

Better Cotton Initiative

Standard Setting and Revision Procedure

BCI-PRO-01 (V2-0) EN

Title:	Standard Setting and Revision Procedure
Document reference code:	BCI-PRO-01-V2
Approval :	BCI Council, January 2014
Contact :	Better Cotton Initiative - Standard and Assurance Program- 22 rue des Asters 102 Geneva, Switzerland Phone: +41 22 939 12 50
E-mail for comments:	gregory.jean@bettercotton.org

A. Purpose and Scope

1.1 The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) 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. BCI works with a diverse range of stakeholders to promote measurable and continuing improvements for the environment, farming communities and the economies of cotton-producing areas. BCI aims to transform cotton production worldwide by developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity.

1.2 This document specifies the procedure to be followed by BCI for the development of any new standard and when substantive changes to an existing standard are made.

1.3 The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the credibility of all standards developed by the BCI, by incorporating the values of transparency, participation and fairness into the processes for their development and revision, and through compliance with international best practice for standards development.

1.4 All aspects of this Procedure are considered to be normative, including the scope, effective date, references, terms and definitions, tables and annexes, unless otherwise stated. As part of the BCI Normative Framework, this Procedure is subject to the review and revision cycle as described in this Procedure.

B. Effective and validity dates

Approval dates:	05 January 2014 - Amended on January 2015
Publication dates:	25 January 2014
Effective dates:	25 January 2014
Period of validity:	Until 31 December 2018 (or until replaced or withdrawn)

C. Definitions

2.1 BCI Member: BCI membership is made up of the following categories: Producer Organisations, Civil Society, Retailers & Brands, Suppliers & Manufacturers, Associate Members. All members can attend the General Assembly, at which time a Council is elected and any proposed changes to the BCI statutes are voted on.

2.2 BCI Council: Elections to BCI Council are voted on at BCI's General Assembly, and positions are open to all members (except for Associate Members). Each membership category has 3 seats, for a total of 12 seats. Once elected, the Council has the option to appoint up to three additional independent people to the Council, not representative of any specific member category. The Council's role is to ensure that the Association has a clear strategic direction and an adequate policy to successfully fulfill its mission.

2.3 BCI Secretariat: A Secretariat shall assist the CEO of the Association in executing the decisions of the Council and serves BCI members and partners. BCI's head office is in Geneva, Switzerland, with regional offices in China, India, and Pakistan.

2.4 Interested party: Any person or group concerned with or directly affected by a standard – used synonymously in this procedure with the term stakeholder.

2.5 Standard: Document that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristic for products or related processes and production methods, with which compliance is not mandatory. For the purpose of this document, the production standard developed by BCI is considered: The Better Cotton Production Principles and Criteria.

2.6 Revision: Any change to the existing standard resulting in significant modification or change of the standard application (e.g. adding or removing a Production Criteria). In this case, the process of revision will have to follow this standard setting procedure. Non-substantive or administrative changes are not considered as standard revision and therefore do not have to follow this procedure.

D. References

The following referenced documents are relevant for the application of this document.

3.1 - ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards (v. 6.0)

3.2 - BCI-STD-01-V2 “Better Cotton Assurance Program”, Nov 2013

3.3 - BCI-STD-02-V1 “Better Cotton Production Principle and Criteria”, May 2013

3.4 - BCI-STD-03-V1 “Better Cotton Performance Scale for Smallholders, Nov 2013

3.5 - BCI-STD-04-V1 “Better Cotton Performance Scale for Medium Farms, Nov 2013

3.6 - BCI-STD-05-V1 “Better Cotton Performance Scale for Large Farms, Nov 2013

3.7 - BCI-PRO-02-V1 “Approval Procedures for verifiers”- Date unknown

4. Decision to develop or revise a BCI standard

4.2 The decision to develop or review a BCI standard shall rest with the BCI Council.

4.3 BCI standards shall be reviewed on an ongoing basis, with the period of the next review not exceeding 5 years from adoption of the previous version of the standard. Status of all BCI normative documents are available on the BCI website in a regularly updated “standard catalogue”.

4.4 The date of the subsequent scheduled review shall be made publicly available.

4.5 A review process shall consider a standard’s continued relevance, effectiveness, and whether external circumstances have changed to the point where change is required.

4.6 After each review, a decision shall be made by the BCI CEO on whether a revision shall be recommended to the BCI Council.

4.7 Reasons why a revision process may be recommended and initiated are

- a) Accumulated comments submitted by any interested party on the current version of the standard
- b) New scientific developments
- c) Change in legislation
- d) Change in BCI strategic planning
- e) Any other significant change in the cotton production and supply chain
- f) A criteria is not understood or implemented in a way that leads to the expected results in line with BCI's intent.

4.8 If the development or the revision of a Standard is approved, the BCI Council shall direct the BCI Secretariat to establish a Standard Setting or Revision Committee (SS/RC).

4.9 The SS/RC is open to all members fulfilling their membership obligations.

4.10 There are a maximum of 12 seats available and minimum 6 seats are needed for the committee to be operational.

4.11 The SS/RC shall include one representative from each category of membership appointed by the Secretariat after a call for candidature sent to all members.

4.12 At least one Council member should participate in the SS/RC

4.13 The SS/RC includes individuals based on the following criteria:

- a) Expert knowledge and/or experience of the issue(s) under consideration
- b) Capacity to contribute a wide range of viewpoints, for example from different socio-economic, geographic, cultural, gender, and organizational backgrounds, and representative of different sizes of farms
- c) Represent potentially affected stakeholders
- d) Understanding of BCI's mission and vision, including knowledge of the BCI systems and procedures

4.14 The SS/RC shall as a minimum include a designated Project Manager from the BCI Secretariat and may include external consultants or experts, if necessary.

