



**BCI Second Regional Working Group meeting
for West and Central Africa
Ouagadougou- Burkina Faso
12-14 November 2008**

SUMMARY REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms and abbreviations	3
Introduction	4
Table 1: Participants' expectations.....	4
SUMMARY OF MEETING DISCUSSIONS	6
PRESENTATION 1: VERSION 1.0 PRINCIPLES, CRITERIA AND ENABLING MECHANISMS.....	6
Figure 1: The Components of the 'Better Cotton' System	7
PRESENTATION 2: OVERVIEW OF OTHER REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS	8
PRESENTATION 3: BENEFITS OF BCI IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA.....	8
BENEFITS TO FARMERS	9
DEVELOPING NATIONAL GUIDANCE MATERIAL.....	12
1/ CROP PROTECTION.....	13
Table 2: Example of crop protection tools	13
2/ HABITAT.....	20
Table 3: Example of habitat conservation tools	20
3/ WATER MANAGEMENT	21
Table 4: Example of water management tools:	21
4/ SOIL MANAGEMENT	22
Table 5: Example of soil management tools.....	22
5/ FIBRE QUALITY MANAGEMENT	26
Table 6: Example of fibre quality management tools.....	26
6. DECENT WORK	28
7/ ACCESS TO FINANCE:	30
8/ KNOWLEDGE SHARING & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	31
Table 7: Example of Knowledge sharing and skills development methods	31
9/ PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS.....	33
BCI INDICATORS	34
Figure 2: Measuring the impact of the 'Better Cotton' System.....	34
ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME	39
IMPLEMENTATION: PILOT PROJECTS.....	43
APPENDIX I LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	46
APPENDIX II POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO FARMERS	48

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABRAPA	Associação Brasileira dos Produtores de Algodão
AProCA	Association des Producteurs de Coton Africains
ASP	African Stockpiles Programme
BCI	Better Cotton Initiative
CEC	Cation Exchange Capacity
CIRAD	Centre de coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement
CNPC	Conseil National des Producteurs du Coton du Bénin
CRA-CF	Centre de Recherche Agricole-Coton et Fibres (Benin)
Bt	Bacillus Thuringiensis
CMDT	Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement du Textile
CmiA	Cotton Made in Africa
FNGPC	Fédération Nationale de Groupements de Producteurs de Coton du Togo
FNPC	Fédération Nationale des Producteurs de Coton du Sénégal
GIPD	Gestion Intégrée de la Production et des Déprédateurs
GM	Genetically Modified
ICCO	Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation
IER	Institut d'Economie Rurale (Mali)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INERA	Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles (Burkina)
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO)
IRD	Institut de Recherche pour le Développement
IUF	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations (UITA)
LEC	Lutte Etagée Ciblée (reduced dose calendar spraying)
LUTRENA	Combating the trafficking of children for labour exploitation in West and Central Africa project (ILO)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ONS	Office National de Soutien des Revenus Agricoles (Benin)
OPCC-GIE	Organisation des Producteurs de Coton du Cameroun – Groupement d'Intérêt Economique
PAN-AFRICA	Pesticide Action Network-Africa
PO	Producer Organisation
RWG	Regional Working Group
SCV	Semis sous Couvert Végétal (underseeding)
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (Swiss Confederation)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SNV	Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (Netherlands Development Organisation)
SODECOTON	Société de Développement du Coton du Cameroun
SODEFITEX	Société de Développement des Fibres Textiles du Sénégal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPCB	Union Nationale des Producteurs de Coton du Burkina
UN – SCPC	Union Nationale des Sociétés Coopératives de Producteurs de Coton du Mali
WACIP	West Africa Cotton Improvement Program
WCA	West and Central Africa
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the outcomes of the second Regional Working Group (RWG) for West and Central Africa that was jointly organised by the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) and l'Association des Producteurs de Coton Africains (AProCA). The meeting took place on 12-14 November 2008 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. It brought together a total of 45 participants, including representatives of cotton growers' organisations, cotton companies, research centres, governments, NGOs, trade unions and international organisations from the six different countries included in the Regional Working Group (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Senegal and Togo). A complete list of participants and their contact details is provided in Appendix 1.

It should be noted that, apart from the specific objectives of the RWG (see below), the meeting did not endeavour to reach or agree on a position on all the issues raised during the three days. Thus, the comments and answers recorded reflect the opinion of the person making the comment and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of BCI or any other person or organisation participating in the meeting.

The Better Cotton Initiative values this input and oversight provided by the West and Central Africa Regional Working Group and sincere thanks is extended to all the participants whose contributions were invaluable in achieving the objectives set out at the start of the meeting. Particularly, the generous support and assistance of AProCA (provided by Mr Mamadou Ouattara) and the continuous support from the meeting moderator (Mr Henk Nugteren, SNV senior advisor) were instrumental in the smooth running and success of the meeting. The BCI extends its gratitude to Mr François B. Traoré, President of AProCA and Mr Kassim S. Traoré from the Ministry of Agriculture of Burkina Faso for opening the proceedings.

The key expectations of participants of the meeting were identified at the start; these are presented by main themes in the table below. During the 3 days, these were kept in mind in order to ensure that participants' expectations were fulfilled by the end of the workshop.

Table 1: Participants' expectations

Main Themes	Individual Expectations
Gain a better understanding of the 'Better Cotton' Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understanding of the system; Better understanding of BCI objectives by all participants; Definition of key role of BCI; Better understanding; Clarification of partner companies and their role in the initiative; Gain a better understanding of BCI in order to make proposals; Understand BCI, their actions and vision; Share good understanding of principles, criteria and support mechanisms of BCI with all participants; Improved visibility of criteria and principles of BCI production; BCI basics and research themes; Clarify the BCI approach in West and Central Africa Clarify and validate the BCI basics; Gain a better understanding of general principles, criteria and support mechanisms.
Implementation of West and Central African projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tests & funds available for 2009-2010, 2010-2011 seasons; When will we be able to implement a BCI project? Move forward to practical implementation of BCI objectives & develop an operational work plan; The project start-up date will be communicated at the end of the meeting; Practical means of implementation of production principles.
Advantages/benefits for cotton growers in West & Central Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define advantages of « Better Cotton » and means of promotion; Gain improved understanding of how cotton farmers in West & Central Africa can benefit from the BCI programme; I expect a proposal to be made at the end of the workshop on how to achieve decent pay for farmers' work; Achieve better knowledge of advantages for farmers; How can value, quality and sales of organic cotton be enhanced?

Main Themes	Individual Expectations
Indicators	Provide precise indicators for the region and discuss them; All indicators demonstrating that « Better Cotton » criteria have been met should be identified.
Other Regional Work Groups	Share experience of the initiative with other regional work groups; Understand and follow implementation of BCI by exchanging with the other Work Groups.
Other expectations	Validate criteria, principles and support mechanisms of BCI; Specifics of BCI compared with WACIP/CmiA; Develop a joint vision to achieve higher performance in the sector in our region (at social, economic and environmental level); Provide clear orientation for cotton in Africa; Learn and understand about the cotton sector in West & Central Africa; Achieve environmentally-friendly cotton growing in West Africa; BCI's expectations in terms of governments; That cotton growers become real actors and fully play their part; Find out what growers think of the BCI initiative and what are the conditions and criteria that make BCI appear more attractive than other initiatives.

The objectives and agenda of the meeting were presented to the group following a brief recap of the main conclusions and recommendations of the first Regional Working Group¹. While the main objective of the first RWG was to start defining 'Better Cotton' in both its social and environmental aspects in the six countries involved; i.e. **what** is 'Better Cotton', the second RWG main objective was to discuss **how** to grow 'Better Cotton' in the region.

The objectives of the meeting were:

1. To ensure shared understanding of Version 1.0 of the BCI global Principles, Criteria and Enabling Mechanisms.
2. To provide an update on the discussions held with other Regional Working Groups in Brazil, India, and Pakistan.
3. To discuss how to implement BCI 'pilot' projects in the region in 2009.
4. To continue discussions on the potential benefits for farmers from the BCI.
5. To discuss on the management practices and implementation strategies that will inform how a farmer may grow 'Better Cotton', and contribute to the development of national guidance material for West and Central Africa.
6. To identify nationally-specific indicators that could be used to assess whether the Criteria have been met, and how baseline and ongoing data can be collected.
7. To further refine BCI's approach to assessment for measuring progress towards growing 'Better Cotton'.
8. To review Version 1.0 of the Principles and Criteria in light of knowledge and understanding developed during the meeting on the feasibility of growing 'Better Cotton'.

The first RWG was held in Ouagadougou in February 2008. The summary report can be downloaded from the BCI website at <http://www.bettercotton.org>

SUMMARY OF MEETING DISCUSSIONS

Presentation 1: version 1.0 Principles, criteria and enabling mechanisms

(Meeting objective 1: To ensure shared understanding of version 1.0 of the BCI global principles, criteria and enabling mechanisms)

The BCI support team (Allan Williams, Ellie La Trobe-Bateman and Nicolas Petit) provided an introduction to the Better Cotton Initiative, covering the following aspects:

The Vision and Mission of BCI: BCI's vision is to enable millions of farmers around the world to grow cotton in a way that is healthier for the farming community and the environment, and more economical, while the mission of BCI is to encourage the adoption of better management practices in cotton cultivation to achieve measurable reductions in key environmental impacts, while improving social and economic benefits for cotton farmers and their communities worldwide.

The organizational structure of BCI: The members of the Steering Committee were described and the presentation highlighted the role of the Steering Committee, that acts as the governing body of BCI, as well as the role of the Advisory Committee – made up of knowledgeable individuals — who provide advice and act as a sounding board for the Steering Committee during the development of the 'Better Cotton' System. The existence of BCI Partners — organisations who support the mission and objectives of BCI was noted, as was the funding of BCI, which comes from SECO (the Swiss Economic Cooperation and Development Division at the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs), SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), Steering Committee members and 'Better Cotton' partners.

The interest of retailers in participating in BCI: This was summarized as being due to a number of factors, including: the fact that cotton is a key raw material and thus a strategic business need that they increasingly need to be available and produced in a way that is compatible with their business responsibilities, in large volumes. Their approach is to reduce the environmental and social footprint of their consumption of cotton, and ensure that they maintain credibility with not only their customers, but also their employees and civil society.

Other stakeholder groups with whom BCI is working: As well as retailers, it was emphasised that BCI engages with a range of stakeholders, including producers (such as Association des Producteurs de Coton Africains, Associação Brasileira dos Produtores de Algodão and the International Federation of Agricultural Producers), civil society (e.g. NGO's such as Oxfam, WWF, ILRF), government (through the International Cotton Advisory Committee and the Regional Working Group process), inter-governmental organisations, researchers and trade and industry. It was further noted that BCI continues to seek additional support and involvement from these stakeholder groups, for example through business development meetings with supply chain actors, and global stakeholder workshops.

The current timeline for the development of the definition of the 'Better Cotton' System: It was noted that this meeting was part of the second phase in the development of the 'Better Cotton' System. The main activities of Phase II will be developing in further detail the region-specific component of 'Better Cotton', and establishing the field projects that will be used to test the draft 'Better Cotton' System.

(BCI road map is available at <http://www.bettercotton.org/pics/BCI%20Road%20Map-phaseII.pdf>)

It was highlighted that following the current round of Regional Working Group meetings there would be a further review of the Principles, Criteria and Enabling Mechanisms, and of the 'Better Cotton' System as a whole, with the final version to be published in 2010.

