



Regenerative Cotton Standard[®] Communication Guidelines

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The table below provides an overview of the previous versions of the RCS Communication Guidelines. For product, corporate, and project communications, only the current document, “RCS Communication Guidelines, August 2026”, applies.

Effective Date

This document enters into force on 1 August 2026. The explanations and provisions in the RCS Communication Guidelines, version of 2026, will expire on 31 July 2026. As of 27 September 2026, this version of the RCS Communication Guidelines will be binding on all partners referred to in Chapter 2.2.

Disclaimer

This document is a voluntary guide that is not intended to replace the legal or regulatory requirements of any country.

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Translation Accuracy

The official language of this document is English. While the Aid by Trade Foundation also makes a German version of the document available, it accepts no liability for errors or misunderstandings arising from the translation.

Contact

Aid by Trade Foundation
Werner-Otto-Strasse 13b · 22179 Hamburg, Germany
Phone: +49 40 25 76 75 50
E-Mail: marketing@abt-foundation.org

Version	Veröffentlichungsdatum	Anpassungen
RCS Communication Guidelines 2024	July 2024	
RCS Communication Guidelines 2026	August 2026	Revision - Product statements - Change of minimum cotton percentage in final product for claim eligibility: from 5 percent to 30 percent - Replace the chain-of-custody term “Hard Identity Preserved” with “Segregation” Addition - Corporate communication - Project communication

1 Introduction

1.1 Regenerative Cotton Standard®

Developed by the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF), the Regenerative Cotton Standard® (RCS) is a voluntary standard for cotton grown by small-scale farmers through regenerative cultivation methods. The Regenerative Cotton Standard® aims to improve the overall resilience and productivity of small-scale farming while generating benefits for agricultural soils, rural communities, the biosphere, and the quality of life of livestock. To achieve these goals, RCS's scope encompasses the entire production system rather than only cotton. Learn more about RCS at www.regenerativecottonstandard.org

The Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) authorises ATA KORA Fördergesellschaft GmbH (ATAKORA) to market and administer licences for the Regenerative Cotton Standard® and to manage the integration of verified cotton into supply chains. Brands and retailers pay ATAKORA a licensing fee that allows them to implement RCS-verified cotton into their supply chains and gives them the right to advertise using the RCS label. The proceeds are then transferred from ATAKORA to AbTF, which reinvests them to promote socially and ecologically sustainable cotton cultivation in project regions.



1.2 Purpose and Scope

The communication guidelines of the Regenerative Cotton Standard® (RCS) are directed at existing RCS partners and third parties; they provide instructions in the proper use of the brand and its messages.

This document establishes the principal rules that corporate, product, and project communications regarding the Regenerative Cotton Standard® have to follow. These include the following:

- Defining general rules for communication about the RCS standard
- Providing direction for all internal and external communications about RCS, and providing support to ensure a consistent image of the RCS brand is presented to the public
- Assisting RCS partners with explaining their involvement with RCS in a manner which is credible, correct, substantiated, and comprehensible
- Helping RCS partners and third parties avoid erroneous or misleading communications that risk causing reputational damage
- Explaining various RCS labels and the correct use of RCS logos
- Providing a selection of suitable texts and specific statements to choose from when communicating about RCS. The texts are meant to serve as suggestions; RCS partners ultimately bear responsibility for how they use them



These guidelines form part of all RCS licensing or partnership agreements and are therefore binding.

Participants or organisations that have not (yet) entered into a contractual relationship with ATAORA are not entitled to mention RCS in communications at the corporate level.

ATAORA retains the right to define appropriate and therefore authorised statements.

ATAORA retains the right to update these guidelines or its communications rules at any time.

ATAORA is obligated to inform its partners about such updates at the time of their publication.

1 The EU regulation defines misleading statements as ones that deceive or are likely to deceive the average consumer, even if the information they contain is factually correct.

