

Kenya Tea Rising



Journey of Quality, Impact & Sustainability



Scaled to perfection

Setting a new
Global Standard
for Consistency
in Kenya Tea
Production



Decoding Terrior - Global
researchers tracing the
DNA of Kenya's signature
tea flavour



Here's The Teeaa...



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CEO's Note

This Quarter, we celebrate the remarkable teamwork, hard work, and excellence that defined the end of the year for the Kenyan tea sector. In this edition, we look at what formed the successful foundation for our journey into 2026.

The Tea Board of Kenya (TBK), alongside our dedicated partners and stakeholders, proudly focused on initiatives that highlight the importance of Origin, Integrity, and Global Promise. These efforts, including the groundbreaking Geographical Indication (GI) project with CIRAD, the crucial push for quality standards, and the strengthening of governance under the Tea Act, are designed to build credibility and unlock premium value across the region and global markets.

From wherever you're reading this Quarter Four edition, as you flip through the pages, enjoy the read and share with the entire tea community your insights on what this edition means for the future of the sector.

We wish you and your families a joyous, restful, and blessed holiday season ahead

Willy Mutai,
CEO Tea Board of Kenya.





WORLD MEDIA TOURS KENYA'S TEA BELT

Kenya made global agricultural headlines in October 2025 when it hosted the IFAJ World Congress, a gathering of agricultural journalists from across the globe. For the first time in Eastern Africa, over 250 journalists, communicators, scientists and policymakers descended on Nairobi and surrounding regions for the four-day congress, under the theme "Unlocking the agricultural potential in the cradle of mankind."

As part of the Congress itinerary, delegates were taken on immersive field tours across agriculture in Kenya. On 18 October 2025, one of the planned field visits included a journey to **Kagwe Tea Factory, Gatwamba**,

Kiambu giving journalists a first-hand view of Kenya's tea sector: from farms to factory floors, processing lines to plantations.

Visiting Kagwe allowed the journalists to walk through tea gardens, observe plucking operations, interact with farmers and workers, and experience the processing chain intimately, from leaf delivery at the factory gate to withering, rolling, drying and sorting. The visit shed light on the hard work behind every packet of Kenyan tea, and gave journalists material to report not only on production but on livelihoods, rural communities, and the people behind the product.



Oct - Nov | 2025

In post-Congress reflections and media coverage, several voices emphasised the importance of agricultural journalism as a bridge between rural realities and global audiences. As one of the Congress organisers put it, the media's role is to ensure farmers and their stories are heard globally.

For the tea sector, having global journalists inside farms and factories sends a strong signal of transparency and readiness to engage with the world not just as a bulk exporter, but as a producer with traceable farms, working hands, and real lives behind every harvest. It is a chance to shift perceptions, highlight challenges, celebrate successes, and open doors for partnerships, trade, and global visibility.

Through the coverage that emerged from the IFAJ visit, Kenya's tea gained more than media space it gained global ambassadors, witnesses who saw the land, the labour, and the potential behind the leaves. The field visit to Kagwe Tea Factory thus stands out as a historic moment: when global journalists stepped into Kenya's tea belt saw the people behind the crop and carried Kenya's tea story to the world.





Kenya's Tea on Display: NITF 2025 Spotlights the Leaf

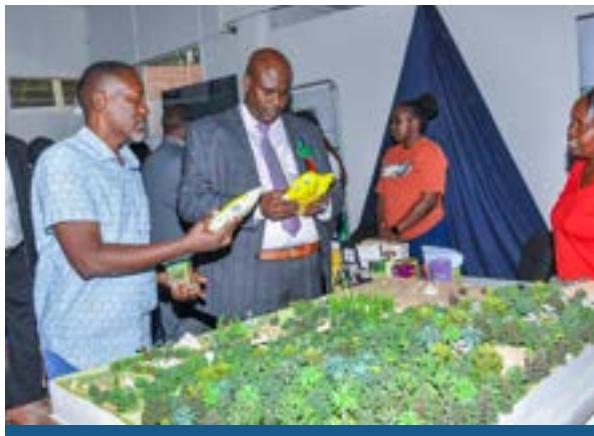


In 2025, the **Nairobi International Trade Fair (NITF)**, the flagship show organised by the **Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK)** at Jamhuri Park once again provided a major platform for sectors across agriculture, trade and innovation.

This year, the fair's theme "Promoting Climate-Smart Agriculture and Trade Initiative for Sustainable Economic Growth," aligned closely with Kenya's evolving tea industry, making it a timely opportunity for the Tea Board of Kenya (TBK) and allied tea stakeholders to showcase Kenyan tea's heritage, quality, and potential to both domestic and international visitors.

