Request for Proposals - Consultancy
Forced labour adaptations of BCI assurance processes
Applications deadline: 06 November 2020

RFP n#: 2020-November-ASP-FLREVIEW

Location: Remote

Start date: 18 November 2020

End date: 30 December 2020

BCI key contact: Leyla Shamchiyeva
Assurance Manager
tender@bettercotton.org

All applications must be sent by email, to BCI's key contact, with the subject header: "Application RFP Forced labour review – RFP n# 2020-November-ASP-FLREVIEW". Questions, requests and applications sent after the deadline (06 November 2020) will not be considered.

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 the end of the 2020-2021 cotton season. In less than 10 years, the Better Cotton Initiative and its Partners have supported over 2.3 million farmers in 23 countries in adopting more sustainable agricultural practices. Thanks to these efforts, Better Cotton accounts for around 22% 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.

Forced labour of adults and children is the most common manifestation of modern slavery and covers any work or service which has been coerced under threat of penalty. Most individuals at risk of forced labour belong to vulnerable or marginalized groups including women, children, and migrants. Forced labour of adults and children is global problems with a strong presence in industries with little regulation and a high number of workers; both are risk factors present in the agricultural sector and cotton growing specifically.

Recognising the importance of forced labour risks in cotton production, in April 2020 BCI formed a dedicated Task Force on Forced Labour and Decent Work. The Task Force comprised experts representing civil society, brands/ retailers, and research or consultancy organisations. The Task Force aimed to develop strategic recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS) in identifying, preventing, mitigating, and remediating forced labour risks related to adults and children.

As one of its recommendations, the Task Force identified the need to revise key elements of existing BCI assurance processes to better reflect forced labour risks and indicators. This is anticipated to be done at a global level initially, and then further refined (in a second stage) at country level, incorporating findings of localised research on forced labour risks.

Objective

The objective of this consultancy is to revise and adapt BCI assurance processes (including the Self-Assessment and guidance/ reporting documents for licensing assessments) in order to:
- Better reflect the ILO 11+ indicators on forced labour
- Utilise existing touchpoints with Producers and farmers (such as self-assessment) to better identify and analyse forced labour risks

- Provide BCI staff and 3rd party verifiers with improved guidance and tools necessary to conduct robust and effective assessments of forced labour risks
- Improve the effectiveness of farmer and worker interviews, whilst ensuring better protection of vulnerable workers and farmers
- Support evidence collection for follow-up on any identified forced labour risks

Deliverables

Activity 1. Revising Assurance Resources

The consultant is expected to review and adapt current assurance processes, tools and documents. The focus will be on decent work sections of these documents, including forced la-bour, labour profiles and risk assessments, etc.

The key documents and existing assurance tools to be reviewed include the following:

1. **'Interim' forced labour indicators** – these have been developed by BCI, aligning with the ILO 11 indicators of forced labour and state-imposed forced labour. These are intended to provide additional detail beyond the current core indicator 6.3.1 ('All forms of forced or compulsory, including bonded or trafficked labour, are prohibited'); and will be incorporated into assurance processes ahead of the next revision of the BCI Principles & Criteria

2. **BCI Assessment Guidance**– provides detailed assessment guidance with descrip-tion of indicators and conformity requirements

3. **BCI Assessment Field Checklist**– supports BCI, partners and verifiers in collecting the necessary information while conducting a producer assessment (for licensing and other purposes). This includes guidance on documents, field observations and farmer/worker interviews

4. **Self-assessment questionnaire** – an annual online survey for all BCI Producers that provides self-reporting of progress against core indicators and continuous improve-ment priorities

Deliverables will include:

- Suggested revisions and feedback on the existing assurance documents and pro-cesses listed above; including how the interim forced labour indicators can be inte-grated into assurance processes
- A set of additional questions for integration into the Producer self-assessment survey to better enable high-level assessment of forced labour risks. The questions should be adapted to BCI producer categories (small, medium and large farms) and could in-clude e.g. recruitment practices, use of written contracts, etc.
- A revised and expanded set of interview guides for farmers and workers to assess the risks of forced labour of adults and children. The guides should consider different farmer/worker profiles, education levels, and gender, and should reflect social auditing good practices. At minimum these would include a farmer interview guide and a sepa-rate guide for worker interviews, that helps to ensure participant protection
- Development of a reporting template to collect and organise evidence of an incidence, or risk of, forced labour
- Development of a sample standard operating procedure in the case of identification of forced labour of adults and children or risks thereof. This would include actions to be taken by the verifier, assessor, BCI or IP staff at the time of the field visit and can in-clude steps to secure protection of the suspected victim, document the incident and collect evidence, contact appropriate referral services, alert authorities, etc.

Activity 2. Supporting training material

The consultant is expected to produce supporting training material for a 1-2 hour long online training session to be delivered at a later date by BCI illustrating the changes made to the assurance process and explaining how new procedures should be put into practice. It will cover changes made to the forced labour indicator guidance, worker interview processes/techniques, evidence collection for reporting, self-assessment etc. The audience will be BCI second-party assessors and 3rd party verifiers.

Deliverables will include a slide deck along with presentation notes.

Experience, Skills, and Competencies

For this consultancy the following competencies are required:
- Experience developing auditing procedures and tools with a forced labour focus
- Expertise in the agricultural sector including familiarity with farm level audits
- Experience in (at least some) regions aligned with BCI's operations including e.g. China, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Mozambique, South Africa, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan etc.

High-level Timeline

06 November 2020	Applications deadline 06 November 2020 All applications must be submitted by email, headed "Application RFP Global Forced Labour Training – RFP n# 2020-November-ASP-FLREVIEW" addressed to Leyla Shamchiyeva at tender@bettercotton.org.
09 November 2020 to 13 November 2020	Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews
By 16 November 2020	The successful applicants will be notified Unsuccessful shortlisted applicants will also be notified
18 November 2020	**Start of the consultancy**
By 19 December 2020	Project initiation and content review. Revise assurance resources incorporating agreed on interim forced labour indicators; this includes revisions to farmer and worker interview guides, reporting templates and sample procedures; field guidance documents, and additional self-assessment survey questions. Discuss with BCI and incorporate feedback as needed.
By 30 December 2020	Develop supporting training material for assessors (BCI, 3PV) covering the changes in the interim indicators, assurance approach, interview techniques/templates, identification of risks, evidence collection

Application

Proposals that respond to this Terms of Reference should be a maximum of 2-3 pages (excluding CVs), and include the following:
- Overview of relevant experience
- Proposed project approach
- Proposed team names, along with CVs
- Detailed and transparent budget, including time allocation and day rates (preferably in Euro) for each person working on this project
- Pricing including any applicable VAT

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In addition to skills, competencies and expertise, BCI will consider value for money and demonstrable commitment to the sustainabilty field to evaluate applications.

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

BCI is committed to good practice and transparency in the management of natural, human and financial resources. All applications will be reviewed under the principles and subject to BCI's policies on equal opportunity, non-discrimination, anti-bribery & corruption and confict of interest.