

1. AIM AND SCOPE

The purpose of this procedure is to determine the solution method for appeals and complaints that may come from operators or about different 3rd parties in control and certification services carried out in accordance with TR (Regulation on the principles and implementation of organic farming) and EU Organic farming legislation and Başak Organic Standard¹.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

General Manager is responsible for the implementation of this procedure, the appropriate handling and decision-making of appeals and complaints within certain periods, and the Quality Unit personnel and Units subject to activities are responsible for the preliminary investigation and recording of appeals / complaints and the follow-up and coordination of corrective / preventive activities.

The Appeal and Complaint Evaluation Committee is responsible for the resolution of appeals/complaints, upon assignment by General Manager, in relevant cases.

3. DEFINITIONS

Başak Ekolojik Ürünler Kontrol ve Sertifikasyon Hizmetleri Tic. Ltd. Şti. hereafter referred to as “Başak Ekolojik”.

Inspector: A real person authorized by the Ministry to inspect the implementation of every stage of organic farming activities in accordance with the relevant legislation, on behalf of control body.

Operator: Natural or legal person engaged in organic farming activities.

Certifier: A natural person authorized by the Ministry to confirm that the inspected product is organic on behalf of the control body.

General Manager: It is the person responsible for the coordination of the certification studies, signing the agreement with the client, relations with the subcontractors and making the agreements.

Appeal: If the operator disagrees with the certification decision or the certification decision process, sanctions or rejection of applications, the operator may appeal the decision.

Complaint: Complaints about Başak Ekolojik services, eg. failure to respond to certification-related correspondence or unprofessional behavior.

Appeal and Complaint Evaluation Committee: In the event that the operator has an appeal to the decisions made as a result of the appeals/complaints, it is the committee that is convened by General Manager to examine the issue and is responsible for the evaluation of the relevant appeals and complaints.

Ministry: T.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Organic Agriculture Committee: It consists of a total of seven members, including the relevant Deputy General Director from the General Directorate of Plant Production of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the relevant Head of Department and three members from the relevant Department, a member from the Legal Counseling Department and a

¹ Başak Organic Standard will be valid until 31 December 2024, it will not be valid as of this date.

Document No	P-06	Prepared by	Checked and Approved by
Release Date	15.12.2014	Betül Aslan	Asaf Özkan
Revision No / Date	09 / 31.09.2024	Electronic copy! Printed version is uncontrolled copy!	
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member from the Guidance and Inspection Department (For the purpose of establishment, duties, working procedures and principles, see Turkish Regulation on the principles and implementation of organic agriculture).

TÜRKAK: Turkish Accreditation Agency.

Quality Unit: Sending the **F-P06.03 Customer Satisfaction Survey Form** to customers, transcribing customer demands obtained from the surveys according to the type of feedback, forwarding summary and detailed reports to the relevant departments, conducting customer satisfaction surveys responsible for evaluating customer demands and, when necessary, notifying the customer of the evaluation results. **Numerical evaluations of the surveys are made according to T-P06.01 Operator Satisfaction Survey Evaluation Instruction.** The e-mail address through which customers can reach customer relations is available on the Başak Ekolojik website.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. Complaint

The General Manager **ensures that the complaint received through written or verbal communication channels is recorded with the F-P06.01 Appeal and Complaint Notification Form.** The General Manager conducts a preliminary investigation of the complaint and confirms whether it is related to the certification activities under the responsibility of Başak Ekolojik. **If the complaint is not related to Başak Ekolojik activities, it rejects the complaint by informing the complaining party. If the complaint is related to Başak Ekolojik activities, the General Manager is responsible for starting to handle the complaint within five working days and finalizing it within 15 days at the latest. General manager; It meets with the parties related to the complaint (including the complaining party, inspectors and certifiers) and other persons it deems appropriate, and records the meetings in writing.** After concluding its investigation, the General Manager ensures that the complainant is informed in writing about the activities to be carried out regarding the complaint, if necessary. In addition, it retrospectively reviews the control and certification stages of the entrepreneur related to the complaint and ensures that it is used as data for corrective action if there are any malpractices or issues that need improvement. If the General Manager is a party to the complaint, the responsibility for handling and resolving the complaint belongs to the Quality Unit.

