Understanding wages in the tea industry
Final Terms of reference for in-country studies

Introduction
This sets out the terms of reference (ToR) for a research study into wages in the tea industry. The research required forms part of a wider project. Background desk research has already been conducted. We are now looking for locally-based researchers in Malawi, Assam and Indonesia with expertise and knowledge of working conditions in the tea sector, to conduct stakeholder engagement and tea estate research including:

- engaging with tea producers (employers) and unions at national and local level
- desk research on wage levels
- field research at estates to interview managers and worker representatives
- stakeholder engagement to discuss findings
- production of research report and contribute to recommendations.

i. Background to the project
This project is an initiative of Oxfam Novib, in partnership with Ethical Tea Partnership, supported by IDH, Unilever, Ethical Trading Initiative and the standards bodies: Fairtrade Labelling Organisation (FLO), UTZ certified and Rainforest Alliance. Oxfam Novib is coordinating the project, with funding provided from IDH, ETP, Oxfam Novib and Unilever. For the full project summary, see Annex 1 (p10).

Goal and purpose of the project
To develop a wage ladder incorporating appropriate national and international benchmarks; to assess whether the ladder can form an effective, transparent system to measure wages of workers in the tea sector; and build a partnership of stakeholders across the tea industry who have a common concern to ensure wages for workers are adequate for sustainable livelihoods.

Approach
The project will consist of the following activities:

- **Analysis of wages**, by means of desk research using available data, together with a survey of tea packers and importers, estates and other employers, backed up with independent research and interviews.

- **Developing a wage ladder tool** to measure wages of workers in the tea industry against appropriate benchmarks in national and international law (ILO conventions) and test it in Indonesia, India and Malawi (see Annex 2 on page 14 for example).

- **Identifying the obstacles to raising wages.** These may relate to barriers to freedom of association and collective bargaining, commercial issues and business practices in the supply chain, market conditions, productivity, political, economic or social factors.
In the process, the project will determine whether the wage ladder tool is fit for purpose and has the support of key stakeholders as a monitoring and evaluation tool that contributes constructively to the wider debate about a living wage.

Findings will be communicated and consulted on with interested stakeholders in-country and through an international workshop in the UK in early 2012.

**Leadership of the project**

A Project Committee guides the project and an ‘Advisory Group’ of NGOs and labour unions, facilitated by an Oxfam GB project adviser, provides advice. The lead consultant agency, UK-based Ergon Associates, recruited by the project leaders, is responsible for the first phase (May-July) and to provide guidance on the second phase (August-October). National researchers, based in each of Indonesia, India (Assam) and Malawi, will be contracted for the second phase, with NGOs and unions being invited to provide advice.

**Coordination of the local researchers**

Oxfam Novib will recruit the local researchers and will coordinate the process. Oxfam Novib will act as a resource for trouble shooting at multi-stakeholder level.

ETP Regional Managers will provide support on the ground to link with government entities (tea boards) and with the local company representatives and tea estates. ETPRM will act as local resource for trouble-shooting.

Ergon Associates will provide guidance on the research through regular communication (via skype and email): (1) introducing the wage ladder tool and explanation of earlier research; (2) agreeing a report structure, (3) providing feedback on the work produced; (4) providing support in matters of interpretation and methodological challenges; and (5) ensuring that the final country report quality is in keeping with the quality required for the overall project.

**ii. Tasks required of local researchers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outline of task</th>
<th>Outcome looked for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workplan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Agreed plan.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree workplan and methodology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with consultants and project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tea producer engagement**

Work with ETP and Unilever to determine the best approach to gain producer support for the project in each country. This will be different in each country, but is likely to include getting buy-in from the Tea Board and relevant Tea Associations. Once this has been done, visit the head offices of selected plantation companies to explain the project, giving them the opportunity to pose any questions or raise any concerns and ensuring they have confidence in the proposed methodology for collecting wage data

