

APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR THE BIM CERTIFIED QUALITY AQUACULTURE SCHEME

PURPOSE

This procedure defines the method by which Complaints and Appeals on Certification Decisions concerning the Certification Body (CBs) operation of its Certification of Applicants to the BIM CQA Standards are handled.

1. SCOPE

Complaints and Appeals concerning the operation of the BIM CQA Programme operated by the CB shall be handled in accordance with this procedure.

Complaints concerning Certified Aquaculture products covered by the BIM CQA Standards or conduct of a Certificate Holder shall be referred directly to the CB's Scheme Administrator who will inform the CB Line Manager which, in turn, will contact the Certificate Holder concerned for additional information and clarification.

Complaints/Formal Concerns/Appeals relating to the certification services provided by the CB will initially be directed to the Senior Manager within the CB concerned who will deal with the Complaint/Formal concern /Appeal in accordance with their Accreditation Body Requirements.

2. METHOD

All Complaints/Formal Concerns/Appeals received will be brought to the attention of the CB's Senior Management. Complaints/Formal Concerns/Appeals may be received by either written or verbal means. However, verbal complainants will be requested to submit a written complaint. For complaints received by telephone, the call will be noted on the CBs complaints register and the caller also requested to submit a written complaint. Complaints received by writing shall form basis of the complainant's file.

The CB, on receipt of a complaint or appeal will raise a Complaint/Appeal Action Form and attach this to the written and / or copy of telephone log of the Complaint/Appeal and allocate a Complaint/Appeal Number. Details of the Complaint/Appeal, name and contact details of

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Complainant and date received will be kept recorded in the Complaints/Appeals Register by the CB's Certification Systems Manager or an equivalent and copied to the Senior Management Team of the CB.

The CB shall acknowledge the Complaint/Appeal in writing within 5 working days and allocate responsibility for investigation and action.

The CB will allocate a nominated Senior Manager to monitor the progress of the Complaint/Appeal Investigation through to close out. This nominated manager will keep the Complainant fully informed of the anticipated timescale to complete the Complaint / Appeal Investigation. Where this involves formation of a Review Panel the Complainant shall be informed of this and the anticipated timescale.

The Complainant shall be updated on the progress of the Complaint / Appeal Investigation at least every 14 calendar days.

On completion of the Complaint / Appeal Investigation, the outcome will be signed off by the CB's General Manager and recorded in the Complaints/Appeals Register. The nominated Manager will advise the Complainant in writing of the outcome. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the CB's investigation they have leave to apply to the BIM CQA Programme Lead and to the CB's Accreditation Body to seek a Full Appeals Review.

A review of the Complaints/Appeals Register and status of outstanding Complaints/Appeals will be subject to regular audit as part of the Internal Audit Programme of the CB and will be included in the CB's Quality System and Management Review Reports.

3 APPEALS REVIEW PROCEDURE

Accredited CBs shall have strict guidelines on what should be included in an Appeal Procedure to a Certification Decision that they will have made for an Applicant to Accredited Certification Programmes like the BIM CQA Scheme. The following list is what BIM would expect an approved CB to follow and if the CB deviates from these guidelines significantly this will need to be discussed and approved by BIM CQA Programme Lead.

- An Applicant shall have the right of appeal against decisions made by the CB Certification Process.
- Appeals shall be made in writing by the Applicant to the CB initially, within 14 calendar days of being advised of the decision that they wish to appeal.

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- The CB will acknowledge the Appeal and shall have the right to conduct Initial Investigations to check the merits of the Appeal.
- The CB should appoint a Senior Manager to oversee the Appeal Investigation and if they agree with the Appeal then the CB will correct the erroneous decision.
- If the Senior Manager does not concur with the Appeal then an Independent Panel, which can include a BIM CQA Appointed representative, is convened to handle the Appeal.
- The CB, including their Programme Manager, BIM CQA Representative and the Raiser of the Appeal are entitled to attend the Appeals Panel and present information to the said Panel.
- This Appeals Panel is independent and will make its ruling on the information supplied during the hearing.
- The Appeals Panel will convene within 1 calendar month of the receipt of the Appeal.
- The ruling of the Appeals Panel is binding and final on the CB and the appealing participant.

4. RECORDS

The Complaints Register and copies of correspondence relative to Complaints will be made accessible for Internal Audit and to Authorised External Agencies.

5 Formal Complaints Concerning the BIM CQA Standards

All complaints on the requirements of the BIM CQA Standards shall be placed in writing and directed back to the CQA Programme Lead. The CQA Programme Lead will acknowledge receipt of the Complaint within five (5) working days and will discuss the Complaint with the CQA Oversight Committee.

BIM's CQA Programme Lead will contact the Complainant by writing the outcome and decision of the CQA Oversight Committee in relation to the complaint raised. Any changes to the standards are made based on the published program of work, by the TAC, following the scheme remit and terms of reference for the TAC.

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AMENDMENT LOG

DATE	ISSUE	AMENDMENT	AUTHORISED BY
21/08/2017	1	Added clarification: Any changes to the standards are made based on the published program of work, by the TAC, following the scheme remit and terms of reference for the TAC.	Vera Flynn

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