

Brief Introduction to Rainforest Alliance Certification

1. Rainforest Alliance

- ❖ Is an international **non-profit organization** working at the intersection of business, agriculture, and forests to make responsible business the new normal (<https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/about>)
- ❖ Builds alliances to **protect forests**, improve **the livelihoods** of farmers and forest communities, promote their **human rights**, and help them **mitigate** and adapt to the climate crisis.
- ❖ Is an **alliance** of farmers, forest communities, companies, and consumers committed to creating a world where people and nature thrive in harmony. By bringing diverse allies together, Rainforest Alliance is making deep-rooted change on some of the most pressing social and environmental issues of our time.
- ❖ **The 5 Principles**
 - ✓ Principle 1: **Effective Planning**
 - ✓ Principle 2: **Biodiversity Conservation**
 - ✓ Principle 3: **Natural Resources Conservation**
 - ✓ Principle 4: **Improved Livelihoods** and Human Wellbeing
 - ✓ Principle 5: Sustainable Cattle Production

2. Who and what can be certified:

- ✓ The **Rainforest Alliance Standard** allows certification only of **farms** (including onsite processing facilities), and farmer groups (with their group administration)
- ✓ Entities involved in post-harvest processing or trade of Rainforest Alliance certified products, can be certified to the **Chain of Custody Standard**.

3. Scoring system:

- ✓ To achieve or maintain certification, farms or farmer groups **must comply with all criterial criteria and achieve the corresponding percentages per level and year**. For level C, first certification audit, a 50% must be obtained; for first surveillance audit 65%, and for second surveillance audit 80%. For level B, the score for certification audit (new audit cycle), must be no less than 50%, and 100% of level C criteria. For first surveillance audit, 65%, and maintain 100% of level C Criteria. For second surveillance audit, 80%, and maintain 100% of level C criteria.
- ✓ Criteria identified as **critical** must always be complied with; the standard includes **15** such criteria, including:
 - **Baseline assessment** is conducted and documented for the farm or group
 - The total **volume** of certified product sold does not exceed the volume harvested from the farm
 - **The products preserve their integrity in accordance with their claim**
 - Independent environmental and social **impact assessment** (ESIA) is conducted prior to land conversion
 - Mechanisms for the selection, monitoring, and management of **service providers**
 - **Commitment** to certification and to complying with this standard
 - **High Conservation Value** (HCV) areas have not been destroyed
 - Farms **conserve all natural ecosystems** and have not destroyed forest
 - Production activities do not degrade any protected area
 - **Animals** that are **endangered** or protected are never hunted or killed
 - **Wastewater** from processing operations is **not discharged** into aquatic ecosystems
 - Untreated **sewage** is not discharged into aquatic ecosystems
 - The farm management develops and implements an **integrated pest management** (IPM) plan

- The use of substances included in the SAN List of **Prohibited Pesticides** is prohibited
- Pesticide application by aircraft complies with SAN requirements for aerial fumigation
- Crops covered by the SAN certificate scope do not consist of genetically modified organisms (**GMOs**)
- Farms do not use human sewage in production or processing activities
- All forms of **forced**, compulsory, or slave **labor** are prohibited
- Workers are treated **respectfully**
- All forms of **discrimination** in labor are prohibited
- Workers have the right to establish and join **worker organizations** of their own free choice
- All workers receive no less than the legal **minimum wage**
- The worst forms of **child labor** are prohibited
- **Young workers** are contracted only under compliance of national regulations
- Respect **workers benefits**
- **Complaints** or grievance **mechanisms** to protect workers' rights
- **Regular working hours** of all workers do not exceed 48 hours per week
- All **overtime** is voluntary
- Access to **potable water** for workers
- **Housing** conditions
- **Occupational Health and Safety** (OHS) plan
- Functional **Personal Protective Equipment** is provided to workers
- **Training** for personnel in charge of handling **chemicals**
- Bathing facilities are provided to all handlers of pesticides
- Rights of **pregnant** and **nursing** women
- **Legitimate right** to use the **land**
- Application of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), when needed.
- ✓ For **farmer groups**, the following additional critical criteria apply:
 - Keeping of **enrollment records** of all members
 - Evaluation of **members' conformance** with this SAN standard
 - Group **governance** structure
 - **Agreements** with all group members
 - **Training plan** for farm members
 - Mechanism for non-discriminatory calculation and **distribution of revenues** to its group members
 - **Plan** to provide access to **health care** and basic **education**
 - The group administrator facilitates the planning process for its members through training

4. Procedures:

- **Application** submitted
- CERES provides **information** and submits a **quote**
- For applicants who are already certified by another certifying agency, both the applicant and CERES inform the current agency to initiate the **certification transfer**
- **Contract** is signed
- Farm or organisation submits "RFA **Management Plan**"
- CERES asks for a **deposit** (advance payment)
- CERES sends a link for application/ **registration** in the RA database (Salesforce)
- **Audit plan** is submitted (latest 5 days before audit)

- Applicant **confirms** audit plan (latest 5 days before audit)
- Auditor conducts **inspection**, writes an audit report
- Audit report is **reviewed** by CERES
- The **final audit report** must be submitted to the client not later than 2 months after the audit
- If necessary, farm proposes **corrective actions**
- If necessary, non conformities need to be **closed**. This may involve follow-up audits in some cases.
- Final **payment**
- Once farm complies with the standard, a **certificate** is issued, with 3 years validity
- **Yearly audits** are conducted to monitor compliance with the standard. Extension or change of scope (e.g. crops, additional areas or farms) is possible during the 3 years certification cycle.
- **Additional** announced or unannounced **audits** are carried out based on a risk analysis.

Clients have the right to access files kept by the certification body in relation to their operation.

5. Duties and Obligations of clients and applicants:

The client is obliged to always comply with the requirements of the RA standard and to assist with audit procedures. The client or applicant has to ensure that certification claims are only in relation to the actually certified products and scopes and to use the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal only according to the provisions of the RA "Use and Seals Guidelines" and not in any misleading way or in a way that could discredit CERES or RA. Details on obligations and duties can be found in the contract that is signed between CERES and the client.

! *Please be aware that this is only a selection of essential requirements of the RA criteria, meant as an introduction. To be in compliance, the organisation needs to read and understand the standard and accompanying documents entirely.*