GOLD STANDARD FOR THE GLOBAL GOALS

LAND USE & FORESTS ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS

Version 1.21

Published October ~~March~~ 2019~~8~~

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.

Status of Document:	Version 1.~~1~~2 – Effective ~~1st~~ 24 ~~March~~ October 2019~~8~~
Language:	English
Contact Details:	help@goldstandard.org www.goldstandard.org
Next planned update:	~~02nd September~~24th April 2021~~19~~

TABLE OF CONTENTS

~~PREFACE~~

~~This Requirements document, hereafter "the " the LUF Requirements", functions as part of a pathway to certification within Gold Standard for the Global Goals. The Requirements enable eligible forestry and agriculture activities to undergo Design and Performance Certification, including issuance of Certified SDG Impact Statements and Products.~~

~~The LUF Requirements are designed to be read in conjunction with the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles & Requirements and associated documents.Through conformity to these two documents andrelevant Methodologies and Product Requirements (for e.g. GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Product Requirements) a Project may be issued with Gold Standard Verified Emissions Reductions ERs (GS VERs) and other products for certification.~~

~~1. HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT~~

~~This document presents the Requirements that Gold Standard Land -Uuse & Forest Projects, including Afforestation/Reforestation (A/R) and/or Agriculture (AGR) shall apply in conjunction with the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles & RequirementsPrinciples & Requirements.~~

~~The 'Land Use & Forests Requirements' include sections or items within sections that apply only to A/R or to AGR projects. "**A/R specific**" sections/items sections apply only to A/R projects . On the other handand, sections/items labelled "**AGR specificAGR specific**" labelled sections/items apply only to AGR projects. Sections/items without any specific label apply to both A/R and AGR projects.~~

~~The Requirements for Smallholder and Microscale Projects are included in Annex A. The se simplifications to the requirements for Smallholder and Microscale Projects provide better access to carbon markets for smallholders.~~

~~The specific Sections that incorporate particular considerations for A/R and for AGR projects are summarized in the table below:~~

~~Table 1: Sections of the 'Land Use & Forests Requirements' with specific requirements for A/R or AGR projects~~

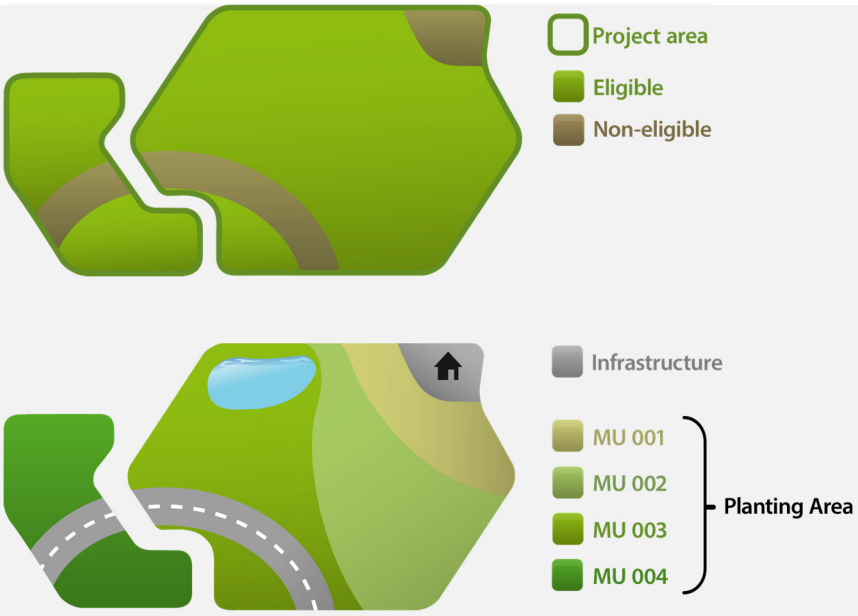
~~A/R specificA/R specific~~	~~AGR specificAGR specific~~
~~Definition – Project Area~~	~~Definition – Project Area~~
~~Definition – Modelling Unit~~	~~Definition – Modelling Unit~~
~~Definition – Tree Planting~~	~~Definition – Project Start~~
~~Definition – Project Start~~	~~Definition – Stakeholders~~
~~Definition – Tree~~	~~Definition – Workers~~
~~2. 0 Eligibility Principles & Criteria: Item 1~~	~~2. 0 Eligibility Principles & Criteria: Item 1~~

~~2. 0 Eligibility Principles & Criteria: Item 2 (i)~~	~~2. 0 Eligibility Principles & Criteria: Item 2 (i)~~
~~2. 0 Eligibility Principles & Criteria: Item 2.2 (ii)~~	~~2. 0 Eligibility Principles & Criteria: Item 2 (ii)~~
~~2. 0 Eligibility Principles & Criteria: Item 3~~	~~2. 0 Eligibility Principles & Criteria: Item 4~~
~~6.0 Principle 4 – Demonstration of Real Outcomes: Item 2~~	~~3.0 Principle 1 – Contribution To Climate Security & Sustainable Development: Item 1~~
~~6.0 Principle 4 – Demonstration of Real Outcomes: Item 5~~	~~4.0 Principle 2 – Safeguarding Principles & Requirements: Item 5~~
~~7.0 Principle 5 – Additionality Assessment: Item 3~~	~~6.0 Principle 4 – Demonstration of Real Outcomes: Item 2~~
~~98.0 Technical Requirements: Item 1~~	~~6.0 Principle 4 – Demonstration of Real Outcomes: Item 5~~
~~8.0 Technical Requirements: Item 2~~	~~7.0 Principle 5 – Additionality Assessment: Item 3~~
	~~98.0 Technical Requirements: Item 1~~
	~~98.0 Technical Requirements: Item 2~~

~~2.~~ TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Terms	Definitions
Agriculture	The Gold Standard defines agriculture in accordance with the FAO, as agricultural activities that contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals: www.fao.org/climate-change/en
Crop	A crop is a plant or fungus species that is purposefully cultivated and/or harvested to satisfy human and livestock needs.
Forest	A forest is defined by the Designated National Authority (DNA) of the project's host country http://cdm.unfccc.int/DNA/index.html. In case no forest definition is yet given by the DNA, the Project Developer can refer to ~~take~~ the forest definition of ~~the~~ the FAO: http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/x6896e/x6896e0e.html or the national forest definition of the project's host country.
Invasive Species	An organism introduced by man into places out of its natural range of distribution, where it becomes established and disperses, generating a negative impact on the local ecosystems and species. An invasive species is likely to cause economic harm or harm to human health. Note that species which are already locally established and of economic importance are excluded under this definition. Source: Adapted from IUCN, available at https://www.iucn.org/theme/species/our-work/invasive-species ~~and SAN~~
Livestock	Livestock comprises all domestic animals. Non-domestic animals are not included unless they are kept or raised in captivity on agricultural holdings, including holdings without land. Source: FAO, available at ~~(~~http://www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/economic/faodef/fdef16e.htm~~)~~
Modelling Units (MU)	M~~**A/R specific:** M~~odelling Units are distinct parts of the ~~planting~~ eligible area where carbon stocks can be quantified based on a Gold Standard-approved SDG Impact Quantification Methodology. ~~based on applying a forest growth model or any SDG Impact can be quantified and certified.~~ To meet the precision level for the carbon stocks estimation (see Annex A- Uncertainty of LUF Parameters) ~~Gold Standard Afforestation/Reforestation (A/R) GHG Emissions Reduction and Sequestration Methodology chapter – CO2 Fixation')~~. MU areas

	normally have homogeneous characteristics to quantify a certain SDG Impact (~~in their gro~~growth patterns, ~~silvicultural~~ management treatment and ~~planting~~ start date). ~~**AGR specific:** Modelling Units represents distinct areas with homogeneous characteristics to quantify a certain SDG Impact.~~
New Area	New areas are project areas that are added to a ~~n existing~~ project after it achieves Design Certification ~~(see Section 26 New Areas Certification). and are included in submission for Verification.~~
People Affected (~~**AGR specificAGR specific**~~)	~~(Adapted from FSC where the term is 'affected stakeholder')~~ People affected are individuals or an entity that are, or are likely to be, subject to the project activities. Examples of people affected are local: (a) ~~(a)~~ Communities, indigenous peoples, neighbors, processors, and local businesses, AND (b) ~~(b)~~ Organizations authorized or known to act on behalf of people affected (e.g., NGOs, labour organizations). Source: Adapted from FSC where the term is 'affected stakeholder'
Planting Area ((~~**A/R specific**~~)**A/R specific)**	The planting area is the ~~part of the project~~eligible ~~-~~area of A/R projects where tree planting activities take place. The ~~eligible~~ planting area is the part of the ~~planting~~ project area which meets the applicability conditions of~~'~~ the ~~any~~ applied Gold Standard Methodology. Non-eligible ~~planting~~ areas ~~I The non- eligible planting area~~ are ~~areas~~those which do not meet the applicability conditions of~~'~~ the ~~any~~ applied Gold Standard Methodology.
Project Area	As per Gold Standard for the Global Goals Glossary, with further definition as follows: 1. ~~1. (Adapted from FSC, where the relevant term is 'Management Unit')~~ The project area is a spatial area or areas submitted for certification with clearly defined boundaries managed to a set of explicit ~~long term~~long-term management objectives. Source: Adapted from FSC, where the relevant term is 'Management Unit' The project area is the sum of all eligible and non-eligible areas as per Figure 1. **Figure 1**: Project area, planting area, and MUs



2. Boundaries of the project area shall be clearly distinguishable in the field.

3. Under the Gold Standard the project area is divided in Modelling Units (MU) for an efficient calculation of the amount of Certified SDG Impact Statement or Product (for example GS-VERs).

The 'project area' as the area of certification shall be limited to eligible areas~~planting areas~~, any riparian or other buffer zones located within eligible areas, and areas set aside for conservation in accordance with Gold Standard LUF requirements. ~~All A/R requirements referring to 'project area' shall pertain to these areas only.~~

~~All Requirements contained in this document and in Gold Standard for the Global Goals more broadly apply to the Project Area.~~

Project Types

A grouped project encompasses several single area projects but applies the 'Land Use & Forests Requirements' in the same way as a single area project. Figure 2, illustrates a grouped project and Figure 3, a single area project. Grouped projects are similar to a Programme of Activities (PoA) under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), allowing for an unlimited number of new project areas to be added without undergoing the complete Gold Standard certification process.

The project developer can add new ~~project~~ areas~~project areas~~ to a project (grouped projects) or expand an existing project area (single area projects) at any ~~stage~~ time after a project

reaches Registered status. ~~of the project certification cycle.of the project certification cycle.~~

Figure 2: Grouped Project

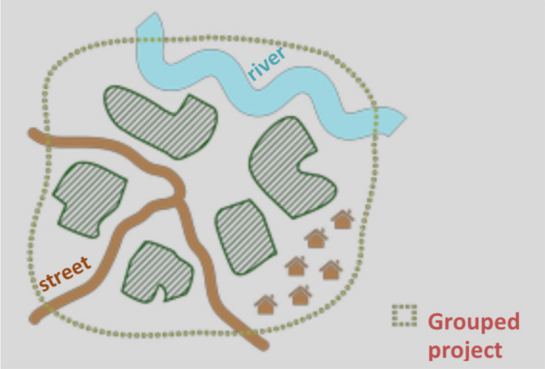
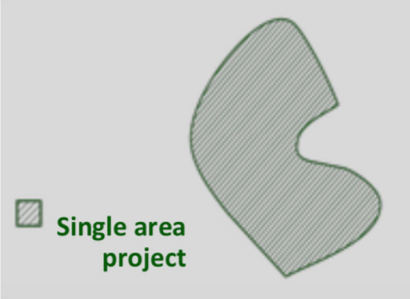


Figure 3: Single Area Project

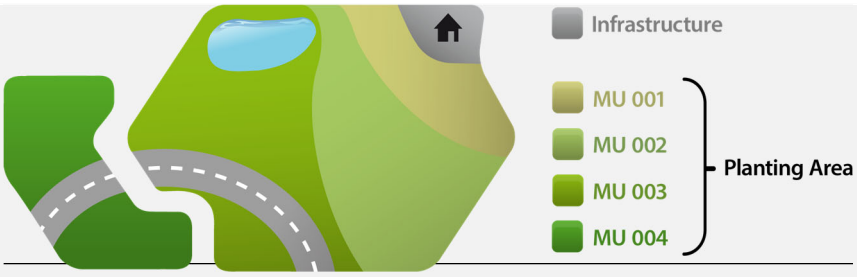


~~Boundaries of the project area and the planting area shall be clearly distinguishable in the field.~~

~~**A/R specific**~~

~~The project area can be made up of discrete parcels of land.~~

~~Planting Area: The planting area is the part of the project area where tree planting activities take place. It can be composed by multiple Modelling Units (MU) (Fig. 3).~~**~~Figure 3~~**~~: Project area, planting area, and MUs~~

	
Project Participant	A project participant is an individual or entity that is contributing to the generation of the SDG certified impacts.
Project Region	The project region is the spatial area where people and environment are influenced by the project activities. A project region can be expanded over time. All project areas are located within the project region. The 'project region' must be identified in the ~~Key Project Information template~~ Project Design Document (PDD) and may indicate areas of future project growth through new area certifications.
Project start	~~1. In addition to the requirements set in the latest applicable version of "Principles & RequirementsGS4GG Principles and Requirements" document, the following also apply:~~ i. **A/R specific**~~A/R specific~~: The project start date shall be the earliest date when~~on is considered the same as the tree planting start, that is tree planting start date i.e., the date when~~ the first trees are planted. ii. ~~3. **(AGR specific**~~**AGR specific**~~**AGR specific:** The project start shall be the earliest ~~t is the~~ date ~~when the project begins to~~ when implementation of the project activities that lead to the certification of Ecosystem Services and SDG Impacts starts. For example, for a project that ~~accrues soil organic carbon from changing an~~involves shift in ~~agricultural practices~~agricultural practice ~~will have as its~~the start date is the date ~~, the point in time~~ when the first project participant shifted to the improved agricultural practice.
SDG Impacts & Ecosystem Services	Ecosystem services are benefits people obtain from ecosystems. Examples include SDG Impacts such as: i. ~~(a)~~ Carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas reduction (SDG 13), AND ii. ~~(b)~~ Water supply and purification (SDG 6), AND iii. ~~(c)~~ Biodiversity conservation and enhancement (SDG 15)~~.~~

