

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE POLICY:

FARM AND SUPPLY CHAIN CERTIFICATION IN COCOA

Document SA-P-AF-6

Version 3.1

English

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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.

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Document Name:		Date of first publication:	Expires by:
Policy For Farm And Supply Chain Certification In Cocoa		April 4, 2020	Until further notice
Linked to:			
SA-S-SD-1 Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard, Farm Requirements and all other annexes, guidances and policies listed in this document			
SA-S-SD-2 Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard, Supply Chain Requirements and all other annexes, guidances and policies listed in this document			
SA-R-GA-4 Rainforest Alliance Certification rules			
SA-R-GA-2 Rules for Certification Bodies			
Replaces:			
SA-P-AF-6-V3 Policy for Farm and Supply Chain Certification in Cocoa			
Applicable to:			
Prospective and certified farm and supply chain entities in the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Certification Program audited against the 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard (Farm Requirements and Supply Chain Requirements)			
Country/Region:			
Sections 1A, 2A and 3A of this policy apply in full to Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon. Section 1B applies specifically to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Section 1C and 3C applies to Côte d'Ivoire only. Section 3B applies to Ghana only.			
Crop:		Type of Certification:	
Cocoa		Farm and Supply Chain Certificate holders	

This policy document is binding. This means that it must be adhered to; therefore, this policy supersedes any related rules or requirements contained in the documents listed in the section "linked to" and/or "replaces" for those party or parties as indicated in the "applicable to" section.

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MAIN CHANGES FROM VERSION 3.0 TO 3.1

From 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023, Rainforest Alliance allowed for a transition period to grant all Certificate Holders time to implement and be verified against only the core requirements of the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Standard.

From 1 July 2023 onwards, all audits conducted against the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Standard are certification audits initiating the 3-year certification cycle¹. This version of the Cocoa Policy, published in June 2023, was adapted to be aligned with the requirements of the certification audit and subsequent surveillance audits against the Rainforest Alliance Standard.

All requirements in version 3.1 of the Cocoa Policy must be complied with in addition to the requirements and rules of the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agricultural Standard as set out in the applicability table section on page 8.

Below is an overview of key adaptations in this document SA-P-AF-6-V3.1, Policy for Farm and Supply Chain Certification in Cocoa, published in June 2024, compared to SA-P-AF-6-V3.0 Policy for Farm and Supply Chain Certification in Cocoa, published June 2023.

Summary Table (changes from version 3.0 to version 3.1)		
Pg.	Clause	Change
PRODUCER CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS		
7-8	1.2.a-d. Geolocation data	Precision of the years for the certification cycle removed because the CHs do not all enter the cycle at the same time.
8	1.2.e. Geolocation data	New requirement to make precision on where geolocation coordinates must be taken.
8	1.2.f. Geolocation data	New requirement on decimal number for geolocation point to align with EUDR requirements.
8	1.3.a. Member Monitoring	Add of sanction (suspension) of the group that the visit of a Member Monitoring staff.
8	1.3.b-d. Member Monitoring	New requirement on mandatory action plan to be provided based on Member Monitoring visit report and sanction if this requirement is not applied
9	1.5.a.iv RMG	New requirement that obliges CH to provide 100% of CCC matriculation as National ID number for the second certification cycle, in Côte d'Ivoire
9	1.6.a. Yield estimation	Increase of percentage of total certified area to be determined through the use of a GPS tool
9	1.7.a. Training	Removal of the start period for CHs in Côte d'Ivoire to contract only the training services of professionals approved by the Rainforest Alliance. Training service contract must also cover the post-audit period
9	1.7.b&c. Training	New requirement on obligation for CH management to trained gradually part of their IMS staff of cooperatives within the 3-year certification cycle on all the topics of the Standard
9	1.7.d. Training	New requirement on training monitoring file to completed by CH and shared with CB and RA before the audit

¹ In Cote d'Ivoire, cocoa farm groups were exceptionally authorized to conduct certification audits from January 1st, 2023.



