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REQUIREMENTS
**GOLD STANDARD FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN
DEVELOPMENT**
V 0.2

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The Governance and Management Systems criteria detailed in Annex D were developed based on Mitigation Action Assessment Protocol (MAAP) from World Bank.

ABOUT GOLD STANDARD

Gold Standard is a standard and certification body that aims to maximise the impact of climate and development activities. We design the strongest processes that amplify the impact of efforts to deliver clean energy and water, responsibly manage land and forests, and transform lives of the world's poor. We then verify those outcomes, inspiring greater confidence that drives investment to accomplish even more.

Gold Standard was established in 2003 by WWF and other international NGOs as a best practice standard to ensure projects that reduced carbon emissions under the UN's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) also delivered on their dual mandate to

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foster sustainable development. Now with more than 80 NGO supporters and 1300 projects in over 70 countries, our projects have delivered billions of dollars in climate and development outcomes in local communities all around the world. Learn more about Gold Standard at www.goldstandard.org. Inquiries should be directed to the Gold Standard secretariat at: info@goldstandard.org



This standard is developed through support from the Low Carbon City Lab (LoCaL).

LoCaL aims to reduce 1 Gt of CO₂ and mobilise €25 billion of climate finance for cities annually by 2050. It is an innovation platform aiming to provide cities with better tools for assessing greenhouse gas emissions, planning, investing and evaluating progress. Started in 2015, LoCaL is a growing community of more than 20 organisations dedicated to unlocking climate finance for cities. This report was realized as part of the project Result Based Financing for Cities (RBFC) under LoCaL. LoCaL is a Climate-KIC flagship programme.

<http://local.climate-kic.org>

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ABOUT CLIMATE-KIC

Climate-KIC is the EU's largest public private partnership addressing climate change through innovation to build a zero carbon economy. We address climate change across four priority themes: urban areas, land use, production systems, climate metrics and finance. Education is at the heart of these themes to inspire and empower the next generation of climate leaders. We run programmes for students, start-ups and innovators across Europe via centres in major cities, convening a community of the best people and organisations. Our approach starts with improving the way people live in cities. Our focus on industry creates the products required for a better living environment, and we look to optimise land use to produce the food people need.

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LIST of ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full form
ADALY	Averted Disability-Adjusted Life Year
CAR	Corrective Action Request
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CER	Certified Emission Reduction
DNA	Designated National Authority
DOE	Designated Operational Entity
EU	European Union
FAR	Forward Action Request
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GMS	Governance and Management system
GPC	Global Protocol for Communities
GS	Gold Standard
Gt	Giga-tonne
HCV	High conservation value
ISEAL	International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling
ISO	International Standards Organization
IT	Information and Technology
LEDS	Low emission development strategies
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MRV	Monitoring, reporting and verification
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
OB	Observation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDSN	Sustainable Solutions Development Network
TGC	Technical Governance Committee
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
V	Version
VER	Voluntary Emission Reduction
VVB	Validation and verification body
WBC	Water Benefits Certificate
WRI	World Resources Institute

PREFACE

In 2015 Gold Standard began development of a single, holistic climate and sustainable development standard for projects and programmes ([Gold Standard for the Global Goals](#)). This comprehensive standard improves consistency and efficiency, updates to the latest best practice and allows quantification and monetisation of SDG outcomes. The long-standing key Gold Standard principles of inclusivity, holistic design, robust safeguards and MRV are all retained and further enhanced in Gold Standard for the Global Goals.

The *Gold Standard for Sustainable Urban Development*, hereafter “the standard”, is intended to function as a pathway to certification within the [Gold Standard for the Global Goals](#) Framework but is specifically tailored to urban Projects or programmes.

The Standard is designed to help urban Projects achieve best practice and quantify their climate and development impacts to help attract investments for low carbon development in urban areas. The design of the Standard hence includes assessment of key elements that align with investor criteria. The standard helps urban authorities to plan, design, implement, monitor, and quantify the performance of a large scale urban Project following the best practices, thereby increasing investor confidence. The Standard will help reduce the risks associated with the investments in the urban space by providing assurance that the Project follows good practice design principles, manages environmental and social risks, engages local communities, conducts robust MRV and delivers multiple development benefits thereby improving the risk-return profile of urban Projects and making them “investment ready.”

These criteria are also aimed to help cities govern and manage their Projects better and continually improve their internal processes. The standard provides a framework to help urban authorities build capacity to efficiently plan, design, implement and monitor the performance of large scale urban Projects.

The standard is intended to be robust but easy to use for early-stage assessment of risks and estimation of development outcomes. It also provides a pragmatic approach for monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of the performance for urban Projects.

The standard proposes direct/indirect involvement of city authorities like such as urban local bodies or municipal corporations. The private sector is also expected to play a key role in leading the low carbon development in urban areas. It shall be noted that Gold Standard requires demonstration of adherence to local laws and regulation and expects

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local authorities to be included as key stakeholders for all Projects where they are not directly involved.

The Standard is intended for use by the following users (but not limited to) –

- Local government, city government, regional government, municipal authorities, associations, infrastructure providers, service providers, project developers, advisors, consultants or broader programme managers.
- Investors (public sector, private sector, impact investors), banks, donors, funds, and foundations.

The Standard puts forward the following value propositions for the target users -

- i. **De-risking** – The standard incorporates the non-financial risk assessment criteria that are based on safeguarding principles that have been recently updated by UNDP after thorough public consultation and expert feedback process. All developers will be required to assess their Projects against these criteria and mitigate the risks identified. The identified mitigations measures will also have to be monitored to track the progress and outcome.

In addition, the Projects are required to carry out comprehensive stakeholder mapping and consultations to incorporate their feedback in the Project design. This approach creates a strategic buy-in from relevant stakeholders and mitigates a significant potential risks in future, which also threaten an investment and the overall project success.

