

COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

FOUNDATION FOR A SMOKE-FREE WORLD

JULY 2022

INTRODUCTION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, “provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet” (UN 2021). The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the world’s shared plan to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality, and protect the planet by 2030. Many businesses and organizations have joined this important effort.

The charitable mission of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, Inc. (the Foundation) is to improve global health by ending smoking in this generation. This mission naturally lends itself to advancing several SDGs. The Foundation’s *Strategic Plan 2022-2024* includes three core work streams: Health and Science Research, Agricultural Diversification, and Industry Transformation (FSFW 2022, FSFW 2022c). The accompanying SDG map provides a visual illustration of how the Foundation’s work aims to materially impact several SDGs, and this report provides an explanation of its commitment to achieving these important goals.

HEALTH AND SCIENCE RESEARCH

The Foundation’s grantmaking in Health and Science Research focuses primarily on SDG 3, “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages,” executed through SDG 17, “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.” The Foundation aims to reduce barriers to quitting and/or switching from combustibles and other toxic tobacco products, and to strengthen understanding, knowledge, and research capacity in the area of tobacco harm reduction and its role in ending smoking.

SDG 3 includes Target 3.a, “Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in all countries, as appropriate,” measured by Indicator 3.a.1, “Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older.” The need for such efforts is clear.

Implementation of the provisions embodied in the FCTC’s MPOWER framework remains uneven, smoking cessation efficacy remains low, and the drug development pipeline is lackluster (Glassman 2021, EY-Parthenon 2018, WHO 2003). Adult smokers are increasingly demanding less harmful options, and technology-driven change is occurring at a faster pace than regulators can manage. Data gathered by the *WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2021* shows that electronic nicotine delivery systems have been banned in 32 countries (covering 2.4 billion people) (WHO 2021). The Foundation’s work supports WHO FCTC provisions and aims to accelerate the progress achieved by FCTC.

Areas of focus within SDG 3 include Target 3.4, “By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.” Indicator 3.4.1 is germane to this goal: “Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease.” In addition, a relevant indicator for the Foundation’s work in developing countries is Indicator 3.3.2, “Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population.” Tobacco use greatly increases the risk of tuberculosis disease and death (WHO 2018). Another relevant target is Target 3.d, “Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction, and management of national and global health risks.”

The Foundation’s charitable work will engage all stakeholders, scientists across academia, governments, and industry, and it will support public-private partnerships. Therefore, on an ecosystem-wide basis and through its Health and Science Research strategy, the Foundation’s work advances SDG 17. The Foundation will continue to work with a broad range of international grantees to accelerate its impact. For example, it will fund grants to organizations focused on strengthening research capability in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and to innovators focused on making needed products and services accessible and affordable for low-income populations.

AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION

As the Foundation makes progress toward its vision of a smoke-free world, the demand for tobacco will continue to decline. The effects of this decline will be substantial for the estimated 15 million tobacco farmers that work roughly 3 million farms and 3.2 million hectares of land over 120 countries to produce the vast majority of the world’s annual tobacco supply (FAO 2021, PMI 2021).^{1,2} The Foundation’s Agricultural Diversification grantmaking and related activity supports the development of a diversified agricultural ecosystem in Malawi to lead smallholder farmers toward economically viable and sustainable alternative livelihoods. To that end, the Foundation’s grantmaking in this area seeks to convene stakeholders, forge partnerships, promote research and innovation, and offer best practices

¹ Note that there are currently no reliable, complete, or publicly available data for the number of tobacco growers globally or in Malawi.

² Note that these data are for harvested, not cultivated, land. In other words, land where the crop was lost due to weather or crop failure is not included.

to help establish a diverse array of sustainable and alternative livelihoods for smallholder tobacco farmers.

In doing so, the Foundation seeks to advance SDG 2, “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.” The Foundation also, albeit to a lesser extent, seeks to advance SDG 4, “Ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”; SDG 8, “Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all”; and SDG 15, “Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”

INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION

The efforts that the Foundation supports through its charitable work in the area of Industry Transformation aim to drive the transformation of tobacco companies for the benefit of public health. Transformation of the tobacco industry can provide an enormous and crucial acceleration to the process of eliminating combustible tobacco. The Foundation believes that the appropriate way to influence industry is *indirectly* through SDG 17, “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.” In particular, the Foundation believes the investor community is a powerful lever with which to influence company management.

