

# Romanian Forest Certification Scheme 2024 – Annex 09

PEFC-RO ST 8009:2024



## **Complaints and appeals procedures** for the establishment and operation of the Romanian Certification Scheme

2024

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# 1. Scope

This document describes the procedures for managing complaints and appeals about:

- PEFC Romania decisions and/or activities.
- PEFC Romania members' decisions and/or activities linked to PEFC Romania decisions and activities.
- A failure to comply with one or more stipulations of the Romanian PEFC forest certification scheme by PEFC Romania or its members.

## Note:

- *Complaints about a certified company are handled by its certification body.*
- *Complaints relating to a certification body are handled in line with the relevant accreditation body's complaints and appeals resolution procedure.*
- *Complaints relating to an accreditation body are handled in line with the relevant international accreditation body's complaints and appeals resolution procedure (IAF).*

# 2. Definitions

## 2.1. Complaint

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

## 2.2. Appeal

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

# 3. Arbitration Body

PEFC Romania establishes its arbitration procedures to resolve disagreements and complaints/appeals related to compliance with PEFC standards and procedures. The arbitration body is set up to function as an independent and impartial body, composed of three to five members, including at least one representative of the forestry sector, one of the environmental groups and one representative of the stakeholder group that is the source of the complaint. The members of the arbitration body always choose a chairperson from among their number. If necessary, the arbitration body may request the expertise of specialists.

# 4. Arbitration procedure

## 4.1. Initiation of arbitration

Any interested party may initiate an arbitration procedure by submitting a written request to the PEFC Romania Secretariat.

The application must contain details of:

- i. the detailed description of the facts,
- ii. the positions of the parties involved (if available) and,
- iii. where necessary, reports of the certification body.

#### **4.2. Acknowledgement of receipt**

PEFC Romania Secretariat shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within one week and make a written request to the members of the arbitration body to meet.

#### **4.3. Hearing and Decision**

The hearing will be held within one month of receipt of the complaint and the final decision will be taken within 60 days. In justified circumstances, which may include the need for additional expertise, the period for taking the decision may be extended by a further 30 days. The decision of the arbitration body shall be taken by simple majority; In the event of a tie, the President shall have the casting vote.

#### **4.4. Communication of the decision**

The PEFC Romania Secretariat is responsible for maintaining the protocols of the hearings and for informing the parties involved about the results of the arbitration. The decision of the arbitration body is binding and represents the conclusion of the arbitration procedure for PEFC Romania.

## **5. Whistleblowing system**

PEFC Romania recognizes the importance of transparency and integrity in implementing and monitoring its standards. An effective whistleblowing system is essential to identify and promptly address any deviations from PEFC standards and procedures. Through this system, members and stakeholders can anonymously or identifiably report their breaches or concerns related to the activities of PEFC Romania or certified entities.

#### **5.1. Submission of the report**

Any person who observes or has information regarding an alleged violation of PEFC Romania standards or procedures has the right to report such violation. Reports can be submitted through the following channels:

- i. Through an online form available on the PEFC Romania website.
- ii. By email to the PEFC Romania secretariat.

#### **5.2. Confidentiality and protection of whistleblowers**

PEFC Romania ensures the confidentiality of reports received and the protection of informants. Whistleblowers shall be protected against any retaliation or discrimination as a result of their reporting.

### **5.3. Report investigation and management**

The reports received will be promptly and impartially investigated by the arbitration body of PEFC Romania, depending on the gravity and nature of the alleged violation. If the report proves substantiated, appropriate corrective action shall be taken according to the procedures established by PEFC Romania.

### **5.4. Communication of results**

The PEFC Romania Secretariat will communicate the results of the investigation and the actions taken to the parties involved in the report, to the extent possible and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

By implementing this breach reporting system, PEFC Romania reaffirms its commitment to transparency, accountability and compliance with its standards and principles.