



COTTON
MADE IN
AFRICA



Standard Setting and Revision Procedure

**for Cotton made in Africa (CmiA)
and Other Cotton Standards of the
Aid by Trade Foundation**



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Contact

Aid by Trade Foundation
Gurlittstraße 14
20099 Hamburg
Germany

Tel. +49 40 - 25 76 755 0

Email: info@abt-foundation.org

Contact for comments: standards@abt-foundation.org

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Purpose and Scope

1. This document specifies the procedure to be followed by AbTF when developing any new cotton standard (CmiA, CmiA Organic, SCS) and when substantive changes to existing cotton standards by AbTF¹ are required to be made.
2. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all CmiA standards are and remain effective and credible by incorporating the values of transparency, participation, and fairness into the processes for their development and by complying with international best practices for standards development.

Decision to Develop or Revise CmiA Standards

3. The decision to develop or review a CmiA standard shall rest with the Management of AbTF.
4. Once the decision to develop or revise a standard has been made by the Management of AbTF, the Technical Advisory Group will be informed.
5. At AbTF, the Standard & Outreach Unit is responsible for reviewing the CmiA standards on an ongoing basis, with a review period not exceeding five years from the adoption of the previous standard version. The objective is to ensure continuous relevance and effectiveness in meeting the standard's stated objectives.
6. The date of the subsequent scheduled review shall be made publicly available and shall be included in the standard document.
7. A revision process may be recommended and initiated for the following reasons:
 - Stakeholder and/or internal AbTF feedback and comments
 - Change in legislation
 - New scientific developments
 - Verification results showing that criteria and indicators are not understood by Managing Entities and are therefore not being implemented as intended
 - Change in AbTF strategic planning
 - Other significant changes in cotton production
8. Based on signals or requests from stakeholders, the Management of AbTF may decide to explore possibilities for the development of a new standard.
9. Prior to the development of a new standard, the AbTF Standard & Outreach Unit must conduct a demand assessment that addresses the following factors:
 - Overall goal of the standard
 - Analysis of who needs the standard and who will use it
 - Description of how the demand can be met
 - Problem and risk analysis, including financial risks
 - Assessment of the extent to which existing standards fully or partially meet the same goals

¹ For ease of reading, the cotton standards of the AbTF are hereinafter referred to as *CmiA standards*.



Procedure for Developing or Revising CmiA Standards

10. For the development or the revision of a standard, the Management of AbTF sets up a Working Group to ensure a balance of interest.
11. The Working Group shall, as a minimum, include a designated project manager from the AbTF Standard & Outreach Unit and the Technical Advisory Group.
12. Before developing or revising a standard, the Working Group shall develop or update terms of reference (ToR) for the standard in question. The ToR have to be approved by the Management of AbTF.
13. The terms of reference shall include:
 - The proposed scope of the standard and the intended geographic application
 - Well-defined objectives that the standard seeks to achieve, in particular those objectives that focus on social, environmental, and economic aspects
 - An assessment of risks in implementing the standard and of how to mitigate them, including an identification of factors that could have a negative impact on the ability of the standard to achieve its objectives
14. The Working Group is responsible for drafting the standard.
15. During the standard development or revision process, the Working Group shall involve external experts for Sub-Saharan cotton cultivation, representatives of Managing Entities, verifiers, and other stakeholders as necessary.
16. The social, environmental, and economic objectives of the standard shall be clearly and explicitly specified in the standard itself.
17. The standard shall restrict trade no more than necessary to fulfil the legitimate objectives of the standard.
18. The standard shall be structured to allow for the monitoring and evaluation of progress being made towards achieving the objectives of the standard as set in the Theory of Change.
19. The standard needs to be clearly structured with objective and verifiable criteria and be written in a clear manner that ensures consistent interpretation.
20. The standard shall not favour a particular technology or patented item.
21. The Management of AbTF shall approve a draft standard before releasing it for public consultation.
22. The launch of a public consultation shall be officially announced on the CmiA website.
23. The AbTF Standard & Outreach Unit shall proactively seek contributions from under-represented stakeholders or disadvantaged groups, e.g. comments from verifiers of assurance providers, agricultural extension staff, or the representatives of ginnery workers employed by Managing Entities.
24. Any proposed draft of a standard shall include at least one round of public consultations to give stakeholders the opportunity to provide input to the standard. A second round is required if substantive changes have been made since the first draft.
25. The first round of consultations on a proposed draft of a standard shall normally include a period of at least 60 days for the submission of comments. The second round of consultations shall normally include a period of at least 30 days.
26. The Working Group shall amend the draft standard to accommodate the comments and feedback received and shall submit the final draft to the Management of AbTF for validation.



