



**COTTON
CONNECT**
REIMAGINING THE FUTURE FOR SUPPLY CHAINS

REEL Cotton Standard 1.0



Contents

- 03 About CottonConnect
REEL Cotton Standard
- 04 Core Principles
- 05 REEL Cotton Theory of Change
- 06 Structure of the Standard
- 07 Scope
Implementation
Stakeholder consultation
Disclosure obligation
Language and translation
Guidelines and SoPs
- 08 Standard effective date and next review
Revision and Version History
- 09 Key Definitions
Abbreviation

REEL Cotton Standard 1.0

- 11 Integrated Management System (IMS)
- 17 Plant and Field Management
- 19 Soil and Integrated Nutrient Management
- 21 Pest Management
- 24 Water Management
- 26 Ecosystem protection and conservation
of high carbon stock areas
- 28 Waste Management
- 29 Institutional Building
- 30 Social Conditions

Annexure

- 37 Glossary of Terms
- 40 List of Prohibited Chemicals

ABOUT COTTONCONNECT

CottonConnect, driven by a vision to reimagine the future of supply chains, implements agricultural training programmes that enhance the sustainability of cotton production and improve farmers' livelihoods. The organisation has trained farmers across India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Turkey, Peru, and Egypt in sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices, achieving positive outcomes while continually expanding its reach. As a socially driven organisation, CottonConnect is dedicated to transforming cotton supply chains by empowering textile producers and farmers to secure better livelihoods. By helping brands access more sustainable cotton and other natural fibres, CottonConnect fosters transparent, traceable, and resilient supply chains that consistently deliver high-quality raw materials.

REEL COTTON STANDARD

The REEL Cotton Standard is a business-driven initiative led by CottonConnect, designed for brands committed to sourcing more sustainable cotton while improving environmental practices, product quality, and traceability across their supply chains—from farms to factories. CottonConnect brings together engaged brands and their supply chain partners within a development-focused framework in key sourcing countries. The REEL Cotton Standard establishes clear requirements that stakeholders are expected to implement to drive continuous improvement and sustainability throughout the cotton supply chain.



CORE PRINCIPLES

The REEL Cotton Standard is built around nine principles:



REEL COTTON THEORY OF CHANGE

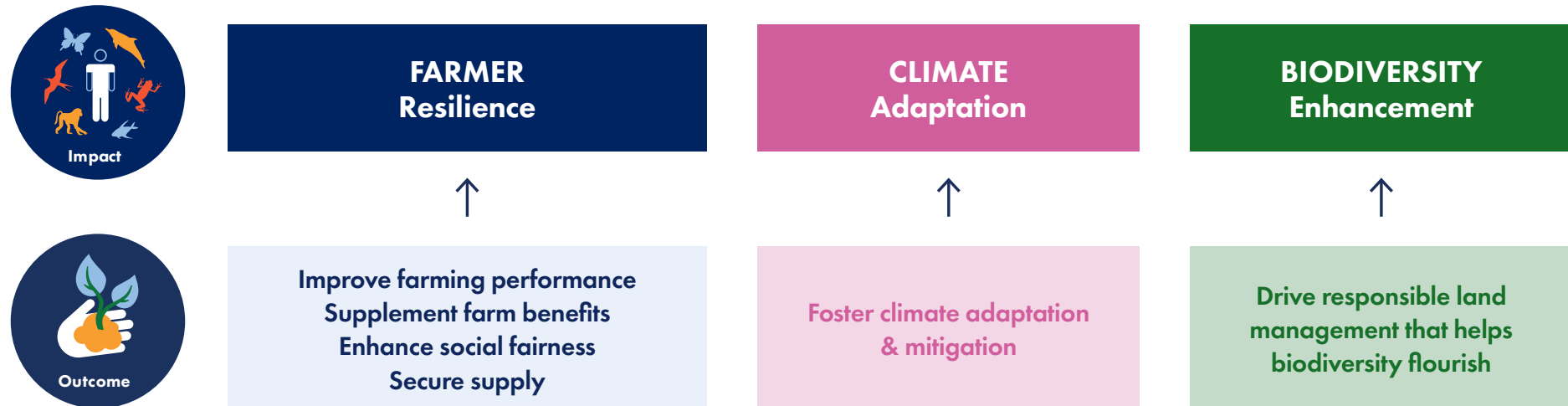
The REEL Cotton Theory of Change outlines how programme interventions drive both short- and long-term improvements across the cotton supply chain. It forms the basis of the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) System by mapping the pathways to impact and identifying key areas of change.

The Theory of Change supports five core goals of the REEL Cotton Programme:

- a. Improved farm performance
- b. Reduced environmental impact
- c. Enhanced cotton quality
- d. Supply chain traceability
- e. Social fairness in farming communities

Each goal is linked to defined outcomes and initiatives, with clear implementation strategies that consider assumptions and risks. This alignment enables CottonConnect to track progress, evaluate impact, and continuously enhance its approach.

For more information, please refer to the [CottonConnect website](http://CottonConnect.org).



STRUCTURE OF THE STANDARD

The REEL Cotton Standard is structured around nine core principles, each addressing a key aspect of sustainable and responsible cotton production. These principles are further detailed through specific indicators, which are assessed based on the level of compliance:

1. full compliance,
2. partial compliance,
3. non-compliance.



The standard employs a three-tier verification system:

First level – Self-assessment:

The implementation team conducts a self-assessment, analysing their progress and achievements.



Second level – Internal monitoring:

The CottonConnect MEL team actively monitors the on-ground implementation of the standard.



Third level – External audit:

Independent Certification Bodies (CBs) are appointed to audit the on-ground implementation of the Standard.

For more information, please refer to the [CottonConnect website](http://www.cottonconnect.org).

SCOPE

The scope of the REEL Cotton Standard focuses on sustainable agricultural practices across all key aspects of cotton cultivation, with the inclusion of essential social elements. Geographically, the REEL Cotton sourcing programme currently operates in cotton-producing countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Turkey, and Egypt, covering both farm-level activities and initial processing stages..

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the REEL Cotton Standard can be carried out with the support and guidance of CottonConnect. To review the eligibility requirements for the REEL programme, please visit www.cottonconnect.org.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

In the first round, we have extended invitations to around 28 stakeholders representing 10 diverse sectors to review the Standard and incorporated their valuable feedback during its development. These stakeholders, hailing from various regions, are actively contributing to ensure a comprehensive and practical approach that enhances the Standard's robustness and suitability for implementation.

In the second round, the REEL Standards were made available for public stakeholder consultation and have been published on the CottonConnect website and social media pages to invite stakeholders to review the standards.

DISCLOSURE OBLIGATION

None of the requirements of this standard limits or expands disclosure obligations under any central/federal, state, tribal, or local laws regarding the reporting of hazardous substance releases or hazardous waste disposal. Each member of the supply chain is responsible for conducting their own inquiries to determine their respective disclosure obligations under these laws and ensuring full compliance with any applicable reporting requirements.

LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION

The REEL Cotton Standard is currently available to the public in English, with official translations completed in Chinese, Turkish, Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil. These translations are available upon request. If you require the Standard in another language, please contact CottonConnect at info@cottonconnect.org.

