

A large, light gray silhouette of a frog is positioned in the background, facing right. It has a large white eye with a gray pupil and a gray outline. The frog's body is elongated, and its legs are spread out. The text is overlaid on this background.

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE
2020 CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

2020 CERTIFICATION AND AUDITING RULES

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**RAINFOREST
ALLIANCE**

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Applicable to:		
The Rainforest Alliance, Certificate Holders and Authorized CBs		
Country/Regions:		
All		
Crops:	Type of organizations:	
Tree crops (such as coffee, cocoa), tea, fruits (such as bananas, coconuts and pineapples), nuts (such as hazelnuts) and cut flowers.	All	

About Rainforest Alliance

The Rainforest Alliance is creating a more sustainable world by using social and market forces to protect nature and improve the lives of farmers and forest communities.

Translation Disclaimer

Any question related to the precise meaning of the information contained in translations should refer to the English official version for clarification. Any discrepancies or differences in meaning due to translation are not binding and have no effect for auditing or certification purposes.

More information

For more information about the Rainforest Alliance, visit www.rainforest-alliance.org or contact info@ra.org

INTRODUCTION

The Rainforest Alliance 2020 Certification Program provides the foundation for our approach to “reimagining certification” – our vision for the future of certification. The new standard, assurance system and related data and technology systems are designed to deliver more value to the many people and businesses around the world that use Rainforest Alliance certification as an essential tool to support sustainable agricultural production and supply chains.

Farms, farmer groups and supply chain organizations that meet all applicable requirements of the Sustainable Agriculture Standard and comply with the process requirements of the Rainforest Alliance Assurance Rules are then able to sell, ship and/or buy their product as Rainforest Alliance Certified.

To expand the reach of the Rainforest Alliance Certification Program and to safeguard the system’s integrity, quality, competitiveness and credibility, the Rainforest Alliance works with independent certification bodies (CBs) around the world. Authorized CBs certify farms, farmer groups and supply chain organizations against the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard.

The Rainforest Alliance is a full member of ISEAL and is committed to ISEAL’s Code of Ethics and supports the ten ISEAL Credibility Principles, which represent the core values on which effective sustainability standards are built. The Rainforest Alliance also applies the principles of ISEAL’s codes of good practice: The Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards (Standard-Setting Code); the Code of Good Practice for Assessing the Impacts of Social and Environmental Standards (the Impacts Code); and the Code of Good Practice for Assuring Conformity with Social and Environmental Standards (the Assurance Code).

The Rainforest Alliance manages, and is responsible for, a global Assurance System for Certification Bodies. As Rainforest Alliance certification expands further globally, the goal is to foster a highly

credible and rigorous system. The audit and certification services rendered under the Assurance System maintain and ensure a general sense of purpose as well as a commitment to high quality, integrity, consistency, and transparency which is also reflected in the commitment to continual improvement of systems, documentation and processes. Access to the system by smallholders is important to the Rainforest Alliance, and smallholders are not at a disadvantage or excluded from accessing certification services.

Just as the Sustainable Agriculture Standard is designed to promote continuous improvement by producers and supply chain actors, the Rainforest Alliance is committed to continuously improving its work, adopting a continuous improvement approach to the 2020 Certification Program. Documentation and systems will be updated accordingly to improve the program’s assurance, and any changes will be communicated to Certification Bodies (CBs) and certificate holders, and made available on the Rainforest Alliance website.

Overview of Assurance Rules & System

The Assurance Rules establish the rules for the various elements that provide assurance for the 2020 Certification Program. The rules are composed of two documents, each with two chapters. At the beginning of each chapter is an introduction that describes the target audience of that chapter.

The two documents are:

2. 2020 Rainforest Alliance Certification and Auditing Rules

3. 2020 Rainforest Alliance Rules for Certification Bodies

The Assurance System takes the contents of these two documents and translates them into the Rainforest Alliance technology systems that are designed to measure, ensure and improve compliance with the Sustainable Agriculture Standard’s requirements. It aims to create



a more robust and credible system by focusing attention on accuracy of data for informed decision processes, risk assessments and audit quality.

INNOVATIONS IN THE RAINFOREST ALLIANCE 2020 ASSURANCE SYSTEM

In line with the Rainforest Alliance's long-term vision of 'reimagining certification', the Assurance System of the 2020 Certification Program introduces numerous innovations to ensure that certification is more context-specific, data-driven, and risk-based.

Risk-based approach

The Rainforest Alliance 2020 Certification Program aims to promote a preventive approach instead of a reactive one, and the Assurance Rules have been developed within a risk-based framework to enable this approach. In this framework, data is collected at the beginning of the certification process, rather than at the end, allowing for risk analysis to be carried out.

Providing actionable information for program users, the program takes this better use of data to introduce the use of 'Risk Maps'. These are maps that are created through combining by combining external data sources with location data. The maps then provide risk levels of countries, organizations and farm (or farm units) for key sustainability topics - child labor, forced labor and deforestation. Risk maps include a risk classification which serves as input for the certificate holder to take informed decisions for improvement and to facilitate the auditing process.

Data monitoring

E can provide an Assurance System that is more responsive, and user centered. The Assurance System introduces a new way of monitoring data submitted via the Rainforest Alliance online platform at several different stages of the certification process, instead of waiting until the audit results have been reported to the Rainforest Alliance. This can help to avoid mistakes in the scope and provision of applicable requirements to the certificate holder.

Strengthened auditing

To strengthen the consistency of audit quality across Certification Bodies (CBs), the Assurance System provides specific requirements and guidance on how to audit specific topics, such as deforestation, child and forced labor, traceability, subcontractors, and personnel files. More generally, by offering a system that leverages data and auditing expertise, the system allows CBs to increase the usefulness and rigor of their audits. Rainforest Alliance aims to work closely with the highest performing CBs, and so now has the ability to limit the number of CBs both per country and globally, based on performance results. The Rainforest Alliance will implement legal and risk analyses as a condition for authorizing the geographical scope of CBs and introduce a fee system for the CB authorization process, designed to reduce the administrative requirements for CBs.

Innovations per chapter in this document

Certification Rules

- Geolocations at farm unit level
- Group Management Assurance
- Confirmation of scope early in the process, to better focus only on applicable requirements
- Groups held accountable for compliance of intermediaries with (traceability) requirements
- Three-year certification cycle
- Certificate holders to stay with the same CB for one cycle
- Remote surveillance audit for top performers
- Threshold of 15 thousand members per sub-group. Groups > 10 thousand to implement digital IMS
- An additional verification level by the Rainforest Alliance for certification decisions

Auditing Rules

- Sampling rules for groups, facilities, documents and interviews (based on SA8000 and SMETA)
- Formula for calculating audit duration



- Pre-audit stakeholder engagement
- Rules on pre-assessment and training
- The use of geodata for auditing
- Extensive description of auditing methods for:
 - a) deforestation
 - b) traceability
 - c) subcontractors
 - d) social requirements: Assess-and-address, Freedom of Association, wages, housing, personnel files.

USING THIS DOCUMENT

Terms, definitions and abbreviations

A global glossary governing all Rainforest Alliance documentation can be found [here](#).

Frequently used abbreviations in this document:

- CB – Certification Body
- CH – Certificate Holder
- RA – Rainforest Alliance
- RACP – Rainforest Alliance certification platform

Key verbal forms:

In this and other assurance documents, the following verbal forms apply:

- “shall” indicates a requirement which is mandatory;
- “should” indicates a recommendation;
- “may” indicates a permission;
- “can” indicates a possibility or a capability.

Further details can be found in the **ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2**.

Implementation

The requirements referred to in this document are binding for all parties involved in the process for certificate holders (CH) to become part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program. This includes

farm CHs as well as supply chain CHs. In this document, CH is used to refer to both prospect CHs and CHs that are already part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program.

Non-fulfilment of any requirements in this document will result in one or more non-conformities (NCs) which may lead to suspension or cancellation of the authorization given to the CB.

An authorized CB or a CH may exceptionally deviate from the requirements of this document under the condition that the CB has received approval from the Rainforest Alliance prior to such deviation and the CB or CH provides documented justifications. For CBs, such justifications shall demonstrate the ability of the QMS of the CB to continuously deliver the expected results of the audit activities and certification processes. For CHs, such justifications shall demonstrate the ability of the management system of the CH to continuously demonstrate conformity of the CH with the assurance and standard rules that apply to their scope.

Such exception requests shall be submitted to certification@ra.org. The CB shall record justifications for deviation in the Rainforest Alliance certification platform (RACP). In the event that a CH does not have a valid contract with a CB, the request shall be submitted to customersuccess@ra.org.

The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right, at its sole discretion, not to accept a deviation from any of the requirements if the justifications do not sufficiently ensure confidence in the CB's decision.

If there is any conflict between the requirements in this document and those in other documents including legal and statutory requirements, the CB and/or CH shall consult the Rainforest Alliance in a timely manner for further guidance on interpretation. The Rainforest Alliance will start carrying out evaluation and monitoring activities based on the Assurance System documents from their effective date.

Reference documents

In all cases, the current and valid version of the standards, normative documents or guidance documents shall be the reference



documents in this document. The latest version of Rainforest Alliance documents, including the Assurance documents can be found at www.rainforest-alliance.org.

Rainforest Alliance documents:

- Sustainable Agriculture Standard including applicable annexes and tools;
- **2020 Rainforest Alliance Certification and Auditing Rules;**
- 2020 Rainforest Alliance Rules for Certification Bodies;
- Rainforest Alliance Sanction Policy;
- Rainforest Alliance Labelling Policy;
- Rainforest Alliance Glossary

External documents:

- ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements.
- ISO 19011:2018 Guidelines for auditing management systems
- IAF MD 5:2019 Determination of Audit Time of Quality, Environmental, and Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems
- ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services

Contacting Rainforest Alliance

Certificate holder support: CHs of the Rainforest Alliance program can contact the Customer Success team at customersuccess@ra.org for questions about the Rainforest Alliance standards and Certification Rules.

Technical support: Certification Bodies and CHs can contact techsupport@ra.org for assistance in accessing or using the Rainforest Alliance systems.

Certification Body support: Certification Bodies can contact the Rainforest Alliance Standards & Assurance department by using the following e-mail addresses:

- certification@ra.org for questions about the Rainforest Alliance standards and Certification Rules, communication about partners (e.g. suspensions and withdrawals of Certificates and activations) and CB authorization and training;
- cbmanagement@ra.org for CB accounts and approvals;
- cbmonitoring@ra.org for CB monitoring;
- cbtraining@ra.org for CB training.

Compliance with Applicable laws

Rainforest Alliance strives for its CHs and CBs to be exemplary figures for improving social, economic, and environmental conditions in their areas of operation. In this regard, CHs and CBs shall obey national laws, regulations, and sector agreements or collective bargaining agreements. In the event that a national law, regulation, sector agreement or collective bargaining agreement is stricter than the requirements of the Rainforest Alliance certification program (Sustainable Agriculture Standard and Assurance Documents) or vice versa, the strictest rule always prevails. For more information, refer to the **Sustainable Agriculture Standard**.

CHAPTER 1: CERTIFICATION RULES

INTRODUCTION

Objectives

- To establish requirements for prospect certificate holders (referring to all organizations that want to be part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program), and certificate holders (referring to all organizations that are part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program) to become or remain part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program.
- To establish requirements on which CHs need to receive an external certification audit.
- To establish a process for CHs to become or remain part of the program.

Applicability

This chapter applies to:

1. Certificate holders that are willing to get certified in the new Rainforest Alliance certification program, including:
 - farming organizations;
 - supply chain organizations.
2. Certification Bodies that want to certify their clients under the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Certification Program.
3. The Rainforest Alliance.

Process requirements for certification of farm and supply chain certificate holders

In order to promote sustainable agriculture, the Rainforest Alliance has developed the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard. Certificate holders that want to sell and/or buy their product as Rainforest Alliance Certified shall meet all applicable requirements from the Sustainable Agriculture Standard and comply with the process requirements of this chapter. The process requirements are based on the general certification process as depicted in figure 1.

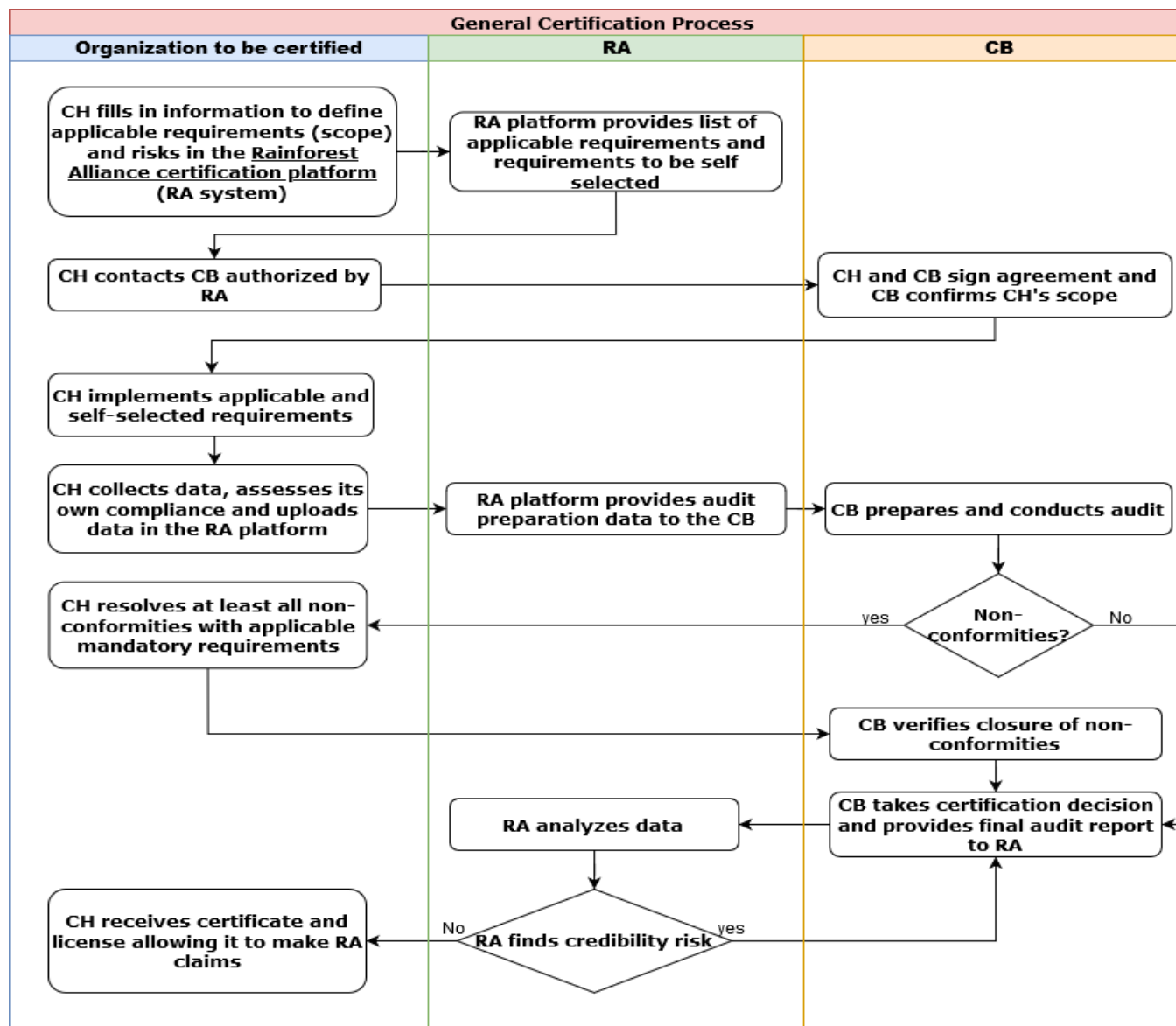


Figure 1 - General Certification Process



1.1 SCOPE OF THE RAINFOREST ALLIANCE PROGRAM AND STANDARDS

The Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard includes Farm Requirements and Supply Chain Requirements. Requirements from the entire Sustainable Agriculture Standard may apply based on the products, processes and activities to be performed as certified (called certification scope) as well as the risks that apply to the specific certification scope.

Possible certification scope

This section explains what may be covered by the Rainforest Alliance certification scope and based on what variables the scope and applicable requirements of a CH are defined.

- 1.1.1** Definition of applicable requirements shall be carried out automatically by the RACP, based on information provided in the platform by the CH. The certification scope is the set of mandatory requirements that apply to a specific CH shall be defined based on:
- a. Crops
 - b. Activities
 - c. Certification option
 - d. Level in the standard based on the year of certification
 - e. Traceability Level (if applicable);
 - f. Risk.
- 1.1.2** Based on which entities, crops, products, activities or services they wish to offer as certified; the CH shall define the certification scope.
- 1.1.3** A CH may choose to include one or more crops in their certification scope. These crops are:
- a. cocoa;
 - b. coconuts;
 - c. coffee;
 - d. cut flowers;
 - e. fruits;
 - f. hazelnuts;



- g. herbs, spices and rooibos (Supply Chain only)¹;
- h. Palm (subject to confirmation);
- i. tea;
- j. Vegetables (subject to confirmation).

1.1.4 Side products and alcoholic derivatives of any of the certified crops are not supported in the Rainforest certification program and therefore shall not be commercialized or processed with a Rainforest Alliance claim.

1.1.5 A CH may include one or more activities in their certification scope from the list below:

- a. Farming
- b. Processing
- c. Trading
- d. Warehousing
- e. Packing
- f. Consumer end product packing
- g. Retail

1.1.6 A CH may include one or more entities in their certification scope. Types of entities are:

- a. farms;
- b. farm groups;
- c. intermediaries;
- d. sites;

¹ For the certification of Herbs and Spices, the Rainforest Alliance and the Union for Ethical BioTrade have developed a joint program. The Rainforest Alliance/UEBT Herbs and Spices Program is a partnership based on the recognition by the Rainforest Alliance of the Ethical BioTrade Standard and the UEBT Certification Protocol. The UEBT Standard includes a supplement with requirements from the Rainforest Alliance Standard that complement the UEBT Standard, or requirements that are unique to the Rainforest Alliance. After issuance of the UEBT Standard Certificate by UEBT, the Rainforest Alliance requirements linked to the scope of supply chain actors apply, as well as all Rainforest Alliance assurance documents for the remaining part of the supply chain until the manufacturing of consumer-end products. Contact the UEBT certification@uebt.org for more information.



- e. subcontractors;
- f. service providers.

1.1.7 The combination of entities included in the certification scope shall determine the certification option of the CH.

1.1.8 CHs that cover different entities in their certification scope shall take full responsibility for all those actors to comply with the standard and process requirements that apply to them. For more information refer to the certification options described in this document.

1.1.9 Some requirements shall be implemented on the entire CH's operation including subcontracted activities and leased portions of land. Some requirements shall be implemented only to the activities related to the certified crops.

Applicable to the entire CH:

- i. social requirements;
- ii. management requirements;
- iii. environmental requirements.

Applicable to the activities related to the certified crops:

- i. supply chain requirements;
- ii. farming practices requirements, except for the requirements on Integrated Pest Management and pesticides which apply to the whole farm.

1.1.10 Based on the year of certification that a CH is in, different levels of requirements from the Sustainable Agriculture Standard apply. Those are:

- a. years 1,2,3: **core** requirements;
- b. years 4,5,6: **core** requirements + **level 1** improvement requirements;
- c. years 7 and beyond: **core** requirements + **level 1** + **level 2** improvement requirements.

For more information refer to the **Sustainable Agriculture Standard**.

1.1.11 For applicable smart meter requirements or self-selected smart meter requirements targets shall be set by the CH. Definition of the baseline shall be done from the moment the smart meter requirement becomes applicable.

1.1.12 The targets set for smart meter requirements shall be realistically achievable.



Performance system

- 1.1.13** The CH shall demonstrate conformity with 100% of the requirements that apply to its certification scope in order to become part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program.
- 1.1.14** Some requirements may be added to the scope of the CH voluntarily, those are called self-selected requirements. For more information refer to the **Sustainable Agriculture Standard**.
- 1.1.15** Any non-conformity (NC) with any self-selected requirements shall not influence the certification status of a CH.
- 1.1.16** Any NC related to any self-selected requirements, shall be closed by the CH before making any claim based on that requirement.

Type of requirement	Non-conformity	Action required
Core requirements	The requirement applies and the CH does not (fully) meet the requirement	Closure of <u>NC</u> to obtain or retain certification
Mandatory improvement requirements	The requirement applies and the CH does not (fully) meet the requirement	Closure of <u>NC</u> to obtain or retain certification
Self-selected improvement requirements	The CH voluntarily selected the requirement but does not (fully) meet the requirement	Closure of <u>NC</u> to make additional claims on the requirement
Mandatory smart meter requirements	The requirement applies and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>smart meter targets</u> are not set (credibly), and/or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data collected for the <u>smart meter</u> is incomplete and/or not credible and/or not consistent. 	Closure of <u>NC</u> to obtain or retain certification
Self-selected smart meter requirements	The CH voluntarily selected the requirement and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>smart meter targets</u> are not set (credibly), and/or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data collected for the <u>smart meter</u> is incomplete and/or not credible and/or not consistent. 	Closure of <u>NC</u> to make additional claims on the requirement

Table 1: Types of non-conformity and possible consequences



For more information on the consequences and process for closure of NCs, see **section on non-conformities** in this document

Verification scope

- 1.1.17 All applicable and self-selected requirements of the **Sustainable Agriculture Standard** shall be verified, for the CH to demonstrate conformity.
- 1.1.18 CHs shall demonstrate conformity with all applicable and self-selected requirements as of the start date of the Certificate (to be obtained).
- 1.1.19 The data collected according to the targets set by the CH for smart meter requirements shall be credible in order to demonstrate conformity with the requirement.
- 1.1.20 Level 1 and/or level 2 improvement requirements shall only be verified during the first certification audit (see section **External Verification of Conformity** in this document), if specifically requested by the CH.
- 1.1.21 Level 2 requirements shall only be verified during the second certification audit, if specifically requested by the CH.

Scope on the Certificate

- 1.1.22 Once a CH has demonstrated conformity with all applicable Standard requirements, the CH shall receive a Certificate. The Certificate allows the CH to offer Rainforest Alliance Certified products and/or services included in the certification and verification scope.
- 1.1.23 The scope mentioned on the Certificate shall include:
 - a. The name of the CH responsible for the implementation of the Rainforest Alliance certification program (see section **certification options** in this document).

Note: an entity investing in the Rainforest Alliance certification program may be mentioned under the name of the farm or farmer group in the event that it differs from the name of the CH implementing the program. For farms or farmer groups, this is the name of the farm or farmer group and not the name of the entity investing in the Rainforest Alliance certification program (in the event that it differs from the farm or farmer group).
 - b. The crops included in the certification.
 - c. The activities and processes included in the certification, per crop.
 - d. The validity dates of the Certificate.
 - e. An annex with area and estimated volume to be harvested within the year of certification per crop, valid for one year. This annex shall be updated yearly, based on the yearly volume estimation.

Note: this applies only to CHs that have farming in their scope.



1.2 CERTIFICATION OPTIONS

This section explains the possible structures in which CHs can join or remain part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program, called certification options. There are 6 certification options, of which the first 4 apply to organizations that include farming in their certification scope. The last two apply to the supply chain excluding farming². This section also details the verification scope specific to the certification option.

Certification options		Scope implications
1	<p>Group of small farms</p> <p>A <u>group</u> of organized <u>farms</u> (<u>group members</u>) that implements a common <u>Internal Management System</u> (IMS) and is composed only of <u>small farms</u>.</p> <p>The group can be organized as an association or cooperative or be managed by a <u>farm</u> or other supply chain actor such as an exporter or another entity.</p>	Farming is included in the scope
2	<p>Group of mixed farms (small and large)</p> <p>A group of organized farms (group members) that implements a common <u>Internal Management System</u> (IMS) and is composed of <u>small farms</u> as well as <u>large farms</u>.</p> <p>The group can be organized as an association or cooperative or be managed by a <u>farm</u> or other supply chain actor such as an exporter or another entity.</p> <p><u>Large farms</u> (or <u>Multi-Farms</u>) with <u>outgrowers</u> are covered under this certification option. In this case the <u>large farm</u> or <u>Multi-Farm</u> counts as <u>large group member</u>.</p>	Farming is included in the scope
3	<p>Single farm (large or small)</p> <p>A single <u>farm</u> that owns or manages one farm with an independent organizational structure, whereby central management and all activities take place at a single physical location.</p> <p>This type of certification is targeted towards single farms that want to get certified independently. The majority will be <u>large farms</u> however, <u>small farms</u> may also get certified under this certification option.</p>	Farming is included in the scope
4	<p>Multi-farm</p> <p>Two or more <u>farms</u> owned or rented by one or more producers whose operations and farming practices are managed centrally, regardless of certification.</p>	Farming is included in the scope

² In case CHs that have farming in scope also include supply chain activities, their certification option stays the same, however applicable standard requirements may be added depending on the activities.



5	Single site An individual organization that does not have farming in the scope of its Rainforest Alliance certification, whereby central management and all activities take place at a single physical location.	Supply chain only
6	Multi-site An organization that does not have farming in the scope of its Rainforest Alliance certification and has an identified central location under which two or more sites are operating.	Supply chain only

Table 2: certification options

- 1.2.1** Responsibility of conformity of all actors that fall under the certification scope of the CH lies with **central management of the CH**
- 1.2.2** All sites covered in the certification scope of a CH, shall be registered in the RACP under the certification account of the CH.
- 1.2.3** NC at any actor covered in the certification scope of a CH (e.g. farm, site, subcontractor, service provider, intermediary, sub-group etc.) affects the certification status of the entire CH.

Rules for farm CHs (options 1 to 4)

- 1.2.4** Any farm shall not simultaneously be certified under more than one Rainforest Alliance Certificate for their entire Rainforest Alliance certified crops area.
- 1.2.5** Parallel production of the certified crop(s) within a farm is not allowed.
- 1.2.6** In the event that the CH uses intermediaries, those shall be included in the Rainforest Alliance certification program under the certification scope of the group.
- 1.2.7** All CHs and their entire area shall be located within the same country.

Additional Rules for group certification

- 1.2.8** Certified sales of group members shall be managed centrally.
- 1.2.9** All group members shall be compliant with the highest certification level within the group (see levels in the Farm Standard).
- 1.2.10** Each (sub-)group shall not be larger than 15.000 group members.
- 1.2.11** Groups with more than 10.000 group members included in the Rainforest Alliance certification scope shall implement a digital Internal Management System (IMS) for all group members.
- 1.2.12** In the event that a group is composed of more than one sub-group:



- a. there shall be an overarching Internal Management System (IMS) that is responsible for conformity of all actors that fall under the scope of the certification of all sub-groups.
- b. Each sub-group may implement an internal inspections system.
- c. The overarching IMS shall verify the functioning of each sub-group's internal inspections system during the self-assessment.

1.2.13 In the event that large farms are part of a group (mixed group certification):

- a. the total certified production area of large farms shall not be more than 30% of the total certified production area of the group;
- b. all large farms and processing unit covered in the certification scope of the group, shall be registered in the RACP under the certification account of the group;
- c. management requirements applicable to group members with Large Farms shall be implemented by the group members with large farms, however Group Management is responsible for conformity.

Additional Rules for multi-farm and multi-site certification

1.2.14 All sites and/or farms shall have a legal or contractual link with the central management of the CH and shall be subject to a single management system.

1.2.15 The single management system operates for the management of at least all activities related to the certification scope.

1.2.16 Two or more sites and/or farms are considered to operate a joint management system if:

- a. there is an identified central location where the activities of sites and/or farms are managed;
- b. implementation of the Standard Requirements is managed centrally;
- c. documents and records needed for certification are stored by the managing site and/or farm;
- d. there is evidence that proves that the central management is owned or is contracted by the sites and/or farm(s) to manage the production and processing areas.

1.2.17 In case of multi-site certification at supply chain level (not multi-farm), sites may be located in more than one country. However, all sites shall be located within the same allowed geographical region. The allowed regions are:

- a. Africa;
- b. Asia + Oceania;
- c. Central America +The Caribbean;



- d. Eastern Europe + European Union;
- e. Middle East;
- f. North America;
- g. South America.

Verification scope for farm CHs (certification options 1 to 4)

1.2.18 Verification of conformity with all applicable and self-selected requirements shall be done through verification of:

- a. The entire area and activities within the CH's limits. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. HCV areas, forests and other natural ecosystems, as well as fallow land.
 - ii. Areas involving human activity and other infrastructure within its limits that include but are not restricted to administrative infrastructure, collection points, intermediaries, processing and packing units and storage facilities.
 - iii. Leased areas inside the CH's facilities.
 - iv. Personnel, including all contracted and subcontracted workers, supervisory and administrative staff, and management and owner representatives.
 - v. Service providers and subcontractors included in the certification scope.
 - vi. People who live temporarily or permanently at the CH's facilities.
 - vii. All documentation relating to social, agronomic and environmental management and considered relevant to determining conformity with the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard.
 - viii. Documentation related to trading of the certified and non-certified product handled by the CH.
- b. Residents of surrounding communities who are or may be directly affected by the CH's activities.
- c. Use of the Rainforest Alliance certification and traceability platforms, and (if any) other systems used related to the implementation of requirements in the certification scope.
- d. If applicable, all group members included in the scope of certification. This includes but is not limited to:
 - i. Areas destined for agricultural production, with focus on products intended to be sold with Rainforest Alliance Certified claims.
 - ii. Group member workers - including all contracted and subcontracted workers, supervisory and administrative staff, management and owner representatives.



- iii. People who live temporarily or permanently on the farm.
- iv. All documentation relating to social, agronomic and environmental management considered relevant to determining conformity with the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard.
- e. If applicable, all intermediaries included in the scope of certification. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Personnel of the intermediaries.
 - ii. All documentation relating to social requirements and traceability.
 - iii. Areas involving human activity and other infrastructure within its limits that include but are not restricted to administrative infrastructure, collection point and transport.

Verification scope for single site and multi-site certification (certification options 5 and 6)

1.2.19 Verification of conformity with all applicable and self-selected requirements shall be done through verification of:

- a. The entire area and activities within the CH's limits. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Areas destined for handling and processing products, with focus on products intended to be sold with Rainforest Alliance Certified claims.
 - ii. Areas involving human activity and other infrastructure within its limits that include but are not restricted to administrative infrastructure, processing and packing units and storage facilities.
 - iii. Personnel, including all contracted and subcontracted workers, supervisory and administrative staff, and management and owner representatives.
 - iv. Service providers and subcontractors included in the certification scope.
 - v. If applicable all documentation relating to social requirements management and considered relevant to determining conformity with the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard.
 - vi. All documentation related to trading and processing of the certified and non-certified product handled by the farm.
- b. Use of the Rainforest Alliance certification and traceability platform, and (if any) other platforms used related to the implementation of requirements in the certification scope.

Table3: verification scopes per certification option



Subcontractors and service providers

CHs may make use of subcontractors and/or service providers for certified activities. This section explains the options and the conditions that apply.

1.2.20 Subcontractors may be included in the Rainforest Alliance certification program under the following options:

- a. as part as the certification scope of one CH;
- b. as part of the certification scope of several CHs;
- c. certified independently.

For each option the conditions in the table on certification conditions for subcontractors below apply.

1.2.21 Service providers may be included in the Rainforest Alliance certification program under the following options:

- a. as part as the certification scope of one CH;
- b. as part of the certification scope of several CHs.

1.2.22 Subcontractors and/or service providers shall comply with all requirements applicable to their scope, depending on the activities carried out. For example: traceability, working conditions, application of inputs, use of seal etc.