Potential benefits for farmers: The outcomes that BCI is seeking were listed, highlighting both that the exact benefits to a farmer will depend upon the current circumstances and farming practices of each individual farmer; and that achieving measurable change is critical to BCI; for farmers, for the environment, and for farming communities. The range of potential benefits listed included:

- Cotton of greater and more consistent quality
- Improved yields, lower input costs, increased profit
- Empowering farmers to negotiate / advocate (through BCI support to producer organisations)
- Meeting market demand for 'better' cotton

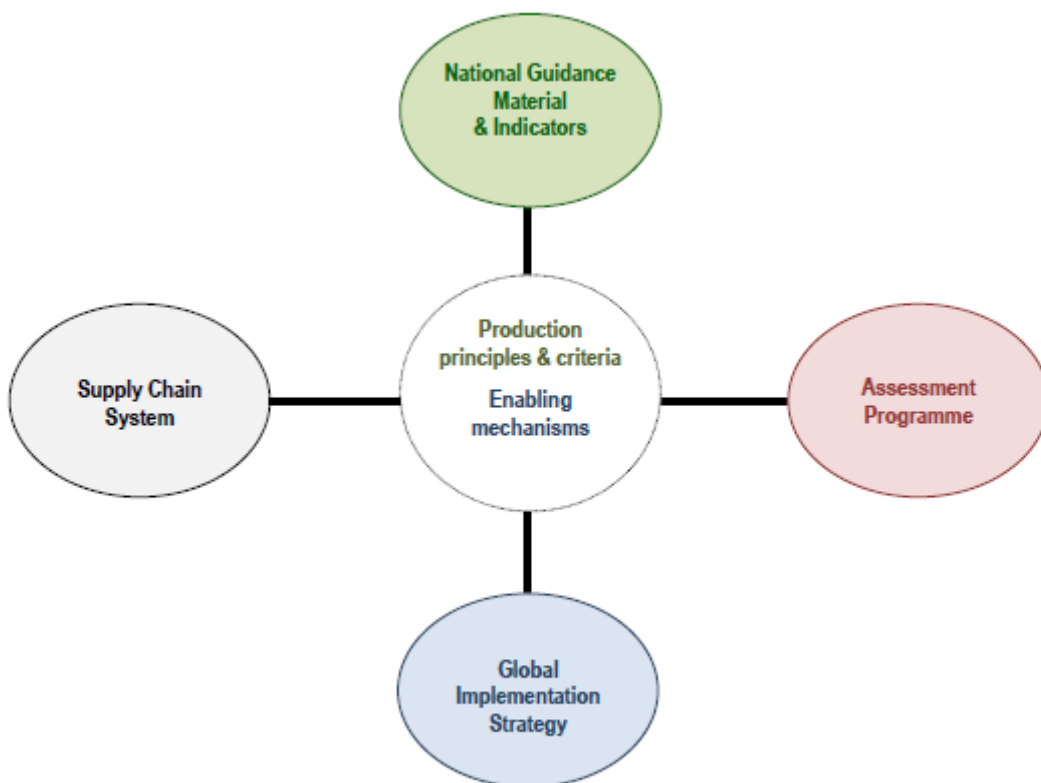
- Improved access to affordable finance
- Long-term sustainability of agricultural activity (soil fertility, environmental health)
- Improved health conditions for farmers/workers and the family/community
- Improved access to information.

Features of BCI highlighted:

- Its desire to be global, but nevertheless take into account regional considerations — so even though there is commonality with respect to issues addressed: i.e. farmers everywhere are expected to consider the same suite of issues — the definition of ‘Better Cotton’ will still allow for both regional production differences, as well as different farm sizes and farming systems.
- Its desire to accommodate both small and large farms, with the recognition that there will be varying needs in varying contexts, thus requiring a tailored approach (e.g. differing implementation strategies and assessment methods) to these different farm types, based on an initial needs assessment.
- Its desire to build and learn from what already exists.
- Its desire to collaborate, rather than compete, with existing activities wherever possible.
- Its collaborative and participatory approach to developing the ‘Better Cotton’ System, i.e. working in partnership with key stakeholders.

The components of the ‘Better Cotton’ System: These components were outlined, showing that in addition to the global principles, criteria and enabling mechanisms, the ‘Better Cotton’ System includes regionally specific national guidance material and indicators, an assessment programme, a supply chain system and implementation strategies (each of these components were discussed in more details during the presentations and group work sessions of the meeting). The meeting was advised that the ‘supply chain system’ is currently being developed with the support of consultants. In order to develop a cost effective supply chain system, the consultants are also contacting some of the participants of the RWG to obtain their perspective as to how a supply chain for ‘Better Cotton’ could work in West and Central Africa.

Figure 1: The Components of the ‘Better Cotton’ System



An overview was then provided on the current version (Version 1.0) of the Global Principles, Criteria and Enabling Mechanisms. Following the presentation, a number of questions/comments were raised by participants:

- the need for BCI to build on the experience of existing projects in the region (such as GIPD or WACIP for example)
- Clarification were sought regarding the funding sources available to BCI
- Discussion on the problem of child labour and related boycott of cotton in Uzbekistan
- Discussion on child labour in the context of WCA (what are the alternatives?)
- Emphasis on the fact that there are many criteria that cotton producers need to respect and that it will be extremely difficult to achieve these goals without appropriate support

Presentation 2: Overview of Other Regional Working Groups

(Meeting Objective 2: To provide an update on the discussions held with other Regional Working Groups in Brazil India and Pakistan)

In response to a request made during the first RWG, a brief overview of the other regions where BCI is working in (specifically on the general aspects of cotton cultivation), and the issues that have been discussed at the different RWG meetings, was provided by BCI. The president of AProCA also provided to participants a short debriefing on the BCI Stakeholder Workshop that he attended in London in May 2008 where he had the opportunity to meet with other cotton producer organisations (such as ABRAPA from Brazil).

These two presentations created a lively debate on what is to be learned from other countries and what are the differences between regions in terms of cotton production system, national policies, infrastructure available, existing producer organisations, access to market and so on. The experience of transgenic cotton cultivation in India and Brazil was also discussed in more detail as Burkina Faso has taken the decision to permit commercial genetically modified (GM) production this year. BCI also took this opportunity to clarify its 'technology neutral' position to the participants (i.e. that, assuming that GM cotton is legally available in the country in question, then it is up to a farmer to decide whether to grow GM cotton; BCI will neither require a farmer to grow GM cotton to qualify as Better Cotton, nor disallow GM cotton to be Better Cotton.). Participants also requested clarifications on the situation in every region with regards to the status of 'pilot project' implementation.

Presentation 3: Benefits of BCI in West and Central Africa

(Meeting Objective 4: To continue the discussion on the benefit for farmers from the BCI)

In this session, two presentations were made. The first one provided a general overview of the potential benefits for farmers (what BCI has to offer) and how this may or may not translate into practice. The theoretical model developed by BCI (Appendix II) shows the expected social, environmental and economic benefits of the BCI. Although different social benefits (such as improved health conditions for farmers/workers and the family/community) and environmental benefits (long-term sustainability of agricultural activity and safeguarding ability of future generations to have a healthy farm and to grow cotton) are clear and well accepted, the question on direct economic benefits is more complex and has its limitations. In practice, there might be (i) trade-off between increased environmental sustainability and profitability; (ii) direct linkages between poverty and non-sustainable production systems; (iii) external factors that BCI has limited influence on (prices on world market, exchange rates, cotton sector reforms, land tenure, etc.); (iv) or limited adoption by farmers of technical recommendations due to different constraints. Through the 'pilot' projects in West and Central Africa, the Better Cotton Initiative will collect the necessary baseline data and measure the impact of the different production principles and criteria on aspects such as production costs, yield, farmer's income, quality and so on. While limited data are available in the region on direct economic benefits of a more sustainable cotton system, different examples were nonetheless presented of successful initiatives dealing with sustainable cotton and providing direct economic benefits to farmers.

A second presentation was made by Henrik Lampa, Environmental Supply Chain Coordinator from H&M, a Steering Committee member of the Better Cotton Initiative. H&M offers fashion for women, men, teenagers and children in around 1,600 stores spread across 29 countries. H&M is aimed at everyone with an interest in fashion and their business concept is to give the customer unbeatable value by offering fashion and quality at the best price. The company stated that taking responsibility for how people and the environment are affected by their activities is important in general and essential if H&M is to be able to grow while maintaining profitability. H&M's Code of Conduct, which is based on ILO conventions and on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, forms the basis for work in this area. More specifically on cotton, they have recently developed their own cotton strategy as cotton is the most commonly used fibre in their garments. Their strategy is to promote organic cotton growing

by contributing to increased demand (their goal in 2008 is to use around 3,000 tonnes of organic cotton), and to improve at the same time conventional cotton growing through their involvement in the Better Cotton Initiative. They have also started to use transitional cotton to support the cotton growers during the crossover period from conventional to organic cotton.

It was also highlighted that the different retailers involved in the BCI use a total annual volume of more than 1,000,000 metric tons of cotton and have customers that are increasingly interested in where the products come from and how they are produced. Therefore, retailers and brands want to contribute to increased involvement of farmers growing 'Better Cotton' in the future with the farmers being both the key beneficiaries and actors in the process.

Benefits to farmers

In this session, four groups were formed and given a list of questions on the potential benefits of the BCI to see how they translate into practice in the context of West and Central Africa. The different questions and answers provided are presented below

1/ For each potential advantage to farmers, please state if you agree (i) if you do not think any benefits are possible (ii) or if you partially agree (iii).

Potential advantages	YES	NO (why not)	YES (but success depends on...)
Improved quality	X		Seed quality; Respect of the delivery of technical support packages; Growing conditions and transformation; Respect of ginning norms; It will be progressive and subject to correct implementation of BCI techniques and criteria and an efficient support mechanism; Environmental (climatic) conditions need to be favourable; It will also depend on all requirements for production being made available at the right time and control of the technical itinerary;
Improved crop yield, reduced costs and increased profits	X		It will also depend on external factors (global price of cotton, cost of inputs, rate of exchange between Euro/dollar etc); It will also be progressive. There will be a short-term reduction in the cost of fertilisers and pesticides, but long-term investment in equipment (plough, animals, compost pit), which will offset the savings from the reduced costs; Cotton grown in the region depends on rain, and crop yield therefore depends on rainfall; Availability of quality inputs at the right time; Control of the technical steps to improve yields; Not simple as it requires a high level of biomass to produce organic manure, & it is difficult to get enough of it; The cost of chemical fertilisers can not be controlled due to inflation; Reducing the cost of insecticides is possible if there is a good understanding of threshold treatment; If there is a specific price for BCI cotton and positive perception of BCI products (in order to increase profits)
Build capacities of producers organisations	X		It would be necessary to cover the costs of training for producers' organisations; On condition a plan to strengthen farmers capacities is drawn up and implemented.

Potential advantages	YES	NO (why)	YES (but success depends on...)
Meet market needs	X		Yes, but on condition BCI provides information on buyers in advance; Markets will need to be identified and it will be necessary to make sure there is a functional mechanism for the supply chain; On condition both quantity and quality of the cotton meet the market norms
Facilitate access to finance	X		This will imply a high level of commitment by BCI; If BCI can offer perspectives of specific markets; If farmers are organised; Possibility of reinvesting profits in the farms Also depends on the political determination of the State
Long-term promotion of sustainable agriculture	X		
Improve health of farmers/agricultural labourers/their families	X		Yes, but on condition that the best practice in use of chemical products is respected and there is adequate finance available. It is necessary to inform and raise growers awareness on the use of protective equipment; Using pesticides respecting thresholds according to the norms.
Improve access to information	X		Depends on free flow of information through the chain and for all actors; On condition that effective capacity is built in producers' organisations and farmers are better organised (introduce an information system); On condition the information is shared in a transparent manner and that farmers take part in setting the prices they are paid; On condition there is an information network set up and that everyone plays their part.
Promote a participatory approach	X		On condition BCI continues the same consultative approach as before

2/ Are you aware of specific examples of best agricultural practice in sustainable cotton in West or Central Africa that have resulted in:

- A) Increased yield?