GUIDELINES AND SOPS

The supporting documents for the implementation of the REEL programme can be accessed from the CottonConnect website:

- REEL Monitoring and Evaluation Process
- REEL Chain of Custody and Traceability Framework
- REEL Cotton Standard and Verification Process
- REEL Cotton Theory of Change
- REEL Cotton Handbook – Accountability & Assurance

STANDARD EFFECTIVE DATE AND NEXT REVIEW

The REEL Cotton Standard will take effect on April 1, 2025. The Standard is reviewed at least every three years, with the next scheduled review in 2027.


ABBREVIATION

BT:	Bacillus Thuringiensis
FFB:	Farmers Field Book
FPO:	Farmers Producer Organisation
FYM:	Farm Yard Manure
GM Seed:	Genetically Modified Seed
G:	Ginner or Gin
IMS:	Integrated Management System
INM:	Integrated Nutrient Management
IP:	Implementing Partner
IPM:	Integrated Pest Management
IWM:	Integrated Water Management
LF:	Large Farm
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
PG:	Producer Group
SF:	Small Farm
SOP:	Standard Operating Procedures
TOC:	Theory of Change
TOF:	Training of Farmers
TOG:	Training of Ginners
TOT:	Training of Trainers

REVISION AND VERSION HISTORY

REEL Cotton Code of Conduct	2015	The REEL Cotton Code of Conduct and the respective draft assessment tool and conduct third-party verification
REEL Cotton Code of Conduct 1.0	2015	The final REEL Cotton Code of Conduct Version 1.0 was developed, and third-party verification framework was designed
REEL Cotton Code of Conduct 2.0	2016	The revision of the REEL Cotton Code, leading to Version 2.0, included strengthening the social criteria on employment conditions and health and safety.
REEL Cotton Code of Conduct 3.0	Jul 21	The revision of the REEL Cotton Code, leading to Version 3.0, included recommendations from a survey conducted with farmers and implementing partners; a review of the Delta indicators for sustainable cotton; enhanced health and safety for gins; and region-specific customisations.
	Aug 21	Stakeholder consultation on REEL Cotton Code of Conduct 3.0
	Apr 22	REEL Cotton Code of Conduct 3.0 released
REEL Cotton Code of Conduct 3.1	Apr 23	Approved and released REEL Cotton Code of Conduct 3.1
REEL Cotton Standard 1.0	2023 – 24	Benchmarking and review of global legislation (EU, UK and US)
	Jul 24	First draft of REEL Cotton Standard 1.0
	Sep 24	First round Stakeholder Consultation on REEL Cotton Standard 1.0
	Jan 25	Second round Public Stakeholder Consultation on REEL Cotton Standard 1.0
	Feb 25	Approval of REEL Cotton Standard 1.0
	Apr 25	REEL Cotton Standard released and available for implementation

LEGENDS

-  Large Farmers (LF)
-  Small Farmers (SF)
-  Producer Group
-  Gin

KEY DEFINITIONS

Farmers classification

Based on the implementation experience of the REEL Programme across various regions, farmers will be classified into two distinct categories to ensure proper support and management:

- **Large Farmers (LF)**
Farm holdings with more than 15 hectares of cotton land in the same cropping season.
- **Small Farmers (SF)**
Farm holdings with less than or equal to 15 hectares of cotton land in the same cropping season.

Farmers Group

Individual small farmers will be organised into groups, comprising a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 50 farmers. For large farmers, all activities including training and meetings, will be conducted on a group/ individual farm basis depending on the local situations/proximity etc.

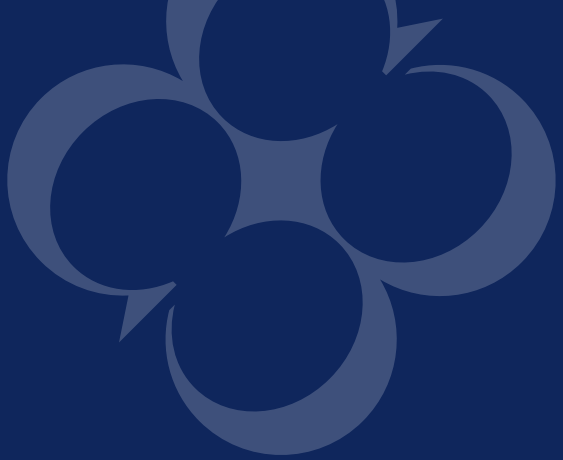
Producer Group

Small farmers will be organised into Producer Groups, with each group comprising up to 4,500 farmers. For large farmers, a Producer Group will consist of 50 farmers, allowing for a deviation of up to 20%.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

This document is issued, takes effect, and is maintained as follows:

Document name:	REEL Cotton Standard
StandardVersion:	V 1.0
Issue Date:	01 March 2025
Effective Date:	01 April 2025
Last updated:	4 February 2026
Previous Version:	NA



REEL Cotton Standard 1.0



1. Integrated Management System (IMS)

















The Integrated Management System (IMS) forms the operational backbone of the REEL Cotton Programme, ensuring that all stakeholders—including Producer Groups, Implementation Partners, and Ginners—adhere to a unified framework for sustainable cotton production. This section outlines the core structural, procedural, and recordkeeping requirements that support effective programme implementation, traceability, quality assurance, and continuous improvement. By clearly defining roles, responsibilities, communication channels, and documentation protocols, the IMS fosters accountability, transparency, and alignment across the cotton value chain, thereby enabling the successful delivery of REEL Cotton objectives at scale.

GROUP	MAJOR	NR	STANDARD REQUIREMENTS	FARM SIZE
		1	Integrated Management System (IMS)	
		1.1	CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS	
		1.1.1	Written contracts, memberships and agreements shall be in place at all levels.	
		1.1.1.1	A written agreement between the Implementation Partner/ Producer Group and CottonConnect shall be maintained.	
		1.1.1.2	An agreement between Ginners, the Implementation Partner/Producer Group, and CottonConnect shall be in place, clearly defining, among other aspects, the purchase requirements.	
		1.2	ESTABLISHMENT OF PRODUCER GROUPS	
		1.2.1	A Producer Group and Implementation Partner structure shall be established, with detailed descriptions of communication strategies with farmer members, including capacity building and first and second-level facilitation.	
		1.2.1.1	The structure and communication strategies of the producer group and implementation Partner shall be described in detail.	
		1.2.1.2	Farmers' groups shall be established for programme implementation. The mode of operation, group leaders, and communication channels shall be clearly defined.	
		1.2.1.3	A documented farmer profile shall be maintained. Reference: MEL Guidelines	
		1.2.1.4	A guideline on the implementation of decent work practices for farms and farmers shall be in place.	

