



Better
Cotton
Initiative

BCI Procedures for consulting on and establishing the Better Cotton System in a country

Orientation

This document describes the Procedures that need to be undertaken by an organisation that wishes to see Better Cotton being grown and sold in any country not already implementing the Better Cotton System. Complying with these Procedures for consulting on and establishing the Better Cotton System is the first step towards growing and selling Better Cotton in a country not already implementing the Better Cotton System.

Contents

Background	2
Introduction	3
Overview of Procedure Requirements	4
The Procedure Requirements in Detail	5
Suggested Reference Documents	9
Appendix: Regional Coordinator Terms of Reference	10

Background

The Better Cotton Initiative is a voluntary, open and inclusive initiative that exists to make global cotton production better for the people who produce it, better for the environment it grows in and better for the sector's future. These procedures have been approved by the BCI Council for application during the 3 year start up implementation phase (2010-2012) of BCI.

This document describes the Procedures that need to be undertaken by an organisation (Proponent) that wishes to see Better Cotton being grown and sold in any country not already implementing the Better Cotton System. Better Cotton can only be grown and sold in accordance with the requirements of the Better Cotton System, which in turn first has to be consulted on and established in accordance with the Procedures detailed below. Complying with these Procedures for consulting on and establishing the Better Cotton System is thus the first step towards growing and selling Better Cotton in a country not already implementing the Better Cotton System.

Compliance with these Procedures needs to be confirmed by the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) before Better Cotton can be grown and sold. As well as providing a consistent and therefore more efficient means for the BCI to oversee the global implementation of the Better Cotton System, undertaking the consultation process outlined by these Procedures will help the critical organisations and stakeholders in country to develop understanding of and support for the implementation of the Better Cotton System. It will help identify key organisations, and inform the development of appropriate implementation strategies. It will also help the Proponent understand what existing activities are being undertaken upon which any implementation can build.

This document is therefore relevant for any organisation interested in working with farmers to support them in growing and selling Better Cotton.

For further information please contact the Executive Director of the BCI.

http://www.bettercotton.org/index/101/contact_us.html

Introduction

The initial focus for the implementation of the Better Cotton System¹ is in the following countries: Brazil, India, Pakistan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Senegal and Togo (Initial Focus Countries). Implementation activities in these countries were preceded by a period of extensive and detailed consultation activity undertaken by the BCI that both informed and established a Nationally-focussed framework for implementation of the Better Cotton System. This National framework consists of a National Stakeholder Council and a BCI Regional Coordinator. The BCI considers this consultative process and National framework as essential pre-requisites for the establishment of the Better Cotton System in a country. The Procedures outlined in this document therefore need to be undertaken before Better Cotton can be grown and sold.

