

# RAINFOREST ALLIANCE POLICY:

## FARM AND SUPPLY CHAIN CERTIFICATION IN COCOA

*Document SA-P-AF-6*

*Version 3*





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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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, for specific interpretation issues about this document contact [wacocoa@ra.org](mailto:wacocoa@ra.org).

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Standards and Assurance		Director of Standards and Assurance		
<b>Linked to:</b>				
SA-S-SD-1 Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard, Farm Requirements and all other annexes, guidances and policies listed in this document				
SA-S-SD-2 Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard, Supply Chain Requirements and all other annexes, guidances and policies listed in this document				
SA-R-GA-1-V1.3 Rainforest Alliance Certification and Auditing rules				
SA-R-GA-2-V1.2 Rules for Certification Bodies				
<b>Replaces:</b>				
SA-P-AF-6-V2.3 Policy for Farm and Supply Chain Certification in Cocoa				
<b>Applicable to:</b>				
Prospective and certified farm and supply chain entities in the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Certification Program audited against the 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard (Farm Requirements and Supply Chain Requirements)				
<b>Country/Region:</b>				
Sections 1A, 2A and 3A of this policy apply in full to Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon. Section 1B applies specifically to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Section 1C and 3C applies to Côte d'Ivoire only. Section 3B applies to Ghana only.				
<b>Crop:</b>		<b>Type of Certification:</b>		
Cocoa		Farm and Supply Chain 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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## MAIN CHANGES FROM VERSION 2.3 TO 3.0

From 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023, Rainforest Alliance allowed for a transition period to grant all Certificate Holders time to implement and be verified against only the core requirements of the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Standard.

From 1 July 2023 onwards, all audits conducted against the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Standard are certification audits initiating the 3-year certification cycle<sup>1</sup>. This version of the Cocoa Policy, published in June 2023, was adapted to be aligned with the requirements of the certification audit and subsequent surveillance audits against the Rainforest Alliance Standard.

All requirements in version 3.0 of the Cocoa Policy must be complied with in addition to the requirements and rules of the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agricultural Standard as set out in the applicability table section on page 8.

Below is an overview of key adaptations in this document SA-P-AF-6-V3, Policy for Farm and Supply Chain Certification in Cocoa, published in June 2023, compared to SA-P-AF-6-V2.3 Policy for Farm and Supply Chain Certification in Cocoa, published July 2022.

Summary Table (changes from version 2.3 to version 3.0)		
Pg.	Clause	Change
<b>PRODUCER CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS</b>		
9	1.2 Geolocation data	Adapted geolocation data requirements for each year in the certification cycle in compliance with European Union Deforestation Regulation. Extension of applicability to Cameroon and Nigeria
11	1.5.a. GMR – national ID number	Modification of required % of national ID numbers for Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, with gradual increase of % per year in the certification cycle
11	1.5.b. GMR – list of sanctioned farmers	New requirement on CH obligation to keep a list of sanctioned farmers and share with the CB before the audit
<b>SUPPLY CHAIN CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS</b>		
12	2.1.a. verification method for supply chain CH	Correction of error in previous version of the policy: supply chain CH in West & Central Africa must have their certification audit (not: <i>second surveillance audit</i> ) on-site. New table explaining the verification method for supply chain CH per year in the certification cycle.
<b>AUDIT PROCESS RULES</b>		
<b>AUDIT PROCESS RULES FOR CB</b>		
13	3.1.a. list of sampled farmers	Modification of requirement: CBs are no longer obliged to share the list of sampled farmers with the CH at the latest 3 pm on the previous day. CBs can share the list of sampled farmers at any time within 24 hours prior to the farm visits.

<sup>1</sup> In Cote d'Ivoire, cocoa farm groups were exceptionally authorized to conduct certification audits from January 1st, 2023.



