



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

# Theory of Change

**COTTON MADE IN AFRICA**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Rationale and Assumptions

→ A **Theory of Change (ToC)** is a logical framework that describes an organisation's desired impacts and depicts how the organisation intends to contribute to this change.

The CmiA Theory of Change outlines the CmiA initiative's activities and links these to the intended immediate outputs, medium-term outcomes, and long-term impacts. It encompasses CmiA's interventions in all areas, including both field- and ginnery-level cotton production as well as its actions within the supply chain. The ToC thus plays a fundamental role in CmiA's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system, allowing us to derive and regularly monitor key performance indicators and long-term goals. As the underlying hypotheses of the Theory of Change are constantly being tested and refined, it should be perceived as a living document that evolves over time based on the initiative's experiences. CmiA

acknowledges that the ToC is only a simplified representation of assumed causal relationships and does not reflect reality in its entirety. Causal chains are not always linear, and reciprocal effects are possible. The Theory of Change only shows CmiA's own scope of action; CmiA recognises that others are also active in similar or overlapping areas and might have an influence on the system. External effects and risks that lie outside CmiA's area of influence but might impact the system are observed and taken into account during strategic considerations.

A theory of change is meant to describe the results an organisation intends to achieve through its interventions. However, an organisation's activities can also have unintended effects, both positive and negative. CmiA is aware of this and aims to capture unintended effects in its monitoring and evaluation system as well.



## 1.2. CmiA's Scope of Action

→ Cotton plays a key role in the fight against poverty in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, as a considerable portion of the income earned by small-scale farmers and their families comes from selling cotton. These farmers face many challenges, such as changing climate conditions, fluctuating global market prices, and low productivity and poor infrastructure in cotton-producing countries. In 2005, the Aid by Trade Foundation and its Cotton made in Africa initiative were created to address these issues. CmiA's work is built on three core pillars of sustainability:



**People:** CmiA supports small-scale farmers and promotes gender equality, decent labour conditions, and respect for the rights of children.



**Planet:** CmiA is committed to protecting soil, water, biodiversity, the climate, and the environment, in part by reducing the negative effects of crop protection.

