

Request for Proposals Implementation Evaluation Study - Consultancy

RFP n#: 2022-06-IM-PIESTUDY

Location: Pakistan

Start date: 1st August 2022

End date: 15th October 2022

Better Cotton key contact:

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All applications must be sent by email, to Better Cotton's key contact, with the subject header: "Application RFP Project Implementation Evaluation Study – RFP n# 2022-06-IM-PIESTUDY".

Questions, requests, and applications sent after the deadline (10th July 2022) 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. 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.

More information about Better Cotton can be found on our website: www.bettercotton.org

Background

After four years of preparatory work, the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) was launched in 2009 as a multi-stakeholder initiative (MSI) with the backing of leading retailers and brands, manufacturers, donors, civil society, and development organisations. The comprehensive Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS) is designed to drive continuous improvement in cotton production – environmentally, economically, and



socially – for all kinds of farmers, from smallholder farmers in countries such as India, Pakistan, and Mozambique to large farms in countries such as Brazil, Australia and the US.

In 2021, we have a network of 65 Strategic Partners (SPs) and Implementing Partners (IPs) around the world, who provide farmer capacity building and support analysis of results indicators. Cotton produced in conformity with the Standard is licensed as Better Cotton. Transactions of Better Cotton by Better Cotton Members in the supply chain are recorded through the Better Cotton Platform (BCP).

Better Cotton is financed through a mix of membership and platform user fees and volume-based fees (VBF), levied on every metric ton of Better Cotton sourced by retailer and brand members. The Better Cotton Growth & Innovation Fund (GIF) fund Better Cotton projects to reach more farmers and accelerate transformation. Most projects are co-funded by IPs.

Scope of Work

Evaluation purpose and target audience

In Pakistan, Better Cotton is working with 6 Implementing Partners (IPs) and 19 projects are being implemented across 25 districts. The purpose of the study is to conduct an ad-hoc implementation evaluation of Better Cotton Program in three districts of Pakistan. The study will aim towards improving project performance, evidence-based decision making, accountability and learning. The focus of the study will be on examining the input activities carried under the project framework and their contributions towards achieving the actual/target outcomes. Further, the study should also explore any gaps in the project implementation under the current framework and draw lessons along with improvement recommendations. The study will also help to assess the effectiveness of the mechanism used during the project implementation.

The study will serve as a guiding document for Better Cotton Program Team to enhance the capacity of Implementing Partners, improve project management and delivery of Better Cotton projects in Pakistan. The findings from the study will be critical in future decision-making processes and towards making necessary adjustments in the project delivery where applicable.

Evaluation objective and scope

The scope of the implementation evaluation will cover the review of all input activities undertaken in the project framework. It is expected that the data collected during the course of the study will be compared with the available data on specified indicators in the project outcomes. The evaluation will assess the project implementation activities for the period 2022-23.

The study will be focused on Better Cotton projects being implemented in two districts of Sindh and one district of Punjab. The objective of the study is to evaluate the implementation strategy and approach of the projects regarding relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The evaluation is expected to provide data and build an analysis on these criteria. Further, the evaluation will also document the challenges, lessons and best practices which are contributing towards failure or achievement of the intended outcomes.

Evaluation questions and tasks

The review will be conducted under the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability. The key evaluation questions are provided below:

Relevance:

- To what extent the implementation activities carried out by the Implementing Partners were consistent with the strategic aims of Better Cotton?

- Were the project activities relevant and prioritised the need of Better Cotton beneficiaries in the region?
- Does the project team have the institutional capacity in terms of staffing and local knowledge to implement the project?
- Was the project implementation appropriate for meeting the project requirements?
- To what extent the project was able to include the target beneficiaries?

Effectiveness:

- To which extent the implementation activities carried out by the Implementing Partner achieved or is expected to achieve actual/target outcomes?
- What were the challenges in achieving the objectives of the implementation?
- Were the outcomes achieved in line with the expected/actual outcome of the Project?
- Are the expected/actual outcomes contributing to the impact as defined in the Better Cotton Strategy?

