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Tobacco industry's use of Corporate Social Responsibility strategies to join the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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Tobacco industry's use of Corporate Social Responsibility strategies to join the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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Background

In September 2015, the 193 UN member states adopted the document “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”¹ to promote sustainable development worldwide over the next 15 years. The 2030 Agenda has set 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Figure 1) and 169 targets containing measures to promote a dignified life for all. The goals and targets are straightforward and can be adopted by countries according to their priorities, in the spirit of a global partnership that guides the choices to improve people’s lives in the present and future.²

The SDGs incorporate the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) as target 3a,¹ reinforcing the need to regard the tobacco industry (TI) as a global force contributing to environmental degradation and health disparities.³ In addition, the SDGs advocate sustainable production patterns, environmental protection, the eradication of hunger, and reducing inequalities.¹ They, therefore, offer a unique opportunity to address tobacco damage throughout the supply chain.⁴ Thus, the reinforcing effects of environmental sustainability and public health increasingly fit the purpose of reducing the damages caused by smoking and the tobacco industry.

However, TI has not measured efforts to associate itself with various initiatives in this field and has used corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies to offer an impartial image of a responsible company committed to social causes while undermining tobacco control and public health policies in Brazil. Therefore, it is essential to identify the CSR strategies adopted by the tobacco industry to mobilize public opinion in its favor to protect tobacco control policies from TI interference.

This document aims to show how the industry and its front groups have appropriated some concepts proposed by Agenda 2030 to improve its corporate image, maintain its business, and increase its profits while covertly countering the implementation of public health policies.

Figure 1: The 2030 Agenda Goals. Source: United Nations - Brazil. The Sustainable Development Goals in Brazil in <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>



Definitions

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): this document uses the WHO definition for the 2030 Agenda, i.e., a plan of action designed to address critical areas for people and the planet, seeking peace and prosperity and focusing on people's well-being and the protection of the environment. At the heart of the 2030 Agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals,¹ which WHO defines as an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership.¹ They state that ending poverty and hunger must include strategies to improve health and education, reduce inequality, stimulate economic growth, prevent climate change, and preserve our oceans and forests.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): According to Bower (1957),⁵ CSR constitutes the adoption of attitudes, postures, decisions, and values that some companies employ to value their image before society. This document classifies TI's CSR strategies into three different categories: internal TI's measures taken to demonstrate sustainability; creation of sustainability programs to promote its image; and links created with organizations related to sustainability in order to associate their names with these projects. Thus, this document shows how the tobacco industry and its front groups present an image of concern about the directions the world is taking, linking it to social causes, and how they are willing to promote CSR strategies. These categories will be presented and discussed throughout the document.

Methodology

This document analyses publications on the 2030 Agenda and TI's CSR strategies in the academic area (abstract, report, record, scientific article, review, monograph), traditional media (radio, television, newspapers, pamphlets), and digital media (social media, blogs, YouTube channels, e-mail) between 2012 and 2021.

The following descriptors were used in the search: (SDG) OR (ODS) OR (Agenda para desenvolvimento sustentável) OR (Agenda 2030) OR (Sustainable Development Goals) OR (Agenda for Sustainable Development) OR (desenvolvimento sustentável) AND (tobacco industry) OR (indústria do tabaco)) AND (responsabilidade social corporativa) OR (social corporate responsibility) AND (Brazil) OR (Brasil).

Preliminary results

How the tobacco industry operates on the 2030 Agenda

Global approach

CSR tactics through the promotion and dissemination of sustainability measures have become a strategic tool to reduce the perception of the negative consequences produced by certain companies.⁶ TI has adopted a pro-Agenda 2030 rhetoric in recent years, acting as if it were an ally in the efforts for sustainable development. Thus, it tries to portray itself as part of the solution, not the problem, mentioning its self-proclaimed activities in favor of sustainable development in its reports. TI often promotes the strength of its supply chains, its role in developing agriculture in low- and middle-income countries, and its efforts to reduce environmental degradation.^{7,8} Thus, TI presents its commitment to fulfilling the SDGs as a justification for engaging with actors and organizations at local, national, and global levels,⁹ and also to develop projects focused on sustainable development. The Philip Morris funded "Foundation for a Smoke-Free World" is a clear example of the industry's attempt to be among organizations focused on promoting sustainable development.¹⁰ In addition, there are doubts about the real impact of TI's actions on sustainable development and compliance with the 2030 Agenda,¹¹ and the legitimacy of their sustainability indicators.¹²

Sustainability is a key part of British American Tobacco's reformulation, which came up with the slogan A Better Tomorrow in 2021. However, evidence shows that this and other tobacco companies seem to give low priority to the environmental issues and impact of their businesses, ignoring the environmental costs of their product manufacture and distribution.¹¹ Finally, IT CSR measures are primarily a PR strategy, as they do not introduce any real change in its business practices and keep producing, promoting, and selling a product that kills up to half its regular consumers.¹³

Brazil

In Brazil, the tobacco industry's behavior has not been different from what it practices globally. This document presents a series of TI CSR strategies related to the 2030 Agenda, evidencing how they are part of the sustainability context in Brazil. It shows how its measures intend to keep it linked to the goals outlined by the United Nations in the 2030 Agenda. It also shows how TI sets its social performance standards, which allows it to externalize its costs to society and consumers while using CSR and other corporate measures to pose as socially responsible.

The strategies used by the tobacco industry addressed in this document were divided into the following categories:

- (1) TI establishes business measures related to the growing and manufacture of tobacco products to demonstrate sustainability and internal coherence;
- 2) TI creates social responsibility programs linked to the 2030 Agenda to promote its image;
- 3) TI is linked to sustainability organizations or sustainability projects to associate its name with noble causes.

1. TI establishes business measures related to the growing and manufacture of tobacco products to demonstrate sustainability and internal coherence.

TI's first action to convey an image of an unsullied company and an agent of social transformation was the adoption of internal measures to show its commitment to sustainability.^{14,15} That is, TI created internal projects to express its concern about the damage caused by its product production in its factories and tobacco crops. In addition, it also created and disseminated measures to generate a better, healthier, and more inclusive work environment for its employees.¹⁶ It intended to show society that it is at the forefront of advances in workers' rights and that it is responsible for how its products can impact nature and the environment. However, such actions mask not only the damage that its toxic products cause to society but also the producers' health and the environment. These strategies include the measures adopted to improve its employees' performance and health, support tobacco growers, and give self-employed workers technical guidance to sell tobacco products. Thus, TI CSR measures do not consider the impact of tobacco growing on tobacco growers, their families, and the environment.