For this reason, the Foundation is committing resources toward Target 17.3, “Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources.” To accelerate the reduction of harm caused by tobacco use, the Foundation ranks the world’s 15 largest tobacco companies on their relative progress toward harm reduction. Findings are reported in the Tobacco Transformation Index™. The Foundation’s charitable efforts in this area thus directly intersect with SDG 9, “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation”—that is, industry innovation. These changes are much needed, as technological disruption is now well underway in the tobacco industry and nicotine ecosystem. The objective is to incentivize scientific research and development for the advancement of products for the benefit of public health. The most substantial impact will be on developing countries, where most adult smokers live.

GENDER EQUALITY, STRENGTHENING CORPORATE CULTURE, AND EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES

As part of the Foundation’s initiatives to promote an equitable and inclusive culture within the organization, the Foundation is intentional about articulating its values. This aids the Foundation in being accountable for incorporating these values into the daily work environment and in its hiring practices, and in considering them when evaluating partners, grantees, and others to support its

charitable work. Along with signifying and defining the Foundation's organizational personality, these values attract others who share its priorities to work with the Foundation. These values demonstrate the Foundation's commitment to SDG 5, "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."

The Foundation works to advance gender equality through its grantmaking and in its work culture. In terms of grantmaking, the Foundation takes the following steps to ensure that women smokers and women smallholder tobacco farmers are appropriately considered in the research it funds, which furthers SDG 5.

- Fund research that addresses the gender dimensions of smoking (from the behavioral, epidemiological, and clinical perspectives), intervention design, and researchers' engagement.
- Support agricultural programs and the development of alternative livelihoods that explicitly address the role of women as smallholder farmers and, separately, as mothers; and actively encourage women to take leadership roles in the development of alternative livelihoods.
- Stimulate all grantees to further the leadership role of women in programs the Foundation funds.

Further, in the Foundation's work environment, as part of SDG 5, it promotes Target 5.1, "End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere" (as measured through 5.1.1); Target 5.4, "Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate" (as measured by 5.4.1); and Target 5.5, "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life" (as measured by 5.5.2).

The Foundation fosters an inclusive and diverse work culture that eliminates discrimination against women in hiring, promotion, and work assignments; provides women with support and accommodations, including through formal organizational policies; and ensures women have the opportunity to participate and be heard at all levels of the organization, including decision-making at the most senior leadership level.

The Foundation has adopted new policies and initiatives to support its organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion journey. These include a training and development program to drive cultural awareness and several changes to promote a culture of equality, transparency, and openness, with the goal of empowering employees to speak up and provide honest feedback. The Foundation also supports its employees during times of need. This year, the Foundation instituted two new policies, a paid parental leave policy and a short-term salary continuation policy. The Foundation also offers employees other helpful benefits, such as an employee assistance program. This program offers services that support employees' well-being and resilience in work and life, further demonstrating the Foundation's firm belief that a decent work environment for all, free from inequities and discrimination, is fundamental.

SECTION 1 – HEALTH AND SCIENCE RESEARCH AND THE SDGs

The purpose of the Foundation—to improve global health by ending smoking in this generation—intersects directly with SDG 3, “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.” The Foundation’s Health and Science Research agenda powerfully relates to SDG 17, “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development,” in the quest to achieve a smoke-free world.

QUICK FACTS ON THE SCALE AND SCOPE OF TOBACCO-RELATED DISEASE

Over 1.1 billion people use tobacco worldwide, and tobacco use is the most preventable cause of morbidity and mortality (GBD 2021). Each year, tobacco use is responsible for nearly 8 million deaths and 200 million disability-adjusted life-years (GBD 2021). Notably, the main causes of mortality are attributed to three noncommunicable diseases: cardiovascular disease, cancer, and respiratory disease, which are all closely associated with cigarette smoking. In addition, 730,000 new tuberculosis cases in 2020 were attributable to smoking (WHO 2018).

The demographics of smoking have changed. Today, more than 80% of smokers live in LMICs (Hosseinpoor 2011). For instance, an estimated 252 million smokers live in China, 250 million live in India, and 69 million live in Indonesia (Glassman 2021). These countries, with the vast majority of smokers, have only a limited ability to implement and enforce tobacco control policies.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in a high-income country such as the United States, smoking is highly concentrated among individuals living below the poverty line and people with poor educational attainment (CDC 2022). The burden of disease is exceptional among those with mental health disorders, as well as those who are homeless and identify as LGBTQ. In most countries, an estimated 15–50% of the population is exposed to secondhand smoke; in some countries, secondhand smoke exposure affects as much as 70% of the population (NCI 2016). The total global economic cost of smoking is estimated to be \$1.85 trillion, around 1.8% of global GDP (Vulovic 2019).

