



Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
Customer Service Charter
Rev – December 2015

Introduction

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), established by Government under the Sustainable Energy Act 2002, has a mission to play a leading role in transforming Ireland into a society based on sustainable energy structures, technologies and practices.

SEAI's key objectives are: implementing strong energy-efficiency actions, accelerating the development and adoption of technologies to exploit renewable energy sources, supporting innovation and enterprise for our low-carbon future, and supporting evidence-based responses that engage all actors.

SEAI is here to help every energy user in Ireland – homeowners and businesses, farmers and food outlets, schools and hospitals. We do this by raising awareness and providing information, advice and publicity on best practice; stimulating research and development; advising on energy policy and publishing energy statistics.

You'll find up-to-date information about our activities, as well as advice and tips, on our website at www.seai.ie

SEAI's Values

Excellence

We strive for excellence in all our work and our results; we aim for best international practice in our programmes and systems.

Innovation

We maintain a creative and adaptive stance in what we do and in the policies and programmes we develop.

Ambition

We are ambitious for SEAI and for Ireland in pursuit of our mission. We want to increase our influence and our contribution to national policy goals.

Effectiveness

We are result-orientated and will transparently measure our performance against our goals.

Integrity

We are fair and balanced in our decisions and our actions. We properly value all stakeholders.

Authority

We are independent in the exercise of our authority and in the discharge of our functions.

Achieving these aims requires SEAI to be a flexible and efficient organisation with the highest standards of corporate governance, risk management, information technology, and human and financial resource management. In the performance of its functions, SEAI will maintain a strong public service ethos and will achieve the highest standards of governance and compliance with The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2009).

Customer Service Commitment

In developing this Customer Service Charter and Customer Action Plan (CAP), SEAI gave due regard to its organisational values, listed above as well as the twelve principles of Quality Customer Service, namely:

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Quality Service Standards | 7 | Appeals |
| 2 | Equality/Diversity | 8 | Consultation and Evaluation |
| 3 | Physical Access | 9 | Choice |
| 4 | Information | 10 | Official Languages Equality |
| 5 | Timeliness and Courtesy | 11 | Better Co-ordination |
| 6 | Complaints | 12 | Internal Customer |

SEAI is committed to providing a quality service to its customers. This Customer Service Action Plan sets out our approach to achieving this commitment.

SEAI Customer Service Charter

SEAI's COMMITMENT TO YOU

- i. Deliver our services to all customers, internal and external, in a timely, effective and professional manner, and in accordance with our values.
- ii. Conduct our business in a fair, open and transparent manner, with regard to your privacy and confidentiality.
- iii. Strive for excellence in the development and delivery of programmes and services through active consultation and continuous improvement.
- iv. Committed to providing maximum possible access and choice in the delivery of our services, while endeavouring to accommodate particular language, diversity and physical access needs.
- v. Provide accurate, authoritative and independent advice and information in a form that best suits your needs.
- vi. Resolve all complaints in an efficient and effective manner.

Customer Action Plan

i. In order to deliver our services to all customers in a timely, effective and professional manner, and in accordance with our values we will:

- Ensure that the Customer Action Plan is readily available to all clients.
- For customers who telephone SEAI, we will ensure that staff:
 - Answer your call promptly.
 - Give their full name when answering the phone.
 - Are helpful and courteous.
 - Are available to answer calls during normal working hours or options to leave a voicemail or divert to another staff member will be made available.
 - Respond to all voicemail messages promptly or at least within the same working day.
- All customers who visit SEAI will be:
 - Received promptly and if you don't have an appointment we will do our best to accommodate you
 - All visitors will be treated in fairly and in a courteous manner
- For customers who communicate with SEAI by letter or email, we will:
 - Acknowledge receipt of all correspondence promptly and, where an immediate response is not possible, send an interim reply indicating when you can expect a definitive response
 - Ensure that all replies carry a contact name, telephone number and/or email address
- SEAI is committed to respect for the environment in the delivery of all our services.

ii. As we conduct our business in a fair, open and transparent manner, with regard to your privacy and confidentiality we will:

- Endeavour to ensure full access to information about our services while complying with the Freedom of Information Acts 1997-2003 and Data Protection Acts 1988-2003.
- Identify clearly respondents and their contact details on all correspondence.
- Ensure openness, fairness and transparency is central to all our funding and procurement decisions.
- Ensure all documentation is user friendly with clear and appropriate language.
- Handle client information and meetings with due regard to privacy, confidentiality and sensitivity.
- Identify all funded projects in the SEAI annual report.

iii. In striving for excellence in the development and delivery of programmes and services through active consultation and continuous improvement we will:

- Consult with our customers on the development of new programmes and services through events, surveys, open communication and feedback.
- Continuously seek the views of our stakeholders on the relevance and quality of services and programmes we provide.
- Seek feedback via our website regarding the level of customer satisfaction.

iv. In our commitment to provide maximum possible access and choice in the delivery of our services, while endeavouring to accommodate particular language, diversity and physical access needs we will:

- Continue to make it easier and more convenient to do business with us.
- Provide an appropriate variety of communication channels including the use of electronic, print, media, private meetings and public events. L

- Endeavour to ensure that we make the best use of available and emerging technologies to facilitate improved access to information and improved choice for customers through the development of more online services.
- Comply with the Official Languages Act 2003- Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003.
- Ensure that all publications are available online.
- Continue to ensure our web facility is accessible to the visually impaired.
- Ensure that offices comply with occupational and safety standards.
- Accommodate the diverse needs of our clients in an appropriate manner.
- Recognise and respect all customers equally with regard to service delivery.

v. To ensure that we provide accurate, authoritative and independent advice and information in a form that best suits your needs we will:

- Fulfil our role as an advisory body to Government and stakeholders.
- Employ professional experts to provide accurate and authoritative information. They will be responsible for gathering and analysing statistics, conducting appropriate research and provide consultative services. In our position as a non-commercial state authority, with a market and policy remit, we will remain independent in all dealings with clients.

vi. Resolving all complaints in an efficient and effective manner

- Formalise a complaints and appeals procedure indicating how we will deal with complaints.
- Publicise this complaints procedure on our website. Copies can be sent via post or email.
- Continue to assess our complaints procedure on a six monthly basis. This will include a review of:
 - Number of complaints received
 - Speed of resolution of complaints
 - Pattern of repeat complaints

Consultation:

Endeavour to satisfy customer's information requirements by actively seeking customer views and suggestions, through market research, regular consultation, surveys and supplying an accessible feedback mechanism for customers.

Evaluation:

In order to measure our success in achieving the above we will:

- Perform a six monthly review of the plan.
- Seek feedback from stakeholders and customers on the quality of our service.
- Seek feedback through all available channels regarding our programmes and services.
- Review and assess feedback and act accordingly.
- Investigate appropriate externally recognised standards and seek to attain such standards.

Reporting:

We will report on our performance in our Annual Report which is also available online at www.seai.ie/publications.

Complaints and Appeals Procedure

SEAI at all times seeks to deliver an efficient and effective service to its customers. We endeavour to give no grounds for complaint about any of our administrative actions or procedures. Nevertheless, things do go wrong. We believe that our customers have a right of complaint if a reasonable level and quality of service is not provided. All complaints will be dealt with in a fair and sympathetic manner.

Scope of this Procedure

This procedure is to guide members of the public through SEAI's complaints process.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

This procedure concerns complaints or appeals relating to delays, mistakes, instances where you did not receive the level of service you feel you are entitled to and decisions with which you are dissatisfied.

You can complain about things like:

- the quality and standard of any service we provide;
- the quality of our facilities;
- the quality and standards of administrative processes.

Your complaint may involve more than one of SEAI's services or be about someone working on our behalf.

What issues are not covered?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service;
- matters which are the subject of litigation;
- a request under freedom of information or data protection legislation;
- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice;
- requests for compensation from SEAI;
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following an investigation. If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Office of the Ombudsman for an independent review of the complaint.
- actions of staff which are not related to their role in SEAI.

A complaint will not be dealt with should the complaint be considered to be trivial or frivolous. Should this be the case, the Information Officer will advise you of SEAI's views in respect of this and will not deal any further with the complaint.

