

Talking Tea

News updates from the Ethical Tea Partnership
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Demonstration of pest collection

Improving smallholder livelihoods and access to international markets

 In many countries a significant proportion of tea is produced by smallholders. The level of support they receive from co-operatives and estates varies significantly between regions. Consequently, many smallholder farmers struggle to achieve a good livelihood from

tea due to quality, productivity and marketing problems.

As international markets demand increasingly high social and environmental standards, there is also concern that smallholders may find themselves unable to supply overseas buyers. ETP is aiming to address these issues and others through new smallholder programmes in Indonesia and Argentina.

INDONESIA

In Indonesia, smallholders typically receive about 75% of the price paid for leaf produced on estates due to poor leaf quality and other factors. How to help smallholders to improve their yields to warrant better prices,



A smallholder farmer's notes

and to meet the rigours of certification are questions often raised with Nelia Latief (ETP Regional Manager, Indonesia). Subsequent discussions with a range of organisations led to a 3 year partnership between ETP and IDH The Sustainable Trade Initiative to tackle these challenges.

Underlying Problems

At the start of the project, ETP and consultants from the Gamburg Research Institute of Tea and Chinchona conducted needs assessments that identified a number of issues:

- Leaf quality affected by lack of technical knowledge, poor agricultural practice and logistical

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“ ETP's model is a great foundation for all future Indonesian smallholder projects ”

Director's page

As we near the end of the first year of our 3 year strategy, I am delighted with how all our programmes are integrating and producing positive results for workers and the environment.



Rachel Cracknell, ETP's climate change specialist discussing adaptation techniques with a Kenyan farmer

2011 has seen a major scale-up in our producer support programmes. These help producers to improve their performance, and can help them to achieve and maintain certification. The developments in China are also very pleasing especially as we're now working with leading Chinese producers to help them assess their performance against all aspects of the ETP Standard.

Our relationships with the certification programmes continue to grow, and I'm happy to report that ETP's Regional Managers have helped a significant number of producers to achieve certification. In addition, we've also been helping smallholder farmers to improve the quality and quantity of leaf, while raising their overall social and environmental standards.



Sebastian Michaelis (Tata Global Beverages) discusses smallholder certification with Joseph Wagurah (ETP's Regional Manager, Africa)

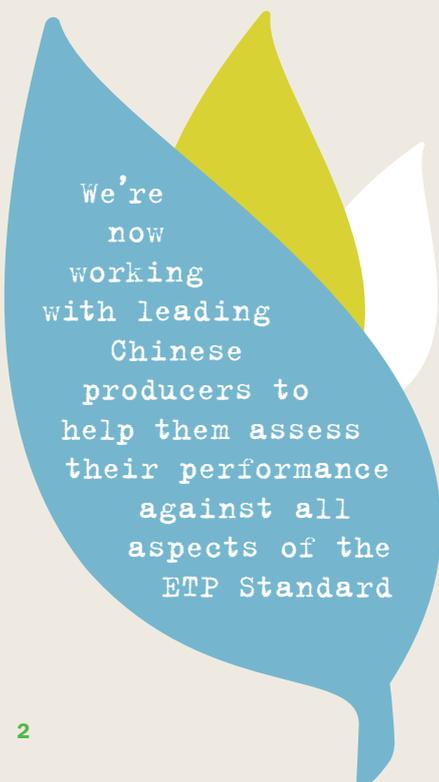
Our climate change project with GIZ in Kenya also aims to help smallholders sustain their livelihoods from tea. In May, we co-ordinated our annual staff meeting with the climate stakeholder meeting in Kericho, so that all our staff could participate in the discussions around climate change. While the consequences for East Africa could be quite severe, the positive focus on the need to take early action and to work cooperatively, gives me great confidence that producers will be able to take the changes in their stride.

The Kericho meeting was just one of a series of very positive cross-regional learning activities for ETP this year. In Kenya, our staff visited a number of estates and smallholders to see how specific challenges have been overcome. We've also facilitated a number of exchange visits between producers so they too had the opportunity to see good practice firsthand.

2011 also saw the re-launch of the ETP website, which we will continue to develop into what we hope will become the best possible resource on tea sustainability. As our programmes, membership and partnerships continue to grow, we find that we're busier than ever. Consequently we've taken on more regional staff so we're better equipped to offer on-the-ground support as we head into 2012.



