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RAINFOREST ALLIANCE MANUAL

(SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE STANDARD - 2020)

Issue No- 1.0

Rev.No.00

REGISTERED OFFICE & WORKS

Address

Disclaimer

This quality Manual, procedures and other related documents are prepared to the best of our judgement and for the guidance of the users. Please note that these are prepared keeping in view the general requirements of the standard .The user is advised to look at his processes, products, services ,customer requirements and other regulatory requirements while preparing his manuals and other documents. The requirements of the standard will be under constant revision and the user is advised to go through the latest standard and visit the standard owner site www.rainforest-alliance.org for updates

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PREFACE

- 1. This manual explains the rain forest alliance requirements related activities of ABC, located at -----.
- 2. This manual is prepared in line with requirements of Rain forest Alliance requirements for sustainable agriculture (2020)
- 3. This manual is prepared, and controlled by under signed, who is presently holding additional responsibility of FSTL (Food safety Team leader)
- 4. A food safety Team is appointed to co-ordinate planning, implementation and monitoring food safety related activities.

CEO

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REVISION RECORDS

Date	Revision made on	Issue	Revision	Remarks
01/01/2023	--	1.0	00	Initial release

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SCOPE

The scope of certification of Rain Forest Alliance standard 2020 applies to

The Farming, Processing (CTC/Orthodox) Tea leaves. (Example)

The manual covers the activities carried out by the following sections and applicable the unit.

- Tea Plantation management
- Production, packing.

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Chapter 1 - MANAGEMENT

Management is a commitment to sustainable agriculture by

- Providing adequate resources and staff to the implementation of the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard.

Management assesses regularly (once in three years) its management capacity to ensure compliance with the standard and the ability to make sustainability performance changes.

Group management uses the Management Capacity Assessment Tool and it includes the following aspects:

- Organization structure
- Financial management
- Training of the employees of the farms
- Sales and marketing
- Internal Management System (IMS)

1.2 Administration

Management ensures compliance with all applicable laws (Local regulations/ others) and collective bargaining agreements within the scope of the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard.

- a) It is also ensured that all the service providers to the farms comply with all relevant/applicable regulations. A copy of the certificate/ evidence of compliance is maintained.
- b) An approved list of subcontractors, suppliers, and intermediaries of certified product is maintained by the Head office and the farms/ estates will but items from these suppliers.
- c) An up-to-date registry of farms/ estates is kept, by HO in the prescribed format.

An up-to-date list of permanent and temporary workers is kept with details such as Full name, Gender, Year of birth, Start and end date(s) of employment, Wages.

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For workers for whom housing is provided, additional information of housing is also maintained.

- d) Management ensures that wherever the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard requires to inform workers the information is given in the local language of the workers.

A signed agreement is in place between the HPO and each farm / estate, specifying the rights and obligations of each party.

The agreement shall include:

- group member’s obligation to comply with the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard.
- The group member’s obligation to accept both internal inspections and external audits.
- Follow grievance procedure
- Copy of the agreement is maintained.

The records are maintained for four years.

Farm Map

An up-to-date map of the farm area will be maintained which includes:

- Farm area
- Processing facilities
- Housing areas
- Schools
- Medical centers /first aid sites
- water bodies and forests, and other natural vegetation
- Riparian buffer zones
- Agroforestry systems
- Protected areas

The map also includes risk areas identified in the Risk Assessment

A sketch of the farm is maintained indicating :

- The production area of certified crop
- Forests
- Water bodies
- Buildings

Farm and geolocation data of the farm unit with the certified crop will be maintained.

Polygons are maintained for 100% of the farm units

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1.3 Risk Assessment and Management Plan

Management conducts a Risk Assessment based on the requirements of the standard, by using the Risk Assessment Tool, (once in three years) The risk mitigation measures are included in the management plan.

Management makes a management plan that includes the goals and actions based on the Risk Assessment and self-assessment tools.
Management reports on the implementation of the management plan yearly. The management plan is updated yearly.

Management provides group members/ workers with services based on the management plan. Services include training, technical assistance, support in record keeping, access to inputs, awareness-raising activities, etc.
Records of services provided are maintained.

Based on the outcomes of the Risk Assessment , management carries out the in-depth climate change risk assessment to assess in more detail climate threats and corresponding mitigation measures tailored.

- Management supports members with
- Training on finance, business management and understanding production costs and net income
 - Facilitating access to financial services like bank account, mobile payment, loans
 - Facilitating access to needed knowledge, inputs, services, markets
 - Extending support to the household and/or community.

1.4 Internal inspections and Self-assessment

An internal inspection system is established to assess compliance of farms with the scope of Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard.
The system includes:

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- Yearly inspection of each farms (including subcontractors, intermediaries, service providers.

All the unit farms will be audited at least once in three years.

