



**Gold Standard**<sup>®</sup>  
for the Global Goals

## GOVERNANCE

# TERMS OF REFERENCES

# METHODOLOGY WORKING GROUP

---

PUBLICATION DATE **04/04/2024**

VERSION **1.0**

### RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Procedure for Development, Revision, and Clarification of Methodologies and Methodological Tools

### CONTACT DETAILS

The Gold Standard Foundation  
International Environment House 2  
Chemin de Balxert 7-9  
1219 Châtelaine Geneva, Switzerland  
Tel +41 22 788 70 80  
Email [help@goldstandard.org](mailto:help@goldstandard.org)

---

## SUMMARY

This document outlines the workings of the Methodology Working Groups that support the Gold Standard Secretariat and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) with methodology-related matters. The Working Group reviews, drafts recommendations and provides advice on methodology standards, guidelines, and clarifications. In addition, the document covers the process for appointing members, working modalities, decision-making, meetings, reviews, and the group's specific responsibilities and role in ensuring compliance with regulations and standards.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1  INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE	3
2  GENERAL GUIDELINE	3
2.1   Role of methodology Working Group(s)	3
2.2   Role of the Secretariat	3
3  MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION	4
3.1   Composition of a Methodological Working Group(s)	4
3.2   Selection, suspension of Working Group members	5
4  WORKING MODALITIES	6
4.1   General	6
4.2   Decision making	7
4.3   Agenda, meeting and minutes	7
5  REMUNERATION	8
6  LIABILITY OF WORKING GROUP(S) MEMBERS	9
Appendix – A. General competence requirements of Methodology Working Groups	10

## 1| INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

- 1.1.1 | This document explains the principles, rules, and working procedures of the Methodology Working Groups that support the Gold Standard Secretariat and TAC with methodology-related matters. It also describes the process for appointing members to a Methodology Working Group and the Secretariat's interaction with the Working Group(s) and TAC.
- 1.1.2 | A methodology Working Group is responsible for reviewing, drafting recommendations, and providing advice on methodology standards, guidelines, and clarifications for project activities and programmes of activities. The document also outlines the composition and working modalities of the Working Group, including membership, decision-making, meetings, and reviews.

## 2| GENERAL GUIDELINE

### 2.1 | Role of methodology Working Group(s)

- 2.1.1 | The Secretariat in consultation with TAC may establish a Methodology Working Group. The role of a working group is to provide support in reviewing and approving methodologies related to specific subject matters, such as renewable energy, agriculture, blue carbon etc. A Methodology Working Group would perform following key functions for activities under GS4GG:
- a. Reviewing and providing recommendations for the development, revision, or withdrawal of methodology standards, guidelines, and clarifications for activities, programmes of activities and other interventions.
  - b. Reviewing and providing recommendations for methodology requirements for activities, programmes of activities and other interventions.
  - c. Providing advice and recommendations to the relevant TAC sub-committees regarding the need and priority areas for methodological guidance.

### 2.2 | Role of the Secretariat

- 2.2.1 | The Secretariat acts as an interface between the TAC, Methodology Working Group(s), and stakeholders in developing and reviewing methodologies and related matters.
- 2.2.2 | The Secretariat provides institutional and technical support to the Methodology Working Group(s), including but not limited to:
- a. Administering meetings and other activities of the Working Groups;
  - b. Administering the implementation of GS4GG methodology development processes;
  - c. Securing and providing advice of a strategic and legal nature to the Working Groups;

- d. Developing recommendations regarding the development, revision or withdrawal of procedures for methodology development process;
- e. Providing recommendations regarding the development, revision or withdrawal of methodology standards, guidelines and clarifications for activities and programmes of activities;
- f. Keeping the methodology Working Group informed of the developments in the global carbon market.

