



BUREAU VERITAS CERTIFICATION



COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

17021-1:2015 9.7-8

ISO

17065:2012 7.13
14065:2013 9, 10

UNFCCC

CDM ACC. STD

V7 14

Revision	Comment on the changes	Review	Approval	Date
3.36	Revision of definitions for appeals and complaints in clause 2.	F. Gomes	CER MS Committee	December 6, 2023
3.35	Appeals process clarified for SA 8000	R Sharma	F Joly de Brésillon	November 20, 2023
3.34	Appendix 3 : IATF16949 : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ add communication of incident number, contracting and performing country ▪ add communication of appeal result to auditor and performing country 	C. Duperrier	F Joly de Brésillon	September 20, 2023
3.33	§3.1 clarifications added in particular: contracting office in charge of the management of the complaint	L Boulkroun	CER MS Committee	July 4, 2023
3.32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New version of ASC Farm CAR (Appendix 6) and MSC GR (Appendix 7) 	E Gruber	F Joly de Brésillon	May 31, 2023
3.31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Following the replacement of QESIS by NEXUS and iEvaluate and as per Tools procedure, QESIS is replaced in this procedure by the "Complaints and Appeals Tool" generic name. ▪ §3.3: modification of the process to align it with the new process created in the tool: complaint and appeal are closed when the decision is sent to the client and an incident is opened if needed. ▪ Appendix 1 - Climate Change ▪ Appendix 2 - SA8000 ▪ Appendix 10 – IFS ▪ Appendix 11 – SEDEX audits 	L Boulkroun A. Prabhu G. Lemos A. Kurek S. Nair	CER MS Committee	March 22, 2023
3.30	As per requirement of the 17021, clause 9.8.8, added sentence stating that progress report shall be provided to be complainant where possible. (page 21)	M Pena	CER MS Committee	February 9, 2023
3.29	Time to communicate the complaint to ASI for ASC – ASC Feed added	E Gruber	F Joly de Brésillon	December 7, 2022
3.28	Complaint FSC ASC MSC: opportunity to contact ASI or the scheme owner + address of ASC added on public procedure	E Gruber	CER MS Committee	November 3, 2022
3.27	Paragraphs 1,2 & 3 of Appendix1-Climate change disputes, complaints & appeals revised	S Patankar	CER MS Committee	August 23, 2022
3.26	New Appendix 11 added for SMETA appeals	R. Sharma	CER MS Committee	March 30, 2022
3.25	Appendix 3 IATF: added requirement for Independent POV reviewer in "Important note"	C. Duperrier	F Joly De Brésillon	November 29, 2021
3.24	New appendix for IFS	R Gomez	CER MS Committee	October 22, 2021
3.23	Appendix 3 IATF Change deadlines in column "When".	C. Duperrier	F Joly De Brésillon	October 18, 2021
3.22	Information about "Rev number" under the title "Bureau Veritas Certification Policy - TQR I&F Division "of the appendix 9 removed	E Gruber	S Ter-Horst	March 8, 2021
3.21	Detailed process embedded in the appendix 3 related to IATF	R Jha	CER MS Committee	December 22, 2020
3.20	Corrected typo mistakes on appendix 9 (revision number) and FSC Farm changed to FSC Services (§ 2.3). Communication when complaint closed for MSC Fisheries (Appendix 7, §2	E Gruber	CER MS Committee	December 15, 2020
3.19	Added reference to templates « IATF 16949_Complaint Verification Process" and "IATF 16949_QESIS_Complaint Tracker_VF."	M Picouveau	S ter-Horst	November 16, 2020
3.18	Appendix 1 CDM updated	R Sharma	CER MS committee	October 2, 2020
3.17	Appendix Aerospace updated and appendix 9 - Publication on BVC website added	R. Sharma	CER MS committee	October 2, 2020
3.16	Added Appendix 8 - RSPO	J Tang	CER MS Committee	September 4, 2020

3.15	Definitions and clarification on records	F Boigelot	CER MS Committee	July 7, 2020
3.14	FSC: additional document created (FSC Complaint notification) to officially close a complaint – ASC: reference to ASI for any appeal or disputes – Appendix 7 for MSC	E Gruber	S Terhorst	June 18, 2020
3.13	Update of Appendix 5- Aerospace further to UKAS finding	P Firth	S ter-Horst	June 5, 2020
3.12	Complaint's procedure (QESIS management) for Climate Change added in Appendix 1	S Pednekar	S ter-Horst	August 23, 2019
3.11	Update of Appendix 3 on IATF.	S. Tuffanelli	Sebastian ter-Horst	August 6, 2019
3.10	In § 1 wording “Complaints and Appeals Management” Policy” replaced by wording “This Complaints and Appeals Procedure”	M Timkin	CER MS Committee	February 22, 2019
3.9	Update of CDM Accreditation Standard version number from 6 into 7	R. Sharma	F. Joly	January 2, 2019
3.8	Clarification of responsibilities for QESIS management of complaints and appeals	F. Boigelot	F. Joly de Bresillon	October 8, 2018
3.7	2 points updated on IATF procedure for appeals.	A. Mihalova	F. Joly de Bresillon	April 23, 2018
3.6	Complaints managed by BV Certification on-line form	E Gruber	P. Jeanmart	March 15, 2018
3.5	Further clarification on when make a complaint public on § 4.2	F. Gomes	F. Joly-de-Brésillon	March 07, 2018
3.4	QESIS replaces IAM	M. Picouleau	F. Joly-de-Brésillon	February 14, 2018
3.3	FSC: Modification of responsibilities in case of complaints - Precision on FSC appeals management	E Gruber	F. Joly-de-Brésillon	February 13, 2018
3.2	Copy of Dispute procedure shall be made available to the client on request added in Climate Change dispute process	R. Sharma	P. Jeanmart	January 24, 2018
3.1	Appendix 6 added (specific rules for ASC schemes)	E Gruber	P. Jeanmart	January 3, 2018
3.0	Revision in Disputes as per CDM ACC Standard requirements	F. Joly	P. Jeanmart	Nov 15, 2017
2.0	Details added when a complaint concerns a scheme managed by a Hub organization (§2.2) – NC ASI 46175	E Gruber	P. Jeanmart	May 17, 2017
1.8	Replaced ISO/TS 16949 by IATF 16949 and Rules 4th by Rules 5th Removed IATF complaints process to align with generic process requirements.	A. Mihalova	P. Jeanmart	February 23, 2017
1.7	“CER Global Accreditation Manager” replaces “Technical Direction” Added reference to template for Complaint’s registration (§2.1)	R. Sharma	P. Jeanmart	February 10, 2017
1.6	Removed mandatory recording of complaints in IAM tool in §2.1	S. Reemers	P. Jeanmart	January 17, 2017
1.5	Added link to website complaints and appeals policy “CER Technical Director” replaced by “CER Accreditation Manager” Amended Appendix 4 FSC: replace Global Coordinator by FSC Technical Expert, §2 and 3 Amended Appendix 2 – SA8000 services to include references to SAAS Procedure 201A:2015	S. Reemers	P. Jeanmart	December 19, 2016
1.3	Added instructions for Aerospace Series – Appendix 5	T. Douce	P. Jeanmart	May 30, 2016
1.2	Updated instructions for ISO TS 16949	A. Mihalova	P. Jeanmart	April 27, 2016

