

# Implementing Partners Meeting

December 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>, Negombo, Sri Lanka

## Welcoming words from Alan McClay

Actors in the cotton sector are confronted everyday with the sustainability factor in their business strategy. BCI is not only part of this movement, but also pushing the world to make things happen beyond the field.

What does this means in terms of uptake?

All production of Better Cotton is increasingly taken up into the supply chain, it is happening three times faster, and now we need to be up to that task. We first focused on developing production, and we now need to make sure that it is taken up the supply chain.

Better Cotton is now grown in 23 countries, making up for ¼ of important cotton producers. With this in mind, BCI still has a long way to go. We have now reached the scale of 29% and need a self-sustaining system. We also need to build resilience and consistency in the system and in its implementation. In parallel, the claims frameworks has to be continuously improved.

We have to work with others. Everything we do has impact and relevance for all sustainability issues. This IP symposium is an opportunity to learn, share, coordinate and build BCI's future.

## Welcoming words from Nicolas Petit

Welcome to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the BCI meeting!

After holding a first session in Hong Kong, we are very happy to see all of you here today. This is an important event for IPs, which represent the core of BCI. IPs are the front line implementers of BCI's programmes, effectively transforming theory into practice and thus improving farmers' lives. We wish to thank all IPs for their hard work, as BCI's success is very much linked to their success.

## Standards Review: Transition Towards the revised Principle and Criteria

### GREGORY JEAN – BCI STANDARDS & LEARNING MANAGER

From May on, the Council has reviewed the most important changes in the Standard, and we now believe that we have a new document which captures well the overall definition of better cotton. It is the best trade-off solution which results from various stakeholders coming from

various world regions. The risk on credibility matter has been reduced and practicability has been improved.

However, a final step still has to be completed: we need to make sure that the transition goes smoothly. In this regard, we need time for phasing and for implement the new standard in a smart way. BCI will have to accompany IPs who will be in the frontline of implementing the new aspects of the revised criteria.

Today we will introduce the new version of the standard and discuss the transition period which will occur in the upcoming months. The standards will be effective in March 1<sup>st</sup> 2018. This means we have 3 months to put everything in place.

From now until March 2018, we need to:

- Finalise the document in itself, and all documents that will be directly impacted by the new standard;
- Adapt the assurance document to make sure that the one used by LF and PU managers is reflecting the new requirements and terminology;
- Translate all those documents in French and Chinese versions;
- Make sure that capacity building includes trainings: thematic training modules will be developed. Country teams and IPs will also receive proper trainings.

From March 2018 will start the one-year transition period.

The changes in the Standards will naturally bring on new challenges. We will have to make sure we have the time and resources to do so.

- The majority of core indicators and all improvement indicators will be effective from March 2018 on;
- Some core indicators which will need a transition phase: the Council has considered that these indicators will represent competency challenges to be implemented, and partners will need time to develop adequate capacity. This will allow time to develop guidance material and deliver trainings. These transition indicators will thus be implemented in March 2019, and in the meantime, only observations will be noted when the producer does not confirm (no case of non-conformity for those transition indicators);
- From March 2019, all producers will be assessed against all indicators.

## Transition Indicators Overview

### ➤ Rotterdam pesticide ban

It was agreed to ban the pesticides form the PICs in 2019. Adequate guidance on alternatives will be provided.

### ➤ Minimum PPE

There is a new definition of minimum PPE. The broadly applicable definition is core, focus on body parts to be covered and not on garments to wear.

### ➤ Water Stewardship Plan

This is the biggest improvement brought to the standard, it focuses on managing water as a critical resource through 5 components. It takes a holistic approach towards water management. It includes:

- Establishing a diagnostic to understand the water resource on the farm, to understand its availability and quality;
- Having more efficient management of soil water;
- Implementing more efficient irrigation practices;
- An enhanced Water quality management;
- Collaboration and collective action towards local sustainable water use: fair use and allocation of resources among various users. There has been extensive discussion on this one, especially on the applicability date. Will require a lot of time and resources. Applicability date from 3-5 years.

A **Water Pilot** will be launched in Pakistan, India, China, Tajikistan and Mozambique. It will test the applicability of the new approach, develop training modules and face to face trainings.

➤ **Soil testing**

Testing the soil is the basis to manage soil health. This can be done through affordable soil kits.

