

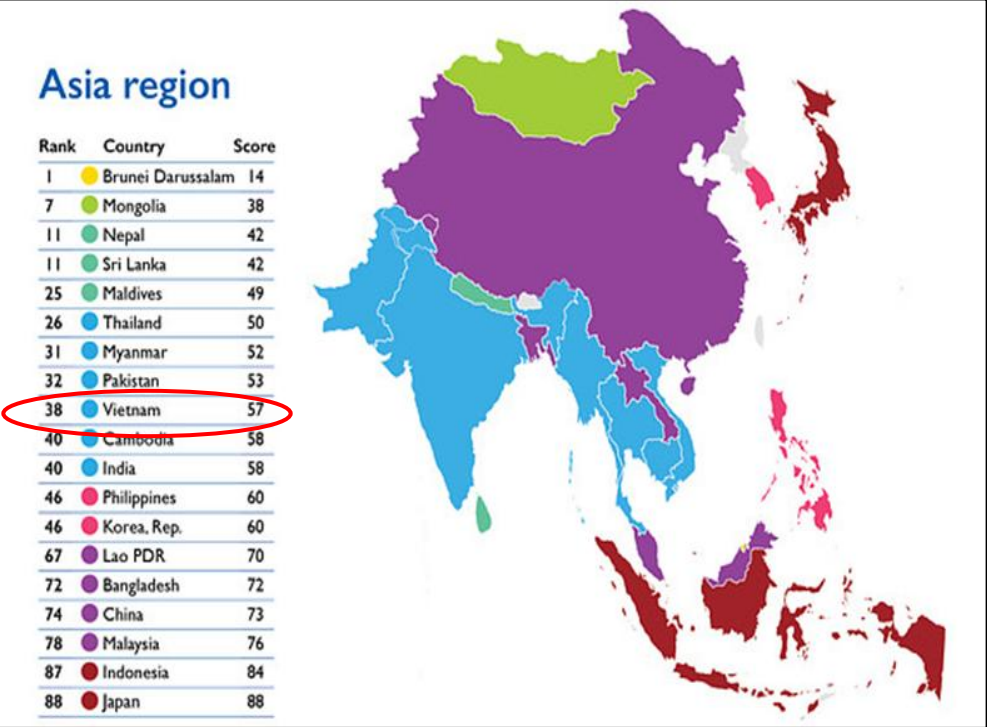
Countermeasures Against Tobacco Industry Influence on ENDS/HTPs Policies: Insights from Vietnam

Nguyen Hanh Nguyen
HealthBridge Foundation of Canada, Vietnam Office

E-Poster No. 1394

Background

- Vietnam ratified the FCTC in 2004 and passed a National Tobacco Control Law in 2012.
- Vietnam has made progress in tobacco control, with smoking rates among adult men decreasing from 47.4% in 2010 to 41% in 2021 (1) and among adolescents aged 13–17 from 4.7% in 2013 to 2.7% in 2019 (2). However, the country now faces growing challenges due to the rising use of new tobacco products including e-cigarettes (ENDS), heated tobacco products (HTPs):
 - Adults: e-cigarette use increased from 0.2% in 2015 to 3.6% in 2020. (3)
 - Youth (aged 13-17): e-cigarette use increased from 2.6% in 2019 to 8.1% in 2024. (4)
- In recent years, Vietnam faces increasing pressure from the tobacco industry to legalize ENDS and HTPs. These products are not currently permitted for sale in Vietnam; however, they are widely available on the black market, particularly targeting youth through online platforms and appealing product designs.
- According to Asia Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2023, Vietnam had medium score of tobacco industry interference reflecting persistent challenges and the need for further progress in countering such influence.



