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# Guidelines on Complaints Handling

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**Acronyms**

**NRA:** National Regulatory Authority

**EACO:** East African Communication Organization

**ICT:** Information and Communication Technology

## I. 0 Introduction

## I.1. Background

Regulators and policy makers in the EACO member states recognise that ICTs in the region have grown in the last 20 years in size and complexity. In addition the ICT services in the region have entered a convergence environment. The above scenario, amongst other dynamic developments, has led to increased consumer complaints. While the EACO member states have developed the necessary mechanisms for complaints handling, it is imperative to harmonise the complaints procedures in the region.

The EACO Complaints handling guidelines outline minimum requirements and procedures in the region.

**I.2. Definitions of Terms**

For the purpose of these guidelines, the terms below shall be interpreted as follows:-

**“Consumer**” any person or entity that acquires ICT goods and services for final use

**“Complaint**” a formal allegation against a party

**“Service provider**” all Service providers under the regulation of a National Regulatory Authority in EAC Countries

**“Service provider”** any entity or person that holds an operating license issued by a National Regulatory Authority[[1]](#footnote-1)

**“Relevant laws”** any applicable law or regulations which a service provider must comply with.

**I. 3. Scope and Objectives**

## Scope

## These guidelines apply to all complaints with regards to ICT goods and services in the EACO member states.

1. **Objectives**

The objectives of these guidelines are:-

1. To define minimum requirements and acceptable standards for complaints handling in the EACO member states
2. To protect and promote consumer rights and interests in the region
3. To facilitate the sharing of best practice in the EACO region.
4. To facilitate the management of cross border complaints.

## 2.0 Complaints Handling Elements

Complaints handling procedures in the EACO member countries shall entail the following elements:-

 **2.1Complaints Lodging**

Consumers shall lodge their complaints with their service providers as a first port of call. Upon failure to get satisfactory redress they shall then lodge their complaints with the NRA.

The NRA may however, intervene in any complaint at any time when it is judged necessary.

 **2.2 Complaints acknowledgemen**t

NRA shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

 **2.3 Complaints Resolution**

A complaint shall be resolved within a prescribed timeframe and the complainant shall be promptly notified.

 **2.4 Cross border Complaints**

NRAs shall maintain contacts of other communications regulators in the region to facilitate the handling of cross border complaints

##  2.5. Information Required

A complaint lodged with the NRA shall provide the following of information:-

1. The full name, contact address of the complainant.
2. The party against whom the complaint is made.
3. Particulars of the nature of the complaint together with copies of any document in support of or in relation to the complaint.
4. The nature of the dissatisfaction, or the alleged harm that the complainant has suffered as a result of the action, inaction or omission of the person or utility against whom the complaint is made.
5. The relief sought by the complainant.
6. Any other information relevant to the complaint.

## Channels to lodge a complaint

NRA’ s shall provide channels to consumers to lodge complaints.

## Confidentiality of information

The information submitted to the Regulatory Authority shall be treated as confidential, unless the party marks such information as public.

## 3.0 Review of the Guidelines

 These guidelines shall be reviewed from time to time as shall be agreed by member states.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)