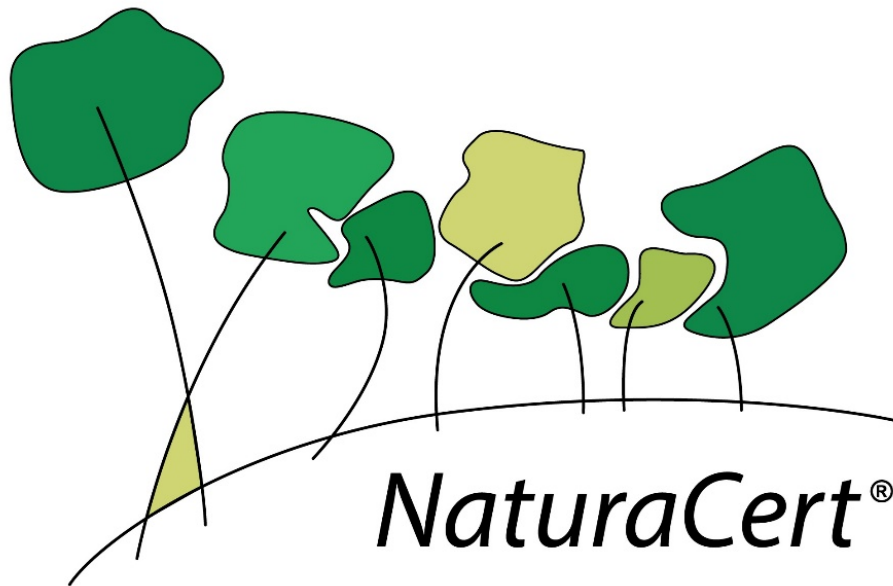


## GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR PRODUCT CERTIFICATION



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Certification is the procedure by which a third party ensures that the assessed person complies with the requirements that regulate their production, processing, and marketing. The certification according to the scope may include tests of the product in the field or in the market, evaluation of the production systems of the raw material, the production system of the process plant and the monitoring of the commercial process through supervision and control.

**NaturaCert** It is a non-profit organization created at the initiative of the Natura Colombia Foundation, which acts with total independence from it and from any other entity offering certification services for all agricultural companies and / or producers of any commercial size that require oversight of a third-party organization that performs its activity impartially, without any discrimination, with absolute confidentiality and without conflict of interest.

By providing your certification services, **NaturaCert** responsibly assumes the decisions made regarding the granting, maintenance, extension, suspension, or cancellation of the certification.

The criteria against which certification decisions are evaluated and decisions are made are contained in the different policies, regulations, standards, or guidelines under which the service is provided by **NaturaCert**.

**NaturaCert** does not supply or design products of the type it certifies, does not provide advice, or provide consulting services about any of the principles and requirements of the different policies, regulations, standards, or guidelines under which it provides its services. It does not provide any product or service that could compromise the confidentiality, objectivity or impartiality of the certification process or its independence.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Scope of the certification:** coverage or limit of the certification.

**Appeal:** A client's request for reconsideration of any adverse decision made by the Certification Body related to their desired certification status. Adverse decisions include refusal to accept an application, refusal to perform an audit, requests for corrective actions, changes in the scope of certification, decisions to deny, suspend or cancel a certification, and any other action that prevents certification.

**Justified Appeal:** This is an appeal whose evaluation result concluded that it had adequate technical support to grant a response in favor of the client's request.

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**Unjustified appeal:** this is an appeal whose evaluation result concluded that it did not have adequate technical support to grant a response in favor of the client's request.

**Audit/ inspection:** systematic, independent, and documented process through which evidence is obtained to evaluate them objectively to determine the degree to which the criteria of a specific standard / norm / protocol are met.

**Auditor / inspector:** person performing the audit / inspection. To facilitate the reading and understanding of this procedure, the personnel employed by NaturaCert to carry out the audit / inspection work will be designated as an evaluator.

**Conformity:** compliance with the requirement of the standard / norm / protocol evaluated.

**Competence:** personal behavior and capacity of the auditor / inspector to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their education, work experience, as well as their training and experience in audit / inspection processes.

**Conclusions of the evaluation:** results of an audit / inspection after considering the objectives and all the findings of the evaluation.

