Better Cotton Assessment Field Checklist

2023-24

For use with V2.1 of the Better Cotton P&C

Smallholder Farms

# Introduction

This field checklist supports Better Cotton, partners or verifiers in collecting the necessary information while conducting a Licensing Assessment or Surveillance Assessments in the context of the Better Cotton assurance programme (Better Cotton, Strategic Partner or independent 3rd party verifiers). The field checklist can also be used by Better Cotton Implementing Partners whilst carrying out PU Support Visits and Readiness Checks.

It indicates to Producer Units the type of questions that might be asked to the PU Manager, Field Facilitators, farmers, and workers, along with documents that might be reviewed and things to be checked during field observations. This is intended as a guidance document only to be used while collecting information in the field. Note that while completing the Better Cotton Assessment Report Template is mandatory; use of this field checklist is optional.

## Types of Indicators

This field checklist covers only **Core Indicators** from the Better Cotton P&C v2.1; organised under the 7 Principles.

# General Information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Visit conducted by | Name:  |
| Organisation: |
| Start date of assessment  |  Start date (dd/mm/yyyy) | Start time: |
| End date of assessment |  End date (dd/mm/yyyy) | End time: |
| Location  | Town/ village: |
|  Country and State: |
| Producer Unit Name and Code  |  |
| PU Manager Name |   |
| Implementing Partner |  |
| Field Facilitator Names | FF1: | FF3: | FF6: |
| FF2: | FF4: | FF7: |
| FF3: | FF5: | FF8: |

# Learning Groups and Farmers visited

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Learning Group** | **LG 1:**  | **LG 2:** | **LG 3:** |
| Farmer 1: |  |  |  |
| Farmer 2 |  |  |  |
| Farmer 3: |  |  |  |
| Farmer 4 |  |  |  |
| Farmer 5: |  |  |  |

# Workers interviewed

Use this section to record details of workers interviewed. Note that worker names must be excluded due to confidentiality; instead please provide a description of the worker’s role.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Worker role/ responsibilities** | **Comments** |
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# P1: Crop Protection

| **Indicator No.** | **How to check**  | **Grading** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1.1.1** A locally adapted and time-bound plan, based on agro-ecosystem analysis and which identifies appropriate specific practices to implement the five components of Integrated Pest Management, is established.*[Reference to Criterion 1.1 The Producer must adopt an Integrated Pest Management Programme that includes all of the following principles:* *(i) growing a healthy crop;* *(ii) preventing the build-up of pest populations and of the spread of disease;**(iii) preserving and enhancing populations of beneficial organisms;**(iv) regular field observations of the crop health and key pest and beneficial insects;**(v) managing resistance.]* | PU Manager/ FF interview:* What are the major pest threats affecting farmers in the PU? What pesticides are widely used?
* Do you have an IPM plan developed and implemented? How was the plan developed? (look for agro-ecosystem analysis)
* What are the key local issues related to crop protection? How these are addressed by the plan?
* When was the plan last reviewed and updated? How has it changed?
* Is there a timeline for the plan?
* Does the timeline seem realistic? When was it last reviewed and revised
* How are farmers managing pest resistance?
* [To FFs]: Are you familiar with the key elements of the plan? How are you training farmers on these?

Documents:* IPM plan - does it cover all five components? Are practices appropriate and specific for the local context?
* Timeline for IPM plan (if separate)

Farmer visits:* Which pesticides do you use, and why? How do you determine when to spray?
* What training have you received on pest management or applying pesticides?
* Do you understand that not all insects are pests or are damaging to the crop;
* Do you understand that some insects play a positive role and can help the crop – these ‘beneficial’ insects should be protected and nurtured; and
* Are you able to recognise common insects including pests and beneficials (i.e. 2 or 3 most common examples)?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **1.1.3** A timeline for implementing the 5 components of the Integrated Pest Management plan is established. | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **1.1.4** There is no calendar or random spraying. | PU Manager/ FF interview:* How do farmers in the PU decide when to spray?
* How do you ensure that farmers are not using calendar or random spraying?
* What type of training has been provided to Field Facilitators and farmers? *(review competence on pest scouting techniques of PU staff)*
* How are farmers observing/monitoring the cotton crop for pests and beneficial insects?

Documents: * Training and awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers

Farmer visits:* What pesticides did you spray and when?
* How do you decide when to spray?
* What training have you been provided on field monitoring and observation techniques?
* Do you recall the main points covered?
* Have you changed any practices as a result?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **1.2.1** All pesticides used are registered nationally for the use on cotton.  | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What pesticides are being used in the PU?
* Do you have a list of the pesticides nationally registered for use on cotton?
* Are you aware of any pesticides used that are not registered nationally for cotton?
* How do you ensure farmers comply with the criteria?
* Are farmers using combination pesticides / ‘cocktails’? If yes, are they registered as a combination?

Farmer visits:* Which pesticides do you use? (*cross-check pesticides used in practice with national lists; review receipts and farmer field books)*
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **1.2.2** All pesticides used are correctly labelled in at least one *de facto* or *de jure* official national or applicable official regional language. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* How do farmers identify and label pesticides? How have you checked this?
* Have you observed any unlabelled pesticides during farmer visits?
* What language(s) are pesticides labelled in?

