



Gold Standard
for the Global Goals

GOVERNANCE

STANDARDS SETTING PROCEDURES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION AND PRINCIPLES	2
2 GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING	3
3 STANDARDS SETTING PROCEDURE	5
4 STANDARDS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES	9
5 REVIEW PROCESS AND ANNUAL PLAN	10
6 RECORD KEEPING	10

1 | INTRODUCTION AND PRINCIPLES

1.1.1 | The Gold Standard Secretariat, governed by the Technical Governance Committee (TGC) is responsible for the development (including the initiation, design, authoring and development) of all ~~Gold Standard's~~ Standards under Gold Standard for the Global Goals (GS4GG). 'Standard' is used as an overarching term throughout this document and may refer to the following lists and any associated procedures, guidelines, templates:

- 000 Series – Technical Governance Principles & Requirements ~~and any associated procedures, guidelines, templates~~
- 100 Series -- ~~_Gold Standard~~ Principles & Requirements ~~and any associated requirements, procedures and guidelines~~
- 200 Series -- ~~_Gold Standard~~ Activity Requirements ~~and any associated procedures and guidelines~~
- 300 Series -- ~~_Gold Standard~~ Contextual Requirements ~~and any associated procedures and guidelines~~
- 400 Series -- ~~_Gold Standard~~ Impact Quantification Methodologies ~~and any associated procedures and guidelines~~
- 500 Series -- ~~_Gold Stand~~ Product Requirements ~~and any associated procedures and guidelines~~

~~1.1.2 |~~ This document sets out the Gold Standard's Standards Setting Procedure hereafter "(SSP)". It is designed to comply with the ISEAL Alliance "Setting Social and Environmental Standards" Code of Best Practice as is applicable to Gold Standard for the Global Goals, the Gold Standard Foundation GS4GG.

~~1.1.2 |~~

~~1.2 |~~ This **document** sets out the Gold Standard's Standards Setting Procedure (SSP). It is designed to comply with the ISEAL Alliance "Setting Social and Environmental Standards" Code of Best Practice as is applicable to the Gold Standard Foundation.

~~1.2.1 |~~ 1.1.3 | Comments related to the SSP may be submitted at any time, by any party to help@goldstandard.org Standards@goldstandard.org ~~via an email~~ with the subject 'SSP Comments'. Gold Standard shall review/collate all such comments and review/update the SSP at a minimum every 3 years or more frequently where urgent matters are to be addressed.

~~1.2.2 |~~ 1.1.4 | The TGC has the authority over any changes to the SSP.

~~1.2.3 |~~ 1.1.5 | In the case of non-substantive changes to the standard (for example corrections of error, language clarification), Gold Standard does not conduct a formal revision process but instead includes notification of any changes in the subsequent review and revision process.

~~1.2.4~~**1.1.6** | ~~_____~~ Between regular or planned updates to the Standard there may ~~from time to time~~ be urgent clarifications or corrections required, ~~for example, if in case there is~~**Gold Standard receives** substantial feedback from ~~our~~ stakeholders that warrants ~~an~~ immediate review of ~~a~~ specific requirement in the Standard. Where such circumstances occur, Gold Standard will update the requirements in discussion with ~~TGC or appointed Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The updates will be published, and stakeholders notified. The updates will be notified to stakeholders and published to the Gold Standard website immediately~~ **Wand** where required, further stakeholder engagement sessions may follow, dependent on the nature of the changes. ~~The precise process for decision, publication and further engagement on unplanned updates shall be discussed with the TGC or appointed TAC~~ **Technical Governance Committee** on ~~a~~ case-by-case basis.

2 | GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

2.1.1 | Gold Standard develops and implements Standards and Modules that may take a number of different forms, as defined in ~~1.1.1 | above~~ ~~1.1 | above~~ ~~1.1, above~~. The ~~ir~~ development ~~of these Standards and Modules~~ may be newly initiated or constitute an update or revision to existing documents.

2.1.2 | The creation or revision of these modules may be undertaken by Gold Standard either as:

- a. ~~(a)~~ Self-initiated in line with pre-planned reviews or the strategic objectives and priorities of the ~~organisation~~ **organisation**.
- b. ~~(b)~~ By initiation via request by any ~~Gold Standard~~ stakeholder and subsequent acceptance by Gold Standard.

2.1.3 | The ~~Gold Standard~~ **TGC** is responsible for mandating the development and approval process of all Standards and Modules. It does so by reference to the ~~Gold Standard~~ **Technical Governance Guiding Principles**. ~~New or updated Standards and Modules material~~ shall not be published or available for use unless approved in accordance with the mandate given to the TGC ~~or appointed Committee~~ as noted in the ~~Gold Standard~~ **TGC Terms of Reference**. Note that the TGC itself is not responsible for taking any such decisions. Instead it provides the necessary mandate to other **Advisory Committees, Working Groups or the Secretariat as appropriate**.

