

Complaints, Appeals & Disputes

1.0 Type of Complaint

Complaints, appeals and disputes regarding certification brought to the attention of the Global Seafood Alliance by retailers, consumers, facilities, or other parties will be handled by Program Integrity or referred to the certification body (CB) involved, depending on the type of the complaint.

- TYPE 1: Complaints, appeals or disputes not associated with the certification or audit process will be handled by the appropriate member(s) of the Program Integrity staff. These complaints may, *inter alia*, relate to board members, committee members, GSA staff, scheme governance, scheme management, logo-use, continued compliance, or the integrity of the standard(s).
- TYPE 2: Complaints, appeals and disputes associated with the certification decision, audit, auditor or CB are referred to the applicable certification body.

Depending on the nature of the issue, GSA reserves the right at its sole discretion to investigate a complaint independently or in conjunction with the complainant or certification body. This may include, but is not limited to, requesting further information, conducting unannounced audits and/or requesting an investigation by the facility in question.

1.1 Type 1 Complaints


Complaints should be submitted in writing to:

GSA Vice President of Program Integrity
Global Seafood Alliance
85 New Hampshire Ave #200
Portsmouth, NH 03801, USA

Or electronically to: programintegrity@globalseafood.org.

The GSA staff may contact the complainant for further information, as needed. To ensure a proper investigation can be done by GSA or the certification body, it is important that the complaint is filed in a timely fashion.

- To best handle any situation that arises, it is important that the complainant provide specific details in writing as to the nature of the complaint. This information includes date, time, location, photos or any other details and documentary evidence to help assist in investigation of the complaint. When complaints or appeals have been submitted with sufficient information to determine the need for further investigation, the matter is carried forward.
- The GSA Program Integrity Manager or their designee will be responsible for seeking and managing resolution of the complaint.

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1.2 Type 2 Complaints

Certification applicants have the right to appeal the certification decisions of certification bodies. Certification bodies shall have documented appeals processes in place and make such policies available to facilities upon request and/or in the event of a complaint. Complaints and appeals shall be directed in writing to the CB and within the time frames and format stipulated by the CB


- A full investigation shall be conducted, and a written response shall be provided by certification body personnel that are independent of the auditor and certification decision maker(s). Appeals and complaints must be resolved within the time frame set by the CB. Actions taken and their effectiveness must be documented.
- GSA requires a full investigation of the report by the CB and, where applicable, the certified site, and a response shall be submitted to GSA for consideration upon completion of the investigation.
- If the complaint has been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant and the CB, no further action may be required.
- If the issues raised in the complaints are not addressed to the satisfaction of GSA, or if the CB or CB auditor actions may bring the certification program into disrepute, the CB may be asked to investigate further, may be sanctioned or suspended, or may have its GSA approval revoked.
- The CB may not undertake any audits while its contract with GSA is suspended or following any termination.
- Where a complaint is considered by GSA to have been justified, the information related to the complaint may be made available to the certification body's accreditation body.

Where appropriate, GSA may request the certification body to sanction, suspend or withdraw facility certification, or sanction, suspend or withdraw a GAA BAP-approved auditor.

2.0 Complaint Records

Complaints will be flagged to the GSA Program Integrity Manager and managers will be kept informed of any corrective actions until the complaint has been resolved.

A log of complaints will be maintained by the GSA Program Integrity team and made available for internal and 3rd party system audits.

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