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## 1. Purpose

This instruction provides the guideline for handling appeals and complaints received from clients and / or consumers of certified systems or products.

## 2. Scope of application

The process for the management of appeals and complaints is subject to confidentiality requirements, with regard to the person submitting the complaint or the appeal and the contents of said complaint or appeal.

This procedure is publicly accessible on the INTERCERT's website forming an integral part of the general contract conditions - TIC-PR-MS-01 Annex 1 - applied by INTERCERT and accepted by the customer who countersigns the technical/financial offer that constitutes an order and a contract for the activities he is interested in.

The presentation of the complaint or the appeal, their examination, and the related decisions don't result in any discriminatory action against the person who has presented the complaint or the appeal.

INTERCERT confirms receipt of the complaint or appeal and provide the person who has presented the issue with reports on the related progress and its results and formally notifies the person who has presented it of the conclusion of said handling process.

If a complaint is not related to internal procedures of INTERCERT, but concerns a product, process, system, customer or certificate, INTERCERT defines, together with the customer and the person who presented the complaint, whether the content of the complaint and its resolution must be made public and, if so, to what extent.

## 3. Normative references

See **TIC-F-MS-57** *Customer Complaint and Appeal Report* for details

See **TIC-F-MS-46\_02** *Customer complaint and appeal directory* for details

## 4. Definitions

**Complaint:** expression of dissatisfaction, usually related to how services are managed and delivered or to the performance of a certificate holder. Complaints can be raised by any stakeholder in the certification process – this can include customers, scheme owners, regulatory bodies and third parties (e.g. a customer of our certified customer).

**Appeals:** an appeal can be raised when a customer does not accept a decision related to a certification.

## 5. Handling appeals and complaints

### 5.1 General

INTERCERT examines written or verbal appeals and complaints by its customers or other interested parties.

For complaints, the Local Area Manager will analyze them in order to establish whether they are well-founded or otherwise. In the case of unfounded complaints, Certification Office will contact the complainant to inform them of the assessment and settle the issue.

For appeals and complaints, the Local Area Manager preventively checks who was involved in the certification activity and then addresses independent personnel for the management of the complaint or the appeal. The authority for management remains with competent technical certifier / Veto power who has the competence for the related certification scheme, but was not involved in the process in question. They report to the Local Area Manager.

### 5.2 Complaints

In the case of a valid complaint, two cases are taken into account: A distinction is made between complaints received by the certification body (ISO/IEC 17065 pt. 4.1.2.2 c and ISO/IEC 17021-1 pt. 9.8) and those received directly by the certification body's clients (ISO/IEC 17065 pt 4.1.2.2 j and ISO/IEC 17021-1 pt. 9.8).

### 5.2.1 Complaints received by CB

The certification body may receive complaints regarding its work or the certified product / management system. These complaints may be filed by any party that is familiar with the certification body's work or uses the certified product / system. Complainants may include customers, consumers, public authorities, or other third parties.

If a complaint is received directly by the certification body, INTERCERT will determine whether the complaint relates to the certified product's / management system's compliance with the certification requirements or to a certification activity.

The LAM investigates every complaint received by the certification body to determine whether it is justified and whether it relates to the activities of the certification body. Where possible, the complainant is informed of the receipt of the complaint and the steps taken. A complaint concerning a certified client is communicated to that client in a timely manner. The LAM designates appropriate personnel to handle the complaint. All details of the process are recorded in documents **TIC-F-MS-57** and **TIC-F-MS-46\_02**, including the responsible personnel, the steps taken, and the deadlines.

### 5.2.2 Complaints received by customers

Clients of the certification Body are required to maintain records of complaints, retain them, and make them available to ZS upon request, provided that such complaints relate to certified products or processes, including the corrective actions taken. Further details are governed by the procedures of the respective audit programs.

LAM will task a Technical Certifier / Veto Power, who did not participate in the procedure under examination, with the review of the certification. In case of errors and/or omissions not resolved by the review, INTERCERT may suspend the certification in the manner and within the times envisaged by contractual conditions. All details of the process are recorded in documents **TIC-F-MS-57** and **TIC-F-MS-46\_02**, including the responsible personnel, the steps taken, and the deadlines.

LAM will send the customer a written communication containing the request for corrective measures to be implemented.

The complainant may ask, at any time, the LAM for information on the procedure's progress.

At the end of all activities, INTERCERT will inform the complainant of the result of the procedure wherever possible.

## 5.3 Appeals

Appeals against INTERCERT's decisions must be presented in writing by ordinary post, fax or certified e-mail within 15 days from receipt of the document, on which the decision against which an appeal is raised is documented.

INTERCERT will confirm the person responsible for managing the appeal within five business days from receipt of the request and undertakes to provide information on the progress of the procedure, following a written request. All appeals are recorded in **TIC-F-MS-57** and **TIC-F-MS-46\_02**, under the responsibility of the Local Area Manager.

LAM will task a technical certifier / veto power, who did not participate in the procedure under examination, with the review.

INTERCERT will communicate the result of the review and the possible acceptance or rejection of the appeal within 90 days.

## 6. Traceability and recording of complaints and appeals

The LAM maintains the electronic archive of complaints and appeals, including all documentation collected in support of the decisions taken, including the proof of implementation of the actions adopted to resolve the complaints and the appeals. Such documentation is retained for a minimum period of 10 years.

Forms **TIC-F-MS-57** and **TIC-F-MS-46\_02** are used for the registration.