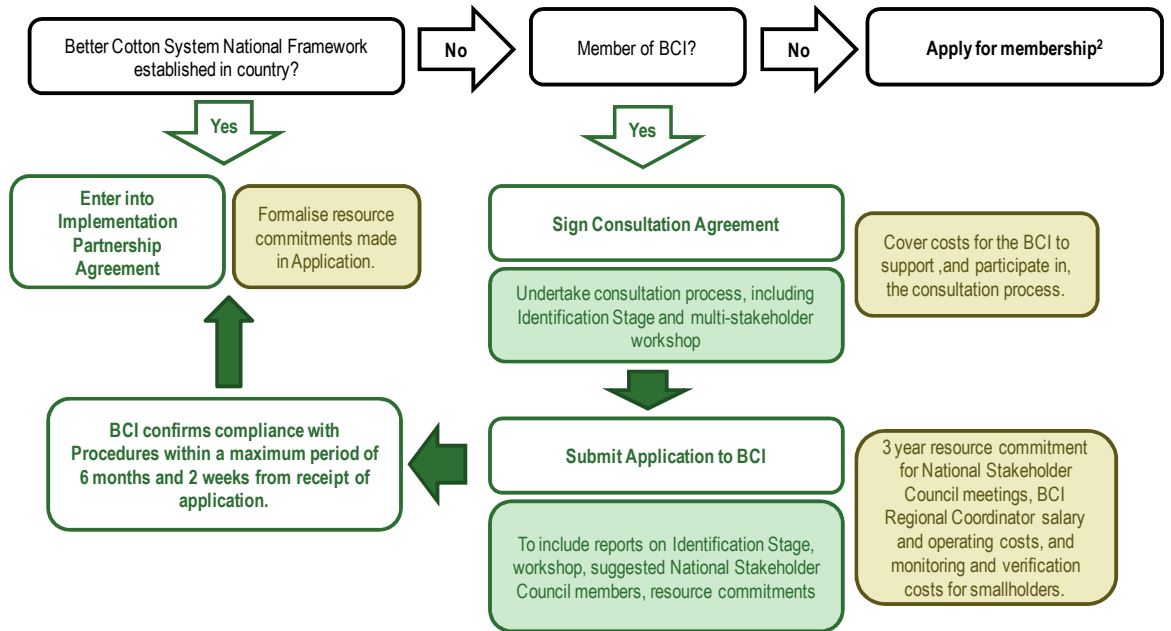
As a global initiative, the BCI would like the Better Cotton System to be implemented in all cotton-growing countries. However, in order for expansion of the Better Cotton System to take place efficiently and effectively, the BCI recognizes that the process undertaken by the BCI in the Initial Focus Countries needs to be undertaken by other organizations interested in implementing the Better Cotton System.

The Procedures outlined in this document only need to be undertaken one time in any country, and compliance with these Procedures needs to be confirmed by the BCI before Better Cotton can be grown and sold there. BCI requires this for at least three reasons:

- To help ensure that as consistent an approach as possible is taken with the consultation on and establishment of the Better Cotton System in every country. This will help ensure that the Better Cotton System is being implemented as consistently as local circumstances allow, and will help to make the BCI oversight of implementation as efficient as possible, as implementation will be based on a common process
- As well as providing for a consistent and therefore more efficient means for the BCI to oversee the implementation of the Better Cotton System, undertaking the consultation process outlined by the Procedures will help to develop understanding of and support for the implementation of the Better Cotton System in the country being consulted. It will also help identify key organisations, and inform the development of appropriate implementation strategies.
- The steps outlined in the Procedures are based on the assumption that the Proponent is intending to work with the Better Cotton System in the country in question. Before actually implementing at farm level, an organisation is required to enter into an Implementation Partnership Agreement (IPA) with the BCI. The IPA will detail the specific requirements of implementing the Better Cotton System, including the resources that need to be allocated to supporting the National framework — i.e. a full time BCI Regional Coordinator and the establishment of the National Stakeholder Council — and to supporting the BCI's participation in the consultation and establishment of the Better Cotton System. These Procedures will help the Proponent to properly detail the resources that need to be provided during implementation of the Better Cotton System to ensure that it can function effectively.

¹ See Better Cotton System documents Mean: Production Principles and Criteria 2.0; Farmer Support; Farm Assessment; Supply Chain; Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning; Tools; Production Principles and Criteria 2.0 EXPLAINED. All available on www.bettercotton.org

