

# Request for Proposals Consultancy – Better Cotton Production and Land Use Change in Brazil

**RFP n#:** 2021-10-IMP-BR

**Location:** Remote

**Start date:** 18 11 2021

**End date:** 31 01 2022

**Better Cotton key contact:**

Alvaro Moreira  
Global Implementation  
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All applications must be sent by email, to Better Cotton's key contact, with the subject header: "Application RFP Better Cotton Production and Land Use Change in Brazil – RFP n# 2021-10-IMP-BR". Questions, requests and applications sent after the deadline (04 November 2021) will not be considered.

## Description

Better Cotton is the world's largest cotton sustainability programme. Our mission: to help cotton communities survive and thrive, while protecting and restoring the environment. In challenging times, we are meeting the challenge head on. Through our network of field-level partners we have trained over 2.5 million farmers in 23 countries in more sustainable farming practices. A quarter of the world's cotton is now grown under the Better Cotton Standard. We have united the industry's stakeholders behind our efforts, and by 2030 our aim is to have trained 5 million farmers and doubled global production of Better Cotton.

To mainstream the production of Better Cotton around the world, to avoid duplication of standard programmes, and to encourage ownership, Better Cotton uses a process called 'benchmarking' to confer one-way recognition of other credible cotton sustainability standard systems. Since 2013, this recognition has allowed farmers who comply with a successfully benchmarked standard system to access the growing market for Better Cotton, avoid duplicative certification requirements and contribute to more rapid growth of the global supply of Better Cotton.

The benchmarking process requires: first, a comparison and evaluation of the comparable cotton production standard against the six components of the Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS), including a gap analysis of key differences; and second, an agreed action plan, or a Roadmap, to resolve gaps over a defined period of time. Importantly, the benchmarked system is not necessarily identical to, nor a mirror image of, the BCSS. Better Cotton determines equivalency based on the standard itself

(and its intent), the domestic production context among other factors (e.g., regulations and enforcement). When elements of either the BCSS and/or the BSS are changed, or credibility concerns arise, a formal review process is needed to re-align the two standard systems.

In 2014, Better Cotton and the *Associação Brasileira dos Produtores de Algodão* (Abrapa) / the Brazilian Cotton Growers Association, entered into a Partnership Agreement that established the *Algodão Brasileiro Responsável* (ABR) / Responsible Brazilian Cotton Programme as a benchmarked standard with Better Cotton. The preceding report, *Benchmarking Analysis between the Better Cotton & Responsible Brazilian Cotton* (2013) assessed the then-current similarities respective standard systems. The 2013 report compared critical components such as minimum qualification or certification requirements, continuous improvement, data collection, supply chain traceability, and organisational business models and governance structures. The report also recommended that Abrapa develop a certification manual to accompany the ABR Programme.

## Background

In 2021, following a revision of the Better Cotton Principles & Criteria, Better Cotton and Abrapa signed a new Partnership Agreement that included an update of the gap analysis between the BCSS and ABR Protocol. In this process, it has been concluded that more detailed information about land use for cultivation of cotton in Brazil is needed. As a result, and to ensure re-alignment of ABR with the BCSS, it has been agreed that Better Cotton and Abrapa will conduct an in-depth analysis of the relations between cotton production, land use change and biodiversity to strengthen both standards' credibility.

Better Cotton is seeking a research consultant (or a small team of researchers) to conduct a concise case study that will examine the relations between land use change and cotton production in Brazil, with a specific focus on cotton farms that have opted in for Better Cotton licensing.

The budget for this piece of work is up to 10.000 EUR.