13	3.1.c. audit planning data	Clarification on frequency and method for CB to report on audit planning data
13	3.1.d. license request submission	New requirement on the obligation of CBs to ensure documents and information in license requests are correct and complete. Resubmissions by CB are limited to two (2).
13	3.1.e and f	New requirement on the obligation of CBs to verify the list of sanctioned farmers and verify if sanction is valid
13	3.1.f.	New requirement on the obligation of CBs to include sanctioned farmers in the audit sample and verify if due SD was paid.
<b>AUDIT PROCESS RULES FOR CERTIFICATE HOLDERS</b>		
14	3.2.d. re-application after non-certification (certification or surveillance audit)	Modification of requirement for CH in Côte d'Ivoire (due to opening of audit period in Côte d'Ivoire): groups in Côte d'Ivoire can only reapply for certification 6 months after the certification or surveillance audit for which they were non-certified.
14	3.2.e. re-application after non-certification (surprise or investigation audit)	Modification of requirement for CH in Côte d'Ivoire (due to opening of audit period in Côte d'Ivoire) : groups in Côte d'Ivoire can only reapply for certification 12 months after the surprise or investigation audit for which they were non-certified.
14	3.2.f. audit preparation documents	New requirement on list of documents that CH must share with CB 4 weeks before planned audit date
<b>CERTIFICATION COST TRANSPARENCY</b>		
15	3.3 Rules on certification cost transparency	Extension of applicability to audits in Cameroon and Nigeria
<b>AUDIT WINDOW AND CERTIFICATE VALIDITY IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE</b>		
16	3.5.a. audit window for certification audits	New requirement that certification audits of cocoa groups in Côte d'Ivoire can take place throughout the year, and that certification audits can take place from 1 January 2023
16	3.5.b. certificate start date	New requirement that the start date of certificates and licenses of cocoa groups in Côte d'Ivoire is the date of the certification decision taken by the CB
16	3.5.c. surveillance audits	New requirement explaining that cocoa groups in Côte d'Ivoire should plan their surveillance audits according to the Certification and Auditing Rules

### CLAUSES REMOVED FROM VERSION 2.3

No. (in version 2.3)	Requirement	Reason for removal
1.4.b.	<i>Any changes to the GMR between the submission of the deforestation and encroachment risk maps to the CB and the first day of the audit must be recorded in an added tab in the GMR, noting the date of the change.</i>	No longer applicable



1.7.b.	For additional trainings (follow up, coaching or further training), certificate holders are recommended to contract the training services of Associated Trainers of Rainforest Alliance.	Clause is not a binding requirement (recommendation remains in effect)
3.1.a.	CBs use the traceability tool provided by the Rainforest Alliance to assess traceability of the CH	No longer applicable in this version of the Cocoa Policy as we are working on a new version of the traceability tool. Once this is finalized, we will communicate to CBs and give sufficient time to practice the tool before it becomes obligatory.
3.1.b.	The pre-audit sample list must be documented. This list may contain more producers than the minimum required sample number to give options to the auditors should the producers not be available during the audit.	Removed because this is already covered in the clauses under section 2.4 sampling of the 1.3 Certification and Auditing rules
3.1.d.	The CB must send the final audit report to the CH at the latest ten days after the last audit day	No longer applicable – alignment with clause 1.4.32 of the 1.3 Certification and Auditing rules: <i>1.4.32 The draft audit report shall be provided no later than <b>3 weeks</b> after the last day of the audit.</i>
3.1.f.	CBs are only required to conduct stakeholder consultation prior to the onsite audit, in the following cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the previous audit report raised an NC on child and/or forced labor.</li> <li>• If there are any complaints related to child and/or forced labor.</li> <li>• Upon RA request If there is evidence of reputational risks associated with child and/or forced labor linked to this CH.</li> </ul>	Exception no longer applicable after end of transition period. From 1 July 2023 onwards, CBs must conduct stakeholder consultation in accordance with annex AR.4.2 of the 1.3 Certification and Auditing rules.
3.1.g.	Once the group has confirmed an audit date with the CB, the group may only reschedule their audit once. Any further attempts to reschedule will result in the audit being moved to the next harvest cycle.	No longer applicable
3.2.a.	CBs must submit to the Rainforest Alliance any evidence of inconsistency between the deforestation risk analysis provided by the Rainforest Alliance and observations of deforestation risk made on the ground. If during an audit, the audit team finds that the deforestation risk of a farm unit is lower than indicated in the deforestation risk analysis, they must provide this evidence in the Rainforest Alliance inconsistency record template. The inconsistency record and evidence	Removed because it is already covered in Annex AR5 of the Certification and Auditing Rules V1.3



	<i>must be shared with Rainforest Alliance when the license request is submitted.</i>	
3.6.a.	<i>(Prospective) CHs in Côte d'Ivoire with a very low (1), low (2) or medium (3) risk level must have their audit during the small harvest (April cycle), between January 1st and June 30<sup>th</sup></i>	No longer applicable (suspension of CH risk levels in Côte d'Ivoire)
3.6.b.	<i>(Prospective) CHs in Côte d'Ivoire with a high (4) or very high (5) risk level must have their audit during the main harvest (October cycle), between May 1st and November 1st</i>	No longer applicable (suspension of CH risk levels in Côte d'Ivoire)
Annex 1	Annex on risk level in Côte d'Ivoire	No longer applicable (suspension of CH risk levels in Côte d'Ivoire)