**Dispute:** An appeal that cannot be satisfactorily resolved by NaturaCert or that requires resolution by another instance, as in the case where the interpretation of criteria is disputed.

**Evaluation team:** one or more evaluators who carry out an audit / inspection with the support, if necessary, of technical experts.

**Evidence of the evaluation:** records, statements of fact or any other information that is relevant to the audit / inspection criteria and that is verifiable.

**Standard / standard / protocol:** sets of requirements used as a reference against which the audit / inspection evidence is compared.

**Regular evaluations:** visits that are mandatory within the certification cycle and are scheduled in agreement with the service user.

**Non-regular evaluations:** those that are carried out depending on the circumstances and have different purposes.

**Nonconformity:** breach of the requirement of the standard / norm / protocol evaluated.

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**Evaluation findings:** result of comparing the evidence of the audit / inspection collected against the criteria of the standard / protocol evaluated.

**Complaint / Claim:** Expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization, regarding its products (services) or the process of handling complaints, where an explicit or implicit response or resolution is expected.

**Justified Complaint / Claim:** this is a claim whose evaluation result concluded that it had adequate technical support to provide a response in favor of the service user's request.

**Complaint / Unjustified claim:** this is a claim whose evaluation result concluded that it did not have adequate technical support to provide a response in favor of the service user's request.

**Suggestion:** It is a hint or formulation of ideas aimed at improving the certification service.

**Certification holder:** is the natural or legal person who signs the contract, in whose name the certificate and / or certification decision is issued.

**Service user:** organization that requests a certification service and is evaluated during the audit / inspection.

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### 3. OBJECTIVE

Establish the guidelines that will govern the product certification/verification procedures in **NaturaCert**.

### 4. SCOPE

This document explains the conditions of the NaturaCert certification system including procedures to obtain and maintain status in accordance with the requirements of the standard / standard or protocol to which a user of the service applies. It also exposes the obligations and rights of both NaturaCert and the users requesting the services.

This regulation will apply to product certification procedures in the areas of:

- Primary production
- Transformation / processing
- Commercialization

### 5. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- ISO / IEC 17065.
- Letter of presentation of the NaturaCert service.
- Cost table.
- Registration / application forms for the certification service.
- Audit plan formats.
- Products / services certification contract.
- Policies / Regulations applicable to the standard /protocol evaluated.
- Current standards / norms / protocols applicable to the requested service.
- Checklists of the requirements and criteria of the standards / protocols evaluated.
- Guidelines for the use of the seals or marks of conformity associated with the certification.
- Certificate of conformity / certification decision letter.

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## 6. ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

The latest versions of the current standards / norms / protocols applicable to the requested service are available on the website of the standardizing entities that the user can access through the **NaturaCert** website.

The service request formats, as well as those related to the report of complaints, claims or appeals are available on the **NaturaCert** website.

The normative documents will be published in Spanish, however, in case of concerns or discrepancies with the user of the service, the version to be considered will be the one officially approved by the standardizing entity or owner of the standard.

**NaturaCert's** documents, which are required for the certification process, will be sent to the users of the service as appropriate at the time required. The updated versions will be communicated via email by the Assistant of the Business and Development Unit.

### 6.1. Change in standards / norms / protocols and / or regulations / certification policies

The introduction of new standards, regulations or changes in the certification requirements will be informed to the users of the service and to all **NaturaCert** staff via email and in cases where the normalizing entities require it, through formal training events. The communication will include the precise form and effective date of making such changes, as well as the implications that this may have on the internal procedures of the user and **NaturaCert**.

Transition periods for the implementation of a new version standard / protocol shall be the standards body or define the same owner. **NaturaCert** will abide by the defined times and will communicate them in a timely manner.

## 7. LEGAL RESPONSABILITY

**NaturaCert**, as a certification body, disclaims any legal responsibility for the actions carried out by certified companies.

## 8. LEGAL COMPLIANCE

For auditing / inspection purposes, if the national legislation is stricter than the requirements of the standard / norm / protocol evaluated, the legislation of the country will prevail, but, if there is no legislation regulating the evaluated or existing requirement, it is

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less strict than the standard /protocol evaluated, the level of compliance that it has established will be required

**NOTE.** Any exception to this rule will be that established by the standardizing entity or owner of the standard / norm / protocol. **NaturaCert** will not define interpretations of the subject unless it has the endorsement of the standardizing entity or owner of the standard / norm / protocol.

