

# ANNEX 11:

## GUIDANCE ON NON-DEFORESTATION APPROACH

*Public Consultation: Draft Version 2.0*

### **Core criteria:**

*"From January 1 2014 onward, forests or other natural ecosystems have not been converted to agricultural production or other land uses."*

### **Explanation of the criteria**

The cut-off date (January 1, 2014) is fixed with no broad exceptions or leeway. After this date, any deforestation or conversion renders a given area or production unit as non-compliant with the Rainforest Alliance certification scheme. However, The Rainforest Alliance Certification Rules establish a mechanism of compensation for minor destruction of ecosystems.

#### **1. Compensation for minor destruction of ecosystems with advance notification**

If the destruction of natural ecosystems -but never for HCV areas up to 1% of the total certified land area is planned by a certified farm manager or group administrator, it will not be a cause for certificate cancellation provided that the responsible CB was informed beforehand and authorized this minor destruction under the following conditions:

- i. Destruction of natural ecosystems will take place only for the reason of installing new farm infrastructure or repairing previously existing farm infrastructure (roads, irrigation infrastructure, including pumping facilities, channels, ponds, reservoirs, dams, and impoundments), permanently installed machinery, and facilities for washing, processing, or packing) or for smallholder farms for the purpose of planting food crops;
- ii. The applicable law is complied with.

#### **2. Compensation for unannounced minor destruction of ecosystems**

Minor destruction of natural ecosystems – but never for HCV areas -that have inadvertently been conducted by a certified farm manager or member farm of a certified group administrator or certified group administrator is permitted only under the following conditions:

- The destruction event is the first one during the organization's Rainforest Alliance certification history.
- The converted area is located outside of HCV areas, protected areas, or land that is illegal to convert;
- A plan with objectives, quantitative targets and parameters, time-bound management actions, resources and responsible personnel for the required restoration is prepared by an ecological restoration specialist and submitted for



approval to the Rainforest Alliance within three months of the date of destruction, including the following requirements:

- I. The destruction is mitigated through restoration in the or close to the converted area or by setting-aside for conservation at least a 1:1 ratio of ecologically comparable areas;
- II. The converted natural ecosystem area is taken out of agricultural production and designated with the aim to restore the area to its former natural condition;
- III. On larger farms, destruction of natural ecosystems of up to 2% of the farm area or 50 hectares (whichever is less) is only permitted if such destruction is compensated by at least a 1:1 ratio of ecologically comparable areas, as specified in a time-bound plan prepared by a qualified professional and approved by the Rainforest Alliance or its representative;
- IV. Destruction of up to 10% of the farm area or 1 hectare (whichever is less) is permitted without the need for compensation. In the case of smallholder groups, these thresholds apply at the level of each member farm.

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