

Across the world availability of flavour accessories for tobacco products: do-it-yourself flavour addition to increase tobacco products' attractiveness

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1 The search protocol

Flavour accessories for nicotine or tobacco products - a web-based inventory of selected countries globally

Background

To discourage youth from the use of nicotine and tobacco products, certain countries have implemented a flavour ban on these products. However, new strategies have been employed to circumvent flavour bans. These include the marketing of **products that can add flavour to nicotine and/or tobacco products** (hereafter named “**flavour accessories**”). Flavour accessories have been signaled on the Dutch market and in other European countries. Still, much is unclear on the different types and varieties of flavour accessories available and the marketing of these products in different countries (with and without flavour bans). Therefore, WHO is conducting a study to learn more about the availability of these products in selected countries in its six regions and the strategies used by their manufacturers to promote them. RIVM will lead this work but will work closely with WHO to gather and analyze data. To this end, we would like to request your participation in developing the inventory on flavour accessories in your country. This will advance our knowledge on the availability and variety of flavour accessories for use with nicotine and tobacco products. Additionally, your answers will provide insight into the marketing strategies of companies that produce and/or sell these products. Based on the collected data, a WHO report will be developed providing a solid information base and a policy brief will also be developed that will inform WHO’s work in this area going forward. This will include raising awareness about the findings among policy makers regarding these products.

The expected time to spend on data collection for your country is max. 2 – 3 days. The deadline for providing your findings is **Monday April 25**. Hereby attached is the protocol for the study (i.e. in this document) to facilitate the search on your local websites, data collection and data recording. We have tried as much as possible to make the web search clear and easy.. However, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the contactpersons.

What TO look for?

- **Products that can add flavour to an existing tobacco or nicotine product, such as flavour cards to put in a pack of cigarettes, flavour sticks to add a flavour to a cigarette, flavour balls to insert into a cigarette etc.**

What NOT to look for?

- **Products that can be used on their own, such as: (e-)cigarettes with flavours, heated tobacco products, inhalers, nicotine pouches, tobacco for oral use etc.**
- **Products that add flavour to products other than nicotine, tobacco or smoking products, such as food flavourings (unless it is clearly stated on the website that the intended use of these flavourings is (also) for a nicotine/tobacco/smoking product)**

Related document: Excel sheet “WHO Flavour accessories inventory”

Systematic search steps for Google searches

For visual examples: see **Appendix A** at the end of this document

- 1a)** Go to your local search engine <https://www.google.xx> (where .xx is the local domain extension e.g. “.it” or “.nl”)
- 1b)** Enter the first keywords from the list below [“Add flavour to cigarette”] in your national language and enter the translated keywords in “Keywords in local language” of the Excel sheet “WHO Flavour accessories inventory”
- 1c)** When a resulting website contains information on flavouring accessories, copy + paste the weblink (URL) in “Sheet 1 – inventory web search” of the Excel sheet
- 1d)** Provide the information asked for in “Sheet 1 – inventory web search” of the Excel sheet. Start with row 1, column B and continue to column W. Questions and examples are given in rows 10 and 11 in “Sheet 1 – inventory web search” and an extra explanation can be found in “Instruction guide & explanation”.
- 1e)** Repeat steps **1c and d** for websites containing information on flavour accessories for the first page of google results with the same keywords.
- 1f)** Repeat step **1a-1e** search for the other provided keywords (2 – 7). If different flavour accessories can be found by other keywords than provided, please provide used keywords in “Keywords in local language” of the Excel sheet and highlight found results in red in “Sheet 1 – inventory web search”
- 1g)** Fill-out the information on contact details and legislation on the top of the page “Sheet 1 – inventory web search” of the Excel sheet “WHO Flavour accessories inventory”.
- 1h)** E-mail the completed Excel sheet to: contactpersons by 25 April 2022.

Seven keywords to be entered in Google search in own language	
1	“Add flavour to cigarette”
2	“Add flavour to tobacco”
3*	“DIY flavoured cigarettes”
4	“Flavour card tobacco”
5	“Flavour filter cigarette”
6	“Click flavour balls cigarette”
7	“Tobacco flavour spray”

*“DIY” = *do it yourself*

General instructions and specifics about the required data are provided in the Excel template “WHO Flavouring accessories inventory”

If information is **not available**, please fill in **N/A**. If a question can be answered with **YES**, please provide further details, including by providing an explanation.

