



BCI Implementing Partners Roles & Responsibilities

Introduction

BCI's Implementing Partners (IPs) are organisations interested in working with farmers to achieve more sustainable farm practices. They are linked to BCI through a specific contract—the Implementation Partnership Agreement. They are responsible for creating an enabling environment for the farmers to participate in the Better Cotton Standard System and to grow and sell Better Cotton. There is no restriction on who can be a BCI Implementing Partner (IP), although all IPs must first be members of BCI. IPs can include producer organisations, supply chain companies, NGOs, and government institutions, among others.

IPs are at the heart of BCI – all of our field level support to farmers around continuous improvement and accessing BCI licenses is by IPs. The critical role played by IPs is nuanced and complex. In this document, we have endeavoured to provide a comprehensive overview of the many roles and responsibilities played by IPs across all BCI's functions. It should be noted that the roles and responsibilities covered in this document are those typically required for the implementation of the Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS) in the field. The IP is usually responsible for the implementation of these activities, however, if an IP decides to delegate some of activities to a local partner (LP), extra attention to managing the project will be required.

This document aims to provide both guidance for prospective IPs, and to act as a tool for existing partners to keep track of the varied activities included in the fulfilment of their roles and responsibilities.

This document outlines the core ways in which IPs engage with BCI, including:

1. BCI – IP partnership vision and values
2. Partnership Management
3. Membership
4. BCSS implementation, including:
 - Project Planning and Management
 - Capacity Building
 - Assurance Programme
 - Results and Impacts
 - Chain of Custody
 - Communication
5. Financial Reporting

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Glossary

<i>Assurance Programme</i>	The licensing process, which assesses whether farmers have met core indicators of BCI's Principles & Criteria. It and the Principles & Criteria are two of six key components of the Better Cotton Standard System.
<i>BCI Licence</i>	According to assurance outcomes, a BCI licence is awarded at producer level (Producer Unit or Large Farm) when BCI Principles and Criteria's core indicators are met. It allows producers to sell their cotton as Better Cotton.
<i>BCI's Principles & Criteria (P&C)</i>	<p>The Better Cotton Principles & Criteria lay out the global definition of Better Cotton, by upholding the following seven principles on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Crop protection➤ Water stewardship➤ Soil health and land use➤ Biodiversity➤ Fibre quality➤ Decent work
<i>Capacity building</i>	<p>Activities, trainings and interventions designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Improve IP's ability to manage projects, transfer knowledge and foster change in farmer practices➤ Enable and empower farmers to improve their practices and social, economic and environmental outcomes
<i>Cascade training</i>	<p>The system by which trainings are cascaded all the way down to farmers. The cascade training set-up may vary from country to country or partner to partner but broadly follows the steps below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ BCI or IP produces training materials and curriculum➤ IP/project delivers regionally adapted training to PU Managers➤ PU Managers deliver locally adapted training to Field Facilitators➤ Field Facilitators deliver training to farmers / Learning Groups
<i>Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)</i>	The Better Cotton Standard is a continuous improvement standard. Licensed producers must commit to continuously learn and adopt improvement practices. Their commitments are recorded in a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).
<i>Field Facilitator (FF)</i>	Field Facilitators play an important role in enabling learning groups and medium farms to continuously improve by providing ongoing support



during the season. Field Facilitators are selected, trained, and typically paid by Implementing Partners.

BCI Growth and Innovation Fund (GIF)

The Better Cotton Growth and Innovation Fund (Better Cotton GIF) identifies, supports and invests in field-level programmes and innovations while fostering adoption of the Better Cotton Standard System by governments, trade associations and other entities.

Large Farm (LF)

Large Farms are producers who depend on permanent hired labour, and whose farm size is above 200ha of cotton.

Learning Group (LG)

Under the BCSS, smallholders are organised into learning groups to provide an environment for farmers to meet, learn about more sustainable practices, and discuss progress and challenges. These groups also provide a mean to teach farmers how to use and learn from keeping record of their inputs, enabling Field Facilitators to collect Results Indicator data. The group size should be defined according to local circumstances (e.g. farm size, transport logistics of seed cotton), with an optimal group size of 35 farmers (minimum 25/ maximum 40).

