

SRI LANKA TEA BOARD
Tea Commissioner's Division
No 574, Galle Road, Colombo 03

Ref: TB/TC/STPT(401)-2026

22nd December 2025

To: All Registered Tea Manufacturers

**SUBSIDY ASSISTANCE TO FORM A FACTORY BASED TEAM OF SMART TEA
PLUCKERS (DALU TEAM) - 2026**

1. Introduction:

It has been observed that the declining trend in skilled labour availability in the tea sector has resulted in numerous challenges, particularly in carrying out land preparation, tea cultivation, and the harvesting of green tea leaves. The scarcity of workers and the lack of required skills have also become major issues in maintaining proper plucking rounds across tea lands of all scales. Furthermore, leaf plucking is the most labour-intensive and costly operation in tea cultivation, accounting for approximately 70% of total labour usage.

In view of the above, the Sri Lanka Tea Board (SLTB) has initiated a subsidy scheme to establish teams of trained workers in all tea-growing districts, with special emphasis on the harvesting of green tea leaves and the use of machinery for field operations while maintaining Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). This subsidy scheme also aims to introduce factory-based teams of smart tea pluckers whose services can be provided to tea land owners within the respective areas, thereby addressing the scarcity of skilled labour.

Budgetary provisions for the year 2026 have been allocated to implement this subsidy scheme for registered tea manufacturers who commit to maintaining trained teams of smart tea pluckers. Each beneficiary is required to maintain the trained team of smart tea pluckers for a minimum period of three (03) years

2. Method of Application

- I. Registered tea manufacturers or Regional Plantation Companies (RPC'S) are eligible to apply for this subsidy scheme.
- II. Duly completed application (Form No.TB/TC/STPT-2026) should be submitted to the relevant Assistant Tea Commissioner on or before 15th February 2026.
- III. The application should be signed and submitted by the Chief Executive Officers of Regional Plantation Companies or by registered tea manufacturers. If the application is not signed by the Chief Executive Officer or the registered tea manufacturer, a letter of authorization should be provided, authorizing an officer to sign the agreement and all subsequent documents on his or her behalf.

3. Procedure of team formation and purchasing machineries

1. Applications are entertained on first come first serve basis. The selected factories are allowed to choose a team of field workers/ employees/ youths who are willing to undergo a training. The age limit should be 18-45 years and a team should comprise 10 to 15 workers/candidates.
2. Five days training is given to the selected team. The training sessions are arranged by the Sri Lanka Tea Board through NIPM with the assistance of TRI and TSHDA. Both theoretical and practical sessions on key field practices such as land preparation, weeding, planting, applications of agrochemicals, leaf plucking, pruning and use of machineries will be covered.
3. Battery operated plucking machines, holing machine, plucking baskets and uniforms are given to the plucking team and the trained team should be able to carry out the operations on the request of tea landowners.

4. Method of payment of subsidies

- I. Subsidy payment for the formation of smart plucking teams is maximum Rs.500,000.00 for the purchase of following items.

1. 10 No's of uniforms	- Rs. 50,000.00
2. 10 No's plucking baskets	- Rs. 25,000.00
3. 10 No's Safety boots	- Rs. 30,000.00
4. 03 No's Battery-operated plucking machines	- Rs.280,000.00
5. 01 No of holing machines	- Rs.115,000.00
	<u>-Rs.500,000.00</u>
- II. On the request of any tea land owner, the plucking team can be employed and reasonable payments are allowed to receive for each field practice. Transportation of the plucking team and machineries should be arranged by the manufacturer or the team leader of the plucking team on the request of land owner.
- III. The applicant / Registered Tea Manufacturer applying for this scheme has to sign a MOU with SLTB and is bound to maintain the machineries and the plucking team in operation minimum 3 years from the date of signing the MOU.
- IV. On completion of the team formation and purchasing all machineries and other items mentioned above 4 .I , The Applicant should inform to the relevant ATC with original Tax invoices and other documents for requesting subsidy payments
- V. Expenses for conducting awareness and training programs for 5 days will be born by Sri Lanka Tea Board.

