

# Request for Proposals - Better Cotton Pesticide Committee

**RFP n#:** 2025-5-SI-PESTICIDECOMMITTEE

**Location:** Remote

**Start date:** Sep 2025

**End date:** September 30th, 2027



**Better Cotton key contact:**

Gregory Jean  
Standards System Integrity

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

You may submit questions to [tender@bettercotton.org](mailto:tender@bettercotton.org) - RFP n# 2025-5-SI-PESTICIDECOMMITTEE".

Questions, requests and applications sent after the deadline (9<sup>th</sup> June 2025) will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS RFP HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO THE 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025.**

**IF YOU HAVE ALREADY SUBMITTED BUT WITH TO ADD MORE INFORMATION OR RE-SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL DOCUMENTS PLEASE DO THIS BY COMPLETING A NEW FORM AND NEW UPLOAD LINKS WILL BE SHARED WITH YOU.**

## Description

Better Cotton is the world's largest cotton sustainability programme. Our mission: 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](http://www.bettercotton.org)

## Background & Purpose

Since its creation, Better Cotton has consistently worked with cotton farmers to phase out the use of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHP's) to reduce the concentration of various chemical compounds in the growth of cotton.

By working with experts in Crop Protection Better Cotton has taken significant steps towards embracing an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach towards reducing Farmer's dependence on HHP's. In some cases, viable alternatives may not yet exist for specific HHPs targeted for phase out. In these circumstances, phasing out HHPs without better alternatives can lead to adverse impacts, such as greater use of broad-spectrum insecticides, pesticide resistance and/or negative impacts on yields and livelihoods. To address this challenge, Better Cotton has set up a specific exceptional use process for HHPs (Annex-1).

The Better Cotton Pesticides Committee ('the Committee') role is to review applications on behalf of Better Cotton Producers or Programme Partners to request exceptional use of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs). The process consists in carefully evaluating each application, taking into consideration the consequences of continued HHP use, impacts on farmers (e.g., livelihoods as well as health and safety), and the technical and/or financial trade-offs of alternatives.

The Committee assesses each application based on specific, defined conditions as outlined in the application process, including consideration of the monitoring and reporting process, use of mitigation measures, and other factors.

We are now looking to broaden the composition of the Pesticides Committee by inviting new experts to join, while continuing collaboration with current members where possible. This updated call for proposals invites applications for a two-year term (2025–2027).

## Composition of the Committee

---

The Committee comprises 5-8 members selected by the Director of Standards & Assurance and Crop protection manager, based on an application and interview process. The Committee include representation from technical experts (with expertise in IPM) as well as Producer/ Programme Partner representatives. Terms on the Committee are set for two years with option to extend. Additional ad-hoc Committee members or Better Cotton staff may be asked to join on a temporary basis to evaluate specific exceptional use applications – for example if specific country or pest expertise is required for a thorough evaluation.

For each specific application received, a minimum of 3 core Committee members (excluding any ad-hoc members) called *subcommittee*, are appointed to review and decide on the application.

## Responsibilities of the Committee

---

The Pesticide Committee assume the following responsibilities:

- **Review and Evaluate Applications:** Committee members shall do an independent review of the application and submit initial comments/any request for further information.

The Committee then gathers, facilitated by Better Cotton or a neutral facilitator, to review the application and discuss the considerations around permitting exceptional use. If additional information is required to evaluate the application, this document in writing and requested from the applicant.

- **Assess Risk and Trade-offs:** The Committee assess the risks associated with the use of the specific HHP and evaluate the trade-offs between the impact of continued use and any alternatives available. They consider social, economic, and environmental factors, including impacts on farmer yields and livelihoods.
- **Mitigation measures and ongoing monitoring:** Where relevant, the Committee identifies reasonable mitigation measures that reduce the risks associated with the exceptional use of HHPs. They consider the feasibility, practicality, and potential impacts of these measures. They also advise on the nature of ongoing monitoring and reporting (where applicable, e.g., if exceptional use is to be granted)
- **Decision-making:** The appointed Committee members make a final decision (approval or rejection) for the application. The Committee makes informed decisions based on collective expertise, scientific knowledge, and regional considerations. They document their decisions, justifications, and any recommended conditions for approval.

