



BETTER COTTON NORMATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Principles, Criteria & Indicators

Smallholders

VERSION 2.0

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Introduction

The Better Cotton Principles and Criteria (P&C) are a critical component of the BCSS. This practice-based standard forms the global definition of Better Cotton. By adhering to these principles, BCI Farmers produce cotton in a way that is measurably better for the environment and farming communities. The P&C provides rules and guidance to farmers participating in BCI programmes on how to reach BCI social and environmental sustainability objectives.

The P&C cover the most significant global issues associated with cotton cultivation and explain the intended outcomes achieved through their adoption. The P&C can be applied at a global level.

They generally apply to farming areas used for the purpose of producing Better Cotton within the geographic boundaries under the farmer's responsibility. This means all areas within or adjacent to BCI Farmers' cotton fields. However, areas that are not used for cotton production are not subject to the P&C, unless they are covered by management plan requirements.

BCI distinguishes between three categories of farmers (smallholders, medium farms and large farms) in recognition of the differences in production methods and workforces they use.

This document covers all principles, criteria and indicators applicable to smallholder farmers only. Separate companion documents covering the principles, criteria and indicators applicable to Medium and Large Farms are also available.

PRINCIPLE 1 – BCI Farmers Minimise The Harmful Impact Of Crop Protection Practices

CRITERION 1.1

The Producer must adopt an Integrated Pest Management Programme that includes all of the following principles:

- i. growing a healthy crop;
- ii. preventing the build-up of pest populations and the spread of disease;
- iii. preserving and enhancing populations of beneficial organisms;
- iv. regular field observations of crop health and key pest and beneficial insects;
- v. managing resistance.

Core Indicators

- 1.1.1 A locally adapted and time-bound plan, based on agro-ecosystem analysis, and which identifies appropriate specific practices to implement the five components of Integrated Pest Management, is established.
- 1.1.3 A timeline for implementing the five components of the Integrated Pest Management plan is established.
- 1.1.4 There is no calendar or random spraying.

Improvement Indicators

- 1.1.5 Proportion of farmers adopting the five components of Integrated Pest Management, in accordance with the list of practices defined in the locally adapted and time-bound plan.
- 1.1.6 Timeline against which 100% adoption on the five components of Integrated Pest Management should be achieved.

CRITERION 1.2

The Producer must only use pesticides that are:

- i. Registered nationally for the crop being treated;
- ii. Correctly labelled in at least one *de facto* or *de jure* official national or applicable official regional language.

Core Indicators

1.2.1 All pesticides used are registered nationally for use on cotton.

1.2.2 All pesticides used are correctly labelled in at least one *de facto* or *de jure* official national or applicable official regional language.

Improvement Indicator

1.2.3 All natural substances used are registered under the local/national BCI natural substance database.

CRITERION 1.3

The Producer must not use any pesticide listed in:

- i. Annex A and B of the Stockholm Convention; or
- ii. Annexes of the Montreal Protocol; or
- iii. Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention.

Core Indicators

1.3.1 Pesticides listed in:

- i. Annex A and B of the Stockholm Convention; or
 - ii. Annexes of the Montreal Protocol; or
 - iii. Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention;
- are not used.

CRITERION 1.4

The Producer must phase out the use of any pesticide active ingredients and formulations that are known or presumed to be extremely or highly hazardous (acute toxicity).

Core Indicators

- 1.4.1 The Producer has a plan to phase out by 2021 pesticides listed in category 1 of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS); Ia of the World Health Organization (WHO) classification.
- 1.4.2 The Producer has a plan to phase out by 2024 pesticides listed in category 2 of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS); Ib of the World Health Organization (WHO) classification.

Improvement Indicators

- 1.4.3 Proportion of farmers who have phased out Globally Harmonized System (GHS) category 1 / World Health Organization (WHO) Class Ia.
- 1.4.4 Proportion of farmers who have phased out Globally Harmonized System (GHS) category 2 / World Health Organization (WHO) Class Ib.

CRITERION 1.5

The Producer must phase out the use of any pesticide active ingredients and formulations that are known or presumed to be carcinogenic, mutagenic or reprotoxic (CMR) substances.

