

Request for Proposals Location Feasibility Study West Africa

RFP n#: 2025-10-FS-LOCFEASIBILITY

Location: West Africa / Remote

Start date: 8th December 2025

End date: 28th February 2026

Technical Team:
Finance & Services



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

You may submit questions to tender@bettercotton.org - RFP n# 2025-10-FS-LOCFEASIBILITY until 22nd October 2025.

Questions and requests sent after the deadline of 30th October 2025 will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Submission Update:

We have changed how we are receiving bids. 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

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 22 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

We are seeking proposals from skilled individuals or organisations interested in Location Feasibility Study – West Africa.

Better Cotton is exploring the establishment of a regional office (or offices) in West Africa to strengthen its presence and enhance operational efficiency across the region. This feasibility study will assess a range of critical factors in line with our Hiring & Mobility Policy – such as legal and regulatory frameworks, employment landscape, financial and banking infrastructure, fundraising opportunities, governance environment, security risks, and overall operational viability—to determine the most suitable country (or countries) for setting up a legal structure (e.g., non-for-profit entity, NGO/NPO, branch office).

Scope of Work

Objectives:

The primary objective of this assignment is to assess and compare the feasibility of establishing a legal presence in selected West African countries—specifically Benin and Côte d'Ivoire. The study will produce a comprehensive, evidence-based report recommending the most suitable country (or countries) for setting up the business or local not-for-profit legal structure (e.g., non-for-profit entity, NGO/NPO, branch office).

The analysis must provide deep insights into the legal landscape (different legal structures), operational environment, workforce availability, compliance requirements, cost-effectiveness, security, and financial systems. The recommendations should be practical, risk-aware, and support decision-making on office setup and program implementation in the region. The detailed scope includes but is not limited to:

Scope of Work

The selected consultant or firm is expected to deliver a detailed comparative analysis and recommendations covering the following thematic areas for **Benin** and **Côte d'Ivoire**:

A. Legal and Regulatory Environment

- Provide an overview of the business and nonprofit registration processes in each country.
- Identify and describe all licenses, documentation, and steps required for setting up a local legal structure for business and nonprofit (branch/non-for-profit company or NPO/NGO).
- Provide a detailed cost breakdown and timelines for registration of all viable options, separately for business entities and nonprofit entities.
- Highlight any limitations or restrictions on foreign ownership, operations of international NGOs, or access to government incentives.
- Analyse existing legal obligations related to compliance, annual filings, audits, and reporting to local authorities.

- Assess legal requirements related to entity setup (corporate & governance), including board composition (local vs. international), mandatory board presence, local shareholder thresholds, and annual reporting obligations.
- Identify applicable laws on anti-corruption, financial transparency, and governance, and assess the overall legal environment—including daily operational liabilities, tax exposure, and compliance burden—to ensure the entity can function effectively without undue legal or administrative constraints.

B. Employment Landscape

- Analyse labour laws including minimum wage, contract regulations, benefits, termination clauses, and employee rights.
- Evaluate the availability of local talent in the areas of finance, programme delivery, M&E, administration, Information & data technology and technical (i.e. decent work, climate change etc) expertise along with language (English) abilities.
- Present salary benchmarks for common roles to determine employment cost-effectiveness.
- Outline the process and requirements for hiring expatriates, including work permits and visas.
- Assess the legal framework and constraints related to directly employing international or global roles within the country, including the feasibility and regulatory implications of using an Employer of Record (EoR) arrangement.
- Highlight cultural or operational factors that may impact team integration and workforce adaptability.

C. Banking and Financial Infrastructure

- Provide information on major local and international banks operating in each country.
- Assess the ease of opening corporate bank accounts for INGOs/non for profits.
- Review regulations regarding receiving international funding, currency exchange controls, and fund repatriation.
- Discuss infrastructure and technology for digital banking, mobile payments, and online transactions.
- Assess ease of managing international projects and donor funding from a financial compliance perspective.

D. Nonprofit and International NGO/NPO/Branch Environment

- Evaluate the regulatory environment for nonprofit organizations, including registration, taxation, and oversight mechanisms.
- Identify known barriers or enablers for INGOs/NPO/Branch operating in the country.
- Assess relationships between government authorities and nonprofit actors.
- Highlight the presence and activity of other INGOs/NPO/Branch and donors in the country.

