



## NATIONAL CLEANER PRODUCTION CENTRE, SRI LANKA

Document Name:	<b>Procedure for Handling Complaints, Disputes and Appeals</b>		
Document No:	<b>EC-PRO-006</b>	Revision No:	
Issue Date:	<b>16/05/2023</b>	Revision Date:	

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure all Complaints concerning the validation, verification and certification services for environmental claims validations / verifications, provided under the NCPC's environmental claims verification scheme, are handled consistently and effectively.

### 2. Scope

The scope of this procedure applies to the following:

- Complaints received from clients and any other stakeholders concerning the validation, verification and certification services for Projects, provided under the NCPC's environmental claims verification.
- Appeals against the decision/opinion made/issued by NCPC which lead to negative opinion concerning the validation, verification and certification services for Projects, provided under the NCPC environmental claims verifications.

### 3. Responsibility

Representative from the Board of directors , Certification Manager (CM), Lead Verifier (LV)

### 4. Definitions

**"Complaint"** means a formal (written) and/or informal (verbal) expressions of dissatisfaction regarding the performance of NCPC in relation to its projects, from any source, such as the client's organization, the general public or its representatives, government bodies, NGOs, etc.



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**“Dispute”** means a disagreement between NCPC and the project participant regarding NCPC’ recommendation and/or opinions/decisions made at various stages during the validation and/or Verification/certification functions.

**“Appeal”** Request by the client or responsible party to the validation or verification body for reconsideration of a decision it has made relating to the validation or verification

### 5. Procedure

#### 5.1. General

5.1.1 Copies of any written communication are retained as part of the complaint/Dispute/Appeal file.

5.1.2 The Complaint/Dispute/Appeal files are kept in a secure and retrievable location, only accessible by authorized NCPC employees whilst ensuring confidentiality requirements are met.

5.1.3 Lead verifier and Technical Team of supporting affiliates are responsible to ensure that the information necessary to the review of the complaint within 7 working days.

5.1.4 Upon completion of Complaints, Appeals, and Dispute actions, a copy of the finalized records shall be placed in the pertinent Job File and/or maintained on NCPC’s complaints/disputes/appeals log.

5.1.5 If the client needs to make a complaint or an appeal the procedure and form have been published under the NCPCSL website: <http://www.ncpcsrilanka.org>



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### 5.2 Complaints

5.2.1 All Complaints are passed to the selected board member who shall ensure that:

- The complainant was informed that NCPC's received the complaint
- The nature of the complaint is confirmed with the complainant
- Sufficient information is gathered from involved parties (internal and external)
- All necessary information is verified for evaluating the validity of the complaint
- Appropriate investigation of the complaint is carried out
- Details of the complaint be gathered and recorded in the complaints/disputes/appeals file.
- making recommendation Certification Manager on required appropriate correction and corrective action to close out the complaint & by whom.

The information recorded includes the following:

- Complaint file based on actions listed under 5.2.1
- Date received and by whom.
- Description of the Complaint
- Recommended appropriate correction and corrective action to close out complaint and by whom.
- Proposed Date to implement the corrective action.

5.2.2 The proposed individual assigned to investigate the Complaint must, before being assigned, confirm they are independent from those who carried out the validation or verification and certifications activities; and, confirm they will safeguard the confidentiality of the complainant and subject of the complaint;

5.2.4 The Complainant is contacted to determine the full nature and extent of the complaint and any additional information is added to the complaints/disputes/appeals file.



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5.2.5 The responsible person as per 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 shall respond to the complainant and initiate action within 30 days of the receipt of the complaint and provide the complainant a progress report where feasible.

5.2.6 Complaints against the Certification Manager are processed in the same way

5.2.7 The criteria for determining the validity of complaints are as follows:

- Delays in delivery of services
- Audit coverage or Interpretation
- Customer Service contact & response
- Auditor competence & consistency

5.2.8 The individual assigned to investigate the complaint may consider it necessary to consult other sources (such as clients and files) that may have been affected by related problems and initiate further corrective/remedial action, as necessary.

5.2.9. Should the investigation indicate misconduct on the part of NCPC Personnel or failure to exhibit the attributes required of NCPC auditors, suitable disciplinary action shall be taken (and documented) by the appropriate manager in addition to any further training/supervision, as noted above.

5.2.10. Complaints are tracked using the NCPC Complaints/Disputes/Appeals file, including results of investigation, follow-up and closure.

5.2.11. The Certification Manager shall summarize all Complaints and their progress and resolution at management review meetings; during which, appropriateness of correction and corrective action are discussed and assessed.



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5.2.12. Certification Manager will notifies the client, in writing, of the outcome of the investigation and the final notice of the end of the Complaints handling process.

5.2.13. The outcome of the audit is documented in accordance with normal procedures, and a note is added to indicate the results of the complaint follow-up.

### 5.3 Review of Complaints

5.3.1 Management Reviews include coverage of Complaints.

5.3.2 Any corrective and preventive action further to that already taken, or of a more general nature, may be delegated to appropriate individuals. Actions are followed-up at subsequent Management Meetings and/or Impartiality Committee Meetings.

### 6. Disputes

6.1 Initial handling of disputes

6.1.1 When there is a dispute NCPC officers shall:

- Report the dispute to selected board member
- Appointed board member will evaluate the dispute
- If the dispute relates to non-fulfillment of a clear requirement, the dispute shall not be considered as dispute.
- If the dispute relates to the interpretation of a requirement, the dispute shall be forwarded to the responsible party
- If the dispute concerns a party that has no contract with NCPC, it should be considered if it is valid
  - Appointed board member, will try to resolve matters effectively in consultation with Chief Executive Officer and will prepare a response to the customer or other parties on the dispute, including potential actions to close the matter. The response is communicated to the customer or other parties on the dispute by the Certification Manager.
  - Lead verifier establishes a file listing status and relevant information concerning disputes.



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6.1.2 If the counterpart does not accept NCPC's response, she/he shall be advised of the appeals procedure if the matter is related to NCPC's actions or directions regarding the validation/ determination/ verification process.

## 7. Appeals

### 7.1 Appeals Procedure

7.1.1 Appeals received by NCPC shall be handled as follow:

- The Lead Verifier is responsible for the registration, monitoring and the coordination of a formal response in written.
- Appointed board member with the team will investigate on the appeal and made the decision
- The proposed individual assigned to investigate the appeal must, before being assigned, confirm they are independent from those who carried out the validation or verification and certifications activities; and, confirm they will safeguard the confidentiality of the appeal and subject of the complaint;
- The Appellant is contacted to determine the full nature and extent of the complaint and any additional information is added to the complaints/disputes/appeals file.
- Decision reached by the Certification Manger shall be communicated to the appellant in writing and by someone not previously involved in the subject of the appeal.
- If the appellant still remains dissatisfied with the decision of the Certification Manger an independent arbitration acceptable to both parties may be offered.
- If the applicant is still dissatisfied with the decision, the applicant shall be made aware of the possibility to submit a complaint to the Sri Lanka Accreditation Board.

7.1.2 Information related to the handling of appeals shall be kept confidential.

## 8. Correction

### 8.1 Corrective Action

8.1.1 The Certification Manager, in consultation with appointed board member, shall review the outcome of all complaints, disputes and appeals and where appropriate, initiate action to prevent repetition and achieve improvements. For definition of



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terms Correction and Corrective action please refer to PRO-008 Corrective Actions Procedure.

### 9. Reference Documents

Complaints/Disputes/Appeals File

EC-GN-20: Complaints/Disputes/Appeals Form

EC-GN-22: Corrective Action Request Form