



MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATION

Services and Management

Orientation

This document provides a comprehensive guide to getting involved with the Better Cotton Initiative. It includes background on the governance structure of the organisation, the types of benefits and services available to members, details of what members are asked to commit to and how to apply, membership fees and how to join the collective effort outside of membership.

Contents

Summary	2
BCI as a Membership Association	5
Benefits and Services	8
Principles of Participation and Obligations for Members	9
Membership Fees	14
Applying for Membership	18
Related Policies	18
Beyond Membership	19
Termination of Membership	20



SUMMARY

BCI as a Membership Association

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) is a not-for-profit membership association registered in Switzerland. The BCI 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.

The membership structure of the association provides an important platform for continued involvement, partnership building and ownership of the BCI by producer organisations, retailers and brands, suppliers and manufacturers (ginners, traders, spinners, mills, cut and sew, financial institutions), civil society and others; as well as leveraging all cotton value chain actors' commitment for Better Cotton production at a global scale.

BCI is a voluntary initiative that welcomes membership of any legally registered organisation that supports the BCI mission and wishes to participate in the realisation of the BCI's long-term objectives. Members of the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) form the BCI General Assembly, which meets at least every three years and elects the Council.

The Membership Association has legal Statutes and By-Laws with which all members must adhere to. These are available to download at www.bettercotton.org.

For more general information on the Better Cotton Initiative please read: [About the BCI](#)

Benefits and Services

Members have governance rights, such as voting at the General Assembly and electing the Council of the BCI.

Members benefit from information, tools and resources on farm level support activities and results, the production and procurement of Better Cotton, and communicating about BCI and Better Cotton.

As part of a global network of stakeholders committed to more sustainable cotton production members will be able to participate in forums for learning and exchange of best practices, and receive additional services provided by the BCI Secretariat.

Principles of Participation and Obligations for Members

Members play a key role in enabling the BCI to achieve its long term objectives. To facilitate this, the BCI has developed eleven Principles of Participation to guide activity by its Members:

1. Application of the Principles
2. Promotion of BCI
3. Compliance with Antitrust policy
4. Payment of fees
5. Communications about BCI
6. Participation in BCI activities

The BCI recognises that its Members are at different positions within the cotton supply chain, and have different capacities to undertake activities. Therefore, the following Principles have specific Obligations that apply to different types of members.

7. Achievement of basic standards and commitment to continuous improvement
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8. Increasing volumes of Better Cotton
9. Support for farmers
10. Assessment and reporting
11. Working with suppliers to promote use of Better Cotton

For more detailed information on how these principles apply to your organisation and what is expected by the BCI please refer to the [Membership application forms](#) and [Guide to Membership Obligations](#).

Membership Fees

All members must pay a membership fee, on an annual basis, in accordance with the BCI membership fee structure that is differentiated per membership category, sub-category and in relation to the size of the organisation. Fees must be paid within 60 days of receipt of an invoice from the BCI.

Applying for Membership

Organisations need to submit the relevant application form for membership to [membership \[at\] bettercotton.org](mailto:membership@bettercotton.org).

Organisations can apply for membership at anytime, for the membership period starting 1 January or 1 July each year.

Membership applications are subject to consultation with existing BCI members for a minimum period of 15 days. It should therefore be noted that any application received after 31 May or 30 November will only be reviewed for the following membership period, 1 January or 1 July respectively. Members must be approved by the BCI Council.

Related Policies

In committing to the BCI Principles of Participation and Obligations, members also commit to adhere to the:

[BCI Anti-trust Policy](#)

[BCI Communication Rules](#)

[BCI Grievance Management Process](#)

Beyond Membership

Alongside membership, the BCI continues to operate inclusively and welcomes other organisations that do not fit into the 5 membership categories (Civil Society, Producers, Retailers and Brands, Suppliers and Manufacturers, Associate members).

The BCI will work in partnership with those organisations interested in contributing to the mission of the BCI, through an appropriate partnership agreement. Depending on what is relevant for the interested organisation, BCI has developed template agreements for Implementing Partners (for organisations willing to implement the Better Cotton System at farm level) and Public Partners (for governmental or inter-governmental bodies that are unable to be members). Other forms of partnership can also be explored.