Option	Conditions that apply
a. <u>Subcontractors/service providers</u> included under the scope of one or more CHs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. The CH making use of the services of the <u>subcontractor/service providers</u> shall take full responsibility of the conformity of the <u>subcontractor</u>, before they can be included into their scope.ii. In case a <u>subcontractor/service provider</u> is included in the certification scope of several CHs, the <u>subcontractor/service provider</u> shall be included in the verification scope and certification process of all CHs that use their services.iii. The <u>subcontractor/service providers</u> that is included under the scope of a CH that is (to be) part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program, shall have a legal or contractual link with the CH receiving the services.iv. The <u>subcontractor</u> shall be registered under the certification account of the CH making use of its services.v. Under this option the <u>subcontractor</u> shall not offer services as certified under the Rainforest Alliance program to other CHs independently from the CH certifying them under their scope.



b. Subcontractors certified independently (this does not count for service providers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Subcontractors may only be independently certified as a CH that is (to be) part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program if the services provided are related to the certified product (e.g. processing, warehousing, transport, rebagging etc.).ii. The subcontractor shall be registered with its own certification account.iii. The subcontractor that is (to be) certified under the Rainforest Alliance certification program independently is responsible for its own conformity with all applicable requirements.iv. The subcontractor that is (to be) certified under the Rainforest Alliance certification program independently is regarded as any other CH that is (to be) certified under the Rainforest Alliance program.v. Subcontractors certified independently shall go through the certification process independently and thus will receive their own Certificate.vi. The subcontractor may offer services as certified under the Rainforest Alliance program to any client for the scope they hold a valid Certificate for.
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Table 4: certification conditions for subcontractors

1.3 VERIFICATION OF CONFORMITY

This section explains the three-year certification cycle in which CHs join and remain part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program. It also explains the different verification levels that may apply.

The certification process is based on a three-year cycle, with yearly revisions, as depicted in the figure below. This requires annual internal verification of conformity (internal inspection and/or self-assessment) and external verifications of conformity (generally CB audits - and in some cases verifications by the Rainforest Alliance).

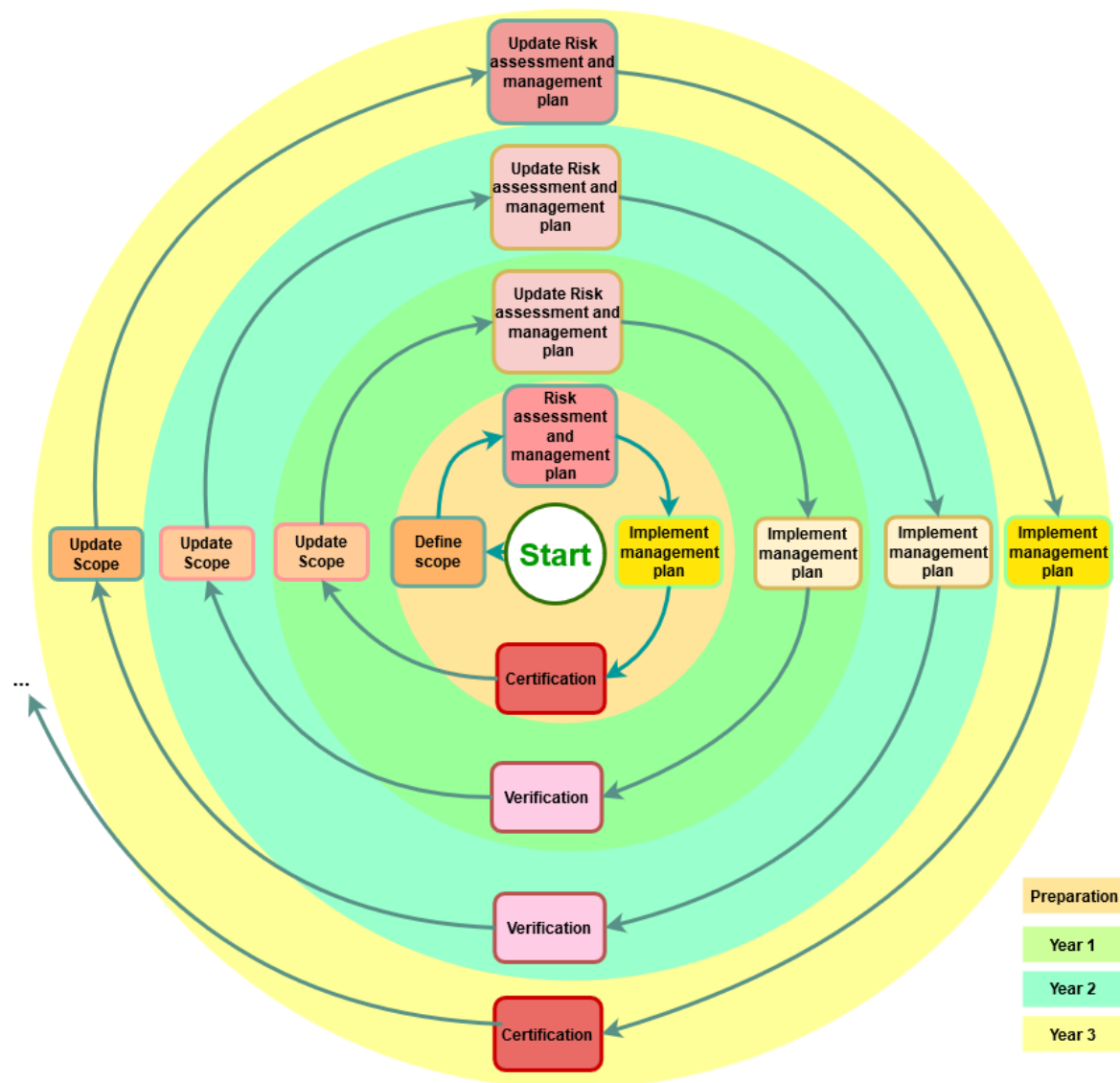


Figure 2: 3-year certification cycle



Applicability of an External CB audit

Certification is provision by an independent body of written assurance (a Certificate) that a product, service or system meets specific requirements. For Rainforest Alliance certification, this requires receiving a certification audit from a Rainforest Alliance authorized Certification Body (CB) against the requirements that are applicable to the scope and context of the CH. However, the frequency and intensity of such audits may vary based on the verification level assigned to the CH. Additionally, in some cases of very low risk, a CH may be exempted from a certification audit (verification levels in table 5).

1.3.1 The verification level is assigned based on risk, defined based on the following indicators:

- a. certification scope;
- b. Rainforest Alliance risk assessment;
- c. external conformity;
- d. internal conformity;

This information shall be provided by the CH through the registration and the risk assessment process in the RACP, for the platform to assign the corresponding verification level.

1.3.2 The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to increase the verification level based on its own risk assessment.

Verification level	Verification Method		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
A (lowest risk)	Rainforest Alliance Review	Rainforest Alliance automated check	Rainforest Alliance automated check
B	CB remote certification audit	Rainforest Alliance Review	Rainforest Alliance automated check
C	CB certification audit	CB remote surveillance audit	Rainforest Alliance Review
D	CB certification audit	CB surveillance audit	CB remote surveillance audit
E (highest risk)	CB certification audit	CB surveillance audit	CB surveillance audit

Table 5: Verification Levels



- 1.3.3** All CHs in verification levels B to E shall receive a certification audit from a Rainforest Alliance authorized CB and surveillance verifications (surveillance audit, remote surveillance audit, Rainforest Alliance review) as defined in their verification level.
- 1.3.4** All CHs in verification level A (and thus the lowest risk) may be exempted from an external CB audit, through the endorsement process (an approval to join the Rainforest Alliance certification program provided by the Rainforest Alliance)³. In those cases, the following applies:
- the Rainforest Alliance will provide an endorsement Certificate with a start date on the date of issuance by the Rainforest Alliance and a validity of three years, subject to the CH maintaining level A verification;
 - The Rainforest Alliance reserves the rights to require a Rainforest Alliance or CB audit to endorsed CHs;
 - In the event that an endorsed CH is found nonconformant with any of the applicable process or standard requirements, the CH shall bear all costs of the audit and complete a certification audit process within **12 weeks** after the date the CH has been found nonconformant in order to remain part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program.
- 1.3.5** All CHs that have farming included in their scope shall be classified in verification level E. However, in the event of proven consistent low risk, farm CHs may request to be moved to verification level D as indicated in the section 'incentives' in this document.
- 1.3.6** Supply chain CHs owning and/or physically handling volumes below the thresholds outlined below are considered small volume CHs based on which a lower verification level might be justified.

Crop/Sector	Total Volume	Equivalent Product
Coffee	100 MT	Green Coffee
Cocoa	75 MT	Cocoa Bean
Tea/Rooibos	100 MT	Made Tea
Bananas	500 MT	Whole Fruit
Fruits	20 MT	Whole Fruit
Hazelnut	50 MT	Hazelnut Kernel
Palm Oil	600MT	Crude Palm Oil
Coconut Oil	100MT	Crude Coconut Oil
Herbs and Spices	200 MT	Dried Herbs and Spices
Vanilla	10 MT	Vanilla Bean
Flowers	500,000 Stems	Flower Stems

³ Those could be for example (but may be subject to change):

- organizations that handle very low volumes of certified product.
- organizations that do not physically handle the certified product, and are not purchasing product directly from the farm CH.



Table 6: Small Volume Thresholds

Rainforest Alliance verification and monitoring

All CHs will be included in the monitoring activities performed by the Rainforest Alliance as follows:

The Rainforest Alliance will analyze data of each CH that goes through the certification process to monitor CB and CH conformity with the applicable rules in the assurance documents and with the applicable requirements in the standard. The Rainforest Alliance will provide a license to use the Rainforest Alliance platform if the data provided by the CH and/or by the CB during the certification process is deemed credible, correct and complete. The following rules apply:

1.3.7 The license shall have the exact scope of the Certificate.

1.3.8 A Certificate shall not be valid without an active license.

1.3.9 CHs shall not ship, process or sell product with a Rainforest Alliance product claim without having a license to use the Rainforest Alliance platform, as outcome of the certification process.

1.3.10 For farm CHs the license shall be updated yearly after CB verification in order to include the volume estimated to be harvested in the harvest cycle year.

1.4 CERTIFICATION PROCESS

This section describes the steps to be taken by the different actors involved in the certification process of a CH. This includes the endorsement process.

- The column "Step" describes the step in the process and the conditions that apply.
- The column "RA/CB/CH" describes the actor responsible for implementing the step.

All time frames in the certification process are counted in weeks (seven days starting any day of the week) and are maximal time frames: shorter is allowed.

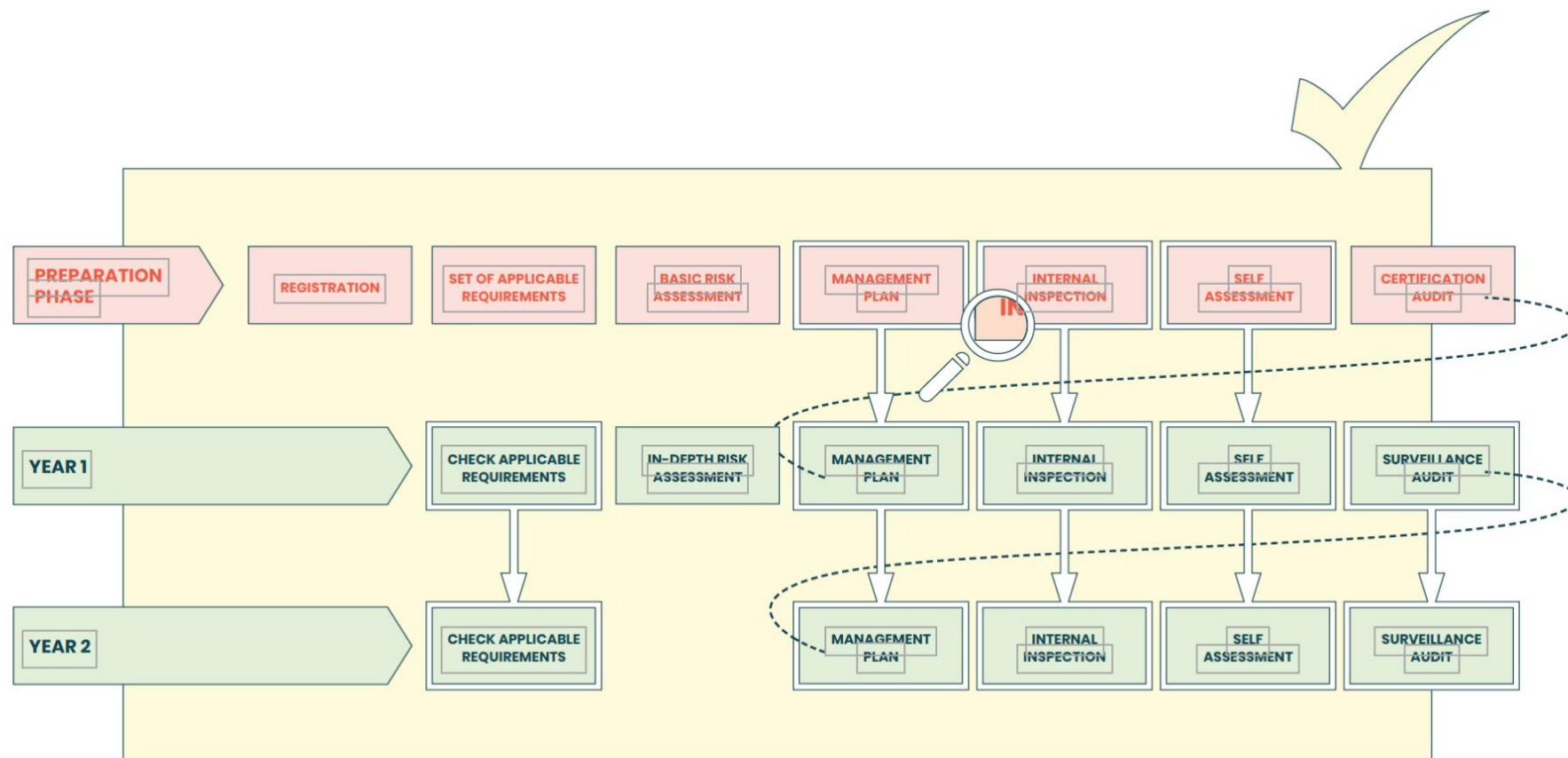


Figure 2: Certification Process overview



Certification Process		
Step	Rules per step	
Steps to determine applicable requirements		
1	<p>The CH creates a certification account in the Rainforest Alliance certification system</p> <p>1.4.1 All CHs that wish to join the Rainforest Alliance certification program shall create a certification account in the <u>RACP</u>.</p>	The CH
2	<p>The CH defines/updates certification scope⁴</p> <p>1.4.2 All CHs shall fill in all information and data necessary to define their certification scope of the CH and applicability of requirements in the <u>RACP</u>.</p> <p>1.4.3 This information shall be revised and updated (where necessary) annually, at a minimum</p> <p>1.4.4 The entire certification scope shall be covered by the certification account. However, a CH may choose to create separate certification accounts for different certification scopes, in which case the CH will follow a separate certification process per certification account and scope. .</p>	The CH
3	<p>The Rainforest Alliance provides/updates list of applicable standards requirements and requirements to be self-selected</p> <p>1.4.5 Once step 2 has been completed, the Rainforest Alliance shall provide the list of applicable requirements through the <u>RACP</u>, as well as the requirements that may be self-selected⁵.</p> <p>1.4.6 The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to update the applicable requirements with a notification period defined on a case by case basis.</p>	The Rainforest Alliance
4	<p>The CH selects/updates self-selected requirements and smart meters</p> <p>1.4.7 All CHs shall revise the list of applicable requirements provided by the <u>RACP</u>, add additional self-selected requirements (if desired) and <u>smart meters</u>.</p>	The CH

⁴ In case of scope extension, the CH goes through the process from step 2 onwards.

⁵ The requirements to be self selected are not mandatory, but may be selected to be included in the certification voluntarily for example to make additional claims.



	<p>1.4.8 If the scope and list of applicable requirements is correct, all CHs shall confirm their scope. From this moment onwards, incoming transactions in the <u>RA traceability platform</u> will be allowed.</p> <p>In the event that the scope is not correct, the CH shall correct this in the <u>RACP</u>. Applicability of standard requirements may change.</p>	
Steps to define the risk-based management plan and verification level		
5	<p>The Rainforest Alliance provides/updates list of applicable requirements</p> <p>1.4.9 Once the CH has confirmed its scope and applicable requirements, the Rainforest Alliance shall provide/update the list of applicable requirements.</p>	The Rainforest Alliance
6	<p>The CH completes/updates risk assessment process</p> <p>1.4.10 All CHs shall go through the <u>risk assessment</u> process in the <u>RACP</u> and provide all information necessary to define:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Verification level</u>. In the event that no audit is required for the entire CH, the CH, moves to step implementation of the applicable requirements in this process⁶. b. <u>Mitigation actions</u> per identified risk. For every risk identified it is mandatory to implement <u>mitigation actions</u>. <u>Mitigation actions</u> provided by the <u>Rainforest Alliance Risk Assessment tool</u> are strongly recommended, but the CH may change them if other actions are considered more appropriate to address the risk. <p>1.4.11 The CH shall revise the outcome of the <u>risk assessment</u> and confirm it in the <u>RACP</u>.</p> <p>1.4.12 If there is anything incorrect, this shall be adjusted before confirming.</p> <p>1.4.13 Once the <u>risk assessment</u> is confirmed, the applicable requirements and <u>verification level</u> cannot be changed anymore. If any further change is needed, the CH shall notify the Rainforest Alliance or the CB.</p> <p>1.4.14 This step shall be finalized at the latest 6 weeks⁷ before the audit.</p> <p>1.4.15 Farm CHs shall provide <u>geodata</u> at this stage. For more information on <u>geodata</u>, see Annex: geodata and risk maps for CHs with farming included certification scope.</p>	The CH
7	<p>The CH chooses a Rainforest Alliance authorized CB</p> <p>1.4.16 All CHs that require a CB audit and are not yet certified, shall choose a Rainforest Alliance authorized CB.</p>	The CH

⁶ For more information refer to section **Verification Levels** in this document.

⁷ A week are 7 days, starting at any day of the week regardless of national holidays.



	<p>1.4.17 Once step 6 is finalized the CHs basic <u>Certification Application Form (CAF)</u> becomes visible in the RACP, to CBs that are authorized for the scope of the CHs.</p> <p>1.4.18 CBs may offer quotations to the CH or the CH may request quotations from the CB based on the CAF.</p> <p>1.4.19 The CH may choose the CB of its preference however, Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to assign the CB to the CH in case of risk identified by the Rainforest Alliance⁹.</p>	
8	<p>The CB signs agreement with the CH and confirms the scope and start package</p> <p>1.4.20 All CHs that require a CB audit and are not yet certified, shall sign a certification agreement¹⁰ with the selected CB and confirm the agreement in the RACP. This will give the CB access to the full profile of the CH where progress can be monitored and the necessary information for the audit preparation shall be shared.</p> <p>1.4.21 The CB shall verify the information provided by the CH in its profile and confirm to the best of its knowledge the scope and verification level of the CH.</p> <p>1.4.22 In the event that the scope is incorrect, this shall be adjusted by the CH. Changes in scope may result in changes to the applicability of standards and verification requirements and audit costs.</p>	The CH + The CB
9	<p>The CH further implements Rainforest Alliance certification program</p> <p>1.4.23 All CHs shall implement all applicable requirements from the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard for the relevant year of certification that have not been fully implemented yet. This includes <u>self-selected requirements</u> and <u>smart meters</u> if applicable and the <u>mitigation actions</u> defined during the <u>risk assessment</u> process.</p> <p>1.4.24 In countries where there is an <u>Associate Trainers Network (ATN)</u>, the CH may use one of the <u>Associate Trainers</u> approved by the Rainforest Alliance. The list of countries where there is an <u>Associate Trainers Network</u>, and the list of approved trainers per country can be found on the Rainforest Alliance Learning Network.</p>	The CH
10	<p>The CH collects data and assesses its own conformity</p> <p>1.4.25 All CHs shall assess their own conformity and that of all actors falling under their responsibility (see certification options) with all applicable requirements and address any identified <u>NCs</u>. For more information on assessment of internal conformity, refer to the requirements on <u>Self-Assessment</u> and <u>Internal Inspection</u> in the Standard.</p>	The CH

⁸ The CAF is based on general information of the CH and includes scope and composition of the CH. For groups this includes estimated number of group members.

⁹ The Rainforest Alliance is exploring the possibilities of putting in place an audit allocation system ran by the Rainforest Alliance. This is initiated for cocoa in Ivory Coast, but may be extended to other crops and countries.

¹⁰ For more information on the content of the certification agreement refer to the **Rules for Authorizing Certification Bodies**.



11	<p>The CB and CH agree on audit dates</p> <p>1.4.26 The <u>CB</u> shall indicate the scheduled audit dates in the <u>RACP</u> 8 weeks before the first day of the audit (certification, re-certification). In the event that the dates change, this shall be adjusted in the <u>RACP</u>¹¹.</p> <p>1.4.27 For the surveillance audit, the schedule indicated in the <u>RACP</u> shall not show any dates to the <u>CH</u>, as the surveillance audit shall be unannounced.</p> <p>1.4.28 In the event that the audit is planned to take place or takes place longer than 6 months after the confirmation of the scope of the <u>CH</u>, the <u>CH</u> shall update its scope and implement any new requirements that may be applicable based on the scope update before the audit.</p>	The CB
12	<p>The CH updates/provides audit preparation or endorsement data</p> <p>1.4.29 All CHs shall complete or revise their audit preparation or endorsement data.</p> <p>1.4.30 All CHs in verification levels B, C, D and E (CB audit) shall provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. self-assessment; b. Workers registry; c. Details of sites, processing units, intermediaries, subcontractors and service providers; d. Risk assessment data. e. A layout of the facilities/infrastructures included in the certification scope. f. Only for groups: mapped product flow from the <u>group members</u> up to the group's central facilities, including all <u>intermediaries</u> (<u>collection points, transport, processing units, warehouses</u> etc.) and activities carried out on the product. g. Only for groups: group member registry (GMR) data. h. Only when farming is included: geolocation data (combination of points and polygons as required in the Farm Requirements). 	The CH

¹¹ For CHs that are receiving a surveillance audit, the scheduled date is the audit cut-off date from which the CH commits to be compliant and ready for the audit.



	<p>1.4.31 This information shall be available to the CB in the RACP at least 5 weeks before the first day of the scheduled audit. If the information is not complete 5 weeks before the audit, the audit shall be postponed.</p> <p>1.4.32 All CHs that are in verification level A that wish to receive or renew their <u>endorsement</u> shall provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Self-assessment. b. Signed endorsement agreement. 	
13	<p>The Rainforest Alliance provides risk analysis to the CB</p> <p>1.4.33 For all CB audits, in addition to the information provided by the <u>CH</u>, the Rainforest Alliance shall provide the following based on level of risk posed to conformity with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A list of minimum requirements to verify based on risk. b. For all farmer CHs: <u>risk maps</u> based on the geodata provided. For more information annex on geodata and <u>risk maps</u> in this document. c. Only for groups and multi-farms: recommendations of farms to be included in the sample. d. Only for multi-sites: a list of <u>sites</u> and/or <u>processing units</u> to audit based on risk. 	The Rainforest Alliance
14	<p>The CB plans and prepares audit (certification or surveillance)</p> <p>1.4.34 Before each <u>certification</u> or <u>surveillance audit</u>, the CB shall plan and prepare the audit incorporating the information provided by the <u>CH</u> in the audit preparation data, and the risk assessment outcome provided by the Rainforest Alliance.</p> <p>1.4.35 The <u>CB</u> may change the risk assessment provided by the Rainforest Alliance and shall provide a justification for doing so.</p> <p>For more information on the rules that apply for the audit, refer to the section on external verification of conformity below. For more information on the process of the audit, refer to the Rainforest Alliance Auditing Rules.</p>	The CB
15	<p>The CB conducts on site audit (certification, recertification or surveillance)</p> <p>1.4.36 All CHs in verification levels B to E that are in their certification audit year shall receive a certification audit.</p> <p>1.4.37 All CHs in verification levels B to E that are in their surveillance year shall receive a surveillance audit.</p> <p>1.4.38 The audit may be combined with audits for other certification schemes.</p>	The CB



	For more information refer to the Rainforest Alliance Auditing Rules .	
16	<p>If any, CB provides a description of non-conformities</p> <p>1.4.39 For all audits where <u>NCs</u> have been identified, the <u>CB</u> shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide a description of <u>NCs</u>, in the <u>RACP</u>, using the Rainforest Alliance checklist. b. This shall be done 1 week after the last day of the audit. c. If any adjustments or changes are made by the quality review of the CB (see Rainforest Alliance Auditing Rules) the <u>CH</u> shall be notified. 	The CB
17	<p>The CH resolves non-conformities</p> <p>1.4.40 All <u>CHs</u> that have received one or more <u>NCs</u> shall close all <u>NCs</u> following the process described under the section Non-conformities and possible consequences of this document.</p> <p>1.4.41 The timeline for closure of the <u>NCs</u> shall be defined by the <u>CH</u> and the <u>CB</u> considering the maximum of 12 weeks that is defined for the <u>CB</u> to take the certification decision.</p>	The CH
18	<p>The CB verifies that non-conformities have been resolved</p> <p>1.4.42 The <u>CB</u> shall verify that all the evidence submitted by the <u>CH</u> is sufficient to close the <u>NCs</u>. The CB may conduct an on site <u>follow up audit</u> if required.</p>	The CB
19	<p>The CB provides the final audit report and performs a quality review</p> <p>1.4.43 For all audits the CB shall provide the final audit report in the <u>RACP</u>.</p> <p>1.4.44 After the final audit report has been completed in the <u>RACP</u> the report will be reviewed by the <u>CB</u> through its internal quality management system.</p> <p>1.4.45 In the event that the quality review reveals any new <u>NCs</u>, the CB will inform the CH and the CH shall close these before the certification decision is taken.</p> <p>1.4.46 The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to require the CB to share the results of the CB's internal quality review and require the CB to follow up on those results.</p> <p>1.4.47 Once the quality review of the <u>CB</u> has approved the report, the <u>CB</u> shall take a <u>certification decision</u> (certification, non-certification, de-certification).</p> <p>1.4.48 The CB shall take the <u>certification decision</u> within the following timelines:</p>	The CB



	<p>a. In the event that any <u>NCs</u> were identified: within 12 weeks after the last day of the audit.</p> <p>b. In the event that no <u>NCs</u> were identified: within 2 weeks after the last day of audit.</p> <p>For more information refer to the Rainforest Alliance Auditing Rules.</p>	
20	<p>The CB submits certification decision in the RACP</p> <p>1.4.49 If the <u>certification decision</u> is positive, the CB shall submit the <u>license request</u> to the Rainforest Alliance through the <u>RACP</u> within 1 week after the certification decision has been taken.</p> <p>1.4.50 In this case the CB shall make the <u>certificate</u> in the <u>RACP</u>. The <u>certificate</u> shall be released for the <u>CH</u> to download it, once the <u>license</u> has been approved by the Rainforest Alliance.</p> <p>1.4.51 If the <u>certification decision</u> is not positive (suspension, cancellation or non-certification), the CB shall submit its decision through the <u>RACP</u> within 1 week after the <u>certification decision</u> has been taken.</p>	The CB
21	<p>The Rainforest Alliance performs data analysis</p> <p>The Rainforest Alliance performs data analysis (manually and/or automatically). These analyses are part of the <u>CH</u> and <u>CB</u> monitoring activities performed by the Rainforest Alliance and may result in additional assurance activities or <u>CB</u> sanctions.</p> <p>1.4.52 The Rainforest Alliance shall perform monitoring activities for all <u>license request</u> and provide an answer to the <u>CB</u> within 1 week after reception of the request.</p>	The Rainforest Alliance
22	<p>CB provides/clarifies certification decision and data to the Rainforest Alliance</p> <p>1.4.53 If requested by the Rainforest Alliance, the <u>CB</u> shall clarify and/or provide additional information on the <u>certification decision</u> and data within 1 week after the request for additional information or clarification.</p>	The CB
23	<p>The CH receives license to use the Rainforest Alliance traceability platform and seal</p> <p>1.4.54 If the certification process and all information is deemed credible by the Rainforest Alliance, a <u>license</u> to use the <u>RA traceability platform</u> shall be issued by the Rainforest Alliance.</p> <p>1.4.55 Until the <u>license</u> is issued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the CH shall not sell or ship any product with a Rainforest Alliance certification product claim; b. any seal approval is not valid without a valid active license in the RACP; c. the CB shall not release a Certificate to the CH. 	The Rainforest Alliance



	1.4.56 The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right not to issue a <u>license</u> . In such case, a certification shall not be valid.	
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Table 7: Certification Process

1.5 EXTERNAL VERIFICATION OF CONFORMITY

This section describes different types of audits applicable to CHs, when they apply and the rules conditions that apply per audit.

Types of audits

Type of audit	Purpose	Applicable rules to be found in
Certification/ Recertification audit	1.5.1 All CHs in verification levels B to E , shall receive a certification audit in order to become part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program. They shall receive a recertification audit once every 3 years to remain part of the Rainforest Alliance certification program.	Verification of Conformity
Surveillance audit	1.5.2 In order to maintain its Certificate, a CH shall receive a yearly <u>surveillance audit</u> . Supply chain CHs may be exempted from receiving external <u>surveillance audit</u> or all <u>surveillance audits</u> based their risk level. See Verification of Conformity .	Verification of Conformity
Follow up audit	1.5.3 Where <u>NCs</u> are identified during the <u>(re)certification</u> or <u>surveillance audit</u> , the <u>CB</u> shall perform a <u>follow up audit</u> to verify closure of the <u>NCs</u> . 1.5.4 The CB shall decide if it is necessary to perform the <u>follow up audit on-site</u> or if a <u>desk follow up audit</u> suffices.	Verification of Conformity
Investigation audit	1.5.5 An <u>investigation audit</u> is conducted in responds to a specific complaint, reported incident or substantial information regarding the conformity of the CH and may be performed by the Rainforest Alliance or the <u>CB</u> .	Verification of Conformity
Extension audit	1.5.6 In case of changes in the scope of a CH that is already certified, an <u>extension audit</u> may be required depending on the scope of the extension (usually additions to the scope). <u>Extension audits</u> are performed by the <u>CB</u> of the <u>CH</u> .	Verification of Conformity
Shadow audit	1.5.7 A shadow audit is an audit carried out by the Rainforest Alliance to evaluate and monitor the performance of the CB by evaluating the performance of an auditor/audit team as they are performing a CB audit in the field. A shadow audit has no cost to the CH.	Rules for Authorizing Certification Bodies



	<p>1.5.8 A shadow audit normally does not have any consequences for the CH. However, the Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to suspend, cancel or not grant a license and require the CB to suspend, cancel or not grant certification in the following cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the CH fails to fulfil its obligations as described in the section on Obligations of the CH during any audit; b. the Rainforest Alliance identifies any non-conformity with the Rainforest Alliance Standard and Assurance requirements for the CH, that jeopardize the credibility of the Rainforest Alliance certification program. <p>1.5.9 The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to require the CB to follow up on non-conformities identified at the CH.</p>	
Review audit	<p>1.5.10 A <u>review audit</u> is an audit carried out by the Rainforest Alliance to evaluate and monitor the performance of the <u>CB</u> by performing an audit to a <u>CH</u> after a <u>CB</u> audit, and comparing audit findings of the <u>CB</u> auditor/audit team and the Rainforest Alliance auditor.</p> <p>1.5.11 A <u>review audit</u> normally does not have any consequences for the CH. However, the Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to suspend, cancel or not grant a license and require the CB to suspend, cancel or not grant certification in the following cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. the CH fails to fulfil its obligations as described in the section on Obligations of the CH during any audit; d. the Rainforest Alliance identifies any non-conformity with the Rainforest Alliance Standard and Assurance requirements for the CH, that jeopardize the credibility of the Rainforest Alliance certification program. <p>1.5.12 The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to require the CB to follow up on non-conformities identified at the CH.</p>	Rules for Authorizing Certification Bodies

Table 8: Types of Audits

Obligations of the CH during any audit

1.5.13 In all types of audits, the CH shall:

- a. use best efforts to accommodate all audit activities as communicated by the audit team, prior to, during and after the audit;
- b. fully cooperate with the audit team;



- c. provide the audit team full access to all facilities, areas and resources required to evaluate the certification scope of the CH throughout the course of audit activities;
- d. provide ground transportation to the audit team for any required traveling between locations within the certification/audit scope (for example between farms, between sites, from/to subcontractors);
- e. provide access to workers, temporary workers and contractors for interviews without coaching or intimidation;
- f. pay workers involved in the auditing process at a fair and equitable rate;
- g. provide private facility for the audit team to perform interviews when required;
- h. not record interviews in any way;
- i. ensure that its personnel do not intervene with any auditing activities, including interviews, in bad faith or otherwise with the intent to disrupt the audit.
- j. accept the CB's decisions and submit any disagreement with the audit process, results, or certification decision in accordance with the Grievance Procedure as set forth in the section Grievance Procedure;

1.5.14 The CH shall pay the CB at least 70% of the audit fees **3 weeks** prior to the first date of the audit or the final time window in case of a **surveillance audit**.