Key tea institutions and producer groups understand the purpose of the project and recognize its value.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outline of task</th>
<th>Outcome looked for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and non-wage benefits. Link this also to overview of cost of production.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree the role they will play in ensuring active and positive involvement from estates, being interviewed themselves, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Union engagement**  
Work with project leaders and ETP regional managers to engage with relevant local unions including women’s officers where relevant. | Record union perspective on wages; wages element of cost of production; engage unions as key stakeholder. |
| Desk research  
Collate information on wages received by workers from a range of sources:  
- the different tasks typically undertaken by women and men workers on estates in the project scope and the different types of contract they are employed on\(^1\).  
- Data on existing wage levels and non-wage benefits, differentiated by gender, needed to populate the Wage Ladder Tool developed by the consultants.  
ETP Regional Managers can provide suggestions and introductions for gathering information.  
In scope: waged workers plucking leaf for, or employed in tea factories under the control of, participating estates. Out of scope: waged workers working on smallholder estates.  
Sources include:  
- ETP and Unilever UK offices (audit records; visit reports, etc);  
- ETP regional managers in-country;  
- Certifying bodies participating in the project (RainForest Alliance, Fairtrade Labelling Organisation, Utz Certified);  
- Price data identified using auction prices for tea, which is in the public domain.  
- Members of the National Reference Groups established by Utz Certified/Solidaridad in-country; | Gender analysis of roles in scope of the project.  
Good quality evidence-based data on wages and non-wage benefits received by workers working on the participating estates segregated by gender, work task and type of contractual agreement |
| Field research  
Visit participating estates (likely to be 3-5 estates) to fill in any gaps in the data:  
- Explain the purpose of the project to managers | Verification, and greater completeness of, wage data already collected  
Manager and worker perspectives at estates, and wage processes, |

\(^1\) As a guide to types of contract see the Precarious Work table on page 7 of the Oxfam International publication *Better Jobs in Better Supply Chains*, March 2010. If this information is not available, participatory (PRA) methods may be required.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outline of task</th>
<th>Outcome looked for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and worker representatives and how the findings will be used and communicated</td>
<td>documented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gather perspectives on the obstacles to raising wages.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Check data from the desk research on wages (and non-wage benefits) received</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by different categories of workers, and record these (protecting anonymity of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the estate) against the wage ladder elements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Check data and the degree to which wages meet needs, through interviews with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a representative sample of workers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Record how wages are currently documented and reported eg by the estate and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auditors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Presentation of data**

Work with the consultants to collate, analyse and synthesize the data so it can be presented clearly on the wage ladder tool and in the report annexes.

Clearly presented data on wages and non-wage benefits as received by workers working on the participating estates, disaggregated by gender, anonymised, represented graphically on the wage ladder tool and in table form.

**Stakeholder consultation**

Consult a range of stakeholders, agreed with consultants/project leaders, on

- The implication of the current wage situation for sustainable livelihoods, capturing available evidence, and the degree to which wages meet workers’ needs.
- The obstacles to raising wages where they are not adequate for sustainable livelihoods.
- Best and worst practice case studies, anonymised.
- Practices that make a positive difference, and examples from other comparable agriculture sectors.
- Feedback on the wage ladder tool and suggestions for improvement.

Stakeholders likely to include:-
- Plantation companies/tea estates participating and their workers.
- NGOs with labour rights/tea sector expertise.
- Trade unions representing workers in the participating estates.
- One or two relevant governmental bodies.
- Companies/retailers sourcing tea from relevant areas.

Summary for the report of the implications of the current situation in the relevant country/region, obstacles to raising wages, relevant case studies and examples, suggestions to improve the wage ladder tool.
### Outline of task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report draft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write up the findings in a report of approx 15 pages, with annexes of 15 pages (??); following the report structure and headings of the existing draft report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome looked for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be included in the report:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Contents, executive summary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Data as set out in iv. above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Analysis and summary of the implications of the current wage situation (as documented by the wage ladder tool) for workers’ livelihoods with reference to available evidence. Headings include: Minimum wage; current wage rates; defining, fixing and uprating the minimum wage; tax; living wage/poverty measurements; industrial relations; benefits; job roles/contract type; general labour issues; commercial issues including cost of production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Overview of the main obstacles to raising wages which are not adequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Best and worst practice examples (anonymised) and case studies, and practices that make a positive difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Suggestions on how to improve the wage ladder for future use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Record of methodology followed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- National legislation relevant to wages in the tea industry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input to guidance to improve recording of wages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Input to guidance to be developed by the consultants, from the relevant country/region perspective, to improve the accuracy and completeness of wage records.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Include recommendations for each set of stakeholders in the tea sector on how practically to deal with wage issues to promote transparency, gender equity and to support monitoring of changes over time. |

