



**trustea**

ENVIRONMENT • SAFETY • LIVELIHOODS

**YEAR BOOK**  
2019





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# Introduction

As one of the largest producers and consumers of tea, India is at the centre of the global tea industry. Over years, the tea sector in the country has changed considerably with the emergence of small tea growers and bought leaf factories, which are tea processing factories to which the small growers sell their production. This structure of the industry also led to several sustainability challenges in the sector, including working conditions, health and well-being of plantation workers, quality of tea and conservation of environment.

*trustea* is an Indian sustainability code and verification system for the tea sector, which addresses some of these challenges. The code enables producers, buyers and others involved in Indian tea businesses to obtain tea that has been produced according to agreed, credible, transparent and measurable criteria. The program is working with smallholder tea growers, bought leaf factories, estates and tea retailers to address issues such as working conditions, health and safety of tea workers, water pollution, food safety, soil erosion and contamination, gender issues and adverse effects of climate change.

The *trustea* program supports smallholders, tea estates and bought leaf factories in improving their competitiveness by positively influencing the scale of production, farm organization, processing, new technologies, supply chain development, and regulatory compliance. *trustea* also works to improve livelihoods of smallholders and tea estate workers, consumer safety and productivity. *trustea* has been developed from within the Indian industry, by the industry and for the industry, incorporating globally prevalent sustainability practices.





The code has clear social and environmental objectives including protection and preservation of the environment, developing and imparting training and education programs, which will have a beneficial impact on the social, environmental and sustainability issues of the Indian tea industry, and social welfare and improvement of livelihood of workers and small growers.



## VISION

The Indian tea industry providing high-quality and safe tea for consumers, good livelihoods for producers, workers and their families, whilst at all times caring for the natural environment.



## MISSION

To sustainably transform the Indian tea industry for the benefit of consumers, workers, farmers and the environment, by:

- Verifying tea producers against a world-class sustainability code of conduct
- Working with the tea industry to address key sustainability challenges such as food safety, stagnating yields, pest and disease control, living wages, worker welfare and equality, preservation of biodiversity and improvement of smallholders' livelihoods



# Impact theme



## Livelihoods

*trustea* programme supports smallholders, tea estates and BLFs in improving their competitiveness by positively influencing the scale of production, processing, technologies, supply-chain development, market access and regulatory compliance.

Today, *trustea* programme covers about 56,000 tea smallholder farmers (SHFs) (approximately 26% of India's tea SHFs) including 4,500 women farmers. *trustea*'s outreach opened vistas for tea SHFs in India to imbibe good agricultural practices on their farms and to provide better access to formal training opportunities on sustainable farm practices.

*trustea* facilitated improved working conditions, fair treatment, health, hygiene (such as proper toilet facilities), safety and remunerations (provident fund, gratuity, etc.) for permanent as well as temporary workers at their respective workplaces.

*trustea* changed the lives of 619,462 tea workers (of which 56% - over 350,0000 - are women) through training, skill-gap assessment, advocacy and partnership, resulting in a better working environment for women (including maternity benefits, crèche facility, etc.).



## Environment

With the implementation of *trustea* programme, producers are encouraged to move towards judicious use of chemicals and fertilisers and to create a road map for increasing use of organic products; this has contributed to the reduction of adverse impact on forest cover due to deforestation. Contaminations of natural waterbodies or surrounding natural ecosystems are protected from adverse impact due to the introduction of the Buffer Zone concept.



## Safety

*trustea* Code ensures workers' safety in the tea sector. Workers engaged in applying fertilisers are trained on safe application methods and, while handling fertilisers, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is used.

*trustea* provides a structured approach to address food-safety issues based on identifying food hazards and promoting Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and Good Hygiene Practices (GHPs) as prerequisites of food safety. With an increase in the availability of plant-protected, code-compliant tea, elimination of the most dangerous agrochemicals from Indian tea production and a reduction in the overall volume of active ingredients, *trustea* endeavours health safety of tea consumers in India.

# trustea's journey

## 2019

- *trustea* Sustainable Tea Foundation incorporated on May 2019.
- Multistakeholder *trustea* Sustainable Tea Council formed in September 2019.
- 'tracetea' app for traceability piloted from November 2019.
- 48% of Indian tea is *trustea* verified in December, 2019.



