

WHAT'S IN OUR 2020 CERTIFICATION PROGRAM?

RISK-BASED ASSURANCE AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

Targeted guidance and monitoring for farmers and companies



The Rainforest Alliance works with many different farmers and companies operating in many different settings around the world. Whether we are working with a smallholder cocoa farmer in Ghana, the owner of a large banana plantation in Ecuador, or a coffee roaster in the United States; our standards and assurance systems must be flexible enough to adapt to these varied contexts. In our 2020 Certification Program, we are going further to ensure that farmers and companies are provided with the requirements that are relevant to their situation and that local risks in agricultural supply chains are taken into account.

WHAT IS OUR NEW APPROACH?

In line with our commitment to [reimagine certification](#), we are moving away from a one-size-fits-all model and towards one that can be adapted to different contexts. We are also moving towards an assurance model that is more risk-based and data-driven. While we will still have a global standard for all crops, our new approach supports farmers and companies to focus on the relevant requirements based on their operations and the specific sustainability risks they face. At the same time, information on risks in different contexts will equip certification bodies with more effective knowledge to carry out audits and help them focus on the issues that matter most.

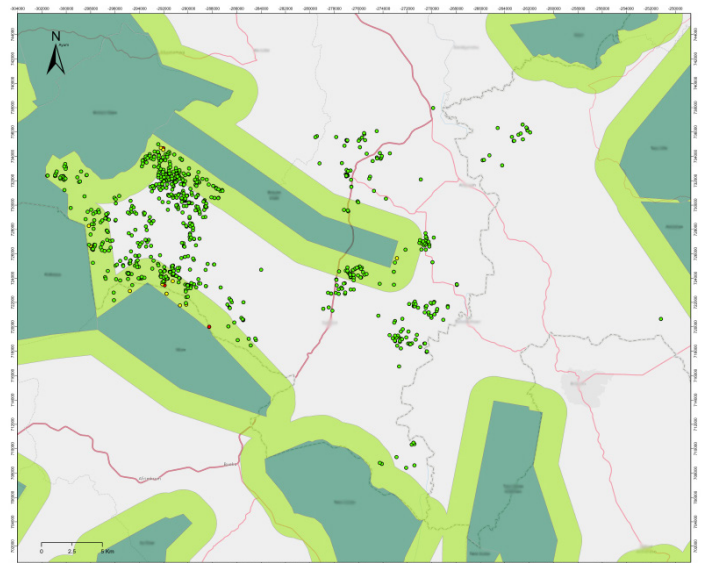
WHAT ARE THE KEY INNOVATIONS IN OUR NEW ASSURANCE SYSTEM?

A risk-based approach with enhanced data monitoring

Our new certification program focuses on identifying and mitigating sustainability risks rather than simply reacting once issues occur. The Rainforest Alliance 2020 Assurance System has been developed with a risk-based framework to enable this. Risk analyses are carried out at the farm and supply chain level and data is submitted via the Rainforest Alliance Certification Platform at several different stages of the certification process. This data is used to identify the relevant requirements for each farmer or company. We are also introducing the Supply Chain Risk Assessment, which evaluates the potential risks of a

company's operations, to determine the type and frequency of verification required. It provides companies with a checklist of the mandatory requirements for their operating context. This enhanced analysis allows farms and companies to identify risks and make timely adjustments instead of waiting until the end of the certification process when the audit results have been reported.

Data collected from these certification processes is also used by the Rainforest Alliance to create "risk maps". These maps indicate how high or low the risks of key sustainability issues such as child labor and forced labor are in a particular country. For example, geolocation data from certified producers is used to map the risk of deforestation and farm encroachment into protected areas. Farms and companies can use these risk maps to make informed decisions when addressing these issues, and certification bodies can use them to focus the auditing process on high-risk areas.



Risk map showing the locations of certified farms and protected areas (in green). Farms are color-coded according to the level of deforestation risk.

Farm Requirements can be contextualized in the following ways:

- Different requirements for small and large farms and small farms with hired workers
- Focus on relevant farm management practices and risk assessments
- Improvement requirements based on country risk maps for the issues of child labor and forced labor in countries where these risks are high
- Differentiated guidance for housing based on the operating region
- Improvement requirements (Smart Meters) that enable farmers to set targets fit for their situation

Supply Chain Requirements can be contextualized in the following ways:

- Additional human rights and social requirements for operating sites that show a high risk of human and workers' rights violations
- Assessment of environmental risks and applicability of relevant requirements in contexts where such risks are present
- Applicability of the Sustainability Differential and Sustainability Investments requirements for supply chain actors responsible for these payments
- Applicability of requirements related to different traceability levels (i.e. mass balance or segregation)
- Different levels and type of verification (desk audit, in-person audit, endorsement etc.) required based on the Supply Chain Risk Assessment

Contextualization for more targeted guidance (see above)

In our new program, all requirements of the 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard are gathered in one digital database. Upon registration, farms will receive the applicable Farm Requirements and companies will receive the relevant Supply Chain Requirements, identified through our Contextualization Framework Tool. The aim is to make requirements easier to understand by providing each farmer and company with those that are relevant for their unique needs.

New rules for more effective audits

In our new program, we are also strengthening auditing quality and consistency of how farms and companies implement the standard through specific requirements and guidance on:

- How to audit key sustainability requirements such as deforestation, child and forced labor, traceability etc.
- How to select the right audit sample for farm groups, workers' interviews, service providers etc.
- How to calculate audit duration

These innovations are designed to improve audit quality, help auditors better verify the identified sustainability risks of farms and companies, and standardize performance across certification bodies. By offering a system that leverages data and supports better auditing practices, we enable certification bodies to increase the usefulness and rigor of their audits and support continuous sustainability improvement across supply chains.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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

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.



United States:
125 Broad Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10004
tel: +1 (212) 677-1900
email: info@ra.org

The Netherlands:
De Ruyterkade 6
1013 AA, Amsterdam
tel: +31 20 530 8000
email: info@utz.org



Rainforest Alliance
[@RnfrstAlliance](#)
[@rainforestalliance](#)

RAINFOREST-ALLIANCE.ORG