Core Indicator

- 1.5.1 The Producer has a plan to phase out Pesticides defined as carcinogenic, mutagenic or reprotoxic (CMR) substances according to Categories Ia and Ib of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) and Ia and Ib of the World Health Organization (WHO) classification.

Improvement Indicator

- 1.5.2 Proportion of farmers who have phased out pesticides defined as carcinogenic, mutagenic or reprotoxic (CMR) substances according to Categories Ia and Ib of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

CRITERION 1.6

The Producer must ensure that any person who prepares and applies pesticides is:

- i. **Healthy;**
- ii. **Skilled and trained in the application of pesticides;**
- iii. **18 or older;**
- iv. **not pregnant or nursing.**

Core Indicator

1.6.1 The Producer must ensure that any person who prepares and applies pesticides is:

- i. Healthy;
- ii. Skilled and trained in the application of pesticides;
- iii. 18 or older;
- iv. not pregnant or nursing.

CRITERION 1.7

Producers must ensure that any person who prepares and applies pesticides always uses appropriate protective and safety equipment in a correct manner.

Core Indicator

1.7.2 Minimum Personal Protective Equipment is worn while preparing and applying pesticides, which includes protection of the following body parts from dermal absorption, ingestion and inhalation:

- Face and airways: eyes, ear canal, nose, scalp
- Limbs: arms, feet, palms, forearms
- Abdomen and genital area.

Improvement Indicator

1.7.5 Proportion of farms where pesticides are prepared and applied by persons who correctly use appropriate protective and safety equipment.

CRITERION 1.8

Producers must store, handle and clean pesticide application equipment and containers, in order to avoid environmental harm and human exposure.

Improvement Indicators

1.8.2 Proportion of farms with separate and safe storage and cleaning sites available.

1.8.3 Frequency at which application equipment is inspected and cleaned.

CRITERION 1.9

Producers must apply pesticides in appropriate weather conditions, according to the directions on the label, and/or manufacturers' directions, with appropriate and well-maintained equipment.

Improvement Indicator

1.9.2 Proportion of farms applying pesticides in appropriate weather conditions, according to the directions on the label with appropriate and well-maintained equipment.

CRITERION 1.10

Producers should dispose of used pesticide containers safely, or through a collection and recycling programme.

Improvement Indicator

1.10.1 Proportion of farms that dispose of pesticide containers safely.

PRINCIPLE 2 – BCI Farmers Promote Water Stewardship

CRITERION 2.1

The Producer must adopt a Water Stewardship Plan to help protect and conserve local water resources and identify opportunities for climate change adaptation. It should include all of the following components:

- i. Mapping and understanding water resources;
- ii. Managing soil moisture;
- iii. Applying efficient irrigation practices to optimise water productivity (applicable to irrigated farms only);
- iv. Managing water quality;
- v. Engaging in collaboration and collective action to promote sustainable water use.

Core Indicators

- 2.1.1** A time-bound Water Stewardship Plan is defined that addresses each of the following components:
- i. Mapping and understanding water resources;
 - ii. Managing soil moisture;
 - iii. Applying efficient irrigation practices to optimise water productivity (applicable to irrigation farms only);
 - iv. Managing water quality;
 - v. Engaging in collaboration and collective action to promote sustainable water use.
- 2.1.2** A timeline for implementing the five components of the Water Stewardship Plan is established.
- 2.1.9** Opportunities for collaboration and collective action (beyond the Producer's unit of production) to achieve sustainable water use are identified.
- 2.1.10** By March 2022, collaboration and collective actions (beyond the Producer's unit of production) towards local sustainable use of water are implemented, as per opportunities identified in the Water Management Plan.

Improvement Indicators

- 2.1.11** Water resources are identified, mapped and understood.
- 2.1.12** Soil moisture management practices to reduce soil water evaporation are implemented, as per the Water Stewardship Plan.
- 2.1.13** Irrigation methods and technologies are implemented to improve irrigation efficiency, as per the Water Stewardship Plan (applicable to irrigated farms only).

