

# IQNet Ltd Complaints and Appeals Process

## CONFIDENTIALITY

IQNet Ltd concern / complaint / grievance handling process is subject to the requirements for confidentiality.

In investigating any complaint, IQNet Ltd will take the necessary measures to protect the identity of the complainant and any person who gave testimony, unless such persons willingly choose to let their identity be known.

Concerns / complaints / grievances filed on an anonymous basis (e.g., by using an unidentified email address) shall be addressed as long as these include contact information (to enable follow-up and reporting).

Confidential complaints can be submitted to [integrity@iqnet-ltd.com](mailto:integrity@iqnet-ltd.com) and shall be received by one specifically designated individual in our organization, specifically trained in our complaint handling procedures.



## ENGAGE with Us

Your feedback is important to us, as we are committed to continually improve and expand our services.

We welcome any suggestions and inputs from any stakeholders, to which we will strive to provide a timely response.

Should you wish to raise any concerns with IQNet Ltd, we would like to inform you on our channels and our process.

## WHO can submit feedback, suggestions, concerns (grievances and appeals)?

Any of our interested parties, including personnel (workers) of our audited / certified organization, clients, beneficiaries, our own auditors, or personnel, organizations in the communities where we (and our audited/certified organizations) operate, can approach us with feedback, suggestions or concerns, if related to IQNet Ltd audit and certification activities, our staff or our IQNet Ltd Representatives, our audit personnel and/or the practices of our audited / certified clients.

Clients or our personnel dissatisfied with a professional judgement and decision made by IQNet Ltd concerning their audit and/or certification program, or a qualification decision, may submit an appeal to IQNet Ltd.

The scope of our complaint and appeal handling process includes, as well, any unethical behavior against our own corporate policies and Code of Conduct.

## Our COMMITMENT

We in IQNet Ltd are committed towards:

- Upholding the principles and values defined in our policies and Code of Conduct,
- Enhancing customer and other interested parties' satisfaction by creating an environment that is open to feedback, resolving any complaints received, and enhancing our ability to improve the service,
- Recognizing and addressing the needs and expectations of complainants,
- Providing effective and easy to use feedback channels,
- Analyzing and evaluating feedback to improve the quality of our services,
- Periodically reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of our feedback handling processes,

## WHERE can you submit feedback?

IQNet Ltd makes available the following channels to provide your feedback, suggestions or concerns:

- A contact form on our Website <https://www.iqnet-ltd.com/en/contact-us>
- Corporate email address [iqnetltd@iqnet.ch](mailto:iqnetltd@iqnet.ch) or specific scheme email addresses [sa8000@iqnet.ch](mailto:sa8000@iqnet.ch), [sedex@iqnet.ch](mailto:sedex@iqnet.ch), [ams@iqnet.ch](mailto:ams@iqnet.ch), [sr10@iqnet.ch](mailto:sr10@iqnet.ch), [academy@iqnet.ch](mailto:academy@iqnet.ch), [acs@iqnet.ch](mailto:acs@iqnet.ch)
- Dedicated email address for any wrongdoing reports (compliance issues, integrity violations, detrimental conduct against whistleblower and other relevant interested party) [integrity@iqnet-ltd.com](mailto:integrity@iqnet-ltd.com)
- Postbox for correspondence Bollwerk 31, CH-3011 Bern, Switzerland
- Phone +41 31 3102442

In addition, contact details for reporting any concerns are randomly distributed by our audit teams, to workers in our SA8000 audited organizations, to facilitate awareness.

Likewise, our audit teams have available their own channels in reporting any sensitive, zero-tolerance issues, audit disruptions, unethical behavior or threatening situations that could be faced during audit assignments.

Ultimately, as part of our commitment, our Managing Director can be directly contacted at [pedro.alves@iqnet.ch](mailto:pedro.alves@iqnet.ch)

**SOME USEFUL TERMS**

**CONCERN** – Matter of relevance or importance for a stakeholder.

**COMPLAINT** – Expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organization to IQNet Ltd, relating to IQNet Ltd activities or the activities of a certified / audited organization, where a response is expected.

