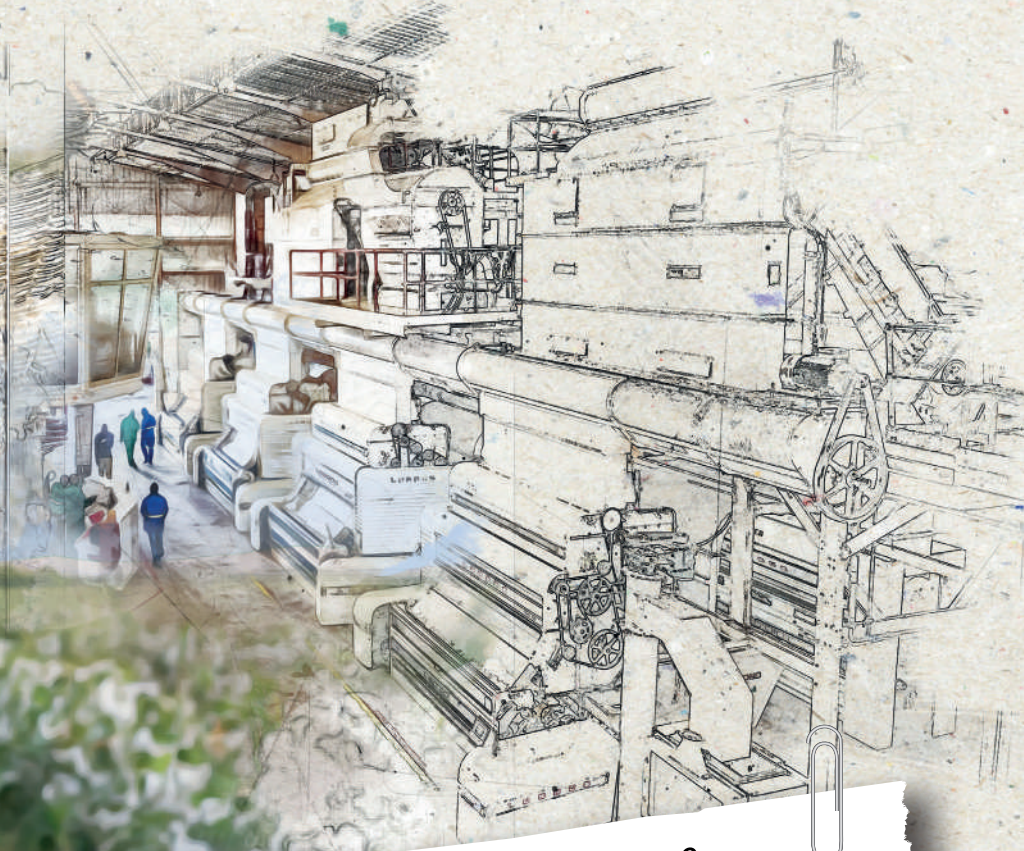




The culture of white gold



*Sustainability report*  
2021/2022 AND 2022/2023 CAMPAIGNS







# Cotton for development



The culture of white gold

- 01 - Foreword
- 02 - Interview with the General manager
- 03 - Who are we ?
- 04 - Our approach to sustainability
- 05 - Our first pillar
- 06 - Our second pillar
- 07 - Our third pillar



## 6 FOREWORD

**# A difficult socio-economic and environmental context for the cotton sector in Côte d'Ivoire**

## 8 INTERVIEW WITH THE GENERAL MANAGER

**# Demonstrating innovation to improve productivity and quality, mobilising to create stronger, more resilient cotton-growing communities, and transforming to preserve the environment and combat climate change**

## 12 WHO ARE WE ?

**# A long-standing company in the cotton sector**

## 22 OUR APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

**# Supporting the development of north-west Côte d'Ivoire through cotton production and making sustainability our daily priority**





# Content



## 32 OUR FIRST PILLAR

### 33 # Doing business responsibly and sustainably

34 **Commitment 1** : Place ethics and sustainability at the heart of our corporate strategy

40 **Commitment 2** : Accelerate our transformation to become a benchmark for quality and innovation in the cotton sector

## 46 OUR SECOND PILLAR

### 47 # Supporting workers and local communities

48 **Commitment 3** : Improve employment conditions and protect fundamental human rights in the supply chain

54 **Commitment 4** : Strengthen our local roots by supporting the socio-economic development of the regions in which we operate

## 58 OUR THIRD PILLAR

### 59 # preserving the environment and combating climate change

60 **Commitment 5** : Responsible management of industrial units to reduce our environmental footprint

66 **Commitment 6** : Innovate to support the development of sustainable agriculture in cotton-growing areas





# Foreword


## A difficult socio-economic and environmental context for the cotton sector in Côte d'Ivoire

The last two years have been marked by a number of events that have brought with them social, economic, and financial challenges on an unprecedented scale.

We have experienced a massive infestation of a new species of jassid (insect pest), which has led to a 54% drop in national cotton production, from 539,623 tonnes in 2021-2022 to 236,183 tonnes in the 2022-2023 season.

Similarly, we faced a sharp rise in fertiliser prices, due to inflation linked to the Russian-Ukrainian war.





In addition, the effects of climate change have intensified. These are characterised by less favourable rainfall, sometimes insufficient or excessive. This is detrimental to the development of the cotton plant, encourages the development of parasites and affects the quality of the cotton in the event of abundant and prolonged rainfall at the end of the crop cycle.

Finally, in the face of the current enthusiasm for growing maize due to the upturn in prices, the cotton sector has seen a decline in the number of growers and in cotton-sown areas.

Despite this difficult context, we have maintained our position as leader in cotton production in Côte d'Ivoire and we have continued our transformation, through social and environmental innovation, to meet new needs and challenges, and to be a benchmark for quality in our industry.

More broadly, we have been working with our farmers to help them cope with this crisis, and we have continued to contribute to improving living standards in their communities.

This enables us to move forward together, and to build a reassuring future in which every ambition can flourish over the long term.



# Interview with the General manager



Jean-Charles Sigrist







**Demonstrating innovation to improve productivity and quality, mobilising to create stronger, more resilient cotton-growing communities, and transforming to preserve the environment and combat climate change**

**At the end of 2023, where are you in implementing your sustainability policy ?**

We have come a long way since we launched our sustainability policy in 2021.

A few workshops were organised in 2022 to unite and empower employees around this novel approach. A roadmap has also been drawn up, setting out the priorities identified and the actions to be implemented by Ivoire Coton.

In this context, many projects are currently being implemented. These include the launch of the Net Zero Carbon Plan to reduce our carbon footprint and the Digit Agri application to improve transparency in our supply chain.

As part of our desire to place social responsibility at the heart of our business strategy and development model, we have also maintained our alignment with the industry's two highest standards. We have therefore renewed our CmiA (Cotton made in Africa) certification for the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 harvests, and we are in the process of obtaining the new Better Cotton certification for part of our cotton production.

The preparation of this second sustainability report is also part of this policy. Drawing on best practice in non-financial reporting, it gives readers a detailed account of all the projects and initiatives we have undertaken over the last two campaigns.



**In a difficult socio-economic and environmental context for the cotton industry, what actions has Ivoire Coton taken over the last two years to fulfil its ambition of "serving the development of north-west Côte d'Ivoire through cotton production" ?**

The cotton sector in Côte d'Ivoire has faced major challenges in recent years that have had a negative impact on its performance, including attacks by a new species of pest, rising fertiliser prices and meteorological incidents.

Against this backdrop, and in order to fulfil our ambition to serve the development of north-west Côte d'Ivoire through cotton production, we have had to innovate to improve productivity and quality. We have stepped up our efforts to create stronger, more resilient cotton-growing communities, and we have accelerated our transformation to preserve the environment and combat climate change.

First, we have been more than ever involved in the field, working alongside growers to tackle the jassid crisis, and we have scrupulously followed the recommendations of the industry bodies in terms of product choice and frequency of phytosanitary treatment.

Various investments have been made and new production and maintenance policies and procedures have been introduced in our factories to enable us to be more efficient and produce better quality cotton.

We have also introduced new measures to encourage producers to produce better quality seed cotton, helping them to prosper at the same time. These include the introduction of a uniformity premium, improved technical guidance and increased awareness campaigns.

We have initiated new projects to speed up the mechanisation of farmers and thus reduce the arduousness of their work. We have also pursued our community initiatives, notably to improve access to roads and water.

Finally, we have continued to cooperate with players in the sector to share more experience in research and innovation, and we have become involved in the 'Quality Cotton Origin Côte d'Ivoire' project to improve the Côte d'Ivoire origin, in particular by drawing up a procedures manual in 2024.

**The effects of climate change are increasingly being felt in Côte d'Ivoire and around the world. What have you done to improve your impact in this area?**

Indeed, Côte d'Ivoire is not spared from climate change and the unpredictable weather phenomena associated with it.

Cotton cultivation in Côte d'Ivoire nevertheless has a lower environmental impact than that practiced in America or Asia. Its cultivation without irrigation (rainfed), with little fertilizer, few insecticides and herbicides consumed per hectare as well as non-GMO seeds, contributes less to global warming and degrades to a lesser extent soil health and biodiversity. Nonetheless, improvements can be made.



This is why the preservation of the environment and the fight against climate change constitute one of the pillars of our sustainability policy, and we have been particularly active in this area during the last two campaigns.

Indeed, in line with the commitments of our shareholder The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), we have been recording our emissions since 2021 and launched in 2023 the Net Zero Carbon Plan, an ambitious programme to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

We have planned investments of 1.4 billion FCFA in energy efficiency projects, sustainable transport, and waste management, to enable us to achieve a reduction of 2,077 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2030.

Likewise, we continued our approach to restoring the soils and sustainable management of land fertility, by encouraging farmers to adopt practices that are more respectful of environment such as crop rotation, use of organic fertilizers, compost and cover crops.

We have also undertaken several innovations in this direction, such as the experimentation of Biochar, the implementation of the project "G-FERTILIS" to improve soil health and the "MecaWat" project to ensure the development of agroecological systems.



### **Traceability of the supply chain is at the heart of sustainability issues. What are you doing to improve knowledge and monitoring of cotton producers?**

At a time when Western textile companies are seeking to ban cotton from their supply chains that comes from irresponsible practices in response to consumer concerns, the issue of traceability has become a key challenge for our industry.