Some of TI's CSR ramifications are winning sustainability stamps and social impact awards and disseminating organic social media posts about their companies.¹⁶ They seek to show that TI products do not cause so much harm to society but rather contribute to communities, create jobs, and pay taxes, contributing to a better and fairer world.

TI has adopted internal measures related to the following 2030 Agenda goals: promotion of sustainable agriculture (SDG 2), gender equality (SDG 5), drinking water and sanitation (SDG 6), affordable and sustainable energy (SDG 7), decent job and economic growth (SDG 8), innovation and infrastructure in the industry (SDG 9) and sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12).¹

In short, with internal measures, TI appears to have an image that its priority is to think about the “ones from home” and evolve together with society, trying to move away from the damage caused by its products and the impact on the environment and society caused by its production.¹⁷

Projects for TI’s employees, tobacco growers and tobacco growing regions

When it comes to internal measures to promote an image of sustainability, Philip Morris Brazil (PMB) stands out. Among the company’s main programs is the Agricultural Labor Practices (ALP), which promotes sustainable measures related to agricultural labor practices.¹⁸ In this project, PMI asked Control Union (a company that develops services related to the sustainability of the industry’s supply chains) to conduct an external evaluation of the Burley tobacco growing operations in its supplier, Alliance One Brazil, in western Santa Catarina.¹⁹ The process aimed to evaluate labor practices on contracted farms and see if they were meeting the standards of the Agricultural Labor Practices Code. This report describes actions related to the seven ALP principles: 1) child labor, 2) income and working hours, 3) fair treatment, 4) forced labor, 5) safe work environment, 6) freedom of association, and 7) terms of employment.²⁰

Despite selling the idea that it is a company concerned with agricultural labor practices, it is essential to point out that Philip Morris accumulates numerous penalties registered with the Ministry of Economy for labor infractions.²¹ One of them is child labor on their farms, with children involved in tobacco harvesting and at risk of nicotine poisoning.²² Furthermore, the company was denounced for forcing immigrant workers into slave labor, hijacking their documents, and forcing them into continuous work without compensation.²² Despite the promises made by the corporation to put an end to such situations, according to the account made by the English newspaper *The Independent*, the problem has not been completely solved, and there are entire families and children forced to work labor in inhuman conditions on their farms.²¹

Another internal program developed by PMB is the Employee Assistance Program.²³ In it, according to PMB, all employees and their families receive full support from the People & Culture area.²³ They say the program goal is to offer free guidance on psychology, finance, law, pedagogy, nutrition, physiotherapy, physical education, social work, and even veterinary services for pet care.²³ Although PMB boasts such benefits to its employees, the truth does not seem to be precisely that. Among the complaints against the company, we have found reports about workers at risk of pesticide contamination, lack of sanitary facilities at work fronts, inadequate electrical installations, and non-formalization of contracts in the workers’ employment record book.²⁴ There are a total of 4,226 legal actions in the Regional Labor Courts against PMB until June 2022.²⁵

PMB also implemented the project Zero Waste to Landfills in 2020. According to them, this project is an effort to search for alternative forms of waste management and avoid environmental liabilities.²³ On the other hand, during World Clean Up Day in 2019, the non-governmental organization Break Free From Plastic showed Philip Morris was among the top ten most environmentally incorrect companies.²⁶ The data was obtained from 476,000 plastic waste

collected by 70,000 people in 51 countries, among which about 43% still had the brand of their manufacturers visible, contributing to mapping the most polluting global companies regarding plastic waste.^{26,27}

Philip Morris has also adopted a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) program, which they say aims to create sustainable value throughout the supply chain. The company points out that the program promotes family farming and crop diversification. They claim to ensure international human rights standards among partner growers and their families, subsistence and income generation, and to spreading sustainable cultivation and management practices for small farms, benefiting the environment.²⁸

In addition to the contradictions already described in TI's programs, it is also necessary to keep in mind that its main objective is to propose programs that address the problems it causes to society. However, these problems remain without noticeable improvement over the years. Furthermore, there is no data to prove that these programs have been effective and that workers in the tobacco industry have had new and better opportunities.²⁹ It seems that such "better practices" are only to promote the company's image.

In 2019, PMB became the first company in the country to receive the EQUAL-SALARY certification for paying men and women equally for equivalent work.³⁰ The seal was awarded by the EQUAL-SALARY Foundation, an independent organization based in Switzerland.³⁰ PMB justifies the initiative by the need for equal opportunities and treatment, which are fundamental to maintaining fair working conditions, and is committed to building a plural and inclusive working environment to make business and society even stronger.³⁰

It is noted that the tobacco industry, more precisely PMB, is trying to show harmony with our planet's current moment, and gender equality is a topic that has been in vogue in our society. So, following this path certainly brings recognition for the merit of such an attitude. It gives the industry a face value that does not agree with the responsibility it has in the impact caused by tobacco on society, showing a contradiction with the intended construction of an image of a company seeking a greater good.

Inclusion policies are another theme that is gaining more and more supporters in our society. Previously excluded groups have gained space in large companies through quotas and more opportunities or respect in the workplace. Those who do not adapt to the new times may lose points in many people's opinion, especially the young generation. Therefore, it is natural for the tobacco industry to explore this theme and become an advocate for diversity. The highly negative focus on its harmful product is redirected to a positive one, where the company can be seen as a transformation and evolution drive. Thus, Philip Morris created Stripes, an affinity group formed by volunteer employees to celebrate and strengthen diversity in the organization.³¹ Formed in 2017, the group contributes to attracting and retaining LGBTQIA+ talent.³¹ The company has also been adopting measures such as the equalization of paternity leave to maternity leave (from 120 to 180 days) in the case of homoaffective couples (as it is granted to single parents), the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ partners and couples in the benefits policy and the local formalization of the global

policy for transgender and gender-transitioned people, which includes, for example, the right to use the social name.³¹

Empower Her is another Philip Morris program that aims at the inclusion and equity of women in the workplace.³² The program was created in 2019 and is another tool for the company to win public opinion. By associating with such a relevant and urgent agenda in our society, PMB stands as a partner in this struggle and thereby tries to reduce its negative image.³² The attempt is to be seen as a company of the new times and willing to change its practices in favor of inclusion and aggregation.

