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1. General information - Scope

This procedure defines the establishment and the operating of a dispute settlement body that takes care of any complaints arising from implementation of the scheme or certification procedures that cannot be dealt with using the dispute settlement procedures of the relevant accredited certification body or the relevant accreditation body.

2. Dispute Settlement Body

The members of the dispute settlement body are independent and impartial. The dispute settlement body will be appointed and its members will be convened by the PEFC Belgium. The dispute settlement body is made up of one representative of forest owners, one representative of the timber industry and one representative of environmental bodies. In each case, the chairman must be elected from among the members of the dispute settlement body.

3. Dispute Settlement Procedures

The request for the initiation of a dispute settlement procedure should be sent to the PEFC Belgium secretariat. It must include informative documentation on the actual case, statements from all parties involved and, if appropriate, the result of the internal investigation conducted by the certification body. The PEFC secretariat will confirm receipt of the request.

If within three months of receipt of the request, no regular meeting of the PEFC Belgium is held, then the appointment of the dispute settlement body and its members must be organised on the basis of written correspondence. The dispute settlement body will meet for the first time within this period. For more complex cases an independent expert will be called in. The decision must be made within three months of the first meeting of the dispute settlement body. Decision is taken by a simple majority. The PEFC secretariat is responsible for drafting reports on the meetings of the dispute settlement body and for informing the parties concerned of the outcome of the dispute settlement.

The decision of the dispute settlement body is binding and terminates the dispute settlement of PEFC Belgium. All certificates and confirmations of participation remain valid until the dispute settlement body has announced its decision.