At Ivoire Coton, we take this issue very seriously and have been working on improving the traceability of our supply chain for quite a few years.

We systematically geolocate farmers' plots. Equipped with GPS devices, agricultural advisors can measure the surface area of farms and cross-reference their census with the declarations made by farmers.

As part of the Sub-Saharan Cotton Initiative (SSCI) funded by GIZ (German Development Cooperation), we are participating in the Cotton4Impact project, which aims to support production traceability in the cotton value chain by the end of 2024.

This helped us to set up a mobile application called Digit Agri in 2023, which enables us to digitise the recording of agricultural operations and credits, improve communication between supervisors and producers, and ensure traceability of cotton production.

Our cotton supply chain is now 100% traceable and digital.



Who are we ?

A long-standing company in the cotton sector



# Our profile

## History

1998

### Acquisition of the north-west lot

Following the Côte d'Ivoire government's decision to withdraw from production activities on the one hand, and to liberalise the cotton sector on the other hand, the north-west lot was acquired in 1998 by the consortium formed by the IPS (WA) and Paul Reinhart AG, a Swiss cotton trading company.

August  
1998

### Creation of the Ivoire Coton company

On 23 August 1998, creation of Ivoire Coton, a company with a capital of FCFA 15,122,000,000 owned by FILTISAC (42%), Paul Reinhart AG (26%), IPS (WA) (17%) and DEG (15%), a German bank (subsidiary of KFW), which was replaced in 2016 by Oikocredit.

June  
2008

### Acquisition of the M'Bengue factory

In June 2008, further to the liquidation of LCCL, Ivoire Coton acquired the M'Bengue lot, and created an operating company called M'Bengue Coton, an affiliate of Ivoire Coton.

June  
2012

### M'bengue Coton merges with Ivoire Coton

M'Bengue Coton merged with Ivoire Coton on June 22, 2012.

Ivoire Coton now comprises the industrial units at Boundiali 1, Boundiali 2, Dianra and M'Bengue, as well as the movable and immovable assets of the Boundiali, Dianra, Odiene and M'Bengue Regional Divisions.

## About us

Founded in 1998, Ivoire Coton is a historic company born of the liberalisation of the cotton industry and the undisputed leader in cotton production in Côte d'Ivoire.

We are based in the north-west of Côte d'Ivoire and operate in the production and processing of seed cotton, as well as the marketing of its products.

Our company is one of the largest socio-economic operators in the areas where it operates. Through our activities, we contribute to the development of farms and their organisations and improve the quality of life of rural communities.

All fibre production is Cotton made in Africa (CmiA) certified, ensuring that our company aims to promote the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of cotton production in Africa, while delivering tangible benefits to farmers, businesses and consumers.

We are also present in Burkina Faso, through our subsidiary Faso Coton.

Ivoire Coton is a member of APROCOT-CI (Professional Association of Cotton Companies of Ivory Coast), UGECI (Union of Large Industrial Companies of Ivory Coast), ACF (African Cotton Foundation) and AFCOT (French Cotton Association).

## Key figures

During the 2021-2022 season, we provided agricultural support to 45,543 cotton growers covering 154,142 hectares of cotton. We produced 167,116 tonnes of seed cotton, representing a turnover of 85.068 billion FCFA.

The 2022-2023 cotton season was marked by a massive infestation of jassids. As a result, we recorded a significant drop in our cotton production, with a cultivated area of 128,441 hectares for a total of 34,746 farmers. We processed 93,048 tonnes of seed cotton. This represents a turnover of FCFA 55.036 billion.

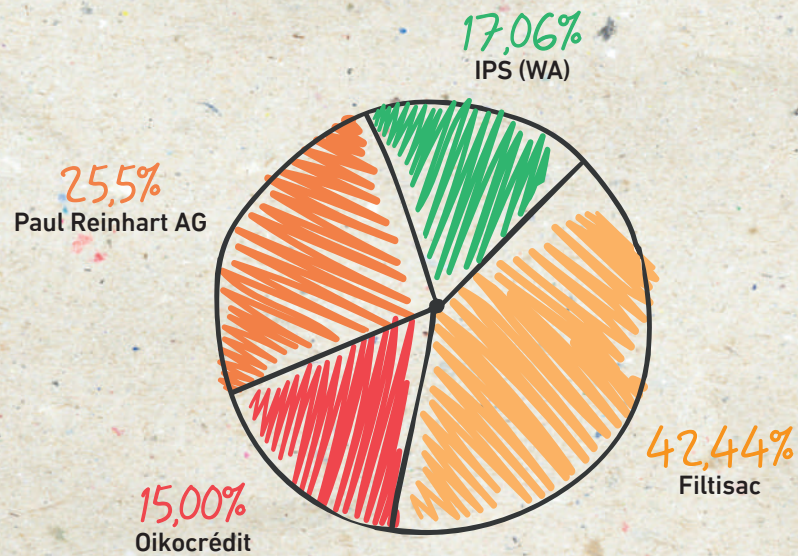
At the end of 2023, we had 495 permanent employees; we used 687 seasonal employees for the 2021-2022 campaign and 646 employees for the 2022-2023 campaign.

### 2021/2022 CAMPAIGN

**45 543** cotton growers supervised  
**154,142** hectares of cotton grown  
**167,116** tonnes of seed cotton processed  
**68,800** tonnes of cotton lint marketed  
 FCFA **85.068** billion turnover  
**485** permanent employees  
**687** seasonal employees

### 2022/2023 CAMPAIGN

**34,746** cotton growers supervised  
**128,441** hectares of cotton grown  
**93,048** tonnes of seed cotton processed  
**39,204** tonnes of cotton lint sold  
 FCFA **55.036** billion turnover  
**495** permanent employees  
**646** seasonal employees



## Shareholding

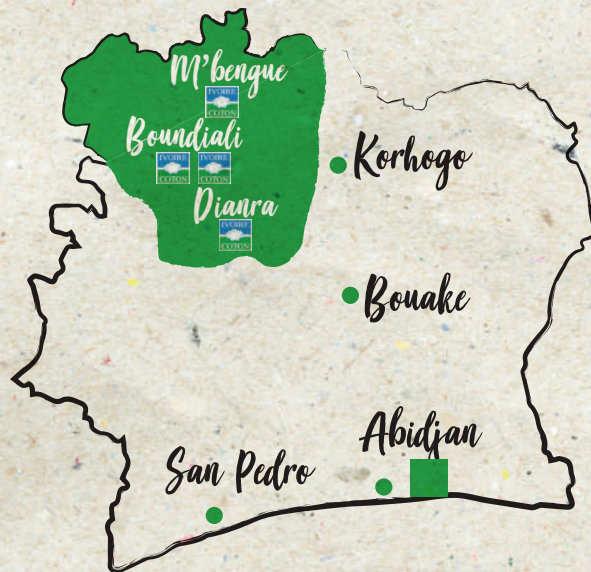
Ivoire Coton has a solid and diversified shareholder structure.

Our reference shareholder is Filtisac, a natural fibre sack manufacturer and subsidiary of IPS (WA), launched in 1965 to support the growth of coffee and cocoa exports from Côte d'Ivoire.

Another pillar of our shareholding is Industrial Promotion Services (West Africa), the institution of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED), whose mission is to promote private initiative and support economically viable businesses in developing countries.

Paul Reinhart AG is also one of our historic shareholders. It is a Swiss international cotton trading company founded in 1788.

Finally, the Dutch cooperative ethical investment company, Oikocredit, took a stake in our capital in 2016, following DEG's departure from the shareholding.



## Our locations

Ivoire Coton's agricultural and industrial support activities are located in the north-west of Côte d'Ivoire, on the border with Guinea and Mali.

In this region, we provided support for 45,543 cotton growers grouped into 1,287 Professional Agricultural Organisations (PAOs) during the 2021/2022 season, and 34,746 cotton growers organised into 1,117 PAOs for the 2022/2023 season.

They come from over 900 villages in a total of 16 departments.

The cotton ginning factories, technical support units (garages and workshops) and regional offices are based in Boundiali, Dianra and M'Benoue.

Our head office is based in Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire. This is where our company's general management and support functions are based.

Fibre is graded at the Single Classification Center of Ivory Coast (3-CCI) in Bouaké.

The cotton we export is shipped to the ports of San Pedro and Abidjan.



# Our development model

## Overview of our value chain

Ivoire Coton oversees agricultural production, logistics and the processing of cotton in north-west Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the marketing of seed and fibre, both locally and for export.



## Supervision of agricultural production

Ivoire Coton provides comprehensive support to farmers through the implementation of the following activities :

### **1. Producer census**

We identify and list growers' intentions in terms of surface area, as well as their input requirements.

To do this, we take into account the technical results of previous campaigns and the capacities and potential of growers.

### **2. Distribution of agricultural inputs and equipment on credit**

Ivoire Coton supplies farmers with inputs, agricultural equipment, and oxen for ploughing.

We pre-finance most of their expenditure, backed by a credit policy that takes account of the producer's ability to repay.

Short-term loans for agricultural inputs are repaid over one year, while medium-term loans for equipment and oxen are repaid over two or three years to help reduce farmers' operating costs. Loans following the sale of motorised chains represent larger amounts and are repaid over the long term, over a minimum of five years.

### **3. Consulting and training**

Each year, Ivoire Coton improves the technical course to provide advice and technical training to producers with a view to continuously improving yields and quality, and consequently their income.

## **ORGANISATION**

To ensure agricultural supervision, Ivoire Coton has set up a local organisation within the Agricultural Production Department.

It was organised into regions (four in total) and subdivided into zones (fifteen in total), which were themselves made up of sections managed by agricultural advisers.

To achieve this, Ivoire Coton employs more than 300 permanent staff who are in direct contact with producers and cooperatives and are responsible for supporting them at every stage of the agricultural campaign.

### **4. Farm modernisation**

Ivoire Coton places particular emphasis on modernising farms by equipping large farmers with motorised chains. It is also pursuing a sustained policy of equipping farmers with oxen and equipment to further develop ploughing.

We have also incorporated sustainable soil fertility management into our support policy, by encouraging the production and input of organic matter, as well as the promotion of erosion control techniques.

### **5. Research & Development**

The Technical Support Department and its attached departments, mainly the Research and Innovation Department and the Farm Modernisation Department, carry out experiments designed to produce economically and ecologically viable solutions for farmers.