   		<p>1.3 DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT</p> <p>1.3.1 A system shall be in place for Documentation and Information Management to record, collect, collate, store, extract, and report data required for programme needs.</p> <p>An updated REEL Programme Plan shall be in place. Guidance: A programme implementation plan outlines how the REEL Programme will be put into action, including programme activities, scope, timeline, tasks, communication, risk management, and monitoring/evaluation, ensuring a structured and successful execution. Key elements:</p> <p>1.3.1.1 i. Programme activities: Clearly define what the programme activities want to achieve, using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) criteria. ii. Timelines: Establish a realistic schedule with key dates and deadlines for each activity and milestone. iii. Monitoring and Evaluation: Define how progress will be tracked and measured against the established objectives.</p> <p>1.3.1.2 Results indicators shall be reported annually and records shall be maintained. Ref: MEL Guidelines</p> <p>1.3.1.3 Monthly progress reports (MPR) shall be submitted.</p> <p>1.3.1.4 Data storage and record retrievability shall be demonstrated at the respective stakeholder level.</p>	   
		<p>1.4 QUALITY, TRACEABILITY, AND TERMS OF TRADE</p> <p>1.4.1 Farmers shall adopt quality and traceability practices at the pre-harvesting, harvesting, post-harvesting handling, and storage stages.</p> <p>1.4.1.1 Farmers shall implement relevant crop harvest management techniques, including appropriate timing and judgment.</p>	
		<p>1.4.1.2 Cotton shall be protected from contamination with foreign materials during and after picking.</p> <p>Guidance: Refer to requirement 1.4.3.1. Cotton contamination during harvesting primarily involves foreign materials like plastic, debris, and dust mixing with the cotton, which can negatively impact the quality and processing of the final product. Sources of contamination:</p> <p>i. Plastic: Plastic module wraps, plastic twine used to tie down covers, and plastic debris blown into fields are major sources of contamination. ii. Debris: Roadside trash, leaves, dust, stones, and other organic matter can also contaminate the cotton. iii. Human Error: Contamination can also occur due to human error during the harvesting process, such as workers dropping debris into the cotton or using contaminated equipment. iv. Equipment: Grease, oil, or grime on harvesting equipment can also contaminate the cotton.</p>	
 		<p>1.4.1.3 The flow of REEL Cotton products shall be documented up to the ginner level and maintained.</p>	

		<p>1.6 TRAINING</p> <p>1.6.1 Training of Trainers (ToT)</p> <p>1.6.1.1 Producer group – A System shall be in place to recruit, train and monitor the performance of the Trainers.</p>	
		1.6.1.1.1 Training of trainers shall be achieved through CottonConnect in collaboration with cotton experts'/universities/ reputed resource institutions (academics, research etc)	 
		1.6.1.1.2 The training procedure, including the annual training plan and attendance records, shall be maintained where applicable as per the REEL Standard.	 
		1.6.1.1.3 Training of Trainers shall encompass all modules, including pre-sowing activities, the REEL Cotton Programme (Decent Work, Health, Safety, Security, and Environment), Crop Management (IPM, INM, IWM, Weed Management), Crop Harvest Management, Techniques, Crop Residue Management, Cover Crops, Grievance Mechanism and Labor Training.	 
		<p>1.6.1.2 Training of Ginners shall be conducted through CottonConnect.</p>	
		1.6.1.2.1 Training of Ginners shall be conducted through CottonConnect (REEL Cotton).	 
		1.6.1.2.2 The annual training plan and attendance records of the ginning staff shall be maintained.	 
		1.6.1.2.3 The training of Ginners shall cover programmatic training, quality, traceability management systems, and HSSE (Health, Safety, Security, and Environment).	 
		<p>1.6.2 Training of Farmers (ToF)</p> <p>1.6.2.1 A system shall be in place to train and monitor the Farmers training performance.</p>	
		1.6.2.1.1 Training of farmers shall be conducted through Implementation Partners.	 
		1.6.2.1.2 An annual training plan and records of attendance for all farmers shall be maintained.	 
		1.6.2.1.3 The training of farmers shall cover all relevant modules, including: 1. Pre-sowing activities; 2. REEL Cotton Programme (Decent Work, Health, Safety, Security, and Environment); 3. Crop Management (IPM, INM, IWM, Weed Management); 4. Crop Harvest Management; 5. Techniques; 6. Crop Residue Management; 7. Institution Building & Grievance Mechanism; 8. Social Condition; 9. Farming as a Business.	 
		1.6.2.1.4 Verification of training records shall confirm that farmers with more than one year in the programme have participated in all relevant training modules.	
		1.6.2.1.5 Farmers shall be informed about and committed to quality and traceability requirements. Guidance: Refer to harvest guidelines and REEL Supply Chain SOP.	 









 		<p>1.7</p> <p>1.7.1</p> <p>1.7.1.1</p> <p>1.7.1.2</p>	<p>FIRST-LEVEL FACILITATION (FARMER GROUP MEETINGS, INDIVIDUAL FARMER MEETINGS, INDIVIDUAL FARM VISITS, DEMONSTRATIONS)</p> <p>First-level facilitation is provided to farmers through group meetings, demonstration plots, exposure visits, and individual farm visits.</p> <p>For each group of farmers, a quarterly group meeting shall be conducted to cover all relevant topics addressed in the module training.</p> <p>Demonstration plot for relevant practices shall be established according to the requirements of the local group.</p>	 
  		<p>1.7.2</p> <p>1.7.2.1</p> <p>1.7.2.2</p> <p>1.7.2.3</p>	<p>First-level facilitation activities shall be recorded, and attendance shall be registered.</p> <p>Farmer meetings shall be documented with minutes.</p> <p>Attendance lists shall be maintained and available for verification.</p> <p>Demonstrations and exposure visits shall be recorded, and attendance shall be tracked.</p>	  
 		<p>1.8</p> <p>1.8.1</p> <p>1.8.1.1</p> <p>1.8.1.2</p>	<p>SECOND-LEVEL FACILITATION</p> <p>Awareness and Mapping for REEL Cotton Agriculture Implementation</p> <p>A comprehensive needs assessment of farmers within the programme’s scope has been conducted.</p> <p>The results of the needs assessment and subsequent training activities shall be systematically presented at the producer group level.</p>	   
		<p>1.8.2</p> <p>1.8.2.1</p>	<p>Based on the mapping exercises, linkages shall be established</p> <p>Farmers shall be linked to certified or recognised laboratories that offer soil testing and analysis.</p>	




















   		<p>1.8.3 Farmers shall be provided with sufficient and updated information on the types and biology of pests, diseases, weeds, and natural enemies, as well as on alternative products that can substitute internationally banned pesticides and shall possess the means to adopt biological and cultural control measures.</p> <p>1.8.3.1 Lists of relevant pests, natural enemies, diseases, and weeds shall be maintained and available for the project area.</p> <p>1.8.3.2 Farmers shall be provided with demonstrations on how to manufacture biological pesticides independently.</p> <p>1.8.3.3 Mapping of pesticides available in the local market shall be verified by agricultural research bodies, ensuring that the same phytosanitary products can substitute internationally banned pesticides with equal efficacy. The list of mapped and substitute pesticides shall be made accessible to farmers.</p> <p>1.8.3.4 Farmers' innovative or local control measures for pests and diseases shall be maintained, tested within groups, and documented.</p>	   
  		<p>1.8.4 The cotton farmer shall be able to demonstrate an understanding of the concept of Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) and its relationship with soil.</p> <p>Farmers shall understand all aspects of Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) disseminated by the REEL Programme and know how to replicate INM-enhancing measures on their own farms. INM practices and their enhancing measures shall be properly documented, communicated, and implemented.</p> <p>1.8.4.1 Guidance: Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) is a farming technique that uses a combination of organic, inorganic, and biological fertilisers to improve soil health and crop yields. Reference: FAO on Integrated Plant Nutrient Management</p> <p>1.8.4.2 Leaf colour charts and other IEC materials related to soil and nutrient deficiency shall be made available to farmer groups.</p> <p>1.8.4.3 The introduction and conservation of pollinators shall be encouraged.</p>	  

2. Plant and Field Management



Effective plant and field management is critical to building a resilient, productive, and sustainable cotton farming system. This section outlines the agronomic practices that support healthy plant growth, soil vitality, and natural pest regulation, all while aligning with local environmental conditions and expert recommendations. By promoting appropriate seed selection, responsible input use, crop rotation, weed control, and habitat conservation for beneficial organisms, the REEL Cotton Programme enables farmers to enhance crop performance, reduce dependency on chemical inputs, and increase long-term farm viability. These practices not only improve productivity but also contribute to ecological balance and climate resilience within cotton-growing regions.

