



## Roadmap: Rainforest Alliance

### Background

At the 2022 General Meeting of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO), members decided to publish individual roadmaps with commitments and milestones as well as progress reports on these commitments.

The individual roadmaps are based on the [GISCO roadmap](#) which lists the goals, targeted indicators and recommendations for action on the focus topics of certified cocoa/cocoa from company programmes, traceability, deforestation/agroforestry, child labour and living income.

These public individual commitments complement the annual monitoring process carried out in cooperation with the ISCOs (European Initiatives for sustainable cocoa), give visibility of the members' contributions to the [GISCO objectives](#) and strengthen individual accountability.

### Commitments

- [Traceability](#)
- [Certified cocoa and cocoa from company programmes](#)
- [Deforestation/Agroforestry](#)
- [Child Labour](#)
- [Living Income](#)

**Comment of the member on the roadmap:**



## Traceability

**Commitment** (submitted in December 2022):

The Rainforest Alliance (RA) actively supports companies in building traceable supply chains. RA has the structures and technology in place for maintaining traceable supply chains and can support companies to transition their supply chains from mass balance to segregated or identity preserved (cooperative level). Any company willing to invest in its supply chain can at least achieve Score 3 of the "GISCO Origin Transparency Levels" within the existing RA Standard and supporting systems.

**Milestone 1:**

100% of certified raw cocoa is traceable from the farm to the first point of purchase (First Mile Traceability).

**Milestone 2:**

In 2020 and 2021 the Rainforest Alliance piloted the Farm Intelligence App to create a stronger digital link between the certified farm group and their farm members and facilitate group management. The app supports the collection of geolocation data and facilitates data collection at farm level for internal inspections. In addition, the app assists farm group management in corrective action planning and basic risk and opportunity analysis. The Farm Intelligence App will gradually roll out across countries beginning with Indonesia, Kenya, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.

**Milestone 3:**

By 2025 the certification program requires "farm polygons" for large farms and geolocation of all farms which are part of groups – with a mandatory improvement requirement.

**Progress** (submitted in December 2024):

**Milestone 1: Achieved**

This milestone has been achieved. All certified raw cocoa under the Rainforest Alliance program is fully traceable from the farm to the first point of purchase, ensuring transparency and accountability in the initial stages of the supply chain.

**Milestone 2: In Progress**

The rollout of the Farm Intelligence App (FIA) has made significant progress in supporting cocoa supply chains:

- **Côte d'Ivoire:**
  - The RA Côte d'Ivoire office made the decision to implement the FIA for all RA Certified cocoa producer groups, encompassing over 900 groups nationwide.
  - In 2024, training efforts intensified, with nearly 80 new Certification Managers trained on the use of the FIA, bringing the total to over 100 groups.
  - This large-scale adoption improves digital traceability by strengthening the link between individual farms and their producer groups. FIA supports geolocation data collection, internal inspections, corrective action planning, and risk analysis, enabling more robust supply chain management.
- **Central America:**
  - FIA was adopted by 17 cocoa (and coffee) producer groups across Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, contributing to a total of 30 active FIA users in the region.
- **Future plans for FIA expansion and development**
  - Tool enhancements:
    - In 2025, RA plans to further improve the FIA tool with a focus on geolocation data collection and enhanced capabilities for Certification Managers to analyze and review data, as well as prepare comprehensive reports.
    - These improvements aim to strengthen the tool's utility for both risk assessment and operational planning at the group level.
  - Training and support in current countries:
    - Training and user support will continue across all current user countries. In Ghana, where adoption of the FIA has been limited, targeted efforts will aim to increase uptake and integration.
  - Expansion to new countries:
    - RA plans to roll out FIA training in new regions, including Indonesia, Vietnam, and Brazil, with the tool already translated for these countries.
    - Additional focus countries include Cameroon, Nigeria, Tanzania, Peru, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, further expanding FIA's global reach.
    - To facilitate this expansion, new training materials, including an e-course, are being developed to streamline onboarding and ensure consistency in training delivery.