1.5.15 The final audit plan, as confirmed in the RACP, and announced to the CH by the CB, shall be displayed by the CH in its facilities, at least **1 week** prior to the first audit date, in a way that all personnel involved in certification is informed of the audit.

1.5.16 Failure to fulfil any of the responsibilities set out above may result in:

- a. Suspension or non-certification of the CH. The Rainforest Alliance may decide not to allow the CH to be (re)certified for a specific period or indefinitely; This may be requested by the CB or at the Rainforest Alliance's own discretion.
- b. Termination of the certification process by the CB; The CB may decide to terminate the certification process with this CH and issue a non-certification and cancel the active certificate if any;

1.5.17 If the certification process is terminated by the CB or the CH receives a suspension or a non-certification due to failure to comply with CH obligations during audit, the CH shall still cover all costs involved, including the cost of any subsequent audit that may be required.

(Re) certification audit: conditions for certification options 1 to 4 (farm CHs)

1.5.18 The (re) certification audit shall take place between **3 months before** and **3 months after** the start date of the harvest of the main crop to be certified.

1.5.19 A certification audit that results in a positive certification decision shall provide the farm or farm group with:



- a. a CB Certificate valid for **3 years**, issued by the CB;
- b. an estimated volume per crop in the certification scope. The estimated volume shall cover the volume estimated to be harvested during **one year**, starting on the first day of the Certificate;
- c. a license to use the RA traceability platform valid for **3 years**, provided by the Rainforest Alliance.

1.5.20 The start date of the Certificate, estimated volume and license shall be the start date of the harvest to be certified (small or large harvest).

1.5.21 For countries and crops where an official start of the harvest is determined, this date applies. For example:

Country	Crop	Official start date of the harvest	
		Main harvest	Small harvest
Ivory Coast	Cocoa	1 st of October	1 st of April
Turkey	Hazelnuts	1 st of August	N/A

Table 9: harvest start dates

1.5.22 For CHs that certify crops with a continuous harvest only, the start date shall be the first day of the audit that led to a positive certification decision¹².

1.5.23 If there is more than 1 crop to be certified with no continuous harvest, the crop with the highest estimated volume shall count as reference for the determination of the audit dates and the start date of the Certificate and estimated volume.

1.5.24 In this case, all other certifiable crops of the same CH shall have the same certification cycle.

1.5.25 Only product harvested within the validity period of a certificate shall be eligible to be sold or shipped as certified.

1.5.26 The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to require the CB to perform an unannounced (re)certification audit.

(Re) certification audit: conditions for certification options 5 and 6 (supply chain CHs)

1.5.27 The re-certification audit shall take place no longer than **4 months prior to or after** the expiry of the previous certificate.

¹² A continuous harvest does not apply for the crops Cocoa, Coffee or Hazelnuts.



- 1.5.28** Products purchased and processed more than **4 months prior to** the audit shall not be sold, shipped or processed as Rainforest Alliance Certified.
- 1.5.29** Incoming transactions that take place more than **4 months prior to** the audit, shall be automatically deleted by the RA traceability platform.
- 1.5.30** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the rights to require the CB to perform an unannounced (re) certification audit.
- 1.5.31** A certification audit that results in a positive certification decision shall provide the CH with:
- a. a Certificate valid for **3 years**;
 - b. a license to use the RA traceability platform valid for **3 years**.
- 1.5.32** The start date of the Certificate and the license shall be the date of first purchase of certified product up to **4 months prior to** the first audit day.
- 1.5.33** Any product purchased longer than **4 months prior to** the first audit day, shall lose its Rainforest Alliance Certified status.

Surveillance audit

- 1.5.34** If a first surveillance audit is required based on the **verification level** of a CH, the first surveillance audit shall always take place **9 to 15 months after** the date of certification.
- 1.5.35** If a second surveillance audit is required based on the verification level of a CH, the second surveillance audit shall always take place **21 to 27 months after** the date of certification.
- 1.5.36** A surveillance audit is a full-scope audit. The CB may decide to adjust the audit sample (group members, interviews, documents, sites etc.) and audit duration on-site as relevant to achieve the audit objectives.
- 1.5.37** The surveillance audit shall be performed preferably when the greatest number of higher-risk activities are performed and/or when the CB estimates that the greatest number of workers will be present.
- 1.5.38** For all CHs that have social requirements in their scope, the surveillance audit shall be either unannounced or announced a maximum of **48 hours prior to** the first date of the audit. In such circumstances:
- a. The CB shall inform the CH of a time window of **at least 8 weeks** in which the audit is expected to be performed.
 - b. This information shall be provided by the CB **at least 12 weeks** prior to the first date of the proposed time window.
 - c. The CB shall ensure that the final announcement includes a detailed audit plan with potential audit team and tentative audit activities for each audit day. Such a plan shall not include the audit dates.



Surveillance Audit: additional conditions for certification options 1 to 4 (farm CHs)

- 1.5.39** All surveillance audits at CHs with farming in their scope shall take place on site.
- 1.5.40** At least one of the two surveillance audits that take place in a 3-year cycle shall take place during the harvest of the main certified crop, to allow for verification of working conditions of the workers employed during peak season.
- 1.5.41** A surveillance audit that results in maintenance of certification, shall provide the CH with:
- a. an estimated volume per crop in the certification scope;
 - b. the estimated volume shall cover the volume estimated to be harvested during **one year**, starting subsequently to the previous estimated volume;
 - c. an update of the previous estimated volume per crop in the certification scope based on the harvested volume and the sales performed.

Follow up audit

- 1.5.42** In the event that NCs have been identified during a (re) certification or surveillance audit, a follow up audit shall always take place to verify closure of the NCs.
- 1.5.43** The CB shall decide whether it is necessary to perform the follow up audit on site.
- 1.5.44** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the rights to require the CB to perform an on-site audit, regardless of the CB's decision, at any time during the certification cycle.
- 1.5.45** The CH shall make full payment to the CB for all costs involved in reviewing the closure of NCs.
- 1.5.46** A follow up audit may have limited scope depending on the NCs found by the CB which lead to the follow up audit.
- 1.5.47** The CH shall ensure that it submits Root Cause Analysis (RCA) and Corrective Action (CA) plan(s) and/or evidence of closure of NCs in a timely manner.
- 1.5.48** The CB shall ensure the follow up audit is performed in a timely manner.
- 1.5.49** Where the CB concludes that the findings found in the audit leading to the follow up audit have not been sufficiently closed within the given timeline:
- a. the CB shall decide to suspend the certificate; or
 - b. the CB shall take a non-certification or cancellation decision;
 - c. the CB may request that the Rainforest Alliance prohibit certification for the CH for an indefinite period.



1.5.50 Where the CB finds new NC(s) during a follow up audit:

- a. the CB shall decide to suspend the certificate; or
- b. the CB shall take a non-certification or de-certification decision;
- c. The CB may request that the Rainforest Alliance prohibit certification for the CH for an indefinite period;
- d. The CB may allow the CH to close the newly found NC(s) within a period of a **maximum of 3 weeks** from the date that the NC(s) have been communicated to the CH and/or the last date of the follow up audit - whichever is earlier.

1.5.51 The CH shall pay the CB for all additional costs involved.

Investigation audit

1.5.52 An investigation audit shall be unannounced or announced at a maximum of 24 hours prior to the first date of the audit.

1.5.53 Whether an investigation audit is required shall be determined based on risks and substantial information received by the CB and/or the Rainforest Alliance.

1.5.54 An investigation may have a pre-defined limited scope to respond to the matters under investigation.

1.5.55 The duration of an investigation audit shall be pre-defined prior to the audit and announced to the CH on the first day of the visit.

1.5.56 If necessary, the audit team has the right to adjust the audit duration whilst on-site.

1.5.57 An investigation audit may be carried out at any time during a certification cycle.

1.5.58 Where the investigation audit leads to confirmed findings directly related to the matters under investigation:

- a. the CB and/or the Rainforest Alliance may decide to suspend the certificate of the CH for an (in)definite period and/or may decide not to allow the CH to get certified again for an indefinite period;
- b. the CH shall cover all costs involved for performing such an audit;
- c. when allowed to maintain its certification, the CH shall implement all required corrective actions to respond to the findings of an investigation audit.

Extension audit

An additional audit may be mandatory for approval of a scope extension request. For more information see section on extensions.

1.5.59 An extension audit shall be performed by the CB that the CH has a valid contract with.

1.5.60 In the event that the CH has an endorsement, and thus does not have contract with a CB, the CH shall contract a CB.



- 1.5.61** In the event that the CB that the CH has a contract with is suspended or does not operate anymore, the CH shall contract a new CB.
- 1.5.62** Whether an extension audit is required, is determined based on the risk and defined in the outcome of the scope change performed by the CH in the RACP.
- 1.5.63** The scope of the extension audit shall be limited to the scope of the extension.
- 1.5.64** An extension audit shall take place while a CH has a valid Certificate.

EXTENSIONS

- 1.6.1** In the event of changes in the certification scope or CH organization that may affect the conformity of the CH, the CH shall inform the CB in writing immediately. Such changes may include change in key responsible persons, change in ownership etc.
- 1.6.2** Changes in the scope that occur during the validity of a Certificate and that imply an increase (i.e. more volume, group members, area, activities, sites or performance level in the standard), shall be included through the scope extension process. For more information on the rules per type of extension, refer to the table below.
- 1.6.3** Any increase (i.e. more volume, group members, area, activities, sites or level) shall not be considered as certified until the extension process has been finalized successfully.
- 1.6.4** To start the process for a scope extension, the CH shall update the profile data in the RACP and inform the CB.
- 1.6.5** Based on the data provided, the Rainforest Alliance platform shall:
- provide an updated list of applicable requirements;
 - indicate the verification needed on the new requirements if any;
 - set in motion the applicable assurance processes. This process is the same as the certification process, starting at step 2, with as scope the applicable requirements that have been added after the update of the profile.

Possible extensions and conditions

Possible extensions	Conditions	Verification needed
1.6.6 volume and/or area and/or	a. the extension shall not be more than 30% of the already certified volume and/or area and/or group members/intermediaries	A <u>CB</u> extension audit is always mandatory for extensions of more than 10% in volume, area or number of <u>group members</u> .



group members	<p>b. the extension shall be requested during the validity of the volume¹³ that is to be extended</p> <p>c. new <u>group members</u> shall have the same level of conformity as the existing <u>group members</u>.</p> <p>d. new <u>group members</u> and or intermediaries shall go through the internal inspection process and found compliant with all applicable requirements.</p>	<p>For extensions below 10%, this is determined based on a risk Assessment performed by the Rainforest Alliance.</p> <p>The extension audit shall include an evaluation of the <u>IMS</u> and its verification of conformity of the added <u>group members</u>, <u>intermediaries</u>, volumes and area, and at least the square root of the number of new <u>group members</u> and/or members with new area and/or volume and/or <u>intermediaries</u> is required during that year before the extension may be added to the existing <u>Certificate</u>.</p>
1.6.7 Traceability level	The <u>CH</u> shall implement all requirements applicable to the traceability to add and verify its own conformity through a <u>self-assessment</u> .	The verification of conformity needed before the <u>CH</u> is allowed to operate under the new traceability level will be determined based on the update of step 6 in the certification process.
1.6.8 Sites and processing units	The <u>sites</u> and <u>processing units</u> shall implement all requirements applicable and the <u>CH</u> shall verify their conformity through a <u>self-assessment</u> .	The verification of conformity needed before the new site(s) are added to the scope of the <u>CH</u> will be determined based on the update of step 6 in the certification process.
1.6.9 Crop	The <u>CH</u> shall implement all requirements applicable and verify its own conformity through a <u>self-assessment</u> .	<p>The verification of conformity needed before the new crop is added to the scope of the <u>CH</u> will be determined based on the update of step 6 in the certification process.</p> <p>For <u>CHs</u> that want to include another crop with farming in scope, an extension audit is mandatory before the extension can be granted.</p>
1.6.10 Processing activities	The <u>CH</u> shall implement all requirements applicable and verify its own conformity through a <u>self-assessment</u> .	The verification of conformity needed before the new processing activities are added to the scope of the <u>CH</u> will be determined based on the update of step 6 in the certification process.

Table 10: Rules per type of extension

¹³ This is not the same as the validity of the Certificate, as the volume is yearly and the Certificate has a 3 years cycle.



1.7 NON-CONFORMITIES AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

This section explains what the possible consequences are in case of NC and how this relates to the performance system.

Identification of non-conformities during an external audit

- 1.7.1 Any NC identified during the external audit shall always be reported to the Rainforest Alliance and communicated to the CH.
- 1.7.2 The audit team is responsible for identifying and describing the NCs identified during the audit.
- 1.7.3 The certifier is responsible for verifying any given NC and shall make adjustments if needed, based on the information provided by the audit team.
- 1.7.4 If a certifier makes any adjustments in the NCs, this shall be reported to the CH.

Non-conformities and the performance system

- 1.7.5 All NCs found against applicable requirements during a certification audit shall be closed before the CH may be certified.
- 1.7.6 If a NC is found for any part of the CH or actor falling under its responsibility, the entire CH shall not be certified before the NC is closed¹⁴.
- 1.7.7 If one or more NCs are found during any audit performed while the Certificate is still active (surveillance or investigation audit), the CH shall not have its active Certificate or volume cancelled unless the CB decides to do so in case of non-certification. However, all NCs with applicable requirements shall be closed within the time frame mentioned in the certification process, in order for the CH to maintain its certification.
- 1.7.8 If one or more NCs are found with a self-selected requirement and/or self-selected smart meter, the NC shall be closed before the CH is allowed to make any additional claims on that requirement. This shall not affect the certification decision.

Closure of a non-conformity

- 1.7.9 Where an NC is raised to a CH, the CH shall determine and implement the appropriate correction and corrective action to prevent recurrence of the NC.
- 1.7.10 The CH shall submit a proposed corrective action plan to the CB that includes:
 - a. **Root cause:** In order to identify the root cause of the NC, the CH shall perform a root cause analysis (RCA);

¹⁴ For example:

- A NC identified at one of the sites, affects the certification status of the entire multi-site
- A NC identified at one of the group members, affects the certification status of the entire group.
- A NC identified at one of the subgroups (when multi-group), affects the certification status of the entire multi-group.



- b. **Correction:** to correct the NC, the CH shall correct all instances of the NC throughout the life of the certificate to date.
- c. **Corrective action:** to eliminate the root cause of the NC and prevent it from recurring. Corrective actions shall focus on long term, sustainable solutions, which eliminate the root cause of the NC;
- d. In the event that the long-term solution to the root cause requires more than the maximum time allowed for closure of NC, the NC may be closed with a corrective action plan as long as the actions to be implemented are concrete, time-bound, have started and will be finalized before the end of the Certificate of the CH;
- e. **A time frame** in which corrections and corrective actions shall be undertaken and evidence submitted to the CB. This time frame shall take into account the maximum of **12 weeks** for the CB to make a certification decision.

1.7.11 The CB shall agree or disagree with the proposed corrective action plan. If the CB disagrees, the CB shall justify the reasons and the CH shall submit a new corrective action plan.

1.7.12 The CB shall verify that the corrections and corrective actions have been taken and have been effective in eliminating the NC and its root cause through a follow up audit.

Non-certification or Cancellation

1.7.13 The CB or the Rainforest Alliance may decide to immediately cancel the current Certificate of the CH and/or decide not to certify the CH for any of the reasons set forth below or for similar reasons.

1.7.14 In such a circumstance, the CB may request that the Rainforest Alliance prohibit certification for the CH for an indefinite period, based on the audit findings.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples that lead to immediate non-certification or cancellation:

1.7.15 Evidence of fraud, inaction or cover-up. This can be for example:

- a. When there is evidence that conventional volume is intentionally being claimed as Rainforest Alliance Certified.
- b. When there is evidence that there is misuse of sustainability differential.

1.7.16 Bribery and/or intimidation of the auditor. If an auditor receives any type of bribe, offer of a bribe or pressure from the CH, the auditor shall immediately suspend the audit and refuse certification. Rainforest Alliance wants to protect the integrity and safety of the auditors that operate in its assurance system; therefore, the auditor may suspend the audit in such cases without having physical evidence of pressure or bribery.

1.7.17 Structural issues with irreversible non-compliant practices, for example (but not limited to):

- c. Use of a product from the Rainforest Alliance list of banned pesticides, for the production of a harvest that is (to be) certified, that cannot be segregated anymore;



- d. Loss of traceability of product that is (to be) certified;
- e. Conversion of forests or other natural ecosystems to agricultural production or other land uses that occurred after January 1st, 2014; **For large estates and/or individual certification**; in the event that the conversion comprises more than 1% of the land of the farm or more than 10 hectares, the NC shall result in non-certification and/or cancellation. In the event that conversion takes place on a Protected Area, in a place and manner than violates the requirement in the standard or applicable law, this shall always result in non-certification and/or cancellation regardless of the size of the conversion.

1.7.18 For **groups**; in the event that any of the above mentioned irreversible non-compliant practices occurred on more than 5% and/or on at least 5 of the audited small farms this is considered to be a systemic issue not an isolated case and therefore shall result in non-certification and/or cancellation;

1.7.19 Systemic failure of the Internal Management System of the CH: this is where management of a CH is not capable of safeguarding conformity of its group members, or any other actors falling under the CHs responsibility, with the requirements of the Rainforest Alliance standard. A NC is regarded as a systemic failure in the event that they are not identified by the IMS of the CH and/or not addressed by the CH.

1.7.20 Severe human rights cases. The Severity Analysis (using the Rainforest Alliance Severity Tool) determines that the identified issue is severe.

1.7.21 Violations of applicable national, regional, local or sectoral **law or collective bargaining agreements**¹⁵.

1.7.22 Evidence of potential criminal activity. In the event that, during the course of any audit, the CB or the Rainforest Alliance discover evidence of potential criminal activity or any other information required to be disclosed to a judicial, governmental or regulatory body, the CB and the Rainforest Alliance reserve the right to disclose such information to the relevant body.

1.7.23 If the corrective actions have not been implemented satisfactorily within the timeframe described in the certification process above, the CB shall not grant the certification (i.e. a first Certificate or a new Certificate following expiry of the previous Certificate shall not be issued). Moreover, in the event the CH still has an active Certificate, the CB shall cancel the certification of the CH, following the conditions described below.

1.7.24 The CB may decide to cancel the certification of the CH by withdrawing their Certificate or issue a non-certification for the reasons stated above. Cancellation or non-certification cannot be lifted. In order to recertify, the CH shall receive a new certification audit.

Consequences and steps to be taken in the event of non-certification or cancellation

1.7.25 The CB shall immediately inform the Rainforest Alliance and the CH through the RACP.

¹⁵ See "Overarching Rules on Applicability of the Standard" for more information on applicability of law.



- 1.7.26** If a CH receives a non-certification and still has an active Certificate, the CB shall cancel the certification of the CH.
- 1.7.27** CHs that have farming included in their scope shall wait at least one harvest period (main/big or mid/small) from the date the non-certification decision was taken, or six months if the harvest is continuous before a new certification may take place.
- 1.7.28** A CH whose Certificate was cancelled, or who received a non-certification and wants to achieve certification again shall comply, by the new audit, with the conformity level (level 0, level 1 or level 2) corresponding to the conformity year they were in when they were cancelled.
- 1.7.29** All volumes under the responsibility of the CH that received a non-certification or cancellation lose their certified status and shall be downgraded to conventional from the day the decision was communicated to the CH by the CB.

Suspension

- 1.7.30** Throughout the validity period of the Certificate, a CB or the Rainforest Alliance may decide to suspend a CHs ' Certificate for a period of up to **3 months**, in the event that there are deviations from the Rainforest Alliance program that requires further investigation¹⁶.
- 1.7.31** For human rights issue included in the Assess-and-Address system (child labor, forced labor, discrimination, workplace violence and harassment), the CB shall suspend the Certificate if there is a potentially severe issue and more time is needed for Severity Analysis (using the Rainforest Alliance Severity Tool).
- 1.7.32** While the CH's Certificate is suspended, the CH may not sell or ship its products with a Rainforest Alliance Certified claim.
- 1.7.33** Once the CB has verified that the underlying reasons for the suspension have been satisfactorily addressed, the CB lifts the suspension of the Certificate, and on behalf of the Rainforest Alliance lifts the suspension in the RA traceability platform. In the event that that upon verification by the CB the underlying reasons for the suspension have not been satisfactorily addressed, the CB shall immediately issue a cancellation following the conditions described above.
- 1.7.34** If following a (re)certification audit, the CH fails to resolve the NCs within the stipulated time period, the CB shall take a non-certification decision, rather than issuing a suspension.

Sell-off period in case of cancellation, non-certification or suspension

- 1.7.35** Upon cancellation, non-certification or suspension the CH shall immediately:

¹⁶ Examples include:

- non-conformities found during a recertification audit, a surveillance audit or surprise audit that might potentially cause a credibility issue for the Rainforest Alliance and/or the CB and requires further investigation to identify whether the CH shall receive cancellation and/or non-certification.
- failure of the organization to meet financial obligations to the CB or Rainforest Alliance or other administrative issues.



- a. cease to make any use of the Rainforest Alliance trademark to sell any previously labeled product unless such trademark is removed, and/or to make any claims that imply that such product, or any activity and/or process of the CH, conforms to the applicable standards;
- b. at the CH's own expense, remove all uses of names, initials, logos, certification marks or other trademarks of the Rainforest Alliance from its products (or, where removal is not possible, recall any such products), documents, advertising and/or marketing materials, physical or electronic promotion material or media, in brochures or on webpages, signs or other documentation and business-to-business communications.

1.7.36 Upon cancellation, non-certification or suspension, CHs shall immediately cease to sell or ship product as certified. However, they will be authorized to make transactions in the RA traceability platform for product that was verifiably sold and shipped prior to the date of cancellation, if the CH complies with the following requirements:

- c. the cancellation, non-certification or suspension is not a consequence of a NC related to loss of traceability of the product or use of banned inputs that cannot be traced back to the source;
- d. the CH shall request permission from the Rainforest Alliance to make the transaction of the product that was sold and shipped before the suspension or cancellation date;
- e. the CH shall provide the Rainforest Alliance with documentation (i.e. bill of lading and invoice) that proves the purchase and shipment took place before the suspension or cancellation date. Because contracts are often for long terms or multiple years, transactions will not be authorized based solely upon purchase contracts. Proof of shipment is required.

1.7.37 The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to deny such a request, in the event that Rainforest Alliance, in its sole discretion, determines that denial is necessary or helpful to safeguard the credibility of the program.

1.8 CERTIFICATE TRANSFERS FROM ONE CB TO ANOTHER

- 1.8.1** Certificates may only be transferred from one CB to another for a new certification cycle (therefore they can only be transferred once every 3 years).
- 1.8.2** The Rainforest Alliance has the right to intervene in any certificate transfer process, including suspending or terminating the process and reversing any existing transfers **within 2 weeks**, if the Rainforest Alliance concludes that transfers may jeopardize the integrity of assurance and certification processes and their outcomes.
- 1.8.3** Certificates shall only be transferred to CBs approved for the geographic scope of the CH. Certificates cannot be transferred to CBs with suspended or cancelled geographic scopes, or CBs that applied for geographic scopes that have not been approved.
- 1.8.4** Transfers or certification applications to new CBs shall not be accepted for CHs that:



- a. have received a non-certification and/or have had their certification cancelled within the past certification cycle year;
- b. have requested more than one transfer in the past year;
- c. are seeking an extension of scope
- d. have their certification suspended or
- e. have a follow-up or investigation audit in process.

1.8.5 Certificate transfer requests shall be made in the RACP by the CH requesting a transfer.

1.8.6 The current CB shall acknowledge receipt of the transfer request sent by the organization and notify the new CB **within 1 week** of the request. The current CB shall indicate to the CH if there are any pending financial obligations that must be settled before the transfer can take place. If there are no pending financial obligations, then the new CB can accept the request and is free to contact the CH to begin the application and certification process.

1.8.7 The new CB shall review the client's profile in advance of the transfer and before accepting the transfer request. This review shall include:

- a. confirmation that the Certificate is in force and valid for the scope described;
- b. identification of the reason for the transfer;
- c. confirmation that the certification scope corresponds to the scope of the new CB;
- d. confirmation that any complaint submitted has been resolved;
- e. review of the client's audit history;
- f. confirmation of the current stage of the audit cycle;

1.8.8 The new CB may request that the previous CB provide copies of audit reports, checklists, pending NCs, and evidence sent by the client to close open NCs and similar documents. The previous CB shall provide these documents subject to written approval of the client that is making the transfer.

1.8.9 Once the transfer is complete, the new CB shall issue a Certificate with the new Certificate code and information about the new CB, while maintaining the same scope and dates of the previous Certificate. This can be done once the CH has undergone a new certification audit.

1.8.10 If a CB has its authorization or scope cancelled, the CH will be allowed to transfer to another CB authorized for the respective scope. If there are no authorized CBs for the respective scope, the Rainforest Alliance will assign a CB until the next certification audit, after which the CH will be allowed to choose any other CB.



- 1.8.11** In the event of disagreement between two CBs involved in Certificate transfer of a CH, the Rainforest Alliance will analyze the case and make a final decision.

1.9 INCENTIVES

In certain cases of low risk, the verification level may be lowered and one of the surveillance audits may be conducted in a remote fashion. This section does not apply to CHs that are not farming as they have the possibility to lower their verification level through the risk assessment process.

Conditions for farm CHs

- 1.9.1** In order to qualify for a remote surveillance audit, the CH shall have:
- a. Access to stable internet connection and remote conference software to conduct opening and closing meeting as well as interviews with personnel, group members/workers and stakeholders and screen sharing of confidential records.
 - b. No NCs issued in the previous two audits (certification and surveillance) on any of below mentioned topics:
 - i. loss of physical traceability;
 - ii. any Assess-and-Address topics;
 - iii. internal inspections;
 - iv. deforestation.
- 1.9.2** For groups, the following conditions also apply:
- a. 100% of internal inspections digitized;
 - b. 100% of all group members mapped with polygons and no NC on data quality of the geolocation data in the previous two audits.
- 1.9.3** A remote surveillance audit shall be requested through the Rainforest Alliance.
- 1.9.4** Both the Rainforest and the CB reserve the right to deny such a request.

1.10 RIGHTS RESERVED BY THE RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

- 1.10.1** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to issue and amend the content and requirements stated in these Rainforest Alliance assurance documents or any other certification related policies or rules.
- 1.10.2** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to have the final say regarding the interpretation of the content and requirements stated in the Rainforest Alliance assurance documents.



- 1.10.3** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to visit any CH and verify compliance with any of the requirements in the Rainforest Alliance certification program, for any reason deemed necessary by the Rainforest Alliance.
- 1.10.4** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to perform residue analysis on certified products to verify compliance of any CH with the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard requirements on use of inputs.
- 1.10.5** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to prohibit any CH from entering/continuing in the Rainforest Alliance program if they have misused the Rainforest Alliance name or marks or in any way participated in fraudulent or unethical behavior in relation to the Rainforest Alliance program
- 1.10.6** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to conduct additional quality control assessments of audits conducted by CBs by:
- a. requesting further documentation;
 - b. requesting clarification or correction of the reported information by requesting a field visit or conducting a review audit, shadow audit, or CB office audit;
 - c. cross-checking the information reported by the CB with external sources, particularly enabling mutual cross-check with other sustainability standard owners.
- 1.10.7** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to use the reported audit information for performance monitoring, statistical analysis and research, and aggregated reporting.
- 1.10.8** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to make the following information publicly available:
- a. name or the CH;
 - b. country;
 - c. crop (e.g. coffee);
 - d. type of CH;
 - e. geolocation of the CHs central location;
 - f. number of hectares;
 - g. Rainforest Alliance ID;
 - h. certification status;
 - i. traceability level (e.g. mass balance);
 - j. announcement that there will be an upcoming audit at the CH;
 - k. audit results including NCs at an aggregated level;
 - l. any other data point set forth in the applicable Rainforest Alliance License Agreement with the CH.
- 1.10.9** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to ask CBs for further information based on audits reports.
- 1.10.10** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to inform the CB about misbehavior or NCs by a CH that is their client under the Rainforest Alliance certification program.
- 1.10.11** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to request that a CB conduct an unannounced audit of a CH and/or to provide advice on sample selection and/or scope of unannounced audits.



The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to reduce the estimated volumes and/or certified area if they differ from averages known for the country or region where a valid justification for such variance is not provided.

- 1.10.12** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to not grant a license or allow certification in the event that Rainforest Alliance concludes that the CH does not comply with the applicable standard or process requirements, or that the audit was not conducted in line with these assurance rules.
- 1.10.13** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to grant exceptions to the requirements in the certification rules or requirements in the standards to CHs and/or CBs adversely affected by humanitarian crises, natural disasters or other exceptional circumstances.
- 1.10.14** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to apply the Rainforest Alliance Sanction Policy in the event that a CB violates the requirements of the certification rules.
- 1.10.15** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to make decisions in grievances as per the Rainforest Alliance Grievance Procedure.
- 1.10.16** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to make the final decision on whether or not something is considered a product claim.
- 1.10.17** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to allocate audit to particular CBs for CHs based on risk.
- 1.10.18** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to conduct audits on CHs that have received an endorsement Certificate. The goal of such audits is to verify that the CH meets the requirements to be exempt from certification and that they comply with the applicable requirements from the standard.
- 1.10.19** In the event that such an audit reveals the CH does not comply with the applicable Requirements or does not meet the conditions for exemption from a certification audit, the Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to charge the costs of the audit to the CH and deactivate an endorsement Certificate. In this case the CH shall immediately inform all of its clients who purchase Rainforest Alliance products from them or subcontract activities on Rainforest Alliance Certified product with them.
- 1.10.20** Regardless of the certification decision, a public summary of the audit is automatically linked to the Rainforest Alliance website and the CB shall therefore respect data privacy rules such as GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).
- 1.10.21** The list of certified farms, groups and Chain of Custody CHs along with newly issued and cancelled certificates are published in the Rainforest Alliance website monthly.

1.11 FORCE MAJEURE

- 1.11.1** It can occur that due to exceptional circumstances that are not in the power of the CH or the CB, CHs or CBs are not capable of complying with the requirements in this document. Those exceptional circumstances can be humanitarian crises, natural disasters or other exceptional circumstances.



- 1.11.2** If such circumstances occur and they hinder the conformity of the CB or a CH with the requirements in this document, the CB shall request an exception with certification@ra.org.

