AID BY TRADE FOUNDATION

Aggregated Verification & Implementation Report 2025

COTTON MADE IN AFRICA

COTTON MADE IN AFRICA

Organic

REGENERATIVE COTTON STANDARD

About

Cotton made in Africa (CmiA), CmiA Organic, and the **Regenerative Cotton Standard (RCS)** are well-recognised standards that follow a **continuous improvement approach** for sustainable cotton production. CmiA and CmiA Organic are implemented in African countries South of the Sahara, and RCS currently in Tanzania and India.

Compliance with standard requirements is regularly monitored by **third-party verifiers** to give independent feedback to Managing Entities on their performance and to ensure that CmiA, CmiA Organic, and RCS remain **credible standards** in which brands, retailers, and consumers can have confidence. The verification process both checks whether Managing Entities comply with the minimum requirements and independently assesses the success in continuously improving the sustainability performance, thus motivating each verified partner to further advance.

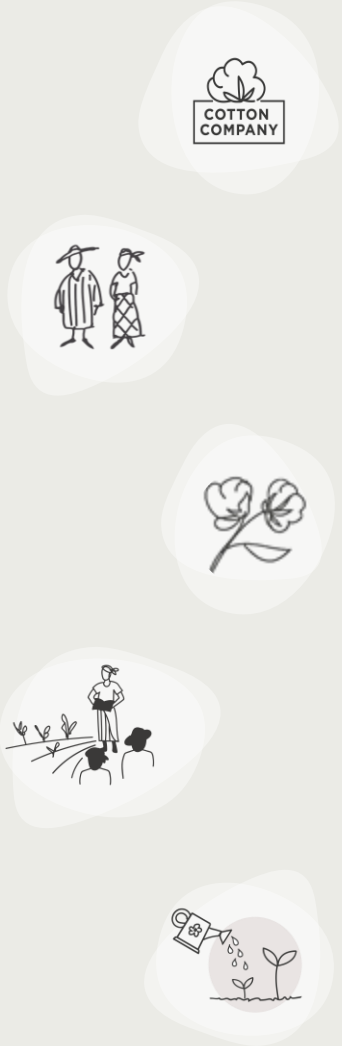
By comparing verification results across the Managing Entities, the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) can analyse remaining challenges and jointly act with relevant stakeholders to overcome them.

Independent and **qualified third-party verifiers** regularly check the performance of Managing Entities (mostly cotton companies) against the requirements of the respective standards. For CmiA and CmiA Organic, this is done at both field level (related to the contracted small-scale farmers) and ginnery level (in ginning factories); for RCS, it applies at field level only.

The **annually published Aggregated Verification & Implementation Report** provides information on the **results of the previous years' verification missions**, serves as a reference to monitor future verifications, and helps to continuously revise and improve the work on field and ginnery levels in line with CmiA, CmiA Organic and RCS standards.

The following chapters provide an **overview of the 2025 performance results** of verified Managing Entities, **verification management activities** conducted by the AbTF as well as the **implementation support offered**.

Executive Summary



In 2025, CmiA and RCS worked with **21 partnering Managing Entities** in 10 African countries South of the Sahara, as well as India (RCS only).

About **710,000 smallholder families** producing about **520,000 tonnes of lint cotton** on an area of about **1.4 million hectares** were verified under CmiA. RCS verification covered about **41,000 smallholder families** producing around **19,000 tonnes of lint cotton** on an area of **46,000 hectares**.

CmiA and RCS verified partners achieved **overwhelmingly very good ratings** in the CmiA and RCS criteria. Compared to previous years, they were able **to enhance their sustainability performance,** highlighting the success of the underlying approach for continuous improvement.

CmiA and RCS verified Managing Entities conducted **trainings for farmers** on topics ranging from **good agricultural practices** to **fighting child labour**.

Several events **for knowledge transfer and exchange** were facilitated to support CmiA partners in implementing the standard.

The AbTF (co-)financed several projects for **training and other implementation measures.**

Content

Cotton made in Africa (Organic) 6

CmiA Verification: Key Facts and Figures 2024-2025 Season 9

Verification Performance Results 13

Regenerative Cotton Standard 20

RCS Verification: Key Facts and Figures 2024-2025 Season 22

Verification Performance Results 25

Standards Implementation 28

Farmer Trainings provided by CmiA/RCS Managing Entities 29

Implementation support for Managing Entities 32

COTTON
MADE IN
AFRICA

The CmiA Standard covers the most significant sustainability aspects of cotton cultivation and ginning.

The 4 pillars of CmiA

Pillar 1: Management

sets out the requirements related to responsible business conduct, the verification process, and commitment to CmiA values.

Pillar 2: People

contains requirements intended to define CmiA's understanding of small-scale farmers and to ensure decent working conditions on ginning mill level, it specifically focuses on the empowerment and development of women and children.

Pillar 3: Planet

aims to cover the most pressing environmental issues and to define how cotton can be cultivated in a way that mitigates negative impacts for nature while increasing the resilience of the agro-ecosystem and the environment of communities farming cotton in rural areas across Africa south of the Sahara.

Pillar 4: Prosperity

consists of requirements that enable cotton farmers to acquire fundamental business skills and to sustainably increase productivity and quality. On a broader scale, these requirements make it possible for communities to improve their livelihoods and resilience.

Principles of the CmiA Standard

The **CmiA principles** define aspirational goals and expectations for Managing Entities and farmers.

Each of the **12 principles** contains several **criteria**, 58 in total, which must be met to fulfil the principle.
Each criterion, in turn, is defined by concrete indicators. Verifiers use these **measurable indicators** to assess whether the criteria, and therefore the principles, are met.
CmiA standard volume 4 classifies indicators as either **core** or **improvement.**

All core indicators must be fulfilled without non-conformities to obtain or maintain a CmiA certificate.
Managing Entities are responsible for adhering to CmiA principles, criteria, and indicators.

