

Rainforest Alliance Overview

Around the world, in forests, on farms and along seashores...in kitchens and supermarkets, classrooms, pressrooms and boardrooms...the Rainforest Alliance is promoting global standards that help protect biodiversity and offer economic opportunities to populations in need.

Responding to a Changing World

During the next four decades, the human population is expected to grow from 6.8 billion to more than 9 billion. In their struggle to feed, clothe and house their families, people everywhere will continue to exert pressure on the Earth's limited resources, particularly in and around our planet's most sensitive and unique ecosystems. Simply designating areas as parks and preserves is not enough. Although 10 percent of the world has already been declared protected, local people continue to rely on the resources within protected zones to earn their livelihoods.

There is a solution. The Rainforest Alliance is helping people to change their land-use practices, championing standards for the long-term sustainable use of resources so that we can conserve the planet's great wealth of biodiversity and help people use the resources they need without compromising them for future generations.

Saving Forests

Over the last four centuries, half of the world's forests have been cleared. In response to this significant loss, the Rainforest Alliance pioneered forestry certification in 1989 with the launch of SmartWood, the first global sustainable forestry certification programme. To encourage market-driven, environmentally and socially sound management of forests, tree farms and forest resources, we award the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)/Rainforest Alliance Certified™ seal of approval to operations that follow strict standards for sustainability. The FSC is the global standard-setter for responsible forestry. As an FSC-accredited certifier, we work in all forest types: tropical, temperate and boreal. FSC/Rainforest Alliance certification guarantees consumers that any forest product — whether it's a guitar, a bookcase or raw lumber — comes from a forest or tree farm managed to conserve biodiversity and ensure the rights of workers and local people.



The Rainforest Alliance works around the globe to conserve biodiversity.

To further promote sustainability, we encourage the recycling of old wood and wood products by certifying those made from reused, reclaimed and salvaged woods. From the cool forests of the northwestern United States to the lowland tropics of Papua New Guinea, the Rainforest Alliance has certified more than 132 million acres (53 million hectares) of forest worldwide. With offices and partner organizations around the world, we are able to offer on-the-ground certification services globally.

While local and indigenous people directly depend on forest resources for their livelihoods, they may lack the technical skills and tools to use them judiciously. Over the past 20 years,



OUR MISSION

The Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior.

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governments everywhere have been turning over forested areas to local communities, a trend that is expected to continue. To help local communities develop sustainable practices and earn a living from the wood and non-timber forest resources they harvest from their lands — such as palm fronds, nuts, rattan, latex and resin — the Rainforest Alliance ensures that community and indigenous forestry operations have equal access to our certified services and markets.

Sowing Seeds for the Future

Farming is the leading destroyer of wildlife habitat, a principal cause of flora and fauna extinction and the largest user of freshwater. Agriculture already occupies one quarter of the Earth's lands. As population pressures intensify and the conversion of forests to farmland increases, current practices will only continue to accelerate the cycle of poverty that so many farmers already experience.

To integrate productive agriculture, biodiversity conservation and human development, we created our sustainable agriculture programme. As of April 2009, approximately 1.5 million acres (600,000 hectares) of farms have significantly reduced their use of herbicides and pesticides, invested in recycling and provided their workers with improved training, housing, health benefits and education, thereby earning the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal of approval. We award our seal to well-managed farms throughout Latin America, Africa and Asia for the production of crops such as bananas, coffee, cocoa, citrus, grapes, pineapple, tea, ferns and cut flowers. Sowing the New Green Revolution is a huge challenge, but the farmers, scientists and activists involved in our Sustainable Agriculture Network — a consortium of nine leading conservation groups in Latin America — are planting the seeds of change.

Bringing Sustainable Products to Market

To support the expansion of sustainable business in the Amazon, the United States Agency for International Development has funded the Initiative for Conservation in the Andean Amazon (ICAA), a program involving more than 20 different organizations. The ICAA is one of the Amazon's first region-wide, multiple-country conservation initiatives — operating in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. The Rainforest

The Rainforest Alliance Certified seal can be found on chocolate, coffee, citrus, tea, pineapples, ferns and flowers grown on responsibly managed farms in Latin America, Asia and Africa.



Rainforest Alliance certification ensures access to education, housing and healthcare for farm and forest workers and their families.

