



Complaint procedure

for issues related to the implementation of the GOTS quality assurance and labelling system

1. Scope of the document

This document describes the process to ensure a formalised, timely and effective means of handling and resolving any complaints raised with regard to:

- unauthorised, false or misleading use of the GOTS logo or other claims related to GOTS (certification),
- failures or omissions in the course of the GOTS certification procedure
- any other abuses of the GOTS quality assurance or the licensing and labelling system
- violations against the ownership and other rights of/in the Global Organic Textile Standard.

2. Principle

Complaints are accepted from any company, organisation or individual.

3. Lodging a complaint

- 3.1 Any complaint referring to a subject as listed in the scope may be lodged in writing by e-mail to mail@global-standard.org
- 3.2 Complaints can only be processed if submitted in English, unless another language is expressly agreed to.
- 3.3 Complaints need to contain the following minimum information:
 - Name and contact details of the complainant
 - Name and contact details of the addressee of the complaint
 - Subject, description and substantiation of the complaint
 - Any further relevant information
- 3.4 So as to formalise and ease the handling of complaints a specific 'complaint form' has been developed. The complainant will generally be requested to use this form so that his complaint can be processed.



4. Processing

- 4.1 Any complaint shall immediately be brought to the attention of the GOTS Technical Director who is in charge to file the complaint and to coordinate its processing.
- 4.2 The complainant will be informed as soon as possible, but not later than 30 days, after receipt that the complaint is being processed and if further information is required, with a request to submit this within a specified time.
- 4.3 Initially the complaint is investigated by the 'Evaluator'. Evaluator is the GOTS Technical Director. Depending on the subject of the complaint the Technical Director may assign the position to a GOTS staff member or a GOTS Regional Representative. If the complaint concerns (directly or indirectly) the (performance of the) work of the GOTS Technical Director and/or the Technical Committee, the GOTS Managing Director serves as Evaluator who may assign this position to a competent person of his choice.
- 4.4 The Evaluator keeps records of all relating conversations, hardcopies and electronic communication.
- 4.5 All parties involved in the process are requested to refrain from commenting publicly on the complaint until a decision is made.

5. Admissibility

- 5.1 If, after due investigation, the complaint turns out to be unsubstantiated the Evaluator communicates this, including the reason, in writing to the parties concerned.
- 5.2 The complainant may appeal against this decision within 14 days in writing to the Evaluator.

6. Conciliation

- 6.1 If the Evaluator considers the complaint admissible, he contacts the parties concerned (by e-mail or phone) to attempt to informally resolve the issue in direct communication and on basis of the stipulations and requirements of the official and public documents of the GOTS program.
- 6.2 If an informal resolution is possible and appropriate, the Evaluator files the collected correspondence and further documentation, communicates the solution to the parties concerned and closes the case file.



7. Decision

- 7.1 If an informal resolution of the complaint is not possible or appropriate or if the complainant appealed against the decision, the Evaluator reports the case to the GOTS Managing Director, if applicable with a recommendation on the decision.
- 7.2 Where initial investigation leads to the suspicion of severe failures or omissions of the work of an approved certification body the case will be referred to the GOTS Technical Committee which, after investigation, makes a recommendation as to any further action to the GOTS Managing Director.
- 7.3 The GOTS Managing Director shall make a decision on the complaint and inform the parties involved accordingly. The decision shall include the reason and may be published.

8. Protection of the GOTS Program

Irrespective of the outcome of this Complaint Procedure the IWG may impose appropriate additional sanctions including legal action if deemed necessary in order to safeguard the credibility of the GOTS program.