## 9. CONFIDENTIALITY, USE AND DATA SESSION

All **NaturaCert** personnel who handle information related to the certification processes will sign a confidentiality agreement where they undertake to make responsible use of it, avoiding its distribution without authorization, as well as its use for their own benefit.

When **NaturaCert** requires to make use of the information of the users of the services, including delivery to third parties, will formally request approval. Some standards / standards / protocols require that a summary of the audit / inspection results be posted. In this case, **NaturaCert** will comply with the indication and disseminate the corresponding information without incurring a breach of confidentiality and will inform the user of the service in advance of the need to make this publication.

When the policies / regulations of the standard / protocol to be certified are contemplated and the user of the service requests a change of certification body, **NaturaCert** will deliver the corresponding information to continue the process.

## 10. CONDITIONS TO OBTAIN AND MAINTAIN THE CERTIFICATION

To obtain the certification, the user of the service must request the audit / inspection, undergo the evaluation process, and demonstrate compliance with the criteria defined by the standard /protocol to which it is applying.

The steps of a process of NaturaCert certification/ *inspection*, are: 1. Service Request, 2. Sending Customer regulatory documents, 3. sending information from the farm or by customer group, 4. Send budget to the client, 5. Approval of the budget, 6. Send and fill out the application form PO-02, 7. Format PO-02 is sent to the technical unit for technical review of the information provided and programming and the audit plan are carried out, 8. The final quotation and the audit plan are sent to the client, 9. When the client approves, a contract and 70% invoice are sent to him, 10. Execution of the audit, 11. Preparation of the audit report, 12. The report is sent for technical review, 13. After making corrections to the report, it is sent to the Certifier or the certification committee for decision-making, 14. The

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certification decision is sent and the documents attached to it. If the scheme asks for an additional step to those mentioned above, the process of the scheme will be followed.

When shipping of normative documents, the documents quote and our system the customer must read them carefully and send the service request form filled out together with the other documents required by **NaturaCert** and / or standard / protocol to which you are applying.

This application will be reviewed by the Assistant of the Business and Development Unit to verify that it is filled out and signed, then it will be sent to the Technical Unit to determine the viability of the process considering **NaturaCert's** commercial policy and the applicable certification conditions according to the scope of the standard /protocol to which the user of the service / interested party is applying.

**NOTE 1. NaturaCert** may reject the request when the natural or legal person requesting the service is related to accusations or complaints of committing crimes such as: processes of forced displacement or disappearance, torture, illicit enrichment, manufacture and trafficking of firearms or ammunition , destruction of the environment, exploitation and illegal occupation of natural resources, parks and forest reserve areas, money laundering, kidnapping, trafficking in persons, usurpation, land invasion and areas of special ecological importance, drug trafficking, genocide, acts of barbarism, among other actions that constitute an ethical impediment to the provision of the service. Additionally, applications may also be rejected because they are crops outside the scope of the standard / norm / protocol, be located outside the geographic scope of **NaturaCert** or because the company or crop is in areas with security problems.

**NOTE 2.** Users of the service are responsible for delivering true, correct, current, and complete information that describes how to handle the production process. Likewise, if required, the user of the service undertakes to provide information about his legal status to NaturaCert.

**NOTE 3. NaturaCert** disclaims any liability associated with economic losses or time for the non-timely delivery of information.

If the evaluation is negative, the Audit Manager of **NaturaCert** or whoever does his times will contact the user of the service to clarify the requested details, if the situation of non-compliance continues the service request is filed and the applicant is informed electronically of the reason for the rejection of his request.

If the assessment is positive the corresponding format for carrying out the plan of the audit / inspection is prepared based on this information is made the quotation for its respective delivery to the user of the service along with the plan.

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**NaturaCert** estimates the **payment** of the certification service for products according to the time taken in day (s) to carry out the audit / inspection activity and the preparation of the visit report (s), the number of days required is established according to the following variables:

- Complexity of the crop
- Type of project: individual or group.
- Number of productive units / farms to be certified / verified.
- Size of production units
- Complexity of the production system: primary production, processing, marketing.
- Distances to travel for visits.
- Number of workers in the productive unit.
- Travel times between the main city and work areas.
- Previous times for research or information gathering.
- Times for review of documentation and Control Systems or Internal Management (SCI or SGI) - Groups.

