

# Member Tool Kit

*Retailers and Brands*

**2018**

*Your guide to managing the Better Cotton Programme*

| **Join** | **Implement** | **Communicate** |



## Introduction



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## Glossary of BCI Terms

BCI:	Better Cotton Initiative
BCP:	Better Cotton Platform (Formally known as Better Cotton Tracer)
BCCU:	Better Cotton Claim Unit
BMZ:	Bundesministerium Für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit (German Federal Ministry for Economic Development Cooperation)
CoC:	Chain of Custody
DFAT:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia
GIF:	Better Cotton Growth and Innovation Fund
IDH:	The Sustainable Trade Initiative
RB:	Retailer and Brand
SM:	Supplier and Manufacturer
ODF:	Output Declaration Form
OPM:	On-Product Mark
VBF:	Volume Based Fee

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction to BCI

The Better Cotton Initiative exists to make global cotton production better for the people who produce it, better for the environment it grows in and better for the sector's future. BCI aims to transform cotton production worldwide by developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity.

To achieve this mission, BCI owns and stewards the [Better Cotton Standard System](#) – the system which encompasses a diverse range of activities and stakeholders from production to the cotton supply chain. The programme is aimed at achieving measurable change and continuing improvements for the environment, farming communities and the economies of cotton-producing areas.

The four specific aims of BCI are:

- To reduce the environmental impact of cotton production;
- To improve livelihoods and economic development in cotton producing areas;
- To improve commitment to and flow of Better Cotton throughout the supply chain; and
- To ensure the credibility and organisational sustainability of the Better Cotton Initiative.

## 1.2 How BCI Retailer and Brand (RB) Members Are Creating Change

BCI Members believe that a systemic approach to change in cotton production is required. However, the approach must be compatible with business, being both pragmatic and cost effective.

The Better Cotton Standard System was created by multi-stakeholders and is supported by the Better Cotton Growth and Innovation Fund (GIF).

BCI RBs contribute to the Better Cotton GIF through volume based fees (VBF) generated by verified sourcing of cotton containing products “as Better Cotton.” Public and private partners of the Better Cotton GIF, match-fund the VBF of BCI RBs to generate the total funds available for field level training and capacity building including annual farmer education programmes for production of Better Cotton.

## 1.3 The Business Case for Retailers and Brands

The business case for retailers and brands is as follows:

- BCI is a credible, multi-stakeholder approach to transform the market and promote more sustainable cotton production. It collects and analyses farm level results and does not bring unacceptable cost to commercial businesses.
- BCI provides a consistent mechanism for participation of RBs through the Better Cotton Chain of Custody and allows them to communicate their participation to stakeholders including customers and consumers.
- BCI RBs have access to an abundant supply of Better Cotton – 23 countries in 2016. BCI's online platform, the Better Cotton Platform, allows RBs to source cotton containing products/orders as Better Cotton by using Mass Balance administration, and have those volumes verified by the Better Cotton Platform.

- There is minimal supply chain disruption, rather suppliers are invited to join the Better Cotton Chain of Custody implementation in a way that does not add unnecessary complexity.
- BCI supports its members to adopt its responsible sourcing programme and provides training support in key sourcing countries.
- Retailers and brands join a mature system of sourcing, with more than 2500 commercial businesses using the Better Cotton Platform, and many other businesses participating using paper transaction documents.
- BCI members have representation on the BCI Council, its governing body, and can influence the future direction of BCI as a group.
- BCI collects and analyses farm level results that, thus far, have demonstrated strong positive environmental, social and economic benefits for BCI Farmers and their communities, which demonstrates that members are investing in a credible and worthwhile programme.

## 1.4 The Toolkit

This Toolkit is targeted to cross-functional teams in corporate offices of BCI RBs, to help them adopt the Better Cotton responsible sourcing programme after joining BCI. The process and timeline outlined here is based on emerging best practice from the 83 Retailer and Brand Members of BCI in 2017. Seventy-two (72) of these members sourced 735,000 metric tons as Better Cotton the same year, an average of about 10,200 metric tons per member.

### Who are these teams?

The functions that create successful implementation are staff managing CSR, Forecasting and Planning, Sourcing, Quality, Supply Chain, Production, Merchandising, Communications, PR, Marketing, and Finance. Good coordination between corporate and field staff is essential for successful implementation. BCI strongly recommends assigning this task to a central coordinator, who would also be the liaison with the Better Cotton Initiative Membership Team.

The core content of the toolkit is a 'Roadmap and Timeline' for an RB Member in its first year. The timelines are colour coded and capture the following:

- Administrative timeline across a year of BCI membership;
- Programme implementation timeline;
- Recommended communications timeline;
- Calendar of BCI global events and trainings; and
- BCI resources to support this process.

