

# RAINFOREST ALLIANCE GUIDANCE

## Tea Selling Marks

*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](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org) or contact [info@ra.org](mailto:info@ra.org)

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This guidance document is non-binding. This means that this document provides important information to help readers understand, interpret, and implement the requirements set out in the documents listed in the section "linked to" above. However, following the guidance in this document is not mandatory.



## INTRODUCTION

Tea traceability in the Rainforest Alliance tea certification program is based on the selling marks recorded for each certificate holder and this is key information for approving volume transactions. Therefore, it is important to have that information recorded accurately at the time of the audit and in the Rainforest Alliance traceability program.

Selling marks define the provenance of tea in the market and are used by buyers to identify which tea quality and variety they want to buy, and which tea is and is not certified). Buyers do not know what tea to buy at auction, or from producers directly, if they do not know which selling marks are linked to certified producers.

Moreover, if the selling mark is incorrect, it will not correspond to the data that buyers have in their ERP systems and will cause issues when they are performing transactions in the Rainforest Alliance traceability platform based on their data.

## GUIDANCE ON SELLING MARK

A selling mark is the name under which the factory sells its tea. This may or may not be the same name as the garden mark (noting that smallholders do not have garden marks – garden marks are associated with estates and origins where tea was introduced/managed under a British system). Note: Buyers often use the term “garden mark”, or just “mark” as shorthand for selling mark.

A selling mark is:

- Printed on the tea sacks shipped from farm CHs factories or bulking factories,
- Will be on purchase orders, contracts, invoices etc.,
- Is used in auction catalogues,
- Is used in the ERP systems of buyers, if they have one,
- In the Rainforest Alliance traceability platform selling mark is a key identifier in the footprint together with variety and producer.
- The identity or “brand” of the tea as produced/packed/sold into the marketplace. It can denote the origin/factory/quality/type of the tea in question. Multiple grades (leaf quality / size) can be assigned under one Selling Mark.

A selling mark can be assigned to a position by:

- A farm CH, who must select a selling mark when converting green leaf into made tea
- A supply chain CH performing a bulk stock activity – where they either name it as one of the selling marks that went into the bulk or give it a unique selling mark name. That selling mark name can be alphanumeric.

A selling mark **can be:**

- The name of the garden producing the tea
- The name of the village/group/community producing the tea
- The factory name/location
- Part of the certificate name

A selling mark **cannot be:**

- The country to which the tea is sold
- The buyer’s name
- The country of origin
- A production standard



- Purchase order, contract, batch, lot, or r production numbers  
Selling marks do not usually contain additions like “farm”, “garden”, “tea estate” or associated suffixes, (but this can be valid if that is the selling mark commonly used by farm CH in the trade and is consistently applied and communicated to the market)

## DATA QUALITY REVIEW

The data review conducted by the Certification Body is important to ensure the correct Selling Marks are being approved and processed for volume sales. Here are some considerations to review:

- Correct spelling according to local language is entered for each corresponding Selling Mark.
- No duplicate names are included within the same certificate holder.

Selling Marks should be verified as follows:

1. Check that Selling Marks are all listed within the footnote of the certificate template.
2. Corresponding Selling Marks are recorded in MTT profile.
3. Corresponding Selling Marks in CH sales documentation.