

POLICY BRIEF

NEW

# SMOKE TRAP

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



Corporate  
Accountability &  
Public  
Participation  
Africa

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# Executive Summary

Nigeria's tobacco landscape is rapidly evolving, marked by the unchecked proliferation of new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products such as e-cigarettes, commonly known as vapes, oral nicotine pouches, and heated tobacco products. These items are now widely available in supermarkets, stores, nightlife spots, and online platforms across the country.

These products are often displayed in retail stores alongside everyday consumer goods such as snacks or electronic accessories. They are also designed to blend seamlessly into daily life. For instance, e-cigarettes are compact and brightly coloured, often resembling tech gadgets or cosmetic items, while delivering fruity-flavoured aerosols that mask nicotine use. Oral nicotine pouches deliver nicotine by being placed in the mouth, typically between the lip and gum. They are small, smokeless, and odourless, often promoted as "tobacco-free" and suitable for discreet use in any setting.

Through a network of actors that includes multinational tobacco corporations such as British American Tobacco (BAT) and Philip Morris International (PMI), as well as manufacturers operating out of Asian production hubs, the tobacco industry has positioned these products as modern, technologically advanced, and lower-risk alternatives to cigarettes. This strategy has expanded nicotine and tobacco consumption beyond traditional users, drawing in young and unsuspecting people who might otherwise never have smoked cigarettes.

Drawing on comprehensive surveillance conducted by Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA), this policy brief highlights the alarming dynamics driving the rise of new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products (NENTPs). The study combined on-the-ground fieldwork, digital monitoring, and key informant interviews across Lagos, Enugu, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, documenting 573 NENTPs out of a total of 781 products captured.

These products are promoted through a range of deceptive tactics, including the normalisation of discreet use in public spaces, youth-appealing flavours that lower barriers to initiation, and unsubstantiated harm-reduction claims. Their spread is further enabled by regulatory loopholes in Nigeria's tobacco control framework, which has not kept pace with evolving nicotine technologies because it was originally designed for conventional tobacco products derived from the tobacco leaf.

Without urgent reforms, the rapid spread of NENTPs risks eroding Nigeria's tobacco control gains achieved through the implementation of the National Tobacco Control Act of 2015 and its 2019 Regulations. Current evidence points to rising consumption, particularly of e-cigarettes, predominantly among adolescents and young people. This trend is already fostering nicotine dependence among new users, intensifying addiction patterns among existing ones, and threatens to further aggravate Nigeria's substantial burden of tobacco-related diseases, which contribute to tens of thousands of annual deaths and hundreds of billions of naira in economic costs.

Importantly, this regulatory gap runs counter to global public-health guidance. The World Health Organization has consistently called for new and emerging nicotine products to be subjected to the same regulatory controls as conventional tobacco products, warning that exemptions create enforcement gaps and enable industry manipulation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9559335/>

# Key Findings

Across physical retail spaces and digital platforms, new nicotine and tobacco products are becoming more visible and accessible. The key findings below summarise the main trends, product categories, and regulatory gaps identified through the market mapping and surveillance exercise.

- 1. Multinational Tobacco Companies and Foreign Manufacturers are Driving the Expansion of NENTPs in Nigeria:** The study found that the Nigerian market is being actively shaped by major tobacco corporations, including Philip Morris International through IQOS devices and ZYN nicotine pouches via Swedish Match, British American Tobacco through products such as Vuse GO and Velo, and Altria Group through NJOY and On!. This expansion is reinforced by a growing wave of Asian manufacturers, including Shenzhen iMiracle Technology, producers of Lost Mary and Elfbar, Shenzhen Kechaoda Technology with AOK products, several Chinese manufacturers behind brands such as King Song and Iyutak, and Malaysia-based NSTY Worldwide, makers of Nasty. Together, these actors and local distributors are flooding the market with flavoured, new nicotine and tobacco products.
- 2. E-cigarettes are Everywhere:** Electronic Nicotine Devices and Electronic Non-Nicotine Devices (ENDS and ENNDs), commonly known as e-cigarettes or vapes, accounted for the most NENTPs products identified in the study, with 522 items recorded. Disposable, flavoured, nicotine-containing vapes were especially common. These devices are widely sold in supermarkets, nightlife venues, and online platforms, with prices ranging from N5,000 to N60,000.
- 3. Product Design and Flavours are Deliberately Used to Attract New and Young users:** Many devices resemble everyday gadgets or cosmetics and are offered in sweet and fruity flavours like blueberry ice, mango, and watermelon. These features lower the barrier to initiation and make nicotine use appear harmless, playful, and socially acceptable, particularly to young people and first-time users.

