



Technical Modules

Module 1: EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Sustainable Agriculture Standard

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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Contributions of this module

Principle 1 The effective planning and management system establishes the requirements for a farm and group management system that allows:

- ✓ Optimizing farm and group management under the principles of sustainability, to facilitate compliance with the social and environmental requirements of the 2017 Standard
- ✓ Increasing management productivity and efficiency
- ✓ Incorporating risk analysis for occupational health and pesticide handling.
- ✓ Promoting climate-smart agriculture and increasing capacity for adaptation to climate change
- ✓ Diminishing environmental impact
- ✓ Improving living conditions of workers, their families and communities

What does this module contain?

This module provides the following tools to optimize the work of the technical community:

- Charts that explain the objectives and key themes of Principle 1
- Tables showing the interrelationships between criteria, for the integral comprehension of the management system for farms and groups
- Tables that compile the elements of the plans, procedures, mechanisms and records requested by the 2017 Standard
- Tables that compile the elements of the group management system and its governance structure
- Recommendations for auditing complex topics

The **Guide for the 2017 Standard** is a key tool for the implementation and evaluation of its requirements.

The **Certification Rules** describe all rights and obligations related to the auditing and certification of farms and groups

Principle I

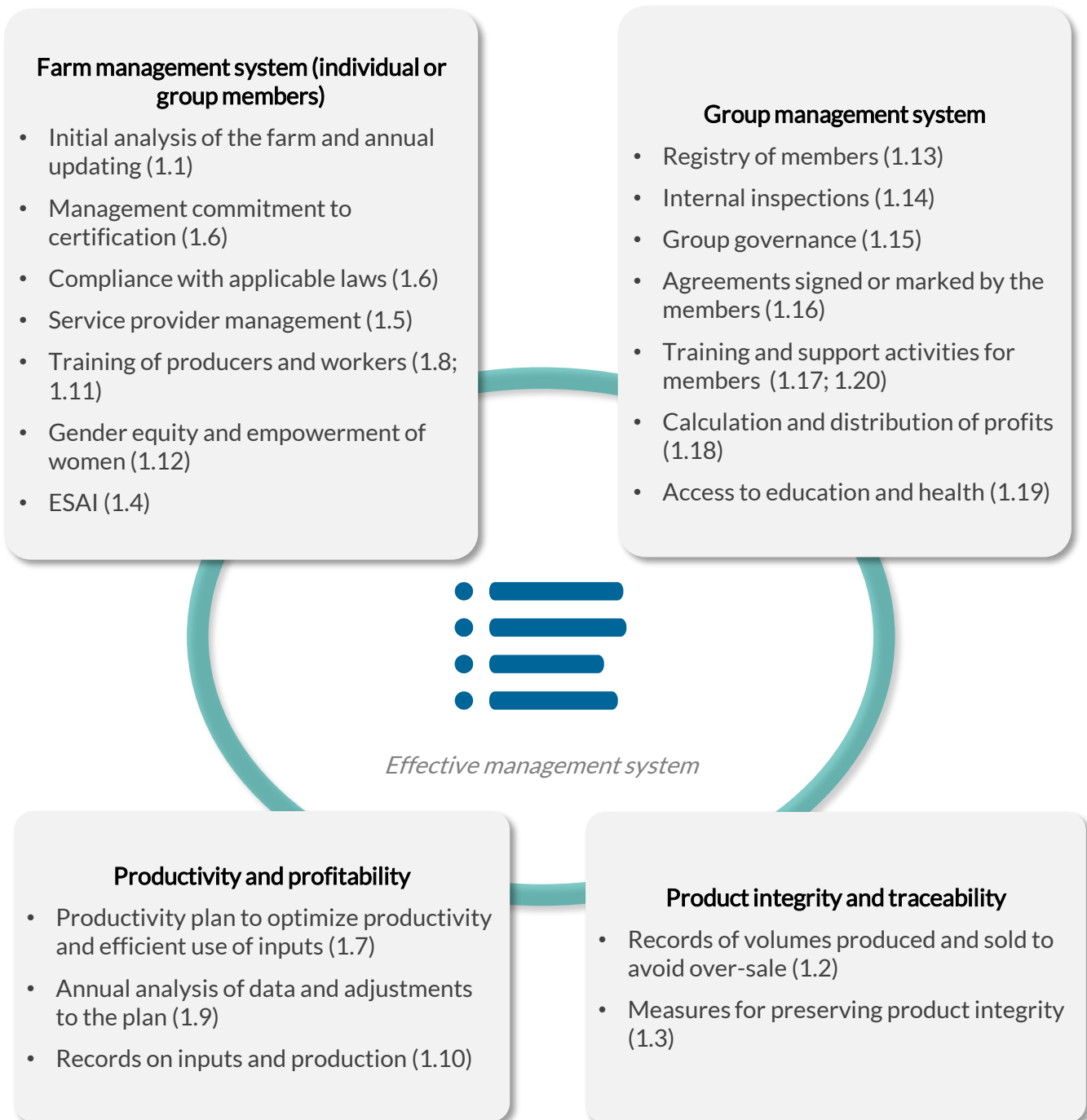
What are its objectives?