**Milestone 3: Achieved**

RA's Certification Program now requires geolocation data for all farms and polygons for large farms. In addition, RA has launched optional EUDR-aligned criteria (related to geolocation data) that Farm Certificate Holders looking to sell cocoa into the EU can select and get audited against.



**Challenge** (submitted in December 2022):

1. Costs and resource investments of digitalization of farm certificate holders, GPS mapping and high-quality geolocation data.
2. Actors in the supply chain must first develop appropriate implementation frameworks, including company commitments and investments, before standard setters can support them with traceability tools and implementation.
3. Mass Balance can be a point of entry into certification for brands new to sustainability or certification. This increases demand for certified cocoa and allows small, marginalized cooperatives to participate in the certified cocoa trade as sourcing moves beyond the well organized and well-connected farmer groups. Here, attention must be paid to unintended negative impacts of higher traceability levels, especially for the poorest.



## Certified cocoa and cocoa from company programmes

**Commitment** (submitted in December 2022):

By providing transparent information and consumer education, the Rainforest Alliance contributes to increasing the demand for certified cocoa in the market and actively supports companies that want to switch to certified sourcing. We strengthen knowledge and awareness of what certification can achieve in the context of corporate due diligence and deforestation requirements, what the limits are, and which aspects need to be implemented by the companies themselves.

**Milestone 1:**

Increase transparency through public reporting of certification-related data. For example, report average Sustainability Differential and Sustainability Investment amount per producer country by 2024.

**Milestone 2:**

Knowledge and awareness raising of how certification can support companies with their legal obligations around due diligence and deforestation legislation.

**Progress** (submitted in December 2024):

**Milestone 1: In Progress**

- RA publishes Certification Data Reports for cocoa on a yearly basis on the website – including data on producing origins, number of Farm and Supply Chain Certificate Holders, certified volume, number of farms, farmers and farm workers, certified crop area, producers sales, and the demand to supply ratio – in order to monitor and publicly share program developments and progress.
- Furthermore, RA has made personalized Power BI reports available to certified companies, in order to give them further insights into their direct supply chains on topics related to traceability, non-conformities, trainings, and compliance support with the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). The higher the traceability levels, the more personalized insights companies receive.
- RA has made SD/SI amounts linked to cocoa transactions visible for certified companies via the traceability portal and will continue to work towards more comprehensive reporting frameworks.
- Transparency efforts also include regular updates on certification practices and their alignment with sustainability goals, shared through the Rainforest Alliance's website and social media channels.

**Milestone 2: In Progress**

The Rainforest Alliance has undertaken a series of initiatives to educate and assist companies in aligning certification with legal obligations related to due diligence and deforestation:

- **Webinars and Information Sessions:** Delivered multiple webinars and information sessions, including targeted engagements with key industry stakeholders like the Bundesverband der Deutschen Süßwarenindustrie (BDSI). These events provided companies with insights on integrating certification into their compliance strategies. Notably, the "Thrive Together" webinar series featured sessions such as "How the Rainforest Alliance can support EUDR compliance in Coffee and Cocoa," guiding companies on compliance with the EU anti-deforestation regulation.
- **European Commission:** Presented on how our standard can support the EUDR in the EU multistakeholder platform on deforestation as requested by the European Commission, and similar presentations were given in various fora.
- **BAFA:** Engaged with the Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA) to provide expert insights, contributing to the development of guidelines that inform companies about certification's role in meeting due diligence requirements.
- **Participation in Cross-Company Mechanisms:** Contributed to the feasibility study for a cross-company grievance mechanism in Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa sector, commissioned by the Due Diligence Fund and GISCO members, aiming to establish effective grievance systems accessible to local rightsholders.
- **Advocacy and Policy Engagement:** Actively participated in policy dialogues and panels to advocate for ambitious deforestation regulations that consider smallholder farmers' concerns, thereby influencing legislation and corporate practices.
- **Direct Company Engagements:** Provided tailored guidance to companies through one-on-one engagements, assisting them in understanding and implementing certification standards to support legal due diligence and deforestation obligations.

