

## Salient features of the Integrated Ombudsman Scheme of RBI

1. The Scheme integrates the existing three Ombudsman schemes of RBI namely, (i) the Banking Ombudsman Scheme, 2006; (ii) the Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies, 2018; and (iii) the Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions, 2019.
2. It will no longer be necessary for a complainant to identify under which scheme he/she should file complaint with the Ombudsman.
3. The Scheme has done away with the jurisdiction of each ombudsman office.
4. The Scheme defines 'deficiency in service' as the ground for filing a complaint, with a specified list of exclusions.
5. A Centralised Receipt and Processing Centre has been set up at RBI, Chandigarh for receipt and initial processing of physical and email complaints in any language.
6. Complaints can continue to be filed online on <https://cms.rbi.org.in>. Complaints can also be filed through the dedicated e-mail, [crpc@rbi.org.in](mailto:crpc@rbi.org.in) or sent in physical mode to the '**Centralised Receipt and Processing Centre**' set up at **Reserve Bank of India, 4th Floor, Sector 17, Chandigarh - 160017** in the prescribed format.
7. Additionally, a Contact Centre with a **toll-free number - 14448 (9:30 am to 5:15 pm)** - has also been operationalised to provide information/clarifications regarding the alternate grievance redress mechanism of RBI and to guide complainants in filing of a complaint.
8. The Executive Director-in charge of Consumer Education and Protection Department of RBI would be the Appellate Authority under the Scheme.
9. A copy of the Scheme is available on the RBI website and on the CMS portal (<https://cms.rbi.org.in>).
10. The Scheme is effective from 12.11.2021.

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The **Reserve Bank - Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS), 2021** was launched to simplify the grievance redressal process by integrating three previous schemes into one. For an entity like **NEDFi** (North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd.), which is a

specialized NBFC, this scheme provides a streamlined framework for addressing customer grievances.

Here are the salient features of the scheme:

### 1. "One Nation, One Ombudsman"

The scheme moves away from the old system of territorial jurisdictions. A customer of NEDFi can now lodge a complaint from anywhere in India, and it will be processed through a centralized system, regardless of which NEDFi branch the dispute relates to.

### 2. Broad Definition of "Deficiency in Service"

The scheme has moved from "limited grounds" of complaint to a broad definition. A complaint can be filed for **any "deficiency in service"**, which means any shortcoming or inadequacy in the financial service that NEDFi is required to provide.

- **Exclusions:** Complaints cannot be made regarding commercial judgments (e.g., a decision to reject a loan based on creditworthiness) or disputes between the company and its vendors/employees.

### 3. Centralized Receipt and Processing Centre (CRPC)

All physical and email complaints are now handled by a single **CRPC established at RBI, Chandigarh**. This serves as the first point of contact for the scrutiny and initial processing of all complaints before they are assigned to an Ombudsman.

### 4. Zero Cost to the Complainant

The entire process—from filing the complaint to the final resolution—is **completely free of cost** for the customer.

### 5. Compensation Limits

The Ombudsman has the power to grant compensation to the customer for losses incurred:

- **Actual Loss:** The Ombudsman can award an amount to cover the actual loss suffered due to the deficiency in service (no specific upper limit, but based on the dispute value).
- **Mental Anguish:** An additional compensation of up to **₹1 Lakh** can be awarded for loss of time, harassment, and mental anguish.

### 6. Rights of the Regulated Entity (NEDFi)

- **Principal Nodal Officer:** NEDFi is required to appoint a Principal Nodal Officer (PNO) who is responsible for representing the company and furnishing information to the Ombudsman.

- **Right to Appeal:** If NEDFi is unhappy with an "Award" (decision) by the Ombudsman, it can appeal to the **Appellate Authority** (Executive Director-in-Charge of the Consumer Education and Protection Department, RBI).
- **Restriction on Appeal:** NEDFi **cannot** appeal if the Ombudsman issues an Award against them specifically for failing to provide necessary information or documents on time.

## 7. Process for Filing a Complaint

The customer must follow a specific sequence before approaching the Ombudsman:

1. **Internal Complaint:** First, file a written complaint with NEDFi.
2. **Wait Period:** Wait for **30 days** for a response.
3. **Escalation:** If the complaint is rejected, not answered within 30 days, or the customer is dissatisfied with the reply, they can then approach the Ombudsman via the **CMS Portal** ([cms.rbi.org.in](http://cms.rbi.org.in)).