



Formal Complaint Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure sets out the steps to be followed for complainants to submit and IFM to deal with a formal complaint about the Institute of Fisheries Management, its activities or decisions.

2. Scope

- 2.1 Stakeholders may have disagreements or complaints about any of IFM's activities. Most will normally be resolved through dialogue and negotiation. When such normal resolution methods have been unsuccessful, the stakeholder may wish to lodge a formal complaint. This procedure shall apply to formal complaints only.
- 2.2 IFM will address any formal complaint that is brought to its attention and which meets the requirements as set out in this procedure. A complaint may be from any stakeholder regarding any of IFMs activities, actions, inactions or decisions, by any of its officers or members.

3. Basis

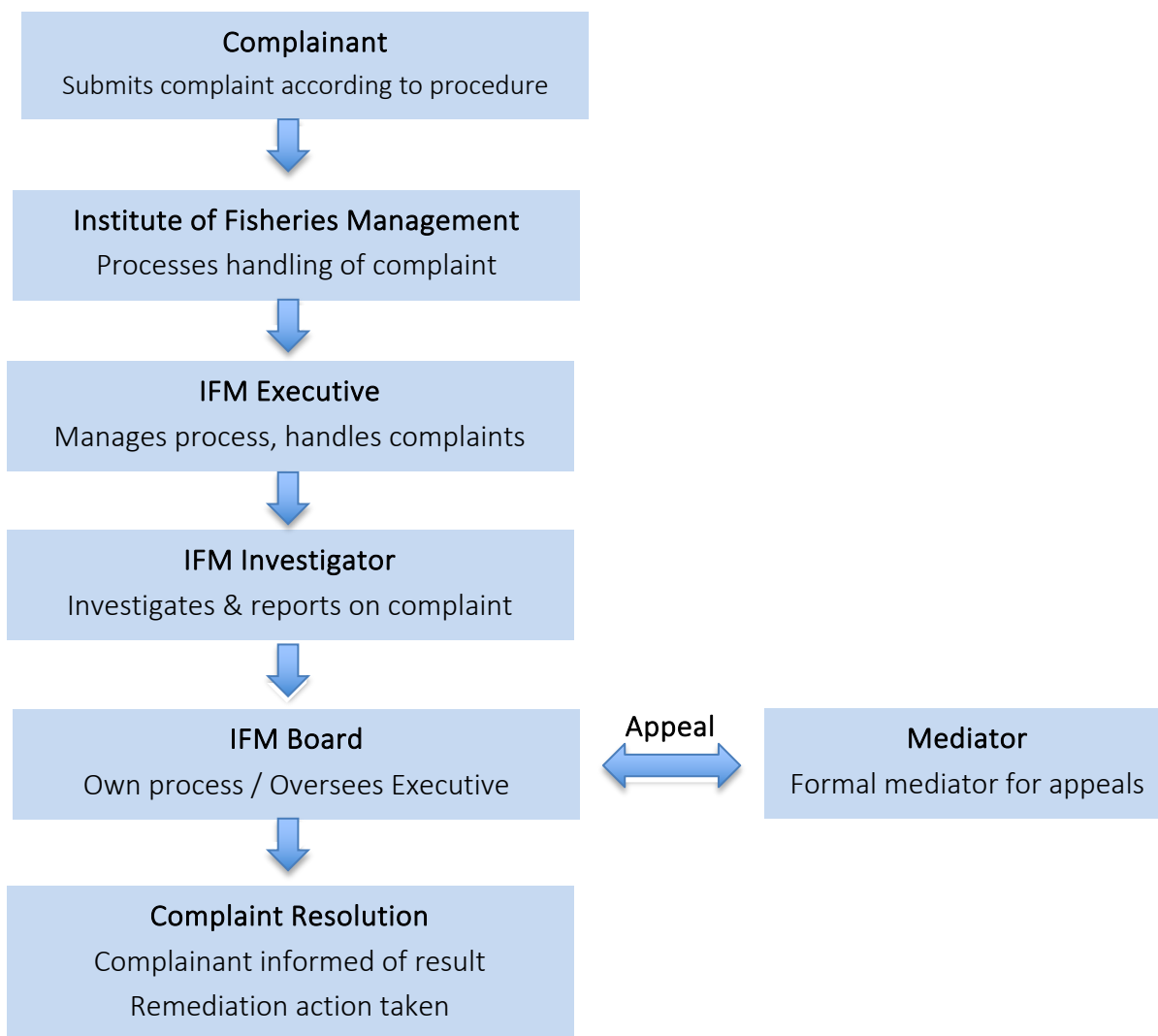
- 3.1 Complaints can be made about any part of IFM's business operations or decision making. Most of IFM's operations and governance are defined in documents published on our website in IFM Governance and Standards [<https://ifm.org.uk/about/ifm-standards/>]. Those documents can often be used as references on which to base the complaint.
- 3.2 A template Formal Complaints Form is provided (Annex 1 of this document) that shall be used by any complainant. It is also on the IFM website here [<https://ifm.org.uk/about/ifm-standards/>].

