

BETTER COTTON ASSURANCE PROGRAM

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT FIELD BOOK On MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

MEDIUM FARMS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ORIENTATION** | *This field book supports BCI, partners or verifiers in collecting the necessary information while doing an external assessment in the field (2nd Party credibility checks by BCI/Strategic Partner/Implementing Partner or 3rd party verification by independent verifiers). It indicates to Producer Unit the type of questions that the person conducting the assessment will ask to the PU manager, to farmers or workers, the documents that will be reviewed and what will be looked at during visual inspection. It should be printed and filled during the visit. While this field book does not need to be sent to BCI, it is the basis to prepare the BCI external assessment report for medium farms that presents the information collected from the visit in a summarised form.*  |

1. **General Information about the visit**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of Assessment (please delete what is not applicable) | 2nd party credibility check conducted by BCI (or Strategic Partner operating on behalf of BCI) | 2nd party credibility check conducted by the Implementing Partner | 3rd party verification conducted by independent verifiers |
| Assessment Reference Number (the ref number should be country/state/PU Unit name/organisation conducting assessment/month-year of the visit |   |
| Assessment conducted by | Institution:  |
| Name of the person conducting the assessment (s):  |
| Email:  |
| Tel:  |
| Date of assessment (dd/mm/yyyy) - start date |   |
| Date of assessment (dd/mm/yyyy) - end date |   |
| Country  |   |
| State |   |
| Name of the Implementing Partner  |  |
| Name of the Producer Unit |   |
| Names of the 3 medium farms visited |  |
| Exact location |   |

