

Cotton made in Africa Standard Revision 2025 Volume 5.0

Summary for the Public Consultation

Hamburg, September 2025



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Introduction

About CmiA and AbTF

Cotton made in Africa® (CmiA), an initiative of the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) founded in 2005, is one of the world's leading standards for sustainably produced cotton.

Our goal is to help people help themselves, via trade rather than donations, in order to improve the living and working conditions of smallholder farmers in Africa and to protect our environment.

We work with a wide-ranging network in cotton-growing countries, including numerous partners throughout the textile value chain as well as both governmental and non-governmental organisations, to ensure the implementation of the standard and the proper processing of certified raw materials throughout the world.





Introduction to this document

This document summarizes the scope, background and rationale, steps and decision-making process for the revisions of the CmiA Standard Vol. 4.0.

This process is carried out in line with AbTF Standard Setting and Revision Procedure (V.1.0), is facilitated by AbTF's Standards & Outreach department, and supported by the Cotton Technical Advisory Group.



COTTON
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AFRICA

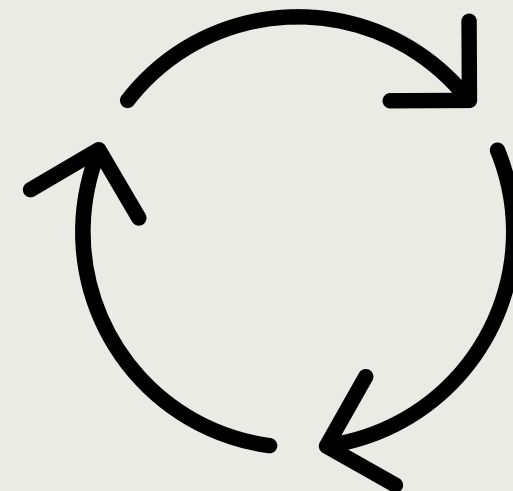
Background and Rationale

It is considered best practice for voluntary sustainable standards to conduct a major review and revision of a standard at least every five years.

Given that the CmiA Standard Vol. 4.0 was published in 2020, AbTF initiated a review of the Standard in early 2025.

The review considered the Standard's continued **relevance**, **effectiveness** and **changes to external circumstances**. It considered verification results, insights from Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), new knowledge and practices, in addition to stakeholder input.

CmiA verified partners and other stakeholders contributed their input through a dedicated two-day workshop with 24 participants held in May 2025 in Côte d'Ivoire. Based on the findings of the review, a revision of the current standard was undertaken to develop the CmiA Standard Vol. 5.0 .

