



BCI

Better
Cotton
Initiative

BCI

Step by Step Guide to Implementation Overview

www.bettercotton.org

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How to use this Guide

It is strongly recommended that the user reviews the Better Cotton System Information Pack, the Implementation Partnership Agreement, and / or the BCI website before using this guide.

The Better Cotton Initiative Step-by-Step Guide to Implementation is structured in to the following main sections:

- An overview, which summarises the purpose, scope of work, and tools and templates available at each stage of the process, in addition to a final checklist of required activities
- The Planning section, which provides more detail on required outputs and outcomes before starting to work with farmers
- The Implementation section, which provides more detail on required outputs and outcomes during the season

Both the Planning and Implementation sections are clearly structured around the stated purpose of each stage of activity, detailed guidance on scope of work, a summary of templates and tools, and a final checklist of activities.

The available tools and templates are identified throughout the Guide through a numbering system and by the following icons:



Tool: Guidance and templates to help **identify** information requirements at various stages of the Better Cotton System process



Form: Form to **collect** information at Learning Group / Large Farm Employer level, and to be submitted to the Producer Unit



Report: Report to facilitate mandatory **reporting** to BCI, required for producers to grow and sell Better Cotton

Tools and template documents (word, excel and pdf format), which are correspondingly numbered and include the appropriate icon, are available to download and use from memory stick, which accompanies the guide. A list of available tools and templates follows this section.

The Annex contains information on currently available resources.



Contacting BCI

If you need support / advice, please contact the BCI Secretariat and / or BCI Regional Coordinators. Contact details are available at http://bettercotton.org/index/101/contact_us.html







List of Tools and Templates

The following tools and templates can be sourced from the USB memory stick, which accompanies the guide:


Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Business Case for Farmers 
- 1.2 Working with Ginners 

Section 2: Planning

- 2.1 Multi-stakeholder Workshop Agenda (identification stage) 
- 2.2 Identification Stage Report 
- 2.3 Stakeholder Analysis 
- 2.4 Formulation Stage Report 
- 2.5 Implementation Plan 
- 2.6 Gap analysis on BCI Production Principles and Criteria 

Section 3: Implementation

- 3.1 Farmer Field Book 
- 3.2 Self Assessment Form for Family Smallholdings 
- 3.3 Self Assessment Form for Smallholder Employers 
- 3.4 Results Indicators Form for Learning Groups 
- 3.5 Producer Unit Report 
- 3.6 Results Indicators Report 
- 3.7 Working with Results Indicators 
- 3.8 Benchmarks for Family Smallholdings 
- 3.9 Benchmarks for Smallholder Employers 

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- 3.10 Appeal Process
 - 3.11 Self Assessment Form for Large Farm Employers
 - 3.12 Results Indicators Form for Large Farm Employers
 - 3.13 Benchmarks for Large Farm Employers
 - 3.14 Documented Chain of Custody



Section 1: Introduction

Purpose

The Better Cotton Initiative Step by Step Guide to Implementation has been produced to support BCI Implementing Partners to work with the Better Cotton System at field level.

This guide is essential to use for implementing the Better Cotton System, as it provides the common framework and core activities that must be done for producers to grow and sell Better Cotton.

Process Overview

The Better Cotton Initiative Step by Step Guide to Implementation comprises two phases – Planning and Implementation.


- The Planning Phase involves an Identification Stage, which includes initial national situational analysis, stakeholder engagement and the identification of potential opportunities to implement the Better Cotton system, followed by a Formulation Stage, which requires more detailed analysis on how specific projects could be implemented, accompanied by a detailed Implementation Plan.¹
- The Implementation Phase involves a sequence of activities required to implement the Better Cotton System, which includes working with farmers to establish a continuous cycle of learning and improvement, making Better Cotton available on the market by fulfilling Supply Chain requirements, and sharing lessons learned and best practice.

Figure 1 – Step by Step Guide to Implementation – Process Overview



¹ In BCI Focus Regions (India, Pakistan, Brazil and West and Central Africa) the BCI has already completed the identification stage. The outcome of the exercise is presented in the existing BCI resources in Annex'.

