



Common Code for the Coffee Community

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4C Project Criteria for the Common Code for the Coffee Community initiative Version 2.1 – February 2006

The Common Code for the Coffee Community (4C) is a transparent and participatory multistakeholder approach to develop, test and broadly disseminate a global market-based voluntary sustainability concept with a code of conduct. It comprises a comprehensive system for supporting sustainability practices in the production, post-harvest processing and trading of “mainstream” green coffee. The initiative’s tri-partite structure reflects the involvement of the relevant stakeholder groups of producer organizations, coffee trade and industry as well as civil society. The objectives, guidelines and practices of the initiative are further explained in the “Project Paper” elaborated by the funding partners ECF, GTZ and SECO and the 4C Document itself.

The 4C approach to coffee on its way towards sustainability builds on the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations, which aim at sustainable livelihoods. The Code has a social, an environmental and an economic dimension.

The initiative is open to voluntary participation by all stakeholders in the coffee chain who comply with its principles and aim at sustainability in the coffee sector. Each stakeholder at his/her own level of operations and activities promotes and supports the production, post-harvest processing and trading of coffee on its way towards sustainability. The 4C Initiative offers its experience to develop projects, provides access to interested donors, development agencies or private entities with available resources. Furthermore, it channels relevant information to interested partners and accompanies them in their efforts to receive external support. The initiative itself does not dispose of funding to financially support projects or capacity building activities.

The Common Code is an inclusive system with a commitment to continuous improvement. Practicability and applicability to a wide range of production systems and regions are the basis for a mainstream approach.

Therefore, the current phase of 4C (2005-2006) has two main objectives:

- 1) the contribution to the exchange, development and dissemination of sustainability practices to guide and support actors along the chain on their way towards sustainability according to the 4C Code Matrix. The 4C initiative draws on existing knowledge, and the results of existing and new projects, programmes and initiatives to incorporate and make accessible the experience of the sector. Through the 4C Support Platform and the Virtual Project Network partners and supporters of the 4C contribute to the initiative by providing know-how, expertise, tools and services from the experience of their individual projects and programmes in different coffee producing countries and regions.
- 2) a reality check of the requirements of the 4C Code Matrix within the entire Code document. In addition to the knowledge generated in cooperation with the 4C Support Platform and the Virtual Project Network, a number of 4C Projects will, therefore, test the first version of the 4C Code Matrix with all its principles. These 4C Projects are conducted by different partners and supporters of the initiative and clearly focus on the testing of the various aspects of the 4C Code Matrix and the 4C system.



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Furtheron, they also facilitate the development and testing of 4C services and sustainability practices in the reality of different coffee growing regions.

A close cooperation between the Steering Committee, the 4C Support Platform and projects themselves is necessary to foster the use of synergies between projects under the umbrella of the Common Code initiative. The Management Unit of the 4C Initiative facilitates this cooperation.

Projects under the umbrella of the Common Code

The Common Code for the Coffee Community-Initiative distinguishes between

- 1) associated **sustainability projects** and
- 2) **4C Projects**.

1) associated Sustainability Projects may be any kind of cooperation towards sustainability in the coffee sector that is conducted by implementing agencies, producer organizations, sustainability initiatives and other partners. These projects relate to components of the 4C concept, the Code Matrix and its sustainability practices. All respective projects are encouraged to contribute to the development of the Virtual Project Network to enable an efficient exchange of best practices and experiences. To be posted on the Virtual Project Network, the project information should be provided using a standardized information template. (Sustainability Project – information sheet)

Those projects can either be

- 1.1) projects that are under implementation or that have already been completed during the existence of the Common Code initiative but that have a clear reference to sustainability in one or more of the three dimensions, or
- 1.2) new projects that do not explicitly test 4C but focus on improving sustainability in the coffee sector.

Cooperating partners kindly agree to share knowledge and experience from their respective associated Sustainability Projects through providing input into the Virtual Project Network as an individual voluntary contribution.

2) 4C Projects meet the requirements of the draft 4C document (agreed by the Steering Committee in September 2004). These projects address the 10 unacceptable practices and all criteria listed in the 4C Code Document. They acknowledge the Project Criteria and make the results of their projects available to other stakeholders of the Common Code initiative, as far as in compliance with anti-trust regulations.

Concerning communication about involvement in the 4C initiative, funding partners may use information about 4C Projects that meet the requirements of the entire Common Code and have been reviewed by the 4C Support Platform. However, the use of the name of the initiative in all communication related to 4C Projects has to be coordinated with the Management Unit according to the communication guidelines agreed by the Steering Committee. All further details about the use of the name of the initiative in communication are stated in the “Rules for Participation”. All activities in 4C Projects must comply with the “Rules for Participation”. A standardized information template (4C Project – information sheet) shall be used to provide information on project activities in the Virtual Project Network .



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4C Projects may use funding from any of the following sources

- public-private facilities,
- private companies,
- technical assistance by third countries,
- governmental and non-governmental organisations,
- partners and the general public.

4C Project Criteria

It is the objective of all 4C Projects to support farmers to apply sustainability practices to meet the requirements of the 4C Code Matrix and to achieve the status of 4C coffee supplier.

They agree to comply with the following criteria:

4C Projects

- 1) comply with the Common Code Preamble and the objectives of the Project Paper of the initiative
- 2) exclude all 10 unacceptable practices as formulated in the Common Code,
- 3) test the Code Matrix with its 17 categories meeting the basic criteria of the requirements according to 4C and starting the continuous improvement scheme,
- 4) provide experience on sustainable production and / or processing methods to other projects and the Management Unit,
- 5) make available the relevant information concerning experience with sustainable coffee
- 6) production to the initiative and accept independent evaluation / analysis (as long as it does not touch details of competitiveness),
- 7) implement and/or test the verification scheme,
- 8) are developed in cooperation with the 4C Support Platform to focus on the most relevant issues, reflecting worldwide coffee producing regions,
- 9) strengthen cooperation along the chain by involving further actors active in the coffee sector,
- 10) ensure multiplication effects by dissemination of the concept and training on sustainability according to the 4C concept,
- 11) strengthen local and regional capacity,
- 12) develop, use and test tools, services and practices of the initiative as agreed with the 4C Support Platform,
- 13) cooperate with representatives of all three stakeholder groups,



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- 14) encourage the integration of further instruments of capacity building to strengthen the capacity of producers involved,
- 15) cooperate with further private or public partners (e.g. development agencies, governments, producer associations etc.) to expand the implementation and support actors along the chain.

In a “Criteria Sheet” projects may declare their interest to become 4C Projects outlining the scope of their activities according to the 4C Project criteria.

4C Projects are requested to monitor and document their approaches to achieve the listed objectives.

All activities in respective projects and with reference to the 4C Support Platform accept international anti-trust regulations and fully comply with the “Rules of Participation”.