



Sustainable  
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Network

# CHAIN OF CUSTODY GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

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[www.sanstandards.org](http://www.sanstandards.org) – [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org)

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## **Terms and Definitions**

### **Annual audit**

Annual audits evaluate corrective actions of previous minor non-conformities and the Traceability Principle. Annual audits are conducted at year 2 and year 3 of the audit cycle (first and second annual audits).

### **Audit**

A systematic, independent, and documented process for evaluating an organization's conformance with the SAN/Rainforest Alliance Chain of Custody Standard and Policy. Audits can be on-site or desk audits, conducted based on the stage of the audit cycle; presence of major or minor nonconformities; and complaints.

### **Certification cycle**

A three (3)-year period that begins with the certification audit and is followed by two (2) annual audits. The following cycle begins with a new certification audit.

**Authorized chain of custody auditor**

Person contracted by an accredited Certification Body or Inspection Body and that meets the SAN requirements for conducting an external audit against the Chain of Custody Standard and Policy.

**Cancellation**

This status applies immediately when the Participating Operator receives official notification from the Certification Body that it did not meet the requirements of the Chain of Custody Standard or Policy. The Participating Operator is deactivated from the traceability system and is no longer permitted to use the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal from that date onward.

**Cancellation date**

The date of the cancellation notification.

**Cancellation notification**

A document issued by the accredited Certification Body to the Participating Operator indicating that its Chain of Custody certificate has been cancelled.

**Certification agreement**

The document signed by the Certification Body and the Participating Operator governing the rights and responsibilities of both parties.

**Certification audit**

The initial audit which takes place at the start of the certification cycle and evaluates conformity with all current and relevant SAN/Rainforest Alliance policies and standards.

**Certification body**

An accredited organization that is responsible for deciding if a Chain of Custody certification should be granted pending verification; or canceled. It can engage Inspection Bodies to perform audits, in which case it is responsible for ensuring the quality of the Inspection Body's services.

**Certified farm/group**

A farm or group of farms that conforms to the requirements of the respective SAN standards and policies and has been issued a certificate by an accredited Certification Body.

**Certified participating operator**

A Participating Operator is considered Chain of Custody Certified once it has been awarded the Chain of Custody certification and only while the certificate is valid.

**Certified product**

Products that claim to be from or are byproducts of a product from a Rainforest Alliance Certified farm. The certified product complying with the Chain of Custody System may bear the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal, as long as the PO complies with the Rainforest Alliance Certified Sustainable Agriculture Use of Seal Guidelines.

### **Chain of custody**

All the steps in the supply chain that are taken from primary production on a certified farm through to final consumption, including all processing, transformation, manufacturing, and storing stages, where progress of the product to the following stage in the supply chain involves a change of ownership.

### **Chain of custody system**

Set of documents, procedures, processes and policies that allow for the tracking of certified products.

### **Claim**

Any statement or indicators that a product comes from a Rainforest Alliance Certified farm. Claims can appear in text or by using the seal:

- on packaging;
- on promotional material; and/or
- as a description on purchase/sale documentation, contracts, or any other type of reference to the product and its origin.

### **Common ownership structure**

Structure in which multisite administrator has ownership or voting power of at least 51% with respect to all participating sites.

### **Controlled blending**

A manufacturing process option that, if approved in advance by the Rainforest Alliance, permits the use of the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal on products where segregation of certified ingredients is not possible within the manufacturing facility. It requires 100% of the core ingredient (all variations and origins) to be sourced from certified farms, segregated and traceable through the supply chain from the farms to the manufacturer, delivered to the factory throughout the year, with sufficient volumes of inputs to make the product(s) with the seal as verified by annual volume reconciliation. Controlled blending is currently only available in cocoa and only for high-volume, mainstream consumer chocolate products.

### **Conversion factor**

The ratio between material quantity entering and material quantity leaving a given process stage employed by the Participating Operator in their own or contracted facilities. The conversion factor is generally calculated by dividing the output (volume or weight) by the input (volume or weight).

### **Corrective action**

Action which corrects nonconformity. Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific nonconformity identified during an audit, as well as its root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the nonconformity.

**Desk audit**

Evaluation conducted without a site visit. A desk audit can be performed if sufficient evidence can be collected from documents and interviews only; and a physical site visit is not required to demonstrate conformance.

**Document**

The information and means of support. It can be on paper, photograph or magnetic, optic or electronic disk.

**Internal inspections**

First party evaluation of the Participating Operator to the SAN/RA Chain of Custody Standard and Policy.

