

⇒ Objective

This document sets out the guidelines to be followed by Nova Cert for handling complaints and appeals in accordance with ISO 17029:2019, ISO 14065:2020 and other accreditation guidelines.

⇒ Scope of the procedure

Applies for the appeals regarding a validation/verification opinion, findings, or audit criteria and for any type of complaint. The procedure also applies for the analysis and decision of complaints.

⇒ Reference Documents

- ISO 17029:2019
- ISO 14065:2020

⇒ Template summary table

Activity	Template
Appeals management	AC-01
Complaints management	AC-02

⇒ Development

1. Appeals

1.1. Appeal submission

Clients have the right to disagree with Nova Cert decisions regarding the validation and verification service. To file an appeal, the client shall send an email with the following information:

- Project name
- Decision being appealed
- Detailed explanation of why is the decision being appealed
- Annexes to support the appeal.

The appeal must be done within the following time frames. These time frames must be clearly stated in the proposal and agreement:

Item to be appealed	Time to submit appeal
Issuance of validation/verification opinion	15 business days
Issuance of a nonconformity or a lead auditor's decision to not close a nonconformity.	5 business days
Specific audit criteria added to the audit plan that was not contemplated in this agreement.	3 business days

1.2. Reception

Upon receiving the appeal, the Management Coordinator shall send an email to the client with the following information:

- Confirmation of the reception of the appeal.
- Inform that the appeal treatment will not result in any form of discrimination actions towards the client, and that Nova Cert understands that the client has the right to disagree with the VVB's decisions.
- Confirm that the review, analysis and decision of the appeal shall not be carried out by the individuals directly involved in the subject of the appeal.
- Estimated time for an official response of the VVB, that should be no longer than 10 business days upon reception of the appeal.

This email must be sent no longer than 2 business days upon reception of the appeal.

1.3. Appeal Analysis and response

The Management Coordinator and the CEO shall review the appeal with all the support annexes and provide the client a response in no longer than 10 business days. A technical expert might be invited to analyze the appeal if the CEO deems appropriate.

Personnel directly involved with the appeal shall not participate in the analysis and decision of it.

The record of the analysis of the appeal must be done in the **AC-01 "Appeal Management"** template.

2. Complaints

2.1. Complaint submission

Clients have the right to file complaints when they feel that poor service is being provided by the VVB, or when the expectations agreed in the proposal and legal agreement are not being met, either in relation to time or quality of service. Complaints decisions shall not have an impact on the result of validation/verification services. If so, an appeal shall be submitted by the client.

To file a complaint, the client shall send an email with the following information:

- Project name
- Detailed explanation of the complaint and why are the client's expectations not being met.
- Annexes to support the complaint, if applicable

The clients may submit a complaint any time.

2.2. Complaint reception

Upon receiving the complaint, the Management Coordinator shall send an email to the client with the following information:

- Confirmation of the reception of the complaint.
- Inform that the complaint treatment will not result in any form of discrimination actions towards the client.
- Confirm that the review and analysis of the complaint shall not be carried out by the individuals directly involved in the subject of the complaint.
- Estimated time for an official response of the VVB, that should be no longer than 10 business days upon reception of the appeal.

This email must be sent no longer than 2 business days upon reception of the complaint.

2.3. Complaint analysis

The Management Coordinator and the CEO shall review the complaint with all the support annexes and provide the client a response in no longer than 10 business days. A technical expert might be invited to analyze the complaint if the CEO deems appropriate.

Personnel directly involved with the complaint shall not participate in the analysis and decision of it.

The record of the analysis of the complaint must be done in the **AC-02 “Complaint Management”** template.

⇒ [Version and changes control table](#)

Version N°	Release date	Change description
Version 01	24/02/2023	Creation of document.