



MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, TRADE & INDUSTRIES, SOKOTO

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM FOR INTERSTATE MOVEMENT OF GOODS

Introduction

This Service Level Agreement (SLA) highlights Sokoto State Government's commitment in respect of the Establishment of a Grievance Redress Mechanism. This sets forth the operational blueprint for implementing and managing the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) within Sokoto State. This SLA was jointly developed by the Sokoto State Ministry of Commerce, Trade & Industries in collaboration with the Sokoto State Internal Revenue Service and the Sokoto State Ministry of Justice. The goal is to fortify coordination and ensure clarity in the process of addressing complaints concerning the interstate movement of goods.

1. Purpose of the SLA

This SLA provides a structured framework for the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). Its primary goal is to foster efficient communication and achieve swift resolution of grievances arising from the interstate movement of goods. It guarantees that all relevant parties have access to a clear, equitable, and accountable process for submitting complaints.

2. Applicability

This SLA governs all procedures pertaining to the interstate movement of goods and is binding on the Ministry of Commerce, Trade & Industries, in concert with all cooperating agencies.

3. Policy Principles

Commitment to Openness: The State Government is dedicated to nurturing an effective, impartial, and transparent environment for trade. The institution of the GRM forms a vital part of this larger effort to sustain harmonious relationships among stakeholders, including merchants, taxpayers, and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

Institutional Synergy: The GRM will function through close cooperation between the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism, the Sokoto State Internal Revenue Service, and the Ministry of Justice. This collaboration is essential to guarantee adherence to legal standards, uphold fiscal integrity, and ensure fair enforcement practices.

Client-Centric Approach: The design of the GRM prioritizes the needs and expectations of businesses. It aims to cultivate trust and promote active involvement by offering responsive and easily accessible channels for grievance resolution.

4. Key Objectives

- ✓ To institute a uniform and clear procedure for stakeholders to voice their grievances.
- ✓ To ensure the prompt and effective settlement of complaints, thereby enhancing stakeholder satisfaction.
- ✓ To advance transparency and accountability in managing all submitted grievances.
- ✓ To gather and analyze data on complaints to inform future policy refinements.
- ✓ To strengthen inter-institutional cooperation in tackling grievances related to trade barriers across state lines, illicit roadblocks, and unauthorized collections.

5. GRM Contact Details

Helpline: A dedicated and operational telephone line for both voice calls and text messaging is available for submitting grievances.

Electronic Mail: A specific email address has been allocated for the submission of complaints.

Web Portal: An accessible online platform is provided for lodging and monitoring the progress of grievances.

Physical Submission: Complaint forms can be submitted in person at the Ministry and other designated offices of the Internal Revenue Service located across critical touchpoints.

6. Grievance Submission Protocol

All complaints related to the movement of goods across states—such as processing delays, harassment at inspection points, documentation errors or unauthorized charges must adhere to the following submission process:

A. Documentation of Complaint: The following details must be provided in the submission:

- ✓ Date the complaint was filed.
- ✓ Name of the individual/entity submitting the complaint.
- ✓ Contact information: email address and/or telephone number.
- ✓ Registration number of the vehicle.
- ✓ Category of the complaint.
- ✓ Detailed account of the complaint (e.g., undue pressure, demands for unauthorized payments, or other non-monetary requests).
- ✓ Inclusion of any pertinent supporting evidence.
- ✓ Estimated financial loss.
- ✓ Identification of the official or party allegedly responsible.
- ✓ Desired date for a resolution response.

B. Documentation of Response:

- ✓ Name of the Complainant.
- ✓ Contact Information.
- ✓ Date of the original complaint.
- ✓ Type/Category of the complaint.
- ✓ Status of the incident (e.g., pending review, ongoing inquiry, successfully concluded).
- ✓ Date the resolution was communicated.
- ✓ Specific mechanism of redress utilized.
- ✓ Details of the action taken for resolution.

7. Resolution Timeframes

All collaborating government agencies are responsible for ensuring coordinated efforts to meet the defined deadlines, using the following criteria:

- ✓ **Acknowledgement of Complaint:** Submissions will be formally acknowledged within three (3) working days of their receipt.
- ✓ **Initiation of Investigation:** The investigative process will begin within seven (7) working days from the date of acknowledgement.
- ✓ **Full Resolution Period:** All grievances are to be fully resolved within thirty (30) working days from the initial date of receipt.
- ✓ **Communication of Outcome:** Complainants will be notified of the final outcome and any remedial actions within the specified period

8. Performance Indicators

Inter-agency performance will be reviewed on a regular basis to gauge the effectiveness of the collaborative effort between the Ministry, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Ministry of Justice in settling grievances.

Resolution Success Rate: A minimum of fifty percent (60%) of all grievances must be resolved within the prescribed timeframes.