➤ **Biodiversity Management Plan**

We had a strong push from stakeholders to move along with this one. It is composed of 5 components.

➤ **HCV Risk Assessment**

Land use change approach: for any land conversion for growing cotton, this assessment will focus on potential risks based not only on national legislation but also on a high conservation value assessment. It will lead to a mitigation plan. It is a very complex to put in place, but we adapted it to the SH context. We will partner with the High Conservation Value Resource Network and have a **pilot project** in Mozambique.

➤ **Child Labour policy**

We need to communicate on the written code of conduct and child labour policy to workers. The core components of the Child labour elimination plan are included.

➤ **Transaction records**

Workers must maintain receipts of sales of BC, including the buyer name and volume.

## QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

*The cost of soil sampling is a concern, either you do it fully, or not at all. Regarding the Water Stewardship Plan: what will be the guidance on soil erosion? Also, the child labour policy really needs to be discussed in other part of the world, as it really is a challenge.*

- We will have soil testing kits at PU level. A feasibility study was conducted and it should not cost more than 2000 USD per PU. Regarding water, soil erosion is a key element of water and biodiversity. This will be required only for MF and LF (not SH). Finally, child labour is part of the continuous improvement plan.

*Regarding the Biodiversity Management Plan, will it mandatory for all farms?*

- It will have to be done per farm, but the PU has to coordinate the participatory mapping of the farms' resources. It doesn't have to be an ecological assessment. What we need is a rough sketch of the land degradation. In the SH context, we can look at it in a village-size perspective, as the lands belong to the community. When it comes to biodiversity, the whole community should be involved.

*The definition of a degraded area can be very strict, do we have a clear one?*

- On every aspects of the standard, we rely on international regulations and definitions. However, producers should be strongly involved. It's the strength of these two water and biodiversity plans. All stakeholders on the field are invited to take part in the discussion and bring their own input. Definitions will be in the guidance part of the standard.

*Regarding soil testing, there are 50 000 farmers in Mozambique and we do not have the money to provide kits to all of them. Moreover, in the north there are no operators involved in soil testing.*

- In some places, producers will be able to do proper soil testing. But when it will be difficult for them to do so, BCI will try to find cost-effective solutions. A least it is a start. It's at the Learning Group level, not at the farmer level, that this will be discussed. What we are talking about here are very basic soil testing kits, it is not precision farming, which explains why it isn't so expensive (there are no lab involved). Soil testing can both be very expensive and very cheap. BCI is working on finding adequate solutions for all partners.

## WORLD CAFÉ: DISCUSSING THE BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PLAN AND THE WATER STEWARDSHIP PLAN

### ➤ Key points discussed on the Biodiversity Management Plan

- The Biodiversity Management Plan will trigger thinking in how we look at the landscape as a whole.
- Both bottom-up and top-down approaches should be used together, so we include farmers' traditional knowledge along with the IP's technical knowledge.
- There should be a multi-stakeholders approach, effectively involving local governments, schools... In this sense, both individual and collective actions should be mapped to have a consensus on which role each actor will have. Each actors' layers of involvement should also be determined. This will also allow to know what exactly can be done depending on the specificities of each area. Older generations of cotton farmers should be involved in these discussions, so they can help out in identifying key areas and share their knowledge.
- Identify community owned, farmers owned and government owned areas.
- 2018 should be a year of mapping. Participatory mapping will allow villagers and other stakeholders to together identify specific areas (i.e.: high levels of biodiversity, areas that belong to farmers, communities or governments, areas in which governments are already doing similar programmes, etc).

- Trainings should be delivered at the farmer, PU and IP levels. These trainings should identify different areas and challenges for each.
- The diversification of cotton species should be considered.
- There are strong interlinkages between water and biodiversity which will have to be considered in the future.

➤ **Key points discussed on the Water Stewardship Plan**

- The nature of different water sources should be identified and mapped: which ones are allocated to growers and thus less under their control and which ones are fully under their control. Moreover, there should be a differentiation between rainfed, groundwater and irrigation cotton crops – all these should be mapped.
- Collective action: established collaborations, existing and new ones. Differentiate during rotational crops, other crops, industries... Collective action plan: increasing information between governments and stakeholders. Work together on water management and existing processes.
- Farmers do not have access to information related to water availability. In this regard, information needs to be disseminated among farmers. In Tajikistan, Pakistan and India, there are existing water committee working on water distribution.
- In many cases, governments do not provide information on water availability or needs.
- In rainfed areas: actors should pay particular attention to soil moisture.
- At the stakeholders level, we should identify the ones responsible for decision making.
- The needs and timelines of trainings: should be determined.
- In China there is a need for a strong collaboration with the government, as most farmers do not understand water policies and approaches. Regarding collective actions, IPs are already resorting to it regarding water use, they receive trainings on water resources shortages.