Smallholder~~s~~	Smallholders are farmers that have more than 50% of farm work done by family members, cooperative members or ~~neighbours~~neighbours.
Tree	(a) ~~1.~~ A tree is a perennial woody plant with one or several dominant sprouts that increase its circumference due to secondary growth. (b) ~~2.~~ For a practical use of this document the definition of a tree ~~goes beyond the scientific definition of a tree and~~ also includes shrubs, palms and bamboo plants. (c) ~~3.~~ In any project, trees shall reach a minimum height of 2 meters. 4. ~~**(A/R specific**~~**A/R specific**~~**A/R specific)**~~**:** For forest inventories of ~~these~~ different types of trees additional guidance is provided by the forest inventory guidelines of the BioCarbon Fund~~[1]~~[1].
Tree Planting (~~**A/R specific**~~**A/R specific**~~**A/R specific**~~)	Tree planting refers to the activity of putting trees in the ground for growth; it also includes sowing or assisted natural regeneration.
~~Verification & Performance Certification~~	~~Review that may take place either alongside or after Project Design Certification and must occur at least once during the 5-year Certification cycle.~~ ~~(**AGR specificAGR specificAGR specific**): The first Verification shall be completed either within two years of project implementation start date or Project Design Certificationn, whichever is later.~~ ~~**(A/R specificA/R specificA/R specific:)** Verification shall follow the Project Design Certification and shall occur at least every 5 years until the end of the crediting period.~~
Wetlands	~~(According to Cowardin et al. 1979)~~ Wetlands are lands that are transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water, and that have one or more of the following attributes: Source: Cowardin et al. 1979 - Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States

[1] Available at http://katoombagroup.org/~katoomba/documents/tools/Pearson%20et%20al%20-%20Sourcebook%20for%20LULUCF.pdf

	(a) ~~(a)~~ At least periodically, the land supports predominantly plants typically occurring in wetlands, AND (b) ~~(b)~~ The substrate is predominantly undrained and water saturated soil, AND (c) ~~(c)~~ The substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year.
Workers	Workers are all persons that are employed ~~by whom~~ by a written or verbal agreement. ~~-~~This includes permanent, migrant, part-time and seasonal employees of all ranks and categories, including field workers, artisans, labourers, administrators, supervisors, executives, contractor employees as well as self-employed contractors and sub-contractors. (~~**AGR specific**~~**AGR specific**~~**AGR specific**~~): Excepted from the definition above are: (a) ~~(a)~~ Workers employed by a verbal agreement on smallholder farms for less than 3 months per year, AND (b) ~~(b)~~ Smallholder farmers themselves, AND (c) ~~(c)~~ Family members of the smallholder farmer

1. SCOPE AND APPLICABLITY

1.1.1 This Requirements document, hereafter " the LUF Requirements", functions as part of a pathway to certification within Gold Standard for the Global Goals. The Requirements enable eligible forestry and agriculture activities to undergo Design and Performance Certification, including issuance of Certified SDG Impact Statements and Products.

1.1.2 This document presents the Requirements that Gold Standard Land Use & Forest Projects, including Afforestation/Reforestation (A/R) and/or Agriculture (AGR) shall apply in conjunction with the Principles & Requirements and those referenced or associated. Through conformity to these two documents and relevant Methodologies and Product Requirements such as GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Product Requirements, a Project may be issued with Gold Standard Verified Emissions Reductions (GS VERs) and other products. New methodologies and certification products involving Land Use & Forest projects may be submitted to Gold Standard for approval as per the Principles & Requirements.

1.1.3 In this document The 'Land Use & Forests Requirements' include sections or items within sections that apply only to A/R or to AGR projects. The sections/items marked as "**A/R specific**" apply only to A/R projects and "**AGR specific**" apply only to AGR projects. Sections/items without any specific labelling apply to both A/R and AGR projects.

~~3.0~~ General ~~1.2. In order to maintain the integrity of the standard, Gold Standard reserves the right to issue updates and changes, clarifications or corrections to its requirements. Typically, this will involve a notice period and guidance will be provided on how to apply the new rules and requirements. Likewise, the Gold Standard reserves the right to require additional information and evidence to be supplied by the Project Developer.~~

~~1.3. The Requirements are organized in line with the e Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles, as set out in the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles & Requirements. Each section explains the specific applicability and/or any further Requirements that apply specifically to A/R projects (**A/R specificA/R specificA/R specific**) and/or AGR Projects (**AGR specificAGR specificAGR specific**).~~

~~6.~~2. ~~2.0~~ ELIGIBILITY ~~PRINCIPLES &~~ CRITERIA

2.1.1 ~~2.2~~ In addition to the requirements stipulated in the Principles & Requirements~~the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles and Requirements, ARequirements~~, A/R and AGR projects shall comply with the following principles and criteria ~~to be considered eligible~~:

(a) Eligible project types are Afforestation & Reforestation Projects (A/R) and Agriculture Projects (AGR).

(b) ~~(a)~~ No Deforestation: The eligible area ~~planting area (**A/R specificA/R specificA/R specific**) or the project area (**AGR specificAGR specificAGR specific**)~~ shall not meet the definition of ~~a~~a forest ~~either~~either ~~10 years before project start date and or~~project start date ~~and/or also~~ at project start date. ~~and shall not have been *forest* for at least 10 years prior to the project start.~~

(c) ~~(b)~~ In the case when ~~the that~~ the ~~planting~~ eligible area ~~(**A/R specificA/R specificA/R specific**) or the project area (**AGR specificAGR specificAGR specific**)~~ has been deforested during the last 10 years prior to project start date, the eligibility of the project shall be determined by Gold Standard as part of the Preliminary Review. ~~-~~The P~~p~~roject D~~d~~eveloper shall provide evidence that the deforestation activity has not taken place with an ~~the~~ intention to implement ~~the~~ project activities ~~and~~ that generate Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact Statements and/or Products, such as GS-VERs.

(d) ~~(c)~~ Projects can be implemented in ~~all~~ any ~~countries~~country. If projects are located in a country or state that has an ~~-~~operational mandatory national or pan-national cap-and-trade scheme to reduce greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions, and hereby accounts for its own land-based activities under its national or subnational accounting, then projects seeking GS~~-~~VERs shall ~~follow the rules in~~conform to the ~~the Gold Standard for the Global Goals~~ GHG Emissions Reduction and Sequestration Product Requirements ~~. In particular,~~ Annex A ~~(~~Double Counting ~~Guidelines~~Requirements~~) is highlighted~~.

~~1.1 2.3.~~ ~~**(A/R specific**~~**A/R** projects~~**A/R specific)**~~:
2.1.2

(a) ~~Can~~Can ~~Must~~ include planting trees

(b) Can include single-species plantations

(c) Can apply all silvicultural systems. For example:

i. Conservation forests (no use of timber)
ii. Forests with selective harvesting
iii. Rotation forestry

~~i. (a) Conservation forests (no use of timber)~~

~~(b) Forests with selective harvesting~~

~~(c) Rotation forestry~~

(d) All projects can include agriculture (agroforestry) or pasture (silvopasture) activities.

2.1.3 **AGR projects** include eligible project activities that are covered by an approved Gold Standard SDG Impact Quantification methodology.

(a) ~~2.4~~ FSC Dual Certification

2.1.4 The Gold Standard and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) are in partnership to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests. Gold Standard and FSC therefore offers opportunities for dual certification ~~opportunity~~ in a parallel process. Projects seeking dual certification will need to comply with all the FSC requirements.

2.1.5 With respect to ~~potential~~ dual certification ~~The~~ Gold Standard recognises that FSC certification can be used to demonstrate conformity with the ~~Requirements of the~~ Safeguarding Principles Assessment ~~as well as~~and ~~the~~ Annual Reporting Requirements. ~~In~~ such cases, the Gold Standard Validation/Verification Body (GS-VVB) is not required to re-check the FSC documentation.

2.1.6 ~~2.4.3~~ In the event of a grievance being raised against a Gold Standard ~~Land use & Forests~~ Project then all Gold Standard Requirements shall apply for the purpose of assessing Non-conformity and any response/redress.

~~1.1.1~~ ~~2.4.4~~ The Project shall demonstrate conformity to ~~Gold Standard Safeguarding Principle~~Safeguarding Principle ~~4.2.1 - (~~ 8 - Water~~Water)~~. ~~FSC~~ Certification is not deemed as evidence that this Principle is met.

2.1.7

~~2.4.5~~ When applying a dual certification, the Project Developer shall provide the 'FSC Audit Report' alongside the Project Design Document (PDD) - the PDD ~~(which~~ may reference the FSC Audit Report for relevant ~~sections but~~sections but is not required to duplicate.~~)~~ Project Developers shall also provide ~~and~~ the 'FSC Annual Surveillance Report' instead of the template for the 'Annual Report'. For dual certification, FSC certification is required to be valid throughout the crediting period.

2.1.8

~~2.5 (**AGR specificAGRAGR specif** projects includes eligible **ic**): Eligible projects are those whose project activities that are covered by an approved approved Gold Standard SDG for the Global Goals "Agriculture Methodology"Impact Quantification methodology.~~

(b) ~~2.6~~ Secured Titles

~~**2.6.1 (A/R specificA/R specific:A/R specific) :**~~

~~1.2~~ For all project participants, the following information and evidence shall be provided:

2.1.9

(a) Name and contact details

~~(a) s~~

~~(c)~~ Each entity's legal registration number and documentation by the governing jurisdiction that ~~–~~proves that the entity is in good standing.

~~(d)~~ AND

(b)

~~( ) AND~~ For the duration of the crediting period the Project Developer shall:

(c)

~~( )~~ where ~~sought as~~ a Gold Standard Certified Statement or Product (e.g. GS-VERs) is sought, Project Developers must own the CO2 user rights[2] ~~[17]~~ or carbon sequestration rights for the project area, AND

i.

ii. hold an uncontested legal land title for the Project Area, AND

iii. own the rights for timber and non-timber forest products for the project area, AND

iv. hold all necessary permits to implement the project (planting permits, infrastructure permits, harvesting permits, etc.), AND

~~o~~v. participate in the financing of the project.

2.1.10 ~~2.6.2~~ If the Project Developer does not meet all of the above requirements, the persons or legal entities that do meet those respective requirements shall endorse the proposed ~~expected~~ project ~~being undertaken by the Project Developer~~ through an agreement that aligns with the duration of the crediting period.

~~1.2.1~~ ~~2.6.3~~ The Project Developer shall inform ~~define~~ the authorities of all project participants with respect of

2.1.11

[2] CO_2 user rights are rights that grant the titleholder any benefit that could be generated from the certification of the carbon sequestration or greenhouse gas reduction by the project.

For land use projects, the holder of the CO_2 user rights is usually the owner of the land, where the project activity takes place – except when such rights have been expressly transmitted to another person or entity by the land owner, or when an authority act / decision / order / regulation assigns such rights to a different person than the land owner.

(a) instructing t~~T~~he Gold Standard ~~secretariat~~, AND

~~(a)~~ requesting or communicating the addition or edits of project participants, AND

(b)

(c) receiving all information from t~~T~~he Gold Standard Secretariat on matters related to the project.

~~1.2.2 of:~~

~~(a) instructing The Gold Standard secretariat, AND~~

~~(b) requesting or communicating the addition or edits of project participants, AND~~

~~(c) receiving all information from The Gold Standard Secretariat on matters related to the project.~~

~~2.6.4 **(AGR specific**~~**AGR specific**~~**AGR specific)**~~:

2.1.12 Depending on the structure of the project, the Project Developer shall ~~fulfil~~ follow either~~ing~~ requirement 1 or 2.~~2:~~

Requirement 1: The Project Developer acts on behalf of project participants.

2.1.13 For such ~~In this~~ cases, each project participant shall sign an *agreement* with the Project Developer, which confirms that:

(a) ~~(a)~~ The project participant holds the CO_2 user rights[3] ~~[18]~~ that are associated with the project activities and has passed ~~–~~these on to the Project Developer, AND

(b) The project participant holds all necessary rights to implement the project activities (e.g., rights to harvest), ~~–~~AND

~~(a) D~~

[3] CO_2 user rights are rights that grant the titleholder any benefit that could be generated from the certification of the carbon sequestration or greenhouse gas reduction by the project.

For land use projects, the holder of the CO_2 user rights is usually the owner of the land, where the project activity takes place – except when such rights have been expressly transmitted to another person or entity by the land owner, or when an authority act / decision / order / regulation assigns such rights to a different person than the land owner.

(c) The legal land title or similar entitlement[4] ~~[19]~~ for the land on which the project activities are implemented is uncontested.

These agreements shall include the:

(a) Contact details of the project participants, AND

(b) The legal registration number and documentation by the governing jurisdiction that proves that the entity is in good standing (in case of an organis~~z~~ation), AND

(c) Contact details of the land owner (if differing), AND

(d) Length of lease contract (if applicable), AND

(e) The liabilities and benefits for the person or entity to implement the project activities (e.g., switch to another crop and get access to the seeds).

