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BCI Chain of Custody Annual Self-Assessment – Short Introduction

Dear Business Partner,

The BCI Chain of Custody Standard requires all certified supply-chain organisations to carry out a self-assessment once a year and to send the result to their certification body. This document summarises when you must carry out the self-assessment, where to download the template, how to fill it in, and how to send it to CERES.

1. What is a self-assessment, and why is it mandatory?

A self-assessment is an annual internal check in which your organisation reviews its own processes against the requirements of the BCI CoC Standard. The aim is for you to identify any non-conformities or opportunities for improvement yourself, before an audit takes place.

- It is mandatory for every supply-chain organisation complying with the BCI CoC Standard, whether certified or not (from the gin to the retailer).
- For multi-site certificates, each site must complete the annual self-assessment; it is the responsibility of the Central Function to ensure that all sites complete it.
- The self-assessment results must be included in the inputs to your annual management review (MR).

2. Where do you download the template?

Better Cotton Platform (BCP) → “Help” section

The self-assessment must be carried out using only the official template published by BCI (CoC Guidance, art. 1.2). A form you prepare yourself is not accepted.

1. Log in to your BCP account.
2. From the top menu, go to the “Help” section.
3. Download the Self-Assessment template and save it to your computer.

3. Timelines — the most critical section

Topic	Timeline / Rule	Reference
Before the first certification audit	You do not need to have carried out a self-assessment before a first certification audit that starts before 28 February 2027. Organisations applying for certification after this date are expected to have completed the self-assessment.	art. 1.1
First self-assessment (after being certified)	It may be carried out in the period between 3 months and 12 months after your first certification audit. Recommendation: do not go past the 9th month, so that there is time to correct non-conformities.	art. 1.3
Subsequent years	Once a year, based on the anniversary date. Recommendation: complete it at least 3 months before the anniversary.	art. 1.3
Correction of non-conformities	Every non-conformity you identify in the self-assessment must be resolved within 90 calendar days from the completion of the self-assessment.	art. 1.7

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Topic	Timeline / Rule	Reference
Assessment spread over more than one day	You do not have to carry out the assessment in a single day. The 90-day period begins as of the last day; the anniversary date is also the completion day. (E.g. if it was carried out on 1–3 March, the anniversary is 3 March.)	art. 1.9
Multi-site	The 90-day correction period begins with the assessment of the last site. The Central Function may start correcting non-conformities the moment they are identified, without waiting.	art. 1.10
Submission to CERES	The completed self-assessment must be sent to your certification body within 12 months of your first certification audit. For it to be considered complete, the non-conformities must also have been closed.	art. 1.11
On the CERES side	When your self-assessment is found to be complete, it is uploaded to the INTACT system within 30 days of receipt.	art. 2.6

Example 1 — Single site

First certification audit: 15 April 2025 → Self-assessment window: 15 July 2025 – 14 April 2026.
Recommended latest date: January 2026 (9th month), so that the 90-day correction period fits within the 12 months.

Example 2 — Multi-site planning (counting backwards)

A multi-site with 5 sites, allowing 1 day per site, and a submission anniversary to CERES of 31 March 2027:

- 31 March 2027 – 90 days = 31 December 2026 (the date by which the assessment must be finished)
- 31 December 2026 – 5 days = 26 December 2026 → the assessment must be started by this date at the latest

4. Who should fill it in?

- The self-assessment must be carried out by the Management Representative, who is responsible for compliance with all the requirements of the standard.
- The Management Representative may delegate this task; however, the person assigned must be competent in the BCI CoC Standard and independent of the area they assess.
- **Example:** the person responsible for purchasing should not carry out the self-assessment relating to section 3 of the standard.
- During the audit, CERES confirms from the previous audit report that the self-assessment was carried out by the assigned Management Representative.

5. How to fill it in? — Step by step

1. **Define the scope.** The self-assessment covers only the requirements within your certification scope that are applicable to you. Mark items that are out of scope as “not applicable” and state the reason.

