



## ISEAL Community Member System Overview

<b>Organisation Name</b>	<b>Rainforest Alliance</b>
<b>Year</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>1</b>
1) The <b>STRATEGIES</b> our system employs to meet its sustainability objectives	
<p>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.</p> <p>We work in four pillars: Certification, Landscapes and Livelihoods, Tailored Supply Chain Services and Advocacy.</p> <p>These are being integrated more closely to optimize scale and impact, focusing on the key geographical areas, crops and issues relevant for our mission.</p> <p>We work closely together with farmers, supply chain parties and a wide range of other external stakeholders to advance our mission.</p> <p>On our certification system, we work with the certificate holders and certification bodies, with companies and governments, with other frameworks and many others to optimize and update our systems.</p>	
2) A description of the <b>STANDARD</b> that our system has developed	
<p>The Rainforest Alliance standard system is developed to optimize coverage of the relevant sustainability issues and feasibility for farms and supply chain parties. The system integrates certification of farms and supply chain actors. For farms, we distinguish small and large farms. Small farms are usually certified in groups. With the standard we want to offer a comprehensive, meaningful and credible sustainability standard that supports certificate holders to improve their sustainability performance over time.</p> <p>The standard covers six chapters: Management, Traceability, Shared Responsibility, Farming, Social and Environment. A part of the requirements are only applicable for farm certificate holders, a smaller part only for supply chain certificate holders.</p> <p>Rainforest Alliance provides a traceability system to ensure proper chain of custody throughout supply chains.</p>	

In the 2020 Standard, more data are being used to gain better insight in performance and impact for farmers and for other stakeholders, and to optimize support and systems.

Certificate holders are supported by a range of tools, templates and guidance documents to help them implement the system. Rainforest Alliance staff and Associated Trainer Network (ATN) provide support. Also, Rainforest Alliance provides an extensive training platform, on which all materials are publicly available in a range of languages: <https://learn.ra.org/>.

An elaborate assurance system with yearly external third-party audits is developed for robustness and credibility of the system.

### 3) How we maintain **RESPONSIBILITY** for decisions taken about and by our system

The Standard is revised at least once in five years, in a process with external stakeholder consultations, as defined and required by ISEAL.

We collect and analyze external and internal feedback in a continuous process in our Learning Framework. Based on this feedback we can make smaller corrections and clarifications, which we publish in yearly updates of the Standard.

Accredited Certification Bodies (CBs) carry out the Rainforest Alliance audits. All licenses are reviewed by Rainforest Alliance.

Rainforest Alliance provides training and support to the Certification Bodies, and works with a CB panel to align and optimize auditing and ensure consistency. Audit reports and non-conformities are analyzed to improve the system and to support certificate holders and CBs.

Certified Farms and Supply chain actors are required to have a grievance mechanism. The Rainforest Alliance itself also works with a grievance mechanism to collect and respond to all grievances, by any stakeholder, on our work, our processes and on the development of these.

The Rainforest Alliance team for monitoring and evaluation carries out analyses and research on the data we receive from certificate holders in the Indicator and Monitoring Framework to measure impact and target improvement of the systems.

Claims and seal use are described in a policy. The seal use request and approval process includes checks of all claims and seal use by the Rainforest Alliance team.

### 4) How our system's design demonstrates a **COMMITMENT TO IMPROVEMENT**

The Rainforest Alliance is continuously committed to improving its intervention through its monitoring & evaluation system. A dedicated monitoring, evaluation and learning team leads this evaluation work using three different approaches.

First, we collect basic data for all farms or farm groups, forestry enterprises and carbon projects participating in field projects or certification, validation, and verification audits. These program-wide monitoring data are analyzed to document the reach of The Rainforest Alliance's programs and the characteristics of the producers with whom we work, as well as progress being made on specific indicators. For our full indicator list, please visit <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/resource-item/indicator-and-monitoring-framework/>

To understand changes in production practices and outcomes in greater detail, we also conduct more intensive sampled monitoring on a subset of the farms, forestry enterprises, and tourism businesses with whom we work. This monitoring is typically conducted on a time-series basis, for instance, to compare conditions before and after certification, verification, or technical assistance. When feasible, we also collect data from a control group for comparison purposes.

Finally, we conduct impacts and evaluation research to test specific hypotheses about program impacts and to evaluate broader or longer-term results, for instance at a landscape scale. To provide an independent perspective, such research is usually conducted by third parties, with The Rainforest Alliance's input limited to hypothesis development, logistical support, or assistance with interpretation of the findings.

To respect and protect the privacy of parties from which we gather data, we have a privacy policy in place outlining how we handle data, as well as the rights a party has in terms of data gathering and usage. For more information, please visit <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/privacy-policy/>

The Rainforest Alliance's M&E system is geared to be used as a mechanism for continuous changes and improvement. Learnings are fed back into the standards updating and development processes. For example, insights from our diverse range of M&E interventions have led to clarifications and revisions of the RA 2020 Standard, its guidance documents and annexes, as well as adjustments to our training interventions.

#### 5) How our standard or tool is monitored and reviewed to ensure its **RELEVANCE**

The Rainforest Alliance Standard comprises a full range of sustainability topics that may be quite demanding for certificate holders. To support access and take-up we provide training and support. Currently we are also involved in processes to enhance ease of use for certificate holders by shortening and simplifying our documentation and processes.

We work with a group of Early Implementor certificate holders to collect feedback on our standard and tools to enhance easier uptake. Also, we are currently setting up a broader Sounding Board to receive feedback and insights.

We collaborate with external frameworks to align on definitions and approaches for ease of use.

#### 6) How the standard or tool is **IMPLEMENTED**

The Rainforest Alliance provides a range of supporting materials including guidance materials, templates and tools to help implement the standard.

All standard documents and a full range of training materials are publicly and freely available on the website in a number of languages, targeting certificate holders, trainers and certification bodies.

When adaptations in the system are made, or when needed for other reasons, we provide extra training, webinars and other support.

Also, our Associated Trainer Network (ATN) provides training for certificate holders.

For accurate and consistent assurance, an extensive Audit and Verification Protocol is used. Rainforest Alliance provides training to CBs and works with a CB panel to address issues related to auditing and assurance and enhance quality and consistency of auditing.