

REEL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION REPORT 2024-25



CottonConnect conducted a structured, multi-stage stakeholder consultation during the revision of the REEL Standards – REEL Cotton and REEL Regenerative. As a community member of ISEAL, CottonConnect followed the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Sustainability Systems to ensure transparency, inclusivity, and credibility in the standards development process.

The consultation was conducted in two stages:

- 1. Stage One** involved direct engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders, including farmers, researchers, brands, ginners, sustainability practitioners, environmental experts, HRDD experts, and representatives of industry associations and membership organizations provided initial feedback on the structure and content of the standards.
- 2. Stage Two** opened the revised standards for public stakeholder feedback, allowing broader review and additional comments.

This comprehensive feedback process played a critical role in refining the standards, enhancing clarity, strengthening implementation feasibility, and aligning requirements with global best practices. It also helped ensure the standards address local realities while maintaining rigour and traceability across the cotton supply chain.



Key Stakeholder Insights



- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of Producer Groups, Implementing Partners, and Ginners.

- Ensure flexibility within the standard to accommodate regional variations in farming practices.



- Include specific terminology such as “hazardous conditions” to align with the ETI Base Code and other international labour standards.



- Consider farmers’ literacy levels in the design and delivery of training modules.

- The involvement of stakeholders in both the development of training modules and the implementation process is a key factor in the program’s success.

Feedback helped in the standard revision



- Clear role definitions for Producer Groups, Implementing Partners, and Ginners have been incorporated into the assessment tools and supporting documentation.



- Differentiated approaches have been integrated to address the needs of small and large farmers, based on landholding size.



- The REEL Standard aligns with ILO conventions on labour rights and compliance, ensuring consistency across all social criteria.

- Requirements related to child labour, health and safety, and workplace discrimination have been strengthened, with clearly defined remediation procedures.

- Targeted initiatives have been integrated to support women and disadvantaged groups, including capacity-building programs and livelihood opportunities.



- Stakeholders are involved at all levels in the development of training content and the implementation of the program.

The consultation process has led to a more inclusive, locally relevant, and verifiable standard requirements. All changes were adopted based on constructive feedback and grounded in field realities. Continuous learning and iterative updates remain central to the REEL approach. Future updates will further integrate stakeholder input, evolving best practices, and on-ground implementation insights.