Once the applicant evaluates the financial offer presented together with the audit / inspection plan, he can decide whether to quote. With a favorable decision of the applicant regarding the budget, the certification contract will be sent for reading, approval, and signature together with the stamp use policy / regulation (according to the standard / protocol) and other documentation that is required. With the approval of the contract, the service user must cancel the corresponding down payment value.

The validity of the contract for the provision of the certification service is defined according to the regulation / policy of the applicable standard / norm / protocol.

Once the previous steps have been executed **NaturaCert will** proceed to assign the auditors / inspector necessary to attend the process and define a date for the visit according to its internal work schedule.

### 10.1. Audit / inspection

The audit / inspection is a systematic, independent, and documented process through which evidence is obtained to evaluate them objectively to determine the degree to which the criteria of a specific standard / protocol are met.

The main steps related to the execution of the audit / inspection include the opening meeting, communication with the auditee, assignment of responsibility of guides or observers, collection and verification of information, generation of findings, preparation of conclusions and meeting of closing.

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Upon completion of the visit, the auditor / inspector will begin the preparation of the report, in the formats established by the policies / regulations of the standard / protocol evaluated or by **NaturaCert**.

The follow-up of the corrective action plans, as well as the report of the closure of nonconformities will be carried out in the times, conditions and formats established by the policies / regulations of the evaluated standard / norm / protocol.

The delivery, review and approval of the audit report will be carried out in accordance with **NaturaCert** procedures and conditions established by the policies / regulations of the standard / norm / protocol evaluated.

## 10.2. Certification Options

Producers or companies may obtain the certification to which they are applying, under any of the options that the standard / norm / protocol has defined either individually or in groups. The aspects related to the service request, scope of the process, management system or internal control, ownership and management of the certificate will be those established in the policy / regulation corresponding to the standard / protocol to which the users of the service apply.

**NOTE.** A producer or company may not certify the same product with two certification bodies or under both options, individually and in groups, simultaneously.

## 10.3. Certification decision

The levels of conformity to be considered in making the certification decision will be those established in the policy / regulation or governing each standard / protocol evaluated. In general terms, two possible situations will be discussed because of the evaluation carried out:

- Compliance: compliance with a requirement
- Nonconformity: Failure to comply with a requirement

If the policy / regulation establishes it, nonconformities may be categorized into sub-levels such as major and minor and give rise to quantitative assessments that are the basis for making the certification decision.

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In the case of audits / inspections under option in the group, the certification decision will be made based on the results of the evaluation of the selected sample and in accordance with the provisions of the policy / regulation that governs each standard / applicable protocol.

When during the evaluation process there are situations that put at risk the safety of the evaluated or of the evaluators, a **critical Nonconformity** may be generated that will result in the audit being temporarily interrupted. In this scenario, a certification decision cannot be taken, therefore it will be sought to maintain the status and schedule a new visit, however, the expiration date of the certificate will not be modified by this situation. **NaturaCert** will define the maximum time to schedule the new visit considering the facts that led to the **Critical Nonconformity**.

The certification decisions for the standards / norms / protocols that require it, are taken by a committee or a certifier. The Certification Committee is an internal decision-making body of **NaturaCert**, which meets periodically to review audit / inspection reports and define user status according to the requirements of the applicable policies / regulations for the standards / rules evaluated. The committee may also make decisions related to the use of seals / marks of conformity and the change of scope of existing certificates. The certifier is a person who meets all the competences required by the schemes to be an Auditor / inspector, is an auditor different from the one who carried out the evaluation and has the power to make the certification decision, the extension of scopes and the use decisions of seals / marks of conformity. The decision of the Certification Committee or the Certifier Regarding the degree of compliance of a user of the service with the regulations / policies of the evaluated standard / norm, it may be to grant, maintain, extend, suspend, or cancel the certification and indicate, where appropriate, the opportunities for improvement with their execution times.

The times for the certification decision are defined according to **NaturaCert's** internal procedures and, where appropriate, adjusted to the applicable policy guidelines / regulations for the standards / standards evaluated. The times are informed to the user of the service at the closing of the audit. communicated via email and are published on the **NaturaCert** website.

