



SNS Certification

Standards and Systems Certification

Handling Clients Complaints

Complaint Receipt, Review and Resolution Procedure

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Amendment / Revision Record

Clause / Page	Revision Details	Reason	Issue	Rev.	Date
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Review and update: SNS Certification reviews public resource documents periodically or when certification requirements, service scope, process ownership, legal obligations, or accreditation/scheme requirements change.



1.0 Purpose

This procedure defines how SNS Certification receives, validates, investigates, resolves and records complaints. The objective is to provide a fair and controlled process that protects complainants, clients, certification integrity and public confidence.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies to complaints received from applicants, certified clients, customers of certified clients, consumers, regulators, legal authorities, interested parties, SNS personnel or any other source. It covers complaints about SNS Certification activities and complaints about certified clients where the matter relates to certified scope or certification claims.

3.0 Definitions

Term	Meaning
Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction requiring response, other than an appeal, related to SNS Certification services or a certified client.
Complainant	Person or organization submitting the complaint.
Validation	Review to determine whether the matter is within scope, credible and supported by sufficient information for action.
Action team	Independent personnel assigned to investigate and recommend resolution.
CAR	Corrective Action Request issued to address confirmed nonconformity or process weakness.
Appeal	Request to reconsider a certification decision; appeals are handled through the appeal process and not as a complaint.

4.0 Complaint Sources

- Email or website contact form published by SNS Certification.
- Written communication from an applicant, certified client or customer of a certified client.
- Regulatory, legal, consumer forum or public authority communication.
- Information received during audit, surveillance, verification or public information review.
- Any other source providing credible information relevant to certification activities or certified scope.

5.0 Complaint Handling Principles

- **Acknowledgement:** SNS Certification acknowledges receipt of a complaint and explains the next step where contact details are available.
- **Impartiality:** Personnel involved in the subject of the complaint shall not lead the investigation or decision on the complaint outcome.
- **Confidentiality:** Complainant identity and client information are protected as far as practical and legally permitted.
- **Evidence-based review:** Complaint decisions are based on available evidence, relevant certification records and applicable requirements.
- **Non-discrimination:** SNS Certification shall not take discriminatory action against a complainant for submitting a complaint in good faith.
- **Communication:** The complainant is kept informed of progress and outcome within practical limits of confidentiality.

6.0 Procedure

1. Receive the complaint through official communication channel or documented internal report.
2. Record the complaint with date, complainant details, subject, client/certificate reference if any, and supporting evidence.
3. Acknowledge receipt normally within two working days where contact details are available.
4. Perform initial validation to confirm whether the complaint is within SNS Certification responsibility and whether sufficient information is available.
5. If the complaint is outside scope or unsupported, communicate the reason for non-acceptance where appropriate and close the record.
6. If valid, assign an independent reviewer or action team not previously involved in the disputed activity.
7. Investigate the issue by reviewing audit records, certification decisions, client communication, public claims, evidence from the complainant and, where relevant, information from the certified client.



8. Determine root cause or contributing cause where SNS Certification process weakness or client nonconformity is confirmed.
9. Define correction, corrective action, special audit, client CAR, mark-use correction, process update or other action as applicable.
10. Verify implementation and effectiveness of action before closing the complaint where verification is required.
11. Communicate the outcome to the complainant and relevant client within confidentiality limits.
12. Retain complaint records and review trends for management review and continual improvement.

7.0 Complaint Related to Certified Client

When the complaint concerns a certified client, SNS Certification determines whether the issue relates to the certified scope, certified management system, certification claim, mark use or potential failure to maintain certification requirements. SNS Certification may require the certified client to investigate, respond with evidence, initiate corrective action, or accept a special audit where the risk or seriousness justifies additional verification.

8.0 Complaint Related to SNS Certification

When the complaint concerns SNS Certification personnel, audit conduct, communication, decision process, confidentiality, impartiality, mark-use control or service handling, SNS Certification assigns an independent person or team to investigate. Confirmed process failures are addressed through correction, corrective action, personnel briefing, procedure update, additional review or other suitable action.

9.0 Confidentiality and Non-discrimination

SNS Certification is responsible for decisions at all levels of complaint handling. Information about the complainant, certified client and investigation outcome is disclosed only where necessary, authorized, or legally required. Submission, investigation and decision of complaints shall not result in discriminatory treatment of the complainant or client.

10.0 Records and Timelines

Activity / record	Target or control
Complaint acknowledgement	Normally within 2 working days where contact details are available.
Initial validation	Normally within 5 working days, depending on information availability.
Investigation and closure	Target within 30 calendar days; complex matters may require staged updates and extended time.
Complaint register	Maintained with complaint status, action owner, evidence, outcome and closure date.
Corrective action records	Maintained where SNS Certification or certified client action is required.
Management review input	Complaint trends and significant cases are reviewed for improvement and impartiality risk.

Document Approval

Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by	Effective date
SNS Certification Management	Technical / Process Owner	Authorized Management	24.05.2026

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