E. Travel & Accessibility

Assess the ease and practicality of international and internal travel to the proposed country/location. This includes:

- Visa requirements:
 - For nationals from other West African countries
 - For international visitors
 - For nationals from Benin/Côte d'Ivoire into neighbouring countries and internationally.
 - Dual nationals
- International (including regional) connectivity – frequency of flights, major airlines operating, and proximity to popular transit hubs.
- Airport infrastructure – quality and accessibility of main and regional airports, airlines available, etc.
- Internal mobility – road and transport conditions for fieldwork.
- Travel risks – including cost, duration, and security considerations.

F. Security and Risk Analysis

- Provide a detailed risk profile for each country, including political stability, crime, civil unrest, and terrorism risks.
- Assess safety for expatriates and local staff.
- Analyse insurance requirements and availability.
- Recommend mitigation strategies for identified risks, including contingency planning and incident management protocols.

G. Fundraising Possibilities and Opportunities

- Identify international, regional, and local donors (e.g., bilateral agencies, multilateral institutions, foundations) with active portfolios in each country, especially in sectors relevant to the organization's mission.
- Assess the availability of government/local stakeholder funding or partnerships, including local grant mechanisms and collaboration frameworks.
- Explore opportunities for partnership or funding through CSR initiatives, corporate philanthropy, or local high-net-worth individuals.
- Outline legal and administrative requirements to raise funds (including restrictions on foreign fundraising, taxation, or required registrations).

H. Cost and Operational Effectiveness

- Assess office setup feasibility, including estimated costs for rent, utilities, and communications. Comment on the reliability of services (e.g., power, internet) and suggest

common local measures to mitigate issues (e.g., surge protectors, backup power, stronger connectivity options).

- Compare costs of local transportation, staff benefits, and accommodation for short- and long-term stays between countries in scope.
- Evaluate availability of reliable ICT infrastructure and logistics support (e.g., couriers, suppliers, etc.).
- Assess the availability of sustainable infrastructure to support environmentally responsible operations, including national recycling schemes, access to renewable energy through the main grid, and safe disposal mechanisms for electronic and hazardous waste.
- Analyse overall operating costs and provide a cost-effectiveness ranking by country.

I. Internet Infrastructure and Data Safety

- Internet Access: Assess availability, cost, and reliability of internet in urban and rural areas.
- Digital Readiness: Review tech infrastructure maturity, hardware availability, local vs. cloud servers, and strength of ICT support networks.
- Cybersecurity: Evaluate local cybersecurity laws, standards adoption (e.g., ISO), and incident response capacity.
- Data Privacy: Check compliance with global data protection laws (e.g., GDPR, Swiss law), and cross-border data flow regulations.
- Digital Tools: Identify commonly used operating systems, software, and language compatibility among professionals and general users.
- E-Signatures & Digital ID: Confirm legal acceptance of electronic signatures and digital identity systems for remote processes.
- Use of Technology: Assess if the country permits the use of Better Cotton's existing tech stack, and identify any restrictions or bans on specific applications, platforms, or equipment vendors that may affect operations.

J. Recommendations

- Provide a comparative analysis of the countries studied using a scoring matrix based on weighted criteria.
- Recommend the top location(s) for office setup with a clear justification.
- Highlight specific risks, advantages, and constraints associated with each recommended location.
- Include operational setup steps and a high-level implementation timeline.

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

Methodology

The consultant/firm is expected to adopt a rigorous, participatory, and evidence-based approach, including:

1. **Desk Research** – Review national laws, policies, and sector studies on nonprofit and INGO operations in Benin and Côte d'Ivoire, incorporating best practices from similar contexts.
2. **Primary Data Collection** – Gather up-to-date costs, timelines, and requirements from government offices, banks, law firms, and service providers, plus salary benchmarks and operational costs.
3. **Comparative Analysis** – Apply tools such as SWOT, PESTLE, and a weighted scoring matrix to assess and compare feasibility across countries.
4. **Ethics & Compliance** – Maintain research ethics, data confidentiality, and compliance with relevant data protection laws (e.g., GDPR).

