

## COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCESS

Document #: GOP208 ASC MSC

Release Date: 10-DEC-2024

Page 1 of 4

Document Owner: Food

Approver: Allen

### Purpose

To describe the process of receiving, evaluating and making decisions on complaints, disputes and appeals.

### Scope

This process applies to complaints relating to ASC/MSC certification services and complaints against certified clients made to ITS, disputes relating to nonconformity(ies) or a certification decision, and applies in case a client who isn't satisfied with the results of the dispute process and wishes to appeal the decision.

### Definition

**Complaints:** Expressions of dissatisfaction made with Intertek with regards to its certification services or its certified clients (as it relates to the implementation of the clients' management systems), where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

**Disputes:** A difference in interpretation of a requirement which justifies formal documentation for further evaluation.

**Appeals:** A formal request for reconsideration of any dispute decision.

### 1. Process

- 1.1 Any party wishing to submit complaints could contact Intertek office via email by sending an Email at [Complaints.ba@intertek.com](mailto:Complaints.ba@intertek.com)
- 1.2 Any party wishing to submit disputes or appeals could contact Intertek office via email by sending an Email at [disputes.appeals.ba@intertek.com](mailto:disputes.appeals.ba@intertek.com)
- 1.3 In case an agreement related to ASC requirements cannot be reached, the complaints/appeals could be submitted to the ASC and ASC appointed accreditation body at:

ASC-MSC	ASI (ASC appointed accreditation body)
a) Email: <a href="mailto:complaints@asc-aqua.org">complaints@asc-aqua.org</a> <a href="mailto:seaweedstandard@msc.org">seaweedstandard@msc.org</a> (ASC-MSC Seaweed) following ASC Procedure – Complaints <sup>[1]</sup> .	a) submitted via the online form on the ASI website ( <a href="https://www.asi-assurance.org/s/complaints">https://www.asi-assurance.org/s/complaints</a> ) following ASI Complaints Procedure <sup>[3]</sup> .
b) Mailing address: Aquaculture Stewardship Council, Daalseplein 101, 3511 SX Utrecht, The Netherlands.	b) In the case of technical or accessibility issues, please use ASI Complaints Submission Form (ASI-TPL-20-114-Complaint Submission Form-V4.0) and contact ASI team at <a href="mailto:dispute@asi-assurance.org">dispute@asi-assurance.org</a>
c) Mailing address (ASC-MSC Seaweed): P.O. Box 19107, 3501 DC Utrecht, The Netherlands and/or Marine House, 1 Snow Hill, London, EC1A 2DH, United Kingdom	

- 1.4 Upon receipt of an allegation, Intertek will log and acknowledge the allegation within 10 working days of receipt (typically via email).
  - a) If the allegation is deemed valid, it will be assigned to designated personnel for investigation and resolution. The complainant/appellant will be informed of the outline of ITS proposed course of action, as well as progress in evaluating until the allegation is closed.
  - b) If the allegation is deemed invalid, the complainant/appellant will be notified in writing of the following: the

## COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCESS

Document #: GOP208 ASC MSC

Release Date: 10-DEC-2024

Page 2 of 4

Document Owner: Food

Approver: Allen

reason for rejection (e.g. when the complaint or appeal relates to certification activities for which ITS is not responsible). If needed, ITS could help to forward the complaints or appeals to the responsible body other than ITS as appropriate.

- 1.5 Intertek shall investigate the allegations and specify all proposed actions in response to the complainant/appellant within 3 months of receiving the complaints or the appeals, unless the subject of the complaints or appeals is also being considered through an objections process, this 3-month timeline may be deferred until completion of the objection process.
- 1.6 Intertek shall report all logged issues using FORM 4 submitted annually no less than forty-two (42) days prior to the annual surveillance by the ASC appointed accreditation body (ASI)'s visit. Copies shall be sent to the ASC and the ASC appointed accreditation body (ASI).
  - a) In case of suspension or withdrawal of the ASC accreditation of the Intertek, all logged issues shall be sent to the ASC appointed accreditation body (ASI) and ASC as part of the suspension or withdrawal process, using FORM 4 no later than the final date of accreditation.