- ii. **Robust governance and management systems** – The governance and management capabilities of urban authorities is vitally important to investors to create confidence that the authority is capable of delivering a project as designed. The standard includes criteria to assess the governance capabilities and structure, including investment planning, inter-institutional coordination, track-record of implementing similar Projects, and management systems (including clearly designated roles and responsibilities etc.) of the designated authorities. From urban authorities' perspective, having such systems in place provides them with an important tool to manage their Projects and also will help continuously build capacities and improve their processes to govern and manage such Projects effectively.
- iii. **Verified development outcomes for assurance and greater brand value** – The

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standard requires that the Project contribute to at least three Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It must make a positive impact to SDG 13 “Climate Action” and also contribute to two additional SDGs; these contributions must be monitored and reported annually. This key feature allows city authorities to prioritise the local actions and align their Projects with the global development language of the SDGs. In addition, it assures investors that Projects contribute positively to global development goals. The annual MRV requirements also provide assurance to investors that desired outcomes from the investments are indeed achieved. This helps create strong brand value for the urban Projects, city authorities and for investors as well to gain recognition for their efforts.

- iv. **Access to results based finance** – The standard sets requirements to assess contribution to SDGs and MRV of the outcomes that create an option for the Project to monetise outcomes and access result based finance like climate or health finance, where relevant.
- v. **Ease of reporting and transparency** – A user-focused online platform will be developed to make reporting easier and transparent thereby making information publicly available on Project’s performance and outcomes.
- vi. **Project aggregation for cost efficiencies** – The standard act as an aggregation tool for multiple Projects thereby improving the risk-return profile of the portfolio for the investor and reducing development and monitoring costs for urban authorities.

INTRODUCTION

This document represents the requirements of Gold Standard certification standard for urban Projects. All urban Projects or programmes for which Gold Standard for Sustainable Urban Development certification is sought shall fulfill the requirements as set out in this document and those referenced or associated. The term Project represents the individual action and/or programme i.e., set of related Projects with common objective. The requirements set out in this document for individual Projects are applicable for programmes, unless stated otherwise.

In order to maintain the integrity of the standard, Gold Standard reserves the right to issue updates and changes, clarifications or corrections to its requirements. Typically, this will involve a notice period and guidance will be provided on how to apply the new rules and requirements. Likewise, the Gold Standard reserves the right to require additional information and evidence to be supplied by the Project developer.

In addition to this document a number of guidelines, tools and templates are provided as annexes to assist developers with their Project and its certification.

Text within the standard below in coloured boxes represents guidance on respective Requirements.

ELIGIBILITY PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

In order to register with Gold Standard all Projects and programmes shall contribute to the vision and mission of Gold Standard, applied specifically through the following principles:

- (a) Gold Standard urban Project: All Projects shall be of a type identified as making a direct contribution to Gold Standard's vision and mission. A number of Project-types are pre-identified as making such a contribution; these are identified in Annex C – SDG Assessment tool.
- (b) Baseline and project scenario comparison: All Projects shall define their baseline scenario and project scenario for use in the following procedures and ongoing reporting.
- (c) Safeguarding principles: All Projects shall conform to Gold Standard safeguarding principles and associated requirements.

(d) Contribution to climate security & sustainable development: All Projects shall contribute to SDG 13, climate action and must more holistically contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals:-

(e) Inclusive: All Projects shall identify and engage relevant (meaning local, affected and interested) 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 as required.

(f) Monitoring, Reporting and Verification: In line with (a)-(e) above all Projects shall:

- i. Design and develop an upfront monitoring plan.
- ii. Undergo validation to register as a Gold Standard urban Project.
- iii. Undertake monitoring in accordance with the monitoring plan and produce monitoring reports. Undergo verification and performance review to maintain Gold Standard certification.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The following general eligibility criteria shall be applied to Projects and programmes:

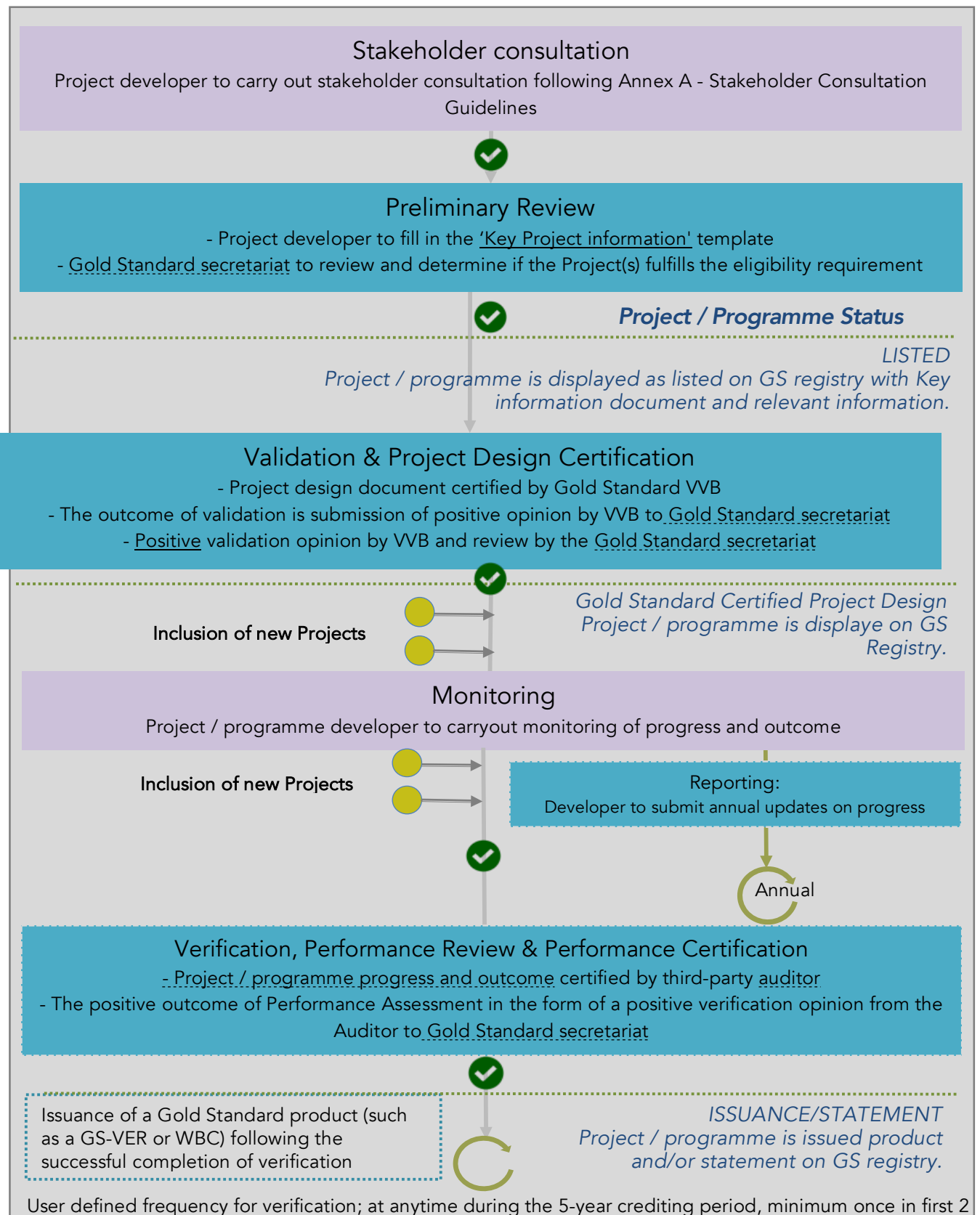
- 1. Types of Project:** Projects that contribute to climate security and sustainable development from all sectors that are relevant within an urban context, including clean energy supply, energy efficiency, transport, housing, water & sanitation, land use planning, solid waste management, wastewater management, public lighting etc. are eligible for certification. For indicative list of Projects that can use the standard, refer to Annex C – SDG Assessment tool. In addition to this list, any new Project may be submitted to Gold Standard for review and approval. Such approval shall be at the discretion of Gold Standard Technical Governance Committee. Such submissions shall demonstrate relevance and contribution to the Gold Standard vision, mission and '[theory of change](#)' as well as be in compliance with all Gold Standard requirements.
- 2. Location of Project:** Project(s) within the geographical boundary of the urban area located in any part of the world are eligible.
- 3. Comparison to baseline:** Referring to the definition of BASELINE, the Project applying for Gold Standard certification shall define the baseline scenario and Project scenario for use in comparison and assessment of Gold Standard requirements.
- 4. Scale:** There is no limit on the scale of the eligible Project(s) unless specified in an approved Gold Standard methodology, guideline or product specification.
- 5. Host country requirements:** Project(s) shall be in compliance with host country's legal, environmental and social regulations as well as any civic and cultural rights. In addition, the designated national agency responsible for climate change actions such as Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) or Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) coordinating agency or Designated National Authority (DNA), as relevant, shall be notified about the Gold Standard certification process, preferably at the time of stakeholder consultation.
- 6. Contact details:** As part of the Project documentation the Project developer shall provide their contact details.
- 7. Legal ownership:** Full and uncontested legal ownership and title for the products of the Project that will be generated under Gold Standard certification (for example carbon credits) shall be demonstrated.

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8. **Legal title:** For the duration of the certification period under Gold Standard, the Project developer shall hold uncontested legal land title (where required for certain Projects) for area within the Project boundary and hold necessary permits to implement the Project. Alternatively, the developer shall demonstrate why land title is not required, for example, due to the nature of the Project proposed.

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URBAN PROJECT CERTIFICATION CYCLE



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The standard has a certification cycle designed to reflect the urban context, scale and longer/varied implementation timelines of Projects and programmes. The certification cycle is suitable for multi-phased programmes with multiple Projects with extended implementation period within a sector or in multiple sectors as is typically the case in urban low-carbon growth programmes. The individual steps in the urban Project certification cycle are as follows.

1. Listing, Validation and Project Design Certification

This section describes the steps that lead to Project or a programme Design Certification with Gold Standard. *[Unless stated otherwise, please note that 'Project' is used to refer both to Projects and programmes in the following sections.]*

1.1. Start Date

- a. The start date of an Project shall be considered to be the earlier of the date on which the developer has committed to expenditures related to the implementation or construction of the Project. This does not include the purchase or option to purchase the land upon which an Project is intended to take place.
- b. Examples of start date of an Project 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, should not be considered in the determination of the start date as they do not necessarily indicate the commencement of implementation of the Project.
- c. 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.
- d. In the case of a Programme of Projects, the start date of an Project can be earlier than the start date of the Programme.

1.2. Preliminary Review

The developer shall complete the key Project information template and shall be submitted to Gold Standard for Preliminary Review, which is conducted only once at the beginning of the Project. In case, the developer intends to develop a programme with similar or different Project(s) within one or multiple sector, the developer shall submit the programme level information with key eligibility criteria (for example, type

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of technology, geographical location etc.) for Projects that will be included in the programme at later stage. In such cases, it is not required to submit individual Project(s) for Preliminary Review to Gold Standard. However, if the Projects are not in compliance with Gold Standard requirements, Gold Standard reserves right to reject the Project(s) at registration stage.

1.3. Listing

With a successful Preliminary Review, the Project obtains 'listed' status that allows the developer to promote their Project to potential investors etc. Listed status does not constitute or convey certification and does not provide any guarantee that the Project will ultimately achieve certification.

