

# RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

## GUIDANCE

### GOOGLE MY MAPS

*Version 1*



**RAINFOREST  
ALLIANCE**



### Translation Disclaimer

For any question related to the precise meaning of the information contained in the translation, please refer to the English official 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)

<b>Document Name:</b>		<b>Document Code:</b>	<b>Version:</b>
Guidance: Google My Maps		SA-G-SD-35-V1	1
<b>Date of first publication:</b>	<b>Date of revision:</b>	<b>Valid From:</b>	<b>Expires by:</b>
14 July 2021	N/A	14 July 2021	Until further notice
<b>Developed by:</b>		<b>Approved by:</b>	
Rainforest Alliance Department Standards and Assurance		Director of Standards and Assurance	
<b>Linked to:</b>			
SA-S-SD-1-V1.1 Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard, Farm requirements (1.2.12. 1.2.13. 1.2.14. 1.2.15. and 6.1.1. 6.1.2) SA-S-SD-13-V1 Annex S12: Additional Details on requirements for no-conversion Document code Annex S17: Collecting Geolocation Data Document code Guidance D: Geolocation Data Requirements and Risk maps			
<b>Replaces:</b>			
N/A			
<b>Applicable to:</b>			
Farm Certificate holders Certification Bodies			
<b>Country/Region:</b>			
All			
<b>Crop:</b>		<b>Type of Certification:</b>	
All crops in the scope of the Rainforest Alliance certification system; please see Certification Rules.		Farm Certification	

Guidance documents are non-binding. Guidance documents provide information to help readers understand, interpret and implement the standard requirements, however, following the guidance in this document is not mandatory.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents .....	3
Table of figures .....	3
Table of tables.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. CREATE A NEW WEB MAP .....	4
3. ADD LAYERS TO THE NEW WEB MAP .....	6
4. POPULATE AN EMPTY LAYER WITH ATTRIBUTES.....	7
5. COLLECTING POINT DATA.....	10
6. CREATING POLYGONS WITH GOOGLE MY MAPS .....	11
7. HOW TO EXTRACT DATA FROM GOOGLE MY MAPS.....	12

## TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Google my Maps application in the play store .....	4
Figure 2. Creating a new map in the web-based application .....	4
Figure 3. Changing the base map to "satellite" .....	5
Figure 4. Renaming the map and layers.....	5
Figure 5. Adding a new layer .....	6
Figure 6. Importing data from desktop .....	6
Figure 7. Protected area layer added to the web map .....	7
Figure 8. Open the layer's table to add columns (attributes) .....	7
Figure 9. How to insert new columns in the data table .....	8
Figure 10. Selecting the required data type for the attributes.....	8
Figure 11. Set column as title for point data.....	9
Figure 12. Data table example .....	9
Figure 13. Collection of points in the field with mobile application .....	10
Figure 14. Data collection synchronized with desktop .....	11
Figure 15. Example of a farm polygon drawn in Google My Maps.....	12
Figure 16. Export to My Maps data as KML.....	12
Figure 17. Export to KML options .....	13
Figure 18. Uploading a KML file to the webtool .....	13
Figure 19. How to convert a KML into a CSV file .....	14
Figure 20. KML converted into a CSV .....	14
Figure 21. Visualizing CSV in excel .....	15
Figure 22. Step 1 .....	15
Figure 23. Step 2 .....	16
Figure 24. Step 3.....	16

## TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1. List of attributes for the data table.....	9
---	---



## 1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance document provides a step-by-step overview on the use of Google My Maps. My Maps can run on your mobile device through the app as well as through a web-based application that runs on your desktop. When used together with a KML to excel convertor, My Maps can be used as a tool to collect the geolocation data of farms. Google My Maps can be downloaded and installed from the [app store](#) on your mobile device.

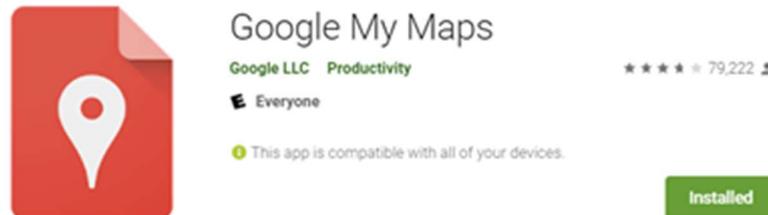


Figure 1. Google my Maps application in the play store

Once the app is installed you can login using a google account. The app can be used to collect points, create and edit maps and be synchronised with a google account on your desktop for further review and editing of data.

The next pages will guide you on how to use the Google My Maps application before, during and after the audit. Anything collected and done on the app must be synced with your mobile device (smartphone, tablet) before going to the field.

## 2. CREATE A NEW WEB MAP

You can create a new map using the web-based application.

- Certificate Holders (CHs) can organize their maps according to the regions in which farms are located for ease of reference.
- Certification Bodies (CBs) can create a map for each of the CHs to be audited so that the data can be more easily managed.

