



New Country  
Programme  
Start-Up Report  
Guidance

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## Executive Summary

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CHECKLIST

Key aspects of this document that support Stage 2 of Better Cotton New Country Start-Up:

- Motivations of the Applicant Country to Implement BCSS
- Production Context in the Applicant Country
- Agronomy and Environment – including overview of most pressing environmental problems
- Application of Better Cotton Principles and Criteria in the Applicant Country
- Producer capacity and training
- Multistakeholder engagement
- Programme strategy and outreach
- 2030 Better Cotton Targets focus areas
- Financial model of implementation
- Monitoring and Evaluation Techniques

## Section 1: The Structure of the Cotton Industry

*This section should provide an overview of the national cotton growing context and describe all segments of the sector which could interact with Better Cotton.*

### 1.1. Context of Cotton Cultivation

Aspects of the sector	Information to provide
<b>Farmers</b>	Number of farmers <sup>1</sup> , disaggregated by gender; farm models (family, businesses); farm size (smallholders, medium farms, large farms); other crops grown in rotation with cotton; Number of farmer organizations/cooperatives; Number of farmer associations/unions; % of population living below the poverty line
<b>Ginners</b>	Number of ginning companies, their location; ginners' relation with farmers; business model; cooperatives or private

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to Better Cotton [Principles & Criteria v2.1](#), page 149-152 for the Better Cotton definition of a cotton farmer.

Aspects of the sector	Information to provide
<b>Seed cultivars/quality</b>	Seed quality; Regulations related to seeds; Former, actual and new varieties; GM status
<b>Area cultivated</b>	Actual season and/or projection for the upcoming season
<b>Production volume</b>	Actual season and/or projection for the upcoming season
<b>Production trend</b>	Describe the production trend in the past years (cultivated area, yields)
<b>Climate and Weather conditions</b>	Irrigation practices, rainfall patterns
<b>Export/consumption</b>	Proportion of ginned cotton which is exported; Proportion of ginned cotton which is used by domestic spinners/textile industry
<b>Export destinations</b>	Country(ies) to which ginned cotton is exported, if so
<b>Labour</b>	<p>Describe how cotton is primarily harvested (e.g., manual labour/mechanisation); Total agriculture labour force, disaggregated by gender; % of total labour force working in agriculture; % of permanent and seasonal labour force; Number of worker organisations/ Number of workers represented in existing farmer organisations</p> <p>What are some key labour force characteristics in cotton-growing regions?</p> <p>Describe any common labour migration patterns, or labour market segmentations (whether by sector, occupation, gender, local/foreign workforce, etc.) if applicable.</p> <p>What are the predominant types of work arrangements in cotton-growing regions? In the presence of collective labour agreements, do those cover provisions on wages, working conditions and benefits? Are labour contractors involved in recruitment and if so, how do they operate?</p>
<b>Competitive advantages</b>	Possible competitive advantages (early availability, speed of shipment...)

Aspects of the sector	Information to provide
<b>Experience of sustainable cotton promotion</b>	Relevant organisations in-country to date (i.e., including IPM, Good Agricultural Practices, Organic and Fairtrade)
<b>Key issues faced in cotton farming</b>	Main environmental, social, and economic issues faced by cotton farmers and workers; main issues faced by ginning companies

*Provide official (government or national research) statistics on cotton production*

*Include any official (government/other) climate / rainfall maps showing regional variations*

*Indicate area cultivated vis-à-vis other crops [Graphic or Chart suggested]*

*Indicate output value of cotton vis-à-vis other crops [Graphic or Chart suggested]*

*Indicate output value of cotton vis-à-vis other crops [Graphic or Chart suggested]*

*Add a map showing the areas where cotton is produced, and ginneries are located*

## 1.2. Sector Organisation and Main Stakeholders

*This section should provide more information how the cotton sector is organized and demonstrate the actors to be involved in the proposed multi-stakeholder approach.*

### Sector Organisation and Stakeholders Checklist

- Farmer associations/organisations (number/types of groups, organisational structures, leadership)
- Profile of ginners and spinners (number of companies, who are the largest, number of facilities, any other key information)
- Marketing structure and industry organisation
- Any statutory and/or government bodies involved in the sector
- Local NGOs and/or civil society groups that are currently active or interested in cotton production and/or enhancing livelihood of cotton farmers