**Management system**

The system whereby an operation is able to trace and keep separate the movement of Rainforest Alliance Certified products across its facilities. The management system includes the documented policies and procedures, recording of product movements and processing points, as well as the mechanisms to ensure the integrity of products from certified farms during receiving, handling, storage, processing, clearance, outsourcing and shipping processes.

**Marketplace**

The Rainforest Alliance's Marketplace is an online platform that provides traceability of certified coffee from the farm to the market through transaction certificates. It is also used as the Rainforest Alliance Certified Use of Seal approval system for all crops and Participating Operators. All Rainforest Alliance Certified farms and entities involved in the supply chain of products from Rainforest Alliance Certified farms must register at [www.rainforest-alliance.org/farmproducts](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/farmproducts).

**Minimum percentage of content**

Requirements for making claims on single ingredient products as defined in the current version of the Rainforest Alliance Certified Use of Seal Guidelines.

**Multi-site operator**

Entity registered on Marketplace that administers two or more sites where trading or processing of certified product occurs. It is the entity that signs the certification agreement with an accredited Certification Body and takes responsibility for the development, execution and maintenance of the internal management system and for verification of each individual site's conformance with the Chain of Custody standard and policy documents. Products from sites covered by a Multi-site certificate

can be of different types and can be produced or manipulated following different methods and procedures.

**Multi-site system administrator**

The legal or administrative representative of a Multi-site Participating Operator. It ensures that all participating sites conform to the Chain of Custody system through internal annual audits.

**Non-programmed audit**

An audit planned by the Certification Body as a method of supervision with respect to the Participating Operator's year-round conformance with the Chain of Custody Standard and Policy. This process is not announced to the Participating Operator. It can occur at any time during the audit cycle. The cost of the process is covered by the accredited Certification Body, unless major nonconformities are found.

**On-site audit**

This type of evaluation is conducted at the Participating Operator's sites or facilities. The aim is to evaluate conformance to the Chain of Custody requirements by observing practices, analyzing documentation, evaluating existing infrastructure and interviewing the employees, management, and/or administration.

**Participating operator**

Any company, association, factory, processing unit or other entity that applies for SAN/RA Chain of Custody certification.

**Process**

The act of transforming a product, by mixing or making any changes, from its original state to a different, new and/or end product. Does not include storage or transportation

**Rainforest Alliance Certified seal**

Registered trademark of Rainforest Alliance, Inc.

**Rainforest Alliance traceability system**

System that tracks volumes of products from Rainforest Alliance Certified farms throughout the supply chain, for applicable crops.

**Research audit**

An audit that is the result of a complaint about a certified Chain of Custody Participating Operator. Its objective is to evaluate the Participating Operator's conformance to the Chain of Custody Standard and Policy. The cost of the process is covered by the authorized Certification Body.

**Segregation**

Controls to ensure that a product is separate from another product, either physically, in time and/or with documentation. If physically segregated then certified product is separable from non-certified product during all receipt, processing, packaging, storage and transportation stages. Segregation in time applies when processing of certified product uses the same facilities as products that do not claim to be from Rainforest Alliance Certified farms. At the time of processing, the facility, production line, or batch is only using products from Rainforest Alliance Certified farms. Segregation is required for making claims that the product is from a Rainforest Alliance Certified farm.

**Sell-off period**

Period beginning on the Cancellation Date and ending on the date that is six months from the Cancellation Date, during which a PO may sell any finished consumer product labeled as Rainforest Alliance Certified that remained in stock as of the Cancellation Date.

**Single participating operator**

This is an entity that administers only one site. The CoC certificate issued for a single PO is for one entity, for example: a single raw material exporter; a cocoa processor that has only one processing facility and produces cocoa butter, liquor and powder.

**Site**

A single functioning unit of an organization or a combination of units situated at one locality, which is geographically distinct from other units of the same organization or the associated network. On or more sub-sites may be regarded as part of a site if they are an extension of the main site with no purchasing or sales functions of their own.

**Supply chain**

The network of supply, manufacture, and distribution of certified or non-certified materials as Rainforest Alliance Certified within intermediary and/or finished products that ultimately are distributed to end consumers.

**Transaction certificate**

Document issued by the Rainforest Alliance that represents that the product volume being sold by the seller has been approved by the RA traceability system.

**Verification audit**

A verification audit is conducted to evaluate corrective actions to address at least one (1) major nonconformity or more than 50% of the applicable criterion resulting in minor nonconformities that

were detected in a certification, annual, research or non-programmed audit. It shall be conducted no later than four (4) months after the initial audit in which the non-conformities were detected.