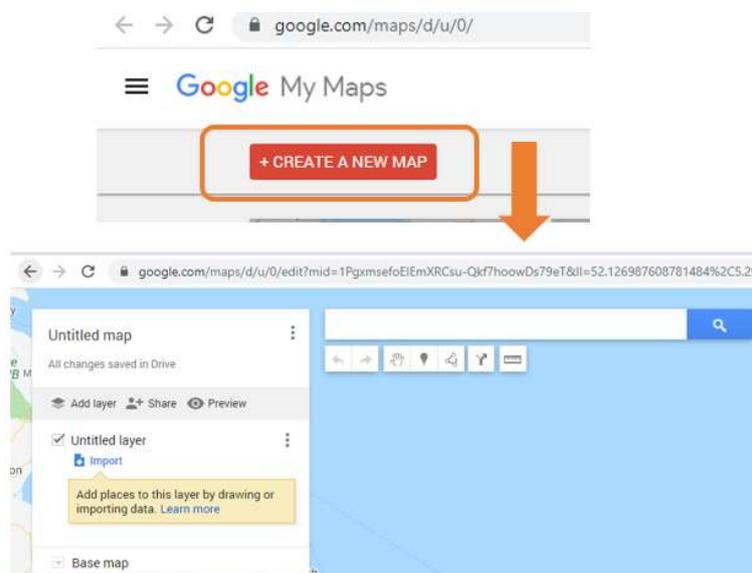


Figure 2. Creating a new map in the web-based application



The default base map can be changed to “satellite” for better visualization of the conditions in the field. Remember that the date of the base map image can be a couple of years old, depending on when the satellite images were last uploaded by Google.

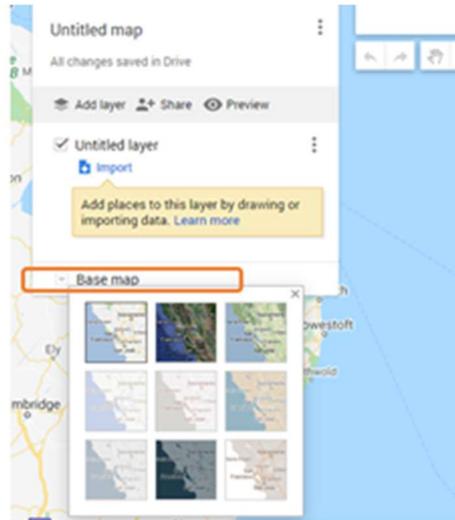


Figure 3. Changing the base map to "satellite"

Rename the map and the layer to suit you for better management of your geolocation data. Layers will allow for better visualization of the geolocation data if other layers of data (e.g. Protected areas) are present and displayed. The first automatically provided layer will be empty, **Chapter 4. Populate an empty layer with attributes** explains how to populate this layer.

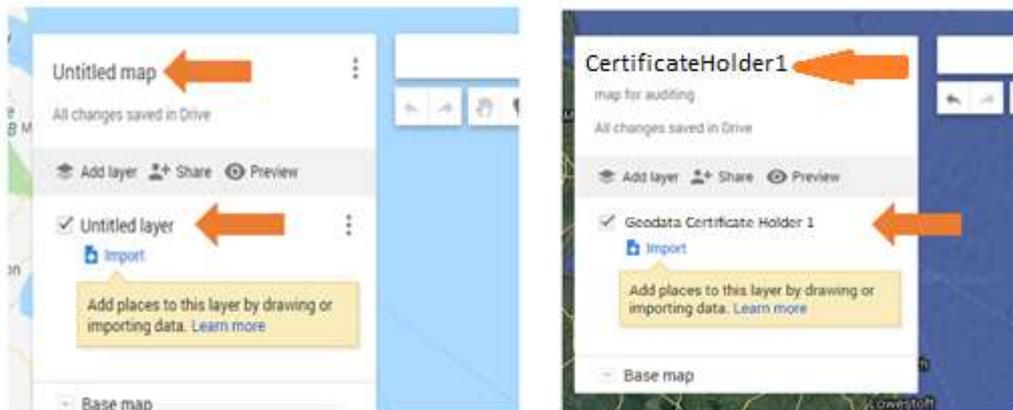


Figure 4. Renaming the map and layers



### 3. ADD LAYERS TO THE NEW WEB MAP

To populate the web-map with already existing data, add a new layer and import a file from the local storage to the online web-map. See Figure 5 & 6.

When the import function (Figure 5) is selected, a CSV, XLSX, KML or GPX file can be imported to My Maps (Figure 6). Now you can upload files as the protected area KML file. For more information on how to do this, check **Guidance: Converting Geospatial Data**, available on the website.

