



**HR POLICY**

**POLICY NAME: DIVERSITY, EQUALITY and INCLUSION POLICY**

**REFERENCE No.: HR/CCUK/DEI/1/2024**

**POLICY VERSION: HR/DEI/001**

**W.E.F: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. At CottonConnect (“**CottonConnect**” or “**Company**” or “**We**” or “**Us**” or “**Our**”), We understand that diversity, equality and inclusivity are fundamental principles that fuel our success and direct our efforts towards building a resilient and forward-thinking Organization. We recognize the value of ensuring equality and establishing a diverse and inclusive workplace that represents the variety of the communities and regions as we operate in as a global company that is leading the way in a transparent and sustainable cotton supply chain.
- 1.2. We are committed to achieving equality in employment opportunities and creating a work culture in which all employees feel valued, respected and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives, talents, and experiences. It is our endeavor to build a workforce which is well represented by all the sections of the society as we feel that, by doing so, we can lead innovation and enhance overall performance which will enable us to serve our customers better.

## **2. Policy Statement**

- 2.1. We are an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to equality of opportunity by providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no person receives less favorable treatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sex or sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, physical abilities, and is not disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.
- 2.2. We continuously strive to ensure that all our facilities, technologies, information, compensation, training and employee benefits are provided to all persons. We promote diversity in employment opportunities and all our decisions with regard to employment, career progression and any other benefits are solely based on skills, qualifications and merit.
- 2.3. Further, we follow an inclusive evaluation process by ensuring that a specially challenged person is provided with suitable flexibility and accommodation that may be required so that they can be evaluated fairly. Any information shared by employees related to physical ability/medical condition will remain confidential.

### **3. Applicability**

- 3.1. The Policy covers our complete workforce including job applicants, full-time/part time employees, interns/trainees, contractual employees, and temporary employees. This Policy also applies to all aspects of employment, be it recruitment, training, working conditions, salaries, transfers, employee benefits and career advancement.
- 3.2. The terms equality, inclusion and diversity are at the heart of this policy. 'Equality' means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination. 'Inclusion' means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution. 'Diversity' means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforces. The Company will actively support equality, diversity and inclusion and ensure that our workforce is valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone in our business to reach their potential.
- 3.3. All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviors, led by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.

### **4. Guidelines**

- 4.1. The Company shall recruit, employ, train, compensate and promote based on aptitude and ability and within our guidelines under this policy and in accordance with applicable laws of the relevant country.
- 4.2. The Company will promote diversity in the candidate pool for each role by establishing neutral job descriptions void of bias, enabling and ensuring that applicants' personal information has no bearing in the hiring process.
- 4.3. The Company shall make all effort to ensure that the physical infrastructure (buildings, furniture, facilities and services in the premises and transportation) adheres to the accessibility standards in accordance with the provisions of the applicable laws and/or as prescribed by the government.
- 4.4. The Company will welcome requests for reasonable adjustments from those with a physical ability/medical condition to allow them to perform to the best of their job. If we feel that a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will discuss this and try to find an alternative solution wherever possible. If an individual is disabled or



becomes disabled, the Company encourages them to tell us about their condition we can provide support.

- 4.5. Everyone is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

5. **Complaint Procedure**

If an individual believes they have been the subject of discriminatory treatment or observes or has knowledge of an actual or potential violation of this Policy, they should report the conduct in question to Grievance Committee at [grievancesandcomplaints@cottonconnect.org](mailto:grievancesandcomplaints@cottonconnect.org) . For escalation, please reach out to Alison Ward ([alison.ward@cottonconnect.org](mailto:alison.ward@cottonconnect.org)) or Geetanjali Solanki ([geetanjali.solanki@cottonconnect.org](mailto:geetanjali.solanki@cottonconnect.org))

The Company will inform all that discrimination is a very serious offence and will be treated as gross misconduct under the Company’s disciplinary procedure. An incident of discrimination is therefore likely to lead to severe disciplinary action.

6. **CUSTODIAN**

- 6.1. Human Resource Department is the custodian of this Policy and will ensure every employee has access to this policy. However, management reserves the right to make any changes to the Policy at any time in whole or in part.

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**Reviewed By**

**Approved By**

**HR Department**

**CEO**