


## cerfoar - Technical Document

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### ANNEX 12

**PG 06.02. Procedure for the resolution of disputes that the association cerfoar shall implement**


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<b>GENERAL PROCEDURE</b> Disputes Resolution	Date of approval	2014 04 07
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## PROCEDURE FOR THE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES THAT THE ASSOCIATION CERFOAR SHALL IMPLEMENT

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## 1. OBJECTIVE

This procedure describes the responsibilities of the Civil Association Administrator of the Argentine Forest Certification System (henceforth the Cerfoar Association) and the actions that shall be met in the process of treating complaints and solving disputes.

## 2. SCOPE

This General Procedure has been approved by the Board of Directors of the Cerfoar Association and applies to the process of treating complaints and solving disputes related to the implementation of the Argentine Forest Certification System or to the sustainable forest management certification procedure and/or chain of custody, which cannot be solved through the disputes resolution procedures of the authorized Certification Body or the appropriate Accreditation Body.

## 3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

cerfoar Association shall ensure that the implementation of the process of treatment of complaints and resolution of disputes is performed observing the following guidelines:

- the information about how and where to present complaints is available to the interested parties in an accessible manner and it is spread for their knowledge;
- the reception of complaints is immediately acknowledged to the complainant, who is informed of the progress of their complaint;
- every complaint is treated equally, objectively and impartially;
- the process of treating complaints and solving disputes is free for the complainant;
- the process of treating complaints and solving disputes is confidential regarding the complainant and his personal information will only be disclosed under their express consent when this is necessary for the treatment of the complaint;
- the effective implementation of the process of treating complaints and solving disputes helps to fulfil the purposes of the cerfoar Association and its continuous improvement.

## 4. PROCEDURE TO TREAT COMPLAINTS AND SOLVE DISPUTES

The Executive Secretariat of cerfoar is responsible for implementing the process of treating complaints and solving disputes and of the control of the records of this process.

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Every complaint shall be addressed in documented form to the Executive Secretariat of cerfoar and shall be accompanied by supporting information for its treatment.

The resolution of the complaint is made by a Disputes Resolution Committee consisting of three members, a representative of the forest producers, a representative of the forest industry and a representative of the other interested parties, independent and impartial summoned *ad hoc* by the Executive Secretariat *ad referendum* of the approval of the Board of Directors of the cerfoar Association.

The process of treating complaints and solving disputes shall follow these stages:

1. Receipt of the complaint:

the Executive Secretariat registers the complaint with the supporting information (background and evidence provided by the complainant) and identifies it unmistakably. The registration of the complaint shall identify the solution sought by the complainant and any other information necessary for the effective treatment of the complaint.

2. Acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint:

the Executive Secretariat notifies the complainant of the receipt of the complaint immediately and in a documented manner.

3. Assessment of the complaint:

the Executive Secretariat assesses the relevance of the complaint to verify that this is within the scope of the PG 06. in force. In case the complaint is rejected, this shall be reported to the complainant together with the justification for the decision adopted.

4. Investigation of the complaint:


the Executive Secretariat investigates the complaint and all the circumstances that led to it, analyses the supporting information and in case it is not sufficient it will request its extension on the part of the complainant or the other parties involved. The level of investigation shall be proportional to the seriousness, frequency and severity of the complaint. The Executive Secretariat shall prepare a report with the results of the investigation.

5. Notification of the Disputes Resolution Committee:

the Executive Secretariat shall, within no more than 60 days after receipt of the complaint, summon the members that compose the committee that will raise each complaint in particular. Each member of the committee receives a copy of the report of the investigation of the complaint elaborated by the executive secretariat.

6. Resolution of the complaint:

the Disputes Resolution Committee shall celebrate the first meeting in no more than 90 days from the reception of the complaint. The Committee has the power to summon an independent external expert for complex complaints that deserve so. The decision will be taken by simple majority within 60 days from the first meeting of the Disputes Resolution Committee.

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The Committee's decision is binding and terminates the process of treatment of a complaint and resolution of disputes in the cerfoar Association.

7. Communication of the resolution of the complaint:

the Executive Secretariat informs the complainant of the decision taken by the committee.

8. Implementation of appropriate corrective and preventive actions:

where appropriate, depending on the analysis and resolution of the complaint, the Executive Secretariat shall implement appropriate corrective and/or preventive actions.

9. Follow-up and records of the process of the treatment of the complaint:

the Executive Secretariat carries out the follow-up and keeps a record of the whole process of treatment of the complaint and dispute resolution, including the implementation of corrective and/or preventive actions and its effectiveness and the minutes of the meetings of the Disputes Resolution Committee.