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# COMMITTEE ON COMMODITY PROBLEMS

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP ON TEA**

**TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION**

**Guwahati (Assam), India, 31 January–2 February 2024**

**TEA AND HEALTH:  
DEVELOPING A GLOBAL HEALTH-BASED PROMOTIONAL  
CAMPAIGN FOR TEA**



Developing a global  
health-based  
promotional  
campaign for tea

FAO-IGG/TEA  
Working Group: Tea &  
Health



# Background

The Working Group (WG) on Tea and Health was formed at the 24th Session of the FAO IGG/Tea held on February 23rd, 2022.<sup>(1)</sup> The WG is committed to working on the promotion of tea's health-boosting properties on a global level.

Tea production and processing represent a source of livelihoods for millions of families, including millions in the least developed countries. Tea export earnings help to finance food import bills, supporting the economies of major tea-producing countries. The tea sector contributes to socio-economic development, representing a major source of employment and income for millions of poor families worldwide.

To ensure a sustainable future for the tea industry and all those who depend on it, it is vital that worldwide demand for tea is increased. There exists an opportunity to stimulate tea consumption through the promotion on the basis of the health benefits of drinking tea.

There is considerable evidence that tea possesses beneficial properties in regard to several areas of human health in support of cardiovascular, brain, gut and oral health. There is also extensive research on the wellbeing benefits provided by tea such as better sleep and improved fitness. More recently, the US Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has published the first dietary recommendation for flavan-3-ols,<sup>(2)</sup> a group of plant polyphenols with a myriad of health benefits, which are abundant in tea.

The present request by the FAO Intergovernmental Group on Tea, is also aligned with the United Nations General Assembly resolution, A/RES/74/241, adopted on the 19th October 2019, which designated 21 May as International Tea Day.<sup>(3)</sup> The observance serves as an acknowledgement of tea's contribution to human health, socialisation, rural development, and sustainable livelihoods.

[1] <https://www.fao.org/markets-and-trade/commodities/tea/teaigg24/en/>

[2] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36190328/>

[3] <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/437/86/PDF/N1943786.pdf?OpenElement>

# Challenge

The world market for tea continues to be in oversupply, as yields per hectare have risen without a matching increase in global demand. Critically, the next generation of consumers have a wide range of beverages to choose from and tea must compete for share of throat.

There has been a global increase in consumer awareness of a healthy lifestyle, and dietary habits are changing in response to known linkages between diet and health. However, many campaigns are focused on health benefits that address the concerns of older generations.

To successfully target younger consumers, a unified global campaign is needed which links tea drinking to benefits that are relevant to that audience.



# Opportunities

Focusing on the topics that interest a younger generation, we can help increase the consumption of tea such as the role of tea for improved fitness. Such a campaign would use the available scientific evidence to create messages and campaign collateral. These could be launched by all tea growing and tea consuming countries simultaneously, creating a global buzz around tea and encouraging consumers, young and old, to drink more tea.

There is extensive evidence in support of the potential roles of tea in relation to aspects of sports and fitness performance and optimal hydration.<sup>(4)</sup> This is further strengthened by the new dietary recommendation for flavan-3-ols, abundant in tea, which support heart health.<sup>(5)</sup> Together these scientific findings would provide the framework for a youth focused campaign designed to encourage increased consumption of tea.

This activity would advance the UN Sustainable Development Goal 3: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” and may also facilitate additional projects which may help develop ancillary products leveraging the health benefits of tea and work towards UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.2: “Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors”.

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AND WELL-BEING



[4] <https://www.sciforschenonline.org/journals/nutrition-food/article-data/NFTOA174/NFTOA174.pdf>

[5] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36190328/>

# Solution

The WG on Tea and Health has the opportunity to use the established science to develop language around the topic of sport and fitness targeting a younger generation as well as the importance of flavan-3-ols in healthy living. The language would include hashtags all organisations could use to amplify the messaging on various media platforms. International Tea Day, 21 May, would provide the perfect platform for the campaign, with all interested parties agreeing to harmonised messaging and campaign timings running up to and culminating on the day of observance.

When combined with existing knowledge on the benefits of tea for fitness and health, the scientific evidence can be used to build an effective promotional plan. Tea Power is the perfect pitch for younger generations who are looking to increase their performance and energy levels while staying healthy.

This promotional plan would be designed to target younger consumers who are looking for an alternative to sugary drinks. This would also support public health objectives of many countries around the world. With carefully crafted messaging, we can create a powerful campaign that will inspire and encourage young people to make tea part of their lifestyle.

**#TeaTime #TeaPower #UnlockYourPotential**

**#SportAndFitnessBenefitsOfTea**

**#YoungerGenerationsHealthAndPerformance**

**#Flavan3ols**



# Call for Collaboration

The power of collaboration is important in this opportunity and approach. Our collective objective to increase tea consumption also requires our collective voice in how we communicate. Ideally, the FAO would endorse this programme providing it support and credibility.

Using videos and images developed by the FAO or by the ICG WG on Tea & Health, will allow all ICG members, including Trade Associations, Tea Boards and research institutes, to roll out messaging that will have a clean and unified approach. Such collaboration is essential to the success of this initiative and can help us reach a broader audience with our messaging.

