

## 1.1 Certification Complaints & Appeals

Southpac retains full responsibility for all decisions at all levels of the complaints and appeals handling process. Southpac will ensure that the persons engaged in the complaints and appeals handling process are different from those who carried out the audit(s) and who made the certification decision(s). The submission, investigation and decision on complaints and appeals will not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

### 1.1.1 Appeals

All appeals are required to be submitted in writing no more than 2 months following the date on which the decision was sent to which the appeal applies.

#### Receiving

The client has the right to appeal decisions made regarding the certification of their company. All appeals shall be logged on the client file and **Form SC30 - Acknowledgment of Receipt of Appeals** sent to the appellant.

#### Validation

The appeal will in the first instance be sent to the **Certifications Coordinator**. The **Certifications Coordinator** will assess whether the appeal was submitted within the required timeframes.

#### Investigation

The appeal shall be directed to a specially formed committee and **SC Form 30 Acknowledgement of Receipt of Appeals** letter will be sent to the client. The committee must convene a meeting with the client within two (2) weeks of receipt of the appeal. The committee must decide within one (1) week of this meeting.

The appeals committee will be made up of one management representative from Southpac, one industry representative and one regulatory representative. All committee members and invitees will be required to sign a Nondisclosure Agreement prior to the meeting.

- The client shall be informed of the names of the committee members prior to the Appeals Meeting to ensure that there is no conflict of interest. The invitation to advise on conflict of interest shall be made in the letter advising the client of the meeting agenda, attendees and dates.
- The committee members will also be informed of the meeting in the form of a letter advising the agenda, date and attendees. The committee members will be invited, in this letter, to advise if there are any conflicts of interest.
- The Southpac committee member shall chair the meeting. Minutes of the meeting shall be kept and distributed to all attendees within three (3) working days of the completion of the meeting.

#### 1.1.1.1 Decision

A report clearly indicating the outcome of the committee's decision/s and the justifications for this/these decision/s shall be formulated by the committee within one week of the meeting and distributed to all parties concerned. If the report shows that the full Certification is to be reinstated with or without provisions, then this shall take place without delay and the next Certification Activity is to be scheduled. The client's Certificate shall be returned without delay. Documents generated relating to the Appeal shall be filed in the "Red" Client's File. The decision to reregister must be made by a majority of the committee. If the report shows that deregistration (Withdrawal) is recommended, Southpac procedures for suspending, withdrawing or reducing the scope of certification shall be followed.

### 1.1.2 Complaints

Complaints can arise from various sources relating to various aspects of the certification process including;

- Complaints about Southpac Certifications by clients or other stakeholders
- Complaints about a client certified by Southpac

All complaints are required to be submitted in writing and sent to **CEO**. All complaints shall be logged as SIR's and handled as such. The **CEO** will initially review the complaint and ascertain whether the complaint is valid. The **CEO** will then decide on the way in which the complaint is processed. Based on the complaint; in most cases the **CEO** will pass the matter on to the member of staff concerned. The latter will reassess the course of events on all its merits, and in case of unclear standpoints, speak to the parties involved, including the complainant and advise the **CEO** about the decision to be taken.

A decision, supported by arguments, will be made known to the complainant by the **CEO** within two weeks of the complaint having been received. Should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the decision, they can make a request to the **CEO** to have the initial decision reviewed, but within 4 weeks of having received this initial decision. The **CEO** will assess whether the procedure has been properly followed and makes a review of the decision.

#### 1.1.2.1 Notification to JAS-ANZ

Any complaint that remains open or unresolved beyond three months will be notified to JAS-ANZ.

#### 1.1.2.2 Confidentiality

The complaint handler will ensure that information regarding the complaint is handled appropriately. Those who have access to any information regarding the complaint will only have access to the information necessary for them to carry out their role. The complaint handler should keep clear and objective records which show how the complaint has been handled. Records of any agreements and outcomes should also be kept. The outcomes and agreements will be provided to the complainant. Southpac will ensure that any documents or records kept, arising from a complaint or its investigation, will be held in a safe and secure place.

### 1.1.3 Impartiality

Any Complaints and Appeals will be reviewed at the BOQ Review and the management of the number of appeals and complaints received and processed, and the policy pursued by the management with respect to these. Review of the complaints and appeals will help to safeguard impartiality when dealing with the fore mentioned.