BAT Brazil also has several internal sustainability programs to convey a positive image to society. The company's 2022 Internship Program hired 20 black students to work in São Paulo (SP), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Uberlândia (MG), Cachoeirinha (RS) and Santa Cruz (RS).³³ In partnership with *Empodera*, an inclusive business platform responsible for the candidate selection process, BAT offered a hybrid or in-person internship.³³ This is another way for a tobacco company to promote its image as an enterprise under the new society's standards and values. Racial discrimination is another fundamental theme nowadays and to link the company to such a relevant agenda is nothing more than to present itself as a partner in a social transformation process. This is the image that BAT Brazil intends to have when formalizing a selection process for black students in the country.

The Responsible Leaf program is another Philip Morris program to promote its image.³⁴ This time, the partnership is with *Produzindo Certo*, a company specializing in environmental management in the Brazilian agribusiness, performing socio-environmental diagnoses at tobacco-producing properties. PMB claims it can identify each grower's needs and define training necessities, good practices, and technologies to be implemented.³⁴ In this partnership, the objective of being linked to an institution that values the environment is evident. The tobacco industry, specifically Philip Morris, seeks to tie itself to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which requires in article 18 the Parties' attention to the protection of the environment and the health of people in tobacco farming.³⁵ However, growing tobacco takes about ten months, from preparing seedling beds to harvesting and curing the leaves. Several types of pesticides are used throughout the period, such as insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides. The Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency classified many of these as extremely and highly toxic (Classes I and II).³⁶ This exacerbated use has consequences for the growers' health, causing acute and chronic intoxication, cancer, and environmental contamination (water, soil, and air).³⁷

In addition to the projects, the tobacco industry also looks for awards and stamps that prove its companies are becoming sustainable and less harmful to society. An important recognition granted by the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)³⁷ featured Philip Morris as one of the ten leading global companies in transparency and environmental performance, granting the Triple-A classification, which ranks it among the best in three criteria evaluated: combating climate change, forest protection, and water security.³⁷ In 2021, Philip Morris received the organization's award for the second consecutive year and entered the CDP list.³⁷

This type of recognition gives the tobacco industry an aura of responsibility, portraying it as an industry of the new times, concerned about the damage they cause to our planet and in tune with society's current demands. These stamps prove that they invest in change and are committed to becoming sustainable companies. In the face of public opinion, they apply a coat of varnish that does not consider the numerous evils that the tobacco industry has caused to the environment. The industry uses its public recognition to defend itself against attacks, be free of responsibility for the environmental impact that its product causes and still promote itself as a leader in the environmental cause. So, it is a clear shot at the current world, where large companies must show commitment to the planet's future.

The SDGs possibly associated with projects aimed at TI's employees, tobacco growers and tobacco regions are listed in **Table 1**.

Project	Link(s)	Associated SDGs
PMI's Agricultural Labor Practices (ALP)	https://www.pmi.com/resources/docs/default-source/pmi-sustainability/cu-third-party-assessment---brazil-(aob).pdf?sfvrsn=2	1 - No poverty 2 - Zero hunger 5 - Gender equality 8 - Decent work and economic growth 12 - Responsible consumption and production
Employee Assistance Program (Philip Morris Brazil)	https://www.pmi.com/markets/brazil/pt/not%C3%Adcias/details/philip-morris-brasil-lan%C3%87a-programa-para-apoiar-colaboradores-diante-de-isolamento-social	8 - Decent work and economic growth
Zero Waste to Landfills (PMI)	https://www.pmi.com/markets/brazil/pt/not%C3%Adcias/details/philip-morris-brasil-lan%C3%87a-primeiro-relat%C3%80rio-de-sustentabilidade-com-foco-exclusivo-nas-iniciativas-desenvolvidas-no-pa%C3%80is	12 - Responsible consumption and production
Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)	https://www.pmi.com/resources/docs/default-source/sustainability-reports-and-policies/good-agricultural-practices-gap.pdf?sfvrsn=2fc091b5_4 https://www.pmi.com/resources/docs/default-	2 - Zero hunger 8 - Decent work and economic growth 12 - Sustainable consumption and production

	source/pmi-sustainability/alp-code.pdf?sfvrsn=9303b0b5_0	
EQUAL-SALARY (PMI Brazil)	https://www.equalsalary.org/certified-companies/philip-morris-brasil-industria-e-comercio-ltda/ https://www.moneytimes.com.br/philip-morris-brasil-e-l-parent-company-to-receive-certification-for-pay-men-and-women-equally/	5 - Gender equality 10 - Reduced inequalities 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
Stripes (PMI Brazil)	https://www.pmi.com/markets/brazil/pt/not%C3%Adcias/details/philip-morris-brasil-celebra-a-inclus%C3%A3o-e-a-diversidade-e-diz-n%C3%A3o-%C3%A0-lgbtifobia	3 – Good health and well-being 10 - Reduced inequalities 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions;
Empower Her (PMI Brazil)	https://www.pmi.com/markets/brazil/pt/not%C3%Adcias/details/philip-morris-brasil-se-associa-ao-movimento-mulher-360-e-amplia-a%C3%A7%C3%B5es-voltadas-%C3%A0-equidade-de-g%C3%AAnero-e-inclus%C3%A3o	5 - Gender equality; 10 - Reduced inequalities 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
2022 Internship Program (BAT Brazil)	https://comunidadeempodera.com.br/edital/398	10 - Reduced inequalities 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
Responsible Leaf (PMI Brazil)	https://www.pmi.com/markets/brazil/pt/not%C3%Adcias/details/produtores-de-tabaco-buscam-ampliar-a-sustentabilidade-de-suas-propriedades https://www.produzindocerto.com.br/o-agro-responsavel-da-philip-morris/	8 - Decent work and economic growth 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure 12 - Responsible consumption and production
Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)	https://www.pmi.com/sustainability/pmi-awarded-triple-a-rating-from-cdp-for-the-second-consecutive-year	9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Table 1: TI's projects aimed at employees, tobacco growers and tobacco growing regions

2 – TI creates social sustainability programs linked to the 2030 Agenda to promote its image.