-

YES/NO	Examples
YES	1/ GIPD Farmers Field Schools 2/ Production and use of organic manure 3/ Lutte étagée ciblée (LEC) (reduced dose calendar spraying) (information on Mali to be provided by CMDT and IER) 4) Communication of techniques for improved soil fertility in the North of Cameroon (currently in their second year of promotion) 5/ Techniques to fight soil erosion 6/ Techniques of underseeding (semis sous couvert vegetal- SCV) 7/ Water management (micro dams) 8/ Integrating tree-growing into the farm system (agro-afforestation) 9/ Fair Trade cotton in Senegal since 2004 (information to be provided to BCI at a later date by SODEFITEX)

- *B) Reducing production costs?*

YES/NO	Examples
YES	1/ BT Cotton 2/ GIPD in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Benin 3/ LEC (information on Benin to be provided by CRA-CF) 4/ Some of the practices mentioned under increased yield also contribute to reducing production costs 5/ SCV as practiced by SODECOTON (Cameroun) and SOCOMA (Burkina Faso)

- *C) Increased income for farmers (without taking organic fair trade cotton into consideration)?*

YES/NO	Examples
YES	1/ Management Board in the case of Benin – (Conseil de Gestion) 2/ GIPD in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Benin 3/ Combined use of organic and chemical fertilisers (long-term investment in the equipment used for making manure and labour) 4/ Minimising the quantities of insecticides and mineral fertilisers, using organic manure 5/ SCV as used by SODECOTON (Cameroon) and SOCOMA (Burkina Faso)

- *D) Better quality fibres?*

YES/NO	Examples
YES	1/ LEC 2/ Harvesting techniques 3/ Improved storage conditions 4/ Information on Benin to be provided by CRA-CF 5/ GIPD in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Benin 6 Minimising the quantities of insecticides and mineral fertilisers, using organic manure 7/ SCV as used by SODECOTON (Cameroon) and SOCOMA (Burkina Faso)

3/ According to you, what should BCI's priority action be to help farmers maximise profit (apart from fair trade organic cotton)?

Examples	
Solve the problem of inputs (finance, availability and quality)	Integrated soil management
Incentives for farmers (guaranteed prices etc)	Integrated best management practice
BCI should work with producers organisation	Strengthen farmers capacities
An adequate system for financing	Guaranteed markets
	Reduced costs of inputs

Overall, the different groups agreed that farmers could obtain different benefits by adopting more sustainable agricultural practices. Various examples of better agricultural practices already exist in the context of West and Central Africa (such as GIPD, LEC or SCV for example) providing direct benefits to the farmer in the form of reduced production costs, increased yield or increased profitability. Nonetheless, success will be highly dependent on a number of factors such as the adoption of better practices by farmers, the support that BCI will be able to provide to farmers (referred to as enabling mechanisms) and the central importance of access to market. Different participants indicated that the benefits presented are likely to be obtained progressively and a long-term approach is necessary. Finally, it is important to remember that benefits are also highly dependent on external factors which BCI has limited influence on (reforms of the sector, exchange rate, subsidies, land tenure or world markets prices).

Developing National Guidance Material

(Meeting Objective 5: To discuss the management practices and implementation strategies that will inform how a farmer may grow 'Better Cotton' and contribute to the development of national guidance material for West and Central Africa)

In this session, participants were asked to contribute to the development of what BCI calls 'National Guidance Material', i.e. information on current best practices, tools and implementation strategies that a farmer might be able to use so as to meet the 'Better Cotton' Production Principles and Criteria, and therefore help them grow 'Better Cotton'. Prior to the group work session, BCI explained the meaning of management practices and implementation strategies, what the national guidance material will be and how it will be further developed during implementation of the 'pilot' projects.

Management Practices: The tools that can be used to meet BCI principles and criteria. These are not only agronomic tools, but business management, and decent work focused prescription of best practice; addressing environmental, economic and social aspects.

Implementation strategies: These are the nationally specific methods by which 'Better Cotton' can be grown; and enabled to be grown.

National Guidance Material: A list of best management practices for how to achieve each of the BCI criteria in question. This guidance will provide details and offer references for further information. The aim is for the guidance to provide options and help knowledge sharing between farmers, but not prescribe what should be done (like a tool box).

BCI commissioned work on the existing management practices and implementation strategies against each Production Principle and Enabling Mechanisms which was provided in advance with a summary sheet on existing 'good' practices in West and Central Africa.

Through group work members of the RWG built upon the information provided in order to highlight the potential tools available in the region to address the criteria relevant to the issue under consideration. At the request of the participants, the results of the small group discussions were not presented in plenary sessions in order to spend more time to discuss the pilot projects and therefore, only the results of the exercise (without discussion on the group work) are summarised here.

NB/ the information indicated in italic was provided in advance of the meeting

1/ Crop Protection

Table 2: Example of crop protection tools

Criteria	Description of tools available	Advantages of implementing tools	Limits of adopting tools	Is there public information on the subject
1A- Integrated Pest Management – IPM – Chemicals and alternatives				
IPM: general comments: The list of tools deals exclusively with chemical treatment and the alternatives, whereas a very important aspect of IPM is the introduction of PREVENTIVE measures. There are therefore some obvious gaps in this list of tools, and we do not have sufficient time to list them today. One of the members of the group reminded participants that some participants had suggested organising a sub-group to work on the question for one day before the regional work group meeting, with the various actors involved in crop protection. The aim would be to develop this exhaustive list of IPM tools.				
An Integrated Pest Management Programme (IPM) is adopted	<i>Pesticides are used as a last resort based on observation of pests and observation of a threshold that is economically tolerable. Farmers are trained in risk-management for each type of pesticide used</i>	<i>Cotton is problematic due to the many problems caused by pests; excessive use of pesticide should be avoided</i>	<i>It is necessary to train farmers Farmers are not always convinced that the recommended pesticides will improve their yield Various methods of GIPD are not widespread due to lack of identification of farmers' real problems, lack of suitability of techniques proposed compared with local practice, subsistence strategies and accessibility of these new techniques</i>	<i>Training Programme (GIPD/CEP) for Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal. Global IPM Facility FAO Rome, March 2006 Farmers' knowledge and perception of cotton pests and pest control practices in Benin: results of a diagnostic study A.A.C. Sinzogan, A. Van Huis, D.K. Kossou, J. Jiggins and S. Vodouhè</i>
	<i>Use of natural pesticides like Neem extract (azadirachta indica) (used alone or together with « kobi » carapa procera), cow urine, papaya leaf extract, traditional soap solution and garlic extracts are used. Local plants such as Khaya senegalensis, Tephrosia vogli, Anonas senegalensis etc. can also be used.</i>	<i>Biopesticides help get rid of various pests that attack cotton. Farmers have reduced costs of intrants by using home-made pesticides. Laboratory tests have confirmed the efficiency of Neem extract on Helicoverpa armigera. These natural pesticides can be strengthened by adding Kobi oil Carapa procera or « Mpeku », Lemna toxica. These natural pesticides have been at least as effective as chemical pesticides in reducing damage done to crops. Reduced production costs and increased profits for farmers</i>	<i>Natural pesticides used in pest control are not as strong The impacts on natural enemies are unknown Farmers need to be trained to recognise the pests' natural enemies</i>	<i>Benin Organic cotton/ organic cotton fair trade project Alafia Penjari</i>

Criteria	Description of tools available	Advantages of implementing tools	Limits of adopting tools	Is there public information on the subject
	<i>Rational use of pesticides: farmers need to spray taking economic thresholds/acceptable damage into consideration, while also considering density of natural enemy population</i>	<i>With a view to avoiding unnecessary harm to the environment and human health, growers need to farm in a way that does not rely too heavily on chemical intrans, but rather on an approach that is based on sustainable economy and environmental contro (like GIPD)!</i>	<i>Farmers need training to be able to detect threshold damage levels. The poor sight of some of the older farmers stops them from observing very small insects</i>	<i>Factors limiting the adoption of GIPD practices by cotton farmers in Benin: a participatory approach, P. Prudent ; S. Loko ; D. Deybe and M. Vaissayre</i>
	<i>Reduced rate of pesticide application: growing pest-resistant varieties of cotton</i>		<i>Availability and cost of new varieties</i>	<i>Decentralized and participatory cotton breeding in Benin: farmer-breeders' results are promising By J. LANCON, S. LEWICKI, M. DJABOUTOU, J.CHAUME</i>
	<i>Efficient use of pesticides: farmers are encouraged to inspect their crops regularly to monitor appearance of pests and only to spray when really necessary. Comparisons of conventional and organic farmers show that the latter had reduced their debts</i>	<i>Less use of pesticides; Greater benefits for farmers</i>	<i>Need to train farmers</i>	<i>Pest control, food sovereignty and organic cotton in Senegal. A report for PAN UK's Pesticides Poverty and Livelihoods project PAN AFRICA – August 2002</i>
	<i>The techniques for making natural pesticides</i>	<i>Pesticides are replaced by local plants available free of cost, such as Neem Azadirachta indica, Lannea microcarpa, chilli pepper, papaya, etc; prepared locally.</i>	<i>It is necessary to train farmers; experience is also required to learn about the impacts of Neem on natural enemies</i>	<i>OBEPAB have carried out many studies on the manufacture and efficiency of Neem (Laurent Glin)</i>

Criteria	Description of tools available	Advantages of implementing tools	Limits of adopting tools	Is there public information on the subject
	<i>The application of pesticides based on a calendar approach: application starts as of the 45th day after sowing; 5 & 6 applications are carried out at 2-weekly intervals</i>		<i>Training farmers to observe and recognise pests is necessary</i>	<i>Management of the resistance of H. armigera to insecticides in West Africa Projet CFC</i>
	<i>Growing Bt cotton to reduce pest damage</i>	<i>Plants produce Bt toxins that can kill the pests that eat them; this has been demonstrated on Heliothis virescens and Pectinophora gossypiella</i>	<i>Bt toxins are less effective on Helicoverpa zea and Helicoverpa armigera that are frequent pests in West Africa - The high cost of Bt seeds can not offset that of pesticides in a significant manner Bt cotton can contaminate local varieties and also play a central part in local ecology and in production programmes - The introduction of Bt cotton can wipe out rural practice that allowed seed sharing between neighbours and family</i>	
	<i>Only use chemicals (synthetic or natural pesticides) after all other means (agronomic, varietal) have failed</i>			
	<i>Reinforce farmers' capacities in terms of knowledge of pests, the damage they do in terms of the level of infestation and specific action of pesticides</i>			
	<i>The use of pesticides should depend on damage thresholds and the characteristics of crop development at any given time</i>			
	<i>If pesticides are used, the most appropriate active means should be used: efficiency in terms of impact on target, low toxicology, few secondary effects on auxilliary fauna.</i>			
	<i>Only use pesticides if a high level of insect infestation has been observed</i>			

Criteria	Description of tools available	Advantages of implementing tools	Limits of adopting tools	Is there public information on the subject
1B IPM: Preventive measures				
1 Early sowing		Avoid 2nd generation <i>Helicoverpa</i>	Risk of seed rot if late rainfall occurs: depends on the climate	Information available from Regional resistance project in West Africa
2 Crop rotation		Allows the biological cycle of pests to be broken and improves soil fertility	Land security	Many studies and research reports exist & can be obtained from national research institutes of the region
3 Quantity of seeds	Select tolerant varieties			
4 Use of insect trapping plants		Limit pests attacking cotton	Difficult to implement Non-native plants (Indian rose, sunflower) are of less interest/value to farmers	IFDC OBEPAB / Institut International d'Agriculture Tropicale, Studies on alternative methods
5 Destruction of cotton plants		Enables the biological cycle of pests to be broken	Recommendations are rarely implemented: farmers often move plots, so do not feel responsible for use of land after harvest	
6. Biological control	Preservation and promotion of natural indigenous species of enemies by selection and use of products	Low cost; efficient	Requires ability to identify pests/natural enemies Tentative studies showing how release of natural enemies have never produced conclusive results given the great complexity of pests in West & Central Africa	Habitat manipulation and supplementary food spray for enhanced pest management in Organic cotton: implications to cotton IPM ROBERT K. MENSAH, SIMPLICE DAVO VODOUHE and DAMIEN SANFILIPPO