Sarah Roberts
Executive Director





Demonstration of homemade pest repellent

Mr Sultoni, Executive Director from Indonesian Tea Board: “ETP’s model is a great foundation for all future Indonesian smallholder projects. Using a number of different experts means that smallholders receive the best information and advice on the issues that hinder them. In addition, access to micro-finance means they can invest in materials when they’re required.”

This was also supported by Pak Wawan a lead farmer working on the project: “Since we have been working with ETP we are more aware of the requirements of international tea companies (buyers). We also hope to increase productivity by the end of the year with the help of experts from Gambung and ETP.”

ARGENTINA

In Argentina, where smallholders face similar problems of poor quality and productivity and low incomes, ETP has teamed up with local staff from Solidaridad to roll-out a similar programme, working with 200 smallholders and the factories that they supply. This will build on Solidaridad’s previous experience of successfully implementing good agricultural practice training with smallholders in tea and other sectors in Argentina.

(continued from front cover)

challenges in getting leaf to factories in good time and condition

- Productivity affected by plots requiring infilling and, lack of working capital to enable effective use of inputs
- Inconsistencies with quality impede scope for using smallholder leaf
- Low level of farmer organisation and support.

Current Activities

Since 2010, Rabobank Foundation and the Ministry of Co-operatives have been providing support to strengthen the smallholder farm co-operatives. One of the outcomes is that farmers will now be able to access micro-finance credit to pay for inputs such as fertilisers when they’re needed.

Productivity of smallholder plots is affected by the age and density of tea bushes. Dushy Perera, ETP’s Regional Manager for Sri Lanka, who has experience of dealing with similar productivity issues, is supporting the development of a tea nursery project that will supply one group of smallholders with young tea bushes.

At the same time, ETP and its projects partners including the Indonesian Tea Board, Gambung Research Institute of Tea and Chinchona, and Rainforest Alliance, have been running a series of workshops on quality enhancement, good agricultural practice and improving social and environmental standards. Buyers from ETP member companies have also run sessions to help smallholders understand what they are looking for when they purchase tea from Indonesia.

The holistic approach of this multi stakeholder project was illustrated by



Unloading tea, Argentina

Kenyan tea sector focuses on adapting to the impacts of climate change



Representatives from the Kenyan tea sector and international tea companies

giz In May 2011, ETP and the German Development Agency (GIZ formerly GTZ) unveiled climate model maps to 60 representatives from the Kenyan tea industry and international tea buying companies at a meeting in Kericho hosted by the Tea Board of Kenya. The maps predict how climate change will affect the suitability of tea production in Kenya between now and 2050. The modelling also identifies those areas that are likely to be most affected and where adaptation strategies are most needed.

RESULTS

The maps indicate a significant reduction in the climatic suitability

for tea growth in certain regions, particularly those areas west of the Rift Valley. In Kenya, around 600,000 smallholders earn a



Tea Research Foundation of Kenya research on climate change

living from tea, so any changes in climate will have negative impacts on production if early steps are not

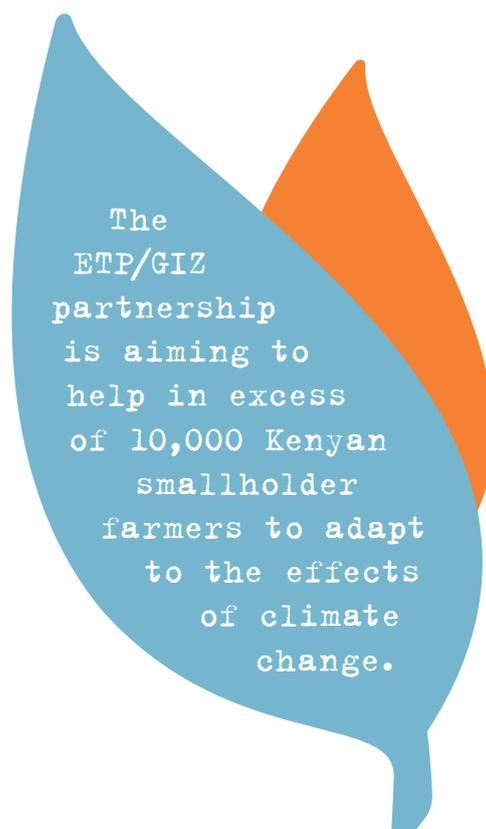
taken to adapt. Kenya is not alone in facing these challenges. A similar project coordinated by the Cafédirect Producers Foundation predicted a more severe scenario for Uganda.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

A number of inspirational speakers provided examples of existing adaptation measures including better farming practices that will help to improve smallholders' resilience to changes. Within the room there was also a great desire for different organisations to work together to develop early strategies, as explained by Dr Wachira from the Tea Research Foundation of Kenya: "The more prepared we are, then the more we can do to reduce the impacts on livelihoods."

