COUNTRY PLAN:
KENYA

September 2021
Country Plan Kenya

This is a summary of the ETP plan for our work in Kenya and it describes how we will bring to life the ETP strategy in this country. The details relate to the period 2021 – 2022 and there is some flexibility within these plans, to accommodate unforeseen disruptions and urgent needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted ETP’s plans in all countries to some extent, and we regularly review and update our priorities given the constraints of the pandemic.

1. Context

ETP supports work in seven very different tea-producing origins. It is essential that we consider the local context when we plan our work for each country. The following sections summarise the contextual priorities in Kenya.

The tea sector is critical to the Kenyan economy, contributing 2% of the agricultural GDP and 23% of foreign exchange. Annually, Kenya produces over 450 million kg making it the third biggest tea producer in the world, after China and India. The industry supports an estimated five million people directly and indirectly, whilst an estimated 650,000 tea growers depend on tea, making the industry one of the leading sources of livelihoods.

At around 40%, Kenya is the most important sourcing country for the ETP membership (based on volume). 28 members source from Kenya. Over the last decade, exports to the UK have reduced while the exports to other key markets such as Pakistan and Egypt, where there is less demand for sustainably grown tea, have risen significantly. Both overall production and exports, although at a slower pace, have grown during the same period. Domestic demand has stayed relatively stagnant, resulting in oversupply, which puts downward pressure on prices.

This, coupled with already very small land sizes and sub-division of land, means that 95% of smallholders cannot earn a living income. (Smallholders make up around 60% of the tea sector by volume produced).

Recent changes introduced under the new Tea Act focus aim to rebalance returns along the value chain. However, since they do not address the fundamental issue of over-production, lack of investment in public services and an enabling environment, they are deemed to be unlikely to solve complex challenges. Instead, continued uncertainty around the Tea Act and the Tea Regulations may even succeed in discouraging international buyers from working in the Kenyan market. A sector-wide strategy represented by key stakeholders to inform policy is lacking. Re-establishment of the Kenya Tea Board, a move widely supported by the industry in Kenya, may provide a forum for this.
Public services in tea growing communities are in urgent need of investment, especially health and education. Living conditions for many smallholders and their workers remain poor, with many living without adequate housing, sanitation or lighting. Workers on smallholder farms lack employment contracts and protection and may face discrimination if they have migrated from other regions.

Although progress has been made, there remain several long-standing challenges in promoting and attaining better lives for women in tea communities, where Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is still prevalent and women are not represented in leadership positions. Nationally 39% of women in Kenya have been victims of GBV by an intimate partner, and representation at the national parliament stands at 22%, further highlighting the need to focus on SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

Climate change poses a significant threat to the tea industry due to changes in rainfall patterns and other unpredictable weather events which can make certain areas unsuitable for tea growing in the future. There is also a significant need to replant tea bushes to more climate resilient varieties. Factories may suffer from fuel wood shortages and households' fuelwood consumption continues to be high which can lead to deforestation.
2. Priorities and Activities

Based on ETP’s assessment of the country context in Kenya, the priorities for the period up to 2022 are to:

- Complete current ETP programmes, incorporate learning and best practices from those programmes into the new partnerships and share the learning widely, building ETP’s position and reputation in-country as an expert on tea.
- Strengthen stakeholder and government engagement, including building relationships with the newly re-established Kenya Tea Board and Tea research foundation, with a view to explore opportunities to sector wider platform to drive collaboration towards sector sustainability.
- Build on the work to date addressing issues facing the most vulnerable people in tea, focusing on women and workers hired on smallholder farms. The aim is to develop safer and more empowered tea communities, address gender-based violence and support women into leadership positions.
- Address climate change with a view to reducing carbon emissions along the supply chain and improving farmer livelihoods.

Figure 1. Diagram summary of all project proposals for Kenya country plan.
Overview of new proposed programmes

Equality
Under the Equality pillar, we propose to start new partnerships with ActionAid and Women Win to tackle safety and rights issues in communities and workplaces for women and the most vulnerable, such as the workers hired by smallholders. The ActionAid programme will adopt the participatory approach to work closely with the tea communities through community platforms which allow voices from the communities to be heard and the most salient human rights issues to be identified and tackled. It will further our understanding of the impact of Covid on tea communities. The programme will build on learnings from the Improving Safety and Opportunities for Women programme and work closely with the county governments to increase access to programmes and investment into the tea communities. Producers will form a key part of the community platforms and will be critical in supporting the implementation of plans. The participatory approach will inform later phases of the Kenya strategy. The proposed pilot in 3-4 communities will ideally be a mix of KTDA smallholder and outgrower/plantation communities.

The partnership with Women Win will focus on supporting women into leadership and tackling safety issues in the workplace. The initial phase of the Women Win partnership has secured funding and will include the development of a strategy to support women into leadership positions, however, further phases beyond 2022 will require additional funding. Both of these programmes are currently under development and are expected to commence in Q3 and Q4 of 2021.

