



Better Cotton
*Claims
Framework*
v2.0

A pillar of the Better
Cotton Standard System

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Better Cotton Claims Framework

The Better Cotton Claims Framework enables members to make credible and positive claims about Better Cotton. It allows for flexible communications on your commitment to BCI and Better Cotton.

Many other communication resources, such as quotations, videos, images and stories from the field are available. By combining claims in the framework with these other resources, a member can articulate a compelling story that is meaningful to them and their customers.

Always refer to the Claims Framework to ensure that the context in which you want to use a claim is not in breach of your agreed conduct as a member. The Better Cotton Claims Framework forms part of the Better Cotton Standard System and is governed by the **BCI Code of Practice**, **BCI Terms of Membership** and **BCI Member Monitoring Protocol**.

KEY INFORMATION

TRAINING:

Mandatory training modules support the use of this framework. Training must be completed prior to making claims.

The BCI communications team is able to provide additional training to your teams, if required.

APPROVALS:

All consumer-facing communications and marketing materials must be approved by BCI.

No Advanced Claims or on-product marks will be reviewed by BCI before a member has started sourcing Better Cotton (with Better Cotton Claim Units visible on the Better Cotton Platform).

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligibility criteria must be met before storytelling, Advanced Claims or the on-product mark can be accessed.

MISLEADING CLAIMS:

Under no circumstances can claims be made that suggest Better Cotton is physically traceable to end products.

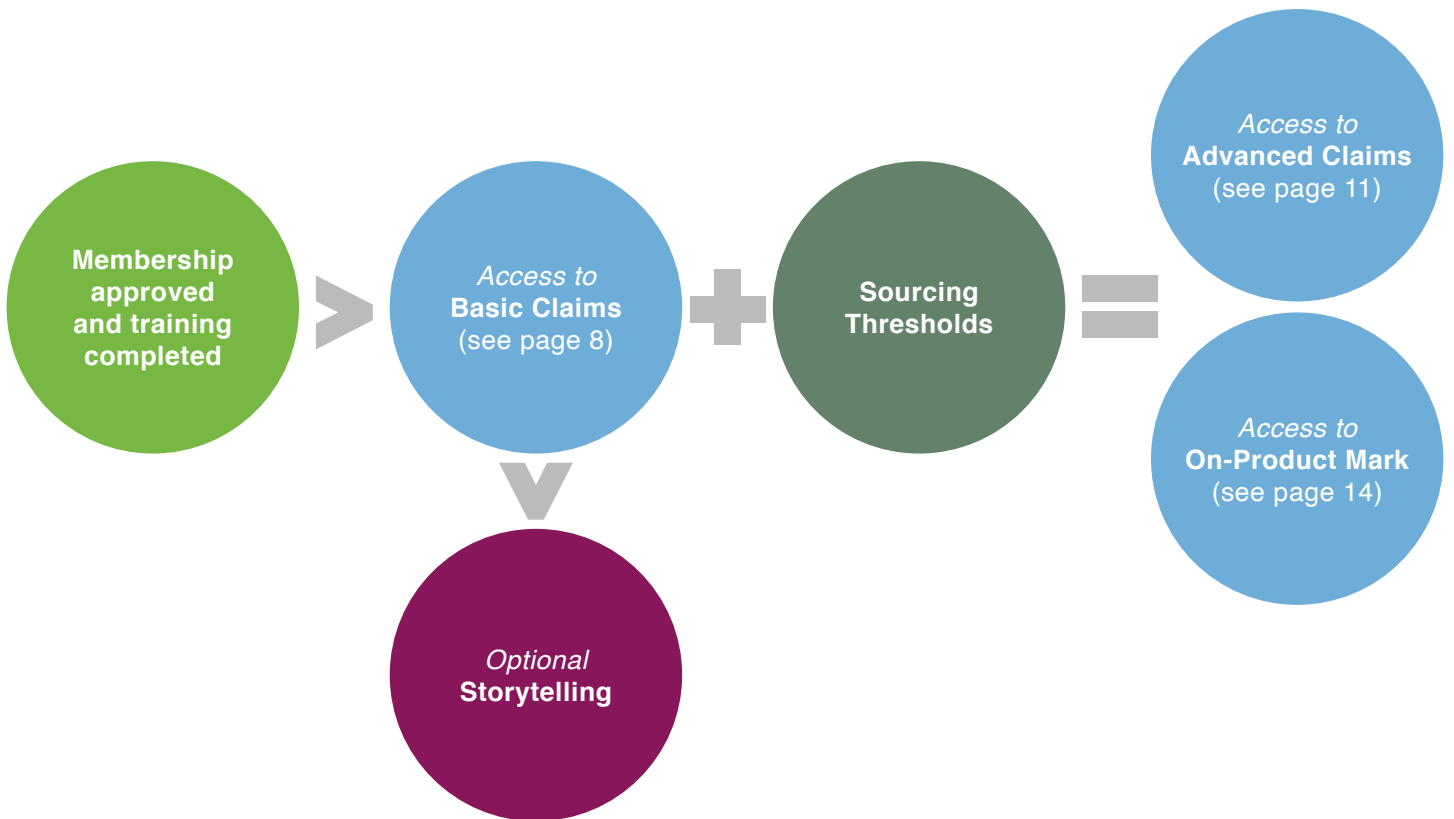
BCI reserves the right to define what constitutes a misleading claim and reject submissions on this basis.

EU regulation defines misleading claims as 'claims that deceive or are likely to deceive the average consumer, even if the information contained therein is factually correct.' Whilst efforts have been made to ensure the claims outlined within this document are only ever transparent and never misleading, the choice to make claims, and the responsibility to ensure claims comply with relevant laws and legislation, lies with the BCI Member.