Criteria	Description of tools available	Advantages of implementing tools	Limits of adopting tools	Is there public information on the subject
2 Exclusion				
Use of the following pesticides: Those categorised as WHO class 1, or are listed by the Stockholm or Rotterdam Convention and endosulfan, is phased out over time., with phasing-out timeline based on the availability of better alternatives and ability for the risk to be properly managed.	<i>The least toxic pesticides as well as the least volatile ones should be given preference</i> <i>Pesticides listed in the Stockholm or Rotterdam Conventions should not be used</i>		<i>Agrochemical companies are bringing pressure to bear on politicians and farmers</i> Problems of national black market and illegal imports from neighbouring countries will continue Suitable inputs should be available at low cost	<i>Final Report P. Ton</i> NOTES: Endosulfan has been banned throughout the zone since 19 January 2009. Alternative insecticides: valuations available from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRPRAO • National research institutes NOTES: No problems with WHO class 1 bans etc...
3 Registered labelled pesticides				
Pesticides are used on crops for which they are legally registered for use and are correctly labelled.	<i>Only pesticides authorised for cotton (under current phytosanitary legislation) should be used; they must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions</i>		Counterfeit, false labels, national black markets and illegal imports	CNCP the National Committee for the Control of Pesticides
	<i>Labels and pictograms should be easy to understand by users</i>			
4 Application criteria				
Pesticides are prepared and applied by persons who are: healthy, skilled and trained in the application of pesticides wearing appropriate protective and safety equipment, 18 years or older, not pregnant or nursing.			Existing programmes are not very efficient. There is a great need to raise awareness	

Criteria	Description of tools available	Advantages of implementing tools	Limits of adopting tools	Is there public information on the subject
	<p><i>These operations to protect crops should only be carried out by trained adults who are aware of the risks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>using pesticides that are authorised for the job in question (information on legislation for each crop)</i> - <i>of the dangers of pesticides (prior to, during and after their use) and of the remedies in case of poisoning, even if it is slight (burning sensation etc)</i> <p><i>Appropriate protective equipment should always be used</i></p>			
	<p><i>Wash hands with soap after using treated seeds</i></p>			
5 Storage				
<p>Storage and handling of pesticide containers avoids environmental and human exposure</p>	<p><i>Store pesticides (manufacturers and companies that sell them) in conditions that guarantee safety for the whole community</i></p> <p>There are sometimes communal storage facilities available</p> <p>Awareness raising</p>		<p>Communal storage facilities are not enough. There need to be facilities in villages, which is not frequently the case</p> <p>Shops run by the Peasants' Organisations: farmers don't trust these, as they are scared of theft</p>	<p>Contact Samuel VODOUNNOUN for a copy of the consultative document on this subject in Benin</p> <p>UNPCB: available funding for storage initiatives in producers' organisations</p>
	<p><i>Get rid of out-of-date pesticides</i></p>			<p>Information available from ASP. Many of the countries in the region are involved in this programme (phase 1 or 2)</p>
	<p><i>Avoid storing products inside the home. They should be stored in special facilities in shops, out of reach of any children.</i></p>			
6. Conditions for applying pesticides				

Criteria	Description of tools available	Advantages of implementing tools	Limits of adopting tools	Is there public information on the subject
Pesticides are applied in appropriate climatic conditions, according to label directions, and or manufacturers' directions, with well maintained equipment	<i>Avoid planting crops that might increase the risk of contamination for the community or the environment (avoid planting near rivers, houses etc.)</i>	Protect health	The most frequently used equipment is the cheapest and not the most appropriate Appropriate equipment exists, but costs more	
	<i>Apply to leaves at the most suitable time of day (avoid the hottest time or changeable winds if using an airborne method of spraying)</i>			
	<i>The method of application that presents the lowest risk for the operator and the environment should be the option of choice</i>			
	<i>Only use recommended or specifically designed equipment; it should be in good working order</i>			
7 Recycling				
Used pesticide containers are collected by a recycling programme, or disposed of safely	<i>Introduce measures to avoid reusing objects in any way: All packaging used for pesticides should be destroyed as well as protective equipment not having been cleaned after use (buckets) or having been in contact with pesticides</i> Flexible packaging that can not be reutilised is useful	Avoids exposing the family, suicides	Farmers buy the pesticides in reusable containers, preferably made of flexible materials. They buy the pesticide not only for the product but also the packaging	
	<i>A collection and recycling programme</i>		The experiment of buying back the packaging in Burkina was stopped, because children tried to collect the empty bottles to resell them	SAPHYTO : Manufacturing unit and distribution of intrants Burkina
	<i>Immediate destruction of packaging after treatment</i>			

2/ Habitat

Version 1.0: 'Better Cotton' is produced by farmers who conserve natural habitats

Table 3: Example of habitat conservation tools

Draft criteria Version 1.0	Description of available tools	Advantages of adopting the tool	Limits to adopting the tool	Is there existing information already published on the subject
1. Water courses, drinking water sources and other bodies of water are protected from farm run-off.	Educating farmers on legal responsibilities: land use and protected area laws Use of publications, training of communities e.g. every two weeks (rotating)	- Wild lands and wildlife are conserved - Increased incomes for continued conservation	- Constant immigration into buffer zones near protected areas - Need for alternative livelihood strategies	Publications from WWF Cameroon
	Educating farmers on legal responsibilities: pesticide-related legislation and regulations Booklets	- Enables the implementation of international conventions	- Availability of alternative pesticides (costs etc)	-Publications from the Africa Stockpiles Programme (ASP) "Pests and pesticide safety"
	Educating farmers on effects of pesticides on pollinators, water resources, soil and health (human, wildlife and livestock) Booklet, Short videos			Publications from ASP targeted at: small holder farmers; school children; extension workers Videos targeted at small holder farmers
2. Biodiversity on and surrounding the farm is enhanced	<i>Agro-forestation, afforestation (hedges and wind-breaks). Respect environmental regulations. Avoid crop-growing very close to houses</i>			WWF Cameroon Afforestation project
	Educating farmers on legal responsibilities: land use and protected area laws Use of publications, training of communities e.g. every two weeks (rotating)	- Wildlands and wildlife are conserved - Increased incomes for continued conservation	- Constant immigration into buffer zones near protected areas - Need for alternative livelihood strategies	- Publications from WWF Cameroon

	Educating farmers on legal responsibilities: pesticide related legislation and regulations Booklets	- Enables the implementation of international conventions	- Availability of alternative pesticides (costs etc)	-Publications from ASP – “Pests and pesticide safety”
	Educating farmers on effects of pesticides on pollinators, water resources, soils and health (human, wildlife and livestock) Booklet, Short videos	-		Publications from ASP –Targeted at: small holder farmers; school children extension workers Videos targeted at small holder farmers
3. The use and conversion of land to grow cotton conforms with national legislation related to agricultural land use	Educating farmers on legal responsibilities: land use and protected area laws Use of publications, training of communities e.g. every two weeks (rotating)	- Wildlands and wildlife are conserved - Increased incomes for continued conservation	- Constant immigration into buffer zones near protected areas - Need for alternative livelihood strategies	- Publications from WWF Cameroon Contact the WWF WAMER office/ WWF Africa

3/ Water management

Version 1.0: ‘Better Cotton’ is produced by farmers who use water efficiently and care for the availability of water

Table 4: Example of water management tools:

Draft criteria Version 1.0	Description of available tools	Advantages of adopting the tool	Limits to adopting the tool	Is there existing information already published on the subject
1. Water use is optimised	<i>Keep soil moist. The soil is kept covered with straw or a plant specifically used as cover crop like Brachiaria ruziziensis, Mucuna pruriens, Dolichos lablab, Crotalaria retusa or Vigna unguiculata. The biomass produced and left behind or partially used for grazing animals can be used as straw to over the soil and reduce water run-off, help it to be absorbed by the soil; water is more readily available for the crops grown</i>	- Improved use of water with resulting improvement to seed cotton - Improved crop yield	<i>Fields need to be fenced off so cattle do not graze on the straw during the dry season</i> <i>The parameter cost/benefit of the use of leguminous plants as cover crop needs to be assessed</i> - pasture for livestock - bush fires - land issues	
	<u>Irrigated crops</u> - Bunds, - Strips of grass used as buffers, - Drip irrigation <u>Non-irrigated</u> - Stone dykes, water reservoirs, furrow dyking, demi lunes	- Improved water use and resulting improved quality in seed cotton - Improved crop yield	Requires a lot of means and investment	ESA Project (Water, Soil, trees) SODECOTON CAMEROUN LAE Project Mali

	<i>Should be planned according to water level so as to allow excess water to flow off</i>			
2. Water extraction does not cause adverse effects on groundwater and water bodies	<i>Strict observation of regulations in each country as also of international laws</i>	Rational management of water resources	High cost of drilling wells is beyond farmers' means	Projet petite irrigation du ministère de l'agriculture au Burkina Faso

4/ Soil management

Version 1.0: 'Better Cotton' is produced by farmers who care for the health of the soil

1/ What regulations/legislation exists to decide what land can be used for growing crops? (For example if the gradient exceeds a certain degree) or whether erosion should be controlled?

No specific regulations, but in certain countries there are laws on agrarian and land reform that define the right to land. There is no legislation on the use of land for crops related to the topography.

2/ What are the main causes of erosion (for example working land that has a steep slope, violent rain, lack of plant cover/excessive grazing)?

The main sources of erosion are water and wind. This is increased by:

- frequent ploughing that makes soil more fragile
- growing crops without respecting levels
- lack of anti-erosion measures (grass strips, stone barriers, tree hedges etc.)
- lack of soil cover (SCV)

Table 5: Example of soil management tools

Draft criteria Version 1.0	Description of available tools	Advantages of adopting the tool	Limits of adopting the tool	Is there existing information already published on the subject
1. Soil management practices are used that maintain and enhance the	<i>Crop rotation: rotation is carried out with local cereals according to each zone</i>	<i>Growing a single crop increases levels of soil disease and soil lacks nutrients</i>	-Land tenure, lack of land	<i>Sub-regional programme of participative training in GIPD via farmers' field schools (GIPD/CEP) For Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal. Global IPM Facility FAO Rome March 2006</i>

