



## Cover

### GOLD STANDARD FOR THE GLOBAL GOALS

### REQUIREMENTS

### DRAFT:

6 - For Public Consultation - March 2017

## Gold Standard Foundation Mission and Vision

**Our Vision:** Climate security and sustainable development for all.

**Our Mission:** Gold Standard maximises the impact of climate and development interventions by creating robust standards that lead to the responsible management of the planet's resources and life-changing benefits to communities around the world.

## Scope and Applicability

1. The Requirements set out in this document are applicable to all Project Developers and the Projects or Programmes\* for which Gold Standard Certification is sought. It also represents the Requirements against which GS-VVBs shall Validate or Verify the Project, in conjunction with the Conformity Criteria.
2. The Requirements shall be applied as per the relevant sections contained within this document and those associated or referenced.
3. From time to time Gold Standard may issue updates and changes, clarifications or corrections to the Requirements. These shall be published to the Gold Standard website and shall be applicable as per the date specifically stated for each update. Gold Standard will provide notice of all such changes and the dates for implementation and applicability. It is the responsibility of the Project Developer to remain up to date and to apply all such updates as required for its Project by checking the Gold Standard website, regardless of whether a notification of change has been received.
4. In some circumstances Gold Standard allows modules or elements of other, partner or endorsed Standards to be considered as evidence that may be used to demonstrate conformance to certain Gold Standard Requirements (*for example Fair Trade, FSC, CDM*). In such cases the Gold Standard Requirements still apply but for practicality shared evidence may be provided.

\*Note that for brevity the standard refers to Projects throughout the text; this may be read as Projects or Programmes.

## Project Pathway and Scope

1. All Projects shall apply the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Requirements and any associated Procedures.
2. All Projects shall apply the relevant Activity Requirements related to their project-type. If no such Requirements exist then the procedure outlined in Section 2.1.1 shall apply.

Items 1 and 2 above are mandatory for all Projects seeking Gold Standard Certification of any kind (referred to as 'The Base Code' below).

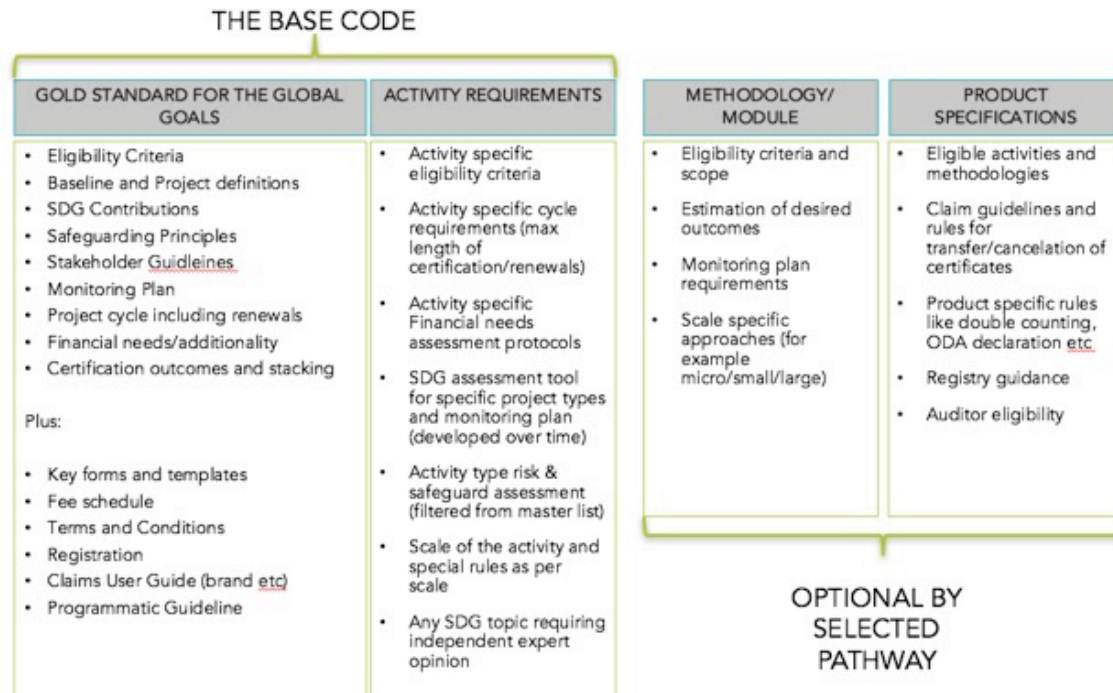
In addition to the 'Base Code':

3. Projects may seek to issue Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts in the form of Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact Statements and/or Gold Standard Certified

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Products. These are achieved by following Gold Standard Approved Methodologies and related Gold Standard Product Specifications.

The typical documentation pathway and content for a Gold Standard Certified Project is therefore as follows. This may vary dependent on pathway sought however:



## 1 Eligibility Principles & Criteria

This section presents the Gold Standard Eligibility Principles that are applicable to all Projects seeking Gold Standard Certification. In order to Register with Gold Standard all Projects shall contribute to the Vision and Mission of Gold Standard, applied specifically through the following Principles and Criteria.

### 1.1 Eligibility Principles

The following Eligibility Principles shall apply to all Projects seeking Gold Standard Certification:

**Principle 1: Contribution to Climate Security & Sustainable Development:**

- (i) Projects shall be of a type pre-identified as eligible or shall submit to Gold Standard for approval of eligibility. This procedure is described in Section 2.1.1
- (ii) Projects shall define their Baseline Scenario and Project Scenario. This procedure is described in Section 2.1.2
- (ii) Projects shall contribute positively to Climate Security & Sustainable Development. These positive contributions are considered against the Sustainable Development Goals. This procedure is described in Section 2.1.3

**Principle 2: Safeguarding Principles:** Projects shall conduct a Safeguarding Principles Assessment and conform to Gold Standard's Safeguarding Principles and Requirements. This procedure is described in Section 2.2.

**Principle 3: Stakeholder Inclusivity:** Projects shall identify and engage Relevant Stakeholders and seek Expert Stakeholder input where necessary in the design, planning and implementation of the Project. Project design shall reflect the views and inputs of stakeholders and ongoing feedback shall be sought, captured and acted upon throughout the life of the Project. This procedure is described in Section 2.3.

