Request for Proposals - Member Monitoring

RFP n#:   2026-1-DE-MMONITORING

Location: Global/Remote

Start date: 9th March 2026

End date: 25th March 2026

Technical Team: Demand and Engagement

All applications must be submitted via this form.

You may submit questions to tender@bettercotton.org **–** RFP n# 2026-1-DE-MMONITORING until 13th February 2026, noting that the **final submission deadline for bids is the 20th February 2026**.

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 2,500 members.

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

Background

We are seeking proposals from qualified individuals or organisations to develop a revised risk-based due diligence and monitoring model for our members and non-member suppliers. This initiative aims to enhance our existing monitoring mechanisms for new and existing members in order to protect the credibility of BCI and its members in the current legislative context, and to identify opportunities for productivity improvements through new screening tools or other technology. The new model must enable more proactive checks on our growing member base without increasing resources.

Our membership association is made up of 2500 members in six categories, Retailers and Brands, Suppliers and Manufacturers, Producer Organisations, Civil Societies and Associate.

Better Cotton ensures compliance and integrity by governing members under strict Terms of Service and a Code of Practice with screening, monitoring, and enforcement protocols, while also overseeing 13,000 non-member supply chain actors through registration checks and platform access rules, investigating any reputational risks and applying sanctions when necessary.

Scope of Work

The successful applicant will build a revised model which focuses on:
-   A risk-based approach, which is easy to implement.
-   An updated approach to due diligence for members and non-member that is relevant to current sector needs and incorporates technology and automation where appropriate.
-   Recommendations for compliance screening tools that are fit-for-purpose and are good value for money.
-   Driving further efficiencies by proposing possible opportunities for partnering with other specialist organisations or relevant ESG standard networks.

Required Outputs:
-   A revised monitoring approach.
-   A revised scope for monitoring with clear list of compliance requirements.
-   Recommendations for enhanced, yet risk-based monitoring process.
-   Recommended screening tools.
-   Recommendations to drive automation where appropriate.

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

13ᵗʰ February 2026	All questions must be sent only to tender@bettercotton.org with the RFP Reference in the Subject line.
20ᵗʰ February 2026	**Applications deadline** All applications must be submitted via this form.
23ʳᵈ – 26ᵗʰ February 2026	Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews
By 27ᵗʰ February 2026	The successful applicant will be notified Unsuccessful shortlisted applicants will also be notified
9ᵗʰ March 2026	**Start of the consultancy**
18ᵗʰ March 2026	Draft revised monitoring model including proactive monitoring and proposed efficiency improvements
20ᵗʰ March 2026	Recommendation for screening tools
23ʳᵈ March 2026	Presentation of revised model and recommendation/Q&A
25ᵗʰ March 2026	Final report / deliverables

Required Skills & Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
Essential
Extensive experience of Supply Chains and Supply Chain Compliance.
Degree or qualifications in sustainability or ESG.
Solid knowledge of compliance tools as well as ESG audit ecosystem for textile and apparel.
Solid evidence of similar analyses /proposals delivered to customers.
Two recent customer references
Optional
Fluent English: BCI's language of operation is English
Knowledge of certification schemes
Knowledge of membership associations
Knowledge specific to sustainability and ESG within textile and apparel supply chains.

Experience working in sustainable textile and apparel space for either a brand or supplier and manufacturer.

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 6 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

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 2026-DE-MMONITORING

1. **Question 1**

    Member monitoring protocol and Member Code of Practice can be found on BCI website, would you be possible to provide the following documents which are essential to understand the current process?
    a. Application form (pdf/ word format) to see the type of questions asked related to Code of Practice
    b. New revised self-assessment questionnaire (2024)

    Answer
    a) **The application form for Supplier and Manufacturers can be found here:**
    Traders
    https://bettercotton.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Better-Cotton-Membership-Application-Form_Suppliers-and-Manufacturers-Traders_January-2024.docx
    Other Suppliers
    https://bettercotton.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Better-Cotton-Membership-Application-Form_Suppliers-and-Manufacturers-Other-Intermediaries_January-2024.docx
    b) **The new questionnaire is yet to be implemented so cannot be provided.**

2. **Question 2**

    The title of the RFP is member monitoring. However, in the first paragraph it refers to '*a revised risk- based due diligence and monitoring model for our members and non-member suppliers*.' Does the scope also cover non-members? From my understanding BCI does not currently have any monitoring for non-members, so it will need to start from scratch. And the approach for non-members should be different. Please kindly confirm if non-members are covered in the scope.

    Answer

    Yes, the scope also includes non-members. Ou non-members are not governed by Terms of Membership but operate under BCP Terms and Conditions. No, we do not have monitoring for non-members. The approach is expected to be different due the

sheer number of non-members 13,000+ non-members vs 2500 members, of which c. 2000 are supplier and manufacturers.