| Guidance for a range of stakeholders, to improve the accuracy and completeness of wage records. |
| For example: |
| i. Employers on how best to record and communicate wages to workers. |
| ii. Traders on how best to integrate a living wage into price negotiations. |
| iii. Standard setters on how the wage ladder could be used as a practical tool in certification. |
| iv. Auditors on how to assess the accuracy and completeness of wage records, how to document |
### Outline of task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outline of task</th>
<th>Outcome looked for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>them and how to set corrective actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v. NGOs and labour unions on how to frame the living wage issue in practice and create transparency on the actual situation at workplace level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vi. Organizations undertaking training of managers and workers on labour rights and responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vii. Propose remediation approaches for companies that address how wages can be raised in a sustainable manner where they are a long way from adequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate findings</td>
<td>Findings communicated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicate findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share findings with stakeholders, in a process agreed with consultants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### iii. Skills and experience required

**Summary**

The project leaders are looking for experienced researchers who are able to:

- get buy-in to the tea wages project from the tea sector per country,
- understand wages from worker and employer perspectives;
- gather data effectively to generate findings which are credible and useable
- analyse and synthesize complex information
- interview stakeholders (including workers)

whilst maintaining an objective approach to the issues involved.

We are looking to contract teams of researchers (probably two people) in each of India (focus region: Assam), Indonesia and Malawi.

**Skills:** research skills; report-writing skills; good communication and interpersonal skills; fluent in English and relevant local language/s.

**Experience:** Essential: understanding wages from national legal standpoint, and from employer and worker perspectives including industrial relations context, ideally in tea or in other plantation agriculture; data management including surveys; report writing; working remotely with project colleagues; working with a range of stakeholders; understanding of gender issues (plus caste in India); understanding of socio-economic and political environment of the relevant country/region.

---

Tea Wages Project: Final Terms of Reference for the local researchers
Desirable: understanding of labour rights, the private sector, tea boards and the tea industry.

**Behavioural competences:** drive to achieve results; critical information gathering; adaptable and flexible; diplomatic and persuasive; motivated; ability to understand different stakeholders’ perspectives.

iv. **Communications during the project**

Communications will be by email and telephone (or skype where available). Communication will be with the following project members, whose role vis-à-vis management of local research is outlined below:

- Oxfam Novib (project leaders and will contract the researchers)
- Ethical Tea Partnership (joint project leaders, and their regional managers in-country will provide logistical support and advice to the researchers)
- Ergon (managers of the researchers on a day-to-day basis)

The researchers will be required to send short, written updates on progress of their work every two weeks. Regular calls will be also scheduled with the consultants and with Oxfam Novib/ETP project leaders to monitor progress, share information, provide any support or guidance required and help troubleshoot any problems arising.

v. **Proposed timeframe (flexible depending on applicant’s situation)**

Please note the following timeframe is flexible. Suitable candidates will be considered even if they cannot meet this exact timeframe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written proposals</th>
<th>Tuesday 19th July</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>end of July/early August (with participation from Oxfam Novib, ETP, Ergon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers appointed</td>
<td>mid-August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers start work</td>
<td>As soon as possible: end of August/early September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desk research</td>
<td>August-October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field research</td>
<td>September-October (depending on local situation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft report</td>
<td>by 31 October</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vi. **Outputs**

- Agreed workplan.
- Project buy-in by plantation companies.
- Good quality data on wages and non-wage benefits received by workers in the participating estates, in table form and presented graphically on the wage ladder tool.
- Based on consultation of key stakeholders, an overview of implications for sustainable livelihoods of current wages (with supporting evidence), obstacles to raising wages, best and worst practice examples, practices that make a positive difference, suggestions for improving the wage ladder tool.
- Draft report, to include outline of report structure, contents, executive summary, wage data (in table form in annexes, and presented on the wage ladder tool), overview of findings from stakeholder consultation, summary of conclusions, record of methodology followed.
- Second draft taking on board proposed improvements.
• Input to guidance for a range of stakeholders, from a country/region perspective, to improve the accuracy and completeness of wage records.
• Communication of findings to stakeholders.

vii. Tone, confidentiality, contract terms

Neutrality
We are seeking researchers who can demonstrate they will take a neutral, objective attitude in relation to debates about wages and labour issues, in order to deliver outcomes that can achieve acceptance by the widest possible range of tea industry stakeholders. Researchers are asked to declare any relevant affiliations, memberships or past roles relevant to the tea wages project, at the time of putting in an expression of interest/proposal.