GROUP	MAJOR	NR	STANDARD REQUIREMENTS	FARM SIZE
		2	Plant and Field Management	
		2.1	PLANT	
		2.1.1	The cotton farmers shall understand the full concept of resilience, be able to implement it effectively against pests and assess its economic viability.	
		2.1.1.1	The selection of cotton crop varieties or characteristics, as well as any demonstrations, shall follow the recommendations of local experts.	
		2.1.1.2	Seed material shall be treated with pesticide or fungicide either by the seed supplier or the farmer.	 
		2.1.1.3	No prohibited chemicals shall be used for seed treatment at the farm level.	 
		2.1.1.4	Farmers shall maintain proper plant population with appropriate seed rate and gap filling as needed.	


      		<p>2.2 FIELD</p> <p>2.2.1 The cotton farmers shall adopt measures to improve the production system's resilience against pests.</p> <p>2.2.1.1 Cotton cultivation shall not be carried out in protected designated areas.</p> <p>2.2.1.2 Summer tillage (soil turning) at intervals of 2-3 years shall be practised, disinfecting and improve the phytosanitary conditions of the soil.</p> <p>2.2.1.3 Farmers shall be encouraged to adopt locally adapted and viable crop rotation practices on a portion of their cotton land.</p> <p>2.2.1.4 Farmers shall carry out regular weed management and control to keep fields clean.</p> <p>2.2.1.5 Farmers shall adopt green mulching and/or dust mulching based on the needs for phytosanitary purposes and/or conserving humidity.</p> <p>2.2.1.6 Existing natural habitats for natural enemies of pests shall be protected.</p> <p>2.2.1.7 Natural habitats for natural enemies shall be developed if they are absent.</p>	           
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3. Soil and Integrated Nutrient Management

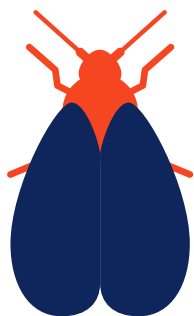


Healthy soil is the foundation of resilient and sustainable cotton production. This section focuses on building and maintaining soil fertility, preventing erosion, and ensuring efficient, safe use of nutrients through integrated nutrient management. Farmers are encouraged to adopt practices such as crop rotation with nitrogen-fixing species, application of manures, and the use of soil and leaf testing to guide fertiliser use. Emphasis is placed on soil conservation through erosion control measures, appropriate tillage, and water management techniques. These practices support long-term soil health, reduce dependence on chemical inputs, and protect water resources, contributing to both environmental sustainability and improved farm productivity under the REEL Cotton framework.

GROUP	MAJOR	NR	STANDARD REQUIREMENTS	FARM SIZE
		3	Soil and Integrated Nutrient Management	
		3.1	SOIL FERTILITY	
		3.1.1	Cotton farmers shall adopt measures to increase soil fertility.	
		3.1.1.1	Burning of crop residues shall not be practised.	
		3.1.1.2	Cotton shall be intercropped or rotated with nitrogen-fixing or other protective plants.	
		3.2	SOIL EROSION	
		3.2.1	Appropriate measures shall be implemented to avoid soil erosion.	
		3.2.1.1	Land preparation shall follow contour lines in hilly or sloping areas.	
		3.2.1.2	Soil-specific tillage methods shall be suggested in the Training Modules. Pre-sowing, IWM, IPM, and INM shall be adopted to prevent soil compaction and erosion of topsoil.	
		3.2.1.3	Irrigation methods shall not disturb the structure of the soil.	
		3.2.1.4	Where applicable, living barriers shall support the stability of the soil.	

     		<p>3.3 INTEGRATED FERTILISER MANAGEMENT Reference: Standard Requirement 1.8.4.1</p> <p>3.3.1 Fertiliser application shall be based on the evaluation of needs, taking into account soil-borne nutrients, soil conditions, and input from non-mineral sources.</p> <p>3.3.1.1 Soil and/or leaf analysis shall be carried out on a regular basis, preferably every three years, when feasible.</p> <p>3.3.1.2 Farmers shall adopt the practice of applying Farmyard Manure (FYM) and/or compost. When feasible, bio-fertilisers shall also be applied.</p> <p>3.3.1.3 Soil conditions, particularly organic matter when available, shall be considered before applying mineral fertilisers.</p> <p>3.3.1.4 Organic manure available on the farm shall not be exported from the farm.</p> <p>3.3.1.5 Manure shall be in an advanced stage of decomposition when applied.</p> <p>3.3.1.6 Farmers shall apply micronutrients based on soil/leaf testing or plant symptoms (colour system), when available.</p>	     
  		<p>3.3.2 Use methods and storage practices for fertilisers shall ensure that their application does not pose a risk of water pollution or health hazards to those who apply them.</p> <p>3.3.2.1 The dose of fertiliser applications shall be according to local requirements and based on soil analyses.</p> <p>3.3.2.2 Organic fertilisers shall not be stored in proximity to surface water bodies.</p> <p>3.3.2.3 When applying fertiliser, reasonable buffer zones shall be maintained around surface water bodies, specific to the type of fertiliser used.</p>	  












4. Pest Management



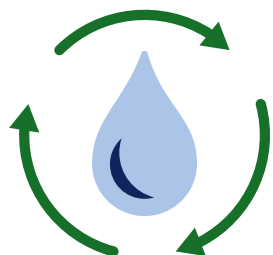
Pest management in cotton farming must balance productivity with environmental and human health. This section promotes an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach, which emphasises ecological balance, minimises chemical use, and prioritises prevention, monitoring, and biological control. By combining cultural practices, mechanical tools, biological agents, and responsible pesticide application only when necessary, the REEL Cotton Standard supports sustainable pest control. Farmers are guided to maintain crop hygiene, scout regularly for pests, respect economic thresholds, and gradually reduce dependence on chemical herbicides and pesticides. Safe handling, proper storage, and the use of approved substances are also key elements to protect farmers, consumers, and ecosystems alike.

