

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

2023 IMPACT REPORT

# TOGETHER



RAINFOREST  
ALLIANCE



Thank you for supporting the Rainforest Alliance, an international non-profit organization partnering with rural communities in the world's most important tropical forests to address the climate crisis by transforming how farms and forests are managed.

Together, we are building an alliance where rural communities are at the heart of the solution. We are improving the lives of farmers and forest guardians while protecting nature.

We are so proud of the work we accomplished in 2023, and we have you to thank. We're excited to share these achievements in this Impact Report; after all, our work is only possible through the generosity of donors like you.





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# Dear friends,

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**We come to you, the Rainforest Alliance's closest supporters and friends, with a message of hope.**

There's no denying that the climate crisis continued to accelerate in 2023. Before the year had even ended, there were already 25 climate disasters in the United States alone, with losses exceeding US\$1 billion each—and a host of other catastrophes around the globe, from a month-long cyclone that hit Mozambique, to devastating floods in Libya, to record-setting temperatures in Europe. But at the Rainforest Alliance, we know that we can bend the curve on the climate crisis, along with the interconnected global challenges of rural poverty, deforestation, biodiversity, and human rights abuses. Why? Because we know what needs to be done—and we're doing it.

For nearly 40 years, the Rainforest Alliance has partnered with communities around the world to protect our most valuable forests. From our very first day, we have understood that big change happens when we work together.

Our alliance begins with friends like you, whose generous support allows us to engage farmers, forest communities, companies, and consumers to create a world where people and nature thrive in harmony. By bringing together diverse allies, we are making deep-rooted change on some of the most pressing social and environmental issues of our time. We're implementing proven and scalable solutions on the ground while testing innovative ways to drive change.

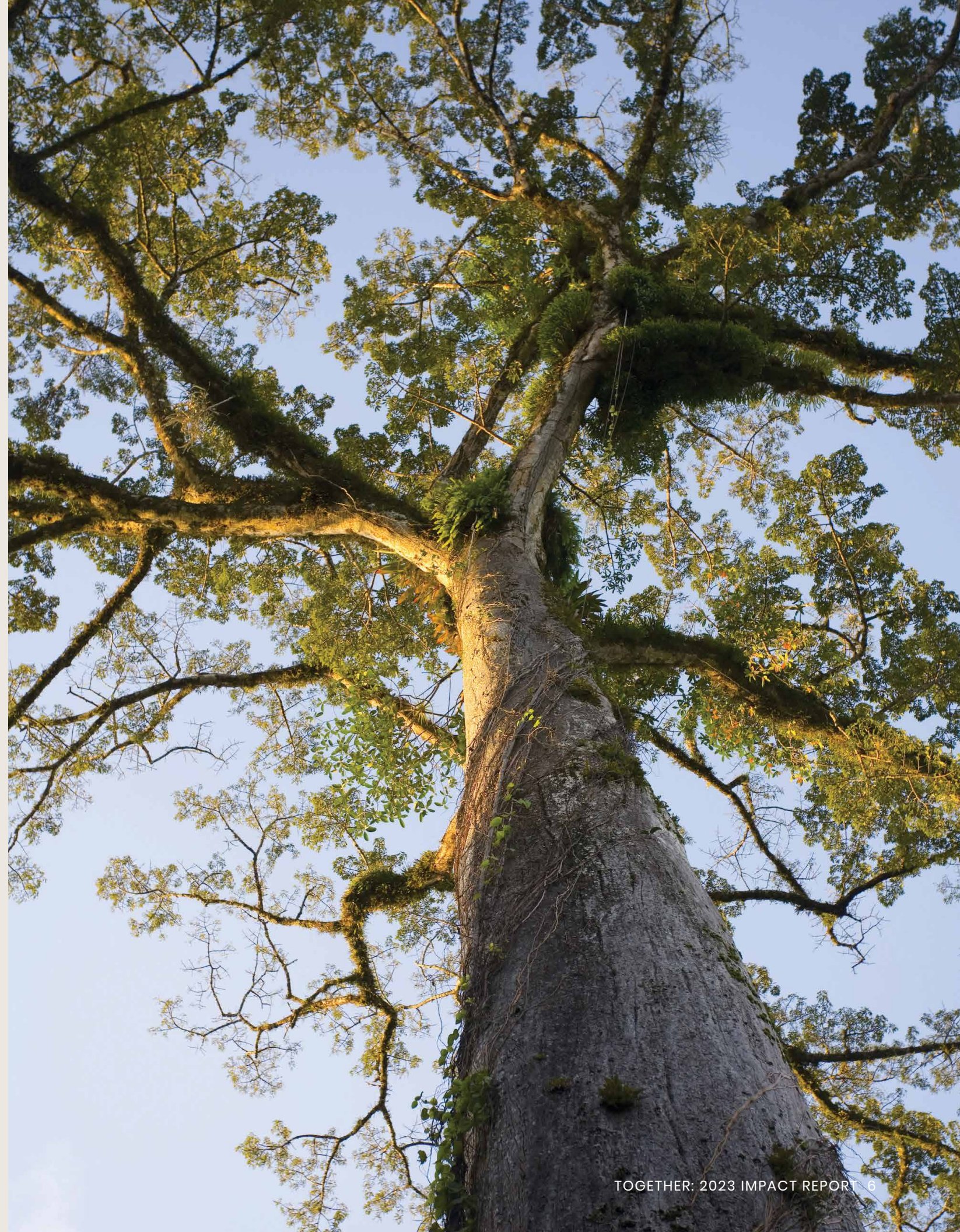
With you by our side, we're accelerating the speed and scale of our impact. We're all in on dramatically expanding the number of partners we work with to reach a tipping point for change. We aim to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and forestry, while developing solutions that help producers and rural communities build resilience to an already-changing climate.

