

Request for Proposal - Reduced Pesticide Commercial Viability Study

RFP n#: 2026-2-ID-RPCVS

Location: Brazil

Start date: 5th March 2026

End date: 25th May 2026

Technical Team: Impact Team



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

You may submit questions to tender@bettercotton.org – RFP n# 2026-2-ID-RPCVS until 20th February 2026, noting that the **final submission deadline for bids is the 28th 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.

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

Brazil is one of the world's major cotton-producing countries, supplying a significant share of the fiber used by global brands and retailers. Production systems in key regions are characterized by high reliance on synthetic pesticides, supported by strong agronomic knowledge, large-scale mechanisation and a focus on yield performance. At the same time, international buyers are increasingly interested in sourcing cotton produced with reduced chemical intensity and stronger alignment to Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles.

Despite this emerging demand, there is limited clarity on the practical business implications for Brazilian farmers of transitioning away from pesticide-intensive production. Key uncertainties remain regarding cost structures, yield impacts, risk exposure during high-pressure pest years, and the level of incentive required to make such transitions commercially viable.

Better Cotton Initiative aims to address this gap by commissioning a sector-informed study that brings together agronomic evidence, economic analysis, risk insights, market perspectives and carbon considerations. The study will support supply chain actors and BCI in understanding what feasible transition pathways could look like and what forms of support may be needed.

Purpose of the Assignment

The objective of this assignment is to develop a Brazil specific reduced-pesticide roadmap that assesses the agronomic, economic and risk implications of transitioning from current pesticide-intensive systems to a set of feasible IPM- and biological-based alternatives. The consultancy will compare farmer income and financial risk under different scenarios, evaluate the level of market or carbon-based incentives required to support transitions, and translate findings into three practical pathways for adoption.

The assignment is intended to produce outputs that are technically rigorous while also being relevant to brands, retailers, traders, Embrapa, ABRAPA and other stakeholders. The roadmap should support sector alignment and guide Better Cotton Initiative's engagement with supply chain partners.

Scope of Work

The project shall commence with an inception workshop covering project planning, data requirements and data collection approaches, an overview of the proposed methodologies for each activity, and a stakeholder engagement plan. Following the workshop, the Consultant shall submit an inception report summarising agreed methodologies, assumptions, timelines and responsibilities. The Consultant may proceed with the assignment only upon written approval of the inception report by BCI. If the inception report is not approved, BCI reserves the right to terminate the contract at that stage without further obligation.

Baseline Assessment of Current Production Practices (8 days)

The consultancy will begin by establishing a clear picture of current pesticide-intensive cotton production in Brazil. This will include describing typical pest complexes, the structure and frequency of pesticide applications, prevailing chemical classes, and the rationale behind existing practices. The baseline should capture both average seasons and periodic high-pressure pest years that heavily influence decisions and costs. It should incorporate credible sources such as Embrapa and ABRAPA, supported by 5-10 expert and farmer interviews and BCI data where needed. This baseline will provide the reference point for all economic and risk comparisons.

Deliverable: Baseline of current cotton production practices.

Development of Feasible Reduced-Pesticide Scenarios (10 days)

The consultancy will define three realistic reduced-pesticide scenarios that Brazilian farmers could reasonably adopt. These scenarios should reflect improvements in IPM, the use of biological control options, enhanced scouting and monitoring, and potential uptake of precision application technologies. For each scenario, the consultancy should describe expected reductions in pesticide use, anticipated operational adjustments, possible yield impacts and conditions that would influence feasibility. Scenarios should be grounded in Brazilian agronomy and reflect practical realities rather than theoretical ideals.

Deliverable: three reduced pesticides scenarios and a business-as-usual scenario using the TCFD Scenario Analysis guidance¹.

Risk Analysis Across Baseline and Scenarios (4 days)

The study will examine how agronomic risk differs across the business-as-usual and the three proposed scenarios. This will include analysing how the frequency and severity of pest outbreaks may change, the extent to which reduced-pesticide systems increase or decrease vulnerability, and the financial consequences of low-, medium- and high-pressure pest years. A probability-weighted multi-year perspective is expected so that the roadmap reflects realistic long-term economic outcomes rather than single-season snapshots.

Deliverable: A probability-weighted multi-year (5, 10, 15 years) risk analysis for 3 reduced pesticides scenario's and BAU scenario.

Economic Modelling and Sensitivity Analysis (20 days)

Using the baseline and scenario definitions, the consultancy will develop a transparent economic model comparing cost structures, gross margins and net income per hectare. Starting point for

¹ TaskForceonClimate-relatedFinancialDisclosures.(2020,October). *Guidance on scenario analysis for non-financial companies*. https://assets.bbhub.io/company/sites/60/2020/09/2020-TCFD_Guidance- Scenario-Analysis-Guidance.pdf

the economic analysis shall be based on a Partial Budgeting approach comparing baseline and intervention scenarios at the per-hectare level, consistent with FAO and World Bank farm-economics guidance. This will show ROI, NPV and payback time for all intervention scenarios and allow for further modelling on a practice level basis. The model should incorporate changes in inputs, practices, operational complexity triggers and yield performance while integrating the risk assessment to produce adjusted income expectations. It should also quantify the price premium or incentive required for farmers to maintain or improve income under each scenario.

The final economic model should be delivered in an editable and user-friendly Excel format.