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>2020 RA SAS</b>	2020 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard
<b>CB</b>	Certification Body
<b>CH</b>	Certificate Holder
<b>GMR</b>	Group Member Registry
<b>RACP</b>	Rainforest Alliance Certification Platform
<b>SD</b>	Sustainability Differential
<b>SI</b>	Sustainability Investment
<b>EUDR</b>	EU Deforestation Regulation



## APPLICABILITY OF REQUIREMENTS

Different sections of this policy apply to Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon as shown in the table below:

- Sections 1A, 2A and 3A of this policy apply in full to Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon;
- Section 1B applies only to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana;
- Section 1C and 3C applies only to Côte d'Ivoire; and
- Section 3B applies only to Ghana.

SECTION		REQUIREMENT	CÔTE D'IVOIRE	GHANA	CAMEROON	NIGERIA
<b>FARM CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>1A</b>	1.1 Fams in protected areas	✓	✓	✓	✓
		1.2 Geolocation data	✓	✓	✓	✓
		1.3 Member monitoring	✓	✓	✓	✓
		1.4 Growth in group membership	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<b>1B</b>	1.5 GMR	✓	✓		
		1.6 Yield estimation	✓	✓		
	<b>1C</b>	1.7 Training	✓			
<b>SUPPLY CHAIN CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>2A</b>	2.1 Certification process	✓	✓	✓	✓
		2.2 Sustainability Differential (SD) payment	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>AUDIT PROCESS RULES</b>	<b>3A</b>	3.1 CB rights and obligations to comply with the audit process	✓	✓	✓	✓
		3.2 CH obligations to comply with the audit process	✓	✓	✓	✓
		3.3 CB obligations to comply with certification cost transparency	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<b>3B</b>	3.4 Audit Allocation		✓		
	<b>3C</b>	3.6 Audit window and certificate validity in Côte d'Ivoire	✓			





## 1. FARM CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

### A. APPLICABLE TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE, GHANA, NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

#### 1.1. Farms in protected areas

- a. Producers in Protected Areas will not be certified if the Protected Area (PA) is classified as a No-Go zone. Groups must remove group members in No-Go zones in order to be certified. Producers in PA that are classified as Go zones may be certified under the following conditions:
- Côte d'Ivoire:
    - i. The CH can provide the decree or order which declassifies the PA. The decree must be emitted by the authority in charge of the management of the PA (SODEFOR or OIPR).
    - ii. The CH can provide the decree or order allowing agricultural activities in an enclave. The decree must be emitted by the authority in charge of the management of the PA (SODEFOR or OIPR).
  - Ghana:
    - i. the CH can provide the allocation paper from the Forestry Commission of Ghana indicating that the area has been assigned/given to the farmer. Actions in the management plan of the protected area are adhered to and implemented by the farmer.
  - Cameroon:
    - i. The CH can provide a ministerial decree, an up-to-date version of the management plan approved by MINFOF, or a memorandum of understanding proving that the authorities have authorized farming in the PA.
  - Nigeria:
    - i. The CH can provide a genuine permit from a relevant authority (Department of Forestry of the Ministry of Environment) indicating the allocated farm area and the concerned farmer.

Note: More information on protected areas can be found in [Guidance D. Geolocation Data Requirements and Risk Maps](#).

#### 1.2. Geolocation data

- a. For the first certification audit (2023), CHs must provide geolocation data for the largest farm unit for 100% of the farms. For at least 10% of the largest farm unit, this is in the form of a GPS polygon (this requirement is aligned with requirement 1.2.12 of the SAS).
- b. For the first surveillance audit (2024), CHs must provide geolocation data for 100% of the farm units. For at least 30% of the farm units, this is in the form of a polygon. A polygon must be available for every farm unit that is 4 hectares or more (in accordance with the requirements of the EUDR).



- c. For the second surveillance audit (2025), CHs must provide geolocation data for 100% of the farm units. For at least 60% of the farm units, this is in the form of a polygon. A polygon must be available for every farm unit that is 4 hectares or more.
- d. For the second certification audit (2026), CHs must provide polygons for 100% of the farm units.
- e. New groups joining the Rainforest Alliance from 2024 onwards must comply with requirement 1.2.b for their certification audit.

For example: a new group has their first certification audit in 2024. They must comply with the requirement 1.2.b: CH must *provide geolocation data for 100% of the farm units. For at least 30% of farm units this is in the form of a polygon. A polygon must be available for every farm unit that is 4 hectares or more.*

### 1.3. Member Monitoring

- a. Farm CHs may not refuse a visit from the Rainforest Alliance Member Monitoring team when a visit is requested. Certificate Holders may reschedule the visit once with a valid reason by proposing an alternative timing for the visit.