The certificate holder may only market the products of the areas, properties and processes that are registered in the **NaturaCert** certification / inspection **program** and that they are covered by the current certificate.

**Note.** The cancellation or suspension of a certificate may occur when the user voluntarily decides to withdraw from the process.

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#### 10.4. Certification cycle

The frequency, number, and type of audits, regular and non-regular, to be performed on each of the users of the service will be defined in the policy / regulation that governs each standard / protocol to which it has applied. In the case of a group option, the sample size to be audited will be defined according to the policy / regulation that governs each standard / protocol to which the user of the service has applied.

When the policy / regulation of the evaluated standard / norm / protocol establishes it, the auditor / inspector shall evaluate the competence of the auditors / internal inspectors of the group through the accompaniment of an inspection / audit to a member production unit within the framework of the visit that is being carried out by NaturaCert.

The percentage of unannounced audits, as well as their scope, will be those that define the policy / regulation of the applicable standard / norm / protocol, however, in case these do not define the number of processes, NaturaCert, will perform unannounced audits to 5% (annual) of the total active companies.

A user of the service can voluntarily withdraw from the certification at any time during the regular cycle of the service, presenting a letter in writing describing the reason for the withdrawal, the date on which he wishes the certificate be canceled and in cases where the scheme allows sell after the cancellation of the certificate, the volume of certified product that remains to be sold; This withdrawal will be accepted as long as it meets the conditions of the contract signed with NaturaCert. In this case, NaturaCert will confirm, by communication from the Certification Manager, the date on which the cancellation becomes effective. NaturaCert will communicate this withdrawal to the standardizing entity or owner of the standard when appropriate, as well as other interested actors that the policies / regulations define.

If the policy / regulation of the applicable standard / norm / protocol establishes it, a user of the service may request the total or partial suspension of the scope of his certification, as well as the extension of the same if he has no sanctions related to compliance with the certification requirements and / or breaches of contract with NaturaCert. The causes and duration of the voluntary suspension or extension, as well as the implications of its application, will be implemented as established by the policy / regulation of the standard / protocol evaluated.

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## 10.5. Certification Maintenance

The maintenance of the certification is carried out through continuous monitoring or control activities for each one of the active projects of the **NaturaCert** certification **program**.

Maintenance mechanisms include the execution of auditing / inspection processes both regular (annual) and non-regular (unscheduled, research, among others that define the regulations / policies of the applicable standard / standard / protocol).

**Note.** Unscheduled audits / inspections / verifications will be carried out on a percentage of the companies active in the **NaturaCert** certification **program**. The conditions related to the percentage of companies and the criteria for the selection of the sample will be established in accordance with the policies / regulations of the standard / protocol to be evaluated. If the certification scheme of a standard / norm / protocol for which **NaturaCert** provides its services does not have a percentage established for unscheduled audits, 5% of the total certified clients will be taken.

For active users of the service that require maintenance or renewal visits, the times established in the regulations / policies of the applicable standard / standard / protocol will be considered and for the execution of the audit / inspection the user of the service must cancel the advance and sign the service provision contract when applicable.

Three (3) months before the execution of an audit / inspection of either maintenance or renewal of the certification, the Certification Assistant will send a statement where the user of the service will be notified of the programming of his next visit and will request the Response regarding your interest to continue or not with the process, if it is positive, you will continue with the other steps already described to formalize the audit / inspection.

## 10.6. Certificate and seals / marks of conformity

When the decision of the Committee or the Certifier is to grant the certification to the service user, **NaturaCert** will issue a Certificate of Conformity that will contain the information established in the policy / regulation of the standard / norm / protocol evaluated. Otherwise, the decision will be communicated through a letter indicating the reasons why the company could not be certified.

When the policies / regulations of the standard / norm or protocol evaluated establish it, a valid certificate may be modified in its scope at the request of the holder thereof. **NaturaCert** will **comply** with the requirements described in the normative documents and will consult with the standards bodies or owners of the standards when the situations that lead to the request of the user of the service are not considered in them.