Overview of Procedure Requirements



- 1 Proponent contacts the BCI to express interest in carrying out the Procedures in a country. The BCI will confirm whether the Better Cotton System has already been consulted on and established in the country in question. If the Better Cotton System is already in place, these Procedures do not need to be undertaken, and the Proponent may enter into an IPA with the BCI. Otherwise, to 2 below:
- 2 If the Proponent is not already member of the BCI then the Proponent must apply for membership (note can only start membership 1 January and 1 July) (Clause 1). Once a member of the BCI, the Proponent then signs a Consultation Agreement with the BCI confirming its willingness to carry out the Procedures within agreed time frames, to financially support the implementation of the Better Cotton System (Clause 2) and to abide by additional communication rules covering this procedure (Clause 2.2).
Once the Consultation Agreement is signed, the BCI provides the Proponent with the BCI Step-by-Step Guide to Implementation (Clause 2).
- 3 Once the Proponent carries out the Procedures as detailed below (Clauses 3 and 4), the Proponent applies, supplying the requested information, to the BCI for confirmation that the Procedures have been complied with (Clause 8).
- 4 The BCI Council considers the Application and within a maximum period of 6 months and 2 weeks, provides a response as to whether the Procedures have been complied with (The six-month period is based on the frequency of Council meetings; the actual time taken for a response will depend on the timing of the Application in relation to the next scheduled BCI Council meeting. It is suggested that the Application be submitted 2 months prior to the next scheduled BCI Council meeting).
- 5 If the BCI Council, after considering the Application, is satisfied that Procedures have been complied with, a conditional confirmation will be provided. Final confirmation is subject to the Proponent signing an Implementation Partnership Agreement. The Proponent shall provide funds to the BCI in accordance with the Application and / or Implementation Partnership Agreement, as agreed.
- 6 The BCI hires the Regional Coordinator; one of the first roles of the Regional Coordinator is to establish the National Stakeholder Council
- 7 Implementation of the Better Cotton System, leading to the growing and selling of Better Cotton, begins.

The Procedure Requirements in Detail

Definitions / Terms

Application

The formal application by the Proponent, with the required information (Clause 8), that seeks confirmation from the BCI that the Procedures for consulting on and establishing the Better Cotton System have been complied with.

Better Cotton System

Means collectively all the following: Production Principles and Criteria 2.0; Farmer Support; Farm Assessment; Supply Chain; Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning; Tools; Principles and Criteria 2.0 EXPLAINED.

Communication Rules

Includes the BCI Communication Rules, subscribed to through membership, and those provided in Clause 2.2 that detail what can be stated publicly by both the Proponent and the BCI about the undertaking of these Procedures.

Consultation Agreement

The agreement required by clause 2 that details the roles and responsibilities of the BCI and the Proponent regarding the consultation and establishment of the Better Cotton System in a country.

Implementation Partnership Agreement

An agreement that details the roles and responsibilities of the BCI and an organisation implementing the Better Cotton System.

Information Pack

The following documents produced by the BCI: Better Cotton System, About the BCI, Membership Association Management, and Communications – management and guidelines.

Procedures

The activities to be undertaken and information to be provided by the Proponent, as listed in this document.

Proponent

The organisation that wishes to see the Better Cotton System established in a country so that Better Cotton can be grown and sold.

Step-by-Step Guide to implementation

The BCI guide provided to the Implementer once the Agreement has been entered into, and which provides detailed guidance information, tools, reporting formats, and forms designed to assist the Implementer to fulfil their responsibilities under this Agreement.

1. Membership and Recognition

- 1.1. The Proponent seeking to consult on and establish the Better Cotton System in a country must be a member of the Better Cotton Initiative². Membership information (including membership application forms and applicable membership fees) available at http://www.bettercotton.org/index/9/get_involved.html
- 1.2. The BCI membership year starts in either January or July. The BCI will consider applications for membership at the next scheduled Council meeting following receipt of the application for membership of the BCI. The Council of the BCI considers applications for membership in December and June each year
- 1.3. Only countries that have been formally consulted with, in accordance with the Procedures detailed in this document will be recognised by the BCI as growing and selling Better Cotton.