AUDIT PROCESS RULES		
CERTIFICATION COST TRANSPARENCY		
12	3.3.e. CB obligations to comply with certification cost transparency	New requirement to clarify when the CHs have the right to complain against the audits costs.
AUDIT ALLOCATION		
13	3.4.e. Audit allocation (Ghana)	New requirement to oblige CBs to respond in good time or to accept reallocation.
AUDIT WINDOW AND CERTIFICATE VALIDITY IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE		
14	3.5.c. audit window for certification audits	New requirement to oblige Management to include audit planification and preparation in the Risk Assessment and the management plan (1.3.2) and implements the related measures as well as the other actions of MP.
14	3.6.a. Certification Application Form	New requirement to oblige Certificate Holders to provide their CCC code through the CAF when carrying out an audit.

CLAUSES REMOVED FROM VERSION 3.0		
No. (in version 3.0)	Requirement	Reason for removal
1.2.e.	<i>New groups joining the Rainforest Alliance from 2024 onwards must comply with requirement 1.2.b for their certification audit. For example: a new group has their first certification audit in 2024. They must comply with the requirement 1.2.b: CH must provide geolocation data for 100% of the farm units. For at least 30% of farm units this is in the form of a polygon. A polygon must be available for every farm unit that is 4 hectares or more.</i>	No longer applicable: no more distinction between new and old groups
3.5.a.	<i>CH in Côte d'Ivoire can have their first certification audit at any time of the year, regardless of the harvest cycle. Certification audits can be conducted from 1 January 2023 onwards.</i>	No longer applicable: now taken into account in the CARs

ABBREVIATIONS

2020 RA SAS	2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard
CB	Certification Body
CH	Certificate Holder
GMR	Group Member Registry
RACP	Rainforest Alliance Certification Platform
SD	Sustainability Differential
SI	Sustainability Investment
EUDR	EU Deforestation Regulation



APPLICABILITY OF REQUIREMENTS

Different sections of this policy apply to Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon as shown in the table below:

- Sections 1A, 2A and 3A of this policy apply in full to Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon;
- Section 1B applies only to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana;
- Section 1C and 3C applies only to Côte d'Ivoire; and
- Section 3B applies only to Ghana.

SECTION		REQUIREMENT	CÔTE D'IVOIRE	GHANA	CAMEROON	NIGERIA
FARM CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS	1A	1.1 Farms in protected areas	✓	✓	✓	✓
		1.2 Geolocation data	✓	✓	✓	✓
		1.3 Member monitoring	✓	✓	✓	✓
		1.4 Growth in group membership	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1B	1.5 GMR	✓	✓		
		1.6 Yield estimation	✓	✓		
	1C	1.7 Training	✓			
SUPPLY CHAIN CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS	2A	2.1 Certification process	✓	✓	✓	✓
		2.2 Sustainability Differential (SD) payment	✓	✓	✓	✓
AUDIT PROCESS RULES	3A	3.1 CB rights and obligations to comply with the audit process	✓	✓	✓	✓
		3.2 CH obligations to comply with the audit process	✓	✓	✓	✓
		3.3 CB obligations to comply with certification cost transparency	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3B	3.4 Audit Allocation		✓		
	3C	3.5 Audit window and certificate validity in Côte d'Ivoire	✓			



1. FARM CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. APPLICABLE TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE, GHANA, NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

1.1. Farms in protected areas

- a. Producers in Protected Areas will not be certified if the Protected Area (PA) is classified as a No-Go zone. Groups must remove group members in No-Go zones in order to be certified. Producers in PA that are classified as Go zones may be certified under the following conditions:
 - Côte d'Ivoire:
 - i. The CH can provide the decree or order which declassifies the PA. The decree must be emitted by the authority in charge of the management of the PA (SODEFOR or OIPR).
 - ii. The CH can provide the decree or order allowing agricultural activities in an enclave. The decree must be emitted by the authority in charge of the management of the PA (SODEFOR or OIPR).
 - Ghana:
 - i. the CH can provide the allocation paper from the Forestry Commission of Ghana indicating that the area has been assigned/given to the farmer. Actions in the management plan of the protected area are adhered to and implemented by the farmer.
 - Cameroon:
 - i. The CH can provide a ministerial decree of forest attribution, an up-to-date version of the management plan approved by MINFOF, or a memorandum of understanding proving that the authorities have authorized farming in the PA.
 - Nigeria:
 - i. The CH can provide a genuine permit from a relevant authority (Department of Forestry of the Ministry of Environment) indicating the allocated farm area and the farmer concerned.