The Framework - How it Works

Once your membership is approved, you can then make Basic Claims, progressing to Advanced Claims and the on-product mark only when sourcing thresholds have been met. BCI's storytelling assets are available to those making all required Basic Claims.

All claims in this framework are available to eligible Retailer and Brand Members. Basic Claims and many Advanced Claims are available to all members including suppliers, manufacturers, traders and civil society members. Claims available to all members are highlighted throughout the document. The on-product mark is available to specific member groups only (see page 15 for member group eligibility). Please note that 'BCP Suppliers' (Those who pay to access BCI's online credit-tracking system but do not have BCI membership), are not eligible for claims outlined in this document.



Logo and URL

Use of the BCI logo and URL falls into the category of 'Basic Claims'.

Only BCI Members and Partners are authorised to use the BCI logo in marketing collateral.

When used on business cards, invoices and e-mail signatures, the BCI logo must be used in conjunction with a 'Membership/Commitment Statement.' See Page 8.

Full guidelines on how to use the logo, trademark information and file downloads can be found here: www.bettercotton.org/resources/logo.

LOGO USE ON-PRODUCT

The logo is an integral part of on-product claims. All claims made about BCI on product packaging must incorporate the BCI logo.

To find out if you are eligible to make on-product claims see page 15.

Translations

TEXT CLAIM TRANSLATIONS

If you want to make a claim in a language other than English, please send your enquiry to the BCI communications team. Translations are available in French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Swedish, German, Mandarin and Dutch.

For translations to be approved in languages other than those listed, a member must submit a proposed translation to BCI for review.

The organisation's name; 'Better Cotton Initiative' and product; 'Better Cotton' must never be translated.

PERMISSION PROCESS: Please allow 10 working days for approval of new translations. Translations must not be published until approval is granted.

Mass Balance

We've created guidelines within the boundaries of the current chain of custody model used by BCI: Mass Balance.

Under this system, there is no guarantee that Better Cotton is physically present in the finished product, and in what quantity. This is why all claims are carefully worded and in line with industry-recognised good practice. This ensures that the message focuses on the BCI Member's commitment to responsibly sourced cotton and not the content of the product itself. Put another way, BCI, used in your marketing, can help position your brand's actions as more sustainable. BCI should not be used to help you position specific products as more sustainable. This applies to our on-product mark as well as our off-product claims. It is also important that the users of the on-product mark fully understand the systems in place so that claims are never misleading.

The future guidelines for using our on-product mark may change if we choose to move towards physical traceability. New guidance may be developed which also refers to the product's content. However, for now, the focus is on commitment-based claims under Mass Balance. As such, no products can be referred to as Better Cotton or BCI products under any circumstances. There should be no suggestion that this is the case.

Basic Claims: Commitment



Unlock Access to
Basic Claims

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete

If you're a BCI Retailer and Brand Member, you must either receive a communications induction, or complete an online training, before you can start making claims. For partners, funders and other membership groups, communications inductions are available on request.

You must be making a claim from the three required* claim types under 'Basic Claims' (Membership/Commitment Statement, Percentage Declaration and Target, and Mass Balance Definition), in order to progress to use of BCI's storytelling assets, Advanced Claims and/or the on-product mark. Claims should be made on the sustainability pages of a member's website.

MEMBERSHIP/COMMITMENT STATEMENTS * required

A membership/commitment statement is a claim that enables you to promote your work with the Better Cotton Initiative/BCI.

These claims can be used separately or in conjunction with each other.

Option 1:

'We (or name of the organisation) are/is a proud member of The Better Cotton Initiative/BCI'.

Option 2:

'We (or name of the organisation) partner/s with The Better Cotton Initiative/BCI to improve cotton farming globally.'

Option 3:

'We (or name of the organisation) are/is committed to improving cotton farming practices globally with the Better Cotton Initiative/BCI'.

MASS BALANCE DEFINITIONS * required

Mass Balance definitions are claims which offer transparency to consumers, outlining how a member contributes to the Better Cotton programme in the field.

You may, alternatively, write your own description of Mass Balance. It must feature the words 'Mass Balance' or 'not physically traceable.'

Option 1:

*Better Cotton is sourced via a system of Mass Balance.

Option 2:

*Better Cotton is sourced via a system of Mass Balance and is not physically traceable to end products. See bettercotton.org/massbalance for details.

Option 3:

*Better Cotton is not physically traceable to end products. However, BCI Farmers benefit from the demand for Better Cotton in equivalent volumes to those we 'source.'

PERCENTAGE DECLARATION AND TARGET * required

This claim is a 'time-bound target for more sustainable cotton sourcing as a X% of total cotton lint use.'

*Where option 2 is used, the member **must** include their definition of 'more sustainable cotton'.*

Option 1:

'We (or name of the organisation) are/is committed to sourcing X% (or X MT) of our cotton as Better Cotton by 20XX.'

Option 2:

'We (or name of the organisation) are/is committed to sourcing X% (or X MT) of our cotton as 'more sustainable cotton' by 20XX.' 'More sustainable cotton' includes (list standards covered here: e.g., recycled cotton, organic cotton and Fairtrade cotton).

**Checklist:**

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete

BCI DEFINITIONS:***Optional Additions (not required)***

BCI definitions are ready-to-use claims describing BCI. These claims may not be re-worded/modified and are available for use in multiple languages.

Option 1:

'The Better Cotton Initiative/BCI aims to transform cotton production worldwide by developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity.'

