	Handling Appeals, Complaints and Disputes Procedure	Document No: AGRI-C-001
		Version No 4
		Issue Date: 18/03/2025

1. Purpose

This procedure establishes a systematic process for handling complaints, appeals, and disputes to ensure fairness, transparency, and impartiality in Agri Canaan’s certification activities, in compliance with ISO/IEC 17021-1:2023 (Clauses 9.7 & 9.8) and ISO/IEC 17065:2012 (Clause 7.13).

2. Scope

This procedure applies to:

- Complaints from clients, stakeholders, or other interested parties related to Agri Canaan’s certification activities.
- Appeals against certification decisions made by Agri Canaan.
- Disputes arising from certification processes.

3. Responsibilities

- **Administrator:** Receives and records complaints and appeals, acknowledging receipt to the complainant/appellant.
- **Scheme Manager:** Conducts initial review, assigns investigators, and ensures impartial handling.
- **Managing Director:** Oversees the entire process and ensures resolution in line with accreditation requirements.

4. Handling of Complaints


4.1 Receipt and Acknowledgment

- Complaints may be submitted via email, phone, or written correspondence.
- The Administrator records the complaint in the Complaints Register and acknowledges receipt within **5 working days**.

4.2 Investigation and Resolution

- The Scheme Manager reviews the complaint and determines if it relates to Agri Canaan’s certification activities.
- If the complaint concerns a certified client, the client is informed and given an opportunity to respond within **10 working days**.

Prepared by	Scheme Manager	Approved by	M.D
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- Investigations may include interviews, document reviews, and on-site assessments if necessary.
- The complainant is informed of the resolution within **30 days**. If additional time is required, the complainant is notified of the delay and expected resolution timeline.
- The decision and corrective actions taken are documented.

4.3 Communication of Outcome

- A formal closure letter is sent to the complainant detailing the findings and corrective actions taken.
- Complaint trends and resolutions are reviewed in Management Review Meetings.

5. Handling of Appeals

5.1 Lodging an Appeal

- Clients may appeal against certification decisions within **15 working days** of notification.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing, stating the reasons and supporting evidence.
- The Administrator acknowledges receipt within **5 working days** and records it in the **NCR Form AGF 009 and CAPA Log**.


5.2 Review and Decision-Making

- Individuals involved in the certification decision under appeal must not participate in the review process.
- Investigating personnel may request additional information from the appellant to conduct an investigation.
- The decision must be made within 30 working days of receiving the appeal.
- The decision is communicated in writing to the appellant, and no discriminatory action is taken against them.

6. Handling of Disputes

- Disputes arising between Agri Canaan and clients/stakeholders that cannot be resolved through complaints or appeals follow a mediation process.
- If mediation fails, arbitration is conducted per applicable legal or contractual agreements.
- The Managing Director ensures dispute records are maintained and reviewed for continual improvement.

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7. Records and Documentation

- Corrective & Preventive Actions Procedure
- NCR Form AGF 009
- Corrective Action & Preventive Action Log

8. References

- ISO/IEC 17021-1: Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ISO/IEC 17065: Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes, and services

9. Amendment History

Date	Author	Modification	Approval
18/03/2025	Scheme Manager	Revision of the whole procedure to integrate with ISO/IEC 17021-1 Requirements	M.D

Prepared by	Scheme Manager	Approved by	M.D
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