

BENCHMARKS FOR LARGE FARM EMPLOYERS

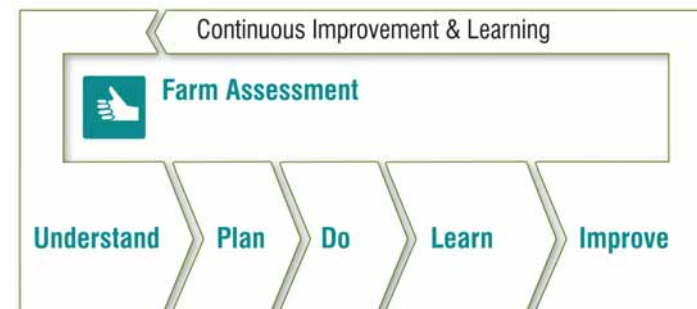
NB: Minimum Production Criteria are highlighted in orange

GUIDANCE ON BENCHMARKS

The BCI is about continuous improvement of production practices and learning from the results of these improved practices. To capture this key characteristic, the BCI works with a *Progress Framework*. The first steps of the BCI Progress Framework (Understand, Plan & Do) are assessed by defined benchmarks during the self-assessment process to know whether farmers meet the BCI Minimum Production Criteria and subsequently the Progress Requirements. Meeting the **Minimum Production Criteria** (MPC) means that farmers must achieve the DO Benchmark for each of the MPC. To be able to continue to sell Better Cotton after meeting the Minimum Production Criteria, a farmer needs to also make progress. The **BCI Progress Requirement** is that farmers, after meeting the Minimum Production Criteria, must complete a minimum number of additional benchmarks within the following 3 growing seasons while maintaining compliance to the Minimum Production Criteria. Progress refers to making progress to the next steps within a Production Criterion, i.e. from Understand to Plan, or from Plan to Do (For more information, please refer to the step by step guide to implementation).

Given the different backgrounds and capacity to change between categories of farmers, the Production Principles and Criteria and the self-assessment process differ per category of farmer. Accordingly, there is also a different set of benchmarks for each category of producers (family smallholdings, smallholder employers and large farm employers). BCI defines **Family smallholdings** as cotton producers who are not structurally dependent on permanent hired labour, who manage their farm using mainly their own and their family's labour; **Smallholder employers** as smallholder farmers who employ a significant number of hired workers, either permanently or for a specific task; and **Large farm employers** as those cotton-farming operations which are structurally dependent on permanent hired labour.

THE BCI PROGRESS FRAMEWORK



Smallholder employers and large farm employers have additional Decent Work criteria and benchmarks as compared to family smallholdings. Also, large farm employers have, for some criteria, different benchmarks to match a more mechanised farming system that generally exists on large farm employers' land.

Overall the benchmarks are written in a way, across Understand –Plan –Do, to support monitoring, through participatory peer review, 2nd party credibility checks, and 3rd party verification. For example, for monitoring purposes the effectiveness of an Implementing Partner will be considered by the BCI on the basis of the UNDERSTAND benchmarks. The documentation referred to in the PLAN benchmarks helps inform credibility checks and verification, on whether large farm employers / Learning Groups are growing Better Cotton. The results of DOING the BCI Production Criteria can similarly inform credibility checks and verification, based on visual signs and discussions with key beneficiaries. These benchmarks, together with the entire Better Cotton System will be externally reviewed at the end of 2012. After 2012 the need for specific LEARN and IMPROVE benchmarks will also be considered in accordance with the results of implementation.

UNDERSTAND Benchmarks

The first step of the Progress Framework is about knowledge sharing and skills development on the different Production Principles and Criteria. The starting point for any activity is to develop an understanding of the issues involved, the reasons why the issue is important and what can be done to address the issue. Farmers need to make informed decisions about their production practices and part of being able to make informed decisions depends on the level of access farmers have to knowledge and to training. This is either already available or the training/information has to be delivered by the Implementing Partner to farmers and/or workers.

The 'Understand' benchmarks have been written in a consistent manner for each criterion: '[Knowledge is available on \(xxx\) and is presented in a suitable format to \(xxx\)](#)'. A suitable format means that the knowledge is available in a format that allows the person attending training to be able to make sense of the knowledge provided. The language used should be appropriate to the training audience (e.g. not too technical) and consider local language, use of diagrams and pictures, literacy levels, etc. A useful reference document for implementing partners to identify what type of information should be provided to farmers and/or workers is '[Production Principle and Criteria 2.0 Explained](#)'. In particular, this document provides information on the rationale and importance of each BCI criterion.

The training materials developed by the Implementing Partner as part of this process might be valid across countries: for example, information on the pesticides listed in the Stockholm Convention or Rotterdam Convention, while others will be nationally specific: for example (i) what constitutes hazardous work in national legislation? (ii) what are the local trade names of pesticides listed in the Stockholm Convention? (iii) what are the locally - appropriate soil management practices for preserving and enhancing soil structure and organic matter levels? Some training materials might already be available at a national level (developed by other actors during previous or on-going related interventions on health and safety, Integrated Pest Management, child labour, etc.) and could be adapted for training farmers and workers involved in the implementation of the Better Cotton System. In any case, the existing training materials/modules or the information developed during implementation are part of what BCI calls National Guidance Material and this is to be shared with BCI to allow the BCI to share it with other Implementing Partners in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

For the purpose of efficiency and practicability, Implementing Partners are advised to conduct training on different criterion within a Production Principle at the same time. The person supposed to receive the training is indicated for each benchmark ('in a suitable format to xxx and xxx'), as both producers and workers may need training. Understand Benchmarks also require that producers and workers can self-assess their situation in relation to the criterion.