Self-Inspection

Management carries out a yearly self-assessment to evaluate its own compliance and that of all actors in its certification scope with the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard.

For farm, the self-assessment includes the results of the internal inspections of the group members and other entities covered in the certificate.

An approval and sanction system are in place for the compliance of group members with the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard.

The system includes:

- A written approval and sanction procedure
- An approval and sanction manager or committee
- A decision on each group member’s/site’s certification status that is signed and documented and included in the final internal inspection report.

1.5 Grievance Mechanism

A grievance procedure is in place that enables individuals, workers, communities, and civil society, to raise their complaints of being negatively affected by specific business activities and/or operations of any nature, including technical, social, or economic nature. The procedure include :

- A grievance committee with decision making power,
- The grievance committee include at least one member/worker representative
- The grievance mechanism has appropriate submission channels, for internal and external stakeholders, including workers, members, staff, buyers, suppliers, indigenous peoples, and communities
- Anonymous grievances are accepted, and confidentiality is respected
- Human and labor rights grievances are remediated in accordance with the Remediation Protocol,
- Grievances and agreed follow up actions are documented, and shared with the persons involved within a reasonable timeframe.

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1.6 Gender Equality

Management is committed to promoting gender equality by:

- A written statement that is communicated to group members/workers
- Appointing a committee that is responsible for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of measures that promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The responsibilities of the committee is also defined.

1.7 Young farmers and Workers

Management promotes the participation and development of young persons (< 35 years age) in farming and management activities.

Management motivates their involvement in farming activities and supports their skills development, including literacy and numeracy skills .

It encourages their participation in training and in decision making.

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Chapter 2 - TRACEABILITY

2.1 Traceability

The total certified production and the certified production for each farm (in kg, in leaves) is estimated once a year.

The calculations are based on yield estimation (in kg/ha, leaf) of a representative sample of farms or farm units. The methodology and calculation are documented.

Management takes stock annually of the total harvested certified production (in kg, leaves) and balance of products in stock.

Management has mapped the product flow up to the final location of the certificate scope, including (collection points, transport, processing units) and activities carried out on the product.

Shipments of certified products do not exceed the total production (for farms), purchase of certified products plus remaining stock balance from the previous year.

Equipment used to define the weight of the certified product is calibrated annually.

2.2 Traceability in the online platform

Volumes sold as certified are recorded in the Rainforest Alliance traceability platform at the latest two weeks after the end of the quarter.

Buyers of Rainforest Alliance Certified product have a procedure in place to regularly verify that transactions in the traceability platform.

Other relevant information on wage payment, investment etc will also be maintained.

2.3 Mass Balance

Volume credits are only converted for a process that can occur in reality.

The volume of product transferred as mass balance is 100% covered by volumes collected as certified.

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Chapter 3 – INCOME AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 Production cost and Living income

Group management collects data on the production costs such as costs of fertilizer, agrochemicals, paid labor, equipment and calculates the net income from the certified crop for a sample of group members the group management shares the analyzed data with the group members.

The actual net income of group member households is assessed against the Living Income. The details are maintained.

3.2 Sustainability Differential

Group management transfers the full amount of the Rainforest Alliance Sustainability Differential in cash to group members:

Documents the payment of the Rainforest Alliance Sustainability Differential to the group members. Separate records are kept for Sustainability Differential payments from each unit which are clearly distinguished from market price.

3.3 Sustainability Investments

The buyer of certified products ensures that the farm certificate holder receives the Sustainability Investment.

An annual report of investments made to farms is maintained.

3.4 Supply chain contributions for living wage payment

The supply chain actor maintains a copy of the farm certificate holder’s plan for wage improvement will be done.

There is written evidence of the agreement with the farm certificate holder on modalities, targets and timelines for contributing to the implementation of the farm’s wage improvement plan is maintained.

The details are entered into the traceability platform.

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Chapter 4 - FARMING

4.1 Planting and Rotation

Plant varieties for planting, are selected based on quality, productivity, resistance to pests and diseases and on suitability for the climate during the lifetime of the plants.

This is done as per the findings of the Risk Assessment regarding climate.

New plantings have a well-established cropping system which takes into account all aspects of planting based on the practices.

Farms implement measures to prevent pests and disease.

4.3 Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)

Not applicable

4.4 Soil fertility and conservation

Management conducts a soil assessment for a representative sample of areas, and updates this at least once every three years.

The soil assessment includes:

- Soil structure •
Soil moisture and water level in the soil
- Drainage conditions
- Identification of areas with visual symptoms of nutrient deficiency

Based on the soil assessment, management identifies soil management measures which will be part of the management plan.

Management carries out regular soil tests and/or (visual) leaf tests once in a year.

Preference will be given to organic fertilizers produced on the farm first. If more nutrients are needed, these are supplemented other organic fertilizers, or by inorganic fertilizers.

