1. Aim

The present Quality Procedure (QP) regulates the order for registering, analysing and processing of complaints, incoming to Testing Laboratory (TL) at Elkabel JSC Burgas.

Clients or other interested parties may submit complaints in connection with:

> Entire activity of the TL, according to БДС EN ISO/IEC 17025:2018, including:

- Competence and impartiality of staff;
- Validity of the results, obtained and reflected in test reports
- Processing of the results
- Protection of professional secrecy, etc.

Received complaints, concerning laboratory activities, for which TL is responsible, are dealt with a timely manner, in order to avoid material and moral damages to the clients and TL itself.

This QP is available on demand from all interested parties.

Head of the TL (HL) or his (her) authorized with QF 620-01-7 person, who did not participate in the TL activities, mentioned in the complaint, draws up, reviews and approves the conclusions on the complaint.

Applying of this QP guarantees objective and unprejudiced look over the cause for the discrepancies (by analysis of the facts and other information) and undertaking of correcting actions when suitable.

2. Responsibilities and rights

HL receives incoming complaint.

HL verifies substantiation of incoming complaint with assistance of authorized persons and issues an Opinion in written with a proposal for decision on the substantiation of the complaint.

HL makes a decision on the substantiation of the complaint.

HL makes a decision on possible subjective motives for the complaint.

HL specifies the actions, responsibilities and deadlines for remedying the causes of the complaint.

HL or his (her) authorized person with a suitable competence, reviews and approves the conclusions on the complaint.

HL or his (her) authorized person establishes contact with the client through QF 710-01-6 ‘‘Letter of notification”. He (she) informs the client on the progress of the proceeding of his (her) complaint and, if the conclusions are already prepared, asks the client if his (her) claims are satisfied.

3. Terms, definitions and abbreviations

TL - Testing Laboratory (at Elkabel JSC - Burgas, Bulgaria)
HL - Head of (Testing) Laboratory
MS - Management System (of TL)
QH - Quality Handbook
QP - Quality Procedure
QR - Person, Responsible for Quality
QF - Quality Form

Complaint - every expressed in an official written form dissatisfaction on the part of the client (individual or organization), concerning activity of the TL / or of an employee / or chosen method / or non-compliance with deadlines.

4. Description

4.1. Handling complaints

If a client / or a person, authorized by him (her) / or other interested party lay a claim, related to laboratory activities of the TL at Elkabel JSC - Burgas not in the special written form, but orally - by phone or personally on-site / or unofficially by letter, he (she) will be informed by the relevant employee of TL that the claim must be laid in a written form, using QF 790-01-1 "Complaints". This has to be done in order to ensure correct proceeding and answer to the complaint.

The incoming complaints are registered with a serial number in QF 790-01-2 "Register of complaints"
After receiving a complaint from a client, begins determination of its substantiation.

In the event when the incoming complaint is unfounded, the claim is rejected in a well-argued manner and the costs incurred are specified in colaboration with the relevant client.

No action shall be given if the complaint:

- Does not concern the competence of TL
- Concerns violations performed before more than 2 years
- The submitter withdraws its complaint in writing
- Is based on anonymity
- Was resubmitted on a matter on which there is a decision, unless it is in relation to the implementation of the decision or is based on new facts and circumstances.

The conclusions on the complaint are drawn up, reviewed and approved by persons authorized by the HL, who did not participate in the laboratory activities considered in the complaint and who may be external personnel for the Testing Laboratory at Elkabel Jsc, Burgas.

After the complaint has been launched, HL, with the assistance of its authorized persons, verifies the substantiation of the complaint and an opinion is issued in written with a proposal for a decision on the substantiation of the complaint.

Within one month of the registration of the complaint all evidence, necessary to clarify the circumstances on the complaint are aggregated and analysed. Then an opinion in written is drawn up with a proposal for a decision on the substantiation of the complaint.

After the decision on the substantiation of the complaint, within one month of its registration, the complainant shall be informed for the substantiation / or groundlessness of the complaint and for the subsequent actions. Actions are taken according to QP 870-01 "Corrective actions". Part 2 of QF 790-01-1 "Complaints" is filled in.

In the presence of an arbitration sample and if there is no established subjective cause for the non-compliance, re-test is carried out. It can be done in the presence of the client.

In the absence of an arbitration sample and if the test is destructive (i.e. the test cannot be repeated on the same sample), test conditions and testing methods are analysed and the calculations are verified.

On client's request the re-testing may be carried out in another accredited laboratory (in the presence of HL or QR). The costs thereof shall be borne by the defaulting party.

All external to TL persons, authorized by HL, involved in decision making and/or in the resolution of a complaint, declare that they have no conflict of interests and will protect professional secrecy before committing any action on the specific complaint. This declaration is made by QF 410-01-1 "Declaration of impartiality and independence" and "Declaration by external clients and visitors".

In case of dissatisfaction of the client, QR reopens a procedure and makes a recording in QF 790-01-2 "Register of complaints". After the completion of this procedure HL or a person authorized by HL contacts the contracting client and asks him (her) through QF 710-01-6 “Letter of notification”. whether the settlement of the complaint satisfies him (her). If the contracting client is satisfied or HL or a person authorized by HL has taken a decision that the complaint is unfounded, the cycle ends. HL or a person authorized by HL notifies the complainant in writing about the end of the process.

On a valid complaint, responsibility is borne by the employees who conducted the tests.

The responsibility of HL and the employees of TL as regards the test results is according to the damage inflicted on the client, established by pre-trial or judicial means and are paid by Elkabel JSC. The proof is done according to the accepted reporting procedure of Elkabel JSC.

4.2 Informing the complainant

TL informs the complainant, through QF 710-01-6 “Letter of notification”, part 2 of QF 790-01-1 “Complain” must be filled, as follows:

- Within one month of the receipt of the complaint TL informs the complainant of the decision taken for the substantiation / or groundlessness of the complaint and whether a move is being given to initiate actions for clarification of the complaint
- As far as possible provide information on progress in examining the complaint
- Within two months of the start of actions for a solution on the complaint - for the control of the processing of the complaint (Conclusion)
- Within 10 days before the deadline for conclusion - on the need to carry out further actions and extension of the time limit

This procedure and QF 790-01-1 "Complaints" are publicly available on the Internet site of Elkabel JSC.

Once the conclusions on the complaint are composed, HL or person, authorized by him (her), informs the complainant for the results of its processing.

4.3 Records

Records created according to the requirements of this procedure, are stored by the QR for a period of two years from the date of the decision on the substantiation, with the exception of those, related to staff.

The latter are kept in the relevant personal files.

At the end of each calendar year HL and QR Make an analysis of complaints received during the year.

This analysis is used as entry information for the "Management review" Protocol in compiling the objectives of the TL, assessment of staff and in identifying the risks and opportunities related to the management system processes in QF 850-01-1 "Risks and opportunities of 'Testing Laboratory' at Elkabel JSC and Actions for their management".

5. Accompanying documents

5.1 References

БДС EN ISO/IEC 17025:2018 "General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories"
QP 870-01 “Corrective actions"
QF 470-01-1 "Declaration of impartiality and independence"
QF 420-00-2 "Declaration by external clients and visitors"
QF 620-01-7 "Authorizing an employee"
QF 710-01-6 “Letter of notification”
QF 820-01-1 "Aims of TL at Elkabel JSC"
QF 850-01-1 "Risks and opportunities of 'Testing Laboratory' at Elkabel JSC and Actions for their management"
QF 800-01-1 "Management review" Protocol

5.2 Applications

QF 790-01-1 "Complaint"
QF 790-01-2 "Register of complaints"