At the TBK stand, visitors were invited to "step into the world of Kenya's Green Gold" a curated experience of tasting premium teas, learning about tea-growing regions, and engaging with industry players. The exhibition highlighted not only tea as a commodity, but tea as culture, livelihood, and a story that connects farmers, factories and consumers through every cup.

The Tea Board of Kenya was proud to welcome PS Cabinet Affairs, Dr. Idris Salim Dokota, PhD, as the Chief Guest at the 2025 Nairobi International Trade Fair. His visit to the TBK stand was more than an official engagement, it was a celebration of Kenya's Green Gold and the farmers, processors, and industry players who make every cup possible



As Kenya's agriculture and trade sectors navigate climate pressures, market shifts and global demand, platforms like the ASK Show play a critical role bridging producers and consumers, showcasing value-added opportunities, and giving Kenyan tea a public voice. For TBK, the 2025 show was not just an exhibition; it was a statement that Kenya's tea is ready for modern markets, global competition, and sustainable growth.





Kenya Explores Geographic Indication to Boost Global Competition

Over the last quarter TBK brought together researchers from CIRAD, industry partners including KTGA and KTDA, and financial partners such as Equity Bank to begin the delicate work of mapping Kenya's tea by origin. The objective: build a credible, scientific case for Geographical Indications (GI) that would allow regions like Kericho and other highlands to market their teas with protected origin labels. That work involves intensive field visits, factory benchmarking, laboratory data from the Tea Research Institute, and regular consultations with farmers and factory managers to document unique terroir, production practices, and organoleptic differences.

Why this matters: GI is not a marketing gimmick. It is a legally enforceable label that links flavour, soil, altitude and tradition to a place — and when implemented fairly, it channels premium payments back to growers and communities. TBK's approach has been methodical: field-to-factory

visits, scientific benchmarking, and stakeholder workshops to make sure that any GI claim will be robust, inclusive, and defensible on international markets.



Stakeholders at Momul, Kagwe and other visited factories expressed cautious optimism. For many smallholders the promise of GI is simple: better prices for the same leaf if the world can clearly recognize where it came from. TBK has repeatedly stressed that GI must be paired with investments in quality (plucking standards, handling and processing) so the origin label always equals a high-quality product that buyers trust.

Moreover, the GI initiative encourages sustainable farming practices and community-based development. By documenting unique qualities tied to geography, Kenya sends a message: tea from each region isn't a commodity, it's a story, a tradition, a heritage. The ongoing study lays the foundation for a future where every tea packet from Kenya comes with a promise: origin, quality, and fair return.

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Every region has a story in its soil, our job is to make that story visible on the world stage.



CS Kagwe and Lipton Unveil Bold Plan to Transform Kenya's Tea Industry



As part of ongoing efforts to transform Kenya's tea industry, the Tea Board of Kenya continues to engage strategic global partners to advance sustainability, innovation, and value addition across the sector.

In this regard, Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock Development, **Sen. Mutahi Kagwe**, held discussions with **Lipton Teas and Infusions**, represented by **Mr. Bruno Laine**, Chief Supply Chain Officer, on initiatives aimed at strengthening the positioning of Kenyan tea in global markets.



Key among the areas discussed was Lipton's commitment to enhancing the branding of Kenyan tea, as well as plans to establish a research and innovation unit at Kabianga University. The proposed facility is expected to support continuous improvement in tea quality, encourage innovation, and strengthen linkages between research and industry needs.

The engagement also reviewed progress on the Amini Sustainability Initiative, which seeks to promote quality production, sustainability, value-for-money for growers, and the adoption of best-in-class ethical practices throughout the tea value chain. The session underscored the importance of collaborative partner between



Advancing Value Addition through the Kenya-China Tea Partnership

Kenya's tea industry has taken bold strides through its partnership with Benny Tea of China, opening new avenues for value addition, innovation, and global market growth.

Following discussions earlier this year between H.E. President William Ruto and Mr. Zhang Chaobin, Chairman of Benny Tea, the company's technical teams visited Mungania, Chebango, and the Tea Research Institute (TRI) factories in Timbili, Kericho. Their goal was to assess factory readiness, identify technology needs, and design a roadmap for producing teas tailored to the China market.

The initiative introduced plans for four fully automated production lines, capable of processing black orthodox, green orthodox, and specialty teas. These facilities are envisioned as Centres of Excellence and Tea Incubation Hubs, driving innovation, value addition, and job creation across Kenya's tea-growing regions.