Tools and Templates

 1.1 - Business Case for Farmers

 1.2 - Working with Ginners

Check List for Implementing Partners

- Approved BCI membership
 - Signed Implementation Partnership Agreement
 - Access to BCI on-line membership portal
 - Local BCI Regional Coordinator contacted
 - BCI workshop participation on how to use this guide
-

Section 2: Planning

Overview

A robust planning process is a key contributor to the successful implementation of the Better Cotton System, ensuring that realistic objectives linked clearly to defined activities are set, the commitment of all parties is secured, clear roles and responsibilities are identified, the resources and capacities required to deliver are defined, and flexibility to adjust the approach over time is factored in.

The aim of the planning phase is for Implementing Partners to develop a detailed Implementation Plan, informed by, amongst other things, a rigorous analysis of the local context and needs, stakeholder inputs, programme and resource requirements, and risk planning.

Identification Stage

Purpose

The purpose of the identification stage is to establish the initial feasibility of implementing the Better Cotton system, by defining at a broad level (country/region):

- who the stakeholders are
 - the key issues facing the cotton sector
 - possible implementation strategies and
 - potential areas for implementation.
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-

Scope of Work

- Initial situational analysis
 - Stakeholder mapping and analysis
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Tools and Templates



2.1 Multi-stakeholder Workshop Agenda (identification stage)



2.2 Identification Stage Report



2.3 Stakeholder Analysis

Checklist for Implementing Partners



Multi-stakeholder Workshop during identification stage



Identification Stage Report

Formulation Stage

Purpose

To complete an in-depth situational analysis and identify how the system could be implemented with partners so that:

- Better Cotton is grown in accordance with the BCI Production Principles and Criteria
 - Farmers are supported to grow Better Cotton through the promotion of the BCI Enabling Mechanisms
 - Supply is connected with demand in the form of an identifiable Better Cotton Bale
 - Farmers are assessed and encouraged to continuously improve through measuring results and seasonal learning cycles
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Scope of Work

In-depth situational analysis including:

- A gap analysis on BCI Production Principles and Criteria
 - Identification of potential Farmer Support activity
 - Assessment of the feasibility of implementing the Supply Chain for Better Cotton
 - Plan of how to implement Farm Assessment and the collection of results indicators
 - Detailed Implementation Plan, with particular focus on achieving the BCI Minimum Production Criteria (MPC)
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Tools and Templates



2.4: Formulation Stage Report



2.5: Implementation Plan



2.6: Gap analysis on BCI Production Principles and Criteria

Checklist for Implementing Partners



Formulation Stage Report



Formulation Stage workshop with all partners



Implementation Plan



Engaged cotton producer organisations and ginners



Funding secured to start activities

Section 3: Implementation

Overview

Successful implementation of the Better Cotton system during each cotton growing season, involves activity at the field level to support and assess farmers to grow Better Cotton, to collect data and report on it, and to connect BCI farmers to demand in the market for Better Cotton.

Working with Smallholders

Purpose

Farm Assessment is the organising framework through which Implementing Partners work with producers at the field level. Farm Assessment involves farmers participating in a continuous cycle of learning and improvement through a progress framework, and is the mechanism for assessing whether farmers grow and sell Better Cotton.

Scope of Work (smallholders)

- Awareness raising activities
 - Organisation of stakeholders
 - Establishing data management system
 - First meeting(s) with Learning Group
 - Collection of baseline data
-

- Farmer support programme
- Credibility checks
- The self assessment process
- 3rd Party verification
- Decision on selling Better Cotton
- Result indicators reporting
- Planning for Progress Requirements





Tools and Templates

Smallholders

-  3.1: Farmer Field Book
-  3.2: Self Assessment Form for Family Smallholdings
-  3.3: Self Assessment Form for Smallholder Employers
-  3.4: Results Indicators Form for Learning Groups
-  3.5: Producer Unit Report
-  3.6: Results Indicators Report
-  3.7: Working with Results Indicators
-  3.8: Benchmarks for Family Smallholdings
-  3.9: Benchmarks for Smallholder Employers
-  3.10: Appeal Process