Programme implementation is company-specific and may vary from the process and times given here, but the overall implementation roadmap should contain the activities outlined in the 'Roadmap and Timelines.'

The supporting tool for this document is a spreadsheet. The tabs in the spreadsheet are the implementation 'Roadmap and Timeline'; 'BCI Resources' available to members; and 'Case Studies', which are examples of member programmes.



## 2. Toolkit Instructions

### 2.1 BCI Retailer & Brand (RB) Member Toolkit

This Toolkit is intended to provide visibility of all activities that promote proper planning of the essential components of your BCI Membership, and the implementation of the Better Cotton Chain of Custody. Timelines and specific engagements are not contractual, but rather, are recommendations based on our experience with existing members.

### 2.2 Instructions:

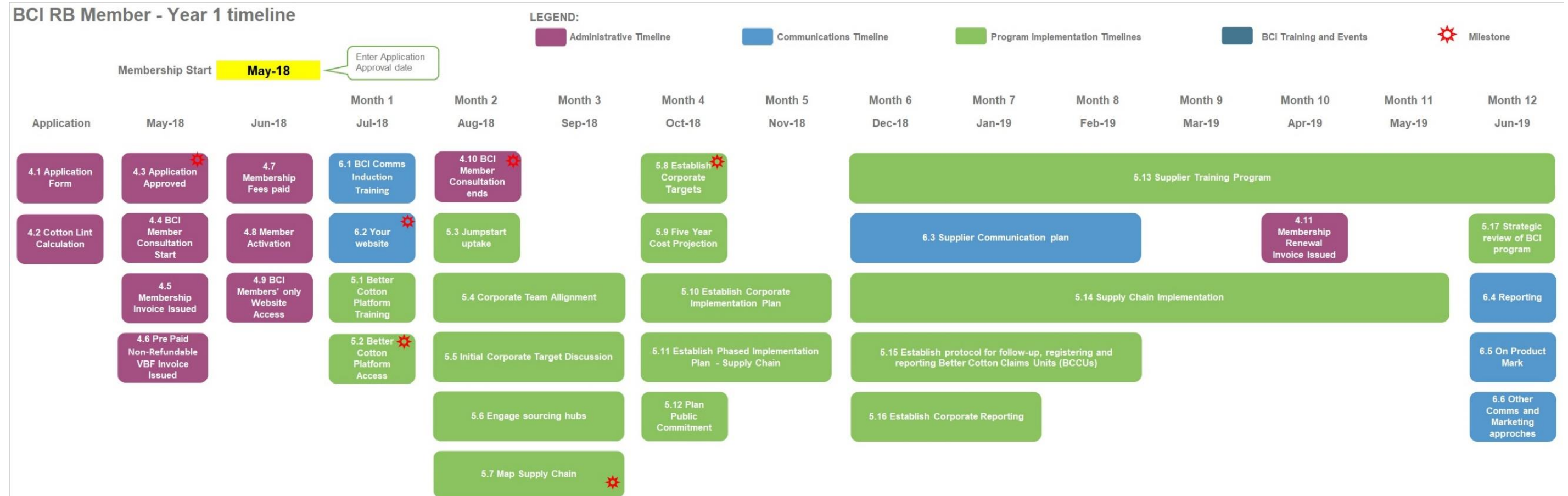
- This RB Toolkit pdf (this document) is for printing.
- Links contained in this document are active/clickable when online. They will open relevant documents and links on the Better Cotton Initiative website.
- Each rectangular box in the “Roadmap and Timeline” page corresponds to a detailed description in subsequent pages.
  - Note that the timelines within this toolkit are not interactive. For the interactive timeline, follow the instructions below.

### 2.3 Instructions for Using the “Interactive Timeline”

- The Interactive Timeline can be accessed by clicking on the “Interactive Toolkit” link on the “Roadmap and Timelines” page of this document.
- Download the Interactive Toolkit and save it to your computer.
- Once the Interactive Toolkit is open, enter your membership start date into the relevant cell in the “Roadmap and Timelines” tab.
- The timeline will adjust to your start date and allows you to see what a recommended implementation timeline looks like for a new BCI RB Member based on our experience and observations.
- Use this roadmap to create a company-specific project plan to understand timings and activities over the BCI annual operating cycle.
- Click on each of the boxes to find a description of tasks related to that activity.

### 3. BCI Roadmap and Timelines

Interactive Timeline can be accessed via the link: [Interactive Timeline](#). Download the toolkit and save it on your computer.



#### BCI Annual 2018 timelines





## 4. Administration

All sections below outline the necessary documentation and related activities, with timelines, that you should be aware of to process your BCI Membership.

### 4.1 Application Form

*Time line: Application*

- Complete and have the BCI Membership Application Form\*, including the Code of Practice, signed by an authorised signatory for your company.
- Ensure all supporting documents listed in the application are prepared for submission e.g. your company registration documents; your company logo graphic; and your business' cotton lint calculation.
- Submit the application to [membership@bettercotton.org](mailto:membership@bettercotton.org).