THE STATE OF HARM REDUCTION

There are nearly 100 million users of vaping (e-cigarette), heated tobacco, and snus products (Shapiro 2020). Studies of these products have shown substantial reductions in exposure to a wide range of chemicals and toxins compared with cigarette smoking (Shahab 2017, Haziza 2016, Sarkar 2010). A review of the evidence reviewed by Public Health England (PHE) led the agency to conclude that “e-cigarettes are at least 95% less harmful than smoking.” Moreover, in terms of secondhand smoke, “there is no side-stream vapor emitted by an e-cigarette into the atmosphere, just the exhaled aerosol” (McNeill 2015, Dockrell 2018). More recent studies leave the PHE conclusion from 2015 unchanged.

SDG 3 – ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

FCTC measures as embodied in the MPOWER framework are being implemented slowly and inconsistently across various countries. The *WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2021* shows that 146 out of 195 member states have introduced at least one MPOWER measure at the highest level of achievement; only two countries have implemented all policies at the highest level. A total of 49 countries have implemented no measures (WHO 2021). Moreover, global progress in implementation of FCTC provisions on research, cessation, and harm reduction appears to be lagging even further behind (Chung-Hall 2018). This situation is further complicated by governments' ambivalence toward tobacco harm-reduction products, which are unquestionably part of the solution.

The Foundation's primary focus is on health (SDG 3), executed through grantmaking (SDG 17). The targets the Foundation intends to positively affect are the following:

1. *Target 3.a - "Strengthen the implementation of the WHO FCTC in all countries, as appropriate."* Progress toward this endeavor is measured through Indicator 3.a.1, *"Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older."*

The FCTC remains the main framework for directing tobacco control activities. That said, almost all of the focus today is on the subset of FCTC articles covered by the MPOWER framework. In this approach, policy levers and governments are the main agents of change. In order to create ecosystem-wide transformation, it will be necessary to implement all elements of the FCTC and to drive the tobacco industry towards transformation. To this end, the Foundation's strategic plan identifies opportunities where there are gaps in implementing the FCTC and other elements of ecosystem-wide transformation (FSFW 2022c). The gaps are related to smoking, tobacco farming, and industry.

2. *Target 3.4 - "By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and well-being."* Progress toward this target is measured through Indicator 3.4.1, *"Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease."* An additional relevant indicator for the Foundation's work in developing countries is Indicator 3.3.2, *"Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population."* Tobacco use greatly increases the risk of tuberculosis disease and death.

The need to rapidly drive down death and disability from smoking is clear, and there are a number of avenues to pursue smoking cessation, prevention of smoking initiation, and harm reduction. Harm reduction, for people who cannot quit or do not want to quit using nicotine-replacement therapy (NRT) or pharmacotherapies, must be explored, especially in light of recent technological innovation and the rapid pace of change in this area.

3. *Target 3.d - “Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction, and management of national and global health risks.”*

The Foundation’s Health and Science Research agenda will focus on nonduplicative and novel research associated with smoking cessation and tobacco harm reduction, particularly in developing countries. The Foundation funds initiatives to strengthen the capacity of researchers and stakeholders to undertake and implement smoking cessation and tobacco harm-reduction programs by enhancing human resource and organizational capacity and by advancing common methodologies.

SDG 17 – STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On an ecosystem-wide basis, and through the Health and Science Research agenda, the Foundation’s work intersects strongly with SDG 17 in striving toward the execution of its purpose.

1. *Target 17.6 - “Enhance North-South, South-South, and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology, and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism.”*

The Foundation will support work that will aid in understanding the underlying reasons for low innovation in the smoking cessation field, and in stimulating innovation to more rapidly develop smoking cessation tools and tobacco harm-reduction products that are highly effective, acceptable from a consumer’s point of view, and affordable in LMIC settings.

2. *Target 17.9 - “Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the SDGs, including through North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation.”* Progress toward this target is measured through Indicator 17.9.1, *“Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries.”*

The Foundation will fund research primarily through major multiyear grants to research institutions and global research networks. These entities will be free to design their own detailed research programs under the supervision of their scientific advisory and institutional review boards, in order to find robust and reliable answers to the high-level questions on the Foundation’s research agenda. The Foundation will also fund different approaches in parallel to explore the same research question.

