

Aid by Trade Foundation Presents New Standard for Regenerative Cotton Produced by Small-Scale Farmers

Through its Regenerative Cotton Standard (RCS), the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) is setting a new bar for sustainable cotton standards. RCS is the first regenerative cotton standard that explicitly prioritises the interests and knowledge of small-scale farmers involved in the production process. With small-scale farmers and textile companies facing growing challenges, the new standard will play a key role in ensuring the resilience and future viability of the sector.

Hamburg, 6 November 2023. The Aid by Trade Foundation has developed the Regenerative Cotton Standard as a new standard for sustainable cotton. Going beyond its successful cotton standards, Cotton made in Africa (CmiA) and Cotton made in Africa Organic, AbTF's new standard expands its future-facing portfolio and offers both textile companies and cotton farmers a new holistic approach for responding to growing challenges in the cotton and textile industries. In addition to supporting farmers in becoming more resilient to the effects of climate change, the Regenerative Cotton Standard offers companies a solution for future-proofing the production of cotton as a key raw material for their textiles. The standard innovatively combines the wealth of experience that AbTF's successful cotton standards have already gathered with new approaches to regenerative agriculture and to community participation in rural areas.

The Regenerative Cotton Standard centres on small-scale farmers and on incorporating their rich store of agricultural knowledge into a cotton production system that supports and strengthens natural regenerative processes. To this end, the standard combines proven approaches to improving human rights and environmental aspects in cotton production by supporting measures for adapting to climate change, for actively including small-scale farming communities, and for promoting animal welfare. Apart from offering small-scale farming communities optimal market access, RCS supports agricultural community projects, which also create opportunities for mutual learning. When working their fields in accordance with the RCS standard, farmers receive support with applying proven cultivation practices like expanded crop rotation, optimised biomass usage, mixed crops, and agroforestry systems. This enables them to increase the climate resilience and fertility of their fields, restore depleted soil, and make it fit for farming again. To equip the farmers against individual crops failing, the new standard makes a point of supporting them in diversifying their crop rotation and crop types.

The Regenerative Cotton Standard offers all participating stakeholders in the textile supply chain the advantage of being able to meet increasingly strict requirements for sustainability reporting. Retailers and brands benefit from Cotton made in Africa's Hard Identity Preserved system underpinning their cotton. The related Online Tracking System creates transparency throughout the value chain.

For the Managing Entities responsible for local implementation, RCS offers market access for an in-demand product. Since the RCS standard requires close co-operation and ongoing integration among both farmers and their communities, loyalty to the Managing Entity is great, enabling its range of cotton products to be well planned and secured. The Regenerative Cotton Standard additionally offers them financial support with expanding their consulting work for small-scale farmers.

"We are glad that the Regenerative Cotton Standard will enrich our foundation's family of standards, starting immediately," says Tina Stridde, the managing director of the Aid by Trade Foundation, before continuing, "We are certain that RCS will meet the high standard of our clients because it

combines high-quality cotton with strong social and ecological credentials. This is supported by the fact that we are already seeing great interest in RCS from both existing and new partners.”

For more information on the Regenerative Cotton Standard, visit <https://regenerative-cotton.org/>.

About the Aid by Trade Foundation

The Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) was founded in 2005 and is now an internationally renowned and active non-profit organization for sustainable raw materials. Through its work, it makes a decisive and measurable contribution to improving the living conditions of people and animals and to protecting the environment. With its certified raw materials Cotton made in Africa (CmiA), Cotton made in Africa Organic (CmiA Organic), Regenerative Cotton Standard (RCS) and The Good Cashmere Standard (GCS), the foundation puts its goals into practice. A globally active alliance of textile companies and brands requests the certified raw materials and pays a license fee to the foundation's marketing company, ATAKORA Fördergesellschaft GmbH. This entitles the partners to market their goods with the labels of the standards. In view of the increasing challenges small-scale farmers and textile companies are facing, the standards are of fundamental importance for their resilience and future viability. The AbTF works in close cooperation with industry experts, animal welfare and nature conservation specialists.

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