



## SGS Certification and Business Enhancement Complaints, Disputes and Appeals Policy and Process

The process of responding to and addressing complaints, disputes and appeals is an integral part of our company's client relations and assurance of customer satisfaction.

It is SGS policy that complaints and appeals shall be handled within a reasonable timescale and as transparently as possible, whilst fully respecting principles and requirements of confidentiality and impartiality and will not result in any discriminatory actions.

This document is applicable for any complaint raised by a customer, potential customer or any stakeholder who may have concerns about or are dissatisfied with any aspect of our service or the service or performance of a company certified by SGS.

It is also applicable in the case of an appeal by a customer against an SGS decision or in any other dispute.

### **Complaints about SGS service or processes.**

Complaints should be addressed in the first instance to your local SGS office to investigate and respond. You will receive acknowledgment, a review of the issue will be initiated, and a response will be made by a person independent of the issue.

### **Complaints about a company certified by SGS.**

SGS involvement in complaints against certified companies is limited to review and evaluation of whether the company is in compliance with the requirements of certification and requiring appropriate action as a result. SGS will not become involved in individual cases of dispute.

#### **a. Complaints about the performance delivery of an SGS certified Company:**

A customer or interested party may have reason to complain that an SGS Certified Company has not delivered or performed in accordance with agreed standards, products or services within the scope of their accredited certification. Complaints should in the first instance be addressed with the certified company to allow them to address the complaint within their formal Management System complaints process and to resolve with the complainant directly.

If the certified company does not respond satisfactorily to your complaint, SGS will investigate your complaint has been managed in accordance with the company's complaints process and that the company continues to comply with the requirements of the relevant standard.

The certification body shall retain the anonymity of the complainant in relation to the client, if the complainant provides an adequate justification for maintaining anonymity.

#### **b. Concerns or complaints about the misrepresentation or general activities of a SGS certified Company**

In any case where the complainant has information about possible fraudulent, misrepresentative or other activities of the certified company inappropriate to their certification, this should be reported directly to SGS. Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be given feedback about the outcome.

The complainant is recommended to first contact the local SGS office or may bring it directly to the attention of the appropriate accredited office, which can be identified on the individual



certificate, on the appropriate Scheme owner website (e.g. FSC, BRC) or in certain cases at the SGS links below.

Such complaints will be treated confidentially and the identity of the complainant will not be made known to the certified company.

### **Disputes and Appeals**

Where a complaint between SGS and a customer cannot be resolved, and the customer does not accept SGS response, an appeal can be made. Details will be made available upon request to your local SGS office. Ultimately disputes shall be handled in accordance with the rules of accreditation, legislation as specifically applicable in contract or normal legislation with the country of operation.

### **Complaint and Appeal Resolving Process**

- A complaint or appeal shall be submitted in writing.
- To assist in this process, complaints and appeal should include following information:
  - Name and contact details of the complainant
  - Clear description of the issue
  - Evidence to support each element or aspect of the complaint or appeal (documents, locations, persons, dates etc.)
- Receipt of a submitted complaint or appeal will be acknowledge by SGS;
- SGS will provide an initial response, including an outline of the proposed course of action to follow up on the complaint or appeal, within two (2) weeks;
- SGS will keep the complainant informed of progress in evaluating the complaint or appeal;
- SGS will investigate the allegations and specify all its proposed actions in conclusion to the complaint or appeal.
- SGS will finally notify the complainant when the complaint is considered to be closed.

### **Important remarks**

- In the case of a complaint or appeal against a Non-Conformity, the Client should continue to respond to / address the Non-Conformity within the required timescale as under some schemes. fixed time thresholds apply which may impact the ongoing validity of certification.
- Some details relating to the outcome may be protected by the confidentiality clauses of the accreditation requirements or by the SGS certification contracts.
- Any party making a complaint has the opportunity to appeal their complaint first to the accreditation body and ultimately to the appropriate accreditation body's dispute resolution process.

### **SGS-Addresses**

- [SGS Offices Directory](#)
- [SGS Forestry and Chain of Custody Accreditations Contacts](#)