The second TI's strategy is to promote sustainability programs for the community, improving its reputation. This category includes programs that promote measures that will benefit the population. Some examples are projects that, as opposed to TI's practices: a) aim to ensure a healthy life and promote well-being for all ages; b) invest in entrepreneurship as an autonomy tool and income generation for the Brazilian youth; c) contribute to inequality reduction and social transformation. We can also mention actions directed to the urban space, especially in socially vulnerable areas, promoting opportunities, inclusion, education, and social mobility.² The industry implements projects to promote itself as a partner in social transformation, tying its image to the planet's development and future. TI portrays itself as part of the solution, not the problem. It tries to change the troublemaker image to which it has always been linked, especially in recent years and with the advances in tobacco control policies. TI intends to turn the tide, change society's view, and be seen as an ally in the struggle for a better and more egalitarian world.

Examples of social sustainability projects linked to the 2030 Agenda

TI undertakes its development and education projects to combat child labor, especially in tobacco-growing regions in southern Brazil. An example is the project *Novos Rurais*, launched in 2012 by the BAT Brazil Institute and with head offices in the states of Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio de Janeiro (Figure 2).³⁸ It aims to enable better living conditions for communities and promote rural development by working with young men and women living in the countryside to promote commercial and product diversification.³⁸ BAT Brazil Institute stated on its website that the project *Novos Rurais* is recognized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as a good practice for sustainable development.³⁸ Other programs aimed at children and young people, and offered by the Interstate Tobacco Industry Union (SindiTabaco), through *Instituto Crescer Legal*, are *Programa de Aprendizagem Profissional Rural* [Rural Professional Learning Program]³⁹ and *Programa Nós Por Elas* [We for Women Program].⁴⁰ These programs offer subsidies so that young people remain and develop in rural areas through income generation opportunities and skills development, respecting gender differentiation, with possibilities for boys and girls.⁴¹ In 2021, there was the 5th edition of the *Programa Nós por Elas – The female voice of the field*,⁴² which addressed topics such as psychological violence and women in decision-making spaces. In one of the *Instituto Crescer Legal's* bulletins, Dr. Carmen Lúcia Helfer (the University of Santa Cruz do Sul's dean and *Instituto Crescer Legal's* founder and counselor) reports the program's importance as an alternative education space to the formal school. Through this *Instituto Crescer Legal's* program, TI not only promotes CSR activities but also uses the connections made with academic institutions to increase the credibility of its programs and CSR measures.⁴³

Another similar project is Investing in Communities [called *Nossas Comunidades Rurais* in Brazil], funded by JTI (Japan Tobacco International) Brazil.⁴⁴ This project invests in actions to

improve the lives of agricultural communities, promoting access to education and the generation of other income opportunities.⁴⁴ The image that TI seeks to pass on by promoting these programs is that it cares that young people stay and develop in rural areas through opportunities for income generation and the development of skills and potentialities, respecting gender differentiation, with opportunities for boys and girls. The reality, however, is that such programs promote tobacco use among young people and an image of social responsibility before society.⁴⁵

TI is also linked to the setup of projects to protect the environment. Between 2017 and 2019, JTI, in partnership with the Vivamos Mejor Foundation, promoted the project *Agricultura para o Futuro no Brasil* [Agriculture for the future in Brazil]⁴⁶ in the Jequitinhonha Valley, Minas Gerais – one the poorest and driest areas in Brazil. The project aims to improve food security, protect scarce water resources and ensure equality in decision-making.⁴⁶

Figure 2. *Novos Rurais* project on BAT Brazil Institute’s website.



Source: <https://rb.gy/m46rpe>

Another JTI initiative, this time in partnership with the Society for Wildlife Research and Environmental Education (*SPVS*), is the JTIBio project.⁴⁷ Starting in 2014, JTIBio’s main objective is to maintain and increase ecosystem services in rural properties in the state of Paraná.⁴⁷ However, no studies have been found showing the impact and scope of these projects, which corroborates the thesis that these projects may eventually aim to promote only the company’s image.

The *Programa de Recebimento de Embalagens Vazias de Agrotóxicos* [Reverse Logistics Receiving Program for Pesticides Empty Containers] is another program that the tobacco industry is proud to present as one of its main assets when it comes to CSR.⁴⁸ It is carried out by the

Interstate Tobacco Industry Union (*SindiTabaco*) and its associated companies in partnership with the Tobacco Growers' Association of Brazil (*Afubra*). It has been 21 years since its implementation in October 2000.⁴⁸ Trucks and teams specialized in rural areas collect the containers used in the tobacco farms.⁴⁸ TI states that the program precedes the legislation on the subject, once two years before Decree 4,074, which in article 53 determined that pesticide users must return containers, the sector was already collecting them.⁴⁸ Another similar project from JTI Brazil is *Pensar na Futuro é Agir Agora* [Thinking of the Future means Acting now].⁴⁹ The project offers dry waste collection and disseminates good practices for reducing the environmental impact in the field, claiming that the municipalities do not carry out such activities in Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Paraná countryside.⁴⁹

Projeto Protetor das Águas [Water Protection Project] is another CSR project to protect the environment sponsored by Philip Morris Brazil in partnership with the Vera Cruz City Hall (RS) and the National Water Agency of Brazil.⁵⁰ Its objective is to preserve Pardo River Basin's water resources and the Vera Cruz (RS) municipality by raising awareness of rural producers.⁵¹ In practice, the project pays for environmental services to protect the springs and river banks in Vera Cruz's rural properties. Each producer is paid two hundred reais per year for joining the program, three hundred and fifty reais per preserved hectare, and water tariff exemption.⁵²

The reality, however, is not exactly what the tobacco industry promotes on a small scale. From cultivation to consumption, tobacco affects air, soil, and water and contributes to deforestation. Evidence indicates that the main damages caused by tobacco production are: 1) tobacco farming pollutes the air, once the use of pesticides exposes not only the grower but the entire surroundings, 2) the burning of wood for curing the leaves causes air contamination by the emission of toxic particles, 3) tobacco growing contributes to the contamination of the streams, rivers, and soil by pesticides, 4) pesticides remain in the environment and, associated to tobacco monoculture, cause soil depletion and groundwater contamination, 5) whole forests are devastated to feed the wood-fired ovens that cure the tobacco leaves before being industrialized, 6) the practice of removing native trees and replacing them with reforestation trees cause damage to the ecosystem, and 7) cigarette filters thrown into lakes, rivers, seas, forests, and gardens take around five years to degrade and can cause fires.⁵³

SDGs associated with social sustainability projects linked to the 2030 Agenda to promote the TI's image are listed in **Table 2**.