Efficiency:

- To what extent the project implementation is being supported by project level communication, monitoring and evaluation systems?
- Were the resources provided sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes?

Sustainability

- To what extent is an exit strategy in place to phase out the assistance provided by the project?
- Was the knowledge gained through this program used in the cultivation of other crops?
- To what extent is the project inclusive towards female beneficiaries?
- To what extent is the knowledge transfer being sustained by the beneficiaries and does this allow changes in degree of dependence on field staff?

Approach and Methodology

A detailed methodology and data collection methods drawing on existing and new qualitative and quantitative data should be proposed by the consultants based on the evaluation questions specified in the TORs and should include but not be limited to the following.

- Desk Review
 - Project documents and available data: BCI Principles and Criteria, Results Indicator Data
 - Existing literature on sustainable cotton farming
- Quantitative/Qualitative Component
 - Target Population

The implementation evaluation should cover the project beneficiaries (farmers, workers), field staff (Producer Unit Managers and Field Facilitators) and senior staff of the implementing partner (Managers, Coordinators and Data Quality officers).

- Sample Size

The sampling strategy should be proposed by the consultant/s and will be approved by the Better Cotton team before commencement of the field activity. The sample should be representative and must consider the geographical area, type of farms (medium and small farms) and gender.

- Sampling Process

The sampling process should be identified and described by the consultant/s.

- Tools

Separate tools to be developed by consultant/s for each sampled population group. Comprehensive tools are required for qualitative and quantitative data collection. Further, these tools need to be translated in the local language used in each district.

- Data Collection and Quality check

Qualitative and quantitative data collection will be performed by consultant/s in each district. In the event of engagement of enumerators or team leaders, the consultants will be responsible for providing relevant training prior to the data collection stage.

The consultant/s will be required to ensure accuracy and quality of the data. The data collected should also be submitted to Better Cotton in soft form for verification and storage.

The proposed approach and methodology are to be considered as flexible guidelines and the consultant/s should make their inputs and propose changes in the study design. The approach and methodology should be further refined by the consultant/s and a detailed description in the proposal and evaluation work plan must be submitted.

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

10 th July 2022	Applications deadline (<i>usually 2-4 weeks after publication</i>) All applications must be submitted by email, headed "Application RFP Project Implementation Evaluation Study – RFP n#2022-06-IM-PIESTUDY" addressed to Usama Tariq at tender@bettercotton.org .
01 st July to 15 th July 2022	Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews
By 30 th July 2022	The successful applicant will be notified

	Unsuccessful <u>shortlisted</u> applicants will also be notified
01 st August 2022	Start of the consultancy
By 8 th August 2022	Draft Evaluation Work plan
By 22 nd August 2022	Final Evaluation Work plan
By 12 th September 2022	Field visit and data collection completed
By 19 th September 2022	List of key findings
By 26 th September 2022	Draft Evaluation Report
By 10 th October 2022	Final Evaluation Report
By 17 th October 2022	Presentation summarizing the Evaluation Report

Required Skills & Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
<i>Essential</i>
Demonstrable experience of at least 5 years in research or evaluation of projects related to sustainable agriculture or related projects.
At least Master's degree in Agriculture, International Development, Economics or related field.
Experience in designing and conducting quantitative and qualitative research, analysis and evaluation.
Experience in evaluating organisational capacity and ability to recommend the corrective actions.
Strong conceptual and analytical skills to synthesize and present findings, draw conclusions, make recommendations and to prepare evaluation reports in a timely manner.
Ability to conduct field research in remote areas,
<i>Optional</i>
Fluent English: Better Cotton's language of operation is English

Application Requirements

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

- Understanding of the Terms of Reference.
- Proposed approach and methodology for the study.
- Two samples of similar previous assignments.
- Curriculum Vitae for all the consultants and details for any complementary staff.

- A financial proposal with breakdown of costs for each district.
- Overview of relevant experience;
- Proposed methodology and timeline;
- Detailed and transparent budget, preferably in PKR, including time allocation and day rates.

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.