Option 2:

'The Better Cotton Initiative/BCI makes global cotton production better for the people who produce it, better for the environment it grows in, and better for the sector's future.'

Option 3:

'The Better Cotton Initiative/BCI connects people and organisations throughout the cotton sector, from field to store, to promote measurable and continuing improvements for the environment, farming communities and the economies of cotton-producing areas.'

Option 4:

'By choosing cotton products from XXX [your company's name], you're supporting responsible cotton production through the Better Cotton Initiative/BCI.'

BCI FARMER DEFINITIONS:***Optional Additions (not required)***

BCI Farmer definitions are ready-to-use claims describing the Better Cotton Production Principles. These claims are not to be edited and are available for use in multiple languages. Pair 'Part 1' and 'Part 2' together for a complete claim.

Part 1:**Option 1:**

'The Better Cotton Initiative/BCI Farmers are farmers who':

Option 2:

'By buying cotton products from XXX (your company's name), you're supporting the Better Cotton Initiative/BCI Farmers who':

Option 3:

'The Better Cotton Initiative/BCI trains farmers to':

Part 2:**Option 1:**

'use water efficiently, care for soil health and natural habitats, reduce use of the most harmful chemicals and respect workers' rights and wellbeing'.

Option 2:

'care for the environment and implement the principles of Decent Work'.

Option 3:

'care for the environment and respect workers' rights and wellbeing'.

LOGO AND URL***Optional Additions (not required)***

Only BCI Members and Partners are authorised to use the BCI logo in marketing collateral. Go to www.bettercotton.org/resources/logo to download logo files and guidelines.

PERMISSION PROCESS: All consumer-facing claims must be approved by BCI.

Storytelling (Optional)



Unlock Access to
Storytelling

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place

You must be making all required Basic Claims before being granted access to BCI's storytelling assets. Use of storytelling assets is optional. If you're meeting the criteria, you may prefer to move onto Advanced Claims.

COUNTRY LEVEL RESULTS

These sentences have been designed to provide an accurate reflection of progress at field level – they are intended as examples of ways in which you can use our results. BCI's results must not be manipulated in any way. Averaging results across different geographies undermines the data's credibility. Should you wish to use BCI results to support your storytelling, please contact the BCI communications team who will help you craft your Better Cotton story in a credible and accurate manner.

Global:

Option 1:

In 2017-2018, the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) licensed over 2 million farmers from 21 countries on five continents.

Optional addition:

Together, these farmers produced 12% of the world's cotton.

Country and indicator:

Example 1: Less water (China):

'In 2017-2018, BCI Farmers in China used 18% less water than Comparison Farmers.'

Example 2: Reduced pesticide use (India):

'In 2017-2018, BCI Farmers in India used 19% less pesticide than Comparison Farmers.'

Example 3: Increased use of organic fertiliser (Pakistan):

In 2017-2018, BCI Farmers in Pakistan used organic fertiliser 4% more often than Comparison Farmers.

Example 4: Improved profitability (Turkey):

In 2017-2018, BCI Farmers in Turkey had 13% higher profits than Comparison Farmers.

Example 5: Improved yield (Tajikistan):

In 2017-2018, BCI Farmers in Tajikistan had a 19% higher yield than Comparison Farmers.

STORYTELLING CONTENT

Available assets include:

- Farmer quotes
- BCI imagery (credited)
- Stories from the field
- Videos

Resources and content are available. Please contact the BCI communications team for details.

PERMISSION PROCESS: All consumer-facing claims must be approved by BCI.

Eligibility Criteria: Advanced Claims and the On-Product Mark



Unlock Access to
Advanced Claims

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place
- Sourcing thresholds met

ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

There are four criteria which determine eligibility to use the on-product mark and access Advanced Claims.

1) MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY (ON-PRODUCT MARK AND INVESTMENT CLAIMS ONLY)

You must:

- Belong to the BCI Retailer and Brand (RB) Membership category, OR
- Be a Supplier and Manufacturer (SM) Member who supplies end products to businesses in the service industry (B2B) (e.g., industrial laundries, hotels, hospitals, staff clothing), i.e., not supplying to consumer-facing retailers or brands, OR
- Be a Supplier and Manufacturer (SM) Member already supplying other BCI Retailer and Brand Members who would like to use the OPM in your own retail activities (B2C). In order to qualify under this category, your B2C activity can represent no more than 25% of your textile business turnover.

Please contact BCI for more details on eligibility criteria. BCI reserves the right to establish if a Supplier and Manufacturer Member is eligible to use the on-product mark.

2) BASIC CLAIMS

You must be making all required Basic Claims to be eligible to access Advanced Claims and the on-product mark.

These claims must feature directly on the e-commerce website (where this exists), not the BCI Member's sustainability site or micro-site.

The claims must feature on the website of both the BCI Member (group level) and the brand wishing to access Advanced Claims and/or the on-product mark.

Alternatively, a direct link to a member's corporate sustainability webpages from an e-commerce site is acceptable.

➤ **Membership Statement visible on a consumer-facing website.** See page 8

➤ **Time-bound target for 'more sustainable cotton sourcing' as a X% of total cotton lint use visible on consumer-facing website of the BCI Member** see page 8.

➤ **Mass Balance Definition** see page 8.

3) SOURCING THRESHOLDS

You must be sourcing your cotton as Better Cotton, and over time meet the below thresholds (at membership level):

- Minimum criteria for on-product mark use: >10%
- End of Year 3: >25%
- End of Year 5: >50%

EXCEPTION: After five years of OPM use, greater than 25% Better Cotton will be accepted as the threshold if the member's entire remaining cotton lint buy is being sourced as 'more sustainable cotton.' This includes certified organic cotton, Fairtrade, recycled cotton or cotton sourced through a BCI Benchmarked Partner.