2. Overview

2.1 Communication Modules and Key Requirements

Depending on the type of contractual relationship between an organisation and ATAKORA Fördergesellschaft GmbH, different rules apply for communication about RCS. There are three different communication modules:

- Product communication, which includes rules for product labelling;
- Corporate communication, which relates to corporate-level communications;
- Project communication as part of a donation agreement with the Aid by Trade Foundation.

Product Communications

	Minimum amount of RCS cotton in the final product ²	Who is affected
	≥ 30 % < 30 % cannot be claimed	• RCS licensing partner • Partners of RCS licensing partners

If the final product has a material composition of less than 30 per-cent cotton, production is possible, but product communication is excluded. According to the Chain of Custody rules, the cotton content of the product must contain only RCS cotton (for detailed information, see chapter 3.1).

2 “Final product” refers to the fully manufactured product in its final form. “Material composition per-centage” refers to the material composition of the entire product—and not to individual product components, parts, or accessories—unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Corporate Communication

Regardless of material composition, the following parties may communicate about their partnership with RCS at the corporate level:

- Companies with a licensing agreement
- Companies with a partnership agreement
- Registered RCS members with a valid membership
- RCS-verified cotton companies with a partnership agreement
- Project partners with a partnership agreement

Partners of RCS licensing partners who do not have their own li-censing agreement with ATAORA may NOT communicate about RCS at the corporate level.

Project Communication

The following parties may communicate about their partnership and project with RCS at the project level:

- Partners with a donation agreement with AbTF
- RCS-verified cotton companies with a partnership agreement and a grant agreement with AbTF

Your communication rights are non-transferable and apply exclu-sively to contractual partners. These guidelines apply, worldwide, to all communication and marketing activities related to the Re-generative Cotton Standard®.



2.2 Partner Categories and Definitions

Licensed Companies

This category includes retailers, suppliers, importers, and manufacturers who

- have a valid licensing agreement or supplier licensing agreement with ATAKORA and
- integrate RCS-verified cotton into their supply chains.

Companies With a Partnership Agreement

These include traders, retailers, and cotton traders who

- have a valid sponsorship or partnership agreement with ATAKORA.

Registered RCS Members

This includes spinning mills, fabric producers, and other registered partners in the RCS supply chain who

- have no formal partnership agreement with ATAKORA but have a valid RCS membership.

Cotton Companies With a Partnership Agreement

These include companies that are based in India or in African cotton-producing countries and that

- have a partnership agreement with ATAKORA and
- have a valid RCS certificate.

Partners of RCS Licensing Partners

These include retailers and brands that

- buy or sell products from RCS licensing partners but do not have a direct licensing agreement with ATAKORA.

Partners With a Donation/Grant Agreement With AbTF

Partners who support a project initiated by the Aid by Trade Foundation sign a donation agreement with the Aid by Trade Foundation. For this purpose, the term “partners” includes RCS partners with a licensing agreement as well as NGOs and private individuals.

If RCS-verified parties want to implement a project together with the Aid by Trade Foundation, they must conclude a grant agreement with AbTF.



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3.1 Produktkommunikation

Companies with a licensing agreement and partners of RCS licensing partners (see chapter 2.2) may communicate about RCS at the product level.

- Product-related communication includes all communication activities related to RCS in the product context, for example on the label or packaging of the product, at the POS (online or offline), in product placement, or in product advertising.
- Please note that RCS may only be advertised on the product if the final product³ consists of at least 30 percent RCS cotton. If the final product has a material composition with a lower RCS content, e.g. 85 percent viscose and 15 percent RCS cotton, this product must not be advertised with an RCS logo. However, the item can still be manufactured.

For more information on production requirements and assurances, see the Aid by Trade Foundation [Transparency Standard](#) and the [Assurance Manual](#).

- Product communication consists of three different elements
1. The correct product logo;

2. A statement recommended by the Aid by Trade Foundation; this includes the minimum amount of RCS cotton in the final product;

3. The correct URL or QR code for end consumers to find additional information.

3

“Final product” refers to the fully manufactured product in its final form. “Material composition percentage” refers to the material composition of the entire product—and not to individual product components, parts, or accessories—unless explicitly stated otherwise.



