REEL COTTON
ON PRODUCT CLAIM/
LABELLING GUIDELINES
CottonConnect is a company with a social purpose to reimagine the cotton supply chains and help textile producers and farmers enjoy better livelihoods.

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ON-PRODUCT CLAIM

On-product claims will help brands and retailers directly communicate their commitment to environment and social responsibility with the help of REEL Cotton (Responsible Environment Enhanced Livelihood) to end consumers. It further sets the requirements for the use of the registered REEL Cotton product mark/label in order to ensure correct and consistent application on products as well as in advertisements and other publications. Consumers can trust and understand that REEL Cotton products are 3rd party verified and its Code of Conduct is developed and regulated by CottonConnect. The formal release of best labelling practices will promote and optimize compliant and truthful labelling. It will also educate new consumers about brands’ or retailers’ commitment to sustainable practises, and specifically the commitments required for REEL Cotton.

PURPOSE

This document outlines requirements for initial applications for the use of the REEL Cotton product mark/label.

AREA OF APPLICATION

The process outlined in this document applies to requests and applications for REEL Cotton licensing with CottonConnect to achieve formal approval to use the respective product mark/label.

WHO CAN USE ON-PRODUCT MARK

- Brands and retailers supporting REEL Cotton producer
- All verified and registered cotton processors, suppliers and garment manufacturers involved in supply chain of REEL cotton supporting brands.

Note: Any company/brands SUPPLIERS/Garment manufacturers interested in using the REEL Cotton product mark on Finished Products to be sold to consumers, must have a valid license contract with CottonConnect.

HOW TO USE ON PRODUCT

Logo: Shape, size, colour and tagline of the logo must be as per CottonConnect guidelines.

Types of mark/labelling: Mark/labelling can be used on hangtags, stickers, consumer packaging, catalogues, online product pages etc. On-product mark should not be permanently printed or attached to products/garments.

Placement of mark: Labelling must be present adjacent to product description and specification.

Size of labelling: It depends on the labelled product and there is no restriction for maximum size provided the logo is enlarged proportionately.

LOGO/TAG/LABELLING GUIDELINE

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ujawon4hu92ysej/AAAYTtH3keGMex-__FhAnJvz6a?dl=0

Exclusion zones and minimum size

The CottonConnect logo should be legible and given space.

Exclusion zone

The exclusion zone around the CottonConnect logo, at whatever size it appears, is half the size of the cotton flower icon. Beyond this you should aim to maximise the space around the logo wherever possible.

Minimum size

The minimum size is there to protect the legibility of the brand wherever it appears. In both digital and print, the logo should only go down to this size if it is absolutely necessary. Anything smaller than the sizes outlined above, and the logo will become illegible.
TRACEBALE AND QR CODE

All the marks/labelling must contain a QR code generated by TraceBale (CottonConnect’s proprietary tool used to implement Traceability across the supply chain). This QR code will provide consumers and end-users with information on product specification, manufacturer involvement, processors and raw material origin.

TRACEABILITY VERIFICATION SOP

The traceability verification ensures that labelling is done after all the transactions – chain of custody, are verified at all the processors like ginners, spinners and beyond. The SOP establishes a procedure to handle, monitor, and record all the tracking by different supply chain stakeholders. The SOP defines the responsibilities of all the stakeholders (brands, local partners, ginners, spinners, fabric manufacturers and garment manufacturers), including transactional procedures for each. The records of the processors in the supply chain should be well recorded onto CottonConnect’s traceability tool platform, 'TraceBale'. It is used to record and monitor the sale of REEL Cotton from one processor to another. It links the REEL Cotton produced with the unique IDs or lot numbers recorded at each step and with the help of these unique Id’s the material can be verified as genuine.

PRODUCT ELIGIBILITY

CottonConnect provides an additional option of online tracking system with TraceBale that ensures complete transparency throughout the entire value chain, allowing cotton to be traced from the field to the finished product. REEL Cotton must not be mixed with any other cotton at any stage of production. Under this system, and in order to carry a CottonConnect label, the following requirements must be observed:

- CottonConnect verified cotton must only be purchased from nominated ginners.
- CottonConnect verified cotton must be used throughout the textile production process, from the cotton to the yarn and the fabric to the final product. It must be stored and processed separately at a designated place. CottonConnect may use necessary verification mechanisms (including on-site monitoring visits) to ensure adherence to the same.
- The final product must contain at least 50% Cotton, of which 100% of the cotton used must be from the REEL programme; the remaining part may contain other fibers. Non verified / other forms of conventional cotton must not be used. CottonConnect may choose to verify these claims on a sample basis by testing the final products available at the market place.
- The 50% rule must be clearly stated in the tagline of each mark/logo.
- In case of a combined product, only CottonConnect verified REEL Cotton must be used.