NEXT STEPS

The next phase of the project will include a major review of existing adaptation resources, the development of an adaptation toolbox for smallholders (including testing with 2 pilot groups) and working with farmer structures to implement adaptation measures.



The ETP/GIZ partnership is aiming to help in excess of 10,000 Kenyan smallholder farmers to adapt to the effects of climate change.

The Kenyan tea sector is certainly taking climate change seriously and the message is spreading across the region. ETP's Executive Director, Sarah Roberts, was invited to the first East Africa Tea Trade Association Convention in Mombasa in July to discuss the implications of ETP and GIZ's work. At that conference almost every speaker, including President Kibaki, highlighted climate change as an important issue. ETP is currently in discussions with a number of partners and donors on how best to scale up this work.

Cross-regional learning



Mature waste water wetlands at an EPK estate

Eastern Produce (Kenya) welcomes Zimbabwean producers on educational trip

At the end of 2010 ETP arranged for management from a Zimbabwean tea estate to visit a Rainforest Alliance (RA) certified Eastern Produce Kenya (EPK) site so they could learn about RA certification.



Waste water wetlands under construction

Joseph Wagurah, ETP Regional Manager for Africa explains, “When I was in Zimbabwe I realized not all my explanations were well understood. This was hardly surprising since the management team had not been exposed to certification before. This led me to the idea of organising a visit to a certified estate to show

them what was required for RA certification.”

This included the factory’s waste water effluent system and associated record keeping (e.g. concentrations of chemicals); keeping certified and uncertified leaf separated; and EPK’s waste and recycling facilities.

Best practice sustainability demonstrated in India

A similar educational exchange took place between companies in North and South India, when staff from Assam visited the Craigmere Estate which had achieved one of the highest scores for an RA audit. The Craigmere team provided an overview of how they had achieved certification. Visitors saw many examples of industry leading practice, ranging from worker canteens, washing facilities, and labour clubs, to the provision of crèches and medical centres. Such improvements lead to better working environments, a more motivated workforce and ultimately increased productivity. A return trip is planned for the future.

“Visiting other plantations helps towards better management systems being introduced and making plantations a better place to work for all its employees, even for companies like ourselves, which have achieved a high level of compliance in various certification programmes,” Managing Director Craigmere Plantations.

ETP Staff also benefit from cross regional learning

ETP’s annual staff meeting, held in Kenya earlier this year, gave ETP staff the opportunity to see a number of sustainability initiatives and different approaches to ‘old’ problems. For Dushy Perera, Regional Manager Sri Lanka, the waste water treatment at an Eastern Produce estate was of particular interest, he explains: “The design and concept for this tea factory waste water filtration system is unique and



ETP staff visit best practice kitchen gardens

well worth sharing. Historically waste water was discharged into streams and marshlands without any consideration for pollution. Thankfully, due to international environmental standards, producers now treat waste water. This system is a great example of how the environment can be enhanced.”



Workers and children safer after agrochemical educational programme



Workshop supervisors undergoing agrochemicals training

  In Sri Lanka ETP is partnering with the PHDT to rollout agrochemical training to 30 estates by the end of 2011. The training consists of two parts. The first ensures that sprayers are trained and provided with the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) so that they spray in a safe and responsible way. The second

is aimed at estate children to help them understand the dangers of agrochemicals.

As well as the workshops, a training manual and support material including pamphlets, reminder cards, posters and videos will also be used to remind all estate personnel of their due care and responsibility.



The Plantation Human Development Trust (PHDT) is a Tripartite Organization consisting of the Government of Sri Lanka, Regional Plantation Companies and Plantation Trade Unions (TU).

It co-ordinates and facilitates infrastructure and social development programmes to enhance the quality of life of the one million tea plantation workers in Sri Lanka.

ETP scales up development work in China's key tea producing regions

This year ETP has significantly expanded its work in China and we are now working with producers in all the major tea growing areas including Hunan, Guangxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, Anhui, Jiangxi and Yunnan. As well as regional expansion, we are now covering different 'tiers' of factories and we are also working with farmers on agrochemical management issues.



