



# RAINFOREST ALLIANCE 2020 CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

## AUDITING RULES

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# RAINFOREST ALLIANCE



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<b>Linked to:</b>		
SA-S-SD-1 Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard, Farm Requirements		
SA-R-GA-2 Rules for Certification Bodies		
<b>Replaces:</b>		
SA-R-GA-1-V1.3 Certification and Auditing Rules		
<b>Applicable to:</b>		
The Rainforest Alliance, Certificate Holders and Authorized CBs		
<b>Country/Region:</b>		
All		
<b>Crop:</b>	<b>Type of Certification:</b>	
All crops in the scope of the Rainforest Alliance certification system; please see Certification Rules.	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

For any question related to the precise meaning of the information contained in the translation, please refer to the official English 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](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org) or contact [info@ra.org](mailto:info@ra.org)

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## KEY CHANGES

AUDITING RULES				
Overarching aim	Topic	Requirement in this doc	Change	Reason
Simplification of the understanding of our Assurance approach	Structure of document	N/A	Readjusted the structure, different order, following the audit process. The annexes have been integrated into the body of the text.	Simplification and ease of use.
Alignment	Alignment of timelines with version 1.0 of the Certification Rules	2.2.5.	The CB shall communicate the audit date to RA 4 weeks before the start of the audit. The audit plan shall be shared 2 weeks prior to the audit.	Alignment of timelines.
Strengthening the assurance of social topics	Extension of sample size	2.3.5	The CB now must increase the sample size of farms visited in case high risk topics are identified in the CB's own risk assessment of the CH. Previously, the CB had this ability, but it was written as optional.	Empowering CBs to take all the time necessary to perform thorough, risk-based audits.
	Lawsuit investigation	2.2.9	Added a maximum timeframe for the lawsuit investigation, 365 days.	Providing clarity regarding how in-depth the search needs to be and limiting the search to a specific timeframe.
	Additional Social Auditing Measures	2.6.1	New table explaining when additional social auditing measures shall be taken into account. Previously, the rules required all measures be taken in the case of any high risk topic.	More contextualized social auditing.



## AUDITING RULES

Overarching aim	Topic	Requirement in this doc	Change	Reason
Strengthening the assurance of social topics	Open lawsuits on human and labor rights and standard compliance	3.2.5	Clarified that a NC can be raised related to the noncompliance with a RA standard requirement, even though there is an open lawsuit.	Compliance with legislation and the RA standard are separate things. It can be the case that the CH is not complying with a Standard requirement, regardless of the outcome of the lawsuit. If the NC on the standard requirement is clear, the CB shall raise the NC for the certification process already. Some lawsuits take a long time to get solved, hence, certification status should not be hindered because of this external process.
	Gender sensitive approach	Introduction and 3.1.3.h.	Explicit mention that in our assurance approach we include a gender sensitive approach.	While we have already been including this approach for a longer time , it is important to clarify this is the intention behind these rules and why certain rules are in place.
	Female auditor and gender diversity in the audit team	3.6.13 and 3.7	Removing a contradiction related to having female auditors in case of high-risk sensitive social topics.	It is still encouraged that CB use female auditors when possible. The CB shall always deploy a gender-sensitive auditing approach, regardless of the gender of the auditor.
	Reference to upcoming Social Risk Maps	Throughout document	Reference to 'social risk maps' instead of 'child labor and forced labor risk maps'.	At publication of this document, RA is at final stages of the development of additional risk maps on Freedom of Association as well as Workplace Violence and Harassment. Additional risk maps may be added in the future. We have changes the



## AUDITING RULES

Overarching aim	Topic	Requirement in this doc	Change	Reason
Strengthening the assurance of social topics				references to be make the assurance system more adaptable to these future additions.
	Off-site interview	2.10	Changed wording to off-site interview (previously 'off-site investigation'). Changed location to the 'interview' chapter.	To make more explicit the difference between off-site interviews and an investigation audit.
	Observations	3.2.4	CBs shall also record audit observations for their own records.	For sensitive topics its often challenging to find sufficient evidence to raise a NC. By recording observations, we allow CBs to keep track and follow-up on these topics in the next audit.
	Grievances	4.1.9	CBs shall record when/if a grievance was investigated during an audit. If the investigation during the audit did not lead to an NC, CBs shall describe the situation and keep record of it for the future.	To increase credibility and transparency of the assurance program. The records can be used in future audits to follow-up on potentially risky topics.
	Contact details of the CB	3.3.3 and 3.6.11	The CB requests and confirms that the CH puts the contact details of the CB at a central location on the CH's property, so anybody within the CH can contact the CB or the CBs' grievance mechanism after the during or after the audit process.	To facilitate accessibility to the audit team to address sensitive topics off-site or in private and/or to increase accessibility of workers and others towards the CBs grievance mechanism.  To make it easier for workers and their representatives to reach out to the CB. Currently, CBs are just recommended to share their details with the workers they speak with.



## AUDITING RULES

Overarching aim	Topic	Requirement in this doc	Change	Reason
Strengthening the assurance of social topics				We want to promote that issues occurring at a CH can be reported to the CB throughout the year, not only during the audit. This also allows workers to reach out to the CB in a more private, off-site manner to share any concerns.
	Freedom of Association	Throughout	Integration of Freedom of Association-specific rules with the risk-based social topics approach.	As the table of Social Risk topics has been broadened to cover topics identified through audit risk assessment & grievances.  Duplications removed.
Audit Cost Reduction	Sampling of large farms	2.3.15.	Sample size for large farmed decreased to 25%	Audit cost reduction
	Sampling of Labor Providers	2.3.20	The sample of labor providers visited for farm groups shall be the labor providers of the same farms sampled during the audit. Previously, it was not possible to have a sample of labor providers.	Preventing excessively long audits where it may be difficult to visit all group members that use service providers. Instead, the CB shall only include the labor providers of the farms in the sample.
	Social risk	2.6	In the previous version, all additional assurance measures would apply in case of any high-risk topic. Now specific additional measures per the 4 key risk topics (child labor, forced labor, workplace violence and harassment and freedom of association) will apply in case of a high risk on any of those 4 topics.	Tailored and targeted measures depending on risk. This enables more contextualization and audit cost reduction.



## AUDITING RULES

Overarching aim	Topic	Requirement in this doc	Change	Reason
Audit Cost Reduction	Stakeholder consultation	2.11	Reduced applicability: Stakeholder consultation only takes place in case of a complaint received by CB and/or RA on Assess-and-Address and/or FoA or in case of investigation audit.	Audit cost reduction, focus on specific cases.
Alignment with EUDR	Lawsuits	3.2.5	CH shall check for open lawsuits on worker's rights and human rights as well as deforestation.	Alignment with wording of EUDR.
Clarification	Surprise Audits	5.2	New section detailing the process for surprise audits. Surprise audits shall be registered using the usual audit planning system. If a CH is not ready or refuses a surprise audit, their certificate shall be suspended.	Additional clarity was needed as we learned from the RA2020 Standard.
	Investigation Audits	5.3	New section explaining the auditing process for investigation audits. The audit may be initiated by Rainforest Alliance of the CB.	There was previously a lack of information on the process for investigation audits.
Incentives	Incentivized Surveillance Audits	5.5	In alignment with the new Certification Rules, we have added information on the audit process for CHs that qualify for incentivized surveillance audits. CHs that meet the requirements are eligible for a surveillance audit limited in sampling and scope.	Incentivizing good performance for low-risk CHs.





# INTRODUCTION

Through the 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard, the Rainforest Alliance has developed a strong, forward-looking approach to certification that is fit for the challenges facing sustainable agriculture and related supply chains. Our long-term vision is based on a set of core principles: continuous improvement, risk-based assurance, contextualization, and shared responsibility.

Farming 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. Authorized CBs audit farming and supply chain organizations against the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard.

The Rainforest Alliance is an ISEAL community member, 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 Code of Good Practice for Sustainability Systems.

## 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 three core documents:

- 1. 2020 Rainforest Alliance Certification Rules**
- 2. 2020 Rainforest Alliance Auditing Rules**
- 3. 2020 Rainforest Alliance Rules for Certification Bodies**

The Assurance System takes the contents of these three 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. Data is collected throughout the certification process to facilitate risk analysis.

With this data, Rainforest Alliance introduces the use of 'Risk Maps'. These are maps that are created through combining external data sources with location data, Rainforest Alliance data and specific sector data. The maps then provide risk levels of countries, organizations and farms (or farm units) for key sustainability and social topics. Social 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 and for the CBs to focus their audits.

## USING THIS DOCUMENT

### 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**.

### Abbreviations:

Abbreviations in this document:

- CAF: Certification Application Form
- CB: Certification Body
- CBA: Collective Bargaining Agreement
- CH: Certificate Holder
- CL/FL/D/WVH: Child labor/forced labor/ discrimination/ workplace violence and harassment
- DGI: Duration of Group Interviews
- DI2: Duration of Individual Interviews
- DS2: Default Farm Sample Size



- FoA: Freedom of Association
- GPF: Group Proximity Factor
- GPS: Global Positioning System
- IDE: Interview Duration Estimate
- MAD: Minimum Audit Duration
- MS: Management System
- NC: Nonconformity
- NGI: Number of Group Interviews
- NGO: Nongovernmental Organization
- NII: Number of Individual Interviews
- PA: Protected Area
- QMS: Quality Management System
- RA: Rainforest Alliance
- RACP: Rainforest Alliance Certification Platform
- RCA: Root Cause Analysis
- RF: Risk Factor

## Implementation

In this document, the term “CB” is used to refer to authorized CBs, unless otherwise noted. 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 [cbcert@ra.org](mailto:cbcert@ra.org). In the event that a CH does not have a valid contract with a CB, the request shall be submitted to [customersuccess@ra.org](mailto:customersuccess@ra.org). The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right, at its sole discretion, not to accept a deviation from any of the requirements.

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](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org).

### Key Rainforest Alliance Documents:

- Sustainable Agriculture Standard Requirements for Farm
- Sustainable Agriculture Standard Requirements for Supply Chain
- 2020 Rainforest Alliance Rules for Certification Bodies
- 2020 Rainforest Alliance Certification Rules
- 2020 Rainforest Alliance Auditing Rules

**Certificate Holder support:** CHs of the Rainforest Alliance program can contact the Customer Success team at [customersuccess@ra.org](mailto:customersuccess@ra.org) for questions about the Rainforest Alliance standards and Certification Rules.

**Technical support:** CHs can contact [customersuccess@ra.org](mailto:customersuccess@ra.org) for assistance in accessing or using the Rainforest Alliance systems, seal use and trademarks.

**Certification Body support:** Certification Bodies can contact the Rainforest Alliance Assurance department by using the following email addresses:

- [cbcet@ra.org](mailto:cbcet@ra.org) for questions about the Rainforest Alliance standards and Certification Rules, communication about partners (e.g. suspensions and withdrawals of certificates and activations)
- [cbmanagement@ra.org](mailto:cbmanagement@ra.org) for CB accounts and approvals
- [cbmonitoring@ra.org](mailto:cbmonitoring@ra.org) for CB monitoring
- [cbtraining@ra.org](mailto:cbtraining@ra.org) for CB training
- [wacocoa@ra.org](mailto:wacocoa@ra.org) for CB support in West-Africa and interpretation of the Cocoa Policy

### Grievances

Kindly use the webform to submit your grievances against Rainforest Alliance: <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/sustainable-farming/farm-certification/questions-and-complaints>

## 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 (CBA) 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**.

When the interpretation of the applicable law poses a challenge in terms of complying with a requirement from the Rainforest Alliance Assurance Documents or Standard, the Rainforest Alliance will analyse each specific situation and communicate the corresponding decision.



# 1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

## 1.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO ALL CERTIFICATE HOLDERS AND AUDITS

- 1.1.1.** In the event that a national law, regulation, sector agreement or collective bargaining agreement (CBA) 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**.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.1.2.** In each audit, the CB audit team shall respect and effectively implement the principles, practices and guidelines in the latest version of ISO19011.
- 1.1.3.** The audit provides verification of the requirements of the certification scope of the Certificate Holder. For more information about certification scope and verification of this scope, please refer to the Certification Rules.
- 1.1.4.** The CB shall ensure that the entire auditing process:
- 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, temporary, seasonal and home-based, regardless if they are local or migrant, legal or illegal, contracted directly by the CH or provided by subcontractors or service providers or labor providers.
  - c. Considers all activities performed by the CH within the certification scope and their associated risks.
- 1.1.5.** An auditor shall not exceed 8 hours of total regular audit time, in a day. This audit time:
- i. includes the time travelling between the farms/sites and excludes the time for the audit team to arrive at the audit site in the morning from her/his accommodation.
  - ii. includes auditing different shifts.
  - iii. excludes the meal breaks and any other breaks.
  - iv. In justifiable cases, the audit time in a day may be more than 8 hours.

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<sup>1</sup> When the interpretation of the applicable law poses a challenge in terms of complying with a requirement from the Rainforest Alliance assurance documents or Standard, the Rainforest Alliance will analyse each situation and communicate the corresponding decision.



- 1.1.6. The CB shall keep records of working hours of each of its auditors and staff and ensure that overtime hours are compensated in a fair manner to its auditors and staff who are involved in the certification process.
  - a. Working hours of auditors and staff include not only auditing hours, but hours for other activities such as reporting, reviewing evidence of corrective actions and handling complaints/appeals.
- 1.1.7. 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.
- 1.1.8. The CB shall record in its own system, and in its reporting to the Rainforest Alliance, 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.
- 1.1.9. 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 not limited to audit preparation, execution and/or reporting activities to collate all the evidence required to deliver an accurate audit report.
- 1.1.10. The CB shall always include the approximate time needed for different activities required in the certification process costs associated with risk scenarios when preparing the offer for the CH. These activities and estimated costs include but are not limited to:
  - a. Application review for acceptance
  - b. Audit preparation
  - c. Audit execution
  - d. Audit reporting
  - e. Estimated costs for surprise audits in the CB's portfolio
  - f. 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 minimally required in this document
  - g. Where applicable, estimated cost for high-risk CHs in its portfolio which may require longer audit duration
  - h. Any relevant contextual and high risks involved in certain geographical scope, such as regions/countries
  - i. Cost for stakeholder consultation, if applicable (see 2.11 Stakeholder consultation )
  - j. Cost for off-site interviews, if applicable (**see** Off-site interviews)
  - k. Cost of certificate transfer, if one would be necessary
- 1.1.11. The CB shall ensure that only personnel meeting the requirements in the RA Rules for Certification Bodies are authorized to carry out the assigned tasks in the audit and certification process and that such personnel are competent to identify evidence of nonconformities.