Effective planning and management system

How are the requirements organized?

There are four main areas of action:



Elements for the management of farms and groups

The 2017 Standard requires the organization of the sustainable management of farms and groups based on 3 elements that give coherence to the actions and requirements of the 2017 Standard. These elements are:

- An initial evaluation that describes the characteristics and initial situation of the farm;
- A socio-environmental management system that allows the implementation of the 2017 Standard criteria and establishes sustainable management (including an agricultural management plan that optimizes the farm's productivity and efficiency, and a training plan to develop skills in producers and workers for the implementation of the 2017 Standard);
- A group administrator management system that establishes the administrator's responsibilities with respect to the member farms of the group and the responsibilities of the member farms in the implementation of the 2017 Standard.

The pages that follow present a series of tables that reunite all the 2017 Standards' criteria for these major topics, their related criteria and the responsibilities that correspond to farm or group administrators.

These tables clarify the relationships that all the criteria of the 2017 Standard have with the farm and group management system.



Initial evaluation of the farm

Critical Criterion 1.1:

An initial evaluation of the farm is conducted and documented. This evaluation is reviewed and updated at least once a year. The evaluation includes:

- a map of the farm indicating the location of each production plot; roads, buildings and other infrastructure; natural ecosystems; and uses given adjoining lands, including protected areas;
- a delimitation of the geographic extent of the certificate;
- information about each production plot, including the type and variety of crops and pastures; density of crops and herds; age or stage of perennial crop renewal and rotation cycle of annual crops; and level of production;
- a tabulation of total farm area, total production area and total natural ecosystem area.

Initial evaluation of the farm CC-1.1:

This criterion requires an initial evaluation every farm within the certification scope, to obtain information on current conditions and key risks that could affect its productivity and sustainability.

The initial evaluation facilitates identification and selection of best management practices adapted to the individual or group farm's crop(s) and the local context.

The initial evaluation also includes data on the total area of the farm, the area under production, and the special areas for conservation and protection, as well as data on the type of crop, variety, and crop age.

The information obtained in the initial evaluation facilitates decision-making, the establishment of best practices and the plans, procedures and mechanisms requested by the management system.

The auditor reviews this information and uses it to analyze the coherence of the plans and practices implemented.

Table 1: Initial evaluation – its elements

Topics	Related criteria			Group Admin.	Farm Admin.
	CC	CIC	Applicable references		
1. Map of farm with information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of each plot, area or production lot • Roads, areas for infrastructure • Natural ecosystems • Land use in areas next to the farm • Location of the farm with respect to nearby protected areas 	1.1	C-2.6	Definition of: farm, production plot, natural ecosystems, protected areas	•	•
2. The map includes the location of well latrines and sewage deposit sites		B-3.21		•	•
3. The map supplies information on the geographic delimitation of the scope of the certificate	1.1			•	•
4. The map indicates total farm area, total production area, and total natural ecosystem area	1.1			•	•
5. The farm has documented information on each production plot, which indicates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of crops • Crop varieties • Pasture varieties (cattle) • Crop density • Herd density (cattle) • Crop age • Renewal stage 	1.1			•	•

Initial evaluation

Scope and relationships

Criterion 1.1, within its scope, aims to increase the ability of the farm and the group administrator to comply with the requirements of the 2017 Standard. Toward this end, this criterion requires that an initial farm evaluation is done and documented, and it should be monitored, reviewed and updated at least once per year.

Criterion 1.1 is related to the commitment of the administration that is required as part of criterion 1.6; this criterion specifies that regular evaluations are required for measuring compliance with the 2017 Standard; it also indicates that the farm administration as well as the group administrator show their commitment to the certification and compliance with its standards.

The scope of criterion 1.1 is in line with the stipulations of criterion 1.14, since it determines that the group administrator should evaluate the conformity of each farm with the 2017 Standard through internal inspections. It also indicates that new farms are subject to an initial inspection or evaluation before they are included as member farms.

RELATED CRITERIA

1.6 The farm administration and the group administrator demonstrate their commitment to the certification and to compliance with this standard:

Resources are dedicated and personnel responsible are assigned to the development and implementation of social and environmental management plans;

The applicable laws within the scope of this standard are identified, compliance systems are maintained and written confirmations regarding this compliance are provided;

Regular evaluations are conducted to measure compliance with this standard;

According to the evaluations, the social and environmental management plans are adjusted.