~~(e) Contact details of the project participants, AND~~

~~(a)~~ ~~(f) The legal registration number and documentation by the governing jurisdiction that proves that the entity is in good standing (in case of an organization), AND~~

~~i.~~ ~~(g) Contact details of the land owner (if differing), AND~~

~~ii.~~ ~~(h) Length of lease contract (if applicable), AND~~

~~(i) The liabilities and benefits for the person or entity to implement the project activities (e.g., switch to another crop and get access to the seeds).~~

2.1.14 Requirement 2: The Project Developer acts on its own. In such cases, t~~T~~he Project Developer shall provide evidence that:

(a) ~~(a)~~ It holds the CO_2 user rights[5] ~~[20]~~ and the rights for any other Certified SDG Impact Statement or Product ~~as applicable~~ that are associated with the project activities, AND

[4] Similar Entitlement: It is considered that similar entitlement exists, when 1) A person or entity has been using the land of the project as its owner, for the period of time that the applicable law requires for persons or entity to acquire property by its use, AND 2) Neighbours or neighbouring community agrees that the land has been used for such time by the person or entity claiming it.

[5] CO_2 user rights are rights that grant the titleholder any benefit that could be generated from the certification of the carbon sequestration or greenhouse gas reduction by the project.

For land use projects, the holder of the CO_2 user rights is usually the owner of the land, where the project activity takes place – except when such rights have been expressly transmitted to another person or entity by the land owner, or when an authority act / decision / order / regulation assigns such rights to a different person than the land owner.

~~D~~

(b) It holds all necessary rights to implement the project activities (e.g., rights to harvest), AND

~~(a) AND~~

(c) ~~(c)~~ The legal land title or similar entitlement~~[21]~~ for the land on which the project activities are implemented is uncontested.

~~1.3~~ (c) ~~2.7~~ New Area Certification

~~1.3.1~~2.1.15 New Areas can be added or removed to an existing project area anytime after a project reaches Registered status (after successfully completing Design Certification)~~it has achieved Design Certification~~ by paying the applicable review fee.

~~1.3.2~~ A project developer shall consult with ~~SustainCert~~Gold Standard before removing a certified area and/or reducing the size of a certified area, in order to assess the materiality of the changes. ~~significance of the loss in emission reductionsCO2 certificatesemission reductions, if any. Removal of certified areas must be conducted according to the applicability requirements of the relevant SDG impacts quantification methodology..~~

~~1.3.3~~2.1.16

2.1.17 ~~2.7.43~~ To add new areas to a project ~~its exiting project. For this~~ the following requirements are set:

(a) The inclusion of new areas ~~inclusion~~ shall follow the ~~process described for Validation and~~ Project Design Certification process as per ~~under~~ Principles and Requirements.

(b) The Project Developer should assess if the n~~N~~ew a~~A~~reas present material differences from the Design Certified project ~~areas alreadythe Preliminary Review~~ and update the Safeguarding Principles & Requirements accordingly. Materiality must be assessed according to Principles and Requirements.

(c) For new areas proposed for inclusion, t~~T~~he crediting period end date ~~– for new areas –~~ will be the same as for the previously ~~registered~~Design Certified project activity.

(d) The registered Monitoring & Reporting Plan template shall be updated with the information for new areas ~~shall be updated~~ as needed.

(e) A site visit and an opinion by a VVB is required to confirm the eligibility of the proposed ~~at~~ activities ~~are implemented~~ in the new areas.

(f) New Areas inclusion can be certified before or during a ~~the~~ performance certification but it is always required to have the opinion of a VVB based on a site visit to the new area/s being certified ~~with the verification requestwith the verification request~~. ~~In particular cases, and at the discretion of Gold Standard, a VVB can be replaced by an Objective Observer in the case of smallholder and/or microscale projects.~~

~~(a) The new areas shall meet ALL applicable requirements of the Gold Standard for the Global Goals as well as the Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements~~

~~(a)~~ ~~(b) The new areas shall follow the process described for Validation and Project Design Certification under the Gold Standard for the Gold Standard Principles and Requirements. A site visit and an opinion by a VVB is required to confirm that activities are implemented in the new areas. In particular cases, and at the discretion of SustainCert, a VVB can be replaced by an Objective Observer in the case of smallholder and/or microscale projects.~~

~~(c) The crediting period of new areas cannot go beyond the crediting period of the existing project, as by the Design Certification.~~

~~(d) The Project Developer shall update, if necessary, the existing Monitoring & Reporting Plan template with the information from the new areas added. The new information shall be clearly distinguishable, e.g., by the use of a different color.~~

2.1.18 ~~2.7.54~~ New a~~A~~reas added to retroactive projects must follow the requirements for retroactive issuance as per~~in~~ the ~~Gold Standard~~ Principles and Requirements, ~~Gold Standard~~ GHG Emissions Reductions & Sequestration Product Requirements, and the ~~Gold StandardLand Use & Forestss Activity~~ Requirements stated in this document.

~~Adding an area which was already part of the original validated project area doesn't not require paying a review fee. Adding areas that were never validated do require paying a review fee.~~

3. ELIGIBILITY PRINCIPLES & REQUIREMENTS

3.1.1 This section describes the additional requirements and/or deviations from the Principles & Requirements. The LUF project seeking Gold Standard certification shall meet these additional requirements.

3.1.2 The Certification cycle for LUF Projects is as detailed in Principles & Requirements. Projects successfully completing Performance Certification shall be issued with Certified Impact Statement and/ or Product as per the Gold Standard Claims Guidelines.

~~7.~~ ~~3.0~~ PRINCIPLE 1 – CONTRIBUTION TO CLIMATE SECURITY & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

3.1.3 ~~3.1.~~ ~~**(AGR specific**~~**AGR specific**~~**AGR specific)**~~: Increasing resilience to be able to deal with impacts of climate change is crucial for achieving

income stability, food security and long-term development. Hence, preserving and increasing adaptive capacity for project participants must be an integral element of every project. Specifically:

(a) ~~(a)~~ The Project Developer shall identify the current and predicted variability in climate/weather for the project region.
~~(a)~~ .

~~(c)~~ ~~(b)~~ Based on the current and predicted variability in climate/weather, the Project Developer shall analys~~z~~e the possible effects on the project within the crediting period.

(b)

(c) ~~(c)~~ The Project Developer shall implement adaptation activities appropriate to the context and need of the respective project.
Adaptation activities may include:

- i. Practices that increase the resilience of farming systems, OR
- ii. Measures to improve the efficiency of water use, OR
- iii. Crops (crop breeds) with improved characteristics, OR
- iv. Crop rotation schemes, OR
- v. Sharing of existing farmers' knowledge as well as knowledge on new agriculture practices, OR
- vi. Diversification of livelihoods, e.g., through increased agricultural productivity, increased variety of cultivated crops, identification of other income streams ~~than form agriculture~~, OR
- vii. Measures to improve soil fertility.

~~8. 4.0~~ PRINCIPLE 2 – SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES & REQUIREMENTS

~~1.3 4.1 In addition to the Gold Standard Safeguarding Principles & Requirements t~~The Project Developer shall conduct the S~~s~~afeguarding Principles assessment ~~follow the process as set out in~~following the~~Safeguarding Principles & Requirements~~ and Risks & Capacities Guideline assessed for the Project Area, taking into account likely issues in the context of the Project Region ~~for Land Use & Forest projects~~. The assessment outcome~~s for each~~ shall be submitted for Preliminary Review and updated as required for ~~Validation and Project~~ Design Certification ~~and at each Verification~~ and Performance Certification.

~~1.3.6~~3.1.4

~~1.3 4.2 The Safeguarding Principles & Requirements as well as the process as set out in the Risks & Capacities Guideline for 'Land Use & Forest' projects shall be assessed for the Project Area, taking into account any issues in the Project Region. In the case of New Areas added after achieving achieved Design Certification, the Project Developer should assess if the New Areas that present material differences from the Preliminary Review and update the Safeguarding Principles & Requirements accordingly.~~

~~A~~

3.1.5 ~~4.3 A~~ minimum of 10% of the total Project Area shall be identified and ~~managed~~ used to protect or enhance the biological diversity[6][~~2~~]. ~~For this, the~~ following High Conservation Value (HCV)[7][~~3~~] approach ~~should be followed~~. The designated protected ~~is~~ area ~~has to~~shall be located within the Project Area and managed by the Project Developer. The protected area can ~~also~~ include ~~the areas of~~ buffer zone areas~~s~~ for water bodies. To protect or enhance biological diversity, the following shall be identified and managed.

- (a) Existing patches of native tree species[8]~~[4]~~, AND
- (b) Single solitary stems of native tree species[9]~~[5]~~, AND
- (c) Habitats of rare, threatened and endangered species~~[6]~~[10], AND
- (d) Areas relevant for habitat connectivity

3.1.6 The P~~p~~roject D~~d~~eveloper shall ~~mainatain~~maintain a buffer zone of 15 meters ~~of Buffer Zones~~ for w~~W~~ater b~~B~~odies ~~4.4 Buffer Zones for Water Bodies: o~~O~~n both sides of any permanent or temporary *water*

---

[6] The variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. Source: FSC

[7] Refer to High Conservation Value Resource Network for definition of High Conservation Value Area. Available at https://hcvnetwork.org/

[8] Native tree species (Source: FSC) Species, subspecies, or lower taxon, occurring within its natural range (past or present) and dispersal potential that is, within the range it occupies naturally or could occupy without direct or indirect introduction or care by humans.

[9] Native tree species (Source: FSC) Species, subspecies, or lower taxon, occurring within its natural range (past or present) and dispersal potential that is, within the range it occupies naturally or could occupy without direct or indirect introduction or care by humans.

[10] All endangered and critically endangered species as defined by the IUCN Red List – www.IUCNredlist.org

bodies such as ~~(~~lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, etc. I~~) buffer zones of 15 meters shall be implemented. I~~rrigation channels are excluded from this requirement. In these buffer zones:

- (a) All existing native trees~~[7]~~ shall be kept, AND
- (b) No ~~fertiliser~~fertilizer and pesticides shall be used, AND
- (c) No logging activities shall take place, AND
- (d) No heavy machinery shall be used, AND
- (e) No cropping is allowed, AND
- In case trees are being planted, these need to~~shall~~ be native tree species~~[8]~~.

(f)

~~4.5. **(AGR specificAGR specific (applicable to Smallholder projects)** For the case of The AgricultureAGR projects or project areas managed by smallholders the project are notre required to demonstrate compliance with following Safeguarding Principles & Requirements **do not** need to be fulfilled (Table 3):**AGR specificAGR specific, (not** applicable **to Smallholder projects)** For the case of Agriculture projects or project areas managed by smallholders the project are nore required demonstrate compliance with following Safeguarding Principles & Requirements **do not** need to be fulfilled (Table 3):~~

~~Table 3: Safeguarding Principles & Requirements that do not apply to smallholder projects~~

~~Safeguarding Principles & Requirements~~	**~~Specific sections that do not apply to smallholders' projects~~**
~~4.3.10 High Conservation Value Areas and Critical Habitats~~	~~Point 4, item b~~
	~~Point 2~~
~~4.3.6 Pesticides & Fertilisers~~	~~All~~

~~2.0~~ PRINCIPLE 3 – STAKEHOLDER INCLUSIVITY~~STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT~~

3.1.7 ~~5.1~~ The Stakeholder Consultation shall~~ould~~ be conducted prior to the project start date ~~(for A/R projects this is the planting start date and for Agriculture projects this is the date when project activities started)~~. The P~~p~~roject D~~d~~eveloper shall refer to Stakeholder ~~Engagement and~~ Consultation Engagement Requirements ~~Requirements and Guidelines~~ for further details.

~~If the Stakeholder Consultation is conducted after the project start date, the Project Developer shall provide further explanation of how comments received during the Stakeholder Consultation are taken into account in the project.~~

~~5.2 The Stakeholder Consultation shall be conducted prior to the completion of Preliminary Review (meaning the report and any feedback received shall be documented and presented).~~

~~3.0~~ PRINCIPLE 4 – DEMONSTRATION OF REAL OUTCOMES

~~3.1~~ ~~6.1~~ All Projects shall undergo ~~a detailed~~ Preliminary Review, Project Design Certification and Performance certification ~~-~~as per the ~~Gold Standard~~ Principles & Requirements. ~~The time period for Preliminary Review, Project Design Review and Performance Review are adjusted to 6, 8 and 3 weeks, respectivelyy`.~~

3.1.8

~~3.3~~ ~~**6.2 The crediting period is the time span for in which SDG Impacts can be accounted for and are subject to monitoring:**~~

~~**iii. 6.2.1 (A/R specific**~~**A/R specific**~~**A/R specific):**~~

~~**:**~~

3.1.9 ~~(a)~~ The crediting period shall be a minimum of 30 years and maximum 50 years. The Project Developer shall select the crediting period based on the characteristics of the project.

3.1.10 **AGR specific:** The crediting period shall be a fixed 10-year period unless otherwise stated in ~~thean~~applicable Impact Quantification Methodology.

~~•~~ ~~.~~

3.1.11 ~~(b)~~ The crediting period starts either with ~~with the planting start date~~ the Project Start Date or three years prior to the date of Project Design Certification, whichever occurs later.

3.1.12 Verification & Issuance review (Performance Certification): The performance review may take place either alongside or after Project Design Certification and must occur at least once during the 5-year Certification cycle.

(a) **AGR specific:** The first Verification shall be completed either within two years of project start date or Project Design Certification, whichever is later.

~~3.1.3~~(b) **A/R specific**: Verification shall be completed at least every 5 years until the end of the crediting period.

