



SOP TITLE	CSDP EC Complaint Procedure
SOP NO.	2-104
REVISION NO	0
PROGRAM	CSDP EC

SOP Approval Dates

	Initial Approval	Last Revision	Last Review
Committee: CSDP EC	07/11/2024		
Program: CSDP EC	07/11/2024		
Policy Committee Review	08/16/2024		
TNI Board of Directors Endorsement	NA (9/11/2024)		
SOP Effective Date	07/11/2024		

1.0 Purpose and Applicability

- 1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes the process for reviewing and handling complaints, as well as the management of appeals received by the Consensus Standards Development Program Executive Committee (CSDP EC) and any of the Expert Committees for which it provides oversight.
- 1.2 Complaints regarding the Consensus Standards Development Process are handled according to the process found in SOP 2-100, Procedures Governing Standards Development.

2.0 Summary

This SOP provides the process for handling complaints and appeals regarding their resolution. The complaining or appealing party must first seek resolution with the appropriate Expert Committee and/or the CSDP EC. If resolution is not achieved, then the CSDP EC shall convene a complaint subcommittee to address the complaint and recommend a resolution. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution provided by CSDP EC's Complaint Subcommittee and chooses to appeal that resolution, the TNI Executive Committee of the Board of Directors is asked to form a Review Panel, which reviews the proceedings and provides CSDP EC with a final resolution to be transmitted to the complainant. The resolution determined by the Review Panel is final and not subject to further administrative challenge.

3.0 Related Documents

POL 1-108, Complaints
SOP 1-106, Complaint Resolution Process
SOP 3-105, Standard Interpretation
SOP 4-102, TNI Proficiency Testing Program Complaint, Appeal, and Dispute Resolution Procedure

4.0 Definitions

Complaint:	An expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, made by any person or organization where a response is expected.
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5.0 Complaint Procedure

- 5.1 Complaints may be received through the TNI Complaint process on the TNI website or may be submitted to the appropriate Chair. If a complaint is submitted to the Chair, it should be in writing to assure that there is no confusion regarding the issue at hand. "In writing", as used throughout this SOP, encompasses electronic submission. Where complaints are made verbally, the person receiving the complaint records the details of the complaint, and requests that those details be confirmed and submitted in writing to assure that there are no misunderstandings.
- 5.2 If a complaint is received by an Expert Committee, and the complaint involves Standard language, the Committee may determine that it can handle the complaint itself (by following this SOP). Any complaint received by an Expert Committee that does not involve Standard language must be forwarded to the CSDP EC (see Section 5.3).
 - 5.2.1 The Expert Committee Chair must acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing to the requestor within 20 days of receipt.

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- 5.2.2 If the Expert Committee determines that the complaint does not fall within the scope of this SOP, the complaint and that determination is forwarded to the CSDP EC Chair and PA for confirmation.
- 5.2.3 If the CSDP EC confirms that a complaint submitted to an Expert Committee does not fall within the scope of this SOP, the complainant is notified in writing within 45 days of receipt of the complaint that the complaint is discharged as “not within the scope of the CSDP EC”.
- 5.2.4 If the complaint falls within the scope of this SOP, the Expert Committee Chair assigns three Committee members, at least 1 of whom must be a Voting Member, to a Complaint Subcommittee. The Chair of the Subcommittee must be a Voting Member. If multiple complaints of a similar nature are received, this Complaint Subcommittee may review these complaints collectively. The selected members must have no conflicts of interest and should, to the extent possible, represent different stakeholder groups. The list of proposed subcommittee members will be provided to the complainant for review. If the complainant presents concerns over the proposed list of subcommittee members to the Expert Committee Chair, the Chair shall review those concerns and may make changes to the subcommittee as deemed necessary or possible.
 - 5.2.4.1 The Complaint Subcommittee reviews the complaint and generates a written report for the Chair. The written report must contain the following:
 - a. Statement about determination that the complaint falls within the scope of this SOP, including information used to support the subcommittee’s determination.
 - b. Proposed resolution including corrective action (if applicable).
 - c. Draft response to the complaining party.
 - 5.2.4.2 The Expert Committee Chair receives the Complaint Subcommittee report and distributes the information to the members of the Expert Committee for review, excluding any committee member who indicates that they have, or is indicated by the complaining party to have, a potential conflict of interest.
 - 5.2.4.3 The Expert Committee votes on the proposed recommendations received from the Complaint Subcommittee. The requirements for voting are specified in SOP 1-102, Voting Rules for TNI Committees.
 - 5.2.4.4 If the Expert Committee disagrees with the recommendation of the Complaint Subcommittee, the complaint (including the Complaint Subcommittee report) is returned to the Expert Committee for re-consideration. A continued disagreement is sent to the Chair of the CSDP EC to determine the outcome of the complaint.
 - 5.2.4.5 When the Expert Committee reaches a conclusion on how the complaint should be resolved, the complaint (including the Complaint Subcommittee report) is sent to the CSDP EC for review following the procedures beginning at 5.3.5.
- 5.3 If the complaint doesn’t involve Standard language, the Expert Committee chose not to address the complaint, or resulted in a disagreement between the Expert Committee

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Complaint Subcommittee and the Expert Committee (as in 5.2.4.4), CSDP EC is assigned the disposition of the complaint.