**Principle 4: Demonstration of real outcomes:** Projects shall:

- (i) Design and develop an upfront Monitoring & Reporting Plan. The procedure for this is described in Section 2.4.
- (ii) Undergo Validation and Project Design Certification. This procedure is described in Section 2.4.
- (iii) Undertake Monitoring in accordance with the Monitoring & Reporting Plan and produce Annual Reports and Monitoring Reports. Projects shall undergo Verification

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and Performance Certification in order to achieve Gold Standard Project Certification and to Issue Gold Standard Certified Impacts and Gold Standard Certified Products where sought.

(i) Undergo Gold Standard Project Certification Renewal in order to remain Certified and to continue to seek Gold Standard Certified Impacts and Gold Standard Certified Products where sought.

This procedure is described in Section 2.4.

**Principle 5: Financial Additionality and Financial Need:** All Projects must demonstrate impacts that are additional as compared to their baseline scenario (i.e. the benefits of the Project are beyond a business-as-usual scenario) as covered in Principle 1, above. In addition Projects following certain Certification pathways (i.e. those seeking to use Certification to attract finance or issue market Products) shall demonstrate Financial Additionality and Ongoing Financial Need. This procedure is described in Section 2.5.

## 1.2 General Eligibility Criteria

The following General Eligibility Criteria shall apply to all Projects seeking Gold Standard Certification

(a) **Types of Project:** eligible Projects shall include physical action / implementation on the ground. Pre-identified eligible Project types are identified in Section 2.1.1.

(b) **Location of Project:** Projects may be located in any part of the world.

(c) **Project Area, Project Boundary and Scale:** The Project Area and Project Boundary shall be defined. Projects may be developed at any Scale though certain rules, requirements and limitations may apply under specific Activity Requirements, Methodologies and Products.

(d) **Host Country requirements:** Projects shall be in compliance with host country's legal, environmental and social regulations.

(e) **Contact Details:** As part of the Project Documentation (see Section 3) the Project Developer shall provide the following information for all Project Participants:

(i) name AND

(ii) contact details AND

In case of an organisation

(iii) the legal registration number AND

(iv) documentation by the governing jurisdiction that proves that the entity is in good standing (defined as being a legal or other appropriate entity registered in or allowed to operate within the required jurisdiction and with no evidence of insolvency or legal/criminal notices placed against it or any of its Directors). Gold Standard retains the right (at its own discretion) to refuse use of the Standard where reputational concerns are highlighted.

(f) **Legal Ownership:** Full and uncontested legal ownership of the products that are generated under Gold Standard Certification, (for example carbon credits) shall be demonstrated. Where such ownership is transferred from project beneficiaries this must be demonstrated transparently and with full, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

Note that for certain Project types there is a requirement for full and uncontested legal title to be demonstrated. These are contained within specific Activity Guidance.

(g) **Other Rights:** As well as legal title and ownership the Project Developer shall also demonstrate where required uncontested legal rights and/or permissions concerning changes in use of other resources required to service the Project (*For example access rights, water rights etc.*). Any known disputes or contested rights must be declared immediately to Gold Standard by the Project Developer and resolved prior to further Project implementation and certification in affected areas.

## 2 Procedures & Requirements

This Section describes the Procedures that shall be followed and the Requirements that shall be met in order to achieve Gold Standard Certification for each of the Eligibility Principles described in Section 1.1. Each section describes the purpose, scope, applicability, Procedure and Requirements.

### 2.1 Principle 1: Contribution to Climate Security & Sustainable Development:

This section describes the Procedures and Requirements concerning Principle 1 - Contribution to Climate Security & Sustainable Development.

By successfully following the Procedures and Requirements in this Section the outcomes are:

- (i) The Project is demonstrated to either be of an eligible type under Gold Standard for the Global Goals or has sought and obtained approval from Gold Standard to proceed as a new Project type.
- (ii) The Project demonstrates its proposed contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), meaning at least a contribution to SDG 13 plus two other Goals.
- (iii) The Project includes the above in its Project Documentation, including the Monitoring & Reporting Plan.

#### 2.1.1 Eligible Project Types

1. A Project type is automatically eligible for Gold Standard Certification if there are Gold Standard published Activity Requirements and/or GS Approved Methodologies associated with it or as referenced in a Product Specification. These are published to the Gold Standard website and must be followed where provided for a given Project type.

*[NOTE FOR REVIEWERS: The activities currently available via the Gold Standard website will be transitioned to the Gold Standard for the Global Goals. In effect this means that all project types currently available and eligible will be eligible under Gold Standard for the Global Goals].*

2. For Project types not currently published to the Gold Standard website Project Developer may submit to Gold Standard for approval. This shall be done as a

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minimum as part of the Preliminary Review though it is recommended to engage with Gold Standard earlier in order to establish the criteria and requirements for approval.

3. Project types applying for Gold Standard approval are referred to the Gold Standard Vision and Mission. The Project Developer shall demonstrate how the Project would contribute to these and how the Gold Standard for the Global Requirements would be met in their application for approval.

4. In reviewing a new Project type for approval Gold Standard may establish new Requirements to be met by the Project in order to achieve Gold Standard Registration and Certification. Where required Gold Standard shall engage expert peer reviewers to establish these Requirements, at the Project Developers expense.

5. Gold Standard does not support Project types associated with energy generated from fossil fuel or nuclear or any project that supports, enhances or prolongs such energy generation. In certain cases (*for example* LPG stoves) an exception is made and this is captured in the relevant Activity Requirements, GS-Approved Methodologies and/or Product Specifications. In addition Gold Standard does not support Project types that have negative or restrictive impacts on sustainable development.

### 2.1.2 Definition of Baseline and Project Scenarios

1. The Project shall define both the Baseline and Project Scenarios. These are defined as follows:

(a) **Baseline Scenario:**

The Baseline Scenario is defined as the reasonable, conservative scenario that would exist in the absence of the project. While setting the Baseline Scenario the Project Developer shall take into account the relevant applicable legislation and how effectively these are enforced.

(b) **Project Scenario:**

The Project Scenario is defined as the scenario that will exist once the Project is implemented and operational.

(c) Note that while not defined as a scenario a consideration of the implementation and decommissioning (where relevant) phases of the project are also an important requirement within the Safeguarding Principles and Stakeholder Inclusivity procedures.



2. The defined Baseline and Project Scenarios shall be included in the Project Documentation and used to inform the other Principle Procedures outlined in this Section. The Baseline Scenario is also reviewed as part of Registration Renewal.

