

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS FOR HALAL CERTIFICATION

(GSO-2055-2:2021)

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GSO-2055-2 PROCEDURE – COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to describe handling of incident, complaint and appeals received from the client, in house and from other parties.

2. SCOPE

This procedure is applicable to all types of complaints and appeals received by Verger.

3. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

INCIDENT

Referred to Complaints, Suggestions, Appeals, Observations and Opportunities for improvement.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints are incidents of grievance or dissatisfaction with Verger. Complaints may be internal in nature or external in nature raised by client, suppliers or other affiliated organizations or complaints raised by client's customers or stake holders as well as written or verbal.

SUGGESTIONS

Verger recognizes that positive feedback is as important as negative. Suggestions are vital in identifying risk and system improvement. As with complaints, suggestions may be internal or external in nature, written or verbal.

APPEALS

Verger recognizes that the client may have some reservations or may not agree with the conduct of evaluator, evaluation findings, certification committee decision and/ or overall interaction with Verger staff. Client is free to communicate the same to Verger Appeal committee and this is treated as an appeal from the client.

OBSERVATIONS

Observations are witnessed incidents of service/operational deficiency, and/ or failure. Observations are often made by individuals independent of the activity witnessed and therefore objective in nature. Observations also play important role in identification of risk and system improvement.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Opportunities for Improvement are incidents where the system has not failed, yet greater operational efficiency may be obtained in analyzing current practice. Opportunities for Improvement are often collected internally but input from external sources is also beneficial.

All applicable as defined in clause 3 of manual.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 RECEIPT AND VALIDATING COMPLAINT AND APPEAL

4.1.1 Complaint and appeal received from client/ other parties by any means or by anyone is first recorded in the complaint and appeal register VG-HF-01. After that a complaint and appeal report are prepared with the details of:

- Compliant and appeal Sr. no.
- Mode of receipt

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- Received by
- Name of client/other parties
- Description of complaint and appeal
- Reference of certification services against which complaint and appeal is raised along with the reference no. mentioned in application form.

4.1.2 Client/other parties' complaint and appeal reports VG-HF-02 are issued to the QA manager for analyzing the root cause.

4.1.3 QA Engineer validates the complaint after checking necessary back-up records or personal interview of the personnel involved in concerned certification activity.

4.1.4 Client complaints, appeal and client feedback are classified according to their cause. The purpose is to allow for better tracking of trends and evaluating improvements in specific domains. Possible causes are:

- Suspected results
- Late result reporting
- Problems with communication and response
- Complaint and appeal regarding business practices, publicity, etc.
- Problems with halal certification service provided

4.1.5 The QA Engineer and the department responsible for the complaint and appeal, decide how to respond to the client and, when applicable, what needs to be done to correct the problem for the client. The client has been informed of this decision.

4.1.6 QA Engineer review every client complaint and appeal, root cause is analyzed, and corrective actions is taken. The same is recorded in the client complaint and appeal report.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINT AND APPEAL

4.2.1 Halal Certification Manager review the complaint and appeal for;

- Delay in submission of certificate,
- Wrong reporting /variation in reporting,
- Audit not carried out as per the contract
- Audit is not carried out in time,
- Inadequate error in reports
- Any other problem identified by the client/other parties.

4.2.2 Client/other parties' complaint and appeal is analyzed for the root cause. After identification of root cause, the necessary actions are taken to resolve the complaint and appeal.

4.2.3 Client/other parties are replied accordingly. Also, necessary actions are taken at client/other parties' end., it is required to resolve the complaint and appeal. Considering the seriousness of the complaint and appeal, the halal certification manager or their nominee may visit the client/other parties, wherever required. Based on his feedback the complaints and appeals are closed by the halal certification manager.

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4.2.4 The reviewer shall not be involved in the original certification activities.

4.3 TREATMENT OF CLIENT COMPLAINT AND OBSERVATION

In case of a complaint/ observation against Verger, QA Engineer analyses the issue to determine if there is system error or person error. He shall determine the root cause and determine correction, corrective action. The possible complaints are:

- Administration problems with appointments, certification files, certificates issued or issued late.
- Evaluators/subcontractor problems with incomplete evaluation documentation
- Agents – problems with general compliance with Verger administration or evaluation procedures

The correction is effected immediately to satisfy the complainant. This may include training / counselling the person involved. The CAR/ PAR is discussed with management during the next Management Review. Appropriate action is taken based on discussions (change in procedure/ formats, training to all personnel etc.). An email is sent out to all staff detailing the issue and remedial action (for information). A copy of the complaint and investigation details is maintained in the respective individual's personnel file for reference at the performance appraisals.