This feedback will help to implement these two plans and comments will be taken into consideration at the IP level. Training modules for all relevant actors will be developed on the needs that have been defined.

## Gathering Voices & Experiences from the Field

### EVA BENAVIDEZ CLAYTON – BCI COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

It is our job and duty as an organisation to share farmers' stories to build momentum and continue to act around the world to have a better impact. IPs, along with the BCI country staff, see these stories and see the positive benefits for farmers growing Better Cotton.

Storytelling is a fundamental strategic way to connect us to BCI farmers. It allows to influence behaviour and change opinions so that we can further encourage sustainable practices. BCI

collects tons of stories every day. Storytelling complements the data we collect from the fields to make a very powerful statement. It allows us to show results in a different way by focusing on specific examples from a single farmer on specific topics: water use, pesticide use... It brings the data alive.

In the beginning of 2018, the BCI communications team will be launching a storytelling pocket guide. It will consist in a simple and visual practical guide that IPs will be able to use when interacting with Field Facilitators, BCI farmers and farmers' communities. It will provide tips, ideas and examples of collecting farm-level content applicable for storytelling.

### Tools & Tips

- Collective quotations: use a quote and an image: asking a few questions to farmers
- Photos: think about the frame and background, subject should look relaxed and happy
- Videos: "*I grow better cotton*", keep the image horizontal, etc

A few interesting points were raised:

- It would be interesting to have an internal sharing of field stories, and know where does each person grow better cotton;
- Storytelling can also be on difficulties and issues, this would offer more insight on farmers' lives and challenges;
- Idea to upload stories in documentaries, as some IPs are already using this method.

### Contacts

- Email stories to [comms@bettercotton.org](mailto:comms@bettercotton.org) or to the BCI Country Staff
- Any idea or questions? Send them to [eva.benavidez-clayton@bettercotton.org](mailto:eva.benavidez-clayton@bettercotton.org)

## Field Level Performance

### ROMAIN DEVEZE – BCI PROGRAMME MANAGER

BCI's role is to build IP's capacity. The responsibility to deliver programmes that will bring real change for farmers is up to the implementing partners. Did you perform well this year? This is a challenging question!

Last year we tried to define what performance means for BCI and we came up to the conclusion that performance is the continuous improvement of operations and practices over time. It encompasses the imperative of demonstrating results, being innovative, leading others and working efficiently. Performance is all about continuous performance, not compliance. Unless we can demonstrate CI, we cannot claim good performance.

Field performance is viewed at two levels:

- IPs performance
- Producer-level performance

BCI acknowledge that it has not met the promises made during the Hong Kong IP Meeting regarding support for CIP:

- Completed: Roll out of improved partnership agreements
- Review of the GIF project application and assessment sheet
- Develop a learning and development strategy

BCI identified 3 building blocks in which performance needs to be better expressed:

1. Partnership management: assessing, monitoring, guiding/ leading
2. Funding: making the right decision, rewarding, scaling up
3. Capacity building : learning, training, sharing and supporting

In order to deliver against those priorities BCI developed a cross functional. Due to a lack of resources, BCI has unfortunately not been in the capacity to deliver all as desired.

Partnership management	Funding framework	Farmer capacity building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop IP performance monitoring process and PA Mgt tool kit</li> <li>• Improve and roll-out partnership agreements</li> <li>• Define incentives for continuous improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve GIF project application and assessment sheet</li> <li>• Reward of high performers (project scope, multi-year funding, Innovation...)</li> <li>• Performance audits for higher risk IPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a learning and development strategy</li> <li>• Develop high quality and appropriate training materials</li> <li>• Building capacity of IP on Continuous Improvement</li> </ul>

The good news is that BCI is carrying on in 2018 with the performance priority and will allocate more staff time. The performance diagnostic and the embedding of new indicators within country teams will be brought forward.