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The circumstances that may result in the modification of the scope of the certificate may be but are not limited to changes in the constitution legal, expansion or reduction of cultivation areas, number of products or producers, production volumes and / or type and number of processes. It is the responsibility of the service user to inform **NaturaCert** when the situations described are presented to determine the actions to be taken if the modification to the current certificate is applied.

The rules and conditions for the use of the seals / marks of conformity are detailed in official documents of the standardizing entity or owner of the standard and they must be complied with by the certified company.

The Certification Committee or the Certifying may verify the proper use of the seal or mark of conformity standard / standard evaluated by reviewing art labeling and where appropriate take to steps to ensure that the use is in accordance with policies / applicable regulations / guides.

**Note.** The registered trademark of **NaturaCert** does not amount to a conformity mark and therefore should not be used to make a certified product declaration.

## 11. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF APPLICANTS / HOLDERS

### 11.1. Obligations of applicants / certification holders

- a) Meet always with the criteria of the standard / protocol applicable to the application for obtaining and maintenance of the certification, including implementing appropriate changes when they are reported by **NaturaCert**.
- b) If the certification applies to ongoing production, the certified product continues to meet the product requirements.
- c) Make all necessary arrangements for conducting the initial and / or maintenance evaluation, including the provision for the examination of documentation and access to all areas, records (including the internal audit report (s)) and personnel for the purposes of the evaluation (example trial, inspection, evaluation, supervision, reassessment) and resolution of claims.
- d) Investigate complaints submitted to your organization related to compliance with the applicable certification scheme.
- e) Allow the participation of observers when the policy / regulation of the standard / norm / protocol evaluated requires or requires it.
- f) Make certification statements consistent with the scope of the certification.
- g) Do not use your product certification in a way that makes **NaturaCert** lose prestige and does not include any statement regarding the certification of your product that **NaturaCert** may consider as erroneous or unauthorized.

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- h) In the case of suspension or cancellation of the certification, the holder undertakes to discontinue the use of all the documentation and advertising material that contains reference to the certification and will undertake the actions required by the applicable certification scheme, as well as return any document to **NaturaCert** Let him demand it.
- i) If you provide copies of the certificate to third parties, the document must be reproduced in its entirety or as specified by the applicable certification scheme.
- j) Comply with the requirements of the certification body when referring to product certification in media such as documents, brochures, or advertising.
- k) Make good use of the Name and Seal according to the applicable certification scheme and not to provide misleading information about the scope of certification to which it is applying.
- l) Maintain a record of all complaints submitted to your organization related to compliance with the applicable certification scheme and make those records available when **NaturaCert** requires it, take appropriate actions with respect to such claims, as well as any deficiencies found in Products or services that may affect compliance with the requirements for certification and document the actions taken.
- m) Notify immediately any change in the design of the product, change of the location of the production unit, expansion, or reduction in the areas of cultivation, expansion or decrease of products, extension or decrease of process lines, inclusion, or exclusion of members within the group of producers, or changes in the possession, structure or location of the holder or any event that modifies the conditions of the scope and scope of the certificate.
- n) Notify immediately about changes that may affect your ability to meet the requirements of the applicable certification scheme.
- o) Always comply with the relevant provisions of the applicable certification scheme.
- p) Make complaints regarding certification only on the scope for which the certification was granted.
- q) When the producer hires consulting services, the consultant may only be present at the opening and closing meeting as a silent observer and may not participate as a representative of the producer at any time.
- r) The client agrees not to reduce the salary of the interviewed workers who receive a payment per piece or task, in these cases the company will present a compensation for the time dedicated to the interview.
- s) Strive to ensure that neither the certificate nor the report nor any part of them is misleading.
- t) Comply with the requirements established in this General Regulation, including the payment of the costs of providing the service agreed in the contract. Costs that are defined and updated annually by the **NaturaCert** Board of **Directors**.

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- u) Deliver true, correct, current, and complete information that describes how to handle the production process.
- v) Receive at any time a visit from **NaturaCert**, including the review of required files, documents and / or records and provide any information and allow authorized **NaturaCert personnel**, for **unlimited** access to the plots and other facilities involved.
- w) Marketing products exclusively from areas, properties and processes that are duly registered in the **NaturaCert** certification **program** and whose contract is in force.
- x) Allow the auditor / inspector workers interviewed without the presence of supervisors or superiors.
- y) Not exert any pressure (coercion, retention, threat, etc.) on the lead auditor / inspector or any member of his team. It is clarified that the final certification decision is beyond the reach of these personnel.
- z) Provide information about your legal status to **NaturaCert**.
- aa) Facilitate the work of the audit team ensuring an atmosphere of tranquility and cordiality between your team and the auditors.