2. Consultation Agreement with the Better Cotton Initiative

- 2.1. Prior to undertaking any of the Procedures listed below, the Proponent must enter into a Consultation Agreement with the Better Cotton Initiative that:
 - a) Commits the Proponent to following these Procedures, and in particular that the Proponent will include, in the application for confirmation of compliance with these Procedures (Application), details of the financial support that the Proponent will provide to the BCI for the implementation of the Better Cotton System, as detailed in clauses 5, 6 and 7. The BCI will make available to the Proponent information to assist the Proponent to better understand the potential costs involved.
 - b) Commits the Proponent to abiding by the relevant Communications Rules (clause 2.2) that detail what can be stated publicly concerning the Proponent's involvement with the BCI.
 - c) (If not already available) Commits the Proponent to translating into the relevant national language all the documents contained in the Information Pack and providing the draft translations to the BCI for proof-reading. The BCI shall organise the proof-reading, and advise the Proponent of any necessary changes prior to the publication of the translated documents. The translated documents need to be available to participants in the multi-stakeholder workshop (clause 3.5).
 - d) Commits the Proponent to financially contributing to the costs involved of BCI supporting and participating in undertaking the Procedures. The exact nature of the participation and support of the BCI will be subject to available resources.
 - e) Acknowledges that the Proponent is required to enter into an Implementation Agreement with the BCI prior to undertaking any field-activities in relation to implementing the Better Cotton System.
- 2.2. In addition to abiding by the BCI Communication Rules subscribed to when becoming a member, external communications (by either Proponent or BCI) may refer to the existence of the Consultation Agreement to develop the Better Cotton System in the country in question. The Proponent may refer to the support they have from the Better Cotton Initiative to undertake these Procedures, and the BCI may refer to the name of the Proponent undertaking these Procedures with reference to the country in question. At no time may it be stated by either Proponent or BCI that Better Cotton exists in the country in question, and at no time may the Proponent claim to represent the BCI.
- 2.3. Upon signing the Consultation Agreement, the BCI will provide the Proponent with the BCI Step-by-Step Guide to implementation, which includes templates and guidance on what to do prior to implementation. The BCI will also provide the Proponent with the BCI Council meeting schedule so that

² In the case where an organisation desires to undertake this procedure, but the nature of the organisation precludes them from being a member, the BCI will require them to enter into a written form of general cooperation (letter of intent, Public Partnership agreement, etc) to cover the general terms of engagement outside the scope of this procedure.
Status: Final / Applicable 2010-2012

the proponent can take into account the likely timing of the consideration by the BCI Council of the Application for confirmation that the Procedures have been complied with.

3. Undertaking of an Identification Stage

- 3.1. Prior to submitting an Application to the BCI, in accordance with clause 8 seeking confirmation from the BCI that the Proponent has complied with these Procedures, the Proponent must undertake an initial Identification Stage, as detailed by the BCI Step-by-Step Guide to implementation (provided by the BCI in accordance with clause 2.3).
- 3.2. The objectives of the Identification Stage are to define, at the country level:
 - a) Who the stakeholders are;
 - b) What the key issues facing the cotton sector are; and
 - c) Potential implementation strategies (including potential areas for implementation).
- 3.3. At the end of the Identification Stage, there should be:
 - a) A clear list of relevant stakeholders with contact information and interest levels in the BCI;
 - b) A clear picture of the cotton supply chain structure from farm to gin;
 - c) A better understanding of the major problems to be addressed;
 - d) An inventory of relevant farmer support activities and potential synergies with BCI;
 - e) A list of potential areas in which the Better Cotton System is proposed to be implemented; and
 - f) A suggested list of representatives for the National Stakeholder Council (see also clause 4).
- 3.4. As part of the Application seeking confirmation of compliance with the Procedures in accordance with clause 8, the Proponent shall provide to the BCI a report on the Identification Stage in the format(s) provided in the BCI Step-by-Step Guide to implementation.
- 3.5. During, or immediately following the Identification Stage, and prior to the submission of the Application for confirmation of compliance with these Procedures, the Proponent shall hold a multi-stakeholder workshop that involves representatives from the same stakeholder categories as detailed in clause 4.
- 3.6. The focus of such a multi-stakeholder workshop should include:
 - a) An overview of the BCI, and all the components of the Better Cotton System;
 - b) An outline of the Proponent's plans for the establishment of the Better Cotton System; and
 - c) The gathering of information relevant for the report on the Identification Stage.
- 3.7. BCI is able to provide advice on the invitation list for the multi-stakeholder workshop should the Proponent desire.

