



Directives on Referral and Costs Related to Investigation/Special Audits of Certified Facilities on the Basis of a Complaint

(Endorsed by the Complaints Panel on 24 June 2018)

Complaints and Appeals Procedures (2017)

The new Complaints and Appeals Procedures¹ require complaints against a certified unit of an RSPO member to be referred to the relevant Certification Body.

The referral to the relevant Certification Body could be related to the following:

- a) Request for information or clarification on the allegations on the basis of the audits conducted;
- b) The Complaint to be investigated and resolved by the relevant Certification Body, through a special audit.

In the event the Certification Body is requested to proceed with a Special Audit, it is determined that a new audit team, with the required expertise and with a different lead auditor, is to be appointed to ensure impartiality.

The **general rule is for the cost of the re-audit to be borne by the respective Certification Body**. The exception to this is on the basis of the following conditions, which would determine if the cost could be transferred to the Company who is the respondent to the Complaint:

- a) Any breaches or non-compliances which occurred are not partly or wholly due to the omission or incompetency of the Certification audits;
- b) Possible breaches or non-compliances occurred post the last audit and were partly or wholly due to the non-compliance by the Company.

The final determination of cost in relation to the re-audit will be determined by the Complaints Panel, in consultation with the RSPO Assurance Department, upon review of the re-audit report. This shall be determined on a case by case basis.

Further in this regard, reference to the Accreditation Body is justified and warranted in the following circumstances:

- a) The Certification Body, notwithstanding the provisions of the RSPO Certification Systems, is unwilling or unable to address the Complaint. In this context, being unable to address the Complaint includes circumstances where there is evidence that the possible breaches by the Respondent arose partly or wholly due to the Certification Body's incompetence/omissions in the certification process;
- b) The Accreditation Body is in a better position to direct the CB as to actions to be taken by the Certification Body and monitor the progress of the Certification Body's investigation.

As such, Complaints referred to the Certification Body would also trigger reference to the Accreditation Body. **As a general practice this will prompt a further audit by the Accreditation Body, with no further cost implications on the Certification Body or the Company.**

Additional note:

When a Complaint is referred to the Accreditation Body, the prevailing guidelines under the Accreditation Body are to be applied.

This document is prepared as RSPO directive and without prejudice to any Parties.

¹ Complaints and Appeals Procedure (June 2017), Clause 5.9 - *In cases where the complaint is against an RSPO member in relation to a breach of the provisions of the RSPO Key Documents by its certified facility, the Secretariat shall in consultation with the Complaints Panel, refer the Complaint to the Certification Body and or where it deems appropriate to the Accreditation Body.*