## Scope of Work

The objectives of the study are to:

- Provide an overview of recent evolution of cotton production in different biomes in Brazil (mainly Cerrado and Amazon) and of relevant national agricultural land legislation, including land conversion, conservation, and biodiversity regulations.
- Demonstrate how Brazilian cotton farming systems, and systems that include cotton as rotational crop, intersect with land use changes in key cotton producing States (focus to be determined during proposal).
- Assess whether current legislation (Cadastro Rural, Amazônia Legal, Código Florestal, and all other relevant regulations) and enforcement matches Better Cotton's High Conservation Value risk-based simplified approach (Core Indicator 4.2.1. of Better Cotton's Principles & Criteria v.2.1), taking into consideration relevant changes in Brazilian legislation.
- Identify ongoing initiatives and/or publicly accessible resources that work alongside Brazilian cotton producers on land use management and conservation.
- Provide tailored recommendations on how Better Cotton could monitor land use change related to cotton farming in Brazil to ensure credibility of sustainable cotton production standards.

The study is to be prepared as an introduction to the topic that will support Better Cotton and Abrapa in re-aligning ABR Protocol to the Better Cotton Standard. Therefore, it will primarily be used for learning

and improvement purposes as well as to frame the discussion around land use change and cotton in Brazil.

The consultant(s) is/are expected to describe his/her/their approach in the proposal, along with a brief explanation of the methodology(ies) to be used. The proposal needs to be consistent with the study's scope and timeframe, presented in this Terms of Reference, and no longer than 2 pages (see details about application below).

The research tools can include, but are not limited to, interviews, document analysis and examination of land cover aerial images available in different platforms such as TerraBrasilis/INPE/BR, Open Land Map, Global Forest Watch, and so on. Better Cotton and Abrapa will support the consultant with contacts.

## High-level Timeline

The assignment is expected to start in October 2021. The final Case Study is expected by end January 2022. Progress will be monitored electronically (by video-calls, emails) throughout the timeframe until completion.

The expected deliverables with tentative timelines are:

<b>04 November 2021</b>	All applications must be submitted by email, headed "Application RFP Better Cotton Production and Land Use Change in Brazil – RFP n# 2021-10-IMP-OC" addressed to Alvaro Moreira at <a href="mailto:tender@bettercotton.org">tender@bettercotton.org</a> .
<b>04 to 11 November Month 2021</b>	Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews
<b>By 12 November 2021</b>	The successful applicant will be notified  Unsuccessful shortlisted applicants will also be notified
<b>By 18 November 2021</b>	<b>Start of the consultancy</b>
<b>By 25 November 2021</b>	A workplan outlining the activities and tasks to be carried out, including detailed timelines and an in-depth explanation of the approach and methods to be used. The consultants will present the workplan in a call with the Better Cotton team a week after submission.
<b>By 15 December 2021</b>	Submission of outputs of the data collection (notes or transcripts of interviews, etc.) with a one-page outline. Better Cotton will provide comments no later than a week after submission.
<b>By 07 January 2022</b>	A draft case study report for review and comment by Better Cotton.

**By 30 January 2022**

A final case study report after integration of Better Cotton's comments with a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the key learnings from the Case Study. The consultants will present key finds on a call with the Better Cotton team.

These deliverables are to be prepared in English and submitted to Better Cotton electronically via email to the Large Farm Programmes and Partnerships Senior Manager.

## Required Skills & Knowledge

Experience:

- Demonstrated experience in planning, designing and conducting research projects in Brazil.
- Demonstrated experience in working on land use change and land conversion regulations in Brazil.
- Knowledge and/or experience with Brazilian commercial agriculture is essential; knowledge of cotton production is desirable.
- Knowledge of and/or experience with voluntary sustainability standards is desirable.

Education:

- Advanced University Degree (minimum Master's Degree) in agronomy, economics geography, biology, development studies, or other related field).

Language:

- Fluent in Portuguese
- Excellent proven written and spoken English
- Strong oral and written communication skills

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

## Application Requirements

Please send your resume (max. 3 pages, with relevant experience only) along with a proposal (2 pages maximum) including the approach, a brief explanation of the methodology to be used, and a detailed financial offer up to €10.000, to Alvaro Moreira, Senior Manager Large Farm Programmes and Partnerships at [tender@bettercotton.org](mailto:tender@bettercotton.org), before 04 November 2021.

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

Better Cotton 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 Better Cotton's policies on equal opportunity, non-discrimination, anti-bribery & corruption and conflict of interest.