CER MS > Procedure “Confidentiality”

https://certification.bureauveritas.com/sites/g/files/zyfpx231/files/media/document/English_Complaints_and_Appeals.pdf



Bureau Veritas Website <http://www.bureauveritas.com>

Template

Notification complaint and appeal (for FSC, MSC and ASC)
IATF 16949_Complaint Verification Process
IATF 16949_Complaint Tracker

1 Scope

This procedure defines how to manage complaints and appeals, received from customers and other external stakeholders related to all Bureau Veritas Certification Services, to ensure they are handled in a professional and timely manner.

A review of appeal and complaint process is done during annual Management Review.

The content of this Complaint and Appeal Procedure is publicly available for external stakeholders on Bureau Veritas websites, for this purpose appendix 9 can be used. Local country may choose to have a translated version in local language for their websites.

The appendices define additional instructions for the following products:

Appendix 1 - Climate Change disputes

Appendix 2 - SA8000 Services

Appendix 3 - IATF 16949

Appendix 4 - FSC Services

Appendix 5 – Aerospace

Appendix 6 – ASC Farm and ASC Feed

Appendix 7 – MSC

Appendix 8 - RSPO

Appendix 9 - Publication on BVC website

Appendix 10 – IFS

Appendix 11 – SEDEX Audits

2 Definitions

Complaint:

- (ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 8.7): expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal (8.6), by any person or organization to a conformity assessment body (4.6) or an accreditation body (4.7), relating to the activities of that body, where a response is expected

Appeal:

- (ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 8.6): request by the person or organization that provides, or that is, the object of conformity assessment (4.2) to a conformity assessment body (4.6) or an accreditation body (4.7), for reconsideration by that body of a decision (7.2) it has made relating to that object

3 . Common process for both complaints and appeals

3.1 Acknowledgement and Record

Upon receipt, complaints and appeals are acknowledged to sender within five working days, unless otherwise specified in Appendices.

They shall be recorded in Complaints and Appeals Tool by the creation of a new request.

All the mandatory information need to be fill in to create a request.

The Recipient of the complaint-appeal and the person who report it in the tool are clearly identified in the tool.

The request manager (person who is in charge of management of the situation) should be chosen taking into account the following rules:

- The complaints are handled at the **contracting entity level**. The performing level can be a part of the investigations but is not responsible of the management of the complaint.
- Appeals are dealt at the level where certification decision making was done (Critical Location, Hub, ICC)

For complaint and appeal received from a complainant or appellant, which is not a BVC client, due consideration shall be given whether it is appropriate to answer, considering potential liability. In such cases, content of the answer is coordinated with client.

This process is subject to requirements for confidentiality.

Bureau Veritas retains the anonymity of the complainant in relation to the client if this is requested by the complainant and shall treat anonymous complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction that are not substantiated as complaints as stakeholder comments and address these during the next audit.

3.2 Responsibility

Personnel who investigate complaints and appeals shall be different from those who carried out the audits and made certification decision, without discrimination against the appellant or complainant.

- If LTM was involved, then a person, internal and independent, shall be appointed
- If LTM was not involved; he or she can carry out the investigation.
- If an appeal concerns one scheme managed by an ICC/Hub, the investigation must be conducted by ICC/Hub, in cooperation with the Head-office and the local country.

Unless otherwise specified in appendices, LTM is the default channel for complaints and appeals. CER Accreditation Manager is notified depending upon severity and is responsible for Complaints/received at I&F TQR. For Complaints/Appeals received at SSC, it is managed by the Accreditation support manager.

Accreditation Managers are informed of complaints related to their product and shall make sure specific requirements are met.

In case of a critical risk (possible litigation, insurance declaration, court summons, loss of image, accreditation) the complaint is transferred to regional or I&F Division legal contact.

3.3 Resolution process

The resolution process includes the following steps.

- Investigation, including if needed business impacts and analysis of the situation
- Intermediate contributions if needed or required
- Formal decision of Bureau Veritas by the appropriate level
- Structure and written response to the client
- Decision to open an internal incident.

All these steps and documents associated need to be recorded in Complaints and Appeals Tool.

When a complaint or an appeal is accepted or partially accepted by Bureau Veritas, an incident needs to be raised in Complaints and Appeals Tool with a high severity. In this case:

- A root causes analysis needs to be performed;
- A Correction and corrective action to be implemented;
- And depending on the situation and the client and schemes requirement, the client can be informed.

The timeframe for resolution is four weeks, unless otherwise specified in appendices. However, this may be affected by responsiveness of the client or other third parties.

The closure timeframe in Complaints and Appeals Tool for CAPA associated to high severity rating is 90 days. If the deadlines are not respected, the escalation process is started.

Complaint can be closed only after a final written response is provided to the complainant. Record of this communication shall be maintained.

For all complaints received from an Accreditation Body or a Scheme Owner on an Accreditation held by BVCH SAS or BVCH SAS UK Branch, the effectiveness of corrective actions must be verified at the next internal audit (not by sampling).

Some products require additional instructions, defined in appendices.

