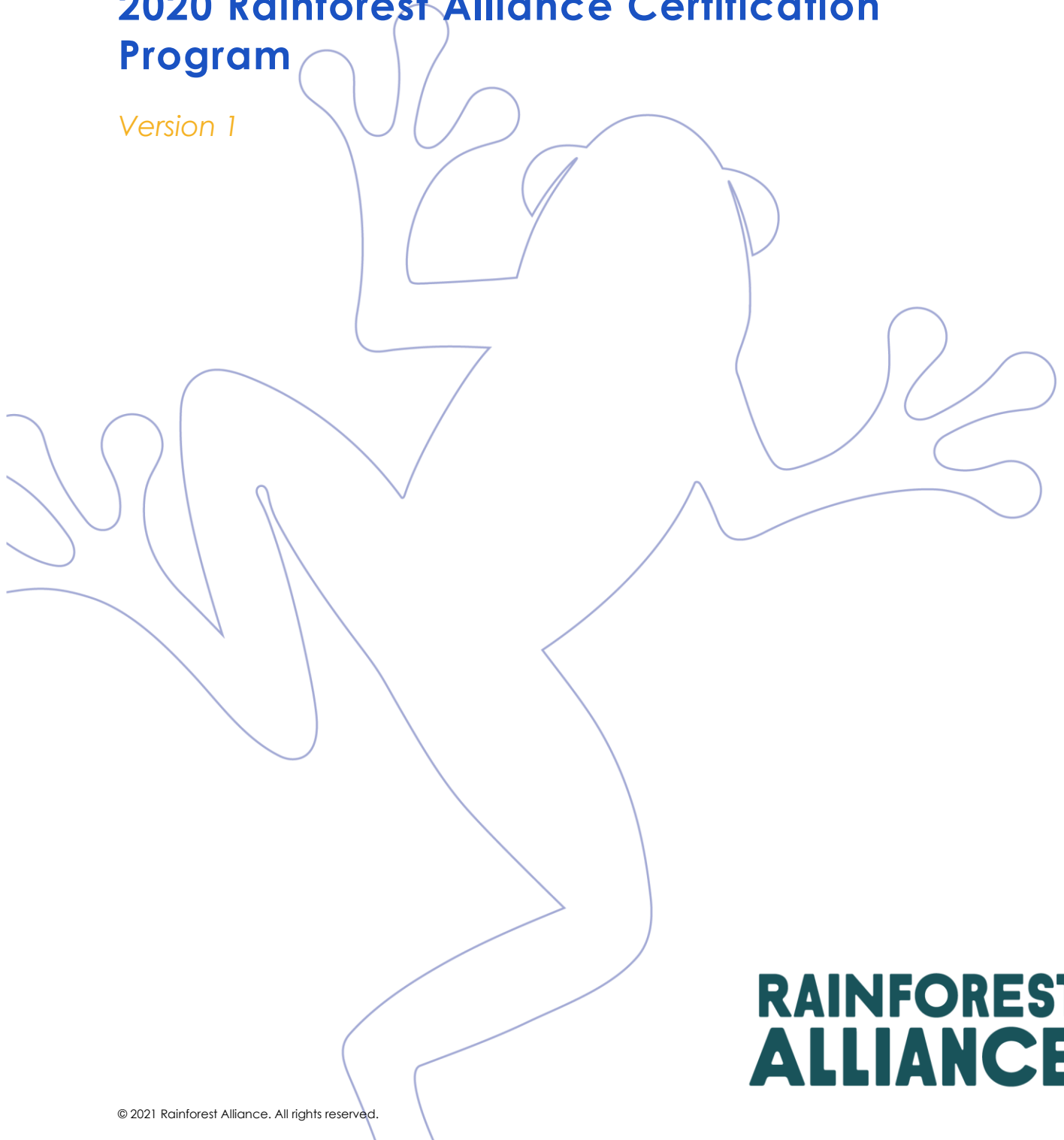


RAINFOREST ALLIANCE GUIDANCE

Farm Certificate Holders transitioning to the
2020 Rainforest Alliance Certification
Program

Version 1



**RAINFOREST
ALLIANCE**



The Rainforest Alliance is creating a more sustainable world by using social and market forces to protect nature and improve the lives of farmers and forest communities.

