

## ICAC 83<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Meeting

Crafting National Textiles Policies  
that Encourage Innovation and  
Enhance Global Competitiveness

Alison Ward, CEO,  
CottonConnect





# Overview of CottonConnect

Founded in **2009**

Mission: Powering Resilient Supply Chains

**25+** brands

**800,000+** farmers trained

**REEL Standards:** Certified Cotton

**TraceBale:** Farm group to fashion Lint equivalent of 503 million t-shirts of traced

## COUNTRIES OF OPERATION



## PROGRAMMES



## FOCUS AREAS



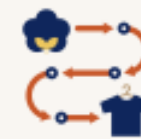
Environment



Climate



Livelihoods



Traceability



HRDD



# Regulation

EU Led regulations are triggering a global shift, making transparency and circularity a mandatory business requirement rather than an option.

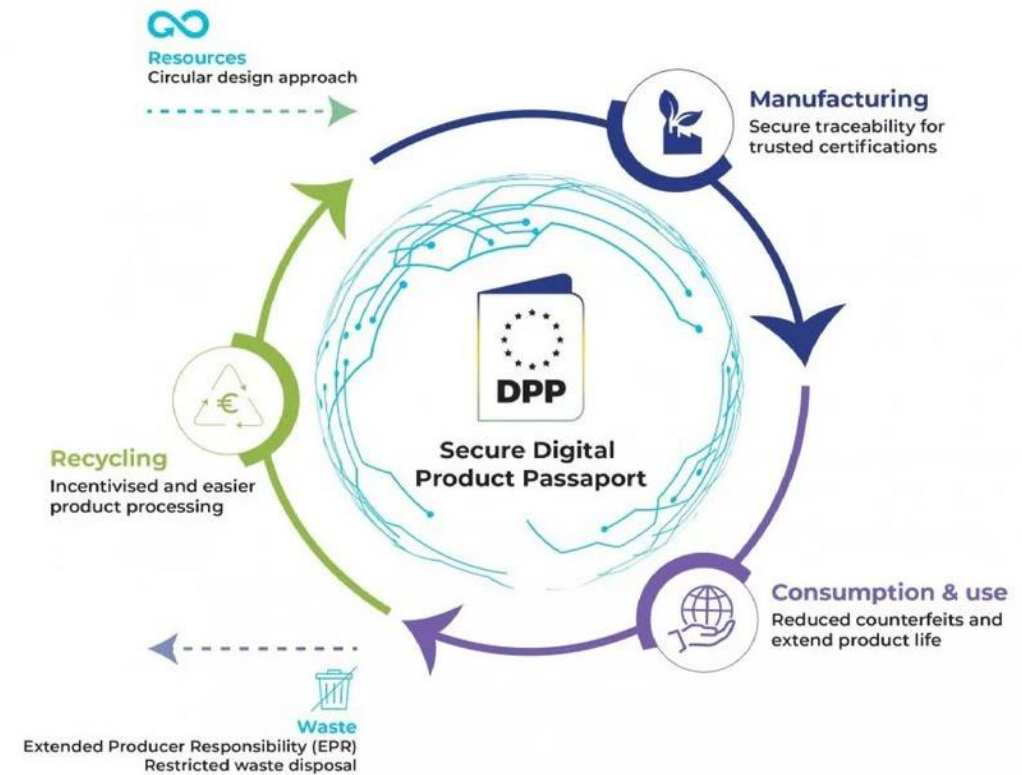
**Digital Product Passport (DPP)** – This is set to become mandatory for all textiles sold in the EU (expected 2026–2030)

## Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):

This circular design approach focuses on restricted waste disposal and incentivized recycling

## Key Legislative Drivers:

- ❖ **EU Green Claims Directive:** Prohibits "green" claims unless evidence applies to the entire product lifecycle.
- ❖ **CSDDD:** Legally obligates companies to mitigate human rights and environmental risks in their supply chain.
- ❖ **US Reporting:** Includes the SEC Climate Disclosure Rules and California's Climate Corporate Data Accountability Act (CCDAA).