1.14 The group administrator evaluates the conformity of each member with the Standard through internal inspections. He/she also inspects all new farms before they are included as member farms. All other member farms are inspected frequently enough to monitor the implementation of actions required for improvement and to ensure that the entire scope of the standard is evaluated for each member at least every three years. Visits to member farms are scheduled in different seasons of the year to evaluate the harvest, agricultural practices, and the pesticide application.

Best practices for the manager and the auditor

The person in charge of the management system (Manager) and the external auditor consider the following aspects:

- Information on Table 1 (of this module) is basic and is part of all the plans and actions that are evaluated in an internal inspection or external audit.
- The frequency of evaluation and monitoring is correspondent with audit results on critical criteria and corrective actions to be implemented. Verify whether monitoring is scheduled in different seasons of the year to evaluate aspects related to the harvest, different agricultural practices, pesticide application and other requirements of the 2017 Standard.
- The farm evaluation and monitoring system (including new farms) generates the planning and implementation of improvement actions in each year.
- Data from the initial evaluation allows the definition of a relationship with the information that should be included in the farm productivity plan requested in criterion C-1.7 of the 2017 Standard.
- The external auditor evaluates whether there is a direct relationship between the data collected in the initial evaluation and the information requested in the productivity plan. Example: The external auditor verifies whether the crop management practices respond to:
 - The requirements of the variety,
 - The age of the crop,
 - The nutritional requirements of the soil,
 - Pests and diseases,
 - The use of pesticides,
 - Adaptation to climate change.
- The compliance of the farms shows the level of commitment to the 2017 Standard criteria and the Certification Rules.
- The farm has identified the legislation applicable to the crop and has support documentation to corroborate its compliance (plans, procedures, and mechanisms) (*when applicable*).
- Maps or sketches form part of the documentation of the Socio-environmental Management System.
- The map or sketch shows the geographic delimitation of the farm; it includes the identification of adjacent areas to determine the distances to protected areas outside the farm (national parks, wildlife refuges, areas of biological importance or with some category of protection); it verifies the existence and location of aquatic ecosystems (rivers, streams, springs, wetlands) and terrestrial ecosystems (forests, savannas, areas under natural regeneration or reforested).
- The map or sketch identifies infrastructure such as warehouses, offices, housing, workshops, and recreation areas, and allows assessing whether any building is located in a risky site, (for example: a pesticide warehouse near an aquatic ecosystem).

Socio-environmental management under the 2017 Standard

The socio-environmental management system allows implementing the requirements of the 2017 Standard and establishing sustainable management.

It consists of a series of plans, procedures, mechanisms and records, which are requested throughout the 2017 Standard in different criteria.

The following tables are presented to assist comprehension of the required socio-environmental management system:

- **Table 2**: List of plans that comprise the system; these are related to the criteria that require them and the associated T&D. Responsibilities are assigned (farm or group administration) as specified in the 2017 Standard.
- **Table 3**: List of procedures and records, with the same details described above.
- **Table 4**: List of mechanisms, with the same details described above.



Plan:

(According to RA Terms and Definitions RA)

“Documents or set of documents, including a diagram or list of projected actions, used to define and achieve an objective or goal. For the purposes of this standard, a plan contains objectives, quantitative goals and parameters, time-bound management actions, resources, and the personnel responsible for the plan.”

Each plan that is mentioned in Table N°1 includes the following information:

- Quantitative goals and parameters (short, medium and long term)
- Objectives to be obtained with the execution of each plan
- The personnel responsible for the execution and monitoring of each plan.
- The procedures and mechanisms (Tables 2 and 3) established in the 2017 Standard to ensure the effective execution of the activities and criteria. The procedures can form part of the plans or they may be documented separately if required.
- List of activities to be managed within a determined time frame
- Reference to records, instructions, procedures or any other document that supports the execution of each plan.

Table 2:
List of plans for the socio-environmental management system (1 of 2)

Type of plan	Related criteria			Group Admin.	Farm Admin.
	CC	CIC	Applicable references		
1) Identification of the environmental and social legislation applicable to the crop	1.6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of applicable laws 	•	•
2) Internal inspection plan	1.6 & 1.14		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related clauses of the 2017 Certification Rules 	•	•
3) Training plan for workers and member farms (see Table #)	4.16	C-1.8; B-1.11; B-1.12; C-1.17; C-1.20; B-3.45; B-4.44; A-2.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of farm administration and group administrator 	•	•
4) Integrated pest management plan	3.3. 2.4	C-3.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of pest • Definition of pesticide 	•	•
5) Plan for the establishment of vegetation in primary and secondary channels (when applicable)	3.5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of Rainforest Alliance Requirements for aerial fumigation 	•	•
6) Occupational health plan (including a risk analysis)	4.14 4.17 4.18	C-4.34 al C-4.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of worker 	•	•
7) Plan to increase and restore native vegetation		C-2.6	Definition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural ecosystems; • Shade-tolerant crops • Plan 	•	•
8) Aquatic ecosystems protection plan in compliance with restoration parameters (when applicable)		C-2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition Rainforest Alliance parameters for restoration 		•