3.1.1 Prerequisites for Product Communication



The implementation (chain of custody) model of Segregation (formerly HIP) enables complete transparency throughout the textile value chain. This allows cotton to be traced from the finished product back to the spinning mills and ginneries. In contrast to the Mass Balance system, this cotton must not be mixed with any other cotton at any stage of production. An exception is made for recycled cotton, accessories, and trims⁴.

RCS yarn produced under this implementation model may consist of

1. RCS-verified cotton only; or
2. a mixture of RCS-verified cotton and recycled cotton under the Recycled Claim Standard (RCS) or the Global Recycled Standard (GRS)⁵.

Mixing with fibres other than cotton is also permitted.

The following specifications must be adhered to throughout the textile production process, from cotton to yarn to fabric:

- Only RCS-verified cotton, which must always be stored and processed separately, may be used, with the exception of the exceptions mentioned above.
- The materials and products produced under this implementation model (yarns, fabrics, textiles) must always be stored and processed separately and be traceable to their origin through appropriate documentation.

In order to ensure that these requirements are met, all partners in the textile value chain must enter the appropriate information into the RCS tracking system. This allows precise statements to be made about the origin of the materials used, including the raw cotton.

Final products may bear the **“Regenerative Cotton Standard®”** logo if the following conditions are met:

- The final product must have an RCS cotton content of 30 percent. If the final product has a material composition with a lower RCS cotton content—e.g. 70 percent viscose, 15 percent RCS cotton, and 15 percent GRS cotton—this product must not be advertised with an RCS logo.
- The product must have been recorded via the RCS tracking system and be traceable to the RCS cotton origin through a complete set of tracking data.

→ For more information on production requirements and assurances, see the Aid by Trade Foundation [Transparency Standard](#) and the [Assurance Manual](#).

4 The use of cotton fibres not verified under RCS is permitted in accessories, trims, decorations, and other minor textile components, provided that these components together represent less than 10 percent of the total weight of the product. Such components may serve functional or decorative purposes but may not be part of the product's main textile component.

5 This also includes their successor standards within the framework of the Textile Exchange Materials Matter Standards.

Logo for Labelling Products for the Regenerative Cotton Standard®



→ If necessary, the [RCS Design Manual](#) can be consulted for more details on using the logo.

RECOMMENDED CLAIM FOR REGENERATIVE COTTON STANDARD® PRODUCT COMMUNICATION

→ Please keep in mind that these texts and statements are only meant to serve as examples. RCS partners are responsible for ensuring that specific statements comply with all relevant laws and regulations.

This product*¹ contains at least 30 percent*² cotton produced by regenerative cultivation methods such as intercropping and reduced tillage, which save the soil.

***Not including accessories/trims¹**

Alternatively, the following short form may be used:

This product¹ contains at least 30 percent*² cotton verified under the Regenerative Cotton Standard®.

***Not including accessories/trims¹**

- 1) Mandatory supplement
- 2) If desired, the exact percentage may be indicated instead.

