

## DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

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## **DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

### **1. Scope and application field**

The scope of this procedure is to define the modalities and responsibilities in order to deal with the complaints and appeals-handling that might be presented by the customers and by other parties caused by lack of satisfaction about the performances, and services provided by the SMC Slovensko a.s. in its activities of evaluation and product certification, and in other fields, and provided by certified clients in product or services issued.

### **2. Definitions and acronyms**

We apply to this procedure the definitions of the Standards ISO 9000:2015 and ISO 19011:2018.

Acronyms:

DT: Technical Director

RSQ: Person responsible for the management quality system

AU: Legal representative

NC: Nonconformities

AC: corrective actions

### **3. Responsibilities**

**RSQ** is responsible for writing, verifying and distributing this procedure.

**AU** is responsible for the approval of this procedure.

The other responsibilities are defined in this procedure and in the procedures mentioned as internal references.

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### 4. Operative modalities

Are considered:

- Appeals, formal appeals presented from any parts to the competent authority of SMC Slovensko a.s. in order to examine a situation in order to obtain change or cancellation of a decision (e.g. related to a complaint decision or a decision on a certified product).
- Complaints, unsatisfied displays, by the subject whose product is certified or under certification in regarding to the service received (for example contractual relation, delays in the compliance of the various phases of the certification process, auditor's behaviour or SMC Slovensko's behaviour considered incorrect) or from any other part, or unsatisfaction of thirds in respect to products or services issued by certified clients.

#### Complaints

Every organization that uses SMC Slovensko a.s.' services or other interested parties has the right to present complaints against the behaviour or performances of the SMC Slovensko a.s., that will provide with written evidences of its reception.

SMC Slovensko a.s. receiving the complaint is responsible for all decisions at all levels of the complaint-handling process.

Submission, investigation and decision on complaints do not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.

After receiving the complaint, SMC Slovensko a.s. confirms whether the complaint concerns the product certification activities for which it is

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responsible and, if so, handles it, confirming to the complainant that it has received an official complaint or appeal.

If the complaint concerns a customer's certified product, the complaint review shall take into account the effectiveness and maintenance of the requirements of the certified product.

Any valid complaint about a certified product of a customer is forwarded by SMC Slovensko a.s. to the customer in question at the appropriate time.

The process of complaints-handling is subject to confidentiality.

Complaints can be sent by email or via mail and should contain:

- Name and address of the person making the complaint
- E-mail
- The reason for the complaint
- SMC Slovensko a.s. is responsible for collecting and verifying all information necessary (as far as possible) to be able to process the complaint or appeal and lead it to a decision or resolution.

Complaints or appeals and decisions on their resolution are examined by the AU which will appoint a person from among its staff not involved in the certification activity relating to the complaint or appeal.

To ensure that there is no conflict of interest, personnel (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy for a client, or been employed by a client, is not used by SMC Slovensko a.s. to review or approve the resolution of a complaint or appeal for that client within two years following the end of the consultancy or employment.

The final result will be sent by email or registered mail.

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Once received, the complaint is analysed and verified and if there is the need of corrective actions and treatment, they will be implemented. Records of complaints and connected corrective actions are kept by RSQ accordingly to PQ05\_P and kept for at least 5 years.

SMC Slovensko a.s. officially communicates to the complainant the outcome and conclusion of the complaint process and determines, together with the certified client and the complainant whether and, if so to what extent, the subject of complaint and its resolution shall be made public.

The complainant can appeal the decision on a complaint in case the response is not considered satisfactory.

For certified products, complaints represent a potential incident and an indication of possible non-conformity.

### *Appeals*

SMC Slovensko a.s., that receives the appeal, is responsible for all the decision at all levels of the appeals-handling process. The personnel engaged in the appeals-handling process are different from those who carried out the audits and made the certification decision on the certified product.

Submission, investigation and decisions on appeals do not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

SMC Slovensko a.s. receives appeals only by formal mail. The appeal should contain the information of the appellant, the reasons for making the appeal.

SMC Slovensko a.s. is responsible for gathering and verifying all the necessary information to validate the appeal.

SMC Slovensko a.s. acknowledges receipt of the appeal within 10 working days from the receiving of the appeals and will provides the appellant with

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progress report and with the outcome within 45 working days from the receipt of the appeal. The final result will be provided to the appellant at the end of the appeals-handling process by email or registered mail.

The decision to be communicated to the appellant is made by, or reviewed and approved by individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of the appeal. SMC Slovensko a.s. formally notify to the appellant the result for the treatment of appeals.

The appeals and corrective actions are recorded according to PQ05\_P and they are kept for at least 5 years by the RSQ.

The appeals not solved can turn into disputes and into legal actions. In that case, the competent court is in Bratislava.

The delivered judgments in consequence of the disputes are filed and kept by the RSQ of the SMC Slovensko a.s. together with the appeals that have produced them.

All the records concerning the complaints, appeals are at the disposition of the accreditation bodies by the SMC Slovensko a.s.

### *Communications*

Communications, comments and information from clients that cannot be classified as appeals or complaints or legal actions are recorded in mod 5.5\_P and analyzed by RSQ and AU and validate by them in relation to any possible action to take.

### **Records**

The records produced by this procedure are filed under the dispositions contained in it.

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### **6. Internal and external references**

External

ISO/IEC 17065:2012

ISO/IEC 17067:2013

*Internal*

MQ, PQ 05\_P , General regulation on product certification (R1\_P).