4 Complaint process

Complaint can be written (Formal Letter, Email, Website) or verbal (Phone Call, Feedback during sales visit or audit).

The process of management of the complaints registered in our website is the following:

- The acknowledgment of the complaint is done automatically
- On HO level, the dispatch of the email is done. If this is a complaint, this is transferred to a generic mailbox (groupqhseinbv@bureauveritas.com)
- Then the complaint is transferred to the QHSE manager concerned for investigation and actions.

Complaints are handled at contracting entity level. An audit may be initiated to proceed with investigation, and the client shall be notified with reasons for the audit.

4.1 Responsibilities

Certification Manager is responsible overall for the effective management of the complaint and shall

- Consider customer feedback
- Take vital role for the corrective action

Local Technical Manager (LTM) is the main person involved in the resolution of the complaint and shall

- Consider customer feedback and initiate corrective action for the complaint if needed
- Record and maintain the customer complaint in Complaints and Appeals Tool with full evidence of acknowledgment and final response to the complainant
- Take vital role for the corrective action if any
- Communicate if needed the action taken to the complainant, if not previously involved in the subject of the complaint.
- Ensure the effectiveness and timely manner of customer complaint process

All sector specific databases shall be updated with necessary records in stipulated timeframe.

On case-by-case basis, BVC, the Complainant and the Client shall decide if information needs to be made public. There must be formal authorization from Complainant and Client when the decision is to make the complaint public.

Any instances where failure to publicly disclose the complaint could affect other stakeholders, should be made public.

Examples of these instances are complaints about:

- Defects that could have catastrophic consequences (injuries, death, etc.).
- Failures in environmental management systems that could cause severe damage to environment and stakeholders.
- Quality of food products; etc.

The decision on making the complaint public shall be recorded.

5 Appeal process

Appeals are dealt at the level where certification decision making was done (Critical Location, Hub, ICC).

Appeals related to QHSE schemes are communicated to CER Accreditation Manager and included in the preparation of BVCH Impartiality meeting.

See appendices for specific Appeal Panels.

Appendix 1 - Climate Change disputes, complaints & appeals

CDM accreditation standard, Version 07.0, 14.2

1 Disputes

A dispute is a disagreement between a DOE (Verifier) and a client, regarding the DOE (Verifier) recommendation, and / or opinions/ decisions made at various stages in the course of its validation and/or verification /certification activities.

. The procedure consists of the following steps:

- Acknowledgment receipt is sent to the disputant
- Upon receipt LTM/Climate Change Quality Manager gathers and verifies necessary information to evaluate validity of the dispute,
- LTM/Climate Change Quality Manager investigates if the dispute raised is valid (the criteria would be to determine if there was any deficiency in BV's service to the client) and then decides what actions are to be taken
- Disputes will be tracked and recorded, including actions undertaken in response to them
- Results of investigations, outcome are communicated to the disputant in an appropriate time. The disputant will be informed of the closure of dispute handling process.
- Appropriate correction and corrective action shall be taken.

Persons engaged in the disputes handling process are different from those who carried out the validation, verification, or certification activities.

Disputes and subject of disputes shall be kept confidential.

In case the appellant is not satisfied with the appeals panel decision, appellant has the option of making a complaint to the concerned accreditation body.

Copy of Dispute procedure shall be made available to the client on request

Complaints related to Climate Change, received from a customer, certification body, or an auditor for CDM/GS/ GCC activities are recorded in Complaints and Appeals Tool with the respective country product manager being the primary contact and Climate Change Quality Manager as an additional contact.

The dispute handling procedure will be reviewed by the Climate Change Quality Manager on an on-going basis and in the following cases:

- Revision in the accreditation standard for CDM/ GS/VCS/GCC
- Revision in the accreditation procedure for CDM/ GS/VCS/GCC
- Decisions of the impartiality committee that are related to CDM/ GS/VCS/GCC
- Decisions of the CDM Management Review that necessitate a review of this procedure

The dispute handling procedure must be read in conjunction with the web hosted procedure for handling of Complaints, Appeals and Disputes which is made available publicly at

<https://www.bureauveritas.co.in/climate-change-services-cdmvcs-gs>

In case of any difference, the web hosted procedure will prevail.

2 Complaints

The resolution process includes the following steps.

- Investigation, including business impacts and analysis of the situation,

- LTM/Climate Change Quality Manager/internal person not involved in the matter will review if the complaint is valid, based on defined criteria (i.e., if there has been any deficiency in BV's service)
- Structured response (root cause analysis, correction, corrective action), if the severity is rated high (see corrective actions)
- Implementation of correction and corrective action,
- Wherever feasible, providing the complainant a report on the progress of actions on the complaint
- Information to the client of findings and actions taken and the outcome of the investigation,
- Monitoring of results: check if the solution is implemented and effective,
- Record and traceability of the complaint will be through Complaints and Appeals Tool,
- Follow up on sustainability of results and of resolution.

The timeframe for resolution is four weeks, unless otherwise specified in appendices. However, this may be affected by responsiveness of the client or other third parties.

The closure timeframe in Complaints and Appeals Tool for CAPA associated to high severity rating is 90 days, after which escalation process is started.

Complaint can be closed only after a final written response is provided to the complainant. Record of this communication shall be maintained.

The complaint handling procedure will be reviewed by the Climate Change Quality Manager on an on-going basis and in the following cases:

- Revision in the accreditation standard for CDM/ GS/VCS/GCC
- Revision in the accreditation procedure for CDM/ GS/VCS/GCC
- Decisions of the impartiality committee that are related to CDM/ GS/VCS/GCC
- Decisions of the CDM Management Review that necessitate a review of this procedure

The complaint handling procedure must be read in conjunction with the web hosted procedure for handling of Complaints, Appeals and Disputes which is made available publicly at

<https://www.bureauveritas.co.in/climate-change-services-cdmvcs-gs>

In case of any difference, the web hosted procedure will prevail.

