

GWJ Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023



**GoodWeave Standard Operating Procedure (SOP03)
Dispute Resolution**

CONTENTS

- 1. Objective and Scope..... 2**
- 2. Roles and Responsibilities..... 2**
- 3. General Procedure 4**
 - 3.1 Dispute Types and Topics 4**
 - 3.2 Submitting a Dispute 6**
 - 3.3 Screening..... 6**
 - 3.4 Investigation 7**
 - 3.5 Decision..... 8**
- 4. Confidentiality and Transparency 9**
- 5. Documentation and Records 10**
- APPENDIX A: References for this document 11**
- 6. Version History 11**
- 7. Effective Validity Dates 11**
- 8. Terms, Definitions and Acronyms..... 12**
- APPENDIX B: Timeline and Decision tree 13**

GWJ Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023

1. Objective and Scope

This GoodWeave International (GWI) procedure defines the process to address all types of disputes that require investigation and independent decision making within the GoodWeave International Certification Division (GWI-CD) and social programming. This procedure does not cover the process to manage stakeholder feedback, questions or complaints related to the [GoodWeave Standards](#) (see SOP02 Development of Standards).

The following procedure provides a mechanism for stakeholders to voice their complaints and concerns; hear and resolve those complaints or disputes; and to assure the integrity of the GoodWeave mission – to stop child and forced labor in global supply chains. This procedure is open to anyone who has a dispute against the conduct or decision making of GWI and/or its Affiliates. All disputes regarding complaints and appeals against the work of the GWI-CD and GoodWeave Licensees are summarized via the [GoodWeave website](#).

This procedure may also be used as a tool/process to follow-up on any actions or circumstances that require investigation, decision and communication outside of the normal audit and inspection process. These “incidents” may be related to trademark misuse, publication of an exposé, police or government action, etc.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of relevant parties/persons related to this procedure/policy:

Partners/Roles	Description/Responsibilities
Certification Committee (CC)	The CC is a permanent committee and a designated body of GoodWeave International. They ensure the certification program is transparent, credible, effective, and reliable, by serving as the central body responsible for decision-making on producer and exporter licensing and certification against GoodWeave Standards. The CC is involved in decisions of formal complaints in relation to the GWI-CD.
Executive Leadership Committee (ELT)	The ELT consists of members representing both consumer and producer countries. The ELT is involved in decision making of formal complaints outside of the GWI-CD, i.e. disputes related to GoodWeave’s prevention and remediation work.
GoodWeave Affiliates	GoodWeave Affiliates, or “GWI Affiliate(s)” are organizations in which GWI has cooperating agreements. Affiliates include entities such as the GWI Country Offices, assurance providers, social program NGO partners and boards of directors.

GWJ Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023

GoodWeave Certification Pvt. Ltd. (GWCPL)	GWCPJ is the IMC Country Office in India that provides assurance/certification services. GWCPJ also provides remediation services and oversight of the GWJ social programming in India.
GoodWeave International (GWJ) Secretariat	The secretariat provides oversight of the assurance system for use of the GoodWeave label. This includes standard, policy and procedure development and updates, as well as quality assurance and monitoring impact. The Secretariat may receive disputes and shall have representation on Dispute Investigation Teams.
GWJ-Certification Division (GWJ-CD)	The GoodWeave International Certification Division (GWJ-CD) is responsible for all aspects of operations relating to certification in producer countries, including coordinating the IMC program and decision-making relating to licensing and certification.
IMC Country Office Head	Oversees the respective IMC Country Team that includes inspectors and administrative staff. The IMC Country Office Head is the main point of contact for all disputes in their country, and reports to the GWJ Secretariat.
IMC Country Office/ Teams	The assurance providers of the GoodWeave system that conduct audits and inspections, oversee remediation activities, quality management, and issue GoodWeave labels.
(Dispute) Investigation Team	Qualified team assigned to investigate formal disputes. The Investigation Team includes a representative from GWJ, relevant Country Office staff, and other needed experts that reflect the needs of the complaint. One member of the team will be the Investigation Team Lead who manages all communications regarding the investigation process to ensure timelines are maintained.
GoodWeave Certification Nepal	GWCN is the IMC Country Office in Nepal that provides assurance/certification services. Note that social programming in Nepal is managed by a separate organization, Nepal GoodWeave Foundation.
GWJ Dispute Designate	Designated staff member from GoodWeave International who oversees all communications regarding the dispute communication, completing of the Investigation Report, and ensures this procedure is being implemented as designed.
Social Programing	Social programing includes GoodWeave's prevention and remediation work. While social programming is not a formal part of the GWJ assurance system, but key to the GWJ holistic approach (The GoodWeave System), theory of change and mission.