Checklist for Implementing Partners

Smallholders

-  Categorise farmers in the support programme into 3 categories (Family Smallholdings, Smallholder Employers, Large Farm Employers)
-  Organise farmers into Learning Groups and identify a facilitator/scribe
-  Set up a data management system and appoint a 'Documentation Officer' at the level of the Producer Unit
-  Ensure smallholders submit a first Results Indicators Form to the Producer Unit (baseline data)

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- Submit first Results Indicators Report to the BCI Regional Coordinator (baseline data)
 - Define and deliver a specific farm support programme (on the basis of needs and benchmarks) in order to achieve the 'DO' Benchmarks on all Minimum Production Criteria
 - Facilitate/organise at least one peer to peer review between Learning Groups of the same Producer Unit
 - For 2nd Party Credibility Checks, check at a minimum 10% of the Learning Group within a Producer Unit per season
 - Facilitate and verify the annual completion of the Self Assessment Form before harvest
 - Participate in 3rd party verification as requested
 - Send a Producer Unit report to the BCI Regional Coordinator at least 4 weeks before harvest
 - Provide feedback to farmers on decisions by BCI about compliance
 - After harvest facilitate the collection of Results Indicators Forms from Learning Group
 - Submit a Result Indicator Report to the BCI Regional Coordinator not later than 8 weeks after harvest
 - Facilitate selection and planning of Progress Requirements
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Working with Large Farm Employers

Purpose

Farm Assessment is the organising framework through which Implementing Partners work with producers at the field level. Farm Assessment involves farmers participating in a continuous cycle of learning and improvement through a progress framework, and is the mechanism for assessing whether farmers grow and sell Better Cotton.

Scope of Work (Large Farm Employers)

- Awareness raising activities
- Organisation of stakeholders
- Establishing data management system
- First meeting(s) with Large Farm Employers
- Collection of baseline data
- Farmer support programme
- Credibility checks
- The self assessment process
- 3rd Party verification
- Decision on selling Better Cotton
- Result indicators reporting
- Planning for Progress Requirements

Tools and Templates

Large Farm Employers

-  3.1: Farmer Field Book
-  3.5: Producer Unit Report
-  3.6: Results Indicators Report
-  3.7: Working with Results Indicators
-  3.10: Appeal Process
-  3.11: Self Assessment Form for Large Farm Employers
-  3.12: Results Indicators Form for Large Farm Employers
-  3.13: Benchmarks for Large Farm Employers

Checklist for Implementing Partners

Large Farm Employers

- Set up a data management system and appoint a 'Documentation Officer' at the level of the Producer Unit
- Ensure Large Farm Employers submit a first Results Indicators Form to the Producer Unit (baseline data)
- Submit first Results Indicators Report to the BCI Regional Coordinator (baseline data)
- Define and deliver a specific farm support programme (on the basis of needs and benchmarks) in order to achieve the 'DO' Benchmarks on all Minimum Production Criteria
- Facilitate/organise at least one exchange review per Producer Unit
- For 2ndParty Credibility Checks, check at a minimum 10% of the Large Farm Employers within a Producer Unit per season
- Facilitate and verify the annual completion of the Self Assessment Form before harvest
- Participate in 3rd party verification as requested
- Send a Producer Unit report to the BCI Regional Coordinator at least 4 weeks before harvest
- Provide feedback to farmers on decisions by BCI about compliance
- After harvest facilitate the collection of Results Indicators Forms from Large Farm Employers
- Submit a Result Indicator Report to the BCI Regional Coordinator not later than 8 weeks after harvest
- Facilitate selection and planning of Progress Requirements

Supply Chain

Purpose

The Supply Chain for Better Cotton makes the Better Cotton grown by farmers available to interested retailers.