Farmer visits:* How do you label and identify pesticides?
* *[Review pesticide labels and storage containers*]
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **1.3.1** Pesticides listed in:(i) Annex A and B of the Stockholm Convention; or(ii) Annexes of the Montreal Protocol; or(iii) Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention;are not used. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What pesticides are being used in the PU? How frequently do you survey the PU to understand what is in use?
* Are any of these covered by Annex A/B of the Stockholm convention (*provide specifics on locally-relevant pesticides*)?
* What methods do you use to understand which pesticides are in use in the PU i.e. survey, field visits?
* If they are in use, how widely are these used within the PU?
* How do you ensure farmers do not use these pesticides?
* Are you also aware of pesticides listed in Annexes of the Montreal Protocol and Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention (*provide specifics on locally-relevant pesticides*?)
* Are any of these pesticides used?
* How do you ensure farmers do not use these pesticides?

Documents:* Review training plan and training materials

Farmer visits:* *Cross-check information from interviews with practices observed at farmer visits.*
* What pesticides are you using currently? How do you decide which ones to use?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **1.4.1** The Producer has a plan to phase out by 2021 pesticides listed in category 1 of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS); Ia of the World Health Organization classification (WHO). | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What pesticides are being used in the PU that are listed in Category 1 of the GHS or 1a of WHO?
* What methods do you use to understand which pesticides are in use in the PU i.e. survey, field visits?
* How widely are these used within the PU?
* How are you planning to phase these out? What viable alternatives are you aware of?
* How do you plan to educate farmers and change practices in line with this deadline?
* Is there a phase-out plan? Is it achievable and realistic? Are all PU staff aware of the plan?

Documents:* Review phase-out plan (if available)
* Review training plan and training materials

Farmer visits: * What pesticides are you using currently? How do you decide which ones to use?
* Are you planning to phase any of these pesticides out in the future?
* Have you received any training on alternatives?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **1.4.2** The Producer has a plan to phase out by 2024 pesticides listed in category 2 of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS); Ib of the World Health Organization classification (WHO). | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What pesticides are being used by farmers that are listed in Category 2 of GHS or 1b of WHO?
* What methods do you use to understand which pesticides are in use in the PU i.e. survey, field visits?
* How widely are these used?
* How are you planning to phase these out? What viable alternatives are you aware of?
* How do you plan to educate farmers and change practices in line with this deadline?
* Is there are phase-out plan? Is it achievable and realistic? Are all PU staff aware of the plan?

Documents:* Review phase-out plan (if available)
* Review training plan and training materials

Farmer visits* What pesticides are you using currently? How do you decide which ones to use?
* Are you planning to phase any of these pesticides out in the future?
* Have you received any training on alternative pesticides?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **1.5.1** The Producer has a plan to phase out pesticides defined as carcinogenic, mutagenic or reprotoxic (CMR) substances according to Categories Ia and Ibof the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What pesticides are being used that are defined as CMR substances according to the GHS?
* What kind of consultation have you conducted to identify these pesticides?
* How widely are these used?
* Do farmers have a plan to phase these out? What viable alternatives are you aware of?
* How do you plan to educate farmers and change practices in line with this deadline?

Documents:* Review phase-out plan (if available)
* Review training plan and training materials

Farmer visits:* What pesticides are you using currently? How do you decide which ones to use?
* Are you aware of any hazardous effects of these pesticides?
* Are you planning to phase any of these pesticides out in the future?
* Have you received any training on alternative pesticides?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **1.6.1** The Producer must ensure that any person who prepares and applies pesticides is:(i) Healthy;(ii) Skilled and trained in the application of pesticides;(iii) 18 or older;(iv) not pregnant or nursing. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* How do farmers decide who applies pesticides?
* Is there a policy available about who can prepare and apply pesticides?
* How are the workers/farmers that work with pesticides trained?
* How do you ensure farmers comply with the criteria? (training, internal management/monitoring, etc)?

Documents:* Review training and awareness raising material for facilitators and farmers/workers
* Training records

Farmer visits:* Who applies pesticides? How do you ensure they are healthy, trained, 18 or older and not pregnant/ nursing?
* Have you been trained on the safe preparation and application of pesticides?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **1.7.2** Minimum Personal Protective Equipment is worn while preparing and applying pesticides, which includes protection of the following body parts from dermal absorption, ingestions and inhalation:(i) Face and airways: eyes, ear canal, nose, scalp(ii) Limbs: arms, forearms, palms, legs, feet (iii) Abdomen and genital area. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What kind of protective equipment is used by farmers/ workers when working with pesticides? How widely is this used?
* Have you identified any farmers or workers not using minimum PPE while preparing or applying pesticides? If yes, what are the common challenges?
* What training has been carried out on minimum PPE?
* Is PPE available and accessible by farmers/workers?