If the complaint is considered to be vexatious SEAI's may choose to limit or cease correspondence with you. This decision will require the authorisation of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and will be recorded as part of the record of complaint.

Unreasonable, vexatious or abusive complainants, along with threats or abuse of staff will not be tolerated and, where appropriate, will be referred to An Garda Síochána.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by the services of SEAI can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf you will need their personal written consent.

How do I complain?

If you wish to make a complaint about the actions of SEAI or if you wish to appeal an SEAI decision the following is the procedure you need to follow:-

- All complaints or appeals must be made in writing and sent by email to info@seai.ie or by post to the Information Officer (see address details below). The SEAI Complaint Form can be used and is available [here](#).
- When complaining, tell us:
 - your full name and address (in certain cases we may ask for proof of identity);
 - as much as you can about the complaint;
 - what has gone wrong;
 - how you want us to resolve the matter.
- **1st Line:** On receipt, your complaint will be logged into SEAI's Complaint Register (CRM) and assigned to the relevant Programme Manager. The Programme Manager will review your complaint and will reply to you within 2 working days of receiving it. If you feel that the response from the Programme Manager is not satisfactory, you can appeal this decision to the Head of Programme.
- **2nd line:** The Head of Programme will review the matter and will revert to you within 5 working days. If you feel that you are still not satisfied with this decision, you will be able to request an internal review from the Head of Finance and Corporate Services ("HoF").
- **3rd line:** The Information Officer will acknowledge your request, on behalf of the HoF, within 5 working days of receiving the request and will advise you of the likely timeframe to receiving a response (which will be made within 20 working days of receipt of original request).

If it is not possible for the HoF to deal with your complaint within 20 working days, a communication will be sent to you stating the reason for the additional time requirement and will include a progress report.

A full investigation into the complaint will be carried out by the HoF. If the complaint relates to the Finance and Corporate Services then the review will be made by another Manager of same level.

On completion of the investigation, a report will be prepared and a response will be sent to you.

The response will:

- contain an account of the dispute at hand;
- address the issues outlined in your submission;
- where appropriate, the response will include a proposed remedy; and
- contain a notification of your right to internal review by The Chief Executive Officer.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome or handling of your complaint, you may request in writing that the matter be escalated internally to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

- **4th line:** The Information Officer will acknowledge you request, on behalf of the CEO, within 5 working days of receiving it and you will be advised of the likely timeframe to a receiving a response (which will be made within 20 working days of receipt of original request).

The CEO will implement a review process and will review all relevant reports and examine the complaint carefully.

On completion of his/her review, a response and proposed remedy (if appropriate) will be issued to you. The CEO's decision will constitute SEAI's final decision on your complaint. If you are not satisfied with the CEO's final decision, you may refer your complaint (and our replies) to the Ombudsman or Ombudsman for Children, as appropriate, for consideration.

SEAI Contact details

Any complaints and requests for appeals should be made in writing and addressed to:

Information Officer
SEAI
Wilton Park House
Wilton Place
Dublin 2
Email: info@seai.ie

Office of the Ombudsman

If you feel that you have been unfairly treated or are not satisfied with our decision on your complaint, it is open to you to contact the Office of the Ombudsman. By law the Ombudsman can investigate complaints about any of our administrative actions or procedures as well as delays or inaction in your dealings with us. The Ombudsman provides an impartial, independent and free dispute resolution service.

Contact details are as follows:

Office of the Ombudsman
18 Lower Leeson Street
Dublin 2

Tel: Lo-call 1890 22 30 30
Tel: 01 639 5600
Fax: 01 639 5674
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie
Website: www.ombudsman.ie

Ombudsman for Children's Office

If you are a child or young person under 18 or an adult who knows a child who you feel has been unfairly treated, or you are not satisfied with our decision on your complaint, it is open to you to contact the Ombudsman for Children's Office. By law the Ombudsman for Children's Office can investigate complaints about any of our administrative actions or procedures as well as delays or inaction in dealings with us. The Ombudsman for Children provides an impartial, independent and free complaints handling service.

Contact details are as follows:

Ombudsman for Children's Office
52-56 Great Strand Street
Dublin 1

Free Phone: 1800 20 20 40
Email: ococomplaint@oco.ie
Website: www.oco.ie