# Becoming a Better Cotton Member

This document comprises of:

1. The membership application form
2. The membership contract (Membership Code of Practice and Terms of Membership)

The membership application form must be completed, signed and returned to Better Cotton along with required support documents as outlined in the form before membership applications can be accepted.

Membership Application Form

Producer Organisations

***Producer Organisations*** include any organisation that engages with and aims to represent cotton producers.

Membership Criteria

Membership is open to all organisations. Better Cotton is an inclusive initiative which aims to work with its members and partners to achieve its goal of transforming cotton production worldwide by developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity. Applicants to membership should fulfil the following:

1. Your organisation’s long-term aspirations **support Better Cotton’s mission**, aims and strategic principles for Better Cotton ([Who we are - Better Cotton](https://bettercotton.org/who-we-are/)).
2. Your organisation is **a legal entity** or a group of legal entities.

*If your organisation forms part of a group, Better Cotton recommends that the entire group becomes a member of Better Cotton. If your organisation runs integrated operations including several processing steps, your membership will be categorised according to the highest value activity exercised.*

1. Your organisation should have a minimum of **1 year’s existence**.
2. Your organisation is able to demonstrate an **existing commitment to good environmental and social standards**.

*Evidence includes but is not limited to a publicly available commitment to sustainability as well as either implementing a code of conduct or implementing a management standard covering both environmental and social practices.*

1. Your organisation **does not pose a reputational risk to Better Cotton** through past or present activities. This includes but is not limited to, child labour, health and safety violations or being listed on an internationally recognised default list or advisory list (e.g. ICA’s List of Unfulfilled Awards). Better Cotton reserves the right to protect and safeguard itself against risks to Better Cotton’s integrity and credibility.

***Companies not meeting one or more of the membership criteria*** *listed above may still apply to the Better Cotton Initiative by adding a justification to their application form. The justification addendum can be requested from Better Cotton for completion by applicant after a review of the application form. The addendum includes clear instructions on what is requested from the applicant.*

Company Information

**About the Organisation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Company |  |
| Business Registration Reference No. |  |
| Address (Headquarters) | Building |  |
| Street |  |
| City |  |
| State  |  |
| Postcode/Zip |  |
| Country  |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Website |  |

The information you provide below will be shared with our Members and Better Cotton Council as part of the consultation and approval process. Answering fully and factually is important to the success of your application.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date your organisation was established |  |
| Brief description of your company’s key activities |  |
| Motivation for joining Better Cotton (sustainability and business motivation) |  |
| What would your organisation like to achieve during your first year as a member? |  |
| Do you have any interest in becoming a Better Cotton Implementing Partner (IP)? *Note that an IP works with farmers at the local level to implement the Better Cotton system.* | YES / NO |
| Please list your membership of local, national or regional organisations.  |  |
| How many members do you have? |  |
| Are your members only in the cotton sector?  |  |
| What percentage of your members are smallholders?   |  |
| What is the estimated average farm size of your members?  |  |
| Does your organisation contract its own field agents / agronomic advisers?  |  |
| Does your organisation currently work with Fairtrade / Organic / other sustainable cotton programmes?  |  |

Data Protection

By becoming a Better Cotton Member, you accept that contact names and email addresses may be shared through internal group communication (or other means). For more information, please see the [Better Cotton Data Privacy Policy](https://bettercotton.org/better-cotton-data-privacy-policy/).

Members often wish to contact each other outside of Better Cotton. If you do not wish your contact details to be shared, please indicate by ticking the box below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | No, I do not wish my or my organisation’s contact details to be shared with other members  |

Better Cotton publishes a Membership list on its website and in some presentations. If you *do not* wish your organisation to appear in this list, please tick the box below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | No, I do not wish my organisation to appear in the Better Cotton Membership list. |

Better Cotton displays members’ logos on its website and includes a link to members’ websites. If you do not wish this for your logo and website, please tick the boxes below.

If you agree for Better Cotton to use your logo it will only be displayed on the Better Cotton Website and in presentations together with other member logos to showcase Better Cotton Members. For any other use of your logo Better Cotton will seek your permission.

If you want us to use your logo, please attach it to the application when submitting.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | No, I do not want Better Cotton to link to my organisation’s website |
|  | No, I do not want Better Cotton to make use of my organisation’s logo |

Contact Information

**Primary Contact**

The primary contact nominated should be the person within your organisation who will act as the organisation’s day-to-day representative with Better Cotton. All communications from Better Cotton to your organisations will be directed to the primary contact.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| First Name |  |
| Last Name |  |
| Position within Organisation |  |
| Email |  |
| Telephone (incl. country code) |  |

**Secondary** **Contact**

The application should also be endorsed and signed by a **senior member** of the organisation who will take responsibility for ensuring that the organisation follows the obligations laid out in the Better Cotton Principles of Participation. You may nominate this senior member as the secondary representative to this function. The secondary contact may be copied into communications but will not be the first point of contact.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| First Name |  |
| Last Name |  |
| Position within Organisation |  |
| Email |  |
| Telephone (incl. country code) |  |