## 2.1.3 Contribution to Climate Security and the Sustainable Development Goals

1. All Projects shall demonstrate a clear, direct contribution to Sustainable Development, defined as making demonstrable, positive contributions to at least three SDGs, one of which must be SDG 13 (defined as Emissions Reductions or Sequestration and/or Adaptation to climate change). These are known as SDG Contributions.

2. SDG Contributions shall:

(a) Be a primary effect - an intentional, direct effect of the project and shall not be 'one off' or an effect generated in design, construction, distribution or start-up or decommissioning of the Project.

(b) Be significant - the effect shall generate an impact that is reflective of the scale of the Project, i.e. that it is a global impact (for example climate change mitigation) or important and significant to the majority of affected stakeholders and/or environment that the Project services.

(c) Be lasting - the Project Developer shall demonstrate that the effect shall be either a permanent change or shall be a change that can be shown to have potential to last beyond the life time of the Project.

3. The Project shall define its SDG Contributions and set monitoring indicators to be included in the Monitoring & Reporting Plan. To do this the following procedure shall be followed:

(a) **Step 1:** Identify the broad, potential SDG Contributions provided by the Project by comparing the Project Scenario to the Baseline Scenario (note multiple baseline scenarios may be relevant depending on the SDG Contributions and/or methodologies followed). All SDG Contributions shall be demonstrated as making a positive effect beyond what would reasonably be expected to occur in the Baseline Scenario.

(b) **Step 2:** Based on the potential SDG Contributions identified in Step 1 select the minimum 3 (including climate security) that meet the Requirements stated in 2 a-c noted above.

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(c) **Step 3:** The Project Developer may choose from the following options to demonstrate SDG Contributions:

1. Option 1 - For any SDG Contribution the Project Developer shall review the SDG Targets and Indicators from the relevant National SDG Indicators or in their absence the latest internationally adopted version, or the latest version 'under consideration' where Indicators are not yet fully adopted. Select the three most relevant to the chosen SDG Contributions. Propose an Output Indicator, Quality Indicator and Justification Information that combined demonstrate how the Project positively impacts the chosen Sustainable Development Goal Indicator.
2. Option 2 - Follow a Gold Standard Approved SDG Tool for the demonstration of SDG Contribution(s). *[NOTE FOR REVIEWERS - such tools could be authored by GS or be an approved 3rd party tool. These will be developed in the coming months and years and be published to the GS website]*
3. Option 3 - Follow a Gold Standard Approved Methodology, published or referenced via the Gold Standard website. These are typically used by Project Developers to achieve GS Certified SDG Impacts, which may be issued as GS Certified Products or GS Certified Impact Statements.

(d) **Step 4 (where required):** For certain SDG Contributions an Expert Stakeholder Opinion and Recommendation may be required – See below.

(e) **Step 5:** Include the Output Indicator, Quality Indicator, Justification and Monitoring Approach or the monitoring parameters for Gold Standard Approved SDG Tools or Methodologies in the Monitoring Plan to inform future Monitoring Reports.

4. As per Step 4.1 above any one or more of the minimum three SDG Contributions chosen by the Project Developer may be undertaken by following a Gold Standard Approved Methodology. By following and achieving Certification under this approach the Project Developer may receive a Gold Standard Certified Impact, issued as GS Certified Products (such as Gold Standard VERs or CER Label) or Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact Statements (see Section 3 for further detail). These may either be selected from the existing Gold Standard Approved Methodologies available or the Project Developer may submit a methodology for review and approval by Gold Standard where appropriate. Before proposing a new methodology the Project Developer shall discuss and agree this with Gold Standard prior to commencement of development.

5. Projects shall seek Expert Stakeholder opinion and recommendation for certain SDG Contributions. Those SDGs requiring Expert Stakeholder opinion are pre-identified in specific Activity Requirements. For new project types these shall be decided upon by

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Gold Standard prior to or during Preliminary Review. The Project Developer shall demonstrate that the Expert Stakeholder has confirmed that the impact is real and meets the Requirements of this section and that any recommendations have been incorporated into the Project Design.

6. The proposed positive SDG Contributions shall be included in the Project Documentation, including proposed monitoring parameters in the Monitoring & Reporting Plan.
7. The Monitoring Report shall include reporting on the positive SDG Contributions and associated monitoring parameters.

## 2.2 Principle 2: Safeguarding Principles

This section describes the Procedures and Requirements concerning Principle 2 - Safeguarding Principles.

By successfully following the Procedures in this Section the outcomes are:

- (i) The Project completes a Safeguarding Principles Assessment to define the relevance of the different Requirements to the Project (note further guidance is also provided in specific Activity Guidance).
- (ii) The Project demonstrates how all relevant Requirements will be met.
- (iii) The above is included in the Project Documentation, including the Monitoring & Reporting Plan.

### 2.2.1 Safeguarding Principles Procedure

**NOTE TO READER - The Safeguarding Principles Procedure document can be found in the 'Re' tab to the right of this panel ---->**

1. All Projects shall undertake an upfront assessment against the Gold Standard Safeguarding Principles and implement their Project in accordance with the stated Requirements. The assessment shall apply to the Project Scenario though certain Assessment Questions and Requirements involve a comparison to the Baseline Scenario(s).
2. All Safeguarding Principles and Requirements shall apply to all Projects, however in order to make the Assessment more practical the Assessment in combination with specific Activity Guidance shall define the Requirements that:

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- (a) Are relevant to the Project and that evidence shall be provided to demonstrate adherence to the Requirements.
  - (b) Are potentially relevant to the Project but may be justified as not requiring demonstration of conformance to the Requirements.
  - (c) Are less relevant to the project and can be ignored without the need to justify.
3. The Safeguarding Principles Assessment shall be completed so far as possible by the Project Developer for submission in the Preliminary Review.
  4. A number of Safeguarding Principles require the opinion and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder. These are pre-identified in the Safeguarding Principles Procedure and in specific Activity Requirements.
  5. The Monitoring & Reporting Plan shall capture any Safeguarding Principle Requirements parameters that are required to be monitored and reported upon and/or reassessed in future, in line with the Gold Standard Safeguarding Principles procedure. This shall be used to inform the ongoing Monitoring Reports and Verification and Performance Review processes.
  6. The Safeguarding Principles Assessment and evidence of conformity to the associated Requirements shall be included in the Project Documentation, including the proposed monitoring parameters in the Monitoring & Reporting Plan.
  7. The Monitoring Report shall include reporting on Safeguarding Principles and Requirements and the associated monitoring parameters.

