

RICERT Grievance mechanism



Version	Author/Reviser	Date approved	Changes
v. 1.0	Niclas Tunebro	181203	First version created
V 1.1	Niclas Tunebro	190130	Updated for anonymous grievance

1 Introduction

The RICERT Grievance mechanism provides any interested party or stakeholder with a formal and structured way of submitting a grievance (a complaint, allegation etc.), perceived or actual, relating to decisions or operations of RICERT or any certified organisation. The mechanism aims to solve any grievance in a transparent and unbiased way and prevent future possible disputes. It also facilitates continuous improvement of RICERT.

2 Scope

The mechanism provides opportunity for:

- Any interested party or stakeholder to submit a grievance in relation to an activity performed by RICERT or an organisation that has been certified by RICERT

The following list gives examples of issues that may be treated via the grievance mechanism:

- Appeals of a Certification decision or audit activity performed by a RICERT
- Termination of certification (due to e.g. misuse of the scheme trademark or any material breach)
- A certified organisation's compliance with applicable scheme
- A certified organisation's misuse of the certificate

Grievances against the Board or CEO to be forwarded for handling by the Impartiality committee to ensure objective assessments (i.e. not in scope for RICERT Grievance mechanism).

3 Transparency and documentation

To ensure transparency, all organisations that are subject of a grievance will be informed sufficiently through the whole process and of any progress. Involved parties may also request information as needed. The grievance manager responsible for the current grievance will be obligated to document all communication, and parties involved will be able to track the grievance until fully resolved.

4 Submission of a grievance

All grievances are to be put forward to RICERT in writing. Grievances regarding the performance of RICERT shall be submitted within 30 days.

If the submitted grievance is found applicable the grievance will be handled by a grievance manager appointed by RICERT in dialogue with the involved parties. All grievance managers shall have relevant knowledge of the context and as far as possible be impartial and free of any conflict of interest in relation to the grievance and the parties involved. RICERT reserves the right to make the final decision on grievance manager, should any disagreements occur.

Steps in submitting a grievance:

Please note: the given time limits below are to be seen as guidelines, timing may vary depending on the severity of the grievance and number of parties involved. In total a grievance is estimated to be treated and decided upon in 90 days, excluding time for any appeals of the decision.

1. Contact RICERT with the following information about the grievance:

- Name of contact person, name of organisation and contact details (non mandatory for anonymous Grievance holders)
- Parties involved
- Description of the grievance. (Description and/or evidence of any actions taken at lower levels to deal with the grievance, e.g. direct contact with the party that the grievance is aimed at)

- Any steps taken to resolve the grievance (non mandatory for anonymous Grievance holders)
- Expected outcomes / actions to resolve the grievance

RICERT will acknowledge receipt of the submitted grievance (if not anonymous Grievance holder)

2. The grievance holder (i.e. the organisation submitting the grievance) will be informed by RICERT if the grievance is found eligible or not (i.e. is in the scope for the RICERT grievance mechanism) within 7 days by RICERT (if not anonymous Grievance holder)

3. If the grievance is found eligible, the grievance holder and the defendant will be contacted within 14 days by the appointed grievance manager (if not anonymous Grievance holder).

4. Parties may within 10 days provide any written reaction or supporting evidence.

5. The appointed grievance manager will start the process of solving the grievance and within 60 days notify all parties by e-mail the result of the process and reasons for the decision and any actions taken or expected by any party.

6. Appeals to the decision may be submitted by any party within 30 days after notification of the decision via mail or e-mail to RICERT and shall include:

- Name and contact details
- Decision which is appealed
- Ground for the appeal

7. The appeal holder (i.e. the organisation submitting the appeal) will be informed if the appeal is found eligible within 7 days by RICERT.

8. If the appeal is found eligible, the appeal is handled by a new independent grievance manager (not the same grievance manager as in the first instance), appointed according to the same guidelines as described above. All parties will be informed and contacted within 14 days.

9. Parties may within 10 days provide any written reaction or supporting evidence.

10. The grievance manager(s) will hear parties and convene sessions deemed necessary for a sound judgment. Decision will be taken and notified to all parties including reasons to the decisions and any actions taken within 60 days. The decision of the appeal is binding to all parties and no further appeal on the same matter will be accepted.

11. If any party is not satisfied after the appeal process at RICERT, the issue may be escalated via the grievance mechanism of the applicable scheme owner.