Invoicing Address

Please supply details to be used for invoicing purposes. Also, please state if your organisation requires any specific information in order to process an invoice (such as Purchase Order numbers).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Contact Name for Invoices | First Name |  |
| Last Name |  |
| Email |  |
| Telephone (incl. country code) |  |
| Address *(if different to HQ)* | Building |  |
| Street |  |
| City |  |
| State  |  |
| Postcode / Zip |  |
| Country  |  |
| Do you have any specific invoicing instructions? If so, please explain. *(e.g. PO numbers, invoice portals, etc.)* |  |

Membership Fees

The table below shows the fees for the membership category Producer Organisations only.

|  |
| --- |
| **2024 MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR PRODUCER ORGANISATION** |
| **Fee Level** | **Annual Fee (EUR)** |
| Non-OECD | 130 € |
| OECD - Sub-national  | 630 € |
| OECD - National and supranational  | 1,270 € |

The fee level is based on whether the organisation is registered in a non-OECD country or in an OECD-country:

* If the organisation is registered in an OECD-country and its activities are limited to one region it is defined as Sub-national.
* If the organisation is registered in an OECD-country and its activities are spread over wider regions, then it is defined as National and Supranational.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 38 member countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade. Check [here](http://www.oecd.org/about/membersandpartners/list-oecd-member-countries.htm) for the list of OECD countries.

The fee structure provides for the possibility that fees are not charged for Producer Organisations in the poorest non-OECD countries: the definition covers those countries ranked between 160 to 191 (i.e. Low Human Development) on the [UNDP Human Development Index](http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI) (HDI). In terms of major cotton producing countries, this would include Pakistan, Madagascar, Senegal, Mozambique, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali. New and existing members can apply for a fee waiver if they are based in any of the listed countries.

Check List

Together with this application form, please make sure you submit the following:

1. **A copy of your company registration certificate**

This document will typically be a copy of your company’s legal registration with the local administrative authorities. If you are applying as a group which is not a legally registered entity, the certificate of incorporation of each of the companies within the group must be submitted.

1. **A signed copy of the Better Cotton Membership Code of Practice**

The Better Cotton Membership Code of Practice is included in this application pack and must be signed separately. It outlines the commitment and expected behaviour of a Better Cotton Member.

1. **A digital copy of your logo (optional)**

The provided logo should preferably be in PNG format, with a transparent background.

Signature

With my signature, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (entity name) is applying for membership to the Better Cotton Initiative. I confirm that I have the legal mandate officially to act on behalf of my organisation.

With the signature below, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (signatory name) acknowledges and accepts the attached Better Cotton Code of Practice, the Better Cotton Terms of Membership, the Better Cotton Fee Structure, the Better Cotton [Statutes](https://bettercotton.org/documents/bci-statutes/), the [Better Cotton Chain of Custody Guidelines](https://bettercotton.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Better-Cotton-CoC-Guidelines-V1.4-Final-Dec-2020-updated.pdf), the [Better Cotton Claims Framework,](https://bettercotton.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Better-Cotton-Claims-Framework-v3.1.pdf) the Better Cotton [Anti-trust Policy](http://bettercotton.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/BCI_Antitrust_Policy_final_eng_ex.pdf) and the [Data Privacy Policy](https://bettercotton.org/better-cotton-data-privacy-policy/), as well as the resulting rights and obligations.

I declare that all information provided is, to the best of my knowledge, comprehensive and correct.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of Signature: |  |
| Signature: |  |
| Position within Organisation: |  |

Member Code of Practice

Our vision is a world where all cotton farming is sustainable.

Better Cotton’s mission is to help cotton communities to survive and thrive, while protecting and restoring the environment. Cotton farmers are at the centre of what we do.

General

Better Cotton is a not for profit multistakeholder membership association. It is politically neutral and it does not discriminate on any grounds.

Better Cotton is a pre-competitive initiative, and does not act in any way that can be construed as limiting competition. The members of Better Cotton ("Better Cotton Members") abide by a strict anti-trust policy. Better Cotton does not set a premium for Better Cotton and pricing of the commodity is a function of the market. The ultimate beneficiaries of Better Cotton’s actions are cotton farmers, cotton farm workers, cotton farming communities and the environment.

Better Cotton has a collaborative approach to other established sustainability initiatives, it complements, rather than competes with them. Better Cotton works alongside others to increase the amount of cotton produced in a more environmentally and socially sustainable way.

Code of Practice

Better Cotton Members are expected to act with integrity and not partake in any activity that could negatively impact the credibility of Better Cotton. This Code of Practice outlines areas in which internationally recognised best practice is expected. The Better Cotton Secretariat reserves the right to define best practice in case of dispute.

Not acting in accordance with this code may lead to the termination of membership in accordance with the Better Cotton Statutes and the Better Cotton Terms of Membership.