## 2017

Programme achieved 500 million kg of verification in 2017



## 2016

- 20,000 STGs engaged by 2016, within two years of formal implementation.
- System assurance audit process commenced in 2016 to ensure standardisation and improved compliance of audit assessments



## 2015

Verification milestone of first 100 million kg was crossed in 2015;



## 2014

Detailed implementation guides, audit protocols and farm diaries developed in 2014.



## 2013

- *trustea* programme was launched in July 2013 – concurrent to the launch, *trustea* Secretariat was established.
- First entity was verified in November 2013 as a pilot project;





# *trustea's* codes cater to various Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs)

Chapter 10: Biodiversity and Environment Management

Chapter 11: Waste and Pollution Management

Chapter 3: Soil Conservation and Management

Chapter 4: Water Management



Chapter 2: Product Traceability

Chapter 5: Fertiliser

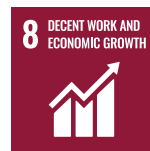
Chapter 6: Plant Protection Formulations (PPF)

Chapter 7: Food Safety



Chapter 8: Safety, Health & Welfare of Workforce

Chapter 9: Working Conditions and Workers Rights

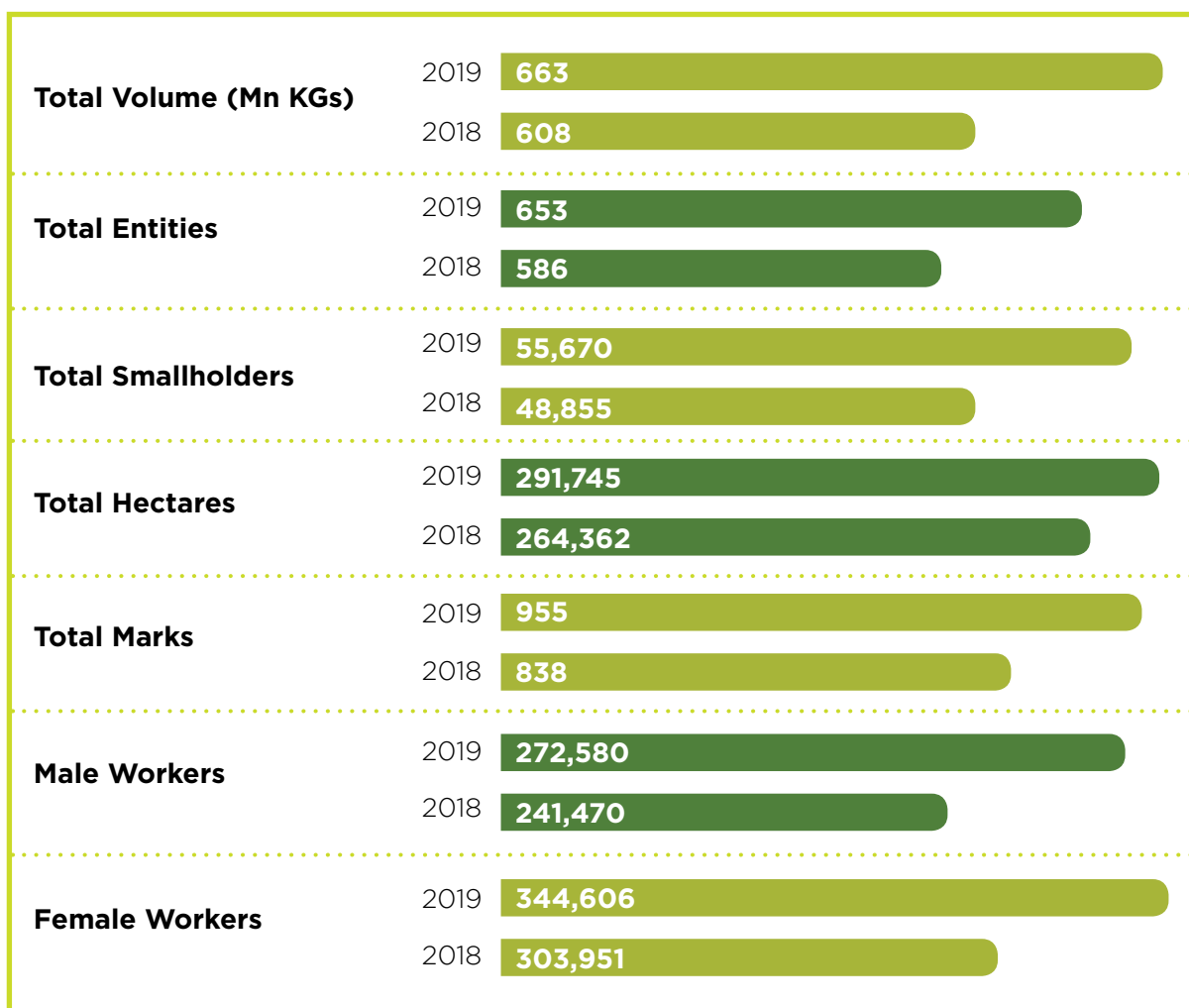
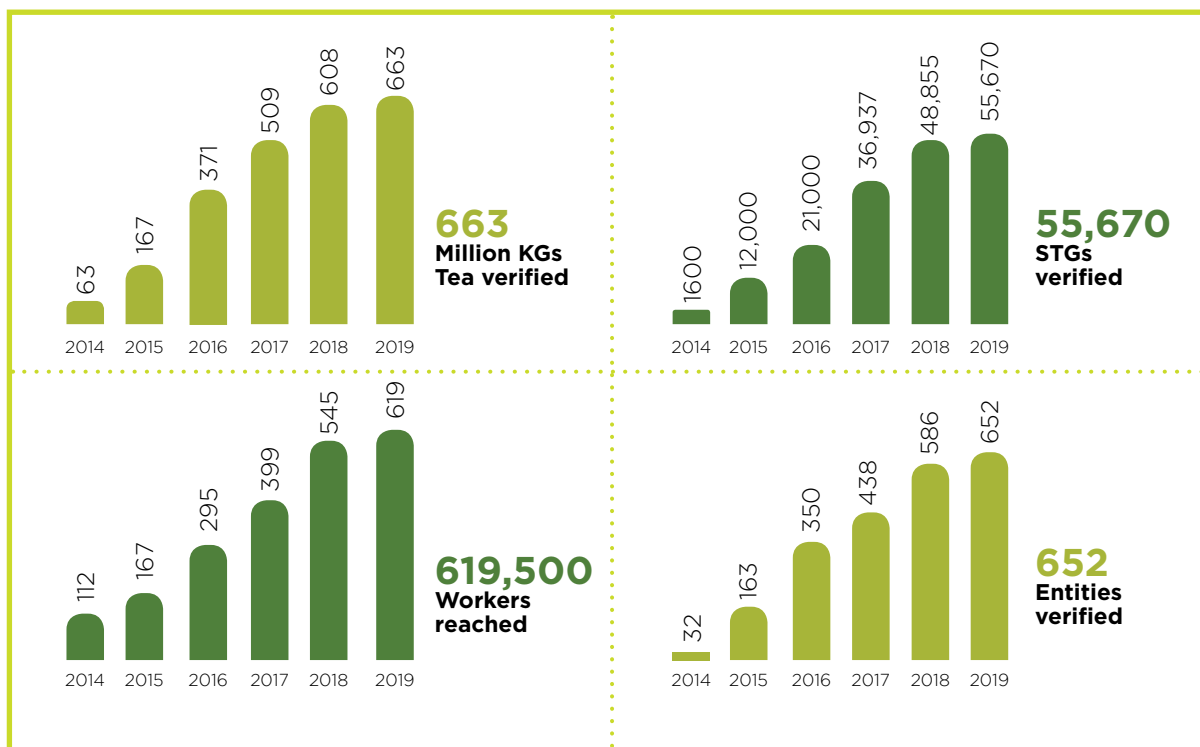


