

**STANDARD OPERATING**

**PROCEDURE**

**COMPLAINTS AGAINST**

**FAIRTRADE STANDARDS**

**SETTING | SHORT SUMMARY**

---

**Approved by:** Andreas Kratz

**Approved on:** 01.02.2016

**Audience:** Fairtrade stakeholders

---

**Contact for comments:** [standards-pricing@fairtrade.net](mailto:standards-pricing@fairtrade.net)

**For further information:** [www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net)



---

## Procedure for complaints

---

Any relevant stakeholders can submit a procedural complaint against the setting of a standard. This is done by sending the properly filled in *Complaint form* to [standards-pricing@fairtrade.net](mailto:standards-pricing@fairtrade.net), from where it will be forwarded to the Quality Manager at Fairtrade International.

### Review

On reception of a complaint the Quality Manager confirms receipt to the body making the complaint within 10 days. The Quality Manager evaluates whether the complaint is valid. A complaint might reasonably be made on the following grounds:

- The determination of a standard not adhering to the SOP Development of Fairtrade standards
- The determination of a standard not adhering to the Project Assignment available on the website

A decision on the acceptance of a complaint is made by the Quality Manager within 30 days from receipt.

### Acceptance

When a complaint is accepted, the Quality Manager sends the Complaints Action list for following up on the respective case to the body making the complaint within 10 days from announcing the decision. Actions normally include that S&P proceeds to review the relevant standard.

### Rejection and pursuit

If a complaint is rejected, the information about the reasons is provided by the Quality Manager to the body making the complaint within 10 days from announcing the decision. After rejection the body making the complaint may choose to pursue the complaint. In this case, the body making the complaint would amend its complaint in consideration of the reasons for rejection. The amended complaint is submitted to the Quality Manager. The Quality Manager then makes preparations to refer the complaint to the Standards Committee (SC) and informs the body making the complaint about the further steps and timelines of the procedure.

There are a number of possible outcomes of the review of a complaint by the SC:

- The SC may accept a complaint; in this case a new project would be carried out by S&P.
- The SC may reject a complaint. No further complaint is possible.
- The SC may declare all or part of the standard against which a complaint is made as invalid and substitute alternate wording or declare the previous version of the standard as valid.
- The SC may declare that a complaint is valid but that reconsidering the standard as per the complaint would not affect the application of the standard in practice; in this case the complaint would be taken into account at the next review of the corresponding standard.

In any case the body making the complaint is informed about the decision made by SC within 10 days. The decision of the SC is final and no further complaint against the decision is possible.