



**REGENERATIVE
COTTON**
STANDARD

Membership Guidelines Regenerative Cotton Standard



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1 General information

These Membership Guidelines, provided by Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF)/ATAKORA, are the framework document for supply chain organisation which want to implement cotton verified under the [Regenerative Cotton Standard](#)® (RCS) into their production lines.

All organisation producing, treating, trading, or sourcing RCS cotton or RCS-claimed products (e.g. comber noils, yarns, fabrics, or garments) are required to maintain a membership with RCS, as applicable.

Organisation with multiple processing and production levels (e.g. producing both yarn and fabric) must register each supply chain unit with RCS. An organisation may define the scope of its registration to exclude processes and products that do not comply with the implementation or registration requirements; however, excluded processes and products must not be associated with RCS claims.

Independent companies within the same group must register individually with RCS.

Retailers or brands that manage their own manufacturing activities might also need to register in accordance with the applicable registration requirements.

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.

The Aid by Trade Foundation and ATAKORA reserve the right to protect and safeguard themselves against risks to their integrity and credibility. CmiA or RCS registrations can therefore be denied, suspended or terminated if a company poses a significant compliance, integrity, reputational, or business risk to the Aid by Trade Foundation or ATAKORA or the respective standard system through past or present actions. Such risks may include, but are not limited to child labour, severe health and safety violations, fraud, corruption, serious breaches of applicable laws or internationally recognised business conduct standards, failure to fulfil contractual or arbitration obligations, or being listed on recognised industry risk and default lists, including the [International Cotton Association's List of Unfulfilled Awards Part 1 or Part 2](#).

2 Chain of Custody Model

2.1 Implementation

RCS applies the Chain of Custody (CoC) model '**Segregation**' to ensure full transparency and traceability for all RCS-verified materials throughout the supply chain. Under this system, 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 without any mixing or substitution, 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 in the cotton share only RCS cotton and are therefore 100% traceable down to the RCS cotton origin. **Recycled cotton under Recycled Claim Standard (RCS) or Global Recycled Standard (GRS)¹ and accessories and trims² are an exception³.**



Figure 1: The process from RCS cotton to RCS yarn⁴

RCS cotton and RCS-claimed materials and products (comber 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**

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.

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



- 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.

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

2.2 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.

3 Become an RCS member

All organisation producing, treating, trading, or sourcing RCS cotton or RCS-claimed products (e.g. comber noils, yarns, fabrics, or garments) are required to maintain a partnership with RCS. Independent companies within the same group must register individually with RCS.

3.1 Annual membership fees

The annual membership fee depends on the supply chain level(s) the organisation is applying for.

ANNUAL FEE	
Spinning Mills (buying cotton, producing yarns)	3,500 EUR (Every 2 nd year without audit, only 2,000 EUR.)
Yarn Trader or Yarn Dye House (buying yarns, selling yarns)	1,000 EUR



	ANNUAL FEE
Fabric Producer (buying yarns, producing fabrics)	1,000 EUR
Fabric Trader or Fabric Dye House (buying yarns, selling yarns)	500 EUR
Garment Producer (buying yarns or fabrics, producing garments)	1,000 EUR
Garment Trader (buying garments, selling garments)	0 EUR
Comber Producer/Comber Trader	1,000 EUR

Companies that cover several production steps (e.g. yarn and fabric production) only pay a single fee.

3.2 General process

Following steps are required for an RCS registration:

1. Register the supply chain organisation online via the AbTF Membership Manager:

<https://registration.aidbytrade.org/registration?standard=RCS>

- Once the registration is approved and payment is received, the organisation receives a membership confirmation valid for one year. This establishes the organisation's official status as an RCS-registered supply chain organisation. It includes assignment of a unique membership number and access to the Tracking System. In addition, registered organisations are listed on one of the official RCS supplier lists.

3.3 Additional requirements for spinning mills

For applications of spinning mills, additional requirements apply before registration:

1. Buy RCS cotton from an RCS [verified cotton producer](#).

- State clearly** for the cotton producer or trader **that the cotton is bought as "RCS" cotton** to be used for RCS production and to receive a volume update in the Tracking System.
- To register the cotton contract in the Tracking System the **contract should be dated not older than one year**.



2. Upload during online registration respective documents for approval by AbTF.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED	SPECIFICATION
RCS cotton purchase contract AND	- Both sides signed contract and invoice (pro-forma invoice is not enough!) - Clearly mentions “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

3. Undergo an [onboarding audit](#) conducted by a 3rd party audit company

The onboarding audit aims to verify the spinning mill's compliance with the segregation and transparency requirements of the [AbTF Transparency Standard](#).

Spinning mills applying for RCS yarn productions must have the necessary management systems, tools, technical equipment, and setups to produce yarns according to the Chain of Custody requirements, specifically focusing on the segregation and separation of RCS verified cotton origins throughout the production processes. The onboarding audit focuses on ensuring that RCS cotton and RCS yarns are handled separately from other materials and that accurate documentation is maintained to support transparency and traceability along the supply chain.

The spinning mill must demonstrate:

- Compliance with segregation requirements as outlined in the AbTF Transparency Standard.
- A transparent and reliable traceability system.
- Comprehensive documentation supporting segregation and transparency.

If any non-conformities are identified, they must be addressed through corrective actions before the RCS application can be approved. Including preparation time, the audit process and the report verification, the registration process might take 21-28 days.

The successful completion of the audit is valid for a period of two (2) years.

4 Renewal of membership

The RCS membership expires annually. Thirty (30) days prior to expiry, the organisation will receive a notification email from the AbTF Membership Manager, including a link to the online renewal process. The renewal process must be completed before the membership expires. Following requirements must be fulfilled:

- RCS transactions are updated regularly, correctly and verified in the Tracking System
- For spinning mills: RCS cotton balance is positive
- Annual membership fee is paid



5 Sanctions

The Aid by Trade Foundation/ATAKORA will be able to terminate a valid RCS membership if a company:

- Poses a significant compliance, integrity, reputational, or business risk to Aid by Trade Foundation/ATAKORA
- Commits serious legal, ethical, or business conduct violations
- Fails to fulfil contractual or arbitration obligations
- Is listed on recognised industry risk or default lists
- Transactions in the Tracking System are not conducted on a regular and valid basis
- The cotton balance is not positive, and the spinning mill does not purchase RCS cotton in due time

If an organisation:

- Cannot prove the source of traded, treated, or processed materials and products under an RCS claim
- Fails to demonstrate that claimed materials were processed correctly and in accordance with the implementation requirements
- Provides fraudulent information or data

then the Aid by Trade Foundation/ATAKORA reserve the right to take corrective actions. These actions may include:

- Commissioning audits
- Cancelling account volumes
- Suspending the organisation
- Terminating the membership entirely

Without valid RCS membership an organisation is no longer allowed to produce or sell any RCS-claimed materials or products.

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)
- HIP Onboarding Audits for Spinning Mills
<https://regenerative-cotton.org/files/onboarding-audits-for-rcs-spinning-mills.pdf>