

Orientation to STOP TI monitoring

- Fahmida Islam
- STOP Bangladesh Focal Point
- STOP, a Tobacco Industry Watchdog



Content

- About STOP
- Introduction to TII
- Tactics
- Tobacco Industry Interference Index
- Investigation of TI
- Union and STOP priority areas
- Questions

About “STOP”

Stopping **T**obacco **O**rganizations and **P**roducts

STOP is a global tobacco industry watchdog whose mission is to expose tobacco industry strategies and tactics to undermine public health.

Comprised of a partnership between [The Union](#), [The Tobacco Control Research Group](#) at the University of Bath, [The Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control](#) and [Vital Strategies](#) funded by [Bloomberg Philanthropies](#).

STOP’s primary work is to understand and expose tobacco industry behavior, and to arm and support stakeholders with evidence and tools to counter the industry

Website:

<https://exposetobacco.org/>

STOP's activity

Provide a platform for advocates, policy makers and journalists to access the latest information on the tobacco industry

Collect data and investigate in comprehensive research

Respond to requests for help through REACT

Expose and challenge the industry's dishonest strategies through media

Collaborate across the tobacco control network to ensure a comprehensive approach to countering industry tactics.

<https://theunion.org/our-work/tobacco-control/stop-a-global-tobacco-industry-watchdog>

Brief Introduction to Tobacco Industry Interference

- For decades, the tobacco industry has actively worked to undermine public health tobacco control efforts
- From passing laws and regulations to implementation and enforcement, industry interference happens at all points of tobacco control efforts
- Interference can be obvious, and it can be masked by the efforts of a third party, front group, or secretly funded individual
- Identifying, exposing and countering interference is vital to successfully moving forward tobacco control efforts and protecting populations from the harms of tobacco



Tactics

Building alliances and front groups i.e. “third party technique”

Weaken the public health community

Disputing and suppressing public health information

Producing and disseminating misleading research and information

Directly lobbying and influencing policy-making

Influencing “upstream” policies,

Litigating or threatening litigation

Facilitating and causing confusion i.e. smuggling

Seeking to manage and enhance its own reputation in order to increase its ability to influence policy

WHO REPORT ON THE GLOBAL TOBACCO EPIDEMIC, 2021

Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index

The Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index revealed how well governments have fought to protect their public health policies.

GTII rankings 2020 (out of 57 countries)

- 1.Brunei Darussalam
- 2.France
11. Nepal
12. Sri Lanka
- 16 Pakistan
- 17 Myanmar
- 22 India
- 30 Bangladesh**
- 33 Indonesia
- 34 Japan

GTII 2020 Findings: Bangladesh

Industry participation in policy development: 6 / 20

Tobacco industry-related CSR activities: 5 / 20

Benefits given to the tobacco industry: 10 / 20

Unnecessary interaction with the tobacco industry: 8 / 20

Procedure for transparency measures: 8 / 20

Avoiding conflicts of interest: 13 / 20

Preventive measures: 18 / 30

Total score of 68

See more: <https://globaltobaccoindex.org/>

Interference can be through:

Allies

Front Groups

Third party

Evidence

Academic Journals

Financial Documents

Organization's materials

Media output

Others

Why, Who, What to investigate?

Why?

- to learn about industry's new investments & products
- to identify industry connections to 3rd parties
- to understand new and emerging issues
- for general knowledge building & awareness
- for specific research projects

Who?

- Senior TI employees
- Lobbyist
- Politicians
- Public officials
- TI representatives
- Tobacco Harm Reduction Advocates

What?

- Allies: Group or associations patronage by TI
- Activities
- Financial Connections