**APPEAL** – Request by an applicant, candidate, audited / certified organization or qualified person for reconsideration of any decision made by IQNet Ltd related to its audit / certification, qualification status.

**WRONGDOING** - Action(s) or omission(s) that can cause harm.

Wrongdoing can include:

- Breach of law, such as fraud, corruption, including bribery.
- Breach of IQNet Ltd code of conduct or policies.
- Gross negligence, bullying, harassment, discrimination, unauthorized use of funds or resources, abuse of authority, conflict of interest, gross waste or mismanagement.
- Actions or omissions resulting in damage or risk of harm to human rights, the environment, public health and safety, safe work-practices or the public interest.

**HOW to submit feedback, suggestions, concerns (grievances and appeals)?**

**Related to an IQNet Ltd certified / audited organization:**

- Report through the relevant grievance channel at the organization, for example:
  - Organization’s management
  - Organization’s worker representatives
  - Worker Union
  - Social Performance Team
  - Ombudsman
  - Vigilance Body
  - etc.

and if the grievance is not responded or not reasonably resolved

- Report to IQNet Ltd

**Related to the quality / integrity / outcome of IQNet Ltd practices (including related activities of its local Representatives):**

- Report to IQNet Ltd

and if the grievance is not responded or not reasonably resolved

- For SA8000: report to SAAS at [saas@saasaccreditation.org](mailto:saas@saasaccreditation.org), or web form <https://sa-intl.org/saas-online-complaints-submission-form/>
- For Sedex SMETA report to Sedex at [grievance@sedex.com](mailto:grievance@sedex.com)
- For aha! Label report to Service Allergie Suisse at <https://www.service-allergie.ch/de/kontakt>

**Related to the professional conduct of our IQNet Ltd auditors:**

- Report to IQNet Ltd

and if the grievance is not responded or not reasonably resolved

- For social auditors report to APSCA at [Ethics@theapsca.org](mailto:Ethics@theapsca.org)

**LANGUAGE to submit feedback, suggestions, concerns (grievances and appeals)?**

While our primary language for official correspondence is English, we welcome feedback, suggestions and concerns in any language.

To accommodate diverse languages, IQNet Ltd utilizes a range of open-source translation tools (machine translation) to handle such feedback. Any data which can be subjected to data privacy concerns will not be included in the text being translated.

**PROCESS for handling complaints (grievances)**

**1. Receipt:** IQNet Ltd may receive concerns from any interested party, using one of the provided channels

**2. Registration:** Concerns shall be made in writing. Verbal communication are not considered as part of this process. Concerns received by any channel, where the sender does not provide sufficient information to be identified and/or to be contacted, will not be investigated.

In order for a concern to be processed, the sender will provide, at a minimum, the following information:

- Individual name or name of the complaining NGO/community group/organization/trade union.
- Concerns may be filed on a confidential basis to protect the anonymity of the interested party but will include contact information in order to enable follow-up and reporting;
- Contact phone/e-mail;
- Concern scope: the description as detailed as reasonable and, eventually, with objective evidence to the concern (e.g. dates, names, facts) will be provided in order to allow investigation.

**3. Acknowledgment of receipt:** Within 5 working days, where practical. If necessary, additional information should be provided by the sender, to support the concern.

**4. Preliminary review:** A review of the nature of concern is performed to identify its validity and if a full corrective action cycle is warranted.

The decision regarding the acceptability of the concern as a complaint (grievance) will be made on the factual evidence provided. If the complaint is not valid, the sender will receive a notification of the reasons for such a decision. The sender is also given the opportunity to provide additional evidence to support the concern.

**5. Investigation:** For valid complaints, an investigation conducted involving, as appropriate, stakeholder engagement, unannounced audits or investigation during regular audits. The investigation will cover all elements identified in the complaint.

**6. Notification of the complainant of the outcome and IQNet Ltd appeal process:** The findings of the complaint investigation are communicated either directly by IQNet Ltd Head Office or through the IQNet Ltd Representative. Formal notification of the conclusion of the complaints-handling process will be issued once the necessary corrective actions have been implemented. In cases where the complaint is deemed unsubstantiated, the complainant will be informed of the reasons for this determination. Complainants will also have the opportunity to provide additional information in support of their complaint, if desired.