

GOLD STANDARD FOR THE GLOBAL GOALS

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES & REQUIREMENTS

Version 1.2

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GOLD STANDARD FOUNDATION VISION & MISSION

OUR VISION: Climate security and sustainable development for all.

OUR MISSION: To catalyse more ambitious climate action to achieve the Global Goals through robust standards and verified impacts.

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1. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

1.1.1 Interventions are never one-dimensional. The interconnected nature of climate and development projects calls for appropriate safeguarding mechanisms. These safeguards help projects to identify, prevent and mitigate negative, unintended consequences that may arise from a given intervention. Credible safeguards are important in both ensuring development outcomes are not undermined as well as gaining public support for climate actions.

The Gold Standard for the Global Goals Safeguarding Principles & Requirements are derived from a number of international conventions, including:

- [UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards \(SES\)](#)
- [UN Environment's Environmental, Social and Economic Sustainability Framework](#)
- [The World Bank's International Finance Corporation Performance Standard](#)

1.1.2 All project shall conform to the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Safeguarding [Principles & Requirements](#) as set out in this document. This document outlines the following overarching-safeguarding principles that a project is required to meet throughout the entire project cycle.

Table 1 Safeguarding Principles

Safeguarding Principles	
Social	Principle 1 Human Rights
	Principle 2 Gender Equality and Women's Rights
	Principle 3 Community Health, Safety and Working Conditions
	Principle 4 Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Peoples, Displacement and Resettlement
	Principle 5 Corruption
Economic	Principle 6 Economic Impacts
Environmental & Ecological	Principle 7 Climate and Energy
	Principle 8 Water
	Principle 9 Environment, Ecology and Land Use

1.1.3 The requirements outlined in this document shall guide projects

- to identify the potential risks and adverse outcomes of their activities
- to adopt a mitigation strategy to avoid or where avoidance is not possible, minimise identified risks, with the intention to achieve the stated requirements

2. SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

- 2.1.1 The Safeguarding Principles Assessment procedure set out in this document includes the key following elements:
- (a) Principles: The overarching principles and rationale for the inclusion of the given assessment.
 - (b) Assessment Questions: The safeguarding assessment questions to identify potential risks and adverse outcomes of the project and determine how the Requirements shall be met for each Principle.
 - (c) Requirements: The requirements define what a Project shall achieve through design, management or risk mitigation.
- 2.1.2 All Safeguarding Principles and corresponding Requirements apply to all Projects seeking Gold Standard certification.
- 2.1.3 All Projects shall undertake an upfront assessment against the Safeguarding Principles and implement their Project in accordance with the stated Requirements. The assessment shall apply to the Project Scenario, although assessment questions and Requirements involve a comparison to the Baseline Scenario(s) and/or the implementation or decommissioning phases of a Project
- 2.1.4 A non-exhaustive list of assessment questions set out against each Principle is provided in the table below. The Project shall provide responses to these questions, including justifications for responses following the below guidance:
- (a) 'Yes' – Meaning that the risk or expected issue identified in the assessment question is relevant to the Project and context. The Requirements apply and adherence shall be demonstrated. All information must be included in the Monitoring & Reporting Plan and future Monitoring Reports.
 - (b) 'Potentially' – Meaning that the risk or expected issue may be relevant at some point in the Project's cycle but is not necessarily relevant now and/or may never arise. The Requirements apply but the Project Developer may justify why these Requirements do not need to be demonstrated as being met.
 - (c) 'No' – Meaning that the risk or expected issue is not relevant to the Project. Justification shall be provided to support this conclusion, with evidence provided where required.
- 2.1.5 Note that certain Requirements are mandatory for all Projects and these requirements are not accompanied by an assessment question. The

- Safeguarding Principles Assessment shall include a description with justifications on how a project met these Requirements.
- 2.1.6 The Requirements shall be used to guide any re-design/mitigation proposals where a risk is identified, i.e., the response to a given outcome shall be designed with the intention of achieving the stated Requirements.
 - 2.1.7 The scope of each Requirement (for example, its application during implementation or to upstream or downstream issues) is defined within the individual section.
 - 2.1.8 In certain circumstances an exception to a specific Safeguarding Principle or Requirement may be sought. Gold Standard encourages Projects to understand and demonstrate the trade-offs associated with them. In the presence of unavoidable negative impacts that exceed the Requirements and may not be remediated by consultation or mitigation, the Project Developer shall submit a Deviation Request to Gold Standard for review. All such requests shall be reviewed by a panel made up of the Gold Standard Secretariat and at least two relevant third-party Expert Stakeholder(s) and a Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Member. The panel shall make recommendations to the Project Developer as to any changes to the project to minimise the adverse outcomes. The panel will also recommend to Gold Standard as to whether the exception should be accepted or not. The final decision shall be taken by Gold Standard. Examples could include where a Project introduces a major innovation, makes a major positive contribution to sustainable development or where a legitimate body of affected stakeholders is empowered to make decisions on such matters.
 - 2.1.9 Certain Safeguarding Principles require opinion and recommendations of Expert Stakeholder(s). These are identified throughout the Safeguarding Principles Requirements and/or in the Activity Requirements. Where applicable, the Project Developer shall demonstrate that the Expert Stakeholders have conducted a thorough review (and, if needed, an onsite visit) and that their recommendations have been incorporated into the project design.
 - 2.1.10 Any failure, at any time in respect to the completion of the Safeguarding Principles Assessment, including conformity with Requirements and Monitoring & Reporting Requirements shall lead to the invocation of the Non-Conformity section of the Gold Standard Principles and Requirements.
 - 2.1.11 The Project shall provide the following information with regards to the Safeguarding Assessment at different project stages;

