Head of Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)

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 or Geneva, Switzerland preferred. Exceptional candidates in 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? Are you an experienced team leader with strong technical knowledge and good strategic thinking skills? Join us at Better Cotton as Head of Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) and lead a global team responsible for measuring impact, facilitating learning, and ensuring credible reporting at 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 MEL team works across the organisation and with Programme Partners to monitor progress against its theory of change using an evidence framework of indicators that range from outputs to impacts. Better Cotton's mission is focused on farm level change in cotton producing communities.

The Challenge

Looking ahead to 2030, we are targeting reducing GHG emissions from cotton production by half, big cuts in synthetic pesticide use, improve soil health across our network, improve farm income and support women's empowerment among farmers and farm workers.

As Head of MEL, you will play a key role in helping Better Cotton to assess results and impact at farm level, ensure credible and timely reporting to stakeholders, and to foster learning within the organisation and among its partners and stakeholders. With the regulatory landscape affecting the apparel and textile sector rapidly evolving, Better Cotton rolling out Traceability, plus putting in place a third party certification scheme, this will be an enriching and challenging role with opportunities to work on diverse topics and projects.

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Your role and responsibilities

We are seeking a motivated and talented Head of Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) to join our team. In this role, you will lead a dynamic team of 11 and serve as a key liaison between the MEL team and Better Cotton's senior leadership. Reporting to the Director of Standards, Certification, and MEL, your specific work areas are:

MEL System Strategy
- Lead the refinement and execution of the 3-year MEL system strategy through 2025, ensuring adherence to data quality principles, meeting stakeholder needs (e.g. feedback of insights to farm level; align with new legislation related to green claims), and continuously improving methods and approaches. A consultative revision to the strategy and system is expected to follow in due course.
- Ensure the MEL strategy supports and aligns with the overall Better Cotton strategy; and enables informed and effective decision making at the leadership level.
- Monitor and report to organisational leadership about team KPIs, ensuring deliverables are consistently delivered on time and to budget.
- Ensure strategic alignment with Better Cotton's Impact Marketplace, now under development. Work closely with teams piloting new approaches for carbon credits and other similar models to generate revenue for farmers.
- Ensure the MEL system meets the requirements of the *ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Sustainability Systems v1.0*.

Team Leadership
- Drive the MEL team to excellence providing mentoring, growth opportunities, regular constructive feedback, and space to learn. Line manage approximately 3 direct reports.
- Foster a culture of collaboration and innovation, where ideas from all levels are encouraged and listened to.
- Communicate team concerns and ideas up to senior leadership. Ensure key information flows from leadership to the MEL team so they are empowered to proactively contribute to the organisation's objectives.
- Build effective matrix relationships with MEL leads in country teams.

Monitoring Data Analytics
- Oversee the collection, analysis, and reporting of Better Cotton Results Indicators from farm level, in cooperation with Better Cotton country teams and Programme Partners.
- Ensure development and continuous improvement of farm results dashboards to enhance learning among Better Cotton staff, Programme Partners, and other key stakeholders.
- Strategise with the data analytics lead on improved ways to communicate internally and externally the insights obtained from MEL data.
- Ensure data of increasing quality can be used by key stakeholders for credible claims and as primary data inputs to Life Cycle Assessments to enable environmental footprinting that includes Better Cotton.

Research and Evaluation

- Oversee the research and evaluation workstreams, which commission and coordinate research activities and independent evaluation studies focused on Better Cotton. This part of the MEL team also provides dedicated services to Better Cotton's Growth and Innovation Fund (GIF), the farm support fund for capacity strengthening particularly in the smallholder context.
- Ensure professional coordination with researchers and in-country staff. Review draft reports for strategically important studies and sign off on all final reports.
- Ensure internal and/or external distribution of reports and learning products.
- Build interest among the academic community and donors in researching Better Cotton's programmes. Provide strategic support to research partnerships and identification of external funding opportunities for robust evaluation.

Field Data Digitalisation

- Oversee manager who leads cross-functional workstream to digitalise data coming from Better Cotton programmes – MEL, assurance, capacity strengthening, linking up with First Mile Traceability.
- Strategically support rollout of digital data collection and reporting methods.
- Support manager to research potential further developments for farm data services. Explore use cases for tools like remote sensing, satellite imagery, and flows of secondary data to complement the MEL system.

Communication and Reporting

- Collaborate with the Communications team to present and disseminate results and learning clearly and succinctly to staff, partners, members, and funders, in order to facilitate increased membership and partnerships for Better Cotton.
- Participate in cross-functional working group to design approaches that bring increased value to Better Cotton members (retailers and brands in particular).
- Advise on use of impact data in B2B and consumer-facing claims amidst the evolving legislative situation.

Financial Accountability

- Actively contribute to financial management and reporting, in cooperation with the Director of Standards, Certification, and MEL to ensure sound financial management.
- Manage, as required, consultancy budgets and contracts in order to ensure efficient and effective use of financial resources.

Profile

The selected candidate will have the following skills, knowledge, and experience:

Essential

- University degree, or equivalent higher education qualification, in a relevant field.
- Extensive experience in monitoring and research in international development contexts, ideally related to the agricultural sector or with a sustainability standards organisation.

- 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 processes efficiently. This involves planning, scheduling, resource allocation, and risk management.
- High ethical standards and integrity in managing monitoring and evaluation processes, ensuring robust methodologies that are fit-for-purpose, credible, and transparent.
- 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 monitoring, evaluation, and learning, staying updated on industry developments and emerging trends.
- Excellent computer and IT skills, including: Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook; experience with data management tools like PowerBI, relational databases, and open source data collection tools would be welcome.
- Excellent English written and oral skills, including communication to diverse audiences.

Desirable

- Knowledge of the agriculture or cotton farming sector.
- Knowledge of the apparel/textile/fashion sector and the role cotton plays.
- Experience with data management, including knowledge about ensuring data quality and how data flows from project level up to centralised storage, analysis, and use.
- Proven ability to understand relevant normative frameworks and regulation related to standard systems and green claims.
- Knowledge or experience with market-based solutions like sustainability standard systems for commodities, impact investing, or carbon markets.
- Experience in a not-for profit organisation.
- Experience with consultative stakeholder engagement.
- 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
- The opportunity to make your mark and make a difference

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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 **14.03.2024** 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.