PLAN Benchmarks

This step in the progress framework turns a producer / workers' understanding into a concrete intention before acting, through a making sense process that translates information and training into a documented format to refer to, and act from. This documentation also allows producers / workers to review their progress, learn and improve. i.e. adjust their plan accordingly based on experience of trying to do it. The Plan benchmarks have also been written in a consistent manner across each criterion: 'Written plan *or* policy *or* procedure (depending on the context) exists' together with information on what needs to be included in it. In some cases, it is also necessary to state that the plan includes a specified timeframe.

For 'written' the BCI accepts any plan/procedure that is documented i.e. wall murals, visual plans (pictograms, video, photos). A written plan/procedure/policy needs to be agreed to at the level of the Learning Group (for family smallholdings and smallholder employers) and by the individual for large farm employers, while it may be the same as that developed for the whole Producer Unit. A written plan/policy/procedure will often be applicable for multiple criteria. Where this is the case it is recommended that the planning process is conducted at the same time for the different but interrelated criteria. For example, an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) policy is needed for large farm employers to address all the criteria related to health and safety. Similarly, the planning process for the Crop Protection Production Principle could be conducted for all criteria together.

If producers have a policy or procedure that involves workers, this should be transparently shared with workers (i.e. posting on board / farm house etc).

DO Benchmarks

This is where understanding and planning are then applied in practice to meet the BCI Production Criteria, e.g. using Integrated Pest Management practices in the field. This is the change sought by each criterion, to bring benefits to farmers, farm workers, and the environment. Usually, reference to the plan/policy/procedure put in place by the producers during the planning stage is included here, together with the results of these activities: 'Plan is implemented so that (xxx)' or 'Policy and/or Procedure is followed so that (xxx)'.

Meeting the Minimum Production Criteria means that farmers must achieve the DO Benchmarks.

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
CROP PROTECTION			
<p>1.1 An Integrated Pest Management Programme is adopted that includes the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) growing of a healthy crop; and ii) prevention of build-up of pest populations; iii) preservation and enhancement of populations of beneficial insects; and iv) regular field observations of the crop's health and key pest and beneficial insects; and v) management of resistance. 	<p>Knowledge is available (on IPM that includes appropriate tactics for each of the 5 elements) and is presented in a suitable format to producers;</p> <p>Formal training on IPM has been undertaken and / or understanding of the elements can be demonstrated, and producers can self-assess their situation</p> <p>Where GM varieties are used, knowledge is available on how to manage resistance, and is presented in a suitable format to producers.</p>	<p>A written IPM Plan exists that provides the specific tactics to be used for each of the 5 elements. The plan also includes the pesticides to be used so as to comply with Criteria 1.2, 1.3 and 1.5.</p> <p>Where GM varieties are used, a written plan exists that details how resistance will be managed</p>	<p>The specific tactics detailed in the IPM plan are used.</p> <p>Where GM varieties are used, resistance management plan is followed</p>
<p>1.2 Only pesticides that are: (i) registered nationally for the crop being treated; and (ii) correctly labelled in the national language, are used.</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on how to identify correctly labelled pesticides, and the pesticides that are legally registered for use on cotton, including both active ingredient and the Trade Name(s) under which the pesticides are sold) and is presented in a suitable format to producers.</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and identify use of non-registered or incorrectly-labelled pesticides.</p> <p>Producers can identify alternatives (including alternative methods) to non-registered or incorrectly-labelled products.</p>	<p>Planning is undertaken for the use of alternative pesticides to any non-registered or incorrectly-labelled pesticides that may have been used, and the IPM plan includes information on the legally-available alternative pesticides and on alternative methods.</p>	<p>Use of only legally registered pesticides that are correctly labelled in the national language</p>
<p>1.3 Pesticides listed in the Stockholm Convention are not used</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on the pesticides listed in the Stockholm Convention, including local Trade Name(s) under which the pesticides are sold) and is presented in a suitable format to producers.</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and identify use of Stockholm Convention listed pesticides.</p>	<p>Planning is undertaken for the use of alternative pesticides to any Stockholm-listed pesticides that may have been used, and the IPM plan includes information on the legally-available alternative pesticides and on alternative methods.</p>	<p>No pesticides listed in the Stockholm Convention are used</p>

