



Newsletter

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Cotton Flower, ©Allan Williams

Latest publications

All available on www.bettercotton.org

- Global Principles, Criteria and Enabling Mechanisms in Chinese
- Final Report: 2nd India Regional Working Group Meeting
- Updated BCI Road Map



Brazil, machine picking, ©ABRAPA

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) aims 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's direct beneficiaries are:

Cotton farmers, cotton farm workers, cotton farming communities, and the environment.

BCI's Long-Term Objectives are:

1. To demonstrate the inherent benefits of better cotton production, particularly the financial profitability for farmers
2. To reduce the impact of water and pesticide use on human and environmental health
3. To improve soil health and biodiversity
4. To promote Decent Work for farming communities and cotton farm workers
5. To facilitate global knowledge exchange on more sustainable cotton production
6. To increase the traceability along the cotton supply chain

BCI's 2012 Goals are:

1. Brands/Retailers members of the BCI use 15% of global cotton production
2. 1.3% of global cotton production (300,000 Metric Tonnes of cotton lint) is produced as Better Cotton in Brazil, India, Pakistan, and Western & Central Africa.
3. The Better Cotton System is developed in China and Central Asia
4. Publicly available information is accessible allowing any country to grow Better Cotton
5. Globally 100,000 farmers are producing Better Cotton
6. Enhanced financial profitability for farmers producing Better Cotton is demonstrated
7. The analysis of data from farm assessment shows positive results.
8. BCI has a knowledge exchange platform on growing cotton more sustainably that is increasingly used over time
9. The BCI association is operating in line with agreed statutes and by-laws
10. At least 60% of the association's operating costs are covered by membership fees

The Better Cotton System

At the end of 2008 the BCI Steering Committee agreed on how the Better Cotton System will work.

The Better Cotton System will include the following components: Global Production Principles with minimum requirements and further progress requirements; globally and locally promoted Enabling Mechanisms; a membership association with rules of participation (like a code of conduct); a global fund for smallholder farm support with eligibility criteria; a link to the market in the form of an identifiable 100% Better Cotton bale; an information management system with multiple user interfaces; assessment mechanisms that exclude the use of accredited auditing and have a strong focus on encouraging progress and measuring impact; tools and rules for messaging and communicating about results and impact at farm level, smallholder farm support, and traceability. This system will be used for the start up phase of implementation from 2009 to 2012 and will not support a label or certification during this time. In 2009 the system components will be further developed and explained ready for 2010. In 2012 an external review of the Better Cotton System and the impact it has had will be carried out, after which the Better Cotton System will be refined.

BCI

Better Cotton Initiative



India Regional Working Group meeting participants.



Pakistan Regional Working Group meeting participants, with Nicolas Petit (left) and Allan Williams (2nd from the right).

Iconic American jeans and casual wear firm, Levi Strauss & Co., recently became a Better Cotton partner.

"We know that in order to sustain our business for another 155 years, we have to address the issue of cotton sustainability", says Colleen Kohlsaatt, Environmental Affairs Manager at Levi Strauss & Co. "Participation in BCI is a means to a reliable supply of sustainable cotton in the future and will help us advance both our environmental and business objectives."

In line with these timelines, version 2.0 of the Global Principles, Criteria and Enabling Mechanisms, will be final for implementation, and published in July 2009. They will be revised as part of the 2012 Better Cotton System review.

Regional Working Groups

India

BCI held the second Regional Working Group meeting in India in January 2009. A diverse and committed range of over 50 stakeholders participated – including producers, state government officials, researchers, NGO's, traders, spinners, retailers, and inter-governmental organisations. The group discussed what appropriate indicators were to assess the impact of growing 'Better Cotton' in India; debated the best way of distinguishing small farmers from large farmers; commented on what the minimum requirements to be a 'Better Cotton' farmer should be and identified the key stakeholders for implementing a credible and cost effective supply chain system. The successful meeting concluded with excellent suggestions for how BCI can continue to develop relationships with those organisations represented, ranging from information sharing, a regular BCI Forum in India and partnerships to implement 'Better Cotton' in the field.

Pakistan

In March 2009, BCI and WWF-Pakistan ran the second Regional Working Group meeting in Lahore. It brought together 30 participants across the same range of stakeholders as in India. The meeting provided a good opportunity to consult with the participants on the proposed 'Better Cotton' System, implementation plans, as well as defining what constitutes 'Better Cotton' from a socio-economic perspective in Pakistan. Participating organisations indicated their willingness to collaborate further during implementation.

Get involved!

[Now is the time to get formally involved in the Better Cotton Initiative.](#)

Like Levi Strauss and other organisations from the civil society and the trade and industry sector, you can become a Better Cotton Partner. Amongst other benefits, Better Cotton Partners are invited to participate in BCI's Global Stakeholder Workshop on 30 June 2009 in Switzerland. At this time BCI will formally become a membership association under Swiss law with the adoption of its Statutes and the election of the Council. If you want to be one of the founding members of the BCI association, join by 1 June 2009! For more information about ways to get involved in BCI please contact Lise Melvin (BCI Manager).

Change in Steering Committee leadership

[Anna Bexell of IKEA is leaving her position as Chair, and will be replaced by the vice chairs Henrik Lampa \(H&M\), Damien Sanfilippo \(PAN-UK\) and Walter Wagner \(WWF\).](#)

Anna shared that 'I will truly miss everyone concerned in the BCI network and the challenging work involved. A lot has been achieved with the Global Production Principles, Criteria and Enabling Mechanisms and an impressive multi-stakeholder process both on local and global level. Networks are being established and recognition of the BCI and 'Better Cotton' is being spread throughout the industry. BCI is actively continuing its outreach to already existing cotton initiatives, the cotton and textiles industry and retail market. None of us alone are strong enough to shift the cotton industry towards better performance, but together we can make a difference.' Anna leaves BCI to have her third child, and we hope she will return soon.