GoodWeave Standard Operating Procedure (SOP03)
Dispute Resolution

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1. Objective and Scope

This GoodWeave International (GWI) procedure defines the process to address all types of disputes that need investigation and independent decision making within the GoodWeave International Certification Division (GWI-CD) and social programming. It does not include feedback, questions or complaints related to the GoodWeave 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, or the conduct of a licensee, importer, exporter or their supplier.

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 GoodWeave International Certification Division.
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 Certification Division, 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 GW Country offices, assurance providers, social program NGO partners and boards of directors.

GoodWeave Certification Pvt. Ltd. (GWCPL)	GWCPL is the IMC Country office in India that provides assurance/certification services. GWCPL may receive complaints or appeals and/or be part of the complaint and appeals team if the complaint or appeal is based in India.
GoodWeave International (GWI) Secretariat	GWI's unit that 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 complaints or appeals and will have representation on complaint and appeals investigation teams.
GWI-Certification Division (GWI-CD)	The GoodWeave International Certification Division (GWI-CD) consists of the Sr Director of Programs, the Director of GWI-CD and the Certification Committee. Collectively they oversee the IMC country offices including quality management and are a decision-making body for assurance providers.
IMC Country Office Head	Head of IMC Country Teams including inspectors and administrative staff. The IMC Head reviews all child labor cases within their country to ensure this procedure is followed by all responsible parties.
IMC Country Office/ Teams	The assurance provider of the GoodWeave system. They conduct audits and inspections, oversee remediation activities and quality management, and issue GoodWeave labels. This document references the India Country Office and the Nepal Country Office.
Investigation Team	The Investigation team will be made up of a GWI representative, relevant Country Office staff, and other needed experts that reflect the needs of the complaint. An Investigation Team Lead will be assigned once the composition of the Investigation Team is decided.
GoodWeave Certification Nepal	GWCN is the IMC Country Office in Nepal. This partner provides assurance/certification services. GWCPL may receive complaints or appeals and/or be part of the complaint and appeals team if the complaint or appeal is based in Nepal.
Dispute Lead	Designated staff member from GoodWeave International who fields complaints and ensures this procedure is being implemented in an appropriate and timely manner.
Social Programing	Social programing includes GoodWeave's prevention and remediation work. Social programming is not a formal part of the GW Certification but is key to the GWI System and our program.
Appeal Panel	A panel compiled when an appeal 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.

3. General Procedure

GWI-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 including complaints, grievances, incidents, and appeals. The following outlines GWI's dispute resolution procedure:

3.1 Dispute Types and Topics

3.1.1 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 Disputes can be regarding a range of topics that include GWI staff or Affiliate behavior, Licensee or supplier behavior, or a report or noncompliance or fraud. The following table outlines the most common dispute topics.

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

Complaints regarding audit and inspection procedures	GWI-CD	Violation of conflict of interest; Breach of confidentiality.
Fraud or misrepresentation of the GoodWeave label	GWI-CD works in correlation with GWI'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	GWI-CD and GWI Business Development Team	Disregard of certification related policies, standards or operating procedures. Non-professional or unethical behavior such as attempted influence to change a certification decision.
Complaints regarding GoodWeave Social programming	GWI Programs Division	Disregard of remediation or prevention related policies, or operating procedures;
Internal Grievances	GWI and its affiliates	A GoodWeave employee (from GWI or Country Affiliate) has a grievance with the conduct of a colleague, management or the organization; Failure of the organization, or an employee, to implement GWI policies and procedures.

3.1.3 Disputes related to fraud or misrepresentation of the GoodWeave label can be raised via:

a. Market Surveillance: SOP06 defines the process of market surveillance conducted by IMC Country offices (for exporters) and the GWI 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 label are brought to the attention of GWI-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 GWI 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

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 Complaints, grievances and appeals 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 complaints and grievances directly from stakeholders, such as: licensees, subcontractors, workers, community members, GWI and GoodWeave country affiliates staff 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 complaint/grievance/appeal
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 5 business days of receipt. Correspondence will include this procedure with reference to the process for dispute investigation and resolution in Annex B.

