



OPTIONAL REQUIREMENT

DEVIATION APPROVAL PROCEDURES

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1| SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

1.1.1 | This document outlines key principles, guidelines and procedures to be followed by projects seeking deviation from Gold Standard for the Global Goals (GS4GG) requirements and SDG Impact Quantification Methodologies / or applicable methodologies.

2| PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 | Principles

2.1.1 | Projects seeking a deviation from applicable Requirements must ensure that the following principles are adhered to

- **Environmental integrity:** Gold Standard certified products (GS VERs) and/or statements will not be overestimated as a result of the deviation, and conservativeness must be ensured
- **Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** SDG contributions that the project is designed to achieve must be in line with GS4GG requirements and are not compromised
- **Safeguarding principles and requirements:** Project must be in line with Safeguarding principles and requirements of GS4GG
- **Compliance with host country regulations:** Project must not conflict with host country regulations

2.2 | Definitions

2.2.1 | The following actions constitute a project deviation when a project deviates from

- a. Applicable requirements listed in GS4GG's
 - Principles and Requirements
 - Activity Requirements
 - Product Requirements
 - Context Requirements
- b. Requirements listed in the applicable SDG Impact Quantification methodology
- c. Approved monitoring plan

2.2.2 | Clarifications on Gold Standard Requirements and SDG Impact Quantification methodologies can be sought at any time and do not require a deviation to be submitted. Clarifications can be submitted to SustainCERT at help@sustain-cert.com

3| DEVIATION APPROVAL PROCEDURE

3.1 | Submission of request for deviations

- 3.1.1 | Deviations can be submitted to Gold Standard or identified during the following stages of the certification cycle –
- a. Outside certification review process – CME/PD/VVB may submit deviations outside the certification review process e.g. during the monitoring period
 - b. Part of certification review process – Gold Standard’s certification partner SustainCERT or CME/PD/VVB can identify deviations during the certification review process
- 3.1.2 | Deviations shall be submitted to Gold Standard/SustainCERT with a complete [Deviation Request form](#).

3.2 | Processing request for deviations

The deviation requests are processed as outlined below.

a. Outside Certification Review

- 3.2.1 | When a new project deviation without any precedent of TAC approval is submitted, the Secretariat will present the request to the Gold Standard TAC for discussion and decide, at the earliest possible opportunity. The decision also outlines requirements, expectations from project as applicable in light with the deviation from GS4GG requirements. The decision will be communicated to the PD/VVB as part of the deviation form.
- 3.2.2 | Deviations that are approved by Gold Standard TAC will either set a precedent for other projects to apply or will be limited to a specific project, e.g. due to its unique circumstances arising from force majeure conditions. In case of these project specific deviations that do not apply to other projects, the approval decision should clearly define the expectations to fall in-line with Gold Standard Requirements as project circumstances come back to normal.____
- 3.2.3 | When a project deviation with precedent (i.e. TAC has previously approved a similar deviation) is submitted, the Secretariat will decide on the deviation request in line with previous decisions approved by TAC or may delegate to SustainCERT if precedent exists.

b. Part of Certification Review

- 3.2.4 | When a deviation is identified by SustainCERT or submitted by PD/VVB as part of the certification process, i.e., design or performance certification etc, SustainCERT shall assess the deviation and decide on the deviation request leading to the conservative outcome as part of the certification decision. SustainCERT shall take into account any precedents available, based on earlier TAC decisions. It should also be ensured that such deviations are restricted to a specific period and do not become a norm.

c. Creation of Precedent

- 3.2.5 | When a decision by the Gold Standard TAC on a deviation request constitutes a precedent, i.e. the approved deviation can also be applied by other projects, this shall be mentioned and outlined in the deviation form. Conditions under which the approved deviation can be applied by other projects shall be clearly defined.
- 3.2.6 | Gold Standard will ensure that the deviation precedents are incorporated in the relevant Requirements or methodologies at the time of the next revision/update. In the interim, deviation precedents may also be published as a rule update/clarification on the Gold Standard website.

4| ACCESS TO APPROVED DEVIATIONS

- 4.1.1 | All deviations and associated document submitted for approval will be made publicly available.
- 4.1.2 | The project developer may request to retract any confidential information informing Secretariat and SustainCERT at the time of submission of a request.
- 4.1.3 | The deviation decisions will be made public using one of the following platforms, as applicable
- Project level deviations – These deviation forms will be uploaded on a project page in the SustainCERT application.
 - Project level deviations that result in a precedent – the deviation form will be made publicly available on the Gold Standard website under the corresponding Requirement/SDG Impact Quantification methodology page.