

Step	Who	PREPARATION FOR CERTIFICATION	This is an overview of the 4C certification steps. The detailed description is to be found in the 4C System Regulations.
1 Organization of a 4C Unit		<p>ME Study the 4C System requirements ⁽¹⁾</p> <p>ME Take responsibility for the 4C Unit ⁽²⁾</p> <p>ME Identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the coffee producers to join the 4C System, who agree to implement the 4C requirements and who agree to supply 4C coffee to the ME all other elements of the supply chain that will be handling the coffee cherries or dried beans, originating from the identified producers ⁽³⁾ <p>ME Communicate to all BPs the 4C sustainability and certification requirements ⁽¹⁾</p> <p>ME Obtain the acceptance of participation in the 4C Unit by all BPs ⁽⁴⁾</p> <p>ME Internally analyse the compliance level of all BPs and the ME to the 4C requirements and identify needs for improvement ⁽⁵⁾</p> <p>ME Implement the principles of the 4C Code of Conduct within the 4C Unit and confirm the exclusion of non-conformities with major checkpoints in the 4C Unit</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>* List of abbreviations is at the bottom of the document</p> <p>(1) 4C Code of Conduct, 4C System Regulations</p> <p>(2) A 4C Unit is inclusive and covers all types of single/groups of farmers and any type of green coffee bean production/process facility</p> <p>(3) Participants in a 4C Unit are called Business Partners (BPs)</p> <p>(4) Mutual commitment is required and must be evidenced in a written form</p> <p>(5) The ME shall conduct internal assessments of its compliance and compliance of its BPs to the 4C requirements</p>
2 Application for a 4C Audit		<p>ME Select and contract one of the CBs cooperating with 4C ⁽⁶⁾</p> <p>ME Fill in the application documents and send them to the selected CB ⁽⁷⁾</p> <p>CB Evaluate and approve the application documents</p> <p>CB Register the application in the 4C portal</p> <p>ME Accept the most current version of the 4C ToU for MEs and confirm the application in the 4C portal</p> <p>4C Validate the application in the 4C portal and provide ME with a unique 4C registration number (if it is a new 4C Unit)</p> <p>CB Conduct a risk assessment, define a sample size, and select a sample for audit ⁽⁸⁾</p> <p>CB Prepare and register the audit plan, and upload the GRAS risk assessment report in the 4C portal ⁽⁹⁾</p> <p>4C Acknowledgment of reception of the audit plan ⁽¹⁰⁾</p>	<p>(6) A list of the CBs cooperating with 4C is available on the 4C website</p> <p>(7) The application documents include BPM and IP. IP is not required prior to the initial 4C certification audit. The templates are available on the 4C website</p> <p>(8) See 4C System Regulations, Chapter 7</p> <p>(9) See 4C System Regulations, Chapter 6.4</p> <p>(10) The on-site audit must be conducted no later than 6 months after the date of validation by 4C</p>

