



PROCEDURE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

LIFE-IN-MP04-1.0-R1-EN

Version: 1.0-R1

Language: English

Applicability: International

Title: Procedure for Conflict Resolution

Code: LIFE-IN-MP04-1.0-R1-EN

Applicability: International

Type: Management Procedure (MP)

Version: 1.0-R1

Status: Final

Language: English

Approval: LIFE Institute Board of Directors

Date: 08/31/2023

In case of doubt and/or inconsistency between versions, the original document must be consulted (Portuguese version).

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OBJECTIVE

This procedure establishes guidelines for the resolution of conflicts related to the LIFE Institute.

APPLICATION

It applies to the LIFE Institute itself, as well as to National Initiatives representing it, to Certification Bodies, to LIFE Certified Organizations, to interested parties and to other individuals and/or entities involved with the LIFE Institute.

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1. COMPLAINTS AND DENUNCIATIONS

For all intents and purposes, in the context of LIFE Certification, the following situations shall be considered as conflicts:

- a) Complaints related to the interpretation, application, coherence and effectiveness of the LIFE Certification Methodology, the LIFE Certification process or the performance of bodies involved in the LIFE Certification System such as: LIFE Institute, National Representation Initiatives of the LIFE Institute, Certification Bodies and Certified Organizations ; or inherent to audit processes and results;
- b) Denunciations relating to the performance/functioning of National Initiatives that represent the LIFE Institute, Certification Bodies or Certified Organizations;
- c) Appeals against decisions taken regarding LIFE Certification and / or suspension of activities related to LIFE Certification. Appeals against the Certification Body or ultimately against the LIFE Institute, when the Certification Body decides to suspend the LIFE Certification of a Certified Organization.

The complaining party may be bodies involved directly or indirectly in the LIFE Certification System, such as: the LIFE Institute, National Initiatives representing the LIFE Institute, Certification Bodies, Certified Organizations, and other individuals/entities interested in LIFE Certification.

The following bodies may be subject to complaints: LIFE Institute, National Initiatives, Certification Bodies and Certified Organizations.

Denunciations about any irregularity concerning to LIFE Certification may be made by National Initiatives, Certification Bodies, Certified Organizations, stakeholders and other individuals/entities interested in LIFE Certification.

Among the institutions which may be denounced are: the LIFE Institute itself, National Initiatives, Certification Bodies and Certified Organizations.

Denunciations relating to irregularities in the LIFE Certification process may involve the following

parties:

- a) Denunciations originating from the Certification Body, or other interested parties pointing out failure in the performance of National Initiatives. In this case, the denunciation shall be sent to the LIFE Institute;
- b) Denunciations originating from Certified Organizations, or other interested parties communicating irregularities observed in the behavior of the Certification Body. In this case, the denunciation must be sent to the National Initiative of the country in which the denounced Certification Body is located, or directly to the LIFE Institute, if the denounced Certification Body is situated in Brazil;
- c) Denunciations originating from stakeholders pointing out failures observed in the behavior of a Certified Organization. In this case, the denunciation shall be sent to the Certification Body responsible for auditing the denounced Certified Organization.

Whenever possible, conflicts arising from complaints and/or denunciations shall be resolved directly through communication between the parties.

The institution which receives the complaint or which has been denounced shall elect a member of their team to establish the main conflict resolution strategies and to follow the process. All stages shall be documented. The informal conversations shall be registered in the form of a summary document with the date and time of the conversation included. Copies of all documents shall be kept in both print and digital format, as shall all electronic communication exchanged between the parties.

The institution to which the denunciation is to be sent; in this case the National Initiative, the LIFE Institute or the Certification Body, shall designate a team member to contact the denounced institution, communicate the denunciation received, and follow the process of conflict resolution.

Complaints or denunciations may be sent to the recipient via normal post, email, fax, telephone, meetings, among others.

The process of the resolution of conflicts arising from complaints or denunciations shall be resolved as a matter of priority between the parties. Should consensus between the involved parties prove impossible through the direct process, the following points shall be observed:

- a) For conflicts outside Brazil: firstly, request support for the National Initiative. Ultimately, if the conflict cannot be resolved by the National Initiative, it should seek formal support from the LIFE Institute and communicate the parties involved in the process;
- b) For conflicts inside Brazil: request formal support directly from the LIFE Institute.

If the situation is solved by the intervention of the LIFE Institute, the conflict is considered closed. In case there is no consensus on this phase, parties can file an appeal.

2. APPEALS

The appeals, that is, requests to reconsider decisions taken by LIFE Institute or the Certification Body, may come from National Initiatives, Certification Bodies or Certified Organizations.

The appeals may occur in the following ways:

- a) Appeal by any National Initiative against a decision taken by LIFE Institute. In this case, it should be contacted directly to the LIFE Institute.
- b) Appeal by a Certification Body located either inside or outside Brazil, against a decision taken by LIFE Institute. In this case, the appeal must be sent directly to the LIFE Institute;
- c) Appeal by a Certified Organization against a decision taken by its Certification Body or by LIFE Institute (e.g. suspension of LIFE Certification). In this case, the appeal shall be sent to the Certification Body responsible or to LIFE Institute if the Institute is directly involved.

The process of resolution of conflicts arising from appeals shall be resolved between the parties. Should consensus between the involved parties not be possible directly, the following points shall be observed:

- a) For conflicts outside Brazil: firstly, request for support to the National Initiative that represents the LIFE Institute nationally, when there is this figure in the country in question. Ultimately, if the conflict cannot be resolved by the National Initiative, or if there is no local representation figure, the demand should be sent directly to the LIFE Institute;
- b) For conflicts inside Brazil: request formal support directly from the LIFE Institute.