- 4. Oral Nicotine Pouches are Marketed Online with Little Restriction:** The study documented 38 oral nicotine pouch products, some containing extremely high nicotine strengths of up to 100 milligrams per pouch. These products are mostly sold through online marketplaces such as Jiji and Jumia, where age verification of potential customers is minimal and ineffective, allowing easy access by minors.
- 5. HTPs are positioned as premium alternatives:** Although the study documented few items, heated tobacco products such as HEETS, and Terea were found to be sold at very high prices at special retail stores offline and online, typically between N65,000 and N70,000.
- 6. New products are recruiting people who never smoked cigarettes before:** Interviews and field observations revealed that some users, including teenagers and young adults, began using nicotine through flavoured e-cigarettes despite having no prior history of smoking. This confirms that NENTPs are multiplying pathways for nicotine consumption rather than serving as harm-reduction tools for existing smokers.
- 7. Marketing relies heavily on misleading harm-reduction and lifestyle narratives:** The industry promotes these products as "tobacco-free," "clean," or environmentally friendly, despite their addictive nicotine content and growing e-waste footprint. It has also latched onto campaigns such as "Quit Like Sweden" to misrepresent Sweden's smoking decline, which was driven by strong tobacco control regulations and product taxation rather than by unregulated or loosely regulated alternatives.
- 8. Nigeria's tobacco-control laws do not adequately cover these products:** Nigeria's tobacco-control laws were written for an earlier market and do not adequately address newer nicotine and tobacco products. The National Tobacco Control Act of 2015 and its 2019 Regulations are largely centred on products made from tobacco leaf and on smoking. As a result, most newer nicotine products fall outside the law's effective oversight. Heated tobacco products are an exception only in principle, as they contain tobacco sticks and fall within the Act's scope, yet in practice they remain largely unregulated. This situation leaves significant gaps in controls on flavours, advertising, nicotine strength, digital marketing, and online sales.
- 9. NENTPs are not taxed, making them cheap and attractive to young users:** Unlike traditional combustibles like cigarettes, which are subject to excise taxes, NENTPs currently bypass public health tax measures. This keeps prices low, increases access, and undermines tobacco-control efforts aimed at reducing affordability.
- 10. Weak coordination among government agencies worsens enforcement gaps:** Regulatory responsibilities are fragmented across health, trade, customs, standards-setting, and consumer-protection authorities, with no unified national position on NENTPs. This lack of coordination and siloed decision-making enables largely unrestricted imports, online sales, and marketing of these products, even as global evidence shows that more than 43 countries have opted to ban e-cigarettes altogether in response to unresolved health risks.

# Recommendations

In response to the afore-discussed issues, this brief proposes a set of measures to close existing gaps and protect public health. First, Nigeria must exert regulatory control over all nicotine and tobacco products, regardless of form or their delivery mechanisms. The omnipresence of these products necessitates addressing all advertising, promotion, and sponsorships—specifically targeting the pervasive influence of digital and social media landscapes.

This heightened regulatory rigor must be underpinned by a unified national stratagem; such a posture would catalyse inter-ministerial coordination and streamline enforcement across disparate agencies, thereby ensuring that Nigeria's domestic policy harmonises with the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

Furthermore, the integration of NENTPs into the national fiscal framework is an essential instrument. While traditional combustibles, such as cigarettes and shisha, are subject to established excise duties, these nascent products bypass the tax net, allowing them to remain relatively cheap and accessible. Bringing NENTPs under the excise regime would reduce affordability, discourage uptake, and generate revenue to support enforcement, cessation services, and public education.

The Nigerian state and all stakeholders should also launch a comprehensive public sensitisation campaign regarding the harms of tobacco use and the addictive nature of nicotine. This is essential to counter industry narratives that frame newer products as harmless or "modern" alternatives. In fact, given the unresolved questions surrounding long-term health impacts, the predatory targeting of youth, and the precedent set by over forty nations that have already restricted or banned these devices<sup>2</sup>, a precautionary, health-first approach should be discussed. In this context, the restriction or outright prohibition of NENTPs is the most effective way to protect public health, especially since credible evidence of their safety remains fundamentally compromised.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://gsth.org/faq-smoking-and-nicotine/nicotine-vaping-products/which-countries-have-banned-the-sale-of-nicotine-vaping-products-e-cigarettes/>

# About CAPP

Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPP) 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. CAPP 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. CAPP 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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Public  
Participation  
Africa

**Lagos Office:** 1A, Adekunle Owobiyi close,  
Off Oladele Kadiri, Off Nob Oluwa Street, Ogba,  
Lagos State, Nigeria.  
**Tel:** +2348029301614

**Abuja Office:** House 4, Cowries Estate, Off Emmanuel  
Mbako Boulevard, by VON, Lugbe, Abuja, Nigeria.  
**Tel:** +2347085915879

**Email:** [info@cappafrica.org](mailto:info@cappafrica.org)