

## Complaints procedure for stakeholders, external contacts and Network Offices staff

At Wetlands International Global Office, we value transparency and strive for excellence. If you have concerns about our actions or staff, this procedure outlines how to file a formal complaint. All contact details are to be found in Chapter 8.

### 1. Who are stakeholders, external contacts and Network Offices staff?

- **Stakeholders** – Individuals or groups who **work with or are affected by** Wetlands International but are not employees. This includes partners, donors, volunteers, consultants, and local communities.
- **External Contacts** – People or organizations **outside** Wetlands International who may interact with it, such as government agencies, suppliers, or the general public, but do not have a direct role in its operations.
- **Network Offices Staff** – People who work **directly** for Wetlands International offices as employees. They have a formal contract with that organization.

### 2. Definition complaint

A complaint is a written grievance from a stakeholder, external contact or Network Offices staff (so not being Wetlands International Global Office staff) regarding:

- Our working methods.
- Actions or omissions by staff, management, or Supervisory Council members.

#### 2.1 Informal approach before filing a complaint

The goal of an informal approach is to resolve the issue **quickly and amicably** without the need for formal investigation or documentation. If this approach does not lead to a satisfactory outcome, then a formal complaint can be submitted following the official process.

An **informal resolution** may include:

- **Direct communication** with the person or department involved to discuss concerns and seek a solution.
- **Seeking clarification** or mediation through a manager, HR representative, or other appropriate personnel.
- **Internal discussions** with colleagues or relevant stakeholders to find an amicable resolution.
- **Providing feedback** informally through emails, meetings, or verbal discussions.

#### 2.2 Formal reporting of a complaint for stakeholders or external contacts

If the informal approach does not resolve the issue, individuals can file a formal complaint.

Severe cases (such as fraud, corruption, financial misconduct, or serious breaches of laws) may require **formal reporting** immediately.

To file a complaint:

- Submit a letter or email to the **Complaints Coordinator** at [HR@wetlands.org](mailto:HR@wetlands.org) or send a written report to:  
**Complaints Coordinator** (Director of Resources of Wetlands International Global Office)  
email: [HR@wetlands.org](mailto:HR@wetlands.org) or  
Stichting Wetlands International  
P.O. Box 471  
6700 AL Wageningen  
The Netherlands

The letter or email of the complaint must include:

- Full name and contact details of the person reporting
- Date of the report
- A clear description of the issue
- Reasons why you believe it is a problem

### 3. What Happens Next?

a) **Acknowledgment:**

We will confirm receipt of your complaint within **5 working days**. Your complaint will also be logged in our register by the Complaints Coordinator.

b) **Processing Timeline:**

- The Complaints Coordinator aims to resolve your complaint within **6 weeks**.
- If an extension is necessary, we will inform you, with reasons, within this period. Extensions will not exceed **4 additional weeks**.

c) **Investigation:**

- The Complaints Coordinator investigates the matter unless the complaint concerns them. In that case, the CEO will handle it.
- Both you and the person(s) involved can present your case in writing or verbally. An impartial staff member will be present during any hearings to ensure fairness.
- An investigation report will summarize the findings and be shared with you, the involved party, and relevant decision-makers.

### 4. Resolution

a) **Decision:**

The Management Team reviews the investigation report and makes a decision within **2 weeks**. If the complaint concerns a member of the Management Team or Supervisory Council, judgment will be made by impartial members of Management Team and/or Supervisory Council.

b) **Outcome Notification:**

- You will receive a written explanation of the decision and any actions taken.
- The decision and hearing report will also be shared with relevant parties and archived in our complaints register by the Complaints Coordinator.

c) **Appeal Options:**

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome, you can escalate the matter to the Supervisory Council via its Chair, or contact the secretary of the branch organization Partos: [klachtencommissie@partos.nl](mailto:klachtencommissie@partos.nl). They will assess whether the complaint handling process was followed correctly.

### 5. Network office procedures and escalation

Each Network office should follow its own established **local procedures** for filing and handling complaints, in accordance with national regulations and Wetlands International's Code of Conduct. Local HR teams or designated Complaints Coordinators should ensure fair, transparent, and timely resolution of reported misconduct.

