

APPEALS PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

An appellant, a certified company or any interested party may appeal against a decision of EQCS. The matter is referred to the appeals panel whose decision is final.

ADMINISTRATION OF APPEALS

In the event of an applicant, certified company or any interested party, wishing to contest any decision of EQCS, he/she shall, within 14 days after having been officially informed of such a decision, give notice in writing to EQCS of his/her desire to appeal against the decision. The receipt of the appeal is acknowledged and the applicant is informed of the progress made and the outcome.

On receipt of such an appeal, EQCS receiving the appeal shall be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the appeal. The QM, under the instruction of MD will advise the impartiality committee of the details of the appeal received. The MD will proceed to constitute an independent appeals panel in each case in consultation with the impartiality committee. The appeals panel will comprise of a chairman who will be assisted by two members of the impartiality committee representing the area of technical expertise related to the nature of the appellant's activities under certification. The appellant will have the right to object to the inclusion of any person in the appeals panel. All members chosen to form the appeals panel shall not have been previously involved in the decision appealed against or who carried out the audit and made the certification decision.

The meeting of the appeal panel shall be held within 30 days of the receipt of notification from the appellant and the appellant will be provided with at least 7 clear days of written notice of the time and place of the appeals panel meeting. Prior to the meeting of the appeals panel the existing decision of EQCS is to remain in force.

At the appeals panel meeting both the appellant and the appropriate representative from EQCS shall be entitled to be heard in confidence and majority decision of the appeals panel shall be final.

The MD shall ensure that the appellant is advised in writing of the decision of the appeals panel within 7 days of the decision. The QM shall record details of the appeal in the **register of appeals/complaints EQCS/P/01-02/F01** and implement the decision of the appeals panel, as required.

On conclusion of the appeal, the QM will also review the grounds of appeal and evaluate if any possible improvements to EQCS management systems are required. A description of the appeals handling process is available on **EQCS website to make it publically accessible**.

The QM shall ensure that the submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

QM takes appropriate correction or corrective action on the identified root cause of the appeal and introduces necessary changes in the system procedure.

The certification body shall give formal notice to the appellant of the end of the appeals-handling process.