Fertilizers are applied in such a way that nutrients become available when and where crops need them, and contamination of the environment is minimized.

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4.5 Integrated Pest Management

Management implements the IPM strategy as developed by a competent professional. The IPM strategy is based on climate conditions, pest monitoring results, implemented IPM actions and pesticides application records.

The IPM strategy is annually updated.

For pest prevention , use of biological, physical, and other non-chemical control methods first, There after if require use agrochemical applications, as advised by a competent technician.

When agrochemicals are used the following aspects are taken care:

- Agrochemicals with the lowest possible toxicity are used
- Applications are made only on the impacted plants and areas
- Active ingredients are rotated to avoid and reduce resistance

The use of pesticides is not promoted.

4.6 Argo chemical management

The farms use only agrochemicals that are approved under the Rainforest Alliance list, and approved by law.

Persons handling pesticides are competent in the application of pesticides, and they use the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as prescribed in the product’s label or Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). The PPE is in good condition. PPE is washed and stored safely and does not enter the workers’ housing. Single-use items are disposed of after one use.

Volume and dosage calculation methods are reviewed and refined to reduce the surplus mix and pesticide overuse.

Management provides the agrochemical handlers at site water and soap, and, when feasible bathing facilities.

Procedures are established and maintained to avoid contamination by pesticides, through spray drift or other pathways, from treated areas to other areas including all aquatic and terrestrial natural ecosystems and infrastructure.

Pesticide applications records are maintained.

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Empty pesticides containers and application equipment are washed three times, and kept under control. The empty pesticide containers are kept in a locked storage area until safely disposed of through a formal collection, and recycling program or returned to the supplier.

Agrochemicals and application equipment are stored in accordance with the label instructions and in a way that minimizes negative impact on the environment and human health. Agrochemicals are stored in their original containers or packaging. An up-to-date pesticide stock inventory is maintained.

4.7 Harvest and Post-harvest practices

Producer’s conserve and optimize quality and quantity of product during harvest and post-harvest handling, including: loading, processing, packing, transportation, and storage.

Producers take measures to keep the maximum residue levels (MRLs) set by the local regulations.

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CHAPTER 5 - SOCIAL

5.1 Child labor, Forced labor , Discrimination and work place violence and harassment

Management is committed to the following social aspects for its implementation:

- child labor,
- forced labor,
- discrimination and workplace violence and harassment

This will be controlled by appointing a management representative at HO. At farm levels a committee is appointed which includes worker representatives and management representatives.

It will be ensured that the committee members are knowledgeable regarding the social aspects.

At HO and farm levels as policy child labor and forced labor and discrimination are not practiced.

Risk assessment with respect to the above aspects is done and any additional mitigation measures that needs to be included in the management plan.

Monitoring:

The management representative/ committee monitors risks and the implementation of risk mitigation measures with respect to child labor, forced labor, discrimination and workplace violence and harassment to the management and to the Grievance Committee. The same is monitored.

The management representative/committee sets out in the Management Plan how to remediate in case cases of child labor, forced labor, discrimination, workplace violence and harassment.

Management representative/ committee provides training/awareness raising on child labor, forced labor, discrimination, and workplace violence and harassment to all group members (farms).

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5.2 Freedom of association and Collective bargaining

Workers have the right to form and join a union of their own choice and to take part in collective bargaining, without prior authorization from the employer, and in accordance with Trade union act. Workers’ representatives are elected by voting.

Management informs workers on these rights through a written policy in a language they understand, before the start of employment. The written policy on freedom of association and collective bargaining is visibly displayed at all times in the workplace.

Workers are not subject to discrimination or retaliation for reasons of past or present workers’ organization or union membership or activities.

Management provides workers’ representatives reasonable paid time off from work to carry out their representation functions and attend meetings.

Management gives trade union access to a notice board to communicate information about their activities.

All workers, including management, receive once every three years information on freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

5.3 Wages and Contracts

Permanent and temporary workers who are employed for more than three consecutive months are issued with a job contract stating the following:

- Job duties
- Location of the job
- Working hours
- Pay rate and/or method of calculation
- Overtime pay rate
- Frequency or schedule of payment
- Deductions, benefits provided such as in-kind benefits
- Paid leave
- Medical leave and protections in case of illness, disability or accident
- Notice period (if any) for contract termination.

Workers are paid the applicable minimum wage or the wage negotiated in a Collective Bargaining Agreement whichever is higher.

Deductions from wages are done as per the Payment of wages act.

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Wages are paid to workers at prescribed intervals as the regulations.

Equal pay for equal work is followed without discrimination on gender or type of worker, ethnicity, age, color, religion, political opinion, nationality, social origin or others.

