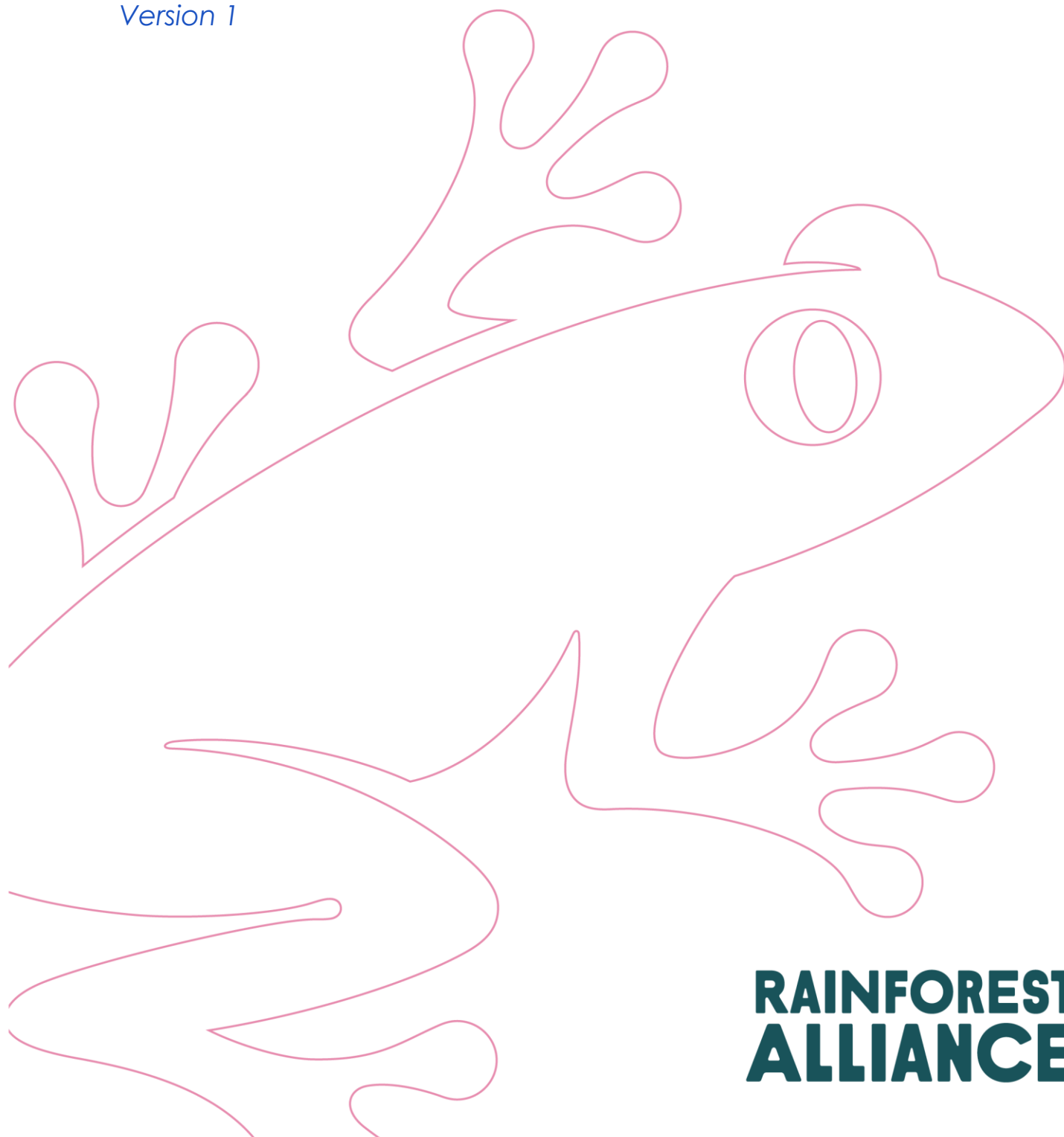


RAINFOREST ALLIANCE POLICY

CHANGES TO CERTIFICATION AND AUDITING RULES FOR AUDITS IN THE TRANSITION YEAR

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?

