



trustea

**INDIA SUSTAINABLE
TEA PROGRAM**



trustea THE INDIA SUSTAINABLE TEA PROGRAM

is an ambitious initiative to develop and implement a sustainability Code for the Indian domestic tea market.

This initiative to transform the Indian tea industry is based on industry realities and globally accepted sustainability principles.

The program, led by the Tea Board of India is currently jointly funded by The Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) and Tata Global Beverages Limited (TGBL).

Solidaridad and Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP) are the implementing partners.

Rainforest Alliance (RA) is the technical advisor.

It is hoped that other organizations will soon join the program.

Tea Board of India strongly believes that the effective implementation of the trustea program will significantly improve the social and economic conditions of the tea industry whilst protecting the environment. As a result consumers will be assured of getting a safe and good cup of tea. Securing the long term sustainability of the Indian tea industry will benefit all stakeholders in the tea industry. The four year program launched in July 2013 targets 500 million kgs of tea from over 600 factories positively impacting the livelihoods of 500,000 tea plantation workers and 40,000 smallholders by 2017.

The India-specific sustainability tea Code has been developed from the industry, by the industry and for the industry.

Effective Code implementation will provide sustainable tea to a rapidly growing community of discernible Indian tea consumers.

Besides, the program will offer producers training in Code compliance, free of charge, through three Farm Support Centres. An important program element will be enhanced clarity among multiple prevailing standards.

IDH acts as the program coordinator. It aims to convene the key stakeholders in the industry in close collaboration with the Tea Board of India to drive behavioural change in the Indian tea industry and institutionalization of sector wide cooperation.

The lead implementer Solidaridad in conjunction with ETP, is responsible for the coordination, facilitation and overall supervision of Code development and program implementation. The activities comprise resource allocation, budget management, farm support centre management and verification processes.

A. WHAT IS trustea THE INDIA SUSTAINABLE TEA PROGRAM?

The India Sustainable Tea Program is a locally-developed and owned Indian sustainability tea Code. This meaningful, cost-effective and practical Code does not compromise globally accepted core sustainability standards.

It is envisioned that compliance with the Code will not only improve competitiveness for tea farms but also make it possible for them to comply with national regulations and in future international sustainability standards. The applicable control points under 11 chapters need to be adhered to within a four-year period, resulting in complete compliance. The verification under the Code provides consumers with the assurance of responsible production and provides producers the opportunity to credibly demonstrate this to their customers.

B WHY DO WE NEED trustea?

Increasing number of consumers around the world are insisting that the products they buy are made from sustainable raw material. The effective delivery of the India Sustainable Tea program will:

- Ensure the long term sustainability of the Indian tea industry, prepare for rising consumer demands for food safety and sustainably produced Indian tea.
- Increase competitiveness of the Indian tea industry.
- Improve the international image of the Indian tea industry.
- Realize livelihood improvement of tea workers.
- Improve the tea growing practices of the fast growing smallholder segment and mainstreaming smallholders and small estates into the sustainability fold.
- Ensure Indian tea can and will be produced in the generations to come.

C. WHAT IS GROUND BREAKING IN trustea THE INDIA SUSTAINABLE TEA PROGRAM ?

- Ownership: Code is developed, owned and managed by Indian tea industry stakeholders.
- Food safety: Extensive focus on food safety components integrated into the Code.
- Good manufacturing practices: Tea manufacturing and other effective practices covering tea factories integrated into one Code.
- Lower certification cost: Innovative verification systems of external audits in alternate years and reduced cost due to the presence of locally-trained auditors.
- Support: Investing in experienced field staff and field offices to assist producers in Code compliance.

D. WHO CAN BE VERIFIED UNDER trustea THE INDIA SUSTAINABLE TEA PROGRAM CODE?

The certificate holder will be the tea plantation company, the bought leaf factory (BLF), or the independent producer groups together with the factory. The entry-point of the Code for compliance will be the factories in estates, BLFs or grower group representatives having processing arrangements, who then work with production sites and smallholders respectively.

E. WHO SUPPORTS trustea THE INDIA SUSTAINABLE TEA PROGRAM CODE?

trustea is supported by the trustea Program Committee (TPC) and trustea Advisory Committee (TAC), both constituted of key Indian tea industry stakeholders committed to work together to enhance tea program accountability and credibility. The Tea Board of India chairs both the TPC and TAC.

The Indian tea industry recognizes that the journey towards achieving complete sustainability needs to start now.

F. HOW DOES trustea RELATE TO OTHER SIMILAR CREDENTIALS AND PROGRAMS (ETP/RA/UTZ/FLO ETC.)?

The new Code has largely been modeled on current internationally recognized standards while taking into consideration Indian realities on the farm and in markets.

The India sustainability verification Code will be benchmarked against RA, UTZ and FLO; it will highlight steps to be taken by producers to move from compliance with the India Code to international certification Codes should they so desire.

Benchmarking trustea – trustea is now being benchmarked by ITC Standards (Joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations) and in the initial findings, trustea shows a strong alignment with the Rainforest Alliance and UTZ from the preliminary mapping done through the ITC Standard Map database.

