



## WHAT'S IN OUR 2020 CERTIFICATION PROGRAM?

# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND SMART METERS

Empowering farmers to be the drivers of their success

**Sustainability is a journey that doesn't end when a certificate is awarded. Fixed sustainability benchmarks that apply to all farmers are key to upholding a high standard of certification, but in our 2020 Certification Program, we are going a step further to help farmers make even more progress on sustainability goals. Our new Sustainable Agriculture Standard will help empower farmers to adopt a model of continuous improvement in line with our reimagining of certification. In addition to traditional pass/fail certification requirements, farmers will also be able to set targets most beneficial for their unique context.**

### HOW DOES THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT APPROACH FIT WITHIN THE NEW STANDARD?

In the Farm Requirements of our 2020 standard, there are core requirements and improvement requirements.

**Core requirements** outline key sustainable agriculture practices that always have to be met in order to achieve certification and are measured according to a pass/fail model.

**Improvement requirements** are designed to further promote and measure progress on sustainable practices. They are divided between mandatory and self-selected. Some improvement requirements are pass/fail while others are measured with Smart Meters.

### WHAT ARE SMART METERS?

A novel feature of our 2020 standard are Smart Meters. Smart Meters give farmers a way to set goals for their farm based on what's most beneficial and feasible within their specific context. Rather than having predefined targets set by the Rainforest Alliance, farmers themselves will set the targets for these improvements and define the necessary actions needed to achieve them.

Farmers will conduct a baseline assessment and define targets for Smart Meters before their first certification or in the first year of certification (depending on the requirement), plan and implement actions to achieve the targets, and monitor results. They will then use the data collected on Smart Meter requirements to

reflect on yearly and to adapt measures in case little or no progress is shown. This creates a feedback loop that enables farmers to continuously improve their practices.

### HOW ARE SMART METERS AUDITED?

There are mandatory and self-selected Smart Meters. For the mandatory Smart Meter requirements, the quality of the data and the actions undertaken will be verified during audits. The results themselves will not influence the certification decision. However, if no data has been collected or if the quality of the data is very low, this may have consequences for certification. For the self-selected Smart Meters, only the quality of the data will be audited.

### REIMAGINING CERTIFICATION AND THE 2020 CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Reimagining certification is our long-term vision for the future of certification. It is part of our wider strategy at the Rainforest Alliance to drive change through our four main areas of work: climate, forests, livelihoods, and human rights.