* **Commitment and Conduct**
Better Cotton Members are committed to the mission of Better Cotton. They support Better Cotton in their communication, are transparent in all their dealings, and collaborate with Better Cotton and its key stakeholders. They provide truthful and accurate input to the organisation. and participate in its governance to improve how Better Cotton works.
* **Business Integrity**
Better Cotton Members act with integrity in their businesses, comply with all relevant legal requirements, respect contract sanctity, do not offer or accept bribes or deliberately withhold information. They act with fiduciary responsibility and protect data responsibly.
* **Decent Work and Human Rights**
Better Cotton Members uphold internationally recognised standards with respect to decent work and human rights (incl. the eight fundamental ILO conventions relating to principles and rights at work) . They do not accept any form of harassment or discrimination on any grounds. They respect workers’ rights to organise themselves and care for their health and safety.
* **Communication**
Better Cotton Members are honest and transparent in their sustainability marketing and communication. They do not use unsubstantiated, or in other ways, misleading claims about Better Cotton or of the impact associated with it. They do not communicate on behalf of Better Cotton.
* **Sourcing**
Better Cotton Members abide by applicable chain of custody guidelines as developed and implemented by Better Cotton, or otherwise recognised officially by Better Cotton.
* **Environmental compliance**
Better Cotton Members are committed to (i) protecting the environment they operate in and (ii) adhering to, at a minimum, the local environmental laws for the location(s) in which they operate.

Credibility and Reputation

These are universal principles that Better Cotton has established for the credibility and wellbeing of its membership community, and to protect the reputation of the association and its members. Above and beyond these principles, if the Better Cotton Council deem that a particular entity, for whatever reason, poses a risk to credibility and/or reputation, Better Cotton reserves the right to protect the reputation of the association for purposes of supporting its mission.

Implementation of the Better Cotton Standard System, and other parts of the Better Cotton programme have their own rules of engagement, however, the above underpin behaviours expected from all members within the Better Cotton Community.

\*\*\*

I am authorised on behalf of my organisation to hereby confirm that we understand and commit to this Code of Practice.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signature   | Company stamp   |
| Name   |
| Role   |
| Date and Place   |

Terms of Membership

Better Cotton membership is renewed annually upon fee payment.

Members wishing to terminate their membership shall give three months’ advance notice in writing by emailing membership@bettercotton.org. Fees already paid for current membership year are not refundable.

1. Terms of Payment

1.1 Membership fees are payable on an annual basis.

1.2 Invoices will be sent electronically by email by default and as hard copy by post upon request only.

1.3 Invoices will be considered as received on the next business day following the day the documents were emailed.

1.4 Membership fee invoices are payable within 30 days of receipt.

1.5 After 30 days a reminder will be sent by the Better Cotton Secretariat. Fee payments will be considered late if received after the payment term has expired. A fee of up to 5 % of the initial amount invoiced may be charged for late payments.

1.6 Failure to pay membership fees for 5 months or longer may result in suspension and/ or termination of membership.

1.7 Fees are reviewed annually by the Better Cotton Council.

1. Adherence to the Better Cotton Initiative Code of Practice

The adherence of members to the Better Cotton Initiative Code of Practice is fundamental to the integrity, credibility and success of Better Cotton.

A violation of the Better Cotton Code of Practice may lead to the suspension and / or termination of membership. A breach of the Better Cotton Code of Practice includes, but is not limited to the following:

**Practice contradicting the spirit of Better Cotton, its mission, aims and strategic principles**

2.1 Endangering the interests or the reputation of the Better Cotton Initiative and of Better Cotton.

2.2 False representation of Better Cotton.

2.3 Making misleading or unsubstantiated claims about the production, procurement or use of Better Cotton and the impact associated with it.

2.4 Being listed on a default list.

2.5 Behaving in a manner contradictory to the Better Cotton anti-trust guidelines.

2.6 Taking part in anti-competitive practices.

1. Termination of Membership

**Under the Better Cotton Statutes, a member ceases to be a member of the Association if the** **member:**

3.1 becomes insolvent

3.2 is wound-up or is dissolved

3.3 resigns that membership by written notice to the Better Cotton Secretariat with a notice period of at least three months

3.4 or is expelled from the Association, according to art. 3.5-9.

**The Council may expel a member if it determines that:**

3.5 the member no longer meets the definition specified for the member’s membership category

3.6 the member no longer meets the membership criteria

3.7 the member fails to adhere to the Better Cotton Member Code of Practice

3.8 the member fails to pay their membership fees on an annual basis and in accordance   with the membership fee structure

3.9 or the member is endangering the interests or the reputation of Better Cotton.

In case of expulsion, the Council must give the member at least 30 days written notice of the expulsion, stating the grounds for the expulsion and allowing the member to provide a written submission stating why they should not be expelled, with such submission to be received prior to the proposed date of expulsion. The Council’s decision whether or not to expel a member is final.