



# NEWSLETTER

January-March 2020 • Volume 4

## From the Director:

The 2019 calendar year has come to a close and the *trustea* program achieved a certified volume of 663 million kgs on exit, which surpassed the program goal for the year. Achieving this, by surmounting many challenges, would not have been possible without stellar contributions from the Commercial Partners, Certifying Bodies and the newly empanelled Implementation Partners. This was commendably supplemented by the *trustea* secretariat team, which stepped up to respond to the dynamic nature of the operational environment. The *trustea* verified community too continued their efforts towards creating a sustainable tea supply chain in India. On behalf of the program we wish to place on record our sincere appreciation to all stakeholders and look forward to their continuing support as we move forward in 2020.

We are pleased to share that the three IT related initiatives, namely, '*trustea* e-Learning', 'traceability app (tracetea)' and the 'Database Management System (*trustea* DBMS)' went live on the *trustea* website and are in the implementation phase. We look forward to embedding these initiatives into *trustea* program operations, in order to deliver an enabling environment for all the stakeholders.

This year, we are focusing on a structured quality improvement of the assurance systems. The secretariat conducted discussion sessions and training, geared towards this. You can view glimpses of these events in this newsletter.

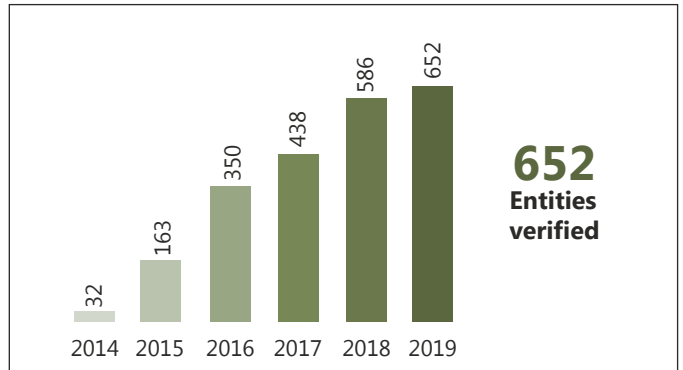
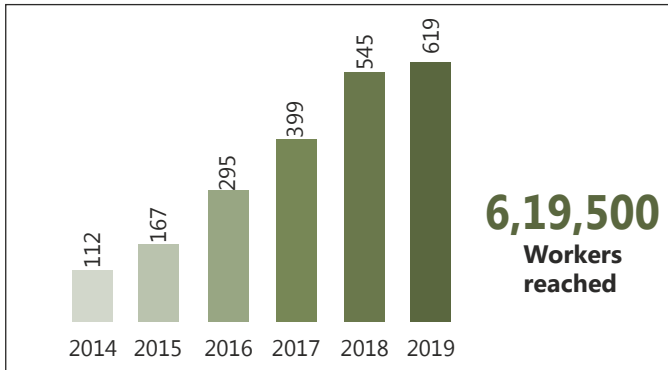
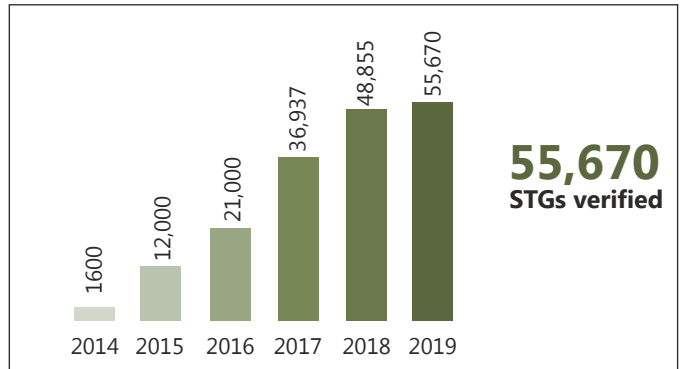
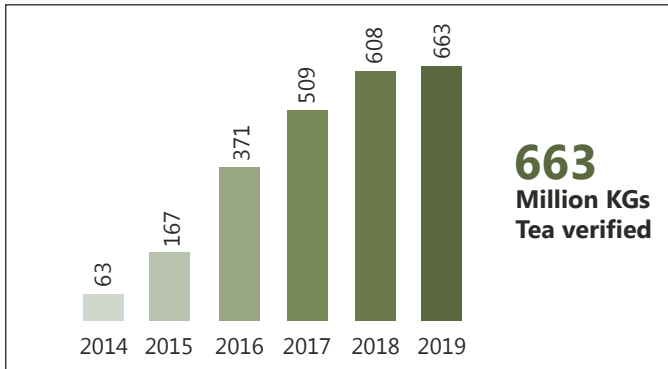
The *trustea* program is committed to transparent operations. Taking the commitment to the next level, 'Grievance' tab has been introduced into our website [www.trustea.org](http://www.trustea.org), towards providing a user-friendly interface for lodging grievances and feedback. If you would like to share your thoughts/feedback on our newsletter, please feel free to email to [comms@trustea.org](mailto:comms@trustea.org).

Hope you enjoy reading this issue of the newsletter!