1. **Producer Unit manager interview & Documentation review (at PU level)**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Minimum Production Criteria |
| N° BCI Criteria | Production Criteria | PU Manager Interview | Documents | Comments |
| 1.1 | An Integrated Pest Management Programme is adopted that includes the following principles: (i) growing of a healthy crop; and(ii) prevention of build-up of pest populations and of the spread of disease; and(iii) preservation and enhancement of populations of beneficial organisms; and(iv) regular field observations of the crop’s health and key pest and beneficial insects; and(v) management of resistance. | How do you conduct your Integrated Pest Management Programme – what kind of strategies/specific practices do you promote in the unit (e.g. crop protection, biological control, pest monitoring, etc.) How farmers decide when to use pesticides?How do they observe /monitor the cotton crop for pests and beneficial insects?Did they use genetically modified seed this season? If yes how did they manage resistance?Do you have any policy, book or guidance about IPM?What type of training has been provided to farmers?  | IPM Plan Training and awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/workersTraining records |  |
| 1.2 | Only pesticides that are:(i) Registered nationally for the crop being treated; and(ii) Correctly labelled in the national language are used. | What pesticides are being used in the PU? Do you have a list of the pesticides nationally registered for using cotton? How do you ensure farmers comply with the criteria? | List of pesticides nationally registered for cotton (if available at PU level) |  |
| 1.3 | Pesticides list in Annex A and B of the Stockholm Convention are not used. | What pesticides are being used in the PU? Do you know the list of pesticides in the Stockholm convention? How do you ensure farmers do not use these pesticides?  | Stockholm conventionList of pesticides used in the PU (if available at PU level) |  |
| 1.4 | Pesticides are prepared and applied by persons who are:(i) healthy; and(ii) skilled and trained in the application of pesticides; and(iii) 18 or older; and(iv) not pregnant or nursing. | Who is allowed to use pesticides (everyone, specific persons?)Is there a policy available in the PU about who can prepare and apply pesticides?Are the workers/farmers that work with pesticides trained? How do you ensure farmers comply with the criteria?  | Training and awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/workersTraining recordsPU policy |  |
| 2.1 | Water management practices are adopted that optimise water use (applicable to both rain fed and irrigated cotton). | *General*What management practices are being implemented? Please give specific examplesHow do you conserve soil moisture for as long as possible?What type of training is provided to farmers? *Rain-fed*How do you make optimal use of rainfall in the PU? *Irrigated*What techniques are being used to maximise the efficiency of irrigation systems used by farmers? What records are being kept on irrigation?  | Training & awareness raising material for facilitators and farmersBest practicesWater use records |  |
| 4.2 | The use and conversion of land to grow cotton conforms with national legislation related to agricultural land use. | What are the legal requirements regarding land use/converting native land into farming land in your region? How do you keep up to date with the legal requirements? How do you ensure that cotton is only grown according to legislation? | National legislationTraining & awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers |  |
| 5.2 | Seed cotton is harvested, managed and stored to minimise trash, contamination and damage. | What management practices are being implemented to minimise trash, contamination and damage? Who is being trained on these practices (farmers only, cotton picker, etc.)? | Training & awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/workersBest practices |  |
| 6.1 | Smallholders (including tenants, sharecroppers and other categories) have the right on a voluntary basis to establish and develop organisations representing their interests. | Is sharecropping or other forms of land arrangements common in the Producer Unit? In the positive, are they also free to join organisations representing their interests? | PU internal policies and procedures |  |
| 6.3 | There is no child labour in accordance with ILO convention 138. |  Do you have a plan in place for the prevention and progressive eradication of child labour? What is the duration of the plan? Do you know the national minimum age for work? How do you proactively prevent children below the national minimum age to working on the farm? What type of records do you keep? How is the plan communicated to farmers/workers? Is there a procedure for checking the age of workers in the Unit How do you remove existing child labour? What alternatives are being proposed? | Child Labour planNational law regarding child labourProcedure for checking the age of workersTraining and awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/workers |  |
| 6.4 | For hazardous work, the minimum age is 18 years. | What tasks do workers/farmers below the age of 18 usually perform?Do you know what is considered as hazardous labour in cotton in your country? How do you ensure that producers have a procedure in place to document workers age and tasks?  | National legislation regarding hazardous work on cottonTraining & awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/workers |  |
| 6.5 | Employment is freely chosen: no forced or compulsory labour, including bonded or trafficked labour. | Have you identified any instances of forced/bonded labour in the Producer Unit? What do you understand by forced labour?How do you ensure that farmers comply with the criteria and that workers are aware of their rights?  | Training & awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/workersInternal policies and procedures |  |
| 6.6 | There is no discrimination (distinction, exclusion, or preference) practised that denies or impairs equality of opportunity, conditions, or treatment based on individual characteristics and group membership or association. | What are the most common forms of discrimination in the PU? What are the majority and minority groups? What are the specific challenges faced by women in the Producer Unit? Do you have a plan in place to improve the position of disadvantaged groups? Does your plan includes gender-specific activities (e.g. Gender based wage discrimination)What is the duration of the plan? What is being proposed in terms of practices?How is the plan communicated to farmers/workers? | Training & awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/workersNon discrimination plan  |  |
| 6.7 | All workers and employers have the right to set up and join organisations of their own choosing, and to draw up their constitutions and rules, to elect their representatives and to formulate their programmes | Are there any workers organisations in the Producer Unit? Employers organisations? What are the membership requirements? How the leadership of the organisation is selected? How often do they meet?How do you ensure compliance with the criteria?  | Training & Awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/workersPU internal policies |  |
| 6.8 | Workers and employers have the right to bargain collectively | Are you aware of any collective bargaining agreement in the Producer Unit? How do you ensure that farmers comply with the criteria?  | Training & Awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/ workersPU internal policies |  |
| 6.25 | Employers do not engage in or tolerate the use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, sexual or other harassment or physical or verbal abuse of any kind | How do you ensure that farmers comply with the criteria | Training & Awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/ workersPU internal policies |  |
| 6.26 | There is a transparent and clear policy and system for disciplinary measures and this is communicated to workers. The system includes fair warning principles and any disciplinary actions are proportionate to the conduct in question |  How do you ensure that farmers comply with the criteria?  | Training & Awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/ workersPU internal policies |  |

