



## What is 4C?

4C stands for “Common Code for the Coffee Community” and is a globally leading certification system for the sustainable cultivation and processing of coffee. The aim of 4C is to anchor sustainability in the entire coffee sector. Independent third-party audits ensure compliance with economic, social and environmental criteria for coffee production and processing in order to establish credible sustainable coffee supply chains.

4C’s sustainability principles are set out in the 4C Code of Conduct, which was developed in a comprehensive and transparent multi-stakeholder process involving coffee producers, trade and industry, as well as various civil society organisations from around the world. In 2007 the 4C Code of Conduct was implemented and in 2014 it was revised in another extensive multi-stakeholder process.

4C is currently active in 25 countries, where more than 400,000 coffee producers, mainly smallholders, produce 4C certified coffee, covering a total area of 1.2 million hectares.

## What is covered by 4C?

The 4C standard ensures that coffee cultivation is not contributing to deforestation or reduction of biodiversity, that good agricultural practices and the protection of soil, water and air is applied, that human, labour and land rights are respected and that farmers are sufficiently trained to increase productivity and profitability.

Remote sensing-based technologies help 4C and its auditors to conduct risk assessments and verify land use change. 4C uses GRAS (Global Risk Assessment Services), a web-based tool providing comprehensive sustainability-related geo-referenced information on biodiversity, land use change, carbon stock and social indices. 4C also enables the measurement of the carbon footprint of coffee.

Requirements on traceability ensure that the physical flow of the coffee can be traced throughout the supply chain.

## Why to use 4C?

4C applies an inclusive approach, which is intended to enable coffee producers to enter certification in order to achieve actual impact on the ground in a continuous improvement process. 4C offers solutions for smallholders and implements projects to improve the livelihoods of coffee farmers and their families.

By using innovative technologies to simplify the audit process, 4C improves audit quality and credibility while providing cost-effective solutions for the entire coffee sector.

4C is based on a broad global multi-stakeholder initiative. It is the largest certification system for coffee and well-recognized by all stakeholders. Independent benchmarks show that 4C is a thorough and reliable standard, such as for instance the ‘Silver’ recognition by Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) Platform.



mail: [info@4c-services.org](mailto:info@4c-services.org)  
tel: +49 221 508020 50  
[www.4c-services.org](http://www.4c-services.org)

4C Services GmbH  
Hohenzollernring 72  
50672 Köln, Germany