Contact BCI

All queries relating to membership of the Better Cotton Initiative should be sent to membership [at] bettercotton.org

Queries relating to partnering with the Better Cotton Initiative should be sent to office [at] bettercotton.org

Contact details of the BCI Secretariat are available online at [Contact](#).

Terminating Membership

Members commit to a three-year membership period, renewable annually upon fee payment.

Members wishing to terminate their membership shall give six months' advance notice in writing to the BCI Council. Fees paid for the membership year are not refundable.





BCI AS A MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATION

The Better Cotton Initiative is a not-for-profit membership association, registered in Switzerland. The BCI 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.

BCI is a voluntary initiative that welcomes membership of any legally registered organisation that supports the BCI mission and wishes to participate in the realisation of the BCI's long-term objectives.

In order to ensure a balanced representation between Members, membership categories have been defined. Organisations falling into the following categories are eligible for membership:

Civil Society: any organisation that runs not-for-profit activity related to the cotton supply chain.

Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power e.g. registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, trade unions, consumers associations, etc.

Producers: any organisation that engages with and aims to represent cotton producers.

Producer organisations can be local, national, regional, or international, only focused on cotton cultivation or not. They must be legally registered organisations.

Retailers and Brands: any for-profit organisation selling goods or commodities directly to consumers.

Suppliers and Manufacturers: any organisation that runs for-profit activity within the cotton supply chain beyond the farm-gate up to retail, from buying, selling, and financing to processing.

*This category includes the sub-categories of **Cotton traders, Cotton ginnors, Other intermediaries** (e.g. spinners, mills, cut and sew), and **Financial institutions**. Each of these 4 sub-categories is differentiated in the Membership Principles of Participation and Obligations, and therefore has individual membership application forms.*

Associate members: any organisation that has an agreement with the Association but does not fall within the above categories; or represents the interests of organisations from the Civil Society, Retailers and Brands, Suppliers and Manufacturers categories.

This category may include trade associations, implementing partners, intergovernmental organisations, etc.

Members have governance rights. All the Members of the BCI Association form the General Assembly which is the supreme authority of the association. Only the General Assembly can approve modification to the Statutes or decide on the dissolution of the Association.

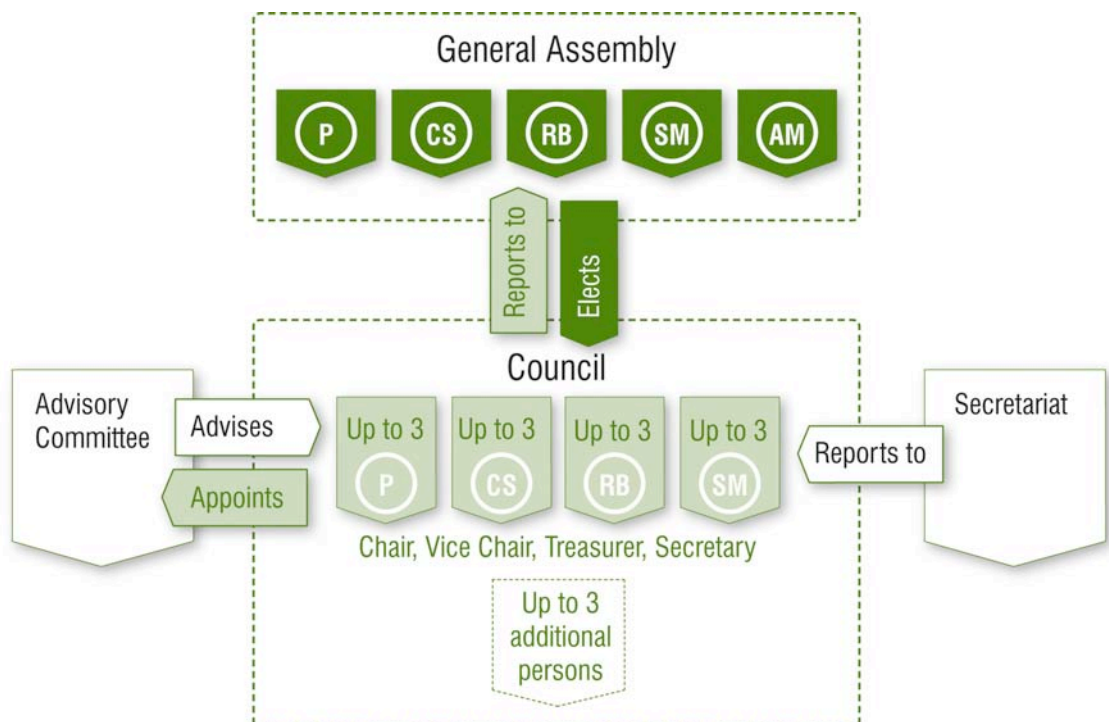
Each member has one vote at the General Assembly. The General Assembly meets at least every three years and elects the Council of the Association to whom it delegates operational activities and strategic decision making. Members will receive each year activity and financial reports from the Council.



