



4C CERTIFICATION BODY REGULATIONS

Version 5.0

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Version 5.0

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Abbreviations

4C	Certification for Climate, Conservation, and Communities
4C CB	Certification Body cooperating with 4C
4C Unit	4C Coffee Unit, 4C Cocoa Unit
4C CoC Unit	4C Chain of Custody Unit
AB	Accreditation Body
AA	Annual Surveillance Audit
BP	Business Partner
BPM	Business Partner Map
CB	Certification Body
CH	Certificate Holder
CoC	Chain of Custody
FB	Final Buyer
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IB	Intermediary Buyer
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
IP	Improvement Plan
ISAE	International Standard on Assurance Engagements
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
ME	Managing Entity
QMS	Quality Management System
CBA	Certification Body Agreement
IB T&C	Terms and Conditions for Intermediary Buyers
MEA	Managing Entity Agreement
The ISEAL Code	ISEAL Code of Good Practices for Sustainability Systems
ToU Portal	Terms of Use of 4C Portal

1. Introduction

This document lays down the mandatory requirements that Certification Bodies (hereinafter “CBs”) shall comply with in order to become and maintain the status of a cooperating CB of 4C Services GmbH (4C), and the duties of cooperating CBs (hereafter “4C CB” or “4C cooperating CBs”) to perform certification services according to the 4C requirements. Furthermore, this document defines the qualification and competent requirements for 4C CB staff to become 4C appointed lead auditors, auditors, evaluators, and certifiers for the purpose of conducting and evaluating 4C audits.

*Requirements
for CBs*

4C is an independent, stakeholder-driven, and internationally recognized third-party certification system for coffee and cocoa. To safeguard independence, objectivity, and the absence of conflicts of interest, 4C requires that all certification activities be conducted exclusively by external third-party auditors. Neither 4C nor any System User is permitted to perform certification audits.

*Independent
third-party
certification
system*

Accordingly, this document establishes strict assurance requirements on 4C CBs and their staff involved in 4C audits. As independent assurance providers within the 4C System, CBs and their staff engaged in 4C certification activities shall always be independent from the activities subject to audit, free from any actual or potential conflict of interest, and able to demonstrate impartiality in all certification decisions and related processes.

*Impartiality and
free conflict of
interest*

The requirements and duties, therefore, laid down in this document are based on industry best practices, relevant standards of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), the International Standard on Assurance Engagements - ISAE 3000 (revised), and the ISEAL Code of Good Practices for Sustainability Systems (the ISEAL Code). That aims to ensure that the 4C CB is neutral and independent and operates in a consistent, transparent, reliable, and credible manner.

*Industry best
practices and
international
standards*

The correct application and assurance of the 4C certification system are a core responsibility of 4C, its System users, and cooperating CBs and their assigned staff (e.g., lead auditors, auditors, evaluators, etc.) ensuring the integrity and robustness of the 4C System. Requirements governing 4C certification, as well as requirements on procedure for conducting 4C audits are described in the latest version of the 4C System Regulations. Compliance with these requirements constitutes a prerequisite for the effective and reliable operation of the 4C certification system.

Integrity

In line with the recommendations of the ISEAL Alliance for credible sustainability standard systems, the 4C CB Regulations is reviewed, and revised, if necessary, at an interval of every five (5) years in a multi-stakeholder engagement process.

*Multi-
stakeholder
process*

2. Scope and Normative References

The requirements specified in this document apply to all 4C CBs, their lead auditors, auditors, evaluators, and certifiers conducting 4C audits or performing 4C certification services. These requirements apply on a global basis.

Global application

Relevant international standards establishing requirements for agricultural conformity assessment, certification of products, processes and services, auditing, or certification management of ISO, ISO/IEC, ISAE, or the ISEAL Code, in their latest valid version, must be considered for application.

International standards and good practices

As a basic principle, all 4C System documents published on the 4C website in their latest applicable versions are valid and must be complied with within the relevant scope of application.

Latest applicable version

Table 1: Overview 4C System documents, templates, and checklists provides an overview of the normative 4C System documents as well as further 4C templates and checklists based on the requirements defined in the 4C System documents, and that are provided by 4C to facilitate the application and certification process in the 4C System.

4C System documents

Table 1: Overview 4C System documents, templates, and checklists

4C System documents (normative)
<p>4C Code of Conduct</p> <p>That is a set of 4C principles and criteria for the sustainable production, processing, and trading of cocoa beans and green coffee beans and is a binding document.</p>
<p>4C System Regulations</p> <p>This document contains relevant aspects and binding requirements of the 4C System, including general rules according to which the 4C System is governed, its internal structure, and the requirements for 4C certification which need to be applied and conformed by all participants of the 4C System.</p> <p>Furthermore, requirements regarding the trading and the commercial reporting of 4C certified products (coffee and cocoa) are described.</p>
<p>4C Certification Body Regulations</p> <p>This is a document consisting of binding requirements for CBs to become and maintain their approval status in the 4C System as a CB cooperating with 4C (4C CB). The document also consists of requirements and necessary qualifications for 4C lead auditors, auditors, evaluators, and certifiers, as well as duties of CBs cooperating with 4C to perform 4C audits and certification services.</p>
<p>4C Glossary</p> <p>This is a document defining the commonly used terms within the 4C System to ensure uniform understanding and consistent interpretation of the 4C requirements by all relevant parties.</p>
4C templates and checklists based on the 4C System documents
<p>4C Audit Checklist</p> <p>The audit checklist is the audit working and reporting tool, designed to be used during 4C audits.</p>
<p>Business Partner Map (BPM)</p>

Business Partner Map is a management tool for certificate holders (CH) (e.g., Managing Entities (MEs), Service providers (SPs), Intermediary Buyers (IBs) or Final Buyers (FBs)) to collect the basic required data of their Business Partners (BPs) or facilities, respectively.

Improvement Plan (IP)

Improvement Plan is a management tool for MEs to plan and report the implementation of improvement actions for the minor non-conformities detected during an audit of a 4C Unit and reports the results of the improvement actions implemented throughout the 3-year certification cycle.

4C contractual documents

Managing Entity Agreement (MEA)

That is the contractual document between 4C and MEs.

Certification Body Agreement (CBA)

That is the contractual document between 4C and CBs.

Terms and Conditions for Intermediary Buyers (IB T&C)

That is the contractual document between 4C and Intermediary Buyers

Service Agreement with Final Buyers

That is the contractual document between 4C and Final Buyers.

Terms of Use of 4C Portal (ToU)

That is the contractual document between 4C and all System Users regarding the use of 4C's digital facilities and its database.

3. Requirements for 4C Cooperating Certification Body

3.1. General Requirements

The CB must ensure appropriate expertise and experience, both in the relevant fields of activity and for the scope of the auditing tasks it is to undertake.

CB expertise

The CB should be carrying out audits in compliance with or according to the principles of:

International standards

- ISO/IEC 17065 establishing requirements for product certification or ISO/IEC 17021 establishing requirements for management system certification.
- ISO 19011 for general guidance on conducting and managing audits and on CB competence management.
- ISO/IEC 17060 establishing good practices for conformity assessments. ISAE 3000 regarding assurance engagements other than audits, or reviews of historical financial information.
- ISO 14065 specifying the requirements for validating and verifying environmental information statements focusing on greenhouse gas, ensuring accuracy, reliability, and credibility of such information, including when a CB conducts audits related to the 4C Carbon Footprint Add-On.
- ISO 14064-3 providing principles, requirements, and guidance for the verification and validation of greenhouse gas (GHG) statements, including when a CB conducts audits related to the 4C Carbon Footprint Add-On.

The CB must ensure that it performs 4C certification services according to the requirements and framework laid down in the 4C System documents.

4C System requirements

The CB must also ensure that its staff participating in 4C audits has knowledge on the 4C requirements and meets the mandatory competence requirements for each duty assigned as described in chapter 4.1 and chapter 5 of this document prior to performing (conducting, evaluating, making certification decision, or managing) 4C audits.

Appointment of qualified staff

3.2. Specific Requirements

3.2.1. Legal Entity

CBs must be registered as legal entity.

CB liability

In case of multinational certification companies, their local branches may apply to become an independent 4C cooperating CB or may be registered as a local operator of the mother company under the condition that the agreement between the mother company_4C CB and 4C is valid, and that the mother company_4C CB declares its wish to include the local branch(es) in its geographical scope of operation. In this case, the mother company_4C CB must provide a description of the organisational structure, including its local branch(es).

Multinational cooperating CB

CBs must communicate any changes in legal status, legal name, address, or ownership of the CB to 4C immediately or within seven calendar days after the change occurred, by providing related documented evidence for the proper review and update in the 4C System.

*Immediate
update of
change*

3.2.2. ISO/IEC 17065 Accreditation

CBs must be accredited against ISO/IEC 17065, establishing requirements for certification bodies operating product certification systems. Accreditation must be performed by Accreditation Body Members (ABs) of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), and the scope of accreditation must be 4C Code of Conduct, 4C certification requirements and 4C CB requirements (hereafter called 4C System requirements).

*ISO/IEC 17065
accreditation*

In case the accreditation scope against the 4C Code of Conduct and 4C System requirements has not yet been made available by the responsible AB, the CB may seek accreditation against other internationally accepted agricultural standards relevant to food and beverage, provided these are comparable to 4C in terms of commodity scope and assurance requirements, including equivalence demonstrated through internal or external benchmarking. The CB shall inform 4C which internationally accepted standard(s) it intends to pursue accreditation and shall get 4C's approval prior to submitting its initial application to become a 4C CB, or prior to its application for reaccreditation of ISO/IEC 17065 in order to maintain its approval status within the 4C System.

*Possible proxy
accreditation*

The AB responsible for the accreditation of a 4C CB shall comply with or conduct its accreditation activities according to ISO/IEC 17011.

*Requirements
for ABs*

ABs must be members of the IAF and comply with IAF requirements. In addition, the staff of the responsible AB who involve in 4C CB accreditation audits or assessments must have up-to-date knowledge of the 4C Code of Conduct and the 4C System requirements. This knowledge is acquired by completing the formal 4C training at least every five (5) years when the System requirements are revised, and by staying updated of system changes through the published 4C System updates.

*Requirements
for ABs' staff*

The respective AB is responsible for monitoring the accredited CB's compliance with the preconditions for its accreditation. The monitoring of the CB's compliance by the AB will be complemented and supported by 4C in the framework of the 4C Integrity Program (see chapter 3.9 of the 4C System Regulations and chapter 5 of this document for further information).

*Monitoring of
4C CB*

In case CBs are multinational with local branch(es), and the local branch(es) wish to be recognized independently by 4C after meeting the requirements laid down in this document, the CB applicant must ensure that it is independently accredited against ISO/IEC 17065, or that the ISO/IEC accreditation certificate of the mother company_4C CB covers its location, and accreditation of the CB applicant complies with accreditation scope as required in this document.

*Accreditation of
multinational
CBs*

The CB is obliged to inform 4C immediately in written form if the accreditation is suspended, withdrawn, terminated, or renewed by the AB.

*Accreditation
status*

In case the CB does not get the renewed accreditation certificate before the old certificate expires, however the renewal process has started, and the CB is waiting for a final decision from the responsible AB, the CB can request a grace period of one month after the previous accreditation certificate expires by submitting a written request to 4C no later than 14 calendar days before the expiry date of the old accreditation certificate, altogether with documented evidence of the delay in the issuance or accreditation decision of the renewed accreditation certificate.

*Expiry and
grace period*

In case there is no specific expiry of an ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation certificate, the CB shall still undergo annual reassessment by the responsible AB. In such cases, the CB is granted a grace period of two (2) months after the anniversary of the initial accreditation issuance date by submitting the written evidence to 4C, no later than 14 calendar days before the anniversary date, confirming one of the following: i) ongoing status of the annual accreditation audit/assessment, ii) a positive audit result, or iii) the ongoing process of making the accreditation decision of the responsible AB. This documentation is required to demonstrate the continuous validity of the CB's accreditation within the 4C System.

*Accreditation
without specific
expiry*

In all cases of application for requesting a grace period, 4C reserves the right to grant or not grant the grace period based on its evaluation of the evidence submitted. 4C will communicate its decision to the respective CB before the pre-agreed due date or no later than 14 days after the day 4C received the complete documented evidence.

*Approval of
grace period*

3.2.3. Geographic Scope of Operation

CBs shall conduct 4C audits of coffee and/or cocoa production only in the countries for which they are approved. Name of the country/countries approved for each 4C CB is published on actual basis on 4C website. 4C CB shall inform the System users to consult it to verify the CB's approved geographic scope of operation before they select and contract a 4C CB for 4C certification services. This requirement regarding geographical scope of operation does not apply to Chain of Custody certification services.

*Approval of
geographic
scope*

The lead auditors and auditors' knowledge and experience with respect to the local context and applicable laws and regulations are essential to ensuring the reliability of 4C audits. Therefore, 4C CBs are approved to perform 4C audits of coffee and/or cocoa production only in the country where they are legally based and/or in countries where their lead auditors and auditor(s) meet all the following conditions:

*Conditions for
scope approval*

- They have experience in auditing coffee and/or cocoa production in those countries.
- They have knowledge of the applicable local legislation and the sectorial context.
- They preferably speak the local language. In exceptional cases, independent interpreter(s) can provide the interpretation services. In this case, to ensure the impartiality and to avoid conflicts of interest, neither the CB nor its auditors may accept interpreters who work for the ME, Business Partner (BP) of the 4C Unit, Intermediary Buyers (IBs), and Final Buyers (FBs) to be audited or certified as staff (permanent or temporary) or as consultant relating to 4C requirements i) in the present, or ii) did so within the last two years. The two-

year period is counted *from* the last day of employment or consultancy (that the labour or consultant contract was concluded/ terminated, or services were provided) *to* the start date of the audit, i.e. the first day of the audit dates of the respective audit, as registered in the 4C Portal.