Provide/paste information that is **directly copied** (after translation to **English**) from the website, unless you are explicitly asked for an interpretation or perception.

We will contact you through WHO should there be any follow up items or questions but please note that any information provided will not be shared with other parties.

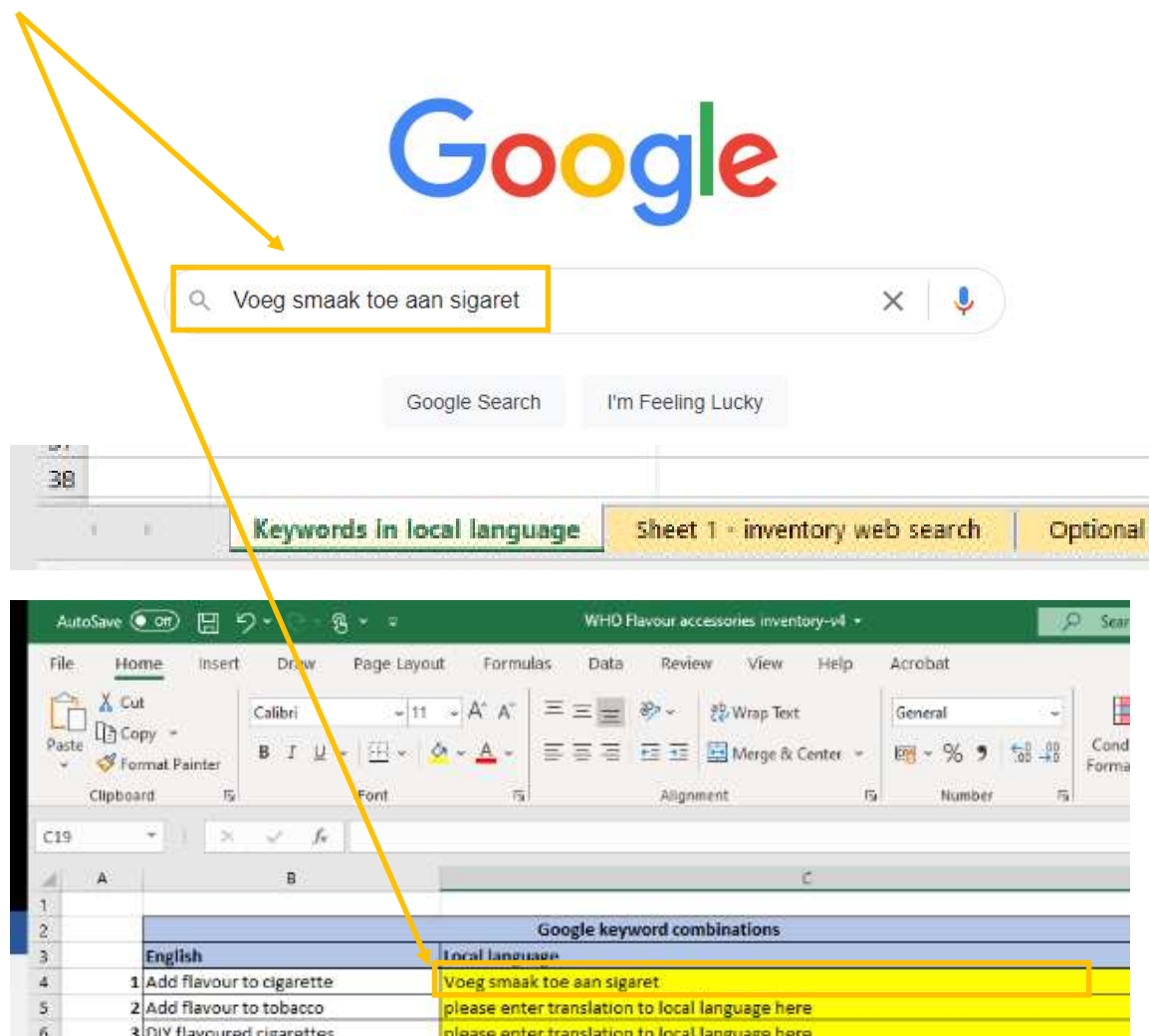
Appendix A – Example of Google search

1a) Enter the Google URL with the local domain extension, e.g:



1b) Translate the keywords (see table on page 2) in your local language and fill out the translation in the first tab “Keywords in local language” of the Excel sheet “WHO Flavour accessories inventory”.