Documents* Review training materials and plan

Farmer/ worker visits:* Who applies pesticides? Which body parts need to be covered during pesticide preparation and application? What protective equipment is used? How do you ensure this is used properly?
* If certain body areas are not being covered by farmers/worker: what are the challenges? Why do you not cover these areas? Is there an issue with the equipment?
* Site visit to check PPE equipment (available, in decent condition, looks used, covers all required body parts)
* Worker interviews to confirm findings where possible
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |

# P2: Water Stewardship

| **Indicator** | **How to check**  | **Grading** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2.1.1** A time-bound Water Stewardship Plan is defined that addresses each of the following components:(i) Mapping and understanding of water resources;(ii) Managing soil moisture;(iii) Applying efficient irrigation practices to optimise water productivity (applicable to irrigation farms only);(iv) Managing water quality;(v) Engaging in collaboration and collective action to promote sustainable water use. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* Has a water stewardship plan been developed and implemented for the PU?
* Were the PU Manager and FFs involved in the development of the plan?
* [To FFs] – can you summarize the main activities set out in the plan? How do these address key issues relevant for the PU?
* How was water mapping carried out? Who was involved?
* How has the map of water resources been used to help identify specific activities or water management priorities?
* Does it have a timeline associated with it? Is the timeline realistic?
* How will farmers be trained on the most relevant aspects of the plan?

Documents* Review water stewardship plan (if available) – does it cover all five components? Does it comprise of specific, locally-relevant activities?
* Review timeline (if separate)
* Review mapping of water resources
* Review training plan or records to verify whether activities are carried out in line with the water stewardship plan

Farmer visits:* What water sources do you use?
* What steps have you taken to reduce water use?
* How do you manage water on your farm? What water management practices have you implemented? Have they made any difference?
* How do you decide when to irrigate? (or, how do you make optimal use of rainfall?)
* What training have you received on water use? What did it cover?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **2.1.2** A timeline for implementing the five components of the Water Stewardship Plan is established. | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **2.1.9** Opportunities for collaboration and collective actions (beyond the Producer’s unit of production) to achieve sustainable water use are identified.  | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* Are you aware of current or future plans for collaboration or collective action on sustainable water use?
* Have you identified any collaboration or partnership opportunities?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **2.1.10** By March 2022, collaboration and collective actions (beyond the Producer’s unit of production) towards local sustainable use of water are implemented as per opportunities identified in the Water Stewardship Plan. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* How will you approach collaboration and collective action on sustainable water? Have you identified activities or actions? What efforts have been made already?
* What future plans are in place?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |

# P3: Soil Management

| **Indicator** | **How to check** | **Grading** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **3.1.1** A time-bound soil management plan is defined that addresses each of the following components: (i) Identifying and analysing soil type; (ii) Maintaining and enhancing soil structure;(iii) Maintaining and enhancing soil fertility; (iv) Continuously improving nutrient cycling. | PU Manager/ FF interview:* How are farmers in the PU currently managing soil quality?
* What types of fertilizers or nutrients are used by farmers in the PU?
* Have you developed a soil management plan for the PU? If so, what does this include? Who was involved in the development of the plan?
* [To FFs] – can you summarize the main activities set out in the plan? How do these address key issues relevant for the PU?
* Does the plan include a timeline? Is the timeline realistic?
* How have farmers in the PU been trained on soil management techniques?

Documents:* Review soil management plan (if available) and timeline. Does it comprise of specific, locally-relevant activities?
* Review fertilizer/ nutrient application records
* Review results of soil testing (if available)
* Review training plan or records to verify whether activities are carried out in line with the soil management plan
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **3.1.2** A timeline for implementing the four components of the soil management plan is established  | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **3.1.3** Soil testing is conducted that includes NPK and pH analysis. A minimum of 1 soil test per Learning Group on a minimum of 20% of the Learning Groups within a Producer Unit must be conducted each year, and with different Learning Groups each year, so that all Learning Groups are covered over a period of 5 years. | PU Manager/ FF interview:* Do you currently carry out any soil testing? Does this include NPK and pH analysis?
* How is this done? What sample of farms does it cover?
* How have you used the results? Have they been shared with farmers?
* Have you trained farmers to carry out soil testing and analyse results?

Documents: * Soil testing plan and results

Farmer visits* Have you carried out any soil testing? Do you know how to do this? Do you have the results (if applicable)? Have you been trained on the process or how to analyse results?
* [If applicable] Have you made any changes based on the results of soil testing?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |

# P4: Biodiversity and land use

| **Indicator** | **How to check**  | **Grading** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **4.1.1** A time-bound Biodiversity Management Plan that addresses each of the five following components, is defined:(i) Identifying and mapping biodiversity resources;(i) Identifying and restoring degraded areas;(iii) Enhancing populations of beneficial insects, as per the Integrated Pest Management plan (Principle 1);(iv) Ensuring crop rotation;(v) Protecting riparian areas. | PU Manager/ FF interview:* Have you developed a biodiversity management plan at PU level? What does this cover?
* How was it developed? Who was involved in the development of the plan?
* [To FFs] – can you summarize the main activities set out in the plan? How do these address key issues relevant for the PU?
* What biodiversity currently exists in the PU area?
* How are farmers managing biodiversity? Have they adopted any practices designed to enhance biodiversity (e.g. crop-rotation)?
* Have farmers participated in any mapping of biodiversity resources or degraded areas?
* Can you summarize the main activities set out in the plan? How do these address key issues relevant for the PU?