4. Process

This is the overall process for handling complaints. It is summarised at 4.9:

- 4.1 The complainant submits a formal complaint as described at 6.
- 4.2 Upon receipt of a complaint IFM acknowledges receipt as described at 5.3.1.
- 4.3 A member of the IFM Executive Team or Board appointed as Investigator as described at 5.4.
- 4.4 The Investigator analyses the complaint, makes enquiries with relevant parties and aims to form an objective response, with any recommendations for the IFM, as described in 7.
- 4.5 The IFM Executive or Board considers and approves (or reviews) the response.
- 4.6 IFM responds to the complainant. The aim is to reply within thirty days of receipt of the complaint.
- 4.7 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response they may appeal. If necessary, this may be handled by an independent mediator, at 50% shared cost to each IFM and the complainant.
- 4.8 The decision of the IFM Board shall be final, unless the case is referred on appeal to the mediator, in which case the decision of the mediator shall be final.

4.9 Summary of the process and roles of the parties involved in the Complaints Procedure:-



5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The following are the different roles and responsibilities of those involved in making and resolving complaints, i.e.:-

- the complainant
- the Institute of Fisheries Management (operational organisation)
- IFM Executive
- IFM Investigator
- the IFM Board
- Chairman of the IFM Board
- Mediator

5.2 Complainant

Any stakeholder involved in IFMs activities, impacted by any action or inaction of IFM or engaged in other activities of the IFM or one of its members.

5.3 IFM (operational organisation)

- 5.3.1 The IFM operational organisation is the point of entry for all complaints that meet the requirements set out in this procedure. This procedure requests complainants to submit their complaint to our general enquiries email address: info@ifm.org.uk which is monitored by the Development Officer or, if that person is on leave, our Chief Executive Officer.
- 5.3.2 On receipt of a complaint, the Officer will refer it immediately to the Chairman of the Board or Chief Executive Officer. Complaints received in any other way will also be routed to that person to take accountability for dealing with the complaint. IFM will acknowledge its receipt to the complainant, in writing, no later than 5 working days after it has been received. It will give an indication of the likely timescale for a response.
- 5.3.3 IFM has the right to return incomplete complaints to the submitting party. Incomplete complaints will be returned with an explanation of why it was considered incomplete.
- 5.3.4 IFM will:
- Receive, acknowledge, and process the complaint.
 - Administer and monitor the handling of all complaints
 - Appoint an appropriate person within IFM to be the Investigator and lead the investigation into the complaint
 - Oversee and execute relevant communications and announcements regarding the complaint.
 - Document Complaints in the 'IFM Complaints Log' that includes a summary of the complaint and subsequent actions.

5.4 IFM Executive

The IFM Executive is the team that runs and manages IFM. The CEO will normally take accountability of how the complaint will be investigated, i.e. the appointment of the IFM Investigator:

- 5.4.1 If the complaint is about an IFM member or officer, an independent member of the IFM team will be appointed. The CEO will review and approve the reply.
- 5.4.2 If the complaint is about the CEO, the complaint will be referred to the Chair of the Board to oversee and resolve.

5.5 IFM Investigator

The IFM Investigator:

- 5.5.1 Shall be selected on the basis of them (a) having the seniority to lead an investigation and (b) to have no connection or conflict of interest either internally within IFM, or externally with the complainant.
- 5.5.2 Shall gather as much independent evidence about the complaint as possible; analyse the complaint, make enquiries with relevant parties and aim to form an objective response.
- 5.5.3 Within a maximum of thirty days (longer if necessary and in agreement with the complainant), the investigator will present the evidence, a draft response and any recommendations to the IFM Board.

5.6 IFM Board

The IFM Board oversees the IFM operational organisation and ensures the following:

- 5.6.1 Takes any decisions based on the recommendations as provided by the Investigator, or mediator. It may decide to take an alternative decision, depending on the consideration of information and risks unavailable to the mediator.
- 5.6.2 Documentation related to the complaint will be held by IFM and made available to stakeholder(s) at the discretion of the IFM Board.
- 5.6.3 Handles any complaints that implicate the CEO.