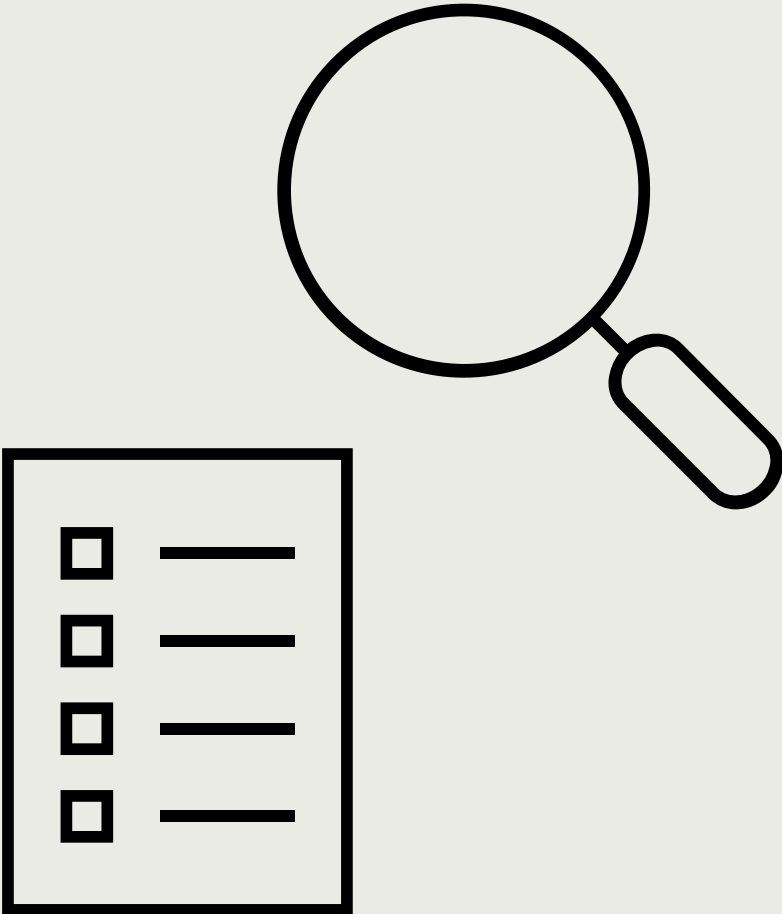


Scope for the CmiA Standard Revision

The CmiA Standard is applicable to rain-fed cotton production by small-holder farmers across African countries organized via dedicated support structures responsible for input provision, knowledge transfer on sustainable agricultural practices, as well as the purchase of the seed cotton from the associated farmers and its processing in ginneries that adhere at their level to sustainable practices, too.

The CmiA Standard is built on **four pillars**: (1) Management, (2) People, (3) Planet and (4) Prosperity. Under each pillar, there are three **principles**, and under each principle are a number of **criteria** to be addressed. Finally, each criterion has one or more **indicators** for conformance.

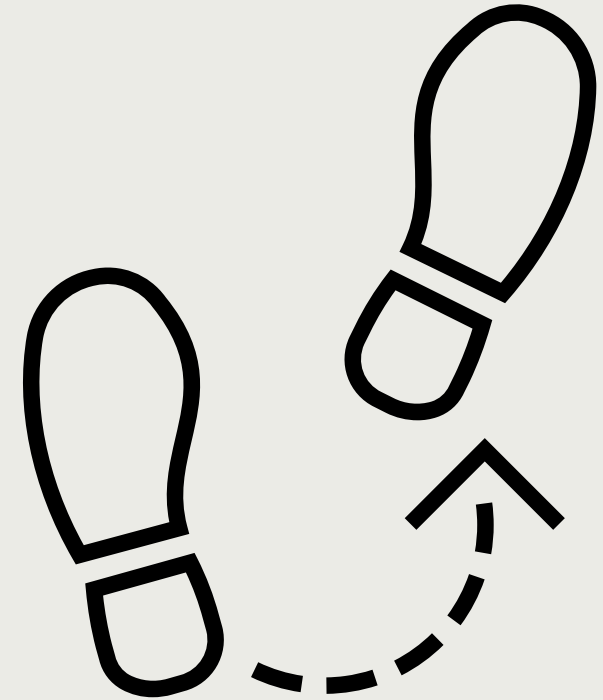
Amendments to the criteria and indicators are done under the continuous improvement credo, i.e. to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the criteria and indicators for the realities on the ground as well as adapting to needs and realities of those using the CmiA label with the aim of improving their sustainability performance of their product portfolio.



Steps for the CmiA Standard Revision (1)

Several steps have already been undertaken:

- ✓ **Review consultation:** AbTF reviewed the relevance and effectiveness of the CmiA Standard Vol. 4.0 as well as changes to external circumstances. Input was gathered from CmiA verified partners and other stakeholders through a dedicated two-days workshop in Côte d'Ivoire (end of May 2025).
- ✓ **Analysis of review feedback:** Internal review findings and feedback received during the time CmiA Vol. 4.0 was in operation as well as during the above-mentioned consultation to identify key issues and areas for improvement to be prioritised during this revision.
- ✓ **Develop draft version of CmiA Vol. 5.0:** The AbTF Standards & Outreach team developed the draft version of the CmiA criteria and indicators set.