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?

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This guidance document is non-binding. This means that this document provides important information to help readers understand, interpret and implement the requirements set out in the documents listed in the section "linked to" above. However, following the guidance in this document is not mandatory.



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INTRODUCTION

The Rainforest Alliance Certification 2020 Program builds on the UTZ and 2017 Rainforest Alliance certification programs but is not a simple update of either program. The Rainforest Alliance 2020 Certification Program is a new program with new requirements for farm and supply chain certificate holders (CHs), as set out in the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard and new Certification and Assurance rules.

This guidance brings further clarification to support Farm Certificate Holders and Certification Bodies (CBs) to determine when to transition to the new program and how to complete their transition process. This includes:

1. Guidance for single-certificate Farm Certificate Holders to determine for which harvest they need to schedule their Transition Period Audit
2. Guidance for Farm Certificate Holders certified under both the UTZ and 2017 Rainforest Alliance standards for the same product (double-certification) to determine when they need to schedule their transition period audit, based on the expiry dates of their current certificate/annual audit deadline, and the dates of the harvest period in which they need to transition.
3. Guidance for requesting time and volume extensions to support the transition process.
4. Conditions for Certification Bodies to audit volume extensions. Other provisions to address situations that do not fall easily within the existing rules.



1. GUIDANCE FOR TRANSITION FOR FARM CERTIFICATE HOLDERS CERTIFIED RAINFOREST ALLIANCE OR UTZ

This section sets out additional guidance to the Rainforest Alliance Transition Rules v1.1. for Farm Certificate Holders that hold either a current Rainforest Alliance certificate or an UTZ certificate.

This guidance is to support farm certificate holders to ensure they conduct their Transition Period Audit in the period from 3 months before to 3 months after the start date of the harvest of the main crop to be certified as required by the Rainforest Alliance Certification and Auditing Rules v1.1. (1.5.20). Please note:

- This “harvest window” maybe for the main harvest or the small/fly harvest.
- This is considered the “Reference Harvest” for transition.
- The main crop is defined as the product to be certified with the largest volume of production.

Guidance:

- *If the Farm Certificate Holder still has a pending audit of a 2020 harvest for which a time extension was granted under the [Rainforest Alliance Audit Exception Policy for COVID-19](#), these audits must be completed before proceeding with the transition to the Rainforest Alliance Certification Program 2020.*
- *If the farm has a certificate expiring, or a surveillance audit deadline in the first semester of 2021, AND the start date of the harvest to be certified also falls in the first semester, the CH shall *conduct* the current program audit until latest June 30, 2021. The CH will then conduct the transition audit for the following year’s harvest in 2022. (**Scenario 1**, see table below).*
- *If the farm has a certificate expiring, or a surveillance audit deadline in the first semester of 2021, BUT the start date of the harvest to be certified falls in the second semester of 2021 (**Scenario 2**), the CH shall request a time extension of the certificate to complete their transition audit within that harvest window in the second semester of 2021.*
- *If the farm has a certificate expiring, or a surveillance audit deadline in the second semester of 2021, BUT the start date of the harvest to be certified falls in the first semester of 2022 (**Scenario 3**), the CH shall request a time extension of the certificate to complete their transition audit within that harvest window in the first semester of 2022.*
- *If the farm has a certificate expiring, or a surveillance audit deadline in the second semester of 2021, AND the harvest to be certified also falls in the second semester of 2021 (**Scenario 4**), the CH shall plan their transition audit within that harvest window in the second semester of 2021.*
- *Certificate Holders may request a time extension of their current certificate or surveillance audit deadline until three months after the start of the reference harvest if needed to complete their transition audit within the harvest window.*
- *If the farm certificate holder's main crop has a continuous harvest, the CH should transition based on the date of expiry of their current certificate or their surveillance audit deadline. They do not need to calculate the harvest window for transition.*



