Better Cotton Chain of Custody Online Registration Form – How to Complete

1. Introduction

The Better Cotton Chain of Custody Standard was launched in May 2023 to increase traceability in the Better Cotton Supply Chain and enable the sale and purchase of physical Better Cotton. A key part of the process to enrol in the new Standard is completion of the Better Cotton Chain of Custody Registration Form.

This form needs to be completed by all sites seeking to operate against the new Standard and will be used to categorise sites and determine their assessment path. It is therefore vital that sites fully understand the expectations around the information required to be submitted in this form and complete it thoroughly.

Better Cotton have therefore developed this guide to assist sites completing the online registration form.

All fields in the online form are mandatory and so, even if a question is not relevant to your individual site you are still required to answer the question. Where a question is not relevant to your site, please enter the term ‘Not Applicable’.

For organisations seeking to provide details for multiple sites, please complete the first 3 questions of the online form and the Better Cotton team will provide an Excel version to complete. This form can then be submitted to Better Cotton via email to compliance@bettercotton.org.

Not all questions in this guide will appear for all sites because the form includes branching which means that some questions only appear based on the answer provided to the previous question.

The Better Cotton team will respond within 30 working days with a response to the categorisation. If you have any questions about the form, please contact helpdesk@bettercotton.org. The Better Cotton team may also reach out if there are any points that require further clarification.
2. Completing the Form

1. The expectation is that this is the name of the overall organisation or parent company that is entering the Better Cotton Chain of Custody v1.0 programme.

2. The site applying needs to decide here if they intend to follow any of the physical models in the new Better Cotton Chain of Custody v1.0 programme. The models are:
   - Segregation (Single Country) - where the cotton content is only Better Cotton, and the Better Cotton is only sourced from a single country and cannot be mixed with cotton from other countries
   - Segregation (Multi Country) - where the cotton content is only Better Cotton, but the Better Cotton can be sourced from multiple countries and mixed
   - Controlled Blending - where the cotton content can be Better Cotton blended with conventional cotton. The amounts of each must always be controlled.

If the site selects ‘No’ there is an assumption that they only want to apply the Mass Balance model and they will be taken to the end of the form.
3. The site can select multiple options here and should only select those that they intend to apply at the site level.

4. If the applicant selects 'Multiple Site' here, they will be taken to the end of the form and invited to complete an Excel version of the registration form. 'Multiple Site' would only be expected to be completed where the form is being completed by a head office for multiple sites within their organisation.
5. We would expect the details of the specific site that is being enrolled to be included here. Each field needs to be completed so if the site does not have, for example, a postcode then they should enter ‘N/A’. The evidence to be uploaded needs to prove that the site exist which could include examples such as company registration forms with government entities, articles of incorporation etc.

6. GOTS is the Global Organic Textile Standard. OCS/CCS are standards covered under the Textile Exchange programme. Other Standards that cover sustainable cotton fibres and materials can be included here and the site should select ‘Other scheme’ if that is the case.
7. If the site selected ‘Yes’ or ‘Other scheme’ for the previous question they will be taken to this question. We would expect that the site uploads a copy of their certificate to prove they are certified to one of the Standards. Better Cotton will then verify this document against the relevant standards database.

8. The annual turnover can relate just to cotton or Better Cotton especially for sites that may trade multiple non-cotton or textile products. The volume of cotton sourced as Better Cotton relates to how much the specific site has sourced in the past 12 months prior to the application. If the site’s reporting works on a calendar year basis, then the cotton sourced as Better Cotton in the prior calendar year would be acceptable. Better Cotton may review this against information stored on the Better Cotton Platform (BCP) to validate.
9. The BCP refers to the Better Cotton Platform where transactions relating to Better Cotton are hosted. The below screenshot gives an outline of what it looks like. If you are new to the Better Cotton Chain of Custody programme you will not have a BCP account and should select ‘No’

10. If the site selected ‘Yes’ to the previous question they will be taken to this question. The BCP code is a 7 digit code followed by a ‘-’ and then another digit and can be found on the platform as shown in the image below:
The company/account type can also be found on the BCP as shown in the image below:

11. These questions refer to the size and capacity of the site. For production it only needs to refer to the production area and does not need to factor in office space. For the warehousing, this refers to where products are stored either before production or postproduction. The site may only have one storage area for both types of products.
12. This is intended to be the person who is responsible for managing the Better Cotton Chain of Custody Standard within the specific site.

13. This is the number of staff at the specific site and includes all staff not just per shift.
14. Multiple options can be selected, but this needs to accurately reflect the activities undertaken at the specific site. Better Cotton may also review the information provided against the type of account on the BCP if it is an organisation that currently exists in the platform.

