

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)



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CAS FAQ

1.1 CAS FAQ

1.1.1 What is Coffee Assurance Services (CAS)?

CAS is a global assurance service provider delivering high quality, independent, innovative and credible services in the coffee sector, for 4C Verification of the Baseline Common Code as well as assurance, integrity and progress measurement in coffee.

As the operator of the 4C Verification System, CAS is responsible for assuring compliance against the 4C Code of Conduct. The 4C Code of Conduct is the operationalized version of the Global Coffee Platform's Baseline Common Code that serves as a reference code for baseline sustainability practices in the coffee sector. CAS is therefore responsible for providing training to 4C verifiers, issuing 4C licenses, and evaluating the level of compliance with the 4C Code of Conduct for 4C Units.

1.1.2 What is the vision of Coffee Assurance Services?

Coffee Assurance Services (CAS) aims to be one of the leading coffee assurance service providers to enable change towards a sustainable thriving coffee sector.

CAS works towards a coffee sector that places integrity at the center of its efforts to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of coffee production and processing.

1.1.3 What services does Coffee Assurance Services offer?

CAS provides credible, cost-efficient and accessible assurance services to the coffee sector. The following services are offered as operator of the 4C Verification System:

- 4C License Decisions for 4C Units
- Evaluation of on-site verification reports and 4C License decisions for 4C Units.
- Approval of 4C Verifiers

- Training and assessment of independent verifiers according to the 4C Verification System.
- Integrity Program for 4C Verification System
- Quality assurance of approved 4C Verifiers. Internal and external oversight planning according to risk assessment and the 4C Quality Management System.
- Data Collection & Analysis
- Assessment of 4C verification data and reporting, including for customers on demand.
- Traceability and Commercial Reporting of 4C Compliant Coffee
- Traceability system and commercial reporting data for 4C Compliant Coffee for customers, especially final buyers.
- 4C Code and Verification System Training
- Training on implementation of the 4C Code and Verification System.
- Credible Assurance
- Definition, development and monitoring of guidelines and regulations of the 4C verification system, including 4C verification regulations, 4C commercial guidelines.

1.1.4 Why was Coffee Assurance Services established?

Following a new strategy to separate the commercial verification related activities from its pre-competitive activities, the 4C Association in 2015 agreed to spin-off the previously in-house verification operations into a separate company in 2016.

In March 2016, the membership of the 4C Association at the 5th General Assembly formally approved the separation.

Coffee Assurance Services GmbH & Co. KG was founded to continue providing 4C verification services as well as assurance, integrity and progress measurement in the coffee sector. Whilst the Global Coffee Platform is a multi-stakeholder sustainability platform aims to create an enabling environment for members to collectively define a shared vision, act on national priorities, closely cooperate with governments, improve the effectiveness of sustainability programs, and contribute to greater impact at farm level.

1.1.5 Who is behind Coffee Assurance Services?

Coffee Assurance Services is incorporated as a limited liability partnership (GmbH & Co. KG) and owned by the Global Coffee Platform.

As of April 2016, the team previously composing the Verification Department of the 4C Association will operate as the core team of Coffee Assurance Services under the leadership of Mr. Gustavo Bacchi as Managing Director.

During a transition phase until the end of 2016, some defined services will be provided on behalf of Coffee Assurance Services by staff of the Global Coffee Platform in order to ensure continuity. Therefore, Coffee Assurance Services was born ready to operate the 4C Verification System through the accumulated knowledge of its professional team.

1.1.6 Who pays for the services delivered by Coffee Assurance Services?

Final buyers pay a volume-based fee to Coffee Assurance Service to operate the 4C Verification System. The volume-based fee covers the cost of delivering the services as described above.

1.1.7 What will happen to the former 4C Verification System?

The 4C Verification System previously run under the 4C Association will continue to be operated by Coffee Assurance Services in the same way: analyzing verification requests from new 4C Units, applications for renewal of 4C Licenses, and all documents related to the maintenance of the 4C Licenses for existing 4C Units. CAS holds full responsibility for managing and operating the 4C Verification System.

1.1.8 How will the information and documents related to my 4C Unit be transferred to Coffee Assurance Services? Will we have to send in all the documents again?