|  |
| --- |
| 2. Management Criteria |
| N° BCI Criteria | Production Criteria | PU Manager Interview | Documents | Comments |
| M1 | PU Manager and Field Facilitators are trained by a BCI accredited trainer and have attended any subsequent refresher training (as required by BCI). | Who gave you the training on BCI? When did you receive the training? What is your understanding of Better Cotton? How do you ensure that field facilitators are trained by a BCI accredited trainer?  | Training records |  |
| M2 | PU data (Name of Producer Unit, location, number of farmers (M/F), number of workers (M/F), expected seed cotton production, name of gins, etc) is updated annually at the latest one month after sowing.  | How many farmers do you have in the Unit?How is the categorisation of farmers being conducted and by whom? What is the estimated seed cotton production this season? Where is the cotton being delivered? Is it possible to see the latest farmers list for the Producer Unit? How often is the list being updated? When the information was or will be communicated to BCI? | PU dataFarmer list |  |
| M3 | Continuous improvement plan available at PU level and reviewed by PU on annual basis. | Could you please share the continuous improvement plan developed at Producer Unit level?When do you review your plan? Are you aware of the continuous improvement plan template for medium farms developed by BCI? | Continuous improvement plan or equivalent internal policies and procedures |  |
| M4 | The PU has a protocol in place to identify (family or hired) workers on the farm, and train them on all relevant aspects of Decent Work.  | How many workers do you have in the unit? Do you have a protocol to identify workers?What training has been provided specifically to workers?  | Workers protocolList of workersTraining & awareness raising materialTraining records for workers |  |
| M5 | PU operates a system to collect, compile and report accurate data from farmer to PU level, and to BCI | How do you ensure results indicators data is reported to BCI?Who is collecting the information and how do you ensure the data is accurate?When do you submit your results indicators to BCI? | Data management systemResults Indicators report from previous season |  |
| M6 | PU operates a system to ensure that farmers can maintain a farmer field book and learn from it | What Farmer Field Book is being used in the Producer Unit? How many farmers have access to it? How it is distributed to farmers?Who is training farmers on how to use it? | Farmer Field Book templateDistribution records |  |
| M7 | PU operates a system to review progress against its plan to: (i)   assess the level of adoption at farmer level of the practices promoted in the training program; and (ii)   Identify and address issues/risks associated with implementation/ potential non compliance; and (iii)  Plan/Enforce implementation of Corrective Actions resulting from monitoring activities. | When do you review your plan? How do you assess the level of adoption at farmer level? How do you ensure that farmers comply with the minimum requirements of Better Cotton?How do you identify and address issues/risk of non compliance? How do you plan and implement corrective actions? Have you implemented corrective actions provided by BCI?Have you conducted internal assessment on 10% of the medium farms in the Unit?  | Internal assessment reportFarmer progress/adoption reportCorrective action formsMonitoring report |  |
| M8 | Training material for facilitators and farmers are available to cover all of the Minimum Production Criteria. | What types of training materials are available on each Minimum Production Criteria?  | Training material for facilitators and farmers  |  |
| M9 | Annual data on number of farmers and workers trained in the PU by gender / topics/ methodology used are reported to BCI. | How many farmers have been trained in the PU this year (or will be trained)?How many workers have been trained in the PU this year (or will be trained)?How many women have been trained (or will be trained)? | Training records |  |

1. **Farmer Interview and Documentation Review (at Farmers level)**

(Reminder: 3 medium farm in each Producer Unit selected for external assessment need to be interviewed. If necessary this section can be printed for each individual interview and then summarised in the external assessment report)

