

New SMOKE TRAP

*Emerging Nicotine & Tobacco Products,
Youth Exposure and Policy Gaps in Nigeria*



NEW
SMOKE
TRAP

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Abbreviations

ATIM	Africa Centre for Tobacco Industry Monitoring and Policy Research
BAT	British American Tobacco
CAPPA	Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa
E-CIGARETTES	Electronic Cigarettes
ENDS	Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems
ENNDS	Electronic Non-Nicotine Delivery Systems
FCCPC	Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
FDA	U.S. Food and Drug Administration
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FCTC	Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
FMOHSW	Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
HTPs	Heated Tobacco Products
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
NAFDAC	National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control
NATOCC	National Tobacco Control Committee
NCS	Nigeria Customs Service
NENTPs	New and Emerging Nicotine and Tobacco Products
NTC Act	National Tobacco Control Act
PMI	Philip Morris International
SON	Standards Organisation of Nigeria
SONCAP	Standards Organisation of Nigeria Conformity Assessment Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO FCTC	World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Foreword

Nigeria stands at a critical juncture in its tobacco control journey.

Over the past decade, the global tobacco industry has transformed its business model, appearing to shift away from conventional cigarettes toward a new generation of nicotine products designed to evade regulation, renormalise the tobacco industry, reshape public perception and recruit new users, particularly young people to take up both the traditional cigarettes and the new nicotine products. This report provides timely and compelling evidence that Nigeria is now firmly within the reach of this 'transformation' tactics as the industry attempts to position itself as the solution to the problem it caused in the first place and still causing.

The findings presented here demonstrate that electronic cigarettes, nicotine pouches and heated tobacco products are not marginal novelties. They are increasingly visible, widely accessible and aggressively marketed across both physical and digital spaces. Their expansion is not occurring despite Nigeria's tobacco control framework, but because of definitional gaps and regulatory blind spots that the industry has learned to exploit with precision. Of particular concern is the way these products are framed - as clean, modern, discreet or even health-enhancing alternatives, despite clear evidence that nicotine remains a highly addictive substance with well-documented harms, especially for adolescents and young adults. The misleading use of "harm reduction" narratives, including selective references to experiences in high-income countries, risks diverting attention from the comprehensive tobacco control policies that have driven declines in smoking elsewhere.

This report is therefore more than a market survey. It is a warning. It shows how, in the absence of decisive action, Nigeria risks inheriting a new generation of nicotine dependence - layered onto an already significant burden of non-communicable disease. At the same time, the report offers a clear path forward. By aligning national law with contemporary market realities, strengthening inter-agency coordination, closing regulatory loopholes and adopting a precautionary, health-first approach to all nicotine products, Nigeria can protect its population, especially its youth, from a preventable and industry-driven epidemic.

I commend the authors for producing an evidence-based, policy-relevant report that speaks directly to Nigeria's current challenges. It is my hope that this work will inform urgent regulatory reform and reinforce Nigeria's commitment to the principles and obligations of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

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Executive Summary

This study maps and analyses the rapid expansion of new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products (NENTPs) in Nigeria, with a particular focus on e-cigarettes, popularly known as *vapes*, oral nicotine pouches, and heated tobacco products. It also documents how these offerings are reshaping the local landscape, expanding pathways to nicotine use and dependence, and exploiting regulatory gaps in the country's tobacco control framework through aggressive marketing, digital saturation and misleading harm reduction narratives.

Using a mixed-method surveillance approach, the study combined physical market mapping in Lagos, Enugu, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja with the monitoring of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X, as well as major e-commerce websites. These quantitative findings were further enriched by key informant interviews (KIIs), which provided qualitative context regarding consumer experiences and industry manoeuvres. Across physical and digital environments, the research team documented a total of seven hundred and eighty-one (781) products, of which five hundred and seventy-three (573) fell within recognised NENTP categories. Other items documented included nicotine gum and traditional tobacco items such as cigarettes, cigars, shisha, grabba leaf and smoking accessories. Together, these findings reveal a market that is not transitioning away from smoking but is instead diversifying and multiplying points of entry into nicotine use.

Electronic nicotine and non-nicotine delivery systems, now dominate Nigeria's contemporary nicotine market. A total of five hundred and twenty-two (522) items were recorded, with *disposable vapes* dominating the market. These products carry varying nicotine concentrations and puff counts and are packaged in bright, compact designs that resemble cosmetics or small electronic gadgets. They are also widely available in supermarkets, kiosks, nightlife venues, and online platforms. Prices range from about N5,000 to N60,000, creating low-cost entry points for new users and premium choices for regular or heavy consumers. Field observations suggest a progression in consumption patterns among users, particularly young people. Many begin with disposable vaping devices before transitioning to refillable pods and modular systems as nicotine dependence intensifies. A parallel trend appears with nicotine pouches, where individuals typically begin at lower strengths and advance to higher concentrations as tolerance and addiction builds.

Oral nicotine pouches represent the second most prominent and fastest-growing category identified in the study, with thirty-eight (38) products documented. Their distribution is overwhelmingly digital, concentrated on e-commerce platforms and social media vendors offering nationwide delivery. Age-verification measures on these platforms are minimal or entirely absent, typically limited to a single click asserting that the buyer is “over 18” or “old enough.” Prices range from N6,000 to N40,000 per can, depending on brand and purchase quantity, with lower unit prices offered for bulk purchases.

Nicotine strengths range from 3 mg to as high as 100 mg per pouch, raising serious concerns about acute exposure and addiction risk in an unregulated market. Heated tobacco products, currently occupy a small niche, with only 13 items documented. However, their high prices, typically between N60,000 and N70,000, suggest deliberate positioning for affluent early adopters, consistent with global industry strategies that phase in these products ahead of broader market expansion.

Importantly, the emergence of NENTPs has not displaced conventional tobacco products. Cigarettes, including menthol variants, as well as flavoured shisha and cigarillos, remain widely available, especially in nightlife and informal retail settings. Consumers move fluidly between old and new products depending on price, flavour, concealability, and context. This pattern directly challenges industry claims that newer nicotine products function primarily as smoking cessation tools. Instead, the markets observed in this study reflect a broadened nicotine ecosystem that recruits new users, sustains nicotine dependence and normalises nicotine consumption across multiple formats.

The study identifies a consistent set of narratives used to promote NENTPs, enable their covert use in spaces traditionally protected by smoke-free norms, and erode barriers to youth uptake in Nigeria. These narratives include claims of being tobacco-free or cleaner, environmental and economic greenwashing, discreet “use anywhere” positioning, the framing of devices as fashionable technology, heavy reliance on youth-appealing flavours, wellness and self-care rhetoric, and messaging around nationwide e-commerce delivery and affordability. A particularly prominent narrative centres on so-called harm reduction and the “Quit like Sweden” framing, which selectively attributes Sweden’s low smoking prevalence to alternative nicotine products while ignoring decades of comprehensive and enforced tobacco control policies. Evidence indicates that these narratives closely mirror transnational tobacco industry strategies and are frequently linked to industry-funded advocacy platforms.

Altogether, the findings show that Nigeria now hosts an increasingly diversified nicotine market operating largely beyond the reach of current laws, at a time when tobacco-related illnesses already contribute substantially to national morbidity and mortality. Gaps in regulation and oversight failures have created room for this market to grow unchecked, allowing manufacturers and vendors to define the identity, appeal, and perceived safety of nicotine products on their own terms.

The report concludes that urgent action is required and makes the following recommendations:

- Regulatory oversight should be strengthened across all nicotine and tobacco products, regardless of form.
- Existing gaps in advertising, promotion, and sponsorship controls should be addressed across both physical and digital environments.
- New and emerging nicotine and tobacco products should be fully integrated into the excise tax system to reduce affordability and generate sustainable revenue for enforcement and cessation programmes.
- Evidence-based public communication should be amplified to establish nicotine as a harmful and addictive substance, with targeted interventions including school-based education that speaks directly to e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches, and HTPs.
- Institutional coordination should be improved across health, standards, trade, customs, and consumer-protection systems to ensure that no product or sales channel sits in a regulatory vacuum.

