

POLICY ON COMMUNICATING DATA

INTRODUCTION

BCI is committed to ensuring that credible data demonstrating progress and results is communicated to BCI members, partners, funders, farmers, and the public. The reputation of BCI rests in large part with the credibility of its data. Data is therefore provided at strategic moments throughout the cotton production cycle to allow actors engaged in the Better Cotton network to effectively use and learn from it.

This policy refers to the periodic communication of data by BCI to all relevant parties. It specifically addresses the following:

- Types of data communicated
- Rationale for any limitations on data use
- When and how data is made available by BCI

BCI will provide data to interested parties according to the present policy. Only data validated and shared by BCI can be referenced as BCI data in external communications.

As needed, additional data sharing agreements are developed according to specific partnership requirements.

DATA COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW

Type of Information	Indicator or Data	BCI Communication Method	Frequency	BCI Shares Information with Whom	Level of Data Aggregation
Global Field Indicators	1. Number of Better Cotton farmers	Supply Chain Updates (Volume)	Quarterly – January, April, July, October	Forecast and Licensed figures shared with members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global • Country • Project (Volume only, in Supply Chain Updates)
	2. Better Cotton hectares under cultivation	BCI Quarterly Reports	Quarterly – January, April, July, October	Forecast and Licensed figures shared with funders and the BCI Council.	
	3. Volume of Better Cotton produced	Harvest Report	Yearly - September	Final figures (after harvest) for the previous year's harvest shared with all BCI stakeholders and the public.	
	4. Percentage of trained farmers licensed 5. Number of farmers trained 6. Number of workers trained	Harvest Report	Yearly – September	BCI stakeholders and the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global • Country
Institutional and Supply Chain Indicators	1. Number and types of BCI Partnerships	BCI Quarterly Reports	Quarterly – January, April, July, October	Funders and the BCI Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global
	2. Number and types of BCI members				
	3. Earned income as percentage of global BCI costs	BCI Annual Report	Yearly - April	BCI stakeholders and the public	
	4. Spinner uptake rate (SUR) 5. Retailer uptake rate (RUR)	Harvest Report	Yearly - September	BCI stakeholders and the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global • Country (for SUR only)
Results Indicators	1. Pesticide use 2. Fertiliser use 3. Water used for irrigation 4. Yield 5. Profitability 6. Leveraging partnership with local specialist organisations on child labour 7. Improving understanding and awareness among farmers about hazardous child labour	Harvest Report	Yearly – September	BCI stakeholders and the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country
	8. Percentage of trained farmers and workers who are women	Project and IP data feedback reports	Yearly - September	Implementing Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project

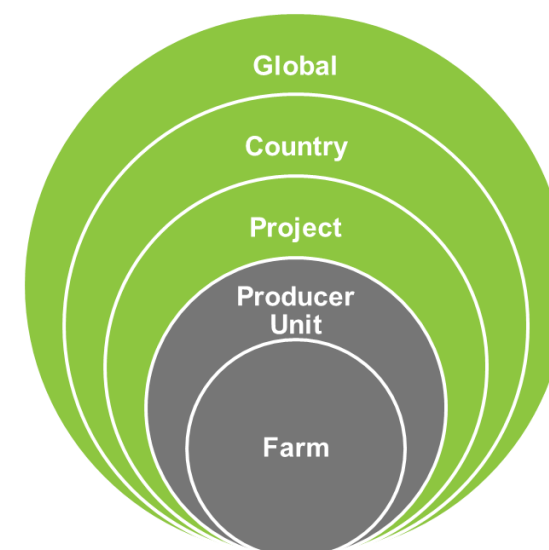
Value Equations	Numeric values per metric tonne of Better Cotton procured for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of smallholder farmers • Number of women trained • Number of hectares • Water use • Chemical use • Fertiliser use • Smallholder profitability 	Membership Claims Table	Yearly - September	Members	• Global and when possible, Country
Member Performance Monitoring	1. Members suspended due to breach of Monitoring Protocol	Listed on the BCI website	Monthly	Public	• Member level
	2. Annual Performance Overview of Retailer & Brand members	Annual Performance Overview	Yearly - October	Private to each Retailer & Brand member	
		Anonymised Summary Report	Yearly - October	Public	

