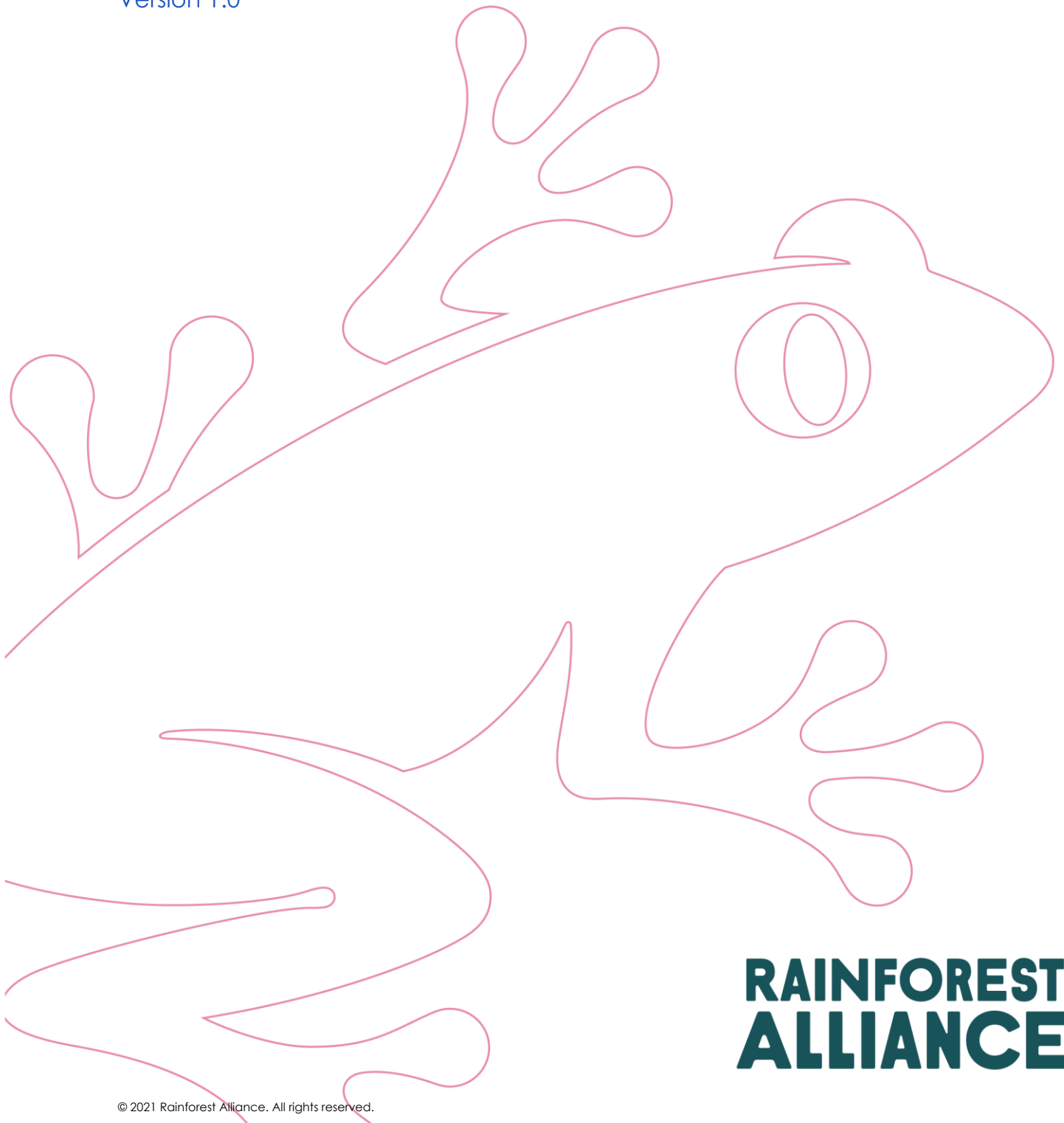


# RAINFOREST ALLIANCE POLICY

## Palm Oil Certification Phase Out

Version 1.0



**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?

For more information about the Rainforest Alliance, visit [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org) or contact [info@ra.org](mailto:info@ra.org)

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard, July 2017 version 1.2</li> <li>- Rainforest Alliance Chain of Custody Policy 2015</li> <li>- Rainforest Alliance Certification Rules, July 2020 version 2.1</li> </ul>			
<b>Replaces:</b>			
All references to palm oil in the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Certification Program and related documents.			
<b>Applicable to:</b>			
Rainforest Alliance Farm and Chain of Custody Certificate Holders and authorized Certification Bodies (CB)			
<b>Country/Region:</b>			
All Regions			
<b>Crop:</b>		<b>Type of Certification:</b>	
Palm Oil		Farm and Chain of Custody Certificate Holders	

This policy document is binding. This means that it must be adhered to; therefore, this policy supersedes any related rules or requirements contained in the documents listed in the section "linked to" and/or "replaces" for those party or parties as indicated in the "applicable to" section.