With a successful Preliminary Review, the Project will obtain 'listed' status in the Gold Standard registry on submission of signed 'Terms and Conditions' and payment of applicable fee¹ (if any). This means that:

- a. Key Project information and supporting documentation is made publicly available, AND
- b. The Project developer may promote the Project according to the Gold Standard claims guidelines as appropriate for listed status Projects. When using the Gold Standard logo, developers must also follow Gold Standard brand guidelines.

¹ Please note that the fees to be charged for listing will be decided at a later stage.

1.4. The Project may proceed to validation and Project Design Certification.

After reaching listed status, an Project may proceed to validation and then Project Design Certification by Gold Standard. The validation and registration steps confirm that the Project design complies with all Gold Standard requirements and that it is ready for verification.

With a successful validation and Gold Standard Secretariat review, the Project obtains the 'Gold Standard Certified Project Design' status, which constitutes and conveys certification by Gold Standard of the up-front Project design and proposed monitoring plan.

By becoming Certified in this way, a Project may further pursue verification, performance review and issuance as per section below. A Project shall achieve Project Design Certification within three years of achieving listed status or shall be de-listed in the event of failure to complete this step.

1.5. Project Design Certification

1. Validation may only be carried out by Gold Standard VVBs. The Gold Standard VVB is appointed directly by the Project developer, selected from the list of approved Gold Standard VVBs who are eligible for the Project type proposed. It includes an assessment of:
 - a. Project documentation
 - b. Stakeholder consultation
 - c. Safeguarding principles assessment
 - d. Sustainable development contributions
 - e. Monitoring plan
 - f. Any supporting information required by any aspect of Gold Standard or included by the developer

Validation begins when the developer has:

- a. Contracted an eligible, approved Gold Standard VVB AND,
- b. Submitted full Project documentation and supporting documents to the Gold Standard VVB.

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- c. Notified Gold Standard of the commencement of validation and the likely submission date upon completion (note that failure to do this at the outset of validation may lead to delay in registration review).
2. Validation ends when the Gold Standard VVB has conducted a site visit and submitted a complete validation report, with no open corrective action requests in the opinion of the VVB, to Gold Standard.
3. Following submission of the validation report by the Gold Standard VVB and payment of a registration fee² by the Project developer, Gold Standard conducts a registration review of the Project documentation and validation report. During the registration review, the Project documentation is also open to Technical Governance Committee and NGO Supporter comment.
4. The Project Design Review period concludes at the later of 6 weeks post-commencement of review or when all corrective action requests are closed. The Gold Standard VVB shall be retained by the Project developer to respond to clarification requests and corrective action requests raised by Gold Standard.
5. 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).
6. The positive conclusion of the Project period shall result in the Project becoming certified as registered. This means that:
 - a. The Project documentation, supporting documentation and final validation report shall be made public.
 - b. The Project becomes eligible for verification and certified SDG outcome statements or issuance of products.
 - c. The Project developer may promote the Project according to the Gold Standard claims guidelines as appropriate for Gold Standard Certified Project Design status. When using the Gold Standard logo, developers must also follow Gold Standard brand guidelines.

Programmes

In case of a programme with similar or different Project(s) within one or multiple urban sectors, the developer shall submit the programme with at least one representative real case Project per sector to pursue validation and obtain Programme Design Certification status. The Project developer shall define the eligibility criteria and monitoring plan for

² Please note that the fees to be charged for registration will be decided at a later stage.

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Projects that would be included in the programme and ensure compliance with these eligibility criteria each time an Project is included in the Programme. The developer can include individual Projects under the registered programme at any time. However, if the Projects are not in compliance with Gold Standard requirements, Gold Standard reserves right to reject the Project(s) at later stage. Additional requirements may also be laid down in product specifications/methodologies. The requirements mentioned in this section are applicable for a Programme where individual Projects are spread over space and time.

1.5.1. Regular vs Retroactive Registration

1. Projects may received Project Design Certification under a Regular or Retro-active procedure³.
2. **Gold Standard Certified** Project Designs 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 Local Stakeholder Meeting shall be submitted to Gold Standard within three months of the event (though this date may be after the Project Start Date). The Stakeholder Consultation should ideally take place before Project has achieved listed' status and before 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 certification (defined as date of first submission of documents for Preliminary Review to Gold Standard) and no stakeholder consultations as per Gold Standard requirements (Annex A) have been carried out.
 - a. For retroactive Projects, Gold Standard may raise additional stakeholder consultation requirements, to be complied with after listing stage.
 - b. For certain methodologies, certified SDG outcome statements and products (for example Verified Emissions Reductions), specifications of the requirements for retroactive registration may differ. These should be checked carefully by the developer. Likewise, some product specifications require prior consideration of revenues to demonstrate financial need 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.

³ It shall be noted that the Urban Project cycle presented in page 13 of this document represents the Regular cycle Registration scenario

1.5.2. Combining Validation and first Verification

1. The Project developer may choose to combine validation and Project Design Certification with their first Performance Certification and issuance, if any⁴. The Gold Standard VVB may combine site visits and consider their reports concurrently. This may occur where the Project start date is prior to the projected registration date.
2. This is achieved through the Gold Standard VVB's submission of positive validation and verification reports concurrently to Gold Standard.
3. Following receipt of the Gold Standard VVB reports, Gold Standard shall carry out a 6-week review period that covers both the Project Design Review and the Performance Review.
4. Successful conclusion of concurrent certification shall lead to both Project Design Certification and Performance Certification (and issuance of any SDG Impacts) taking place concurrently.

2. Monitoring, Reporting and Verification

With successful registration, every Project shall monitor the progress and outcomes according to the registered monitoring plan. The Project developer submits annual reports of progress and outcomes. The annual reports are meant to keep Gold Standard updated on the status and progress of the Project. To report the progress and outcomes of a programme, a sample of Project(s) can be monitored and the results can be consolidated at programme level.