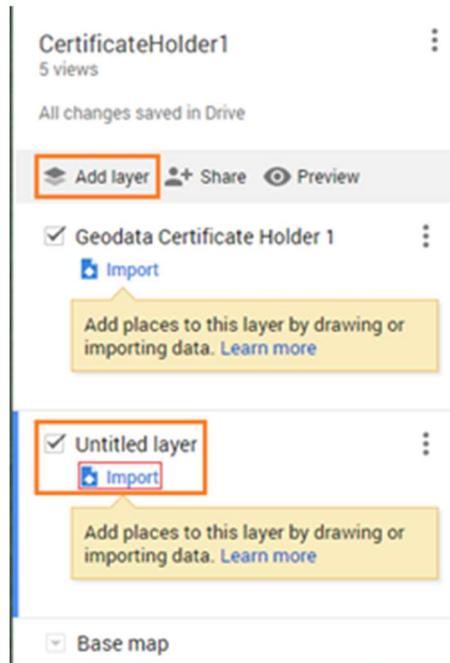


Figure 5. Adding a new layer

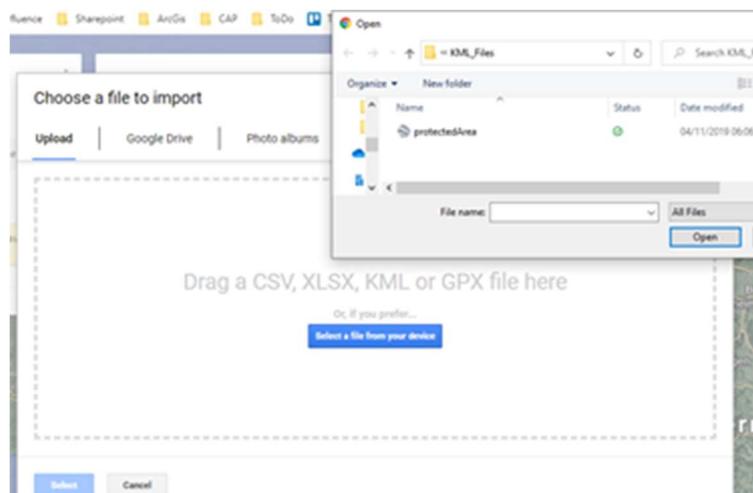


Figure 6. Importing data from desktop



In Figure 7 you can see what it should look like when the newly added protected area KML file has been added to the web-map. The next chapter explains how to create a layer with attributes (e.g. the points you collected).

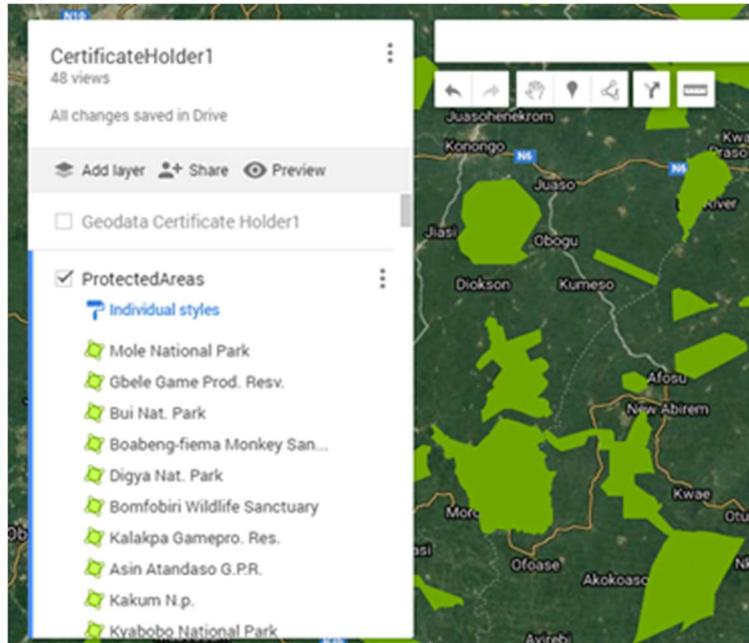


Figure 7. Protected area layer added to the web map

## 4. POPULATE AN EMPTY LAYER WITH ATTRIBUTES

The layer provided when creating a web-map is empty. This means that there are no columns to populate with attributes (data). To create attributes, click on the three dots as shown in Figure 8 below, then select “**Open data table**”.

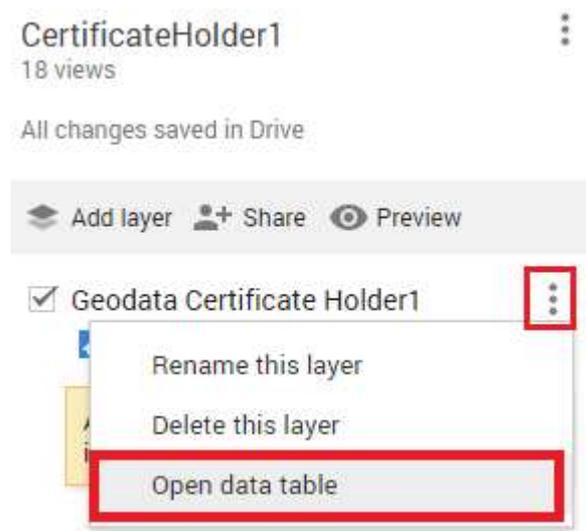


Figure 8. Open the layer's table to add columns (attributes)

After opening the data table, you will see an empty table (Figure 9), with only 2 columns: “**name**” and “**description**”. To add new columns, select the arrow next to one column, and



click on “**Insert column after**” or “**Insert column before**”. With this, you will see a new window open that allows you to insert the column’s name and data type.