<p>structure and fertility of the soil</p>	<p><i>The use of mineral fertilisers and nutrients: managing soil fertility is something that can be achieved by crop rotation, using cover crops and organic manure. The remaining stalks of cotton and other crops are used as mulch rather than being burned</i></p>	<p><i>Chemical fertilisers cost money that poor farmers can not afford</i></p> <p>Reduced cost of intrants for farmers who do not have the means</p>	<p><i>The level of intensity and amount of work women have to do; lack of animals to draw ploughs, carts etc</i></p> <p>Difficult work; lack of means of transport; lack of biomass to make organic manure (disorganised grazing of fields); lack of water to damp down compost</p>	<p><i>Benin Organic cotton/ organic fair trade cotton project Alafia Penjari</i></p> <p>IRAD (Institut de la Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement) and ESA project (Water Soil Trees) SODECOTON in Cameroon</p>
	<p><i>Combining animal and crop farming : use manure for areas where crops are being grown.</i></p>	<p><i>Most farmers don't have the means of buying recommended fertilisers</i></p>	<p><i>Farmers don't have enough animals in their herds and the manure is of poor quality. It can cost a lot to bring the manure to the fields</i></p> <p>Availability of organic manure on the farm</p>	<p>Cotton and the environment : the facts of the problem Burkina Faso</p> <p>ESA project SODECOTON au Cameroon</p>
	<p><i>Cotton growing is diversified with four other crops: maize, groundnut, sesame and hibiscus</i></p>	<p><i>Growing just one crop reduces soil fertility; crop rotation leads to improved soil fertility</i></p>	<p><i>It is necessary to have market outlets for alternative crops</i></p>	
	<p><i>Cotton crops are rotated with maize, millet or sorghum to improve the food security of the household</i></p>	<p>-Food security - Maintain soil fertility</p>	<p>- Land tenure and lack of availability of land</p>	<p><i>Evolution of management practices in cotton savannah family farms of Central Africa Emmanuel Mbétid-Bessane Michel Havard Koye Djondang</i></p> <p>ESA project SODECOTON Cameroon</p>
	<p>Cow dung is mixed with wood shavings, fermented cows urine and used together with chemical fertilisers</p>	<p>Reduced production costs</p>	<p>Lack of animals to draw carts to transport the organic manure</p> <p>Bringing the organic manure to the fields is not easy: it is labour- and cost-intensive and there is the constraint of the amount of water required to make the compost</p>	<p><i>Pest control, Food security and organic cotton in Senegal A report for PAN UK's Pesticides Poverty and Livelihoods PAN AFRICA project August 2002</i></p>

Draft criteria Version 1.0	Description of available tools	Advantages of adopting the tool	Limits of adopting the tool	Is there existing information already published on the subject
	<p><i>Make compost from leftover parts of cotton plants (stalks, seed pods): they are dug into the soil or composted. The resulting product is spread on the fields</i></p>	<p><i>Small farmers don't have the means of buying fertilisers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced production costs 	<p><i>Possibility to use them together with chemical fertilisers. Which remains a risk in terms of pests and disease</i></p>	<p><i>ITRA report 2003</i></p>
	<p><i>Composting techniques: the different techniques for composting in fields and on the farm are:</i></p> <p>Field composting (mulching):</p> <p><i>Cut grass/stalks; dry in the sun and leave until the following season</i></p> <p>Composting on the farm</p> <p><i>Dig 2 pits 4m x 2m and 1,5m deep; place cow dung in one, sand from a termite heap, wood shavings, plant matter and straw. Add sufficient water to wet the mixture; cover the pit; add more water one week later; after 30 days shift the mixture into the second pit; 4 months later, the mixture is ready for use and can be spread on the fields under the plants</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making it in a stable with manure - Making it in a wintering ground or improved ground - Keeping the animals in the fields 	<p>Fertilisers cost too much compared with the sales price of conventional cotton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced production costs 	<p>Very labour-intensive, particularly for women</p> <p>Land tenure, and lack of availability of land (renting plots, land insecurity) constraints of making organic manure</p>	<p><i>Organic cotton programme in Togo Ebeh Adayade Kodjo Executive Coordinator Alliance Nationale des Consommateurs et de l'Environnement (ANCE Togo)</i></p> <p>ESA project SODECOTON Cameroon</p>
	<p><i>Crop rotation and fertilisation of soil: The management of soil fertility is based on crop rotation using leguminous crops (sesame, groundnut, beans, etc.) and fertilising fields with organic matter, cow manure, grass and left-overs from harvesting are recycled instead of being burned; This is a non-toxic approach that respects the environment</i></p>	<p><i>The use of natural resources is a sustainable method and is cost-effective</i></p>	<p><i>Composting is labour-intensive and is often a task allocated to women and children</i></p>	<p><i>Organic cotton programme in Togo Ebeh Adayade Kodjo Executive Coordinator Alliance Nationale des Consommateurs et de l'Environnement (ANCE Togo)</i></p> <p>ESA project SODECOTON Cameroon</p>

2. Nutrients are applied on the basis of crop and soil needs. Timing, placement and quantity applied are all optimised	<i>Using basic formulæ to enrich soil, applied when fields are ploughed; the formula (NPK+S+B) are applied when the seeds germinate and IN is applied when they bloom</i>	- Reduced production costs - Less pollution or soil acidity	<i>Training farmers should be encouraged, particularly for applying these two different kinds of fertilisers at different times</i> <i>Most farmers apply fertilisers only once, at some point between the 30th and the 50th day after seeds have germinated, for fear the cotton might be short of fertiliser if they applied it earlier, as recommended</i>	<i>Factors limiting the adoption of IPM practices by cotton farmers in Benin: a participatory approach; P. Prudent ; S. Loko ; D. Deybe and M. Vaissayre</i>
	<i>Study and propose the generalisation of formulæ adapted to agro-pedagogical zones by adding organic manure (Application of standard formulæ do not necessarily always meet the plants' real needs)</i>	- Reduced production costs - Efficient use of fertilisers	Problem of supplies	Cotton companies in West and central Africa
3. Production practice are used that minimise erosion	<i>Cover crops, rows of stones (cordons pierreux), strips of grassland, small dykes, stones...</i>	- Less erosion, soil protected and restored	Land tenure, training of farmers in techniques, availability of biomass for SCV	Widespread in ESA project SODECOTON Cameroon

5/ Fibre quality management

Version 1.0: 'Better Cotton' is produced by farmers who care for and preserve the quality of the fibre

Table 6: Example of fibre quality management tools

Draft criteria Version 1.0	Description of available tools	Advantages of adopting the tool	Limits of adopting the tool	Is there existing information already published on the subject
1. Practices are adopted that maximise the fibre quality	<i>Using specially selected cotton seeds: Using cotton seed that has been specially selected in laboratories with farmer's help or in field trials on varieties</i>	<i>Most cotton seeds are produced during the ginning process; these seeds are not selected. High quality certified seed is the best defence against damage caused by pests, disease and climate stress.</i>	<i>Laboratory or field tests require money that is not always available from funders</i>	<i>Programme sous-régional de Formation Participative en Gestion Intégrée de la Production et des Déprédateurs des cultures a travers les champs-écoles des producteurs (GIPD/CEP) Pour Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali et Senegal. Global IPM Facility FAO Rome Mars 2006</i>
		Seeds are selected and projects established. A seed plan is run by the cotton companies together with the producers and the research institutes		YES In Senegal Cf Annual report on seed production SODEFITEX In Mali, cf Annual report on seed division by the CMDT
	<i>Plant selection: A variety of genetically variable cotton has been planted in the four main cotton sites in Benin (Savalou, Diougou, Kandi et Okpara), and undergoes different selection depending on environmental pressure and pressure from farmers. 14 genotypes of various origin (West and Central Africa, USA, Argentina and Australia) have been selected for the morphobiological appearance and their agronomical and technical performance; they have been crossbred at random.</i>	<i>In response to the farmer's demands for a wider range of varieties that meet local growing conditions. Good rain water management, respecting the right date to sow and the risk of pests remain constraints</i>		<i>Decentralized and participatory cotton breeding in Benin: farmer-breeders' results are promising By J. LANCON, S. LEWICKI, M. DJABOUTOU, J. CHAUME and E. SEKLOKA, and Farmer-Breeders: L. ASSOGBA, D. TAKPARA and B. I. OROU MOUSSE. March 2004</i>
	<i>Use of specially selected seeds: seeds are selected in laboratories or in the field, using a participative approach with farmers</i>	<i>Some cotton seeds are sub-products of the ginning process; these seeds are not selected. Good quality seed is the first defence against pesticides, disease and climatic stress</i>	<i>Laboratory or field trials require money that is not always covered by funders</i>	<i>Organic cotton program in Burkina Faso/ Helvetas Burkina. UNPCB</i>
	<i>Respect of sowing plan, maintain plots, fertilisers applied at correct date and right dosage, quality seeds</i>			

	<i>Seeds sown at right date</i> <i>Correct density</i>	Factor of highest yield, best quality, reduced risk of pest attack		
2. Seed Cotton is harvested, managed and stored to minimise contamination and damage	<i>Early harvest picking plants several times; no PP bags, avoid harvesting wet cotton, avoid contamination of cotton, sort upon harvesting, stock in clean place (fields, concessions, collection areas)</i>			

6. Decent work

1. What are the programmes that deal with the concept of decent work in agriculture in the region that BCI should work with? (i.e. what are the best practices currently implemented in terms of decent work?) Who are the key actors? (Governments, international organisations, unions, civil society, private sector)?

Compagnie Malienne de Développement des Textiles (CMDT) du Mali:

- Fight against child labour

Fair Trade (FLO/Max Havelaar/ Helvetas):

- Fair pay;
- Fair approach to questions of gender;
- Fight against child labour

2. Are you aware of initiatives other than CMDT and fair trade involved in the fight against child labour in the cotton sector?

ILO/ EO/SST (Mali, Burkina, Niger, Senegal, Benin, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire):

- Promotion of Health and Safety at work
- Introduction of Health and Safety at work

ILO/PAMODEC (West and Central Africa):

- Principles and fundamental rights at work
- International labour norms

The International Programme for the Abolition of Child Labour /ILO (West and Central Africa):

- Fight against Child Labour

Social Protection Programme STEP/ILO (Burkina, Benin, Togo..):

- Promotion of the extension of social protection

3. Are you aware of Farmer Field School initiatives that include specific modules on decent work? What organisation would be the best to implement that in the future?

CMDT: Experience of Kita in Mali:

- Fair trade
- Test by field school
- Total ban on child labour
- Democracy and good governance

Suggested organisations: CMDT & FLO

4. What are the main constraints in promoting decent work in West and Central Africa?

- Low wages of agricultural labour
- Lack of social security (health cover)
- Problems of access to land

5. How can we differentiate between smallholder farmers, smallholder farmers using a significant amount of labour and employers with large farms in the cotton-growing context of West and Central Africa? What does this imply for the Better Cotton system?

For smallholders:

Inadequate equipment / Difficulty in getting loans for inputs / Vicious circle of indebtedness

(NB: the participants did not understand this question as intended by BCI: the aim of the question was to discuss the distinction between smallholder farmers, smallholder employers and large farm employers in the context of West and Central Africa. The BCI needs to define these categories appropriately as different criteria are applicable for each²)

6. What is your definition of a significant number of hired workers?

Permanent salaried workers do not constitute a significant criteria for agricultural labour in Africa

(NB: This question was not understood by the participants as intended by BCI - see previous question)

7. How can BCI guarantee that their efforts in the field of decent work are co-ordinated with those of the State and other actors?

- Permanent exchange
- Signing of conventions
- Regular evaluation of co-operation
- Take the ILO programme in each country into account along with the States' priorities
-

8. What is the best approach to adopt to promote decent work with smallholders and farmers who employ labour?

- Targeted consultation with the actors
- Capacity building/awareness-raising/information

10. Who is best equipped to evaluate the initial situation concerning decent work in the cotton sector in the region? (needs assessment, situational analysis, baseline data collection)?

- Cotton companies
- State structures responsible for labour legislation, health and rural development
- NGOs
- International organisations

11. Who is best placed to measure long-term progress achieved in terms of decent work? (Assessment programme)?

- Consultancies operating under the control of the Ministry for Labour and ILO
- Independent consultants

² BCI defines smallholders as cotton producers that are not structurally dependent on permanent hired labour, who manage their farm mainly using their own and their family's labour. BCI defines smallholder-employers as smallholder farmers who employ a *significant* number of hired workers, either permanently or for a specific task. BCI defines large farms as those cotton farming operations which are structurally dependent on permanent hired labour (see Version 1.0 of Global Principles, criteria and enabling mechanisms, July 2008).