Audits conducted in unregistered/unapproved countries will not be accepted and the CB assumes full responsibility of handling the situation (dispute) with its clients on its own cost.

Rejection of audit

The CB can apply to expand its geographical scope of operation at any time, provided it fulfils the requirements set out in chapter 3.2.3 of this document. Chapter 3.3 below further complements this requirement by specifying the detailed requirements for the CB seeking approval for the expansion of the geographical scope of operation.

Application for scope expansion

3.3. Application of Certification Bodies, Approval, and Publication by 4C

Once a CB has been legally registered and accredited in accordance with requirements set out in chapters 3.1 and 3.2, and its staff meet the competence requirements laid down in chapters 4 and 6 of this document, the CB is eligible to apply to become a 4C cooperating CB. Any CB that was previously authorized by 4C but i) voluntarily left the System, or ii) its authorization was revoked by 4C and that wishes to re-enter the System, shall comply with all requirements laid down in this document and shall have resolved any infringements identified by 4C, where applicable (i.e., under the 4C Integrity Program) before reapplying for approval again as a 4C cooperating CB.

Application condition

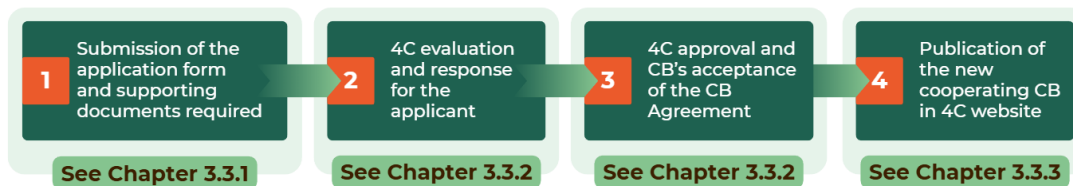


Figure 1: Process of evaluation and approval of a CB's application

3.3.1. Certification Bodies Application

In order for a CB to cooperate with 4C, the CB applicant must submit a written application form (Annex 1) together with all required documents, as indicated below, to 4C at Assurance@4c-services.org. The application form and supporting documents should preferably be submitted in PDF format and shall consist of:

Application documents

1. the legal registration of the CB,
2. the valid ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation certificate(s) with its annex(es) of relevant accreditation scope. In case the CB applies to provide 4C Carbon Footprint Certification services, the CB will need to include the valid accreditation certificate(s) and all relevant annex(es) specifying their accreditation on this scope,
3. an application indicating the 4C certification program(s) for which the CB is applying (note: the CB can apply for an Add-On certification program only if the CB is simultaneously applying for a 4C core certification program for coffee

- and/or cocoa production, or the CB is already approved as a 4C CB), together with the name of assigned lead auditors, auditor(s) to the applied program(s),
4. a declaration of the geographic scope, including a list of country/countries in which the CB applies to conduct 4C audits, and the corresponding certification programs to be offered, and the full names of the lead auditors, auditors to be assigned to conduct 4C audits in each registered country,
 5. a list of assigned staff including 4C CB responsible(s), 4C lead auditor(s), 4C auditor(s), 4C evaluator(s), and 4C certifier(s) who i) met the qualification requirements set out in chapter 6 and ii) are approved by the CB according to the requirements of chapter 4 to manage the 4C certification program within the CB, to conduct and evaluate 4C audits, and make certification decisions respectively. Documented evidence confirming each assigned staff's compliance with the qualification and approval requirements shall be enclosed (for each staff) as supporting documentation of the CB's internal approval process.
 6. the declaration on the fulfilment of all requirements set out in this document (Annex 2)

Declaration(s) shall be with letter head of the CB applicant, up to date, and signed by the legal representative of the CB applicant. Declaration(s) must specify 4C as the recipient as follows:

Requirements for declarations

4C Services GmbH
Hohenzollernring 72,
50672 Cologne
Germany

In case the CB applicant initially applies to become a cooperating CB of 4C or applies to re-enter to the 4C System, the application documents must consist of all documents listed above.

Full application

4C CB Application Submission Checklist	
For New or Returning Applicants	
Application	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Signed application form (Annex 1)
Legal Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proof of the CB's legal entity status
Accreditation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Valid certificate(s) + annexes showing relevant scope
Program Scope	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Must include a 4C Core Program (Coffee or Cocoa)* *Add-ons are only possible if a Core program is active
Geographic scope	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> List of countries detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corresponding certification programs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corresponding lead auditors (full names) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corresponding auditors (team description)
Personnel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> List of approved Staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Responsible, Lead Auditor, Auditors, Evaluators, Certifiers) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documented evidence of their qualifications.
Compliance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Signed declaration of fulfilment (Annex 2)

Figure 2: Checklist of requirements for application as a new or returning CB

In case the cooperating CB applies to expand the geographical scope of operation, the CB shall submit to 4C the documents indicated in points 4, 5, and 6 as shown below:

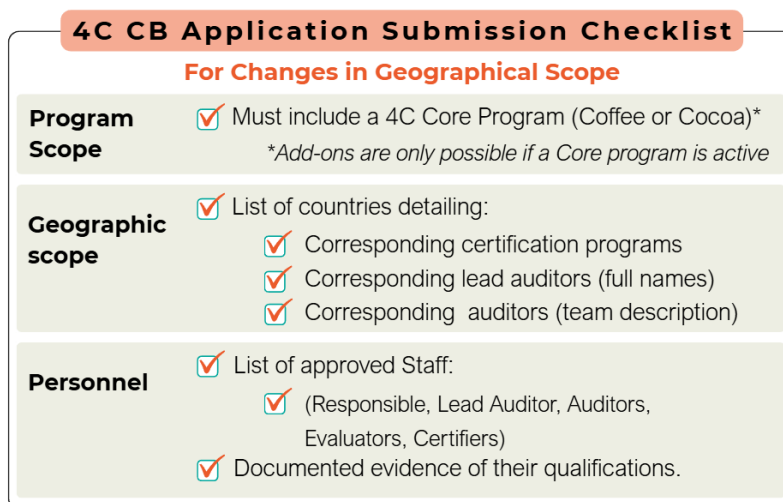


Figure 3: Checklist of requirements for application for expanding CB geographical scope

Only a complete application submitted for at least one 4C core certification program, either for coffee or cocoa production, will be considered eligible and will be accepted for evaluation by 4C.

Eligible application

3.3.2. Evaluation Process

The CB applicant will receive written acknowledgment of the receipt of their application within seven (7) calendar days, as well as the first evaluation feedback from 4C within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date on which the complete application has been received by 4C. The evaluation of the CB Applicant’s submission shall be conducted without charge and shall include written feedback and comments on the application documents. 4C reserves the right to request from the CB applicant any clarifications, supplementary information, or additional documentary evidence deemed necessary for the evaluation. 4C will rely on publicly accessible sources from local authorities or responsible AB(s) to verify the validity and accuracy of the relevant documents. When it is necessary, e.g., as open sources of information are not available or not accessible, the CB applicant will be requested to support 4C in contacting the relevant authorities or responsible AB(s). In such cases, 4C will not be responsible for any delay caused by these external organizations (local authorities or responsible AB(s)) nor for any damage or loss that may occur to the CB applicant due to this delay.

Application evaluation

The evaluation can be conducted onsite (at the CB office) or through a remote audit (by checking documents and conducting interviews with the CB responsible person/people and/or with assigned auditors, evaluators, and certifiers of the CB). An onsite assessment, if required, will be communicated by 4C.

Type of evaluation

The evaluation process must be concluded no later than three (3) months from the date that the complete application is received and confirmed by 4C. Therefore, 4C is authorised to annul the application due to the failure of provision of additional evidence by the CB applicant as required, or when there is no response from the CB applicant

Deadline for application evaluation

to 4C's feedback and comments during the evaluation process within the indicated due date, which is communicated by 4C.

In case of exceptional circumstances, the deadline can be extended but must be approved by 4C in writing beforehand.

Exception

3.3.3. Approval and Publication of 4C CBs

4C reserves the right to not approve a CB applicant or to discontinue the approval of an existing 4C CB if the CB:

Requirements for disapproval

- fails to provide the required additional evidence or to respond to 4C's evaluation feedback within the due date communicated by 4C during the evaluation process.
- fails to comply with one or more requirements for CBs laid down in this document.
- fails to comply with one or more assurance requirements laid down in the 4C System Regulations, in particular the 4C certification requirements (chapter 5) and Integrity Program (chapter 3.9).
- fails to provide sufficient administrative support to 4C, especially in the framework of the 4C Integrity Program, e.g., when such support is required under local applicable laws and regulations, or by national/local authorities, to enable the execution of 4C Integrity assessments at the CB office(s), or at the premise of the CB's clients.
- fails to undertake the assurance action as required within the indicated timeframe or due date communicated by 4C (e.g., obligations arising from the 4C Integrity Program or validation process) without a reasonable justification priorly approved by 4C, thereby undermining the credibility and reputation of the System.
- fails to fulfil the payment due to 4C, if applicable, by the due date unless there is another decision communicated in advance by 4C.
- fails to conduct an adequate assessment of traceability to prevent greenwashing, including the mandatory verification that 4C coffee and/or cocoa are sold solely within 4C System with registered IBs and FBs.

Once 4C receives sufficient evidence from the CB applicant and approves the application, 4C will inform the CB about the approval decision and the request that the CB shall accept the latest version of the Certification Body Agreement (CBA) and Terms of Use of the 4C Portal (ToU) prior to entering cooperation with 4C. The CBA and ToU constitute legally binding agreements establishing the cooperation between 4C and the cooperating CB. The requirements set forth in this document, in the 4C System Regulations, in the CBA, and the ToU complement and reinforce one another.

Approval and Contractual agreements

After the CB has accepted the CBA and ToU, the CB is considered accredited by 4C and designated as a "cooperating CB". Any kind of certification decision, audit, or assessment activity can only be conducted by the CB after the CB has accepted the CBA and ToU. Exceptions to this requirement may be granted solely when specific activities are explicitly required during the process of evaluation of the CB application, and only with explicit approval in advance from 4C.

Approval and exception

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Once the cooperation between 4C and the CB is confirmed, 4C shall publish the name, address, and logo of the cooperating CB, as well as the name of the designated CB responsible person, including its contact details, the certification programs, and countries for which the CB is approved to operate, on the 4C website. Furthermore, 4C will include information on the responsible AB in the 4C certificates issued by the respective CB. The information on the [4C website](#) regarding cooperating CBs will be publicly accessible and kept up to date.

*Publication of
CBs' contact*

4. Responsibilities of Certification Bodies

4.1. Appointment of Qualified Staff

The CB must have in place a procedure to recruit, train, evaluate the performance/qualification of, and approve any individual staff who will be involved in 4C certification processes. The procedure should include i) job descriptions (or terms of reference) regarding the competence requirements for each role in the certification process and responsibility required, and ii) rules of operation for a person or committee involved in the recruitment, training, evaluating and approving a staff.

Appointment procedure

The CB must appoint and have a sufficient minimum number of qualified staff (at least one 4C lead auditor and one evaluator) to be able to conduct and evaluate 4C audits, make certificate decisions, and to provide 4C certification services.

Minimum number of staff

The appointed staff to be involved in 4C audits and 4C certification services are 4C lead auditors, auditors, evaluator, and certifier, and they are obliged to comply with the qualification requirements as stated in chapter 6 of this document, and to participate in a formal 4C training prior to the certification activity.

Requirements for appointed staff

A cooperating CB is allowed to appoint a new 4C auditor, certifier (not applicable for lead auditor and evaluator) provided that he/she i) meets all applicable qualification requirements, ii) has completed 100% of the content of all modules that are tagged as "Important for CBs" on the [4C Academy](#), and iii) has completed an internal training that is equivalent to the formal 4C core training in terms of length and content.

Internal training requirements

Regarding the length and content, the internal training on the 4C Code of Conduct and 4C certification requirements must consist of at least:

Eligible internal training

- two hours on the overview of the 4C sustainability requirements. Additional training time for each dimension or for each principle (criteria, checkpoints) is strongly recommended to equip the auditor or certifier with a consistent understanding of the 4C sustainability requirements.
- two hours on Risk Assessment, including the clustering of coffee producers and GRAS Tool+ application (by observing the use of GRAS Tool+ by the most experienced 4C lead auditor, auditor of the CB, watching the video on how to use the GRAS Tool+, and reading the related guidance provided in the 4C Academy), risk level definition and aggregation, Audit Plan development, and sample selection.
- two hours on the Audit checklist and reporting, together with the requirements and procedures on certification decision-making.

The training content shall include the latest version of the 4C System documents and applicable System Updates and should be conducted by the most experienced 4C lead auditor, auditor or evaluator at the CB.

Trainer and content of internal training

In addition to the requirements for the internal training, the CB must ensure that the new auditor or certifier completes a formal 4C training organized by 4C Services within the following twelve months to maintain his/her approval status. Non-compliance of this requirement will lead to the suspension of the individual auditor, evaluator, certifier for at least 12 months.

Monitoring internal training and sanctions

According to the CB's quality management and its human resource management regulations, the CB is responsible for assigning, training, evaluating, and approving any individual staff appointed to be involved in a 4C audit. The CB shall ensure that the assigned staff is competent to deliver the expected results according to the 4C requirements.

*Responsibility
for staff
competence*

The CB is obliged to immediately inform 4C via e-mail or keep its profile in the 4C Portal updated together with relevant supporting documents of any changes in staff appointed and get 4C validation before involving them in any 4C certification activities.

*Reporting of
relevant
changes*

If there are three (3) individuals (either lead auditor, auditor, evaluator or certifier) suspended within a calendar year, the CB will be suspended for six (6) months due to the systemic failure in monitoring staff qualification as required by 4C.

