



ALL ABOUT ESG SH.P.K.
PRO-19 - COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND DISPUTES PROCEDURE

ref. ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 §9.7 · §9.8 · IAS AC477

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Nature	Procedure		
Replaces	PRO-19 Rv.1 of 04/08/2025		
Applies to	Every complaint about ALL ABOUT ESG or about an organisation it certifies, and every appeal against a decision on a certification		
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Approved by	G. Fortino	Signature	

**Revision history**

Rv.	Date	Description of the change	Chapters	Approved by	Prepared by
0	04/10/2024	First issue.	all	G. Fortino	A. Madeo
1	04/08/2025	Change of company name.	all	G. Fortino	A. Madeo
2	03/09/2026	Full rewrite on §9.7 and §9.8. Complaints move to their own register.	all	G. Fortino	C. Volpe



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1 - Purpose and scope

This procedure establishes how ALL ABOUT ESG receives, evaluates and decides complaints and appeals, which ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 §9.7 and §9.8 require, and how a dispute that follows one of them is handled.

It applies to an appeal by an organisation against a decision the body has taken concerning its certification; to a complaint about the body, its personnel or its process; and to a complaint about an organisation the body certifies, from whatever source, including a worker of that organisation, a client of it, an authority or a member of the public. The public description of the process is chapter 22 of R-GR, which is accessible on the website of the body without a request having to be made. This procedure is what the body does; R-GR is what the complainant and the appellant are entitled to.

2 - References

Document	What is applied from it
ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015	§9.7, on appeals: the documented process, the independence of those who decide, the absence of discrimination, the acknowledgement, the progress reports and the formal notice of the conclusion; §9.8, on complaints: the same, with the confidentiality of the complainant and of the content, and the referral of a valid complaint to the certified organisation
ISO 10002:2018	Guidance on the handling of complaints. It is guidance and not a requirement
IAS AC477 and the IAS Rules of Procedure	Accreditation requirements, including what is reported to the accreditation body
R-GR	General regulation, chapter 22, which is the public description of this process, and chapter 23 on confidentiality
MQ	Management system manual, chapter 10.8
PRO-02	Management of corrective and preventive actions
PRO-04	Document and record management, and the confidentiality arrangements
PRO-05	Management of nonconformities
PRO-06	Management review, which receives the number, the subject and the outcome of complaints and appeals
PRO-18	Certificate issuance, for the effect of a decision on a certificate
PRO-20	Audit planning and conduct, for an additional audit at a certified organisation
R-IC	Rules of the committee for the safeguard of impartiality
M-030	Register of complaints and appeals
M-027	Minutes of the meeting of the committee
M-072	Register of findings and reports, where a nonconformity of the body found through a complaint is entered

3 - Terms, definitions and abbreviations

Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction, other than an appeal, addressed to the body, concerning its activities or the activities of an organisation it certifies, to which a response is expected.

Appeal: a request by an organisation that the body reconsider a decision it has taken concerning that organisation's certification.

Valid complaint: a complaint that concerns a certification activity for which the body is responsible. Whether a complaint is valid is decided on its subject, never on whether it is convenient.

Dispute: a disagreement that survives the conclusion of a complaint or an appeal and is pursued outside this process.

Abbreviation	Function or term
DG	Top management
DT	Technical direction
RSQ	Quality manager
UTE	Technical office
CI	Committee for the safeguard of impartiality
CT	Deliberating committee
RGV	Audit team leader

4 - How a complaint or an appeal reaches the body

A complaint or an appeal is brought in writing to direzione@allaboutesg.eu or to the registered office of the body, and states the subject, the facts and the evidence on which it rests. R-GR chapter 22 gives that address publicly.

Where a complaint is made by telephone or in person, whoever receives it writes it down and asks the complainant to confirm it in writing. Where the complainant will not or cannot confirm it in writing, the complaint is registered on the note taken, with the reason, and is treated: a complaint is not dismissed because of the way it arrived.

An appeal is brought within thirty days of the notification of the decision appealed against, as R-GR chapter 22 states.

Bringing an appeal does not suspend the decision appealed against. A complaint may be brought at any time.

No charge is made for a complaint or an appeal. Bringing one results in no discriminatory action of any kind against the person who brought it, and no consequence for the certification of the organisation concerned other than the one this procedure produces.

5 - Registration and the confidentiality of the register

UTE registers every complaint and every appeal on M-030 within two working days of receipt, and acknowledges receipt to the complainant or the appellant within five working days.

M-030 carries: the progressive number, the date of receipt, whether it is a complaint or an appeal, who brought it, the subject, the organisation concerned where there is one, the person to whom the file is assigned, the decision on validity with its reason, the actions taken, the date and content of the response, the date of the formal notice of conclusion, and whether a corrective action was opened on M-072.

M-030 is a register of its own and is not merged with M-072. §9.8.5 requires the process to be subject to the requirements of confidentiality as regards the complainant and the content of the complaint: a register open to everyone who treats the nonconformities of the body does not meet that requirement. Access to M-030 is limited to DG, DT, RSQ and UTE, and to any person assigned a file, for that file.

Where a complaint discloses a failure of the body itself, that failure is entered on M-072 under PRO-05, stated as a requirement not met and without the identity of the complainant.

6 - Who handles it

The file is assigned by DG. A person who took part in the matter complained of, or who took the decision appealed against, does not handle the file, does not decide it and does not review the decision. Where the person who would ordinarily handle it is so involved, DG assigns it to another competent person; where no one within the body is independent, DG assigns it to a competent person outside the body under M-040 and M-041, or brings it to CI.

