

Better Cotton Initiative

Code of Conduct

Certification Bodies

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1.0	January 2023	Initial issue	Assurance Manager	Head of Assurance
1.1	March 2026	Rebranding	Assurance senior coordinator	Assurance Manager

Purpose

This Code of Conduct lays out the specific behaviours expected from Certification Bodies conducting work on behalf of Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), or Better Cotton Initiative partners. Breaches of this Code of Conduct are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including the termination of the relevant Legal Agreement and referral to relevant authorities.

The Better Cotton Initiative Code of Conduct- Certification Bodies applies to all countries where BCI operates. This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with

local legislation where possible, however should the Code of Conduct demand a higher standard than the local laws then this Code of Conduct will prevail.

General Conduct

- I will uphold the integrity and reputation of Better Cotton Initiative by ensuring that my professional and personal conduct is consistent with Better Cotton Initiative's values and standards.
- I will treat all people with respect and dignity and will not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- I will demonstrate sensitivity to the customs, practices, culture and personal beliefs of others.
- I will not engage in physical violence or acts of bullying or harassment.
- I will not consume illegal substances, and understand that inebriation while performing work duties, or when representing Better Cotton Initiative, will not be tolerated.
- I will not engage in any acts of fraud, theft or corruption.
- I will not use Better Cotton Initiative time and property for personal gain.
- I will read and adhere to all Better Cotton Initiative ethics policies and guidelines, shared in the contract annex
- I will not take bribes from or any form of compensation in exchange for explicitly or implicitly influencing the assessment being conducted. I will not make "facilitation" payments, or bribes, unless I genuinely fear for the immediate safety and security of myself or my companions if the payment is not made.
- I undertake to maintain absolute confidentiality with regards to any sensitive information I encounter during my work with Better Cotton Initiative.
- I will not collect, use or disclose personal information for purposes other than those for which consent has been obtained, in accordance with Better Cotton Initiative's Data Privacy Policy, available at <https://bettercotton.org/better-cotton-data-privacy-policy/>

Safeguarding and Decent Work

- I will adhere to Better Cotton Initiative's Safeguarding policy and associated policies, and with local and national laws and regulations at all times. Should the Better Cotton Initiative Code of Conduct demand a higher standard than the local laws then this Code of Conduct will prevail.
- I will not engage in abusive or exploitative conduct.
- I will ensure that I understand all definitions of abuse and exploitation utilised by Better Cotton Initiative and will undertake any training on Safeguarding required of me.
- I understand that all forms of sexual harassment are prohibited and I will adhere at all times to the Better Cotton Initiative Equal Opportunity, Anti-discrimination and Anti-harassment Policy

- I will not engage in sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18). Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
- I will not exchange money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour.
- I will not engage in sexual relationships with clients, since such relationships may be based on inherently unequal power dynamics.
- I will not engage in any form of sexual harassment including any form of unwelcome attention that might offend, humiliate or intimidate the other person.
- I will not engage in any commercially exploitative activities involving children, including child trafficking, child prostitution or child labour.
- I will not engage in any activities that involve forced, indentured, bonded or involuntary labour.
- I will not engage in human trafficking or any other form of modern slavery
- I understand that Better Cotton Initiative has a zero-tolerance approach to any attitudes or behaviours that put children or adults at risk of harm.
- I understand that Safeguarding incidents are acts of serious misconduct and are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including the termination of the Service Agreement and referral to relevant authorities for criminal prosecution.
- I understand that all persons working on behalf of Better Cotton Initiative or Better Cotton Initiative partners are obligated to report any safeguarding incident they become aware of within 24 hours following the Better Cotton Initiative Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, while maintaining confidentiality and protecting the safety of any affected person(s) as a priority.

Conflicts of Interest/Fraternisation

- I will avoid any situations in which a personal or professional interest could conflict, or reasonably appear to conflict, with the best interests of Better Cotton Initiative. If Better Cotton Initiative assessments assigned to me are for producer/s and/or their key employees with whom I have a personal or professional relationship with or if I have personal interest in the producer/s that I am assigned for verification., I will declare to these Better Cotton Initiative immediately.
- I will disclose to the Better Cotton Initiative country manager any relationships that could lead to potential conflicts of interest for Better Cotton Initiative, including any relationships with a client or Better Cotton Initiative staff member.

Communications

- I will not post disparaging or defamatory statements about Better Cotton Initiative, Better Cotton Initiative staff, our partners, retailer and brand members, council members, or affiliates past or present.
- If I post about my work with Better Cotton Initiative online, I will state that my views are my own and do not represent those of Better Cotton Initiative or our partners.
- Any photographs taken of individual(s) require their consent Any photographs taken during the assessment are the property of Better Cotton Initiative and

should not be published on any platform, including the verifiers website or social media, without permission from Better Cotton Initiative.

- I will not use social media accounts to discuss defamatory or harmful content, or any other matters that may negatively impact Better Cotton Initiative.
- I will not speak to the press without seeking my Better Cotton's consent. Adherence with the Better Cotton Initiative Ethical Image Guidelines, I will not propagate negative stereotypes in any photos or videos and will be respectful of individuals' dignity and privacy. I will not take or utilise photographs or videos featuring suffering, portraying victimhood or containing graphic imagery.

By signing the Better Cotton Initiative Code of Conduct I acknowledge that I have read and agreed to adhere to the above.

DATE: _____

PRINT NAME: _____

SIGN NAME: _____