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Development of New RA Sustainable Agriculture Standard

In January 2018, the Rainforest Alliance merged with UTZ in order to more effectively respond to the urgent challenges of today: the Rainforest Alliance and UTZ.

The New RA is reimagining the certification and evolving certification system based on the principle that sustainability is a journey of continuous, data-informed improvement rather than a binary pass/fail model. Based on that, the development of a new Sustainable Agriculture Standard started was started in June 2018 by setting out high level goals for the new certification programme. The new sustainable agriculture standard is designed to maximize positive social, environmental, and economic impact, while offering farmers an enhanced framework to improve their livelihoods and protecting the landscapes where they live and work.

The first cut of the standard was developed by the standard committee and published for public consultations. The new standard consists of two versions one for smallholders (Groups) and the other one for Plantations (medium and large farms). The draft standard set up consists of **Core Criteria**, Improvement Criteria related to Core Criteria, SMART Indicators to measure and Outcome. All the criteria have been grouped under four areas Management, Farming Practices, Social and environmental. Sustainability improvement topics in the new Rainforest Alliance standard are categorized as **mandatory, context-specific, or self-selected**.

In the draft standard there are 32 core criteria and a number of improvement criteria under each core criteria.

There are a number of innovations in the draft standard. One key innovation is in our proposed approach for child labor, forced labor and (sexual) harassment; extensively addressing economic prosperity of the farmers and workers; addressing gender inequality recognizing the importance of women and girls for development.

The standard is currently under review of public around the world.



Standards Committee

Status of RA Certification in Sri Lanka

Volume certified (tons) - 91,362

No tea estates certified—164

No private factories certified - 19

No smallholders certified - 34,691

Area tea certified (ha) - 55,757

Total Area Certified (ha) - 101,080

Sri Lankan stakeholders assembled to provide inputs for the new draft RA standard

The draft standard have been published and currently under the review of the public (mainly the stakeholders). RA has planned 33 public consultation workshops around the world and the stakeholder consultation workshop in Sri Lanka was held on 31st January 2019 at Waters Edge, Battaramulla, or-

ganized by Alliance for Sustainable Landscapes Management (ASLM). There were 75 participants representing RA certified farms and groups, as well as farms and groups currently under the certification process, brokers, buyers, exporters, sector experts, intellectuals, certification bodies, representatives from other standards,

INGOs and NGOs.

The standards were critically reviewed by the stakeholders and provided comments and suggestions to further improve the standards. As the workshop output a report was prepared and submitted to the standards committee for their consideration.



Training of Sri Lankan Auditors by RA

The Rainforest Alliance (RA) and with the collaboration of Alliance for Sustainable Landscapes Management (ASLM) organized a workshop to train new auditors to perform RA Sustainable Agriculture Certification audits in Sri Lanka. This workshop was a result of a long discussion between local stakeholders of RA certification process in Sri Lanka and RA regarding the issues faced



Participants for the Auditor Training programme

by the applicants when they apply for certification audits, i.e. high cost for audits when the auditors come from CBs in India, inadequate understanding of local conditions, realities and language by the Indian Auditors etc., considering all the facts and importance of Sri Lanka as a country in RA sustainable agriculture certification Programme, this workshop was organized to train Sri Lankan auditors who can perform RA Sustainable Agriculture Certification audits in Sri Lanka in future. This training would be the first step towards qualify as an auditor and after fulfilling the other requirements the trainees may become accredited auditors attached to the RA accredited

Certification Bodies (CBs) by 2020.

The programme was conducted by Ingrid Ayub, RA Authorized Instructor and supported by Maria Angélica Bonilla, Standards & Assurance Senior Associate; Giri Kadurugamuwa RA Programme Coordinator, Sri Lanka.

There were 21 participants for the training which included 17 male and 4 female participants and most of them have earned some experiences before on auditing on quality standards.

Micro-watershed conservation project

"Large tea plantations in up country have a large number of micro watershed areas which provide continuous flow of water to the downstream. Human, animals, ecosystems, agriculture, fisheries, power generation and other industries heavily depend on water coming from upper watershed. If the water flow reduces due to degradation of micro watershed areas, downstream communities will suffer. Therefore our utmost responsibility is to protect the existing micro watershed areas in up country which are being degraded due to pressure from plantation communities.

Micro watershed areas exist within large tea plantations in up country are under threat and large number of them have been destroyed over the last few decades due to poor management by the plantation managements, inadequate implementation of laws, conversion for development activities, encroachment for settlements and specially for vegetable cultivations.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to have a proper programme to conservation management of micro watershed areas in upper watershed areas. ASLM together with RA and

donor agencies such as UNEP-GEF and KIRIN Holdings also with the support of government agencies and RPCs implementing a programme for conservation of selected micro watershed areas.