Table 2: TI's social sustainability projects linked to the 2030 Agenda to promote its image

Project	Link(s)	Associated SDGs
Novos Rurais (BAT Brazil)	http://www.institutosouzacruz.org.br/groupms/sites/INS_8BFK5Y.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO8U4Q3N?opendocument	1- No poverty 2 - Zero hunger 4 - Quality education

		8 - Decent work and economic growth
<i>Programa de Aprendizagem Profissional Rural</i>	http://crescerlegal.com.br/instituto/programa-de-aprendizagem-profissional-rural/	1 - No poverty 2 - Zero hunger 4 - Quality education
<i>Programa Nós por Elas</i>	http://crescerlegal.com.br/instituto/programa-nos-por-elas-a-voz-feminina-do-campo/	4 - Quality education 5 - Gender equality
Investing in Communities (JTI Brazil)	https://www.jti.com/pt-br/americas/brazil/plantando-responsabilidade-colhendo-o-bem	4 - Quality education 8 - Decent work and economic growth
<i>Agricultura para o Futuro no Brasil</i> (JTI Brazil)	http://jtifoundation.org/projects/farming-future-brazil/ (2022).	5 - Gender equality 13 – Climate action 14 - Life below water 15 - Life on land;
<i>Pensar na Futuro é Agir Agora</i> (JTI Brazil)	https://www.jti.com/sites/default/files/local-files/br/portuguese/documents/news-documents/brazil_pr_iniciativa-deve-retirar-toneladas-de-res%C3%ADduos-de-propriedades-rurais-no-sul-do-pa%C3%ADs-10.09.17_1_0.pdf https://www.jti.com/sites/default/files/local-files/br/portuguese/documents/news-documents/brazil_pr_iniciativa-deve-withdraw-tons-of-res%C3%ADduos-de-properties-rural-no-sul-do-pa%C3%ADs-10.09.17_1_0.pdf	2 - Zero hunger 7 - Affordable and clean energy 12 - Responsible consumption and production
JTIBio Project	http://www.spvs.org.br/projetos/projeto-jtibio/	13 - Climate action 14 - Life below water 15 - Life on land
<i>Programa de Recebimento de Embalagens Vazias de Agrotóxicos</i>	http://www.sinditabaco.com.br/programas-socio-ambientais/gestao-ambiental/programa-de-recebimento-de-embalagens/	12 - Responsible consumption and production 13 - Climate action

		14 - Life below water 15 - Life on land
<i>Projeto Protetor das Águas</i>	https://www.veracruz.rs.gov.br/portal/secretarias-paginas/191/programa-protetor-das-aguas/	6 – Clean water and sanitation 14 - Life below water

3 – TI is linked to organizations related to sustainability to associate its name with noble causes.

The third strategy adopted by TI is to support or sponsor organizations that already operate in the sustainability sector, linking their image to relevant and increasingly sensitive topics in our society. The industry associates itself with a relevant institution in a specific area, either as a member or partner of the initiative, with or without financial support. Its name is linked to the institution or project and appears as part of the initiative, either as a sponsor or supporter. So, the industry portrays itself as a sector that dialogues with others and is in constant exchange and partnership in society’s favor by associating its name with broadly recognized partners.^{54,55} A clear example of this strategy was the *Sunrise Project*, which was in force until 2006.⁵⁶ The industry used it to address its deteriorated image with society,⁵⁶ seeking to associate with individuals, groups, or organizations involved with tobacco control so that the partnership could help improve its image. This project had excellent visibility, and the company’s explicit intention was to divide and conquer the tobacco control movement while trying to establish relationships with those considered moderate in their claims.⁵⁶

This is, therefore, a simple and effective form of advertising, where the industry takes advantage of the reach and projection of large organizations that fight for a better and more sustainable world. There are several institutions in Brazil with great relevance in their areas with their sustainable development projects/causes in poverty eradication, health and well-being, reduction of inequalities, and sustainable cities and communities supported or sponsored by the tobacco industry. We can mention the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (*IBAMA*),⁵⁷ the Ministry of Environment,⁵⁸ the *Movimento Mulher 360 (MM360)*,⁵⁹ and the International Labor Organization’s office in Brazil.⁶⁰ All these institutions are recognized in their respective areas of activity and have had TI as a global or national partner. TI's objective is to benefit from the publicity these organizations involved in the 2030 Agenda can give and obtain a stamp of authenticity. These partnerships give TI a level of credibility that it would be difficult to gain on its own or through its programs, given its products’ harmful nature.

Industry projects linked to recognized organizations in the area of sustainability

The InPACTO project is an example of TI’s CSR strategy with organizations related to sustainability.⁶¹ The NGO *Instituto Pacto Nacional pela Erradicação do Trabalho Escravo*

[National Pact for Slave Labor Eradication Institute] says it has mobilized different sectors in promoting decent work for 15 years.⁶¹ In Brazil, InPACTO is recognized by different sectors of society as a safe space of dialogue for common problems, uniting companies in the search for collective solutions.⁶¹

TI has also been teaming up with large-scale projects and partners from several industries. An example is the Achieving the Reduction of Child Labor in Support of Education (ARISE) project,⁶² which had JTI, Winrock International, and the International Labor Organization (ILO) as partners.⁶² It proposed to offer education, economic empowerment, and legal structures to prevent and eliminate child labor in tobacco-growing communities.⁶² Nonetheless, it is known that TI uses child labor as a reputation tool and contributes to projects unrelated to relevant efforts to end child labor.⁶³

Two other large-scale projects were *Movimento Mulheres 360*, which aims for the economic empowerment of Brazilian women, and the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS). This multisectoral initiative promotes the responsible use of fresh water that is socially and economically beneficial and environmentally sustainable.⁶⁴ These movements were financed by several private companies, including Philip Morris International and JTI.^{59,64} Through such CSR initiatives, TI linked its name to the programs' values and tried to shape public opinion in its favor.