Members within the Civil Society, Producers, Retailers and Brands, and Suppliers and Manufacturers categories have the opportunity to be elected on the Council. Each category of organisation has three seats on the Council. All the members vote to elect these twelve Council members for three years. Associate members do not have the opportunity to be elected to the Council. The Council, once elected, may appoint up to three additional persons (not organisations) to the Council. The Council meets at least twice a year and has responsibilities, that include, to:

- call a General Assembly meeting at least every three years;
- approve the By-Laws of the Council;
- elect the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary of the Association from amongst its members for a 1 year term;
- appoint the members of the Advisory Committee;
- establish any organ, committee or operational group considered necessary for the pursuit of BCI's mission;
- approve the annual budget and audit report of the Association;
- approve the membership fee structure and principles of participation;
- approve admission and expulsion of members;
- approve significant modifications to the definition of Better Cotton; and
- determine a grievance management process.

Figure 2: BCI Association Governance Bodies





The Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary will be involved in the activities of the BCI by working closely with the Managing Director and Secretariat. Their role is therefore important for the effective running of the association:

- The Chair has a key role as both an internal and external ambassador for the association;
- The Vice-Chair of the association should assist the Chair in all responsibilities;
- The Treasurer ensures the financial accountability of the association;
- The Secretary ensures open and transparent communication between BCI members and the Council.

For more details on BCI's governance please read the [Statutes](#) and [By-laws](#).



BENEFITS AND SERVICES

Beyond governance rights, organisations that are members of the BCI Association benefit from

Tools and Resources: online membership portal

- Farm support implementation tools and best practice
- Advocacy tool kit for external communication
- Success stories and farm level data to communicate change

Information

- BCI activity and progress reports
- Research and existing good practices relevant to the Better Cotton System and more sustainable cotton production
- Collated public market information
- Sources of Better Cotton

Being part of a global network

- Reducing their environmental and social footprint through collective action for change
- Easier access to expertise and knowledge on cotton
- Participating in forums and working groups as needed

Services

- Promotion of BCI Enabling Mechanisms at a global and local level
- Training and capacity building activities provided to farmers through Implementing Partners
- Oversight of Farm Assessment, including 3rd party credibility checks, to determine which farmers are growing and selling Better Cotton
- Increased traceability in the supply chain up to the creation of a bale of Better Cotton lint
- Collation and analysis of data from farm level about the results of growing Better Cotton
- Coordination of a National Stakeholder Council in each focus region

For those members or organisations that are Implementing Partners, the BCI will also provide support services (such as workshops), advice in relation to working with the Better Cotton System, and the BCI Step-by-Step Guide to Implementation.



PRINCIPLES OF PARTICIPATION AND OBLIGATIONS FOR MEMBERS

Members play a key role in enabling the BCI to achieve its long term objectives. To facilitate this, the BCI has developed eleven Principles of Participation to guide activity by its Members. The BCI recognises that its Members are at different positions within the cotton supply chain, and have different capacities to undertake activities. Therefore, within some Principles (7 to 11) the BCI has developed Obligations that apply to different types of members.

Organisations admitted as members are expected to apply these Principles in their activities and adhere to these Obligations as the basis of their membership commitments.

1. Application of the Principles

Members shall apply these Principles of Participation in their activities and shall comply with the relevant Obligations that relate to their own organisations.

2. Promotion of BCI

Members shall promote the long-term objectives of BCI and shall not undertake activities that could bring BCI into disrepute or damage its reputation.

3. Compliance with Anti-trust policy

Members shall comply with the BCI Anti-trust policy [2nd September 2009] and shall not engage in any collaborative activity that involves sharing information on costs, prices, margins, suppliers or customers that could be interpreted as anti-competitive under international or national trade rules.

