The Gold Standard

Agriculture Requirements

Valid since **Dec 2014**
Version **0.9 (for road-testing)**

This version of the Gold Standard 'Agriculture Requirements' is subject to *road-testing*. That means that during the phase of road-testing (until the end of 2015), experiences from the projects that apply to these requirements will be collected and feed into version 1.0.

Version 0.9 is a full version to create validated and verified CO_2-certificates.
CO_2-certificates that are generated with this version are valid under future versions.

The Gold Standard

In 2003, representatives of environmental and human rights organisations convened in Brussels to discuss their concerns that carbon markets could become a 'race to the bottom' in relation to environmental integrity and sustainable development.

The group highlighted the need for a system that could identify and encourage well-designed activities as the sources for credible greenhouse gas reductions that maximise wider sustainable development outcomes. At this meeting the concept of the Gold Standard was born.

The Gold Standard certification scheme was developed through close collaboration between technical and policy experts from civil society, governments, multi-lateral organisations and the private sector. A non-profit Swiss Foundation was established to house a full-time secretariat for the standard and to further develop tools to achieve its mission.

Now endorsed by 100+ international NGOs and with more than 1,200 projects in 50 countries undergoing certification. The Gold Standard has become the global benchmark for high integrity climate finance. It is regularly referenced by governments and policy makers that aspire to a globally-integrated approach to addressing climate change and development.

Acknowledgements 100+

We would like to thank the 100+ stakeholders that have provided their continuous feedback and support throughout the development process of this document. We particularly wish to acknowledge the contributions of:

WWF, WorldVision, FSC, Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, UNESCO, UNEP, UN-FAO, SWISSAID, IUCN, TÜV Süd, Wetlands International, UNIQUE, Transparency International, CGIAR, DNV, SNV, International Livestock Research Institute, myclimate, ForestConServ, ForestFinance, SouthPole Carbon, Forest Trends, Joannuem, Silvestrum, PwC Sustainability, German Federal Environment Agency, giz, Indonesian REDD+ Task Force, Nationaal Groenfonds, Bureau Veritas, NEPcon, FiBL, International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, TIST Program, OroVerde, Progresso, ECOCERT, Sicirec, ETIFOR, ForestFinest Consulting, Initiative Développement, GET-Carbon, CO2OL, Cochabamba Project, BaumInvest, Soil and More International, CEDECO, HIVOS, Shared Value Africa, ForestSense, Querdenker, Green Resources, Ernst Basler + Partner, Environmental Accounting Services, Ferrero, global-woods, The Cirrus Group, WOCAN, ClearSky Climate Solutions, Hochschule Weihenstephan, CO2balance, TREES Forest Carbon Consulting, Woodrising, Winrock, University of Freiburg International Forest Students Association, University of Greenwich, Universität Koblenz-Landau, Ecological Services Centre/ Organic Certification Nepal, natureOffice, CO2 Environment, EURAF, Cepicafe/NorAndino, WithOneSeed, Taking Root, RAMP Carbon, Woodland Carbon Code, BIOS - Organic Certification, Wilson Applied Consultancy, Climate Adapt, Climate Bridge, Ecological Carbon Offset Partners, Bullet Forestal, ProClimate, JustGreen, GHG Offset Services, Grattan MacGiffin Ecoinvest Services, Permian Global, ecoPartners, CleanAir Action, Carbon Farmers of Australia, Lutheran World Relief, University of Leeds, Save the Earth Cambodia, Palestine Polytechnic University.

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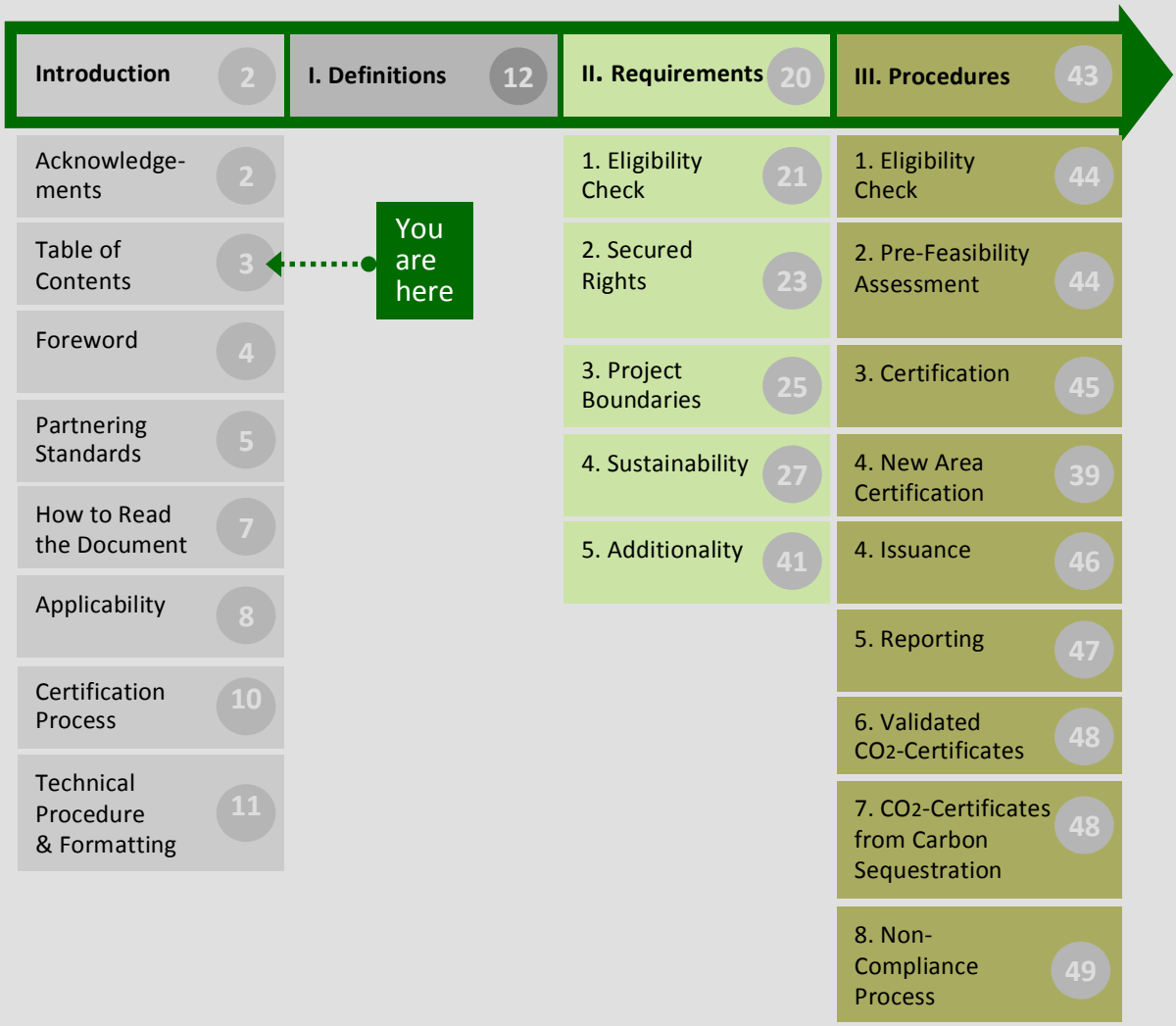
The Gold Standard 'Agriculture Requirements' are structured as follows:



Foreword

How important is agriculture?
According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), an estimated number of 805 million people on our planet are chronically undernourished[1]. Furthermore, global climate change disproportionately affects the farming systems of already vulnerable people - subsistence farmers in particular - by increased frequency and severity of droughts, floods and storms as well as shifts in temperature. Overall, agriculture contributes 10-12% of global anthropogenic emissions and thereby is the most important sector of global greenhouse gas emissions not related to energy[2].

What is our goal?
In response to this global challenge, the Gold Standard has expanded its scope to apply our proven certification scheme to the agriculture sector. As with all our 'Land Use & Forests' work, Gold Standard Agriculture shares the goals of maintaining and enhancing the carbon stock stored and contributing to greenhouse gas reduction at the landscape level. In addition, Gold Standard Agriculture projects will deliver additional benefits by addressing the drivers of deforestation, improving the sustainable use of resources, people's livelihoods, resilience and the capacity to adapt to a changing climate as well as the conservation of biodiversity. Our first step in bringing this scope to life is to develop the following Gold Standard 'Agriculture Requirements'.

Scope of the 'Agriculture Requirements'
The Gold Standard defines agriculture in these 'Agriculture Requirements' in accordance with the FAO as agricultural activities that contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals: www.fao.org/climatechange/en/

[1] FAO 2014. The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2014. Rome, Italy.
[2] IPCC 2014. Fifth Assessment Report, WG III, Chapter 11 AFOLU. Geneva, Switzerland.