3. *Target 17.3 - “Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources.”* Progress toward this endeavor is measured through Indicator 17.3.1, *“Additional financial resources mobilized for developing countries from multiple sources.”*

The environment for smokers in many countries is changing rapidly. It will be important to have up-to-date data available and analyzable at national and subnational levels to track progress and inform the actions of consumers, regulators, and other stakeholders, as well as to continually refine the Foundation’s own activities. An additional concern is that 80% of smokers today live in LMICs, but most research today is led by centers in the United States and Europe. Funding for research is also limited, particularly outside the United States. Of the \$31.4 billion in development assistance for global health in 2011, only \$68 million went to tobacco control. In 2015, low-income countries received only 0.3% of direct grants for health research (Bollyky 2015, WHO 2018a).

SECTION 2 – AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION AND THE SDGs

The objective of the Foundation’s work in Malawi is to mitigate the effects of a global decline in the demand for tobacco on smallholder tobacco farmers and the tobacco-dependent economies in which they reside. In Malawi, where the Foundation has formed an affiliate, the Agricultural Transformation Initiative (ATI), tobacco exports account for 55.6% of total merchandise export earnings. This makes Malawi one of the most, if not the most, tobacco-dependent countries in the world (FSFW 2022a, FSFW 2022b).

The vast majority of tobacco farmers in Malawi and in the sub-Saharan region are smallholder tobacco farmers who cultivate less than one hectare. They are arguably the most disadvantaged and least compensated link of the tobacco value chain (Makoka 2016, Hu 2015, Leppan 2014, Kibwage 2009). Malawi is ready to diversify. Tobacco farmers are struggling, and producer prices have reached new lows (FSFW 2022a).

In its work in Malawi, the Foundation seeks to convene stakeholders; forge partnerships; facilitate policy change; promote science, research, and innovation; and disseminate best practices to help establish a diverse array of sustainable alternative livelihoods for smallholder tobacco farmers. Its primary means of doing so is through the ATI, which serves as a hub for a series of interrelated programs and research (FSFW 2022b). These include the:

- Center for Agricultural Transformation (CAT) in Malawi. The CAT serves as hub of innovation and change by stimulating, incubating, and evaluating alternative crop and livelihood options, supportive technologies, novel infrastructure, and commercially driven solutions for smallholder tobacco farmers in Malawi.

- Malawi Agricultural Policy Advancement and Transformation Agenda (MwAPATA) Institute. The MwAPATA Institute is an independent policy think tank in agricultural, natural resources, trade, and rural development policy research, providing concrete policy guidance and implementation support for agricultural transformation and development in Malawi.
- The Institute of International Education (IIE) Fellowship and Scholarship Fund. The program’s aim is to strengthen the capacity of researchers and professionals in Malawi in high-priority fields including business, data science, environmental studies, economics, and engineering. These individuals will help the country transform its agricultural sector by reducing its dependence on tobacco exports.

Given that the overarching aim of the ATI is to establish a diverse array of sustainable and alternative livelihoods for smallholder tobacco farmers, the Foundation’s work in this area most directly supports SDGs 2, 4, 8, and 15.

SDG 2 – END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The work of the ATI contributes to three targets underlying this goal.

Target 2.3 - “By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists, and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, and opportunities for value addition and nonfarm employment.” Progress toward this target is measured through Indicator 2.3.2, “Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status.”

Providing smallholder tobacco farmers with better-paying, sustainable, and alternative livelihoods is the primary aim of the ATI. The initiative takes a farmer-focused, locally tailored, systems-level approach to identifying innovative and profitable alternative crop and livelihood options for farmers. To accomplish this, the ATI works primarily with the CAT and other stakeholders to locate new markets and develop sustainable business models, conduct local policy analysis, build in-country capacity, unlock capital, and create viable alternatives for smallholder farmers.

Target 2.a - “Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development, and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.” Progress toward this target is measured through Indicator 2.a.2, “Total official flows (official development assistance plus other official flows) to the agriculture sector.”

The ATI has already made commitments to the agricultural sector in Malawi. The CAT and the Mwapata Institute serve as anchor institutions for investment, research, and technical assistance to the agriculture sector in Malawi.