From the highlands of Mount Kenya and Kericho to teacups in China, the partnership is creating new opportunities for farmers, factory workers, and the broader tea sector, while strengthening Kenya's reputation for premium

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**From Kenya's highlands to
China's teacups, this
partnership is steeped in
growth**



KichekdaKona.



**WHAT DO YOU CALL A
TEA THAT IS REALLY GOOD
AT ITS JOB?**

WHAT?

High-quali-tea.



The Board of Directors Advancing Kenya's Tea Transformation Through Strategic Leadership

Strengthening Strategic Partnerships for a Value-Added Tea Future

Kenya's tea sector continues to advance its transition from a bulk-export model to a value-driven, diversified, and globally competitive industry, anchored on strong partnerships across the value chain. Over recent weeks, the Tea Board of Kenya (TBK) Board of Directors has undertaken a series of strategic engagements with local and international industry players to accelerate this transformation.

Central to these engagements has been a shared focus on value addition, innovation, market diversification, and sustainability. Through discussions with global buyers, local brands, processors, and traders, TBK is strengthening collaboration aimed at unlocking higher returns for farmers and positioning Kenyan tea more competitively in premium global markets.



Engaging Global Brands and Market Leaders

The TBK Board held discussions with Lipton Teas and Infusions, one of the world's leading tea companies, to deepen collaboration on Kenya's value-addition agenda. The engagement explored emerging global market trends, including growing demand for traceable, sustainably produced, and high-quality teas, as well as opportunities for enhanced branding and innovation.

These conversations reinforced Kenya's ambition to move beyond bulk exports and establish itself as a leading supplier of specialty and orthodox teas, supported by strong sustainability credentials and market intelligence from global partners.



Championing Local Brands and Product Diversification

At the local level, TBK continued to champion Kenyan brands through engagements with Kericho Gold, an established leader in innovation and premium tea products. Discussions between the TBK Board and Gold Crown Beverages, the company behind the Kericho Gold brand, focused on practical pathways to scale product diversification, branding, and value addition.

Kericho Gold's success story highlights the potential for Kenyan tea brands to command greater value both locally and internationally, while creating stronger linkages between farmers, processors, and consumers.



Deepening Expertise in Orthodox Tea Production

As part of efforts to grow Kenya's footprint in premium tea categories, TBK facilitated knowledge-sharing sessions with Uniworld Tea Company and Tusha Tea Company, drawing on Sri Lanka's globally recognised expertise in orthodox tea production and export.

With orthodox and specialty teas commanding premium prices in niche markets, the engagements underscored opportunities for Kenya to diversify beyond traditional CTC production, expand whole-leaf tea offerings, and strengthen competitiveness in markets that prioritise quality, provenance, and traceability.





Market Efficiency and Sector Coordination

Recognising the importance of a well-functioning marketplace, the TBK Board also engaged with the East African Tea Traders Association (EATTA) to discuss market efficiency, regulatory alignment, and sustainable industry growth. These consultations form part of TBK's broader mandate under the Tea Act 2020, which emphasises inclusive governance, fair participation, and coordinated sector development.

In addition, TBK held engagements with ChaiTrading, focusing on trading dynamics, market access, and opportunities to strengthen linkages between producers and buyers in a rapidly evolving global tea landscape.

A Shared Vision for the Future

Collectively, these engagements reflect a deliberate and coordinated approach to building a resilient, diversified, and future-ready tea sector. By strengthening partnerships across production, processing, trading, and branding, Kenya is laying the groundwork for higher-value

exports, improved farmer incomes, and a stronger global tea identity.

As TBK continues to convene stakeholders and champion sector reforms, the focus remains clear: driving value addition, fostering innovation, and ensuring Kenyan tea competes and wins in the world's most demanding markets.



Environmental Stewardship at the Heart of Kenya's Tea Future



The Tea Board of Kenya continues to advance sustainability as a cornerstone of a resilient and future-ready tea industry. This commitment was demonstrated through participation in a large-scale tree-planting exercise alongside the Prime Cabinet Secretary, H.E. Dr. Musalia Mudavadi, and other key national stakeholders, reinforcing the sector's role in environmental stewardship.

The initiative brought together public and private sector partners in a collective effort to restore landscapes, protect vital ecosystems, and strengthen climate resilience in tea-growing regions. The Tea Board of Kenya expressed appreciation to industry players including Nyayo Tea Zones Development Corporation, Williamson Tea, Eastern Produce, BAT, and others who contributed seedlings towards this monumental exercise.





