REEL COTTON CHAIN OF CUSTODY AND TRACEABILITY FRAMEWORK

COTTON CONNECT

REIMAGINING THE FUTURE FOR SUPPLY CHAINS
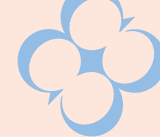
Overview of REEL Cotton claim

The REEL Cotton Programme is independently verified by a code of conduct developed with FLOCERT.

The REEL Code of Conduct verifies that farmers in the REEL Cotton Programme are using sustainable practices, with added elements that ensure traceability and decent work. A claim may be made that cotton is REEL Cotton throughout the supply chain by farmers, ginners, spinners, fabric producers, garment manufacturers and brands. To ensure this claim is accurate there are clear auditing, verification and traceability processes in place that ensures the chain of custody and traceability of REEL Cotton throughout the supply chain.

Process of audit and certification

A three-stage audit process is maintained for quality implementation and monitoring of the programme.

FIRST-PARTY AUDIT:

First-party audits are better known as self-assessment. This is when the implementation team from the local partner organization will audit a process or set of processes in the quality management and implementation of the programme to ensure it meets the requirements. This type of audit is focused not only on whether the implementation meets the requirements of a standard, but that the process maintains the quality implementation of the programme.

SECOND-PARTY AUDIT:

A second level audit process is performed by the internal monitoring team of CottonConnect to ensure that the programme meets the requirements. These requirements include training quality, implementation processes, documentation, records, and requirements on traceability, farm demonstration and farmers' learning processes. These audits are done on-site by reviewing the processes.

THIRD-PARTY AUDITS:

A third-party audit of REEL Cotton Code is performed by FLOCERT. This is another effective mechanism to identify the gaps and issues in various M&E related systems and processes. These audits help in identifying areas for improvement and make necessary course corrections in the programme implementation.

REEL Cotton is a private code and does not issue a certificate following an audit. The organization and processors need to comply with the standard system. Compliance level is monitored and verified with the help of different audit processes.
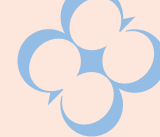
Programme monitoring for managing compliance

TECHNOLOGY-BASED M&E:
Based on the need of the programme web-based and mobile-based applications are developed and deployed for M&E and ensuring traceability. The mobile based data collection systems are adopted to ensure real-time tracking of the M&E data collection and timely validations and rectifications.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:
Toward the end of each programme lessons learned are gathered and the same is used for further programme planning processes. To further institutionalize the process, CottonConnect is in the process of developing and establishing a learning framework to ensure concurrent documentation of learning from the programme planning and implementation.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN (CAP):
A corrective action plan is a document describing exactly how a specific finding of the audit will be implemented and addressed. The CAP gives a reference point to look back on when there are questions about implementation and when it comes time to evaluate whether or not the changes were successful.

REEL Cotton traceability

Traceability means that individual REEL Cotton products need to be identifiable as REEL Cotton at all steps of the processing from farm to end garments and with all relevant documents and labelling. The aim of documentary and physical traceability is to ensure that products sold as REEL Cotton are sourced from REEL producers and processor.
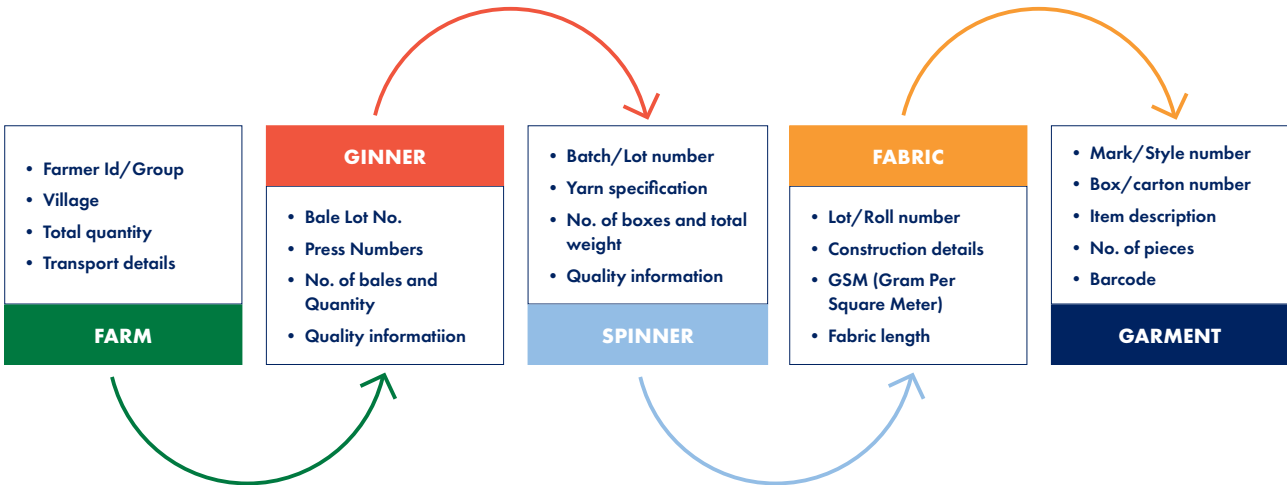

	GINNER		FABRIC	
• Farmer Id/Group • Village • Total quantity • Transport details	• Bale Lot No. • Press Numbers • No. of bales and Quantity • Quality informatiion	• Batch/Lot number • Yarn specification • No. of boxes and total weight • Quality information	• Lot/Roll number • Construction details • GSM (Gram Per Square Meter) • Fabric length	• Mark/Style number • Box/carton number • Item description • No. of pieces • Barcode
FARM		**SPINNER**		**GARMENT**

Figure: Diagrammatic representation of traceability process

PHYSICAL TRACEABILITY:

CottonConnect ensures the physical traceability of REEL Cotton throughout the entire supply chain, from farm to final product. Following the segregation model, every REEL Cotton product or the raw materials are kept physically separate at all stages. The diagram represents the maintenance of distinct documentation at each level, guaranteeing and facilitating traceability during processing. This traceability system in the REEL Cotton supply chain ensures that the volumes of verified REEL Cotton material sold align with or do not exceed the volumes of verified REEL Cotton material produced or purchased, thus ensuring integrity and accuracy in the chain of custody.

DOCUMENTARY TRACEABILITY:

Standard reporting systems of REEL Cotton are used for monitoring all transactions from farm to garment manufacture. Unique IDs of products are transferred at each transaction between processors and manufacturers. These transactions are monitored on a real-time basis with the help of traceability that is TraceBale. A physical copy of all transactions is also maintained for verification of the standard transaction process. This helps the processor to enter the transactional and process information. The reports are generated instantaneously by the system and can be kept as a record to be shared as and when needed.

PHYSICAL VERIFICATION:

As such, there is no physical certificate for the REEL Cotton products. The TraceBale data and reports demonstrate traceability throughout the production process. However, the physical records such as farmer procurement booklet entries, procurement receipts, invoice, bill of lading etc. should refer to the product as REEL Cotton.

There will be a physical verification of the product along with records and processes to match the data entry in TraceBale. The processors are expected to complete the entries in TraceBale in a timely fashion, once they receive goods in their premise and effect sale of the product after the process. It is necessary for the processor to complete the entry in TraceBale for the process link between supply chain stakeholders to be verified and validated.