- 1.1.12. The CB shall ensure that its personnel who are involved in the certification process of a CH do not perform any consultancy activities for that CH during the period from 2 years prior to the first audit date to 2 years after the last audit date.
- 1.1.13. 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.

## 1.2 EXCEPTIONS TO ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR CHS

- 1.2.1. 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 and Auditing 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.
- 1.2.2. The CB shall always request approval from the Rainforest Alliance before taking actions that deviate from any rules in the Rainforest Alliance Assurance documents/system. Such exceptions requests shall be submitted to [cbcert@ra.org](mailto:cbcert@ra.org) or as otherwise instructed by the Rainforest Alliance, at least 3 weeks prior to the intended implementation date.

**Note:** A shorter time for granting an exception may not allow a decision to be reached at the time the CB expects.
- 1.2.3. The CB audit teams can take actions that deviate from the rules without having prior approval only when:
  - a. Such decisions are taken when they are onsite, and they have good justifications.
  - b. Such deviations will not jeopardize the credibility of the certification program.
  - c. The deviations resulted from information/changes that were unknown to the audit team/CB prior to the audit.
  - d. The CB audit team shall provide documented justification in the audit report.





# 2. AUDIT PLANNING AND PREPARATION

## 2.1 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

**2.1.1.** 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 will achieve the audit objectives with the given resources.

**2.1.2.** 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 activities.
- d. The applicant does not already have a valid certificate or a cancelation that may disallow the CH from being certified at that time.

**2.1.3.** Once the CB approves the application and other necessary data that has been submitted by the CH, the CB shall ensure that the audit team has access to that information at least 4 weeks prior to the first date of the audit, to ensure proper audit preparation.

**Note:** The CB shall have a process to provide such data to the audit team as soon as the data is available. When the data provided by the CH is not complete enough for audit preparation, the CB shall postpone the audit.



## 2.2 PREPARING THE AUDIT

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

**2.2.1.** During the audit preparation, the CB shall verify the following, at least:

- a. Formal establishment of the CH, as a cooperative or as another type of legal entity, including the actual address(es).

**Note:** Except for the single farm certification option, a CH shall be a registered legal entity in that country.

- b. Registry of the sites/farms as in the RACP
- c. Organizational chart of the CH and roles and responsibilities of key persons
- d. The product flow chart and map(s)/layout of locations and facilities of the CH.
- e. Applicable laws and/or CBA.
- f. For farm audits: Identify if a stakeholder consultation is needed (see 2.11 Stakeholder consultation [Error! Reference source not found.](#)).
- g. For supply chain audits: that the CH's verification level is up-to-date.

**2.2.2.** The CB shall make available to the audit team the most up-to-date list of applicable laws and the country risk assessment for the geographical scope of that audit and any other relevant internal resources of the CB, such as the CB audit risk assessment, templates and tools necessary to perform the audit. The audit team shall review and effectively use these resources to prepare, plan and execute the audit.

**2.2.3.** 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 and off-site investigation. The lead auditor shall be responsible for the quality and execution of the audit plan.

**2.2.4.** The audit team shall ensure that the audit plan clarifies roles and responsibilities of all members of its team as well as of required key persons (see Audit team selection and composition) from the CH who will need to provide access and/or facilitate different audit activities.

**2.2.5.** For each audit, the CB shall confirm the planned audit date to RA at least 4 weeks prior to the audit. Once this planned audit date is confirmed, the CB shall not change the audit date except if audit preparation data is insufficient or in the case of force majeure. If an audit date is changed with less than 4 weeks notice, sufficient justification shall be provided by the CB.

**2.2.6.** For each audit, the detailed and final audit plan shall be shared with RA at least 2 weeks prior to the audit date. Once the final audit plan is shared with Rainforest Alliance, the CB shall not change the audit dates, the audit duration, or composition of the selected audit team. The CB shall provide a justification for any changes to the audit plan once it has been shared.



- 2.2.7.** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right not to accept changes to the planned audit date or content of the uploaded audit plan, for example when the Rainforest Alliance has communicated a monitoring plan to evaluate performance of a specific audit team. In case the CB failed to accommodate the monitoring plan, the Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to request the CB to cover costs involved for the Rainforest Alliance to re-arrange the monitoring activity.
- 2.2.8.** For certification, surveillance, and follow-up audits, except desk-based follow-up audits, the CB shall ensure that the CH receives the audit plan no later than 2 weeks prior to the first audit date.
- 2.2.9.** The CB shall perform a preliminary review of official publicly available information to verify whether there are any lawsuits, or any judicial or administrative proceedings related to violations of workers' rights and/ or human rights against the CH in the last year. If there are applicable proceedings or complaints, the CB shall conduct a preliminary investigation.
- a. The investigation shall be done using publicly available data.
  - b. The investigation shall be complemented by a self-declaration of the CH, which shall provide copies of the complaints, judgments, appellate decisions, and notices of violation. False information or omission of information shall result in a non-certification decision.
  - c. The investigation shall include the following scope of lawsuits and proceedings of the last year.
- 2.2.10.** 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.
- 2.2.11.** The lead auditor shall ensure that the audit plan includes, at a 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 location
  - g. Names, gender, contact details, 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 titles of key persons required to be present during the audit, including but not limited to:

- i. Management representative
- ii. HR/payroll staff
- iii. Management of processing facilities
- iv. Occupational Health and Safety Committee representative, if applicable
- v. Workers representative(s), if applicable
- vi. Assess-and-address committee representative
- vii. Gender committee representative
- viii. Grievance committee representative
- ix. Any other committees<sup>2</sup>
- 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 activities they are allowed to participate; for example, participation of the RA staff as an observer, or participation of RA AP Oversight auditors or the CB's accreditation body if relevant
- n. List of key documents or groups of documents that shall be readily available for the audit, including documents required for the auditing social topics and self-selected requirements
- o. A summary profile of each of its audit team members including background and contact details
- p. Working languages during the audit and reporting language of the audit

**2.2.12.** The CB may decide to disclose to the CH fewer details than required in 2.2.11. f that allows better opportunities to achieve the audit objectives. In such a case, the CB shall provide justifications for the decision when sharing the implemented audit plan to Rainforest Alliance after the audit.

**Note:** Even when sharing with the CH fewer details than stated in 2.2.11., the CB still needs to make sure all applicable elements are covered in its planning process.

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<sup>2</sup> One committee may address more than one of the topics listed above. Thus, representative(s) present from those committee(s) do not necessarily need to be different people.



- 2.2.13.** 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 workers to be interviewed.
- 2.2.14.** The CB shall record in its own system at least the following communications:
- a. Communications between the audit team (lead auditor) and the CB regarding the audit preparation, audit plan(s), including changes.
  - b. Communications between the CB and the CH regarding the audit plan(s), including changes.
- 2.2.15.** 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.
- 2.2.16.** The CB shall share the implemented audit plan after the audit if there are changes to the original plan, including justifications of such changes.
- 2.2.17.** Prior to the audit, the CB shall ensure that it has clearly communicated to the CH to make available for review during the onsite audit, at least the following documents and records:
- a. Collective agreements that are in place, under negotiation, or recently expired (if not already shared with the CB prior to the audit)
  - b. Employment contracts and all terms of payment (including statutory deductions and payment of social benefits by employer)
  - 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
  - f. A record of cash allowances, bonuses disbursed, 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.)



### Additional requirements for farm audits

- 2.2.18.** The CB shall have a mechanism to define and document the risks of nonconformity (herewith referred to as audit risk assessment) with the Rainforest Alliance standard for each audit.
- 2.2.19.** The CB shall share the audit risk assessment and detailed audit plan with Rainforest Alliance at least 2 weeks prior to the first date of the audit.
- 2.2.20.** In addition to the application form required by Rainforest Alliance, the CB shall perform its own risk assessment for the audit considering, at a minimum:
- a. Social risk maps provided by the Rainforest Alliance, geodata risk assessment results, and any additional results of the RA risk assessment system where available
  - b. (In-depth) Risk assessments performed by the CH as per farm certification standard requirements 1.3.1, 1.6.3, and 5.1.5 and any other that may be officially communicated by the Rainforest Alliance
  - c. Management plan by the CH
  - d. Quality of geodata
  - e. CB's Country Risk Assessment as per the RA Rules for Certification Bodies
  - f. CB's Applicable Law Assessment, as per the RA Rules for Certification Bodies
  - g. History of the CH from previous audit reports and/or other sources of information that the audit team knows of
  - h. Complexity of activities within the certification scope
  - i. Geographic location of the CH's sites and facilities
  - j. Number and homogeneity/diversity of sites/farms
  - k. Worker information (among others number and type of workers, presence of vulnerable groups, time in which more labor is present on farm)
  - l. Processing and packing units
  - m. Functioning of the management system (MS), based upon data provided by CH and previous audit reports
  - n. Products traded and traceability levels
  - o. Type of crops
  - p. Internal and external complaints against the CH, if available



- q. Results/nonconformities/points for attention from the last audit(s)
- r. Risk from the CH's subcontractors/ intermediaries/ service providers and/or labor providers (see **Error! Reference source not found.**)
- s. Other audit preparation data submitted by the CH prior to the audit
- t. Indicator data
- u. Any lawsuits against the CH

**2.2.21.** The CB's audit risk assessment results shall be the basis for<sup>3</sup>:

- a. The selection and/or adjustment of the sample size/composition for different categories of samples, including but are not limited to:
  - i. Farms/farm sites/farm units 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
- d. Determining additional audit activities
- e. Determining whether additional assurance requirements apply

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<sup>3</sup> Additionally, please see **Error! Reference source not found.** regarding consequences in case of risky topics.



## 2.3 SAMPLING

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

- 2.3.1. The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure for sample determination based on the audit risk assessment conducted by the CB prior to the audit, results from the Rainforest Alliance risk assessment, and risks emerging during the audit.
  - 2.3.2. 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 for the audit.
  - 2.3.3. For all sampling activities, the CB shall ensure the most representative sample possible to effectively review and verify evidence of (non)conformity of the CH.
  - 2.3.4. For all the sampling calculations:
    - a. The CB shall round up the calculated number to the next whole number.
    - b. Unless otherwise specified in specific rules in this document, when the calculated number is smaller than 3, the CB shall include at least 3 or all such subjects<sup>4</sup> (farms, persons/workers, documents, transactions, etc.) in the audit sample when the population size is smaller than 3. However, if the number of sites in a supply chain actor or farms in a multi-farm to be visited is smaller than 3, the CB is not required to increase the number to be 3.
    - c. If there are contradictory requirements on sampling sizes that result in two different calculated sample sizes for the same sample, the audit team shall use the larger sample.
- Note:** In case of doubt, please consult the Rainforest Alliance.
- 2.3.5. Prior to the audit, when a CH is determined to be high risk, the CB shall increase the sample size appropriately to ensure that the risk areas identified can be sufficiently checked during the audit.
  - 2.3.6. During the audit, the CB audit team may increase the sample sizes (farms, sites, documentations, interviews, etc.) as minimally required in this document when high risk(s) on relevant topic(s) have been identified by the audit team.
    - a. When such changes result from information known to the CB prior to the audit, the audit team shall adjust its audit activities to accommodate the changes without increasing the audit costs to the CH. This may result in requesting an exception from the Rainforest Alliance and a deviation record is created.
    - b. When such changes result from information unknown to the CB prior to the audit, the audit team will add additional time to cover the increased sample(s) and the CH shall cover the additional costs involved, for auditing and reporting activities. In such cases

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<sup>4</sup> Subjects in this context means the members of the population from which you are defining an audit sample.





the CH is required to fully cooperate with the CB and its audit team, otherwise the CB has the rights to terminate the audit and/or suspend the currently active license and/or de-/non-certify the CH.

- 2.3.7.** The audit team shall respect the applicable additional rules on sampling in the sub-chapters of this Chapter when (pre)defining different audit samples.
- a. Sampling for Shared Responsibility
  - b Minimum Requirements for Document Sampling
  - c. Others applicable to both farm and supply chain audits

### Minimum Requirements for Document Sampling

- 2.3.8.** When auditing other locations/actors, the CB audit team will decide a realistic and reasonably representative sample of documentation for verifying implementation of the CH. For example, documentation provided by or related to labor providers, service providers, subcontractors and intermediaries.
- 2.3.9.** When auditing social topics, the CB audit team will consider rules in section 2.6 of this document.
- 2.3.10.** The CB audit team shall use this section as reference for selecting documents during an onsite follow up or an investigation audit.
- 2.3.11.** 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	Square root of the number of contracts	Farm and supply chain audits	For SC CHs responsible for SD/SI payments, sample size is further specified in Sampling for Shared Responsibility.
MS staff records	Square root of the number of persons	Farm and supply chain audits that have social topics in scope	Knowledge and competence of the MS staff, their training records, conflict of interests, contracts between CH and the staff, <u>wages</u> , working hours, benefits
Training records	Square root of training events in the past 12 months	Farm and supply chain audits	Training of farmers, workers
CH <u>risk assessment</u>	All required by the Standard	Farm and supply chain audits	



Type of document	Minimum number of items	Applicable to	Remarks
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.
	Square root (with a minimum of 5) of all transactions/shipments	Supply chain audits	
Sales records	Overview(s) to verify the total volume purchase, processed, sold and stock.  At least complete product flow verification of at least 5 sale transactions (see <a href="#">Auditing traceability in farm audits</a> ).	Farm audits	
	Square root (with a minimum of 5) of all transactions/shipments	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, <u>wages</u> , 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	At least 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.