~~2.1.4~~ | ~~Standards~~ **approvals** decisions typically fall into two categories, summarised in ~~figure~~ **TABLE** 1, below. Typically, Category 1 decisions are made by ~~TGC or a Technical group~~ **Advisory Committee** mandated by the TGC for that purpose. ~~This could be an existing standing Committee, a sub-group or a newly formed Expert Working Group for the purpose. Project or function specific standing Committees are typically responsible for Category 2 decisions, though these may be supplemented by further experts and/or stakeholders where required~~ ~~from time to time~~.

2.2+

FigureTable 1- Categories of Standards Setting decisions

<u>Category</u> ATEGORY 1	<u>CATEGORY 2</u>
<u>Cross cutting and strategic issues</u>	<u>Activity specific matters</u>
- <u>New standards and standards updates e.g. GS4GG</u>	- <u>Management of and updates to standards, tools and guidelines.</u>
- <u>New products and product revisions e.g. GS4SUD, RECs labels</u>	- <u>New development of and updates to Activity Requirements, tools and guidelines e.g. RE Activity Requirements</u>
- <u>New cross cutting products and revisions, tools and guidelines e.g. additionality, double counting</u>	- <u>Activity specific methodologies (noting that first of its kind/challenging methodologies captured as Category 1) e.g. Agriculture emission reduction quantification methodology</u>
- <u>Cross cutting methodologies, tools and guidelines e.g. Gender</u>	- <u>Activity specific application of Product Specifications e.g. crediting periods/renewals</u>
- <u>First of its kind or challenging (principles to be defined) methodologies, tools and guidelines e.g. ADALYs</u>	- <u>Activity specific auditor eligibility within overall <u>Assurance Framework</u> VVB Requirements</u>
- <u>New development and revisions to technical processes, procedures and structures e.g. Grievance Procedure, <u>Assurance Framework</u> Validation & Verification Requirements (VVB)</u>	
- <u>New project types</u>	

CATEGORY 1 – cross cutting and strategic issues	CATEGORY 2 – activity specific matters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New standards and standards updates e.g. GS4GG New products and product revisions e.g. GS4SUD, RECs labels New cross cutting products and revisions, tools and guidelines e.g. additionality, double counting Cross cutting methodologies, tools and guidelines e.g. Gender First of kind or challenging (principles to be defined) methodologies, tools and guidelines e.g. ADALYs New development and revisions to technical processes, procedures and structures e.g. grievance procedure, Assurance Framework New project types 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of and updates to standards, tools and guidelines. New development of and updates to Activity Requirements, tools and guidelines e.g. RE Activity Requirements Activity specific methodologies (noting that first of kind/challenging methodologies captured as Category 1) e.g. Agriculture ER methodology Activity specific application of Product Specifications e.g. crediting periods/renewals Activity specific auditor eligibility within overall Assurance Framework

3 | STANDARDS SETTING PROCEDURE

The Standards Setting Procedures (SSP) sets out the requirements, processes and procedures to be applied under the following development scenarios:

- a. ~~(a)~~ For developing new ~~Gold Standard~~ Standards documentation
- b. ~~(b)~~ For review and update to existing ~~Gold Standard~~ Standards documentation
- c. ~~(c)~~ For corrective action or suspension of existing approved Standards⁰

The purpose of the document is to make clear the SSP for the above elements and provide details of compliance for all Gold Standard stakeholders ~~and~~ in line with the aforementioned ISEAL Codes. It also provides clear guidance as to the governance and approval requirements in line with the ~~Gold Standard~~ **Technical Governance Guiding Principles**.

3.1 | Standards Setting and Revision Procedures

3.1.1 | ~~Figure-Table~~ 2 explains the types of documents and categories (as related to ~~figure-Table~~ 1, above) of decision making within Gold Standard:

Figure-Table 2- Categories of Documents and technical developments

Document Series	Category-CATEGORY 1 —Matters reviewed and mandated by the TGC	Category-CATEGORY 2— Matters reviewed and approved by a permanent Committee
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GOVERNANCE-000.1_V1.1_Gov_Standards Setting Procedure
GOVERNANCE- Standards Setting Procedure
V 2.0