*Describe, in as much detail as possible, the organisation(s) of producers into functional groups. Describe what they do, how they interact with other supply chain actors (e.g., ginners, traders, and spinners). What support do the organisations provide to farmers and what is the main interest for farmers in participating in them?*

*Describe and explain number of gins, distribution of size and market share, history/trajjectory of the sector, and relationship with farmers/ producer organisations*

*Describe history of Industry Association(s), legal roles, key functions, any strategic plans or programmes, relations with other organisations in the sector*

### 1.3. Policy environment

This section must provide information on the policies and regulations under which cotton is cultivated in the prospective country, including:

#### Policy Environment Checklist

- Possible subsidies
- International, national, regional or local programmes supporting cotton growth
- Government's support for cotton
- Land ownership and use
- Relevant national (or provincial) labour regulations, as applicable to the agricultural sector (e.g., minimum working ages, minimum wages, hazardous & light work stipulations, regulation relating to associations, unions and farmer organizations)

## Section 2: The Better Cotton Sustainability Standard in Context

The objective of this sections is to exhaustively identify:

- What are the current priorities and/or challenges for cotton producers in the Better Cotton Standard?
- Which themes require significant effort
- How are the P&Cs supported by domestic policies/regulatory frameworks

### 2.1. Production Practices and Better Cotton Principles & Criteria

*The purpose of this section is to describe the main domestic production practices in relation to each of [Better Cotton's 7 Principles and Criteria](#) (P&C). It should present a comprehensive and honest appraisal of key environmental, social, and in some cases, economic issues related to domestic cotton production. This section should highlight the key issues within the P&C and level of development within the country.*

## Principle 1 : Crop Protection

### Principle 1: Crop Protection Checklist

*Include relevant details (e.g., organisations, laws/standards or voluntary principles) pertaining to each of the following:*

- List and describe main and secondary pests in cotton producing region/s and pest resistant cultivars grown
- Regulatory framework (include full list of agro-chemicals that are nationally approved – and prohibited – for use in cotton), identifying any that appear in in the Rotterdam Convention, Stockholm Convention or that are listed as Class 1 Toxic chemicals by the World Health Organisation (WHO)
- Recent trends in agro-chemical regulation and use
- Farmers' access to pest control chemicals
- Agro-chemical application methods
- Agro-chemical labelling and storage
- Hazardous work
- Localized pesticide/chemical application record keeping requirements
- Local uptake of good practices in pest management and domestic technical resources available

*Insert a table or catalogue of applicable crop protection chemicals indicating a) how toxic chemicals are classified; b) the corresponding marking; c) median lethal dose LD50; and, d) permissible exposure limits.*

*List and describe national laws and their components in relation to chemicals used in cotton production.*

*List and describe components of personal protective equipment (PPE), and any special measures or regulations related to the use of the following:*

- *Protective clothing and gloves*
- *Shoes / Boots*
- *Goggles*
- *Protective mask*
- *Maintenance and sanitary measures*

*Describe any requirements for disposal of agro-chemicals containers including washing packages, and transportation to secure location, as applicable.*



*Include the main agro-chemical application seasons for various pests.*

*Describe weed control measures used at soil preparation, planting stage and throughout the growing season.*

*Include a list or table of herbicides and their use. It is further recommended to include the following headings:*

- *Name of herbicide*
- *Method of application*
- *Timing*
- *Volume applied/dosage*
- *Targeted weeds*
- *Substances mixed*
- *Notes on application (e.g., half-life, crop damage, drift risk, toxicity rating, temperature considerations, rainfall/irrigation considerations)*

## Principle 2 : Water Stewardship

### Principle 2: Water Stewardship Checklist

- Cotton and water use in cotton producing region/s
- Water pricing
- Irrigation/drainage infrastructure
- Irrigation methods
- Impacts of climate change
- Availability and use of water resource mapping
- Existing or prospective joint and/or collaborative water stewardship programmes

*If relevant, describe any national research initiative(s) and/or advisory programmes on water use and irrigation in cotton*