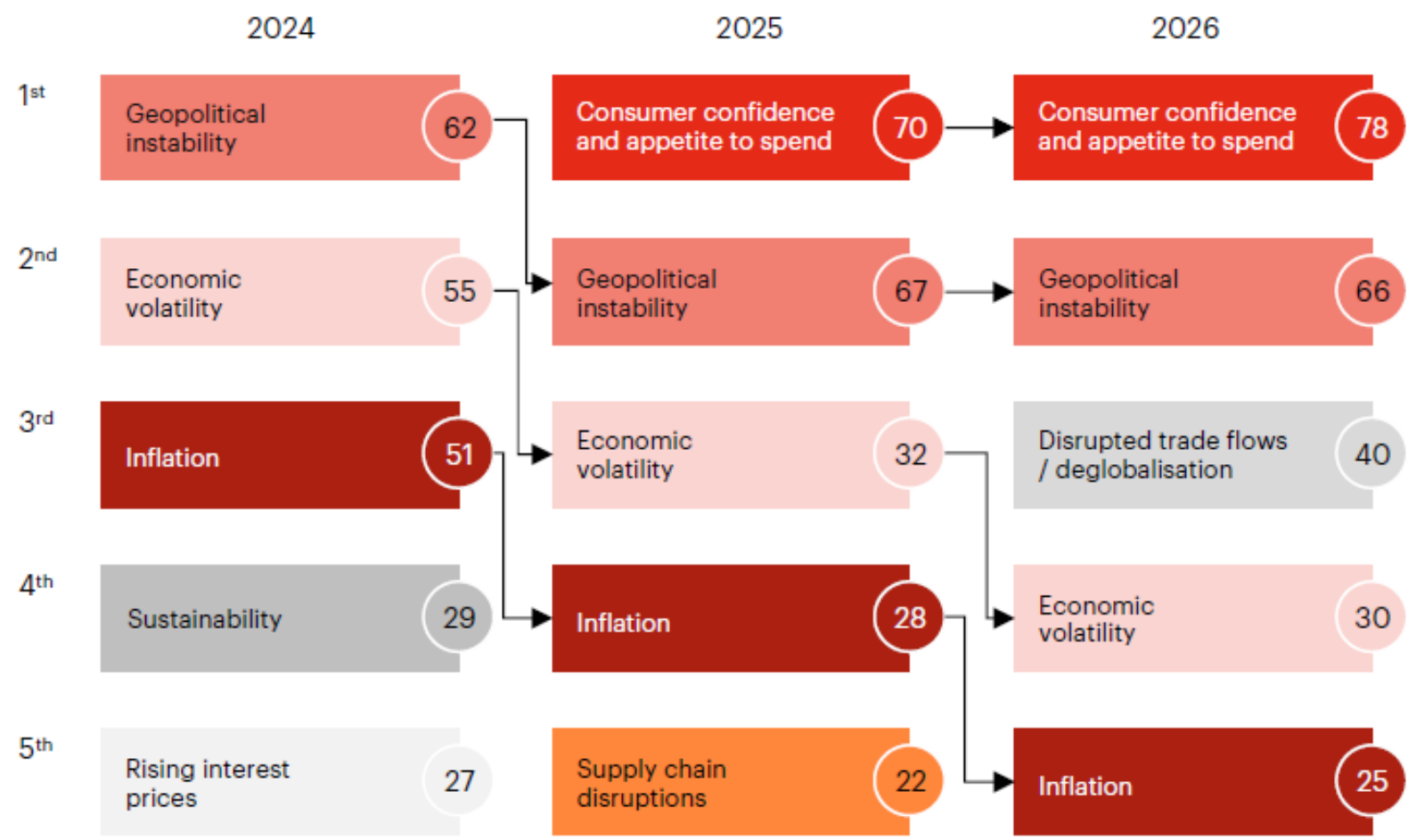
# Global Shifts

Question: What aspects of the global economy do you expect will be the greatest risks to growth in the fashion industry in [year]? Select three, %