Type of document	Minimum number of items	Applicable to	Remarks
Maps, polygons	Follow <a href="#">Auditing geodata and geodata risk maps in an audit</a> on using geodata for audit		
Internal inspections and farm documentation	At least 50% of the 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	<p>Same number of approval records as sample size chosen, if approval documents are different from 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>	Farm audits	Reason for the sanction shall be cross verified. In case of high risk that the CH sanctioned farmers without properly following the procedure or without justified reasons, the audit team may decide to visit and/or call sanctioned farmers who are not currently enrolled in the group to verify.
Worker contracts		Audits with social chapter in scope	



Type of document	Minimum number of items	Applicable to	Remarks
Wages and Living Wage documents and records	<p>a. From the 12-month of payroll records, the audit team shall verify at least 3 months' data, including one peak season month, one average and one low season (if applicable) for a total of 3 months of payroll.</p> <p>b. For the 3 months sample, verify the filled in Salary Matrix Tool (farm audits) or other documented data on salary payments (SC audits), including a sample of worker files (pay slips) per number of worker files sampled.</p>	<p>Farm audits</p> <p>Farm and SC audits with social chapter in scope</p>	<p>The audit team shall define a representative sample based on the demographics of the workers (e.g. male/female, permanent/temporary, hired by labor provider or service provider), the different wage data (bonuses, in-kind benefits, per season) and risks, including at least the most important type of workers as included in the Salary Matrix Tool "category of workers" (farm audits) or other documented data on salary payments (SC audits) and gender. The sample shall correspond to interviewed workers.</p>

Table AR1: Minimum Documents To Be Verified by CB Audit Team at the Management System

### General Requirements for Sampling in Farm Audits

**2.3.12.** The following sampling requirements apply:

- a. The CB shall audit all the processing units of a single farm CH and shall follow the rules below for multi-farm (2.3.14) or group farms (2.3.15).
- b. Regardless of the certification option, the audit team shall audit a selected farm against all applicable requirements.
- c. If a farm buys (non)certified products that are of the same crops to be certified, the CB shall verify requirements related to traceability and therefore the audit team shall sample purchase centers, interview involved persons and verify related documentations.
- d. For a selected farm, regardless of the certification option, 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.
- e. For all farm certification options, 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 farm unit
- ii. Crop diversity
- iii. Number of farm units managed by the single farm CH or the group members
- iv. Nonconformities noticed in external audits and internal inspections/self-assessments
- v. Utilization of workers (family and hired)
- vi. Volumes delivered/sold to the CH
- vii. Use of inputs
- viii. Type of activities on the farm
- ix. Location/proximity of the farms/farm units and remoteness of farm/farm unit from other farms, IMS, and or infrastructure.
- x. Existing natural ecosystem within the farm or abutting the land
- xi. Any complaints
- xii. Land use pattern before certification
- xiii. Deforestation, protected area, and encroachment risk
- xiv. Housing for workers
- xv. Use of subcontractors/service providers/labor providers
- xvi. Presence of vulnerable workers

f. The CB shall try to visit all the farm units of a farm in one certification cycle.

**Note:** The CB will give priority to visiting farm units with the highest risks, using the risk-based approach.

g. The audit team shall include the farm unit ID/number of visited farms and reason for sampling in the audit report.

h. In a surveillance audit, a representative sample of the farm units where an 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 audits.

**2.3.13.** The CB audit team shall perform the witness audit of at least the square root of total number of internal inspectors or 8, whichever is smaller, to verify their competence and performance during a certification/surveillance audit.

a. In a witness audit, the CB audit team shall ensure that the internal inspector being witnessed has not seen how a CB auditor performed a farm audit/visit during the same audit (see further notes below). To select the persons to be witnessed, the audit team shall use a random stratified sampling.



**2.3.14.** For a **multi-farm** audit, the following requirements apply:

Topic for Sampling	Minimum Sample
a. Purchase/buying centers	At least 50% of the square root of purchase/buying centers OR 3 of them, whichever is higher
b. Processing Unit	Shall be audited at least once in a certification cycle
c. Central management location	The main/central location where the audit team has access to the management system documentation and management system staff, shall be included in every audit.
d. Farms	All member farms shall receive an audit at least once in the certification cycle, based on the parameters of 3.2.12. In a certification or surveillance audit, the CB shall audit at least 33% of the number of farms in a multi-farm CH.
e. If NCs were found in the previous audit	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, where the verification can be limited to detected NCs

Table AR 2: Multi-farm Sampling



**2.3.15.** For **group farm audit**, the following sampling requirements apply:

Topic for Sampling	Minimum Sample
<p>a. Farms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Default farms sample size (DS2) = square root (number of small farms in group CH)</li> <li>ii. Default large farm sample size (DLS) = number of large farms in a CH * 0.25</li> <li>iii. The CB may at the most increase the sample size up to two times the default minimum number, 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.</li> <li>iv. Based on the CB audit risk assessment, the number of the small farms to be visited/audited shall be determined prior to the audit, in the planning stage. The number of small farms to be audited/visited, shall not be smaller than the default minimum number (see below).</li> <li>v. The CB shall ensure the most representative sample of members farms to be visited among different villages/sections/regions/internal inspection regions/sub-groups, etc.</li> <li>vi. The CB shall visit/audit at least 25% of the large farms every year, and the CB shall ensure 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.</li> <li>vii. The maximum number of small farms that shall be audited per day by one auditor shall not exceed six. For large farms, it shall be maximum three farms per day per auditor. If the CB decides to increase the number of member farms per day, it shall contact the Rainforest Alliance to obtain an exemption prior to implementing and shall document justification for such adjustment.</li> <li>viii. 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.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> It is possible for the CB to announce the names of farmers to be visited the following afternoon on the morning of the previous day.</p>



Topic for Sampling	Minimum Sample
<p>b. Farms high risk for deforestation and protected areas</p>	<p>The audit team shall ensure that the audit sample of farms to be visited is representative of the risk levels as identified in the risk maps of deforestation and protected areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. At least 20% of the farms in the audit sample shall have high risk as identified in the geodata risk assessment. Of that number, at least 50% of the sample of high risk areas should be those high risk for protected areas. If the total number of high-risk farms in the group is smaller than 20% of the audit sample, all such farms shall be included in the audit sample.</li> <li>ii. At least 10% of the farms in the audit sample shall have medium risk as identified in the geodata risk assessment. If the total number of medium-risk farms in the group is smaller than 10% of the audit sample, all such farms shall be included in the audit sample.</li> <li>iii. If the CH does not have any high-risk farms, i.e. the highest risk level identified by the geodata risk assessment is medium, at least 20% of the farms in the audit sample shall have medium risk as identified in the geodata risk assessment. If the total number of medium-risk farms in the group is smaller than 20% of the audit sample, all such farms shall be included in the audit sample.</li> </ul>
<p>c. Purchase/buying centers</p>	<p>At least 50% of the square root OR 3 centers, whichever is higher</p>
<p>d. Processing units</p>	<p>At least the square root of the total number of processing units</p>
<p>e. Main/central location with MS documentation and MS staff</p>	<p>Shall be audited in every audit</p>
<p>f. Human dwellings (e.g. homes and temporary houses)</p>	<p>Shall be audited using a risk-based approach to make observations on conformity with requirements on social topics and requirements that have a possible impact on human health and safety</p>

Table AR3: Group Sampling





### Requirements for Sampling Housing

**2.3.16.** The following requirements are applicable in case the Rainforest Alliance Farm Standard requirements of chapter 5.7 on housing apply.

**2.3.17.** 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
- c. Location of the houses (ensuring the most remote houses are also included)
- d. Age of the housing
- e. Housing in state of repair
- f. Housing provided to different type of workers

**2.3.18.** The sample is:

- a. At least the square root of the total habitable areas<sup>5</sup> on the farm. This number could be higher if the auditor identifies risky situations that require visiting more houses to confirm (non)conformity.
- b. Increased by 10% in case the topic is identified as high or very high risk.
- c. In case the audit team could not visit certain houses in the desired sample, this shall be reported in the audit report with the reasons why.

### Requirements for Sampling Intermediaries, Subcontractors, and Service Providers

**2.3.19.** For intermediaries and subcontractors<sup>6</sup> and service providers who do not have their own Rainforest Alliance certificate/endorsement, the following additional sampling requirements apply:

- a. The CB shall analyze the risks associated with the scope of each intermediary, subcontractor, service provider and include them into the audit sample in accordance with the associated risk.

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<sup>6</sup> Regarding the sampling of subcontractors of a supply chain CH, the CB follows the general supply chain sampling rules as a supply chain subcontractor is regarded as a site.



- b. 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 **Error! Reference source not found.** of this document.
  - i. The CB shall use a risk-based approach to determine which actors(s) (i.e. intermediaries, subcontractors, service providers or labor providers) to be physically visited. If all the information required to verify and confirm their (non)conformity is available without a physical visit, the audit team can audit the actor from the CH location. However, for example, certain documents/workers or visual information (e.g. verification of housing provided to workers) are not available or cannot be verified from the CH location, the CB shall visit such an actor/entity.
 

**Note:** If a subcontractor handles/process certified product, it is expected that the audit team will visit the location on which such activities are carried out.
  - ii. In case an actor is selected to be audited and is not available for an in-person interview, the audit team shall select another actor with similar profile/risks or decide to interview that actor using another alternative, such as via a remote audit. This shall be documented in the audit materials.
- 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.

### Sampling for Labor providers

**2.3.20.** The CB must make sure to include a representative number of group members that use labor providers, and has the right to increase the sample size. See table AR4 or the minimum number of labor providers to be sampled per audit, per type of certificate holder.

Type of certificate holder	Minimum number of labor providers to be included in sample
Groups	Labor providers of group members included in the audit sample and the labor providers in the group's central (processing) facility
Multi-farm	100% of the farms that are sampled during that particular audit
Individual certified farm	100% of labor providers

Table AR4 Minimum number of labor providers to be sampled



### Requirements for Sampling On-site Follow-Up Audits

**2.3.21.** The CB shall follow the below additional sampling requirements for **onsite follow up audits**:

- 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. If the non-conformity reflects the lack of a system/procedure and its implementation, the audit team shall expand the scope of the follow-up audit to cover the documentation of that system/procedure on the MS level, as well as its implementation on the site/farm level.
- 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 a. and b. above shall be followed.

**2.3.22.** When uploading the draft audit report, the CB shall include the planned and implemented samples together with justification for any changes and/or deviations.

### Sampling Requirements for Supply Chain Audits

**2.3.23.** For a multi-site SC audit, the following additional sampling requirements apply:

- a. The CB shall consult the central management location during the audit process. In the second surveillance year, if the central management location lands in level B or C (no audit), they should be consulted as a part of the audit process, but this does not result in an increase in the sample size.

**2.3.24.** The sample of sites to be audited shall be equal to the square root of the total number of sites requiring an audit in that year. The sites shall be selected in such a way that represents the risk categories according to the completed SCRA for each site. The sample selection will be made only from those sites that fall into categories B through E.

- a. When selecting sites for audit, the following factors shall be considered:
  - i. Geographic distribution
  - ii. Activities and/or products produced
  - iii. Size and complexity of participating sites
  - iv. Areas of improvement of the management system identified by internal reports or external audits
  - v. New sites, products or processes
  - vi. Risk level of the sites



- 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.

**Note:** The CB may decide to verify effectiveness of the corrective actions at the additional (site) by performing a remote audit.

**2.3.25.** The CB may extend the sample size to include sites that otherwise would not require an audit in that year. This shall be justified based on risk.

**2.3.26.** 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.

## 2.4. SAMPLING FOR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

### Sustainability Differential (SD)

#### Sampling SD in Supply Chain Audits

Sampling topic/document	Minimum Sampling	Applicable standard requirement
Contractual agreements with buyers include SD information (amount and payment details)	Square root of contracts between buyer and farm CH, sample to include those contracts of largest contracted volume	3.2.4
Buyer reports payment in the traceability platform	Square root (but at least 5, whichever is greater) of transactions as part of the contracts included in the audit sample	3.2.3, 3.2.6, 3.2.7
Transactions as a part of the contracts included in the audit sample	Square root (or at least 5, whichever is greater) of transactions as part of the contracts included in the audit sample	3.3.4 and 3.3.5



Table AR 5: Sampling SD in SC Audits

### Sampling SD for farm audits

Sampling Topic/Document	Minimum Sampling	Applicable standard Requirement
Redistribution of SD to group members	Verification at farms included in the regular audit sample (see section Sampling)	3.2.1.
For individual farm CHs: SD spent to the benefit of workers	<p>Verification of all categories of spending; including this topic in interviews with workers</p> <p>Verification of the annual report SD is spent according to the categories as listed in the Standard requirement and after worker representatives were consulted.</p> <p>Annual report is provided through the RA platform on the SD spent (% of total per category).</p>	3.2.2

Table AR6: Sampling SD in Farm Audits

## Sustainability Investments (SI)

### Sampling SI for supply chain audits

Sampling Topic/Document	Minimum Sampling	Applicable Standard Requirement
Buyer makes investment and reports	<p>Square root (but at least 5, whichever is greater) of transactions as part of the contracts included in the audit sample</p> <p>In-kind investments per farm CH in monetary value at an annual basis</p>	3.3.4 and 3.3.5

Table AR7: Sampling SI in SC Audits



### Sampling SI for farm audits

Sampling topic/document	Minimum Sampling	Applicable Standard Requirement
Identification of investment needs and design of investment plan	There will just be one investment plan.	3.3.1

Table AR8: Sampling SI in Farm Audits



## 2.5. SAMPLING WORKER INTERVIEWS AND WORKER FILES

### Applicable to farm audits and supply chain audits that have social topics in the certification scope

- 2.5.1.** 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 non-administrative workers,, including worker representatives, of the CH in the certification scope. The number of interviews, individual or group, can always be increased depending on the risks identified before or during the audit.
- 2.5.2.** The number of interviews can be distributed over individual interviews and group interviews. However, the CB audit team can decide to do all interviews as individual interviews. The number of individual interviews is set as minimum, while the number of group interviews is set as maximum.
- 2.5.3.** The number of persons in group interviews given in this table below are suggestive. In case more than one group interviews are allowed, the audit team can flexibly adjust this number depending on availability of the workers to join group interviews. For example, when the table suggest 5 group interviews of 5 person/one group interview, the audit team can have 3 group interviews of 5 persons/each, 1 group interviews of 6 persons/each and one group interview of 4.
- 2.5.4.** 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 Section [Interviews and worker files review](#) of this document.
- Note:** The number of interviews is calculated for the entire CH, even if it's a multi-site, multi-farm or multi-group. The interviews will then be distributed among the different sites/farms/ locations/groups of workers, using a risk-based approach.
- 2.5.5.** 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. And it will include workers hired through labor provider(s).
- 2.5.6.** The CB shall consider the number of workers in peak production period(s) and in low production period(s) among other factors when determining the most representative sample.
- The CB shall calculate the number of interviews and worker files of non-administrative workers according to table AR9. Ensure that workers from different labor providers are included in the sample of worker interviews and worker files.
- 2.5.7.** The CB shall interview and review employee files of a representative number of administrative staff (management, supervisors and other administrative staff, (field) technicians, etc.) of the CH.
- Minimum number of such interviews shall be square root of number of administrative staff.
  - Minimum number of worker files of such staff to be reviewed shall be at least half of the number of interviews of administrative staff.



**2.5.8.** A group interview shall not have more than 6 workers, and the auditor shall ensure that sufficient time is provided for all of the interviewees 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 interviewees.

