

# Summary Report

## BCI's 2021 Virtual Implementing Partner Meeting

18, 19, 27, 28 January 2021

Over four virtual sessions in January, the Better Cotton Initiative hosted a total of 220 participants from 23 countries, including 102 Partners delegates (Implementing, Knowledge and Strategic), 70 BCI staff and 25 thematic experts. Around 60 different organisations from the public and private sector attended the event. Live interpretation was provided in French, Portuguese and Mandarin.

This BCI family gathered to discuss the topic of Climate Change and Cotton Growing; as well as how BCI can strengthen its Capacity Building activities in the field in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The meeting was a great success; and all participants welcomed this unique opportunity to share across teams, regions, countries, and organisations. This report offers an overview of key discussions held over the three-day event.

### Opening on Climate Change & Cotton

Hannah Pathak – Forum for the Future & Alastair

Baglee – Acclimatise (Willis Towers Watson)



After a warm welcome from Angela Russ, our Implementation Sr. Manager, the first session started with and insight into Climate Change impacts on cotton growing lands from Forum for the Future and Acclimatise, two partners engaged with BCI in the Cotton 2040 project.

Hannah and Alastair dove into how this project sought to create a resilient cotton industry in turbulent times. Among other workstreams, the Global Climate Risk Mapping tool is an innovative approach to rapidly identify climate

hazards in cotton production globally. This would include the use of analytics to reveal hazards for present-day (2000-2019) and future projection (2040), as well as a snapshot of which cotton growing regions in the world will experience the greatest and most profound changes in the climate and other climate-related hazards.

Overall, increasing the cotton industry's resilience to climate change would require :

- Raising awareness on risks;
- Building an understanding of the implications of these risks;
- Increasing understanding of solutions to reduce vulnerability.

[Link to the presentation](#)

[Learn more about the Cotton 2040 Project](#)

### Understanding Climate Change

Participants then got the opportunity to learn more about linkages of Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) and Cotton in three different breakouts led by Partner organisations.

#### Climate Smart Agriculture & Agri-innovation

Anukool Nagi & Prashant Pastore – Solidaridad



As CSA is gaining pace, more agri-innovation start-up ventures are looking at modernising agriculture by bringing in applications in precision agriculture, traceability, creation of digital platforms and natural resource management.

[Presentation Link](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)



### BCI's Principles & Climate Change

Jens Soth & Stefanie Kaegi – Helvetas

Let's take a deep dive into BCI's Principles & Criteria to understand how Climate Change is a cross-cutting thematic and that many practices are already been implemented at field-level.

[Presentation Link](#)

[Notes and Q&A](#)

[Padlet Link](#)

### Climate Smart Agriculture at Community Level

Asad Imran – WWF Pakistan

Covering mitigation and adaptation activities whilst sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes.



[Presentation Link Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3](#)

[Notes and Q&A](#)

## BCI's Plans on Climate Change

Gregory Jean – BCI Standard Manager

Marie Le Guillouzic – BCI Standard & Learning Snr. Officer

Lena Staafgard – BCI COO

BCI first offered an overview of projects in the pipeline (Cotton2040 Working Group, ATLA project on the Landscape Approach, Delta Project, Gold Standard Project, GHG calculator with Quantis) before diving into its future plans for [a 5-years Climate Change Strategy](#), focusing on 5 key components:

- **Standards Revision** (*carbon sequestration, community resilience, energy use, innovation & management*)
- **Capacity Building** (*raising awareness, adapting to geographical specificities, Farmer-centric approach, promoting collective action*)

- **Partnerships** (*co-projects, funding opportunities, fellow VSSs*)
- **Research** (*climate-smart best practices in cotton, developing tools*)
- **Organisational level** (*staff awareness, travel policies, waste policies*)

During an interactive session, participants got to provide their feedback on where climate change should be considered within BCI's workstreams, effects in the field on cotton production and cotton communities, and resilience techniques already being used.