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Table-1. Complaints and Procedures

N	Complaint	Execution
1	Use of the logo and the right to use documents outside the specified scope	Corrective action is requested within a maximum of 10 days; if the result is negative, the certificate is suspended for one month; if it is still negative, the certificate is cancelled.
2	Using the logo in a way that may cause misunderstanding (e.g. using the logo on the product), such as product certification	
3	Incorrect use of the accreditation body's logo	
4	From the relevant chambers or professional groups to which the operator is affiliated or a member Complaints/feedbacks	
5	Complaints/feedbacks from relevant parties who benefit from the Operator's product	If it is proven to be a justified complaint/publication, It is decided to carry out an inspection within one month. Corrective action may be requested within 1 month at most. If the result is negative, the certificate will be suspended for one month, and if it is still negative, the certificate will be canceled.
6	Inappropriate news about operators appearing in the written and visual media	
7	Complaints about office services include, but are not limited to: Inability to reach relevant people, The document is issued and sent late, etc.	Notify the customer about the evaluation result of the complaint. information is given, to prevent recurrence and to identify the root cause Corrective action is initiated to eliminate and its effectiveness is measured.
8	Complaints that may affect control objectivity, independence and efficiency, including but not limited to the following; Attitude and behavior of the controller, Any difference in the interpretation of the standards, Failure to use appropriate methods in control, Failure to comply with the control plan,	

Complaints that may come from different parties about operators; It may be related to non-compliance with the rules of use of certificates and logos. Compliance with the principle of confidentiality is essential in evaluating such complaints. In special cases where the issue needs to be announced to the public, the form and details of the announcement are the responsibility of our company and legal requirements are complied with. Namely:

In case the entrepreneur receives a complaint about the products within the scope of certification; must submit the content and reason of the complaint to our company. Operator; It must inform Başak Ekolojik about the corrective actions to be carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation, ensure compliance and prevent recurrence.

4.2. Appeal

The General Manager ensures that the objection received through written or verbal communication channels is recorded with the *F-P06.01 Appeal and Complaint Notification Form*. It carries out a preliminary investigation of the appeal and confirms whether it is related to the certification activities under the responsibility of Başak Ekolojik. If the appeal is not related to Başak Ekolojik activities, it rejects the objection by informing the objecting party. If the appeal is related to Başak Ekolojik activities, the General Manager is responsible for starting to handle the objection within five business days and finalizing it within 15 days at the latest. For this purpose, it creates the Appeal Evaluation Committee. The Appeal Evaluation Committee consists of 3 members appointed by the General Manager. Unanimity of at least 2 members is required for the decision, and 2 members must be competent on the subject decided. Başak Ekolojik employees who are involved in the control and certification activities of the objecting customer that are the **subject of the objection** cannot take part in the Objection Evaluation Committee for the evaluation of this customer's objection. To ensure that there is no conflict of interest, Başak Ekolojik; It does not use personnel (including those in managerial

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positions) who have provided consultancy to a client or have been employed by a client, in reviewing or approving the resolution of a complaint or objection of that client for a period of two years following the termination of the consultancy or employment. **The meetings that take place are recorded with the F-P08.01 Meeting Form.** Committee members sign the S-P02.01 Committee Membership Agreement, BY-P02.05 Committee Membership Declaration of Obligations and BY-P02.02 Impartiality and Confidentiality Declaration. If the General Manager is a party to the objection, the responsibility for handling and resolving the objection belongs to the Quality Unit.

Table-2.Appeals Regarding Certification Activities Under Başak Ekolojik Responsibility