**Challenge:** (submitted in December 2022)

The proportion of certified and independently verified cocoa depends on company decisions and company sustainability strategies.

## Deforestation/Agroforestry

### **Commitment** (submitted in December 2023):

The Rainforest Alliance (RA) actively contributes to preventing deforestation and forest degradation and supports ecosystem restoration through its standard criteria, audits, on-site guidance, consumer awareness, as well as through other targeted activities with companies.

The certification program prohibits deforestation and conversion of natural ecosystems after January 1st, 2014. The new standard also requires farmers to increase native tree cover on existing farms and in agroforestry systems or conservation lands to ensure that farming not only has a minimal negative impact, but that it also generates positive impacts on biodiversity, climate, and the long-term sustainability of the landscape.

Certification is just one of our tools embedded within a holistic approach to create deforestation-free supply chains. Beyond certification, we support this mission through our tailored programs that work with companies to implement no-conversion commitments in supply chains where certification is not an option.

### **Milestone 1:**

In our advocacy work, RA in collaboration with other standard setters advocates for ambitious regulation on deforestation that takes into account the concerns of smallholder farmers.

### **Milestone 2:**

The Rainforest Alliance will continue to implement and scale landscape level projects to stop deforestation, prevent forest degradation and promote restoration with at least three major supply chain actors.

### **Milestone 3:**

By 2025 the certification program requires “farm polygons” for large farms and geolocation of all farms which are part of groups – with a mandatory improvement requirement.

### **Milestone 4:**

The Rainforest Alliance provides risk assessments based on GPS locations of certified farms, to check for any evidence of forest conversion based on a customized forest baseline map and helps farmers better address their deforestation risks.

By 2025, the Rainforest Alliance will provide restoration and rehabilitation frameworks for certificate holders.

**Progress** (submitted in December 2024):

**Milestone 1: Achieved**

RA has actively engaged in policy dialogues to promote robust deforestation regulations that consider smallholder farmers' challenges. We participated in multi-stakeholder platforms and provided input to the legislative process related to the EUDR, ensuring that smallholder perspectives are integrated into policy frameworks.

**Milestone 2: In Progress**

RA has initiated and expanded several landscape-level projects in collaboration with key supply chain actors:

- **Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana:** RA brings together cocoa-producing families, governments, and the private sector to improve livelihoods for cocoa farmers, increase tree cover, and help reduce national and corporate GHG emissions ([Rainforest Alliance](#))
- **Indonesia:** Since 2019, RA has worked in Sintang, West Kalimantan, with local farmers and platforms to tackle deforestation, boost incomes, and promote sustainable land use. ([Rainforest Alliance](#))
- **Kenya:** The Mount Kenya Sustainable Landscape and Livelihoods Program focuses on restoring degraded forests and riparian zones, enhancing community capacity for sustainable land management. ([Rainforest Alliance](#))
- **Cameroon:** RA collaborates with rural communities in the Western Highlands and Mintom region to prevent forest conversion and strengthen community rights over natural resources. ([Rainforest Alliance](#))

**Milestone 3: Achieved**

See progress update under Milestone 3 in the Traceability section.

**Milestone 4: In Progress**

Through its Certification Program, the Rainforest Alliance helps farmers collect and process geo-coordinates for their farms. This information is used for the accurate mapping of deforestation risks, with the analysis conducted at farm level using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. The process integrates RA's proprietary AI remote sensing forest data alongside other publicly available and government data sources to map deforestation risks. Farmer groups use these risk maps to conduct deforestation checks and implement any required mitigation measures, particularly in high-risk areas. Independent, third-party auditors also use these maps to conduct risk-based verification of no-deforestation, including under the optional EUDR requirements. ([Rainforest Alliance](#))