## Principle 3 : Soil health

### Principle 3: Soil Health

- Key issues and challenges related to soil health
- Variations in soil structure by region, clearly identifying those most relevant to cotton growing areas.
- Erosion issues and approaches, including proportion of irrigated land affected by erosion
- Farm run-off
- Current trends in fertiliser use and optimising nutrient application

- Local uptake of soil conservation practices
- Applicable regulatory framework(s)

*Describe how soil is normally tested and usual frequency.*

## Principle 4 : Biodiversity Enhancement & Land Use

### Principle 4: Biodiversity Enhancement & Land Use Checklist

- Agricultural land use and management practices
- Regulatory frameworks related to biodiversity and land use
- Pressures on biodiversity from cotton cultivation
- Agricultural genetic resources
- Key issues and challenges related to biodiversity
- National mapping of biodiversity resources

*Include 2-3 paragraphs outlining national law and authority bodies that are responsible for land and water administration, covering the following points:*

- *Land ownership structure and basis in law*
- *Any regulations on conversion of land to or from agricultural use*
- *Land administration system, including the structure and role of land authorities within the government*
- *Water and wastewater administration system and any legislative basis*
- *Any environmental conservation frameworks applicable to cotton growing*

## Principle 5 : Fibre Quality

### Principle 5: Fibre quality Checklist

- Describe all farm practices for fibre quality control for (post-harvest) handling of cotton related to:
  - Irrigation and fertilisation termination and defoliation preparation
  - Defoliation
  - Harvest
  - Storage and transportation
  - Ginning

## Principle 6 : Decent Work

### Decent Work Checklist

- Legal and regulatory frameworks for labour, as applicable to cotton growers and as appropriate to the previously described structure of the cotton sector (e.g., large farms or smallholders)
- Which Better Cotton Decent Work criteria would apply in country based on farming requirements (i.e., labour intensive and/or mechanised farm)?
- Identify important actors involved labour oversight in its implementation
- Key deficits and/or issues related to *decent work*, especially child labour

### **Child Labour**

- Regulatory framework
- Incidence of child labour
- Children’s work on family farms
- Worst forms of child labour: hazardous work
- National and regional/local government approaches to child labour (and relevant laws, policies, etc.)
- Est. % of children, ages 5 – 14 years in child labour
- Est. % of children, ages 5 – 14 years performing hazardous work
- Est. % of children, ages 15 – 17 years performing hazardous work
- Primary & secondary school completion rates, disaggregated by gender
- Numbers of primary & secondary education teachers per 1000 (population)
- Numbers of primary & secondary schools per 1000 (population)
- Minimum school-leaving age

### **Forced Labour**

- Incidence and risk
- Regulatory framework
- Est. number of forced labour incidents (disaggregated by gender)

### **Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining**

- Labour organisation
- Farmer organisation
- To what extent can cotton farmers and cotton farm workers freely exercise their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and/or association? Are these rights guaranteed by law?
- Is there an active civil society that contributes to defending the rights of workers through their participation in social dialogue mechanisms, among others?
- Are there existing mechanisms to access justice and remedy in the cotton growing areas? If so, what are they and who can benefit from them?

### **Health and safety**

- Incidence and risks associated
- Typical farm management of occupation safety and health (i.e., policies and procedures)
- Regulatory framework

### **Employment conditions for cotton fieldworkers**

- Regulatory framework
- Wages
- Social security

- Working hours
- Worker accommodation
- Use of labour intermediaries

**Basic treatment and disciplinary practices**

- Any reports available of abusive practices in the country, current or historical.

**Discrimination**

- Regulatory frameworks
- Women workers and women farmers
- Migrants
- Other minorities

*Include descriptions and, where applicable, any context behind legislation covering the following:*

- *Freedom of association, collective bargaining and industrial relations (Laws providing for or regulating trade unions)*
- *Elimination of forced labour*
- *Elimination of child labour, protection of children and young persons*
- *Equality of opportunity and treatment (non-discrimination, workers with family obligations)*
- *Tripartite consultations (including any national collective bargaining framework)*
- *Education, vocational guidance and training (relevant to the cotton sector)*
- *Employment security, termination of employment*
- *Agricultural Cooperatives*
- *Labour contracts*
- *Wages (minimum wages, payment of wages]*
- *Human resources/personnel management*
- *Hours of work, rest and paid leave*
- *Night work*
- *Occupational safety and health*
- *Social security (general standards)*
- *Maternity/ paternity protection*
- *Migrant workers*