4. Payment of fees

Members agree to contribute to the costs of running BCI by paying the fee relevant for their category of membership in a timely manner as determined by the BCI Council.

5. Communications about BCI

Members shall comply with BCI's Communication Rules covering how their participation in BCI may be described publicly.

6. Participation in BCI activities

Members shall contribute to the development of BCI through an appropriate level of meeting attendance, by responding to BCI communications, by providing information and sharing knowledge.

The following Principles relate to members in different ways depending on their type of organisation. Members should refer to the specific Obligations that relate to their category (and in some cases sub-category).

7. Achievement of basic standards and commitment to continuous improvement

8. Increasing volumes of Better Cotton

9. Support for farmers

10. Assessment and reporting

11. Working with suppliers to promote use of Better Cotton

Obligations for each category (or sub-category) are as follows:



Retailers and brands

7. Achievement of basic standards and commitment to continuous improvement

7.1 Members shall communicate with their suppliers about their membership of BCI.

8. Increasing volumes of Better Cotton

8.1 Members shall use increasing volumes of Better Cotton over time.

8.2 Where possible, members shall notify BCI of annual cotton procurement plans.

8.3 Members shall monitor and report annually to BCI on total cotton volumes and Better Cotton volumes used.

9. Support for farmers

9.1 Members shall provide additional financial support consistent with their scale for activities to support smallholder farming communities, according to their identified needs and BCI goals.

10. Assessment and reporting

10.1 Members shall report to BCI on the application of the Principles of Participation in line with the reporting requirements agreed by the Council.

10.2 Members accept that BCI may undertake reasonable checks to verify their participation.

11. Working with suppliers to promote the use of Better Cotton

11.1 Members shall take steps to encourage their key suppliers to join BCI.

11.2 Members shall prioritise the purchase of Better Cotton and develop longer-term relationships with suppliers of Better Cotton, where possible.

Suppliers and manufacturers: Financial institutions

7. Achievement of basic standards and commitment to continuous improvement

7.1 Members shall integrate consideration of the BCI Production Principles and Criteria 2.0 (July 2009) into lending activities.

8. Increasing volumes of Better Cotton

8.1 Members shall promote the BCI Enabling Mechanisms on access to finance for BCI farmers.

9. Support for farmers

9.1 Members shall participate in appropriate BCI activities and facilitate promotion of BCI farm-level support activities.

10. Assessment and reporting

10.1 Members shall report to BCI on the application of the Principles of Participation in line with the reporting requirements agreed by the Council.

10.2 Members shall share best practice and relevant learning.



Suppliers and manufacturers: Other intermediaries (e.g. spinners, mills, cut and sew)

- 7. Achievement of basic standards and commitment to continuous improvement**
 - 7.1 Members shall comply with all applicable national laws and regulations.
 - 8. Increasing volumes of Better Cotton**
 - 8.1 Members shall facilitate and respond to customer requirements to source Better Cotton.
 - 9. Support for farmers**
 - 9.1 Members shall provide support for activities to assist smallholder farming communities, according to their identified needs and BCI goals.
 - 10. Assessment and reporting**
 - 10.1 Members shall report to BCI on the application of the Principles of Participation in line with the reporting requirements agreed by the Council.
 - 10.2 Members shall report annually to BCI on Better Cotton volumes used.
 - 10.3 Members accept that BCI may undertake reasonable checks to verify their participation.
 - 11. Working with suppliers to promote the use of Better Cotton**
 - 11.1 Members shall develop and maintain traceability systems to facilitate segregation of Better Cotton as far as it is practicable.
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Suppliers and manufacturers: Cotton traders

- 7. Achievement of basic standards and commitment to continuous improvement**
 - 7.1 Members shall communicate with their suppliers and customers about their membership of BCI.
 - 8. Increasing volumes of Better Cotton**
 - 8.1 Members shall facilitate and respond to customer requirements to source Better Cotton.
 - 9. Support for farmers**
 - 9.1 Members shall provide support for activities to assist smallholder farming communities, according to their identified needs and BCI goals.
 - 10. Assessment and reporting**
 - 10.1 Members shall report to BCI on the application of the Principles of Participation in line with the reporting requirements agreed by the Council.
 - 10.2 Members shall report annually to BCI on Better Cotton volumes traded, subject to commercial confidentiality.
 - 10.3 Members accept that BCI may undertake reasonable checks to verify their participation.
 - 11. Working with suppliers to promote the use of Better Cotton**
 - 11.1 Members shall develop and maintain traceability systems to facilitate segregation of Better Cotton as far as it is practicable.
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Suppliers and manufacturers: Ginners

