



**REGENERATIVE
COTTON
STANDARD**

Guidelines for RCS Implementation in the Supply Chain



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1 General Information & RCS Membership

These Implementation Guidelines, provided by Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF)/ ATAKORA Fördergesellschaft GmbH (ATAKORA), are intended as a practical guidance and overview for supply chain organisations looking to implement cotton verified under the Regenerative Cotton Standard® (RCS) into their production lines. The [Aid by Trade Foundation Transparency Standard](#) remains the primary reference document.

All organisations producing, treating, trading, or sourcing RCS cotton or RCS-claimed material or products (e.g. noils, yarns, fabrics, or garments) are required to maintain a [membership](#) with RCS, as applicable. To ensure that purchases of RCS-claimed products and materials are made under a verified claim, it is always the duty and responsibility of the purchasing entity to check whether the selling entity is registered with RCS, as applicable.

Retailers and brands must sign a licensing agreement with ATAKORA. This agreement allows them to incorporate the RCS verified cotton into its supply chain and to use the RCS logo and label for product communication and corporate communication in accordance with the RCS Claims Frameworks, as applicable (see [Chapter 5](#)).

They are responsible for:

- informing their relevant supply chain partners about the Chain of Custody (CoC) implementation requirements;
- ensuring that all relevant supply chain partners comply with the CoC requirements;
- monitoring documentation and data in the tracking systems to confirm the traceability and integrity of claimed materials; and
- ensuring accurate product labelling and marketing, avoiding any misleading claims.

2 Chain of Custody Model

RCS applies the Chain of Custody (CoC) model of '**Segregation**' to ensure full transparency and traceability for RCS-verified cotton and RCS claimed materials and products throughout the supply chain. Under this CoC model, RCS-verified cotton can be traced from the retail order back to the RCS-verified cotton producer, providing complete visibility of each step in the supply chain. This model guarantees that the integrity of the verified cotton is maintained, supporting the highest level of transparency and assurance.

Cotton verified under the Regenerative Cotton Standard® can be only implemented under the Chain of Custody model 'Segregation' into the supply chain.

All RCS-verified materials and retailer purchase orders (POs) must be tracked in TextileGenesis.

RCS yarns, fabrics, and garments must contain **RCS-verified cotton** in their cotton content. **Recycled cotton under Recycled Claim Standard (RCS) or Global Recycled Standard (GRS)¹ and accessories and trims² are an exception³.**

¹ Or their successor standards under the Textile Exchange Materials Matter Standard.

² The use of non-RCS-verified cotton fibres is permitted in accessories, trimmings, embellishments and other secondary textile components, provided that these components together account for less than 10 per cent of the product's total weight. Such components may serve functional or decorative purposes, but must not form part of the product's main textile component.

³ The Aid by Trade Foundation Transparency Standard will be updated accordingly until August 2026.

Figure 1: The process from RCS cotton to RCS yarn⁴

RCS cotton and RCS-claimed materials and products (noils, yarns, fabrics, garments) must be segregated at all stages of the supply chain (from cotton producer to retailer/brand).

- **RCS cotton** and non-RCS cotton **must be kept segregated** at all stages of storage, processing, treatment, and inter-facility transportation. Segregation may be physical (e.g. separate storage areas and production lines) or temporal (e.g. separate production runs, one after the other).
- **RCS cotton must be clearly marked** with 'RCS' at all stages of storage, processing, treatment, and inter-facility transportation (e.g. with signage). Accompanying sales and transport documents must clearly identify (e.g. with bale numbers or lot numbers) the corresponding bales as RCS-verified cotton bales.
- The **substitution or blending of RCS cotton with non-RCS cotton is prohibited**. The only exception is recycled cotton certified under the Recycled Claim Standard (RCS) or the Global Recycled Standard (GRS). Blending RCS cotton with non-cotton fibres is permitted.
- **RCS-claimed materials or products (yarns, fabric, garment or comber noils)** and other materials or products (yarns, fabric, garment or comber noils) **must be kept segregated** at all stages of storage, processing, treatment and inter-facility transportation. Segregation may be physical (e.g. separate storage areas and production lines) or temporal (e.g. separate production runs one after the other).
- **RCS-claimed materials or products (yarns, fabric, garment or comber noils) must be clearly marked** with 'RCS' at all stages of storage, inter-facility transportation, and processing (e.g. with signage). Accompanying production reports as well as, sales and transport documents must clearly identify (e.g. with lot numbers) the corresponding materials or products as RCS-claimed products or materials.
- The **substitution or blending of RCS-claimed materials or products (yarns, fabric, garment or comber noils) with non-RCS materials or products (yarns, fabric, garment or comber noils) is prohibited**. The only exception is recycled cotton materials or products certified under the Recycled Claim Standard (RCS) or the Global Recycled Standard (GRS). However, RCS-claimed materials or products can be mixed with other, non-cotton materials or products.
- To avoid any confusion with other standards (e.g. the Recycled Claims Standard) it is recommended to clearly state "Regenerative Cotton Standard" on all relevant documents.
- **Proof of the segregation and labeling must be documented** and must be either uploaded in the Tracking System or provided during audit.

⁴ All intermediate levels, e.g. yarn/fabric trader, dye houses or comber producer/trader, are also in scope of the AbTF Transparency Standard and must fulfil all relevant regulations.



The **same procedure applies for all supply chain levels producing, trading and processing cotton or cotton-containing products and cotton by-products.**

3 Assurance under the Aid by Trade Foundation Transparency Standard

The [Aid by Trade Foundation \(AbTF\) Transparency Standard](#) defines the requirements for all supply chain organisation that produce, trade, treat, buy, or sell any products that contain RCS cotton (e.g. cotton, comber noils, yarns, fabrics, or garments/textiles).