The 12 principles of CmiA

Management

1. CmiA Managing Entities commit to **responsible business conduct.**

2. CmiA Managing Entities are committed to CmiA values and **continuously improve** their CmiA performance.

3. CmiA Managing Entities operate **effective management systems.**

People

4. CmiA Managing Entities **support small-scale farmers.**

5. CmiA Managing Entities promote **decent working conditions** throughout all field and ginnery operations.

6. CmiA Managing Entities respect the **rights of children** and promote **gender equality.**

Planet

7. CmiA Managing Entities **use land responsibly, enhance biodiversity, and protect the climate** and the environment.

8. CmiA Managing Entities provide **GMO-free cotton** seeds and **care for water and soil.**

9. CmiA Managing Entities **minimise the adverse effects of crop-protection practices.**

Prosperity

10. CmiA Managing Entities provide CmiA-contracted farmers with **access to high-quality inputs** and **input pre-financing**.

11. CmiA Managing Entities assist CmiA-contracted farmers in **sustainably increasing cotton productivity and fibre quality**.

12. CmiA Managing Entities enable CmiA-contracted farmers to **improve their living conditions and resilience.**

CmiA Verification: Key Facts and Figures

2024-2025 Season

In 2025, CmiA worked with 20 partnering Managing Entities in 10 African countries South of the Sahara.

1 CÔTE D'IVOIRE
CIDT
COIC
Ivoire Coton
SECO

2 BURKINA FASO
Faso Coton
SOFITEX

3 TOGO
NSCT

4 BENIN
Bénin Coton
Label Coton
OBEPAB
SODECO

5 CHAD
CotonTchad

6 CAMEROON
SODECOTON

7 UGANDA
Regenesus
Commodities

8 TANZANIA
Alliance Ginneries
Biosustain
S.M. Holdings

9 ZAMBIA
Alliance Ginneries
Continental Ginnery Ltd.

10 MOZAMBIQUE
SAN JFS

After successfully completing its first verification cycle, **one company from Uganda became a new CmiA partner in 2025**. In Zambia, two already CmiA-verified cotton companies merged to form a single entity. At the same time, another company in Zambia ceased operations, and a partnership with a company from Uganda was terminated.

This brings the number of Managing Entities verified under CmiA and CmiA Organic to 20 in 2025.

CmiA Cotton Production Overview 2024-2025 Season

20 Verified Managing Entities

714,721 Farmers

42,666 (Thereof) Organic farmers

1,386,366 Area (ha)

1,236,548 Seed cotton (mt)

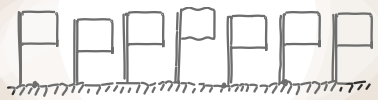
522,363 Lint cotton (mt)

25,238 (Thereof) Organic lint cotton

In 2025, about **710,000 smallholder families** producing about **520,000 tonnes of lint cotton** on an area of about **1.4 million hectares** were verified under the CmiA & CmiA Organic standards.