3 Appeals

A documented procedure for appeals will be maintained and made publicly available. The appeal will be dealt with by an independent appeals committee of 3 persons who are different from those who conducted the validation, verification, technical review, or final decision. The appeal panel will be formed in response to the appeal received from the client. It will be ensuring that the submission, investigation, and decision on appeals do not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

The procedure for handling appeals will be as follows:

- The appeal will be acknowledged by the LTM/ Climate Change Quality Manager, and a receipt provided to the appellant
- Appeals panel will be constituted as above
- The validity of the appeal made will be ascertained after considering all the information available and gathered as a part of the investigation
- The appeal will be duly recorded and tracked, including any action taken to resolve the same
- If the appeal investigation points to a systemic deficiency or a non-conformity, appropriate correction and corrective actions will be taken to eliminate the gaps in the system
- The confidentiality of the appellant and the subjects of the appeal will be protected subject to the requirements for confidentiality
- The appellant will be kept informed of the progress on the appeal and the final decision on the same
- The appeals committee will have the final say in deciding on the appeal and will function independently in that regard
- The appellant will be informed of the independent appeals committee's final decision on the appeal. However, if not satisfied with the decision, the appellant will be informed of their option to raise a complaint with the CDM EB or VERRA/GS/GCC Secretariat.

The appeals handling procedure will be reviewed by the Climate Change Quality Manager on an on-going basis and in the following cases:

- Revision in the accreditation standard for CDM/ GS/VCS/GCC*
- Revision in the accreditation procedure for CDM/ GS/VCS/GCC*
- Decisions of the impartiality committee that are related to CDM/ GS/VCS/GCC*
- Decisions of the Climate Change Management Review that necessitate a review of this procedure*

The appeals handling procedure must be read in conjunction with the web hosted procedure for handling of Complaints, Appeals and Disputes which is made available publicly at <https://www.bureauveritas.co.in/climate-change-services-cdmvcsgs>

In case of any difference, the web hosted procedure will prevail.

4 Legal records

BV India Legal Department maintains a record of judicial processes pending against BV India, as well as information of any judicial cases held in the past.

If the subject matter of a judicial process pending, or instituted against BV India, is such that it is incompatible with its functions as a DOE (Verifier), BV India shall promptly report the matter to UNFCCC/VERRA/GS/GCC secretariat.

Appendix 2 – SA8000 Services

SAAS Procedure 201A:2015

In addition to the company's system to redress complaints, BV and SAAS headquarters provide two additional levels where workers or interested parties can file complaints.

Auditors shall confirm that workers and other interested parties understand and have access to all hierarchy levels of the complaints and appeals process, and that workers are trained in how to use that access.

1 Company Level

Complaints can be filed directly with the factory in question and may be resolved without the involvement of third-party auditors. SA8000 companies are required to establish a complaint procedure that provides workers the option to file a complaint anonymously. Companies are encouraged to establish suggestion boxes or a free mail-in system to facilitate workers expressing their concerns. These complainants shall be able to lodge a complaint anonymously. If names are given, no repercussions shall result. This may encourage an internal discussion and resolution prior to, or instead of, a formal complaint.

The company's Social Accountability Manager shall ensure there is a confidential, accessible, and free system for workers to lodge complaints or appeals regarding the company's conformance to SA8000. Also, the corrective Action taken to rectify the complaint shall be communicated to the workers filing the complaint or, in cases of anonymous complaints, to the worker elected SA8000 representative. In companies where a trade union is present, trade union representatives shall be involved in the complaint processing and settlement procedures.

In some cases, workers may feel the need to take their complaint to the certification body. Such cases include situations where: a) the complaint resolution is not satisfactory to workers; or b) workers feel too intimidated to lodge a complaint directly with management.

2 Bureau Veritas Level

If the company's complaint hierarchy does not satisfactorily address and resolve complaints, workers have access to the appeals procedure, enabling them to bring an appeal before local certification entity that verified the company's compliance with SA8000. Workers' ability to file an appeal shall not rely on their meeting auditors during surveillance visits.

The auditor shall verify that this mechanism and information are known to workers and other interested parties, during SA8000 audits.

Interested parties including workers unions, trade unions and NGOs can appeal the decision to certify a facility, if it presents credible and objective evidence of serious violation of any element of SA8000.

For example: a community group with evidence that workers are being fired for unionizing could appeal against the company's certification by contacting BVC that granted the certification.

The mechanism for receiving and handling complaints and appeals from workers and interested parties is described below:

- a) Acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant within 5 working days.
- b) Determine the acceptability of the complaint based on evidence received. If the complaint is accepted then conduct an investigation as detailed below.
- c) If the complaint is not accepted, notify the complainant of the reason as to why it was not accepted,
- d) Conduct an investigation, which may be aided by an unannounced audit, or any semi-announced audit is scheduled or Offsite Interviews. Local certification entity investigates and sends records of verification details to GPM/ICC
- e) Assign personnel for the complaint investigation only those who were not a part of the relevant audit team.
- f) Submit a report to the complainant regarding the conclusion of its investigation. The report SHALL present the resolution of the complaint and the reasons for that conclusion including summary of the documented evidence submitted and response, if there is any received from the certified organization's management. Any corrective action, agreed and confirmed as, implemented shall also be included in the report. The report SHALL be written according to any relevant confidentiality agreements and SHALL be issued within 10 days of rendering the decision.
- g) Whistle-blower's will be protected from retaliation

In case of appeal, this will be dealt with by an independent appeals committee of 2 persons who are different from those who conducted the audit, technical review, or final decision. . If the two persons in the committee disagree, final decision would rest with Global Accreditation Manager .

An appeal raised by a client of Bureau Veritas for SA8000 certification against a certification decision made by Bureau Veritas Certification can be related to:

- Refusal by Bureau Veritas Certification to proceed with an SA8000 audit.
- Disagreement with a nonconformity raised by Bureau Veritas Certification during an audit.
- Changes in scope of SA8000 certification proposed by Bureau Veritas Certification.
- A decision to reduce, suspend or terminate the SA8000 certification of the certified operation.