In case of a complaint/ observation against a certified client, the QA Engineer studies the complaint and discusses with the evaluator. If the complaint is found genuine and valid i.e. indicates a system failure, the complaint is sent to the client for a response. No confidential reports or information will be sent to complainants without written permission from the client. Adequate time is given to the client for response. If required, QA Engineer follows up with the client for the response. Depending on the response, QA Engineer may decide to;

- Write to the complainant about the response and asks for his response.
- Ask further clarification from the client
- Depute an evaluator to personally visit the client and investigate for failure. Such visit shall be considered as special visit and charged to client.
- Request a joint meeting with client, complainant and Verger

QA Engineer shall communicate with the complainant at the end of the process detailing the findings and to formally close the complaint. A copy of the correspondence is kept in the client file for records and the same is passed to evaluator during next audit. The details of all complaints and action taken (Correction, CAR/ PAR) are discussed in the Management Review and Impartiality Committee meeting.

4.4 TREATMENT OF CLIENT COMPLAINT AND APPEAL

Any company or organization who fails to satisfy an evaluation or surveillance may appeal against the decision. Where an appeal is received the following procedure will be followed.

The CEO will appoint the members of the appeals committee under the leadership of CEO who will hear the appeal and determine the outcome. In case, CEO are part of the halal certification

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team, CEO shall decide the investigating officer for the appeals process. In such a scenario CEO shall approach Impartiality Committee and/ or Verger team to provide a decision on the appeal. The decision on the appeal shall be taken based on the decision by Verger committee and the Impartiality committee. Results of the appeal will be reported to the Impartiality Committee.

- All appeals shall be received by the QA Engineer and details of appeals shall be recorded in the Appeals Register maintained by the QA Engineer.
- QA Engineer shall investigate the appeal made and inform the client about its plan of action for investigation and action thereupon.
- An investigation report (Incident Report) for each individual appeal shall be maintained by the QA Engineer. In case, any further corrective and preventive action is required post actions identified and taken based on the Incident report, Corrective and preventive action procedure.
- A copy of the investigation report shall be sent to the client.
- After the evaluation of the complaint encountered, if the complaint is found to be justified then the certificate holder shall be required to compensate for the damage(s) caused under the relevant provisions of the contract.
- In case of any further ambiguity, the same shall be reviewed by the board of directors and appropriate decision arrived at.
- In case the issue still remains open; the same shall be intimated to the accreditation board for its valuable comments.
- All appeals made are collated and analyzed on a yearly basis.
- Necessary corrective and preventive actions shall be taken based on the appeal trend.
- Appeal trends and corrective and preventive action taken shall also be reviewed as part of the Management committee meeting and Impartiality committee meeting.
- QA Engineer shall ensure that details with respect to the appellant and actions there upon is not shared with the audit team members.
- QA Engineer shall ensure that no discriminatory action is taken against the appellant.

4.5 CLOSING COMPLAINT AND APPEAL

4.3.1 Depending on the nature of the non-conformity, the QA Engineer may follow up with requests for corrective and preventive actions. When the investigation of client complaint and appeal determines that remote operation or other external organizations contributed to the complaint and appeal, the QA Engineer, or his delegate contacts these organizations and provides them with all relevant information.

4.3.2 Every client complaint and appeal are recorded. The records are maintained by the QA Engineer. When there are copies of written communication, reports and other documents related to a complaint and appeal, these records are organized into a file and are identified with the complaint and appeal number and also having records of the corresponding corrective or preventive actions. The records of investigations that concern product quality or other test characteristics are maintained by QA Engineer. Based on analysis of Client/Other Parties complaint and appeal, necessary actions are taken, and client is replied for closing the complaint and appeal. QA Engineer identifies the need for taking corrective and preventive action to prevent such complaints and appeals in future and accordingly concerned person is informed.

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4.3.3 All the complaints and appeals received by the organization will be closed within 14 working days after receipt of the complaint and appeal. Audit Manger is authorized for closing of complaint and appeals.

4.3.4 The Operational Manager gives formal notice of the end of the complaint and appeal handling process to client.

4.3.5 Handling process descriptions for complaints and appeals shall be sent to any interested party upon request by QA Engineer.

4.3.6 Decision on appeals shall not result in any biased actions.

4.6 CLIENT FEEDBACK

4.4.1 Client feedback is taken at least once in a year. All instances of client feedback, both positive and negative, are reviewed by QA Engineer. Complaints and appeals are investigated to determine the cause, determine corrective actions and identify any preventive measures that may be required. Unsatisfactory feedback is also considered as a complaint and its analyzed as per the above procedure.

4.4.2 QA Engineer monitors effectiveness of corrective and preventive action by reviewing results for suitable time on case-to-case basis.

4.4.3 If any major changes in any of the relevant documents are necessary by way of corrective and preventive action or complaint and appeal, then this is done as per procedure for document control and records are maintained.

5. REFERENCES

- GSO-2055-2:2015 Clause 9.7

6. RECORDS

- 6.1 Complaint and Appeal Report VG-HF-02
- 6.2 Complaint and Appeal Register VG-HF-01
- 6.3 Client feedback form VG-HF-32

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CHANGE HISTORY

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