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How Better Cotton Initiative Scaled Global Impact with Supply Chain Traceability

Sustainability Standard Case Study

13k+ organizations sourcing through the BCI platform

23% of global cotton production

2.5k+ members globally



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Overview

Scaling a global sustainability standard requires more than setting guidelines. It demands visibility across complex, multi-tier supply chains. Without reliable data and traceability, it becomes difficult to measure impact, verify claims, and support growth.

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), the world's leading sustainability standard for cotton, was created to improve environmental and social outcomes in cotton production. As adoption grew, BCI needed a way to track cotton volumes and verify sourcing claims across its expanding global network.

To support its mission and scale its impact, BCI partnered with Source Intelligence to implement a traceability solution capable of tracking cotton throughout the supply chain, from farm to retailer.

Challenge

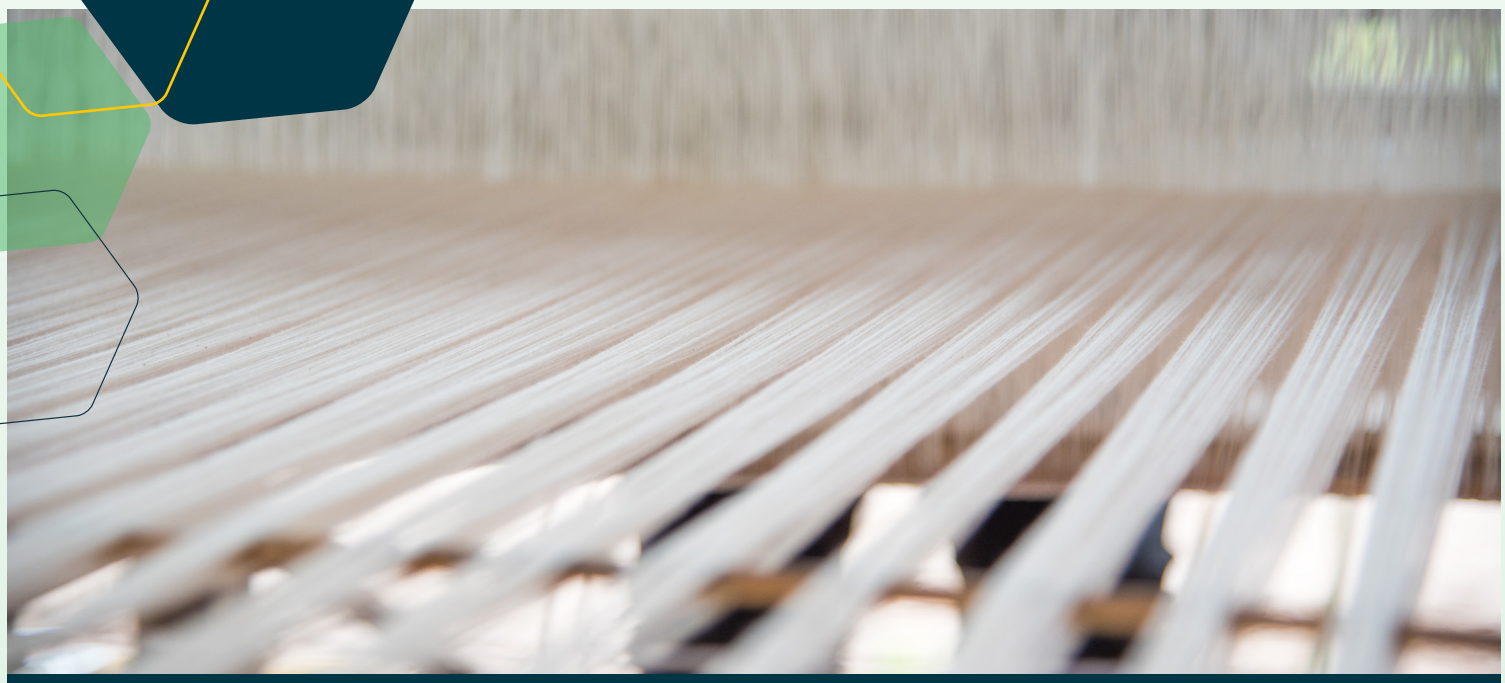
As BCI expanded its farmer training programs and membership base, the organization faced increasing pressure to track and verify the flow of Better Cotton through global supply chains.

Key challenges included:

- Limited visibility into cotton volumes moving through multi-tier supply chains
- Difficulty verifying sustainability claims across different supply chain actors
- Need to support rapid growth in membership and production
- Lack of a centralized system to manage and share supply chain data

To achieve its goals, BCI needed a scalable solution that could track cotton across every stage of the supply chain while maintaining data integrity and transparency.

To move forward, BCI needed a platform that could enable traceability, support collaboration across stakeholders, and provide the data needed to scale its global impact.



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Solution

BCI implemented Source Intelligence's ChainPoint platform to develop the Better Cotton Platform (BCP), a centralized system for tracking cotton throughout the supply chain. The solution enabled BCI to establish a scalable chain of custody model and improve visibility across all supply chain participants.

The platform reflects the full cotton supply chain, from farmers and ginners to traders, yarn spinners, fabric mills, and retailers. By capturing transactions at each stage, BCI gains a complete view of how Better Cotton moves through the ecosystem.

Key capabilities include:

- **End-to-end supply chain traceability -** Tracks cotton across the full supply chain, from ginners and traders to yarn spinners, fabric mills, and retailers.
- **Mass-balance chain of custody model -** Ensures that the volume of Better Cotton sold does not exceed what was produced, maintaining integrity across transactions.
- **Better Cotton Claim Units (BCCUs) -** Digitally track cotton as it moves through the supply chain, enabling traceability from yarn spinners to finished products.
- **Centralized data management and reporting -** Allows supply chain actors to input, monitor, and share transaction data within a single platform.
- **Collaboration across supply chain stakeholders -** Enables communication and coordination between farmers, traders, manufacturers, and retailers.

By consolidating these capabilities into a single platform, BCI established a transparent and scalable system for tracking sustainable cotton. The solution enabled more accurate data management, improved trust in sustainability claims, and supported the organization's continued growth.



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Results

With Source Intelligence, BCI successfully scaled its sustainability standard while maintaining transparency and credibility across its global supply chain.

The Better Cotton Platform enabled BCI to track cotton volumes, support supply chain collaboration, and expand adoption of its standard worldwide. Today, more than 13,000 organizations source through the platform, reflecting how deeply traceability has become embedded across the cotton supply chain — from farm to finished product.

Key outcomes include:

- **2,500+ members globally,** reflecting strong adoption of the standard
- **1.39 million farmers licensed** to grow Better Cotton in the 2023–24 season, across 15 countries
- **23% of the world's cotton** now produced under the Better Cotton Standard
- **5.64 million metric tons** of Better Cotton produced in the 2023–24 season
- **2,200+ supplier sites** able to source physical Better Cotton
- **Improved traceability** and verification of sustainable cotton across the supply chain



Today, BCI continues to expand its reach and impact, supporting more sustainable cotton production while improving livelihoods and environmental outcomes worldwide.

Scale your impact with Source Intelligence's ChainPoint platform

Enable traceability, improve transparency, and grow your sustainability initiatives with confidence.

Schedule a demo

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