~~A~~~~and may be up to 3 years prior to the date the project reaches the 'Design Certification'Registration' status for the purpose of issuing Certified SDG Impacts or Products such as GS VERs.~~

~~**6.2.2 (AGR specificAGR specificAGR specific)**~~

~~(a) The crediting period shall be determined by the applicable Gold Standard for the Gold StandardGold Standard approved SDG Impact Quantification Methodology.~~

~~(b) The crediting period may be up to 3 years prior to the date the project reaches the 'Design Certification' status for the purpose of issuing Certified SDG Impacts or Products such as GS VERs.~~

~~A~~According to the Principles & Requirements, all projects shall seek ~~6.3 Gold Standard for the Global Goals requires Certification~~Crediting Period Renewal every 5th year~~s~~. At the time of project renewal, ~~The following are exceptions are applicable to for~~ A/R and AGR project~~s~~ shall ~~s:~~

(c) ~~A/R and AGR projects are not required to~~ update the baseline ~~unless otherwise stated in applied~~following the applied Impact Quantification Methodology requirements.

~~Ongoing Financial Need is not required to be proven at unless otherwise stated in a specificapplicable Product Requirement.~~

~~In accordance with the above the process for Certification Renewal follows the same process as Performance Certification.In accordance with the above the process for Certification Renewal follows the same process as Performance Certification.~~

~~3.7~~

~~6.3.1 The project baseline is not required to be updated unless otherwise stated in any applicable Gold Standard SDG Impact Quantification Methodology.~~

~~6.3.2 Ongoing Financial Need **is not required** to be proven at Certification Renewal unless otherwise stated in a specific Product Requirement.~~

~~6.4 In accordance with the above the process for Certification Renewal follows the same process as Performance Certification.~~

~~6.5 The Inputs & Grievance Mechanism (Annex B) shall apply. An updated Inputs & Grievances table shall be included in the Annual Reports and in Verification report.~~

~~6.6 New Areas Certification~~

~~6.1.1 At any time after the Design Certification and submission for Verification, the Project Developer can add or remove new areas to its exiting project.~~

~~6.1.2 The Project Developer should assess the New Areas that present material differences from the Preliminary Review and update the Gold Standard Safeguarding Principles & Requirements assessment accordingly.~~

~~For the process of adding New Areas this the following requirements are set:~~

~~(a) The new areas shall meet ALL applicable requirements of the Gold Standard Land Use & Forests Requirements~~

~~The new areas shall follow the process described for Validation and Project Design Certification under the Gold Standard for the Gold Standard Principles and Requirements~~

~~according to the processes outlined for New Area Certification~~

~~(b) The crediting period of new areas cannot go beyond the crediting period of the existing project, as by the Design Certification~~

~~.~~

~~(c) The Project Developer shall update, if necessary, the existing Monitoring & Reporting Plan template with the information from the new areas added. The new information shall be clearly distinguishable, e.g., by the use of a different color.~~

~~New Areas added to retroactive projects must follow the requirements for retroactive issuance in the Gold Standard Principles and Requirements, Gold Standard GHG Emissions~~

~~Reductions & Sequestration Product Requirements, and the Gold Standard Use & Forests Activity Requirements~~

~~4.0~~ PRINCIPLE 5 – FINANCIAL ADDITIONALITY & ONGOING FINANCIAL NEED~~ADDITIONALITY ASSESSMENT~~

3.1.13 ~~7.1~~ The project shall demonstrate additionality ~~the se Requirements shall be implementeind in line with~~as per the ~~Gold Standard~~ Principles & Requirements, ~~for~~ or GHG Emissions Reduction and Sequestration Product Requirements, as applicable~~projects seeking Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact Statements or Products~~.

~~The requirements in this section ensure that projects can demonstrate that they would not have been implemented without the benefits of Gold Standard Certification.~~

3.1.14 The following requirements are applicable for the demonstration of prior consideration of revenues from Gold Standard certification for standalone p~~P~~rojects:

(a) Regular cycle projects are exempt from any kind of prior consideration of carbon revenue checks.

(b) Retroactive cycle projects shall submit the required documents to Gold Standard ~~(time of first submission)~~ within five years of its start date (time of first submission). Project submitted at a date later than five year from the project start date will not be eligible for Gold Standard certification.

~~Templates for the submission of Additionality for AGR and A/R Projects are provided and should be submitted along with PDD for Preliminary Review.Templates for the submission of Additionality for AGR and A/R Projects are provided and should be submitted along with PDD for Preliminary Review.~~

~~7.2 Retroactive Submission:~~
~~The Land-use & Forest Activities as defined under Gold Standard for the Global Goals – Land-use & Forests Activity Requirements>> can be submitted for preliminary review within five years of the project start date. This rule change is applicable with effect from the date of publication.~~

3.1.15 ~~If the submission to the Preliminary Review was after the project start~~For r~~R~~etroactive cycle projects, ~~: If the submission to the Preliminary Review was after the project start,~~ the Project Developer shall demonstrate that:

(a) the revenues from Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact Statements or Products, such as GSVERs, were seriously considered in the decision to implement the project, AND

(b) there was continuous interest in Certified Impact Statements or Products for the project in parallel with its implementation.

Evidence to support the prior consideration can include contracts, draft versions of project information, correspondence with financial institutions or other stakeholders, minutes and notes of meetings, agreements or negotiations with auditors, publications in newspapers.

~~(a) the revenues from Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact Statements or Products, such as GS VERs, were seriously considered in the decision to implement the project, AND~~

~~(b) there was continuous interest in Certified SDG Impact Statementss or Products for the project in parallel with its implementation.~~

~~Evidence to support the prior consideration is can include: contracts, draft versions of project information, correspondence with financial institutions or other stakeholders, minutes and notes of meetings, agreements or negotiations with auditors, publications in newspapers.~~

The ~~A/R~~ project shall apply one of the following options ~~7.3~~ to ~~Tools for~~ demonstrat~~ing~~e project additionality ~~(A/R specificA/R specific)~~:

3.1.16

~~7.3.1~~ Option 1 - ~~A/R~~ CDM Tools

(a) ~~:~~

- **A/R project:** S~~s~~hall apply
- t~~T~~he ~~The project shall meet the additionality requirements of the~~ latest version of the A/R CDM 'Combined tool to identify the baseline scenario and demonstrate additionality in A/R CDM project activities'.~~.~~

i. The CDM specific terms of the A/R CDM additionality tool (tCERs, A/R CDM project, etc.) shall be interpreted ~~with~~in ~~The~~ the context of Gold Standard ~~context~~. The '*Guideline on the assessment of investment analysis*' and the '*Guidelines for objective demonstration and assessment of barriers*' can be used.

ii. **AGR project:** ~~S~~shall apply the latest version of *CDM* 'Guidelines for the establishment of sector specific standardized baselines', or *'Combined tool to identify the baseline scenario and demonstrate additionality'.* The '*Guideline on the assessment of investment analysis*' and the '*Guidelines for objective demonstration and assessment of barriers*' can be used.

(b) ~~7.3.2~~ Option 2 – Positive List

~~A/R Project:~~

i. ~~In order to apply Option 2, t~~The project ~~S~~shall meet ~~bellow~~ requirements ~~s ((all of the requirements (~~a)~~), (b) and (~~, (b) and ~~to~~ (c)~~)~~ in the list below ~~in the list below~~ and at least one of the requirements from ~~from at least one of the requirements from~~ (d) ~~to or~~to (g) to apply option 2~~) in order to be considered as additional under Option 2~~.

~~(a)~~ ~~(a)~~ The project is located in a ~~Less~~Least ~~ss~~ Developed Country (LDCs) or in a region with a recent UNDP Human Development Indicator[11] ~~[9]~~ below 0.8. AND

(a)

(b) The project shall have no intention of creating a forest for the commercial use of the timber or non-timber forest products. AND

~~(b)~~ ~~(b)~~ The project shall have no intention of creating a forest for the commercial use of the timber or non-timber forest products.AND

(c) ~~(c)~~ The project activities shall not be mandatory by any law or regulation, OR if it is mandatory, it shall demonstrate that these laws or regulations are systematically not enforced. AND

~~(d)~~

~~(f)~~ ~~(d)~~ The project ~~area~~ is located in a region with a mean annual precipitation of less than 600 mm. OR

(d)

~~(h)~~ ~~(e)~~ The soil pH of the planting area is less than 4.0. OR

(e)

[11] UNDP Human Development Indicator: http://hdr.undp.org/en/data/profiles/

(f) ~~(f)~~ The planting area is planted with minimum 5 different native tree species in mixed stands, covering at a minimum 50% of the planting area. OR

~~-~~The project area is located in a country or region with a recent UNDP Human Development Indicator12 ~~[10]~~below 0.5, OR i~~I~~n a Small Island Developing State (SIDS)~~[11]~~13

~~(g) The project area is located in a country or region with a recent UNDP Human Development Indicator[10]below 0.5, OR In a Small Island Developing State (SIDS)[11]~~

~~7.4 **AGR project shall use one of** Tools forfollowing options to demonstrating demonstrate project additionality **(AGR specificAGR specific):**~~

~~7.4.1 Option 1 – CDM Tools~~

~~The project shall meet the demonstrate the additionality requirements of either:*The latest version of the CDM '*~~*Combined tool to identify the baseline scenario and demonstrate additionality'*~~

- ~~Thcompliance using the e latest version of the CDM ', or~~

~~*The latest version of the CDM '*~~*Combined tool to identify the baseline scenario and demonstrate additionality'*~~

~~T~~

- ~~*The latest version of the CDM '*~~*Combined tool to identify the baseline scenario and demonstrate additionality'*~~

~~The '*Guideline on the assessment of investment analysis*' and the ' can be used as assistance.~~

~~7.4.2 Option 2 – Activity Penetration~~

(g)
~~The '*Number of* farmers adopting the project activity' represents the farmers participating in the project.This option shall only be applied by projects applying the Gold Standard for the Global Goals GHG Emissions Reductions & Sequestration Product~~

[12] UNDP Human Development Indicator: http://hdr.undp.org/en/data/profiles/

[13] SIDS: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sids/list

~~Requirements and that result in GSVERs of less than *60,000 tCO$_2$eq* annually. The project is deemed additional when the project activity is adopted by less than 5% of farmers in the Reference Area[12]:~~

~~•~~

The '*Number of* farmers adopting the project activity' represents the farmers participating in the project~~.~~

~~7.4.3 Option 23 – Positive List~~

ii. **~~In order to apply Option 2, the~~ AGR project:** S~~s~~hall meet ~~bellow~~ requirements ~~(~~(a) and ~~to~~ (b) in the list below and at least one of the requirements from (c) to~~or~~ (f)~~)~~. ~~The project shall meet requirements (a) and (b) in the list below and at least one of the requirements (c) – (f) in order to be considered as additional:~~

(a) ~~(a)~~ The project area is located in a country or in a region with the ~~a recent~~ latest UNDP Human Development Indicator[14] ~~[13]~~below or equal to 0.7. AND

(b) ~~(b)~~ The project activities shall not be mandatory by any law or regulation, OR if they are mandatory, the Project Developer shall demonstrate that these laws or regulations are systematically not enforced. AND

(c) ~~(c)~~ The mean annual precipitation in the project area is less than 600 mm. OR

(d) ~~(d)~~ In the project area a minimum of 5 native crop species are being cultivated in a locally adapted agroforestry system[15]~~[14]~~. OR

(e) ~~(e)~~ The project is a smallholder project and results in Gold Standard VERs of less than 60,000 tCO_{2eq} ~~annually~~per annum. OR

[14] UNDP Human Development Indicator: http://hdr.undp.org/en/data/profiles/

[15] A locally adapted agroforestry system refers to land-use systems and practices where trees are deliberately integrated with crops and/or livestock on the same land management unit adapted to the local geophysical and social conditions.

(f) ~~(f)~~ The project area is located ~~:~~ i~~I~~n a country or region with a recent UNDP Human Development Indicator ~~[15]~~below 0.5, OR In a Small Island Developing State (SIDS). ~~OR~~

(c) Option 3~~2~~ – Activity Penetration (**AGR Project Specific)**

~~**(AGR Pproject Specific):** An~~

i. AGR project can only use this option~~,~~ if the project is applying GHG Emissions Reductions & Sequestration Product Requirements and annual GHGs reductions are ~~is~~ less than *60,000 tCO_2eq*. The project is deemed additional when the project activity is adopted by less than 5% of farmers in the Reference Area[16]~~[12]~~. The~~, where~~ 'Number of farmers adopting the project activity' represents the farmers participating in the project.

~~A project can only use this option, if the project is applying GHG Emissions Reductions & Sequestration Product Requirements and annual GHGs reduction is less than *60,000 tCO_2eq*.~~

~~5.0~~ RETROACTIVE ISSUANCE

~~8.1 A project may issue Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact Statements or Products, such as GS-VERs only within its crediting period. The crediting period cannot start before the project start, but may start after.~~

3.1.17 ~~8.2 If a project has its Preliminary Review later than the project start, A retroactive~~ project may request retroactive i~~I~~ssuance of Certified ~~SDG~~ Impact Statements and / or Products. The maximum period for retroactive issuance is three years - which starts either with the Project Start Date or three years prior to the date of Project Design Certification, whichever occurs later.

~~5.1 either from – depending on which date comes later for maximum upto of up to 3 years or project start, whichever is later is possible. In the case that new areas are added to a project (New Area Certification), its crediting period may not be moved earlier to the date of the existing crediting period.~~

~~8.3 These rules should apply in combination with the requirements set in the latest version of and .These rules should apply in combination with the requirements set in the latest version of Gold Standard Principles & Requirements and Gold Standard GHG Emissions Reductions & Sequestration Product Requirements.~~

[16] Reference Area: an area with similar climatic and social conditions as defined by the Köppen-classification http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Köppen_climate_classification

~~6.0~~4. ~~9.0 TECHNICALOTHER~~TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

~~9.1~~ In addition to the Principles and Requirements, the Project Developer shall follow the ~~following~~ process outlined below: ~~based on the type of certification that is being pursued~~ ~~.In addition to the~~ Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles & Requirements, ~~tThe Project Developer shall undertake the following process based on the type of certification that is being pursued.~~

4.1.1.