Environment
ETP’s priority will be to scale up our environment partnerships with the FAO Global Low Carbon Tea (GLI-TEA) Programme and the Mt Kenya Landscape and Livelihoods programme. The GLI-TEA programme aims to decrease carbon emissions in the tea supply chain whilst reducing poverty and increasing the resilience of 50,000 tea farmers. There is a strong component on enhancing the enabling environment for carbon neutral value chains. The Mt Kenya Programme, led by Rainforest Alliance, will develop an improved landscape management structure of the Mt Kenya area to conserve natural resources and improve people’s livelihoods, including income diversification reaching 25,000 tea smallholders. Both of these programmes have secured funding. ETP’s role is to support the design and implementation of the programmes and this requires ETP-funded staff resource. Options for scaling the approach used under the Enhancing Livelihoods programme (e.g. replanting, Village Saving and Loans Associations and income diversification) will be explored as part of the Mt Kenya landscape partnership. However, if this is not possible, other avenues, including developing a relationship with the Tea Research Foundation will be explored to scale up this work, depending on funding.
Economics

Engagement with KTDA on improving business practices to raise conditions for workers hired on smallholder farms will continue but will depend on possible changes resulting from the revised tea regulations. This work will include a farm management pilot and work to change the by-laws governing the relationship between KTDA and farmers.

All the programmes described above have elements focusing on poverty reduction; and, ETP will additionally continue to support the implementation of the roadmap to reach living wage and living income which the IDH is developing. In the initial stages, the support needed here is ETP staff time.

The Better Than Cash Alliance is interested in conducting research in Kenya in 2022 to identify actionable opportunities to improve livelihoods through digital payments.

A strong county or national government engagement component will be part of all partnerships to ensure programme sustainability. This will also form a part of the ETP stakeholder and influencing strategy to ensure government programmes are available in the communities.

The overall reach of these proposed new programmes will be over 250,000 farmers, workers and community members.
3. Supporting activities

3.1 Partnerships
As part of the ETP global strategy, we are exploring locally-registered partners who have the potential to support ETP project work. Nairobi is a hub for regional funding. With this said, in addition to providing a vehicle to employ staff and contract team members, ideally, we will identify a partner organisation to enable us to develop proposals to access local fundraising opportunities. Further research and analysis is needed but options include Vi-Agroforestry and UN Global Compact. These partners also offer the option for regional and/or global partnerships.

The general approach in Kenya is to work at multiple levels, across government, producers (plantations and smallholder factories and communities), the Tea Board, Tea Research Institute, communities as well as certifiers and civil society. This will ensure we maintain flexibility in our approach while there is still uncertainty around the new Tea Act and the Tea Regulations. Strengthening relationships with partners will allow us to understand the impact these changes will have on the enabling environment. Working with diverse partners will allow us to tackle complex challenges at different levels, from direct implementation and understanding worker and community views, to influencing policy and convening stakeholders at a national level.

3.2 Shared learning
ETP has significant data and insights from our programmes in areas such as energy efficiency and workers hired by smallholders. These will be developed into case studies to support our engagement and influencing strategy and build upon the sector study conducted by NewForesight Consultancy.

3.3 Communications
In Kenya, ETP is well known among industry stakeholders such as tea producers and producer organisations like KTGA. Key new stakeholders to engage over the next 18 months are the re-established Kenya Tea Board, the Kenya Tea Research Institute, and local and national governments. The Tea Board will be critical to engage, and there will be a real opportunity to raise the profile of sustainability challenges and drive sector collaboration through this engagement.

ETP has already been invited to present at tea sector meetings organised by ETTA. Over the next year, we will continue to identify the most impactful channels and opportunities to share learning and raise the profile of our prioritised issues, such as women’s safety, and the rights of vulnerable communities. The GLI-TEA programme will provide an opportunity to influence the enabling environment on climate change. Where possible, we also align with the Kenyan government’s big four agenda. The most relevant areas to ETP are food security and nutrition, universal health coverage, and affordable housing. We will also closely monitor the implications of the new Tea Act and Tea Regulations and input into consultations where relevant. Resourcing to support these stakeholder engagements will be required.
To support communications, we will be working to identify a local pool of freelancers to support story gathering, which will support member communications and ETP’s communications strategy in-country.

The objectives of the ETP Kenya in-country communications in the period up to 2022 are to:

- Develop a robust influencing and engagement plan.
- Strengthen the position of ETP as a tea expert and trusted partner.
- Share learning and best practice widely to:
  - Create a shared understanding of issues such as complex vulnerabilities faced by workers of smallholders and women in the tea sector.
  - Scale up programmes and best practices in country.
  - Direct funding into the tea communities.
  - Improve availability of government programmes in tea communities.
4. Background materials

A budget, workplan and monitoring and evaluation plan have been developed to support the implementation of the priorities outlined above.