1.12 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- 1.12.1** Any grievance concerning the Rainforest Alliance shall be handled according to the **Rainforest Alliance Grievance Procedure**, available on the [Rainforest Alliance website](#).
- 1.12.2** CHs have the right to appeal a decision taken by the Rainforest Alliance or the CB. In the event that it concerns a decision taken by the CB, the CH shall first submit a grievance through the grievance procedure of the CB. If that does not resolve the grievance, the CH must submit a grievance through the Rainforest Alliance Grievance Procedure. The CH agrees that it shall only resort to legal remedies such as a lawsuit, injunction, request for declaratory relief or other claim or legal action against the Rainforest Alliance after it has fully exhausted its administrative remedies in accordance with the CB grievance or appeal process and the Rainforest Alliance Grievance Procedure.
- 1.12.3** CHs acknowledge and agree that its participation in the certification program is on a voluntary basis. For that reason, each CH agrees that it will utilize the Rainforest Alliance Grievance Procedure to challenge any decision regarding its certificate or address any disagreements the CH may have with a CB or with Rainforest Alliance, in the event that a grievance was not resolved through the CB grievance procedure. In the event that a CH attempts to undermine the Rainforest Alliance Grievance Procedure through litigation, the CH agrees that the CB's or Rainforest Alliance's decision regarding the certificate shall (i) remain in force until the final resolution of the Grievance Procedure or (ii) be taken at Rainforest Alliance's discretion at any time during the Grievance Procedure or during such litigation at Rainforest Alliance's discretion. The CB or Rainforest Alliance's certification decision shall remain in place until the final resolution of any challenge and/or exhaustion of all available appeals, as the case may be.



ANNEX 1: GEODATA AND RISK MAPS FOR CHS WITH FARMING INCLUDED CERTIFICATION SCOPE

This annex explains the rules that apply for providing and verifying geodata in the certification process.

Geodata collection

1.12.4 The CH shall provide geodata at different stages in the certification process:

- a. **Registration:** at this point, groups shall provide envelopes or a mix of points and polygons, as per the standard requirements. New groups can provide envelopes indicating the geographical scope. For large farms (part of a group) and individual farm certification, polygons shall be always provided at this step. This geodata will be used to produce the **first risk map** for deforestation, data quality and protected areas.
- b. **Before the (re) certification and surveillance audit:** all CHs, before the audit, must provide the updated geolocation data (points and/or polygons) in conformity with the applicable standard requirements. This geodata will be used to produce the **second risk map** for deforestation, data quality and protected areas, which will be used by the CB during the audit. In the time between the registration and up to 5 weeks before the first day of the audit, CH can update their geolocation data when needed.

For more guidance refer to the Rainforest Alliance guidance on geodata.

Risk maps: quality of geodata, deforestation and encroachment in Protected Areas

To provide support in auditing recent conversion of natural ecosystems, Rainforest Alliance's risk maps will give an overview of whether there is evidence from remote sensing of conversion on a certain farm for which geodata has been provided. The risk maps are made by overlaying geospatial location data, a baseline layer indicating forests present until 2014 and evidence of tree cover loss since the same cut-off year. The result will be a risk indication of farms that have deforested since 2014 and farms that could deforest in the future due to their current geolocation data. Likewise, the Rainforest Alliance will elaborate maps for monitoring the risk of encroachment into protected areas by overlaying the geolocation of the farms with up-to-date maps of Protected Areas. In addition to this, there will be also an indication of quality problems with the geodata provided.



Every time the geolocation data is updated, so will be the risk maps (deforestation, data quality and protected areas) provided by the Rainforest Alliance. The CH will have access to the Rainforest Alliance risk maps in the RACP and so will the CB after the contract is signed and indicated in the RACP as per the certification process explained in this document.

Verification of risks

Before creating the risks maps, RACP will validate the geodata provided by the member. As a result of this process, the Rainforest Alliance will identify mistakes with the geodata and request the CH to correct them (more detailed information available in the **Rainforest Alliance Guidance document on geodata**) before proceeding with the risks maps. There are issues that the RACP won't be able to identify as mistakes to be fixed by the CH and will thus require CB verification. This geodata will be displayed in the geodata quality risk map. Examples of this are: repetition of geodata across different groups.

Deforestation and encroachment in protected areas

This section explains the rules that apply for use of the geodata risk maps internally by the CH, as well as by the CB.

Internal verification by CH management

Topic from the Standard	Rules
Conversion of natural forest and natural ecosystems	<p>1.12.5 Envelopes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Groups shall identify the farms located in or close to the high-risk areas, shown in the Rainforest Alliance risk maps.ii. When mapping the farms for points and polygons, groups shall visit the farms previously identified and determine whether conversion of natural ecosystems took place inside their boundaries.iii. Group members with farms in which deforestation took place, must be excluded from the group. <p>1.12.6 Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Group members with farms with deforestation, shall be excluded from the group.ii. Group members with farms identified as high risk, shall be excluded from the group OR the CH shall visit all high risk farms and gather evidence showing that conversion of natural ecosystems didn't happen inside the farm boundaries as indicated. If conversion occurred, the group member shall be excluded from the group.iii. Group members with farms identified as medium risk in the risk map, shall be visited by the CH to assess whether conversion of natural ecosystems happened inside the farm boundaries as indicated. If conversion occurred, the group member shall be excluded from the group. <p>1.12.7 Polygons:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Group members with farms with deforestation, shall be excluded from the group. ii. Group members with farms identified as high risk in the risk map, shall either be excluded from the group or evidence shall be provided that no conversion has happened within the farm boundaries iii. Large farms part of the group identified as high risk shall be excluded from the group unless evidence is provided that no conversion has happened within the farm boundaries. If the member converted area is less than 1% of the farm area or 10 ha (whichever is smaller) and the CH wants to apply minor conversion (minor non-compliance), the member shall submit a restoration/compensation plan in collaboration with an ecologist. This shall be reviewed by the CB iv. Individual CHs identified as high risk shall not proceed with certification unless evidence can be provided that no conversion has happened within the farm boundaries. If the converted area is less than 1% of the farm area or 10 ha (whichever is smaller) and the CH wants to apply minor conversion (minor non-compliance), the member shall submit a restoration/compensation plan shall be developed in collaboration with an ecologist. This must be reviewed by the CB
Production and processing in Protected areas and designated buffer zones	<p>1.12.8 Envelopes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Groups shall identify the <u>group members</u> with <u>farms</u> located in or close to the high-risk areas, shown in the Rainforest Alliance <u>risk maps</u> ii. When mapping the farms for points and polygons, the CH shall visit the farms identified in the previous point to determine whether their boundaries are inside the <u>protected area (PA)</u>. iii. For farms identified inside Protected Areas the following applies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Production inside 'No-go' PA: group members shall be excluded from the group o Production inside 'Go' PA: group members shall be excluded from the group if production doesn't comply with applicable laws. <p>1.12.9 Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Group members with farms with production inside 'No-go' PA shall be excluded from the group; ii. Group members with farms with production inside 'Go' PA who don't comply with <u>applicable law</u> and <u>management plans</u> for these areas, as defined by the relevant authorities, shall be excluded from the group;



	<p>iii. Group members with farms identified as high risk, shall be excluded from the group OR the CH shall visit all those farms and gather evidence showing that production didn't occur inside the 'No-go' PA;</p> <p>iv. Group members with farms identified as medium risk, shall be visited by the group to assess whether production happened inside the PA and whether it complies with the <u>applicable law</u>.</p> <p>1.12.10 Polygons</p> <p>i. Group members with farms with production inside 'No-go' PA shall be excluded from the group.</p> <p>ii. Group members with farms with production inside 'Go' PA that don't comply with <u>applicable law</u> and <u>management plans</u> for these areas as defined by the relevant authorities shall be excluded from the group</p> <p>iii. Individual farms where conversion is carried out in a place and manner that violates requirement on Production and processing in Protected areas and designated buffer zones of the standard or applicable law shall not be certified</p>
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Table 9. Use of geodata in internal verification by organization management

Non-conformities with requirements on Conversion of natural forest and natural ecosystems and Production and processing in Protected areas and designated buffer zones

Topic and standard requirement number	Rules	
	Group certification	Large estates
Conversion of natural forest and natural ecosystems	<p>1.12.11 If non-compliant small farms represent more than 1% and up to 5% of the <u>group members</u>, they shall be excluded from the <u>group</u>. However, if the percentage is up to 1%, the <u>group</u> could decide to keep those farms. In both cases, the group shall implement the below measures to solve the <u>NC</u> and avoid further conversion:</p> <p>a. establishment of a sanctioning system for group members to prevent further deforestation;</p> <p>b. implementation of awareness raising measures or training;</p>	<p>1.12.15 If evidence of conversion was found and/or confirmed by the <u>CB</u> during the audit, and the converted area is less than 1% of the farm area or 10 ha (whichever is smaller). Then the CH shall submit a restoration/compensation plan in collaboration with an ecologist. This must be reviewed by the <u>CB</u>.</p>



	<p>c. Development and implementation of an agroforestry plan to mitigate any loss of prior conservation values with the goal of reaching the Rainforest Alliance reference parameters for optimal shade (see glossary) on an area of at least three times the converted area within the timeframe of the second improvement level (6 years). This plan shall be included in the group management plan. of the group</p> <p>d. 3-year plan to collect polygons of farms units of producers with medium and high risk of deforestation.</p> <p>1.12.12 If the group is a mix of smallholders and large farms, the group shall implement the above and, for the larger farms it shall implement the following:</p> <p>a. <u>Large farms</u> shall be excluded from the group where the converted area is larger than 1% of the farm area or 10 ha.</p> <p>b. For large farms, where the converted area is less than 1% of the farm area or 10 ha, the <u>CH</u> shall develop a restoration/compensation plan in collaboration with an ecologist</p> <p>1.12.13 If non-complaint farms comprise more than 5% (at least 10 ha or 5 audited group members) of the group, the group as a whole shall not be certified.</p> <p>1.12.14 In all cases the <u>CH</u> must provide evidence showing that deforestation did not take place inside the farm boundaries, as explained in the previous section.</p>	<p>1.12.16 If an area larger than 1% of the total <u>Certificate</u> area or 10 ha (whichever is smaller) is converted, the <u>CH</u> shall not be certified.</p> <p>1.12.17 In all cases, the <u>CH</u> can provide evidence showing that deforestation didn't take place inside the farm boundaries.</p>
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Production and processing in Protected areas and designated buffer zones	<p>1.12.18 Non-compliant group members shall be excluded from the group in the event that:</p> <p>c. Group members with farms with production inside 'Go' PA that don't comply with <i>applicable law</i> and <i>management plans</i> for these areas</p> <p>d. Group members with farms with production inside 'No-go' PA</p> <p>1.12.19 Groups with more than 5% of group members in NC with the requirement on Production and processing in Protected areas and designated buffer zones shall not be certified.</p> <p>1.12.20 In all cases, the CH may provide evidence showing that production did not occur in violation with the requirement on Production and processing in Protected areas and designated buffer zones.</p>	<p>1.12.21 If conversion takes place in a place and manner than violates criterion the requirement on Production and processing in Protected areas and designated buffer zones or applicable law, the farm shall not be certified</p> <p>1.12.22 In all cases, the CH may provide evidence showing that production didn't happen in violation with the requirement on Production and processing in Protected areas and designated buffer zones.</p>
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Table10. Non-conformities with requirements on Conversion of natural forest and natural ecosystems and Production and processing in Protected areas and designated buffer zones

CHAPTER 2: AUDITING RULES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter applies to Rainforest Alliance and Authorized Certification Bodies under the the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Certification Program.

Objectives of the chapter

The main objectives of this chapter are:

- i. To establish requirements to be followed by certification bodies in order to ensure that audits are conducted following a consistently structured process to obtain accurate information about the certificate holder (CH).
- ii. To ensure that certification decisions are made based on a truthful, accurate and fair representation of the level of the implementation of the standard requirements at the level of the CH.
- iii. To provide a framework based on which the Rainforest Alliance can carry out a standardized process to evaluate and monitor the performance of authorized Certification Bodies (CBs).

Applicable to

- Authorized Certification Bodies;



- The Rainforest Alliance.

2.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

- 3.19.1** In each audit, the CB audit team shall respect and effectively implement the general audit principles, practices and guidelines in the latest version of ISO19011.
- 3.19.2** The CB shall perform audits according to the types of audits and audit notification as defined in the the Rainforest Alliance Certification Rules.
- 3.19.3** The CB shall ensure that the audit process, i.e. planning, execution, reporting:
- a. covers all applicable requirements at each location audited by the CB audit team.
 - b. considers all types of workers: onsite, off-site including full-time, part-time, seasonal and home-based.
 - c. takes into account all activities performed by the CH within the certification scope and their associated risks.
- 3.19.4** The audit team shall cover all the shifts in one audit.
- a. The audit team shall not audit both 2nd and 3rd shift in one audit day at one same location/site.
 - b. If the CH uses a different shift hours pattern, the CB shall adapt its auditing activities to ensure the coverage of all key processes in all the shifts.
- 3.19.5** An auditor shall not exceed 8 hours of total audit time including shift audits in a day. This does not include the meal breaks and any other breaks.
- 3.19.6** The audit team shall use the latest available checklist, templates, binding documents and data provided by the Rainforest Alliance for preparing, executing and reporting the audit.
- 3.19.7** The CB shall verify the complaints/investigations/nonconformities established against the CH by government agencies or any other stake holders for any activities directly related to the certification scope.
- 3.19.8** The CB shall ensure to always allocate sufficient resources, including time, for its personnel to carry out the assigned tasks in the certification process. This includes time for the audit team to effectively perform auditing activities, including but are not limited to audit preparation, execution and/or reporting activities to collate all the evidence required to deliver an accurate audit report.
- 3.19.9** The CB shall always include the approximate time needed for different activities required in the certification process when preparing the offer for the CH. These activities include but are not limited to:



- a. application review for acceptance;
- b. stakeholder consultation;
- c. audit preparation;
- d. audit execution;
- e. audit reporting considering time needed for reporting in RACP;
- f. estimated costs for investigation audits in the CB's portfolio;
- g. estimated cost for unannounced audits;
- h. estimated cost for high-risk CHs in its portfolio which may require longer duration;
- i. estimated cost for CHs who do not prepare well for certification which requires the CB to spend more time on document review, audit preparation and a sample bigger than other CHs;
- j. any relevant contextual and high risks involved in certain geographical scope, such as regions/countries.

3.19.10 The CB shall ensure that its audit teams are competent to observe evidence of nonconformities.

3.19.11 The audit team shall at all times during the audit observe the conflict on interest rule and refrain from consultancy work (See Annex 9).

3.19.12 The CB shall ensure that its personnel shall not perform any consultancy activities for any of its the Rainforest Alliance CH during the period from 3 years prior to the first audit date to 3 years after the last audit date for any types of audit carried out for that CH.

3.19.13 The CB shall ensure that a lead/ support auditor does not audit the same CH for 3 or more consecutive audits, including investigation audits.

Note: A follow up audit is not counted for this requirement.

3.19.14 In the event that an auditor believes her/his safety might be at risk as a result of communicating a nonconformity, the audit team may decide not to communicate such a finding until it has left the premises of the CH. Such a finding shall be communicated by the CB to the CH within 3 days from the closing meeting of that audit. The CB audit team shall include such a situation in the audit report.

3.19.15 The CB shall effectively implement the requirements defined in the Annexes of this document for relevant auditing activities.

3.19.16 The CB shall assess conformity with the shared responsibility and sustainability differential requirements, following the official Rainforest Alliance instructions. These instructions can be found in (sector) annexes.

3.19.17 The CB shall identify and/or record all nonconformities observed in any type of audit activities.



3.19.18 The CB shall ensure that the corrective actions taken by the CH after an audit are appropriately implemented among all the sites, farms, locations within the certification scope and not only the visited sites/farms/locations.

3.19.19 The audit team shall provide documented justification to the Rainforest Alliance for any deviations of any of the rules in the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System.

Additional requirements for Farm audits:

3.19.20 In case of group certification, the CB shall disclose names of farmers to be visited no earlier than one day prior to the visit at the selected farms.

Note: It is possible for the CB to announce the names of farmers to be visited in the next day's afternoon in the morning of the previous day.

3.2 TIMELINES

3.2.1 The CB shall record in its own system and in the RACP, the dates that each activity in the certification process began and finished, at least to the extent that the CB can demonstrate conformity to the timeline requirements in the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System.

3.2.2 The CB shall follow the timeline set out in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below.

- a. Figure 1 illustrates the important steps and accompanying timeline requirements for such a step for audits with farming in the audit scope.
- b. Figure 2 illustrates the important steps and accompanying timeline requirements for such steps for audits without farming in the audit scope.

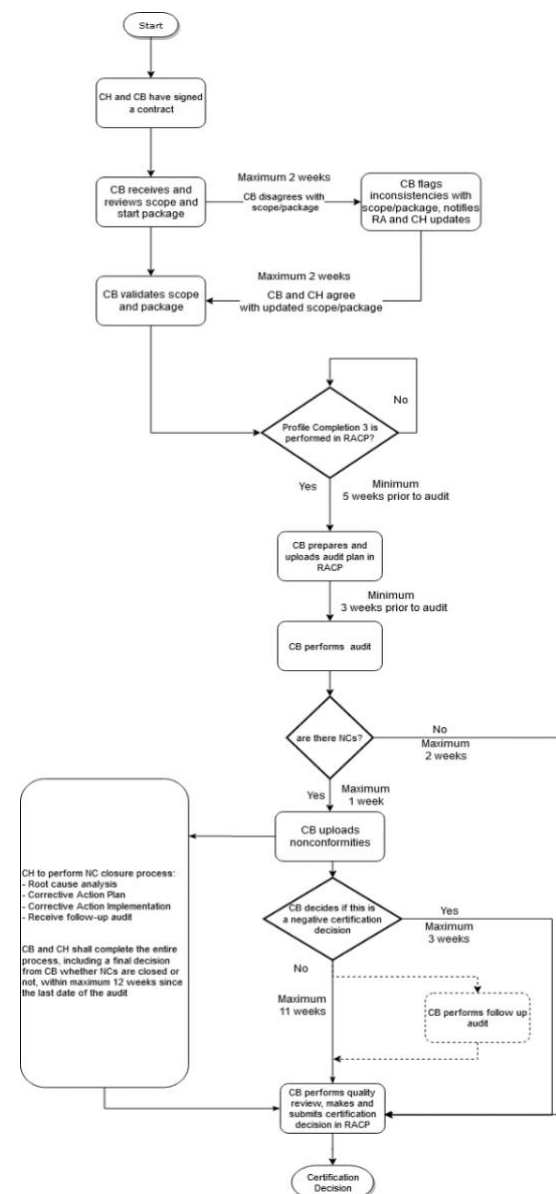
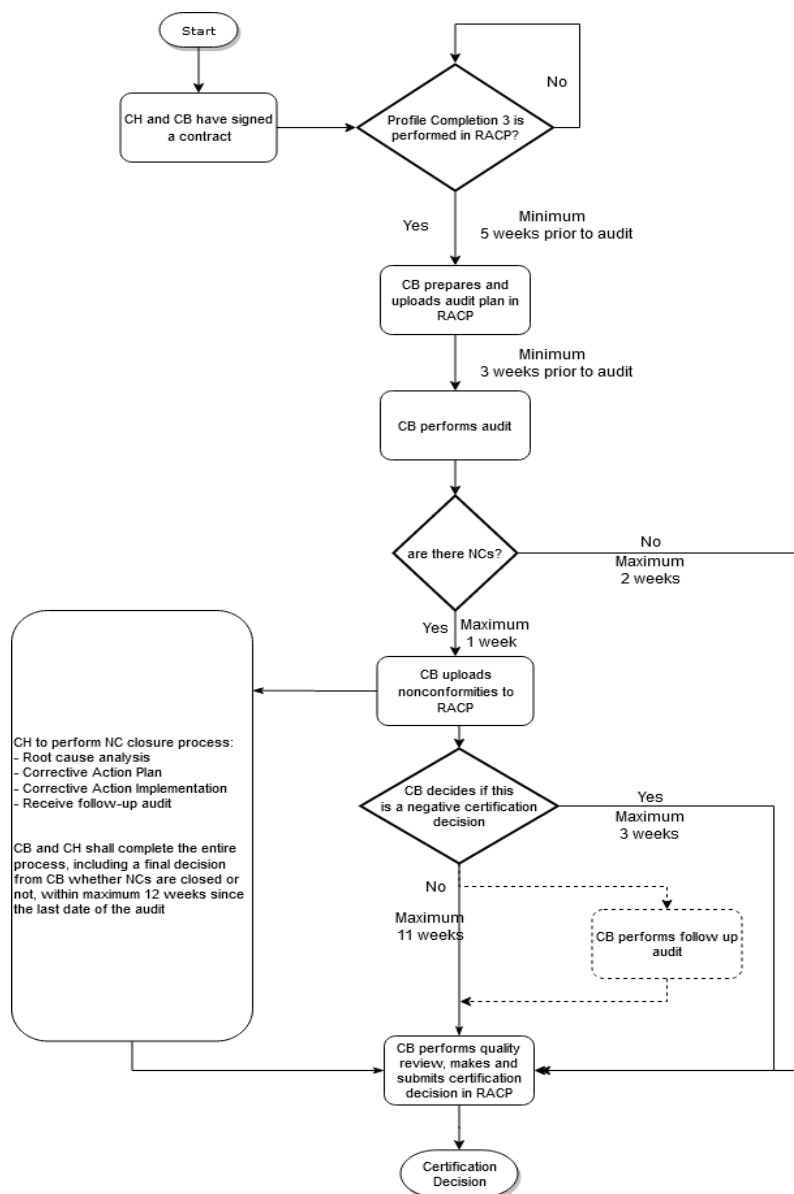


Figure 1: Timeline for important steps in the Certification Process. Figure 2: Timeline for important steps in the Supply Chain Certification Process



3.3 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

- 3.3.1** The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure for the certification application review process and for performing the activities prior to the audit to ensure that:
- a. The process is completed in a timely manner as required in the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System.
 - b. The CB has received complete and accurate data before proceeding to the next step in the certification process.
 - c. The audit team shall achieve the audit objectives with the given resources.
- 3.3.2** The CB shall review all the information obtained from the CH to ensure that:
- a. The information about the CH and its pertinent systems is sufficient for planning and conducting the certification/audit activities.
 - b. The scope of certification and the applicant's activities are clearly defined.
 - c. The CB has the competence, capability and resources required to conduct the requested certification activity.
- 3.3.3** Once the CB approves the application and data from RACP (RACP) that has been submitted by the CH, the CB shall ensure that the audit team has access to the approved version to prepare and execute the audit at least 3 weeks prior to the first date of the audit.
- 3.3.4** After the audit, the CB shall update the data in the application form in RACP if changes and/or differences were identified during the audit.

3.4 AUDIT PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

- 3.4.1** The CB shall have a mechanism to define and document the risks of nonconformity with the Rainforest Alliance standard for each audit. The CB shall upload the risk assessment to RACP for each audit at least 2 weeks prior to the first date of the audit.
- 3.4.2** The risk assessment performed by the CB for each audit shall consider at a minimum:
- a. Risk assessment performed by the CH;
 - b. Risk maps provided by the Rainforest Alliance;
 - c. Generic risk, risk specific to the region, country context;



- d. History of the CH;
- e. Complexity of activities within the certification scope;
- f. Geographic location of the CH's sites and facilities;
- g. Number of sites/farms;
- h. Number of workers;
- i. Processing and packing units;
- j. Functioning of the MS;
- k. Products traded and traceability levels;
- l. Type of crops;
- m. Homogeneity of the sites/farms;
- n. Internal and external complains;
- o. Results/nonconformities from the last audit;
- p. Risk from the CH's subcontractors/ intermediaries/ service providers/ labor providers;
- q. Data submitted by the CH prior to the audit such as self-assessment, CH risk assessment.

3.4.3 The CB's risk assessment results shall be the basis for:

- a. The selection and/or adjustment of the sample size/composition for different categories of samples, including but are not limited to:
 - i. sites/farms and other actors, such as intermediaries, subcontractors, service providers/ labor providers to be visited/interviewed;
 - ii. workers to be interviewed;
 - iii. documents to be reviewed;
 - iv. processes/activities/locations to be visited/observed.
- b. Determining the audit team composition.
- c. Determining the audit duration.



3.4.4 During the audit preparation, the CB shall verify the following:

- a. Formal establishment of the CH, as a cooperative or as another type of legal entity, including the actual address(es).
- b. Registry of the sites/ farms as in RACP.
- c. The policies and procedures as defined by the management system (MS) in order to function effectively, if available, including approval and sanction procedure.
- d. Organizational chart of the CH and roles & responsibilities of key persons.
- e. The product flow and map(s) of locations and facilities of the CH.

3.4.5 The CB shall ensure that prior to each audit, the CB makes available to the audit team the most up-to-date applicable laws and the risk assessment for the geographical scope of that audit. The audit team shall review and effectively use these resources to prepare, plan and execute the audit.

3.4.6 The audit team shall develop an audit plan for each audit using all the data available from the RACP, updated data received from the CH during the audit preparation process and data from other applicable sources such as stakeholder consultation, off-site investigation. The lead auditor shall be held accountable for the quality and execution of the audit plan.

3.4.7 The audit team shall ensure that the plan clarifies roles and responsibilities of all members of its team as well as to clarify roles of key persons (see 2.4.15 below) from the CH who will need to provide access and/or facilitate different audit activities.

3.4.8 For each audit, the detailed and final audit plan shall be uploaded into the RACP at least 3 weeks prior to the first audit date.

3.4.9 Once the final audit plan is uploaded in RACP, the CB shall not change the audit dates, the audit duration and composition of the selected audit team.

3.4.10 The CB shall provide a justification for any changes to the audit plan once it has been uploaded.

3.4.11 The Rainforest Alliance reserves the rights not to accept such changes, for example when the Rainforest Alliance has communicated to the CB a plan to evaluate performance of a specific audit team.

- a. In case the CB failed to accommodate such request, the Rainforest Alliance reserves the rights to request the CB to cover costs involved for the Rainforest Alliance to rearrange such an activity.

3.4.12 For announced audits, the CB shall ensure that the CH receives the audit plan, either through the RACP or by means of the CB, no later than 2 weeks prior to the first audit date.

3.4.13 For unannounced audits, the CB shall ensure that:

- a. Such an audit file is created in RACP and the detailed audit plan is uploaded into RACP no later than 3 weeks prior to the first audit date.



- b. Neither the audit plan nor the information of the coming visit shall not be shared with the CH by the CB or, when having valid justifications, the CB may decide to inform the CH, in writing, of the visit maximum 48 hours prior to the first day of the visit.
- 3.4.14** The audit plan shall sufficiently describe the sequence of audit activities and fully cover the entire audit scope to ensure that the conformity of the CH and effectiveness of the management system are sufficiently verified as well as to allow the intended audience to understand who is doing what and when without disclosing details that may affect the results of the audit or the confidentiality of the involved persons.
- 3.4.15** The lead auditor shall ensure that the audit plan includes at minimum the following elements:
- a. Audit objectives;
 - b. Audit criteria;
 - c. Audit scope, including identification of the organizational and functional units or processes to be audited;
 - d. Audit dates;
 - e. Locations to be visited, e.g. factory, farms, site at intermediaries, subcontractors, service providers/ labor providers;
 - f. Planned audit duration at each site;
 - g. Names, gender, roles and responsibilities of each audit team member, including interpreter, technical expert, observer;
 - h. Name, address of the CH to be visited and contact details of the appointed person for facilitating the audit;
 - i. Names and/or title of key persons required to be present during the audit, including but not limited to:
 - i. management representative;
 - ii. workers representatives including representative(s) of trade union if applicable;
 - iii. HR/payroll staff;
 - iv. H&S responsible staff;
 - v. any other committees, such as complaint and appeal, women's committee;
 - vi. assess-and-address committee representative;
 - vii. gender committee representative;
 - viii. grievance committee representative;
 - ix. management of processing facilities.
 - j. Approximate time and duration for each audit activities during each day of the audit;
 - k. Where applicable, the expected number of farm visits and/or worker interviews with a disclaimer that these may change due to risks or information unknown to the CB prior to the audit but emerging during the audit;
 - l. Statement of free of conflict of interest, commitment to confidentiality, non-bribery and/or anti-corruption policy, both generic and specific to this audit;



- m. List of parties interested in participating in the audit process, their roles and for which activity they are allowed to join;
- n. List of key documents or groups of documents that shall be readily available for the audit;
- o. A summary profile of each of its audit team members including background, contact details;
- p. Working languages during the audit and reporting language of the audit.

3.4.16 The CB may decide to disclose fewer details than required in this document if that allows better opportunities to achieve the audit objectives.

3.4.17 Justifications for such decisions shall be provided

3.4.18 The CB shall record in its own system at least the following communications:

- a. Communications from the CB to its audit team regarding the audit plan(s), including changes.
- b. Communications between the CB and the CH regarding the audit plan(s), including changes.

3.4.19 The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented process to inform the CH of its rights to object any audit team member in any audit where the CH has valid justification for such objection, e.g. justified conflict of interest, and how the CB responds to such objection. The CB shall record relevant communication regarding this process, including objection from its CHs and the results of such objection.

3.4.20 The CB shall upload to RACP the implemented audit plan after the audit if there are changes to the plan confirmed in RACP, including justifications of such changes.

Additional requirements for Farm audits:

3.4.21 During the audit preparation (6.4.5), the CB shall additionally verify:

- a. Risk assessment by the CH;
- b. Management plan by the CH;
- c. Quality of geodata (see Annex 5), i.e. review the Rainforest Alliance risk maps for deforestation, protected areas and quality of geodata.

Note: Please refer to geospatial guidance for detailed steps of how to use the risk maps.

3.4.22 The audit plan shall not disclose the details of the sample, such as names, IDs, codes of the farms to be visited and/or detailed distribution of farm workers to be interviewed.



3.5 SAMPLING

Audit evidence collected in an audit is based on a sample of the information available. Therefore, determining representative samples with appropriate sizes prior to the audit and adjusting these samples during the audit following the risk-based audit principle is vital to achieve the audit objectives. This document refers to different types of samples, including for example, of farmers, of workers, of documents and with different sample size requirements. The risk from different topics may also affect the overall sample size of the audit.

Note:

- This section includes detailed requirements on sampling of farms, farm units, sites.
- Requirements on sampling of documents for review at management system are included in Annex 2.
- Requirements on sampling of workers for interviews and worker files for reviews are included in Annex 3.
- Additional sampling requirements for social topics are included in Annex 8.

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

- 3.5.1** The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure for sample determination based on the risk assessment conducted by the CB prior to the audit and risks emerging during the audit.
- 3.5.2** For all sampling activities, the CB shall ensure the most representative sample possible, using stratified random sampling, to effectively review and verify evidence of (non)conformity of the CH.
- 3.5.3** For all the sampling calculations:
- a. The CB shall round up the calculated number to the next whole number.
 - b. If the calculated number is smaller than 5, the CB shall include all of such items in the audit sample.
- 3.5.4** Where a CH is determined to be high risk by the CB and/or the Rainforest Alliance, the CB may decide to increase the sample size (farms, sites, documentations, interviews, etc.) and may visit all large member farms or all sites within the scope in one audit.
- 3.5.5** The audit team shall visit a representative sample of human dwellings, e.g. homes and temporary houses, using a risk-based approach to make factual observations on conformity with requirements on social topics and requirements that have a possible impact on human health/safety, such as chemical storage, reuse of chemical containers, waste disposal, potable water, storage of chemical equipment and PPEs and/or risks of other requirements.
- 3.5.6** For intermediaries and subcontractors and service providers who do not have their own Rainforest Alliance certificate/endorsement the following additional sampling requirements apply:



- a. The CB shall ensure that each intermediary, each subcontractor and each service provider is audited at least once in a 3-year certification cycle. When a service provider is a labor provider, the CB shall follow requirements in Annex 8 of this document.
- b. The CB shall analyze the risks associated with the scope of each intermediary, subcontractor, service provider. In case of high risk, the CB may decide to increase the sample size.
- c. In subsequent audits, the CB shall revisit a representative sample of intermediaries and subcontractors and service providers to verify effectiveness of corrective actions raised during previous audits, internal and/or external, as applicable.

3.5.7 The CB shall keep records of all the sampling steps, including but not limited to sample size with explanation and parameters used to determine the sample prior to the audit.

3.5.8 The CB shall record justification of any deviation from the sampling requirements in this document.

3.5.9 The CB shall upload the planned and implemented samples into RACP together with justification for any changes and/or deviations.

