Culinary Heritage Certification
Regulations & Certified Member Standards

1. Introduction and Purpose

Established in 1995, the Culinary Heritage Network is dedicated to preserving, promoting and developing regional culinary traditions, supporting local food production and encouraging sustainable, high-quality food experiences.

The Culinary Heritage Certification System provides independent, internationally recognised assessment of businesses that demonstrate a meaningful commitment to their culinary heritage, responsible practices and quality.

The iconic Culinary Heritage chef's hat represents this commitment and helps consumers identify businesses that have been assessed against common international standards.

Culinary Heritage Certification complements existing regional food initiatives, quality schemes and destination development activities. Its purpose is not to replace local identities or established initiatives, but to strengthen their visibility and credibility through an internationally recognised certification.

Certification is awarded to individual businesses that fulfil the applicable requirements. Participation in a Destination Programme does not automatically constitute certification of an entire destination.

These regulations establish the standards, responsibilities and procedures applicable to businesses seeking or maintaining Culinary Heritage Certification.

2. Certification Principles and Criteria

All Culinary Heritage Certification assessments are based on six core pillars:

1. Culinary Heritage Preservation

Businesses shall demonstrate a genuine connection to regional food traditions, local products, recipes, production methods or culinary culture. Traditional knowledge and cultural identity should be preserved, presented and shared in ways appropriate to the business.

2. Sustainability and Local Sourcing

Businesses shall demonstrate responsible sourcing, meaningful cooperation with local or regional suppliers where appropriate, and practices that reduce unnecessary environmental impact, resource consumption and waste.

3. Quality and Authenticity

Products, food, beverages and customer experiences shall maintain consistent quality and accurately represent their stated origins, methods and characteristics.

4. Community Engagement

Businesses should contribute to the local food economy, support regional producers and participate in preserving or communicating the culinary identity of their community.

5. Transparency in Operations

Businesses shall operate responsibly and transparently, provide accurate information about their products and services, and comply with applicable legislation and regulatory requirements.

6. Innovation in Tradition

Businesses are encouraged to develop contemporary interpretations, new products or improved methods that respect and build upon culinary traditions while remaining relevant to present-day consumers.

The six pillars are applied according to the nature of each business. Assessments consider the circumstances of the business, its geographical location and its contribution to regional culinary heritage.

Certification requires a demonstrated commitment to the overall standards, rather than compliance with a rigid or identical operating model for every business category.

3. Eligible Businesses

Culinary Heritage Certification is available to businesses that contribute directly to regional food culture and can demonstrate the required standards.

Eligible sectors include:

Primary Producers

Agricultural, horticultural, fisheries and other primary producers supplying products that reflect the region's natural resources, agricultural traditions or culinary identity.

Food and Beverage Producers and Processors

Businesses producing or processing food and beverages with a meaningful connection to regional ingredients, traditions, production methods or specialities.

Restaurants, Cafés, Hotels and Caterers

Hospitality businesses offering food and culinary experiences that demonstrate quality, authenticity and a genuine connection to local or regional food culture. Relevant dishes, ingredients or specialities should be identifiable and communicated to customers.

Wholesalers, Retailers and Food Markets

Businesses that actively promote regional food products, support local producers and make regional culinary specialities accessible to consumers.

Other food-related businesses may be considered where their activities make a clear and demonstrable contribution to the aims of Culinary Heritage.

Eligibility does not automatically confer certification. Each business must successfully complete the applicable assessment.

4. Certification Pathways

Businesses can enter the Culinary Heritage Certification System through two recognised pathways.

4.1 Individual Certification

An individual business may apply directly to Culinary Heritage.

The application is followed by an on-site assessment conducted by an officially appointed Culinary Heritage Certification Inspector. The inspector evaluates the business against the certification criteria and prepares a written assessment report.

Businesses that fulfil the required standards are granted Culinary Heritage Certification and become Certified Members of the network.

4.2 Destination Programme

Public authorities, destination organisations, regional bodies or associations may cooperate with Culinary Heritage to arrange certification assessments for a group of businesses.

The Destination Programme provides a coordinated approach to assessing individual businesses within a destination or defined geographical area.

Assessments are conducted by Certification Inspectors appointed by Culinary Heritage. The participating organisation facilitates local coordination and practical arrangements in accordance with the agreed programme.

Each participating business is assessed individually and must meet the same certification criteria as businesses applying directly.

A Destination Programme recognises the certified businesses within the participating area. It does not automatically certify the destination as a whole.

Both pathways lead to the same Culinary Heritage Certification, Certified Member status and trademark usage rights.

