 International Halal Center مركز الحلال العالمي	SOP-14-ALL-EN		
	Handling and evaluation of complaints/ appeals (SOP)		
	Revision No.:		Revision date:
	001/2023		29 January 2023

Handling and evaluation of complaints, appeals and review requests

1. Purpose & scope

This procedure aims at describing the steps adopted by IHC for:

- Complaints handling
- Handling of appeal against a certification decision
- Handling of request of reviewing an evaluation decision.

This SOP applies to all parties that are involved in the complaints, appeals, and review request procedure. All IHC clients have the right to make a complaint, appeal against any certification decision or request a review of any evaluation IHC may take if they can bring forward good arguments. This SOP outlines the principles and responsibilities with regards to complaints, appeals and review requests.


2. Responsibilities

It's the responsibility of the QM, TD and CAC to ensure the proper setting, implementation, and communication of this document.

3. Abbreviations and definitions

GM:	General management
IC:	Impartiality committee
SC:	Sharia committee
CDC:	Certification decision committee
CAC:	Complaints/ Appeals committee
BSD:	Business & sales development
MA:	Management assistance
TD:	Technical department
OM:	Operation management
QM:	Quality management
AD:	Administration
HR:	Human resources
AC:	Accounting department

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CCS: Customer & consumer service

BO: Branch office

ACT: Auditing and certification team

AR: Application reviewer

TA: Technical auditor

IAE: Islamic affairs expert

TE: Technical expert

LA: Lead auditor

SU: Supervisor (meat)

CR: Certification reviewer

QMS: Quality management system

Certification

Scheme: The certification system related to specified products, to which the same specified requirements, specific rules and procedures apply.

Product certification: A third-party attestation related to products

COC: Certificate of conformity, which is a formal document issued by the accredited certification body, stating that certification is being granted for the product in accordance with the applicable scheme/ standards.

IHC: International Halal center

CB: Certification body

HC: Halal certification body

AB: Accreditation body

SOP: Standard operating procedure

PFC: Process flow chart


NC: Non-conformity

4. Further definitions relevant to this SOP

Complaint:

A "Complaint" means an expression of dissatisfaction by individual(s) or organization(s) (including certified organization(s)) with an issue related to IHC or organizations certified by IHC in writing. Specifically, the complaint is related to the certification service of IHC.

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▪ **Certification decision:**

A decision taken by IHC to grant or deny initial certification, confirm certification after surveillance audit, renew certification, extend a certificate, suspend a certificate, lift the suspension or to decertify. A Certification decision becomes valid with immediate effect.

▪ **Evaluation decision:**

A decision taken by IHC to confirm non-conformities identified during an audit, confirm corrective measure proposals or objective evidence, verify objective evidence during a follow-up audit without suspension, or to consider a major non-conformity. An Evaluation decision becomes valid with immediate effect.

▪ **Appeal:**

A request to review and reverse a certification decision. Appeals against certification decisions are decided on by the CAC of IHC.

▪ **Requests for review:**

These are requests to review an evaluation decision and is handled by the TD.


▪ **Complaints/ appeals committee (CAC):**

This committee is an internal quality control body that objectively handles the complaints considering any raised argument and objection by the involved parties. As a company-internal body, its role is not that of an external or official arbitration body nor a court-like institution.

5. Acknowledgement of a complaint, appeal, or a review request

- Complaints, appeals, and requests of review must be submitted through written text. The client feedback form of IHC (FOR-15) can be used for complaints. Complaints, appeals, and requests of review can be also sent via Email, fax, filling online form, or other means to transfer written texts.
- A complaint related to IHC certification service can be submitted any time.
- A review request against an evaluation decision can be submitted within 1 month after an evaluation decision is taken.
- An appeal can be submitted within 1 month after a certification decision.
- IHC will not respond to anonymous requests without clear contact information.
- After receipt of the complaint, request of review, or appeal in writing, IHC shall investigate whether it relates to the certification activities of IHC.
- IHC confirms the receipt and acknowledgement to the complainant, review request submitter, or appellant using an official letter.
- The QM maintains a log of complaints, appeals or request of reviews (LIS-02).
- The QM shall handle or forward the complaints, appeals, and requests of review. The QM decides after initial evaluation if this request shall stay in handling by QM or be forwarded to the TD or to the CAC.

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- The present status of evaluation or certification stays unaffected, until a revised decision is issued. The new decision is valid with immediate effect.
- Interested parties or ABs can ask to see and evaluate the log of complaints, appeals or request of reviews.

6. Categories of complaints, appeals, or review requests

The complaints, appeals, review requests can be classified under the following categories:

- Against QMS of IHC (complaint)
- Against implementation of the QMS of IHC (complaint)
- Against IHC-certified product or client (complaint)
- General dissatisfaction against the whole IHC or personnel of IHC
- Against already taken evaluation decisions (request of review)
- Against already taken certification decisions (appeal)

7. Reasons for a complaint, appeal, or a review request

All complaints, appeals, review requests must state the reason(s) and need to be supported by information and evidence. This is important for the IHC case evaluation.