Local Partner (LP)

Local organisations identified and overseen by BCI IPs, that operate at local level and that IPs delegate some of their activities to.

Project

When an IP implements a BCI programme in a given region through a dedicated project team, it is called a project. There can be one or more projects per IP (if different teams are set-up in one or more regions).

Producer Unit (PU)

Learning Groups or medium farms are grouped together to form a Producer Unit (PU). The size of a unit will depend on local circumstances though the optimal size is between 3,500 to 4,000 farmers for smallholders with a maximum of 100 learning groups. In the case of medium farms, the optimal size is 100 farmers per Producer Unit. Different categories of farmers (smallholders, medium or large farms) are not mixed in the same Producer Unit.

Producer Unit Manager (PUM)

Each PU is coordinated by a dedicated Producer Unit Manager (PU Manager). Each unit of producers must have its own PU Manager. The PU Manager is selected by the Implementing Partner. PU Managers undergo training and capacity building delivered through the Implementing Partner. They need to fully master the Better Cotton Principles and Criteria and the requirements of the Better Cotton Assurance Programme.

Roles & Responsibilities

1. Partnership Governing Values

BCI works with IPs to implement Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS) in the field. BCI and IPs enter into a partnership under common governing values:

- Transparency: each partner commits to operating transparently, sharing information openly with the other to promote sustainability in the cotton sector
- Mutual benefit: each partner will work to ensure both parties are benefitting from the partnership, and to maintain this.
- Mutual accountability: each partner agrees to assume responsibility for their activities, and to fulfil all commitments on time and to a high level of quality.
- Mutual respect: each partner commits to treating each other with mutual respect in all matters.
- Inclusivity and bottom-up approach: Partners commit to include all actors' views and consult on the definition of sustainability objectives
- "Farmer Centricity": Partners commit to bring all their expertise and experience to the service of farmers and the BCI mission. Farmers' voices are heard and fairly reflected in project design and activities.

2. Internal Management System

- For partners working through projects (or through different regional management teams), a strong internal management system is required. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - **A robust management structure:** Should be available to provide guidance and supervision to field teams, with clear coordination and communication mechanisms enabling information to flow to and from field level.
 - **Strong HR processes:** IPs should have strong HR processes in place, including end of season staff evaluations for all staff (including PU managers and FFs), formal grievance mechanisms, and documentation for all key HR policies and procedures (code of conduct, payroll, employment data etc.)
 - **Management Information Systems (MIS):** IPs working at scale should have a well-defined MIS system in place to enable efficient access to key organisational information, including HR, finance, and budget related data.
 - **Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms:** IPs should have standard operating procedures for monitoring visits, standard processes for selecting PUs to visit, and checks in place to ensure that identified areas for improvement are followed up on at PU level.
 - **Data management and reporting mechanisms:** IPs should have an effective data collection and management process, including standard protocols for assessing and accessing data received from field level.
 - **A clearly defined partner selection process:** Partners interested in working with an IP should submit a detailed expression of intent, including details on the organisations structure, projects, key staff, and aims for the partnership. Programme staff from the IP should also visit the local partner, along with the finance team, to review documentation. Financial guidelines should also be shared with potential partners.

3. Partnership Management

IPs and BCI teams are expected to maintain a close relationship and to share an understanding about what it means to be partners, including:

- Together BCI country teams and IPs should work to define the roles and responsibilities of each organisation, as well as identify a key contact person to coordinate activities and manage the partnership. Appropriate lines of escalation should also be identified.
- Hold monthly meetings to check in, discuss issues, and coordinate activities
- Meet annually for an end of year partnership review meeting to review the partnership, discuss its long-term vision, successes and areas for improvement, and to plan ahead
- Both partners should communicate openly about any issues which arise, or any support needed
- Escalate any high-level issues to the BCI country/regional manager

4. Membership

- IPs are required to be BCI members (except for government entities)
- As BCI Members, IPs commit to the BCI code of practice (for [commercial members](#) or [non-commercial members](#)). Breaches of the code of practice may lead to a termination of membership and IP Agreement.
As BCI members, IPs are required to pay annual membership fees, unless otherwise agreed with BCI.

