



## External Relations Department

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### **SBP Further Enhances Consumer Grievance Handling Mechanism at Banks**

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is in continuous pursuit of strengthening the consumer protection regime and market conduct of the industry. Amongst other efforts, SBP is focusing on improvement in grievance handling mechanisms at banks, microfinance banks (MFBs) and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) (hereinafter referred to as banks) with the aim to provide more affordable, accessible, fair, accountable, and efficient grievance redressal. For this purpose, various measures have been taken by SBP to enhance responsible complaint handling by the banks as they handle more than 97% of complaints related to the banking industry, in a year. Recently, SBP conducted a detailed review of complaint handling practices at banks, primarily focusing on 'ease of lodgment', and 'quick and fair disposal' of complaints.

Based on the findings of the review and the role of complaints in improvising banking services, SBP has directed the banks to enhance the grievance handling mechanism deployed at their end. In order to make complaint lodgment at banks easier and accessible, SBP has prescribed mandatory modes of complaint lodgment to banks with a direction to ensure their availability and accessibility at all times. These modes include Call Centers, Emails, E-forms, Surface mail, Fax, and Complaint boxes/registers. Additionally, the banks have also been encouraged to invest in innovative modes of complaint lodgment like receiving complaints through SMS/Call Back Service, Mobile applications, Self Service Kiosks and other Social Media Platforms. Such investment will not only boost convenience for customers rather it will help banks capture/handle complaints in a better way.. Banks have also been advised to send awareness SMS messages at least on a bi-annual basis to create adequate awareness regarding the complaint lodgment modes deployed.

For better tracking of complaints by the customers, the provision of complaint tracking numbers in written form has been made mandatory. Similarly, special focus has been laid on quick and meritorious disposals of complaints.

Further, SBP has also enhanced the reporting requirements on complaint handling in light of the international and local needs/trends. Besides, banks have been advised to ensure provisioning of adequate support to complaint handling function at banks in terms of Human Resources, Information Technology, Training, etc.

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