Request for Proposals – Digital performance monitoring tool design

RFP n#:	2025-7-PR-PPPERFTOOL
Location:	Remote
Start date:	08/09/2025
End date:	15/11/2025

Better Cotton key contact:
Clément Devade
Partnership Manager

All applications must be submitted via this form.

You may submit questions to tender@bettercotton.org -RFP 2025-7-PR-PPPERFTOOL until 21st of July 2025.

Questions, requests and applications sent after the deadline of 27th of July 2025 will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

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 challenging times, we are meeting the challenge head on. Through our network of field-level partners we have trained over 2.8 million farmers in 22 countries in more sustainable farming practices. 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, and by 2030 our aim is to have trained 5 million farmers and doubled global production of Better Cotton.

Background

Better Cotton is focused on affecting change: reducing the environmental impact of cotton production and improving the livelihoods of cotton farmers through the production of Better Cotton. To achieve this change, Better Cotton coordinates a capacity strengthening programme, delivered through experienced field-level partners, referred to as Better Cotton Programme Partners (PPs). These PPs help farmers to adopt practices consistent with the Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS).

The credibility of the BCSS therefore relies, in part, on Better Cotton's ability to support the PPs and monitor their performance according to agreed Key Peformance Indicators (KPIs)

Better Cotton has initiated the development of a digital Partner Performance Monitoring Tool to enhance data-driven decision-making and support the effective monitoring of programme implementation across multiple countries and teams. In 2024, KPIs were collaboratively defined by cross-functional teams and across countries. A Power BI dashboard has since been developed to visualise and analyse these KPIs, supported by a back-end data source structured in Microsoft Excel.

The current backend Excel file is designed to feed directly into Power BI via a periodic connection. It acts as both a data repository and a data collection interface. However, the system faces several limitations at this stage:

- **Data Entry Complexity**: KPI data is collected manually in the Excel backend, which currently includes approximately 30 worksheets—most of which are dedicated to data input. This setup results in a cumbersome process, particularly as it relies on contributors with varying levels of Excel proficiency.

- **Scalability Constraints**: The tool was initially built to track around 60 KPIs, but the structure must remain flexible to accommodate a dynamic and evolving list of indicators, as programme needs change over time.

- **Customisation Needs**: While the majority of KPIs are global, some indicators must be tailored to specific countries or partners, adding further complexity to the existing Excel-based collection system.

- **Multi-partner Input**: The system currently supports performance assessment of approximately 45 partners, a number expected to fluctuate periodically.

Better Cotton is therefore seeking technical expertise to strengthen and streamline the performance monitoring system, with a particular focus on improving data collection workflows, ensuring scalability, enhancing usability across users with different digital skills, and maintaining strong interoperability with Power BI.

Objective

The objective of the consultancy is to strengthen Better Cotton's Partner Performance Monitoring Tool by enhancing its data collection architecture, usability, and integration with Power BI by the 15th of November 2025.

Specifically, the consultancy aims to:

1. **Define the best data collection and data analytics tool suiting Better Cotton needs and capacities.** So far, it is Excel based but we are keen to consider other Microsoft tools options.

2. Streamline KPI data collection
   - Design a tool or adapt the existing Excel-based or other MS tool-based backend to improve usability, data accuracy, and efficiency.
   - Reduce complexity for data contributors with varying levels of Excel proficiency, if Excel tool is the best.
   - Introduce mechanisms for easier and more structured data entry, including automated controls, validations, or user-guided inputs.

3. Improve scalability and flexibility of the tool
   - Adapt the tool to accommodate a growing and evolving list of KPIs.
   - Enable modular design to account for partner-specific and country-specific indicators without disrupting the core structure.
   - Ensure the system remains robust as the number of partners or indicators increases over time.

4. **Ensure integration with Power BI on the short term, and take into consideration that the data will be integrated into the Cotton Cloud, or SQL data warehouse.**
   - Refine and optimize the connection between the Excel backend and the Power BI dashboard.
   - If the Excel backend is not chosen, ensure the other tool integration with Power Bi.

5. **Enhance user experience and accessibility**
   - Design a system that is intuitive for non-technical users and accessible across regions.
   - Ensure the solution includes user support mechanisms such as tooltips, instructions, or automated error checks.

