

Rainforest Alliance

As long ago as the 1990s the non-governmental organization the Rainforest Alliance developed the so-called SAN standard together with its partner organizations in the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN). The new 2017 SAN standard, which imposes numerous innovations on producers, has been in effect since 1 July 2017. Moreover, the management sovereignty and the further development of the standard were placed solely in the hands of the Rainforest Alliance in mid-October 2017. The SAN has withdrawn from the certification processes.

The Rainforest Alliance pursues its objectives through:

- Integration of the sustainably-oriented production of crop plants and farm animals into local and national strategies which serve to conserve biodiversity and safeguard well-being from a social and ecological stance
- Creation of awareness of the mutual dependence of intact ecosystems, sustainably-oriented agriculture and social responsibility among producers, traders, consumers and at decision-making levels within companies
- Educating consumers and those with responsibility within companies on the importance of purchasing agricultural products which have been produced in a socially- and environmentally-compatible manner
- Stimulating dialog between environmental protection, social and business groups and organizations in the northern and southern hemispheres on the benefits of sustainably-oriented agriculture.

Since 1992 1.3 million farms in 47 countries have been Rainforest Alliance-certified. These farms, among them small family-owned farms as well as plantations, cultivate more than 100 crop plants, and above all coffee, cocoa, bananas, tea and citrus fruits, as well as the oil palm, on 3.5 million hectares.

At the website <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/sas/> it is possible to search a comprehensive database for certified farms under “Certificate Search”.

At present 20 oil palm farms are certified to the SAN standard. The Rainforest Alliance was actively involved in the development of the RSPO Standard and has also coordinated the SAN standard with ISCC so as to harmonize the differing standards for sustainable oil palm cultivation to the greatest extent possible.

Principles and criteria

The objective of the 2017 SAN standard is that of ensuring agricultural operations analyze weaknesses, risks and hazards, so as to subsequently avoid them - could they arise from an ecological or social stance as a

consequence of farm operations. The 2017 SAN standard is based on the cornerstones of a healthy environment, social justice and economic viability.



Figure 1: Seal of the Rainforest Alliance

The 2017 SAN standard is sub-divided into **5 chapters and more than 100 criteria**. The 5 chapters of the 2017 SAN standard are titled as follows:

1. Improvement in agricultural productivity
2. Conservation of biodiversity
3. Conservation and protection of natural resources (incl. the protection of soils and open waters, and also a reduction in climate-damaging emissions and integrated pest management [IPM])
4. Improvement in working and living conditions for farmers, workers and their families
5. Specific requirements for tropical cattle farming

In the meantime the standard encompasses 37 Critical Criteria, which have to be fulfilled unconditionally in order to qualify for successful certification. Among the Critical Criteria are compliance with a traceability system, the protection of areas of high conservation value (HCV, incl. natural ecosystems as well as cultural and/or religious sites), the protection of wild animals, a waste water management system, the protection of workers, the ban on the employment of minors under the age of 15, and the taking into consideration of particular protective regulations for workers aged between 15 and 17, the payment of at least a minimum wage, requirements for the commissioning of sub-contractors, compliance with rules for aerial fumigation, the vouchsafing of the freedom of association and freedom to form organizations.

In order to attain and maintain certification, in the first year of certification the farm has, at the very least, to fulfil all the Critical Criteria and 50 percent of the Level C criteria. The required degree of compliance with the standard increases annually. Thus in year 6 all the Critical Criteria, all Level C and Level B criteria, as well as 50 percent of the Level A criteria, have to be fulfilled. Any violations of the criteria have to be remedied on a binding basis by the time of the next audit. In total there are 119 criteria in the 2017 SAN standard (without the chapter on cattle farming). In addition, there is a fully revised, more comprehensive and more stringent list of prohibited substances and materials.

The 2017 SAN standard can be downloaded [here](#).

Supply Chain Options

The following traceability verification is approved by the Rainforest Alliance for the oil palm:

1. Identity preserved
2. Segregation

How can a company be certified

Accredited and independent certification bodies certify farms, administrators of farmer groups and companies which are involved in the supply chain.

How often do audits take place

The audits take place annually; in the case of successful audits the certificates only have to be renewed every 3 years (certification audit). Furthermore, unannounced audits are also

conducted - there is at least one surprise audit in a 3-year cycle.

Communication and use of the trademark

Certified farms, administrators of farmer groups and operations involved in the supply chain can apply to use the Rainforest Alliance Certified™ seal for products. Upon signing a license agreement the company may refer to the certification on its products and in its sales documents.

All Rainforest Alliance Certified™ farms and operations involved in the supply chain have to register themselves on the Marketplace 2.0 website <https://marketplace.ra.org/netapp/index/index> and are listed there.

Costs

The costs of certification depend on the size of the company and the costs for the creation of the certifiability.

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Note:

The Rainforest Alliance is currently holding negotiations with UTZ on a possible merger of the two organizations. Should these negotiations be concluded successfully, a new joint standard is to be developed by 2019/2020.