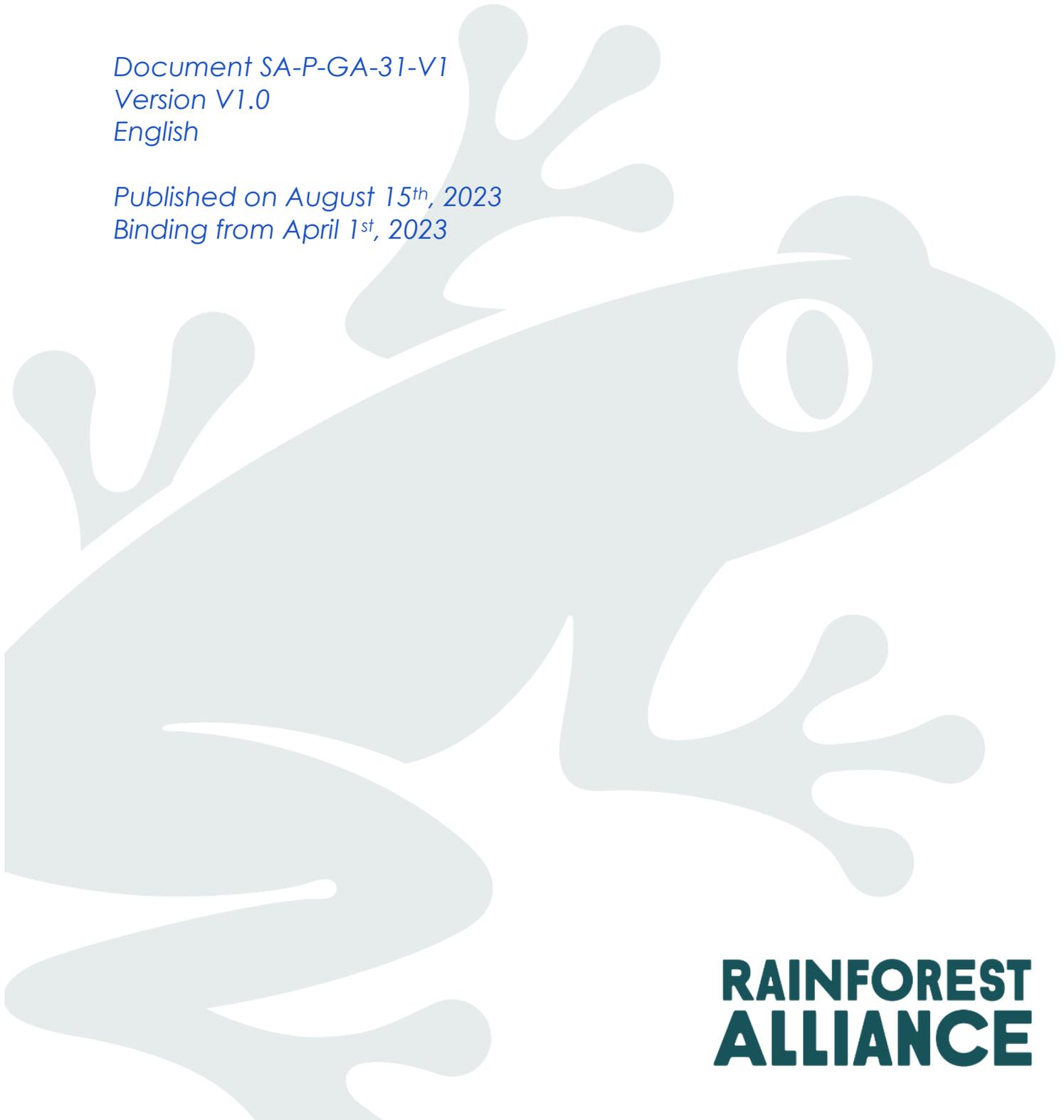# RAINFOREST ALLIANCE POLICY

LICENSE RENEWAL DURING RAINFOREST ALLIANCE REVIEW YEARS

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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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SA-S-SD-2 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard, Supply Chain Requirements SA-R-GA-1 Rainforest Alliance Certification and Auditing Rules				

Applicable to
Supply Chain Certificate Holders, Certification Bodies

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1. THE RAINFOREST ALLIANCE REVIEW

The Rainforest Alliance review is a type of verification conducted by the Rainforest Alliance, based on risk indicators provided by the certificate holder (CH) in the Rainforest Alliance Certification Platform (RACP). The review is applicable to CHs eligible for Endorsement (verification level A) and CHs that fall under verification level B during year 1 surveillance and verification level C during year 2 surveillance.

The table below illustrates in which year and for which risk level the review is applicable:

Verification level	Verification method		
	Certification	Year 1: Surveillance	Year 2: Surveillance
A-very low	Rainforest Alliance review	Rainforest Alliance automated check	Rainforest Alliance automated check
B-low	CB remote 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

Table CR 5: Verification Levels

This document and the process outlined in it are exclusively applicable to CHs with verification level B and C, because it involves a Certification Body (CB) as third party.