ETP continues to expand its reach in China

We are also expanding the remit of our producer support work: from health and safety and safe use of agrochemicals, to cover social issues such as worker management. Producers are being assisted to assess their performance against all the social and environmental criteria in the ETP Standard and we have seen significant improvements over the past twelve months.

Workplace safety a top priority in Assam



ETP is helping tea gardens in Assam to improve workplace safety

 Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is a top priority for ETP and its members and an area that many tea estates and factories in Assam struggle with. To tackle this, ETP has entered a partnership with Verde Consulting Pvt. Ltd to deliver OHS training across Assam.

As well as creating a culture change (putting OHS at the heart of operations) participants are also equipped with the skills and tools to

assess risk – ultimately leading to safer and better work environments.

The training covers a wide variety of OHS issues including written policy and management systems, machine and fire safety, and health and welfare of workers. The success of it is nicely summarised by Sandip Ghosh from the Assam Branch Indian Tea Association (ABITA), “The feedback from the workshops is excellent and more gardens need to be trained!”

Environmental management training

 ETP is also partnering with Verde Consulting Pvt. Ltd to help Assam producers to improve their performance against the environmental provisions of the ETP Standard.

The training covers key environmental provisions including water and soil management, agrochemical training, and the protection of wildlife and ecosystems.

“It is both heartening and encouraging to see the ETP pilot awareness courses covering Environment Management in the tea industry and Occupational Health & Safety. The courses are well executed and beneficial to the participants. Overall they are very practical and interactive in the way they have been designed.”
Ashok Bhargava, Managing Director Apeejay Tea Group.

Understanding elephant movement and reducing conflicts with people

 At the end of 2010 ETP organised an environmental management workshop for producers from 19 estates in the central highlands of Sri Lanka. The workshop, which was held in partnership with Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) India, covered agrochemicals, soil & water conservation, energy use, waste management and wildlife protection and ecosystem conservation.

Prior to the workshop a session

on managing human/elephant conflicts was also included after ETP heard about the concerns of one Regional Plantation Company whose workers were experiencing dangerous encounters with elephants.

As well as providing information on elephant ecology and conservation, the training showed some practical ways to make estates safer. These included early warning trip wire systems, solar powered electric fences and changing patterns of food and grain storage.

The training also demonstrated what to do if encountered by an elephant and how to safely negotiate ‘flashpoint’ situations.

The benefit of the workshop was highlighted by the Group Manager of the Plantation Company: “It was a very useful, interesting and educative workshop for all of us that participated.

“Programmes of this nature enable us to educate our staff, workforce and communities living on and around estates.”

Organisational news

ETP has undergone a lot of changes throughout 2011 – here's a reminder of the developments

WELCOME

...to Anu Huhtisaari and Diya Sharma who will take over the Monitoring Programmes for Africa and India respectively, and to Beatrice Cameron who will be joining ETP as a Support Assistant in the London Office. Rachel Cracknell has also joined ETP to coordinate ETP's climate change work.

CONGRATULATIONS

...to Heleen Bulckens (Programme Manager for India) and her husband Richard on the arrival of their second son.

GOOD LUCK

...to Céline Gilart (Programme Manager for Africa and Latin America) who has joined Twinings as Sustainability Supply Chain Manager for Beverages.

AND FAREWELL

...to Norman Kelly who has decided to step down after 2 years as ETP Chairman. Norman was integral to ETP's new direction and the appointment of Sarah Roberts (ETP Executive Director), and will be sorely missed.



ETP members prioritise initiatives to tackle sustainability issues

ETP MEETING



ETP's recent two day AGM brought a large portion of the tea industry together to assess trends in the tea sector and influence new sustainability initiatives and ETP's strategic direction. External guest speakers were also organised by ETP to stimulate debate around two sensitive issues affecting the industry.

ILO and ETI consultant Stirling Smith discussed HIV/AIDS in the workplace and gave members an insight into how it will potentially impact on the tea

industry focusing on peripheral smallholder communities. While Frank Mechielsen (Policy Advisor, Oxfam Novib) gave an overview of an ETP/multi-stakeholder project that's examining the wage issue across the tea sector.

During a strategic session there was clear consensus that ETP should expand its strategic work on climate change and to develop an initiative on water management. Other outcomes included the need for ETP to continue its lead role in tackling complex social issues such as sexual harassment and discrimination.

OUR MEMBERS

