Request for Proposals - Consultancy
ATLA Consultant
Applications deadline: 01 September 2020

RFP n#: 2020-09-S&A-ATLA
Location: Home office
Start date: 30 September 2020
End date: 15 July 2022

BCI key contact: Gregory Jean
   Standard and Assurance
   gregory.jean@bettercotton.org

All applications must be sent by email, to BCI’s key contact, with the subject header: “Application RFP ATLA- RFP n# 2020-09-S&A-ATLA”.

Questions, requests and applications sent after the deadline (01 September 2020) will not be considered.

Description

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) is a multi-stakeholder initiative and the largest cotton sustainability programme in the world. BCI and its Partners currently support over 2.3 million farmers in 23 countries in adopting more sustainable agricultural practices. Thanks to these efforts, Better Cotton accounts for around 22% of global cotton production. BCI works closely with stakeholders all the way from farms to fashion brands and civil society organisations, driving the cotton sector toward sustainability.

The Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS) is at the heart of BCI’s approach and includes six main components: the Better Cotton Principles & Criteria, assurance programme, capacity building, chain of custody, monitoring and evaluation, and the Claims Framework.

The Better Cotton Principles and Criteria lay out the global definition of Better Cotton, across seven principles. They ensure that Better Cotton meets clearly defined requirements for pesticide use, water management, biodiversity, soil health, fibre quality, decent work, and management systems.

The Better Cotton programme is delivered through a network of more than 70 ‘Implementing Partners’, often local NGOs or cotton supply chain partners who recruit and train field staff and organise and work with farmers on the ground. Once farmers have demonstrated compliance with the Better Cotton Principles & Criteria, licenses to sell Better Cotton are granted at the ‘Producer Unit’ level for Smallholder and Medium Farms and for each Large Farm individually.

Looking ahead, BCI is exploring how a landscape or jurisdictional approach – managing resources at a larger scale that extends ‘beyond the farm gate’ – can help us achieve better results and system efficiencies. As part of this work, we have been awarded a multi-year grant from the ISEAL Alliance for the Adaptation to Landscape Approach (ATLA) project. This initiative will explore how BCI’s current systems and standards could be adapted to a landscape or jurisdictional approach.

BCI is seeking proposals from skilled individuals or organisations interested in supporting BCI in this exciting project and helping to shape the adaptation of the Better Cotton Standard System to landscape approach.
About the ATLA project

The Global Canopy Programme defines a landscape approach as follows:

‘A landscape approach aims to ensure the realisation of local level needs and action (i.e. the interests of different stakeholders within the landscape), while also considering goals and outcomes important to stakeholders outside the landscape, such as national governments or the international community. A landscape approach may be undertaken by one or more stakeholders who engage in actions independently, or by multiple actors as part of a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process. This multi-stakeholder process is referred to as integrated landscape management.’

A jurisdictional approach is a specific variation on this concept, which: ‘uses government administrative boundaries, primarily subnational, to define the scope of action and involvement of stakeholders rather than social (e.g. indigenous community) or environmental (e.g. ecosystems, watershed) boundaries.’

Although some elements of the BCI system are already aligned with a landscape approach, there is a need for a comprehensive review to understand how the system, or relevant parts of the system could be further adapted to take a landscape approach – and what this would mean for BCI and our stakeholders in terms of opportunities, investment, and benefits.

The ATLA (Adaptation to Landscape Approach) is a two-year project that seeks to explore this adaptation process through the development of a strategic roadmap and set of recommendations. This project will notably be supported by two pilot projects, summarised below:

- In Turkey, BCI will build on a water stewardship project that WWF Turkey has been implementing in the Büyük Menderes basin to field test BCI’s landscape approach. This includes GIS based spatial analysis, training implementers and farmers on new landscape approach and testing a set of landscape-level indicators.

- In Pakistan, the focus is on assessing the extent to which the BCSS can become embedded within the Pakistan State System, engaging with relevant stakeholders through a jurisdictional approach.

The final strategy and recommendations developed through the ATLA will help BCI identify opportunities to evolve its approach and management systems to better support a landscape or jurisdictional approach in key areas where this approach can deliver the most value.

The full brief of the ATLA project can be found in Annex 1.

Role of the Consultant:

The Consultant will play a critical role in successful delivery of the ATLA project. The Consultant’s work will be divided between development of a global strategy/ recommendations and support for the two pilot application projects.

This means that although the Terms of Reference for the Consultant will stretch over a two year period, the work will be carried out in discrete phases, with the greatest time investment

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2 Ibid.
at the start of the project to define the global strategy development and at the end of the project with the delivery of a formal report that includes strategic recommendations on system development for coming years. Each of these elements is explained in more detail below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Estimated timeline</th>
<th>Estimated work days</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global strategy development</td>
<td>October – January 2020</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support to pilot adaptation projects in design and planning</td>
<td>November 2020 – February 2021</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of pilot project findings and progress</td>
<td>November 2021 – February 2022</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalise strategy and recommendations incorporating insights from pilot applications</td>
<td>March-May 2022</td>
<td>10</td>
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With support of the BCI Standards Manager, the Consultant will carry out the following activities:

1. **Global strategy development: Develop a global strategy, roadmap, and set of recommendations to adapt the Better Cotton Standard System’s components, tools and approaches to landscape/jurisdictional approach**

The Consultant will develop an initial strategy, roadmap, and set of recommendations based on desktop research and interviews with selected stakeholders. This is expected to include the following elements:

A. Background research:

- Interviews with relevant stakeholders, including internal BCI teams such as Standards and Assurance (S&A), Implementation teams (global and country level), Monitoring & Evaluation team, and BCI’s Chief Operating and Executive Officers, etc.
- Desktop research on current Better Cotton Standard System components including the Better Cotton Theory of Change, Principles & Criteria, M&E approach, and assurance system – to understand current practices and identify priority opportunities for adaptation to a landscape approach.
- Desktop research/ selected interviews with other standard/ certification system or best practice approaches to landscape or jurisdictional management.
- Reviewing relevant sections of the BCI 2030 strategy and contributing to revisions/ additions as appropriate to ensure alignment between BCI’s strategy and key recommendations.
- Targeted review of other ongoing strategic workstreams at BCI that may be applicable or may inform a landscape approach (i.e. BCI’s national embedding strategy, work on climate change strategy, common farm level impact metrics, BCI’s emerging thinking about post 2030 “exit strategy”, etc).
- Participate with the S&A team in designing the roadmap for next Better Cotton Principles and Criteria revision process by exploring opportunity to adapt specific principles or Indicators to reach beyond the Producer Unit and employ a landscape approach.
B. Development of the initial report including strategy, roadmap, and recommendations:

- This report will summarise the findings of the research phase and include initial strategic recommendations on how BCI should evolve its standard system further towards a landscape approach in the coming years.

- The recommendations should take into account guidance from ISEAL which focuses on the following drivers/entry points of a landscape/jurisdictional approach:
  
  - Ability from BCI to bring the market function/supply chain approach and bring the possibility of embedding an existing ‘supply chain’ approaches within jurisdictional or landscape approaches.
  
  - Land Use planning and landscape connectivity and BCI’s national embedding strategy(ies).
  
  - Government and local stakeholder mobilization
  
  - Producer support at scale through capacity-building
  
  - Verification and monitoring
  
  - Leverage climate funding and sustainable finance

- The initial report should identify and address key implications on other project/workstreams.

- The initial report will also explain how the pilots will serve to test recommendations and confirm assumptions on options to adapt system components over the project duration.

2. Support pilot adaptation projects in design and planning

The Consultant will support the pilot project teams in developing pilot approach documents and workplan, including objectives, outputs and outcomes in a way that is relevant to the BCI overall approach presented in the initial report. This will include:

- Supporting the Turkey pilot project team to review and discuss the project approach, objectives, and detailed workplan tailored around the Buyuk Menders Basin project in Turkey.

- TBC - One field visit to support the Turkey pilot adaptation team in the planning phase for the pilot project [depending on COVID-19 travel restrictions + Consultant’s own ability/desire to travel – otherwise video meetings can be carried out instead].

- Supporting the Pakistan country team in developing and reviewing the objectives, approach, and workplan (including the stakeholder engagement strategy) as part of the regional jurisdiction approach in Pakistan/ Punjab.

- Follow the implementation of the pilot project workplans in line with recommendations embedded in the initial strategic report.

- Highlight and discuss lessons learnt from the pilots through final review meetings with both project teams.

3. Review pilot project findings

- Conduct consultation with both pilot project teams to understand challenges met and collect suggestion for system adaptation.

- Review activity reports from both pilot projects in light of recommendations embedded in the initial strategic report.
4. **Finalise global strategy, incorporating insights from pilot applications**

- The Consultant will incorporate lessons learned from the pilot phase into the initial strategic report and will amend – as necessary – the strategic recommendations and roadmap based on experiences from the pilots.

- The final report will include the following elements:
  
  a. Strategic recommendations on how BCSS components should be adapted towards a landscape/jurisdictional approach; addressing the dimensions below:
     
     - Ability from BCI to bring the market function/supply chain approach
     - Land Use planning and landscape connectivity
     - Government and local stakeholder mobilization and BCI’s national embedding strategy(ies).
     - Producer support at scale through capacity-building
     - Verification and monitoring
     - Leverage climate funding and sustainable finance

  b. An assessment of the magnitude of changes and resource implications for the adaptations noted above

  c. A 5 to 10 year roadmap setting out how BCI should pursue these strategic recommendations to adapt the Better Cotton Standard System including prioritization and practical considerations, as well as opportunities for a landscape approach to enable a post 2030 exit strategy.

The final recommendations and roadmap will be reviewed by senior BCI leadership and discussed with the BCI Council in Q3 2022.

**Deliverables**

1. An initial strategic report assessing feasibility and identifying key opportunities to adapt the BCSS to a landscape/jurisdictional approach

2. Feedback and suggested revisions to project approach, objectives, and activity plans for both pilot adaptation projects (Pakistan and Turkey)

3. Final strategic report, recommendations, and roadmap, integrating lessons learnt from the pilot projects

**High-level Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01 September 2020</td>
<td>Applications deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>01 September to 01 October 2020</td>
<td>Applications review &amp; shortlisting / Interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>By 01 October 2020</td>
<td>The successful applicant will be notified</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 October 2020</td>
<td>Expected start of the consultancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>By 01 February 2021</td>
<td>Deliverable I</td>
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<tr>
<td>By 01 March 2021</td>
<td>Deliverable II</td>
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<tr>
<td>By June 2022</td>
<td>Deliverable III</td>
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Consultant qualifications

The Consultant should have strong familiarity with standard or certification systems (especially in agriculture) and good knowledge of concrete landscape or jurisdictional approaches, appropriate analytical and writing skills, and a demonstrated ability to deliver projects on time and within budget.

Provided it is safe and permitted to travel, the Consultant may carry out one site visit to Turkey to support the pilot project team in planning. BCI will reimburse the Consultant for all pre-approved travel expenses reasonably incurred in connection with the performance of duties.

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.

Proposals

To apply, please submit to tender@bettercotton.org by 01 September 2020:

- cover letter, highlighting relevant experience
- a formal project proposal describing how you will approach this project
- CVs of the Consultant and any additional team members proposed