

Request for Proposals Assurance/ Audit System - Requirements Gathering

RFI n#: 2024-02-SA-AUDSYSREQ

Location: London, UK or Remote

Start date: 14 March 2024

End date: 31 March 2024

Better Cotton key contact:

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Project Manager



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

You may submit questions to tender@bettercotton.org - RFI n# 2024-02-SA-AUDSYSREQ until 01 March 2024

Questions, requests and applications sent after the deadline (03 March 2024) will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Description

Better Cotton is the world's largest cotton sustainability programme. Our mission is 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 provided training on more sustainable farming practices to more than 2.9 million cotton farmers in 26 countries. 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

Background

New legislation in the EU will require Better Cotton to become a third party certification scheme in order to allow continued use of sustainability labels. This means we will need to make changes to our farm and supply chain assurance models, so that all certification assessments/audits and decisions are made by third party accredited certification bodies. In addition, we will introduce a new certification option for retailer-brands who are using the Better Cotton label.

Together with the traceability system and new Chain of Custody standard rolling out, this will mean a **steep increase in the number of audits, auditors, and certification bodies (CBs)** working with Better Cotton over the next couple years. We will also be developing new, shared procedures for recruitment and approval of certification bodies, and monitoring of auditors.

To manage this increased workload, we are looking to develop a new assurance/ audit management system. Although additional components may be added in future, the key objectives for the minimum viable product (MVP) phase are to:

1. *Monitor and manage certification bodies and individual auditors*: This will cover accreditation or licensing of Certification Bodies (CBs) as well as oversight and monitoring of CBs and their auditors. For example, tracking which CBs are approved for both supply chain and Producer certification, and which auditors have specific scopes
2. *Plan and manage audits (and potentially other assessments)*: this will cover audits/ assessments across Producers, Supply Chain, and eventually Retailer-brands

As this system will be shared by several internal teams (all of which have slightly different current procedures), a careful requirements gathering is essential to help prioritise functionality for the first MVP. This will include reviewing certification and audit management processes, data requirements, and system integration needs.

The aim is to roll out the MVP version of the solution by February 2025.

We are seeking an experienced technical consultant to carry out the **technical requirements gathering process**, with support from the functional representatives and IT representative.

Scope of Work

Working with the function leads and IT representative, the consultant will be responsible for the following activities:

Requirements gathering

1. Meet with functional leads (assurance, supply chain, claims) to map out current and future planned processes with respect to:
 - a) Certification body management
 - b) Auditor qualifications and approvals
 - c) Audit planning and management (including also potentially other types of assessments such as second party monitoring assessments)
 - d) Assurance/ audit data (including key users, external interfaces, and uses)
 - e) Current systems in use and current/ future integration needs
 - f) Any related processes
2. Map the user journeys for a Better Cotton assurance/ audit management system for the below user groups:

- a) Better Cotton assurance staff (including Producer assurance, Supply Chain, and Claims teams)
 - b) Certification Bodies/ auditors/ potentially second party Better Cotton assessors
 - c) Supply Chain and Producer organisations (if relevant)
 - d) Other users as relevant
3. Based on Part 1 and 2 above, identify key solution requirements for the assurance/audit management system, categorised by
 - a) Essential functionality for the MVP (Phase 1)
 - b) Future desired functionality (ideally ranked or grouped by priority)
 4. Coordinate one initial consultation round on draft solution requirements with internal audience and selected users (e.g. ideally a sample of a couple of certification bodies) to provide feedback before revising and updating the solution requirements as in Part 3 above
 5. Participate in initial discussions with 2 existing Better Cotton system providers (Salesforce and Chainpoint) to discuss draft system requirements and feasibility

In addition to skills, competencies and expertise, we will consider value for money and demonstrable commitment to the sustainability field to evaluate applications.

Overview of Deliverables

Estimated resource is 7-10 days ideally with the majority of work completed by 31 March 2024 (deliverables 1 and 2 at least)

	Description of deliverables	Comments
1	Summary notes from functional lead discussions	Discussion notes on current and future processes, priorities, data requirements, and system needs
2	Draft requirements document	At a minimum must cover functional, non-functional and system integration requirements for both Phase 1 (MVP) and longer term (desired) elements
3	Final requirements document	Adjusted and revised based on one round of internal consultation and (if scope/ timing permits), with interviews with two external users (CBs)

Application Requirements

Proposals responding to this Request for Interest should be a maximum of 3 pages (excluding CVs), and include the following:

- Overview of relevant experience
- Proposed methodology and timeline
- Detailed and transparent budget, in EUROS, including time allocation and day rate

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 the principles and subject to Better Cotton's policies on equal opportunity, non-discrimination, anti-bribery & corruption and conflict of interest.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Technical Evaluation Criteria

- Demonstrated understanding of this RFP
- Quality and clarity of the proposed approach and methodology
- Feasibility of the proposed activity plan and timeline, and appropriateness of time allocated to delivering each task
- Relevant professional experience of the proposed consultant(s)
- Quality and relevance of the sample work submitted

Financial Evaluation Criteria

- Quality and clarity of budget provided, and level of detail included
- Alignment of the budget to the activity timeline detailed in the technical proposal
- Value for money
- Adherence to the available budget