7/ Access to finance:

1. Should BCI play a part in helping to promote access to finance for small cotton farmers, given the high level of activity that already exists in the region? If so, what part should they play?

Yes; BCI should play a part in this area, because although there are already enough micro-finance institutions, in reality not many farmers have access to financial services due to the very high interest rates.

3 types of loan currently exist:

- 1/ **Seasonal loans:** for seeds and inputs required at the start of the cotton-growing season, money lent by input distributors
- 2/ **Cash loans:** For seasonal labour (ploughing fields, hoeing etc.) This loan is made by local banks and certain micro-finance institutions (MFIs)
- 3/ **Harvesting loan:** For those farmers who do not have the means to cover the labour costs of harvesting the crop. These loans are always granted by micro-finance institutions.

Categories 2 and 3 carry a very high rate of interest that does not enable growers to make a profit on their crop. BCI's role could be to identify micro-finance institutions whose rate is under 5%

2. How can we guarantee that access to finance is fair, with a view to enabling the most financially excluded communities and farms in greatest difficulty, and women specifically, to be given access to financial services?

We need to identify the loan requests on a gender basis (men, women). If discrimination is found to exist, pressure needs to be brought to bear on the MFIs and farmers' organisations to respond to all the farmers who request loans.

3. What role can BCI play in the problem of indebtedness of cotton farmers?

In certain countries, the inputs are supplied to village collectives who distribute them to the individual farmers on the basis of mutual surety. This implies that the most profitable farmers in the collective cover the debts of the least profitable farmers.

BCI can play several parts:

- At the beginning of the season: carry out a basic evaluation and analyse the production costs with a view to determining the elements that could help cut costs.
- Input management: correct expression of needs, input management, taking real cultivated surface area into consideration

4. How is it possible to guarantee the sustainability of planned actions?

- BCI can encourage the textile brands involved in the initiative to commit to buying the cotton over a several year period, including the increased volumes of cotton.
- BCI can supervise all the actors involved in the programme to ensure they respect their contractual commitments

5. What loan programmes for small-scale farmers have had the most impact in the region to date?

Seasonal loans (for inputs etc) are the most essential for small-scale farmers. To the best of our knowledge there are no specific programmes that currently cover these types of loans. It is only large-scale farmers who have more access to cash loans.

6. How can BCI link access to finance to Farmer Field Schools or other educational approaches for small-scale farmers?

We can use these farmers meetings to manage a loan programme and train farmers on financial management etc.

7. Who would be the most appropriate actors to carry out an evaluation of the needs of small-scale cotton farmers as far as access to finance is concerned?

Firstly the Producers' Organisations, and also the staff (trainers, and state advisors on agriculture). Then there are the sales' staff of the micro-finance institutions.

8. Who would be the most appropriate actors to evaluate the impacts of access to finance on small-scale farmers?

Firstly the farmers and their organisations, then the State.

9. How would it be possible to link access to finance to environmental/social commitment?

If farmers have access to loans, they can buy agricultural equipment (carts, oxen, etc) they then no longer need to use child labour. Idem for environmental commitments: the loans would help finance appropriate pesticides.

10. How can we ensure that BCI's efforts are co-ordinated with those of other actors in this domain?

It is necessary to carry out an audit, to question the key actors on what they are doing in terms of access to loans for farmers, and then to consider how BCI could contribute to or reinforce existing programmes and if needs be, start up a new programme.

8/ Knowledge sharing & skills development

This group looked at a range of knowledge sharing and skills development methods, describing each one in terms of benefits and limitations in the West and Central African context.

(NB/ the information indicated in italics was provided by CABI in advance of the meeting)

Table 7: Example of Knowledge sharing and skills development methods

Methods	Examples of programmes that use this method	Advantages to using this method	Limits to using this method	Globally, is this technique useful for knowledge sharing and developing know-how?
Radio broadcasts	Atiakodji, UNPCB, Mobiom, UNSPC, Cotton companies	Mass impact	The practice is limited	Broadcasting at specific times
Advisory support for farmers (<i>'appui-conseil'</i>)	Governmental bodies, NGOs, cotton companies and growers' organisations	Close follow-up Reduced costs	Low level follow-up Overworked Risk of using BCI funds for other things	It is necessary to select people carefully
Field visits/ on-site demonstrations	Research institutes, development structures, governmental structures, NGOs, cotton companies	Participative, practical	Difficult access for farmers	Method to be applied using other farmers as relays
Public extension services	Governmental bodies		Poor results in terms of objectives	Agents need to be involved in a sustainable way, particularly in terms of mass communication methods
Private extension services	<i>National companies such as SOFITEX support farmers in the implementation of good agricultural practice</i>	There is a high degree of correlation between objectives & results	<i>Insufficient technical support: 1 technician for 500 farmers Farmers are trained without any support/follow-up, so they may fall back into their old agricultural practice</i>	This can be effective on condition private companies find it profitable

Exchange visits	Research institutes, governmental development structures, NGOs, cotton companies	Sharing of experience and practice	Not extensively practiced	Very useful for BCI
Training for all the family	Development structures, governmental structures, NGOs, cotton companies, producers' organisations		Expensive	
Farmers Field School (FFS)	Research institutes, development structures, governmental structures, NGOs, cotton companies	<i>An increasing number of funders and governments have accepted the interest of the field-schools, particularly in learning about indigenous practice, the inventiveness of farmers and the communication between farmers. In villages where no organisational infrastructure exists (co-operatives, village associations, farmers' groups etc) the FFS appear as catalysts in mobilising capital and projects that can generate profitable incomes</i>	<i>Farmers develop real techniques built on knowledge-based experience in the fields and a coherent way of interpreting experience based on local knowledge</i> <i>Farmers need to be motivated to create groups that can provide on-going benefit for farmers over and above the project</i> <i>Training farmers requires support on the part of funders. Regular visits from facilitators to the most remote villages is important</i> <i>There is also the problem of high costs and low impact in terms of numbers of people impacted</i>	Use other farmers as relays for greater efficiency
Improve the exchange of knowledge between research scientists and farmers	<i>Farmers involved in selection have improved their skills over several years working with formal farmers</i>	Enables scientific message to be adapted to farmer's understanding	<i>This is a long-term issue with farmers</i>	Create technical sheets adapted to farmers' situations
Management board (Conseil de Gestion)	PADIP, UNPCB, SNV	Takes farm as a whole into account	Expensive	
Community of practice	HELVETAS and Organic Exchange	Exchange of information at minimal cost		
Theatre forum	Research, Mobiom			
Discussion/dialogue group	DANIDA	Involve women/gender issues		Suitable for women's groups
Professional interest group	PADIP, UNPCB, SNV			

9/ Producer Organisations

1. Does BCI have a part to play in supporting the cotton-producer organisations, given the amount of existing activities in the region? (AFD, SNV, Helvetas, World Bank etc)? If yes, what should their role be?

Yes, BCI does have a part to play, particularly concerning:

- Reinforcing the capacities of the Producers' Organisations, particularly at grass-roots level (Professionalisation)
- Organising exchange visits between farmers
- Contributing to the creation and dynamics of inter-organisational networking between producers' organisations
- Supporting the Producers Organisations to establish a system and organisation that is in phase with the BCI principles

2. How can we be sure that the BCI efforts are co-ordinated with the other actors in this area?

- BCI is already involved in a participative approach at regional level. In the future it would be good to continue and capitalise best practice.
- There is a need to set up a consultative framework in each country to bring the Producers' organisations and all other stakeholders together.

3. What support programmes for producers organisations have had most impact to date?

- Capacity- building programmes for producers organisations and their unions
- The Producers Organisations micro-finance programmes

4. How can we guarantee the sustainability of potential actions?

- By assimilation of the approach by the producers organisations
- Implementation should be carried out by the producers organisations
- The umbrella groups should work directly with BCI
- An action plan, self-evaluation and follow-up evaluation

5. Who are the most appropriate actors to carry out an evaluation of the producer's organisations needs?

- The producers organisations and their umbrella groups

6. What are the key difficulties that exist when producers organisations are established in West and Central Africa?

- Illiteracy
- Inadequate laws
- In certain cases, the idea of setting up producers' organisations was not the farmers idea

7. What do you understand by « support the producers organisations »

- Meeting technical and financial needs as expressed by the farmers

8. What is needed to really reinforce the capacities of an organisation in West and Central Africa?

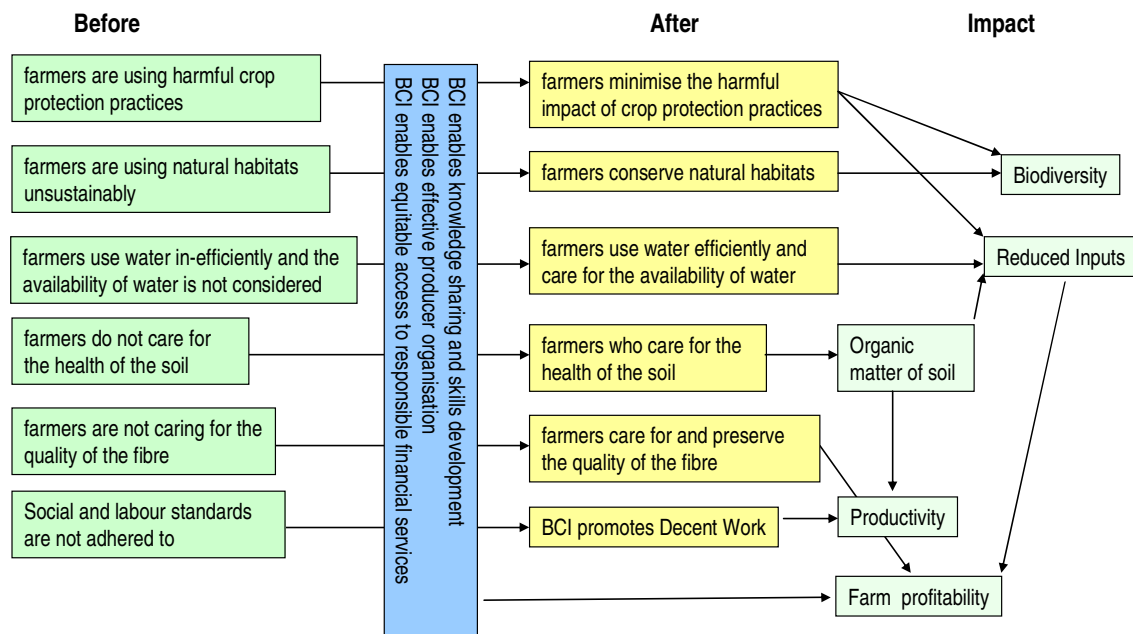
- Exchange
- Develop skills
- Support for good internal governance in the producers' organisations
- Literacy

BCI Indicators

(Meeting Objective 6: To identify nationally-specific indicators that could be used to assess whether the criteria have been met and how baseline and ongoing data can be collected)

To introduce the session, the participants were reminded that BCI's mission is to bring about measurable environmental, social and economic changes and thus that BCI considers it important to assess progress made by farmers over time to ensure both that involvement in the 'Better Cotton' System is having the desired, positive effects and that the change inherent in the concept 'Better' can be clearly and accurately communicated. The need to identify the actual impacts of growing 'Better Cotton' in turn requires the identification of relevant indicators that can be used to monitor and measure these impacts. Figure 2 was used to represent how the 'Better Cotton' System is envisaged to cause change and how this relates to some possible impacts.

Figure 2: Measuring the impact of the 'Better Cotton' System



Therefore, the purpose of the indicator session was to start identifying some of the key indicators that could be used to monitor and evaluate progress towards meeting each principle over time, in the particular context of West and Central Africa. The participants were divided into six smaller groups: crop protection, habitat conservation, water, soil management, fibre quality management, and decent work. All participants were asked to select a group that they felt that they could contribute to most. The tables that follow show each of the groups work and suggestions for indicators.