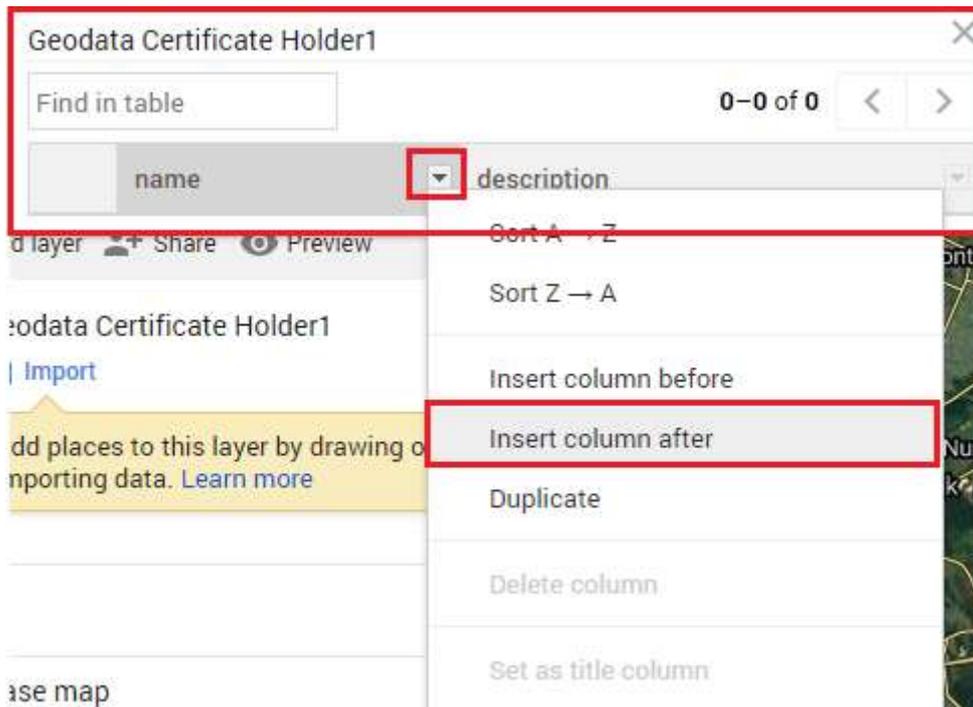


Figure 9. How to insert new columns in the data table

For each attribute (column), the correct data type must be indicated (Figure 10). This will ensure that you do not have values which do not make sense of that data type. For example the “**FarmID**” field must be filled in with numbers and not text.

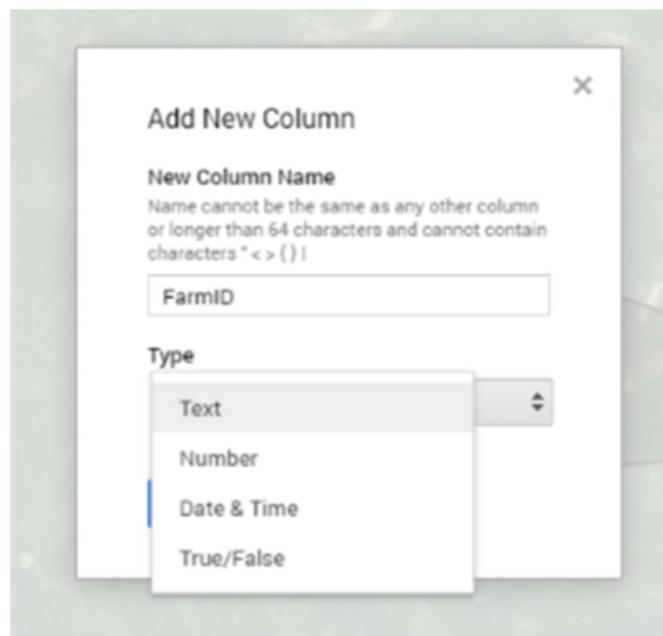


Figure 10. Selecting the required data type for the attributes



CHs can use the attributes (columns) to structure their geolocation data collection. The farm ID and farm unit ID should be used to identify farms and farm units, respectively. In some countries, the farm ID could be indicated by the government, whereas in others, this would be an identification number created by the group management. Other attributes are the farm area, farm unit area and any other data that would be useful for the audit and the group management. When reporting geolocation data to RA, the CHs must provide the required attributes and data points as mentioned in [Annex S17. Collecting geolocation data](#). The table below shows examples of attributes that can be added to the data table.

Attributes (column name)	Data type	Mandatory
Farm Unit ID	Text	Yes
Farm Unit Area (ha)	Number	Yes
Farm ID	Text	Optional
Group member Identification	Text	Optional
Total Farm area (ha)	Number	Optional
Other fields	Text / Number	Optional

Table 1. List of attributes for the data table

After adding the desired attributes (columns), you can set a title column that will identify the geolocation data as per Figure 11 below.