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
<p>1.4 Pesticides are prepared and applied by persons who are: (i) healthy; and (ii) skilled and trained in the application of pesticides; and (iii) 18 or older; and (iv) not pregnant or nursing</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on better management practices for pesticide use, covering the 4 issues noted in the Criterion) and is presented in a suitable format to producers and pesticide applicators. Producers are able to demonstrate their understanding of these issues and can self-assess their situation Instances where pesticides may not be applied in accordance with the Criterion are identified.</p>	<p>Written policies and procedures exist, detailing how the producer will ensure that unhealthy people, people without training, people below the age of 18 and pregnant or nursing women do not prepare and apply pesticides with specific reference to who is allowed to prepare and spray pesticides.</p> <p>Producers have a system in place to document worker age and tasks</p>	<p>Policies and procedures are followed so that preparation and application of pesticides is done according to Criterion 1.4</p>
<p>1.5 Use of pesticides in any of the following categories: (i) WHO Class I, (ii) those listed by the Rotterdam Convention, (iii) endosulfan, is phased out, with the timeline based on the availability of better alternatives and ability for the risk to be properly managed</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on the pesticides included within the Criterion, including local Trade Name(s) under which the pesticides are sold, and on the alternative pesticides available, and on alternative methods), and is presented in a suitable format to producers. Producers can self-assess their situation and identify which pesticides currently being used (if any) are included in the Criterion, the reasons for phasing out, and the alternatives (including alternative methods) available</p>	<p>If pesticides listed in the Criterion are being used, the IPM Plan details the use of alternative pesticides and alternative methods, in accordance with the National phasing-out plan.</p>	<p>Where better alternative pesticides or methods are available and can be managed properly (as defined by the National Phasing Out Plan) those pesticides in WHO Class 1, Rotterdam Convention, and endosulfan are not sprayed</p>
<p>1.6 Pesticides are always prepared and applied by persons who correctly use appropriate protective and safety equipment</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on pesticide preparation and use, detailing how pesticides should be prepared and applied so as to minimise the risks of pesticide exposure to the user), and is presented in a suitable format to producers and pesticide applicators.</p> <p>Topics to be covered include: use of personal protective equipment (PPE) (including its maintenance and cleaning), mixing and tank-filling protocols (appropriate equipment, e.g. measuring jugs), importance of understanding and following of label instructions, application methods for ensuring the applicator is protected, and access to washing facilities. This information is informed by relevant legislative and regulatory requirements</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and identify appropriate preparation and application techniques, and PPE to be used by applicators. Common understanding demonstrated by applicators and producers on what appropriate PPE is, how to use and maintain PPE, follow label instructions and safe preparation (filling and mixing) and application methods</p>	<p>Written procedures exist detailing how to correctly use appropriate protective and safety equipment when preparing and applying pesticides.</p>	<p>All procedures are followed to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of appropriate PPE in accordance with the pesticide being used and its label requirements - Label instructions are followed - Proper maintenance and cleaning of PPE - Use of appropriate preparation and application methods - Applicators have access to appropriate facilities for washing themselves after handling / applying pesticides

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
<p>1.7 Pesticide application equipment and containers are stored, handled and cleaned so as to avoid environmental harm and human exposure</p> <p>(All farms benchmarks)</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on appropriate storing, handling and cleaning of pesticide containers and application equipment), and is presented in a suitable format producers and pesticide applicators.</p> <p>Topics to be covered include: i) the importance of keeping pesticides in their original containers; ii) the importance of not re-using pesticide containers; iii) how to transport and store them safely (e.g. separate by type, in a locked, well-ventilated room); iv) appropriate cleaning procedures for used containers and application equipment; v) choice of location for cleaning and storing used containers and application equipment; this information is informed by relevant legislative and regulatory requirements</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation</p>	<p>Written plan exists for development of appropriate storage, handling and cleaning facilities / techniques. The plan includes specific actions to be undertaken for safe storage, handling and cleaning, and the timeframes for their implementation.</p>	<p>Plan is implemented so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All pesticides are stored and transported safely in their original transport containers and are kept in designated safe areas, out of reach of children - No pesticide containers are re-used for any purpose - Empty pesticide containers are stored, labelled and handled appropriately and securely until they are collected / disposed of - Spills cannot seep into water supplies.
<p>Additional benchmarks for large farms employers on criteria 1.7</p>	<p>As above, with additional topics to include as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record keeping (manifest) of pesticides stored • storage signage and storage location • emergency spill plan • first - aid kits • in accordance with any legislative/regulatory requirements 	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above with plan implemented so that in addition:</p> <p>Up-to-date manifest maintained of pesticides stored and movements in stock</p> <p>The storage area is secure, appropriately located and signed (as per the written plan), in accordance with legislative / regulatory requirements</p> <p>There is a dedicated area used for preparing pesticides / cleaning equipment and containers that is appropriately located, and equipped to handle spills (for example away from water courses/other sensitive areas, absorbent material, clean-up equipment on hand)</p> <p>A basic emergency plan is established that details how to respond to spills / leaks/poisoning (see also Criterion 6.14).</p> <p>There is access to running water and a suitably equipped first aid kit</p>