- 2.1.14** Irrigation timing is planned to maximise water productivity (applicable to irrigated farms only).
- 2.1.15** Irrigation is not conducted on a rigid pre-determined calendar schedule (applicable to irrigated farms only).
- 2.1.16** Risk to water quality is considered when managing and applying nutrients and pesticides, as per the Water Stewardship Plan.

PRINCIPLE 3 - BCI Farmers Care For The Health Of The Soil

CRITERION 3.1

The Producer must adopt a soil management plan to maintain and enhance soil health that includes all of the following components:

- i. Identifying and analysing soil type;
- ii. Maintaining and enhancing soil structure;
- iii. Maintaining and enhancing soil fertility;
- iv. Continuously improving nutrient cycling.

Core Indicators

- 3.1.1** A time-bound soil management plan is defined that addresses each of the following components:
- i. Identifying and analysing soil type;
 - ii. Maintaining and enhancing soil structure;
 - iii. Maintaining and enhancing soil fertility;
 - iv. Continuously improving nutrient cycling.
- 3.1.2** A timeline for implementing the four components of the soil management plan is established.
- 3.1.3** Soil testing is conducted that includes NPK and pH analysis. A minimum of 1 soil test per Learning Group on a minimum of 20% of the Learning Groups within a Producer Unit must be conducted each year, with different Learning Groups each year, so that all Learning Groups are covered over a period of 5 years.

Improvement Indicators

- 3.1.8** Soil testing is conducted annually within each Learning Group.
- 3.1.9** Tillage methods are conducted in a way that reduces soil compaction and damage to soil structure.
- 3.1.10** Nutrients are applied based on soil test results.
- 3.1.11** Practices to control soil erosion are implemented.
- 3.1.12** Crop diversity, such as crop rotation, is used to regenerate the soil.

PRINCIPLE 4 - BCI Farmers Enhance Biodiversity And Use Land Responsibly

CRITERION 4.1

The Producer must adopt a Biodiversity Management Plan that conserves and enhances biodiversity on and surrounding the farm and includes all of the following components:

- i. Identifying and mapping biodiversity resources;
- ii. Identifying and restoring degraded areas;
- iii. Enhancing populations of beneficial insects as per the Integrated Pest Management plan (Principle 1);
- iv. Ensuring crop rotation;
- v. Protecting riparian areas.

Core Indicators

- 4.1.1** A time-bound Biodiversity Management Plan that addresses each of the five following components, is defined:
- i. Identifying and mapping biodiversity resources;
 - ii. Identifying and restoring degraded areas;
 - iii. Enhancing populations of beneficial insects, as per the Integrated Pest Management plan (Principle 1);
 - iv. Ensuring crop rotation;
 - v. Protecting riparian areas.
- 4.1.2** A timeline for implementing the five components of the Biodiversity Management Plan is established.
- 4.1.3** Biodiversity resources are identified and mapped.
- 4.1.4** Degraded areas on the farm are identified.

Improvement Indicators

- 4.1.7** Proportion of farms implementing measures to restore degraded areas, as per the Biodiversity Management Plan.
- 4.1.8** Proportion of farms implementing measures to protect water courses and wetlands in and adjacent to the farm, including maintaining and/or restoring appropriate riparian and other buffer zones, as per the Biodiversity Management Plan.

CRITERION 4.2

For the conversion of land used to grow cotton, the Producer must adopt the High Conservation Value approach and respect the right of local communities and indigenous people.

Core Indicator

4.2.1 In the case of any proposed conversion from non-agricultural land to agricultural land, the BCI High Conservation Value risk-based simplified approach must be implemented.

Improvement Indicator

4.2.2 Where High Conservation Values are identified, a management and monitoring plan is established to maintain those values.

PRINCIPLE 5 – BCI Farmers Care For And Preserve Fibre Quality

CRITERION 5.1

The Producer must harvest, manage and store seed cotton to minimise trash, contamination and damage.