## In this Issue

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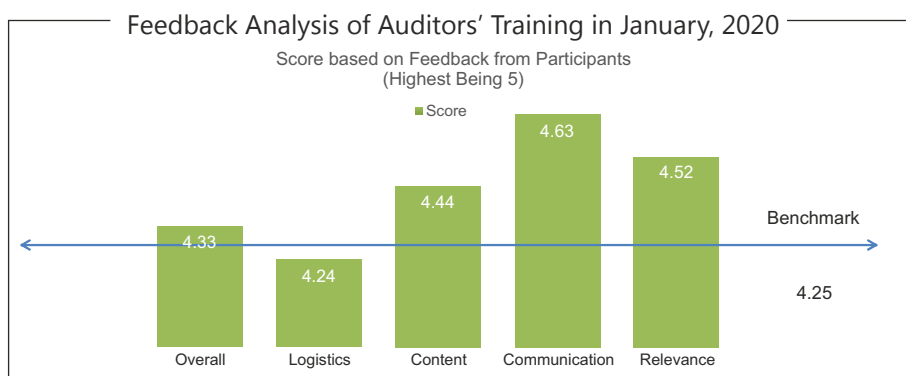
## PROGRAM UPDATE



## NEWS AND UPDATES

### trustea auditors' training program (21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020)

The participants were trained on audit protocols and procedures with special focus on the key elements of all the Mandatory Control Points of the trustea code. The training program saw participation from 38 representatives across eleven organisations. Three Implementation Partners Viz. 'Tea Research Association (TRA)', 'RGR-an associate of Tata Trusts' and 'Action for Food Production (AFPRO)' and eight empanelled certification bodies Viz. Control union, Cotecna, DNVGL, IMO Control, Indocert, OneCert, SGS and TUV India took part in the training. trustea is working continuously to improve its service delivery and will review the actions required based on the feedback.



## Discussion Sessions on Assurance System Improvement (30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020)

Multi-thematic interactive sessions were conducted on creating a mutually aligned framework towards structured improvements in the assurance system which saw participation from three Implementation Partners Viz. 'Tea Research Association (TRA)', 'Tata Trust', 'Action for Food Production (AFPRO)' and 8 empanelled certification bodies Viz. 'Control Union', 'Cotecna', 'DNVGL', 'Indocert', 'SGS' and 'TUV India'. Representatives of the Commercial Partners also participated in the event.

The broad framework of an aligned assurance process was formulated for on-ground implementation by Implementation Partners, Certifying Bodies and *trustea* Secretariat. The key elements of the mandatory Control Points verification protocol are being uploaded over the e-Learning portal towards facilitating ease of reference. 42 delegates participated in the discussion.



## EVENT CALENDAR

**“Roundtable on Gender Equality and Empowerment in Indian Tea Sector” and “Working condition and Living income of Small Tea Growers”**

**19 DEC 2019  
KOLKATA**

The Roundtable in Kolkata was co-hosted by IDH and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands. The five-member delegation from Netherlands was led by honourable Ms. Birgitta Tazelaar, Vice Minister and Deputy Director General, International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Netherlands. It was a platform to facilitate discussions on the crucial agenda items as well as identifying the challenges and steps towards overcoming them. The event was well attended by a cross section of stakeholders including Netherlands Consulate, Tea Board of India, IDH - the Sustainable Trade Initiative, *trustea*, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), UN Women, Hindustan Unilever Ltd., Tea Research Association (TRA), Tata Global Beverages Ltd., Amalgamated Plantations Pvt. Ltd., Assam Bought Leaf Tea Manufacturer's Association (ABLTMA), Rainforest Alliance, The Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Association (CISTA), Senchal Agro, DNVGL, and Solidaridad. The roundtable facilitated great exchange of insights and ideas from the dignitaries that would be useful for the *trustea* Program towards its continuous improvement initiative.





## CODE CORNER

### New 'zero tolerance criteria' added to the *trustea* code:

(The latest version of the *trustea* code is easily accessible over our website. Please click over the web link: <https://trustea.org/the-code/>)

*trustea* has introduced 'zero tolerance criteria' in its code, with respect to the wage and employee benefits, as depicted below:

- 9.7: Equal work shall be remunerated with equal pay.
- 9.8: The temporary workers shall not be paid less cash wages than the permanent workers.
- 9.9: Workers (permanent and seasonal) are paid gross wages that comply with national legislation or collective bargaining agreements, whichever is higher. If workers are paid per unit weight of harvested tea, in normal working day (maximum of 6 days a week and 48 hours a week) they shall be allowed to earn at least the national or sector established minimum wage. Deductions from wages for disciplinary purposes shall not be made beyond the provisions of the law.
- 9.10: No adolescent worker shall be given work for more than twenty-seven hours a week as maintained in the PLA, 1951.
- 9.11: Workers shall not be required to work more than 48 hours per week on a regular basis and shall be provided with a weekly day off. In the event of engagement beyond 48 hours, as per the state and national legislation, it shall never be more than 12 hours a week.
- 9.13: The verified unit (where applicable) shall provide Provident Fund (PF), Gratuity and Pension schemes for all its employees (permanent and temporary) conforming to national norms. PF benefit to be extended to the workers of tea gardens/factories from the date of joining.
- 9.20: Workers shall receive all maternity entitlements and protection in line with national law and practice. Maternity leave shall not result in any discrimination, loss of seniority or deduction of wages.

*For more details on the Program, contact: [support@trustea.org](mailto:support@trustea.org)*