Additional requirements for Farm audits:

3.5.10 The CB audit team shall perform the witness audit the square root of total internal inspectors, to verify their competence and performance during every audit.

Note:

A witness audit in this context is understood as the process in which the CB audit team observe the internal auditor(s) of the CH performing an internal inspection to evaluate the competence and performance of such selected internal auditor(s).

3.5.11 For **a farm visit**, the following additional sampling requirements apply.

- a. The CB shall audit all the processing units and at least the square root of the purchase/buying centres, respectively.
- b. The audit team shall audit a selected farm against all applicable requirements.
- c. For the individual farm, the number of farm units, including field numbers, sections, divisions, to be visited by the CB audit team shall be minimum square root of the total number of farm units.
- d. The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure for selecting the farm units for an external audit using a risk-based approach. The procedure shall consider at least:
 - i. area of the holding;
 - ii. crop diversity;
 - iii. number of farm units managed by the group members;
 - iv. nonconformities noticed in external audits and internal inspections/self-assessments;



- v. utilization of manpower or labor;
- vi. volumes delivered to the CH;
- vii. use of inputs;
- viii. activities on the farm;
- ix. location/proximity of the farms/farm units;
- x. existing natural ecosystem within the farm or abutting the land;
- xi. any complaints;
- xii. land use pattern before certification;
- xiii. deforestation risks;
- xiv. workers hired;
- xv. housing for workers;

- e. The CB shall make an effort to visit all the farm units of a farm in one certification cycle.
- f. The audit team shall document the farm unit ID/number that were visited and include this information in the audit report.
- g. In the surveillance audit, a representative sample of the farm units where a NC was noted shall be visited to verify the level of conformity and effectiveness of the management system in addressing the audit findings, regardless whether the findings were from internal or external visits.

3.5.12 For **a multi-farm audit**, the following additional sampling requirements apply:

- a. The CB shall audit at least the square root of the purchase/buying centres, respectively.
- b. The CB shall ensure that each processing unit is audited at least once in a certification cycle.
- c. The CB shall audit the main/central location, where the audit team has access to the MS documentation and MS staff, in every type of audit.
- d. The CB shall develop and effectively implement a procedure to choose the member farms under the multi farm in such a way that all the member farms receive an audit at least once in the certification cycle. The CB may decide to re-visit the farms or increase the sample size based on the performance in the previous audits and/or risks identified.
- e. The procedure shall consider at least the parameters set out in 4.5.11 in this document, including parameters to select farm units.
- f. If the previous audit found NCs, the CB shall verify the effectiveness of corrective actions to address the NCs:
 - i. at farms where the NCs were found;
 - ii. at minimum one additional farm where the NCs were not found. The verification at the additional farm(s) can be restricted to the detected NCs.



- g. When one farm within the multi-farm certification scope does not maintain conformity, or does not effectively close out the NC(s) found, all farms as included in the scope of the certification are subject to suspension of the certificate and/or sanctions as applicable depending on the nature of the NC(s).

3.5.13 For a **group certification audit**, the following additional requirements apply:

- a. The CB shall audit at least the square root of the purchase/buying centres, respectively.
- b. The CB shall audit at least the square root of processing units. This may increase when the audit team identifies high risks on relevant topics at such units.
- c. The CB shall audit the main /central location, where the audit team has access to the MS documentation and MS staff, in every type of audit.
- d. The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure for selecting the member farms and the farm units of group members using a risk-based approach.
- e. The procedure shall consider at least the parameters set out in 4.5.11 in this document, including parameters to select farm units.
- f. Based on the risk assessment, the number of the group members to be audited shall be determined prior to the audit, in the planning stage.
- g. The default minimum number (DMN) of group members to be audited is square root of the total number of members excluding the large farms.
- h. The CB may at the most increase the sample size up to 2 times the DMN, if CB finds any issues that may affect the credibility of certification. The CB shall document justifications for any adjustment of the DMN for each audit.
- i. The CB shall audit at least 33% of the large farms every year so that each of the large farms is audited at least once in a certification cycle. In case the risks are assessed to be high, the CB may decide to increase the sample size for large farms and may visit all large farms within the scope in one audit.
- j. In addition to the smallholder requirements, the CB shall verify the applicable criteria from chapter 5 of RA Farm standard for Medium to Large farms at these large farms.
- k. The maximum number of small farms that shall be audited per day by one independent auditor shall not exceed 6. For large farms, it shall be maximum 3 farms per day per independent auditor. If the CB decides to increase the number of group members per day, it shall contact the Rainforest Alliance to obtain an exemption prior to implementing and shall document justification for such adjustment.
- l. In addition to the visit to farms, the CB shall interview a part of the membership, for example at the community house, to verify their understanding of the standard. The interviews can be done in group or as individual or both and will be in addition to the one chosen for visiting (DMN).



- m. The minimum number of such additional group members (small farms) to be interviewed shall be at least 25% of the DMN. The CB shall ensure that the number of participants per a group interview will not be more than 6.

3.5.14 The CB shall follow the below additional sampling requirements for follow up audits (see section 4.17):

- a. If, during the previous audit, only the group Management System (MS) did not meet the requirements, the follow up audit shall only apply to the MS. The elements to be covered in the follow up audit can be restricted to the nonconformities found. The audit team may expand this if new information has emerged or new risk has been identified during the follow up audit.
- b. If, during the previous audit, nonconformities were only found among the member farms, the size of the sample shall be twice the number of farms that did not meet the requirements, up to a maximum number equal to the required sample size in the previous audit. The farms that did not comply shall be part of the sample.
- c. If, during a previous audit, both the group management and the member farms had nonconformities with the requirements, both shall be audited. To determine farm sample size, the rules established in 4.5.13 shall be followed.

Additional requirements for Supply Chain audits:

3.5.15 For a multi-site audit, the following additional sampling requirements apply

- a. For multisite audits, the CB shall audit the main/central location in every type of audit.
- b. If the previous audit found NCs, the CB shall verify the effectiveness of corrective actions to address the NCs:
 - i. at sites where the NCs were found;
 - ii. at minimum one additional site where the NCs were not found. The verification at the additional site(s) can be restricted to the detected NCs.
- c. In case it is concluded by the CB and/or the Rainforest Alliance that the CH is high risk, the CB may decide to increase the sample size and may visit all sites within the scope in one audit.

3.6 AUDIT DURATION

Applicable to Farm audits only:

Based on the data shared by the CH and the Rainforest Alliance's risk assessment system, the Rainforest Alliance will estimate the minimum audit duration (MAD) which will serve as the basis for CBs to determine the actual audit duration.

3.6.1 In calculating the estimated Minimum Audit Duration (MAD), the CB shall follow the following guidelines:



- a. The CB shall assess the proximity between the farms of the CH and the ease of travel between one farm and another, this is called the group proximity factor (GPF). To do so, the CB shall also use its knowledge of the local context to consider the topography of the place, transportation means, quality of roads, seasons and weather conditions in determining the GPF. The CB audit team shall determine the most accurate GPF and shall not use this as a means to reduce the audit duration.

Note: Group proximity factor (GPF) is determined by the CB prior to audit using the GPS coordinates of group farms

- b. Below is a guideline for the CB to determine the GPF. The CB shall follow the guidelines in Annex 5 as well:

Proximity assessment by CB	GPF value
Group farms are in very close proximity and it is easy to visit more than 6 farms per auditor within 8 hours, including time for traveling between 6 farms in any 2 selected sub-groups/villages	1.0
Group farms are in quite close proximity and it is reasonable to visit up to 6 farms within 8 hours, including time for traveling between 6 farms in any 2 selected sub-groups/villages	1.1
Group farms are in reachable distances and it is reasonable to visit up to 5 farms within 8 hours, including time for traveling between 5 farms in any 2 selected sub-groups/villages	1.2
Group farms are distant from each other and it is reasonable to visit up to 4 farms within 8 hours, including time for traveling between 4 farms in any 2 selected sub-groups/villages	1.4
Group farms are quite distant from each other and it is reasonable to visit up to 3 farms within 8 hours, including time for traveling between 3 farms in any 2 selected sub-groups/villages	1.5

Table 1: Determine Group Proximity Factor

- c. Risk factor (RF):

Risk category of the CH	RF value
CH in the very high-risk category	1.4



CH in the high-risk category	1.3
CH in the medium risk category	1.0
CH in the low risk category	1.0
CH in the very low risk category	0.9

Table 2: Determining Risk Factor

d. Interview Duration Estimation (IDE):

- i. The CB has calculated the number of individual interviews (NII) and the number of group interviews (NGI) following the guidelines in Annex 3 of this document.
- ii. Minimum Duration for individual interviews (DI2) will be calculated as $NII * 0.25hr$
- iii. Minimum Duration for group interviews (DGI) will be calculated as $NGI * 0.5hr$

Minimum IDE (in hours) = DI2 + DGI

e. Farm Sample size determination:

- i. Default farms sample size (DS2) = square root (number of group members)

Estimated minimum audit duration (MAD) is calculated as follows:

MAD (single certification) = $(DS2/6) * RF * GPF$ + IDE (in hours) + 1 day for Management System

3.6.2 For combined or integrated audits, the CB shall follow the requirements in Annex 11.

Note:

- When an interpreter is used, the audit team needs to adjust the required audit duration accordingly.
- “1 day for Management System” is the minimum. Based on its evaluation, the CB needs to increase the duration to sufficiently verify conformity at the visited CH. For example, at a big tea factory or coffee processing facility, the number of days for auditing the management system is expected to be increased.
- Single certification is understood as the audit covers only the the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Standard.



3.7 CERTIFICATION AND SURVEILLANCE AUDIT

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

- 3.7.1** The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure which describes how it performs certification and surveillance audits.
- 3.7.2** The CB shall perform a full audit to evaluate the effectiveness of the CH management system (MS) and conformity with applicable requirements by collecting complete and accurate data to define objective and representative evidence.
- 3.7.3** At least, the audit shall effectively:
- a. Evaluate the level of conformity of the CH regarding the applicable requirements of the Standard and its assurance system, in particular with respect to the identification of key aspects, processes, objectives and functioning of the CH's management system.
 - b. Obtain sufficient information to verify and confirm that the CH has correct scope.
 - c. Identify and verify applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.
 - d. Verify the correct number of sites, farms, workers, including from intermediaries, subcontractors, service providers and labor providers involved in certification.
 - e. Evaluate any improvements and/or changes since the last audit, if applicable.
 - f. Review the documented information by the CH as well as competence of its staff and commitment and effort of the CH to ensure conformity
 - g. Review the key processes at the CH to the extent required to confirm (non)conformity.
 - h. Evaluate the effectiveness of the self-assessment and/or internal inspection process performed by the CH and the level of implementation of the documented management system.
 - i. Review and confirm accuracy of data provided by the CH and from RACP
 - j. Evaluate the effective management of intermediaries/ subcontractors/ service providers and labor providers.
 - k. Evaluate the effectiveness of the CH grievance system.
 - l. Evaluate maturity and development of the documented management system, including but not limited to an effective functioning of the CH management system and how it translates requirements from the Standard into positive impacts.
 - m. Review results of any other external audits that include elements relevant to the scope of the audit. Examples include H&S audit by a governmental organization, labor inspection by a local authority, a social audit, an audit for another sustainability scheme.

3.7.4 A certification audit shall include at least the following elements:

- a. Opening meeting.
- b. Facility tour.
- c. Verification of set up and functioning of the documented management system, including but are not limited to documented policies and procedures, records keeping, staff competence and commitment, understanding and implementation of statutory and legal requirements, conformity of intermediaries, subcontractors, service providers, labor providers, internal inspection and self-assessment, HR policies and practices: recruitment/ contracting/ payroll/wages/ payment/ working hours/ promotion.
- d. Interviews with CH administrative staff, CH's management.
- e. Interviews with workers, worker's committees, representatives, workers working for intermediaries, subcontractors, service providers and labor providers and other persons involved in certification.
- f. Interviews with and/or visits to intermediaries/ subcontractors/ service providers/ labor providers.
- g. Interviews with community members where appropriate.
- h. Visits to processing unit(s) and interviews with workers at such locations.
- i. Triangulation of information at the MS before the closing meeting.
- j. Determine the audit findings among audit team members.
- k. Closing meeting.

3.7.5 If the CH is not ready to receive the CB during an unannounced audit, the CB shall suspend the certificate of that CH. Only in case of force majeure or with exceptionally valid reason which is determined at the sole discretion of the Rainforest Alliance, one exception may be given during one cycle of certification, i.e. 3 years.

3.7.6 Additionally, for a surveillance audit, the audit team shall review and verify at least the following:

- a. Any change in certification and/or audit scope.
- b. Effective implementation of improvement criteria.
- c. Verify data quality for smart meter criteria.
- d. Effective functioning of the management system including but not limited to:
 - i. effectiveness of training and awareness raising activities;



- ii. effectiveness of root cause analysis, corrections, corrective and preventive actions resulted from internal or external nonconformities;
- iii. effectiveness of risk assessment and management .

3.7.7 The CB shall evaluate and document the overall performance and progress of improvement, including any trends such as repeated areas for improvement, repeated nonconformities of the CH.

3.7.8 The CB shall document records as they consider necessary to demonstrate how an audit activity has been performed to show its conformity to the requirements of the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System as well as detailed evidence to demonstrate (non)conformity of the CH in each audit.

Note: This record also includes justification for each deviation of any of the requirements in the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System.

Additional requirements for Farm audits:

3.7.9 The audit team shall visit a representative sample of farms/farm units, including conservation areas, infrastructures, non-certified crop areas and shall conduct interviews with workers at farm level. The audit team shall also engage with any stakeholders at community level, wherever appropriate

3.7.10 The audit team shall always verify data quality for applicable smart meter criteria.

3.8 CONDUCTING AN OPENING MEETING

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

3.8.1 The CB audit team shall ensure that each audit starts with an effective opening meeting conducted by the lead auditor.

3.8.2 The opening meeting shall include participation of the audit team and key CH persons indicated in 2.4.15 of this document at a minimum.

3.8.3 The opening meeting shall include at least the following elements:

- a. Introduction of the audit team with clear roles and responsibilities including those for interpreters, observers and/or technical experts.
- b. Confirmation of the audit plan and that all the planned activities can be performed. This shall clearly define:
 - i. audit type;
 - ii. audit scope;



- iii. audit objectives;
 - iv. audit criteria;
 - v. any changes;
 - vi. any relevant arrangements with the CH such as date and time of closing meeting;
 - vii. logistic arrangements for transportation within the audit;
 - viii. break time;
 - ix. availability of any guides for the audit team.
- c. Confirmation of any changes affecting the planned audit activities.
 - d. Confirmation of communication channels and contact points between the audit team and the CH.
 - e. Confirmation of availability of resources and facilities for the audit team.
 - f. Confirmation that the CH will pay for the workers, at least at the normally applicable rates, who participate in the audit activities either as interviewees, guides, facilitators or any other roles¹⁷.
 - g. Confirmation that all required documentation is available at the location the audit is taking place or is otherwise easily accessible to the audit team by electronic means.
 - h. Confirmation of matters related to confidentiality, including permission to take photographs and situations in which the CB must share information to an external organization including the Rainforest Alliance, its relevant accreditation body and/or the relevant authorities.
 - i. Confirmation of relevant work safety, emergency and security procedures for the audit team.
 - j. The method of reporting, including the types and grading of any nonconformities that may be identified.
 - k. Information about the conditions under which the audit may be prematurely terminated.
 - l. Confirmation that the audit team is responsible for the audit and shall be in control of executing the audit plan including audit activities and audit trails.

¹⁷ The interpreter will be paid by the CB.



- m. Confirmation of the status of findings of the previous audit, if applicable.
 - n. Confirmation of the language to be used during the audit as well as any necessity for interpreters.
 - o. Confirmation that adjustments will be made if new information emerges.
 - p. Confirmation of the CB's anti-bribery and/or anti-corruption policy.
 - q. The audit team shall require the CH to sign a declaration, by its representative, that it has understood and agreed not to make any bribery attempt and it shall respect the given policy.
 - r. Methods and procedures to be used to conduct the audit based on sampling and an explanation of the sampling of farms and workers. However, the CB:
 - i. Shall not disclose sample of workers to be interviewed at any time;
 - ii. Shall not disclose details as to how documents, records are sampled at any time.
 - s. The audit team shall explain that it may give contact details of the CB, the CB's audit team to any persons during this visit and the CH shall not discourage, in any way, such persons to contact the CB at any time.
 - t. The audit team shall explain that all interviews must be conducted with strictest confidentiality and therefore the CH's representatives are required not to participate in or be party to interviews of farmers.
 - u. The audit team shall explain that workers shall be interviewed at their place of work or at a site where the worker feels comfortable and provides privacy. The CB shall explain that the CH shall ensure that its workers will not intentionally intervene in the interviewing process in any way and the CH shall not have any recording device in such an area during the audit process.
 - v. The audit team shall explain that the presence of workers organizations representatives during interviews with workers is not permitted.
 - w. Explanation of the need of performing a facility tour and confirmation of any special arrangements that may be needed.
 - x. Opportunity for the participants of the meeting to ask questions, especially questions from the committees invited to this meeting.
- 3.8.4** The CB audit team shall complete a meeting log record, using a template from the CB, with at least names, positions, signature of participants, date, time, and location of the meeting as well as any additional notes emerging from the meeting.
- 3.8.5** If the CH has used consultancy services from another individual or organization, the CB shall ensure that the consultancy body can only be present during opening meeting and closing meeting as a silent observer who shall not intervene with any of the audit activities and shall not represent the CH in any instance.
- a. The CB shall ensure that such an entity shall not provide answers, documents to the audit team on behalf of the CH.



3.8.6 For an unannounced audit, the CB shall conduct:

- a. The opening meeting right after the audit team arrives at the CH's office or selected location where it can meet one or more representatives of the CH.
- b. A facility/factory tour immediately after the opening meeting if the facility/factory is on the same location where the opening meeting is conducted.

Additional requirements for Farm audits:

3.8.7 The CB shall confirm to the CH that the audit team shall not disclose details of the selected sample of farmers more than one day prior to the actual visit.

3.9 FACILITY TOUR

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

The purpose of the facility tour is to enable the audit team to observe the physical conditions and current practices in all areas of the facility to form a view of how physical conditions measure up standard requirements. The tour is also an opportunity to hold unstructured conversations /interviews with management and workers, seek site-based evidence to support findings.

The findings from the tour will later be triangulated with evidence from management/ worker interviews and document review.

In this document, facility is understood as the premises of the CH where key processing activities are performed.

3.9.1 The CB shall evaluate the risk of key activities and where, at the CH's premises these risky activities could be observed. In order to do so, the CB shall:

- a. ensure that the CH has provided (uploaded) a simple layout of the locations that are under the certification scope, including all involved infrastructures, as per the applicable standard requirement.
- b. in all cases have an understanding of when these locations will be in use, to identify the most appropriate time to execute the audit activities.
- c. ensure they receive the product flow prior to the audit, to understand the processes and potential activities taking place on the CH's premises.
- d. identify the operating hours of these activities.

3.9.2 The audit team shall plan the facility tour accordingly. This facility tour plan may be adapted when arriving onsite.



- 3.9.3** In some cases, the CH sites may prohibit visitors from walking unaccompanied through production areas or forbid photography for reasons of safety or commercial confidentiality. Nonetheless, the audit team shall ensure that activities in such restricted areas are evaluated in alternative ways.
- a. The audit team shall note restrictions on access or photography in the audit report.
- 3.9.4** The facility tour shall cover – but not be limited to - those locations where there are workers performing key processing activities directly involved in the certification scope. The tour shall also include areas where there are on-going or planned construction activities.
- 3.9.5** During the facility tour the CB audit team shall, at a minimum:
- a. Initially evaluate:
 - i. the work done at the site;
 - ii. working conditions;
 - iii. health and safety practices.
 - b. Identify:
 - i. critical risk steps;
 - ii. potentially vulnerable groups of workers;
 - iii. processes in the certification scope;
 - iv. whether there might be operations not performed onsite and therefore potentially executed by subcontractors.
 - c. Observe atmosphere between management and workers and how management systems and practices are being implemented.
 - d. Select potential groups/individuals to be interviewed onsite.
 - e. Conduct confidential conversations with workers/supervisors on general issues, if appropriate.
- 3.9.6** During the tour, the audit team shall make effort to minimize its impact on on-going activities of the CH during the facility tour.

3.10 MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AUDIT AND DOCUMENT REVIEW

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

- 3.10.1** During an onsite audit, the audit team shall verify at least the following:



- a. The documents as provided and if there have been any changes.
- b. Risk assessment by CH, including social and environmental issues if applicable.
- c. Management plan including social and environmental issues if applicable.
- d. Risk mitigation as identified.
- e. Any changes to the farm enrolment such as deletions or additions.
- f. Competence of the MS staff.
- g. Training records for MS staff and workers.
- h. Traceability, purchase procedures and purchase records.
- i. Contract between the CH and the member farms.
- j. Conflict of interest of the MS staff.
- k. Details and records of sustainability differential management.
- l. Self-assessment results.

3.10.2 The CB audit team shall verify at minimum the following documents of the MS

- a. The CB audit team shall follow the minimum number of verifications of the MS documents as per Annex 2 in this document. The audit team may increase the sample size where new information and/or emerging risk(s) have been identified.
- b. The CB shall have a template to record the verification done by the CB audit team. The auditor notes shall include or provide clear objective and verifiable evidence indicating which specific records were evaluated to establish audit conclusions.

Additional requirements for Farm audits

3.10.3 Additionally, the audit team shall verify at the MS of a farm CH the following:

- a. Set of procedures and forms defining the internal inspections.
- b. The details and records of the internal inspections, including an evaluation of the number of inspections per day and number of inspectors vs. number of farmers.
- c. Training records for group members.



- d. Any support in kind provided to group members.
- e. Farm documentation of the activities on the farm.

3.11 INTERVIEWS AND WORKER FILES REVIEW

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

- 3.11.1** The CB shall ensure that the audit team composition, including interpreters, reflects the languages spoken by the persons involved in the certification activities in the scope of the CH.
- 3.11.2** The CB shall allocate sufficient time for the audit team to conduct the necessary interviews without having to rush or reduce the number of interviews due to time and cost pressures. The audit team can refine the number and distribution of interviews during the preliminary meeting according to factors such as the activities on the farm during the audit; the types of workers available and their characteristics, responsibilities and distribution on the property; and other factors related to information not available during the audit planning process including any emerging risks identified during the onsite audit process.
- 3.11.3** The CB audit team shall ensure that the CH representatives and/or representatives of any other external organization, e.g. representatives from the trade union, shall not to be present during interviews of farmers and/or workers.
- 3.11.4** The audit team shall only disclose to the CH in a general way the number and general composition of interviews to be performed, without giving details. The names of the interviewed workers shall never be disclosed to the CH.
- 3.11.5** Following the requirements given in Annex 3 of this document, the CB shall calculate the number of worker interviews separately for:
 - a. At farm(s).
 - b. At processing unit(s).
 - c. At labor providers.
- 3.11.6** The CB shall ensure that interviewed workers that are paid per piece or task are compensated for the time dedicated to the interview. Special consideration should be taken with those workers paid by piece or task by the subcontractors, service providers and labor providers.
- 3.11.7** The CB audit team shall perform interviews in the language that the interviewees feel comfortable with to share information with the CB audit team. The CB shall consider the need to have interpreters and arrange that prior to the audit. When an interpreter is part of the audit team, the CB shall ensure that the requirements in Annex 1 of this document are effectively implemented.
- 3.11.8** At a minimum, the following criteria shall be considered during the selection of the workers for interviews:



- a. The number of workers present during the audit as well as their distribution in different areas and tasks.
- b. Production and processing activities in operation during the audit.
- c. The number of workers who work remotely, home-based and workers who are of interest but not present during the audit days.
- d. Age of workers, including workers from different age groups.
- e. Ethnicity including origin and ethnic group, such as workers of different origin within the same country, foreigners, indigenous people from different tribes.
- f. Gender.
- g. Employee status, such as permanent, temporary, casual, full time, part time workers.
- h. Type of payment, such as workers paid per hour/day and workers paid per quota, piece or task.
- i. Hierarchy level, such as operations/supervisors.
- j. Literacy level, if available.
- k. Types of work they perform.
- l. Time working for the CH, including recently hired workers.
- m. Vulnerable workers, e.g. workers at risk of exploitation or discrimination or harassment.
- n. Representation in the union, workers committee or committees or any other similar organization.
- o. Presence of labor providers such as security guards, transport of workers/inputs/products, cleaning services, medical services, maintenance or provision of workers for weeding, harvesting, pesticide application, packing and others.
- p. The existence of land or resource use concessions, CHs with high influxes of seasonal workers, or other conditions that have impacts on the surrounding communities.
- q. Previous nonconformities, complaints.
- r. Special factors, such as workers recently returned from sick leave, workers recently returned from maternity leave, migrant or temporary workers, and young workers (between 15 and 17 years of age)
- s. To complete an audit trail about gender discrimination, violence and sexual harassment, the CB audit team shall interview, onsite and/or off-site, the subcontractors and service providers, cleaners, canteen staff, construction crews, clinic nurses and doctors, dormitory and security guards, as well as transport service providers.



t. Other risk indicators identified during the audit preparation and emerging during the audit execution.

3.11.9 The CB audit team shall ensure that the participants in the interview feel safe, secure, comfortable and their privacy is protected.

3.11.10 The CB audit team shall ensure that participants of interviews will not be coerced, threatened or retaliated in any form. The audit team may share their contact details and the contact details of the interpreter so that participants of interviews may contact if they are threatened, coerced or retaliated in any way.

3.11.11 In case the nature of the activities at a CH depends much on the use of temporary and/or seasonal workers, the CB shall make its best effort to have the most realistic estimate of the number of workers present at any time to decide the time to perform the audit. This estimate shall be recorded in the CB's system.

3.11.12 In the case of a large number of temporary and/or seasonal workers are not onsite during the audit due to some unexpected reason and/or certain persons required to be interviewed are not present, the CB audit team shall make its best effort to have a conversation with such person(s) by other means, for example via a phone call or an off-site visit.

3.11.13 The audit team shall observe the following minimum guidelines for interviews:

- a. The auditors shall present themselves to the persons they will interview and explain the purpose and nature of the interview as well as the confidentiality of interviewee identity and responses.
- b. If an interpreter is part of the interview, the interviewer will introduce her/himself and reiterate that the interviewer will strictly follow the confidentiality requirement. From time to time, the auditor may create a structured introduction and ask the interpreter to do that on the auditor's behalf for efficiency purpose.
- c. The interviewees shall be respected at all times. The interviewer or interpreter shall not use condescending, abusive, insulting or otherwise offensive language or tones.
- d. Women auditors shall conduct the interviews of women on gender-related matters, especially sexual harassment. CBs shall record the reasons for not using female auditors and any compensatory or mitigation measures taken.
- e. For formal interviews in groups, the group shall be removed from their work areas and audit teams shall use techniques that promote contributions from all members of the group. The audit team shall ensure that no supervisors or supervisor family members were selected as part of the group to be interviewed.
- f. Information about the interviews and the information obtained shall be recorded, but the details shall not be disclosed to the representatives of the CH in any way that would potentially reveal the identity of the interviewees.
- g. Interviewees shall be thanked for their information and time and reminded that their names and the information contributed will not be disclosed to the CH management.



- h. The audit team shall ensure that workers are not obligated to participate in interviews or provide information beyond answers to the team's questions.

3.11.14 The CB audit team may decide to increase the number of interviews in the event of any justified information towards nonconformity. The CB shall record their justifications for deviating from the originally planned number and distribution of interviews.

3.11.15 The CB audit team shall ensure that each group interview shall have no more than 6 interviewees.

3.11.16 The CB audit team may decide to carry off-site interviews outside of planned audit activities in case they perceive that an open discussion is not possible. However, the CB audit team considers the risks and ensures the safety of the audit team and that of the interviewees.

3.11.17 The representative of intermediaries, subcontractors, and service providers shall be interviewed by the CB audit team to verify their understanding and implementation of the applicable requirements. The minimum number of intermediaries, subcontractors, and service providers to be interviewed by the CB shall be at least square root of number of intermediaries, subcontractors, and service providers respectively. All labor providers shall be included in the sample (see Annex 8)

3.11.18 The CB shall interview the person(s) responsible for maintaining the workers files (human resource staff) as well as managers, assistants and other administrative staff which are not to be counted in the number of interviews to be performed according to Annex 3 of this document.

3.11.19 The CB audit team can finalize an interview in case of disrespect or intimidation by the interviewees.

3.11.20 The CB audit team shall verify at least the following items in a selected worker file:

- a. Age verification mechanism and proof of age, where applicable.
- b. Copy of picture identification card, where applicable.
- c. Contact details: address, phone number if available.
- d. Contract.
- e. Training records, if applicable.
- f. Payment records.
- g. Type of work carried out, number of hours, shifts.
- h. Time in, time out records.
- i. Medical records, where applicable.



- j. Payment of applicable benefits.
- k. Entitlements by law or collective bargaining agreements / collective contracts: vacations /annual leave, transport allowance, housing allowance, maternity leave, paternity leave, sick leave and others.

3.11.21 The CB shall develop and make use of a template for carrying out and reporting the interviews to the extent that it demonstrates conformity with the requirements in this document.

3.11.22 The CB shall record the list of interviewees with their names, and characteristics such as age, gender, type of worker(permanent, temporary or subcontracted), time working at the farm, type of task performed (harvesting, pruning, weeding, packing, other), type of payment (hour or piece rate / task, site of interview, type of interview (individual or group), unionized / non-unionized and others. This list shall be compiled by the lead auditor and kept strictly confidential and secure at the CB database. The CB shall upload into RACP a list with the individual interviewees with their characteristics as mentioned above, without their names. Additionally,

1.1.1.1. The audit team shall record the date, place, time and duration of the interviews.

1.1.1.2. Should interviewees refuse to provide their names or participate in the interview, the auditor shall register so in the audit notes.

3.11.23 In all versions of the reports, the CB shall never include pictures of interviewees or other workers and employees.

Interviewing children

3.11.24 The audit team shall make efforts to interview children where and when appropriate.

Note: The auditor will respect the local/national legal requirements in having a conversation with children in the specific context

3.11.25 The audit team shall follow the below additional requirements when interviewing children is required:

- a. All rules for interviewing adults also apply for interviewing children.
- b. The CB audit team shall make the best effort to prevent any risk arising to the children participating in interviews.
- c. The CB audit team shall obtain consent from the children, and if present, the consent from their parents or legal guardian, to participate in an informal conversation.
- d. The CB audit team shall clearly explain the aim, the process, including at least the reasons for having a conversation with the child/children, the confidentiality, how the information may be used and what the rights of the children are in this process (not to participate, not to answer questions and right to complaint about the way in which the interview was conducted or the content), prior to the interview.
- e. When possible, the CB audit team shall first interview children together in a group interview and only perform individual interviews if needed.
- f. Presence of a trusted adult: children shall be given the option of a familiar adult to be present during the interviews.



- g. The CB audit team shall make the best effort to select an appropriate location for interviews guided by considerations for the safety and privacy of the children. This could be living quarters, workplace or a neutral location.
- h. The interview shall take place at a time and location that children suggest or prefer and that safeguard the protection and safety of the child(ren) and their need for rest.
- i. The CB shall develop a documented set of possible questions to perform considering age-appropriate language for children that the audit teams may encounter during the audits. The CB shall ensure the questions are appropriately translated into the languages that the auditors use in their audits and the CB's audit teams have access to the latest version prior to their audits.
- j. The audit team shall let children answer in their own words and the CB audit team shall ensure interpreters translate literally to ensure accuracy.
- k. If the child(ren) raise issues of abusive and dangerous situations, possible coercion and violence by employers or other persons, they may require immediate safeguarding. In these cases, the audit team shall, with the child and (where possible) her/his parents' consent, refer the case to the CH's Grievance Mechanism and/or the Assess and Address Committee for safeguarding needs.