The Project/programme developer engages the Gold Standard VVB for verification and certification of outcomes following the requirements in the section below.

2.1. Annual Reporting

1. The developer shall submit an annual report that shall be made public via the Gold Standard Registry. The developer shall also make the annual report available for access to stakeholders identified in stakeholder consultation.

⁴ It shall be noted that the Urban Project cycle presented in page 13 of this document represents a scenario where there is no combining of validation and verification

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2. Reports shall be submitted within 12 months of the date of registration and every subsequent 12-month period thereafter.
3. The annual report shall focus on information since the last annual report. It shall include:
 - a. A summary of the recent events/actions related to the Project(s)
 - b. A clear statement on how stakeholders may provide inputs/grievances
 - c. A list of all inputs/grievances which have been received together with all of their respective answers/actions
 - d. Any incidents or events that may impact the outcomes or impacts delivered to date (in terms of loss) or the ongoing performance of the Project
 - e. Any legal contest or dispute that has arisen
 - f. Updates to the governance and management systems
 - g. Capacity building activities undertaken by the developer
4. The following shall be submitted together with the annual report as supporting documents:
 - a. Any updates to the key Project information, Project design documentation and monitoring plan
 - b. A summary of all monitoring information collected during the year
 - c. An update of the list of stakeholders who will receive the annual report
 - d. An update of the 'Project developer & secured titles' (in case of changes)
5. The 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 developer organisation.
6. The Gold Standard Secretariat will conduct spot-checks of annual reports of Projects based on target-random approach. If risks are identified during the spot check assessment, the developer may be asked to submit the Projects for full verification.

2.2. Verification, Performance Review & Issuance

2.2.1 Verification

All Projects applying for certification under the standard shall submit the Project for verification at least once during the 5-year crediting period. Developers shall still submit annual reports to Gold Standard.

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The developer can combine and submit more than one Projects of a registered programme for performance certification.

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.

2.2.2 Performance review

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.

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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.

2.2.3 Issuance

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

2.2.4 Retroactive Verification, Performance Review and Issuance

- a. Projects may apply for Performance Certification for a period of up to three years prior to Project Design Certification.
- b. This option may be adjusted by a given methodology, certified SDG outcome statement or product specification and these requirements should be checked carefully by the Project developer.

3. Baseline updates

The baseline for an Project must be renewed once every five years after Project Design Certification date.

4. Non-Conformity

- a. The Project developer shall report any potential or actual non-conformity against the requirements and any associated guidelines, tools or methodologies immediately upon discovery.
- b. In the event of non-conformity the Gold Standard Grievance and Non-Conformity Procedure shall be followed.

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STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Why are these requirements important?

Stakeholder consultation provides an opportunity for an Project developer to engage with stakeholders and share and promote understanding about the Project. It also provides an opportunity for affected stakeholders to have a say in the design of the Project.

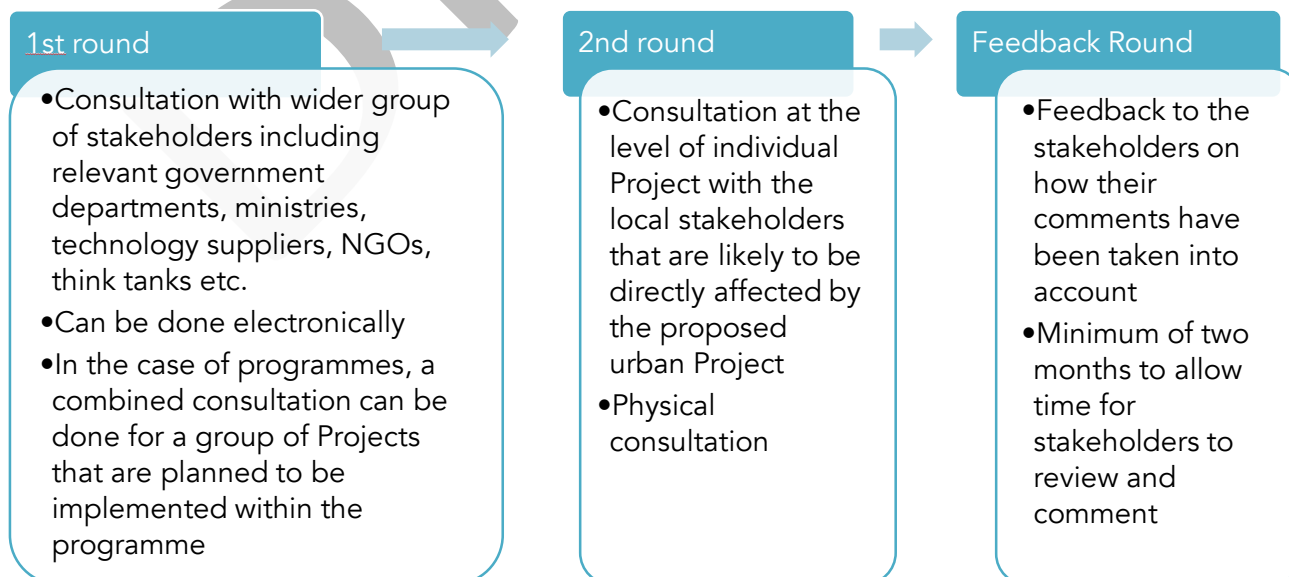
What are the key requirements?

The stakeholder guidelines are tailored to recognise the scale and wide variety of affected and interested stakeholders whose views must be captured and incorporated while finalising the design of the Project. The key requirements of stakeholder consultations:

- Demonstrate information exchange with stakeholders on Project:
 - Its objective
 - Scale and duration
 - Contribution to sustainable development
 - Interaction of energy, land use and water and safeguard screening reports
- Should be ideally conducted prior to the start date of the Project
- Shall include at least one public in-person meeting and one feedback consultation

How to meet the requirement?

