Lead Verifier – Qualifications and Competencies

V2- November 2022

General

Essential

- Experience of conducting agricultural or natural resource third party assessments, including interviewing farmers, workers and community members and reviewing management system documents.
- Trained in auditing principles, procedures, techniques, and behaviours as described in ISO 19011
- Ability to prepare well-documented third party verification reports with clear analysis and specific evidence to support conformity / non-conformity findings
- Ability to communicate clearly in English both verbally and through the writing of verification reports [1]
- Strong attention to detail
- Good time management skills

Desirable

- The ability to read and speak in the language(s) used by assessment stakeholders.
- University degree in agriculture, natural resources, environmental management or other relevant subject

Verification mechanism

- CV and Audit log
- Qualification/ education/ training certificate.
- Review of previous third party verifier reports
- Shadow assessment[2]

Knowledge and Skills

Essential

- Knowledge of national and local laws and regulations on the environment, labour, health and safety, land and water ownership in the country of verification visits.
- Knowledge of prevailing industry and cotton farming practices.
- Knowledge of local social and cultural conditions to be considered in the conduct of a verification visit
- Understanding of handling sensitive date and maintaining confidentiality.

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[1] In a minority of regions, this may be desirable only. This is dependent on the context of the region.
[2] A shadow assessment is where a Better Cotton assessor shadows the third party verifier on an assessment to observe and evaluate the verifiers performance. This is sometimes also referred to as a witness audit.

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- Ability to identifying and gathering information from local knowledgeable sources, (including human rights, labour, environment, cotton organisations/ individuals and other local institutions).

Verification mechanism

- CV review
- Lead verifier interview
- Audit log review

Social auditing

Essential- verifiers must meet at least one of the below requirements.

- Post-secondary education and/or 1 year experience in social work or services that includes labour welfare or labour affair;
- 2 years' experience working on a farm or plantation directly related to managing labour in an operational capacity (general farm management / human resources);
- 2 years' experience in performing a gap analysis, internal social audits or second- or third-party social assessments;
- Successfully taken and passed the accredited 5-day SA8000 basic auditing course or equivalent (equivalent courses include Amfori 5-day auditor training course or another 2-day minimum auditor course); or
- Be an APSCA Registered Audit or APSCA Certified Social Compliance Auditor

Verification mechanism

- CV review
- Audit log review
- Qualification/ education/ training certificate.

Understanding of Better Cotton Principles & Criteria and Assurance programme

Although an understanding of Better Cotton is required at the point of application, training on Better Cotton is mandatory for all verifiers.

Essential

- Understanding of the Better Cotton Principles & Criteria and how to assess farm level compliance with these.
- Ability to identify areas of non-conformity with the Principles and Criteria and triangulate evidence of non conformity in assessment reports.

Verification Mechanism

- Attend Better Cotton third party verifier training
- Pass online assessment(s) before undertaking first assessment.
- Shadow assessment
- Commitment from verifiers to review updates to assessment resources.