The appeal panel will be formed in response to the appeal received from the client. It will be ensuring that the submission, investigation, and decision on appeals do not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant

The procedure for handling appeals will be as follows:

- A. The appeal will be acknowledged by the LTM within 5 working days
- B. Appeals panel will be constituted as above
- C. The validity of the appeal made will be ascertained after considering all the information available and gathered as a part of the investigation within 15 working days
- D. The appeal will be duly recorded and tracked by GPM, including any action taken to resolve the same
- E. If the appeal investigation points to a systemic deficiency or a non-conformity, appropriate correction and corrective actions will be taken to eliminate the gaps in the system
- F. The confidentiality of the appellant and the subjects of the appeal will be protected subject to the requirements for confidentiality
- G The appellant will be kept informed of the progress on the appeal and the final decision on the same
- H The appeals committee will have the final say in deciding on the appeal and will function independently in that regard .Record of such decision shall be maintained which may normally happen only by e mail communication if physical meeting is not possible between the committee members.
- I .The appellant will be informed of the independent appeals committee's final decision on the appeal within 30 working days . However, if not satisfied with the decision, the appellant will be informed of their option to raise a complaint with the Accreditation Body SAAS.

3 SAAS - Accreditation level

Any interested party can also file a complaint or appeal with SAAS about accreditation of Bureau Veritas. The complainant, however, shall first seek to exhaust the complaints and appeals process at the company and certification body levels.

Complaints Received by SAAS Regarding Bureau Veritas & its certified Clients is handled in following manner:

- a) Acknowledge receipt of the complaint from SAAS. Authors: L. Bernstein & P. Scott Social Accountability Accreditation Services Issue:
- b) Report its plan of action to SAAS within 10 days, and submit subsequent reports every 30 days.
- c) Complete the investigation within 90 days
- d) Maintain records of complaints, appeals and responses for a minimum of 10 years after the resolution
- e) GPM will provide a detailed report to SAAS of all complaints received every 6 months.

Appendix 3 - IATF 16949

IATF Automotive certification scheme for IATF 16949, 5th Edition, 2.9

Appeal decision shall be done by the Appeal Panel with involvement of Global Product Manager, an independently assigned POV or Technical advisor and CER Technical Director.

For unusual cases, the Appeal committee will ask another independent POV to challenge the Appeal committee decision and in case of any remaining doubt, a clarification is asked to IAQB. Timing if a major nonconformity is appealed, BVC appeal committee to meet within 14 days to provide first feedback to the client.

- Appeal Panel reviews the case, to decide based on appeals and reports submitted by Technical Manager
- Appeal Panel decision is communicated to appellant. It shall be noted that this decision is absolute and final.

The submission, investigation and decision on appeals do not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

Upon request, BVC can inform the appellant that he or she can question decision of Appeal Panel, by raising same appeal to Accreditation Body.

Detailed process is described below:

BVC Appeal Management Process_IATF				
Step	What	When	Who	Business rules / procedure
1	Receipt of Appeal	Within 2 days	IATF Accreditation Manager	IATF Accreditation manager sends acknowledgement to respective contracting office
2	Independent POV review	Within 6 days	POV	IATF Accreditation Manager requests SSC to initiate independent POV Review. SSC to assign the file to independent POV by email. SSC to communicate decision received from independent POV to IATF Accreditation Manager by email Important Note: SSC to ensure POV decision has been received for all NCs for which Appeal has been raised Important Note: Independent POV review to ensure to take into account only evidence available at the date of the closing meeting Important Note: Independent POV reviewer shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the appeal request along with other documents (reports, NC report, score cards...) - Provide a recommendation to accept or reject the appeal request - Justify the recommendation based on rules, SI...
3	Raise a request in Complaints and	Within 6 days	SSC	SSC raises a request in Complaints and Appeals Tool and update internal appeal tracker. SSC keep themselves as

	Appeals Tool Incident & assign for Validation			Owner and Contracting Country responsible as Recipient. SSC sends Appeal to IATF Accreditation Manager for Validation SSC to send Internal incident number, contracting and if different performing country
4	Appeal Committee Meeting	Within 14 days	BV Appeal Committee	
5	Appeal Decision			If appeal is accepted proceed step 7 to 13 if not 7, 7 and 13
6	Communication of Decision to contracting office	Within 14 days	IATF accreditation Manager	
7	Communication of Decision to Client, auditor and performing country	Within 14 days	Contracting Office	Country to upload evidence of communication to the client in Complaints and Appeals Tool Country to upload evidence of communication to the auditor and the performing country (if the auditor does not belong to the contracting country) in Complaints and Appeals Tool
8	Correction Action - Update of Audit reports/Upload into system/Update of IATF DB	Within 17 days	Contracting Office/SSC	Country to inform SSC / IATF Accreditation Manager once updated audit report is uploaded in CMX. • SSC to ensure IATF database has been updated accordingly & Update Appeal Log Important Note: SSC to ensure clearly in comments section of the IATF database why this change was made
9	Creation of CAPA in Complaints and Appeals Tool	Within 20 days	IATF Accreditation Manager	Creation of CAPA in Complaints and Appeals Tool by IATF Accreditation Manager where he/she updates the CAPA Owner as Contracting Country responsible, CAPA Approver as IATF Accreditation Manager and CAPA Verifier as TQR Quality Manager.
10	First Response in Complaints and Appeals Tool	Within 80 days	Contracting office	The evidence of communication of appeal committee decision to the client also needs to be uploaded in Complaints and Appeals Tool (correction section). Note: Contracting office will need to co-ordinate with performing office (for investigation/actions) in case the auditor is not sponsored by them
11	Review of response in Complaints and Appeals Tool	Within 85 days	IATF Accreditation manager	CAPA Approver (IATF Accreditation Manager) reviews and gives decision on the CAPAs and route it forward to Contracting Country person for Implementation (if approved) and send it back (if rejected).
12	Upload Implementation evidence in Complaints and Appeals Tool	Within 90 days	Contracting office	

13	Verification & Closure of Appeal incident	Within 90 days	TQR Quality Manager	
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Appendix 4 – FSC Services

1 Filing

The FSC global procedure for the management of complaint and appeal is available on BV HO Website, in English, and several additional languages.

Any FSC complaints and appeals can be recorded on-line by using the link designed for that purpose. The local countries can also have on their own websites another way to record any complaint or appeal received, but the link to the BV HO complaint management must be mentioned.

FSC Complaints and appeals are acknowledged to sender within two weeks. Initial response to the client includes a proposed course of action, within two weeks. Information is sent to the complainant(s) regarding evaluation the complaint and or appeal.

2 Responsibility

Timeframe for resolution of both complaints and appeals is three months.