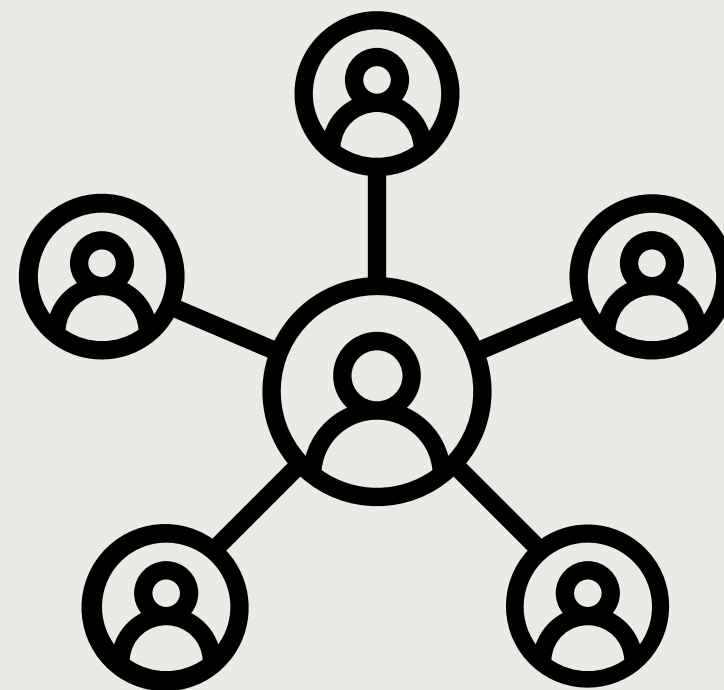


Steps for the CmiA Standard Revision (2)

The following steps are still planned for the revision process (1):

✓ **Public consultation** (19 September – 17 November 2025): During this 60-day public consultation phase, all stakeholders will have the opportunity to participate and provide feedback on the draft CmiA Vol. 5.0. To ensure participation of diverse stakeholder groups, consultation methods will include:

- ✓ further feedback from the Cotton Technical Advisory Group
- ✓ newsletter, social media and other outreach activities
- ✓ two workshops for verified CmiA partners and CmiA candidates (mid-October for Eastern and Southern African partners; early November for West and Central African partners)



Steps for the CmiA Standard Revision (3)

The following steps are still planned for the revision process (2):

- ✓ **Final Draft of CmiA Vol. 5.0:** The responsible persons of the Standards & Outreach department will continuously compile and analyse all comments received during the public consultation phase. This will inform the development of the final draft of Vol. 5.0.
- ✓ **Approval by AbTF's Board of Trustees:** Once the final draft has been prepared, the Board of Trustees (BoT) will decide on the approval of the CmiA Standard Vol. 5.0.
- ✓ **Launch CmiA Vol 5.0:** Following approval of the Standard, a period of preparation will be undertaken, including design and translation, revision of associated documents. The official launch of the CmiA Standard Vol. 5.0 will include webinars, a course on AbTF's Learning Platform and potentially in-person events.





CmiA Standard Revision Timeline

The table gives an overview of the timeline for various steps in the CmiA Standard Revision.

	03/25	04/25	05/25	06/25	07/25	08/25	09/25	10/25	11/25	12/15	01/26	02/26
Review Consultation												
Feedback Analysis												
Draft CmiA Vol. 5.0												
Public Consultation												
Final Draft CmiA Vol. 5												
BoT Approval												
Launch CmiA CmiA Vol. 5												