Verification Activities Overview CmiA 2025

10



Production Countries

2

Ecocert, Burkina Faso

AfriCert, Kenya

Verification Companies

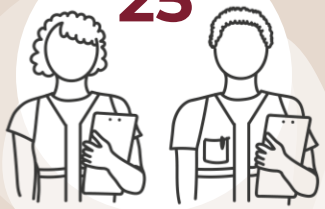
2

For CmiA Candidates

2

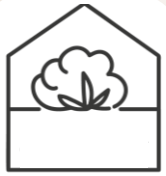
Witness Verifications

25



Verifiers

20



Managing Entities

24

Verification Missions

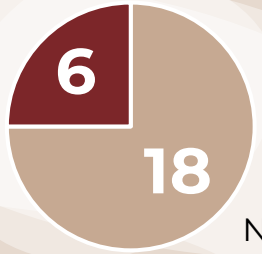
12

On Field Level

12

On Ginnery Level

Southern Hemisphere



Northern Hemisphere

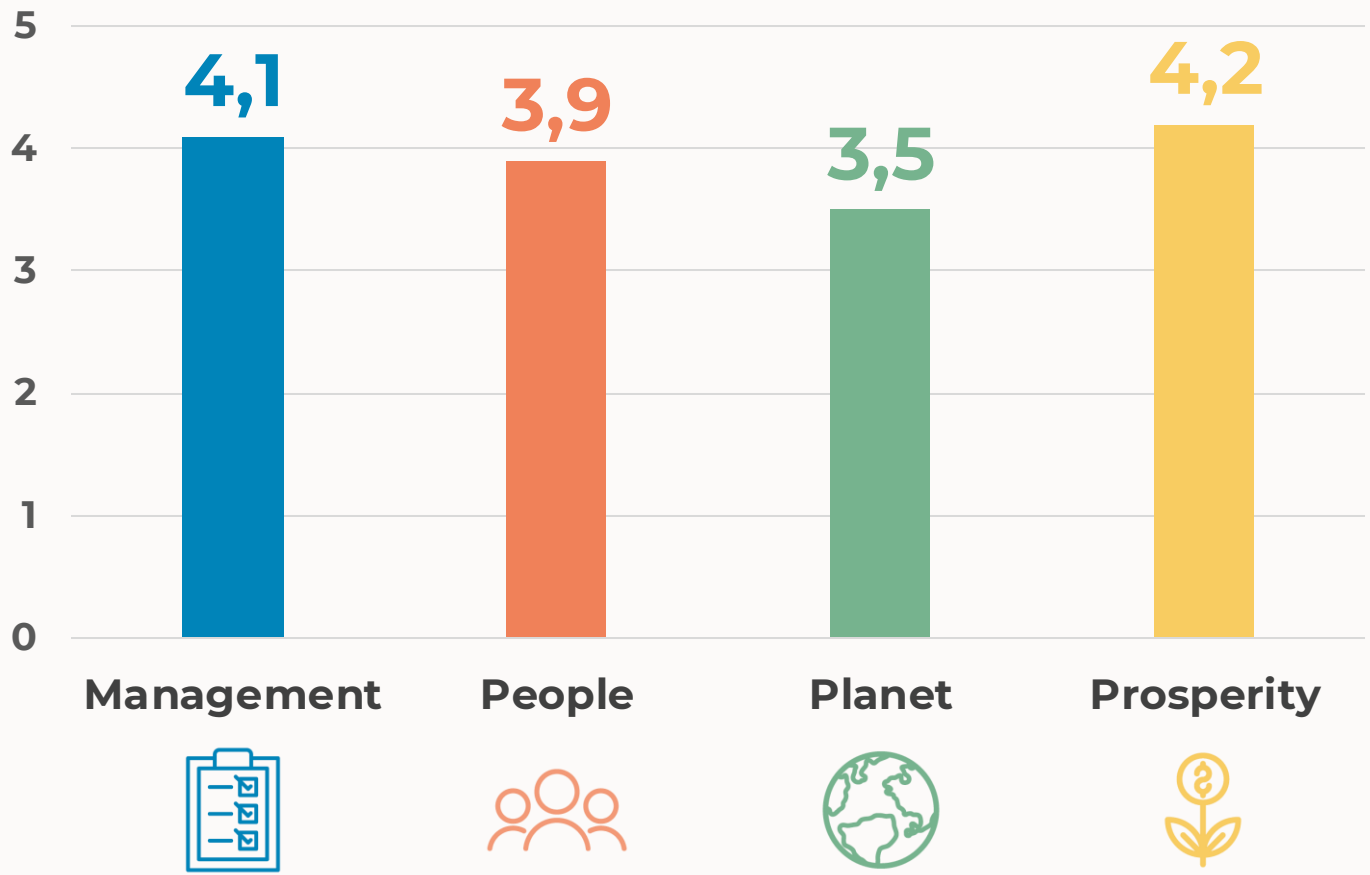
Verification Performance Results 2025

Per
Pillar

Average Verification Results

The verification results from 2025 show that CmiA verified partners achieved **best ratings in the Prosperity Pillar, followed closely by the Management Pillar**, as well as People, and Planet pillars.

*Averages include core and improvement indicators.



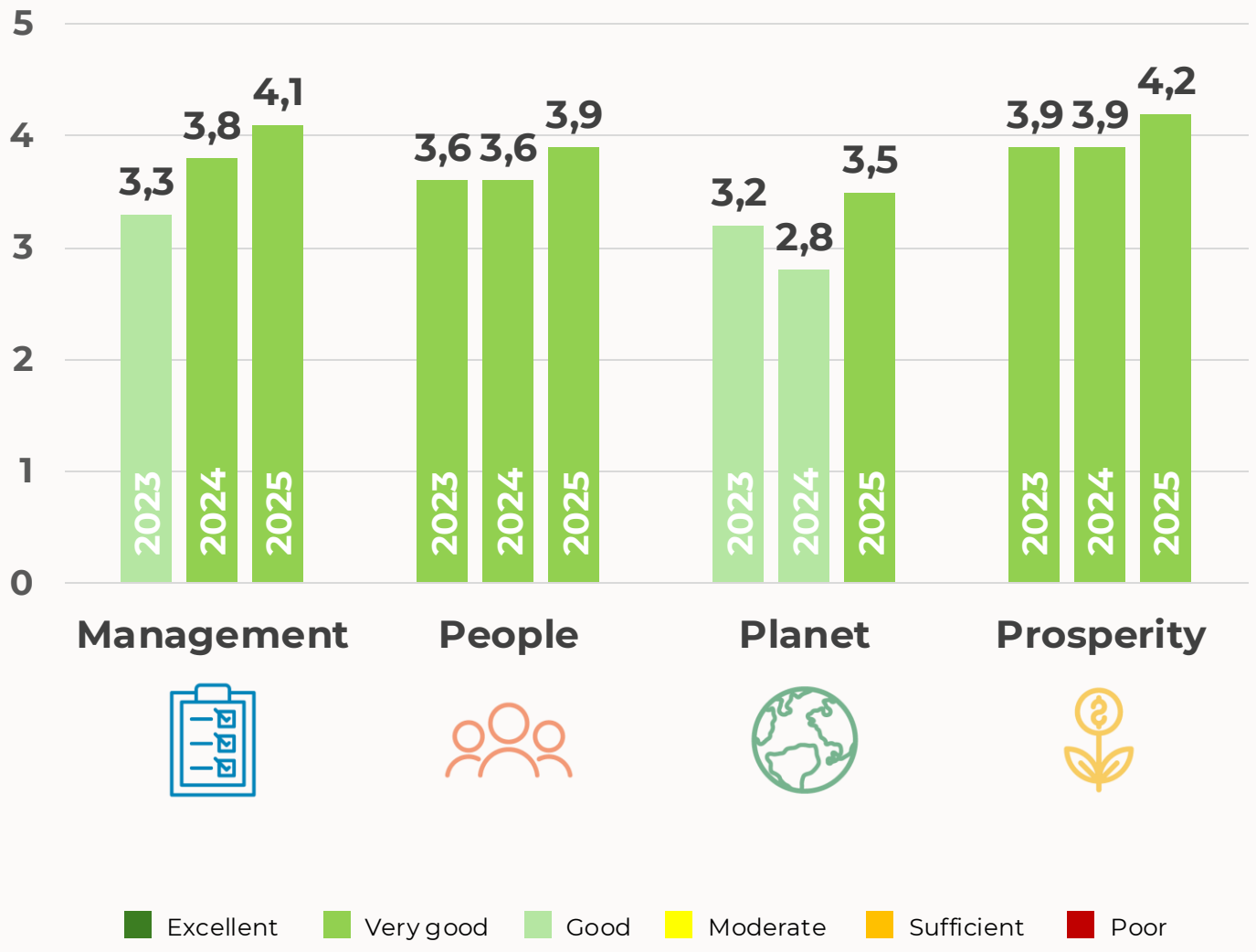
Per
Pillar

In 2025, **all four pillars were rated “very good”**.

All pillars increased their score compared to previous years, underlining the effectiveness of our **continuous improvement approach**.

