

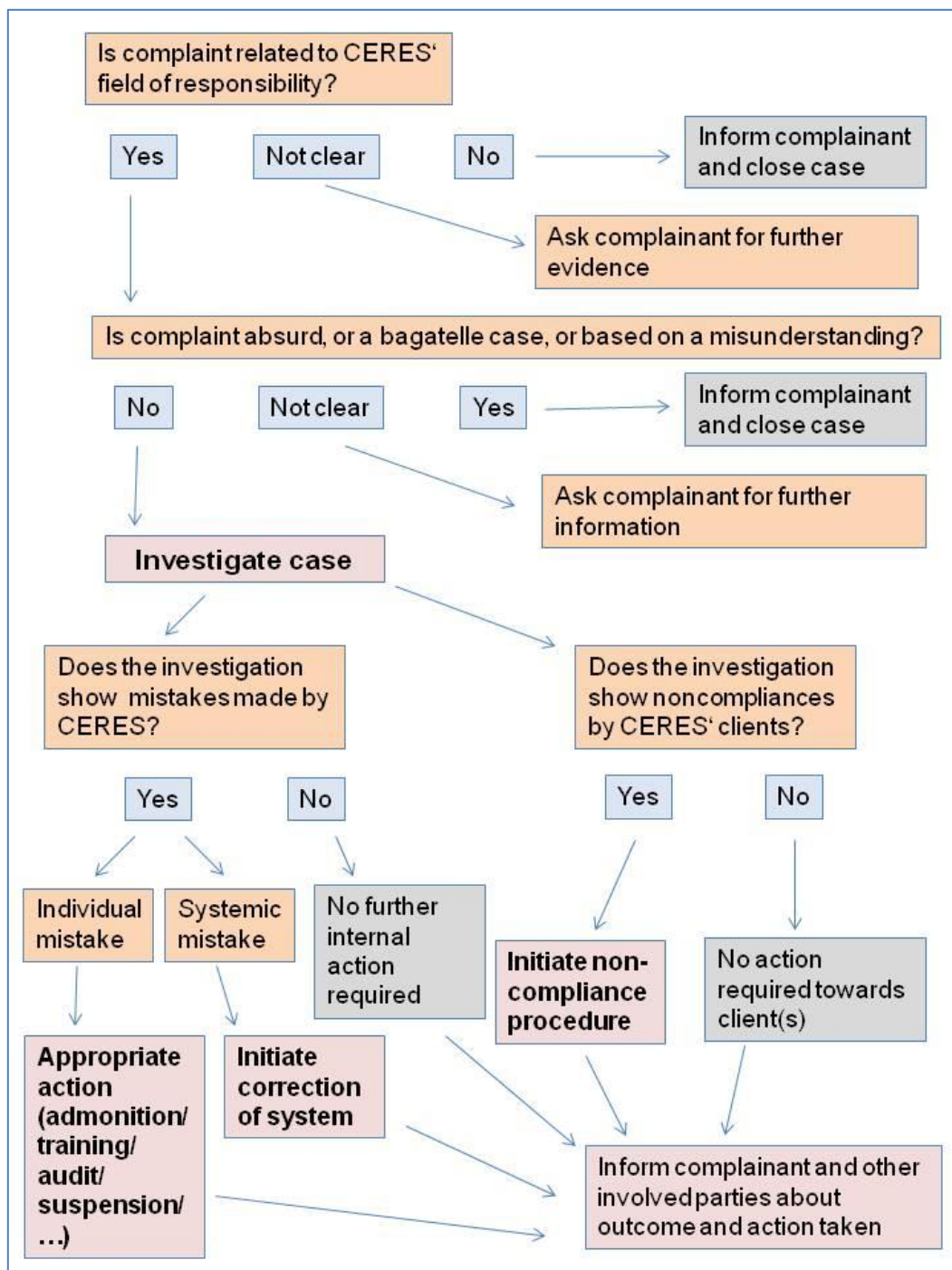
Brief Information on Complaints and Appeals to CERES

1. Definition:

- **Appeal resp. mediation (NOP):** when a client does not agree with a certification decision, he or she can appeal against that decision
- **Complaint:** A complaint can be presented against any aspect of CERES' performance (inspection, certification, finances, administration, complaint against residue cases).

2. Procedure:

We publish a **complaint form** on our website which can be used for a formal complaint/appeal resp. mediation. However, CERES also **accepts complaints presented in other forms**, such as in simple emails, or even verbally. Contact details of our offices can be found on following [link](#). The following decision tree explains CERES internal procedure for complaint handling:



If the complaint is related to performance of a CERES staff, the case shall be handled **by a different person**. Also appeals/mediations are handled by a person who is different from the one who made the initial decision.

For Rainforest Alliance following deadlines apply:

- Within 10 calendar days information that the appeal/complaint has been received
- Within 30 calendar days result of the investigation

For other standards following deadline apply:

- Within 3 days to a maximum of 1 week, written confirmation will be send that the appeal/complaint has been received
- Within maximum of 90 days appeal/complaint should be closed.

Please let us know if you want your complaint to be handled **confidentially**! We will fully respect your confidentiality!

In case of appeals/mediation, prepayment is requested. Please see the Invoicing Rules on our website.

<http://www.ceres-cert.de>