The Committee shall strive to reach agreements by consensus on granting exceptional use of HHPs. Consensus is defined here as general agreement in favour of an application, plus the absence of a sustained objection to the proposal. If the Committee is unable to reach a decision, it will outline its opposing views and submit the options for a final decision by the Director of S&A and Sr Director of Programmes.

If the application is approved, the Better Cotton Pesticides Committee detail conditions in the evaluation report that shall include at least:

- Mandatory mitigation measures
- Reporting requirements
- The period for which exceptional use is granted (maximum two seasons)

## Engagement Modalities

---

- Pesticide committee members should commit **sufficient time and resource to the work of the Committee to ensure thorough and timely decisions on each application**. This includes keeping Better Cotton informed of any significant periods of leave (or other non-availability). Eligible Committee members will first be contacted with a request to handle a specific application and will be able to confirm their availability.
- **Time commitment for each Committee member** is estimated to be approximately 4-5 hours for each application. For each application accepted by a committee member, the process typically includes 1-2 hours to review the application (including consulting with relevant Better Cotton staff) and sharing notes ahead of the Committee meeting; 1.5 hours to attend the meeting, and

1 hour to assist with or review the write-up of the final decision. This can vary as it is difficult to predict the back and forth resulting from requested addition information.

- **Any conflicts of interest must be transparently declared** to Better Cotton ahead of joining the Committee, and any new conflicts of interest declared promptly in writing.
- **Follow agreed timelines to review each application, including preparation work, participation in scheduled meetings, and finalization of the decision.** Each application must be decided within 35 calendar days of receipt, and the schedules of multiple Committee members must be coordinated during this process. Therefore, it is critical that all members of the Committee deliver on their agreed responsibilities and deadlines (barring exceptional circumstances).
- **Maintain full confidentiality for all information related to an application.** All information and evidence provided by Producers, experts, Better Cotton, or Programme Partners to support an application or decision must be considered confidential and shall not be shared outside of the Better Cotton team and members of the Committee.

## Appointment of Committee Members

New members will be appointed to the Committee in line with the following process:

Deadline	Details
01 May 2025	<b>Request for proposal:</b> Better Cotton shall issue a request for proposal for the Pesticide Committee, inviting interested individuals with relevant expertise and experience to apply.
16 June 2025	<b>Nomination review:</b> Better Cotton shall review the nominations and shortlist candidates based on their qualifications, experience, and expertise. Interviews with shortlisted candidates may be conducted to assess their suitability for the role.
21 July 2025	<b>Appointment of committee members:</b> Better Cotton shall appoint the Pesticide Committee members based on the shortlist and any additional criteria specified.
25 August 2025	<b>Committee members induction:</b> Better Cotton shall provide induction for the members, covering the relevant policies, procedures, and guidelines for reviewing applications for exceptional use of highly hazardous pesticides.
25 September 2025	<b>Review of first set of applications:</b> The Pesticide Committee shall begin reviewing the first set of applications for exceptional use of highly hazardous pesticides, using the procedure established by Better Cotton.

## Required Skills and Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
Essential
Applicants should hold at least a Master's degree in Agriculture, Environmental Science, or a related field

Minimum of 5 years of professional experience in pesticide management, IPM, or sustainable agriculture
--

Familiarity with cotton production systems and knowledge of international pesticide regulations will be an added advantage.
---

## Application Requirements

---

Please note that we have changed our RFP submission protocol, and this is now in two phases;

- Phase 1: Initial details will be submitted on the form found in this [link](#).
- Phase 2: You will receive an email with live links to upload relevant documents (please check your Spam and Junk folders)

Applications should include a CV and proposal. Proposals responding to this Request for Proposal should be a maximum of 2 pages (excluding CVs), and include the following:

- Overview of relevant experience
- Short explanation of why you have a relevant profile to be part of this Committee.