1c) Enter the first set of keywords (as provided in the table above) in your local language, in Google:

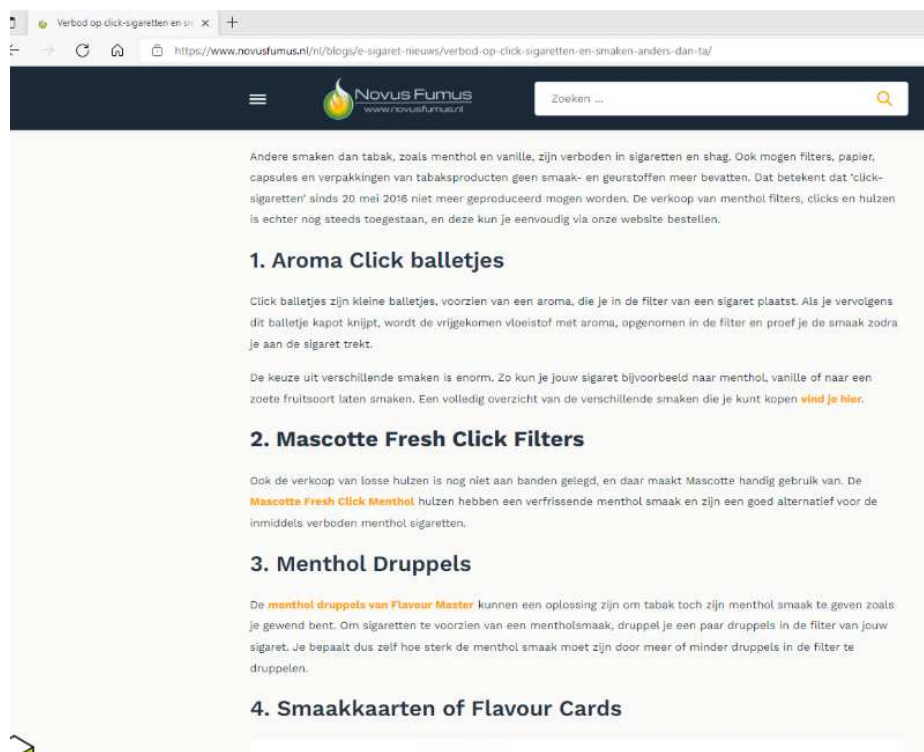
A composite image showing a Google search and an Excel spreadsheet. The top part shows a Google search page with the search bar containing the text "Voeg smaak toe aan sigaret". Below the search bar are buttons for "Google Search" and "I'm Feeling Lucky". The bottom part shows an Excel spreadsheet titled "WHO Flavour accessories inventory-v4". The spreadsheet has three tabs: "Keywords in local language", "Sheet 1 - inventory web search", and "Optional". The "Keywords in local language" tab is active. The spreadsheet has columns for "English" and "Local language". The first row of data is highlighted in yellow and contains the text "1 Add flavour to cigarette" in the English column and "Voeg smaak toe aan sigaret" in the Local language column. The second and third rows are highlighted in yellow and contain the text "2 Add flavour to tobacco" and "3 DIY flavoured cigarettes" in the English column, and "please enter translation to local language here" in the Local language column. A yellow arrow points from the search bar to the "Local language" column in the spreadsheet.

1d) Look at the resulting list of websites. If a website contains information on flavour accessories, copy the URL in the Excel document

The screenshot shows a Google search for "Voeg smaak toe aan sigaret". The search results include a snippet about manufacturers adding substances to cigarettes, followed by several search results. One result is highlighted with a yellow box: "Verbod op click-sigaretten en smaken anders dan tabak" from Novus Fumus, dated 4 May 2021. A yellow arrow points from this highlighted result to the URL in the table below.

