

# Strategic Plan

## 2022-2024



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2024

(Updated 2/2024)<sup>1</sup>

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## Mission

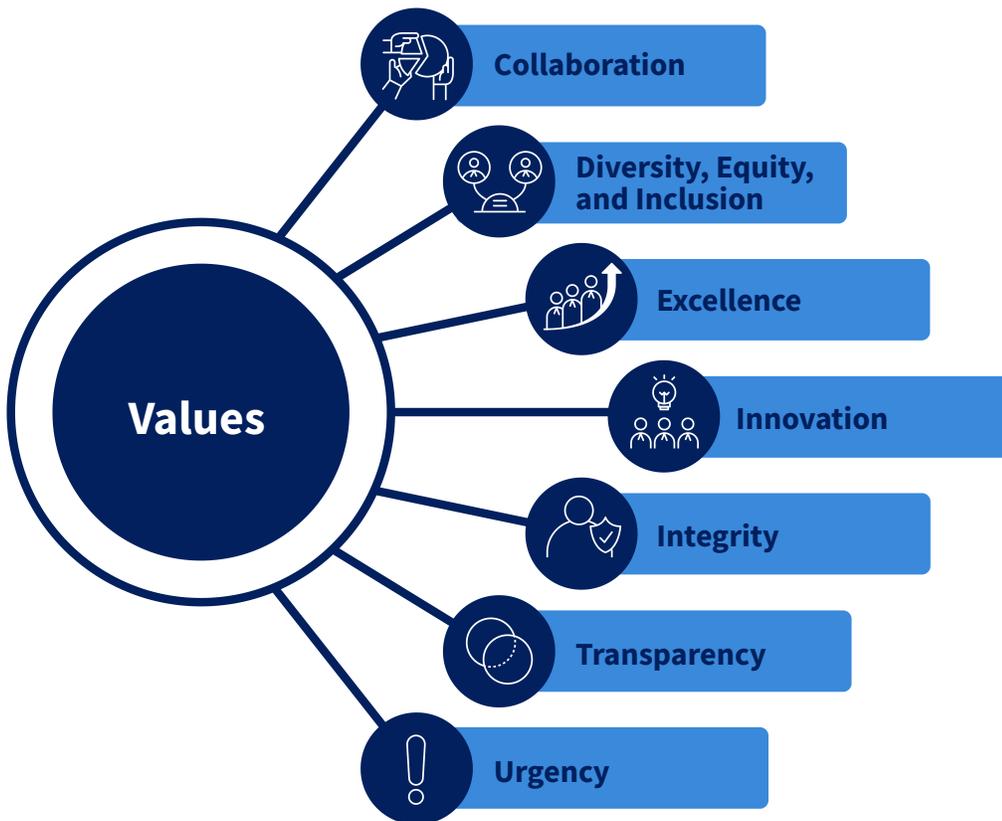
The mission of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World is to end smoking in this generation.

## Vision

Our vision is a world in which combustible, other forms of toxic tobacco, and smoking related death and disease are eliminated, and tobacco-dependent agriculture and economies are diversified.

## Values

As we work toward achieving our mission and goals, we at Foundation for a Smoke-Free World (“FSFW” or “Foundation”) are guided by the following fundamental values:



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<sup>1</sup> As stated on page 16 of the Plan, it was Foundation’s intention to update this Plan as circumstances changed throughout the Plan term. 2024 has been a year of many changes for Foundation, including a new leader, and the termination of the Pledge Agreement with PMI. Minor changes to this Plan have been incorporated in this updated version to reflect the termination of the work relating to the Tobacco Transformation Index and a new emphasis on education and correcting misperceptions and misinformation about nicotine and relative risk among tobacco and nicotine products.

## **Executive Summary**

This 2022 to 2024 Strategic Plan (the “Strategic Plan”) serves as the Foundation’s roadmap for the next three years. Intentionality in setting goals, strategies, tactics, and metrics maximizes the likelihood of accomplishing our objectives. Moreover, such intentionality supports the Foundation’s conviction that by acting with a sense of urgency, producing excellent work, and emphasizing a collaborative, transparent, and inclusive environment with the highest level of integrity, we will create a world in which combustible tobacco, other toxic forms of tobacco, and smoking-related death and disease are eliminated and tobacco-dependent agriculture and economies are diversified, achieving our mission to end smoking in this generation.

In creating this Strategic Plan, we considered internal and external factors impacting the Foundation’s ability to achieve its mission and goals over the next three years. We also reflected on the Foundation’s activities during the last three years as it executed its first strategic plan, including its key accomplishments. The current state of the public health and tobacco control communities also impacted our planning.