*Describe laws or statutes covering the following issues:*

- *Risk and hazard assessments*
- *Work with agro-chemicals (storage, safety measures, training)*
- *Regulations regarding other hazards in agricultural employment (heavy metals/ hydrocarbons)*
- *Supervision of work (health monitoring, medical examinations)*
- *Training on safety*

- *Personal protective equipment*
- *Workplace illnesses*
- *Restrictions on work for children*
- *Migrant workers*

## Principle 7 : Management Systems

### Management Systems Checklist

- Describe champions and progress and/or achievements made in the following areas (i.e. the 6 previous Better Cotton Principles & Criteria) through capacity building, extension services and/or promotion of continuous improvement:
  - Yield
  - Fibre quality parameters
  - Improved profitability
  - Lower/more sustainable water use
  - Uptake of integrated pest management practices
  - Improvements to soil fertility
  - Environmental health and safety
  - Workplace health and safety
  - Harvest
  - Farm-level data management

## 2.2. Assurance Programme and Continuous Improvement

*An effective assurance system is an essential part of any sustainability programme. Assurance refers to the measures put in place to ensure that something meets a certain performance level. Think of it as a quality check – there to make sure everything is running up to standard.*

*The concept of continuous improvement is at the heart of Better Cotton’s approach to increasing the sustainability of cotton farming. Better Cotton defines continuous improvement as a systematic process of continuously improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of existing measures. Ingrained within the BCSS is that the participants and growers of Better Cotton make commitments to be self-reflective and identify areas of improvement and monitor progress related to the P&C. Each producer (either an individual large farm or producer unit made of smallholder farms or medium farms) is required to complete and retain a continuous improvement plan (CIP) covering a period of at least 3 years.*

### Assurance and Continuous Improvement Checklist

- What level of field engagement is expected, and how would partners engage with farmers?
- Which entity would be managing control and certification?

- Which accredited firm(s) would perform the audits for participating farmer groups?
- Identify prospective improvement goals across Better Cotton Principles 1 to 6 that would be applicable to producers in country
- Describe scoping and consultation process at producer to develop and refine improvement goals and how this will be coordinated with different partners/stakeholders
- Describe possible field interventions and a sample producer-level written plan to monitor and review progress against annual and long-term targets
- Identify additional resources (e.g., partnerships, capacity building) that could support continuous improvement of the new country programme

## 2.3. Capacity Building

*In this section, applicants should define approaches to capacity building within the implementation framework set above. Refer to the BCSS [Capacity Building](#) page and describe how capacity building will be undertaken and what efforts will be made to expand sustainability improvements.*

### Capacity Building Checklist

- Discuss how the P&C and Continuous Improvement efforts can be incorporated into a capacity building strategy (e.g., at farm-level, PU level, etc.)
- Indicate the publicly available resources for cotton producers to improve production practices
- How are cotton producers able to access those resources
- Outline a capacity building strategy that indicates target audience, resources potentially needed (e.g., partnerships, regional gap analysis), and projected aims

*Partners and shared learnings from other Better Cotton countries to improve capacity building*

*Existing capacity building efforts that relate to the Better Cotton P&C and that would support*

## 2.4. Chain of Custody and Traceability

### Chain of Custody and Traceability Checklist

- Current and potential market demand for cotton grown in the country/context
- Detailed description of farm to gin to mill process

- The existing conditions to envisage, maintain, and monitor segregation of licensed/certified cotton between farm and gin.
- Existence of online or offline system that allows supply chain actors to report purchases, sales and/or other attributes of bales and intermediary products moving along the supply chain.
- Market dynamics and the relative ease with which Better Cotton members can credibly source Better Cotton from the Partner’s projects.
- The relative ease with which farmers can sell their cotton to gins as licensed cotton.
- Any further development and/or investment is required to better facilitate uptake.
- Existing procedures for supply chain reporting and data exchange between stakeholders.
- Any existing traceability programme and, if not, potential for physical traceability in coming years.
- Cotton inspection practices, storage and transportation methodologies.