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Minimum Production Criteria |
| N° BCI Criteria | Production Criteria | Farmers Interview | Documents | Comments/observation of non compliance?  |
| 1.1 | An Integrated Pest Management Programme is adopted that includes the following principles: (i) growing of a healthy crop; and(ii) prevention of build-up of pest populations and of the spread of disease; and(iii) preservation and enhancement of populations of beneficial organisms; and(iv) regular field observations of the crop’s health and key pest and beneficial insects; and(v) management of resistance. | How do you conduct your Integrated Pest Management Programme – what kind of strategies/specific practices do you use (e.g. crop protection, biological control, pest monitoring, etc.) How do you decide when to use pesticides?How do you observe /monitor your cotton crop for pests and beneficial insects?Did you use genetically modified seed this season? If yes how did you manage resistance?Do you have any policy, book or guidance about IPM?  | Pesticide application recordsTraining & awareness raising material for farmers/workers |  |
| 1.2 | Only pesticides that are:(i) Registered nationally for the crop being treated; and(ii) Correctly labelled in the national language are used. | What pesticides do you use? Are the label instructions useful? Do you have the list of pesticides nationally registered for using in Cotton? | List of pesticides |  |
| 1.3 | Pesticides list in Annex A and B of the Stockholm Convention are not used. | What pesticides do you use? Do you know which one you cannot use? Do you know the list of pesticides in the Stockholm convention? | List of pesticidesAwareness raising material for farmers |  |
| 1.4 | Pesticides are prepared and applied by persons who are:(i) healthy; and(ii) skilled and trained in the application of pesticides; and(iii) 18 or older; and(iv) not pregnant or nursing. | Who is allowed to use pesticides (everyone, specific persons?)Who is applying pesticides on your farm? How old are they? How do you know their ages? What training is provided to pesticide applicators? What training did you receive on pesticide use?  | Training & awareness raising material for farmers/workersAge documentationTraining records |  |
| 2.1 | Water management practices are adopted that optimise water use (applicable to both rain fed and irrigated cotton). | *Rain-fed*How do you make optimal use of rainfall in the farm? What specific practices are being used? How do you conserve soil moistures for as long as possible? *Irrigated*How do you decide when to irrigate the crop?How do you maximise the efficiency of your irrigation system?What training did you receive on water use?  | Training & awareness raising material for farmers |  |
| 4.2 | The use and conversion of land to grow cotton conforms with national legislation related to agricultural land use. | What are the legal requirements regarding land use/converting native land into farming land in your region? What land are you not allowed to convert for cotton farming here?  | Training & awareness raising material for farmers  |  |
| 5.2 | Seed cotton is harvested, managed and stored to minimise trash, contamination and damage. | What do you do to maintain the quality of your cotton during harvest and storage? Where do you store your cotton? How do you minimise contamination? What bags do pickers use? What training did you receive? Are workers responsible for harvesting and storage trained in better management practices? | Training & awareness raising material for farmers/workersTraining records |  |
| 6.1 | Smallholders (including tenants, sharecroppers and other categories) have the right on a voluntary basis to establish and develop organisations representing their interests. | Do you have sharecroppers, tenants, or other type of arrangements on your farm? In the positive, do they have the right to establish and develop organisation representing their interests? | Training & awareness raising material for farmers/workersInternal policies and procedures |  |
| 6.3 | There is no child labour in accordance with ILO convention 138. | What are the criteria for hiring labour?How do you check the age of your workers? What internal policies and procedures do you have in place? Do you know the national minimum age for work?How do you proactively prevent children below the national minimum age to working on the farm? | Training & awareness raising material for farmers/workersInternal policies and proceduresAge documentation National law |  |
| 6.4 | For hazardous work, the minimum age is 18 years. | Are your children (or other children) helping you on the farm? What do they do? How do you decide what task is appropriate?Do you know what constitutes hazardous child labour on cotton in your country? What evidence is there to ensure that no one under 18 carry out hazardous activities?  | Training & awareness raising material for farmers/workersInternal policies and proceduresAge documentationNational law |  |
| 6.5 | Employment is freely chosen: no forced or compulsory labour, including bonded or trafficked labour. | Do you hire workers directly or through a labour broker/recruiters/intermediary? Which of the workers documents (if any) are kept by you or an intermediary (e.g. identity papers, passport, travel document, etc.)Are any workers indebted to you or an intermediary? Are you providing wages advances to your workers? What type of loans do you provide to workers and how does it work in terms of repayment? How is the movement of workers restricted within the farms, if at all? Are workers ever fined for any reason? If so what for?How do you deal with workers wanting to leave the job?What training did you receive on the issue of forced labour | Training & awareness raising material for farmers/workersInternal policies and proceduresWork contracts |  |
| 6.6 | There is no discrimination (distinction, exclusion, or preference) practised that denies or impairs equality of opportunity, conditions, or treatment based on individual characteristics and group membership or association. | How do you understand the issue of discrimination? What are the different wages categories for workers? (including according to gender)What evidence is there that workers can raise issues without fear of discrimination or penalty? | Training & awareness raising material for farmers/workersInternal policies and proceduresPayment records |  |
| 6.7 | All workers and employers have the right to set up and join organisations of their own choosing, and to draw up their constitutions and rules, to elect their representatives and to formulate their programmes | Do you belong to an employer organisation? Are your workers parts of a worker organisation? Do they have the right to set up and join organisations of their own choosing? | Training & awareness raising material for farmers/workersWorkers and employers organisations document if any |  |
| 6.8 | Workers and employers have the right to bargain collectively | How the salary of workers is being defined? Is there a collective bargaining agreement in place between you and your workers?If no agreement in place, do they have the right to bargain collectively? | Training & awareness raising material for farmers/workersPayment recordsCollective bargaining agreements |  |
| 6.25 | Employers do not engage in or tolerate the use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, sexual or other harassment or physical or verbal abuse of any kind | How do you ensure the basic treatment of workers? How do you ensure the workplace is free from any type of punishment, coercion, harassment and abuse? Is there an internal policy in place? | Training & awareness raising material for farmers/workersInternal policies and procedures |  |
| 6.26 | There is a transparent and clear policy and system for disciplinary measures and this is communicated to workers. The system includes fair warning principles and any disciplinary actions are proportionate to the conduct in question | Do you have a policy and system in place for disciplinary measures? How do you ensure it is communicated to workers? What are the fair warning principles included in the policy? What disciplinary actions are taken in case of misconduct? | Training & awareness raising material for farmers/workersDisciplinary measures policy |  |
| 2. Management Criteria |
| N° BCI Criteria | Production Criteria | Farmers Interview | Documents | Comments |
| M5 | PU operates a system to collect, compile and report accurate data from farmer to PU level, and to BCI  | What data do you have to provide to the facilitators?What kind of documentation is maintained at farm level?  | Farmer Field Book |  |
| M6 | PU operates a system to ensure that farmers can maintain a farmer field book and learn from it | Did you receive a Farmer Field Book? Have you been trained on how to use it? How useful it is for learning purposes?  | Farmer Field Book  |  |
| M7 | PU operates a system to review progress against its plan to: (i)   assess the level of adoption at farmer level of the practices promoted in the training program; and (ii)   Identify and address issues/risks associated with implementation/ potential non compliance; and (iii)  Plan/Enforce implementation of Corrective Actions resulting from monitoring activities. | How often do you receive a visit from the facilitators? Are they discussing with you progress being made? Or corrective actions to be implemented on the farm? What are the actions being planned in the coming month to achieve compliance with the criteria.  |  |  |
| M8 | Training material for facilitators and farmers are available to cover all of the Minimum Production Criteria. | What type of training did you receive this season? Who delivered the training? What did you learn? Did you understand the training? What is Better Cotton? Do you know the 6 Better Cotton Production Principles? How was the quality of the training delivered? How could it be improved?  | Training & awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers |  |

