

GOV09 – Appeals Committee Terms of Reference		
Changes	Following the ISEAL codes and inquiries from Dutch labour unions, additional points were made to stress impartial efforts to resolve complaints, and allow possibility for complainants to remain anonymous.	
Approval of the original document:	BoD	2008-10-10
Replaces version	EC	2009-04-22
Approval of current version:	EC	2010-11-25

Period of validity and modifications

This document has been approved by the Board of the Union for Ethical BioTrade (in short UEBT) on the date of 22 April 2009. Any modification to these terms of reference shall be approved by the Board of Directors or its Executive Committee. This document remains valid until such a revision occurs.

Appointment and Duration of Terms of officers

The Appeals Committee is composed of minimum 3 and maximum 5 persons. Members of the Appeals Committee should be members of UEBT, but members of the Board shall not take part in the Appeals Committee. Committee members will be appointed by the Board for a duration of 3 years.

Purpose

The Appeals Committee shall serve as an impartial conflict resolution mechanism (as described in PRO07-Appeals Committee), and may be called upon by the Executive Director or the Board to provide advice on any appeal on decisions made by other bodies of UEBT.

Tasks

The tasks of the Appeals Committee are to provide impartial recommendations to the Board regarding grievances on the following issues:

- standard development,
- attribution of grants,
- membership decisions,
- verification decisions, and
- claims made by members regarding UEBT.

All other issues need to be brought up during the General Assembly.

Exceptions: Specific procedures of UEBT may limit or expand the role of the Appeals Committee and overrule these terms of reference. Such procedures shall have been approved by the Board or its Executive Committee. For instance, with regard to appeals on standard setting decisions, decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

Committee President and the role of the Secretariat

The Committee appoints a President from its midst, who will report to the Board and the General Assembly on the functioning and decisions of the Committee

The UEBT Secretariat acts as Secretary to the Appeals Committee. As such it prepares the agenda and background documentation on each agenda point, and elaborates the minutes of each meeting. Before each meeting, it will provide to the Committee a summary of the issue at stake, a clear indication of decisions/feedback required from the Committee, and the necessary background information.

Meetings are convened by the Executive Director or the Board and facilitated by the UEBT Secretariat. Committee members can request that additional issues be put on the agenda, or request that a special meeting is convened to address a specific issue.

Meeting format and decision-making

The Committee discusses issues by e-mail. Teleconferences may be organised if need arises. Committee members normally have two weeks to react on issues raised, unless indicated differently. Committee members may request a different deadline.

Decisions of the Appeals Committee shall be taken by consensus of all its members. The President of the Committee will oversee decision-making processes.

Confidentiality & conflict of interest

If a decision to be taken creates a potential conflict of interest with other (applicant) members, she/he shall notify this to the Appeals Committee. In case of a conflict of interest, the member shall refrain from taking part in the relevant discussions and decisions.

Integrants to the Appeals Committee shall sign a confidentiality agreement addressing the issues of confidentiality and conflict of interest.

A complainant may request the UEBT Secretariat to remain anonymous. Such requests will be assessed on a case-to-case basis and accepted when warranted.

Reporting

Minutes will be prepared on all meetings of the Appeals Committee. Minutes will be signed by the President of the Committee and presented to the Board.

All affected parties will be informed about the decisions taken.