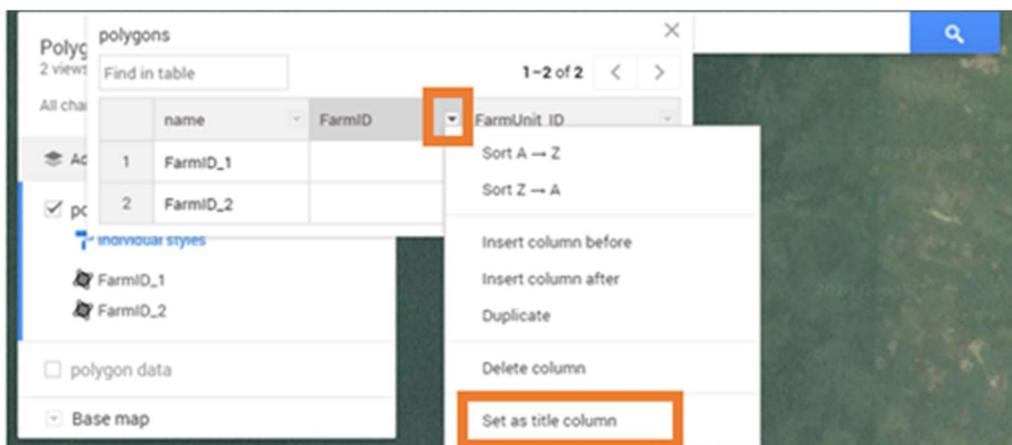


Figure 11. Set column as title for point data

Figure 12 shows what a populated attribute table will look like after collecting all the geolocation data and attributes.

	name	FarmId	FarmArea	FarmUnitId	FarmUnitArea	description
1	Point 1	FarmId1	5.6	FarmUnitID1	3.3	desc1
2	Point 2	FarmId1	5.6	FarmUnitId2	2.3	desc2
3	Point 3	FarmId3	1.5	FarmUnitId3	1.5	desc3

Figure 12. Data table example



## 5. COLLECTING POINT DATA

To record a location point while in the field:

- Open the My Maps app on your mobile device,
- Open the map previously created,
- Click the blue “+” sign in the lower right corner,
- Click on “**Add a new point**”,
- Select the location, select the layer, and give the point a name.

Points can also be added by touching and pressing the screen for several seconds at the desired location until prompted to name and save this point.

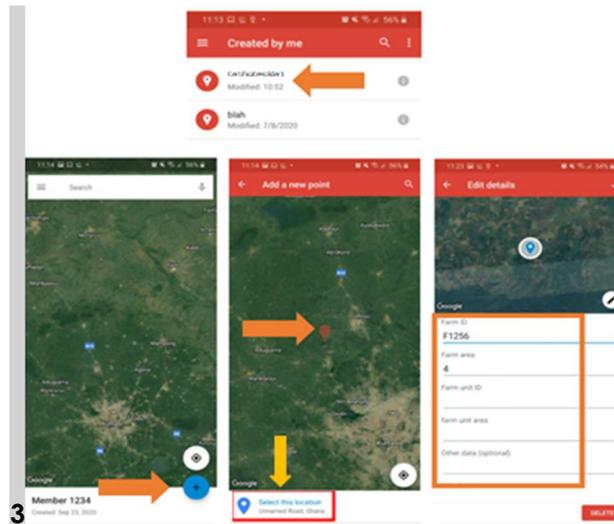


Figure 13. Collection of points in the field with mobile application

Ensure that your location (blue dot on the screen Figure 14) in the app is zoomed-in enough to ensure the new point marks your real location. Press the coordinate button above the blue “+” sign to center your location.

Once the point has been added, the latitude and longitude coordinates of the point are displayed under the map, at the location of the red box (Figure 13). The created points can be edited in Google My Maps.

After naming the point, other data fields that need to be filled in are shown (these fields were created in the previous **Chapter 3**). If an Excel/CSV template has been uploaded in the layer of data collection, a screen appears requesting the information included in the columns of the Excel/CSV.

When you return from the field and connect to the Internet, your mobile My Maps will automatically synchronize with your desktop web-based Google My Maps program. This is where you will be able to view and edit your maps and export the data as a KML file. Figure 14 below shows the desktop version now synced after collecting the points in the field.

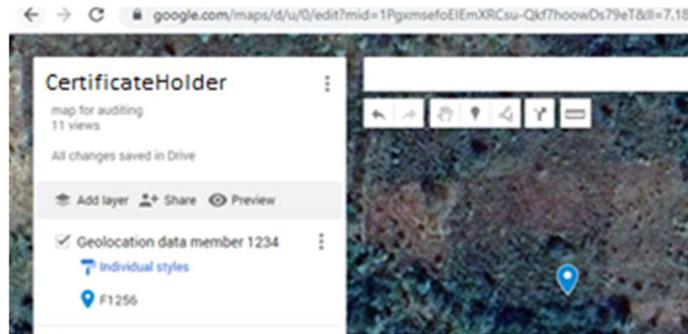


Figure 14. Data collection synchronized with desktop

## 6. CREATING POLYGONS WITH GOOGLE MY MAPS

The mobile version of Google My Maps is an extension of Google Maps and syncs automatically with the web-based Google My Maps. Therefore, the mobile map can be accessed and edited in any Internet browser on a desktop (after signing-in to your google account). Since maps are web-based, they can be shared with and edited by multiple users who share the same login details. In the mobile app the My Maps home screen appears in which all the previously created and shared maps can be accessed or, if needed, a new map created.

*Note: My Maps looks similar but slightly different to the traditional Google Maps viewer.*

### 6.1 Upload data into Google My Maps

Once the map is opened in the web Google My Maps, the collected field data can be edited. To do this, create a new layer and import the file(s) as explained in **Chapter 3**.