Numerous national and international public and private partnerships have been forged to encourage Research & Development, the transfer of skills and expertise, and the sharing of best practice in cotton production and processing.

Ivoire Coton also has a 15-hectare Observation Post (OP) dedicated exclusively to agricultural research and development.



## Agricultural logistics

**We maintain bush shops for storing inputs and rural tracks to facilitate the collection and transport of seed cotton from villages to factories.**

**The evacuation of cotton begins after the harvest, mainly in the last decade of October and is generally completed by April.**

### **6. Maintenance of bush shops**

The 'magasins brousse' (bush shops) are shops for storing inputs (seeds, fertilisers, insecticides, herbicides, etc.) located in the villages or main towns of the Ivoire Coton support zones; some shops belong to the OPAs (Professional Agricultural Organisations), and others are owned by Ivoire Coton.

Each year, Ivoire Coton provides maintenance for these bush shops to the tune of 150 million FCFA.

### **7. Maintenance of cotton tracks**

To facilitate the collection of seed cotton and the delivery of agricultural inputs to the villages, we conduct a track maintenance programme each season using our own funds. This activity is normally the responsibility of the State.

Every year, Ivoire Coton spends between 200 and 250 million CFA francs on maintaining cotton tracks and reprofiling certain major roads.

### **8. Collection**

The seed cotton produced by the growers is stuffed into tarpaulins weighing an average of around 200 kg. Each grower has his cotton stuffed, weighed, and loaded onto a lorry.

The lorry is accompanied by a set of documents to ensure the traceability of the seed cotton. One of the documents shows, for a given lorry, the list of names of producers who have sold, their surface area, the number of tarpaulins and the quantity sold. The document also

contains information about the village and the cooperative, signed by the parties involved (agricultural adviser and OPA representative).

This stage is supervised by a marketing committee, which ensures that the activity runs smoothly. The committee is made up of cooperative managers and the agricultural adviser.

### **9. Transport**

Some of the cotton is transported by Ivoire Coton.

At the Boundiali 1 factory, 10% of seed cotton is transported by the Ivoire Coton rolling stock and 90% by the private sector. At the Boundiali 2, Dianra and M'Bengue mills, 35% of seed cotton is transported by the Ivoire Coton rolling stock and 65% by the private sector.

All sites have a fuel station and a weighbridge.

### **10. Weighing**

Once the lorry has been taken to the factory for ginning, it is weighed to obtain the factory weight, which is generally higher than the weight obtained on the market.

### **11. Payment**

Once the cotton has been weighed at the factory, Ivoire Coton publishes the purchase listing with the choice, quantity, and value of the seed cotton. The listing is then sent to the zone for processing, which consists of deducting the agricultural credit from the gross value of the cotton in order to obtain the net amount to be paid to the OPA (producers).

The net income paid to cotton growers takes account of their agricultural credit.

Payment is by cheque issued by the regional office.



## Seed cotton processing

**Industrial activities include cotton ginning, cleaning, packaging, marking and storage.**

**These activities are carried out at the Boundiali, Dianra and M'Bengue ginning complexes. The Boundiali ginning complex comprises two factories.**

**Technical support units at the plants maintain the rolling stock and industrial equipment throughout the company. They comprise a central garage in Boundiali, two garage branches, one in Dianra and the other in M'Bengue, and a mechanical workshop in Boundiali.**

### **12. Ginning**

During the ginning process, the cotton fibre is separated from the seed.

### **13. Cleaning**

The cotton fibres are then cleaned to remove small impurities.

### **14. Packaging**

Once cleaned, the cotton fibres are compressed to form cotton bales.

### **15. Marking**

The cotton bales are then marked.

### **16. Storage**

Before being marketed, cotton fibre and seed cotton are stored in the ginning complexes.

Each plant has several warehouses for storing the fibre and hoppers for the seeds.

Uncovered surfaces are also used to store the fibre safely (fire hydrants or RIAs nearby).



## Marketing of semi-finished products

**Marketing includes sales, transit, and claims management.**

### 17. Sale

Cotton fibre represents just over 40% of the volume of the product marketed but around 85% of sales. Cottonseed accounts for just over 50% of the volume of products sold, but only around 15% of sales.

99% of the cotton fibre is sold for export to a list of traders (buyers of raw materials) approved by its Board of Directors, the vast majority of whom are based in Europe.

The seed is sold to national oil mills. Some is also kept for seed.

Sales are made exclusively by tender based on market indices (dollar and euro exchange rates, cotton index on the New York futures market and the Liverpool COTLOOK indices).

Sales are made under the European General Regulation (EGR), and Ivoire Coton has been a member of the French Cotton Association (AFCOT) since 1998.

### 18. Transit

Ivoire Coton manages the evacuation of the fibre to the ports of San-Pédro and Abidjan.

To do this, we use forwarding agents who transport the cotton to Europe by sea.

### 19. Claims management

The Sales Department is responsible for receiving, processing, and monitoring complaints. It ensures that all complaints are dealt with within no more than 48 hours, as formalised in the complaints handling procedure.

Complaints about the quality of cotton fibre exported are systematically investigated at the port, which is mandated by Ivoire Coton to ensure that they are admissible with a view to compensation.

One claim has been registered for the 2021-2022 campaign, and two for the 2022-2023 campaign.

### MAIN CUSTOMERS





Our approach  
to sustainability



Supporting the development  
of north-west Côte d'Ivoire  
through cotton production and  
making sustainability our daily  
priority

## The socio-economic impact of the Ivorian cotton sector



**236.178** TONNES

The level reached by seed cotton production in 2022-2023, i.e. a production of 100,129 tonnes of fiber.



**411.262** HECTARES

The area cultivated in cotton, representing one of the most important crops in the country in 2022-2023.



**5<sup>th</sup>**

The Rank of Côte d'Ivoire, as a cotton producer in Africa for the 2022-2023 season.



**2.7** MILLION

The number of people who make a living from cotton, including 106,667 producers in 2022-2023.



**310** FCFA/kg

The purchase price of seed cotton for the 2022-2023 campaign..



The cotton sector has a major socio-economic impact in Côte d'Ivoire, contributing to job creation, poverty reduction, income generation, rural development, and economic diversification.

**Job creation :** Cotton growing generates jobs in rural areas of Côte d'Ivoire, where most farms are located. Farmers, agricultural workers, and processing plant employees find work in the industry, helping to reduce unemployment and improve living conditions for local people.

**Income for farmers :** Growing cotton is a major source of income for Ivorian farmers. Profits from the sale of cotton enable them to support their families, invest in their farms and access essential services such as education and healthcare.

**Exports and tax revenues :** Côte d'Ivoire is one of West Africa's leading cotton exporters. Exports of cotton and cotton by-products make a significant contribution to the country's export earnings, strengthening its balance of trade. In addition, taxes and royalties collected on cotton production and exports provide essential tax revenue for the government.

**Rural development :** The cotton sector fosters the development of rural areas by providing essential infrastructure and services such as roads, schools, and health centres. Investments in the sector also help to strengthen farmers' technical capacities, improve agricultural practices, and promote sustainable development in these regions.

**Economic diversification :** As well as supplying cotton fibre, the Ivorian cotton sector also produces by-products such as cottonseed cake and oil. This diversification of production helps to create added value and stimulate economic growth at different levels of the value chain.



## Our approach to a thriving cotton sector

### Mission

Our mission is to promote the development of farms in order to guarantee supplies for our factories, process seed cotton and market semi-finished products, thereby helping to improve living standards in rural communities.

### Signature

Our slogan :

#### " The Culture of White Gold "

highlights its economic value, its quality, and its cultural importance.

Like gold, cotton is precious and represents an important economic resource for those who grow and sell it.

That's why we strive to produce top-quality cotton, using careful cultivation and processing methods.

Cotton growing has a long history and great importance in the north-west of Côte d'Ivoire. We are therefore committed to taking account of the farming traditions and cultural heritage associated with cotton production.

### Ambition

Our ambition is to increase acreage and yields, add value to cotton products and by-products, market production profitably and thus to remain a major player in the cotton sector in West Africa by building grower loyalty, professionalism, and staff responsiveness, while ensuring a fair return on capital invested and being part of a sustainable development dynamic.

We are also positioning ourselves as a player of excellence in environmental and social practices.

At Ivoire Coton, we sum up this ambition in a few words: cotton at the service of development.



## Challenges and materiality to meet the expectations of our stakeholders

### **Our approach to identifying material challenges**

As part of the development of our sustainability strategy, we conducted a materiality analysis in 2021.

We began by identifying our company's main impacts on aspects of sustainability such as the social, societal, ethical, economic, and environmental dimensions.

By actively listening to the expectations of our key stakeholders, we then identified the priority issues to be addressed in our activities over the coming years.

To do this, we called on external expertise and drew on best practice and standards in the cotton sector, in particular the Cotton Made In Africa (CmiA) and Better Cotton standards, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the FAO framework on sustainability measures in cotton production systems.

### **Presentation of material issues**

Nine key issues that will require particular attention from Ivoire Coton over the next few years were identified.

Since we conducted this materiality analysis, we have taken many steps to create greater financial and extra-financial value for our company and our stakeholders.