Table 2:
List of plans for the socio-environmental management system (2 of 2)

Type of plan	Related criteria			Group Admin.	Farm Admin.
	CC	CIC	Other		
9) Water conservation plan		B-3.17	• Definition of plan	•	•
10) Waste management plan		C-3.38	• Definition of: wastes plan	•	•
11) Plan to optimize productivity		C-1.7	Definition de: • fertilizer • pesticide • Climate change	•	•
12)) Plan for workers and their families to have access to basic health and education services (when applicable)		C-1.19 C-4.29	Definition of: • decent wage • health and education services • plan	•	•
13) Plan for energy efficiency		B-3.44		•	•
14) Plan for the prevention and monitoring of child labor		B-4.24	Definition de: • child labor • community • plan	•	•
15) Plan for decent wages		C-4.29	Definition de: • decent wage • health and education services • Plan	•	•
16) Herd health plan		C-5.7	• Definition de plan	•	•
17) Water quality monitoring plan for compliance with Rainforest Alliance parameters on water for cattle		C-5.11	• Definition of Rainforest Alliance parameters on water for cattle	•	•

Table 3: List of Procedures and Complementary Records for SEMS Plans

Type of procedure or record	Related criteria			Group Admin.	Farm Admin.
	CC	CIC	Applicable references		
1) Procedures for the prevention or reduction of risks to worker health	4.14		Occupational health plan	•	•
2) Procedures for the prevention and control of emergencies	4.16	B-4.44	Occupational health plan	•	•
3) Records' maintenance	1.13	A-3.14		•	•
4) Water consumption records		B-1.10 A-3.19		•	•
5) Procedure for full payment of wages		C-4.21 A-4.27		•	•
6) Surgical or emasculation procedures		C-5.14		•	•
7) Updated records on inputs and production data, at least for crops and cattle production systems		B-1.10		•	•
8) Records on training sessions		B-1.11 B-1.12		•	•
9) Records on inputs and production		B-1.10		•	•
10) Map with natural ecosystems		C-2.6		•	•
11) Records on pest infestations	3.3	C-3.23 C-3.24		•	•
12) Records showing reductions or increases in the severity of pests or on the use of pesticides		B-3.26		•	•
13) Records on energy use reductions		A-3.46		•	•

Table 4: Mechanisms (documentation)

Related directly to the Critical Criteria, the 2017 Standard require mechanisms (documents) as part of the Socio-environmental Management System.

Mechanism	Related criteria			Group Admin.	Farm Admin.
	CC	CIC	Other		
1) Mechanism to prevent the mixing of certified product with non-certified product in the facilities and in harvest, reception, packaging and transport processes.; and to avoid product over-sale	1.2 1.3		Section 3, letter (K) on the 2017 Certification Rules	•	•
2) ESIA. Written procedures for minimizing or mitigating any negative impact (when applicable).	1.4			•	•
3) Mechanism for the selection, supervision and management of service providers	1.5			•	•
4) Identification, documentation and systems for compliance with the applicable legislation	1.6			•	•
5) Agreement with the farm's commitment to certification and compliance with the 2017 Standard.	1.6			•	•

Best practices

For the manager and the auditor

The Manager and the external Auditor consider the following aspects related to the social and environmental management system:

- Verify that the social and environmental management system includes plans, procedures and mechanisms that apply to the processes related to the Group Administrator and the Farm Administrator; and that are updated periodically based on the results of internal inspections and external audits.
- Verify that the social and environmental management plan is appropriate for the farm's (or group or farms') size, structure, processes and activities performed.
- Take into consideration that for family-managed farm, which does not contract labor, the plan includes only a limited quantity of required activities to be in compliance with all labor-related criteria.
- The same applies to environmental aspects, for example: for a farm, which does not have natural ecosystems, does not use irrigation or does not carry out wastewater discharge processes that require corrective action to mitigate or eliminate a risk of contamination, the content of its environmental plans will have fewer applicable activities that must be carried out on the farm.
- Consider that the procedures mentioned in **Table 3** are suitable for inclusion in a specific plan; for example, the procedures for the prevention or reduction of risks to worker health can fit perfectly in the Occupational health plan, and so on for other procedures or mechanisms.
- Are aware that the mechanisms indicated in **Table 4** are documents that complement the social and environmental management system, which is why they may or may not form part of a management plan, depending on what is applicable.
- Verify that the procedures in each plan make reference to the records, instructions, or any other related document.
- Verify that what the procedures say is consistent with the processes or activities carried out on the farm.



Productivity Plan

The 2017 Standard requires the Group Administrator and farm Administration to develop a management plan for optimizing productivity.

