

PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION POLICY

I. Introduction

The Gold Standard relies on public stakeholder consultations to make its rule-making transparent, informed, and conservative. A stakeholder is any individual or group that has an interest in any decision or rule made by The Gold Standard. (See iSeal Standard Setting Code version 6). Comments from interested stakeholders allow The Gold Standard to make decisions that are based on evidence, experience, and the views of those local communities who will be most affected by the rules or decisions. Matters that require public stakeholder consultations include, but are not limited to, scope expansion and the inclusion of other environmental assets for certification.

II. Solicitation

Where a decision or rule requires a public stakeholder consultation process, The Gold Standard will publish a call for stakeholder comments through its website and other reasonable communication channels, such as climate-I and Ecosystem Marketplace. The call for comments will include any supporting documentation that must be considered for interested stakeholders to be fully informed. It will also clearly identify where stakeholder comments should be submitted. All public stakeholder consultations will be open for comment for a minimum of thirty (30) calendar days.

It is critical to the success of The Gold Standard consultation process that the relevant stakeholders are identified and queried. The Gold Standard will ensure the participation of a balanced and representative group of stakeholders that are likely to have an interest in the subject matter or who will be affected by its implementation. Appropriate and accessible mechanisms for participation will be provided. Where required, The Gold Standard may proactively survey select individual stakeholders for a more in-depth analysis. The Gold Standard may perform such one-on-one consultations where The Gold Standard feels it has not received engagement from a balanced and representative group of stakeholders.

III. Decision-Making

Following each public stakeholder consultation, The Gold Standard will make a decision or rule where it determines, in its sole discretion, that there is a consensus. A “consensus” is not defined as unanimity, but a general agreement among the majority of interested stakeholders.

IV. Publication

Immediately following each public stakeholder consultation, The Gold Standard will publish the following documents on its website:

- The initial call for comments with any supporting documentation;
- All responses received by The Gold Standard in connection with the stakeholder consultation;
- Any responses by The Gold Standard to a stakeholder in connection with that stakeholder’s comments; and
- The ultimate decision or rule made by The Gold Standard.