Number of non-administrative workers involved in the CH	Minimum number of workers to be interviewed	Minimum number of individual interviews	Maximum number of group interviews	Minimum number of worker files to be checked
1-5 workers	All workers are interviewed individually			All worker files are reviewed
6 – 10	6	6	Not applicable	6
11-50	9	6	1 group of 3 workers	9
51-100	15	7	1 group of 3 1 group of 5	12
101-250	20	10	2 groups of 5	15
251-500	32	12	2 groups of 3 1 group of 4 2 groups of 5	18
501-1500	40	15	2 groups of 3 1 group of 4 3 groups of 5	20
1501 – 4000	50	18	1 group of 3 1 group of 4 5 groups of 5	25
4001 and more	65	25	8 groups of 5	30

Table AR9: Number of Interviews and Worker Files

**Note:** As per Interviews and worker files review **Error! Reference source not found.**, the sample size of worker interviews might need to be increased with 10% (requirement 1.3) and the worker files.





## 2.6. PREPARATION AUDITING OF SOCIAL TOPICS

- 2.6.1.** The CB shall apply the measures in Table AR10 when high risk social topics are within scope or
- If a grievance has been received on these topics
  - In the case of an investigation audit
  - The CB's audit risk assessment has evaluated any of these social topic(s) as high risk

Additional Assurance measure	Topic of high risk or topic on which grievance was received			
	Child labor	Forced labor	Workplace violence and harassment	Freedom of Association
Specific risk overview	x	x	x	x
Additional audit time at the Internal Management System	x	x	x	x
Off-site interviews		x	X	x
Worker interview selection	x	x	x	x
Composition of group interviews				X
Increased sample size of worker interviews and worker files		x	X	X
Timing	x	x	X	
Audit team composition	x	x	X	X

Table AR10 Applicability of additional Assurance measures per high risk topic



Topic	Action
Specific risk overview	<p><b>2.6.2.</b> For the topics or requirements that are identified as <i>high risk</i>, the CB shall create 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"> <li>a. Target group/vulnerable groups</li> <li>b. Period in the year</li> <li>c. Location in which this risk might be identified</li> <li>d. Scenarios/description of the risky situation</li> <li>e. The specific requirement in the Standard it links to</li> </ul>
Off-site interviews	<p><b>2.6.3.</b> The CB shall perform an off-site interview (only applicable in farm audits, refer to Off-site interviews <b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>) on the topic(s) of <i>high risk</i>, when security is ensured, unless the workers request otherwise.</p>
Sample size of <u>workers</u> interviews and <u>worker</u> files	<p><b>2.6.4.</b> The CB shall increase the total number of worker interviews and the worker files for review to 110% of the calculated sample size (see Sampling worker interviews and worker files)</p>
Worker interview selection	<p><b>2.6.5.</b> The audit team shall ensure a most representative sample is defined using stratified random sampling, considering workers related to the grievance, nonconformity, or lawsuit, affiliated workers from all worker organizations and non-affiliated workers.</p> <p><b>2.6.6.</b> The audit team interviews at least all workers that have reportedly suffered violations of their right to freedom of association, collective bargaining, or have been discriminated or mistreated because of their participation in a worker organization, whenever such information is available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The audit team shall ensure union or workers organizations are interviewed either onsite or off-site, whatever option the representatives prefer.</li> </ul>
Composition of group interviews	<p><b>2.6.7.</b> The CB shall ensure that extra measures for group interviews are taken to include both unionized and non-unionized workers.</p> <p><b>2.6.8.</b> If there are both workers that are unionized and non-unionized, one group interview shall have only unionized workers and another group interview shall have only non-unionized workers.</p> <p><b>2.6.9.</b> If there are workers affiliated to different trade unions/workers organizations, one group interview will have only workers affiliated with the same trade union/worker organization.</p>



Topic	Action
Timing	<b>2.6.10.</b> Any audit shall take place in a period where the CB audit team can collect and verify the most relevant information to confirm the topics of high or very high risk.
Audit team composition	<p>See Audit team selection and composition</p> <p><b>2.6.11.</b> Where deemed necessary, the CB shall ensure the audit team has a legal specialist on labor law.</p> <p><b>2.6.12.</b> Gender diversity shall be included as a consideration for the composition of audit teams and a record is kept of this analysis.</p> <p><b>2.6.13.</b> Where possible, women auditors should conduct the interviews of women on gender-related matters, especially in case of high risk on gender-based violence and/or harassment.</p>
Mechanism to receive comments throughout the year	<b>2.6.14.</b> The CB shall have a mechanism in place that allows comments to be submitted regarding high risk topics at any time during the validity of the certificate, and that specifies how those comments are to be taken into consideration for the next coming audit. Records of the comments are kept. The CB shall make sure that the mechanism is known to the public.

Table AR11 Additional Requirements Related to Social high risks

## 2.7. AUDIT DURATION

**2.7.1.** The base formula for the estimated minimum audit duration (MAD) is calculated as follows:

$$\text{MAD (single certification)} = ((\text{DS}2/6) + (\text{DLS}/3)) * \text{RF} * \text{GPF} + \text{IDE (in hours)} + (\text{number of processing unit to be audited} * 2 \text{ hours}) + (\text{number of purchase/buying centers to be audited} * 1.5 \text{ hours}) + 1 \text{ day for Management System}$$

**2.7.2.** The formula in this section may be adjusted at the discretion of the Rainforest Alliance. CBs shall use the most updated version of the CAF to determine MAD.

**2.7.3.** Audit time at a processing unit is expected to increase significantly if there are complex processing activities at such a site.

**2.7.4.** Audit time at a purchase/buying/collection center/location is expected to increase significantly if the center/location buys/handles large volumes and/or from a large number of small farms and/or both certified and non-certified volumes.

**2.7.5.** For combined or integrated audits, the CB shall follow the Certification Rules **Error! Reference source not found.**



**2.7.6.** When an interpreter is used, the audit team needs to adjust the required audit duration accordingly. In determining the additional time when an interpreter(s) is needed, the audit team shall consider if interpreters are needed for which audit activities, i.e. at IMS only, both IMS and farms, both management, farmer and worker interviews, etc. Single certification is understood as the audit covers only the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Standard.

**Applicable only to farm audits**

**2.7.7.** Based on the data shared by the CH and the Rainforest Alliance’s risk assessment system, where available, the minimum audit duration (MAD) will be estimated using the above formula, which will serve as the basis for the Rainforest Alliance to estimate the MAD.

**2.7.8.** The CB is expected to increase the audit duration using the outcome of its audit risk assessment process to ensure that the audit team has sufficient time to properly verify conformity of the CH.

**2.7.9.** Audit duration can also be increased based on emerging risks resulted from information that was not known to the CB audit team prior to the audit (see also 2.4.5 of this document)

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

- a. The CB shall develop and implement a documented procedure to 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 realistic GPF and shall not use this 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. The CB shall follow the below guidelines in determining the GPF and the guidelines in Auditing geodata and geodata risk maps in an audit:

Proximity assessment by CB	GPF value
Group farms are in <i>very close</i> proximity, and it is easy to visit 6 farms per auditor within 8 hours, including time for traveling between 6 farms in any 2 selected villages/sections/regions/internal inspection regions/sub-groups, etc.	1.0
Group farms are in <i>reachable</i> 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 villages/sections/regions/internal inspection regions/sub-groups, etc.	1.1
Group farms are <i>distant</i> 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 villages/sections/regions/internal inspection regions/sub-groups, etc.	1.2
Group farms are <i>quite distant</i> 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 villages/sections/regions/internal inspection regions/sub-groups, etc.	1.3

Table AR12: Determining Group Proximity Factor



c. Risk factor (RF):

Risk category of the CH	RF value
CH in the highest risk category	1.2
CH in the high-risk category	1.15
CH in the medium-risk category	1.1
CH in the low-risk category	1.0
CH in the very low-risk category	0.9

*Table AR13: Determining Risk Factor*

**Note:** The risk category is determined for each audit at a CH using the data provided by the CH. This will be the results from combining outcome of the Rainforest Alliance risk assessment system, if available, and the outcome of the CB audit risk assessment.



**2.7.11.** The CB shall use the following parameters to determine Interview Duration Estimation (IDE):

- a. The CB has calculated the number of individual interviews (NII) and the number of group interviews (NGI) following the guidelines in **Error! Reference source not found.i** of this document.
- b. Minimum Duration for individual interviews (DI2) will be calculated as  $NII * 0.25$  hour
- c. Minimum Duration for group interviews (DGI) will be calculated as  $NGI * 0.5$  hour

$$\text{Minimum IDE (in hours)} = DI2 + DGI$$

**2.7.12.** Audit time at other farm sites:

- a. At a processing unit<sup>7</sup>: at least 2 hours/unit
- b. At a purchase/buying/collection center/location: at least 1.5 hours/center

#### **Applicable only to Supply Chain audits**

**2.7.13.** The audit duration at the central management facility shall be minimum of 2 hours to assess administration (procedures, processes, documentation).

**2.7.14.** In a multi-site audit, the CB shall ensure that a minimum audit duration of 2 hours for each site that handles certified product. The audit team ensures a minimum of 4 audit hours for a site that has both administration and handling of certified product.

**2.7.15.** If social topics are included in a supply chain audit scope, the CB ensures that rules affecting audit duration as laid out in the CAF and as deemed necessary by the CB's risk analysis.

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<sup>7</sup> A processing unit can be a coffee mill, a tea factory, a central cocoa warehouse, a packing house (banana, pineapple, flower, oil palm), etc.



## 2.8. AUDIT TEAM SELECTION AND COMPOSITION

- 2.8.1. All audit team members meet the applicable requirements of the Rules for CBs.
- 2.8.2. Each audit shall have a lead auditor. If there is just 1 person in the audit, that person will need to meet the lead auditor requirements.
- 2.8.3. Audit teams shall include at least a lead auditor and any other roles as defined as necessary in the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard or the Rules for CBs.
- 2.8.4. When necessary, the organization performing the audit shall include technical expert(s) as part of the audit team to ensure the audit team has the collective competence to achieve the audit objectives.
- 2.8.5. The audit team is proficient in the languages spoken by the population at the CH that will be audited (both speaking and reading).
- 2.8.6. In case an interpreter is used during the audit, prior to the audit, the CB shall ensure:
  - a. There is a documented and implemented procedure for the selection and use of interpreters during audits and certification activities.
  - b. That both the CB and the interpreter have signed an agreement inclusive of a non-disclosure agreement.
  - c. There are no conflicts of interest between the interpreter and the CH and/or workers, worker representatives and or other actors linked to the CH.
  - d. The interpreter meets the entry requirements as explained in the Rules for Certification Bodies & received appropriate training and instructions.
  - e. That there are an adequate number of interpreters available to ensure communication between the audit team and the intended audience including management, workers and any other relevant stakeholders.
  - f. That the interpreter meets the requirements of Use of interpreter .
  - g. That the interpreter has received clear instructions from the CB/audit team before the audit to ensure the requirements in this document are fully implemented.



## 2.9 REMEDIATION

**2.9.1.** Prior to any on-site audit, the CB shall develop and implement a documented procedure that informs the audit team of what to do in event that a (potential) case of labor abuse has been identified during the audit or during the off-site interview. The procedure shall be aligned with the principles and procedures of effective remediation mentioned in Sustainable Agricultural Standard Annex Chapter 5: Social and shall at least include:

a. General aspects:

- i. Clarifying responsibilities of the audit team in case a (potential) violation is identified.
- ii. Adopting a people-centered safe-guarding approach, placing the safety, welfare and confidentiality of any at-risk person as the primary and paramount factor.
- iii. Adapting to local context, legal framework and risks related to the CH.
- iv. The audit team shall follow the Remediation Plan of the CH or if not available, not practical or deemed not appropriate, its own documented procedure, to minimize any risk to workers or other people involved.

b. When (potential) cases are found during the audit:

- i. Immediate safeguarding of (potential) survivors) in case of abusive and dangerous situations, possible coercion and violence by employers or other people.
- ii. Establishing trust and obtaining consent of (potential) survivor.
- iii. Investigating, gathering and securing of information and evidence. The audit team shall consider the likelihood that there are other persons impacted that have not yet been identified and take appropriate steps to identify those. The audit team shall collect signatures of all witnesses, as possible.
- iv. After consent of the survivors(s) and if safe to do so, identify which internal and/or external stakeholders to refer them to for resources.
- v. Safety of the audit team: The CB shall include how the audit team can ensure their own safety, including in the case of audit termination.
- vi. Reporting of findings: The audit team shall record/document and report the issue, maintaining the anonymity and safety of the victim into account (among others, include the cases in the audit report and in the license request, keeping the identity of the victim anonymously).

**Note:** Whenever possible, the audit team may refer the victim to support from qualified professionals (e.g. psychological, medical or social assistance), or if they believe that the person is in immediate danger, a temporary safehouse or shelter for the child, always ensuring the best interests of the child are of primary concern.





- 2.9.2.** Prior to the audit, the audit team shall review the Remediation Plan (as part of the Management Plan) of the CH and verify if the plan looks actionable and practical.
- 2.9.3.** In all cases, the audit team shall prioritize the welfare of people when deciding how to inform employment site management of any nonconformity, including those leading to a negative certification decision.

## 2.10.OFF-SITE INTERVIEWS

### Applicable to farm audits

- 2.10.1.** The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure for determining the need for off-site interviews. The objective of the procedure shall be to ensure that the CH activities do not compromise the integrity of the CB and/or the the Rainforest Alliance. The procedure takes into account the safety of auditors.
- 2.10.2.** To determine the need for off-site interviews, the CB shall:
  - a. Prior to the audit, use the CB's audit risk assessment, and if applicable the outcome of the stakeholder consultation, to evaluate if the risk identified is better addressed through off-site interviews, e.g. by taking into account the sensitivity of the topics, the risk that workers cannot be interviewed fully anonymous on-site and/or the risk that workers would not fully open up when interviewed onsite.
  - b. During the audit, where it seems workers may feel able to speak more freely about any concerns off-site or where local actors, located outside of the CHs premises, might provide corroborative information or evidence.
  - c. The audit team will conduct such interviews, preferably, before the opening meeting, and during non-working hours and days, unless the workers request otherwise.
- 2.10.3.** If the need for off-site interviews is identified in the audit preparation phase, the CB shall clearly indicate in preliminary and/or final audit plans that off-site interviews would be/were carried out. When communicating the need for an off-site interview to the CH, the CB shall:
  - a. Use their judgment to determine how much detail to reveal to the CH considering the risk that the CH could for example influence the off-site interview process. This is important when interviewing workers outside of the CH's properties, for example in cases to investigate freedom of association and/or relevant topics related to working conditions.
  - b. Clearly state that the CH shall bear the costs involved.
- 2.10.4.** Off-site interviews with workers shall be at minimum with 2 workers to a maximum of 10 workers. If deemed needed, the audit team can decide to have up to 8 interviews with other local actors.
- 2.10.5.** The CB shall document the outcome of this process and share the results with Rainforest Alliance in the audit report.



