

# Travelife Appeals Policy and Procedure

## 1. Purpose and definition

Travelife provides a formal procedure through which companies can request reconsideration of a Travelife assessment, recognition or certification decision that directly affects them.

An **appeal** is a formal written request by a company for reconsideration of a decision relating to its Travelife Partner recognition or Travelife Certified certification.

An appeal may, for example, concern:

- an assessment or certification decision;
- a decision not to grant Travelife Partner recognition or Travelife Certified certification;
- a decision concerning identified non-conformities where these affect the recognition or certification decision;
- suspension, withdrawal or reduction of Travelife recognition or certification; or
- another formal decision directly affecting the company's Travelife recognition or certification status.

An appeal is distinct from a **complaint**. Dissatisfaction concerning Travelife services, the conduct of staff, contractors, assessors or auditors, a Travelife company, or other matters that do not constitute a request to reconsider a formal recognition or certification decision are handled under the **Travelife Complaints Procedure**.

## 2. Who may submit an appeal

An appeal may be submitted by a company that is directly affected by the Travelife decision concerned.

The company submitting the appeal is referred to as the **appellant**.

An appeal must relate to a specific Travelife assessment, recognition or certification decision. General concerns or dissatisfaction that do not concern such a decision will be handled, where applicable, under the Travelife Complaints Procedure.

Submitting an appeal does not automatically change, suspend or reverse the decision being appealed. The decision remains in effect unless and until it is revised through the appeals process.

## 3. Submitting an appeal

Appeals must be submitted in writing and should clearly identify the decision being appealed and the grounds on which reconsideration is requested.

The appeal should include:

- the name and contact details of the company;
- the assessment, certification or other decision concerned;
- the date on which the company was informed of the decision;
- the grounds for the appeal;
- an explanation of why the company considers the decision to be incorrect or should be reconsidered; and
- any relevant supporting evidence.

An appeal should be based on information relevant to the decision being challenged. New corrective actions implemented after the decision will normally be addressed through the applicable assessment or corrective-action process rather than treated as grounds for an appeal against the original decision.

Appeals should be marked “**Appeal**” and submitted by email:

**Travelife General Manager**

[info@travelife.info](mailto:info@travelife.info)

Formal appeals must be submitted in writing.

#### **4. Time limit for appeals**

An appeal must be submitted within **30 calendar days** of the company being formally notified of the decision concerned.

Where an appeal is received after this period, Travelife may determine that it is inadmissible unless there are reasonable circumstances justifying the delay.

Travelife will acknowledge receipt of an appeal within **five working days**.

Travelife will conduct an initial review to determine:

- whether the appeal was submitted by a company directly affected by the decision;
- whether it concerns a decision that can be appealed under this procedure;
- whether it was submitted within the applicable timeframe; and
- whether sufficient information has been provided to enable the appeal to be considered.

Where additional information is required, Travelife may request this from the appellant.

Where an appeal is considered inadmissible, the appellant will be informed in writing and provided with the reason for this determination.

#### **5. Internal reconsideration**

Where an appeal is admissible, Travelife will first review whether the matter can be resolved through internal reconsideration.

This review may consider:

- the assessment or audit report and supporting evidence;
- the applicable Travelife criteria and assessment requirements;
- the basis and records supporting the original decision;
- the grounds and evidence submitted by the appellant; and
- any apparent factual, administrative or procedural errors relevant to the decision.

The person responsible for the internal reconsideration must not have made the original decision being appealed. Where necessary, additional technical expertise may be obtained from persons who are independent of the original decision.

Where the internal reconsideration identifies an error or other grounds for revising the original decision, Travelife will take the appropriate action and communicate the revised outcome and reasons to the appellant in writing.

Where the appellant accepts the outcome, the appeal will be considered resolved.

## 6. Referral to the Appeals and Complaints Panel

Where an appeal **cannot be resolved through internal reconsideration**, it will be referred to the **Travelife Appeals and Complaints Panel** for independent review.

An appeal may also be referred directly to the Panel where Travelife considers that the nature of the matter makes independent consideration appropriate.

The appellant will be informed when the appeal is referred to the Panel and may be invited to provide additional information or clarification.

The Panel will consist of persons with appropriate knowledge and competence relevant to the matter being considered. Panel members must be able to consider the appeal impartially and must not have participated in the assessment, audit, review or decision that is the subject of the appeal.