Questions	URL of the website
Examples	www.fruitastick.com
1	https://www.novusfumus.nl/nl/blogs/e-sigaret-nieuws/verbod-op-click-sigaretten-en-smaken-anders
2	
3	

1e) Based on information provided on the website, fill out the rest of the fields in the corresponding row



Locations	URL of the website	Type of website		Language(s) of website
Examples	e.g. www.fingertick.com	e.g. Local webshop, International webshop, forum, social media	In case of 'other', please fill out type of website in this column	e.g. "Portuguese", "English", "Portuguese and English"
1	https://www.novusfumus.nl/nl/blogs/e-sigaret-nieuws/verbod-op-click-sigaretten-en-smaken-anders-dan-ta/	other	Informative website with links to local webshop	Dutch

Product name / brand	Manufacturer	Product type	
<i>e.g. "Frutastick"</i>	<i>e.g. Philip Morris</i>	<i>e.g. clickball, card, spray</i>	<i>In case of "other", please fill out product type in this column</i>
Aroma click balls	Aroma King	click ball	N/A

Fill out up to row W “Famous people / influencers cited?”

1f) Only look at the first page of Google for each keyword search



1g) repeat for other provided keywords in a similar way as described before



voeg smaak toe aan tabak

Google Search I'm Feeling Lucky

1h) Fill-out top of Excel sheet (legislation, contact info etc.)

WHO Flavour accessories inventory-v4-withexampleforscre

Home Insert Draw Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Help

Cut Copy Format Painter

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	B	C	D	E	F
Country:	The Netherlands				
Does your country have a ban on flavours or flavourings in tobacco products?	yes	Product type(s)	Flavours and/or flavourings		
		cigarette and roll-your-own	all characterizing flavours including menthol		
Does your country have a ban on flavour accessories?	no	N/A			
Marlboro Red cigarettes, regular pack	20	€8,20	N/A		
Contact name:	Ingrid Bakker				
Contact e-mail:	person@rivm.nl				

1h) E-mail fully filled out Excel sheet to contact persons.

2 The excel template

Sheet 1 – Keywords in local language

Google keyword combinations		
English	Local language	
1	Add flavour to cigarette	please enter translation to local language here
2	Add flavour to tobacco	please enter translation to local language here
3	DIY flavoured cigarettes	please enter translation to local language here
4	Flavour card tobacco	please enter translation to local language here
5	Flavour filter cigarette	please enter translation to local language here
6	Click flavour balls cigarette	please enter translation to local language here
7	Tobacco flavour spray	please enter translation to local language here

In case additional keywords were used:

Optional	please enter English keywords here	please enter translation to local language here
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Sheet 2 – Inventory web search

Please indicate your answers by clicking on a cell		
Country:	Please fill out your answer here by replacing this text	
Does your country have a ban on flavours or flavourings in tobacco products?	Product type(s)	Flavours and/or flavourings
	In case of "other" please fill out product here	
Does your country have a ban on flavour accessories?	If yes: please elaborate	

Marlboro Red cigarettes, regular pack	<i>Number of cigarettes in pack (e.g. 20)</i>	<i>Costs per pack with currency (e.g. \$10,-)</i>	<i>If unsure, please fill out an estimation here.</i>
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Questions	URL of the website	Type of website		Age verification	What products does the website sell?	Language(s) of website	Product name / brand	Manufacturer	Product type		ALL available flavours
		<i>e.g. Local webshop, international webshop, forum, social media</i>	<i>In case of "other", please fill out type of website in this column</i>						<i>Does the website require age verification? Yes/no</i>	<i>e.g. Tobacco products, e-cigarettes, non-tobacco products</i>	
<i>Examples</i>	<i>e.g. www.frutastick.com</i>										
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											