GWJ Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023

Appeal Panel	A panel compiled when an eligible appeal to a dispute resolution decision has been received. The panel will consist of at least three people who have contextual knowledge to handle the case. Panel members, as much as possible, will be impartial and free of any conflict of interest in relation to the original dispute and the original dispute resolution decision.
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3. General Procedure

GWJ-CD strives to operate its certification program and social programming with due diligence. Part of our integrity and credibility of the GoodWeave System is to ensure our policies and procedures are being upheld. This happens in part through careful and complete management of all disputes.

3.1 Dispute Types and Topics

3.1.1 A dispute is a disagreement, argument, controversy, or claim that gives rise to a formal process of investigation and decision. There are various types of disputes that are covered by this procedure:

Type of Dispute	Definition
Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction, other than an appeal, by any person or organization to GoodWeave International or its affiliates.
Appeal	Requests by GoodWeave Licensees, their suppliers, or complainants for reconsideration of a decision.
Grievance	Another word for a complaint over something believed to be wrong or unfair.
Whistleblower	A person who discloses/reveals information about a licensee or their supply chain that is deemed illegal, immoral, illicit, unsafe or fraudulent.
Incident	Any type of event or action related to GoodWeave Licensees, their supply chains and/or products that requires an independent investigation to determine appropriate follow-up actions.

3.1.2 The following table outlines the most common dispute topics raised with examples:

Dispute Topic	Relevant GoodWeave Unit	Examples
Appeals of certification decisions	GWJ-CD	Arbitrary judgments; discrimination; disregard of certification related policies, standards or operating procedures.
Complaints regarding the conduct of GWJ personnel	GWJ-CD or Social Programming and works in correlation with GWJ's Code of Ethics	Non-professional behavior or unethical behavior such as bribes and action with bias and lack of impartiality.

GWJ Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023

Complaints regarding audit and inspection procedures and their implementation	GWJ-CD	Violation of conflict of interest; Breach of confidentiality.
Fraud or misrepresentation of the GoodWeave label or marks	GWJ-CD works in correlation with GWJ's Market Surveillance procedure (SOP06).	Identification or tip is received regarding fraud or misrepresentation of the GoodWeave label by GoodWeave licensees or other market actors (see 3.1.3 below).
Complaints regarding GoodWeave Licensees and their supply chains	GWJ-CD and GWJ Business Development Team	Disregard of certification related policies, standards or operating procedures.
Complaints regarding GWJ Social Programs	GWJ Programs Division	Disregard of remediation or prevention related policies, or operating procedures.
Internal Staff Grievances	GWJ and its affiliates	A GoodWeave employee (from GWJ or Country Affiliate) has a grievance due to the conduct of a colleague, management or the organization; Failure of the organization, or an employee, to implement GWJ policies and procedures.

