



RWANDA STANDARDS BOARD

NATIONAL CERTIFICATION DIVISION

TITLE:	IDENTIFICATION No.	AUTHOR:
PROCEDURE ON HANDLING COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS	NCD/PRO/06	QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OFFICER

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DOCUMENT CONTROL:

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1. PURPOSE

To ensure that complaints and appeals on certified products and systems received by National Certification Division are managed with impartiality and in a timely and cost effective manner, without undue delay to ensure client satisfaction.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all complaints and appeals related to NCD certified products and systems.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 Commitment

The Top Management of NCD is committed to effective and efficient management of complaints and appeals. RSB allows both personnel and clients to contribute to the resolution of complaints and/or appeals related to certified products and systems submitted to RSB in a sustainable manner.

Information about how and where to complain is well publicized to clients, personnel, and other interested parties.

3.2 Accessibility

A complaints-handling process is easily accessible to all complainants. Information is available on the details of making and resolving complaints detailed in a procedure that is available on the RSB website. The complaints-handling process and supporting information is easy to understand and use. The information is in clear language. Information and assistance in making a complaint is available at the Customer Care Desk.

3.3 Responsiveness

Receipt of each complaint is acknowledged to the complainant immediately. Complaints are addressed promptly in accordance with their urgency. For example, significant health and safety issues should be processed immediately. The complainants are treated courteously and kept informed of the progress of their complaints through the complaints-handling process.

3.4 Principles of objectivity in the complaints-handling process

Our principles of objectivity in the complaints-handling process include the following:

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3.4.1 Openness: the complaint and appeals handling process is well publicized, accessible, and understood by those involved in a complaint/appeal. The process is clear and well publicized so that both personnel and complainants/appellant can follow them.

3.4.2 Impartiality: RSB avoids any bias in dealing with the complainant/appellant, the person complained/appealed against, or the Unit. The process is designed to protect the person complained against from any biased treatment. Emphasis is placed on solving the problem and not on assigning blame.

3.4.3 Confidentiality: the process is designed to protect the complainant's/appellant's and client's identity, as far as is reasonably possible.

3.4.4 Accessibility: RSB allows the complainant/appellant access to the complaints and appeals handling process at any reasonable point or time. Information about the complaints and appeals process is readily available in clear language and in formats accessible to all complainants/appellants both in electronic format and hard copy. When a complaint/appeal affects different processes, a plan to coordinate a joint response is made.

3.4.5 Completeness: RSB searches for the relevant facts, talking to people from both sides involved in the complaint/appeal to establish a common ground and verify explanations.

3.4.6 Equitability: RSB gives equal treatment to all people.

3.4.7 Sensitivity: each case is considered on its merits, paying due care to individual differences and needs.

3.4.8 Accountability: RSB Top Management ensures that accountability for and reporting on its actions and decision with respect to complaints and appeals handling is clearly established.

4. PRINCIPLE RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 RSB Top management

- a) Makes complaints and appeals handling a priority for the institution;
- b) Identifies and allocates the management resources needed for an effective and an efficient Complaints and appeals handling process;
- c) Ensures the promotion of awareness of the complaints and appeals handling process and the need for a client focus throughout the organization;
- d) Ensures that there is a process for rapid and effective notification to top management of any significant complaints/appeals;
- e) Periodically reviews the complaints and appeals handling process to ensure that it is effectively and efficiently maintained and continually improved.

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4.2 NCD Manager

- a) Ensures that complaints and appeals handling procedure is established and is effectively managed;
- b) Ensures that the complaints and appeals handling process is implemented;
- c) Liaise with the QMSO on complaints and appeals handling;

4.3 QMSO

- a) Ensures that information about the complaints and appeals handling process is easily accessible;
- b) Ensures that complaints and appeals handling data are available for the Top Management Review; this data may include actions and decisions, quality and timeliness, monitoring and evaluation;
- c) Establishes a process of performance monitoring, evaluation of complaints and appeals handling process;
- d) Maintains the effective and efficient operation of the complaints and appeals handling process;
- e) Ensures that monitoring of the complaints and appeals handling process is undertaken and recorded;
- f) Proposes recommendations for improvement.

4.4 Customer Care Officer

- a) Behave professionally when dealing with clients;
- b) Help clients gain access to the complaints and appeals handling process;
- c) Know complaint and appeals handling procedures well and comply with core values;
- d) Keep informed about NCD's work and developments in programs and services;
- e) Maintain interest in best practice in complaints and appeals handling;
- f) Treat customers in a courteous manner and promptly respond to their complaints/appeals or direct them.

4.5 All certification personnel

- a) Be aware of their roles, responsibilities, and authorities in respect of complaints/appeals;

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- b) Be aware of what procedures to follow and what information to give to complainants/appellants; and
- c) Report complaints/appeals which have a significant impact on NCD activities.

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Receipt of complaints or appeals

Complaints or appeals on certified products and systems are received through different channels including but not limited to phone, email, written, E-portal, verbal.

