

Request for Proposals

Case Study on the Effects of Climate-smart Agricultural Practices Implemented by ABR-Better Cotton Producers on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in Brazil

Applications Deadline: 5 December 2022, 9:00 PM CET

RFP n#: 2022-11-MEL-CSB
Location: Brazil
Start date: 19 December 2022
End date: 19 March 2023

Better Cotton key contacts:
Nazir Ul Haq
MEL Grants Senior Coordinator
tender@bettercotton.org



All applications must be sent by email, to Better Cotton's key contacts, with the subject header: "Application RFP Climate Change Case Study in Brazil– RFP n# 2022-11-MEL-CSB".

Description

Better Cotton is the world's largest cotton sustainability programme. Its mission is to help cotton communities survive and thrive while protecting and restoring the environment. In less than 10 years since its establishment, the Better Cotton Initiative and its Partners have supported over 2.3 million farmers in 23 countries in adopting more sustainable agricultural practices and Better Cotton accounts for 30% of global cotton production by the end of 2020-2021 cotton season. Better Cotton is truly a joint effort, encompassing stakeholders all the way from farms to fashion brands and civil society organizations, driving the cotton sector toward sustainability. It seeks to transform cotton production worldwide by developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity. Better Cotton has united the industry's stakeholders behind its efforts, and by 2030 it aims to train 5 million farmers and double the global production of Better Cotton.

Background

Brazil is one of the world's largest cotton producers, with primarily large and mechanized farms. In Brazil, Better Cotton partners with the Associação Brasileira dos Produtores de Algodão, the Brazilian Cotton Growers Association (ABRAPA). ABRAPA became a strategic partner of the Better Cotton

Programme in 2014 after completing a thorough benchmarking¹ process that aligned ABRAPA's own sustainable cotton programme, the Algodão Brasileiro Responsável (or ABR programme), with the Better Cotton Standard and is recognised as equivalent. This means that cotton farmers growing cotton in line with the ABR programme can opt to sell their cotton as Better Cotton.

As of 2020-21, ABR-Better Cotton in Brazil is grown in the states of Piauí, Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Maranhão, Goiás, Bahia, and São Paulo. Currently, there are 345 ABR-Better Cotton licensed farms in Brazil that produced 1,968,467 tonnes of Better Cotton in the season 2020-2021.

Cotton production in Brazil is largely rainfed (only 8% is irrigated), and therefore cotton farmers depend on receiving sufficient rain during the season. In a tropical climate with intense pest pressure, Brazilian farmers face a real challenge in reducing their use of pesticides to protect their crops, including highly hazardous pesticides. The intensive use of agrochemicals, including fertilizers and pesticides, in addition to other factors, has grave environmental impacts. A recent study² on the Green House Gas emission of Better Cotton found the average GHG emissions intensity in Brazil from Season 2015-2016 to 2018-2019 was 1.99 tons of CO₂e per ton of lint produced. Considering the proportion of GHG emissions in Brazil by source, fertilizer production was found to be the largest driver of emissions representing 43% of total emissions, followed by pesticides (17%), fertilizer application (15%), ginning (14%), etc. Climate change in turn poses significant challenges for cotton producers in Brazil as extreme heat and drought have cut yields by nearly 30 percent in the last season. Climate risks also threaten land availability, drive agricultural intensification, promote deforestation and increase soil erosion and deterioration.

Faced with the growing climate risks, Better Cotton and ABRAPA are working together to help ABR-Better Cotton licensed producers make cotton farming in Brazil more climate-resilient and sustainable while aiming to protect their livelihoods. They are promoting various climate-smart practices that serve to mitigate climate change and support adaptation at the farm level.

Better Cotton has also developed a climate approach to support farmers to further mitigate their impact on climate change and adapt to its consequences and Brazil has been identified as one of the priority countries for Climate Action. Under the climate action, Better Cotton intends to spur action by setting clear targets, in line with climate science based on the study on GHG emissions, that could be tracked and reported, and used for learning and continuous improvement. Better Cotton also aims to Build country-level action plans which recognize the urgency required in implementing both mitigation and adaptation actions. In addition, Better Cotton and ABRAPA also promote environmental sustainability by requiring compliance with Brazilian environmental legislation.

Purpose & Scope of the Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to conduct a case study in Brazil to identify and document climate-smart agricultural practices implemented by ABR-Better Cotton licensed producers in Brazil, provide in-depth information on the selected climate-smart agricultural practices and assess their contribution to climate change mitigation, as well as the extent to which they have enabled the Better Cotton producers to adapt to the consequences of climate change. The study will serve to disseminate successful climate-resilient practices and generate insights for learning and improvement.

More specifically, the case study should cover the following key research questions.