Table 2 Safeguarding Assessment Information

Project stage	Information
Stakeholder Consultation	Information on draft Safeguarding Principles Assessment including a summary of environmental, social and

	economic impacts of projects shall be made available to Stakeholders to seek feedback during Consultations.
Preliminary Review	A draft Safeguarding Principles Assessment
Design Review	A completed Safeguarding Principles Assessment fully assessed by the Gold Standard Validation/Verification Body (GS-VVB)
Performance Review	The monitoring report shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) An update on the implementation including information on relative success and failures, or improvements to proposed mitigation measures (b) Monitoring and reporting on any key indicators identified, including against pre-set tolerances (c) Information on any assessment questions answered 'Potentially' or where Requirements call for regular re-assessment

Table 3 Mandatory Requirements and Assessment Questions

Principle	Sub-principle	Mandatory requirements and assessment questions	Response Yes No Potentially
Social Safeguarding Principles			
Principle 1 - Human Rights		Mandatory requirement. Refer to the requirement section for the details.	
Principle 2 – Gender Equality and Women’s Rights		Mandatory requirement. Refer to the requirement section for the details.	
Principle 3 – Community Health, Safety and Working Conditions		Mandatory requirement. Refer to the requirement section for the details.	
Principle 4 – Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Peoples, Displacement and Resettlement	4.1 Sites of Cultural and Historical Heritage	Does the Project Area include sites, structures, or objects with historical, cultural, artistic, traditional or religious values or intangible forms of culture (e.g., knowledge, innovations, or practices)?	
	4.2 Forced Eviction and Displacement	Does the Project require or cause the physical or economic relocation of peoples (temporary or permanent, full or partial)?	

	4.3 Land Tenure and Other Rights	Does the Project require any change to land tenure arrangements and/or other rights?	
		For Projects involving land use tenure, are there any uncertainties with regards to land tenure, access rights, usage rights or land ownership? Examples include, but are not limited to water access rights, community-based property rights and customary rights.	
	4.4 Indigenous Peoples ¹	Are indigenous peoples present in or within the area of influence of the Project and/or is the Project located on land/territory claimed by indigenous peoples?	
Principle 5 – Corruption		Mandatory requirement. Refer to the requirement section for the details.	
ECONOMIC SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES			
Principle 6 – Economic Impacts	6.1 Labour Rights	Mandatory requirement. Refer to the requirement section for the details.	
	6.2 Negative Economic Consequences	Does the project cause negative economic consequences during and after project implementation, e.g., for vulnerable and marginalised social groups in targeted communities?	
ENVIRONMENTAL/ECOLOGICAL SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES			
Principle 7 – Climate and Energy	7.1 Emissions	Will the Project increase greenhouse gas emissions over the Baseline Scenario?	
	7.2 Energy Supply	Will the Project use energy from a local grid or power supply (i.e., not connected to a national or regional grid) or fuel resource	

¹ There is no one universally accepted definition of indigenous peoples. For purposes of this Standard “Indigenous peoples” refers to distinct collectives, regardless of the local, national and regional terms applied to them (For example, “tribal people”, “first peoples”, “scheduled tribes”, “pastoralist”, “hill people.”), who satisfy any of the more commonly accepted definitions of indigenous peoples. Including but not limited to those provided for in the Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (ILO Convention No. 169), the Study on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations (the “Martinez Cobo Study”), and the Working Paper on the Concept of “Indigenous People” prepared by the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

		(such as wood, biomass) that provides for other local users?	
Principle 8 – Water	8.1 Impact on Natural Water Patterns/Flows	Will the Project affect the natural or pre-existing pattern of watercourses, groundwater and/or the watershed(s) such as high seasonal flow variability, flooding potential, lack of aquatic connectivity or water scarcity?	
	8.2 Erosion and/or Water Body Instability	Could the Project directly or indirectly cause additional erosion and/or water body instability or disrupt the natural pattern of erosion? If 'Yes' or 'Potentially' proceed to next question?	
		Is the Project's area of influence susceptible to excessive erosion and/or water body instability?	
Principle 9 - Environment, ecology and land use	9.1 Landscape Modification and Soil	Does the Project involve the use of land and soil for production of crops or other products?	
	9.2 Vulnerability to Natural Disaster	Will the Project be susceptible to or lead to increased vulnerability to wind, earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding, drought or other extreme climatic conditions?	
	9.3 Genetic Resources	Could the Project be negatively impacted by the use of genetically modified organisms or GMOs (e.g., contamination, collection and/or harvesting, commercial development)?	
	9.4 Release of pollutants	Could the project potentially result in the release of pollutants to the environment?	
	9.5 Hazardous and Non-hazardous Waste	Will the Project involve the manufacture, trade, release, and/or use of hazardous and non-hazardous chemicals and/or materials?	
	9.6 Pesticides & Fertilisers	Will the Project involve the application of pesticides and/or fertilisers?	
	9.7 Harvesting of Forests	Will the Project involve the harvesting of forests?	
	9.8 Food	Does the project modify the quantity or nutritional quality of food available such as through crop regime alteration or export or economic incentives?	

