Better Cotton Claims Framework

Summary

The 2014 Better Cotton Claims Framework (and referred to elsewhere as BCI Communication Rules), makes it simpler for members to make valid claims about Better Cotton use, and introduces more flexibility in how Better Cotton claims can be made. The intention of this document is to outline in a clear and concise way how the Better Cotton Claims Framework can be applied.

The Framework supports BCI members to promote Better Cotton. It provides greater clarity and simplicity in claiming (you don’t have to check with BCI every time you want to make a claim), the ability to talk about impact, and consistency in talking about Better Cotton and BCI.

Claims on the use of Better Cotton can be made by all BCI members relative to their membership status, role in the supply chain, and (for supply chain actors) their levels of Better Cotton use. In principle, the more Better Cotton a member procures, the greater the level of claim that can be made, and the higher the impact of the communication. Claims can be applied at corporate, brand, and in-store level. High procurement Retailer & Brand members are allowed to customise their claims with the approval of BCI. No on-product claims are allowed.

The Better Cotton Claims Framework provides a clear set of claims that align with the Better Cotton Traceability System, and claims will be validated through this system.

The Framework is applicable for use from 1 January 2014, and will be reviewed for improvements for use from 1 January 2015.

Claims Principles

BCI works on the principle of evidence-based communication. This allows members to make positive and credible claims about the value and impact of Better Cotton in terms of sustainable cotton production, and improved livelihoods for cotton-growing communities.

Retailers & Brands: Level of Procurement

Claims are differentiated by membership level and level of procurement. The table below indicates the levels of Better Cotton use that define High Procurement, Average Procurement, and Low Procurement.

Members can only make claims after both membership and volume based fees have been paid to make Better Cotton procurement-related claims. The first set of volume based fee invoices will be issued for payment in January 2014.

Levels of procurement will be monitored and confirmed through the Better Cotton Traceability System on-line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High procurement</td>
<td>&lt;25%</td>
<td>&lt;40%</td>
<td>&lt;70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average procurement</td>
<td>1% - 25%</td>
<td>5% - 40%</td>
<td>10% - 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low procurement</td>
<td>some &gt; 1%</td>
<td>some &gt; 5%</td>
<td>some &gt; 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-procuring</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Claims Format

There are seven types of claims provided with usage differentiated by BCI membership level and/or Better Cotton procurement level. For each type of claim there is basic fixed text that must be used ‘as is’ by all members, and supplementary text that is encouraged but not required. This is provided in the BCI Membership Claims Table, on the members-only area.

a) BCI membership:

‘We are proud members of the Better Cotton Initiative, working towards a future where all the world’s cotton is produced in a better way: socially, economically and environmentally.’

b) X% as Better Cotton:

‘We (or name of the organisation) source X% (or X MT) of our cotton as Better Cotton. We are committed to sourcing X% (or X MT) by 20XX.’

c) Value equations:

This approach allows procuring members to communicate to their customers in a more concrete way based on data of results from the field and the impact of growing Better Cotton.

Numeric values per Metric Tonne of Better Cotton procured will be provided by BCI on:

- number of smallholder farmers
- number of women trained
- number of hectares
- water use
- chemical use
- fertiliser use
- smallholder profitability

These value equations are a key benefit to procuring members as they provide evidence for what the commitment to Better Cotton means in practical terms. Members must use the value equations provided by BCI. No other sources of data are valid for Better Cotton.

They will be updated on a regularly basis, to remain accurate and in line with the seasonal field results of Better Cotton and are provided in the BCI Membership Claims Table.

d) Custom messaging:

The messaging and text provided by BCI can be customised as long as it is first approved by BCI and does not contradict or confuse a basic claim. This is only allowed for high procurement Retailer & Brand members and Suppliers & Manufacturer members.

The BCI Partnership or Membership Director should be contacted for any requests regarding customised messaging. Please ensure that you give BCI at least 4 weeks lead time before your deadlines for our approval, to allow us to understand your needs and support a beneficial outcome.

e) Partnership:

‘We are a proud partner of the Better Cotton Initiative, working towards a future where all the world’s cotton is produced in a better way: socially, economically and environmentally.’
f) Donor:
‘We are proud to support Better Cotton – a socially, economically and environmentally better way of producing cotton.’

g) Usage Claim
All supply chain actors procuring Better Cotton can make claims about the number of Better Cotton Claim Units used in the products they are supplying. This is done via the use of an Output Declaration. This type of Better Cotton usage claim is valid from 1 July 2013.

Registered traders and spinners must use the Better Cotton Tracer to generate their Output Declarations. For all other intermediaries (registered or basic) sample Output Declarations are provided on the BCI website. All other intermediaries must use these samples in line with the Chain of Custody Guidelines, and at the request of a client.

For suppliers, usage claims are not dependent on the amount of Better Cotton procured but on their status as ‘procuring or non-procuring’ members.

Conditions
1. Claims at corporate level can be applied at group/holding company and brand levels.
2. Basic claims are to be used “as is”; supplementary text as indicated in the BCI Membership Claims Table is encouraged but not required.
3. Figures used must always be BCI validated.
4. Multiple claims can be used together, according to the table.
5. The URL www.bettercotton.org and/or BCI logo must be included somewhere along with the claim.
6. No on-product claims are permitted.

Monitoring
Members are requested to share their communication material about Better Cotton / BCI as soon as it is ready.

The BCI Secretariat will run a monthly monitoring scan of claims made by members against the Better Cotton Claims Framework.

In the case where a member does not adhere to this Better Cotton Claims Framework (also referred to as the BCI Communication Rules), the following action steps will be taken:

» First non-adherence:
  Written warning issued > Communication by member retracted / removed and confirmation of this retraction provided in writing to BCI.

» Second non-adherence:
  Membership suspension > Communication by member retracted / removed > Letter required from member explaining why second non-adherence happened.

» Third non-adherence:
  Membership expulsion based on Council Approval.
### Claims Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>BCI logo /URL</th>
<th>Farmers stories</th>
<th>WHERE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retailers &amp; Brands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Procurement</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Procurement</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Procurement</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Procuring Member</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Suppliers &amp; Manufacturers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Procuring (Registered and Basic)</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-procuring (Registered and Basic)</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Producer Organisations</td>
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<td>Civil Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate Members</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non BCI members</td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Including ginner members*