## 2.5. Results and Impact

*This section should focus on the strategy to measure and improve the credibility and quality of the implementation and assurance programme in country. Refer to the BCSS [Results and Impact](#) page and identify tools and approach to a robust M&E programme that ensures quality of results indicator data collection.*

### Results and Impact Checklist

- Resources needed to effectively collect credible results indicator data at producer levels
- Opportunities to demonstrate impact and expand outreach programs (e.g., case studies)
- Data Protection requirements/specifications

## Section 3: Country Programme Strategy

*This section should summarize how the direct country BCSS programme will be delivered and set out a clear plan for how start-up and the first period of implementation will take place (at minimum for the first 3 years/ 36 months). This section should be able to be extracted and serve as a stand-alone implementation plan for the applicant country.*

***Describe the envisioned model for BCSS delivery in the country, including the internal organisation structure, national and international partners, their roles and responsibilities.***

### 3.1 Summary Table of Country Programme Strategy

Below is a sample summary table with the types of information that should be included in the final report.

Summary Country Programme Strategy: Table Checklist	
<b>Strategic Partner (SP)</b>	<i>National-level Organisation that will administer BCSS in-country and serve as primary partner with Better Cotton Secretariat</i>
<b>Programme Partner(s)</b>	<i>Organisation(s) that will implement the programme on-the-ground with producers</i>
<b>SP Location</b>	<i>City/country and active regions</i>
<b>Duration covered by initial strategy (months)</b>	<i>X months (at least 36 months)</i>
<b>Annual and total cost (EUR)</b>	<i>Approx. X EUR over the duration of initial strategy; at least 36 months. (Include reference to external budget sources)</i>
<b>Funding Sources /Mechanism</b>	<i>e.g. Name of organisation/grant/donor, government funding type, other named fundraising resources, other'. [Details to be included in the Budget section at the end of this document]</i>
<b>Production Target for Better Cotton (MT)</b>	<i>Include approx. X MT of Better Cotton LINT, with breakdown over the period of programme strategy</i>
<b>Overall Programme Objective(s)</b>	
<b>High-level priority sustainability challenges</b>	<i>e.g. principle areas or specific criteria such as, water use / soil health / decent work.</i>
<b>Main Partners and roles</b>	<i>Cotton ginners: X Y Z</i>
<b>Other stakeholders and roles</b>	<i>Industry associations, other cotton traders and producers</i>
<b>Target Groups (directly affected by the programme)</b>	<i>e.g. smallholders</i>
<b>Final Beneficiaries (those who will benefit in the long term)</b>	<i>Farmers, ginners, local community, xx</i>



<b>Key Risks &amp; Challenges to Implementation</b>	
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### 3.2. Programme Aims, Objectives and Targets

Programme Aims, Objectives and Targets Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the nature of your interest in Better Cotton and why there is interest/need in the country becoming a producer of Better Cotton, explaining how a Better Cotton programme will support final beneficiaries.</li> <li>• Include more information on how the proposed programme structure was developed and what stakeholders were invited to participate in its development</li> <li>• Provide definitions and details of proposed programme aims, objectives and targets and how their progress could be measured</li> </ul>

### 3.4. Better Cotton 2030 Targets

The Better Cotton 2030 Strategy consists of five new impact target areas to measure and report on. These target areas are: climate change mitigation; smallholder livelihoods; women’s empowerment; soil health; pesticide use. Impact targets in each of these areas will provide metrics to ensure greater demonstrable impact and progressive, measurable change at the field level by 2030. These new commitments align with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and build on the agreements reached at COP26 to reach actionable climate mitigation outcomes for cotton farming communities.

***In this section, demonstrate how the programme will work towards these target areas in the proposed cotton producing regions.***

Target area	Better Cotton Impact	Better Cotton Target
<b>Climate change mitigation</b>	By supporting farmers to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions of growing cotton, Better Cotton will be contributing to the solution to the climate crisis in collaboration with other actors in the fashion and textile sector. Mitigating climate change will support farmers in the long term by enabling them to become more resilient, maintain and improve their livelihoods, as well as retain the ability to grow fibre and food for the planet.	Reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions per tonne of Better Cotton lint produced by 50% by 2030, from the 2017 baseline

