

GBN Certification: Complaints and Appeals Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

This document describes the Green Business Network's (GBN) procedures for addressing complaints and appeals in regard to the GBN certification, including complaints about the certification process as well as the decision to award certification to businesses other than one's own (the appeal process would be used in relation to one's own business). Complaints and appeals are dealt with in a similar manner. This SOP pertaining to complaints and appeals will only come into effect after an attempt to find a resolution with Green Business Network Director is deemed unsuccessful.

Green America reserves the right to amend and interpret this SOP without notice, including in the event of a situation that is not covered by the scope of this SOP.

Scope:

The scope of this SOP applies to the following:

- Complaints concerning GBN certification;
- Appeals regarding GBN certification decisions (appeals may only be brought forward by a business that has applied for certification);
- Complaints regarding GBN standards for certification.

Submission

All complaints and appeals must be submitted in writing to the GBN standards committee at GBN@greenamerica.org, with Certification Complaint or Appeal in the subject line. Details of the nature of the complaint or appeal, as well as relevant documentation must be included in the submission. A timeline of events and indication of relevant parties should also be included in the complainant's submission.

Once a complaint is submitted, the GBN standards committee will acknowledge receipt within 10 working days and assign a standards committee member to lead and oversee the complaint and appeal process—the Standards Committee Lead (SCL). The SCL will be responsible for documenting the complaints and appeals process and communicating with the complainant.

Review

The assigned SCL first reviews the complaint or appeal to ensure that it falls under the scope of this SOP, and will confirm with the Green Business Network Director that an initial resolution of the complaint or appeal was deemed unsuccessful.

Once the complaint or appeal has been accepted as being within scope of this procedure, the SCL will inform the complainant that they are conducting an investigation that will include a review of the provided documentation. The SCL may also choose to conduct interviews of relevant parties to the complaint or appeal as needed.

In cases of appeal of a business member certification decision, the complainant may be asked to either amend their assessment and/or provide new evidence to the standards committee that shows their compliance to GBN standards.

Decision

After a review of the complainant's documentation, collected evidence and interviews are complete, the SCL will prepare a recommendation to the standard committee. The standard committee will then review the recommendation and draft a response. The standard committee will also determine what further action, if any, is needed to address the complaint or appeal.

A response will be provided to the complainant within 30 days of the acceptance of the complaint or appeal.

Complaint and appeal decisions by the standards committee are final.