SECTION 7: PROCESS REQUIREMENTS	
Title: 7.13 Complaints and appeals	
Issue No : 01	Revision No. : 00
Issue Date : 15/04/2025	Revision Date : 00/00/0000

6. Scope

This procedure outlines the framework for managing complaints and appeals received from customers and external stakeholders regarding Bureau Veritas Certification Services. The aim is to ensure these concerns are handled professionally and promptly.

- Complaints can be made through various channels (written formal letters, emails, website forms, or verbal communications).
- The appeal and complaint process will be reviewed annually during the Management Review.
- The content of this procedure is publicly available on Bureau Veritas websites.
- Appendices provide specific instructions relevant to various products and services.

7. Definitions:

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction (ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 8.7) by any individual or organization directed at a conformity assessment body (CAB) or an accreditation body.

Appeal: A request (ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 8.6) for reconsideration of a decision made by a CAB regarding conformity assessment.

3. Common Process for Complaints and Appeals

3.1 Acknowledgment and Record

- Complaints and appeals will be acknowledged within five working days.
- Upon receipt of a complaint or appeal, the BVIPL shall confirm whether the complaint or appeal relates to certification activities for which it is responsible and, if so, shall address it.
- Each complaint/appeal will be recorded in the Complaints and Appeals internal records, ensuring all mandatory fields are filled.
- Identification for both the recipient and the individual logging the complaint/appeal is required.
- Inform all internal stakeholder who are involved in certification process of particular client.

Management Assignment

- Complaints are managed at the contracting entity level, while appeals are managed at

the certification decision-making level.

- If complaints or appeals come from non-BVIPL clients, the decision to respond will consider potential liability, in consultation with the client when necessary.

3.2 Responsibility

- Investigators must differ from those who carried out investigation audits or made certification decisions, ensuring no discrimination against complainants or appellants.
- If the Local Technical Manager (LTM) was involved, an independent person will be appointed for the investigation.
- The decision resolving the complaint or appeal shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, person(s) not involved in the certification activities related to the complaint or appeal.
- To ensure that there is no conflict of interest, personnel (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy for a client, or been employed by a client, shall not be used by the certification body to review or approve the resolution of a complaint or appeal for that client within two years following the end of the consultancy or employment.
- The BVIPL will be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information (as far as possible) to progress the complaint or appeal to a decision.

Notification and Involvement

- The LTM is the default channel for complaints and appeals unless specified otherwise in the appendices.
- The CER Director is notified based on severity and complaints from organic shceme complaints are managed by the Quality Manager.

3.3 Resolution Process

- The resolution process includes:
    - Conducting an investigation assessing business impacts.
    - Notify the non compliance to client for the complaint received
    - Gathering intermediate contributions if necessary.
    - Making a formal decision regarding the complaint/appeal.
    - Providing a structured, written response to the client or complainee
    - Give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the complint/appeal process to the appellant.
    - BVIPL take any subsequent action needed to resolve the complaint or appeal.
    - Opening an internal incident if the complaint/appeal is accepted or partially accepted.

- All steps must be documented in the Complaints and Appeals Tool.

1. Severity and Reporting

- If a complaint is rated high severity, a root cause analysis is required.
- Corrective actions should be implemented and documented.
- Client notification may be required, depending on the situation.

Timeframes

- Complaints and appeals will be resolved within 30 days, although this timeframe may be influenced by stakeholder responsiveness.
- High severity incidents must be closed within 90 days in the Complaints and Appeals Tool. Failure to meet deadlines will initiate an escalation process.

Public Disclosure

- The decision to make a complaint public must have formal authorization from the complainant and the client, especially if there are potential risks to stakeholders.

5. Appeal Process: NPOP 2024

First appeal:

(i) The Operator can appeal to the appeal committee of the BVIPL against the decision of the Certification Body within 30 days of communication of the decision. The appeal shall be disposed of within two months.
(ii) The BVIPL will handle the appeal as per policy and procedures for handling appeals by its certified Operators against its certification decision.
(iii) The BVIPL will inform the Operators of the appeal procedures at the time of certification or will be available on BV website.
(iv) The appellate/ appeal committee will be independent from the certification activities and free from conflict.

Second appeal:

(i) If the Operator is not satisfied with the decision of the appeal committee of the BVIPL, it can file a second appeal with the NAB Sub Committee constituted by the NAB for hearing such appeals.
(ii) The Committee shall ordinarily dispose of the appeal within three months.
(iii) In case more time is required, the same shall be communicated to the appellant in writing stating the reasons thereof for such delay.