GROUP	MAJOR	NR	STANDARD REQUIREMENTS	FARM SIZE
		4	Pest Management	
		4.1	INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT Guidance: Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a holistic, environmentally-friendly approach to pest control that prioritises prevention and minimises the use of pesticides by combining various methods like biological control, cultural practices, and targeted chemical interventions. Reference: FAO on IPM	
		4.1.1	Crop hygiene shall be safeguarded through preventive cultural means.	
		4.1.1.1	Diseased plants shall be removed and destroyed, burned, or buried to maintain healthy crops.	SF LF
		4.1.1.2	Management of natural enemies and other integrated pest management techniques shall be incentivised, promoted, disseminated, and made known to farmers.	SF LF
		4.1.1.3	Cage crops, molasses traps, yellow traps, pheromone traps, and light traps shall be adopted, when feasible, to control and monitor pests.	SF LF
		4.1.1.4	Water used for irrigation shall be clean.	SF LF















  		<p>4.1.2 Monitoring to determine the economic threshold of pests and the optimal time for the application of pesticides shall be practised.</p> <p>4.1.2.1 The cotton farmer shall scout and monitor for pest attacks.</p> <p>4.1.2.2 When feasible, farmers shall use pheromone traps for the identification of pests to ensure targeted pesticide use.</p> <p>4.1.2.3 Economic injury levels and action thresholds shall be respected.</p>	     
  		<p>4.1.3 Farmers shall be encouraged to use recurrent herbicides only as a last resort.</p> <p>4.1.3.1 Preventive weed control and management shall be performed manually or mechanically.</p> <p>4.1.3.2 Farmers shall be encouraged to avoid using herbicides.</p> <p>4.1.3.3 The application of herbicides shall be reduced over time.</p>	     
  		<p>4.1.4 Cultural, physical, and biological measures shall be applied before resorting to chemical pest control, and only if scouting has shown pest infestation.</p> <p>4.1.4.1 Farmers shall plant cotton alongside border crops and trap crops.</p> <p>4.1.4.2 At least one cultural measure to control pests, such as bird perches or traps (e.g., pheromone traps), shall be adopted.</p> <p>4.1.4.3 At least one biological method, such as the release and augmentation of natural enemies, the use of microbial products, natural products/biological pesticides, or organic pest repellents (e.g., neem extract), shall be considered.</p>	     
  		<p>4.2 PESTICIDE USE</p> <p>4.2.1 REEL farmers shall strive to reduce the amounts of pesticides used over time, with records of pesticide use being maintained and available.</p> <p>4.2.1.1 Farmers shall keep records of the types and amounts of pesticides used, along with pest and pesticide details, in the Farmer Field Book (FFB).</p> <p>4.2.1.2 With the help of usage records and inventories, farmers shall demonstrate that pesticide application follows a downward trend and is applied only as needed.</p> <p>4.2.1.3 Farmers shall prefer the selection of pesticides with the lowest toxicity levels.</p>	     























		4.2.2	Substances classified as WHO Class Ia and Ib, as well as those banned by international conventions (such as POP, PIC, Montreal, and Stockholm), shall not be used.	
	✓	4.2.2.1	Cotton farmers shall not use pesticides containing substances listed in WHO Classes Ia and Ib.	 
	✓	4.2.2.2	Cotton farmers shall not use any substances listed as prohibited chemicals by the international protocols or governance bodies followed by CottonConnect, including WHO, POP, PIC, and Montreal (refer to the annexure of the standards for links to these lists).	 
		4.2.2.3	A list of locally available safe pesticides shall be provided to the farmer groups.	
		4.2.3	Substances listed on the REEL Prohibited Pesticide List shall be phased out.	
		4.2.3.1	Cotton farmers shall not use substances listed on the REEL Prohibited Pesticide List.	 
		4.2.4	Pesticides used shall be officially registered in the country, with crop and pest specificity warranted.	
		4.2.4.1	Cotton farmers shall only use pesticides that are officially registered in the country.	 
		4.2.4.2	The crop specificity of used pesticides shall be guaranteed.	 
		4.2.4.3	Pesticides used shall be specifically recommended for combating the target pest.	 
		4.3	SAFE HANDLING	
		4.3.1	Pesticides shall be safely stored, handled, and disposed of.	
		4.3.1.1	Pesticides shall be safely stored and kept out of children's reach.	
		4.3.1.2	Farmers shall use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for spraying.	 
		4.3.1.3	Pesticide containers shall not be stored, handled, emptied, disposed of, or left unattended in a manner that may present a hazard to persons, animals, food, feed, crops, or property.	 

5. Water Management

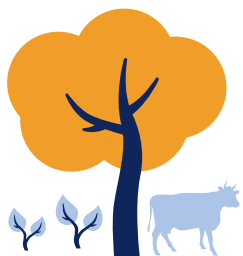


Water is a critical resource in cotton production, and its sustainable management is vital for long-term agricultural resilience and ecosystem health. This section outlines the responsible use of water in cotton farming, focusing on securing sustainable sources, preserving water quality, and optimising usage efficiency. REEL Cotton encourages farmers and producer groups to identify legal water sources, adopt water-saving techniques, and ensure irrigation practices align with crop needs and local rainfall patterns. The standard also promotes on-farm water harvesting, regular maintenance of irrigation equipment, and safe disposal of excess water to prevent resource depletion, pollution, and crop damage.

GROUP	MAJOR	NR	STANDARD REQUIREMENTS	FARM SIZE
		5	Water Management	
		5.1	SUSTAINABLE WATER SOURCES	
		5.1.1	Sources of water for the irrigation of cotton fields shall be identified and preserved.	
		5.1.1.1	The farm owner shall identify all water sources for the irrigation of cotton fields.	 
		5.1.1.2	The cotton farmer shall be clear about the volumes of water that can be used to avoid depleting the source(s).	 
		5.1.1.3	Water availability from the chosen source(s) shall be sufficient from the start of cotton production.	 
		5.1.1.4	The cotton farmer shall be able to demonstrate legal authorisation to extract water.	 
		5.2.1	Producer groups shall adopt initiatives to preserve water sources.	
		5.1.2.1	Innovative techniques for on-farm water harvesting shall be actively promoted.	

		<p>5.2 QUALITY OF IRRIGATION WATER</p> <p>5.2.1 The water used for the irrigation of cotton fields shall be safe for crops, soil, and human health.</p> <p>5.2.1.1 Untreated sewage water shall not be used in cotton fields.</p>	 
      		<p>5.3 SUSTAINABLE USE OF WATER</p> <p>5.3.1 Measures to optimise water use for the irrigation of cotton fields shall be adopted.</p> <p>5.3.1.1 The cotton farmer shall have a good understanding of the watering needs of cotton.</p> <p>5.3.1.2 The rainfall pattern shall be taken into account when watering cotton fields.</p> <p>5.3.1.3 The timing of irrigation shall follow the physiological requirements of the cotton plant.</p> <p>5.3.1.4 Farmers shall accurately record and recall the volume of water used for irrigation to support efficient water management and sustainable practices</p> <p>5.3.1.5 The most effective and affordable irrigation method available in the region shall be used by cotton farmers.</p> <p>5.3.1.6 The irrigation equipment shall be properly maintained.</p> <p>5.3.1.7 The appropriate method of water discharge or drainage shall be followed during heavy rainfall or flood.</p>	           

6. Ecosystem protection



Sustainable cotton cultivation must go hand-in-hand with the protection and restoration of natural ecosystems. This section outlines measures to safeguard forests, maintain ecological and public buffer zones, and enhance biodiversity through restorative and preventive practices. REEL Cotton prohibits deforestation for new cultivation and promotes conservation of primary and secondary forests, especially those over 10 years old. It also emphasises the establishment and restoration of buffer zones near sensitive ecosystems and populated areas, encouraging ecological compensation through tree planting and restoration of degraded lands. By integrating agrobiodiversity and intercropping, farmers are empowered to improve both environmental health and their own economic resilience.

GROUP	MAJOR	NR	STANDARD REQUIREMENTS	FARM SIZE
		6	Ecosystem protection	
		6.1	FOREST CONSERVATION	
		6.1.1	New lands for cotton cultivation shall not be developed through deforestation, on protected land.	
	✓	6.1.1.1	Primary forests and land protected by law shall not be destroyed for the purpose of cotton cultivation.	
		6.1.1.2	Secondary forests over 10 years old shall not be deforested for the purpose of gaining new land for cotton cultivation.	
		6.1.1.3	For secondary forests less than 10 years old and trees around the farm, compensation shall be sought in the form of restoration measures on unproductive land.	