## The State of Fashion 2026

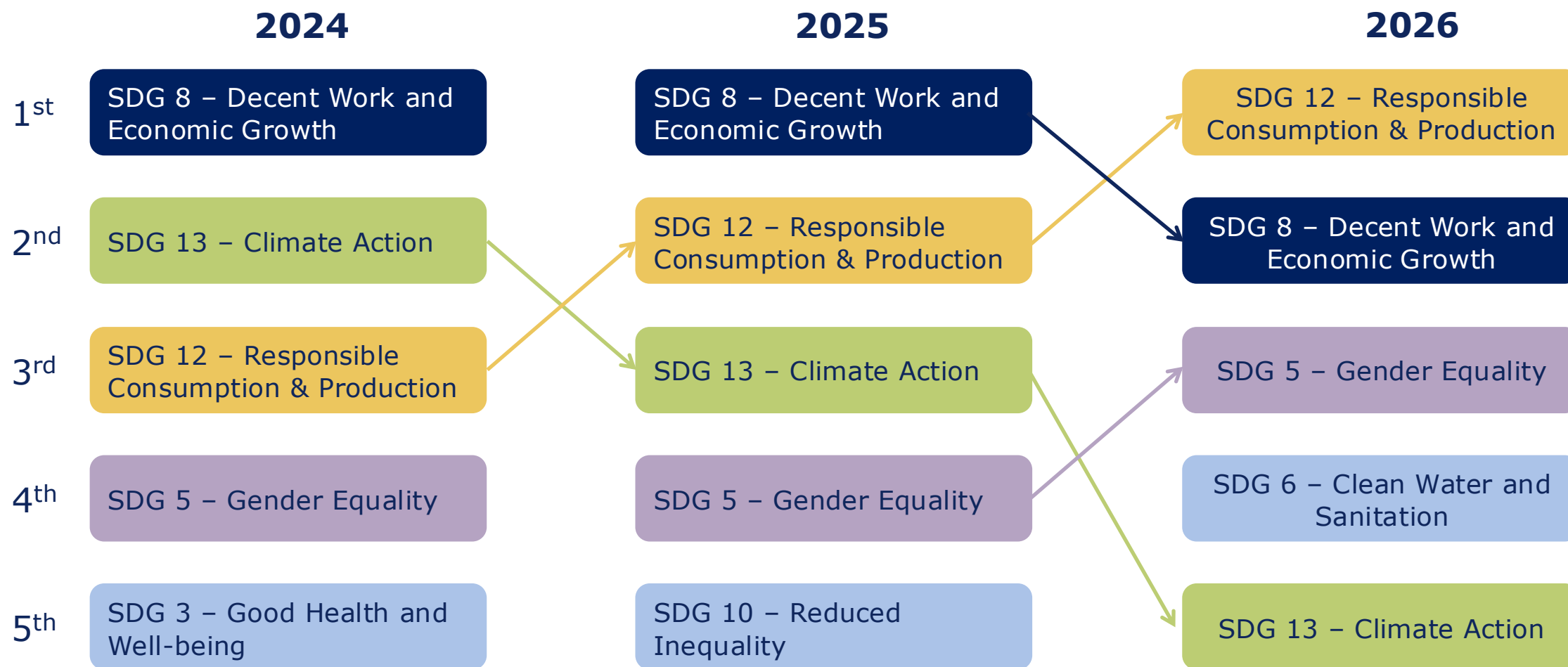
BoF McKinsey & Company



Source: BoF-McKinsey State of Fashion Executive Survey 2024, 2025 and 2026

# Customer's Company Focus

Sustainable Development Goals - New focuses in 2026





# Cotton critical factors



## Certification

As the base for any claim



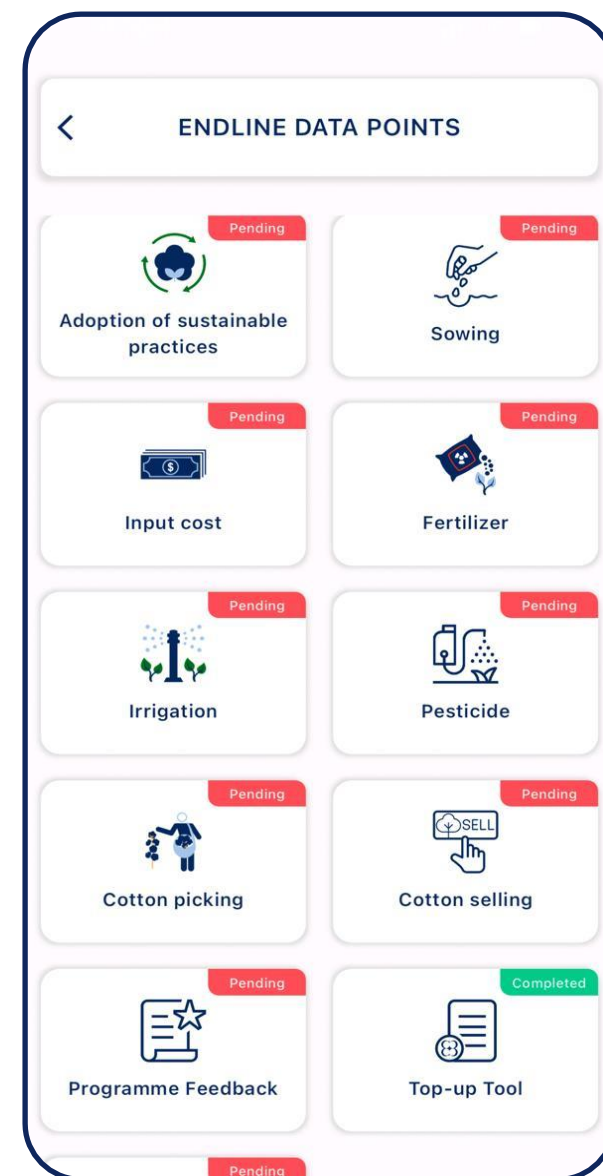
## Verified data

Open-source data access and ready for integration with EU data



## Effective traceability

Unique IDs at every stage, from farm group to ginner, spinner, and garment manufacturer.



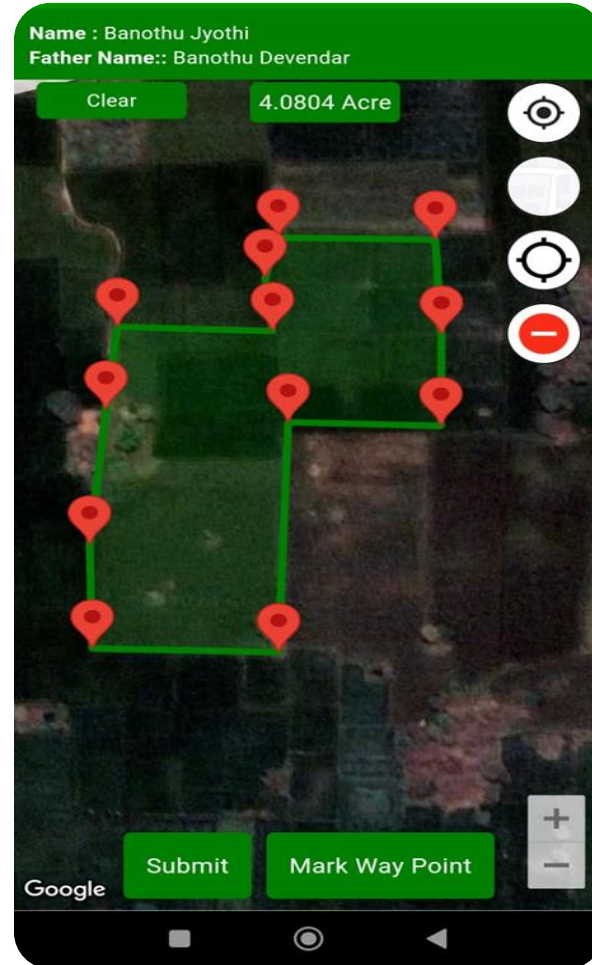


## Cotton critical factors contd...

### Advanced Verification Mechanisms:

- ❖ Evidence Based
  - Geo Tagging
  - AI Crop ID
  - Digital chain of custody etc.
  
- ❖ Advanced DNA markers such as Haelixa

# Haelixa





# The Regenerative Revolution

- ❖ Agriculture contributes to **30% GHG emissions\***
- ❖ Promote carbon sequestration – **4 bn acres** of cultivated farmland – **0.5 to 1.2 metric gigatons\*** (Gt) of CO<sub>2</sub> annually possible
- ❖ Over **50 of the 79 mega food and retail corporations** (contributing to over USD 3 trillion including PepsiCo, Nestle, Unilever) embracing regenerative agriculture

## Opportunity for Cotton

- ❖ Building resilience against climate instability while diversifying farmer incomes.



*\*McKinsey Report on building food and agriculture businesses for a green future*



# Engineering for High Value

To enhance competitiveness, national policies must incentivize fibers meeting specific high-value properties:

- ❖ **Staple Length and Strength**
- ❖ **Micronaire (Fineness and Maturity)**
- ❖ **Colour and Trash Content**

Cross-functional research from seed to harvest ensures the availability of sustainably sourced fibers with guaranteed technical specs.





# Collaborative Roadmap

Integrated multi stakeholder approach

- ❖ Governmental Role
- ❖ Brand Leadership
- ❖ Supply Chain Partners





“Doing less bad is not the same as doing more good. (...) Don't think about minimising the footprint of a person or society. Think about a beneficial footprint. Efficiency as insufficient, but we honor the transitional state. Committing to continuous improvement is the beginning of a great journey”

**WILLIAM MCDONOUGH**

THE UPCYCLE: BEYOND SUSTAINABILITY—DESIGNING FOR ABUNDANCE (2013)