27. Once the final draft of the standard is approved by the Management of AbTF, it will be presented for final approval to the AbTF Board of Trustees.
28. The Board of Trustees shall only make a decision when a quorum as defined in the by-laws of the Board of Trustees By-Laws is present. It shall seek to make a decision by consensus (i.e. the absence of sustained opposition). In cases where the Board of Trustees is unable to reach consensus, the Board of Trustees shall resort to a vote as determined in its by-laws.
29. In the event that the Board of Trustees rejects the final draft, the Management of AbTF shall seek to establish the reasons for rejection and forward those to the Working Group for consideration. The Working Group shall then reconvene.

Publication and Record-Keeping

30. The approved final standard shall be published on the CmiA website within 30 days of approval.
31. All approved standards shall include information on the official language and a note that, in the event of inconsistency between versions, reference shall default to the official-language version.
32. All approved standards shall include a point of contact for submitting general feedback and requests for clarification.
33. AbTF shall keep a file of all records made during standards development and revision activities (consultation comments, how they were taken into account, a list of stakeholders, the interested parties involved, draft and final versions of the standard, etc.), and these shall be made available on request where there is justified interest.
34. All records related to standard development and revision activities shall be kept for at least five years.

Non-substantive Changes

35. Typographical errors and minor inconsistencies may be corrected with the approval of the Management of AbTF. There is no need for a formal revision process.
36. The Management of AbTF may also propose non-substantive changes to the Board of Trustees. A written proposal for the recommended changes shall be prepared by the Standard & Outreach Unit and shall be circulated to the Board of Trustees for a 30-day review period. In the event of comments from the Board, the written proposal may be amended. The final written proposal as amended shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval.
37. The updated standard shall be clearly identified with a version number and date, and the most recent version shall be made available on the CmiA website.

Complaints

38. All complaints on issues related to standard setting and revision procedures shall follow the CmiA Complaints Procedure, which is publicly available on the CmiA website.



References

- ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards (v. 6.0)
- Assurance Manual for Cotton made in Africa (CmiA) and other Cotton Standards of the Aid by Trade Foundation (V1)
- Cotton made in Africa Standard – Principles, Criteria and Indicators (Vol. 4)
- CmiA Organic – Complementary Requirements to CmiA Vol. 4 (V1)

Annexe: Definitions

Decision-making bodies	A detailed description of the decision-making bodies is given in the CmiA Assurance Manual (chapter 4).
Non-substantive changes	Typographical errors, minor inconsistencies, mistakes in references.
Revision	Any change to the existing standard resulting in a significant modification of or change to the standard's application (e.g. adding or removing criteria). In this case, the process of revision will have to follow this standard setting procedure. Non-substantive or administrative changes do not constitute a revision of the standard and therefore do not have to follow this procedure.
Stakeholder	Any person or group concerned with or directly affected by a cotton standard of the Aid by Trade Foundation (CmiA, CmiA Organic, SCS ²).
Standard	A document that provides, for common and repeated use, legally non-binding rules, guidelines, or characteristics for products or related processes and production methods. For the purposes of this document, the cotton standards developed by the AbTF and currently in use are: CmiA Standard Vol. 4 and CmiA Organic (Complementary Requirements to CmiA Vol. 4).