A member's sourcing threshold is measured using the volumes declared on the Better Cotton Platform, against the company's self-declared total annual cotton lint usage. BCI verifies the amount of lint sourced as Better Cotton via the Better Cotton Platform.

Year 3 and year 5 thresholds are defined as being the end of the third and fifth year following approval of the first on-product mark.

After year 5, you must maintain a sourcing level of above 50% in order to continue using the on-product mark.

BCI reserves the right to ask members to evidence their sourcing of more sustainable cotton outside of Better Cotton, if, after year 5, they are sourcing between 25% and 50% Better Cotton and wish to continue making these claims.

4) VOLUME-BASED FEE

You must be up-to-date in paying the Volume-Based Fee. The current Volume-Based Fee calculation methodology is available in the member application form. Please contact the BCI Membership Team for more details.

Advanced Claims. Volume and Investment: Reach



Unlock Access to
Advanced Claims

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place
- Sourcing thresholds met

You must be making all required Basic Claims before you can make Advanced Claims. Retailer and Brand Members must also be meeting sourcing thresholds to access the claims laid out in this section of the Claims Framework. See page 11 for eligibility criteria.

VOLUME SOURCED

These claims are a calculation of Better Cotton sourced (as a percentage of total estimated cotton lint consumption) by an individual member:

‘We (or name of the organisation) source X% of our cotton as Better Cotton.’

‘Last season, we sourced* all of the cotton for our kidswear range as Better Cotton.’

‘All of our ladieswear is now sourced* as more sustainable cotton. This includes Better Cotton through BCI and organic cotton.’

If a member wishes to call out the range of products which is being sourced as Better Cotton, a ‘Mass Balance Definition’ (see Basic Claims page 8) should be made. This should be made in addition to the definition already featuring on a member’s website. It must feature on the same channel as the claim. Alternatively, a member can highlight the URL by including the text ‘learn more at bettercotton.org/massbalance’.

VOLUME SOURCED – REALISED

These claims are a calculation of Better Cotton sourced by an individual member:

Option 1:

Last year (or specific year to match sourced volume), we sourced XXX metric tonnes of cotton as Better Cotton. That’s the equivalent of almost XXX pairs of jeans.’

If a member wishes to use this claim, a ‘Mass Balance Definition’ (see Basic Claims page 8) should be made. This should be made in addition to the definition already featuring on a member’s website. It must feature on the same channel as the claim. Alternatively, a member can highlight the URL by including the text ‘learn more at bettercotton.org/massbalance’.

INVESTMENT/GLOBAL REACH * Retailer and Brand Members only

These claims are intended to demonstrate a member’s contributions to BCI’s global reach by equating the volumes of Better Cotton sourced by a member in a given season, to BCI’s reach (in terms of farmers reached and hectares under cultivation). These claims are calculated based on an individual member’s investment in one year, against the BCI Growth and Innovation Fund global indicators and BCI Growth and Innovation Fund total field investment.

Option 1 – Number of BCI Farmers:

‘Last year, our investment enabled BCI to reach and train over/almost XXX farmers on more sustainable practices.’

Option 2 – Number of hectares under Better Cotton cultivation:

‘Last year, our investment enabled Better Cotton to be produced on over/almost XXX HA of land.’

Advanced Claims. Investment: Global Impact

INVESTMENT: GLOBAL IMPACT*

Retailer and Brand Members only

These claims are intended to demonstrate a member's contributions to BCI's global impact by equating the volumes of Better Cotton sourced by a member in a given season to BCI's field-level results.

Methodology:

Equation:

[Improvement factor per kg of Better Cotton] * [Volume sourced by member] = Member contribution

Example (fictional):

1. Estimated average water savings (i.e., improvement factor) of 0.1 m³ per kg of cotton.
2. Member sourced and declared 3,000 MT of Better Cotton.
3. 0.1 m³ * 3,000 MT cotton = 300,000 m³ (79 million gallons).

BCI's methodology ([see Impact Reporting for BCI Retailer and Brand Members: methodology](#)) must be followed if members are reporting on the impact of their sourcing, as outlined here (in relation to water, profit and pesticides). If this data is manipulated, or reporting relates to additional contribution factors (fertiliser/grey water etc.), BCI will not be able to endorse the calculations and will require the member to publish a disclaimer that reflects this.

WATER

Last year/in 20XX, an estimated XXX litres of water were saved thanks to our sourcing of Better Cotton. [Note that water savings relate to blue water use (irrigation). This claim is intended to be used in relation to farmer inputs and not other forms of water use].

PESTICIDE

Last year/in 20XX, an estimated XXX kg of pesticides were avoided thanks to our sourcing of Better Cotton.

PROFIT

Last year/in 20XX, BCI Farmers benefited from an estimated XXXXXXXX euros of additional profit* thanks to our sourcing of Better Cotton.

[required footnote] *BCI Farmers experience profit increases for a variety of reasons, most commonly due to increased yields and/ or optimised use of inputs (such as irrigation water, pesticides or synthetic fertiliser).

Optional addition:

That's the equivalent of XX YYY of water.

OR: That's enough to XX YYY.



Unlock Access to
Advanced Claims

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place
- Sourcing thresholds met

PERMISSION PROCESS:

BCI will accept the total cotton consumption as issued by the member. However, we may ask you to submit documentation to support these numbers periodically. The responsibility for your communications/claims related to your annual cotton consumption remains with you. The data you use to complete the calculation must match data shown on the Better Cotton Platform. Members will be required to clarify any discrepancies should they occur. Please contact the BCI communications team should you wish to make Investment Claims.

