

Grievances Policy

Policy Name	WEF Grievances Policy
Policy Category	Legal
Policy Number	2008-001
Policy Origination and Review Dates	July, 2008; Sept 2018; June, 2023
Requirements	Not required by state or federal statutes
Review Cycle	5 years
Legal Review Required	Yes

A. General Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Water Environment Federation to provide a means for its members to address grievances.

A grievance is defined as a complaint **against WEF** where the WEF member feels that they have been wronged or treated unfairly by WEF (real or perceived) as a result of interpretation, application of, or compliance with the provisions of WEF Bylaws or policies (except for this Grievance Policy). This Grievance Policy addresses complaints **against WEF**; complaints against another WEF member are covered in WEF's Code of Conduct and Member Discipline Policy.

B. Petition

Any member of WEF is entitled to present a written grievance petition. A Member Association may also act on its own behalf or on the behalf of one of its members (who is also a member of WEF) to present a written grievance petition. To be considered, petitions must be presented in writing to WEF's Executive Director no later than 30 days from a) the date of occurrence, or b) knowledge of the action, facts, or circumstances on which the member's or MA's grievance is based. If it is not possible, or not appropriate to provide the petition to WEF's Executive Director, it may be presented in writing to WEF's President.

The written petition must summarize the reason(s) for the grievance and, if possible, a statement as to what remedy the complaining member or MA ("complainant") seeks. If the complainant requests a hearing in the petition, the complainant will be responsible for any expenses outside of the normal course of WEF business incurred by holding a hearing.

C. Handling of Grievances

1. Documentation and Confidentiality

The Executive Director will be responsible for documenting the grievance and resolution and for maintaining records in accordance with WEF's document retention policies. If the Executive Director is implicated in the grievance, the WEF President will document the grievance and resolution and provide the appropriate WEF staff with records to maintain. While WEF seeks to handle all grievances with the appropriate level of confidentiality, the degree with which confidentiality may be maintained may need to vary with the specifics of the situation.

2. Process and Timing

While the specific details of processes and timing required for a grievance petition may be tailored to the situation, petitions flow through several steps (as follow) and are generally answered in a period of 90 to 180 days from receipt of the petition:

a. Determination of Who Handles:

Upon timely receipt of a petition, the WEF Executive Director, in consultation with the WEF President, will determine if the grievance will be:

- i. **Resolved by the Executive Director:** If the President and Executive Director determine that the grievance can be resolved by the Executive Director, they will notify the Board that the petition was received and how it is being handled.
- ii. **Referred to the Bylaws Subcommittee/Committee or to another committee selection for resolution:** The President will select the subcommittee/committee that will receive the petition referral. If the grievance involved the President, or any of the members of the committee the President selected for referral of the petition, the Executive Director shall make a referral or designate a substitute subcommittee/committee (but only for the purposes of the grievance).

Individuals participating in resolution of a grievance petition must be free of conflicts of interest. If a conflict of interest exists, it will be handled according to the WEF Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy.

b. Review and Response

The details of the grievance will be reviewed by those assigned to resolve and answer the petition; review meetings are typically held virtually. If requested in the petition, the complainant shall be entitled to a hearing, at the convenience of those assigned to handle the petition, prior to the rendering of an answer. Receipt of the petition and request for a hearing, if any, shall be acknowledged and recorded in any meeting minutes or other

petition documentation and maintained in WEF files by the Executive Director. Hearings are typically conducted via a virtual/teleconference connection in conjunction with a review meeting and limited to a 30 minute discussion. As stated previously, any expenses outside of the normal course of WEF business for a requested hearing shall be borne by the complainant.

The grievance shall be answered in writing by the Executive Director or the committee to which the petition was referred; a copy of the response will be documented in WEF files and the Board will be notified of how the petition was resolved. Responses will be made upon due consideration of all the relevant facts and circumstances pertaining to the grievance and will set forth the reasons upon which the determination is based.

D. Appeal

Within 10 days of the receipt of WEF's response to the petition, the complainant may, if desired, make a written appeal to the Board requesting that the grievance be considered further. If an appeal is received by the Board, the Board, at its next regularly scheduled meeting, shall consider the appeal and render a decision supporting, reversing, or modifying the resolution documented in the response to the grievance petition. The decision will be made by majority vote and will constitute final judgment.

E. Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation against a grievance petition filed, as outlined in this policy, is a serious violation of this policy, and will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with applicable policies. No individual will be subject to harassment, intimidation or any type of retaliation because they have: (1) filed a grievance petition; (2) assisted or participated in resolution of a grievance petition. Acts of retaliation related to a grievance petition should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated and addressed.