

## IICD Complaints Procedure

### Introduction

The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) strives to be a reliable and transparent organisation. This means that IICD wishes to treat complaints made by partner organisations and other clients (thereafter called 'Partners') seriously, whether they are made in the Netherlands or abroad. To this end, IICD has introduced a clearly-defined complaints and appeals procedure.

Definitions of 'complaints', 'appeals' and 'significant interest' used by IICD are first dealt with below. The main principles of the complaints and appeals procedure are outlined thereafter.

### Definitions

A **complaint** is said to occur when a partner/client of IICD is dissatisfied with the services provided by IICD and/or the way in which he/she has been treated by a member of staff. This may involve, for example, bad manners on the part of the staff member or having been spoken to disrespectfully. It is important for IICD to deal with such complaints correctly so as not to endanger the good relationships we enjoy with our partners/clients.

An **appeal** relates to a legally binding decision made by IICD, which is deemed to be prejudicial by the recipient. IICD's decision has (legal) consequences, in particular, for the financial situation of the recipient, but may also, for example, affect the social and/or political standing of the recipient (e.g. a partner that is told that the relationship will be terminated). An appeal is specifically dealt with as an internal procedure (as part of the day-to-day operations), whereby the issue in question is re-examined and reappraised.

A **significant interest** is said to exist when the amount is equal to or greater than €50,000.

### Principles

*Complaints* are dealt with within the scope of the Managing Director's (MD) responsibilities. The way in which they are dealt with is described in detail below.

It is important that the matter is given serious attention, first by the team and the Country Manager (CM) responsible at the point of complaint, as part of its normal procedures. The CM always informs the Team Leader (TL) and can ask the TL to deal with it, who may then find it necessary to involve the MD. In special cases it will go to the MD. The MD will be included in the process if the political importance is high, in cases of corruption, and in cases where the amount exceeds €50,000. In these cases, the final decision is no longer taken by the team in question, but is submitted to the Managing Director. The organisation which submitted the complaint is given the opportunity to present its case.

All complaints are registered and once every 6 months are placed on the agenda of the Management Team (MT) to see what we can learn from them.

Appeals are dealt with in the same manner, unless this fails to result in a satisfactory solution. In which case, the method of dealing with appeals as described in the contract is considered to be adequate. In cases where there is a significant interest involved on the part of the organisation, either due to the amount involved (€50,000 or more) or the social or political sensitivity of the programme, an independent advisory panel, consisting of 3 members (2 aid experts + 1 legal officer) will advise the Managing Director. This ad hoc committee will be appointed by the Board of Trustees. In principle, the Managing Director will follow the advice of this panel and can only decide to disagree with its recommendations if backed by solid and well-reasoned arguments. She/he will report this to the Board of Trustees.

Each year, the Board of Trustees will receive a list of the complaints and appeals received and processed, as well as an indication of their nature. In this way, the Managing Director is made

accountable for the policy pursued both with regard to the processing of complaints about IICD services in general and, should there be reason to do so, the processing of individual cases in particular.

Every year, IICD informs its partners in the South about the procedures. This is the responsibility of the Managing Director. The IICD Complaints Procedure is made accessible to everybody through a pdf file on the IICD website.

## **IICD Complaints Procedure**

The person who has received the complaint is responsible for providing feedback within the term given.

People should try to settle the issue/problem before it becomes an official complaint that needs to be processed.

1. Complaints about a specific IICD staff member have to be addressed first to the staff member in question.
2. Complaints about IICD in general are required to be submitted either orally or in writing to the Managing Director.
3. Complaints about the Managing Director should be submitted directly to the chairman of the Board of Trustees.
4. When no satisfactory reaction is given, complaints are required to be submitted in writing to [management@iicd.org](mailto:management@iicd.org) or by post to: IICD Management, P.O. Box 11586, 2502 AN The Hague, The Netherlands and marked as "Confidential".

### *In the case of complaints about a specific IICD staff member*

In such cases, the Team Leader decides on the way in which the complaint should be processed on the basis of the procedure; in non-critical cases the Team Leader will pass the matter on to the staff member concerned. The latter will reassess the course of events on all its merits, speak to all the parties involved, including the complainant, and advise the Team Leader about the decision to be taken.

1. A decision, supported by arguments, will be made known to the complainant by the Team Leader within two weeks of the complaint having been received. If settlement cannot be reached within two weeks, the Team Leader will send confirmation of receipt, specifying the date by which the complaint will be processed. He or she will deal with the complaint as indicated. If 2 weeks is not possible, the period of response should still not exceed 4 weeks.
2. However, should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the decision, he or she can make a request to the Managing Director to have this initial decision reviewed, but within 4 weeks of having received this initial decision. The Managing Director will assess whether the procedure has been properly followed and will make a limited (content-related) review of the decision to judge if this is properly grounded in IICD policy and procedures. This will take into account whether the Team Leader has acted within reason with respect to the disputed decision. The Director's decision will be made known within four weeks after the request for a review of the case has been received from the complainant.
3. Complaints about the Managing Director can be sent directly to the Board of Trustees, which will handle the complaints within two months, following the same steps as in the case of (other) individuals.

### *In the case of general complaints about IICD*

1. Complaints about IICD should be sent directly to the Managing Director; a decision, supported by arguments, will be made known to the complainant by the Managing Director within four weeks of the complaint having been received.
2. However, should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the decision, he or she can make a request to the Board of Trustees to have this initial decision reviewed, on condition that this request is made within two months of having received this initial decision. The Board will assess whether the procedure has been properly followed and will make a limited (content-related) review of the decision to judge if this is properly grounded in IICD policy and procedures. This will take into account whether the Managing Director has acted within reason with respect to the disputed decision. The Board of Trustees' decision will be made

known within two months after the request for review has been received from the complainant.

Each year, a list will be drawn up for the Board of Trustees and IICD's Management Team of the number of complaints received and processed as well as the time within which they are handled, and the policy pursued by the management with respect to these complaints. The conclusions may subsequently lead to proposals being made on how to improve these procedures.

*In the case of complaints related to the execution of contracts*

In the case of conflicts between IICD and its partners, related to the execution of contracts, IICD does not have an appeals procedure; the procedure that is part of the contract with the partner will therefore apply.