For detailed requirements on stakeholder consultation, refer to Annex A - Stakeholder Consultation Guidelines



Why are safeguarding principles important?

A key requirement for Gold Standard certification is that the Project does not adversely affect social, environmental and economic safeguarding principles. If risks are identified, they need to be mitigated, monitored, and verified by a third party. This assessment gives confidence to the investors that the Project does no unintended harm and helps to de-risk the investment. These safeguards also provide an opportunity to the Project developer to mitigate any adverse impacts that their Project might have on issues like human rights, air quality, biodiversity, water access, etc.

What are the key requirements?

All Projects shall assess, monitor and report on the safeguarding principles and requirements as set out in the safeguarding principles procedure. The safeguards tool is organised in the form of a series of key safeguarding principles and a series of assessment questions and requirements for each principle. All assessment questions shall be comprehensively answered by the Project and the requirements set out against each item shall be met. Whenever a risk is identified, it shall be mitigated and monitored. The monitoring plan shall capture any elements of the safeguarding principles assessment that are required to be reported upon and/or reassessed in future, in line with the Gold Standard safeguarding principles document.

In case of a programme with group of similar Projects, the risk assessment shall be carried out at the programme level considering the potential risks of individual Projects that are planned or will be included in future.

How to meet these requirements?

For detailed requirements on the safeguarding principles, refer to Annex B - Safeguarding Principles. All assessment questions shall be comprehensively answered with justification by the Project and the requirements set out against each item shall be met.

Why is the sustainable development assessment important?

The standard enables urban Projects to quantify their contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby helping them align their Projects with the global development agenda, which is providing a common framework for many stakeholders, from NGOs and development agencies to corporates and investors. It will also help give confidence to investors that the contributions to SDGs are real, measureable and long-term (please see MRV requirements).

What are the key requirements?

Urban Projects applying for Gold Standard certification are required to show a positive contribution to SDG 13 “Climate Action” (an environmental dimension of sustainable development). Under SDG 13, Projects can show a contribution to GHG mitigation or climate adaptation. In addition, they must also show positive contributions to sustainable development under any other two SDGs. Developers can propose bottom-up approaches to assess contributions to climate adaptation that will be reviewed by Gold Standard before approval.

For assessment of SDG contributions, developers shall first choose a relevant indicator and then use one of the following options to monitor and quantify the outcome based on the chosen indicator:

- a) Use an existing Gold Standard approved methodology to claim absolute number of outcomes like GHG reductions or ADALYs. They may refer to other protocols like the Global Protocol for Communities (GPC) or WRI’s GHG Protocol for Project Accounting, but they must first be endorsed by Gold Standard. By using this option, a developer cannot issue carbon credits or any other product but can claim outcomes like GHG reductions by specifying the level of uncertainty resulting from the application of the protocol.
- b) Propose a new bottom-up quantification approach for review and approval by Gold Standard as part of the approval process.

One or more of the minimum three SDG chosen by the Project developer may be taken forward to an issued product (such as Gold Standard VERs or CERs) or a certified SDG outcome statement. This approach requires use of existing Gold Standard approved

methodologies or the developer may submit a methodology for review and approval by Gold Standard, where appropriate.

How to meet these requirements?

The standard provides simple-to-use best practice guidelines on SDG outcomes for Projects designed and implemented in urban settings, in the form of an SDG Assessment tool. The tool is based upon SDGs and their associated targets. Within this tool, Project assessment filters are developed that prioritise which targets are relevant to a given Project type. Accordingly, the predefined indicators or Project-specific indicators can be selected for annual monitoring to capture the progress towards contribution to chosen SDG Target.

The SDG Assessment tool is available as Annex C - SDG Assessment tool.

Why are governance and management systems important?

Determining the governance capabilities/structure including investment planning, inter-institutional coordination, track-record of implementing similar Projects and management systems (including clearly designated roles and responsibilities etc.) is seen to be important from an investor's perspective as investors' due diligence typically involves an assessment of these aspects. These criteria are designed to give an investor the confidence that the Project developer has the necessary capabilities to implement and manage the Project smoothly. From a cities/municipality perspective, having such systems in place gives them an important tool to manage their Projects and also will help continuously improve their processes to govern, manage and train their staff on such Projects.

What are the key requirements?

Project developers are required to demonstrate that there are governance and management systems (GMS) in place to ensure smooth design, implementation and operation of the urban Project. Developers must also demonstrate that capacity development needs of stakeholders are considered, as this is an important component of sustainable development, and that steps are taken to ensure that the necessary capacity building measures are implemented. The requirements are laid down in the form of a series of indicators/criteria that must be used for self-assessment by the developer. These criteria also include levels of development which are aimed to help the developer achieve continuous improvement. The self-assessment reporting on these criteria are subject to Gold Standard VVB verification to ensure that ongoing improvement is demonstrated. Project developers are required to report on the continuous improvement on different criteria laid down in GMS (Annex D). The Gold Standard can conduct spot checks of the annual reports to check if continuous improvement has been demonstrated. In case, continuous improvement is not demonstrated, the Gold Standard will raise a FAR to ensure that this is addressed as part of the next annual report.

How to meet these requirements?

The governance and management systems criteria are available as Annex D - Governance, Management Systems. Each of the criteria given in the Annex shall be self-assessed by the developer for a given Project as relevant. Annually the self-assessment shall be revisited to assess the improvement over previous year and shall be included in

annual reporting and shall be audited by the Gold Standard VVB.

DRAFT

REGISTRY REQUIREMENTS

The 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 Gold Standard VVB's validation and verification reports shall be submitted. Note that the Gold Standard VVB is responsible for uploading the final validation or verification Report.
- 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 Gold Standard 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.

A

Annual report - An annual update submitted by the Project developer via the Gold Standard Online Platform. The annual report covers updates to key Project SDG outcomes and actions taken on the Project during a given year.