FSC	Complaint	Appeal
Contact client	LTM	FSC Hub Manager
Registration	LTM	I&F TQR – Forestry
Decision	LTM	I&F TQR FSC Technical Expert
Support	FSC Hub Manager	I&F TQR – Forestry, FSC Hub Manager and LTM

The owner of the compliant has to upload any record generated by the resolution of the complaint (email with the complainant, internal email).

The monitoring of all the FSC complaints and appeals is made by I&F TQR accreditation manager.

3 Discrimination

The submission, investigation and decision on appeals and complaints shall not induce any discriminatory actions against the complainant or appellant.

4 End of the process

The owner of the compliant shall send a final answer to the complainant, using the form Notification letter, and the complainant is invited to refer it to FSC or ASI in case of appeal.

Appendix 5 - Aerospace

EN 9104-001:2013 Clause 6.7.j

1 Complaints

Complaints related to Aerospace certification scheme, coming from a customer, certification body, OASIS feedback or an auditor, for Aerospace activity are recorded in Complaints and Appeals Tool with the ICC Operations Manager being the primary contact and International Aerospace Business Director as an additional contact.

The procedure shall ensure:

- All requests for corrective action are responded to within 30 calendar days from receipt of complaint if response requested, the response is provided within 30 calendar days from receipt of complaint by the accredited entity.
- If the CB determines that a short notice audit is necessary, this audit shall be completed within 90 calendar days from receipt of the complaint; and
- An effective corrective action process that provides for containment activities, conformance to the applicable standard is re-established, completion of root cause analysis, corrective actions addressing all root causes, and a completion date for the implementation of all corrective actions is defined. The CB shall be responsible for the resolution of all complaints. Complaints that cannot be resolved by the CB shall be referred to the AB.

2 Appeals

An Appeal decision shall be made by the Independent Appeal Panel/individual specifically agreed to deal with the appeal with the support and involvement of the ICC Operations Manager. The person conducting the appeal must be an independently assigned POV or Technical advisor, the CER Global Accreditation Manager and a representative of I&F TQR. Timing if a major nonconformity is appealed, BVC appeal committee to meet within 5 days to provide first feedback to the client.

- Appeal Panel reviews the case, to make a decision based on appeals and reports submitted by ICC Operations Manager
- Appeal Panel decision is communicated to appellant. It shall be noted that this decision is absolute and final.

The submission, investigation and decision on appeals do not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

Upon request, BVC can inform the appellant that he or she can question decision of Appeal Panel, by raising same appeal to Accreditation Body or IAQG/EAQG.

3 Timeframe

Requests for corrective action are responded to within 30 calendar days from receipt of complaint.

If response to feedback is requested, the response is provided within 30 calendar days from receipt of complaint.

If a short notice audit is necessary, this audit shall be completed within 90 calendar days from receipt of the complaint.

Appendix 6 – ASC Farm – ASC Feed

ASC Farm CAR V 3.0
ASC Feed CAR V1.0

All formal and informal complaints, appeals, concerns or objections related to BV ASC Farm activities, a certificate holder or a certification applicant are kept on file and logged in Complaints and Appeals Tool.

4 Complaints

The complaint is managed by the BV entity, and if necessary, by the Hub manager, or the accreditation manager.

BVC encourages the complainants to submit copies of their complaints to directly to the ASC at:

- Email: complaints@asc-aqua.org
- Mailing Address: Aquaculture Stewardship Council, Daalseplein 101, 3511 SX Utrecht, The Netherlands

5 Appeals

An Appeal decision is managed by the hub manager, or the accreditation manager if needed.

6 End of the process

The owner of the complaint shall send a final answer to the complainant, using the form Notification complaint and appeal, and the complainant is invited to refer it to ASC or ASC appointed accreditation body in case of appeal.

The monitoring of all the ASC complaints and appeals is made by I&F TQR accreditation manager.

7 Submission during the annual surveillance assessment

BVCH report all logged issues (complaints, appeals) using the FORM 4 submitted annually no less than 42 days prior to the annual surveillance by the ASC appointed accreditation body's visit. Copies are sent to the ASC and the ASC appointed accreditation body.

8 Suspension or withdrawal of BVC ASC accreditation

In this case, all logged issues are sent to the ASC appointed accreditation body and ASC as part of the suspension or withdrawal process using FORM 4 no later than the final date of accreditation.

Appendix 7 – MSC

MSC General Certification Requirements v2.5

1 Complaints and appeal acknowledgement

Within 10 working days of receiving a complaint or an appeal, BVCH will provide an initial response to the complainant or appellant, including an outline of the proposed course of action to follow up on the complaint or appeal.

BVCH will keep the complainant or appellant informed of progress in evaluating the complaint or appeal until it is closed.

BVCH will investigate the allegations and specify all proposed actions in response to the complainant or appellant within 3 months of receiving the complaint or appeal.

2 End of the process

The owner of the complaint will send a final answer to the complainant, using the form Notification complaint and appeal, and the complainant is invited to refer it to MSC or MSC appointed accreditation body in case of appeal.

In cases where the subject of the complaint or appeal is also being considered through an objections process, this 3-month timeline may be deferred until completion of the objection process.

A summary of any complaint evaluated in relation to the MSC Fisheries Program is sent to the MSC via complaints@msc.org within 20 days of closure of the complaint.

The monitoring of all the MSC complaints and appeals is made by I&F TQR accreditation manager.

Appendix 8 – RSPO SCCS

RSPO-PRO-T05-002 V2

1. Bureau Veritas Impartiality Committee for RSPO

1.1 Bureau Veritas National Office may, whenever relevant, consult or refer the formal complaint to Bureau Veritas' Impartiality Committee for RSPO, such as complaints related to conflict of interest, Bureau Veritas' independence, etc.

1.2 The Committee shall be informed of the complaint and of all the steps taken by Bureau Veritas to resolve the complaint as well as the response provided by the affected stakeholder.

1.3 Bureau Veritas Impartiality Committee will review all the information provided and will make a proposal to the affected Bureau Veritas National Office on how to resolve the dispute.

1.4 Bureau Veritas National Office shall report to the Committee on the outcome once the dispute has been resolved or of any action taken to resolve the dispute.