Partnering Standards

The Gold Standard encourages dual certification with its partnering standards. While these partnering standards focus their certification on different *commodities* such as cacao, coffee, rice, maize, timber, cotton, etc., Gold Standard centres on the certification of different *ecosystem services* (such as carbon, water or biodiversity) across these different *commodities*.

Together with the partnering standards Gold Standard aligns and streamlines the different terms, requirements and processes.

Where overlaps are identified Gold Standard acknowledges these and thus 'waives' the respective parts within its own requirements. In this way transaction costs can be minimised and processes become more efficient.

	Description	Alignment	Chapters
	Fairtrade is an alternative approach to conventional trade and is based on a partnership between producers and consumers, offering producers a better deal and improved terms of trade. There are about a 1,000 Fairtrade certified producer organizations in 58 producing countries, representing over 1.2 million farmers and workers.	Aligned with the Fairtrade International core requirements from the 'Fairtrade Standard for Small Producer Organizations' and the 'Fairtrade Standard for Hired Labour'.	To be analysed early 2015
	The Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) promotes efficient and productive agriculture, biodiversity conservation and sustainable community development by creating social and environmental standards. There are over 1 million farms certified by the SAN standard in over 40 countries.	Aligned with the criteria of the 'Sustainable Agriculture Standard' and 'Standard for Sustainable Cattle Production Systems'.	To be analysed early 2015
	FSC is an international not for-profit, multi-stakeholder organization established in 1993 to promote responsible management of the world's forests. Today, FSC has certified over 180,000 million ha of forest across 1,200 sites of the globe.	Aligned with the FSC 'Principles and Criteria (V5-0)'	If a project is FSC certified then the requirements in chapter '4. Sustainability' (except for sub-chapter '4.3 Capacities and Risks') and chapter '7. Reporting' are met with the FSC documentation.

Gold Standard Fairtrade Carbon Scheme

Fairtrade and Gold Standard are working on a joint *Gold Standard Fairtrade Carbon Scheme*. The rules and procedures for this scheme are still under development and will be published in 2015.

Gold Standard + Fairtrade Carbon Scheme = Fairtrade-Gold Standard CO_2-certificates

How to Read the Document

- Dashed underlined words are defined in the section 'I. Definitions'.
- *Italics* are used to improve the readability and understanding.
- **Shall** indicates requirements that must be followed in order to conform.
- **Should** indicates that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required.
- **May** indicates a course of action is permissible but not compulsory.
- **Can** is used for statements of possibility and capability.

Smallholders

This symbol indicates a requirement, which does **not** need to be fulfilled for projects or project areas that are managed by smallholders.

These simplifications to the requirements provide better access to carbon markets for smallholders. In case a project still intends to apply the respective requirements it may do so.

This symbol indicates special guidance that may be applied by projects that are managed by smallholders.

Smallholders are defined in chapter 'I. Definitions'.

The section 'II. Requirements' features three different types of boxes:

Clear boxes I The information in the *clear boxes* is to assist in using the document and to define the different processes that must be followed for each chapter depending on the type of certification undertaken.

Green boxes I *Green boxes* indicate that the project owner shall provide evidence to show compliance with the requirements through submitting the filled-in *templates* and *supporting documents*. (Note: If the document is printed in black and white, the *green boxes* are identified as the *grey* boxes without borders.)

Grey boxes with a border I *Grey boxes with a border* indicate requirements that must be followed, but which do not require documentary evidence from the project owner unless otherwise noted.

Applicability

Host countries
The 'Agriculture Requirements' can be applied in all countries.

Methodology
The Gold Standard 'Agriculture Requirements' can only be used in combination with one of the approved Gold Standard 'Agriculture Methodologies'.

Throughout this document, the 'Agriculture Methodology' that a project applies is referred to as the *relevant methodology*.

An 'Agriculture Methodology' enables the project owner to calculate the amount of CO_2-certificates that the project generates. Each 'Agriculture Methodology' starts with applicability requirements, which outline the pre-conditions of a project to apply this methodology.

The 'Agriculture Methodology' further describes the way to determine the business-as-usual (baseline) scenario, the amount of carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas reductions as result of to the project activity, potential leakage effects that influence greenhouse gas emissions outside the project area as well as possible other greenhouse gas emissions (e.g., machinery used) caused by the project.

Each 'Agriculture Methodology' provides guidance on which parameters are subject to monitoring and how this shall be done.

Find the list of the available Gold Standard 'Agriculture Methodologies' at: www.GoldStandard.org/LUF_Agriculture
The first list of 'Agriculture Methodologies' is expected to be published early 2015.

If your planned project activity is not yet covered by a Gold Standard 'Agriculture Methodology', please contact the Gold Standard secretariat.

Project types

The Gold Standard has developed these 'Agriculture Requirements' to serve different types of project settings.

A *grouped project* encompasses several *single area projects* but applies the 'Agriculture Requirements' in the same way as a *single area project*. The graphic on the right illustrates a *grouped project*, the graphic on the left a *single area project*.

Grouped project

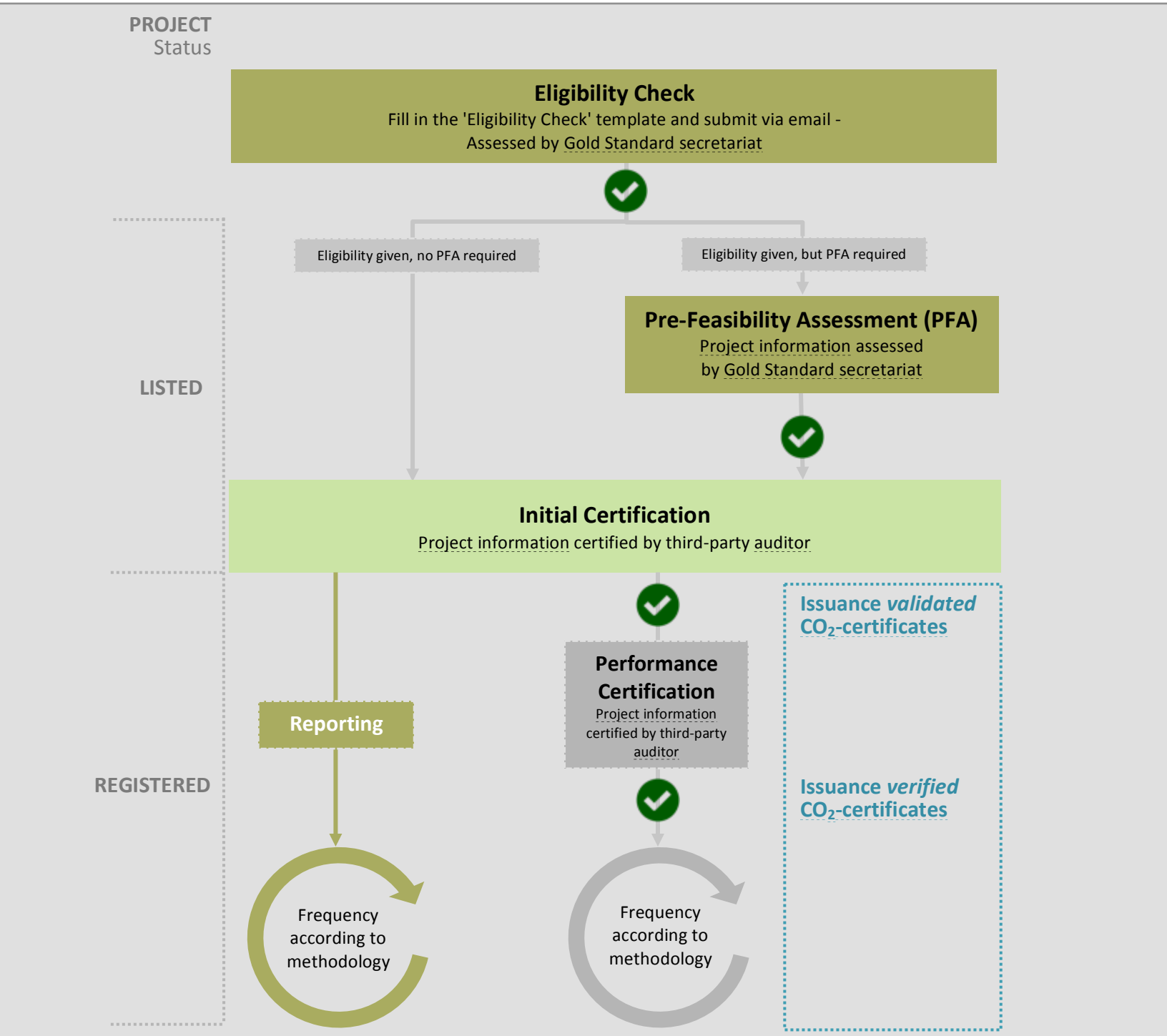
Grouped projects are similar to a Programme of Activities (PoA) under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), allowing for an unlimited number of *new* project areas to be added without undergoing the complete Gold Standard certification process.

