



From the **Director**

The year gone by saw the addition of a new feather in *trustea*'s cap as we achieved the **ISEAL Code** compliant status. Coming after the completion of a decades long journey, we are proud to have achieved this prestigious recognition for this unique domestic sustainability code. This puts *trustea* at par with the leading global sustainability standards and will enable us to continue to bring best in class sustainability practices to the Indian tea industry. It opens up the pathway to explore avenues to link all *trustea* verified units to export markets. We will be connecting with all stakeholders towards this end.

On the *trustea* footprint front, we closed one more year of significant growth with the addition of **106 million kgs** of new volume to the *trustea* program taking our coverage to **70%** of Indian tea production. The handholding support on the field by our implementation partner personnel was a big enabler in this achievement. The certification bodies too pitched in by ensuring timely completion of their deliverables. We also sincerely acknowledge the continued support received from the programme funders and valuable guidance from the *trustea* Council members.

The program achievements in **2023** were the culmination of dedicated and focused behind the scenes work put in by the *trustea* team with a never say die attitude. Such stellar results can only be achieved when the team demonstrates self-belief and backs it up with the requisite efforts.

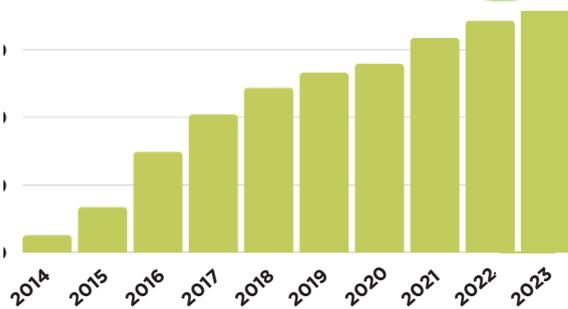
The new year beckons with the exciting work of implementing the ***trustea code V3.0*** with very focussed sustainability practices with the goal of ushering in a low carbon tea production regime that will empower the verified entities to successfully manage the increasing challenges of climate change. We will continue our intensive training and on-field work to facilitate a smooth transition.

On behalf of *trustea* I wish a successful and **Happy New Year** to all our partners, stakeholders and well-wishers and look forward to your continued support in our journey.

Rajesh Bhuyan

Program Update

YEAR-WISE PROGRESSION OF VOLUME (M KGS)



954
tea verified
on exit 2023



WOMEN
3,83,131



MEN
3,01,001

WORKERS REACHED



880

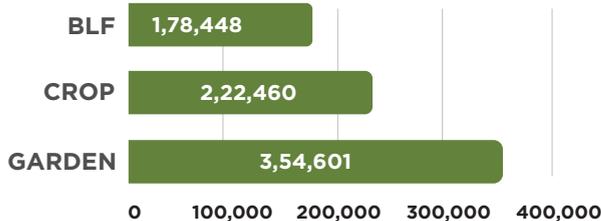
ENTITIES VERIFIED



1,30,250

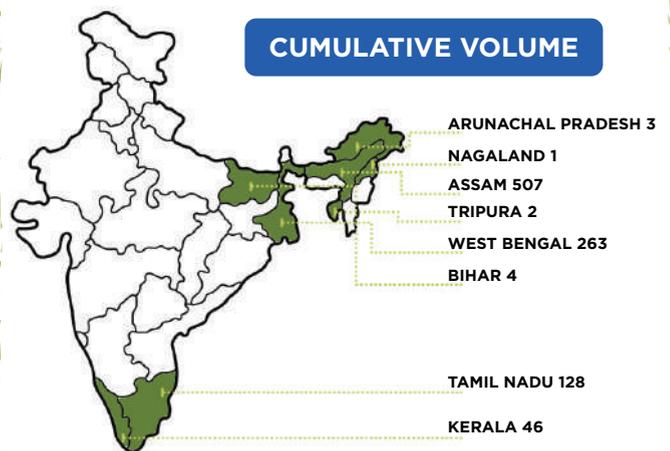
STG'S ADDED

AREA COVERED (in hectares)



Note: The tea garden area include the crop area of the garden and they are not mutually exclusive

CUMULATIVE VOLUME



TOTAL - 954

Note: The depiction of the boundaries in the map is for general illustration purpose only

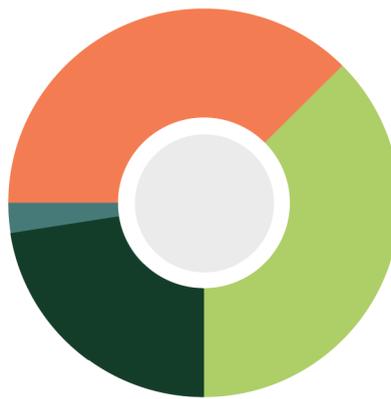
IT Update

BLF



- Assam-37
- West Bengal-34
- South India-27

Farmers



- South India-29142
- Assam-26624
- West Bengal-13805
- North East- 919

Aggregators



- West Bengal- 467
- Assam- 227
- South India- 83

Farm Diary Usage (region wise)	2023
Assam	6441
South India	5053
WB	3736
Total	15230

tracetea Rollout Status				
	2021	2022	2023	Total
tracetea Live	1	31	38	70
Farm Diary Usage	790	18724	15230	34744

An intro into Regenerative Agriculture



'Without efforts to restore and protect land – a finite resource, nearly 70 gigatonnes more carbon would be emitted by 2050 due to land use change and soil degradation, representing approximately 17 per cent of current annual greenhouse gas emissions'-

ref. UN - Land the planet's carbon sink.