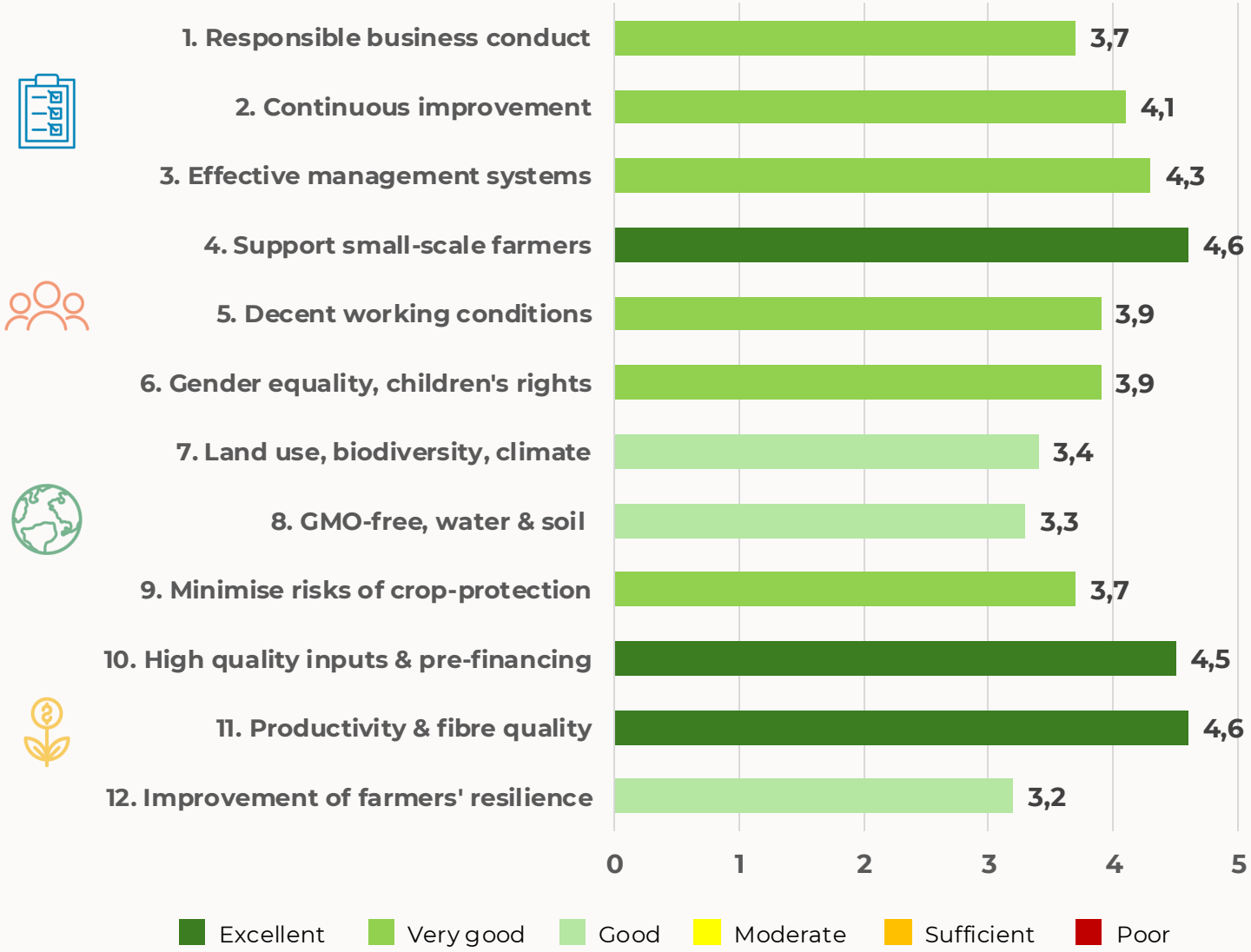
*Averages include core and improvement indicators.

Average Verification Results Comparison 2023-2025



Average Verification Results

Per **Principle**



A closer look at Principle level reveals that Principle 4 on supporting small-scale farmers, Principle 11 on productivity and fibre quality, as well as Principle 10 on high quality inputs and pre-financing received the strongest scorings.

Distribution of ratings among indicators

Over **66%** of the indicators received either **excellent (40,3%),** or **very good (26%)** ratings on average over all verifications in 2025.

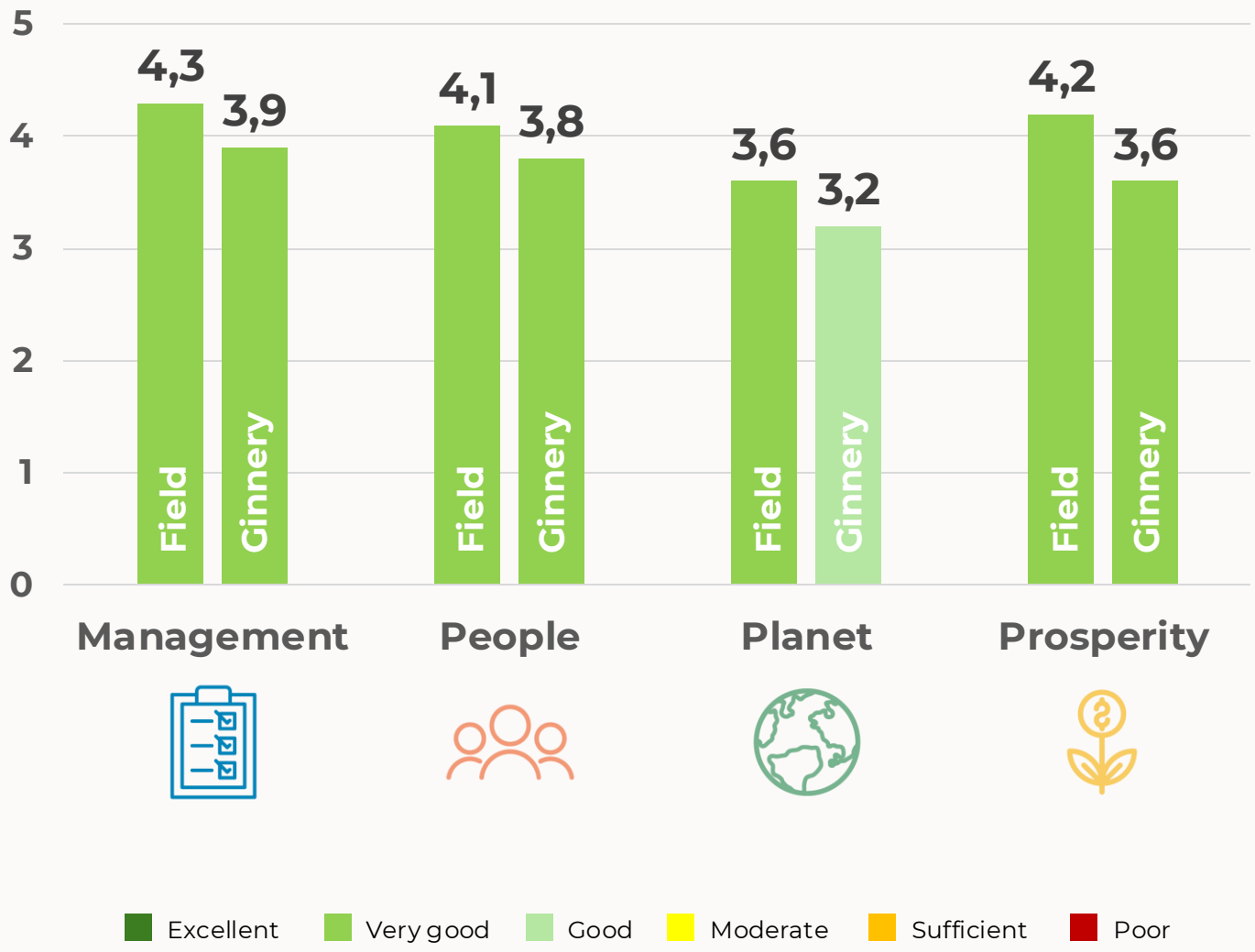
In 2025, no indicators received a poor average score.