4. Identification of potential National Stakeholder Council representatives

- 4.1. The report on the Identification Stage (clause 3) shall attach the Proponent's suggested representatives for the National Stakeholder Council. The Terms of Reference that outline the role of the National Stakeholder Council can be found on the BCI website at www.bettercotton.org.
- 4.2. If the suggested representatives for the National Stakeholder Council do not include representatives from all the stakeholder categories listed in the NSC Terms of Reference, the Proponent must provide an explanation as to why a certain category or categories of stakeholders have not been included.

5. Establishment and functioning of the National Stakeholder Council

- 5.1. The BCI shall consider the suggested representatives for the National Stakeholder Council as part of its consideration of the Application.
- 5.2. As part of the Application, the Proponent must commit to providing sufficient funds, in the first 3 years of implementation of the Better Cotton System for running of the National Stakeholder Council. The total funds committed, and how they are to be applied, need to be detailed.
- 5.3. The commitment of funds detailed in the Application required by this clause will be formalised in the IPA, or equivalent formal commitment to providing the funds.
- 5.4. Upon final confirmation by the BCI that the Procedures have been complied with, i.e. once the suggested representatives on the National Stakeholder Council have been approved and that the IPA has been signed the Proponent must support the BCI Regional Coordinator in the establishment of the National Stakeholder Council, in accordance with the Terms of Reference provided by the BCI for National Stakeholder Councils, and clause 6 below.

6. Support for BCI Regional Coordinator

- 6.1. As part of the Application, the Proponent must commit to providing sufficient funds, for the first 3 years of implementation of the Better Cotton System for the salary and operating costs of a BCI Regional Coordinator to be located in the country in question.
- 6.2. The Application must include the following information:
 - a) The total funds to be paid to the BCI to support the full time BCI Regional Coordinator, detailing the relevant salary costs, on-costs and operating costs to be paid
 - b) The timing of payments
- 6.3. The commitment of funds detailed in the Application required by this clause will be formalised in the IPA, or equivalent formal commitment to providing the funds.
- 6.4. The Regional Coordinator will be contracted, trained and managed by the Better Cotton Initiative, and will report directly to the BCI Secretariat.
- 6.5. The BCI Regional Coordinator shall work with the Proponent to establish the National Stakeholder Council.

7. Support for the Better Cotton Initiative

- 7.1. The Application of the Proponent must include provision of sufficient funds, for the first 3 years of implementation of the Better Cotton System, to cover the costs of the BCI monitoring and verifying compliance with the Better Cotton System.
- 7.2. The funds must be equal to an amount of at least 15 % of the agreed salary for the BCI Regional Coordinator.
- 7.3. The Application must include the following information:
 - a) The total funds to be paid to the BCI
 - b) The timing of payments
- 7.4. The commitment of funds detailed in the Application required by this clause will be formalised in the IPA, or equivalent formal commitment to providing the funds.
- 7.5. The BCI will use the funds provided by the Proponent to oversee the implementation of the Better Cotton System, including the training and contracting of 3rd party verifiers required to uphold the credibility of Better Cotton.

8. Confirmation of Compliance with these Procedures

- 8.1. The Council of the BCI needs to confirm that these Procedures have been complied with by the Proponent before Better Cotton can be grown and sold.
- 8.2. An application for confirmation of compliance with these Procedures shall (Application):
 - a) Be in writing
 - b) Be addressed to the Executive Director of the BCI
 - c) Include the following information:
 - i. The report on the Identification Stage (clause 3), and the list of suggested representatives for the National Stakeholder Council (clause 4)
 - ii. A report on the multi-stakeholder workshop (clause 3)
 - iii. The commitment of the Proponent to support the operation of the National Stakeholder Council for at least 3 years, including the total funds committed, and how they are to be applied (clause 5).
 - iv. The commitment of the Proponent to funding a BCI Regional Coordinator for at least 3 years (clause 6).
 - v. The commitment of the Proponent to contributing to the costs incurred by the BCI in administering the application for confirmation of compliance, and the initial establishment of the Better Cotton System (clause 7).
- 8.3. In order to allow sufficient time for the BCI Secretariat to follow up with the Proponent on any questions relating to the Application, it is suggested that the Application be submitted at least 2 months prior to the scheduled next BCI Council meeting date.
- 8.4. The BCI Council shall review the Application at its next schedule Council meeting, and within a maximum of 6 months of receiving it, and shall confirm whether or not the Procedures have been complied with within 2 weeks of the Application being considered by the BCI Council.
- 8.5. If the BCI Council considers that the Procedures have been complied with, it will provide a conditional confirmation of compliance. Final confirmation (and therefore the ability to implement the Better Cotton System and grow and sell Better Cotton) is subject to formal agreement being reached between the Proponent and the BCI on the funding support requirements detailed in clauses 5, 6 and 7.

