

Request for Proposals:

Better Cotton Country Supply Chain Mapping

RFP n#: 2022-10-TRC-CONMAP

Location: Global

Start date: January 2023

End date: April – May 2023

Better Cotton key contact:

Nick Gordon

Traceability

tender@bettercotton.org



All applications must be sent by email, to Better Cotton's key contact, with the subject header: "Application RFP Better Cotton Country Supply Chain Mapping – RFP n# 2022-10-TRC-CONMAP".

Questions, requests, and applications sent after the deadline (**December 30 2022**) will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Introduction

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 difficult times, we are meeting the challenge head on. Through our network of field-level partners we have provided training on more sustainable farming practices to more than 2.9 million cotton farmers in 26 countries. More than a fifth of the world's cotton is now grown under the Better Cotton Standard and our membership network includes more than 2,400 members.

As Better Cotton enters its next strategic phase, to achieve our 2030 vision and drive change on the ground for farmers, we will make it possible to trace Better Cotton through the global supply network.

To test the application of physical traceability in cotton supply chains, over the next months, Better Cotton is delivering a series of pilot projects across key strategic countries. The pilots will help inform how traceability will be delivered on both national and global contexts. A phased roll-out of the new traceability solution is planned for end of 2023.

We are now seeking proposals from skilled individuals or organisations with expertise in the cotton supply chain to develop comprehensive value chain analysis and mappings for a range of Better Cotton countries that will be used to inform the implementation of traceability.

The Assignment

Please note that applicants may propose an alternative structure for the assignment with their proposal.

The purpose of the assignment is to document how cotton flows through supply chains in a range of countries and to provide Better Cotton with visibility on the actors, processes, and documentation necessary to deliver a robust traceability system in each of these countries. The consultant should also provide an overview of the main challenges the country's cotton sector is likely to face in the adoption of traceability and share recommendations to address these challenges.

Applicants are invited to develop a proposal for one, several or all of the following countries:

Countries with Better Cotton production and processing

- Brazil
- India (*State level mapping may be required*)
- USA
- Mali
- South Africa
- Egypt
- Tajikistan

Countries with Better Cotton processing only, no production

- Vietnam
- Bangladesh
- Indonesia
- South Korea
- Thailand
- Malaysia
- Guatemala

For countries where Better Cotton is produced, the flow of cotton shall be analysed and mapped from the farm level onwards (farm to gin link, gin to trader or spinner, fabric mill, garment manufacturer, retailers/brands ensuring information is also shared on middlemen/ agents/ intermediaries in between each supply chain node, if relevant). For other countries, the flow of cotton should be mapped from import destination(s) (trader, spinner, fabric mill, garment manufacturer) to end retailer/ brand or export destination(s).

To achieve this, the consultant will be required to:

- **Provide an overview of the cotton sector in the targeted countries**

The consultant will provide a short contextual overview based on literature review and interviews outlining the macro characteristics of the cotton sector (import/ export), key regulations, key stakeholders and influencers, production trends, traceability initiatives, digitalisation uptake, access to finance, and any other relevant contextual information.

- **Map the cotton supply chain and analyse how the movement of cotton is currently tracked and documented, and where there are gaps.**

The consultant will be required to produce a detailed supply chain analysis and map describing the key roles, responsibilities, and processes within the country's cotton supply chain, describing each supply chain actor and how cotton moves from one supply chain actor to another (level of custody, transportation, etc). The mapping should clearly outline how documentation is used, generated, and shared between each supply chain actor, including highlighting areas where a lack of meaningful documentation may present challenges to Better Cotton's [Chain of Custody](#) system.

- **Analyse the operations of the described supply chain stages to understand existing processes and potential challenges of introducing physical segregation.**

Through a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder interviews, and visits to manufacturing facilities, the consultant will be required to document the processes that occur within each mapped supply chain stage. This activity should include, but is not limited to:

- A process map of the activities that occur at site-level, describing the transformation, aggregation, and disaggregation processes that may take place.
- How cotton is currently being identified and monitored while undergoing transformation processes at supply chain stages including associated documentation
- A high-level assessment of the main problematic issues at supply chain stages that could undermine the physical traceability of material, including efforts to reconcile volumes of in-bound and out-bound materials, and non-compliance with processes.

Case studies should be added to this section to help illustrate the processes/ challenges with real life examples.

