

Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Friend of the Sea works to ensure credibility for its conduct. Complaints and appeals concerning the Friend of the Sea Project are important to our policies, as they help Friend of the Sea to improve transparency, participation and fairness. Inputs about products' certifications, during the certification process, shall initially be addressed by means of the [Objections Form](#) and [Objections Procedure](#). At the end of the certification process, if the party raising the objection deems the relevant certification body was unable to address it satisfactorily, a complaint shall be registered by means of this procedure.

According to the procedure described below, stakeholders and applicants can complain at any time about certification decisions and Friend of the Sea's governance, scheme management, executive functions and standard-setting process. This procedure regulates the process by which parties can file complaints and appeals of non-compliance as well as how Friend of the Sea handles the complaints and reacts to arbitration's conclusions.

1. In order to be deemed acceptable, complaints and appeals must comply with the following:
 - Be submitted by means of the [Complaints and Appeals Form \(CAF\)](#), which is available on the website;
 - Sent via email to info@friendofthesea.org;
 - Filled out in English;
 - Filled out in all its parts;
 - Accompanied by evidence.
2. Within 10 working days of receiving the filled out CAF, Friend of the Sea shall acknowledge receipt and inform the complaining party.
3. Complaints about products' certifications, as well as appeals of non-compliance to certification decisions, will be forwarded by Friend of the Sea to the relevant certification body, who will be required to investigate the complaint under its own accredited systems and procedures. If the complainant deems the relevant certification body was unable to address the complaints and appeals of non-compliances satisfactorily, these can be submitted again to



Friend of the Sea, who will forward them to the designated mediation and arbitration institute ([INMEDIAR](#)) who will contact the complaining party and propose its arbitration services. Although INMEDIAR's website is written only in Italian, under request, arbitration services can be carried out in English. For more info about it please write to info@friendofthesea.org.

4. Complaints and appeals related to Friend of the Sea's governance (including the Board of Directors), scheme management, executive functions, and standard setting procedures will be forwarded to Friend of the Sea's Board of Directors, which will, within 15 working days, provide a reply to the complaining party. In case the complaining and appealing party will not deem the Board of Directors' reply satisfactory, it will have the opportunity to request an arbitration by means of the designated mediation and arbitration institute ([INMEDIAR](#)).
5. Friend of the Sea's Board of Directors will have to act accordingly to the arbitration's conclusions and when requested, it will have to correct any situation not in alignment with Friend of the Sea's principles and procedures, by means of an Action Plan to be notified to the complaining and appealing party, not later than 60 working days following the date of receipt of the arbitration's conclusions.
6. At the end of the process, a summary of the complaint and subsequent actions shall be available on the official website, in the section "[Previous and Pending Complaints](#)".