

	Ozone Sustainability Management Systems (OSMS) FZE Procedure for Handling Complaints and Appeals	OP-FS-06-Rev. 00, Issue 01, 01-12-2025
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Amendment Record Sheet

S. No.	Amendment dates	Sections	Page no.	Details	Approved by

1.0 Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this procedure is to clearly outline the steps related to the handling of complaints and appeals by clients **against Ozone’s certification and audit process**. This procedure covers the activities from the receipt of a verbal or written complaint or appeal, to the submission to OSMS.

This policy ensures that complaints & appeals are effectively addressed fairly, resolved and used for continuous improvement. It also includes compliance with scheme specific complaint & appeal requirements, reporting and trending.

2.0 Responsibility

Certification Manager

- Shall Sign off the Complaints process once after the resolution completed.

Compliance Manager

- Shall receive, record, coordinate, and manage all complaints and appeals related to the FSC certification process
- Shall ensure that the Complaints and appeals process shall be followed and all complaints and appeals shall be recorded in the register
- Shall communicate with the appellant and the impartiality committee.
- Shall ensure that its functionality is available, review and updated.
- Shall ensure that It should be monitored in scheduled Internal audits of OSMS.

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Head Impartiality Committee

- Shall select at least 03 members for the panel to resolve complaints and appeals.
 - Shall ensure that meeting takes place within 15 days from the receipt of complaint and appeals and in case of a presence requirement of the appellant to be given at least 10 days' notice of meeting venue and agenda.
 - Shall declare their any conflicts of Interests they may have in the proceedings.
 - Shall makes a decision should be unbiased and act in good faith.
- The Impartiality committee is responsible for handling appeals submitted by appellant through written, verbal and online modes. The impartiality committee acknowledges the receipt of the appeal and ensures that is is resolved fairly and within scheme specific time frames.

3.0 Procedure for Complaints and Appeals

3.1 The OSMS allow the aggrieved party the opportunity to present the complaint or appeal to us via email, or letter:

Ozone Sustainability Management Systems FZE (OSMS)
Office: C1 - 1F - SF0442, Ajman Free Zone, UAE
Email: integrity@ozonesustainability.com
Phone: +91-9711002728

The complaint or appeal shall to include:

- A clear description of the complaint or appeal;
- Objective evidence to support each element or aspect of the complaint or appeal;
- The name and contact information of the submitter;
- A clear statement if the complainant wishes to stay anonymous in relation to the certificate holder against whom the complaint is directed.

In case of appeals, the appellant must file its appeal within 14 calendar days after notification of the decision.

4.0 Complaints

4.1 Any Client, Supplier or other parties wants to raise a complaint against the services provided by OSMS or its certified clients should, in the first instance, indicate their intention in writing to the concerned OSMS office located in country.

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5.0 Time lines to be followed:

Acknowledging and responding to the complaint & appeals on email/website = within 3 business days.

investigate the allegations and specify all its proposed actions in conclusion to the complaint or appeal within 03 months of receiving the complaint or appeal. and Communication of the result of the investigation to the appellant within 3 month, Variation of time depends on case to case basis.

Acknowledge receipt and provide an initial response outlining the proposed follow-up actions and the investigation team= Within two (2) weeks

6.0 Process

6.1 In case of complaint related to a certified client, the complainant shall provide evidence that they had previously attempted to resolve the matter directly with certified client and are not satisfied with the actions taken / decision provided by the certified client. The Compliance Manager shall gather all necessary evidence and provide a written acknowledgement of the complaint received and seek additional information if required in order to analyses the complaint.

6.2 All complaints will be recorded by the receiving OSMS office. Where required, the Compliance Manager shall liaise with client in order to try to resolve the complaint.

6.3 During the process of investigation of complaint, The Compliance Manager shall appoint a team to follow up on the appeal or complaint. The team persons involved in the investigation shall be independent of the subject of the complaint. If applicable and possible, the team shall include an appointed FSC Lead auditor, and a person with country specific knowledge. The team can also consist of only one person. In case the FSC Compliance Manager has been involved in the matter of the dispute, the responsibility to follow-up on the dispute is forwarded to the Impartiality committee of OSMS. The complainant or appellant is informed of the progress in evaluating the complaint or appeal during the whole process. Information can also be obtained by the complainant or appellant on request. This ensures impartiality, Independence and fairness in decision-making.

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6.4 The costs for such an investigation shall be estimated upfront and communicated to the appellant or complainant. While OSMS aims for a fair and transparent assessment process, the costs for the process cannot be borne by OSMS alone. OSMS reserves the right to charge cost for the investigation depending on the nature of the appeal or complaint.