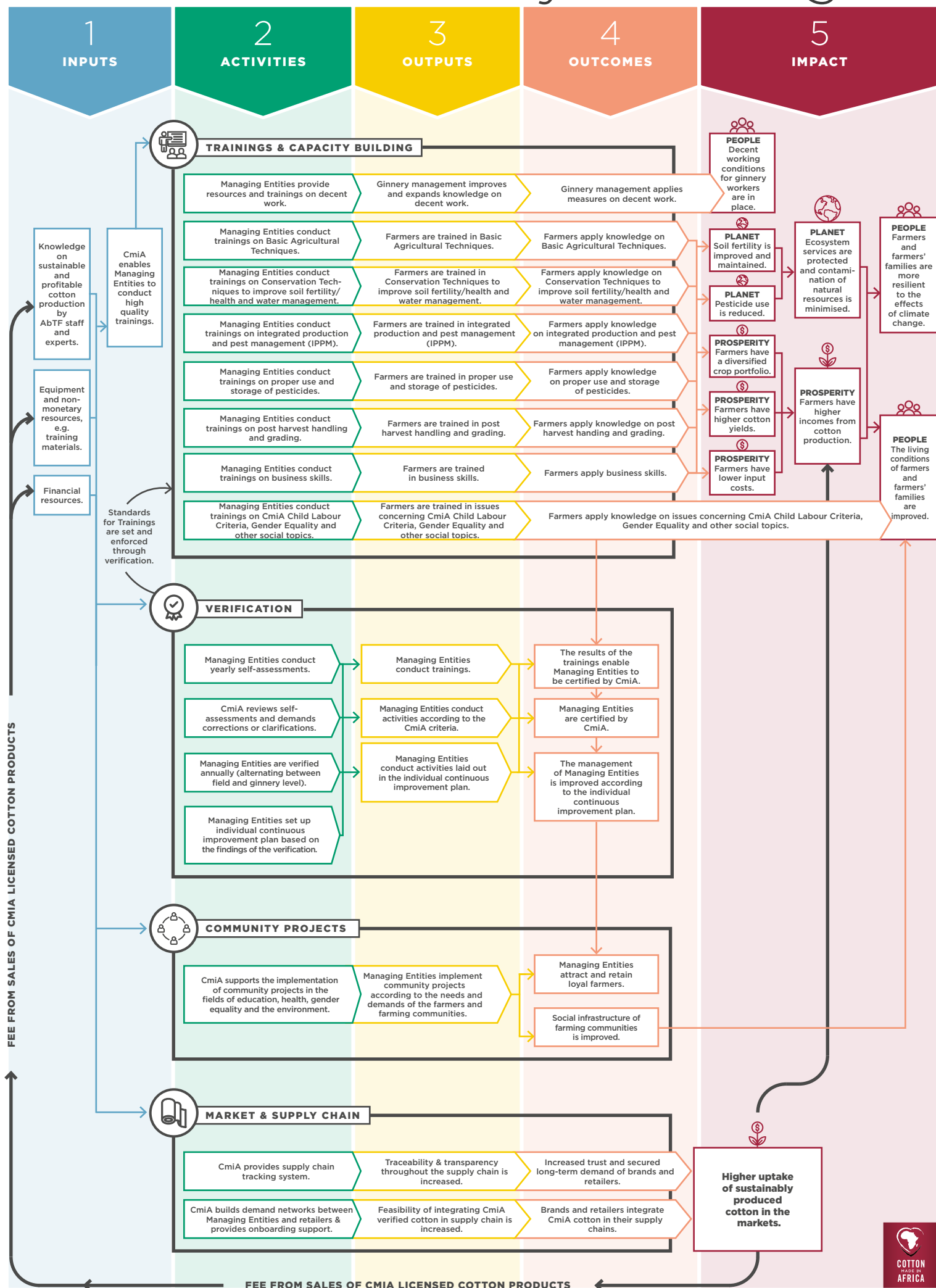


**Prosperity:** CmiA facilitates access to knowledge and high-quality inputs, thereby contributing to improvements in productivity, fibre quality, and overall living conditions.

CmiA's approach to achieving these goals is outlined in the Theory of Change, below.



# 2. The CmiA Theory of Change





## 2.1. Inputs and Activities

The Aid by Trade Foundation provides a variety of inputs to help achieve CmiA's goals. The key **inputs** for the Cotton made in Africa initiative are:

- Knowledge on sustainable and profitable cotton production by AbTF staff and experts
- Equipment and non-monetary resources (e.g. training material)
- Financial resources

These inputs are funded through fees generated by the sale of CmiA-licensed cotton products. To sell CmiA cotton, Managing Entities (usually cotton companies) must hold a CmiA certificate, which is obtained by successfully completing a verification cycle. This circular approach enables the initiative to sustain itself on a long-term basis.

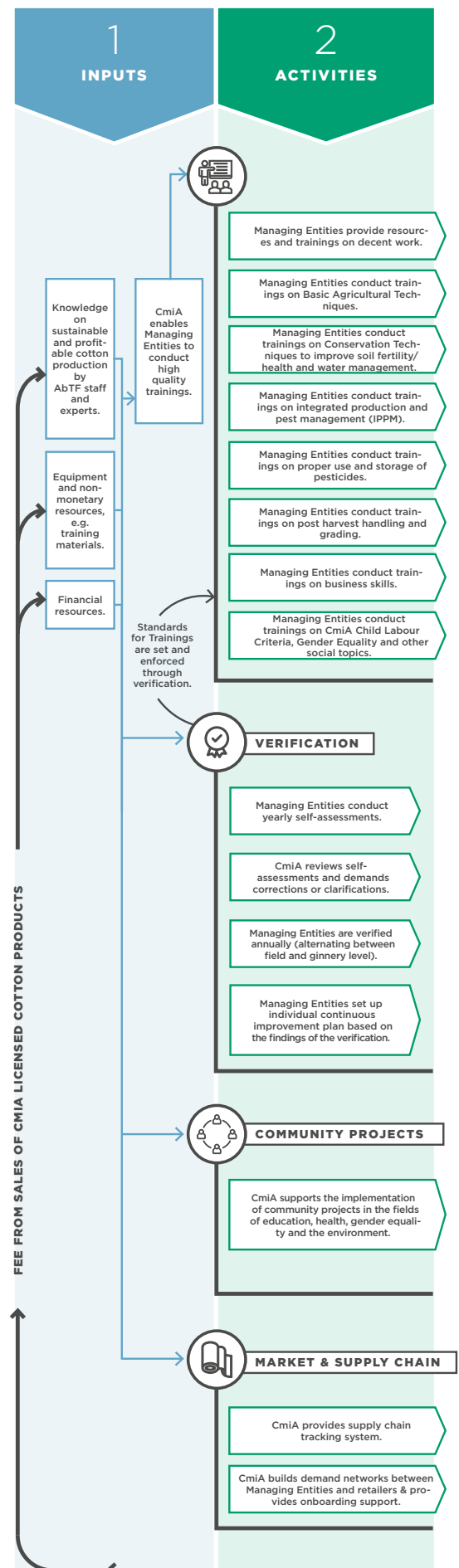
The inputs are used for **activities** in several areas, which can be divided into four different impact strands: Trainings & Capacity Building, Verification, Community Projects and Market & Supply Chain.