### 1.4. Growth in Group Membership

- a. For groups with less than 2 000 producers, the total number of certified producers in a group shall only grow by 30% over the whole audit year in comparison to the total number of certified producers in the previous audit year (certification audit and/or extension audit).
- b. Groups with more than 2 000 producers shall only grow by 10% over the whole audit year in comparison to the total number of certified producers in the previous audit year (certification audit and/or extension audit).



## B. APPLICABLE TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND GHANA

### 1.5. GMR

- a. The National ID number of all group members in possession of such must be indicated in the new GMR template. CHs in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana must comply with a minimum percentage of group members holding a National ID number:
  - i. For the first certification audit, CHs in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana must indicate the National ID number for at least 40% of group members
  - ii. For the first surveillance audit, CHs in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana must indicate the National ID number for at least 60% of group members
  - iii. For the second surveillance audit, CHs in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana must indicate the National ID number for at least 100% of group members
- b. CHs must keep a list of all farmers that are sanctioned at the time of the audit, including their details (name, internal farm ID, national ID (if available), phone number, farm size, production, volume sold during previous harvest, farm size, GPS coordinate, and reason of sanction). The list must be shared with the Certification Body as part of the audit preparation documents (see requirement 3.2.f)

### 1.6. Yield estimation

- a. The total certified area is determined through the use of a GPS tool for at least 90% of producers.

## C. APPLICABLE TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE

### 1.7. Training

- a. From January 2022, (prospective) Certificate Holders in Côte d'Ivoire shall only contract the training services of professionals approved by the Rainforest Alliance or Conseil du Café Cacao. The initial training on the new standard and related documentation shall be provided by Rainforest Alliance or the Associated Trainers.



## 2. SUPPLY CHAIN CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

### A. APPLICABLE TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE, GHANA, NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

#### 2.1. Certification process

- a. All Supply Chain CHs taking legal ownership of certified cocoa or derivative products in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon must have their certification audit on-site. For all Supply Chain CHs in these countries, the verification method table below applies (overriding the global verification method table from the Certification and Auditing rules):

Verification level	Verification method		
	Certification	Year 1: surveillance	Year 2: surveillance
A-very low	On site CB certification audit	Rainforest Alliance automated check	Rainforest Alliance automated check
B-low	On site CB certification audit	Rainforest Alliance review	Rainforest Alliance automated check
C-medium	On site CB certification audit	CB remote surveillance audit	Rainforest Alliance review
D-high	On site CB certification audit	On site CB surveillance audit	CB remote surveillance audit
E-very high	On site CB certification audit	On site CB surveillance audit	On site CB surveillance audit

- b. If a Supply Chain CH receives a non-certification decision, the CH shall wait 6 months after the decision is taken before reapplying for certification.

#### 2.2. Sustainability Differential (SD) payment

- a. Payment of SD by the first buyer to the group is made no later than 6 months after reception of the beans by the first buyer, unless otherwise required by local regulations.



### 3. AUDIT PROCESS RULES

#### A. APPLICABLE TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE, GHANA, NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

##### 3.1. CB rights and obligations to comply with the audit process

- a. CBs may share the list of sampled producers with the CH at the earliest 24 hours prior to visiting those producers.
- b. CBs must pay out of pocket expenses needed for conducting the audit to their auditors prior to the audit taking place.
- c. CBs must update regularly the information on the progress of the certification process for the CHs that have contracted them. For cocoa farm audits in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, this must be done weekly through the SharePoint audit tracking file shared with the CBs to this purpose. For all other audits, this must be done biweekly by sending a list to CB management.
- d. CBs must make sure that the information and documents in license requests submitted to RA are complete and correct. CBs are allowed a maximum of 2 re-submissions after the submission of the initial license request. If more license rejections and resubmissions are needed, this will lead to a non-conformity for the CB.
- e. If the CH has sanctioned farmers, the CB must verify if the reason for sanctioning is valid as per the Sanction and Approval system set up by the group (as per annex AR2.1 on Approvals and sanctions in the 1.3 Certification and Auditing rules).
- f. As per clause 2.4.2 of the 1.3 Certification and Auditing Rules on representativity of the audit sample, CBs are required to include sanctioned farmers in the audit sample. CBs must verify whether the sanctioned farmers received the correct amount of SD for the volumes delivered to the group prior to being sanctioned (as per requirement 3.2.1 of the RA SAS).