For Kenya's tea industry, environmental protection is not optional it is essential. Healthy forests safeguard water catchments, regulate climate, and sustain the ecosystems that tea farming depends on. By investing in tree planting and restoration, the sector is protecting the very foundation upon which millions of livelihoods rely.

The exercise aligns with H.E. President William Ruto's 15 Billion Trees Agenda, a national commitment to restore degraded landscapes and promote climate-resilient development. Beyond planting, the focus remains on long-term tree care, recognising that nurturing trees is a lasting responsibility that delivers benefits for generations.

As Kenya works toward a greener future, the Tea Board of Kenya remains committed to championing sustainable practices that strengthen the tea sector while contributing to national environmental goals. A greener Kenya is not only a healthier environment it is the pathway to a stronger, more sustainable tea industry.

BUT.....

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Before we plant a million trees we must nature a million hearts that care

Truphena Muthoni

Extending Kenya Tea's Impact Through Youth and Community Engagement

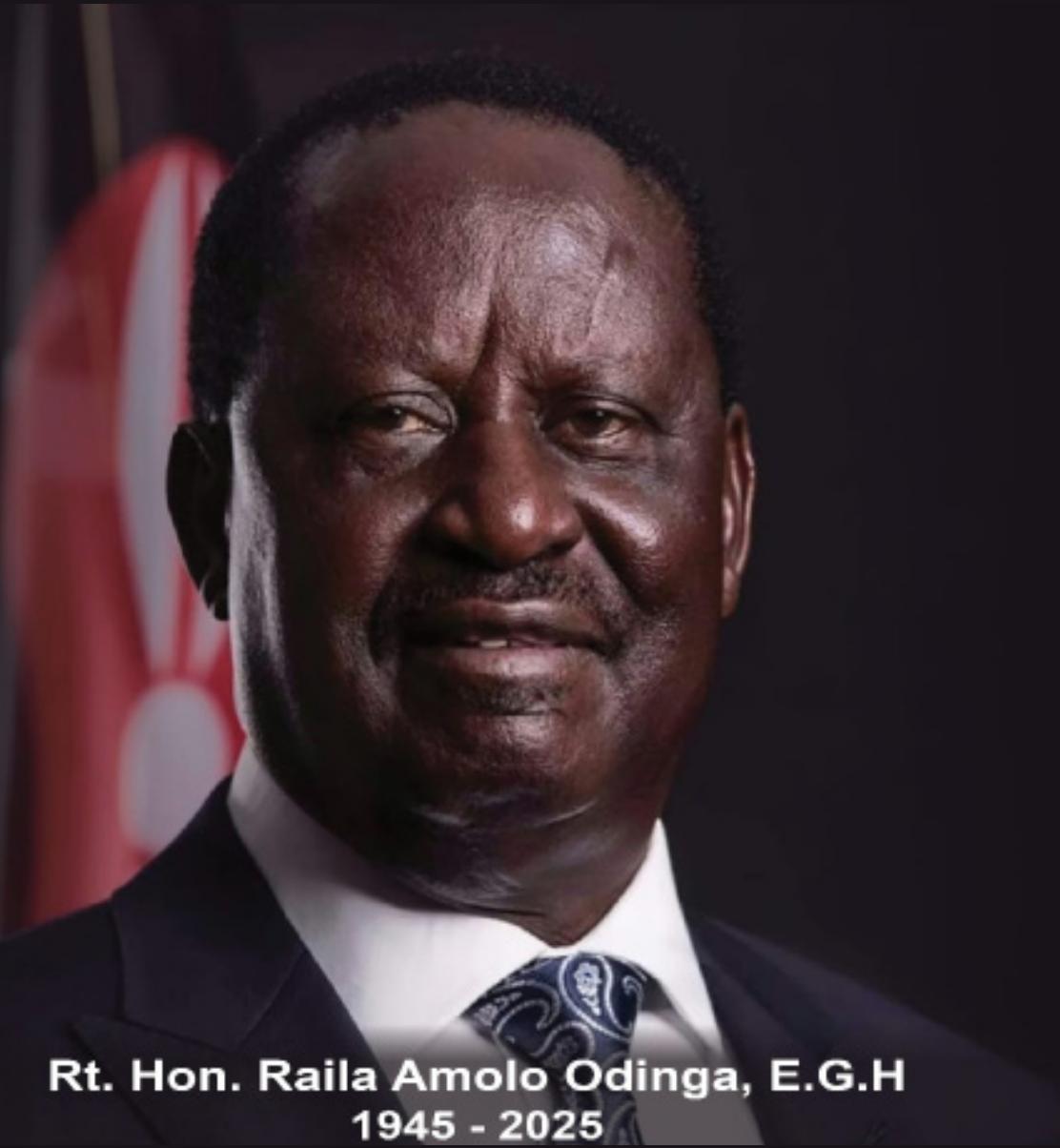
The Tea Board of Kenya continues to champion community empowerment by leveraging platforms that inspire excellence, unity, and opportunity. This commitment was on display during the Kericho Senator Aaron Cheruiyot Football Tournament, popularly known as Karnet Karnet Komas Kazit (KKK), a vibrant event that brings together sport, culture, and economic empowerment.