NAME OF ISSUE	PRESENTATION OF THE ISSUE
Traceability	Transparency in the cotton value chain is becoming a prerequisite for future market access. Traders need to know where their cotton comes from and whether it complies with national and international laws. In the long term, data should be accessible to trace each bale of cotton back to the producer in order to meet their customers expectations for ethically responsible products, processed in a sustainable way and respecting good environmental and social practices.
Access to water	Access to water is a fundamental good and an elementary condition for health. The cotton company promotes access to drinking water for people in the areas where it operates.
Education and awareness-raising	Educating farmers and raising their awareness is crucial, as it helps to improve yields and cotton quality, and consequently increase their income. They cover technical and commercial aspects as well as subjects such as health protection, compliance with social standards, particularly the ban on child labour, environmental protection, etc. Education initiatives also involve young people, women, and cooperatives in rural areas, through basic schooling and training to support the creation and development of their economic activities.
Waste management	Chemical inputs in agriculture have proved their worth in increasing yields. However, handling these chemicals entails risks for the health of both farmers and the staff responsible for managing them. Environmental pollution is one of the consequences, particularly in intensive cotton-growing areas. Pesticide packaging is left in fields, next to houses, etc., with harmful effects on the environment. This is why the cotton company has a duty to raise awareness, train and educate the population about the risks associated with the mismanagement of these chemicals. In addition to raising awareness, the company must seek to reduce this waste.
Pest and pesticide management	The use of pesticides to control pests is still essential to the profitability of cotton growing in West Africa. Despite years of rational use, risks to human health and the environment remain. However, new techniques and products do exist. The cotton company needs to experiment with them and adapt them to the Ivorian context, while maintaining or even improving productivity and profitability for growers.
Climate risk mitigation and adaptation	Climate change is having an increasingly negative impact on smallholder cotton producers, particularly poor households in rural areas. Producers resilience needs to be strengthened to maintain production levels while adapting to climate risks. Growing organic cotton is one of the solutions, in particular because it has a lower carbon footprint than conventional cotton.
Mechanisation	Cotton is grown by families in Côte d'Ivoire, mainly with the help of oxen or by hand. The growing shortage of labour and the arduous nature of the work are limiting production. There is a desire to develop small-scale motorisation. This would enable the introduction of new practices, known as 'breakthroughs', such as direct sowing on plant cover, thus promoting agro-ecological production systems. The land needs to be developed and the tools best suited to the various cultivation operations to be motorised identified. It will be important to train technicians and growers to master these new tools. Lastly, different organisational models could be proposed to stakeholders for dissemination (individual credit, setting up a service company, collective management, etc.).

## Our main commitments

Our new sustainability policy was formalised in 2021, following the materiality analysis.

We have structured it around three main pillars and six commitments to meet the major challenges facing our industry, such as protecting human rights in the supply chain, improving traceability in our business, promoting sustainable agriculture, improving the livelihoods of communities, etc.



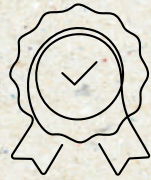
	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	
<p><b>Pillar 1: Our commitments to more responsible and sustainable economic growth</b></p> <p><b>Commitment 1 :</b> Putting ethics and sustainability at the heart of our corporate strategy</p> <p><b>Commitment 2 :</b> Accelerating our transformation to become a benchmark for quality and innovation in the cotton sector</p> <p><b>Pillar 2: Our commitments to employees and local communities</b></p> <p><b>Commitment 3 :</b> Improving employment conditions and protecting fundamental human rights in the supply chain</p> <p><b>Commitment 4 :</b> Strengthening our local roots by supporting the socio-economic development of the regions in which we operate</p> <p><b>Pillar 3: Our commitment to preserving the environment and combating climate change</b></p> <p><b>Commitment 5 :</b> Responsible management of industrial units to reduce our environmental footprint</p> <p><b>Commitment 6 :</b> Innovating to support the development of sustainable agriculture in cotton-growing areas</p>	Eliminating poverty in all its forms, everywhere in the world	
	Enabling everyone to live in good health and promoting well-being at all ages	
	Ensuring equal access to quality education for all and promoting opportunities for lifelong learning	
	Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls	
	Promoting sustained, shared and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all	
	Reducing inequalities within and between countries	
	Establishing sustainable consumption and production patterns	
	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its repercussions	
	Preserving and restoring terrestrial ecosystems	
	Strengthening the means to implement the Global Partnership for Development and revitalising it	

## Creating shared values

Through our approach to sustainability, we aim to have a positive impact on our stakeholders and on society. Here are a few of our achievements in creating shared value for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 campaigns.



Pillar 1



**80%** attendance rate at Board meetings in 2022 75% in 2023

**1<sup>st</sup>** West African company to be CmiA (Cotton made in Africa) certified since 2005

A **100%** traceable, digital supply chain with the Digit Agri application

**68,800** tonnes of cotton lint produced for the 2021-2022 season and 39,204 tonnes for 2022-2023

**85.5%** premium cotton for 2021-2022 and 88.3% for 2022-2023

**41.2%** seed cotton yield for 2021-2022 and

**42.13%** for 2022-2023

**11** customers and **3** complaints

Pillar 2



**495** employees, including 35 women by the end of 2023

**687** seasonal workers for 2021-2022 and **646** for 2022-2023

**19%** reduction in the frequency rate of workplace accidents between the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 campaigns

Between **200** and **250** million CFA francs in runway maintenance each year

FCFA **150** million a year to maintain bush shops

Approximately FCFA **48** billion in total agricultural credit granted

FCFA **87** billion paid to producers (gross income)

Pillar 3



Launch of the Net Zero Carbon Plan

**24.5%** reduction in GHG emissions between 2021 and 2023

**43%** reduction in waste production

**100%** of organic waste recycled

**5,750** tonnes of organic fertiliser ordered

Approximately **3** tonnes of cover crop seed produced

Launch of the 'G-FERTILIS' project to improve soil health

Participation in the "MecaWat" project to develop agro-ecological systems







# Our first pillar

Doing business responsibly and sustainably



# Commitment 1



## Place ethics and sustainability at the heart of our corporate strategy

Over the past two years, we have consistently adhered to the rules of good governance, integrity, business loyalty and transparency to ensure the long-term development of our company and the territories in which we operate.

We have continued to transform ourselves so that sustainability issues are fully integrated into our business strategy and at the heart of our development model.

In line with this, we have renewed our CmiA certification for all our cotton production and are preparing for the new Better Cotton certification.

Finally, we have taken an active part in initiatives within our industry to promote more sustainable and responsible cotton production, in particular the 'Quality Cotton Origin Côte d'Ivoire' project.

## Our governance bodies

Chaired by Mr Mahmoud Rajan, our Board of Directors in 2023 will comprise seven directors representing the main shareholders. They were appointed at the Annual General Meeting of 24 June 2021 for a renewable two-year term.

The Board meets twice a year, and whenever circumstances require, to examine and validate Ivoire Coton's decisions and strategic orientations, and to monitor their proper implementation.

In 2022, the Board had a participation rate of over 80%, while in 2023 it was 75%.

### OVERVIEW OF DIRECTORS

**Mr Mahmoud RAJAN**, Chairman of the Board of Directors

**Mr Mahamadou SYLLA**, Director

**Mr Jürg REINHART**, Director

**PAUL REINHART AG** represented by **Mr Thomas GLAUS**, Director

**OIKOCREDIT** represented by **Mr Prévost KLA**, Director

**FILTISAC** represented by **Mr Christian GODDE**, Director

**IPS (WA)** (pending the appointment of a new Director)

Ivoire Coton has also opted for a collegial management style, separating the roles of Chairman of the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer.

The Executive Board is responsible for the operational management of our company, assisted in its mission by the Executive Committee, comprising the Chief Executive Officer and the four main directors.

### MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**1. Jean-Charles SIGRIST**, Chief Executive Officer

**2. Siaka DIALLO**, Deputy Managing Director

**3. Johanna ADOTEVI**, Sales Director

**4. Fousseny COULIBALY**, Director of Agricultural Production

**5. Vassiriki SAHADE**, Industrial Director

**6. Djary KOFFI**, Director of Technical Support



1



2



4



3



5



6



## Renewal of CmiA (Cotton made in Africa) certification for 100% sustainable cotton

In 2023, we renewed our CmiA (Cotton made in Africa) certification for the 2023/2024 harvest and the 2024/2025 harvest.

This certification is obtained in accordance with a set of specifications that require an agricultural audit and an industrial audit. Rigorous monitoring is carried out every two years to determine whether or not certification should be renewed.

CmiA is an initiative of the Aid by Trade Foundation. Its mission is to improve livelihoods, promote sustainable development, protect the environment, and ensure a better future for generations to come.

At the heart of the Cotton made in Africa initiative is CmiA certification, which is based on a standard with numerous sustainability criteria. The catalogue of criteria is structured on two levels.

Firstly, it defines exclusion criteria for deciding whether smallholders and cotton companies can participate in the Cotton made in Africa programme. These minimum requirements include a ban on slavery, human trafficking, any form of exploitation of child labour and the deforestation of primary forests. In addition, the use of dangerous pesticides and genetically modified seeds is prohibited.

Secondly, smallholders and cotton companies producing cotton in accordance with the Cotton made in Africa criteria must comply with a series of sustainability indicators. These criteria do not all have to be 100% met from the outset. But farmers and cotton companies must prepare improvement plans and demonstrate that they are working towards full compliance with the criteria.

To achieve this, CmiA has set up a quality assurance system for buyers, a mechanism for monitoring production, evaluating, and learning new practices, training for producers and capacity building for those involved in implementing the standards.

This sustainable certification covers around 40% of African cotton production and is sought by many textile companies in Europe and Asia, because the conditions that prevail in Africa make cotton attractive (hand-picked, very good water footprint, low carbon footprint and GMO-free).

Added to this is the CmiA Supply Chain service, which is highly appreciated by many customers, helping them to integrate cotton seamlessly into global textile chains and ensure traceability thanks to the tracking system set up and guaranteed by CmiA.

Ivoire Coton was the first West African company to be certified CmiA (Cotton made in Africa) since the initiative was launched in 2005.

## End of the CmiA - BCI (Better Cotton Initiative) partnership, towards a new cotton certification system in Côte d'Ivoire

Better Cotton is a non-profit organisation that has been promoting better cotton-growing practices in 24 countries since 2005, notably through BCI certification. The initiative represented more than 20% of global cotton production in 2019.

Better Cotton and CmiA have been partners since their creation in 2005, enabling CmiA-certified cotton to also obtain BCI certification, without undergoing any further assessment. This partnership was terminated in 2023.

We are therefore in the process of obtaining the new Better Cotton certification for part of our cotton production, with the aim of maintaining our alignment with the two highest standards in the sector.

In 2023, Better Cotton has also announced the opening of a new programme in Côte d'Ivoire and has committed to supporting 200,000 domestic cotton farmers in its first five years through training and resource allocation. The Professional Association of Cotton Companies of Côte d'Ivoire (APROCOT-CI) will serve as Better Cotton's strategic partner for Côte d'Ivoire.



Against this backdrop, Better Cotton organised workshops in March 2023 in Abidjan, in which our Managing Director, Mr Jean-Charles SIGRIST, and his Sales Director, Mrs Johanna ADOTEVI, actively participated.

The aim of the first workshop was to bring together multi-stakeholder actors from the region, within the cotton sector and beyond, to share experiences, learnings and explore opportunities for collaboration, which can be used to shape and inform Better Cotton's activities and ambitions to achieve tangible impact in West Africa.