More importantly, Nigeria, based on the WHO FCTC Treaty signed in 2004 and ratified in 2005, should implement a precautionary, health-first posture to prevent a new generation from becoming dependent on nicotine and to align tobacco control with current market realities.

Introduction

Nigeria's tobacco and nicotine landscape has undergone a profound shift over the past decade. As observed globally, transnational tobacco companies have managed to shift public attention from conventional combustible cigarettes towards a new generation of nicotine delivery technologies that are marketed as modern, cleaner, and safer alternatives. These include electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), electronic non-nicotine delivery systems (ENNDS), heated tobacco products (HTPs), and oral nicotine pouches. These products are widely promoted as posing reduced risks compared to smoking, yet their quick diffusion is reshaping patterns of nicotine initiation and dependence rather than reducing harm.¹⁻²

This transition reflects a deliberate industry strategy to reframe nicotine use in ways that evade regulation, 'rehabilitate' corporate legitimacy, and recruit new users, particularly young people, at a time when the harms of smoking are widely recognised and increasingly regulated. Globally, tobacco companies have invested heavily in product innovation, flavour engineering, digital marketing, and lifestyle branding to reposition nicotine consumption as a matter of choice, technology, and convenience.³⁻⁴ These strategies have been documented internationally as mechanisms to undermine tobacco control gains and expand markets in low- and middle-income countries.

In Nigeria, this shift is unfolding within a regulatory environment that has not adjusted to match market innovation. Although Nigeria is a Party to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), its tobacco control architecture remains largely anchored in assumptions from an earlier era – one in which tobacco-related harm was understood primarily through the smoking or chewing of tobacco leaf. The National Tobacco Control (NTC) Act (2015) and its accompanying National Tobacco Control Regulations (2019) reflect this framing, focusing predominantly on products made wholly or partly from tobacco leaf.⁵⁻⁶ As a result, many newer nicotine products, particularly those containing synthetic nicotine or delivering nicotine through aerosol-generating devices or oral routes, fall outside clear regulatory coverage.

¹ World Health Organization. Electronic nicotine and non-nicotine delivery systems: a brief. WHO EURO 2020. Available from: <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2020-4572-44335-62638>

² National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Public health consequences of e-cigarettes. Washington (DC): National Academies Press; 2018. doi:10.17226/24952. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/n/nap24952/pdf/>

³ Gilmore AB, Fooks G, Drope J, Bialous SA, Jackson RR. Exposing and addressing tobacco industry conduct in low-income and middle-income countries. *Lancet*. 2015;385(9972):1029–43. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(15)60312-9

⁴ Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control. (n.d.). How the tobacco industry misappropriates harm reduction to sustain nicotine addiction. <https://ggtc.world/knowledge/who-ftc-article-53-policy-instruments/how-the-tobacco-industry-misappropriates-harm-reduction-to-sustain-nicotine-addiction>

⁵ Federal Republic of Nigeria. National Tobacco Control Act. Abuja: Government of Nigeria; 2015. Available from: <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/NationalTobaccoControlAct2015.pdf>

⁶ Federal Republic of Nigeria. National Tobacco Control Regulations. Abuja: Government of Nigeria; 2019. Available from: <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/National-Tobacco-Regulations-2019.pdf>

This definitional gap has tangible public health consequences. Section 12 of the NTC Act imposes a broad ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, but Section 45 defines “tobacco product” as any article wholly or partly made from tobacco leaf. Newer nicotine technologies fall outside this scope, creating a loophole that manufacturers and retailers now exploit to market highly addictive products using youth-appealing designs, sweet flavours, and digital platforms that are difficult to monitor. In addition, whereas traditional tobacco products are subject to packaging and labelling rules, newer nicotine items are not. This lack of standards allows manufacturers to design devices that resemble sweets, cosmetics, or personal electronics, heightening their appeal to young and underage users.

Independent scientific evidence confirms that nicotine is a highly addictive substance with well-documented adverse effects on cardiovascular health, brain development and neurocognitive function, particularly among adolescents and young adults.⁷ While the long-term health effects of some newer nicotine products are still being studied, uncertainty does not imply safety. The WHO has consistently advised governments to apply a precautionary, health-first approach to E-cigarettes, HTPs, and other emerging nicotine products, especially in settings where regulatory capacity is limited and youth exposure is high.⁸

Despite this guidance, new nicotine products in Nigeria are widely promoted through flashy point-of-sale displays in supermarkets and malls, and on e-commerce platforms such as Jiji, and Jumia, using misleading narratives.⁹ These include claims that products are “tobacco-free”, “environmentally sustainable”, or “suitable for discreet use in any setting.” Harm reduction messaging has also become increasingly prominent, particularly through the “Quit Like Sweden” narrative, which selectively attributes Sweden's low smoking prevalence to alternative nicotine products while overlooking the decisive role of decades of comprehensive tobacco control measures such as high tobacco taxation, advertising bans, graphic health warnings and smoke-free laws.¹⁰ These narratives closely mirror global tobacco industry strategies and raise concerns under Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, which recognises the fundamental conflict between public health objectives and tobacco industry interests.¹¹

⁷ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Public health consequences of e-cigarettes. Washington (DC): National Academies Press; 2018. doi:10.17226/24952. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/n/nap24952/pdf/>

⁸ WHO study group on tobacco product regulation. Report on the scientific basis of tobacco product regulation: eighth report of a WHO study group. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021 (WHO Technical Report Series, No. 1029). Available from: https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/34326/1/WHO_study_group_tobacco_regulation.pdf

⁹ Unknown author. (n.d.). Nicotine pouches. Jiji Nigeria. Retrieved December 8, 2025, from <https://jiji.ng/389-nicotine-pouches>

¹⁰ Tobacco Tactics. “Quit like Sweden”. Available from: <https://www.tobaccotactics.org/article/quit-like-sweden/> (Last Accessed 21.12.2025)

¹¹ World Health Organization. Guidelines for implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Geneva: WHO; 2008. Available from: https://fctc.who.int/docs/librariesprovider12/default-document-library/who-fctc-article-5.3.pdf?sfvrsn=a52de22a_16&download=true

It is crucial to note that the emergence of new nicotine products in Nigeria has not displaced conventional tobacco use. Combustible cigarettes, flavoured shisha, and other smoked products remain widely available and visible in nightlife and informal retail spaces. Instead of substitution, the market increasingly reflects coexistence and convergence, with users, especially young people, moving between old and new products depending on price, flavour, concealability, and social settings. International evidence shows that such diversified nicotine markets are associated with increased initiation, dual use, and sustained dependence rather than cessation.¹²

The rationale for this study lies in the widening gap between Nigeria's tobacco control laws and the realities of its evolving nicotine market. The concern is heightened by the country's growing non-communicable disease burden, where chronic respiratory and tobacco-related conditions already account for thousands of preventable deaths each year.¹³ The accelerating uptake of new nicotine technologies only increases the urgency of strengthening Nigeria's governance approach, particularly in light of misleading harm reduction campaigns by multinational corporations such as Philip Morris International, which promote newer devices as so-called safer alternatives while downplaying the broader policy context behind smoking declines elsewhere.¹⁴

Without systematic documentation of product availability, marketing practices, and industry narratives, key actors lack the evidence needed to design effective regulatory responses. Without clear classification, regulators cannot develop enforceable standards, and enforcement agencies are unable to intervene when products, vendors, or supply chains cannot be identified. Without a clear understanding of industry tactics, public-health advocacy remains reactive rather than anticipatory.

This report addresses these gaps by mapping new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products across selected Nigerian cities (Lagos, Enugu, and FCT, Abuja) and digital platforms, providing an empirical foundation to support regulatory reform, institutional coordination, and stronger public health protection in line with Nigeria's WHO FCTC commitments.

