

Request for Proposals

Chain of Custody

Documentation Consultancy

RFP n#: 2021-11-TRC-COCDOC

Location: Remote

Start date: 17 January 2022

End date: 30 September 2022

Better Cotton key contact:

Jacky Broomhead

Traceability

tender@bettercotton.org



All applications must be sent by email, to Better Cotton's key contact, with the subject header:

"Application RFP Chain of Custody Documentation – RFP n# 2021-11-TRC-COCGUID"

Questions, requests and applications sent after the deadline (15 December 2021) will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

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. 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.

Background

We are seeking proposals from skilled individuals or organisations interested in supporting the stakeholder consultation and drafting process to develop our new chain of custody system documentation and requirements for Better Cotton.

As Better Cotton enters its next strategic phase, to achieve our 2030 vision and drive change on the ground for farmers, Better Cotton will make it possible to trace Better Cotton. By introducing traceability, we will continue to generate demand for Better Cotton, supporting our core markets of apparel and textiles while contributing to systemic change.

We work across all kinds of farm types, sizes and geographies. It is crucial that these producers, and the Better Cotton they produce, can continue to access international markets in the face of changing regulatory and business expectations.

Currently Better Cotton uses a single hybrid chain of custody model consisting of segregation and mass balance. Better Cotton is segregated at farm through to gin, meaning it is stored, transported and processed separately from conventional cotton. This ensures that all Better Cotton bales produced by participating gins are 100% Better Cotton and can be traced back to licensed Better Cotton farmers.

After the cotton leaves the gin, we use a mass balance chain of custody model. Mass balance is a volume-tracking system that allows Better Cotton to be substituted with conventional cotton by traders (country-level only) or spinners along the supply chain while ensuring that the amount of Better Cotton sold never exceeds the amount of Better Cotton purchased. This combination of segregation and mass balance has enabled Better Cotton to scale and drive demand for sustainable practices worldwide.

To enable traceability, Better Cotton will need to introduce additional requirements for suppliers to provide the necessary supply chain visibility and controls to support system integrity, while keeping administrative mass balance as an option for those who do not wish to source traceable Better Cotton. Better Cotton have employed an external organisation to conduct an assessment into different models, and a recommendation will be delivered by early February. Better Cotton are looking for a consultant to support the stakeholder consultation process to refine, socialise and build consensus around these recommendations. Once agreed, the consultant will draft the new chain of custody system requirements and related documentation for a system that would permit both "traceable" better cotton, and mass balance.

Better Cotton are convening a chain of custody task force made up of different cotton supply chain actors (ginners, traders, spinners, fabric mills, manufacturers, retailers and brands) and external experts (NGOs, intergovernmental bodies etc) to support the consultation process. The consultant will work with the Better Cotton traceability and supply chain teams to facilitate the task force workshops and achieve consensus on the way forward. Using the task force inputs and direction from Better Cotton, the consultant will also be responsible for drafting the new system requirements and related documentation.

The new CoC documentation will cover our current mass balance system along with the new models agreed through our CoC assessment, so there is one document for all chain of custody methods accepted by Better Cotton.

Scope of Work

Objectives

The objectives of this consultancy are to:

- Based on the traceability chain of custody recommendation, plan and facilitate workshops with the chain of custody task force to gather industry feedback on the proposed new model
- Using the chain of custody report and task force feedback, support Better Cotton to achieve consensus on the way forward
- With direction provided by Better Cotton, draft the new chain of custody requirements covering both our current mass balance system and the new chain of custody models for traceability
- Support the consultation process of the new chain of custody system requirements for traceable and administrative mass balance Better Cotton.
- Produce V2 of Better Cotton's chain of custody system requirements and documentation.

Activities

The consultant will be required to explore the activities outlined in this section by facilitating workshops with the Chain of Custody Task Force, conducting 1-1 meetings or interviews where relevant and some desk research. Better Cotton will establish the chain of custody task force and facilitate contacts with stakeholders to ensure the consultant has the access needed to conduct the assignment. Better Cotton will also provide background information on our traceability programme, our current CoC guidelines and the chain of custody revision including the draft and final reports.

1. Prepare and deliver workshops for the chain of custody task force to achieve consensus on the new chain of custody model for traceable Better Cotton

Working with the traceability team, the consultant will support Better Cotton by planning the agendas for the chain of custody task force meetings, developing workshop content (PowerPoint slides, Menti surveys, pre-read documents) and facilitating workshops. This includes any pre-work the task force needs to complete.