4.1.2. All projects ~~(A/R and/or AGR, both)~~ shall provide the following information in the Key Project Information:

~~**Preliminary review**~~

~~9.2 Key project information~~

~~For all projects involving A/R and/or Agriculture activities the following information shall be included in the Key Project Information:~~

(a) General description and overview of p~~P~~roject activities

- ~~(a)~~ Organis~~z~~ations that are involved in the project (project participants)
- ~~(a)~~ Communities stakeholders involved in the project, as applicable
- ~~(a) Location of the project area and the planting area (A/R specificA/R specific), as applicable~~
- ~~(a) Size of the project area and the planting area (A/R specificA/R specific), as applicable~~
- ~~(a)~~ Risk of the project area to change (during the crediting period)
- ~~(a)~~ Risk of the project activities to change (during the crediting period)
- ~~(a)~~ Timeframe for the project activities
- ~~(a)~~ Number of predicted CO2-certificates or other Certified SDG Impacts sought
- ~~(a)~~ Land-use history and current situation of the project area
- ~~(a)~~ Socio-economic history and current situation
- Main social impacts (risks and benefits)

- Main environmental impacts (risks and benefits)
~~Main environmental impacts (risks and benefits)~~
- Financial structure
-

6.1 **A/R ~~specific~~ projects:** ~~Sshall also provide following information:~~

~~i.~~ Location of the project area and the planting area, as applicable

- **A/R projects:**
~~(h)~~ Size of the project area and the eligible ~~area~~ planting area~~-~~, as applicable
- **A/R projects:** Number of Modeling Units and size of each one
- ~~(i)~~ **A/R projects:** ~~(A/R specificA/R specific):~~ Forest management applied (past and future)
-
- **A/R projects:**
~~•~~ ~~(A/R specificA/R):~~ Forest characteristics (including main tree species planted)
-

~~(AGR specific~~AGR projects: S~~s~~hall also ~~lso~~ provide ~~following information~~ information on ~~:AGR specific)~~

~~(m)~~• ~~:~~ d~~D~~istribution of revenues (between the Project Developer and the smallholders), if applicable

~~The Project Developer shall define the project representatives who may have sole or joint authority on:~~

~~(a) Instructing and communicating with the Gold Standard secretariat, AND~~

~~(b) Receiving all information from the Gold Standard secretariat on matters related to the project.~~

4.1.3. ~~(c)~~ All projects ~~(A/R and/or AGR, both) For all projects involving A/R and Agriculture activities the following information~~ shall ~~be~~ submit ~~ted as~~ GIS vector layers[16] (Table 4). The GIS vector layers shall be labelled comprehensively:

Table 1~~4~~: Information ~~that must be submitted~~ as a GIS vector layer

ITEMS	A/R projects	AGR projects	Certification Stage
Project Region	Yes	Yes	Preliminary Review and Project Design certification
Project Area	Yes	Yes	
Eligible Areas ~~Planting Areas~~	Yes	Yes	
Individual Modelling Units	Yes	Yes	
Infrastructure (road, houses, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Project Design certification
Water B~~b~~odies	Yes	Yes	
Protected Areas	Yes	Yes	
Biodiversity Areas	Yes	Yes	
Where Affected People are situated	Yes	Yes	
Sites with special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance	Yes	Yes	
Sites with special significance for *indigenous people and local communities* – resulting from the Local Stakeholder Consultation (LSC)	Yes	Yes	
Where *indigenous people and local communities* are situated	Yes	Yes	
Where *indigenous people and local communities* have legal rights, customary rights or sites with special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance.	Yes	Yes	

4.1.4. ~~9.3 (**AGR specific**~~**AGR specific** requirements for ~~s~~Smallholder projects shall use the following guidance to provide above information; ~~**AGR specific**~~**AGR specific**~~)~~ ~~Special guidance on requirements (s) – for smallholder projects~~

~~(n)~~ ~~(a)~~ Project region: A map with a polygon reflecting the boundaries

(b)

~~(b)~~ Project areas: A map with one GPS point per project participant and each project participant shall have a hand-drawn map of its part of the project area

(c)

~~(c)~~ Protected areas: A map with national parks (as by Google Maps) and UNESCO sites (as by http://whc.unesco.org/en/interactive-map/)

(d)

~~(d)~~ Biodiversity areas: A map with a polygon reflecting the boundaries

(e)

~~(a)~~ ~~(e)~~ Infrastructure and permanent water bodies: As by Google Maps

(f)

Location of affected people

~~(f) Where people affected are situated~~: One GPS point per person, group of persons or community with a caption that describes~~d~~ the effect

(g)

(h) ~~(g)~~ Sites with special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance: One GPS point per site with a caption that describes the significance and effect

ANNEX A – UNCERTAINTY OF LUF PARAMETERS

Annex A ~~presnts~~presents guidelines for accounting ~~Undertinainty~~Uncertainty associated with LUF projects. This guideline is applicable to all Gold Standard LUF projects in all countries.

1.1.1 Estimated greenhouse gas emissions and removals resulting from Land Use and Forestry (LUF) ~~-~~activities have uncertainties associated with the measurements/estimates of various parameters, especially area or other activity data, carbon stocks, biomass growth rates, expansion factors, emission factors and other coefficients.

1.1.2 This guideline provides a step-by-step approach on how to treat uncertainties in LUF projects and how to comply with the required target precision of 20% of the mean at a 90% confidence level.[17]

1.1.3 This guideline does not provide requirements for the estimation of uncertainties. Rather, it is assumed that the uncertainties associated with the various input data are known, either as estimates based on sound statistical sampling/measurement or published values, or default values given in IPCC Guidelines (2006), IPCC GPG - LULUCF (2003)

1.1.4 To accommodate that measurements are not always available to projects, and IPCC default factors following tier 1 approach do not meet Gold Standard requirements for project data and precision level, this guideline incorporates three approaches for baseline and project activity quantification:

(a) ***Approach 1:*** ~~: Approach 1~~ requires on-site measurements to directly document pre-project and project activity data.

(b) ***Approach 2:*** ~~: Approach 2~~ uses peer-reviewed publications to quantify baseline and project activity data. Project owners need to prove that the research results are conservative and applicable to the project site and management practice.

(c) ***Approach 3:*** ~~: Approach 3~~ applies default factors to quantify changes but a discounting factor (Uncertainty Deduction) must be applied if compliance with the ~~GS~~ uncertainty threshold of ±20% at a 90% confidence interval is not satisfied.

1.1.5 Generally, the most specific approach possible with the data available must be chosen. A decision tree to determine an eligible approach is supplied in Figure 1 below.

[17] For parameters also applied in Gold Standard Energy such as fuel emission factors the Gold Standard precision of 10% of the mean at the 90% confidence level must be applied.

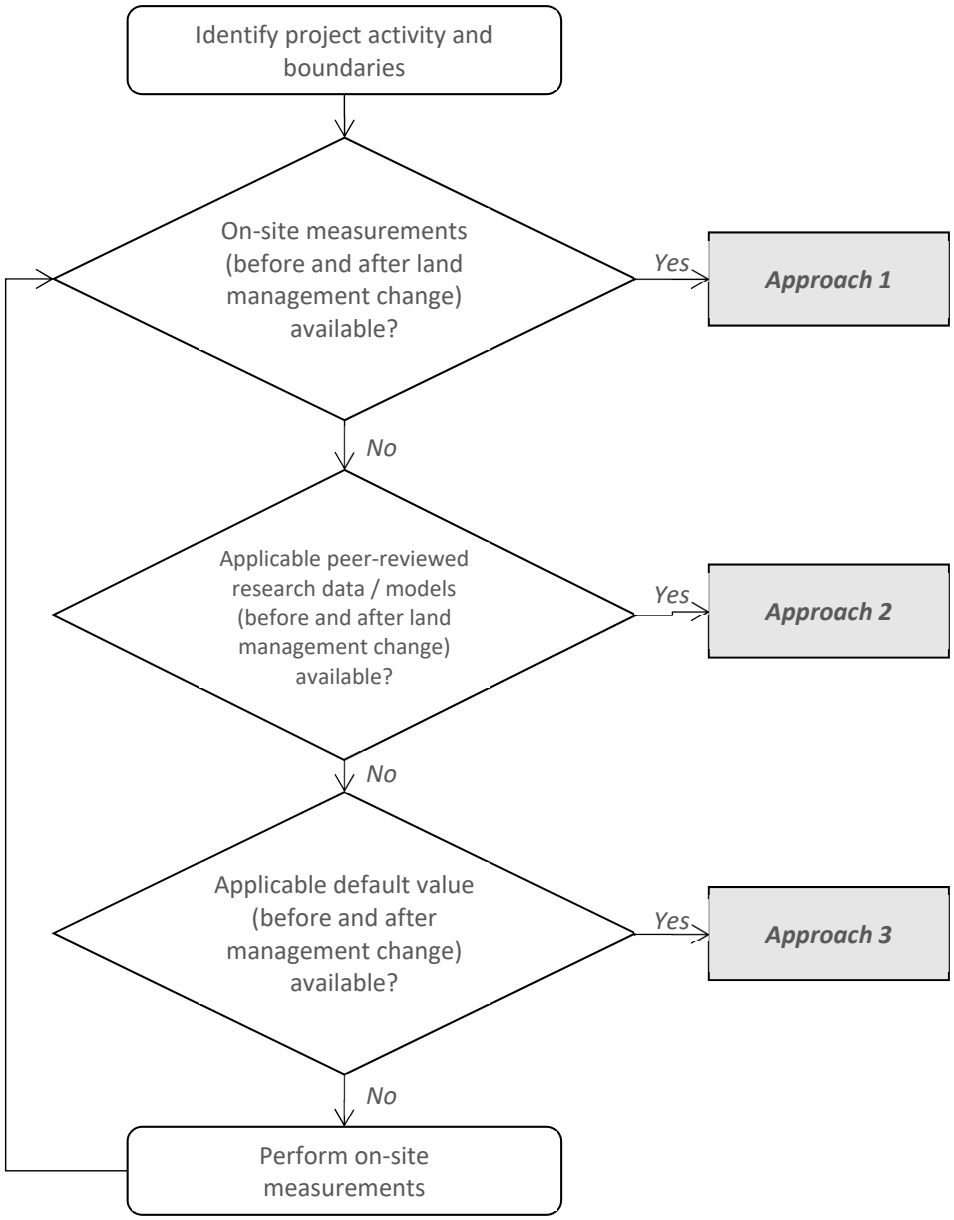


Figure 1: Decision tree for identification of appropriate approach ~~(according to The Gold Standard Agriculture Methodology Increasing Soil Carbon through Improved Tillage Practices)~~

Under **Approach 1** ~~Approach 1~~

1.1.6 d~~D~~ata is measured within each stratum and shall follow accepted sampling and analysis protocols. The project owner shall use Special Guidance for Smallholder Projects Data. Data is~~is~~ measured within each stratum and shall follow accepted sampling and analysis protocols.

(a) ~~-~~If the uncertainty of estimated value is less than or equal to 20% of the mean change value then the project owner may use the

estimated value without any deduction for uncertainty, i.e. UD = 0.

(b) If the uncertainty is greater than 20% of the mean value, then the project owner shall either increase the sampling effort to achieve this target or the project owner shall use the estimated value subject to an Uncertainty Deduction (UD) in table 1 below (see approach 3).

~~1.1.1 Approach 2~~
1.1.7
~~1.2 Special Guidance for Smallholder ProjectsApproach 2~~

~~Approach 2~~

~~Approach 2~~

(a) Data is derived from ~~data published in~~ peer reviewed published literature. Evidence for applicability of the literature values to the project site has to be provided with respect to climate factors (e.g. precipitation levels and seasonal distribution), soil and vegetation types as well as current and historic management systems (e.g. crops, tillage techniques, fertilization). Direct application of literature values is only permitted if the source conditions match the project environment, evidence of which shall be provided. Furthermore, literature values shall only be applied within the spatial and temporal dimensions analys~~z~~ed in the original source (e.g. SOC depth, timespan for which changes are documented). If a range of parameter values are ~~is~~ given in a source or data is aggregated across various factor levels (e.g. average in a region, across a range of soil types), the most conservative value shall be used.

(b) Alternatively, values from literature may be verified by comparing them to measurements in a set of sample sites within the respective project stratum to indicate conservativeness of the parameter values applied. Such measurements are required if evidence for applicability (as listed above) of literature values is deemed insufficient by an auditor.

(c) The project owner shall use ~~GS LUF~~ precision of 20% of the mean at the 90% confidence level as the criteria for reliability of estimates

1.1.8 Special Guidance for Smallholder Projects
~~1.3~~ Special Guidance for Smallholder Projects

- Data is derived from ~~data published in~~ peer reviewed published literature. Evidence for applicability of the literature values to the project site has to be provided with respect to climate factors (e.g. precipitation levels and seasonal distribution), soil and vegetation types as well as current and historic management systems (e.g. crops, tillage techniques, fertilization). Direct application of literature values is only permitted if the source conditions match the project environment, evidence of which shall be provided. Furthermore, literature values shall only be applied within the spatial and temporal dimensions analys~~z~~ed in the original source (e.g. SOC depth, timespan for which changes are documented). If a range of parameter value~~-~~s are~~is~~ given in a source or data is aggregated across various factor levels (e.g. average in a region, across a range of soil types), the most conservative value shall be used.

(a)

(b) Alternatively, values from literature may be verified by comparing them to measurements in a set of sample sites within the respective project stratum to indicate conservativeness of the parameter values applied. Such measurements are required if evidence for applicability (as listed above) of literature values is deemed insufficient by an auditor.

(c) If the uncertainty of estimates is less than or equal to 20% of the mean change value then the project owner may use the estimated value without any deduction for uncertainty, i.e. UD = 0. If the uncertainty is greater than 20% of the mean value, then the project owner shall use the estimated value subject to an Uncertainty Deduction (UD) in table 1 below ~~(~~(see approach 3).