	9.9 Animal husbandry	Will the Project involve animal husbandry?	
	9.10 High Conservation Value Areas and Critical Habitats	Does the Project physically affect or alter largely intact or High Conservation Value (HCV) ecosystems, critical habitats, landscapes, key biodiversity areas or sites identified? For example, Ramsar wetlands, World Heritage Areas, 'wilderness' areas, free-flowing rivers, unique or species-rich areas, primary forest, threatened or endangered species, migratory species as defined by treaties and national authorities or areas of natural cultural significance.	
	9.11 Endangered Species	Are there any endangered species ² identified as potentially being present within the Project boundary (including those that may route through the area)?	
		Does the Project potentially impact other areas where endangered species may be present through transboundary affects?	

3. SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS

Principle 1 – Human Rights

The Gold Standard Certification:

- (a) Recognises the centrality of human rights to sustainable development, poverty alleviation and ensuring fair distribution of development opportunities and benefits; and supports “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all”³.
- (b) Does not recognise or support Projects that may contribute to violations of a State’s human rights obligations and the core

² All endangered and critically endangered species as defined by the IUCN Red List; <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>

³ Charter of the United Nations, Article 1, para 3. <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/index.html>

international human rights treaties⁴, and seeks to support the protection and fulfilment of human rights.

- (c) Upholds the principles of accountability and the rule of law, participation and inclusion, and equality and non-discrimination, noting that prohibited grounds of discrimination include race, ethnicity, gender, age, language, disability, sexual orientation, religion, political or other opinion, national or social or geographical origin, property, birth or other status including as an indigenous person or as a member of a minority.

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.1.1 The Project Developer and the Project shall respect internationally proclaimed human rights and shall not be complicit in violence or human rights abuses of any kind as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁵.
- 3.1.2 The Project shall not discriminate with regards to participation and inclusion.

Principle 2 – Gender Equality and Women’s Rights

The Gold Standard Certification:

- (a) Promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- (b) Does not recognise Projects that contribute to discrimination against women or reinforce gender-based discrimination and/or inequalities
- (c) Recognises and seeks to contribute to SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The Project Developers shall refer to the Gold Standard [Gender Equality Requirements Guidelines](#) and Gold Standard [Gender Policy](#) for further details in this regard.

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

⁴ These include the following: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1981), Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (2003), International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2010), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008).

⁵ <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

- 3.2.1 The Project shall not directly or indirectly reinforce gender-based discrimination and shall not lead to/contribute to adverse impacts on gender equality and/or the situation of women. Specifically, this shall include (not exhaustive):
- (a) Sexual harassment and/or any forms of violence against women – address the multiple risks of gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation or human trafficking.
 - (b) Slavery, imprisonment, physical and mental drudgery, punishment or coercion of women and girls.
 - (c) Restriction of women’s rights or access to resources (natural or economic).
 - (d) Recognise women’s ownership rights regardless of marital status – adopt project measures where possible to support to women’s access to inherit and own land, homes, and other assets or natural resources.
- 3.2.2 Projects shall apply the principles of nondiscrimination, equal treatment, and equal pay for equal work, specifically:
- (a) Where appropriate for the implementation of a Project, paid, volunteer work or community contributions will be organised to provide the conditions for equitable participation of men and women in the identified tasks/activities.
 - (b) Introduce conditions that ensure the participation of women or men in Project activities and benefits based on pregnancy, maternity/paternity leave, or marital status.
 - (c) Ensure that these conditions do not limit the access of women or men, as the case may be, to Project participation and benefits.
- 3.2.3 The Project shall refer to the country’s national gender strategy or equivalent national commitment to aid in assessing gender risks.
- 3.2.4 Based on the responses to assessment questions above, Gold Standard may require that the Project seek the input of an Expert Stakeholder(s) and to include their recommendations in the Project design.

Principle 3 – Community Health, Safety and Working Conditions

The Gold Standard Certification:

- (a) Ensures that projects anticipate and avoid adverse impacts on the health and safety of affected communities during the Project’s life cycle from both routine and non-routine circumstances.

- (b) Ensures that projects to provide workers with safe and healthy working conditions and to prevent accidents, injuries, and disease.

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.3.1 The Project shall avoid community exposure to increased health risks⁶ and shall not adversely affect the health of the workers and the community.