Furthermore, RA is developing comprehensive restoration and rehabilitation frameworks to support certificate holders in restoring degraded lands and enhancing ecosystem services. These frameworks will offer practical guidance on implementing effective restoration practices, contributing to biodiversity conservation and climate resilience. ([Rainforest Alliance](#))

**Challenge:** (submitted in December 2022)

1. Low cocoa prices limit producer investment opportunities in productivity / agroforestry systems which may lead to deforestation.
2. Supporting producers that are not eligible for certification due to our strict cut-off date or minor conversion allowance, but still require support with restoration efforts and to comply with the EU Regulation on deforestation-free products.
3. Company support for generating high quality data and monitoring systems at farm and cooperative level beyond current projects is necessary.



## Child Labour

### **Commitment** (submitted in December 2023):

The Rainforest Alliance as a standard setter actively contributes to preventing child labor through its standard requirements, audits, on-site consultations, and consumer awareness as well as through other targeted activities with companies. Under Rainforest Alliance certification, all certified producer groups must have an integrated management system (IMS) in place, address gender issues, and implement an Assess & Address system, all of which contribute to tackling the issue of child labor. By 2024, RA will develop and distribute additional training materials and guidance on gender inclusion for certified groups. Additionally, RA will continue to provide training to certified groups on the implementation of Assess & Address.

### **Milestone 1:**

We will train and support our Farm Certificate Holders, who in turn will establish effective assess-and-address due diligence systems to prevent, monitor, and respond to child labor.

### **Milestone 2:**

Together with key market partners, Farm Certificate Holders, and civil society organizations, we will support community and landscape programs up to 100 communities in Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana to tackle root causes of child labor through education, vocational and technical training (targeting youth), income-generating activities, gender empowerment, awareness raising, and advocacy with national and local authorities.

### **Milestone 3:**

By 2025, our program to eradicate child labor in Cote d'Ivoire will empower 9 cooperatives to more effectively identify, address, and prevent child labor and improve livelihood strategies of over 5,000 households. Key interventions include: baseline assessments and M&E to identify cases of child labor and root causes; capacity building tools for cooperatives and training to staff; remediation and prevention activities with cooperatives

### **Milestone 4:**

We will continue to raise awareness about the risks and root causes of child labor – and the ways we can tackle this collaboratively with farmers, companies, governments, and consumers – through our website and social media channels, as well as national- and community-level outreach in the countries where we work. We will also continue to advocate for the adoption and implementation of human rights due diligence legislation by the EU and in the member states to ensure supply chain actors fulfil their responsibilities – including ensuring that adequate resources reach local communities.

### **Milestone 5:**

We provide detailed and regularly updated Child Labor and Forced Labor risk maps for the sourcing of certified cocoa. Upon request, RA will provide recommendations for action to partners.



**Progress** (submitted in December 2024):

**Milestone 1: In Progress**

RA has made significant progress in training and supporting Farm Certificate Holders to establish robust assess-and-address due diligence systems to prevent, monitor, and respond to child labor. Key activities and resources include:

**1. Training Material Development:**

RA developed the [Child Labor Guide](#), which provides a step-by-step framework for child labor due diligence, including risk assessment, mitigation, remediation, and monitoring. Additionally, the [Child Labor Toolkit Modules](#) help farms, businesses, and others to implement child labor due diligence, including risk assessments, mitigation actions, remediation, monitoring, engaging with children safely, and context about child labor legislation. The guide contains five modules, three annexes and a workbook of exercises.

Further resources include flip books and an e-course on Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD), ensuring accessible learning formats. These materials are being translated into local languages to enhance inclusivity and usability.

**2. Training Implementation:**

Comprehensive training sessions have been conducted with Farm Certificate Holders, including workshops and interactive e-learning modules tailored to regional contexts. Training outcomes are documented in a Rainforest Alliance Training Report (accessible for certified companies via Power BI) which provides an overview of farmer participation and program effectiveness.