Levels of Data Aggregation

The graphic to the right illustrates the levels of aggregation at which data is calculated and communicated. The global level indicates information from all Better Cotton producing countries pooled and presented together (e.g. volume of Better Cotton produced globally). The country level means that totals are given for Global Field Indicators (e.g. volume of Better Cotton produced nationally) and national averages of Results Indicators for each country where Better Cotton is grown.

Statistics aggregated at the project level can also be communicated, although this is normally not communicated publicly, rather it is shared within the Better Cotton network among partners for learning or shared by Implementing Partners with funders for project monitoring purposes. Project level forecast data on lint cotton volumes are also shared with BCI members via Supply Chain Updates.

The grey circles indicate levels at which BCI does not communicate data. BCI never shares or communicates individual farm level data. This data is stored confidentially and only used to produce statistics.



DATA COMMUNICATED BY BCI

A. Global Field Indicators

1. Number of Better Cotton farmers
2. Better Cotton hectares under cultivation
3. Volume of Better Cotton produced (in metric tonnes of lint)
4. Percentage of trained farmers licensed
5. Number of farmers trained
6. Number of workers trained

Explanation of Data Type

The Global Field Indicators provide an overview of the availability of Better Cotton and the scope of engagement with farmers and on-farm workers around the world.

Rationale

The first three Global Field Indicators are calculated three times per season and are given the status of **Forecast** (after planting), **Licensed** (before beginning of harvest), or **Final** (after harvest) based on the moment of the production cycle during which the data is gathered in each country. Due to the quantities and complexity of the data BCI collects, BCI makes Global Field Indicators available at the country and global levels only, and does not communicate figures for individual projects or producer units (PUs), except in the case of volume produced in the Supply Chain Updates (explained below).

The status of Forecast, Licensed, or Final is included in all external communication of the first three Global Field Indicators. The reason these particular indicators are updated at different points during the cotton production cycle is to allow for supply chain actors to plan based on the Better Cotton licences granted before harvest (and in some cases, based on forecast production). While the number of farmers is not expected to change between licensing and harvest, the area under cultivation and the final volume produced can vary due to intervening climatic factors.

Forecast information is privileged and BCI makes it available at the project, country, and global level to members in Supply Chain Updates and to the BCI Council and funding partners in quarterly reports. Implementing Partners and PUs can share forecast data with supply chain actors, but as there is no guarantee that forecast figures will exactly match final numbers, partners and producers should use the suggested language in the box to the right as a disclaimer.

In addition to the figures on Better Cotton farmers and production, BCI tracks training participants according to gender and farmer/worker status. BCI focuses external sharing on the number of farmers and workers trained at the country and global levels.

Finally, BCI shares the country and global level percentage of trained farmers licensed. This indicates the proportion of farmers trained on the Better Cotton Production Principles and Criteria who meet the standard (and were thus granted Better Cotton licences).

Recommended Language for Sharing Forecast Information

The following phrasing is recommended if Implementing Partners or Producer Units wish to share Forecast information.

___ farmers are expected to participate in the project/PU. Together, they will sow ___ hectares of cotton. Licensing figures will be available toward the beginning of harvest, in [? months]. The volume of Better Cotton licensed will be made public then.

Frequency & Timing of Update

The first three Global Field Indicators are available on a quarterly basis (January, April, June, and October) with relevant updates to figures depending on the production cycle in each country.

Final, confirmed figures for all Global Field Indicators pertaining to the previous harvest year are available in the annual Harvest Report, which is published on the BCI website every September.