Finally, an overview of where Climate Change sits in [BCI's 2030 Strategy](#) was provided by our COO, Lena Staafgard:

- In our **Executive Summary**, we acknowledge projections of the most pressing challenges for the cotton sector and farmers; and our first priorities are to build farm-level resilience in the face of climate change and support farmers to adapt, whilst also focusing on improving farmer livelihoods.
- In our **Vision & Mission**, we explicitly mention that cotton farmers should become resilient to unpredictable climate conditions.
- Our **Core Strategy** is built around adaptation to climate change through a farmer-centric approach.
- In our **Standard Evolution**, we will seek to integrate this mitigation and adaptation agenda & sensitivity around farmer and worker perception of climate change challenges & landscape approach to include consideration of the impact of cotton growing beyond farm boundaries.
- In our **Capacity Building** section, we will put greater emphasis on climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies as well as our partnership model (strengthening support for our IPs, improving market access mechanisms for the cotton produced, access to climate finance).

[Link to the presentation](#)

Interactive Consultation [Part 1](#) [Part 2](#) and [Part 3](#)

## An insight from the Rainforest Alliance

Abdul-Razak Saeed & Abraham Kelvin Nartey



The second day was opened by Emma Dennis, our Sr. Manager on Sustainable Agricultural Practices; after which our fellow ISEAL member, Rainforest Alliance, held an exciting presentation on their Climate Change Work, including their geographic area of focus, their approaches for training and supporting farmers on CSA, and their monitoring outcomes.

[Link to the presentation](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

## IP Showcase of Best Practices Climate Change Resilience

Eight Implementing Partners (IPs) then presented on their field best practices on Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation in eight different breakout sessions.

### Agroforestry & Climate Change

SWRDO – Pakistan

[Presentation Link](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Adapting to Climate Change’s new weather

Cotton Connect – China

[Presentation Link](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Adapting to Climate Change

Lupin Foundation – India

[Presentation Link](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Intercropping: A Climate-resilient Approach

REEDS – Pakistan

[Presentation Link](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Soil Health & Climate Change

CABI – Pakistan

[Presentation Link](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Mulching – A Soil Moisture Conservation Practice to fight Climate Change

K.K.Fibers – India

[Presentation Link](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Tree Plantation Drive

Lok Sanjh Foundation – Pakistan

[Presentation Link](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Collective Adaptation Action in times of Flooding

Songzi – China

[Presentation Link](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

Each time, IPs presented their field partners, beneficiaries, methodology, lessons learnt, replicability potential and support needed from BCI. We thank and congratulate our IPs for sharing their best practices and for their continuous engagement in the BCI programme.

## Financing Climate Action

Sandra Fong – BCI Grant & Fundraising Coordinator

Yasmin Zanini – BCI Grants Officer

The day ended with a brief session from our Fundraising team on how to access funding for climate projects, with a deep dive into grant applications. The session focused on areas of interest for funding climate change projects, how to find grants, and some tips for grant research and application. Additionally, a list of donors funding climate change actions was also provided, to assist IPs in identifying potential

donors that they can monitor and check which best fits their needs.

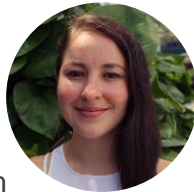
[Link to the presentation](#)

[Notes and Q&A](#)

[Prospective Donors List for Funding Climate Change Action](#)

## An insight from the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN)

Catalina Mora



After a dynamic welcome from Lena Staafgard, our COO, on the third day, yet another ISEAL member, SAN, offered a deep dive into their CSA practices at field level.

SAN's outcome-based approaches are aiming for transition towards CSA practices all the while seeking to define priorities and paths of action in partnership with agricultural producers. Their sound indicator framework looks at continuous improvement, flexibility, shared learning and practical solutions.

[Link to the presentation](#)

## Going in-depth on Climate Change practices

Right after a quick interactive session with quizzes, participants then split into four breakouts to learn more about the interlinkages of Climate Change mitigation & adaptation best practices with thematic topics of the BCI Principles & Criteria.