The appeals may be sent to the recipient through the normal post, email, telephone, or meetings, among others.

The institution which receives an appeal shall name a person from its team to be responsible for establishing the conflict resolution strategies and to follow the process. All stages shall be documented. The informal conversations shall be recorded in the form of summary documents with the date and time of the conversation included. Copies of all documents shall be kept in both print and digital format, as shall all electronic communication exchanged between the parties.

3. REQUESTS FOR FORMAL SUPPORT FROM LIFE INSTITUTE FOR RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

The support of LIFE Institute shall be requested in the last resort, when a consensus among the parties was not possible. In this case, the responsible person shall send to the LIFE Institute a formal support request, in accordance with the Conflicts Presentation Form (CPF) presented in Appendix I of this document. The Conflicts Presentation Form shall be filled out in Portuguese, Spanish or English, signed by the complainant/applicant and sent to LIFE Institute via normal post, email or fax, among others.

When the resolution of the denunciation sent to the National Initiative or to the Certification Body is not in their power, the signing and sending of the Conflicts Presentation Form (CPF) shall be the responsibility of one of the members of the team of either the National Initiative or the Certification Body, who has been designated to carry out the process of conflict resolution.

4. CONFLICT ANALYSIS BY LIFE INSTITUTE

After receiving the formal support request LIFE Institute team will carry out an analysis of the conflict, so as to evaluate whether to proceed with it or not. If the intervention by the Conflict Resolution Committee, mentioned in item 5 of this document, is unnecessary, the LIFE Institute must send to the claimant or applicant, as well as to the other parties involved, the Conflict Resolution Form (CRF) contained in in Appendix II of this document.

The Conflict Resolution Form shall be filled out in a language understood by both parties involved in the conflict and sent via email by the LIFE Institute to them.

If a support is requested for the resolution of a denunciation sent initially to the National Initiative or to the Certification Body, LIFE Institute shall send the Conflict Resolution Form (CRF) to the institution which contacted it. This is responsible for passing on the decision to the institution that made the denunciation as well as to the denounced organization.

Should the intervention by the Conflict Resolution Committee prove necessary, the LIFE Institute team shall name the Conflict Resolution Committee, according to the procedures described in item 5 of this document.

5. THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

Conflicts received by the LIFE Institute will first be evaluated by the internal team.

Conflicts forwarded to the LIFE Institute whose resolution is not promptly resolved by the internal team, shall be forwarded to the Conflict Resolution Committee. It falls to the involved parts to designate the members who shall make up the Committee for the resolution of the conflict.

The Conflict Resolution Committee shall consist of a minimum of three individuals. All shall be impartial and free of any conflict of interest in relation to the parties involved.

The Conflict Resolution Committee members shall maintain absolute confidentiality on the matter

dealt with, assuming this commitment in signed term.

The LIFE Institute will be directly responsible for coordinating the work of the Committee, providing a deadline for the solution, even if partial coordination is delegated to an external representative acting on its behalf.

The meeting (s) between the members of the Committee necessary to the progress of the matter, may be in person or held by conference call, by telephone or any other means, provided that it is registered.

For discussion and resolution of the conflict, the Committee shall adopt all the steps necessary, such as: consulting experts, requesting extra information, scheduling additional meetings, among others.

The decisions shall be obtained by agreement between the members of the Committee. Should it prove impossible to reach a consensus, the final decision shall be based on a simple majority vote.


After analysis of the situation, the Committee shall send its decision to the LIFE Institute.

6. REFERENCES


ABNT NBR ISO/IEC 17011 – Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies carrying out the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix I – Conflicts Presentation Form (CPF)

	<p style="text-align: center;">Conflicts/Demands Presentation Form (CPF) Date: / /</p>
<p>1. Conflict/Demand origin <input type="checkbox"/> Complaint <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal <input type="checkbox"/> Denunciation <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>	
<p>2. General information about the conflict or demand</p> <p>2.1 Description:</p> <p>2.2 Evidences that justify an unresolved conflict or demand:</p> <p>2.3 Measures taken so far to resolve the conflict (if any):</p>	
<p>3. Location, date and signature:</p>	

Appendix II – Conflict Resolution Form (CRF)

	<p>Conflict Resolution Form (CRF) Date: / /</p>
<p>1. Brief conflict description (demand in analysis)</p>	
<p>2. Conflict resolution Committee (composition including the professional profile of members or experience / relationship with the issue under analysis, which justifies their participation)</p>	
<p>3. Brief description of the analysis process (date, participants, subject and referrals of meetings, and mails, conference calls or other steps of the analysis process)</p>	
<p>4. Process analysis 4.1 Proceed: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 4.2 If no, give reasons:</p>	
<p>5. Process situation</p> <p>5.1 Resolved (summary of the resolution and current situation)</p> <p>5.2 Pending. Referrals: (summary of required actions, deadlines and responsibilities)</p>	

NOTES ON DEVELOPMENT OF THIS DOCUMENT

Version 1.0: approved on 01/29/2013, by the LIFE Institute Board of Directors. Initial issue of the document.

Version 1.0: approved on 05/17/2018, by the LIFE Institute Board of Directors. Adjustment of document layout and content review.

Version 1.0-R1: approved on 08/31/2023, by the LIFE Institute Board of Directors. Change of document layout and insertion of the new LIFE Institute logo.