* Out of 288 indicators

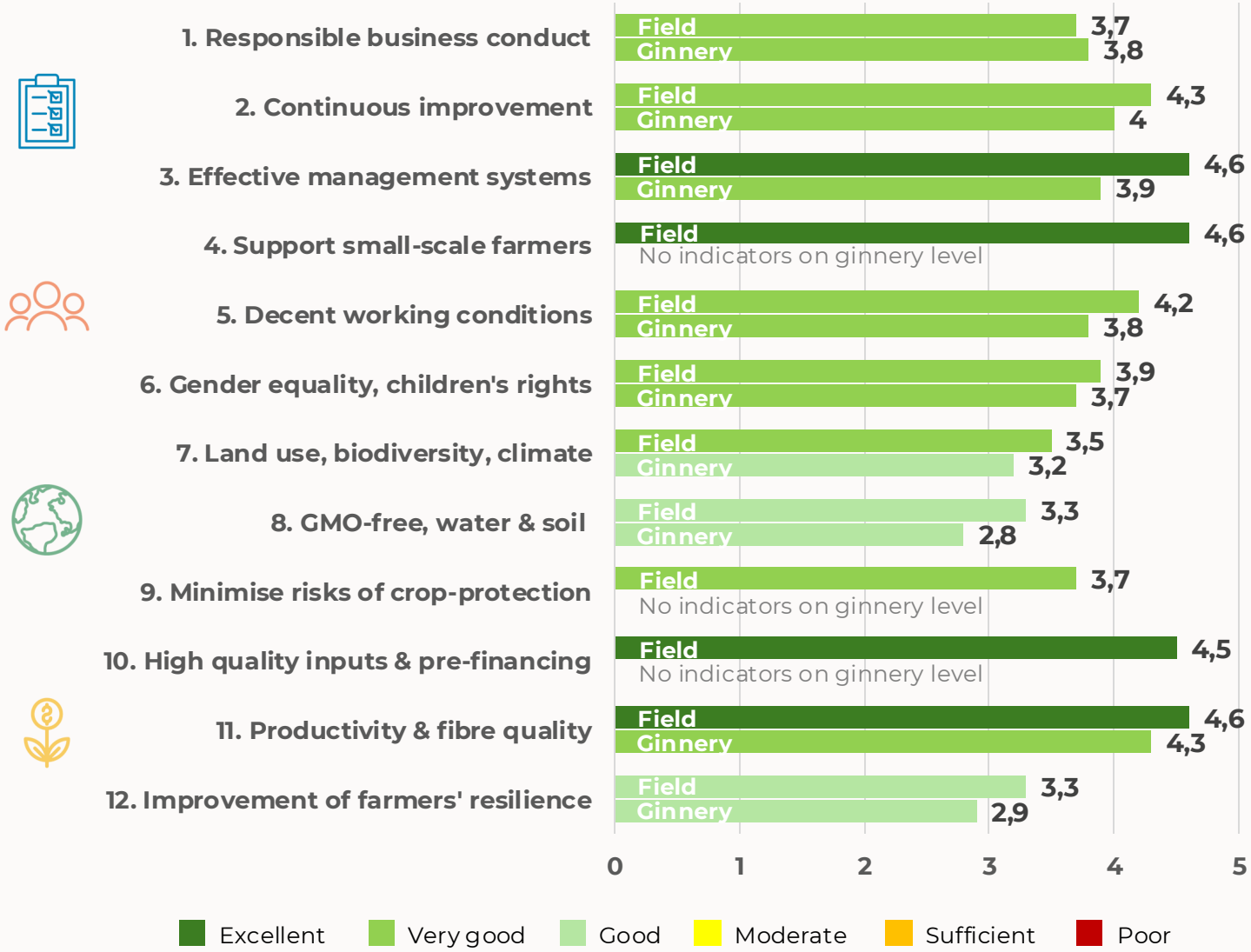
Per
Pillar

Aggregated data shows that field-level indicators, which encompass all farming activities slightly outperformed ginnery-level indicators, which focus on the processing of seed cotton into lint cotton.

Average Verification Results Comparison Field – Ginnery



Average Verification Results Comparison Field – Ginnery



Per **Principle**

The slightly better performance of field-level indicators compared to ginnery-level indicators remains consistent when examining the data on principle level.

Principles 4, 9 and 10 only concern field-level activities, and therefore have no comparable data.