Better Cotton will be responsible for convening the task force, organising meetings, note taking, circulating summary notes to participants and managing any communications to attendees following the workshop.

The proposed timeline for workshop meetings is outlined below:

Month	Meeting #	Meeting Topics
January	1	Kick off meeting Overview of programme and activities
February	2	Review of CoC research

	3	Better Cotton presentation: proposed Chain of Custody model and approach
March	4	Feedback on Better Cotton proposal
	5	Feedback on Better Cotton proposal
	6	Feedback on Better Cotton proposal (if needed)
April	7	Agree way forward on Chain of Custody models
May	8	Input on draft explanatory and generic management system requirements
	9	Input on draft supply chain controls
June	10	Input on draft implementation approach
	11	Input on draft verification approach
July	12	Review of proposed Chain of Custody requirements
August	-	-
September	13	Review of consultation input on new CoC requirements
	14	Wrap-up meeting

Workshop attendees are from various time zones, to accommodate as many participants as possible, Better Cotton workshops tend to take place at 12:30 GMT. The consultant will need to be available for workshops during this period. For important topics, the workshop may be repeated twice in one day to reach attendees from different time zones.

Throughout the CoC model consultation, the consultant will need to actively listen to the various stakeholders, interpret feedback from the group and bring together different ideas to help drive consensus on the route forward. Strong influencing and persuasion skills will be needed to ultimately reach a decision by April 2022.

2. Draft the new chain of custody system requirements and documentation.

Once the direction has been agreed, the consultant is responsible for drafting the new system requirements and documentation.

At a minimum we expect this to include:

- A new Chain of Custody standard / guidelines for existing administrative mass balance and traceable Better Cotton
 - o Explanatory requirements
 - o Generic management system requirements
 - o Specific supply chain controls
 - o Additional CoC-related controls
 - o Implementation and monitoring
- Certification body process requirements
- Audit process requirements

The consultant will propose a draft structure for the documentation and both the consultant and Better Cotton will agree the structure before the drafting process commences. Better Cotton will have final editing rights over the document.

3. Publish Better Cotton's chain of custody system requirements and documentation

Once the draft is complete and has been reviewed by Better Cotton, the consultant will support the consultation of the new documentation and system requirements through the CoC task force and with any other key stakeholders (e.g. the traceability panel, the cotton traceability steering group, implementing partners, other standards systems).

Industry feedback must be collated, assessed, and agreed by Better Cotton before the requirements and system documentation are amended.

The consultant will be responsible for updating the requirements and system documentation with all agreed changes to create the final version.

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

High-level Timeline

15 December 2021	Applications deadline All applications must be submitted by email, headed "Application RFP Chain of Custody Documentation – RFP 2021-11-TRC-COCDOC" addressed to Jacky Broomhead at tender@bettercotton.org .
16 December to 24 December 2021	Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews
By 7 th January 2022	The successful applicant will be notified Unsuccessful <u>shortlisted</u> applicants will also be notified
19 January 2022	Start of the consultancy
By 28 January 2022	Define detailed plan for workshops
By 30 May 2022	First draft of new CoC documentation and requirements
By 30 September 2022	Published V2 CoC system requirements and documentation

Required Skills & Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
<i>Essential</i>
Demonstrated experience in developing and implementing supply chain/chain of custody requirements for sustainability systems
Proven experience facilitating multi-stakeholder workshops with attendees from different cultural backgrounds to achieve consensus
Previous experience documenting chain of custody or standard systems documentation and requirements
Strong influencing and persuasion skills and an understanding of group dynamics
Fluent English with a demonstrated ability to produce high quality outputs (workshop slides, reports or other documentation) that are clear and concise
<i>Desirable</i>
Knowledge of the cotton supply chain
Auditing experience
Demonstrated experience with ISEAL Code Compliance (particularly Assurance Code v2)

Application Requirements

Proposals responding to this Request for Proposals should be a maximum of 16 pages (excluding CVs), and include the following:

- Overview of relevant experience;
- Proposed methodology and timeline;
- Detailed and transparent budget, preferably in EUROS, including time allocation and day rates.
- Examples of previous documentation or report writing

In addition to skills, competencies and expertise, we 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.

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.