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
<p>1.8 Pesticides are applied in appropriate weather conditions, according to label directions and or manufacturer's directions, with appropriate and well-maintained equipment</p> <p>(All farms benchmarks)</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on the influence of weather conditions and how to determine if conditions are appropriate, the importance of understanding and complying with label instructions (e.g. regarding application rate, application method, re-entry periods) and how to maintain application equipment), and is presented in a suitable format to producers and pesticide applicators. Pesticide applicators and workers understand the importance of each of these issues and are able to self-assess their own specific risks with respect to applications of pesticides, based on the location of the area to be treated and the types of pesticides to be applied. Pesticide applicators and workers understand the importance of ensuring label conditions are followed and can self-assess their situation</p>	<p>Written procedures exist detailing how pesticide applications are to be carried out, taking into account the need to apply them in appropriate weather conditions, in accordance with label directions and using appropriate and well-maintained equipment</p>	<p>Procedures are followed so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applications made take into account the potential effects on surrounding areas. Re-entry periods are adhered to <p>Equipment is inspected for leaks, cracks, worn parts regularly, and is only used if in good condition</p>
<p>Additional benchmarks for large farm employers on criteria 1.8</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above, plus additional written procedures exist for how to monitor weather conditions: wind speed and direction, temperature and humidity.</p> <p>The procedures include the critical parameters for these weather conditions (i.e.. what the application stop / go weather condition limits are, based on the pesticide being applied and the location of application)</p>	<p>As above, and in addition the procedures are followed so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weather conditions are monitored (and records kept) before pesticides are applied, and during the application; records are maintained of the weather conditions, and stop / go parameters abided by
<p>1.9 Used pesticide containers are collected by a recycling programme, or disposed of safely</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on the risks associated with re-using pesticide containers and on how to safely dispose of or recycle pesticide containers, including appropriate cleaning techniques), and is presented in a suitable format to producers and any workers. Producers and workers understand the importance of not re-using pesticide containers, and how to dispose of them safely. Producers can self-assess their situation and identify appropriate options for the storage and disposal of empty pesticide containers</p>	<p>Written plan (with timeframes) exists that details how the proper storage / disposal / recycling of empty pesticide containers will be undertaken safely</p>	<p>Plan is implemented so that empty pesticide containers are stored and recycled or disposed of safely</p>

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
WATER			
<p>2.1 Rain fed cotton: Water management practices are adopted that optimise water use</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on management practices to capture rain fall / store moisture in the soil: e.g. use of cover crops, crop residue retention, tillage practices, planting date and planting rate (plant density), weed control and methods to capture water), and is presented in a suitable format to producers.</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and identify which options are appropriate for their situation</p>	<p>Written plan exists for implementation of management practices to capture rain fall / store and conserve moisture in the soil.</p>	<p>Plan is implemented so that management practices for capturing rain / soil moisture storage and conservation are used.</p>
<p>2.1 Irrigated: Water management practices are adopted that optimise water use</p> <p>(all farms benchmarks)</p>	<p>As above with additional issues to consider including: choice of irrigation system (including the importance of soil type and its water holding capacity), its monitoring and maintenance (infrastructure, pumps, plant), irrigation timing / scheduling</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and identify which options are appropriate for their situation</p>	<p>As above, plus additional written procedures exist for how irrigation system is to be managed and monitored, including the irrigation scheduling programme (how irrigation timing is to determined so as to optimise water use), and for pressurised systems, the system maintenance programme and schedule.</p>	<p>As above, plan implemented and in addition the irrigation system is managed in accordance with the written procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Records are maintained on irrigation timing (date of irrigation) and water applied for each field
<p>Additional benchmarks for large farm employers on criteria 2.1 (irrigated)</p>			<p>As above, with plan implemented so that in addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irrigation is based on crop need: appropriate soil water monitoring tools used - Pressurised irrigation systems are maintained regularly, in accordance with plan - Records are maintained on irrigation timing (date of irrigation) and water applied for each field

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
<p>2.2 Management practices are adopted to ensure that water extraction does not cause adverse effects on groundwater or water bodies</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on the potential impacts of water extraction and management practices to address this) and is presented in a suitable format to producers.</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and identify potential impacts arising from their activities.</p>	<p>Written procedures exist for minimising adverse effects on groundwater or water bodies</p>	<p>Procedures are followed so that adverse effects on groundwater or water bodies are minimised. Records are maintained of the volumes of water extracted</p>
SOIL			
<p>3.1 Soil management practices are adopted that maintain and enhance the structure and fertility of the soil</p> <p>(All farms benchmarks)</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on locally - appropriate soil management practices for preserving and enhancing soil structure and organic matter levels (e.g. zero tillage, cover crops, crop residue maintenance and use of crop / legume rotations, choice of tillage equipment)) and is presented in a suitable format to producers.</p> <p>Knowledge available and presented in a suitable format on how to identify soil structural problems</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and identify soil structure problems, and the potential management practices to deal with them</p>	<p>Written plan exists for implementation of appropriate management practices to maintain and enhance soil structure and to increase soil organic matter content</p>	<p>Plan is implemented so that management practices that preserve soil structure and increase soil organic matter content are used.</p>
<p>Additional benchmarks for large farm employers on criteria 3.1</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above, with plan implemented so that in addition, identified soil structural problems are addressed through appropriate management practices</p>
<p>3.2 Nutrients are applied on the basis of crop and soil needs. Timing, placement and quantity applied are all optimised.</p> <p>(all farms benchmarks)</p>	<p>Knowledge is available on appropriate nutrient monitoring procedures (e.g. visual inspection, leaf tests, soil tests), nutrient formulations and application techniques, and is presented in a suitable format to producers.</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and the techniques for ensuring that timing, placement and quantity applied are optimised, are identified.</p>	<p>Written procedures exist that details how soil and crop monitoring is conducted to determine nutrient application types, rates and timing.</p>	<p>Procedures are followed so that nutrients are applied on the basis of identified crop and soil need and application (timing, placement quantity) is appropriate to the type of nutrient being applied and the growth stage of the crop</p>