Better Cotton is a not-for-profit membership organization with limited funding. For any partial reimbursement for time required, Better Cotton will evaluate the request. In case of approval the compensation will be granted at an agreed flat rate and subject to funding availability. Should an in-person meeting be scheduled, Better Cotton will seek to sponsor reasonable travel costs for those unable to cover these expenses, upon request.

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.

# Annex 1- Better Cotton Highly Hazardous Pesticides Exceptional Use Process v.2.0

To be used with the Better Cotton Principles and Criteria v.3.0

Issue date	15 September 2024
Effective date	1 October 2024
Version	2.0
Contact	Ownership of this document is with the Better Cotton Standards and Assurance Team. For any enquiries, please contact: <a href="mailto:standards@bettercotton.org">standards@bettercotton.org</a> .

## Background and Context

Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) are pesticides that are associated with significant health and environmental risks. Reducing the total toxicity of pesticides applied to crops and ultimately eliminating the use of HHPs is integral to protecting the health of farmers, workers and farming communities, while also conserving the environment. One method to achieve this is to prohibit or restrict access to certain types of pesticides in the context of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy. However, in some cases, viable alternatives may not yet exist for specific HHPs. In these circumstances, phasing out HHPs without better alternatives can lead to adverse impacts, such as greater use of broad-spectrum insecticides, pesticide resistance and/or negative impacts on yields and livelihoods. To address this challenge, Better Cotton in its P&C v.3.0 has set up a specific exceptional use process for HHPs.

The aim is to have a clear, transparent, and rigorous process to make informed decisions on the exceptional use of HHPs that are otherwise prohibited or targeted for phase out under the P&C. The process aims to ensure a thorough and impartial consideration of the impacts of continued use of the respective HHP vs. the impacts of phasing out (including evaluating the trade-offs of available alternatives). It also ensures that any granted exemptions are subject to specific monitoring and reporting requirements and include longer-term commitments to phasing out and finding better alternatives.

## Exceptional Use Approvals

- Applications for exceptional use are reviewed by members of the dedicated Better Cotton Pesticides Committee<sup>1</sup>.
- Exceptional use is granted for specific active ingredients at a country or Partner level.
- Exceptional use are applicable for a defined period of maximum two seasons (any further extension require and updated review).

- Exceptional use is subject to specific, defined conditions as outlined in this document

## Process Overview

### 1. Initiate a request for exceptional use

- a. Programme Partners (PPs) or individual Large Farms (LFs) can initiate the process by communicating the need for exceptional use to their local Better Cotton Country Team.
- b. Producers located in the same country or region are encouraged to reach out jointly if they have similar needs and challenges. Better Cotton Country Teams will support Producers or Programme Partners in gathering the necessary elements to submit an application for exceptional use. The final application must come from the Better Cotton Country team<sup>2</sup>.
- c. Partners or Producers should initiate this process at least 120 calendar days before the start of sowing, as in some cases, further information or external input may be required for the application.

### 2. Submit an application

- a. Completed applications for exceptional use must be submitted at least 90 calendar days prior to the start of sowing, using the application form provided by Better Cotton.
- b. The application requires:
  - General information: the name and contact details of the applicants, the active ingredient concerned, the specific pest(s) that are targeted, method of application, application equipment, intended quantities and geographical scope of use.
  - Background context and current use: a description of the Integrated Pest Management approach in place, plus description of the historic extent and nature of use of the HHP
  - Evaluation of alternatives: description of alternative options (both chemical and non-chemical), including results of any previous use, trials, or research studies carried out.
  - Risk assessment and mitigation: Assessment of risks to human health and the environment associated with the specific HHP, plus an overview of specific measures to mitigate each risk.

