



FACTSHEET

PAK

2014

## Market Transformation Initiative

### Better Cotton Farmer Support Programme



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**Donor:** Better Cotton Fast Track Fund (BCFTF)

**Duration:** January 2010 – December 2014

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) is a collaborative response to the need to tackle environmental and social challenges associated with cotton production, and to enable change towards a sustainable future. WWF believes that the strong link between markets and cotton farmers is the key to the success of BCI.

WWF-Pakistan, through its Sustainable Agriculture Programme, implements projects to contribute to WWF's global Market Transformation Initiatives to make commodities' cultivation part of a sustainable industry. The project works with partners to help farmers grow Better Cotton and improve their profitability, reduce the use of pesticides, manage water usage, and improve soil health and the welfare of farm workers. The product, Better Cotton, represents a new globally recognized benchmark for cotton which is sustainably produced. By participating in the Better Cotton Fast Track Fund (BCFTF), leading brands and retailers are supporting the initiative that provides farmers with the tools and know-how to improve farming practices.

#### Specific Objectives

1. Small and large-scale farmers involved in project activities apply Better Management Practices (BMPs) according to the BCI production principles and criteria through a participatory approach to improve soil health and biodiversity.
2. Implementation of BCI Decent Work criteria in the overall cotton production system for farmers and farm workers in target areas.
3. A sustainable mechanism is in place to facilitate and encourage



uptake and widespread dissemination of BCI production principles and Decent Work criteria is supported by a farmer self-assessment mechanism.

4. A farmer self-assessment mechanism is in place in accordance with BCI principles and criteria.
5. An effective system is in place for the procurement of BMP cotton seed supported by creating a local, national and international enabling environment through public-private partnerships.

## Brief Description

In January 2010, as an implementing partner of BCI, WWF-Pakistan initiated the Better Cotton Farmer Support Programme in Rahim Yar Khan district, Punjab; Ghotki and Sukkur, Sindh; and later in Jhang. The project was started with an aim to involve 83,000 small and large-scale farmers in effective implementation of BCI production principles and Decent Work, which involves opportunities for work that are productive and deliver fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

In 2013, the organization facilitated more than 19,000 smallholders and 150 large farmers in the project area to implement the Better Cotton System (BCS) over an area of 91,000 hectares of commercial cotton cultivation in Rahim Yar Khan. These farmers made better crop management decisions which resulted in a reduction of 11 per cent in irrigation water usage, 31 per cent reduction in pesticide usage and 33 per cent reduction in synthetic fertilizers usage, without affecting yield. This resulted in 14 per cent net economic benefits for the better cotton farmers with total production of 41,600 Better Cotton bales by BCI designated ginners. A large quantity was procured by local suppliers of Levi Strauss & Co, IKEA and other international brands.

### Purpose:

100% compliance to BCI production principles and criteria to improve sustainability of cotton production, resulting in substantial benefits for people, the environment and the cotton sector.



## Objective

To test the Better Cotton System in Pakistan to achieve BCI long term objectives focusing on:




- Implementation of BCI production principles and criteria through a participatory approach to improve soil health and biodiversity.
- Implementation of BCI Decent Work criteria in the overall cotton production system for farmers and farm workers.
- Development and testing of a farmer self-assessment mechanism.



All photos: © Sustainable Agriculture Programme / WWF-Pakistan

## Beneficiaries

Farming communities including smallholders, smallholder employees and large farmer employees of the project areas.

	<p><b>Why we are here:</b> To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.</p>
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