During the tournament, the Tea Board of Kenya Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Willy Mutai, presented Kenya Premium Tea hampers to champions and distinguished guests, reinforcing tea's place not only as a national heritage crop but also as a symbol of pride, quality, and shared prosperity.

The event was graced by the Speaker of the Senate, Hon. Amason Jeffah Kingi, alongside a distinguished lineup of leaders, including Harambee Stars Head Coach Benni McCarthy, Sen. Hillary K. Sigei (Bomet), Hon. Peter Kaluma (MP, Homa Bay Town), Hon. Benjamin Langat (MP, Ainamoi), and leaders from the Kipchimchim Group, led by Chairman Alfred Soi and Group Managing Director Bernard Soi.

Tea and football, though distinct, share a common purpose. Tea sustains rural livelihoods and drives economic growth, while football provides a powerful platform for youth development, mentorship, and unity. When these two forces converge, they create meaningful opportunities that uplift communities and inspire the next generation.





Rt. Hon. Raila Amolo Odinga, E.G.H
1945 - 2025

This year offered a moment of reflection on the enduring legacy of Rt. Hon. Raila Amolo Odinga, whose lifelong commitment to democracy, reform, and national dialogue has shaped Kenya's political journey and resonated beyond our borders. His leadership and sacrifice continue to inspire conversations on unity, justice, and inclusive governance in Kenya and across Africa.

May His Soul Rest in Peace



Kenya's tea sector continues to undergo critical reforms aimed at safeguarding farmer welfare, strengthening governance, and ensuring long-term sustainability. As part of these efforts, a high-level consultative engagement was convened, bringing together KTDA Holdings Limited, the Tea Board of Kenya, and key industry stakeholders to address concerns surrounding 2024/25 green leaf payments.

Central to the discussions was the commitment to strengthen KTDA governance, enforce financial accountability, and modernise tea marketing models. Proposed interventions include the adoption of direct and digital marketing platforms, enhanced quality standards, and the establishment of a Tea Quality Laboratory in Mombasa to support value differentiation and traceability in global markets.



Securing Fair Returns for Tea Farmers Through Institutional Reforms

The engagement provided clarity on factors influencing farmer earnings, including shifting global market dynamics, rising production costs, and quality-based income variations. Stakeholders reaffirmed that these challenges are market-driven and not the result of discrimination, underscoring the need for systemic reforms that restore confidence and fairness across the value chain.



Additional measures highlighted include support under the Smallholder Tea Quality Improvement Programme (STQIP), the removal of VAT on key inputs, continued provision of subsidised fertiliser, and targeted financial interventions to stabilise factory operations. These include the release of **KSh 2.7 billion** to support farmer payments and **KSh 3.7 billion** earmarked for factory upgrades and modernisation. The sector also stands to benefit from expanded trade opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) framework.

The consultative process will be followed by a National Tea Conference, bringing together sector actors to deepen dialogue and align on the implementation of these reforms. As Kenya charts the future of its tea industry, the focus remains clear: building a sector anchored on **trust, transparency, quality, and equitable returns for farmers**.



Gen Z vs Office OG:

Every office has it the OGs who've seen it all and the Gen Zs who bring a different rhythm to the workday. Different styles, same goal: get the work done..

The OGs like things steady. Familiar tunes in the background, notebooks nearby, and phones used when necessary. They value order, routine, and doing things properly because experience has taught them that structure keeps everything moving.

Their kind of fun? A good laugh at the tea station, a story that starts with "Back in the day...", or a team lunch where wisdom is served with a side of humor.



Gen Z brings a faster pace. Music playlists rotate, phones multitask, and ideas move quickly from thought to action. It may look busy, but it's just another way of staying engaged and productive.

Their version of fun? Office meme wars, spontaneous playlists for "Friday vibes," TikTok breaks (on lunch hour... allegedly), and after-work hangs that end in content ideas or karaoke challenges.