Principle 4 – Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Peoples, Displacement and Resettlement

The Gold Standard certification:

- (a) Promotes and supports the protection and preservation of cultural heritage and the equitable sharing of benefits from the use of cultural heritage.
- (b) Advocates the avoidance of alteration, damage or removal of artifacts and objects of cultural value.
- (c) Recognises and respects the prohibition of forced evictions and the use of violence generally.
- (d) Recognises and fosters full respect for indigenous peoples' human rights as recognised under Applicable Law, including but not limited to their rights to self-determination, their lands, resources and territories, traditional livelihoods and cultures.
- (e) Ensures that Projects that may impact indigenous peoples and local farmers are designed in a spirit of partnership with them, with their full and effective participation, with the objective of securing their free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC)⁷ where their rights, lands, resources, territories, traditional livelihoods may be affected.

⁶ Such as (but not limited to) transmission of communicable diseases to water-borne, water-based, water-related, and vector-borne diseases, and communicable diseases (e.g. HIV, TB and malaria) that could result from the Project, taking into consideration the differentiated exposure to and higher sensitivity of marginalised groups, including communities living in voluntary isolation

⁷ Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a specific right that pertains to indigenous peoples and is recognised in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The normative framework of FPIC consists on a series of legal international instruments including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the International Labour Organization Convention 169 (ILO 169), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), among many others, as well as national laws. Please refer to the link for further details.

<http://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-pillars/fpic/en/>

Principle 4.1 - Sites of Cultural and Historical Heritage

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.4.1 The Project shall not involve or be complicit in the alteration, damage or removal of any sites, objects or structures of significant cultural heritage.
- 3.4.2 Where a Project proposes to utilise Cultural Heritage, including the knowledge, innovations, or practices of local communities, affected communities shall be informed of:
 - (a) Their rights under Applicable Law,
 - (b) The scope and nature of the proposed commercial development; and
 - (c) The potential consequences of such development.
- 3.4.3 The Project shall provide for equitable sharing of benefits from commercialisation of such knowledge, innovation, or practice, consistent with their customs and traditions.
- 3.4.4 The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder(s) shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the project design.

Principle 4.2 - Forced Eviction and Displacement

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.4.5 The Project shall not involve and shall not be complicit in the involuntary relocation of people.
- 3.4.6 Projects shall avoid physical (i.e., relocation or loss of shelter) and economic displacement (i.e., loss of assets or access to assets that leads to loss of income sources or means of livelihood), and mitigate displacement impacts on displaced persons and host communities when displacement cannot be avoided. In such cases, the Project shall integrate into the Project documentation a Resettlement Action Plan or Livelihood Action Plan as appropriate. Please refer to [UNDP Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement](#)⁸ requirements for further details in this regard.
- 3.4.7 The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder(s) shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the project design.

⁸ UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards;
<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/operations1/undp-social-and-environmental-standards.html>

Principle 4.3 - Land Tenure and other rights

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.4.8 The Project Developer shall identify all such sites/matters potentially affected by the Project. For all such sites/matters identified the Project shall respect and safeguard:
- (a) Legal rights, or
 - (b) Customary rights, or
 - (c) Special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance of people shall be demonstrably promoted/protected.
- 3.4.9 Changes in legal arrangements must be in line with relevant law and regulation and must be carried out in strict adherence with such laws. All legal disputes must be resolved prior to the Project being carried out in such areas. All such changes must be demonstrated as having been agreed with free, prior and informed consent.
- 3.4.10 The Project Developer must hold uncontested land title for the entire Project Boundary to complete Project Design Certification.
- 3.4.11 The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder(s) shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the project design.

Principle 4.4 - Indigenous people⁹

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.4.12 The Project Developer shall identify all communities of Indigenous Peoples within the Project area of influence who may be affected directly or indirectly by the Project.
- 3.4.13 The Project Developer shall recognise and respect the indigenous people's collective rights to own, use, and develop and control the lands, resources and territories that they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired, including lands and territories for which they do not yet possess title.

⁹ There is no one universally accepted definition of indigenous peoples. For purposes of this Standard "Indigenous peoples" refers to distinct collectives, regardless of the local, national and regional terms applied to them (For example, "tribal people", "first peoples", "scheduled tribes", "pastoralist", "hill people."), who satisfy any of the more commonly accepted definitions of indigenous peoples. Including but not limited to those provided for in the Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (ILO Convention No. 169), the Study on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations (the "Martinez Cobo Study"), and the Working Paper on the Concept of "Indigenous People" prepared by the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

- 3.4.14 The Project Developer shall respect, protect, conserve and shall not take the cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).
- 3.4.15 The Project Developer shall ensure that the indigenous people are provided with the equitable sharing of benefits to be derived from utilisation and/or commercial development of natural resources on lands and territories or use of their traditional knowledge and practices by the Project. This shall be done in a manner that is culturally appropriate and inclusive and that does not impede land rights or equal access to basic services including health services, clean water, energy, education, safe and decent working conditions and housing.
- 3.4.16 The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder(s) shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the project design.

Principle 5 – Corruption

The Gold Standard certification

- (a) Does not recognise Projects that engage in, contribute to or reinforce corruption of any kind.