### 4.2 Cotton Lint Calculation

*Time line: Application*

- An essential step to engage in more sustainable cotton is to know how much cotton lint your company required for its previous fiscal year's performance. BCI fees are determined by this cotton lint figure or cotton footprint. The cotton footprint refers to total cotton lint that was "consumed" by all spinners and vertical mills in a RB's supply chain in order for the RB to end up with all of the finished products they bought from their garment manufacturers. All types of cotton (e.g. Fair Trade, certified organic) you use are included. This calculation also helps you take your first steps to understanding your dependence on cotton and initiate discussions about responsible sourcing of the raw material.
- You may assess your cotton footprint by:
  - Using your own calculations with your company supply chain data if available (very rarely this is the case);
  - Using the BCI Cotton Calculator ([Cotton Calculator](#)); or
  - Using a verified third-party cotton lint calculation, which BCI recommends, like those offered by Made-By Inc.

In all cases, you are fully responsible for any claims related to this calculation. BCI uses your cotton footprint to determine your membership and volume based fees.

- Submit to [membership@bettercotton.org](mailto:membership@bettercotton.org).

### 4.3 Application Approved

*Time line: Approval Process*

- Application forms are submitted to BCI Leadership for approval. This can take up from one to three weeks.
- You are informed immediately on approval of your application.

### 4.4 BCI Member Consultation Starts

*Time line: Approval Process*

- According to the BCI Statutes, members of BCI have the possibility to approve new members joining BCI. This is carried out in the form of a three-month Member Consultation starting when a member is approved.
- BCI posts your membership intent into the Membership Area of the BCI website for the Member Consultation. BCI Members have the opportunity to raise any objections to your BCI membership application.
- While under Member Consultation, applicants having paid membership dues and therefore activated, have equal access to BCI resources and benefits as existing members.

### 4.5 Membership Invoice Issued

*Time line: Approval Process*

- A membership fee invoice is raised by BCI Finance when you are approved, payable within 60 days. Membership services will be accessible upon full payment of the invoice.
- It is important to note that membership fees are used to cover the operating budget of the BCI Secretariat.

### 4.6 Pre-Paid Non-Refundable VBF Invoice Issued

*Time line: Approval Process*

- A farmer support fee is also invoiced when your membership is approved, payable within 60 days.
- This fee is deductible from annual volume-based fees (VBF) generated by 31 December of the current year.
- It is important to note that volume-based fees are fully used to cover costs related to the production of Better Cotton, mainly for the farmer training programme. It is invested into the Better Cotton GIF, where it attracts match-funding from public and private donors. In 2018, these match funders were IDH (The Netherlands), BMZ (Germany) and DFAT (Australia).

### 4.7 Membership Fees Paid

*Time line: Approval Process*

- Status change from Application Approved to Member Under Consultation, no action required from the member.
- Member should not keep BCI Programme implementation on hold during this period but should begin the process.

### 4.8 Member Activation

*Time line: Approval Process*

- Member activation gives access to member services, and specifically, access to the Members Only areas of the BCI website.
- You are also able to access the RB Caucus Forum on Yammer where RB Members can interact amongst each other and with their BCI Council Representatives.
- You will receive the Monthly Member Update and Quarterly Bulletin, regular e-communications for members.
- You can request a Communications Induction Training and access regional staff of BCI including the Supplier Training Programme.
- You can also access your Better Cotton Platform account on successful completion of the Better Cotton Platform training.
- Importantly, you can use the BCI Claims Framework to inform all your stakeholders that you are a member of BCI.

### 4.9 BCI Members Only Website Access

*Time line: Approval Process*

The members' area of the BCI website contains information that only members can access. These include field stories, pictures, logo access, key facts and data, BCI policies, and more. Please consult the BCI Communications team for review before you publish any BCI information, or claims related to BCI.

## 4. Administration *(continued.)*

### 4.10 BCI Member Consultation Ends

*Time line: Month 3*

- If three months of Member Consultation ends with no feedback, the applicant is confirmed as a BCI Member. There are no additional application steps or access to additional member resource given during Member Activation. All member resources and benefits are accessible once the member has paid the first invoice, after the application is approved.
- During Membership Consultation, BCI reserves the right to exclude a member following feedback gathered through the consultation. Any monies paid will be refunded in the case of exclusion.
- PLEASE NOTE: Any member exclusion after Member Consultation, can only take place through a formal BCI Council decision, and in this case, no monies are refunded by BCI.

### 4.11 Membership Renewal Invoice

*Time line: Month 10*

- The membership renewal invoice will be issued by BCI Finance two months prior to the membership renewal date. The invoice is payable within 60 days.
- Membership services will be suspended if the invoice is not paid in full.