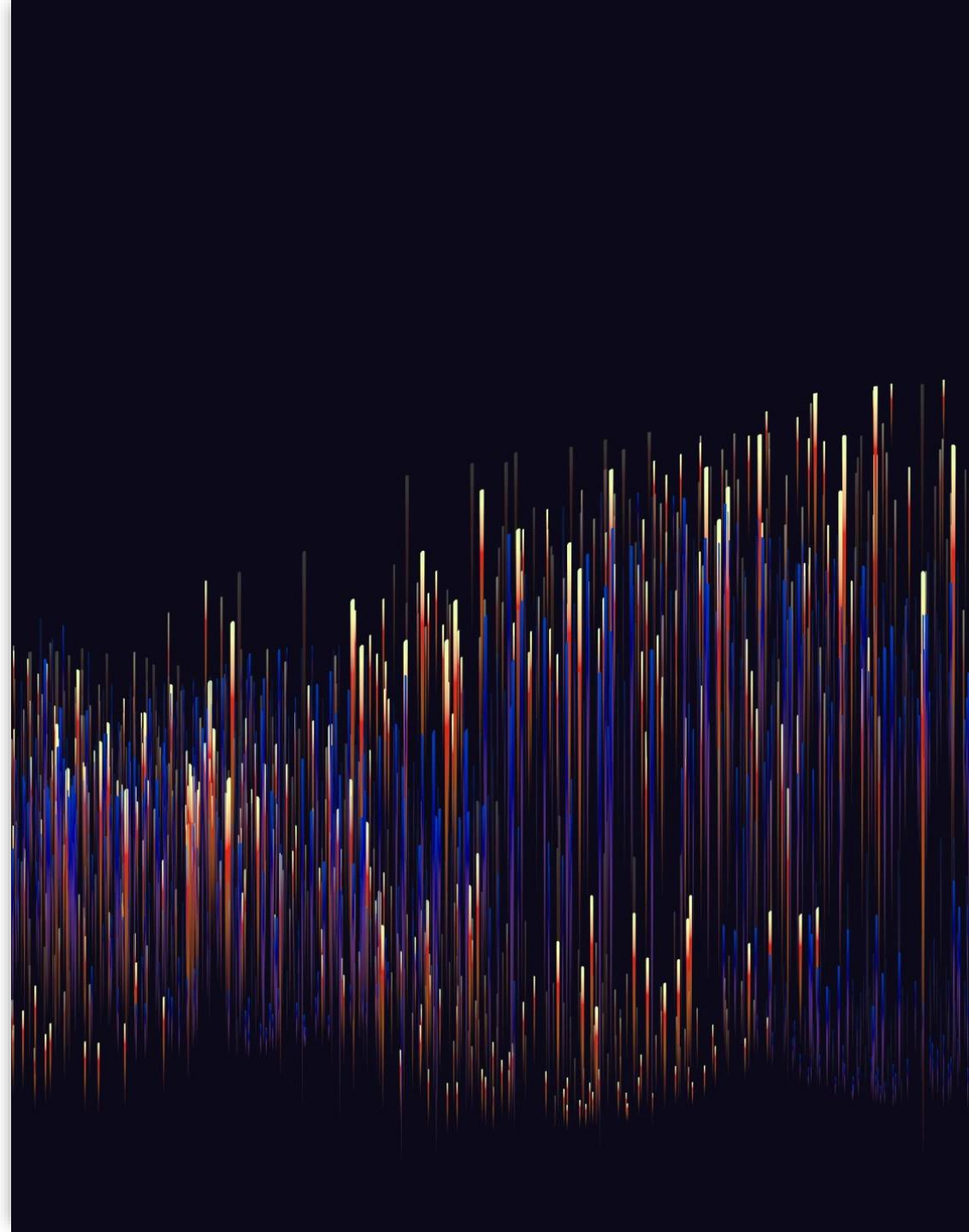


Priorities areas of Union and STOP Monitoring

- **Corporate transformation:** TI activity related to general attempts to presenting tobacco companies as being good actors and shifting away from traditional tobacco products. Examples: BAT's Bonayon, Supernova initiatives etc.
- **Tax, illicit trade, and smuggling:** TI activity to undermine tax or track and trace policy, invoke illicit trade arguments and data, or facilitate smuggling. Examples: lobbying for favorable tax rates, lots of media news of smuggling, and funding illicit trade research.
- **MPOWE(R) policy interference:** TI activity to block, weaken, or delay core TC policy progress (beyond tax).
- **COVID-19:** Any TI activity related to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. CSR, policy interference, marketing, and misuse/funding of research).
- **Alternative products (e-cigs, HTPs, ENDS, etc.):** TI activity related to introducing or promoting non-traditional tobacco and nicotine products to a market. Examples: suspected ally activity like Vapors of Bangladesh, online TAPS on e-cigs etc.
- **Foundation for a Smoke-Free World:** Country and regional PR, research and programmatic activity of the Foundation, its staff, known allies, and grantees.

Industry Tactics

- **Advertising/Promotion/Sponsorship (TAPS):** marketing, promotion, brand stretching, social media/online advertising, sponsorship, point of sale
- **Corporate Social Responsibility:** donations, events and initiatives, announcement of awards
- **Direct Policy Interference:** lobbying, political contributions, drafting legislation, voluntary agreements, avoiding or violating current polices
- **Corporate Activity:** change in corporate form, merger or acquisition, PR campaign, corporate branding
- **Allies and Front Groups:** emergence of a new ally or front group, PR or advocacy campaign
- **Litigation:** legal action taken, threat of legal action
- **Science and Research:** create and distribute deceptive research, fund research or surveying, misleading use of research



Examples:

- “Members of Detective Branch (DB) of Rangpur Metropolitan Police (RpMP) arrested a man named Md Rezzakul (41) with 66,000 pieces of Bidi with fake band-roll worth about Tk. 6.40 lakh from Haragach Police Station area in Rangpur metropolitan.”

In the presence of respective Mayors, Chief Administrative officer from the Govt. BAT Bangladesh conducted campaign on COVID-19 vaccine registration for farmers, retailers, and field workers- associated

- Is this industry interference? Why or Why not? Is this industry interference? Why or Why not?

