

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE PROCEDURE

Partial remote audits for high and very high-risk groups in Côte d'Ivoire

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.

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More information?

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

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High and very high risk cocoa farm Certificate Holders in Côte d'Ivoire Certification Bodies allocated to these groups			
Country/Region:			
Côte d'Ivoire			
Crop:		Type of Certification:	
Cocoa		Farm	

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INTRODUCTION

A number of groups who passed their audit in 2020 but remain in the **High** and **Very High Risk category** in Côte d'Ivoire are eligible to receive partial remote audits against the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Standard for the October 2021 season. The partial remote audits consist of an initial desk audit and a later on-site verification.

The **desk audit** shall take place from August onwards and must be completed no later than **15 September 2021** so that the group receives a certification decision before **1 October 2021**. The group has 2 weeks to remotely close Non-Conformities. If the group passes the desk audit, the Transition Certificate will be granted for the October 2021 to September 2022 harvest season. The license on the RACP will only contain 50% of the annual volume.

The on-site verification must be conducted before the group can be granted the remaining 50% volume. The on-site verification shall take place before **15 November 2021**. The group has 10 weeks to close Non-Conformities (NC) as set out in [the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Certification and Auditing Rules](#). If all NCs are closed within this timeframe, the remaining 50% volume can be added to the license.

PURPOSE

- The purpose of the desk audit is to verify the **existence of a functioning management system** which ensures compliance with the requirements of the 2020 RA Standard. The desk audit consists of the verification of documents related to key credibility requirements. These are set out in the simplified checklist provided by the Rainforest Alliance. No interviews are required for the desk audit.
- The purpose of the on-site verification is to check **if the management system is working effectively and there is evidence that practice is compliant** through sampling, interviews and on-site observation to cross check the documentary evidence verified during the desk audit.

AUDIT PROCESS:

Part one – Desk Audit

1. The CH sends the CAF and preparation documents for audit to their allocated CB.
2. CB shares the audit plan (both desk and on-site) and provides the list of documents required for the desk audit to the CH. The audit duration and planning for the audit (including both the desk audit and the on-site verification) must be documented in the CAF.
3. The CH shares the required documents at least **five working days** before the desk audit start date.
4. An auditor from the CB conducts the document review for the desk audit using the simplified desk audit checklist shared by RA. The document review should take a minimum one and maximum two person-days.
5. The CB holds a virtual opening meeting to explain the audit process and possible outcomes. The CB may ask the CH for clarifications on issues detected during the document review.



6. The CB holds a virtual closing meeting to present the checklist completed during the document review. During this meeting the CB explains any NCs found and the next steps for closing the NCs and completing the certification process.
7. The completed checklist and minutes of the closing meeting are sent to the group immediately after the end of the desk audit so that group can start to close any NCs identified.
8. On the basis of the desk audit and evidence of NC closure if applicable, the CB takes the certification decision. The certification decision must be taken and communicated to RA and the CH.
 - If no NCs were found – decision is communicated maximum two working days after the closing meeting of the audit
 - If NCs were found - decision is communicated maximum two working days after the end of the two-week period for closure of NCs
9. The certification decision has one of two possible outcomes:
 - i. A **positive certification decision** if the CH is found to be in compliance with the simplified checklist for the desk Audit. In this case, the CB grants 50% of the annual volume. To do so, the CB makes the license request to RA by submitting the simplified checklist, certificate template and estimated volume annex (with full annual volume) via email along with the certification decision. Rainforest Alliance then issues the license with 50% of the volume within two working days.
 - ii. A **negative (non-certification) decision** if the CH is not able to close NCs identified during the Desk audit. In this case, the CB submits to RA via email the simplified filled-in checklist along with the certification decision. The CH then has to go straight to the full on-site audit in which case the normal audit procedure applies.

Part two – On-site Verification (normal audit procedure applies)

1. The CB and CH schedule the on-site verification, which must take place before 15 November.
2. During the on-site verification the CB verifies all applicable requirements. The CB provides the CH and RA with the final checklist with NCs no later than ten days after the closing meeting of the on-site verification (as indicated in requirement 3.1.b. of the [Cocoa Policy](#)).
3. If any NCs are identified during on-site verification, the CH has 10 weeks from the closing meeting of the on-site verification to close these and provide evidence of closure to the CB (as indicated in the [Certification and Auditing rules](#)).
4. The CB decides if a further on-site follow-up audit is needed to verify the closure of NCs as described in the [Certification and Auditing rules](#) and taking into account [the Policy on remote closure of NC's](#).
5. The CB takes the certification decision and informs both the CH and RA.
 - a. If the on-site verification results in a positive certification decision, the CB informs RA and the remaining 50% volume will be added to the license.
 - b. If the on-site verification results in a non-certification decision, the certificate is cancelled and any unsold volume can no longer be sold as RA certified.



REQUIREMENTS TO CHECK

- **Desk audit:** RA will provide a simplified checklist focused on key credibility topics, including instructions regarding which documents to review (see desk audit checklist)
- **On-site verification:** all applicable requirements. Document review on site should be limited to verification of issues that could not be verified during the desk audit (apart from records on bought and sold volumes).

LIST OF MANDATORY DOCUMENTS FOR DESK AUDIT

The Rainforest Alliance is providing a simplified checklist focused on key credibility topics for use during the desk audit.

The list below identifies the documents that must be included in the desk audit to verify the requirements in the simplified checklist.

Provided on application for an audit

- List of applicable requirements
- Management capacity tool
- GMR (NB – The GMR must first be uploaded into the RA certification platform by the CH so they can receive their deforestation and protected area analysis)
- Deforestation and Encroachment in Protected Area Risk Analysis received from RA
- Polygon file
- Self-assessment
- Audit report of previous audit

Additional documents to be verified during the Desk Audit

Ch 1 Management

- Management plan
- Risk assessment
- Management capacity tool
- Management plan
- Written evidence of internal inspection system
- Written approval and sanction procedure

Ch 2 Traceability

- Written yield estimation methodology
- Registry for purchase from members (registre d'achat – usually excel file)
- Product flow map
- Written traceability procedure

Ch 3 Income and Shared Responsibility

- Registre des primes
- Written evidence that SD system is in place
- SI plan

Ch 5 Social

- Assess and address system documentation outlining the committee members, mandate, qualification of committee members, mode of selection of committee members, proof of communications with producers regarding A&A system, proof of awareness raising
- Documented cases of child labour, forced labour, workplace violence and harassment and remediation measures (if any)
- Records of social risk monitoring



- Cases reported and documented remediation actions (if relevant)