6. Support capacity building and guidelines
   - Deliver a guideline and training to Better Cotton Staff to ensure good understanding and ownership of the tool.

Tasks & Methodology

The selected consultant will be expected to adopt a collaborative, iterative, and user-centred approach to redesigning and enhancing the Partner Performance Monitoring Tool. The methodology should prioritize **functionality, scalability, usability, and sustainability**, while maintaining alignment with Better Cotton's KPI framework and internal processes.

1. Inception and needs assessment
- Review the existing Excel backend and Power BI dashboard to identify technical bottlenecks and usability issues.
- Map the existing data flow from collection to dashboard visualization.
- Propose potential other solution than Excel for the backend file.

2. Adapt or redesign the KPI collection framework (Excel or other)
- Simplify and restructure the Excel-based or other tool based backend to improve data entry workflows and minimize user error.
- Implement automation where feasible (e.g., drop-down menus, conditional formatting, error checks or other).
- Introduce mechanisms to handle country- or partner-specific KPIs dynamically (e.g., modular templates, filters or other).
- Streamline tab structure (e.g., reduce redundancy, group inputs logically, apply protection where necessary or other).

3. Optimization of integration with Power BI
- Reassess and restructure the Power BI data model to ensure efficient data loading, refresh performance, and flexibility for disaggregated analysis.
- Implement or improve the automation of data refresh between Excel and Power BI (e.g., Power Query, scheduled refresh).
- Ensure KPI visualizations are aligned with revised data structure and disaggregation needs (partner, country, thematic area).

4. Testing and user feedback
- Facilitate testing sessions with internal users.
- Collect feedback and iterate on tool usability, performance, and clarity.

Deliverables

- Project delivery plan
- Revised data collection tool, on Excel or other

- Technical guideline explaining the structure and use of the data collection and Back-end Excel or other file.
- Updated Power BI dashboard (or recommendation for necessary adjustments).
- Data model documentation and user guide for Power Bi maintenance.

High-level Timeline

27th of July 2025	Applications close. All proposals must be submitted using this link
28th of July to 22nd of August	Applications review.
25th / 26th of August	Interviews
1st of September	**Contract signature**
8th of September	**Start of the assignment**

Required Skills & Knowledge

Essential skillset
Power BI development & data visualization   • Proven experience designing and optimizing interactive dashboards in Power BI.   • Strong knowledge of Power Query, DAX, and data modeling principles.   • Ability to create dynamic visualizations that support drill-down analysis, partner-level disaggregation, and customizable filtering.   • Understanding of KPI frameworks, including how to operationalize qualitative and quantitative metrics.   **Advanced excel skills**   • Expertise in structuring complex Excel workbooks for data collection and transformation.   • Proficiency with structured tables, formulas, data validation, and automation (e.g., VBA or Power Query in Excel).   • Experience designing Excel templates that are user-friendly and minimize data entry errors.   **Data architecture & integration**   • Ability to redesign the back-end data structure to be scalable, maintainable, and flexible to evolving KPIs.   • Understanding of ETL processes, especially integrating Excel-based data into Power BI seamlessly if Excel solution is selected.   • Experience managing hierarchical, partner-specific, and country-specific data within a common schema.

Process design & user-centred Design
- Experience simplifying complex data collection processes, ideally in contexts with users of varied digital literacy.
- Ability to design systems that are scalable and adaptable over time, with clear documentation and training support.

Stakeholder Engagement & Change Management
- Strong communication skills to gather requirements, translate them into technical solutions, and provide user training and support.
- Experience in capacity building—supporting teams with templates, guides, and training for ongoing use.

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).**

Interested applicants are asked to send, in English, the following:
- Relevant staff CVs
- A detailed financial offer
- A list of references
- A short narrative proposal composed of:
  - A timeline for delivery
  - A concise description of the approach that will be used including your Due Diligence understanding, approach to partner engagement, how you will convince PPs to share information and overcome partners who are reluctant to cooperate with the process. (NB. The consultant will implement Better Cotton methodology and use Better Cotton tools.) 1500 words max.

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.