### 6.2 Create and edit polygons in Google My Maps

Use the line tool (Figure 15) to draw the perimeter of the farm area, clicking to create a vertex (point) at every corner, and then clicking on the first point (vertex) to complete the polygon. After reference points have been collected from the field, import them to Google My Maps to determine where to draw the polygon vertices. When finished, enter the polygon name and description and do not forget to press the blue save button.

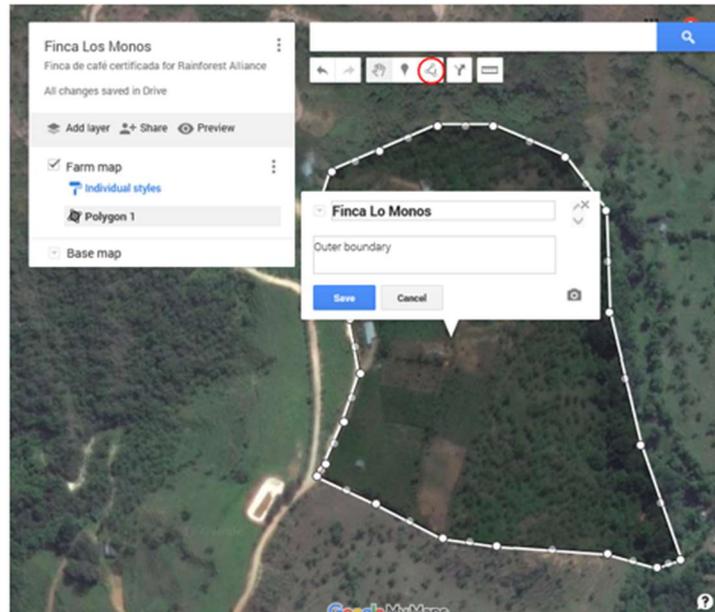


Figure 15. Example of a farm polygon drawn in Google My Maps

All features created can be customized by e.g. line thickness, icon type, and color. Maps are automatically saved as you work.

## 7. HOW TO EXTRACT DATA FROM GOOGLE MY MAPS

To export the map, click on the three dots in the top right of the map box, select “**Export to KML/KMZ**” (Figure 16) and select whether you want to export all the map data, or just the data in a specific layer (Figure 17). The KML file can then be shared and emailed. Generating KML files enables you to visualize the points in other software.

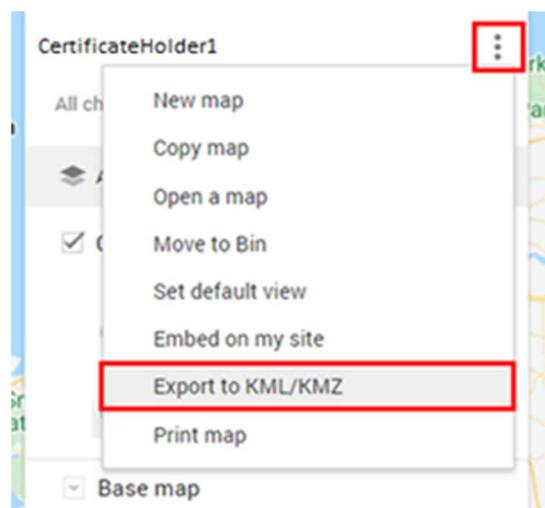


Figure 16. Export to My Maps data as KML

Figure 17 shows the options for exporting the map to KML. Make sure to check the option “**Export as KML instead of KMZ**”. A whole map or just one layer can be selected for export. Do not forget to press the “**Download**” button.



A KMZ file is a compressed KML file meaning that the size of the file and download time is reduced. Whilst a KML file can be recognized by other programs, a KMZ file is not. Also, due to the reduced size of the KMZ file it has significantly fewer errors. We therefore advise to always rather convert to a KML file.

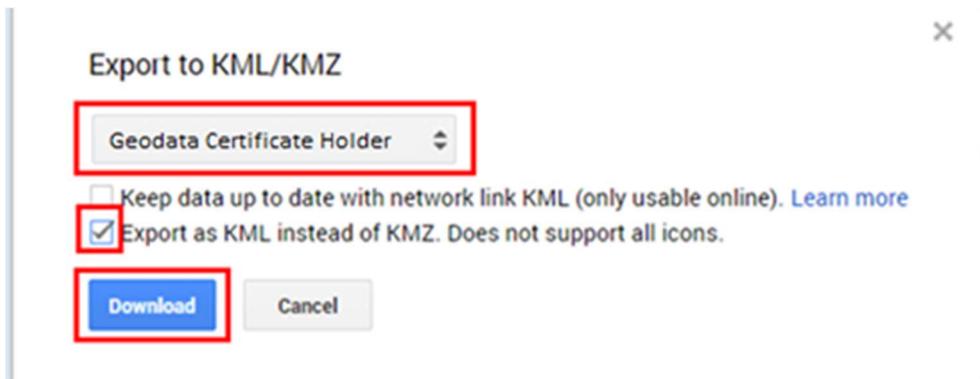


Figure 17. Export to KML options

Unfortunately, there is one downside to a KML file, and that is that they do not have tables in which data can be easily modified nor copy-pasted to other files (e.g. GMR). To create a modifiable table from the KML file, you will therefore need to convert it into a CSV file. There are several tools available online to do this. One tool we advise can be found at <https://geojson.io>.