On-Product Claims



Unlock Access to
On-Product Claims

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place
- Sourcing thresholds met

The on-product mark (OPM) is one way in which you can communicate your commitment to the Better Cotton Initiative, directly to your customer, via the end product.

On-product is simply one of many channels you can use to reach your customer, enabling you to highlight the commitment your brand has made to BCI. The OPM is not a 'product label' and can never be used to make claims about a product's fabric content or suggest physically traceable Better Cotton is present in a product. Should a claim be made in the space around a product (e-commerce, catalogue or on product packaging), it is classed as use of the OPM. The majority of members who use the OPM do so in the form of a swing tag or sticker. However, an OPM doesn't have to be physically present on a product to be classed as such. An OPM could be used on any channel including in a catalogue, on point of sale in store, on shipment packaging or on the e-commerce pages of a website.

We have created precise guidelines to ensure that members use the BCI OPM in a way which:

- Protects the BCSS's credibility by never deceiving the consumer, misleading the reader, over-claiming, or leaving a claim open to inaccurate interpretation.
- Incentivises those members who source meaningful quantities of Better Cotton and are committed to doing so in the future.
- Creates a consistent BCI message for readers across diverse products in different regions, thereby improving consumers' understanding of more sustainable cotton.

Review the sub-sections on the following pages to learn more about, or apply to use, the BCI on-product mark.

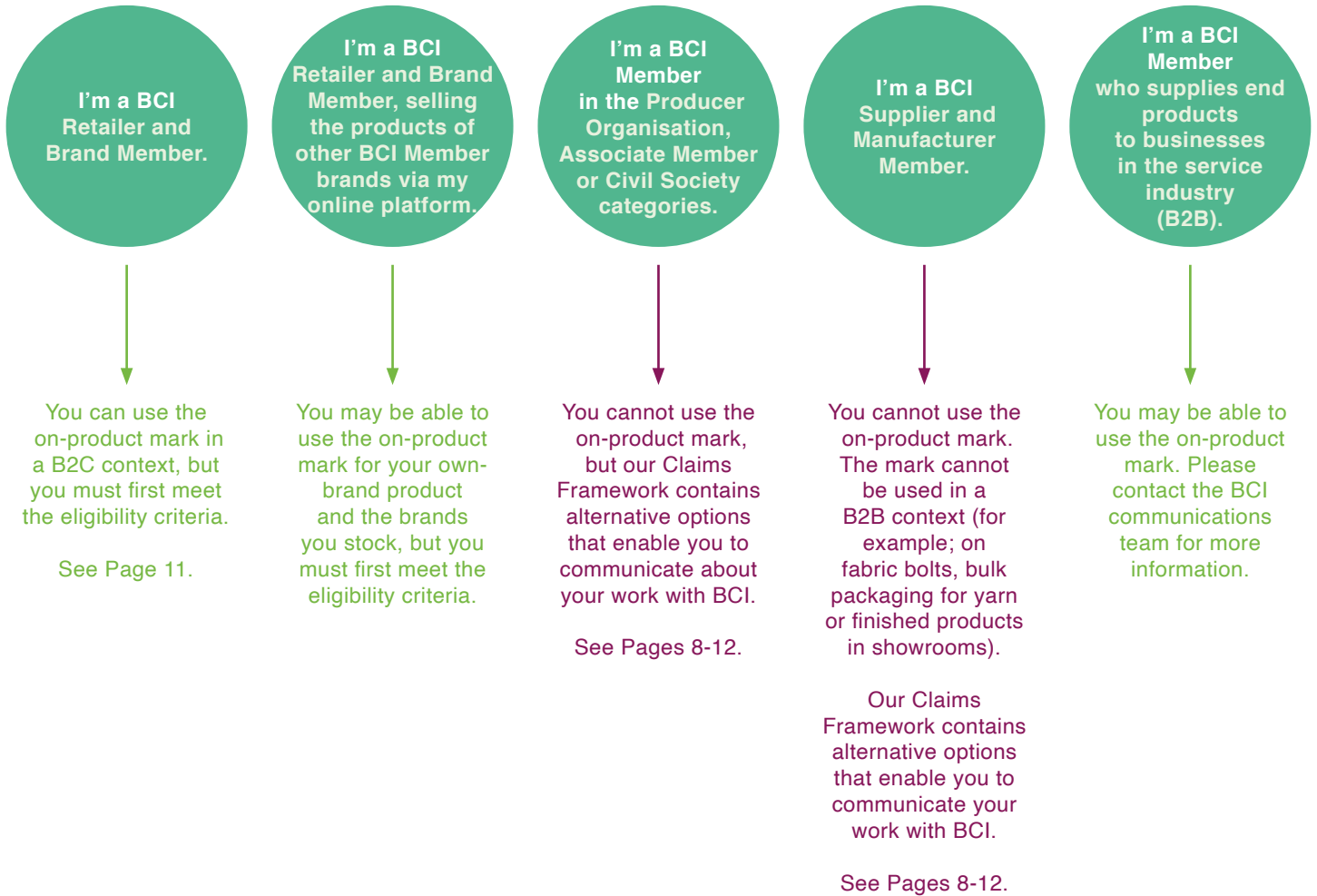
Membership Categories and the On-Product Mark

 **Unlock Access to On-Product Claims**

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place
- Sourcing thresholds met

The diagram below details if your Membership Category is eligible to use the on-product mark.



NOTE: The on-product mark is only intended to be used in a consumer-facing context. Exceptions may apply. Please contact the BCI communications team for more information.