Single area project

At any time after the Initial Certification, the project owner can add new project areas to an existing project (*grouped projects*) or *expand* an existing project area (*single area projects*). To do this the project owner shall undertake the process as described under 'new area' for each section in chapter 'II. Requirements'.

Certification Process

The diagram below provides an overview of the different steps in the Gold Standard *certification process* along with the sequence of activities for project *registration* and the *issuance* of CO_2-certificates. The steps are explained in more detail in the subsequent chapters.



Technical Procedure & Formatting

Accounts

1. When the Eligibility Check is completed the project owner shall create an account on the Markit Registry.
2. Project information can be submitted for any certification step within the projects Markit Registry account.
3. All relevant project information, except when *confidential*[3], shall be made publically available through the Markit Registry.

Language

4. The *filled-in templates* and *supporting documents* shall be submitted in
   (a) English, OR
   (b) A language agreed upon by the project owner, the Gold Standard secretariat and the auditor.

Format

5. Templates shall be filled in green using a Calibri, size 10 font. Information on 'new areas' that is added to the existing templates shall be clearly differentiated, e.g., by the use of a different colour.

6. Red coloured comments already existing in the template (for better guidance) shall be deleted before document submission.

7. Numbers above one thousand shall be formatted with a comma (1,000,000), decimals separated by a point (1.35).

8. Maps shall include the following information:
   (a) Name of the project
   (b) ID of the project
   (c) Legend
   (d) Date of publication
   (e) A distance scale based on the metric system of measurement
   (f) Direction of North
   (g) Map projection
   (h) Grid coordinate system
   (i) Infrastructure (roads, houses, etc.) and rivers
   (j) Information on the satellite or aerial picture (image acquisition date, image resolution, data source)

Labelling and Numbering

9. All *supporting documents* shall be numbered according to the following format with an underscore (_) separating the different elements:

Chapter number	02 for chapter '2. Secured Rights'
ID of the document	01 for the first supporting document
Title of document	Project Boundaries Western Tanzania
Date of publication	Jul 2014
Example	02_01_ Project Boundaries Western Tanzania_ Jul 2014

[3] Confidential — Confidential refers to information that the project owner desires to be treated as confidential and which is not meant for the public, e.g., contract information, economic data, principal and contractor information.

I. Definitions

General Terms

1. **Crop** l A crop is a plant or fungus species that is purposefully cultivated and/or harvested to satisfy human and livestock needs.

2. **Livestock** l (Source: FAO) Livestock comprises all domestic animals. Non-domestic animals are not included unless they are kept or raised in captivity on agricultural holdings, including holdings without land.

3. **Tree** l (adapted from FAO) A tree is a perennial woody plant with one or several dominant sprouts that increases its circumference due to secondary growth.

   For the purpose of this document, the definition of a tree goes beyond the scientific definition of a tree and also includes shrubs, palms and bamboo plants.

4. **Smallholder**[4] | Smallholders are farmers that have more than 50% of farm work done by family members, cooperative members or neighbours.

5. **tCO_2** l The unit of tCO_2-e (tonnes of CO_2 equivalent emissions) is expressed as tCO_2.

   The most recent global warming potentials published by the *UNFCCC*[5] for a 100-year time horizon shall be taken into account when converting climate relevant molecules into tCO_2-e.

6. **Invasive species** l (adapted from IUCN and SAN) An organism introduced by man into places out of its natural range of distribution, where it becomes established and disperses, generating a negative impact on the local ecosystems and species. An invasive species is likely to cause economic harm or harm to human health.

   Note that species which are already locally established and of economic importance are excluded under this definition.

7. **Wetlands** l (according to Cowardin et al. 1979) Wetlands are lands that are transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water, and that have one or more of the following attributes:
   (a) At least periodically, the land supports predominantly plants typically occurring in wetlands, AND
   (b) The substrate is predominantly undrained and water saturated soil, AND
   (c) The substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year.

8. **Ecosystem services** | Ecosystem services are benefits people obtain from ecosystems. Examples are:
   (a) Carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas reduction, AND
   (b) Water supply and purification, AND
   (c) Biodiversity conservation and enhancement.

[4] Smallholder — The definition of 'smallholder' can still be subject to changes based on experiences during 2015.
[5] UNFCCC — The following link provides a list of GWPs used by the UNFCCC that are also applied under the Kyoto Protocol. http://unfccc.int/ghg_data/items/3825.php

Governance

9. **Gold Standard secretariat** l The Gold Standard secretariat manages the day-to-day running of the standard, including strategic and technical development, operational performance, project certification support and governance, registry management, capacity building, marketing and fundraising.

   See also: www.GoldStandard.org/LUF/LUF_Team

10. **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** l The TAC is an independent body composed of market specialists that provide expertise, guidance and decisions on methodology approval, rule changes and appeals.

    See also: www.GoldStandard.org/About-Us/Governance

11. **Auditor** l Gold Standard is currently developing an 'Audit Framework' to clarify which auditors are recognised for which scopes, project types and methodologies.

    See also: www.GoldStandard.org/Audit-Framework

12. **Customary rights** l (Source: FSC) Customary rights are those that result from a long series of habitual or customary actions, constantly repeated, which have, by such repetition and by uninterrupted acquiescence, acquired the force of a law within a geographical or sociological unit.

Project

13. **Project** l A project is the realisation of project activities.

14. **Project start** l The project start is the date when the project begins to implement project activities that lead to the certification of one or several ecosystem services.

15. **Project information** l Project information is used as an umbrella term for *filled-in templates* and their *supporting documents.* All *templates* are available under: www.GoldStandard.org/LUF_Agriculture

    Where useful, the *filled-in templates* should be backed by *supporting documents*. These documents can be scientific reports, copies of contracts, meeting minutes, pictures, maps, etc.

    The *filled-in templates* together with the *supporting documents* form the base of information for any certification process.

16. **Project activity** l Project activities are those activities that are required to plan, implement and manage a project over its lifetime, with the objective of producing land-based products and additional, certifiable ecosystem services.

17. **Crediting period** l The crediting period is the time span in which the carbon sequestration or greenhouse gas reduction can be accounted for and is subject to monitoring.

    The duration of the crediting period is specified in the *relevant methodology*.

    Special guidance for smallholder projects
    Smallholders join and exit projects more frequently than projects participants in regular projects. Although a project always has only one crediting period, smallholders of a project can have different *commitment periods* to a project.

    Overall, it is the responsibility of the project owner to deliver the estimated (validated) amount of CO_2-certificates of its Initial Certification or New Area Certification within its crediting period.

Project Actors

18. **Project owner** l (Source: FSC, where the term is 'The Organization') The person or entity that holds or is applying for certification and therefore responsible for demonstrating compliance with the requirements upon which Gold Standard certification is based. The project owner shall be *one* individual or entity only.

19. **Project representative** l The project representative is the entity or person who will serve as the focal point for the project. The project representative can be more than *one* individual or entity.

20. **Project participant** l A project participant is an individual or entity that is contributing to the generation of the certified ecosystem services.

21. **People affected** l (adapted from FSC where the term is 'affected stakeholder') People affected are individuals or an entity that are, or are likely to be, subject to the project activities.

    Examples of people affected are local:
    (a) Communities, indigenous peoples, neighbours, processors, and local businesses, AND
    (b) Organisations authorised or known to act on behalf of people affected (e.g., NGOs, labour organisations).

22. **Workers** l (adapted from Fairtrade and FSC) Workers are all persons that are employed by a written or verbal agreement.

    This includes permanent, migrant, part-time and seasonal employees of all ranks and categories, including field workers, artisans, labourers, administrators, supervisors, executives, contractor employees as well as self-employed contractors and sub-contractors.

    Excepted from the definition above are:
    (a) Workers employed by a verbal agreement on smallholder farms for less than 3 months per year, AND
    (b) Smallholder farmers themselves, AND
    (c) Family members of the smallholder farmer.

23. **Stakeholders** l The stakeholders are persons, groups or entities that may be affected by the project or that show interest in the project.

    The following categories of stakeholders are included, but not limited to:
    (a) People affected, AND
    (b) Policy makers and representatives of authorities, AND
    (c) *Designated National Authority (DNA)*[6] and *National Focal Point*[7], AND
    (d) NGOs working on topics relevant to the project, AND
    (e) The *Gold Standard Regional Manager*[8] located closest to the project, AND
    (f) *Gold Standard NGO Supporters*[9] active in the host country of the project.

[6] Designated National Authority (DNA) https://cdm.unfccc.int/DNA/index.html
[7] National Focal Point http://maindb.unfccc.int/public/nfp.pl
[8] Gold Standard Regional Managers www.GoldStandard.org/Contact

Areas

24. **Project region** l The project region is the spatial area where people and environment are influenced by the project activities.

    A project region can be expanded over time.

    All project areas are located within the project region.

25. **Project area** l (adapted from FSC, where the relevant term is 'Management Unit') The project area is the spatial area submitted for certification, managed to a set of explicit long-term management objectives.