Documents:* Biodiversity management plan (if available) – Does it cover all five components? Does it comprise of specific, locally-relevant activities? Is the plan achievable and realistic?
* Timeline (if separate) – is the timeline realistic?
* Mapping of biodiversity resources (if available)

Farmer visits* What animals and plants are you aware of on your land?
* Have you participated in any work to map these plants and animals?
* Have you been trained on methods to improve biodiversity? Please explain
* Are you aware of any degraded areas on your farm (or in the local area?). How are these identified?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **4.1.2** A timeline for implementing the five components of the Biodiversity Management Plan is established. | *(see above 4.1.1)* | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **4.1.3** Biodiversity resources are identified and mapped. | PU Manager/ FF interview:* Have you carried out any mapping of biodiversity resources? How was this done and who was involved?
* What focal species have been identified?

Documents:* Mapping of biodiversity resources (if available)

Farmer visits* What animals and plants are you aware of on your land?

Have you participated in any work to map these plants and animals? | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **4.1.4** Degraded areas on the farm are identified. | PU Manager/ FF interview:* What do you understand by the term ‘degraded areas?’
* Have you carried out any work to identify degraded areas on farms in the PU? What types of areas do these include (e.g areas with erosion, or overgrazed vegetation)
* Have any measures been taken to help restore these degraded areas?

Documents:Mapping or list of degraded areasObservations:Look for any degraded areas during site visits to see if this aligns with the PU plan and PU staff understanding | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **4.2.1** In case of any proposed conversion from non-agricultural land to agricultural land, the BCI High Conservation Value (HCV) risk-based simplified approach must be implemented | PU Manager/ FF interview:* Are you familiar with BCI’s simplified High Conservation Value (HCV) approach?
* Have any farmers recently converted land from non-agricultural to agricultural land? How did this process happen?
* If relevant, has the simplified HCV approach been implemented?
* If relevant, were any elevated risks identified? Have these been mitigated?
* What are the legal requirements regarding land use/converting native land into farming land in the local area?
* How do you keep up to date with the legal requirements?

Farmer visits:* How long have you been growing cotton on your land? Are you aware of any farms in the area that were converted from non-agricultural uses?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |

# P5: Fibre Quality

| **Indicator** | **How to check** | **Grading** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **5.1.1** Good management practices for the harvest and storage of seed cotton are adopted. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* How are farmers working to minimise trash, contamination and damage?
* What good management practices have been shared with farmers? Who is being trained on these practices (farmers, workers, etc.)?

Documents: * Review training and awareness-raising materials
* Review training plan

Farmer visits:* What do you do to help reduce contamination or protect fibre quality?
* Have you received any training on how to reduce contamination? What did this training cover?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |

# P6: Decent Work

| **Indicator** | **How to check** | **Grading** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **6.1.2** The Producer has a time-bound plan for the prevention of child labour in accordance with ILO Convention 138. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* Has a baseline assessment for risks of child labour been carried out covering farmers in the PU?
	+ When was this done?
	+ What was the outcome?
* Is there a plan in place for the prevention of child labour?
* Is it realistic and achievable?
* How was it developed? Who was involved?
* What is the duration of the plan?
* Has the plan been communicated to farmers/workers?
* How are you working to address any existing child labour? What alternatives are being proposed?

Documents:* Child labour prevention plan
* Outcome of baseline assessment for child labour risks (if applicable)
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **6.1.3** There are no workers below the age of 15 (14 in certain specified countries), or below the minimum age for employment defined by local law (whichever is higher) unless they meet all of the following conditions: (i) the child is helping on his/her own family’s farm; (ii) the child's work is structured so as to enable him/her to attend school;  (iii) the child's work should not be so demanding as to undermine his/her education; (iv) the child should not perform tasks that are hazardous for him/her because of his/her age;  (v) the child must be guided – both in terms of learning skills and supervision of tasks – by a family member;  (vi) the child has received appropriate training. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* Do you know the national minimum age for work?
* How do you proactively prevent children below the national minimum age from working on the farm?
* What type of records do farmers keep on worker age?
* What training have you provided to farmers about child labour?
* Are you aware of any family-based child labour among farms in the PU? If yes,
	+ Do these children attend school?
	+ When do they work in the farm?
* Which tasks do they do?
* Are they supervised by any adults while working?
* Are they given any training on the tasks they do?

Farmer visits:* Do your children help on the farm? How old are they? What tasks do they do?
* Do they attend school? Which school, and how often?
* Have they ever needed to miss school due to work on the farm?
* How are they trained and supervised during their work on the farm?