*Systemic issue
and sanction*

4.1.1. Appointment of 4C Certification Body Responsible Person

The CB must appoint at least one responsible person within the CB to act as the main contact person for 4C matters.

*Responsible
person for 4C*

The CB responsible person is a staff member of the CB, must be fluent in English, and is the representative of the CB for all communications with 4C. This includes, but not limited to, matters related to the CB's legal status, accreditation, performance of the CB (incl. CB's annual assessment/audit) and that of its staff, acceptance of 4C integrity assessments, provision of administrative support to enable such (4C integrity) assessments, coordination of the participation of relevant CB personnel in the 4C integrity assessments, implementation of corrective measures, and reporting on improvements according to 4C requirements.

*Requirements
for CB contact
person*

The CB responsible person is recommended to participate in a formal 4C training. In addition, the CB responsible person is obliged to participate in the 4C CB feedback meetings and to coordinate their staff who are relevant for other meetings, workshops, and/or calibration, webinars organised by 4C relating to CBs, to exchange practical experiences, feedback, and best practices.

*Participation in
4C activities*

4.1.2. Appointment of Lead Auditor, Auditor, Evaluator, and Certifier

The CB shall assign its personnel as 4C lead auditors, auditors, evaluators, and certifiers in order to ensure the involvement of relevant staff in 4C audits. Before these individuals can performing any functions as a 4C lead auditor, auditor, and evaluator, or certifier, the CB shall ensure that they meet all the qualification requirements specified in chapter 6 and have followed the promotion procedure, where applicable, as detailed in chapter 4.1.

*Requirements
of appointed
staff*

A 4C auditor is a member of the audit team and in charge of auditing one or several 4C requirements and evaluating the correction of related non-conformities if assigned by auditor in charge. A 4C lead auditor is a senior auditor and only 4C lead auditors can be assigned as the auditor in charge of a 4C audit. A 4C lead auditor can also play the role of a 4C auditor.

*Lead auditor
and auditor*

Only one auditor in charge shall be assigned to each 4C audit. The auditor in charge acts as the audit team leader and is responsible for organising the audit from the initial stages of the audit process through to the completion of the initial audit report package and make certification recommendation. This includes evaluating the audit application, conducting risk assessment, defining risk level and selecting sample, developing the audit plan, conducting audit, and finalizing the initial audit report package. The organisation of an audit further includes assigning tasks assigned to the audit team members and supervising their work, auditing one or several 4C requirements, is responsible for the overall evaluation of the correction of non-conformities submitted by the certification applicant, concluding the overall audit result, issuing the certification recommendation, and managing all relevant communication with clients and auditees.

Auditor in charge

The CB may outsource the auditing activities, however neither the evaluation of 4C audit reports nor the issuance of the 4C certificates may be outsourced. The auditing activities can only be outsourced to qualified auditor(s) who meet the requirements set out in chapter 6 of this document. The CB remains fully responsible for all activities performed by any outsourced auditor.

Outsourced auditor

The CB must define the staff (e.g., person or committee) responsible for evaluating the audit report package, making the certification decision, and issuing the 4C certificate (evaluator) or responsible solely for issuing the 4C certificate (certifier).

Evaluator and certifier

The 4C evaluator must be qualified by meeting all qualification requirements for a 4C lead auditor and therefore being able to evaluate 4C audit reports and to make the certification decisions and must not have been involved in the audit process of the 4C Units or 4C CoC Units to be certified. The evaluator shall review all relevant audit reports, documentation, and evidence to determine if they comply with the 4C sustainability requirements, certification, and applicable assurance requirements. Based on this evaluation, the evaluator shall confirm or revise the certification recommendation (positive or negative) proposed by the auditor in charge and shall make the final certification decision.

Responsibility of the evaluator

The certifier's responsibility is to be on behalf of the CB to confirm the certificate decision, including signing and issuing the 4C certificate.

Responsibility of the certifier

4C lead auditors can also act as 4C evaluators and therefore can evaluate 4C audit reports provided that they were not the auditor in charge nor part of the audit team of the audit to be evaluated.

Lead auditor acts as evaluator

4C evaluators can be 4C certifiers and therefore they can confirm the certification decision for the audit they evaluate and issue the 4C certificate, given that they have not been involved in the audit process of the 4C Units or 4C CoC Units to be certified, neither as auditor in charge nor as part of the audit team.

Evaluator acts as certifier

To comply with the impartiality requirement that the evaluator is not allowed to evaluate and make the certification decision of any audit in which they were audit team member or auditor in charge, the CB must have at least one person as 4C lead auditor and at least another person as evaluator.

Minimum number of staff

Any staff assigned as lead auditors, auditors, evaluators, or certifiers at the CB shall be free from any commercial, financial, or other pressure that might influence

Impartiality and no conflict of Interest

assessments and certification decisions. Further requirements are set out in chapter 4.3 of this document.

4.1.3. Appointment of Trainee and Observer

The CB is allowed to internally build the capacity of its staff before appointing them as 4C auditor.

*Capacity
building*

The 4C observer is a CB staff member participating as part of audit team who is only observing the on-site or remote verification/auditing, and he/she might have not yet met all qualification requirements for an auditor in the 4C verification. The observer does not conduct any interviews or document checks or any other related 4C auditing activities and mainly observes the 4C lead auditor or the 4C auditor conducting the verification/auditing.

Observer

The 4C trainee is a CB staff member who participates as part of the audit team and may conduct interviews or document checks strictly under the supervision of the auditor in charge. The trainee shall not make any audit results nor independently communicate audit result to the auditee. The participation of the trainee must be properly recorded in the audit report(s) and will serve as the basis for evaluating the trainee's performance before any appointment of him/her as a 4C auditor. Only lead auditor is authorized to supervise, coach, and evaluate the performance of a trainee who participates in an audit under the responsibility of the lead auditor for training purposes.

Trainee

Both the 4C trainee and 4C observer status are used for training purposes with the objective of staff being approved in the future as 4C auditor. Therefore, they are also obliged i) to comply with the general qualification requirements as stated in chapter 6 of this document, ii) to complete all modules of the [4C Academy](#) tagged as "Important for CBs" and iii) to participate in a formal 4C training or an internal training before being assigned to participate in any audit team. In addition, the participation of a trainee and/or an observer in a 4C audit, including their activities and responsibilities, shall be clearly communicated to and agreed upon by the certificate holders (e.g., Managing Entity, Intermediary Buyer, Final Buyer) prior to the audit. This process shall be supported with documented evidence, which shall be maintained at the CB office and made accessible to the 4C Integrity auditor(s).

*Conditions for
observer and
trainee*

Any staff assigned as observers or trainees at the CB is free from any commercial, financial benefit or relationship, or other pressure that might influence their participation in a 4C audit.

*Impartiality
and no conflict
of interest*

4.2. Performance Maintenance and Periodic Evaluation of Appointed Staff

To maintain the qualification as required by 4C and the knowledge on 4C requirements of the appointed staff, the CB must have in place a procedure to ensure that:

*Qualification
monitoring*

- every 4C auditor, lead auditor shall conduct at least one 4C audit per calendar year in the role of an auditor and an auditor in charge respectively. Witness audits conducted by the CB are acceptable for this purpose. Exceptions to this requirement must be requested in due time and approved by 4C (e.g.

where the CB does not have a sufficient number of 4C clients to conduct the required number of 4C audits). If it is not possible for a lead auditor or an auditor to maintain competency by conducting at least one 4C audit per calendar year, the individual shall undergo refresher training through an in-house training organized by the CB or by participating in a formal 4C training, and must perform at least one external audit under another agricultural standard for commodities similar to coffee or cocoa. The request of exception must be submitted by the CB to 4C in writing, by the end of November of the respective year for review and approval.

- all assigned staff involved in 4C certification services shall have access to, read, and understand the 4C certification requirements (e.g., 4C System Documents and System Updates), adjustments, or changes of 4C requirements, as well as other relevant communication from 4C. That can be achieved through internal training, calibration, coaching, information sharing, internal communication, etc. organized by the CB or by 4C.
- all assigned staff involved in 4C certification services shall complete all modules tagged as “Important for CBs” on the [4C Academy](#) in order to continue conducting 4C audit(s). They shall participate in at least one formal 4C training every five (5) years to maintain competence, especially in case of a revision of the 4C Code of Conduct and/or 4C System Regulations. In addition, they shall regularly participate in internal training courses organized by the CB or in 4C webinars and formal 4C trainings.
- the mandatory attendance of a 4C formal training within 12 months and the performance appraisal of a staff appointed based on completed internal trainings, shall be monitored and implemented by the CB.
- all assigned lead auditors, auditors, and certifier must attend and complete the calibration if that is organized by 4C.

The CB must evaluate its staff's performance on a periodic basis, at least once a year, according to the CB's quality management and its human resource management regulations (e.g., 4C business related staff appointment procedure, chapter 4.1) to ensure the relevant appointed staff meets the competence requirements. Staff competence should be evaluated regularly through a process that considers personal behaviour and the ability to apply the knowledge and skills gained through education, work experience, auditor training, and audit experience.

*Performance
evaluation*

To evaluate the performance of staff (including the compliance with qualification and knowledge of 4C certification requirements, and auditing competence and performance), frequency, quality, and accountability of tasks, the following requirements should be implemented but not limited to:

*Regular
performance
appraisal*

- Performance appraisals must be conducted for each assigned staff and for the position they are assigned for (including 4C trainee and 4C observer, if applicable) and at least once a year.
- Performance appraisals shall be supported by records of internal feedback (e.g., assurance team, senior team, lead auditor, 4C audit report evaluation) and from external (customers' feedback, 4C feedback during audit plan and

audit report validation processes, 4C integrity assessments, reports of third parties, etc.).

- Evidence to confirm the maintenance of knowledge on 4C requirements can be records of trainings, results of (knowledge) tests, etc.

The 4C qualification requirements set out in chapter 6 of this document, the internal appointment processes (including job descriptions, or terms of reference regarding the competence and responsibilities requirements for each function in the certification process, as well as promotion and demotion procedures) as required in chapter 4.1, quality management outlined in chapter 4.5 shall form the basis for a consistent and accountable performance appraisal.

Basis for the evaluation

In addition to the requirements set out in the ISO/IEC 17065 on the CB's responsibility for all outsourced activities, the CB shall conduct an evaluation of the performance of the freelance or outsourced 4C auditors immediately, within 60 calendar days, after each 4C audit, and only those outsourced auditors meeting the requirements of audit quality and complying with auditing requirements can continue to work with the CB in the following 4C audits.

Performance of freelance auditor

The results of performance evaluations, for both CB staff and freelance auditors, if applicable, must be documented and confidentially managed at the CB office. Related staff must be informed immediately about the assessment results to achieve effective improvement. Actions must be taken based on the results of the performance appraisals to address any performance gaps and needs (e.g., training, calibration, on the job training, coaching, etc.) to adequately maintain the team's competence for conducting 4C certification services.

Competence maintenance

4.3. Management of Impartiality and Conflict of Interest

The CB, its insourced (internal) appointed staff, outsourced auditors, interpreters, or experts, consultants to be involved in 4C audits must be impartial and free from any potential conflict of interest concerning the clients and auditees to be audited and certified, and/or any situation which may affect their impartiality and objectivity in their respective tasks within the 4C certification process. Any evaluations and decisions must be based on objective evidence of conformity (or non-conformity) and must not be influenced by other interests or by other parties. All CB staff, especially 4C auditors in charge, auditors, evaluators, and certifier must operate at high levels of professional integrity and be free from commercial, financial, or other pressures that might affect their judgment.

Professional practices

The CB shall have an internal procedure in place to ensure that the CB and its internal or outsourced assigned staff, interpreters, experts, and consultants do not offer or provide consultancy services to clients and auditees for whom the CB conducts assessments or evaluates compliance with 4C requirements. The CB shall also require its clients or potential clients to inform the CB, preferably before the step of developing the audit plan and, in all cases, necessarily prior to the audit conduction stage, of any individual who is assigned as auditor in charge or as audit team member in their 4C audit who may encounter one of the following cases that could result in a potential conflict of interest.

Conflict of interest management

Conflict of interest may arise, among others, when:

- The any assigned staff involved in 4C certification activities of a 4C Unit or a 4C CoC Unit has provided services to or has worked as staff or manager of the same 4C Unit, 4C CoC Unit, or 4C System user in implementing the 4C requirements (within the last four (4) years counting from the last day that the services were provided to the starting date of the audit which is registered in the 4C Portal) and/or prepares the 4C Unit, 4C CoC Unit, or 4C System user for the currently requested certification.
- The same 4C lead auditor has been appointed as auditor in charge for the certification of the same 4C Unit or 4C CoC Unit for more than three consecutive audits (including all types of audits and excluding surveillance audits).
- The CB and/ or its 4C assigned staff involved in 4C certification activities have benefits from the business of their clients (e.g., the ME or 4C Unit) requesting for certification, including client retention. For instance, assigned staff have shares in the ME, IB, FB, BPs of 4C Unit, or facilities of 4C CoC Unit, have direct kinship relationships with the owner(s) of the object to be verified, or have commercial relationships with the CH, 4C Unit, or 4C CoC Unit.