Alliance's role in this project is to expand the adoption of certification as a conservation tool, working in collaboration with our partner groups Fundación Natura in Colombia and Conservación y Desarrollo in Ecuador.

Ecologically Sound Touring

With 900 million people travelling every year, tourism is not only big business, but a growing source of revenue for people living in areas that are particularly rich in plant and animal species. While tourism can have serious negative impacts on local people and the environment, it also has the potential to provide incentives for conservation. The Rainforest Alliance is working with other organizations and experts worldwide to develop best management practices for sustainable tourism that help tourism businesses and consumers effectively contribute to biodiversity conservation and social welfare. We are also conducting training and technical assistance workshops throughout Latin America to teach tourism entrepreneurs how to implement these sustainable management practices, obtain certification and market their businesses to conscientious consumers.

The Rainforest Alliance is uniting stakeholders worldwide to share information on how the tourism industry is promoting sustainable resource management. As secretariat of the Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas, we are helping tourism certification programmes, tour operators, government agencies, civic organizations and travellers throughout Latin America and the Caribbean share information and experiences, define common work tools and market sustainable tourism certification. We are also collaborating with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Foundation to launch the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC), an international organization that will work to increase the credibility of sustainable tourism certification programs and ultimately help to protect the environment and the rights and livelihoods of local communities. The STSC will serve as the accreditation body that endorses sustainable tourism certification programmes that are in compliance with the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, the first globally relevant sustainable tourism criteria.

Curbing Climate Change

To help mitigate profound and irreversible impacts to the Earth due to our changing climate, the Rainforest Alliance is promoting climate-friendly forestry, tourism and agriculture activities. By giving people an incentive to conserve their forestlands, we are helping to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions (caused by deforestation) and protect forests (that absorb carbon dioxide). And by ensuring that forest managers, farm managers and tourism businesses plan ahead for a changing climate, we are improving their ability to adapt to its effects.

In forestry, we are developing pilot initiatives to measure the carbon sequestered through reforestation projects as well as those that avoid deforestation. We are also validating and verifying that forest-based carbon-offset projects meet internationally recognized standards. In agriculture, we are ensuring that Rainforest Alliance Certified farms minimize their emissions and do not cause forest conversion. We are also exploring how coffee and cocoa farmers can earn payments for sequestering additional carbon by planting trees on their farms or creating forest set-asides — an incentive for them to keep forests standing and an opportunity for responsible companies to purchase carbon offsets to counter their own emissions. And in tourism, we are training businesses to manage their greenhouse gas emissions and recommending suitable offset opportunities for the emissions they cannot reduce.

Because the world cannot seriously address climate change without greatly reducing deforestation, the Rainforest Alliance is also active in international efforts to ensure that the reduc-

Sustainable tourism protects the planet's natural resources.



Photos: A. Morgan, L. Pedersen, J. Vogel Bass, R. Goodier, C. Trewick

For more information about the Rainforest Alliance, please visit www.rainforest-alliance.org



The Rainforest Alliance educates consumers about making sustainable choices.

tion of emissions from deforestation and degradation (known as REDD) is given a meaningful place in the post-Kyoto United Nations protocol for addressing climate change.

Engaging the Public

The conservation efforts of the Rainforest Alliance will have little permanent benefit unless the public understands and supports our goals, which is why communication and education have always been an important part of what we do. Worldwide, we work closely with industry leaders, journalists, conservation colleagues and government officials, and we reach hundreds of thousands of concerned consumers, children, parents and teachers through our publications, special events and Web site (www.rainforest-alliance.org). Our online reference library, the Eco-Index (www.eco-index.org), helps conservationists and scientists share information and insights. The Rainforest Alliance's education programme (www.rainforest-alliance.org/education) provides an online curriculum and multilingual resources to teach students about the world's diverse and threatened ecosystems.

By reducing the deleterious impacts of forestry, agriculture and tourism — especially in ecologically critical regions — and improving the lives and livelihoods of people living and working in these areas, the Rainforest Alliance is setting new standards. With more than 35,000 members, a budget of \$30.3 million, and projects active in more than 70 countries, we are recognized as a world leader in the successful design and implementation of conservation measures and methods that will sustain the Earth's people and places for decades to come.



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