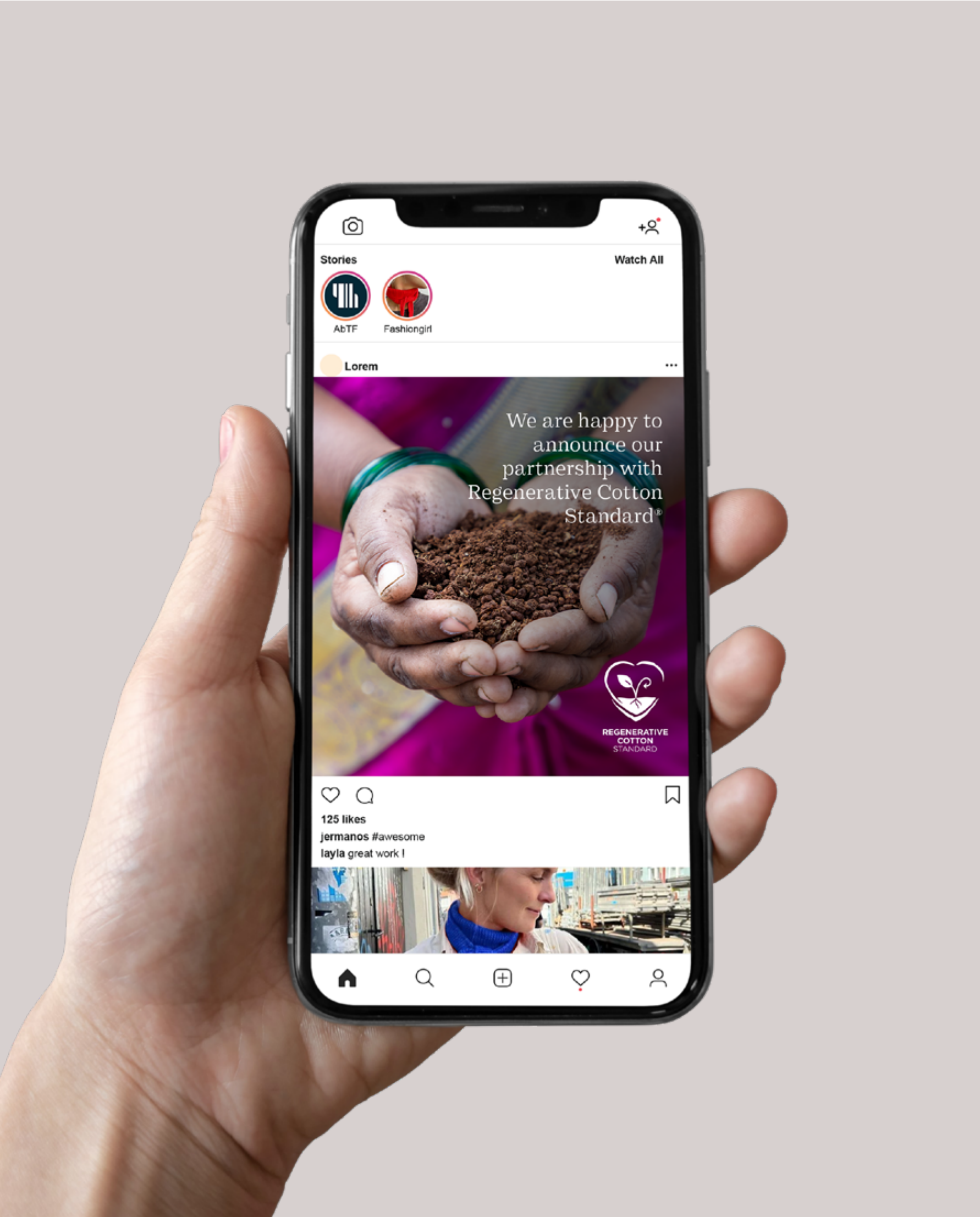
→ After each product statement, the following URL must be added:

www.regenerative-cotton.org/standard

An initiative of the Aid by Trade Foundation

→ Alternatively, a QR code may be inserted instead of the URL.

3.2 Corporate Communication



The following parties may communicate at the company level about their partnership with the Regenerative Cotton Standard®:

- Companies with a licensing agreement
- Companies with a partnership agreement
- Registered RCS members with a valid membership
- RCS-verified cotton companies with a partnership agreement

Corporate communication includes all communications that relate to an organisation’s overall commitment, involvement, or partnership with the Regenerative Cotton Standard®, such as annual reports, websites, press releases, and social-media or other media publications.