Note: Whenever possible the audit team may suggest some psychological, medical or social assistance for the child(ren), or if they believe that the child is in immediate danger, a temporary safehouse or shelter for the child, always ensuring the best interests of the child are of primary concern.

- l. Should a child be found in a situation of child labor, but not be in immediate danger, the audit team shall follow the Rainforest Alliance Remediation Protocol and refer the case to the Grievance Mechanism and/or the Assess and Address Committee for safeguarding needs.

3.12 CONDUCTING A CLOSING MEETING

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

3.12.1 The CB shall conduct a closing meeting with participation of at least the audit team and key persons indicated in 2.4.15 of this document, where appropriate.

3.12.2 The closing meeting shall include but are not limited to the following elements:

- a. Explanation that the audit process used a sample-based and risk-based approach.
- b. The method and timeframe for the reporting.
- c. A short summary of strengths and good practices at this CH, if applicable.
- d. Explanation of all audit findings in the audit language that the participants would not find it so challenging to understand.
- e. The process for handling audit findings of the CB, including any consequences relating to the certification status of the CH, if applicable.



- f. Timeframe for the CH to respond to the audit findings.
 - g. Post audit activities, such as (onsite) follow up audit if applicable and the possibility that audit findings may be adjusted from the quality review process of the CB.
 - h. Reiteration of confidentiality.
 - i. Information about complaint and appeal procedure of the CB.
- 3.12.3** The CB shall ensure that if there is participation of a consultant as an observer in the closing meeting, this person shall be a silent observer who shall not represent the CH in this meeting.
- 3.12.4** The audit team shall consider the use of interpreter(s) in the closing meeting if necessary.
- 3.12.5** The audit team shall leave a copy of the audit findings with detailed explanation of the findings.
- 3.12.6** The CB shall record participation of the meeting using the template provided by the CB which contains at least: location and time of the meeting, names, position and signature of participants, any other notes needed.
- 3.12.7** Any diverting opinions between the audit team and the CH shall be recorded.

3.13 AUDIT TERMINATION

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

- 3.13.1** The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure to address a situation in which an audit can be prematurely terminated. Some examples of such situations are: extreme natural events, denied access to CH workers, staff, documents, infrastructure; serious accident; concerns related to security and safety; power outage; attempted bribery; non-cooperation during an audit; unexpected changes of audit scope due to non-disclosure of information from the CH during the audit application/preparation process; evident fraudulent activity; attempt to hide or alter any information/ evidence observed by the audit team.
- 3.13.2** The procedure shall include actions that different parties involved will take, including: the CB, the audit team, the CH when such a situation occurs.
- 3.13.3** The audit team shall not carry out any portion of an audit that is likely to risk the health and safety of the audit team or those involved in the auditing process, such as interviewees. In these cases, the CB shall notify the Rainforest Alliance and justify the omissions.
- 3.13.4** When there is a situation leading to terminating an audit, the CB shall:
- a. Document it to the detail level that allows the CB or the Rainforest Alliance to investigate and address such an issue, for example uncooperating, attempted bribery, safety concerns. Such records shall be maintained up to date.



- b. Inform the Rainforest Alliance immediately in writing and produce a report that covers the steps which have been completed and findings identified. This shall be uploaded into RACP within 2 weeks since the occurrence and updated once the case has been closed.
- c. Give the audit team the authority to leave the premise immediately if there are materialized risks to their safety.

3.13.5 If an audit is prematurely terminated, the CB shall issue a nonconformity and may:

- a. Decide to suspend or cancel the certificate, depending on the nature and severity of the issue found. Such a decision shall be taken within 7 days since the occurrence.
- b. Request the Rainforest Alliance not to allow the involved CH to get certified for a (in)definite period.

3.13.6 In case an audit cannot be performed within the allowed timeframe defined in this document and/or the Certification Rules, or is terminated due to a cause by the CH:

- a. The CH shall make payment for the due amount as invoiced by the CB.
- b. A new audit is collaboratively scheduled by both parties if the CH still wants to pursue certification with the CB and the CB still accepts the application for certification by the CH.

3.13.7 In case an audit cannot be performed within the allowed timeframe or is terminated due to a cause by the CB:

- a. The CB shall inform the Rainforest Alliance immediately with detailed explanation of deviations.
- b. The CB shall not charge the CH for the costs incurred that did not result in the expected outcome.
- c. a new audit is collaboratively scheduled by both parties if the CH still wants to pursue certification with the CB.

3.13.8 All termination cases shall be recorded in RACP with the details to the extent that is sufficient to the reader to understand the reason(s) and the context of such a case.

3.13.9 The Rainforest Alliance reserves the rights not to allow a certificate transfer in case there was a valid reason for audit termination with the current CB.

3.14 DRAFT REPORT AND CHECKLIST

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

3.14.1 The CB shall respect the reporting and follow-up timelines defined in this document.

3.14.2 The Rainforest Alliance reserves the rights to require shorter deadlines in cases of investigation audits or high-risk cases.

3.14.3 The lead auditor shall ensure that



- a. the draft report is completed within the given timeframe with clear and objective evidence sufficiently to confirm (non)conformity of the CH for the determined scope.
 - b. the data required for completing the license activation process is accurate and complete before sending the draft report to the CH.
- 3.14.4** The checklist and audit report shall include the audit findings (conformity and nonconformity) with description of required objective evidence(s) obtained during the audit so that the reader understands the nature and magnitude/impact of the findings. The (non)conformities and the evidence description shall not disclose costs, competitive or intellectual property information, names of CH workers or any information that could put at risk the health or safety of the involved persons.
- 3.14.5** The audit evidence (photos and copies of documents) that support or demonstrate the evidence description provided can be annexed to the report but shall not be made public. The lead auditor shall ensure that audit evidence collected by the audit team (photos, copies of documents, etc.) shall be shared with the CB within 3 weeks from the last day of the audit.
- 3.14.6** The lead auditor shall send the CB the check list, audit report, list of member farms, data about workers, interviews and any evidence obtained during the audit within the given timeframe in this document.
- 3.14.7** The CB shall record audit evidence in its system and make available when requested by the Rainforest Alliance.

3.15 QUALITY REVIEW

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

- 3.15.1** The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure for the quality review of audit reports/data together with evidence of closure of nonconformities.
- 3.15.2** The CB shall assign a competent quality reviewer(s) to perform the quality review of the draft audit report, checklist, required data and NC closure evidence provided by the audit team.
- 3.15.3** The quality review shall be done by person(s) who were not part of the audit team of the audit and has the active status of a certifier.
- 3.15.4** The CB shall perform at least:
- a. Reviewing the quality of and confirming the nonconformities before uploading them to RACP.
 - b. Reviewing the quality of corrective actions by the CH to close the NCs found and to make a certification decision.
- 3.15.5** The quality reviewer shall ensure at least the following elements according to the requirements of the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System:
- a. Correct interpretation of the Standard criteria for the applicable scope.



- b. Assignment of nonconformities to the correct Standard criteria.
 - c. Review of technical concepts relevant to the production system in the evaluation of the Standard criteria.
 - d. Verification that the report does not include the names of the persons interviewed.
 - e. Verification that the evidence for all applicable criteria and all nonconformities is described in a manner that is clear, concise, objective and expresses the nature, magnitude and correct technical basis of the nonconformities in relation to the Standard.
 - f. Verification that the conclusions of the report are consistent with the nonconformities reported.
 - g. Verification that the auditor verified the information and data about the CH indicated in this document, e.g. geodata, workers data, other relevant audit evidences.
 - h. Verification that the samples were correctly determined and implemented, e.g. samples of farms, workers, worker files, documents, labor providers.
 - i. Verification that the correct number and distribution of interviews were conducted.
 - j. Correct spelling and grammar without excessive use of jargon or colloquialisms.
 - k. Conformity with submission deadlines established in this document.
 - l. The adequacy and effectiveness of corrective actions submitted, including appropriate root cause analysis.
- 3.15.6** The reviewer shall evaluate the quality of the report and keep a record for each audit report reviewed including aspects to be improved, which will be used for the auditor performance evaluation to be carried out by the CB and Rainforest Alliance.
- 3.15.7** The quality reviewer shall document recommended changes and any comments, observations and suggestions for improvement and send them to the lead auditor.
- 3.15.8** The lead auditor shall modify audit reports based on the comments, observations and suggestions indicated in the quality review. Any conflicts between the audit teams or lead auditors' findings and the recommended changes must be documented and incorporated in the CB's quality management system for eventual reviews.
- 3.15.9** In case the quality review process of the CB reveals concrete evidence that the auditing process was not properly executed, the CB shall evaluate the nature of the finding and take corresponding corrections and corrective actions. If the corrections and corrective actions require additional auditing activities to collect data to complete the report, the CB shall cover costs for such activities.
- 3.15.10** In case additional assurance review of the Rainforest Alliance reveals concrete evidence that the auditing process was not properly executed, the CB shall take corresponding corrections and corrective actions as requested by the Rainforest Alliance. If the corrections



and corrective actions require additional auditing activities to collect data to complete the report, the CB shall cover costs for such activities.

3.15.11 CBs shall maintain copies of the original draft audit report and the quality review teams' reports and incorporate them into quality assurance reviews as indicated in the CBs' quality management systems.

Additional requirements for Farm audits:

3.15.12 The quality reviewer shall verify that

- a. the list of member farms is complete with accurate data, including geo-location data for each farm.
- b. the volumes reported are congruent and realistic in relation to the crop and the production areas.

3.16 FOLLOW UP AUDIT

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

3.16.1 The CB shall use objective evaluation of the audit findings, the risks from each audit to justify if an onsite follow up audit is needed.

3.16.2 The CB shall follow the applicable requirements in this document when performing a follow-up audit considering the scope of such an audit.

3.16.3 For follow-up audits, the auditors shall update the original checklist and indicate the additional information and the date when the follow-up audit was performed. For new audit samples, the lead auditor shall ensure accurate and complete evidence and findings for all applicable requirements.

3.16.4 In case there was contribution by technical experts, the CB may append that to the audit report template or upload it separately if the content does not fit into the normal audit report template.

3.16.5 The CB shall follow the requirements for a follow-up audit in the Certification Rules.



3.17 CERTIFICATION DECISION PROCESS

Applicable to Farm and Supply Chain audits:

- 3.17.1** The CB shall take the decision and complete the submission process in the RACP within the timelines defined in the the Rainforest Alliance Assurance system. The certification decision, negative or positive, shall be decided by approved and active certifier(s).
- 3.17.2** To decide whether a certification decision is negative, the CB shall follow the guidelines in the chapter Certification Rules.
- 3.17.3** In case further assurance review(s) of the audit documentation package show(s) evidence that the decision of the CB was made based on inaccurate and/or incomplete data and/or without strong, objective evidence, the Rainforest Alliance reserves the rights not to activate the license in RACP.
- 3.17.4** The CB shall ensure that all the audited CHs comply with all applicable requirements before issuing a positive certification decision.
- 3.17.5** In case the CB decides to decertify or non-certify a CH, it has to be made within 2 weeks since the last date of the audit.
- 3.17.6** The certifier that makes the certification decision has the authority to:
- Make the final certification decision.
 - Modify the recommendation of the audit team, due to inconsistencies identified in the audit report.
 - Request that the lead auditor clarify or expand any section of the audit report.
 - Dismiss a nonconformity with documented justification, or
 - Issue a new nonconformity with documented justification.

Note:

A certification decision can be negative or positive. Such a decision is taken by the CB to certify, de-certify, non-certify, suspend, extend the certification scope, maintain certification status, terminate the certificate.

- 3.17.7** The certifier shall justify their decisions based on the technical framework of the Standard, the Certification Rules and related requirements in the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System. If these decisions result in modification of the audit team's findings or decisions the CB shall document the certifier's justification for these modifications for review within CB's quality management systems.
- 3.17.8** The CB shall use mechanisms to communicate certification decisions to audited CH. The CB shall keep records of the communication trail and acknowledgement of communications, such as electronic mail (with acknowledgement of receipt) and registered post. The CB shall make such records available to the Rainforest Alliance when required.
- 3.17.9** The CB shall inform the CH of the certification decision only when the CB has completed the required steps in the RACP.



3.17.10 The CB shall upload into the RACP all audit reports and required data regardless of the certification decision.

3.18 ISSUING THE CERTIFICATE

3.18.1 The CB shall only use the the Rainforest Alliance certificate as generated by the RACP.

3.18.2 CBs shall release a certificate only after the license has been activated in the RACP. CBs shall also release the certificates for:

- a. CHs that have undergone scope extension audits that necessitate changes in the certificate.
- b. CHs that have changed their legal or commercial name; or
- c. CHs that have transferred to the CB, but only after the next programmed audit and a positive certification decision.
- d. In these cases, certificate validity shall not change.

3.19 EXCEPTIONS

3.19.1 The CB shall evaluate each application for exceptions received from a certified CH and validate whether to accept the exception. The CB can analyze if the exception is applicable for the following:

- a. Conformity with a criterion
- b. Certificate or audit date extension
- c. Volume change
- d. Force majeure: Extraordinary event or circumstance that is beyond the CH's control, and that prevents it from complying with these rules and Rainforest Alliance Certification Rules. This includes risks beyond the control of the CH, incurred not as a product or result of negligence or malfeasance. Rainforest Alliance will approve the exception if applicable. These exceptions are valid until the next revision process for these rules.

3.19.2 The CB shall submit in writing the exception requests and its decisions to the Rainforest Alliance.

3.19.3 When in doubt of whether an exception request can be approved, the CB shall consult the Rainforest Alliance for further instructions.



ANNEX 1: USE OF INTERPRETER

1. The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure for the selection and use of interpreters during audits and certification activities.
2. The CB shall ensure that there are no conflicts of interest between the interpreter and the related CH.
3. The CB and the interpreter shall sign an agreement inclusive of a non-disclosure agreement.
4. The CB shall ensure an adequate number of interpreters are available to ensure communication between the audit team and the intended audience including management, workers and any other relevant stakeholders.
5. The CB audit team shall ensure that the interpreter does not act as an auditor, including but are not limited to:
 - a. Conducting independent interviews or reviews of documents
 - b. Making decisions on conformities or nonconformities.
6. The CB shall ensure that the interpreter has received clear instructions from the CB/audit team before the audit to ensure the requirements in this Annex are fully implemented.
7. The audit team shall ensure that the interpreter does not alter or influence the meaning or direction of the communication being interpreted by the audit team or the auditee.
8. The interpreter shall not omit elements of the conversation to any of the stakeholders.
9. When discussing social and/or sensitive aspects, the interpreter:
 - 1.1.1.1. Shall remain neutral and avoid judgment or use of patronizing language or behavior
 - 1.1.1.2. Shall be aware of her/his impact on the interviewee
10. The audit team shall ensure that the interpreter is not be a participant in the communication between interviewer and interviewee. The interpreter only facilitates their communication.
11. The interpreter shall not initiate any independent conversations with the interviewee unless instructed by the interviewer.
12. The interpreter shall always maintain neutrality towards the interviewee.



ANNEX 2: MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR DOCUMENT SAMPLING

This annex provides requirements for the audit team to sample documents at different locations during an audit. The audit team is not obliged to respect all the requirements in a follow up or an investigation audit.

1. The audit team shall verify at least the types and number of documents included in the table below.

Type of document	Minimum number of items	Applicable to	Remarks
Policies and procedures	All applicable	Farm and Supply Chain audits	
Purchase/sales contracts	A representative sample	Farm and Supply Chain audits	
MS staff records	Square root of the number of persons.	Farm and Supply Chain audits	Knowledge and competence of the MS staff, their training records, conflict of interests, contracts between CH and the staff, wages, working hours, benefits.
Training records	Square root of training events in the past 12 months	Farm and Supply Chain audits	Training of farmers, workers
Risk assessment	All required by the Standard	Farm and Supply Chain audits	
Purchase records	Same as sample size chosen	Farm audits	The purchase slips of the member farms chosen as sample; Purchase vs. current production vs. yield estimation. The audit team may increase the sample size, at its discretion, to check purchase records of farmers that are not in the sample.
	A representative sample	Supply chain audits	



Sales records	Overview(s) to verify the total volume purchase, processed, sold and stock. At least complete product flows of at least 5 sale transactions.	Farm audits	
	A representative sample	Supply chain audits	
Sustainability Differential records	Current records	Farm and Supply Chain audits	
Internal inspector files	Square root of the number of internal inspectors.	Farm audits	At least the following is verified: Competence of internal inspectors, conflict of interest, wages, working hours, benefits. Additionally, witness audits shall be performed to a certain number of internal inspectors, which should match with the files of internal inspectors verified.
Management plan	Entire CH	Farm audits	
Contracts with group members	50% of total number of farms chosen as the sample	Farm audits	50% of the files will be from the selected farms for visit and the rest will be from the member farms not chosen as samples.
Maps, polygons	Follow Annex 5 on using geodata		
Internal inspections and farm documentation	Same as sample size chosen	Farm audits	The internal inspection reports of all the members in the sample. The CB auditor may decide to check additionally 25% of the sample size of the members not chosen as sample.
Approvals and sanctions	Same number of approval records as sample size chosen, if approval documents are different from	Farm audits	



	<p>contracts between the management and the farmers</p> <p>All sanctions performed in the last year if there are 15 or less than 15 sanctioned members. If there are more than 15 sanctioned members, the sample shall be 15 plus the square root of the number of sanctions above 15.</p>		<p>Reason for the sanction shall be cross verified</p>
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Table 3: Minimum documents to be verified by CB audit team at the Management System



ANNEX 3: CALCULATING THE NUMBER OF WORKER INTERVIEWS AND WORKER FILES

The table below provides the requirements on determining the minimum number of interviews to be done and the number of worker files to be reviewed based on the number of workers.

1. The audit team shall perform at least the number of interviews of workers and reviews of worker files included in the table below while respecting the general requirements in the Interviewing section of this document.
2. The sampling of workers shall use the number of persons as the basis for calculation, regardless of how many hours they work for a week, rather than the number of full-time equivalent workers.
 - a. The CB shall consider the number of workers in peak production period(s) and in low production period(s) among others when determining the most representative sample.
3. When the total number of non-administrative workers is less than 6, all workers shall be interviewed, and all worker files shall be reviewed.
4. The CB will not count interviews with and/or number of worker files of management, supervisor or administrative staff of the CH while making the calculations.
5. A group interview shall not have more than 6 workers and the auditor shall ensure that sufficient time is provided for all of the group members to express themselves

Note:

The average time spent on an individual interview is estimated to be on average at least 15 minutes for an interview with no issues and 30 minutes where issues are raised. The average time spent on a group interview is estimated to be between 30 to 45 minutes, including time required to assemble workers.

Number of workers involved in the CH	Minimum number of interviews	Minimum number of individual interviews	Maximum number of group interviews	Minimum number of worker files to be checked
Under 10	6	3	1 group of 3	6
11-50	9	5	1 group of 4	9



51-100	15	7	1 group of 3 1 group of 5	15
101-250	20	10	2 groups of 5	20
251-500	32	12	2 groups of 3 1 group of 4 2 groups of 5	32
501-1000	40	15	2 groups of 3 1 group of 4 3 groups of 5	40
1001-2000	50	18	1 group of 3 1 group of 4 5 groups of 5	50
2000 -5000	65	25	8 groups of 5	65
More than 5000	Square root of total number of workers	At least 35% of interview sample size	At maximum 65% interview sample size	Square root

Table 4: Number of interviews and worker files



ANNEX 4: OFF-SITE INVESTIGATION PRIOR TO ONSITE AUDIT

1. The CB shall perform an off-site investigation following the requirements in this Annex when high risks have been identified by the CB and/or the Rainforest Alliance.
2. The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure for determining the need for an off-site investigation. The objective of the procedure shall be to ensure that the CH activities do not compromise the integrity of the CB and/or the certification scheme, including but not limited to severe fraud, attempted bribery, past and present legal actions against the CH, especially when it is related to violations of human rights such as freedom of association, sexual harassment, forced labor, trafficking and exploitation of migrant workers and / or child labor are identified as high conformity risks in a risk assessment for a geographic scope.
3. To determine the need for an off-site investigation, the CB shall evaluate the relevant risks identified through the review of the certification application, the stakeholder consultation, any complaints it received about a particular CH and risks at the CH shared to the CB by the Rainforest Alliance. Some examples of off-site investigations include interviews with workers and members of the community outside the properties of the audited CH, physical meetings with selected stakeholders, obtaining (documented) information from local authorities and other external sources such as trade unions, local NGOs, consultants/experts on the highest risk topics, if these have not been satisfactorily performed during the stakeholder consultation phase.
4. The CB shall clearly indicate in preliminary and/or final audit plans that off-site investigations would be carried out. The CB shall use their judgment on how much detail to reveal to the CH when there is risk that the CH could influence the off-site investigation process. This is important when interviewing workers outside of the CH's properties, for example as in cases of investigating freedom of association and/or relevant topics related to working conditions.
5. The CB may count off-site worker interviews as part of the required number of interviews for an onsite audit.
6. The CB shall not count interviews with other stakeholders—government authorities, advocacy groups, and union representatives that do not work on the audited CHs— as part of the required number of interviews and do not count them as worker interviews. The Rainforest Alliance can designate the number and type of interviews, where appropriate as part of the scope for off-site investigation.
7. The CB shall document the outcome of this process and upload the results of such an off-site investigation into RACP. If any cases identified as having materialized risks, the CB shall record justification for continuing the certification process with that CH.



ANNEX 5: USING GEODATA AND RISK MAPS IN AN AUDIT

General:

1. The risk maps support the auditing process by providing an overview of (1) quality issues with the geodata, (2) conversion of natural forest and ecosystems, and (2) encroachment into protected areas. The maps are the result of overlaying geospatial location data of the member with other layers of information (forest layer, tree cover loss, protected areas). In the future the Rainforest Alliance may create risk maps for other topics and hence, new layers of information will be needed. While the CH is preparing for certification, it is possible to update the geospatial data, every time this is done, the risk maps will be updated accordingly. Once the CB and the CH have signed a contract, the CB will have access to the risk maps of the CH.
 - a. **First risk map:** this is the risk map (for geodata quality, deforestation and protected areas) created by the Rainforest Alliance upon registration. The geodata used at this stage could include an envelope of the geographical scope or a combination of points and polygons, following the standard requirements. For more information about this refer to the guidance (TBD).
 - b. **Second risk map:** this is the risk map created by the Rainforest Alliance which will be used for the onsite audit. The geodata used at this stage will be a combination of points and polygons, following the standard requirements. It will allow the CB to identify the farms to be included in the sample based on risks.
2. The CB shall use the most updated risk maps to identify and assess the risks of the CH as part of its own risk assessment prior to the audit. The CB shall use the results of such risk assessment for preparing and executing the audit where applicable.
3. The CB shall verify at least the following during the audit preparation in order to evaluate the quality of the geodata provided by the CH:
 - 1.1.1.3. Identifying unusual patterns for the location of the farms/sites (e.g. perfectly squared grid in which all points are equidistant from one another)
 - 1.1.1.4. Identifying geodata location in unusual locations (e.g. in palm oil fields instead of the commodity under the audit scope) during the audit preparation
 - 1.1.1.5. Identifying potential repetition of farms/farm units/sites within this CH and between this CH and other Rainforest Alliance-certified CH(s).
 - 1.1.1.6. Determining whether geodata was taken following the guidelines provided by the Rainforest Alliance.
4. The CB shall verify at least the following during the onsite audit in order to evaluate the quality of the geodata provided by the CH:
 - a. The CB shall evaluate the credibility of location points/polygons collected by the CH by comparing them with the data collected by the audit team.



- b. The CB audit team shall triangulate the evidence provided by the CH with evidence provided by the farmers for situations in which there is repetition of farms/farm units/sites within this CH and between this CH and other Rainforest Alliance-certified CH(s).
 - c. Geodata management (correct usage of farmer and/or farm/ farm unit IDs in geodata collection and internal inspections by the CH).
 - d. Risk assessment methodology implemented by the CH to choose farms/farm units for which to collect polygons.
5. The CB shall evaluate the goals for yearly geodata collection the CH has set up (e.g. did the group reach the % of polygons they had planned to collect every year, until the next improvement level?)
6. The CB shall determine a representative sample by using a combination of the risk analysis conducted by the CB and the risk analysis done by the Rainforest Alliance.
7. For an individual farm/site selected in the audit sample, the audit team shall visit the areas considered as high risk in the the Rainforest Alliance risk maps.
8. Prior to the onsite audit, the CB ensures to have received and evaluated the geospatial data provided by the CH through the the Rainforest Alliance system in order to prepare and plan the audit. In case new/updated geodata is provided, the CB shall evaluate this new geodata and the new Rainforest Alliance risk maps produced with it. This geodata will be a combination of points and polygons for farms/farm units/sites as required in the standard.
9. The CB shall verify the quality of the geodata provided by the CH (see 3 and 4 in this Annex) and assess the risk of deforestation and encroachment of protected areas on the field (Refer to Annex 6 of this document). During the audit preparation, the CB shall decide which evidence to check in the field and at the MS and which data to cross check during the onsite visit.
10. The audit team shall ensure that sample is representative of the risk levels encountered in the group. At least 30% of the sample shall be composed with farms with medium/high risk if the total number of medium/high risk farms is equal or larger than 30% of the calculated sample size (e.g. sample size is 10 and number of risky farms is 6, then the sample must have at least 3 of those risky farms). If, however, the total number of risky farms is lower than 30% of the calculated sample size, all risky farms shall be included in the sample (e.g. sample size is 10 and there are 2 risky farms, then these shall be included in the sample). If risks are greater than identified, the audit team can expand the sample size to have more certainty on whether this is a severe issue (See Annex 6 of this document and Certification Rules).
- a. When there is a severe issue (see Certification Rules section 2.7), the CB shall raise a NC and the CB shall ensure that, when allowed, the closure of such a NC gives enough confidence that the risk has been effectively mitigated/addressed by the CH.
 - b. When the NC given can be closed, the CB may perform an onsite follow up audit to verify that the issues have been properly addressed.
11. During the onsite or follow up audit, the CB shall verify:



- a. The audit team shall verify with the internal inspector or data collector the process of geodata collection (points and polygons) in the field. For this, the CB could accompany the relevant person(s) and evaluate whether geodata is being collected in the appropriate manner (refer to geospatial guidance for more detailed information).
 - b. With the selected sample, the CB shall evaluate whether the location points/polygon provided coincide with the actual farm location visited during the audit. In addition, the CB shall respect the recommendations provided by the Rainforest Alliance in order to verify whether geodata is taken following the guidelines provided by the Rainforest Alliance.
 - c. Based on the type of geodata provided by the CH, the CB shall crosscheck this with data collected in the field to evaluate geodata quality (see 3 and 4 in this Annex).
 - d. The CB shall verify if the risks for protected areas (PA) and deforestation identified by the Rainforest Alliance are indeed present in the field and evaluate the corrective actions that the CH should implement and/or whether the CH clearly presents nonconformities related to protected areas and/or deforestation that may lead to a negative certification decision. In such a case, the CB shall terminate the audit process (for more information, refer to Annex 6 of this document).
- 12.** When auditing deforestation and PA risks, the CB shall collect the geodata of the group members' visited farms/farm units/sites (e.g. location points). In the case of polygons, the audit team should review the polygons for the farms with the highest risk levels. Based on this, the CB shall assess whether there should be a nonconformity about geodata. If as a result of the audit, the CH needs to correct and provide new geodata, the CB shall review this and assess whether this new information changes the Rainforest Alliance risk maps for PA and deforestation. If that is the case, the CB shall verify the new risks, as explained above in this Annex.
- 13.** The audit team shall collect evidence if the following situations are found during the audit: (a) a farm/farm unit has deforested/encroached in PA, (b) a farm/farm unit was indicated as risky in the Rainforest Alliance risk maps but field evidence proved otherwise. The evidence could include:
- a. Location point/polygon of the farm/farm units
 - b. Explanation of why conversion showed up in satellite images but would not mean conversion: for example, forest plantations that are harvested and converted to agricultural use, but would not mean conversion of natural ecosystem
 - c. (if applicable) High resolution satellite imagery showing that conversion of natural ecosystems didn't take place
 - d. Pictures, drone images or other proof of field evidence that explains risk detection (high shade coverage, timber plantations in the surrounding etc.)
 - e. Farms' age older than the cut-off date; conversion found due to harvesting shade trees, for example etc
 - f. Additional information that can show conformity (different classification of the PA provided by the government)



- g. Evidence showing conformity with the applicable law and management plans for protected areas, as defined by the relevant authorities
- h. Permits granted by the government
- i. Explanation of technical issues leading to wrong detection of protected area boundaries (for example, low resolution etc.)

14. As part of the license request process the CB shall provide:

- a. Identification of all the group members' farms/farm units/sites included in the audit sample. For the deforestation and PA risk-based-part of the sample (as mentioned in point 10 above), indicate the reason for including them (e.g. deforestation risk, PA risk)
- b. Geodata collected by the CB audit team of the group member's farms/farm units/sites visited as part of the sample (location points and/or polygons)
- c. Updated geodata of the member (if applicable), explanation of findings by the CB, or provided by the member and assessed by the CB, when deforestation or encroachment in PA has been confirmed or when the CH is contesting the risk analysis provided by the Rainforest Alliance (refer to geospatial guidance for detailed explanation).

15. However, based on the risk level of the CH, the Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to request additional evidence as part of the license request process.



ANNEX 6: AUDITING DEFORESTATION AND ENCROACHMENT IN PROTECTED AREAS

To support CBs in auditing recent conversion of natural ecosystems, the Rainforest Alliance's risk maps give an overview of whether there is evidence/indication of conversion on a certain farm/site of which a polygon or location point has been provided. The risk maps are made by overlaying geospatial location data, a baseline layer indicating forests present until 2014 and evidence of tree cover loss since the same cut-off year. The result will be a risk indication of farms/sites that have deforested since 2014 and farms that are at risk of deforesting in the future. Likewise, the Rainforest Alliance will elaborate maps for monitoring the risk of encroachment into protected areas by overlaying the geolocation of the farms with up-to-date maps of Protected Areas (PA). This Annex describes how to use the risk maps to plan and conduct the audit.

1. The CB shall follow the requirements and guidelines in this Annex while performing an audit in which deforestation and encroachment in protected areas is part of the scope.
2. The CB shall use the first risk map (see Annex 5 of this document) as an indicator of risk of the CH. The CH might have excluded group members or production sites from application to certification and the excluded areas will not be taken in the audit sample or evaluated; however, the audit team shall consider this as a risk indicator when assessing the overall risk of the certificate holder and raise an NC on the corresponding control point (4.1.1 or 4.1.2) if more than 5% of the initial group members were excluded based on their risk to the respective control point.
3. The audit team shall use the updated second risk map (see Annex 5 of this document) in preparing the audit.
4. In addition to the risk maps, the audit team shall use different factors to assess the risks to deforestation, including but not limited to, new production areas, purchases of new land, and new infrastructure, or large increases in production without the purchase of new land.
5. Prior to the audit, the audit team shall research whether there are protected areas and/or important ecosystems in the areas under the audit, and to be knowledgeable of the rules and laws of protected areas, including buffer zones, for the specific context of the audit. The results of such research shall be recorded by the audit team in corresponding certification file which will be made available to the Rainforest Alliance upon request.
6. The audit team shall verify deforestation at different stages, i.e. in the farm, at the factory/processing unit and at MS level.
7. During the visit, the audit team shall verify the following signs of recent deforestation in the field.
 - a. The audit team shall take pictures of relevant evidences and retain the picture as part of the certification file at the CB. The CB shall make such pictures available to the Rainforest Alliance upon request.