## 2.11 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

### Applicable to farm audits

- 2.11.1.** Prior to any audit process, the CB shall develop and implement a documented procedure for performing stakeholder consultation, in accordance with the requirements in this chapter.
- 2.11.2.** The CB shall perform stakeholder consultation in Farm Standard audits in case of an eligible complaint against the CH related to requirements 5.1 Assess-and-Address and/or 5.2 Freedom of Association of the Farm Standard.
- 2.11.3.** The stakeholder consultation shall take place prior to or during the onsite audit, with the aim to
  - a. Investigate the complaint.
  - b. Identify risks that the CH may have a nonconformity raised during the audit on 5.1 Assess-and-Address requirements related to child labor and/or forced labor and/or 5.2 Freedom of Association.
  - c. Understand common concerns and risks in each local context, such as geographic region, crop, sector, with the 5.1 Assess-and-Address and/or 5.2 Freedom of requirements Association of the Standard.
  - d. Have a better understanding of the local interpretation of the 5.1 Assess-and-Address and/or 5.2 Freedom of Association requirements.
  - e. Establish and/or maintain relationships with interested stakeholders that could provide the CB with information on any risks/issues that may emerge during the certification cycle.
- 2.11.4.** The stakeholder consultation process shall include at least the following activities.
  - a. Stakeholder identification and information for stakeholders shall entail:
    - i. The CB shall identify and compose a list of relevant stakeholders, who can provide most insights or most relevant information related to the aim of the consultation.
    - ii. The CB shall select and consult at least 3 different stakeholders per consultation.
    - iii. Profile of the stakeholder including reason for contacting, potential conflict of interest between the stakeholder(s) and the CH, topics intended to include in the specific consultation.
    - iv. The CB shall ensure that stakeholders are approached on a voluntary basis and may decline to collaborate.
    - v. The CB shall share with the stakeholders the aim of the consultation, and how confidentiality is ensured.
    - vi. The consultation shall be verbal and/or written and the CB shall identify which method is the most suitable and feasible, in-person or remotely.



- b. When consulting the stakeholder, the CB shall build trust with the stakeholder. This shall include 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. Plan for how the stakeholder can continue to provide the CB with updated risks/issues on the topics discussed throughout the certification cycle.
  - v. Never disclosing confidential information from/about the CH.
- c. The CB shall document the main findings of the consultation and based on the information obtained through the stakeholder consultations, the CB shall adapt the audit process accordingly. This may entail, adapting the audit plans and/or methods of the onsite audit to verify the risks and/or potential issues shared by the consulted stakeholders.
- d. The CB shall conclude the consultation in the following ways:
  - i. Follow-up with the stakeholder in which the CB defines when it will reach out in the future to seek updated information.
  - ii. 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.
  - iii. Record keeping of the entire process and its outcomes and reporting.

**2.11.5.** The CB shall provide the stakeholder consultation record to the Rainforest Alliance upon request and without unwarranted delay. 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 documenting all information received during the consultation
- d. When and how the CB will consult the stakeholder(s) for updated information in the future.
- e. An explanation of how the CB interpreted or made use of this feedback to adjust the audit plan or how the information was used to further verify or corroborate information received during the onsite audit.
- f. Responses of stakeholders to the relevant topics, both before and after the consultation, in case of questions.

**2.11.6.** The CB shall count as minimum duration of this exercise 2.5 hours, although the exact time needed might depend on several external factors.

**2.11.7.** Prior to the publication of the draft audit report, the CB shall inform each stakeholder that they consulted with in writing how their feedback was addressed by the audit team.



# 3. CONDUCTING THE AUDIT

## 3.1. GENERAL PROVISIONS ON CONDUCTING AN AUDIT

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

- 3.1.1.** The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure which describes how it performs certification and surveillance audits.
- 3.1.2.** 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.
- 3.1.3.** As a minimum, an audit shall effectively:
  - a. Obtain sufficient information to verify and confirm that the CH has correct scope, including reviewing and confirming accuracy of data provided by the CH and from Rainforest Alliance.
  - b. Verify the correct number and effective management of sites, farms, workers, including from intermediaries, subcontractors, service providers and labor providers involved in the certification process of that CH.
  - c. Evaluate the level of conformity of the CH regarding the applicable requirements of the Standard and its assurance system, with respect to the identification of key aspects, processes, objectives and functioning of the CH's management system and its related implementation and farm level.
  - d. 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.
  - e. Identify and verify applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.
  - f. Evaluate the effectiveness of the CH grievance mechanism.
  - g. Evaluate any improvements and/or changes since the last audit, if applicable.
  - h. Apply a gender sensitive approach to the entire audit process.



- 3.1.4.** An audit shall include at least the following elements:
- a. Opening meeting
  - b. Facility tour, if applicable
  - c. Verification of set-up and functioning of the documented management system
  - d. Interviews with CH administrative staff, CH's management
  - e. Interviews with workers, worker's committees, worker representative(s), workers working for intermediaries, subcontractors, service providers and labor providers and other persons involved in certification, if applicable.
  - f. Stakeholder consultation, if applicable
  - g. Off-site interviews, if applicable
  - h. Visits to selected farms/farm units and their ecosystems, infrastructures such as storages, showers for sprayers, etc.
  - i. Visits to other farm locations including but not limited to processing units, purchasing centers, nurseries, worker houses, and interviews with workers/MS staff at such locations where applicable
  - j. Triangulation of information
  - k. Collecting the audit findings among audit team members
  - l. Closing meeting
- 3.1.5.** If the CH is not ready to receive the CB during an unannounced audit (investigation or surprise 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.
- 3.1.6.** Additionally, for a surveillance audit, the audit team shall review and verify at least the following:
- a. Verification of if the CH qualifies for an incentivized surveillance audit as described in 5.5 INcentivized Surveillance Audits
  - b. Any change in certification and/or audit scope
  - c. 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 actions that needed to be implemented as a result of internal or external nonconformities
    - iii. Effectiveness of risk assessment and management, including implementation at farm level
- 3.1.7.** The CB shall evaluate and document the overall performance and progress of improvement, including any trends such as the repeated need for improvement in a specific area and repeated nonconformities raised to the CH.



**3.1.8.** 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 of the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System.

### Additional requirements for Farm audits

**3.1.9.** The audit team shall visit a representative sample of farms/farm units, including conservation areas, infrastructure, non-certified crop areas and shall conduct interviews with workers and/or group members at farm level. The audit team shall also engage with any stakeholders at community level, when appropriate.

**3.1.10.** The audit team shall always verify that data for applicable smart meter requirements is credible, complete, and consistent.

**3.1.11.** The audit team shall verify the effective implementation of improvement requirements, self-selected or mandatory.

## 3.2. AUDIT EVIDENCE

**3.2.1.** Audit evidence shall be triangulated through management system and document review, observations and interviews, to cross-check findings.

**3.2.2.** The CB audit team shall accept and review digital data and/or digital evidence provided by the CH to verify (non)conformity of the CH with the applicable standard requirements.

**Note:** The CB and its audit team cannot insist on accepting only paper-based evidence of compliance, especially as more and more data are captured, stored and analyzed in digitalized format.

**3.2.3.** In all audits that include social topics in the certification scope, 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.

**3.2.4.** If it is not possible to corroborate findings through additional evidence and/or interviews, the CB shall record it as an observation in the audit report, including the reason why it could not be corroborated and what additional steps were taken to investigate (offsite interviews, stakeholder consultation). If there are observations that lead to suspicion of severe human rights abuses, this CH shall be included in the surprise audit sample of that year.

**3.2.5.** In case there are any open lawsuits, or any judicial or administrative proceedings against the CH who receives an audit related to the suspected violations of workers' rights, human rights, and/or deforestation, the CB still shall verify during the audit if there is proof of a nonconformity against the Rainforest Alliance Standard. If that is the case, a nonconformity can be raised.

**Note:** An open lawsuit, or any open judicial or administrative proceeding, is not per se a proof of nonconformity.



## 3.3. CONDUCTING AN OPENING MEETING

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

- 3.3.1.** The CB audit team shall ensure that each audit starts with an opening meeting conducted by the lead auditor.
- 3.3.2.** The opening meeting shall include participation of the audit team and key CH persons indicated in Audit team selection and composition.
- 3.3.3.** 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 and confirm:
    - i. Audit team
    - ii. Audit type
    - iii. Audit scope
    - iv. Audit objectives
    - v. Audit criteria
    - 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. Any changes affecting the planned audit activities
  - c. Communication channels and contact points between the audit team and the CH
  - d. Availability of resources and facilities for the audit team
  - e. That the CH will pay for the workers who participate in the audit activities either as interviewees, guides, facilitators or any other roles at least their normal, applicable rates
  - f. 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
  - g. Matters related to confidentiality, including permission to take photographs and situations in which the CB must share information to an external organization such as Rainforest Alliance and/or the relevant authorities.



- h. Relevant work safety, emergency and security procedures for the audit team.
- i. That the audit team is responsible for the audit and shall be in control of executing the audit plan
- j. The status of findings of the previous audit, if applicable.
- k. The language to be used during the audit as well as the need for the use of an interpreter.
- l. That adjustments will be made if new information emerges.
- m. The CB's anti-bribery and anti-corruption policies
- n. The method of reporting, including the types and grading of any nonconformities that may be identified.
- o. Information about the conditions under which the audit may be prematurely terminated.
- p. 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.
- q. 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
  - iii. Shall not disclose details of the selected sample of farmers more than one day prior to the actual visit, if applicable
- r. The audit team shall give the CB contact details to the committee representative and worker representative. Also, the audit team shall explain that it may give contact details of the CB and 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.
- s. The CB will request the CH to put the contact details of at least one auditor on the notice board, so anybody can contact the audit team during the audit process or after.
- t. The audit team shall explain that all interviews must be conducted with strictest confidentiality and therefore the CH's representatives or any type of supervisor are required not to participate in interviews of farmers and workers.
- 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 all interviews must be conducted with strictest confidentiality, and therefore the presence of worker 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.





- 3.3.4. 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.
- 3.3.5. If the CH has used consultancy services from another individual or organization, the CB shall ensure that the consultancy body or individual is only present during the opening closing meetings 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 or documents to the audit team on behalf of the CH.
- 3.3.6. For an unannounced audit (surprise or investigation 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.

## 3.4. 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 and practices measure up to standard requirements. The tour is also an opportunity to hold unstructured conversations/interviews with management and workers and to seek site-based evidence to support findings.

- 3.4.1. The findings from the tour will later be triangulated with evidence from management/worker interviews and document review.
  - 3.4.2. 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 map/layout of the locations that are under the certification scope, including all involved infrastructures, as per the applicable standard requirement.
    - b. In all cases, understand 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 chart prior to the audit, to understand the processes and potential activities taking place on the CH's premises.
- Note:** A product flow chart shows the movement of the product across different stages. This will help in planning the audit to identify the crucial stages where there is traceability and therefore which units, locations, steps are to be assessed for onsite.
- d. Identify the operating hours of these activities.



- 3.4.3.** The audit team shall plan the facility tour accordingly. This facility tour plan may be adapted when arriving onsite.
- 3.4.4.** 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 closing meeting log and the audit report.
- 3.4.5.** The facility tour shall cover, but is not be limited to, locations where there are workers performing key processing activities directly involved in the certification scope. The tour shall also include areas where there are ongoing or planned construction activities.
- 3.4.6.** During the facility tour, the CB audit team shall, at a minimum identify and evaluate:
  - a. Work being carried out at the site
  - b. Working conditions for all workers in the facility for the different duties
  - c. Health and safety practices
  - d. Critical risk steps
  - e. Potentially vulnerable groups of workers
  - f. Processes in the certification scope
  - g. Whether there might be operations not performed onsite and therefore potentially executed by subcontractors
- 3.4.7.** Observe the atmosphere between management and workers and how management systems and practices are being implemented.
- 3.4.8.** Select potential groups/individuals to be interviewed onsite.
- 3.4.9.** Conduct confidential conversations with workers/supervisors on general issues, if appropriate.
- 3.4.10.** During the facility tour, the audit team shall make an effort to minimize its impact on ongoing activities of the CH.



## 3.5. MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AUDIT AND DOCUMENT REVIEW

The purpose of the management system audit and document review is to determine the structure, function, and effectiveness of the internal management system.

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

**3.5.1.** In general, the audit team shall evaluate all types of documents required to confirm (non)conformity with all applicable standard requirements during the audit.

**Note:** The list of documents indicated in this section is non-exhaustive.

**3.5.2.** During an 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 and risk mitigation measures, if applicable
- c. Management plan
- d. Any changes to the CH's registration information such as deletions or additions
- e. Competence of the MS staff
- f. Training records for MS staff and workers
- g. Traceability, purchase/sales procedures and purchase/sales records
- h. Contract between the CH and the member farms/sites, if applicable
- i. Conflict of interest of the MS staff
- j. Details and records of Sustainability Differential and Sustainability Investment payments and management, as applicable
- k. Self-assessment results
- l. Worker files
- m. Effectiveness of the MS in identifying and resolving nonconformities, from both internal inspections/self-assessments and external audits

**3.5.3.** The CB audit team shall verify as a minimum the following documents of the MS as described in the section on minimum requirements for document sampling.



### Additional requirements for farm audits

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

## 3.6. INTERVIEWS AND WORKER FILES REVIEW

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits that have social topics in scope

- 3.6.1.** 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.
- 3.6.2.** 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/or 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.
- 3.6.3.** 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 be present during interviews of farmers and/or workers.
- 3.6.4.** 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 in any way.
- a. The CB may count off-site worker interviews as part of the required number of interviews for an onsite audit.
  - b. The CB shall not count interviews with other stakeholders — government authorities, advocacy groups, and union representatives that do not work on the audited CHs premises — as part of the required number of interviews and these cannot be counted as worker interviews.



- c. The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to designate the number and type of interviews, where appropriate as part of the scope for off-site investigation.
- d. The CB shall have a template to record the verification done by the CB audit team. The audit checklist shall include or provide clear objective and verifiable evidence indicating which specific records were evaluated to establish audit conclusions.

**3.6.5.** The CB shall ensure that interviewed workers that are paid per piece or task are compensated for their time taken to conduct the interview. Special consideration should be taken with those workers paid by piece or task by the subcontractors, service providers and/or labor\_providers.