*[cross-check through direct conversations with children and other workers, and reviewing school attendance records, where available]* | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **6.1.4** A written child labour policy, specifying under which circumstances and for which tasks children can or cannot work or be employed and why, has been communicated to farmers/workers/employees. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* Are you aware of a written child labour policy for the PU?
* What does it cover? What are the key circumstances and tasks for which children are permitted to work?
* How have you communicated to farmers, workers, and employees about the policy?
* How do you ensure farmers understand these circumstances and comply with the policy?

Documents:* Review policy (if available)
* Review training materials

Farmer visitsHave you received any training on child labour and the tasks that children can do on the farm? What did the training cover? | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **6.2.1** Hazardous work is not conducted by workers under 18. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What activities are considered as hazardous labour?
* What tasks do workers/farmers below the age of 18 usually perform?
* How do you ensure that farmers have a procedure in place to document workers ages and tasks?

Documents:* Training and awareness raising materials; training schedule
* Proof of age records (if available)

Farmer visits:* Who carries out hazardous work on the farm (i.e. spraying, etc). How do you ensure these workers are 18 or over?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **6.3.1** All forms of forced or compulsory, including bonded or trafficked labour, are prohibited. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What types of workers are engaged during the crop season? (permanent, seasonal, temporary/day wage workers)
* Where are the workers from? From the nearby villages, from another district or province or country?
* How are workers hired (i.e. directly or through a labour broker/recruiters/intermediary?
* If workers are hired through third parties, how do you check their working arrangements?
* How do farmers negotiate working conditions with workers?
* Do you know if farmers provide wage advances or loans to workers? Do you know the repayment conditions? What happens if the worker cannot pay?
* What is your understanding of ‘forced or compulsory labour’?
* Have you identified any indicators of forced/bonded labour amongst any farms in the PU? e.g. limited mobility, withholding of wages, coercive measures
* How are farmers and workers trained on this topic?
* How do you ensure that farmers comply with the criteria and that workers are aware of their rights?

Farmer/ Sharecropper Interviews:* Do you own your land? Did you receive a loan or a wage advance from the farm owner? If so, how much and what happens if you cannot repay?
* Have your personal documents been taken away from you by the farm owner? If so, can you get them back if you ask?
* Do you hire any additional workers? If so, what type of workers do you use?
* Do you employ your family members at the farm?
* How are workers hired (i.e. directly or through a labour broker/recruiters/intermediary?
* Do you have a verbal agreement/contract with a labour provider? What are the terms?
* Who pays the labour recruiter’s fees?
* Do labour providers require to have a legal permit or a licence?
* Where are your seasonal/temporary workers from?
* Who arranges the temporary workers’ accommodation? Do workers' pay for their accommodation? Can workers also use their own transport and accommodation?
* How do you check the workers’ age?
* Do you keep the workers’ documents for the duration of their work on the farm?
* How are terms of work agreed with the workers?
* What do workers have to do if they want to quit?
* How frequently do you pay your seasonal and temporary workers? Every day/week or month?
* How do you pay your workers – in kind, cash or through the labour provider?
* Do you provide your workers a wage advance or a loan? If so, please give an example how much you advance, and what are the terms of repayment?
* What training did you receive on the issue of forced labour?

Documents:* Worker records, including for seasonal and temporary workers (not just permanent workers)
* Worker documentation or contracts (if available)
* Training materials and training schedule
* Video/pictures of communication/training/briefing taking place (if available)
* Records/summary of what was discussed
* Agreements between third party labour brokers/suppliers and the farm – check these are in line with national law
* Wage payment records, loan records, including for seasonal and temporary workers (not just permanent workers)

Worker Interview:* How did you get this job?
* How did you agree the terms of work?
* Did you have to pay a labour broker a fee to get this job? If yes, how much did you have to pay?
* Have your personal documents been taken away from you by the labour recruiter or the farmer? If so, can you get them back if you ask?
* Did you receive a loan or a wage advance from the farm owner or a labour recruiter? If so, how much and what happens if you cannot repay?
* Do your wages get paid on time? How frequently do you receive your payment? How are you paid (in kind, cash, through the labour provider)?
* What do you need to do if you want to quit your job?
* What is your typical day on the farm like? How long do you work each day? When was the last time you had a rest day?
* Do you ever have to ask your family members to help you with your work tasks on the farm without pay?
* Have you ever witnessed other workers being abused at work?
* Have you seen young children (under 15 years old.) working at the farm during school hours?
* Do you think some groups of workers are treated worse than others? Why do you think that happens?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **6.4.3** The Producer Unit has a time-bound plan to improve the position of disadvantaged groups. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What are the most common forms of discrimination relevant to the PU? What are the majority and minority groups?
* Do you know whether a baseline survey has been undertaken to identify disadvantaged groups?
* What disadvantaged groups have been identified?
* What are the specific challenges faced by women amongst the PU?
* Is there a plan in place to improve the position of disadvantaged groups? Is the plan realistic and achievable?
* What is the duration of the plan?
* What are the key features or practices in the plan? Can the PU staff talk through the plan and the associated activities?
* Has the plan been implemented?

