

Head of Certification

Starting Date: As soon as possible

Contract type: Full-time and open-ended

Salary: if hired in London – 72'100 GBP, if in Geneva – 109'500 CHF, if in New Delhi – 3'710'500 INR, if in Lahore - 8'624'210 PKR, commensurate with relevant experience and skills

Location: London, United Kingdom preferred. Exceptional candidates in Geneva, Switzerland; New Delhi, India and Lahore, Pakistan will be considered

Application closing date: 14th March 2024

About the Job

Are you purpose-led and ready to embark on a journey to shape the future of sustainable cotton? If you also have good experience as a team leader with strong technical knowledge and good strategic thinking skills, then join us at Better Cotton as **Head of Certification** and lead a global team responsible for the development of new certification processes and systems, building on our existing assurance models. This new certification system will help maintain the credibility and scalability of the world's largest cotton sustainability initiative.

We support more sustainable farming practices and farm livelihoods for nearly 3 million farmers in the Better Cotton network in 23 countries around the world. Almost a quarter of the world's cotton is now grown under the Better Cotton Standard System. Better Cotton's certification teams oversee the auditing of farmers against our field-level sustainability standard (the Principles & Criteria), as well as the auditing of supply chain companies against our Chain of Custody standard.

As Head of Certification, you play a key role in helping Better Cotton to analyse and oversee current assurance and audit-related procedures, and develop new procedures and systems needed under a third-party certification model. This will be a busy and challenging role with plenty of opportunities to work on diverse tasks and projects.

Your role and responsibilities

We are seeking a motivated Head of Certification to join our team. In this role, you will serve as a key liaison between the certification team(s) and Better Cotton's senior leadership. You will be responsible for the following workstreams:

Drive the overall strategy and processes for certification.

In this area, you will:

1. Lead a consultative, inclusive process to design/ update Better Cotton's third-party certification scheme and related processes, in line with best practice, relevant legislation and key frameworks (e.g. ISEAL, ISO 17065, etc). This includes certification approaches

for Producer (farm level) and relevant Supply Chain actors, as well as other users of Better Cotton claims and labels

2. Ensure that the certification approach is aligned with, and informed by, Better Cotton's overall strategy and business model
3. Strategize to identify key risks and opportunities related to certification and assurance. With the support of the team, propose actions or mitigations, and escalate issues when necessary to Better Cotton senior leadership
4. Oversee the development of new shared certification IT systems and tools as required, and ensure these are project managed and resourced effectively
5. Work closely with communications, traceability, membership and claims to assure transparency and consistency of messaging relating to the certification model and its transition

Ensure that certification team(s) and work areas are represented effectively at Better Cotton leadership level, in terms of planning, resource allocation, and decision-making.

In this area, you will:

1. Establish regular communication channels upwards with the *Director of Standards, Certification and MEL* and other senior leadership to inform of key decisions, milestones, and implications
2. Cascade information and insights from senior leadership to the certification/ assurance teams
3. Engage proactively with other functions including Traceability, IT, Finance, and others, to identify and address areas of overlap and cross-functional work

Oversee the successful and credible implementation of certification programmes, including day to day operations

In this area, you will:

1. Work with team leads to ensure clear work plans and roles/ responsibilities for certification/ assurance teams (Producer and Supply Chain level, and claims)
2. Ensure certification programmes are implemented in a credible and consistent manner, with regular monitoring and calibration
3. Strive to balance rigour and cost- efficacy, through thoughtful and efficient use of resources (financial and human)
4. Ensure strong financial controls are in place to manage budgets and enable reporting

Develop long-term partnerships with Certification Bodies (CBs), and where relevant accreditation bodies to support high quality and cost-effective certification services.

In this area, you will:

1. Work with relevant teams to build and manage strategic relationships with certification bodies

2. Establish robust but cost-efficient and scalable approaches for training auditors and managing performance
3. Ensure Better Cotton has a sufficient network of qualified CBs and auditors to support long-term programme needs
4. Maintain relationship with the accreditation body approving our scope of accreditation, and initiate and maintain relationships with other accreditation bodies as strategically relevant depending on our countries of operation.

