

Assurance Manager

Post Announcement

Open-ended contract, full-time



Starting date: As soon as possible

Contract Type: Full-time

Salary: Starting £45,000 per annum, commensurate with skills and experience

Location: London, UK (Geneva, CH may be considered for the right candidate)

Application closing date: Midnight 15 September GMT



Description

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) — the largest cotton sustainability programme in the world — aims to reach 5 million farmers worldwide with more sustainable agricultural practices, and account for 30% of global cotton production by 2020. In less than 10 years, the Better Cotton Initiative and its Partners have supported over 2 million farmers in 23 countries in adopting more sustainable agricultural practices. Thanks to these efforts, Better Cotton accounts for around 19% of global cotton production. We are truly a joint effort, encompassing stakeholders all the way from farms to fashion brands and civil society organisations, driving the cotton sector toward sustainability. BCI aims to transform cotton production worldwide by developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity. Countries which currently implement the Better Cotton Standard System include: China, India, Pakistan, Israel, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, South Africa, Tajikistan, Turkey, USA. We also have partnerships to recognise qualified cotton from Australia, Brazil and countries within the Aid by Trade Foundation Standard System.

BCI is seeking a highly motivated and qualified professional to join the Standards & Assurance team at BCI as an Assurance Manager.

The BCI Assurance Programme is a field-level system for the regular assessment of farmers around the world participating in the Better Cotton Standard System. Oversight of farmer performance is conducted through various mechanisms, including self-assessment, second party checks, and 3rd party verification visits. As an Assurance Manager you will play a leading role in the execution of the BCI Assurance Programme globally. You will monitor the implementation of annual country-level assurance plans for the remainder of 2019 and both develop and oversee annual country assurance plans for the upcoming year. For your assigned countries, you will oversee all external assessment activities, assume responsibility for licensing processes, and ensure the accuracy and timeliness of internal data management. You will play a leading role in helping improve BCI's Assurance Programme at both the procedural and strategic level, ensuring it remains at the forefront of innovation and delivers credible outcomes at scale. The Assurance Manager reports to the Head of the Assurance Programme and works closely with the other members of the Standards and Assurance team and the Global Implementation Team across 4 continents.

The Assurance function cuts across internal team structures and you will be the matrix manager for country-specific programme staff, who are responsible for implementing the assurance programme. The position requires travel to certain countries under your remit (approximately 3 one week long haul trips) as well as short-haul travel within Europe (approximately 4 short-haul trips).

This challenging role offers excellent opportunities for personal and professional development, together with a competitive benefits package.

Responsibilities

1. Oversee the execution of the BCI Assurance Programme

Operational management of assurance team

- Matrix manage country programme staff who are responsible for the execution of country assurance plans, provide leadership and direction, help problem-solve when required and ensure plans are credibly executed in accordance with internal protocols.
- Co-manage the Global Assurance Team (all country programme staff) through the organisation and execution of remote monthly meetings designed to collect feedback from the field work, introduce new processes and templates, provide training and support, and enable cross-country learning and collaboration.
- Provide support to Implementation Managers in charge of BCI Strategic Partnerships in establishing appropriate and credible assurance protocols for partnership countries

Oversight of assurance data management

- Assume accountability for the timely collection, verification and inputting of relevant assurance data, ensuring that BCI's online database holds accurate and up-to-date information.

Oversight of licensing of farmers under the BCI programme

- Assume responsibility for Better Cotton licences issued at Producer level, including ensuring that all required documentation is signed-off and filed per due process.

Annual review and planning

- Assume responsibility for the annual review of the assurance programme delivery through the implementation of internal oversight and reporting mechanisms.
- Ensure that the annual review takes into account feedback from the country programme staff responsible for execution of the Assurance Programme.
- In collaboration with Country Managers, develop annual country level assurance programme plans for the 2020-21 season.

2. Contribute to continuous improvement of the BCI Assurance Programme

- Execute planned improvements to existing BCI assurance tools, templates, and procedures, and develop new assurance documentation as required.
- Lead designated projects to integrate and automate assurance mechanisms in BCI's online database and other technology platforms to increase the efficiency of assurance programme implementation.
- Contribute to the current strategic revision of the Better Cotton Assurance Programme, including understanding the complexities present at field-level, supporting the internal

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approval process, developing a comprehensive implementation plan and timeline, revising relevant documentation, and preparing and executing training materials.

3. Capacity Building

- Plan and deliver periodic training to the Global Assurance Team to ensure they have the skills and competencies required to execute the Assurance Program with integrity, consistency and credibility.
- Support in the design and implementation of training material for BCI Implementing Partners to understand the Assurance Programme and associated IP roles and responsibilities.
- Support the Training and Assurance Manager in the training and monitoring of independent verifiers.

Skills, Knowledge, and Experience:

Skills and Knowledge
Essential
University degree, or equivalent higher education qualification, in a relevant field
Excellent understanding of what constitutes credible and scalable assurance in the context of global commodity value chains
Ability to assess seemingly conflicting requirements and design well-balanced resolutions, meeting strict credibility and scale criteria
Demonstrated interest in sustainability and international development
Superior skills and aptitude to appraise arguments critically and logically, organise ideas in a clear and concise manner, and draw conclusions and formulate arguments in way that is effective, concise, precise and specific
Excellent analytical and problem solving skills with a proactive approach to finding and proposing solutions to challenges
Excellent managerial skills, including clear and concise communication, effective problem-solving, excellent time management, and leadership
Fluent in English
Excellent organisation and capacity to handle multiple priorities
Willingness to carry out administrative tasks
Excellent IT skills, including: Word; PowerPoint; Excel
Desirable
Academic background in rural/agricultural development and sustainability
Good understanding of knowledge management, learning and innovation
Understanding of the training-of-trainers process, monitoring & evaluation or standards systems
Competency in languages most relevant to BCI countries, such as Mandarin, Portuguese, French, Hindi, Urdu, Russian or Turkish

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Experience
Essential
At least 7 years' working experience with at least 5 in a relevant field
Experience of project management in an international context
Experience of line management
Significant experience with standards systems and assurance, auditing or certification
Experience working as part of a multi-cultural team
Desirable
Experience in a multi-stakeholder initiative or supporting multi-stakeholder dialogue and consultation
Experience working in the agricultural commodity sectors
Experience in a member organisation or not-for profit organisation
Experience managing external consultants

Working Arrangements

The position is full-time (40 hours per week) and will be based in the London, UK, office. BCI offers flexible working, with core hours being 10am – 4pm and the option to work from home at least one day per week.

Travel will be required (10-15%)

Applications:

Interested applicants with the required attributes are asked to send a detailed CV (3 pages maximum) and a motivational letter (2 pages maximum), in English, by email to: recruitment@bettercotton.org with subject: "Application Assurance Manager " by the 15 September 2019 at the latest.

We thank all applicants for their interest; however only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

BCI is currently unable to provide sponsorship for work permits, and candidates need to have a pre-existing right to work in the location where they will be based.

BCI is an equal opportunities employer, and is committed to good practice and transparency in the management of natural, human and financial resources.