Draft CmiA Standard Vol. 5.0 – Summary of Changes



Precision

Simplification of language

Streamlining of requirements

Clearer requirements for conformance

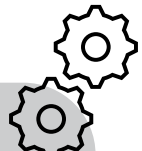


Purpose

Community Engagement

Climate Change Resilience & Biodiversity

Clarity and consistency in policies, plans and risk assessment



Integrated Value

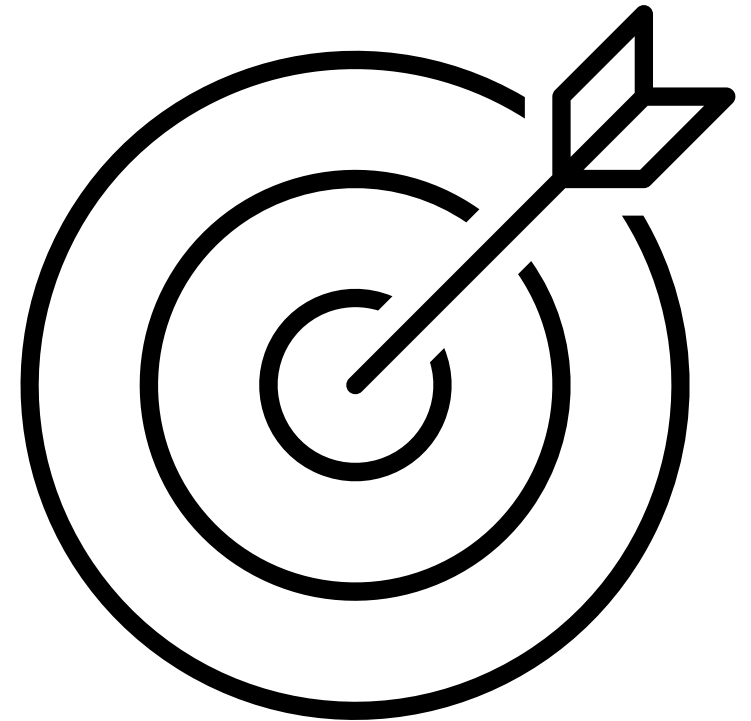
Increased alignment with Human Rights Due Diligence requirements

Further interoperability with sustainability reporting requirements

Precision

Ensuring an efficient and effective implementation of the CmiA Standard at scale.

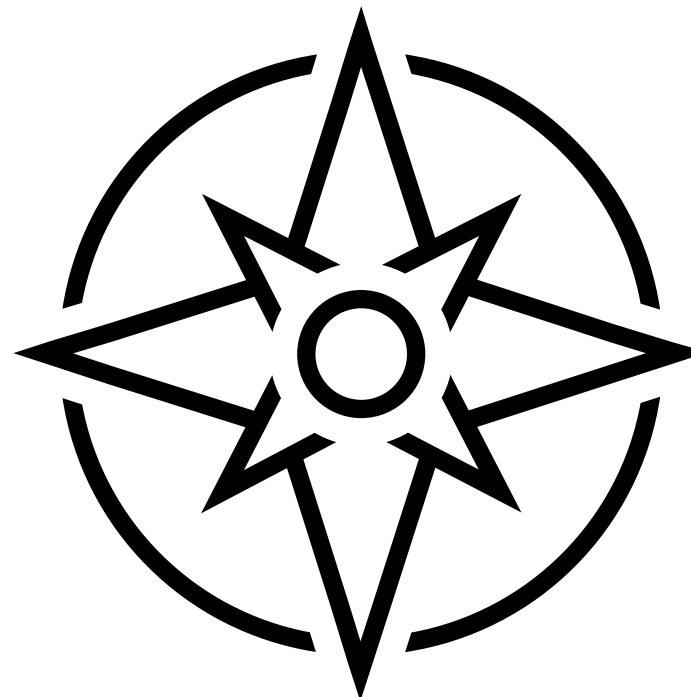
- 1) Simplification of language:** Shorter sentences, clear and concise phrasing, and shifting explanatory aspects from indicators to guidance sections.
- 2) Streamlining of requirements:** Reduction of 42 indicators compared to Vol. 4.0.
- 3) Clearer requirements for conformity:** Where necessary, indicators have been rephrased to clarify conformity expectations.



Purpose

Enhancing relevance with wider sustainability priorities from community to global level.

- 1) **Community Engagement:** New and rewritten indicators for Managing Entities to actively involve with wider local communities to incorporate their perspective into their activities and make use of traditional and local knowledge.
- 2) **Climate Change Resilience and Biodiversity:** New and rewritten indicators to further incorporate climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as biodiversity protection into strategic decisions for cotton farming and ginning.
- 3) **Clarity and consistency in policies, plans and risk assessments:** Rather than maintaining separate topic-specific guidelines, plans and risk assessments, the Managing Entities compile a comprehensive risk analysis. This analysis combines different topics and their interdependencies. Subsequently, plans are developed based on this consolidated analysis, and guidelines can be further summarised.