The second workshop focused on Côte d'Ivoire's membership application. It enabled Better Cotton to gauge the involvement of stakeholders in the Ivorian cotton sector and to learn about the actions already underway.

## Our participation in the " Quality Cotton from Côte d'Ivoire' project "

In recent years, the cotton sector has undergone several upheavals due to a variety of factors, including the volatility of world cotton prices, rising input costs, the adverse effects of climate change, etc.

Efforts to revive the sector have been undertaken by private players and by the State, supported by technical and financial partners, notably through specific programmes and by subsidising fertilisers and the purchase price of seed cotton, which has enabled production to pick up, reaching 539,000 tonnes in 2021/2022.

However, the quality of Ivorian cotton remains a major concern. Côte d'Ivoire has even lost the premium linked to the quality of its fibre on the international market.



Aware that producing quality cotton remains a challenge to be met in order to improve the Côte d'Ivoire origin, the players in the sector have decided to set up a Quality Commission in 2021. This will bring together all the key players in the sector: the State of Côte d'Ivoire, the Cotton and Cashew Council (CCA), the Interprofessional Agricultural Organization of the Cotton Sector (INTERCOTON), the Professional Association of Cotton Companies of Côte d'Ivoire (APROCOT-CI), the Federation of Unions of Cooperative Societies of Producers in the Cotton Sector of Côte d'Ivoire (FPC-CI), the Interprofessional Fund for Research and Agricultural Consulting (FIRCA) and the National Agricultural Research Center (CNRA).

In 2023, the Quality Commission launched the 'Quality Cotton Origin Côte d'Ivoire' project. This project covers the entire cotton value chain, from harvest to post-harvest, with a particular focus on the adoption of best agricultural practices, efficient input management, and the optimisation of harvesting, storage, sorting and transport processes.

Reforms are underway to make our cotton more sustainable, ensure its global competitiveness and boost the incomes of Ivorian cotton growers:

- The introduction of marking methods to ensure complete traceability of cotton, from harvest to finished product.
- Improving homogeneity and quality grading to reduce intra-bale variability, to ensure that each bale of cotton offers consistent and predictable quality.
- The introduction of incentives to encourage farmers to pursue sustainable practices and produce high-quality cotton.

As part of its activities, the Quality Commission has made it a priority in its action plan to draw up a procedures manual in 2024, which, when applied, will formalise and provide a framework for rigorous processes designed, ultimately, to produce quality cotton in Côte d'Ivoire.



"Ivoire Coton is involved in the 'Quality Cotton Origin Côte d'Ivoire' project, and chairs the classification committee through its Sales Director, who I am.

We are working together with all the players in the Côte d'Ivoire cotton industry to ensure that everyone understands the merits of this approach, which should ultimately benefit producers by improving their incomes, as well as improving the quality of Côte d'Ivoire cotton.

What's more, it will enable us to formalise best practices and is part of our commitment to continuous improvement.

Mrs Johanna ADOTEVI, Sales Director

## Commitment 2

### **Accelerate our transformation to become a benchmark for quality and innovation in the cotton sector**

Since the last report, we have continued to improve the quality of cotton in both agricultural production and industrial activities.

We have introduced new measures to encourage producers to produce better quality seed cotton, helping them to prosper.

Similarly, we have continued to transform our plants and have made investments that will enable us to increase productivity and produce better quality fibre.

As a major innovation, we have digitised all our agricultural data, enabling us to improve traceability in our supply chain.

We have also continued to cooperate with players in the industry to share more experience in research and innovation.



## Setting up a traceable supply chain using digital technology

Since 2021, we have been participating in the Cotton4Impact project, which aims to support production traceability in the cotton value chain by the end of 2024.

This project is being implemented as part of the Sub-Saharan Cotton Initiative (SSCI), which is funded by GIZ (German Development Cooperation). It is a consortium made up of the Reinhart Foundation, the cotton companies Alliance Ginneries Limited of Zambia and Tanzania and our company.

Against this backdrop, in May 2022 we launched a major digitisation project aimed at digitising the recording of agricultural operations, improving communication between supervisors and producers, and ensuring the traceability of cotton production.

This project led to the introduction of a mobile application called Digit Agri in 2023. This application enables all field supervisors to collect and transmit all field data in near-real time to an ERP system, making it accessible to other Ivoire Coton staff, such as information on each producer and plantation, rainfall data, inputs distributed, etc.

This means we can better prevent social, environmental and climate risks in our cotton supply chain, such as deforestation and child labour.

As well as improving traceability in our business, this new application will enable us to save a considerable amount of time in processing data (previously paper-based) and make the data in our possession more secure. It is also helping us to drastically reduce our paper consumption.

All our agricultural advisers now use this application via a tablet. They have all been trained in its use.



" The digitisation project is making our work easier, as it means we don't have to carry around a lot of documents and the margin for error is considerably reduced. We're more efficient and we save time.

Similarly, traceability is improved because no data can be lost once it has been entered. All the audit data can be consulted in one place. "

**Mr Youssef KANATE,**  
Agricultural Adviser in the Katogo area



## Our efforts to encourage and motivate producers regarding the quality of seed cotton over the last few seasons

Quality seed cotton is better paid and enables the cotton industry to make better use of the fibre produced.

Quality comes into play at every stage of production, starting with the farming phase.

That is why we are constantly improving the technical side of the business, backed up by a programme of training and support for farmers.

More than ten training courses a year are given to farmers, covering all stages of agricultural production, right through to post-harvest and storage.

In 2023, despite the jassid crisis, we innovated with the production of video clips aimed at raising awareness among producers of good farming practices and preserving the quality of seed cotton.

Thanks to the advent of smartphones, these videos on the cotton-growing cycle, harvesting, storage and marketing of seed cotton are being widely distributed to cotton growers.

Also, from the 2022-2023 marketing year, we have introduced a uniformity premium to encourage producers and their organisations to improve quality.

Finally, as part of the Cotton4Impact project, we are in the process of setting up a pilot application to send information on farming practices and weather forecasts to 1,000 farmers on their mobile phones. To date, the service provider has already been selected. The idea, through this test phase, is to assess the interest shown by cotton growers in such a system and its impact on their day-to-day practices.



## Ongoing transformation of plants to improve performance

Several investments have been made in our factories since we produced our first sustainability report to enable us to improve our performance and produce better quality cotton.

In fact, two lint cleaners (for cleaning seed cotton before ginning) have been replaced at the Boundiali 2 plant, and four new feeders (for cleaning seed cotton before ginning) have been installed at Dianra. We have also changed several humidifier lines, which has significantly improved the quality of fibre cleaning.

In addition, we have installed generators at the M'Bengue plant, so that we are less affected by power cuts and can maintain our industrial equipment.

As part of our drive to reduce our carbon footprint, we are also in the process of replacing our air conditioning units with Inverter systems, traditional lighting with LED bulbs, diesel forklifts with electric ones, and ageing machine motors with new ones. As well as the environmental impact, these investments are having a positive impact on our productivity.

## New procedures for quality cotton processing

Over the last two campaigns, we have continued to strengthen and formalise our practices, as dictated by our quality management system.

New quality procedures have been published. For example, a procedure has been put in place to ensure better control of moisture content at various stages of the ginning process, which is necessary to maximise the value of the cotton.

We have also improved our maintenance policy at plant level, in particular with the formalisation of a standardised maintenance sheet, enabling a common approach across all plants and tighter controls by our maintenance department. We have also equipped ourselves with new predictive maintenance software (Movipack), enabling us to better identify equipment malfunctions.

To help us strengthen our quality control system in the factories, we called in an international expert. In particular, he trained the agents responsible for quality control of seed cotton and helped us to draw up a manual of procedures for seed cotton, fibre, and seed, and to set up our maintenance plan.

Finally, we have set up a crisis management committee and formalised our approach to enable us to react appropriately in the event of a crisis.

## Closer cooperation with all stakeholders to promote innovation

Our company has always cooperated with various private and public players, both in Côte d'Ivoire and internationally, particularly on the African continent as part of a South-South cooperation dynamic.

We maintain close relations with industry management bodies such as the Cotton and Cashew Council (CCA), the Interprofessional Fund for Research and Agricultural Council (FIRCA), the Interprofessional Agricultural Organization of the Cotton Sector (INTERCOTON) and the Professional Association of Cotton Companies of Côte d'Ivoire ( APROCOT-CI).

Our long-standing partners include the National Agronomic Research Center (CNRA), the Regional Program for Integrated Cotton Production in Africa (PR-PICA), the African Cotton Foundation (ACA), Aid By trade Foundation (AbTF), the African Cotton Foundation (ACF) and the Higher School of Agronomy (ESA).

Every year, new partnerships are forged to further promote the transfer of skills and expertise, and the sharing of best practices in cotton production and processing.

Since 2021, we have been partnering GIZ as part of the Sub-Saharan Cotton Initiative (SSCI), and we launched the Cotton4Impact project in November 2022, which aims to improve the traceability of cotton production. Our collaboration continued in 2023 with the launch of the Digit Agri application.

In 2023, we also created a partnership with the African Cotton Foundation (ACF) to implement the G-Fertils project, which aims to improve soil fertility.

Our partners also include CIRAD and the French government, with whom we have launched the 'MecaWat' (Mechanisation and Work in Agroecological Transitions) project in 2023 to help develop agroecological systems.

## Participation in the Regional Programme for Integrated Cotton Production in Africa

The Regional Programme for Integrated Cotton Production in Africa (PR-PICA) is an association of research institutes, cotton companies and/or inter-professions and cotton producer organisations from eight West and Central African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, Chad and Togo.

The Programme works in the field of research and development, in integrated management of cotton pests, soil fertility, varietal improvement and capacity building for all players in the cotton sector.

As a member, we play an active role in the various projects underway and took part in the 15th PR-PICA review meeting in Grand Bassam in April 2023.

The aim of the meeting was to review the progress of the 2022/2023 cotton season in the programme's member countries and to present the results of the research and extension work carried out during the 2022/2023 season, as well as the prospects for integrated management of cotton production (pest management, soil fertility and the issue of new varieties adapted to climatic variations).

It was also an opportunity to share information on the state of cotton production in the sub-region, in particular solutions for improving field yields and therefore producers' incomes, and to facilitate B2B meetings between researchers, cotton companies, cotton growers, technical and financial partners, and agro-pharmaceutical firms.

