

The Better Cotton Initiative launches The Better Cotton Innovation Challenge with EUR 135,000 in prize money



New Delhi, Nov 21, 2019 (Issuewire.com) - BCI, along with its partner IDH, The Sustainable Trade Initiative, announced the launch of the [Better Cotton Innovation Challenge](#) on 20th November at The Claridges, New Delhi.

The challenge launch, organized by Dalberg Advisors, was attended by a range of stakeholders, including IDH, BCI, Action For Food Production (AFPRO), JPAL, Yes Bank, BBC Media Action and WWF India. It attracted the interest of several prominent agriculture and tech-focused companies including Wadhvani AI, Digital Green, Bharat Rohan, eKutir.

'IDH & the Better Cotton Growth & Innovation Fund work on identifying and implementing innovative ideas to ensure the adoption of better cotton farming principals. We have partnered with Dalberg on the Challenge to identify solutions which will help us deepen the impact on farmers and can accelerate the adoption of sustainable cotton globally' said Pramit Chanda, Country Director IDH, officially launching the event.

'Better Cotton has grown in scale in the past decade, but to continue to increase share in the global cotton production, innovation is a necessity. This Challenge is a great way to birth new ideas and foster their implementation' said a team member from BCI India.

Through the Innovation Challenge, BCI and IDH are seeking innovative ideas to scale more sustainable cotton in two categories:

- Innovations for customized Better Cotton training to cotton farmers.
- Innovations to reduce the time and cost of data collected for Better Cotton licensing processes.

The solutions could be based on a wide range of innovation pathways and technologies such as machine learning, satellite-based analytics and image recognition, design thinking, as well as behavioral nudges.

The Innovation Challenge will run in three stages starting from 20th November 2019 until 31st May 2020. The first stage invites a wide range of innovators from across the world to submit applications with their unique ideas and solutions. The second round will invite shortlisted participants to submit more detailed proposals, and the third stage will have up to five participants carrying out rapid field trials to test their innovation. The winners will receive a cash prize of up to EUR 135,000 and the chance to scale their innovation with up to 2.2 million BCI farmers. Participants being shortlisted in the second and third rounds will be provided targeted mentoring and support by the challenge organizers.

'The Better Cotton Challenge can unearth non-obvious approaches to accelerate sustainable cotton farming and we are excited to see a range of innovators submitting their ideas.' said Nirat Bhatnagar, Partner at Dalberg Advisors, leading the strategy and implementation of the Challenge.

The deadline to apply is 15th January 2020 and the challenge team invites innovators from across the world - working at universities, research and development labs, start-ups and non-profit organizations. Interactive webinars will be hosted in December 2019 for more information. Dates will be shared on the website. Additional information about the Challenge and the application link can be found at www.bettercottonchallenge.org.

About the organizations

[The Better Cotton Initiative \(BCI\)](#) is a global not-for-profit organization and the largest cotton sustainability program in the world. It aims to transform cotton production worldwide by developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity. BCI partners with on-the-ground Implementing Partners to provide training on more sustainable farming practices to more than two million cotton farmers in 21 countries. In 2017-18, Better Cotton accounted for 19% of global cotton production.

[IDH. The Sustainable Trade Initiative](#), convenes companies, civil society organizations, governments, and others in public-private partnerships in order to drive the joint design, co-funding and prototyping of new economically viable approaches. IDH is supported by multiple European governments, including the institutional donors: BUZA, SECO, and DANIDA.

[Dalberg Advisors](#) is a global advisory firm that provides high-level strategic, policy and investment advice to the leadership of key institutions, corporations, and governments, working collaboratively to address pressing global problems and generate positive social impact. Dalberg has a global presence, covering 25 countries across continents.

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