



# Rainforest Alliance Water and soil analysis through representative samples for Group Administrators

July, 2017  
Version 1

The Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices, and consumer behavior.

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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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## Policy

<b>Issue Date:</b>	<b>Binding date:</b>	<b>Expiration date:</b>
August 30, 2017	July 1, 2017 retrospectively	Until next review
<b>Developed by:</b>		<b>Approved by:</b>
Standards and Policy Unit, SAN secretariat		Standards and Policy Director, SAN
<b>Linked to (code and name of documents, if applicable):</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RA-S-SP-1-V1.2 Sustainable Agriculture Standard, July 2017</li> <li>• RA-R-SP-1-V1.2 Certification Rules 2017</li> </ul>		
<b>Replaces:</b>		
-		
<b>Clause or criterion number and text:</b>		
<p><b>Critical criterion 3.1</b> Wastewater from processing operations is not discharged into aquatic ecosystems unless it has undergone treatment to meet Rainforest Alliance industrial wastewater parameters. Wastewater from processing operations is not applied to land with very sandy or highly permeable soils, where slopes exceed 8%, or where the water table is seasonally or permanently high. Wastewater from processing operations may not be applied to soil unless it has undergone treatment to remove particulates and toxins and to reduce acidity and complies with additional Rainforest Alliance industrial wastewater parameters for irrigation. Wastewater from processing operations may not be mixed with clean water for the purpose of meeting Rainforest Alliance industrial wastewater parameters.</p> <p><b>Level B Criterion 3.11</b> Nutrient management practices are implemented based on assessment of crop needs, regular monitoring of soil fertility and crop nutrient status, or recommendations from local agronomic experts. Organic fertilizers are preferentially used where locally available.</p> <p><b>Level A Criterion 3.14</b> Based on record-keeping (see 1.10), the farm management and group administrator demonstrate that nutrient inputs to crops and soils are sufficient to compensate for production-related uptake and losses, but do not contribute to eutrophication through excessive application.</p> <p><b>Critical Criterion 3.12, letter b)</b> Potable water provided by the farm management and group administrator complies with Rainforest Alliance safe drinking water parameters based on testing preceding each Rainforest Alliance certification audit and any time that new water contamination risks have occurred. Potable water sources are protected and water distribution mechanisms are maintained to avoid contamination.</p> <p><b>Level A Criterion 5.27</b> Water for cattle complies with Rainforest Alliance safe drinking water parameters.</p>		
<b>Applicable to:</b>		<b>Audit type:</b>
Authorized Certification Bodies and Auditors		All
<b>Regions:</b>		
All		
<b>Crops:</b>	<b>Type of organizations:</b>	
All	Group Administrators, with the exception of multi-sites (where a single legal entity owns or holds more than one discrete farm or site with separate production management system, but under one IMS of the group administrator)	

## 1. Introduction

Rainforest Alliance is a growing network of people who are inspired and committed to working together to achieve our mission of conserving biodiversity and ensuring sustainable livelihoods. For more information about Rainforest Alliance, visit our website: <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org>.

## 2. Policy - Water and soil analysis for group administrators' member farm management through representative samples

1. This Rainforest Alliance policy only applies to criteria 3.1, 3.11, 3.14, 4.12 and 5.27.
2. Representative samples are based on the stratified random sampling method, where the population is divided into smaller groups, known as strata, according to criteria relevant for the analysis, and then each sample is selected randomly, ensuring that all the strata of interest are proportionally represented.
3. For the criteria 3.1, 4.12 and 5.27, a group administrator may show compliance with the corresponding Rainforest Alliance parameters at member farm level, through the analysis of a representative number of water samples:
  - a. In order to show compliance with critical criterion 3.1, the group administrator collects water samples that are representative for the different type of water treatment systems from the processing operations of its member farms, and the analysis of the collected water samples shall comply with the Rainforest Alliance industrial wastewater parameters, or the Rainforest Alliance industrial wastewater parameters for irrigation. It is not necessary to conduct one analysis for each member farm, if the types of process and treatments are not different. Water analysis conducted by government research institutes are considered as evidence of compliance as long as they correspond to the same type of process and treatment system used by member farms.
  - b. In order to comply with letter (b) of critical criterion 4.12, the group administrator collects representative water samples that consider the different water treatment and potable water supply systems within the group administrator's scope, presenting the analysis results of different water storage tanks and water treatment systems used by the group administrator or by sub-groups of the member farms.
  - c. Clause 2.3, letter (b) of this policy also applies to criterion 5.27.
  - d. For criteria 3.11 and 3.14, a group administrator may demonstrate compliance with monitoring of the soil fertility and crop nutrient status at member farm level through the analysis of a representative sample of soil types or crop plant's tissues. Samples shall representatively consider the different crops and soil types, according to different climatic patterns and altitudes. Research studies and soil classifications by region carried out by government research institutes are considered evidence of compliance as long as they correspond to the same regions where the member farms are located.