The complaints, appeals, review requests may have one or more of the following reasons:


- Confidentiality not held.
- Bias or unfair behavior or decision.
- Failure to consider presented and relevant information.
- Unreasonable delay in processing or taking decision.
- Unprofessional behavior or decision.
- Dispute about facts
- Other reasons mentioned by complainant, appellant, and request provider.

8. Investigation, action, and response

This procedure is handled by the QM, TD or CAC and includes the following steps:

- Gathering more relevant information
- Discussion with other related parties
- Analysis of the cause(s)
- Internal discussion
- Decision
- Reply to the complainant, appellant, or request provider.

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- Proposal of corrective action
- Proposal of preventive actions

9. Formation of the complaints/ appeals committee (CAC) and its decision

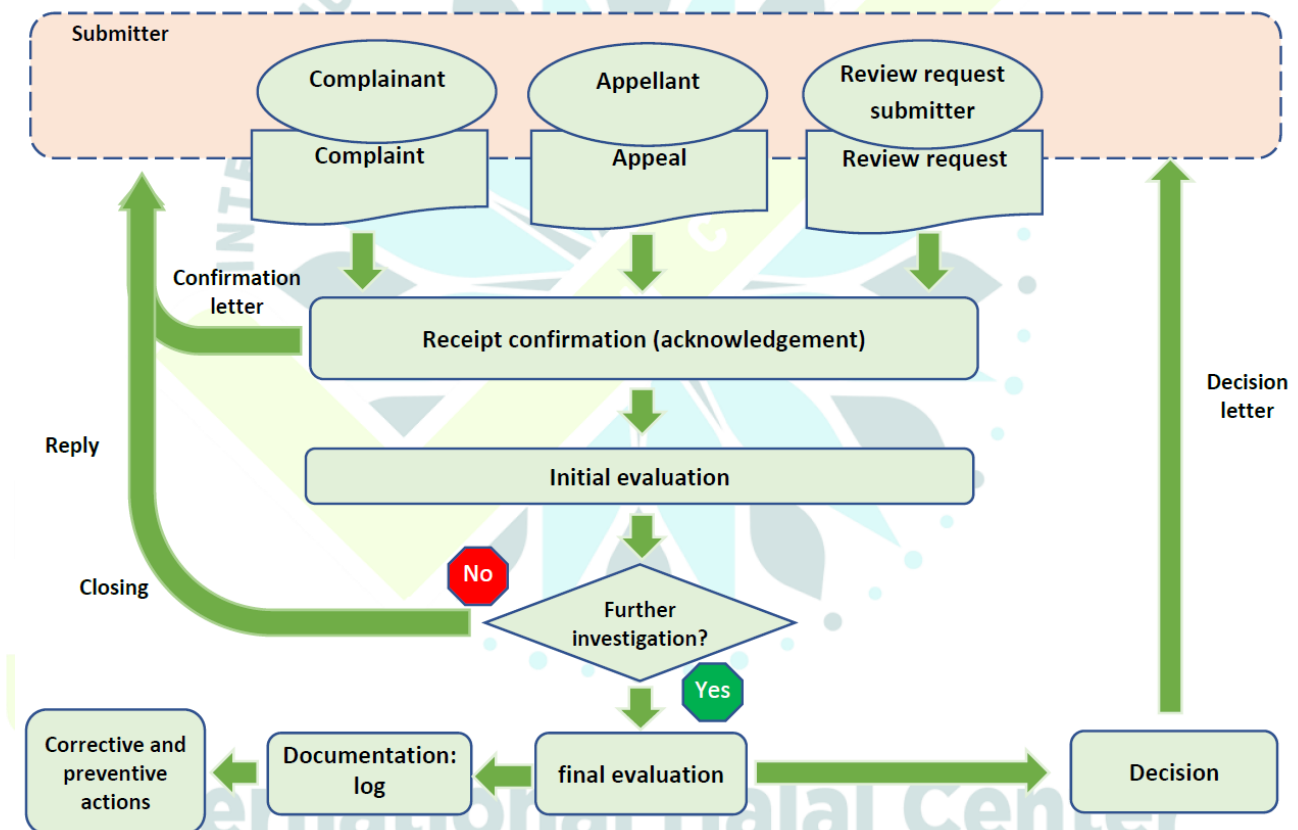
The committee involves the following personnel:

- From Quality department (QM) (1 person)
- From technical department (TD) (1 person)
- From Sharia committee (SC) (1 person)


The decision is taken upon unanimity (3-0) or majority (2-1).

10. Process flow chart

The flow chart of this process is shown in PFC-14.



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11. References

- List of complaints, appeals and review requests (List)
- Organizational chart (Chart)
- Functions, responsibilities, and authorities of personnel (SOP)
- Certification scheme (SOP)
- Decision making procedure (SOP)
- Company official letter (Form)
- KPIs (SOP)
- Quality policy
- Confidentiality measures (SOP)
- Evaluation, monitoring, and management of personnel qualification (SOP)

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