*Potential
conflict of
interest*

The internal procedure must be documented and implemented to appropriately determine and manage conflicts of interest which may arise in the context of 4C certification activities. The procedure shall consist of, but shall not be limited to the following:

*Impartiality
monitoring
procedure*

- All staff of the CB is well informed about and commit with impartiality and the no conflict-of-Interest policy/requirement prior to their appointment as 4C lead auditor, auditor, evaluator or certifier. The requirement applies also for 4C trainees, observers, and outsourced staff such as freelance auditors, interpreters, experts, and consultants.
- There is a self-declaration signed by each internal and outsourced assigned staff of no commitment or no involvement in any 4C certification activities where their spouse, children, or direct relatives (parent, brother, or sister, either of their own or in law) are i) auditees or ii) responsible staff of or in managerial positions of the auditee, iii) having commercial relations with auditee, or iv) owner of the subject of the audit. The self-declaration can be signed on a regular basis or once prior to the assignment of the CB's staff to a 4C certification activity. Auditees of a 4C audit can be ME, BP, IB, and FB. Subjects of the audit are warehouses/storage areas, mills, plantation areas, etc.
- An audit log or service contracts with report of work if applicable, or similar records of each 4C assigned staff to monitor service and audit he/she provided, conducted since he/she has been assigned as 4C related business staff (trainee, observer, lead auditor, auditor, evaluator or certifier). Or a CB log of the number and frequency of audits conducted for each client, including audit team members and their role in each audit.
- A risk analysis concerning impartiality and conflict of interest shall be conducted and documented by the CB prior to the assignment of its auditor

in charge, audit team member, evaluator or certifier for each 4C audit to inform that there is no conflict of interest of the assigned staff.

Before sending an offer to the client applying for 4C certification, CBs must ensure that they have no conflict of interest related to that certification service. In case of exceptions needed due to the absence of alternative options, for example logistical constraints due to force major, the CB must seek 4C's approval in written form preferably prior to the audit registration occurs or at least seven calendar days before the audit date. All communication with 4C, together with the justification and evidence, must be documented and managed at the CB office and must be accessible to the 4C Integrity Program when required.

Exceptions

However, during the certification process, the CB may provide its clients and auditees with useful information on various issues such as description of non-conformities detected, clarification of 4C requirements, and may guide the certificate holders in filling in the 4C templates correctly, which is not related to complying with the 4C requirements. In this case, the CB must make the following clear to the certificate holders:

Support to auditees

- The suggestions given are not binding requirements.
- 4C Units and 4C CoC Units are responsible for implementing the 4C requirements.
- Useful information provided to the 4C certificate holders during an audit is recorded in the audit report.

4.4. Gender Balance of the Audit Team

It is recommended that the cooperating CBs have a gender-balanced audit team during 4C audits and not violating the specific requirement of gender-balanced if required by other certification programs of 4C (e.g., 4C Advancing Equity, Empowering Women Add-On).

Gender aspect consideration

A high number of women work in the coffee sector. In many cases, due to socio-cultural reasons, male auditors are not always able to conduct in-depth interviews with female producers or workers and verify their working or living conditions effectively. When the audit team is gender-balanced and split up, the task division should take the gender aspect into account ensuring that the female auditor has the possibility to interview as many female producers and workers as possible. In case of the absence of female auditors, male auditors should follow good practices of gender-sensitive inspection activities or interviewing, and vice versa.

Gender-sensitive approach

4.5. Quality Management

The CB must comply with all aspects of the 4C certification requirements and therefore, should appropriately include these aspects into the CB's quality management system (QMS) and clearly indicate that it is applicable for 4C related certification processes. The quality management of the CB should aim for continuous improvement of the CB's performance against 4C requirements internally and externally. 4C requirements can be integrated into the QMS of the CB or are developed in a separate section or procedure, policy, framework, or guidelines of the QMS. The integration should cover, but is not limited to:

4C requirements in QMS

- Internal processes of the CB:
 - This includes sufficient process descriptions and clear responsibilities related to activities performed in relation to 4C audits (e.g., who is responsible for evaluating 4C audit reports or making a certification decision). The process description shall contain at least all steps of the 4C certification procedure from audit preparation (including quotation provision, audit registration, audit application evaluation, risk assessment with minimum sample size definition, audit plan development, audit plan registration with 4C, and audit plan communication with client) to audit conduction, evaluation, audit result communication, and certification decision making. This aspect is also linked to the requirement related to the framework to perform 4C certification activities laid down in chapter 4.7 of this document.
 - The process shall include requirements of documentation for each step of the 4C certification procedure, and information management.
 - Fulfilling the requirements of audit quality, among other aspects, by ensuring the consistency of data across different documents, complete provision of the required data before making audit result and certification decisions, using the (4C audit) correct templates (valid version), providing adequate and well documented evidence to support the audit results, analysing and reporting non-conformities including further information on the root causes of the issues, etc. It is required that the Four-Eyes principle is applied by fulfilling the 4C requirement on having separate staff assigned as auditor and evaluator for the same 4C audit, to confirm the audit results before the final certification decision is made.
- Services provided to external parties (4C System users), including communication with customers, the preparation and performance of 4C audits, and the CB's internal handling of complaints or appeals from 4C System users:
 - The CB shall establish, implement, and maintain a procedure for receiving and responding to clients' requests for 4C certification services, whether submitted in the form of a quotation (service proposal) or as a service contract (or contract, service agreement) that formalizes the contractual agreement between the CB and its clients. The detailed requirements are specified in chapter 4.7 of this document.
 - The CB shall establish, implement, and maintain an internal procedure for receiving, handling, and responding to feedback, complaints, and appeals (hereinafter collectively referred to as "complaints") related to 4C certification services provided by the CB. Such complaints originating from external stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, submissions from auditees, certificate holders, 4C during the validation process, or independent third parties such as reporters, journalists, authorities, or any other stakeholders. Complaint may be submitted directly to the CB or transmitted to the CB by 4C or by any stakeholders outside the CB. The detailed requirements governing this procedure are set out in chapter 4.10.

- The CB shall have requirements of documentation for each step of the procedures above and relevant information management.

4.6. Audit Risk Management

Before and during any 4C audit, the 4C lead auditor is in charge of carrying out a risk assessment for the 4C Unit or 4C CoC Unit to be audited. The result of the risk assessment drives the intensity of the audit (i.e., the scope of evidence to be checked in the case of a CoC audit) and influences the size and selection of the samples.

*Risk-based
audit*

The 4C requirements for the risk assessment are specified in chapter 7 of the 4C System Regulations.

4.7. Framework to Perform 4C Certification Activities

The CB that performed the (re)certification audit of a 4C Unit or 4C CoC Unit is responsible for conducting the annual surveillance audit(s) (ASA) or addendum audit(s), of the 4C Unit or 4C CoC Unit within the validity period of the certificate, unless the certificate holder (CH) has contracted another CB for the conduction of addendum audit(s) or ASAs (change the responsible CB).

*CB
responsibility in
certification*

The CB shall take full responsibility for conducting the audit, evaluating the evidence submitted for the correction of non-conformities, and evaluating the audit report, making the certification decision, and issuing the certificate. The CB is responsible for establishing the 4C certification framework within which its appointed staff (both internal and outsourced) perform their tasks relating to 4C certification activities.

*Establishment
of the
framework*

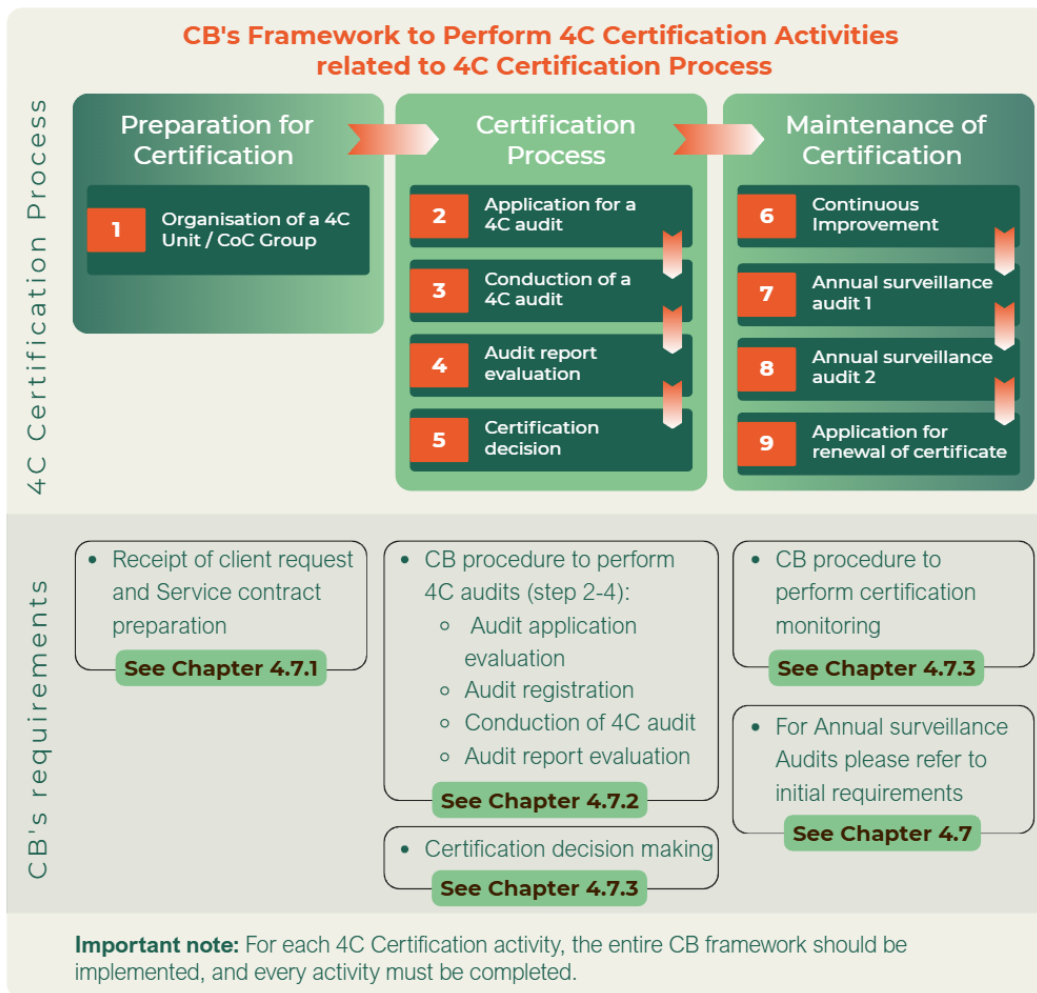


Figure 4: CB's Framework for conducting a 4C audit

The CB's framework for performing 4C certification activities shall be documented, updated, and implemented in accordance with the 4C certification requirements. That shall include, but is not limited to the following components:

Documented framework

4.7.1. Service Contract Signing

Prior to undertaking any 4C certification activity, the CB shall have a valid and fully executed service contract with the Managing Entity (ME) of the respective 4C Unit or the applicant for CoC certification (hereinafter referred to as the "certification applicant"). The CB may receive requests for a service proposal (e.g., quotation) from MEs, SPs, IBs, FBs seeking to undergo an audit against the 4C requirements. A request for an offer does not guarantee that the CB will subsequently be selected for conducting the audit. It is recommended that a separate (commercial) service contract be concluded between the CB and the certification applicant for each individual 4C audit.

Service contract

The service contract must describe the 4C certification activities that the CB is going to provide to the certification applicant according to the current valid 4C requirements. The service contract shall include location(s) of the audit, length of activities, number of man days, travelling (if applicable) and audit cost. The CB is recommended to include in the service contract the requirement on minimum payment of audit cost before the audit starts.

Content of service contract

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The service contract related to 4C certification activities must be available and accessible to the 4C integrity auditor during any integrity audit. In addition, the template of the current valid version of a CB's service contract, including its annexes if applicable, shall be shared with 4C for assurance monitoring when required.

Information management

The CB shall clearly communicate its auditing fee structure and the 4C certification fee with its clients before both parties sign the service contract.

Auditing fee

4.7.2. 4C Audit Procedure

The CB's audit procedure for conducting 4C audit shall include, but not be limited to, the following parts:

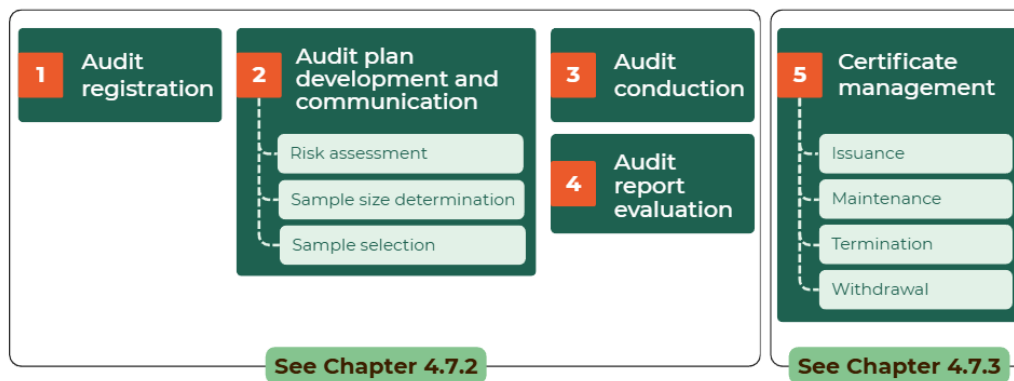


Figure 5: CB framework for 4C audit procedure

Audit registration

Immediately after the CB has signed a service contract with its client and prior to any certification activities, the CB must evaluate the application documents and register the audit application in the 4C Portal, where it is then confirmed by the certification applicant and thereafter validated by 4C.

Application evaluation and register

The CB must ensure that the certification applicant and auditors use the applicable and up-to-date version of the 4C audit checklist, and any other working templates required for the 4C audit and that the documents are filled in both completely and correctly. Should questions or ambiguities arise in the course of the certification process, the CB is obliged to contact 4C immediately to request clarification and guidance before proceeding with the certification activities. 4C is entitled to give binding instructions to the CB regarding the application, interpretation, or verification of 4C requirements.

4C working templates

Audit plan development and communication

The CB must conduct the risk assessment in order to plan a reliable and creditable audit, identify the risk level, define the minimum sample size, and select sample for a specific audit as per required in chapter 7, 4C System Regulations.