¹² World Health Organization. *WHO global report on trends in prevalence of tobacco use 2000–2030*. Geneva: WHO; 2024. Available from: <https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/1903bfca-6c2f-470c-bd52-237edf4828ca/content>

¹³ World Health Organization. (2019, August 7). *Nigeria fulfils commitment, launches plan for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases*. WHO Regional Office for Africa. <https://www.afro.who.int/news/nigeria-fulfils-commitment-launches-plan-prevention-and-control-non-communicable-diseases>

¹⁴ Unknown author. (n.d.). *Tobacco harm reduction: Most smokers need cigarette alternatives — PMI executive*. EnviroNews Nigeria. Retrieved November 28, 2025, from <https://www.environewsigeria.com/tobacco-harm-reduction-most-smokers-need-cigarette-alternatives-pmi-executive/>

¹⁵ https://extranet.who.int/fctcapps/sites/default/files/2023-06/Info-Note_Novel-Classification_EN.pdf

Methods

Study Design

The study employed a mixed-methods market surveillance design to document the availability, marketing practices, and circulation pathways of new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products in Nigeria. The approach combined physical retail mapping, digital marketplace monitoring, structured product documentation and desk research to understand how newer nicotine and tobacco products circulate across urban and semi-urban Nigeria.

Study Sites

Offline surveillance was conducted in three locations selected to reflect diverse market dynamics and consumer profiles: Lagos, the country's largest commercial hub with extensive retail diversity and density; FCT, Abuja for its young, mobile population and vibrant nightlife economy; and Enugu, representing a growing market outside the country's dominant metropolitan corridors. The focus on these areas provided insight into how NENTPs circulate across different socio-economic, retail and cultural settings.

Physical Market Surveillance

Structured walk-throughs and observations were conducted in malls, supermarkets, kiosks, smoke shops, bars, lounges, and roadside stalls. Trained field monitors documented not only product availability, but also retail practices that reinforce visibility and consumer appeal. These included how items were displayed, the aesthetic cues used on packaging, pricing behaviour, flavour presentation and observable interactions between vendors and consumers. Attention was paid to features that enhance appeal or concealability, such as compact device design, gadget-like appearance, youth-oriented branding and flavour descriptions. Thirty trained monitors conducted this work using tools developed by CAPPA.

Digital Surveillance

Digital surveillance targeted online social media platforms and e-commerce websites. Platforms monitored over time included, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X, and online marketplaces. Vendor accounts were catalogued, and screenshots were captured to document advertising language, imagery, promotional narratives, flavour marketing, product prices, and claims related to harm reduction, wellness or discretion. Where possible, researchers engaged vendors directly to document sales practices, age-verification procedures, and the narrative strategies used to normalise nicotine use, especially among younger audiences.

Key Informant Survey

An online survey was administered to key informants to capture their knowledge of and experiences with new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products. The survey received responses mostly from individuals aged 18–25, a demographic identified as particularly vulnerable to NENTP uptake. The survey instrument included a mix of open-ended and closed questions covering personal experiences with these products, motivations for use or switching, preferred flavours, pricing influences, exposure to marketing and promotional tactics, perceptions of harm reduction claims, and patterns of dual or poly-use. Responses were collected anonymously to encourage honest reporting.

Data Collection Tools and Procedures

To ensure consistency, a unified monitoring framework guided data collection across physical and digital environments. Field teams used structured data collection tools to record product types, brand, stated nicotine content, flavour variants, packaging attributes, price points, harm reduction messaging, vendor claims, and any regulatory indicators such as warnings or age restrictions.

Data Management and Classification

In total, seven hundred and eighty-one (781) product entries were recorded from field observations and digital monitoring. These raw entries were reviewed and reorganised into internationally recognised NENTP categories to distinguish newer nicotine technologies from traditional tobacco items, producing a coherent inventory for detailed analysis.

Desk Review

The empirical surveillance was complemented by a desk-based review of Nigeria's tobacco control laws and regulations, relevant policy documents, industry narratives, and international guidance on the regulation of NENTPs. This component supported the interpretation of findings and helped identify shortcomings, overlaps, and areas of institutional ambiguity relevant to emerging nicotine products.

Limitations

As with any investigation of this scope, constraints apply. The surveillance focused on selected urban and semi-urban areas – Lagos, Enugu, and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja – and therefore cannot reflect the full diversity of retail outlets, neighbourhoods, or sales practices nationwide. Vendor sensitivity toward product-related questions occasionally restricted the depth of information obtained. Online platforms, by their nature, remain volatile, with listings frequently appearing and disappearing. Also, without laboratory analysis, claims about nicotine content, including in products labelled nicotine-free, could not be independently confirmed. These limitations notwithstanding, the mixed-methods design provides a robust and empirically grounded snapshot of Nigeria's current NENTP landscape and the forces shaping access and appeal under weak regulatory oversight.

Classification Framework

Nigeria's tobacco and nicotine marketplace has moved well beyond the earlier dominance of cigarette brands and long-established corporations such as British American Tobacco Nigeria, Philip Morris International, and Japan Tobacco International. What now exists is an environment defined by an array of product types, fluid retail tactics, and evolving supply chains that reflect a wider play of actors. These include suppliers linked to East Asian manufacturing hubs, and local intermediaries who repackage imported products to increase visibility and cultural appeal.

Making sense of this changing market required a clear system for grouping products observed across physical retail spaces and online platforms. This approach served two main purposes. It provided a shared analytical language that situated Nigerian market realities within internationally recognised categories of new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products. It also reflected Nigeria's blended retail environment, where newer nicotine products are often sold alongside conventional tobacco items. Particularly, the classification drew on definitions developed by the World Health Organization, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation, and other recognised public health bodies.

Core Definitions

Globally, new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products are commonly grouped into three broad families: *Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)* and *Electronic Non-Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENNDS)*, *heated tobacco products*, and *oral nicotine products or nicotine pouches*.¹⁵

- **Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and Electronic Non-Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENNDS)**

These are battery-powered devices that heat a liquid to produce an inhalable aerosol. ENDS contain nicotine; ENNDS do not. Their solutions typically include propylene glycol, glycerol and flavouring agents, and may contain additional chemicals, some of which are toxic. The devices appear as e-cigarettes, and as disposable or reusable vapes. *Their use is often referred to as vaping.*

- **Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs)**

HTPs are electronic devices that warm processed tobacco to generate an aerosol. Inserts used in these devices contain nicotine and may include additives or flavourings. Products such as IQOS Heets, Neo sticks, and Terea are designed to replicate the hand-to-mouth experience of smoking and rely on specially manufactured tobacco sticks or capsules. Although promoted as cleaner or technologically superior options, they still deliver nicotine from tobacco and form part of the industry's broader shift toward aerosol-based nicotine consumption.

¹⁵ https://extranet.who.int/fctcapps/sites/default/files/2023-06/Info-Note_Novel-Classification_EN.pdf

The Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC classifies HTPs as tobacco products and confirms that they require regulation equivalent to combustible products.¹⁶

- **Oral Nicotine Pouches**

These are small pouches containing nicotine-infused powder with flavourings and other ingredients. They are placed between the lip and gum, where their contents dissolve and enter the bloodstream. Although they contain no tobacco leaf, the nicotine in them is derived either from the tobacco plant or from synthetic production. These laboratory-made variants are often marketed as “tobacco-free,” yet there is little chemical distinction between synthetic and tobacco-derived nicotine.¹⁷

- **E-liquids/Vape Juices**

These bottled liquids are used in refillable ENDS or ENNDS devices. They may contain nicotine, flavourants, solvents or other chemical additives, the composition of which varies widely and is sometimes undisclosed.

- **Combustible Tobacco Products**

Items that require burning and inhalation, including cigarettes, roll-your-own tobacco, flavoured cigarillos, cigars, and shisha tobacco.

- **Leaf-Based Products (Grabba and Whole Leaf)**

Strips or sheets of cured tobacco leaf sold as wraps or mixing tobacco, commonly used in blunt preparation and various forms of hand-rolled smoking.

- **Shisha and Hookah Products**

These include flavoured tobacco molasses used in waterpipes, along with the devices through which they are consumed. The molasses typically contains tobacco, glycerine, sweeteners, and flavouring agents that are heated to produce an inhalable aerosol.

- **Accessories and Devices**

Hardware such as pods, coils, shisha trays, pots, and disposable mouthpieces. These items were documented as part of the broader consumption landscape but were coded separately from nicotine products.

¹⁶ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9559335/>

¹⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/nicotine-pouches/index.html>

Major Findings

The study documented seven hundred and eighty-one (781) products across Lagos, Abuja and Enugu. Of these, five hundred and seventy-three (573) were classified as new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products. The remaining items consisted of conventional tobacco products, shisha molasses and accessories, e-liquids or vape juices, and nicotine gums. This distribution reflects a market expanding through regulatory blind spots, as the findings below illustrate.

