	APPEALS, COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES	Document No.	CDM-P-06
		Version	3.4
		Date of Issue	18-05-2026

1.0	**Purpose**
	To lay down procedure for receiving, managing, evaluating, and investigating complaints, disputes, and appeals, making decisions on them, and taking appropriate corrections and corrective actions.
2.0	**Scope**
	All complaints, disputes and appeals received from clients/any other stakeholder.
3.0	**Policy & Procedure**
3.1	It is KBS's endeavor to act on any claim of dissatisfaction that is brought to its attention by any interested party. Expressions of dissatisfaction are categorized as follows: • Complaint: Formal (written) expressions of dissatisfaction, made electronically or in writing regarding the performance of a KBS (as validation/verification/certification body) or its outsourced entities in relation to its validation and/or verification/certification activities, from any source, including but not limited to clients, the general public or its representatives, government bodies, NGOs, etc. • Disputes: Disagreement between the KBS and its client on any matter pertaining to the validation and/or verification/certification activities excluding decisions subject to appeal. • Appeal: A client request for a review of a decision taken by the KBS (as validation/verification/certification body) in respect of undertaken validation and/or verification/certification activity.
3.2	The procedure is available publicly on the website of KBS.
3.3	**Procedure for Complaints**
	Manager HR & Admin who is in charge is responsible for handling complaints.
3.3.1	Written complaints are received and recorded in the '**Appeals, Complaints & Disputes Form**' (**CDM-F-13**) by Manager- HR & Admin. He/she gathers and verifies all necessary information for evaluating the validity of the complaint, investigates the complaint and decides actions to be taken in response to the complaint. A complaint is treated as valid only if it pertains to any validation/ verification/certification activities with regard to the validation and/or verification/certification for which KBS is responsible. Manager HR & Admin ensures that appropriate corrections and corrective actions are taken and recorded in '**Appeals, Complaints & Disputes Form**' **CDM-F-13**. The process is subject to requirements for confidentiality, as it relates to the complainant and the subject of complaint. He /she ensures that the person engaged in the complaint handling process are different from those related to complaints. Where the complaint involves Manager HR & Admin, MD nominates another person to handle the complaint. The person handling the complaint acknowledges receipt of the complaint, provides the progress report where feasible and informs the complainant of the outcome of the investigation and the final notice of the outcome. customer acceptance and/or acknowledgement of satisfactory resolution will be obtained

	through email/any other communication mode that can be recorded as evidence.
3.3.2	Informal complaints (verbal) usually pertain to small matters and are dealt with by the receiving person at the point of activity itself. If the verbal complaint is found to be of serious nature it is recorded in '**Appeals, Complaints & Disputes Form**' **CDM-F-13** and handled further as above.
3.4	**Procedure for Disputes**
	Disputes are received/recorded in the 'Appeals, Complaints & Disputes' Form (**CDM-F-13**) by Manager HR & Admin. He/she gathers and verifies all necessary information for evaluating the validity of the dispute, investigates the dispute and decides actions to be taken in response to the dispute. A dispute is treated valid only if it pertains between KBS and any stakeholder with regard to KBS validation and/or verification/certification activities. The disputes, including actions undertaken in response to them, are tracked and records are maintained in '**Appeals, Complaints & Disputes Form**'**CDM-F-13**. Manager HR & Admin ensures that appropriate corrections and corrective actions are taken and recorded in '**Appeals, Complaints & Disputes Form**'**CDM-F-13**. The confidentiality of the disputes and subject of disputes is safeguarded. The process is subject to requirements for confidentiality, as it relates to the disputes and the subject of disputes. He /she ensures that the person engaged in the dispute handling process are different from those who carried out the validation or verification/certification activities. Where the dispute involves Manager HR & Admin, MD nominates another person to handle the dispute. The person handling the dispute acknowledges the receipt of the dispute, provides the progress report where feasible and informs the disputant of the outcome of the investigation and the final notice of the end of the dispute handling process. The records of disputes are maintained.
3.5	**Procedure for Appeals**
3.5.1	Appeals are received, acknowledged and recorded in 'Appeals, Complaints & Disputes Form (**CDM-F-13**)' by Manager HR & Admin. He/ She gathers and verifies all necessary information for evaluating the validity of the appeal. An appeal is treated as valid only if it pertains between KBS and any stakeholder with regard to KBS validation and/or verification/certification activities. Manager HR & Admin establishes an "Independent Panel" on receipt of the appeal to handle the appeal process. Manager HR & Admin ensures that person engaged in the appeal panel are different from those who conducted the validation or verification/certification, including the technical reviewer and final decision making. KBS ensures that the appeal handling process doesn't result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant. The panel investigates and decides on the appeal, taking into account all the relevant information available and gathered as part of the investigation. The panel makes final decision in '**Appeals, Complaints & Disputes Form**' **CDM-F-13** and is communicated to appellant by Manager HR & Admin. The confidentiality of the appeals and subject of the appeal is safeguarded. The process is subject to requirements for confidentiality. The person handling the appeal provides the progress reports on the appeal investigation and handling to the appellant and provides information/notice on the final decision.