### 2.3 Principle 3: Stakeholder Inclusivity

This section describes the Procedures and Requirements concerning Principle 3 - Stakeholder Inclusivity.

By successfully following the Procedures and Requirements in this Section the outcomes are:

- (i) The Project demonstrates how it has identified, engaged and consulted with Relevant Stakeholders. Where required, Expert Stakeholders are engaged in the process.
- (ii) The Project demonstrates the records of the consultation and how the outcomes of consultation have positively influenced the Project design and implementation.
- (iii) The Project demonstrates that stakeholder concerns have been addressed and any disputes have been resolved.

(iv) The Project demonstrates that an appropriate system for the ongoing capture, recording and responding to stakeholder concerns is developed.

(v) The above is captured in the Project Documentation, including the Monitoring & Reporting Plan.

### 2.3.1 Stakeholder Procedure

**NOTE TO READER - The Stakeholder Procedure and Guideline can be found in the 'Re' tab to the right of this panel ---->**

1. All Projects shall conduct a Stakeholder Consultation and ongoing Engagement process and implement an ongoing Feedback and Grievance Mechanism. This shall be carried out in line with the Gold Standard Stakeholder Procedure and Guideline.
2. The Stakeholder Consultation shall be conducted prior to the Start Date of the Project (see Section 2.4). If the Consultation is conducted after the Start Date, the Project Developer shall provide further explanation of how comments received during the Consultation are taken into account in the Project design and implement a Feedback & Grievance Mechanism that takes into account that activities have already begun.
3. The Stakeholder Consultation shall include at least one public, in-person meeting (at a location appropriate to the context and accessibility for the stakeholders identified) and one feedback consultation which shall be open to anyone wishing to attend and which shall be conducted in accordance with the Stakeholder Guidelines.
4. The project shall maintain a publically available and easily accessible (to all Relevant Stakeholders) system of feedback and grievance capture. The exact mechanism(s) shall be appropriate to the context and nature of stakeholders involved.
5. The Monitoring Plan shall include monitoring of any ongoing feedback and/or grievances received from stakeholders, in line with the Stakeholder Procedure and Guideline. All such feedback shall be accurately recorded and made transparently and publically available.
6. A report of the Consultation process, including consultation feedback and how this was incorporated into the design of the Project, shall be included in the Project Documentation and the Monitoring & Reporting Plan.
7. The Monitoring Report shall include an update on stakeholder feedback received during the period and any actions taken in response. It shall also review the relative

successes and failures of the ongoing stakeholder feedback mechanism and any proposals for improvement.

## 2.4 Principle 4: Demonstration of Real Outcomes

This section describes the Procedures and Requirements concerning Principle 4 - Demonstration of Real Outcomes. This Principle represents the Gold Standard Project cycle and the timescales and frequency for Certification.

By successfully following the Procedures and Requirements in this Section the outcomes are:

- (i) The Project develops a Monitoring and Reporting Plan.
- (ii) The Project achieves Registration by engaging a GS-VVB and undergoing Validation and Registration Review.
- (iii) The Project provides ongoing Annual Reporting
- (iv) The Project achieves Performance Certification and Issuance by engaging a GS-VVB and undergoing Verification and Performance Review.
- (v) The Project undergoes Registration Renewal every five years.

### 2.4.1 Gold Standard Project Cycle

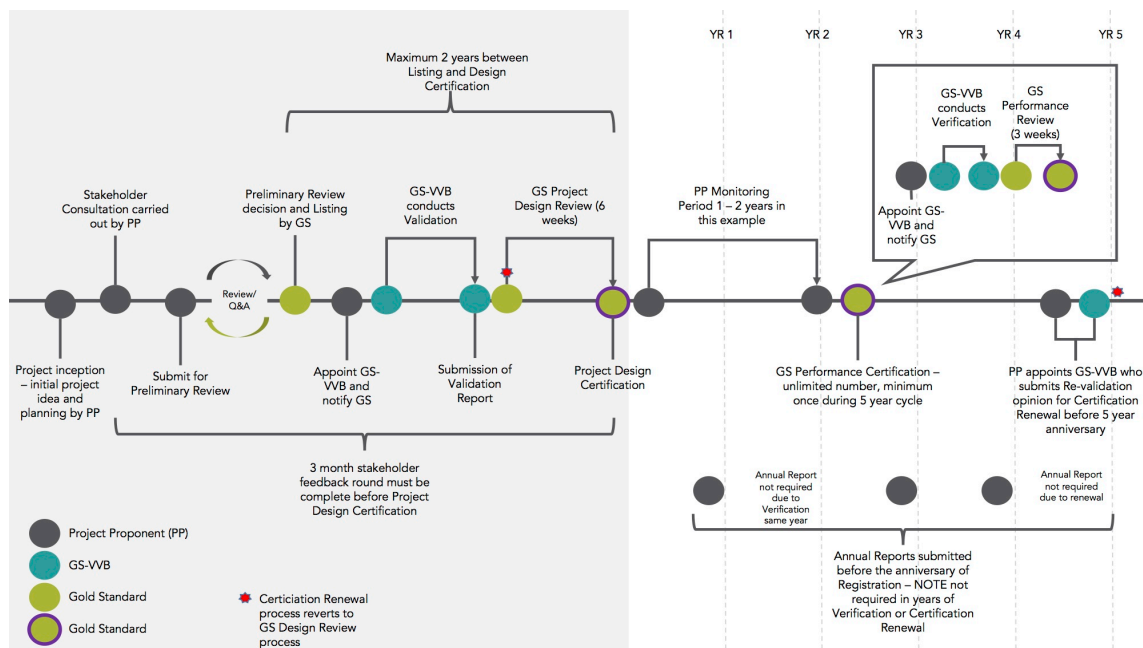
Gold Standard for the Global Goals Project Certification is based on a 5 years renewable cycle, with key features as follows and summarised in flow diagram below:

- All Projects must LIST with the Gold Standard by undertaking a Preliminary Review and uploading key documentation including Stakeholder Consultation report.
- Projects may then seek GOLD STANDARD PROJECT DESIGN CERTIFICATION n with Gold Standard by successfully completing Validation and subsequent Project Design Review.
- Gold Standard Certified Project Design status Projects then enter a 5 year renewable cycle wherein for each five year period they must undergo Verification and Performance Review to achieve GOLD STANDARD CERTIFIED PROJECT status and where sought GOLD STANDARD CERTIFIED IMPACTS.
- To retain this status at the 5th year Projects must undergo PROJECT CERTIFICATION RENEWAL by updating information, updating baseline, and demonstrating Ongoing Financial Need.