- 3.1.3 Disputes related to fraud or misrepresentation of the GoodWeave label can be raised via:
- a. Standard Operating Procedure Market Surveillance and Handling Cases of Fraud and Misrepresentation (SOP06) defines the process of market surveillance conducted by IMC Country Offices (for exporters) and the GWJ Business Development Team (for importers) to identify issues or claims of fraud or misrepresentation of the GoodWeave label.
 - b. Stakeholder input via website or email: If issues or claims of fraud or misrepresentation of the GoodWeave marks are brought to the attention of GWJ-CD through methods of this procedure they follow SOP06 if the dispute is informal and this procedure if the dispute is formal.
 - c. As a part of regular monitoring and inspection procedures implemented according to SOP04.
- 3.1.4 GWJ has an open-door policy regarding whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns of fraud, harassment, child or forced labor, or other violations, and recognizes the extra protection needed to maintain their anonymity. Appendix C outlines our Whistleblower

GWJ Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023

Policy and provides a way for individuals to confidentially report any wrongdoing in the workplace and/or supply chain.

3.2 Submitting a Dispute

- 3.2.1 Disputes may be received by the GWI-CD, GWI, and/or GWI Affiliates.
- 3.2.2 GWI-CD and Affiliates in producer and consumer countries may receive disputes directly from stakeholders, such as: licensees, subcontractors, workers, community members, and survivors. Only licensees and their suppliers may raise appeals to decisions made by the GWI-CD.
- 3.2.3 Submissions can be made by email, letter, in person/verbally, or through our online form on the [GoodWeave International website](#).
- 3.2.4 If a dispute is raised verbally, the person receiving the dispute (i.e. GWI Staff or Affiliates) will write down the details following [our online form](#). This form should be submitted the same day the dispute is received.
- 3.2.5 Details of disputes must be recorded as part of the submission, including:
 - d. Name and contact details (unless the complaint is anonymous)
 - e. Date and method the complaint was received
 - f. Who received the dispute
 - g. Type of dispute
 - h. If appeal, define the specification of the decision and grounds of the appeal
 - i. License holder (if applicable)
 - j. Brief description
 - k. Supporting evidence (if any)
 - l. Description of the steps that have already been taken to resolve the dispute (if any).
- 3.2.6 The submission shall be acknowledged in writing from GWI to the complainant within five (5) business days of receipt. The acknowledgement shall include a copy of this procedure (or hyperlink) with reference to the process for dispute investigation and resolution in Annex B.

3.3 Screening

- 3.3.1 Within five (5) business days after the dispute has been received, designated personnel will assess the nature of the dispute and determine whether it is a formal or informal dispute (see table below) and who is the relevant and impartial decision-making authority (see 3.4.1).

Type of Dispute	Process	Examples
Informal	To be resolved within fifteen (15) business days by the IMC Country Office and complainant to be informed of decision within this timeline.	Delays in reporting; communication regarding certification or social programs; audit and inspection follow up

GWJ Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023

	Documentation and review during the subsequent internal audit or management/system review.	
Formal	Escalation and decision-making body will depend on the category of the dispute (see 3.4). All formal disputes require an investigation (see 3.3).	Appeals of certification decision or inspection findings which are supported by reasonable evidence; complaints regarding professional or ethical conduct

3.3.2 When in doubt about whether a dispute is formal or informal the GWJ Dispute Designate shall be consulted.

3.4 Investigation

- 3.4.1 All investigations must have a designated Investigation Team and an investigation plan within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the dispute.
- 3.4.2 The complainant/appellant should be updated of the necessary details of the investigation plan within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the dispute.
- 3.4.3 The investigation plan and timeline shall be developed by the Investigation Team.
- 3.4.4 Composition of the Investigation Team includes:
 - a. An Investigation Team Lead is the direct point of contact with the GWJ Dispute Designate, and manages all communications regarding the investigation process to ensure timelines are maintained.
 - b. At minimum, there will be one GWJ representative and one IMC Country Office and/or GWJ Affiliate representative;
 - c. Experts as required by the subject of the dispute;
 - d. When necessary, at least one member of the Investigation Team will be representative of, and appropriate to, the needs of the complainant and dispute, including consideration of: race, class, caste, ethnicity, sex, gender, religion, culture, etc.
- 3.4.5 To ensure impartiality, the Investigation Team will not include persons that are the subject of the dispute or involved in the decision-making process that is being appealed.
- 3.4.6 The investigation process along with a report (see Appendix F Investigation Report Template) with recommendations for resolution will be completed and submitted to the appropriate decision-making body (see 3.5.1) within sixty (60) calendar days after the dispute has been received.