<b>Smallholder livelihoods</b>	Farmers, farm workers and farming communities, have the knowledge, skills, power and choice to use reliably accessible material and non-material resources to sustain or improve their wellbeing – even in times of shocks, and without harming the current or future wellbeing of others or the environment	TBC 2022
<b>Women’s empowerment</b>	Women farmers and workers can equally participate in and benefit from Better Cotton	1. Increase the proportion of women field staff to 25% and support their empowerment through new initiatives and opportunities  2. TBC 2022

### 3.5. Programme Governance

<b>Proposed Organisational Structure Checklist</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of organisation(s) that will oversee and administer BCSS in-country</li> <li>• Organisation that will serve as Strategic Partner and its qualifications, internal organisational structure</li> <li>• Organisation(s) that may/will serve as Implementing Partners, qualifications and internal organisational structure</li> <li>• Organigram/diagram(s) of internal and external relationships and coordination</li> <li>• National legal/regulatory requirements for registration of organisation and/or Better Cotton operations</li> <li>• Attachments to NCSU Report: (required) SP letter of commitment; letters of interest/ commitment from potential programme partners</li> </ul>

Based on the stakeholder consultations and the preceding stakeholder mapping, this section should identify and include the proposed key stakeholder(s) that will serve as a Strategic Partner and potential Implementing Partners for BCSS implementation. As described in the NCSU Guidance, as a national level organisation, the Strategic Partner shall be the primary partner with Better Cotton Secretariat whilst Implementing Partners may undertake activities closer to the field-level. This section should also describe each Partner’s and other stakeholder’s role vis a vis the BCSS their internal organizational structure (staff, consultants, etc.). Letters of interest and/or commitment that should be secured in earlier steps of the NCSU process must be included as separate attachments to the NCSU Report.

- Key Legal and/or regulatory requirements for in-country registration for operations

- Include information on requirements that Better Cotton and/or the SP must fulfil in order to operate legally within the country.

*Provide an overview of the structure of the proposed strategic partner who will oversee the delivery of the BCSS. It may be useful to provide an organogram indicating the functions relevant to implementing Better Cotton.*

*Include table of key persons for the dedicated in-country Better Cotton team*

### 3.6. Implementation Methodology and Model

*This section should describe the management structure for BCSS delivery and the implementation methodology. (See indicative list of programme activities in Appendix).*

#### Implementation Methodology and Model Checklist

- Description and rationale of implementation approach/method – i.e., how SP will introduce and deliver BCSS to target groups
- Procedures for follow-up, monitoring, and internal/external evaluation of progress
- Processes for farmer-level data collection (on inputs and outputs) required under Results and Impact
- Training needs for partners, ginners, facilitators, producers and related plans
- Assigned of roles, background rationale, and engagement levels of actors and stakeholders (local partner(s), target groups, local authorities, etc.).
- Requirements for Better Cotton implementation (e.g., staffing, consultants, office rental, equipment, materials and supplies to be acquired or rented)

*Describe the nature of your operations as they pertain to how the programme will be implemented including how any partnership will be structured*

### 3.7. Farm-Level Implementation

*This section should set out how the implementation model will be applied at the farm-level to meet the Better Cotton Principles and Criteria.*

#### Farm-level Implementation Checklist

- Farm-level criteria/production criteria for participation
- Proposed organisation of farmer groups (see Appendix A for more information)

- Delivery of assurance and verification systems and implications (e.g. inspection bodies, responsibilities, engagement on non-compliances)
- Training requirements for Better Cotton Principles & Criteria and data collection methods
- Certification and licensing requirements / expectations

### 3.8. Business Model and Financial Plan

#### a. Description of Business Model

*This section should describe the nature and types of funding / income sources that will support the Strategic Partner and the new country's implementation for at least 3 years and projections for the following years. If the SP is an existing entity, its current business model should be described, and any relevant attachments should be included to the Start-up Report. If the SP is an organisation that will be established for the purpose of the BCSS, then requirements for in-country registration should be included. Better Cotton Costs to be accounted for are not only the in-country operations but also the operational costs incurred by the Better Cotton Secretariat.*

#### b. Operating Budget 5-year Projection

*This projection should cover all necessary start-up and implementation costs through year 5. A separate spreadsheet-based detailed breakdown of costs must be provided to Better Cotton. In addition to the spreadsheet with the detailed implementation cost, this section should provide a supplementary narrative of the first 5 years of income / costs / expenses.*