    For the efficient calculation of the amount of CO_2-certificates or other accounted ecosystem services under the Gold Standard, the project area is divided into Modelling Units.

    Within a project region, existing project areas can be expanded and new project areas can be added or removed after the Initial Certification (for New Area Certification see also 'III. Procedures, 3. Certification').

26. **Modelling Unit (MU)**| A Modelling Unit represents an area with *homogeneous characteristics* to quantify a certain outcome of an ecosystem service.

    Further guidance on how to define the *homogeneous characteristics* of Modelling Units will be provided within the *relevant methodology*.

[9] Gold Standard NGO Supporters www.GoldStandard.org/Our-Partners/NGOs

Certificates

27. **CO_2-certificate** l An issued CO_2-certificate is either a *validated* CO_2-certificate, or it is a *verified* CO_2-certificate. Both types of CO_2-certificates are issued in the Markit Registry. To receive *validated* CO_2-certificates the chapter 'III. Procedures, 6. Validated CO_2-certificates' shall be followed.

    A *validated* CO_2-certificate represents the *expected* reduction, removal and avoidance of 1 tCO_2. A *validated* CO_2-certificate can be transferred or *assigned* in the Markit Registry.

    A *verified* CO_2-certificate represents an *actual* reduction, removal and avoidance of 1 tCO_2. A *verified* CO_2-certificate can be transferred or *retired* in the Markit Registry.

    Within the Markit Registry *validated* CO_2-certificates are automatically replaced once they are *verified* through a Performance Certification.

28. **Markit Registry** l The Markit Registry is the online operating system that administers project information and issues CO_2-certificates. It is operated by the company *markit*: www.GoldStandard.org/About-Us/Project-Registry

Certification

All of these steps are described in more detail in chapter 'III. Procedures'.

29. **Eligibility Check** l The Eligibility Check is a high level assessment undertaken by the Gold Standard secretariat to determine whether a proposed project is eligible to be *registered* as a Gold Standard project.

30. **Pre-Feasibility Assessment** l The Pre-Feasibility Assessment (PFA) is a *desk review* of the project information undertaken by the Gold Standard secretariat to determine whether a proposed project is likely to be successfully certified by a third-party auditor.

31. **Initial Certification** l The Initial Certification is the first certification of a project undertaken by a third-party auditor to assess whether the project complies with the Gold Standard requirements and the *relevant methodology*.

32. **New Area Certification** l The New Area Certification is the certification of any new area that is added to an existing project or any expansion of an existing project area.

    New Area Certifications are undertaken by a third-party auditor to assess whether the *new areas* comply with the Gold Standard requirements and the *relevant methodology*.

33. **Performance Certification** l The Performance Certification is undertaken by a third-party auditor to assess the on-going compliance of the project with the Gold Standard requirements and the *relevant methodology*.

    The frequency for the Performance Certification is defined within the *relevant methodology*.

II. Requirements

1. Eligibility Check

1.1 Key Project Information

The project owner shall undertake the following process based on the **certification step** that is being pursued:

Eligibility Check I The project owner shall provide the information using the template 'Key Project Information' and send the document to eligibility.check@goldstandard.org

Initial I The project owner shall update, if necessary, the *existing filled-in* template 'Key Project Information'.

Performance I The project owner shall update, if necessary, the *existing filled-in* template 'Key Project Information'.

New Area I The project owner shall update, if necessary, the *existing filled-in* template 'Key Project Information' with the information from the *new* areas added. The new information shall be clearly distinguishable, e.g., by the use of a different colour.

General Information

1. A general description of the project shall be provided that includes the following:

   Background of the project area
   (a) Land-use history and current situation, AND
   (b) Socio-economic history and current situation, AND
   (c) Agriculture practices and forest management applied (historic and current situation).

   Project description
   (d) Project activities, AND
   (e) Stakeholders involved in the project, AND
   (f) Location of the project (project region and project area), AND
   (g) Size of the project (project region and project area), AND
   (h) Crediting period, AND
   (i) Expectations and risk of changes during the crediting period for points (d)-(h) , AND
   (j) Approximate number of predicted CO_2-certificates during the crediting period, AND
   (k) Land use characteristics (main crops, animals, tree species, etc.), AND
   (l) Main social impacts (risks and benefits), AND
   (m) Main ecological impacts (risks and benefits), AND
   (n) Funding structure, AND
   (o) Distribution of revenues (between the project owner and the smallholders), if applicable.

Project Representatives

2. The project owner shall define the project representatives who may have sole or joint authority on:
   (a) Instructing and communicating with the Gold Standard secretariat, AND
   (b) Receiving all information from the Gold Standard secretariat on matters related to the project.

The following requirements are part of the Eligibility Check, but do not require any updating of the template 'Key Project Information' for the Initial Certification, Performance Certification or New Area Certification.

Double counting of emissions

3. The project shall comply with the Gold Standard guidelines for 'Double counting of emissions'. See www.GoldStandard.org/Double-Counting

Pre-Feasibility Assessment

4. The project owner shall undertake a Pre-Feasibility Assessment if its project:
   (a) Applies a Gold Standard 'Agriculture Methodology' that is still in *road-testing*[10], OR
   (b) Is expected to generate more than 1,000,000 CO_2-certificates over the crediting period, OR
   (c) Is located in a *national park* or protected *UNESCO site,* OR
   (d) Is identified as *high-risk* project by the Gold Standard secretariat.

   In order to commence the Pre-Feasibility Assessment the respective *fee*[11] shall be paid.

Compliance with *relevant law*[4]

5. The project owner shall commit himself to be compliant with all *relevant laws*[12].

   In case there is conflict between compliance with the 'Agriculture Requirements' and compliance with any *relevant laws*[12] the project owner shall contact the Gold Standard secretariat.

Best practice

6. The project owner shall sign and submit the Gold Standard 'Terms & Conditions (LUF)' and 'Cover Letter', through which it agrees to maintain the high standards and reputation of Gold Standard in all activities connected to the project.

[10] Road-testing — Each Gold Standard 'Agriculture Methodology' is in road-testing until the first five projects that apply it have completed a Pre-Feasibility Assessment - see: www.GoldStandard.org/LUF_Agriculture

[11] Fee — See: www.GoldStandard.org/LUF/LUF_certification-process

[12] Relevant laws — Relevant laws refer to all local laws as well as international laws that have direct relation to the project. Each project owner has to sign a Gold Standard declaration on compliance with relevant laws in order to comply with the Gold Standard Principles. See: www.GoldStandard.org/LUF

2. Secured Rights

2.1 Secured Rights

The project owner shall undertake the following process based on the **certification step** that is being pursued:

Initial l The project owner shall provide the information using the template 'Secured Rights'.

Performance l The project owner shall update, if necessary, the *existing filled-in* template 'Secured Rights'.

New Area l The project owner shall update, if necessary, the *existing filled-in* template with the information from the *new* areas added. The new information shall be clearly distinguishable, e.g., by the use of a different colour.

Secured Rights
Depending on the structure of the project, the project owner shall fulfil requirement 1 or 2.

1. **The project owner acts on behalf of project participants.**
   In this case each project participant shall sign an *agreement* with the project owner, which confirms that:
   (a) The project participant holds the *CO2 user rights*[13] that are associated with the project activities and passed these on to the project owner, AND
   (b) The project participant holds all necessary rights to implement the project activities (e.g., rights to harvest), AND
   (c) The legal land title or *similar entitlement*[14] for the land on which the project activities are implemented is uncontested.

   These *agreements* shall include the:
   (d) Contact details of the project participants, AND
   (e) The legal registration number and documentation by the governing jurisdiction that proves that the *entity* is in good standing (in case of an organisation), AND
   (f) Contact details of the land owner (if differing), AND
   (g) Length of lease contract (if applicable), AND
   (h) The liabilities and benefits for the *person or entity* to implement the project activities (e.g., switch to another crop and get access to the seeds).

[13] CO_2 user rights — *CO_2 user rights* are rights that grant the titleholder any benefit that could be generated from the certification of the carbon sequestration or greenhouse gas reduction by the project.

For land use projects, the holder of the *CO_2 user rights* is usually the owner of the land, where the project activity takes place - except when such rights have been expressly transmitted to another *person* or *entity* by the land owner, or when an authority act / decision / order / regulation assigns such rights to a different person than the land owner.

[14] Similar entitlement — It is considered that *similar entitlement* exists, when
1) A *person* or *entity* has been using the land of the project as its owner, for the period of time that the applicable law requires for *persons* or *entity* to acquire property by its use, AND
2) Neighbours or neighbouring community agrees that the land has been used for such time by the *person* or *entity* claiming it.

2. **The project owner acts on its own.**
   The project owner shall provide evidence that:
   (a) It holds the *CO_2 user rights*[15] that are associated with the project activities, AND
   (b) It holds all necessary rights to implement the project activities (e.g., rights to harvest), AND
   (c) The legal land title or *similar entitlement*[16] for the land on which the project activities are implemented is uncontested.