CROP PROTECTION

Draft Criteria Version 1.0	Proposed indicators	How can they be collected?	Who should collect the indicators?
An Integrated Pest Management Programme is adopted	Knowledge of pests and the damage they cause; natural targeted enemies; Methods for observing pests in the field; Protection techniques used by farmers; Pesticides used (kind and dosages); protection programmes used	Tests and field surveys	Technicians Management and partners
Use of the following pesticides: those categorised as WHO Class I, or are listed by the Stockholm or Rotterdam Conventions and endosulfan, is phased out over time, with the phasing out timeline based on the availability of better alternatives and ability for the risk to be properly managed	Adopt and apply legislation forbidding the use of class 1 pesticides and endosulfan	Check information in official government newspaper and appropriate media	All partners
Pesticides are used on crops for which they are legally registered for use, and are correctly labelled	Appropriate labelling (in accordance with the contents and current legislation)	Laboratory tests	Appropriate laboratory
Pesticides are prepared and applied by persons who are: healthy, skilled and trained in the application of pesticides, wearing appropriate protective and safety equipment, 18 years or older, not pregnant or nursing.	Preparation and application of pesticides by suitable people Awareness-raising activities and training of farmers	Surveys and observations Training reports	Competent national structures and partners
Storage and handling of pesticide containers avoids environmental and human exposure.	Are there suitable stores? Practice of storing pesticides (in the villages)	Surveys and observations	Competent national structures and partners
Pesticides are applied in appropriate climatic conditions, according to label directions, and or manufacturers' directions, with well-maintained equipment	Using pesticides under suitably safe conditions	Surveys and observations	Competent national structures and partners
Used pesticide containers are collected by a recycling programme, or disposed of safely	Is there a programme for managing empty packaging?	Surveys and observations of farmers	Competent national structures and partners

WATER

Draft criteria Version 1.0	Proposed indicators	How can they be collected?	Who should collect the indicators?
Water use is optimised	Number of reservoirs CES techniques (<i>Ados</i> in Mali, <i>zaï</i> and <i>demi-lune</i> in Burkina Faso) Evaluation of water reserves Degree of satisfaction of crops needs in water	Quantitative measures; degree of satisfaction of crops needs in water, water reserves, amount of water in reservoirs Fact sheet and logbook	Research Institutes Extension workers Specialised NGOs Technical agents in producers organisation
Water extraction does not cause adverse effects on groundwater and water bodies	Depth of the water table Rate of nitrates in subterranean water Amount of surface water available	List reservoirs Measure quantity of water Fact sheet	Research Institutes Extension workers Farmers Specialised NGOs Technical agents and producers organisation

SOIL

Draft criteria Version 1.0	Proposed indicators	How can they be collected?	Who should collect the indicators?
Soil management practices are used that maintain and enhance the structure and fertility of the soil	Soil pH Physical and chemical composition of soil: granulometry (structure?), ability to retain water, depth, permeability, CEC, percentage of organic matter	Physical and chemical analysis of the soil Visual observation of plant cover	Research Institutes Extension workers Farmers Specialised NGOs Technical agents and producers organisation
Nutrients are applied on the basis of crop and soil needs. Timing, placement and quantity applied are all optimised.	Dosage and type (formulæ) of fertilisers (both chemical and organic) Dates when applied	Fact sheet or crop logbook	Extension workers Farmers Research scientists Technical agents and producers organisation
Production practices are used that minimise erosion	Percentage of top soil covered Speed of run-off Quantity of arable land washed away by erosion	Biomass measurement The way the land has been worked Plan to measure erosion	Extension workers Farmers Research scientists Technical agents and producers organisation

HABITAT

Draft criteria Version 1.0	Proposed indicators	How can they be collected?	Who should collect the indicators?
Water courses, drinking water sources and other bodies of water are protected from farm run-off.	Number of training sessions on water management undertaken Number of people trained in water management Fences built around water points Number of farmers who build fences Length (meters) of fences built	From project activity reports	Project manager Cotton companies Producer associations
Biodiversity on and surrounding the farm is enhanced.	Number of biodiversity zones defined Number of fish water life, wildlife and plants identified Number of people trained in biodiversity conservation Presence of pollinators (bees, butterflies)	Maps of land zones Species counts Activity reports Observation	Project Manager Producers
The use and conversion of land to grow cotton conforms with national legislation related to agricultural land use	Existence of legislation on soil protection Number of producers understanding and following the soil legislation Area of land designated for agriculture Surface area of protected areas Number of people who know and respect the protected area limits Number of people trained in protected area legislation	Surveys Zoning plan Workshop reports	

FIBRE QUALITY

Draft criteria Version 1.0	Proposed indicators	How can they be collected?	Who should collect the indicators?
Practices are adopted that maximize the fibre quality	Germination rate of seeds distributed to farmers should be at least 80% (certified seeds)	Carry out germination test at factory Farmers carry out germination tests	Cotton company and producers organisations
	Date of sowing (according to recommendations based on research in the various countries)	Weekly or monthly reports on work carried out on farm	Cotton company technicians and producers organisation
	Spread fertiliser (date, dose, type)	Weekly or monthly reports on work carried out on farm	Cotton company technicians and producers organisation
	Hoeing (date and number of times)		
	Treatment (dose, frequency)		
Number of farmers trained in techniques to optimise quality of cotton fibre	The presence sheet of trainees	Trainers, Cotton company technicians and producers organisations	

Draft criteria Version 1.0	Proposed Indicators	How can they be collected	Who should collect the indicators?
Seed cotton is harvested, managed, and stored to minimise contamination and damage	Time of harvest (early harvest, field picked several times)	Visiting plots at harvest time	Cotton company technicians and producers organisations
	Type of equipment used to harvest (% of farmers using recommended equipment + Existence of infrastructure for storing (other indicators)	Audit existing recommended equipment and visit plots	Cotton company technicians and producers organisations
	Number of farmers having adopted best practice of storing seed after harvesting (not placed on ground, in a well-ventilated clean place both in the fields and on farm).	Visit store facilities	Cotton company technicians and producers organisation

DECENT WORK

Theme	OUTCOME / CRITERIA	Indicators	How to collect data	Who should collect data
Freedom of association	The farmers are organised in associations in order to defend their interests	Number of farmers organised Officially recognised status Minutes of meetings Well-kept management documents	From State authorities Compare with baseline data	Cotton companies Producers organisations, umbrella groups
Health and safety	Ensure that farmers work in good conditions of safety	Number of cases of poisoning recorded Rate of use of individual protective equipment Number of farmers trained in health and safety	Health centre Management structure	Producers organisations, umbrella groups BCI
Child labour	Children are forbidden to take part in activities liable to affect their well-being (health, education, safety, normal development)	Rate of children attending schools Rate of school drop-outs Records of number of children poisoned	Health centre Schools	Producers organisations, umbrella groups BCI
Forced labour	(No reply)			
Principle of non-discrimination	Respect for the principle of non-discrimination	Percentage of disadvantaged farmers (small-scale farmers and women) who gain access to means of production	Management structures	BCI
Employment conditions	Tacit understanding between farmers and farm labourers	Number of cases recorded	Audits in villages Local authorities	BCI
Basic treatment and disciplinary practices	Basic regulations observed	Number of cases handled	Producers associations Local authorities Traditional local mediators	BCI

NB: Sometimes, if the season is poor, certain farmers are not able to respect their commitments to workers

Discussion on Indicators

Following the plenary presentations of the different groups, a number of comments were made by participants:

- The indicator used need to be easily measurable and not require complex equipment to record.
- The indicators will have to be further defined at a project level, and be up to BCI to a large part.
- The phrasing of the indicators needed to be precise
- One participant indicated that indicators should be measurable (in the forms of numbers, quantity and volume) and should not cost too much to be effective. A target should be set in advance and when the impact assessment is made, it is necessary to look at how we are getting closer to this target.
- On soil and water, some participants mentioned that the indicators proposed are too technical and costly. They might be relevant for a research institute but not for an initiative like BCI expecting to work with the mass market in the future.
- On decent work, some questions were raised on the issue of forced labour. The group did not mention any indicators as they think it is a non-issue in the region while other participants emphasised that there are cases of forced labour (sometimes due to indebtedness) and that this criteria of decent work remains entirely valid.

Overall, it was recognized that this exercise is a starting point in the process of defining appropriate indicators for the implementation of the Better Cotton Initiative.

Assessment Programme

(Meeting Objective 7: To further refine BCI's approach to assessment for measuring progress towards growing 'Better Cotton')

The draft assessment programme (version 1.0) was presented highlighting the three main assessment stages: (i) initial context assessment, (ii) farm assessment (i.e. assessing progress made over time by farmers against the production principles); and (iii) impact assessment, assessing the impact of growing 'Better Cotton' over time. The focus of the discussion was on farm assessment specifically. It was emphasised that measuring and understanding 'progress' was at the heart of the programme and required measures to both encourage and measure change, whilst also ensuring that 'Better Cotton' is initially accessible by all.

The Assessment Programme is still at the initial stage of development, and BCI is seeking input from the Regional Working Groups and experts. The session was designed to gather important information to help shape the components of the programme.

An overview of the input received is presented below.

1. Do you think a progress approach to farm assessment works in your region? Please explain your answer

YES / NO	Examples
YES	But must have basic and progress criteria.
	Helps farmers to gradually adapt to the new criteria.
	Two approaches identified: i) advisory support ii) system of internal control
	At the end of each year indicate the points where more progress is required from BCI's point of view
	Yes, because this is something that is already evaluated and there are statistics available in the cotton companies. There is however need for greater support in terms of additional equipment.
	The criterion of progress should be used to emulate best practice for farmers in order to achieve the best conditions possible Evaluation also enables communication with clients

2. Do you have any comments on the minimum requirements proposed to qualify as « Better Cotton »

Criteria	Comments
Pesticides are used for crops for which they are legally registered for use and are correctly labelled (Principle of crop protection)	This is the ideal but it is difficult to measure and adhere to. Rephrase to: "Products used are those accepted and recommended for cotton." Authorities have to provide the resources for protection of other crops. It was also noted that there is no difference between BCI and other initiatives, and that it is important to clarify what exactly are dangerous pesticides, and to be precise
For Hazardous work, the minimum age is 18 years of age (Principle of decent work)	Different views were discussed: - All activities harmful to health, education, safety and welfare of children and women should be prohibited; - Important to engage decision makers to respect this principle; - At 16 some farmers are already running their own farm. As a result, the minimum age should be reduced to 15; - There is a need for awareness-raising on this subject - Age can be a valid criterion on condition we differentiate between paid work and training carried out within the family. The notion of hazardous work also needs to be clarified.
Employment is freely chosen: no forced or compulsory labour, including bonded or trafficked labour (Principles of decent work)	Most participants found this criterion totally valid. However, one person mentioned that forced labour no longer exists today. Working off debts does not constitute forced labour, because debtors will not work in their creditor's fields unless they can find no other way of paying off their debts. This aspect was contested by others.

3. Do you think that other criteria should be included as minimum requirements at global level in order to qualify for « Better Cotton »?

Response
No specific criteria defined; suggested there is a need to set up a system to stimulate production of 'Better Cotton', for example market pricing signals
A criteria for ISO 9000 certification was also proposed - Supply good-quality inputs - Control and correct application of technical requirements - Early, careful, staggered manual cotton-picking - Sorting into homogenous lots - Forbid use of PP sheets during harvest, commercialisation and transport and packaging of fibre - Handling, storing and transport of fibre in optimal conditions
Food security

4. Are there any of the BCI criteria that you feel are priorities to make progress on in your region? Or do you favour a more general approach to progress that includes measuring all criteria?