Affected stakeholder - Any stakeholder affected physically, socially or economically by the implementation of the Project. Note that affected stakeholders may in some cases be a distance beyond the Project boundary.

B

Baseline scenario - The reasonable scenario that would exist in absence of a given Project, and is also referred as the 'business-as-usual' scenario. While setting the baseline scenario for an Project the developer shall take into account the relevant applicable legislation, which is also enforced effectively (rate of enforcement is greater than 50%).

C

CER - Certified Emissions Reduction - A carbon credit, issued by a third party standard (typically UNFCCC Clean Development Mechanism) for use in compliance carbon markets.

Certification - The written assurance confirmation/communication that fulfilment of specified requirements has been demonstrated (Adapted from ISO 17000).

Conformity - The "fulfillment of a requirement". To conform means to meet or comply with requirements.

Corrective Action Request - With a corrective action request (CAR), the Gold Standard validation and verification body or the Gold Standard Secretariat requests appropriate action be taken to show compliance with a requirement. In order to achieve a successful certification, all CARs shall be formally closed. CARs can be converted to forward action requests (FARs) (see definition below).

E

Preliminary Review - A simple, desk-based check by Gold Standard that the Project has the potential to meet Eligibility Principles and Criteria. It does not constitute a certification decision or guarantee that the Project will be successful in seeking certification or that later rounds of review will not provide differing findings.

Eligibility principles - The overarching rationale and purpose for the requirements as related to achieving the Gold Standard Vision and Mission.

Expert stakeholder - Expert stakeholders hold specific expertise or knowledge about the organization, process, or Project being audited and/or about the context and practices to which the Project is applied.

F

Forward Action Request (FAR) - A validation and verification body (VVB) or the Gold Standard Secretariat requests appropriate action be taken in the Project to become fully compliant with a requirement. A FAR will be issued where the impact of the Project is: not material within the current certification, AND unusual or non-systematic, AND correctable in a specific timeframe of less than one year. FARs can be closed by the Gold Standard Secretariat or a VVB (see definition below).

G

Gold Standard certified Project - An Project that has successfully reached registered status with Gold Standard.

Gold Standard CER label - A Gold Standard 'issued product,' representing a label that is applied to CERs to denote that they are issued from a Gold Standard-certified Project.
(Synonym – GS CER)

Gold Standard certified SDG outcome statement - A certified statement issued by Gold Standard upon the successful certification under a given Gold Standard approved methodology. These may come in a number of forms.

Gold Standard®

Gold Standard - The owner and operator of [Gold Standard for Global Goals](https://www.goldstandard.org). Gold Standard is a Swiss-based non-profit whose vision is 'Climate Security and Sustainable Development for all.' www.goldstandard.org
(Synonym – GS)

Gold Standard issued products - Products that are generally financial instruments issued by Gold Standard upon the successful certification under a given Gold Standard approved methodology and product specifications. Examples include Gold Standard VERs and CER labels.

Gold Standard approved methodology - The specific Project and outcome requirements and procedures developed by an Expert Working Group and approved by the Gold Standard Technical Governance Committee that is used to quantify, monitor and report on a given outcome that may lead to the issuance of Gold Standard issued products or outcome statements.

Gold Standard NGO supporters - Gold Standard was founded by a group of NGOs and continues to represent the interests of civil society in all its work. Its NGO supporters can take an active role in the Project development and review process, providing constructive feedback and offering their expertise. This lends further credibility to our local sustainable development initiatives.
<http://www.goldstandard.org/our-story/who-we-are>

Gold Standard Technical Governance Committee (TGC) – The governance body responsible for ensuring the rigor and integrity in all Gold Standard's work, from proven existing programs to innovative new initiatives. The TGC is an independent body composed of market specialists that provide expertise, guidance and decisions on methodology approval, rule changes and appeals.

Gold Standard verified emission reduction (VER) - A single unit (one tonne) of CO₂ equivalent reduction captured as a carbon credit for use as a commodity within the voluntary carbon market.
(Synonym – Carbon Credit)

Gold Standard Validation and Verification Body (VVB) - The Gold Standard approved audit organisation appointed on behalf of the Project developer to carry out an audit and assessment in order to provide a validation or verification opinion to Gold Standard in order to ultimately support certification or rejection.
(Synonym – Assurance Provider (ISEAL), VVB (ISO), DOE (UNFCCC), GS-VVB)

|

Interested stakeholder - Any stakeholder who is interested in the Project or its outcomes. They do not need to be local to or affected by an Project.

Project - The action or policy being implemented for which Gold Standard certification is sought.

Project area - The physical spatial area or areas submitted for certification. It contains the area required to successfully manage the explicit objectives of the Project.

Project boundary - The clearly defined physical boundary or edges of the Project that delineate the Project area from non-Project areas.

Project documentation - Project design and monitoring documentation that demonstrates in detail how the requirements are met. This can include Gold Standard templates such as Project Design Documents and Monitoring Reports as well as supporting documents such as charts, maps or spreadsheets.

Project design documentation - A Gold Standard required document that captures how the Project shall fulfill the relevant requirements.

Project developer - The person or entity that holds or is applying for certification of an urban Project and therefore responsible for demonstrating compliance with the requirements upon which Gold Standard certification is based. The Project owner may delegate authority to an Project developer for all interactions with the Gold Standard. Project developer is to be read as programme developer if a programme (set of related Projects with a common objective) is being developed.
(Synonym – Project Proponent, Project Developer)

Project owner – The person or entity that owns the project.
(Synonym – Project owner)

Project scenario - A description of the Project undertaken including its outputs and outcomes that can be used in comparison to baseline for various Gold Standard eligibility principles.

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Issuance - The issuing by Gold Standard of a Gold Standard product (such as a GS VER) or a certified SDG Outcome Statement. These are issued by Gold Standard following the successful completion of performance certification.