5. BCSS Implementation

The IP is responsible for implementing the Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS). An IP working with BCI should have experience working with farmers and in sustainability, as well as a good understanding of BCI's Principle's & Criteria (the document that forms the basis of the BCI standard, also known as the BCI P&C). Together with the support of their BCI country teams, IPs implement the following activities:

Project Planning and Management

Set up the project

- Select the project area and identify local challenges through consultation with various stakeholders (such as farmers, NGOs, researchers, supply chain actors etc)
- Organise farmers into producer units (PUs) and learning groups (LGs – only applicable to smallholders) according to the BCI assurance programme, taking into account the local structure of markets and villages, as well as geographical proximity.
 - Farmers are divided into three categories: smallholders, medium farms, and large farms. Smallholders are considered to be farms of less than 20 hectares in size and are further divided into learning groups (LGs) of around 35 farmers. Medium farms are typically between 20 and 200 hectares in size. Large farms are above 200 hectares in size. Smallholders and medium farms are grouped into producer units (PUs).
 - Licenses are obtained at the producer level and are either attributed to an individual large farm or, for small and medium farms, to a producer unit.

- Select appropriate PU managers (as per the [BCI PU manager qualifications and competencies](#)) and field facilitators for each producer unit.

Build a three-year project plan

- Create targets based on learnings, improvement plans (at project and producer level) and, if possible, assessment reports from previous years
- Plan the key activities required to meet these targets and define an implementation plan, including:
 - An annual schedule of assurance activities, including when these will take place
 - An annual training plan at project-level
- Consider how the project could reach more farmers in the project area, if possible.
- Prepare a 3-year budget
- Ensure decent working conditions for all staff, including fair and equal pay (salary meeting at minimum average regional wage, travel compensation for fuel etc...)

Develop an annual Project Improvement Plan (PIP)

- Based on project experience each year, IPs should develop improvement plans at project-level.
- This process involves a self-reflection exercise, encouraging IPs to think critically about the work they are conducting at project level, and to use this information to identify areas for improvement. The information for this should come from IPs' existing knowledge of their projects and should be taken from existing BCI processes.
- From this, Project Improvement Plans (PIP) will be developed to address identified gaps. The process is not designed to be prescriptive, however PIPs should include multi-year targets and timebound activities, agreed with the relevant BCI country team.
- Monitoring progress towards these targets and timebound activities will also be agreed upon in collaboration with BCI country teams. Overall progress should be reported on annually and will be used to inform the following years' PIP.

Select and manage Local Partners (where applicable)

The IP is responsible for implementing the Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS) and should try to implement activities directly where possible. If an IP decides to work through a local partner (LP), extra attention to managing the project will be required.

- Onboard qualified local partners (LPs)
 - Establish a formal agreement outlining respective roles and responsibilities of the local partner and the IP organisation that is available to the BCI team
 - Provide an induction to the Better Cotton Standard System, as well as training, to the local partner
- Oversee and manage local partner's activities
 - Ensure there is a system in place to assess the performance of the partner annually
 - Maintain frequent communication with the partner so that any issues are addressed and ongoing feedback is provided
 - Visit the project site regularly, at least once per season

Capacity Building

BCI works through Implementing Partners (IPs) to build capacity of farmers in growing Better Cotton, in order to increase adoption of better practices by farmers.

Set up a cascade training system for optimum capacity building programme delivery (*please see appendix 1 for a visualisation of this process*)

- ▶ The cascade training system specifies how trainings will be cascaded and training material from BCI and other sources will be adapted down to all levels:
 - From IP to project (if applicable)
 - From IP/project (if applicable) to PU managers
 - From PU manager to field facilitators
 - From field facilitators to learning groups/farmers
- ▶ For each level of the cascade training, an annual training plan addressing the following areas should be developed, including:
 - Sustainability hotspots/continuous improvement process focal area (as per the CIP process)
 - Potential risks of non-compliance with the BCI Principles & Criteria
 - Resources that will be required for the next season
 - Internal management system (staff skills and performance, training assessments, induction systems for new staff etc.)
 - Other relevant information from internal and external assessment visits
- ▶ For each level of the cascade training, competent trainers that have appropriate qualifications and/or experience should be identified and ensure that:
 - Trainings follow a plan and that the timing and location of these allows a high level of participation where gender equality and inclusion are promoted.
 - Learnings are achieved through clear and frequent communication, and that issues in the field are shared with the IP and BCI