5.4 Living wage

The total wages paid to all types of workers is assessed yearly against the Living Wage benchmark, as approved by the Rainforest Alliance and in accordance with the Global Living Wage Coalition. The management uses the Rainforest Alliance Salary Matrix Tool to accurately fill in data for workers’ wages.

5.5 Working conditions

Workers do not work more than eight regular working hours per day and 48 regular working hours per week.

Overtime work is voluntary and only permitted on need based and are paid wages at premium rates (Double rate).

Pregnant permanent workers are entitled to paid maternity leave of at least 14 weeks, of which maximum six weeks before the expected due date and at least six weeks after giving birth, and receive maternity rights and benefits.

5.6 Health and Safety

A Health safety committee is constituted and it conducts an analysis of the occupational health and safety risks. The mitigation measures are included in the Management Plan and implemented.

First aid boxes are available to workers for the treatment of work-related injuries, and emergency health care is provided free of charge including transport to and treatment in a hospital.

Workers have access to sufficient and safe drinking water at all times by proving potable drinking water in the farms.

The water used for drinking is tested as per IS 10500 standard annually for its conformity.

Sufficient, clean, and functioning toilets and handwashing stations are provided in the farms.

Persons that work in hazardous situations are trained in the use of the PPE.

It is ensured that all tools used by the workers are in good working condition.

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Workers are authorized to leave situations with imminent danger without seeking employer’s permission and without being penalized.

An accident and emergency procedure is in place including marked fire exits, evacuation maps. Mock drills are conducted at least one in a year. There is firefighting equipment and workers are trained on how to use this equipment.

Workers are provided with basic training on occupational health, safety, and hygiene. Hygiene instructions are visibly displayed at central locations in the farms.

Workers who regularly handle hazardous agrochemicals will undergo a medical examination at least once a year.

5.7 Housing and Living conditions

Workers and their families that are provided with clean, and decent living quarters considering local conditions.

The facility has cooking areas with smoke ventilation, Dry floors, Pest control systems in place.

5.8 Communities

Management respects customary rights peoples and local communities.

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Chapter 6 – Environment

Plantation or processing of the products will not occur in protected areas or their officially designated buffer zones, except where it complies with applicable law. Management plans and implements measures to conserve natural ecosystems. The plan is based on the map required in the Risk Assessment Tool and the same is updated annually. Farms maintain existing riparian buffers adjacent to aquatic ecosystems.

Protection of wild life and bio diversity

In order to protect wild life threatened animals and plants are not hunted, killed, fished, collected or trafficked as a policy. Erosion by water and wind is reduced through practices such as re-vegetation. Fire is not used for preparing or cleaning fields, except when specifically justified in the IPM plan.

Water management and conservation

Farms comply with the applicable law for the withdrawal of surface or groundwater for agricultural, domestic or processing purposes. Irrigation and water distribution systems are maintained to optimize crop productivity while minimizing water waste, erosion, and salinization.

Waste Water management

Tests for processing Wastewater is tested for different parameters from discharge points and results are documented. Human sewage, sludge, and sewage water is not used for production and/or processing activities.

Waste Management

Waste is stored, treated and disposed of authorized way that do not pose health or safety risks to people, animals or natural ecosystems. Waste is stored and

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disposed of only in designated areas and not disposed of in natural or aquatic ecosystems.

Non-organic waste is not left on the land.

Farms do not burn waste, except in incinerators technically designed for the specific type of waste.

Energy Efficiency

Management takes measures to increase energy efficiency and reduce dependency on non-renewable energy sources used for production and processing.

The energy used for machinery used for production and processing are quantified and documented. (Electricity Bills)

Green house gas reduction

Farms document net Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions from main sources in production and processing operations. This includes emissions from use of fossil fuels and electricity, fertilizer, waste and wastewater and land use change.

References

- 1. SOP for transport of agrochemicals and fuels
- 2. SOP for handling of agrochemicals and fuels
- 3. SOP for storage of agrochemicals and fuels
- 4. SOP for checks on respirators issued to spraying workers
- 5. SOP for spraying workers
- 6. SOP for maintenance of spraying in buffer zones
- 7. SOP for handling of spraying coat/pee of spraying workers
- 8. SOP for handling of hazardous waste
- 9. SOP for sand in spill trays
- 10. SOP for operating power sprayers and other sprayers
- 11. SOP for mechanical pruning
- 12. SOP for lathe operator
- 13. SOP for protection of endangered spices found within the company premises.
- 14. SOP for fire
- 15. SOP for usage of PPEs
- 16. SOP for fire wood shed
- 17. SOP for generator room
- 18. SOP for internal inspection
- 19. Grievance procedure

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- 20. Approved list of suppliers/ sub-contractors
- 21. Agreement Between HO and farms
- 22. Farm Map/ farm Sketch
- 23. Risk assessment template
- 24. Management plan
- 25. Internal inspection report
- 26. Self-assessment report
- 27. Gender equality committee