Once the Geojson is open, upload can be done from the top-left by selecting "**Open**" → "**File**". Then select the KML file that you want to convert from your computer (Figure 18).

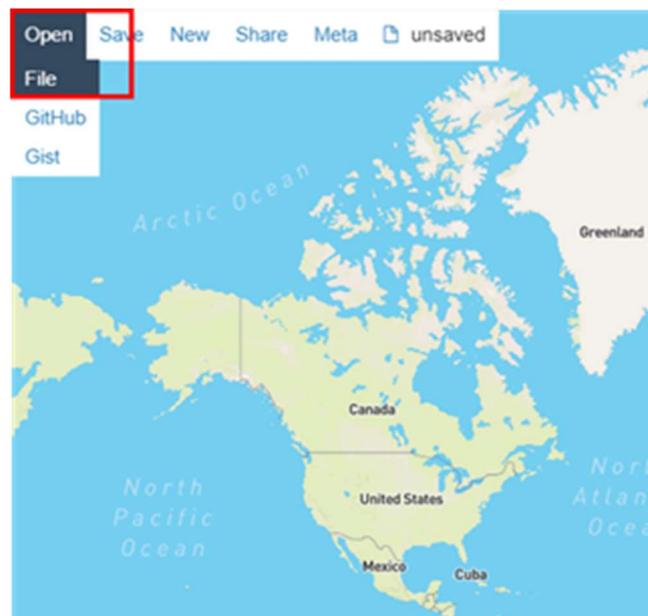


Figure 18. Uploading a KML file to the webtool

When the KML file(s) have been uploaded correctly, you will see the points on the map. To finish the file conversion, click on "**Save**" and then "**CSV**" in the top-left corner.

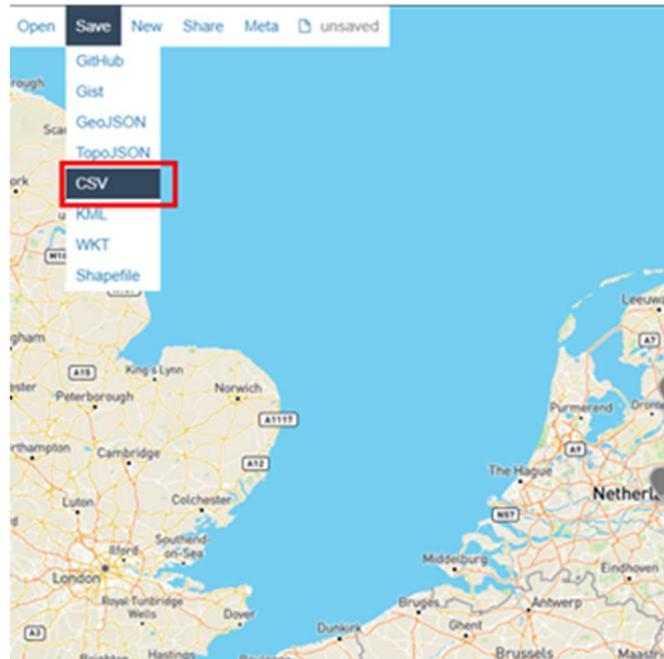


Figure 19. How to convert a KML into a CSV file

After you have saved the CSV file and then opened it, you should see something as in Figure 20. As you can see, the data of each point has now been put in one cell separated with commas. If this is the case, you have successfully converted the data.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	name,description,FarmId,FarmArea,FarmUnitId,FarmUnitArea,Longitude,Longitude,lon,lat							
2	Point 1,desc1,FarmId1,2.3,FarmUnitId1,1.5,,,6.3514473,52.1606793							
3	Point 2,desc2,FarmId2,3.4,FarmUnitId2,2.7,,,5.8131173,51.9580332							
4	Point 3,desc3,FarmId3,6.7,FarmUnitId3,4.5,,,5.9119942,52.5632178							
5								
6								
7								

Figure 20. KML converted into a CSV

If you see the information separated by a dot instead of a comma, then you need to go into the program and reconfigure this setting. This can be changed by following these next steps.

- Click on the first column “**A**”.
- Then from the “**Data**” tab click on the “**Text to Columns**” function (Figure 21).

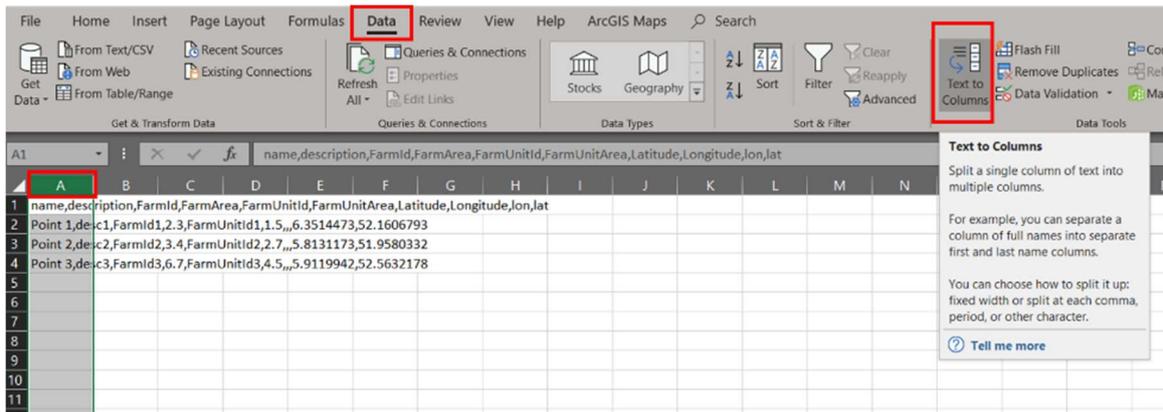


Figure 21. Visualizing CSV in excel

A “Text to Columns” wizard appears which consists of another 3 steps:

- Step 1: Ensure the box “Delimited” is checked and click on “Next”.