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.5.1 The Project shall not involve, be complicit in or inadvertently contribute to or reinforce corruption or corrupt Projects.

Principle 6 – Economic Impacts

The Gold Standard certification:

- (a) Promotes equitable, sustainable economic growth and stability and Projects that are appropriate and considerate of the economic situation in which they are developed.
- (b) Ensures that projects respect and promote worker's rights, promote the right to decent work, fair treatment, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity for workers, and avoid the use of forced labour and child labour.
- (c) Prioritises appropriate and properly considered local employment and procurement wherever possible.

Principle 6.1 - Labour Rights

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.6.1 The Project Developer shall ensure that there is no forced labour and that all employment is in compliance with national labour and occupational health and safety laws, with obligations under international law, and consistency with the principles and standards embodied in the International Labour Organization (ILO) fundamental conventions¹⁰. Where these are contradictory and a breach of one or other cannot be avoided, then guidance shall be sought from Gold Standard. It requires that;
- (a) Workers shall be able to establish and join labour organisations.
 - (b) Working agreements with all individual workers shall be documented and implemented. These shall, at minimum, comprise:
 - i. Working hours (must not exceed 48 hours per week on a regular basis), AND
 - ii. Duties and tasks, AND
 - iii. Remuneration (must include provision for payment of overtime), AND
 - iv. Modalities on health insurance, AND
 - v. Modalities on termination of the contract with provision for voluntary resignation by employee, AND
 - vi. Provision for annual leave of not less than 10 days per year, not including sick and casual leave.
- 3.6.2 Child labour, as defined by the [ILO Minimum Age Convention](#)¹¹ is not allowed. The Project Developer shall use adequate and verifiable mechanisms for age verification in recruitment procedures. Exceptions are children for work on their families' property as long as:
- (a) Their compulsory schooling (minimum of 6 schooling years) is not hindered, AND
 - (b) The tasks they perform do not harm their physical and mental development, AND
 - (c) The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the project design.

¹⁰ ILO Conventions Nos. 29 and 105 (forced and bonded labour), 87 (freedom of association), 98 (right to collective bargaining), 100 and 111 (discrimination), 138 (minimum age), 182 (worst forms of child labour).

¹¹ ILO Conventions and Recommendations on child labour;
<http://www.ilo.org/ippec/facts/ILOconventionsonchildlabour/lang--en/index.htm>

- (d) The Project Developer shall ensure the use of appropriate equipment, training of workers, documentation and reporting of accidents and incidents, and emergency preparedness and response measures.

Principle 6.2 - Negative Economic Consequences

The Gold Standard requires that

- 3.6.3 The Project Developer shall demonstrate the financial sustainability of the Projects implemented, also including those that will occur beyond the Project Certification period.
- 3.6.4 The Projects shall consider economic impacts and demonstrate a consideration of potential risks to the local economy and how these have been taken into account in project design, implementation, operation and after the Project. Particular focus shall be given to vulnerable and marginalised social groups in targeted communities and that benefits are socially-inclusive and sustainable.

Principle 7 – Climate and Energy

The Gold Standard Certification:

- (a) Promotes Climate Security (mitigation and adaptation) and Sustainable Development.

Principle 7.1 - Emissions

The Gold Standard requires that

- 3.7.1 Projects shall not increase greenhouse gas emissions over the Baseline Scenario unless this is specifically allowed within Activity Requirements or Gold Standard Approved Impact Methodologies.

Principle 7.2 - Energy supply

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.7.2 The Project shall not affect the availability and reliability of energy supply to other users.

Principle 8 - Water

The Gold Standard Certification:

- (a) Promotes sustainable management, protection, conservation, maintenance and rehabilitation of natural habitats and their associated biodiversity and ecosystem functions.

Principle 8.1 - Impact on Natural Water Patterns/Flows

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

3.8.1 The Project shall ensure that water resources are conserved. For surface waters this means:

- (a) Maintaining credible environmental flows, demonstrated by providing a verifiable calculation that shows conservation is maintained at a level as advised by the independent Expert Stakeholder, and
- (b) Ensuring that any discharged wastewater is of a high enough standard to allow beneficial reuse. For ground water this means limiting abstractions to levels less than, or equal to, rates of recharge. Managed aquifer recharge may be used to conserve groundwater resources. The project can use historical records, ongoing monitoring and reporting through data logging of physical measurements, online sources and/or government data to assess the project risks/impacts.

Recommended methods: Quantitative documentation of all sources and volumes of water abstractions. Use of weirs and gauges, flow meters, pump energy consumption, transpiration rates, government data, remote sensing.

3.8.2 At each Performance Certification the Project shall assess whether it is in an area of physical water stress or scarcity. The project can conduct an analysis of the water scarcity within the Project's physical area of influence (e.g., basin, watershed) and shall monitor the impact frequently. The project can use [Aqueduct](#), [GWSP Digital water Atlas](#), [Water Risk Filter](#), [WBCSD Global Water Tool](#), [Water Stress Index Maplecroft](#), [Water Scarcity Index Pfister](#) or other recognised tools for water stress and scarcity assessment with in the Project's physical area of influence.