The recently concluded COP28, has set forth an Action Agenda on Regenerative Landscapes led by the COP28 Presidency, and supported by the UN High Level Climate Champions (HLCC); to aggregate, accelerate and amplify existing efforts and new commitments to transition large agricultural landscapes to regenerative landscapes by 2030.

Today, the topic of **Regenerative Agriculture** (RA), has a lot of people talking, especially because prioritization of soil health is at the core. The good news is that, as opposed to conventional agriculture this approach not only cuts back on the negative impacts of the conventional chemicalized practices; it rather improves the health and resiliency of system resources over time, that translates into higher crop yields and reduced carbon footprints.

So apart from playing a pivotal role in improving crop yields RA can actually mitigate or even potentially reverse the current global trends of atmospheric carbon accumulation.

Talking about 'Tea', the need for RA has generated from three existential challenges- climate change induced downward crop curve, aggravated soil degradation and finally tea quality depletion; leading to an erosion of market competitiveness, simultaneously aggravating the economic vulnerability of the tea producers.

However, Tea as a plantation crop serves for natural carbon capture. Hence, if we can optimize the good agricultural practices (GAP), and cut back on the GHG emitting components through higher integration of on- farm produced non- chemical inputs, higher resource recycling and reduced reliance on chemical fertilizers; we can actually harvest the carbon sink capacity of the tea soils.

The **trustea Code Version 3.0** is designed to focus on Regenerative Agricultural Practices that will work towards restoration of soil and ecosystem resilience; and reduction/ elimination of non- renewable fossil fuel-based inputs; thereby bringing environmental and economic benefits to the plantations and most importantly reduce the Carbon Footprint in Tea Production. In 2024, we intend to roll out the practices in 100 *trustea* verified entities, work towards enabling the entry level Regen-Certification and thereafter take the learnings forward.

An intro into Regenerative Agriculture



The framework developed by *trustea* towards dissemination of regenerative agriculture in Indian tea will be primarily governed by TWO PRINCIPAL criteria – Qualitative Approach in Soil and Focus on Development of Bush Health. A major activity will be Mapping of Soil Health Status of Plantations in order to formulate effective soil health management plan. Another area of interest will be to optimize the vegetation cover, be it in the form of shade trees or social forestry or development of the riparian barriers, in order to utilize the benefits of carbon storage in their above and belowground biomasses. Optimization of the good agricultural practices already prevalent in the entities will also be a key component with a RII approach i.e. retain, improve upon and induct new practices to transition along the regenerative concept.

So to start its regenerative journey a tea producing entity should first seek the support of *trustea*, who will hand hold the producer through this entire transition, undertake resource evaluation of the plantation to identify the existing GAP that can be improved upon and also provide training towards planning for long term approach and meet the phase wise targets.

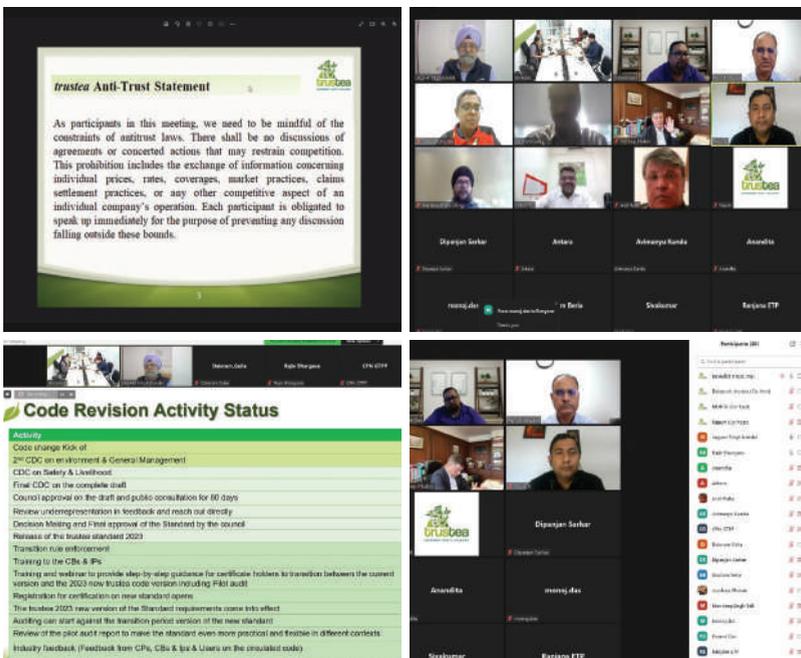
Our members will join the low carbon - regenerative agriculture movement as they transition to version 3.0 starting January 2024.

Dr Antara Bera
Senior Manager – Regenerative Agriculture

Events Calendar



Apprenticeship training under the project 'STRIVE' (Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement) was conducted on 4 Oct at INDCOSERVE. The daylong session was attended by around 40 unemployed youths. Key topics covered - work place safety, *trustea* introduction, GAP & revised code implementation.



10th Council Meeting was held virtually on 4 Dec. The session was attended by our esteemed council members wherein the program updates were reviewed, valuable inputs shared on the agenda & plans for the upcoming year discussed & approved.

trustea at work



For more details on the program get in touch at support@trustea.org.
To share your contributions for the upcoming newsletter issue drop us a mail at comms@trustea.org or sarkar@trustea.org.

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