If you would like to communicate at the company level about your partnership with the Regenerative Cotton Standard®, we would be pleased to provide you with further information. The following channels are available for corporate communication:

- Reports
- Online presence (excluding webshops and e-commerce)
- PR measures
- Social media publications

To enable you to adapt your communication accordingly, we would be pleased to provide you with the following information:

- **Facts and figures** proving the cotton fibres’ quality and origin as well as their transparency and traceability within the supply chain
- **Social factors** that illustrate the direct impact of our collaboration on farmers and their families
- **Interviews** with farmers and current reports from RCS project regions
- **images**, including various photos from the project regions, are at your disposal

The following logos are available for corporate communication:



**REGENERATIVE
COTTON
STANDARD**



AUTHORISED STATEMENTS FOR COMMUNICATING ABOUT A PARTNERSHIP
WITH THE REGENERATIVE COTTON STANDARD® AT THE COMPANY LEVEL

A. We support the Regenerative Cotton Standard® as a partner company [member/licensee].
Learn more at
<https://regenerative-cotton.org/get-involved/brand-retailer>

B. By working with the Regenerative Cotton Standard®, we support small-scale farmers in cultivating cotton in a way that protects the environment, animals, and soil.
Learn more at
<https://regenerative-cotton.org/get-involved/brand-retailer>

C. Through our partnership with the Regenerative Cotton Standard®, we support small-scale farms in their transition to regenerative agriculture, which protects both the environment and the soil.
Learn more at
<https://regenerative-cotton.org/get-involved/brand-retailer>

→ We kindly ask all partners to send us your corporate communication drafts for review.
Please contact marketing@abt-foundation.org with any questions.

3.3 Project Communication



The following logos are available for project communication:



Partners who have a donation agreement with the Aid by Trade Foundation and are financing a support programme jointly with RCS can publicise these efforts. Project communication addresses support for the programme or project and is regulated through contractual agreements with the Aid by Trade Foundation.

How can I co-finance a project?

If you are interested in supporting a project, please contact our team via info@abt-foundation.org for more information about current support programmes.



→ We can provide you with images for publication.

4 Requirements & Prohibitions

4.1 Terminology

Permitted Terms	Prohibited Terms
✓ Regenerative agriculture / regenerative cultivation	✗ Sustainable cotton
✓ Regenerative cultivation methods	✗ Sustainability
✓ Cotton verified in accordance with the Regenerative Cotton Standard®	✗ Fair/better cotton Environmentally friendly cotton
✓ Promotion of initiatives in the areas of education, health and women’s empowerment	✗ RCS-Projekt
	✗ Development aid
	✗ Our small-scale farmers/farms
	✗ Our smallholders

4.2 Use of the Logo

- ✓

RCS logos can be used in the specified formats and colours.
- ✓

Product communications must always include a logo along with the URL (www.regenerative-cotton.org/standard) as well as a short explanation about RCS.
- ✓

RCS logos may not be narrower than 15 millimetres in width.
- ✗

RCS logos may not be placed on a busy or excessively colourful background.
- ✗

RCS logos must be clearly legible and sufficiently contrasted (using variations if necessary).
- ✗

RCS logos may not be smaller than any adjacent labels or logos.
- ✗

When displayed in a series alongside other labels or logos, RCS logos may not be trimmed.

RCS logos can be used in the specified colours, as applicable:

Cloud White	
HEX:	#FFFFFF
RGB:	255 255 255
CMYK:	0 0 0 0
Pantone:	Pantone White C

Soil Black	
HEX:	#3A3938
RGB:	58 57 56
CMYK:	0 0 0 100
Pantone:	Black 7 C

Regenerative Blue	
HEX:	#4597BA
RGB:	62 157 206
CMYK:	70 20 5 5
Pantone:	2389 C

Soil Beige	
HEX:	#AB7954
RGB:	171 121 84
CMYK:	25 50 65 20
Pantone:	728 C

Ground Green	
HEX:	#91B88A
RGB:	145 184 138
CMYK:	50 12 55 0

→ For more information on the correct use of the logos, please refer to the [RCS Design Manual](#).

4.3 Translations

Authorised statements/texts for communication are available in German and English. The name of the Regenerative Cotton Standard® must not be translated.