The industry has built a partnership with an organization that fights against an evil in which TI may be involved: slave labor.²² This partnership contradicts some press news about the industry's performance. During a surveillance operation in Santa Catarina in 2014, for example, five people, including a 17-year-old teenager, were found working in conditions analogous to slavery on a property that produced tobacco for the multinational Alliance One. The company, which reports operations in over 90 countries on its website, was held legally responsible.²⁴ The inspection also found problems in farms producing for China-Brazil Tobacco, Philip Morris, BAT, and Universal Leaf, who were responsible for infractions against 89 workers in the state.²⁴

Another project linked to the tobacco industry that has had much publicity, mainly in rural regions, is *Quintais Orgânicos* [Organic Backyards].⁶⁵ This project has been under development since December 2017 and has Philip Morris Brazil's and Embrapa Temperate Agriculture's support. As a partner company, the tobacco industry is associated with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (*Embrapa*), the project's developer.⁶⁶ The project aims to contribute to food security and the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of family farmers, agrarian reform settlers, indigenous communities, *quilombolas* [descendants of Afro-Brazilian enslaved people], students from rural schools and welfare institutions. According to the TI, it technically and conceptually privileges the principles of ecologically based production, addressing cultural, ethnic, environmental, food, economic and medicinal issues.⁶⁵

It is important to emphasize that Brazil is considered a strategic country for Philip Morris. Brazil is Philip Morris's main global supplier because it is known internationally for its high-quality tobacco. Philip Morris buys tobacco directly or indirectly from about 50,000 family farmers in Brazil. In the city of Santa Cruz do Sul (RS), the company is involved in the tobacco seed supplying to the final product manufacturing, which is sold in the domestic market and exported.⁶⁷

So, the company places itself as a partner in the search for improvements in working conditions. However, child labor is still a practice attributed to the company.⁶⁸

In all the cases mentioned, the tobacco industry is dressed up in responsibility. It portrays itself as a modern industry, concerned about the damage they cause to our planet and in tune with society's current demands. These stamps prove that they invest in change and are committed to becoming sustainable companies. In the face of public opinion, they apply a coat of varnish that does not consider the numerous evils that the tobacco industry has caused to the environment. The industry uses its public recognition to defend itself against attacks and still position itself as a leader in the environmental cause and still promote itself as a leader in the environmental cause. So, it is a clear shot at the current world, where large companies must show commitment to the planet's future.

The tobacco industry is linked to the Ekloos Institute.⁶⁹ On its official website, the Ekloos Institute states its mission is to promote initiatives with social impact, contributing to inequality reduction.⁶⁹ They also say they aim to become a reference as an organization that promotes the development of a social ecosystem through ethics, transparency, quality, responsibility, collaboration, and solidarity.⁶⁹ The Ekloos Institute has a partnership with the BAT Brazil Institute,⁷⁰ and both institutions promote the *Vamos Rio* Social Acceleration Program through the state law for the incentive to the culture of the State Secretariat of Culture and Creative Economy of Rio de Janeiro.⁷⁰ The program's objective is to strengthen businesses with social impact, civil society organizations, and cultural and creative economy groups that operate in the State of Rio de Janeiro so that they can develop, improve their management processes and expand their social impact.⁷⁰ This partnership, therefore, benefits BAT Brazil, which approaches an institution linked to the 2030 Agenda themes and Rio de Janeiro's Department of Culture, promoting itself as a company linked to corporate social responsibilities.

The Ethos Institute of Business and Social Responsibility is another institution renowned in the 2030 Agenda implementation. Philip Morris Brazil and JTI are two of its members.⁷¹ The Institute's mission is to mobilize, encourage and help companies manage their businesses in a socially responsible way, making them partners in building a fair and sustainable society. Among its members, there are companies from the hospital, health insurance, advertising, beverage and tobacco, and civil construction areas.⁷²

Approaches considering the presence of harmful product manufacturers in sustainability-related initiatives have been taking place in recent decades at international and national levels.⁷³ In Brazil, the Bovespa (São Paulo Stock Market) Corporate Sustainability Index (*ISE*) brings together companies best evaluated in social responsibility issues. It was the subject of a heated discussion about the criteria for defining which company could plead the title of socially responsible.⁷⁴ At the time, the Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis (*IBASE*), organizer of the Social Balance Award, withdrew from the board that prepared ISE after the majority decided on the non-exclusion of weapons, tobacco, and beverage companies – the Ethos Institute defended their permanence. More recently, Ethos has published a story promoting JTI's

child labor eradication program,⁷⁵ a program terminated by ILO based on the United Nations policy to prevent interference from the tobacco industry⁷⁶.

Philip Morris Brazil also joined the Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development (CEBDS), a non-profit civil association that promotes sustainable development through articulation with governments and civil society and disseminates the most current concepts and practices on the subject.⁷⁷ CEBDS was founded in 1997 and is now formed by a group of important Brazilian entrepreneurs who say they are attentive to the changes and opportunities that sustainability has brought, mainly since Rio 92 Conference. CEBDS represents more than 80 business groups operating in Brazil, responsible for 47% of the Brazilian GDP and 1.1 million jobs.⁷⁷ It integrates the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) global network,⁷⁸ which has nearly 60 regional and national councils in 36 countries, 22 industrial sectors represented, and 200 business groups operating worldwide. Philip Morris Brazil has been associated with CEBDS since July 2018 and uses international parameters to measure the impact of water use⁷⁹ in its operations. According to them, the company's unit in Santa Cruz do Sul (RS) was the first in the country and Latin America to receive the AWS certification.⁷⁹ They also say that, in recent years, their factories have already reduced more than 30% of the volume of water used in cigarette manufacturing and that they have adopted a system of water treatment and reuse. Again, Philip Morris tries to promote itself as a responsible company tied to the 2030 Agenda goals. CEBDS frequently promotes PMI's actions related to the 2030 Agenda.⁸⁰

The SDGs associated with projects and organizations linked to sustainability with which TI has partnerships are listed in **Table 3**.