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
Additional benchmarks for large farm employers on criteria 3.2	As above	As above plus additional written procedures exist for: - undertaking regular soil and crop nutrient monitoring programme, including the need to test for potential in-season deficiencies - a nutrient budget that takes into account leaf / soil tests and nutrient availability from previous crops (nutrient removal / fixing) and fertiliser applications (i.e.. field history)	As above, with procedures followed so that in addition: - the nutrient status of the crop and the soil is monitored regularly - A nutrient budget is used to inform nutrient applications - Long-term nutrition trends are monitored
3.3 Management practices are adopted that minimise erosion, so that soil movement is minimised and water courses, drinking water sources and other bodies of water are protected from farm run-off.	<p>Knowledge is available (on soil erosion management practices, such as strip cropping, crop residue maintenance, cover crops, use of earth works and use of strips of native vegetation along water streams to control erosion, filter out agrochemicals and protect wildlife habitats), and is presented in a suitable format to producers.</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and identify potential or existing erosion problems, and the management practices available to deal with them</p>	Written plan exists that details the management practices to be adopted that will help control water flows and erosion, and to repair any serious existing erosion problems (gullies)	<p>Plan is implemented so that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regular monitoring is undertaken of areas that are at risk of eroding, and of areas with an existing erosion problem - management practices are applied that control erosion and water flows, and that protect any off-site water bodies - areas with visual signs of erosion are being actively managed with appropriate control practices
HABITAT			
4.1 Practices are adopted that enhance biodiversity on and surrounding the farm	<p>Knowledge is available (on practices that enhance biodiversity on and surrounding the farm, and the likely presence of, and how to control, invasive species, and is presented in a suitable format to producers.</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and identify any invasive species (weeds, animals) present on their farm</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and identify any areas of significant biodiversity on their farm or neighbouring land</p>	Written plan exists that details the agreed practices to enhance biodiversity on and surrounding the farm, and to control invasive species.	Plan is implemented so that practices are used to enhance biodiversity on and surrounding the farm.

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
4.2 The use and conversion of land to grow cotton conforms with national legislation related to agricultural land use.	<p>Knowledge is available (on the legal use and conversion of land to grow cotton), and is presented in a suitable format to producers.</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and any areas on their farm that may be subject to specific legislative requirements regarding land-use, tree clearing/conversion to farm land are identified.</p>	<p>Written plan exists that details the specific legislative requirements to ensure that use of the land and any planned conversion complies with national legislation;</p> <p>The written plan includes a protocol for ensuring that any changes in the legislation become known and can be incorporated into the plan.</p>	<p>Plan is implemented so that cotton is only grown on legally used and converted land.</p>
FIBRE QUALITY			
5.1 Management practices are adopted that maximise the fibre quality	<p>Knowledge is available (on the critical agronomic factors for managing fibre quality, in particular choice of variety, sowing date / density and water, weed and nutrition management), and is presented in a suitable format to producers.</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and understand the effect of the above factors on fibre quality, and the management practices available to them are identified.</p>	<p>Written plan exists that details the identified management practices for maximising fibre quality (such as varietal selection, planting date, harvest date, water, weed and nutrition management)</p>	<p>Plan is implemented and varieties appropriate for the region are planted, in the recommended planting time period</p>
5.2 Seed cotton is harvested, managed, and stored to minimise trash, contamination and damage	<p>Knowledge is available (on appropriate harvesting and seed cotton storage management practices, including harvest timing and protocols for ensuring that seed cotton is maintained free of contamination during harvest, storage and transport: use of non-contaminating harvest bags, clean storage areas, segregation according to quality), and is presented in a suitable format to producers and pickers.</p> <p>Producers can self-assess their situation and specific aspects of their operation that pose a risk of contaminating seed cotton are identified.</p>	<p>Written procedures exist for harvesting, storing and transporting seed cotton so as to avoid contamination</p> <p>Written plan exists (with timeframes) that details how any infrastructure required to ensure that cotton can be stored and transported so as to avoid contamination will be established</p>	<p>Procedures are followed so that cotton is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - harvested using appropriate management practices, especially regarding use of non-contaminating harvest bags - stored using appropriate management practices especially regarding use of clean storage areas, and segregation according to quality; and - transported so as to prevent contamination <p>Plan for establishment of any required infrastructure to store and transport cotton so as to avoid contamination is implemented</p>
Additional Benchmarks for large farms employers on criteria 5.2 (only for those with mechanised harvesting)	As above	As above plus written procedures include a machinery management programme (e.g. protocols for machinery set-up, maintenance and hygiene) focused on minimising contamination	As above, with procedures implemented so that in addition the machinery management programme is followed and contamination is minimised