Documents:* Plan to improve the position of disadvantaged groups
* Timeline (if separate) – is the timeline achievable?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **6.5.2** There is no evidence of any policy, practice or customary rule that results in the payment of unequal wages on the basis of gender to workers who perform the same job. | PU Manager/ FF Interview *(also refer to guidance in 6.3.1)** How are male and female workers paid? Are you aware of any customary rule or practice that would lead to unequal wages for those doing the same job?
* Have farmers been trained on the topic of equal wages?
* Have workers been trained on the topic of equal wages?
* What records do farmers keep on wages paid to workers?
* Have you ever reviewed worker wages to identify inequalities within the PU?

Documents* Wage slips or payment records (if available)

Farmer visits:* How many male and female workers do you have? Do they do the same job(s)?
* How do you determine wages for these workers? (cross-check with records if possible)
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **6.13.1** Farmers in the PU are aware of the legally applicable minimum wage/s (statutory national or regional minimum wage applicable to agriculture, collectively agreed wage, industry minimum). | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What is the legal minimum wage? *Do the PU staff know the legal minimum wage?*
* Are farmers aware of the legal minimum wage?
* What training has been provided on this?

Documents:* Wage slips or payment records (if available)
* Training materials and training records

Farmer visits:* Are you aware of the legal minimum wage? How do you determine wages for your workers?
* How do wages vary across your workers?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **6.19.1** Use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, sexual harassment or physical or verbal abuse or harassment of any kind, is prohibited. | Farmer Interview:* Are there supervisors or other worker representatives that facilitate communication with workers? If yes, how do you ensure that they treat workers fairly?
* Have you received any complaints from workers about working conditions?
* What happens if a worker does not finish their work or do a bad job or break something? Are workers aware of the disciplinary procedure on the farm?
* What training has been provided to farmers on appropriate techniques for disciplining workers?
* Have you introduced any interventions i.e. training on the importance of respect in the workplace?

Worker Interview: * Are there any supervisors, worker leaders? How do they treat you? If they act unfairly, are you able to get help from anyone, e.g. the farmer or farm manager? What might be the consequences?
* What happens if you or another worker do not finish their work or do a bad job or break something? Are you aware of the disciplinary procedure on the farm?
* Do you think some groups of workers are treated worse than others? Do you know why that happens?
* Have you ever witnessed any use of physical punishment, sexual harassment, or physical/ verbal abuse towards or amongst workers?

Documents: * Disciplinary procedure
* Evidence of training, training material
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |

# P7: Management System

| **Indicator** | **How to check** | **Grading** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **7.1.1** A Continuous Improvement Plan is available, implemented and monitored according to the applicable BCI Continuous Improvement planning process, and reviewed annually. | Does the CIP reflect considerations of both regional sustainability priorities and PU-specific challenges (as identified through internal assessment/monitoring and external assessment)?PU Manager/ FF Interview:* Does the PU have a Continuous Improvement Plan in place?
* Has the PU aligned with BCI’s CIP planning process?
* What does this include? What are the main priorities for improvement?
* Do the PU staff understand why specific issues have been prioritised in the CIP?
* When was the plan last reviewed?
* How has it changed according to this review?
* How do you monitor progress against the plan?
* What progress has been made? Were there any specific challenges that have prevented implementation?
* [PU Manager] Did you play a strong role in the development of the CIP?
* [PU Manager] Can you explain how the CIP was developed and how it is being used in practice?
* [PU manager and FF] Do you have a strong understanding of why specific issues have been prioritised in the CIP and the activities that are planned to address these issues?

Documents:* Continuous Improvement plan
* Review the timeline of activities – is it achievable?

Farmers/worker interviews:* Were they aware of the focus areas?
* Had they attended any training on the focus areas?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **7.2.1** A training plan identifying the key sustainability issues to be addressed for the Producer, the name of training provider(s), scheduling and expected participants is available and implemented. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* Does the PU have a training plan identifying all points in 7.2.1? When and how was it developed?
* How did you determine what to include in this plan?
* Has the training plan been implemented according to the plan and timeline? If not, why not?
* What challenges have you encountered in delivering this training?
* Could you describe content and timing of the training for workers offered?
* Could you describe how the training is conducted to be inclusive to women farmers? *Do women need to train women or is the timing altered to enable their attendance?*

Documents:* Training plan and timeline

Farmer/ worker visits:* What training have you received from the FF or others? What topics were covered? Do you recall any key points from these trainings?
* What was the most helpful or informative part of the training?
* Do you intend to implement the best practices that the training focused on? If not, why?
* Are you aware of any additional planned training?
* What could make training more effective in the future?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **7.2.2** Training materials for Better Cotton Initiative farmers and workers are available to cover Better Cotton Initiative Principles and Criteria Core Indicators, with a focus on key sustainability issues in the local context. Best practices (validated locally) related to production are shared with Better Cotton Initiative farmers through appropriate dissemination material in local language. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What methods for training do you use? What has worked well?
	+ Can you give an example?
* How do you train Field Facilitators, so they can in turn train farmers?
* How do you plan to adjust or improve your training approach in the future?
* How do you share best practices with farmers? Can you give an example?