Risk assessment

Before conducting an audit, the CB must develop and communicate the audit plan with the client and register the audit plan in the 4C Portal for 4C validation. The audit plan must include at least the following:

Audit plan development

- Name and contact information of the responsible CB
- Name of the auditor in charge (only one)

- Name and role of each audit team member
- 4C Unit or 4C CoC Unit number, name, and contact information of certification applicant
- Audit type and audit method to be applied
- Defined risk levels for each group of BPs of a 4C Unit, or of 4C CoC Unit, and minimum sample size
- Date, time, and location of the opening meeting, activities to be conducted, required participants Date, time, and location of the auditing activities; name and ID and/or address of auditees can only be announced according to the 4C sample opening rules, which are applicable for a specific audit method
- Date, time, and location of the closing meeting and required participants
- Travelling time and accommodation, if applicable
- Report preparation time, if applicable
- Required facilities for the audit conduction, if applicable
- Trainees and/ or observers participating in the audit, if applicable

The CB shall have a clear procedure for communicating the audit plan to its client in a timely manner and before the conduction of the audit for a proper audit arrangement by the certification applicant and the auditees. The procedure will allow the certification applicant to provide the CB with relevant information regarding the proposed audit team members for continuously analysing the impartiality and mitigating the risk of any conflict of interest if applicable.

Audit plan communication

The procedure should allow the client to confirm or reject, to make suggestions, and to give feedback regarding the audit plan. The certification applicant should have the right to refuse the participation of trainees or observers with or without justification provided.

Certification applicant right

To secure 4C's validation of the audit plan, the CB shall submit the following information and documents, at least seven (7) calendar days before the audit date in the 4C Portal for intime validation of 4C:

Audit plan registration

- Audit plan
- GRAS report for each cluster of BP Producers, if applicable
- Final risk level definition for each group of BPs of 4C Unit, or for the 4C CoC
- Risk assessment report, including the definition of the risk level aggregation (GRAS Risk level index/indices, additional risk indicators, or CoC risk assessment), sample size calculation and sample size definition for each group of BPs of 4C Unit or for the 4C CoC Unit

The following information shall neither be published nor entered in the 4C System but maintained at the CB office and made available to the Integrity auditor when required, during the Audit plan registration step. The CB shall communicate the sample to the certification applicant in accordance with the applicable 4C requirements regarding sample opening.

Sample selection and communication

- Sample selection (e.g., BPs sampled)
- Justification of the sample selection

Audit conduction and audit report evaluation

The CB shall comply with requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 and comply with requirements of ISO 19011 in performing the auditing activities regardless type and mode of the 4C audit.

Audit conduction

In addition, the auditor in charge is the only responsible person to make the conclusion of the audit results, recommend the certification decision, and communicate the initial audit results with the certification applicant at the closing meeting. Initial audit results are the results that are concluded basing on auditing activities, evaluation of the additional evidence provided by auditees, and evaluation of the correction of non-conformities if applicable, by audit team members and the auditor in charge.

Responsibility of auditor in charge

The evaluator is the person responsible for evaluating the audit report package to ensure the audit quality, the consistency of information in all pertinent documents, and the compliance of the auditing activities and of the certification decision.

Responsibility of evaluator

The audit report evaluation shall, at a minimum, include the following elements:

Audit report evaluation

- The correct application of GRAS Tool+ (e.g., applicable cut-off date for land use change assessment, definition of the number of clusters, centre point and proper radius of each cluster, etc.), risk analysis, sample size determination, and sample selection,
- The audit team' compliance with the all required deadlines (audit application registration and validation, audit plan registration and validation, evaluation of the correction of non-conformities, audit conclusion, and issuance of the certificate decision).
- The adequacy and correction of the justification of the non-conformities reported based on reliable and documented evidence,
- The objective and sufficient collection, evaluation, and documentation/recording of the evidence throughout the audit process,
- The completion of auditing of all checkpoints as required in each type and mode of the 4C audit

The audit report evaluation result must be documented and uploaded in 4C Portal and forms an integral part of the audit report package.

Evaluation report

In exceptional circumstances, while making certification decision (e.g., (non) excluding BPs, extending the due date for concluding the audit, granting the conditional certification, etc.), the CB is required to conduct an internal discussion between the auditor in charge and the evaluator on the issues/request of exception, specific context, evidence, and justification. Discussion result must be documented and the suggested recommendation together with the justification must be submitted with 4C for approval before the certification decision is made. As 4C will reserve the right to make the final decision on granting the exception based on the information provided, the request shall be submitted to 4C, in written, at least 14 calendar days before the due date of 60 calendar days.

Exception

The procedure within the CB shall clearly define the responsible person or role for each type of activity, including but not limited to issuing quotation, negotiating and concluding service contract, agreeing on certification services, communicating the audit plan, preparing audit reports, reporting non-conformities, evaluating evidence,

Impartiality and no conflict of interest

and making certification decision. For all such activities, the principles of impartiality and the absence of conflicts of interest shall be strictly upheld.

For ensuring the continuous compliance of the 4C Unit or 4C CoC Unit for which the CB has issued a 4C certificate, the CB shall conduct the Annual Surveillance Audits (ASA) within 12 months and 24 months after the anniversary of the certificate issuance date, in accordance with 4C certification requirements. The procedure within the CB shall define effective communication with its certified clients, hereafter referred to as certificate holders (CH), and ensure the timely involvement of all relevant staff in order to maintain the continuous certification (of CHs).

CB's role in the certification maintenance

For the renewal of a 4C certificate, a recertification audit shall be conducted every three (3) years to verify the continued compliance of 4C Units and 4C CoC Units with the applicable 4C requirements. The CB should cooperate closely with the certificate holder (CH) to ensure the timely planning and execution of the recertification audit, with particular attention to minimising the risk of any gap between consecutive certification periods.

CB's role in the recertification

4.7.3. Issuance, Termination, and Withdrawal of Certificates

Issuance of Certificates

4C provides templates for 4C certificates which must be always applied. If the CB intends to adjust the layout of the template (e.g., due to safety paper with watermarks), the adjustment of the layout must be approved by 4C. The certificate may only be issued based on the information available at that time in the 4C database, as confirmed during the 4C registration of CHs and their 4C Units or 4C CoC Units.

4C certificate template

After a positive certification decision, the CB will issue a 4C certificate using the latest version of the 4C certificate template. A 4C certificate can only be issued if an audit has been conducted and all applicable 4C requirements are complied with. A 4C certificate can only be issued to System users managing 4C Units or 4C CoC Units who have accepted the latest applicable version of the 4C Portal Terms of Use (ToU), who are not suspended from certification by 4C, and:

Condition to issue certificate

- who have accepted the Agreements for MEs in the case of the MEs.
- who have accepted the latest applicable version of the 4C Terms and Conditions for IBs (T&C IB) in the case of the IBs.
- and who have signed a Service Agreement with 4C in the case of Final Buyers (FBs).

The CB must confirm the certification decision no later than 60 calendar days after the last day of the audit. This period includes the time for the implementation of corrective measures by the 4C Unit and 4C CoC Unit to clear non-conformities which were detected during the respective audit. The CB may issue a 4C certificate immediately or once the current valid certificate has expired in order to avoid a gap between two certificates. The certificate's validity period must not start prior to the date of issuance of the certificate. The CB is responsible for the compliance of the 4C Units, 4C CoC Units certified and for the correctness of a 4C certificate it has issued until the certificate expires or is terminated (voluntarily) by the ME of 4C Units, by the SP, IB, or by the FB of a 4C CoC Unit, or is withdrawn by the CB or suspended by 4C.

Certification decision

Termination of Certificates

The certificate will end automatically by the expiry date.

*Natural
termination*

In case a CH does not intend to continue with the 4C certification, it is possible to end (terminate) a certificate prior to the end of the official validity period by giving a written notice to the CB which issued the 4C certificate as well as to 4C. The CB is responsible for informing 4C in time about the date of the discontinuation of a certificate. In case a 4C certificate is terminated prior to the end of its initial validity period, 4C will update the database of certificates on the 4C website and 4C Portal accordingly.

*Discontinue
certification*

The CB is responsible for documenting all communication referring to the decision made by its client to support the decision of terminating the certificate. The CB must make this information accessible to the 4C Integrity auditor or share it with 4C if required for assuring the accountable termination decision.

*Document
discontinuation*

Withdrawal of Certificates

The CB must withdraw immediately a 4C certificate if there are severe or critical infringements with 4C requirements identified. Definition and types of infringements are laid down in chapter 3.8 of the 4C System Regulations.

Infringements

If there are infringements reported by a reliable source of information (e.g., newspapers, reports of authorities, etc.), the CB shall request an irregular surveillance audit to check the compliance of the 4C Unit and 4C CoC Unit. The CB is responsible for planning the irregular surveillance audit and informing the 4C Integrity Program about the plan of the irregular surveillance audit within 14 calendar days after receiving the notification of the infringements, or earlier if there is another due date earlier than 14 days communicated by the notifier. The plan shall include the proposed audit dates, and approval from 4C's required prior to registering the audit in the 4C Portal. In case there is no additional guidance or no feedback from 4C (e.g., the suggestion of changing the audit dates), after a maximum of fourteen calendar days after informing 4C, the CB shall register the irregular surveillance audit in the 4C Portal and conduct the audit as planned.

*Irregular
surveillance
request*

An annual surveillance audit is mandatory for all CHs in order to maintain the validity of the 4C certificate. The result of the surveillance audit in all cases will form the basis for the CB to either confirm the validity of the certificate issued or withdraw the certificate.

*Regular
surveillance*

In case the CB withdraws a certificate, the CB must immediately inform 4C about the withdrawal and must upload all supporting documents (e.g., surveillance audit report, documented evidence, etc.) into the 4C Portal.

*Withdrawal
procedure*

Withdrawn certificates will be published as such on actual basis on the 4C website.

*Publication on
4C website*

4C is responsible for classifying any infringements and for assessing the MEs' and their 4C Units' or SPs', IBs' or FBs' infringements based on a case-by-case examination, considering the requirements laid down in the 4C System documents as well as in the 4C ME Agreement, T&C IB or Service Agreement signed by FBs. With regard to this examination, 4C is entitled to undertake adequate fact-finding measures to request documents or (written) statements concerning the event. 4C will take responsibility of the suspension decision that results from the examination, according to the guidance laid down in chapter 3.8 of the 4C System Regulations. The CB is obliged to cooperate with and support 4C in such examinations as thoroughly as possible.

Suspension vs infringement

4.8. Performance Management of the Certification Bodies

The CB shall conduct an internal assessment or internal audit of its operations on an annual basis. This annual assessment includes, at a minimum:

Annual CB assessment

- the performance of the organisation and of assigned staff,
- the identification of risk of not complying with 4C requirements or gaps requiring improvement,
- the definition of improvement measures, and
- the establishment of appropriate risk mitigation measures.

The “internal audit of the CB” can be also called “internal assessment”, “internal performance assessment” or “internal performance audit” and all such terms are considered equivalent and may be used by the CB according to its internal terminology.

CB's internal audit

The internal audit is a process to support the CB to regularly identify any risk of not complying with 4C requirements in order to make the necessary corrections and improvements to ensure that the CB complies with 4C requirements, and to prepare the CB for the ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation audit or annual accreditation assessment (see chapter 3.2.2). The internal audit can be used as a mean to evaluate the performance of the CB's assigned staff, and the capacity building and training plan for the related staff shall be based on its result.

Purpose of the internal audit

The time interval between two consecutive annual audits of the shall be no less than 12 months and shall not exceed 18 months.

Frequency

The CB can use an internal or external (outsourced or contracted) auditor who is senior and has good knowledge of 4C to perform the CB internal audit.

Auditor of internal audit

The CB shall base on the 4C requirements laid down in the 4C System documents to internally assess and review its procedures/ policies, and their implementation. It is recommended to use the 4C CB office audit checklist as a practical tool for the CB internal audit. The CB annual internal audit is different from the annual assessment of the responsible AB to maintain the ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation.

Basis of the internal audit

The CB annual audit result and improvement plan shall be shared with 4C for information management, CB performance monitoring, and 4C's support where relevant.

Information sharing

4.9. Procedure for Handling Complaints and Appeals

The CB shall have a procedure in place on recording, managing and handling complaints and appeals related to 4C audits conducted by the CB. The appeal and complaint procedure must be publicly available to the CB's clients who are 4C System users and to other stakeholders who want to report a complaint or appeal relating to a 4C related service provided by the CB or to other clients certified by the CB. The CB shall record and track complaints and appeals, the communication of the dispute handling result to the complainant as well as actions undertaken to resolve them.

Dispute management

The 4C System users can raise a complaint or an appeal toward the CB and request the CB to address it before the audit report is completed or before the certification decision is made by the CB.

Complaint toward CB

The procedure shall describe the steps of the process for resolving complaint, including sequence of steps, the timeframe or deadline applicable for each step, and the responsible staff who is appointed to participate in the process.

Complaint and appeal handling procedure

The steps, at a minimum, can include:

Content of the handling procedure

- the receipt of complaint,
- the analysis of its validity and may include the possibility to reject it if the complaint does not meet the requirements set out in chapter 3.7 of the 4C System Regulations,
- the collection of evidence,
- the consultation of experts (if needed), and
- the investigation of the case,
- the reaudit, reassessment of the evidence, if needed, and
- communication of the result to the complainant.

The CB should include the follow up in the procedure allowing the complainant to appeal against the result if they don't agree with it. For example, if the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the CB and wants to make further appeal, a new round of giving a complaint and responding will be opened, until both sides are satisfied, otherwise the complainant can submit a complaint to 4C, where it will be handled according to 4C's procedure.