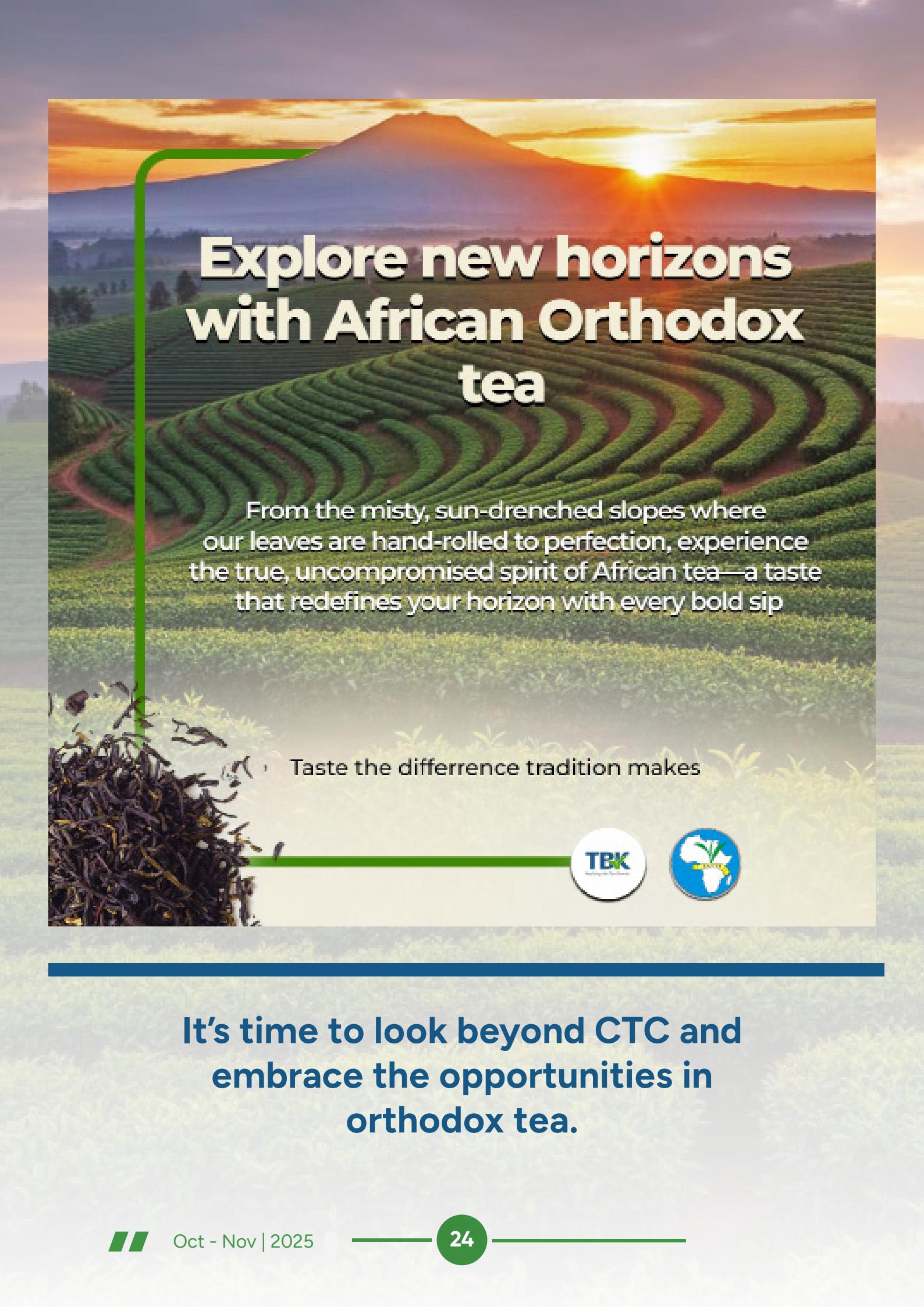
But the best part?

Tea breaks tell the story best. OGs swap stories, share laughs, and pass on lessons learned. Gen Z checks a message, shares a meme, then jumps right back into work. Different styles, same break.

In the end, the office works because of both. The OGs keep things grounded. Gen Z keeps things moving. And somewhere between the radio and the playlist, the workplace finds its balance.

D i f f e r e n t
g e n e r a t i o n s .
O n e t e a m . S a m e
d e a d l i n e .