Project	Link(s)	Associated SDGs
<i>Instituto Pacto Nacional pela Erradicação do Trabalho Escravo - InPACTO</i>	https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/participants/138641-Instituto-Pacto-Nacional-pela-Eradicacao-do-Trabalho-Escravo-InPACTO https://inpacto.org.br/sobre-nos/	8 - Decent work and economic growth 12 - Responsible consumption and promotion 17 – Partnerships for the goals
ARISE (International Labor Organization)	https://www.jti.com/pt-br/americas/brazil/plantando-responsabilidade-colhendo-o-bem https://www.jti.com/pt-br/americas/brazil/plantando-responsibility-reaking-it-well	8 - Decent work and economic growth 10 - Reduced inequalities 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions

<p><i>Movimento Mulheres 360</i></p>	<p>https://movimentomulher360.com.br/parceiros/</p> <p>https://www.pmi.com/markets/brazil/pt/not%C3%ADcias/details/philip-morris-brasil-se-associa-ao-movimento-mulher-360-e-ampliações-voltadas-à-equidade-de-gênero-e-inclusão</p> <p>Webinar: http://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/philip-morris-cria-campanha-de-conscientizacao-sobre-violencia-domestica-durante-pandemia</p>	<p>5 - Gender equality;</p>
<p><i>Quintais Orgânicos (Embrapa)</i></p>	<p>http://www.projetoquintais.com.br</p> <p>http://www.projetoquintais.com.br/colaboradores</p>	<p>1 - No poverty 2 – Zero hunger 8 - Decent work and economic growth 10 - Reduced inequalities 12 - Responsible consumption and production;</p>
<p>Ekloos Institute (State Secretariat of Culture of Rio de Janeiro)</p>	<p>https://www.ekloos.org/vamosrio</p>	<p>8 - Decent work and economic growth 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure 10 - Reduced inequalities 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions 17 - Partnerships for the goals</p>
<p>Ethos Institute</p>	<p>https://www.ethos.org.br/conteudo/associados/</p>	<p>8 - Decent work and economic growth 11 - Sustainable cities and communities 12 - Responsible consumption and production</p>

		16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions 17 - Partnerships for the goals
Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development (CEBDS) - World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)	https://cebds.org/ https://cebds.org/empresas/ https://cebds.org/philip-morris-brasil-assina-compromisso-do-cebds-para-melhor-gestao-hidrica/	7 - Affordable and clean energy 13 - Climate action 14 - Life below water 15 - Life on land 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions; 17 - Partnerships for the goals

Table 3: Institutions and Social Sustainability Projects to which IT is associated.

Conclusion

The tobacco industry operates on the most different fronts when it comes to CSR strategies related to sustainable development and, more precisely, the 2030 Agenda. It promotes and joins projects in all the 2030 Agenda SDGs, which society will be implemented in the coming years. Thus, it positions itself as a partner in this struggle and displays an image of concern about society's direction.

Considering ending poverty (SDG 1), TI promotes projects aimed at agriculture and agricultural practices. It makes people believe that it is a sector that offers job opportunities and enables citizens to work where they will be trained and have decent work, which will allow them to assist their families' needs. However, it is known that tobacco growers live in poverty and are often indebted to TI.⁸¹ Although TI places itself as an important contributor to the economy through tax collection, the estimated direct health costs associated with smoking in Brazil reach R\$50 billion against R\$12 billion in tax revenues.⁸²

Regarding SDS 2, ending hunger and promoting sustainable agriculture, the tobacco industry undertakes projects that show concern for the environment's future, such as reforestation projects, and stimulates sustainable practices. Therefore, the image passed on is that they have no responsibility for the devastation of the environment and the exploitation of the rural worker. The label that society and public opinion come to see is that TI agrees with the vision of a better future for humanity. Nonetheless, it is responsible for harming the ecosystem by producing a product that causes lasting damage to the environment. The industry manipulates public opinion by developing CSR measures and simulating support for alternative crop projects.⁸³ Besides, the agricultural area used for tobacco growing also does not meet the need for food growing and food security strategies.⁸⁴

When it comes to ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all (**SDG 3**), the tobacco industry, on the one hand, promotes projects relevant to its employees' health and well-being, while on the other hand, promotes the cultivation of a plant that harms the health of the farmer for the tobacco leaf manipulation and the excessive use of pesticides.^{85,86} It is important to note that some mental and behavioral disorders, such as anxiety, sleep disorders, stress, and depression, were pointed out as illnesses commonly diagnosed among tobacco-growing families due to the work conditions and the contractual relationships with tobacco companies.⁸⁷

SDG 4 deals with ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education. Again, the industry positions itself as a partner in this task. TI shows concern about future citizens and supports programs that primarily target younger people and their learning. It benefits from child labor as an unpaid workforce and simulates support for actions against child labor.⁸⁸ However, it is known that school dropout is high during harvest, and the industry is constantly accused of child labor practices.⁸⁹ Despite the damage to the children and adolescents' health and the withdrawal from studies, the tobacco industry is not held responsible,⁸⁸ portraying itself as part of the solution, not the problem.

TI often addresses gender equality (**SDG 5**) in several projects. Their objective is to achieve equal conditions for men and women in the labor market. As it is a current theme with great media appeal, the industry undoubtedly tries to show it is a sector in accordance with modern times and tied to the moment that the world lives. Women are the majority of the world's population, and they gain the recognition that is rightfully theirs every day. So, being a partner in this journey means being in tune with what the world demands. However, the industry's approach ignores specific issues that permeate women's relationship with tobacco. Women account for 9.6% of Brazil's more than 22 million smokers.⁹⁰ They are at risk of becoming ill or dying from a series of diseases caused by tobacco use or exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, bringing additional risks to their children when pregnant and breastfeeding.⁹¹ A recent study showed that women play a central role in smoking, with severe challenges to their health and well-being, deserving differentiated attention.⁸⁷

Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation, **SDG 6** theme, is another topic in which the industry finances projects seeking to demonstrate itself driven by the same objective. In this 2030 Agenda goal, one of the TI's strategies is to develop projects that care for the environment, particularly those ensuring water resource preservation, such as *Projeto Protetor das Águas*.³¹ However, tobacco growing and cigarette production are responsible for generating tons of solid waste, which pollutes water systems.⁸⁴ In addition, the use of pesticides in tobacco growing contaminates water sources and soil and causes damage to farmers' health.⁹² Recent studies show that 3.7 liters of water are necessary to make one cigarette.⁹³

SDG 7 deals with affordable and clean energy, and the industry also focuses on this theme. There are programs about reforestation and using clean energy in its factories. This time, we see the industry "concerned" about a more sustainable future with less environmental damage. Still, they provide no report demonstrating the damage done to the environment and how balanced this scale is. In reality, it is the opposite: the tobacco industry and its front groups, such as the Tobacco

Growers' Association of Brazil (*Afubra*), claim that tobacco growers use reforestation wood – eucalyptus, which is not native – to feed greenhouses as firewood for the curing of tobacco leaves.⁹⁴ Thus, tobacco growing processes cause deforestation.⁹⁵

