



**COTTON  
MADE IN  
AFRICA**



# **CmiA Press Release**

**Sight, Touch, Smell: For World Soil Day on 5 December, Cotton made in Africa Presents New Guidelines for Evaluating Soil Quality**

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## **Sight, Touch, Smell: For World Soil Day on 5 December, Cotton made in Africa Presents New Guidelines for Evaluating Soil Quality**

**According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), around one third of all arable land worldwide is already degraded. This can be attributed among other reasons to agricultural overexploitation and to the impact of climate change. To raise awareness of this, the UN has declared 5 December to be World Soil Day. With its new Cotton made in Africa (CmiA) Soil Assessment Guide, the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) is further expanding its training programme for small-scale cotton farmers in Africa. Using this guide, cotton farmers can collect valuable information about soil conditions in their fields—easily, quickly, and on the spot. By making it possible for small-scale farmers to collect this data themselves, AbTF enables them to increase soil quality through better-informed decisions.**

**Hamburg, December 5, 2023.** In its regional workshop for East and Southern Africa, recently held in Uganda, AbTF introduced these guidelines to staff from companies partnering with Cotton made in Africa. The staff then joined AbTF in testing the approach under field conditions. “The participants all loved how the training combined theory and practice,” says Alexandra Perschau, the head of standards and outreach at the Aid by Trade Foundation, continuing, “Agricultural extension workers can use the CmiA Soil Assessment Guide to show small-scale farmers how to evaluate soil conditions in their fields without technical equipment or access to laboratory tests, instead relying only on their senses of sight, touch, and smell. Through the didactic approach of the training material, workshop participants also learnt how to share their academic knowledge with small-scale farmers in a simple and applicable way.”

During the workshop, it became clear to everyone there that addressing soil degradation and climate change will require all stakeholders in cotton production to work together. “Change starts with me,” stated Jeremiah Mateka, who works for the CmiA-certified cotton company CGL Zambia, speaking at the closing of the event. “Long time the soil has been forgotten, and I can see a u-turn is needed how we treat our soils with herbicides and fertilisers,” adds Alick Siapwaya, who is also with GCL Zambia.

Starting immediately, the participative approach taken by these guidelines will be incorporated into the existing training materials of all cotton companies working with CmiA. In five steps, soil is examined with regard to characteristics including colour, consistency, and smell. The CmiA Soil Assessment Guide was developed as part of CAR-iSMa, a consortium project launched by the Aid by Trade Foundation; the project has a total budget of EUR 2.8 million and is supported by Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), until the end of 2024. By that deadline, CAR-iSMa is aiming to provide around 100,000 small-scale farmers with support in developing new strategies to counteract the effects of climate change in order to enable future generations to earn their living through cotton cultivation as well.



Best regards,

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### **About Aid by Trade Foundation**

Founded in 2005, the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) is now an internationally renowned non-profit organisation that works throughout the world to promote sustainable raw materials. Its activities make a decisive and measurable contribution to improving the living conditions of people and animals while protecting the environment. AbTF takes a practical approach by creating and maintaining a variety of standards to certify raw materials: Cotton made in Africa (CmiA), Cotton made in Africa Organic (CmiA Organic), Regenerative Cotton Standard (RCS), and The Good Cashmere Standard (GCS). A global alliance of textile companies and brands purchases the certified raw materials, paying a licensing fee to AbTF's marketing company, ATAKORA Fördergesellschaft GmbH. The payment of this fee entitles the partners to sell their goods under the standards' labels. As the challenges facing textile companies and small-scale farmers grow, the standards have a major role to play in ensuring their resilience and future viability. AbTF collaborates closely with industry experts and with specialists in animal and nature protection.

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