Complainant's right

The procedure of the CB should enable the CB to process complaints and appeals in an effective, timely, and professional manner.

Efficient mechanism

The staff who is already involved in a 4C certification activity (conduct or evaluate a 4C audit or make a certification decision) shall not be involved in handling complaints or appeals relating to that audit.

Impartiality and no conflict of Interest

Regarding complaints and appeals directed at 4C, the CB shall provide 4C with required evidence or justification within the timeframe specified and communicated by 4C, to support the handling process. The CB shall also archive all solution decisions issued by 4C, in accordance with the requirements set out in chapter 3.7 of the 4C System Regulations.

Complaint toward 4C

4.10. Documentation

The CB is responsible for implementing and managing the documentation of all 4C audits, copies of all certificates issued, the results of evaluations of NCs' correction, relevant staff records to ensure the competence of appointed staff involved in 4C certification activities, and dispute handling of all cases reported relating to 4C certification services. These documents must be retained at the CB office for a minimum of six (6) years and are subject to inspection and verification by an integrity auditor commissioned by 4C.

*Information
management*

4C audit and certification documents shall be managed in such a way that only approved (in both cases of positive and negative decision) and valid versions are in use. If there are different levels of access to information at the CB, these levels of authority shall be clearly indicated in the internal procedure as required in chapter 4.7. The CB must ensure that the applicable 4C audit checklist and all required pertinent documents valid at the time of the audit are used for each audit conducted. 4C is responsible to provide a template for the audit report and all required pertinent documents for consistent use within 4C. 4C may adjust existing or develop additional documents to be used after a specified transition period, especially in the case this is deemed necessary to improve traceability or to reduce the risk of fraudulent behaviour.

*Audit
documents
management*

The CB shall document the periodic competence evaluation of CB staff (4C auditors, other assigned staff) and must keep appropriate records of the education, training, skills, experience, and approval decision of all appointed staff of the CB.

*Staff
competence
documentation*

4.11. Data Management and Transmission

The CB is obliged to upload all documents related to 4C audits onto the 4C Portal in accordance with all applicable deadlines required by 4C. This includes documents of certification audits, surveillance audits, and addendum audits. The obligation to upload the documents onto the 4C Portal applies also for audits with a negative certification decision as a result.

*Deadline for
uploading of
documents*

The CB may use data provided on the 4C Portal for internal administrative processes, according to the 4C ToU, 4C CB Agreement and 4C System Regulations. Utilization and transmission of data other than what is described in the 4C ToU, 4C CB Agreement, and 4C System Regulations is strictly prohibited.

*Agreement on
data use*

4C accepts the documents that are uploaded onto the 4C Portal only if they are filled out in English, Spanish, or Portuguese. In case of complaints, appeals, or any other formal dispute, CBs must provide the complete report and supporting information translated into English.

*Language of
reports*

Documents to be uploaded onto the 4C Portal include but are not limited to:

*Documents to
be uploaded*

- Business Partner Map (BPM)
- 4C audit report
- Signed 4C audit report result page at closing meeting

- Signed 4C amended audit report result page (after the report evaluation and required only when there are major NCs detected)
- Improvement Plan (IP), if applicable
- GRAS Tool+ report, risk assessment report(s) if applicable, final risk levels for BP Producers and BP SPs, risk analysis (including the total risk level aggregated for the whole 4C Unit, 4C CoC Unit), and audit plan (including sample size calculation, definition of sample size, and sample selection) from risk assessment. In case of surveillance audit, the CB must provide the justification in the risk assessment report if the final risk levels are different from the risk assessment results of the last certification audit
- Documented evidence, if applicable

Required documents must be uploaded on the 4C Portal in such a manner that they can be reviewed and processed by 4C without disproportionate effort. This includes but is not limited to documents containing correct data (e.g., addresses or geo-coordinates, audit dates, etc.) and being signed if necessary. 4C is entitled to specify the requirements regarding the form in which certification documents are to be submitted to 4C.

Quality of documents

The CB is obliged to immediately inform 4C via e-mail of any changes made (e.g., concerning audit team members, audit date or the withdrawal of any certificate previously issued) as well as of any unsuccessful audits.

Reporting of relevant changes

5. Integrity Program for Certification Bodies

4C is responsible for developing and operating the 4C Integrity Program as a means of quality and risk management and as a tool for monitoring and verifying the compliance of CBs and their appointed staff with 4C requirements. The 4C Integrity Program ensures the integrity of the 4C certification system and facilitates continuous improvement and implementation of best practices. Within the framework of the Integrity Program, 4C is entitled to perform monitoring and integrity assessments of cooperating CBs. Monitoring or integrity assessments will be conducted either by 4C or by independent auditors or oversight bodies commissioned by 4C.

Quality and risk management

5.1. Monitoring of Certification Bodies

Monitoring of certification services provided by CBs is conducted by 4C or by a 4C integrity auditor commissioned by 4C on an on-going basis. The monitoring may consist of but is not limited to, checking the compliance of the CB and its assigned staff who is involved in 4C audits concerning e.g., certification procedure, audit application evaluation, risk assessment and final risk levels determination, sample size calculation, sample selection, audit plan development and communication, meeting deadlines (uploading audit documents, certification decision, providing feedback to 4C's comments during process of validation or of solving complaints and appeals), and audit report quality (e.g., relevance and adequateness of justification, explanation).

Scope of monitoring CBs

Monitoring can be a desk audit, remote audit, or on-site audit at the CB office with or without a witness audit at the auditees' sites.

Type of monitoring CB

In case of infringements with 4C requirements during the audit process observed during monitoring activities, 4C may require the CB to repeat the audits in a manner that complies with the 4C requirements at the CB's own expense in addition to the respective applicable sanction set out in Annex 3.

Sanction to CB

5.2. Integrity Assessments of Certification Bodies

Integrity assessments can be conducted at the CB's office (CB office audit) and/or at 4C Units, 4C CoC Units certified by the CB (CB witness audit or 4C compliance audit). Both CB office audit and CB witness audit aim to assess and verify the compliance of the CB and of its 4C lead auditors, auditors, evaluators and other assigned staff who are involved in 4C certification activities. An integrity assessment usually is an on-site and announced audit, however depending on the scope and objectives, it can be conducted under the form of an unannounced audit, remote or desk audit.

Types of integrity audit

The result of an integrity assessment is summarized in an integrity report in which the performance of the auditor, assigned staff, and the CB is evaluated, their compliance with 4C requirements is verified, infringements are stated, corrective measures are required, and points of improvement are identified based on the findings of the audit. A representative of the CB assessed shall sign the report.

Integrity report

Upon request, 4C is entitled to forward the integrity report to the competent public national authority or accreditation body responsible for the accreditation of the CB, especially in case of severe infringements of the CB, its auditors, or assigned staff.

*Sharing of
integrity report*

The 4C integrity assessment at the CB office and/or at the CB's customer site of a cooperating CB is independent of the common surveillance and monitoring of CBs usually performed by the responsible AB for accreditation of the CB.

*Independent
integrity audit*

The CB is obliged to allow for and to participate in CB office audits and/or CB witness audits scheduled by 4C. The CB, as the auditee of the integrity assessment, is responsible to arrange all required administrative procedures according to national and local laws and regulations of the countries, region, location where the integrity assessment is taking place. The CB is also required to coordinate and cooperate with its customers (4C Units, 4C CoC Units certified by the CB and related CHs) to support and facilitate the conduction of the CB witness audit when required.

*CB
responsibility
toward 4C
integrity*

Participation of the CB in any compliance audit (at the CB's customer's site) scheduled by 4C is also mandatory. Further information on compliance integrity assessments at CB's customers are provided in the 4C System Regulations, chapter 3.9 "Integrity Program".

*Participation of
the CB*

Any exception concerning the participation of the CB in the 4C integrity assessment, postponement of the audit, or change in the audit dates can be proposed by the CB. The proposed exception shall be submitted by the CB with a written justification of the proposal to 4C within the due date communicated by 4C when the notification is sent. The request will be evaluated and decided on by the 4C Integrity Program on a case-by-case basis. Per integrity assessment, the CB has the right to propose new audit dates maximum twice after the notification is communicated by 4C.

Exception

The CB has right to propose new integrity assessment dates after getting the notification from 4C. However, if the CB cannot comply with the second proposal of integrity audit dates after these were already communicated by 4C, 4C has the right to change from an announced audit to an unannounced audit and can conduct it without any prior announcement to the CB within six (6) months counting from the last audit date(s) proposed. The CB is obliged to accept and participate in this unannounced audit. In addition to this, an unannounced audit can be applied in case of critical infringement(s) of the CB or of the CB's customer reported to 4C by a local authority, AB, or another third party.

*Unannounced
audit*

At all locations where the cooperating CB performs activities associated with 4C and at which it exercises the verification of 4C requirements, the cooperating CB must enable employees of 4C, independent auditors and/or oversight bodies commissioned by 4C:

*Granting
access*

- to enter sites and offices during business hours or hours of operation
- to conduct inspections
- to inspect and audit all written and electronic business records available
- to request the necessary information
- to accompany the cooperating CB on 4C audits (CB witness audit) and/or carry out its own control audits (compliance audit) of CHs, 4C Units and 4C CoC Units that have already been certified.

The integrity assessment includes, among others, the verification of the following elements:

- Accreditation of the CB (by the responsible AB and by 4C)
- Training, monitoring and ensuring of qualification of 4C auditors and assigned staff (curriculum vitae (CVs), training records, evidence of competence, approval evidence, etc.)
- QMS, related procedures and its implementation regarding 4C audits
- Documentation of risk analyses conducted prior to 4C audits (including e.g., GRAS report, risk level determination, remote sensing analyses of farms and compliance with 4C requirements), sample size calculation, sample selection, and audit plan development and communication
- Documentation of audit reports, evaluation of NC elimination, evaluation of audit reports, and monitoring of the timely implementation of corrective actions Decision-making process for issuing or not issuing a certificate, or for confirming or withdrawing an existing certificate in case of surveillance audits
- Other procedures or documentation required by 4C as laid down in currently applicable versions of the 4C System documents.

General requirements on the integrity assessment of CHs, 4C Units, and 4C CoC Units, 4C CB, and the 4C Integrity Program are specified in chapter 3.9 of the 4C System Regulations.

5.3. Classification of Assessment Results

Based on one or more integrity reports and monitoring results, 4C will classify the performance of the CB, its 4C auditors, and assigned staff who are involved in 4C certification activities. In the case of unacceptable or deficient performance, the CB and the auditor and/or assigned staff (if applicable) will be informed about this classification and shall have the opportunity to respond in a written statement within 14 calendar days after the notification.

*Evidence-
based
classification*

The 4C performance classification for the CB, its 4C auditors, evaluators, and other assigned staff will be based on:

- The individual CB integrity report
- The compliance integrity reports of 4C Units or 4C CoC Units which have been audited by the CB
- The CB's written statement to the integrity report
- The monitoring results through reviewing 4C audits conducted by the CB

CBs' performance can be classified respectively as:

*Performance
classification*

1. **Good performance:** No systematic or severe infringements of the CB and its appointed 4C auditors and 4C evaluators have been found. The CB demonstrates good performance. No specific reassessments or immediate measures are necessary.

2. **Performance needs to be improved:** Requires the CB and/or its 4C lead auditors, auditors, evaluators, and other assigned staff to improve performance and implement improvement measures. Performance needs to be improved in case of infringements detected regarding the following aspects, among others:
 - Negligence of the 4C requirements in a way that has no substantial negative impact on the implementation of the 4C System, for instance, lack of adequate documentation at CBs office
 - One or more minor technical failures in the audit process

3. **Unacceptable performance:** Puts the overall competency of the CB and/or its 4C lead auditors, auditors and 4C evaluators regarding 4C at risk. In such a case, severe or critical infringements with the 4C requirements and procedures are observed. These include but are not limited to:
 - Deliberate and/or repeated ignorance or negligence of the 4C requirements (e.g., sending a not qualified auditor to conduct a 4C audit)
 - One or more major technical failures in the audit process (e.g., auditing an insufficient sample, fails to conduct an adequate assessment of traceability to prevent greenwashing, including the mandatory verification that 4C coffee and/or cocoa are sold solely within 4C System with registered IBs and FBs)
 - Many technical failures in the audit process
 - Verified fraud
 - Not granting access to the integrity auditor for integrity assessment.

Further integrity assessment(s) can be planned immediately to investigate whether it was an isolated incident or a customary working practice, but one single assessment can also result in this classification.

5.4. Infringements, Procedures for Improvement and Sanctions

5.4.1. Infringements

Infringements of the CB are a nonfulfillment of the CB, or of its assigned staff with regard to 4C requirements. Infringements can be detected beyond a 4C audit, during the 4C internal validation process, or via a 4C integrity assessment. In the event of infringements of a CB cooperating with 4C, its auditors, or assigned staff, 4C may impose sanctions against the CB or the individuals responsible for the infringement (see Annex 3). Based on a case-by-case examination, 4C evaluates the type and level of infringements and defines the type and level of sanctions. The status of the sanction(s) applied to a CB is updated on actual basis and published on the 4C website.

The type and criticality of infringements of a CB are classified in three groups that are moderate, severe, and critical. The table on the classification of the infringements including the relevant sanctions is in the Annex 3 of this document.

*CB
infringements*

*Infringement
classification*

5.4.2. Procedures for Solving Documentation Failures

Upon the certification decision made by a CB via the 4C Portal, 4C conducts a validation check of all pertinent documents and sends communication with comments for revision and clarification to the evaluator and/or certifier of the CB. The day the CB concludes audit report evaluation, (i.e., takes the certification decision) marks the start of the revision and correction period, which may last up to 60 calendar days (see Annex 4),

Detection of infringement

Based on the validation feedback communicated by 4C, the CB revises the documents, provides additional evidence, if required, and sends them back to the relevant responsible staff at 4C for evaluation. The CB can work with the certificate holder to consolidate additional evidence or the adjustment of the audit documents. In case the updated documents contain remaining or newly added errors, these observations are collected and communicated again by 4C to the CB. Consequently, the CB must make further revisions.