  		<p>6.2 BUFFER ZONES</p> <p>Guidance: A buffer zone is a designated area, often vegetated, separating agricultural land from sensitive areas like water bodies or other land uses to protect water quality and prevent the spread of pollutants.</p> <p>6.2.1 Cotton production shall respect ecologically sensitive areas by maintaining adequately sized buffers, and there shall be visible signs that these areas have been actively restored.</p> <p>6.2.1.1 When applicable, the farmer shall maintain buffer zones between their operations and ecologically sensitive areas, in accordance with local legislation.</p> <p>6.2.1.2 Ecological buffers shall be left untouched.</p> <p>6.2.1.3 Naked buffers shall be actively restored through reforestation or other protective measures that allow natural regrowth without human or animal interference.</p>	     
 		<p>6.2.2 Buffers to public areas such as roads and human settlements shall be maintained.</p> <p>6.2.2.1 The cotton farmer shall maintain safe distances from public roads and houses when applying chemicals.</p> <p>6.2.2.2 In cases where safe distances cannot be maintained, vegetative buffers shall be implemented to ensure public safety.</p>	   
  		<p>6.3 ECOLOGICAL COMPENSATION</p> <p>6.3.1 The cotton farmer shall actively contribute to restoring unproductive land.</p> <p>6.3.1.1 Unproductive land shall not be converted into cotton fields.</p> <p>6.3.1.2 The cotton farmer shall be able to demonstrate that measures have been implemented to restore natural vegetation.</p> <p>6.3.1.3 Cotton farmer groups shall contribute to the plantation of trees, including cotton trees, in their locality.</p>	     
 		<p>6.4 AGROBIODIVERSITY</p> <p>6.4.1 Cotton farmers shall diversify their production systems to enhance environmental and economic sustainability.</p> <p>6.4.1.1 Intercrop practice shall be designed based on the socio-economic situation of the cotton farmer (e.g., availability of land and irrigation).</p> <p>6.4.1.2 Economic resilience shall be increased through intercropping.</p>	   

7. Waste Management



Effective waste management is essential for maintaining farm hygiene, protecting the environment, and ensuring human and animal health. This section focuses on the identification, prevention, and proper disposal of hazardous waste generated on cotton farms. Hazardous waste can include chemical residues, expired inputs, contaminated packaging, used oils, batteries, and animal waste. Cotton farmers must ensure that such materials are not left unattended and are disposed of using environmentally sound methods. By keeping farm premises free of inorganic and hazardous waste, REEL Cotton farmers contribute to a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable farming ecosystem.

GROUP	MAJOR	NR	STANDARD REQUIREMENTS	FARM SIZE
		7	Waste Management	
		7.1	WASTE MANAGEMENT Guidance: Types of Hazardous Waste in Agriculture: i. Chemicals: This is a broad category encompassing pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides), biocides, and other chemicals used for various agricultural purposes. ii. Unused and Expired Chemicals: Even unused or expired chemicals can pose a hazard and need to be handled and disposed of properly. iii. Packaging Materials: Contaminated packaging from pesticides, fertilisers, and other chemicals can also be considered hazardous waste. iv. Other Hazardous Materials: This includes things like used oil, batteries, and other materials used on farms that can become hazardous waste. v. Biomedical Waste: Animal waste and dead animals can also be considered hazardous waste if not managed properly.	
		7.1.1	The cotton farmer shall demonstrate that the farm is free of hazardous waste and that disposal techniques are appropriate for the identified waste.	
		7.1.1.1	The cotton farmer shall have identified hazardous waste on the farm, house, or sheds.	SF LF
		7.1.1.2	Farm premises and fields shall be free of inorganic waste.	SF LF
		7.1.1.3	Appropriate disposal techniques shall be employed that do not harm the environment or human health.	SF LF

8. Institutional Building



Institutional building strengthens producer groups, enhances bargaining power, reduces costs, and fosters resilience through collective action and knowledge sharing.

GROUP	MAJOR	NR	STANDARD REQUIREMENTS	FARM SIZE
		8	Institutional Building	
		8.1	STRENGTHENING PRODUCER GROUPS	
		8.1.1	Organisation of producer group (or sub-group structures) should be encouraged to undertake collective bargaining for their produce and purchase of agri-inputs.	SF
		8.1.2	Joint activities by Farmer Groups are actively promoted	SF




























9. Social Conditions



Sustainable cotton production must be rooted in respect for human rights, social equity, and fair labour practices. This section of the REEL Cotton Standard outlines core social conditions aligned with international labour conventions, including those of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It ensures freedom of association, the prohibition of forced and child labour, non-discrimination, and the right to decent and safe working conditions. The standard also promotes the social and economic inclusion of women and vulnerable groups, supporting their participation in farming and community-based enterprises. Through these social safeguards and empowerment strategies, REEL Cotton aims to create dignified livelihoods and inclusive communities while enhancing the overall sustainability of the cotton value chain.

GROUP	MAJOR	NR	STANDARD REQUIREMENTS	FARM SIZE
		9	Social Conditions	
		9.1	FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION (ILO 87) & COLLECTIVE BARGAINING (ILO 89)	
		9.1.1	Management of farms/gin with more than 10 full or part-time permanent workers shall recognise, in writing and in practice, the right of all workers to establish and join worker organisations of their own choosing and to collectively negotiate their working conditions.	
		9.1.1.1	Management shall respect the right of all workers to form or join a trade union or informal labour group of their choice and to engage in trade union activities on-site, if available.	
		9.1.1.2	Workers shall have the right to choose their representative at any level.	

 		<p>9.1.2</p> <p>9.1.2.1</p> <p>9.1.2.2</p>	<p>If no active and representative union exists on farms with more than 10 full or part-time permanent workers, all workers shall democratically elect a workers' committee to represent them and negotiate with management to defend their rights and interests.</p> <p>Worker committees shall be established to defend workers' rights and interests if trade unions are absent on-site or in the area.</p> <p>The workers' committee shall be democratically elected by workers to represent their interests and negotiate with management.</p>	 
   		<p>9.1.3</p> <p>9.1.3.1</p> <p>9.1.3.2</p> <p>9.1.3.3</p> <p>9.1.3.4</p>	<p>Workers shall not be subject to retaliation, discrimination, or any other negative consequences as a result of collective bargaining.</p> <p>The union representative/workers' committee representative shall have access to all workers at the workplace.</p> <p>The union representative/workers' committee representative shall be aware of the appeal procedure in case management does not comply with legal rules.</p> <p>The workers' committee shall be capable of operating on-site, free from farm management interference.</p> <p>There shall be no signs of worker retaliation or discrimination due to collective bargaining.</p>	   
		<p>9.2</p> <p>9.2.1</p>	<p>PROHIBITION OF FORCED LABOUR (ILO 29 & 105)</p> <p>Forced labour, including bonded or involuntary prison labour, does not occur.</p>	
	<p>✓</p>	<p>9.2.1.1</p>	<p>There shall be no evidence of forced labour.</p>	
		<p>9.2.1.2</p>	<p>No recruitment fee, charges, or retention of valuables or identity papers shall be imposed on members.</p>	
		<p>9.2.1.3</p>	<p>Salaries or wages shall not be retained by the member farmers or ginners to force workers to stay.</p>	
		<p>9.2.1.4</p>	<p>Workers shall be free to leave their workplace with appropriate notice.</p>	
		<p>9.2.1.5</p>	<p>Spouses shall work voluntarily and on a separate contract basis.</p>	