### 3| MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION

#### 3.1 | Composition of a Methodological Working Group

- 3.1.1 | The Methodology Working Group consists of a Chair, Vice-Chair, and members with specialist expertise as required.
- 3.1.2 | The working Group must have a minimum of 5 members and a maximum of 10 members unless otherwise agreed between the Secretariat and TAC Chair.
- 3.1.3 | The Working Group shall have a fair distribution of members between developed and developing countries, with appropriate geographic, subject matter expertise and professional/organizational backgrounds. The Working Group should also have a fair distribution of Gold Standard's Stakeholder Groups among its members. It may not be possible to include all stakeholder groups, such as directly affected stakeholders, but any groups not included should be represented on TAC through other stakeholder groups, such as project developers/technical experts and NGOs. The working Group should strive for gender balance where reasonably possible. Affiliation with NGO supporters is an asset but not a requirement.
- 3.1.4 | The TAC elects one of its members to act as the Chair and/or Vice-Chair of a Working Group. If no TAC member is available to act as Chair or Vice-Chair, the TAC may elect alternate member(s) as the Chair and/or Vice-Chair. In any case, the TAC selects the Chair and Vice-Chair of a Working Group.
- 3.1.5 | In addition to the Chair and Vice-Chair of a Working Group, the TAC may elect its members or alternate members to support meetings of a Working Group as appropriate.
- 3.1.6 | The Chair is elected for three years with a possible renewal once, for a maximum of 6 years in total. Each member is expected to serve as Vice-Chair on a one-year rotational basis, nominated in chronological order of joining the Working Group.
- 3.1.7 | If the Chair or Vice-Chair of a working group is unable to carry out their functions or ceases to be a member or alternate member of TAC, the TAC elects a new Chair or Vice-Chair of the working group for the remainder of the term.
- 3.1.8 | The Vice-Chair acts as the Chair in cases where the Chair is absent, conflicts of interest arise, sudden departures occur, or other grounds deemed necessary by a two-thirds majority of TAC members. If neither the Chair nor

Vice-Chair can attend a meeting or conference call, one of the TAC members or alternate members elected to support the meetings of the working group, if applicable, shall serve as the Chair for that meeting, subject to their availability. Otherwise, the working group shall elect a member from its present members to serve as the Chair for that meeting.

- 3.1.9 | The Chair of a working group shall facilitate a free exchange of views and information among members and between the Secretariat and members. In fulfilling this role, the Chair shall declare the opening and closing of meetings, ensure compliance with the relevant sections of this procedure, grant the right to speak, and announce agreements. The Chair shall rule on points of order and, subject to this procedure, shall have complete control of the proceedings and over the maintenance of order at the meeting.
- 3.1.10 | The Chair of a working group shall convey the mandate or guidance from the TAC, including the priority of setting the agenda of the panel or working group meetings, where applicable, and at all times remain neutral in the discussion within the working group. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the working group may express their views to the TAC as a member or alternate member of the TAC. Before doing so, they shall share their views with the working group and always clearly distinguish between personal views and those of the panel or working group.
- 3.1.11 | The Chair of a working group may consult with the Vice-Chair and supporting members at any time in fulfilling their role as the Chair. The Secretariat shall ensure that the information necessary for the Chair to manage the panel or working group meetings is also shared with the Vice-Chair and supporting members.

### **3.2 | Selection and suspension of Working Group members**

- 3.2.1 | The relevant Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) selects Working Group members from those who have applied in response to a public call for experts. The Secretariat invites applications via an open call based on the requisite expertise. Candidates must provide the Secretariat with a letter of motivation and a CV for consideration by the TAC.
- 3.2.2 | Term of service for a Working Group member is three (3) years. A member may reapply for further terms but can only serve for a maximum of nine (9) years.
- 3.2.3 | If a member of a Working Group resigns or has their membership terminated, the TAC selects a replacement member for the remainder of the term from the applicants of the last call for experts or by inviting new applications. The relevant TAC Chair confirms new members with inputs from the TAC members.
- 3.2.4 | All Working Group members act in a personal capacity. Their names, country of residence, and professional affiliations are listed on the Gold Standard Website. All members are contracted in their function through a separate and individual Service Provider Agreement (SPA) with The Gold Standard.

Confidential information and conflicts of interest (COI) should be managed according to the Service Provider Agreement (SPA).

