

Request for Proposals - BCI Product Marketing Communications Strategy

RFP n#: 2025-10-DE-PMARKETING

Location: London, UK

Start date: 7th Dec 2025

End date: 23rd Mar 2026

Technical Team: Demand & Engagement



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

You may submit questions to tender@bettercotton.org – RFP n# 2025-10-DE-PMARKETING” until 14th November 2025, noting that the **final submission deadline for bids is the 20th November 2025**.

Questions, requests and applications sent after the deadline will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Important Submission Process Information:

After submitting your details through the [form](#), you will receive a separate email to upload your supporting documents to a secure platform.

AT THE END OF THIS DOCUMENT, THERE IS A QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SECTION WHICH YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO GO THROUGH IN PREPARATION FOR SUBMITTING YOUR BIDS

Description

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) 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 BCI Standard and our membership network includes more than 2,400 members.

More information about BCI can be found on our website: www.bettercotton.org

Background

We are seeking proposals from a qualified marketing communications consultant or agency to develop an updated marketing communications strategy and deliver a refreshed suite of communications tools and content tailored to current and prospective members. This initiative aims to improve engagement, strengthen our brand presence, and support membership growth and retention.

The successful consultant will excel in copywriting and, through the project, will build a comprehensive understanding of our system, culture and tone of voice.

Key focus areas for the strategy include:

- The BCI Traceability Platform
- The new BCI label
- Certification scheme
- The overall BCI programme (sourcing BCI Cotton)

Scope of Work

The primary objectives of this project are to:

- Clearly articulate the benefits and value of BCI aligned with audience needs
- Develop clear, engaging and consistent content and materials for our communications channels
- Increase brand perception, member engagement and new member acquisition

The project is divided into key phases:

Phase 1: Discovery and research

The consultant will review existing member engagement communications materials (e.g. Better Cotton website, portal, global newsletter, targeted outreach etc) and build up a detailed understanding of the BCI programme, traceability solution, membership, certification programme and new product label.

Combined with internal stakeholder interviews, the results of recent member surveys, engagement metrics and competitor analysis, the consultant will create a discovery report including a SWOT analysis of our current communications and recommendations.

The consultant will also have access to a legal benchmarking communications framework with key messaging on how sourcing BCI cotton aligns with sustainability and due diligence legislation.

Internal stakeholders to be interviewed include:

- Member engagement account managers (representing perspectives of retailers and brands)
- Supply chain engagement staff (representing perspectives of suppliers)

- Head of Certification
- Director of Traceability
- Claims manager
- Member communications manager

Deliverables: Discovery report (max 50 pages) including

- SWOT of our current communications on traceability, membership and certification
- Review of competitors communications (minimum 12 organisations)
- Key recommendations for updated BCI communications covering;
 - Traceability service
 - Certification
 - Membership
 - BCI product label and claims
 - Sourcing BCI cotton

Phase 2: Marketing communications strategy

Using the learnings from phase 1, the consultant will define audience personas, key messaging and channels for the in scope BCI services.

Audience personas include:

- Current retail and brand members (US based)
- Current retail and brand members (EU or Global based)
- Prospective retail and brand members
- Current supplier members
- Prospective supplier members
- Better Cotton Platform Users

In scope BCI services covers:

- Traceability platform
- Certification
- BCI membership
- BCI product label and claims
- Sourcing BCI cotton in general

Deliverables:

Report covering the following:

- 1) Key messaging for in scope BCI services:
 - How to describe the service
 - Key benefits
 - What not to say
- 2) Audience personas
 - Summary of persona type including goals, challenges, behaviours
 - Any alterations in key messaging for each BCI service dependent on that persona and channel used

Phase 3: Creative development and content

Using the approved key messaging, the consultant will develop draft and final versions of the following content, with an emphasis on driving member uptake and understanding of the value of our services.

- a) Key messaging talking points on traceability, membership, certification, the Better Cotton Platform and the new label
- b) Updated website content and imagery for traceability, membership, certification, the Better Cotton Platform and claims.
- c) Updated call to action messaging covering:
 - a. Retailer steps to sourcing traceable BCI cotton
 - b. Supplier steps to sourcing traceable BCI cotton/certification
- d) Tradeshow toolkit
 - a. Leaflet
 - b. Banner options

Phase 4: Training and handover

Once the deliverables are complete, the consultant will run 2 x 2-hour online sessions with the Demand & Engagement leadership and management explaining the communications messaging

The training should be interactive and include activities practicing the key messaging

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

High-level Timeline

20th November 2025	Applications deadline All applications must be submitted via this form .
21st November to 30th November 2025	Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews
By 31st November 2025	The successful applicant will be notified Unsuccessful <u>shortlisted</u> applicants will also be notified
7th December 2025	Start of the consultancy
By 16th January 2026	Discovery report due
By 30th January 2026	Marketing communications strategy, and key messaging due
By 2nd March 2026	Draft of all content

By 23rd March 2026

Final content deliverables

Following the submission of deliverables, BCI will take 1 week to review and provide feedback on the discovery report and key messaging. Following the submission of the draft content, there will be a 2-week review period.