N	Appeal	Execution
1	By the operator; appeal against certification decision	Objection to Başak Ekolojik must be made within 14 days at the latest. If the prohibited substance is applied during the production process, Başak Ekolojik does not accept the objection.
2	Objection to the decisions taken by Başak Ekolojik regarding pesticide residues in organic products	It must be done by the operator within 30 days at the latest. Re-evaluation can be done in the form of an additional check or a check of the document (evaluation documents, photographs, etc.). If the prohibited substance is applied during the production process, no objection will be accepted.
3	Objection to nonconformities written by inspectors as a result of the control	In this case, the inspector tells the operator; Explains that he/she has the right to object and prepares a report. The person being controlled is asked to sign the report; if he does not, the report is signed unilaterally. It is stated in the minutes that the subject and the person under control abstained from signing. The General Manager examines the objection and communicates the result to the relevant parties in writing, stating detailed justifications.
4	Objection to the Inspectors who will carry out the control	The operator to be controlled has the right to object to the controllers. The General Manager makes evaluations in a way that does not hinder or delay the control process or jeopardize its impartiality, independence and consistency. If the objection is found to be justified, the controllers are changed and the information of the newly appointed controllers is sent to the company for confirmation. If the objection is not justified, this situation is communicated to the entrepreneur in writing and re-confirmation of the control plan is requested.

In order to apply when necessary, competent courts in case of appeals are determined in the **S-P01.01 Organic Agriculture Inspection and Certification Service Agreement**. If the operator has an appeal to the Başak Ekolojik certification decision which is according to TR Organic Agriculture Regulation, it has the right to submit the relevant information and documents to the Organic Agriculture Committee within twenty-one (21) days at the latest.

4.2.1 Activities to be carried out by the Appeal and Complaint Evaluation Committee

The duty of the Appeals and Complaints Evaluation Committee is to evaluate the appeals/complaints received at any stage of control and certification processes, in accordance with the principles of impartiality and confidentiality.

Appeal and Complaint Evaluation Committee takes the following as a basis when evaluating;

- ✓ Compliance with accreditation standards,
- ✓ Adhering to the principle of impartiality and confidentiality,
- ✓ The inspection will measure whether the operator's system is capable of meeting and maintaining client requirements and continuously improving the system,
- ✓ Compliance of Başak Ekolojik employees with relevant control and certification procedures,

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- ✓ Operator's membership of any group or association, easy access to services regardless of the number of certified operators,
- ✓ Implementation in accordance with policies and procedures,
- ✓ The use of the document and logo.

4.3. Records of Appeal and Complaints

Appeal and complaint records (if any, correspondence with the Organic Agriculture Committee / Ministry on the subject) are kept by General Manager. If the operator is a certified client; A copy of the appeal and complaint form (if any, correspondence with the Organic Agriculture Committee / Ministry on the subject) is also kept in the file of the operator. Appeal and complaint records are confidential and are not open to parties other than the operator, the Appeal and Complaint Evaluation Committee and the Organic Agriculture Committee / Ministry / TÜRKAK.

4.4. Corrective Actions After Appeal and Complaint Processes

General manager is responsible for initiating corrective/preventive action as far as practicable regarding each complaint or appeal. Corrective / preventive actions are followed and coordinated by the Management Representative in accordance with the **P-12 Corrective Preventive Actions Procedure**. Appeal and complaint procedures during the meeting period are reported to the management with a performance report by the Quality Management Representative for the purpose of evaluation in the management review meetings. Management can also take corrective / preventive action decision based on this report (see **P-10 Management Review Procedure**).

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Management Review Procedure (P-10)
- Corrective Preventive Actions Procedure (P-12)
- Organic Agriculture Inspection and Certification Service Agreement (S-P01.01)
- Appeal And Complaint Notification Form (F-P06.01)
- Client satisfaction survey form (F-P06.03)
- Committee Membership Agreement (S-P02.01)
- Committee Membership Statement of Obligation (BY-P02.05)
- Impartiality and Confidentiality Statement (BY-P02.02)
- **Meeting Form (F-P08.01)**
- **Operator Satisfaction Survey Evaluation Instruction (T-P06.01)**

6. DISTRIBUTION

An electronic copy of this document is available to all personnel in the Başak Ekolojik Institutional Portal System (SharePoint).

7. REVISION HISTORY

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Revision No	Relevant Article	Revision	Revision Date
06	General	TR-AB code has been removed from the name of the document and the names of the QMS in the document. Main headings are all capital letters.	03.01.2022
07	General	Adjustments have been made according to the new EU organic production Regulation with number (EU)2018/848.	19.10.2022
08	03	Customer relations definition has been added.	08.12.2023
09	3,4.1,4.2,5	Changes made to the relevant articles are indicated in bold and italic font.	31.09.2024

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