

ANNEX S15

Additional Details on Conservation and Restoration Areas Outside Farm Boundaries

Version 1.1





Translation Disclaimer

For any question related to the precise meaning of the information contained in the translation, please refer to the official English version for clarification. Any discrepancies or differences in meaning due to translation are not binding and have no effect for auditing or certification purposes.

More information?

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

Document Name:		Document Code:	Version:
Annex S15: Additional Details on Conservation and Restoration Areas Outside Farm Boundaries		SA-S-SD-16-V1.1	1
Date of first publication:	Date of revision:	Valid From:	Expires by:
January 31, 2021	N/A	July 1, 2021	Until further notice
Developed by:		Approved by:	
Rainforest Alliance Department Standards and Assurance		Director of Standards and Assurance	
Linked to:			
SA-S-SD-1-V1.1 Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard, Farm requirements			
Replaces:			
Applicable to:			
Farm certificate holders			
Country/Region:			
All			
Crop:		Type of Certification:	
All crops in the scope of the Rainforest Alliance certification system; please see Certification Rules		Farm certificate holders	

Any use of this content including reproduction, modification, distribution or republication, without the prior written consent of Rainforest Alliance is strictly prohibited.



OBJECTIVE OF THE ANNEX

This annex explains the additional details on the requirement for natural vegetation with regards to the option of having conservation and restoration areas outside the certified farm boundaries.

REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO NATURAL VEGETATION

6.2.3. MANDATORY SMART METER

Producers maintain, and management monitors, natural vegetation cover and reports annually on the indicator from year one onwards.

If there is less than 10% of the total area under natural vegetation cover or less than 15% for farms growing shade-tolerant crops, management sets targets and takes actions for farms to reach these thresholds as required in 6.2.4.

Natural vegetation is vegetation made up predominantly of native or locally adapted species, resembling in species composition and structure the vegetation that occurs or would occur in the absence of human interference. Natural vegetation can include one or more of the following (not exclusive):

- *Riparian buffers.*
- *Conservation areas within the farm.*
- *Natural vegetation in agroforestry systems.*
- *Border plantings, live fences and barriers around housing and infrastructure, or in other ways.*
- *Conservation and restoration areas outside the certified farm that effectively provide for long-term protection of the subject areas (for at least 25 years) and yield additional conservation value and protection status relative to the status quo.*

Indicator:

- *% of total farm area under natural vegetation cover.*

6.2.4. MANDATORY IMPROVEMENT (L2)

There is natural vegetation cover

- *On at least 10% of the total area for farms growing non-shade tolerant crops.*
- *On at least 15% of the total area for farms growing shade-tolerant crops.*

EXPLANATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS 6.2.3 & 6.2.4

Requirement 6.2.3 is a mandatory smart meter that requires producers to monitor and report annually on the percentage (%) of natural vegetation on the farm. If the percentage of natural vegetation on the farm is less than 10% (for non-shade-tolerant crops) or 15% (for shade-tolerant crops), producers need to set targets and take actions to increase the percentage of natural vegetation. Requirement 6.2.3 is flexible and offers diversity of options for producers to be able to reach the required percentage of natural vegetation on the farm or group of farms.

Requirement 6.2.4 is a mandatory improvement that, in year six, producers need to reach at least 10% (for non-shade-tolerant crops) or 15% (for shade-tolerant crops) of natural vegetation.



ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THE OPTION – CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION AREAS OUTSIDE THE CERTIFIED FARM

Where it is not possible to achieve the percentage of natural vegetation as per requirement 6.2.3 on the farm without a reduction in the productive agricultural area, producers have the option to complement the area of on-farm vegetation with conservation or restoration areas outside the certified farm boundaries. This option is possible under certain conditions, as presented below.

CONDITIONS FOR CONSERVATION OR RESTORATION AREA OUTSIDE THE CERTIFIED FARM BOUNDARIES

1. Producers can have conservation or restoration areas outside the farm boundaries only if they are not able to reach the required percentage of natural vegetation on their farm.
2. Producers do not convert existing natural vegetation on the farm into other land uses. Conservation areas outside farm boundaries can only be used to complement existing and additional on-farm vegetation. External conservation areas cannot be used to replace on-farm vegetation.
3. Producers can have part of the required percentage of natural vegetation on their farm and a percentage of natural vegetation as conservation area outside the farm boundaries. For instance, a producer may have 5% of natural vegetation on the farm, and 5% outside the farm.
4. The conservation or restoration area outside the certified farm boundaries effectively provides long-term protection of that area for at least 25 years.
5. The conservation or restoration area outside the certified farm boundaries yields additional conservation value and protection status relative to the status quo: the area is maintained or improves in terms of biodiversity value.
6. The conservation or restoration area outside the certified farm boundaries is in a similar ecosystem to the certified farm. For instance, if the certified farm is in an area where rainforest is the predominant ecosystem, the conservation or restoration area is located in an area in which rainforest is predominant as well.



CONDITIONS FOR THE AUDITABILITY OF CONSERVATION OR RESTORATION AREAS OUTSIDE THE CERTIFIED FARM BOUNDARIES

1. Certificate holders provide polygon data for the conservation or restoration area(s) outside farm boundaries.
2. Certificate holders indicate the size (ha) of the conservation or restoration area(s) as well as the percentage this represents in relation to certified farm area.
3. Certificate holders show documentation demonstrating that the conservation or restoration area(s) can be provided with effective long-term protection of at least 25 years.
4. Certificate holders may provide drone images and/or high-resolution satellite images as evidence to show that the conservation or restoration area(s) yields additional conservation value and protection status relative to the status quo. The auditor has the authority to define whether the evidence is sufficient and whether there is a need to visit the conservation or restoration area.
5. The auditor visits the conservation or restoration area outside farm boundaries at least once every six years. Certificate holders pay any extra costs of auditing the conservation or restoration area outside the certified farm boundaries, e.g. for auditors to travel to the conservation or restoration area(s) for verification.