### 4.12 VBF Invoice + Pre-Paid VBF Invoice

*Time line: Quarter 1, 2018*

- Volume based fee invoices are calculated based on the total Better Cotton Claim Units (BCCUs) registered in the member's Better Cotton Platform Account (BCP). VBF invoices are sent end-January, and February. Pre-paid VBF or Farmer Contributions are deducted. If these latter are higher than VBF, please note NO REFUND IS POSSIBLE. Your pre-payments are invested during the year you pay them to cover field activities.
- The pre-paid volume based fee invoice for the coming year will also be invoiced in February and March of the current year. This is equal to the previous year's volume based fee for existing members.

### 4.13 Submit Self-Assessment

*Time line: September 2018*

- BCI Members are requested to take a self-assessment in autumn each year.
- The self-assessment is a survey to determine if members align with the BCI Code of Practice. The link to the self-assessment survey is emailed by the BCI Membership Team in September of each year.  
**The survey must be completed and submitted within 4 weeks.**

### 4.14 Deadline for Declaring Annual BCCUs

*Time line: December 2018*

- Total annual BCCUs must be declared and acknowledged in the BCP by RB Members by 31 December each year.
- It is your (RB Member's) responsibility to inform your suppliers and follow up reporting. BCI can only verify what you have registered in your BCP account, and your communications claims must match registered BCCUs.

### 4.15 Submit Five Year Forecast

*Time line: December 2018*

- Internally review and complete your five year cost projection for scaling up your BCI Programme. Be sure to consult with all relevant colleagues for alignment.
- Update and submit a new copy with every budget cycle, strategic review or performance management review.
- The cost projection enables BCI to have good data for forecasting supply-related work.
- The 5-Year Cost Projection Tool can be accessed via the following link: [5-Year Cost Projection Tool](#)



## 5. Programme Implementation

Joining BCI, for a retailer and brand, is foremost a commitment to implement a responsible sourcing programme for its cotton-containing products. It requires members to actively implement the Better Cotton Chain of Custody Guidelines by engaging with their supply chains. The high-level milestones and related activities described here are based on our observations of programme implementation with current members and will help you plan and guide internal engagement within your company and supply chain.

### 5.1 Better Cotton Platform Training

*Time line: Month 1*

- Review the Better Cotton [Chain of Custody Guidelines](#) to understand the requirements to source cotton products “as Better Cotton.”
- Understand what the Chain of Custody requires you to hold as documentary support for five years and ensure that relevant procedures are put in place within your company.
- The Better Cotton Platform (BCP), is an online system owned by BCI, and is used by ginners, traders, spinners, other textile value chain actors, and by retailers and brands. It is used to trace seed Better Cotton from farms to gins and for documentation and reporting purposes between suppliers and manufacturers after the gin level in the supply chain. The Better Cotton Platform allows BCI to verify the volumes of Better Cotton lint sourced by spinners and merchants in a RB’s supply chain, allowing BCI’s RB Members to make credible claims about their sourcing activities.
- The schedule of Better Cotton Platform Training webinars for RBs can be reached via the “Events” page on [Bettercotton.org](#) ([BCI Events and Training](#))
- It is recommended that the primary contact with BCI takes the training to understand how it works and determine how the Better Cotton Platform must be adopted by the business. Then, colleagues who will be involved in managing the reporting should take the training. Alternatively, many people involved in the project can take the training, then decide together who should be accessing the system for monitoring and management purposes.
- Additionally, there are web-based trainings for all supplier and manufacturers. The primary contact may also take those to fully understand what their supply chain will be doing on the system.
- Plan to do refresher trainings at least once per year for all personnel having access to the member’s Better Cotton Platform account.
- Be sure to manage accesses for staff who leave your company and inform BCI within 15 days according to the Better Cotton Chain of Custody.
- Contact the BCI Better Cotton Platform Coordinator, ([supplychain@bettercotton.org](mailto:supplychain@bettercotton.org)).

### 5.2 Better Cotton Platform Access

*Time line: Month 1*

- Once training is completed, plan who should have BCP accesses in your company, then apply for BCP access by emailing the Better Cotton Platform Coordinator ([supplychain@bettercotton.org](mailto:supplychain@bettercotton.org)).

### 5.3 Jumpstart Your Uptake

*Time line: Month 2*

New BCI Members, at this point, are usually ready to have some “quick wins” by accepting BCCUs as they source cotton-containing products/orders from their suppliers who are already BCI Members. Some suppliers who are BCI Members may be ready to allot BCCUs towards cotton-containing orders from new RB Members. BCI recommends starting with these opportunities to gain experience about how the Better Cotton Chain of Custody works and use the experience to inform the implementation plans being established by the company.

### 5.4 Corporate Team Alignment

*Time line: Months 2 and 3*

There might still be a need to consolidate or achieve cross-functional corporate alignment within a new member company to support systematic planning of the responsible sourcing programme.