Importantly, in formulating this Strategic Plan, we re-emphasized our commitment to funding research that is nonduplicative and novel, focusing on scientific and regulatory gaps. We started with the bedrock that the Foundation’s grant making and other efforts support three broad categories of work: (i) health and science research aimed at helping smokers quit or switch to reduced-risk products (RRPs); (ii) transforming industry; and (iii) diversifying the agricultural sector in Malawi.

As more fully detailed in the Strategic Plan, with this background in mind, our roadmap for the next three years is defined by the five SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) goals that the Foundation will work toward achieving. To accomplish these goals, the Foundation will focus its broad categories of grant making across six “smoke-free purposes” for which it was created. The Strategic Plan will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and adjusted as appropriate.

# **Goals**

With this background in mind, the Foundation will work over the next three years to achieve the following goals:

- 1. Reduce barriers to quitting and/or switching from combustibles and other toxic tobacco products.**
- 2. Strengthen understanding, knowledge, and research capacity in the area of tobacco harm reduction and its role to end smoking.**
- 3. Support the development of a diversified agricultural ecosystem in Malawi to lead smallholder farmers toward alternative livelihoods.**
- 4. Drive the transformation of tobacco companies for the benefit of public health.**
- 5. Strengthen the Foundation's future to fulfill its mission**

**For 2024, the final year of this Plan, the Foundation has determined to end its efforts toward achieving Goal 4 and has added a new goal:**

- 6. Educate the public and health care providers to correct misperceptions and misinformation about nicotine and relative risk among tobacco and nicotine products.**

# Context

## I. Foundation's Progress Toward Its First Strategic Plan

As we reach the end of the First Strategic Plan three-year cycle, we reflect on the Foundation's activities over the last three years. Key accomplishments include:

- [Foundation grants](#) supported more than 100 international researchers in advancing research in smoking cessation and harm reduction, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries (“LMICs”), marginalized communities, and culturally sensitive interventions.
- The Foundation's [Global State of Smoking Polls](#) provided an understanding of the experiences and challenges of smokers, their habits, and their perceptions of the risks associated with tobacco products and alternative nicotine delivery systems. These polls and other FSFW-supported reports, including [Global Trends in Nicotine](#), [Burning Issues: The Global State of Harm Reduction](#) and the [Dubrovnik Consultation](#), documented the nicotine ecosystem, perceptions and misperceptions about tobacco and nicotine, and economic perspectives associated with tobacco harm reduction—initial steps in addressing false beliefs.
- Several [country reports](#) published by the Foundation and its partners filled knowledge gaps in our collective understanding of tobacco production and use, especially in LMICs.
- In Malawi, working with our Agricultural Transformation Initiative (ATI) affiliate, the Foundation provided grants to support the launch of the Centre for Agricultural Transformation (CAT), which aims to help farmers diversify their incomes to build resilience and ease their heavy reliance on the declining tobacco sector. The Foundation, with ATI's assistance, continues to support CAT programs, scholarships, and other human and institutional capacity-building efforts.
- The Malawi Agriculture Policy Advancement and Transformation Agenda (MwAPATA) Institute was launched by Michigan State University (MSU) with the support of a Foundation grant. This think tank is assisting in generating evidence to inform policies that support smallholder farmers in diversifying their production. The MwAPATA Institute, along with its partners—the National Planning Commission, MSU, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the National Statistical Office—have produced a number of [research papers](#) and briefs, which are leading to impactful science-based policy reform.
- The [Tobacco Transformation Index](#) is the first tool to rank the world's 15 largest tobacco companies, which account for nearly 90% of global cigarette volume, on their relative progress toward harm reduction. The first edition was published in September 2020 and a new edition will be published every two years. The Index is a platform that produces research and other content to complement the company rankings.
- Scientific journals have published several reports written by Foundation grantees that explore the barriers to smoking cessation and the impacts of harm reduction. The grantees include [Analytisch-Biologisches Forschungslabor GmbH](#), [Center of Excellence for the Acceleration of Harm Reduction](#), and [BOTEC Analysis](#).

## II. Research Gaps and Responses

The Foundation funds research and engages in direct charitable activities that are non-duplicative and novel, focusing on scientific and regulatory gaps, in furtherance of the purposes for which it was formed. Our efforts generally fall into three main subject areas:

## **A. Health and Science Research Aimed at Helping Smokers Quit or Switch to RRP**

For the incidence of cigarette smoking and other forms of toxic tobacco use to decrease, current users must quit or switch to RRP and non-smokers and those who do not use tobacco in any form must not start. Researchers and experts define the former path as the “off-ramp” of smokers and tobacco users, and the latter path as the “on-ramp” of non-smokers and non-tobacco users. The material net gain for public health can only be achieved if substantially more smokers quit than non-smokers start.

