

ANNEX S12

Additional Details on Requirements For No-Conversion

Version 1.1



**RAINFOREST
ALLIANCE**



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OBJECTIVE OF THE ANNEX

This annex provides additional details on requirement 6.1.1 that certified farms have no conversion of natural forests or ecosystems to agricultural production or other land uses.

CORE REQUIREMENT 6.1.1:

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

EXPLANATION OF THE REQUIREMENT

The purpose of requirement 6.1.1 is to ensure that agricultural production and other activities on certified farms does not cause the destruction of natural forests or ecosystems. Protection of natural forests or ecosystems, including wetlands and peatlands, is essential to mitigate the impact of climate change and protect the livelihoods of farmers and forest communities.

To uphold the standard's strict requirements on no-deforestation and no-conversion The cut-off date (January 1, 2014) is fixed with no exceptions. Any deforestation or conversion which occurred after this date renders a given area or production unit as non-compliant with the Rainforest Alliance standard and will generally be cause for decertification. However, some flexibility is provided to enable producers to adapt to changing conditions (including climate change), such as for the management of infrastructure or for minor cases which can be remediated as detailed below.

Definition of conversion of Land use

Conversion refers to any change of a natural ecosystem to another land use or profound change in the natural ecosystem's species composition, structure, or function. This includes the conversion of a natural ecosystem to a plantation, cropland, pasture, water reservoirs, infrastructure, mining, and urban areas. Deforestation is one form of conversion (conversion of natural forests). The conversion includes severe degradation or the introduction of management practices that result in a substantial and sustained change in the ecosystem's former species composition, structure, or function Change to natural ecosystems that meets this definition is considered to be conversion regardless of whether or not it is legal.

Identification of conversion

To provide support in detecting recent conversion of natural ecosystems Rainforest Alliance's geodata risk maps will give an overview of whether there is evidence from remote sensing of conversion on a certain farm for which geodata has been provided. The risk maps are made by overlaying geospatial location data, a baseline layer indicating forests present in 2014 and evidence of tree cover loss since the same cut-off year. The result will be a risk indication of farms that have deforested since 2014 and farms that could deforest in the future due to their current geolocation data. The Rainforest Alliance will also elaborate maps for monitoring the risk of encroachment into protected areas by overlaying the geolocation of the farms with up-to-date maps of Protected Areas. Rainforest Alliance risk maps will be updated each time the geolocation data is updated. The risk maps will be available to Certificate Holders on the Certification Platform.

Farm and group managers should use the results of the Rainforest Alliance risk maps to identify areas and producers at particular risk of non-compliance, assess this risk and take steps to manage it appropriately.



It is important to note that geolocation data cannot always distinguish between conversion and other forms of legitimate land use change such as;

- Forest plantations that are harvested and converted to agricultural use but do not involve conversion of natural ecosystem;
- Harvesting of shade trees that does not involve conversion of natural forests
- tree cover loss that occurred before the 2014 cut-off date;

Farm and group managers will need to investigate identified risk to determine the most appropriate management solution.

Minor conversions

For large farms (including those certified as part of a group) and individual farms, conversion of forests or other natural ecosystems to agricultural production or other land uses that occurred after January 1st, 2014 must not comprise more than 1% of the land of the farm or more than 10 hectares (whichever is smaller). If conversion has occurred below this threshold farm management must develop a restoration/compensation plan showing how the conversion of forest or ecosystem will be remediated in collaboration with an ecologist. The planned restoration must be:

- **Proportional:** The area to be restored must be at least as big as the converted area. This requirement can be met by taking the converted area out of production and restoring it, or by restoring and/or providing compensatory conservation benefits on a nearby area;
- **Equivalent:** The ecosystem to be restored must be equivalent to the lost natural ecosystem in ecological value. If the value of the restored area is or will be lower than that of the converted area, then a larger area must be restored;
- **Additional:** The restoration activities must be additional to the activities planned for other reasons, including compliance with the Rainforest Alliance requirements on natural vegetation;
- **Permanent:** The restoration activities must be designed in a way to ensure long-term viability, including funding, management responsibilities, and clear land designations and land rights;

The plan shall include intermediate time bound targets, clear responsibilities of activities, and a plan for monitoring at least once every three years.



For group certification, in general group members with farms where deforestation has occurred must be excluded from the group. If non-complaint (Large and small) farms comprise more than 5% of the total or (at least 10 ha) the group cannot be certified. However, if the proportion of group members who are non-compliant is less than 1% of the total group membership the group may implement measures to remediate and avoid further conversion. These measures may include:

- Establishment of a sanctioning system for group members to prevent further deforestation.
- Implementation of awareness raising measures or training for group members
- Development and implementation of an Agroforestry plan to mitigate loss of prior conservation values by transitioning an area at least three times the converted area. The plan includes intermediate time bound targets, clear responsibilities of activities, and a plan for monitoring at least once every three years with the goal of reaching the agroforestry targets within 6 years. This plan is included in the farm management plan.
- Plan to collect polygons of farms units of all producers of medium and high risk of deforestation and encroachment to protected areas

No conversion may ever take place in a Protected Area or their officially designated buffer zones, (except where this is allowed by applicable law), or in a place and manner than violates the requirement in the standard or applicable law.

Minor conversion for infrastructure management

Conversion of natural ecosystems up to 1% of the total certified land area to maintain or expand infrastructure essential for farm or processing operations may be permitted under the following conditions:

- i. Conversion may take place only for the reason of installing new farm infrastructure or repairing or modernizing existing farm infrastructure (e.g., roads or irrigation infrastructure, including pumping facilities, channels, ponds, reservoirs, dams, and impoundments), permanently installed machinery, or facilities for washing, processing, or packing.
- ii. Farm or group management documents the plan for the installation in advance, including the reason why the proposed infrastructure installation or repair cannot be carried out without converting the relevant area.
- iii. Polygons of the overall certified land as well as the converted area are collected to demonstrate that the land area to be converted is below the allowed threshold of 1% of total certified land. NB The 1% threshold is the cumulative total allowable area from the first date of application for certification.
- iv. The conversion fully complies with Requirement 6.1.2 so Production or processing does not occur in protected areas or their officially designated buffer zones, except where it complies with applicable law.
- v. The conversion fully complies with applicable law.
- vi. The conversion is consistent with any designations or recommendations regarding High Conservation Values contained in any HCV assessment(s) of the site or area.