**Note:**

- The audit team confirms during the closing meeting that the CH shall pay an equivalent amount to the workers interviewed for the time they spent with the CB audit team.
- The audit team keeps track of how much time the workers spent for the interviews and shares the data with the CH, without compromising the privacy and/or confidentiality of the interviews/interviewed persons. The team shall make sure that the CH will pay those workers, normally at the end of the day, or in some cases at the end of a period. The CB audit team shall verify that payment has been made and the amount paid to the workers is equivalent to at least what they should earn if they used that time for performing the task(s).

**3.6.6.** The CB audit team shall perform interviews in the language that the interviewees feel comfortable with. 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 [Error! Reference source not found.](#) of this document are effectively implemented.

**3.6.7.** At a minimum, the following criteria shall be considered for the selection of workers to be interviewed:

- 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, are home-based, live onsite 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/minorities
- 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 who provide workers for field activities, such as weeding, harvesting, pesticide application, and for processing activities, such as at packing plants, processing units and others
- p. Presence of workers contracted by service providers, for example, security guards, drivers for transportation of workers/inputs/products, cleaning services, medical services, equipment maintenance and others
- q. 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
- r. Previous nonconformities, complaints
- s. 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 in some countries 14, and 17 years of age)
- t. Other risk indicators identified during the audit preparation and emerging during the audit execution.

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

**3.6.9.** The CB and its audit team shall ensure that they will not disclose data/information in any way that may allow participants of interviews to be coerced, threatened or retaliated in any form. The audit team may share the audit team's and/or the CB's contact details so that participants of interviews can contact them if they are threatened, coerced or retaliated in any way.

**3.6.10.** In the case that many 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.

**3.6.11.** 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 the interviewee's identity and responses.



- b. If an interpreter is part of the interview, they will introduce her/himself and reiterate that the interviewer (as well as the auditor) will strictly follow the confidentiality requirement. If appropriate, 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. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. Interviewees shall be thanked for their information and time and reminded that the information contributed will not be disclosed to the CH management. The auditor(s) shall make CB contact details available in case the interviewee would like to contact them outside of working hours.
- g. The audit team shall ensure that workers are not obligated to participate in interviews or provide information beyond answers to the team's questions.

**3.6.12.** 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.

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

**3.6.14.** The CB audit team may decide to carry out 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.

**3.6.15.** The representative of intermediaries, subcontractors, and service providers (including labor providers and the workers employed by them) 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 [Error! Reference source not found.](#))

**3.6.16.** 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

**3.6.17.** The CB audit team can terminate an interview in case of disrespect or intimidation by the interviewees.



**3.6.18.** The CB audit team shall verify at least the following in any 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. Employment contract, if applicable
- e. Training records, if applicable
- f. Wage payment records, including payment of applicable benefits, e.g. year-end bonus
- g. Type of work carried out, number of hours, shifts
- h. Time in, time out records
- i. Medical records, where applicable.
- j. Entitlements by law or collective bargaining agreements/collective contracts<sup>8</sup>: vacations/annual leave, transport allowance, housing allowance, maternity leave, paternity leave, sick leave and others.

**3.6.19.** 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.

**3.6.20.** 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 share with Rainforest Alliance a list with the individual interviewees with their characteristics as mentioned above, without their names. Additionally,

- a. The audit team shall record the date, place, time and duration of the interviews.
- b. Should interviewees refuse to provide their names or participate in the interview, the auditor shall register so in the audit notes/interview records.

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

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<sup>8</sup> CBAs are normally legalized and formal, recognized by different parties/organizations while collective contracts are normally signed by the company and the (representatives of) the workers, where there are no CBAs in place. Contracts are normally not legalized and not registered with external/governmental agencies.





## 3.7. USE OF INTERPRETER

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

3.7.1. During the audit, the interpreter:

- a. shall not act as an auditor, including, but not limited to:
  - i. Shall not conduct independent interviews or reviews of documents.
  - ii. Shall not make decisions on conformities or nonconformities.
  - iii. Shall not alter or influence the meaning or direction of the communication being interpreted by the audit team or the auditee.
  - iv. shall not omit elements of the conversation to any of the stakeholders.
- b. When discussing social and/or sensitive aspects:
  - i. Shall remain neutral and avoid judgment or use of patronizing language or behavior.
  - ii. Shall be aware of her/his impact on the interviewee.
- c. is not a participant in the communication between interviewer and interviewee. The interpreter only facilitates their communication.
- d. shall not initiate any independent conversations with the interviewee unless instructed by the interviewer.

## 3.8 INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

3.8.1. 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.

3.8.2. The audit team shall follow the below additional requirements when interviewing children: -

- a. Prior to the audit, 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 audit teams have access to the latest version.
- b. The audit team shall make the best effort to prevent any risk arising to the children participating in interviews.
- c. The audit team shall obtain consent from the child (if legally allowed at their age) or the child's parent or legal guardian for an informal conversation with the child(ren).



- d. When possible, the audit team shall first interview children together in a group interview and only perform individual interviews if needed.
- e. Presence of a trusted adult: Children shall be given the option of a familiar adult to be present during the interviews.
- f. The 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.
- g. 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.
- h. The audit team shall clearly explain to the child prior to the interview:
  - i. The aim
  - ii. The process, including at least the reasons for having a conversation with the child(ren)
  - iii. The confidentiality
  - iv. How the information may be used and
  - v. What the rights of the children are in this process (not to participate, not to answer questions and right to complain about the way in which the interview was conducted or the content)
- i. The audit team shall let children answer in their own words and the Audit team shall ensure interpreters translate literally to ensure accuracy, following also the rules of Use of interpreter
- j. If through the interview a potential case of child labor (severe or not) is identified, the audit team follows the rules in 2.1.1. Remediation.



## 3.9 SUPPORT PERMITTED AND NOT PERMITTED DURING AN AUDIT

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

#### 3.9.1. Support from the CB audit team permitted during an audit

- a. Describe examples of conformity with standard requirements that auditors have seen on other farms, without identifying the farm where the practices were seen
- b. Provide guidance materials or other supporting materials to the CH that explain how to implement best practices for the standard
- c. 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 auditors may show photos of the nonconformities during the audit with an explanation of the reasons for the lack of conformity

#### 3.9.2. Support from the CB audit team 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
- e. Mix support and certification activities in any way that violates any of the requirements in the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System.



## 3.10 CONDUCTING A CLOSING MEETING

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

- 3.10.1** The CB shall conduct a closing meeting with participation of at least the audit team and, if available, key persons indicated in 2.3.11 of this document, where appropriate. The audit team conducting the closing meeting shall make clear the purpose and elements of the closing meeting.
- 3.10.2** The closing meeting shall include, but is 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 as reflected in the Certification Rules.
  - c. A short summary of strengths and good practices of the CH, if applicable
  - d. Explanation of all audit findings in the language that participants would not find challenging to understand
  - e. The process for handling audit findings of the CB,, including closing nonconformities and 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, anti-bribery, and anti-corruption policies
  - i. Information about the local contact details of the CBs grievance procedure and of the Rainforest Alliance grievance procedure, including the scope and functioning of both mechanisms.
- 3.10.3** 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.
- 3.10.4** The audit team shall consider the use of interpreter(s) in the closing meeting if necessary.
- 3.10.5** The audit team shall provide to the CH a copy of the audit findings with detailed explanation of the findings. Such a list of audit findings shall be signed off by the lead auditor and a representative of the CH. The CB shall record any diverting opinions on the findings between the audit team and the CH.
- 3.10.6** In the event that an auditor believes her/his safety may be at risk as a result of communicating a nonconformity, the audit team may decide not to communicate such a finding until the team has left the premises of the CH. Such a finding shall be communicated by the CB to the CH within 3 working days from the closing meeting of that audit. The CB audit team shall include the description of such a situation in the audit checklist/report.
- 3.10.7** 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.



## 3.11 AUDIT TERMINATION

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

- 3.11.1** The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure to address a situation in which an audit can be prematurely terminated.
- a. Some examples of such situations are: extreme natural events, denied access to CH workers, group members, member farms, staff, documents, infrastructure; serious accident; concerns related to security and safety of the audit team; 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.
- 3.11.2** The procedure shall include actions that different parties involved will take, including: the CB, the audit team, the CH when such a situation occurs.
- 3.11.3** 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.
- 3.11.4** 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 by the CB.
  - b. Inform the Rainforest Alliance immediately in writing and produce a report that covers the steps which have been completed and findings identified. The report shall be shared with Rainforest Alliance 2 weeks after 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.
  - d. Suspend or cancel the certificate, depending on the nature and severity of the issue found. Such a decision shall be taken within maximum 2 weeks since the occurrence.
  - e. If applicable, request the Rainforest Alliance not to allow the involved CH to get certified for a (in)definite period.
- 3.11.5** In case an audit cannot be performed within the allowed timeframe defined in this document, 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.



- 3.11.6** 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.
- 3.11.7.** All termination cases shall be shared with Rainforest Alliance with details to the extent that is sufficient to the reader to understand the reason(s) and the context of such a case.
- 3.11.8.** 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.



# 4. REPORT WRITING

## 4.1 DRAFT REPORT AND CHECKLIST

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

- 4.1.1. The CB shall identify and/or record all nonconformities found in any type of audit activities.
- 4.1.2. 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 CB.
- 4.1.3. The audit checklist shall include the conformity and/or nonconformity results with the audit findings description and evidence. Additional information can be detailed within the required objective evidence(s) obtained during the audit so that the reader understands the nature and magnitude/impact of the findings. More specifically:
- 4.1.4. The findings 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 persons. If there is a conformity, after a grievance was submitted, the CB shall clearly describe the findings and the evidence that confirm it.
- 4.1.5. Evidence shall be demonstrated by at least two pieces of evidence that corroborate the finding.
- 4.1.6. The audit evidence 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 shall be shared with the CB within 2 weeks from the last day of the audit.
- 4.1.7. After the audit, the CB shall update the data in the CAF if changes and/or differences were identified during the audit.
- 4.1.8. The CB shall record audit evidence in its system and make available when requested by the Rainforest Alliance.
- 4.1.9. The CB shall keep records of any grievances they've received and investigated during the audit, regardless of whether this led to a NC or not.



## 4.2. QUALITY REVIEW

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

- 4.2.1.** The CB shall develop and effectively implement a documented procedure for the quality review of audit reports/data and related processes together with evidence of closure of nonconformities.
- 4.2.2.** The CB shall assign a competent reviewer(s) to perform the quality review of the draft audit report, checklist, required data and NC closure evidence provided by the audit team.
- 4.2.3.** 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 lead auditor or a certifier. In either case, the certifier of the audit is responsible for ensuring the quality of the final audit report and acceptance of the corrective actions since the certification decision is a result of accepting the audit report together with corrective actions.
- 4.2.4.** The quality reviewer shall ensure that the final audit report is shared with the Rainforest Alliance in the timeframes defined in the Certification Rules.
- 4.2.5.** The CB shall perform at least two quality reviews:
  - a. Review 1: Reviewing the quality of and confirming the audit findings, evidence description, and corresponding evidence before approving the checklist/report. The CB ensures that the approved checklist will be made available to its CH within a maximum 5 weeks after last day of audit.
  - b. Review 2: Reviewing the quality of the root cause analysis, corrective action plan, and closure of NCs by the CH and confirming the findings. The certifier performing this review makes the final certification decision. The results of the second review and the final certification decision must be available to the CH a maximum of 12 weeks after the last day of the audit.
- 4.2.6.** The quality reviews shall ensure at least the following elements according to the requirements of the Rainforest Alliance Assurance System:
  - a. Correct interpretation of the Standard requirements for the applicable scope
  - b. Assignment of nonconformities to the correct Standard requirements
  - c. Review of technical concepts relevant to the production system in the evaluation of the Standard requirements
  - d. Verification that the report does not include the names of the persons interviewed
  - e. Verification that the evidence for all applicable requirements, for both conformities and nonconformities, is described in a manner that is clear, concise, objective, verifiable and expresses the nature, magnitude and correct technical basis of the (non)conformities in relation to the Standard, and that it demonstrates triangulation.
  - f. Verification that the conclusions of the report are consistent with the nonconformities reported





- g. Verification that the audit team verified the information and data about the CH indicated in this document
- h. Verification that the sample sizes and composition were correctly determined and implemented
- 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

- 4.2.7.** The reviewer shall evaluate the quality of the report and the CB shall 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.
- 4.2.8.** The quality reviewer shall document recommended changes and any comments, observations and suggestions for improvement and send them to the lead auditor and the CB.
- 4.2.9.** 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.
- 4.2.10.** 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/certification decision process, the CB shall cover costs for such activities.
- 4.2.11.** 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.
- 4.2.12.** 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.
- 4.2.13.** In case there was contribution by technical experts, the CB shall indicate this to RA, either in the audit report template or upload it separately if the content does not fit into the normal audit report template.

#### **Additional requirements for farm audits**

- 4.2.14.** 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.



## 4.3. FOLLOW-UP AUDIT

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

- 4.3.1.** The CB shall use objective evaluation of the audit findings, the nature of the corrective actions required to close the NCs found, and the risks from each audit to justify if an onsite follow up audit is needed.
- a. The CB shall consider an onsite follow up, for example, when confirmation of effectiveness of corrective actions requires visual observations and/or worker/management interviews to confirm understanding/implementation of newly established policies/practices and/or to confirm effectiveness of training activities, witness audits of internal inspectors to confirm competence or improved internal inspection (this list of examples are non-exhaustive).
  - b. When evidence of effective implementation of corrective actions can be verified through a documentation (desk) evaluation, the CB will perform this within the given timeframe to ensure that a certification decision can be made and submitted to RA on time. A desk evaluation does not require a formal audit plan to be shared with the CH.
- 4.3.2.** The CB shall follow the applicable requirements in this document when performing an onsite follow-up audit considering the scope of such an audit (see also Section 1.5 **Error! Reference source not found.** of the Certification Rules).
- 4.3.3.** The CB shall inform the CH of any additional costs for the follow-up audit within 3 weeks since the last date of the audit.
- 4.3.4.** 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 requirements that were verified.

### Applicable to supply chain audits

- 4.3.5.** If CH has submitted a corrective action plan for closure of nonconformities, the CB shall follow-up to verify closure of those non-conformities within 12 months of the previous audit start date, unless this can be verified during a regular audit for that year. This follow-up may happen in a year in which the supply chain actor does not require a certification or surveillance audit. This can be done through remote checks, if possible.