Proponents of THR focus on the benefits of the “off-ramp”, *i.e.*, RRP as a means of helping smokers quit. While the traditional tobacco control community highlights the challenges associated with the “on-ramp,” focusing particularly on youth vaping.

We consider the research being conducted globally, as well as gaps in current knowledge, to assess the priorities for the Foundation’s future research in this area. The Foundation will focus on non-duplicative and novel research associated with smoking cessation and THR, including:

- improving understanding about whether THR products are an “on-ramp” for non-smokers and/or an “off-ramp” cessation tool for smokers;
- the effects of THR product use;
- the availability of and economics associated with THR and risk proportionate regulation;
- misperceptions around nicotine;
- correcting misinformation and disinformation about THR, so that it is assessed based on evidence;
- supporting medical and other health professionals in advising smokers and tobacco users, with an emphasis on marginalized and diverse communities, and LMICs.

## **B. Transforming Industry**

The Tobacco Transformation Index research platform is a tool, the first of its kind, which complements the Foundation research agenda as a change agent. Its theory of change is predicated on the forces of competition, differentiation, and constructive engagement. The Index is not an end in itself but a potential accelerant by indirectly influencing company behavior in a manner in line with our mission.

## **C. Transitioning the Agriculture Sector in Malawi**

The Foundation’s work in Malawi, one of the world’s most tobacco dependent economies, assists smallholder tobacco farmers in transitioning to sustainable livelihoods. Our work there is demonstrating progress and attracting potential partners. Foundation’s programs in Malawi will continue to be focused on the Centre for Agricultural Transformation, which embodies innovative programs eventually to be housed in a physical structure, and the MwAPATA Institute, which supports effective policy research and evidence generation related to agricultural transformation in the country.

## Focus Areas

The Foundation will continue to fund grants and otherwise engage in charitable activities in the same three broad categories in which we have worked since our inception (health and science research aimed at helping smokers quit or switch to less harmful products, industry transformation, and agricultural diversification in Malawi). More specifically, our efforts will focus on six of the “smoke-free purposes” described in our [Certificate of Incorporation](#), Article Third. These focus areas will prescribe the direction for the work that will be done to achieve the goals we set for the Foundation for the next three years and execute on our mission to end smoking in this generation.

### ***The Foundation will hold, invest and administer assets received as charitable gifts, bequests and contributions and use such assets or the income therefrom to:***

1. Make grants relating to alternatives to cigarettes and to achieve a smoke-free world: make grants and other distributions to academic, health-related, research and science centers and institutions and other collaborating centers and institutions, and to scientists and health-related experts, to support research and projects regarding alternatives to cigarettes and other combustible tobacco products and how to best achieve a smoke-free world and advance the field of tobacco harm reduction;
2. Research and report on public opinion about tobacco harm reduction: fund global research initiatives and publish reports regarding, among other things, the attitudes and opinions of the general public towards tobacco harm reduction;
3. Fund verification studies to assess the impact of reduced risk products on public health: fund scientific verification studies to assess the impact of smoke-free and reduced risk products on public health outcomes and how such products affect the general population;
4. Inform the public about the activities of the tobacco industry that influence achieving a smoke-free world: scrutinize, comment on, and inform the general public regarding the activities of the tobacco industry, other commercial entities and other stakeholders which may have an impact, either positive or negative, on achieving a smoke-free world and advancing the field of tobacco harm reduction;
5. Research and promote sustainable agricultural alternatives in light of reduced demand for leaf tobacco: research the effect of the reduced demand for leaf tobacco on farmers and other stakeholders and explore and promote sustainable agricultural and nutritional alternatives for tobacco farmers, tobacco land and other stakeholders;
6. Research sustainability issues and solutions related to the management of smoke-free and reduced risk products-related waste materials; and
7. Convene stakeholders around topics relevant to creating a smoke-free world: support global conferences, forums, panels and similar programs to focus on the evolving science regarding alternatives to cigarettes and other combustible tobacco products and how to best realize a smoke-free world.

# Strategies and Tactics

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To achieve our ambitious goals, the Foundation aims to employ a series of measurable strategies and tactics in each of its areas of focus, or smoke-free purposes, as described below.