Documents:* Sample training materials

Farmer/ worker visits:* What training have you received from the FF or others? Did this cover best practices related to production?
* How was the training given?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **7.2.3** The Producer reports annual data on number of Better Cotton Initiative farmers and workers trained by gender and topic to demonstrate the implementation of the training plan. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What is your process for collecting and reporting annual data on the number of farmers and workers trained?
* Do you have this data available from the previous or current season?
* How are you using this data to review and improve your training approach?
* How else do you measure the effectiveness of training?

Documents:* Data/ records on training provided by gender and topic
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **7.2.4** The Producer operates a system to: (i) Assess and document the level of adoption of practices promoted through training;  (ii) Identify and address the risks associated with adopting the practices promoted through training; (iii) Evaluate the training materials continuously to improve their content and delivery. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* How are you measuring the adoption of practices promoted through training?
* Can you provide an example?
* Do you have any evidence that farmers are considering adoption even if they haven’t done so yet? For example, do they have demonstration plots on their farms, are they participating in any trials on the topic? Have they been asking more questions on the topic after the training?
* How have you identified any risks or challenges associated with adopting these practices? For example, are there practices that farmers have been trained on but are very hesitant to adopt?
	+ How are you addressing these challenges? Can you give an example?
* How do you evaluate training materials and delivery to improve its effectiveness?
	+ Can you give an example of a change you’ve made in response to this review process?

Farmer visits:* Have you been requested to give any feedback on trainings provided?
* Have you been consulted on what topics would be most useful to have training on?
* Were you satisfied with the training given? If not, why?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **7.3.1** The Producer collects and maintains accurate and complete Producer Unit data in the format required by the Better Cotton Initiative. This will include (but not be limited to) name and contact information of Producer Unit Manager; list of farmers organised into Learning Groups (for smallholder Production Units); age, gender, education, level of farmers; expected seed cotton production per farmer and area under cultivation; geo-location of Producer Units; names of gins. The Producer Unit data is updated annually, at the latest by the end of sowing. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* What is your process for collecting data on farmers in the PU? Who is responsible for this?
* How do you make sure this data is complete and accurate? What is your method to cross-check/validate the data?
* What challenges do you encounter in collecting this data?
* What is your process and timeline for updating this data on an annual basis?

Documents:* Records of data as required by BCI (all points listed in 7.3.1)
* *Cross reference data with farmer recall*
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **7.3.2** The Producer maintains a farm-level record keeping mechanism (e.g. Famer Field Book) for essential production data on inputs and outputs in an accurate manner. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* How are farmers in the PU recording data on inputs and outputs? (e.g. using field books)
* Is anyone assisting them with this process (i.e. children, FFs, etc)
* What challenges do they face with recording accurate data?
* How have farmers been trained on recording input/ output data?
* Are you training farmers on how to use the data as a learning tool?
* Is the production data complete/properly formatted, up-to-date and accurate?
	+ Note: will vary depending on the time of the season that the EA is conducted. E.g. if the External Assessment is conducted at the start of the season data in the farmer fieldbook will be limited (e.g. data may only include cost of land preparation, few input costs such as seeds, etc.)
* Are all farmer fieldbooks from the previous season are available for auditing purposes?
	+ Note: Going forward, this will be communicated to the IPs one season in advance as something that will be required and checked during External Assessments, so that they can collect and store all farmer fieldbooks from a given season.
* How is data/record keeping stored/archived?
	+ Note: focus should be on good data management practices (not only compliance) that there is a sustainable system for managing historical records)
* Has the PU Manager received training on the data management processes and tools? \* Ask the PU Manager what type of training he/she received on the data management processes and tools \* The PU Manager's response should include: -- Review of the PU Manager's role and responsibilities -- Review of the data completion guidelines -- Review of how to use the farmer fieldbooks
* Does the PU manager understand his/her responsibility for collecting and reviewing data prior to submission to the IP? \* Ask the PU Manager what he/she does with the data received before submitting to the next level and make sure the response includes an initial completeness check
* Does the PU have standard measurement systems at the local level for each results indicator? \* Either PU has a written policy or the PU Manager can confidently explain how each indicator is measured at the local level (i.e. locally-determined measurements of farm area and water use)

Documents:* Sample of farmer record-keeping (e.g. field books, receipts for inputs, farmer pocketbooks and/or other records to verify inputs, costs, etc.)
* Training materials