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- The number of Verifications/Performance Certifications in a 5 year cycle is not limited although it must take place at least once, no later than two years post-Project Design Certification or Project Certification Renewal.
- The maximum number of Project Certification Renewals and whether a certain number or automatic or reduced in scope is governed by individual Activity Requirements and/or Product Specifications. In the absence of any such stated Requirement a Project shall undergo full Project Design Certification Renewal at the 5th anniversary.

The following process flow shows the Project Cycle for a typical Project Certification:



## 2.4.2 Development of Monitoring and Reporting Plan

1. Projects shall produce a Monitoring & Reporting Plan that includes a detailed approach to the following:
  - (a) Monitoring and reporting of parameters identified for positive SDG Contributions.
  - (b) Monitoring and reporting of parameters associated with any Requirements and re-assessments highlighted by the Safeguarding Principles Assessment.
  - (c) Monitoring and reporting of Stakeholder Engagement, feedback, grievances and any action taken.
  - (d) Any monitoring requirements and parameters in any Gold Standard Approved Methodology, Tool and/or Product Specification selected.

2. For each monitored parameter from 1(a) to 1(d) above the following information shall be provided in the Monitoring Plan:

- (a) Metric or variable that shall be monitored and reported.
  - (b) Frequency of monitoring and reporting against each parameter.
  - (c) Method of collection of information and identification and details of the organisation or individuals involved in the collection.
  - (d) Any quality control approaches for the proposed data collection and reporting.
  - (e) Any ethical restrictions on the collection and/or reporting of collected information.
3. The Project Monitoring Plan shall be presented for Validation and shall form the basis of ongoing Monitoring Reports that shall be presented for Verification.

## 2.4.3 Project Design Certification

### 1. Project Start Date:

1. The Project start date shall be considered to be the earlier of the date on which the Project Developer has committed to expenditures related to the implementation of the Project. This does not include the purchase or option to purchase the land upon which a Project is intended to take place.
2. Examples of start date may be the date on which contracts have been signed for equipment or construction/operation services required for the Project. Minor pre-Project expenses such as the contracting of services /payment of fees for feasibility studies or preliminary surveys, shall not be considered in the determination of the start date as they do not necessarily indicate the commencement of implementation of the Project.
3. Note that the Project start date definition and requirements may differ under certain Product Specifications (for example for GS VERs) and Project types (for example for land-use practices). These shall be clearly stated in the Product Specification, Methodology or Activity Requirements.

### 2. Preliminary Review:

1. The Preliminary Review is conducted once at the outset (i.e. at an early stage of project design and before Listing on the GS Registry, see below) of a Project. During the Preliminary Review the Gold Standard conducts a desk review of the Key Project



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Documentation. This reviews whether the Project has the potential to conform to the Gold Standard Requirements and may therefore progress to Listed status.

2. The Preliminary Review includes a desk review of Project Eligibility Principles as well as Methodology applicability amongst other matters.

3. The Preliminary Assessment starts when the Project Developer has:

(a) signed and submitted the 'Terms and Conditions' AND

(b) submitted the Key Project Information, draft Project Documentation and supporting documents, AND

(c) paid the fee for the Preliminary Review where required.

The outcome of the Preliminary Review may be:

(a) a successful Review without any likely or potential CARs, FARs or OBSs identified  
OR

(b) a successful Review with likely or potential CARs, FAR s or OBS identified, OR

(c) an unsuccessful Review with at least one potential NC identified.

With either outcome 4.a or 4.b the Project may progress to Listing, as per Section 2.4.2.3, below.

The minimum requirements for draft Project Documentation includes a substantively completed Project Design Documentation submission that captures:

(a) Fully completed details required under Section 2 - Eligibility Criteria

(b) A Stakeholder Consultation Report as defined under the Stakeholder Guideline and Procedure

(c) A substantially completed Safeguarding Principles Assessment (meaning the majority completed, including any key Principles that relate to the project type or context) including any Expert Stakeholder opinions and recommendations

(d) Defined SDG Contributions including any Expert Stakeholder opinions and recommendations sought

(e) Confirmation of certification pathway and any GS Approved Methodologies and Product Specifications followed including a demonstration of Financial Additionality where required

(f) A draft Monitoring Plan

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4. During the Preliminary Review step Gold Standard may identify any further matters that require Expert Stakeholder opinion and recommendations not already pre-identified

5. The Preliminary Review is intended as a guide to the Project Developer and does not represent a Certification review or result in Certification. It does not guarantee that a Project shall be successful in Validation or Registration or ongoing Verification and Performance Review. Neither does it guarantee that further issues or alternative interpretation will arise later. The CARs, OBs and FARs are indicative only, further matters may be raised or interpreted differently by the GS-VVB and/or Gold Standard during the Project Cycle.

### 3. Listing:

1. With a successful Preliminary Review, the Project will obtain 'Listed' status in The Gold Standard Registry. This means that:

(a) the Project Documentation and supporting documentation is made publicly available, AND

(b) the Project Developer may promote the Project according to the Gold Standard Claims Guideline as appropriate for Listed status Projects..

(c) the Project may proceed to Validation.

2. Listed status does not constitute or convey Certification and does not provide any guarantee that the Project will ultimately achieve Certification.

### 4. Validation and Project Design Certification:

1. Validation is conducted by a GS-VVB who assesses the up-front design and monitoring plan for a Project against the Eligibility Principles, Criteria and Requirements. This includes Validation of:

(a) the Project Documentation including the Monitoring Plan

(c) Any supporting information required by any aspect of Gold Standard or included by the Project Developer as containing evidence of conformity to all applicable Gold Standard Requirements.

2. This section details the procedure for Validation and Certification resulting in the Project achieving Registered status:

3. Following Listing a Project may proceed to Validation and finally Registration of the Project by Gold Standard. Registered is a status that constitutes and conveys

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Certification by Gold Standard of the up-front Project Design and proposed Monitoring Plan against the Gold Standard Requirements.

4. The Project shall be Registered within two years of achieving Listed status or shall be de-Listed in the event of failure to complete this step.