Researchers will need to observe due confidentiality of sensitive information and anonymise names, seeking guidance where needed from project leaders/consultants.

Conflicts of interest
The consultant should have no direct interest in the results of the project so should not be directly involved in the execution of projects claiming to improve the situation of labourers, workers or farmers (in tea or other commodities), nor should he/she be commercially active in selling products that claim to contribute to such an outcome. We recognize the sensitivities around the issues of wages in the tea industry, and therefore will need any candidates to make a declaration of anything (eg organizational memberships or affiliations) that could constitute a conflict of interest. Any involvement of previous, similar work should also be declared. Neither of these will prejudice any application received.

Completeness and balance of the findings
The consultant should ensure the report findings reflect the views of all stakeholders and therefore should submit the findings to these stakeholders for review.

Protection of anonymity and confidentiality
The researcher should ensure all results and information contained in reports are not traceable to specific stakeholders (ie must be anonymised where relevant) and must maintain commercial confidentiality.

Tone of research report
The researcher’s final report needs to be neutral in tone. It should stick to data gathered during the research, avoid generalisations, and reference the source of all relevant information included.

Contract terms
The contract is offered on a consultancy basis. Payments will be by Oxfam Novib, in an agreed format. For the purposes of this work, the researcher/s will be self-employed and responsible for the payment of any taxes and other self-employment contributions incurred as well as for office
expenses. Payment will be on acceptance of completed work tasks by the project co-
ordinator/manager. Payment will be made by Oxfam Novibin two stages: half at the start of the project and half after finalization.

**Estimate of days required, travel involved**
An estimated total of 120 days/per country – for example around 40 days each for a team of 3 people. Travel involved to tea estates.

viii. **Recruitment process**
Recruitment is being managed by Ergon Associates, a UK-based labour rights consultancy conducting part of the project management as well as the overall research report (www.ergonassociates.net).

**Contact:** Ms Pins Brown on pins.brown@ergonassociates.net

**Proposals**
Proposals for individual/teams of researchers should be sent to Pins Brown by Tuesday, July 19th. Proposals should be no longer than 10 pages (excluding CVs and work sample) and should specify:

- **Suitability**: a summary of how you/your team meet the requirements of the research work including skills, experience and neutrality
- **Methodology**: how you/your team would carry out key tasks and deliver key outputs
- **Fees and estimated costs (including reimbursable expenses)**
- **Availability** from August-December 2011, as well as capacity/availability to participate in a telephone interview by phone or Skype in either late July or mid-August
- **Work sample**: a writing sample, ideally of a succinct research report. If your proposal is a team submission, please indicate which team member would be the primary report author and send a sample from that person.
- CVs of proposed researchers

**Shortlisting**
Proposals will be shortlisted and those shortlisted will be invited to participate in a telephone or Skype interview with the project leaders. Those sending unsuccessful proposals will be informed by email by July 29th.
Annex 1: Project Summary

Understanding wage issues in the tea sector: Project Summary, June 11

Background

Achieving fairness and transparency with regards to wages for workers in the tea sector is a complex challenge, for a variety of reasons. These include non-wage benefits and variable rates complicating the picture, governmental policy of spreading employment in some regions, seasonality, and the different roles traditionally played by men and women on tea estates.

To address this challenging topic Oxfam Novib in partnership with the Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP) initiated this project aimed at increasing understanding of wages in the tea industry. This work is supported by IDH, Unilever, and the standards bodies FLO, UTZ certified and Rainforest Alliance, amongst others. The project is coordinated by Oxfam Novib, and funded by ETP, Unilever, Oxfam Novib and IDH.

