

**Suspension, Withdrawal,
Appeal and Complaints
for Sustainability Scheme**


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02.09.2024

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CHANGE HISTORY

Rev.	Effective Date	Reason / Nature of Changes
0	15.8.2016	New Issue for MSPO & RSPO certification.
1	02.02.2017	Further defined retention period of record at clause 7.4.
2	30.10.2017	To address RSPO SCC Desk Review audit findings
3	02.07.2018	To follow up with RSPO Certification Systems for Principles & Criteria – June 2017
4	27.08.2018	To address RSPO P&C Desk Review audit findings
5	02.11.2020	Delete RSPO; Add ISO 17065; Add MSPO SCCS; Editorial changes
6	23.03.2023	TNM new brand/logo
7	16.08.2023	Management Change - HoD
8	01.08.2024	Implementing MS2530:2022
9	02.09.2024	New appointment of Quality Executive. -To change from Scheme Executive to Quality Executive

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1. INTRODUCTION

To implement sustainability requirements in the oil palm industry. Sustainability requirements include the environment, social, health & safety and economics. Based on this standard a certification scheme was established. This document refers to procedure for handling suspension, withdrawal, appeal, complaints and grievances for the certification scheme.

2. SCOPE

This procedure prescribes the step to be taken and assigned personnel responsible on handling suspension, withdrawal, appeal, complaints and grievances concerning certified organizations that is open to any interested party in accordance with the most recent revision of international standard.

3. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

- 3.1 ISO 17021 Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- 3.2 ISO / IEC17065: Conformity Assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
- 3.3 MS 2530:2022 Standard Series
- 3.4 Requirements for Certification Bodies

4. SUSPENDING, WITHDRAWING OR REDUCING THE SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

- 4.1 The certification body shall have a policy and documented procedures for suspension, withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification, and shall specify the subsequent actions by the certification body.
- 4.2 In the event of suspending, withdrawal or reinstatements of certification, the Certification Body shall inform the scheme owner within two (2) working days accordingly together with the effective date and justification of suspension or withdrawal.
- 4.3 The certification body shall suspend certification in cases when, for example:
 - a) Failed to meet certification requirements;
 - b) The certified client does not allow surveillance or re-certification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies; or
 - c) The certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension.
- 4.4 The certification body shall have enforceable arrangements with its clients to ensure that in case of suspension and withdrawals the client refrains from further promotion and advertising of its certification.
- 4.5 Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension in a time established by the certification body shall result in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification. The suspension would not exceed six (6) months from date of noticed from Certification Body.
- 4.6 Upon request by any party, the certification body shall correctly state the status of certification of a client's management system as being suspended, withdrawn or reduced.

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- 4.7 In special circumstances, scheme owner may instruct a Certification Body to suspend or withdraw a certificate. This must be based on the internal processes and decisions within the scheme owner.
- 4.8 Following withdrawal and termination of a certificate, a full re-certification audit is necessary before certification can be re-awarded.

5. APPEALS

- 5.1 The certification body shall have a documented process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on appeals.
- 5.2 The certification body shall be responsible for all decisions at all levels of the appeals-handling process. The certification body shall ensure that the persons engaged in the appeals-handling process are different from those who carried out the audits and made the certification decisions.
- 5.3 Submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.
- 5.4 The appeals-handling process shall include at least the following elements and methods:
- An outline of the process for receiving, validating and investigating the appeal, and for deciding what actions are to be taken in response to it, taking into account the results of the previous similar appeals
 - Tracking and recording appeals, including actions undertaken to resolve them
 - Ensuring that any appropriate correction and corrective action are taken
- 5.5 The certification body shall acknowledge receipt of the appeal and shall provide the appellant with progress reports and the outcome.
- 5.6 The decision to be communicated to the appellant shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of appeal with a time frame of not exceeding 60 calendar days.
- 5.7 The certification body shall give formal notice to the appellant of the end of the appeals-handling process.

6. COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

- 6.1 Upon receipt of a complaint or grievance, the certification body shall confirm whether the complaint / grievance relates to certification activities that it is responsible for and, if so, shall deal with it. If the complaint relates to a certified client, then examination of the complaint / grievance shall consider the effectiveness of the client's sustainability certification.
- 6.2 Any complaint / grievance about a certified client shall also be referred by the certification body to the certified client in question at an appropriate time.
- 6.3 The certification body shall have a documented process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on complaints/ grievances. This process shall be subjected to requirements for confidentiality, as it relates to the complainant and to the subject of the complaint.
- 6.4 The complaints / grievance handling process shall include at least the following elements and methods:
- An outline of the process for receiving, validating and investigating the appeal, and for deciding what actions are to be taken in response to it, taking into account the results of the previous similar appeals

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- b) Tracking and recording appeals, including actions undertaken to resolve them
 - c) Ensuring that any appropriate correction and corrective action are taken
- 6.5 The certification body receiving complaint/ grievance shall be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint.
- 6.6 Whenever possible, the certification body shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint/ grievance, and shall provide the complainant with the progress reports and outcome.
- 6.7 The decision to be communicated to the complainant shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of complaint/ grievance.
- 6.8 Whenever possible, the certification body shall give formal notice to the complainant of the end of the complaints/ grievance handling process to the complainant.
- 6.9 The Certification Body shall update the status of all the complaints to the scheme owner as following.

Notify the MSPO Scheme Owner within 6 months from the date of the complaints are received. Unresolved complaints will be handled by an Arbitration Committee (AC) set up by the Scheme Owner.

7. RECORDS OF APPLICANTS AND CLIENTS

- 7.1 The certification body shall maintain records on the audit and other certification activities for all clients including organizations that submitted applications, and all organizations audited, certified, or with certification suspended or withdrawn.
- 7.2 Records on certified clients shall include the following:
- a) application information and initial, surveillance and recertification audit reports;
 - b) certified agreement;
 - c) justification of the methodology used for sampling;
 - d) justification for auditor time determination;
 - e) verification of correction and corrective actions;
 - f) records of complaints and appeals, and any subsequent correction or corrective actions;
 - g) committee deliberations and decisions, if applicable;
 - h) documentation of the certification decisions;
 - i) certification documents, including the scope of certification with respect to product, process or service, as applicable;
 - j) related records necessary to establish the credibility of the certification, such as evidence of the competence of auditors and technical experts.
- 7.3 The certification body shall keep the records on applicants and clients secure to ensure that the information is kept confidential. Records shall be transported, transmitted or transferred in a way that ensures that confidentiality is maintained.

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- 7.4 The certification body shall have a documented policy and documented procedure on the retention of records. Retention period of all these records must be kept at least 2 certification cycle + current (minimum 15 years).