

Appeals & Complaint Procedure

1. Introduction

To review and resolve the internal and external appeals and complaints and to take whatever action is required to prevent a recurrence of that deficiency.

This procedure shall cover the following:

- receipt of formal appeal & complaints from GSCS registered operator/applicants.
- receipt of a formal appeal & complaints from a user of the GSCS registered client.
- receipt of a formal appeal & complaints from a clients, vendor, brands etc.
- receipt of a formal appeal & complaints from a GSCS Overseas offices
- receipt of verbal appeal & complaints and anonymous complaints
- Internal employees

This procedure allows the aggrieved party the opportunity to present the complaint or appeal to GSCS and to require the complainant or appellant to include a clear description of the complaint or appeal, objective evidence to support each element or aspect of the complaint or appeal, and the name and contact information of the submitter or be anonymous.

2. Information of Right to Complaint

This procedure shall be easily accessible on the websites of GSCS (as GSCS does never do outsourcing of schemes, it is not applicable) in the local language of the country of operation.

Anyone can submit the appeal or complaints by through GSCS website <https://gscsintl.org/appeal-complaint> or they can directly communicate by email, mobile, phone, through postal address or complaint box located in GSCS office premises. Complaints/appeals lodged through website shall come to the inbox of GSCS Managing Director at a.mottaleb@gscsintl.com.

The below are the details for raising appeal or compliant shall also be available in GSCS website.

- Email ID: a.mottaleb@gscsintl.com
- Mobile no. +971545448574
- Phone no. +88 02 5508 6965
- Postal Address: House 75, Road 19, Sector 11, Uttara, Dhaka 1230, Bangladesh.

GSCS client agreement which will be given to all clients with the quotations/contract will also show the procedures for complaints.

All Auditors must inform operator regarding their right to complaint and GSCS procedure at opening and closing meeting, following GSCS opening and closing meeting agenda (PCWI05 & PCWI11).

Complainant/Appellant shall be offered the opportunity to refer their complaint to GSCS's accreditation bodies (ASI, ANAB) and scheme owners (particularly to FSC, if the

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complaint relates to FSC scheme), if the issue has not been resolved through the full implementation of GSCS procedure, or if the complainant disagrees with the conclusions reached by GSCS and/ or is dissatisfied by the way, GSCS handled the complaint. As the ultimate step, the complaint may be referred to FSC, in case of FSC scheme related complaints.

Note01:

GSCS shall retain the anonymity of the complainant in relation to the client, if this is requested by the complainant.

GSCS shall treat anonymous complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction of the Client Organizations, that are not substantiated as complaints as stakeholder comments and address these during the next audit.

3. Responsibility of Managing Director

- Shall be responsible for ensuring that all Impartiality Committee members have access to internal system and website.
- Shall ensure that review of complaints is put on the agenda for all Impartiality Committee Meetings and Management Review Meetings.
- Shall be responsible for verifying the effectiveness of the corrective action taken through review of Internal Audit Reports and information on the internal system.
- Shall ensure that the coordination of all complaints is in accordance with the procedure identified within this document.
- Shall ensure that all complaints are closed out within a three (03) months' period.
- Shall ensure that all service complaint records requiring action are completed, specifying corrective action taken to bring about a satisfactory conclusion to the complaint.
- Shall ensure that all complaints received are put directly into the web-based system or email system.
- Shall be responsible for recording complaints in the GSCS system.

4. Investigation for Complaint & Appeal

All complaints received (through website/emails/phone calls/internal employees) will be recorded through GSCS Managing Director through a.mottaleb@gscsintl.com, in the integrity department of GSCS, in the centralised complaint and appeal database.

4.1 Recording & Responding to Complaints

- Upon receipt of a complaint or appeal, GSCS shall confirm whether the complaint or appeal relates to certification activities, or any other activity related to GSCS, if so, shall address it.
- Firstly, the complaint shall be registered in the complaint log with a complaint tracking number. The source and description of the complaints are mandatory fields and therefore must be completed.

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- GSCS shall acknowledge receipt of a complaint or appeal within 3 (three) working days to the complainant or appellant. The response to the complaint and appeal shall be the same language that is used in the public summary certification report or shall agree with the complainant on the language used.
- Within 5 working days, GSCS shall start investigation of the complaint as per the below methodology.
- GSCS shall respond with a proposed course of action within 2 weeks of receiving the complaint & appeal. The submitter will be kept posted of progresses/outcomes accordingly as per clause 3.4 below.

4.2 Investigating Complaints

The investigation team for each complaint & appeal shall be consisted of –

5. GSCS Integrity Team
6. Managing Director
7. A member of GSCS Impartiality Committee

The investigation committee will not involve any person related to the complaint.

GSCS shall –

- gather and verify all necessary information (as far as possible) to progress the complaint to a decision.
- investigate the allegations and specify all its proposed actions in conclusion to the complaint or appeal within three (3) months of receiving the complaint or appeal.
- Keep the complainant/appellant informed about the progress in evaluating the complaint/ appeal time to time to the complainant(s)/ appellant(s).
- ensure that there is no conflict of interest, with the personnel from investigation panel and the complainant/appellant client.

The decision of the investigation panel shall be final. All outcomes and results of appeal and complaint shall be recorded in the complaint database.

7.1 Corrective/Preventive Action

After the investigation has been completed and the root cause has been determined, corrective/preventive action will be determined and recorded in the complaint & appeal database.

The report will present the resolution of the complaint/appeal and the reasons for such resolution, summarizing the documented evidence submitted unless the submitter has requested it be held confidential in whole or in part, and summarizing a response from the management of the facility.

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The accused party (if any) has the right to submit a written response to the allegations and to have that response, or a summary of it, included in the report. If the accused party has agreed to corrective action, that commitment will be included in the report.

The report shall be written so as not to breach the confidentiality agreement in effect and shall be issued within 10 days of the rendering of the decision.

GSCS shall ensure that results shall be communicated to the complainant and appellant with the investigation report.

7.2 Corrective Action/Preventive Verification

GSCS Integrity team shall ensure the verification the completion of the corrective/preventive action taken without any delay, and update.

The Impartiality Committee and Management Review Members shall review all complaints raised as well as a report on any trends to ascertain:

- the continued effectiveness of the corrective actions since the last meeting.
- the repetitive nature of subsequent complaints.

The output of the Impartiality Committee and Management Review shall demonstrate that all complaints have been dealt with and that any corrective/preventive action that was required because of the complaint have been effectively implemented.

7.3 For PEFC Certification:

Any substantiated complaints of client organizations' noncompliance with certification standards or complaints against client organizations that GSCS receives or gets notified about shall be reported to the PEFC Council within 30 days.

Summary reports for complaints and appeals that have been resolved against PEFC certified client organizations that have been received by the certification body must be provided by GSCS to the PEFC Council and the relevant PEFC National Governing Body. These reports shall include at a minimum:

- a) identification of the appellant/complainant (subject to disclosure)
- b) identification of the client organisation
- c) subject of the complaint
- d) summary of the complaint handling process
- e) outcome/resolution of the complaint

8. Records

Records of complaints and appeals and responses to each will be kept for a minimum of seven (07) years after the resolution of the complaint.

GSCS shall register all complaints related to FSC scheme with FSC.

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GSCS shall make documented.

- the methodology for dealing with the Appeals
- a register shall be maintained to record all Appeals and their outcome and the names of the Members of the Committee hearing the Appeal.

References Document (s)

PCF02-Complaint List
PCF12-Management Review Report
PCF18- Impartiality Committee Agenda
PCF24-Complaints Form
Automatic Client Feedback Mechanism