~~**Approach 3**~~

~~1.4~~ Approach **3**

1.1.9

(a) Project owners may use published default factors such as IPCCs. However, as IPCC default factors are often available on tier 1 level only and are thus too generic for project level with high resulting errors for an individual site (or product), Gold Standard provides a discounting approach for those default factors which do not meet the Gold Standard uncertainty threshold of ±20% at a 90% confidence interval.

(b) If the uncertainty is less than or equal to 20% of the mean change value then the project owner may use the estimated value without any deduction for uncertainty, i.e. UD = 0. If the uncertainty is greater than 20% of the mean value, then the project owner shall use the estimated value subject to an Uncertainty Deduction (UD) in Table 1:

Table 25: Uncertainty discounting approach

Uncertainty [U]	Uncertainty Deduction [UD] (% of U)
20<U≤30%	50%
30<U≤40%	75%
40<U≤50%	100%

Example:

Estimated mean = 60±30 kgCO2e
Calculate Uncertainty U = 30/60 = 50%
Resulting Uncertainty Deduction UD = 100% *30 = 30 kg CO2e

1.1.10 The Uncertainty Deductions shall always be applied in the most conservative way, i.e. limiting the activities' GHG benefits to the lower end of the confidence interval.

Discounted conservative mean:

For stocks / GHG removals:
In baseline = 60 + 30 = 90 kgCO2eq
In project = 60 - 30 = 30 kgCO2eq

For GHG emissions:
In baseline = 60 - 30 = 30 kgCO2eq
In project = 60 + 30 = 90 kgCO2eq

ANNEX B – REQUIREMENTS~~IIRIEMENTS~~ FOR A/R S~~LUF~~ ~~S~~MALLHOLDER & MICROSCALE PROJECTS~~GUIDELINES~~

1. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

1.1.1 The Annex B presents simplified requirements for Smallholder and Microscale projects seeking Gold Standard certified statements and or products such as Gold Standard VERs. The following sections outline the requirements that are modified, simplified or waived for Smallholder and Microscale projects. If a particular requirement in the 'Land Use & Forest Activity Requirements' is not discussed here, it implies that the 'Land Use & Forest Activity Requirements' and/or Principles & Requirements shall be followed. If a project intends to apply the requirements of the 'Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements' instead of the adapted version outlined in this guideline, it may do so.

1.1.2 To avoid undermining the purpose of the simplified requirements~~his guideline~~, Project Developers are not allowed ~~shall not~~to register projects with similar characteristics as separate projects

1.1.3 These requirements shall be applied in combination with the Gold Standard 'Land Use & Forest Activity Requirements'.~~.~~

~~TERMS AND DEFINITIONS~~

~~Terms~~	~~Definitions~~
~~Auditor~~	~~The Auditors are individuals that have successfully completed the Gold Standard training for 'LUF Auditors' and are as defined in the Gold Standard Validation & Verification Body Requirements. Until than regular 'company auditors' shall be used.~~ ~~These 'individual auditors' are limited to audit projects~~ ~~(a) as New Area Certification~~ ~~(b) as Performance Certification (except for the first Performance Certification)~~ ~~The cumulative amount of GS VERs (in the case of application of the Gold Standard GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Product Requirements) issued through one or several certifications executed by 'individual auditors' cannot exceed 100,000. For other SDG Impact Statements sought please contact the Gold Standard for limitations.~~ ~~Beyond this threshold a Performance Certification by a 'company auditor' can reinstate a project's eligibility for subsequent cumulative 100,000~~

		GSVERs – again issued through one or several certifications executed by 'individual auditors'.
	Project actiors – Worker	The term 'Worker' is adapted to: Workers (adapted from Fairtrade and FSC) Workers are all persons that are employed by a written or verbal agreement. This includes permanent, migrant, part-time and seasonal employees, of all ranks and categories, including field workers, artisans, labourers, administrators, supervisors, executives, contractor employees as well as self-employed contractors and sub-contractors.

How to read

The applicability of requirements for Microscale or Small scale is indicated at the start of a specific chapter or subchapter.

1.0 APPLICABILITY / SCOPE And ND ApplicabilityPPLICABILITY

1.1 1.1 Applicable for:

2.0 These requirements shall be applied in combination with the Gold Standard 'Land U-use & Forest Activity Requirements'.

- Microscale Projects
- Smallholder Projects

1.2 Applicability / Scope – To be added as new requirementsSmallholder projects: include

(a) This guideline shall be applied in combination with the Gold Standard LU&F Activity Requirements.

(b) Smallholders I This guideline can be applied by 'smallholder projects' —project areas that are managed by smallholders and .

(c) tThere is NO limit in size for such 'smallholder' projects'. For The

(d) pProjects that consist of areas , which are managed by a mix of smallholders and non-smallholders ('smallholders' as defined in 'Definitions') can can seek a combined certifications for project involvsinvolves both Smallholder and Non – Smallholder project areas. Though, use this guidelinethese requirements can only be applied for the project areas that are managed by the sSsmallholders.

1.1.4 ~~(e) Combined certifications are possible and economically worthwhile.~~

1.1.5 ~~(f) M~~~~ircoscale: This guideline can be applied by 'm~~icroscale projects are defined as ~~the '~~ projects with a project area of maximum 500ha.

~~. .~~
~~2.2 The 'A/R Smallholder & Microscale Guidelines' modify some of the existing definitions of the 'Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements'. Thus the 'Requirements' shall be interpreted accordingly.~~

~~2.3~~ When the Project Developer is uncertain about ~~a particular interpretation~~the interpretation of 'Land U~~-u~~se & Forest Activity Requirements' in the context of s~~S~~mallholder or microscale projects, ~~he~~the developer shall ~~contact the Land Use & Forest team of the~~seek clarification from the Gold Standard Secretariat.

1.1.6

2. D~~e~~E~~2.0 DE~~FINITIONS

2.1 ~~2.6 Project activity: Project activities are activities (planning, implementation and management) undertaken with the objective to certify more than one Ecosystem Services and SDG benefit (e.g. emission reduction, removal and avoidance, biodiversity enhancement, water supply).~~Project activity: Project activities are activities (planning, implementation and management) undertaken with the objective to certify more than one Ecosystem Services and SDG benefit (e.g. emission reduction, removal and avoidance, biodiversity enhancement, water supply).

~~The term 'Project' refers to A project is the realization of project activities.~~

2.1.1 ~~*A/R* projects are project areas with *homogeneous characteristics* and are usually defined by the:~~

~~(a) age cohorts, AND~~
~~(b)~~

~~(mix of) tree species, AND~~
~~(c)~~
~~(d) silvicultural treatment, AND~~

~~(e)~~
- ~~agro-ecological conditions (e.g. elevation, precipitation, soil type, etc.).~~agro-ecological conditions (e.g. elevation, precipitation, soil type, etc.).

~~2.2 In the context of sSmallholder and mMicroscale projects, the Project Areas replaces/merges the definitions of 'Project area', 'Planting area' and 'Eligible Planting Area' and are defined as a spatial area submitted for certification, managed to a set of explicit long-term management objectives. (Source: adapted from FSC, where the relevant term is 'Management Unit')~~

~~The term 'Modelling Unit (MU)' represents an area with *homogeneous characteristics* to predict (model) and verify SDG Impacts. For the efficient calculation of the amount of GS-VERs or other SDG Impacts (e.g. carbon reduction, removal and avoidance, biodiversity enhancement, water supply) under The Gold Standard, the project area is divided into the sub-unit of Modelling Units (MUs).~~

~~2.3~~2.1.1 Project Actors include workers ~~who are all persons~~ that are employed by a written or verbal agreement. This includes permanent, migrant, part-time and seasonal employees, of all ranks and categories, including field workers, artisans, labourers, administrators, supervisors, executives, contractor employees as well as self-employed contractors and sub-~~contractors.(~~contractors. (Source: adapted from Fairtrade and FSC). In the context of Smallholders and Microscale projects, workers include;

(a) workers employed by a verbal agreement on smallholder farms for less than 3 months per year, AND

(b) smallholder farmers i.e., farmers that have more than 50% of farm work done by family members, cooperative members or neighbours. AND

(c) family members of the smallholder farmer

~~2.4~~2.1.2 The Auditor refers to a Gold Standard accredited Validation and Verification body (VVB) or individual experts who have successfully completed the Gold Standard training for 'LUF Auditors' and are accredited and approved following Gold Standard Validation & Verification Body Requirements. Upon Gold Standard approval, the 'individual auditors' can be engaged to audit projects for New Area Certification and Performance Certification (except for the first Performance Certification) with following limitations

(a) The cumulative amount of GS-VERs ~~-~~issued through one or several certifications executed by 'individual auditors' cannot exceed 100,000 GS-VERs. For other SDG Impact Statements, ~~-~~the developer shall seek clarification from the Gold Standard Secretariat.

(b) Beyond this threshold a Performance Certification by a Gold Standard accredited VVB can reinstate a project's eligibility for subsequent cumulative 100,000 GS-VERs – again issued through one or several certifications executed by 'individual auditors'.

~~2.1 Applicable for:~~

- ~~Microscale Projects~~
- ~~Smallholder Projects~~

2.2 The 'A/R Smallholder & Microscale Guidelines' modify some of the existing definitions of the 'Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements'. Thus the 'Requirements' shall be interpreted accordingly.

2.3 When the Project Developer is uncertain about a particular interpretation, he shall contact the Land Use & Forest team of the Gold Standard Secretariat~~.~~

~~2.4 Governance~~

~~2.4.1 To be added to the definition 'Auditor':~~

Auditors are individuals that have successfully completed the Gold Standard training for 'LUF Auditors' and are as defined in the Gold Standard Validation & Verification Body Requirements. Until than regular 'company auditors' shall be used.

These 'individual auditors' are limited to audit projects
(a) as New Area Certification

(b) as Performance Certification (except for the first Performance Certification)

The cumulative amount of GS-VERs (in the case of application of the Gold Standard GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Product Requirements) issued through one or several certifications executed by 'individual auditors' cannot exceed 100,000. For other SDG Impact Statements sought please contact the Gold Standard for limitations.

Beyond this threshold a Performance Certification by a 'company auditor' can reinstate a project's eligibility for subsequent cumulative 100,000 GSVERs – again issued through one or several certifications executed by 'individual auditors'.

~~2.4.2 Project Actors include workers who are all persons that are employed by a written or verbal agreement. This includes permanent, migrant, part-time and seasonal employees, of all ranks and categories, including field workers, artisans, labourers, administrators, supervisors, executives, contractor employees as well as self-employed contractors and sub-contractors.(Source: adapted from Fairtrade and FSC). In the context of Smallholders and Microscale projects, workders include;~~

~~The term 'Worker' is adapted to:~~
~~• Workers (adapted from Fairtrade and FSC) Workers are all persons that are employed by a written or verbal agreement.~~

~~• This includes permanent, migrant, part-time and seasonal employees, of all ranks and categories, including field workers, artisans, labourers, administrators, supervisors, executives, contractor employees as well as self-employed contractors and sub-contractors.~~
~~Excepted from the definition above are:~~
~~• workers employed by a verbal agreement on smallholder farms for less than 3 months per year, AND~~

~~smallholder farmers i.e., Smallholder- Smallholders are farmers that have more than 50% of farm work done by family members, cooperative members or neighbors.~~
~~• themselves, AND~~

~~• family members of the smallholder farmer~~

• Smallholder- Smallholders are farmers that have more than 50% of farm work done by family members, cooperative members or neighbors.

~~2.5 Areas~~

~~The term project area replaces/merges the definitions of 'Project area', 'Planting area' and 'Eligible Planting Area':~~

~~i.Project area l (Source: adapted from FSC, where the relevant term is 'Management Unit') The project area is a spatial area submitted for certification, managed to a set of explicit long-term management objectives.~~

~~For the efficient calculation of the amount of CO2-certificates or other accounted SDG Impacts (e.g. carbon reduction, removal and avoidance, biodiversity enhancement, water supply) under The Gold Standard, the project area is divided into the sub-unit of Modelling Units (MUs).~~

1.1 New project areas can be added and removed to an existing project area after its Initial Certification (see 'Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements' – New Area Certification').

~~To be added as new definition:~~

~~2.6 Project activity: Project activities are activities (planning, implementation and management) undertaken with the objective to certify more than one Ecosystem Services and SDG benefit (e.g. emission reduction, removal and avoidance, biodiversity enhancement, water supply).~~

~~2.7 The term 'Project' is adapted to:~~
~~Project: A project is the realization of project activities.~~

~~2.8 The term 'Modelling Unit (MU)' is adapted to:~~

~~Modelling Unit (MU) l A Modelling Unit (MU) represents an area with *homogeneous characteristics* to predict (model) and verify SDG Impacts~~

~~*2.9 A/R projects*~~

~~For A/R projects these *homogeneous characteristics* are usually defined by the:~~

- ~~age cohorts, AND~~
- ~~(mix of) tree species, AND~~
- ~~silvicultural treatment, AND~~
- ~~agro-ecological conditions (e.g. elevation, precipitation, soil type, etc.).~~

~~2.10 Certificates~~

~~The term 'Crediting period' is adapted to:~~
~~Crediting period I The crediting period as is the time span in which SDG Impacts, including the reduction, removal and avoidance of CO_2 can be accounted for and is subject to monitoring.~~

~~2.11 Smallholder projects~~

~~Smallholders join and exit projects more frequently than participants in regular projects. Although a project always has only *one* crediting period, smallholders of a project can have different commitment periods to a project.~~
~~Overall, it is in the responsibility of the Project Developer to deliver the estimated SDG Impacts and GS-VERs (where applicable) within its crediting period, as outlined during the Initial Certification.~~

~~2.12~~In the context of ~~-~~Smallholder and microscale A/R projects, a

2.1.3 ~~A~~n adaptation of the crediting period after the Design Certification is possible, as long as it stays within the timeframe of 30-50 years. For the procedures, please contact the Gold Standard secretariat.