### 3. Application finalisation

- Applications are reviewed by Better Cotton Country Teams for eligibility, accuracy, and completeness. Applications should then be submitted to Better Cotton Crop Protection global team.
- The Better Cotton Crop Protection global team will complete the applications with available result Indicators data, and check applications for eligibility, accuracy. They should also clarify open questions or missing information with Country Teams and subsequently submit application to country specific pesticides sub-committees for review and decision making.

### 4. Application Review and Decision Making

4a) Pesticides Committee sub-team will review the application and prepare key questions that they want to follow-up on in the country teams interviews. These questions will be shared at least 1 week before the scheduled interview call, so that the Country Teams can prepare and come with the right information to the interviews.

4b) The pesticides committee sub-team will have a call with the country representatives to discuss open questions and get more context. Either directly after the call, or in a separate one,



in the absence of the country team representatives, recommendations for the decision will be prepared – facilitated by Better Cotton global and following the predefined reporting structure. If further information is required before the Committee can decide, they will document this in writing and the applicant will have a defined time period (usually 15<sup>ii</sup> days) to provide further information as required.

5. Based on the discussions of the sub-committee, Better Cotton global will draft a report, that is shared with the sub-committee for review, before it will be sent to the full pesticides committee for approval.

The report shall include at least:

- A summary of the Committee discussion and key points raised
- The final decision (approval or rejection) and rationale
- In case of an approval, specific conditions for exceptional use, including, at minimum
- The period for which exceptional use is granted
- Mandatory mitigation measures Compliance with all P&C v3.0 Crop Protection indicators and label requirements
- Inclusion as priority in Continuous Improvement Plans
- Specific training on risks and mitigation measures
- Focus on steps to improve appropriate PPE Use
- Focus on environmental risk mitigation
- RIR Reporting on Pesticide Data
- Recommended mitigation measures that include specific ad-hoc management practices

Exceptional use can be granted for a maximum of two seasons. After that, an updated application is required to enable any further extension.

6. After the approval, the report will be shared in written form with country teams and programme partners / Large Farms, as well as the assurance team for implementation. The overall results will be made publicly available.

## 7. Monitoring and review process

- For any HHP approved for exceptional use, the Programme Partner or Large Farm using the HHP in question is responsible for complying with all required conditions (including monitoring and reporting) required for exceptional use.
- If these conditions are not met, the exceptional use approval can be revoked (subject to review by the Better Cotton Director of Standards & Assurance and Senior Director of Programmes); and/or specific Producers' licenses may be affected by non-compliance under Principle 3 of the P&C v.3.0.
- At any point, Better Cotton may request further information or an update on how the conditions of exceptional use are met.

Better Cotton staff will be responsible for reviewing the monitoring information submitted by Partners/Large Farms who have been granted exceptional use of HHPs. If exceptional use is granted



for a large number of Producers or a large geographical area, the review may be based on a sample of Producers

## **8. Emergency case**

### **i. Definition of "Emergency"**

An "emergency" is defined as a relevant and urgent pest outbreak situation impossible to anticipate that poses a significant threat to crop health and productivity, requiring immediate action to prevent severe economic loss or irreversible damage to cotton fields. An emergency occurs when, despite proactive monitoring and best practices in pest management, a pest outbreak arises that could not have been reasonably predicted with sufficient accuracy or specificity to take effective preventive measures.

Producers are expected to maintain vigilance in monitoring potential pest risks and act proactively where indicators are present. For instance, continuous rainfall could signal the potential for a whitefly outbreak, and producers are expected to respond to such indicators to the extent possible. However, in cases where an outbreak escalates rapidly beyond the capacity for reasonable anticipation, or where preventive measures have been applied but failed to prevent a significant threat, the situation may be considered an emergency.

Such emergencies may include, but are not limited to, sudden pest or disease outbreaks, invasive species incursions, or environmental calamities (e.g., flooding, drought, or fire) that directly impact crop viability.