Develop relevant and appropriate training approaches and materials:

Trainers at all levels of the cascade training model use appropriate approaches and materials. Training materials are reviewed and adapted annually according to training evaluation feedback, external and internal assessment outcomes, CIP amendments and other relevant information, as identified in the annual training plan

Monitoring of capacity building activity outcomes:

Ensure the monitoring of post training outcomes and practice adoption according to the continuous improvement plans (CIPs) of producer units and in line with BCI's core indicator 7.2.4. on a yearly basis.

Continuously support field staff in their work with farmers and workers:

Ensure sufficient resources are available for field staff to conduct field activities. Field staff should be further supported with annual performance reviews in order to identify skill gaps and enhance their growth and development.

Collect & share good practices and collaborate with others on critical topics

- Submit proven and effective training materials to BCI and participate in workshops facilitated by BCI
- Engage and collaborate with external partners or experts that can provide complimentary expertise
- Participate in in-country BCI capacity building activities such as workshops, exposure visits etc.

Support continuous improvement at farm level

Ensure the implementation of the continuous improvement plan process, including:

- Reviewing the outcomes of the scoping and consultation process conducted by the PU Manager (step 1 of the CIP process)
- Participating in regional planning groups to discuss common challenges, exchange expertise, and identify or review interventions (step 2 of the CIP process)
- Supporting the PU Manager in completing the CIP template and identifying key “focus areas” (step 3 of the CIP process)
- Supporting the PU Manager in the implementation and monitoring of the CIP (step 4 and 5 of the CIP process)
- Supporting the PU Manager in reviewing and revising the CIP (step 6 of CIP process)

Assurance Programme

The [Assurance Programme](#) is the central mechanism for checking if a producer is meeting the BCI minimum requirements, and can therefore be given a Better Cotton licence. IPs act as a key stakeholder in implementing the assurance programme, and have responsibility for the following activities:

Support PU Managers with the implementation of the P&Cs

- For example, IPs should coordinate with, and support, PU managers in the development of policies and management plans, such as with the creation of an appropriate CIP. IPs should also work with PU managers to develop corrective action plans, and to increase levels of adoption at field level.

Communicate assurance programme requirements and deadlines

- Ensure PU managers and field facilitators are aware of assurance programme deadlines and help monitor progress towards these.

Create a PU internal management system

- This includes supporting with the following PU level activities:
 - Developing, implementing and regularly revising a continuous improvement plan;
 - Operating a data management system, including: farmer lists, farm level production data (such as the farmer field book), results indicator reporting (RIR), producer level data

including geo-location, co-farmer and farm labour profiles, receipts/sales information for cotton sales, training and adoption records.

- Work with the PU to identify potential non-conformities and help to address these, as well as supporting them to develop a corrective action plan and address any outstanding non-conformities.

Carry out readiness checks of new PUs before licensing

- Conduct readiness checks on new PUs before the initial licensing assessment to ensure the producers are ready for licensing. If any compliance gaps are identified during a readiness check, IPs and PU managers should work together to develop corrective actions. The IP representative is responsible for ensuring corrective actions are implemented by the PU.
- Based on the readiness check, the IP should submit a list of all new producer units it is recommending for licensing to the BCI country team.

Carry out PU support visits

- IP representatives should also carry out PU support visits to PUs with active licences in order to check progress against the PU's CIP, as well as to check compliance against core indicators. IPs are also responsible for scheduling these visits and ensuring each PU receives one during its active licence period.

Results and Impacts

IPs play a key role in working with BCI to demonstrate results and impacts and use them as learnings for farmers. As such, IPs are asked to report to BCI on agreed metrics and comply with BCI's [Policy on Communicating Data](#).