¹ More about benchmarking process here: <https://bettercotton.org/brazil-qa/>

² <https://bettercotton.org/better-cotton-releases-our-first-study-on-ghg-emissions/>

- What are the major climate-smart practices implemented by the ABR-Better Cotton licensed producers in Brazil? In which regions these practices are being implemented and for how long? What are the different initiatives from Better Cotton and ABRAPA to support the adoption of these practices? What are the factors affecting the adoption of these practices?
- How well have these practices enabled the Better Cotton-ABR producers and their communities to adapt to the consequences of climate change? What are the factors influencing climate change adaptation among the producers?
- What effects do those practices have on climate change mitigation?
- What are the key lessons learned from climate change efforts in Brazil? What has worked well and could be scaled up? What are the major challenges observed?
- Are there been any unintended outcomes of the climate-smart practices promoted by the program, either positive or negative?

Methodology

Better Cotton expects the evaluation consultant to develop a methodology based on the study's purposes and suggested key research questions. The consultant should also provide justification for proposing a particular approach and methodology with a detailed discussion in their proposal. The final decision on the approach and methodology to be used will be done in consultation with the Better Cotton team.

Given the scope and purposes of the assignment, we primarily envision qualitative data collection methods including but not limited to:

- Desk review of relevant documentation from Better Cotton and ABRAPA
- Review of secondary literature and resources related to Climate Change in Brazil
- Interview with program staff including ABRAPA and Better Cotton and other relevant stakeholders
- Interview and focus group discussions with participating producers
- Interviews with relevant government agencies, NGOs, and private sector agencies working on Climate Change in Brazil
- Field Observations
- Other methods proposed by the consultant

The consultant will be required to travel to program areas in Brazil for field observation and interviews or FGDs with relevant stakeholders.

Deliverables

Below is the list of deliverables to be submitted by the consultant(s).

a. Inception Report

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

- Describe the approach and methodology that will be used to undertake this case study
-

- Set out in some detail the data and information required to answer the research questions, data sources, data collection methods, data analysis approach
- Detailed work plan, schedule, and travel itinerary
- Include the list of key stakeholders to be interviewed and the tools to be used for interviews and discussions.
- Present an outline for the final study report

b. Data Collection Tools

Following the approval of the study methodology, the consultant should develop the data collection tools and checklists to be used during the study and finalize them based on feedback from Better Cotton and other stakeholders.

c. Progress Report

The consultant should submit a brief progress report to Better Cotton midway through the study, sharing the progress of the study, including initial findings and challenges faced by the consultants.

d. First draft of the Study Report

The consultant should provide the first draft of the study report to Better Cotton following the agreed schedule.

Draft reports will initially be shared with the Better Cotton team for review and input before being revised and then shared with relevant stakeholders for feedback. Stakeholders will be given a reasonable timeframe in which to respond.

e. Final reports and presentation

- The consultant should submit the final report incorporating comments from Better Cotton and other key stakeholders.
- The consultant should also hand over a complete data set including transcripts of stakeholder interviews and any other data collected to Better Cotton at the end of the assignment.
- The consultant should also submit a PowerPoint summary of the main findings in the report and give a presentation to the Better Cotton team.

These deliverables are to be prepared in English only and submitted to Better Cotton electronically via email.

High-level Timeline

Activity	Tentative Deadline
Tender date	14 November 2022
Deadline for submission of proposals	5 December 2022

Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews	5 – 14 December 2022
Successful applicants to be notified	14 December 2022
Start of assignment	19 December 2022
Inception Report	13 January 2023
Finalize data collection tools	20 January 2023
Field data collection, documents review, and data analysis	23 January– 17 February 2023
First draft of the study report	1 March 2023
Final draft study report	13 March 2023
Presentation of study findings	17 March 2022

Required Skills & Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
Essential
The lead consultant must have:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A postgraduate qualification in a relevant field such as agriculture, environment, sustainability, research, or social sciences • A minimum of 10 years of professional experience in conducting studies or evaluations of development programs, including qualitative research and case studies • Experience working and conducting research in the sustainable agriculture sector and climate change, preferably in Brazil • Working knowledge of sustainability standards • Excellent written and verbal communication skills • Excellent report-writing skills • Fluent in written and spoken Portuguese and English • Excellent facilitation and coordination skills
Desirable
It would be desirable for the lead consultant or another member of the team to have:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working knowledge of the cotton industry/sector • Experience in conducting evaluations or studies in Brazil

Application Requirements

Interested parties are requested to submit a detailed proposal including at a minimum:

- A succinct, well-documented Technical Proposal that includes:
 - Understanding of the assignment including a summary of tasks and main objectives
 - The proposed study approach and methodologies
 - Activities and a corresponding timeline
 - A clear description of the project team with details of the relevant experience of team members
- 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 including time allocated for each activity and daily rates, respecting the overall budget available for the assignment detailed in the Budget & Payments section at the end of this document. Please note that ALL costs must be included in the detailed budget including expenses, traveling costs, and taxes.

Consultants are invited to submit their proposals before 9.00 pm CET on 5 December 2022 to tender@bettercotton.org

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

The 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
- Conceptual framework and methodology proposed
- 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 case study report

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

Budget and Payment

The maximum budget available for this study is Euro 15000.

Payment to the consultants will be made based on the following schedule.

Upon acceptance of the inception report and submission of the advance invoice	30%
Upon acceptance of progress report	30%
Upon submission of approved final reports and presentations, as per the agreed timetable	40%