3. **Question 3**

The RFP states that "*The new model must enable more proactive checks on our growing member base without increasing resources.*" – It is very unlikely that you can be more proactive without increasing resources (human, financial etc). Therefore, the recommended approach will still be combination of proactive (for new members) and reactive (for current members), risk-based and efficient, so focus on the riskiest areas. What is your expectation on this?

Answer

A combination of proactive and reactive is fine but the expectation is that it cannot only be reactive for existing members. By driving an efficient risk-based approach, and more upfront screening/assessment, we would like to be more prepared when issues are reported in the media – and avoid entirely reactive actions and response.

4. **Question 4**

One of the outputs is "*Recommendations to drive automation where appropriate*" - what do you mean by automation? The process is conducted by software within minimum checks by staff members.

Answer

The screening process is entirely manual; we are looking for smarter ways to conduct the due diligence checks, ideally, we would like to eliminate as many manual steps as possible through the introduction of automated steps or new technology - so that manual steps are kept to a minimum and focussed on value-add activities.

5. **Question 5**

There is 4 weeks (22.01 – 20.02) to submit proposal but only 2.5 weeks (09.03 – 25.03) to conduct the project. Isn't it better to have a longer time to work on the project than the proposal? Would BCI accept an earlier starting date (i.e. 2 March)?

Answer

There is flexibility in the schedule. We are open to starting earlier. We will be reviewing applications weekly and starting the next selection stage ahead of the closing date as we identify suitable candidates, so, yes, we could indeed start earlier.

6. **Question 6**

In the Member Monitoring Protocol, it refers to a new self-assessment questionnaire (section 3.2.1). Who review them and what do you do with the results?

Answer

The new questionnaire has not been implemented yet. The results are expected to be reviewed by the member monitoring team.

7. **Question 7**

The deliverable is a list of recommendations of member monitoring listed under 'required outputs', but it does not require actual re-writing of the Member Monitoring Protocol. Is it correct?

Answer

No, it doesn't at this stage, although the protocol may need to be revised as a result of the recommendations.

8. **Question 8**

What is the budget range for this project?

Answer

To maintain fairness, we are not able to share the budget however, we do recognise the technical expertise required and ask that you put in your best offer as part of your financial proposal. You can also capture the core of our scope as one price, and if there is anything else you think would be relevant, add that as separate costing.
The work was initially estimated at 10 days.

9. **Question 9**

Your expectations on the levels of Secretariat and member consultation on the monitoring model?

Answer

Please propose a level of internal and member consultation. We envisage potentially consulting with our Standards Integrity Team Compliance, Decent Work, Supply Chain, Member Monitoring teams.

10. **Question 10**

The availability of a subset/sample of both of those stakeholder groups within the timeframe?

Answer

Tbc after review of 9. We will endeavour to secure time with those stakeholders.

11. Question 11

Are there any hard constraints we should design around (e.g., GDPR/data residency requirements, procurement limitations, required use of existing vendors, platform constraints, restrictions on new headcount, or limitations on new paid subscriptions/tools)?

Answer

There are no constraints regarding vendors, platforms or existing tools. GDPR requirements will of course apply. Our core member monitoring team is two-people strong (one open Manager vacancy, one Coordinator) and is supported by country teams who help with local checks. We would ideally like to manage within the existing headcount but would consider any other recommendation you may have. The need is for a fit for purpose model that takes advantage of technology to reduce the current manual steps so the gained time can be redirected and delivers enhanced risk-based process.

12. Question 12

Which screening domains are required? Are there any specific sources or tools that must be used, or any that are explicitly disallowed?

Answer

Please see Membership criteria and Code of Practice, and the existing Member Monitoring Protocol. There are no tools explicitly disallowed.

13. Question 13

What are the top outcomes you will use to evaluate whether the revised model is successful?

Answer

The model must:
- **be risk-based and enhanced**
- **Resource**
- **Easy to implement**

Use of technology

14. Question 14

- Can you provide specifics around this: "current legislative context"? Which jurisdictions or regulations and stakeholder expectations are most influencing the redesign?

Answer

Key Global Supply Chain Legislation that impact our global Retailer and Brand members and Supplier and Manufacturer members such as but not limited to EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), the US Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA).

15. Question 15

Which internal systems and data sources will be available during the engagement? If feasible, can you provide anonymized samples to support analysis and validation?

Answer

The successful candidate will have access to the monitoring team who will be able to answer any question. Anonymised past cases can be provided if deemed useful.

16. Question 16

As you consider introducing automated steps or new technology, what level of automation is acceptable? Do you require full audit trails and explainability for screening outcomes and decisions?

Answer

We have not defined an acceptable level of automation as such. We will consider all recommendations. We will require explainability for screening outcomes.