

Complaints and Appeals Procedure



Introduction

Sustainability Assurance Services (SAS) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of quality and service in our ISO certification activities. We recognize that complaints and appeals may arise from our clients or stakeholders, and we value feedback as an opportunity for continuous improvement. This Procedure outlines the procedure for submitting, processing, and resolving complaints and appeals related to our certification services.

This procedure is intended to be used in cases of a complaint, an instance when a client or stakeholder feels there has been a validation error, or to issue an appeal, to be used in cases where a client or stakeholder has incomplete or incorrect documentation and/or data and would like to provide additional documentation to be reconsidered.

Complaint and Appeal Process

Submission of a Complaint or Appeal

Complaints and appeals can be submitted by sending an email to appeal@sustainabilityassured.com. The email should include the following details:

- Contact information
- Applicable project number
- Nature of the complaint or appeal
- Any relevant supporting documentation

A SAS employee responsible for complaint and appeal handling will acknowledge receipt of the email within one business day. This acknowledgment will include information about the expected timeline for review and resolution.

Initial Review

The complaint or appeal will be reviewed by the SAS Director or designee within two business days. The review will involve assessing the validity of the complaint or appeal and its alignment with certification activities.

Complaint Investigation and Resolution

If the complaint is found to be valid and within the scope of SAS certification activities, the following steps will occur:

- Investigation: The project team will gather additional information and evidence related to the complaint.
- Analysis: The project team will analyze the complaint to identify its root cause and determine appropriate corrective actions.
- Resolution Proposal: Based on the investigation and analysis, a proposed resolution will be formulated.

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Appeal Investigation and Resolution

If the appeal is found to be valid and within the scope of SAS certification activities, the following steps will occur:

- Investigation: The project team will review the additional documentation to determine if it is valid within the scope of the certification.
- Analysis: The project team will determine the impact the additional documentation and/or data has on the outcome of the assurance decision.
- Resolution Proposal: Based on the investigation and analysis, a proposed resolution will be formulated.

Approval by SAS Director

The proposed resolution will be submitted to the SAS Director or designee for approval within two business days of the completion of the investigation and analysis.

Communication of Resolution

Once the resolution is approved by the SAS Director, the project manager will communicate the resolution to the provided contact information. The communication will include details about the resolution, any corrective actions taken, and an estimated timeline for implementation.

Implementation and Follow-Up

The organization will implement the proposed resolution and any necessary corrective actions within the specified timeline (14 days). Progress will be monitored to ensure timely completion.

Closure of Complaint or Appeal

Upon successful implementation of the resolution, the complaint will be considered resolved. The project manager will notify the complainant of the closure and seek confirmation of their satisfaction with the resolution.

Documentation and Record Keeping

All details related to the complaint, investigation, resolution, and communication will be documented and maintained as part of the organization's records. This documentation will be used for monitoring, review, and continuous improvement.

Continuous Improvement

Feedback and lessons learned from complaints will be used to identify opportunities for process improvements and enhance the organization's services.

Review and Update

The complaint and appeal process will be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure its effectiveness, alignment with organizational needs, and compliance with ISO standards.