Deliverables

Sr.	Deliverable	Description / Scope	Format & Length	Key Notes / Quality Requirements
1	Inception Report	Workplan, scope, methodology, and country-specific approach	Word, 3–4 pages	Concise, client-validated methodology
2	Country Legal & Institutional Environment Report	Legal & regulatory setup (nonprofit/business), employment laws & salary benchmarks, banking/financial infrastructure, nonprofit & donor landscape	Word, max 12 pages per country + Excel salary annex	Must include references to local laws; verified data; practical guidance
3	Risk & Compliance Report	Security and risk environment (risk matrix), internet & data safety, GDPR/data protection compliance	Word, max 8 pages per country + compliance table	Balanced, evidence-based; credible sources (UN, govt, INGOs)
4	Cost & Operational Feasibility Report	Detailed cost breakdown (registration, operations, HR, banking), country comparison & cost-effectiveness analysis	Excel cost table + Word summary (6 pages)	Verified vendor estimates, Govt fees, transparent assumptions
5	Funding & Partnership Landscape Report	Mapping of fundraising opportunities, donor priorities, risks, and practical recommendations	Word, 6–8 pages	Clear donor mapping, actionable recommendations

6	Comparative Analysis & Final Recommendations	Consolidated feasibility analysis, ranking matrix, scorecard, implementation roadmap; presentation of findings	Word/PDF report (40–50 pages) + PPT (15–20 slides)	Evidence-based, professionally formatted, includes all annexes & references
---	---	--	--	---

High-level Timeline

30th October 2025	All applications must be submitted via this form .
20th November 2025	Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews
30th November 2025	The successful applicant will be notified Unsuccessful <u>shortlisted</u> applicants will also be notified
8th December 2025	Start of the consultancy
28th February 2026	Final report / deliverables

Required Skills & Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
<i>Essential</i>
Demonstrated experience in conducting feasibility studies, legal and market research, or nonprofit sector assessments in Africa, preferably in West African contexts.
Strong knowledge of legal, regulatory, and nonprofit operating frameworks relevant to the establishment and operation of INGOs/NPOs.
Proven access to, or partnerships with, in-country legal, administrative, and technical experts in West Africa (Benin and Côte d'Ivoire).
Excellent analytical, research, and report-writing skills, with the ability to produce clear, evidence-based, and actionable outputs in English.
Strong stakeholder engagement skills, with the ability to gather and validate information from diverse sources and provide legally sound, operationally practical recommendations.
Demonstrated experience in conducting feasibility studies, legal and market research, or nonprofit sector assessments in Africa, preferably in West African contexts.
<i>Optional</i>
Previous experience working with international development organizations, donors, or NGOs on country-entry or legal establishment processes.
Familiarity with nonprofit governance, fundraising compliance, and donor landscapes in West Africa.
Understanding of regional socio-political and economic dynamics affecting nonprofit operations.

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 15 pages in English (excluding CVs), and include the following:

- Relevant Staff CVs – Profiles of proposed team members, highlighting qualifications, expertise, and relevant experience in similar assignments.
- Detailed Financial Proposal – Inclusive of all applicable taxes, duties, fees, and other charges, presented in EURO and preferably in Excel format.
- References – At least three references from previous clients for similar work, including contact details.
- Technical Proposal (Short Narrative) – Not exceeding 8 pages, outlining:
 - Proposed Timeline – Key milestones and delivery dates aligned with the TOR requirements.
 - Approach & Methodology – Concise description of the proposed approach, data collection methods, analytical tools, and quality assurance measures to be applied.

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 especially the objectives, scope of work and deliverables.
- 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-FS-LOCFEASIBILITY

Note: The questions are in black, while the answers are to be in Better Cotton's branded green. Delete this line once the question and answers have been completed and are ready to be added on to the RFP for publishing

1. Question 1

Should the cost comparison under the assignment cover only setup costs (e.g., registration, licenses, etc.), or should it also include estimated annual operational costs such as staff, rent, and utilities?

Answer

It should include both components – setup (Capex) and operational (Opex) costs.

2. Question 2

Please confirm whether there is an approximate or maximum budget ceiling that we should consider for our financial proposal.

Answer

We encourage vendors to submit their most competitive pricing to ensure a fair and transparent procurement process, and to maximize value for money.