Reporting Metrics: The following data points will be consistently tracked and recorded:

- ✓ Total count of complaints received.
- ✓ Number of complaints successfully resolved.
- ✓ Number of pending or unresolved complaints.
- ✓ Classification of complaints and the corrective measures implemented.
- ✓ Service Quality: Satisfaction surveys will be conducted periodically to measure stakeholders' perception of the grievance resolution process.

9. Definition of Grievance

Interstate Movement-Related Grievance: A grievance is defined as any issue or concern raised by goods transporters, merchants, or logistics providers regarding non-adherence to approved procedures governing

the interstate movement of goods. This includes, but is not limited to, harassment, demands for unauthorized payments, processing delays at border control points, or the failure of officials to issue valid receipts.

10. **Communication with the Complainant**

Upon acknowledging the complaint, the complainant must be provided with the following information:

- ✓ A unique grievance tracking number for monitoring and follow-up.
- ✓ The anticipated date for resolution.
- ✓ Information on the recourse available if the matter is not addressed by the expected date.
- ✓ If the grievance is delayed beyond the anticipated resolution time, the personnel responsible for receiving the complaints must provide the complainant with an explanation for the delay. The updated expected date for resolution.
- ✓ A clear statement of the action the complainant can take if the revised deadline is missed.
- ✓ Once the final resolution is delivered, the office responsible for grievance redress will provide the complainant with a detailed account of the remedial action taken and information on the available channels for pursuing the matter further if the resolution is deemed unsatisfactory.

11. **Grievance Redressal**

Confirmation of Receipt: An acknowledgement will be dispatched to the complainant within three (3) days of receiving the grievance, confirming receipt and outlining the subsequent steps.

If a grievance is deemed ineligible for review, the complainant will be informed accordingly, along with the precise reasons for the decision.

12. **Investigation Phase**

For all eligible grievances, a comprehensive inquiry will be undertaken by the Grievance Redress Panel (GRP). The complainant may be contacted for additional clarification.

The investigation phase is scheduled to take thirty (30) days.

13. Final Resolution

Upon the conclusion of the investigation, a decision will be made and communicated to the complainant within thirty (30) days.

The grievance file will be closed if the complainant expresses satisfaction with the outcome.

If the complainant is dissatisfied, they retain the right to appeal the decision (refer to the appeals procedure below).

Appeals Procedure

Should the complainant be unsatisfied with the decision, they may lodge an appeal with the Chief Executive within three (3) days of receiving the decision.

The appeal will be reviewed, and a conclusive final decision will be issued within fourteen (14) days.

14. Monitoring and Reporting

Periodic Reporting: The GRM management team is required to furnish quarterly reports that cover the following:

- ✓ The total volume of grievances received and the number successfully resolved.
- ✓ Emerging trends in complaints to pinpoint areas needing systemic improvement.
- ✓ Feedback gathered from stakeholders concerning the grievance handling process.
- ✓ All grievances will be logged in a Grievance Register. This log must include details of the complaint, the actions taken, and the final resolution.

A simplified tracking table format is shown below:

Tracking Nos	Complainant Name	Contact	Date of Complaint	Type of complaint (based on classification)	Description of Issue	Date of Response	Action Taken	Status (Open/Ongoing/Resolved)

- ✓ Grievances are considered valuable intelligence for understanding the expectations of service users and for initiating systemic improvements to meet those expectations.
- ✓ The Ministry is therefore expected to determine why certain categories of grievances are reported with higher frequency than others. A template for conducting a root cause analysis of complaint areas is shown below:

S/N	Date and description of Grievance	Grievance - prone areas identified	Root cause identified	Action Required to Improve System	Planned date and Authority Responsible for Taking Action	Action Taken date

The Ministry will submit a Quarterly Report in this regard with suggestions for modification in policy initiatives, delivery system, and organisational structure for the consideration/directions of the Permanent Secretary.

Annual Review: An annual review of the SLA will be conducted to assess its effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.

15. Continuous Improvement

- ✓ **Feedback Mechanism:** Implement a system for collecting feedback from complainants and stakeholders to improve the GRM.
- ✓ **Training and Capacity Building:** Regular training sessions will be conducted for staff involved in the GRM to enhance their skills in grievance and customer service.
- ✓ **Joint Review Meetings:** Quarterly inter-agency meetings will be convened to evaluate progress, address recurring issues, and agree on corrective measures.

16. Conclusion

This SLA aims to provide a structured and transparent approach to grievance redress, ensuring that stakeholders' concerns are addressed promptly and effectively. It also reinforces inter-agency collaboration as a foundation for sustainable, transparent, and efficient interstate trade facilitation in Sokoto State.

Signed: Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Commerce, Trade & Industries, Sokoto, in collaboration with:
Executive Chairman, Sokoto State Internal Revenue Service and
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice

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