Table 1 below sets out the possible combinations of dates of recertification/audit deadline and harvest for transition, the applicable rule in the Rainforest Alliance Transition Rules V1.1, and the timing of the transition audit that **single-certificate Farm Certificate Holders with a defined harvest** should follow:

# Scenario	Certification/Audit Deadline	Reference Harvest start date	Applicable rule	Timing of Transition Audit
1	1 st Semester 2021	1 st Semester	F18 F22	Undergo current program audit until latest June 30, 2021 and conduct the transition audit in the 1 st semester of 2022.
2	1 st Semester 2021	2 nd Semester	F20	Obtain a time extension for the current certificate/audit deadline until the reference harvest window. Undergo the transition audit in the 2 nd semester of 2021.
3	2 nd Semester 2021	1 st Semester	F20 F23	Obtain a time extension for the current certificate/audit deadline until the reference harvest window. Undergo the transition audit in the 1 st semester of 2022.
4	2 nd Semester 2021	2 nd Semester	F19 F23	Undergo the Transition Audit in the 2 nd semester of 2021.

Table 1: Guidance table for Farm CHs with single certification.

2. GUIDANCE FOR TRANSITION FOR FARM CERTIFICATE HOLDERS CERTIFIED RAINFOREST ALLIANCE AND UTZ

This section sets out additional guidance to the Rainforest Alliance Transition Rules V1.1 for Farm Certificate Holders that hold both a current Rainforest Alliance certificate and an UTZ Certificate and have a defined harvest period. This guidance is to support farm certificate holders to identify when they need to conduct their single transition audit for the new certification program. The timing of the transition audit will depend on three parameters:

- The date of expiry of the UTZ certificate
- The date of the audit (certification or surveillance) deadline for the Rainforest Alliance certificate
- The start date of the reference harvest

The Farm Certificate Holder shall conduct their transition audit in the period from 3 months before to 3 months after the start date of the harvest of the main crop to be certified as required by the Rainforest Alliance Certification and Auditing Rules v1.1. (1.5.20). Please note:

- This "harvest window" maybe for the main harvest or the small/fly harvest.
- This is considered the Reference Harvest for transition.
- The main crop is defined as the product to be certified with the largest volume of production.

Guidance:

- If the Farm Certificate Holder still has a pending audit of a 2020 harvest for which a time extension was granted under the Rainforest Alliance Audit Exception Policy for COVID-19, these audits must be completed before proceeding with the transition to the Rainforest Alliance Certification Program 2020.