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

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Applicable to:			
CBs and prospect certificate holders			
Country/Region:			
All			
Crop:		Type of Certification:	
All crops		Farm certificate holders Supply Chain certificate holders	



1. INTRODUCTION

The 2020 Rainforest Alliance Certification Program introduces several important innovations that will strengthen our assurance system, but that will need additional time to be fully implemented. Some of these rules could entail more audit time and cost, so Rainforest Alliance authorizes the changes summarized in this policy, during the transition year. This policy describes the changes to ensure consistent implementation of the Certification and Auditing Rules across the program.

2. GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAF	Certification Application Form
CAR	2020 Rainforest Alliance Certification and Auditing Rules
CB	Certification Body
CH	Certificate Holder
RACP	Rainforest Alliance Certification Platform

3. OBJECTIVES

Communicate the authorized changes to the published Certification and Auditing Rules, version 1.1 to enable a smooth Transition Certification Audit.

4. POLICY

The changes described in the table below are only applicable to Transition Certification Audits.

Section in CAR	Current Rule	Authorized Modifications
1.4.24	The CB shall indicate the scheduled start date of the audit in the RACP 6 weeks before the first day of the audit (certification, re-certification, surveillance).	During the transition year CBs are not required to set the first day of audit six weeks ahead. CBs may start the audit sooner as long as the audit date is agreed upon with the client and enough preparation for the audit has been made. CBs are required to inform RA of their monthly audit planning, through the CB Management email address.
1.4.26	All CHs shall complete or revise their audit preparation or endorsement data and provide the applicable documents/data from the list below: [list of 12 documents]	For the transition audits the CHs will only have to provide the following five documents to the CB before the audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Certification scope information in the CAF, b. Self- Assessment, c. Group Member Registry, d. Checklist of applicable requirements, e. Latest audit report and transaction reports, if applicable. <p>CBs are still required to verify the other documents listed in rule 1.4.26 during the audit.</p>



Section in CAR	Current Rule	Authorized Modifications
1.5.5	In addition to the certification and surveillance audits, the CB shall carry out surprise audits on at least 10% of the CHs in their portfolio or Rainforest Alliance CHs to verify continuity of conformity of the selected CBs.	Surprise audits are not mandatory during the transition year. Compliance with transition rule CB Rule 24 is not compulsory.
1.7.10	The CH shall submit a proposed corrective action plan to the CB that includes:	
(d)	In the event that the long-term solution to the root cause requires more than the maximum time frame allowed for closure of the NC, the NC may be closed with a corrective action plan, as long as the full implementation of the correction (of the short-term solution) has been completed within 10 weeks and the actions in the corrective action plan are concrete, time-bound, have started within the maximum allowed time frame, and will be finalized before the end of the certificate of the CH and no later than the below time frames:	Letter (d) of this section only allows closure of NCs with a corrective action plan that goes beyond the 10-week timeframe for NC closure, for NCs related to the assess and address system for human rights issues, and housing. During the transition period, however, any NCs which require for long-term solutions to address root causes may be closed by an action plan that goes beyond the 10-week period for NC closure, provided that the actions have been started during the 10-week correction period and will be completed by the first audit of the certification cycle ¹ .
1.8.1	Certificates may only be transferred from one CB to another for a new certification cycle (therefore they can only be transferred once every 3 years).	During the transition year CHs may hire any CB authorized for the country and scope.
1.8.4	Transfers or certification applications to new CBs shall not be accepted for CHs that: [list of five elements]	This rule does not apply during the transition year.
1.8.5	Certificate transfer requests shall be made in the RACP by the CH requesting a transfer.	This rule does not apply during the transition year.
1.8.7	The current CB shall acknowledge receipt of the transfer request sent by the organization and notify the new CB within 1 week of the request. The current CB shall indicate to the CH if there are any pending financial obligations that must be settled before the transfer can take place. If there are no pending financial obligations, then the new CB can accept the request and is free to contact the CH to begin the application and certification process.	A CB cannot sign an agreement with a CH if the CB that carried out the previous audit of the CH has informed the new CB there are pending payments. In this case the new CB must receive and keep evidence that pending financial obligations to the previous CB have been settled before accepting to audit the CH.
1.8.8	The new CB shall review the CH's profile in advance of the transfer and before accepting the transfer request. This review shall include: [list of six elements]	This rule does not apply during the transition year.
2.3.18	The CB shall upload the audit risk assessment to RACP for each audit at least 2 weeks prior to the first date of the audit, together with the detailed audit plan.	CBs are not required to upload the Audit Risk Assessment to the RACP two weeks before the audit, until this functionality is available in the RACP. However, CBs must complete the CH risk assessment in the CAF and include it when submitting the audit report and provide it to RA before this submission on request