15. What is meant here by ‘excluding’ is are there any areas of the site that will not be applying the requirements of the Better Cotton Chain of Custody Standard v1.0. This may be because only parts of the site are used to process and/or store Better Cotton products. This does not need to include areas such as office space.
16. If the site selects ‘Yes’ to the previous question they will be taken to this question. The site needs to explain which areas of the site they will be excluding and provide reasons for the exclusions. Better Cotton may share the details provided here with the Third-Party Verifier (3PV) that will conduct the assessment at the site and the 3PV may also inspect the areas listed to ensure there are no risks identified that jeopardise adherence to the Better Cotton Chain of Custody requirements.

17. Multiple options can be selected. For sites that already have access to the BCP this reflect what is available in their BCP account. The type of materials purchased and produced will depend on the nature of the site and the primary activities.
18. This is a multiple-choice question and lists all countries alphabetically. Sites should select only those for their direct suppliers.

19. Please note that this question requests the information in Metric Tonnes and should be a numerical value. It should also be noted that it is only an estimate and Better Cotton will not be assessing the site against the information provided here. The question also refers to Better Cotton or Better Cotton containing products so does not need to include estimates for conventional or other non-Better Cotton products.
20. This question is referring to whether the site can segregate their Better Cotton or Better Cotton containing products from conventional or non-Better Cotton products.

More details can also be found in the terminology and definition document on the Resources section of the Better Cotton website.
22. If the site selects Digital Identification Systems (ERP) from the previous question, then they will be taken to this question and asked which system they use. Better Cotton may request further information to verify the system used.

23. This question will be most applicable to processors but does the site transform the form of the product they receive for example do they spin or weave the cotton.
24. If the site selects 'Yes' to the previous question they will be taken to this question to ask how they manage the inventory on site. By inventory it means the amount of Better Cotton held on site. If the site selects 'No' to the previous question they will be asked if they take physical possession of the Better Cotton meaning does the Better Cotton arrive in their site or is it traded to another site instead.

25. This question is referring to if the site outsources or use subcontractors in relation to any activities that are within the scope of the Better Cotton Chain of Custody programme. By outsourcing or subcontracting we mean that the site retains ownership of the product throughout and, typically, the site receives the product back before they sell to their customers.
26. If the site selects ‘Yes’ to the previous question they will be taken to this one. By processing it is referring to whether the subcontractor does any of the product transformation for example weaving, spinning, dyeing. For logistics it is referring to whether they use subcontractors for storage and transportation activities only.

27. A quality management system is defined as a formalized system that documents processes, procedures, and responsibilities for achieving quality policies and objectives. This is important for the new Better Cotton Chain of Custody Standard. A site can incorporate the Better Cotton CoC requirements into their existing quality management system.
28. An internal audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization’s operations. Typically, sites do this for other programmes and the Better Cotton Chain of Custody requirements could be brought into existing internal audit programmes.

29. If the site selects ‘Yes’ in the previous question they will be taken to this question. An internal audit is like other audits where findings are typically raised to assess conformity. The findings can be uploaded by the site in the format listed in the question.
30. This asks whether a site has a list of approved suppliers, for sites that are new to the Better Cotton programme, this could refer to other products. Better Cotton do not define what format this needs to be kept in but the Better Cotton Chain of Custody v1.0 has requirements on the minimum amount of information that sites are expected to retain for each supplier.

31. This closely relates to the quality management system question earlier in the form but by certified it is referring to whether the management system has been audited or assessed by an independent third-party verifier or certification body and has been certified as meeting a particular standard.
32. If the site selects ‘Yes’ to the previous question they will be taken to this question. ISO9001 and ISO14001. ISO standards are quality management systems (QMS) standards developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) that help organizations ensure they meet customer and other stakeholder needs within statutory and regulatory requirements related to a product or service. There are other standards that cover quality management systems and other certification schemes include quality management system requirements within them.

The site would be expected to upload a copy of the certificate for the relevant Standard.

33. A social compliance scheme, also called a social or an ethical scheme, is a programme designed at ensuring organisations are complying with socially responsible principles. This can be 2nd party for example Retailer or Brand Standards, or 3rd party which are programmes that are assessed by Third Party Verifiers.
34. If the site selects 'Yes' to the previous question, then they will be taken to this question. The options listed are social compliance schemes and their details can be found on their respective websites. The site should upload a copy of their certificate or other evidence if they comply with one of these standards. Better Cotton will review the details and seek to verify with the respective standard.

35. This is a free text box for sites to enter information for any other assessments or audits. This could include areas such as environmental or other Chain of Custody Standards. If there are no other standards the site can enter 'N/A' in the box.
36. The site should enter the date in the format requested. Also, while the site may want to enter the programme immediately there are no guarantees as to the date, particularly for those that require an assessment prior to entry. But Better Cotton will work with sites to ensure they are updated on the timelines and process.

There will be a final slide requesting any feedback on the form and sites need to click the green box with the arrow in the bottom right corner to complete the form and submit to Better Cotton.