



The 4C Association Kicks-off its New Business Model

Bonn, 28 March 2011. The 4C Executive Board announced today that the 4C Association will start the transition phase to enforce its new business model, which will be fully operational by the beginning of 2012. The business model was first approved by the 4C Council during its last meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, on 15 February. This new focus will allow the 4C Association to adapt its modus operandi to better serve the needs of its members in the current coffee market context.

“With its new business model, the 4C Association will focus on core activities to serve members’ interests and particularly encourage the demand of 4C Compliant Coffee in the market. The new model also reflects 4C Members’ ambition to transform the Association into THE network of genuinely committed actors who work together to address the sustainability issues of the sector in a pre-competitive manner. I am looking forward to this new 4C Association which I believe will play a crucial role in shaping the future development of a sustainable coffee sector”, says Diego Pizano-Salazar, the President of the 4C Association.

The 4C Association received broad support from its members, many of whom committed to making an extra financial contribution totalling € 440,000 to ensure a smooth transition into the new model.

Shift to a demand driven approach:

The shift to the new business model will not affect the mission or vision of the 4C Association. The 4C Association will continue working to achieve its goal of building a sustainable mainstream coffee community through 100% sector compliance to – at least – baseline sustainability standards.

However, to achieve this goal, the 4C Association will now shift from a supply driven to a demand driven approach. The former approach was key to the starting phase of the 4C Project a decade ago. It helped in building up a supply of 4C Compliant Coffee, training producers in the application of the 4C baseline sustainability standard and broadening the network of partners and members. By building on these initial successes, the new demand driven approach will also make the 4C system much more commercially viable.

As part of the new business model, the 4C Association will focus on a core set of services that are beneficial to all its members. Core services include, among others, setting and maintaining the 4C baseline standard, defining the rules of the verification system, providing producers with access to tools and information on sustainability practices, acting as a multi-stakeholder exchange platform and actively promoting all sustainability standards in the market. Core services are thought as those key activities that are beneficial to all members.

In addition, members will be able to acquire tailor-made services on demand at an extra cost such as trainings, communication services or personalized guidance on verification requirements. In this way, 4C Members will be able to better define their needs and receive those additional services they deem necessary.

As part of the new model, the 4C Association will also strengthen its pre-competitive platform function. Through this platform, stakeholders can address topics affecting sustainable development like climate change, access to finance, aging farmer population etc. Finally, the 4C Association will also strengthen its collaboration with other sustainability standards by promoting them in the market and encouraging their participation in the Association.

In the coming months, the 4C Association will work out the details to put its new business model into practice. This will ensure the Association enters 2012 fully equipped to start working in accordance with the new model.

Media Contacts:

If you would like to receive more information about the new business model or schedule an interview with Melanie Rütten-Sulz, the Executive Director of the 4C Association, please contact Verónica Pérez Sueiro, Communications Manager, at +49 176 27424440 or veronica.perez@4c-coffeeassociation.org