Note: More information on protected areas can be found in [Guidance D. Geolocation Data Requirements and Risk Maps](#).

1.2. Geolocation data

- a. For the first certification audit CHs must provide geolocation data for all farm units. For at least 10% of the farm units, this is in the form of a GPS polygon.
- b. For the first surveillance audit, at least 30% of the farm units must be in the form of a polygon for the farm CHs in Cameroon and Nigeria. In Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, at least 50% of the farm units must be in the form of a polygon.

A polygon must be available for every farm unit that is 4 hectares or more (in accordance with the requirements of the EUDR).
- c. For the second surveillance audit at least 60% of the farm units must be in the form of a polygon.



- d. For the second certification audit, CHs must provide polygons for 100% of all farm units.
- e. Coordinates must be taken as close as possible to the center of the farm/farm unit, considering the internal farm conditions (in accordance with the provisions of [Annex S17: Collecting geolocation data](#))
- f. All geodata must include 6 decimal digits.

1.3. Member Monitoring

- a. Farm CHs may not refuse a visit from the Rainforest Alliance Member Monitoring team when a visit is requested. Certificate Holders may reschedule the visit a maximum of twice with a valid reason by proposing an alternative timing for the visit. If a requested visit is refused more than twice without a valid reason the certificate will be suspended until a visit has been received.
- b. Groups visited by the Member Monitoring team will receive a visit report within 1 week of the visit. Thereafter must propose an improvement plan based on the observations made by the Rainforest Alliance team, two weeks after receiving this report. Groups that have not proposed a plan to improve their system one month after the deadline, nor been in contact with the Member Monitoring team will have their license suspended for 1 month. This is lifted by sending the plan.
- c. Member Morning will validate the improvement plan or give further feedback for improvement if needed.
- d. When requested by Member Monitoring Team, the group must transmit proof of correction within 3 months.
- e. Groups that have not transmitted proof of correction within 3 months after the deadline will have their license suspended for 3 months.

1.4. Growth in Group Membership

- a. For groups with less than 2 000 producers, the total number of certified producers in a group shall only grow by 30% over the whole audit year in comparison to the total number of certified producers in the previous audit year (certification audit and/or extension audit).
- b. Groups with more than 2 000 producers shall only grow by 10% over the whole audit year in comparison to the total number of certified producers in the previous audit year (certification audit and/or extension audit).

B. APPLICABLE TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND GHANA

1.5. GMR

- a. The National ID number of all group members in possession of such must be indicated in the new GMR template. CHs in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana must comply with a minimum percentage of group members holding a National ID number:
 - i. For the first certification audit, CHs in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana must indicate the National ID number for at least 40% of group members.
 - ii. For the first surveillance audit, CHs in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana must indicate the National ID number for at least 60% of group members.
 - iii. For the second surveillance audit, CHs in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana must indicate the National ID number for at least 100% of group members.



- iv. For the second certification cycle, CHs in Côte d'Ivoire must indicate as National ID number, the CCC immatriculation for at least 100% of group members.

- b. The collection of National Identification (ID) numbers for farmers must be done in accordance with national legal requirements as indicated in the "RAINFOREST ALLIANCE Instructions for Cocoa Groups in Ghana, Côte D'Ivoire on National Identification Requirements".

- c. CHs must keep a list of all farmers that are sanctioned at the time of the audit, including their details (name, internal farm ID, national ID (if available), phone number, farm size, production, volume sold during previous harvest, farm size, GPS coordinate, and reason of sanction). The list must be shared with the Certification Body as part of the audit preparation documents (see requirement 3.2.f)

1.6. Yield estimation

- a. The total certified area is determined through the use of a GPS tool for 100% of producers.

C. APPLICABLE TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE

1.7. Training

- a. All Certificate Holders in Côte d'Ivoire shall only contract the training services of professionals approved by the Rainforest Alliance and Conseil du Café Cacao. The training on the Standard and related documentation shall be provided by Rainforest Alliance or the Associated Trainers and the contract must also cover the post-audit period to support the correction of possible non-conformities.

