



**THE GOOD
CASHMERE
STANDARD**
by AbTF



THE GOOD CASHMERE STANDARD® APPEALS PROCEDURE

Version 1 (March 2024)



Contact

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This document has been issued in the following languages: English and Chinese. In case of any discrepancy between the English and the Chinese versions, the English version prevails.

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Introduction

1. According to The Good Cashmere Standard® (GCS) Verification Governance (issued in December 2021, updated in March 2024), decisions for issuing a GCS certificate for a Cashmere Producer¹ are made by GCS Verification Management. Licensing decisions are based on the outcomes of self-assessment and external verification. Cashmere Producers may appeal against a licensing decision by submitting a written application, along with objective evidence, within 15 working days of being informed of the cancellation or denial of a GCS certificate.
2. The appellant (i.e. Cashmere Producer) must submit a completed [GCS Appeals Submission Form](#) as found on the GCS website. All appeals need to include:
 - a) A clear rationale for each non-conformity being appealed; and
 - b) Detailed supporting evidence for each non-conformity being appealed.
3. Appeals are reviewed and decided by select members of GCS 's Appeals Committee, which is composed of AbTF senior management, independent third-party verifiers, and other experts deemed necessary and useful. For more information on the Appeals Committee, please refer to the [GCS Appeals Committee Guidelines](#).
4. Appeals decisions are based on a detailed review of the objective evidence provided, both from the verification visit and from the Appeals Submission Form, and must fulfil both the letter and the spirit of the criteria in the version of the Standard document valid at the time of the appeal.
5. A decision can have the following outcomes:
 - a) *Original decision overturned*: The decision being appealed against or reviewed will be changed by the GCS Verification Manager. The effect of this changed decision is explained to the appellant along with the communication of the decision.
 - b) *Original decision confirmed*: The decision being appealed against or reviewed is confirmed and will not be changed. The appellant will be informed about the decision in writing, and the reasoning behind the decision will be explained.

¹ The term cashmere producer summarizes the organisational units Buying Station and Dehairing Station.



Appeals Procedure

Process stage	Responsible	Required actions
1. Appeal submitted	Appellant (Cashmere Producer)	<p>1a. The Cashmere Producer completes the appeal using the Appeals Submission Form available on the GCS website in English and Chinese.</p> <p>1b. The Cashmere Producer emails the appeal to complaints@abt-foundation.org with the supporting documents.</p> <p>Appeals must be submitted within 15 working days of the Cashmere Producer being informed of the licensing decision.</p>
2. Appeal received and checked for eligibility	GCS Verification Management	<p>2a. AbTF confirms to the appellant that the appeal has been received.</p> <p>2b. AbTF assesses the eligibility of the appeal, i.e. checks whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been submitted by a Cashmere Producer; • The correct template has been used; • It has been submitted within 15 working days of the Cashmere Producer having received the licensing decision; • The Appeals Submission Form has been sufficiently completed; and • Evidence is provided for each appealed criteria assessment made by the auditors. <p>2c. If the appeal is not eligible, the Cashmere Producer is informed and may submit the appeal one more time within five working days.</p> <p>2d. If necessary, eligible appeals will be translated into English (in co-ordination with the GCS Verification Manager).</p>
3. Appeal processed	GCS Appeals Committee	<p>3a. AbTF appoints three or more select members of the Appeals Committee to join the case-specific Appeal Task Force to review and decide on the submission. Members of the Appeal Task Force are selected based on local knowledge and availability; AbTF ensures that selected members are free from any direct conflict of interest.</p> <p>3b. The Appeal Task Force confirms availability and receives the full appeal submission package from AbTF, including the appeal submission and all relevant documentation (self-assessment, third-party indicator assessment, and verification report).</p>
4. Appeal decision made	GCS Appeal Task Force	<p>4a. The Appeal Task Force has a minimum of five working days to review the materials received.</p>



		<p>4b. The GCS Verification Management schedules and co-ordinates a virtual meeting of the Appeal Task Force.</p> <p>4c. The Appeal Task Force evaluates the appeal and reaches a decision.</p> <p>4d. The Appeal Task Force documents the decision in writing, including its rationale.</p>
<p>5. Notification of the appeal decision provided</p>	<p>GCS Verification Management</p>	<p>5a. The decision is communicated to the appellant via email. All decisions made by the Appeal Task Force are final.</p> <p>GCS aims to communicate final decisions to the appellant within 25 working days of receiving an (eligible) appeal submission.</p>

Related Documents

The following documents supplement the Appeals Procedure document and can be found on the GCS website:

- GCS Manual
- GCS Appeals Submission Form
- GCS Appeals Committee Guidelines

AID BY TRADE FOUNDATION

The Good Cashmere Standard[®] by AbTF is an independent standard for sustainably produced cashmere wool. Developed in 2019 in close collaboration with animal welfare specialists and independent cashmere-production experts, its goal is to improve the welfare of cashmere goats, the lives of the farmers, and the condition of the environment in which they live. The standard focuses on cashmere production in Inner Mongolia (China). The standard is administered by Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF), founded by Prof. Dr. Michael Otto in 2005.

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