Core Indicator

5.1.1 Good management practices for the harvest and storage of seed cotton are adopted.

Improvement Indicator

5.1.2 No polypropylene, polyethylene or any synthetic bags are used during the harvesting of cotton by hand, nor during storage and transportation.

CRITERION 5.2

The Producer should adopt management practices that maximise fibre quality.

Improvement Indicators

5.2.1 Number of best practices (validated locally) to maximise fibre quality shared with Better Cotton Initiative Farmers through appropriate dissemination material in local language.

5.2.2 Proportion of farms adopting recommended practices to maximise fibre quality.

PRINCIPLE 6 – BCI Farmers Promote Decent Work

CRITERION 6.1

The Producer must ensure there is no child labour, in accordance with ILO Convention 138. In the case of family smallholdings, children may help on their family's farm provided that the work is not liable to damage their health, safety, well-being, education or development, and that they are supervised by adults and given appropriate training.

Core Indicators

- 6.1.2** The Producer has a time-bound plan for the prevention of child labour in accordance with ILO Convention 138.
- 6.1.3** There are no workers below the age of 15 (14 in certain specified countries), or below the minimum age for employment defined by local law (whichever is higher) unless they meet all of the following conditions:
- i. the child is helping on his/her own family's farm;
 - ii. the child's work is structured so as to enable him/her to attend school;
 - iii. the child's work should not be so demanding as to undermine his/her education;
 - iv. the child should not perform tasks that are hazardous for him/her because of his/her age;
 - v. the child must be guided – both in terms of learning skills and supervision of tasks – by a family member;
 - vi. the child has received appropriate training.
- 6.1.4** A written child labour policy, specifying under which circumstances and for which tasks children can or cannot work or be employed and why, has been communicated to farmers/workers/employees.

Improvement Indicators

- 6.1.5** Procedures are in place for checking the age of workers, including record-keeping at farm level.
- 6.1.6** Child protection or monitoring committees are established.
- 6.1.7** Proportion of child labourers appropriately transferred to education.
- 6.1.8** Proportion of family of child labourers provided with alternative sources of income (through local partnership initiatives).

CRITERION 6.2

The Producer must ensure that for hazardous work, the minimum age is 18 years.

Core Indicator

6.2.1 Hazardous work is not conducted by workers under 18.

CRITERION 6.3

The Producer must ensure there is no forced or compulsory labour, including bonded or trafficked labour.

Core Indicator

6.3.1 All forms of forced or compulsory, including bonded or trafficked labour, are prohibited.

CRITERION 6.4

The Producer must not practise discrimination (distinction, exclusion or preference) that denies or impairs equality of opportunity, conditions or treatment based on individual characteristics, group membership or association.

Core Indicator

6.4.3 The Producer Unit has a time-bound plan to improve the position of disadvantaged groups.

Improvement Indicators

6.4.4 A written code of conduct or non-discrimination policy is communicated to farmers/workers/employees.

6.4.5 Specific outreach to women farmers and workers is conducted by women facilitators.

6.4.6 Equal access to training is given to women workers.

CRITERION 6.5

The Producer must observe the principle of equal pay for equal work.

Core Indicator

- 6.5.2** There is no evidence of any policy, practice or customary rule that results in the payment of unequal wages on the basis of gender to workers who perform the same job.

CRITERION 6.13

The Producer must ensure that all workers – waged and piece rate – are paid wages at least equivalent to the applicable legal national minimum wage or regional norm, whichever is higher; and that workers are paid regularly, on time, and through an appropriate method of payment.

Core Indicator

- 6.13.1** Farmers in the PU are aware of the legally applicable minimum wage/s (statutory national or regional minimum wage applicable to agriculture, collectively agreed wage, industry minimum).

CRITERION 6.19

The Producer must not engage in or tolerate the use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, sexual harassment, physical or verbal abuse or harassment of any kind.

Core Indicator

- 6.19.1** Use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, sexual harassment or physical or verbal abuse or harassment of any kind, is prohibited.

CRITERION 6.21

The Producer should develop partnership and collaboration on decent work at local, regional or national level.

Improvement Indicators

- 6.21.1** Number of alliances or partnerships established with local organisations on decent work.