The history of 4C Units, including complete documentation of all 4C Verifications and licensing decisions, the 4C Licenses, correspondence and electronic messages, and other related documents will now be managed by Coffee Assurance Services, in order to continue operating 4C verification services.

1.1.9 What happens to 4C licenses? Will they expire or change under Coffee Assurance Services?

Valid 4C Licenses of existing 4C Units issued under the former 4C Association will remain valid until the expiry date specified on the 4C License. New or renewed 4C Licenses will be issued by Coffee Assurance Services.

1.1.10 Will my current 4C License continue to meet the requirements of the 4C Verification Regulations and Commercial Guidelines? Will buyers of 4C Compliant Coffee be able to accept my current 4C License?

Yes, 4C Licenses will continue to meet the requirements of the 4C Verification Regulations and Commercial Guidelines, as long as it is within its validity period.

Thus, valid 4C Licenses will continue to be accepted by buyers of 4C Compliant Coffee, and trading of 4C Compliant Coffee will not be interrupted through the transfer of management of the 4C Verification system to Coffee Assurance Services.

1.1.11 What will happen to the verifying companies who are responsible for the 4C verification field checks and for the 4C Verification reports? Can I continue to hire them to perform verifications at my 4C Unit? Or should I hire Coffee Assurance Services from now on?

Yes, 4C Units can continue to hire the current approved verifying companies. These will continue to be authorized to carry out 4C Verifications as long as they are approved as such. A register of all approved 4C verifiers is available through [here](#).

1.1.12 I am an approved verifying company, or a verifier - can I continue to carry out 4C Verifications?

Existing approved verifying companies and their verifiers can continue to carry out 4C verification to 4C Units on demand and agreed with those 4C Units directly.

Valid framework contracts with existing approved verifying companies will be handed over from the former 4C Association to CAS.

1.1.13 I am a verifying company, or a verifier, but I have not yet been approved to offer the service of field verification in accordance with the 4C Verification System. How do I apply for the approval?

Requests for approval of verifying companies and their verifiers should be directed to Coffee Assurance Services. The training of verifiers, and their approval or disapproval, are also responsibilities of CAS. Please email info@cas-veri.com for all approval requests.

1.1.14 How will this impact my business with 4C Compliant Coffee?

For the better! Coffee Assurance Services is a company founded on the long-term premise of delivering high-quality and innovative assurance services to its clients - 4C Units, final buyers and others. We are focused on delivering professional and timely services that add value to our customers.

1.1.15 Will Coffee Assurance Services operate the 4C Verification System the same way as before?

In the short term, no change is planned to occur in the rules or procedures of the 4C Verification System.

However, in the medium term, improvements in procedures will be gradually introduced to simplify the verification processes and the communication between 4C Units and Coffee Assurance Services, and all along the supply chain.

Any changes will consider previous planning and advanced communication for the necessary adaptation by all involved parties. Therefore, feedback and suggestions are welcome and will be reviewed in order to strengthen the 4C Verification System, making it increasingly reliable, transparent, inclusive and effective. Any suggestions please share with us via info@cas-veri.com.

1.1.16 What happens to the 4C Entry-level Standard? What is the relationship between the 4C Code of Conduct operated by Coffee Assurance Services and the Baseline Common Code of the Global Coffee Platform?

Created by the coffee sector for the coffee sector in 2004, the Common Code for the Coffee Community (4C) was conceived as a baseline and entry-level to drive out unacceptable practices and improve the economic viability (productivity, efficiency and market access) for coffee producers, the working and living conditions of their families and workers, and the conservation of natural resources such as primary forest, water, soil, biodiversity and energy.

As a result of the evolution of the former 4C Association into the Global Coffee Platform (GCP) and the spin-off of the 4C Verification System to the newly established Coffee Assurance Services (CAS), the 4C Entry-level Standard also undergoes significant changes in its role and functioning. The Baseline Common Code will continue to set baseline sustainability principles and practices for coffee production and processing. In its path to becoming a global reference for the coffee sector, it aims to underpin national sustainability strategies and can be used in a variety of ways by different stakeholders.