5. Validation shall be carried out by a GS-VVBs. The GS-VVB shall be appointed directly by the Project Developer, selected from the list of approved GS-VVBs, eligible for the Project type proposed. The GS-VVB appointment shall include responding to clarifications, queries, OBs, FARs and CARs raised by Gold Standard during Registration Review.

6. Validation begins when:

(a) The Project Developer has contracted an eligible, approved GS-VVB AND,

(b) Submitted full Project Documentation and Supporting Documents to the GS-VVB who shall upload to the Gold Standard Registry AND,

(c) The Project Developer has notified Gold Standard of the commencement of Validation and the indicative submission date for completion.

7. Validation ends when the GS-VVB has conducted a site visit and submitted a complete Validation Report, with no open NCs and/or CARs in the opinion of the GS-VVB, to Gold Standard.

8. Following submission of the Validation Report by the GS-VVB and payment of Project Design Certification fee by the Project Developer the Gold Standard conducts a Project Design Review of the Project Documentation and Validation Report. During the Project Design Review the Project Documentation is also open to Technical Advisory Committee and NGO Supporter comment.

9. The Project Design Review period concludes at the later of either 6 weeks post commencement of review or when all CARs are closed. The services of the GS-VVB shall be retained by the Project Developer to respond to clarification requests and CARs raised by Gold Standard and until the conclusion of the Project Design Certification decision.

10. The date of Registration is the last day of the Project Design Review period, even if the review itself extends beyond this date (i.e. the date of Project Design Certification is retrospectively confirmed).

11. The positive conclusion of the Project Design Review period shall result in Gold Standard Project Design Certification status.

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This means that:

- (a) The Project Documentation, supporting documentation and final Validation Report shall be made public (unless otherwise agreed with Gold Standard, for example in the case of commercially or personal security sensitive information).
- (b) The Project becomes eligible for Verification and Performance Certification.
- (c) the Project Developer may promote the Project according to the Gold Standard Claims Guidelines as appropriate for Gold Standard Certified Project Design status Projects.

## 5. Regular vs Retroactive:

- 1. Project design may be Certified under a Regular or Retro-active procedure.
- 2. Regular Projects are those where the Stakeholder Consultation (according to Gold Standard Stakeholder Guidelines) meeting has taken place prior to the Project Start Date. The report of the Stakeholder Meeting shall be submitted to Gold Standard within three months of the event (though this date may be after the Project Start Date).
- 3. Retro-active Project Design Certification may be sought for Projects where the Project Start Date has already occurred prior to the application for Gold Standard Design Certification (defined as date of first submission of Preliminary Review information to Gold Standard).
- 4. For Retro-active Projects Project Design Certification shall occur within two year of the Project Start Date unless otherwise stated in the specific Activity Requirements or Product Specification.
- 5. For certain Methodologies and Gold Standard Certified Impacts the Requirements for Retro-active Project Design Certification may differ. Likewise some Product Specifications require Prior Consideration of revenues in order to be eligible to receive an Issued Product and may limit or extend the maximum period of Certification prior to Project Design Certification.

## 5. Combining Project Design Certification and first Performance Certification:

- 1. Project Developers may choose to combine Validation and Registration with their first Verification and Performance Review. The GS-VVB may combine site visits/consider their Reports concurrently. This may occur where the Project Start Date is prior to the envisaged Registration Date.

2. This is achieved through the GS-VVB submission of positive Validation and Verification Reports concurrently to Gold Standard.
3. Following receipt of the GS-VVB Reports Gold Standard shall carry out a 6 week review period that covers both the Project Design and the Performance Review.
4. Successful conclusion of concurrent Certification shall lead to both Project Design Certification and Performance Certification taking place concurrently.

## 2.4.4 Annual Reporting

1. Projects shall provide transparent, annual update reports. Reports shall be submitted within 12 months of the date of Project Design Certification and every subsequent 12 month period thereafter. It is not required for years when a Verification is completed. Failure to provide Annual Reports as required shall result in the de-Certification of the Project.
2. The Project Developer shall submit an Annual Report to Gold Standard that shall be made publicly available to access to stakeholders identified in Stakeholder Consultation, including via a free to access website. The Annual Report is not published to the Gold Standard Registry.
3. The 'Annual Report' shall focus on information since the last 'Annual Report' or Verification Report as appropriate. It shall include:
  - (a) a summary of the recent events/actions related to the Project,
  - (b) a clear statement on how stakeholders may provide inputs/grievances,
  - (c) a list of inputs/grievances which have been received together with their respective answers/actions
  - (d) any incidents or events that may impact the Outcomes/Impacts delivered to date (in terms of loss) or the ongoing Performance of the Project.
  - (f) any legal contest or dispute that has arisen

The following shall be submitted together with the 'Annual Report' as supporting documents:

- (a) any updates to the Key Project Information, Project Documentation and Monitoring & Reporting Plan
- (b) a descriptive summary of all monitoring information collected during the year

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(c) an update of the list of stakeholders (with contact details) who will receive the 'Annual Report'

(d) an update of the 'Project Participants & Secured Titles' (in case of changes)

4. The Project Developer shall attest to the accuracy of the information provided by its signature on the 'Annual Report'. The signatory shall be an individual with legal signing authority within the Project Developers organisation.

5. Based on the 'Annual Report', The Gold Standard Secretariat, Gold Standard NGO Supporters and the Technical Advisory Committee may monitor and assess the continuous Conformance of the Project to the Requirements.

6. Annual Reporting does not represent Certification nor any decision-making or agreement to any design change by Gold Standard. Annual Reporting is intended as an opportunity to share progress and make key updates with formal review of conformity to Requirements and any changes in approach shall be undertaken at Verification/Performance Certification only.

### 2.4.5 Performance Certification

#### 1. Verification:

1. Verification may take place either alongside or after Project Design Certification (see Section 4) and must occur at least once during the 5 year Certification cycle.

2. Verification shall only be commenced once a Project achieves Gold Standard Certified Project Design status (or concurrently as noted above).

3. Verification shall include all Gold Standard Requirements as well as those contained in any Methodologies, Certified SDG Outcome Statements and Product Specifications that are included in the application by the Project Developer.

4. Verification shall be undertaken by a GS-VVB who is eligible for the scope of Project and any GS Methodology being applied.

5. In some circumstances a different GS-VVB is required to undertake Verification than was used for Validation. This is as stipulated in the relevant Methodology or Product Specification. Unless otherwise stated the same GS-VVB may undertake both steps for a given Project.