### Restoring Degraded Areas to fight Climate Change

*Ishan Agarwal & Subrata Singh – Foundation for Ecological Security (FES)*



Looking at our processes for facilitating landscape level eco-restoration which requires planning at scale and collective action by communities.

[Presentations: Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Water, Climate & the Landscape Approach

*Jens Soth & Stefanie Kaegi – Helvetas*  
*Mark Dent – AWS*



Introduction to the landscape approach and the benefit of collective mapping with farmers group, collecting example from water stewardship and ranking the measures to identify the most relevant practices.

[Presentation Link](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Soil Health & Climate Change

*Ronald Vargas – FAO Global Soil Partnership*



The RECSOIL programme is a promising GHG offsetting option to decarbonise the economy, based on the implementation of sustainable soil management practices (soil organic carbon-centered) on a large scale.

[Presentation Link Part 1 and Part 2](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

## Pesticides Restriction & Climate Change

Stephanie Williamson & Rajan Bhopal – PAN-UK

Covering managing cotton pests, diseases and weeds without increasing reliance on pesticides, including cultural methods, agroecological principles and the use of food sprays to attract beneficial insects.



[Presentation Link](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

A warm thank you to all topic experts for sharing their knowledge within the BCI community of practice.

## Gender & Climate Change

Aurelie Ceinos, Jo Howarth & Aqsa Khan – CARE International, FCDO WOW Partnership



Narjis Ashfaq – SWRDO Pakistan

CARE International, CARE Pakistan and Sangtani Women Rural Development Organization (SWRDO) hosted a session on the importance of gender considerations in our efforts to combat climate change.

- CARE first delivered a learning session on essential gender mainstreaming concepts, highlighting the **double injustice of climate change and gender inequality**. We discussed six key gender actions to consider in adaptation projects and programmes, such as integrating gender training into projects.
- SWRDO then took participants to the field with an example of how their agroforestry project **leverages the role of women in cotton to mitigate climate change**.

- CARE Pakistan shared how they worked with the National Disaster Management Authority to ensure that their action plans reflect the importance of Gender in Emergencies. As **women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate disasters**, gender considerations are critical to our efforts to adapt to our changing world. Specific examples include ensuring that food and aid distribution centres consider safety and establishing 'gender task forces'.

[Link to CARE's presentation](#)  
[Link to SWRDO's presentation](#)  
[Notes and Q&A](#)

## Commitments to Action

Each participant was then called upon to commit on one action s/he would like to complete in the 2021/22 season, based on identified challenges and solutions from the previous sessions. We were excited to see so many strong commitments covering the various topics of Collective Action, Gender, Fundraising, Soil Health, Water Stewardship, Pesticides Use and Biodiversity. Lena Staafgard applauded these commitments while closing the day and the topic of Climate Change.

[Commitments to Action on Climate Change](#)

## Opening the day on covid-19 adaptations

Alan McClay – BCI CEO  
Graham Buford – BCI Capacity Building Manager

The last day of the event was opened by Alan McClay who congratulated IPs on their efforts and continuous work throughout the difficult year of 2020. He also highlighted three key themes of the 2030 Strategy: IP performance and support, a greater focus on Decent Work and the need to

balance scale and impact during the lifetime of the Strategy.

Graham Bruford then held an open discussion on working under the pandemic situation. Points of the discussion included challenges, best achievements, opportunities, adaptation measures, effectively focusing on field staff and farmers' learning, and on how BCI could support its IPs in the best way possible.

[Link to the Consultation Summary](#)

## IP Showcase of Best Practices Pandemic adaptation

Four IPs then presented their best practices on training and knowledge dissemination.

