



Document name	RTRS Guideline for Desktop Audits Version 1.0
Document reference	RTRS Accreditation and Certification Procedure for Responsible Soy Production Version 4.2 RTRS Chain of Custody Accreditation and Certification Procedure for Certification Bodies Version 3.2
Date	April 28 th 2020
Produced by	RTRS Secretariat- Technical Unit.

Mandatory version from April 2020



1. Introduction

As a consequence of the novel coronavirus pandemic, many governments have issued regulations establishing travel restrictions and social distancing measures, which affect the possibility of conducting the on-site audits that are part of the ordinary certification process. In this context, RTRS has thoroughly monitored the developments on the novel coronavirus outbreak situation in order to analyze the hazards that could potentially entail the conduction of on-site audits, and also safeguard both certificate holders and the certifications bodies.

In light of the ‘force majeure’ situation that the entire world is facing because of the novel coronavirus and taking into consideration that both **Section A2.5.6 RTRS Accreditation and Certification Procedure for Responsible Soy Production Version 4.2** and **Section A.2.3.4. of the RTRS Chain of Custody Accreditation and Certification Procedure for Certification Bodies Version 3.2** allow the certification bodies to obtain the required information through alternative means in the event access to the units is not possible due to *force majeure* (circumstances beyond the control of the certification applicant) or access is not safe for the assessor, RTRS has decided to publish this document which provides for the guidelines to be followed in connection with the conduction of audits using alternative remote mechanisms for the collection of all the relevant information (the “Desktop Audits”).

Provided that the coronavirus outbreak remains qualifying as a pandemic for the World Health Organization, RTRS will consider valid audits conducted in strict observance of the guidelines contained in this document. This guideline will be periodically reviewed in order to keep up with the developments on the COVID-19 outbreak and make the proper adjustments to reduce the impact that this exceptional situation may have on RTRS stakeholders’ activities.

2. Initial audits and transfers of certifications

Type of audits	Scope	Applicability of Desktop Audits
(i) Initial audits; and (ii) transfers of certifications ¹	Production + CoC for producers (Individual Producer)	Desktop Audits will not be admitted, thus no certificates will be granted
	Production + CoC for producers (Group or Multi-site)	
	Production + CoC for producers + EU RED	All initial audits will be postponed until on-site visits can be carried out.
	Production + CoC for producers + non-GMO	

¹ The transfer of a certification is defined as the recognition of an existing and valid product certification, granted by one accredited and recognized certification body (the “Issuing Certification Body”), by another accredited certification body (the “Accepting Certification Body”) for the purpose of issuing its own certification.



	Production + CoC for producers + non-Paraquat	
	Chain of Custody	Initial audits will be allowed under the modality of Desktop Audits only in cases where the Certification Body has already certified the relevant facilities with another similar verification scheme, for example, GMP+, ISCC, 2BSvs, among others)

3. Surveillance (“Follow-up”) audits and re-certification audits

- 3.1. **Individual Follow-up and re-certification audits against the Production Standard** will be admitted under the modality of Desktop Audits. Reports, certificates and certified tons of RTRS’ material will be uploaded to the RTRS Trading Platform. Producers will be allowed to sell their certified volume.
- 3.2. **Multi-site Follow-up and re-certification audits against the Production Standard** will be admitted under the modality of Desktop Audits. Reports, certificates and certified tons of RTRS’ material will be uploaded to the RTRS Trading Platform. Producers will be allowed to sell their certified volume.
- 3.3. With regards to **groups of less than 60 farms certified against the Production Standard**, Desktop Audits will be allowed. Reports, certificates and certified tons of RTRS’ material will be uploaded to the RTRS Trading Platform. The group will be allowed to sell its certified volume.
- 3.4. With regards to **groups of more than 60 farms certified against the Production Standard**, all audits will be postponed until on-site visits can be carried out.
- 3.5. All **Follow-up and re-certification audits against the Production Standard including the EU RED scope** will follow the guidelines set forth by the European Commission.
- 3.6. All **Follow-up and re-certification audits against the Production Standard including the non-GMO scope** will be postponed unless it can be assured that a third party is able to take the relevant non-GMO grains samples for analysis purposes.
- 3.7. All **Follow-up and re-certification audits against the Production Standard including the non-Paraquat scope** will be allowed under the modality of Desktop Audits. Reports, certificates and certified tons of RTRS’ material will be uploaded to the RTRS Trading Platform. Producers will be allowed to sell their certified volume.



