



# ***Complaints and Appeals Management for Forest & Wood Certification***

*Bureau Veritas Certification Policy - TQR I&F Division*

*Rev3*



***Move Forward with Confidence***



## **1. 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.

The definitions used by Bureau Veritas Certification are the following:

### **Appeal:**

An Appeal is defined as an “Appeal against a Certification Decision made by Bureau Veritas Certification or Decision made by Bureau Veritas Certification on the validity of a complaint against either Bureau Veritas Certification or a Bureau Veritas Certification Certified Organisation”.

### **Complaints:**

A complaint is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction by a person or organization (“party”) against either Bureau Veritas Certification or a Bureau Veritas Certification Certified Organisation”.

## **2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

Complaints and appeals are registered directly on-line by the “party” on either the global Bureau Veritas Certification website and (or) directly on the Bureau Veritas Certification local office’s website; This complaint form and the complaint/appeal process is publicly available in the same languages as the public certification summaries published by Bureau Veritas Certification on-line.

This complaint/appeal form is also available in print on party’s request.

Complaints and appeals received must be recorded and the details transmitted to the relevant Bureau Veritas Certification entity for processing.

In case of complaint or appeal received from a “party” which is not a Bureau Veritas Certification client, due consideration must be given whether or not it is appropriate to answer, taking into account potential liability. In such cases, the content of the answer must be coordinated with the client.

The Local Technical Manager (LTM) is the default channel for dealing with the complaints and appeals. End-responsible to carry out this process:

- For complaints, LTM
- For appeals, FSC HUB manager (related with the country of the appeal).

The relevant KPI must be monitored as a measure of effectiveness of the process (KPI).

An overall review of customer’s complaints or appeal process must be part of the annual Management System Review.

The HUB Manager, the TQR CER Technical Manager and the Global accreditation Coordinator shall be informed of all FSC complaints. The Global Technical Director of Bureau Veritas Certification Holding SAS shall be notified depending upon severity. In case of a critical risk (such as complaints involving a possible litigation, insurance declaration, court summons, loss of image, accreditation...) the complaints must be transferred to the HO Divisional legal contact.

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. OVERALL PROCESS STEPS**

For each complaint and appeal, the following points must be followed:

- 1) The complaint and appeal must be recorded by the LTM of the receiving Bureau Veritas Certification Entity. Complaints/appeals will normally be made in writing, but if not, Bureau Veritas Certification office receiving the official oral complaint shall initiate a record in BVC system.
- 2) LTM communicates the details of the complaint or appeal and findings to relevant internal parties where required Technical Manager shall liaise with Bureau Veritas Certification (Holding) or the relevant accredited Bureau Veritas Certification entity in order to reply adequately to the appeal or complaint.
- 3) LTM shall:
  - record documents, ensure traceability of documents,
  - check the feasibility of the decisions and closes the case when solved
- 4) Complaint shall be offered the opportunity to refer it to FSC's dispute resolution process if the issue has not been resolved at the end of the complaint procedure with Bureau Veritas Certification.

The submission, investigation and decision on appeals/complaints shall avoid any discriminatory actions against the party. This process must be managed as confidential.

The complainant has the opportunity to refer their complaint to ASI, if the issue has not been resolved through the full implementation of Bureau Veritas Certification's own procedures, or if the complainant disagrees with the conclusions reached by the Bureau Veritas Certification and/ or is dissatisfied by the way Bureau Veritas Certification handled the complaint. As the ultimate step, the complaint may be referred to FSC.

## **4. APPEALS PROCESS**

Upon receipt of the appeal LTM shall determine if she or he was involved in the appealed decision – all appeals must be investigated by personnel different from those who carried out the audits and made the relevant certification decision.

If she or he was involved, then a suitable qualified internal independent panel shall be appointed, and if not she or he can carry out the investigation. The panel is composed of: 2 person independent from the appealed decision from 2 HUBS and the Global accreditation coordinator.

Any appeal received must be communicated in a timely manner to the Global accreditation Coordinator to support the answer to the appellant that the appeal has been received and will be processed and to investigate the grounds of the appeal, by reviewing the appeal and associated files (contract review, audit reports, certification decision details) followed by preparing a report detailing the appeal.

The receipt of the appeal must be acknowledged, according to the above principles, including an outline of the proposed course of action to follow up on the appeal, within 2 weeks of receiving it.

Global accreditation coordinator shall monitor the results, have investigated and specified all its proposed actions in response to appellant(s) within 3 months of receiving the appeal with the support of FSC Hub manager / LTM.

## **5. COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

Upon receipt of the complaint LTM shall determine if she/he was involved in the process in question – all complaints must be investigated by personnel different from those who carried out the audits and made the relevant certification decision. If s/he was involved, then a suitable qualified internal independent person(s) shall be appointed, and if not s/he can carry out the investigation.

The receipt of the complaint must be acknowledged, according to the above principles, including an outline of the proposed course of action to follow up on the complaint, within 2 weeks of receiving it.

FSC Hub manager shall monitor the results and keep the complainant(s) informed of progress in evaluating the complaint, and have investigated the allegations and specified all its proposed actions in response to the complaint within 3 months of receiving the complaint with the support of LTM.