



**COTTON**  
MADE IN  
**AFRICA**

# COTTON MADE IN AFRICA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION 2018

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## **Cotton made in Africa: An internationally recognized standard for sustainable cotton from Africa**

**Cotton made in Africa (CmiA) is an Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) initiative and an internationally recognized standard for sustainably produced cotton from Africa. Since its creation by Dr. Michael Otto in 2005, it has set for itself the goal to protect the environment and help Sub Saharan African smallholder cotton farmers and ginnery workers<sup>1</sup> improve their living and working conditions. To put this aim into practice, the initiative's approach focuses on activating market forces instead of aid. An alliance of international textile companies and brands built up by CmiA purchase the CmiA certified sustainable cotton, integrate it into their respective textile value chains and pay a license fee to use the seal. The license fees paid by the demand partners are directly reinvested to benefit smallholder farmers, their families, ginnery workers in the project countries and nature protection. The CmiA on-product logo shows the consumer that the purchase of a labelled product contributes to environmental protection and to supporting farmers as well as ginnery workers in Sub-Saharan Africa.**

Under the CmiA credo to help people help themselves Cotton made in Africa stands for an innovative approach that combines the aims of development cooperation with those of sustainable trade. Qualification programmes teach smallholder farmers about efficient and environmentally friendly cultivation methods that protect the environment and enable the farmers in the producing countries to live a better life. CmiA cotton is not artificially irrigated. Instead it is only rain-fed cultivated, GMO-free and has a considerably smaller ecological footprint than conventionally grown cotton. Per kilogram of cotton, CmiA consumes one liter of water whereas more than 2,000 liters of water are used to the global average. Additionally, growing CmiA cotton emits up to 40% less greenhouse gases than conventional cotton production.<sup>2</sup> Deforestation of primary forests or the use of highly hazardous pesticides according to international conventions are as strictly forbidden as slavery, human trafficking or child labor. International conventions such as the ILO core labour standards are firmly anchored in the set of the CmiA sustainability criteria. CmiA certifies the production as well as the ginning of cotton in Sub Saharan Africa.

In 2018, about one million cotton farmers and more than 12,000 ginnery workers from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mozambique as well as Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia participated in CmiA. With two new partners in Benin and Nigeria, CmiA increases the

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<sup>1</sup> Ginneries: Factories where cotton fibers get separated from the seeds. It is the first step of the cotton supply chain.

<sup>2</sup> Data refer to one kilogram of cotton. Bluewater usage: in comparison to the global average; greenhouse gas emissions: in comparison to conventional cotton (Source: LCA by PE INTERNATIONAL 2014)



number of countries where the sustainable cotton standard is being implemented from season 2018/2019 onwards. In 2018, approximately 580,000 tons of certified CmiA cotton have been produced pursuant to the CmiA sustainability criteria.<sup>3</sup>

On the marketing end, Cotton made in Africa relies on a global alliance of textile companies and brands that are specifically interested in purchasing sustainably produced CmiA cotton, which then enters the global production markets and is processed into textiles. In 2018, 46 textile companies including Aldi Nord and Aldi Süd, Asos, Bestseller, Bonprix as part of the Otto Group, Dibella, Ernsting's family, Rewe Group or Tchibo put about 103 million CmiA labelled textiles on the market. This represents an increase of about 14,4% compared to 2017. The licensing fees for CmiA certified cotton paid by the demand partners are reinvested in the growing regions to benefit the cotton farmers in the project countries – to pay for external certification, agricultural trainings, "Farmer Business Schools" that teach smallholder farmers basic business skills, or initiatives specifically designed to support women on their way to economic and social independence. All the implemented measures help the cotton farmers to successfully manage their small business, thus improve the lives of their whole family and protect nature.

As part of a sustainable development partnership, the initiative works with a variety of public and private partners and non-governmental organisations. In addition to the Welthungerhilfe, the WWF, CARE International and the Naturschutzbund Germany, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ) and others participate in Cotton made in Africa. Local cotton companies are essential to realizing the goals in the African project countries.

#### The Aid by Trade Foundation

The Aid by Trade Foundation was established in 2005 by Dr Michael Otto, a Hamburg-based entrepreneur and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Otto Group. Since its creation, the AbTF is an independent foundation whose goal is to help people help themselves through trade, and thus to secure the conservation of vital natural resources and the future of future generations. With its Cotton made in Africa initiative, the foundation literally puts the principle of "aid by trade" into practice.

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<sup>3</sup> CmiA cotton is grown in different climatic zones in Sub-Saharan Africa. Just as divergent are the cotton harvest periods per country. To facilitate communication and to communicate reliable, up-to-date figures, the data rely on results from the concluded harvest season 2017/2018 CmiA cotton is grown, harvested and ginned in.