7. Achievement of basic standards and commitment to continuous improvement

7.1 Members shall comply with all applicable national laws and regulations.

8. Increasing volumes of Better Cotton

8.1 Members shall facilitate and respond to customer requirements to source Better Cotton.

9. Support for farmers

9.1 Members shall provide support for activities to assist smallholder farming communities, according to their identified needs and BCI goals.

10. Assessment and reporting

10.1 Members shall report on contamination levels, where possible, and provide other information in line with BCI supply chain data requirements.

10.2 Members shall report annually to BCI on Better Cotton volumes ginned, subject to commercial confidentiality.

10.3 Members shall report to BCI on the application of the Principles of Participation in line with the reporting requirements agreed by the Council.

10.4 Members accept that BCI may undertake reasonable checks to verify their participation.

11. Working with suppliers to promote the use of Better Cotton

11.1 Members shall maintain the BCI chain-of-custody requirements by weighing, segregating (in transport, storage and processing as applicable), identifying and maintaining information systems relating to Better Cotton bales.

11.2 Members shall promote traceability of Better Cotton among other value chain participants (eg local traders, agents, transporters).

Producer organisations

7. Achievement of basic standards and commitment to continuous improvement

7.1 Members shall support their own members to participate in the Better Cotton system.

7.2 Members are committed to continuous improvement towards meeting the BCI Production Principles and Criteria 2.0 (July 2009).

8. Increasing volumes of Better Cotton

8.1 Members shall provide assistance to their members in maintaining BCI's chain-of-custody requirements.

9. Support for farmers

9.1 Members shall participate in BCI activities and facilitate promotion of BCI farm-level implementation activities among their members.

9.2 Members shall disseminate implementation tools provided by BCI, as far as is practicable.

10. Assessment and reporting

10.1 Members shall facilitate implementation of BCI's farm assessment (e.g. distribution of monitoring materials, support to farmers in maintaining records, collating records, providing member information to BCI annually).



- 10.2 Members shall share good practice with BCI and report other existing activities and programmes at farm level that are in line with BCI's long-term objectives.
- 10.3 Members shall provide information to help in assessing the activities of other supply chain actors (e.g. ..respect for contracts).

Civil society

7. Achievement of basic standards and commitment to continuous improvement

- 7.1 Members shall seek to provide oversight of continuous improvement in cotton cultivation.

8. Increasing volumes of Better Cotton

- 8.1 Members shall support the increasing production and use of Better Cotton by undertaking activities most appropriate to them.

9. Support for farmers

- 9.1 Members shall provide support for activities to assist smallholder farming communities, according to their identified needs and BCI goals.
- 9.2 Members shall provide active participation and support for BCI in terms of input, expertise and advice according to their own abilities.

10. Assessment and reporting

- 10.1 Members shall report to BCI on the application of the Principles of Participation in line with the reporting requirements agreed by the Council.

Associate members

7. Achievement of basic standards and commitment to continuous improvement

- 7.1 Members shall encourage their own members to join BCI (if relevant).

8. Increasing volumes of Better Cotton

- 8.1 Members shall support the increasing production and use of Better Cotton by undertaking activities most appropriate to them.

9. Support for farmers

- 9.1 Members shall participate in appropriate BCI activities and facilitate promotion of BCI farm-level implementation activities.
- 9.2 Members shall use the tools developed by BCI, as far as is practicable.

10. Assessment and reporting

- 10.1 Members shall report to BCI on the application of the Principles of Participation in line with the reporting requirements agreed by the Council.
- 10.2 Members shall share best practice and relevant learning.

For guidance on what it means to work with these Principles of Participation and Obligations, please take a look at the [BCI Guide to Members Obligations](#). BCI will also provide a simple reporting framework to support members in their commitment to report on the application of the Principles and Obligations.



MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees are paid annually. Fee levels are decided by the Council and subject to annual review. For 2010, fee levels for each category, and sub-category, are given below. Please note that the calculation of sliding scales is provided in the different [membership application forms](#).