The management plan is requested in criterion C-1.7 and it is one of the plans that comprise the management system.

Table N°5 refers to the content of the plan for optimizing productivity and the criteria related to each topic.

The Group Administrator and the farm Administration are responsible for developing the plan to optimize productivity.

Table N°5 indicates the topics that should be included in the plan, the criterion that requests this, and it determines whether this is the responsibility of the Group Administrator, the farm administration, or both.

The plan for optimizing productivity includes descriptions of actions or processes carried out on the farm for the purpose of obtaining better productivity and quality (refer to the column 'Plan content').



Criterion C- 1.7: The farm administration and the group administrator develop and regularly update an agricultural management plan to optimize productivity, use inputs efficiently, and comply with the 2017 Standard. The plan includes:

- soil health and erosion;
 - water management (contemplating the estimated use of water for irrigation);
 - pests and diseases;
 - management of inputs (including the estimated use of fertilizers and pesticides);
 - planting materials;
 - climate change;
 - extreme weather events;
 - estimated production volumes and desired product quality in crop and cattle production, covered by the scope of the Rainforest Alliance certificate and for the next production cycle;
 - labor;
 - identification of agricultural practices for optimizing productivity and efficient use of inputs.
-

Table 5

Productivity Plan (1 of 2)

Plan contents	Related criteria			Group Admin.	Farm Admin.
	CC	CIC	Applicable references		
1. Soil health and erosion		C-3.8; C-3.9 B-3.10; B-3.11 B-3.12; B-3.13 A-3.14		•	•
2. Water management	3.1 3.2 3.7	B-1.10 C-3.15; C-3.16 B-3.17; B3.18 A-3.19; C-3.20 B-3.21; B-3.22 C-5.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B-1.10 Amount of water used for irrigation, processing, or cattle production; • Definition of aquatic ecosystems; • Rainforest Alliance parameters for industrial wastewater; • Rainforest Alliance parameters for industrial wastewater from irrigation; • Definition of sewage water; • Definition of applicable law; • Definition of gray water; • Rainforest Alliance parameters regarding water for cattle. 	•	•
3. Pests and diseases	3.3 3.5	C-3.9; B-3.25 C-3.24; C-3.23 B-3,26	Definitions of pest, IPM, and pesticide Rainforest Alliance requirements for aerial fumigation	•	•
4. Management of inputs (including the estimated use of fertilizers and pesticides)		C-1.9; B-1.10 C-1.17; B-3.11 B 3.12; A-3.14 B-3.26		•	•
5. Planting materials				•	•
6. Climate change			Consult the Introduction of Principle 1 (2017 Standard)	•	•

Table 5

Productivity Plan (2 of 2)

Plan Contents	Related criteria			Group Admin.	Farm Admin.
	CC	CIC	Applicable references		
7. Extreme weather situations		There are no related criteria		•	•
8. Estimated production volumes and desired product quality for crops or cattle production covered under the scope of the certificate and for the next production cycle	1.2 1.3			•	•
9. Labor		There are no related criteria		•	•
10. Identification of agricultural practices to optimize productivity and use inputs efficiently		There are no related criteria		•	•

To evaluate compliance with Criterion C-1.7 it is important to take into account the definition of **Climate Smart Agriculture**, accepted by Rainforest Alliance :

An approach to developing the technical, policy and investment conditions to achieve sustainable agricultural development for food security under climate change. It is composed of three main pillars: sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes;

- 1) adapting and building resilience to climate change;*
- 2) reducing and/or removing greenhouse gases emissions, where possible.*

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Best practices for the manager and the auditor

The Manager and the external Auditor consider the following aspects related to the plan for optimizing productivity:

- Verify that the plan to optimize productivity contemplates what is required in the criteria associated with each topic.
- Evaluate whether the agricultural management plan to optimize productivity is adjusted to the size and processes of the farm, and whether it effectively reflects the reality of the farm in terms of identifying agricultural practices for optimizing productivity and using inputs efficiently.
- Determine whether what is described in the plan for productivity is understandable and user friendly.
- Verify whether there are documents or records that support the actions implemented on the farm to optimize productivity, for example:
 - Estimated production volumes and desired product quality for crops or cattle production covered in the scope of the certificate
 - Records for estimated use of pesticides and fertilizers
 - Records on water use for operations that use irrigation systems or use water in their processing facilities or cattle production.
 - Records of monitoring of pests and diseases, among others that apply.

Training plan

The training plan is a tool to prepare and instruct farm personnel and producers on the implementation the 2017 Standard criteria. It generates the necessary skills for establishing an efficient production process.

Training increases the productivity of farm workers and group members farms by making them more competitive and creating opportunities to improve working conditions.

Training is strongly allied with meeting the objectives and goals of the Group Administrator and the Farm Management.

It constitutes a knowledge base and skills required for the performance of the work in an efficient, safe and competent manner. It also provides information on the impact the work can generate if done incorrectly.



