

Request for Proposals: Farm level GHG accounting methodology

RFP n#: 2023-10-PR-GHG-ACC

Location: Remote

Start date: 05/01/2024

End date: 02/08/2024



Better Cotton key contact:

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All applications must be submitted via [this form](#).

You may submit questions to tender@bettercotton.org with the following header: “Question - RFP n#2023-10-PR-GHG-ACC”.

Questions, requests, and applications sent after the deadline (19 November 2023) will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Description

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 trained over 2.5 million farmers – from the smallest to the largest – in 23 countries in more sustainable farming practices. 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.

More information about Better Cotton can be found on our website: www.bettercotton.org

Better Cotton has recently begun a new strategic phase toward 2030, with a deepened commitment to making positive impact on how cotton is produced. Better Cotton set 5 ambitious impact targets in 2021 focused on climate change mitigation, soil health, pesticide use, smallholder livelihoods, and women’s empowerment.

On GHG, Better Cotton has set an ambitious emissions reduction target of 50% per tonne of cotton produced, compared to our 2017 baseline. We are doing so through various actions such as promoting the implementation of context specific climate smart practices at farm level, supporting the development of climate related services, exploring incentives and governance system solutions,

along with Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (LCA, Cool Farm tool) that aim at improving GHG emission estimation and supporting decision making for carbon footprint reduction.

To achieve our 2030 targets and strategy, we are also implementing a significant transformation programme to the Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS) – deepening our impact by unlocking new channels of funding to our field programmes and the farmers we work with, enhancing our field-level assurance, monitoring and reporting activities, and generating greater value for our corporate members by enabling the tracing of Better Cotton in global supply chains.

To this effect, we have recently revised our Chain of Custody (CoC) system, adding physical CoC models to our existing Mass Balance offering. Our new [Chain of Custody](#) provides our corporate members assured:

- Visibility of the Country / Countries of Origin of their sourced physical Better Cotton
- Percentage physical Better Cotton within a product (by Country), and
- Aggregate volume of lint utilised in the production of the product.

Until now, Better Cotton corporate members have only been able to use a global conventional Emissions Factor for their sourced Better Cotton orders, as our Mass Balance approach allows the substitution of Better Cotton with conventional without restriction. The introduction of our physical CoC models brings the opportunity to link the improvement our corporate members fund on the ground to the physical Better Cotton in their end products. Better Cotton is also exploring the introduction of a credit trading facility, that would enable the market to purchase units representing the production of more sustainable cotton directly from farmers and farming communities.

As part of a project funded by the ISEAL Innovations Fund, Better Cotton is now seeking an expert consultant or consultancy team to identify and design methodologies and tools to credibly account, report, and allocate GHG emissions associated with agricultural commodity production in general, and apply it to Better Cotton, for allocation across our current and future CoC models.

Scope of Work

This consultancy will build on Better Cotton's work on GHG quantification, accounting and reporting to date¹, to develop the methods and tools needed to credibly, reliably, and effectively quantify GHG emissions at field level, and support Better Cotton to adopt the methodology and approach. The outputs should align with GHG accounting and reporting frameworks, notably:

- GHG-P Corporate and Scope 3 Standards (especially the Land Sector and Removal Guidance)
- SBTi FLAG Guidance
- ISO 14064

In addition to aligning to the standards and guidance listed above, the outputs should also support the corporate buyers of preferred fibres and certified agricultural commodities to credibly report and disclose on the GHG footprint sourcing through disclosure and ESG standards and frameworks like GRI 305, CDP, and ISSB Standards, and the upcoming EU CSRD, along with supporting science-based target setting where relevant.

¹ Better Cotton [GHG emissions study, 2021](#); Guidance resulting from [Gold Standard-led project, 2020-2021](#): "Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting for Certified Commodities".

The consultant will work with Better Cotton to implement the methods and tools, and develop training for other voluntary standards systems to adapt and adopt the agricultural commodity-agnostic approach to their own field activities.

The farmers we license across the world are diverse – as are their production systems. The methods and tools identified through this consultancy should work for smallholder farmers in India, as well as large farm owners in the US – differences in farming context and challenges in primary data collection must be considered. The general methodology should consider individual, group and landscape / jurisdictional application of GHG accounting, to accommodate the different spatial scales that Better Cotton may license / certify in the future.