- b. Every year the IMS staff of cooperatives must be trained on the Standard by the Associated Trainers and at least 50% of the members of that cooperative must be trained on at least one of the related topics in the Standard and this training must reach out all the members during a 3-year certification cycle.

- c. The last training provided by the cooperative to the members of the cooperative on the standard or related to the certification process must be provided at least 3 months before the start date of the audit.

- d. All CHs must complete the training monitoring file including the name of the trainer(s), the subjects covered and the training dates which must be shared with their Certification Body and RA before the audit.



2. SUPPLY CHAIN CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. APPLICABLE TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE, GHANA, NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

2.1. Certification process

- a. All Supply Chain CHs taking legal ownership of certified cocoa or derivative products in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon must have their certification audit on-site. For all Supply Chain CHs in these countries, the verification method table below applies (overriding the global verification method table from the Certification and Auditing rules):

Verification level	Verification method		
	Certification	Year 1: surveillance	Year 2: surveillance
A-very low	On site CB certification audit	Rainforest Alliance automated check	Rainforest Alliance automated check
B-low	On site CB certification audit	Rainforest Alliance review	Rainforest Alliance automated check
C-medium	On site CB certification audit	CB remote surveillance audit	Rainforest Alliance review
D-high	On site CB certification audit	On site CB surveillance audit	CB remote surveillance audit
E-very high	On site CB certification audit	On site CB surveillance audit	On site CB surveillance audit

- b. If a Supply Chain CH receives a non-certification decision, the CH shall wait 6 months after the decision is taken before reapplying for certification.

2.2. Sustainability Differential (SD) payment

- a. Payment of SD by the first buyer to the group is made no later than 6 months after reception of the beans by the first buyer, unless otherwise required by local regulations.



3. AUDIT PROCESS RULES

A. APPLICABLE TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE, GHANA, NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

3.1. CB rights and obligations to comply with the audit process

- a. CBs may share the list of sampled producers with the CH at the earliest 24 hours prior to visiting those producers.
- b. CBs must pay out of pocket expenses needed for conducting the audit to their auditors prior to the audit taking place.
- c. CBs must update regularly the information on the progress of the certification process for the CHs that have contracted them. For cocoa farm audits in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, this must be done weekly through the SharePoint audit tracking file shared with the CBs to this purpose. For all other audits, this must be done biweekly by sending a list to CB management.
- d. CBs must make sure that the information and documents in license requests submitted to RA are complete and correct. CBs are allowed a maximum of 2 re-submissions after the submission of the initial license request. If more license rejections and resubmissions are needed, this will lead to a non-conformity for the CB.
- e. If the CH has sanctioned farmers, the CB must verify if the reason for sanctioning is valid as per the Sanction and Approval system set up by the group (as per annex AR2.1 on Approvals and sanctions in the 1.3 Certification and Auditing rules).
- f. As per clause 2.4.2 of the 1.3 Certification and Auditing Rules on representativity of the audit sample, CBs are required to include sanctioned farmers in the audit sample. CBs must verify whether the sanctioned farmers received the correct amount of SD for the volumes delivered to the group prior to being sanctioned (as per requirement 3.2.1 of the RA SAS).

3.2 CH obligations to comply with the audit process

- a. At least 75% of the total number of audited producers must come from the auditor's pre-sampled list.
- b. A minimum of 75% of audited producers are able to show some form of official ID to prove their identity during the audit. If a National ID number is indicated for the audited producer in the GMR, the producer must be able to show the corresponding ID. If no National ID number is indicated, the producer can show another form of identification (health insurance card, birth certificate, etc.).
- c. Appeals to the CB on non-certification decisions must be submitted to the CB by the CH at the latest two weeks after the non-certification decision is issued. Grievances must be submitted to Rainforest Alliance at the latest two weeks after the outcome of the appeal of the non-certification decision to the CB.
- d. If a group receives a non-certification decision from a certification or surveillance audit, the group cannot apply again for certification for the same harvest. They can apply for certification again at the earliest for the following harvest. E.g., a group wants to have their certificate starting for the main 2023 harvest but receives a non-certification following their audit. The group cannot be certified for the 2023 harvest, whichever the audit date, and can only be certified at the earliest for the small 2024 harvest. Groups



in Côte d'Ivoire can only reapply for certification 6 months after the audit for which they were non-certified.