The 2017 Standard refer to aspects related to the training plan in 14 criteria, of which 4 correspond directly to critical criteria (3.3; 4.12; 4.14; 4.16) and 8 to continuing improvement criteria (C-1.8; B-1.11; B-1.12; C-1.17; C-1.20; B-3.45; B-4.44; A-2.13).

Table N°5 includes all aspects related to the topic of training.

The objective of this table is to compile the criteria of the 2017 Standard that involve training topics within their scope. It specifies which criteria and aspects are the direct responsibility of the Group Administrator and which are the responsibility of the farm administration.

In addition to the training topics, it also refers to the criteria that request records as evidence of compliance with the action.

Table 6

Training Plan

Aspects required for the training plan	CC	CIC	Group Admin.	Farm Admin.
1) Development and implementation of the training plan so that workers comply with the requirements of the 2017 Standard and their tasks.		C-1.8	x	x
2) Records related to each training topic, including the evidence of women's participation.		B-1.11 B-1.12	x	x
3) Training plan and other support activities for members of the group, based on needs identified through the governance structure of the group and the group administrator planning process.		C-1.17 C-1.20	x	
4) Training for workers on emergency procedures and responses for damage to crops or attacks on wildlife.		A-2.13		x
5) Training on the content of the IPM plan.	3.3			x
6) Training on water treatment systems to purify water for drinking (small producers).	4.12		x	
7) Training on the occupational health plan (prevention or reduction of high risks to the health of the group administrator's personnel and group members).	4.14		x	x
8) Training on the safe management and application of pesticides and other hazardous substances.	4.16		x	x
9) Training on increasing energy efficiency in the domestic use of firewood by workers, producers, and their families.		B-3.45	x	x
10) Training on first aid.		B-4.44	x	x

Best practices for the manager and the auditor

The Manager and the external Auditor consider the following aspects related to the Training plan:

- **Prior analysis of group or farm needs:** It is evident that the training program responds to the specific training needs of the farms or workers. Verify whether an assessment was made in advance to determine the viability and functionality of the training activities.
- **The training activities are related to the tasks done by the workers:** The objective of the training is to improve farm, worker and administration efficiency. Verify whether the training program includes introductory and training activities that are based on the work performed by the personnel of the group administrator and the farm, producers and workers.
- **Documentation of training:** To determine the validation, functionality and level of knowledge acquired through training activities, a cross-check is done between the training topics implemented and the supporting records and interviews of workers who participated in the activities.
- **Evaluation of training results:** Internal inspections and external audits are evaluation mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of the training received by farm personnel and the member farms of the group administrator. The management and evaluation of the training plan ensures that its design includes introductory and training activities based on corrective and preventive actions derived from the risk assessment required in critical criterion 4.14 (Occupational Health and Safety) and any nonconformities identified in the internal inspections and external audits.

The Manager and the external Auditor also verify the following:

- How do the Group Administrator and Farm administration identify the training needs?
 - How are the training needs for specific tasks analyzed?
 - Is training conducted, reviewed and modified when necessary?
 - How is the training documented and tracked?
-

Management by the group administrator to support the members

Group administrators support their members to improve their knowledge and capacity for the implementation of practices towards sustainable agriculture. It is the group administrators who develop a management system that ensures the compliance of the group members and their farms with the requirements of the 2017 Standard.

This management system is a documented set of plans and procedures that a group will implement to ensure that it complies with the requirements of 2017 Standard and policies.

The 2017 Standard assigns the group administrator a number of responsibilities in the management of the group, including documentary records, training of producers, and management of group internal governance.

The SAN/RA Certification System delegates on the group administrator the responsibility of the inspection of each one of the farms that are included into the certificate scope; and requires the certification body to audit a representative sample of such farms, not only to evaluate their performance, but mainly to evaluate the group administrator performance and determine if the delegation of responsibilities is “safe”

As part of the management system, the group administrator develops and implements a group governance structure, which establishes:

- Transparent rules and processes for managing and focusing on making decisions related to group members
- Non-discriminatory criteria for the selection of members
- Specific responsibilities for group members in terms of compliance with the applicable criteria of the 2017 Standard.
- The mechanisms, procedures or rules through which the administrative control and direction of the group members is exercised, as in the following examples:
 - Procedure for enrolling group members;
 - Procedures for sanctions and complaints;
 - Procedure for the identification and control of conflicts of interest;
 - Procedures for evaluation and monitoring (internal inspection).



