

The IUCN NL Complaints procedure

Definition of terms

Article 1

In this procedure the following terms mean:

- complaint: any expression of dissatisfaction with IUCN NL policies or the execution of these policies by IUCN NL or one of its funds. Complaints may be related to marketing and fundraising, but also to the services supplied by IUCN NL (subsidies, opinion forming and information) and integrity questions, experienced either as a victim or a witness or in case of suspicion.
- complainant: any person directly or indirectly contacted by IUCN NL and any person who uses services or products supplied by IUCN NL or its legal representative, or any person who is planning to use those services or products or who has used them in the past.
- alleged perpetrator: IUCN NL, or any person who works for IUCN NL (either as a volunteer or an employee) to whom the complaint is directly related.
- reception of complaints: listening to questions or complaints, giving information and advice in connection with these questions and complaints and also providing support (if necessary through mediation) in any further discussion of the complaint. A complaint may be submitted orally, but the complainant may also choose to submit the complaint in writing.
- treatment of complaints: the investigation into the cause of the complaint, if needs be resulting in measures relating to the complaint.
- Human Resources Manager: the confidential counsellor working for IUCN NL, appointed for external integrity issues.
- Regional coordinator, project leader: the operational manager of the staff members of a regional team or a project within the IUCN NL bureau.
- complaints committee: the IUCN NL management team and the HR manager.

Objective of the complaints procedure

Article 2

The complaints procedure has the following objectives:

- to do justice to the individual complainant;
- to enhance the quality of the IUCN NL services.

Basic principles of the complaints procedure

Article 3

The complaints procedure is based on the following principles:

- whenever possible, the complaint will be discussed between the complainant and the person directly involved;
- In case of integrity issues, the case may be discussed with the confidential counsellor whereupon the decision to file a formal complaint can be made;
- the reception of complaints on project level is preferable to immediate treatment of complaints by the complaints committee;

- if necessary, the complaints committee decides on a formal complaint and informs the complainant on any measures taken by IUCN NL with regard to the complaint;
- the complaints procedure is free of charge and is easily accessible;
- the complaint should be dealt with promptly in accordance with set, clear-cut procedures;
- both parties may be heard according to the principle of hearing both sides of the argument;
- both parties have the right to inspect any documents that may be relevant for the treatment of the complaint;
- personally identifiable information about the complainant and the alleged perpetrator will be treated and recorded carefully and in confidence;
- the complaints committee does not decide on liability.

To submit a complaint

Article 4

1. The complainant preferably first applies to the staff member directly involved or to the head of the IUCN NL team against which the complaint is directed, in order to try and find a solution.
2. If the complainant and the staff member or team leader in question cannot reach a satisfactory solution for the complaint or if the complainant does not wish to discuss the complaint with the staff member or team leader in question, the complainant may submit a formal complaint with the IUCN NL complaints committee. This complaint must be submitted in writing to mail@iucn.nl. The complainant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt.
3. Serious complaints involving inappropriate behaviour or staff (e.g. rudeness, discrimination or harassment) will be directed to the Human Resource Manager (mail@iucn.nl).

Responsibilities of the regional coordinator/project leader regarding the reception of complaints

Article 5

The head of the team against which the complaint is directed has the following responsibilities with regards to the complaints procedure:

- to support the staff member against whom the complaint is directed in the careful reception of the complaint;
- to help the complainant in finding a satisfactory solution for the complaint if necessary;
- to help the complainant in trying to restore the relationship of trust with IUCN NL or the IUCN NL staff member involved;
- to mediate between the complainant and the staff member involved, on the express request of the complainant or the staff member involved;
- to inform the complainant about the possibility of submitting the complaint to the complaints committee;
- to signal fundamental shortcomings in the service provided by IUCN NL.
- to report to the complaints committee about any registered complaints.

Responsibilities of the complaints committee regarding the reception of complaints

Article 6

The complaints committee has the following responsibilities:

- to decide on the submitted complaint based on the way the complaint was handled and, if necessary, to take measures arising from the complaint;
- to signal and to remove fundamental shortcomings in the service provided by IUCN NL.

Procedure of the complaints committee regarding the handling of complaints

Article 7

- The complaints committee ensures that the complainant is informed about the proposed procedure within two weeks after submitting the complaint.
- If a complaint does not contain sufficient information in the opinion of the complaints committee, it will give the complainant the opportunity to provide more clarity.
- The complainant, the alleged perpetrator and any other individuals who must be heard in the opinion of the complaints committee, may be summoned for the oral proceedings by the complaints committee.
- In assessing the complaint, the complaints committee complies with those requirements which, according to generally accepted standards, can reasonably be imposed on the treatment of complaints.
- A report will be made of the adopted procedure and of the statements of the parties involved and any experts heard by the complaints committee. The report will also comprise the decision of the complaints committee on the submitted complaint and the measures proposed in consequence of the complaint.

Article 8

- If a complaint is related to a member of the complaints committee, the member may voluntarily withdraw from the procedure.
- The members of the complaints committee and other persons involved in the procedure are subject to a duty of secrecy regarding the information they have received, either in their capacity of member of the complaints committee or within the context of their involvement.

Time limits

Article 9

- The complaints committee will notify the complainant and the alleged perpetrator in writing of its findings with regard to the complaint within a reasonable time limit, but no later than two months from the receipt of the complaint. If the complaint cannot be settled within the stipulated time limit, the complaints committee will notify the complainant in writing, stating the reasons for the breach of the time limit.
- The complaints committee also notifies the complainant of the measures taken regarding the complaint.

Discontinuation of the procedure

Article 10

- A complaint will no longer be treated when it is withdrawn by the complainant, or when the complainant no longer feels the need for continuation of treatment after mediation and/or consultation.
- The complainant always retains the right to apply to the proper judicial authority, such as the civil court, the administrative court or the criminal court.
- If the complaint is heard by a judicial authority as mentioned in paragraph 2, the complaints committee will, in consultation with the complainant, determine which parts of the complaint still need to be treated by the complaints committee.
- If the treatment of a complaint is discontinued, the complainant and the alleged perpetrator will be notified in writing, stating the reasons for the discontinuation.

Concluding provisions

Article 11

IUCN NL will take care of the publication of this complaints procedure.

Article 12

This complaints procedure is public. The complete text of the complaints procedure is available in Dutch and the other IUCN languages (on demand) and on the IUCN NL website. Grant recipients will be notified of the existence of this procedure.

Article 13

Within two years of the effective date of this complaints procedure, the complaints committee will evaluate this complaints procedure.

Article 14

All matters not provided for in this complaints procedure will be decided by the direction of IUCN NL.