- 3.2.5 | Members of a Working Group must abide by provisions related to conflict of interest and transparency as per terms of Service Provider Agreement, taking into account specific confidentiality requirements. They must declare whether they have a pecuniary or financial interest in an issue presented to them as a member of the Working Group, and if so, refrain from participating in any discussion or decision on the issue. Members of a panel or Working Group must not disclose any confidential or proprietary information that comes to their knowledge from serving on a panel or Working Group. For these purposes, panel or Working Group members sign NDA and COI terms as part of the Service Provider Agreement before assuming their duties.
- 3.2.6 | The Chair of a Working Group, in agreement with the vice-chair, may suspend and subsequently recommend to the TAC the termination of the membership of a particular member on the grounds of, inter alia, a breach of the Conflict of Interest terms, failure to attend three consecutive meetings of the Working Group without proper justification, or not fulfilling the duties of a member, in particular not providing work inputs of the required quality and on time. The TAC considers such recommendations and decides whether to terminate the membership of the member in question.
- 3.2.7 | With the support of the Secretariat, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of a Working Group evaluate the performance of members of the panel or Working Group and provide feedback to them. The evaluation is used as one of the bases for consideration of reselection of members for further terms or for the suspension of membership.
- 3.2.8 | The Chair and the Vice-Chair of a Working Group evaluate the performance of the Secretariat supporting the work of the Working Group and provide feedback to the Secretariat.
- 3.2.9 | Members of a Working Group must attend each meeting. If a member is unable to attend a meeting fully or partially due to circumstances beyond their control, they must immediately inform the Chair of the panel or Working Group through the Secretariat, together with proper justification. The absent member must provide their input via electronic means. Failure to do so without proper justification is treated as an absence from the meeting without proper justification.
- 3.2.10 | Considering the demand of the respective work area, the TAC may place a panel or Working Group in abeyance at any time.

## 4| WORKING MODALITIES

### 4.1 | General

- 4.1.1 | A working group should execute its functions efficiently. Members are expected to behave in a way that promotes effective decision-making.

4.1.2 | The methodology working group(s) will operate under the guidance of TAC. Tasks will be assigned to the methodology working group in accordance with their defined roles as stated in para 2 above or described in methodology development and review procedures, the management plan, and work plans of the TAC and methodology working group.

4.1.3 | The Secretariat is responsible for conducting technical assessments of issues to be considered by the working group. They ensure that these issues are provided in sufficient time for due consideration by the members. The Secretariat may establish and maintain rosters of experts to draw on their expertise to assess specific cases or to supplement the collective expertise of the working group.

## **4.2 | Decision making**

4.2.1 | Ideally, all decisions should be made by consensus of the group, but in cases where consensus is not possible, decisions should be made by a majority vote with a quorum. Any major objections should be identified and documented.

4.2.2 | The working group make decisions based on submitted documents, available facts, evidence, and discussions during meetings. These decisions are made by carefully considering all available evidence and members' perspectives on the topic at hand. When making decisions or delegating authority, all members are responsible for considering what is in the best interest of the Gold Standard as a whole. This must be considered before the interests of a single stakeholder group or their own constituency, though these views should also be taken into account.

4.2.3 | Any member of a working group, as well as the Secretariat, perceives a conflict of interest, they can request that member abstains from the decision-making process or exclude themselves from the discussions.

4.2.4 | Market participants can request to restrict information to specific members with valid and clear reasoning to the Gold Standard Secretariat. The final decision lies with Chair or Vice-Chair, who can call for a vote by the entire working group if in doubt.

## **4.3 | Agenda, meeting and minutes**

4.3.1 | The Secretariat is responsible for drafting the agenda for meetings and providing all associated documents to members at least five working days in advance. Working Group members may request the inclusion of an item in the agenda in writing and are responsible for providing necessary supporting information in a timely manner.

4.3.2 | Methodology-related strategic issues, new methodologies, updates, clarifications and related matters are discussed during plenary meetings, conference calls, and via email as agreed upon by the working group members and Secretariat.

4.3.3 | The working group should hold monthly online meetings and, when possible, a two-day face-to-face forum once a year. Whenever feasible, these meetings

should be used for decision-making and approvals. If necessary, additional meetings can be arranged to discuss specific topics, such as detailed consideration of a new scope or standard, or for distributing information about strategic matters.

