



Rainforest Alliance
Policy on the transition period to the
2020 certification system for banana
certificate holders

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Version 1.0

More information?

For more information about the Rainforest Alliance, visit www.rainforest-alliance.org or contact info@ra.org

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Policy

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August 19, 2020	July 1, 2021	Until next review
Developed by:		Approved by:
Standards & Assurance		Leadership Team
Linked to (code and name of documents, if applicable):		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SA-R-GA-2-V1.0 Transition Rules for current UTZ and Rainforest Alliance certificate holders wishing to be certified under the 2020 Rainforest Alliance certification program. • 2017 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard • 2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard 		
Replaces:		
N/A		
Clause or criterion number:		
Rules 13 and 21 in the Transition Rules		
Applicable to:		
Rainforest Alliance banana certificate holders		
Regions:		
All regions		
Crops:	Type of organizations:	
Banana	Farms and supply chain actors	

1. Introduction

The Rainforest Alliance is an international non-profit organization working at the intersection of business, agriculture, and forests to make responsible business the new normal. We are an alliance of companies, farmers, foresters, communities, and consumers committed to creating a world where people and nature thrive in harmony. For more information about Rainforest Alliance, visit our website: <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org>.

2. Policy

2.1. Introduction

The 2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard will become binding on July 1, 2021 for all crops. Certificate holders will have until June 30, 2022 to undertake their first audit to this standard. During this transition period Farm level Certificate Holders will be required to comply only with the Core Requirements of the standard. After a successful audit they will be issued with a Transition Certificate valid for one year. The purpose of this transition period is to allow certificate holders enough time to put in place the required systems and capacities to comply with the requirements of the new standard. Following the transition year Farm level Certificate Holders will be audited against the full set of applicable requirements in the Standard and begin a three-year certification cycle.

During the transition period Chain of Custody Certificate Holders will receive a desk audit only against the full set of Supply Chain Requirements in the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard. After a successful audit they will be issued with a Transition Certificate valid for one year. Following the transition year Supply Chain level Certificate Holders will be required to receive a full audit, including an in-person audit where necessary, to begin a three-year certification cycle.

However, due to the unique market characteristics of the sector, banana growers will have an extended period until 31 December 2022 to complete their first audit to the 2020 Rainforest Alliance standard. For their first audit under the new standard Banana producers will be required to comply only with the Core Requirements of the standard. After a successful audit they will be issued with a Transition Certificate valid for one year. The next audit will be against the full set of applicable requirements in the Standard to begin a three-year certification cycle.

2.2. Transition period rules for banana certificate holders

1. **For new or noncertified banana farms:** During the period between July 1 2021 and June 30 2022, banana farms that do not hold a valid Rainforest Alliance certificate by June 30 2021, shall be audited based on the 2020 Rainforest Alliance certification system. The farm requirements related to Shared Responsibility, including the management of Sustainability Differential and Sustainability investments will only be audited following the first available contracting cycle that begins post July 2021 (*see 2.3 below*).
2. **For existing RA certified banana farms:** All banana certificate holders shall undertake at least one Rainforest Alliance audit during 2021 as a condition to remain certified. For audits taking place in the second semester of 2021, banana certificate holders may choose to be audited using either the 2017 or the 2020 Rainforest Alliance certification system.

3. For banana farms that chose to be audited in 2021 against the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard the farm requirements related to Sustainability Differential and Sustainability Investments will not apply. The farm requirements related to Shared Responsibility, including the management of Sustainability Differential and Sustainability investments will only be audited following the first available contracting cycle that begins post July 2021 (*see 2.3 below*).
4. Rule 13 of the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Certification System Transition Rules indicates that “Audits based on the current version of the UTZ and/or Rainforest Alliance Certification Programs shall not be carried out after June 30, 2021”. By issuing this Policy, Rainforest Alliance authorizes banana certificate holders an exception to this rule, extending the period in which they may be audited against the 2017 Rainforest Alliance standard. Between July 1 and December 31, 2021, banana certificate holders may choose between the following options:
 - a. To be audited to the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard, according to the Transition Rules for current UTZ and Rainforest Alliance Certificate Holders.
 - b. To undertake the respective certification or surveillance audit corresponding to their year in the current certification cycle, following the 2017 Rainforest Alliance Certification Rules, including the Policy on Certification Requirements for Certificate Holders on Year 3, where applicable.
5. Certificate Holders who chose to be audited against the 2017 Rainforest Alliance Standard between 1 July and 31 December 2021 must be audited against the core requirements of the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard between January 1 and December 31, 2022. They will then be issued with a one-year transition certificate. Transition period audits will not be possible after January 1, 2023. The certification audit process that starts the three-year certification cycle shall be closed, with a certification decision, before December 31, 2023.
6. Irrespective of the chosen option, audits based on the 2017 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard will not be authorized by Rainforest Alliance after December 31, 2021. Verification audits, programmed to close nonconformities opened during an audit process based on the 2017 standard, and the certification decision, shall occur before December 31, 2021. Otherwise, an audit based on the 2020 standard will have to take place to achieve certification.
7. It is the certificate holder’s responsibility to:
 - a. Inform themselves which certification bodies are authorized to conduct audits against the relevant standard (2017 or 2020) and apply for an audit with an authorized CB.
 - b. Inform the certification body which certification system they are requesting the audit for
 - c. Request the audit with enough time in advance to the certification body they work with.
8. **For new or noncertified banana supply chain (chain of custody) actors:** From July 1, 2021 supply chain actors that do not hold a valid Rainforest Alliance certificate by June 30 2021, shall be audited based on the 2020 Rainforest Alliance certification system. The Supply Chain requirements related to Shared Responsibility, including the payment of Sustainability

Differential and Sustainability investments will only be audited following the first available contracting cycle that begins post July 2021 (*see 2.3 below*).

9. **For existing RA certified banana supply chain (chain of custody) actors:** All banana supply chain certificate holders shall undertake the required Rainforest Alliance audit or obtain the appropriate exemption during 2021 as a condition to remain certified. For audits taking place in the second semester of 2021, banana supply chain certificate holders may choose to be audited using either the 2017 or the 2020 Rainforest Alliance certification system. The Supply Chain requirements related to Shared Responsibility, including the payment of Sustainability Differential and Sustainability investments will only be audited following the first available contracting cycle that begins post July 2021 (*see 2.3 below*).

2.3. Applicability of the Requirements related to Sustainability Differential and Sustainability Investments

1. The 2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard requirements related to the payment of Sustainability Differential and Sustainability Investments¹ will only be mandatory for contracts and agreements established in the first available contracting cycle post July 2021.

¹ See Rainforest Alliance Standard chapter 3.2 (Sustainability Differential) which apply to both farms (3.2.1 and 3.2.2) and supply chain actors (3.2.3 through to 3.2.7) and 3.3 (Sustainability Investments).