Explore new horizons with African Orthodox tea

From the misty, sun-drenched slopes where our leaves are hand-rolled to perfection, experience the true, uncompromised spirit of African tea—a taste that redefines your horizon with every bold sip



Taste the difference tradition makes



**It's time to look beyond CTC and
embrace the opportunities in
orthodox tea.**

Sharpening Skills for Kenya's Growing Orthodox Tea Market

As part of its continued efforts to strengthen value addition and market competitiveness, the Tea Board of Kenya recently convened an onsite training for Black Orthodox Tea makers at Gitugi Tea Factory, held from 25th to 27th November 2025.



Participants engaged in hands-on sessions focused on product diversification, quality assurance, and the practical application of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) to support consistent, high-quality orthodox tea production. Key areas covered included grading standards, quality evaluation,



Beyond technical skills, the forum reinforced the importance of aligning production with market demand, positioning Kenyan orthodox teas to compete more effectively in both local and international markets.



Through such capacity-building initiatives, the Tea Board of Kenya continues to support innovation, strengthen factory-level expertise, and expand opportunities for Kenya's growing orthodox tea segment.



Did You Know?

There Are Different Arts of Tea Harvesting



Hand Plucking

Hand plucking is the traditional and most selective method of harvesting tea. Skilled pluckers carefully pick the tender shoots two leaves and a bud, by hand, ensuring that only the best parts of the bush are harvested. This method allows for exceptional quality, which is why it is preferred for premium teas and specialty markets. Hand plucking is not just work; it's a craft that reflects generations of experience and dedication.

Machine Plucking

collect tea leaves quickly over wide areas, ensuring timely delivery to the factory while maintaining freshness. Machine plucking supports high-volume production and helps estates meet market demand consistently. While highly efficient, it still requires skilled operators to ensure the tea is harvested at the ideal height and quality.





Backpack Harvester

Innovation meets mobility with this method. Here, a plucker wears a lightweight motor on their back, connected to a handheld cutting unit. As the tea leaves are harvested, they are gently conveyed into a collection bag. This method allows for steady and controlled harvesting, reducing fatigue while maintaining high-quality leaf collection. It's especially useful in hilly or large tea estates where efficiency and precision are needed.

Two-Person Shear Plucking

This method involves two workers working in tandem, each holding one end of a long shear tool, moving together across the tea bushes. The coordinated effort ensures even plucking height, uniform growth of the bush, and efficient coverage of large areas. Teamwork is key in this method, and it demonstrates how collaboration in the field can enhance both productivity and consistency.



Innovation in tea harvesting is not about replacing tradition it is about building on it. From the careful hands of skilled pluckers to teamwork in shear harvesting, portable motorised tools, and modern machines, each method reflects how the tea sector continues to adapt to changing needs.

These approaches show how knowledge, teamwork, and technology work together to support efficiency, quality, and sustainability. By blending time-tested practices with modern solutions, Kenya's tea industry remains resilient, competitive, and ready for the future ensuring that every leaf harvested contributes to livelihoods, growth, and global excellence.



In Pictures



IFAJ JOURNALISTS FACTORY TOUR



CIRAD ON GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION





KENYA - CHINA TEA PARTNERSHIP





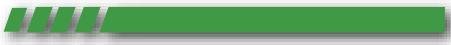
TBK BOARD OF MEMBERS
VISIT TO MOMBASA



TBK AT THE NAIROBI TRADE FAIR 2025



KENYA TEA AND MOROCCO





YOUTH & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



TREE PLANTING



About TBK

We are Building Trust Through Integrity

At the heart of a strong institution lies trust, trust built through integrity, accountability, and consistency in how decisions are made and services delivered. At the Tea Board of Kenya (TBK), these values are not aspirational statements; they are the standards that guide everyday work.

As a regulator and promoter of Kenya's tea industry, TBK operates in a space that demands transparency and fairness for all stakeholders, from farmers and factory managers to traders and global buyers. Every policy decision, regulatory process, and engagement is anchored on clear procedures, ethical conduct, and responsibility to the sector.

Integrity at TBK means doing what is right, even when it is not visible. It means clear systems, documented processes, and collective accountability. It means ensuring that opportunities in the tea sector are governed by merit, compliance, and fairness, not influence or shortcuts.

In an industry that supports millions of livelihoods, good governance is not optional. It protects farmers, strengthens markets, and builds confidence among local and international partners. By upholding transparency and zero tolerance for corruption, TBK contributes to a stable, credible, and competitive tea industry.

As Kenya's tea sector continues to evolve, trust remains its strongest currency. Through ethical leadership and accountable service, the Tea Board of Kenya remains committed to safeguarding that trust, for today's stakeholders and for generations to come.





