

## REEL Cotton Theory of Change

The REEL Cotton Theory of Change plays a crucial role in illustrating how the interventions under the REEL Cotton Programme contribute to both short-term and long-term changes.

The Theory of Change provides the foundation for the REEL Cotton Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) System by outlining how the REEL Cotton Programme aims to bring about change and identifies the specific areas where these changes will occur. It is designed to meet the following goals of the REEL Cotton Programme:

- a. improved farm performance,
- b. reduced environmental impacts,
- c. enhanced cotton quality in the supply chain,
- d. traceability of REEL Cotton from farmer to store
- e. promoting social fairness in farming communities.

Each goal of the REEL Cotton Programme is linked to corresponding impacts, outcomes, outputs, and initiatives. These initiatives encompass a range of interventions and activities aimed at achieving the desired changes. For each initiative, REEL Cotton has defined a comprehensive implementation strategy that considers the associated assumptions and risks. By aligning interventions with the Theory of Change, CottonConnect can monitor and evaluate the outcomes of actions, learn from experiences and continuously improve its approach.



### TIMELINE FOR THEORY OF CHANGE

The REEL Cotton Programme is strategically designed to accomplish its objectives within a three-year timeframe through ongoing capacity-building initiatives led by agronomic experts on the ground. Continuous support and guidance are given to farmers to enhance their knowledge and skills, empower them to adopt sustainable practices and improve their agricultural outcomes.

### MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

As part of the development process, CottonConnect extended invitations to stakeholders from various sectors to engage in the review of the Theory of Change, with approximately 25 stakeholders sharing their feedback. This collaborative approach ensured alignment with market requirements and insights to effectively address the most critical issues surrounding sustainable cotton supply chains.

The Theory of Change is also communicated to:

- a. Leadership (Board and Directors)
- b. Employees
- c. External assurance partners and implementing partners
- d. Customers

Through ongoing dialogue and collaboration with stakeholders, CottonConnect can refine and enhance the Theory of Change, promoting the achievement of shared sustainability goals.

# Theory of Change

## Responsible Environment Enhanced Livelihoods (REEL) Cotton

GOAL

Improved farm performance, reduced environmental impacts, improved cotton quality in the supply chain, traceability of REEL Cotton from farmer to store, and social fairness in farming communities

IMPACT

### Sustainable Land Management

### Environmental Stewardship

### Supply Chain System Strengthening

### Social Fairness

Improved soil health, plant growth, and increased yields/profits

Soil fertility is safeguarded through reduced use of fertilisers and savings from reduced input costs

Soil health is preserved through reduced use of pesticides and increased use of bio-pesticides

Farmers benefitted from the replication of sustainable best practices

Sustainable and responsible use of water resources

Sustainable waste management practices

Preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity in the farmlands

Better quality cotton procured through the supply chain

Genuineness of REEL Cotton

A reliable and verified supply chain of REEL Cotton

Farmers benefitted from knowledge sharing, local support and joint initiatives post the training period

Workers empowered and motivated

Farmers/Workers working in a safe and hygienic working environment

Prohibition of Child Labour  
Farming is no longer a hindrance to child education

Improved social status and well being

OUTCOMES

Farmers adopting Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) practices

Farmers applying fertilisers based on evaluation of needs and increased use of bio-pesticides and plant residues

Use of cultural means / bio-pesticides for safeguarding crop hygiene and striving for reduced use of pesticides

Local knowledge sharing and capacity building support available to farmers

Farmers making optimum use of water and water sources are preserved

Recycling of organic farm waste and safe disposal of hazardous waste by farmers

Farmers are committed to responsible management of ecosystems and biodiversity and necessary measures are taken by farmers

Improvement in quality of cotton produced

Farmers aware of the quality and traceability requirements of REEL Cotton

GINNERS ensuring the quality, traceability, and sustainability standards required for REEL Cotton

Farmers receiving support through producer groups/SHGs

The rights of workers are respected and forced labour is abolished

Workers are provided with basic services, resources, and working conditions necessary to comply with the occupational health and safety program objectives.

Child labour is not practiced and schooling is not affected for workers (under 18), and children under 15 working on family farms

Participation in decision making by disadvantaged groups

Increased awareness about health and nutrition

OUTPUTS

Farmers trained on various stages and important aspects of cotton cultivation through national networks or institutions (REEL Cotton India) in collaboration with national agriculture science centres  
Farmers are provided onsite support during various stages of cotton cultivation  
Demo plots are created in all programme areas on sustainable cotton cultivation

GINNERS trained on quality requirements, traceability, management system, and HSSE (Health, Safety, Security and Environment) through national networks

Supported formation of Farmer Producer Groups/SHGs

Farmers oriented on labourers' right to association and duties and responsibilities

Farmers oriented on aspects related to occupational safety

Farmers oriented on child rights and the importance of education for children

Programmes related to disadvantaged /minority groups among the farmers' workforce and women

INITIATIVES

Design capacity-building tools and train farmers on various stages and aspects related to cotton cultivation  
Collaboration with National Networks / national agricultural science centres

Design of capacity-building tools for GINNERS on various aspects of supply chain management

Facilitating the formation of farmer producer groups / SHGs (Post the training period)

Interventions at the community level

ASSUMPTION & RISKS

- ASSUMPTIONS**
- Farmers continue to grow cotton
  - No major or adverse natural calamities
  - Farmers continually attend training programmes and adopt sustainable practices
  - Farmers willing to address workers' issues based on the capacity building programmes

- Participation of women and other disadvantaged in the society in the programme
- The willingness of ginnners for cooperation and compliance
- Local partners maintain the necessary capacity to support field interventions

**RISK**

- Limited buy-in of training inputs among farmers
- Land and water availability related issues
- Climate change
- The unwillingness of farmers to participate in a farmer producer company
- Children working on the farms
- Farmers unwilling to adopt cultural/traditional practices