Farmer visits:* What data do you provide to the Field Facilitator on inputs and outputs? How do you record this? [look at examples in the field]
* What do you think is the purpose of keeping these records?
* Does anyone help you with recording this information?
* Cross check records (i.e. farmer field book) with verbal feedback from farmers and receipts if available (i.e. pesticide receipts)
* Cross check records (i.e. farmer field book) with verbal feedback from farmers and receipts if available (i.e. pesticide receipts)
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **7.3.3** The Producer operates a system to collect, compile and report complete and accurate Results Indicator data in accordance with the Results Indicator Reporting template. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* How do you collect and report on Results Indicator data?
* Who is responsible for carrying out this process?
* How do you ensure that data is complete and accurate? What challenges do you face in getting this data?
* Does the PU manager understand what complete data looks like and what problem areas to look out for? \*Ask the PU Manager what he/she looks for when reviewing the RIR data and make sure it includes that data is submitted for ALL RIs for each farm, (e.g. zero values listed instead of blanks, etc.) \*Make sure the PU Manager also mentions red flags/problems such as: -- duplicate Farm IDs -- multiple farms with identical data reported for a given indicator, etc.
* If measurement processes collect data in units different from the BCI standard, can those units can be confidently converted (e.g. by giving a clear explanation ideally with an example) to BCI standard units? \* Units must be convertible to the following: -- Area (of any measure): hectares -- SEED Cotton Harvested: kg -- Water Applied: m3 -- Cost and Income: local currency -- Fertiliser applied: kg or L -- Pesticides applied: kg or L -- Pesticide active ingredient concentrations: g/L or g/kg
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **7.3.4** The Producer creates and maintains a profile of the farm labour force, including estimates of numbers of workers, as per the Better Cotton Initiative defined worker categories and disaggregated by gender. The labour profile is updated annually, at the latest at the end of sowing. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* Do you have a profile of the labour force used by farmers in the PU?
* How have workers been categorized? Are you aware of the worker categories developed by BCI?
* Are workers broken down by category and gender?

Farmer visits:* [*cross-check information from labour profile with farm-level observation].*
* How many workers do you use? What type of workers are they? Do you use any women workers?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **7.3.5** The Producer ensures that all farmers within the PU maintain receipts of sales of Better Cotton, including the buyer name, date, and volume, for at least one year and is able to collect and submit these sale records to BCI upon request. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* How are farmers selling their cotton? (i.e. via middle man, market or direct to gin)
* Are farmers being provided with any receipts when cotton is sold? Are these kept for at least one year?
* If not, do farmers have an alternate method for recording who they sold their cotton to, including the buyer, date, and volume?

Farmer visits:* How do you sell your cotton? Are you given any receipt from the buyer?
* Do you keep any records of how much cotton was sold, and to whom?
* Are you able to retain the receipt for at least one year?
* [Review sales receipt or other records if available]
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |
| **7.4.1** The Producer operates a system to: (i) Identify and address the risks of non-conformity with core indicators; (ii) Plan and enforce the implementation of Corrective Actions resulting from monitoring activities. | PU Manager/ FF Interview:* Do you carry out internal monitoring of farmers to identify non-conformity risks?
* How does this work in practice? How are responsibilities divided between PU Manager and FFs?
* What risks or issues were found as a result of this activity? How were they addressed?
* How do you plan and implement corrective actions resulting from verification and monitoring?

Farmer visits:* Have you been given any feedback from the FF on practices to change or corrective actions that need to be implemented? Can you give any examples?
 | * Compliant
* Compliant with observation
* Incidental NC
* Systemic NC
 |  |

# Worker Interview Guide

This section includes a sample of questions that might be relevant when interviewing workers

| **Principle/ Questions** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- |
| **General/ Introduction***[explain purpose of the interview and that all information will be anonymous and confidential]** What is your name?
* What type of work do you do? Which farmer(s) do you work for?
* Do you live in the local area?
 |  |
| **Principle 1: Crop Protection***For workers that work directly with Crop Protection** Do you know how to recognise the different pest and beneficial insects in cotton?
* Do you conduct field observations of the crop’s health, key pest and beneficial insects?
* Have you received any training about IPM?
* On what basis do you decide to apply pesticides?
* How long have you been working with pesticides?
* Have you been trained for it?
* How old are you?
* How do you conduct the pesticide preparation and application?
* Do you know the danger of pesticides?
* Do you wear any protective equipment? Please describe this. What body parts are covered?
 |  |
| **Principle 5: Fibre Quality*** Have you been trained on the risk of contaminating seed cotton?
* What practices do you use to avoid contamination during harvest, storage and transporting seed cotton?
 |  |
| **Principle 6: Decent Work*** Has someone checked your age when you were hired? How old are you?
* What kinds of work do you do? How were you trained for these tasks?
* Do you know of any law or internal policy that determine the minimum age for your work?
* Do you know if there are any children working on this farm? Have you seen any children in the field?
* How are you paid for the work you do? Are all workers doing the same job paid the same?
* Are you working for your family or for someone else?
* How does your boss provide feedback to workers? How are workers disciplined if they don’t do a good job?
* Have you received any training or education on good work practices and the rights of workers?
* Have you encountered any issues of discrimination at work – for example due to your race or gender? How were these resolved?
* Are you aware of any code of conduct or policy non-discrimination?
* Are you a member of a union or other worker organisation? If not, would you like to be? Are you aware of your rights to join a workers organisation?

For detailed guidance on the assessment of indicators on forced labour, please refer to a separate [Decent Work Assessment Guidance Pack](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1jzzt6wx0us1xgo/AAArwno9bSwUI0hMv9VTNRlpa?dl=0), which includes indicator level guidance on an expanded set of indicators under Core Indicator 6.3.1 on forced labour, farmer and worker interview guides and standard operating procedures for incidents/risks of forced labour. |  |