

## 541. Complaints & Appeals

### 1. Aims and Principles

Professional, transparent and efficient handling and documentation of complaints and appeals received about Tún's operations, certification activities and decisions. These procedures are available to clients and stakeholders.

### 2. Definitions and Scope

#### 2.1 Definitions

**Complaint** is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction (other than appeal or objection) by any person or organisation relating to the activities of Tún, where a response is expected.

**Appeal** is defined as a request by a client for reconsideration of a decision made by Tún related to client's desired certification status where a response is expected.

**Objection** is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organisation about:

- (a) the outcome of a fishery assessment at the point of Determination and Final Report or
- (b) the outcome of a complaint or appeal handled by Tún.

#### 2.2 Scope

This operating procedure covers the handling and documentation of all complaints and appeals received about Tún's operations, activities and decisions.

This procedure does not cover objections to Tún's decision on a complaint or appeal or objection to outcome of full fishery assessment.

Clients are advised to submit objections to scheme owners, accreditation bodies and/or competent authority, depending on the subject matter.

### 3. Responsibility

All complaints and appeals are referred to General Manager for first consideration.

General Manager is responsible for implementing Tún's management procedures regarding complaint and appeal and/or for appointing alternative competent person to manage the handling of part or all of the procedures regarding complaint or appeal.

If the matter concerns certification decisions, the responsibility may be transferred to program manager of the relevant certification scheme. Competence and impartiality are observed when appointing person(s) to review and decide on a complaint or an appeal.

### 4. Implementation

**4.1 Notice of a complaint or an appeal:** Any client, any party or stakeholder to the process, action or decision against which a complaint or an appeal is raised, may submit complaint or appeal. Tún may specify for individual types of decisions deadline for submitting a complaint and appeal. Notice must be supported by the following information as a minimum:

- a. Name, identity number, address and contact details of the person or entity raising the complaint or appeal, and his/her association with the subject matter.

- b. Sufficient details of the complaint or the appeal, i.e. the process or the decision against which either is raised, including any alleged errors or unfairness of that process or decision.
- c. Any new information that complainant or appellant considers material to the issue and why such information could be material to the result of the issue.

**4.2 Review of a complaint or an appeal:** Tún documents the handling of complaints and appeals, from the point of receipt to final decision.

- 1) Tún confirms whether a complaint or an appeal relates to Tún's activities.
- 2) Within 5 working days of receiving a complaint or an appeal, Tún acknowledges the receipt by letter to the complainant or appellant.
- 3) Tún proposes a draft course of action to follow up on the complaint or the appeal, taking account of the need for further information, expertise and competence of staff.
- 4) Within 10 working days of receiving a complaint or an appeal, Tún provides initial response to the complainant/appellant, outlining the proposed course of action to follow up on the complaint or the appeal.
- 5) Tún provides evidence to the complainant or appellant if the handling of the complaint or the appeal requires the involvement of a third party, such as an owner of a certification scheme, an accreditation body or competent (public) authority.
- 6) Tún keeps the complainant or appellant informed of the progress of the handling of the complaint or the appeal until the matter is closed.

**4.3 Investigation and Reporting:** Tún investigates the complaint or the appeal and prepares a report to Tún's management:

- 1) The complaint or the appeal is investigated by a competent reviewer:
  - a) The complaint or the appeal and attached information
  - b) Tún records of the activity or decision against which the complaint or the appeal is raised.
  - c) Tún may, if necessary, request further information from a member of staff or the complainant/appellant. Such information shall be provided within 5 working days of such a request.
- 2) The reviewer prepares a summary report to Tún summarizing the results of the evaluation of the complaint or the appeal, and specifying all actions proposed in response to the complaint or the appeal.

**4.4 Decision and Target Time:** Tún makes a decision on the response to the complaint or appeal:

- 1) The decision is made by the General Manager, or other competent Tún personnel or committee appointed by the General Manager, as appropriate to the subject matter.
- 2) The target time for a decision from the date of a complaint or appeal is 30 days and the maximum time is 90 days. However, if the subject matter is also being considered through an objection process, the 90 days maximum may be extended until the objection process is completed.
- 3) Tún gives formal notice of the outcome and end of the complaint and/or appeal process to the complainant/appellant within 5 working days of a decision.

**4.5 Follow-Up:** Tún instructs relevant personnel or committee to implement decision regarding complaint or appeal. General Manager or other member of staff responsible for managing the handling of the complaint or appeal confirms that corrective action has been implemented.

**4.6 Recording and Storing of Complaints and Appeals:** A log is kept of all complaints and appeals received, specifying the subject matter, name of the complainant and/or appellant, opening and closing dates of each case, and the scheme and/or management section relevant to the case. Documents received and documents created in the process of handling the case are kept on an accessible folder for up to five years, after which the folder is kept in a long-term safe storage.

## 5 References

- 1) Tún's Quality Manual.
- 2) Tún standards for organic agricultural production and sustainable production.
- 3) MSC General Certification Requirements.
- 4) ISO 17065.

## 6 Documents

- 1) Complaints and appeals log.
- 2) Complaint and appeal and attached documents received.
- 3) Complaint & appeal template and attached reports pertaining to each complaint or appeal.

## 7 Review

This procedure is reviewed as a part of Tún's regular internal audits as outlined in section 9 of Tún's Quality Manual.