#### Operating Budget Checklist (to also be included as a separate spreadsheet attachment)

- Include a budget table that has the following: total expected costs by years included in initial strategy (a minimum of 5 years); anticipated cost per MT of lint produced within proposed Better Cotton programme; line items for sources of income; balance (total income minus total cost)
- Provide a separate Excel/table document with expected overhead costs by activity, over time
- Descriptions of costs and incomes and indicate status (secure, disbursed, projected, etc.)
- Indication of whether there is a projected balance shortfall or surplus for each year
- How challenges, risks and opportunities impact the budget

### 3.9. Timeline and Geographies of Implementation

#### Timeline Checklist

- Timeline of implementation and assurance activities throughout a single season (with an indication of sowing, harvest, etc.)

- Projections of farmers (and acreage and yield) over number of years included initial strategy
- Timeline and projections by regions of cotton cultivation
- Projections of types of actors and number involved over period of initial strategy

### 3.10. Communication of Activities

*Communication to external partners and Better Cotton Members is critical for the success of Better Cotton and the global uptake of Better Cotton. Better Cotton Secretariat's Communications Team leads global communications to Better Cotton's stakeholders and must approve and sign-off on country-level communications. In this section, include how the country's results and impact may be depicted and communicated to Better Cotton global stakeholders and what domestic stakeholders should be involved in this process.*

#### Communications Messaging Playbook

- Key messages for global/domestic stakeholders regarding cotton production in-country (e.g. "who the [country] farmer is" and description of main challenges/priorities)
- Anticipated questions and answers from Better Cotton Members and/or stakeholders regarding cotton production
- Sample 'story from the field' pitch and/or social media posts
- Any requirements/ restrictions related to domestic communications, e.g. translations, publication limitations etc.

*Summary of intent behind launching Better Cotton and how this would be communicated to local stakeholders and Better Cotton global community.*

### 3.11. Challenges, Risks and Opportunities

*This section should describe in detail risks and opportunities to BCSS implementation within the country (akin to a “Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats” analysis). Special attention must be devoted to national or regional safety/security risks and credibility risks that may threaten the global credibility of the Better Cotton Standard (e.g., physical segregation issues, absent regulatory enforcement related to labour). Additionally, challenges, opportunities and risks related to uptake and/or enrolment in the Better Cotton programme should also be identified (e.g. landscape of existing/ similar standards that are under development).*

#### Challenges, risks, and opportunities Checklist

- Provide analysis of key short- and long-term risks, concerns, and challenges to BCSS implementation, with specific attention to safety/security, credibility of the Better Cotton standard (and its components), implementation, and uptake. Better Cotton
- What issues could affect the sustainability of Better Cotton production once started?
- In relation to each issue identified, what mitigation/prevention strategies can be deployed, and/or what other resources would be required?
- Identify challenges to implementation in-country and potential methods of remediation
- Identify current and future opportunities of a Better Cotton programme in country and how those could help implementation
- Is there any reason for Better Cotton to be concerned about the safety, security and/or freedom of movement of our staff, partners, and/or any other individual involved in the delivery of our programme and services? If yes, please detail.

#### a. Human and Labour Rights

In this section you may elaborate on the specific human rights and labour rights risks that exist in the proposed cotton producing regions and elaborate on the initiatives currently being implemented to mitigate these risks, as well as initiatives being implemented to advance and support cotton farmer and worker rights more generally. Where accredited National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) exist, this should be highlighted, as well as their classification (A, B, or C – according to the Global Alliance of NHRIs).

#### Human and Labour Rights related Risks checklist

- Is there any reason for Better Cotton to be concerned about other significant and systemic human rights violations which could interfere with the integrity and feasibility of our mission? If yes, please detail.

- In what areas do you see the greatest potential for improvement on labour issues in cotton production?
- What labour issues in cotton production do you consider would require the greatest effort to address and why?
- On what labour issues do you think Better Cotton can have the greatest impact or influence on?

## Appendix

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### Appendix A – Glossary of Terms

**Applicant.** Interested party from a country where Better Cotton does not currently operate Better Cotton licensing programme. In the NCSU process flow, the Applicant is the external liaison with Better Cotton who endeavours to initiate Better Cotton licensing within the prospective country.