6. Verification starts when the Project Developer has:

(a) contracted an eligible GS-VVB AND



(b) submitted the Monitoring Report to the GS-VVB who shall upload to the Gold Standard Registry AND

(c) notified Gold Standard of the commencement of Verification (via regional contact). Failure to do so may result in a delay to the commencement of Performance Review.

7. Verification ends when the GS-VVB provides a written Verification Report to The Gold Standard. A positive Verification Report shall have no pending or open CARs in the opinion of the GS-VVB.

## **2. Performance Review and Performance Certification:**

1. Following submission of the Verification Report by the GS-VVB and payment of the Performance Certification fee by the Project Developer the Gold Standard conducts a Performance Review of the Monitoring Report and Verification Report. During the Performance Review the Project Documentation is also open to Technical Advisory Committee and NGO Supporter comment.

2. Unless otherwise stated in a specific Activity Requirement, Methodology or Product Specification the Performance Review period concludes at the later of 3 weeks post commencement of review or when all CARs are closed. The GS-VVB shall be retained by the Project Developer to respond to clarification requests and CARs raised by Gold Standard.

3. During the Performance Review new CARs, FARs and OBS may be raised by any party, including Gold Standard. If any new CARs or FARs are opened, these shall be addressed by either the Project Developer and/or the GS-VVB.

4. The Performance Review period concludes at the later of the conclusion of 3 weeks or when all CARs are closed.

5. The positive conclusion of the Performance Review period shall result in:

(a) Gold Standard Certified Project status wherein the Project Documentation, supporting documentation and Verification Report are made public via the Gold Standard Registry.

(b) The Project becomes eligible for receipt of any applicable ongoing Gold Standard SDG Impact Certification including the issuance of any Gold Standard Certified Products or SDG Impact Statements.

6. Certified SDG Impact Statements and/or Certified Products shall be provided once the Project is both eligible (as above) and the required fees have been paid to Gold Standard.
7. This process may take into account Retro-active Certified Outcome Statements and/or Issuance. The maximum time for Retro-active Certification is the later of the Project Start Date or two years prior to the date of Project Design Certification unless otherwise stated in a specific Methodology, Certified Impact Statement and/or Product Specification.

## 2.4.6 Project Certification Renewal

### 1. Renewal of Gold Standard Project Certification:

1. To maintain Gold Standard Certified Project status beyond five years a Project must undergo Project Certification Renewal. This process shall begin (defined by the submission of a re-Validation opinion by a GS-VVB for Renewal Review to Gold Standard) no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Project Design Certification date. Note that GS Renewal of Registration may complete after the 5th anniversary, the Renewal date shall be backdated to the earlier of the re-Validation opinion or the 5th anniversary.

2. Failure to do so shall result in the Project being de-Certified and removed from the Gold Standard Registry.

Project Certification Renewal follows the same process as Project Validation and Project Design Certification (see Section 3.1.4) though the scope of assessment is limited to:

- (a) Changes to the General Eligibility Criteria
- (b) Incorporation of any relevant updates to the Gold Standard Requirements
- (c) Re-definition of Baseline Scenario and any impact of change on the Eligibility Principles, Criteria and Requirements
- (d) Review of Operational Financial Need where appropriate, as per Principle 5
- (e) Any activity or methodology specific Requirements

### 2. Automatic or adjusted Renewals:

1. The application of Project Certification Renewal differs from Project type to Project type. The five year renewal cycle remains in place for all though different Project types allow for automatic renewal for a given number of cycles and/or to remove the need



for any or all of 1a-e above. These are as defined in the Activity Requirements related to the Project.

## 2.5 Financial Additionality and Ongoing Financial Need

This section describes the Procedures and Requirements concerning Principle 5 - Additionality and Financial Need

By successfully following the Procedures and Requirements in this Section the outcomes are:

- (i) The Project demonstrates Financial Additionality and is therefore able to Issue certain Statements and Products.
- (ii) The Project demonstrates Ongoing Financial Need and is therefore able to complete Registration Renewal.

### 2.5.1 Financial Additionality and Ongoing Financial Need Procedure

#### 1. Applicability of Financial Additionality and Ongoing Financial Need:

1. Project's seeking Gold Standard Certified Impacts for the purposes of assignment to funders or buyers (i.e. any Statement or Product that may be assigned to a third party in the Gold Standard Registry) must demonstrate Financial Additionality and/or Ongoing Financial Need. The application of the Requirements in this section is determined under the relevant Activity Requirements and Product Specification.

#### 2. Financial Additionality:

1. All Gold Standard Project's seeking Project Design Certification that includes such Gold Standard Certified Impacts as noted in 1, above must be demonstrated to be financially additional, meaning that the outcomes generated by the Project would not have occurred without the financial benefit derived from Gold Standard Certification.

2. Such Gold Standard Projects shall demonstrate Financial Additionality as noted in the relevant Activity Requirements and/or Product Specification. The latest version of the additionality tool available at the time of first submission to The Gold Standard shall be applied. This tool may be used by the project until the project achieved Gold Standard Certified Project Design status..

3. In the absence of any such Activity Requirement or Product Specification the project shall apply the UNFCCC CDM Tool for demonstration of additionality, latest available version at time of submission.

4. Proposals may be made for new additionality tools by submission to Gold Standard for approval.

### **3. Stacking and Financial Additionality:**

1. Projects seeking to issue multiple different Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts shall demonstrate Financial Additionality as per 2, above. Such Projects must also provide qualitative, evidence-based justification of the need and value-add to the Project outcomes for each additional revenue stream.

### **4. Operational Financial Need:**

1. All Gold Standard Project's seeking Certification for such SDG Impacts as noted in 1, above must be demonstrated to have an ongoing Ongoing Financial Need for such mechanisms. This means that the Project could not continue without the ongoing financial benefit derived from Gold Standard SDG Impact Certification.

2. Projects shall provide evidence based on actual project-level financial information to demonstrate Ongoing Financial Need and that Gold Standard Certification provides a material financial input to the ongoing success of the project. Commercially sensitive information shall not be published.

3. Ongoing Financial Need must be demonstrated at Certification Renewal.

## **2.6 Programmes**

1. The Gold Standard certification cycle is suitable for multi-phased programmes with multiple interventions with extended implementation period within a sector or in multiple sectors as is typically the case in urban low-carbon growth programmes.