### **ii. Geographical scope of emergency derogation**

Emergency derogations for the use of HHPs should be considered at the Producer Unit (PU) level rather than at the national or regional level, to ensure that the response is proportionate to the specific conditions faced by the producer. However, in exceptional cases where multiple PUs within the same country face a similar emergency, a country-level derogation may be considered, provided that sufficient evidence supports the widespread nature of the threat.

### **iii. Conditions and step-wise approach to follow in an Emergency case**

To apply for an emergency derogation for the use of HHPs, the following step-wise approach must be followed:

- Assessment and initial notification:
  - As soon as the pest outbreak occurs, the Producer must assess the situation to determine whether it meets the criteria for an emergency as defined above. This assessment must include evaluating the Economic Threshold Level (ETL) to ensure that the decision to declare an emergency is based on an informed understanding of the potential economic impact and the feasibility of effective pest management actions

- The Producer must notify their Project Partner immediately upon identification of the emergency situation, providing initial details and evidence of the threat (e.g., photos, pest reports, expert assessments...etc).
- Before resorting to HHPs, the Producer must evaluate all possible alternative measures, including non-chemical pest control methods (e.g., biological control, cultural practices) and less hazardous pesticides.
- The Producer must document all alternative measures considered or attempted, providing a rationale for why these measures were not feasible or effective in the specific context of the emergency.
- Submission of derogation request:
  - If no feasible alternatives exist, the Producer Unit must submit a formal derogation request to the Partner **as soon as possible after the pesticide application** (no later than 3 days for Large Farms and 7 days for smallholders), The request must be completed using a standardized questionnaire to ensure clarity and consistency that includes:
    - A description of the emergency situation and its potential impact on crop health and productivity.
    - Evidence supporting the emergency status (e.g., pest infestation data, expert assessments, weather reports).
    - Justification for the use of HHPs, including an explanation of why alternative measures were not viable.
    - A plan for the mitigation of potential negative impacts resulting from HHP use (e.g., application techniques, protective measures, monitoring strategies).
- Review and decision by Project Partner:
  - The Partner should review the derogation request within a specified timeframe after reception (3 days for Large Farms, 7 days for Producer Unit) to confirm whether the situation qualifies as an emergency under Better Cotton standards.
  - If possible, the Partner may consult with relevant stakeholders, including agronomists, local experts, and community representatives, to assess the validity of the request.
  - The partner should send the request to national Better Cotton team (local and global) for final approval / rejection
- Approval, conditional approval, or rejection:
  - Better Cotton team panel<sup>3</sup> may approve or reject the derogation request possibly after consulting the Pesticides committee if needed. Conditions may include specific restrictions on the type and amount of HHPs used, requirements for monitoring and reporting, and follow-up actions to prevent future emergencies.
  - In case of rejection, the Producer will no longer be able to use the HHP in question in the future during the ongoing year
- Post-application monitoring and reporting:

- Following any approved emergency use of HHPs, the Producer must monitor the situation closely and report the outcomes to the Partner, including any observed impacts on non-target species, the environment, or human health. Producers are required to complete a standardized post-application monitoring report using the template provided by Better Cotton. This template will be shared as a link and must be completed and submitted at the end of the ongoing season. The report should include detailed observations on environmental and human health impacts, mitigation measures taken, and any follow-up actions planned. The collected data will be analyzed to assess the broader implications of HHP use, and compliance will be verified during field visits.
- The Producer must also submit reflect any measures to prevent future reliance on the HHP in question in its IPM plan, including measures to strengthen IPM practices and explore alternative methods.
- The Partner should share the monitoring outcomes and the plan with Better Cotton team at the end of the season (or at the beginning of the following season if the derogation is needed late in the ongoing season)

---

<sup>3</sup> Panel includes Director of Std, Cert and MEL, Director of Programmes, country director, and global Crop Protection manager