		9.3	PROHIBITION OF CHILD LABOUR (ILO 138)	
		9.3.1	Children shall not be employed or contracted below the age of 14.	
	✓	9.3.1.1	The minimum age of children employed shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 14.	 
		9.3.1.2	Policies and procedures to prevent the employment of children below the age of 14 shall be in place and under the custody of the implementing body.	 
		9.3.2	All children of farmers, farm labour and gin labour shall attend compulsory schooling. Work shall not jeopardise their schooling or social, moral, or physical development.	
		9.3.2.1	Member farmers and ginners shall ensure that work does not jeopardise the schooling, health, safety, or social, moral, or physical development of workers under the age of 18.	 
		9.3.2.2	Children under the age of 14 engaged in joint family labour or neighbourhood services shall only perform work duties that are commensurate with their age and under the custody and guidance of their parents or relatives.	 
		9.3.2.3	Children under the age of 14 engaged in joint family labour or neighbourhood services shall do so only after school or during holidays.	 
		9.3.2.4	All children of farmers, farm labour and gin labour shall attend compulsory schooling.	 
		9.4	PROHIBITION OF WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR (ILO 182)	
		9.4.1	Worst forms of child labour do not occur.	
	✓	9.4.1.1	There shall be no evidence of trafficked, bonded, forced, or abused labour.	 
		9.4.2	Monitoring, evaluation and response mechanisms exist.	
		9.4.2.1	Incidences of the worst and regular forms of child labour shall be documented.	 
		9.4.2.2	An action plan to prevent, monitor, and remediate child labour shall be implemented, documented, and followed up.	 

      		<p>9.5 WARRANTY OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY</p> <p>9.5.1 The farm shall provide workers in all work areas with the basic services, resources, and working conditions necessary to comply with occupational health and safety programme objectives.</p> <p>9.5.1.1 A safe and hygienic working environment shall be provided, considering the prevailing knowledge of seed cotton production and ginning and any specific hazards. Adequate steps shall be taken to prevent accidents and injury to health arising from, associated with, or occurring in the course of work by minimising, as far as reasonably practicable, the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment.</p> <p>9.5.1.2 Workers shall receive regular and recorded health and safety training, and such training shall be repeated for new or reassigned workers.</p> <p>9.5.1.3 Gin factories shall provide first aid services and emergency health care free of charge for work-related injuries to workers and supervisors.</p> <p>9.5.1.4 First aid boxes shall be accessible at all times at the farm or workplace. The boxes shall be fully equipped and in good condition.</p> <p>9.5.1.5 In all farms & gins, potable drinking water shall be accessible to all workers during their working period.</p> <p>9.5.1.6 Personnel who apply or handle agrochemicals or perform any other hazardous work shall be provided with the necessary protective equipment.</p> <p>9.5.1.7 Storage areas for agrochemicals shall comply with basic safety standards.</p>	             
     		<p>9.6 EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS</p> <p>9.6.1 Workers shall be aware of their rights and duties, responsibilities, salaries, and work schedules.</p> <p>9.6.1.1 All workers employed for more than 3 months shall have legally binding labour contracts defining their rights and duties, responsibilities, work schedules, and wages/salaries.</p> <p>9.6.1.2 Workers employed for more than 3 months shall receive copies of, or have access to, the contracts signed by both parties.</p> <p>9.6.1.3 Payment shall be made in legal tender.</p> <p>9.6.1.4 Payments shall be made on time, according to an appropriate payment schedule that has been communicated to workers employed by the farmer & gins.</p> <p>9.6.1.5 In farms with more than 10 full or part-time permanent employees, an up-to-date written payroll and job description for each employee shall be available, providing a clear account of wages earned, as well as, if applicable, allowances, bonuses, overtime payment, and all deductions in detail.</p> <p>9.6.1.6 The legal provisions for social insurance, leave practices, and overtime shall be followed.</p>	           

    		<p>9.6.2 Work, including subcontracted work, shall be equally remunerated according to the type of work provided and for both genders alike.</p> <p>9.6.2.1 Payment of workers contracted by the farmer & gins shall either be in line with or exceed sector Collective Bargaining Agreements or correspond to the regional average and/or official minimum wages for similar occupations.</p> <p>9.6.2.2 Payment shall be at least equal to the country or region-specific stipulated benchmark for living wages.</p> <p>9.6.2.3 Women’s pay shall be equal to their male counterparts for the same type of work provided.</p> <p>9.6.2.4 The pay rate shall allow subcontracted workers who are remunerated based on production quotas or piecework to earn at least the proportionate minimum wage or the relevant industry average (whichever is higher) during normal working hours.</p> <p>9.6.2.5 Working hours shall not be excessive and shall be in line with national or local legislation regarding overtime and remuneration.</p>	         	
		<p>9.6.3 Deductions from salaries shall only be made as agreed by national laws, as fixed by a Collective Bargaining Agreement, or if the employee has given their written consent.</p> <p>9.6.3.1 Deductions from salaries shall be in line with national laws and/or the Collective Bargaining Agreement (if applicable).</p> <p>9.6.3.2 Dedications shall not be used as disciplinary measures.</p> <p>9.6.3.3 When deductions are made for services provided by the farmer, they shall be in line with the actual costs incurred by the employer.</p>	     	
		<p>9.7 NO DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE (ILO 111) AND WORKPLACE HARASSMENT.</p> <p>9.7.1 Any form of discrimination or abuse shall be absent.</p>		
		✓	<p>9.7.1.1 There shall be no discrimination based on race, caste, national origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union membership, political affiliation, or age in recruitment, remuneration, access to training, promotion, disciplinary measures, termination, or retirement.</p>	 
		✓	<p>9.7.1.2 The organisation and its members shall not engage in or support the use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, or verbal abuse.</p>	 
		<p>9.7.1.3 The work shall be free from abuse, violence and harassment, including child or any form of abuse, gender-based violence, sexual and physical harassment. Ref: ILO on Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)</p>	 	

		<p>9.7.2</p> <p>9.7.2.1</p>	<p>Grievance mechanisms</p> <p>A grievance mechanism shall be implemented and made accessible to farmers, workers, and other individuals potentially affected by the organisation's work. The design and functionality of the mechanism shall be effective.</p>	
 		<p>9.8</p> <p>9.8.1</p> <p>9.8.1.1</p> <p>9.8.1.2</p>	<p>WOMEN'S SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT</p> <p>The organisation shall foster the social and economic development of farmers and their spouses through the creation of Farmer Groups, Women in Cotton projects, and other entrepreneurial initiatives at the community level.</p> <p>Farmer Groups shall be enabled to improve the economic resilience of member farmers.</p> <p>Entrepreneurial initiatives shall be developed at the communal level to diversify sources of income for farmers.</p>	 
		<p>9.8.2</p> <p>9.8.2.1</p>	<p>Programmes related to disadvantaged or minority groups among the farmers' force, particularly women, shall be in place to improve their position.</p> <p>Women farmers or spouses of male farmers who are members of disadvantaged or minority groups shall be prioritised for participation in entrepreneurial ventures aimed at promoting regenerative farming practices, including but not limited to nursery development, animal husbandry, biochar production, and agricultural input production.</p>	



Annexure



Glossary of Terms

AGROBIODIVERSITY

Agrobiodiversity is the variety of animals, plants and microorganisms that are used directly or indirectly for agriculture, including crops, livestock, and forestry. It comprises the diversity of genetic resources used for food, fodder and fibre production. It also includes the diversity of non-harvested species that support the production e.g., soil microorganisms, predators and pollinators as well as the diversity of agro ecosystems.

