

Standards & Assurance Senior Coordinator

Starting Date: As soon as possible

Contract type: Permanent role

Salary: £40,000- £45,000, commensurate with experience

Location: London, UK, or surrounding areas (ability to commute to Better Cotton office in London approximately once weekly would be preferable)

Application closing date: 3 January 2022; applications will be considered on a rolling basis

Background

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 - from the smallest to the largest - 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, from ginners and spinners to brand owners, civil society organisations and governments. Everyone who cares about cotton and its sustainable future can now be part of something better.

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

Better Cotton is now seeking a highly motivated and qualified professional to join the Standards & Assurance team as a Senior Coordinator.

In this role, you will support the coordination of the Better Cotton assurance programme, which aims to monitor and verify performance of cotton farmers (or groups of farmers) around the world. The assurance programme relies on a global network of third-party verifiers, Better Cotton staff in country, self-assessment procedures, field-based licensing assessments, and related processes. In this role, you will oversee the effective implementation of assurance procedures, coordinate the assurance system review, and support Better Cotton country teams who work closely with farmers in the field.

A key element of maintaining the credibility of the assurance programme is a strong team of third-party verifiers and qualified second-party assessors, and you will be responsible for implementing a strategy to ensure high-quality, effective verifiers across Better Cotton countries. You will also contribute to capacity-building and training activities. Along the way, you will learn a great deal about the sustainability challenges and opportunities facing cotton farmers around the world – from water

and pesticide use, to enhancing biodiversity, and promoting decent work. You will also help the team to explore new approaches to assurance and verification – including direct to farmer and worker feedback tools, use of satellite data, landscape-level monitoring, etc.

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 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 Senior Coordinator will have the following responsibilities:

Assurance Programme (coordination, support, and improvements)

- Build and maintain expertise on Better Cotton's innovative assurance model, including knowledge of requirements and procedures
- Support timely seasonal assurance activities for designated countries
- Monitor adherence to internal assurance protocols for assigned countries
- Coordinate and oversee the periodic Assurance System Review of the Better Cotton Assurance Programme by an independent body contracted by Better Cotton.
- Contribute towards better use of data to inform programme activities and share insights with various stakeholders i.e., Country Teams, Implementing Partners, Third Party Verifiers, farmers etc

Assurance Programme (Tools & Document Management)

- Oversee the management of the tools, templates and policies supporting and governing the assurance programme

Third Party Verifier Strategy (management, coordination, and improvements)

- Support in the design and implementation of the third-party verifier strategy (monitoring and calibration). Identify improvements or opportunities for new initiatives to support strengthening the verifier team.
- Monitor the effective implementation of the third-party verifier strategy, approval procedures and support country teams where required
- Carry out verifier/auditor application reviews and support country teams with the onboarding of new verifiers.
- Assume responsibility of verifier/auditor documentation, ensuring information is up-to-date and maintained in Better Cotton's online database
- Coordinate and support the delivery of improvement plans for third party verifiers

Capacity Building

- Support in the design and implementation of training material for internal staff and for independent third-party verifiers to support with their understanding and delivery

Beyond these specific responsibilities, the Standards & Assurance Senior Coordinator 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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial working experience, with project management experience • University degree, or equivalent higher education qualification, in a relevant field • Demonstrated interest in sustainability and international development • Experience with standard systems and assurance, auditing or certification • Demonstrable experience engaging with external consultants or verifiers/auditors • Strong stakeholder engagement skills and the ability to communicate clearly and concisely with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. • Ability to assess seemingly conflicting requirements and design well-balanced resolutions, meeting strict credibility and scale criteria • Superior skills and aptitude to appraise arguments critically and logically, organise ideas in a clear and concise manner, and draw conclusions and formulate arguments in a way that is effective, concise, precise and specific • Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills with a proactive approach to finding and proposing solutions to challenges • Excellent organisation skills, capacity to multi-task and handle multiple priorities • Willingness to carry out administrative tasks • IT literacy, including proficiency in Microsoft Suite (Word, Powerpoint, Excel, Outlook) • Fluent in English: ability to communicate clearly and concisely
<i>Desirable</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic background in rural/agricultural development and sustainability • Auditing experience (management system, sustainability standards or farm assurance schemes) • Experience with Sharepoint, PowerBI (Microsoft Suite) and/or Salesforce • Experience in a member organisation or not-for profit organisation • Competency in languages most relevant to Better Cotton countries, such as Hindi, Urdu, Mandarin, French, Portuguese and Turkish

Working arrangements

The position is full-time (40 hours per week). The role will ideally be based out of Better Cotton's London office; Better Cotton supports flexible working, and the position will likely be split between remote work and office.

Travel will be required (10-15%) – 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 – S&A Senior Coordinator**” to: recruitment@bettercotton.org

Application deadline: 3 January 2022

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.