**3. Monitoring and Remediation:**

RA has developed a comprehensive Remediation Protocol to effectively address and remediate instances of child labor, forced labor, discrimination, and workplace violence and harassment. This protocol provides a structured approach for documenting and addressing such cases.

**Milestone 2: In Progress**

RA has expanded its efforts to address child labor through region-specific interventions and innovative tools.

Regional Impact:

- In **Côte d'Ivoire**, RA partnered with local NGOs to establish Child Protection Committees, involving government officials and community members to monitor and remediate child labor ([Rainforest Alliance](#)).
- In **Ghana**, RA implemented initiatives to combat child labor and forced labor in cocoa and gold mining communities. Key resources developed include [e-course materials on HRDD](#), providing actionable templates for training. The [Interactive Social Protection Map](#), created in collaboration with the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), highlights intervention areas and supports community engagement efforts ([Rainforest Alliance](#)).
- In **Uganda**, the "Child Labor Free Zone" initiative in West Nile focuses on education, community engagement, and livelihood improvements, leading to measurable reductions in child labor cases ([Rainforest Alliance](#)).



### **Milestone 3: In Progress**

Under the Empowering Communities and Cooperatives to Eradicate Child Labor (ECCCL) project, Rainforest Alliance has made significant progress in Côte d'Ivoire toward empowering 9 cooperatives to identify, address, and prevent child labor while improving the livelihoods of over 5,000 households. Baseline assessments have been initiated to identify child labor cases and their root causes. Capacity-building tools have been developed, and training sessions conducted for cooperative staff to enhance their ability to implement Assess-and-Address systems. Remediation activities, including educational support and livelihood diversification, are underway to support affected households.

#### **Key Partners and Contributions:**

- **RVO (Dutch Development Agency):** Provided critical funding for the project.
- **ASA NGO:** Facilitated capacity-building sessions for cooperatives, enhancing referral mechanisms and coordination with child protection structures.
- **Save the Children, UNICEF, and the Ministry of Women, Family, and Children:** Offered guidance during learning events, helping refine project tools and interventions.
- **Cargill and Unilever:** Collaborated on implementing due diligence processes within supply chains to address child labor.

#### **Key Achievements:**

- **Baseline Assessments:** Completed surveys to analyze household vulnerability, school attendance, and income sources. A market study identified 79 income-generating activities to support income diversification across 7 cooperatives.
- **Capacity Building:** Delivered training on Assess-and-Address systems, ensuring cooperatives can effectively detect and remediate child labor cases.
- **Referral Mechanisms:** Developed a Referral Circuit Scheme to strengthen coordination with community-level Child Protection Committees.
- **Income Diversification:** Supported cooperatives in implementing crop diversification strategies, reducing cocoa dependency and improving food security.

### **Milestone 4: In Progress**

RA utilizes its website and social media platforms to disseminate information on child labor, its root causes, and collaborative solutions. Articles such as "[It Takes a Global Village to Tackle Child Labor on Farms](#)" highlight community-based approaches to combating child labor. By hosting community events, such as a workshop in Atiwa East, RA raises awareness about child labor and forced labor. RA has also collaborated with journalists to enhance reporting on human rights due diligence (HRDD) and continues to advocate for robust HRDD legislation on EU-level, engaging with policymakers to ensure that supply chain actors are held accountable.

### **Milestone 5: In Progress**

RA has developed child labor and forced labor sectoral risk maps to assist farmers, certification bodies, and companies in identifying and mitigating human rights risks in their supply chains. These maps are regularly updated and available to partners, accompanied by guidance documents explaining their methodology and application ([Rainforest Alliance](#)). Upon request, RA also provides tailored recommendations to partners, aiding in the development of effective mitigation strategies.

#### **Challenge:** (submitted in December 2022)

1. Certified farmer groups may need to make additional investments to implement an effective Assess & Address system, the cost of which should be shared with their buyers through Sustainability Investment payments.
2. Low cocoa prices perpetuate the issue of farmer poverty which is an underlying cause of child labor.