Where the REEL Cotton mark/label is used in combined products with only one component (cotton) that complies with REEL Cotton requirements, the mark/label shall state, combined product’ verified to REEL cotton.
To ensure that all the requirements are met, all partners in the textile value chain must submit relevant information to the TraceBale system and periodic audits of TraceBale chain of custody documentation may be commissioned by CottonConnect for ensuring the integrity of REEL Cotton. This will allow tracking of the raw material origin and manufacturing.

SOUTH INDIAN COTTON YARN TRADERS OPTIMISTIC OF BETTER DEMAND

Owing to several positive signals, cotton yarn traders in south India are optimistic about seeing better demand in the next few days. Encouraging trade enquiries in the north Indian market, possible ease in COVID restriction in Mumbai and Delhi, a gain of INR 3-10 per kg in cotton yarn prices in Tiruppur are among the reasons for optimism among traders. An increase in grey fabric processing activities in Ahmedabad is also an indication that there will be better demand in the coming days, according to traders.

TRANSLATIONS

Authorized claims for communication are available in English only. Translations must be approved in languages other than English, a REEL Cotton/ CottonConnect member must submit a proposed translation for review (productclaims@ottonconnect.org). The name REEL Cotton (Responsible Environment Enhanced Livelihood) & CottonConnect must never be translated. Translations must not be published until approved.
Permission process: Please allow ten working days for approval of new translations. Translations must not be published until approved.
THE FORMAL APPROVAL PROCESS OF ARTWORK

1. **Agreement and contract**: Formal agreement and contract are mandatory to claim any physical product made from REEL Cotton.

2. **Meeting request**: Meetings can be requested with CottonConnect to understand the on-product labelling and tag. The process will be initiated based on meeting eligibility criteria.

3. **Training**: Communication induction from CottonConnect is mandatory.

4. **Development and submission of artwork**: Brand can start developing the artwork based on training and meeting eligibility criteria. Each artwork must be approved by CottonConnect except for repeat artworks with updated product titles and images. One has to inform CottonConnect about the planned launch date of the OPM along with the planned distribution of its use (across the relevant product areas and geographical locations). Once the designs are finalized, please send the complete digital artwork carrying CottonConnect on the product mark, including the background material(s), sizing and colour specs, to the CottonConnect team for approval.

5. **Official approval from CottonConnect**: One will receive confirmation within a maximum of ten working days (two weeks) after receiving the finished artwork. We will advise if amendments are needed. The mark must not be printed, published, or displayed until approved.

**NOTE:** Once labelling is live (online or offline), CottonConnect reserves the right to add appropriate imagery in external communication, with approval requested from the brand within 5 working days. Number of marks/labelling will depend on the quantity of cotton processed, which takes into account the wastage during processing.

For approval, any alterations to the claims outlined in this document, individual designs and frequently recurring design templates for agencies (such as product packaging), please contact CottonConnect at: productclaims@cottonconnect.org.

PROTECTING REEL COTTON LABELLING

1. **Monitoring**: The REEL Cotton tag/labelling is the exclusive property of CottonConnect. CottonConnect actively monitors the use of the mark/labelling on packaging and promotional materials in the marketplace and will take appropriate action to protect its integrity. Members are encouraged to notify CottonConnect where any suspected misuse is identified. CottonConnect may also engage the services of a third-party agency to monitor the same.

2. **Misuse**: In the event of misuse of the mark/labelling by registered licencees, the complaint and misuse will be processed through the CottonConnect complaint procedure and the following procedure will be implemented:
   - The report of the misuse will be logged in the appropriate register of complaints or misuse
   - The company or organization misusing the mark/labelling will be contacted in writing and/or by telephone and the complaint will be investigated. The complaint will be investigated within 15 working days.
   - Appropriate corrective action will be required within a time limit. The time frame will be dependent on the medium where the violation appeared and the severity of the violation or misuse.
   - Follow-up action will be conducted to ensure the misuse has been corrected.
   - Failure to take the required action by the member may result in the suspension or termination of the license and the approval on the use of mark/labelling.
   - In the event of the mark/labelling being misused by a third party, the infringement will be processed through the same complaints procedure and the organization will be notified that the product/s must be withdrawn from sale or the promotional materials from circulation and/or its website with immediate effect.

3. **Incorrect marks/labelling**: Incorrect labelling includes incorrect or misleading claims and unapproved or incorrect use of the REEL Cotton logo/stamp. Products labelled incorrectly can be sold until they are out of stock, under the condition that the labelling is removed. A new labelling proposal can be submitted to CottonConnect within 30 days and must be approved by CottonConnect prior to publication. Serious violations, misleading and unapproved communication may result in suspension or expulsion from the use of REEL Cotton labelling/tag. CottonConnect reserves the right to withdraw the use of the REEL Cotton logo or name in any marketing or branding activities, with 90 days’ notice.