As you read this report, we hope you'll take pride in the essential role your support has played in making important strides toward achieving these ambitious goals. Thank you for believing in us and being part of our alliance. Together, we are changing lives, safeguarding biodiversity, and protecting and restoring forests; all play a crucial role in our climate, and our future.

With gratitude,

**Santiago Gowland**  
Rainforest Alliance CEO

**Daniel Katz**  
Rainforest Alliance  
founder & board chair





# A Systemic Approach to a Global Problem

**Fragmented efforts are holding the world back.** But when we join forces, we can accelerate change at the speed and scale the world needs.

The Rainforest Alliance's holistic approach benefits farmers, forest communities, and Indigenous peoples around the world, helping them to protect forests, improve their livelihoods, promote their human rights, and mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis. We do this by bringing together people and businesses to change the way the world produces, sources, and consumes.

Our strategic approach is delivering globally significant, measurable results:

**15 million acres**  
of farmland certified globally against our sustainability standards

**58 countries**  
where we have sustainability projects and/or certified farmers

**4 million farmers & workers**  
on Rainforest Alliance Certified farms

**190 countries**  
where you can buy products with the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal or UTZ label

**6,000+ companies**  
working with us to source certified ingredients and improve their business practices

**700+ employees**  
around the world



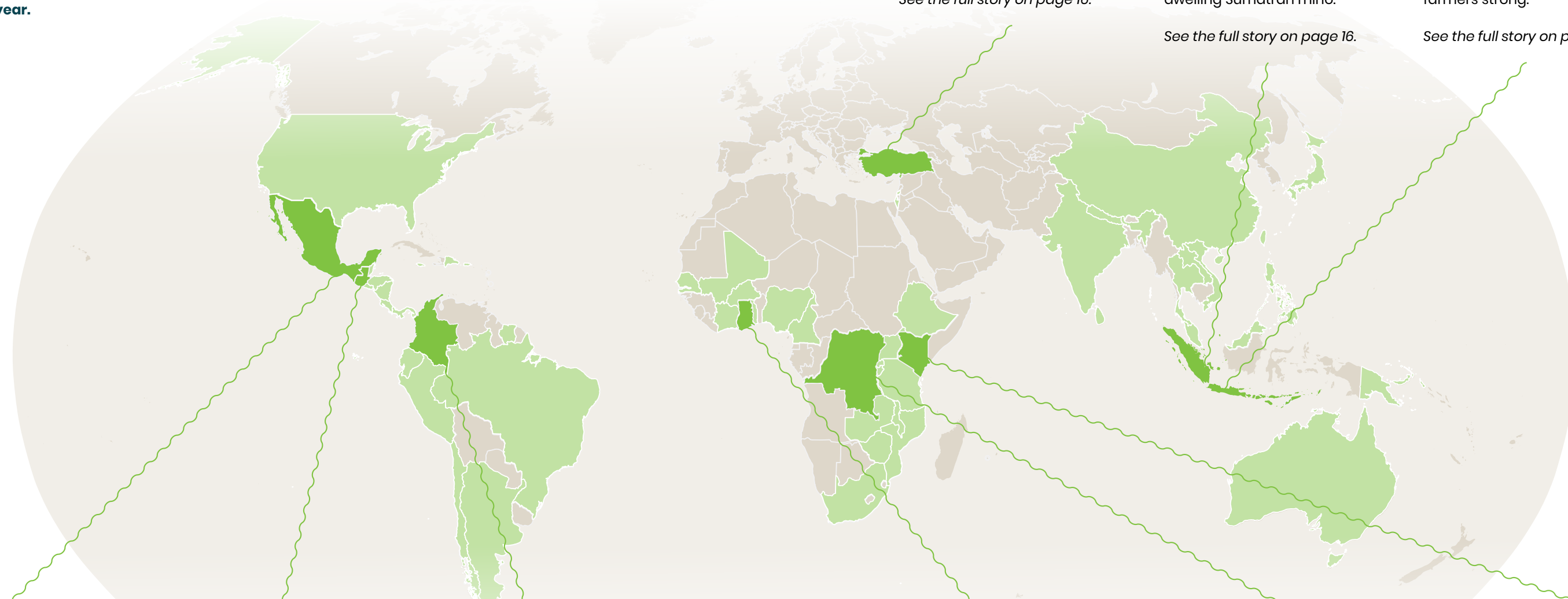
## Our Approach Works Because We Are Not Alone

