



Standardised Complaints Handling Guidelines for the Electricity Supply Industry

October 2015

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Rationale

The Complaints Handling Guidelines are designed to set a standard for Licensees to handle complaints in relation to their obligations under the Electricity Act and relevant Regulations. These Guidelines provide for best practice in complaints handling among Licensees.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of these Guidelines is to standardise complaints handling mechanism across all Licensees. The Guidelines streamline complaints handling mechanism to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, objectivity, fairness, consistency and transparency.

These Guidelines will enable Licensees to:

- a) Deliver customer satisfaction;
- b) Improve complaints handling with emphasis on efficiency, effectiveness, objectivity, fairness, consistency and transparency; and,
- c) Continuously review and evaluate their complaints handling processes with the aim of improving efficiency.

The Guidelines will also enable ERA to:

- a) Establish a standardised complaints management system across all Licensees that will generate reports for informative analyses to aid in decision making.
- b) Study and monitor the trends of Complaints registered with Licensees, with the aim of making informative analysis to aid in decision making; and,

1.3 Legal Framework

These Guidelines are developed pursuant to section 10(i) of the Electricity Act, Cap 145, 1999 which mandates ERA to develop and enforce performance standards for the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity, and Section 10 (j) of the Act which requires ERA to develop uniform electricity industry standards and codes of conduct. Additionally, Section 10(q) authorises ERA to approve codes of conduct in

respect of the operation of transmission and distribution systems. ERA has therefore developed these Guidelines to set uniform standards for Licensees in complaints handling.

2.0 Citation, Commencement and Extent

These Guidelines may be cited as the Standardised Complaints Handling Guidelines for the Electricity Supply Industry, 2015 and shall come into force in October 2015 and apply to all Licensed electricity distribution companies in accordance with the Electricity Act, 1999 Cap 145, Laws of Uganda.

3.0 Interpretation

In these Guidelines:

“Applicant” means a consumer requiring to be supplied with electricity;

“The Act” means “The Electricity Act, 1999, Chapter 145, Laws of Uganda;

“The Authority” means the Electricity Regulatory Authority established under Section 4 of the Electricity Act, 1999, Chapter 145, Laws of Uganda;

“Channels of Communication” means various forms/media through which Complaints may be submitted to Licensees.

“Complaint” means a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about an action, proposed action, or failure to act by a Licensee or retail seller, its employees or contractors;

“Complainant” means a person making a Complaint;

“Complaints Handling Procedure” means a procedure which complies with Regulation 21.1 of the Electricity Primary Grid Code Regulations, 2003 and Regulation 13 of the Electricity Quality of Service Code Regulations, 2003;

“Complaints report” means the report prepared and published in accordance with Guideline 11 under these Guidelines;

“Consumer” means any person supplied or entitled to be supplied with electrical energy for personal, industrial and commercial use but does not include a person supplied with electrical energy for delivery to another person;

“ERA” means the Electricity Regulatory Authority;

“License” means a License issued under the Electricity Act, 1999, Chapter 145 Laws of Uganda;

“Licensee” means the holder of a Licence under the Electricity Act, 1999, Chapter 145, Laws of Uganda;

“Redress scheme” means a redress channel in accordance with Regulation 21.1 of the Primary Grid Code Regulations, 2003;

“Resolved complaint” means a Complaint in respect of which there remains no outstanding action to be taken by the Licensee and which has been resolved to the satisfaction of the Complainant or on whose behalf that Complaint was made;

“Tribunal” means the Electricity Disputes Tribunal established under section 93 of the Electricity Act, 199, Chapter 145, Laws of Uganda;

“Unresolved complaint” means a Complaint which has been received by a Licensee and whose details have been or should have been recorded by that Licensee;

“Vulnerable Consumer” means a person in need of special care, support, or protection;

“Business day” means a day, other than a Saturday, Sunday, or public holiday;