Crucially, the initiative enables CmiA Managing Entities to conduct high quality **training** by providing expertise, non-monetary resources, and financial support. Via so-called Trainings of Trainers (ToT) and a field extension system, the training contents are shared with the farmers, addressing cotton production topics such as good agricultural practices (GAP), integrated production and pest management (IPPM), and the safe use and storage of pesticides. Managing Entities also offer training in gender equality, the prevention of child labour, and fundamental business skills for farmers. Because CmiA criteria and verifications cover both field- and ginnery-level activities, training and information about decent working conditions are also provided for the next processing stage, i.e. in the ginneries.



In the area of **verification**, the activities comprise the entire assurance process. The cotton companies complete annual self-assessments, which are reviewed by AbTF staff (verification management). Alternating between the field and the ginnery level every year, AbTF commissions third-party control bodies to conduct on-site verification missions at the Managing Entities. The Managing Entities then set up individualised continuous-improvement plans based on the verification results.



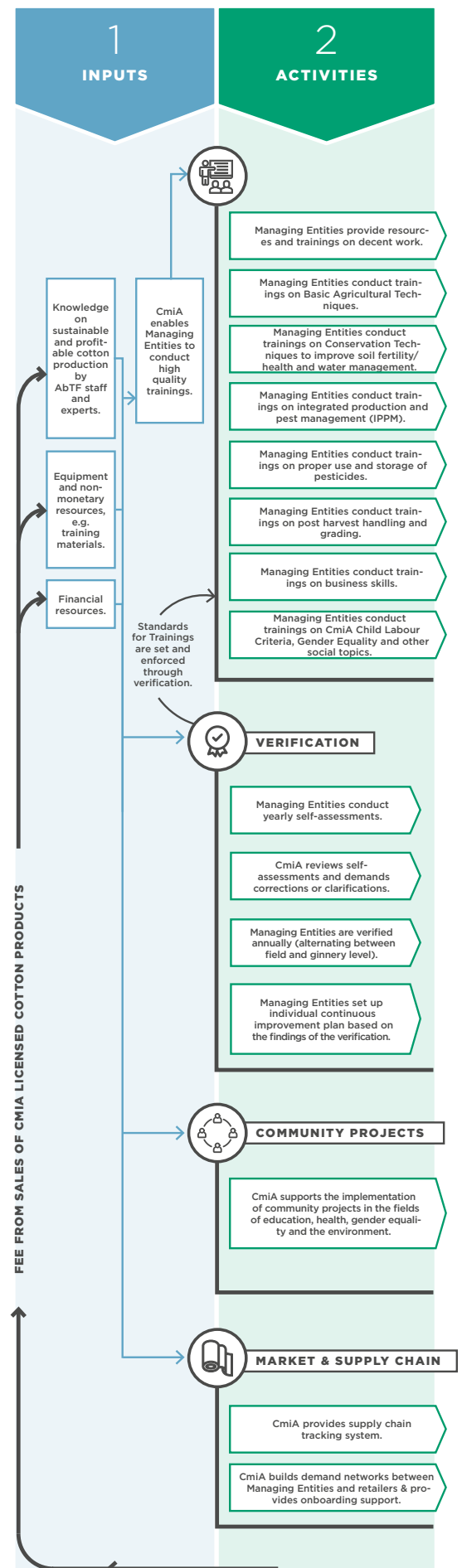




In addition to the initiative's regular activities around the CmiA standards, it also supports Managing Entities in the implementation of **community projects** for cotton farmers and/or ginnery workers in the subject areas of health, education, gender equality, and the environment. This support is not only monetary but also content-related to ensure the conception of impactful projects with the objective of improving overall living conditions for the rural communities.



While the CmiA standards' principles, criteria, and indicators cover cotton production at the field level as well as cotton processing at the ginnery level, the initiative also serves as a facilitator for the textile **market and supply chain** by establishing contacts and building demand networks between Managing Entities, international cotton traders, and brands and retailers offering apparel and textiles. In addition, it provides a supply chain tracking system to be used by all value chain parties involved.