More people are demanding sustainable products, with eco-active consumers identified as the fastest-growing consumer group globally. Accounting for 22 percent of the global population today, they are projected to make up over 50 percent by 2029. More businesses are demanding it, too, with the sustainability and green tech market projected to grow from US\$10 billion in 2020 to US\$75 billion by 2030.

# Our Impact

Fueled by your generous support, we are building a global alliance of people who share our vision of a world where people and nature thrive in harmony. Together, we are driving local change in 58 countries that adds up to significant global impact.

**Below, and in the pages that follow, are just a few of many stories from the past year.**



## 6,500 hazelnut farmers

the Rainforest Alliance has trained in strategies to address child labor abuses along Türkiye's Black Sea coast, where more than 20 percent of seasonal migrant agricultural workers are children.

*See the full story on page 16.*

## 45,000 trees

planted by Rainforest Alliance-supported smallholder coffee farmers over the past two years on land bordering Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park, one of the last remaining homes of the critically endangered forest-dwelling Sumatran rhino.

*See the full story on page 16.*

## 24,900% increase

in the number of farmers participating in Klasik Beans, a Rainforest Alliance Certified coffee cooperative in West Java, Indonesia, which was established in 2009 with just eight members, and is now more than 2,000 farmers strong.

*See the full story on page 16.*

## 30,000 trees

planted by the community of La Ramona, with the Rainforest Alliance's support, to restore degraded land in Chiapas, Mexico.

*See the full story on page 11.*

## 2.7 million tons

of CO2 sequestered by protecting and restoring critical tropical forests, thanks to the Rainforest Alliance's 300 community partners in Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve.

*See the full story on page 12.*

## 96,000 acres

of land in Colombia's San José del Guaviare region, where the Rainforest Alliance works with community partners to reverse decades of deforestation, helping them to develop a forest management plan that leverages markets for sustainable, native, non-timber forest products (like açai berries and cocona fruit).

*See the full story on page 12.*

## 71,000 acres

of land in Ghana's Juaboso-Bia region that Rainforest Alliance-trained cocoa farmers have reforested over the past decade, leading to a restored river system and greater resilience from climate impacts.

*See the full story on page 13.*

## 50 households

trained by the Rainforest Alliance last year in integrated agriculture-aquaculture management as part of a pilot program to address both poverty and deforestation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Salonga National Park.

*See the full story on page 14.*

## 19,000 coffee farmers

in the Mount Kenya landscape who received training over the past year on the Rainforest Alliance's Sustainable Agriculture Standard, which ensures best practices in agricultural productivity, sustainability, and social impact.

*See the full story on page 14.*

# Together, we're protecting precious forests in Latin America



## Helping a Colombian Community Restore Their Part of the Amazon Rainforest

Deep in the heart of Colombia, San José del Guaviare is a region of contrasts—a place where the grassy plains of Los Llanos meet the northern edge of the Amazon rainforest, and ancient rock formations stand sentinel over the remarkable landscape. Yet rural communities in this biodiverse, isolated region have struggled for decades, plagued by paramilitary violence and drug traffickers. To survive, these communities have been driven to cattle farming, resulting in record rates of deforestation and decreased soil fertility, threatening their food security and livelihoods.

