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**PEFC CR procedures for the investigation and
resolution of complaints and appeals**

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1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this guideline is to describe the responsibilities and actions of the PEFC Czech Republic association (PEFC CR) and the Arbitral Commission in relation to the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals.

PEFC CR regards all complaints and appeals as opportunities to improve its services and implement corrective and preventive measures.

2. SCOPE

This guideline details procedures for complaints and appeals to the PEFC CR which concern decisions and/or activities of the PEFC CR. Complaints and appeals relating to a certified entity; an accredited certification body or an accreditation body shall be dealt with by the complaints and appeals procedures of the relevant accredited certification body; accreditation body; or by the International Accreditation Forum.

3. DEFINITIONS

Complaint

Written expression of dissatisfaction (other than appeal) by any person or organisation which relates to the activities of the PEFC CR.

Appeal

Written request by the appellant for reconsideration of any decision made by the PEFC CR decision making bodies where the appellant considers such decision have been taken in breach of the PEFC CR requirements or procedures.

Activities and decisions of the PEFC CR

All activities and decisions of the PEFC CR relating to the procedures of documentation development and implementation, and to the interpretation of requirements of the Czech Forest Certification System.

4. COMPLAINTS

- 4.1 Complaints submitted to the PEFC CR shall be limited to activities and decisions of the PEFC CR.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of the complainant to submit written information supporting the complaint which can be verified as accurate and correct through an independent source.
- 4.3 Complaints submitted regarding a specific certified entity shall be referred to the relevant certification body's own complaints resolution procedure.
- 4.4 Complaints submitted regarding a specific accredited certification body shall be referred to the relevant accreditation body's own complaints resolution procedure.
- 4.5 Complaints submitted regarding a specific accreditation body shall be referred to the International Accreditation Forum's complaints resolution procedure.

- 4.6 Regardless of the outcome of any complaint, the complainant and the PEFC CR will each meet their own costs.
- 4.7 It is expected that any formally accepted complaint, not requiring an on-site investigation, should normally be resolved within 6 months.

5. APPEALS

- 5.1 Appeals submitted to the PEFC CR shall be limited to activities and decisions of the PEFC CR.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the appellant to submit written information supporting the complaint which can be verified as accurate and correct through an independent source.
- 5.3 Regardless of the outcome of any appeal, the appellant and the PEFC CR will each meet their own costs.
- 5.4 It is expected that any formally accepted appeal, not requiring an on-site investigation, should normally be resolved within 6 months.

6. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS ACCEPTANCE

- 6.1 All complaints and appeals shall be addressed in writing to the PEFC CR.
- 6.2 The secretariat decides on formal acceptance:
 - a) of the complaint and its further investigation provided that the complaint is in accordance with 4.1 and the information supporting the complaint can be authenticated as being in compliance with 4.2,
 - b) of the appeal and its further investigation provided that the appeal is in accordance with 5.1 and the information supporting the appeal can be authenticated as being in compliance with 5.2.
- 6.3 The national secretary shall without delay:
 - a) acknowledge to the complainant / appellant (in writing) the receipt and subject of the complaint / appeal or rejection of the complaint / appeal with justification if it is not in accordance with clause 4.1 and 4.2 (in case of the complaint) or 5.1 and 5.2 (in case of the appeal).
 - b) provide the complainant / appellant with details of the PEFC CR's complaints and appeals procedures.

7. COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION PROCESS

- 7.1 After receiving the complaint, the PEFC CR chairman shall assign the Arbitral Commission to investigate the complaint. The investigators shall have no vested, or conflict of, interest in the complaint.
- 7.2 The Arbitral Commission shall undertake a thorough investigation and seek a resolution. The Arbitral Commission shall submit in a timely matter, a detailed written report, to the PEFC CR chairman and the national secretary shall

present it to the PEFC CR Council. The report shall include a statement indicating whether, or not, the complaint has been substantiated, procedures for its resolution and decision on resolving the complaint.

Note: it is expected that complaints not requiring an on-site investigation should normally be investigated within 1 month

- 7.3 The national secretary shall inform the complainant and other interested parties about the outcomes of the complaint resolution process, in writing.

8. APPEAL INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION PROCESS

- 8.1 After receiving the appeal, the PEFC CR chairman shall assign the Arbitral Commission to investigate the appeal. The investigators shall have no vested, or conflict of, interest in the appeal.

- 8.2 The Arbitral Commission shall undertake a thorough investigation and seek a resolution. The Arbitral Commission shall submit in a timely matter, a detailed written report, to the PEFC CR chairman and the national secretary shall present it to the PEFC CR Council. The report shall include a statement indicating whether, or not, the appeal has been substantiated, procedures for its resolution and decision on resolving the appeal.

Note: it is expected that appeals not requiring an on-site investigation should normally be investigated within 1 month

- 8.3 The national secretary shall inform the appellant and other interested parties about the outcomes of the appeal resolution process, in writing.