GW Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023

3.5 Decision

3.5.1 The decision-making authority matrix is as follows:

Decision making authority	GoodWeave Unit	Type of complaint
Certification Committee (CC)	Major NC’s that are related to licensee status or compliance decision.	Formal
Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	Regarding GW social programming (prevention and remediation)	Formal
Relevant Country Affiliate	Either minor NC’s related to certification, or social programming in specific country.	Informal
GW Sr Director of Programs	Regarding GW social programming activities	Informal

3.5.2 Where the CC or ELT is needed for independent decision making, the following steps are taken:

- a. The CC or ELT reviews the investigation report and determines whether the complaint or appeal is valid and if the recommendations for resolution are sufficient for approval.
- b. All members must be in favor of the recommendation to grant approval.
- c. The CC or ELT may request additional information or revision to the recommended resolution prior to granting approval.

3.5.3 If the dispute falls outside the remit of the CC or the ELT, or the relevant body is unable to make a decision for any reason, then the case may be raised to the GoodWeave International’s Board of Directors for an independent decision.

3.5.4 All decisions related to the status of an applicant or licensee remain in force until the dispute is resolved. For example, if a company is delicensed and raises an appeal, the company remains delicensed during the investigation and reporting process until a formal decision is made and communicated.

3.5.5 All disputes, both informal and formal, must be concluded within ninety (90) calendar days of receiving submission. However, if there are exceptional circumstances determined by the Investigation Team, a request for extension of timeline may be made to the GWI Dispute Designate and shall not exceed sixty (60) days. GWI will inform all necessary parties in writing of any such extension.

3.5.6 Once a decision has been made the Investigation Team Lead or GWI Dispute Designate shall take necessary steps to inform the affected parties of the resolution within five (5) business days of the decision in writing.

GWJ Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023

3.6 Appeals to the Investigation Decision and Resolution

- 3.6.1 Affected stakeholders may request a one-time only appeal of the dispute resolution decision.
- 3.6.2 GoodWeave will inform the appellant within ten (10) business days of receipt of an eligible appeal if it is granted. Appeals are eligible when the following requirements are met:
 - a. the appeal includes substantial and verifiable evidence to the contrary of the decision, and
 - b. the appeal has been submitted within ten (10) business days after the result of the original complaint has been formally communicated.
- 3.6.3 If the appeal is eligible, GoodWeave will appoint an Appeal Panel that will consist of at least three people who have contextual knowledge to handle the case. Panel members, as much as possible, will be impartial and free of any conflict of interest in relation to the original dispute and the original dispute resolution decision. Depending on the nature of the appeal, GoodWeave may decide to appoint one or more external parties to participate on the panel.
- 3.6.4 Within thirty (30) days after granting the appeal, GoodWeave will:
 - a. update the appellant on the next steps and the structure of the appeal panel;
 - b. inform relevant GoodWeave staff that an appeal has been received and request additional evidence to be submitted within ten (10) business days.
- 3.6.5 The Appeal Panel may request additional information from the appellant or from GoodWeave. If this is the case, the relevant party will be given five (5) business days to submit further evidence.
- 3.6.6 The Appeal Panel shall make decisions by majority vote.
- 3.6.7 Within thirty (30) business days of all evidence being submitted the Appeal Panel will inform all parties of the decision.
- 3.6.8 The decision of the Appeal Panel is final and no further dispute team or appeal on the same matter will be accepted.