- Check data submitted by producers to make sure it meets requirements and is complete and accurate. IPs should also submit result indicator reports (RIRs) to BCI once a year.
- Support learning feedback loops to producers by sharing data with producer managers and FFs (such as learning dashboards)
- Collaborate with BCI and its research partners when requested;
- Inform BCI of any other research initiative or project related to BCI in which the IP is involved, either through providing BCI-related data, participating to interviews, or organising field visits to BCI farmers.
- Share any field-level best practices and impact studies conducted in the project area with BCI
- Provide seasonal data (referred to as reach indicators) to BCI six times throughout the season (planned, early season reporting, late season reporting, licensing figures, and final post-harvest figures). These figures should consist of the volume of Better Cotton Produced, the number of Better Cotton farmers divided by gender, and the area under Better Cotton cultivation.

Chain of Custody

This section refers to BCI's [Chain of Custody guidelines V.1.3](#), which outlines the central responsibilities of IPs when working with farmers and ginners for Better Cotton uptake. When adjustments are made to the CoC guidelines, BCI IPs are responsible for becoming familiar with these changes themselves, as well as communicating any changes to the farmers and ginners they work with.

Help connect licensed BCI farmers with participating ginners

- The IP should identify a sufficient number of local ginners to gin the Better Cotton seed produced by participating farmers from their project area. This information will be requested by the supply chain team prior to the start of harvest.
- The IP should participate in meetings with ginners (organised by the BCI supply chain team). The timeline for this varies in different countries and will need to be confirmed with the BCI supply chain team in each case.
- Where possible, the IP should facilitate exchange between farmers and ginners through exchanging ginner and farmer lists (address and contact numbers only) with each other. This could, for example, enable a ginner to be invited to a farmer training to share best practices for picking.
- Project staff should also make note of where most farmers within their respective PUs are selling their cotton and aim to enrol these ginners for the next season if they are not enrolled already. The list of prospective ginners who are not yet enrolled should be passed on to BCI country supply chain teams.

Segregation and documentation of Better Cotton between farm and gin

- The IP is responsible for ensuring that IP staff and farmers who are associated with the IP comply with the relevant Chain of Custody requirements, specifically that:
 - Better Cotton is kept segregated from conventional cotton at all points of harvest, storage, sale and transport
 - Where relevant, AAV/farmer codes are kept secure and only shared with buyers purchasing Better Cotton (such as a gin or middleman)
 - Farmers maintain records of seed Better Cotton sales (required by BCI's P&C, indicator 7.3.5/ 7.3.6)
 - The IP maintains records demonstrating that all participating farmers have been trained on the relevant chain of custody requirements as set out in clause 3.2.1 of (CoC) V.1.3.
- The IP should communicate licensing decisions to farmers and ginners, including licence cancellations and disqualifications. This will let farmers know if they can sell their cotton as Better Cotton, and ginners will be made aware of whether or not they can procure Better Cotton for that season.
- Before licensing, the IP should inform BCI on the channels through which cotton is sold in their areas (e.g. direct sale, middlemen or market yard) so that the BCI supply chain team can identify who training should be provided to (middle men, gin staff etc.)

Distribution of Annual Authorised Volume (AAV) codes

- Where relevant, the IP is responsible for sharing AAV codes with all producers (LF, MF and LG lead farmers) it is working with and ensuring that PU managers distribute AAV codes to farmers within two weeks of the IP receiving these codes.
- In cases where codes may not be distributed directly to farmers by PUs, an alternative system must be in place (e.g. unique farmer codes and farmer lists) to ensure gins can cross-check that they are buying from licensed BCI Farmers.
- If the IP becomes aware of any potential misuse of AAV codes, it should contact BCI's supply chain team (and Strategic Partners where relevant) within 3 days of learning about the issue. The IP should work with BCI in taking the necessary action to ensure the credible flow of Better Cotton between farm and gin.

Training and other activities

- The IP should attend at least one of the BCI Supply Chain trainings per year (pre-season/post season) and cascade this down to internal staff and farmers.
 - The IP and BCI Supply Chain team should coordinate to invite gins to participate in ginner trainings before the start of the harvest season
 - In low uptake areas, BCI might request specific support actions from the IP to improve uptake
- BCI may also request that IP staff participate in BCI gin support visits.