- If the UTZ certificate expires in the first semester of 2021 AND the next 2017 Rainforest Alliance audit deadline is in the first semester of 2021, AND the reference harvest for the Transition Period Audit also starts in the first semester, the Farm Certificate Holder shall undergo both current certification program audits before June 30, 2021 to renew both current certificates. The Certificate Holder shall then conduct one single Transition Period Audit within that harvest window starting in the first semester of 2022, (**scenario 5**, see *Table below*).
- If the UTZ certificate expires in the second semester of 2021 AND the next 2017 Rainforest Alliance audit deadline is in the second semester of 2021 AND the reference harvest also starts in the second semester, the Farm Certificate Holder shall conduct a Transition Period Audit within that harvest window starting in the second semester of 2021, (**scenario 6**).
- If the UTZ certificate expires in the first semester of 2021 AND the next 2017 Rainforest Alliance audit deadline is in the first semester of 2021 BUT the reference harvest starts in the second semester, the CH shall extend both certificates until 3 months after the start date of the reference harvest and undergo a single transition audit within that harvest window starting in the second semester of 2021, (**scenario 7**).
- If the UTZ certificate expires in the second semester AND the next 2017 Rainforest Alliance audit deadline is in the second semester of 2021, BUT the reference harvest occurs in the first semester of 2022, the CH shall request a time extension of both certificates until 3 months after the reference harvest start date and then undergo a single transition audit within that harvest window starting in the first semester of 2022, (**scenario 8**).
- If the UTZ certificate expires in the second semester BUT the 2017 Rainforest Alliance audit deadline expires in the first semester, AND the reference harvest occurs in the second semester, the CH must extend the Rainforest Alliance certificate until 3 months after the start date of the reference harvest, and then undergo a single transition audit in the second semester of 2021, (**scenario 9**).
- If the UTZ certificate expires in the first semester BUT the 2017 Rainforest Alliance audit deadline expires in the second semester, AND the reference harvest occurs in the second semester, the CH must extend the UTZ certificate until 3 months after the start date of the reference harvest then undergo a single transition audit in the second semester of 2021, (**scenario 10**).
- If the UTZ certificate expires in the first semester BUT the 2017 Rainforest Alliance audit deadline expires in the second semester AND the reference harvest occurs in the first semester, the CH must renew the current UTZ Certificate before June 30, 2021, and extend the Rainforest Alliance certificate until 3 months after the start date of the reference harvest, and undergo a single transition audit in the first semester of 2022, (**scenario 11**).
- If the UTZ certificate expires in the second semester BUT the Rainforest Alliance audit deadline expires in the first semester, AND the reference harvest occurs in the first semester, the CH must renew the current Rainforest Alliance Certificate before June 30, 2021, and extend the UTZ certificate until 3 months after the start date of the reference harvest, and undergo a single transition audit in the first semester of 2022, (**scenario 12**).
- If the main crop of the farm certificate holder has a continuous harvest, the CH should transition based on the date of their current UTZ certificate expiry, and their Rainforest Alliance audit deadline. They do not need to calculate the harvest period for transition. If both the UTZ and Rainforest Alliance deadlines fall in the same semester they should transition during that same semester at the first available opportunity, i.e.:



- if both deadlines fall in the second semester, the CH should transition in the second semester of 2021 (**scenario 5**)
- if both deadlines fall in the first semester, the CH should transition in the first semester of 2022 (**scenario 6**)

If the UTZ and Rainforest Alliance deadlines fall in different semesters, the CH should select whether they wish to maintain their certification cycle in the first or second semester.

- If the CH maintains the certification cycle in the second semester. They must request an extension to whichever deadline expires in the first semester to match the audit deadline date of the second certificate and conduct a single transition audit in the second semester (**scenarios 9 and 10**)
- If the CH maintains the certification cycle in the first semester, they must conduct an audit against their current certification program to renew whichever deadline expires in the first semester before June 30, 2021. They should also request an extension of the certificate or audit deadline expiring in the second semester to match the expiry date of the first certificate and conduct a single transition audit in the first semester of 2022 (**scenarios 11 and 12**)

Table 2 sets out the possible combinations of dates of certificate/audit deadline expiration and harvest for transition, the applicable rule in the Rainforest Alliance Transition Rules v1.1 and the timing of the transition audit that **double-certified (UTZ/RA) Farm Certificate Holders with a defined harvest** should follow:

# Scenario	UTZ Certificate Expiration	RA Audit Deadline	Reference Harvest period for transition	Applicable rule	Summary result
5	1 st Semester	1 st Semester	1 st Semester	F26	Conduct audits to renew both UTZ and 2017 RA certificates before June 30, 2021.
6	2 nd Semester	2 nd Semester	2 nd Semester	F26	Conduct single transition audit in 2 nd semester 2021.
7	1 st Semester	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester	F26	Extend both UTZ certificate and RA audit deadline until the reference harvest window and conduct transition audit in 2 nd semester 2021.
8	2 nd Semester	2 nd Semester	1 st Semester	F26	Extend both UTZ certificate and RA audit deadline until the reference harvest window and conduct transition audit in 1 st semester 2022.
9	2 nd Semester	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester	F26	Extend 2017 RA audit deadline until the reference harvest window and conduct transition audit in 2 nd semester 2021.
10	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester	2 nd Semester	F26 F15	Extend UTZ certificate until the reference harvest window and conduct transition audit in 2 nd semester 2021.
11	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester	1 st Semester	F26	Renew UTZ Certificate until June 30, 2021, extend 2017 RA audit deadline until the reference harvest window and conduct transition audit in 1 st semester 2022.