- Contact the BCI Membership Team to plan meetings with your key cross-functional colleagues essential to successful implementation. BCI Membership or other staff can be a valuable resource for this type of company meeting.
- Aim to get your key functional colleagues and decision-makers on board with your Better Cotton sourcing implementation plan.
- Raise awareness and inspire your staff – your company is using “business as usual” to create transformation of a commodity together with like-minded businesses.
- Use BCI photos, artwork, farmer stories, member quotations and videos to bring visibility internally, accessible here: [BCI Resources](#).

### 5.5 Initial Corporate Target Discussions

*Time line: Months 2 and 3*

- Participation of cross-functional colleagues is key to kick off discussions on targets.
- The following key functions are the most useful to include in these discussions: Brand Merchandising, Sourcing, Supply Chain, Production, Forecasting and Planning, Fabric Procurement, Product Category Staff, Quality, CSR, Communications and Marketing.
- Supply chain mapping of your products by country against the list of suppliers engaged with BCI is the type of mapping exercise that is helpful to uncover the products that will help you meet target volumes. Your first targets may be internal until you are comfortable releasing an externally communicated target.
- Revisit your five year cost projection periodically to match targets with cost and ensure alignment with senior management.
- When your plans are robust enough to meet targets, and there is a critical mass of internal and supplier engagement, consider publishing your target commitments. It is important to share your sourcing targets with your key suppliers and partners, so they can use the information to inform their participation in BCI.

## 5. Programme Implementation *(Continued.)*

### 5.6 Engage Your Sourcing Hubs

*Time line: Months 2 and 3*

- As the discussions at corporate level occur, your colleagues from regional sourcing hubs get engaged quickly in Chain of Custody discussions as they are responsible for sourcing decisions and know suppliers.
- Make sure that they are aware of our Chain of Custody trainings and have a copy of the Better Cotton Chain of Custody Guidelines.

### 5.7 Map Supply Chain

*Time line: Months 2 and 3*

- Together with key corporate and sourcing hub colleagues, continue your supply chain mapping to start working systematically to set targets for sourcing cotton-containing products as Better Cotton.
- Map products vs countries vs suppliers in country vs BCI Members to uncover the products that will help you meet target volumes.
- You can also start systematically getting your suppliers to use the Better Cotton Platform or to become BCI members.
- Part of mapping is answering the following questions, which help create a controlled and phased implementation of Better Cotton sourcing:
  - Which products are heaviest in cotton content?
  - Where are they coming from? Which countries, which suppliers?
  - Which suppliers are verticals?
- Dialogue with key suppliers about their plans for scaling up their responsible sourcing programmes or getting engaged with BCI.
- Determine quick wins to meet targets in early years and systematically plan the scale up for following years.

### 5.8 Establish Corporate Targets

*Time line: Month 4*

- With the knowledge gained from your supply chain mapping and your five-year cost projections, you are ready to establish corporate targets for your Better Cotton Programme and create a firm plan to achieve them for at least the first two years.
- Does your company intend to engage with consumers at a product level about its Better Cotton Initiative engagement?
  - If yes, then the sourcing thresholds for use of the BCI on-product mark must be considered in setting corporate targets. Find the relevant guidelines here ([BCI Claims Framework](#)).
- Make sure your targets align with your business needs.
- Get approval for your targets from key corporate decision makers.
- Assign responsibilities for meeting the targets.
- Internal communication to key colleagues about the commitment is important for continued progress until a wide implementation plan is adopted.

### 5.9 Five Year Cost Projection

*Time line: Month 4*

- Review five-year cost projection and resubmit it to BCI based on established targets.
- Contact BCI Membership ([membership@bettercotton.org](mailto:membership@bettercotton.org)) for a copy of the projection template.

### 5.10 Establish Corporate Implementation Plan

- Outline your implementation plan so that there is a common reference point for all your cross-functional colleagues.
- This may be via an internal company website or a paper document and should contain your context, your commitment, your strategy, your targets and timelines, key functional roles and who is accountable for achieving your targets as well as when you will report on and review these targets.
- Our interactive timeline can also be added to your corporate implementation plan or form the skeleton of your plan.
- Another level of implementation detail will describe the supply chain implementation.
- Keep all your stakeholders updated on your progress.