Use of the On-Product Mark



Unlock Access to
On-Product Claims

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place
- Sourcing thresholds met

ELEMENTS OF THE MARK

- Logo: This shape forms the graphic part of the mark and is the BCI corporate logo.
- URL bettercotton.org/massbalance: This BCI website address must always be displayed in the form included in the mark.
- TM: The mark must be directly accompanied by a TM mark. The letters TM indicate that this is a trademark. Registration of the trademark is pre-approved in a number of countries.
- Text claim: The mark must be directly accompanied by an approved, on-product text claim.

NOTE: The BCI logo cannot be used without a text claim, however, there may be occasions, (for e-commerce only), when the text claim and URL can be used without the logo.

BACKGROUNDS

The BCI on-product mark can be used on hangtags, stickers, consumer packaging, catalogues, online product pages etc. The BCI on-product mark must not be permanently attached to a product (e.g., care labels or direct-to-garment printing).

If you are a Supplier and Manufacturer (SM) Member who supplies end products to businesses in the service industry (B2B) (e.g., industrial laundries, hotels, hospitals, staff clothing), i.e., not supplying to consumer-facing retailers or brands, exceptions to the above may apply. Please contact the BCI communications team for further details.

LOCATION

The mark must not be used adjacent to details of a product's fabric composition.

COLOUR

The mark can be used in:

- BCI green: R141 G198 B64, or C50 M1 Y98 K0, or Hex #8DC640, or Pantone Solid Coated 368 C.
- Black: when the mark is printed in black it must be clearly visible, i.e., not used on an existing dark background.
- White: for use on dark backgrounds.

SIZE AND PROPORTIONS

The minimum size for on-product applications of the mark is 20mm, measured from the left to the right-hand side of the URL. There is no maximum size restriction for display of the mark. The logo should be enlarged or reduced proportionally, without distortion, and used in its entirety.

CLEARANCE

The minimum clearance around every edge of the mark includes the URL and TM.

LICENSED PRODUCT

Licensed product must fall into the members total cotton usage calculation in order to qualify for on-product mark use.

Licensed product featuring copywritten material which falls into a member's total cotton usage, may be eligible to feature the BCI OPM. Contact the BCI communications team for more information.

CHANNELS

The BCI on-product mark should be used on removable packaging (swing tickets, over-hangers, bag inserts, stickers etc.). It may not be used on channels sewn into products or permanently attached in any way.

Should the BCI OPM be approved for use on a product sticker, it is the member's responsibility to ensure the sticker application is executed in line with the Claims Framework.

Product Eligibility



Unlock Access to
On-Product Claims

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place
- Sourcing thresholds met

COTTON CONTENT

The on-product mark (OPM) can be used on any product where cotton is the majority fabric component, or no other fabric components are greater. This does not refer to the sourcing of Better Cotton for a product, but cotton in general.

Examples

- ✓ 100% cotton
- ✓ 40% cotton 30% viscose, 30% polyester
- ✓ 45% cotton, 45% polyester, 10% elastane
- ✗ 50% polyester, 45% cotton, 5% polyester

PROPORTIONAL USE (GUIDANCE ONLY)

BCI recommends that a member's OPM use is proportional to the volume of cotton they have sourced as Better Cotton. This can be measured by member-group or by brand. What matters is that the consumer is not misled into believing that the member is sourcing more Better Cotton than they are.

There are multiple ways that this can be measured:

WEIGHT

The volume of cotton sourced as Better Cotton as a proportion of the member's total cotton lint consumption.

OR

NUMBER OF PRODUCT LINES

The number of product lines the member has sourced as Better Cotton.

OR

VOLUME OF PRODUCTS

The volume of products the member has sourced as Better Cotton.

When the umbrella branding approach is used, (see page 20), the Proportional Use Guidance still applies.



Text Claims and Logo Use

 **Unlock Access to On-Product Claims**

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place
- Sourcing thresholds met

The claims and associated logos in the below table are the only claims available to be made on-product. The logos must be used in full and claims may not be edited. Logo use guidelines are available.

Available On Product Claims		Standard On-Product Mark	Parallel On-Product Mark
		The standard BCI on-product mark can be used to convey the message to consumers that a portion of a member’s majority cotton products were sourced as Better Cotton, and/or, simply that the brand is partnering with BCI and sourcing Better Cotton.	An associated on-product mark can be used in conjunction with the BCI on-product mark whilst making claims or using the logo of partner/peer standards and/or belonging to identity cottons, (without the implication of the ability for BCI to physically trace the cotton in the product), BCI allows use of an parallel on-product mark. This can only be used with the claims outlined below, and only ever with a claim originating from a country in which a BCI programme is present. This claim is simply intended to highlight a member’s BCI Membership, via the product packaging.
Logo			
Claim 1	By buying cotton products from XXX, you’re supporting more sustainable cotton farming.	✓	✗
Claim 1.1	By buying cotton products from us, you’re supporting more sustainable cotton farming.	✓	✗
Claim 2	XXX cotton products support more sustainable cotton farming.	✓	✗
Claim 2.1	Our cotton products support more sustainable cotton farming.	✓	✗
Claim 3	XXX is proud to invest in making cotton production more sustainable.	✓	✓
Claim 3.1	We’re proud to invest in making cotton production more sustainable.	✓	✓
Claim 4	XXX is a proud member of the Better Cotton Initiative.	✓	✓
Claim 4.1	We’re a proud member of the Better Cotton Initiative.	✓	✓

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place
- Sourcing thresholds met