## 11.2. Rights of applicants / holders

Both applicants and the holders of the product certification of **NaturaCert**, have the right to:

- a) Receive the service quote within five (5) business days following notification of approval of your service request.
- b) Receive information related to the process, including these general regulations, and instructions to process forms of **NaturaCert**.
- c) Receive current versions of standards / norms / protocols and / or regulations / certification policies.
- d) Receive an audit / inspection plan prior to the evaluation visit.
- e) That, during the evaluation visit, the regular auditing procedures apply.
- f) Be attended by the staff responsible for **NaturaCert** to answer questions related to the certification process.
- g) Request a change in a member of the audit team for reasons of conflict of interest or different situations that may cause misunderstandings during the audit. NaturaCert will review the situation as mentioned in the 30MP Quality Manual
- h) Receive the results of the evaluation in the times established by the applicable certification regulations / policies.
- i) That the integrity of the documents, facilities, and personnel available for evaluation be maintained.
- j) To request the postponement of the visit due to situations of force majeure in accordance with the provisions of the applicable policy or regulation.

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- k) Receive the certification decision in the time established by the policies / regulations of the standard / norm or protocol evaluated, after the visit or after the closure of nonconformities.
- l) Make use of the marks and make declarations of conformity if it demonstrates compliance with the conditions established in the regulation / policy.
- m) Expand or modify the scope of the certificate according to the policies / regulations of the standard / standard or protocol evaluated.
- n) Make suggestions, complaints or claims related to the **NaturaCert** certification process only with respect to the scope of the certification contract following the procedure established in numeral 13 of these General Regulations.
- o) Appeal a decision related to the **NaturaCert** product certification process following the procedure established in numeral 14 of this General Regulation.
- p) **NaturaCert**, take any information provided by the holder or applicants as confidential, including details of products and processes, evaluation reports and any associated documentation (unless it is required by law). No confidential information will be transmitted to third parties without the written authorization of the certification holder. The owner has the right to access their own records.

## 12. SANCTIONS APPLICABLE TO THE SERVICE USER

**NaturaCert** may apply sanctions to users of the certification service based on the results of audits / inspections performed, both regular and non-regular, as well as other considerations defined in the policies / regulations of the standard / norm / protocol evaluated which may include but are not limited to improper use of seals / marks of conformity and coercion, retention or threat actions on the evaluator or any member of his team.


The types of sanctions, the implications of them within the process, as well as the requirements for their lifting will be applied by **NaturaCert** according to the guidelines established by the standards bodies or owners of the evaluated standards.

## 13. SUGGESTIONS, COMPLAINTS AND CLAIMS

Any person (internal or external to **NaturaCert**) may make a duly justified suggestion, complaint or claim to the Executive Directorate of **NaturaCert** through the completion of the Report form for suggestions, complaints / claims, appeals and disputes. The Executive Directorate with the support of the other areas of the organization will evaluate the causes, seek the fastest solutions and, if necessary, will process before the competent agency to choose the best remedy and send a communication to the applicant.

**NOTE.** A suggestion, complaint or claim may be made by telephone when there are technological limitations or when the interested party has any disability that prevents the

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completion of the format Report of suggestions, complaints / claims, appeals and disputes. A **NaturaCert** official or a third party may also fill out the form on behalf of the person who wants to send the suggestion, complaint, or claim.

The Quality Manager is responsible for receiving suggestions, complaints / claims from clients, as well as sending a response communication to the applicant informing that it will be processed by **NaturaCert**. The **NaturaCert** Executive Directorate and the Quality Manager are responsible for analyzing the purpose of the suggestion, complaint / claim to send it to the corresponding area (s) so that they are consequently responsible for analyzing the causes, formulating, and implementing the action plan that may be in place and prepare a response for the service user. The Executive Directorate is responsible for sending the respective response to the service user. All **NaturaCert** officials can provide information about the procedure for anyone to submit a suggestion, complaint, or complaint.