If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the local process, or if the issue requires further review due to its severity or complexity, they may escalate the matter to the **Complaints Coordinator of the Global Office** at [HR@wetlands.org](mailto:HR@wetlands.org).

### 6. Anonymously reporting of a complaint

Reports can be made **anonymously** via the independent **External Confidential Advisor**, who is not part of Wetlands International's management structure and provides impartial guidance.

#### How to report a complaint anonymously:

Submit a letter or email to the **External Confidential Advisor**:

**External Confidential Advisor: Ms. Ingrid van Wezel**

Phone: +31 (0)6 5532 6539

Email: [ivanwezel@chello.nl](mailto:ivanwezel@chello.nl)

Your letter or email should include:

- A clear description of the issue.
- Reasons why you believe it is a problem.

Anonymous reports will be handled with strict confidentiality, and no retaliatory actions will be taken against individuals making such reports.

## 7. Whistleblower Protection

Wetlands International ensures protection for whistleblowers who report corruption, serious misconduct, or legal violations. In line with Dutch whistleblower law (**Huis voor Klokkenuiders**), an employee or stakeholder is protected against retaliation if:

- The misconduct is reported internally (to the employer) or externally to a competent authority authorized to handle such complaints.
- The report is based on reasonable grounds at the time it is made.
- The whistleblower has first-hand knowledge of the misconduct and can provide supporting evidence (e.g., documents, emails, photos).

Employers are legally prohibited from taking retaliatory actions against whistleblowers, such as:

- Dismissal or demotion.
- Intimidation, bullying, or exclusion.
- Any form of coercion, intimidation, or pressure to discourage or prevent reporting misconduct.

### How to report:

Reports can be made anonymously via the **External Confidential Advisor**:

Ms. Ingrid van Wezel

Phone: +31 (0)6 5532 6539

Email: [ivanwezel@chello.nl](mailto:ivanwezel@chello.nl)

Reports can be escalated externally to the **Dutch Whistleblowers Authority**:

Email: [contact@huisvoorklokkenluiuers.nl](mailto:contact@huisvoorklokkenluiuers.nl)

Website: [huisvoorklokkenluiuers.nl](http://huisvoorklokkenluiuers.nl)

## 8. Contact information

**Complaints Coordinator (Director of Resources of Wetlands International Global Office):** [HR@wetlands.org](mailto:HR@wetlands.org)

**External Confidential Advisor:** Ms. Ingrid van Wezel

Phone: +31 (0)6 5532 6539

Email: [ivanwezel@chello.nl](mailto:ivanwezel@chello.nl)

**Dutch Whistleblowers Authority:** [contact@huisvoorklokkenluiuers.nl](mailto:contact@huisvoorklokkenluiuers.nl)

**Complaints committee Partos:** [klachtencommissie@partos.nl](mailto:klachtencommissie@partos.nl)

## 9. Transparency

A summary of all complaints and decisions is recorded in our complaints register, maintained by the Complaints Coordinator of Wetlands International Global Office.

## 10. Accountability

Wetlands International is committed to ensuring accountability in handling complaints and reports of misconduct. Regular reviews of complaint-handling processes will be conducted to maintain transparency and integrity.

Accountability measures include:

- Periodic review and updates of complaint-handling procedures.
- Monitoring compliance with Dutch legal and regulatory requirements.
- Ensuring impartiality in investigations and decision-making.
- Safeguarding complainants and whistleblowers from retaliation.

Any concerns about the complaint-handling process can be escalated to the **Supervisory Council** or external oversight bodies.

## Colophon

Wetlands International  
P.O. Box 471  
6700 AL Wageningen  
The Netherlands

Email:	<a href="mailto:post@wetlands.org">post@wetlands.org</a>
Website:	<a href="http://www.wetlands.org">www.wetlands.org</a>
Document:	Wetlands International Complaints procedure
Author:	Director of Resources
Modified:	March 2025
Available at:	<a href="http://www.wetlands.org">www.wetlands.org</a>
Adopted by:	Management Team / Supervisory Council