[15] CO_2 user rights See footnote of the previous page.
[16] Similar entitlement See footnote of the previous page.

3. Project Boundaries

3.1 Project Boundaries

The project owner shall undertake the following process based on the **certification step** that is being pursued:

Initial l The project owner shall provide the information by uploading the *GIS vector layers*[17] in its Markit Registry account. The GIS vector layers shall be labelled comprehensively.

Performance l The project owner shall update, if necessary, the existing *GIS vector layer*[1].

New Area l The project owner shall update, if necessary, the *existing GIS vector layer*[1] from the *new* areas added. The new information shall be clearly distinguishable.

1. The following information shall be clearly defined within the submitted *GIS vector layers*[1]:
   (a) Project region, AND
   (b) Project area(s), AND
   (c) Protected areas, AND
   (d) Biodiversity areas (see chapter '4.2.2 Ecological, requirement 3.'), AND
   (e) Infrastructure (roads, houses, etc.) and permanent water bodies, AND
   (f) Where affected people are situated, AND
   (g) Sites with special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance.

Special guidance on requirement 1 - for smallholder projects

(a)-(g)

(a) Project region: A map with a polygon reflecting the boundaries
(b) Project areas: A map with one GPS point per project participant and each project participant shall have a hand-drawn map of its part of the project area
(c) Protected areas: A map with national parks (as by Google Maps) and UNESCO sites (as by http://whc.unesco.org/en/interactive-map/)
(d) Biodiversity areas: A map with a polygon reflecting the boundaries
(e) Infrastructure and permanent water bodies**:** As by Google Maps
(f) Where people affected are situated: One GPS point per person, group of persons or community with a caption that described the effect
(g) Sites with special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance: One GPS point per site with a caption that described the significance and effect

[17] GIS vector layer — A *GIS vector layer* is any file format containing vector spatial data that can be opened and displayed with a software application. For assistance in creating *GIS vector layer* maps use the following link www.GoldStandard.org/LUF_Technical-Assistance or contact the Gold Standard secretariat.

3.2 System Boundaries & Leakage

System boundaries delineate the border for greenhouse gas emissions that occur in relation to the project activity.

Leakage is the effect on greenhouse gas emissions that occur outside the project area due to the project activity (directly or indirectly).

Leakage and system boundaries are of special importance for climate agriculture projects as they can be sufficiently large as to have a significant impact on the net carbon sequestration / greenhouse gas reductions of a project.

Guidance on how to set the system boundaries, which hence determine the leakage effects, is provided in the *relevant methodology*. Hereby, leakage effects may be determined on a per-area base (tCO_2/ha) or on a unit of product base ($kgCO_2$/kg of product).

The Gold Standard 'Agriculture Methodologies' adhere to the following leakage principles:

1. Gold Standard projects account for all leakage and minimise negative leakage effects and, AND
2. Gold Standard follows a holistic approach on leakage accounting and thus also recognises positive leakage effects to the extent feasible, AND
3. Gold Standard recognises the complexity of the topic and has a firm commitment to pragmatic (cost-efficient) approaches.

4. Sustainability

The requirements in chapter '4. Sustainability' ensure that projects are designed and implemented in a sustainable and participatory way.

In section '4.1 Adaptation' and '4.2 Do-No-Harm & Sustainable Development' the minimum requirements on climate adaptation as well as social and ecological safeguards are set.

Requirements that show risk of *non-conformity* during the crediting period from this chapter are subject to continuous monitoring through the '4.6 Sustainability Monitoring Plan'.

In '4.3 Capacities and Risks' requirements are set on how a project owner shall provide evidence on sufficient capacities to implement the project and how risks associated with the project can be identified and mitigated.

In '4.4 Local Stakeholder Consultation' and '4.5 Input & Grievance Mechanism' requirements outline how to build a continuous dialogue with people affected to ensure a participatory implementation of the project.

4.1 Adaptation

Increasing resilience to be able to deal with impacts of climate change is crucial for achieving income stability, food security and long-term development. Hence, preserving and increasing adaptive capacity for project participants must be an integral element of every project.

1. The project owner shall identify the current and predicted variability in climate/weather for the project region.

2. Based on the current and predicted variability in climate/weather, the project owner shall analyse the possible effects on the project within the crediting period.

3. The project owner shall implement *adaptation activities* appropriate to the context and need of the respective project.

   Adaptation activities can include:
   (a) Practices that increase the resilience of farming systems, OR
   (b) Measures to improve the efficiency of water use, OR
   (c) Crops (crop breeds) with improved characteristics, OR
   (d) Crop rotation schemes, OR
   (e) Sharing of existing farmers' knowledge as well as knowledge on new agriculture practices, OR
   (f) Diversification of livelihoods, e.g., through increased agricultural productivity, increased variety of cultivated crops, identification of other income streams than form agriculture, OR
   (g) Measures to improve soil fertility.

4.2 Do-No-Harm & Sustainable Development

The project owner shall undertake the following process based on the **certification step** that is being pursued:

Initial l Each of the requirements in this section shall be assessed on their relevance to the project.

- If not relevant, the project owner shall provide a justification to the *non-relevance* for the respective requirement.
- If relevant; the project owner shall provide evidence of how the project is in compliance with the requirements listed in this section AND provide a rating of the future *risk* of non-conformity (*low*, *medium*, or *high*).
- If the *future risk* rating is *medium* or *high*, respective *mitigation measures* shall be put in place and subject to monitoring under the '4.6 Sustainability Monitoring Plan'.

For documentation of these requirements, the project owner shall use the template 'Do-No-Harm'.

Performance l Follow the process of the chapter '4.4 Sustainability Monitoring Plan'.

New Area l The project owner shall update, if necessary, the *existing filled-in* template with the information from the *new* areas added. The new information shall be clearly distinguishable, e.g., by the use of a different colour.

Additional 'Do-No-Harm and Sustainable Development' requirements may be listed in the *relevant methodology*.

4.2.1 Social

The requirements listed in this section shall be applied on the project region.

Food Security

1. The project activity shall not negatively influence access to and availability of food for people affected.

People and Local Communities

2. Sites with:
   (a) Legal rights, OR
   (b) Customary rights, OR
   (c) Special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance of people affected
   shall be identified, known and respected by the project owner.

3. The transfer of control of any activities from people affected to the project owner shall be documented following *FPIC*[18] principles and be fairly compensated.

4. The project shall not involve the involuntary relocation of people.

5. If significant disputes remain unresolved after grievance mechanisms have been completed, then all project activities shall be suspended until the dispute is resolved.

[18] FPIC The documentation shall be conducted according tot he FPIC principles provided by FSC: https://ic.fsc.org/download.fsc-fpic-guidelines-version-1.a-1243.pdf

The requirements on this page ensure that the project owner follows the *8 ILO Fundamental Conventions*[1] of the *International Labour Organisation (ILO)*. They shall be applied to 'workers' as defined in chapter 'I. Definitions'.

Note that smallholders are not considered as workers.

Working Conditions

6. Workers shall be able to establish and join labour organisations.

7. There shall not be *forced labour*[19].

8. *Working agreements* with all individual workers shall be implemented.
   These shall at minimum comprise:
   (a) Working hours, AND
   (b) Duties and tasks, AND
   (c) Remuneration, AND
   (d) Modalities on health insurance, AND
   (e) Modalities on termination of the contract.

9. Workers and labour organisations shall be generally satisfied with their *working agreements.*

10. If the host country where the project is located did not ratify all of the 8 *ILO Fundamental Conventions*[20]*,* the project owner shall provide a written affirmation to uphold them.

11. Workers shall be informed in a workshop about their rights according to the *8 ILO Fundamental Conventions*[2].

12. There shall be no *child labour*[21].
    Excepted are children for work on their families' property as long as:
    (a) Their compulsory schooling (minimum of 6 schooling years) is not hindered, AND
    (b) The tasks they perform do not harm their physical and mental development.

[19] Forced labour — Forced labour in accordance with the 8 ILO Fundamental Conventions: http://ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations/lang--en/index.htm

[20] 8 ILO Fundamental Conventions — http://ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations/lang--en/index.htm

[21] Child labour — Child labour in accordance with the 8 ILO Fundamental Conventions: http://ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations/lang--en/index.htm

Occupational Safety & Health

13. For workers there shall be at minimum provisions for:
    (a) First aid, AND
    (b) The safe transport of workers, AND
    (c) Timely evacuation of workers to an adequately equipped medical facility in case of serious accident, AND
    (d) The safe storage, handling, transport and application of chemicals.

14. Workers and smallholders shall have job-specific training to safely implement the project activities.

15. Workers and smallholders shall be informed about the danger that chemicals or other substances can pose to their health.

16. Workers shall have safe tools, safe machinery and adequate protective equipment.

17. *Hazardous work*[22] shall not be carried out by people that:
    (a) Have mental handicaps, OR
    (b) Have respiratory diseases, OR
    (c) Are less than 18 years old, OR
    (d) Are pregnant or breastfeeding women.