G. HOW IS THE trustea CODE DEVELOPED?

- The Code is developed in accordance with globally accepted principles and local stakeholder involvements including the Tea Board of India, with clear social, economic and environmental objectives. The Code is administered through TPC and TAC.
- The Code is based on Indian realities and existing legal provisions. References were drawn from existing global standards like Rainforest Alliance, Ethical Tea Partnership, UTZ Certified as well as the Unilever Sustainable Agriculture Code.
- TAC is a forum comprising official representatives of key tea industry stakeholders - Tea Board, CCPA, ITA, UPASI, FAITTA, Tea Brokers and National Federation of Small Tea Growers / CISTA.
- As part of Code development, six pilots, were identified in coordination with HUL and TGB to field test the program

undertaken in three regions-West Bengal, Assam and Nilgiris covering large and small estates as well as smallholdings. The pilots are providing practical information on what works and what are the bottlenecks in reaching the objectives of the Code. Four pilot estates, two in Assam (Sundarpur and Tyroon) and two in South India (Erinkadu and Wentworth) have been verified. Two bought leaf factory (BLF) is under process, one in Assam (Surya) and the other in West Bengal, (Panbari). Total 4.3 million Kgs of tea has been verified covering an area of 2062 Ha.

- Those interested in adopting the Code may contact the trustea Secretariat.
- The lead implementing partner, Solidaridad, is hosting the Secretariat of trustea in Kolkata. The Secretariat provides communication and secretarial support. It will also manage a website (www.trustea.org) for India Sustainable Tea Program and set up Code management systems. It is hoped that by the end of the program period, the Code will be self-administering and would be managed by the Indian tea industry.
- The version (V.1.0) of the Plant Protection Code developed by Tea Board is now available for adoption and use by tea estates. This shall be updated periodically.

H. HOW DOES ONE GET VERIFIED UNDER THE trustea CODE?

- The Code is designed towards a progressive achievement of complete compliance by year four. The “Mandatory” (highlighted in red) and “other criteria” have been divided into four parts covering eleven chapters. In each segment, the verified unit will need to meet 100 per cent of Mandatory control points and 50 per cent of other criteria in year 1, 60 per cent in year 2, 70 per cent in year 3 and 80 per cent in year 4.
- In the first year, the entity entering for verification needs to undertake external verification audits by auditors approved by the Code Secretariat as per the verification protocol and then such audits will be conducted every alternate year. In the years with no external audits, the verified unit must conduct internal audits and supply the audit report to the Indian trustea Code Secretariat.
- An audit protocol has been created which specifies requirements for audit bodies, auditors, internal auditors, Internal Documentation System (IDS) managers, and other interested parties on procedures for trustea audit. Observance of these requirements is intended to ensure that audit bodies operate management system of trustea verification in a competent, consistent and impartial manner, thereby facilitating the recognition of such bodies and the acceptance of their certificates.
- To support the audit process under trustea a few Audit Bodies have been identified and trained according to the requirements of the Code. They will audit the producer as per the agreed trustea protocol.

I. WHY JOIN **trustea** INDIA SUSTAINABLE TEA PROGRAM?

trustea India Sustainable Tea Program supports smallholders and estates in improving the competitiveness of tea gardens by positively influencing the scale of production, farm organization, processing, new technologies and supply chain development.

It aims to improve the livelihoods of smallholders and estate workers.

Further:

- Improved consumer safety leading to reputational benefits and better consumer loyalty.
- Better productivity addressing supply security.
- Improved hygiene in factories addressing food safety issues.
- Controlled and safe handling/use of pesticides.
- Improved environment.
- Improved image of Indian tea locally and globally.

THE FARM SUPPORT CENTRES (FSCS)

The program will set up three Farm Support Centres in three tea producing regions hosted by Solidaridad. The FSCs work closely with branch offices of the Indian tea producer associations - Nilgiris Planters Association and Tea Board offices (apart from research institutes like TRA in North and UPASI Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in South. The personnel will work directly on-field and will be dedicated to the program. The main function of the FSCs will be:

FSC Contacts:

South India: Arjun.V.M@solidaridadnetwork.org Tel. No: +91-423-223-3772

North India (Tinsukia): Diggvijay.Jamwal@solidaridadnetwork.org Tel. No: +91-374-234-2502

1. Technical support on-field

- Identify specific bottlenecks for adopting sustainable production amongst smallholders and estates and provide advice and solutions.
- Provide tailor-made solutions to smallholders on good agricultural practices in collaboration with the Tea Research Association (TRA) and UPASI Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK).
- Set up and manage demo plots where the training of smallholder trainers will be conducted.
- Strengthen smallholder cooperatives.

2. Support smallholders in forming or strengthening groups and associations

- Train farmers in the governance and management of the group/association.
- Assist in the implementation of the sustainability strategy within the group.
- Improve the participation of women in smallholder groups.

3. Provide training to trainers

A series of trainings will be conducted by FSCs with the purpose to develop competent peer sustainability trainers with the skills to design and implement training programs.

4. Provide support to estates and smallholders in preparing for audits and undertaking improvements

- Support during gap audits.
- Support in improving compliance where the FSC team will work along with the trainers and farmers.

The program is open for all to join and participate in, with all being welcome to be a part of the change!

For more information, please contact:

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