BCI 2018 AOP Priority: Strengthen producer performance and foster CI through:

- Diagnostic
- Performance Strategy Development
- Embedding
- Training, tool development
- Partnership performance toolbox
- Innovation framework



## Learning and Development Strategy: Towards a virtuous cycle of continuous learning and improvement

**GRAHAM BRUFORD – LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

**Objectives are:**

1. To outline the key components of the draft Learning & Development Strategy  
Feedback and inputs from IPs are welcome  
Objectives of the strategy:
  - To ensure Continuous Improvement in farming practices on the ground
  - To ensure Continuous Improvement of the BCSS and in the BCSS requirements. This will be taken on by the Global Assurance team who will review 2PCC implementation; shadow verification audits and gather feedback on BCSS implementation.  
In parallel, 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Verifiers will work on 3PV implementation and give feedback.
2. To prioritise the development of key learning tools in 2018; we are not lacking in good training materials, but we need to organise them and ensure they work as effectively as they can.

### 2018 Plans

- Interactive performance mechanisms for producers (results feedback loop), which includes the Result Indicator Dashboards, the Self-Assessment Dashboards and the RI Mobile data collection application
- Develop a BCI Training Academy to include:
  - Qualification Management System (QMS) for 3PVerifiers and relevant IP staff
  - Training modules, face to face and online: will first develop face-to-face trainings, then take learnings from these sessions to develop online content
  - Topics will include: Assurance and auditing process (for IPs and 3PV); alternatives to problematic pesticides; Integrated Pest Management; PPE; Water Stewardship; Biodiversity Management; Internal Management System; Gender equality and Results Indicator data quality.

### Field-based learning and knowledge exchange

Role of the BCI Supply Team: IP trainings, IP monitoring, develop IP manuals, Field Facilitator project and support the creation /re-settlement of National Stakeholder Councils.

Knowledge exchange will consist on:

- Making the National Guidance Material accessible through an online resource centre
- Building and improving regional and online discussion forums
- Continuing to capitalise on the IP Symposium
- Organise Best Practices competitions



#### Field Facilitator Capacity Building – GIF Project

- Motivation: Significant variation in knowledge and capabilities of the FFs
- Focus on defining desirable qualifications, competencies and skills, through the assessment tool to identify specific skill gaps of FF and the development of training material resource to address these needs
- We will first start with an Indian focus – availability in regional languages, BCI is looking for IPs to pilot the projects
- Partnering with training provider organisation – suggestions welcomed
- These plans link to Criterion 7.2

IPs are interested for more 1 on 1 feedback on training materials, and a better understanding of more information.

### QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

*Will the 3PVerifiers be trained at country level? Would it be possible to create training for IPs on 2PCC requirements?*

- BCI will gather representatives from each country in a to be determined location for a global training. If 2PC training is needed, IPs should let BCI know so.

*Who will be developing the trainings to ensure that they work in different countries?*

- Graham Bruford will coordinate and gather materials. External consultants will be used to ensure that trainings are relevant. IPs will also be consulted.

*What are the potential costs over gathering NGM?*

- There already is a clause in the IP Agreement.

*Is BCI planning on developing any materials for farmers?*

- BCI is working on the scope for the development of templates that could be used to develop more effective materials for PU Managers, FFs, and farmers.

*Is there any incentive mechanism to encourage bottom-up adoption of this strategy? This strategy appears to be a top-down approach.*

- The BCI model as it stands is a top-down approach, but it is investigating what other levels it can support.

*Would it be possible to incorporate cross-learning from farmers and use of technology?*

- Farmer-to-farmer training is encouraged (could BCI develop guidelines on how to establish this type of training?).

## BREAK-OUT SESSION

→ *What learning tools could BCI provide to support IPs?*

- Managing for the expectations of the attitude of the auditor – some are more stringent than others; underscores needed for 3PV calibration
- Training for Facilitators that uses local knowledge and adapts information to the local context
- Templates to develop training materials that meet BCI expectations
- Knowledge Network and national level and state level platforms for IPs to share materials and experiences (BKN model)
- Method to capture expertise of each IP and disseminate this information to field level
- National Guidance Material available through shared platform
- More regular contact with IP staff, more field visits
- How to engage women farmer and bring them into BCI programmes
- Trainings on how to map sustainability issues
- Pictorial training materials
- Trainings on social media
- Validation of materials that are adapted locally; use external partners to validate, especially when on specific topics such as pesticide use