19. Workers handling chemicals or other substances that pose harm to human health on a regular basis should be examined by a doctor once per year.

20. To support requirements 13. and 19. workers shall appoint an individual to have overall responsibility for 'Health & Safety' at the worksite. This person shall have demonstrated expertise, skills or experience in relevant medical treatment.

No Discrimination

21. Discrimination based on, or in the form of:
    (a) Gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or any other basis, OR
    (b) Physical and mental punishment and coercion, OR
    (c) Sexual harassment
    shall not be tolerated.

Anti-Corruption

22. The project owner should not be involved in corruption with relation to the project activity and shall comply with anti-corruption legislation where this exists.

23. The project owner shall publicise a commitment not to offer or receive bribes in money or any other form of corruption.

[22] Hazardous work Hazardous work is referring to: www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C184

Women

24. The project shall meet at minimum *two* from the following *four* domains to improve the wellbeing of women in the project region:
    (a) *Income or assets* (material goods, monetary resources, land, livestock, etc.)
    (b) Discretionary or socialising *time*
    (c) Skills, *education or knowledge*
    (d) Role for decision making

The domains are based on the *W+ Standard*[23]. The *W+ Standard* is a unique certification label developed by the *Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture Network* (WOCAN) that endorses projects that create increased social and economic benefits for women participating in economic development or environment projects.

[23] W+ Standard www.wplus.org

4.2.2 Ecological

The requirements listed in this section shall be applied on the project area unless stated otherwise.

GMOs

1. *Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)*[24] as defined by SAN shall not be used.
2. If there is a risk of *GMO* contamination from outside the project area, appropriate counter measures should be taken.

Biodiversity

3. A minimum of 10% of the total project area shall be *identified* and *managed* to protect or enhance the *biological diversity*[25]. For this, the *HCV*[26] approach should be followed.

   This area has to be located within the project region and managed by the project owner. The area can also include the areas of requirement 19 (buffer zones for *water bodies*).

4. (a) Existing patches of *native tree species*[27], AND
   (b) Single solitary stems of *native tree species*[27], AND
   (c) Habitats of *rare, threatened and endangered species*[28], AND
   (d) Areas relevant for habitat connectivity
   shall be identified and managed to protect or enhance *biological diversity*[25].

Soil Fertility & Soil Conservation

5. Appropriate measures shall be put in place to minimise:
   (a) *Soil erosion*[29] (e.g., through ground cover, planting along contour lines), AND
   (b) Soil degradation (e.g., through crop rotation, composting, no use of heavy machinery, use of *N-fixing plants*, reduced tillage, no use of ecologically harmful substances).

6. On slopes, *measures* to reduce *soil erosion*[29] shall be implemented (e.g., hedge and tree rows, natural terracing, infiltration strips, permanent ground cover). For these *measures* the concept of the *effective slope length*[30] shall be taken into account.

[24] GMO — (Source: SAN) An organism, whose genetic material has been altered using genetic engineering techniques, i.e., the direct manipulation of an organism's genome using biotechnology.

[25] Biological diversity — (Source: FSC) The variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

[26] HCV — High Conservation Value www.hcvnetwork.org

[27] Native tree species — (Source: FSC) Species, subspecies, or lower taxon, occurring within its natural range (past or present) and dispersal potential that is, within the range it occupies naturally or could occupy without direct or indirect introduction or care by humans.

[28] Endangered species — All *endangered* and *critically endangered* species as defined by the IUCN Red List - www.IUCNredlist.org

[29] Soil erosion — Soil erosion is the process by which soil and rock are removed by water and wind, and then transported and deposited in other locations.

[30] Effective slope length — The *effective slope length* is the route that follows the maximum slope gradient over which runoff accumulates and causes erosion. It is defined by the LS parameter of the Universal Soil Loss Equation described under http://35.8.121.139/rusle/about.htm

Fertilisers


7.

7. The use of synthetic fertilisers shall be minimised and justified.

8. Untreated human faeces shall not be used as fertiliser.

9. The use and production of organic fertiliser should be enhanced.

10. The use and cultivation of *N-fixing plant*[31] species as organic fertiliser and livestock fodder should be enhanced.

11. The use of *burnt lime*[32] as fertiliser should be avoided.

Chemicals & Integrated Pest Management


12.

12. The use of pesticides shall be minimised and justified.

13. In the case that pesticides are used and two or more different pesticides are equally effective, the least hazardous pesticide shall be used.

14. Substances listed in the:
    (a) *Prohibited Materials List*[33] from Fairtrade International, OR
    (b) *Banned Active Pesticide Ingredients*[34] from SAN
    shall not be used.

15. Invasive species shall not be used.

16. The use of *Biological control agents*[35] shall be justified by direct experience or scientific research that demonstrates that there is, or can be, no invasiveness and no adverse impacts.

17. Invasive species already present should be progressively reduced and eliminated.

18. An *Integrated Pest Management (IPM)*[36] plan should be developed and implemented.

[31] N-fixing plant — Refers to plant species with the ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen.
[32] Burnt lime — Burnt lime is calcium oxide used on acidic soils to increase the pH-value.
[33] Prohibited Materials List — www.fairtrade.net/fileadmin/user_upload/content/2012-01-10_PML_Red_and_Amber.pdf
[34] Banned Active Pesticide Ingredients — http://sanstandards.org/userfiles/SAN-S-2-1%20SAN%20Prohibited%20Pesticide%20List%20November%202011.pdf
[35] Biological control agents — (Source: FSC) Organisms used to eliminate or regulate the population of other organisms.
[36] IPM — (Source: US-EPA) IPM is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices www.epa.gov/opp00001/factsheets/ipm.htm

Water Resources


19.

19. On both sides of permanent or temporary *water bodies* (lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, etc.) buffer zones of 15 meters shall be implemented. Irrigation channels are excluded from this requirement.
    In these buffer zones:
    (a) All existing native vegetation shall be kept, AND
    (b) No fertiliser and pesticides shall be used, AND
    (c) No logging activities shall take place, AND
    (d) No heavy machinery shall be used, AND
    (e) No cropping is allowed, AND
    (f) In case trees are being planted, these shall be *native*.

20. The flows of and access to *water bodies* shall not be interrupted by project activities in a way that negatively influences people affected by the project activities.

21. Ground and surface water levels shall not be impacted in a way that negatively influences people affected and environment of the project region.

The requirements related to water will be aligned with the Gold Standard *Water Benefit Standard* based on the experiences with the 'Agriculture Requirements' during 2015.

Waste

22. Non-biodegradable waste arising by project activities shall always be handled and deposited in a way that it does not negatively influence people affected and the environment of the project region.


23.

23. Wastewater containing harmful substances arising by project activities shall only be deposited in nature after effective treatment that complies with minimum *water quality requirements*[37].

[37] Water quality requirements (Source: SAN) Biochemical Oxygen Demand (DBO5,20) < 50mg/L; pH 6.0-9.0; Grease and oils < 30 mg/L; Faecal coliforms absent.

Animal Welfare & Livestock Management

24. The welfare of animals shall be ensured by:
    (a) Provision of sufficient drinking water, AND
    (b) Access to daylight, AND
    (c) The prohibition of *cattle trainers*[38], AND
    (d) No hindrance in their sensory perception and performing their basic needs, AND
    (e) No *mistreatment*[39].

25. Injured or sick animals shall be treated and isolated, if necessary, for recovery.

26. Excessive or inadequate use of veterinary medicines shall be avoided. Thus, all medications shall be:
    (a) Administered strictly according to label and package instructions, OR
    (b) According to a trained veterinarian.

27. Synthetic growth promoters including hormones shall not be used.

28. Animals shall be exposed to the least stress possible during transportation and slaughtering.

29. Appropriate space per animal and stocking rates per land unit should be set according to their developmental and physical needs.

[38] Cattle trainer (Source: Bioland) A cattle trainer is a metal holder or wire which is fixed slightly above the back of tethered cattle which gives an electric shock to the animal if it bends the back – appropriate to the species – during urinating or defecating. The electric shock forces the animal to step backwards and to urinate or defecate in the manure trench instead on the own laying bed.

[39] Mistreatment (Source SAN) Mistreatment is the use of sharp objects, misusing irritating substances, including potash for branding and moving animals in a pain-inflicting way.

4.3 Capacities and Risks

This section is currently being elaborated and can be expected soon. As soon as the 'Capacities and Risks' are approved, they have to applied as it will be described in this section.

4.4 Local Stakeholder Consultation (LSC)

The chapter 'Local Stakeholder Consultation' ensures that stakeholders are able to actively influence the project design and implementation process. The LSC shall be finalised before the Initial Certification of a project and involve a discussion on all requirements of chapter '4.2 Do-No-Harm & Sustainable Development' that are relevant to the project.

This participatory process shall empower the project owner to define the *measures* that safeguard the long-term social, environmental and economic success of the project.

