



Standards & Assurance Officer

Starting Date: As soon as possible

Contract type: One -year permanent role to start (with expectation to extend)

Salary: £26,900

Location: London, UK

Application closing date: 1 November 2021

Background

Better Cotton is the world's leading sustainability initiative for cotton. Our mission is to help cotton communities survive and thrive, while protecting and restoring the environment. Better Cotton operates on a truly global scale, reaching more than 2 million farmers across 23 countries. The Standards & Assurance function helps to develop and oversee the Better Cotton farm-level sustainability standard, and through the assurance programme, ensures that farmers meet this standard before they can sell Better Cotton. Oversight of farmer performance is conducted through various mechanisms, including self-assessment surveys, field assessments carried out by Better Cotton local country teams, and 3rd-party verification visits.

About this role

BCI is now seeking a motivated and organised **Standards & Assurance Officer** to support with the coordination of the assurance programme.

As a Standards & Assurance Officer, you will support the execution of the Better Cotton assurance programme. You will help coordinate seasonal assurance activities, and contribute to maintaining, enhancing, and reviewing the programme to ensure its credibility and effectiveness. You will update and oversee assurance procedures, conduct internal monitoring against procedures, and support Better Cotton country teams who work closely with farmers in the field. You will also contribute to capacity building supporting the development and delivery of training activities.

This exciting role offers excellent opportunities for personal and professional development, together with a competitive benefits package. This role is embedded within the Better Cotton Standards & Assurance function; the central team is split between London and Geneva, and the country-level assurance team includes colleagues in the US, India, Pakistan, China, Egypt, Turkey, Mozambique, South Africa, and Mali.

Responsibilities

The successful candidate will report to the Assurance Manager (based in London). The candidate will work closely with the other members of the Standards & Assurance team and will regularly collaborate with other Better Cotton country teams, third-party verifiers, and other stakeholders.

Specifically, the Standards & Assurance Officer will have the following responsibilities:

Assurance Programme (coordination, support, and improvements)

- Build and maintain expertise on BCI's innovative assurance model, including knowledge of requirements and procedures
- Support with monthly team meetings, including the development of agendas, materials, meeting minutes and following up on actions where required.
- Help coordinate seasonal assurance activities including the distribution of self-assessment surveys to farmers via the online survey platform
- Monitor adherence to internal assurance protocols for assigned countries
- Support with processing appeals submitted by farmers, which includes engaging with the appeals panel and preparing pre-reads and information packs etc.
- Coordinate assurance team work-planning and task management, including rotas and agendas/ actions for meetings

Assurance Programme (Tools & Document Management)

- Update and enhance the existing tools, templates, and policies supporting and governing the assurance programme, and develop new components as required.
- Ensure all tools, templates and documents are available in the required languages through translation coordination
- Support with the management of the team Sharepoint site

Data Management and Analysis

- Periodically monitor the assurance data (quality and completeness checks) in the Field Programme Salesforce system (online database)
- Contribute towards better use of data to inform programme activities and share insights with various stakeholders i.e., Country Teams, Implementing Partners, farmers, etc.

Capacity Building

- Support with the development and delivery of training for internal staff and for independent third-party verifiers

Standards Development

- Assist with the coordination of processes to revise or update the Better Cotton farm-level standard, including organising stakeholder meetings or surveys, capturing actions, etc

Beyond these specific responsibilities, the Standards & Assurance Officer may be asked to participate in other workstreams or cross-functional projects, depending on capacity and organisational needs.

Profile

The selected candidate will have the following skills, knowledge, and experience:

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
<i>Essential</i>
University degree, or equivalent higher education qualification, in a relevant field
Demonstrated interest in sustainability and international development
At least 2 years' working experience with at least 1 years in a relevant field
Experience and willingness in carrying out administrative tasks to support achieving team objectives
Excellent organisation and capacity to handle a set of different priorities several projects running in parallel
Proven ability to collaborate effectively across different teams and cultures, strong relationship building skills and service-oriented attitude
Good communication skills with the ability to communicate clearly and concisely, as well as the ability to assimilate and process information for wide-ranging audiences.
Proven ability to work autonomously with a high level of personal effectiveness and ability to adapt to changing priorities
Aptitude to appraise arguments critically and logically, organise ideas in a clear and concise manner, and draw conclusions and formulate arguments in way that is effective, concise, precise and specific
Excellent computer and IT skills, including: Word; PowerPoint; Excel, Outlook (Microsoft Suite)
Fluent in English – ability to communicate clearly and concisely
<i>Desirable</i>
Academic background in rural/agricultural development and sustainability
Advanced numerical skills and experience in analysing large data sets
Experience with Sharepoint, PowerBI (Microsoft Suite), and/or Salesforce
Experience in a not-for profit organisation
Experience with standards systems and assurance, auditing or certification
Competency in languages most relevant to BCI countries, such as Hindi, Urdu, Mandarin, French, Portuguese and Turkish

Working arrangements

This is a full time (40 hours per week) position. The role will have an initial one-year contract, with the aim to extend further. The role can be based at Better Cotton's London or Geneva office; BCI supports flexible-working, and the position will likely be split between remote work and office.

The position will include travel – likely 1-2 short-haul trips per year and 1 longer trip to a cotton-growing region (Africa, South Asia, Americas).

Applications

Interested applicants with the required attributes are asked to send, in English, a detailed CV and a brief cover letter (2 pages maximum) to Better Cotton by email with subject “**Application for S&A Officer**” to: recruitment@bettercotton.org

Application deadline: 1 November 2021

We thank all applicants for their interest; however, only candidates short-listed for a telephone interview will be contacted. Better Cotton is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to good practice and transparency in the management of natural, human, and financial resources.