Website appearances (your perception): is the website particularly attractive for youth?	Target audience(s) mentioned on the website?	Special offers	Advantages	"How to use" description given?	Flavour ban mentioned on the website?	Costs per sample?	Famous people / influencers cited?
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yes/no	Provide up to five keywords that that motivate your answer why you think the website is attractive for youth. Examples: childlike, colourful, chique, basic, professional, modern, use of cartoons...	e.g. non-smokers in case of "perfect for when you are not used to smoking" youth and adults : "for young and old" (former) menthol users : "for people who were used to smoke menthol cigarettes"	In case of "other", please fill out target audience in this column	yes/no e.g. "3 for the price of 1", "50% discount"	e.g. easy in use, more flavour, fits in your pocket, refillable	E.g. "add three balls to your cigarette with the delivered applicator before lighting the cigarette"	E.g. "since 2020 menthol is not allowed ..."	Please provide smallest sample size and currency, e.g. \$5,- for one flavour spray	Name of person + citation. E.g. "Tom Cruise uses flavour cards for his cigarettes"

Sheet 3 – Instruction guide & explanation

Guidelines for each category in "Sheet 1 - inventory web search"	Examples, explanations				
Start a new row for each new accessory, also when sold on the same website (just enter the URL again in the next row for each different accessory)	1	URL	local webshop	English	Frutastick
	2	URL	local webshop	English	Rizzla card
If a own chosen keyword combination (apart from the 7 provided) is used to obtain information on flavour accessories, please enter results in red	1	www.frutastick.com	forum	English	menthol card

Question/topic	Type of answering	Examples, explanations
URL of the website	Copy + paste URL	Website URL (source), e.g. www.frutastick.com
Type of website	Choose one option from the dropdown menu or fill out in case of "other"	Type of the website: is it a local webshop, an internation webshop (e.g. Amazon), forum ?

Age verification	<i>Choose from dropdown menu: yes or no</i>	Some websites may show a pop-up window where you need to indicate your age, date of birth or confirm that you are older than a certain age.
Type of products sold	<i>Choose one or more options from dropdown menu</i>	Are the products sold by themselves on an independent webshop, or in a webshop for tobacco and/or e-cigarette products, or a webshop that also sells non-tobacco products such as food, gadgets or clothing?
Language(s) of website		Language options for the website (if multiple languages are available, this is usually represented by country flags in the top corner of the website)
Product name / brand	<i>Fill out</i>	Name or brand of the product, e.g. 'frutastick'
Manufacturer	<i>Fill out</i>	Manufacturer of the product, e.g. 'Philip Morris'. In case this is not explicitly mentioned on the website, please perform a separate Google search to see if the manufacturer of a specific product is known and fill this out as the answer
Product type	<i>Choose one option from the dropdown menu or fill out in case of "other"</i>	Type of the product, e.g. clickball, card, spray...
ALL available flavours	<i>Fill out all available flavours</i>	All available flavours of a particular flavour accessory, e.g. "menthol", "strawberry" and "crazy rainbow", in case of "crazy rainbow", please provide the flavours that belong to this description
Website appearances (your perception): is the website particularly attractive for youth?	<i>Choose from dropdown menu (yes/no) and motivate the answer in case of "yes" in the second column</i>	Provide up to five keywords that that motivate your answer why you think the website is attractive for youth. Examples: childlike, colourful, chique, basic, professional, modern, use of cartoons...
Target audience mentioned on the website?	<i>Choose one or more options from dropdown menu or fill out in case of "other"</i>	Is a clear target audience explicitly mentioned on the website? E.g. "perfect for when you are not used to smoking" "for young and old" "for menthol users"
Special offers	<i>Choose from dropdown menu: yes or no</i>	If special offers are provided, such as "3 for the price of 1" or "50% discount", please enter yes. If not: enter no or N/A.
Advantages	<i>Copy + paste advantages mentioned on website</i>	Are advantages mentioned on the website? E.g. . easy in use, more flavour, fits in your pocket, refillable...
"How to use" description	<i>Choose from dropdown menu: yes or no</i>	Is a "how to use"-description given on the website? E.g. "add three balls to your cigarette with the delivered applicator before lighting the cigarette"
Flavour ban mentioned?	<i>Choose from dropdown menu: yes or no</i>	Is a flavour ban mentioned on the website? E.g. "since 2020 menthol is not allowed..."
Costs per sample	<i>Fill out</i>	What are the costs of the smallest package size? E.g. one flavour spray costs \$5,-