The consultant is welcome to suggest alternative timelines if the work can be completed earlier than proposed

Required Skills & Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
Essential
Extensive experience in marketing communications, copywriting or branding
University degree in marketing or similar qualification
Evidence of previous marketing communications work on technology platforms (esp. traceability or supply chain tools), sustainability, textiles and/or agricultural commodities
Exceptional copywriting skills – the ability to communicate technical concepts in a simple and engaging way
Optional
Fluent English: BCI's language of operation is English

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)**

Proposals responding to this Request for Proposals should be a maximum of ten 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 rates

Please also include examples of relevant communications work for similar clients. This will not be factored into the page count.

We thank all applicants for their interest; however, only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

BCI 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 BCI'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

Questions & Answers for RFP 2025-10-DE-PMARKETING

1. Question 1

Could you confirm whether the creative development phase should include full design execution (layout, visuals, and print-ready assets) or focus on copy and messaging frameworks only?

Answer

The focus is on copy and messaging. However, images and layout should be included for the following;

- Website copy
- Tradeshow toolkit (print ready assets needed)

2. Question 2

Is there a target budget range or ceiling for this project to guide scoping and allocation of resources?

Answer

To ensure value for money we would like to see how much each applicant budgets for the proposal. Please use your cost estimations for similar projects to provide us with an estimated cost.

3. Question 3

Of the identified audiences (retailers/brands vs suppliers), which group is the highest priority for improved engagement and membership growth?

Answer

Retailers and brands drive the most investment in our field level programme and create demand for BCI cotton so are the highest priority for engagement and membership growth.

4. Question 4

Will the consultant have access to the recent member survey results, engagement metrics, and the legal benchmarking communications framework referenced in the RFP?

Answer

Yes, these will be provided under an NDA.

5. Question 5

Is there an existing brand positioning or tone of voice framework that the updated communications should align with, or is a degree of brand evolution encouraged?

Answer

A degree of evolution is welcome

6. Question 6

Finally, can you confirm whether all collaboration will be virtual, or if in-person sessions (e.g. interviews or workshops) should be factored into the proposal?

Answer

If the consultant is in the UK, some in-person sessions will be conducted. However, BCI staff are based in +20 countries so 90% of consultations will be virtual.

7. Question 7

Should the proposal include taxes?

Answer

As a no-profit, we encourage our partners who we work with, including suppliers, to pay taxes. Please indicate taxes on your proposal

8. Question 8

Is it acceptable to submit the proposal in PDF format?

Answer

Yes

9. Question 9

No specific requirements are mentioned regarding the team or English proficiency—can you confirm this is correct?

Answer

Fluency in English is a critical requirement for this project

10. Question 10

Should all deliverables and training sessions be conducted in English?

Answer

Yes, the consultancy and all deliverables must be in English

11. Question 11

I am a solo consultant and will be offline during the two-week school holidays over Christmas. Would there be any flexibility to move the discovery report deadline back by approximately two weeks? This would enable me to deliver the work to a high standard without compromising quality or family commitments.

Answer

We've updated the project timelines to provide more flexibility

12. Question 12

For Phase 1, can you please indicate how many member engagement account managers and how many supply chain engagement staff you would expect to be interviewed?

Answer

5 ME staff
5 SCO

13. Question 13

Can you also indicate whether all the internal stakeholders listed in Phase 1 will be available for interview between 8th and 19th December?

Answer

Yes

14. Question 14

In my experience, the two weeks between 22nd December and 2nd January won't be feasible due to holidays. This makes for a very tight timeframe for conducting interviews and delivering the discovery report to schedule, meaning interviews would need to be conducted as early as possible in December.

Answer

We have updated the time scales

15. Question 15

In Phase 2, is the data and insights to inform the audience personas expected to be available from the member surveys and/or internal stakeholder interviews? I'd normally expect these personas to be informed by audience surveys and/or interviews, but if time and budget are limited we can do our best with the information available.

Answer

In your proposal, please explain how you would develop the audience personas and the information you would require.

16. Question 16

Are there any channels beyond those listed in Phase 3 (website, leaflet and banners) for which you anticipate needing content?

Answer

The channels in scope have been listed in the RFP

17. Question 17

Will stakeholder interviews be conducted individually, or would you be open to group interviews or workshops?

Answer

We are open to group workshops by sub function, but some should be individual – particularly with senior staff

18. Question 18

For the updated Better Cotton Initiative website content and imagery, since this isn't a redesign, but an update of content, should content and imagery be provided in a specific format, or uploaded to a CMS (Content Management System)?

Answer

We are checking with the communication department and technical team, please provide various solutions with associated pricing models if they will be different.

19. Question 19

Finally, could you confirm which tools or platforms (e.g., CRM, Email marketing, CMS, Digital Asset Management, collaboration tools, etc.) the consultant will need to work within or deliver assets for?

Answer

- Adobe creative suite for trade show toolkit, process flows and graphics
- Copy can be in Word
- For final website content, we will provide access to a limited version of Wordpress