4. Confidentiality and Transparency

- 4.1** GWJ personnel, Investigation Teams, Appeal Panels and Decision-making bodies shall commit to treat all information regarding the dispute as confidential (unless otherwise determined by this procedure). This includes all information regarding the affected parties, the details of the dispute, or the process being followed.
- 4.2** GoodWeave will make all efforts to anonymize dispute cases, and not share personal information, such as:
 - 4.2.1 Names of the parties involved in the dispute.

GWI Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023

- 4.2.2 Addresses of homes or companies
- 4.2.3 Other information that identifies a person or company.

4.3 GoodWeave may share certain details of the dispute if there is a legal obligation to do so.

4.4 GoodWeave will present a public summary of disputes related to the certification program (complaints and appeals only) that will not contain confidential information.

5. Documentation and Records

5.1 A dispute file will be made and accessible only to authorized staff. Records relating to formal complaints are also saved in the GWI-CD files.

5.2 A dispute log must be kept by the GWI Dispute Designate. The relevant IMC Country Office will maintain their own records of disputes (both formal and informal).

5.2.1 Dispute logs maintained by GWI will be reviewed during quarterly Management Team meetings (management review).

5.2.2 Dispute logs maintained by GWI Affiliates will be reviewed during the annual internal audit process for follow-up and to ensure compliance with this procedure.

5.3 Records should include the specifics of the case, dates, any decisions and corrective actions taken as a result of the case and kept for at least five years.

GWJ Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023

APPENDIX A: References for this document

6. Version History

Ver.	Date (MM/YY)	Change Summary	Approved by
1.1	03/2020	N/A	Director of Standards and Certification
2.0	06/2023	Expanded and renamed our complaints and appeals procedure to include more detail on investigations. Reviewed and aligned with ISEAL best practices on grievance mechanisms. Updated to the new GWJ template for policies and procedures. Added Appendix B, for ease of use by public to understand how to submit a complaint. Added Appendix C Whistleblower policy. Added Appendix D-G internal templates for consistency and clarity of the process.	Senior Director of Programs

7. Effective Validity Dates

Here you want to outline the approval process that was undertaken and the dates that the document is published and effective. Note any transition periods or if there is a defined deadline for termination of applicability of the document.

Type	Definition	Date
Approval Date	The date that the version was approved by the person or group that has the authority to make changes.	July 5, 2023
Publication Date	The date that the document transitioned from draft to final version and made available to relevant stakeholders. For all publicly available documents, this is the date that the document is made available on the website.	July 5, 2023
Effective Date	The date of which the published document becomes applicable for use. This date does not necessarily match the date of publication.	July 5, 2023
Transition Period	The period of time after the effective date in which the new version of a published document is phased-in and in parallel the old version is phased-out. Both versions may be available for a specified period of time. Transition periods are not mandatory but recommended for documents that require new procedures or requirements that need a gradual introduction.	N/A
Period of Validity	Period of time for which a document is valid for use.	Until replaced or withdrawn

GW I Document ID: SOP03	Document Name: Dispute Resolution
Ver #: 2.0	Effective Date: July 5, 2023

8. Terms, Definitions and Acronyms

8.1 Terms

Term	Definition
Appellant	A person, organization or a representative of an organization appealing the decision of a decision-making body.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organization.
Complainant	A person, organization or a representative of an organization submitting a complaint or grievance.
Appeal	An appeal is a complaint against a decision made by a decision-making body.
Whistleblowing	Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or. This can include bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.
Applicant	An exporter or importer that is applying to become a GoodWeave Licensee.
Licensee	An importer or exporter of finished goods licensed by GoodWeave International based on demonstrated compliance with the GoodWeave International Generic Standard. Also referred to as the "GoodWeave licensee".

8.2 Definitions

Please refer to the GW International Glossary

8.3 Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
GW I	GoodWeave International
GW I-CD	GoodWeave International Certification Division
IMC	Inspection, Monitoring and Certification
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
CC	Certification Committee

APPENDIX B: Timeline and Decision tree