5.1.1 Complaints or appeals received by phone hotline 3250 or any other line are recorded on the Complaints and Appeals form [NCD/FOM/10](#) by the Customer Care or by the person who has received the complaint or appeals and then forwarded to the relevant unit directors

5.1.2 For written complaints or appeals, the appropriate section of complaint and appeal form is completed and attached to the complaint/appeal and forwarded to the relevant unit directors.

5.1.3 A complaint or appeal can be logged through the website by clicking contact and sending the complaints/appeals, or by clicking online services to gain access to the web portal and create an account. Once an account is created details of complaint/appeal are sent through MIS. A complainant/appellant may also write a complaint/appeal as an email to info@rsb.gov.rw or certification@rsb.gov.rw or download the complaint and appeal form from RSB website www.rsb.gov.rw fill it and forward the scanned copy to info@rsb.gov.rw.

5.1.4 When a complainant/appellant comes to RSB, he/she is facilitated by the Customer Care Officer or unit directorsto fill the complaint and appeal form. RSB has documented practical guidelines for handling verbal complaints and appeals [NCD/GID/05](#).

5.1.5 The complaint/appeal is assigned a complaint/appeal number by unit directors and filled with immediate effect into the respective complaints/appeal register [SCU/REG/02](#) or [PCU/REG/02](#).

5.1.6 Once registered and assigned a complaint number, the received complaints/appeals are forwarded immediately by the relevant Certification unit director to the NCD Manager for further action(s).

5.2 Acknowledgement of complaints and appeals

The NCD Manager as appropriate ensures that all complaints/appeals are immediately acknowledged, using appropriate means depending on the way it has been received, upon reception.

5.3 Initial assessment of complaints and appeals

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5.3.1 The NCD Manager assigns the complaint to QMSO to gather information necessary to evaluate the credibility of the complaint/appeal, its severity, safety implication, complexity, impact, and the need and possibility of immediate action.

5.3.2 The QMSO evaluates relevance of the complaint/appeal and reports back within one working to the NCD Manager for further action as appropriate.

5.4 Investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals

5.4.1 In case the complaint/appeal is considered relevant, the NCD Manager assigns the relevant Director to communicate in writing the complaint/ appeal to the respective client for action.

5.4.2 The concerned certified client is responsible for investigating and initiating correction, corrective and/or preventive actions and resolves the complaint with the complainant as stipulated in article 15 of the licensing contract.

5.4.3 The certified client keeps the NCD updated on the progress of complaint handling and information on closure of the complaint.

5.4.4 Where necessary a short notice audit may be conducted to investigate a complaint. An independent sample may be taken for complete investigation in case of certified product.

5.4.5 The surveillance audits verify effectiveness of the actions taken by the client and the relevant Director ensures that the client's audit programme is updated accordingly.

5.4.6 National Certification Division does not demand a fee for solving a complaint unless the nature of the complaint requires logistics support to be solved. Cases that require short notice audit, sampling, testing, subcontracting, courts of law, verification, calibration are among those that require logistics to be solved. For such cases, the complainant is informed of the situation at hand and asked for his or her choice. At all times, the choice of the complainant is given priority as much as applicable.

5.4.7 The Director follows up with the respective client to ensure that the complaint/appeal is effectively resolved and files a report from the client on how the root cause was addressed and a confirmation that effectiveness of the action(s) taken was/were verified.

5.5 Confirmation of satisfaction of complaint/appellant about the client's feedback

5.5.1 The NCD Manager ensures that the complainant/appellant is satisfied or not by the communicated feedback from the certified client upon NCD's reception and acceptance of complaint/appeal resolution report.

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5.6 Closing complaints and appeals

5.6.1 When the complainant/appellant accepts the proposed decision or action, then it is carried out and recorded as closed complaint by the QMSO.

5.6.2 If the complainant/appellant rejects the proposed decision or action, then the complaint/appeal remains open and records are kept. The complainant/appellant is given the option to complain/appeal to higher level which is the RSB DG's office.

5.6.3 If the complainant/appellant is still not satisfied with the proposed decision or action then complainant/appellant can log the complaint/appeal to the Ministry of Trade and Industry or any other external party.

5.6.4 NCD continues to monitor the progress of the complaint/appeal until all reasonable internal and external options are exhausted or the complainant/appellant is satisfied.

5.6.5 RSB determines, together with the client and the complainant/appellant, whether and, if so to what extent, the subject of the complaint/appeal and its resolution will be made public.

5.6.6 Where possible, NCD gives a formal notice to the complainant/ appellant at the end of the complaint/appeal handling process.

5.6.7 Turnaround time for resolving complaints/appeal varies depending on the nature of the complaint/appeal.

5.7 Impartiality

Any individual or team involved in the resolution of complaints:

- a. does not take part in the subject of the said complaint or appeal
- b. is independent of the audit and/or certification process that is the subject of the complaint/appeal.
- c. audit and/or certification process that is the subject of the complaint/appeal.

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