

# Investing in Organic and Fairtrade Cotton in India: A Partnership Model

## The Organic Cotton Sector

Cotton is the most used natural fiber in the global textile sector. The demand of organic cotton especially is ever increasing from brands and retailers. One main challenge is aligning the available certified organic cotton with the increasing demand and increasing risk of GMO contamination. India is already the main contributor to organic cotton, making up for more than 50% of the global production. It also is the country with the most land in-conversion to organic cotton and offers great potential for further extension.

## Purpose

The project aims to increase the amount of available organic cotton on the world market by supporting the transition of conventional to organic cotton farming. Training measures will be carried out with local partners to promote capacity building in small-scale organic cotton production. The project measures should lead to a sustainable improvement in the economic situation of the local small-scale farmers and the environmental condition of the project area.

## Project Activities

To reach the project objectives the following measures will be implemented:

- **Seed and irrigation programmes** will increase the quality and staple length of cotton fibres. The **provision of non-GM seed packages** enables farmers to improve the quality of sowing independent of seed suppliers.
- **Cotton sourcing commitments and a transparent and non-volatile price structure** will improve the economic resilience of farmers. A minimum support price

Project name	Pilot Project Organic Cotton
Project format	Integrated Development Partnership
Project region	South Odisha, India
Cooperation and Implementing partners	Dibella, Fairtrade Germany, GIZ, Tchibo, Chetna-FFID, OCA
Annual harvest	250 MT organic and in-conversion cotton
Duration	01.06.2020 – 31.03.2023



will be paid to organic farmers while farmers in-conversion to organic certification will be supported by a Fairtrade Premium payment. Free transportation and transparent determination of the amount of harvested cotton will increase financial benefits and empowerment of farmers.

- **Trainings for farmers and multipliers** will increase the knowledge of efficient organic farming methods. The main focus will be on supporting the transition of conventional to organic farming and a sustainable quality development of organic cotton in cooperation with relevant actors.
- **Women Empowerment** will increase through the support of female-managed Farmer Producer Organisations (FPO) and the certification of farms in women's name. More enterprises owned by female farmers means more women having increased independence through direct access and control over financial resources.

*“The supply of organic cotton will only grow if we can ensure a business case for farmers, whether they are transitioning to organic farming or already certified. The power of this pilot is that it has the right ingredients and the right partners. We are excited to see this project inspire and inform larger-scale action by actors within the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles and beyond.”* OCA



From left to right: 1 Female cotton farmers 2 Cotton farmer with cotton  
© Fairtrade – Didier Gentilhomme



<sup>3</sup> Raw cotton in the field <sup>4</sup> Fairtrade Consultant with Cotton farmer at Chetna ©Fairtrade – Didier Gentilhomme

## Project Benefits

The pilot project will improve the livelihood and living conditions of farmers by collective actions of private and public sectors such as:

- Improved farmer knowledge of sustainable cotton farming practices and the number of farmers producing non-GM organic cotton and seeds
- Increased production volumes of Fairtrade and organic certified seed cotton
- Increased incomes for the involved farmers and their families by the creation of a sustainable business case for Fairtrade and organic cotton
- Set long-term sourcing commitments from project partner brands
- The implementation of environmentally friendly production measures and a reduction in the negative impact on the environment

## Implementing Partners

### FFID – Chetna

An umbrella of small (cotton) farmers owned cooperatives with specific focus on addressing livelihoods, enhancing life quality and building farming community resilience through a 360 degree convergence intervention model around agroecological approaches, agri & non-agri allied enterprises, food & nutrition security, education, financial inclusion and building sustainable and traceable supply chains. [www.chetnaorganic.org.in](http://www.chetnaorganic.org.in)

### Organic Cotton Accelerator (OCA)

The Organic Cotton Accelerator (OCA) is a multi-stakeholder organisation dedicated to organic cotton. As a global platform, we are committed to bringing integrity, supply security and measurable social and environmental impact to organic cotton. OCA unites the sector to unleash the potential of organic cotton because we envision a future where we have fully realised the Organic Cotton Effect – organic cotton’s powerful and positive impact on people, planet and prosperity.

[www.organiccottonaccelerator.org](http://www.organiccottonaccelerator.org)



## Cooperation Partners

### Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

GIZ GmbH is Germany’s leading provider of international cooperation services. As a federal enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de)

### TransFair e.V. (Fairtrade Germany)

Founded in 1992, TransFair is a non-profit organisation registered in Germany and a member of Fairtrade International. Fairtrade strives for a world in which all producers can enjoy secure and sustainable livelihoods. Fairtrade works through certification standards, producer advisory services, projects and programmes, consumer awareness raising and education, market linkages and advocacy. [www.fairtrade-deutschland.de](http://www.fairtrade-deutschland.de)

### Tchibo GmbH

Tchibo stands for a unique business model by using a multi-channel distribution system to offer coffee and weekly changing non-food ranges, including textiles: in own shops, third-party retail outlets, and online. In 2020, 96% of the cotton for Tchibo apparel and home textiles was sourced from more sustainable sources (mainly from certified organic sources) – aiming for 100% in 2022. [www.tchibo-nachhaltigkeit.de](http://www.tchibo-nachhaltigkeit.de)

### Dibella b.v.

Dibella has been a Europe-wide textile service partner since 1986, offering long-life and high-performance flat linen for contract business in the hotel, hospitality and healthcare industries. Dibella follows a holistic approach which is not confined to the production process but extends through to the customer. The company’s goal – a complete closed loop for professional textile applications. [www.dibella.de](http://www.dibella.de)

#### Published by:

Partnership for Sustainable Textiles  
c/o Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36 + 40  
53113 Bonn

#### In cooperation with:

TransFair e.V. (Fairtrade Germany)  
Tchibo GmbH  
Dibella b.v.

#### On behalf of

German Federal Ministry for Economic  
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

#### Contact Details:

Dr. Lisa Wegner  
mail@textilbuendnis.com

#### Please visit:

[www.textilbuendnis.com](http://www.textilbuendnis.com)  
[www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de)

Status: April 2021