## I. Grants Relating to Alternatives to Cigarettes and Achieving a Smoke-Free World

### Desired Outcomes/Strategies

- Improve understanding about the long-term effects of THR product use;
- Improve understanding about whether THR products are an effective off-ramp (cessation) tool for smokers;
- Improve understanding about whether THR products are an “on-ramp” for non-smokers;
- Educate about the availability of and economics associated with THR and increase awareness of risk-proportionate regulation;
- Ensure the needs of overlooked smokers, including those suffering from mental health conditions, LGBTQ+, people of color, and people residing in poverty are included;
- Address the needs unique to smokers living in LMICs; and
- Improve understanding about and contribute solutions to electronic waste generated by THR product use.

### Directives/Tactics

- Perform literature reviews of the existing body of research to identify findings and gaps related to the effects of THR product use, poly use of THR and cigarettes, and whether THR is an effective tool for quitting by existing smokers, particularly in LMICs;
- Initiate novel and non-duplicative research on the potential effects of THR product use;
- Make grants to research, introduce, and apply 21st century systems biology in epidemiology;
- Research interventions for quitting or switching for use in marginalized and vulnerable communities;
- Research interventions for quitting or switching for use in LMICs;
- Make grants to better understand the economics of THR and support availability and effective policies, through in-country research and capacity building, particularly in LMICs;
- Research and report on companies’ THR marketing practices to restrict youth access; and
- Research to understand the challenge of electronic waste generated by THR products and offer potential solutions.

## **II. Research and Report on Public Opinion About Tobacco Harm Reduction; Educate the Public and Health Care Providers About Nicotine and Relative Risk Among Tobacco and Nicotine Products:**

### **Desired Outcomes/Strategies (Benefits or changes resulting from efforts undertaken. Actions we want FSFW and grantee outputs and actions to achieve):**

- Identify and dispel misperceptions around nicotine and relative risk;
- Conduct research to support medical and other health professionals in advising smokers and tobacco users to quit or switch to THR products;
- Provide information about nicotine, cessation, and relative risk to correct misperceptions and misinformation with science-based evidence;
- Enhance the capacity of researchers and stakeholders to undertake and implement smoking cessation and THR programs by enhancing human resource and organizational capacity and by advancing common methodologies;
- Help drive global public discussion about nicotine, cessation and relative risk; and
- Increase capacity for researchers to address misperceptions and misinformation about tobacco and nicotine products.

*Note: For 2024, these strategies have been supplemented to include work focused on educating the public and health care providers about nicotine and relative risk among tobacco and nicotine products.*

### **Directives/Tactics (Specific activities to be performed or encouraged, ultimately resulting in one or more desired outcomes):**

- Perform literature reviews of the existing body of research to identify findings and gaps, including work regarding potential harm and benefit of nicotine and the health outcomes of nicotine use in the absence of combustion;
- Initiate non-duplicative and novel research on the potential benefits of nicotine related to specific disease groups and/or population health conditions;
- Study doctors' and other health professionals' perceptions of nicotine (information and misinformation) and support education on this topic, focusing on LMICs;
- Enhance the role and capacity of medical and other health professionals in leading interventions for smokers through cessation and THR, especially focusing on smokers from diverse and underserved communities;
- Enhance the role and capacity of medical and other health professionals in LMICs in leading interventions for smokers through cessation and THR;
- Support the development and strengthening of civil society networks that focus on misinformation and disinformation associated with nicotine and provide education about THR;
- Develop cohesive training programs for 'capacity building' within the THR community;

- Assess WHO, major NGOs, philanthropies, and scientific groups’ reports on tobacco use, cessation, and THR and develop communications plans that promote evidence-based cessation and THR solutions leading up to and subsequent to COP-10;
- Assess the resources required by LMICs to promote cessation and adequately treat tobacco dependence, per Article 14 of the FCTC, including with assistance from THR products;<sup>2</sup>
- Disseminate research and reports to increase awareness, engagement, and use;
- Implement integrated communications programs that leverage evidence from research and reports to secure news media coverage and drive social media conversation and digital media engagement;
- Create messaging tailored for access and relevance to global health community stakeholders in key markets, supported by communications agencies, in-market partner activation, and via the Foundation’s social and digital platforms.;
- Launch and manage a rapid response program that addresses misperceptions and misinformation, leveraging the organization’s social media channels and other tools to reach target audiences;
- Create a section on the organization’s website, featuring information and breaking news about tobacco, nicotine, cessation, and relative risk, to serve as a resource for consumers and other key stakeholders in the global health community; and
- Initiate requests for proposals for projects that will educate and reduce misperceptions among the public relating to tobacco, nicotine, cessation and relative risk among tobacco and nicotine products.