### Visit to SONAMA (Benin) to share experience on mechanising farmers and improving soil fertility

In November 2023, a delegation led by the Managing Director of Ivoire Coton (made up of Ivoire Coton agents and producers), travelled to Benin as part of a study visit to the Société Nationale de Mécanisation Agricole (SONAMA).

It was initially set up by the Beninese government, which is making great efforts to help farmers mechanise and modernise their agriculture by facilitating access to mechanisation equipment, small-scale irrigation, and training.

The purpose of the visit was to take stock of agricultural mechanisation, which has made great strides in Benin, and the innovations underway to improve soil fertility through new tillage techniques.

The delegation visited quite a few sites, including :

- The Ouidah site: where the delegation was able to see SONAMA's range of tractors and tools.
- The Centre Permanent d'Expérimentations (CPE) in Parakou, which houses the TAZCO project experiments, where a collection or production trial for improving plants and a crop rotation trial involving cotton/maize combined with stylosanthes/Sorghum combined with soya have been set up.
- The Parakou demonstration site, where the delegation attended the 2nd mechanised harvesting day, during which the mechanised harvesting of cotton, maize and soya was presented.
- A 10-ha peasant farm where conservation agriculture is practised with stylosanthes and mucuna.

Thanks to this sharing of experience, Ivoire Coton will be able to acquire agricultural materials and equipment from SONAMA for testing at the M'Bengue and Boundiali observation posts. It will also be able to experiment new technical itineraries, including improving plants, in the coming seasons.







## Our second pillar

Supporting workers  
and local communities



## Commitment 3

### **Improve employment conditions and protect fundamental human rights in the supply chain**

In recent years, our active HR policy has enabled us to improve working conditions for our employees, particularly in terms of income, training, and career development.

We have also succeeded in ensuring the permanent employment of all seasonal workers in agricultural production, providing sustainable employment in the most isolated regions of Côte d'Ivoire.

We have also stepped up our OHS efforts, with new initiatives and greater awareness of the need to wear PPE in our plants.

In terms of the supply chain, we have worked hard to speed up the mechanisation of growers and have given them more support in transforming their farming practices, thereby reducing the arduousness of their work.

Finally, we have raised awareness among farming communities of the risks associated with the use of plant protection products.



## Continuing to improve working conditions for our employees

At Ivoire Coton, we are committed to improving the working conditions of our employees.

In terms of remuneration, we have increased low-income salaries in a context of high inflation, even before the revaluation of the minimum wage which took place in January 2023. We have also introduced a new production bonus to better reward the performance of permanent and seasonal plant employees.

We have succeeded in ensuring the permanent employment of all seasonal agricultural management staff, guaranteeing them long-term employment. As a result, all our agricultural advisers now have permanent contracts with our company.

We are also in the process of drawing up our first skills matrix, which will enable us to identify the skills available and the skills needs to be met through training and coaching. This matrix will also serve as a reference for recruitment and internal promotion. This is a key step in the implementation of our GPEC (Forwardlooking Management of Careers and Skills).

## An occupational health and safety (OHS) policy that continues to be strengthened

We have continued to strengthen our health and safety policy, in particular by carrying out an OHS risk study for each workstation in collaboration with the Occupational Health and Safety Committee

(OHSC). This enabled us to identify actions to be taken to reduce these risks and further prevent occupational illnesses. For example, we have provided drivers with lumbar belts and first-aid kits.

We also carried out new lung checks for all staff, which allowed us to detect pathologies which were treated.

Aware of the noise pollution generated by our activities within the plants, we carried out a noise mapping exercise in 2022. This enabled us to adapt PPE to certain exposed positions (helmets and earplugs) and to carry out audiograms for the permanent, seasonal, and casual staff concerned. This approach will be repeated every two years as a preventive measure.

Awareness of health and safety risks has been stepped up over the last two campaigns. New pictograms and safety instructions have been posted in the plants. Efforts have also been made to raise awareness of PPE. A system of penalties for failure to wear PPE has been introduced, and shift supervisors have been given a greater sense of responsibility in this area. Unannounced checks on the wearing of PPE are carried out by the human resources department and plant managers. As a safety measure, we have also introduced colour codes to separate permanent staff from seasonal staff and labourers within the plants.

Finally, to make work more comfortable, we have installed new sanitary facilities and improved lighting in and outside the plants, to improve the safety of drivers and private hauliers in particular.

As part of the Solips solidarity fund, we have continued to carry out several preventive health initiatives, such as screening campaigns for certain diseases and the distribution of condoms to employees twice a year to combat HIV/AIDS.

## Our human resources indicators

	2021-2022	2022-2023	Progress
Total workforce (excluding seasonal workers)	485	495	+2%
Of which women	34	35	+2.9%
Number of employees aged under 35	104	107	+2.8%
Of which women	8	4	-50%
Number of employees aged between 35 and 55	336	341	+1.5%
Of which women	25	28	+12%
Number of employees aged over 55	45	48	+6.6%
Of which women	1	3	+66.6%
Number of executives	18	16	-11.1%
Of which women	2	3	-33.3%
Number of managerial staff	30	28	-6.6%
Of which women	4	4	0%
Number of non-managerial employees	437	451	+3.2%
Of which women	28	28	0%
Number of employees with less than 5 years' service	219	240	+9.6%
Of which women	11	11	0%
Number of employees with between 5- and 12-years' service	112	110	-1.8%
Of which women	9	10	+11.1%
Number of employees with more than 12 years' service	154	145	-5.8%
Of which women	14	14	0%
Number of trainees	38	16	-57.9%
Number of permanent contracts	474	486	+2.5%
Of which women	31	32	+3.2%
Number of fixed-term contracts	11	9	18.2%
Of which women	3	3	0%
Number of new hires	47	42	10.6%
Of which women	5	3	-40%

	2021-2022	2022-2023	Progress
Number of redundancies	5	10	+50%
Of which women	0	1	+100%
Number of resignations	10	9	-10%
Of which women	1	1	0%
Number of seasonal workers	687	646	-6%
Of which women	22	40	+81.9%
Staff turnover	8.71%	6.46%	-2.25%
Of which women			
Percentage of workforce covered by supplementary health insurance	100%	100%	0%
Percentage of workforce covered by a supplementary pension scheme	9.90%	8.89%	1%
Number of people taking maternity leave	1	4	+75%
Number of returns from maternity leave	2	4	+50%
Percentage of workforce declared to be disabled	0.41%	0.40%	0%
Frequency rate of accidents at work	25.24%	6.03%	-19.2%
Severity rate of accidents at work	0.17%	0.16%	0%
Number of hours of OHS training	64	0	-100%
Total training budget (all courses combined) in FCFA	95 450 827	90 268 800	-5.4%
Number of employee representatives	27 full members and 26 substitutes	29 full members and 25 substitutes	+1.9%
Percentage of employees covered by collective agreements	100	100	0%
Number of agreements signed	0	0	0%
Number of meetings with employee representatives	1	1	0%
Number of strike days	0	0	0%
Number and nature of labour disputes	0	0	0%

## Increased awareness of the use of Personal Protective Equipments (PPE) for plant protection treatments

In order to reduce the risks of poisoning linked to the use of agricultural inputs, our agricultural advisers train growers to wear appropriate clothing during crop protection treatments, i.e. long-sleeved shirts, gloves, trousers, boots, masks, and goggles.

Similarly, a training module is dedicated to the management of cases of poisoning by plant protection products and the emergency procedures to follow.

Despite this, many producers continued to use inappropriate clothing. To remedy this, since the 2022-2023 campaign, we have been equipping growers with PPE kits on favourable and flexible terms.

500 kits have been made available to growers via their groups for this purpose.

This was made possible thanks to a supplier who lowered its prices compared with previous campaigns. The materials used are now more suitable (woven cotton instead of white nylon). This offers users greater comfort.

For the 2023-2024 campaign, awareness-raising is continuing, as is the operation to provide 600 PPE kits to producers.

In the previous report, we stated that we would be putting in place a system to improve the management of chemical input waste in order to reduce the risk of poisoning. This has now been achieved. With our partner Croplife, we are in the process of deploying cages for collecting empty phytosanitary product packaging in the villages.



## Our efforts to speed up mechanisation in cotton growing and reduce the workload for farmers

Barely 1% of the growers we work with have motorised equipment. 88% are equipped for harnessed cultivation and 11% still use manual cultivation.

Reducing the arduousness of farmers' work is therefore one of the major challenges facing the cotton industry in Côte d'Ivoire.

Over the last two seasons, we continued to equip producers with oxen and work equipment.

We have sold 25 new motorised chains to growers over the last two seasons. This brings to 56 the number of motorised chains introduced since 2015.

New, more ergonomic, and effective insecticide treatment equipment was also tested with a view to its widespread use in farming, such as ultra-low-volume motorised backpack sprayers.

We are also involved in the 'MecaWat' project (Mechanisation and Work in Agroecological Transitions) in partnership with CIRAD, CNRA, FERT and UFACOCI COOP-CA. This project aims to contribute to the development of agro-ecological farming systems, by working on the development of ad hoc mechanisation options that consider the removal of technical constraints, improved productivity, and the arduousness of work.

For several campaigns now, we have been promoting cover crops and zero tillage or minimum tillage techniques, with a view to protecting and restoring the soil. These innovations help to combat erosion and improve soil health and fertility.

Finally, we are in the process of setting up a pilot project for insecticide treatment by drone on several plantations in the M'Bengue and Boundiali regional departments for the 2024-2025 season. To do this, we are working with an Ivorian start-up specialising in this field.

Drone spraying would not only enable us to increase efficiency, but also reduce the drudgery of the work and the exposure of growers to chemicals.



## Commitment 4

### **Strengthen our local roots by supporting the socio-economic development of the regions in which we operate**

The 2022/2023 season was marked by an unprecedented attack by pests, which reduced cotton production in Côte d'Ivoire by more than 50%. With the support of the State and international aid, we were able to react quickly and help cotton growers to cope with this crisis, with reinforced monitoring.

We have continued to work to create stronger, more resilient communities by investing in the well-being and progress of farmers and their families, and by improving their livelihoods. We have enriched our support policy and developed new tools for greater proximity.

We have also set up a maize support project to build loyalty among cotton growers.

