

Short introduction: Steps to Certification for Artisan C-Sink Managers and Networks

	Procedure	Applicant or client	CERES
1	Request	After completion of the registration and endorsement phase with Carbon Standards (CSI), the certification phase with CERES generally begins. Typically, applicants present a first general request, asking about requirements, procedures, prices for certification	The applicant receives from CERES first information, by e-mail, often combined with individual additional information by phone. This information includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> link to the relevant documents on CERES website link to the Application form.
2	Formal application	Client submits application form	CERES reviews application. If we can offer the requested service, the application is accepted.
3	Offer		Based on the current Price list published on the website, as well as the number of Artisan Pros/networks and the size of the networks to be certified, we calculate the validation, inspection, and verification fees. We then submit a written offer to the applicant. Normally, this is an estimate that does not include travel costs, accommodation, or other additional expenses. Along with the offer, we provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a certification contract this document
4	Contract	Once the applicant and CERES have agreed on the fees, the applicant signs the contract. By doing so, he/she is committed to fulfil the applicable standards and agrees with CERES General Terms of Business	CERES sends a counter-signed copy of the contract and the invoice to the client
5	Pre-payment	The client deposits the agreed advance payment.	CERES provides the client with a second package of information and forms related to the affected standards, including, among others: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant CERES policy, link to the Management plan.
6	Project design document (PDD) and Management Plan (MP)	The client submits the PPD (including annexes and supporting documents) and completes the management plan (MP). Reviewing the MP also helps identify and correct any noncompliance issues.	CERES validates the PDD, reviews the Management Plan, and issues Findings (Non-conformities) if necessary.
7	Corrective actions	If non-conformities are detected during the process of working out and reviewing the MP, these should be corrected even before the first inspection takes place. <i>Example: Improvement of the internal control system.</i>	CERES checks the corrected management plan

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8	Issuance of Validation Statement		After receiving all corrective actions based on the Findings, CERES will issue the Validation Report, the Validation Findings Report, and the Validation Statement.
9	C-sink registry		CERES will forward all finalized documents to CSI for publication on the Global C-Sink registry
10	Setting up an Internal Control System (ICS)	<p>This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of internal regulations • Working out of forms for internal inspections and other procedures • Selection and training of internal inspectors • Training of participating farmers on production methods and basic rules • For larger projects with more than one internal inspector: an ICS (Internal Control System) responsible person must be identified to supervise the internal inspectors 	The Internal Control System Policy for Global Artisan C-Sink is available on the website under the " Policy on ICS Manual " section.
11	Farmer registration	All farmers need to be registered, with their names, addresses, fields, potential yield. A contract must be signed between the Network and each farmer.	
12	Internal inspections	The internal inspectors inspect 100% of farms each year, verifying compliance with the Artisan C-Sink standard. Where necessary, they agree on necessary corrective actions with the member farmers.	
13	Evaluation of internal reports, follow-up	<p>The C-sink manager evaluates internal reports, making sure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a provisionally approved farmers list is set up, including all members who comply with the rules • follow-up is given to the implementation of corrective actions, within a suitable timeframe • internal inspectors whose reports do not show the requested quality, receive additional training, or are replaced, in case they do not have the necessary skills. 	
14	Scheduling inspection	Inspector and client schedule a date for the inspection	
15	Inspection	Responsible staff, including internal inspectors, must be present, and records must be prepared. After the inspection, the inspection report must be signed by the client or a designated responsible person.	The CERES inspector checks the implementation of the project based on the PDD. The inspector also evaluates the functioning of the ICS. A sample of farmers is inspected, and the performance of internal inspectors is assessed. Artisan Pro Farmers are inspected separately with additional requirements.

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				In addition to inspecting the Network, the C-Sink Manager is also assessed.
16	Inspection report	The client receives a copy of the non-conformities found during the inspection and countersigns.		For each C-sink Network inspected an inspection report is generated summarizing all findings of all inspected Artisan Pros and Artisan Farmers. Immediately after the inspection, the inspector finishes his/her report and submits it to the CERES headquarter. (no later than 14 days)
17	Evaluation	The client receives a copy of the non-conformities		The report is reviewed by the responsible certification officer. Additional questions must be clarified with the inspector. In case additional non-conformities are raised by the certifier those are communicated to the client.
18	Final invoice	Payment of the remaining fees according to offer, plus travel costs.		Issues the invoice
19	Certification decision			CERES makes the certification decision, normally within 4 weeks after the inspection, maximum 6 weeks. There are basically three possibilities:
			a) Client complies with the standard →	Certificate is issued and sent to client
		Client corrects non-conformities and sends evidence to CERES	b) Client has non-conformities, which need to be corrected. This may include missing documents, or more substantial things. →	CERES issues Notice of Noncompliance. Certificate is issued once CERES has evidence of correction of non-conformities (in some cases, this may involve an additional inspection).
			c) Client has major non-conformities which cannot be corrected in the short term →	CERES issues a Denial of Certification letter.

Please be reminded that, in addition to this routine procedure, CERES may conduct unannounced inspections at any time. Clients for unannounced inspections may be selected risk based, or randomly. Since conducting such unannounced inspections is compulsory for CERES, the costs is charged to the client.

This whole procedure is apparently very long and complicated. Nevertheless, many steps, which are presented here one after the other, often take place at the same time. Clients can contribute to **acceleration** by:

- paying on time
- immediately filling in and thoroughly the necessary forms, contracts etc.
- immediately implementing necessary corrective actions.

Please be aware that C-Sink managers wishing to trade their C-Sink potential must have a valid Global Artisan C-Sink certificate, which needs to be uploaded for each production lot.

During the entire process from application through certification and the annual renewal process, the client has the right to file complaints or appeals to CERES. They will be handled according to CERES internal rules and the client will be informed of the outcome of the complaint assessment.