B. Institutional and Supply Chain Indicators

1. Number and types of BCI partnerships
2. Number and types of BCI members
3. Earned income as percentage of global BCI costs
4. Spinner uptake rate
5. Retailer uptake rate

Explanation of Data Type

BCI tracks institutional and supply chain indicators to measure the effectiveness of the operation of BCI and its members, as well as the strategy for developing demand for Better Cotton.

Rationale

Strategic relationships have been key to the success of BCI. As a multi-stakeholder initiative, BCI works with a diverse range of actors to promote measurable and continuing improvements for the environment, farming communities, and the economies of cotton-producing areas. These crucial relationships have made Better Cotton what it is today. BCI therefore strives to be transparent about its relationships with stakeholders and reports on its earned income as a percentage of global costs to measure financial sustainability. The list of members and type of member is available to the public on the BCI website; the contact details are only shared with other members. Members can elect not to be on this list, or share contact details.

BCI also regularly provides updates on progress toward the aim to increase uptake of Better Cotton throughout the supply chain with rates of Better Cotton purchased by spinners and by retailers.

Frequency & Timing of Update

The indicators related to partnerships and members along with the earned income as percentage of BCI costs are included in the Annual Report each April; an update to the members list is made on a weekly basis on the *Our Members* page of the BCI website. The spinner and retailer uptake rates are communicated in the Harvest Report each September. Data about BCI partnerships and members, along with the spinner uptake rate are also shared with BCI's governing Council and funders on a quarterly basis.

C. Results Indicators

Results Indicators	What is Communicated	Small-holders	Medium Farms	Large Farms
1. Pesticide use	% difference between Better Cotton farmers and conventional farmers on kilograms applied per hectare of commercial and organic	✓	✓	✓
2. Fertiliser use	% difference between Better Cotton farmers and conventional farmers on kilograms applied per hectare of commercial and organic	✓	✓	✓

3. Water used for irrigation	% difference between Better Cotton farmers and conventional farmers on cubic metres used per hectare	✓	✓	✓
4. Yield	% difference between Better Cotton farmers and conventional farmers on Kilograms of lint cotton produced per hectare	✓	✓	✓
5. Profitability	% difference between Better Cotton farmers and conventional farmers on net income per hectare	✓	✓	
6. Elimination of child labour - Leveraging partnership with local specialist organisations	Existence of partnership(s) established by or on behalf of the PU with credible local organisations to address child labour, in particular to identify and reduce barriers to formal schooling	✓	✓	
7. Elimination of child labour - Improving understanding and awareness	% of farmers who can accurately differentiate between acceptable forms of children's work and hazardous child labour	✓	✓	
8. Inclusion of women	Number of farmers and workers receiving BCI training who are women, by training topic	✓	✓	

Explanation of Data Type

The Results Indicators help determine if growing Better Cotton delivers real benefits to farmers. BCI and partners collect Results Indicator data at the farm level and present the situation of Better Cotton farmers compared to that of farmers using conventional methods in the same season. More information about how the Results Indicators are measured and the methodology used to collect them is available in the document, *Better Cotton Assurance Program: Working with Results Indicators*.

Rationale

National averages for Results Indicators are calculated and these country-level results are what BCI communicates to members, partners, and the public.

For learning purposes, BCI shares cleaned and confirmed Results Indicator data aggregated at the project and PU level with the Implementing Partners responsible for managing the projects. Partners are limited to sharing their own data (not confirmed by BCI) and BCI-confirmed data at project level with their funders. Producing Better Cotton is a collective effort and individual actors (partners and funders) can communicate about their contribution (i.e. the number of farmers they are working with or the farming area their projects cover) and link it to the broader picture (i.e. official Results Indicators at the country level). Partners are therefore welcome to use Results Indicator data published by BCI in its Harvest Report in their own external communications.

