

Organic Cotton Round Table

Terms of Reference

August 2020

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Disclaimer: The Terms of Reference of the Organic Cotton Round Table are subject to regular reviews by its Steering Committee.

About the Organic Cotton Round Table

Textile Exchange's Organic Cotton Round Table (OCRT) was established in 2012 when the organization declared a Call to Action prompted by a decline in organic cotton production in spite of growing demand. Every year since its inception, the OCRT has held a one day, in-person meeting alongside Textile Exchange's annual Textile Sustainability Conference. The global OCRT summit has always been highly interactive and action-oriented and is typically attended by 150-200 individuals including farmer representatives, manufacturers, brands, retailers, traders, NGOs, and trade associations. The OCRT quickly became the primary place and space for stakeholders to get together to hear more about issues facing the organic cotton sector, to diagnose these issues and, most importantly, find ways to take action.

The OCRT initially focused on addressing key challenges in the stability and sustainability of the organic cotton sector at a global level through the lens of three workstreams: Business Models, Seed and Soils, and Consumer Engagement. Under these workstreams, the OCRT identified a number of initiatives and has either catalyzed, or been an incubator for, their development. Such initiatives include the [Organic Cotton Accelerator](#), the [Chetna Coalition](#), [aboutorganiccotton.org](#) (a microsite dedicated to organic cotton), an inventory of non-GMO seed availability, and the [OCRT Innovation Award](#).

After a number of years of approaching barriers to growth in organic cotton at the global level, the need to customize strategies at the regional level become increasingly apparent. Ultimately, the same issues and opportunities exist for all, but each region is at a different stage of development and therefore requires a different strategy, alongside designated resources and networks of supporters. As a result, the Regional OCRT model was born in 2017. So far, Regional OCRTs have been held in [Turkey \(2017, 2018\)](#), [Burkina Faso \(2018 and 2020\)](#), and [China \(2019\)](#).

The latest component of the OCRT is the launch of an online community (OCRT HUB) in September 2020, which will enable dialogues to continue throughout the year and reach a wider audience. As for the other Round Tables of Textile Exchange, the online community of the OCRT is hosted on Textile Exchange's online membership portal, the HUB. Accompanying the OCRT HUB is the [OCRT suite of webpages on Textile Exchange's website](#), which is used to communicate information about OCRT outcomes, current activities, and future plans.

Vision

The vision of the OCRT builds on that of Textile Exchange. We envision a global organic cotton sector that protects and restores the environment and enhances lives.

Purpose

The purpose of the OCRT is to bring the organic cotton community together to be inspired, mobilized, and equipped to meet our vision in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Objectives

- Address the barriers to growth of organic cotton production and consumption.
- Improve the sustainability of the organic cotton industry.
- Give a voice to all stakeholders across the organic cotton industry and build understanding of the needs and expectations of these different stakeholder groups.
- Catalyze collective action and cross-sector and -region partnerships, particularly with organizations working on the ground.

Scope

The scope of the OCRT is to:

- Connect.
- Educate.
- Facilitate sharing of best-practices between regions and projects.
- Identify barriers to growth, common opportunities, and challenges.
- Support and incubate new ideas.
- Catalyze collective action.

How we add value

The OCRT adds value to the organic cotton community by providing an inclusive place for all stakeholders to come together.

The OCRT is pre-competitive and collaborative. It acts as a catalyzer for action, partnering with organizations across the world and the textile industry.

Building on a community approach, the OCRT addresses the key barriers to growth by triggering experience sharing and collective action across regions and projects.

The OCRT operates through a number of activities at both global and regional levels, including the OCRT Online Community, the OCRT Global and Regional in-person Summits, and Working Groups operating virtually under the OCRT.

Structure and Membership

Convener	Textile Exchange
Eligibility	Membership of the OCRT is enabled by submitting a request online and agreeing to abide by the OCRT Membership Requirements.
Composition and representation	Stakeholders of the organic cotton sector include suppliers, brands, NGOs, research institutions, public organizations, and other relevant actors.
Membership Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing time and expertise during participation in OCRT activities. • Working openly and collaboratively to meet the objectives of the OCRT, sharing best practices and lessons learned. • Non-disclosure and confidentiality of shared information within the group and compliance with all applicable antitrust and anti-competitive laws, including, without limitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treating any information that is shared as part of any OCRT meeting or activity in accordance with the Chatham House Rule (<i>Participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.</i>); ○ That none of the information shared as part of the OCRT may be used to cause competitive injury or disadvantage to another OCRT member, participant, Textile Exchange or the OCRT; and ○ Abstaining from any conversations or activities that may restrict competition or set prices. • Refraining from using any information obtained through the OCRT, other than to advance the objectives of the OCRT and in no event to disparage OCRT Members, their products, practices, businesses, or their reputations.
Governance structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OCRT Steering Committee¹ governs the OCRT and oversees its strategy. • Textile Exchange OCRT team members coordinate and support the OCRT activities.
Means of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Online Community of the OCRT (OCRT HUB)² • OCRT Global and Regional Summits • Working Groups operating under the OCRT

¹ The OCRT Steering Committee provides oversight to the activities and is in charge of ensuring delivery of its outputs and outcomes. Established at the start of 2019 by members of the former Board of Textile Exchange Europe, the OCRT Steering Committee comprises a multi-stakeholder group of individuals with a strong geographic spread who are committed to the OCRT's mission.

The eligibility criteria to the OCRT Steering Committee are stipulated in its own Terms of References.

² The OCRT HUB the virtual home of the OCRT. It is an interactive platform, open to all and hosted on Textile Exchange's Hub. The OCRT HUB connects virtually the OCRT community, keeping OCRT conversations and momentum going through the year. Participation in the OCRT HUB is by agreeing with the OCRT Membership Requirements and Textile Exchange Hub's Community Rules and Etiquette.