OSMS is dedicated to duly considering substantive Complaints from any party. However, OSMS reserves the right to reject Complaints deemed persistent, vexatious, or an abuse of the dispute process. Such decision require approval from certification manager following an individual assessment of the case. Upon rejection, OSMS will notify the Complainant and escalate the matter to ASI or FSC for final disposition or, as appropriate, to reject the Complaint as without merit.

6.5 The investigation team submits a written report to the Certification manager/Impartiality committee. The Certification manager/Impartiality committee reviews the report and decides whether to accept or reject its findings. The decision includes:

- Description of the investigation that OSMS conducted, evidences gathered and verified and the conclusions drawn by the investigation team;
- If applicable, Corrective Actions that were implemented, or are to be implemented, whether at OSMS or OSMS clients;
- Information if OSMS considers the appeal or complaint as resolved (closed) based on the information included in the report.

6.6 The result of the complaint handling process shall be communicated to the complainant within 03 month. meaning that the certification body has gathered and verified all necessary information, investigated the allegations, taken a decision on the complaint and responded to the complainant.

6.7 The complainant can refer its complaint to ASI in case:

- The complainant disagrees with the response from OSMS, or
- the issue has not been resolved through the full implementation of OSMS's procedures, or
- The complainant is dissatisfied by the way OSMS handled the complaint.

For filing complaints at ASI, the respective process ASI-PRO-20-104-Complaints shall be applied. Further information can be found on the ASI website. <https://www.asi-assurance.org/>

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As the last step, the complainant may follow the FSC complaint procedure as laid out in the respective FSC procedure: <https://fsc.org/en>

6.8 Trending & Continuous Improvement: OSMS shall analyze the complaints included scheme specific KPIs and trends, is used for continuous improvement efforts within OSMS. Root cause analysis and corrective action help address the identified issues and enhance process and services. Such analysis is included on an annual basis:

- Number of complaints received.
- Identified and non-identified sources of complaints.
- Breakdown by type of complaints and their related certification process.
- Complaints with evidence and without evidence.
- Nos & Types of Actions taken and

7.0 Whistle blowing

The compliance manager will be responsible for recording any alerts on it and Initiate investigation. He may make team of 03 people (Internal/External) and authorize them to undertake investigation. Once Investigation completes within time frame of 3 month, the investigating team shall report to Certification Manager/Impartiality committee. During all processes including Investigation, Confidentiality shall be maintained at all levels.

Anyone submitting an alert through the whistle-blowing channel will be protected from retaliation, harassment, or discriminatory behavior. Moreover, every call, written communication and/or email will be dealt with confidentiality unless it is necessary to share such information in order to address the matter appropriately.

No retaliation

Ozone is committed to handling complaints without discrimination or retaliation against the complainant, regardless of the decision.

8.0 Appeals

8.1 Upon receipt of the appeal, the impartiality committee acknowledges receipt of appeal and confirms whether the appeal relates to certification process and audit process of OSMS. The appeal process shall be addressed promptly if it is within OSMS's scope.

8.2 The compliance manager or other personnel including individuals not involved in the certification activities related to the appeal.

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8.3 The appeal shall be reviewed and resolved by the Impartiality committee members to ensure objectivity, transparency and impartiality.

8.4 It should be noted that the appeals committee decision is absolute and final which can be overturned only by the impartiality committee, if necessary. This will be accompanied by a formal notice to the appellant of the end of the appeals/complaint handling process.

8.5 The actions undertaken in response to complaints and appeals shall be communicated to the appellant and recorded. It may include a formal notice, letter, or email of the outcome and end of the appeal process. In case the appellant is not satisfied with the appeals panel decision has the option of making a complaint to the concerned accreditation body.

Non-Retaliation

Submitting an appeal will not result in any form of retaliation against the appellant. OSMS is committed to ensuring that the appeal process remains fair and unbiased.

9.0 Next Steps :

9.1 In accordance with FSC regulations, every complaint submitted to OSMS is registered with FSC.

9.2 In the event that the FSC complaints management system is not available;

a) the OSMS shall provide FSC with an annual overview of the complaints received according to a template provided by FSC.

b) the OSMS shall submit the annual overview summary to FSC once per calendar year during the first (1) quarter of the following calendar year, at dispute.resolution@fsc.org.

9.3 Anonymous complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction that are not substantiated as complaints are treated as “stakeholder comments” by OSMS and address during the next audit at the certificate holder.

9.4 OSMS responds to complaints and appeals in the same language that is used in the public summary certification report, or shall agree with the complainant on the language used. Most commonly this would either be English, or the language of the appellant or complainant.

9.5 The OSMS shall retain the anonymity of the complainant in relation to the organization, if this is requested by the complainant.

9.6 During the process of dispute resolution, all original decisions of the OSMS remain in force until the complaints or appeal is settled by OSMS or another appointed authority.

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9.7 This Procedure is a public document and available for downloading at www.ozonesustainability.com