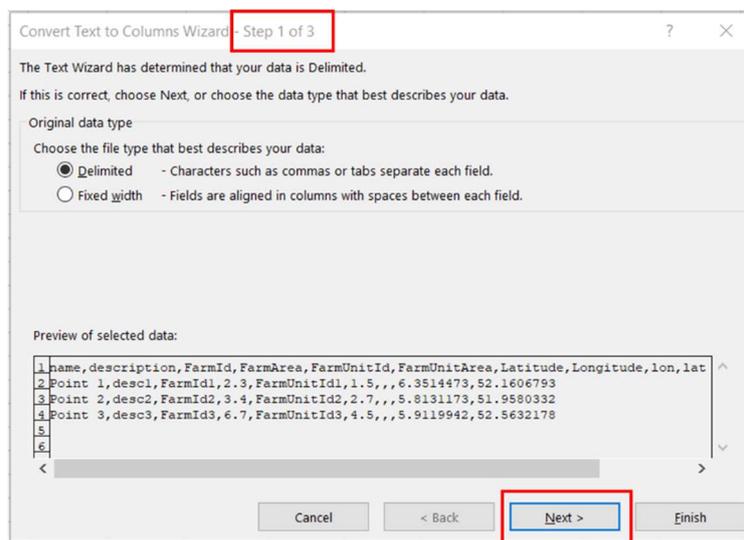


Figure 22. Step 1

- Step 2: check the following boxes:
  - “Tab” and “Comma”, then click on “Next”.
  - Choose Comma when decimals are separated from the integers with points, chose other [ . ] when decimals are separated with a comma.

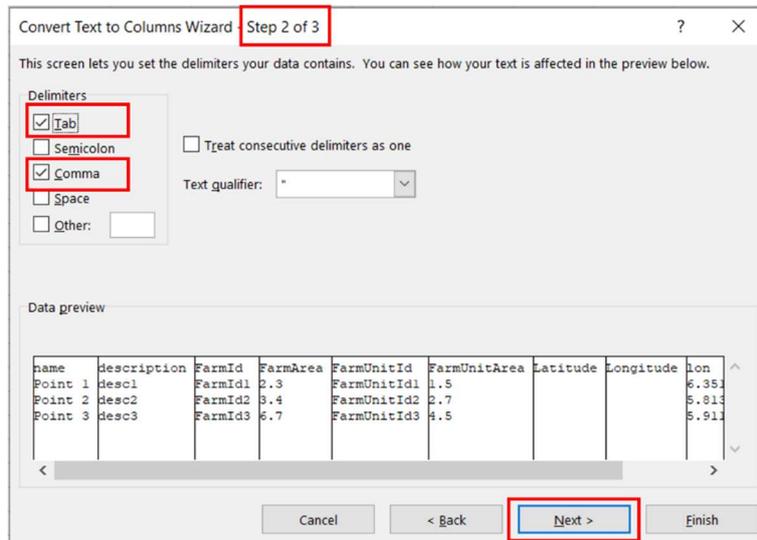


Figure 23. Step 2

- Step 3: click on “**Finish**”. Then all the data will be displayed as in Figure 20 i.e. separated by a comma.

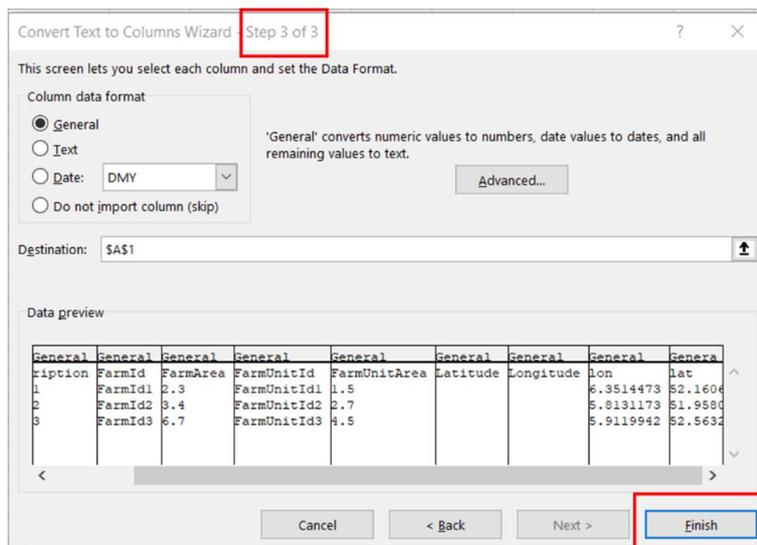


Figure 24. Step 3