

Request for Proposals Security Benchmarking

RFP n#: 2025-10-FS-SECBENCHMARK

Location: London
Start date: 1st December 2025
End date: 20th March 2026

Technical Team:
IT & Data



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

You may submit questions to tender@bettercotton.org - RFP n# 2025-10-FS-SECBENCHMARK until 4th November 2025.

Questions, requests and applications sent after the deadline of 11th November 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.

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

Background

We are seeking proposals from qualified organisations to conduct a comprehensive security benchmarking exercise.

The objective is to assess our current information security posture and identify the necessary steps to align with the requirements of ISO/IEC 27001:2022 across our global IT estate. With branch offices in several countries and other countries with fully remote staff it is critical that we provide solution that support both models.

This exercise will help us:

- Understand our current level of compliance with ISO 27001
- Identify where we are in line with the ISO standard, where we need to improve and where we are exceeding
- Develop a roadmap for achieving certification

Scope of Work

These are the expected outputs for this work:

Work Required

- **Assessment of Current Security Policies, Procedures, and Controls:** Conduct a thorough review of Better Cotton's existing security policies, procedures, and controls across the IT estate.
- **Gap Analysis Against ISO 27001 Requirements:** Perform a detailed gap analysis to identify areas where current practices do not meet the ISO/IEC 27001:2022 standards.
- **Recommendations for Remediation and Improvement:** Provide actionable recommendations to address identified gaps and enhance the overall security posture.

Deliverables

- **Detailed Benchmarking Report:** A comprehensive report outlining the current security performance, areas of improvement, and recommendations for enhancements. The report must prioritise remediation efforts based on the severity and impact of identified gaps. The report should include a roadmap that translates these recommendations into a phased implementation plan, including time estimates and resource requirements.
- **Gap Analysis Matrix:** A matrix that clearly maps out the gaps identified during the analysis and the steps required to achieve compliance with ISO/IEC 27001:2022.

BCI IT Systems in Scope:

- **Microsoft 365:** Email, identity & access management, file/data storage, MDM (Intune)
- **Salesforce:** CRM, financial data (Certinia)
- **Azure Database:** Data warehouse
- **Office Networks:** Wifi & wired networks for internet access
- **Windows Devices:** Laptops for hybrid working
- **Other SaaS Products:** Source Intelligence (Chainpoint), DocuSign, and Rippling (HRMS)

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

11 th November 2025	All applications must be submitted via this form .
12 th November 2025 to 21 st November 2025	Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews
26 th November 2025	The successful applicant will be notified Unsuccessful <u>shortlisted</u> applicants will also be notified
1 st December 2025	Start of the consultancy (Please suggest as can be flexible based on Holiday season)
Please suggest as part of your proposal	Scoping
Please suggest as part of your proposal	Initial Assessment & GAP Analysis
Please suggest as part of your proposal	Gap Analysis Matrix
By 20 th March 2026	Final Report and Roadmap

Required Skills & Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
<i>Essential</i>
Minimum of 10 years of professional experience in cybersecurity, with at least 5 years specifically focused on ISO 27001 implementation, auditing, or benchmarking.
Demonstrated ability to conduct gap analyses, maturity assessments, and remediation planning
Strong analytical and report-writing skills, with the ability to present findings to both technical and non-technical stakeholders
Experience with relevant IT systems

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 (excluding CVs), and include the following:

- Overview of relevant experience
- Proposed methodology and timeline, including sample gap analysis template
- Detailed and transparent budget, in EUROS, including time allocation and day rates, preferably in excel format.

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:** The proposal should clearly demonstrate an understanding of the objectives and requirements of the security benchmarking exercise.
- **Quality and Clarity of the Proposed Approach and Methodology:** The approach and methodology should be well-defined, logical, and clearly articulated, showing how the consultant plans to conduct the assessment, gap analysis, and provide recommendations.
- **Feasibility of the Proposed Activity Plan and Timeline:** The activity plan and timeline should be realistic and feasible, with appropriate time allocated to each task to ensure thoroughness and accuracy.
- **Relevant Professional Experience of the Proposed Consultant(s):** The consultant(s) should have relevant experience in conducting security benchmarking exercises, particularly in alignment with ISO/IEC 27001:2022 standards.
- **Quality and Relevance of the Sample Work Submitted:** The sample work should be of high quality and relevant to the scope of this project, demonstrating the consultant's capability to deliver the required outputs.

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