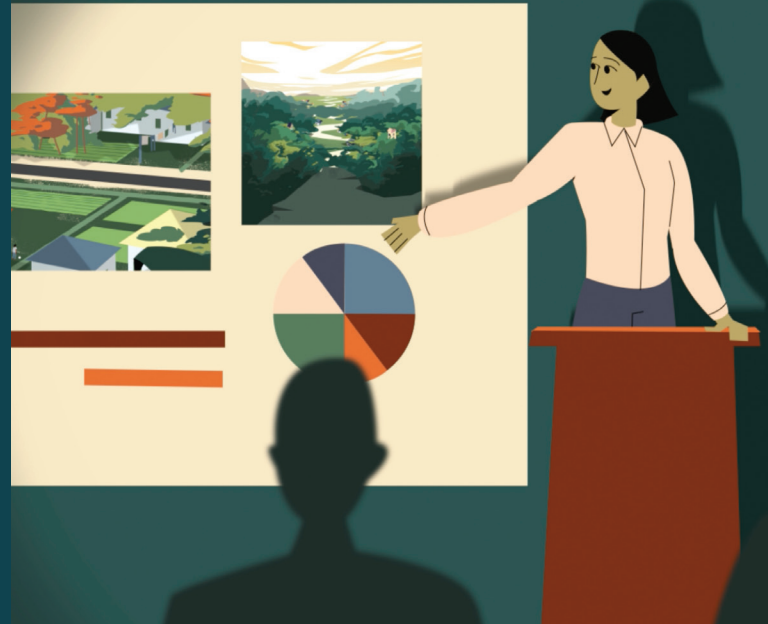# RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

Closing the gap between commitment and action

Beneath the crispy surface of a store-bought chocolate chip cookie are an untold chain of consequences that have nothing to do with extra calories. That cookie might contain palm oil from Indonesia, cocoa from Côte d'Ivoire, soy from Brazil, and milk from Colombian cattle. Not to mention the packaging, which could be sourced from vulnerable forests in any of these locations.

Like most consumer products available on a typical supermarket shelf, cookies land on our plates after traveling an intricate global web of commodity supply chains, each of which has potential links to deforestation and other adverse impacts. Rather than ask billions of people worldwide to stop eating cookies, however, the more practical solution rests with those who trade and process the ingredients in those cookies. That kind of supply-chain transformation can only be created through the collaborative efforts of producers, companies, civil society, and government.

Companies worldwide have made public commitments to transform their supply chains to eliminate deforestation, conversion of ecosystems, and human rights abuses. But despite these commitments on paper, real progress on the ground has been limited. The complexity of even a single value chain has inherent challenges, and with multiple standards, systems, tools, and metrics to consider for any given commodity or region, it's difficult to assess whether a company is truly fulfilling its commitments.

The Steering Group includes representatives from the following organizations:

Forest Peoples Programme

imaflora

National Wildlife Federation

The Nature Conservancy

proforest

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

RESOURCETRUST

SAI SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY INTERNATIONAL

VERITÉ Fair Labor. Worldwide.

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

WWF

Plus independent experts:
Gita Syahrani - Indonesia
Silas Siakor - Liberia

Accountability Framework
Delivering on ethical supply chain commitments

The Accountability Framework provides common norms and guidance to help accelerate progress and improve accountability for ethical supply chain commitments.

By bringing greater clarity, consistency, and effectiveness to the implementation of commitments, the Accountability Framework initiative helps to:

Halt deforestation

Protect other natural ecosystems

Respect human rights

Support livelihoods

ACCELERATING PROGRESS AND IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY

A coalition of leading environmental and social organizations, including the Rainforest Alliance, created the Accountability Framework initiative (AFi) in 2017 as a response to these challenges. The AFi seeks to clarify what "good" looks like as companies set, implement, and demonstrate progress toward halting deforestation, protecting natural ecosystems, respecting human rights, and supporting producer and community livelihoods.

In June 2019, the initiative published the first version of the Accountability Framework: a set of norms, definitions, and guidance based on a working consensus of leading environmental and social organizations that reflects the collective expertise of companies, NGOs, and governments. The Framework is designed to be an essential guide for companies and others committed to eliminating deforestation, human rights violations, and other adverse impacts of commodity production from supply chains. It provides consistent measures of progress across commodities, regions, and supply chain positions, and it presents a path for companies to credibly demonstrate continuous improvement and fulfillment of commitments.

In this way, soy producers in South America, cocoa growers in West Africa, and multinational retailers can use the same terms, norms, and metrics to define, implement, and monitor their policies. This also brings coherence between the private sector, governments, and other actors – supporting collaboration to promote good practices and to hold accountable those whose actions fall short of their pledges.

SUPPORTING OTHER SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

The Accountability Framework is not a new certification standard or auditing tool. Rather, it is a global initiative that helps companies use existing tools and provides guidance on topics that lack clarity. In other words, it synthesizes best practices and common approaches to help companies measure their progress and meet their commitments. It can be applied across multiple commodities and regions, and it recognizes UTZ and Rainforest Alliance certification as effective tools that can be used to drive progress on sustainability. In the next phase, partners will drive uptake of the Accountability Framework with companies and other stakeholders, helping to close the gap between commitments and action.

Learn more about the Accountability Framework at **accountability-framework.org**

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

We're working to create a better future for people and nature. Join us at **rainforest-alliance.org**