3.~~3.0 K~~ KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

~~3.1 Applicable for:~~

- ~~Smallholder Projects~~
- ~~Micro-scale Projects (Not applicable)~~

3.1.1 ~~3.2~~ The following additional information is required to support Key Project Information:

~~1.1~~

~~(a)~~ Organis~~z~~ations involved in the project (including legal details of the Project Developer and its relationship to the local communities of the project)

(a)

~~(b)~~ Target smallholder groups that will be invited to participate

(b)

~~(c) Location of the project area~~

~~(d) Size of the project area~~

(c) ~~(e)~~ Distribution of revenues (between the Project Developer and the smallholders)

3.1.2 ~~AGR specific~~ Smallholder projects shall use the following guidance to provide the information listed in Section 4~~9~~:

(a) Project region: A map with a polygon reflecting the boundaries
(b) Project areas: A map with one GPS point per project participant and each project participant shall have a hand-drawn map of its part of the project area
(c) The projects shall submit digital polygons of each Modeling Unit plot area as by Google Earth or other online tools or on-site GPS or Lidar measurements.
(d) Protected areas: A map with national parks (as by Google Maps) and UNESCO sites (as by http://whc.unesco.org/en/interactive-map/)
(e) Biodiversity areas: A map with a polygon reflecting the boundaries
(f) Infrastructure and permanent water bodies: As by Google Maps
(g) Location of affected people~~Where people affected are situated~~: One GPS point per person, group of persons or community with a caption that describes~~d~~ the effect
~~Sites with special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance: One GPS point per site with a caption that describes the significance and effect~~
(h)

~~1.2~~ 3.1.3 At validation and verification,~~3.4~~ each smallholder participating in the project shall:

~~(a)~~ (a) ~~(a)~~ know during any field visit what area of his land is part of the project activity (project area), AND
(a)

(b) ~~(b)~~ have a hand-drawn (or digital) map of this area that contains the size of his land and/or the number of trees.

~~4.0 SUSTAINABILITY~~

~~4.1 Applicable for:~~

- ~~Smallholder Projects~~
- ~~Micro-scale Projects~~

3.1.4 ~~4.2~~ Safeguarding Principles & Requirements

(a)

Under the ~~s~~Principle 3 Community Health, Safety and Working Conditions~~Social category~~,
~~4.2.1 Social~~

~~Note that the requirements for~~ Working Conditions and ~~for~~ the Occupational Health & Safety ~~aseement~~assessment can be~~re~~ limited to 'workers' of the project only.

(b) ~~.~~

Under Principle 9 Environment, Ecology and Land Use~~environmental category~~,
~~4.2.2 Environmental~~

~~i.~~ t~~T~~he following r~~R~~equirements ~~ARE NOT are not~~are not~~are removednot~~ applicable~~mandatory~~ for s~~S~~mallholder and m~~M~~icroscale ~~projcets~~projects:

- ~~(a)~~ Through a smart mosaic of the planting areas, buffer zones and infrastructure habitat connectivity for flora and fauna should be enhanced.
- ~~(b)~~ A minimum of 10% of the total Project Area shall be identified and used to protect or enhance the biological diversity[18] following High Conservation Value (HCV)[19] approach shall be followed~~Minimum 10% of the project area shall be identified and managed used to protect or enhance the *biological diversity*[22] of *native ecosystems*[23]. For this, the *HCV*[24] approach should be followed~~.
- ~~(c)~~ On both sides of permanent or temporary *water bodies* (lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, etc.) riparian buffer zones of 15 meters shall be implemented on each site. In these riparian buffer zones:

[18] The variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. Source: FSC

[19] Refer to High Conservation Value Resource Network for definition of High Conservation Value Area. Available at https://hcvnetwork.org/

- only native tree species[20] ~~only *native tree species*[25]~~ may be planted, AND
- *invasive species*[21] ~~[26]~~ shall be removed, AND
- all existing vegetation shall be kept, AND
- no timber harvesting activities shall take place, AND
- no use of fertilizer or chemical pesticides.

(c) The project shall assess~~Requirements are further adapted to~~:

- ~~(e)~~ Existing patches of trees or single solitary stems with a high degree of biological diversity[9], AND
- ~~(f)~~ H~~h~~abitats of endangered species[22] ~~endangered species[27]~~ shall always be identified and managed to protect or enhance the biological diversity[9].
- ~~(g)~~ Workers shall transport, store, handle and apply chemical pesticides in a safe way.

3.1.5 AGR specific (applicable to s~~S~~mallholder projects) The AGR projects or project areas managed by smallholders are not required to demonstrate compliance with following Safeguarding Principles Assessment~~Safeguarding Principles & Requirements~~:

- Principle 9.6 - Pesticides & Fertilisers
- Principle 9.~~4.3.~~10 High Conservation Value Areas and Critical Habitats: ~~point~~paragraph 1.1.33.b ~~2~~ and point 1.1.33.b ~~4 item b~~

~~4.3.6 Pesticides & Fertilizers~~

~~Table 3: Safeguarding Principles & Requirements that do not apply to smallholder~~ projects

[20] Native tree species (Source: FSC) Species, subspecies, or lower taxon, occurring within its natural range (past or present) and dispersal potential that is, within the range it occupies naturally or could occupy without direct or indirect introduction or care by humans.

[21] Invasive species (Source: FSC) Species that are rapidly expanding outside of their native range. Invasive species can alter ecological relationships among native species and can affect ecosystem function and human health.

[22] All endangered and critically endangered species as defined by the IUCN Red List – www.IUCNredlist.org

~~Safeguarding Principles & Requirements~~	~~Specific sections that do not apply to smallholders' projects~~
~~4.3.10 High Conservation Value Areas and Critical Habitats~~	~~Point 4, item b~~
	~~Point 2~~
~~4.3.6 Pesticides & Fertilisers~~	~~All~~

~~5.0 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION (SC)~~

~~5.1 According to the 'Gold Standard Safeguarding Principles & Requirements' which needs to be applied by all projects, all requirements of the Safeguarding Principles Assessment are subject to discussion during the stakeholder consultations – and need to be monitored in case any risk of future non-compliance is identified.~~

4.0 ~~6.0~~ LEGAL RIGHTS

4.1.1. ~~6.1 The requirement is adapted to~~The P~~p~~roject ~~:~~

~~Each smallholder~~ D~~d~~eveloper shall sign an *agreement* with the Smallholders ~~Project Developer~~ which confirms that the smallholder holds the '~~CO2~~ GS ~~-~~VERs user rights[281]' from the trees that are planted due to the project ~~and~~ but has passed these rights on to the Project Developer, AND the smallholder holds all necessary rights to implement the project (e.g. planting permits, right to harvest). ~~.~~

Such *agreements* shall include the:

- contact details of the smallholder, AND
- contact details of the land owner (if differing), AND
- length of lease contract (if applicable), AND
- a confirmation that the land tenure on which the trees are planted is uncontested, AND
- the liabilities and benefits for the smallholder.

4.1.2 All paragraphs within the *agreement* shall be explained and discussed with the smallholders ~~in meetings~~. If helpful, the *agreement* should be translated to the local language and/or explained ~~in an~~ orally ~~way~~.

4.1.3 If a smallholder does not hold land rights~~meet requirements (a) and (b)~~, the person or legal entity that does meet those respective requirements shall endorse the participation of the smallholder in a written form~~.~~

~~6.2~~ All paragraphs within the *agreement* shall be explained and discussed with the smallholders in meetings. If helpful, the *agreement* should be translated to the local language and/or in an oral way.

4.1.4 ~~6.3~~ The Project Developer shall ~~have a list with all~~maintain the following ~~informaiton~~information:

- ~~names and contact details from the participating smallholders, AND~~
- the locations (GPS points) and area (ha) of their project areas, AND
- ~~the end dates of the lease contracts and frequency of renewal (if applicable), AND~~
- ~~the start and end dates of the smallholders participating in the project.~~

~~7.0 ADDITIONALITY~~

~~7.1 Additionality~~

~~7.1.1~~ ~~Please note that the~~The project 'Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements' contain two options for the proof of to demonstrate additionality. Though, the adaptations made by this guideline only refer to 'Option 2', 'Option 1' can also be applied by the Project Developer.

5. Additionality

5.1.1 ~~Please note that the~~The project ~~The 'Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements' contain two options for the proof of to demonstrate additionality. Though, the adaptations made by this guideline only refer to 'Option 2',~~ The project can demonstrate additionally ~~applying 'Option 1' can also be applied by the Project Developer. Theor following adaptation to 'Option 2'~~as per Section Principle 5 – Financial Additionality & Ongoing Financial Need of ~~.~~The 'Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements'. ~~refers to the addition of new areas: 7.2.2 To be added to the 'Process for New Area Certification':To be added to the 'Process for New Area Certification':~~

~~5.1 Process for New Area Certification~~

~~At the time of preliminary review, the project may use Option 2: The Project Developer may use the *UNDP Human Development Indicator*[29] of the Initial Certification for inclusion of New Area..~~

~~7.2.3 The requirement for eligibility is adapted to:~~

~~2.5 The requirement for eligibility is adapted to:~~
~~The requirement for eligibility is adapted to:The project area shall not have been *forest*[30] for at least 10 years prior to the planting start.~~

~~i. .~~

~~In case the project area has been deforested during the last 10 years, evidence shall be given that the deforestation activity has not taken place with the intention to reforest the area and generate CO2-certificatesGS-VERs.~~

6. ~~8.0~~ GHG EMISSIONS REDUCTION & SEQUESTRATION METHODOLOGY (A/R)

~~8.1 Applicable for:~~
- ~~Smallholder Projects~~
- ~~Micro-scale Projects~~

~~4.1~~ 6.1.1. Many projects take place in countries where little scientific information is available for trees species, biomass in general and other land use related activities. Therefore, following simplifications to~~8.2 Practical Approach~~ ~~where~~ Gold Standard A/R GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration~~, or Gold Standard Agriculture GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration~~ Methodologies ~~are applied~~
~~4.2~~ .can be applied.
~~4.3~~

~~i.~~ (a) The Project can apply existing national or international default values, wherever available for estimations of 'Baseline', 'Leakage' and 'CO2-Fixation'

(b)
~~2.6 8.2.1 Many projects take place in countries where little scientific information is available for trees species, biomass in general and other land use related activities.~~

~~8.2.2 To provide cost-efficient estimations for the parameters 'Baseline', 'Leakage' and 'CO2-Fixation' it is thus recommended for the Project Developer not to execute expensive field research, but to use wherever possible existing national or international default values.~~

~~8.3~~ Baseline: ~~To be added as new requirement:~~
Applicability conditions for each Baseline scenario shall be set.

~~New Area~~ ~~**Certification**~~

~~New project areas can be added and removed to an existing project area after its InitialDesign Certification (see 'Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements' – New Area Certification').~~

~~8.4 The process for 'New Area Certification' is adapted to:~~

~~Process for New Area Certification~~

~~For the New Area Certification, the Project Developer shall provide demonstrat that justification that the new areas meet the applicability conditions that were set during the~~

~~Project Design Certification.~~

~~In case 'new' *Leakage scenarios* are created, the process for Project Design Certification shall be followed.~~

~~The resulting figures of the 'Baseline' template shall be used to update the projects 'Modelling Units Report'. This can be a self-made spreadsheet by the project.~~

~~The resulting figures of the 'Leakage' template shall be used to update the projects 'Modelling Units Report'. This can a self-made spreadsheet by the project.~~

~~In case 'new' *MU growth-models* are created the process for Initial Certification shall be followed.~~

~~The resulting figures of the 'CO2-Fixation' template shall be used to update the projects 'Modelling Units Report'. This can a self-made spreadsheet by the project.~~

~~8.5 Leakage: To be added as new requirement:~~

~~Applicability conditions for each *Leakage scenario* shall be set.~~

~~8.6 CO2-Fixation (for application of A/R GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Methodology): To be added as new requirement:~~

~~Applicability conditions for each *MU growth-model* shall be set.~~

~~8.7 Forest Inventory~~

~~The requirement is adapted to:~~
~~For *forest inventories* the 'Guidelines – Forest Inventory' should be followed.~~
~~8.10 The requirement is adapted to:~~

~~The *forest inventory* shall be sufficient to meet a MU precision with a maximum error of ±20% at a 90% confidence interval. Where the error is above 20%, the additional difference shall be deducted.~~

~~9.0 PROJECT CYCLE~~

~~9.1 Applicable for:~~

- ~~Smallholder Projects~~
- ~~Micro-scale Projects~~

~~9.2 New Area Certification~~

~~9.2.1 To be added as information:~~
~~New Area Certification can also be executed by 'Auditors' as per Definitions, Section 2.4.~~

ANNEX C – GUIDELINES TO CONDUCT A SPATIAL FOREST/NON-FOREST ASSESSMENT

1.1.1 ~~1.1~~ The ~~following document~~Annex C provides guidance ~~on~~:

i. ~~to i) how to~~ develop a forest/non-forest assessment to determine eligible areas to issue ~~for claiming CO2-certificates~~GS ~~-~~VERs, ~~and~~AND;

i.

ii. ~~ii)~~ required ~~data~~information ~~to be provided as part of a GS PDD for LUF projects~~for project documentation:

1.1.2 Use the definition of "forest" according to the Land Use and Forests (LUF) Activity Requirements as a minimum mapping unit (MPU). Indicate which definition ~~they are using~~is used for the assessment and justify the reasons.

~~1.1 s~~

~~1.2~~ Report on the type of remote sensing data (e.g. satellite, radar, spatial resolution) and source/s of the data and any relevant support documentation that helps in the replication and accurate~~cy~~ assessment of the spatial analysis.