##### 3.2 CH obligations to comply with the audit process

- a. At least 75% of the total number of audited producers must come from the auditor's pre-sampled list.
- b. A minimum of 75% of audited producers are able to show some form of official ID to prove their identity during the audit. If a National ID number is indicated for the audited producer in the GMR, the producer must be able to show the corresponding ID. If no National ID number is indicated, the producer can show another form of identification (health Insurance card, birth certificate, etc.).
- c. Appeals to the CB on non-certification decisions must be submitted to the CB by the CH at the latest two weeks after the non-certification decision is issued. Grievances must be submitted to Rainforest Alliance at the latest two weeks after the outcome of the appeal of the non-certification decision to the CB.
- d. If a group receives a non-certification decision from a certification or surveillance audit, the group cannot apply again for certification for the same harvest. They can apply for certification again at the earliest for the following harvest. E.g., a group wants to have



their certificate starting for the main 2023 harvest but receives a non-certification following their audit. The group cannot be certified for the 2023 harvest, whichever the audit date, and can only be certified at the earliest for the small 2024 harvest. Groups in Côte d'Ivoire can only reapply for certification 6 months after the audit for which they were non-certified.

- e. If a group receives a non-certification decision after a surprise or investigation audit, the group shall wait at least one full harvest period from the date the non-certification was taken. E.g., a certified group goes through a surprise audit in the middle of their small harvest of April 2024 and receives a non-certification decision. The group must wait for the rest of their April 2024 harvest and the full 2024 main harvest: the earliest the group can be certified is April 2025. Groups in Côte d'Ivoire can only reapply for certification 12 months after the audit for which they were non-certified.
- f. Farm CHs must share the following documents with the CB at the latest 4 weeks before the first audit day:
  - Certification Application form (CAF)
  - Management plan
  - Self-assessment
  - Group Member Registry
  - Geodata risk assessment (risk maps)
  - Indicator data
  - Management Capacity Assessment Tool (annex S02)
  - List of sanctioned farmers



### 3.3 CB obligations to comply with certification cost transparency

The CB shall have a transparent cost calculation system, which shall reflect in the offer for audit and certification services that is provided to the CH. This includes but is not limited to:

- a. CBs must complete and include the certification cost transparency tool in all certification offers made to farm CHs in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Cameroon and Nigeria. The total price on the offer shall correspond to the total price indicated in the template. Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to request the completed certification cost template in case of price-related grievances raised by CHs.
- b. The total price on the offer must include basic follow-up of closure of non-conformities. If follow-up audit on-site is needed, a complementary offer must be drawn up and invoiced based on the same fee structure.
- c. If the total price on the invoice differs from the price on the initial offer, the CB must clearly indicate the reason for the difference.
- d. Negotiation and acceptance of the offer for audit services remains the responsibility of CBs and CHs. If a disagreement should arise, the CH must first appeal directly to the CB. Where CHs are unable to resolve a complaint related to audit costs, they may then submit a formal complaint to the Rainforest Alliance through [wacocoo@ra.org](mailto:wacocoo@ra.org) within two weeks of the outcome of the appeal with the CB and before signing the contract. Rainforest Alliance will adjudicate the complaint based on compliance with the transparency requirements and coherence with cost information already collected from CBs. Rainforest Alliance will issue a decision within 2 weeks.

## B. APPLICABLE TO GHANA

### 3.4 Audit Allocation

- a. Audit allocation is applicable to all audits of farm CHs against the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Standard in Ghana. Audit allocation does not apply to supply chain CHs.
- b. Farm audits against the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Standard are allocated to CBs by the Rainforest Alliance.
- c. Upfront Audit costs including auditors' expenses (as a proportion of total cost) are covered in the contract between the CH and the CB and paid to the CB ahead of the audit.
- d. The Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to intervene in the audit planning process and request changes to improve audit quality, if the proposed plan does not conform to Rainforest Alliance guidance in terms of audit team composition, sample size and composition or audit duration.



## C. APPLICABLE TO COTE D'IVOIRE

### 3.5 Audit window and certificate validity in Côte d'Ivoire

- a. CH in Côte d'Ivoire can have their first certification audit at any time of the year, regardless of the harvest cycle. Certification audits can be conducted from 1 January 2023 onwards.
- b. Certificates issued from first certification audits in Côte d'Ivoire must have the certification decision date as the start date and are valid for 3 years. The license will have the same start date and is valid for 1 year.
- c. Farm CH in Côte d'Ivoire must schedule their surveillance audits in compliance with the Certification and Auditing Rules
  - i. First surveillance audit: 9 to 15 months after the certificate start date (3 months before to 3 months after the expiry date of the license)
  - ii. Second surveillance audit: 21 to 27 months after the certificate start date (3 months before to 3 months after the expiry date of the license)