SDG 4 – ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

The work of the ATI contributes to Target 4.b, “By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and African countries, for enrollment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering, and scientific programs, in developed countries and other developing countries.” Progress toward this target is measured through Indicator 4.b.1, “Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study.”

The ATI provides graduate scholarships and fellowships to students from Malawi in high-quality academic programs and research, allowing students to study in leading US, Israel, and South African higher education institutes in priority fields. The ATI does this as a part of its commitment to building sustainable human and institutional capacity for local involvement and ownership in agricultural transformation and growth, gender equality, and development.

SDG 8 – PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT, AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

The work of the ATI contributes to Target 8.2, “Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation, including through a focus on high-value-added and labor-intensive sectors.” Progress toward this target is measured through Indicator 8.2.1, “Annual growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) per employed person.”

By seeking better-paying, sustainable, and alternative livelihoods for smallholder tobacco farmers in tobacco-dependent economies, the ATI is committed to improving economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation. The programs and research represent the seeds of projects that, if successful and scaled, will contribute to economic diversification and growth.

SDG 15 – PROTECT, RESTORE, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS

The work of the ATI contributes to Target 15.3, “By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought, and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.” Progress toward this target is measured through Indicator 15.3.1, “Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area.”

The ATI is committed to understanding the impact of climate change on agriculture and tobacco production and seeks to integrate and promote climate-smart solutions into its diversification programs in Malawi. This includes supporting approaches and practices that can adapt to the impacts of a changing climate while mitigating agriculture’s contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.

SECTION 3 – INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION AND THE SDGs

The Foundation’s Industry Transformation strategy aims to accelerate the reduction of harm caused by tobacco use. The Foundation’s primary focus in this area is on SDG 9; SDG 9 is executed through SDG 17.

SDG 9 – BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION, AND FOSTER INNOVATION

The Foundation estimates that total global retail sales of nicotine delivery products in 2020 were more than \$850 billion, with combustible tobacco products and cigarettes representing 93% and 84%, respectively (FSFW 2021). Vaping products made up about 2.5% of the nicotine ecosystem, followed by heated tobacco products, 2.4%; smokeless tobacco products, 1.6%; NRT smoking cessation aids, 0.3%; and tobacco-free oral nicotine, 0.1%. Retail sales figures include taxes applied to the final purchase price.

Approximately 5.2 trillion retail cigarette sticks were sold during 2020, compared to 5.4 trillion in 2017. This figure nears 5.6 trillion cigarette sticks when illicit trade is included. Of note, locally manufactured combustible tobacco products, such as bidis in India, are outside the scope of this estimate. The six largest tobacco companies generated more than 86% of cigarette retail volume sales globally in 2020. The vaping products category remains largely fragmented and is not dominated by the largest tobacco companies. The emergence of a relatively new category, tobacco-free oral nicotine, is one of the notable developments in the global nicotine ecosystem in recent years. From a small base, tobacco-free oral nicotine registered the highest growth rate among all categories for the period 2017-2020.

The work the Foundation is doing in the area of information technology (IT) demonstrates its commitment to Target 9.5, “Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending.” Progress is measured through Indicator 9.5.1, “Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP,” and Indicator 9.5.2, “Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants.”

SDG 17 – STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Foundation believes that the appropriate approach to influencing industry is indirectly through strategic partnerships. For this reason, the Foundation is committing resources toward Target 17.3, “Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources.” The objective is to accelerate the reduction of harm caused by tobacco use by ranking the world’s 15 largest tobacco companies on their relative progress toward tobacco harm reduction. Findings are reported in the Tobacco Transformation Index (TTI 2020). The Foundation engages with various stakeholder groups—the investor community, researchers, nongovernmental organizations, industry participants—to acquire input toward the development of the Index process design and evaluation criteria, and to gather consensus regarding the appropriate role of the tobacco industry.

In particular, the Foundation believes the investor community is a powerful lever. Public company management has a fiduciary responsibility to deliver shareholder value, while increasingly demonstrating progress toward environmental, social, and governance (ESG) objectives. Therefore, investors have significant influence on management through engagement.

The Tobacco Transformation Index objectively measures the nature of the tobacco companies’ product sales, product offer, capital allocation, marketing, regional variations, and more. The objective is to incentivize scientific research and development for the advancement of product innovations for the benefit of public health and potentially millions of adult smokers, particularly in developing countries. The intention of the Index is to evaluate and objectively report the actions of the largest nicotine delivery companies in the world.

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