E-cigarettes Everywhere

Electronic nicotine and non-nicotine delivery systems dominated the market, accounting for five hundred and twenty-two (522) entries and making them the most visible segment of Nigeria's contemporary nicotine economy. This category included rechargeable disposable vapes, refillable pod systems, reusable devices and modular kits compatible with bottled liquids. *Brands such as King Song (manufactured in China), Bang vape (manufactured in China), Iyutak (manufactured in China), Vuse GO (BAT), Lost Mary (Shenzhen iMiracle Technology), Nasty (NSTY Worldwide, Malaysia), AAOK (Shenzhen Kechaoda Technology), Elf bar (Shenzhen iMiracle Technology), and NJOY (Altria Group) appeared repeatedly, each catering to different consumer groups.*

Rechargeable disposable vapes containing nicotine were the signature products in this segment. Their design relies on bright colours, polished surfaces, and compact shapes that resemble lip gloss, USB sticks or miniature gadgets. This mimicry helps them pass as everyday objects rather than nicotine devices. The camouflage is central to their appeal among adolescents and young adults because it separates the act of use from the cultural imagery of smoking and recasts vaping as a harmless accessory.

The risks of this concealment were underscored by a parent interviewed during the study, who recounted discovering her thirteen-year-old child using one of these devices: *“I thought it was an electronic device he got from a friend until I accidentally saw him using it, with 'smoke' coming out of his nose and mouth. I was shocked.”*

Young users themselves underscored the appeal of these products. A 22-year-old male informant attributed their attraction to the *“comfort of use and variability of flavour,”* while a 19-year-old female informant described vapes as *“much more addictive than regular cigarettes.”*

Notably, another informant who reported never having smoked cigarettes or used any other combustible product explained that they began vaping because it was *“easier to use”* and aligned with a perceived *“lifestyle image”*. The same informant added that they initially used devices containing *“1 percent nicotine”* but had since moved to products with *“5 percent nicotine.”* These accounts point to both initiation among non-smokers and a clear pattern of nicotine escalation.

Refillable and reusable vapes appeared less frequently but represent a steadily expanding user base. Their attraction lies in customisation, perceived sophistication, and lower recurring costs. Field observations indicate that many users, including adolescents, begin with disposable vapes and gradually move to pod-based or modular systems as nicotine dependence deepens. This progression was explicitly articulated by one key informant, who, when asked whether nicotine strength influenced purchasing decisions, responded affirmatively, noting that they “started with 20 mg pods and moved to 50 mg pods based on availability.”

Photo Plate 1. ENDS/ENNDs Products Sold in Retail Stores Across Lagos, Enugu, and FCT Abuja



Vaporesso Eco Nano Pod Vape Kit

Promoted 📍 Lagos, Ikoyi, 3 hours ago 🔖 1 👁️ 18 views

Vapes	Brand New
TYPE	CONDITION
Black, Blue, Pink, Purple, Yellow	Unisex
COLOR	GENDER
Refillable Pods	1000 mAh
POD MOD SUBTYPE	BATTERY CAPACITY

🚚 Delivery Show 1 options

The Vaporesso Eco Nano Pod Kit is the ultimate MTL pod system, simple and easy to use for starters and those wishing to move to a more economically and environmentally friendly pod vaping kit, comparable to single-use disposable kits.



MoonNight

The Glow of Every Moment

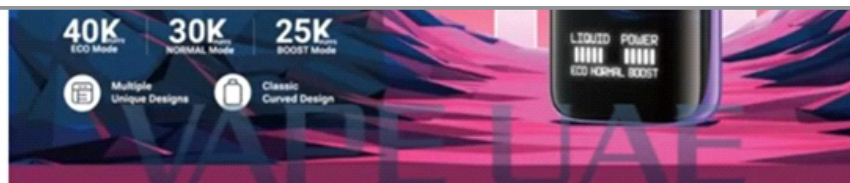
3-Level
Adjustable Power

40K ECO Mode
30K NORMAL Mode
25K BOOST Mode

Multiple Unique Designs | Classic Curved Design

ELFBAR

LQUID POWER
ECO NORMAL BOOST



Vape Life Nigeria is thrilled to announce the arrival of a true game-changer in the Nigerian vaping scene: the ELF BAR MoonNight 40,000 Puffs Rechargeable Disposable Vape. Forget everything you know about disposable vapes. The MoonNight isn't just a device; it's an ultra-capacity, smart-tech powerhouse designed for the vaper who demands ultimate longevity, control, and flavour.

For Nigerian vapers looking for the next big step in convenience and endurance, your search ends here. The MoonNight elevates your experience to new heights, making constant device replacements a thing of the past.

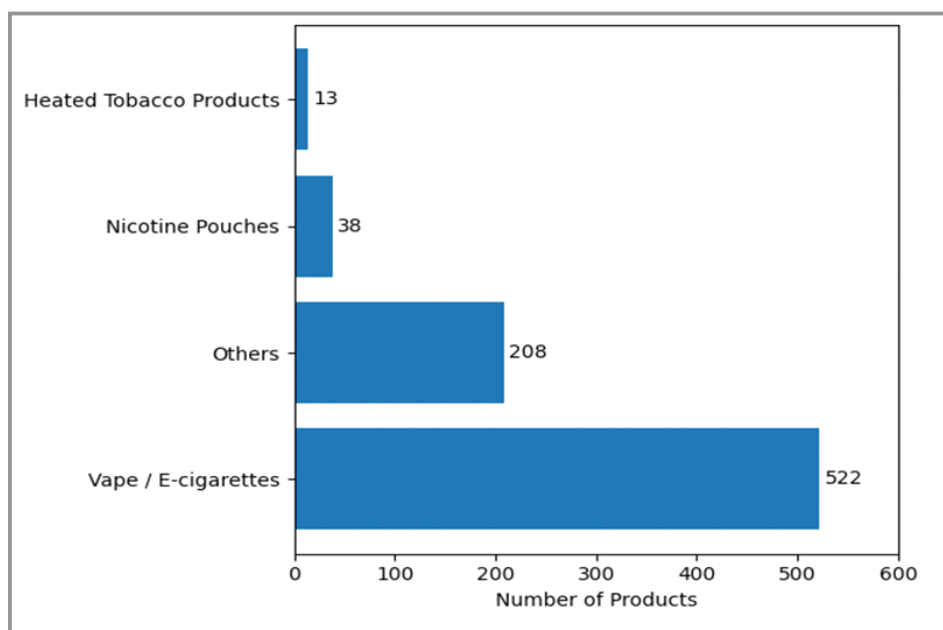
Massive Capacity Meets Smart Technology

The ELF BAR MoonNight 40,000 Puffs sets a new benchmark for disposable vapes. This is more than just a large puff count; it's a completely redefined user experience driven by cutting-edge features:

- Pictures captured during field monitoring of physical retail outlets and online vendor pages across Lagos, Enugu, and the FCT, Abuja

Puff counts printed on many devices ranged from 600 to 50,000 puffs. These numbers communicate endurance and value for money, assuring extended use. Flavour profiles mimic confectionery and fruits such as banana and watermelon, further softening the sensory barriers to initiation. The circulation patterns of e-cigarettes show how deeply embedded they have become in daily life. They appear in supermarkets beside snacks and electronics, in stores as impulse buys, and across social media and e-commerce pages as lifestyle objects. Their reach across both formal and informal sectors signals that vaping has moved beyond niche subcultures into mainstream youth consumption. Their pricing further reinforces this accessibility. Devices range from *N5,000* – *N60,000*, roughly *\$4 to \$41*, depending on brand, puff count, and flavour complexity. This range allows for low-barrier entry points that encourages experimentation, while still carving out premium tiers for repeat users.

Figure 1. Frequency of all Tobacco and Nicotine Products and Accessories



- **A Wave of Nicotine Pouches**

With thirty-eight (38) products recorded, nicotine pouches emerged as the second most prominent category and one of the fastest-growing segments of Nigeria's changing nicotine market. Prices ranged from *N6,000* to *N40,000* per can, depending on brand, with lower unit prices offered when buyers purchase in larger quantities. A typical can contains between fifteen and twenty pouches.