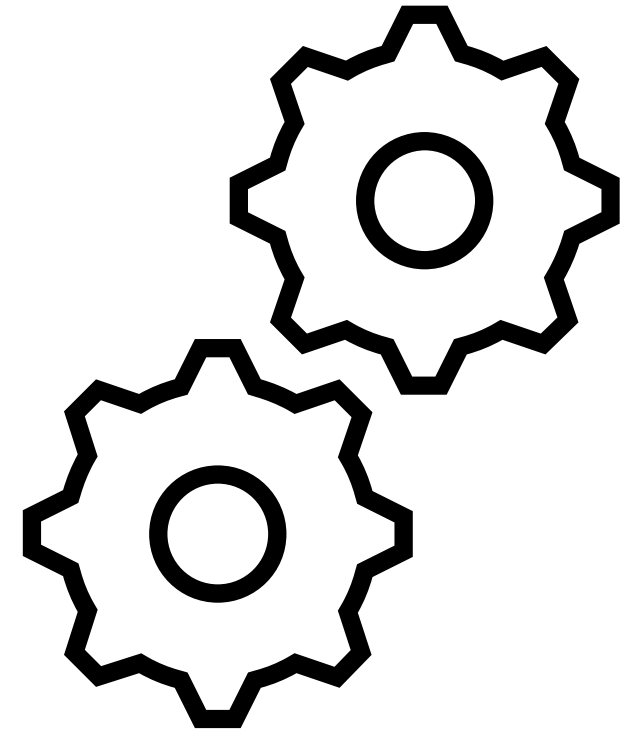




Integrated Value

Strengthening integration with corporate-level reporting.

- 1) **Increased alignment with Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence requirements:** More than 30 new and rewritten indicators aligned with Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence requirements, as outlined by ITC standards map, and other initiatives (e.g., Helpdesk Business and Human Rights, Siegelklarheit, Green Button, Textile Exchange).
- 2) **Interoperability with sustainability reporting requirements:** Data reporting requirements from verified partners to be expanded and further aligned for corporate level reporting.



Public Consultation

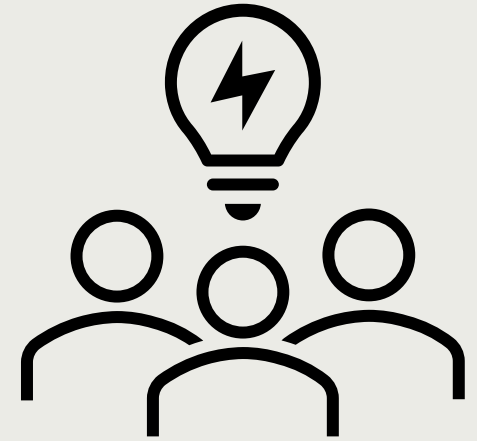
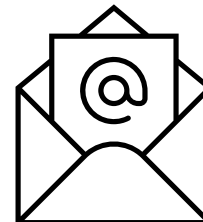
Public consultation on the draft CmiA Standard Vol. 5.0 is open until **17 November 2025**.

During the formal public consultation period, all stakeholders are invited to provide feedback on the draft CmiA Standard Vol. 5.0. The Standard Revision page on the CmiA website will be maintained throughout the revision process.

Get involved

- Download and review the draft CmiA Standard Vol. 5.0
- Provide feedback:
 - Send your general feedback per email to standards@abt-foundation.org
 - Provide detailed feedback on individual requirements in the draft CmiA Standard Vol. 5 Excel file

The AbTF Head of Standards & Outreach, Alexandra Perschau, and the Project Manager CmiA & RCS Verification Management, Elena Wahrenberg, are co-leading the revision process. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide any feedback on the CmiA Standard revision process by emailing standards@abt-foundation.org or to the involved staff directly.



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AID BY TRADE FOUNDATION

The Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) was founded in 2005 and is now an internationally renowned and active nonprofit 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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