

Request for Proposal: Women Field Staff Needs Assessment and Baseline Empowerment Study (multiple countries)

RFP n#: 2022-04-CO-GENDER

Locations: India, Pakistan, China,
Mozambique, Mali, Turkey

Start date: June 2022

End date: October 2022

Better Cotton key contact:

Hayley Morgan
Senior Global Programme Coordinator,
Gender Focal Point
tender@bettercotton.org



All applications must be sent by email, addressed to Better Cotton's key contact, with the subject header: "Application RFP Women Field Staff Need Assessment and Baseline Empowerment Study – RFP n# 2022-04-CO-GENDER". Questions, requests and applications sent after the deadline (6 May 2022) will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

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. Through our network of field-level programme 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. Our 2030 strategy also recognises our opportunity to tackle systemic inequalities and unequal gender relations to promote shared power, control of resources, decision-making, and support for women's empowerment. One of our 5 new impact target areas is women's empowerment. Our goal is to increase the proportion of

women in field staff positions who make our programmes possible, and to support their empowerment through new initiatives.

Description

Better Cotton capacity building programmes are delivered by a network of over 5,000 field staff (13% women), hired and supported by our growing Programme Partner network. By setting a target to increase the proportion of women field staff globally, and developing new initiatives to meet the particular needs of these women, we believe that our programmes will become more impactful and more inclusive for the communities we aim to support.

In order to inform new initiatives, we require a qualitative needs assessment of Women Field Staff to understand their needs, experiences, and ideas for how their roles and our programmes could evolve and improve. We are also committed to demonstrating impact through measuring the empowerment of women field staff, and collecting their baseline empowerment levels will help us better understand their situation.

We are seeking proposals from skilled individuals or organisations interested in conducting qualitative research to address our needs assessment objectives, and to adapt and apply our existing women's empowerment indicator with the same field staff population. In addition, we invite our research partners to make recommendations for how the Better Cotton team can utilise findings from this project to develop an impact pathway and action plan to tackle identified barriers and proactively support empowerment.

Project areas:

Direct Better Cotton programmes are active in 11 countries. The proposed project areas are China (\approx 35 women field staff), India (\approx 380 women field staff), Mali (\approx 80 women field staff), Mozambique (\approx 30 women field staff), and Pakistan (\approx 160 women field staff). These countries represent 5 of the 6 proposed projects areas, to also include Turkey (\approx 18 women field staff). *We recognise that not all applicants will have the capacity to deliver this project in all 6 countries, and welcome applications for 1-6 countries. Pending the types of applications received, we may choose to contract one lead organisation to convene country-level studies, using the same methodology.*

Needs assessment questions (to be further developed with the appointed consultant):

- What does "empowerment" mean to women field staff?
- What empowerment barriers (such as transportation and patriarchal structures) and opportunities (such as progression goals) do women field staff identify?
- What are their personal and professional motivations?
- How do their roles vary? What ideas do they have about how their roles could be adapted?

Scope of Work

The expected output will be to build the research approach based on already conducted Better Cotton studies (FF survey and Delta framework) and utilise the findings to supplement in-person qualitative research methods (focus group discussions, key informant interviews). In addition to FGDs or interviews, remote surveys can be part of the methodology to increase the sample size and achieve a representative sample of approximately 20% of our target population. There are approximately 550 active women field staff in BCI programmes and we would like to cover around 100-120 women field in this study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the diffusion of women field staff across states and

regions within each project country, we welcome hybrid methodologies that make the best use of technology along with in-person interviews. Entirely in-person approaches will be required however in Mozambique and Mali.

The empowerment methodology used must build on the quantitative [Delta Framework](#) Women's Empowerment Indicator, in development with CARE International for use in farm settings. Adaptation to make the indicator relevant and appropriate for field staff and to include a qualitative dimension will be required. The level of effort for adaptation is not anticipated to be high.

The outputs will be:

- Risk-assessment to ensure study does not cause unintended harm
- Qualitative and quantitative research methodology and tools for needs assessment and baseline empowerment study with women field staff
- Research coordination and delivery
- Results and analysis – report and presentation
- Recommendations for methods to continuously engage and support women field staff, based on results and analysis
- Recommendations for how the Better Cotton team can utilise findings from this project to develop an impact pathway and action plan to tackle identified barriers and proactively support empowerment.

Additional factors to consider:

By Field Staff we refer to individuals with a field/farm facing role, and primarily focus on [Producer Unit Managers](#) (responsible for project coordination, training, data management and assurance activities) and Field Facilitators (responsible for convening Learning Groups, developing and delivering training, building relationships with cotton communities). We also hope to include women in other roles, more limited in number.

High-level Timeline

6 May 2022	All applications must be submitted by email, headed "Application RFP Women Field Staff Need Assessment Study – RFP n# 2022-03-CO-GENDER" addressed to Hayley Morgan at tender@bettercotton.org .
9 - 18 May 2022	Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews
20 May 2022	The successful applicant will be notified Unsuccessful <u>shortlisted</u> applicants will also be notified
End May/Early June 2022	Start of the project
Mid June 2022	Methodology and plan for qualitative and quantitative research
End June 2022	Finalise tools and questionnaire
By end September 2022	Conduct and complete need assessment and baseline empowerment study
By mid October 2022	Final report

Required Skills & Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
<i>Essential</i>
Expertise in gender research in at least 1 of our project countries
Willingness to work in collaboration with multiple project consultants
Expertise in developing qualitative and quantitative research methods/tools
Solid knowledge/understanding of at least 1 country and multiple regional contexts
Ability to adapt study to multiple countries and contexts, including translation of tools
<i>Desirable</i>
Ability to deliver study across multiple or all project countries
Knowledge of local languages and contexts
Experience in agriculture and cotton
Existing network of consultants and network on the ground

Application Requirements

Proposals responding to this Request for Proposals should be a maximum of 5-6 pages (excluding CVs), and include the following:

- Overview of relevant experience;
- Proposed methodology and timeline;
- Detailed and transparent budget in EUROS, including time allocation and day rates.

We are open to applications covering one to all five countries, if the applicant has the necessary expertise and resources in those countries.

In addition to skills, competencies, and expertise, we will consider 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.