## 4.4. CERTIFICATION DECISION PROCESS AND REPORTING TO RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

- 4.4.1. The CB shall report the audit findings in the checklist. The audit findings shall include the evidence but this will not be shared publicly. The evidence shall demonstrate the use of triangulation, even if the evidence was obtained using only interviews.
- 4.4.2. The CB shall take the decision and complete the submission process within the timelines defined in the Certification Rules. The certification decision, negative or positive, shall be decided by an approved and active certifier.
- 4.4.3. To decide whether a certification decision is negative, the CB shall follow the guidelines in the Certification Rules.
- 4.4.4. The CB shall ensure that all the audited CHs comply with all applicable requirements before issuing a positive certification decision.
- 4.4.5. In case the CB decides to decertify or non-certify a CH because of reason mentioned in Certification Rules, it shall be made within 4 weeks since the last date of the audit.
- 4.4.6. The certifier that makes the certification decision has the authority to:
  - a. Make the final certification decision.
  - b. Modify the recommendation of the audit team, due to inconsistencies identified in the audit report.
  - c. Request that the lead auditor clarify or expand any section of the audit report.
  - d. Dismiss a nonconformity with documented justification, or
  - e. 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, or terminate the certificate.
- 4.4.7. The certifier shall justify their decisions based on the technical framework of the Standard, the Certification Rules and other binding documents from Rainforest Alliance. 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.
- 4.4.8. The CB shall develop and implement a documented mechanism 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/or registered posts.
- 4.4.9. The CB shall inform the CH of the certification decision only when the CB has completed the required steps in this document.
- 4.4.10. The CB shall share all audit reports and required data with the Rainforest Alliance regardless of the certification decision.
- 4.4.11. The CB shall only use the Rainforest Alliance certificate templated as provided by the Rainforest Alliance.



- 4.4.12.** 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 extensions 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.

## 5. OTHER TYPES OF AUDITS

### 5.1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

#### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits performed by CBs

- 5.1.1.** For surprise and investigation audits, the CB shall ensure that:
- a. The detailed audit plan is shared with RA no later than 2 weeks prior to the first audit date.
  - b. The CB shall not share any information with the CH concerning the coming visit nor the audit plan.
- 5.1.2.** Surprise audits shall be conducted without prior notification to the CH. Investigation audits may be conducted either with or without prior notification to the CH.
- I. In case of prior notification: The CB shall inform the CH of the audit in writing no more than 24 hours prior to the arrival of the audit team, such a written notification shall not the audit plan or other details that may compromise the execution of the audit. They audit team may decide to disclose only the first date, the duration, composition of the audit team and the locations to be visited.
  - II. In case of no prior notification: 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.



## 5.2. SURPRISE AUDITS

- 5.2.1. CBs shall register surprise audit planning using the same system as any other form of audit.
- 5.2.2. The audit plan shall be shared with the Rainforest Alliance at least 2 weeks prior to the surprise audit being conducted.
- 5.2.3. The selection of CHs for surprise audits and CB risk analysis as well as requirement selection shall be documented.
- 5.2.4. If the CH is not ready or refuses to receive the CB during a surprise audit, the CB shall suspend the certificate of that CH. Only in cases of force majeure or with valid reason determined at the sole discretion of the Rainforest Alliance may one exception for a surprise audit be given during one certification cycle.
- 5.2.5. The CB shall provide the audit checklist with description of NCs to the CH within 3 weeks of the last day of the audit.
- 5.2.6. If an NC is found, the CH shall submit a proposed correction action plan and evidence of closure to the CB a maximum of 6 weeks after the last day of the audit.
- 5.2.7. The CB shall verify corrections and closure of NCs through an NCs review a maximum of 8 weeks after the last day of the audit. This does not need to be shared with the Rainforest Alliance, except on request.
- 5.2.8. Suspension or cancelation as a result of a surprise audit shall follow the procedure defined in the Certification Rules.

## 5.3. INVESTIGATION AUDITS

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits performed by CBs

- 5.3.1. The investigation audit shall be conducted onsite. When conformity can be fully demonstrated through documentation, the CB may request RA's permission to conduct the verification of evidence remotely.
- 5.3.2. 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.
- 5.3.3. 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.
- 5.3.4. 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.



- 5.3.5.** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to assign investigation audits to CBs and to oversee the process.
- 5.3.6.** 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.
- 5.3.7.** The investigation audit shall cover at least the requirements related to the elements within the complaint/issue. The audit process (planning, execution, reporting) shall clearly demonstrate this.
- 5.3.8.** 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.
- 5.3.9.** 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.
- 5.3.10.** 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.
- 5.3.11.** 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 shared the detailed audit plan with the Rainforest Alliance at least five 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 four weeks after the last audit date.

## 5.4. COMBINED AND INTEGRATED AUDITS

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

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

- 5.4.1. The CB shall only perform an integrated audit when there is full mutual recognition of the involved schemes.
- 5.4.2. The CB shall request permission from the Rainforest Alliance (to be obtained from [cbmanagement@ra.org](mailto:cbmanagement@ra.org)) for conducting an integrated audit prior to the audit.
- 5.4.3. 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](mailto:cbmanagement@ra.org)).
- 5.4.4. 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 requirements of involved schemes.
- 5.4.5. The CB shall estimate audit duration for combined audits as follows:
  - a.  $MAD (\text{double certification}) = MAD (\text{single certification}) * 1.5$
  - b.  $MAD (\text{triple certification}) = MAD (\text{single certification}) * 1.75$ .
  - c. 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 the Rainforest Alliance certification and another similar certification programs and triple certification is understood as the audit covers Rainforest Alliance certification and two other certification programs in the same time.
- 5.4.6. The CB shall follow the requirements in Table AR14 if combined and/or integrated audits are offered by the CB.



#### 5.4.7.

Requirements	Combined	Integrated
Scheme permission	Not mandatory for the Rainforest Alliance	Mandatory, from involved schemes collectively
Auditor/certifier 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- all overlapping CPs (applicable to all standards to avoid duplication), and</li> <li>- the additional individual CPs per standard that are not mutually recognized (if applicable)</li> </ul>
Audit preparation	Separate planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One audit plan, indicating the specific samples and sample justification per scheme</li> <li>- Multiple client self-assessment reviews per scheme</li> </ul>	Joint planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One audit plan</li> <li>- One audit sample and justification</li> <li>- One client self-assessment review</li> </ul>
Audit	Full audit per scheme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audit sample per scheme</li> <li>- IMS audit per scheme</li> <li>- Internal inspection review per scheme</li> <li>- Interviews per scheme</li> </ul>	One integrated audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One set of samples</li> <li>- One IMS audit</li> <li>- One review of internal inspection</li> </ul>
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 AR14: Combined and Integrated Audits





## 5.5 INCENTIVIZED SURVEILLANCE AUDITS

### Applicable to farm certificate holders

- 5.5.1.** This section is applicable to all Rainforest Alliance's farm certificate holders and supplements clause 4.4 Incentives for certificate holders of the [Certification Rules](#). Furthermore, the conditions below must be met for this policy to be applicable:
- a. In case an exception of certificate holder transfer during the certification cycle was granted by the Rainforest Alliance, the past audit reports must be sent to the new certification body to be evaluated in order to confirm that the farm certificate holder meets the conditions mentioned above.
  - b. Complete the Certification Application Form and share with the certification body at least 2 weeks prior to the audit being conducted
- 5.5.2.** The sampling in incentivized surveillance audits shall be adjusted as follows:
- d. Group CHs meeting conditions in the section 4.4.2 of the Certification Rules are eligible to have a reduced sample size of small farms for their surveillance audit(s). Group CHs meeting these conditions shall have a sample size of 75% of the square root of the total small farms. For Group CHs with large farms will apply 75% of the 25% sample.
  - e. For Group CHs the CBs can visit more than six group members per day per auditor. For large farms, it shall be maximum three farms per day per auditor.
  - f. Should the certificate holder want to include any new members to the surveillance audit scope, the number of new group members included in the sample must be proportional to the number of new group members added with reference to the total group size. For example, if the group has 1000 members and 50 of those are new members, that is 5%. Therefore 5% of the sample must be made up of new group members.
  - g. Individual farm CHs meeting the conditions in the section 4.4.2 of the Certification Rules may receive the third audit of a certification cycle (second surveillance audit) as a remote surveillance audit, only if below requirements are met. In order to qualify, the CH shall have at least, but not limited to:
    - h. No changes in the existing scope;
    - i. Access to stable internet connection and remote conference software to conduct opening and closing meeting as well as interviews with personnel, workers and stakeholders and screen sharing of confidential records.
    - j. No high risk identified in the CB risk assessment or any Rainforest Alliance risk map.
    - k. No NC on data quality of the geolocation data during the current certification cycle



- 5.5.3.** During these incentivized surveillance audits, CBs shall focus on auditing the following topics:
- a. All requirements with non-conformities raised during the previous audit.
  - b. Should the certificate holder be audited against EUDR requirements (only applicable for coffee or cocoa farm CHs): all the interrelated requirements between EUDR and Rainforest Alliance standard need to be audited.
  - c. All applicable requirements that have smart meters.<sup>9</sup>
  - d. Should the certification body start the surveillance audit with reduced requirements but notices that the certificate holder does not comply with the conditions above, the certification body can either suspend the audit or add additional requirements to continue with the audit. These decisions can be made on-site by the lead auditor and such changes shall be recorded in the deviation record.
- 5.5.4.** In case an exception of certificate holder transfer during the certification cycle was granted by the Rainforest Alliance, the past audit reports must be sent to the new certification body to be evaluated in order to confirm that the farm certificate holder meets the conditions mentioned above.
- 5.5.5.** Complete the Certification Application Form and share with your certification body at least 2 weeks prior to the audit being conducted
- 5.5.6.** Both the Rainforest and the CB reserve the right to deny such a request for a remote or reduced sample audit

#### Applicable to supply chain certificate holders

- 5.5.7.** To receive a surveillance audit, the supply chain certificate holder must already have the first certification audit done and was audited against all the applicable requirements of the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture standard.
- 5.5.8.** Furthermore, the conditions below must be met for this policy to be applicable:
- a. No history of non-certification or cancellation in the previous 3 years.
  - b. Already received the first certification audit and had no nonconformities raised against any of the below topics:
    - i. Major issues regarding loss of physical traceability.
    - ii. Confirmed issues regarding freedom of association.
  - c. In case of certificate transfer exceptions during the certification cycle approved by Rainforest Alliance, the past audit reports must be sent to the new certification body and evaluated to confirm that the supply chain certificate holder meets the conditions mentioned above.

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<sup>9</sup> Please go to: [Indicators and Smart Meters | Rainforest Alliance \(rainforest-alliance.org\)](https://rainforest-alliance.org/indicators-and-smart-meters) for more information on applicable smart meters and what needs to be done by CH and CB.



- 5.5.9.** During these incentivized surveillance audits, CBs shall focus on auditing the following topics:
- a. All requirements with non-conformities raised during the previous audit.
  - b. All requirements related to compliance with payment of Sustainability Differential / Sustainability Investment (chapter 3), traceability (chapter 2.2).
- 5.5.10.** Should the certification body start the surveillance audit with reduced requirements but notices that the certificate holder does not comply with the conditions mentioned in this section, the certification body can either suspend the audit or add additional requirements to continue with the audit. These decisions can be made on-site by the lead auditor and such changes shall be recorded in the deviation record.
- 5.5.11.** Should any discrepancies be found during the audit, the certification body should contact the Quality of Implementation team responsible for the region by sending an email to [cbcert@ra.org](mailto:cbcert@ra.org).
- 5.5.12.** The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to request a full-scope audit to be conducted instead of an incentivized surveillance audit, change the audit method, or increase audit samples for those CHs that have been identified as having a high reputational risk in the last 3 years.



# 6. AUDITING SPECIFIC TOPICS

This chapter describes mandatory requirements for auditing these topics. Please note that the below is not meant to be an exhaustive list of actions to perform to audit these requirements. It's meant to ensure these actions are always taken, in each audit. The Auditor Verification Protocol provides further guidance.

## 6.1 AUDITING SOCIAL TOPICS<sup>10</sup>

### Auditing Assess-and-Address System

- 6.1.1. During the audit, the audit team shall verify whether the CH has in place the required elements of the Assess-and-Address system<sup>44</sup> as described in the Standard and verify if so, whether the system is functioning.
- 6.1.2. If a (potential) case of labor abuse is identified during the audit, the auditor or audit team shall follow the CBs' documented procedure on Remediation (see Remediation).

### Auditing Freedom of Association

- 6.1.3. In case a nonconformity on Freedom of Association is raised, the CB shall consider whether the root cause is a form of discrimination and whether this requires a nonconformity against an Assess-and-Address requirement.

### Auditing labor providers

- 6.1.4. During the audit, the CB audit team shall verify and confirm whether labor providers meet the relevant Standard requirements of 5.3 or 5.5, including through triangulation of information with worker interviews. This includes, among others the assessment of:
  - a. Recruitment and hiring practices
  - b. Contracts
  - c. Compensation and benefits (particularly for the lowest-wage workers)
  - d. Loans, advances, deposits and deductions
  - e. Discipline and termination

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<sup>10</sup> social topics refer to all topics and requirements included in Chapter 5 Social of the farm and supply chain standards.



- 6.1.5.** The CB audit team shall verify the effectiveness of the CH's system to ensure the labor providers comply with the applicable Standard requirements of 5.3 and 5.5, 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. The employer does not misuse the contracting through labor providers to undermine worker protections.

#### **Auditing housing- applicable to farm audits**

- 6.1.6.** 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. 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.
  - c. Inspect the functioning of the facility. This may be done through interview with the people living in the house.
  - d. Conduct interviews with people living in the house, if applicable.
- 6.1.7.** 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.
- 6.1.8.** 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 (when there are applicable laws in that country requiring the CH to provide houses to the workers). This is linked to Rainforest Alliance Farm Standard requirement 1.2.1 and/or 5.7.
  - b. A NC in one house is considered as a NC for the CH.
- 6.1.9.** The CB shall follow the timeline for closing NCs in this document referring (see Timelines 1.7.10) and more specifically to the maximum timeline clarified in 1.7.10d on housing.



## 6.2. AUDITING SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

### Applicable to farm and supply chain audits

**6.2.1.** The CB shall follow the guidelines and requirements in this section while auditing Shared Responsibility (Sustainability Differential and Sustainability Investment). In cases where an NC is raised, the CB shall ensure that corrective actions are properly implemented to prevent recurrence of the same issue.

