OPERATING PROCEDURE
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
OP016 - 10

References:	
R 47 - 03	9.1.3.f / 17.1.c / 20 / 21.2.c
Policies	PM001 PAR 8.8
Procedures	OP006 / OP007 / OP017 / OP024
Forms	F017 / F018 / F019A / F020 / F022
Other	

1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to document a systematic way for evaluating and decision-making regarding complaints received from SANAS, measured entities and/or other parties. To ensure that all complaints received are recorded and resolved successfully.

2 Scope

2.1 The complaints procedure focuses on the evaluation and investigation of all complaints received.

3 Definitions

Complaint: a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.

Committee: a group of people appointed for a specific function by a larger group and typically consisting of members of that group.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 The Office Administrator is responsible for sending the **Acknowledgement of Receipt of Complaint (F017)** to the Measured Entity. Should a complaint and/or an enquiry be received from SANAS, **the dtic** or an organ of state the Directors will hold an Emergency Management Review meeting to discuss the matter.

4.2 The Office Administrator will allocate the unique number to the Complaint and keep track via the **Appeals & Complaints Register (F020)**.

4.3 The Verification Manager is responsible for all complaints that are lodged and will convene a Complaints Committee.

4.4 The Verification Manager will provide feedback to the Measured Entity in writing with regards to the outcome of the complaint lodged.

5 Procedure

5.1 The procedure for handling complaints will be made publicly available on RVN Empowerment's website. All employees will also be briefed on this procedure so that they can advise clients that may enquire about it.

5.2 Complaints and/or enquiries received from SANAS, **the dtic** and/or organ of state will not be registered as official complaints. Instead, the Directors will hold an Emergency Management Review Meeting to discuss the matter and decide on how to address the matter going forward. Should a non-conformance be raised the Corrective Action Process (OP016) should be followed.

5.3 The complainant will be sent the **Complaints Form (F019A)**, by the office administrator on receipt of a complaint (at the request of the verification manager) or alternatively the complainant can download the **Complaints Form (F019A)** from our website and email the completed form to the office administrator. Several sources are used to initiate complaints. These include customer complaints, supplier complaints, complaints from the verifying personnel, external audits and management review meetings. Any complaint about a verified measured entity will be referred by the rating agency's verification manager to the verified measured entity.

5.4 The completed **Complaints Form (F019A)** will be submitted to the office administrator. The office administrator will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 48 hours by completing an **Acknowledgement of Receipt of Complaint (F017)** and sending it by email to the complainant.

5.5 The office administrator will forward the complaint by email within 48 hours to the verification manager who will validate the complaint and determine whether complaints received relates to the B-BBEE verifying process conducted by the rating agency.

5.6 Once validated, the office administrator will assign the next number (e.g. C001, C002) to the complaint on the **Appeals & Complaints Register (F020)**.

5.7 The verification manager will convene the complaints committee as per the terms of reference in point 5.8 below.

5.8 The verification manager will ensure that individuals appointed to the committee to assist with the investigation, were not involved or subject to the complaint in any way whatsoever. If the committee consists of 2 members to resolve the complaint and both members are not in agreement, a third person will be brought in to provide the final resolution. This is ensured by examining the client files to identify the names of the team originally involved as per the Declaration of Conflict of Interest (F018). All committees' members will sign impartiality and are bound by confidentiality clauses in their Employment Contract (F022) (Annexure A).

5.9 The committee chairperson will enter the cause and recommend corrective actions on the complaint form as recommended by the committee.

5.10 The chairperson will provide the verification manager with progress reports every week in writing. The verification manager will in turn report progress to the complainant at least twice during the investigation.

5.11 The completed complaint form will be referred to the verification manager, who will review and advise the person responsible for the affected area who will be responsible for implementing the appropriate corrective action as per the Corrective Action Procedure (OP007). The verification manager will follow up on the effectiveness of the implementation within 2 weeks and document on the complaint form.

5.12 The verification manager will forward the form to the office administrator who will be responsible for filing the form and updating the Appeals & Complaints Register (F020) with all remedial actions taken.

5.13 The verification manager will notify the complainant of the decisions at the end of the complaints-handling process within 1 week of the committee findings in writing.

5.14 Should the complainant not be satisfied the verification manager will direct the complainant to the dtic. The client will not incur any additional costs when lodging a complaint.

5.15 Complaints will be investigated within a 30-day period.

5.16 When training is required as a result of a complaint, the verification manager will so note on the Complaint form and notify the Head of Verification, who will be responsible for scheduling the appropriate training. Evidence of the training will be documented and filed as per the procedure re Document Control (OP006).

5.17 The verification manager will review complaints annually to identify any deviations from procedures as well as other opportunities for improvement. This information will be reviewed during the management review meetings.

6 Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE: APPEALS & COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

a. <u>Purpose and Objectives of the committee:</u>
The Appeals & Complaints Committee must investigate all complaints and appeals, using root cause analysis (OP024) techniques outlined in Procedure: Root Cause Analysis, thoroughly, objectively and accurately within 30 (thirty) days from receipt of the complaint or appeal.

b. <u>Output expected and the timeframes in which the output is expected</u>
Root cause analysis.
Solution recommandations.

Final decision communicated in writing to the verification manager.
Corrective action recommendations.
Progress reports every two (two) weeks in writing to the verification manager.

c. The schedule and location of meetings for the committee
Ad hoc: As and when complaints / appeals are received then:
Weekly at the rating agency's offices

d. Competency requirements of committee members
Committee members must have a minimum level 3 in all competencies defined in the Individual's Skills Assessment. The person with the most experience will be appointed chairperson. Committee members will change depending on the complaint/appeal origination to ensure impartiality.

e. Number of committee members required
Minimum 2 (two) committee members.

f. Balance of interest consideration of the committee members
All employee records will be scrutinized by the verification manager to ensure impartiality as well as the measured entities file to ensure independence from the original verification.

g. Agenda:
Welcome
Apologies
Review of Appeal
Review of Original documentation
Investigation
Recommendations
Decision
Date of next meeting

h. Format of minutes of committee meetings
Minutes to be taken by the chairperson

Issue discussed	Investigation/ Recommendation	By Whom	Date

7 Records

7.1 Acknowledgement of Receipt of Complaint (F017)
7.2 Declaration of Conflict of Interest (F018)
7.3 Complaints Form (F019A)
7.4 Appeals & Complaints Register (F020)
7.5 Employment Contract (F022)