Chapter 1: Management System and Continual Improvement



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

# Programme updates as of Dec 2019



## Cumulative Volumes - by Region

Region	Entity	Regional - <i>trustea</i>			Region total			India overall production	
		Vol (Mn KGs)	Marks	% total verified	Vol (Mn KGs)	Marks	% total verified	Vol (Mn KGs)	% of total
Assam (incl Tripura & AP)	Estate	186.66	225	28%	390.59	497	59%	746.6	59%
	Estate + BLF	134.24	166	20%					
	BLF	69.69	106	11%					
Bengal	Estate	39.53	57	6%	145.3	243	22%	424.06	22%
	Estate + BLF	18.79	32	3%					
	BLF	86.98	154	13%					
South India	Estate	65.07	88	10%	127.2	215	19%	219.04	19%
	Estate + BLF	31.38	22	5%					
	BLF	30.75	105	5%					
<b>Total</b>		<b>663.10</b>	<b>955.00</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>663.10</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1389.7</b>	<b>100%</b>



# trustea's transformation across dimensions

## Operation

- Standard operations and simplified interface with partner organisations through mapping and standardising the verification process
- Engaging and evaluating Implementation Partners (IPs)
- Developing a service-delivery framework to ensure a time-bound response to external stakeholders

## Communications

- Focusing on engagement with the stakeholders including external audiences
- Using digital platforms including social media channels, websites and e-mail campaigns
- Developing communication and branding guidelines
- Undertaking trademark registration and developing logo-usage guidelines

## Assurance

- Transparency and credibility in System Audit Assurance by strengthening process compliance and auditing quality
- 100% review of audit reports ensuring audit outcomes are based on credible evidence, in turn transparency
- Fair and credible mechanism for grievance remediation on certification decisions, enabled with transparent process for appeals
- Enhanced code credibility through globally-recognised quality standards (e.g. ISO 9001 certification, pursuing ISEAL)

## Information Technology (IT) Systems

- Leveraging technology to enhance programme delivery and interactions/collaborations with organisations
- Initiatives on Data Based Management System (DBMS), traceability application facilitating knowledge sharing, analytics and decision-making





## Implementation Partners

Implementation Partners (IPs) of *trustea* are Tea Research Association (TRA), Action for Food Production (AFPRO) and Reviving Green Revolution (RGR) – an initiative of Tata Trust. TRA and AFPRO joined *trustea* programme in June 2019 and RGR in September 2019. The key regions of operations for these IPs include states such as Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and West Bengal. The IPs cater to approximately 670 entities (i.e. tea estates, BLFs, etc.).

### Key functions of the IPs:

- Assist smallholders and estates in production as per the criteria of *trustea* Code
- Encourage smallholders to produce more efficiently and provide on-site trainings at the demo plots
- Deliver trainings to the estate staff and smallholder cooperatives. Staff from each of the participating factories, smallholder cooperatives and estate staff are identified and are furnished with train-the-trainer guidance to manage and implement *trustea* Code
- Furnish verification support, including the implementation field staff joining the trainers to help conduct internal audits and prepare for verification
- Monitor and reinforce continuously to ensure improvements are maintained after the verification process

“TRA Tocklai has been looking after the sustainability of the Indian tea industry since 1911 and would like to ensure that the tea industry remains sustainable, economically robust and compliant with national and international standards.”

Mr Joydeep Phukan,  
Principal Officer and Secretary,  
Tea Research Association

“The objective of the mission should be to adjust our activities to the changing paradigm to adapt ourselves to regime ‘Climate Change’ and follow the best possible participatory approach by all partners for regulating a regime for the benefit of all.”

Mr D. K. Manavalan  
Executive Director  
AFPRO, states

# Feeling the change: Farmers' stories

## Small growers creating large impact



**Mrs Saroja** is a progressive farmer and member of the Athipoo STGs – a tribal society established early in 2012 and registered with the Tea Board. She owns 0.91-acre land and harvests about 100 KG per day; her two sons, aged 29 and 35, have another four acres of land where they grow exotic vegetables. In addition to good agricultural practices and nutrition management, which is the hallmark of *trustea*, record-keeping has helped her keep track of expenses. Training has made her conscious of the ill-effects of fertiliser and chemical application without using PPEs. Furthermore, through the intervention, the SHFs are complying with a notified wage of Rs 328 per eight-hour day for tea workers in the state of Tamil Nadu and the wages are revised from time to time based on governmental notification, as applicable.