Deliverables

Deliverable 1: Guidance for farm-level GHG emissions calculations

- The main output of this consultancy will be the development of guidance for farm-level GHG emissions calculations for agricultural commodities that is credible, reliable and cost effective, and in line with GHGP and SBTi FLAG criteria. The guidance should include:
- An approach for farm level GHG emissions calculation that meets cost effectiveness and GHGP- SBTi FLAG criteria by:
 - Identifying scope and boundaries of the GHG accounting system and define the GHG accounting approach.
 - Identifying required data points and related emissions factors and cost-effective, efficient methods for data collection, including digital approaches as appropriate, and credible secondary data sources where primary is unavailable.
- A decision-making framework for GHG accounting tool selection.
- Detail on allocating estimated GHG emissions with specific CoC models.

Deliverable 2: Support to Better Cotton in applying the methodology to the BCSS

In addition, the consultant will need to support Better Cotton in:

- Applying the GHG emissions calculations methodology to Better Cotton production
- Identifying credible allocation approaches to Better Cotton CoC models
- Identifying potential for carbon removals in Better Cotton's large and small farm contexts
- Identifying potential for other sustainability metrics measurements

Deliverable 3: Training delivery on methodology

They will also work with Better Cotton to communicate and train stakeholders on the outputs of this consultancy internally (x1) and externally (x2) (participation in training webinars, materials development and presentation).

In order to successfully fulfil these tasks, the consultant is recommended to consider:

- The 2022 guidance developed by the Gold Standard for the ISEAL-funded Value Change Programme for certified commodities²
- The 2021 Anthesis Study which estimates Better Cotton GHG emissions³
- The 2022 SustainCERT study that highlights the gaps between the above documents⁴
- The upcoming GHG Protocol Land Use and Removal Guidance⁵
- The SBTi FLAG guidance

High-level Timeline

19 November 2023	Applications deadline All applications must be submitted via this form .
20 – 24 November 2023	Applications review, with shortlisted candidates contacted
w/c 27th November 2023	Interviews with shortlisted candidates
By 1 December 2023	The successful candidate will be notified Unsuccessful shortlisted candidates will also be notified
December 2023	Contracting and alignment on consultancy workplan, methodology and deliverables. This may involve multiple calls between the selected consultancy and Better Cotton to align on mid-point deliverables and timelines
8th January 2024	Start of the consultancy – Kick-off call with Better Cotton
By 10 May 2024	Completion of Deliverable 1
By 2 August 2024	Completion of Deliverables 2 and 3

² [Gold Standard Guidance, 2022](#)

³ [Better Cotton First Study on GHG Emissions, 2021](#)

⁴ Summary available upon request, full report will be provided to the selected Consultant

⁵ [Land Sector and Removals Guidance | GHG Protocol \(draft\)](#)

Required Skills & Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
<i>Essential</i>
Life-cycle assessment and/or GHG accounting applied to organizations, products, and services, particularly Scope 3 emissions MRV and reporting.
Application of LCA methodology and standards to the agriculture sector, including estimating the emissions and removals due to land use change, synthetic and organic fertilizer use, and soil management practices.
Knowledge about the global climate standards, namely the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, ISO standards, and the recent developments such as the EU taxonomy for sustainable activities.
Knowledge about corporate environmental reporting and pledges like SAC Higg MSI, CDP and Net Zero commitments, and target setting programs such as Science Based Targets initiative, SBTi Forest, Land and Agriculture (FLAG), and the UNFCCC Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action.
Evidence of successful project management and effective facilitation of different perspectives towards a common objective, especially in the field of climate change and carbon accounting.
Communication: Engaging communicator both in person and in writing. Ability to adjust style of communication to suit audience (e.g. present technical topics to a non-technical audience)
Adaptability, communication, and outreach skills
Degree in engineering or hard sciences. An environmental or climate specialization would be an asset

Application Requirements

Proposals responding to this Request for Proposals should be a maximum 10 pages (excluding CVs and annexes), and include the following:

- Overview of relevant experience
- Proposed methodology and timeline, including how they will engage with Better Cotton to progress deliverables
- Assurances that the scope of work can be delivered within the specified timeline
- Detailed and transparent budget, in EUROS, including time allocation, day rates and any anticipated expenses.

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 these principles and subject to BCI's policies on equal opportunity, non-discrimination, anti-bribery and corruption and conflict of interest.