Before an appeal is considered, Travelife will check for actual or potential conflicts of interest. A person with a conflict of interest, or whose impartiality could reasonably be questioned, will not participate in consideration of the appeal and will be replaced where necessary.

One Panel member will act as **Chairperson**. Administrative support may be provided by a Travelife staff member who is not involved in determining the outcome of the appeal.

## 7. Panel review and decision

The Appeals and Complaints Panel will review the decision being appealed and the information relevant to that decision.

The Panel's review may include:

- the original assessment or audit report and supporting evidence;
- the original review, recognition or certification decision and its documented basis;
- the appeal and supporting evidence submitted by the appellant;
- the outcome of the internal reconsideration;
- the applicable Travelife criteria, requirements and procedures;
- information provided by relevant assessors, auditors, reviewers or other parties; and
- any additional information considered necessary to reach an informed decision.

The Panel may request further information or clarification and establish a reasonable timeframe for its submission.

The purpose of the appeal is to determine whether the original decision was properly made on the basis of the applicable requirements and information available. The Panel will not lower or modify applicable Travelife requirements in order to resolve an appeal.

Following its review, the Panel may decide to:

- confirm the original decision;
- revise the original decision; or
- return the matter for further assessment, review or decision-making where additional consideration is required.

The Panel's decision and the reasons supporting it will be documented.

## 8. Timeframes and notification

Travelife will seek to consider and resolve appeals as soon as reasonably possible. The appellant will be kept informed of progress and advised where additional information or time is required.

Where an appeal is referred to the Appeals and Complaints Panel, Travelife will seek to complete the overall appeals process within **90 calendar days** of receiving sufficient information to consider the appeal.

Where the nature or complexity of the matter requires additional time, the appellant will be informed of the reason and the revised expected timeframe.

The appellant will be informed in writing of the final outcome, including the reasons for the decision.

Where a decision is made by the Appeals and Complaints Panel, Travelife will aim to communicate the decision within **seven working days** after the decision has been made.

## 9. Effect of an appeal

Submission of an appeal does not automatically suspend the decision being appealed.

Where an appeal results in revision of the original decision, Travelife will take the necessary action to implement the revised decision and, where applicable, update the company's recognition or certification status and related records.

Where further assessment or review is required, Travelife will inform the company of the next steps.

The outcome of an appeal will not result in discriminatory action against the appellant.

## 10. Impartiality

Appeals will be considered objectively and impartially.

Persons involved in the original assessment, audit, review or decision being appealed will not make the final decision on the appeal.

Persons participating in the Appeals and Complaints Panel must be free from conflicts of interest in relation to the appellant and the matter being considered.

Travelife will ensure that investigation of and decisions on appeals do not result in discriminatory action against the appellant.

## 11. Corrective action and follow-up

Where an appeal identifies an error, weakness or inconsistency in Travelife assessment, review, certification or decision-making processes, Travelife will consider whether corrective action or broader improvements are required.

This may include:

- correction of an assessment or certification record;
- reconsideration of an affected decision;
- clarification of criteria or assessment requirements;
- additional training or guidance;
- revision of procedures or controls; or

- other measures appropriate to the findings of the appeal.

Actions arising from appeals will be recorded and, where appropriate, followed up to verify their implementation.

## **12. Confidentiality and data protection**

Appeals and related information will be handled confidentially and disclosed only to persons who require the information for the review and resolution of the appeal, or where disclosure is required by law.

Where information needs to be disclosed to another party in order to consider an appeal fairly, only information relevant to that purpose will be shared.

Travelife will take appropriate measures to protect confidential information provided by the appellant and other parties.

Personal data will be processed in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and the **Travelife privacy policy**.

## **13. Records and review**

Travelife will maintain records of appeals and their handling, including, as applicable:

- the appeal and supporting information;
- the initial admissibility review;
- relevant correspondence;
- the original assessment, review and decision records;
- the internal reconsideration;
- referral to and consideration by the Appeals and Complaints Panel;
- the final decision and supporting reasons; and
- corrective or follow-up actions taken.

Appeal records will be retained in accordance with the applicable Travelife record-retention requirements and relevant legal obligations.

Travelife will periodically review appeals and their outcomes to identify recurring issues, risks and opportunities for improvement.

////