About the Tea Improvement Programme of Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH)

The Tea Improvement Programme of IDH a consortium of the biggest tea companies in Europe, the three most important certifiers and a broad spectrum of NGOs that work on sustainable tea production in countries in Africa and Asia and on sustainable procurement in Western Europe. Members of the TIP include Unilever, Sara Lee and Twining, who together represent 40% of the Western market for black tea. Other members are the business organizations The Royal Dutch Coffee and Tea Association (KNVKT), UK-based Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP), the NGOs Oxfam Novib, Solidaridad, and the standards bodies Rainforest Alliance, UTZ certified and Fair Labelling Organization (FLO).

Creation of a more fair and transparent wage structure was defined by IDH as one of the topics for innovation. Its €9.2 million budget programme has set a target of a 20% increase in income for 310,000 small holders and workers by 2013.

Goal and purpose of the Tea Wage Project

Developing and applying a wage ladder tools can help move an industry on from a debate about ‘what is a living wage?’ to an evidence-based understanding of what wages are paid in relation to a range of wage benchmarks.

The purpose of this project is to develop a wage ladder, incorporating appropriate national and international benchmarks, assess whether the ladder can form an effective, transparent
system to measure wages of workers in the tea sector, and build a partnership of stakeholders across the tea industry who have a common concern to ensure wages for workers are adequate for sustainable livelihoods.

**Approach**

The project will consist of the following activities:

- **Analysis of wages**, by means of desk research using available data, together with a survey of tea packers and importers, estates and other employers, backed up with independent research and interviews.

- **Developing a wage ladder tool** to measure wages of workers in the tea industry against appropriate benchmarks in national and international law (ILO conventions) and test it in Indonesia, India and Malawi.

- **Identifying the obstacles to raising wages**. These may relate to barriers to freedom of association and collective bargaining, commercial issues and business practices in the supply chain, market conditions, productivity, political, economic or social factors.

In the process, the project will determine whether the wage ladder tool is fit for purpose and has the support of key stakeholders as a monitoring and evaluation tool that contributes constructively to the wider debate about a living wage.

Findings will be communicated and consulted on with interested stakeholders in-country and through an international workshop in the UK in early 2012.

**Project structures**

A Project Committee\(^2\) guides the project and an Advisory Group\(^3\) of NGOs and labour unions provides advice; some have already provided input during the design stage. The lead consultant agency Ergon Associates (based in the UK) is responsible for the first phase (see below) and to provide guidance on the second phase. National researchers, based in each of Indonesia, India (Assam) and Malawi, will be contracted for the second phase, with NGOs and unions being invited to provide advice.

**Timetable of activities**

Planning and preliminaries, December 10 to March 2011.

Phase 1: Sector analysis and development of the wage ladder tool, April to June 2011:

---

\(^2\) The Project Committee members are: Oxfam Novib, Ethical Tea Partnership, IDH, Unilever, Ethical Trading Initiative, Rainforest Alliance, Utz Certified, Fairtrade Labelling Organisation.

\(^3\) The Advisory Group members are: Solidaridad, Somo, Tropical Commodities Coalition, Traidcraft, Banana Link, Christian Aid, Oxfam GB, Oxfam Novib, plus individuals from civil society with relevant expertise.
Project kick-off, March 2011.

Desk research, March to June 2011

Phase 2: Country studies, consultation and report, July 2011 to Feb 2012
  Country-level studies, Aug-Oct 2011
  Country-level consultation, Dec 2011
  Global workshop in UK and final report, Feb 2012

Contact point for further information: Frank Mechielsen, Willem van Dam, Oxfam Novib.
frank.mechielsen@oxfamnovib.nl
willem.van.dam@oxfamnovib.nl.

Annex: motivation from members to participate in the project

Project Committee members

Oxfam: “Oxfam is co-leading this project because of our support for organisations seeking to bring about positive change for workers in global supply chains. For workers to achieve a fair share of the retail price, greater clarity and transparency are needed along the value chain. This project will make an important contribution to this, and comes at a time of other constructive initiatives to tackle very low wages.”

Ethical Tea Partnership: “Wage issues in the tea sector are complicated and current discussions are often ill-informed and conflictual. A project such as this could form a firm foundation from which to develop a more constructive and consensual approach which would be valuable to all stakeholders.”