Most importantly, the Baseline Common Code will be operated as the 4C Code of Conduct by Coffee Assurance Services, together with the 4C Verification System.

1.1.17 Will Coffee Assurance Services change the 4C Code of Conduct?

The 4C Code of Conduct is the operationalized version of the Global Coffee Platform's Baseline Common Code against which compliance can be demonstrated through the 4C Verification System and 4C Licensees issued. As the operator of the 4C Code of Conduct, CAS will be customizing the Baseline Common Code for 4C Units without any changes of the content.

More precisely, CAS uses the version of the 4C Code of Conduct launched in May 2015, which was the result of a participatory and inclusive multi-stakeholder consultation and agreement. As such, the 4C Code of Conduct cannot be changed by Coffee Assurance Services but follows the revision cycle of the Global Coffee Platform's Baseline Common Code.

1.1.18 As a member of the former 4C Association, will I automatically become part of Coffee Assurance Services and Global Coffee Platform?

Members of the former 4C Association will automatically be members of the Global Coffee Platform (GCP).

However, Coffee Assurance Services is a provider of assurance services and not a membership organization. Services by Coffee Assurance Services are accessible for members of the Global Coffee Platform according to the defined terms and conditions of Coffee Assurance Services.

During 2016, new companies or entities who wish to establish a 4C Unit to undergo the verification process and receive a 4C License will have to first become members of the Global Coffee Platform, and then register with Coffee Assurance Services for their first 4C Verification through the normal application procedure.

Existing members who already have 4C Units established, and who wish to request a 4C Verification for any of their 4C Units, must contact CAS through the normal application procedure.

1.1.19 Do I have to be a member of the Global Coffee Platform to produce, trade and source 4C Compliant Coffee?

Until the end of 2016, membership in the Global Coffee Platform remains a pre-condition to be able to establish a 4C Unit and produce, trade or source 4C Compliant Coffee through CAS.

1.1.20 What happens with the membership fee I already paid to the former 4C Association, does it go to Coffee Assurance Services or to Global Coffee Platform?

Membership fees paid to the former 4C Association remain with the Global Coffee Platform. Therefore, members can continue enjoying the benefits and opportunities related to being a member of the Global Coffee Platform.

Coffee Assurance Services is a service provider and not a membership organisation, and charges a volume-based fee from final buyers.

1.1.21 I am currently a Business Partner of a 4C Unit. What do I do now?

There is no specific action to be done as a Business Partner of a 4C Unit. The Business Partners of a 4C Unit should address their questions regarding the 4C Code of Conduct and the verification procedures to the Managing Entity of the corresponding 4C Unit.

1.1.22 I am currently the Managing Entity of a 4C Unit. What do I do now?

To formalize the transfer to CAS, 4C Units will have to enter into an agreement with CAS. There is no additional specific action to be done as a Managing Entity of a 4C Unit, as there will be no changes to the 4C Verification System. We have laid everything out for you in an easy to use guidance document that explains step-by-step how to continue implementing the 4C Code of Conduct.

1.1.23 I am currently a Final Buyer of 4C Compliant Coffee. What do I do now?

Final buyers will have to sign an agreement with Coffee Assurance Services to continue being able to use Traceability and Commercial Reporting services and source 4C Compliant Coffee. Accordingly, they will have to report their received volumes of 4C Compliant Coffee through the Commercial Reporting process and pay quarterly fees to Coffee Assurance Services on volumes of 4C Compliant Coffee received. The invoices will be issued by Coffee Assurance Services, and the payments will be made to CAS respectively.

1.1.24 Who do I contact for?

- General questions and requests, specific requests and questions related to verification assessment, implementing the 4C Code and an update of your status: info@cas-veri.com
- For all media related enquiries: communications@cas-veri.com
- For all invoicing and administrative issues: admin@cas-veri.com

1.1.25 Where can I find CAS verification documents?

- [4C Code of Conduct](#)
- [4C Verification Regulations](#)
- [4C Commercial Guidelines](#)
- Business Partner Mapping [EN](#) | [ES](#) | [PT](#)
- Self-Assessment Tool [EN](#) | [ES](#) | [PT](#)