Establish supportive, open team culture and line management to certification team lead(s)

In this area, you will

1. Establish a revised team structure to build on existing assurance, supply chain, and claims functions, but improve synergies and collaboration
2. Mentor and provide line management for estimated 4-6 direct reports, with good HR processes in place
3. Foster a culture of collaboration and innovation, where ideas from all levels are encouraged and listened to
4. Work with team leads and the Director of Standards, Certification, and MEL to provide regular feedback on performance, to ensure training/ career progression opportunities, and to address any HR related challenges in a timely and sensitive way

The successful candidate will work closely with other functions including Membership and Supply Chain/Claims, IT, Traceability, and Communications. The role holder may support on other key project areas as interest and capacity allow

We are looking for someone who has

the following skills, knowledge, and experience:

Essential

- University degree, or equivalent higher education qualification, in a relevant field
- Extensive experience in certification and accreditation, ideally related to the agricultural sector or with a sustainability standards organisation.
- Comprehensive understanding of the certification process, including requirements, procedures and documentation.
- Demonstrated ability to lead and manage a diverse team, including setting goals, providing guidance, and resolving conflicts.
- Proficiency in project management techniques to coordinate and oversee certification processes efficiently. This involves planning, scheduling, resource allocation, training, calibration, and risk management.
- Proven ability to understand relevant normative frameworks and regulation related to certification and standard systems

- High ethical standards and integrity in managing certification processes, ensuring fairness, impartiality, and transparency.
- Experience collaborating effectively across different teams and cultures, strong relationship building skills and service-oriented attitude.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills with the ability to communicate clearly and concisely, as well as the ability to assimilate and process information for wide-ranging audiences.
- Proven ability to work autonomously with a high level of personal effectiveness.
- Commitment to ongoing learning and improvement in certification processes and practices, staying updated on industry developments and emerging trends.
- Excellent computer and IT skills, including: Word; PowerPoint; Excel, Outlook

Desirable

- Knowledge of the agricultural or cotton farming sector.
- Experience in a not-for profit organisation
- Competency in languages most relevant to Better Cotton countries, such as Hindi, Urdu, Mandarin, French, Portuguese and Turkish

What we offer

- Competitive salary
- Hybrid working
- The opportunity to work from anywhere in the world for up to one month per year
- Flexible working, with core hours from 10 am to 4 pm local time
- Continuous learning and development
- Pension scheme
- 25 days paid annual leave, plus 8-9 Bank Holidays and a discretionary further 3 days off over Christmas
- Enhanced parental benefits
- A warm, positive working environment where everyone is valued
- The opportunity to make your mark and make a difference.

Working arrangements

The position is full-time (40 hours per week). Better Cotton offers flexible working, with core hours being 10 am – 4 pm. The position may include some travel.

Apply now

Send us your CV (2 pages maximum) and a brief cover letter (1-page maximum) by or before **14.03.24** [via this link](#).

In your cover letter, please include an explanation of why your experience is specifically relevant to this role at Better Cotton. We want to see your personal style – what makes you tick and why you think your next opportunity is here with us.

Our hiring process

Initial Screening:

If you are selected, you will be contacted for an initial screening, which may involve a brief phone interview or video call. The purpose is to learn more about you, confirm basic qualifications, and discuss the role and organisation.

Interviews:

If you are confirmed after the initial screening, you will be invited for interviews. The interview process at Better Cotton may include one or more rounds of interviews with various stakeholders, such as the hiring manager, team members, and potentially senior management.

Assessment and Testing:

Depending on the role, you might be required to complete assessments, technical tests, or skills evaluations to gauge your competency and suitability for the position.

Reference Checks:

Once you progress further in the process, reference checks are conducted to validate your work history, skills, and qualifications, and for some roles, your education and criminal history.

Offer stage:

After completing interviews, assessments, and reference checks, the hiring team evaluates your performance and fit for the role. If you are selected and your references are relevant and satisfactory, you will receive a formal job offer letter outlining the terms of employment, compensation, benefits, and any other relevant details.

About Better Cotton

Better Cotton is the world's largest cotton sustainability programme. Our 200+ colleagues of 37+ nationalities are united by a shared passion and commitment to achieving the Better Cotton mission: to help cotton communities survive and thrive, while protecting and restoring the environment. Through our network of field-level partners a quarter of the world's cotton is now grown under the Better Cotton Standard. We have united the industry's stakeholders behind our efforts, from ginners and spinners to brand owners, civil society organisations and governments. Everyone who cares about cotton and its sustainable future can now be part of something better.

About our Values

The post holder will be expected to operate in line with our workplace values which are:

- **Trustworthy** (including honest, transparent, credible)
- As having **Integrity** (including responsible, authentic)
- **Positive** (including problem-solving, pragmatic)
- **Engaging** (including adaptable, inclusive, holistic)
- **Daring** (including courageous, innovative, game-changing)

Being you @ Better Cotton

Better Cotton is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer with a strong commitment to good practice and transparency in the management of natural, human, and financial resources.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to any attitudes or behaviours that put children or adults at risk of harm. Safeguarding incidents are acts of serious misconduct and are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal and referral to relevant authorities for criminal prosecution. Therefore, all offers of employment are subject to satisfactory references and appropriate screening checks.