→ *Which good examples of learning tools can IPs share?*

- Video training for farmers
- Folk media and other media to reach farmers: music, plays, dance, radio & art
- Local knowledge sharing
- Video training materials have already been created by some IPs, could be translated e.g. Australia
- Decent Work training material following approval by FLA – IPUD

## Continuous Improvement Planning: New Development and Consultation

### ROMAIN DEVEZE – BCI PROGRAMME MANAGER

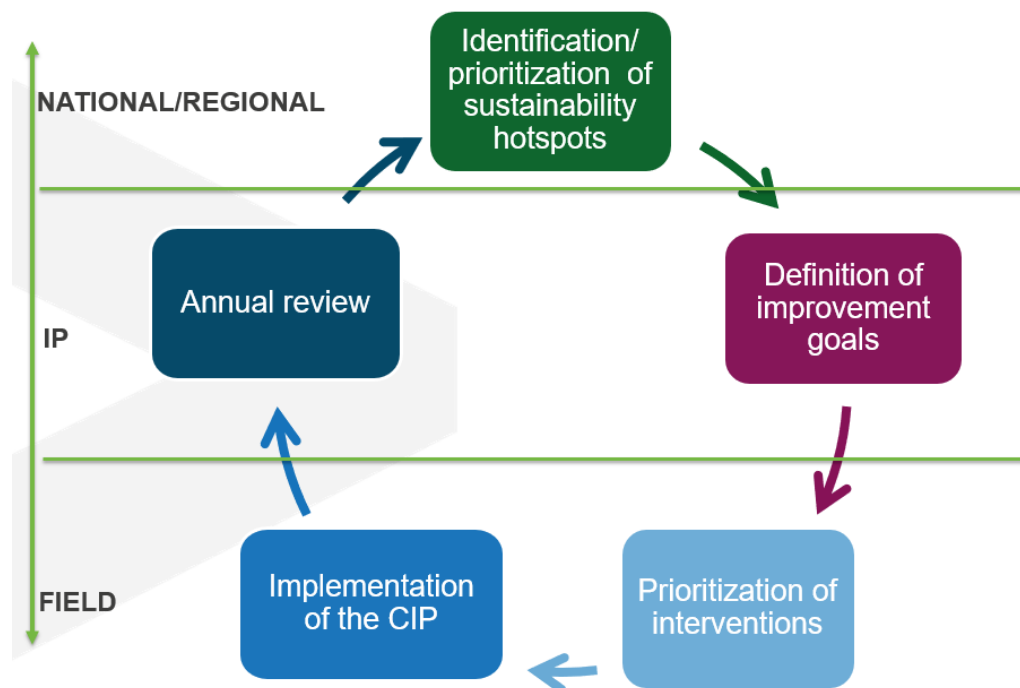
BCI's intent is to design a process that helps IPs to prioritise, plan and monitor their performance and demonstrate improvements.

It is more than a tool but a process, to:

- Prioritise and plan: through the collaborative definition of long term improvement targets and a seasonal work plan, corrective actions and specific interventions on improvements indicators (training, partnership, innovative production and management practices...)

- Better manage the farm or the PU through an operational tool central to his IMS that helps the IP keeping track of the work being developed by its field facilitators and farmers or workers on priority activities
- Monitor where the IP stands against the level of practice prescribed both on indicators and global priorities that will help it increasing performance and its scoring on improvements indicators over time
- Demonstrate improvement of performance over time in relation to the Better Cotton Production Principles and Criteria.

### BCI CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS



1. Define missions and roles of your group in relation to others
2. Select improvement goals: Goals state what you will do to carry out the mission. Because you are searching for improvements, goals should aim for a higher level of accomplishment ("national good") than previously.
3. Set objectives: Objectives are the details about expected accomplishments. What type of results do you want, and in what quantity?
4. Select action strategies. Strategies are the operational means to achieve the improvement goals. Strategies are specific actions
5. Negotiate collaboration on major issues. To carry out your strategies, you need cooperation from other organizations
6. Implement the strategies: interventions, resource, empowerment/reward
7. Evaluate results, make adjustments, and repeat the process?

### BCI CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS



### Roles & Responsibilities

The self-assessment scoring system currently classifies Producers based on BCI defined performance bands. The self-assessment should enable producers to understand how they are progressing on their CIP targets (ideally providing a % achievement measure).