### 6.2.2. SUSTAINABILITY DIFFERENTIAL (SD)

#### Auditing process for supply chain audits

Standard Requirement	Implementation	Compliance management
Content of contractual agreement (3.2.4)	Contractual agreements with buyers include SD information (amount and payment details)	The CB audit team shall raise a nonconformity if the contractual agreement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not include reference to SD</li> <li>• is not signed/dated by both parties</li> <li>• does not include SD amount (by volume), and timing of payment</li> <li>• does not clearly distinguish SD from price, quality premiums and other differentials</li> </ul>
Payment of SD and reporting of SD payment (3.2.3, 3.2.6, 3.2.7)	Buyer reports payment in the traceability platform Information around SD amounts should align: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SD as agreed</li> <li>• SD entered as "SD agreed to be paid"</li> <li>• SD entered as "SD confirmed paid"</li> </ul>	The CB audit team shall further investigate any discrepancies found in the audit sample. Possible outcomes are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) If the farm CH entered an incorrect amount ("SD agreed to be paid") in the traceability platform, the amount should be adjusted retrospectively by the farm CH<sup>11</sup>.</li> <li>2) If the buyer paid an incorrect amount (different than what was agreed upon), the CB shall raise a NC against the SC CH and ensure that discrepancy needs to be compensated for, if not corrected, will lead to sanction.</li> </ol>

<sup>11</sup> If above is detected during a SC audit, no NC can be raised against the farm CH. The SC CH's CB will notify the Rainforest Alliance for further follow up with the farm CH (farm CH's CB) to adjust incorrect data.



Standard Requirement	Implementation	Compliance management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SD actually paid (visible in payment evidence)</li></ul>	<p>3) If there was no payment because of time deferral, the CB shall not raise a NC, but observation is noted to follow up to make sure that payment will be made.</p> <p>4) If there was no payment within stipulated timeframe, the CB shall raise a NC against the SC CH, if not corrected, will lead to sanction.</p> <p>5) If there was no payment evidence of payment available, the CB shall raise a NC against the SC CH, if not corrected, will lead to sanction.</p>

Table AR15: Auditing SD in SC Audits



## Audit process for farm audits

Standard requirement	Implementation	Compliance management
<p>For group farm CHs: Redistribution of SD to group members (3.2.1)</p>	<p>Process of redistribution in place and functioning, to ensure timely and pro-rata transfer of SD to group members</p>	<p>The CB shall raise an NC against the farm CH in case of incorrect implementation while the farm CH has received SD payment from its buyer(s), such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members have not received SD payments</li> <li>• The amount received by group members (by volume) is not in conformity with the amount contracted (by volume)</li> <li>• The total amount of SD distributed to group members is not equal to the total amount of SD received from buyers</li> </ul> <p>In case non-payment of SD from buyer to farm CH was detected during farm audit, the CB performing the farm audit shall flag this to the Rainforest Alliance for further follow up by the buyer's CB. The CB shall report the reason and evidence as to why it could not be assessed. The farm CH will not receive an NC in this case.</p>
<p>For individual farm CHs: SD spent to the benefit of workers (3.2.2)</p>	<p>SD is spent according to the categories as listed in the Standard requirement and after worker representatives were consulted. Annual report is provided through the RA platform on the SD spent (% of total per category).</p>	<p>The CB shall raise an NC against the farm CH in case of incorrect implementation while the farm CH has received SD payment from its buyer(s), such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no evidence of how SD payments were used</li> <li>• There is no evidence of consultation with workers' representation on the priorities for use of SD</li> <li>• SD is not spent to the benefit of workers, (i.e. is used for purposes other than those prioritized in the consultation with worker representation)</li> <li>• There is no reporting on the use of SD</li> </ul> <p>In case non-payment of SD from buyer to farm CH was detected during farm audit, the CB performing the farm audit shall flag this to RA for further follow up by the buyer's CB. The farm CH will not receive an NC in this case.</p>

Table AR16: Auditing SD in Farm Audits





### 6.2.3. SUSTAINABILITY INVESTMENTS (SI)

#### Auditing process for supply chain audits

Standard requirement	Implementation	Compliance management
<p>Buyer makes investment and reports (3.3.4 and 3.3.5)</p>	<p>Buyer makes the investments (cash and/or in kind; whatever is agreed upon with farm CH) and confirms SI made in the platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash at transactional level (amount initially entered by farm CH ("SI agreed to be paid"))</li> <li>• In-kind investments per farm CH in monetary value at an annual basis</li> </ul> <p>Information around SI amounts should align:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SI as agreed</li> <li>• SI entered as "SI agreed to be paid"</li> <li>• SI entered as "SI confirmed paid"+ in-kind</li> <li>• SI actually made (visible through evidence)</li> </ul>	<p>Sustainability Investments (SI) are made. This entails that:</p> <p>1) SI at transactional basis is paid (same process as SD), buyer can pay aggregate amounts in monetary terms and confirm "SI paid" in the platform.</p> <p>CB verifies that payments are made and that payments align with what is reported as "SI agreed and confirmed paid..</p> <p>2) If relevant, in-kind investments are made by the buyer, and reported in the platform once per annum.</p> <p>CB verifies that in-kind investments as reported through the platform are made.</p>

Table AR17: Auditing SI in SC Audits



## Auditing process for farm audits

Standard requirement	Implementation	Compliance management
Identification of investment needs and design of investment plan (3.3.1)	<p>Prior to season/audit:</p> <p>Investment plan is drawn up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volume-based SI amount (cash)* identified</li> <li>• Potential in-kind investment needs identified</li> </ul> <p>*"SI agreed to be paid" is entered in the transactions of certified volume sold to buyer.</p> <p>Once investments are received and spent, investment plan is updated, and information reported in the Rainforest Alliance platform: % of total spent per pre-defined investment category.</p>	<p>The CB shall verify whether investment plans exist and are set up according to the correct template and instructions however are not asked to analyze the content of the plan.</p> <p>Once investments have been received, verification is done as to whether investments 1) are spent according to the plan, 2) are reported correctly in the platform and 3) can be proven through invoices, etc.</p> <p>If CB detects that any of the above is not correctly implemented, the CB shall raise a NC.</p> <p>In case monetary or in-kind SI has not been received as agreed with the buyer, the CB performing the farm audit shall flag this to the Rainforest Alliance for further follow up by the buyer's CB.</p>

Table AR18: Auditing SI in Farm Audits

## 6.3 AUDITING GEODATA AND GEODATA RISK MAPS IN AN AUDIT

### Applicable to farm audits

**6.3.1.** The geodata risk assessment supports the auditing process by providing an overview of (1) quality issues with the geodata in form of validation table, (2) deforestation and (3) encroachment into protected areas. The maps are the result of overlaying geospatial location data (farm unit(s)) of the member with other layers of information (forest cover, tree cover loss, protected areas). While the CH is preparing for certification, it is possible to update the geodata, every time this is done, the risk maps will be updated accordingly. Once the CB and the CH have signed a contract and confirmed this with RA, the CB will have access to the risk assessment results of the CH.

**The final geodata risk assessment results** are created by the Rainforest Alliance, the results are:

- a. Geodata validation table
- b. Geodata risk table



- c. Deforestation risk map
- d. Protected area risk map

These results 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.

- 6.3.2.** The CB shall use the most updated final geodata risk results to identify and assess the risks of the CH as part of its own audit risk assessment prior to the audit. The CB shall use the results of such risk assessment for preparing and executing the audit where applicable.
- 6.3.3.** 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 (more information in Annex Chapter 1: Management).
  - a. Identifying unusual patterns for the location of the farms/sites (e.g. perfectly squared grid in which all points are equidistant from one another)
  - b. Identifying geodata location in unusual locations (e.g. in palm oil fields instead of the commodity under the audit scope) during the audit preparation
  - c. Identifying potential repetition of farm units within this CH and between this CH and other Rainforest Alliance-certified CH(s).
- 6.3.4.** Determining whether geodata was taken following the guidelines provided by the Rainforest Alliance (more information in Annex Chapter 1: Management). 7.3.3. 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 credibility of location points/polygons collected by the CH by comparing them with the data collected by the audit team.
  - b. triangulation of 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 farm units for which to collect polygons.
  - c. The CB shall evaluate the goals for yearly geodata collection the CH has set up for their smart meters (e.g. did the group reach the % of geodata they had planned to collect every year, until the next improvement level?).
  - d. 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 (more information in Guidance D: "Geolocation Data Requirements and Risk Maps").
  - e. For an individual farm selected in the audit sample, the audit team shall give priority to visiting the farm units using the risk-based approach. The audit team shall make use of the RA final geodata risk assessment results.



- f. Prior to the onsite audit, the CB ensures to have received and evaluated the geospatial data provided by the CH through the RACP 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 (more information in "Use right document reference").
- g. The CB shall verify the quality of the geodata provided by the CH and assess the risk of deforestation and encroachment into protected areas on the field (Refer to Auditing Deforestation and encroachment into protected areas). 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.
- h. If number of farms identified as risky (medium/high) by the CB based on the extrapolation of the audit sample is greater than as identified in the risk assessment results, the audit team can increase the percentage of high/medium risk farms in the audit sample to evaluate potential systematic issues.

**Note:** The calculated number of risky farms to be included in the audit sample is always rounded up.

**6.3.5.** 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 Annex Chapter 1: Management 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 Annex Chapter 1: Management.
- c. Based on the geodata provided by the CH, the CB shall crosscheck this with data collected in the field to evaluate geodata quality.).
- d. Besides points "a" to "c" above, the CB shall consider the following for assessing the correctness of the geolocation data provided by the CH: device used by the CH vs device used by the CB for data collection, margin of error of different devices, internal conditions in the farm (high cliffs, rivers, irregular and dangerous terrain, etc.). When in doubt, the CB shall consult with the Rainforest Alliance.
- e. The CB shall verify if the risks for protected areas and deforestation identified by RA are indeed present in the field and evaluate the corrective actions the CH took to address these risks. These corrective actions could include documentation related to following up on these risks, if the original data collected was accurate, and actions taken by the CH to correct these errors..
- h. When auditing deforestation and protected area 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 for deforestation and protected areas. 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.

- i. The audit team shall collect evidence mentioned below if during the audit a farm/farm unit that was indicated as having a risk for deforestation or encroachment into PA in the Rainforest Alliance geodata risk maps has no risk based on the field observations (more information in Guidance D: Geolocation Data Requirements and Risk Maps). The evidence shall include:
  - i. Group Member's identification number, Farm internal ID (for farms) and the Farm unit ID
  - ii. The latitude and longitude (location point) of that farm/farm unit
  - iii. For risk of deforestation:
    1. Explanation of why conversion showed up in satellite images but would not mean conversion, for example:
      - a. Forest plantations that are harvested and converted to agricultural use but would not mean conversion of natural ecosystem
      - b. Farms' age older than the cut-off date
      - c. Conversion found due to harvesting shade trees, etc. To reach the conclusion of whether deforestation was present, the following can be used: high resolution satellite imagery, pictures, drone images or other proof of field evidence that explains risk detection (high shade coverage, timber plantations in the surrounding etc.)
    2. Indication of the current land use type: forest, agroforestry or agricultural use
    3. Estimation of the size of the affected area in hectares
  - iv. For risk of production in protected areas:
    1. Additional information that can show conformity (different classification of the PA provided by the government) - this must be submitted to and reviewed by the Rainforest Alliance
    2. Explanation of technical issues leading to wrong detection of protected area boundaries (for example, low resolution, other dataset used, etc.)
    3. Permits granted by the government
    4. Management plans of protected areas
    5. For medium risk (farms inside "Go" Protected Areas), evidence showing conformity with the applicable law and management plans for protected areas, as defined by the relevant authorities



## 6.4 AUDITING DEFORESTATION AND ENCROACHMENT INTO PROTECTED AREAS

### Applicable to farm audits

- 6.4.1** The CB shall follow the requirements in this section while performing an audit in which deforestation and encroachment into protected areas is part of the scope.
- 6.4.2** The CB shall use the **geodata risk assessment results** (see [geodata and geodata risk maps in an audit](#)) as an indicator of risk of the CH. The CH might have excluded member farms 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.
- 6.4.3** The audit team shall use the **final geodata risk assessment** in preparing the audit and choosing the audit sample (see [geodata and geodata risk maps in an audit](#)).
- 6.4.4** In addition to the geodata risk maps, the audit team shall use different factors to assess the geodata risks, 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.
- 6.4.5** 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.
- 6.4.6** The audit team shall verify deforestation at different stages, i.e. in the farm, at the factory/processing unit and at MS level.
- 6.4.7** During the visit, the audit team shall verify signs of recent deforestation in the field such as:
- a) Young age of crop trees
  - b) Young tree stumps
  - c) Recent changes in bordering trees
  - d) Colonization of open spaces by pioneer species
  - e) Cleared swaths in the forest or in production sites
  - f) Signs of recent fires
  - g) Recent cut wood logs
  - h) High amounts of organic matter in the soil when compared to other production sites (used as indication)etc.  
(see Guidance M Natural Ecosystem and Vegetation for more guidance)



- 6.4.8 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.
- 6.4.9 During visits of farm units with high deforestation risk or high risk of encroachment to protected areas, such as evidence of recent deforestation from the geodata risk assessment or identified as high risk by the audit team, the audit team shall exercise professional skepticism that conversion or expansion has happened and shall follow up to confirm the risk (see also [geodata and geodata risk maps in an audit](#), point 13).

## 6.5 AUDITING TRACEABILITY IN FARM AUDITS

### Applicable to farm audits only

- 6.5.1 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, dispatched to the processing or to the warehouse
    - iv. Transportation documents
    - v. Dispatch of products
- 6.5.2 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 name of group member, group member ID, date, product type and volume



- 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. This is not applicable for mass balance products.
- 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.

**6.5.3** 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. This is not applicable for mass balance products.
- 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.

**6.5.4** 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. Products are identifiable from the receipt of raw material till the final product dispatch
- g. Incoming raw materials are identified with the details of the source and certification status





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

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

- l. The traceability from the final processed product to the raw material supplied and its source is possible

**6.5.5** The 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.)

**6.5.6** Minimum product flow to be carried out:

- a. Purchase receipts of the member farms selected as sample is crosschecked
- b. At least one tracking from raw materials to processed and dispatched and the stock/balance. This may be done for a single day, month or season
- c. Tracking from sales invoice to the raw materials
- d. Plausibility of yield estimation for a period of 12 months, i.e. including volume of an entire production cycle.
- e. All sales are documented and made available for verification including sale as certified, sale under different certification and conventional sales

**6.5.7** 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.

**6.5.8** The audit team shall interview different persons involved in different steps of the product flow chart/map to triangulate information on traceability, among other topics. These persons include farmers, management system staff, workers, intermediaries, subcontractors, service providers (such as transportation agent/drivers). Please refer to Section 2.3 Sampling of this document for more details on sampling requirements.