Unlike vapes, these products were rarely sighted in physical outlets. Their commerce is overwhelmingly digital, concentrated on platforms such as Jiji, Jumia, and Instagram, where vendors actively advertise and assure nationwide delivery. Documented brands included ZYN (Swedish Match/PMI), Velo (BAT), On! (Altria), Killa and Pablo (NGP Empire), Lucy (USA) and newer entrants such as Minoa from Shenzhen.

Products documented in the study displayed nicotine strengths ranging from as low as three milligrams (3mg) to as high as hundred milligrams (100mg) per pouch. In an unregulated environment, such wide variations — particularly the very high-dose products — heighten the risk of acute nicotine exposure, particularly for inexperienced users or underage persons. More worrisome is the fact that some brands such as Cuba manufactured by Nicotobacco factory in Poland, did not disclose nicotine concentration on their packaging, even as vendor listings and retail marketing materials indicated nicotine levels as high as 66mg per pouch.

Premium Vapes Nicotine Pouches

Qty.	Item Description	Selling Price
5	51mg Chapo White Nicotine - American Blend Danger Strong	N25,000.00
1	51mg Chapo White Nicotine - Polar Mint	N25,000.00
1	51mg Chapo White Nicotine - Crystal Menthol	N25,000.00
1	51mg Chapo White Nicotine - Brutal Cold	N25,000.00
5	100mg Aroma King Triple Kick NoNic Pouches - Freeze Ice	N25,000.00
5	100mg Aroma King Triple Kick NoNic Pouches - Menthol Ice	N25,000.00
2	100mg Aroma King Triple Kick NoNic Pouches - Cola Ice	N25,000.00
2	100mg Aroma King Triple Kick NoNic Pouches - Blueberry Ice	N25,000.00
2	100mg Aroma King Triple Kick NoNic Pouches - Ruby Berry Ice	N25,000.00
2	100mg Aroma King Triple Kick NoNic Pouches - Mango Ice	N25,000.00
2	100mg Aroma King Triple Kick NoNic Pouches - Peach Ice	N25,000.00
5	50mg Aroma King Triple Kick NoNic Pouches - Menthol Ice	N25,000.00
5	50mg Aroma King Triple Kick NoNic Pouches - Freeze Ice	N25,000.00
5	50mg Aroma King Triple Kick NoNic Pouches - Double Ice	N25,000.00
5	25mg Ghost Strong Nicotine Pouches - Citrus	N30,000.00
10	25mg Ghost Strong Nicotine Pouches - Ice Spearmint	N30,000.00
5	25mg Ghost Strong Nicotine Pouches - Blueberry Ice	N30,000.00
10	25mg Ghost Strong Nicotine Pouches - Freeze	N30,000.00
10	25mg Ghost Strong Nicotine Pouches - Spearmint	N30,000.00
5	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Banana Ice	N30,000.00
5	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Blue Mint	N30,000.00
5	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Blue Raspberry	N30,000.00
10	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Frosted Ice	N30,000.00
15	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Frosted Mint	N30,000.00
5	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Green Mint	N30,000.00
5	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Kiwi	N30,000.00
5	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Lemonade	N30,000.00
5	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Mango Ice	N30,000.00
10	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Mocca	N30,000.00
10	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Passionfruit	N30,000.00
12	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Strawberry Watermelon	N30,000.00
10	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Tropical Punch	N30,000.00
2	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Strawberry Lychee	N30,000.00
2	50mg Pablo Exclusive White Nic Pouches - Grape Ice	N30,000.00
5	30mg Pablo Nic Pouches - Ice Cold	N30,000.00
5	30mg Pablo Nic Pouches - Red	N30,000.00
5	30mg Pablo Nic Pouches - X Ice Cold	N30,000.00
5	30mg Pablo Nic Pouches - Ice Cold	N30,000.00
5	30mg Pablo Nic Pouches - X Ice Cold	N30,000.00
5	16.5mg Killa Exclusive Nic Pouches - Blue Mint	N30,000.00
5	16.5mg Killa Exclusive Nic Pouches - Double Mint	N30,000.00
5	16.5mg Killa Exclusive Nic Pouches - Green Mint	N30,000.00
5	16.5mg Killa Exclusive Nic Pouches - Lemonade	N30,000.00
5	16.5mg Killa Exclusive Nic Pouches - Strawberry Watermelon	N30,000.00
5	16.5mg Killa Exclusive Nic Pouches - Tropical Punch	N30,000.00
2	16.5mg Killa Exclusive Nic Pouches - Blue Raspberry	N30,000.00
3	16.5mg Killa Nic Pouches - 13	N30,000.00
3	16.5mg Killa Nic Pouches - Apple	N30,000.00
5	16.5mg Killa Nic Pouches - Banana Ice	N30,000.00
5	16.5mg Killa Nic Pouches - Blueberry	N30,000.00
3	16.5mg Killa Nic Pouches - Cappuccino	N30,000.00
5	16.5mg Killa Nic Pouches - Cola	N30,000.00

Premium Vapes Nicotine Pouches Contd.

Qty.	Item Description	Selling Price
1	KLAR Mint Mini Extra Strong	N35,000.00
1	NEAFS Blueberry Ice 12mg	N35,000.00
1	NEAFS Mint Fusion 12mg	N35,000.00
2	RUSH PRO Berry Ice Extra Strong	N35,000.00
3	RUSH PRO Nordic Frost Extra Strong	N35,000.00
3	RUSH PRO Mango Freeze Extra Strong	N35,000.00
5	RUSH PRO Icy Grape Extra Strong	N35,000.00
5	66mg CUBA Black line Nic Pouches - Grape	N35,000.00
5	66mg CUBA Black line Nic Pouches - Blueberry	N35,000.00
5	66mg CUBA Black line Nic Pouches - Blackcurrant	N35,000.00
5	66mg CUBA Black line Nic Pouches - Pineapple	N35,000.00
5	66mg CUBA Black line Nic Pouches - Apple Juice	N35,000.00
5	66mg CUBA Black line Nic Pouches - Watermelon	N35,000.00
10	66mg CUBA Black line Nic Pouches - Forest Berries	N35,000.00
10	66mg CUBA Black line Nic Pouches - Ice Spearmint	N35,000.00
5	66mg CUBA Black line Nic Pouches - Double Fresh	N35,000.00
5	66mg CUBA Black line Nic Pouches - Cold Dry	N35,000.00
5	30mg CUBA Ninja Nic Pouches - Pinacolada	N35,000.00
5	30mg CUBA Ninja Nic Pouches - Coconut	N35,000.00
5	30mg CUBA Ninja Nic Pouches - Pinacolada	N35,000.00
5	30mg CUBA Ninja Nic Pouches - Strawberry	N35,000.00
20	30mg CUBA Ninja Nic Pouches - Bubblegum	N35,000.00
20	30mg CUBA Ninja Nic Pouches - Energy	N35,000.00
2	30mg CUBA Ninja Nic Pouches - Ice Cool	N35,000.00
2	16mg CUBA Black Nicotine Pouches - Peach	N35,000.00
2	16mg CUBA Black Nicotine Pouches - Grape	N35,000.00
5	16mg CUBA Black Nicotine Pouches - Apple Juice	N35,000.00
2	16mg CUBA Black Nicotine Pouches - Forest Berries	N35,000.00
2	16mg CUBA Black Nicotine Pouches - Cola	N35,000.00
5	16mg CUBA Black Nicotine Pouches - Pineapple	N35,000.00
4	16mg CUBA Black Nicotine Pouches - Ice Spearmint	N35,000.00
1	16mg CUBA Black Nicotine Pouches - Double Fresh	N35,000.00
1	4mg Velo Purple Grape Mini	N35,000.00
1	4mg Velo Pride Mini Limited Edition 2025 Cherry Ice	N35,000.00
5	6mg Velo Tomorrowland Mini Limited Edition 2025 Tangy Lime	N35,000.00
1	6mg Velo Nicotine Pouch - Tropical Mango (Tropical Breeze)	N35,000.00
5	6mg Velo Purple Grape Mini	N35,000.00
5	6mg Velo Nic Pouches - Polar Mint	N35,000.00
10	6mg Velo Mini Nic Pouches - Bright Spearmint	N35,000.00
5	6mg Velo Nic pouches - Spearmint	N35,000.00
5	8mg Velo Nicotine Pouch - Purple Grape (Royal Violet)	N35,000.00
30	8mg Velo Nic Pouches - Lime Flame	N35,000.00
15	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Crispy Peppermint	N35,000.00
15	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Minty Lemon	N35,000.00
1	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Wintery Watermelon	N35,000.00
1	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Watermelon Ice	N35,000.00
1	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Peach Ice	N35,000.00
10	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Cherry Ice	N35,000.00
15	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Ice Cool	N35,000.00
15	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Ice Berry	N35,000.00
10	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Strawberry Ice	N35,000.00
10	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Tropical Breeze	N35,000.00
5	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Tropical Ice	N35,000.00
5	10mg Velo Nic Pouches - Watermelon Mint	N35,000.00