REGENERATIVE COTTON STANDARD

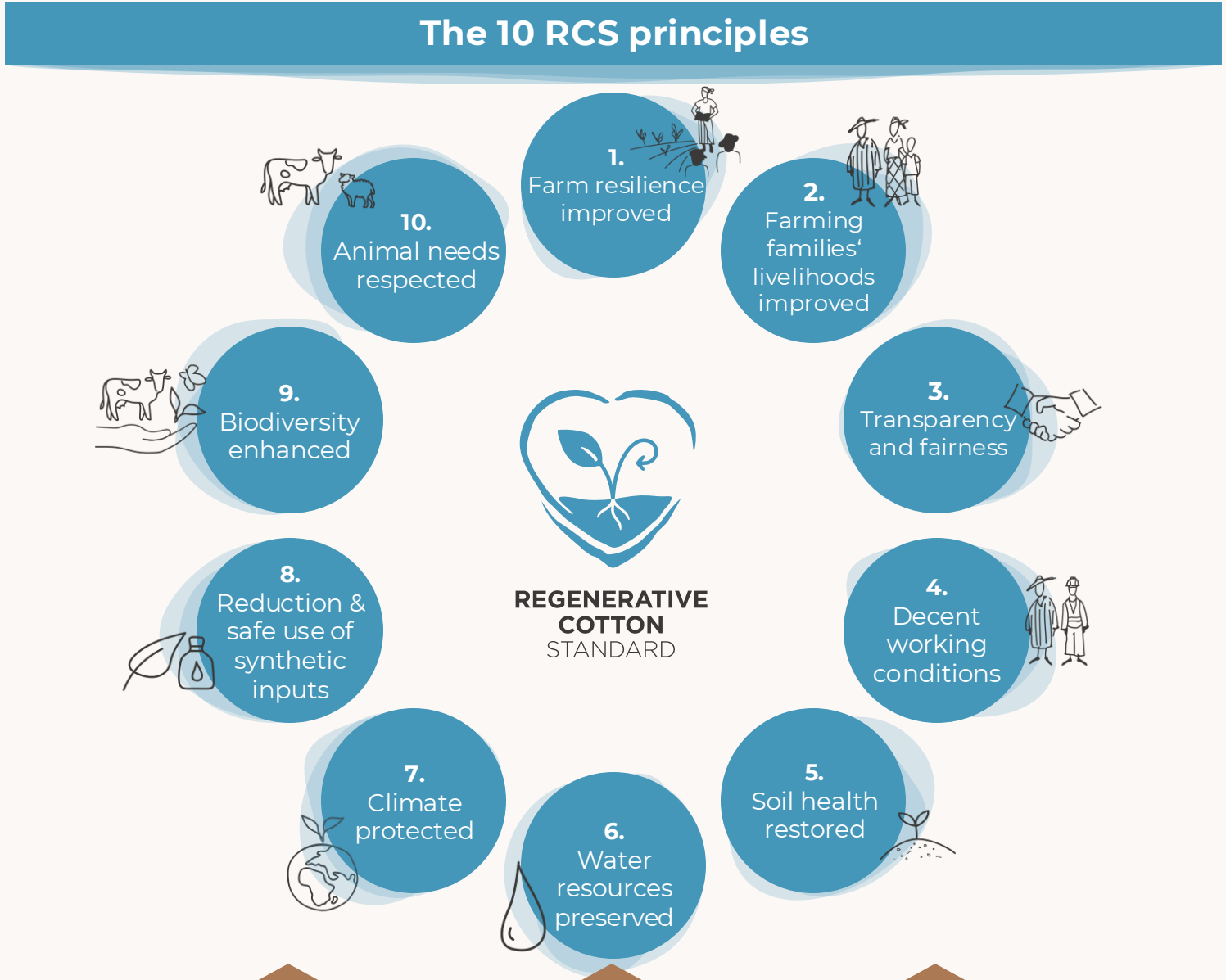
Principles of the RCS Standard

The RCS Standard is built on **ten core principles** that define the expectations and aspirational goals for both Managing Entities and farmers. These principles are grounded in **enabling requirements** that need to be fulfilled in order for farmers to act in **accordance with regenerative agriculture.**

Each principle contains **specific criteria**, which in turn are defined by **concrete, verifiable indicators**.

These **measurable indicators** are used by verifiers to assess whether the criteria, and thus the principles, are met.

This structure helps Managing Entities easily **navigate the requirements** and **evaluate their performance**.



RCS Verification: Key Facts and Figures
2024-2025 Season

RCS Cotton Production Overview 2024-2025 Season

3 Verified Managing Entities

41,532 Farmers

46,421 Area (ha)

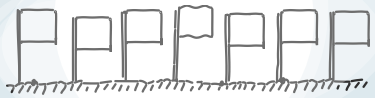
53,017 Seed cotton (mt)

19,643 Lint cotton (mt)

In 2025, about **41,000 smallholder families** producing about **19,000 tonnes of lint cotton** on an area of about **46,000 hectares** were verified under the RCS standard.