4.0 Licensees' Complaints Handling Procedures

4.1 A Licensee must have in place at all times a Complaints Handling Procedure approved by the Authority.

4.2 Each Licensee must comply with its Complaints Handling Procedure in relation to each Complaint it receives.

4.3 Each Licensee's Complaints Handling Procedure must:

- a) Be in plain and understandable language;
- b) Allow for Complaints to be made through various Channels of Communication;
- c) Allow for Complaints to be progressed through each stage of the Complaints Handling Process orally (by telephone or in person at the Licensee's business premises), SMS or in writing (email, letters and social media);
- d) Describe the steps which the Licensee will take with a view to investigate and resolve a complaint and the likely timescales for each of those steps. These timescales must be in accordance with the Act.
- e) Provide for an internal review of an unresolved Complaint where a Complainant is dissatisfied with the handling of that Complaint.
- f) Describe the Complainant's right to refer a Complaint to an alternative redress scheme if they are dissatisfied with the resolution:
 - i. On and from the point at which the Licensee receives a Complaint; and,
 - ii. After the Licensee has resolved the Complaint;
- g) Inform Complainants of the names and contact details of the Electricity Regulatory Authority and / or the Tribunal in cases where Complainants are dissatisfied with the solution arrived at by the Licensee; and,
- h) Offer the Complainant:
 - i. an apology where necessary;
 - ii. an explanation;
 - iii. the appropriate remedial action to be taken by the Licensee; and,
 - iv. the award of compensation in accordance with the Electricity Act and relevant Regulations.

4.4 Licensees must include in their Complaints Handling Procedures, as a remedy, the award of compensation to Consumers, in appropriate cases, where a Consumer has been adversely affected by a failure of that Licensee to comply with its obligations under, respectively, standard conditions in the Electricity Act, 1999, Chapter 145, Laws of Uganda, relevant Regulations and Standards and the License.

5.0 Recording complaints upon receipt

Upon receipt of a Complaint a Licensee must record with the following details:

- a) the date that the Complaint was received;
- b) the Channel of Communication used to lodge the Complaint;
- c) the identity and contact details of the Complainant or on whose behalf the Complaint is made;
- d) the area of residence of the Complainant;
- e) a summary of the Complaint;
- f) a summary of any advice given or action taken or agreed upon in relation to the Complaint; and,
- g) Whether the Complaint has been resolved and the basis for resolution.
- h) In cases of unresolved Complaints, the Licensee must record the steps taken to handle the Complaint and upon resolution, the time taken to resolve the Complaint and the solution offered.
- i) A copy of the record must be given to the Complainant

6.0 Referring Consumers to the redress scheme

6.1 The Licensee must send a Complainant a written notice informing them of the matters addressed in Guideline 5.0.

6.2 A notice sent in accordance with Guideline 6.1 must notify the Complainant:

- (a) of their right to refer the Complaint to available redress schemes;
- (b) that the redress scheme process is independent of the Licensee;
- (c) that the redress scheme process is free of charge to the Complainant; and,

(d) that the Complainant may refer their Complaint to the Authority or the Tribunal.

7.0 Allocation and maintenance of adequate resources for complaints handling

Each Licensee must;

- (a) Receive, handle and process Complaints in an efficient and timely manner; and,
- (b) Allocate and maintain such level of resources as may reasonably be required to enable that Licensee to receive, handle and process Complaints in an efficient and timely manner and in accordance with these Guidelines.

8.0 Vulnerable Consumer

If the Licensee receives a Vulnerable Consumer, that Licensee must take such additional steps as it considers necessary or appropriate with a view to assist that Vulnerable Consumer and resolve the Complaint in an appropriate and prompt manner.

9.0 Information to be provided to consumers

9.1 Each Licensee must ensure that its Complaints Handling Procedure is displayed at a clear and prominent location on all premises that interface with Consumers and the website.

9.2 Each Licensee must, at least once in every twelve-month period, inform all its Consumers of the existence of its Complaints Handling Procedure and how a Complainant may obtain a copy of it.