AGROECOLOGY

Agroecology is an ecological approach to agriculture that views agricultural areas as ecosystems and is concerned about with the ecological impact of agricultural practices.

AGROFORESTRY

Agroforestry is a collective name for land-use systems and technologies where woody perennials (trees, shrubs, palms, bamboos, etc.) are deliberately used on the same land-management units as agricultural crops and/or animals, in some form of spatial arrangement or temporal sequence.

BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is a term used to describe the enormous variety of life on Earth. It can be used more specifically to refer to all of the species in one region or ecosystem. Biodiversity refers to every living thing, including plants, animals, humans, and microorganisms in the soil.

BIO MAGNIFICATION

Condition where the chemical concentration in an organism exceeds the concentration of its food when the major exposure route occurs from the organism's diet.

BT COTTON

BT (*Bacillus Thuringiensis*) cotton is a genetically modified organism (GMO) or genetically modified pest resistant plant cotton variety, which produces an insecticide to combat bollworm.

CHEMICAL FERTILISERS

Synthetic fertilisers like urea, di-ammonium phosphate, murate of potash etc.

CHEMICAL PESTICIDES

Synthetic pesticides like acephate, ethion etc.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION & MITIGATION

Climate change adaptation refers to actions that reduce the negative impact of climate change, while taking advantage of potential new opportunities. Adaptation (responding to climate impacts) and mitigation (reducing GHG emissions) are necessary complements in addressing climate change.

COVER CROP

Cover crop is a crop grown for the protection and enrichment of the soil and increased retention capacity of water in the soil.

CROP ROTATION

Crop rotation is the practice of planting different crops sequentially on the same plot of land to improve soil health, optimise nutrients in the soil, and combat pest and weed pressure.

DEMONSTRATION PLOT

A demonstration plot is a field that can be used to teach, experiment, and share ideas about agricultural practices.

ECOLOGY

Branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings.

ECOSYSTEM

A community or group of living organisms that live in and interact with each other in a specific environment.

FARMERS GROUP

Individual farmers shall be organised into groups for the implementation and monitoring of the REEL programme and its activities. Each group will elect a group leader who will serve as the primary contact for group members. The number of farmers in each group may vary by region, with a maximum of 50 and a minimum of 20 farmers per group.

FARM SIZE

For the effective implementation of the REEL programme, farmers have been categorised into two groups: Small Farm Holdings and Large Farm Holdings. Small Farm Holdings refer to farmers with less than or equal to 15 hectares of cotton land, while Large Farm Holdings consist of farmers with more than 15 hectares of cotton land.

FARMERS PRODUCER ORGANISATION

A farmer producer organisation (FPO), formed by a group of farm producers, is a registered body with producers as shareholders of the organisation. It deals with business activities related to farm produce and works for the benefit of member producers.

HABITAT

A habitat is the place where an organism lives.

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER

An organisation or entity that actively carries out the programme's objectives on the ground. They are responsible for executing the programme's strategies, reaching target beneficiaries, and achieving the desired outcomes.

INTERCROP

Intercropping is the practice of growing two or more crops in proximity. Like pigeon pea or green gram with cotton crop.

LARGE FARM HOLDING

Large Farm Holdings refers to farmers with more than 15 hectares of cotton land.

MIX CROPPING

A system of sowing two or three crops together on the same land, one being the main crop and the others the subsidiaries.

NATURAL HABITAT

A natural habitat is an ecological area (on or beyond the farm) where specific species live.

PEST SCOUTING

The term 'pest scouting as it applies to the area of agriculture can be defined as 'inspecting a field for pests, including insects, weeds, and pathogens. 'Pest scouting is a basic component of integrated pest management programmes.

PHEROMONE TRAP

Pheromones are chemicals used by insects and other animals to communicate with each other. Insects send these chemical signals to help attract mates, warn others of predators, or find food. Using specific pheromones, traps can be used to monitor target pests in agriculture or in residential areas.

POLLINATORS

A pollinator is anything (insects, birds & animals) that helps carry pollen from the male part of the flower (stamen) to the female part of the same or another flower (stigma). The movement of pollen must occur for the plant to become fertilised and produce fruits, seeds, and young plants.

PRODUCER GROUP

Farmer Groups will be consolidated into Producer Groups. Each Producer Group will be led by a Project Coordinator. To ensure efficient operation and implementation, a Producer Group shall consist of a maximum of 4,500 farmers. For large farmers, Producer Group will consist of 50 farmers, allowing for a deviation of up to +20%.

PRODUCER GROUP INFORMATION

Producer group information may include but is not limited to, farmers' lists, farmers' group lists, land data, cotton cultivation areas, projected production of REEL Cotton, organisational structure, and implementation team details.

PROJECT FARMERS

Project farmers are the REEL Cotton project farmers

REEL COTTON

Cotton produced out of the REEL Programme farmers.

RESILIENCE

The ability of a community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner.

SALINISATION

The process of increasing the salt content is known as salinisation.

SMALL FARM

Small Farm Holding refers to farmers with less than or equal to 15 hectares of cotton land.

SOIL HEALTH

Soil health is the soil's ability to function and sustain plants, animals and humans as part of the ecosystem. The diversity of microorganisms plays a crucial role in soil functioning.

SOIL ORGANIC MATTER

Soil organic matter (SOM) is the organic matter component of soil, consisting of plant and animal detritus at various stages of decomposition, cells and tissues of soil microbes, and substances that soil microbes synthesise. SOM also acts as a major sink and source of soil carbon.

SOIL SALINITY

Soil salinity is the salt content in the soil.

TRAP CROP

Trap crop planted to attract insect pests from another crop, especially one in which the pests fail to survive or reproduce. Like China rose in cotton farm.

YELLOW STICKY TRAP

Yellow sticky traps are a commonly used method for population monitoring of many pests.

List of Prohibited Chemicals

REEL Cotton Standard disallows the use of any materials defined by the following protocols or governance bodies. Please consult the links below for an updated list of the prohibited substances.



WHO

The WHO recommended classification of pesticides by hazard, of which:

1. Extremely hazardous (Class Ia); and
2. Highly hazardous (Class Ib)

<https://www.who.int/publications> or

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240005662>



POP

Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants (POPs), of which: Annex I and Annex II

<https://echa.europa.eu/list-of-substances-subject-to-pops-regulation> or

<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/ConventionText/tabid/2232/Default.aspx>



PIC

Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade under the Rotterdam Convention, of which: Annex III

<https://echa.europa.eu/information-on-chemicals/pic/chemicals> or

<http://www.pic.int/TheConvention/Overview/TextoftheConvention/tabid/1048/language/en-US/Default.aspx>



MONTREAL

Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer

<https://ozone.unep.org/treaties/montreal-protocol>

