

Validation and Verification in Conflict Zones

1. Background

Projects proponents have faced considerable challenges in contracting DOEs for the validation and the verification of projects located in conflict zones or refugee camps. Gold Standard rules allow deviation to normal project cycle for projects located in conflict zones and refugee camps. This allows project proponents to combine DOE validation or verification (based on a desk-review) with on-site validation or verification conducted by an Objective Observer (OO) contracted by project proponents.

2. Steps and procedures for projects in conflict zones that want to apply the proposed approach

2.1.1. Submission for approval

The Gold Standard Foundation will assess applications on a case-by-case basis and check the credibility of the project proponents involved in the project activity submitted for approval. The applicant is required to demonstrate prior experience in working in conflict zones and show involvement in other activities within the considered conflict zone, apart from implementing the project activity. Alternatively, the establishment in the context of the project activity of a formal collaboration with partners who have such an experience and involvement can also be approved as long as such collaboration is sustained over the entire crediting period.

Evidence must also be provided showing that DOEs are not willing to go on-site before a project activity is allowed for deviation from standard validation or verification procedures.

2.1.2. Selection of Objective Observer

The project proponent is required to identify and provide Gold Standard with the name and contact details of three Objective Observers (independent experts from local universities, NGOs, consultancies, etc.) who can credibly carry out an appraisal of the project activity.

The Objective Observers suggested should preferably be representatives of development organizations with conflict zone and host country experience, so that environmental and socio-economic impacts can be safely and credibly assessed. Where applicable, the

Objective Observer suggested by the project proponent shall already have authorisation to work in the specified conflict zone.

Gold Standard will select an Objective Observer amongst the three suggested candidates based on an assessment of their expertise or if they do not match the required criteria, the Gold Standard will ask for other candidates to be proposed or possibly suggest another experts to act as the Objective Observer.

The DOE shall provide a checklist to the selected Objective Observer before the site visit to assist the Objective Observer in assessing the relevant aspects related to the validation or verification of an activity. The checklist shall be limited to issues that the DOE thinks would be necessary to check on-site to form the validation or the verification opinion. The project proponent will be responsible for contracting and covering the costs of the Objective Observer(s).

2.1.3. Site visit by Objective Observer and submission of the report

The appointed Objective Observer during validation stage is required to visit the project activity and to meet the local stakeholders to provide an independent assessment on the risks associated with the project as well as to identify potential negative impacts associated with the project activity on the social, environmental and economic elements of the local community.

The appointed Objective Observer during verification stage is required to visit the project activity and confirm the status of project operation. The Objective Observer shall also assess whether the mitigation plan has been effectively implemented and negative impacts and risks have been mitigated. Further, the Objective Observer is required to check that other negative impacts have not resulted due to implementation and operation of the project.

The Objective Observer shall make use of the Validation or Verification Appraisal Report template provided by the Gold Standard as well as the checklist provided by the DOE.

The Validation or Verification Appraisal Report prepared by the Objective Observer is to be made available to the Gold Standard and the DOE. This report forms part of the final Validation or Verification Report submitted by the DOE for requesting registration or issuance. The DOE has the option to seek for clarification and shall use the findings from the Validation or Verification Appraisal Report to form the final validation or verification opinion.

The Gold Standard Foundation will review the report delivered by the Objective Observer during the 8-week registration or 3-week issuance review process.