CB correction

As depicted in Annex 4, 53 calendar days after the conclusion date of the Audit report evaluation, 4C sends an automatic reminder that seven (7) calendar days remain until unresolved issues in the documentation may result in infringements. After 60 calendar days, all issues that have not been corrected by the CB will be recorded as infringements and the 1st warning letter is sent to the CB listing these infringements. The applicable procedure to solve the CB infringement is described in chapter 5.4.3 of this document.

Deadline to solve the documentation failure

5.4.3. Procedures for Solving Infringements, Improvement and Sanctions

There are four (4) action level including informing the CB on the infringement(s) identified, improvement requirements, and sanctions to the CB (warning, yellow card, red card, and CB Agreement cancellation). 4C is entitled to take sanctioning decisions. Yellow and red cards can be lifted again after a defined period when the respective conditions are fully met.

Communication of infringement

Level 1: Warning

A warning will be issued where any infringement with the 4C requirements belonging to the categories 'Procedure failure', 'Management of appointed staff', 'Failure to meet requirements on risk assessment and sampling', and 'Wrong certification decision' is detected. Only the CB will be informed about the warning immediately after the infringement is detected either during the audit plan validation process, audit report validation process, or during an integrity assessment. Usually, warnings require that the CB submits to 4C a statement of explanation and a plan of corrective measures to be implemented with a clear timeframe of implementation to ensure compliance with 4C requirements, within 14 calendar days following the notification of the official first warning.

Warning letter

Evidence on the corrective measures needs to be provided to 4C within a timeline proposed by the CB, evaluated by 4C, and agreed upon by both sides.

Submission of evidence

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In case no response has taken place within seven days after the warning letter issuance date, reminders will be sent out to support the CB in submitting the required response to the warning letter in time. If no proper response of the CB is recorded, a second warning letter will be sent after 14 calendar days.

*Timeframe of
CB action*

If there is still no response recorded or no satisfactory resolution of the infringement(s), the level of infringement is escalated after 28 calendar days (see Annex 4). This means that moderate infringements increase to severe; likewise severe infringements are raised to critical and therefore the relevant sanction will be applied accordingly as described in levels 2,3, and 4.

*Upgrade of the
infringement*

Level 2: Yellow card

A yellow card will be issued where the CB does not react nor report towards 4C in response to the warning, and/or to the written request to the CB to develop a correction plan with an indicated deadline defined and communicated by 4C, or where infringements with the 4C requirements are detected as severe (e.g., in the framework of the 4C Integrity Program). A yellow card can especially be issued, where minor infringements occur repeatedly or systematically, especially in cases where 4C has already issued a warning to the CB regarding the same type of infringement.

Yellow card

Along with the issuance of a yellow card:

Sanction

- the CB will be marked with a yellow card in the list of cooperating CBs that is published on the 4C website. The yellow card remains remarked during the period where the CB implements corrective actions, provides the respective evidence, and the result of the correction is evaluated by 4C.
- the CB can continue and complete the pending steps of all on-going 4C certification processes as contracted with users.
- the CB is not allowed to commit to, register, or start a new 4C audit until the yellow card is lifted.
- the respective responsible auditor(s) may be immediately suspended from any audits of the CB and of all other CB(s) that the auditor(s) is/are currently working/contracted with as an outsourced auditor, in the 4C System.

The yellow card can only be lifted when 4C receives sufficient documented evidence from the CB to confirm the correction of the infringement(s). If applicable, 4C may request a new assessment to confirm the correction of severe infringements or to verify the effectiveness of the corrective measures.

*Lifting yellow
card condition*

Level 3: Red card

A red card will be issued where severe or critical infringements with 4C requirements are detected (e.g., in the framework of the 4C Integrity Program), where required improvement measures due to a yellow card are found to have not been sufficiently implemented, where the CB does not react nor report on repeated written requests by 4C, or where the AB or competent national public authority has suspended the accreditation or permission of the CB.

Red card

A red card will lead to the following sanctions:

Sanction

- The CB will be marked with a red card in the list of cooperating CBs that is published on the 4C website. The red card remains marked during the period

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where the CB implements corrective actions, provides the respective evidence, and the result of the correction is evaluated by 4C.

- The CB is not allowed to register a new 4C audit.
- The CB is not allowed to issue new certificates or renew any certificate (in case of recertification or addendum audit).
- The CB must inform all clients in written form that the CB is not allowed to issue or reissue 4C certificates.

In the case of a severe infringement (e.g., technical failures in the audit process), individual 4C responsible auditor(s) may be immediately suspended from conducting further 4C audits of the related CB and of all other CB(s) that the auditor(s) is/are currently working/contracted with (as an outsourced auditor), in the 4C System.

Sanction to individual auditor

Any damages or losses incurred by the CB to its customers or third parties due to a detected infringement will be the responsibility of the CB.

CB liability

The red card can only be lifted when 4C receives sufficient documented evidence from the CB to confirm the elimination of the infringement(s) or when 4C receives the lifting decision from the responsible accreditation body or the competent national public authority. If applicable, 4C may request a reassessment to confirm the elimination of severe or critical infringements and the CB must bear the full cost for any reassessment, if that is required. The assessment cost will include but is not limited to the working time of the integrity auditor(s) and related logistic costs allowing for an on-site assessment, if applicable.

Lifting red card condition

Level 4: CB agreement cancellation

Contractual agreement cancellation, between 4C and the CB, can take place particularly in cases of verified fraud, when a red card could not be lifted again after the agreed time period, bankruptcy, or loss of the required permission or accreditation of the CB by a national authority or accreditation body.

Contract termination

Consequences in the case of cancellation of the cooperation agreement between 4C and the cooperating CB include:

- The CB is not allowed to issue new certificates or reissue certificates.
- The cooperation agreement cancellation is made public on the 4C website and all 4C System users are informed.
- The information is provided to the AB that has accredited the CB and is responsible for monitoring the CB.

Any damages or losses incurred by the CB to its customers or third parties due to a detected infringement will be the responsibility of the CB.

CB liability

In case the CB would want to reactivate the cooperation with 4C, the CB must reapply for recognition by 4C. The CB must implement corrective actions and report in written on its immediate actions to 4C and submit these documents along with the application to 4C. 4C has the right to accept or refuse the application, and may request an assessment to the CB to confirm the correction of severe or critical infringements of the CB and the CB must bear the full cost for any assessment if that is required.

Reapplication of the CB

6. Requirements for 4C Lead Auditors, Auditors, and Evaluators

The competence of 4C lead auditors, auditors, and evaluators is integral in achieving trustful, credible, and reliable certification results. All lead auditors, auditors, and evaluators independent of their specific operational area, must meet general requirements and qualification requirements to be able to conduct or evaluate 4C audits. When they conduct audits for 4C Add-Ons, they must meet additional specific requirements as indicated in the respective Add-On documents.

Approval conditions

6.1. General Requirements

All lead auditors, auditors, and evaluators appointed to conduct and evaluate 4C audits must meet the following requirements:

General requirements

- They must have technical knowledge and a good understanding of the activities and processes undertaken by the audited 4C Unit or 4C CoC Unit and its overall organization with respect to the 4C requirements. Lead auditors, auditors, and evaluators' knowledge must be sufficient for identifying, assessing, and managing the risks during each audit and audit evaluation.
- They must have the capability to analyse the risks, based on their professional knowledge and the information provided by the ME of the 4C Unit or the SPs, IB/FB of the 4C CoC Unit. This is necessary to be able to draw up and carry out an audit plan, corresponding to the risk assessment requirements described in chapter 7 of the 4C System Regulations, the audit scope, and the complexity of the 4C Unit' or 4C CoC Unit's activities. This includes relevant evidence, upon which the final conclusion will be based.
- They must behave professionally in compliance requirements of ISO 19011 (e.g., ethical, open-minded, diplomatic, observant, culturally sensitive, etc.). Auditors and evaluators should follow "principles of auditing" according to ISO 19011 when conducting and evaluating 4C audits. Those principles are integrity, fair presentation, due professional care, confidentiality, independence, evidence-based approach, and risk-based approach¹.
- They must plan and conduct the audit with respect to nature, timing, and extent of evidence-gathering procedures in such a way that a meaningful level of assurance for a decision regarding compliance with the 4C requirements is available. The lead auditor, auditor, and evaluator must establish at least a "limited assurance engagement" in the context of the nature and complexity of the 4C Unit or 4C CoC Unit's activities. A "limited assurance engagement" implies a reduction in assurance engagement risk to an acceptable level as the basis for a negative form of expression of the auditor or evaluator's conclusion².
- Lead auditors are not permitted to make ultimate certification decisions regarding audits they have performed themselves.

¹ ISO 19011:2018 Guidelines for auditing management systems

² ISAE 3000

6.2. General Qualification Requirements

Lead auditors, auditors, and evaluators who are and will be involved in 4C audits have to have at least the following qualifications:

*General
qualification
requirements*

- At least two years of work experience in the sector of relevant commodities; all in all, at least three years of work experience and experience with at least one of the commodities currently allowed in the 4C System
- Successfully completed training program that covers generic auditor knowledge and skills; at least 40 hours of audit training (e.g., according to ISO 19011)
- Knowledge of the applicable local laws, regulations, and international conventions and the ability to apply it during the audit
- Knowledge of the local context and the ability to apply it during the audit
- Knowledge in the handling, evaluation, and assessment of the plausibility of data sources
- Knowledge about risk analysis methodologies, tools, and relevant databases, especially knowledge of the evaluation of satellite data
- Knowledge in traceability verification and relevant databases, chain of custody options, and supply chain logistics
- Competence in group certification, risk-based audits, and sampling principles
- Interviewing skills and sound communication skills to properly address audit concerns and shortcomings
- Attention to detail and capacity to thoroughly review comments and reports
- Analytical skills and ability to take risk-based verification samples and to make persuasive decisions and recommendations

6.3. Specific Qualification Requirements

In addition to the general requirements and qualifications, lead auditors, auditors and evaluators who are and will be involved in 4C audits must at least have competences in one of the following areas:

*Specific
qualification
requirements*

- Knowledge in agricultural production and post-harvest processing
- Knowledge in food processing
- Knowledge in chain of custody
- Knowledge in social development
- Knowledge on pedology (soil science) is recommended.

The required competence(s) can be evidenced through:

*Evidence of
qualification*

- Completed studies at a university or a technical college, or a comparable qualification in one of the following areas (areas with a comparable content are also eligible):
 - Horticulture, agricultural sciences, agricultural engineering, agricultural economics
 - Agroecology, geology, geological sciences, geoecology, landscape ecology, life sciences, et al.
 - Spreadsheet analysis, accounting, enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, logistics, supplier and supply chain management

- Conducted within the last three consecutive years at least three complete certification audits on agricultural production as an officially approved auditor in any of the following schemes or a combination thereof: Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade, Global G.A.P, organic, ISO 9001/ ISO 14001/ SA8000, etc.

Additionally, the lead auditors, auditors, and evaluators may need to complete the following courses, if these are part of the scope of the audit:

- Successful completion of the 4C Carbon Footprint Add-On (CF Add-On) training course when the CB seeks approval to conduct or offer CF Add-On certification services
- Successful completion of the 4C Advancing Equity, Empowering Women Add-On (GE Add-On) when the CB seeks approval to conduct or offer GE Add-On certification services

6.4. Additional Qualification Requirements for Lead Auditors

In addition to the general and specific qualification requirements for lead auditors, a 4C lead auditor shall have at least the following additional qualifications:

Requirements for lead auditor

- Knowledge of the 4C System and understanding of its mission/ vision
- Successful completion of the ISCC GHG training course (if GHG evaluations are conducted).
- Problem-solving skills and ability to lead multi-stakeholder discussions
- Knowledge of organizing an audit from the initiation to its completion (including application document evaluation, risk assessment and audit planning, conduction of opening meeting/closing meeting, conduction of the audit, making audit results, recording/documentation of the audit results, evaluation of corrective measures and making certification decision)
- Knowledge of the content of an audit; the establishment of the audit objectives; defining the audit scope; the development, implementation, and management of an audit
- Work experience in the position of leading assessments and/or research on one of the commodities currently allowed in 4C System of at least two years
- Knowledge to manage an audit team and evaluate performance of the audit team member(s).

7. Contractual Relationship between Certification Bodies and 4C System Users

4C does not manage nor control service contracts between CBs and other 4C System users, such as MEs, Intermediary Buyers (IB), or Final Buyers (FB). 4C System users may freely choose 4C cooperating CBs to perform an audit (e.g., certification audit, surveillance or addendum audit for 4C Units, for 4C CoC Units according to the 4C requirements. In the case of a change of the CB, the requirements regarding the integrity of the system must be met as described in chapter 5.2.4 of the 4C System Regulations. These measures are taken to address a 4C System users' certification history appropriately and to reduce the risk that CBs are changed with the intent to cover up infringements or violations of 4C requirements ("CB hopping").

Change of CBs

A change of CB during an audit is not allowed.

In case a 4C Unit or 4C CoC Unit has already been certified according to 4C requirements and intends to become recertified under 4C by a different cooperating CB or to change the CB within a three-year certification period (e.g., for having an addendum audit or surveillance audit conducted), the newly contracted CB will be granted access to the relevant audit documents of the previous audits in the notification of 4C System.

Transfer of last audit results

The audit report and documents from the last or previous audits of the current valid certification cycle must be considered during the audit to be performed by the newly contracted CB. 4C is also entitled to provide the relevant audit results of the previous audit(s) to the newly contracted CB. Both CBs (the new and the old CB) are obliged to cooperate in case of questions arising during the audits which concern the audit history of the 4C Unit.