## 2.2. Outputs and Outcomes

To achieve long-term impacts around the sustainability pillars of people, planet, and prosperity, CmiA pursues specific objectives at the **outcome** level by means of the initiative's **outputs**.



The direct outputs of **training** are farmers who have acquired specific skills and techniques. The underlying assumption (see Glossary) is that the resulting outcome will be the actual **application** of the newly gained skills, knowledge, and techniques. At the ginnery level, it is assumed that improving ginnery management's knowledge about decent working conditions will lead to applied decent work measures in the factories. As described above, this training is carried out by the Managing Entities with material, organisational, and content-related support from AbTF.



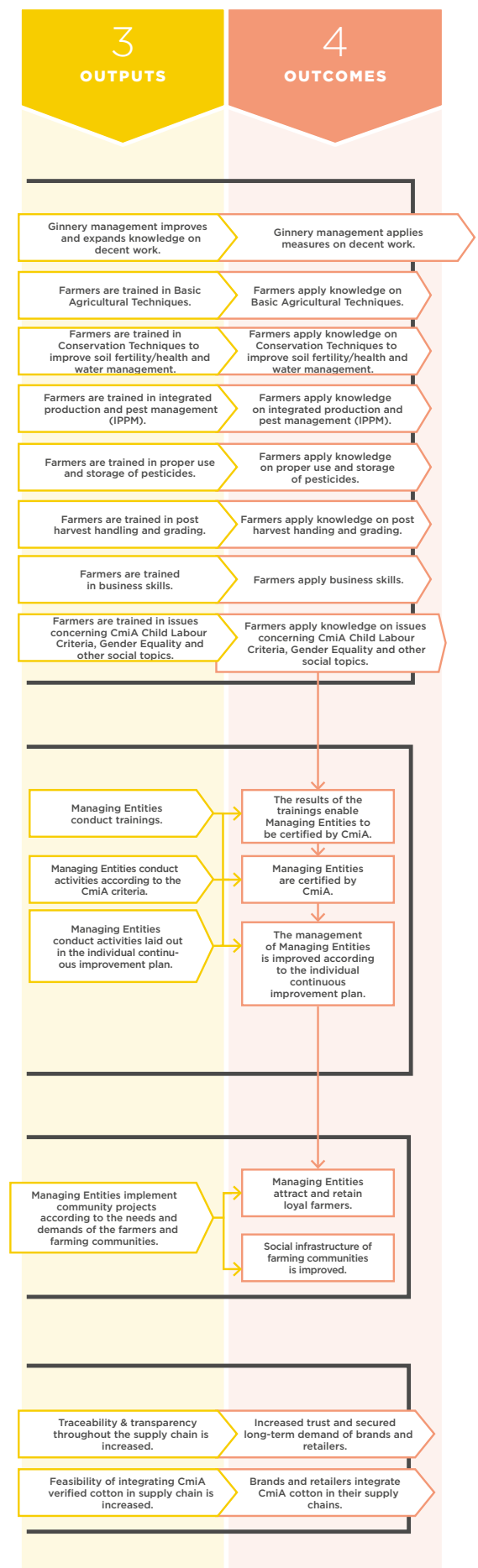
One output of the **verification** activities is represented by CmiA-compliant training and activities that Managing Entities presumably conduct in order to pass verification. They also carry out the activities set out in their individual continuous-improvement plans. These outputs are expected to lead to two outcomes: The Managing Entities become or stay CmiA-verified, and they continuously improve their management practices. Regarding the relationship between the verification process and training measures, it is also assumed that Managing Entities are able to pass CmiA verification as a result of the training that offers farmers and ginneries the knowledge they need to comply with the standards' criteria. Better management practices also help Managing Entities become verified, and training standards are set and reinforced through the verification process.



For **community projects**, a direct output of CmiA's support is the actual implementation of projects by Managing Entities in the areas of education, health, gender equality, and the environment. The underlying hypothesis predicts that this will improve infrastructure for farming communities, in turn creating loyalty amongst the farmers towards the responsible Managing Entity and towards cotton growing in general.



A direct output of the AbTF tracking system is an improvement in traceability and transparency throughout the **supply chain**. The assumed outcome is increased trust and long-term demand by apparel and textile brands and retailers. In addition, AbTF's demand network and its continued support will make it easier for brands and retailers to integrate CmiA-verified cotton into their supply chains. Combined, these two aspects—transparency and easy integration—are expected to motivate brands and retailers to continuously increase the uptake of CmiA cotton into their supply chains.