- 5.3.1 If the complainant hasn't already been acknowledged, the CSDP EC Chair must acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing to the requestor within 20 days of receipt.
- 5.3.2 If the complaint is confirmed as outside the scope of this SOP, the CSDP EC Chair notifies the complaining party in writing that the complaint has been deemed outside the scope of this SOP. The notification must include an explanation for the decision and the right of the complaining party to appeal the committee's decision.
- 5.3.3 If the complaint is deemed within the scope of this SOP, the CSDP EC Chair assigns three Committee members to a Complaint Subcommittee. The subcommittee selects one of its members as the Chair. If multiple complaints of a similar nature are received, this Complaint Subcommittee may review these complaints collectively. The selected members must have no conflicts of interest and should, to the extent possible, represent different stakeholder groups. The list of proposed subcommittee members will be provided to the complainant for review. If the complainant presents concerns over the proposed list of subcommittee members to the CSDP EC Chair, the Chair shall review those concerns and may make changes to the subcommittee as deemed necessary or possible.
- 5.3.4 The Complaint Subcommittee reviews the complaint and generates a written report for the Chair. The written report must contain the following:
 - 5.3.4.1 Summary of the complaint and actions taken, including information used to support the subcommittee's determination of the complaint.
 - 5.3.4.2 Proposed resolution including corrective action (if applicable).
 - 5.3.4.3 Draft response to the complaining party.
- 5.3.5 The CSDP EC Chair receives the Complaint Subcommittee report and distributes the information to the members of the Committee for review, excluding any committee member that indicates that they have, or is indicated by the complaining party to have, a conflict of interest.
- 5.3.6 The CSDP EC votes on the proposed recommendations received from the Complaint Subcommittee. The requirements for voting are specified in SOP 1-102, Voting Rules for TNI Committees.
- 5.3.7 If the CSDP EC disagrees with the recommendation of the Complaint Subcommittee, the complaint (including the Complaint Subcommittee report) is returned to the Complaint Subcommittee for re-consideration. If a continued disagreement occurs, the CSDP EC determines the outcome of the complaint by simple majority vote.
- 5.3.8 Once a recommendation is approved by the CSDP EC, the CSDP EC Chair distributes the written response to all parties involved. The CSDP EC implements corrective action, if applicable. If corrective action is required by other parties, the CSDP EC Chair presents the need for corrective action to the appropriate party to address.

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- 5.4 The Committee strives to provide a final response to the complainant within 90 days of the date of receipt of the complaint. The Committee must also include information about the appeal process (if appropriate). If the complaint is not completely resolved within 90 days, a status update and justification for the delay is provided to the complainant by the end of the 90-day time frame.
- 5.5 If the resolution to the complaint is not to the satisfaction of the complainant, an appeal may be filed with the CSDP EC Chair within 30 days of receipt of the final response from the CSDP EC Chair. The appeal process (See Section 6.0) must then be followed.

6.0 Appeal Process

- 6.1 The CSDP EC Chair informs the Executive Committee of the TNI Board of Directors about the need to form a Review Panel.
- 6.2 A Review Panel is composed to represent the TNI membership, consisting of five members chosen from each of the three stakeholder groups of TNI: ABs and other governmental agencies that operate environmental accreditation programs, Accredited Organizations, and Others. The five members include a TNI Board member who serves as the chairperson, a CSDP EC member, and three TNI members. The TNI Board Chair names the member for each stakeholder group. The selected members must have no conflicts of interest (COI) as described in TNI SOP 2-102. If a COI is identified, then the Review Panel member is replaced by an alternate, named by the TNI Board Chair for the Panel's deliberations.
- 6.3 The disputing party is notified of the members of the Review Panel and has the right to request the removal of a member for cause.
- 6.4 The Review Panel must carry out an independent review of all relevant documentation including the Complaint Subcommittee report and the initial complaint.
- 6.5 The Review Panel must conduct interviews with the disputing party. The Review Panel also may conduct interviews with other individuals as deemed appropriate by the Review Panel.
- 6.6 The Review Panel must complete its review and render a final decision to the CSDP EC Chair within 90 calendar days following the request to form the Review Panel. This time frame may be extended by mutual agreement of all parties up to a maximum of 60 additional calendar days.
 - 6.6.1 The written report must include:
 - a) A list of parties interviewed.
 - b) A list of documents reviewed.
 - c) A statement that there were no members of the Review Panel who had any conflicts of interest that were not approved by the complainant.
 - d) The Review Panel's decision.
- 6.7 The CSDP EC Chair transmits the Review Panel's decision to the complainant within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the decision from the Review Panel.
- 6.8 Complainants are limited to one iteration of this procedure for each complaint.

7.0 Records Management

While complaints or appeals remain open, the CSDP EC Chair, or designee, maintains all related correspondence, reports, and records, including those of the subcommittees, for future reference

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per SOP 1-104. As deliberative information, such materials are not available outside of the complaint resolution process until such time as the complaint is fully resolved and any appeal is exhausted.

8.0 References

- SOP 1-102: Voting Rules for TNI Committees
- SOP 1-104: Control of Documents
- SOP 2-100: Procedures Governing Standards Development
- SOP 2-102: CSDP EC Procedure for Addressing Conflicts of Interest

9.0 SOP Approved Changes

Revision No.	Date of Change	Description of Change
0	07/11/2024	New SOP