Several projects promoted or shared by the industry related to **SDG 8** deal with sustainable economic growth and decent work. Among them, InPACTO, a project to eradicate child labor, stands out. Despite funding projects and establishing partnerships for fighting against child labor, TI is also linked to practices that promote child labor since many children work on tobacco farms worldwide.⁹⁶ Besides, there is an apparent contradiction to the support intended by the industry for these projects since smoking is related to early deaths at productive age, early retirement higher rate, absences from work, lower income, and more expenses, e.g., insurance, cleaning, and equipment maintenance.⁹⁷

Industry, innovation, and infrastructure are **SDG 9** themes. Programs focused on promoting greater efficiency and environmental preservation in tobacco-growing properties and on business opportunities arising from global warming are part of the tobacco industry's agenda. These programs aim to place TI as an industry willing to recognize its misconceptions and seek improvements. Actual practices, however, show that little has changed. The impact of tobacco products on the environment shows the opposite of what the tobacco industry promotes. Recent WHO analysis shows that every year the tobacco industry costs the world 600 million trees, 200,000 hectares of land, 22 billion tons of water, and 84 million tons of CO₂. Most tobacco is grown in low- and middle-income countries, where water and farmland are often desperately needed to produce food. Instead, these lands are being used to grow plants that kill, while more and more land is being deforested. The costs of cleaning up tobacco products thrown in the trash fall on taxpayers, not the industry. Each year, this costs Brazil more than US\$ 200 million.⁹⁸

SDG 10 corresponds to the issue of inequalities. The industry has created several projects focusing on this theme, such as projects aiming to pay their female and male employees equally for the same job and selective processes aimed at afro-descendant people. With this social theme, the industry tries to position itself as an evolving sector. With such attitudes, they win public opinion and raise supporters. Nonetheless, this relationship does not seem resolved with tobacco growers. The analysis of the Human Development Index (HDI – life expectancy, schooling, and per capita income) shows that the main tobacco-growing areas in the Southern region are among those with the lowest HDI in the country and that the monthly income is less than one minimum wage for 61% of tobacco-growing families.⁹⁹

SDG 11 focuses on sustainable cities and communities. TI is imbued with collaborating with this theme when presenting projects that deal with sustainability. The project *Pensar na Futuro é Agir Agora* (JTI Brazil) exemplifies how the TI acts to show engagement in sustainable development. Despite programs and actions, TI keeps manufacturing a product responsible for damaging the environment and the population's health. In fact, tobacco products are the most polluting items on the planet, containing more than 7,000 toxic chemicals that seep into our environment when discarded. About 4.5 trillion cigarette filters pollute oceans, rivers, sidewalks, parks, and beaches every year.¹⁰⁰

Responsible consumption and production are **SDG 12** themes. TI wants to pass on an image that it is committed to the environment and society and creates or associates with responsible consumption and production programs. Although some tobacco components are biodegradable, filters and plastic packaging, as well as components of electronic smoking devices (ESDs) remain in the environment for long periods.⁴¹ Moreover, manufacturing and offering tobacco products to the population contradicts this SDG because it compromises consumers' health, pollutes the environment, and consumes public resources to treat associated tobacco diseases. Tobacco companies should not be rewarded for any initiative linked to SDGs.¹⁰¹

SDG 13 deals with measures against global climate change, which is somewhat tied to SDG 12 because, with responsible production, the tobacco industry would be contributing to reducing its emissions and reducing the risk of global warming that generates irreversible damage to our planet. Thus, environmental projects are this SDG focus. However, it is known that TI's priority is to manufacture a product that directly contributes to global climate change. Manufacturing and distributing tobacco products are environmentally harmful due to the extensive use of energy, water, and other resources. Overall, these processes generate substantial carbon emissions, corresponding to 3 million transatlantic flights.⁹³ They include the use of energy and water for tobacco growing, tobacco leaf shredding and reconstitution, reconstituted tobacco freezing and artificial surface expansion, production of the paper used in commercial cigarettes or as roll-your-own paper, production of cigarette filters, and production of packaging and advertising materials. The logistics of importing and distributing sheets from manufacturers to wholesalers and retailers by truck, boat, train, or other means of transport creates an additional carbon footprint.⁹³

SDGs 14 and 15 deal with aquatic and terrestrial lives, respectively. Here, TI focuses on projects that make tobacco companies' ecosystems more sustainable and less harmful to species. Still, growing, manufacturing, and delivering to tobacco retailers have serious environmental consequences, including deforestation and pesticide contamination, since tobacco growing is among the ten crops that require high quantities of fertilizers and leave more residues in soil and water, affecting flora and fauna.¹⁰² Cellulose acetate cigarette filters are not biodegradable and may remain in the environment for long periods in the form of microplastics which can cause significant damage to the marine environment, lakes, rivers, estuaries, and wetlands. Filters also release nicotine, heavy metals, and other chemicals into ecosystems. This, in turn, affects the livelihood and health of fishing communities living in coastal areas and those who consume sea products affected by contamination.⁹³

SDG 16 deals with peace, justice, and strong institutions, which parallels SDGs 5 and 10, which deal respectively with gender equality and reduced inequality. The projects in which the tobacco industry engages directly address the way the industry deals with its employees and how it claims to promote equality. Thus, these projects focus on themes such as gender, race, and religion. However, as commented in SDGs 1, 4, and 5, there is an inconsistency between TI's initiatives to reduce inequality and the data on farmers involved in the tobacco production chain

(see SDG 10), on the tobacco pandemic profile among women (see SDG 5), and about child labor (see SDG 4).

Finally, **SDG 17** deals with partnerships and strengthening the means of implementation. TI has several projects with other institutions on this theme. They are projects to tie the name of the industry to noble causes and put the industry in the spotlight, usually through sponsorship and institutional support. The goal is to be associated with serious institutions and reap the rewards from the positive marketing that these partners can bring. In addition, the industry calls itself a partner of governments and public agencies in the fight against smuggling¹⁰³ and tries to position itself as a partner in public health by promoting ESDs.¹⁰⁴

In conclusion, the tobacco industry associates itself with all the 2030 Agenda goals. CSR strategies, which promote an image of seriousness before society, show that the tobacco industry is often successful despite significant inconsistencies with the real world and its non-accountability for the harm caused by tobacco to society, economy, health, and environment. Although much investment is made in this sector, the damage caused by the product is far from being repaired. TI's strategies mean to mitigate its negative image obtained by selling a product that kills millions of people every year. The tobacco industry also influences politicians and legislators to dilute measures contrary to their business interests, undermining governments and society's efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda goals.^{103,104}

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