We have also pursued our community initiatives, in particular to improve access to roads and water.

## Our efforts to support cotton growers in the fight against jassids

The 2022-2023 cotton season was marked by a massive and uncontrolled infestation of jassids, with an unprecedented impact on cotton production in most West African cotton-growing countries. Jassids are classic cotton parasites belonging to the group of sucking bites.

Nationally, the entire cotton-growing basin has been severely affected by these attacks, which have led to a 54% drop in cotton production, from 539,623 tonnes in 2021-2022 to 236,183 tonnes in the 2022-2023 season.

At Ivoire Coton, our efforts have resulted in a relatively lower level of production decline, of around 44%, or 10% less than the national average.

This proliferation of jassids could not be controlled by the programs protection in force, due to the appearance of a new species jassid named *Amrasca biguttula*, which had not previously been recorded in the cotton pest complex in Côte d'Ivoire.

Apart from cotton, attacks by this new, highly invasive species have had a major impact on vegetable crops, particularly okra, which is one of the main host plants for this parasite.

Against this backdrop, the Ivorian government has provided direct financial support to producers at the rate of 72,000 CFA francs per hectare of sown cotton to mitigate losses and loss of earnings. This represents a total of around 29 billion FCFA.

This strong government measure has enabled us to bounce back and easily re-mobilise producers for the 2023-2024 campaign, with a significant increase in the number of producers and surface areas. We have taken a few measures to make us more resilient to possible attacks such as those caused by jassids during the 2022-2023 season.



" The support provided by Ivoire Coton took the form of more advice and intensified insecticide treatments, which enabled us to save part of the cotton crop and become aware of the damage that jassids can cause, as well as preparing ourselves for a better start to the 2023-2024 season. "

**Abou Coulibaly,**  
President of the OPA of the village of Ziévoogo Kassiongo



## Setting up a maize support project to build loyalty among cotton growers

In response to farmers' growing preference for maize over cotton, in 2023 we launched a project to support maize production for the 2023-2024 season.

The main aim of this initiative is to build grower loyalty by supplying the inputs (hybrid seeds, fertilisers, herbicides, and insecticides) and agricultural advice needed to optimise the management of a maize plot.

Specifically, the aim is to promote a policy of intensive maize cultivation with the aim of substantially increasing field yields and reducing the area under cultivation to levels that can be easily controlled. For cotton growing, this should enable beneficiary farmers to find time to maintain their plots and also to consider increasing the area under cultivation.

This enables us to deal with the establishment of structures specialising in maize production in our area of operation, which is often the reason for the decline in the number of producers and cotton acreage.

The criteria for selecting producers and granting maize credit depend closely on the beneficiaries' ability to repay based on their cotton production. This essentially involves the level of cotton acreage and previous yields. The agricultural credit linked to this operation is estimated at around 900 million FCFA.

At the time of publication of this report, the project is supervising 3,854 growers covering a total area of 5,000 hectares for the 2023-2024 season. On the strength of the satisfactory feedback and the enthusiasm generated among growers, we have already taken steps to increase the area of maize under supervision to 8,000 hectares for the 2024-2025 season.

## Our contribution to the social and economic development of communities

As a responsible corporate citizen, we strive to contribute to local social and economic development.

Every year, we respond to the day-to-day needs of our local communities by giving them access to some of the company's assets: access to water pumps at the plants, the loan of water tanks for various local events, donations of diesel fuel for the local authorities, etc.

In response to the problem of water supply in the Boundiali area, in 2022 we installed freely accessible taps at the entrance to the plant.

We also give grants to local communities, in particular to finance national celebrations. This aid amounted to FCFA 14.3 million in 2022 and FCFA 10.9 million in 2023.







## Improving access to drinking water for rural populations in the north of Côte d'Ivoire

As in previous years, we are continuing our work on access to drinking water for cotton-growing communities, with a view to improving their daily lives.

Over the last two campaigns, thirteen human-powered hydraulic pumps have been created in 13 villages for 5,516 direct beneficiaries.

The total cost of these installations was FCFA 52.9 million, thanks to the generosity of our partners Aid by Trade Foundation, CmiA and the REINHART Foundation.

A water point management committee (COGEPE) has been set up in each locality. COGEPE members, most of whom are women, have been trained. This consists of theoretical and practical training on site (in the villages), including the WASH concept. A few men have been included to contribute their expertise in maintaining the structures.

These structures are highly appreciated by local people, as they have helped to reduce cases of morbidity (diarrhoeal diseases, typhoid, guinea worm, etc.) and the distance travelled to fetch water from ponds. Ultimately, people in good health are more available for activities in the fields and save money on healthcare (consultations, prescriptions).

## Continuing to open up the site areas by reprofiling the roads

As in every campaign, we continued to maintain the runways and reshape the roads in the areas where we are present.

As well as supplying seed cotton to factories and providing agricultural inputs, this operation is also helping to open up villages and increase school enrolment.

As in previous years, we have spent between FCFA 200 and 250 million on this activity for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 campaigns.

" We had problems getting enough good quality water for our household chores and for drinking. The only source of water was 3 km from the village and was used for both animals and people. It was a source of diarrhoea in particular. "

**Mrs Rokia BAMBA,**  
Matron and President of the women of Zandougou



 Our third pillar

Preserving the environment  
and combating climate  
change



## Commitment 5

### **Responsible management of industrial units to reduce our environmental footprint**

The year 2022 was marked by the launch of the Net Zero Carbon Plan by our shareholder, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), propelling us on an ambitious journey to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

We therefore initiated a few changes in 2023 that will enable us to monitor our main impacts, improve the energy efficiency of our facilities, review our transport practices, and manage our waste more responsibly. Our transformation will continue over the coming years, supported by a formalised decarbonisation plan and major investments.

Finally, we have begun to involve our partners in this approach, in particular equipment suppliers and transport partners.

## Launch of the Net Zero Carbon Plan to reduce our carbon footprint

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and our shareholder Industrial Promotion Services (West Africa), as a member of the network, have set themselves the goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

To achieve this, AKDN has committed to reducing Scopes 1 and 2 of its emissions by at least 4.2% per year until 2030 (base year 2021).

Similarly, in terms of scope 3, the fund has undertaken to ensure that:

- 90% of spending to go to companies that actively measure and report their GHG emissions by 2025.
- 75% of expenditure to be paid to companies with science-based net zero emissions targets for their scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2025 (and 90% by 2030).
- At least 50% of spending should go to companies that have set science-based targets to achieve net zero emissions across their value chain by 2050 or earlier. By 2030, this figure will rise to 75% of spending.

In 2022, Group-wide governance was put in place to implement this project. Focal points have been appointed in each subsidiary and experts have been recruited to carry out energy audits and help define decarbonisation plans.

Similarly, tools have been developed to track monthly consumption for scopes 1 and 2 and annual consumption for scope 3.

In line with the Group's commitment, we have embarked on this process with the aim of:

- Measuring, monitoring, and reporting our Category 1, 2 and 3 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- Set GHG reduction targets for 2030 for our own activities and those of our supply chain.
- Formalise and implement decarbonisation plans to achieve these objectives.

In 2023, we called in an expert to carry out energy audits of all our sites and to help us define our decarbonisation plan.

It provides for investments of FCFA 1.4 billion to enable us to achieve a reduction of 2,077 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030, which represents 8.2% of IPS (WA) total emissions and 27.7% of those of Ivoire Coton.

A focal point has also been appointed within our company to steer this approach.



" The Net Zero Carbon Plan means that greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to as close to zero as possible, with the remaining emissions in the atmosphere being reabsorbed by the oceans and forests.

The approach is based on the following principles:

- Reducing its own GHG emissions.
- Reducing indirect GHG emissions, particularly from purchasing.

In the medium and long term, this project will enable Ivoire Coton to :

- Achieve productivity gains through low-carbon technologies.
- Reduce the energy bill by cutting fossil fuel imports.
- Improve well-being, including health. "

Vassiriki SAHADE, Industrial Director

## Stepping up our efforts to improve the environmental performance of our operations

Since the launch of our carbon initiative in 2022, we have introduced monthly monitoring of our consumption to enable us to assess and report on our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for scope 1 and 2.

To do this, we have developed measurement tools, including waste management and water resources, such as borehole and wetland meters, electricity meters, and we also plan to install electric meters.

We have gone from 7,501 tonnes of carbon in 2021 to 7,384 tonnes in 2022 and 5,572 tonnes in 2023, a reduction of about 25%. This performance has been greatly helped by the reduction in production of 17.8% in 2022 and 42% in 2023.

In support of our decarbonisation plan, several measures have been taken to improve our energy efficiency.

In terms of lighting, for example, we are in the process of replacing the current lamps with LED lighting. We also plan to install translucent sheets in the factories to get more daylight.

We have also launched a call for tenders in 2023 for the creation of an 800 kWp solar installation to provide lighting for our plants and offices.

We are also rolling out a programme to replace all our air conditioning units with new installations fitted with Inverter systems. Out of a total of 84 air conditioners, 12 will be replaced every year for 7 years.

The same applies to the 12 diesel and gas forklift trucks in our plants. These will gradually be replaced by electric forklifts. In 2023, three electric forklifts have already been received.

The old engines in our equipment are also being replaced by new-generation engines with lower fuel consumption coefficients, and the vehicle fleet is being rejuvenated every year.

For example, we are planning to introduce geolocation on our fleet of vehicles, and we will be organising training for our drivers in eco-driving, which is an effective way of reducing fuel consumption and bad driving on the road.

Scope 3 represents a large part of our carbon footprint and covers emissions associated with activities upstream and downstream of the value chain, such as agricultural production and transport. 95.6% of Ivoire Coton's total emissions come from Scope 3, in particular synthetic fertilisers distributed to growers, which alone account for 82% of emissions in this category.

We intend to improve our approach with cotton growers over the coming years, working in particular on soil reclamation and agricultural waste management.

A number of sustainable agricultural projects have been launched to promote the adoption of agro-ecological practices, with a view in particular to reducing the use of synthetic fertilisers while improving farm incomes.

We also want to involve our suppliers in the process. We have therefore identified 38 major suppliers, representing 90% of our purchasing volume, to assess their emissions and commit them to reduction targets. To do

this, we will support them in accurately measuring their emissions and providing advice on emission reduction strategies, with a focus on low-carbon technologies. These suppliers will also be required to regularly monitor and report on progress in the interests of transparency and accountability.