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2. **Include subcontractors.** Contracted/subcontracted sites where BCI cotton is handled must be included in the assessment. If all the relevant requirements can be reviewed and evidenced remotely, this assessment may be carried out remotely (by telephone call and document request).
3. **Collect evidence for each requirement.** Assess each item as “compliant / non-conformity” and write down the record you rely on (procedure no., record name/date, ID number, training record, etc.). Rows left blank or marked only “compliant” are considered incomplete.
4. **Record non-conformities clearly.** Open a non-conformity for every area where full compliance is not achieved. Identifying them is not negative — it is the purpose of the process.
5. **Correction and root cause.** Apply the immediate corrective action for each non-conformity; carrying out a root cause analysis to prevent recurrence is good practice. Record the completion date and the evidence.
6. **Close within 90 days.** Complete the corrections within 90 calendar days from the day the self-assessment was completed.
7. **Send it to CERES.** Forward the completed template and the correction evidence before the deadline — so that there is time to respond if we have any questions.
8. **Take it to the MR.** Add the results to the agenda of your annual management review meeting.

6. How do you send it to CERES?

Send the completed self-assessment template and any corrective action evidence to the following address:

E-mail: textile@ceres-cert.com.tr

Subject line: BCI CoC Self-Assessment – [Company Name] – [BCP ID] – [Year]

Attachments:

1. The completed self-assessment template
2. Non-conformity correction evidence (if any)
3. If multi-site, the assessment of each site
4. **The signed Management Review (MR) document in which the self-assessment results were discussed**

Your submission is reviewed remotely for completeness; this is not an audit. If necessary, additional documents supporting the corrections may be requested. When found satisfactory, it is uploaded to your company profile in INTACT within 30 days.

7. What happens if you do not send it on time?

Situations in which a non-conformity is raised

In the following cases, CERES is required to raise a non-conformity against you using the standard non-conformity table:

- If the self-assessment was not sent on time,
- If the self-assessment was filled in incompletely,
- If the identified non-conformities were not fully resolved.

If a non-conformity is not adequately closed within the given period, your certificate may be suspended for a minimum of 3 months or until the non-conformities are closed. If a serious risk is identified in the self-assessment, a surveillance audit may exceptionally be requested.

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Good news

Non-conformities that you identify yourself in the self-assessment do not affect your certificate status, provided they are corrected appropriately within the deadline. Transparency is essential in this process — the expected behaviour is to identify findings, not to hide them.

8. Final checklist before sending

- ☐ The current BCI template downloaded from BCP → Help was used
- ☐ The assessment was carried out within the time window
- ☐ It was filled in by the Management Representative or a competent/independent deputy
- ☐ All requirements in scope were assessed, no rows left blank
- ☐ An evidence reference was written for each item
- ☐ Subcontracted/contracted activities were included
- ☐ If multi-site, all sites were assessed
- ☐ Non-conformities were recorded, corrections completed within 90 days
- ☐ The name, date and signature of the person who carried out the assessment were added
- ☐ The results were discussed in the MR, and the signed MR document was attached

9. Frequently asked questions

Do I have to finish it in a single day?

No. You can spread the assessment over several days; the 90-day correction period and the anniversary date are calculated from the day it is completed.

In a multi-site, can the sites carry out their own assessment?

Yes; if that is practical, each site can carry out its own self-assessment. However, the responsibility for ensuring that all sites complete it lies with the Central Function.

Is it a problem if I do not find any non-conformity?

No; however, you are expected to be able to show that every requirement in scope was genuinely assessed and evidenced. “Compliant” marks without evidence are considered a deficiency.

What if I change my certification body?

Before the transfer is completed, the status of your self-assessment is reported by the old certification body to the new one; the new body is obliged to check whether the self-assessment has been sent.

Is the review of the self-assessment subject to a fee?

Yes. The fees that you can see at <https://ceres-cert.com.tr/teklif-al/> will be applied.

This document has been prepared by CERES for the purpose of customer information, on the basis of the BCI Chain of Custody – Self Assessment Guidance and the BCI Chain of Custody Standard. The binding text is the original English documents published by BCI; for the current version, please check bettercotton.org/document-library. For your questions, you may contact your CERES representative or helpdesk@bettercotton.org.