2. Responding to a formal complaint or grievance

2.1 Once the formal complaint has been investigated, the CER Director or CER Manager from the relevant Bureau Veritas national Office shall respond to the complaint or grievance indicating whenever relevant and appropriate the preventive and/or corrective measures that will be implemented to address the issue raised.

2.2 For all the formal complaints, grievance or disputes received, the relevant Bureau Veritas Certification National Office shall handle the complaint within 60 days of receiving the formal complaint.

2.3 Whenever a complaint cannot be resolved within 60 days, Bureau Veritas shall inform the RSPO Secretariat, including information as to why the complaint cannot be resolved within an appropriate time frame.

3. Referring a formal complaint to RSPO

3.1 A certified operation has the right to raise a formal complaint with RSPO or directly to the RSPO Executive Board, in line with RSPO Grievance Procedure, if it is not satisfied with Bureau Veritas Certification's final response.

4. Recording a formal complaint or grievance

4.1 All formal complaints or grievances received shall be recorded together with all the steps taken to resolve the complaint and all communication with interested and/or directly affected parties. Records shall be kept in Bureau Veritas [Complaints and Appeals Tool](#).

5. Appeals

5.1 An appeal may only be made by a client of Bureau Veritas for RSPO certification against a RSPO certification decision made by Bureau Veritas Certification.

5.2 An appeal raised by a client of Bureau Veritas for RSPO certification against a RSPO certification decision made by Bureau Veritas Certification may only be related to:

- Refusal by Bureau Veritas Certification to proceed with an RSPO audit.
- Disagreement with a nonconformity raised by Bureau Veritas Certification during an RSPO audit.
- Changes in scope of RSPO certification proposed by Bureau Veritas Certification.
- A decision to reduce, suspend or terminate the RSPO certification of the certified operation.

5.3 The grounds for an appeal are limited to:

- An appeal based on the fact that Bureau Veritas Certification has not followed its own procedures for RSPO certification or RSPO certification requirements; or
- An appeal based on the fact that Bureau Veritas Certification has incorrectly interpreted the RSPO certification requirements.

5.4 Notifications of appeal shall be received by the Director or Manager of the relevant Bureau Veritas Certification National Office within 30 days of the relevant RSPO certification decision being received by the certified operation.

5.5 The Director or Manager of the relevant Bureau Veritas Certification National Office shall review and respond to an appeal within 60 days of receiving the appeal. In its response, Bureau Veritas Certification shall clearly indicate whether the original decision is maintained or whether based on the elements presented in the appeal that the initial decision has been modified to take into account any new and relevant information provided.

5.6 A certified operation has the right to raise an appeal with RSPO or directly to the RSPO Executive Board, in line with RSPO Grievance Procedure, if it is not satisfied with Bureau Veritas Certification's final response.

Appendix 9 – publication on BVC website



Complaints and Appeals Management for Certification Services

Bureau Veritas Certification Policy - TQR I&F Division

Move Forward with Confidence



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Bureau Veritas Certification policy is to establish a standard and structured process for the management of Complaints and Appeals received by Bureau Veritas Certification. The purpose of this policy is to communicate the standard process to all operations to ensure that all appeals and complaints are handled in a professional and responsible manner.

1. Definitions

The definitions used by Bureau Veritas Certification are the following:

Complaint

(ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 8.7): expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal (8.6), by any person or organization to a conformity assessment body (4.6) relating to the activities of that body, where a response is expected.

Appeal

(ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 8.6): request by the person or organization that provides, or that is, the object of conformity assessment (4.2) to a conformity assessment body (4.6) for reconsideration by that body of a decision (7.2) it has made relating to that object.

2. Complaints

Common Process Steps

2.1 Receipt and Acknowledgement

Complaint can be written (Formal Letter, Email, Website) or verbal (Phone Call, Feedback during sales visit or audit). The process of management of the complaints registered in our website is the following:

- The acknowledgment of the complaint is done automatically
- On HO level, the dispatch of the email is done. If this is a complaint, this is transferred to a generic mailbox (groupqhseinbv@bureauveritas.com)
- Then the complaint is transferred to the QHSE manager concerned for investigation and actions.

Complaints are handled at contracting entity level. An audit may be initiated to proceed with investigation, and the client shall be notified with reasons for the audit.

The complaint form and the complaint/appeal process are publicly available in the same languages as the public certification summaries published by Bureau Veritas Certification.

Upon receipt, complaints and appeals are acknowledged to sender within five working days, unless otherwise specified.

The Recipient of the complaint is either the person who received it directly or the one who entered the information. They are assigned to the validator who will determine the severity and decide actions according to this rating

2.2 Responsibility

Personnel who investigate complaints and appeals are always different from those who carried out the audits and made certification decision, without discrimination against the appellant or complainant.

- If (LTM) Local Technical Manager was involved, then a person, internal and independent, is appointed
- If Local Technical Manager was not involved; he or she can carry out the investigation.

Unless otherwise specified, LTM is the default channel for complaints and appeals.

2.3 Resolution process

The resolution process includes the following steps.

- Investigation, and analysis of the situation,
- Structured response (root cause analysis, correction, corrective action) if the severity is rated high
- Implementation of correction and corrective action,
- Information to the client of findings and actions taken,
- Monitoring of results: check if the solution is implemented and effective,
- Record and traceability of documents,
- Follow up on sustainability of results and of resolution.
- The timeframe for resolution is four weeks, unless otherwise specified in appendices. However, this may be affected by responsiveness of the client or other third parties.

Bureau Veritas retains the anonymity of the complainant in relation to the client if this is requested by the complainant and shall treat anonymous complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction that are not substantiated as complaints as stakeholder comments and address these during the next audit.

When the formal investigation and resolution of the complaint cannot be completed within 4 weeks, a progress update of the investigation shall be provided to the complainer until the situation is resolved.

On case-by-case basis, BVC, the Complainant and the Client shall decide if information needs to be made public. There must be formal authorization from Complainant and Client when the decision is to make the complaint public.

Any instances where failure to publicly disclose the complaint could affect other stakeholders, should be made public.

