

# Safeguarding and Whistleblower Protection Policy

trustea Sustainable Tea Foundation

tSTF S&WPP 01



## 1. Purpose

trustea Sustainable Tea Foundation is committed to maintaining a safe, ethical, transparent, and accountable environment across all its operations and stakeholder engagements.

The Foundation recognizes its responsibility to protect individuals from harm, abuse, exploitation, harassment, retaliation, and unethical conduct in connection with trustea activities.

This Policy establishes the principles and mechanisms for safeguarding individuals and enabling the confidential reporting of misconduct, unethical practices, violations of organizational policies, or legal non-compliance without fear of retaliation.

This Policy shall be read in conjunction with the trustea Code of Conduct and other applicable organizational procedures.

## 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all trustea employees, consultants, auditors, interns, volunteers, Board members, contractual personnel, service providers, partners, and any individual acting on behalf of trustea.

The Policy also extends to interactions with workers, farmers, community members, vulnerable groups, and other stakeholders engaged through trustea-related activities.

## 3. Safeguarding Commitment

trustea is committed to ensuring that all individuals associated with its work are treated with dignity, respect, and care.

The Foundation maintains zero tolerance towards:

- abuse, exploitation, neglect, or intimidation;
- sexual harassment or sexual exploitation;
- bullying or coercive behavior;
- physical, emotional, verbal, or psychological harm;
- retaliation against individuals raising concerns; and
- any conduct that compromises the safety, dignity, or well-being of another person.

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All individuals associated with trustea are expected to behave responsibly, professionally, and ethically during all organizational activities and engagements.

## **4. Protection of Vulnerable Persons**

Particular care shall be exercised during interactions with vulnerable individuals or groups, including women, children, migrant workers, marginalized communities, and economically vulnerable persons.

Any conduct that exploits power imbalance, authority, position, or influence for personal benefit or to cause harm shall be treated as a serious violation of this Policy.

trustea expects all personnel and partners to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and respectful conduct at all times.

## **5. Whistleblower Protection**

trustea encourages the reporting of genuine concerns relating to misconduct, unethical behavior, corruption, fraud, safeguarding incidents, discrimination, harassment, conflicts of interest, policy violations, misuse of organizational resources, or legal non-compliance.

Reports may be made by employees, partners, stakeholders, or any person associated with trustea activities.

The organization shall make reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality and protect the identity of individuals reporting concerns in good faith.

Anonymous reporting may also be accepted wherever sufficient information is available for review.

No individual shall face retaliation, discrimination, intimidation, harassment, or adverse consequences for reporting a concern in good faith or participating in an inquiry.

## **6. Reporting Mechanism**

Any safeguarding concern or whistleblower complaint should be reported through designated organizational channels.

Reports may be submitted through email, written communication, or any officially established reporting mechanism of trustea.

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All complaints shall be handled with appropriate sensitivity, confidentiality, impartiality, and fairness.

Where necessary, trustea may undertake a review, inquiry, or investigation to assess the matter and determine appropriate actions.

The organization may also take immediate interim measures where there is a risk to the safety or well-being of any individual.

## **7. False or Malicious Complaints**

trustea encourages responsible and honest reporting.

Knowingly making false, misleading, or malicious allegations may result in appropriate disciplinary or corrective action.

However, a report made in good faith shall not result in any action against the reporting individual merely because the concern could not be substantiated.

## **8. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

Information relating to safeguarding concerns and whistleblower complaints shall be handled with due confidentiality and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Records relating to complaints, investigations, and corrective actions shall be maintained securely in accordance with applicable legal and organizational requirements.

## **9. Roles and Responsibilities**

All individuals covered under this Policy are responsible for maintaining ethical conduct and contributing to a safe and respectful environment.

Management shall ensure that concerns are reviewed promptly, fairly, and independently to the extent practicable.

Leadership personnel shall promote awareness of this Policy and support a culture where individuals feel safe to raise concerns without fear.

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## 10. Implementation and Review

trustea shall periodically review this Policy to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with applicable legal requirements, stakeholder expectations, and organizational commitments.

Training and awareness initiatives may be conducted to support the implementation of this Policy.

## 11. Contact for Reporting Concerns

Concerns under this Policy may be reported to:

Email: [support@trustea.org](mailto:support@trustea.org) , [bhuyan@trustea.org](mailto:bhuyan@trustea.org) , [majumdar@trustea.org](mailto:majumdar@trustea.org)

trustea shall make reasonable efforts to address concerns in a timely and responsible manner.

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**REVIEW RESULT:**

**REVIEWED BY:** Anandita Ray Mukherjee

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