4.15 The SS/RC participants shall

- a) Comply with the ToR of the SS/RC
- b) Abide by the BCI Anti-trust policy at all times
- c) Draft Terms of Reference for the project which include objectives, a list of key interested parties and work plan (including decision making process).
- d) Produce drafts of the revised standard both prior to and following stakeholder feedback, including justification of the proposed changes, and an assessment of risks and impact of each change.

5. Process to develop or revise a BCI standard

5.1. Terms of Reference

5.1.1 When developing a Standard, the Standard Setting Committee shall develop Terms of Reference for the standard which must be approved by the BCI Council.

5.1.2 The Terms of Reference shall include

- a) A justification of the need for the standard, including an assessment of whether the proposed standard will meet an expressed need
- b) Clear objectives that the standard seeks to achieve, in particular those objectives that focus on social, environmental and/or economic aspects
- c) An assessment of risks in implementing the standard and how to mitigate for these, including identification of factors that could have a negative impact on the ability of the standard to achieve its objectives

5.1.3 If the SS/RC is revising a standard, the SS/RC shall update the ToRs originally approved.

5.1.4 The BCI website shall be continuously updated with information on the status of the standard development or revision activities.

5.2 Drafting Standards

5.2.1 The social, environmental and economic objectives of the standard shall be clearly and explicitly specified in the standard itself or in the explanatory document accompanying the standard document.

5.2.3 In defining the content of a standard, consideration shall be given to regulatory requirements, market needs as well as scientific and technological developments.

5.2.4 Standards shall be structured to allow for monitoring and evaluation of progress toward achieving the standard's objectives.

5.2.5 A standard shall avoid language and structure that may create ambiguities in interpretation. Consistent interpretation will be sought by setting criteria that are clear, objective and verifiable.

5.2.6 A standard shall not favor a particular technology or patented item.

5.2.7 The SS/RC shall approve the draft Standard or the draft revised standard before releasing it for public consultation.

5.3 Consultation

5.3.1 The launch of a public consultation shall be officially announced on the BCI website. The announcement shall be copied to the ISEAL Alliance.

5.3.2 The announcement shall include:

- a) A brief and clear description of the scope and objectives of the consultation
- b) The justification of the need to introduce or revise the standard

- c) The objectives the new standard want to achieve or the reason for revising standards
- d) The estimated timeline for completion of the proposed standard or revision
- e) The opportunity to submit written comments on the specific issues and approaches that should be addressed
- f) Contact details

5.3.3 Through a stakeholder mapping process, the BCI Secretariat shall identify individuals or groups that are likely to affect or be affected by BCI activities covered by the normative document scope.

5.3.4 The BCI Secretariat shall proactively seek contribution from under-represented stakeholders or disadvantaged groups, using various means, including but not limited face-to-face meetings, emails, workshops or asking support from facilitators who have direct contact with stakeholders.

5.3.5 The BCI Secretariat shall encourage organisations that have developed related standards to participate

5.3.6 Any proposed draft of a standard shall include at least two rounds of public consultation. The second round shall be required if substantive changes have been made since the first draft.

5.3.7 Each round of consultation on a proposed draft shall normally include a period of at least 60 days for the submission of comments and no less than 30 days if a justification has been established for a reduced consultation period.

5.3.8. After each consultation, a synopsis of the comments received and how they have been addressed shall be produced. The synopsis shall be made publicly available and shall be sent to all parties that submitted comments.

5.3.9 The SS/RC shall amend the draft Standard in light with the comments received and submit to the BCI council.

5.4 Approval

5.4.1 No decision shall be made by the Council unless a quorum as defined in the Council By-Laws is present.

5.4.2 The BCI Council confirms that the process followed by the SS/RC has been in line with the standard setting/revising procedure.

5.4.3 The Council shall seek to make all decisions by consensus (absence of sustained opposition).

5.4.4 In the case where the Council is unable to reach consensus, the Council shall resort to a vote as determined in the By-Laws of the Council.

5.4.5 in the case of rejection of the draft prepared by the SS/RC, the Secretariat shall seek to establish the reasons for rejections and forward to the SS/RC for consideration. The SS/RC shall then reconvene.

5.5 Publication and Record-keeping

5.5.1 The approved final standard shall be published on the BCI website within 30 days of approval.

5.5.2 All approved standards shall include on their cover page the official language and a note that in case of inconsistency between versions, reference shall default to the official language version.

5.5.3 All approved standards shall include a contact point where requests for clarification and general feedback can be sent.

5.5.4 All approved standards shall include the date of the subsequent scheduled review.

5.5.5 BCI shall keep a file of all records made during standards development and revision activities (consultation comments, how they were taken into account, list of stakeholders, interested parties involved, draft and final versions of the standard, etc.) and these shall be made available on request.

5.5.6 All records related to standard development activities shall be kept for at least five years.

5.6 Making non-substantive changes

5.6.1 Typographical errors and minor inconsistencies may be corrected with the approval of the BCI CEO.

5.6.2 The Director of Standards and Assurance may also propose non-substantive changes to the BCI Council as follows:

- a) A written proposal for the recommended changes shall be prepared by the BCI secretariat, and shall be circulated to the BCI Council for a 30-day review period
- b) After this 30-day review period the written proposal may be amended to take account of any comments received
- c) The final written proposal as amended shall be submitted to the BCI Council for approval
- d) The updated standard shall be clearly identified with a version number and date and the most recent version shall be posted on the BCI website

5.7 Complaints mechanism

5.7.1 All complaints on issues related to standard setting and revision procedures will follow the grievance management process which is publicly available on the BCI website.