3.8.3 The Project shall provide verifiable evidence of water stress experienced in the basin(s) in which the Project is active, and demonstrate that consumption of water by the Project (over Baseline) is negligible or will bring positive impacts or, at a minimum, not increase the overall annual basin stress.

3.8.4 The risk(s) of the Project negatively impacting the catchment shall be assessed and addressed to ensure its ongoing, long-term viability and impact on surrounding social-economic and environmental assets. The project can use mapping tools, or other appropriate nationally recognised tools in this regard. Recommended methods include online tools, engineering or physical assessment, historical flow records, land

use records, and verbal or written surveys with local agencies and residents. Examination of longitudinal and lateral conductivity to check connectivity of flows, including vertical connectivity (i.e., sufficient flows or dead zones).

- 3.8.5 Where the Project is involved in abstraction from water resources required to support biodiversity and other ecosystem services, an eflow assessment consistent with good practice, including a modern method outlined in one of the key references listed below must be undertaken. Alternatively, where local, national or regional regulation exists or where alternative approaches may be more appropriate then these may be put forward to Gold Standard for approval.
- 3.8.6 Where environmental flow assessments are impractical, the Project is required to demonstrate that the flow rate and variability is maintained from the abstracted water resource. A verifiable calculation shall be provided for each water source demonstrating total flow rates do not fall below levels that are contextually appropriate, as advised by an independent Expert Stakeholder.
- 3.8.7 The opinions and recommendations of Expert Stakeholder(s) shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the project design and Monitoring Plan.

Principle 8.2 - Erosion and/or Water Body Instability

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.8.8 The risk of the Project negatively impacting the catchment and any risks impacting the Project's success shall be assessed and addressed. The project shall ensure its ongoing, long-term viability and impact on surrounding social-economic and environmental assets. The project shall assess the sensitivity of the physical area of influence due to low percentage of impervious cover in a project (e.g., basin, catchment), susceptibility to erosion and water body instability, and lack of terrestrial habitat connectivity. The project can use mapping tools, or other appropriate nationally recognised tools, academic or published studies on the relevant area. The recommended methods include online tools, visual inspection, engineering or physical assessment, historical land use records, aerial photographs, and verbal or written surveys with local agencies and residents on the characterisation of geomorphology of water bodies.
- 3.8.9 The Project shall demonstrate that measures to ensure soil protection and minimised erosion are in place prior to the commencement of the Project.
- 3.8.10 The Project shall demonstrate that measures will be undertaken to ensure that surface and ground waters are protected from erosion and that these measures are in place prior to the commencement of the Project.

- 3.8.11 Measures shall be incorporated to reduce soil erosion on slopes (e.g., hedge and tree rows, natural terracing, infiltration strips, permanent ground cover). For these measures, the concept of the effective slope length shall be taken into account.
- 3.8.12 Impact shall be reassessed at a frequency appropriate to the context of the ecosystem affected. The monitoring approach and frequency shall be justified by reference to natural patterns and variations.
- 3.8.13 Where the Project takes place in a water scarce or water stressed area, the opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder shall be sought and demonstrated as being considered and incorporated into the project design.

Principle 9 - Environment, ecology and land use

The Gold Standard Certification:

- (a) Ensures a precautionary approach to natural resource conservation and avoids negative environmental impacts.

Principle 9.1 - Landscape Modification and Soil

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.9.1 The Project shall identify the functions and services provided by the landscape and demonstrate no net degradation in existing landscape function and services.
- 3.9.2 To ensure healthy soils the following aspects shall be identified, and appropriate measures shall be put in place to protect them:
 - (a) Soil types, AND
 - (b) Biota, AND
 - (c) Erosion
- 3.9.3 Measures shall be incorporated to minimise soil degradation (e.g., through crop rotation, composting, no use of heavy machinery, use of N-fixing plants, reduced tillage, no use of ecologically harmful substances).
- 3.9.4 Projects that involve the production, harvesting, and/or management of living natural resources by small-scale landholders and/or local communities shall adopt the appropriate and culturally sensitive sustainable resource management practices.

Principle 9.2 - Vulnerability to Natural Disaster

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.9.5 The Project shall avoid or minimise the exacerbation of impacts caused by natural or man-made hazards, such as landslides or floods that could result from land use changes due to Projects. The Project Developer shall include mitigation measures (if possible), the emergency preparedness plan and response strategies. The Project Developer shall disclose appropriate information about emergency preparedness and response Projects, resources, and responsibilities to affected communities.

Principle 9.3 - Genetic Resources

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.9.6 Projects involving the use of GMOs¹² are not eligible for Gold Standard Project Design Certification.
- 3.9.7 An assessment for the risk of GMO contamination from outside the Project area and reasonable and appropriate counter measures should be taken.