12	2 nd Semester	1 st Semester	1 st Semester	F26 F15	Renew 2017 RA audit deadline until June 30, 2021, extend UTZ certificate until the reference harvest window and conduct transition audit in 1 st semester 2022.
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Table 2: Guidance table for Farm Certificate Holders certified in both current programs.

3. GUIDANCE ON EXTENSIONS

Rule F13 of the Transition Rules version 1.1 states that time extensions of current certificates, where necessary, shall be requested and granted through the Certification Bodies that issued them.

When Certificate Holders need to request time or volume extensions of current certificates, the CH must contact the Certification Bodies that issued the current certificate using the following process as stated below. Please note, If the Certification Body is no longer operative due to a sanction for any other reason, the Farm CH should hire a different Certification Body to request such an extension on their behalf.

3.1 Time Extensions

- Farm CHs of current Rainforest Alliance and UTZ programs who wish to request time extensions to their existing UTZ certificate or Rainforest Alliance audit deadline should make the request to the CB who issued the certificate. For Rainforest Alliance certification, the CB submits a time extension request to cbcet@ra.org, using the COVID exception format in excel and mentioning in the subject line COUNTRY - TRANSITION EXTENSION - MEMBER ID. For UTZ certification, time extensions shall be requested through the corresponding traceability platform (GIP or MTT), indicating in the description the reason for the extension and the small and main harvest dates, as a condition for approval.

3.2 Volume Extensions

- If the time extension requested by the Farm Certificate Holder results in a change of audit period from a small harvest to the main harvest, the CH may also request a volume extension to cover the volumes from the small harvest which happens prior to the Transition audit window.
- For Rainforest Alliance certification, the CB submits a volume extension request along with the time extension request to cbcet@ra.org, using the COVID exception format in excel and mentioning in the subject line COUNTRY - TRANSITION EXTENSION - MEMBER ID.
 - In column P, the CB shall indicate the amount of volume needed for the volume extension.
 - In column Q, the CB shall indicate the small and main harvest start and end dates.
- For UTZ certification, volume extensions shall be requested along with the time extension through the corresponding traceability platform (GIP or MTT), indicating in the description the reason for the extension and the small and main harvest dates, and the amount of volume needed for the volume extension as a condition for approval.



4. GUIDANCE FOR CONDUCTING TRANSITION PERIOD AUDITS

- If any volume extensions are given according to section 3.2 of this guidance, the Certification Body in charge of the Transition Period Audit shall also audit the volumes covered by these extensions against the audit's traceability requirements to verify product integrity and volumes. This is an addition to **CB Rule 27** in the Transition Rules version 1.1.
- If the Certification Body finds non-conformities related to traceability of the volume covered by the extension as per section 3.2 of this guidance, it may issue a non-conformity and take a non-certification decision if the non-conformity is irreversible.
- The Certification Body shall clearly state in the Transition Audit Report on requirement 2.1.2 of the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard to evaluate the related volumes covered by the extension.

5. GUIDANCE FOR CASES NOT COVERED ABOVE

Cases may arise that do not fit the current transition routes set out in tables 1 and 2 of this guidance (see above). Such cases might occur due to the audit schedule before the publication of this guidance, extensions included in certificate calculations, longer audit windows, and other factors. In such cases

- the Certificate Holder should contact the local Rainforest Alliance Team or info@ra.org
- If a Certification Body identifies such a case, they should request guidance from the Rainforest Alliance by contacting cbcet@ra.org following the as the title of the email: COUNTRY NAME – Member ID/Certificate Code – Transition Outlier Case

The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to establish binding transition instructions for such cases, which will be communicated to the Certificate Holder and their Certification Body in due time.