



SEEP- 59th Minutes
29 September 2024

Minutes
**59th Meeting of the Expert Panel on Social, Environmental and
Economic Performance of Cotton Production - SEEP**
Sunday, 29 September 2024 09:00 am Tashkent Time
In Person and Virtual – Zoom

Members:

Allan Williams, Australia
Iain Gardiner, BCI
Elke Hortmeyer, Bremen Cotton Exchange
Leon Picon, Türkiye

Observers:

Mark Messura, USA
Takaaki Kai, Japan
Keerti Rathore, USA
Lalit Kumar Gupta, India
Eimear McDonagh, Australia
Patrick Packnett, USA

ICAC Secretariat:

Lorena Ruiz, Economist
Keshav Kranthi, Chief Scientist
Eric Trachtenberg, Executive Director
Parkhi Vats, Trade Analyst

1. Introduction and Approval of the Minutes from the Meeting in India

The meeting commenced with a welcome by Allan Williams (Chair, SEEP). He invited participants to introduce themselves and indicate whether they were official SEEP members or observers.

2. The primary agenda items discussed were:

- Regenerative Agriculture – Updates and findings from an ongoing study led by Dr. Kater Hake, supported by the Cotton Research & Development Corporation.
- Water Use in Cotton Production – A request for an updated position paper to counter misconceptions about cotton's water consumption.
- Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions and Sustainability Reporting – Increasing demand from brands and retailers for emissions data and environmental impact certifications.

3. Regenerative Agriculture (Regen Ag) Practices Report

- The study evaluated 25 regenerative agriculture practices, assessing feasibility across different farming systems (e.g., smallholder vs. mechanized, irrigated vs. rainfed).
- Adoption varies based on local conditions, policy restrictions, and economic viability. Participants emphasized that practices must be adapted to regional realities rather than a one-size-fits-all model.

- Phase 2 includes an introductory Guide to Regenerative Agriculture aimed to providing a broad audience with an overview of regenerative agriculture, its growing significance, and key principles. The guide will also address structural challenges that must be resolved to facilitate wider adoption.
- A second component of the report will provide a more detailed review of existing RA standards, assessing their feasibility for implementation across various farming systems, as identified in Phase 1.
- Participants debated whether ICAC should take a leadership role in defining Regen Ag standards for cotton or focus on guiding best practices and data collection.

Action Points

- Finalize and publish the second part of the Regenerative Agriculture Report.
- Establish ICAC's leadership role in Regenerative Agriculture, with a focus on defining key principles for cotton farming, including soil health, climate resilience, and greenhouse gas reduction.

4. Water Use in Cotton Production

- Cotton's water consumption is often misrepresented, leading to misconceptions about the cotton industry amongst consumers and retailers and brands especially.
- Updating a concise, executive-level fact sheet on water use efficiency, particularly for trade and policy audiences.
 - For example, cotton occupies 2.38% of global arable land but uses only 1.8% of irrigation water, a crucial fact to highlight in advocacy materials.

Action Points

- SEEP to update the White Paper on Water Use in Cotton Production, incorporating data from ICAC studies and reports. This updated resource will provide high-level talking points for non-experts to address common misconceptions.

5. Greenhouse Gas Emissions & Carbon Footprint

- Increasing demand for GHG emissions data, certifications, and verifiable impact assessments for cotton production.
- A need for reliable measurement frameworks and how ICAC can align with existing industry standards.

Action Points

- SEEP to explore reliable measurement frameworks for carbon footprint, sequestration, and emissions reduction, as well as existing industry standards and how ICAC can align with them.

6. Next Steps & Action Points

Allan Williams thanked all members and observers for their active participation and valuable contributions during the meeting. The meeting was officially adjourned at 10:30 am (Tashkent time).