Scope of Work

The focus for implementation of the Supply Chain for Better Cotton is on the movement of seed cotton from the farm to the gin, and the creation of a bale of lint made of 100% Better Cotton. This consists of the following elements, all of which are compulsory:

- Segregation of Better Cotton from field to the bale
 - Establishing documented chain of custody
 - Weighing of seed cotton and lint cotton
 - Creation of 100 % Better Cotton bales
 - Using a Better Cotton descriptor that allows for the identification of the 100 % Better Cotton bales.
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Tools and Templates



1.2: Working with Ginners



3.14: Template Chain of Custody

Checklist for Implementing Partners



Ensure that Better Cotton is segregated from other cotton at all times until the Better Cotton is delivered to the gin



For farmers who sell seed cotton, ensure that the weight of the seed cotton produced by individual farmers, and the weight of lots of Better Cotton delivered to the gin (where cotton from different farmers is aggregated) is recorded, and the information is recorded in the Chain of Custody documentation, and archived.



For farmers who sell lint cotton, ensure that the weight of lint cotton produced by individual farmers, and the weight Better Cotton ginned (where cotton from different farmers is aggregated) is recorded, and the information is recorded in the Chain of Custody documentation, and archived.



Ensure that there is a documented chain of custody of the Better Cotton, so that the Learning Group / Large Farm Employer who produced the Better Cotton can be identified.

National Guidance Material

Purpose

National Guidance Material (NGM) clarifies how best to achieve the Production Principles and Criteria in national contexts, and provide the means by which local conditions and circumstances are taken into account, so that farmers can address the globally-defined BCI Production Principles and Criteria.

Scope of Work

The NGM developed by BCI Implementing Partners need to be submitted annually to the BCI Regional Coordinator and should include information such as:

- Training modules, manuals (for trainers and/or farmers) on the different BCI Production Criteria
 - Management practices available to farmers validated through field testing
 - Strategies for working with and supporting cotton farmers (BCI Enabling Mechanisms)
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Checklist for Implementing Partners

- Develop and share with BCI training manuals/modules on the BCI Production Principles and Criteria
 - Develop and share with BCI information on locally appropriate management practices for the relevant BCI Production Criteria
 - Develop and share with BCI information on best practices for BCI Enabling Mechanisms
 - Participate in dissemination workshops on lessons learnt and NGM development as appropriate
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Lessons Learnt and Sharing Best Practices

Purpose

To enable the successful development of the Better Cotton System across the supply chain and countries, BCI is emphasising the importance of sharing knowledge and best practice on how to work with cotton farmers, the cotton supply chain and the Better Cotton System.

Scope of Work

Lessons learnt:

Development by Implementing Partner of their own monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework at project level to support continuous improvement and learning, and the sharing of lessons learned.

When relevant, development by Implementing Partner of an appropriate exit strategy based on lessons learnt during implementation.

Sharing best practices:

Sharing of knowledge and best practices at a national and a global level through the National Stakeholder Council, National Guidance Material, dissemination workshops, collaboration with existing and complementary initiatives, a publicly accessible on-line library, and an on-line membership portal.

Checklist for Implementing Partners

- Define and integrate into project plans and activities (as necessary) an appropriate project monitoring, evaluation and learning framework
 - Define and put in place an appropriate exit strategy (if relevant)
 - Participate, as appropriate, in the different mechanisms established by the BCI Secretariat for the sharing of best practices (National Stakeholder Council, workshops, online library and membership portal)
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Communication**Purpose**

To bring credibility and clarity to the work being undertaken by BCI and producers, BCI and Implementing Partners need to ensure a consistent message is given to BCI members, partners and the public in general. All Implementing Partners are required to adhere to BCI Communication Rules, http://bettercotton.org/files/Membership/BCI_Communication_Rules_final_eng_ext.pdf as specified in the Implementation Partnership Agreement.

Scope of Work

Implementing Partners communicate about their work to the BCI through the Producer Unit and Results Indicator Reports, and through sharing National Guidance Material. As important ambassadors for BCI, Implementing Partners can also communicate to their own stakeholders (including local stakeholders / partners / producers) directly about the partnership and the project – in line with the BCI Communication Rules.

Checklist for Implementing Partners

- Read the BCI Communication Rules
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