Retailers and brands			
	Threshold (Metric Tonnes lint / year)	Annual fee (€)	Comments
Largest	Volumes: > 250,000 MT	50,000	Fixed fee
Very large	Volumes: 200,000 – 250,000 MT	35,000 – 50,000	Sliding scale
Large	Volumes: 100,000 – 200,000 MT	20,000 - 35,000	Sliding scale
Medium	Volumes: 50,000 - 100,000 MT	15,000 – 20,000	Sliding scale
Small	Volumes: 10,000 – 50,000 MT	10,000 – 15,000	Sliding scale
Very small	Volumes: 5,000 - 10,000 MT	5,000 – 10,000	Sliding scale
Smallest	Volumes: < 5,000 MT	5,000	Fixed fee*
Definitions: Retailers and brands			
Cotton volume thresholds	Refers to lint cotton. Retailer cotton use to be calculated according to volume of cotton used in manufacture of pieces purchased, on the basis of the BCI Cotton Volume Calculation Tool.		
	* Alternatively, for retailers with sales under €100 million per year, and without the staff resources to undertake a cotton volume calculation, BCI may propose a turnover-based fee.		

Suppliers & Manufacturers: Financial institutions		
IFIs, MFIs, regional development banks, commercial banks with international operations	€20,000	Flat fee
Local/national FIs	<€ 2,000	Sliding scale based on size of agri-business lending portfolio
Definitions: Financial institutions		
Commercial banks with international operations	Refers to all commercial banks and banking groups with operations in both Northern and Southern hemispheres	



Suppliers & Manufacturers: Other intermediaries (spinners, mills, CMT facilities)			
	Threshold (MT lint / year)	Annual fee (€)	Comments
Very large	Volumes: > 50,000 MT	5,000	Fixed fee
Large	Volumes: 25,000 – 50,000 MT	2,000	Fixed fee
Medium	Volumes: 10,000 – 25,000 MT	500	Fixed fee
Small	Volumes: < 10,000 MT	200	Fixed fee
Definitions: Suppliers & manufacturers			
Suppliers and manufacturers	For the purposes of fee calculation, this category includes yarn spinners, fabric mills and all CMT facilities. Membership will be undertaken by companies, not individual facilities.		
Integrated supply chains	In the case of supply chains integrated from farm to processor – such as contract farming – entities will be categorised for BCI membership according to the highest value activity exercised by the entity		

Suppliers & Manufacturers: Cotton traders			
	Threshold (MT lint / year)	Annual fee (€)	Comments
Very large	Volumes: >200,000 MT	20,000	Fixed fee
Large	Volumes: 50,000 – 200,000 MT	5,000 - 20,000	Sliding scale
Medium	Volumes: 10,000 – 50,000 MT	1,000 - 5,000	Sliding scale
Small	Volumes: < 10,000 MT	1,000	Fixed fee
Definitions: Traders			
Cotton volume thresholds	Refers to lint cotton. Established by reference to ICAC analysis of CICA survey data in ICAC Review of the World Situation Vol. 62 – No. 3, January-February 2009		

Suppliers & Manufacturers: Ginners			
	Threshold (MT lint / year)	Annual fee (€)	Comments
Very large	Volumes: > 50,000 MT	2,000	Fixed fee
Large	Volumes: 25,000 – 50,000 MT	1,000	Fixed fee
Medium	Volumes: 10,000 – 25,000 MT	500	Fixed fee
Small	Volumes: < 10,000 MT	200	Fixed fee
Definitions: Ginners			
Ginners	Membership will be undertaken by ginning companies ('ginners'), not individual facilities ('gins'). Where gins are owned and operated by entities with other supply chain activities (eg mills or traders), these entities will be categorised for BCI membership according to the higher value activity exercised by the entity		



Producer organisations

	OECD states (€)	Non-OECD states (€)	
National and supra-national	2,000	500	Fees may be waived/reduced for poorest non-OECD countries (eg 140-179 on UNDP Human Dev Index)
Sub-national	1,000	100	
Definitions: Producer organisations			
OECD states	30 member states of OECD include the following significant cotton-producing countries: Greece, Turkey, USA, Australia and Mexico		
Fee exemption	The fee structure provides for the possibility that fees are not charged for Producer Organisations in the poorest non-OECD countries: the definition covers those countries ranked between 140-179 on the UNDP Human Development Index. In terms of major cotton producing countries, this would (at September 2009) include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, Togo, and Zambia.		

