Appeals and Complaints Handling Procedure

Certification and Inspection Activities

1 Purpose

To establish the process for receiving, evaluating, investigating, resolving and closing appeals and complaints related to certification and inspection activities.

2 Scope

This procedure applies to appeals and complaints related to certification and inspection activities performed by Kompleye, including CMMC assessments and complaints concerning certified organizations.

3 Responsibilities

Practice Lead

- Maintains the appeals and complaints process.
- Ensures submissions are registered, assigned, monitored and closed.
- Selects competent and impartial personnel for review and decision-making.
- Ensures required communications and actions are completed.
- Reports relevant results and trends as input to management review.

Assigned Reviewer

- Gathers and verifies the information necessary to evaluate the matter.
- Reviews the evidence against applicable requirements.
- Documents conclusions and proposed actions.

Authorized Decision-Maker

- Reviews the evidence and conclusions.
- Makes, or reviews and approves, the final decision.
- Authorizes communication of the outcome.

All Personnel

- Promptly forward appeals and complaints to the Practice Lead.
- Protect confidential information.
- Disclose any conflict of interest before participating in the process.

4 Principles and Definitions

4.1 Definitions

Appeal

A request for reconsideration of a certification or inspection decision made by Kompleye.

Complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction, other than an appeal, relating to the activities of Kompleye or a certified organization, where a response is expected.

Appellant

The person or organization submitting an appeal.

Complainant

The person or organization submitting a complaint.

4.2 Appeals and Complaints Principles

- **Impartiality:** Appeals and complaints are handled objectively and without commercial, financial or other pressure.
- **Independence:** Reviewers and decision-makers are not involved in the matter under review.
- **Competence:** Personnel are selected according to the activity, scheme and technical subject involved.
- **Responsibility:** Kompleye remains responsible for all decisions made throughout the process.
- **Non-discrimination:** Submission, investigation and decision do not result in discriminatory action.
- **Confidentiality:** Information is protected and disclosed only when authorized or required.
- **Evidence-based decisions:** Conclusions are based on information gathered and verified by Kompleye.
- **Transparency:** This process is published on the Kompleye website.
- **Traceability:** Each case and its resolution are recorded in the Kono Appeals/Complaints Portal.

These principles incorporate the applicable certification and inspection requirements for impartiality, independence, competence, confidentiality, responsibility, public availability and non-discrimination.

5 Appeals Handling

5.1 Receipt and Initial Review

Appeals and complaints may be submitted verbally or in writing through the communication channels provided by Kompleye, including the form published on its website.

Any submission received by personnel is forwarded to the Practice Lead and registered in the Kono Appeals/Complaints Portal. Receipt is acknowledged using the contact information provided.

The Practice Lead determines whether the submission is an appeal, a complaint, a suggestion, or a matter outside Kompleye's responsibility. Additional information may be requested where necessary to understand and evaluate the matter. Suggestions are referred to the responsible area. Matters outside Kompleye's responsibility are recorded and the submitting party is informed where practicable.

5.2 Appeals

The Practice Lead confirms the decision under appeal and the certification or inspection activity concerned.

The appeal is assigned to personnel with the competence required for the applicable activity and scheme and who were not involved in the audit, technical review, certification decision, inspection decision, or other activity that is the subject of the appeal. The reviewer gathers and verifies the relevant information, evaluates the appeal against applicable requirements, considers previous similar appeals where applicable, and documents the conclusions.

The final decision is made, or reviewed and approved, by authorized personnel who were not involved in the audit, technical review, certification decision, inspection decision, or other activity that is the subject of the appeal.

Any correction or corrective action resulting from the decision is managed through the applicable process.

The appellant receives acknowledgement of receipt, progress information where appropriate, and formal written notice of the outcome and closure.

For CMMC assessments, an Organization Seeking Certification that remains dissatisfied with Kompleye's final appeal decision may elevate the appeal to the Cyber AB in accordance with applicable programme requirements. CMMC assessment appeal records, reviewed records and decision results are submitted through the CMMC instantiation of eMASS, where required.

5.3 Complaints Against Kompleye

The Practice Lead confirms whether the complaint relates to activities for which Kompleye is responsible.

Complaints within scope are assigned to competent personnel who were not involved in the subject of the complaint. The reviewer gathers and verifies the relevant information, determines whether the complaint is substantiated, and identifies any required action.

The resolution is made, or reviewed and approved, by authorized personnel who were not involved in the subject of the complaint.

Identified nonconformities are managed through the applicable corrective action process.

The complainant receives acknowledgement of receipt, progress information where appropriate, and formal written notice of the outcome and closure.

5.4 Complaints Concerning Certified Organizations

A complaint concerning a certified organization is evaluated against the certified scope and the effectiveness of the organization's management system.

Valid complaints are communicated to the certified organization at an appropriate stage.

Kompleye may request investigation results, corrections, corrective actions, supporting evidence, or other information necessary to evaluate the complaint.

Follow-up may be completed through documented evidence, surveillance activities, recertification activities, or special audits, where justified.

Any resulting action affecting certification is managed through the applicable certification decision process.

Kompleye determines, together with the certified organization and the complainant, whether and to what extent the subject of the complaint and its resolution will be made public.

5.5 Decision and Closure

The decision record identifies the matter reviewed, evidence considered, conclusions reached, required actions and authorized decision-maker.

A case is closed when the outcome has been communicated and any required actions have been completed or transferred to the appropriate controlled process.

Relevant appeals, complaints and resulting actions are reviewed as input to management review.

6 Records

All records generated through this procedure are maintained in the Kono Appeals/Complaints Portal. This includes certification, inspection and CMMC cases, communications, evidence, decisions, actions, closure records and evidence of applicable eMASS submissions.

Records are controlled, protected, retained and disposed of in accordance with the Control of Documents and Records procedure and the Master List of Documents and Records.