TEA BOARD OF KENYA

Analyzing the Tea Potentials



Merry Christmas

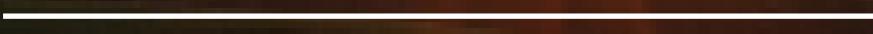
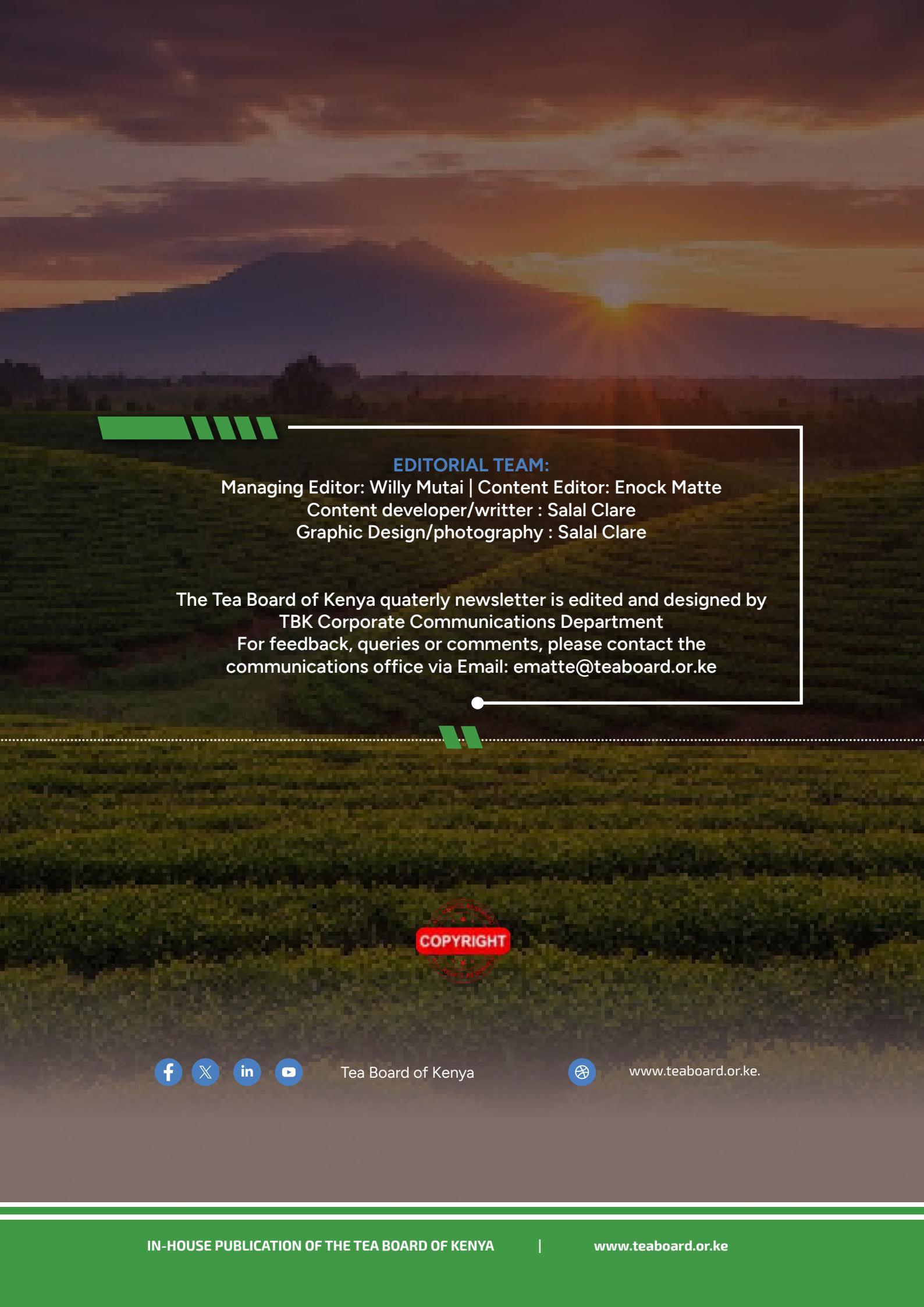
Christmas is here, A season of love, joy, and togetherness, bringing warmth to every moment and creating memories to cherish. From all of us at the Tea Board of Kenya, we wish you peace, happiness, and a truly magical festive season.

Tea Board of Kenya



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Tea Board of Kenya



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