The objective is mapping, boundary demarcation, implementation of conservation activities to improve the condition, community awareness, sustainable management with the support of the community and declare as a protected area.

So far, activities have been implemented to protect 4 such

micro watershed areas in Ella DS Division. The fifth micro watershed has been selected from the Strathspey Estate of Maskeliya Plantations LTD in Upcot and financial support for conservation activities provided by KIRIN Holdings. About 100 households will be directly benefited.

Under this programme 5 micro watershed areas will be selected from up country and necessary measures will be taken for the conservation of them by 2021. KIRIN Holdings has already committed the financial support to undertake the programme.



Area demarcated – 3.61 ha



Boundary demarcation using wooden poles



Community awareness programme

Rural Entrepreneur Academy and tea smallholder certification

The Rural Entrepreneur Academy (REA) is an innovative concept introduced by ASLM for mobilizing Sri Lankan tea smallholders to become entrepreneur tea farmers from the present status of subsistence or means of living type of marginal farms. The REA has a novel approach and also use the concept of Farmer Field School (FFS). This new initiative is called "Rural Entrepreneur Academy" in which the rural economy will be strengthened using available resources within the selected rural areas.

The objective of FFS is: "Tea smallholder farmers are capacitated and strengthened to become entrepreneur farmers by training, capacity building and implementing sustainable agricultural practices".

Under this programme, it is expected to train the TSH farmers to become entrepreneurs and National Vocation Qualification Certificate (NVQ) will be awarded to the farmers who successfully complete the pro-

gramme. As a group the tea smallholder society will be certified under the RA Sustainable Agriculture Certification Programme. The other objectives are to expedite the certification process, give more autonomy for the TSH in decision making, increasing bargaining power of the group, mobilize the society as an entrepreneur, as well as to give the ownership of initiative and credit of improvements and achievements to the group members, most importantly to bring financial benefits to the grassroots level TSH members.

A curriculum has been developed to train tea smallholders which cover several subject areas related to sustainable farm or landscapes management, diversification of economic activities, diversification of income sources, improving resilient to climate change etc.,. The curriculum has eight lessons such as observation of ecosystems in the farm and analysis; effective planning and management system; control-

ling and reversing soil erosion and sustainable weed management; waste management, waste water management and health; Integrated Pest management (IPM) and safe use of chemicals; plant nutrients, use of chemical fertilizer and preparation of composts; shade management, pruning, plucking and transportation; forests conservation; and any other subject based on the request of the members.

As the first step those who successfully implement the learnings on their farms will be evaluated and expected to grant a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) certificates. The NVQ evaluation and granting of certificate will be done by University of Sabaragamuwa. Further, the Tea Smallholder Development Society where the group of TSH are members and undergo training will be mobilized to get RA sustainable agriculture certification which can generate some financial and other benefits to the TSH. In addition,

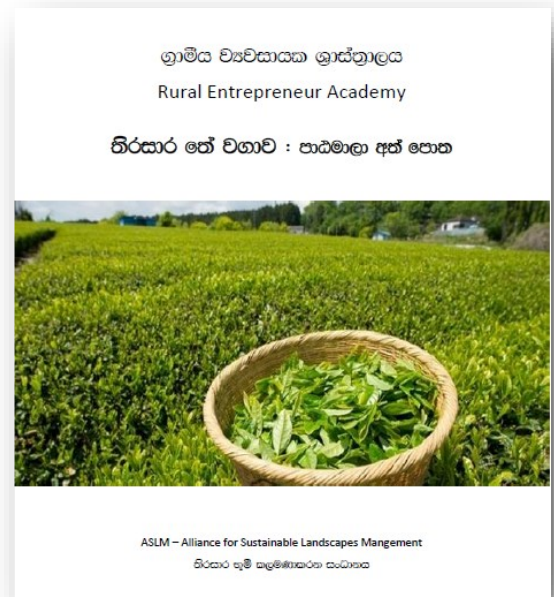
other skill development based on demand, diversification of crops and income portfolio etc., also will be attended.

ASLM introduced this REA concept to the Tea Smallholder's Development Societies in 2018. In order to make this effort a success National Federation of Tea Smallholder Development Societies, Faculty of Agriculture and Agribusiness Management of Sabaragamuwa University, Unilever Sri Lanka and Kirin Holdings have come forward as counterparts.

The pilot initiative of REA was implemented With Dikheha Tea Smallholdings Development Society and 125 smallholders participated. The second group of REA commenced in Ruwanpura Colony at Kudaoya Hatton. The community has been displaced from Kotamle dam project and resettled. There are 109 members and out of that a group of 18 are undergoing the training.