Once the suggestion, complaint or claim has been studied within 18 business days (Monday through Friday) from the presentation of the same, the **NaturaCert** Executive Directorate will inform the interested party of the result of the review, in case of not having a conclusion of the suggestion, complaint or claim at this time the Executive Directorate will send a communication informing the state in which it is and the time in which it will be answered.

All active users of the **NaturaCert** certification **program** must have a system of suggestions, complaints, and complaints from users' suppliers regarding the certified product. The **NaturaCert** auditors / inspectors must verify their application for which the client must allow their review by the **NaturaCert** inspector auditor at the time of the visit or when required by **NaturaCert**.

**14. APPEALS**

Any active client of the **NaturaCert** product certification program may exercise the right of appeal against the decision to grant, maintain or **deny** certification for **NaturaCert** products and, in principle, the interested party must request it in writing by filling in the Report form of suggestions, complaints / claims, appeals and disputes, it must be duly substantiated. The Executive Directorate and the Quality Manager will examine and qualify if they are justified or unjustified appeals and / or customer disputes, however, the analysis and treatment of them will always be carried out with the support of a leading auditor.

**Note.** In cases where the standard / protocol establishes it, the user of the service may file an appeal in relation to the nonconformities reported by the evaluation team even before the committee has made a certification decision. Situations in which **NaturaCert will** proceed according to the guidelines that the standardizing entity / owner of the standard has established.

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Appeals may be made if the petitioner:

- a. Have signed a valid contract with **NaturaCert** and has fulfilled the commitments acquired therein.
- b. Be covered within the certification program.

The Assistant of Certification is responsible for receiving appeals from clients through the format Report suggestions, complaints / grievances, appeals and disputes, as well as sending a response communication to the applicant informing that it will be handled by the Technical Unit **NaturaCert**.

The Executive Directorate, the Quality Manager and a leading auditor <sup>[1]</sup> of **NaturaCert** they are responsible for studying, in the first instance, the report appeals format Report suggestions, complaints, claims, appeals and disputes analyze the cause that generated the appeal and raise the implementation of the action plan through the diligence of format Following suggestions, complaints / claims , appeals and disputes.


Once the appeal has been studied, within a period of no more than 10 business days from the presentation of the **appeal**, the **NaturaCert** Executive Directorate will inform the interested party by letter of the outcome of the review.

In the execution of the action plan, if necessary, the Executive Directorate of **NaturaCert** **will** consult with the Certifier or the Certification Committee, who has made the decision, to clarify the facts and when there are differences in interpretation of findings you can advise with the standardizing entity that manages the applicable standard of the client certification process. The action plan may include the scheduling of a research visit, which will aim to resolve the points under discussion, in which case, once this is done, the lead auditor / inspector will prepare a report and submit it to a new Certifier or Certification Committee to give a final verdict, in this session the auditor who led the visit cannot take part or has made the decision of prior certification.

If after the implementation of the action plan, the appeal turns out to be justified and the client's position is corroborated, the costs incurred for the research visit will be charged to **NaturaCert**. Otherwise, the appeal turns out to be unjustified or unsubstantiated, it will be refused and if the investigation visit was made, the client will be responsible for the expenses incurred by **NaturaCert** for this activity.

The Executive Directorate of **NaturaCert** will send a written communication to the client informing about the final verdict regarding the appeal, who must provide feedback to **NaturaCert** about the acceptance or not of this response.

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If the client does not agree with the final verdict after the treatment of the appeal, it will be handled as a dispute, therefore, the Executive Directorate will take the case to the President of the Board of Directors of **NaturaCert** who in the **second instance** will issue a Response to the request.

If so, far no satisfactory response has been given to the client, the Chairman of the Committee of Interested Parties will be informed to summon said body as a third instance, review the case and issue the final response to the request, which will be communicated to the service user. The Stakeholders Committee may refer directly to the Accreditation Body to see how to resolve the dispute.

Appeals and disputes, as well as the procedure related to them, are filed in the user's folder of the corresponding service. In addition, a copy is filed in the users claims folder, for tracking.

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[\[1\]](#) The auditor who participates in the analysis and treatment of the appeal and / or dispute must not have participated in the audit process or in the certification decision making.

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