## Living Income

**Commitment** (submitted in December 2024):

As standard setters and founding members of the Living Income Community of Practice, we actively support the development of instruments for companies to take action on closing living income gaps in their supply chains in a measurable way. With this in mind, we will build on our existing Monitoring Tool, which enables companies to assess the impact of their activities on farmer incomes and the closure of gaps in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, to develop a simple, farmer-led tool to better understand producers' needs.

The Rainforest Alliance has implemented a minimum Sustainability Differential, which is a monetary payment to certified producers of at least 70 USD per MT. This payment is one component of the work of supply chain actors to close living income gaps. (This payment is implemented globally, except in Côte d'Ivoire where it will be implemented in 2023).

Immediately and on an ongoing basis, we will raise awareness of the concept and importance of payment of a living income to farmers and, to this end, will facilitate cooperative strengthening and encourage companies to share the responsibility of more sustainable production costs and make measurable contributions to living incomes within their supply chains

**Milestone 1:**

By 2025, we will publish a simple, farmer-led tool, within the Rainforest Alliance Standard, to better understand producers' needs.

**Milestone 2:**

We will scale up our work on cash transfers and continue to play an important facilitation role around data and payment mechanisms to close income gaps. We will explore partnerships to make the transfer process more efficient and include a gender lens on how transfers are made, to ensure we do not exacerbate disparities.

**Milestone 3:**

We will fully operationalize the Digital Internal Management System and Farm Risk Assessment Tool as part of our Standard. Using their data, farmers can make informed business decisions based on an analysis of past performance. Farm group management can support the improvement of the farm performance of their members by providing tailored support on the basis of member needs.

**Progress** (submitted in December 2026):

**Milestone 1: In Progress**

A Living Income tool has been piloted, and learnings have been integrated. The Rainforest Alliance is working on a producer-centric solution, which can be used to calculate living income gaps and better understand producers' needs and suitable interventions.

**Milestone 2: In Progress**

RA continues to scale up efforts to address income gaps for cocoa farmers through targeted cash transfer initiatives and innovative partnerships ([Rainforest Alliance](#)). These projects focus on efficient data collection, streamlined payment mechanisms, and a strong gender lens to ensure transfers are equitable and do not exacerbate existing disparities.

- **Hershey Income Accelerator Program:** RA has partnered with The Hershey Company, CARE International, PUR, and 100WEEKS to improve cocoa farmer livelihoods as well as the environment in Côte d'Ivoire by facilitating direct cash transfers and helping farmers adopt regenerative agricultural practices ([Rainforest Alliance](#)).
- **Cloetta & IKEA Social Entrepreneurship Partnership:** Through the Living Income Module, RA collaborated with Cloetta, IKEA Social Entrepreneurship, and GIZ to improve value distribution within the cocoa supply chain ([Rainforest Alliance](#)).
- **Nestlé Partnership:** RA has a comprehensive partnership with Nestlé, providing services from field-based support to supply chain monitoring, aiming to improve farmer well-being and promote sustainable practices. RA is an implementation partner for the Nestlé Income Accelerator Program, collecting farm household data to capture the adoption of agricultural practices, shade tree management, and other farm-related characteristics (such as the incidence of pests and diseases) in collaboration with the KIT-Institute, responsible for evaluating socio-economic characteristics and improvements.

**Milestone 3: In Progress**

The **Risk Assessment Tool** remains a core component of the Rainforest Alliance Standard. It is fully operationalized, a decisive factor in the audit process, and a key requirement within the Standard. The tool is actively used by all Farm Certificate Holders, demonstrating its critical role in driving compliance with the Rainforest Alliance Standard and improving farm performance.

The **Farm Intelligence App (FIA)** plays an important role in supporting producer groups with data collection and informed decision-making. See progress update under Milestone 2 in the Traceability section for further updates on its development and rollout.

**Challenge:** (submitted in December 2022)

Standard setters can contribute through their standards and programs, but are dependent on company decisions for implementation.