

# Better Cotton Platform Changes

## FAQ

### [Apply for a Better Cotton Platform Account](#)

#### Introduction

As part of BCI's commitment to continual improvement, Better Cotton Claims Units (BCCUs) can now only be transferred through the supply chain via the Better Cotton Platform (BCP). The changes simplify the transfer of BCCUs.

The [table](#) below outlines the difference between BCI Membership and BCP non-member access.

#### Important Highlights

- Companies wishing to transfer Better Cotton Claim Units (BCCUs) can only do so electronically through the Better Cotton Platform (BCP).
- Paper/hard copy Output Declaration Forms (ODFs) are no longer accepted as a transaction entry method in the Better Cotton Platform.
- BCI Retailer and Brands Members have until **31 July 2020** to manually add BCCUs to their accounts for ODFs generated in the supply chain before 31 Dec 2019.
- All BCI Members and BCP Suppliers are requested to forward any remaining ODFs to their customers as soon as possible so that they can be received by BCI Retailers and Brands to be inputted before 31 July 2020

#### What is the Better Cotton Platform (BCP)?

The BCP is an online system owned by BCI, and used by ginners, traders, spinners, other textile supply chain actors, and retailers and brands to document their Better Cotton sourcing volumes.

The BCP enables suppliers and manufacturers to report to their customers how much Better Cotton lint was sourced through the sale of cotton containing products and allows BCI to verify the volumes of Better Cotton Claim Units (BCCUs) allotted or received as sourcing orders are fulfilled across the supply chain. As a result of this verification, and BCI's mass balance chain of custody, retailers and brands at the end of the supply chain can make credible claims about their annual Better Cotton sourcing achievements.

## What are Better Cotton Claim Units (BCCUs)?

A BCCU is the designated unit that corresponds to 1 kg of Better Cotton lint sold by a participating ginner.

After the gin, BCI uses a mass-balance chain of custody system in which each supplier is only required to document the volume of their purchases and sales relating to Better Cotton but are not required to physically segregate Better Cotton.

BCCUs are allotted to each sale transaction entered into the Better Cotton Platform (BCP) by suppliers and manufacturers. As the BCCUs move through the cotton supply chain, conversion rates are applied to account for the losses through the supply chain (from cutting, etc), so the weight of the final garment is not the same as the number of BCCUs allocated to it. For example, a finished t-shirt weighing 200 grams will have been made from lint weighing up to 300 grams because there are losses in the yarn spinning process, in preparing the fabric, and when cutting from the fabric to make the t-shirt.

## Why are Better Cotton Claims Units (BCCUs) so important?

Collecting BCCUs is important for BCI Retailer and Brand Members, as it provides them with visibility into how much Better Cotton was sourced by their suppliers for the orders they placed. It also provides BCI with a consistent and transparent mechanism on which to charge BCI Retailer and Brand Members volume-based fees, which are invested into farmer training and capacity building on more sustainable agricultural practices. Investment in these field-level activities secures a future supply of Better Cotton.

## What are Output Declaration Forms (ODFs)?

Before 31 December 2019, for every entry made into the Better Cotton Platform (BCP), an ODF was automatically generated by the BCP. ODFs were exported out of the BCP in a PDF format for record keeping or documentation purposes for companies sourcing as Better Cotton. They were passed onto customers. ODFs can no longer be generated from the BCP and all actors in the supply chain must now use the BCP to allocate BCCUs to Better Cotton orders.

## To whom does this apply?

All companies wishing to transfer Better Cotton Claim Units (BCCUs) must use the Better Cotton Platform (BCP). These include all companies that are engaged in the following commercial activities:

- Buying cotton lint and selling fabrics.
- Buying yarns and selling fabrics.
- Buying cotton lint and selling end-products.
- Buying yarns and selling end-products.
- Buying fabrics and selling fabrics (dye houses and fabric traders).
- Buying yarns and selling yarns (yarn traders).

**Exception:** End-product manufacturers that buy fabrics and sell finished products and sourcing agents that buy and sell finished products are currently exempt from this requirement. However, BCCUs can only be transferred electronically, so for retailer and brand members to report on having sourced Better Cotton, this exception requires that the BCCUs are transferred from the tier two supplier directly to the retailer or brand.

### **What does this mean for companies without a Better Cotton Platform (BCP) account?**

If you do not have a BCP account, you will need to register for one immediately in order to fulfil Better Cotton orders.

Signing up is easy. Once you apply for a BCP account, you will receive online training on how to electronically receive Better Cotton Claims Units (BCCUs) and pass them on in the BCP.

You will also be able to communicate your ability to fulfill Better Cotton orders with your customers and potential customers. Please refer to section five of the BCP Terms and Conditions for more information.

### **How much does a Better Cotton Platform (BCP) account cost?**

BCP access is €500 per year.

### **What will happen if I don't sign up for a Better Cotton Platform (BCP) account?**

You will not be able to transfer Better Cotton Claims Units through the BCP or fulfil Better Cotton orders.

### **Can I have proof of my transaction?**

For transactions made between two users of the Better Cotton Platform (BCP), a proof of transaction record is available but not for the purposes of transferring Better Cotton Claims Units).

### **What do the changes mean for existing Better Cotton Platform (BCP) non-member suppliers?**

Existing BCP non-member suppliers do not need to take any action.

### **What do the Output Declaration Form (ODF) changes mean for BCI Retailer and Brand Members?**

If you are a Retailer and Brand Member, request your relevant suppliers (tier two and beyond) to sign up to the Better Cotton Platform (BCP).

The most significant benefit to you is that you are no longer needed to allocate resources to manually enter any Better Cotton Claims Units (BCCUs) into your account.

Once suppliers apply for a BCP account, they will receive online training on how to receive the BCCUs and pass them on in the BCP.

Please share this document and other supporting information available here with your suppliers so they are aware of the changes.

## What is the deadline for processing existing Output Declaration Forms (ODFs)?

We understand it takes time to implement changes.

The deadline for Retailer and Brand Members to process ODFs raised prior to 01 January 2020, is 31 July 2020.

Retailers and Brands should request to suppliers, all outstanding BCCUs for orders delivered in the first quarter of 2020 as soon as possible in order to meet the deadline of 31 July 2020. ODFs not entered into the BCP by this date will be lost.

## What is the difference between BCI Membership and Better Cotton Platform (BCP) access?

	BCI Membership	BCP Non-Member Supplier
BCP account and user ID	✓	✓
BCP access for multiple account holders	✓	✗
Listing within the BCP platform	✓	✓
Inclusion in BCI's public online member list	✓	✗
Access to BCI logo to use on communications materials e.g. e-mail template, website, marketing materials and reports	✓	✗
Access to the BCI On-Product Mark to communicate Better Cotton sourcing commitments	BCI Retailer and Brand Members <b>only</b>	✗
Eligible to be a BCI Council representative	✓	✗
Eligible to vote for the BCI Council representatives	✓	✗
Annual fee	Based on membership category. Visit the <a href="#">BCI website</a> for more information.	€500 as of 01 June 2019

### Contact Us

If you are interested in membership, please visit our [website](#) for more information.

[membership@bettercotton.org](mailto:membership@bettercotton.org)