



## **SGS Certification and Business Enhancement (CBE)**

### **Responsible Business Services (RBS)**

#### **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 in the case of an appeal or dispute raised by a customer against an SGS decision as a result of an audit or assessment. It also applies to other parties with a legitimate interest in the outcome of the audits.

Where the dispute or appeal relates to a concern about the integrity of the auditor or any other SGS employee further information is available on our web site in our [integrity pages](#). A violation report may be submitted at [report a violation](#).

#### **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 explaining the outcome will be made. Complaints are handled in line with the SGS Conditions for Customised Audit Services and any other contractual arrangements in force.

#### **Disputes**

Where an audit requestor, audited entity or other party with a legitimate interest in the audit process wishes to dispute the overall outcome of an audit or a specific finding they should contact the local SGS office in the first instance. You will receive an acknowledgement and be advised of next steps. Depending on the nature of the dispute, and the code or standard against which the audit was conducted, a review of the issue will be conducted which may include specialists from other locations to ensure that the dispute is fully and independently investigated.

Where the person initiating the dispute wishes to remain anonymous, the investigation will be conducted with due consideration to ensure that this anonymity is maintained.

You will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and once this is completed and a decision is made this will be communicated to the relevant parties.

Ultimately disputes shall be handled in accordance with legislation as specifically applicable in contract or normal legislation with the country of operation.

## **Appeals**

Where a dispute cannot be resolved or the initiator does not accept SGS response, an appeal can be made. Details will be made available upon request to your local SGS office.

## **Dispute and Appeal Resolving Process**

- A dispute or appeal shall be submitted in writing.
- To assist in this process, disputes and appeals should include following information:
  - Name and contact details of the person submitting the dispute (a request for anonymity may be included)
  - Clear description of the issue
  - Evidence to support each element or aspect of the dispute or appeal (documents, locations, persons, dates etc.)
- Receipt of a submitted complaint or appeal will be acknowledged by SGS without delay;
- SGS will provide an initial response, including an outline of the proposed course of action to follow up on the complaint or appeal,
- SGS will keep the complainant informed of progress in evaluating the dispute or appeal;
- SGS will investigate the allegations and specify all its proposed actions in conclusion to the dispute or appeal.
- SGS will finally notify the complainant when the issue is considered to be closed.

## **Important remark**

- Some details relating to the outcome may be protected by the confidentiality clauses of the Scheme owners or by client contracts.