3.6	**Dissatisfaction with the Manager HR & Admin resolution for Complaint/Dispute/Appeal by the Applicant**
3.6.1	If the concerned party is not satisfied with the response from the Manager HR & Admin, MD constitutes an Appeals / Complaints / Disputes committee. The concerned party has the right to agree to the composition of the Committee and may challenge its composition. The Committee meets and makes its recommendations within **30 days** to MD. MD decides and conveys its decision to the concerned party. Customer acceptance and/or acknowledgement of satisfactory resolution will be obtained through email/any other communication mode that can be recorded as evidence.
3.7	**Dissatisfaction with the External committee resolution output for Complaint/Dispute/Appeal by the Applicant**
3.7.1	The appellant is informed of the progress report on the appeal investigation and handling and the panel's final decision. In cases where the appellant is not satisfied with the decision, the appellant is informed that it has the option of making a complaint to the respective accreditation board.
4.0	**GS specific requirement additional to above-described procedure**
	KBS shall investigate the allegations and specify all proposed actions in response to the complainant **within 3 months** of receiving the complaint. In cases where the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, KBS shall inform the complainant that it has the option of making a complaint to Gold Standard.
5.0	**Records**
	a) Appeal & Complaint Form (**CDM-F-13**) b) List of Appeals, Complaints & Disputes (**CDM-D-05**) c) Corrective Action Record / Non-conformity report (**CDM-F-11**)

Revision History:

Version	Reason of Change	Prepared by QM (Date)	Approved by MD (Date)
2.0	Fresh issue to align the procedure with AS Version 6.0	04-12-2014	04-12-2014
2.1	Revised as corrective actions implemented for NC received during surveillance audit.	14-05-2018	14-05-2018
2.2	Revised as corrective actions implemented for concern received during NABCB audit for ISO14065.	01-02-2021	01-02-2021
2.3	Inclusion of GS specific requirement	31-03-2022	31-03-2022
3.0	Revision based on Article 6.4 Accreditation Standard Version 01.0	10-09-2024	28-09-2024
3.1	Responsibility correction done	10 Jan 2025	17 Jan 2025
3.2	Process of appointing external committee added	20 Jan 2025	09 Feb 2025
Modification of the Revision History as per procedure CDM-P-02			

Version	Description	Prepared by (Date)	Reviewed by (Date)	Approved by (Date)
3.3	Revisions made in order to align procedure as scheme neutral	05/12/2025 (Asst. Manager Quality system)	11/12/2025 Manager Quality	04/01/2026
3.4	Revision based on Article 6.4 Accreditation Standard Version 02.0	Asst. Manager Quality system (16/04/2026)	01/05/2026 Manager Quality	18/05/2026