5.7 Chairman of IFM Board

The Chairman of the IFM Board:

- 5.7.1 Appoints the IFM Investigator from the IFM Board of Trustees if required.
- 5.7.2 Is the final reference point for appeals.

5.8 Mediator

- 5.8.1 A professional mediator can be appointed if IFM and the complainant are unable to resolve the complaint. The mediator:
 - Is completely independent of IFM.
 - Handles complaints referred to it that IFM and the complainant have been unable to resolve.
 - Decides on the legitimacy and course of action of the complaint.
 - Seeks to mediate and find common ground to enable the two parties to move forward.
 - Gives recommendations deducted from the complaint and any further investigation deemed necessary to the IFM Board.
 - Aims to handle all complaints within 2 months of being referred the complaint.
 - Shall agree a fee for its mediation services to be paid 50% by each the complainant and IFM.

6. Submitting complaints

- 6.1 To be accepted and classified by IFM as a formal complaint, the complainant shall:
 - Use the complaint form in ANNEX 1
 - Submit it in writing by email to: info@ifm.org.uk
 - Be specific and include appropriate, objective justification and evidence to credibly substantiate any claim
- 6.2 Upon receipt, the IFM shall endeavour to verify if the complaint meets the general criteria set out in Section 2 within 5 working days of receipt.
- 6.3 IFM may ask for further information to substantiate the information received from the complainant. Unsubstantiated complaints or complaints based upon hearsay will not be accepted.
- 6.4 Once accepted IFM shall refer the complaint to the IFM Investigator within 2 working days and shall record the complaints in the complaints log.
- 6.5 Non-accepted complaints will also be logged.

7. Investigating complaints

- 7.1 IFM shall allocate an 'investigator' within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint to review or resolve a complaint according to the following criteria:
 - 7.1.1 The investigator shall not be implicated in the complaint.
 - 7.1.2 A copy of the complaint, with all correspondence, shall be passed to the investigator.

- 7.1.3 The investigator may contact the complainant to determine the full nature and extent of the complaint and to obtain any additional information from whatever source, including the complainant and other stakeholders, if necessary.
- 7.1.4 The investigator shall send the complainant an estimated timeframe for dealing with the complaint and keep them informed of the progress of the investigation.
- 7.1.5 The investigator shall determine whether the complaint has merit or whether the complaint has not borne out as a situation needing corrective actions. Any decisions shall be recorded in the complaints log and passed to the IFM Executive (or Board if referred there).
- 7.1.6 For complaints with merit, the investigator shall determine the cause of the complaint and, after review, shall set up an action plan to correct the cause of the complaint and prevent its reoccurrence. This shall be presented to the IFM Executive (or Board if referred there).
- 7.1.7 For complaints with no merit, IFM will inform the complainant accordingly, including a summary of the underlying assessment.

8. Appeals

- 8.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response, they may appeal to IFM.
- 8.2 Appeals would normally be considered by someone independent of and senior to the Investigator, i.e. the CEO or the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.
- 8.2 If the appeal is unsuccessful the complainant can choose to seek independent mediation. This will be at 50% shared cost to the complainant and IFM. There will be one round of mediation.
- 8.3 The decision of the mediator will be final for both parties.

9. Review

This procedure will be reviewed at a minimum of every 2 years or sooner if deemed necessary.

ANNEX 1. Complaint Form



Institute of Fisheries Management

Formal Complaint Form

As required in the IFM Formal Complaint Procedure all formal complaints shall be submitted to IFM using this Formal Complaint Form.

In order to process your complaint efficiently and to your satisfaction, please read the following carefully:

- All fields with a * must be completed
- You should read the IFM Formal Complaint Procedure carefully
- Complaints filed on hearsay will not be accepted
- In case multiple complaints are filed with the same motivational context, these shall be considered as one complaint and processed as such
- All filed complaints must be accompanied by relevant evidence to help to substantiate them
- Send the completed form by email to: info@ifm.org.uk

Your information	
Date *	
Surname *	
First Name *	
Title	
Email *	
Telephone no.	
Organisation (if applicable) *	
Address	
The Complaint	
Your complaint *	Describe the nature of your complaint
List enclosed evidence (if applicable)	Title(s) of document(s) - -
Outcome desired	Describe what you would ideally like as an outcome.