



AUDIT EXCEPTION POLICY FOR COVID-19
MARCH 2020

**RAINFOREST
ALLIANCE**



SUMMARY

Issue Date:	Binding date:	Expiration date:
March 6, 2020	March 6, 2020	May 31, 2020
Developed by:		Approved by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainforest Alliance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Standards and Assurance
Linked to (code and name of documents, if applicable):		
UTZ related documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UTZ Assurance Certification protocol, version 4.3 December 2018 UTZ Code of Conduct for individual and multi-site certification, version 1.1 + relevant crop annexes UTZ Core Code of Conduct for group and multi-group certification, version 1.1 + relevant crop annexes Chain of Custody Standard + relevant crop annexes 		Rainforest Alliance related documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RA Certification Rules, July 2017 version 1.2 RA Chain of Custody Policy 2015 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard, July 2017 version 1.2
Reporting to RA		
<p>CBs are required to inform Rainforest Alliance via certification@ra.org when putting this policy in place for desk audits and certificate extensions. RA reserves the right to review these extensions and respond accordingly.</p>		
Applicable to:		
<p>Rainforest Alliance authorized certification bodies as well as Farm and Chain of Custody certified entities (for both UTZ and Rainforest Alliance programs).</p>		
Regions:		
<p>All regions where there is a red or yellow level of infection according to information from the public health authorities for that country. If the country does not provide such information please refer to the travel advisory of the Dutch government, US Center for Disease Control or the World Health Organization.</p>		
Crops:	Type of organizations:	
All	Farm and Chain of Custody entities	



1. INTRODUCTION

Rainforest Alliance is a growing network of people who are inspired and committed to working together to achieve our mission of conserving biodiversity and ensuring sustainable livelihoods. For more information about Rainforest Alliance, visit its website: <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org>.

2. POLICY FOR AUDIT EXCEPTIONS DUE TO COVID-19

2.1 JUSTIFICATION

Currently, due to restrictions on travel and access to certain sites due to public health risks related to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), cases are arising in some localities where it is not possible to follow the planned schedule of audits in the annual audit cycle. Rainforest Alliance considers this to be a situation of force majeure which affects the normal implementation of our certification program. For this reason a specific policy has been developed to govern exceptions arising from disruptions to audit activities due to corona virus or public health measures related to it. This procedure is in effect as of 7th March 2020. This is a temporary measure which is currently valid only until end of June 2020. Information on any further extension of the policy will be communicated before the end of that period.

2.2 POLICY FOR CURRENT UTZ AND RA CHAIN OF CUSTODY STANDARDS

- a) All rules in the current certification document apply and continue to be mandatory (UTZ Assurance Certification protocol, version 4.3 December 2018 and RA Chain of Custody Policy
- b) Where it is not possible for an Auditor to conduct an in person audit, Rainforest Alliance authorizes CBs to carry out remote CoC audits of Participating Operators (CoC POs) will replace the onsite audits required for the current audit cycle per the relevant certification documents.
- c) Rainforest Alliance reserves the right to insist on an on-site audit for companies as needed. In this case an extension of the existing licence may be granted to cover the period until an on-site audit can be conducted
- d) No certifications will be issued for new chain of custody operations without an on-site certification audit using the normal procedure.



2.3 POLICY FOR CURRENT UTZ CODE OF CONDUCT AND RA SAS 2017 FARM STANDARD

- a) All rules in the current certification document apply and continue to be mandatory (UTZ Assurance Certification protocol, version 4.3 December 2018 and RA Certification Rules, July 2017 version 1.2).
- b) Existing certificate holders with certificates expiring on or before 31 May 2020, may be granted a license extension for a period no longer than 6 months for an on-site audit to be conducted.
- c) Audit exemptions related to this policy are valid for a maximum of 3 months after the expiry date of the policy (31 May 2020) -therefore not beyond 30 August 2020.
- d) All pending on-site audits from this period must be conducted before 31 July 2020 to allow for new certificates to be issued as soon as possible thereafter.
- e) No certifications will be issued for new farm operations without an on-site certification audit using the normal procedure