Functions of the group administrator

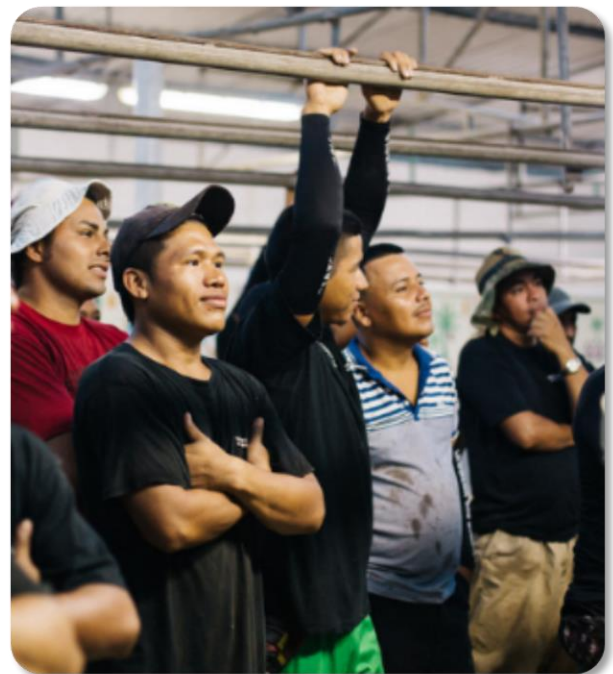
In the case of individual farms, it is the farms management responsibility to assure compliance with the 2017 Standard. In the case of farm groups, it is the group administrator who assumes the responsibility to assure that all member farms covered by the certification scope are in compliance with the 2017 Standard.

The group administrator is also responsible for providing assistance and facilitating the planning process for member farms, considering that on-farm planning helps the producers assess the conditions and key risks that affect the productivity and sustainability of the farm.

All the Principles of the 2017 Standard include criteria that refer to actions of the Group Administrator and the individual farm management, in order to indicate that the scope of or compliance with a criterion is the responsibility of the Group Administrator when the farms are under that type of model, or it is the responsibility of the individual farm management when this falls under other certification models. Example:

C-1.9: The farm administration and the group administrator analyze the farm's records on inputs and production at least annually to evaluate the achievements of the farm's management plan and make adjustments to it for the next year.

The criterion for continuing improvement C-1.9, indicates that when farms are under the Group Administrator model, it is the responsibility of their administrator to advise the managers of the members farms on how to carry out an annual analysis of the records that support the application of agrochemicals and other records related to production activities; this is to determine whether the farm's management plan requires adjustments or modifications for the next year. It is important to consider that in criterion C-1.9 specifically, when a management plan is required, this refers to the agricultural management plan required in C-1.7, the criterion for continuing improvement.



Tables for criteria

The following tables organize all the criteria and requirements under the responsibility of the Group Administrator throughout the 2017 Standard. Their content is:

- **Table 7:** Documents that comprise the management system
- **Table 8:** Documents for the management system and governance structure
- **Table 9:** Establishes the relationship of the Principles of the Standard with the criteria where the Group Administrator has direct responsibility in the implementation of actions to comply with what the scope of a criterion requires.

The information in these tables is intended to guide the Manager and the External Auditor about which documents or actions are the direct responsibility of the Group Administrator.

Therefore, the Manager and the External Auditor consider the following:

- Does the Group Administrator’s management comply with the requirements for each one of the critical criteria and criterion for continuing improvement, which includes certain responsibilities?
- Does the scope and content of the documents and records correspond to what was requested in each one of the criteria?



Table 7: Management system (documents required)

Documents	Related criteria		
	CC	CIC	Complementary information
1) Document with the identification of personnel responsible for the implementation of the social and environmental management system.	1.6		<p>Critical criterion 1.6 specifies “Resources are dedicated and <u>responsible personnel are assigned to the development</u> and implementation of the social and environmental management plans.”</p> <p>This can be in the form of an organizational diagram that includes the responsibilities or functions of all who form the group, (the Administrator’s staff, representatives of member farms, persons in charge of processing and storage centers).</p>
2) Enrollment records for all group members.	1.13		<p>Definition of <u>group administrator</u></p> <p>Include as a minimum: name, contact information, gender, age, location, crop and production areas</p>
3) Procedure for the selection, supervision and management of <u>service providers</u> .	1.5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of <u>servicer providers</u> • Guide to 2017 Standard critical criterion 1.5
4) Procedures for product traceability to ensure the integrity of the certified product.	1.2 1.3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide to 2017 Standard critical criteria 1.2 and 1.3
5) Training plan		C-1.17 C-1.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The section on training included in this module • Guide to 2017 Standard criterion 1.17 • Refer to Table N° 5
6) <u>Plan</u> for providing access to health services and <u>basic education</u> for members when these services are not available.		C-1.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of health services • Definition of basic education • Guide for the interpretation of criterion 1.18 <p><i>This procedure only applies in regions where these services are not available in areas where the group members are located.</i></p>

Table 8:
Management system (Governance structure 1)