**Mrs Beekiammal**, a woman SHF, owns three acres of tea plantations spread across four locations in T Manihatty village of Tamil Nadu. She avoids application of agrochemicals to control pests and diseases and prefers manual weeding with occasional use of herbicides to control weeds. After *trustea*'s intervention, she was able to reduce fertiliser application by almost 30% (amounting to Rs 2,700 per split dose) and avoid spraying herbicide near the waterbodies in order to eliminate the possibility of water contamination. The quantity of fertiliser applied also dropped from 300-350 KG per acre to about 150 KG per acre as per recommendation based on a soil test report.

*These success stories speak about the impact made by trustea program in the lives of its members. The stories of beneficiaries like Mrs. Saroja and Mrs. Beekiammal make it evident that the adoption of trustea code has brought economic and health benefits to enormous people in tea supply chain.*

*The communities associated with trustea have started feeling the difference and are expecting a long-term partnership with the program.*

## Beneficiary speaks - change through farm diary and environmental sustainability



**Mr Pradhap Kambattan**, a progressive farmer in the Trichigadi village of Tamil Nadu has been supplying tea leaves to Havukal factory, a verified entity under *trustea* programme, for the last five years and has been a lead farmer in his village.

With the introduction of *trustea* programme in the factory, he was exposed to various types of trainings on the recommended agricultural practices for tea cultivation, knowledge on banned/prohibited agrochemicals and on proper storage of harvested tea leaves - which had been performed in a traditional way, not following the recommendations of the expert agencies such as United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI), the regional agricultural body for tea.

Pradhap mentions the periodical trainings received from the program gave him adequate knowledge to maintain records of agricultural inputs, cultivation costs, crop-season yield, etc. *trustea* programme has developed specific contents for training the STGs on the significance of properly maintaining records (bills of fertilisers/pesticides purchased, wages and other farm-related expenses).

*Trainings received on maintaining a 'Farm Diary' has enabled beneficiaries like Pradhap to assess the performance of cultivation over the year and to make corrections in the cultivation practices in line with the sustainability perspective.*

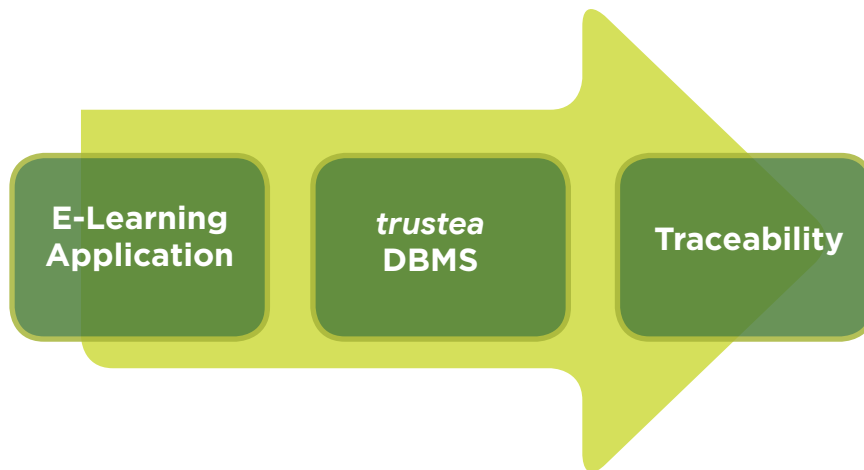


**Mr Binod Kumar Agarwalla**, proprietor of Premier Tea Factory says, "*trustea* has disseminated knowledge on various aspects including environmental sustainability in the form of training. We are able to use these learnings in our day-to-day operations. Our association with *trustea* is for a noble cause and will fetch enormous benefits to the environment and to the community in the long run."