§9.7.7 and §9.8.9 require the decision to be taken, or reviewed and approved, by a person or persons not previously involved in the subject. The record on M-030 names who decided and states, in one sentence, why that person was independent of the subject. A file in which that sentence cannot be written is a file that has been assigned wrongly.



The body is responsible for every decision at every level of this process. It does not delegate the decision to the person who made the complaint, to the organisation complained of, or to anyone outside the body other than as this chapter provides.

7 - Complaints

7.1 - Validity

Within ten working days of registration, UTE determines whether the complaint concerns a certification activity for which the body is responsible, and records the determination on M-030 with its reason. §9.8.3 requires that determination.

Where the complaint is not valid, the complainant is told so in writing, with the reason and, where the body can identify it, with the person or authority to whom the matter properly belongs. The entry is closed with that response. Where the complaint concerns a certified organisation, the examination of the complaint takes into account the effectiveness of the certified management system, as §9.8.3 requires: the question is not only whether the fact complained of occurred, but whether the system that was certified should have prevented it.

7.2 - Investigation

The body collects and verifies all the information necessary to validate the complaint, which §9.8.7 makes its responsibility and not the complainant's. The investigation examines, as applicable: the audit reports of the organisation concerned for the current cycle; the findings raised at those audits and their closure; the previous complaints on the same subject; and the records of the process complained of.

Where the information available does not settle the matter, UTE may request an additional audit at the certified organisation under PRO-20 chapter 12, announced with short notice or unannounced where the subject of the complaint requires it. The audit is conducted by an audit team leader other than the one who conducted the audit in question, and covers the areas the complaint concerns.

Where the complaint concerns a worker of a certified organisation, the identity of the worker is not disclosed to that organisation, and the matter is put to the organisation in terms that do not permit the worker to be identified. Where the subject cannot be put without identifying the worker, the body asks the worker in advance whether to proceed, and records the answer.

7.3 - Outcome

The body concludes the process within sixty days of receipt. Where more time is needed, the complainant is told in writing before the sixty days expire, with the reason and the new date. §9.8.8 requires the body to report progress and outcome to the complainant so far as it is able.

The decision is communicated to the complainant with what was found, what the body has decided and what it will do. §9.8.10 requires the body to give formal notice of the end of the process, and that notice is given even where the complaint was not upheld.

A valid complaint about a certified organisation is referred by the body to that organisation, as §9.8.4 requires, in due time. The body determines, together with the organisation and the complainant, whether and to what extent the subject of the complaint and its resolution are made public, as §9.8.11 requires, and records the determination. Where the complaint is upheld and discloses a failure of the certified organisation's system, the finding is raised under PRO-20 chapter 9 and the effect on the certification is determined under PRO-18 chapter 8. Where it discloses a failure of the body, PRO-05 and PRO-02 apply.

8 - Appeals

UTE registers the appeal on M-030, acknowledges receipt within five working days, and DG assigns it under chapter 6. The person assigned examines the decision appealed against, the evidence on which it rested, and the evidence the appellant has produced, and considers the outcome of previous similar appeals, which §9.7.4 a) requires. The examination is of the decision, not of the appellant.

The body collects and verifies all the information necessary to validate the appeal, which §9.7.5 makes its responsibility. Where the appeal concerns the conduct of an audit, an additional audit may be carried out under PRO-20 by an audit team leader other than the one whose work is in question; where the appeal concerns the certification decision, the file is put to CT in a composition that excludes whoever took the decision appealed against.

The body concludes within sixty days of receipt, informs the appellant of the progress and of the outcome, and gives formal notice of the conclusion. The decision may be:

- ☐ the appeal is upheld and the decision appealed against is replaced, with the consequences for the certificate determined under PRO-18;
- ☐ the appeal is upheld in part, and what is upheld is stated;
- ☐ the appeal is not upheld, and the reason is stated by reference to the requirement and to the evidence.

Every appeal, whatever its outcome, is examined for what it says about the process: where it discloses that a decision was taken on an incomplete record, or that a finding was wrongly classified, that is a nonconformity of the body and is entered on M-072.

9 - Disputes

Where the complainant or the appellant does not accept the conclusion of the process, the matter is a dispute. The body states in its notice of conclusion that the person may address the accreditation body, and gives the contact details of IAS.

A dispute pursued before a court or an arbitrator is handled by DG with the body's legal advisers. The file, the records of this process and the audit records that bear on it are preserved until the dispute ends, whatever the retention of PRO-04 would otherwise allow.

The body does not treat the bringing of a dispute as a ground to suspend or withdraw a certification. The grounds are those of R-GR chapter 18, and none of them is the exercise of a right.

10 - Reporting and review

RSQ reports to CI, at each of its meetings, the number of complaints and appeals received since the previous meeting, their subject in terms that do not identify a complainant, and the time taken to conclude them. CI examines whether the handling was independent and whether any of them discloses a threat to impartiality, and records its opinion on M-027.

The number, the subject and the outcome of complaints and appeals are an input to the management review under PRO-06 chapter 6, input i). The identity of a complainant is not brought to the review.

What is reported to the accreditation body is what the IAS Rules of Procedure require, in the form and at the time they require. The body does not undertake, in this procedure, a reporting obligation the accreditation rules do not impose; where IAS requests the register, it is provided.

11 - Records

Record	Kept by	Retention
M-030 - Register of complaints and appeals	UTE	Current certification cycle plus the whole of the previous one, and until the end of any dispute
The file of each complaint and each appeal: what was received, what was collected, who decided and the notices given	UTE	With the register
M-027 - Minutes of the committee, for the examination of chapter 10	RSQ	Without limit of time
The entries opened on M-072 where a failure of the body was found	RSQ	With the register of findings