Civil society

	Threshold	Annual Fee (€)		
Large international	Income: > €10m - €100m	5,000 – 10,000		Sliding scale
Medium international	Income: €1m - €10m	1,000- 5,000		Sliding scale
Small international	Income: €0.5m - €1m	500 - 1,000		Sliding scale
Very small international	Income: <€0.5m	500		Fixed fee
		OECD	Non-OECD	
Large national	Staff: > 100	500	200	Fixed fee
Small national	Staff: < 100	300	100	Fixed fee
Definitions: Civil society				
International CSO	International CSOs are deemed to be those organisations whose work entails either directly employing staff in another country, or providing financial support for projects or programmes implemented by partners in countries other than where they are headquartered. Discretion may be exercised by BCI in the case of CSOs established in a Southern country, with operations in more than one Southern country.			
Income	Income of International CSOs to be established by reference to annual operating expenditure for previous financial year.			
National CSO	Refers to all CSOs – established in any country – with operations in that country only. See definition of OECD / non-OECD under 'Producer Organisations'.			

Associate members

Non-OECD	€1,000	Flat fee
OECD	€1,000 – €20,000	Sliding scale based on revenue



Activities covered by fees

In order to successfully deliver the BCI's 2012 goals, during the start up phase of implementation, there are three different levels of financial needs:

1. Funds for farmer support to enable farmers to produce and sell Better Cotton.
Such funds can either flow directly to Implementing Partners or through the BCI. It is BCI's preference that funds flow directly to Implementing Partners.
2. Core operating costs that cover work related to running and managing the BCI Association and delivering services to members. These costs represent 55% of the BCI Association's budget in 2010.
3. National implementation operating costs that cover work related to coordinating and supporting work on the Better Cotton System in the BCI focus regions (Brazil, India, Pakistan and West and Central Africa), that specifically includes:
 - oversight of Farm Assessment procedures to determine which farmers are producing and selling Better Cotton;
 - carrying out 3rd party credibility checks - annually on a random and risk basis - of farmers that sell Better Cotton;
 - running of National Stakeholder Councils in each focus region to facilitate national level ownership and mainstreaming of Better Cotton production;
 - full time BCI Regional Coordinators in each focus region.

These costs represent 45% of the BCI Association's budget in 2010.

The BCI aims to fund 100% of the Association's budget through membership fees over time. However, this is not expected in the start-up phase of implementation and BCI's goal for 2012 is to have at least 60% of the Association's operating costs covered by membership fees. Income received from membership fees will therefore contribute towards both the 55% core operating costs, and the 45% national implementation operating costs.

Funds for farmer support will be needed in addition to the membership fees.

Terms of Payment

1. Membership fees are payable on an annual basis.
2. Members will be invoiced by the BCI Secretariat as soon as practicable
 - a. after the Council has approved an organisation for membership; or
 - b. after the anniversary of this approval.
3. Invoices will be sent electronically by email by default and as hard copy by post upon request only.
4. Invoices will be considered as received on the next business day following the day the documents were emailed.
5. Membership fee invoices are payable within 60 days of receipt.
6. After 60 days a reminder will be sent by the BCI Secretariat. Fee payments will be considered late if received after 60 days of receipt of the invoice. An interest of 1.5 % of the initial amount invoiced will be payable for each month that payment is overdue.
7. Membership status will be reviewed by the Council for members that have fees outstanding after 5 months of receipt of the invoice.



Waiver of fees

In exceptional circumstances, fees may be partially or fully waived to take account of implementation activities undertaken by members, where this is formally requested to and approved by the Council. The operation of the waiver is determined by the [BCI Membership Fee Waiver Process](#).

APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP

The membership application process includes 3 steps: submission of an application form, review of application by existing members, review and decision by the Council. This process will be run twice a year. Organisations can apply for membership at anytime for the membership period starting 1 January or 1 July each year. Members must be approved by the BCI Council.

Membership and applications are subject to consultation with existing BCI members for a minimum period of 15 days. It should therefore be noted that any application received after 31 May or 30 November will only be reviewed for the following membership period, starting 1 January and 1 July respectively.

