

Wind Sustainability Initiative (WSI)

Complaints and Appeals Mechanism

Introduction

To meet the growing demand for electrification as well as global climate goals, wind energy must rapidly scale. Tripling the world's total installed wind capacity to more than 2,700 GW by 2030 will require supply chains that are not only resilient and sustainable, but also inclusive and transparent. Achieving these demands require close coordination across countries and regions on supply chain development, along with internationally recognised, best-in-class practices among suppliers, manufacturers, developers and investors in the wind sector.

Through a unified approach to standards, WSI seeks to streamline adoption, reduce risks and costs, build social acceptance, and enable long-term, sustainable growth for the wind sector.

Mission and Objectives

- **Harmonised Standards:** Establish international ESG standards to guide responsible sourcing and procurement across the wind energy supply chain.
- **Just and Inclusive Transition:** Ensure that the global expansion of wind energy upholds human rights, protects the environment, and embeds sustainability across the value chain.
- **Business Case for Sustainability:** Advocate for global mechanisms that reward not only cost-competitiveness, but also environmental and social responsibility.

Purpose of the Complaints and Appeals Mechanism

The success of WSI depends on trust, transparency, and accountability. To promote confidence among industry, investors, and civil society, WSI is introducing this Stage 1¹ Complaints and Appeals Mechanism. Its purpose is to:

- Provide a fair and transparent process for stakeholders to raise concerns about WSI's governance, members, or approved assessors.
- Ensure that decisions are subject to review and that remedies are available when legitimate grievances arise.

¹ Stage 1 is designed for governance and membership phase in the setup of WSI. Once the Standards are operational Stage 2 of Complaints and Appeals mechanism will be introduced

- Embed accountability at the earliest stage of standards development, laying the foundation for a credible, widely adopted international certification system.

Scope

This Mechanism will evolve in step with WSI's development. This mechanism currently applies to:

- Decisions and actions of the WSI ²³ and governance structures.
- Conduct or compliance of WSI members with agreed principles.
- Conduct of third-party assessors engaged by WSI.

This mechanism does **not** cover:

- Commercial or contractual disputes between private parties.
- Legal disputes that should be handled through judicial or regulatory systems.
- Certification-related complaints and appeals (to be introduced in Stage 2 once standards are operational).

Once the standards and certification framework are operational, the Mechanism will be expanded to include certification-related complaints and appeals, an independent panel, and public reporting of outcomes.

Guiding Principles

This Mechanism is aligned with international good practices, including ISEAL's Code of Good Practice, and is designed to be:

- **Accessible** – open to all relevant stakeholders via simple submission methods.
- **Fair and impartial** – decisions are made based on evidence and reviewed independently of those involved in the original action.
- **Transparent** – processes and timelines are clearly defined.
- **Confidential** – complainants may request anonymity, and sensitive information will be protected.
- **Evolving** – the mechanism will expand once WSI standards and certification are operational.

³ At this stage, the WSI Secretariat is the GWEC staff in charge of this WSI project management

Submitting a Complaint

1) Eligibility

Complaints may be submitted by any stakeholder with a legitimate interest in WSI's activities, including members, governance participants, and third-party assessors

2) Criteria for acceptance

To be accepted, a complaint must:

- Fall within the scope of this mechanism.
- Be supported by specific and objective information.
- Be submitted in writing (in English) via the WSI Secretariat.

Complaints will not be accepted if they are:

- Trivial, vexatious, or manifestly unfounded.
- Based solely on hearsay without evidence.
- Legal matters beyond WSI's authority.

3) Submission and acknowledgement

- Complaints should be submitted to the WSI Secretariat by email.
- Receipt will be acknowledged within 5 calendar days.
- The Secretariat will decide whether to accept or reject the complaint within 15 calendar days and inform the complainant.

4) Investigation and resolution

- Accepted complaints will be reviewed by the Secretariat.
- The Secretariat may request clarifications or supporting information, which must be provided within 30 calendar days.
- Complaints will be resolved within 30–60 calendar days of acceptance, wherever possible.
- Outcomes may include:
 - Complaint not upheld.
 - Complaint partially upheld, with improvement actions identified.
 - Complaint upheld, with corrective actions required.

Appeals

1) Scope

Appeals may be lodged when:

- A complainant disagrees with the outcome of their complaint that has been formally submitted prior to the appeal.
- A member or assessor contests an adverse decision of the Secretariat (e.g., membership termination, assessor approval).

2) Submission

- Appeals must be submitted within 30 calendar days of the decision being communicated.
- Appeals must clearly explain why the decision was incorrect or inconsistent with WSI's procedures.

3) Review process

- Appeals will be reviewed by an ad hoc internal review team composed of Secretariat staff not directly involved in the original decision.
- If a conflict of interest arises, the Secretariat may appoint an independent external reviewer.
- Appeals will be resolved within 30–60 calendar days of submission.

4) Decision

- The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the appellant in writing via email.
- Decisions of the appeal process are final within the current WSI governance framework.

Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

- Complainants may request anonymity. Identities will not be disclosed without consent, unless required by law.
- The Secretariat will maintain an internal log of all complaints and appeals, including actions taken and resolutions reached.
- At this early stage, WSI will not publish external reports of complaints. Once the standards and certification system are operational, WSI will introduce a public reporting mechanism and independent panel oversight.

Future Development



This Complaints and Appeals Mechanism is a **Stage 1 framework** designed for the governance and membership phase of WSI. It will be expanded to cover:

- Certification and audit-related complaints and appeals.
- Independent Complaints and Appeals Panel (separate from the Secretariat).
- Public reporting of complaints and appeals outcomes.

The Mechanism will be reviewed and updated as the WSI transitions into a legal entity and operational certification system.