Principle 9.4 - Release of pollutants

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.9.8 The Project shall avoid the release of pollutants¹³. This applies to the release of pollutants to air, water, and land due to routine, non-routine and accidental circumstances¹⁴.
- 3.9.9 The Project Developer shall ensure that pollution prevention and control technologies and practices consistent with national regulation or international good practice are applied during the Project life cycle.
- 3.9.10 All potential pollution sources that may result from the Project that cause the degradation of the quality of soil, air, surface and groundwater within the Project's area of influence shall be identified. Appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring shall be implemented to ensure the

¹² An organism in which the genetic material has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally by mating and/or natural recombination. See 'FSC Interpretation on GMO – FSC-POL-30-602': <https://ic.fsc.org/download.fsc-pol-30-602-2000-fsc-interpretation-on-gmos-genetically-modified-organisms.a-499.pdf>

¹³ For the purposes of this Standard, the term "pollution" refers to both hazardous and non-hazardous pollutants in the solid, liquid, or gaseous phases, and includes other components such as pests, pathogens, thermal discharge to water, GHG emissions, nuisance odours, noise, vibration, radiation, electromagnetic energy, and the creation of potential visual impacts including light.

¹⁴ Including those covered under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, available at http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/lrtap_h1.html

protection of resources. The project can use historical records, ongoing monitoring and reporting through data logging of physical measurements, online sources, government data. The recommended methods include quantitative documentation of all sources and volumes of water abstractions, use of weirs and gauges, flow meters, pump energy consumption, transpiration rates, government data.

Principle 9.5 - Hazardous and Non-hazardous Waste

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.9.11 Projects shall avoid or, when avoidance is not feasible, minimise and control release of hazardous materials resulting from their production, transportation, handling, storage and use in the Project. Where avoidance is not possible, the health risks, including potential differentiated effects on men, women and children, of the potential use of hazardous materials shall be addressed appropriately.
- 3.9.12 Projects shall consider the use of less hazardous substitutes for such chemicals and materials and will avoid the manufacture, trade, and use of chemicals and hazardous materials subject to international bans or phase-outs due to their high toxicity to living organisms, environmental persistence, potential for bioaccumulation, or potential for depletion of the ozone layer¹⁵.
- 3.9.13 All sources of waste and waste products shall be identified and classified. Waste products include amongst others:
 - (a) Chemical wastes, AND
 - (b) Containers, AND
 - (c) Fuels and oils, AND
 - (d) Human waste, AND
 - (e) Rubbish (including metals, plastics, organic and paper products), AND
 - (f) Abandoned buildings, machinery or equipment.
- 3.9.14 Where waste generation may not be avoided, the Project shall reduce the generation of waste, and recover and reuse waste in a manner that is safe for human health and the environment.
- 3.9.15 Where waste may not be recovered or reused, it shall be treated, destroyed, or disposed of in an environmentally sound manner that

¹⁵ As defined by international conventions or local legislation. Where local legislation and international conventions may diverge, the higher standard will apply.

includes the appropriate control of emissions and residues resulting from the handling and processing of the waste material.

- 3.9.16 If the generated waste is considered hazardous¹⁶, reasonable alternatives for its environmentally sound disposal will be adopted while adhering to the limitations applicable to its transboundary movement¹⁷.
- 3.9.17 The Project shall not make use of chemicals or materials subject to international bans or phase-outs. For example, DDT, PCBs and other chemicals listed in international conventions such as the [Stockholm Conventions on Persistent Organic Pollutants](#) or the [Montreal Protocol](#).

Principle 9.6 - Pesticides & Fertilisers

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.9.18 Projects involving pest management, the integrated pest management (IPM) and /or integrated vector management (IVM) approaches shall be adopted and aim to reduce reliance on chemical pesticides.
- 3.9.19 The health and environmental risks associated with pest management should be minimised with support, as needed, to institutional capacity development, to help regulate and monitor the distribution and use of pesticides and enhance the application of integrated pest management.
- 3.9.20 When Projects include pest management or the use of pesticides, pesticides that are low in human toxicity, known to be effective against the target species and have minimal effects on non-target species and the environment shall be selected.
- 3.9.21 There shall be a 'Chemical Pesticides Policy' that is documented, implemented and regularly updated. This policy shall include at a minimum:
- (a) Provisions for safe transport, storage, handling and application,
AND

¹⁶ Shall be Consistent with the objectives of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, available at <http://chm.pops.int/default.aspx>, and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, available at <http://ozone.unep.org/en/treaties-and-decisions/montreal-protocol-substances-deplete-ozone-layer>. Similar considerations will apply to certain World Health Organization (WHO) classes of pesticides.

¹⁷ Transboundary movement of hazardous materials should be consistent with national, regional and international law, including the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, available at <http://www.basel.int>, and the London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, available at <http://www.imo.org>. For further guidance, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is a policy framework to foster the sound management of chemicals, available at <http://www.saicm.org/>.

- (b) Provisions for emergency situations.
- 3.9.22 The Project Developer shall not purchase, store, manufacture, trade or use products that fall in Classes IA (extremely hazardous) and IB (highly hazardous) of the [World Health Organization Recommended Classification of Pesticides](#) by Hazard.
- 3.9.23 Fertilisers shall be avoided, or their use shall be minimised and justified. If the aerial application of fertiliser is used, then measures shall be put in place to prevent drift.