In response, the Rainforest Alliance is collaborating with partners on the Forest Allies initiative, which focuses on a 96,000 acre area where local communities have fought to maintain their land rights in the face of war, violence, and illegal activities. Together, we are working to develop a forest-management plan that helps the community restore degraded forest areas and manage the rest; establish and run successful enterprises to market their non-timber forest products, including açai berries and cocona fruit; and promote the community's fundamental rights. Thanks to surging national and international interest, these products represent a powerful incentive to keep forests standing, and an economic alternative for rural producers such as Blanca, a 68-year-old widow who joined the program so she could better manage her 210 acres of land.



## Applying Indigenous Knowledge to Create a Thriving Coffee-Growing Community in Mexico

More than two decades ago, 20 Indigenous Tzotzil families were driven from their ancestral lands in Chiapas, Mexico. They wandered from place to place, until finally, they settled 247 acres of severely degraded—and virtually uninhabitable—land 140 miles away. There they formed La Ramona, an ejido (communally owned land).

After struggling for many years with poor coffee plants, degraded soil, and climate challenges, La Ramona became one of eight communities in the area that the Rainforest Alliance began working with to modify their farming practices in ways that let them thrive economically while working to restore the land to its original richness. Since the initiative started, La Ramona has transformed the landscape from a near-desert into a healthy, productive ecosystem. The community has planted 30,000 trees and 65,000 coffee plants, boosting its production to three times that of nearby communities. And all of this has been accomplished using traditional practices that had previously been lost over the years.

“Science shows that what Indigenous people did 100 years ago is the best way to farm.”

**Daniel Domínguez Monzón**  
Rainforest Alliance agronomy expert



## Using Community Forestry to Protect the Largest Tropical Forests in Meso-America

Guatemala suffers some of the highest deforestation rates in the Americas. The Rainforest Alliance works with 12 partner communities in the Maya Biosphere Reserve—part of the Selva Maya, the largest tropical forest north of the Amazon—to show that this unsustainable practice doesn't have to be the norm. Impressively, 10 of these communities have maintained a near-zero deforestation rate for almost 20 years using an integrated land management

approach known as community forestry. The other two community concessions were recently created, a testament to the Guatemalan government's faith in this model.

Together, these 12 community forest concessions steward some 872,000 acres of forest. The Guatemalan government has granted them the right to make a living from timber and non-timber forest products (such as ramón seeds and palm fronds), so long as they do so in harmony with nature. All told, the concessions support more than 100 locally owned businesses, generating more than 12,000 jobs and millions of dollars in annual revenues.

# Together, we're empowering rural communities in Africa



## Working with Ghanaian Cocoa Farmers to Restore Degraded Forests

Ghana is losing its rainforest faster than any other country in the world. The main driver is agricultural expansion for cocoa—a vital cash crop that supports the livelihoods of some 800,000 small-scale farmers.

After taking part in Rainforest Alliance trainings, cocoa farmers in western Ghana's Juaboso-Bia area were inspired to regenerate their landscape. Together with the Rainforest Alliance's Ghana team, members of 36 farming communities—spanning 72,000 acres—joined forces with government officials,

cocoa traders, and chocolate manufacturers to form a community-led Landscape Management Board. Over the past decade, the Board has spearheaded local reforestation efforts—including planting nearly 60,000 tree seedlings in formerly degraded areas. Its members have also cultivated thousands of young shade trees on local cocoa farms, nurturing thriving agroforestry systems that can help farmers grow their resilience to climate change impacts. The initiatives have been life-changing: Because of deforestation, water used to disappear from the rivers during the dry season, explains Elijah Owusu-Cashiekrom, chairman of the board's forest governance unit—but after planting trees on riverbanks, "the rivers flow all year like they used to."

## Using Integrated Approaches to Protect the Rainforest of the Congo Basin

Deforestation, overfishing, and hunting pose a triple threat to the people—and the incredible biodiversity—of the Monkoto Corridor of Salonga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Local communities here face high poverty rates and rely heavily on natural resources, accounting for 95 percent of their food, medicine, and livelihoods.

To create a more sustainable future for the region, the Rainforest Alliance provides training on community forestry strategies. This helps the communities develop ways to generate better incomes, while reducing pressure on wildlife and forests. During the initial phase of this project, 50 households were trained to integrate large-scale aquaculture with pigsties and poultry. The beauty of this circular system is that the animal manure serves as a valuable fertilizer for the fish, while the fish provide income and sustenance for the community. This is the first step in eventually reaching 3,600 farming households in the area.

"I am very happy about what we are learning and how we are developing our work through this initiative. We will make sure to put this into practice to use our land in a way that doesn't destroy the forest."