Examples of these instances are complaints about:

- Defects that could have catastrophic consequences (injuries, death, etc.),
- Failures in environmental management systems that could cause severe damage to environment and stakeholders.
- Quality of food products; etc.
- A final written response is provided to the complainant
- Specific complaints and appeals handling procedure are applied for following schemes based on scheme owner requirements and a copy of these can be made available on request from LTM
 - IATF 16949
 - SA8000
 - CDM

3. Appeal Process

Appeals are dealt at the level where certification decision making was done (Critical Location, Hub, ICC) and coordinated by Local Technical Manager with concerned Accreditation Manager and CL, Hub, or ICC to maintain impartiality.

Appeals related to QHSE schemes are communicated to CER Accreditation Manager.

PS: for ASC, MSC and FSC, the complainant can refer the complaint to ASI, if the issue has not been resolved through the full implementation of BVCH 's own procedures, in case of disagreement with the conclusions or dissatisfaction by the way BVCH handled the complaint. As the ultimate step, the complaint or appeal may be referred to the scheme owner.

For ASC: email: complaints@asc-aqua.org - Mailing Address: Aquaculture Stewardship Council, Daalseplein 101, 3511 SX Utrecht, The Netherlands

Appendix 10 – IFS

All IFS complaints should be handled according to the IFS Annex 4, version 3 of the Framework Agreement:

The appeals shall be finalized within 20 working days of receiving information from the assessed site. A letter confirming receipt of the complaint shall be issued within a maximum of five (5) working days. An initial response shall be given within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint. A full written response be given after the completion of a full and thorough investigation into the complaint.

For the handling of complaints received by the IFS Offices, the basis for complaint management is described in the IFS Framework Agreement with certification bodies: If the complaint relates to the quality of the content of IFS audits or IFS audit reports, IFS MANAGEMENT will ask the certification body to provide a statement on the cause and the measures introduced to rectify the problem within 2 weeks. If the complaint relates to the quality of IFS Assessments or the content of IFS Assessment reports, the IFS Offices require the certification body to provide a statement on the cause and the measures identified to rectify the problem within two (2) weeks.

If the complaint relates to administrative errors, e.g., in IFS certificates and/ or IFS reports based on typing mistakes or in the IFS database based on an oversight or by accident, IFS MANAGEMENT will ask the certification body to provide a statement and rectify the problem within 1 week. The certification body may ask IFS MANAGEMENT providing an argumentation to extend this period. The statement must be issued in writing by email or post. If the complaint relates to administrative errors, e.g. in IFS Assessment reports, IFS Certificates or in the IFS Database, the IFS Offices ask the certification body to provide a statement and rectify the problem within one week. The statement shall be issued in writing, by e-mail or post.

Appendix 11 – SEDEX Audits

Templates – SMETA Appeal form

1 Purpose

The purpose of the Appeal Procedure is to provide our Suppliers / Clients with unbiased, fair, and rationally prompt resolution process about the disputes raised by the Supplier / Client during or post the SMETA audit / Sedex Virtual Assessment. The appeal procedure can be made available to clients on request

2 Appeal Process Steps

This procedure defines the Appeal process steps for SMETA audits / Sedex Virtual assessments.

- If there is a disagreement between the Site Management and Auditor during the closing meeting on all the non-conformities or any of the non-conformities raised by the Auditor, the site management signs in the dispute box of the CAPR and states their reasons why agreement was not reached with the corresponding non-conformity serial number against which they have a dispute.
- The concerned Technical Reviewer (during the technical review process) would bring such disagreement noted in the CAPR to the attention of Global Social and Customized Audits Manager / Technical Expert (herein after referred as Technical Governance Team).
- Alternatively, in case above process is not followed viz. reason is not mentioned in the dispute box of Signed CAPR by the Site Management, the Supplier / Client can raise objections about any of the non-conformities raised by the Auditor after the Audit is carried out.
- Technical Governance Team would forward Appeal Form to the Auditor. Post Auditor and Supplier incorporates the respective comments in the Appeal Form along with Audit information, the same will be forwarded to the Technical Governance Team for their review.
- Based on the comments made by both parties viz. Auditor and Supplier and the local law / ETI Base Code Requirement in the Appeal form, the duly filled Appeal form is reviewed by the Technical Governance team. In case, there are any clarifications which needs to be sought from the Auditor, the same is being put forward to the

local network country / Auditor prior to arriving at the decision. Post getting the necessary clarifications, appeal decision is being made by the Technical Governance Team as to whether the concerned non-conformities are valid or need to be removed / downgraded to observation.

- The final decision is let known to the Network Country who in turn forwards the same to the Supplier. In case, the NCs are downgraded / removed, the Revised CAPR is being sent to the Supplier through the Network Country / Auditor for their acknowledgment / signature. Revised CAPR shall be uploaded on Sedex Advance platform along with the Audit Report.
- Further, in case, the Final Appeal Decision of the Technical Governance Team is not agreeable to the Supplier, they can raise their grievance to the Sedex Grievance Team. On receiving the grievance, Sedex will get the comments / explanation as to the situation on the day of Audit from both the parties and then take a final decision on the issue raised.

Audit Team will clearly communicate to the Site Management Representatives during the audit that our company has an “Appeals Procedure” in place. Should they or the Client wish to challenge any or all the findings raised during the audit, their appeal would be considered, and the due process would be followed.

3 Appeal Handling

The Appeal would be handled by Technical Governance Team who will have no role to play in the audit including auditing / reviewing the report under dispute. Member of the BVCH TQR team responsible for SEDEX scheme would approve the appeal decision and Global Social and Customized Audits Manager would be the back-up in his absence.

In no case, the Appeal decision would be made and approved by the same personnel.

4 Timeline for Appeal process

Stage	Action	Timeline
1	Technical Governance Team receives an appeal from the Supplier / Client challenging any or all the findings raised during a said audit	Initiation date
2	Technical Governance Team may request any further clarifications / details from the Auditor with respect to the filled Appeal form. Clarifications would be put across by Auditor within 5 working days of the clarifications being sought by Technical Governance Team	Within 30 calendar days of initiation date.
3	Technical Governance Team will relay the Appeal decision post approval from Member of the BVCH TQR team responsible for SEDEX scheme OR Global Social and Customized Audits Manager to the local network country / Auditor.	Within 30 calendar days of initiation date.

Technical Governance Team shall log all appeals /disputes and records will be duly maintained for future reference.