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## List of abbreviations

CB	Certification Body
CoC	Chain of Custody
CFFP	Conselho da Fileira Florestal Portuguesa (Portuguese Forestry Sector Council)
IPAC	Portuguese Accreditation Institute (Instituto Português de Acreditação)
PEFC	Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes
PFCS	Portuguese Forest Certification Scheme/PEFC Portugal
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
TC	Technical Committee 145



## 1 Introduction

The CFFP is aware that, as with any program or activity, sometimes disagreements may arise in the application of the PFCS scheme which could result in a complaint or dispute.

This procedure defines the entities that take care of any complaints or dispute and the appeal mechanism for those that cannot be dealt with using the dispute settlement procedures of the relevant accredited certification body or the relevant accreditation body.

The CFFP encourages all interested parties to make use of the applicable mechanisms for complaint and appeal and to transmit information about any suspicious activity. In addition to correcting any arising issues, complaints and appeals mechanism also provides an opportunity to implement corrective and preventive actions and, in this way, improve PEFC services.

Fundamentally, it is a mechanism to ensure accountability.

## 2 Bibliographic References

The following references are indispensable for the application of this document. For normative references dated and undated, applies the latest edition thereof (including any revisions).

Document	Title
Advisor Council OR	Operational Regulations of the Advisor Council
CFFP DOC 1001:2009	Statutes of the Conselho da Fileira Florestal Portuguesa
NP4406	Portuguese Standard for the Sustainable Forest Management Systems - Application of the pan-European criteria for sustainable forest management
OR	Operational Regulations of the Technical Committee 145

## 3 Categories of Complaints

There are four categories within PFCS scheme where differences of opinion or disagreements could result in a complaint or dispute, which are as follow:

1. The content of the Portuguese standards for SFM and the standard development procedures;
2. The accreditation of certification bodies;
3. The approach taken at the time of the certification of a particular forest, or chain of custody system by accredited, independent, third-party CB
4. Issues concerning management of a specific forest area, or forest product supply chain.



## 4 Resolving a Complaint or Dispute

Within the PFCS scheme entities have different roles and responsibilities for the different categories. Complaints and disputes should in first instance be directed to that entity which has responsibility for the particular issue.

The first step to resolve a complaint or dispute should be communicate with the responsible entity – TC/IPQ, IPAQ, the Certification Body – related to the complaint, dispute, concern or question. Each of the entities have documented procedures for dealing with complaints, disputes and appeals. In relation to CFFP, these are outline within this procedure.

Category 1 - In relation to complaint/dispute on TC has its own appeal, complaint and dispute mechanisms which are a requirement for the standard setting work activities and are outline in the their Operational Regulation, which can be consulted in the webpage of the ICNF <http://www.icnf.pt/portal/florestas/gf/norm-gf/resource/docs/norm-gf/regr-ct145> and PEFC Portugal <http://www.pefc.pt/certificacao-gfs/elaboracao-np-4406/documentos>.

Category 2 - In relation with claims, disputes or actions concerning the certification process or the behaviour of the Certification Body that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the certification body or other third party, the matter should be referred to the Accreditation Body concerned, which in Portugal is IPAC.

Category 3 - All accredited certification bodies operating PEFC sustainable forests management and chain of custody certification are required to have documented procedures for dealing with complaints, appeals and disputes related to the certification process - even to the point of refusal, suspension or withdrawal of a certificate chain of custody and / or sustainable forest management. These procedures are a requirement within the relevant accreditation requirements of ISO/IEC 17021, and NP EN 45011 "General requirements for certifying bodies of product (ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996).

Category 4 – For forest management organisations chapter 4, bullets 4.3.3 of the Portuguese Standard for SFM, NP4406 includes a specific requirement for resolving complaints and demonstrate a pro-active attitude in resolving disputes relating to forest management between forest operators and local people.

## 5 Addressing CFFP/Advisor Council

For any complaint or dispute concerning certification decisions, accreditation of certification bodies, which cannot be dealt with using the mechanisms of the relevant accredited certification body or the relevant accreditation body CFFP, will convene, on a temporary basis, a specialized committee for settlement of disputes, complaints and appeal within the Advisor Council.

The Advisor Council is an advisory body of CFFP and is composed by representatives of Portuguese forestry sector organizations, independent and unbiased, in the following scale:



CFFP Normative Document for PEFC Portugal scheme Users

PEFC PT 1004:2013

General Procedure for Claims, Disputes and Appeals

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- two representatives of recognized merit of the forest production activity;
- two representatives of recognized merit of the forestry industry activity and related services;
- two representatives of forestry higher education;
- two representatives of the universe of activities identified in paragraph 3 of Article 5 of the statutes, which includes conservation of nature and the environment, consumer protection, and social interests, forestry education, research and development

The Advisory Council is presided by the CFFP Board Chairman who will appoint the representatives of the specialized committee, which comprise three representatives of the main sectors represented in the Advisor Council.

The entity wishing to use the specialized committee of the Advisor Council should communicate in writing to the CFFP Secretary, wisely one month period of the complaint/dispute, informing the underlying reasons for the issues raised and the details of the claim. The President will acknowledge the complainer within 10 days after the reception of the complaint and convened a meeting.

The President of the Advisor Council will convened a meeting in order to evaluate impartially all the gathered and validate information of the complaint.

The specialized committee will issued a recommendation within a period not longer than 2 months. According to the decision, CFFP will decide on a definitive basis thus the decision will be binding and terminates the dispute settlement of CFFP.

The subject and outcome of the complaint shall be registered and a formal response will be forwarded to the complainant following the Board's decision as well as all the members of the Advisor Council.