Response
Yes. Cotton fibre quality, soil fertility, IPM, quality of seed cotton. We should make assessments at each stage and improve the criteria.
BCI should prioritise the development of an overall assessment approach
Priority = use pesticides only for the crop for which registered Overall progress achieved on other criteria added
Criteria for agronomy and training
1- Soil fertility management 2- Finance for inputs and agricultural equipment 3- Organising producers

5. What methods of assessment would be suitable to use in your region for small-scale farmers and smallholder/large farms employers? Is there a difference?

Smallholder	Smallholder employers and large farm employers
Participatory assessment Provide support for self-assessment	Participatory assessment Provide support for self-assessment

6. What assessment of cotton production is already carried out in your region? And by whom?

Examples in the region	What specifically is being assessed?	Who carries out the assessment?	Who pays for the assessment?	Specific to small farmers / employers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rate of germination - Level of fertility - Level of protection - Plant health - Yield/Output 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and devt. Institutes - Monitoring structures - Cotton companies - Farmers associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cotton companies - Producers organisations 	Small farmers
End of season evaluation	Actual (level of) production	Cotton companies Producers organisations State	The cotton sector and the State	
Mid-season evaluation	Land under cultivation, inputs used	Cotton companies Producers organisations State	The cotton sector and the State	
Non-participatory assessment	Yield and overall production	Follow-up department of cotton companies	Cotton companies	
Participatory Assessment	Yield Production per quality			
Self-assessment	Yield Production per quality Training	Farmers Partners (BCI)	Farmers organisations	
Organic	Environment	Internal controls and certification agencies	Farmers organisations, NGOs and buyers	
Fair Trade	Social	Internal controls and certification agencies	Farmers organisations, NGOs and buyers	Farmers carry out self-assessment and an inspector evaluates samples

7. Please suggest ways to address failure to meet requirements? Specifically

a. For minimum requirements

Response
Satisfied Less satisfied Not satisfied
Commits at start; if no progress is made by the end of the process, then involvement in programme should be suspended
Failure to respect correct use of pesticides Should respect at least 2/3 of the minimum criteria
More information and awareness-raising as this is a long-term training task. Organise study trips and commentated visits and exchange between farmers
Corrective training Support Warning Exclusion

b. For progress requirements

Response
Satisfied Less satisfied Not satisfied
N/A
N/A
More information and awareness-raising as this is a long-term training task. Organise study trips and commentated visits and exchange between farmers Motivation for the best farmers Organise a 'best farmer' award
Warning Corrective training Exclusion

Discussion on the Assessment Programme

- Following discussion provided further input as: The document provided including three types of assessment was confusing (i.e. initial context, production/farm and impact)
- There should be a mid-term review of the whole project (not just at the end) that seeks and includes producer feedback on how they think the project / BCI is performing
- There should be annual farm assessments for farmers
- A farmer can not progress any further until they meet the minimum requirements
- A 'progressive approach', as described by the BCI needs to be more fully explained
- There was a need for definite indicators to use.
- The market needs to be prepared for 'Better Cotton'

All of these comments will be taken into account whilst BCI works with work groups and experts on the Assessment Programme. The Assessment Programme is a key component of the 'Better Cotton' System, but is not separate from the other parts. Before any clear definition of what the BCI Farm Assessment Programme and Impact Assessment are, all other components need to be finalized. The Supply chain component for example will also be critical in understanding what options are possible for the Assessment Programme. This will be occurring in a consultative period from January – April 2009, following an agreement from the BCI Steering Committee on what the BCI model is, and whether a product claim is needed.

The 'Better Cotton' System will include an assessment programme that measures change and its impact, and will measure progress on the farm level. This progress assessment will not result in a label; however there are a number of ways in which it can still link to the market. The Assessment Programme seeks to be inclusive and enabling, as opposed to restrictive of entry and costly. The programme that is developed will be tested in the pilot projects and this will enable BCI to refine the programme.

Implementation: Pilot Projects

(Meeting Objective 3: To discuss how to implement BCI pilot projects in the region)

An overview of what BCI means by 'pilot projects' was presented, their objectives and how they are going to be established in the region in 2009

- Aim: 2009 Planting Season
- Trial of the whole 'Better Cotton' System in the WCA regional context (testing of all components of the 'Better Cotton' system and not just the Production Principles & Criteria)
- Proposed initially in one country
- Emphasis that the proposed project seeks to draw from past experience to avoid replication of work, and wants to involve partners from a range of sectors and backgrounds (BCI does not want to reinvent the wheel but rather to build on existing initiatives and start from an existing structure)
- The time to refine the system for other projects, and other countries after 2010
- BCI Regional Coordinator for Africa employed by February 2009
- This is the time for partner engagement

More specifically, the objectives of pilot projects are

1. To test the regionally specific management practices and other tools to meet production principles
2. To test regionally specific implementation strategies against each enabling mechanism so farmers can use the management practices and other tools
3. To test ways of linking cotton harvested from the pilot projects with the market
4. To refine indicators for assessment, and methods for data collection, specifically who and how this will be conducted
5. To refine the framework for undertaking a needs assessment
6. To develop institutional capacity for assessment of 'Better Cotton'
7. To harness learning on how implementation can become self sufficient
8. To evaluate the impact on farm profitability of the 'Better Cotton' system

The aim of this session was to discuss in further details some of the following questions:

- 1) Where should the field project (or projects) be located?
- 2) Who should be involved in the process?
- 3) What existing programmes could BCI collaborate with to test the 'Better Cotton' System?
- 4) What are the key actions to be taken forward?

Prior to the discussion, further details were provided on the process in other countries where BCI is involved (building on existing projects in India and Pakistan with WWF and IKEA; collaborating with ABRAPA in Brazil). The criteria for the selection of the field project were also introduced:

- If possible, starting from an existing programme with similar objectives
- Willing and active project partners
- Willing farmers
- Representativeness (for example, in Brazil, the field project will have to take into account both small farms and large farms)
- One or more countries depending on capacity and funds availability
- Existing institutional structure to carry out the different activities
- Synergies with national policy with regards to sustainable agriculture/ cotton production

Where?

- In Mali, there are already different initiatives such as organic cotton and fair trade and it might be confusing and difficult for farmers to make a choice. It is therefore recommended to work with a group of farmers who are not involved in other initiatives;
- One country for the field project was not considered as a viable option by the different participants if representativeness is a criterion. It would be better to work with 2 or 3 countries at the same time and with a smaller number of farmers if the budget is not sufficient. The lessons learnt will be stronger if more than one country is considered;
- If only one country was to be selected, a request was made that the other countries should nonetheless be involved in the project management group;
- The specificities of each country and regions within countries was noted by different participants;
- Even though there are differences, it was also noted that the cotton sector in West and Central Africa has many similarities (in terms of structures, producer organisations, cotton companies, techniques, etc.)
- Having more than one country involved also reduces the risk of failure.
- Representatives of each country were supportive of running the pilot in their country.

Who?

- AProCA is considered to be the main entry point for the initiative in the region as they are the only organisation with a regional mandate;
- UN-SCPC indicated that they are the focal point for the different activities on-going on cotton in Mali and they are therefore in a very good position and interested to participate in the field project. UNPCB made a similar comment with regards to Burkina Faso;
- SODECOTON and CMDT also indicated their willingness to participate in the initiative. There are many existing cotton projects in Cameroon and Mali that BCI could build upon;
- SODEFITEX mentioned that there is already a good starting point in Senegal with organic and fair trade cotton as well as the implementation of the charter on quality between cotton companies and producer organisations;
- FASO COTON is currently involved in a Public-Private Partnership project financed by the German Development Finance Bank, DEG (Cotton Made in Africa, who is a partner of the BCI);
- Government representatives emphasised the need to closely collaborate with the relevant government authorities before the start of any activities and ensure that the project fits with national priorities. The government is often the key platform to link the different actors together;
- Different research centres (such as IER, INERA) confirmed their interest to collaborate in the future in their respective areas of expertise (crop protection, soil fertility, quality, socio-economic aspects, etc.);
- The Africa Stockpiles Programme is currently working in Mali, and planning is advanced for commencing work in Benin, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Cameroon; it was advised that there are many potential areas of collaboration between ASP and BCI in terms of awareness raising, pesticide management, legislation review, etc.
- SNV focus their activity on support to Producer Organisations and it is expected that PO will have a key role to play in the Better Cotton Initiative implementation in West and Central Africa. They have collaborated with BCI in the past and are willing to continue the collaboration in the future;
- ICCO indicated that while they are engaged in different projects on organic or fair trade cotton, BCI is also extremely important to support hence their participation in the RWG. A specific comment was made on the importance of strategic thinking beyond the 'pilot' phase. While it is probably easy to find support for the field project, it is essential to see how to replicate the approach in a sustainable way with other groups of farmers, other countries. The cost is likely to be very high and an appropriate system is urgently required to achieve those objectives.
- Oxfam similarly argued that because of the key objectives of BCI, the replication of activities on a larger scale is the main challenge;
- SOLIDARIDAD is also keen to participate and there are many synergies with their current activities in the region with producer organisations;
- ILO indicated the synergies with regards to Decent Work. They are implementing different projects in the region and there are possibilities to work with BCI on these questions. The IUF representatives similarly indicated the potential synergies with BCI on Decent work;
- WWF Cameroon indicated that they consider BCI as an opportunity as the two organisations have similar objectives. They are interested to work closely with SODECOTON in order to improve the living conditions of cotton farmers;
- BCI should learn from existing GIPD programmes in the region as they are many similarities and a good knowledge base in terms of farmers field schools, knowledge sharing, etc.

- For Organic Exchange, the key question is the link with the market as producing something different ('Better Cotton') will not be enough if there is no demand for it. They have very good experience on marketing linkages and they are keen to contribute to BCI in developing the appropriate system required;
- PAN-AFRICA also indicated that they have similar objectives with BCI and they have a good expertise on pesticides that could be very useful for BCI to consider;
- The need to closely coordinate with existing and numerous initiatives on cotton in Mali was emphasised by one participant as well as the importance of ensuring the sustainability of the different actions beyond the project duration;
- The participatory approach of BCI was strongly supported and it is expected that BCI will continue working in the same way during the field projects.
- The need was recognized to adopt a bottom-up approach starting from the producers and going up by involving the other actors in the supply chain. This will ensure that the project activities will be in line with the real needs of the farmers.
- The importance of the project management group was also discussed to ensure appropriate coordination at national and regional level. It should include experts, government and civil society representatives, cotton producer organisation, cotton companies, etc.
- It is also important to avoid creating structures anew entailing unnecessary costs but rather to work through existing structures already in place in the region.
- There is a need for BCI to get better access on the ground in phase II. The approval of producer organisations and cotton companies is essential to negotiate this access. Initiatives already exist to grow more sustainable cotton and BCI value added will have to be demonstrated to all the different actors in the next couple of years.

How?

The time available before 2009 is limited and it is therefore necessary to take concrete actions in the next three months in order to start implementation as soon as possible. The RWG strongly indicated that there are many willing partners in the region and many synergies with existing initiatives that BCI could build upon. Different organisations could collaborate with BCI in their respective expertise areas. Overall, it was agreed that AProCA should be the key partner in the region (co-programmer). It was also agreed that to be more representative and increase the chance of success, implementation in more than one country is required if funds permit.

Accordingly, immediately following the meeting BCI and APROCA commenced discussion of some of the practical issues associated with developing the project to trial the 'Better Cotton' System such as funding opportunities, the choice of location, the choice of implementing partners as well as the management structure for the field projects. It was proposed that a brief mapping of stakeholders in each country will be conducted by AProCA in January 2009 with support from national cotton producer organisations in order to select in a more objective way the main area where testing of the 'Better Cotton' System will be conducted.

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Appendix II Potential Benefits to Farmers