## 2.3. Impact

At the **impact** level, the CmiA initiative seeks to achieve improvements around the sustainability pillars of people, planet, and prosperity.



Regarding the dimension of **prosperity**, CmiA aims to assist the cotton farmers in increasing their income from cotton production through higher cotton yields, lower input costs for cotton production and potentially a diversified crop portfolio, all of which are expected to result from the application of farming techniques learnt during training.



Concerning the **planet** pillar, the application of training contents is expected to help reduce pesticide use and improve or maintain soil fertility. In this way, CmiA strives to protect ecosystem services and to minimise the contamination of natural resources.

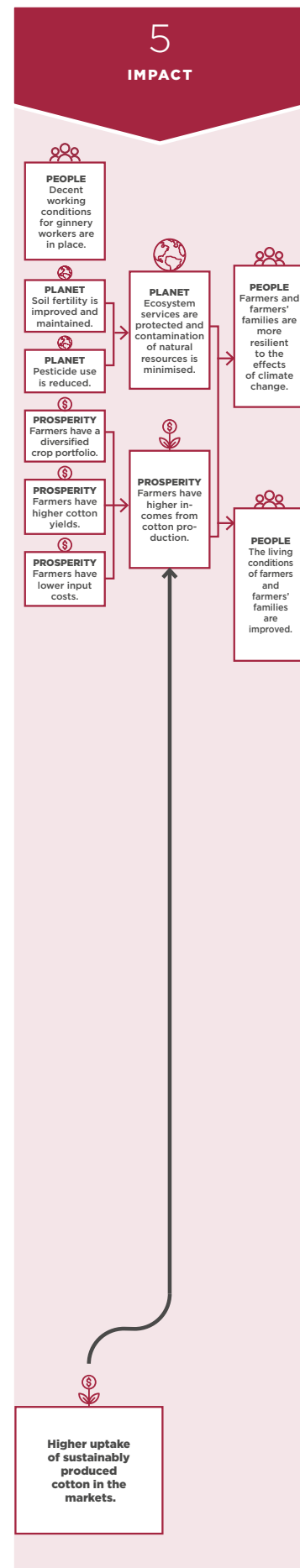


The **people** pillar will see both ginnery- and field-level impacts. In the ginneries, the main goal is to create decent working conditions for workers and employees in the ginnery, which are assumed to be in place after the ginnery managements implemented the respective measures.

In the field, CmiA's overall objective is to contribute to improved living conditions for farmers and their families and to assist them in becoming more resilient to changes in the market or the climate. The underlying hypothesis is that this will be possible due to increased farming expertise and more income from cotton.

Higher income can also emerge in connection to the supply chain impacts. It is assumed that growing trust and demand from brands and retailers combined with the greater integration of CmiA cotton in their supply chains will lead to a steady, long-term increase in the uptake of sustainably produced cotton in the markets, allowing farmers to benefit from secure access to cotton markets and potentially higher prices.

As mentioned above, CmiA follows a circular approach: A higher uptake of CmiA cotton also means that an increased amount of licensing fees can be reinvested in the initiative to sustain it, enabling CmiA to ensure continuous and reliable support for smallholder cotton farmers in Africa on a long-term basis.





## GLOSSARY

### Assumption

A hypothesis about factors or risks which could affect the progress or success of an organisation's interventions (adapted from the OECD glossary)

### Impact

A primary or secondary long-term effect produced by an organisation—whether positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended (adapted from the OECD glossary)

### Indicator

A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievements, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of an organisation (adapted from the OECD glossary)

### Inputs

The financial, human, and material resources used for an organisation's intervention (adapted from the OECD glossary)

### Outcome

The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs (OECD Glossary)

### Outputs

The products, services, and capital goods that result directly from an organisation's intervention (adapted from the OECD glossary)

## REFERENCES

OECD Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. Paris, OECD Publications, 2002.



## **AID BY TRADE FOUNDATION**

The Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) was founded in 2005 by Prof. Dr. Michael Otto, an entrepreneur from Hamburg, Germany. The aim of the foundation, which operates independently of the Otto Group, is to help people to help themselves through trade, thereby preserving vital natural resources and securing the livelihoods of future generations.

With the Cotton made in Africa (CmiA) initiative, AbTF is putting its principles into practice. The trade partners of the CmiA Demand Alliance source African cotton produced according to the CmiA standard and pay the foundation a volume-based license fee that is reinvested in the cultivation areas. Consumers recognise products by the CmiA label and make a valuable contribution to protecting the environment and supporting smallholder farmers and their families in Africa.

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