**IV. Workers Interview**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| N° BCI Criteria | What to ask? | Comments |
| 1.1  | *For workers that work directly with Crop Protection*: Do you know how to recognise the different pest and beneficial insects in cottonDo you conduct field observations of the crop’s health, key pest and beneficial insects?Have you received any training about IPM? How do you manage resistance? |  |
| 1.4  | *For workers that work directly with Crop Protection*How long have you been working with pesticides? Have you been trained for it? How old are you?How do you conduct the pesticide preparation and application? Do you know the danger of pesticides?Do you think it is ok for female workers to apply pesticides when pregnant?  |  |
| 5.2  | Have you been trained on the risk of contaminating seed cotton?What practices do you use to avoid contamination during harvest, storage and transporting seed cotton?  |  |
| 6.3  | Has someone checked your age when you were hired? How old are you?Do you know of any law or internal policy that determine the minimum age for your work? Do you know if there are any children working on this farm? Have you seen any children in the field?  |  |
| 6.4  | Did someone check your age when you were hired? How old are you?Do you know who is allowed or not to prepare and apply pesticides? What task do you do?  |  |
| 6.5  | Does the farmer keep any of your documents (ID, passport, travel documents, etc.)? Can you leave the farm in any moment or during your holidays? Are you satisfied with your work? Are you indebted to your employer? What are the implications? |  |
| 6.6 | Have you felt any discrimination here as compared to other workers?Are you well treated here?How has the situation improved or deteriorated recently? Are you from the area or you migrated to work here? |  |
| 6.7 | Can you establish an organisation to represent your interest? Do you think it is possible in this farm? Have you heard any history from other workers that have any problem with it in this farm? |  |
| 6.8 | Do you talk about wages with the farmer? How are your wages negotiated? Is there an agreement in place? Do you have the support of the workers union to talk about wages?  |  |
| 6.25 | Have you suffered any physical or verbal abuse of any kind from your supervisors? Have you heard any history about it on the farm involving any of your colleagues? |  |
| 6.26 | Do you know the disciplinary measures of the farm? Do you know the consequences when you make some mistake or have an inadequate conduct in your work?  |  |
| Training (management criteria) | Did you receive any training from the Producer Unit this season? Have you understood the training provided to you? What rights do you have in relation to the BCI decent work criteria?  |  |

#  VISUAL INSPECTION

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Minimum Requirements | Key issues to be addressed during visual inspection | Comments/description – (Remember to take photos) |
| ManagementCriteria | Farmers corresponding to farmer list |  |
| Crop ProtectionCriteria 1.1 | Integrated pest management specific practices (e.g. traps, field monitoring for pests and beneficial insects, resistance management, etc.) |  |
| Crop ProtectionCriteria 1.2, 1.3 | Type of pesticides used  |  |
| Crop ProtectionCriteria 1.4 | Age and health of pesticide applicatorsPregnant or nursing women? |  |
| WaterCriteria 2.1 | Water sources used for irrigation and water management practices observed  |  |
| Natural HabitatCriteria 4.2 | Use and conversion of land in conformity with national legislation? |  |
| Fibre QualityCriteria 5.2 | Fibre quality management practices (harvesting techniques, storage area for cotton, cotton transportation, machinery management, contamination of cotton, etc.) |  |
| Decent WorkCriteria 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6 | Type of labour used in the farm (children/young persons, pregnant women, permanent, temporary, migrant workers, ethnic minorities) and work performed by each of them  |  |
| Decent Work 6.25, 6.26 | Treatment of workers (punishment, coercion, harassment, abuse) – relationship between workers and supervisors/manager |  |