



# ***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](mailto:complaints@asc-aqua.org) - Mailing Address: Aquaculture Stewardship Council, Daalseplein 101, 3511 SX Utrecht, The Netherlands