Communications

As the Better Cotton Standard System is implemented by a large and diverse number of partner organisations based around the globe, it is essential that partner organisations understand and agree to communicate about their work with BCI on the basis of the following principles:

- On the use of BCI logo:
 - For commercial communication only: neither BCI nor IPs shall use the other's logo in any fashion without the other partner's prior written approval.
 - Only BCI members and partners (this does not include Better Cotton platform users) are authorised to use the BCI logo as marketing collateral, for more information please see the BCI guidelines on appropriate usage.
 - To support activities in the field, BCI and IPs can make use of both logos together.
- For communicating about results and field-level data:
 - IPs should refer to the Better Cotton Claims Framework for more information on the appropriate use of language to describe BCI's work, results and field level data.
 - When IPs wish to communicate data externally and attribute it to BCI, they may only reference data that is validated and shared by BCI.
- Partners can share and communicate their own data related to BCI project activities, but the data cannot be attributed to BCI and the BCI logo cannot be used unless a written agreement has been acquired.
 - Partners may communicate, for example, to their funders about the Reach Indicators they collect and that pertain to their specific projects (i.e. information aggregated at the level of the implementing partner or project).

- They may also communicate data at the global and country level that is provided by BCI in official communications.
- BCI recommends that IPs limit the sharing of their own results at project or producer unit level to the funders of those projects or other partners for learning purposes
- IPs may be asked to work with BCI on the writing of reports, statements and collect stories from the field.
- IPs ensure obtaining consent via a consent form when taking information/pictures from farmers to be used for publication.

6. Financial Reporting

Please note that BCI is currently reviewing its financial requirements and that this list may be updated to require IPs to strengthen their financial record keeping and documentation of approval of expenses.

For non-GIF-funded IPs:

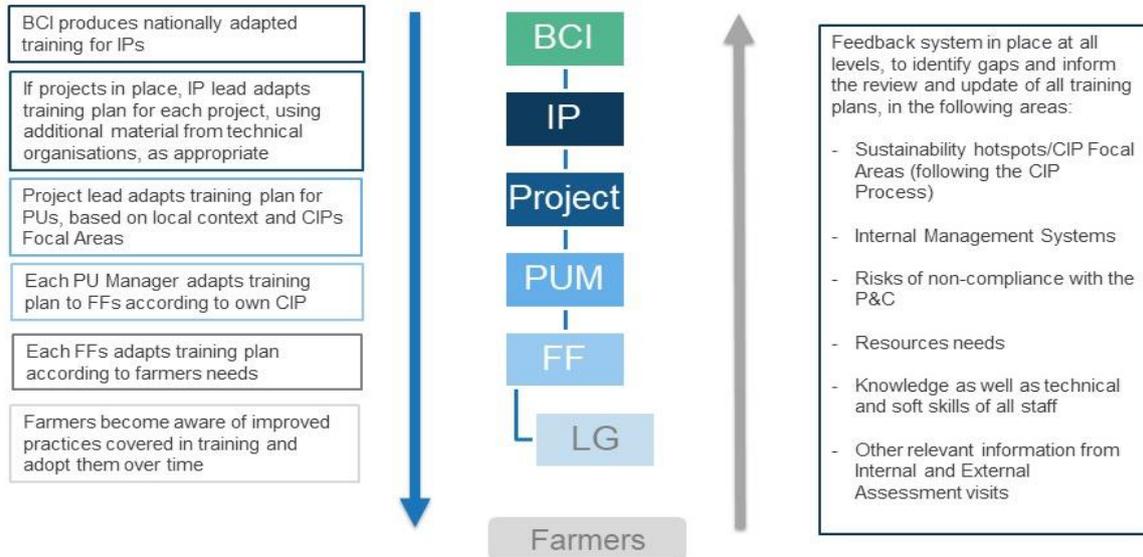
- To identify potential budget limitation risks and to have a plan to mitigate those risks.
- To provide BCI with a 3-year budget plan.
- To provide a budget for all PUs and associated PU level activities within the IP. This should include staff resources required at PU level, as well as any other costs associated with the management of the PU.
- To provide notice to BCI of any modification to the approved annual budget.
- To submit to BCI complete and reliable management reports in accordance to the content, format and frequency requested.
- To provide a copy to BCI of their annual financial report.