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
DECENT WORK			
6.1 Smallholders (including tenants, share-croppers and other categories) have the right, on a voluntary basis, to establish and develop organisations representing their interests	Knowledge is available (on how family smallholdings can organise themselves to represent their interests, in their region and for cotton) and presented in a suitable format to smallholders. Smallholders are able to self assess their situation. Existing organisations able to represent cotton smallholders are identified.	Written plan exists on how to establish and develop or join organisations representing smallholders' interests.	Plan is being implemented. Smallholders have the right to establish and develop or join organisations representing their interest.
6.2 Access to potable and washing water is provided.	Knowledge is available (on water quality and hygiene) and presented in a suitable format to producers and workers. Producers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self assess their situation	Written plan exists for producers to provide potable and washing water in an appropriate manner over a defined timeframe.	Plan is being implemented. Drinking and washing water facilities are placed within reasonable proximity to the workplace and accessible to all
6.3 There is no child labour, in accordance with ILO Convention 138.(See ILO Convention 138) (all farms benchmarks)	Knowledge is available (on national/state legislation and relevant ILO conventions related to child labour) and presented in a suitable format to producers and workers. Producers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation. Instances where child labour does or is likely to occur on the farm are identified.	Written procedures exist to proactively prevent children below the national minimum age to working on the farm. Producers have a procedure in place for checking age of workers and/or require age documentation for employees as a condition of employment and keeps documentation on record. Producers also have written procedures in place for removing existing child labour in an appropriate manner (corrective actions avoid harming children or their families; children are transferred to education, the income of the family is compensated by either employing the parent of the child labourers or by other means) with a specified timeframe for completion.	Procedures in place for the prevention and progressive eradication of child labour on cotton farms are followed.
Additional benchmark for large farm employer			Procedures in place are followed so that there is no child labour on farm in accordance with ILO Convention 138

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
<p>6.4 For hazardous work, the minimum age is 18 years of age</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on what constitutes hazardous work in national legislation including reference to ILO convention 182) and presented in a suitable format to producers and workers. This includes information that, at a minimum, no one under 18 can prepare or spray pesticides (see crop protection criteria 1.4).</p> <p>Producers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation.</p> <p>In accordance with national legislation, activities in the cotton cultivation cycle which are deemed to constitute hazardous labour are identified.</p> <p>Where and when persons under 18 are performing those type of activities is identified including a risk assessment on hazards associated with workers below 18 years.</p>	<p>Written policies exist detailing how persons below the age of 18 shall not carry out hazardous work with specific reference to who is allowed to prepare and spray pesticides. Producers have a procedure in place to document worker age and tasks.</p>	<p>Policies in place are followed so that any work which is likely to jeopardise children' physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals is not done by anyone under the age of 18 (as per national legislation where it is defined).</p>
<p>6.5 Employment is freely chosen: no forced or compulsory labour, including bonded or trafficked labour</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on national/state legislation and relevant ILO conventions related to forced labour and various issues around forced, compulsory, bonded and trafficked labour in the local context) and presented in a suitable format to producers and workers.</p> <p>Producers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation.</p> <p>Any instances of forced labour are identified.</p> <p>High-risk groups (like children, migrants, highly indebted producers and spouses and children of workers) and any existing employment terms are identified.</p>	<p>Written procedures exist to ensure that employment is freely chosen</p>	<p>Procedures in place are followed so that all workers are employed on a voluntary basis on terms that respect local laws.</p> <p>Producers shall not bind workers to employment as a condition of fulfilling terms of a debt to a third party or to the producer. Any wage advances given to the workers in order to secure employment should be interest free, of reasonable value, documented and should not contribute to bonded labor. Workers shall retain possession or control of their identity cards, identity papers, travel documents, or any other personal legal documents such as land deeds or house mortgage. Producers shall not retain any such documents or restrict workers' access to them for any reason whatsoever, including in order to ensure that workers shall remain in employment in the farm.</p>

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
<p>6.6 There is no discrimination (distinction, exclusion, or preference) practised that denies or impairs equality of opportunity, conditions, or treatment based on individual characteristics and group membership or association.</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on national/state legislation and relevant ILO conventions with regards to the issue of discrimination and how to address it in local cotton context) and is presented in a suitable format to producers and workers.</p> <p>Producers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self assess their situation.</p> <p>The most common forms of discrimination and the minority and majority groups are identified. Forms of discrimination may include but are not limited to gender based wage discrimination, ethnicity/caste/gender based work allocation, access to facilities and any kind of harassment including sexual harassment.</p>	<p>Written plan exist to improve the position of the disadvantaged groups in an appropriate manner with a specified timeframe for completion.</p>	<p>Plans are implemented so that the position of disadvantaged groups improves.</p>
<p>6.7 All workers and employers have the right to set up and join organisations of their own choosing, and to draw up their constitutions and rules, to elect their representatives and to formulate their programmes</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on national/state legislation with regards to freedom of association and relevant ILO conventions) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers.</p> <p>Producers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation.</p> <p>Possible organisations representing workers and employers interests are identified.</p>	<p>Employers recognise in writing the right of workers to set up and join organisations of their own choosing without prior authorisation.</p>	<p>Employers recognises in practice the right of all workers to set up and join organisations of their own choosing without prior authorisation.</p> <p>Employers shall not interfere in the matters of workers organisations and respect all laws, rules and procedures governing Freedom of Association under the ILO conventions. If no active and recognised organisation is able to work in the area, it is recommended that Employers encourage the workers to democratically elect a workers' organisation which represents them and which negotiates with the employer to defend their rights and interests</p>
<p>6.8 Workers and employers have the right to bargain collectively</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on national/state legislation and relevant ILO conventions related to collective bargaining) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation.</p>	<p>Employers recognise in writing the rights of workers and employers to bargain collectively. A written plan exists to promote and facilitate the establishment of collective bargaining agreement if the workers and employers mutually agree to do so.</p>	<p>Employers recognise in practice the right of workers to bargain collectively.</p>
<p>6.9 Workers have the right to belong to a trade union and carry out lawful union activities without any fear of anti-union discrimination</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on national legislation and relevant ILO conventions related to freedom of association, rights of workers and trade unions) and presented in a suitable format to workers and Employers. Workers and employers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation</p>	<p>Written policies exist to ensure that: (i) the workers are not under any pressure to join or not to join a particular organisation / committee (ii) the workers will not be harassed or discriminated against should they choose to join a workers' organisation of their own choice.</p>	<p>Policies in place are followed so that employers refrain from any acts of interference with worker's right to belong to a trade union. There is no disciplinary action taken against union activities</p>