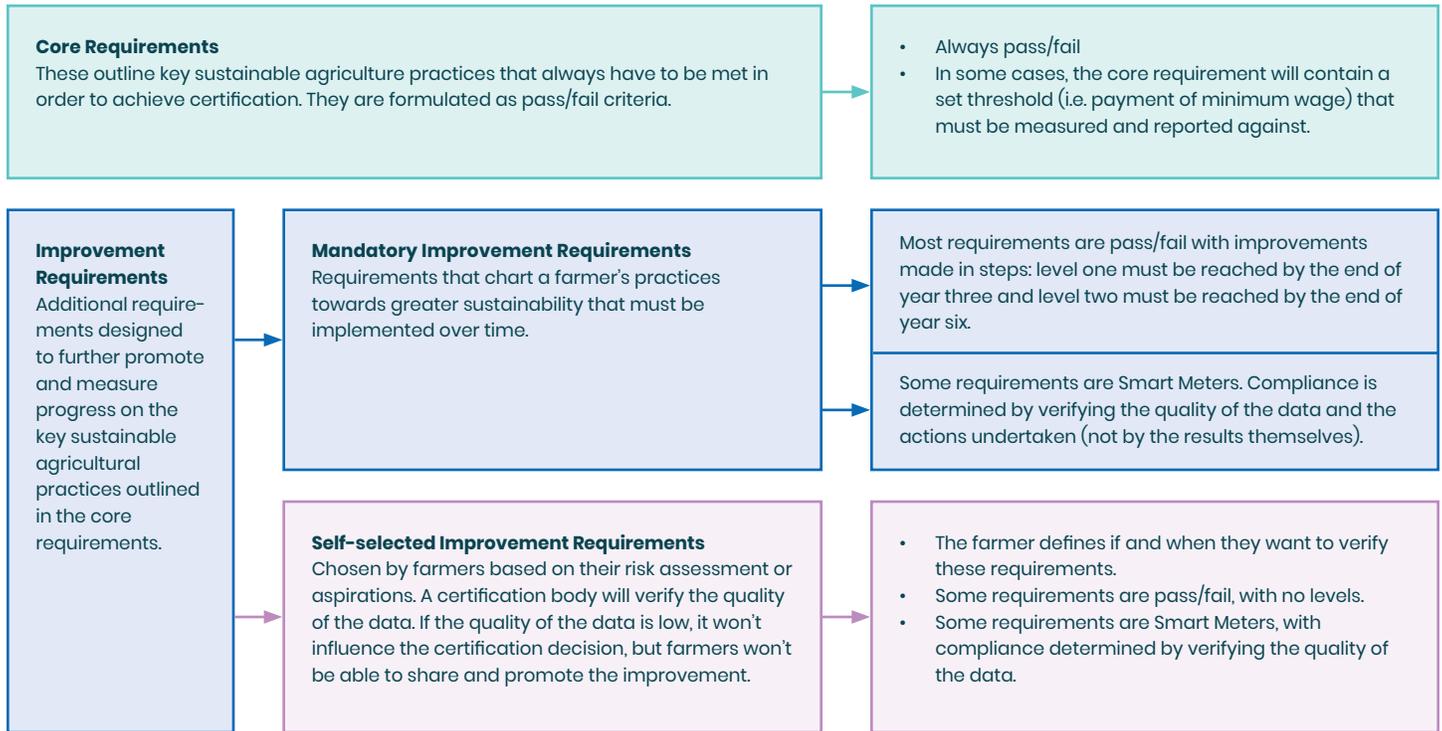
In June 2020, the Rainforest Alliance takes the first step on its journey towards "reimagining certification" with the publication of its 2020 Certification Program. We've been working on this new program since 2018, when the Rainforest Alliance and UTZ merged.

The 2020 Certification Program—including a new Sustainable Agriculture Standard—is a unique opportunity to really change the way that certification works and how it delivers value to the many people and businesses around the world that use it.

Between June 2020 and mid-2021, the Rainforest Alliance will roll out the new program around the world, including a comprehensive training plan. Audits against the new program will begin in mid-2021.

REQUIREMENT TYPE

COMPLIANCE MEASUREMENT



WHY ARE WE TAKING THIS APPROACH?

Smart Meters support farmers in identifying the most effective measures they can take to achieve even more sustainable production. We have taken this approach to gain better insights into the performance of farms and their improvements over time. It also allows farmers to set their own targets that fit their local context. For example, while all farmers are required to conserve on-farm natural ecosystems as a core requirement, they can each set their own annual targets for the improvement of natural vegetation cover on their farm area. The data collected from Smart Meter indicators enables farmers to better display their efforts and quantify the benefits of more sustainable practices which contributes to better market access and prices for their goods.

HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM OUR PREVIOUS STANDARDS?

Both the UTZ Code of Conduct and the 2017 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard have gradual improvement systems where more requirements have to be met each year. All of them are pass/fail and mandatory.

HOW DOES THIS NEW APPROACH SUPPORT OTHER RAINFOREST ALLIANCE WORK?

In line with our [reimagining of certification](#), Smart Meters support our goal to become more data driven. Smart Meter data will give farmers, companies, and the Rainforest Alliance better insights into farm performance, and allow us to see where further support is required. The data can also be used for external reporting on the continuous improvements made by farmers, the Rainforest Alliance, and companies. Supply chain actors can ask farmers to use specific Smart Meter data for their own reporting and aggregated Smart Meter data can be used for advocacy purposes—for instance, to show the living wage gap in certain countries.

In our new certification program, the Supply Chain Requirements will also adopt a continuous improvement model. Many of them will follow a "stepwise approach" which gradually introduces new criteria for environmental, social, and economic conditions over time.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read more about [what to expect in our new certification program](#). For specific questions, email us at [cs@ra.org](mailto:cs@ra.org).



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