• Price list of nicotine pouches obtained from an online vendor

The design of nicotine pouches compounds their risks. Small, odourless and smokeless, these products — as advertised — permit discreet use in offices, vehicles and public gatherings. Some promotional narratives emphasised faster absorption “through the oral mucosa,”¹⁸ while others portrayed pouches as “excellent alternatives” to smoking or vaping. Their invisibility, coupled with flavours such as mint, blueberry, cola, mango ice, pineapple ice, and sweetened fruit blends, removes many of the sensory deterrents that traditionally discourage novice users.

These attributes become more troubling when placed alongside the weak age-control measures in the digital marketplace. Although platforms like Jumia and Jiji require visitors to click a prompt confirming they are eighteen or older before accessing product pages, the process is largely nominal. Anyone can click through, and no secondary verification follows. A child can access the full catalogue simply by selecting “I am 18.” Vendors on social media demand no verification at all. The ease with which these superficial checks can be bypassed creates an environment where young people can obtain high-dose nicotine pouches with nothing more than a click or casual message to a seller.

Photo Plate 2. Nicotine Pouches Marketed Through Nigerian E-Commerce Platforms and Offline Retail Stores



¹⁸ The oral mucosa refers to the soft, wet, protective lining that covers the inside of the mouth, including the cheeks, gums, lips, tongue and the floor of the mouth.

Nicotine Pouches

TYPE

Other

COLOR

15

NUMBER OF ITEMS

Brand New

CONDITION

Unisex

GENDER

Cool Mint

FLAVOR

Show more

Store address

Show 3 options

We Sell In Lagos And Port Harcourt And We Deliver Nation Wide. These pouches offer a modern way to enjoy nicotine without the hassle of traditional tobacco products. The pouches utilize a tobacco-free nicotine formula, which is absorbed through the oral mucosa, providing a smooth and steady release of nicotine. This method of oral absorption ensures a quicker and more controlled nicotine delivery compared to other methods.

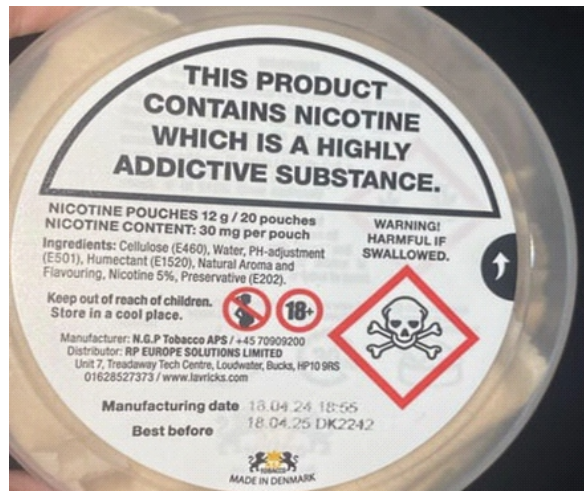
Each pack of LUCY Nicotine Pouches contains 15 pouches, making it convenient to carry and use throughout the day. The compact and discreet packaging ensures that you can take your pouches anywhere, whether you're at work, traveling, or out with friends.

35 MG PER POUCH

50MG PER POUCH



NOIS Pro



N 10,000

Juice Head Pouches 6mg

We Sell In Lagos And Port Harcourt And We Deliver Nation Wide. The Juice Head Nicotine Pouches...

Rivers, Port-Harcourt

Unisex



N 35,000

Velo Nicotine Pouches

As a convenient and discreet alternative to traditional tobacco products, nicotine pouches are an...

Lagos, Ikoyi

Unisex



N 40,000

ZYN Nicotine Pouches

ZYN nicotine pouches are a smokeless, tobacco-free alternative to enjoy nicotine anytime, anywhere...

Lagos, Ikoyi

Unisex

Tobacco-Free

Enjoy a guilt-free experience with Smokey Mountain's pouches, which are completely tobacco-free, making them ideal for those seeking an alternative without the harmful effects of traditional tobacco.

Nicotine-Free

These Wintergreen pouches are nicotine-free, offering a satisfying flavor without the addictive qualities of nicotine, perfect for users looking to reduce dependency while enjoying a familiar taste.

Convenient Packaging

Each can contains 15 pouches, conveniently packaged for easy use and portability, ensuring that you have your favorite pouches handy anytime, anywhere, without the mess of traditional chewing tobacco.

NGN 28743

Order now and get it around
Saturday, January 24

QTY: 1

ADD TO CART

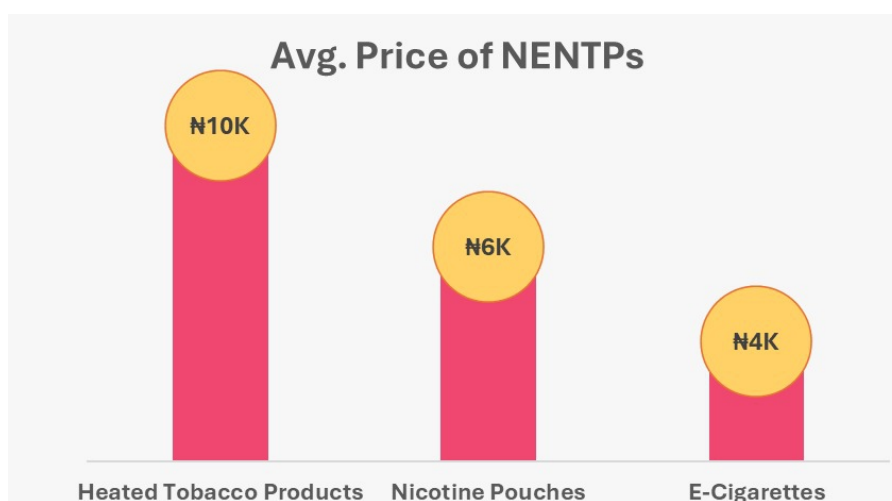
Documentation showing synthetic nicotine pouches promoted and sold online and offline across Lagos, Abuja and Enugu.¹⁹

• Heated Tobacco Products

Heated tobacco products formed a small but revealing part of the dataset. Only thirteen items were recorded, indicating a tentative foothold in Nigeria. Products such as IQOS Terea, IQOS ILUMA, and HEETS (PMI) appeared almost exclusively on e-commerce platforms than in mainstream retail outlets. Their limited visibility suggests that international manufacturers are still testing the market, gauging interest and studying consumer behaviour.

Pricing patterns reinforce this positioning. HEETS sold for roughly N65,000 per ten-pack carton, while Terea was priced around N70,000. These costs indicate that HTPs are not intended for mass uptake at this stage but are positioned for phased entry targeting affluent early adopters, building familiarity and brand presence ahead of broader expansion. This mirrors global industry strategies in which companies pivot from combustibles to aerosol technologies as smoking regulation tightens.