### New measures to reduce the nuisance caused by our plants for local communities

Our plants generate nuisances for workers and local communities, particularly in terms of noise and dust. That is why we have installed dust chambers and cyclones to retain and direct the dust, as well as bins to collect the dust collected.

In our previous Sustainability Report, we reported that areas for progress had been identified to further reduce air pollution.



We have resized the cyclones in all our plants and increased their number to better channel the dust. We have also stepped up the monitoring of our equipment to further prevent leaks that could generate dust.

In a major development, we are in the process of setting up a vacuum cycloning system at the Boundiali 2 plant, as a pilot site, to reduce the amount of dust released into the environment. This will be operational for the 2025-2026 campaign. We hope to extend this practice to all our plants in the future.

To reduce noise pollution, we have identified noisy machines with a view to insulating and/or replacing them. To date, one machine has been replaced by a silent version. We will be pursuing this approach in the years to come.

In addition, we have created a parking lot dedicated to parking of transporters on land adjacent to the Boundiali factories. This is lit and secured by the presence of security guards. Previously, lorries were parked outside the plants, which not only posed a risk to passers-by, but also caused noise and odour nuisance for local communities.

Monthly meetings are held with the hauliers, and they are regularly briefed on road safety.

## Our efforts to improve waste management at our facilities

The waste sorting and collection system has been strengthened at our plants. A register has been set up and all waste is recorded at the end of each month.

Waste from the production process, consisting mainly of organic matter such as cotton waste and dust, is recycled and distributed to farmers to be used as fertiliser in the fields. Bins have been installed to channel this type of waste more effectively and make it easier to collect.

Other solid waste includes steel and scrap metal, plastic, used tyres and wood. This waste is sold on the market.

Used oils and greases are collected in dedicated drums. They are removed by service providers approved by the Ivorian Anti-Pollution Centre (CIAPOL), in accordance with regulations.

Similarly, our digital transformation approach is helping us to drastically reduce our paper consumption, especially with the introduction of the Digit Agri application, which digitises the recording of agricultural operations.

Finally, in November 2023, we distributed durable, reusable metal water bottles to all staff, to replace the use of plastic water bottles.





	2021-2022	2022-2023	Progress
GHG emissions (scope 1 and 2) in CO2e	7,384 tonnes	5,573 tonnes	-24.5%
Direct energy consumption (head office and production sites) in kWh	12,270,090	12,266,755	-0.03%
Direct water consumption (head office and production sites) in m <sup>3</sup>	18,960	12,620	-33.44%
Waste generated (head office and production sites)	159.06 tonnes	86.19 tonnes	-43%
Plastic waste and tyres	25.68 tonnes	15.32 tonnes	-40%
Wood waste	39 tonnes	31.20 tonnes	-20%
Waste steel and scrap links	89.17 tonnes	34.27 tonnes	-61.6%
Organic waste	5.21 tonnes	5.40 tonnes	+3.5%
Recycled or reclaimed waste	5.21 tonnes (100% organic waste)	5.40 tonnes (100% organic waste)	+3.5%



## Commitment 6

### **Innovate to support the development of sustainable agriculture in cotton-growing areas**

Aware of the key role we can play in restoring and sustainably managing soil fertility, we have launched several projects, such as 'G-FERTILS' to improve soil health and 'MecaWat' to develop agro-ecological systems. We have also innovated with the Biochar experiment.

We have also redoubled our efforts to encourage farmers to adopt more environmentally friendly practices, such as the use of organic agricultural inputs, organic manure, and cover crops.

Lastly, we have begun experimenting with an organic cotton growing method, with the longer-term aim of producing cotton without pesticides, insecticides, or chemical fertilisers, and without GMOs.

## Our priority: the restoration and sustainable management of soil fertility

Cotton yields and even food crop yields have been falling steadily over the years, despite the use of mineral fertilisers.

This situation is the result of the degradation and loss of soil fertility caused by poor agricultural practices combined with unfavourable climatic factors, in particular:

- Mechanical working of the soil (ploughing) without precautions, exposing it to the effects of erosion by run-off water (rain) and wind.
- Continued depletion of soil organic matter, due to exports through crops, without sufficient compensation. This results in widespread soil acidification.
- The destruction of living soil organisms (earthworms and micro-organisms) responsible for producing fertilising elements and aerating the soil.

Given this situation, we are placing the restoration and sustainable management of soil fertility at the heart of our agricultural support policy.

We encourage the production and use of organic manure on the plots. As part of the COMPACI project (from 2010 to 2015), substantial equipment support was provided to farmers to help them produce organic manure. Currently, with the support of FIRCA, a premium is paid to farmers who produce pit manure to encourage them to do so.

We also promote erosion control techniques through training and material support for various projects.

We are continuing to encourage the use of organic fertilisers to deal with the difficulty of producing manure, as many producers have pointed out. As a result, 750 tonnes and 5,000 tonnes of organic fertiliser have been ordered for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 seasons, respectively.

We continue to introduce growers to the concept of cover crops and legumes, to help restore soil life and improve fertility. These plants help to:

- Improve soil structure through root action, encouraging the development of living soil organisms.
- Better fix atmospheric nitrogen, and therefore reduce the need for mineral fertilisers.
- Produce biomass that can be used to protect the soil from bad weather, to implement cover cropping systems and to increase soil organic matter.
- Reduce weed cover in combined cropping systems.
- Develop improved fallow land.

In-house seed production is continuing in order to have sufficient quantities for trials (crop combinations, sowing on plant cover) in all localities. Specific agricultural equipment for the treatment of cover crops has been acquired to facilitate the experiments.



" We received training on new organic fertilisers such as Biosol and Fertinova. We were also told about certain plants that add fertiliser to the soil.

We are still reticent about certain products and techniques, such as zero tillage.

Before, if you didn't plough your field, it wouldn't give you anything.

Today, we are told that cotton can be sown without ploughing.

At first it was hard to believe, but when you really follow the instructions of the agricultural advisers on how to use the products or techniques, there is a benefit for the soil. "

Mr Sibirina YEO, cotton farmer in the village of Kantara

## The experiment of Biochar to restore soil fertility

As part of our approach to restoring and sustainably managing soil fertility, we are experimenting with the production and use of biochar.

Biochar is a carbon-rich product obtained from the pyrolysis of certain resources available in the environment. These are essentially accessible and renewable materials such as cotton stalks, rice husks, maize stalks, groundnut hulls, etc.

Biochar is used to amend and fertilise poor, acid soils. It can be combined with organic and chemical fertilisers (Compost, NPK). Biochar promotes plant growth and improved yields.

The specific advantages of Biochar are:

- Restructuring the soil by improving its physical properties.
- Improving soil ph.
- Improving water retention in the soil.
- Increased availability of soil nutrients.
- The formation of humus and a porous structure that creates a sustainable habitat for micro-organisms.
- Carbon storage in the soil.

Activities related to the testing of this innovation were carried out in the Regional Directorates of Dianra and Odienné during the 2023-2024 season and will continue over the next few years.

## Our commitment, with the support of ACF (African Cotton Foundation), to improving soil health through the "G-FERTILS" project

In 2023, we launched the G-FERTILS project with financial support from ACF (African Cotton Foundation), as part of our drive to improve soil health in a sustainable way.

This €626,572 project is 50% funded by our company and 50% by ACF. It focuses on the following main areas of work:

- Integrated management of agriculture and livestock.
- Integrated soil fertility management.
- Water and soil conservation.
- Monitoring soil health.
- Communication on the project and its results.

The project will be implemented over a period of two and a half years, covering all areas of the Boundiali and M'Bengue Regional Directorates.



## Participation in the " MecaWat " project (Mechanisation and Work in Agroecological Transitions) to develop agroecological systems

As part of our work to improve farming techniques, we are participating in the 'MecaWat' project (Mechanisation and Work in Agroecological Transitions).

Its aim is to contribute to the development of agro-ecological farming systems in Sub-Saharan Africa, through the mechanisation of crop production operations. Its aim is to combine greater labour productivity with less drudgery and a work organisation that favours women and young people.

The French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs have funded this €590,000 project. It is being implemented in partnership with CIRAD, CNRA, FERT and UFACOCI COOP-CA.

Starting in April 2023 and lasting 24 months, the MecaWat project will focus on the following key areas:

- The implementation of experimental systems for the development and evaluation of innovative cropping systems, based on the mobilisation of ecological intensification levers: return of biomass to the soil, rotation, succession, association, reduction and then elimination of tillage.
- The development of new equipment such as strip-tills, localised powder dispensers, sowing wheels, etc.
- The development of collections of plant material, particularly legumes, for the production of grain and/or biomass for fodder or 'fertiliser' purposes.
- Supporting the implementation of innovative systems in pilot areas.

The project is being implemented at two sites in the M'Bengue Regional Directorate, one in the farming area in the village of Kachofa and the other at the Observation Post (OP).

## A first step towards organic cotton production

We are interested in organic cotton and eventually aim to produce cotton without pesticides, insecticides, or chemical fertilisers, and without GMOs.

That is why we have started experimenting with an organic cotton growing method for the 2021-2022 season.

In collaboration with 'ELEPHANT VERT', we tested a range of certified organic products, including bio-pesticides to combat the cotton plant pest complex.

In general, bio-pesticides are botanical or micro-organism-based.

Prospecting is continuing in order to find the best products (cost-effective) for growers.

The aim is also to be able to incorporate effective biopesticides into the conventional treatment programme in order to reduce the quantity of chemicals used over the crop cycle.

## Our indicators for sustainable agriculture

	2021-2022	2022-2023	Progress
Ordering organic fertilisers	750 tonnes	5,000 tonnes	+85%
Consumption of organic fertiliser	613.05 tonnes	3,831.40 tonnes	+84 %
Cover crop seeds produced	1.5 tonnes	1.478 tonnes	-1,5%







**IVOIRE COTON**

Une réalisation IPS West Africa

71, boulevard de Marseille,  
face au CHU de Treichville, Abidjan. Côte d'Ivoire.  
18 BP 3419 Abidjan 18

Téléphone : +225 27 21 21 01 71

Fax : +225 27 21 25 67 21

Email : [info@ivoire-coton.ci](mailto:info@ivoire-coton.ci)

Web : [www.ivoire-coton.ci](http://www.ivoire-coton.ci)