REA Dikheha, Hedigalla Janapadaya



RA Certified New Farms and Groups

The following private factories (Groups) were RA certified during the period.

⇒ **Hidellena Tea Factory (Pvt) Ltd**, 2,601 hectares of land, 1,890 hectares of tea cultivations, 1,891 Mt of made tea and 7,555 of producers have been certified.

⇒ **Kalubowitiyana Tea Factories Ltd**, 801 hectares of land, 791 hectares of tea cultivations, 1,229 Mt of made tea and 3,057 of producers have been certified.

⇒ **Madulsima Plantations PLC**, 7,369 hectares of land, 3,572 hectares of tea cultivations, 4,571 Mt of made tea and 12 of producers have been certified.

⇒ **Green House Plantation PVT LTD**, 851 hectares of land, 808 hectares of tea cultivations, 750 Mt of made tea and 2,581 of producers have been certified.



Total certified for the period:

hectares of land:	11,622
hectares of tea cultivations:	7,061
Mt of made tea :	8,441
number of producers have been certified:	13,205

KIRIN Holdings Visited Tea Estates in Sri Lanka

Kirin is a popular Beer manufacturer in Japan. They produce nonalcoholic beverages as well. One such product is ready to drink tea from Sri Lanka. Kirin RTD products are named Nuwaraeliya, Dimbula and Kandy. Kirin commenced purchasing Sri Lanka tea in the year 2012 in collaboration with RA and ASLM. Kirin is supporting ASLM to provide technical training to

Tea producers of selected marks. ASLM has extended technical training for 80 tea estates and out of those 62 estates are RA certified and the others are in the pipeline for certification.

Since 2012 Kirin CSR team along with the RA marketing representative of Japan pays an annual visit to Sri Lanka. The latest visit was in 2019 Febru-

ary led by Mr. Ryuji Nomura General Manager of the CSR division and three other, ably supported by Ms. Chieko Ichchikura of RA. They visited micro watershed conservation project at Strathespy Estate, REA at Ruwanpura colony and Loolecondre estate. We are happy to announce that the JEDB is also joining club with Kirin support.

"Private sector investments in biodiversity and natural resources conservation is a must to protect the world and also to continue improvement towards sustainable businesses"



Consultation of Regional Federations of Tea Smallholdings Development Societies on identification of needs for protecting sustainability of Sri Lankan tea industry

A consultation workshop on “identification of needs for protecting sustainability of Sri Lankan tea industry” was held on 11th December 2018 at BMICH with the participation of elected members for the regional federations of tea smallholdings development societies from Ratnapura, Galle, Matara, Kalutara, Uva, Kandy, Kegalle and Nuwara Eliya regions. In addition the representatives

from responsible government agencies such as the Ministry of Plantation Management, Tea Smallholdings Development Authority, and representatives from Tea Producers Association and representatives of private tea factories who are working with tea smallholders also participated. The event was organized by Unilever Sri Lanka with the partnership of Tea Smallholders National Federation and Alliance for Sustainable Landscapes Management (ASLM).



“the future of Sri Lankan tea industry relies on the tea smallholders. They contribute about 73% of the total tea production of the country”

The participants discussed and presented the needs of amendments to the policies and legislatures and also needs of revisiting the method of extension, capacity building, technical assistance and supporting through provisioning of new technology etc.,

As the output of the programme a report has been prepared with the

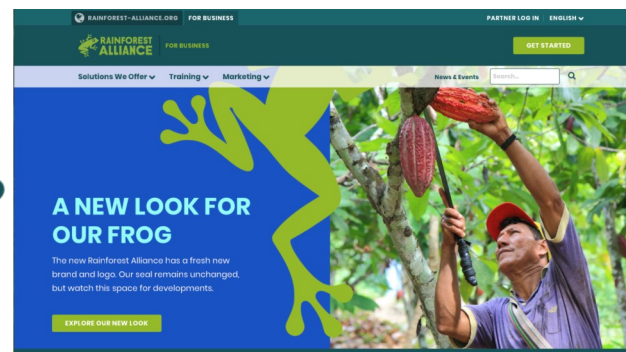
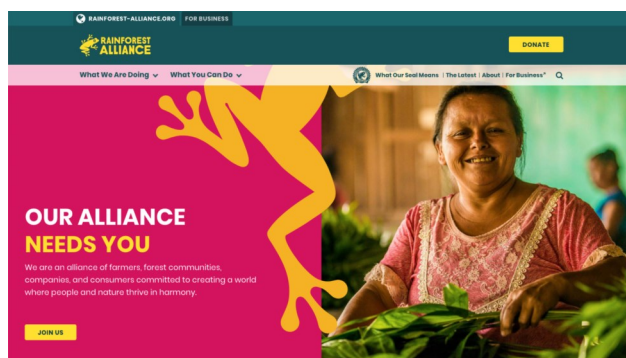
inputs of the participants and will be shared with the responsible stakeholders for future actions.

