



## Update on Responsible Business for Gins programme

CottonConnect's Responsible Business for Gins programme, designed to raise the standards in the crucial process of ginning in the cotton supply chain, now includes additional training topics and is available in more countries.

The Responsible Business for Gins programme, first introduced in 2023, has since expanded to more gins and regions including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, and Türkiye.

Ginners are a vital link between farms and textile manufacturers. CottonConnect works with gins processing the seed cotton grown in its programmes, to promote responsible business conduct at gin level. This includes:

1. Ensuring fair labour practices in the gins, where seasonal and vulnerable workers are often employed.
2. Implementing safety and grievance mechanisms to protect workers' rights.
3. Maintaining traceability and documentation which is essential for buyers committed to ethical sourcing.
4. Influencing upstream and downstream practices, as ginners often interact with both farmers and buyers.



**Aggregated results from HSSE (Health, Safety, Security, and Environment) Gin programmes in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, and Türkiye in 2023-24 show:**



Compliance with safety aspects **increased** from 42% to

**87%**



Adoption of precautionary measures **increased** from 70% to

**91%**



Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by gin workers **increased** from 56% to

**97%**

For further information on how CottonConnect can support your organisation, please contact us at:  
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The Responsible Business for Gins programme has expanded from HSSE training to include key aspects of human rights due diligence.

- **Human rights compliance:** The programme places strong emphasis on protecting human rights and legal compliance.
- **Worker welfare:** To ensure comprehensive worker welfare, participants are asked about the provision of health insurance, regular health check-ups, and working conditions.
- **Worker residential facilities:** Improvements are made to the residential facilities provided by gins for workers.
- **Worker protection:** The programme increases the availability of grievance mechanisms and worker representation structures such as worker committees or unions.

An effective grievance mechanism enables any issues compromising responsible business conduct to be identified early and concerns addressed.

**Example issue:**

Due to high volumes during peak seasons, gins may employ seasonal workers through informal labour contractors without formal contracts. There is a risk of these seasonal workers working excessive hours without overtime pay or having no access to safety equipment or grievance mechanisms.

**Recommended action:**

In its training with gins, CottonConnect recommends that they vet labour contractors and use written contracts for seasonal workers, provide them with personal protective equipment (PPE) and implement regular safety drills. Seasonal workers should also have access to the grievance reporting channels and designated trained personnel as a point of contact.

Compliance with the **Responsible Business for Gins Code of Conduct** is third-party verified by an independent verifier. The benefit of third-party verification is demonstrated in the results of three gins in India transitioning from second to third-party verification. An overall increase of 57 percentage points in full compliance of the Code of Conduct across various parameters was observed as gins transitioned from second-party to third-party verification, indicating a positive response to more rigorous, independent scrutiny.

By adopting responsible business conduct, gins help to build a transparent, responsible supply chain. This supports brands in meeting regulations on human rights due diligence, for example the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, and provides assurance of responsible conduct at both the farm and gin levels of cotton production.