*The success stories of people like Mr Binod Kumar Agarwalla make it evident that the adoption of trustea guidelines has not only improved the tea quality but also provided economic and health benefits to the people engaged in the tea supply chain.*

# Driving innovations

Towards enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, *trustea* has implemented the following three IT initiatives:



## 1. E-Learning Application

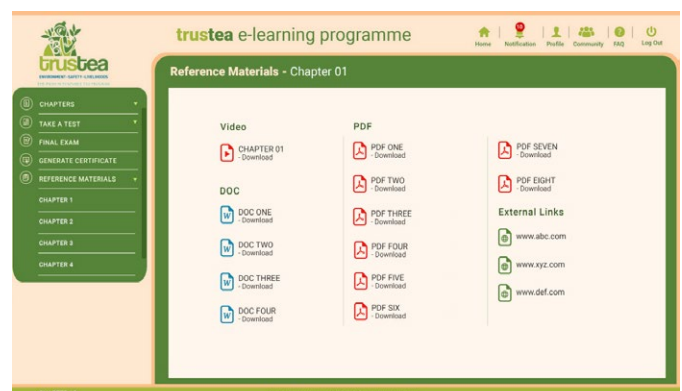
*trustea* E-learning, a comprehensive video-based online-training programme, now makes available *trustea* system knowledge at the fingertips of one and all, removing the bottlenecks of knowledge delivery through the hitherto prevalent classroom-training model. The initiative provides ease to access learning material on *trustea* Code and both implementation process and online community for sharing knowledge and ideas provide great benefit to the learners. Since launch, more than 500 learners have enrolled with over 250 certificates issued post assessment.

- Application rolled out and received great response from learners
- Many learners have enrolled and many have successfully completed the modules
- 653 *trustea* officers of verified units are mandated to complete the E-learning course by 31 March 2020

### Audio-Visual Training



### Reference materials Download facility





## 2. *trustea* Database Management System (DBMS)

*trustea* has developed and launched DBMS, a web-based tool to create a one-point access for all programme stakeholders to avail data since programme inception (e.g. audit details, certification details, entity-wise volumes, process updates), enabling internal and external audits to be managed based on their schedules. The concerned stakeholders will be notified through the system regarding any overdue audits and 'at risk' marks. The DBMS serves as a storage and access point for current and legacy data of the programme and facilitates audit tracking and certification process from initiation to finalisation.

Migration to the customised DBMS ensures ease of operations and transparent interfacing of processes with partner organisations, enabling across-the-board standardisation and data retention.

Certification Bodies and Implementation Partners have begun using the web app; all key operations – audit processes, certifications, handling new enrolment requests, etc. are being managed through DBMS System.

## 3. Traceability

*trustea* has released *tracetea* application (app) – the “farm to table” traceability solution for the tea industry – to bring ease of operations and transparency in the tea supply chain.

*tracetea* is a software application (web-based as well as android; available on Google Play Store) for the entire tea-manufacturing process (i.e. plucking leaves, register management at the farm by growers, collection of leaves, supply to factories by aggregators followed by comprehensive factory production, inventory, dispatch management, etc.). Forward/backward traceability for tea is the core feature of this app, enabling tracking tea from the bush to the cup. It provides real-time information on the manufacturing process, accessible from any mobile device from any location. The app helps maintain the integrity of the manufacturing process and chemical-usage norms, positively impacting the brand image.



# Key events during 2019



Review and Reorientation for empanelled Certification Bodies, Commercial Partners and Implementation Partners



4-6 February

9-11 April



Interactive Session for Empanelment with Implementation Partners

Implementation Training with Implementation Partners and Certification Bodies'



27-29 May

18 September



First council meeting of *trustea* Sustainable Tea Foundation

Tea Trade Dinner' hosted by *trustea* with participation from tea fraternity; Chairman, Tea Board of India (TBoI) as the guest of honour



18 September

8 November



*trustea*'s participation in 'Tea Conclave'

Roundtables on 'Gender Equality and Empowerment in Indian Tea Sector' and 'Working Condition, Living Income of STGs'; participation from Netherlands Consulate, TBoI, GAIL, UN Women, etc.



19 December

# Glimpses of events during 2019



Implementation training with implementation partners and certification bodies



1st Council Meeting of *truste*a Sustainable Tea Foundation



Tea Trade Dinner hosted by *truste*a with participation from tea fraternity



trustea's participation in Tea Conclave



Roundtables on 'Gender Equality, Empowerment in Indian Tea Sector' and 'Working condition, Living income of STGs'



Press interaction with trustea and its implementation partner TRA



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