

Short introduction: Steps to Validation/Verification 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 validation/verification phase with CERES generally begins. Typically, applicants present a first general request, asking about requirements, procedures, prices for validation/verification	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, 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"> Inspection and 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
6	Project design document (PDD)	The client submits the PPD (including annexes and supporting documents).	CERES validates the PDD, and issues Findings (Non-conformities) if necessary.
7	Public Consultation	The client provides the updated PDD based upon the first round of feedback given by the validator.	CERES reviews the PDD to ensure that it meets the basic quality requirements and submits a clean version of the PDD to CSI for public consultation (1 month). During this 1-month period, if any comments are raised by the stakeholders, they will be clarified with the client.
8	Corrective actions	If non-conformities are detected during the validation of PDD, these should be corrected even before the first inspection takes place.	CERES checks the submitted corrective actions

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		<i>Example: Improvement of the internal control system.</i>	
9	Issuance of Validation Statement		After receiving all corrective actions based on the Findings, CERES (an independent reviewer) will issue the Validation Report, the Validation Findings Report, and the Validation Statement.
10	C-Sink registry		CERES will forward all finalized documents to CSI for publication on the Global C-Sink registry
11	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.
12	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.	
13	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.	
14	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. 	
15	Scheduling inspection	Inspector and client schedule a date for the inspection	
16	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.

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			<p>Artisan Pros are inspected separately with additional requirements.</p> <p>In addition to inspecting the Network, the C-Sink Manager is also assessed.</p>
17	Inspection report	The client receives a copy of the non-conformities found during the inspection and countersigns.	<p>For each C-sink Network/Pro/C-sink Village inspected, an Inspection Finding Report is generated summarizing all findings detected during the onsite audit. Immediately after the inspection, the inspector finishes his/her report and submits it to the CERES headquarter (no later than 14 days).</p> <p>In case the project is complex and big, the inspector finishes his/her report and submits to the CERES within 1 month.</p>
18	Evaluation	The client receives a copy of the non-conformities	<p>The report is reviewed by the responsible Evaluation Officer. Any additional questions must be clarified with the inspector. If additional non-conformities are identified by the Evaluation Officer, these shall be communicated to the client in the form of an Evaluation Report.</p>
19	Review	The Resolution of Non-Compliance report with Non-Conformities and their Corrective Actions, Verification Report and Statement draft will be passed on to an independent reviewer who will then check everything as a six-eye principle. Upon checking everything, client will receive Resolution of Non-Compliance including Non-Conformities and Corrective Actions, Verification Report, Validated PDD and Verification Statement.	
20	Final invoice	Payment of the remaining fees according to offer, plus travel costs.	Issues the invoice
21	Verification decision		<p>CERES makes the Resolution of Non-Compliance after evaluating the inspection finding report, and submitted corrective actions if applicable. There are basically three possibilities:</p>
			<p>a) Client complies with the standard → Verification statement is issued and sent to client</p>
		Client corrects non-conformities and sends evidence to CERES	<p>b) Client has non-conformities, which need to be corrected. This may include missing documents, or more substantial things. → CERES issues Resolution of Noncompliance. Verification statement is issued once CERES has evidence of correction of non-conformities (in some cases, this may involve an additional inspection).</p>

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		c) Client has major non-conformities which cannot be corrected in the short term	→ CERES issues an Adverse Verification Statement

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 based on risk or at random. As the conduct of such unannounced inspections is mandatory for CERES, the associated costs are charged to the client.

Please also note that the desk review and approval of any additional Artisan Pro/Farmer requests may incur additional fees in line with our current price list.

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 credits must have a valid Global Artisan C-Sink verification statement, which needs to be uploaded for each C-sink request.

During the entire process from application through verification 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.