- 4.3.4 | The Secretariat shall arrange online meetings using professional services and tools as available.
- 4.3.5 | All members are expected to carefully study the information provided and prepare their contributions to the working group discussions and decision-making. After meetings, all members are expected to contribute to follow-up actions as agreed and/or mentioned in the meeting minutes.
- 4.3.6 | In between meetings, email consultations may occur for items that cannot wait for consideration during the next formal working group meeting. Relevant items should be reviewed and decided on via email with an aim to make decisions ideally through consensus of the group or at least by majority vote with a quorum and with major objections identified and documented.
- 4.3.7 | Working Group members approve minutes. The Secretariat sends draft minutes to all working group members and requests feedback within five working days. If a working group member does not respond within five working days, then their acceptance of the minutes is assumed. If comments or corrections are received from members, then the Secretariat revises the minutes and reissues them, restarting the 5-day cycle. In the event of a dispute, the Chair makes the final decision. The Secretariat shall record calls and prepare and share minutes of the meetings at the earliest convenience but no later than five working days (unless circumstances prevent) after the meeting unless otherwise agreed with the Chair.
- 4.3.8 | The Secretariat communicates the decisions with TAC and/or methodology developers. The methodology working group recommendations and discussions are confidential and may only be made public following TAC decisions. The TAC shall resolve any questions concerning the application of these confidentiality provisions to specific recommendations.
- 4.3.9 | The recommendations made by a working group to the TAC shall be distributed to the TAC members before the subsequent TAC meeting that shall consider the recommendations. However, if a working group meeting is held shortly before the Board meeting, the Chair of the TAC may decide otherwise.

## 5| REMUNERATION

- 5.1.1 | The working group members are not remunerated for regular services, such as monthly and occasional ad hoc discussions, meetings, etc. However, they are entitled to reimbursement for travel and subsistence costs per the Gold Standard travel policy (included in the Service Provider Agreement).
- 5.1.2 | Gold Standard may engage working group members for work outside the scope of the working group mandate. In such cases, members shall be



compensated for the task undertaken by means of payment of daily fees. Remuneration is clarified and applied on a case-to-case basis.

## **6| LIABILITY OF WORKING GROUP(S) MEMBERS**

6.1.1 | Gold Standard indemnifies each working group member for any third-party claims made against him or her during their term arising in connection with his or her provision of services to Gold Standard on the working wroup, except to the extent that such claim arises from the gross negligence, intentional misrepresentation or willful wrongdoing of the Working Group member.

# APPENDIX – A. GENERAL COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS OF METHODOLOGY WORKING GROUPS

## A.1. MEMBERS' COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS

### General

- a. Comprehensive understanding of the principles, modalities, and procedures of the GS4GG, as well as the ability to apply them to real-world situations.
- b. Demonstrated experience and/or knowledge relevant to the GS4GG certification pathways and cycle, including a working knowledge of the requirements for certification and the process of certification.
- c. Relevant working experience of at least five years in methodological issues related to project-based mechanisms, including experience in project design, implementation, and monitoring.
- d. Technical/scientific expertise in at least one of the following areas:
  - i. Proven expertise in the specific area of GHG quantification methodologies being reviewed, including a working knowledge of the latest research and best practices in the field.
  - ii. Baseline and monitoring methodologies for GS4GG eligible activities, including the ability to design and implement effective monitoring and evaluation systems.
  - iii. Baseline and monitoring methodologies for at least two project activity types and criteria defined in GS4GG, including a deep understanding of the specific requirements for each type of activity.
  - iv. Implementation of Gold Standard activities or programmes of activities, including the development of project design documents or programme of activities design documents, validation, monitoring, verification, and certification, as well as the ability to identify and address potential issues that may arise during the certification process.
- e. Strong analytical skills, with the ability to interpret complex data and communicate findings effectively, including the ability to develop recommendations based on data analysis.
- f. An advanced university degree in economics, energy, environmental studies, natural sciences, engineering, agriculture, forestry or any related disciplines, as well as the ability to apply this knowledge to the development of effective and sustainable project designs.

## DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Description
1.0	04/04/2024	Initial adoption

---