Figure 3. Average Price of New and Emerging Nicotine and Tobacco Products in Naira



¹⁹ Jiji.ng. (n.d.). *Non-Smoking Alternative* [Online classified ad]. Jiji.ng. Retrieved January 16, 2026, from <https://jiji.ng/ajah/hookah-and-vaporizers/non-smoking-alternative-yxxgwILXhpKuqvAhpUC6RYKa.html>

False and Harmful Narratives Used to Promote NENTPs in Nigeria

The messaging around newer nicotine and tobacco products in Nigeria reflects a coordinated effort to normalise use, downplay risks, and evade the intent of existing tobacco control measures. Surveillance across retail outlets, digital storefronts, vendor descriptions and industry-linked platforms revealed a set of narratives that shape consumer perception, exploit regulatory gaps, and reframe these products as tools for wellness or cessation.

1. Tobacco-Free and Cleaner Nicotine Claims: Nicotine pouches from brands such as ZYN, Velo, On!, Pablo, Killa, Lucy and Minoa are consistently marketed through the language of absence: *tobacco-free, clean, smokeless, modern or guilt-free*. Many pouches claimed to be tobacco-free and made from synthetic or laboratory-derived nicotine. The absence of tobacco, however, does not lessen the pharmacological force or addictive potential of nicotine. Synthetic or laboratory-derived nicotine is chemically indistinguishable from its tobacco-derived counterpart and carries the same risk of dependence. Several products even carried warnings that nicotine is addictive and harmful to children, pregnant women and individuals with heart conditions.

2. Environmental and Economic Greenwashing: Rechargeable pods, reusable vapes and refillable devices are presented as “eco-friendly” and “sustainable.” This narrative masks the considerable e-waste burden created by plastic cartridges, lithium-ion batteries, nicotine residues and heavy metals.²⁰ In Nigeria, where waste management and recycling systems are weak, and informal disposal is common, these discarded devices accumulate in drains, dumpsites, and waterways. The industry's environmental messaging conceals the long-term costs borne by communities and public authorities.

3. “Use Anywhere” and Discreet Consumption: Nicotine pouches are promoted as products that leave no smoke, smell or visible vapour. Vendors describe them as ideal for outdoor venues and indoor gatherings, lowering the behavioural threshold for initiation and enabling covert use by minors. This framing reintroduces nicotine consumption into spaces meant to be protected under smoke-free policies, and softens the social stigma historically associated with smoking.

4. Devices Framed as Tech Gadgets: Vapes resembling USB sticks, cosmetics or miniature electronics are marketed as premium technology and next-generation design. By presenting devices as lifestyle accessories rather than drug-delivery systems, vendors align nicotine use with digital culture and youth aesthetics, masking the core function of the product.

²⁰ Ngambo G, Hanna EG, Gannon J, Marcus H, Lomazzi M, Azari R. A scoping review on e-cigarette environmental impacts. *Tob Prev Cessat.* 2023 Oct 2;9:30. doi: 10.18332/tpc/172079. PMID: 37789930; PMCID: PMC10542855

5. Flavouring as Identity and Experience: Across vapes and pouches, flavours such as blueberry ice, cola, mango ice, pineapple ice, banana, and watermelon are used to cultivate sensory appeal. These flavour profiles soften the harsh associations of tobacco and recast nicotine use as a customised and pleasant experience. Evidence shows that this approach is especially attractive to adolescents, reflecting wider global patterns in the uptake of flavoured nicotine products.

6. Health and Wellness Claims: Vendors frequently borrow the language of self-care, describing products as tools for balance, calmness, or lighter living. Terms such as *organic*, *natural leaf*, or *plant-derived nicotine* create a false aura of purity. This tactic echoes the discredited marketing of “light” or “additive-free” cigarettes and directly contradicts.

8. Imported, Premium and Unisex Positioning: Claims such as “*imported from the UK*,” “*European quality*,” or “made in Sweden” are used to confer prestige on nicotine pouches. Vendors also describe them as suitable “for everyone,” pairing the messaging with minimalist tins, neutral colour palettes and sleek designs that broaden appeal across gender and social groups.

10. Budget-Friendly: Despite rising costs of living, many products were touted as affordable or cost-effective. This narrative targets young and low-income consumers, masking the cumulative cost of repeated purchases and the escalating financial burden associated with dependence.

11. Harm reduction and Quit Like Sweden framing: A dominant narrative centres on harm reduction claims rooted in the so-called “Swedish success.” Through curated events and media engagements asking whether Nigeria can “Quit Like Sweden,” industry-aligned experts present Sweden's low smoking prevalence as the result of widespread adoption of snus, pouches and vapes. Independent analyses, however, show that this narrative is incomplete and heavily shaped by tobacco-industry interests. Investigations have traced the “Quit Like Sweden” platform to organisations funded by the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, a body financed exclusively by Philip Morris International. These connections raise serious concerns about the neutrality of the messaging being exported to low- and middle-income countries, including Nigeria.²² Moreover, Evidence from Swedish and international authorities demonstrates that Sweden's smoking decline is rooted not in alternative nicotine products but in decades of strong public-health policies: high cigarette taxation, comprehensive advertising bans, graphic health warnings, enforced smoke-free environments and strict age-of-sale laws.²³ Claims that smokeless products alone made Sweden “smoke-free” ignore this regulatory context and closely mirror industry interests in expanding new nicotine markets.

²² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Why do youth vape?* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/why-youth-vape.html>

²³ Quit Like Sweden. (2025, November 16). *Quit Like Sweden*. Tobacco Tactics. Retrieved December 9, 2025, from <https://www.tobaccotactics.org/article/quit-like-sweden/https://www.uicc.org/news-and-updates/announcements/misleading-and-industry-friendly-narrative-swedens-smoke-free-status>

The Broader Implications

The evidence presented in this study highlights two related developments shaping Nigeria's tobacco and nicotine landscape. The first is a clear attempt by industry actors to divert regulatory and public attention away from cigarettes and toward a growing range of newer nicotine products designed to look modern and socially acceptable. As smoking is now widely recognised as harmful, manufacturers are seeking renewed credibility by recasting nicotine use as a matter of innovation, relying on claims of reduced harm that remain largely unsupported, while also keeping the focus on cigarette market expansion.

Second, they also show a growing concentration of nicotine marketing in digital spaces. This is evident in the rise of vape and smoke shops appearing across search engines, online maps, social media platforms, and e-commerce sites. Online channels offer speed, discretion, and minimal scrutiny, making them increasingly attractive to sellers. At the same time, Nigeria has no clear or enforceable rules governing the importation, packaging, promotion, disclosure, or registration of these products, nor a functioning system for age verification. In the absence of effective oversight, vendors and manufacturers shape how these products are presented, marketed, and perceived as safe.

Regulatory and Policy Gaps

When the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was negotiated in the early 2000s, the global emergency was the world of cigarettes and other tobacco-leaf derived products.²⁴ The FCTC's architecture reflects that period. Its initial guidelines emphasised smoke-free environments, health warnings, taxation, advertising bans, and the regulation of product contents and emissions, all rooted in a universe where harm originated from burning, chewing or inhaling material derived from the tobacco plant.

Nigeria signed the FCTC in 2004, ratified it in 2005 and translated its commitments into the National Tobacco Control Act of 2015 and the National Tobacco Control Regulations of 2019. Both instruments inherited the assumption that tobacco products were those containing tobacco leaf in forms that were visible, combustible or chewable. At the time, this reflected the market Nigeria faced, the available science, and the guidance provided by the WHO FCTC, which itself had not yet fully anticipated heated tobacco devices, nicotine as an independent chemical, synthetic nicotine or aerosol technologies with no leaf content at all.

As the findings of this study show, Nigeria is now home to many products that sit far outside the structures of public health oversight. The institutional machinery for tobacco control created by the National Tobacco Control Act 2015 envisioned an oversight structure that spans multiple ministries and agencies, including the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (FMOHWSW), the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), the National Tobacco Control Committee (NATOC), the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), and various law enforcement bodies.

On paper, this multi-sectoral architecture reflects the spirit of the WHO FCTC. However, with respect to emerging nicotine and tobacco products, the system reveals a vacuum. Nigeria has no unified national position on nicotine-only products and the marketing and cross-border e-commerce of NENTPs. This fragmentation has become increasingly visible in contemporary regulatory discourse. In 2024, the Standards Organisation of Nigeria, the agency responsible for setting quality and safety benchmarks for products sold in the country, announced it was developing guidelines for newer nicotine products, but no framework has yet been finalised.²⁵

²⁴ <https://fctc.who.int/convention>

Its earlier guidelines on the importation of e-cigarettes, published in 2019, stated that only zero-nicotine e-cigarettes that do not contain propylene glycol could be registered and processed through the Standards Organisation of Nigeria Conformity Assessment Programme (SONCAP) at the time. However, the market today is saturated with e-cigarettes containing varying levels of nicotine, as well as propylene glycol.