For GIF-funded IPs:

- To provide a copy of the approved annual budget for implementation of the BCI programme to BCI. The budget should be specific regarding financial sources and the use of funds. Annual budget is expected to address all the activities indicated in the annual implementation plan;
- To provide a 3-year budget plan as requested by GIF application;
- Submission of mid-year report (narrative and financial) by mid-September according to GIF requirements;
- Submission of year-end report (narrative and financial) by 1 May according to GIF requirements;
- Submission of independent financial audit report by May 1 adhering to the GIF audit instruction provided by the appointed GIF auditor.

Appendix 1: Reference Documents

Figure 1: Cascade training outline





Appendix 2: Detailed Glossary

<i>Assurance Programme</i>	The licensing process, which assesses whether farmers have met core indicators of BCI's Principles & Criteria. It and the Principles & Criteria are two of six key components of the Better Cotton Standard System.
<i>BCI Licence</i>	According to assurance outcomes, a BCI licence is awarded at producer level (Producer Unit or Large Farm) when BCI Principles and Criteria's core indicators are met. It allows producers to sell their cotton as Better Cotton.
<i>BCI Members</i>	BCI members are organisations that have joined BCI formally as members in support BCI's mission 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. Members categories include: Civil Society, Producer Organisation, Supplier and Manufacturer, Retailer and Brand as well as Associate.
<i>BCI's Principles & Criteria (P&C)</i>	<p>The Better Cotton Principles & Criteria lay out the global definition of Better Cotton, by upholding the following seven principles on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Crop protection➤ Water stewardship➤ Soil health and land use➤ Biodiversity➤ Fibre quality➤ Decent work
<i>BCI Supply Chain</i>	The Better Cotton Supply Chain references all the steps to move and transform raw Better Cotton into finished products and distributing them. The entities involved in the supply chain include farmers, gins, spinning mills, fabric mills, traders and end-product manufacturers.
<i>Better Cotton</i>	Cotton produced by licensed BCI Farmers under the Better Cotton Standard System or recognised equivalent standards.
<i>Better Cotton Claim Unit (BCCU)</i>	A tracking unit that corresponds to 1 KG of Better Cotton lint produced by a licensed farmer and procured from a participating BCI ginner by a cotton merchant or a spinning mill.
<i>Better Cotton Standard</i>	A holistic approach to sustainable cotton farming which covers



<i>System (BCSS)</i>	<p>all three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economic. The system is comprised of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Principles and Criteria➤ Capacity Building➤ Assurance Programme➤ Chain of Custody➤ Claims Framework➤ Results and Impact
<i>Capacity building</i>	<p>Activities, trainings and interventions designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Improve IP's ability to manage projects, transfer knowledge and foster change in farmer practices➤ Enable and empower farmers to improve their practices and social, economic and environmental outcomes
<i>Cascade training</i>	<p>The system by which trainings are cascaded all the way down to farmers. The cascade training set-up may vary from country to country or partner to partner but broadly follows the steps below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ BCI or IP produces training materials and curriculum➤ IP/project delivers regionally adapted training to PU Managers➤ PU Managers deliver locally adapted training to Field Facilitators➤ Field Facilitators deliver training to farmers / Learning Groups
<i>Better Cotton Chain of Custody (CoC)</i>	<p>The chronological documentation, paper trail and electronic evidence that relates to the movement of Better Cotton products through the supply chain. CoC ensures the volume of Better Cotton claimed by BCI Retailer and Brand Members does not exceed the volume of Better Cotton produced by licensed BCI Farmers in any given time period (accounting for relevant conversion rates).</p>
<i>Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)</i>	<p>The Better Cotton Standard is a continuous improvement standard. Licensed producers must commit to continuously learn and adopt improvement practices. Their commitments are recorded in a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).</p>
<i>Farmer list</i>	<p>List of farmers within a PU participating to a BCSS programme, benefiting from training and eligible for a BCI license.</p>
<i>Field Facilitator (FF)</i>	<p>Field Facilitators play an important role in enabling learning groups and medium farms to continuously improve by providing ongoing support</p>



during the season. Field Facilitators are selected, trained, and typically paid by Implementing Partners.

