



# Verification Complaints Policies and Procedures

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## Introduction:

This policy deals with the procedures to be followed by BEE Online staff on receipt of or issuing a complaint to or from any source against the Measured Entity or BEE Online itself. This policy further details the conditions under which complaints are validated and procedures to be followed when approving and conducting special evaluations.

The purpose for this policy is to:

- a) Establish conditions for validating all types of complaint's;
- b) To identify the applicable forms to be used when handling complaints: and
- c) To detail effective guidance for BEE Online staff, on what procedures to be followed when handling complaints by measured enterprises, BEE Online Staff, other enterprises than the measured enterprise, stakeholders or BEE Online Customers or suppliers.

## Policy Statement:

It is the policy of BEE Online to review all complaints received from any source, against either an Measured Enterprise or BEE Online itself that are related to compliance with BEE Online's standards, criteria, or procedures and to resolve any such complaints in a timely, fair, and equitable manner. BEE Online are committed to appropriately addressing all complaints to inspire confidence in our verification process. Furthermore, it is the policy of BEE Online to retain all documentation associated with any such complaint received for a period of not less than five (5) years. BEE Online will not pursue complaints that are not in writing or that are anonymous. Receipts of all complaints will be acknowledged within fourteen (14) days. Complaints against BEE Online employees will be handled in accordance with the BEE Online HR Manual and may result in actions up to and including termination of employment. Complaints against a Measured Enterprise due to the Measured Enterprise providing incorrect or misleading information regarding the B-BBEE status, the contents of verification reports and final certificate, or the verification action taken by BEE Online, the Measured Enterprise will be required to make a public correction.

## Procedures:

A description of the complaints procedure is publicly available in the Verification Agreement and on our website; [www.beeonline.co.za](http://www.beeonline.co.za)

When BEE Online receives a complaint via email, fax, telephone, the complainant is emailed or faxed the Complaints Form BO123. All complaints are sent to the Verification Administrator. The Verification Administrator will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 days by email.

### 1. Verification Complaints

On receipt of a complaint a copy of the complaint is recorded in the Measured Enterprise's folder on the network. The complaint will also be logged in the Complaints and Appeals Log by the Verification Administrator. A copy of the complaint is forwarded by Verification Administrator to the Senior Verification Manager and Managing Director (MD), informing them of the complaint.

The complaint will be reviewed by the MD whereby he will:

- Establish the validity of complaint by checking the name of the ME against the client information, checking the certificate number if applicable, reviewing the nature of complaint provided against policies, procedures and codes of conducts to assess whether or not there has been a breach in principle;
- Review of the severity of the reported complaint by understanding and measuring the consequences of the potential breach; and
- Decide on follow up action to be taken: The MD will convene the Complaints & Appeals Committee in accordance with the Committees Procedure (BOPol06) within 1 week of the receipt of the complaint

The Complaints & Appeals Committee Terms of reference is as follows:

#### Committee Members

- The MD will base the selection of committee members on independence (i.e. not involved in the original verification), competence – this will be done by reviewing the BEE Online Skills & Competence Matrix to select individuals with an average level 3 skill. The committee members will be formally notified of their appointment by the MD.

#### Objectives

- To investigate the breach and root cause thereof outlined in the complaints form completed by the MD
- To gather evidence to support the complaint
- To ensure that the complaint is investigated impartially and confidentiality
- To advise the MD on the decision on corrective action to be taken
- The decision must be made within 14 days of the convening of the committee

#### Procedure

The MD will provide the complainant with progress reports by email within the 30 day period.

The chairperson will distribute the information at the committee meeting and will be responsible for minuting the meeting

#### Agenda:

- Terms of reference/ objectives review
- Review of complaint
- Review of information and evidence
- Root Cause Analysis
- Outcome of Analysis
- Decision
- Corrective Action Proposal

The decision will be communicated in writing to the MD within 2 days by the chairperson.

If it appears that a BEE Online representative or an individual working on behalf of BEE Online may have violated BEE Online's criteria, policies, or procedures, that individual will be asked to respond to the issues raised in the complaint within 1 week. If BEE Online determines that a violation has occurred, BEE Online will counsel the responsible party and may take further action as circumstances warrant, up to and including termination as a BEE Online representative.