J

Justification information - Along with an output indicator, the information that must be provided to support the SDG contributions claimed by an Project. The information must credibly demonstrate how the output indicator can be used to show a positive influence on one or more SDG indicators.

K

Key Project Information - A template that captures high level Project details in the early stages of development. The key Project information is used to support Preliminary Review.

L

Listed - 'Listed' is a certification status that an Project may achieve through successful completion of the Preliminary Review.

Local stakeholder - Stakeholders that reside or work within or in close proximity to the Project area.

M

May - Indicates that something is permitted or an option.

Merging registration - The scenario when the registration and first issuance are done together.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - The eight international development goals adopted by the United Nations in 2000. The Millennium Development Goals concluded as of 2015 and are replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals.

Monitoring period - The period of time that a monitoring report covers and for which verification and ultimately certification is sought.

Gold Standard®

Monitoring plan - An initial plan and subsequent ongoing monitoring that is based on the systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide indications of the extent to which outcomes are being achieved.

Monitoring report - A report submitted by the Project developer in support of verification. The monitoring report includes reports against the parameters set in the monitoring plan and any re-assessment, change or stakeholder feedback received during the monitoring period.

Non-conformity – Non-conformity is a non-fulfillment or failure to meet a requirement. (Synonym – Non-compliance)

O

Observation - With an observation, the VVB or the Gold Standard Secretariat provides an observation on possible future non-compliance with a requirement. Unlike CARs and FARs, observations are warnings and do not need to be formally corrected. They are given special attention during the next certification.

Online platform - Gold Standard aspires to build an online user interface to support the use of [Gold Standard for Global Goals](#). This written version of the standard will underpin the online platform. During development and road-testing it is likely that an offline version will be used with the online platform commencing later.

Output indicator - An indicator selected by the Project developer representing the tangible result of the Project. The indicator, along with the justification information and quality indicator and any expert stakeholder opinion is used to demonstrate SDG Contribution.

P

Performance review - A review conducted by Gold Standard, TGC and NGO Supporters on the monitoring report and verification opinion. The result of the Review may lead to Certification, CARs/FARs/OBs being raised or rejection.

Programme - A set of related Projects with a common objective submitted to Gold Standard. In this standard document, a programme is simply included under the term 'Project.'

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Programme developer - The person or entity that holds or is applying for certification of a Gold Standard programme (set of related Projects with a common objective) and therefore responsible for demonstrating compliance with the requirements upon which Gold Standard certification is based. In this standard document, a programme developer is simply included under the term 'Project developer.'
(Synonym – Project developer)

Programme documentation - Demonstrates in detail programme design and monitoring and how the requirements are met. This can include Gold Standard templates such as Project design documents and monitoring reports as well as supporting documents such as charts, maps or spreadsheets.

R

Registration - A key milestone in the Project / programme cycle. It marks the point an Project has undertaken validation, a VVB has submitted a positive opinion and the Gold Standard registration review is complete. Only registered activities may proceed to verification/performance certification (see also retro-active registration/merging registration and performance certification).

Retro-active registration - Registration of an Project whose start date has already occurred prior to the application for Gold Standard certification (defined as date of first submission to Gold Standard).

Relevant stakeholders - The collective term for local, affected, interested and expert stakeholders.

Requirement(s) - Elements (rules, procedures, guidelines) that the activity must conform to in order to proceed through validation/verification and ultimately certification.

S

SDG contributions - The contribution made by an Project to the targets defined under the SDGs, which are quantified using an appropriate approach.

Shall - A requirement that must be followed.

Should - A recommended course of action, though others may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - An agreed set of targets and indicators for future International Development that replace the Millennium Development Goals. Published by the United Nations, they consist of 17 Goals and 169 targets and 230 indicators and are expected to be in place until 2030.
(Synonym – Global Goals)

Start Date of Project - The start date of an Project shall be considered to be the earlier of the date on which the developer has committed to expenditures related to the implementation or construction of the Project(s). This does not include the purchase or option to purchase the land upon which an Project is intended to take place. For further information, please see Section 1.1

Start Date of a Programme (consisting of multiple Projects) – The start date of a Programme shall be considered to be the date of submission of the Programme level stakeholder consultation report to the Gold Standard registry.

T

Template - Templates are blank documents that can be completed for a given activity and submitted for use in various stages of the Project cycle.

U

Urban areas⁵ - An urban area can be defined by one or more of the following: administrative criteria or political boundaries (e.g., area within the jurisdiction of a municipality or town committee), a threshold population size (where the minimum for an urban settlement is typically in the region of 2,000 people, although this varies globally between 200 and 50,000), population density, economic function (e.g., where a significant majority of the population is not primarily engaged in agriculture, or where there is surplus employment) or the presence of urban characteristics (e.g., paved streets, electric lighting, sewerage)

Urban services – The sector (distinct area of urban service separate than others) under which a proposed Project belongs. For e.g. solid waste management
(Synonym – Sector)

⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/sowc2012/pdfs/SOWC-2012-DEFINITIONS.pdf>

V

Validation - The act of auditing the anticipated outcomes of an Project 'ex-ante,' performed by a Gold Standard VVB and resulting in a validation report.

Validation report - A report provided by the Gold Standard VVB, submitted to Gold Standard that confirms the positive or negative outcome of initial certification along with justification and record of all OBs, FARs and CARs either pending or closed.

Verification - The act of auditing an Project 'ex-post,' performed by a Gold Standard VVB and resulting in a verification report.

Verification report - A report provided by the Gold Standard VVB, submitted to Gold Standard that confirms the positive or negative outcome of performance certification along with justification and record of all OBs, FARs and CARs either pending or closed. The report also confirms the respective numbers/amounts to be included in certified SDG outcome statements for issuance.