<i>Field staff</i>	Field staff refer to any staff working in the field to support the implementation of the BCSS. This could include but is not limited to: Project/Field Coordinator, PU Managers and Field Facilitators.
<i>BCI Growth and Innovation Fund (GIF)</i>	The Better Cotton Growth and Innovation Fund (Better Cotton GIF) identifies, supports and invests in field-level programmes and innovations while fostering adoption of the Better Cotton Standard System by governments, trade associations and other entities.
<i>Implementing Partner (IP)</i>	Implementing Partners (IPs) are organisations interested in working with farmers to achieve more sustainable farm practices. They are linked with BCI through a specific contract—the Implementation Partnership Agreement. They are responsible for creating an enabling environment for the farmers to participate in the Better Cotton Standard System and to grow and sell Better Cotton. There is no restriction on who can be a BCI Implementing Partner (IP), although all IPs must first be members of BCI. IPs can include producer organisations, supply chain companies, NGOs, and government institutions, among others.
<i>IP staff</i>	IP staff refers to any staff working at the IP management level. This may include but is not limited to: IP Manager, IP Coordinator, and Project Manager.
<i>Large Farm (LF)</i>	Large Farms are producers who depend on permanent hired labour, and whose farm size is above 200ha of cotton.
<i>Learning Group (LG)</i>	Under the BCSS, smallholders are organised into learning groups to provide an environment for farmers to meet, learn about more sustainable practices, and discuss progress and challenges. These groups also provide a mean to teach farmers how to use and learn from keeping record of their inputs, enabling Field Facilitators to collect Results Indicator data. The group size should be defined according to local circumstances (e.g. farm size, transport logistics of seed cotton), with an optimal group size of 35 farmers (minimum 25/ maximum 40).
<i>Local Partner (LP)</i>	Local organisations identified and overseen by BCI IPs, that operate at local level and that IPs delegate some of their activities to.
<i>Project</i>	When an IP implements a BCI programme in a given region through a dedicated project team, it is called a project. There can be one or more projects per IP (if different teams are set-up in one or more regions).

<i>Project staff</i>	Project staff defines any staff working in the implementation of the BCSS at field-level in a given region, as part of a project (e.g. Project Manager, Project Coordinator, Field Coordinator...etc)
<i>Producer Unit (PU)</i>	Learning Groups or medium farms are grouped together to form a Producer Unit (PU). The size of a unit will depend on local circumstances though the optimal size is between 3,500 to 4,000 farmers for smallholders with a maximum of 100 learning groups. In the case of medium farms, the optimal size is 100 farmers per Producer Unit. Different categories of farmers (smallholders, medium or large farms) are not mixed in the same Producer Unit.
<i>Producer Unit Manager (PUM)</i>	Each PU is coordinated by a dedicated Producer Unit Manager (PU Manager). Each unit of producers must have its own PU Manager. The PU Manager is selected by the Implementing Partner. PU Managers undergo training and capacity building delivered through the Implementing Partner. They need to fully master the Better Cotton Principles and Criteria and the requirements of the Better Cotton Assurance Programme.
<i>Producer Unit (PU) staff</i>	Any staff working under a Producer Unit. This includes but is not limited to: PU Manager, Field Facilitators, Lead Farmers.
<i>Licensing Assessment</i>	All Producers must undergo a licensing assessment to receive or renew a licence to assess compliance against the BCI Principles & Criteria. This can be conducted by either BCI or a 3PV.
<i>IP Readiness Check</i>	IPs are to conduct an IP Readiness Check on all new Producer Units to assess whether a new PU fully meets the Core Indicators before determining whether the PU will be recommended for licensing.
<i>IP Monitoring Visit</i>	All licensed PUs are required to receive a field-based monitoring visit conducted by the IP in either Year 2 or Year 3 of the active licence period
<i>Surveillance Assessment</i>	Surveillance assessments are conducted by either BCI or a 3PV and are carried out on a sample of licensed PUs in either Year 2 or Year 3 of the licence.
<i>2nd Party Credibility Check</i>	Visits conducted by either BCI or the IP to assess a PU's (2PCC) conformity with BCI Principles & Criteria.
<i>3rd Party Verifiers</i>	3rd Party Verification is a critical component of the Assurance Programme. 3rd party verifiers are independent verifiers approved by BCI to carry out verification activities in specific countries.