

PRESS RELEASE

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TWO LEADING PROVIDERS OF SUSTAINABILITY CERTIFICATION SERVICES, NEPCON AND RA-CERT, JOIN FORCES

October 1 marks the official joining of RA-Cert with NEPCon to unify their credible sustainability certification services at a global scale, engage widely with a diverse range of stakeholders, and productively contribute to the development of schemes for environmental and socially responsible practices.

Copenhagen, Denmark (1 October 2018) – Today, NEPCon is pleased to announce the successful acquisition of RA-Cert, the certification division of the Rainforest Alliance, following the [signing of the formal agreement on 10 July 2018](#).

NEPCon, a mission-based organisation headquartered in Copenhagen, has strengthened its capacity to deliver sustainability certification and auditing services, and implement related conservation projects on a global scale. With more than 220 staff members working from 25 different offices and an extensive network of professional consultants located on six continents, NEPCon now offers services in nearly 100 countries.

The acquisition bolsters NEPCon's reach and scale, enabling the newly expanded organisation to better drive impact on the ground and achieve its mission. The organisation will be better-equipped to provide services to large, international corporations with global supply chains in agriculture and forest products, as well as secure its engagement with small and medium-sized companies, small landholders and community enterprises that are essential for sustainable development at the local level.

The combined organisation operates under the name of NEPCon, and continues to offer certification, verification and assurance services that both NEPCon and RA-Cert have been delivering in forestry, agriculture, responsible sourcing, biomass, carbon footprinting, and tourism. As a result of its newly expanded global reach, NEPCon will also be in a position to engage additional stakeholders through its projects that aim to build capacity, raise awareness, and conserve nature through innovation.

Peter Feilberg, Executive Director of NEPCon, says, "As an NGO, we are focused on achieving our mission of mainstreaming sustainability. The acquisition of RA-Cert will give us global reach for servicing customers both large and small, with supply chains extending around the world. Importantly, it will also put us in a unique position to see where further developments are needed to help clients ensure social and environmental sustainability in their resource management and sourcing practices."

Since the signing of the agreement in July, Rainforest Alliance and NEPCon have been working together to transition RA-Cert clients to NEPCon, making NEPCon responsible for the delivery of their ongoing certification and verification services.

Laura Terrall Kohler, formerly with RA-Cert and now Director of NEPCon's Assurance division, says, "NEPCon and RA-Cert have been cooperating partners for nearly 20 years and have built many auditing tools and systems together. We are certain that our history of collaboration will help ensure the smooth

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transition of RA-Cert clients to NEPCon. We are also excited to add value to all of our clients by being able to work with extended global supply chain networks and offer new services.”

A brief history of the RA-Cert and NEPCon relationship

NEPCon and RA-Cert are long-time partners. The first collaboration took place in 1998 when both worked together on FSC™ (Forest Stewardship Council™) certification, and over time the work expanding to other services, including agriculture certification.

This partnership led to NEPCon and RA-Cert having complementary approaches to certification management with similar guiding principles. With that in mind, clients can expect the same credibility and reliability in NEPCon that they have come to rely on with RA-Cert.

About NEPCon

NEPCon (Nature Economy and People Connected) is an international non-profit organisation that works to build capacity and commitment for mainstreaming sustainability. For over 20 years, NEPCon has worked to foster sustainable land use and responsible trade in forest and agricultural commodities – through innovation projects, capacity building, and sustainability services. NEPCon is an accredited certifier for sustainability schemes such as FSC, PEFC, RSPO, SBP, tourism and the Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture standard. We also certify to NEPCon’s own LegalSource® and Carbon Footprint Management standards. The NEPCon Assurance division promotes and delivers certification services, and surplus from this work supports the development of NEPCon’s non-profit activities.

NEPCon’s work with certification systems extends far beyond service delivery. NEPCon actively engages in the continual development and improvement of certification schemes to support their credibility and impact on the ground; whilst enhancing access to certification for small enterprises. Tools and systems developed as part of NEPCon’s programmes are freely available through an [Open Source Policy](#). NEPCon places great focus on transparency and knowledge sharing, and collaboration with the entire range of stakeholders, including governments, NGOs and industry organisations. Learn more at www.nepcon.org.

About RA-Cert and the Rainforest Alliance

RA-Cert has been the certification division of the Rainforest Alliance, encompassing all certification, assurance and auditing programs managed by the Rainforest Alliance across agriculture, forestry, and tourism. RA-Cert includes a global staff and network of partners located across North America, Central and South America, Africa and Asia Pacific. The Rainforest Alliance’s certification and assurance team helped establish some of the leading sustainability standards in forestry, tourism and agriculture. RA-Cert’s expertise, transparency and integrity has been recognised and valued around the world, including continued innovation and constant improvements.

Founded in 1987, the Rainforest Alliance is an international non-profit organisation working towards a future where people and nature thrive in harmony through creative, pragmatic collaboration with farmers, foresters, communities, scientists, governments, environmentalists, and businesses. The Rainforest Alliance merged with UTZ in January 2018, joining forces to rejuvenate agricultural landscapes, conserve forests, foster sustainable livelihoods, and build climate resilience across vulnerable regions; transform business practices and drive supply chain innovation; and engage consumers in positive change. Learn more at www.rainforest-alliance.org and <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/>.

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Past announcements:

[NEPCon and Rainforest Alliance sign agreement for certification programme acquisition \(10 July 2018\)](#)

[NEPCon and RA-Cert Union Update \(2 May 2018\)](#)

[RA-Cert and NEPCon Announce Intent to Join \(9 February 2018\)](#)

[RA-Cert + NEPCon News Page and FAQ](#)

[Info sheet about the acquisition](#)