8. During visits of farms/sites with high deforestation risk or high risk of encroachment to protected areas, i.e. evidence of recent deforestation from risk maps as described above or identified as high risk by the audit team with new information found onsite, the audit team shall exercise professional scepticism that conversion or expansion has happened and shall follow up to confirm the risk.
9. The audit team shall effectively incorporate the topic of deforestation in interviews with farmers, workers and in stakeholder consultation.
10. To determine a nonconformity of 4.1.2, encroachment in protected areas, the audit team shall consider the following:
 - a. If a farm/farm unit/site is in a protected area, the producer or group member cannot be certified unless the production is allowed under applicable law (see glossary of the the Rainforest Alliance standard: National and ratified international laws that apply in a given context or situation. National laws include the laws and regulations of all jurisdictions within a nation (local, regional, and national). International laws to which nations have acceded are also considered as applicable law).
 - b. The applicable law can constitute a certain zoning in a management plan (multi-use zones), a certain category of protected areas (IUCN categories V, VI), or permits (for example, admitted farms); if production is happening in a protected area does not allow production ("no go" protected area), the group member has to be excluded or the individual CH decertified/non-certified.
 - c. In any case of permitted production there needs to be verifiable evidence that the production is allowed under applicable law; this includes clear boundaries in the form of polygons of the zoning or permit, for example, polygons of enclaves or admitted farms.
 - d. In the case that production is only allowed under certain conditions, the audit team shall verify that these conditions are met by the CH.
 - e. In case that production is not allowed in the protected area or the conditions are not met, the group member or individual CH cannot be certified. For group/multi-farm and multi-site CHs, the CB shall assess, based on the risk maps, whether:
 - i. <5% of member farms are nonconformant with 4.1.2; in this case the member farms shall be excluded from certification
 - ii. >5% of members farms are nonconformant with 4.1.2: in this case, the CH shall raise a nonconformity leading to non-certification or decertification (see chapter Certification Rules section 2.7).
11. The CB audit team shall follow the following guidelines, for determining Nonconformities, for cases of conversion of natural forest and ecosystems for group/multi farm and multisite CH.



- a. First of all, based on the audit sample and the risk maps, the overall number of noncompliant group member farms shall be extrapolated as follows:
 - i. If all audited member farms showed evidence of recent conversion, all members shall be deemed non-conformant;
 - ii. If the number of member farms found to have converted after the cut-off date is equal to or higher than those flagged in the risk maps, the audit team shall extrapolate the corresponding percentage of all group members to be deemed nonconformant;
 - iii. If the number of member farms found to have converted after the cut-off date is lower than those flagged in the risk maps, there cannot be an automated extrapolation on nonconformities. However, in order to determine the overall risk for *severe issues* (see *chapter Certification Rules, section 2.7*) on group level and to determine whether this will lead to non/de-certification, there shall be an extrapolation based on the percentage of risky¹⁸ members found nonconformant. For example, if 4 out of 5 risky audited group members are found to be nonconformant, the actual number of nonconformant members should be estimated at 80% of risky members. If there are 20 risky members, the extrapolation would be that 16 are nonconformant. If this is above 5% of the group, this is considered as a severe issue that leads to non/de-certification (see *chapter Certification Rules, section 2.7*).
- a. Scenario 1: the CB shall issue a **nonconformity** (severe issues – see Certification Rules) leading to a negative certification decision if one of these 3 conditions are met:
 - the number noncompliant small farms (after extrapolation) comprise more than 5% of total number of small farms in the group
 - the number of noncompliant sites/ large farms (after extrapolation) comprise more than 5% of total number of sites/ large farms in the group
 - the total converted area from the entire CH is more than 10ha.
- b. Scenario 2: the CB shall issue a **nonconformity** and allow the CH to **exclude** the converted farms and implement proper corrective actions if:
 - the number noncompliant small farms comprise more than 1% and less than 5% of total number of small farms in the group and the total converted area from the entire CH is less than 10ha
 - the number of noncompliant sites/large farms comprise more than 1% and less than 5% of total number of large farms in the group and the total converted area from the entire CH is less than 10ha

¹⁸ Considered as risky according to the risk maps.



- c. Scenario 3: the CB shall issue a nonconformity and allow the CH to **keep** the converted farms and to implement proper corrective actions if:
 - the number noncompliant small farms comprise less than 1% of total number of small farms in the group and the total converted area from the entire CH is less than 10ha
 - the number of noncompliant sites/large farms comprise less than 1% of total number of site/large farms in the group and the total converted area from the entire CH is less than 10ha
- d) Scenario 4: the CB shall issue a nonconformity and allow the CH to close the NC if the first risk map showed >5% risky members, but no or only a nonconformity resulted from the audit
- e) In case of doubt, the CB shall consult the Rainforest Alliance before making the decision.

12. The CB shall follow the below guidelines in determining NCs for cases of conversion of natural forest and ecosystems for individual/ single site CH:

- a. If evidence of conversion was confirmed by the CB during the audit, and the converted area is less than 1% of the site/farm area or less than 10 ha (whichever is smaller), the CB can allow the CH to close the NC.
- b. If evidence of conversion was confirmed by the CB during the audit, and the converted area is larger than 1% of the site/farm area or larger than 10 ha (whichever is smaller), the CB shall issue a nonconformity (severe issue – see chapter Certification Rules) that leads to a negative certification decision.

13. In case the CH can close the NC (as described in point 14-15 above), the CB shall follow the following guidelines on how to close nonconformities on deforestation (4.1.1 of the Farm standard), if possible:

- a. For large farms:
 - In case the risk maps show risk of conversion and the CH still applies for certification, the CB shall request prior to the audit a polygon of the converted area and the overall farm to show eligibility for certification. The CB shall also request the restoration plan that is the basis for the corrective action. The CB shall only accept such a plan that has been developed by a local ecologist, and the planned restoration must be (1) *proportional*; (2) *equivalent*; (3) *additional*; (4) *permanent*; the plan shall include intermediate time bound targets, clear responsibilities of activities, and a plan for monitoring at least once every three years. The plan shall be audited at the outset and the progress toward it shall be audited at least once every year based on monitoring results (see guidance for 4.1-4.3).
 - During the visit, the audit team shall evaluate the quality and accuracy of the polygons of the converted area and the overall farm area and shall verify the restoration plan as above.
- b. For group certificates:



- i. Approval and sanction system of the CH, if applicable, to prevent further deforestation. Implementation of awareness raising measures or training sessions to relevant audience. Agroforestry plan to mitigate any loss of prior conservation values. The plan includes intermediate time bound targets, clear responsibilities of activities, and a plan for monitoring at least once every three years. With the goal of reaching the agroforestry targets within 6 years. This plan is included in the management plan of the CH.
 - ii. An area at least three times the converted area that will reach the Rainforest Alliance parameters for optimal shade within the timeframe of the second improvement level (6 years).
 - iii. Plan to collect polygons of farms units of all producers of medium and high risk of deforestation.
- 14.** The CB shall verify point 11, 12, 13 in this Annex during the audit in case the CB does not identify noncompliant group members, but the **first risk map** of the group showed >5% risky members.



ANNEX 7: AUDITING TRACEABILITY WITH FARM STANDARD

1. Product flow verification:

- a. The CB shall do a thorough credibility check of the estimations done by the CH.
- b. The CB shall have a template to record the traceability done by its auditors
- c. CB shall verify at least the following documents as applicable to the context: harvest records, purchase records, purchase slips, status of the member farm, delivery slips, receipt at the processing unit, conversion or out turn of the product, sales record, stock, separation between different certification schemes, identification and segregation of the product.
- d. The audit team shall verify at least the following at the individual and multisite producers:
 - i. Harvest records that contain the section or field number or plot where the product is harvested from, date of the harvest
 - ii. Number of workers employed for harvest
 - iii. Quantity harvested, despatched to the processing or to the warehouse
 - iv. Transportation documents
 - v. Despatch of products

2. At the IMS level, the audit team shall verify the following:

- a. Binding and up to date contracts/agreements exist with all producers (member farms)
- b. The member farms trade only through the IMS while claimed certified products
- c. Confirmation that the product purchased by the IMS is only from the registered member farmers
- d. Documented evidence that the member farms sell only from the registered and certified land
- e. Receipts are issued to the farmers clearly indicating the quantity, price, deductions if any,
- f. There is no conflict of interests between the member farms and the buying person(s)
- g. The buying person(s) is sufficiently trained and are competent to carry out their work
- h. Total volume /quantity of purchase is not more than the estimated quantity and /or actual harvest. If there is a deviation from estimation, the CB auditor shall record the reason for such variation



- i. There are sufficient identifiers or signages at the purchase, transport, storage and processing units to visually distinguish the certified products from the rest and store them separately
- j. The documents accompanying the products during the transportation clearly mention the type of product, certification status
- k. The buying person(s) /storage /processing unit staff are trained by the IMS and are competent to maintain the integrity of the product

3. At the warehouse the following shall be verified

- a. There are sufficient identifiers or signages at the warehouse units to visually distinguish the certified products from the rest and store them separately
- b. The facility pest management is not done with any prohibited pesticides listed in the standards
- c. The person(s) handling the warehouse are trained and competent to maintain the integrity of the certified product.
- d. The materials leaving the warehouse are packed in such a way that there is no chance of any commingling or mixing without damaging the package
- e. Bulk products are transported in exclusive transport unit or with a clear separation
- f. There is a contract between the warehouse and the IMS /producer if the warehouse is not owned by the CH.

4. At the processing unit, the following shall be verified at minimum:

- a. List of product assortment processed
- b. List of suppliers who supply the raw materials, their certification status
- c. Labelling on the products (signages) on the products received so that the product's integrity is maintained
- d. List of ingredients and their composition and their certification status in case of multi ingredient product
- e. Process flow chart and appropriate conversion/outturn of the products
- f. GMO is not used in the processing/storing
- g. Products are identifiable from the receipt of raw material till the final product despatch
- h. Incoming raw materials are identified with the details of the source and certification status



- i. Appropriate identification, separation and cleaning measures are in place to prevent commingling with or contamination by non-certified products at any stage
- j. Facility pest management is not done with active ingredients included in the list of prohibited pesticides
- k. Workers/staff are trained, competent and can ensure the integrity of the product
- l. Records of quantity of the raw materials received, used for processing, processed final product for the last 3 years.

Note:

For initial certification audit, such records may be available for only the last one year.

- m. The traceability from the final processed product to the raw material supplied and its source is possible.
 - n. There is no technology to restore the product's quality characteristics lost during the processing activity
 - o. Processing aids if used are known and declared
- 5.** The CB audit team shall verify at least the following at a buying center/buying intermediary
- a. List of farms it buys from and identification of certified ones
 - b. Purchase records indicating the certification status of the product
 - c. Sale records indicating the certification status.
 - d. State of equipment used (e.g. calibration of scales, moisture meters, etc.)
- 6.** Minimum product flow to be carried out.
- e. Purchase receipts of the member farms selected as sample is crosschecked
 - f. At least one tracking from raw materials to processed and despatched and the stock/balance. This may be done for a single day, month or season
 - g. Tracking from sales invoice to the raw materials. This may be done for a single day, month or season
 - h. Plausibility of yield estimation for a period of 12 months, i.e. including volume of an entire production cycle
 - i. All sales are documented and made available for verification including sale as certified, sale under different certification and conventional sales



7. In each audit step, the CB shall determine which of these verification activities be performed at which location with which actor depending on the activities that actor performs. For example, if a buying station performs processing activities, the CB shall perform applicable checks described in the rule for a processing unit.
8. The audit team shall always evaluate and/or confirm the authenticity of documents presented by the CH.



ANNEX 8: ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR AUDITING SOCIAL CHAPTER

General

Chapter 1. The CB shall follow the below additional requirements on auditing housing, wages and labor providers and the requirements in the General section of this Annex in all audits that have social requirements within the audit scope.

1. The CB shall follow the below additional requirements on auditing other topics of the Social Chapter when such a topic is within the scope of:
 - a. an off-site investigation.
 - b. an investigation audit.
 - c. an audit in which the topic(s) are evaluated to be a medium/high risk (see point 3 of this Annex).
 - d. Any time at the discretion of the Rainforest Alliance.
2. During the audit preparation, the CB shall identify the level of risk of conformity on social topics per CH by:
 - a. Making use of risk assessment results provided by the Rainforest Alliance.
 - b. Making use of the CB's risk assessment system for identifying conformity risks for each audit.
3. The CB shall perform a preliminary review of official publicly available information to verify whether there are any open/closed lawsuits, or any judicial or administrative proceedings against the CH who receives the audit related to violations of workers' rights and/ or human rights. In case those are present, the audit team shall follow up on the nature of the case and identifies if it is isolated or systemic and if it is a nonconformity against the Standard.

Note:

An open lawsuit, or any open judicial or administrative proceedings is not per se a proof of nonconformity.

4. The audit team shall use testimonies of the interviewees as corroborative evidence to raise a nonconformity when they match or concur. Corroborative evidence are facts that are confirmed in multiple interviews, even without any documented evidence.
5. During the audit, in case the results from step 3 of this Annex indicated a high risk for certain topic(s) in the Social Chapter, the audit team shall make necessary and relevant adjustments as indicated in Table 4.



Action	Medium / high risk
Specific risk overview	<p>For the issues that are identified as medium/ high risk, the CB creates an overview to identify more specifically what each such risk is about, including at least the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Target group/ vulnerable groups, e.g. migrant workers, children between 15-18 years old, women, ethnic groups; ○ Period in the year, e.g. during peak season, holidays season, season when there might be labor shortage; ○ Location in which this risk might be identified, e.g. field/ factory / group member level; ○ Scenarios/ description of the risky situation, e.g. worker substitution where children are substituting their parents, no age verification methods as lack of birth certificates in the region; ○ The specific requirement in the standard it links to.
Off-site investigation	<p>The CB shall perform an off-site investigation (refer to Annex 4 of this document) on the topic(s) of high risk.</p> <p>The CB shall not inform in advance the certificate holder that it will carry out an off-site investigation related to any specific topic.</p>
Sample size of workers interviews and worker files	The number of workers interviews and the worker files for review shall be increased to 110% of the calculated sample size (see Sampling section of this document).
Timing	The audit needs to take place in a period where the CB audit team can collect and verify the most relevant information to confirm the risky topics.



Audit team composition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CB shall ensure that at least one auditor who is highly skilled at social audit is part of audit team. This auditor meets the thematic requirements of the chapter Requirements for Certification Bodies Personnel within the Assurance document Rules for Certification Bodies. If such an auditor is not available, the CB shall include a technical specialist having expert-level competence on the topic in the audit process. 2. Where deem necessary, the CB shall ensure the audit team has a legal freedom of association specialist 3. Gender diversity shall be included as a consideration with the composition of audit teams.
Audit duration	The CB shall increase the audit duration as required to include the additional requirements mentioned in this chapter, without compromising on the other requirements of the standards to be audited.

Table 5: Adjusting the audit based on conformity risk level for social topics

Stakeholder Consultation

6. The CB shall develop and implement a documented procedure for performing stakeholder consultation.
7. The CB shall perform stakeholder consultation in audits that have high risk scenarios of child labor, forced labor and freedom of association based on the Rainforest Alliance risk maps
8. When required, the CB shall perform a stakeholder consultation to:
 - a. Identify nonconformity risks at the specific CH to be visited.
 - b. Understand common concerns and risks in each context, such as geographic region, crop, sector, with the requirements of the Standard.
 - c. Have better understanding of local interpretation of the requirements.
 - d. Establish and/or maintain relationship with the interested stakeholders that will provide the CB with information on any risks/issues emerged during the certification cycle.
9. The CB shall ensure that the audit team use the outcome of the stakeholder consultation to plan and execute the audit.
10. The CB can perform the stakeholder consultation prior to or in parallel with an off-site investigation (see Annex 4). The scope of an off-site investigation may be more targeted and intensive, regarding certain specific topics identified as high risk, than that of a stakeholder consultation.
11. For each consultation, the CB shall compose a list of relevant stakeholders (to achieve the objectives as per point 9 above for the topics indicated in point 18 below, with contact details (if possible) for each stakeholder. A non-exhaustive list of stakeholders includes stakeholders at the following levels:



- a. National stakeholders, e.g. national NGO, Healthcare facilities, Research organizations, ministry of labor, Red Cross, humanitarian aid organization.
- b. Local stakeholders, e.g. local NGO, labor recruitment agencies, topic experts, consultants, local authorities, community leaders, medical centers, police, religious centers, local schools, local government, labor unions, community social groups.

12. From the list the CB shall select the stakeholders to consult by evaluating who can provide most relevant information to achieve the objectives of a consultation and by ensuring that all of the topics indicated by point 18 below are covered.

13. The CB shall consult with at least 3 different stakeholders per consultation on both levels indicated in point 12 above.

14. The CB shall observe any potential conflict of interest between the stakeholder(s) and the CH.

15. The CB shall never disclose confidential information of/about the CH during a stakeholder consultation session.

16. The CB shall ensure that a stakeholder consultation process includes at a minimum:

- a. Profiling of the stakeholder including reason for contacting, potential conflict of interest, topics intended to include in the specific consultation.
- b. The consultation includes at least:
 - i. introduction clarifying the goal of the consultation and how the data is being used;
 - ii. confidentiality agreement;
 - iii. inquiring/sharing of information regarding the interested topics;
 - iv. recording of relevant information collected;
 - v. closing the session including agreement on how the stakeholder can provide the CB with updated risks/issues directly linked to the topics discussed with the CB.

- a. Follow up from the CB with the stakeholder in which the CB defines when it will reach out to the specific stakeholder in the future for seeking updated information.

17. The CB shall evaluate and document at least the high-risk topics among the following:

- a. Risks related to social topics, including but are not limited to:
 - i. discrimination;



- ii. use of child labor;
 - iii. use of forced labor;
 - iv. workplace violence and harassment;
 - v. freedom of association;
 - vi. risks related to the use of labor providers.
- b. Specific information for CH regarding grievances, violations of rights, or social conflicts that have already been submitted and which the stakeholder is aware of.
- c. Any pending legal proceedings.
 - 18.** For each stakeholder consultation the CB shall record the relevant information collected, to the extent that it can demonstrate the consultation has been effectively conducted. This record shall include but is not limited to:
 - a. Names and contact details of individuals and organizations consulted.
 - b. Copies of all correspondence with stakeholders.
 - c. Notes/ minutes of meetings on all information received orally.
 - d. When and how the CB will consult the stakeholder(s) for updated information in the future.
 - e. An explanation of how the CB interprets or makes use of these comments to adjust the audit plans or to further verify or corroborate information received in the onsite audits.
 - 19.** Based on the information obtained through the stakeholder consultations, the CB shall adapt the audit plans of the onsite audit to verify the risks and/or potential issues shared to the CB by the consulted stakeholder(s).
 - 20.** The CB shall not share confidential information collected from stakeholder consultations with any third-party without prior approval from the involved stakeholder(s). This shall be explicitly mentioned during the consultation process with each stakeholder.
 - 21.** The CB shall ensure that stakeholders are approached on a voluntary basis and have the opportunity to decline to collaborate.
- a. In the event that another stakeholder is consulted the CB shall record this, together with the reasons as part of the notes for that consultation session.



- 22.** The CB shall provide the stakeholder consultation record to the Rainforest Alliance upon request and without unwarranted delay.

Auditing Freedom of Association (FoA)

- 23.** Regarding the interviews, the audit team shall implement the following additional guidelines (see requirements on performing interviews in 4.12):

- a. When possible and when security is ensured, the interviews related to workers' labor rights violations shall take place outside of the CH's limits, unless the workers request otherwise. The audit team will conduct such interviews, preferably, before the opening meeting, and during non-working hours and days, unless the workers request it otherwise.
 - b. The audit team interviews all workers that have reportedly suffered violations of their right to freedom of organization, collective bargaining, or have been discriminated or mistreated because of their participation in a worker organization, whenever such information is available.
 - c. The CB shall ensure that when group interviews are part of the audit:
 - i. One group interview shall not have both unionized and non-unionized workers.
 - ii. One group interview shall not have affiliated workers from different trade unions/ worker organizations.
 - d. The audit team shall ensure a most representative sample is defined using stratified random sampling, considering workers related to the complaint/nonconformity, affiliated workers from all worker organizations and non-affiliated workers.
- 24.** In case there is a final resolution in favor of a worker, the audit team shall identify if the situation was isolated or systemic, and if the corrective action has been effectively implemented. In case of isolated issues with properly implemented corrective actions, no nonconformities are assigned.
- 25.** In case of a nonconformity on FoA, the CB shall consider whether the root cause is a form of discrimination.

Auditing Wages and Living wage

- 26.** Prior to audit, the CB shall receive Salary Matrix (Annex 8 of the Rainforest Alliance Standard), and analyze the data filled in and identify if there are any inconsistencies, inaccuracies that need explanation or raise medium/high risk issues, for example:
- a. Workers are paid below the minimum wage;
 - b. Workers work more than the regular working hours according to national law.



c. Wage gaps between female and male workers

27. Prior to the audit, the CB shall collect and analyze the in information, whenever available:

- a. National and/or regional average and/or median wage statistics
- b. National and/or regional minimum wage requirements
- c. Regional data on average household expenditures and food basket
- d. Prevailing industry wage
- e. Collective agreements that are in place, under negotiation, or recently expired
- f. Legal information about apprenticeship (wage and term) requirements and limits
- g. Legally required social benefits such as medical care, accident insurance etc.
- h. Legally and/or contractually permitted wage deductions
- i. Working hours and standard work week under national law
- j. Living wage benchmarks as provided by the Rainforest Alliance

28. Prior to audit, the CB shall ensure that it has clearly communicated to the CH to make available for review during the on-site audit, at least:

- a. Collective agreements that are in place, under negotiation, or recently expired
- b. Employment contracts
- c. Pay slips and payroll records for at least the last 12 months
- d. Wage records, overtime and production records for all types/categories of jobs/function per gender
- e. Records of hours worked (regular and overtime)
- f. A list of cash allowances, bonuses and in-kind benefits provided to types of workers or individually per worker (if applicable) and per gender
- g. Calculation of cost to employer for each of the in-kind benefits and supporting proof
- h. Pay system and calculation methods at the facility (piece rate vs. hourly rate, base rate vs. bonus)



- i. Documentation showing piece rate quota determination
- j. Benefit registers (showing time taken for sick leave, maternity leave, vacation, etc.)
 - 29.** Prior to audit, the CB shall clearly communicate to the CH the relevant persons/positions to be present during the audit for revision of the documentation and procedures related to wages and living wages. It is recommended these person(s) are HR or Finance manager or similarly in-charge person(s) at the CH.
 - 30.** The audit team shall verify that the CH has the required systems and processes in place to effectively collect and store quality data to document complete and accurate wages data and contracts properly and fill in the tool correctly.
 - 31.** During the onsite visit, the audit team shall verify aspects related to wages and living wages, including at least, by:
 - a. Management/staff interviews, to understand payroll processes and how benefits and incentives are offered and awarded. And
 - b. Document review, to assess remuneration. And
 - c. Worker interviews, to validate payroll records and triangulate information.
 - 32.** The audit team shall conduct interviews with Management (HR management, Finance or/ and payroll staff) to understand payroll processes and how benefits and incentives are offered and awarded, to understand the payroll system in place in order to verify the remuneration of workers and verify the gap to a living wage is correctly assessed and can be monitored.
 - 33.** The audit team shall review documented information to assess remuneration, at minimum:
 - a. The audit team shall verify whether data filled in the salary matrix tool is aligned with records and evidence collected, through payroll sampling, interviews. As requested prior to the audit, the auditee should have available 12 months of payroll records. From the 12-month sample, the audit team shall verify at least 3 months' data, including one peak season month, one average and one low season for a total of 3 months of payroll.
 - b. For each of the three months of the sample, the audit team shall verify the filled in salary matrix tool, including a sample of workers based on the following sample size (the Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to request for increased sample size in case of higher risk):

Total number of workers	Payslip Sample Size
1 - 1000	Per number of worker files sampled + (in case of high risk) at least 5 additional payslips or payslips of all workers if total number of workers is less than 10.



1001 - 2000	Per number of worker files sampled + (in case of high risk) at least 10 additional payslips.
2001 - 3000	Per number of worker files sampled + (in case of high risk) at least 15 additional payslips
3001 and over	Per number of worker files sampled + (in case of high risk) at least 20 additional payslips

Table 6: Payslip sample size

- c. The audit team shall define a representative sample based on the demographics of the workers (e.g. male/female, permanent/temporary) and risks, including at least the most important type of workers as included in the salary matrix tool "category of workers" in terms of number of workers, , which shall correspond to interviewed workers plus others.
 - 34.** The audit team shall validate payroll records and triangulate information as part of worker interviews.
- a. In the cases when the salary matrix calculates prevailing wages are below the applicable Living Wage benchmark, the audit team shall verify that management and workers have jointly agreed to a Wage Improvement Plan and review the content of the plan to ensure it contains, at minimum, the targets, timeline, responsible person to achieve progress towards the applicable benchmark.
- b. The audit team shall verify that wages are adjusted at minimum yearly for inflation.
 - 35.** The following scenarios could results in a nonconformity on wages/minimum wages that may lead to a negative certification decision:
 - a. If during the audit, the audit team identifies there is a mismatch or misrepresentation of data in the salary matrix, or evidence that the CH does not support the assessed level of prevailing wages as per the tool, and the HR/Finance person in charge fails to offer a clear and valid explanation for such an inconsistency and/or inaccurate data.
 - 36.** The following scenarios could lead to a nonconformity on wages/minimum wages that will lead to a negative certification decision:
 - a. Systematic lack of evidence or data, on a large scale, to support the remuneration of workers as per filled in salary matrix (cash wage, in-kind benefits, bonuses, legal benefits, hours worked, piece rate rates, allowances and others that constitute the overall remuneration that workers are entitled to, based on national law, the applicable CBA and their individual employment contract); and/ or
 - b. One that relates to misrepresentation or falsifications of data and evidence on wages in the salary matrix tool or existing documentation and systems at the CH.



37. During audit reporting, in all cases of inconsistencies, the audit team shall record this and provided explanation by the CH as part of the audit report.

Auditing Assess-and-Address¹⁹

38. Prior to the audit, the audit team shall review the Remediation Plan (as part of the management plan) and verify if the agencies on the plan indeed exist/are active and supportive for the identified remediation actions. The CB shall ensure that it has received contact details of the Assess-and-Address Committee. The CB audit team may contact the committee beforehand to identify any points of attention.
39. The audit team shall verify whether the CH has in place the required elements of the Assess-and-Address system as described in the Standard and verify if so, whether the system is functioning.
40. The audit team shall identify labor abuses following the below guidelines.

As part of this system verification, the audit team shall also seek to identify if any cases of child labour, forced labour, discrimination, and/or workplace violence and harassment (CL/FL/D/WVH) occur. In doing so, it is critical that the auditors are familiar with the full definitions of CL/FL/D/WVH in the Glossary. If such a case is found, the following scenarios would apply:

- a. if a case was already identified by the CH's monitoring system, is being remediated using the Remediation Protocol, and the remediation is on track to meet the required time milestones, the audit team will not raise a nonconformity. However, the audit team shall include in their report the type of issue (CL/FL/D/WVH) and the date by which remediation must be completed, and the CB shall verify the identified issue(s) in the next audit.
- b. If a case was identified by the CH's monitoring system, and is being remediated using the Remediation Protocol, but the remediation is not meeting the time milestones in the Protocol, and/or is not being implemented in a manner consistent with the Protocol, the audit team shall use the Severity Analysis Tool (see below in point 44) and there are 2 potential outcomes:
 - i. If the case is evaluated as **non-severe**, this would mean it is a nonconformity on the remediation system.
 - ii. If the case is evaluated as **severe**, the CB shall take a negative certification decision and the active certificate and license may be suspended or cancelled.
- c. If an issue was not identified by the CH's monitoring system, the audit team shall analyse it using the Severity Analysis Tool (see below in point 44), there are two options:

¹⁹ Assess & Address approach and Remediation Plan are defined in the Rainforest Alliance Standard with its annexes.



- i. If a case is evaluated as **non-severe**, this is a nonconformity on a failure of the Assess-and-Address monitoring system.
- ii. If a case is evaluated as **severe**, the CB shall take a negative certification decision and the active certificate and license may be suspended or cancelled (see chapter Certification Rules, section 2.7).
- d. In case of doubt on any of the options above, the CB shall seek further guidance and/or interpretation from the Rainforest Alliance.
 - 41.** Any form of workplace violence and harassment shall also be considered as a form of discrimination.
 - 42.** The CB shall follow the following guidelines in evaluating severe issues:
 - a. In case the audit team identifies a case of labor violations on CL/FL/D and/ or WVH, the audit team shall use this Severity Analysis Tool to identify the level of severity.

Severity Analysis Tool

- 43.** During the audit, when the audit team identifies a case of labor violations on CL/FL/D and/ or WVH, shall use this Severity Analysis Tool to determine whether the case is to be considered severe or not.



Question	Yes /No	Details / clarification
Is the situation of the worker/child life-threatening?		If yes, issue is severe even if none of the other answers are "yes."
Does the issue have the potential to cause lasting impact on the physical and/or psychological wellbeing of the worker/child?		If yes, issue is severe even if none of the other answers are "yes."
Is this a systemic incident, meaning there are multiple cases of this issue at this CH and the issue is rooted in a management practice?		"Yes" to this question on its own does not make the issue severe, but in combination with one other "yes," it is severe.
Is there evidence that farm management/staff knew that the issue was taking place, but approved/continued the practice?		"Yes" to this question on its own does not make the issue severe, but in combination with one other "yes," it is severe.

Table 7: Severity analysis

Remediation Protocol:

44. In all cases, the audit team shall prioritize the welfare of workers when deciding how to inform employment site management of any nonconformity leading to a negative certification decision.
45. The audit team shall follow the escalation policies of the CH to minimize any risk to workers.

Auditing Housing

The following requirements are applicable in case the to be certified operation needs to comply with Farm Requirements, criterion 5.7.1 on housing, unless otherwise stipulated.

46. During the audit, the audit team shall collect a copy of the register(s) mentioned in criteria 1.2.5 in the Rainforest Alliance Farm Requirements.



- 47.** During the audit, the composition of the sample of houses to be visited shall be determined in a manner that is representative of all houses provided by management to workers, using stratified random sampling. The following sampling parameters shall be considered as a minimum:
- a. Number of people residing in the house; (if applicable, include housing where children are residing)
 - b. Differences in the types of houses (e.g. bathroom inside the house/ outside the house or with electricity/without electricity);
 - c. Location of the houses (ensuring the most remote houses are also included);
 - d. Age of the housing
 - e. State of the housing; and
 - f. Housing provided to different type of workers (e.g. permanent, temporary).
- 48.** The sample is:
- a. At least the square root of the total habitable areas²⁰ on the property. This number could be higher if the auditor identifies risky situations the requires visiting more house to confirm (non)conformity.
 - b. Increased by 10% in case the topic is identified as medium/high risk.
- 49.** In case the audit team could not visit certain houses in the desired sample, this shall be reported in the audit report.
- 50.** During the audit, the auditor shall (after requesting permission of the adult present at the house and/or the house owner), at least:
- a. Inspect the outside of the house
 - b. Enter the house and conduct interviews with people living in the house.
 - c. Visit all key areas inside the house, including the cooking area, bathing place, toilet, and one bedroom. If the toilet and/or bathing place are outside of the house, the auditor shall evaluate those as well.

²⁰ Habitable area: area that at some moment in the year could be used as housing for workers.



- d. Inspect the functioning of the facility (e.g. if the electricity is provided, check if all the sockets are working, if the toilet has a flushing system, make sure that it is working). This may be done through interview with the people living in the house.
- 51.** To verify Farm standard requirement 5.7.2, regarding children going to school, the audit team shall confirm and verify the closest distance from the entrance of the farm to the closest school.
- 52.** At least in the following cases the audit team shall issue a nonconformity:
 - a. In case there is a shortage of housing, for workers that are entitled to housing.
 - b. A NC in one house is considered as a NC for the CH. to the CB shall report to the Rainforest Alliance if the case is an isolated case or if the CB detects that it is systemic.
- 53.** The CB shall follow the same timeline for closing NCs in this document (see Timelines 4.2). A NC on housing, e.g. the lack of houses, cannot be closed outside of this timeframe, i.e. multiple year housing plans shall not be accepted.