5. Terms and conditions of this scheme

- I. The selected team of leaf pluckers needs to be given at least 5 days training (40 hours). Theoretical and practical aspects of field practices such as land preparation, tea planting, weeding, application of agrochemicals, leaf plucking and pruning need to be covered. Further the usage of machineries and modern tools is incorporated in the training schedule.
- II. Necessary service and repairs of the machineries should be carried out by the respective registered tea manufacturer.
- III. Registered Tea Manufacturer is responsible to assign an officer to guide the plucking team on the request of any tea land owners. The details of usage of machineries, field practices carried out, services and repairs of machineries, earning and payments to the plucking team have to be updated by the assign officer at the factory level. The team leader of the plucking team is also responsible to maintain daily records according to the specimen formats given.
- IV. Total financial subsidy payment is Rs 500,000.00 and the payment is made once the team is trained and all machineries are purchased. Original Tax invoices, performa invoices and copies of Goods Receiving Notes (GRN) should be submitted for each purchase in order to grant the subsidy.

6. The Regional Assistant Tea Commissioners and their areas of authority are as follows:

<u>Regional Assistant Tea Commissioners</u>	<u>Areas of authority</u>
01. Assistant Tea Commissioner Visaka Mawatha, New Badulla Road, Bandarawela. Tel/Fax : 0572222812 E mail: atcbandarawela@pureceylontea.com	Badulla / Monaragala Districts
02. Assistant Tea Commissioner Walahanduwawatte, Galle. Tel/Fax 091-2232052 E mail: atcgalle@pureceylontea.com	Galle District (Except Elpitiya Divisional Secretariat area)
03. Assistant Tea Commissioner No 140, Ambagamuwa Road, Gampola. Tel/Fax 081-2352279 E mail: atcgampola@pureceylontea.com	Kandy/Matale Districts
04. Assistant Tea Commissioner N0 23, New Lane, Uyanwatta, Matara. Tel/Fax 041-2222636 E mail: atcmatara@pureceylontea.com	Matara / Hambanthota Districts
05. Assistant Tea Commissioner 61/1, New Town, Rathnapura. Tel/Fax 045-2222136	Ratnapura District Kegalle District

E mail: atcrathnapura@pureceylontea.com

06. Assistant Tea Commissioner
Wathurana Road,
Baduraliya. Tel/Fax: 034-2247444
E mail: atcmathugama@pureceylontea.com

Kalutara District,
Galle Districts (Elpitiya
Divisional Secretariat
area)

07. Assistant Tea Commissioner
No 10, Nanuoya Road,
Kelegala, Nuwara Eliya.
Tel : 0522234695/Fax: 0522234686
E mail: atcnuwaraeliya@pureceylontea.com

Nuwara Eliya District

Information regarding this subsidy scheme could be obtained from the Deputy Tea Commissioner (Regulatory) at the Sri Lanka Tea Board Head office.

Deputy Tea Commissioner (Regulatory)
Sri Lanka Tea Board
No 574, Galle Road, Colombo 03
Tel: 0112587448/ 0112587814
E mail: tcdgeneral@pureceylontea.com


K A M K Jayawardena
Tea Commissioner

Copies:

1. Secretary, Ministry of Plantation and Community Infrastructure
2. Chairman, Sri Lanka Tea Board,
3. Chairman, Tea Research Institute
4. Chairman, Tea Small Holdings Development Authority
5. Chairman, State Plantation Corporation
6. Chairman, Janatha Estate Development Board
7. Chairman, Sri Lanka Tea factory Owner's Association
8. Chairman, Planter's Association
9. Chairman, Colombo Tea Traders' Association
10. Chairman, Federation of Tea Small Holdings Development Society
11. Chairman, Tea Exporter's Association
12. Chairman, Colombo Brokers Association
13. Director General, Sri Lanka Tea Board
14. Director-Tea Research Institute
15. Superintendent-Government Auditor-SLTB
16. Internal Auditor-SLTB
17. Deputy Tea Commissioner (Regulatory/ Development/ Export)
18. Assistant Tea Commissioners-Please issue copies to all RTDO's, Tea Instructors/ Inspectors (Galle/ Matara/ Matugama/ Bandarawela/ Ratnapura/ Nuwara eliya/ Gampola)