- *Picture showing the constituents of a single use vape product documented during offline surveillance*

²⁵ Standards Organisation of Nigeria - SON. (2025, May 9). The Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), led by Dr. Ifeanyi Chukwunonso Okeke ... [Status update]. *Facebook*. <https://web.facebook.com/sonnigeria/posts/the-standards-organisation-of-nigeria-son-led-by-dr-ifeanyi-chukwunonso-okeke-co/976142011213110/>

²⁶ Exports-to-Nigeria. (n.d.). *SON guidelines for the importation of e-cigarettes in Nigeria*. Exports-to-Nigeria. <https://www.exports-to-nigeria.com/media/news/e-cigarettes>

Parallel conversations within the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment underscore the same uncertainty. These developments are important to note because the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (FMOHSW) remains the statutory lead for tobacco control, however the rise of nicotine-only products and e-cigarettes sits uneasily within existing definitions. As a result, agencies approach the issue through the lens of their institutional mandates: health authorities treat the products as a public health threat, while trade-related bodies view them as commercial goods within their remit. The absence of a harmonised national position has created a regulatory drift, leaving no coherent framework for safety standards, importation, age-gating, and marketing.

This gap is further magnified in fiscal policy. Nigeria imposes excise duties on conventional tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, and shisha. These duties do not apply to e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches, or heated tobacco products. Without defined tax categories, such products enter the country, attracting minimal charges and circulating widely, cheaply, and discreetly.

Definitive Blind Spots

The NTC Act (2015) defines tobacco products as items manufactured from tobacco leaf for smoking, sucking, chewing or snuffing. This definition cannot accommodate ENDS and ENNDS devices, heated aerosol systems or oral nicotine pouches that contain no tobacco leaf. Even so, the Act imposes robust prohibitions on the advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products across television, radio, newspapers and the internet. This provision aligns with global FCTC best practice and has been effective in limiting the industry's ability to market cigarettes and other combustible products. However, this protection does not extend to NENTPs. As a result, disposable vapes, synthetic nicotine pouches and heated devices are aggressively marketed across Instagram, TikTok, Jiji, lounges, kiosks and nightlife spaces through imagery, influencers, flavours, gadget aesthetics and youth-oriented language that would be illegal if applied to cigarettes. Other blurred areas for new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products include:

- 1. Prohibition on misleading packaging, labeling and product design, regulation of promotional features:** Section 21 of the NTC Act prohibits deceptive terms such as “light,” “mild,” or “low tar,” and bans design features that suggest reduced harm. But again, these protections apply only to “tobacco products.” Emerging nicotine devices therefore escape the safeguards intended to prevent consumer deception. Their packaging freely uses pastel colours, confectionery aesthetics, wellness language, digital gadget imagery, and flavour-driven branding that undermines the law.

2. Regulation of Smoking: Section 9 of the NTC Act (2015) guarantees smoke-free protections for public places. Vaping generates aerosol rather than smoke, and nicotine pouches produce no emissions at all. The implication is that activities such as vaping, which undermine the intent of smoke-free protections, fall outside existing enforcement boundaries, allowing their open use in malls, lounges, and other public spaces.

3. Age-of-Sale and the Collapse of Protection for Minors: The NTC Act prohibits the sale of tobacco to persons under 18. But because nicotine-only products are yet to come under national oversight, minors can obtain high-strength items online or through informal vendors with little resistance. Digital age verification often consists of a single “I am 18” click, with no further scrutiny.

Conclusion

Gaps in legislation, poor institutional coordination, and the unchecked circulation of new products now reinforce one another in Nigeria, widening the distance between regulation and reality. The World Health Organization has urged countries to subject all new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products to the full scope of tobacco control measures, with emphasis on strong restrictions, precaution, and the protection of young people in contexts where scientific evidence is still unsettled.²⁷

²⁷ <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/who-position-on-tobacco-control-and-harm-reduction>

Recommendations

In light of the findings of this report, urgent action is required. The following recommendations are proposed to address gaps identified.

- 1. Strengthen Oversight of NENTPs:** The study highlights that Nigeria's existing tobacco control framework was built around products containing tobacco leaf, which means newer nicotine devices, except for heated tobacco products (HTP), technically fall outside current definitions. This has created uneven application of safeguards such as packaging standards, advertising restrictions, licensing requirements, age-of-sale protections, and taxation structures. Given these observations, it may be useful for relevant authorities to review how modern nicotine delivery systems are classified within existing regulatory frameworks, especially as many of these products contain nicotine in plant-derived or synthetic forms. Clarifying how nicotine is treated across different formulations could support more consistent approaches to issues such as product registration, ingredient disclosure, health warnings and monitoring. It is pertinent to note that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) won a legal challenge that now allows it to regulate e-cigarettes as a tobacco product on the basis that the nicotine in these e-liquids is derived from tobacco plants.²⁸

Particularly, this study underscores the importance of a precautionary approach in public health. The science on the long-term health implications of newer nicotine products remains unsettled, and several claims about their benefits are still under debate globally. Public health bodies may therefore find value in examining whether the current system adequately anticipates these uncertainties. In contexts where safety cannot be verified, authorities may wish to explore measures that prioritise risk mitigation and prevent the circulation or marketing of such products.

- 2. Rebuild Public Understanding and Protecting Young People:** NENTPs thrive on narratives that portray them as safer alternatives. Nigeria requires a public-education strategy that confronts with evidence these myths directly. Schools, universities, and youth-dense environments must be equipped to recognise discreet, odourless devices. Teachers and counsellors need materials explaining what these products are, why they appeal to adolescents, and how addiction develops even in the absence of smoke.

²⁸ Public Health Law Center. (2016, December). *FDA's authority to regulate tobacco products under the Deeming Regulation: A legal overview* (TCLC-FDA-DeemingReg-RegulationAuthority-Dec2016). <https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/tclc-fda-deemingreg-regulation-authority-Dec2016.pdf>

- 3. Nicotine Products and Nigeria's Taxation Framework:** Taxation is one of the strongest tools for reducing harmful product use, yet emerging nicotine devices currently sit outside Nigeria's fiscal architecture. While traditional tobacco products like cigarettes attract excise duties, NENTPs circulate with little scrutiny. Bringing all tobacco products and nicotine delivery systems under an excisable category would reduce affordability, discourage youth uptake, weaken the budget-friendly narrative promoted by vendors and generate revenue for enforcement, cessation programmes, and public education.
- 4. Address Advertising and Promotion Regulatory Gaps Across all Nicotine Products:** As tobacco industry advertising, promotion and sponsorship evolves to include new products, platforms and tactics, so too should regulations. Key actors should regularly review evidence and address regulatory gaps on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of all nicotine products—online and offline – so that they are aligned with WHO FCTC recommendations for comprehensive bans. This includes influencer-promotion, flavour-driven packaging, youth-oriented imagery, and point-of-sale displays.
- 5. Bolster Institutional Coordination:** Nigeria's response will falter if agencies continue to operate in isolation. A unified national stance is essential. Standards bodies, health authorities, customs, consumer protection agencies, and enforcement institutions must include a coordinated strategy on NENTPs. Without harmonised standards and joint enforcement protocols, the industry will continue to exploit fragmentation as a divide-and-rule strategy.

About CAPPAA

Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPAA) is a pan-African nongovernmental organisation that works to advance human rights and public services, challenge corporate abuse of natural resources, and build community power for participatory governance. CAPPAA is dedicated to nurturing movements of African communities and a new generation of leaders working shoulder to shoulder to demand democratic governance of natural resources, accountability from power structures, inclusive participation in development processes, and an end to all forms of corporate and state abuse. CAPPAA envisions a continent whose development path is designed, modelled and executed by Africans - respecting and guaranteeing human rights, enabling social justice, and ensuring harmony with the environment.

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