The standard verifies that all relevant supply chain actors comply with the defined traceability, segregation, and transparency requirements, ensuring that RCS cotton can be credibly traced through all processing and trading stages. Verification is carried out through independent third-party audits that review documentation, records, and physical traceability controls, and that assess the correct implementation of all criteria at site level. The corresponding [Assurance Manual](#) provides further guidance on verification and implementation.

The requirements of the AbTF Transparency Standard must be applied at each site owned by the organisation which falls under the RCS registration, and which wants to produce and sell RCS-claimed products.

Following documentation of RCS productions must be either entered into the RCS Tracking System or provided on request during audits.

ENTITY	TRANSACTION	DOCUMENTS REQUIRED	SPECIFICATION
Spinning Mill	Cotton Purchase MANDATORY for RCS registration	RCS cotton purchase contract AND	- Both sides signed contract and invoice (pro-forma invoice is not enough!) - Clearly mentions "Regenerative Cotton Standard/RCS cotton" (Incl. expected shipment date)
		Cotton shipment document/ confirmation of receipt AND	Document confirming cotton receipt at spinning mill's warehouse
		Photo documentation	Photo proof that RCS cotton is clearly marked and stored separated from any other cotton
	Yarn Sale	Production report AND	Document excerpt showing which RCS cotton bales have been used for yarn production
		Yarn shipment document	- Incl. buyer/seller information, amount and delivery date - Clearly mentions "Regenerative Cotton Standard/RCS yarn"



ENTITY	TRANSACTION	DOCUMENTS REQUIRED	SPECIFICATION
Yarn Trader/Yarn Dye House	Yarn Sale	Yarn purchase document AND Yarn sales document (e.g. invoice, shipment document, dyeing report)	- Incl. buyer/seller information, amount and delivery date - Clearly mentions "Regenerative Cotton Standard/RCS yarn"
Fabric Mill	Fabric Sale	Production report AND	Document excerpt showing which RCS yarn purchase has been used for fabric production
		Fabric shipment document	- Incl. buyer/seller information, amount and delivery date - Clearly mentions "Regenerative Cotton Standard/RCS fabric"
Fabric Trader/Fabric Dye House	Fabric Sale	Fabric purchase document AND Fabric sales document (e.g. invoice, shipment document, dyeing report)	- Incl. buyer/seller information, amount and delivery date - Clearly mentions "Regenerative Cotton Standard/RCS fabric"
Garment Producer	Garment Sale = allocation of input material to retailer POs	Production report	Document excerpt showing which RCS yarn/fabric purchase has been used for garment production
Importer	Garment Order	Garment purchase document AND garment sales document (e.g. invoice, shipment document)	- Incl. buyer/seller information, amount and delivery date - Clearly mentions "Regenerative Cotton Standard/RCS product"

4 Tracking System

The mandatory tracking of all RCS-claimed materials and products is managed via **TextileGenesis**.

Companies registered with RCS receive access to the TextileGenesis system. All partners in the supply chain are required to regularly provide purchase and sales data, along with the necessary supporting documents, through TextileGenesis.

AbTF/ATAKORA does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of data or documents provided in TextileGenesis. If doubts arise regarding the reliability of information, AbTF/ATAKORA reserves the right to commission third-party auditors to verify the supply chain, including inspections at processing facilities or warehouses to confirm the physical availability of RCS-verified cotton or RCS-claimed materials, as well as compliance with the applicable standard requirements and their proper implementation.



5 Labelling

To be labelled with the “*Regenerative Cotton Standard*” logo, the final product must be composed of at least 30% RCS cotton⁵, with the remaining percentage comprising any other, non-cotton fiber or verified recycled cotton⁶. Only products produced according to the outlined requirements are allowed to be claimed as and labeled with the “*Regenerative Cotton Standard*” logo.



Retailers and brands must ensure that only garments and textiles:

- which meet all implementation requirements outlined in the AbTF Transparency Standard; and
- which are traceable through the applicable tracking system

are sold under the RCS claim.

All product claims and labels must comply with the applicable Claims Frameworks and Logo Manuals.

For further information please contact the AbTF Marketing Department at:

marketing@abt-foundation.org

6 Contact and Documents

If you have any questions regarding RCS, please contact the RCS team:

mail@scotsupport-dss.atlassian.net (Available Monday – Friday, 09:00 am – 17:00 pm Indian time)

Helpful documents:

- RCS verified cotton companies:
<https://regenerative-cotton.org/files/RCS-Cotton-Companies.pdf>
- Aid by Trade Foundation Transparency Standard
https://regenerative-cotton.org/files/AbTF_TransparencyStandard_Version1_6.2025.pdf
- Assurance Manual AbTF Transparency Standard
[Assurance-Manual_AbTF-Transparency-Standard_Version1_6.2025.pdf](https://regenerative-cotton.org/files/Assurance-Manual_AbTF-Transparency-Standard_Version1_6.2025.pdf)
- RCS Membership Guideline
https://regenerative-cotton.org/files/RCS_Membership-Guidelines.pdf
- Onboarding Audits for Spinning Mills
<https://regenerative-cotton.org/files/onboarding-audits-for-rs-spinning-mills.pdf>

⁵ For products containing less than 30% RCS cotton, on-product labelling is not permitted. However, the product may still be claimed and sold as an RCS product in accordance with the applicable claim requirements.

⁶ Verified recycled cotton under the Global Recycled Standard (GRS), Recycled Claim Standard or their successor standards within the framework of the Textile Exchange Materials Matter Standards.