

Nicaragua



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Industry Participation in Policy Development

There is no evidence of participation by the tobacco industry (TI) in the development or formulation of public health policies. Similarly, there is no evidence that the government has undertaken or supported policymaking processes or legislation in collaboration with the TI or its representatives. However, the National Development Plan, formulated and implemented by the central government, identifies tobacco as one of the priority areas of agricultural development.

2. Industry CSR Activities

There is no evidence that government agencies or officials endorsed, supported, formed alliances with, or participated in TI activities described as socially responsible. There is also no evidence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) contributions, monetary or otherwise, received from the TI or those working to promote its interests.

3. Benefits to the Industry

There is no evidence of negotiations between the TI and government authorities regarding the implementation of tobacco laws and regulations.

Cigarette imports from China are included in the Nicaragua-China Free Trade Agreement. In March 2025, the Nicaraguan Embassy in China participated as the guest of honour at a cigar and tobacco promotion event in Beijing.

4. Unnecessary Interaction

Senior government officials, including the Presidential Advisor for Investment Promotion, Trade, and International Cooperation, attended the International Tobacco Fair in Estelí. The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA) conducted an on-site visit to tobacco companies in Estelí to learn about environmental practices and establish partnerships for nurseries and reforestation as part of the national and local campaign “Green, I Love You Green.”

The Puro Sabor Festival, now in its 12th year, is a prominent example of the support the TI receives from local and national governments. One of its objectives is to promote the country’s tobacco brand. The Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Labor, and Nicaragua’s Tourism Institute participated in the festival.

5. Transparency

There is no public disclosure of interactions between the TI and the government. There is also no evidence that the government has rules requiring disclosure or registration of TI entities. A review of trade, agricultural, food, and health authority regulations shows that the Nicaraguan government complies with national and international regulations for the control of tobacco marketing, both for export and import.

6. Conflict of Interest

Law 727 and other legal references do not prohibit contributions from the TI or entities working to further its interests to political parties, candidates, or campaigns, nor do they require full disclosure of such contributions.

There is no evidence that high-profile retired government officials are part of the TI.

7. Preventive Measures

The government has not established a procedure to disclose records of interactions with the TI and its representatives, such as agendas, attendees, minutes, or outcomes. It has also not formulated, adopted, or implemented a code of conduct for public officials regarding standards they must follow in their dealings with the TI. A review of media sources, government institutions, Law 727, and executive decrees yielded no evidence of an existing plan, a plan in development, or a formal commitment to a structured program aimed at raising awareness about implementing Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Promote greater transparency in all matters related to compliance with Law 727, especially regarding activities involving the TI and its relations with the national government.
2. Establish regulations governing interactions between government entities, their officials, and the TI, including a specific code of conduct to ensure compliance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.
3. Enhance access to information on the TI's activities and its relationship with Law 727 and related regulations, and ensure that codes and monitoring mechanisms derived from it are fully implemented.
4. Strengthen monitoring of the TI's compliance with environmental laws and regulations, particularly concerning the impacts of tobacco cultivation, processing, and marketing.
5. Accelerate efforts to complete pending commitments related to the WHO FCTC, with a focus on establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for all implemented actions.