**Better Cotton Secretariat.** The Better Cotton Secretariat, referred to as Better Cotton or the Secretariat, is headquartered in Geneva and has a satellite office in London. It has programme offices in countries where licencing of Better Cotton is directly implemented. In the NCSU process, Better Cotton may appoint a staff Lead and/or group to liaise directly with the Applicant.

**Better Cotton Council.** An elected board comprised of 12 seats representing different Better Cotton membership categories. The Better Cotton Council oversees Better Cotton’s strategic direction and ensures its successful fulfilment of the Better Cotton mission.

**Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS).** The BCSS is a holistic approach to sustainable cotton production that is comprised of 6 elements: Principles & Criteria; Capacity Building; Assurance; Chain of Custody; Claims Framework; and Results and Impact. These elements work together and support the credibility of Better Cotton and Better Cotton. The system is designed to ensure the exchange of good practices, and to encourage the scaling up of collective action to establish Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity. More information can be found here: <https://bettercotton.org/what-we-do/>

**Continuous Improvement.** A systematic process of continuously improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of existing measures.

**Direct Country Programme.** Relevant for prospective countries where there is no national cotton sustainability standard. The direct country process refers to the initiation and launch of Better Cotton licensing activities overseen and administered by the Better Cotton Secretariat or a Strategic Partner.

**External Assessments.** External assessments are required under the BCSS and allow for the identification of corrective actions and improvement recommendations, supporting Producer Units and farmers to remediate nonconformities and identify focus areas for their Continuous Improvement Plan. There are two types of external assessments: 1) Second Party Credibility Checks (2PCCs) implemented by Better Cotton or IPs; and 2) Third Party Verifications (3PVs) conducted by independent consultants/auditors.

**Field Facilitator.** Field Facilitators play an important role in enabling Learning Groups and Medium Farms to continuously improve by providing ongoing support during the season. They are selected, trained, and typically paid by Implementing Partners. The role requires appropriate facilitation skills to effectively train farmers and promote the uptake of sustainable practices. An optimal ratio is a maximum of 10 Learning Groups per Facilitator (350 farmers) in the context of smallholders, though this number largely depends on existing local realities.

**Programme Partner (PP).** An organisation responsible for creating an enabling environment in a given project area(s) so that farmers can participate in the Better Cotton Standard System. These Partners implement capacity-building and training based on the Better Cotton Production Principles



and Criteria and collect data at field level. IPs must undergo an SP or Better Cotton endorsement process.

**Programme Partnership Agreement (PPA).** Agreement between Better Cotton and endorsed PPs that details the nature of both Better Cotton's and the PP's roles and responsibilities to implement the BCSS within the country programme.

**New Country Programme Start-Up (NCSU).** Refers to the entire to initiate Better Cotton licensing within a prospective country.

**New Country Start-Up Report.** The NCSU Report provides a thorough and detailed review of the Applicant's project plan over a 5-year period.

**Smallholder farms:** Farmers who are not structurally dependent on permanent hired labour, and whose farm size does not exceed 20ha of cotton. (Licencing activities done at PU level). There are typically between 3,500 to 4,000 farmers per Producer Unit. Each smallholder PU is further into Learning Groups (LGs) with approximately 35 farmers plus Lead Farmer.

**Medium Farms:** Farmers who are structurally dependent on permanent hired labour, and whose farm size is between 20 to 200ha of cotton. (Licencing activities done at PU level). There are typically 100 farmers per Producer Unit.

**Large Farms:** Farmers who are structurally dependent on permanent hired labour, and whose farm size is above 200ha of cotton. (Licensing activities done at individual level). Large Farms typically participate individually or under some sort of group assurance model.

**Strategic Partner (SP).** A National-level or international organisation responsible for the coordination and implementation of the Better Cotton Standard System, or a Better Cotton-recognised Standard System, in a given country or region. SPs take significant leadership for Better Cotton in country(ies) where they have been mandated by Better Cotton, which may include overseeing Programme Partners and other organisations.

**Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA).** Agreement between the Better Cotton Secretariat and the SP to undertake the oversight, administration, execution of the Better Cotton licensing activities, either via the direct country process or benchmarking process. The SPA requires approval of the Better Cotton Council.

## Appendix B – Indicative Listing of Implementation Activities

