

Making and Handling of Appeals, Complaints and Disputes

This is a summary of the details documented in CB standard Operating Procedure number, AC SOP 8.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to describe how appeals, complaints and disputes are received, evaluated, and resolved by the CB.

2. Responsible

2.1 The Quality Manager

- i. Receives and documents all complaints and appeals.
- ii. Analyses the received complaints and appeals in consultation with the technical /Scheme managers to establish the ones related to the certification activities. ,
- iii. Facilitates the evaluation process for the received complaints / appeals to conclusion.
- iv. Communicate the outcome of the evaluated complaints or appeals to the complainant or appellant who lodged them.

3. Handling appeals, complaints and disputes.

3.1 Steps to making complaints and appeals

- i. All complaints and appeals must be submitted in written form (no verbal or anonymous appeal will not be accepted).
- ii. They must be signed by the person submitting them and addressed to the Quality manager and Technical manager according the procedures provided by the certification body.
- iii. They must contain adequate information on the subject issue or on the adverse decision and reasons for believing the decision was not good or was not made in accordance with proper regulations, or policies.
- iv. The Quality Manager shall register the submitted appeals and / or complaints in the form AC 9x (appeal form) and AC 54x (complaint form) respectively.

3.2 Handling appeals

- i. After receiving an appeal, the Quality manager shall register it in form AC 9x (appeal form).
- ii. The Certification Body must acknowledge receipt of the appeal to the appellant within 10 working days.

- iii. The Quality Manager and the Technical manager or an appointed Lead auditor who did not participate in the audit process in question, and all of them without any conflict of interest as stated in AC SOP shall:
 - a. Study the appeal to confirm if it's related to the certification activities appealed against and if so shall address it.
 - b. Gather verifies and compares information regarding the appeal to make a decision.
 - c. Make a decision regarding the appeal based on the verified information
- iv. The decision made is then communicated to the person appealing either upholding it or dismissing it within 20 business days for all standards apart from RA standards which takes 60 business days.
- v. If the Quality Manager participated in the audit process, he /she shall be excluded from the appeal review process. The Technical manager shall lead that appeal resolving process. The Technical manager in this case must also be free from any conflicts of interest in the case.
- vi. Appeals by clients against suspension or withdrawal do not change that decision to suspend or withdraw certification until the appeal process has been completed.