The project owner shall undertake the following process based on the **certification step** that is being pursued:

Initial l The project owner shall provide information using the template 'Local Stakeholder Consultation'.

Performance l Follow the process of the chapter '4.3 Input & Grievance Mechanism'.

New Area l The project owner shall identify the stakeholders that are *new* to the projects due to its expansion. With these *new* stakeholders a LSC shall be conducted.

1. **The Local Stakeholder Consultation (LSC) shall be conducted in accordance with 'Guidelines - LSC'. These guidelines follow the *FPIC principles*[40].**

In the guidelines the following steps are described in more detail:

Invitation of Stakeholders

2. The project owner shall proactively invite the stakeholders to provide comments on the proposed project.

Timeline

3. The LSC should be conducted prior to the project start. If the LSC is conducted after the project start, the project owner shall provide further explanation of how comments received during the LSC are taken into account in the project.

Public Consultation Meeting

4. The LSC shall include at least one public in-person meeting, which shall be open to anyone willing to attend. For this meeting the project owner shall proactively invite the stakeholders.

Input & Grievance Mechanism

5. A formal *input and grievance mechanism* shall be in place in accordance with the chapter 'Input & Grievance Mechanism'. This mechanism shall be described during the LSC.

[40] FPIC principles — Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is generally understood as the right of people affected by project activities to approve or reject proposed actions or projects that may affect them or their lands, territories or resources. https://ic.fsc.org/guides-manuals.343.htm?lightbox[width]=720#file-details-1243

4.5 Input & Grievance Mechanism

The chapter 'Input & Grievance Mechanism' ensures a transparent and continuous communication channel with stakeholders and is used in addition to the LSC. It ensures that issues arising during the lifetime of a project are properly addressed.

The project owner shall undertake the following process based on the **certification step** that is being pursued:

Initial l The 'Input & Grievance Mechanism' is put in place as part of the LSC process.

Performance l For every Performance Certification all inputs and grievances that are gathered since the last certification (Initial Certification or Performance Certification) shall be collected. The project owner shall provide information using the template 'List of Inputs & Grievances'.

The 'Input & Grievance Mechanism' is an integral part of the annual reporting process. See also chapter 'III. Procedures, 5. Reporting'.

New Area l For the New Area Certification the project owner shall follow the process for Performance Certification.

1. The project owner shall establish an 'Input & Grievance Mechanism' in accordance with the 'Guidelines - Input & Grievance Mechanism'.

4.6 Sustainability Monitoring Plan

The chapter 'Sustainability Monitoring Plan' provides the base for monitoring the *mitigation measures* identified in the chapters '4.1 Do-No-Harm & Sustainable Development'.

The project owner shall undertake the following process based on the **certification step** that is being pursued:

Initial | The project owner shall provide information using the template 'Sustainability Monitoring Plan'. The template contains the table below. Here, requirements with a risk of *non-conformity* from the chapter '4.2 Do-No-Harm & Sustainable Development' are recorded for monitoring.

Performance | The project owner shall update the *existing* template 'Sustainability Monitoring Plan'.

New Area | The project owner shall update, if necessary, the *existing* template with the information from the *new areas* added. The new information shall be clearly distinguishable, e.g., by the use of a different colour.

1. The project owner shall use the table below to define the monitoring for each of the *mitigation measures* identified in the chapters '4.2 Do-No-Harm & Sustainable Development'.

2. The selected parameters shall be practical to measure and be relevant to the *mitigation measure*.

The table format for the 'Sustainability Monitoring Plan' is provided below. A separate table shall be prepared for each of the parameters to be monitored.

Sustainability Monitoring ID		
Indicator for		
Mitigation measure		
Chosen parameter		
Current situation of parameter		
Estimation of baseline situation of parameter		
Target for parameter		
Monitoring	How will it be monitored and documented?	
	Who is responsible for monitoring and documentation?	
	When will it be monitored (duration and frequency)?	

5. Additionality

The chapter 'Additionality' ensures that projects demonstrate that they would not have been implemented without the benefits of CO_2-certificates.

The project owner shall select **between** option **1, 2** or **3** to demonstrate that the project is additional.

The project owner shall undertake the following process based on the **certification step** that is being pursued:

Initial l The project owner shall provide information using the template 'Additionality'.

Performance l Not applicable.

New Area l Option 1 - The project owner shall:

(a) Repeat the process for the Initial Certification with regard to the *new* areas only, OR

(b) Identify *key elements* of the project's existing additionally test and provide evidence that these *key elements* are not changed due to the *new* areas. *Key elements* shall include 'barriers' (in case of the barrier analysis) and economic assumptions (in case of the investment analysis).

Option 2 - The project owner shall demonstrate that the adoption of the respective activities including the *existing* **and** the *new* areas remains below or is equal to 5% by farmers in the *reference area*[41].

Option 3 - Follow the process of the Initial Certification.

Option 1 - CDM Tools

The project shall meet the additionality requirements of the latest version of the CDM *'Guidelines for the establishment of sector specific standardized baselines'.*

The '*Guideline on the assessment of investment analysis*' and the '*Guidelines for objective demonstration and assessment of barriers*' can be used as assistance.

Guidelines: http://cdm.unfccc.int/Reference/Guidclarif/index.html

[41] Reference area The *reference area* is an area with similar climatic and social conditions as defined by the Köppen-classification http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Köppen_climate_classification

Option 2 - Activity Penetration

This option shall only be applied by projects that result in CO_2-certificates of less than *60,000 tCO_2*[42] annually.

The project is deemed additional when the project activity is adopted by less than 5% of farmers in the *reference area*[2], an area with similar climatic and social conditions as defined by the *reference area*[43]:

$$\frac{\textit{Number of farmers adopting the project activity}}{\textit{Number of farmers in the reference area}^2\textit{ potentially adopting the project activity}} = \textit{\% of farmers adopting the project activity}$$

The *'Number of farmers adopting the project activity'* represents the farmers participating in the project.

Option 3 - Positive List

The project shall meet requirements (a) and (b) in the list below and at least **one** of the requirements (c) - (f) in order to be considered as additional.

(a) The project area is located in a country or in a region with a recent *UNDP Human Development Indicator*[44] below or equal to 0.7.
(b) The project activities shall not be mandatory by any law or regulation, OR if they are mandatory, the project owner shall demonstrate that these laws or regulations are systematically not enforced.

(c) The mean annual precipitation in the project area is less than 600 mm.
(d) In the project area a minimum of 5 native crop species are being cultivated in a *locally adapted agroforestry system*[45].
(e) The project is a smallholder project and results in CO_2-certificates of less than *60,000 tCO_2* annually.
(f) The project area is located:
- In a country or region with a recent *UNDP Human Development Indicator*[44] below 0.5, OR
- In a *Small Island Developing State (SIDS)*[46]

Retroactive Submission

1. If the Eligibility Check was submitted after the project start, the project owner shall demonstrate that the revenues from CO_2-certificates were seriously considered in the decision to implement the project.

   The crediting period of retroactive submission is limited as specified in the *relevant methodology* applied.

No Deforestation

2. The project area shall not have been *forest*[47] for at least 10 years prior to the project start.

   In case the project area has been deforested during the last 10 years, evidence shall be given that the deforestation activity has not taken place with the intention to implement the project activities and generate CO_2-certificates.

[42] 60,000 tCO_2 — Projects with less than 60,000 tCO_2 are defined as small-scale - see: UNFCCC decision 1/CMP.2, paragraph 28.
[43] Reference area — See footnote on previous page.
[44] UNDP Human Development Indicator — http://hdr.undp.org/en/data/profiles/
[45] Locally adapted agroforestry system — A locally adapted agroforestry system refers to land-use systems and practices where trees are deliberately integrated with crops and/or livestock on the same land management unit adapted to the local geophysical and social conditions.
[46] SIDS — http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1520
[47] Forest — A forest is defined by the Designated National Authority (DNA) of the project's host country: http://cdm.unfccc.int/DNA/index.html

III. Procedures

1. Eligibility Check

1. An Eligibility Check is conducted once at the beginning of each project.

2. During the Eligibility Check the Gold Standard secretariat checks the filled-in template 'Eligibility Check' through a *desk review*.

3. The outcome of the Eligibility Check determines whether the project shall:
   (a) Continue with the process 'Initial Certification', OR
   (b) Conduct a Pre-Feasibility Assessment.

4. With a successful Eligibility Check projects that are not required to do a Pre-Feasibility Assessment will obtain 'listed' status in the Markit Registry. This means that:
   (a) The project and project information is made publically available, AND
   (b) The project owner can promote the project according the 'Guidelines - Brand and Communications', AND
   (c) The project can proceed to Initial Certification or Pre-Feasibility Assessment.

2. Pre-Feasibility Assessment

1. A Pre-Feasibility Assessment is conducted:
   (a) As it is required due to the outcome of the Eligibility Check, OR
   (b) On a voluntary base by the project owner.