Unilever: “Unilever will offer support to this project in the form of cash and also with time and knowledge as the project is considered to be piloting an innovative approach to sustainable agriculture implementation and assessment.”

KNVKT: “The Royal Dutch Coffee and Tea Association supports the Wage Proposal as submitted by Oxfam Novib. The proposal sets out to address an important topic that is in need of further investigation. The findings could be relevant for multiple commodities especially in light of recent Green Public Procurement policies put forward by the Dutch government.”

Fair Labelling Organisation: “Fairtrade is working to promote fair/decent wages for workers in the supply chains of Fairtrade-certified products, and supports the aims of this project. Fairtrade would be interested in supporting this project through giving guidance and assistance via the project steering committee’. -we have particular interest in Malawi and would hope to be able provide particular expertise/contacts/knowledge in this area.”

Rainforest Alliance: “Rainforest Alliance is supporting this project with advice and guidance as its outcomes shall not only provide more transparency on wage issues in the tea sector but also come up with a tool to assess them, which the Rainforest Alliance and the Sustainable Agriculture Network will be able to use in their work across the tea programme. This will help the Rainforest Alliance in its mission to ensure sustainable livelihoods for tea workers and their families.”
Utz Certified: “UTZ certified fully supports the importance of wages in the sustainability discussion and has conducted some research on the definition and possible implementation of a living wage concept. The project by Oxfam Novib/ETP is very welcome and we hope to gain interesting insights into possibilities for applying the wage ladder tool in the tea sector. We are happy to contribute with our expertise and active participation in the project’s Steering Group.”

Ethical Trading Initiative: “Achieving a living wage for workers is one of the most pressing, yet complex issues in ethical trade, and as such is one of ETI’s strategic priorities. We support the practical, collaborative approach that this project espouses, and believe it could provide valuable lessons not just for the tea sector, but for many other poor and vulnerable people working in global supply chains.”

Support from Civil Society Organisations

Traidcraft: “Traidcraft hopes that this project will achieve a clear and common understanding of the wage situation faced by workers in the tea sector and so will set a firm foundation to overcome the barriers to bringing about meaningful and lasting change across the sector. We are happy to bring our experience as a fair trade company and as an NGO working to support tea growers to this important work.”

Tropical Commodity Coalition: “TCC supports this project, because we think more knowledge and understanding is needed. Out of the many social challenges still present in supply chains, decent/living wages is one of our key-focuses. TCC can contribute by sharing knowledge and experience, through coordination (as Chair of the broader TIP Reflection Group) and through cross-commodity learning.”

Banana Link: “Banana Link hopes that this initiative in the tea sector can generate not only useful tools but also the necessary political will to raise wages. In this process we are keen to ensure that workers’ voices through their independent trade unions are heard, since, ultimately, achieving sustainable living wages depends on the quality of the social dialogue that is in place. We are happy to bring our experience of ongoing efforts in the banana industry.”

Solidaridad: “Solidaridad supports the wage project which offers an opportunity for exploring the use of the wage ladder tool in an agricultural setting and addressing one of the most difficult issues in the tea sector. Solidaridad supports it indirectly by giving feedback through the Advisory Board and directly by providing access to local partners and offering facilitation in a broad base multi-stakeholder discussions on the findings of the wage ladder study through the National Reference Groups in India as well as Indonesia. It is crucial that the discussion is led by local stakeholders and/or tea buyers.”

Somo: “The low wages of tea workers is one of the most important and difficult issues to address in the tea sector. SOMO supports this project because it attempts to address tea wages in a multi-stakeholder setting. We hope that our modest advisory role will help to support it to advance the much needed, but often hampered, dialogue and discussion among stakeholders on the this issue in this industry locally, nationally and internationally.”

Christian Aid: “Christian Aid supports this project, the wage issue in the tea sector is both complicated and often misrepresented and so this initiative is crucial to generate a useful tool. Identifying potential interventions related to wages which can improve the lives and livelihoods of those connected to the tea sector and challenge structures to eradicate poverty is essential.”
Annex 2: Sample wage ladder

Please note this is a fictitious sample only, provided to indicate what a wage ladder is.

Bars 1-6 represent imaginary workplaces, and 0-350 the imaginary local currency. The key indicates the different benchmarks used.