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
6.10 Employers should provide access and reasonable facilities for workers' representatives	Knowledge is available (on provision of access and facilities for workers' representatives) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation	Written policies exist to ensure that access and reasonable facilities for worker's representatives are provided	Policies in place are followed so that employer provides appropriate facilities upon request for representative's meetings with workers and for representatives to effectively carry out their function. Employer allows trade unions not based at the farm to meet and share information with the workforce at an agreed time and place without interference
6.11 Workers receive regular health and safety training appropriate to the work that they perform	Knowledge is available (on health and safety issues) and presented in a suitable format to employers. Employers conduct risk assessment on farm (and identify the key training requirements for workers) and are able to self-assess their situation	Written OHS policy exists including commitment by employers to training, specifying frequency and the scope	Workers receive regular health and safety training appropriate to the work they perform.
6.12 Employers meet their workers' basic requirements, as specified above, including a clean place to eat and access to adequate medical care at no charge	Knowledge is available (on meeting workers' basic requirements, including a clean place to eat and access to medical care at no charge) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation	Written OHS policy exists that includes how employers provide workers' basic requirements.	OHS policy is followed so that: -Employers meets worker's basic requirements including potable drinking water, clean toilets, a clean place to eat and access to adequate medical care for workers and their immediate families. -Employers ensure that workers receive regular medical examination at the employer's expense. In case the workers reside on the farms, the employers will ensure that living quarters are adequate, safe and do not pose any risk to the workers or their families
6.13 Employers identify work hazards, inform workers on safe work practices and adopt preventive measures to minimise hazards in the workplace. Employers maintain records of any accidents and occupational diseases	Knowledge is available (on work hazards, safe work practices, preventive measures and how to maintain appropriate records) and presented in a suitable format to the employer. Employer is able to self-assess their situation. Work hazards are identified by the employer.	Written OHS policy exists including: (i) preventive measures to minimise the hazards identified (ii) plan made to inform workers on safe work practices over a defined timeframe (iii) procedures for record keeping of any accidents and occupational diseases	OHS policy is followed. Employer provides a safe working environment to workers. Preventive measures to minimise hazards in the workplace are adopted and monitored. Danger areas, activities and substances are well marked. Workers are informed by the employer on safe work practices. Record of any accidents and occupational diseases in the workplace are complete and up to date.
6.14 Employers ensure that measures are in place to deal with accidents and emergencies, including first aid and access to appropriate transportation to medical facilities	Knowledge is available (on how to deal with accidents and emergencies) and presented in a suitable format to employers. Employers are able to self-assess their situation	Written OHS policy exists including: procedures for first aid and appropriate transportation to medical facilities	OHS policy is followed. Adequate first aid supplies and trained first aid personnel are available on farms. Medically competent personnel can be reached in case of emergencies. Employer provide access to appropriate transportation to medical facilities in case of accidents and emergencies

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
6.15 Waged workers are paid wages at least equivalent to the applicable legal national minimum wage or regional norm, whichever is higher	Knowledge is available (on applicable legal national minimum wage or regional norm) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation.	Written plan exists describing how to ensure waged workers are paid in accordance with the criterion, over a defined timeframe. A negotiating process between employers and workers' representative is initiated.	Plan is implemented on time so that workers receive wages at least equivalent to the applicable national minimum wage or regional norm, whichever is higher
6.16 Where workers are paid at a piece-rate, this rate permits the worker to earn the applicable national minimum wage or regional norm (whichever is higher) during normal working hours and under normal operating conditions	Knowledge is available (on applicable legal national minimum wage or regional norm) and presented in a suitable format to employers and piece-rate workers. Employers and piece-rate workers share the same understanding of the method of calculation for piece rate workers and are able to self-assess their situation	Written plan and procedures exist to ensure piece-rate workers are paid in accordance with the criterion over a defined timeframe. A negotiating process between employers and workers' representatives is initiated on piece-rate payment.	Plan implemented on time and procedures are followed so piece-rate workers receive the negotiated price for piece-rate work (and this rate permits the worker to earn the applicable national minimum wage or regional norm, whichever is higher)
6.17 Workers are paid regularly in cash, or in a form that is convenient to them	Knowledge is available (on national/state legislation with regards to the payment of wages) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation	Employers and workers plan together payment schedule and forms of payment	Payments are made regularly, in a timely manner and in form previously agreed by workers. Receipt of in-kind payment is voluntary and all payments are properly documented.
6.18 The principle of equal pay for work of equal value is observed	Knowledge is available (on the principle of equal pay for equal work) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers. 'Equal Pay' should be understood as a broad concept that includes all payments, including basic wages, bonuses and non-monetary benefits. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation	Written policies exist to ensure equal pay for work of equal value is observed e over a defined timeframe.	Policies in place are followed. Remuneration for the work performed is documented and signed by the recipient (worker).
6.19 The worker's consent is obtained in advance as regards all working conditions	Knowledge is available (on the need to obtain worker's consent on their working conditions in advance) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation.	Employer-workers meeting(s) are scheduled before work commences.	All workers are aware of their rights and duties, responsibilities, salaries, starting date, hiring period, and work schedules. Employers obtain in advance worker's consent on all working conditions through written contract. Where legislation does not require written contracts, worker's consent on all working conditions is obtained verbally.
6.20 Workers are employed under legally binding (preferably written) contracts of employment	Knowledge is available (on national/state legislation with regards to contracts of employment) and presented in a suitable format to producers and workers. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation	Written plan exists to ensure legally binding contracts of employment are given to workers. .	Policies in place are followed so that all workers have written contracts, unless where national legislation states that employment contracts for relevant form of work (permanent, fixed-term, seasonal) may be verbal.