*Note: For 2024, these directives/tactics have been supplemented to include work focused on educating the public and health care providers about nicotine and relative risk among tobacco and nicotine products.*

### **III. Verification Studies to Assess the Public Health Impact of Reduced-Risk Products**

**Desired Outcomes/Strategies (Benefits or changes resulting from efforts undertaken. Actions we want FSFW and grantee outputs and actions to achieve):**

- Assess methodologies, data, interpretations, and conclusions from studies on cessation, THR, and related research to independently verify outcomes and recommendations.

**Directives/Tactics (Specific activities to be performed or encouraged, ultimately resulting in one or more desired outcomes):**

- Monitor and perform verification studies on scientific publications relating to: smoking cessation, THR, product usage trends, WHO and other UN agencies’ publications, and policy development and recommendations.

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<sup>2</sup> FCTC Article 14 requires that signatories “develop and disseminate appropriate, comprehensive and integrated guidelines based on scientific evidence and best practices, taking into account national circumstances and priorities, and shall take effective measures to promote cessation of tobacco use and adequate treatment for tobacco dependence.”

## **IV. Inform the Public about the Activities of the Tobacco Industry That Influence Achieving a Smoke-Free World**

### **Desired Outcomes/Strategies**

- Advance the Tobacco Transformation Index as a credible research platform and vehicle of change for key stakeholders, including institutional investors, researchers, media, and policy makers; and
- Increase Index recognition by company management as a vehicle that creates relative competitive advantage, or conversely disadvantage, depending on company actions over time.

*Note: Foundation determined in November 2023 to end its efforts to work in furtherance of these strategies.*

### **Directives/Tactics**

- Introduce additional formal Index releases; and
- Produce a steady flow of new research on a regular basis, including company performance by region/country, state monopolies, marketing practices, global trends in nicotine, intellectual property.

*Note: Foundation determined in November 2023 to end its efforts to work on these directives/tactics.*

## **V. Research and Promote Sustainable Agricultural Alternatives in Light of Reduced Demand for Leaf Tobacco in Malawi**

### **Desired Outcomes/Strategies**

- Increase knowledge and adoption of agricultural science, technology, and innovation;
- Diversify agricultural production by smallholder farmers;
- Provide analyses, studies, research, and education about agricultural policies that constrain agricultural diversification, and support advocacy to eliminate constraints;
- Build human and institutional capacity necessary to support development and adoption of improved agricultural practices and diversification; and
- Generate awareness for the challenges smallholder tobacco farmers and Malawi's agriculture infrastructure face and evidence-based solutions.

### **Directives/Tactics**

- Attract funding partners to help support (i) sustainable agricultural alternatives to tobacco; (ii) nonpartisan analyses, study, research, and education about agricultural policies needed to promote sustainable agricultural alternatives to tobacco; and (iii) human and institutional capacity development to drive agricultural transformation;
- Introduce improved agricultural practices and technologies through smart farms to farming communities;
- Create sustainable institutional capacity that can advocate for agricultural policy reform;

- Support partners to develop linkages with international institutions that deepen and broaden human capacity and accelerate diversification from tobacco;
- Create sustainable institutional capacity that can facilitate agricultural diversification;
- Partner with institutions that are aligned to develop alternatives to tobacco to support agricultural diversification;
- Develop partnerships with public and private sector partners in Malawi to leverage development of human and institutional capacity for acceleration of agricultural diversification;
- Manage and collaborate with partners on earned, paid, and owned communications campaigns that promote the programs FSFW supports in Malawi and agricultural transformation messaging; and
- Initiate non-duplicative proposals for funding on the potential benefits of diversifying to specific non-tobacco value chains by smallholder farmers.

## **VI. Convene Stakeholders Around Topics Relevant to Creating a Smoke-Free World**

### **Desired Outcomes/Strategies**

- Attract additional funding sources to FSFW through a variety of mechanisms: co-grant making with partners in individual research programs, agricultural and industry transformation, and alternate funding path with principal funder.
- Promote active and sustainable exchange of ideas between and among stakeholders in the tobacco control community, broader harm reduction community, and the agriculture sector, including those of differing views;
- Leverage the Foundation’s network to bring together thought leaders to drive solutions to challenging issues; and
- Broaden partner network.

### **Directives/Tactics**

- Identify key audiences and pursue engagement and partnerships;
- Host webinars around key topics;
- Support grantee-led stakeholder engagement sessions; and
- Participate at traditional THR and agriculture conferences, as well as relevant events outside of those sectors.

Our goals to end smoking in this generation are ambitious. Many external factors will impact our ability to achieve these goals, and we will continue to review, monitor, and update this organic plan periodically.