- e. If a group receives a non-certification decision after a surprise or investigation audit, the group shall wait at least one full harvest period from the date the non-certification was taken. E.g., a certified group goes through a surprise audit in the middle of their small harvest of April 2024 and receives a non-certification decision. The group must wait for the rest of their April 2024 harvest and the full 2024 main harvest: the earliest the group can be certified is April 2025. Groups in Côte d'Ivoire can only reapply for certification 12 months after the audit for which they were non-certified.
- f. Farm CHs must share the following documents with the CB at the latest 4 weeks before the first audit day:
 - Certification Application form (CAF)
 - Management plan
 - Self-assessment
 - Group Member Registry
 - Geodata risk assessment (risk maps)
 - Indicator data
 - Management Capacity Assessment Tool (Annex S02)
 - List of sanctioned farmers

3.3 CB obligations to comply with certification cost transparency

The CB shall have a transparent cost calculation system, which shall reflect in the offer for audit and certification services that is provided to the CH. This includes but is not limited to:

- a. CBs must complete and include the certification cost transparency tool in all certifications offers made to farm CHs in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Cameroon and Nigeria. The total price on the offer shall correspond to the total price indicated in the template. Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to request the completed certification cost template in case of price-related grievances raised by CHs.
- b. The total price on the offer must include basic follow-up of closure of non-conformities. If a follow-up audit on-site is needed, a complementary offer must be drawn up and invoiced based on the same fee structure.
- c. If the total price on the invoice differs from the price on the initial offer, the CB must clearly indicate the reason for the difference.
- d. Negotiation and acceptance of the offer for audit services remains the responsibility of CBs and CHs. If a disagreement should arise, the CH must first appeal directly to the CB. Where CHs are unable to resolve a complaint related to audit costs, they may then submit a formal complaint to the Rainforest Alliance through wacocoa@ra.org within two weeks of the outcome of the appeal with the CB and before signing the contract. Rainforest Alliance will adjudicate the complaint based on compliance with the transparency requirements and coherence with cost information already collected from CBs. Rainforest Alliance will issue a decision within 2 weeks.
- e. The situations for which a disagreement should arise, can be for example :
 - Unjustified increase in costs without any link to scope changes.



B. APPLICABLE TO GHANA

3.4 Audit Allocation

- a. Audit allocation is applicable to all audits of farm CHs against the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Standard in Ghana. Audit allocation does not apply to supply chain CHs.
- b. Farm audits against the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Standard are allocated to CBs by the Rainforest Alliance.
- c. Upfront Audit costs including auditors' expenses (as a proportion of total cost) are covered in the contract between the CH and the CB and paid to the CB ahead of the audit.
- d. The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to intervene in the audit planning process and request changes to improve audit quality, if the proposed plan does not conform to Rainforest Alliance guidance in terms of audit team composition, sample size and composition or audit duration.
- e. After allocation or re-allocation, Certification Bodies as well as Certificate Holders have within two weeks to respond (acknowledge) receiving the allocation.



C. APPLICABLE TO COTE D'IVOIRE

3.5 Audit window and certificate validity in Côte d'Ivoire

- a. Certificates issued from first certification audits in Côte d'Ivoire must have the certification decision date as the start date and are valid for 3 years. The license will have the same start date and is valid for 1 year.
- b. Farm CH in Côte d'Ivoire must schedule their surveillance audits in compliance with the Certification and Auditing Rules
 - i. First surveillance audit: 9 to 15 months after the certificate start date (3 months before to 3 months after the expiry date of the license)
 - ii. Second surveillance audit: 21 to 27 months after the certificate start date (3 months before to 3 months after the expiry date of the license)
- c. Management must include the mitigation measures from the Risk Assessment Tool in 1.3.1 regarding Audit preparation in the management plan (1.3.2). Management implements the related measures.

3.6 Certification Application Form

- a. Certificate Holders must provide their CCC² code through the CAF when carrying out an audit.

² CCC: Conseil du Café Cacao