



## From Cotton Field to Clothes Hanger: S.OLIVER GROUP Supports Organic Cotton through Direct Supply Chain to India

The S.OLIVER GROUP helps nearly 400 farmers in India to grow organic cotton through the EMPOWERING FARMERS program. This is the first project of the company with a direct and transparent supply chain that starts with the cultivation of the raw materials (a purchasing model known as direct sourcing). It is intended to strengthen the livelihoods of the farmers and their families and at the same time ensure transparency along the entire supply chain. The cotton will start to be deployed in the Spring/Summer 2024 season and introduced on Thursday, July 13, to trade partners.

Cotton is the most important fiber in the Group's portfolio. In 2022, over 90 percent of the cotton used was already obtained from responsible, verified and certified sources. Sonja Balodis, Chief Product Officer at S.OLIVER GROUP explains: "Responsible management is a key value for us as a family company. The EMPOWERING FARMERS program is not just about contributing to Sustainability strategy for materials and fibres, through which we want to consistently increase the amount of sustainable products for customers. By focusing on organic cotton and supporting local initiatives, we can also make a valuable contribution to the two issues of environmental protection, and work and living conditions in farming." The program covers essential components of the sustainability strategy of the S.OLIVER GROUP.

Change works best when we work together

The EMPOWERING FARMERS program came out of the Partnership Initiative Organic Cotton in India, which the S.OLIVER GROUP has been part of since April 2022. It is managed by the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles and the Organic Cotton Accelerator (OCA), and has the goal of developing an environmentally friendly and economically viable supply chain. Despite the high demand, organic cotton makes up less than two percent of global cotton production. The S.OLIVER GROUP works closely within this framework with the Vasudha Cooperative and undertakes to purchase a defined quantity of certified organic cotton or cotton in conversion over a period of three years. The small businesses receive a bonus that is higher than the market price to increase the incentive to convert to organic farming. This is because in the three-year conversion phase in which lower yields may be achieved, producers can usually only offer their goods at the conventional price.

“OCA has always focused on creating the conditions for organic cotton to thrive – by putting farmers first. This pioneering project has helped mobilise more support for smallholders during the challenging phase of transitioning to organic farming practices. Thanks to the market linkages facilitated by the project, the farmers have benefited from secure off-take and better prices for their cotton. This truly helps accelerate organic cotton's potential for positive impact on people and the planet,” says Sanchit Kukreja, Programme Manager at OCA.

The co-operative enables the participating businesses to take part in targeted training sessions, visit model farms and share experiences. The farmers are also given advice and support on the certification of fields and cotton. Unlike conventional production, no chemical fertilizer, pesticides or genetically modified seeds are used in organic farming.

#### SALES INFORMATION – ONLY RELEVANT FOR FASHION B2B MEDIA

The cotton from the project will be deployed in the first half of 2024 in T-shirts by s.Oliver Red Label Women, Men and Junior. Trading partners can order s.Oliver Red Label Men and Women Styles from Thursday, July 13 in the showrooms of the S.OLIVER GROUP as well as from the digital Global Order Spot. s.Oliver Junior will follow on the next order date.

Photos: Organic Cotton Accelerator (OCA)

#### COMPANY INFORMATION

Since it was founded in 1969, the S.OLIVER GROUP has developed into a multi-brand group of companies. Alongside s.Oliver and QS, the brand portfolio also includes comma, LIEBESKIND BERLIN, and COPENHAGEN STUDIOS. The Group employs around 5,100 employees worldwide.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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