

BETTER COTTON ASSURANCE PROGRAM

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT FIELD BOOK On MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

SMALLHOLDERS

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| **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 smallholders that presents the information collected from the visit in a summarised form.*  |

1. **General Information about the visit**

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| 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 Learning Groups visited |  |
| Names of the 15 farmers visited |  |
| Exact location |   |

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

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| 1. Minimum Production Criteria |
| N° BCI Criteria | Production Criteria | PU Manager Interview | Documents | Comments |
| 1.1 | The Producer Unit has a locally adapted and time-bound plan based on agro-ecosystem analysis that provides the specific practices to implement the 5 principles of Integrated Pest Management. | Do you have a locally adapted plan on the 5 principles of IPM? What is the duration of the plan? How is the plan communicated to farmers?What specific practices are being recommended to farmers? Are there GM varieties in the PU? If yes, how is resistance being managed by farmers? | IPM plan |  |
| 1.1 | There is no calendar or random spraying. | How do you ensure that farmers are not using calendar or random spraying? What type of training has been provided to facilitators and to farmers? When do farmers decide to use pesticides?How are farmers observing/monitoring the cotton crop for pests and beneficial insects? | Training and awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers |  |
| 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. | What type of organisations able to represent cotton smallholders exists in your area? What are the membership requirements? How the leadership of the organisation is selected? How often do they meet? Are smallholders free to join these organisations? 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 | The PU has a time-bound plan for the prevention and progressive eradication of 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 |  |
| 6.3 | Exceptionally in the case of family smallholdings, children aged under the national minimum age for access to employment may help on their family’s farm in certain defined conditions, and these conditions are cumulative: (i) children may only work on family smallholdings if their work is structured so as to enable them to attend school; (ii) this work should not be so demanding as to undermine their education; (iii) they should not perform tasks that are hazardous for them because of their age; (iv) they must be guided – both in terms of learning skills and supervision of tasks – by a family member; (v) they have attended appropriate training. | How do you understand the difference between light work and child labour? How do you ensure farmers understand this difference and comply with the criteria? | PU internal policies and proceduresTraining 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 | The PU has a time-bound plan to improve the position of disadvantaged groups. | 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?  |  Non-discrimination plan |  |

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| 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), list of Learning Groups, 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? How many Learning Groups? How are the Learning Groups being set up? 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 smallholders 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 Learning Group and from LG to PU level.  | 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 Learning Group 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 Learning Group 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 Learning Group in the Unit?  | Internal assessment reportLG 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 Learning Group/Farmers level)**

(Reminder: 3 Learning Groups and 5 farmers in each Learning Group need to be interviewed – so a total of 15 farmers per visit. If necessary this section can be printed for each individual interview and then summarised in the external assessment report)

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| 1. Minimum Production Criteria |
| N° BCI Criteria | Production Criteria | Farmers Interview | Documents | Comments/observation of non compliance?  |
| 1.1 | There is no calendar or random spraying. | How do you decide when to use pesticides?How do you observe/monitor your cotton crop for pests and beneficial insects?How was your IPM training?  | Pesticide application recordsAwareness raising material for farmers |  |
| 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?  | 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?  | 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?  | Awareness raising material for farmersAge documentation |  |
| 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?  | 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?  | 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?  | Awareness raising material for farmers |  |
| 6.1 | Smallholders (including tenants, sharecroppers and other categories) have the right on a voluntary basis to establish and develop organisations representing their interests. | Are you part of a producer organisation? Are you free to join any organisation representing your interests? What kind of organisation could you join? How often do you meet with your peers to discuss sharing resources or information about cotton farming?  | Awareness raising material for farmers |  |
| 6.3 | Exceptionally in the case of family smallholdings, children aged under the national minimum age for access to employment may help on their family’s farm in certain defined conditions, and these conditions are cumulative: (i) children may only work on family smallholdings if their work is structured so as to enable them to attend school; (ii) this work should not be so demanding as to undermine their education; (iii) they should not perform tasks that are hazardous for them because of their age; (iv) they must be guided – both in terms of learning skills and supervision of tasks – by a family member; (v) they have attended appropriate training. | Are your children (or other children) helping you on the farm? What do they do? How long are the working days? Who supervises them? What type of training have they received? When do your children go to school? How do you decide what task is appropriate? How do you check the age of the workers? Do you know the national minimum age for work? How do you proactively prevent children below the national minimum age from working on the farm? What training did you receive on child labour?  | Awareness raising material for farmersAge documentation |  |
| 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?  | Awareness raising material for farmers and workersAge documentation |  |
| 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 | Awareness raising material for farmers and workers |  |
| 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 Learning Group and from LG to PU level.  | What data do you have to provide to the facilitators?What kind of documentation is maintained at farm/Learning Group level? Can you read and write? If not who is maintaining the information for you?  | 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 Learning Group 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 in the Learning Group, on the farm? What are the actions being planned by the farmer/Learning Group 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?  | Awareness raising material for farmers |  |

**IV. Workers Interview**

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| 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? On what basis do you decide to apply pesticides? |  |
| 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?Are you working for your family or for someone else? |  |
| 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? |  |
| 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

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| 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 to avoid calendar or random spraying (e.g. field monitoring for pests and beneficial insects) |  |
| 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, 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 – relationship between farmer and workers in the field |  |