

# Request for Proposals - Consultancy

Decent Work Monitoring Approach Design

Applications deadline: 23 May 2021

**RFP #:** 2021-May-ASP-UZDWM

**Location:** Flexible

**Start date:** 21 June 2021

**End date:** 10 December 2021

**BCI key contact:** Leyla Shamchiyeva  
Assurance Manager  
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All applications must be sent by email, to BCI's key contact, with the subject header: 2021-May-ASP-UZDWM".

Questions, requests, and applications sent after the deadline (23 May 2021) will not be considered.

## Background

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) is a multi-stakeholder initiative and the largest cotton sustainability programme in the world. BCI and its Partners currently support 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. BCI works closely with stakeholders all the way from farms to fashion brands and civil society organisations, driving the cotton sector toward sustainability.

Uzbekistan has been applauded for the progress achieved transitioning out of the state-imposed forced labour system in cotton harvest inherited from the Soviet system. However, pockets of non-compliance persist and a proactive approach to monitoring and managing the risks of forced labour will be essential before BCI could credibly operate in Uzbekistan.

In Uzbekistan, the Better Cotton Standards System (BCSS) is currently piloted by GIZ in the framework of the "*Sustainability and Value Added in the Uzbek Cotton Economy*" project (2020-2021). BCI is supporting this work by providing technical expertise. As part of this support BCI is looking to commission a consultancy to develop a dedicated decent work monitoring approach and test it out during the 2021 harvest season. The decent work monitoring would be complementary to BCI's standard assurance approach.

## Objective

BCI is seeking a consultant to develop and carry out a decent work focused monitoring approach in Uzbekistan to strengthen and adapt BCI's assurance processes in high-risk contexts. The monitoring approach will be based on the Better Cotton Standard System and further enhanced to include interim indicators of forced labour. The interim indicators of forced labour are based on the 11 ILO indicators of forced labour and will be integrated in the next revision of the Better Cotton Standard's Principles & Criteria. The monitoring approach may deviate from the standard audit practice but would also be expected to cover conventional monitoring approaches such as documentation review, field visits and worker interviews. It will also consider the potential of incorporating worker voice technology in the assessment process, outlining risks and opportunities.

The aim of the monitoring approach will be to better identify decent work and particularly forced labour risks and inform future developments of the BCI assurance model for high-risk regions.

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**The proposed approach will need to balance credibility, practicality / applicability and resource efficiency.**

The consultant will be required to address the following areas:

- **Scope and timing**

- A methodology for sampling of farms or clusters for monitoring. Only farms/clusters participating in the Better Cotton Standard System implementation will be part of the sample
- A high level assessment of the risk factors to help determine the scope of the assessment. This can be done through secondary source review, key informant interviews, production specifics (e.g. low mechanisation, low population density, etc.), external pressures (e.g. expected early rains, value chain pressures, etc.) or other
- A higher risk profile may warrant further assurance activities (e.g. interviews, spot checks, etc.)
- The monitoring should be split into visits at different points during the harvest season (e.g., start and end of the harvest).

- **Structure and planning**

- The monitoring will comprise:
  - Desk-based review, including secondary resources, media reports, assessments by the ILO and other independent stakeholders
  - Stakeholder/key informant interviews
  - Producer (cluster) document review and management interviews, including cluster-level monitoring, recruitment approach, grievance redressal, etc.
  - Field visits and observation
  - Farmer and worker interviews

The consultant will specify the optimal duration and structure of the assessment visits and specify which visits will be announced and/or semi-announced visits

- Process to escalate identified risks or incidences of labour rights violations
- Recommendations for incorporating worker voice tools in the assessment process
- Monitoring documentation and reporting

- **Monitoring results reporting**

- Evidence interpretation and identification of risks – combination of indicators pointing to a high risk of decent work violations
- Categorisation of risks: How systemic are the risks? Can the risks be addressed through targeted interventions or do they require a systemic/landscape approach?
- Can BCI credibly operate a programme in this locality based on the findings of the monitoring assessment?
- Recommendations for corrective/remedial actions, including but not limited to awareness raising and capacity building. The consultant will also advise the primary stakeholders to engage in the corrective/remedial action design and implementation

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## Deliverables

The consultant will deliver:

- A written document detailing the decent work monitoring approach
- Monitoring tools, e.g., semi-structured interview guides for key interviewee categories, reporting template, check-lists, etc.
- Workshop with BCI and relevant stakeholders to validate the monitoring approach and receive feedback to finalise the approach
- Monitoring visits field testing the agreed approach
- Monitoring report with the assessors' team profiles annexed

We anticipate the task to take around 20 days to complete. Approximately 10 days are expected for the development and validation of the monitoring approach. Further 10 days in 2021 are expected for the monitoring. **This is an indicative number only and will be finalised based on the methodology proposed by the consultant.**

## Experience, Skills, and Competencies

This assignment can be delivered by a team of consultants comprising team lead and assessor(s). The consultant (or team of consultants) must demonstrate excellent knowledge of international social auditing, forced labour and child labour monitoring, a good level of understanding of the systemic nature of historic decent work challenges and the challenges posed by the relatively new cluster system. The consultant(s) are expected to have the awareness of recent developments in the agricultural sector in Uzbekistan and adopt a neutral, unbiased position. The consultant(s) able to demonstrate the following competencies will be prioritised for selection:

- Understanding of the context-specific decent work risks
- Expertise in monitoring forced labour and child labour in high-risk environments
- A good understanding of agricultural contexts and large farm management
- Experience conducting monitoring in the cotton sector in Uzbekistan is desirable
- Awareness of Uzbekistan's textile cluster system, historic labour mobilisation system, local stakeholders and developments in recruitment methods and forced labour issues of the last six years
- The reports and communication with BCI will be in English and the consultant must be fluent in written and spoken English
- Knowledge of Uzbek and/or Russian in the consultants conducting the field visits (assessors) is essential

## High-level Timeline

Activities – Consultant	Approximate time allocation (days)
Project kick-off: Develop and agree approach with BCI/GIZ	1
Review of decent work monitoring approaches in Uzbekistan's cotton harvest; stakeholder consultations	3
Monitoring approach design	4
Stakeholder workshop to validate the approach	1
Field assessment planning	2
Field assessment and reporting	8
Approach finalization	1
Total	20

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## Application

Proposals that respond to this Terms of Reference should be a maximum of 5 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

All applications must be submitted by email, headed “2021-May-ASP-UZDWM” addressed to Leyla Shamchiyeva at [tender@bettercotton.org](mailto:tender@bettercotton.org).

In addition to skills, competencies, and expertise, BCI will consider value for money and demonstrable commitment to the sustainability 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 conflict of interest.