### 5.11 Establish Phased Implementation Plan - Supply Chain

*Time line: Month 4 and 5*

- Create a phased implementation plan based on your initial sourcing discussions. This is reviewed each year to scale up existing suppliers to 100% sourcing of cotton-containing products as Better Cotton and to include new suppliers into the programme.
- As you include new suppliers and progress with implementation, use the BCI Supplier Training Programme to bring suppliers on board. This results in real supply chain engagement and helpful discussions on sourcing as Better Cotton.
- Carefully plan and phase communications from your company to key suppliers. Create a communications plan for your supply chain:
  - COMMUNICATE your commitments – it triggers suppliers' business discussions around engaging with BCI.
  - DIALOGUE with your suppliers – it allows them to buy into your vision.
  - ALLOW suppliers time to explore this new direction and how to integrate it – leads to long term success.
  - AGREE on targets that they can comfortably meet while you meet your goal – this tends to reduce risk of opportunistic pricing.
- Hold staff accountable for checking that suppliers register BCCUs on an on-going basis.
- Agree on your overall plan internally and allocate resources appropriately for successful implementation.
- Assign roles and responsibilities to different functions within your company.
- Reach out to your Membership contact to request [Face-to-Face BCI Supplier Training Programme or online supplier training webinar](#).

### 5.12 Plan Public Commitment

*Time line: Month 4*

With your Corporate Communications personnel, plan when you would like to make your programme targets public. This is important for your stakeholders to see, especially your supply chain business partners as they support your Better Cotton scale-up by making firm plans based on your commitment.

## 5. Programme Implementation (Continued.)

### 5.13 Supplier Training Programme

*Time line: Months 6,7,8,9,10,11 and 12*

- During supplier implementation, visit the [Supplier Training Programme](#) (STP) area of the BCI website to plan your supplier scale up by region.
- Respect the training schedules as BCI Staff involved are monitoring the entire supply chain implementation of the BCI Programme and so seasonally might not be available due to the cotton harvest.
- Invite all your suppliers who should be involved in the Better Cotton Chain of Custody - old and new, BCI Members or non-BCI Members - as an opportunity to learn and dialogue. Ideally, suppliers for this training are end-product manufacturers (cut-sew), fabric mills, and spinners.
- Be prepared to share your company implementation plan and progress to inspire and motivate them to work with you to achieve desired levels of sourcing.
- For the Better Cotton Platform, be clear and prescriptive on what you would like them to do. For example, which references do you need to track the progress of your Better Cotton scale up? Allotments of BCCUs must be aligned with sourcing of cotton-containing products.

### 5.14 Supply Chain Implementation

*Time line: Months 6,7,8,9,10 and 11*

- Supply chain implementation is a process that is repeated every year, with new and existing suppliers from your supply chain, which allows you to progress to higher levels of Better Cotton uptake.
- Carry out controls to ensure that all suppliers from previous production seasons are fully aware of your plans to continue sourcing cotton-containing products as Better Cotton in the current season and that it is becoming part of your sourcing as usual.
- Ensure your BCP accounts are set up logically for optimal follow-up of reporting by suppliers:
  - Plan how many logins you need for your colleagues to adequately control reporting e.g. login per sourcing country or sourcing hub or per brand.
  - All suppliers should be on the BCP.
- Calculate the expected BCCUs for a period (per season or per half year) and per supplier and ensure that they are uploaded by a clearly communicated deadline date to your BCP Account. As orders are delivered, create a reliable and auditable link between BCCUs registered to your account and real orders delivered to you.
- Ensure that before 31 December each year that the BCCUs match what you agreed with your different suppliers.

### 5.15 Your Supplier Communication Plan

*Time line: Months 6, 7 and 8*

- Establish your internal communications plan to keep suppliers aware of your targets and progress.
- Communicate your plans; some BCI Members have dedicated suppliers' portals, annual supplier meetings or conferences.
- Ensure that all product specifications packages contain factual and clear instructions regarding sourcing your cotton products as Better Cotton.

### 5.16 Establish Protocol for Follow-Up, Registering and Reporting Better Cotton Claims Units (BCCUs)

*Time line: Months 6,7 and 8*

- Document concisely the instructions for the supply chain so that there is a reference for others in the company on protocol in place to respond to the Better Cotton Chain of Custody Guidelines.
- Documentation ensures continuity in case of staff turnover.
- Documentation assures auditors that you are implementing with due diligence and that you can reliably demonstrate alignment with the BCI Chain of Custody Guidelines.

### 5.17 Establish Corporate Reporting

*Time line: Months 6 and 7*

- Corporate level, plan to report regularly on progress to your company programme sponsors and cross functional colleagues.
- Ensure that before 31 December each year, the BCCUs registered match what you agreed on with your different suppliers.
- BCI can only verify what you have on your Better Cotton Platform account and your communications claims must match registered BCCUs. Any claims related to your overall cotton footprint are entirely your company's responsibility, and BCI recommends that you establish a verification process with a suitable third party on your cotton lint footprint.