Documents	Related criterion		
	CC	CIC	Complementary information
1) Procedure for the selection and enrollment of group members. Include the non-discrimination statement.		C-1.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of procedures • Definition of group member • Definition of small producer <p><i>The procedure indicates the requirements necessary for joining the group and explains the steps to follow for incorporating new members.</i></p> <p><i>Note: clause 9, section (g) of the 2017 Certification Rules define the requirement for every new farm to be included in a certified group of farms to be on the same performance level as the rest of the group.</i></p>
2) Commitment agreement signed by the members of the group. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The obligations of the group member to the 2017 Standard. • Right to appeal nonconformities • Right to resign when considered necessary 		C-1.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of group member
3) Procedures for sanctions and appeals for nonconformities of group members with the applicable criteria of this standard and with internal requirements of the group administrator.		C-1.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide to 2017 Standard Criterion 1.16 <p><i>The procedure describes the progressive sanction measures. It includes a description of the actions for informing the producer about the content and scope of the sanctions and complaints procedures.</i></p> <p><i>It explains the steps a group members must follow to appeal any taken decision.</i></p>

Table 8:
Management system (Governance structure 2)

Documents	Related criterion		
	CC	CIC	Complementary information
<p>4) Internal inspection procedures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of inspections, • Season of the year when the inspection is done, • Description of the procedure to follow, which ensures that the full scope of the 2017 Standard is evaluated for every member at least every three years. • Schedule of the visits for each year. 	1.14 1.6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide to 2017 Standard Criteria 1.14 and 1.6 • Definition of internal inspections • Definition of member farms • Criterion 1.6 specifies, “Regular evaluations are done to measure compliance with this standard.” <p><i>The procedure refers to the tools (documents) used in the inspection, and the individuals responsible for its implementation and the corrective actions plan that is generation after the internal inspection. The procedure specifies the scope of the internal inspection (group administrator, member farms, processing and packaging centers)</i></p>
<p>5) Document that identifies the <u>laws applicable</u> under the Rainforest Alliance scope. Compliance with legislation applicable to the crop is demonstrated and there are written confirmations regarding this compliance.</p>	1.6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of applicable laws • Guide to 2017 Standard critical criterion 1.6
<p>6) Documented mechanism for the calculation and non-discriminatory distribution of earnings to its <u>group members</u>, and communicating the distribution of the earnings to them in a transparent way.</p>		C 1.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of group administrator • Definition of group members • Guide to 2017 Standard criterion 1.18

Best practices for the manager and the auditor

The Manager and the external Auditor analyze and verify the following:

- The documents comprising the Governance Structure form part of the Internal Management system;
- The contents of the Internal Management System includes the 2017 Standard criteria;
- The governance structure established by the Group Administrator is efficient in managing the group (verifying whether the related documents facilitate decision-making by the Group Administrator and the members);
- The members of the group have good knowledge of the scope of the different procedures that comprise the governance structure and other documents of the Internal Management System;
- The group members farms are aware of their rights and obligations and know to exercise it.
- The documents comprising the Internal Management system, especially the ones for the Governance Structure, do not contain indications that could be considered discriminatory. For example, one discriminatory practice is that the Group Administrator decides not to affiliate small producers of a certain area.

A cross-check is done between what the Internal Management System documents say and the level of knowledge and understanding by the group administrator's direct members and the persons in charge of the member farms.

Table 8:
Responsibilities of the group administrator according to the different criteria.

Principle	Areas	CC	CIC
1. Efficient Planning and Management System	Critical Criteria related to the group administrator	1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6	
	Efficient Planning and Management system		C-1.7; C-1.8 C-1.9; B-1.10 B-1.11; B-1.12
	Management of the Group Administrator in support of the Members	1.13 1.14	C-1.15; C-1.16 C-1.17; C-1.18 C-1.19; C-1.20
2.. Conservation of Biodiversity	Native Vegetation		C-2.6
3. Conservation of Natural Resources	Conservation and soil management		A-3.14
	Integrated Pest Management		C-3.24; B-3.25 B-3.26
	Pesticide Management		B-3.36
	Waste Management		C-3.38; A-3.42 A-3.43
	Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions		B-3.44; B-3.45 A-3.46
4. Better livelihoods and human wellbeing	Critical Criteria related to the group administrator	4.8; 4.9 4.12; 4.13 4.14; 4.16 4.20	
	Employment and Wage Conditions		C-4.21 C-4.22 B-4.24 B-4.26 A-4.27
	Decent wage – Essential needs of workers and their families		C-4.28; C-4.29 B-4.30; B-4.31 A-4.32; A-4.33
	Occupational Health and Safety		C-4.34; C-4.35 C-4.36; C-4.37 C-4.41; C-4.42 B-4.44; B-4.46 A-4.47
5. Sustainable Cattle Production	Critical Criteria related to the group administrator	5.1; 5.2	
	Sustainable Cattle Production		C-5.7; C-5.11 B-5.19