10.0 Follow up

10.1 Where a Complainant claims to have made a Complaint in respect of a matter but it is not possible to identify a Complaint, the Licensee must record the fact that it is unable to trace the Complaint.

10.2 Where a Licensee has recorded that a Complaint it is resolved but subsequent contact from a Complainant in relation to that Complaint indicates that it is not resolved, the Licensee:

- a) must record details of this change in the complaint's status in its recording system;
- b) must as soon as reasonably practicable after becoming aware of the fact that the Complaint is not resolved;
 - i. direct the Complainant to the Complaints Handling Procedure for redress; and,
 - ii. offer to provide a copy of the Complaints Handling Procedure to the Complainant free of charge.
- c) must take account of that Complaint in any report which it is obliged to prepare and publish in accordance with Guideline 11; and,
- d) shall not otherwise be entitled to treat that Complaint as a resolved Complaint for the purposes of these Guidelines until that complaint is demonstrably resolved.

11.0 Publication of information on Complaints

11.1 Licensees who hold a License under the Act must:

- a) publish quarterly Complaints report at a prominent location on their website;

12.0 Reporting to ERA

Licensees must provide monthly Complaints reports to ERA. These reports must be in a format stipulated by ERA in the form attached under Annex 2.

ANNEX 1 - EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Guidelines)

These Guidelines prescribe standards for the handling of Complaints by Licensees and for the supply of electricity to Consumers about the prescribed standards and levels of compliance with those standards.

The Guidelines come into force in October 2015

Guideline 1 provides for the Rationalisation, Purpose and Legal Framework of these Guidelines

Guideline 2 provides for the Citation, Commencement and Extent of these Guidelines

Guideline 3 provides for Complaints Handling Procedures

Guideline 4 specifies the information about Complaints that must be recorded by Licensees upon receipt of such Complaints

Guideline 5 specifies the information that must be recorded by Licensees about Complaints that have not been resolved

Guideline 6 requires Licensees to inform Consumers in writing of the Consumer's right to refer the Complaint to the redress scheme;

- a) when the Licensee realises that the Complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the Consumer; or ,
- b) the expiry of the time period that the Licensee has to resolve the Complaint.

Guideline 7 sets out how Licensees should deal with Complaints and requires that they allocate sufficient resources to enable them to do so.

Guideline 8 requires Licensees to establish arrangements for Vulnerable consumers

Guideline 9 describes information that should be provided to Consumers

Guideline 10 requires Licensees who hold supply Licences to prepare and publish a quarterly report concerning their Complaints Handling Procedure, mentioning the

existence of the Guidelines and setting out certain details concerning the Complaints they have received from Consumers during the relevant period.

Guideline 11 provides for reporting to ERA

ANNEX 2 - PROPOSED COMPLAINT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Name of Distribution Company	Category of Complaints Level 1	Category of Complaints Level 2	Status of Complaints		Average Turnaround Time
			No of Resolved Complaints	No of Pending Complaints	
	Connection to the Grid	Delayed New connection			
		Disconnection			
		Delayed Reconnection			
		Other			
	Metering	Meter reading			
		Meter malfunctioning			
		Other			
	Billing	Fraud billing			
		Estimated billing			
		Over billing			
		Delayed billing			
		Other			
		Planned Interruption			

Name of Distribution Company	Category of Complaints Level 1	Category of Complaints Level 2	Status of Complaints		Average Turnaround Time
			No of Resolved Complaints	No of Pending Complaints	
	Supply Interruption	Unplanned interruption			
		Other			
	Quality of Supply	Voltage Fluctuation			
		Other			
		Broken poles			
		Faulty Transformer			
		Line maintenance			
		Other			
	Way leave	Trespassing			
		Compensation			
		Other			
	Customer Service	Frontline staff			
		Field staff			
		Other			
	Loading Units	Token load failure			
		Mobile money facilities			
		Inadequate units			