Suggested Reference Documents

- Better Cotton System Information Pack
http://www.bettercotton.org/index/140/better_cotton_system.html
- Membership Association – services and management
http://www.bettercotton.org/files/Membership/BCI_Association_Services_Management_final_eng_ext.pdf
- Communication Rules
http://www.bettercotton.org/index/171/communication_rules.html
- Template Consultation Agreement
- Template Implementation Partnership Agreement
- Terms of Reference, National Stakeholder Council

For further information or copies of reference documents not available on www.bettercotton.org please contact office@bettercotton.org

Appendix: Regional Coordinator Terms of Reference

Regional Communication and stakeholder engagement:

1. Supporting BCI's stakeholder engagement with cotton producers, cotton farm workers, civil society, trade & industry (especially gins and traders), government and other organizations.
2. Maintaining regular and accurate communication with BCI members and Implementing Partners in [country] to ensure that the BCI and the Better Cotton System is well understood.
3. Identifying potential expansion possibilities for the BCI in [country/region].

Implementation of the Better Cotton System

4. Supporting the development of, and managing the implementation of the whole Better Cotton System in [country]; from initial implementation programs to expansion. The main components include:
 - a) **BCI Production Principles and Criteria:** Support needs assessments and gap analyses in implementation areas and look to identify national long term needs to meet all Production Principles in each country. Support may include the management of consultant contracts, sharing of best practice and existing knowledge, and carrying out the gap analyses.
 - b) **BCI Enabling Mechanisms:** Support the implementation of the BCI Enabling Mechanisms to address the priority needs identified. Support may include the management of consultants, coordination of meetings and facilitation of relationships.
 - c) **Farm Assessment:** Provide support to farmers and Implementation Partners in the gathering and exchange of information. Carry out 2nd party credibility checks, facilitate 3rd party verification, and decide on the compliance of producers with the BCI Production Criteria.
 - d) **Impact Assessment:** Assist in the collection of results indicators and manage the collection of other relevant Monitoring and Evaluation data.
 - e) **Supply Chain:** Support the implementation of the Better Cotton Supply Chain System for Better Cotton, and in particular facilitate the relationships with, and activities of, ginners.
 - f) **Information Sharing:** facilitate the development of appropriate regional information on specific ways available to farmers to address the BCI Production Principles: (i) identify material that already exists on best practices used in the region; (ii) identify gaps that need to be filled; (iii) work with Implementing Partners to ensure that each criteria has sufficient and appropriate information available; (iv) share the information developed or obtained by the project with BCI.
 - g) **National Stakeholder Council:** support the establishment and operation of the National Stakeholder Council for [country]

Regional management

5. Contribute to the formulation of project proposals for implementation of the Better Cotton System in [country]
6. Managing discrete budgets in relation to BCI's engagement within the region.
7. Providing regular reporting within a set framework to the manager.
8. Keeping up-to-date with complementary activities / projects implemented in the region.

General

9. Maintaining strong and effective communication lines with the BCI Secretariat, BCI Members, and BCI Implementing Partners.
10. Attending internal meetings to report on activities and to facilitate the exchange of information between regions.
11. To keep up to date with, and report on, significant issues arising that are relevant to the cotton sector, and the Better Cotton System, within the country/region.