### 5.18 Strategic Review of BCI Programme

*Time line: Month 12*

- Review your programme during your business' strategic review period and adjust targets to better fit strategic direction. Consider these factors. How have you performed against expectations? What needs to change? Who needs to do it? By when?
- Review your financial planning, budgets, payments to BCI, and use these insights to adjust your five- year cost projections; when finalised, re-submit to BCI Membership.
- Also review whether the programme is providing the desired stakeholder value. Consider communications, marketing and PR activities related to your BCI engagement. Adjust or develop further if necessary. Be sure to plan time to consult with BCI Communications Staff for support and approval of BCI-related marketing communications.
- As part of your review and actions, be sure to consult with BCI Membership on any expected and unexpected changes that happened during the fiscal year – selling parts of the business, reorganisation, acquiring brands, changing membership from a single brand to a holding company with a portfolio of brands and so on.
- Communicate internally and with BCI, any relevant information such as communication campaign launches, or more aggressive supply chain scale up so that BCI can plan to support you.

The steps below will help you make credible and positive claims about Better Cotton and allows flexibility in how to communicate about your commitment.

### 6.1 BCI Communications Induction Training

*Time line: Month 1*

- Members are able to start engaging with stakeholders using the [BCI Claims Framework](#).
- A BCI Communications Overview call is offered.
- Discuss ways you can announce your membership to your stakeholders.
- Contact [membership@bettercotton.org](mailto:membership@bettercotton.org), if you would like your logo displayed on the BCI website carousel.

### 6.2 Your Website

*Time line: Month 1*

- Option to publish a 'Membership Statement' and the BCI logo on your corporate and/or brand website.
- The BCI Communications Team must sign off the publication of any further information.
- Let your supply chain know you are a BCI Member. Those who are already BCI Members can start planning for your orders. Those who are not members can learn how to work with the Better Cotton Chain of Custody or consider membership themselves.

### 6.3 Reporting

*Time line: Months 12*

- Consider including your BCI Membership and progress to date in your sustainability reporting. Sign off proposed content with BCI Communications Team.
- BCI can only verify volumes sourced as Better Cotton shown in your Better Cotton Platform account. Your communications claims must match this.
- Any claims related to overall cotton footprint are your company's responsibility.

### 6.4 On Product Mark (OPM)

*Time line: Months 12*

- After 12 months of membership, the option to use the BCI on-product mark (OPM) becomes available to members meeting the additional eligibility criteria. The OPM is a way to utilise product packaging/e-commerce or catalogue product listings as channels through which members can communicate their commitment to BCI. NOTE: Under no circumstances, via any channel, can a member suggest that Better Cotton is physically present in a product.
- Members must be sourcing at least 5% of their total cotton lint buy as Better Cotton (verified on the Better Cotton Platform) and be making all Level One Claims from the BCI Claims Framework in order to meet eligibility.
- Establish your brand(s) marketing strategy regarding use of the OPM.
- Note that due to the nature of the Chain of Custody model used by BCI (Mass Balance Administration), any majority cotton product can be used as a channel to communicate commitment, using the OPM. This strategy for use of the OPM should be established up-front.
- Contact the BCI Communications Team to review your eligibility and discuss communications plans.
- Contact the BCI Communications Team for approval of your OPM artwork.

### 6.5 Other Communications and Marketing Approaches

*Time line: Months 12*

- The BCI Claims Framework outlines multiple communications options. Claims can be made that demonstrate your commitment, demonstrate your investment in real terms, tell farmer stories and outline results to name a few options.
- Examples are available that detail ways in which BCI Members are using the Claims Framework.



## 7. Training and Events

Throughout the year we hold various events around the world to help you learn more about Better Cotton. From events that outline what it means to be a member of BCI, to specific training and networking events for existing members to learn more about sourcing cotton-containing products as Better Cotton. The most up to date listing of events will always be online at <http://bettercotton.org/get-involved/events/>.

### 7.1 BCI 2018 Global Cotton Conference – Brussels

*Time line: 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018*

BCI 2018 Global Cotton Conference will bring the entire sector together to collaborate on a more sustainable future for cotton. Join industry leaders and experts for an interactive opportunity to explore thematic at field level, in the supply chain and in consumer facing business.

Prior to the public conference, on 26 June BCI will host 'An Introduction to BCI' and a BCI Members-Only General Assembly. During the General Assembly, BCI Council election results will be revealed and BCI Members will receive updates on membership benefits, Better Cotton supply figures and global strategy.

For details and to register visit the link below:

[BCI Global Cotton Conference](#)

### 7.2 Better Cotton Chain of Custody and Better Cotton Platform Training

*Time line: Every Month*

BCI hosts Better Cotton Chain of Custody Guidelines and Better Cotton Platform Training for Retailer and Brand Members online. During this training, you will learn about the Better Cotton Chain of Custody Guidelines and how the Better Cotton Platform works. The training is run twice per month. Training dates can be found on the resources page of the BCI website: [BCI Training and Events](#).

Registration is required to participate in the trainings.