Verification Activities Overview RCS 2025

2



Production Countries

2

Verification Companies

3

Verification Missions

3

Managing Entities

4

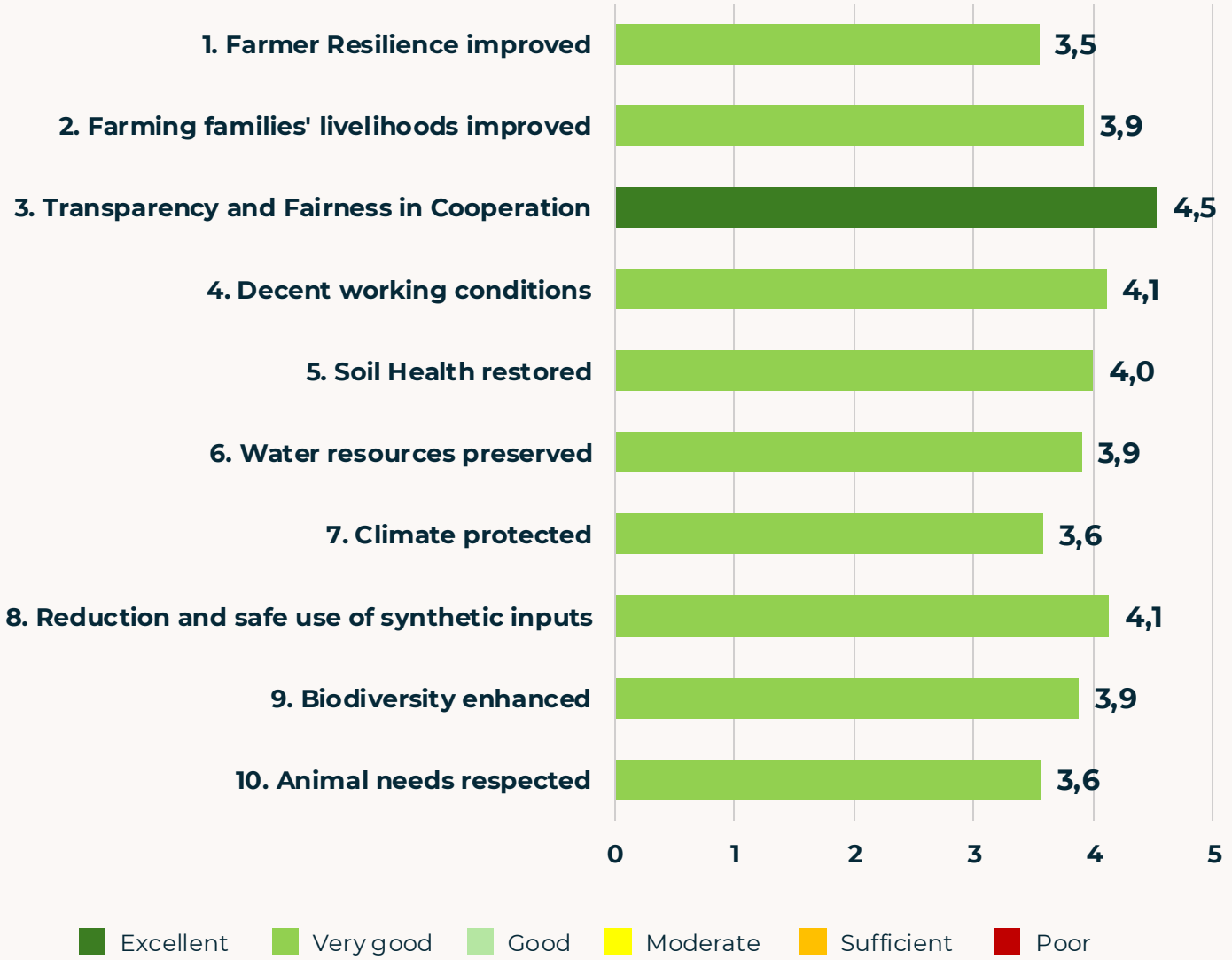
Verifiers

Verification Performance Results 2025

Average Verification Results

The 2025 RCS verification results show that partners performed best in principles 3 (Transparency and Fairness in Cooperation), 4 (Decent working conditions) and 8 (Reduction and safe use of synthetic inputs).

*Averages include core and improvement indicators.



Distribution of ratings among indicators

More than 75% of the indicators received either **excellent (41,3%),** or **very good (36,3%)** ratings on average over all verifications in 2025.

*out of 160 indicators.

