



**EFR CERTIFICATION**  
**Standard Operating Procedure**  
*Handling of complaints and non conformance*

SOP98 rev00

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### Revision History

Rev. No.	Effective Date	Page	Description of Change	Change Reason
00	09.09.2009	All	New Release	Nil

Approved by:  
Edly Ramly  
*Principal*

### OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 This document details the process adopted by EFRC to ensure a timely, independent and effective resolution of complaints from persons or organisations.
- 1.2 This document details the process adopted by EFRC to ensure a timely, independent and effective resolution management system non conformances.
- 1.3 This procedure also include the procedure for short notice audit

### 2. REFERENCES

- 2.1 ISO/IEC 17011: Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
- 2.2 IAF GD 1:2003: IAF Guidance on the Application of ISO/IEC Guide 61
- 2.3 EFRC Manual
- 2.4 SOP17 Corrective and Preventive Action

### 3. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this document, definitions in the relevant ISO standards and the relevant ISO/IEC Guides shall apply. The following definitions and abbreviations shall also apply.

- 3.1 Accreditation criteria:** Includes the appropriate accreditation standard, and all EFRC approved policies and procedures at the time of application, and those approved from time to time subsequent to accreditation, that are applicable to the accreditation program under which accreditation is sought
- 3.2 Complaint:** Expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any person or organisation, to EFRC, relating to the activities of EFRC or of an accredited CAB, where a response is expected.



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**3.3 EFRC Secretariat (hereinafter referred to as Secretariat):** Staff employed by EFRC with delegated powers and authority to implement the policies and procedures of EFRC and manage certification activities.

**4. PROCEDURE**

4.1 EFRC will endeavour to action any claim of dissatisfaction, formal or informal, that is brought to its attention with regard to the activities of EFRC or a body certified by EFRC. Expressions of dissatisfaction brought to the attention will be treated as complaints and will be handled in accordance to this document and other relevant procedures.

4.2 EFRC has established procedure to investigate and decide on the validity of complaint. For valid complaints, EFRC shall take appropriate actions and assess their effectiveness and maintain record all complaints and actions taken. EFRC shall give a reply to the complainant about action taken on the complaint.

4.3 EFRC may conduct reassessment if investigation and analysis of complaint indicates that the certified organization no longer complies with EFRC certification criteria. The organization, the complainant shall be required to demonstrate that the complainees has had ample opportunity to rectify the situation. The submission shall include sufficient objective evidence to substantiate the claims and allow for the Investigative Officer to make a decision on the appropriate action to be taken.

4.4 A complaint can be sent to EFRC by telephones, emails, letters or facsimile. Dissatisfaction based on hearsay will not be considered as a complaint.

4.6 It will not always be obvious that a piece of incoming correspondence is a complaint. An item of incoming mail / correspondence will only be classified as a complaint by the Principal when the complaint refers to EFRC or EFRC client. Before accepting incoming correspondence as a complaint, the Admin shall ensure that the complaint is substantiated, and satisfied that all attempts have been made to resolve the issue at the lowest/appropriate level.

4.7 Where the Director Principal considers that the complaint has not been adequately addressed at the lowest/appropriate level, the correspondence shall be reverted back to the complainant to be addressed as a dispute between the complainant and EFRC client.

4.8 Once identified as a complaint by the Principal, the Admin shall enter the complaint in the Complaints Register, establish a new number, append the document to the file and pass the corrective action request to the Investigative Officer, as identified by the Principal. A Complaints Register shall be maintained and be kept up to date by the Assistant Director of Accreditation. All incoming and outgoing correspondence, including a brief summary of the correspondence, shall be logged in the Complaints Register.



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- 4.9 After registration as a complaint, the Scheme Manager of the respective scheme acknowledges receipt to the complainant, if name and address is available.
- 4.10 Investigative Officers  
For complaints about:
- EFRC (including staff with the exception of the Principal), the Investigative Officer shall be of equivalent ranking or of a more senior position than the staff being investigated and shall be independent of the activities that is being investigated.
  - Accredited bodies or certified bodies, the Investigative Officer shall be the respective Scheme Manager or a senior Assistant Director of Accreditation.
- 4.11 Where the complaint involves EFRC directly, the Investigative Officer shall investigate and make recommendations to the Principal on all issues relevant to EFRC. In resolving all the issues, the Investigative Officer shall consider both immediate and long-term action required by all parties concerned.
- 4.12 Once a conclusion is reached, the Investigative Officer shall write to the parties concerned advising them of those parts of the outcome that affect them.
- 4.13 The Investigative Officer shall, consistent with EFRC policy on confidentiality, formally bring the substance of the complaint and any relevant facts to the notice of the complainee, even where these have already been made known to the complainee by the complainant. The Investigative Officer will formally request the complainee to respond to EFRC, within 14 days, giving comments on the complaint and detailing the actions the organisation proposes or has taken to investigate and resolve the matter. The Investigative Officer should ensure that the complainee considers the immediate and long-term aspects.
- 4.14 The Investigative Officer shall update the follow-up column of the complaints register. If correspondence is not received from the complainee within the specified period of time, a reminder will be dispatched. Extended delays shall be brought to the attention of the Director General.
- 4.15 There may be a need for several rounds of correspondence between EFRC and interested parties, and on-site follow-up action with the clients. All correspondence arising from the complaint shall be placed in the complaints file.
- 4.16 Once the Investigative Officer is satisfied that the matter is resolved, the Investigative Officer shall ensure that the complainant is advised of the outcome, complete the file and update the complaints register.
- 4.17 **Special audits**



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The EFRC shall, in response to an application for extension to the scope of a certification already granted, undertake a review of the application and determine any audit activities necessary to decide whether or not the extension may be granted. This may be conducted in conjunction with a surveillance audit unless specified by customer. Specific fees is imposed for additional audit.

It may be necessary for the EFRC to conduct audits of certified clients at short notice to investigate complaints, or in response to changes, or as follow up on suspended clients. In such cases

- a) the EFRC shall describe and make known in advance to the certified clients at least 2 weeks before the visit
- b) reason on the conditions under which these short notice visits are to be conducted, and
- c) the client shall agreed with the fees imposed or else the suspension is triggered as per SOP96

4.17 Complaints shall be included as an agenda item for all Management Review meetings.