Principle 9.7 - Harvesting of Forests

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.9.24 The Project shall:
- (a) Enhance the sustainable management of forests, including the application of independent, credible certification for commercial, industrial-scale timber harvesting, AND
 - (b) Maintain or enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functionality in areas where improved forest management is undertaken.

Principle 9.8 - Food

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.9.25 The Project activity shall not negatively influence access to and availability of food for people affected.

Principle 9.9 - Animal husbandry

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.9.26 The welfare of animals shall be ensured by:
- (a) Provision of sufficient drinking water, AND
 - (b) Access to daylight, AND
 - (c) The prohibition of cattle trainers, AND
 - (d) No hindrance in their sensory perception and performing their basic needs, AND
 - (e) Management policies and staff training to prevent mistreatment (evidence of animal mistreatment shall be treated as an immediate Non-conformity).

- 3.9.27 Excessive or inadequate use of veterinary medicines shall be avoided. Thus, all medications shall be:
- (a) Administered strictly according to label and package instructions, OR
 - (b) According to a trained veterinarian.
- 3.9.28 Injured or sick animals shall be treated and isolated, if necessary, for recovery.
- 3.9.29 Synthetic growth promoters including hormones shall not be administered.
- 3.9.30 Animals shall be exposed to the least stress possible during transportation and slaughtering.
- 3.9.31 Appropriate space per animal and stocking rates per land unit should be set according to their developmental and physical needs.

Principle 9.10 - High Conservation Value Areas and Critical Habitats¹⁸

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.9.32 No Project that potentially impacts identified habitats as identified above shall be implemented unless all of the following are demonstrated:
- (a) The risk of the Project negatively impacting the catchment and risks impacting project success shall be assessed and addressed to ensure its ongoing, long-term viability and impact on surrounding HCV and ecological assets.

¹⁸ Critical habitats are a subset of both modified and natural habitats that require special attention. Critical habitats are areas with high biodiversity value, including any of the following features:

- i. habitat of significant importance to Critically Endangered and/or Endangered species;
- ii. habitat of significant importance to endemic and/or restricted-range species;
- iii. habitat supporting globally significant concentrations of migratory species and/or congregatory species;
- iv. highly threatened and/or unique ecosystems; and/or
- v. areas associated with key evolutionary processes.

Critical habitats include those areas that are

- i. legally protected,
- ii. officially proposed for protection,
- iii. identified by authoritative sources for their high conservation value (such as areas that meet criteria of the World Conservation Union classification, the Ramsar List of Wetlands of (iv) International Importance, and the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization's world heritage sites), or recognized as protected by traditional local communities.

- (b) No measurable adverse impacts on the criteria or biodiversity values for which the critical habitat was designated, and on the ecological processes supporting those biodiversity values;
 - (c) A robust, appropriately designed, and long-term Habitats and Biodiversity Action Plan is in place to achieve net gains of those biodiversity values for which the critical habitat was designated.
- 3.9.33 Within the Project the area that is managed by the Project Developer and the area of impact downstream, the following shall be identified and protected/enhanced. In the case of downstream impacts, the Project shall ensure mitigation is in place within the Project Boundary such that the Project shall not adversely affect these areas:
- (a) Existing patches of native tree species, AND
 - (b) Single solitary stems of native tree species, AND
 - (c) All freshwater resources including rivers, lakes, swamps, ephemeral water bodies and wells
 - (d) Habitats of rare, threatened and endangered species, AND
 - (e) Areas relevant for habitat connectivity shall be identified and managed to protect or enhance biological diversity.
- 3.9.34 If the Project is located in such habitats; the Project Developer shall:
- (a) Minimise unwarranted conversion or degradation of the habitat.
 - (b) Identify opportunities to enhance the habitat as part of the Project. For Projects applying the Land Use & Forest Activity Requirements Projects, a minimum 10% of the Project area shall be identified and managed to protect or enhance the biological diversity of native ecosystems. For this, the HCV approach should be followed (www.HCVnetwork.org). This area has to be located within the project region and managed by the Project Developer. The area may also include the areas of the requirement (for example, buffer zones for water bodies in the case of Land Use & Forests).
- 3.9.35 The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the Project design. The project can use mapping tools such as [LEFT](#), [IUCN Red List](#), [IBAT](#) or other appropriate nationally recognised tools may be used or visual inspection. The recommended methods include online tools, visual inspection, engineering or physical assessment, use historical data and verbal or written surveys with local residents.

Principle 9.11 - Endangered Species

The Gold Standard Certification requires that

- 3.9.36 Under no circumstances shall the Project lead to the reduction or negative impact of any recognised Endangered, Vulnerable or Critically Endangered species¹⁹.
- 3.9.37 Habitats of endangered species shall be specifically identified and managed to protect or enhance them.
- 3.9.38 The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder shall be sought and demonstrated as being considered and incorporated into the project design.

¹⁹ All endangered and critically endangered species as defined by the IUCN Red List; <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>