

C&A Foundation’s management response to the evaluation of “Accelerating Organic Cotton in China by Replicating Behavioural Change” (2019)

INTRODUCTION

The project with RARE, initiated in 2015, was one of the first organic cotton related initiatives that C&A Foundation supported. The foundation considered China an important geography to expand to, given its global ranking in terms of cotton production and as the largest manufacturing/sourcing base¹ for the garment industry. Despite it being the second largest producer of cotton², organic cotton production had not taken off in China. This initiative was presented by RARE to the foundation and the proposed idea of using behaviour change approaches to influence uptake of organic cotton farming sounded promising. The foundation was willing to experiment with bold and new ways, that went beyond traditional farmer capacity building approaches, to target sustainability.

The Sustainable Raw Materials programme appreciates that this evaluation has allowed time to reflect on the approach to designing programs and envisioning intended programmatic outcomes. The programme recognizes that it is important to conduct extensive research on regional contexts, multiple partners, and individual partner strengths prior to entering a new geography. The programme acknowledges that a deeper understanding of the value chain, prevailing farm management models, incentive structures, and policy issues would have helped better inform the structure of this initiative and target setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLANS

The evaluation highlights lessons that the foundation finds useful and will incorporate going forward.

Recommendations and Action Plan			
Recommendation	Management Response: (Accepted, Partially Accepted, Not accepted)	Action Planned	Expected Completion Date
Jointly identify initiative elements that can be used for learning activities	Accepted	Learning from RARE’s initiative, there is an understanding that there are infrastructural and policy level limitations that restrict organic farming to thrive in China. The Sustainable Raw Materials programme is in the process of commissioning a study, scheduled to conclude by end of 2019, to validate these insights. The study is expected	Dec 2019
Promote learning activities through a “learning summit” on the current situation of sustainable			

¹ Source: Statista, Value of the leading 10 textile exporters worldwide in 2017

² Source: International Cotton Advisory Committee

<p>organic cotton in China.</p>		<p>to provide a deep-dive understanding of the organic cotton sector in China, including value chain enablers, policy barriers, and drivers to scale organic farming in the country. The study will be leveraged to engage with a wide coalition of stakeholders and brainstorm on future priority areas.in China</p>	
<p>Continue and reinforce engagement in China</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The programme recognizes that in-country presence in China is important, as is engaging with the government and public institutions prior to rolling out projects. As next steps, the focus will be on building effective ecosystem networks in the country, including the government, brands, and implementation partners. The programme agrees with the evaluation that the next steps in programming should follow a deeper analysis</p>	<p>The recommendation will be revisited when the programme redefines its strategy in China</p>
<p>Prioritize Xinjiang in selecting sites for sustainable cotton production</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>The Sustainable Raw Materials programme will continue to be focused on smallholders and farmer co-operatives. Selection of implementation sites in the future will incorporate this lens.</p>	<p>The recommendation will be revisited when the programme redefines its strategy in China</p>
<p>Establish clear guidelines and training on the project cycle to enable project managers to better develop models for planning, delivering, assessing, and adapting programming</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>This initiative was amongst the first few supported by the foundation. Since then, the foundation has evolved its grant mechanism, including establishing well-defined approval procedures and continuous grant monitoring processes that enable early course corrections.</p>	<p>The foundation works towards continuously improving grant lifecycle processes</p>