### 7.3 BCI Regional Member Meetings

*Time line: Variable*

Every year BCI hosts the BCI Regional Members Meetings in India, Pakistan, China, USA and Turkey. Join us for updates on Better Cotton globally and locally. It's a perfect opportunity for networking with fellow BCI Members across the cotton supply chain, including ginners; cotton traders; spinners; fabric and garment mills; and retailers and brands. Visit BCI events page for dates and locations of the Regional Members Meetings.

[BCI Training and Events](#)

### 7.4 Retailer and Brand Peer to Peer Workshops

*Time line: Variable*

Every year BCI runs a moderated peer-to-peer workshops in various locations across the world. These workshops offer learning opportunity with the goal to provide a platform for BCI Retailer & Brand members to discuss how to unlock barriers for sourcing Better Cotton.

Visit BCI events page for dates and locations of Peer 2 Peer Workshops.

[BCI Training and Events](#)

### 7.5 BCI Field Trips

*Time line: Variable*

Join us for a chance to visit cotton farms, ginners, and other actors at the source of cotton production. Different locations around the world will offer different agendas and registration options. In most cases, attendees will be responsible for their own travel and accommodation at a central location where the BCI Field Trip will begin. Ground transportation and other logistics will be provided by the BCI Field Trip organiser.

Visit BCI events page for dates and locations of BCI Field Trips.

[BCI Field Trips](#)

## 8. Resources

This resource page is intended as a quick BCI reference for Retailer and Brand Members to access tools related to specific steps in your Better Cotton procurement journey.

The categorisation of BCI tools is broad. These tools and resources may be applicable at various stages of your membership journey.

(Updated as of April, 2018)



### 8.1 Step 1: Learning about Better Cotton for Your Business

These tools are also effective for internal training or introductions to BCI.

- [www.BetterCotton.org](http://www.BetterCotton.org): Access the BCI website for all current information.
- [BCI Introduction Slides](#): A brief introduction to BCI.
- [BCI Online Q&As](#): Access the most common FAQs.
- [Key Facts Flyer](#) & Brochure

### 8.2 Step 2: Securing Internal Buy-In

These tools promote deeper engage with internal teams to integrate Better Cotton into your business.

- [Members' List](#): Current list of BCI Members and Better Cotton Platform Users, helpful for identifying suppliers already participating.
- [BCI Video Library](#): For a variety of short video content.
- [Membership & Funding Model](#): It's critical to understand the long-term financial implications for this responsible sourcing programme.

### 8.3 Step 3: Join BCI

Apply for membership and start to access your member benefits.

- [Membership Application & Fees Table](#)
- [Cotton Calculator](#): For an estimate of your total cotton footprint.
- [Fee Calculator](#): Estimate what your engagement will cost over the next five years.

### 8.4 Step 4: Set Targets and Map Supply Chain

Access tools to help you set targets and drive the uptake of Better Cotton through your business.

- [Regional Workshops](#): Join BCI for an upcoming event.
- [Supplier listing](#): See Resources page on our website for the list of suppliers using the Better Cotton Platform

### 8.5 Step 5: Source Better Cotton

These materials enable you to engage with suppliers, track your procurement, and successfully use BCI as a responsible sourcing programme.

- [Better Cotton Platform](#): Required to document your BCCUs.
- [Price Differential Guide](#): Handling price differentials in your supply chain in 3 steps.

- [Supplier Training Programme](#): Review the calendar for this one-day training designed to help Retailer & Brand Members jump-start a new Better Cotton sourcing programme or expand an existing one. It can also be carried out as a webinar.
- Better Cotton [Platform Training materials](#): For those needing a technical refresher. (Note that you need your BCI website member login)
- Better Cotton Chain of Custody Training on Mindflash [online learning platform](#). Training is available for your suppliers 24 hours per day, 7 days per week online on this platform
- Visit [this link](#) to see how your supply chain can participate in BCI by being a BCI Member or by purchasing an account and having access to the Better Cotton Platform

### 8.6 Step 6: Communicate about Better Cotton

Share your successful procurement of Better Cotton with internal and external stakeholders. (Note that you need your BCI website member login to access some of the resources)

- [Image Library](#)
- [Claims Framework](#)
- [Farmer Quote Library](#)
- [Promotional Artwork](#)

### 8.7 BCI Case Studies

The purpose of these case studies is to provide context and share real-world experiences with Retailer and Brand Members who are implementing or expanding their Better Cotton sourcing programme:

- [IKEA Case Study](#)
- [H&M Case Study](#) (Refer to Pages 40 and 52)
- [adidas Case Study](#)

### 8.8 Additional Support

Contact your company representative for more details about [Membership Resources](#) only accessible to members, training details or more information about the online learning platform.

Reach out to BCI for more support or specific questions:

[Membership@BetterCotton.org](mailto:Membership@BetterCotton.org). Our global team located in Switzerland, UK, USA, China, India, Pakistan and Turkey are available to support you and your supply chain partners.