5. Assessment and Certification Process

The certification process is designed to be professional, transparent and constructive.

Application and Preparation

Businesses provide relevant information about their operations, products, sourcing, quality practices and connection to regional culinary heritage.

They should be prepared to present supporting documentation and explain their working methods during the assessment.

On-Site Assessment

An appointed Certification Inspector visits the business and evaluates the relevant certification criteria.

Depending on the business category, the assessment may include discussions with management and staff, examination of sourcing and production practices, observation of operations, inspection of facilities and evaluation or tasting of products and dishes.

Assessment Report

Following the visit, the Certification Inspector prepares a written feedback report evaluating the business against the official Culinary Heritage Certification criteria. The report highlights the business's strengths and provides constructive recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Certification Decision

The assessment findings form the basis for the certification decision, which is made under the authority of Culinary Heritage.

Businesses meeting the required standards are granted Certified Member status and the right to use the Culinary Heritage Trademark in accordance with these regulations.

Businesses that do not meet the required standards are not granted certification. They receive feedback identifying areas for improvement and may be considered for reassessment.

Certification applies to the assessed business and the operations or premises explicitly covered by the certification decision. Additional business locations are not automatically included.

6. Responsibilities of Certified Members

Certified Members represent the values of Culinary Heritage and are responsible for maintaining the standards demonstrated during their assessment.

In practice, Certified Members are expected to fulfil the following responsibilities.

Maintain Quality and Authenticity

Continue to provide products, services and experiences that reflect the quality, authenticity and culinary identity upon which certification was granted.

Support Regional Food Culture

Maintain a meaningful connection to local food traditions, regional producers and culinary heritage. Businesses should communicate relevant stories, ingredients and traditions to customers whenever appropriate.

Source Responsibly and Work Sustainably

Prioritise suitable local and regional products where reasonably available, maintain responsible supplier relationships and make continuous efforts to reduce waste and unnecessary environmental impact.

Operate Transparently and Legally

Provide accurate information about products, ingredients, origins and business practices. Comply with applicable food safety, hygiene, employment, environmental and other legal requirements.

Cooperate with Certification Monitoring

Provide reasonable information or documentation when requested by Culinary Heritage to confirm continued compliance with certification standards.

Communicate Significant Changes

Inform Culinary Heritage of substantial changes in ownership, business activity, location or operations that could affect the basis of certification.

Use the Trademark Correctly

Follow the official trademark guidelines and ensure that the Culinary Heritage name, logo and Trademark Sign are used accurately and only in connection with the certified business.

Maintain Certification Status

Complete the applicable renewal procedures and fulfil the relevant certification and membership fee obligations.

Certified Members are encouraged to participate in network activities, collaborate with other members, share knowledge and promote the culinary heritage of their region.

7. Certification Validity, Monitoring and Renewal

Initial Certification Period

Successful businesses receive certification valid for two years from the date of certification.

During this period, the business is recognised as a Certified Member and is authorised to use the Culinary Heritage Trademark, provided the certification standards continue to be maintained.

Annual Renewal

Following the initial two-year period, certification may be maintained through annual renewal.

Renewal requires payment of the applicable annual fee and continued compliance with the Culinary Heritage standards.

Culinary Heritage may request confirmation of business information, sourcing practices, operational changes or other relevant evidence as part of the renewal process.

An annual renewal does not automatically require a new on-site assessment. Culinary Heritage may, however, require additional verification or reassessment when circumstances justify it.

Continued Compliance

Culinary Heritage reserves the right to review a Certified Member's compliance at any time, particularly where significant operational changes, complaints or concerns regarding the certification standards arise.

Where shortcomings are identified, the business may be requested to implement corrective measures within a specified period.

Failure to maintain certification requirements may result in suspension or termination of certification.

A business whose certification has expired or been terminated may not continue using the Culinary Heritage Trademark or displaying the Trademark Sign.

8. Ownership and Usage of the Culinary Heritage Trademark

The Culinary Heritage Trademark is registered with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), under EUTM file number **000778035**, and is owned by the **Society Latgale Culinary Heritage Center**.

The Trademark, including the iconic chef's hat symbol, is an official sign of Culinary Heritage Certification.

Rights of Use

Certified Members in good standing are authorised to use the official Trademark in connection with their certified business, including appropriate use on websites, menus, marketing materials, signs and other communication.

The Trademark must be reproduced in accordance with official brand guidelines and may not be altered or used in a misleading manner.

Trademark Sign

The official physical Culinary Heritage Trademark Sign identifies a certified business to visitors and customers.

