REEL Regenerative Theory of Change

INTRODUCTION
The REEL Regenerative Programme Theory of Change (ToC) serves as a crucial framework for effectively implementing the programme and establishing both long-term and short-term impacts. By outlining the programme’s aim, desired outcomes, and interventions, the ToC provides a solid foundation for the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system. Additionally, it plays a significant role in aligning risks and assumptions during programme implementation to ensure the desired change is achieved. Through the ToC, risks associated with programme implementation are identified, enabling the development of appropriate coping mechanisms. Ultimately, the ToC facilitates informed decision-making and enhances the overall success of the programme.

TARGETED IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME
The impact of the REEL Regenerative Programme is categorized into three main overarching themes. This division provides a comprehensive and clear understanding of the programme’s implementation and allows for a more focused and structured approach towards achieving the intended outcomes.

1. Farmers’ Resilience
   • improve farming performance
   • supplement farm benefits
   • enhance social fairness
   • secure supply

2. Climate Adoption
   • foster climate adaptation
   • mitigation

3. Biodiversity Enhancement
   • drive responsible land management that helps biodiversity flourish

TIMELINE FOR THEORY OF CHANGE
The REEL Regenerative Programme is strategically designed to accomplish its objectives within a three-year timeframe through ongoing capacity-building initiatives led by agronomic experts on the ground. Continuous support and guidance is given to farmers to enhance their knowledge and skills, empower them to adopt sustainable practices and improve their agricultural outcomes.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH
As part of the development process, CottonConnect extended invitations to stakeholders from various sectors to engage in the review of the Theory of Change, with approximately 25 stakeholders sharing their feedback. This collaborative approach ensured alignment with market requirements and insights to effectively address the most critical issues surrounding sustainable cotton supply chains.

The Theory of Change is also communicated to CottonConnect’s:
   a. Leadership (Board and Directors)
   b. Employees
   c. External assurance partners and implementing partners
   d. Customers

Through ongoing dialogue and collaboration with stakeholders, CottonConnect can refine and enhance the Theory of Change, promoting the achievement of shared sustainability goals.
Impact Outcome Output Intervention Assumptions & Risks

FARMER Resilience

- Improved farming performance, supplement farm benefits, enhance social fairness, secure supply
- Baseline assessments are conducted in program areas on agricultural practices, social performance, and biodiversity indicators
- Farmers are provided with continuous training on RA practices and respective effects on climate adaptation and mitigation and agro-biodiversity enhancement and conservation
- Demo plots are created in all program areas to allow lead farmers and trainers to serve as role models for successful on-site implementation
- ReEL REGEN code is introduced as a key interlinkage between CottonConnect, local implementation partners, and external verifier

CLIMATE Adaptation

- Foster climate adaptation & mitigation
- Enhanced agro-ecology & create and retain natural habitats on farms

BIODIVERSITY Enhancement

- Promote agro-ecology & create and retain natural habitats on farms
- Increased biodiversity, soil and climate degradation due to unsustainable production practices
- No major adverse incidents / natural disaster
- Farmers are ready to grow cotton from 2021-24
- Adequate and timely rainfall
- Uptake of new knowledge by implementing partners (reinforcement of the information for IP, technical knowledge accessible)
- Influence of demo plots and demos farmers on other beneficiaries due to social bonding
- Active involve of women in the frontline decision making for cotton production
- Access to financial support /institutions

Assumptions

- Easy government registration procedures for the Farmer Producer Company
- Farmers are motivated throughout the process until the establishment of Farmer Producer Company
- Seed money available in the Farmer Producer Company
- Farmers are ready to grow cotton from 2021-24
- Effective change in training
- Demonstration plots are created in all areas to allow lead farmers and trainers to serve as role models for successful on-site implementation
- Improvement of RA farming practices in a step-by-step manner
- Farmers with the support of local implementation partners adopt improved RA farming practices

Risks

- Little acceptance of training programme
- Increased or inadequate or insufficient rainfall
- Crop change or water salinity
- Land consolidation
- Elimination of major economically important species those having a role in sustainable cotton production
- Long process for the establishment of Farmer Producer Company
- Women participation
- Social exclusion (inequality in access to services and resources)
- Children working on the farms (child vs family labor)
- Poor access to financial support
- Farmer insolvency to financial and knowledge institutions

Note: One output can have multiple outcomes, and the interlinkages between them is depicted using alphabetic indexing. The outcomes ‘increased trust and transparency in the supply chain’ will impact at a broader level.