Step	Who		
3 Conduction of a 4C Audit			
	CB	Audit the ME's and BPs' compliance with the 4C requirements on-site during the harvest season, using the latest version of the pertinent 4C documents ⁽¹¹⁾	<p>(11) The pertinent 4C documents include the 4C audit checklist template, BPM, and IP. The last two have already been provided during the application process and will be checked for correctness during the on-site audit</p> <p>(12) To confirm the elimination, ME has to request an audit to have it verified and evaluated by the CB to get a positive certification decision. The certification decision, together with the uploading of all certification documents, must be done by the CB 60 calendar days after the last day of the audit the latest</p> <p>(13) IP is based on non-conformities with minor checkpoints identified during the audit. See 4C System Regulations, Chapter 4.3.3</p>
	CB	Prepare the audit report by inserting the results in the audit checklist and audit result page	
	ME	Work on the elimination of any non-conformities with major check-points revealed during the audit within the timeframe provided by the CB ⁽¹²⁾	
	CB	Conduct a desk-audit or further on-site audit to confirm the compliance of the BPs and ME and update the audit result page accordingly	
	CB	Make a certification recommendation	
	CB	Upload the audit report into the 4C portal to automatically generate the IP	
	ME	Fill-in the automatically generated IP and present it to the CB within the timeframe provided by the CB ⁽¹³⁾	
4 Audit Report Evaluation			
	CB	Evaluate and approve the audit report and IP together with all pertinent documents and pieces of evidence ⁽¹⁴⁾	(14) If necessary, the evaluator at the CB will contact the ME to obtain further details or clarification
5 Certification Decision			
	CB	<p>Make a certification decision within the required timeframe of 60 days ⁽¹⁵⁾ and upload all pertinent documents and information to the 4C portal ⁽¹⁶⁾</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case the decision is positive, issue a certificate to the 4C Unit via the 4C portal <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>4C certificate confirms compliance of the certificate holder with the 4C requirements. It is valid for 3 years and may be subject to a surveillance and/or integrity audit at some point during the 3-year compliance level ⁽¹⁷⁾</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case the decision is negative, a full new audit must be conducted once the 4C Unit is ready to comply with the 4C requirements 	<p>(15) Starting from the last day of the actual date of the on-site audit</p> <p>(16) The pertinent documents and information include the audit report, signed audit result page, BPM, and IP. Evaluator has the right to overwrite auditor's recommendation on certification</p> <p>(17) The CB which has issued the certificate is responsible for the compliance of the 4C Unit with the 4C requirements during the validity period of the certificate unless ME decides to change the CB</p>
	4C	Validate the certification documents internally ⁽¹⁸⁾	(18) 4C might come back to the CB and/or ME for clarifications in case of doubts
	4C	Publish the certificate on the 4C website	
MAINTENANCE OF THE CERTIFICATE			
6 Continuous Improvement ⁽¹⁹⁾			
	ME	Implement the improvement measures within the 4C Unit stated in the IP within the three-year period of certification, indicating progress each year via the AUs (see below)	(19) The following responsibilities of the ME and its BPs apply throughout the validity period of the certificate

Step	Who		
	ME	Monitor compliance performance of the BPs and be able to report this to 4C	
	ME	Measure the results and impact of the improvement activities	
	ME	Annually report to 4C on sales of 4C certified coffee via the 4C portal ⁽²⁰⁾	(20) See 4C System Regulations, Chapter 9
	ME / BP	Receive surveillance audits or integrity assessments at the office of the ME and the chosen BPs if requested	
7 Annual Update – End of Year 1			
	ME	Update BPM and IP ⁽²¹⁾	(21) See 4C System Regulations, Chapter 5.3.2
	ME	Send the updated documents to its contracted CB	
	CB	Evaluate the AU1 ⁽²²⁾	(22) If necessary, an addendum or a surveillance audit may follow to ensure the implementation of the 4C requirements. See 4C System Regulations, Chapter 6.1
	CB	Make a decision on certificate maintenance and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If positive, upload the AU1 documents to the 4C portal ⁽²³⁾ • If negative, upload the AU1 documents to the 4C portal and withdraw the certificate via the 4C portal immediately 	(23) The deadline for CB to evaluate, approve, and upload the documents is 60 days from the due date of the AU submission. The timely cooperation of ME and CB is very important
8 Annual Update – End of Year 2			
	ME	Update BPM and IP ⁽²¹⁾	
	ME	Send the updated documents to its contracted CB	
	CB	Evaluate the AU2 ⁽²²⁾	
	CB	Make a decision on certificate maintenance and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If positive, upload the AU2 documents to the 4C portal ⁽²³⁾ • If negative, upload the AU2 documents to the 4C portal and withdraw the certificate via the 4C portal immediately 	
9 Application for Renewal of Certificate			
	ME	Restart from Step 1 ⁽²⁴⁾	(24) In case of an addendum or a surveillance audit, restart from Step 1 as well

ABBREVIATIONS	
AU1	Annual Update 1
AU2	Annual Update 2
BP(s)	Business Partner(s)
BPM	Business Partner Map
CB	Certification Body
IMS	Internal Management System
IP	Improvement Plan
GRAS	Global Risk Assessment Services
ME	Managing Entity
ToU	Terms of Use