Certified Members operating premises accessible to customers shall display the official sign in a suitable, visible location. Businesses without such premises may agree on an appropriate alternative with Culinary Heritage.

The Trademark Sign is supplied by Culinary Heritage and remains subject to the certification and trademark usage rules.

Business Certification and Product Communication

Culinary Heritage Certification recognises the assessed business. It does not automatically constitute separate certification of every product, service or location associated with that business.

Trademark use on packaging, product information or promotional material must not mislead customers regarding the scope of certification.

End of Trademark Rights

If certification expires, is suspended or is terminated, the business must cease representing itself as currently certified and immediately discontinue the corresponding Trademark use, including displaying the Trademark Sign.

Unauthorised or misleading use may result in further action to protect the integrity of the Trademark.

9. Fees and Financial Conditions

Culinary Heritage maintains an official fee structure for certification, Certified Membership and associated trademark materials.

The following arrangements apply under the current certification model.

Individual Certification

The initial assessment fee is **€150**, excluding applicable VAT.

This includes the on-site certification assessment, written feedback report and, for businesses that successfully qualify, the initial two-year certification period.

For individually certified businesses with customer-facing premises, the official Trademark Sign is required in accordance with Section 8 and is supplied at a one-time cost of €65, excluding applicable VAT.

Destination Programme

Destination Programme fees are established through a separate agreement with the commissioning organisation, according to the scope of the programme.

The agreed package includes assessment of participating businesses and, for those successfully qualifying, their initial two-year certification and official Trademark Signs.

Annual Renewal

Following the initial two-year certification period, Certified Members pay an annual renewal fee of **€50**, excluding applicable VAT, to maintain certification and authorised trademark usage.

Fees may be reviewed periodically. The applicable official fee schedule is published by Culinary Heritage, and specific contractual conditions are governed by the relevant written agreement where applicable.

Payment of an assessment fee does not, in itself, guarantee certification.

10. Certification Oversight and Inspectors

The Global Coordinator is responsible for the overall consistency, integrity and international administration of the Culinary Heritage Certification System.

This includes oversight of certification procedures, appointment and authorisation of Certification Inspectors, interpretation of standards and supervision of compliance.

Certification Inspectors

All Certification Inspectors are selected, appointed and trained under the authority of the Global Coordinator.

Inspectors must conduct their assessments professionally, objectively and independently, applying the official certification criteria and assessment methods.

An inspector must not undertake an assessment where financial, managerial or other conflicting interests could compromise impartiality.

Inspectors are responsible for documenting their findings and preparing written reports that support fair and consistent certification decisions.

Certification Inspectors operate under the authority of Culinary Heritage and are accountable for the quality and integrity of their assessments.

Culinary Heritage retains final responsibility for certification decisions and the administration of Certified Member status.

11. Complaints, Appeals and Termination

Appeals Against Assessment Decisions

A business that disagrees with an assessment outcome should first discuss the findings directly with the responsible Certification Inspector.

Where applicable, a Destination Programme coordinator may assist with communication or practical clarification.

If the matter remains unresolved, the business may refer the appeal to the Global Coordinator for review.

Culinary Heritage retains final authority in determining certification appeals.

Complaints and Non-Compliance

Complaints concerning a Certified Member, certification practices or improper trademark usage may be submitted to Culinary Heritage.

Where appropriate, Culinary Heritage will review the matter and request clarification or corrective action from the business concerned.

Serious or repeated failure to meet certification standards, misleading representation, improper trademark use or other significant breaches may result in suspension or termination of certification.

Where circumstances permit, businesses will be given a reasonable opportunity to address identified shortcomings. Serious breaches may justify immediate suspension.

Voluntary Withdrawal and Reapplication

Certified Members may withdraw from the certification system by providing written notification to Culinary Heritage.

When certification ends, all rights associated with the certification and Trademark cease.

A business whose certification has ended may apply for certification again, subject to the applicable assessment requirements and any necessary corrective actions.

12. Governance and Amendments

Culinary Heritage is responsible for maintaining the Certification System, its standards, assessment procedures and the integrity of the associated Trademark.

These regulations constitute the common framework for all businesses certified under the Culinary Heritage Certification System, regardless of their certification pathway.

Culinary Heritage may update the regulations and supporting certification criteria to reflect developments in professional practice, sustainability, food culture and the operation of the international network.

Material amendments are subject to approval by Culinary Heritage and will be communicated through its official information channels.

The current approved edition of these regulations is published on the Culinary Heritage website. Any separate written agreements already in force remain subject to their applicable terms.

Culinary Heritage retains final authority over the interpretation and administration of these regulations and the certification rights granted under them.