

## PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

### PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Establish the activities to be carried out for the reception and treatment of complaints and appeals lodged with EPIC, due to decisions taken as a conformity assessment body.

Reference: ISO 17029:2019-CLAUSE NOS—9.8, 9.9, 9.10

RESPONSIBILITY:

Head Operation/Director

### DEFINITIONS

Facts discovered after the issue of validation/verification statement.: Disagreement between the EPIC and the GHG service client (project participant) regarding the EPIC's recommendation and/or opinions/decisions made at various stages during the validation and/or verification/certification functions.

Appeal: Request by the client of the conformity assessment service to the same EPIC body to reconsider the decision taken by the assigned professional team regarding the assessment carried out.

Note:

1. An appeal for reconsideration is considered to be the first instance.
2. In some service regulations, the term Dispute can still be found, which is equivalent to an appeal for reconsideration.
3. For climate change services accredited under the United Nations standard, the reinstatement is equivalent to the dispute. In the standard it is found as follows:  
Disagreement between the DOE (Designated Operational Entity) and the project participant (PP) regarding the recommendation and/or decisions/opinions of the DOE (Designated Operational Entity) taken at different stages during the validation and/or verification/certification functions.

Complaints: Formal (written) and/or informal (verbal) expressions of dissatisfaction / incompetence / project rejection in relation to EPICs GHG validation and verification functions,

from any source, such as the Accreditation Body, GHG client's organization, the general public or its representatives, government bodies, NGOs, etc.

## **DETAILS OF PROCEDURE**

1. EPIC has a philosophy to understand a perception of customer satisfaction. This measurement is undertaken by direct interaction with customers as to their perception of EPIC Certification Services. EPIC collects customer satisfaction feedback using form (FORM 03-01) from the clients to improve validation and verification processes further. The feedback will be collected over phone/e-mail.

2. Results of the feedback shall be considered at Management Review, opportunities for improvement identified and trends monitored. Information or documentation provided to EPIC by the requesting party will be kept confidential.

3. If feedback is negative on any point, it is considered as a complaint and is recorded as a complaint and suitable correction and corrective action using the FORM 05-01 will be taken and communicated to the client.

### **Handling of Appeals.**

4. EPIC has established a documented process for handling appeals. EPIC will upload the same in the company website. EPIC ensures that the handling of the appeals procedure is available to all interested parties.

5. Formal proceedings will be initiated when the appeal is made in writing by the appellant. EPIC will initiate the action using the complaint form (FORM 05-01).

6. Acknowledge the appeal and communicate to appellant.

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

8. Appeals process includes an independent appeal panel responsible for the appeals process. The appeals panel can comprise of the Head of Operations and quality manager, who is not involved in any validation / verification process. Based on the type of issue, the appeals panel may take the services of an external legal/technically qualified person as well.

9. The external panel members shall have at least 5 years of professional experience in science / engineering fields/legal profession as appropriate and terms of contract similar to the impartiality committee shall apply.

10. The appeals panel shall collect all the necessary information to determine whether the appeal is substantiated.

11. The appeals panel shall advise the appellant to review the contents of this procedure available in the EPIC website. Copies of all correspondence with the Appellant will be maintained.

12. The panel shall meet within 30 days from the date of receipt of the appeal. The date and location of the meeting will be sent to the appellant in writing, at least 7 days before the meeting requesting the Appellant to appear before the Appeal Panel either online or in-person.

13. The appeals panel shall hear the appellant. Minutes of the meeting will be maintained.

14. The assessment of the Appeals panel shall be final and shall be recorded in writing, with copies to the appellant. The result of an Appeal may result in corrective actions being taken which shall be recorded in the relevant form (FORM 05-01) in line with PROCEDURE 05.

15. Appellant shall be informed about the assessment of Appeals Panel and shall inform that the Appellant in case is not satisfied with the decision of the Appeal Panel, has an option of complaining to the corresponding GHG program body or respective Accreditation bodies.

16. The Appeals panel shall ensure that the submission, investigation and assessment on appeals do not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

17. The final decision on the appeal panels assessment will be made by, reviewed and approved by the director not involved in the decision which is the subject of the appeal in question.

### **Handling of complaints**

18. EPIC has established and documented the process to receive, evaluate, and resolve complaints.

19. EPIC will upload the complaints procedure in the company website.

20. Formal proceedings will be initiated when the complaint is made in writing by the complainant, complaints can also be received by other means such as oral/in-person/telephone etc. EPIC will initiate the action using the complaint form (FORM 05-01).

21. Acknowledge the complaint by the Head Operations (who is independent from those who carried out the validation or verification and certification activities for the specific project) and communicate the complainant to the corresponding lead auditor, so that he/she can carry out the review and adjustments in accordance with the PRO 02.

**Complaints from client**

21.1) Client complaints will normally be made in writing by the client, complaints can also be received by other means such as oral/in-person/telephone etc, the EPIC shall maintain a complaint record in Form 05-01. An initial response shall be made to the client within 5 working days. Full resolution should be within 4 weeks whenever possible, this may be affected by the responsiveness of the client or other third parties. The Head-Operations shall be aware of all customer complaints.

22.The submissions, investigation and decision on complaints do not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.

23.Head- Operations, when receiving a Complaint, by whatever means (phone, e-mail etc.) completes the relevant form. All Complaints shall be recorded in appropriate form (FORM 05-01)

24.Head-Operations shall gather and verify all necessary information to determine whether the complaint is substantiated. For evaluating the validity of the complaint, investigating the complaint and for deciding what actions are to be taken in response to it.

25.After investigating the root cause of the Complaint and taking any necessary corrective action, the Head-Operations shall write to the person who made the Complaint advising them of the actions taken and closing the matter. All Complaint letters will be filed in the Complaints file. All the complaints/disputes will be dealt expeditiously. Safeguards for confidentiality of the complaint is maintained.

26.Head-Operations will ensure/monitor that the appropriate corrections and corrective actions are taken to safeguard the confidentiality of the complainant and subject of the complaint.

27.Final review/approval of corrections/corrective actions is done by Head Operations.

28.Communicate to the complainant about the action taken on the complaint including progress reports of the complaint.

29.Head Operations shall keep all the records of complaints.

Approved by Head operations

**APPROVAL RECORD**

Version No	Details of Revision	Effective date
1.0	Initial adoption	29.09.2022

2.0	Requirements of ISO 17029 and ISO 14065	14.08.2023
3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The means of feedback collection is updated</li> <li>• Years of experience for the appeals panel members updated</li> <li>• Sources of complaints is updated</li> <li>• 'Complaints from client' is moved from PRO 05 to PRO 03</li> <li>• Editorial updates</li> </ul>	01.02.2024