Deliverables

Inception Report

Upon the review of available documents and an initial discussion with Better Cotton, the consultant should submit an inception report and give a presentation to the Better Cotton project team. The inception report and presentation will:

- Describe the approach that will be used to undertake each of the tasks described above
- Include a detailed work plan and schedule
- Include a list of stakeholders to be interviewed, and identify where the consultant will need support from Better Cotton to engage additional further stakeholders
- Include an outline for the final report to be submitted

Final report and recommendations

The full report and recommendations should include:

- Detailed supply chain analysis and mapping of how cotton moves through country supply chains, including descriptions of roles, responsibilities, processes, documentation and any associated data, technologies, and systems. Documentation should be shared and explained in English if this could support subsequent verification. The mapping should include an outline and description of the processes happening at each supply chain stage and how these processes may impact the traceability of cotton fibers.
- An analysis of how site-level processes, data and documentation in the country's cotton supply chain vary across regions, identifying ways in which Better Cotton may verify the credibility of documentation.
- A series of detailed recommendations based on extensive research to assist Better Cotton in mitigating the challenges associated with site-level processes, data and supply chain documentation while implementing physical traceability.
- Report should be no more than 25 pages

Executive summary

The report should include an executive summary that is a maximum of four pages and contains the main findings and recommendations from the assignment. It should be accompanied by a PowerPoint slide deck (no more than 12 slides) summarising the same. The audience for the PowerPoint slide deck is the Better Cotton Leadership and global/ country traceability teams.

Timeline

30 December 2022	Applications deadline – 17.00 GMT 30/12/22 All applications must be submitted by email, headed “Application RFP Better Country Cotton Supply Chain mapping – RFP n#2022-10-CONMAP” addressed to Nick Gordon at tender@bettercotton.org .
2 January 2023	Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews
9 January 2023	The successful applicant will be notified Unsuccessful <u>shortlisted</u> applicants will also be notified
12 January 2023	Start of the consultancy – kick off meeting
February – March 2023 (to be discussed)	Inception report
April – May 2023 (to be discussed)	Final report / deliverables

Required Skills & Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
Essential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in analysis of cotton supply chains • Solid knowledge/understanding of the Chain of Custody and traceability in agricultural or mined commodities (preferably with experience in auditing and supply chain compliance) • Knowledge of approaches to supply chain integrity • Experience working in or extensive knowledge of the production or processing country • Excellent analytical skills • Excellent written communication and report writing skills • Fluent written and spoken English
Desirable
It would be desirable for the lead consultant or another member of the named team to have:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing knowledge and understanding of the Better Cotton system • Ability to communicate in local languages would be a distinct advantage

To Apply

Interested parties can apply for one or more of the country supply chain mappings. The detailed proposal to submit should include at a minimum:

- A succinct, well-documented technical proposal that includes:
 - A summary of the overall purpose and each task to be completed
 - An overview of the proposed methodology and approach
 - Activities and a corresponding timeline
 - A clear description of the project team, detailing the relevant experience of team members (especially regarding the country context the application is tailored to)
 - Declaration of any potential conflicts of interest relating to this assignment
- At least one sample of previous relevant work (the contents of which will remain confidential and will be used for the sole purpose of evaluating the submission). This sample report must be less than three years old unless particularly relevant to this assignment.
- Financial Proposal: Please provide a detailed budget in Euros per country including time allocated and daily rates, as well as any expenses that will be incurred, respecting the overall budget available for the assignment detailed in the Budget & Payment section at the end of this document.

Please note that ALL costs must be included in the detailed budget including travel expenses, translation costs and taxes.

Consultants are invited to submit their proposals before 5.00 pm GMT 30 December 2022 to tender@bettercotton.org with the subject header: "Application RFP Cotton Supply Chain Mapping – RFP n# 2022-10-TRC-CONMAP".

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.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Technical Evaluation Criteria

- Demonstrated understanding of this RFP, and the responsiveness of the proposal to it
- Quality and clarity of the proposed approach and methodology
- Feasibility of the proposed activity plan and timeline, and appropriateness of time allocated to delivering each task
- Relevant professional experience of the proposed consultant(s)

- Quality and relevance of the sample work submitted

Financial Evaluation Criteria

- Quality and clarity of budget provided, and level of detail included
- Alignment of the budget to the activity timeline detailed in the technical proposal
- Value for money
- Adherence to the available budget ceiling