For understanding of the economic model, the consultancy shall apply a Representative (Model) Farm approach, using a limited number (ca. 3 - 5) of typical farm typologies reflecting different starting conditions (e.g. farm size, input intensity and baseline yield). For each model farm, an enterprise-level partial budgeting analysis shall compare baseline and intervention scenarios, quantifying changes in cost structures, gross margins and net income. This approach shall enable comparison of economic outcomes and incentive requirements across heterogeneous farm types and support interpretation at enterprise and programme level.

A sensitivity analysis should demonstrate how changes in key parameters like pesticide prices, pesticide occurrence risks, market access and pricing, biological input costs, or yield variability can influence the conclusions. Conducting a structured sensitivity analysis will help assess the robustness of the results to variations in these critical factors.

Deliverables: 1. Costing assumptions based on current and historical pricing of input products 2. Farm level economic model using standard agroeconomic methodologies including enterprise budgeting, partial budgeting and risk-adjustments to forecast economic impacts of reduced pesticide scenarios. 3. Model farm examples showing rationale and impact for intervention scenarios and direct effects on different farmer groups. 4. Sensitivity analysis on key parameters to show effects of key levers on the results, historical analysis of key parameters.

Verification of results (10 days)

To ensure strong buy-in and relevance of results. The consultant will verify the outcomes with farmers and key stakeholders, e.g. BCI, Abrapa, Embrapa and input suppliers through a series of semi-structured interviews (ca. 10). This engagement should ensure assumptions are relevant, divergence in opinions is clear. It should also cover Farmer's willingness to test new approaches, perceived risks and validation of agronomic assumptions. The consultancy should synthesise these insights into a verification brief describing the interview results, changes based on the verification and any identified divergence among actors.

Deliverable: Verification Brief

Transition Pathways and Strategic Recommendations (5 days)

The consultancy will develop three practical transition pathways representing different levels of ambition and close alignment with the three established scenarios. For each pathway, the consultancy should describe expected pesticide reductions, economic implications, risk profiles and operational feasibility. The pathways should also outline the roles that Better Cotton Initiative, producers, traders, brands and technical partners could play in enabling progress. This section

will form the strategic backbone for any industry accepted roadmap and provide clear guidance for future action. The results shall be presented to a stakeholder group selected by BCI.

Typical indicators (non-exhaustive) that are expected to steer the different pathways are:

Risk profile adjustments and valuation for farmers and offtakes

Economic factors for farmers, retail and brands e.g. payback period, ROI and/or NPV for intervention pathways.

Pesticide burden/benefits in terms of costs, yield and market access risks

The end-product should use the identified pathways and analysis of these as the basis for providing strategic recommendations for the sector.

Deliverable: Pathway overview and strategic recommendations in a final report on all the above encompassing delivered through 1. Written Report and 2. A PowerPoint presentation.

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 February 2026	Questions deadline All questions must be sent only to tender@bettercotton.org with the RFP Reference in the Subject line.
28th February 2026	Applications deadline All applications must be submitted via this form .
5th February to 16th February 2026	Applications review & shortlisting / Interviews (Applications would be reviewed on rolling basis)
By 1st March 2026	The successful applicant will be notified Unsuccessful <u>shortlisted</u> applicants will also be notified
4th March 2026	Start of the consultancy
By 12th March 2026	Inception Report and Workshop (outlining methodology, data sources, stakeholder engagement plan and modeling approach)

By 31st March 2026	Editable Economic Model (covering baseline, scenarios, sensitivities and risk valuation)
By 30th April 2026	Draft Report (covering all components till 'Verification of Results')
By 8th May 2026	Final report (presenting the consolidated roadmap, integrating stakeholder feedback)
By 15th May 2026	Flagship Presenting Deck (suitable for external communication with brands and traders)

Required Skills & Knowledge

Skills, Knowledge and Experience
Essential
Strong knowledge of Brazilian agronomy, preferably with cotton expertise.
Proven experience in agricultural economic modelling and scenario analysis.
Familiarity with pesticide/IPM systems and biological solutions
Experience engaging with supply chain actors.
Fluency in Portuguese and English.
Optional
Capability to assess carbon-related opportunities (desirable).

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 include:

- Team composition, roles and short biographies.
- Detailed description of proposed methodology and workplan.
- Stakeholder engagement approach tailored to the Brazilian context.
- Examples of relevant past assignments.
- Detailed budget
- Proposed timeline aligned with the expected duration.

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
- Technical Strength and clarity of the proposed approach and methodology (35%)
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed activity plan, stakeholder engagement and timeline, and appropriateness of time allocated to delivering each task (20%)
- Relevant professional experience of the proposed consultant(s) (25%)
- Quality and relevance of the sample work submitted (20%)
- Value for money (15%)
- Inclusion of Brazilian Expertise (5%)

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

Governance and Oversight

- The consultancy will work under the supervision of Better Cotton Initiative's Impact & Development Team. Regular check-in meetings will be held throughout the project. Better Cotton Initiative may convene a small advisory group comprising selected brands, traders and technical stakeholders to provide input and feedback at critical stages.

Better Cotton Initiative encourages applications from Brazilian Freelancers, Brazilian Consultancy Firms or mixed Brazilian–international teams and proposals that has a practical time plan finishing the project before the high-level timeline.

All deliverables should be drafted in both English and Portuguese.