Famous people / influencers cited?	<i>Copy + paste citation</i>	Are famous people or influencers cited? E.g. "Tom Cruise uses flavour cards for his cigarettes"
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3 Brands and manufacturers

Table 1. Overview of all reported brands of the different types of flavour accessories

Brands of products reported	
Capsules	Aroma Kapsel, Aroma King, Atomic, Bull Brand, Capsulas de frutas, Cigarette Blast Capsule, Cigarette Burst Beads, Cigarette Pops Crushball, Click of Taste, Clickers, CooBigo, Crushstore, Dark Horse, DAYANG, Explosion Beads Balls, Flavely crushballs, Flavouroom, Formizone, Freeze, Frutta, Gizeh, Hoffmann, Hot flowers, Iurima, JAOCDOEN, Jujucat, King Palm, KLCR, Kooshy, Lilico, Mascotte, MCT, Menthol Mint, Crushballs, Menthol24de, MKXULO, Mr Crush, MrBlastin, NIVNI, Novus Fumus, QINGWEICH, Rhinestein, Rizla, Santiago, Snail, Swan, Tip time, Ulike, Volking, Woorea, XYZCUP, Yellow finger
Card	Aroma King, Aromax+, Click of Taste, Crizp, Flavorkissy, Flavouroom, Fleva, Freeze, FRIZC, HIPZZ, Honeypuff Inc., King Palm, Korona, Mascotte, Mason's, Nivni, PL88, Rizla, Swan, WHITELAMA, ZUGSPITZE 30
Filter tip	Bull Brand, CBO, Clipper, Dark Horse, Energy, Flavor King, Fleva, Frutta, Gizeh, Joyo, King Palm, Korona, Mascotte, MCT, Palmer, Rizla, SMK, Smokingpaper.com, Swan, Tip Time, Ventii, Zig Zag
Spray	Hubbly bubbly, Leaf only, Original Tobacco Flavour Co., REV, SBE, Tasty Puff
Drops	5Monkeys, Flavour Blast, Flavour Master, Instahit, Make it Menthol, MF Rural, Tasty Puff
Other	Bull Brand, Cyclones, Flavour by stone, Frutastick, Juicy Jay, Korona, Wellgreen

Table 2. Overview of all reported manufacturers of the different types of flavour accessories
Manufacturers that also produce tobacco products are indicated in cursive.

Manufacturers of products reported	
Capsules	Anhui Snail Environmental Technology Co. Ltd., Aroma King, Atomic, Bangyao, <i>Bull Brand</i> , Crushstore, <i>Dark Horse</i> , Flavely, Flavouroom, Formizone, GIZEH, Hoffmann, <i>Imperial tobacco</i> , Iurima, Jujucat, KLCR, Kooshy, Lalicic Trading AB, Lilico, Mascotte, Menthol24de, Mr Crush, MrBlastin, NIVNI, Novus Fumus, Qiu County Haolaixin New Material Technology Co.,Ltd, Rhinestein, Santiago, Shijiazhuang shengshizhixing Environment Engineering Co.,Ltd, SKU, Swan, Tip Time, Ulike, Volking, Woorea
Card	Aroma King, Aromax+, <i>BULL BRAND</i> , CRIZP, Freeze, Frizc, Greens Holdings UK Limited, HIPZZ, Honeypuff Inc., <i>Imperial Tobacco</i> , Korona, "LALICIC TRADING AB", Nivni, Novus Fumus, Republic Technologies, <i>Rizla</i> , SD International, WHITELAMA
Filter tip	Active, Bull Brand, Clipper, Energy, Gizeh, <i>Imperial Tobacco</i> , Kent Druk, Korona, Mascotte, Palmer, SMK, Swan, Tip Time, Zig Zag
Spray	<i>Gawith Hoggarth</i> , <i>Imperial Tobacco</i> , Tasty Puff, The Original Tobacco Flavour Company
Drops	<i>Bull Brand</i> , Flavour Master, Instahit, Sarome, Smooke
Other	<i>Bull Brand</i> , Cyclones, Juicy Jay, Korona, Novus Fumus