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### 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 the Rainforest Alliance, please visit our website: <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org>.

### 2. BACKGROUND OF PALM OIL CERTIFICATION

The Rainforest Alliance has worked for more than 30 years to promote best practices in farming, driven by the belief that making agriculture more sustainable is critical to stopping deforestation and combating climate change. Palm oil cultivation is a driver of deforestation, particularly in Southeast Asia.

However, since the certification program in palm oil was launched eleven years ago we have not seen the impact and growth that we had hoped to achieve. Our palm oil program has fewer than twenty certified operations in Latin American and Papua New Guinea and the majority of these also hold other voluntary sustainability certifications. On the supply chain side, market uptake has been slow. For this reason we have made the strategic decision to phase out of palm oil certification and not to include palm oil from the scope of the new Rainforest Alliance 2020 Certification Program.

In 2019 the Rainforest Alliance took a strategic decision to maintain palm certification on the 2017 Rainforest Alliance Standard to allow for closer alignment with existing voluntary sustainability standards. However this approach proved to be extremely complicated and ultimately not feasible. The small size of the program means that it is not viable for Rainforest Alliance to maintain the 2017 Rainforest Alliance Standard for palm certification alone. However transitioning palm certification to the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Standard would require significant investment for both farm and supply chain actors, with limited returns due to low market uptake.

We have also come to understand that sector transformation in the palm sector requires a broader and more innovative approach that leverages Rainforest Alliance's strengths beyond certification. Therefore, we have made the strategic decision not to include palm oil from the scope of the new Rainforest Alliance 2020



Certification Program. This policy provides the framework for the phase out of the Rainforest Alliance palm oil certification program.

### **3. RAINFOREST ALLIANCE FUTURE WORK IN PALM OIL**

Palm oil remains a priority sector and an important focus for the organization as part of its wider vision and commitment to drive sustainable transformation of landscapes, agriculture, and forestry. The Rainforest Alliance will continue working to make palm oil production systems and supply chains more sustainable through a two-fold approach. On the one hand we will leverage our experience in Landscape-level and community forestry approaches - strategies that we have forged and employed with documented success for decades - to strengthen smallholder growers in vulnerable landscapes in their enterprise skills, livelihoods and agricultural practises. At the same time we will focus on increasing accountability and transparency in the sector through the Palm Industry Platform which builds on our extensive experience in traceability, supply chain assessments and corporate engagement. Rainforest Alliance will use this transparency to drive impact to improve smallholder livelihoods and reduce deforestation in the palm sector. The crossroads of our field- and market-based interventions will catalyse change in this sector.

### **4. WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR PALM CERTIFICATE HOLDERS**

Although the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Standard becomes mandatory on 1 July 2021, In recognition of the commitment of our existing palm certificate holders we are offering the option for them to remain certified against the Rainforest Alliance 2017 Standard until a final date of 31st December 2022.

### **5. RULES FOR PALM CERTIFICATION PHASE OUT**

The rules for the phasing out of Rainforest Alliance palm oil certification are as follows:

- a) No new farms can join the Rainforest Alliance 2017 Certification program for Palm oil, from the date of this policy.
- b) Palm oil producers and supply chain actors are not eligible for certification under the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Certification program
- c) Renewals of certification against the Rainforest Alliance 2017 Sustainable Agriculture Standard for single farms, farm groups or supply chain actors must be finalized before 31st December 2021. This means that the physical audit (re-certification, surveillance, verification) must be conducted, any non-conformities closed, and the certification decision made by this date.
- d) Any farm certificate holder whose certification or audit deadline expires in the first semester in 2022 and who wish to remain certified until December 2022 must conduct and finalise their audit before 31st December 2021.
- e) A farm certificate holder whose certification or audit deadline expires in the second semester in 2022 may apply for a time until 31 December 2022 at the latest, provided they have finalised any pending audit for 2020 or 2021 before 31st December 2021.



- f) All certificates for farm certificate holders will have a final expiry date of 31 December 2022 at the latest.
- g) Certified organizations are responsible for informing their buyers about this policy and specifically that no further Rainforest Alliance Certified palm oil will be sold from that farm from 1st January 2023 onwards.
- h) New supply chain actors may join the program until the end of 2021 provided they finalise their certification process by 31 December 2021.
- i) All certificates for supply chain actors will have a final expiry date of 30 June 2023 at the latest. This is to allow supply chain actors to sell remaining RA certified products in accordance with Rainforest Alliance labelling and traceability requirements.
- j) Labelling approvals for use of the Rainforest Alliance Certified (RAC) seal will only be granted until the 30th June 2023. Any product remaining on shelf with the RAC seal will not be expected to be removed or destroyed at any time.