4.4 Use of the Registered Trademark

Please note that the ® symbol may only be used in countries which are listed as a licensed territory in the Licensing Agreement (section 2, “Licensee’s Rights of Use”) and in which the trademark is registered.

4.5 Measures and Sanctions for Infringements

In the event of a breach of the requirements set out in this document, an escalating series of measures will be taken.

Unless otherwise specified, the following will apply:

- The improper use must be stopped immediately;
- The content must be removed or corrected within 30 days of this being requested;
- Failure to do so may result in further action being taken by ATA-KORA; this includes a public declaration of abuse as well as the suspension or withdrawal of marketing rights or of the right to use the trademark on products and in advertising.

Measures within the meaning of this section include, for instance, the following:

- Corrective actions. Remove, adapt, or correct illegal content or markings.
- Temporary restrictions. Temporary suspension of any or all rights to use the RCS logo, name, or claims.
- Withdrawal of communication rights. Long-term or complete withdrawal of permission to use RCS elements.
- Escalating measures. Further organisational measures such as suspension or exclusion from RCS network.

The application of the measures depends on the type, severity, and frequency of the respective violation in individual cases.

Use Without a Valid Licensing Agreement or Registration

- Violations occur, for instance, when the RCS logo, name, or claims are used without appropriate authorisation.
- Use in corporate communications is reserved exclusively for partners with their own, valid licensing agreement.
- In product communications, use is only permitted if a valid licensing agreement exists or RCS products are purchased through a licensed RCS partner.
- In this case, the use of the affected claims and markings must be discontinued immediately.

Non-compliant Production or Incorrect Labelling

- Infringement occurs when products are not produced in accordance with the applicable [RCS guidelines](#) but are nonetheless marked with the corresponding RCS claims or logos.
- In this case, the use of the affected claims and markings must be discontinued immediately.

Unauthorised or Incorrect Use of Logos and Claims

A violation occurs when RCS logo, claim, or trademark elements are used in an unauthorised or non-compliant form. Examples include the following:

- Use of the product logo despite falling below the minimum percentage of RCS cotton in the final product as defined in Table 2.1;
- Use of non-approved logo variants (e.g. incorrect colours, changed proportions, or divergent design);
- Use of outdated or unauthorised logo versions;
- Deviation from the defined design guidelines (e.g. protective space, minimum size, placement);
- Use of unauthorised claims (statements).

Missing or Insufficient Tracking

- In particular, a violations occurs if the RCS logo, name orclaims are used for products whose RCS-relevant supplies have notbeen tracked, or have been tracked only incompletely or incorrectly.

→ **Thank you for choosing to collaborate with the Regenerative Cotton Standard®. We are delighted to have you communicate with and about us, whether at the product, corporate, or project level.**

Founded in 2005 by the entrepreneur Prof. Dr Michael Otto, the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) is now an internationally renowned non-profit organisation that works throughout the world to promote sustainable raw materials. Its activities make a decisive and measurable contribution to improving the living conditions of people and animals while protecting the environment. AbTF takes a practical approach by creating and maintaining a variety of standards to verify raw materials: Cotton made in Africa® (CmiA), Cotton made in Africa Organic (CmiA Organic), the Regenerative Cotton Standard® (RCS), and The Good Cashmere Standard® (GCS). As climate change and market changes cause the challenges facing herders, textile companies, and small-scale farmers to grow, the standards have a major role to play in ensuring their resilience and future viability. AbTF collaborates closely with industry experts and with specialists in animal and nature protection.

Aid by Trade Foundation: One Platform, Four Strategic Levers

Verified raw materials	Transparent supply chains
Practical onboarding	Plug & play brand storytelling

Built to cover your entire sustainability workflow, from sourcing to storytelling.



Contact

Marketing@abt-foundation.org

Aid by Trade Foundation • Werner-Otto-Straße 13 b • 22179 Hamburg

www.aidbytrade.org