The Rainforest Alliance conducts a verification of conformity with the Supply Chain Requirements of the Rainforest Alliance 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard throughout the duration of the license (year 1 surveillance for verification level B and year 2 surveillance for verification level C). However, it is important to note that the supply chain CHs must first complete their RACP profile update and receive their verification level. They will then contact the CB of their choice, which will formally send the updated documents (see section 2 below) to the Rainforest Alliance for license renewal.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LICENSE RENEWAL IN RAINFOREST ALLIANCE REVIEW YEARS

Certificate Holders

- Update and re-confirm the certification scope in RACP yearly for verification levels to be calculated again. For verification levels B-E, the latest email results of the Supply Chain Risk Assessment (SCRA) must be forwarded to the CB. CHs are responsible for following these timelines and completing their RACP requirements 3-6 months prior to their license expiration.
- Verify conformity to the applicable requirements by using self-assessment. Columns **D and E should be filled in completely** in the document and uploaded to RACP yearly.
- Ensure there is a valid License Agreement in RACP.
- Initiate the Handshake with the relevant CB.
- After completing the above points, the CH should contact their CB, and request the certificate's validity to be updated for the license renewal.
- NOTE: The CB may charge administrative fees for completing the license renewal process.

- NOTE: The CB is not responsible for reminding the CH to update their certification scope, SCRA, self-assessment, or License Agreement. Compliance with these requirements is the sole responsibility of the CH.

Certification Bodies

- Receive the CH's updated verification level(s) and assess the verification method for that year. (It is not the responsibility of the CB to send a reminder to the CH to complete this process in time for their license expiration)
- Complete the Handshake with the relevant CH.
- Review the RACP scope of the CH to ensure any updates to the certificate and attached annex.
- Update and submit the certificate with the new license validity dates on the CH's certificate annex and request the license renewal to the Rainforest Alliance via the Microsoft form.
- For CHs who submitted a corrective action plan for non-conformities (NCs) received prior to 1 July 2023, the CB must verify whether those NCs have been effectively closed. In addition to the updated certificate, the audit report with evidence of closure of those NCs must be sent to the Rainforest Alliance.

The Rainforest Alliance

- Ensures that the CH has their next pending license created in RACP and has received verification levels for all their sites.
- Completes checks to ensure the license renewal request by the CB and documentation by the CH are complete and correct (Certificate, Self-Assessment, valid License Agreement, and additional documentation if applicable).
- Informs the CH and/or CB whether any of the above documents are missing/incomplete before granting the license.
- Takes final decision on granting new license in RACP and notifies the CB.
- During the review, the Rainforest Alliance verifies CH's conformity to the applicable requirements and follows-up with the CH to ensure compliance. This review may occur either during or after the license renewal has been granted to the CH.
- Informs the CB if the CH has any non-conformities which could lead to suspension of the license or an increase in their verification level.

3. EXCEPTIONS FOR RAINFOREST ALLIANCE REVIEW

There are two exceptions where CBs should still perform an audit for CHs who would usually require a review:

Full closure of non-conformities

If a CH has submitted a corrective action plan for NCs received prior to 1 July 2023 and some of those NCs are still pending verification of closure, the CB must carry out a follow-up audit to verify the closure of the NCs within 12 months of the previous audit start date, unless this can be verified during a regular audit for that year. This can be done through remote checks, if

possible. For further information, please see section 4 of our [Adjusted Timelines for Transition and Full Certification Cycles](#).

Multi-site CHs with different verification levels

In the case of multi-site CHs with different verification levels (A, B-E), the Rainforest Alliance will not carry out separate or additional verification for sites that fall under the review. This is because these sites are already included in the management plan presented by the CH's central management location during the audit by the CB.

4. FAQ

Q: What is the difference between a transition license and the full certification cycle?

A: The Rainforest Alliance introduced its new Certification Program based on the [2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard](#) on 1 July 2021. To support CHs transitioning from the UTZ and 2017 Rainforest Alliance certification programs, the Rainforest Alliance allowed for a period of transition audits for supply chain CHs (1 July 2021 to 30 September 2022) during which several measures were taken to facilitate existing and new CHs to familiarize themselves with and implement the new standard requirements.

CHs that underwent a transition audit received a license with a **one-year validity** to give them sufficient time to fully comply with all the applicable requirements of the 2020 Sustainable Agriculture Standard. After having obtained their transition license, CHs **shall follow the full three-year certification cycle based on the verification level assigned yearly**, as per the table below.

Verification level	Verification method		
	Certification	**Year 1: Surveillance**	**Year 2: Surveillance**
A-very low	Rainforest Alliance review	Rainforest Alliance automated check	Rainforest Alliance automated check
B-low	CB remote 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

Table CR 5: Verification Levels

See also: [SA-P-GA-8 Policy on Changes to Auditing Rules in Transition Year](#), and [Adjusted Timelines for the Transition and Full Certification Cycles of the 2020 Rainforest Alliance Certification Program](#)

Q: How will the Rainforest Alliance verify the CH's conformity during the review?

A: The Rainforest Alliance will verify a CH's conformity based on their RACP profile, the completed self-assessment, traceability, payments of SD/SI, and any other applicable requirements.

As outlined in the Certification and Auditing Rules, the Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to suspend a license and/or to increase the verification level, if the applicable requirements are not complied with.

However, please note that this process for the review is subject to potential change. We recommend staying updated with the Rainforest Alliance for any updates or clarifications regarding this process.

Q: Can the CB issue an invoice for the Rainforest Alliance Review year?

A: Yes, CBs can issue an invoice to CHs to submit the request for renewal of the license for the review. There may be additional costs incurred if verification of closure of non-conformities is required. This invoice is for administrative purposes only, and the Rainforest Alliance is not involved in this process nor responsible for calculating or managing these fees.

Q: What if a CH indicates an NC in their self-assessment? How will this be checked?

A: The Rainforest Alliance will review the self-assessment for all CHs after receiving the request for their new license. If a NC is identified during the review, there will be direct follow up with the CH to resolve the matter.

For any further questions or inquiries, please contact us at cbcert@ra.org (for CBs) or at customersuccess@ra.org (for CHs). We are here to assist you and provide any additional information you may need.