000 – Technical Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guiding Principles - Standards Setting Procedures - Grievance Procedures - TGC Terms of Reference - Public consultation not required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Committee Terms of Reference - Public consultation not required
100 – Gold Standard Principles & Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Principles, Requirements, Procedures and Guidelines - Major review and update to the above - Publication of terms of <u>Publication of terms of</u> reference/_key principles and rationale and - full 2 rounds (60 days and 30 days) of public consultation required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity-specific application of Principles & Requirements (typically through Activity Requirements, see below) - Rule clarifications and updates - Public consultation at discretion of Committee
200 – Activity Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Activity-types Requirements <u>(when outside given Committee scope)</u> - Publication of terms of <u>Publication of terms of</u> reference/key principles and rationale and - 1 (30 days) round <u>(30 days)</u> of public consultation required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Activity Requirements or updates to same (within a given Committee scope) - Public consultation at discretion of Committee
300 – Context Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Context Requirements, Tools and Guidelines. - Publication of terms of <u>Publication of terms of</u> reference/key principles and rationale and - 1 (30 days) round <u>(30 days)</u> of public consultation required 	-
400 – Impact Methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New cross-cutting or first-of-its kind <u>(outside given Committee scope)</u> or complex methodologies - Publication of terms of <u>Publication of terms of</u> reference/key principles and rationale and - 1 round (30 days) of public consultation required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New methodologies or updates to same (within a given Committee) scope) - 1 round <u>(30 days)</u> of public consultation (30 days) at discretion of Committee
500 – Product Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New cross-cutting Product Requirements <u>(outside given Committee Scope)</u> - Publication of terms of <u>Publication of terms of</u> reference/key principles and rationale and - 1 round (30 days) of public consultation required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity Specific Product Requirements <u>(within given Committee scope)</u> - Publication of terms of <u>Publication of terms of</u> reference/key principles and rationale and

- 1 round (30 days) of public consultation required
-

3.1.2 | Note that the public consultation requirements noted in ~~figure-Table 2, above~~ may be enhanced at the discretion of TGC or appointed Committee where deemed necessary.

3.1.3 | The procedure for development of Standards under Category 1 shall be as follows:

STEP 1 – The Secretariat shall notify TGC of the intended standards development. This is carried out using the Feasibility Assessment procedure noted in 3.2 | ~~below~~3.2 below.

STEP 2 – Governance and workplan proposal are prepared. Secretariat makes a proposal to TGC for how the new standard should be developed and governed/approved. This proposal is justified using the Gold Standard Technical Governance Guiding Principles and is reviewed and approved by TGC. The proposal includes ~~(as a minimum)~~information:

- The purpose and rationale of the development
- The timeline for delivery including any funding deadlines
- An overview of key stakeholder groups affected (see 3.5 | ~~below~~3.5 below)
- A proposal for the governance Working Group or Committee composition and terms of reference, with particular focus on the extent~~ed~~ and boundary of any decisions they will take
- A proposal for public consultation approach as required

STEP 3 – Terms of Reference/Principles for the development are posted to the Gold Standard website, including ~~for~~ how stakeholders may engage in the process. This process is outlined in ~~3.4 | below~~3.4, below. Relevant standards bodies shall also be notified of the proposed development as per ~~3.5 below~~3.5 | below.

STEP 4 – The working structure as mandated in Step 2 is implemented and administered by the Gold Standard Secretariat. The outcomes of any public consultation steps are transparently published to the Gold Standard website within 6 weeks of closure of consultation periods.

STEP 5 – Once the approval of the relevant Working Group or Committee is granted, a final notification is posted to the Gold Standard website, including any details of the update coming into force and transition for the new standard.

This may also include targeted consultations with key stakeholders. Further consultations may be conducted as deemed necessary for the development of the Standard. For development of new modules (for example methodologies), consultation requirements shall be at the discretion of TGC.

3.1.4 | The procedure for Category 2 decision shall depend upon the specific Terms of Reference of the relevant Committee. In effect, the Terms of Reference for such decisions supersede Steps 1-3 of the SSP (i.e., they have already been mandated by TGC to carry out the decision).

~~3.1.4~~3.1.5 | As a default all standard updates within category 1 and 2 have 90 days grace period before updates come into force unless it is differently specified in the update document.

3.2 | Feasibility Assessment Process

3.2.1 | It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to evaluate and report upon the likely need for a new Standard or Module to be developed.

3.2.2 | Dependent on the nature of the Standard or Module, it is either the responsibility of the Gold Standard Board or Technical Governance Committee to give the Secretariat approval/mandate to proceed with development.