¹ Compliance of requirement **1.2.3**, where suppliers and subcontractors need to be compliant and certified, will only be checked during the certification audit of the first certification cycle.



Section in CAR	Current Rule	Authorized Modifications
2.3.19	The audit risk assessment performed by the CB for each audit shall consider at a minimum: [list of 21 elements]	The CB will only need to complete a calculation of the risk level of the CH in the CAF. The CB will use this assessment to identify particular areas of risk to verify during the audit, as per rule 2.3.20 and to calculate the minimum audit duration as per section 2.5
2.4.3.b	For all the sampling calculations: Unless otherwise specified in specific rules in this document, when the calculated number is smaller than 5 , the CB shall include at least 5 or all such subjects (farms, persons/workers, documents, transactions, etc.) in the audit sample when the population size is smaller than 5.	When the calculated number is smaller than 5, the CB shall include at least 3 elements, in the case of persons/workers, documents, transactions, etc. For the number of farm units, when the calculated number is smaller than 5, the CB shall include at least 2 farm units.
2.5.4	Risk factor (RF)	The CB shall use the Risk Factor resulting from the Risk Assessment in the CAF to calculate the audit duration as per rule 2.5.4. The template for calculating minimum audit duration is also included in the CAF.
2.13.4	The checklist and audit report shall include the audit findings (conformity and nonconformity) with description of required objective evidence(s) obtained during the audit so that the reader understands the nature and magnitude/impact of the findings. [...]	Description of evidence of <u>conformity</u> is only required for issues flagged as high risk in the CH risk assessment in the CAF. Evidence description is however still mandatory for all requirements with nonconformities.
Rule 2 Annex AR4.2	Prior to the onsite audit, the CB shall perform stakeholder consultation in Farm Standard audits that have high risk of child labor and/or forced labor based on the Rainforest Alliance child labor and forced labor sector risk maps and/or (very) high risk of nonconformity for freedom of association as identified by the CB (audit risk assessment during audit preparation) and/or the Rainforest Alliance.	Stakeholder consultation is only mandatory: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When there have been complaints related to child labor, forced labor or freedom of association in the last 12 months before the audit start day, or 2. If during the last audit of the CH, a nonconformity was raised on any requirements related to these issues. Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to require the CB to carry out a stakeholder consultation for a specific CH audit for cases related to other requirements, such as use of pesticides or aerial fumigation.
Rule 53 Annex AR4.10	The CB shall perform an off-site investigation following the requirements in this Annex when (very) high risks of nonconformity on social topics have been identified by the CB (audit risk assessment) and/or the Rainforest Alliance	An off-site investigation is only mandatory: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When there have been complaints related to social issues in the last 12 months before the audit start day, or 2. If during the last audit of the CH, one or more nonconformities were raised on any of the mandatory social requirements. Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to require the CB to carry out an off-site investigation for a specific CH audit for cases related to other requirements, such as use of pesticides or aerial fumigation.