3.3 Screening

3.3.1 Within 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 15 business days by the IMC country office and complainant	Delays in reporting; communication regarding certification or social programs; audit and inspection follow up

	to be informed of decision within this timeline. 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 GWI Sr. Director of Programs shall be consulted.

3.4 Investigation

3.4.1 All investigations must have a designated Investigation Team and an investigation plan within 15 business days of receiving the dispute.

3.4.2 The complainant should be updated of the necessary details of the submission and investigation process within 15 business days of receiving the dispute.

3.4.3 The investigation plan and timeline of the investigation shall be developed by the Investigation Team.

3.4.4 Composition of the Investigation Team includes:

a. An Investigation Team Lead who will manage all communications regarding the investigation process and ensure timelines are maintained.
b. At minimum, there will be one GWI representative and one IMC Country Office and/or GWI Affiliate representative;
c. Experts as required by the subject of the complaint;
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 60 calendar days after the complaint or appeal has been received.

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
Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	Regarding unethical behavior by a licensee or their supply chain	Formal
Relevant Country Affiliate	Either minor NC's related to certification, or social programming in specific country.	Informal
GWI Sr Director of Programs	Regarding GW social programming generally	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 90 days of receiving submission. However, if there are exceptional circumstances determined by the Investigation Team, they may request the CC or ELT for more time to resolve the complaint. 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 shall take necessary steps to inform the affected parties of the outcome within 5 business days of the decision in writing. This includes the party submitting the dispute, as well as the subject of the dispute.

3.6 Appeals to the Investigation Decision and Resolution

3.6.1 Complainants may request a one-time only reconsideration of the decision for resolution of the dispute (an appeal to the dispute resolution decision).

3.6.2 GoodWeave will inform the appellant within 10 business days of receipt of the appeal if the appeal is found eligible. The appeal is eligible if:

a. the appeal includes substantial and verifiable evidence to the contrary of the decision.
b. the appeal has been submitted within 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 30 days after determining if the appeal is eligible, GoodWeave will:

a. inform the appellant information on the appeal panel;
b. inform relevant GoodWeave staff that an appeal has been received and request additional evidence to be submitted within 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 5 business days to submit further evidence.

3.6.6 The appeal panel will decide on the appeal by consensus. If consensus is not possible, a decision will be made by majority vote.

3.6.7 Within 30 business days of all evidence being submitted; the appeal panel will inform all parties of the resolution and 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 All parties involved in the dispute shall commit to treat all personal information (see 4.2) contained within any communications or documents shared as confidential.

4.2 GoodWeave will not share with other parties that are not part of the dispute personal information, such as:

4.2.1 The identity of the parties involved in the dispute.

4.2.2 Details of the dispute or investigation.

4.2.3 Measures taken to resolve the dispute.

Note: Other parties may include both internal staff and external parties.

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 complaints and appeals that will not contain confidential information.

5. Documentation

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 Dispute Lead. The relevant 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.

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 GWI 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
2.1	09/2026	Expanded the scope of dispute targets to include licensees. Revised type of disputes to include unethical behavior.	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.	October 3, 2026
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.	October 15, 2026
Effective Date	The date of which the published document becomes applicable for use. This date does not necessarily match the date of publication.	October 15, 2026
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	N/A

	documents that require new procedures or requirements that need a gradual introduction.	
Period of Validity	Period of time for which a document is valid for use.	Until replaced or withdrawn

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 dispute resolution decision.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organization to GWI relating to activities of GWI.
Complainant	A person, organization or a representative of an organization submitting a complaint.
Appeal	An appeal is a complaint against a decision made by GoodWeave International.
Days	Refers to business days.
Whistleblowing	Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to GWI's activities. 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
GWI	GoodWeave International
GWI-CD	GoodWeave International Certification Division

IMC	Inspection, Monitoring and Certification
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
CC	Certification Committee

APPENDIX B: Timeline and Decision tree

