



# Tobacco Industry Allies

November 2022




## What is a tobacco industry ally?

Tobacco industry allies are groups or organizations that promote the tobacco industry's business interests. They usually do not make or sell tobacco products, but by promoting the industry's agenda, they help perpetuate the global tobacco epidemic. The tobacco industry is the greatest barrier to reducing tobacco use and the harms that come with it. Industry allies are an extension of the industry.

### Industry allies can be difficult to identify.

- Many allies have names that seem unrelated to the tobacco industry, or may sound like they work against the tobacco industry. One example is the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, a front group that was established and is fully funded by Philip Morris International.
- Some allies obscure or hide their links to the industry.

STOP has organized allies into three categories.

Category	Characteristics	Possible activities
<b>Front groups</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tobacco industry plays a key role in the establishment, funding and/or membership of the organization</li> <li>• Claim to act independently</li> <li>• Often claim to represent a public or special interest</li> <li>• Financial links to the industry may be obscured or hidden</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign against tobacco tax increases and plain packaging laws for cigarettes</li> <li>• Lobby for looser regulations of tobacco and nicotine products</li> <li>• Advocate for the use of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products, aligned with the tobacco industry's definition of "harm reduction"</li> </ul>
<b>Astroturf groups</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A group or organization designed to look like a spontaneous grassroots effort to either support or oppose a specific industry-related policy</li> <li>• May recruit supporters or give false impressions of number of supporters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out or highlight so-called corporate social responsibility initiatives from the industry</li> <li>• Launch campaigns that claim to represent specific groups, such as small business owners or consumers</li> <li>• Create or coordinate petitions or letter-writing campaigns demanding easier access to the industry's newer tobacco and nicotine products, or advocating against tobacco control measures such as tobacco tax increases, plain packaging or usage restrictions</li> </ul>
<b>Third parties</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take on a spokesperson or lobbyist role</li> <li>• Appear to be independent, but often receive funding from the industry</li> <li>• Tobacco companies are often members of these groups</li> </ul>	

Search for examples at: [exposetobacco.org/tobacco-industry-allies](https://exposetobacco.org/tobacco-industry-allies)

## Industry allies harm public health.

- Tobacco use causes more than 8 million deaths every year, and costs the global economy about [US \\$1.85 trillion annually](#)<sup>1</sup> in health care costs and the loss of productivity.
- Proven measures, such as increasing tobacco taxes; banning advertising, promotion and sponsorships; implementing plain packaging or graphic health warnings; implementing smoke-free places and more will reduce tobacco-related suffering, economic losses and death.
- Allies help the tobacco industry delay or block these life-saving policies, or weaken policies to favor industry profits over public health.
- In places where the industry has low credibility or is prohibited from interacting with policymakers due to national policies designed to protect policy from industry influence, allies may provide another path for the industry to exert its influence.

## Examples of Industry Allies

### Aliansi Masyarakat Tembakau Indonesia (AMTI)<sup>2</sup>

<b>Location</b>	Based in Indonesia, operates primarily in Indonesia
<b>Ally category</b>	Front group
<b>Main ally focus</b>	Promoting combustible cigarettes
<b>Tobacco company links</b>	PT HM Sampoerna Tbk, the Indonesian subsidiary of Philip Morris International, was one of the founding members.
<b>Activities</b>	Lobbied against tobacco control measures including bans on cigarette and tobacco product advertising and increases in tobacco taxes
<b>Threats to public health</b>	<p>Delaying or canceling advertising bans allows tobacco companies to continue recruiting new smokers and perpetuating addiction among current smokers.</p> <p>Fighting tobacco tax increases, and therefore tobacco price increases, keeps cigarettes accessible and affordable, especially to cost-conscious consumers including youth. This effectively promotes and encourages tobacco use.</p>

### World Vapers' Alliance<sup>3</sup>

<b>Location</b>	Based in the United States, operates globally
<b>Ally category</b>	Astroturf group
<b>Main ally focus</b>	Primarily promoting electronic nicotine products, many of which are manufactured by major transnational tobacco companies
<b>Tobacco company links</b>	<p>British American Tobacco was involved in the group's creation, direction and funding.</p> <p>Consumer Choice Center, which set up and funds the World Vapers' Alliance, has received funding from British American Tobacco, Philip Morris International and Japan Tobacco International.</p>
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Organized a "seemingly organic" letter-writing campaign against flavor bans and health warnings in the Netherlands</p> <p>Lobbied against the regulation of e-cigarettes and campaigned for their use as a smoking cessation tool</p>
<b>Threats to public health</b>	<p>The organization does not always disclose its industry links and reportedly leaves its name off of its Facebook ads, creating the misperception this is an independent, grassroots campaign.</p> <p>Regulations on e-cigarettes can prevent young people from becoming addicted. Fighting these regulations makes e-cigarettes more easily accessible to young people.</p>

1. [https://tobacconomics.org/files/research/523/UIC\\_Economic-Costs-of-Tobacco-Use-Policy-Brief\\_v1.3.pdf](https://tobacconomics.org/files/research/523/UIC_Economic-Costs-of-Tobacco-Use-Policy-Brief_v1.3.pdf)

2. <https://tobaccotactics.org/wiki/Lobby-Groups/>

3. <https://tobaccotactics.org/wiki/world-vapers-alliance/>

<b>Concordia<sup>4</sup></b>	
<b>Location</b>	Based in the United States, operates globally
<b>Ally category</b>	Third party
<b>Main ally focus</b>	Portraying the tobacco industry as a responsible, innovative and trustworthy partner
<b>Tobacco company links</b>	Philip Morris International has been listed as a “patron member” since 2020, and has sponsored and regularly spoken at discussions at Concordia events since 2017.
<b>Activities</b>	Hosts events relating to public-private partnerships, including a summit that takes place during the same week as the United Nations General Assembly
<b>Threats to public health</b>	Giving Philip Morris International a platform to promote its agenda and allowing it to share the stage with heads of state, senior executives and representatives of the United Nations falsely legitimizes the cigarette company as a partner. This may lead to partnerships that result in policies that serve the industry’s interests, instead of the public’s.

### Industry allies cannot be trusted.

Industry allies present a threat to public health. Policymakers across all government sectors should not work with allies, and instead should implement Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which aims to protect policies from the influence of the tobacco industry and those serving its interests.

Check [STOP’s growing database](#) to ensure you are not working with an ally that is furthering the tobacco industry’s harmful agenda: [exposetobacco.org/tobacco-industry-allies](http://exposetobacco.org/tobacco-industry-allies)

4. <https://tobaccotactics.org/wiki/concordia/>



### About STOP (Stopping Tobacco Organizations and Products)

STOP is a global tobacco industry watchdog whose mission is to expose the tobacco industry strategies and tactics that undermine public health. STOP is funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies and comprised of a partnership among the Tobacco Control Research Group (TCRG) at the University of Bath, The Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC), the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) and Vital Strategies. For more information, visit [exposetobacco.org](http://exposetobacco.org).