Audit history taken into account

A CB remains responsible for the certificates it has issued to 4C System users until the respective certificates expire, are terminated by the certificate holder, or are withdrawn by the issuing CB. In case the service contract is terminated, either by the CH or by the CB, the certificate issued by a CB will remain valid until and be withdrawn automatically on the day the new certificate is issued by the newly contracted CB. One CB cannot take responsibility for certificates issued by another CB.

Responsibility for certificate issued

8. Annexes

Annex I: CB Application form

The editable version of this document is available [in 4C website](#).



Certification Body Application

IDENTIFICATION

Full legal name of the Certification Body*	
Address*	
Telephone*	
Email*	
Name of contact person*	
Telephone of contact person*	
Email of contact person*	

Attention:

4C Services GmbH
4C System Operation and Assurance Department
Hohenzollernring 72,
50672 Cologne
Germany

APPLICATION

I am, _____,
representing _____, would like to apply for:

- a) Become a Cooperating Certification Body of 4C

YES NO Not Applicable

- b) Provide 4C certification services of

<input type="checkbox"/> Coffee production certification	<input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Equity, Empowering Women Add-On
<input type="checkbox"/> Cocoa production certification	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Security Add-On
<input type="checkbox"/> Chain of Custody	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Add-On
<input type="checkbox"/> Carbon Footprint Add-On	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

Note: Add-On is only eligible when and where (countries) the Coffee and/Cocoa production certification is approved.

- c) Change the geographical scope of operation

<input type="checkbox"/> Expansion of scope - Part A and Part B	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduction of scope – Part A
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	

- d) Validate the staff assigned to perform 4C-related certification activities as listed in

Part B Not Applicable



Annex 1
Certification Body Application

We would like to enclose with the application form the following documents for perusal:

1. A copy of the current valid legal registration** of the CB and relevant annexes, if applicable
 YES NO Not Applicable
2. A copy of the current valid accreditation certificate(s)** against ISO/IEC 17065 and its annex(es) with relevant accreditation scope
 YES NO Not Applicable
3. A copy of other valid accreditation certificate(s) if available, these ISO/IEC are: *Name of the ISOs*
 YES NO Not Applicable
4. A list of country/countries for geographic scope of operation approval, listed in Part A
 YES NO Not Applicable
5. A list of assigned staff who met the qualification requirements laid down in the 4C Certification Body regulations and already approved by the CB for being involved in 4C audits, as listed in Part B
 YES
 and YES, we have male and female auditors to comply with the gender balance requirement for Advancing Equity, Empowering Women Add-On
 Not Applicable
6. Self-declaration on the fulfilment of all requirements as required by 4C for a cooperating Certification Body
 YES Not Applicable

With my signature, I confirm that _____ understand and undertake to comply with 4C requirements for 4C cooperating Certification Body, and is responsible for providing additional evidence to support 4C during the evaluation process.

Place and date of signature: _____

Signature:

Name of the representative*: _____

Position*: _____

Email*: _____

Telephone: _____

Notes:

(*) Information required here is mandatory for the application to become the 4C CB.

(**) This document is a mandatory requirement for the application to become the 4C CB.



Annex 1
Certification Body Application

Part A:

4C Core Certification Programs and Countries of the application

Name of Country	4C core Certification programs applied			
	Coffee Production Certification	4C Cocoa Production Certification	Chain of Custody	List of assigned Lead/Auditor(s) and Related documented evidence enclosed
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Worldwide (default)	Name of assigned lead/auditors: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Experience in auditing coffee and/or cocoa production in the country <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of the applicable local legislation and the sectorial context
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Worldwide (default)	Name of assigned lead/auditors: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Experience in auditing coffee and/or cocoa production in the country <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of the applicable local legislation and the sectorial context
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Worldwide (default)	Name of assigned lead/auditors: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Experience in auditing coffee and/or cocoa production in the country <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of the applicable local legislation and the sectorial context

Annex 1
Certification Body Application



Part B:

List of the assigned staff

#	Name of assigned staff	Staff member role	Related documented evidence enclosed
1.		<input type="checkbox"/> Lead auditor <input type="checkbox"/> Auditor <input type="checkbox"/> Trainee <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluator <input type="checkbox"/> Certifier <input type="checkbox"/> CB Responsible person <input type="checkbox"/> Auditor freelancer <input type="checkbox"/> Lead auditor freelancer	<input type="checkbox"/> Up to date CV <input type="checkbox"/> Up to date audit log Completion of 4C training (within the last 12 months): <input type="checkbox"/> Formal training mode (inc. training attestation attached) <input type="checkbox"/> In-house training mode <input type="checkbox"/> Approval or de/promotion decision of the CB
2.		<input type="checkbox"/> Lead auditor <input type="checkbox"/> Auditor <input type="checkbox"/> Trainee <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluator <input type="checkbox"/> Certifier <input type="checkbox"/> CB Responsible person <input type="checkbox"/> Auditor freelancer <input type="checkbox"/> Lead auditor freelancer	<input type="checkbox"/> Up to date CV <input type="checkbox"/> Up to date audit log Completion of 4C training (within the last 12 months): <input type="checkbox"/> Formal training mode (inc. training attestation attached) <input type="checkbox"/> In-house training mode <input type="checkbox"/> Approval or de/promotion decision of the CB
3.		<input type="checkbox"/> Lead auditor <input type="checkbox"/> Auditor <input type="checkbox"/> Trainee <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluator <input type="checkbox"/> Certifier <input type="checkbox"/> CB Responsible person <input type="checkbox"/> Auditor freelancer <input type="checkbox"/> Lead auditor freelancer	<input type="checkbox"/> Up to date CV <input type="checkbox"/> Up to date audit log Completion of 4C training (within the last 12 months): <input type="checkbox"/> Formal training mode (inc. training attestation attached) <input type="checkbox"/> In-house training mode <input type="checkbox"/> Approval or de/promotion decision of the CB

Notes

- The CB responsible person/people, 4C lead auditor(s), 4C evaluator(s) and 4C certifier(s) are mandatory and must be available at the initial application/reapplication of a CB.
- A list of assigned staff is mandatory for the CB applying to expand the geographic scope of operation.

Annex 2: Declaration on Fulfilment of Requirements for Certification Bodies

CB letter head with logo and contact information

We, <Name of the CB> herewith declare towards

4C Services GmbH (4C)
Hohenzollernring 72
D-50672 Köln, Germany

that we as a Certification Body fulfil the following requirements for a cooperation agreement with 4C:

- (1) Accreditation against ISO/IEC 17065 establishing requirements for bodies operating product certification systems
- (2) Conducting audits in compliance with standard ISO 19011 establishing guidelines for quality and / or environmental management systems auditing
- (3) Conducting audits in compliance with standard ISO/IEC 17060 establishing good practices for conformity assessment
- (4) Appointment of competent employees in terms of the qualification requirements laid down in the 4C Certification Body Regulations

By signing this declaration, the Certification Body agrees to inform 4C immediately in case of any changes to the fulfilment of the requirements, especially with regard to the legal registration and accreditation (by an accreditation body which is a member of International Accreditation Forum).

{Name of the Certification Body}

{Name of the Certification Body Representative}

{Street, number}

{Address with Postcode, country}

Stamp, date, and signature of the representative of the certification body

* Please include a copy of the respective certificates

Annex 3: Table on the Classification of Infringements of the Certification Body

Type of infringement	Level of infringement related to the audit process	Level of infringement related to the requirements for CBs and/or integrity program	Sanctions
Procedure failure: failure to meet deadlines or requirements of the certification procedure (validation, due date, deadline, etc.)	Moderate	Moderate	Warning letter and a possible fine of 1,000 EUR per case
Documentation failure: incorrect, incomplete, and inconsistent documents (wrong version, incorrect filling, missing data, etc.)	Moderate	Moderate	Warning letter
Management of appointed staff: Failure to meet 4C requirement on managing, approving, and replacing assigned staff to work on 4C related business	Moderate	Moderate	Warning letter and a possible fine of 1,000 EUR per case
No proper correction to the moderate infringement(s) or non-response to a warning letter before the deadline ³	Severe	Severe	Yellow card
Failure to meet requirements on risk assessment and sampling (failure to apply the risk assessment, non-compliance of minimum sample size, missing at least one BP type in the sample, not analysing potential additional risk indicators). Also valid for additional and specific requirements of Add-On Certifications, when applicable	Severe	Severe	Yellow card and a possible fine of up to 10,000 EUR per case
Wrong certification decision	Severe	Severe	Yellow card and a possible fine of up to 10,000 EUR per case
No reply within the respective timeframe (communicated by 4C) to the notification of the integrity assessment	Not applicable	Severe	Yellow card

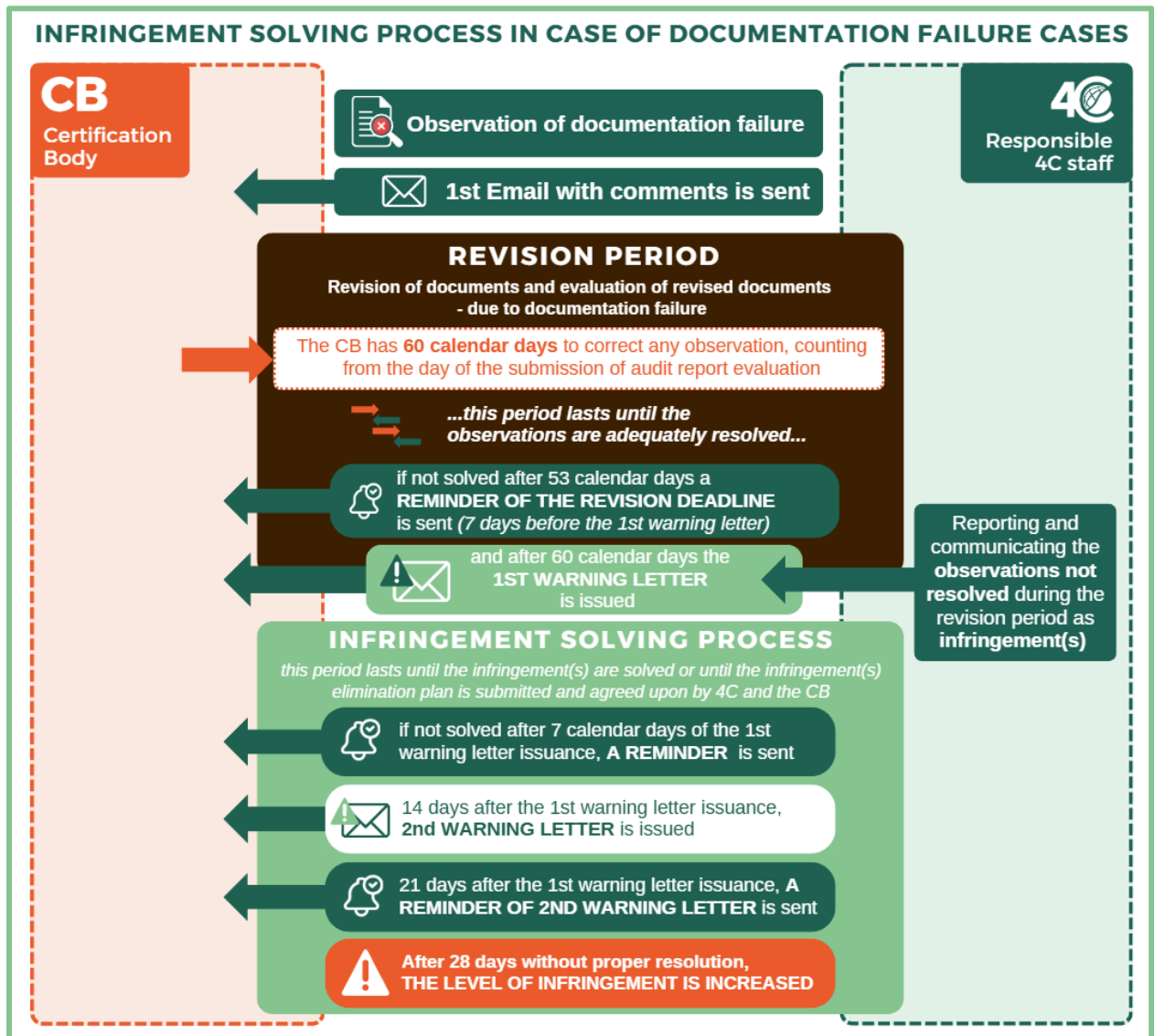
³ Any moderate infringement notified through warning letter that is not cleared or no response from CB after the 2nd warning letter.

Type of infringement	Level of infringement related to the audit process	Level of infringement related to the requirements for CBs and/or integrity program	Sanctions
Not granting access to the integrity auditor(s) during the integrity assessment	Not applicable	Critical	Red card
Accreditation body or competent national public authority has suspended the accreditation or permission of the CB	Not applicable	Critical	Red card
No proper correction to any severe infringement or non-response to a yellow card sanction notification applied ⁴	Critical	Critical	Red card
Verified intentional fraud (identified and verified during integrity audits or inspected by government agencies, etc.)	Critical	Critical	Agreement cancelation and a possible fine of up to 10,000 EUR per case
No proper correction to any critical infringements OR Non-response to a red card sanction notification applied ⁵	Critical	Critical	Agreement cancelation

⁴ Any severe infringement notified through a warning letter that is not cleared or non-response from the CB after the 2nd notification on the application of a sanction together with the yellow card

⁵ Any critical infringement notified through a warning letter that is not cleared or non-response from the CB after the 2nd notification on the application of a sanction together with the red card

Annex 4: Process for Solving Documentation Failures



Annex 5: Process for Solving Infringements