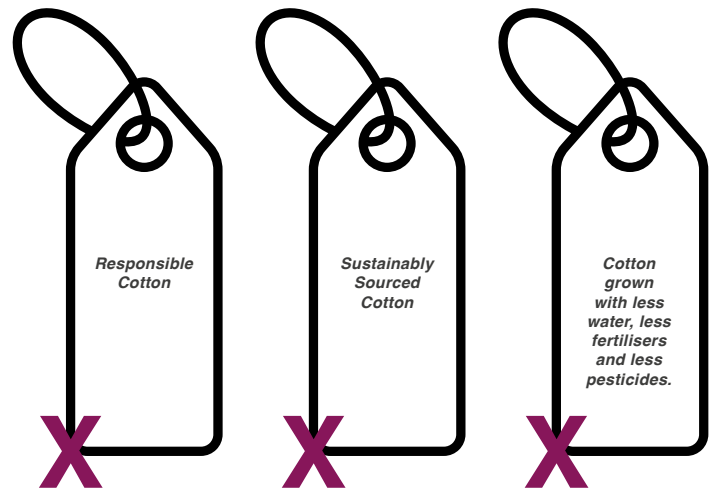
QR CODES

Members are able to use QR codes on product, leading to further information about their efforts to source more sustainable cotton. However, if QR codes are featured on product without the BCI OPM, information about Mass Balance must be featured on the website linked to the code. Examples of Mass Balance explanations can be found on page 8.

**GENERAL SUSTAINABLE COTTON
CLAIMS - GUIDANCE**

Whilst BCI is unable to enforce appropriate use of claims where there is no mention of BCI or Better Cotton, we strongly advise against making claims, on or in association with products, which suggest physical content of ‘more sustainable/responsible/responsibly sourced cotton.’ BCI views such claims as misleading when the intended message is that the product is made of Better Cotton. These claims are not in the spirit of the BCI/Member relationship. Widespread use of such misleading claims risk causing damage to BCI’s credibility, working against our mission, and in turn, devaluing claims for the wider BCI membership.

Examples include:



On-Product Umbrella Branding



Unlock Access to
On-Product Claims

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place
- Sourcing thresholds met

Members are able to use on-product ‘umbrella branding’ (a catch-all term or branding to identify a product that is part of a member’s sustainability strategy). This method gives members flexibility in their on-product messaging. However, we have guidelines for avoiding potential conflict with the Mass Balance element of BCI’s model.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

Members must meet eligibility criteria (see page 11) to use umbrella branding.

USE:

An umbrella branding approach is allowed, provided that this is not used as a synonym for Better Cotton or the BCI on-product mark (OPM). It must relate to the company’s sustainable materials efforts in general, and not its Better Cotton efforts specifically.

TRANSPARENCY:

When the umbrella branding approach is used, a member must clearly state on its group or brand website what the labeling scheme covers, including an explanation of Mass Balance in relation to BCI (see Basic Claims page 8).

Examples

✓ **‘Eco Collection’**
(applied to product sourced as Better Cotton, Organic Cotton, more sustainable celulosés and products that contain >50% recycled fibres)

✗ **‘Eco Cotton Collection’**
(applied to products sourced as Better Cotton)
The BCI on-product mark should be used instead.

E-Commerce Use



Unlock Access to
On-Product Claims

Checklist:

- Membership approved
- Communications induction
- OR
- Online training complete
- Basic Claims in place
- Sourcing thresholds met

Should a claim be made in direct association with a product or range of products, it is classed as use of the on-product mark (OPM).

The majority of our members that use the OPM do so in the form of a swing tag or sticker. However, an OPM doesn't have to be physically on a product to be classed as such. An OPM may be in a catalogue, on point of sale in store, on shipment packaging to customers or, in this case, on a website.

ELIGIBILITY FOR E-COMMERCE USE

There are five criteria to be met which establish whether you are eligible to use the on-product mark. The same criteria apply in an e-commerce context. See page 11 'Eligibility Criteria'.

LOGO USE FOR E-COMMERCE

The logo and text claims are both elements of the mark, and wherever possible, must be used together. Exceptions are made if your website does not have the capabilities to display a logo. In this case, the text claim and URL can be used without the logo. The BCI logo cannot be used without a text claim.

Minimum sizing and logo legibility depend on your website's layout.

TEXT CLAIMS FOR E-COMMERCE USE

Claims made in association with a product, or range of products in an online context, must be selected from the pre-approved list of 'on-product text claims.' Custom-built claims are not allowed in this context.

LOCATION OF THE ON-PRODUCT MARK

The logo component of the on-product mark can be located:

- In the product title/description
- In the product details (expandable, roll-over or hidden tab)

The logo component of the on-product mark must not be located:

- In the product details where this could suggest Better Cotton is part of the fabric composition.

The text claim component of the on-product mark can be located:

- Adjacent to the logo component of the on-product mark
- Separate from the logo component of the on-product mark either:
 - In the product title/description
 - In the product details (expandable, roll-over or hidden tab)
 - On the sustainability pages of the same website. In this case, the logo must contain a link to these pages.

DIRECTING THE CONSUMER TO LEARN MORE

When the on-product mark is used it is crucial that the customer is able to learn more about BCI's work and the member's relationship with BCI. There are three ways in which this information can be displayed in relation to e-commerce OPM use:

- A link, directly from the claim itself, connecting the consumer with the BCI website homepage.
- A link, directly from the claim itself, connecting the consumer with the member's own sustainability webpages where they will find approved copy explaining more about BCI. These sustainability pages must also contain a clearly accessible link to BCI's website.
- Use of BCI's logo (complete with Mass Balance URL)

Approval Process

1 TRAINING

You will need to ensure you have received a communications induction or completed the online training.

