

Better Cotton Chain of Custody

Appeals Procedure

Version 1.0, January 2024

Introduction

Appeals may be submitted against a rejection of an organisation from entering the Better Cotton Chain of Custody programme during the screening process against the Better Cotton Chain of Custody Eligibility Criteria. Alternatively, an appeal may be submitted against an assessment decision made by an Approved Third Party Verifier for the Better Cotton Chain of Custody Standard.

In either case an appeal must be submitted to Better Cotton in writing within 10 working days of receipt of either the screening rejection or the appeal decision of the Third Party Verifier. Appeals are to be sent via email to compliance@bettercotton.org and must include a clear rationale and objective evidence to support the appeal.

The Appellant must submit a completed Appeals Submission form as found on the Better Cotton website. All appeal submissions must:

1. Include a clear rationale for the appeal
2. Include detailed supporting evidence for the appeal

Appeal submissions are reviewed and decided by a selected set of members from the Better Cotton Membership and Supply Chain Team. Appeal decisions are based on a detailed review of the objective evidence provided (both from the appeals submission form and/or outcomes of assessment activities); with reference to the decisive text in the Better Cotton Chain of Custody.

Appeals Procedure

Process Step	Responsible	Actions
1. Submit Appeal	Appellant	<p>Organisation completes the appeal using the Appeal Submission Form.</p> <p>Organisation emails the appeal to compliance@bettercotton.org along with supporting documents.</p> <p>Appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the organisation either being rejected for entry to the Better Cotton Chain of Custody programme or within 10 working days of the appeal decision of the approved Third-Party Verifier</p>
2. Appeals received and checked for eligibility	Better Cotton Supply Chain Team	<p>2a. Better Cotton confirms to the Appellant that the appeal has been received</p> <p>2b. Better Cotton assesses admissibility of appeal against following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of correct template

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If appealing an assessment decision by a Third-Party Verifier, confirm that the organisation has appealed to the Third-Party Verifier first • Submitted within 10 working days of the organisation either being rejected for entry to the Better Cotton Chain of Custody programme or within 10 working days of the appeal decision of the approved Third-Party Verifier • Adequate completion of Appeal Statement (I) • Clear rationale and evidence provided <p>2c. If not admissible, Better Cotton informs the Appellant and the appeal may be submitted one further time (within 7 working days)</p> <p>2d. Appeals should be in English and supporting evidence may be submitted in local language. If applicable, appeals are translated into English (coordinated by Better Cotton Supply Chain Country Teams) Note that this may delay the appeal process</p>
3. Processing of Appeal	Better Cotton Chain of Custody Appeals Team	<p>3a. Members of the Supply Chain team including Senior Manager and Senior Coordinators receive the full appeal submission pack, including the appeal submission and all relevant assessment documentation. If any members of the team have a direct conflicts of interest they are excluded from the process.</p> <p>3b. Appeals Team has minimum 7 working days to review the materials received.</p> <p>3c. Appeals Team may consult with either or both of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of Membership and Supply Chain - Senior Director of Membership and Supply Chain - Other members of the Senior Management team if it impacts their area
4. Appeal Decision	Better Cotton Chain of Custody Appeals Team	<p>4a. Appeals team evaluates appeal and reaches a decision</p> <p>4b. Appeals team documents the decision in writing, including rationale</p>
5. Notification of Appeal Decision	Better Cotton Senior Chain of Custody and Supply Chain Integrity Manager	<p>5a. The decision is communicated to the Appellant via email. All decisions of the Appeals Team are final.</p> <p>Better Cotton aims to communicate final decisions to the Appellant within 35 calendar days of receiving and (eligible) appeals submission</p>

If the Appellant is dissatisfied with the way the appeal has been handled they may raise a complaint using the Better Cotton Complaints Policy