Auditing labor providers

- 54.** Prior to the audit, the CB shall ensure that the audit team has access to at least the following information related to each labor provider:
 - a. Name of person or company providing labors (legal name, if registered)
 - b. Contact details
 - c. Official/ national registration number, if available
 - d. Copy of contract between CH and service provider/labor provider
 - e. Number of laborers hired through each labor provider, including number of men/women/young workers
 - f. Profile of the workers recruited through labor providers, including at least:
 - i. Type of jobs/ tasks (e.g. skilled/ unskilled)
 - ii. Working hours/ time slots (e.g. certain shifts, days in the week, periods in the year/ seasonality of work)
 - iii. Origin (e.g. which country/ region)
 - iv. Primary language(s) spoken



- v. Housing.
 - a. Based on above information, the CB shall identify any risk of vulnerability to certain labor issues.
- 55.** Prior to the audit, the CB shall request the CH to have the relevant documentation and persons readily available onsite during the audit related to the labor providers, including at least:
 - a. Person responsible for oversight of and communication with labor providers regarding conformity with standard requirements
 - b. Documentation showing remuneration from CH to labor providers for services provided (e.g. recruitment of workers)
 - c. Contracts between labor provider and workers, payroll records, onboarding practices, documentation on loans/deposits/deductions, documentation related to housing, and/or any other relevant policies, procedures, or records of the labor provider
 - d. Whether or not they are present onsite for the audit, the audit team shall make its best effort to interview labor providers to collect information related to conformity
- 56.** Regardless whether the CH has verbal or written agreement with labor providers, the CB audit team shall:
 - a. verify conformity of all labor providers in each audit.
 - b. calculate the number of worker interviews and worker files for each labor provider separately following the requirements in Annex 3 of this document.
- 57.** During the audit, the CB audit team shall verify and confirm whether labor providers meet the relevant requirements, including triangulation of information with worker interviews. This includes, among others:
 - a. Observations of living and dining areas for workers living onsite, whether they are owned/managed by the CH or by service/labor providers
 - b. Assessment of:
 - i. Recruitment and hiring practices
 - ii. Compensation and benefits (particularly for the lowest-wage workers)
 - iii. Loans, advances, deposits and deductions
 - iv. Housing and living conditions (including provision of food and water)



v. Discipline and termination

- 58.** The CB audit team shall verify the effectiveness of the system of the CH to ensure the labor providers comply with the applicable requirements, including but not limited to:
- a. Scope of the system ensures conformity to all the relevant/ applicable requirements
 - b. Recordkeeping by the CH of registration/licenses and documentation about labor providers
 - c. Appointment of a responsible person in management to oversee and monitor continuous conformity of labor providers, onboarding practices for workers hired through labor providers and workers directly employed by labor providers
 - d. Effectiveness of risk assessment and risk mitigation
 - e. Grievance mechanisms.
 - f. Approach/clear procedure to determine when a contract with the labor providers needs to be terminated
 - g. The employer does not misuse the contracting through labor providers to undermine worker protections
- 59.** During the audit, the CB shall use the Rainforest Alliance Remediation Protocol to assess labor providers' conformity with requirements to remediate of any case of child labor, forced labor, discrimination, or workplace violence/harassment, in situations where the affected worker was employed by the labor provider.
- 60.** During the audit and during the reporting phase, if the CB finds a nonconformity against the Standard Requirements, 1.2.2 or 5.3.9 , it should clearly note the specific labor problem.



ANNEX 9: SUPPORT PERMITTED AND NOT PERMITTED DURING AN AUDIT

1. Support permitted during an audit:

- a. Describe examples of conformity with standard criteria that auditors have seen on other farms.
- b. Mention to the CH the names of consultants or organizations that can help the CH with an improvement plan or with the implementation of best practices as long as they are not commercially linked to the CB or the auditors conducting the audit.
- c. Provide guidance manuals or other supporting materials to the CH that explain how to implement best practices for the Standard.
- d. Describe a nonconformity during the closing meeting and in the audit report in such a way that the nonconformity is clear, so that the CH knows exactly what it needs to correct. The lead auditor may show photos of the nonconformities found during the audit with an explanation of the reasons for the lack of conformity.

2. Support not permitted during an audit

- a. Recommend specific actions or products for complying with the applicable requirements, including providing root cause, corrective actions, designs for operations-specific infrastructure, or write or participate in writing required plans, policies or procedures.
- b. Give advice or directions, prescribe practices, or provide instructions to close nonconformities. They may, however, explain in detail the reasons that led to opening the nonconformities.
- c. Provide support or consulting services that could affect their impartiality in assigning nonconformities, evaluating corrective actions and making certification decisions.
- d. Combine or package offers or quotes for technical support with certification services; and
- e. Mix support and certification activities in any way that violates any of the requirements in the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System.

3. The actions described in this section are permitted by Rainforest Alliance, but are not required. The CB shall consult Rainforest Alliance if they have any questions or need more information about technical support during or related to certification processes.



ANNEX 10: ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PERFORMING AN INVESTIGATION AUDIT

An unannounced audit performed to respond to a specific grievance, or an issue identified as high risk to the credibility of the program.

This annex provides requirements for audit team performing an investigation audit.

1. The CB shall follow the requirements in the Certification Rules on investigation audits.
2. If the Rainforest Alliance or the CB determines that the complaint/issue merits an investigation audit, the complainant shall be informed of the summary of the audit results by the organization that performs the audit.
3. When the audit team decides to inform the CH in writing maximum 24 hours prior to the arrival of the audit team, such a written notification shall not disclose details that may affect the execution of the audit. The audit team may decide to disclose only the first date, the duration, composition of the audit team and the locations to be visited.
4. When the audit is conducted without prior notification, the audit team shall share with the CH in the opening the audit plan (see requirements on audit planning and preparation). The audit team may decide to share less information when this will reduce the risk of not achieving the audit objectives.
5. The investigation audit shall always be conducted onsite, unless Rainforest Alliance authorizes the verification of evidence remotely, when conformity can be fully demonstrated through documentation.
6. Depending on the scope, sample size and severity of the issues, the audit team shall implement the relevant rules/requirements in the auditing process (preparation, execution, reporting, decision making), as defined in this document, including its annexes.
7. Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to authorize the CB to have an investigation audit replaced by a regular audit, if these are already scheduled within two months from the date the complaint was received by the CB or the Rainforest Alliance.
8. The audited CH may reject the visit and request the rescheduling of the investigation audit only once and for proved reasons of force majeure, such as natural disasters, political conflicts in a region, epidemics or where the producer/representative of the CH can demonstrate medical reasons or previously acquired commitments limiting the access to evidence. However, Rainforest Alliance or the CB may decide to reschedule the audit immediately within 24 hours; if the organization rejects the audit a second time, the certificate shall be cancelled immediately.
9. Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to assign investigation audits to CBs and to oversee the process.
10. The audit team shall follow the below additional sampling requirements:
 - a. If the complaint/issue pertains only to the performance of the management system regarding the applicable requirements, the investigation audit shall cover only to the requirements applicable to the management system.



- b. If the complaint/issue pertains to the performance of one or more farms/sites regarding applicable requirements, the sample shall only consist of the farm(s)/site(s) included in the complaint.
 - c. If the audit team deems it appropriate, the size of the sample may be expanded up to a maximum equivalent to twice the number of farm(s)/site(s) included in the complaint/issue.
 - d. If the complaint pertains to both the management system and the farm(s)/site(s), both shall be included in the audit sample.
 - e. The audit team can increase the size of the sample by up to 40% to audit member farms/sites based on conformity issues detected during the audit that merit further investigation. The expanded sample can be to all those requirements linked to the conformity issues.
- 11.** The investigation audit shall cover at least the criteria related to the elements within the complaint/issue. The audit process (planning, execution, reporting) shall clearly demonstrate this.
- 12.** The audit team shall engage with the complainant and relevant stakeholders outside of the premises of the CH if appropriate. Outcome from such engagement activities shall be recorded as part of the audit package.

Note:

Stakeholders to be considered include, but are not limited to: social /environmental local authorities, representatives of the communities in which the CH to be audited is located, labor union representatives or other type of worker representatives, e.g. welfare committee, occupational health and safety committee, gender committee, Rainforest Alliance staff, such as CB Monitoring, Communications and country team.

- 13.** When necessary, the organization performing the audit shall include technical expert(s) as part of the audit team to ensure the audit team has collective competence to achieve the audit objectives.
- 14.** When an investigation audit is performed by a CB:
- a. The CB shall inform the Rainforest Alliance of such an audit at minimum one week after the decision to perform that audit has been made.
 - b. The CB shall upload the detailed audit plan to RACP at least 5 days prior to the first audit date.
 - c. The CB shall decide when and how much information from the detailed plan that the CB wish to share with CH, provided that sharing of such information will not affect the achievement of the audit objectives.
 - d. The CB shall share with the Rainforest Alliance the draft audit report within one week after the last audit date.
 - e. The CB shall share with the Rainforest Alliance the final audit report within 4 weeks after the last audit date.



ANNEX 11: COMBINED AND INTEGRATED AUDITS

This annex outlines to requirements for the CB when combined and/or integrated audits are part of the CB's services.

CHAPTER 1. The CB shall only perform an integrated audit when there is full mutual recognition of the involved schemes.

CHAPTER 2. The CB shall request permission from the Rainforest Alliance (to be obtained from cbmanagement@ra.org) for conducting an integrated audit prior to the audit.

CHAPTER 3. For both combined and integrated audits, double selling of certified volume (i.e. selling the same volume multiple times under each scheme's programs) is not permitted. The CB shall ensure that it only perform the audit when the CH has signed a "No Double Selling Declaration" prior to the audit (to be obtained from cbmanagement@ra.org).

CHAPTER 4. The CB shall perform a combined or integrated audit for different commodities (e.g. audit for scheme 1 is in coffee and audit for scheme 2 is in cocoa), only when the checklists include all applicable control points of involved schemes.

CHAPTER 5. The CB shall estimate audit duration for combined audits as follows:

5.1.1.1.1. MAD (double certification) = MAD (single certification) * 1.5

5.1.1.1.2. MAD (triple certification) = MAD (single certification) * 1.75.

5.1.1.1.3. For audits combining more than 3 schemes, the CB shall request the Rainforest Alliance for further guidance.

Note:

- The calculation of MAD (minimum audit duration) is explained in section 4.6 of this document.
- Double certification is understood as the audit covers Rainforest Alliance certification and another similar certification program and triple certification is understood as the audit covers Rainforest Alliance certification and two other certification programs in the same time.

CHAPTER 6. The CB shall follow the requirements in Table 8 if combined and/or integrated audits are offered by the CB.

Requirements	Combined	Integrated
Scheme permission	Not mandatory for the Rainforest Alliance	Mandatory, from involved schemes collectively
Auditor/ competence	Auditor/certifier separately approved per scheme	Full recognition of each other's approved auditors/ certifiers



Audit checklist	Separate checklist per standard	One integrated checklist, listing: - all overlapping CPs (applicable to all standards to avoid duplication), and - the additional individual CPs per standard that are not mutually recognized (if applicable).
Audit preparation	Separate planning: - One audit plan, indicating the specific samples and sample justification per scheme - Multiple client self-assessment reviews per scheme	Joint planning: - One audit plan - One audit sample and justification - One client self-assessment review
Audit	Full audit per scheme: - Audit sample per scheme - MS audit per scheme - Internal inspection review per scheme - Interviews per scheme	One integrated audit: - One sample - One IMS audit - One review of internal inspection
Alignment of certification validity periods	Per scheme, i.e. different validity timeframes following the guidelines/ protocol of each scheme	Per scheme, i.e. different validity timeframes following the guidelines/ protocol of each scheme
Alignment of certified volume	Certified volume ascertained per scheme, and CB shall verify the risk of double-selling	Certified volume ascertained per scheme, and CB shall check the risk of double-selling
Reporting	Separate audit report per standard	One integrated audit report

Table 8: Combined and integrated audits

ANNEX: 12 LIST OF CHECKLISTS, TEMPLATES AND TOOLS FOR AN RAINFOREST ALLIANCE AUDIT

Templates to be developed:

- i. Template for the Rainforest Alliance to collect data on workers from certificate holders prior to the audit
- ii. Template for certificate holders to apply for certification providing details such that CB can make



- an offer and both the CB and the Rainforest Alliance can identify key risks
- iii. Template for CB to perform risk assessment for each audit
 - a. This risk assessment should result in a list of key stakeholders to perform stakeholder consultation
 - b. This risk assessment should result in a decision whether off-site investigation is required
 - iv. Template for CB to request and report deviations/exceptions to the requirements in the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System
 - v. Template for CB to calculate/estimate audit length following the minimum requirements in the Auditing Rules
 - vi. Template for CB to record audit plan
 - vii. Audit checklists (Farm and Supply Chain)
 - viii. Group member registry template
 - ix. Template for CB to report results of:
 - a. Stakeholder consultation
 - b. Off-site investigation
 - x. Template for CB to report audit results of different types of audits for both Farm and supply chain standards (please consider how this is linked to the audit checklists):
 - a. Certification, surveillance
 - b. Follow-up
 - c. Investigation
 - xi. Template for CB to record and report interviews:
 - a. at farm/group management level, at farm level, at factory among others
 - b. Different types of interviews: management/supervisor/administrative staff; workers (also from subcontractors/ service providers/ labor providers); off-site interviews

ANNEX 13: SUPPLY CHAIN RISK ASSESSMENT

The Supply Chain Risk Assessment (SCRA) is a series of questions that evaluates the potential risks of an CH's operations in order to determine the type and frequency of verification required. The CH is responsible for annually updating their profile or confirming that the scope of their SCRA has not changed if not updates are needed.

Once the list of applicable requirements is confirmed by the CH, the SCRA then determines the level of verification required to address the CH's contextualized checklist. Additional documentation can be provided by the CH against the mandatory requirements which will be considered as possible mitigating factors to decrease verification level. The SCRA start package therefore can be broken down into two parts: 1) the contextualized check list of mandatory and self-selected requirements and 2) the level of verification needed to assess conformity; visualized in the graphic below:

A change in verification level can occur in between audit cycles if there is a significant change in CH's scope. If the verification level changes prior to the annual SCRA completion date, the start package is updated and sent out to the CH and the CB (if applicable).

1. The CB shall verify the accuracy of the start package prior to the audit.
2. If the CB disagrees with either the verification level or the applicable requirements outlined in the package, they may contact the Rainforest Alliance and state their case. This is outlined in the diagram below:

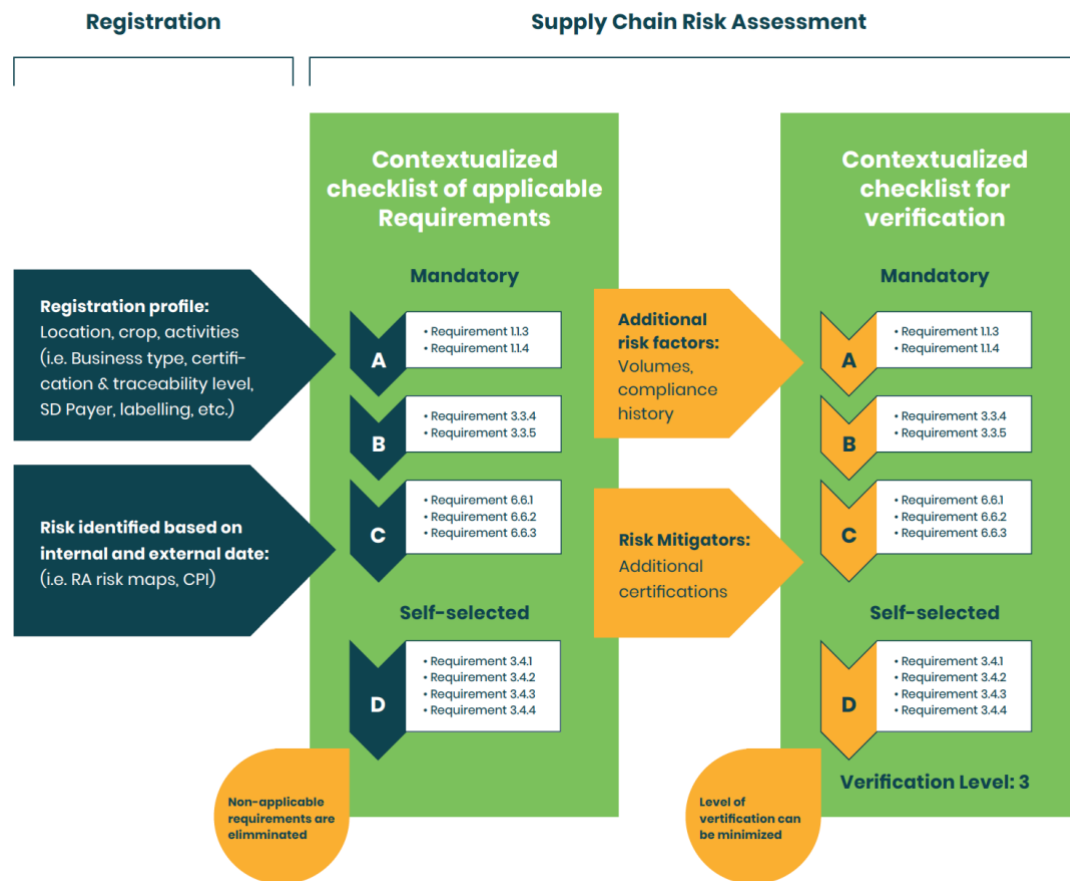


Figure 3: Contextualization process

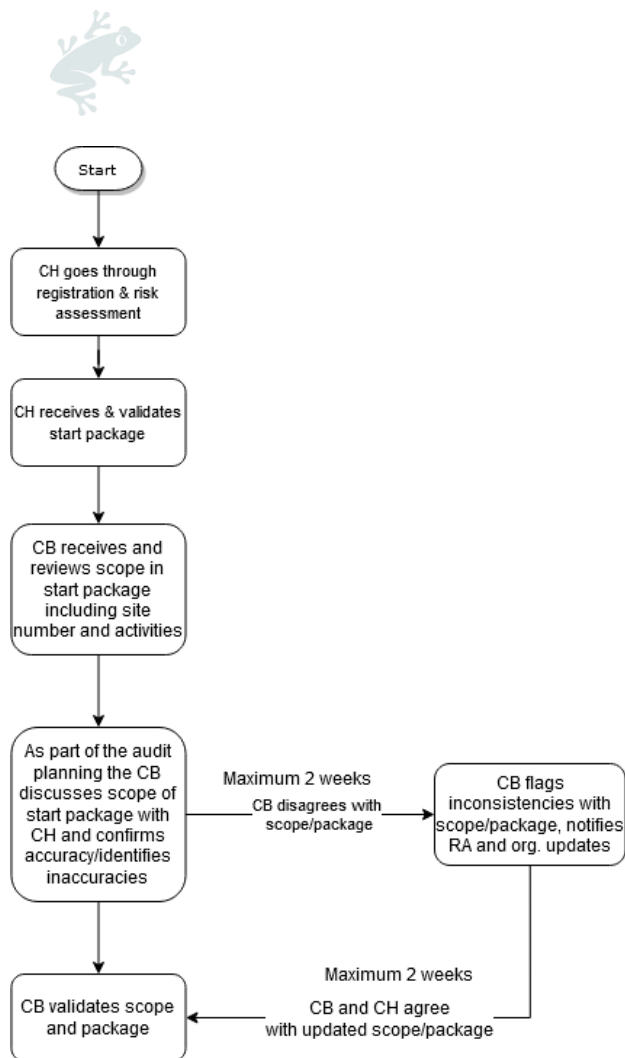


Figure 4: Supply Chain start package

3. The audit team shall audit all of the sites included in the scope of the verification package for accuracy of information.
4. During the audit planning, the audit team shall confirm with the CH, and any additional sites included in the scope if needed, in order to verify that the correct number of sites are listed as in scope and the activities reflected in the start package are accurate.



5. If the audit team discovers that the start package is inaccurate based on the current scope, the audit team then communicates this to Rainforest Alliance and the CH works with the CB and Rainforest Alliance to correct the scope and update the start package.
6. The audit team shall not perform an audit:
 - a) If the start package has not been validated by both the CB and the CH.
 - b) At a site that does not have a corresponding SCRA report.
7. When there is a change in verification level, the CB shall implement the new verification method based on the updated verification level.



ANNEX 14: AUDITING SHARED RESPONSIBILITY (SUSTAINABILITY DIFFERENTIAL AND SUSTAINABILITY INVESTMENTS)

Requirements related to Sustainable Agriculture Standard Farm Requirements section 3.1 and Supply Chain Requirements sections 3.2 and 3.3

Sustainability Differential

1. **Sustainability Differential (SD):** Is a mandatory payment of an additional cash amount to certified producers (paid to Single Farm, Multi-Farm and Farm Group CHs) by buyers^[1] of Rainforest Alliance certified product, over and above the market price of the commodity in question.
2. **Timing:** Given that the audit against the Sustainable Agriculture Standard Farm Requirements will typically take place first, the CB auditing the Farm/Group certificate holder (further: Farm CH) shall enter an appropriate sample^[2] size of Transactions into The Rainforest Alliance Traceability Platform to allow the CB auditing the Supply Chain certificate holder (further: SC CH) to reconcile that information. In the event a Supply Chain audit (further: SC audit) only takes place after a new round of contract negotiations^[3] and/or buying cycles between farm CH and Buyer, the CB handling the SC audit still is responsible for reconciling the sample of Transactions captured as part of the previous round of contract negotiations.
3. **Issuing reconciliation related nonconformities for Supply Chain CH:**
 - a. Any material deviation in SD payments (meaning >10% below the SD amount entered in the Rainforest Alliance Traceability Platform and/or >10% below contractually agreed amount and/or < \$0,01 per unit of measurement entered in The Rainforest Alliance Traceability Platform) shall be considered a nonconformity.
4. **Issuing reconciliation related nonconformities for (Farm) Group CH:**
 - a. Any material deviation in SD payments (meaning >10% below what the individual group member was supposed to receive based on his/her volume delivered to the group) from the farm group CH to the individual member farms, shall be considered a nonconformity.



Requirements	Applicable Standard	What needs to be verified?	Available tools and templates for CH and CB	Typical evidence for CB verification	Mandatory Activities for farm <--> supply chain reconciliation by CBs
Payment made by buyers to the CH	Supply Chain	a. Existence of SD payment from buyer to the farm CH b. Contracts between the farm CH and the Buyer contain explicit information on SD such as height and terms and conditions of payment	N/A	a. A representative sample ^[4] of bank transfer statements, indicating name, address, farm CH bank details, amounts and period concerned Cross-Check: Extract of the buyers' accounting/ERP system confirming the numbers and details on the bank statements b. Copy of a contract /agreement/arrangement between the buyer and the farm CH, drawn up following the (annual) contract negotiations and/or buying cycle. Check whether contracts/agreements/arrangements are confirmed and/or signed by both parties and contain information on SD height and terms of payment. Cross-Check: Alignment of height and payment terms with existing SD payments	a. For an appropriate sample ^[5] of Transactions, check whether the amount paid by buyer is aligned with the amount received by the farm CH. The specific Transaction details and associated SD amounts are captured in The Rainforest Alliance Traceability Platform ^[6] by the CB who is auditing farm standard. The CB auditing the SC is obligated to check these specific Transactions and report any (material) deviations. (see additional guidance on NCs for reconciliation above)



Receipt by the farm CH and dispersal to group members [19]	Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Receipt of the SD cash from buyer to farm CH b. Proof of disbursement of SD received by the Group CH to individual group members based on their volume contributions c. Contracts between the farm CH and the buyer contain explicit information on SD such as amount and terms and conditions of payment d. In the case of a group the sum of SD Cash payments to individual group members needs to align with the total SD Cash amount received by the Group. 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Proof of SD received from buyer by checking a representative sample of bank statements and/or cash receipts (in case of cash payments). b. Proof of disbursement from group CH by checking a representative sample [2] of bank statements and/or cash receipts of individual group members c. Copy of a contract /agreement/arrangement between the buyer and the farm CH, drawn up following the (annual) contract negotiations and/or buying cycle. Check whether the contracts are signed and contain information on SD height and terms of payment. a. Cross-Check: CB to check if the total SD amount can be <u>reproduced</u> by checking if the total SD amount received by the farm group from the buyer, is aligned with the total amount received by individual farm group members (done by adding up the amounts of SD received by ALL individual group members). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The CB auditing the farm CH shall list and tag an appropriate sample of Transactions in The Rainforest Alliance Traceability Platform (see additional guidance on NCs for reconciliation above) so the CB auditing the SC CH can reconcile these.
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Sustainability Investments

1. **Sustainability Investments (SI):** Are cash or in-kind investments from buyers of Rainforest Alliance certified products to farm CHs (Individual Farm CHs and Farm Group CHs). It is meant to enable improvements required by, and stimulate compliance with, the new Rainforest Alliance Standard
2. **Timing and issuing reconciliation related nonconformities for Farm or Supply Chain CH:** Given that the farm standard audit will typically take place first, **the CB auditing the farm CH** shall check the farm CH investment plan (consistent with Farm Standard requirement 3.1.3) and verify that:
 - a. The investment plan exists and was drawn up using the prescribed information sources. In case an investment plan is not drawn up, the CB shall NOT issue a non-conformity. Instead the CB shall explicitly mention in the audit report that an investment plan was not drawn up [\[8\]](#).
 - b. The investment \$ amount required by the farm CH (as specified in the Investment Plan) matches the total investment \$ amount received by their buyer(s). In case of a mismatch the CB shall NOT issue a non-conformity. Instead the CB shall explicitly mention the mismatch in the audit report **and** report the gap [\[9\]](#) between total investment needs (\$ amount) specified in the investment plan and total investments received (\$ amount) from buyers.
 - c. The investments required and **received** are aligned with a given audit cycle (during which the farm CH is required to make an investment plan), meaning that only investments received within that specific period are included when determining the total amount of investments received and reporting the gap(s). Any investments received prior to or after the designated audit cycle need to be allocated to their designated audit cycle.

To ensure reconciliation between Farm and Supply Chain CHs, the CB auditing the Farm CH will ensure that the CB auditing the Supply Chain CH is aware of farm level findings [\[10\]](#). This is done by indicating, on a sample basis [\[11\]](#), for which specific Farm CHs the consistency of investments received (with the farm investment plans), have been assessed. To accommodate this, the CB shall enter this information (assessment + specific farm CH identification number) in The Rainforest Alliance Traceability Platform to allow the CB auditing the Supply Chain Standard CH access to that information.

Consequently, **the CB auditing the Supply Chain Standard CH** shall check the report of investments made by the Supply Chain Standard CH (consistent with Supply Chain Standard requirement 3.3.5) and verify, for an appropriate sample [\[12\]](#), that:

- a. The Supply Chain Standard CH has reported investments made (at Farm Ch level) in an investment report.



- b. The area(s) of investment(s) contributed to by the buyer are aligned with the areas in need of investments, as specified in the Farm CH investment plan^[13]. In case of a genuine mismatch^[14] the CB shall NOT issue a non-conformity. Instead the CB shall explicitly mention the mismatch in the audit report. In case of an illegitimate mismatch^[15], the CB shall issue a non-conformity.
- c. The investments required and **made** are aligned with a given audit cycle, meaning that only investments made by a Supply Chain Standard CH within that specific period are included when determining the total amount of investment contributions made to farm CHs, and reporting alignment with the investment needs of associated Farm CHs.

In the event a SC audit only takes place after a new audit cycle of the Farm CH, the CB handling the SC audit still is responsible for reconciling the investments made (both amount and area of investment) with the investments received.

Requirements	Applicable Sustainable Agriculture Standard Requirements	What needs to be verified?	Available tools and templates for CH and CB	Typical evidence for CB verification	Mandatory Activities for farm <--> supply chain reconciliation by CBs
Investment plan formulated	Farm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Existence of investment plan (drawn up in cooperation with group members, in case of a group certificate) b. Inputs used to inform the investment plan are latest A) audit report, B) Self-Assessment, C) Internal Inspection, D) Management plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment planning template^[16] (filled-out) • Audit report from previous year/cycle • Self-Assessment report from this year/cycle • Internal inspection report from this year/cycle • Farm CH Farm Management Plan from this year/cycle 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A filled-out investment planning template by the Farm CH b. Meeting notes (to assess that plan was drawn up in cooperation with a representation of group members, in case of group certificate or a representation of workers, in case of individual farm CH)^[17] c. Assess level of alignment between finalized 	N/A



				investment plan and findings from input documentation.	
Investments and amounts reported by buyer(s)	Supply Chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Investment(s) are based on farm CH Investment plan b. Existence of report on total investment(s) made per farm CH c. Existence of SI payment from buyer to farm CH. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment planning template (filled-out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Check alignment of SC CH investments reported, for an appropriate sample, with Farm CH investment needs (as specified in Investment Plan) b. A report of sustainability investments made per farm CH c. A representative sample^[18] of bank transfer statements, indicating name, address, farm CH bank details, amounts and period concerned <p>Cross-Check: Extract of the buyers' accounting/ERP system confirming the numbers and details on the bank statements</p>	Check guidance on Timing & Non-Conformities specified above for more information



Investment amounts received by farm CH		a. Existence of SI receipt by farm CH	N/A	<p>a. Proof of SI receipt by a farm CH by checking a representative sample^[19] of bank statements and/or cash receipts (in case of cash payments).</p> <p>b. Check if spend of received investments is done in accordance with farm CH investment plan (i.o.w. are CHs spending investment money received in those areas in need of investments and can they show evidence to support that?) by checking a representative sample of invoices for SI spend.</p>	Check guidance on Timing & Non-Conformities specified. Please find more information above
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^[1] The Supply Chain Actor defined as a buyer can differ across sectors: please consult the Supply Chain Standard

^[2] Half the square root of the total Transactions between farmer and buyer is an appropriate sample.

^[3] Provided that contractual relationships are in place.



[\[4\]](#) Please consult section 2.5 and Annex 2 of this document for guidance on sampling.

[\[5\]](#) Half the square root of the total transactions between farmer and buyer is an appropriate sample.

[\[6\]](#) The CB auditing the farm standard is enabled to capture Transactions, associated volumes and SD payments in an upload field. The information in this field can also be accessed by the CB auditing the SC standard, allowing the SC CB to reconcile if SD payments made match SD received.

[\[7\]](#) Please consult section 2.5 and Annex 2 of this document for guidance on sampling.

[\[8\]](#) The Rainforest Alliance decided to not instruct the issuance of non-conformities for this requirement since the concept of Sustainability Investments and related Investment plans are newly introduced and warrant a transition period.

[\[9\]](#) In case an investment plan was not drawn up, the investment gap does not have to be reported.

[\[10\]](#) The Rainforest Alliance Traceability Platform will provide a functionality that allows this. If an associated SC CH receives an audit, the CB auditing the SC CH will automatically check alignment with the specific Farm CH investment plan.

[\[11\]](#) Half the square root of the total Farm CH investment plans, for which the consistency of investments received by SC CH's (with the farm CH investment plans) has been assessed during the farm audit, is an appropriate sample.

[\[12\]](#) Half the square root of Farm CH's for which the buyer contributed to their investment plan, is considered an appropriate sample

[\[13\]](#) In case a farm CH investment plan was not drawn up, the CB shall indicate this in the audit report and explicitly states that alignment between investments made and the farm CH investment plans could NOT be verified

[\[14\]](#) It is considered a genuine mismatch if the investments made are NOT aligned with the farm CH investment plan but ARE steered towards a legitimate investment category (these categories are referenced in the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard)

[\[15\]](#) It is considered an illegitimate mismatch if the investments made are NOT aligned with the farm CH investment plan AND are also steered towards an illegitimate investment category (meaning one outside the investment categories referenced in the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard)

[\[16\]](#) This template will be provided as part of guidance documentation

[\[17\]](#) This only applies if the Farm CH in question is looking to comply with Mandatory Improvement Requirement 3.3.2. or 3.3.3. in the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard

[\[18\]](#) Please consult section 2.5 and Annex 2 of this document for guidance on sampling.

[\[19\]](#) Please consult section 2.5 and Annex 2 of this document for guidance on sampling.