3.2.3 | In such cases where formal approval is needed, the Secretariat shall provide an overview of (not-exhaustive):

- a. ~~(a)~~ How the proposal fits into the objectives and strategic direction of Gold Standard
- b. ~~(b)~~ Whether an existing Gold Standard document already provides this service
- c. ~~(c)~~ Whether another standards body provides a similar service and how these might compete
- d. ~~(d)~~ How the demand can be satisfied by the development of a Standard
- e. ~~(e)~~ Risks associated with the development of a Standard or Module
- f. ~~(f)~~ Funding and resource requirements, including external expertise
- g. ~~(g)~~ Key stakeholder feedback (including NGO supporters) where required
- h. ~~(h)~~ Any other pertinent information

3.2.4 | ~~Taking into account~~Considering the above information the Secretariat shall assess whether to proceed with the development (if it doesn't require formal mandate from Gold Standard Board/Technical Governance Committee) or else present to the relevant governance body for approval.

3.2.5 | The formal decision and supporting information shall be maintained as per the Record Keeping procedure (Section ~~_6.0, below~~6 | below).

3.3 | Notifications to other standards bodies

3.3.1 | Gold Standard shall notify all stakeholders of any new Standard or Module (where appropriate) development by posting to the Gold Standard website. Such notices shall also be included in any outreach material such as Gold Standard newsletters.

3.3.2 | Due to the breadth of the scope of Gold Standard, it is recognised that notifying every possible standard in the same space will not be feasible. Instead, where Gold Standard and another standards body appear to be developing similar or identical tools or products, the Secretariat shall investigate how best to notify and discuss with the other body of its intentions.

3.3.3 | The above point shall not compel Gold Standard to notify or share information with a competing standard where this would be to the detriment of Gold Standard's work.

3.4 | Terms of Reference & Public Summary Process

3.4.1 | For all new Standards or major revisions to Standards, Gold Standard shall publish a clear Terms of Reference document to its website. This document shall include:

- a. ~~(a)~~—Background and rationale for the development of the Standard including links to the Gold Standard Vision, Mission and Theory of Change
- b. ~~(b)~~—The scope and the intended outcomes and impacts that the Standard aims to achieve
- c. ~~(c)~~—An overview of governance and decision making and how the Standard will be approved
- d. ~~(d)~~—A high level workplan including reference to consultation periods
- e. ~~(e)~~—Complaints and grievance contact details and protocol
- f. ~~(f)~~—Opportunities for engagement and consultation in Standards development
- g. ~~(g)~~—Any risks associated with the proposed Standard or its development

3.4.2 | The Terms of Reference shall be dynamic; new elements, news, updates and changes shall be published to the Gold Standard website as the Standard develops.

3.4.3 | The Terms of Reference shall be published as soon as possible after a mandate to proceed has been given (as per the Standards Setting Procedure) and a credible, robust workplan has been designed. The Terms of Reference shall be published no later than one month prior to first public consultation round, ideally earlier.

3.5 | Stakeholder Mapping and Consultation Process

3.5.1 | As a part of the Standard development or revision process, the Secretariat shall target key stakeholder groups which include both those who will be directly impacted by the implementation of the Standard and those who are indirectly affected, giving an opportunity to all groups to contribute to the development of the Standard.

3.5.2 | All stakeholder consultations shall follow the [Gold Standard Stakeholder Consultation Policy](#). The Secretariat shall maintain a dedicated area on the organisation's website for all ongoing consultation.

4 | STANDARDS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

4.1.1 | All allegations, grievances and complaints regarding standards setting shall be directed through the Gold Standard ~~Grievance Procedure~~[Allegations and Complaints Procedure](#).

5 | REVIEW PROCESS AND ANNUAL PLAN

5.1 | Review Process

5.1.1 | All the Standards documentation shall be reviewed at a minimum of five years or periodically as requested by the external party or the TGC. The revisions can be specific to a document or the entire Standards documentation as deemed appropriate. The Secretariat shall inform its stakeholders of the planned date of revision of Standard or its Modules.

5.2 | Annual Planning

- 5.2.1 | The Secretariat shall on at least an annual basis produce a workplan of proposed Standards and Modules review.
- 5.2.2 | The workplan shall include the organisational objectives for the year and their rationale, ongoing and future tasks that will be undertaken, expected timelines of completion, the team or the individual responsible for the tasks, contact information, etc.
- 5.2.3 | The workplan as relates to Standards and Modules development shall be posted on the Gold Standard website where required.

6 | RECORD KEEPING

- 6.1.1 | The Secretariat shall maintain a permanent record of previous Standard development (i.e. all versions of all elements of the standard are permanently stored), as well as the revisions of the Standard (including a record of Version Control). These include policies and procedures guiding the development of the Standard and shall be made available to stakeholders upon request.
- 6.1.2 | During any public comment period and feedback/ suggestions/comments received from the stakeholders and/or the TGC on any of the Standard elements shall be compiled and recorded. The Secretariat's assessment of the feedback/ suggestions/comments shall also be maintained.
- 6.1.3 | The Secretariat shall retain the draft and final versions of the Standard.