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
6.21 Adequate records are kept in accordance with national law, but in any event sufficient to enable monitoring	<p>Knowledge is available (on national/state legislation for employment record keeping and what is sufficient to enable monitoring) and presented in a suitable format to employers.</p> <p>Employers are able to self assess their situation</p>	<p>Written plan to develop a documentation procedure at the farm level exists The records shall be kept in accordance with national law.</p> <p>At a minimum records should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) information on wages (including form of payment), ii) date of birth (age), iii) gender, iv) working times (working hours and overtime), v) date of entry and period of employment, and vi) number of permanent/seasonal workers. 	<p>The procedure is developed and followed so that correct employment records are available on farm.</p>
6.22 Temporary, seasonal and (sub-) contracted workers receive equivalent benefits and employment conditions to permanent workers in relation to their period of employment	<p>Knowledge is available (on what equal benefits means in relation to period of employment) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self assess their situation</p>	<p>Written policy exists to provide equivalent benefits and employment conditions to all workers in relation to their period of employment over a defined timeframe</p>	<p>Policy is being followed so that:</p> <p>Work conducted by all workers (both permanent and temporary) is recorded properly. The workers while receiving the wages / benefits according to the work they performed and the negotiated terms of employment should sign / thumb print against the wages / benefits they received. Any discrepancies in compensation can be explained by objective differences in work or negotiated terms of employment</p>
6.23 Working hours comply with national laws or relevant collective agreements, whichever is more favourable to the worker	<p>Knowledge is available (on national/state legislation or relevant collective agreements with regards to working hours) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self assess their situation.</p>	<p>Written plan exists to ensure that a sufficient labour force is in place to do the work within working hours with limited need for overtime. An agreement between workers and producer on working hours is reached.</p>	<p>Plan is implemented so that pay records indicate that working hours do not exceed national statutory or collectively agreed maximum. Working hours are covered in contract of employment (if contract required by law)</p>
6.24 Overtime work is voluntary and remunerated in accordance with the law or applicable collective agreements	<p>Knowledge is available (on national/state legislation or applicable collective agreements with regards to overtime work) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self assess their situation</p>	<p>Written plan exist to ensure that a sufficient labour force is in place to do the work within working hours with limited need for overtime. An agreement between workers and employers on overtime work is reached.</p>	<p>Plan is implemented so that overtime work is at all times voluntary and paid according to legal or sector standards. It cannot be required on a regular basis and should be compensated at a premium rate</p>
6.25 Employers do not engage in or tolerate the use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, sexual or other harassment or physical or verbal abuse of any kind.	<p>Knowledge is available (on national/state legislation and what constitutes different types of harassment, punishment and abuse) and presented in a suitable format to employers and workers. Employers and workers share the same understanding of the criteria and are able to self-assess their situation</p>	<p>Written policies exist to ensure basic treatment of workers.</p>	<p>Employers ensure that the workplace is free from any type of punishment, coercion, harassment and abuse.</p>

Production Criteria	Understand	Plan	Do
<p>6.26 There is a transparent and clear policy and system for disciplinary measures and this is communicated to workers. The system includes fair warning principles and any disciplinary actions are proportionate to the conduct in question.</p>	<p>Knowledge is available (on the need for a transparent and clear policy and system for disciplinary measures) and presented in a suitable format to employers. Employers are able to self assess their situation</p>	<p>A written transparent and clear policy exists for disciplinary measures and this is communicated to workers by producers. The policy provides a clear statement of what constitutes acceptable behaviour in the workplace and establish a fair and transparent framework to follow where there are allegations of misconduct. Workers have a clear understanding of what behaviours lead to disciplinary action and what those disciplinary actions will be. The disciplinary actions should be progressive in nature (from verbal warning-written warning-notice-termination). The employer has an appeal mechanism in the farms with the involvement of credible local organisations.</p>	<p>Policy is followed so that fairness and transparency in disciplinary practices is observed by the employer in accordance with national laws and collective agreements</p>