

# BUSINESS NEWSLINE

## Overview of Better Cotton in Uzbekistan (2022-2023 Season)

*Progress & Insights from Uzbekistan: 2022-23 Season Growing Data*  
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The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) continues to make significant strides in Uzbekistan, aligning with global standards for sustainable cotton production. In the 2022-23 season, BCI saw a formal launch of its Better Cotton Programme in Uzbekistan, driven by key partners such as GIZ, the World Bank, and the Uzbekistan government.

### Key Highlights

**1. Volume of Better Cotton Grown:** Uzbekistan produced a substantial amount of Better Cotton in the 2022-23 season, contributing to the global total of 5.47 million metric tonnes of cotton lint, a key milestone for sustainable cotton practices worldwide.

**2. Formal Programme Launch:** The 2022/23 season marked the approval of a formal Better Cotton programme in Uzbekistan. The programme focuses on capacity building, decent work practices, and sustainable farming techniques. Systems were put in place to ensure the programme's credibility, including:

- o Identification and training of independent verifiers for licensing assessments.

- o Monitoring decent work conditions and auditing segregation practices at participating clusters.

**3. Collaborations and Partnerships:** Better Cotton's progress in Uzbekistan was supported by multiple partnerships, including GIZ's engagement since 2020 and the World Bank's Multi-Donor Trust Fund. A consultative council established in 2018 played a pivotal role in multi-stakeholder dialogue, preparing Uzbekistan's cotton industry for sustainable production.

**4. Sustainability Roadmap:** A joint sustainability roadmap, initiated in May 2023, was developed between Better Cotton and Uzbekistan's National Commission on Combatting Human Trafficking and Forced Labour. The roadmap focused on four key objectives:

- o Building effective management systems for the Better Cotton programme.
- o Promoting labour rights and ensuring safe working conditions for cotton workers.
- o Raising awareness on best environmental practices in cotton production.

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o Creating a three-year strategic roadmap for scaling the Better Cotton programme.

**5. Decent Work Monitoring:** Decent work monitoring was carried out during the 2023 harvest, where interviews were conducted with over 1,000 workers across 12 farms in seven regions. This ongoing effort highlights the importance of ensuring fair and safe working conditions.

### Uzbekistan's Progress Shared Globally

Better Cotton actively shared Uzbekistan's progress at international platforms, including at the ITMF -

International Textile Manufacturers Federation Annual Conference, ensuring visibility of the strides made in sustainable cotton production within the region.

This report summarizes the key achievements and insights from the 2022-23 season of Better Cotton's efforts in Uzbekistan, reflecting the impact of collaboration, sustainability, and improved working conditions in the country's cotton sector.

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## MMR 2024 Conclave Highlights Workforce Upskilling Amidst Technological Transformation



L-R, Kumar Rajagopalan (CEO, Retailers Association of India), C K Venkataraman (MD, Titan Company Ltd), G.R. Venkatesh (CHRO, Reliance Retail Ltd), Bijou Kurien (Chairman, Retailers Association of India), Dr. Lawrence Fernandes (Director - Retail Learning & Member Relationship, RAI)

The 18th edition of Manning Modern Retail (MMR) 2024, hosted by the Retailers Association of India (RAI), took place on September 19, 2024, bringing together HR leaders and industry experts. The conclave focused on the theme "Evolve, Engage, and Elevate – Shaping the Future of Talent," emphasizing the critical role of workforce upskilling in the face of rapid technological disruption.

Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO of RAI, highlighted the importance of talent development, stating, "In this era of technological advancements, our most valuable asset remains our people. Organizations must prioritize upskilling to stay competitive."

The event featured notable speakers, including C K Venkataraman, MD of Titan Company Ltd., who stressed HR's role in fostering a culture of continuous learning. The conclave concluded with the Retail HR Awards, recognizing excellence in HR innovation and employee retention across various categories. MMR 2024 reinforced its position as a leading platform for shaping the future of retail talent in an ever-evolving business landscape.