With revised approach to scoring, license duration is no longer solely based on status against all criteria, but also based on CIP progress.

BCI establishes a threshold for non-progress on CIP targets (based on number of years in BCSS), at which point license is cancelled.

### Way forward

- Feasibility of establishing national/ regional stakeholder group with a technical mandate
- Monitoring process and integration into the Assurance programme
- Guidance /template development to IPs

### Result survey

The National Stakeholder Council:

- Has been abandoned by most countries: cost, time, relevance
- Is necessary for various criteria (natural substance registry, water resource identification, biodiversity mapping)
- Is part of the governance review (TBD)
- Will be become essential on learning and sharing

I. Identify National / Regional Priorities	II. Define CIP Content	III. Implement CIP	IV. Monitoring
<b>BCI</b> -Coordinate Regional meetings -Provide comparative analysis and feedback on SA perf	Provide guidance and templates for the CIP development Ensure corrective actions and non-conformities are well captures	Develop a resource library of good practices, reg. expertise hub Run BCI Academy + training modules	-IP monitoring and GIF project application assessment -Perf validation check
<b>IP</b> Facilitate National / Regional priorities definition in line with RIs, CAPs, SA	-Select priorities at IP level based on National / Regional priorities and SA and ext. assessments -Establish links to BCI criteria/ indicators. -Define: goals for each priority, timeline, provide targets to integrate into the SA	-Mobilise resources for implementation (BCI Academy, consultation-expertise hu, knowledge partnership, etc.	IP-2PCC is re-oriented as to focus on CIP implementation rather than compliance assessment
<b>PU</b> -New Producers complete diagnostic SA survey at start of BCSS participation. -Annual internal / self-assessment for all	-Define the specific practices to practices to be implemented to achieve goals. -While CIP priorities / targets are common at IP level, practices may differ at PU Level	-Ensure practices defined in CIP are built into training plans and internal monitoring systems -Utilize resources mobilized by IP to train on practices defined	Mostly during SA

## BREAK-OUT SESSION

- You are part of a stakeholder group and need to provide technical guidance on the sustainability hotspots and ensure that progress is made on key priorities within the cotton growing region.

	Scope of activity	Group composition	Organisational set up/format	Funding Model
<b>Pakistan</b>	Technical support, advocacy at policy level, explore funding mechanisms at local level, expansion, identify hotspots  Main topics: Agriculture, Decent Work, Environment, Climate Change & Financial	Mid-level management/technical person from Ministry; Public Sector Agricultural, Labour & Social Departments; Academia, NGOs/Civil Society; INGOs; Farmer representatives; Business Forum  BCI and IPs sit together and propose the nomination for members	Technical working groups led by a member of the stakeholder group  Meeting twice a year + Follow up Pre and Post meetings  Chairs: Two chairs proposed: Chairman & General Secretary, selected for a rotation period of 2 years	First two year, sponsored partially by BCI and Projects  Then, the Council will develop a mechanism for regular funding source to run meeting expenses

<b>Senegal, Mozambique, Madagascar, South Africa</b>	Technical & Political	Governments (Ministry of Agriculture) Research Institutes, Ginners, Farmer Associations, ILO and IPs	BCI-Led Yearly meeting for evaluation and governance	BCI GIF + local fundraising
<b>India</b>	Technical Support and management to IPs; leveraging key strengths of members; agronomic support; support on social aspect; capacity building of PU staff	IP representatives; agronomic actors (CICRM, KVK, AGRL, UNNS); management actors (IRMA per region); CSOs; BCI	Regional & National groups  Quarterly meetings	IP Coordination budget + GIF Seed fund
<b>China</b>	Policy update; technical support; sharing best practices	Advisory Committee; Think-Tanks of Governments; associations, Research Institute, local Governments, IPs, ginners, textile mills, retailers and brands, 3PVs, NGOs	Meeting on a regular basis at national level Sub-committee at the regional level	Financial sponsorship from various stakeholders
<b>Turkey, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Israel, Australia, USA</b>	<p>This structure should gain the trust of farmers; have a strong leadership; bring and manage collaboration; direct existing structures (Gov Extension + Research institutes) into sustainable hotspots</p> <p>It should be the structure to which farmers look up when they have a problem</p>	Farmers, governments, industries & civil society	Building on existing working structure (i.e.: National Cotton Board Israel)	