

# BCI Principles & Criteria: Revision Process

## Reasons for revising the Principle & Criteria

BCI is committed to reviewing the Better Cotton Standard at least once every 5 years. This is a unique opportunity to integrate feedback from all of our various stakeholders into the Standard. Importantly, the process will maintain the Better Cotton Standard's relevance to sustainability challenges in the cotton sector. The revision process gives opportunities to the general public and membership to contribute to the way in which the Better Cotton Standard evolves.

As an ISEAL Full Member, BCI also follows the ISEAL Code for Setting Social and Environmental Standards, ensuring that the Standard is reviewed regularly and following recognised good practices.

## Stakeholders involved

The revision of the Standard is led by the BCI Standard and Assurance team, supported by a Standard Revision Committee.

The process affects various stakeholders who are part of the BCI system implementation and use the P&C and related documents to implement more sustainable farming practices.

**Farmers:** Smallholders, Medium Farms and Large Farms define their continuous improvement plan and undertake annual self-assessment on BCI minimum and improvement requirements. They are therefore directly concerned by any change brought to the P&C.

**Implementing Partners:** They enable cotton farmers to grow Better Cotton by supporting Producer Units in conducting their activities, carrying out Second Party Credibility Checks on Producers Units (including the preparation of corrective actions), and sharing best practices with BCI, also in line with the P&C.

**Country Managers/Strategic Partners:** They are the front-line implementers of BCI systems. They are not only in charge of carrying out Second Party Credibility Checks, but they also review Producer Unit self-assessment, support 3rd party verification process and prepare corrective action plans for Implementing Partners/Producer Units. Their work will be significantly impacted by any change to the P&C.

**Independent Verifiers:** It is part of their duty to independently assess a Producer Unit or Large Farm's performance against BCI requirements. They will have to make adjustments to their verification processes according to any new version of the P&C.

**BCI Members and other stakeholders:** The P&C are the basis of the BCI sustainability production system, and due to this, their revision and the changes they bring have a significant

impact on this group of advocates. Members will be sensitive to the way standards are revised, ensuring sustainability objectives are maintained.

## Revision Process

### Stakeholder consultation

Input into the review of the P&C is pro-actively sought after by BCI. All in all, up to two rounds of stakeholder consultations are organised in order to allow all interested and impacted parties to provide their comments and contribute to the process. Participants have the opportunity to provide their input through an online survey.

### Standard Setting and Revision Committee

The Standard Setting and Revision Committee (SSRC) supports the revision of the P&C by discussing modalities and intensity of changes to be brought to P&C and prepare drafts for stakeholder consultations.

Members of the Committee meet several times during the course of the process to offer technical advice and expertise towards the revision of the Standard. They have the opportunity to bring perspectives from their respective groups and stakeholders, evaluate impacts on affected stakeholders and decide on the degree of change to be incorporated in the new standard. Ultimately, the Committee is in charge of deciding when the final draft of the P&C is ready for review and approval by the BCI Council.

### Council Approval

The BCI Council oversees the Committee. It comprises **10 members** who bring relevant expertise. It consists of the following:

- At least one representative from each membership category: the opportunity to apply has been given to all BCI Members;
- One Council member;
- A designated project manager from BCI.

The BCI Council has the authority in approving the final draft of the revised P&C. The Council confirms that the process followed by the Standard Revision Committee is in line with BCI's Standard review process. The Council ultimately had the authority to approve the content submitted, following the two rounds of stakeholder consultation.

### Pilot Projects

The Standard Setting and Revision Committee proposes entirely new environmental or social safeguards to be integrated into the P&C. Once approved by the council, some are experimented through Pilot Projects, which serve to assess interpretation, local relevancy and feasibility of implementation for further adjustment.

### Transition Period

Once the revisions to the P&C are approved, a transition period is defined for those implementing the Standard.