2. During the Pre-Feasibility Assessment the Gold Standard secretariat assesses the project information through a *desk review*. It assesses whether the project is likely to comply with the requirements.

   The outcome of the Pre-Feasibility Assessment is the *Pre-Feasibility Assessment report*. This report includes a list of resolved *Corrective Action Requests (CARs)* and open *Observations (OBS)* from the *desk review*.

3. With a successful Pre-Feasibility Assessment projects will obtain 'listed' status in the Gold Standard Registry. This means that:
   (a) The project and project information is made publically available, AND
   (b) The project owner can promote the project according the 'Guidelines - Brand and Communications', AND
   (c) The project can proceed to Initial Certification.

3. Certification (Initial Certification, New Area Certification, Performance Certification)

1. All certifications (Initial Certification, New Area Certification and Performance Certification) are completed by the assessment from a third-party auditor. The auditor's assessment confirms the project's compliance with the requirements. It shall include, but is not limited to:
   (a) *Audit planning*, AND
   (b) *Desk review*, AND
   (c) *Field visit*, AND
   (d) *Audit report*.

2. The *audit planning* shall amongst others include:
   (a) An agreement between the auditor and the project owner that clarifies the *response times* for clarifications or the exchange of the list of *Corrective Action Requests (CARs)*, AND
   (b) The contact details of the audit team leader, AND
   (c) The competency, roles and contact details of the audit team members.

3. The *desk review* shall amongst others take into account:
   (a) The submitted project information (*filled-in templates* and their *supporting documents*), AND
   (b) The *certification report* of the last certification, AND
   (c) All reports (see chapter '5. Reporting') since the last certification, AND
   (d) If available, the *Pre-Feasibility Assessment report* (only relevant for the Initial Certification).

4. The *field visit* shall amongst others include:
   (a) Field observations, AND
   (b) Interviews with the project owner, workers and stakeholders.

5. Once the Initial Certification or Performance Certification is completed, the auditor provides a written *audit report* to the Gold Standard secretariat. This report shall amongst others include:
   (a) An overview of the audit (including the quantity of *validated* and *verified* CO_2-certificates), AND
   (b) A description of the competency of the audit team, AND
   (c) An overview on the history of the report, AND
   (d) A description the objectives and scope of the report, AND
   (e) A description of the level of assurance and materiality levels for the estimation of CO_2-certificates, AND
   (f) A description of the *relevant methodology* applied, AND
   (g) A summary of the assessment from the audit process, AND
   (h) An audit conclusion and opinion, AND
   (i) A list of the individual requirements of the assessment, including concerns that are defined by the auditor.

The auditor shall use the template that will be provided under: www.GoldStandard.org/LUF_Agriculture
This template is still to be developed. Meanwhile auditors shall use their own templates.

Review

The *review period* follows any type of certification (Initial Certification, New Area Certification and Performance Certification). It ensures the possibility of stakeholders to raise concerns before CO_2-certifictes are issued and allows the Gold Standard secretariat to review the quality of the *certification report*.

1. During the *review period* the Gold Standard secretariat, *Gold Standard NGO Supporters* and the Technical Advisory Committee may express concerns on the project and its *certification report*.

   If any new concerns arise, either the project owner or the auditor shall address them. The Gold Standard secretariat will document this in a *review report*.

2. The *review period* ends
   (a) After 8 weeks for the Initial Certification or after 3 weeks for a New Area and Performance Certification, AND
   (b) When no more concerns are pending.

3. When the *review period* has ended (all concerns have been closed) the project will obtain 'registered' status. This means that:
   (a) The updated project information is made publically available, AND
   (b) The project owner can promote the project according the 'Guidelines - Brand and Communications'.

4. Issuance

1. After the review period the *validated* and *verified* CO_2-certificates are *issued* into the project owner's Markit Registry account.

2. 20% of the issued *validated* and *verified* CO_2-certificates shall be transferred into the *Gold Standard Compliance Buffer*[48]. The transfer is distributed pro rata according to the vintage years.

   The project owner may transfer CO_2-certificates from other Gold Standard certified projects to the *Gold Standard Compliance Buffer* in lieu of the CO_2-certificates from the project.

Gold Standard currently requires all 'Land Use & Forests' projects to contribute to the *Gold Standard Compliance Buffer*.

Our vision is to certify projects on a landscape level. Landscape projects use different types of methodologies and thus can issue different types of CO_2-certificates with the same certification: CO_2-certificates from greenhouse gas reductions (without any risk of non-permanence) as well as CO_2-certificates from carbon sequestration (with a risk of non-permanence).

To date, the landscape approach has not yet been developed. Hence, it is so far not defined how landscape projects will issue their CO_2-certificates.

As a consequence Gold Standard takes a cautious approach with the Gold Standard 'Agriculture Requirements version 0.9' and requires that all project types, independent of their types of CO_2-certificates, to contribute to the *Gold Standard Compliance Buffer*. This will be subject to evaluation and possible adaptation under version 1.0.

[48] Gold Standard Compliance Buffer — The *Gold Standard Compliance Buffer* is explained in more detail in 'The Gold Standard Foundation Land Use & Forests Framework' - see www.GoldStandard.org/LUF

5. Reporting

1. The minimum frequency for *reporting* is determined by the respective methodology that is applied.

2. For the *reporting*, the project owner shall use the template 'Reporting' and
   (a) Upload it through the Markit Registry, AND
   (b) Send it to stakeholders that show interest in the project.

3. Incidents or events that affect compliance with the conservative estimation of and monitoring of CO_2-certificates shall be reported to the Gold Standard secretariat within 30 days after their discovery. The template 'Carbon Performance' shall be used for this reporting.

3. The *reporting* shall focus on information that was gathered since the last *report*. It shall include:
   (a) A summary of the project and its recent activities (maximum 2 pages) , AND
   (b) A clear statement on how stakeholders can provide inputs/grievances, AND
   (c) A list of inputs/grievances which have been received together with their respective answers/actions.

   The following documents shall be submitted together with the filled-in *reporting* template as *supporting documents*:
   (a) A list of stakeholders who will receive the *reporting*, AND
   (d) The last *certification report.*

4. Based on the information contained in the reports, the Gold Standard secretariat, *Gold Standard NGO Supporters* and the Technical Advisory Committee have frequently updated information about the development of the project.

   Identified *non-conformities* are processed according to the procedures outlined in chapter '7. Non-Compliance'.

6. Validated CO_2-certificates

Projects that seek finance often consider selling their expected CO_2-certificates up-front. The requirements below describe under which conditions *validated* CO_2-certificates can be issued under Gold Standard and allocated to buyers.

This chapter is optional. Thus, it only applies to projects that want to issue *validated* CO_2-certificates.

1. Agriculture projects can issue *validated* CO_2-certificates up to 3 years in the future.

2. Project owners shall transparently communicate the differences between *validated* and *verified* CO_2-certificates.

7. CO_2-certificates from Carbon Sequestration

1. In all projects where the *relevant methodology* contains carbon sequestration, the project owner shall ensure at any time during a crediting period that the quantity of *expected* and *already* stored tCO_2 is always equal or more than the CO_2-certificates that are *validated* and *verified* by the project.

2. If compliance with requirement 1 is not maintained, the project owner shall demonstrate to the Gold Standard secretariat how the project will realistically recover appropriate levels of carbon stored.

   The project owner shall use one or more of the following approaches:
   (a) *Assigning* / *retiring* CO_2-certificates from the project which are not yet transferred or *assigned* / *retired*, OR
   (b) Purchasing CO_2-certificates from any other Gold Standard certified projects (these can also be from other project types such as renewable energy), OR
   (c) Re-implementing project activities which recover the carbon stocks over time, OR
   (d) Implementing the project activity on new areas to generate further CO_2-certificates.

3. During the period where the project owner is not in compliance with requirement 1, an equal number of CO_2-certificates from The *Gold Standard Compliance Buffer* will be put 'on-hold'.

8. Non-Compliance Process

1. Project owners shall report possible *non-conformity* on requirements within 30 days of their discovery. The template 'Non-conformity' shall be used for this reporting.

2. Any reported case of *non-conformity* will be investigated by the Gold Standard secretariat and if appropriate, will be escalated for consideration by the Technical Advisory Committee.

   A *non-conformity* shall have at minimum one of the following characteristics:
   (a) It continues over a long time, OR
   (b) It is repeated/systematic, OR
   (c) It affects a significant area, OR
   (d) It causes significant damage.

3. Depending on the extent of the reported *non-conformity*, the project owner's account on the Markit Registry may be frozen during the time of investigation.

4. If the project owner cannot demonstrate its re-conformity within 3 years, the project is *non-compliant* and will be *annulled*. Gold Standard Gold Standard reserves the right to take legal actions.

5. The *annulation* of a project leads to the assignment/retirement of a corresponding number of CO_2-certificates from the *Gold Standard Compliance Buffer*. With this, the permanence of CO_2-certificates that have been transferred or assigned/retired is maintained.

Imprint

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