- 6.21.2** Number of outreach activities to specific target groups beyond farmers (e.g. women, children, casual workers, migrant workers, local authorities, school teachers, pesticide applicators, cotton pickers, etc.).
- 6.21.3** Proportion of Learning Groups (for smallholder PUs) or farms (for medium farm PUs) with a specific person or group in place to actively promote decent work within the community (e.g. decent work committees, child labour monitoring committees, local pressure group, Lead Farmer, etc.).

CRITERION 6.22

The Producer must develop effective producer organisation and/or strengthen existing ones.

Improvement Indicators

- 6.22.1** The Producer Unit has a programme in place (or is part of a programme) to develop effective producer organisation and/or strengthen existing ones.
- 6.22.2** Proportion of farmers in the Producer Unit members of producer organisation.
- 6.22.3** Estimated number of Producer organisations with women holding a position of responsibility (e.g. decision-making position, board membership, etc.).
- 6.22.4** Number of basic services provided by the producer organisation to their members (e.g. marketing, inputs, extension, storage, credit, market information, processing, etc.).

PRINCIPLE 7 – BCI Farmers Operate An Effective Management System

CRITERION 7.1

The Producer must develop and implement a Continuous Improvement Plan.

Core Indicator

- 7.1.1** A Continuous Improvement Plan is available, implemented and monitored according to the applicable Better Cotton Initiative Continuous Improvement planning process, and reviewed annually.

CRITERION 7.2

The Producer must ensure that BCI Farmers and workers receive regular training on best practices to achieve the Better Cotton Initiative Principles and Criteria Core Indicators and relevant Continuous Improvement Plan goals.

Core Indicators

- 7.2.1** A training plan identifying the key sustainability issues to be addressed for the Producer, the name of the training provider(s), scheduling and expected participants is available and implemented.
- 7.2.2** Training materials for BCI Farmers and workers are available to cover Better Cotton Initiative Principles and Criteria Core Indicators, with a focus on key sustainability issues in the local context. Best practices (validated locally) related to production are shared with BCI Farmers through appropriate dissemination material in the local language.
- 7.2.3** The Producer reports annual data on number of BCI Farmers and workers trained by gender/topic/methodology to demonstrate the implementation of the training plan.
- 7.2.4** The Producer operates a system to:
- i. Assess and document the level of adoption of practices promoted through training;
 - ii. Identify and address the risks associated with adopting the practices promoted through training;
 - iii. Evaluate the training materials continuously to improve their content and delivery.

CRITERION 7.3

The Producer must operate a data management system.

Core Indicators

- 7.3.1** The Producer collects and maintains accurate and complete Producer Unit data in the format required by the Better Cotton Initiative. This will include (but not be limited to) name and contact information of Producer Unit Manager; list of farmers organised into Learning Groups (for smallholder Producer Units); age, gender, education, level of farmers; expected seed cotton production per farmer and area under cultivation; geo-location of Producer Units; names of gins. The Producer Unit data is updated annually, at the latest by the end of sowing.
- 7.3.2** The Producer maintains a farm-level record keeping mechanism e.g. Farmer Field Book for essential production data on inputs and outputs in an accurate manner.
- 7.3.3** The Producer operates a system to collect, compile and report complete and accurate Results Indicator data in accordance with the Results Indicator Reporting template.
- 7.3.4** The Producer creates and maintains a profile of the farm labour force, including estimates of numbers of workers, as per the Better Cotton Initiative defined worker categories and disaggregated by gender. The labour profile is updated annually, at the latest one month after sowing.
- 7.3.5** The Producer ensures that all farmers within the Producer Unit maintain receipts of sales of Better Cotton, including the buyer name, date, and volume, for at least one year and is able to collect and submit these sale records to BCI upon request.

CRITERION 7.4

The Producer must monitor and review risks of noncompliance and implementation of corrective actions.

Core Indicator

- 7.4.1** The Producer operates a system to:
- i. Identify and address the risks of non-comformity with core indicators;
 - ii. Plan and enforce the implementation of Corrective Actions resulting from monitoring activities.