- 3.8. All **Follow-up and re-certification audits against the Chain of Custody Standard** will be allowed under the modality of Desktop Audits. Reports and certificates will be uploaded to the RTRS Trading Platform and the facilities will be allowed to receive RTRS’ certified material.

4. Verification process

4.1. Production Standard

4.1.1. Indicators of Principle 1 - Legal Compliance and Good Business Practices

1.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
1.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.
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1.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.

4.1.2. Indicators of Principle 2 - Responsible Labour Conditions

2.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference, will be deemed admissible. Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
2.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
2.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.



2.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. • Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
2.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. • Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
2.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. • Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
2.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. • Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
2.1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. • Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
2.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
2.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
2.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
2.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
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2.4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. • Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
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2.5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
2.5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
2.5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
2.5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
2.5.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
2.5.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
2.5.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. • Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
2.5.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
2.5.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. • Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
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4.1.3. Indicators of Principle 3 - Responsible Community Relations

3.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with stakeholders through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
3.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with stakeholders through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
3.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with stakeholders through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
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3.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with stakeholders through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
3.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with stakeholders and direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
3.3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. • Interviews with stakeholders and direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.



3.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with stakeholders and direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
3.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with stakeholders through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
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4.1.4. Indicators of Principle 4 - Environmental Responsibility

4.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.
4.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.
4.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.
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4.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.
4.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. Videos and photos of different areas of the farm delivered to the auditors by Producers/Group Managers will be deemed admissible.
4.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. Videos and photos of different areas of the farm delivered to the auditors by Producers/Group Managers will be deemed admissible.
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4.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible. Videos and photos of different areas of the farm delivered to the auditors by Producers/Group Managers will be deemed admissible.
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4.1.5. Indicators of Principle 5 - Good Agricultural Practices

5.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Videos and photos of different areas of the farm delivered to the auditors by Producers/Group Managers will be deemed admissible.
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5.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Producers shall be required to sign an affidavit assuring their compliance with this indicator.
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5.9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Videos and photos of different areas of the farm delivered to the auditors by Producers/Group Managers will be deemed admissible.
5.9.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.
5.9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
5.9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
5.9.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator. Interviews with direct and indirect workers through phone or videoconference will be deemed admissible.
5.10.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.
5.11.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.
5.11.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers/Group Managers will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with the indicator.

4.2. Chain of Custody Standard

4.2.1 The organizations will be entitled to provide information to the auditors remotely in order to show compliance with all the indicators.



- 4.2.2 Videos and photos of different areas of the facilities shall be required to organizations in order to comply with certain indicators.
- 4.3. If Certification Bodies wish to use other alternative mechanisms for the collection of the relevant information, which are different from the ones included in this document, the Certification Bodies must inform RTRS about this situation in order for the latter to approve the use of such alternative mechanisms.

5. Justification of Desktop Audits

- 5.1. The Certification Bodies will have to justify the reason why an on-site audit cannot be carried out, and thus a Desktop Audit will be conducted. Only the reasons listed below will be deemed valid:
 - 5.1.1.the relevant government has established a quarantine or other measures regarding social distancing that hinder the Certification Bodies from visiting the relevant farm and/or facility;
 - 5.1.2.the relevant government has established travel restrictions that hinder the Certification Bodies from travelling to the relevant farm and/or facility; and/or
 - 5.1.3.the producer has not yet opened the farm to external visitors.

6. Characteristic of Desktop Audits

- 6.1. The Desktop Audits' methodology is designed to maintain the assurance level of the RTRS verification process and its credibility.

All public reports shall include a description of the audit methodology used; therefore, the report shall expressly state whether an audit was carried out on-site or as a Desktop Audit



ROUND TABLE ON RESPONSIBLE SOY ASSOCIATION (RTRS)

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