Monitoring of the Results Indicators does not in itself prove impact of the Better Cotton System. Rather, this data allows for a comparison of the situation of Better Cotton farmers with that of farmers using conventional methods in any given year. Impact is defined by ISEAL as the “...positive and negative long-term effects resulting from the implementation of a standards system, either directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.” BCI is committed to

Clarifying Results vs. Impact: Recommended Language When Communicating Results Indicator Data

This data illustrates the situation of Better Cotton farmers compared to conventional farmers in the _____ season. The data is collected from Better Cotton farmers and control farmers. This data alone does not scientifically demonstrate impact.

assessing impact and is working to implement studies and will communicate findings and learning as they become available.

Frequency & Timing of Update

The Results Indicator data is communicated yearly in BCI's annual Harvest Report.

In order to simplify reporting frameworks and communications, BCI communicates on the harvest year. Harvest seasons vary among countries and Results Indicator data flows on an on-going basis. BCI releases the final, validated Results Indicator data only once a year in order to ensure the integrity of the information. No data will be communicated before the analysis is complete.

D. Value Equations

Explanation of Data Type

In line with the Better Cotton Claims Framework, Value Equations are a key benefit to procuring members, as they provide evidence for what the commitment to Better Cotton means in practical terms. Numeric values per Metric Tonne of Better Cotton procured are provided by BCI on the following:

- Number of smallholder farmers
- Number of women trained
- Number of hectares
- Water use
- Chemical fertiliser use
- Fertiliser use
- Smallholder profitability

Members must only use the Value Equations shared by BCI. No other sources of data are valid for claims on Better Cotton.

Rationale

A table will accompany these equations to show, wherever possible, Value Equations for each country, for members to use in their claims. However, not all countries will appear under each Value Equation as sometimes a particular harvest can generate misleading or less positive data when taken out of context. The annual Harvest Report is fully transparent on all indicators if more information is needed.

Frequency & Timing of Update

The Value Equations will be updated on a yearly basis in the BCI Membership Claims Table along with the Harvest Report every September, to remain accurate and in line with the seasonal field results of Better Cotton.

E. Member Performance Monitoring

Explanation of Data Type

BCI will publish a list of its members who are suspended due to a breach of the Member Monitoring Protocol. Also, BCI will send all Retailer & Brand members an individualised Annual Performance Overview of their performance during the year. The report will be based on data provided by the members in the Annual Member Questionnaire (September) and on other data collected by BCI. BCI will also publish an anonymised version of the Annual Performance Overview summarising how its members are doing with regard to the minimum and improvement requirements as outlined in the BCI Monitoring Protocol for members.

Rationale

The intention of the Monitoring Protocol and communicating transparently about member performance is to protect the credibility of the Better Cotton Initiative as well as to encourage members to continue to improve their own performance and to support the development of the initiative. Collaboration, sharing experiences and continuous improvement are the key themes BCI would like to promote amongst members. Members are expected to aim to:

- Protect the credibility of BCI and its members. This includes requirements such as payment of fees, compliance to the Better Cotton Chain of Custody Guidelines and compliance to the Better Cotton Claims Framework.
- Drive change. This includes requirements such as public alignment with the BCI mission, setting a sustainable cotton strategy and reporting the procurement of Better Cotton in the case for retailers and brands.

Frequency & Timing of Update

The list of suspended members will be updated on the BCI public website on a monthly basis. The individualised Annual Performance Overview will be provided in October each year to each Retailer & Brand member as well as the aggregated anonymised summary report.

ATTRIBUTION OF DATA

Only data validated and shared by BCI can be referenced as BCI data in external communications.

Partners can share and communicate data collected and verified by them, but the data cannot be attributed to BCI and the BCI logo cannot be used. Partners may communicate, for example, to their funders about the Global Field Indicators they collect and that pertain to their specific projects (i.e. information aggregated at the level of the Implementing Partner or project). They may also communicate data at the global and country level that is provided by BCI in official communications. Data not checked, confirmed, and communicated by BCI must be attributed only to the partner who collected the information. Partners, members, and other BCI stakeholders are required to conform to this policy. BCI will not validate any information that violates the policy.