Standards Implementation

COTTON MADE IN AFRICA

COTTON MADE IN AFRICA Organic

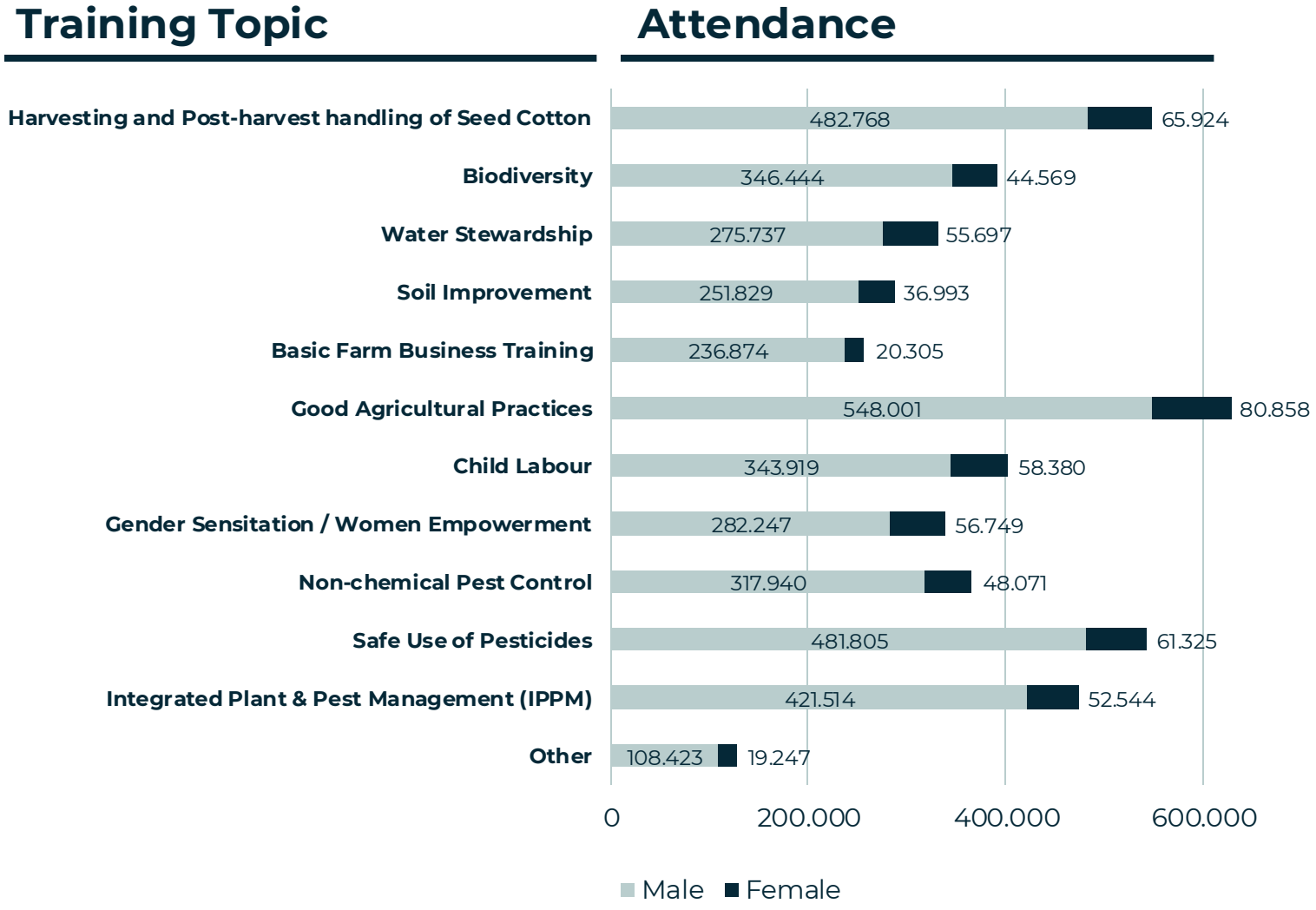
REGENERATIVE COTTON STANDARD

Farmer Trainings provided by CmiA & RCS Managing Entities

2025

Farm-level Training Attendance*

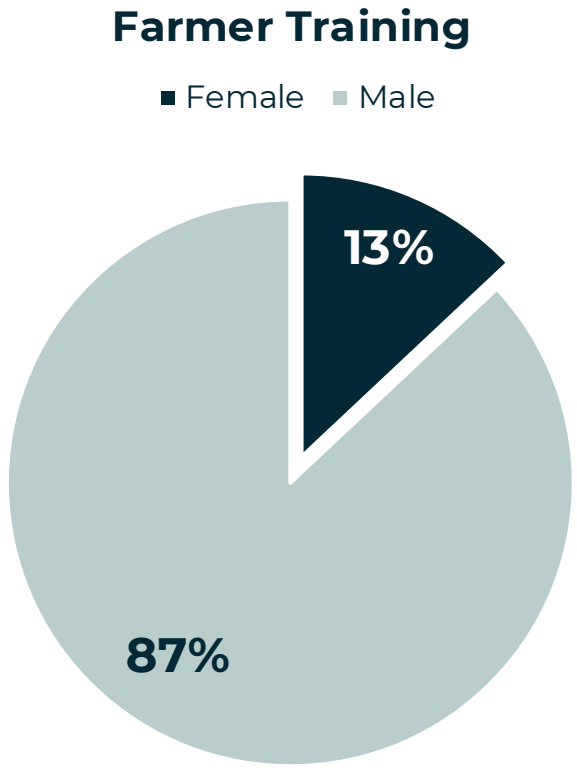
*The data represents training contacts, not absolute participant numbers.



Training Attendance by Gender

In 2025[1], CmiA verified Managing Entities conducted farm level trainings on various topics, ranging from environmental issues such as biodiversity and water stewardship to social issues like child labour and women empowerment (see page 30).

While the general share of female to male CmiA-contracted farmers is 10% to 90%, the training sessions saw a **slightly higher participation of women**, with 13% female and 87% male attendees.



Farm level training attendance by gender

[1] Data referring to 2024-25 agricultural season

Implementation Support for Managing Entities

Innovations Club

Benin

The Innovations Club, launched in May 2023 by AbTF and the African Cotton Foundation (ACF), held its third workshop in April 2025.

This time, the three-day technical workshop took place in Benin and combined theoretical presentations with practical demonstrations. The more than 20 participants benefited from the specialist presentations and the exchange of ideas among the partners.

INNOVATIONS CLUB
by CmiA & ACF

Regional Workshop East & Southern Africa

Maputo, Mozambique

In October 2025, AbTF invited two representatives from each verified partner in Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique and Uganda to the CmiA Regional Workshop in Maputo (Mozambique).

In addition to the representatives of the Managing Entities, a representative from the verification body AfriCert, as well as four AbTF team members took part in the workshop.

The workshop focused on improving the uptake of training content among farmers and on greater involvement of the cotton-growing communities. Furthermore, gathering feedback on the draft of the CmiA Standard Version 5.0 was a key component of the programme.

Regional Workshop West & Central Africa

Cotonou, Benin

In November 2025, the AbTF invited its Francophone partners to a CmiA Regional Workshop in Cotonou (Benin). Two representatives each from the verified partners in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Chad and Togo, as well as two participants from the Ivorian association APROCOT-CI, a representative of the Beninese association AIC and a representative of the verification body Ecocert met with four CmiA team members.

The participants in the three-day workshop engaged in intensive discussions. Topics included the evaluation of verification results, discussions on standard requirements with a view to the revision of the CmiA Standard in 2025, and presentations by the partners on aspects of the standard that are being implemented very well and can serve as a model for others.

Cooperation between ACF and AbTF

Throughout Africa

The cooperation between AbTF and ACF continued in 2025. Since March 2021, AbTF has been cooperating with the African Cotton Foundation (ACF).

In 2025, the seven projects, involving a total of 28,550 beneficiaries, were successfully completed.

The main topics for projects aimed at the implementation of the CmiA standard criteria and measures to improve soil health and fertility, diversification and integrated pest management.

In addition to project funding, the cooperation agreement also includes the organisation of the Innovations Club (see page 33).

Empowering Women in Rural Areas

Côte d'Ivoire

In 2025, AbTF, in collaboration with the Besteller Foundation and the verified cotton companies Compagnie Ivoirienne de Coton (COIC) and Compagnie Ivoirienne pour le Développement des Textiles (CIDT), launched two projects aimed at empowering women in rural areas. The projects began in April 2025 and will run for two years, or two cotton seasons.

The aim is to provide sustainable support to women through the production and marketing of compost and biochar, as well as through the establishment of women-led savings and credit groups (AVEC). The production and use of biochar and compost not only serves as an additional source of income but is also intended to improve soil quality and contribute to higher yields. A total of 320 women farmers are being trained and educated, which is expected to benefit 5,400 members of the village community. By the end of the projects, a total of 400 tonnes of compost is to be produced.

Fostering strong Partnerships to integrate Benin's growing organic Cotton Sector into Global Supply Chains

Benin

The AbTF is also participating in the project "Fostering strong partnerships to integrate Benin's growing organic cotton sector into global supply chains", which was launched in November 2024 and will run until October 2027.

The AbTF is a partner in the consortium alongside PAN UK, OBEPAB, Reinhart and SODECO. GIZ is supporting the implementation with funding from the BMZ (German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development). The AbTF contributes in terms of content and organisation, as well as through in-kind contributions and co-financing.

Bio-Input Center in India

India

As part of the RCS implementation in India, the AbTF in cooperation with the Managing Entity established two strategically located Bio-Input Centres in 2025. These centres provide farmers with easy access to high-quality organic and regenerative agriculture inputs, services, and training, contributing to improved yields, reduced costs, and enhanced soil health. These centres benefit approximately 1,200–1,500 farmers.

AID BY TRADE
FOUNDATION

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

CONTACT

Aid by Trade Foundation
Werner-Otto-Straße 13 b · 22179 Hamburg · Germany

Telephone: +49 40 25 76 75 50
Email: info@abt-foundation.org

www.cottonmadeinafrica.org
www.thegoodcashmerestandard.org
www.regenerative-cotton.org
www.aidbytrade.org