

Vietnam



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Industry Participation in Policy Development

The collaboration between government and tobacco industry (TI) companies in the formulation and enforcement of anti-smuggling policies remains evident. Large scale destruction of smuggled cigarettes has been carried out in provinces such as Ho Chi Minh City, Binh Phuoc, Dong Thap, and Binh Dinh, with the involvement of market surveillance agencies, police, prosecutors, and other relevant agencies alongside the Vietnam Tobacco Association (VTA). Additionally, the VTA actively participated in inter-agency workshops and policy discussions on special consumption tax and anti-smuggling measures, where it provided recommendations.

2. Industry CSR Activities

Despite Article 16 of the Law on Prevention and Control of Tobacco Harms (effective May 1, 2013), which limits corporate social responsibility (CSR) by the TI and prohibits its publicity, the TI continues extensive CSR activities across sectors. Throughout 2023 and early 2025, Vietnam National Tobacco Corporation (Vinataba), British American Tobacco (BAT), and Khanh Viet Corporation (Khatoco) actively contributed to social programs, including building houses for poor families, supporting disaster relief, and funding education through scholarships and donations of school supplies to disadvantaged students. BAT also promoted environmental CSR activities, with themes of sustainability and women's empowerment. These activities were endorsed by local authorities and received media coverage, strengthening the TI's public image and political goodwill despite legal restrictions.

3. Benefits to the Industry

Cigarettes are still sold as duty free items for international travelers and seafarers working on board seagoing vessels on international routes. Vietnam increased its 2024 import tariff quota for raw tobacco to 71,835 tons, an increase of 3,421 tons from 2023. In addition, Decree No. 144/2024/NĐ-CP maintains a preferential 50 percent import tariff for e-cigarette related products (HS 24.04) and vaping devices (HS 8543.40.00). This decree was issued before the new Tobacco Ban Resolution was passed.

4. Unnecessary Interaction

TI companies in Vietnam continue to foster close relationships with both central and provincial government officials through regular meetings, awards, and joint activities. In 2023–2025, several central level officials, including leaders from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Home Affairs, and the State Capital Management Committee, attended conferences and events organized by Vinataba, BAT Vietnam, and industry associations. At the provincial level, leaders from Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Vinh Phuc, and Can Tho actively participated in ceremonies, meetings, and company visits hosted by TI companies. Additionally, cooperation agreements were signed between provincial authorities (Ninh Thuan, Binh Duong) and TI companies to jointly communicate campaigns on combating smuggled and counterfeit cigarettes.



5. Transparency

The government views interaction with the TI as “normal,” and therefore open about such engagement. However, detailed information on these interactions is not always available to the public. The government does not have procedures for the disclosure or registration of TI entities, affiliated organizations, or individuals acting on their behalf.

6. Conflict of Interest

There have been no new appointments of government officials to the TI since 2014. However, the appointment of staff from the Ministry of Industry and Trade to Vinataba in 2014 remains in effect, and those staff were promoted in 2023.

7. Preventive Measures

The government has not yet established a procedure for disclosing records of interactions with the TI, including agendas, attendees, minutes, or outcomes. No specific code of conduct for public officials in relation to the TI has

been adopted. Some preventive efforts made in the past are still in place. The Ministry of Health issued dispatches in 2017 and 2021 warning against cooperation with the Philip Morris-funded Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, aligning with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. In 2024, the Politburo issued Regulation No. 178-QĐ/TW on controlling power and preventing corruption and misconduct in legislative processes. This regulation applies to all public officials, including those involved in tobacco control policy development, and addresses acts such as bribery, media manipulation, and collusion with private interests during law-making.

There is currently no government program to systematically raise awareness across all departments about Article 5.3 guidelines. The Ministry of Health and its partners have conducted some awareness-raising activities for government officials and the media. Regulations on gift giving and receiving by public officials exist under anti corruption laws and directives. Public servants are prohibited from accepting gifts or benefits from individuals or entities related to their official duties and are required to declare and hand over any such gifts in accordance with national regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enforce Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC in Vietnam and increase awareness among government agencies about TI interference.
2. Develop a code of conduct for public officials that includes clear rules on not accepting sponsorships, not forming partnerships, and limiting interactions with the TI to only when strictly necessary to protect the integrity of public health policies.
3. Ban all forms of TI-related CSR in line with Article 13 of the WHO FCTC.
4. Conduct regular monitoring of TI activities and enhance collaboration with civil society organizations working in tobacco control to counter industry interference.