The Requirements in this section are applicable for a Programme where multiple individual activities are spread over space and time.

Specific Requirements associated with Programmes are as follows:

(a) The start date of a Programme shall be considered to be the date of submission of the Programme level stakeholder consultation report on the Gold Standard registry

(b) In the case of a Programme of Activities, the start date of a specific activity can be earlier than the start date of the Programme.

(c) In the case of a programme with similar or different activities within one or multiple sector, the Project Developer shall submit the programme level information with key eligibility criteria (for example, type of technology, geographical location etc.) for activities that will be included in the programme at later stage. In such cases, it is not

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required to submit individual activities for eligibility check to Gold Standard. However, if the activities are not in compliance with Gold Standard requirements, Gold Standard reserves right to reject at Registration stage.

(d) In case the case of a programme with similar or different intervention(s) within one or multiple sectors, the Project Developer shall submit the programme with at least one representative real case activity per type to pursue Validation and obtain Registered status (Project Developer may combine and submit more than one activities of a registered programme for Performance Certification)

The Project Developer shall define the eligibility criteria and monitoring plan for interventions that would be included in the programme and ensure compliance with these eligibility criteria each time an intervention is included in the Programme. The Project Developer may include individual activities under the registered programme at any time. However, if the interventions are not in compliance with Gold Standard requirements, Gold Standard reserves right to reject them at a later stage.

(e) Additional programmatic requirements may also be contained in product specifications/methodologies.

(f) Regarding Principles 1-3 the Requirements and procedures shall apply at the individual activity level.

(g) Financial Additionality and Operational Financial Need, where required, shall be proven at the individual activity level.

## 3 Certification Outcomes

This Section provides an overview of the types of Gold Standard Certification outcomes. It should be read in conjunction with the Gold Standard Claims Guidelines which provides further guidance as to the application and communication of Gold Standard Certification.

Types of Certification:

1. **Gold Standard Certified Project Design:** Successful attainment of Gold Standard Certified Project Design status results in the Project allows the Project to undertake Verification and Performance Certification on the way to becoming a Gold Standard Certified Project and to promote the Project in accordance with the Gold Standard Claims Guideline.
2. **Gold Standard Certified Project:** A Gold Standard Registered Project that successfully completes Verification and Performance Review is called a Gold Standard Certified Project. It is Issued with a combined Project-level statement of the positive SDG contributions made or Certified Outcomes achieved in a given Monitoring Period. The Project is also able to promote itself in accordance with the Gold Standard Claims Guideline.

A Gold Standard Certified Project is issued a statement confirming its status and listing its SDG Contributions and Certified SDG Impacts.

2. **Statements and Products:** Further to Gold Standard Certified Project status a Project may also be issued Gold Standard Certified Impacts, including SDG Outcome Statements and Gold Standard Certified Products (such as GS VERs). This is subject to successful Verification and Performance Certification of the Project's conformity to applicable Gold Standard Methodologies and Product Specifications.

All projects from Listed status and beyond, including their Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts are captured on the Gold Standard Registry and are publically and transparently available to all to review. The Project is also able to promote it's claims in accordance with the Gold Standard Claims Guideline.

3. **Stacking:** The Project Developer may potentially pursue any number and combination of Gold Standard Certified SDG Outcome Statements and Issued Products provided that:

(a) All Requirements in this document and in the relevant Gold Standard Methodologies are fully met.

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(b) The Methodology and/or Product Specification do not stipulate that the issuance of a given combination of Statements and Products is ineligible under Gold Standard. Such details are confirmed within specific guidelines, methodologies or Product Specifications.

(c) All necessary legal terms and conditions are fully executed and complied with. It is noted that certain Product Specifications may impose particular legal requirements/come with Product-specific terms and conditions and other legal documents that shall be completed.

Project Developers and funders/buyers of Gold Standard Statements and Products must adhere to the Gold Standard Claims Guidelines as appropriate to the status of the Project. This defines and directs the use of claims made in relation to Gold Standard Certification.

After Registration it is possible to add further Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts to the Project Issuance but it is not allowed to retroactively issue further Statements or Products for previous Monitoring Report periods.

## 4 Documentation and Technical Requirements

1. Projects shall provide evidence of conformity to the Requirements in the form of:

### **For Preliminary Review:**

- (a) Key Project Information
- (b) Project Documentation so far as completed (Public Consultation shall be included)
- (c) Supporting evidence and documentation such as maps, survey results or calculations

### **For Validation and Project Design Certification:**

- (a) Project Documentation including Monitoring & Reporting Plan
- (b) Activity or Methodology specific documentation
- (c) Supporting evidence and documentation

### **For Annual Reporting:**

- (a) Annual Report documentation
- (b) Supporting evidence and documentation

### **For Verification and Performance Certification:**

- (a) Any updates to the Project Documentation
- (b) Monitoring Report
- (c) Activity or Methodology specific documentation
- (d) Supporting evidence and documentation such as maps, survey results and/or calculations

2. Except for supporting evidence and documentation all the above shall be submitted using Gold Standard Project templates.

3. The Project Developer shall open an account on the Gold Standard Online Platform and the Gold Standard Registry:

- (a) With these accounts, Project Documentation, Project Design Documentation, Monitoring Plans, Reports, supporting documentation and the GS-VVB's Validation and Verification Reports shall be submitted. Note that the GS-VVB is responsible for uploading the final Validation or Verification Report.

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- (b) All Project Documentation, except confidential information, shall be made publicly available through The Gold Standard Registry.
- (c) All information shall be submitted in English, OR a language that has been agreed upon by the Project Developer, The Gold Standard Secretariat and the GS-VVB.
- (d) Figures above one thousand shall be formatted with a comma (for example 1,000,000), and decimals will be separated by a point (for example 1.35).
- (e) Pictures, graphs, tables and supporting documents within Project Documentation shall be clearly marked with a unique ID.

## 5 Non-Conformity

1. The Project Developer shall report any potential or actual Non-Conformity against the Requirements and any associated Guidelines, Tools or Methodologies immediately upon discovery. Non-conformities may also be submitted to Gold Standard by any party for review.
2. Gold Standard shall undertake a review of the Non-Conformity, including as required commissioning an independent investigation and an expert peer review of any recommended action taken.
3. Gold Standard shall decide upon the action taken in response to a confirmed Non-Conformity. This may include a requirement for immediate rectification or change, to suspend a Project until rectification has been Verified or to remove Gold Standard Registration status for the Project.