SOURCEINTELLIGENCE
Formerly ChainPoint

BETTER COTTON INITIATIVE

CASE STUDY

The Better Cotton Platform

ABOUT BETTER COTTON

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) is the world's leading sustainability standard for cotton. BCI supports cotton-farming communities socially, environmentally, and economically while protecting and restoring the environment. The standard teaches farmers to grow cotton more sustainably to help them enjoy better yields, improved working conditions, and greater financial security.

The Better Cotton vision was born from a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) round-table discussion in 2005 when a group of visionary organizations, including Gap Inc., H&M, and IKEA, pledged their support to ensure a sustainable future for cotton production. BCI was officially launched four years later, in 2009, with the publication of the first Better Cotton global standard.

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A GROWING STANDARD SEEKING SOFTWARE

BCI got to work with its holistic, farm-level approach to improving cotton production, and by 2013, the standard was ready to expand its farmer training program, grow Better Cotton supply and demand, and increase membership. 680,000 farmers produced 905,000 metric tons of Better Cotton in 2013, and BCI set a goal to significantly grow those numbers by 2020.

To achieve its goal (and scale its impact), BCI required a tool to track volumes of Better Cotton through supply chains. That's when the standard was introduced to Source Intelligence's ChainPoint platform.
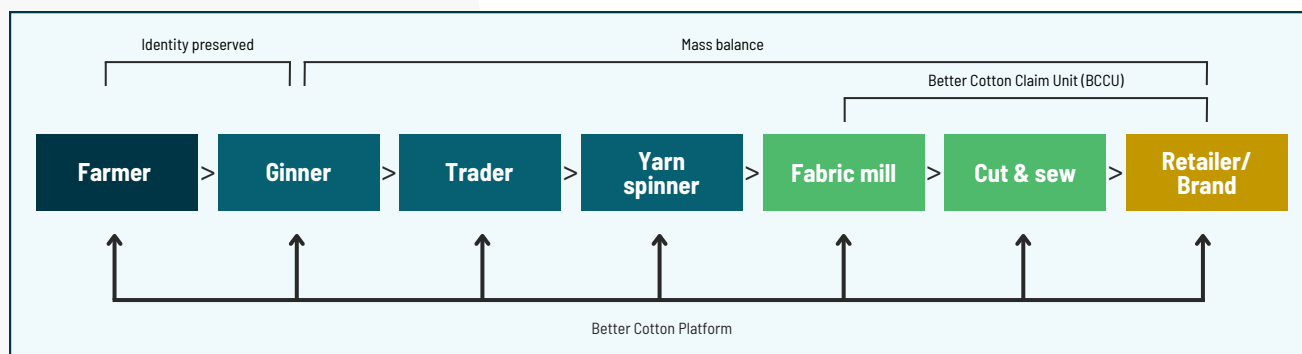
THE BETTER COTTON PLATFORM

After learning about the flexible, innovative capabilities of the ChainPoint platform, BCI partnered with Source Intelligence to introduce Chain of Custody requirements for supply chains and develop a cotton tracking and tracing system. The platform, called the Better Cotton Platform (BCP), tracks cotton at all stages of the supply chain – from the ginner to the retailer – using a combination of a mass-balance model and the tracing of "Better Cotton Claim Units" (BCCUs).

>> Watch the Better Cotton Initiative Chain of Custody Video

The figure below outlines a typical Better Cotton supply chain:
1. Farmers bring their cotton yield to a cotton gin
2. Cotton fibers are separated from their seeds and processed into cotton bales
3. Cotton bales are either traded or sold to spinners to supply fabric mills with yarn
4. The fabric is sold and further processed into consumer products, such as clothes and linens
5. The consumer products are delivered to retailers

HOW THE BETTER COTTON PLATFORM WORKS

The Better Cotton Platform is used only by BCI and registered supply chain organizations that buy, sell, or source Better Cotton or Better Cotton-containing products. The platform serves as an online database where actors in the supply chain can enter and monitor transactions for cotton, and BCI can verify the volumes of Better Cotton sourced in the supply chain.

Using the mass-balance Chain of Custody model, the BCP tracks the volume of sustainable cotton from the ginners to the yarn spinners. The platform ensures that a trader cannot sell more Better Cotton to yarn spinners than what was acquired from Better Cotton ginners. At the yarn spinner, each kilo of Better Cotton becomes a BCCU.

Once the Better Cotton continues its journey through the supply chain as yarn, cloth, and the final product, it is accompanied by these BCCUs. Using the BCP, retailers can then trace the BCCUs back to the yarn spinner that issued them.

EXPANDING THE BETTER COTTON IMPACT

By utilizing Source Intelligence's ChainPoint platform to develop the Better Cotton Platform, BCI ensured that retailers and brands can confidently claim their products as Better Cotton products, which grew the standard's memberships and ultimately expanded its impact.

As of 2023, the BCI boasts over 2,500 members, about 2.2 million farmers in 22 countries are licensed to sell their cotton as Better Cotton, and more than a fifth of the world's cotton is produced under the Better Cotton Standard. In total, BCI programs have positively influenced the lives of almost 4 million people working in cotton production.

SCALE YOUR IMPACT WITH SOURCE INTELLIGENCE'S CHAINPOINT PLATFORM

A standard's ability to effectively track and measure data is crucial to ensuring growth and making a meaningful impact. With Source Intelligence's ChainPoint platform, you'll get a configurable, scalable solution to help you streamline data management and collaboration with all actors in the supply chain. Our software enables you to capture supply chain data, generate data reports, and share those reports with relevant stakeholders within the platform. Schedule a demo to discover what our software is capable of and how it can help you scale your efforts. **>> Schedule a demo**

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