If BEE Online finds that a violation of its policies or procedures has occurred which may have had an effect on the verification action, BEE Online may initiate further proceedings as circumstances warrant: If the effect is limited to that particular ME, BEE Online may revisit to the Measured Enterprise at its own cost with an independent verification team from the original verification. If all verification activities are found by the committee to have been affected, BEE Online will cease operations until such time as corrective action has been implemented. All ME's and the DTI will be advised by the MD.

Following the decision and recommendation for corrective action by the Complaints Committee, the MD will advise an independent verification manager to implement the corrective action and monitor the effectiveness. The VM will report back to the MD in writing within 3 months of the date of the committee meeting.

If it is decided that there is no breach according to the nature of the complaint, the complainant will be notified either by email by the MD that no further action will be taken within. A copy of this notification will be stored in the Measured Enterprise's folder as per the procedure in BOPol04.

### 1.1 Complaints against a Measured Enterprise

On establishment of a breach of BEE Online's standards, criteria, or procedures by the Measured Enterprise, a complaint is formulated by BEE Online or by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party. The MD will validate the complaint by checking the name of the ME against the client information, checking the certificate number if applicable, reviewing the nature of complaint provided against policies, procedures and codes of conducts to assess whether or not there has been a breach in principle;

If the complaint appears to warrant further investigation, the MD will forward a copy of the complaint to the authorised official of the Verified Enterprise with a request for a response within 2 weeks. The enterprises response will be reviewed by the Complaints Committee of BEE Online within 2 weeks days of receipt of the enterprises response.

If BEE Online determines that the enterprise's response satisfactorily addresses the issue or issues raised in the complaint, the matter will be considered closed and the 3<sup>rd</sup> party notified within fourteen (14) days. The Complaints and Appeals Log BO116 will be updated.

In the event that an entity response is not received by BEE Online within thirty (30) days of the request for the response, or if the response is not deemed to have satisfactorily resolved the issue, BEE Online may initiate further proceedings as circumstances warrant, up to and including a Special Evaluation and/or revocation of verification status.

Complaints against a Measured Enterprise due to the Measured Enterprise providing incorrect or misleading information regarding the BEE status, the contents of verification reports and final certificate, or the verification action taken by BEE Online, the Measured Enterprise will be required to make a public correction. A copy of the follow up action is clearly documented on the Measured Enterprise's file with the complaint clearly marked as being resolved (including date of resolution).

The MD will provide the authorised representative of the ME with formal written notification that the Complaints process has ended. If the ME expresses dissatisfaction with the conclusion the MD will advise the ME to contact the DTI.

## 2. Complaints against BEE Online and / or its staff

On receipt of a complaint a copy of the complaint is recorded in Appeals and Complaints Log on the network. Meeting will then be called in order to inform the Managing Director of the complaint.

The complaint will be reviewed by the MD whereby he will:

- Establish the validity of complaint by reviewing the nature of complaint provided against policies, procedures and codes of conducts to assess whether or not there has been a breach in principle;
- Review of the severity of the reported complaint by understanding and measuring the consequences of the potential breach; and
- Decide on follow up action to be taken: The MD will convene the Complaints & Appeals Committee in accordance with the Committees Procedure (BOPol06) within 1 week of the receipt of the complaint

The Complaints & Appeals Committee Terms of reference is as follows:

### Committee Members

- The MD will base the selection of committee members on independence, competence – this will be done by reviewing the BEE Online Skills & Competence Matrix to select individuals with an average level 3 skill. The committee members will be formally notified of their appointment by the MD at the first meeting convened by the committee.

### Objectives

- To investigate the breach and root cause thereof outlined in the complaints form completed by the MD

- To gather evidence to support the complaint
- To ensure that the complaint is investigated impartially and confidentiality
- To advise the MD on the decision on corrective action to be taken
- The decision must be made within 14 days of the convening of the committee

The decision will be communicated in writing to the MD within 2 days by the chairperson.

If it appears that a BEE Online representative or an individual working on behalf of BEE Online may have violated BEE Online's criteria, policies, or procedures, that individual will be asked to respond to the issues raised in the complaint within 1 week. If BEE Online determines that a violation has occurred, BEE Online will counsel the responsible party and may take further action as circumstances warrant, up to and including termination as an BEE Online representative. If it is decided that there is no breach according to the nature of the complaint, the complainant will be notified either by email by the MD that no further action will be taken within.

Related Policies, Procedures and Forms:

BOPol12 - HR Policies & Procedures

BOPol13 - Verification Engagement Policy & Procedure Manual

BOPol10 - Control of Record Policy & Procedures

BO116 - Complaints and Appeals Log