



Hungarian Forest
Certification
Non-profit Ltd.

8 Magyar str.
Sopron, Hungary
www.pefc.hu
info@pefc.hu

M E R

Magyar Erdőtanúsítási Rendszer

MER 07
2016-05-30
v1

Investigation of Complaints and Appeals

Copyright information

This document is copyright-protected by law. Copyrights belong to the Hungarian Forest Certification Non-profit Ltd. No part of the document may be changed or amended, reproduced or copied in any form or by means for commercial purposes without the permission of the Hungarian Forest Certification Non-profit Ltd.

Title:	Resolution of Complaints
Code:	MER 07 v1
Approved by:	Hungarian Forest Certification Council
Date of approval:	2016.05.30
Issue date:	2016.05.30
Application date:	2016.05.30

Content

1	Complaints.....	4
2	Appeals.....	4
3	Complaints and appeals acceptance	4
4	Complaint investigation and resolution process	5
5	Appeal investigation and resolution process	5

1 Complaints

- 1.1 Complaints submitted to the HFC shall be limited to concerns, or issues regarding the operation of HFC.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 Complaints submitted regarding a specific certified entity shall be referred to the relevant certification body's own complaints / appeals resolution procedure.
- 1.4 Complaints submitted regarding a specific accredited certification body shall be referred to the relevant accreditation body's (or bodies') own complaints / appeals resolution procedure.
- 1.5 Complaints submitted regarding a specific accreditation body shall be referred to the International Accreditation Forum's complaints / appeals resolution procedure (www.iaf.nu).
- 1.6 Regardless of the outcome of any complaint, the complainant and the HFC will each meet their own costs.
- 1.7 It is expected that any formally accepted complaint, not requiring an on-site investigation, should normally be resolved within 6 months.

2 Appeals

- 2.1 Appeals can be submitted once to HFC in case of unsatisfactory resolution of a complaint.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of the appellant to submit written information, which can be verified as accurate and correct through an independent source.
- 2.3 Regardless of the outcome of any appeal, the appellant and the HFC will each meet their own costs.
- 2.4 It is expected that any formally accepted appeal, not requiring an on-site investigation should normally be resolved within 6 months.

3 Complaints and appeals acceptance

- 3.1 All complaints and appeals shall be addressed to the HFC Secretariat (hereinafter "Secretariat").
- 3.2 Secretariat decides on formal acceptance:
 - a) of the complaint and its further investigation if the complaint is related to HFC and sufficiently justified by supporting information/documents;
 - b) of the appeal and its further investigation if the appeal related to a decision on a previously submitted complaint;
 - c) appeals can be submitted once concerning a certain complaint.
- 3.3 The Secretariat 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 1.1, 1.2 or 1.3 (in case of the complaint) or 2.1 or 2.2 (in case of the appeal).
 - b) provide the complainant / appellant with details of the HFC's complaints and appeals procedures.

4 Complaint investigation and resolution process

- 4.1 Upon the receipt of the complaint the HFC Council assigns an ad-hock Arbitration Committee.
- 4.2 Arbitration Committee can be established also temporarily for periodical tasks (e.g. standard setting procedure).
- 4.3 The investigator(s) shall have no vested, or conflict of, interest in the complaint.
- 4.4 The work of the Arbitration Committee shall be in line with MER 03.
- 4.5 The Arbitration Committee shall undertake a thorough investigation and seek resolution. The Arbitration Committee shall submit in a timely manner a detailed written report, and present it to the HFC Council.
The report shall include a statement indicating whether, or not, the complaint has been substantiated and recommendations on resolving the complaint.
- 4.6 It is expected that complaints not requiring an on-site investigation should normally be investigated by the TFG within 1 month.
- 4.7 The Secretariat shall inform the complainant and other interested parties about the outcomes of the complaint resolution process in writing.

5 Appeal investigation and resolution process

- 5.1 Upon the receipt of the appeal the HFC Council assigns an Arbitration Committee, in which the members can be the same as in the Arbitration Committee dealing with the concerned complaint.