(including but not limited to: Newsfeed posts, Members Newsflashes, Outreach Presentations and the Communications Showcase).

2 REQUEST MEETING

Arrange a meeting with BCI to ensure understanding of the on-product mark's purpose, the process for its approval and confirm you are meeting the eligibility criteria. Note that BCI may grant pre-approvals of on-product mark use to account for packaging lead times. Pre-approvals are made at members' own risk.

3 DEVELOP ARTWORK

You can then start developing your artwork.

Each individual artwork must be approved by BCI with the exception of repeat artworks with updated product titles and/or images ONLY.

4 SUBMIT ARTWORK

You will need to be able to inform BCI of the planned launch date of the OPM along with the planned distribution of its use (across the relevant product areas and geographical locations).

Once you have finalised your designs, please send all your complete digital artwork files carrying BCI on-product mark – including details of the background material(s), sizing, and colour specs – to the BCI communications team for approval.

5 AWAIT APPROVAL

You will receive confirmation within a maximum of 10 working days (2 weeks) after we receive the finished artwork. We will advise if amendments are needed. The mark must not be printed, published, or displayed until approval is granted.

NOTE: Once claims are live, BCI reserves the right to add imagery in appropriate external communications

Ensuring Credible Claims and Monitoring (Overview)

MONITORING MEMBERS' BETTER COTTON COMMUNICATIONS

Why do we monitor claims?

We monitor members' claims in their communications about their commitment and involvement with BCI. This allows us to:

- Advise members how to continuously improve their communications in order to support our mission.
- Address any breaches of BCI guidelines in a standardised way, thereby reassuring all members that the community's credibility remains intact.

We use the following activities to implement our Monitoring Protocol for claims:

- Using a sampling approach, an audit of BCI Members' website content takes place annually.
- Other members notify BCI where any false or questionable claims are suspected.
- For on-product and Advanced Claims, Retailer and Brand declarations on the Better Cotton Platform are monitored.

What happens when a member makes an incorrect claims?

Our monitoring protocol includes resolution procedures for suspensions and withdrawals for misuse.

Warning and Corrective Action Plan issued: If a member's communications are in breach of the Better Cotton Claims Framework, no further claims will be approved by BCI until the Corrective Action Plan is complete.

Suspension: If the agreed upon Corrective Action Plan is not completed by the member within 30 days of receiving the formal warning, members are given a further 30 days to complete the Corrective Action Plan. Further actions may be required. Access to the Better Cotton Platform is suspended during a member's suspension. No further claims will be approved by BCI until the Corrective Action Plan is complete.

Expulsion: A member may be expelled when the communications are not removed or corrected by the member within 60 days of the suspension.

The Better Cotton Claims Framework is governed by:

- The BCI Code of Practice
- The BCI Terms of Membership
- The BCI Monitoring Protocol

When a member receives a warning in relation to incorrect or misleading use of claims, this warning remains live, on a member's record, for one year (even if corrected). Should the same member be in breach of the Claims Framework on a second occasion during that period, a suspension or expulsion may be issued.

CLAIMS MONITORING PROTOCOL

BCI monitors the steps to be followed by members before claims are approved and once claims are published. Members are obliged to request approval for all consumer-facing claims.

BCI has resolution procedures to address the use of any misleading claims, on-product or otherwise.

Should members publish claims in breach of the Claims Framework, or no longer fulfil the on-product mark eligibility criteria, they will receive an official warning and Corrective Action Plan from the BCI Secretariat. The warning will state in what respect the member has breached requirements, and will outline corrective actions or consequences, depending on the nature of the breach.

Examples of potential breaches and BCI responses include but are not limited to:

Incorrect or Misleading Usage	BCI Response and Next Steps
A member is not sourcing Better Cotton as per minimum sourcing requirements to make the desired claim.	BCI revokes the right to make Advanced Claims or use the on-product mark. If this relates to use of the on-product mark, the member is able to keep the products carrying the claim in stores until they run out of stock. Members wishing to continue using the on-product mark will need to submit a new request once they have achieved the sourcing threshold.
A member has advanced in the Claims Framework (past Basic Claims), but is not making required Basic Claims.	BCI proposes a timeline of 30 days to display the required Basic Claims.
A member is not paying Volume-Based Fees.	BCI proposes a timeline of 30 days to pay the fees.
<p>A member has published incorrect or misleading claims, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unapproved and incorrect use of the on-product mark ➤ Claims that suggest physical Better Cotton content in products ➤ Unapproved and misleading language with regards to the BCI Standard ➤ Misuse of BCI’s Advanced Claims 	<p>The member is required to remove or correct misleading BCI communications within 30 days.</p> <p>A Corrective Action Plan will be put in place, also to be completed within 30 days. Corrective actions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Claims Framework Training ➤ Issue of corrective statements ➤ Removal of packaging and/or goods when the breach is an unapproved, misleading on-product mark ➤ Removal of in-store communications material when the breach is an unapproved, misleading claim <p>No further claims will be approved for any brand under a member with an incomplete Corrective Action Plan. Failure to complete a Corrective Action Plan within the agreed time-frame may result in suspension or expulsion from BCI.</p> <p>Members wishing to continue making consumer-facing claims will need to first complete the Corrective Action Plan and then gain re-approval from BCI. In serious cases of misleading, unapproved communications (such as content claims or repeat breaches of the Claims Framework), BCI reserves the right to ban the use of BCI’s trademark or name in consumer-facing marketing.</p>



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, by developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity.

Learn more at [BetterCotton.org](https://www.bettercotton.org)