**Benzi Ekuma**  
Small-scale farmer



## Helping Coffee and Tea Farmers in Kenya Adapt to a Changing Climate

Smallholder coffee and tea farmers in the iconic forested landscape of Mount Kenya are increasingly feeling the effects of climate change with higher temperatures, unpredictable rainfall changing growing cycles, and increasing cases of pests like tea mites and tea weevils. Combined with other challenges like aging coffee and tea bushes and rising production costs, many farmers are left struggling to maintain their livelihoods.

To address this problem, the Rainforest Alliance has embarked on a six-year project to work with 25,000 smallholder coffee farmers and 25,000 smallholder tea farmers to conserve and better manage their resources. The project will enable farmers to collectively increase their incomes and better adapt to the effects of climate change. This project takes advantage of the fact that the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard is a powerful tool to drive the uptake of best agricultural and management practices in farms, contributing to improvements in productivity and social issues. In just the first year of the project, more than 19,000 coffee farmers in the Mount Kenya landscape received training and were supported through the transition process—a very positive start.



# Together, we're championing human rights while tackling climate change and biodiversity loss in Asia



“We don’t have landslides anymore. If you have agroforestry... the more biodiversity of the trees, the more variety, the cleaner the water becomes, and of course the fresh air.”

**Eko Purnomowidi**  
Coffee farmer and co-founder of Klasik Beans



## Addressing Child Labor on Hazelnut Farms in Türkiye

In the rugged hills of the Black Sea coast of Türkiye, hazelnut production is still mostly manual and heavily reliant on seasonal labor. The Turkish Statistical Institute estimates that there are at least one million seasonal migrant workers in agriculture—and more than 220,000 of them are children. In some areas, more than 40 percent of workers are aged 15-18, and up to 10 percent are even younger.

In an effort to get children out of dangerous farm labor (without driving abuses underground), the Rainforest Alliance is working collaboratively with farmers to assess and address child labor on the ground. So far, our teams have trained more than 6,500 farmers in targeted prevention, monitoring, and remediation strategies, and have helped set up community-based working groups in selected hazelnut villages across the Black Sea’s Ferizli and İkizce districts. Additionally, since 2022 the Rainforest Alliance has been working with partners to launch summer school programs for the children of seasonal workers to provide alternative opportunities to farm labor.



## Working with Sumatran Coffee Farmers to Protect the World’s Smallest Rhino

Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park, where the rainforest meets the sea, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It is home to the critically endangered—and wonderfully woolly—Sumatran rhino, along with some of the world’s last remaining primary rainforests. But the park is threatened—in part, by agricultural activities such as coffee cultivation—and more than 22 percent of its forest has already been lost.

Working with the government’s appointed forest managers, the Rainforest Alliance has helped smallholder coffee farmers obtain social forestry licenses from Indonesia’s Ministry of the Environment and Forestry. The licenses were granted in exchange for the farmers conserving wildlife and maintaining forest cover. Over two years, the Rainforest Alliance’s team has supported these smallholders in planting 45,000 trees in the area that directly borders the national park. The project’s design also promoted small-scale tourism, helping farmers to learn the local flora and fauna and to lead tours as a way of increasing their incomes.

## Creating Climate-Resilient Communities in Indonesia and Around the World

In 2004, the combination of heavy rains and a deforested mountainside proved lethal for a farming community in West Java, Indonesia, when a huge landslide took many lives. This is just one example of how extreme weather events and a changing climate are endangering both the lives and livelihoods of communities around the world.

A few dedicated community members took it upon themselves to reforest the mountain, before forming Klasik Beans, a coffee cooperative devoted to agroforestry, an approach of that helps to foster biodiversity while also producing quality coffee. The cooperative is now a model for climate resilience that the Rainforest Alliance is working to replicate elsewhere, helping communities around the world to implement more sustainable farming practices such as reforesting hillsides, protecting waterways and wildlife, and nourishing the soil.



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# Together, we're creating a world where people and nature thrive.

**The Rainforest Alliance only works with your steadfast support, for which we are incredibly grateful.**

“I support the Rainforest Alliance, not only for the organization’s dedication to the health of the planet but for its commitment to the well-being of smallholder farmers and their families. For me, this is central: When farmers are earning fair wages, they will stop looking for other ways to support their families, such as through illegal logging and child labor. And ultimately, we will have healthier food and more productive land.”



**Marilú Hernández de Bosoms**  
Rainforest Alliance Board

**We'd love to hear from you!**  
Please reach out directly to  
Maria Wassum at [mwassum@ra.org](mailto:mwassum@ra.org).

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SCAN TO GIVE

