1. **Introduction**

IPMF, the Instituto Pró Manejo Florestal (henceforth PEFC Brazil), is the entity authorized by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (henceforth PEFC Council) as the National Governing Body responsible for administering PEFC Brazil, the national forest certification system.

Diagrama

Descrição gerada automaticamente

1. **Objective**

To define the process and responsibilities for receiving and addressing complaints and disputes related to governance and administration of the PEFC certification in Brazil, as well as complaints that cannot be resolved by the procedures of the accredited certification body, for forest management or for chain of custody.

1. **Scope**

This guideline applies to PEFC Brazil, all accredited certification bodies, all organizations that have received certification or are in the process of certification, as well as society in general.

1. **Supplementary documentation**

PEFC GD 1004: Administration of PEFC scheme

GL 7/2007 - PEFC Council procedures for the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals

1. **Procedure for resolving disputes and complaints**
   1. Complaints of any nature that cannot be resolved by the certification body shall be forwarded to the Board of Directors of PEFC Brazil via any of the communication channels (phone, e-mail, letter, website, etc.) provided by PEFC Brazil at www.pefcbr.org .
   2. The complaint should be accompanied by evidence related to the case, statements from the involved parties, as well as results of the internal investigation conducted by the certification body, if possible and applicable. This information shall be utilized for analysis and investigation.
      1. If the complaint arrives by telephone, it shall be transcribed and appear along with the evidence related to the case and accompanying statements.
   3. The Board of Directors of PEFC Brazil shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint/dispute upon request by the person who submits it.
   4. The Board of Directors of PEFC Brazil shall ensure that evaluation and decisions related to the complaint are impartial and free of conflicts of interest.
   5. The Board of Directors of PEFC Brazil shall conduct an initial analysis of the complaint and address it internally. When necessary, the Committee for Resolving Disputes and Complaints shall be involved, as described in Chapter 6, along with the Administrative Board.
   6. The complaint shall be responded to within a maximum of 6 months from the date it was received.
   7. The Board of Directors of PEFC Brazil shall formally communicate the decision to all parties involved, and also define appropriate corrective and preventative measures.
   8. The decision of the Board of Directors of PEFC Brazil or the Committee to Resolve Disputes and Complaints (when these are involved involved) is final and cannot be appealed, and concludes the process of disputes and complaints with PEFC Brazil.
   9. All certifications are considered valid until the received complaint is confirmed and resolved.
   10. If onsite investigation at the facilities of the certification body or certified organization is required to substantiate the complaint, the resulting costs will be passed on to the certification body or certified organization, respectively.
   11. The Board of Directors of PEFC Brazil shall be responsible for evaluating cases in which certification or contractual relationships between parties must be suspended, and shall communicate the decision to suspend to the involved parties, along with the duration of this suspension.
   12. PEFC Brazil shall guarantee the confidentiality and secrecy of information received and of those who submit complaints.
2. **Committee for Resolving Disputes and Complaints**
   1. The members of this committee are independent and are nominated and invited on an *ad hoc* basis by the Board of Directors of PEFC Brazil.
   2. The members of the committee shall sign a confidentiality and impartiality agreement, and shall keep everything they may encounter during their participation on the committee confidential.
   3. The committee shall be comprised of 3 members of PEFC Brazil who are shown to be knowledgeable about the subject in question. It shall be the responsibility of PEFC Brazil to balance the interests of committee member so that no single area of interest is overrepresented.
   4. For more complex cases, a specialist in the area shall be recommended; this specialist will advise the committee but will not cast a vote.
   5. The committee shall meet for the first time within a maximum of 3 months from the time the complaint is received.
   6. The committee shall rule on the complaint a maximum of 3 months from the first meeting. The decision shall be a simple majority.
   7. In each case, the president of the committee shall be named by the committee members.
   8. Costs related to the Committee shall be paid by PEFC Brazil.
   9. The Board of Directors of PEFC Brazil is responsible for drafting minutes of the meetings and maintaining necessary records related to the function of the Committee.
3. **Control of documents and records** 
   1. All complaints and their respective responses shall be recorded by PEFC so they can be easily tracked.