Application for membership



Organisations seeking to become member of the BCI need to fill in the membership application form for the relevant category and send it to the Secretary of the Association by email to membership [at] bettercotton.org or by fax to +44 20 7681 1352.

Please refer to the relevant application form for more information on the documents and information requested. The applicant must sign on behalf of the organisation applying for membership by acknowledging and accepting the BCI Statutes, the BCI Principles of Participation and Fee Structure for Membership, the BCI Policies on Grievance, Communications and Anti-trust, and the resulting rights and obligations.

You can download membership application forms here: [Membership Application form](#).

RELATED POLICIES

Anti-trust Policy

As indicated in the Principles of Participation, ‘Members shall comply with the BCI Anti-trust Policy [2 September 2009] and shall not engage in any collaborative activity that involves sharing information on costs, prices, margins, suppliers or customers that could be interpreted as anti-competitive under international or national trade rules’. Organisations applying for membership must read, acknowledge and accept BCI’s anti-trust policy in their application form. Non-compliance with the anti-trust policy is grounds for expulsion from the Association.

Please read the [BCI’s Anti-trust Policy](#).



Communication Rules

The Principles of Participation state that 'Members shall comply with BCI's Communication Rules covering how their participation in BCI may be described publicly'. The Communication Rules cover other areas of communication such as communication on Better Cotton, use of BCI logo, media coverage, terminology, etc. Non-compliance with the Communication Rules is grounds for expulsion from the Association.

Please read the [BCI's Communication Rules](#).

Grievance Management Process

Should a Member/Partner have a grievance in relation to the BCI's activities, this can be raised and managed through the BCI grievance management process. This aims to provide:

- a clear focal point for grievances raised;
- a transparent and impartial process and mediation to address grievances, with respect for sensitive information; and
- a credible, efficient and solution-oriented arbitration.

Please download the [BCI Grievance Management Process](#).

BEYOND MEMBERSHIP

Alongside membership, the BCI continues to operate inclusively and welcomes other organisations that do not fit into the 5 membership categories (Civil Society, Producers, Retailers and Brands, Suppliers and Manufacturers, Associate members) or are unable to become members of an Association like the BCI.

The BCI will work in partnership with those organisations interested in contributing to the mission of the BCI, through an appropriate written and signed agreement. Depending on what is relevant for the interested organisation, BCI has developed template agreements for Implementing Partners (for organisations willing to implement the Better Cotton System at farm level) and Public Partners (for governmental or inter-governmental bodies that are unable to be members).

Implementing Partnership is relevant for an organisation that desires their work at field level to adhere to the requirements of the Better Cotton System so that the farmers involved can grow and sell Better Cotton. BCI will provide support, advice and tools to Implementing Partners.

Public Partnership is relevant for an organisation that is governmental or inter-governmental with restrictions on its ability to participate within membership associations such as the BCI, with an interest in working with or promoting the Better Cotton Initiative and/or the Better Cotton System, or providing relevant expertise, advice, experience to implement the Better Cotton System.

Other forms of partnership can also be explored.

CONTACT BCI

All queries relating to membership of the Better Cotton Initiative should be sent to membership [at] bettercotton.org

Queries relating to partnering with the Better Cotton Initiative should be sent to office [at] bettercotton.org

Contact details of the BCI Secretariat are available online at [Contact](#).



TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Members commit to a three-year membership period, renewable annually upon fee payment.

An organisation ceases automatically to be a member of the Association if the organisation becomes insolvent, is wound-up or is dissolved.

Members wishing to terminate their membership shall give six months' advance notice in writing to the BCI Council (by emailing secretary [at] bettercotton.org). Fees paid for the membership year are not refundable.

The Council may expel a member if it determines that:

- the member no longer meets the definition specified for the member's membership category;
- the member fails to: contribute to the Association's mission, and to share relevant learning and experience, in line with the Association's antitrust policy; comply with the Principles of Participation applicable to their category; or to pay membership fees, on an annual basis, in accordance with the membership fee structure;
- the member is endangering the interests or the reputation of the Association.

In case of expulsion, the Council must give the member at least 30 days written notice stating the grounds for the expulsion and allowed the member to provide a written submission stating why they should not be expelled, with such submission to be received prior to the proposed date of expulsion. The Council's decision whether or not to expel a member shall be final.