



**Corporate actors use a wider variety of channels to engage with policy makers. Not all of these are openly acknowledged. Policy makers' are not always aware of these channels with potentially serious consequences for evidence based policy making**

**channels**  
 political action  
**addictions**  
 corporate actors

[WP12](#) involved mapping the activities of corporate and economic actors in order to ascertain the shape and nature of the engagement of 'addiction related industries' (Alcohol, Tobacco, Gambling and Food) with policy makers. Comparing the architecture of corporate political action in the EU of these 'addiction related industries' is a relatively unexplored area of policy action in relation to the governance of addictions. The ways in which these products and services are sold and promoted are regulated differently across Europe and member states. Similarities can be observed, however, in the ways in which the commercial sectors that manufacture and promote these products operate.

It is clear that in addition to direct action from corporations, a myriad of intermediaries also engage in policy related activities. By following the 'routes' that corporations take to pursue their interests, as opposed to examining a predetermined universe of 'lobby groups', we were able to develop a more comprehensive analysis of corporate political action. The many and various 'routes' to policy influence are significantly greater than has been suggested in previous research. However, while the 'routes' increase, the actors involved may not. This can result in the appearance of a range of voices engaging with policy makers, when in fact a much more limited range of corporate actors is behind the apparent range on offer.

Our research demonstrated that a wide range of organisations including trade associations, think tanks, law firms, lobbying and PR consultancies, research institutes and civil society groups appear to have direct or indirect relations with corporate actors. This can result in two issues: first corporate linked voices can be over-represented in policy discussions; and second that this skewing of the information environment is not necessarily easily visible to policy makers. As a result, public health interests can be overwhelmed or drowned out in policy discussion and evidence based approaches can be undermined.

Those who seek to exert influence often attempt to keep this hidden. Therefore, one policy measure could be to facilitate wider knowledge by improving transparency-registers and conflict of interest measures where they exist and establish them where they do not.

Another is to more effectively manage policy access - attempting to ensure a level playing field for contending interests.

**READ MORE**

Miller, D.; Schloegl, M.; & Harkins, C.; (2015) *Influence network diagrams: A report describing a theoretical framework to understand the organizational shape of industrial actors in scientific, policy and public debate*. Addictions and Lifestyles in Contemporary Europe - Reframing Addictions Project (ALICE RAP): [Deliverable 12.2](#)

Miller, D. and Harkins, C. (2015) 'Addictive substances and behaviours and corruption, transparency and governance' in Peter Anderson, Jürgen Rehm, and Robin Room (eds) [Impact of Addictive Substances and Behaviours on Individual and Societal Well-being](#), Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Miller, D. & Harkins, C. (2014) 'Webs Of Influence: Corporate Impacts On Governance' in Anderson, P., Buhringer, G. & Colom, J. (eds) [Reframing addiction: policies, processes and pressures](#). Barcelona: The ALICE RAP project. ISBN: 978-84-697-1647-2

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