Most interesting thing is that the federation members unanimously possessed a resolution with suggestions and requests for the betterment of the future of tea smallholding sector and tea industry as a whole.

Launch of New Identity of RA



Rainforest Alliance (RA) launched its new identity and new logos are presented above. Now you can visit RA or UTZ web sites and get more information and new look of their web sites.



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“He who save the nature save by the nature”



Alliance for Sustainable Landscapes Management (ASLM) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization established in year 2000 and it has been implementing Sustainable Agriculture, Biodiversity Conservation, natural resources conservation and management, related projects since its inception.

The vision and the mission of ASLM:

VISION: A society that value, appreciate, conserve and enrich natural and cultural heritage for their well-being.

MISSION: Preserve and enhance the environmental and cultural integrity of natural and human-influenced landscapes.

ASLM is the only legally appointed country representative of Rainforest Alliance (RA) in Sri Lanka and it facilitates and coordinates the RA Sustainable Agriculture Programme in Sri Lanka.

Under the RA certification programme, initial assessments, training of farm managements, group administrators and IMS teams of farms, group members including smallholders on Sustainable Agriculture Standard are undertaken. Interested companies are supported with training on documentation, preparation of documentation, preparation of necessary formats, plans, policies and procedures. In addition support in solving problems related to the RA certification and coordination between RA and stakeholders also being done by ASLM.

What is sustainable Agriculture means?

Sustainable Agriculture defines as farming systems that are "capable of maintaining their productivity and usefulness to society indefinitely. Such systems... must be resource-conserving, socially supportive, commercially competitive, and environmentally sound (USDA National Agricultural Library)" "the term sustainable agriculture means an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term:

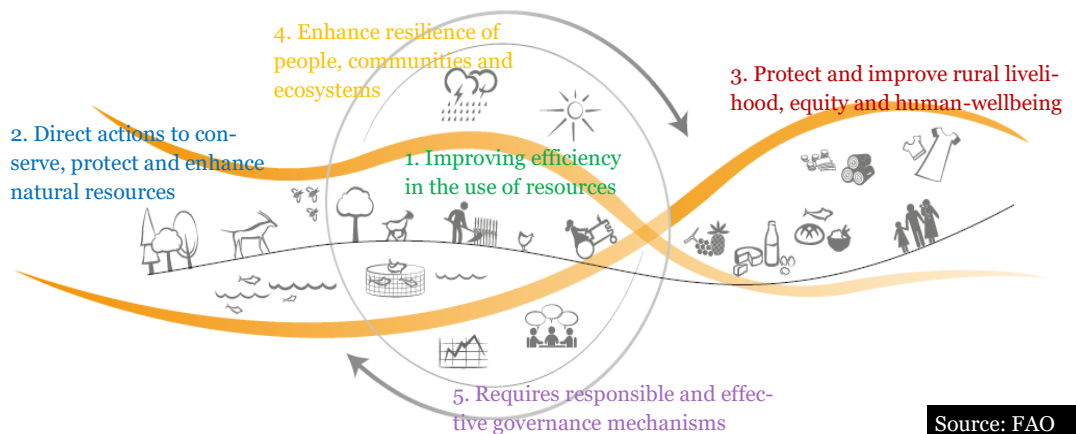
- ⇒ Puts the emphasis on methods and processes that improve soil productivity while minimizing harmful effects on the climate, soil, water, air, biodiversity and human health.
- ⇒ Aims to minimize the use of inputs from non-renewable sources and

- petroleum-based products and replace them with those from renewable resources.
- ⇒ Focuses on local people and their needs, knowledge, skills, socio-cultural values and institutional structures.
- ⇒ Ensures that the basic nutritional requirements of current and future gen-

- erations are met in both quantity and quality terms.
- ⇒ Provides long-term employment, an adequate income and dignified and equal working and living conditions for everybody involved in agricultural value chains.
- ⇒ Reduces the agricultural sector's vulnerability to

- adverse natural conditions (e.g. climate), socioeconomic factors (e.g. strong price fluctuations) and other risks.
- ⇒ Fosters sustainable rural institutions that encourage the participation of all shareholders and promote the reconciliation of interests.

The 5 principles of Sustainable Food and Agriculture



Source: FAO