### 3. Personnel

ITS will be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information (as far as possible) to make the complaint or appeal to a decision based on certification requirements.

- 2.1 The decision to resolve the complaint or appeal shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, person(s) not involved in the certification activities related to the complaint or appeal.
- 2.2 To ensure that there is no conflict of interest, personnel (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy for a client, or been employed by a client, shall not be used by ITS to review or approve the resolution of a complaint or appeal for that client within two years following the end of the consultancy or employment.
- 2.3 The appointed personnel who meet the requirements in 2.1 and 2.2 and responsible for handling complaints or appeals shall:
  - a) Review, Investigate, validate, and document the resolution of the complaints and the appeals against this document and the procedures in ISO 17065 clause 7.13.
    - A description of the complainants' option to complain to the accreditation body if they are not satisfied with the CAB's response to their complaint and also their option to complain to the ASC-MSC if they are not satisfied with the accreditation body's response.
    - A reference to the accreditation body's dispute resolution mechanisms, including the incidents, complaints and appeals handling processes.
    - The appointment of an independent member of the ITS's management team who shall report the outcome of the complaint or appeal to the top management of the CAB.
    - Encouragement for the complainants to submit copies of their complaints directly to the ASC-MSC
  - b) give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the complaint process to the complainant, whenever possible (if appropriate)
  - c) give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the appeal process to the appellant (if appropriate)
  - d) Follow up the subsequent action needed to resolve the complaint or appeal (if appropriate)
  - e) Report on top management

## COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCESS

Document #: GOP208 ASC MSC

Release Date: 10-DEC-2024

Page 3 of 4

Document Owner: Food

Approver: Allen

### 4. Notification and Confidentiality

- 3.1 ITS shall notify the client of the receipt of a complaint against their certified system at an appropriate time.
- 3.2 ITS shall report all logged issues using FORM 4<sup>[1]</sup> submitted annually no less than 42 calendar days prior to the annual surveillance visit to be performed by the ASC appointed accreditation body (ASI) with copies sent to the ASC and the ASI.
- 3.3 a) In case of suspension or withdrawal of the ASC accreditation of the Intertek, all logged issues shall be sent to the ASC appointed accreditation body (ASI) and ASC as part of the suspension or withdrawal process, using FORM 4 no later than the final date of accreditation.
- 3.4 The complaints and appeals handling process are subject to the requirements for confidentiality.
  - 3.4.1 When the complaint/appeal is against a certified client, the subject of the complaint/appeal is not to be made public unless Intertek, the complainant/appellant, and the client decide together as to what extent the subject of the complaint and the resolution shall be made public.

---

<sup>1</sup> FORM 4 – LOG OF COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS AND OBJECTIONS (V2.0)

<sup>2</sup> ASC Procedure – Complaints (V2.0)

<sup>3</sup> ASI Complaints Procedure (ASI-PRO-20-104-Complaints-V7.0)

## COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCESS

Document #: GOP208 ASC MSC

Release Date: 10-DEC-2024

Page 4 of 4

Document Owner: Food

Approver: Allen

### REVISION LOG

Revision #	Description of Change	Release Date
V1.0	Original version	JUN-2014
V2.0	Update the documents according to ASC CAR v2.0; combine complaints process and appeals process	MAY-2016
V2.1	Update the documents according to ASC CAR v2.1; Add 2.3 ISO 17065 clause 7.13 is explained in more detail	30-DEC-2019
V2.2	Add 1.6 The requirement for information on complaints and appeals for MSC-ASC Seaweed certification	09-JAN-2020
V3.0	Update ASC and ASI contact information	08-NOV-2023
V4.0	Update ASC and ASI Complaint Procedure	10-DEC-2024