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Terms and Definitions

V1.1

BCI Certification Key Terms and Definitions

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Introduction

This document:

- Outlines key terms and definitions used in certification process and guidance documents.
- Is relevant to Certification Bodies, Chain of Custody (CoC) Actors and Producers.

- Does not cover terms which are covered in other documents, such as the Principles and Criteria (P&C), the Chain of Custody Standard and associated normative certification documents.

Better Cotton regional volume release date

A date set by Better Cotton per season and per region when volumes are released by Better Cotton to eligible producers. This is a process where Better Cotton provides the producer with a unique code that is associated to a specific volume that can then be traded within the Better Cotton system. This includes issuing Annual Authorised Volume (AAV) codes or updating volume inventories in the Better Cotton Platform, so that buyers of Better Cotton can enter their purchases into the Better Cotton Platform and receive Better Cotton Claim Units (BCCUs) to pass through the supply chain. The date is determined on a country or regional basis and is typically around the start of harvest.

Can

Indicates a **possibility** expected or conceivable material, physical or causal outcome **and capability** fitness, or quality necessary to do or achieve a specified thing

Cancellation of certification

When a producer or a supply chain actor voluntarily stops their certification or has become ineligible.

Certification

A status awarded by a third-party certification body to a producer, supply chain company or retail brand to confirm their compliance with the relevant Better Cotton Standard and requirements has been confirmed. This certification status, together with other Better Cotton registration/ approval steps as relevant, gives the producer, supply chain company or retail brand the right to trade Better Cotton and/or make Better Cotton claims.

Derogation

In P&C these are deviations from the Better Cotton Principle and Criteria approved by Better Cotton in specific situations and/ or regions.

In CoC these are cases where a variation is considered applicable not just to the original organisation applying but rather across many organisations e.g. a category of organisation.

Learning Group (LG)

A Learning Group is a group of Better Cotton Farmers who gather together to participate in training and learning activities on more sustainable production practices. All Smallholder Producer Units are divided into Learning Groups of approximately 35 farmers, managed by a Field Facilitator to help enable learning. Typically, each Field Facilitator in a Smallholder Producer Unit will work with about 10 Learning Groups, or 350 farmers at a maximum.

May

Indicates a **permission** consent or liberty (or opportunity) to do something.

Must

Indicates an **external constraint** (e.g. laws of nature or particular conditions existing in some countries or regions) that is not stated as a provision of the document

Non-conformity

A gap identified in compliance with a clause/ indicator of a Better Cotton Standard.

Open Source Intelligence (OSINT)

OSINT refers to the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information from publicly available sources. These sources can include social media, news articles, government reports, academic research, and other publicly accessible data.

Permission to trade

A time bound approval to trade Better Cotton issued by a Certification Body to a Producer following initial certification audit, before full compliance is met but where a threshold of compliance is achieved. When the time-bound approval expires trade is no longer allowed unless certification is issued as a result of full compliance being demonstrated. Producers re-joining the programme after their certificate has

been cancelled are not eligible for permission to trade if any of the compliance gaps relate to non-conformities identified at the point of cancellation.

Shall

Indicates a **requirement** which conveys objectively verifiable criteria to be fulfilled and from which no deviation is permitted if conformance with the document is to be claimed.

Should

Indicates a **recommendation** a suggested possible choice or course of action deemed to be particularly suitable without necessarily mentioning or excluding others.

Surveillance audit

All auditing activities carried out by the Certification Body that take place between the full audits of initial certification and certification renewal.

Suspension of certification

A valid certificate is in place but for a period of this certificate the certification status is suspended by the Certification Body pending certain conditions being met which will lift the suspension. During the suspension the ability to trade Better Cotton or make Better Cotton claims is withheld. The certificate expiry date remains unchanged. Surveillance and corrective action activities are still required during the suspension period.

Variations

Deviations from the Better Cotton Normative documents, requested by producers, supply chain companies or retail brands which have been approved by Better Cotton. In P&C this excludes the P&C itself for which any deviations are subject to the derogation policy.

Withdrawal of certification

When a producer or CoC client has their certification withdrawn by a certification body as a penalty due to the conditions of a suspension not having been met or other

situations defined in the P&C or CoC monitoring and certification requirements. Right to trade Better Cotton or make Better Cotton claims is withdrawn and a full new application for certification is required. This may only be possible after a certain period of time has passed as defined in the P&C or CoC monitoring and certification requirements.