



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

12 January 2017

Press Release

The Better Cotton Initiative and Cotton Australia team up to support training for Pakistani cotton farmers

The Australian Government, Cotton Australia and the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) have together launched a partnership to support the training of approximately 225,000 Pakistani cotton farmers commencing with the 2017 cotton season.

This partnership will deliver practical tools and the latest environmental and cutting-edge management practices aligned with internationally recognised quality assurance for sustainable cotton production. Pakistani farmers will be trained in techniques for growing cotton with a focus on improved environmental, social and economic benefits, in line with the Better Cotton Standard System.

Cotton is an important export earner for Pakistan – the fourth largest producer of cotton in the world. The partnership has been established to support Pakistan’s ability to compete in premium international cotton markets.

The Australian Government has committed AUD500,000 to this project which will be supported through the Australian aid program’s Business Partnerships Platform. Australia’s contribution will be matched by AUD2.4m from the BCI Growth and Innovation Fund. The BCI Growth and Innovation Fund’s matching funds come from BCI Retailer and Brand members, such as Adidas, IKEA, H&M, Levi Strauss & Co, Marks & Spencer, Cotton On, Tesco, Sainsbury’s, Tommy Hilfiger and Nike.

Lena Staafgard, BCI Chief Operating Officer noted that the partnership represents an important step forward for BCI in promoting cross-learning between cotton growing countries. “This collaboration will deliver tangible value to cotton farmers in Pakistan as they gain access to the vast body of deep knowledge on good agricultural practices held by Cotton Australia, as well as being able to participate in BCI training programmes to promote more sustainable farming practices. At BCI, we’re excited to be able to link up our partners across the world, with the aim of benefitting the global cotton sector.”

Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Margaret Adamson welcomed the launch. “The partnership will work closely with Cotton Australia and Australian cotton farmers who will share their world-leading practices, skills and experience with farmers in Pakistan. By promoting Australian cotton practices we will aim to help improve the global reputation of Pakistan cotton, safeguarding cotton’s future in Pakistan,” Ms Adamson said.

Adam Kay, CEO of Cotton Australia said “Australian cotton farmers are happy to share knowledge and experience to assist other cotton producers (in this case Pakistani) improve their sustainability, as this gives brands and retailers the confidence to use cotton in their

products. More and more global brands and retailers only want to source cotton that has been responsibly produced.”

The partnership brings together the world’s largest cotton sustainability program, BCI, with some of the world’s largest retail brands that have committed to significant targets for sustainable cotton use in their products. BCI’s strategic partner and fund manager, the IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative, will provide strategic support and through its convening and co-funding power support Better Cotton market demand for cotton which is produced in an environmentally, economically and socially sustainable manner, while also equipping farmers in Pakistan with the skills to meet that demand.

For more information on this partnership visit: <http://www.thebpp.com.au>;

Better Cotton Initiative: <http://bettercotton.org/>;

Growth & Innovation Fund: <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/initiative/growth-innovation-fund/>;

Cotton Australia: <http://cottonaustralia.com.au/>

Or contact: Australian High Commission’s Media and Public Diplomacy at bushra.naz@dfat.gov.au

Contact: Bushra Naz, Media and Public Diplomacy, bushra.naz@dfat.gov.au