Results and Impact

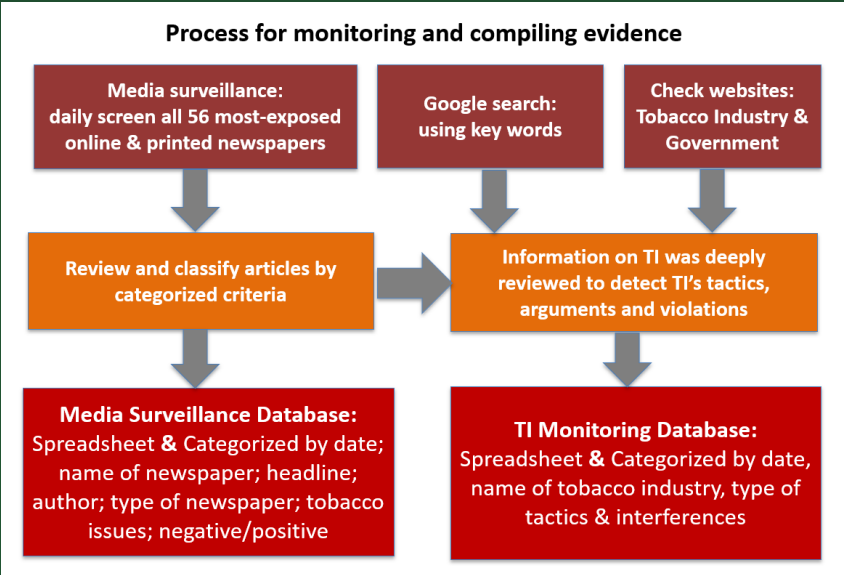
- Evidence on tobacco industry interference and their false arguments was documented in a timely manner, providing a critical foundation for developing effective, evidence-based counter-arguments and for exposing the industry's influence.
- Advocacy campaigns and coordinated responses was strengthened.
- Policymakers became more aware of TI tactics, enabling stronger alignment in counterstrategies.
- Real-time technical support facilitated unified action among the government and tobacco control partners, while media engagement empowered journalists to expose misinformation and raise public awareness.
- Expanded coalitions, including non-health sectors, fostered a multi-sectoral response to TI influence. These efforts have contributed to support for the passage of NA Resolution banning the manufacture, trade, import, storage, transportation, and use of ENDS/HTPs in Vietnam.

How the tobacco industry influences the development and implementation of Tobacco Control policies in Vietnam



Intervention or Response

To address TI interference, a series of strategies were implemented:
(1) Monitoring and documenting TI's tactics to establish evidence



(2) Informing, alerting and promoting counter action

- Monthly TI Monitoring (TIM) Newsletter sent to tobacco control working group & relevant government agencies
- Notification message/email to Core TIM group for rapid action (combine of government in charge of tobacco control, WHO, and alliances/groups)
- TIM Core group discussion to decide: Issues need to counter, Counter action: rapid response/non rapid response, Stakeholder involved for countering.
- Supports for countering:
 - Providing real-time technical support
 - Sending formal letter
 - Engaging with media to expose tobacco industry's false claims (press release; media interview; social media)
 - Publishing evidence-based report, advocacy materials



(3). Raising awareness among policymakers and the public about TI's interference and the importance of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.



Workshop for Government agencies



Media training

(4). Mobilizing and expanding coalitions to include diverse stakeholders

Support was strengthened by engaging with social organizations and broadening collaboration across both health and non-health sectors. Key stakeholders included health experts (e.g., the Poison Control Center of Bach Mai Hospital), non-health partners (e.g., the Ministry of Education and Training, the Department of Child Affairs, the Vietnam Association for the Protection of Child Rights), and academic institutions (e.g., the Institute for Health Strategy and Policy, Hanoi University of Public Health, etc.).

Conclusions

- Tobacco industry interference takes place through various channels and continues to pose a serious challenge.
- Monitoring TI tactics, engaging the media, supporting policymakers, and mobilizing civil society, rooted in the principles of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, are critical tools for resisting commercial interests that threaten health gains.
- Continued vigilance and coordination are required to safeguard progress and prevent the normalization of ENDS/HTPs.

References

1. Ministry of Health Vietnam. Noncommunicable disease risk factors survey. 2021
2. Ministry of health Vietnam, WHO. Global school-based student health survey 2019
3. Ministry of Health Vietnam. Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2015 and Provincial Adult Tobacco Survey 2020
4. Hanoi University of Public Health. Survey on the use of ENDS/HTPs among adolescents in Vietnam. 2024