### Ensuring Cascading Knowledge

*Arvind – India*

[Presentation Link](#)

[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Virtual capacity building of IP Staff, Lead Farmers & Farmers

*REEDS – Pakistan*

[Presentation Link](#)

[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Village-level public Address Systems

*Vardhman Textiles – India*

[Presentation Link](#)

[Notes and Q&A](#)

### Giving Full Play to the Role of Field Facilitators

*Huangmei Huinong – China*

[Presentation Link](#)

## Sharing with the Pakistan Team

Mahum Naseer – Pakistan BCI  
Programme Officer



Mahum Nasser held a very positive and encouraging presentation on the behalf of the Pakistan team on how they have themselves managed to adapt to the pandemic situation. This included the overall mobility of staff and accessibility to the field, managing licensing agreements for BCI Farmers as well as Field Data Collection and Compliance.

[Link to the presentation](#)

A big congratulation to all our Country-level staff for all their efforts!

## Field Innovation Contest

It was then time for everyone to vote for their favourite field innovations, submitted by 11 IPs from 6 different BCI regions. This resulted in a rich variety of different practices.

We are happy to announce the three winners:

1. *WWF-Turkey* for their Call Centre
2. *WWF-Pakistan* for their Empowering Disadvantaged Groups practice
3. *Ambuja Cement Foundation – India* for their Decent Work Animation Videos

A big congratulation to the winners, as well as to all 11 who submitted an innovation!

[Link to Field Innovations](#)

[Link to the voting results](#)

## Our Commitments for the Next IP Meeting

Through an evaluation feedback, we gathered participants' opinion to help us improve this BCI family event. It was pleasing to note that all of the sessions of this current meeting received a high value rating and that participants felt the atmosphere was positive. Many participants also reported multiple learnings on the different topics covered which was good to see.

Building on this feedback, our commitments for the next IP Meeting are the following:

- We will reach out to IPs and BCI staff to enquire about whether we should hold a **Virtual event in 2022 or an in-person meeting in 2023**, as the evaluation responses indicated a fairly even split between the two options.
- If we hold a Virtual Meeting, we will certainly consider how best to improve participants' experience of the meeting platform, as we understand there were significant challenges for some participants which will need to be overcome.
- If we have an in-person meeting, we will promote a format **more focused on the Community of Practice**. In this regard, we will include more exchange sessions such as games, country stands and breakouts. We will reduce the number of presentations and include visual material when possible (videos, pictures, charts). We wish to take the participants on a learning journey, by having smaller groups going into more connected and meaningful conversations.
- We are also investigating the option of holding it in **a BCI cotton growing country**.
- We are considering inviting potential donors and government representatives to a future in-person IP Meeting for them to see the various progress made at field level; highlight potential funding opportunities and support national embedding efforts.

- Whether Virtual or in-person, we will have **strong take-away messages** from each session.
- The focus topic of the next event is yet to be decided as feedback from participants indicated the two most popular topics were **Decent Work** and **Soil Health**.
- We plan to select best practices that go beyond the stage of only "awareness raising" so as to highlight the potential differences in terms of practices between IPs who have been with BCI for the past 10 years (more advanced practices) and new IPs.
- At the same time, we will keep reaching out to involve **thematic experts** so that they can connect with IPs and deepen their knowledge. Building on the gender and climate change session at this meeting, we will be **putting more emphasis on gender** throughout the event.

Review the Participants' Feedback:

- [Mentimeter Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3](#)
- [Analysis](#)

## Closing the 2021 IP Meeting

Isabelle Roger – BCI Council Member (Solidaridad)



The IP Meeting was closed by Isabelle Roger, our BCI Council member from Solidaridad, who congratulated everyone for their commitments and emphasised on the Climate priority for BCI as an organisation.

A big thank you on the behalf of the organisation team to those of you who contributed to the event, including BCI staff, our IPs, external experts from partner organisations and interpreters.

In case of any question or comment, please contact a member of the BCI organisation team:

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## Additional Links

- [Agenda](#)
- [List of Participants](#)

**Thank you all for taking part in once another inspiring and fruitful meeting with us!**