1.1.3

1.1.4 Remote sensing scenes should be dated:

i. ~~i)~~ at least 10 years before ~~(up to 12 years)~~ the start date of the project, ~~and~~AND;

i.

ii. ~~ii)~~ at project start date ~~(up to 1 years before start date)~~

1.1.5 The forest/non-forest assessment shall be conducted for the entire project area ~~including all Modeling Units (MUs)~~. It is not necessary to do a classification of a full remote sensing scene (e.g. a whole Landsat image), but a sub-set of a scene is acceptable if it provides the necessary training points to complete a forest/non-forest classification with the required accuracy.

1.1.6 The following information/data should be reported in the PDD:

~~i.~~ Type of sensor used, spatial resolution, path/row, date of the scenes used

i.

ii. -Description of the method and software used in the pre-processing and classification ~~proces~~process

~~s~~

iii. -Description of how issues with areas under clouds/shadows were dealt with:

- In the case of scenes that date~~s~~ 10 years before the project start date, the P~~p~~roject D~~d~~eveloper ~~PD~~ should conservatively consider ~~non-eligible~~ all areas under shadows/clouds as not eligible

- In the case of scenes at project start date, if the start date is more than ~~3~~ 1 year~~s~~ before the start of Preliminary Review, then the Project Developer should conservatively consider ~~non-eligible~~ all areas under shadows/clouds as not-eligible. In such cases, a Project Developer could prove eligibility by conducting a ground-truthing exercise to verify the land-cover for areas under clouds/shadows. The Project Developer shall report on how the ground-truthing was conducted, and which areas were visited (only visited areas can be included in such analysis; sampling is not allowed)
-

~~In the case of scenes at project start date, if the start date is less than 3 1 years after the start of Preliminary Review, then a Project Developer could prove eligibility of areas under clouds/shadows by conducting a ground-truthing exercise to verify the land-cover under such areas. The PD shall report on how the ground-truthing was conducted, and which areas were visited (only visited areas can be included in such analysis; sampling is not allowed)~~

- Clearly map all polygons covered by shadows/clouds and present a table with the areas of each polygon and the total area in hectares
-

- Develop a combined mask for the areas under clouds/shadows in both scenes and apply it to the scenes proceeding to the classification

~~Include a map with the original remote sensing images (10 years before and at project start date) overlapped with the polygons of the proposed project area and planting area, clearly differentiating the boundaries of the project area and Modelling Units and other features within the project area in a clear and distinguishable way~~

~~ii.~~ ~~Iv.~~ Include a map of the classified scenes (10 years before and at project start date) with the forest/non-forest classes before and after the application of the selected forest definition as MPU (resampling).

iv. Classify the scenes with the original spatial resolution. Then, resample the classification products for each scene. The final non-eligible areas within the project area will be the ~~cummulative~~cumulative forest areas from both classified scenes. Generate a shapefile of the eligible area.

v.

~~iii. Include a map with the total non-eligible and the total eligible area which is the result of the cumulative (addition) of the forest areas in the classified images (10 years before and at project start date) two classification products. This map should include the polygons of the project area and MUs. The total extension of the MUs is defined by the boundary of the total eligible area.~~

vi. Include a description of how the accuracy assessment was conducted (e.g. how the assessment points were selected and how the confusion matrix was prepared and interpreted). The accuracy must be calculated and reported on ~~on a~~ class-by-class and for the overall classification. The accuracy assessment of the classification must be conducted using ground-truth data (surveys) or remote sensing imagery of higher resolution of that used for the classification. The minimum overall accuracy for each class should be 90%.

vii. Provide a shapefile with the points used for the accuracy assessment.

viii. A final table indicating the total area (in hectares) of the project area, modelling units (planting area), and the 10% set aside ~~10%~~for the conservation area.

1.1.7 The use of already classified remote sensing products coming from official sources (national/government institutions) is allowed. If this ~~ese~~ data is used, then the Project Developer shall explain the type of remote sensing imagery used in that analysis, the method, and the accuracy as reported by the original source.

1.1.8 When using publicly-available remote sensing products that show tree cover instead of forest cover (i.e. Global Forest Watch), then a Project Developer should prove that the selected tree cover percentage is representative of the DNA or national host or FAO forest definition, as necessary.

~~9.~~ ANNEX D~~C~~ – LUF ~~LU&F~~ INPUT & GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

1. ~~1.0~~ PURPOSE

- ~~1.1~~ To maintain a transparent communication channel with stakeholders throughout the crediting period of a project, in addition to the consultation conducted at the design stage (via two rounds of Stakeholder Consultation).

- ~~1.2~~ To address early in the crediting period, unforeseen issues that arise during the course of a project. Stakeholders can suggest improvements or modifications based on their direct experience with the project and their knowledge and understanding of local conditions.

- ~~1.3~~ To further increase the robustness of The Gold Standard through more active and continuous stakeholder involvement, thereby adding value to the existing system of stakeholder feedback and monitoring.

- ~~1.4~~ To increase mutual trust between the project developer and the local stakeholders, to the benefit of both parties.

2. ~~0~~ REQUIREMENTS

~~2.1~~ The project developer shall establish methods a-c (below) of *input & grievance* expression for each project. Method d (below) is optional and may be chosen in agreement with local stakeholders (as part of the SC meeting). The project developer shall also demonstrate that they regularly monitor and respond to the comments that are made through each of the methods for continuous *input & grievance* expression.

Methods for continuous *input & grievance* expression

(a) Continuous 'Input & Grievance Expression Process Book'

(b) Telephone access

(c) Internet and email access

(d) Nominated Independent Mediator (NIM)

~~2.2~~ Comments received through any of the methods shall be documented using the table template below. This table is part of the 'Annual Reports' and thus part of every third-party audit and Gold Standard review.

Method 1 – Input & Grievance Expression Process Book

A comment book shall be made available on the project site or in the most appropriate, publicly accessible location (e.g. a local community centre, at the local council, a local library or school), so that local stakeholders can provide feedback on the project.

The book is important to allow for continuous inputs in regions with high literacy rates but which have minimal access to the internet. The location of the book shall be explained and discussed at the SC meeting and then justified in the project documentation.

At a minimum, the book shall be formatted to include the five sections from the ~~table~~ Table ~~(~~DC~~-~~1~~)~~ template. If the project developer feels that additional columns are necessary then these can be included. The table shall be formatted to allow for stakeholders to make anonymous comments should they wish.

The project developer shall check the comments in the book on a regular basis and record responses. The project developer may record changes that are made to the project, acknowledge problems and explain their causes, or explain why the comment cannot be addressed by the project, or if it is irrelevant. Even where the desired outcome of the stakeholder cannot be achieved, the project developer shall use their response to show that they are respectful of the views of stakeholders and suggest alternative solutions or compromises wherever possible.

Table D~~C~~-1: Template table for recording input & grievance expressions

Date	Comment	Action requested from Project Developer	Response from project developer	Person designated with responsibility by project developer	Issue resolved?
	Explanation of problem or comment.	What would the stakeholder like to see change/stay the same.	Explanation from the project of what they will do in response to the	Identification of who will take responsibility for responding AND	This could be confirmation from the person who made the complaint,

			comment. This may be an explanation as to why the project is unable to respond/does not see the problem as necessary to address.	monitoring the issue.	or the project.

Table DC-2: Pros and cons of Method 1

Pros	Cons
○ Simple to use – does not require access to technology or associated costs for stakeholders ○ Cheap, efficient to manage ○ Simple to explain to stakeholders	○ Assumes literacy (they are still able to communicate through other input mechanisms) ○ Requires small geographical spread of stakeholders (or possibly more than one book) ○ Potential loss/theft of the book (ensure that a secure place is chosen and daily checks are carried out) ○ Could result in complaints from individuals, but little space for constructive discussions with wider community (encourage discussing these complaints in the local governance meetings)

Method 2 – Telephone access

In regions where stakeholders may be spread over a large geographical area, telephone contact may be more practical than a physical book. The telephone contact details shall be explained and discussed at the SC meeting and then justified in the project documentation.

The telephone number could be that of the project site office or another location. However, in countries where local or national calls, or calls to mobiles, have different pricing, the project developer shall try to offer the least expensive option and justify the choice. The contact details of The *Gold Standard Regional Manager* located closest to the project shall also be provided for stakeholders.

The project developer shall ensure that the phone is answered by someone (or has an answer phone message) in a language(s) appropriate to the stakeholders of the project.

Calls received shall be logged and recorded in the same way as in the book, with the date, comment, action requested and project developer response recorded for each call. As with all of the methods, stakeholders are not required to give their personal details when they wish to make a comment.

Table DC-3: Pros and cons of Method 2

Pros	Cons
○ Simple to use ○ Simple to explain to stakeholders ○ Inexpensive to run if the project developer uses the same phone line as the project/office rather than setting up a separate phone line ○ Greater anonymity for stakeholders ○ Overcomes illiteracy issues ○ Better where stakeholders may be spread over a larger area or have geographical barriers to access the project site/book/mediator	○ Stakeholder incurs the cost of a phone call ○ Provides fewer channels for discussion with wider community as complaints are individualized (encourage discussions on these also in the local governance meetings)

Method 3 – Internet access

In regions with widespread internet access an email address or comments section on a website established by the project developer could be the easiest way of receiving input from stakeholders. The email and website details shall be explained and discussed at the SC meeting and then justified in the project documentation.

The email address of The *Gold Standard Regional Manager* located closest to the project shall also be provided for stakeholders to contact. On a website, the information of the project and mechanism for providing comments shall be presented in a straightforward manner, showing the same information as in the ~~table~~ Table ~~(~~DC-1~~)~~ template. The information shall be in the language(s) most appropriate for local stakeholders and it shall allow for comments to be made anonymously.

Emails or website comments received shall be logged and recorded in the same way as in the book, with the date, comment, action requested and project response recorded for each message. As with all of the methods, stakeholders are not required to give their personal details when they wish to make a comment.

Table D~~C~~-4: Pros and cons of Method 3

Pros	Cons
○ Simple to use ○ Simple to explain to stakeholders ○ Useful where stakeholders are be spread over a larger area or have geographical barriers to access the project site/book/mediator ○ Managing an email address or website section for comments is inexpensive for project developer.	○ Assumes literacy ○ Assumes internet connection, and access to the internet for all groups of stakeholders ○ May entail some costs for the project developer to set up, of a website is used ○ Provides fewer channels for discussion with wider community as complaints are individualised (discuss in the local governance meetings) ○ Potential lower level of anonymity than telephone calls/comment book.

Method 4 – Nominated Independent Mediator (Optional)

The selection of a Nominated Independent Mediator (NIM) by the project developer may be the best approach for projects in regions with low literacy rates and/or little access to telephone and internet connections. The NIM shall be someone that local stakeholders can access easily, trust to represent their views, and who is in contact with the project developer. The selected NIM shall be discussed at the SC meeting and agreed by and with the local stakeholders. Contacts between the NIM and the local stakeholders shall be communicated to, and recorded by, the project developer using Table D-5~~Table C-4~~. This shall include the date of contact, all of the issues that have been discussed and any information or responses that were provided to the NIM in response to the stakeholders.
The NIM shall be willing to be contacted by the auditor or The Gold Standard Secretariat to confirm their role and the comments they have received.

Table~~-~~ D-5~~10~~: Pros and cons of Method 4

Pros	Cons
○ Simple to explain to stakeholders ○ ○ Can work within (and uphold) local customs for managing disputes ○ Potentially provides a third party to mediate relationships ○ Overcomes literacy issues ○ · Potentially allows for community engagement and discussion of issues	○ The mediator may be biased towards/against the project and not give objective feedback (can be discussed in the local governance meetings and a request can be made to change the mediator if they are found to be prejudiced) ○ May not be approachable for stakeholders, or not to all groups (as above can be resolved in local governance meetings) ○ May require remuneration to take the role seriously

Table- D-6~~11~~: Table template for communications between NIM and stakeholders

Date	Comment	Action requested from Project Developer	Response from project developer	Person designated with responsibility by project developer	Issue resolved?
2 April 2013	The construction vehicles that drive to the site make lots of noise, and beep their horns to access the site.	Please make less noise on the roads around the site and at the site entrance, as there are houses nearby.	Drivers have been asked to be respectful of the neighbours as they drive near the site, and turn off their engines when they are waiting to enter. They have also been asked to telephone the site office to gain entry to the site, instead of beeping their horns. May 2013.	Mr. Kajura, Head of Site Transport	Internal monitoring suggests that drivers now call instead of using their horns to gain entry to the site. Mr Kajura has spoken to project neighbours, and they agree that noise levels from the site have reduced. June 2013.
3 April 2013	There is now less land to graze our cattle because the area around the turbines has a fence.	Access to more land for grazing the animals.	For safety reasons, some areas have to be restricted so that there are no accidents. However, we will hold a meeting with local people to explain which areas are	Ms. Mandela, Site Manager.	Project community meeting held 30th May 2013. Map produced and copies distributed to local people to indicate which areas are accessible.

			dangerous and therefore restricted, but use a map and discuss with local people to see if there are other areas of the site that can be used for grazing animals. May 2013.		Explained the dangers of high voltages for the animals to show why access to some land had been restricted. Community members agreed, but have asked for an animal passage to be made to access the western area of the site. This will be done with new fencing in August 2013.

3.~~0~~ Stakeholder Consultation (SC) Meeting

At the SC meeting, the methods of input shall be explained and discussed to ensure that local stakeholders agree that the details of the selected methods will be the most appropriate e.g. the location of the book is accessible and secure, local stakeholders agree that the mediator is someone that they can approach and trust to represent their comments to the project without prejudice, the website is in appropriate language(s) and will be easy for local stakeholders to use etc.

The *SC Report* shall document any comments, criticisms or improvements that were made to the continuous *input & grievance* expression methods discussed at the SC meeting.

Recommended Best Practice for Continuous Input & Grievance Expression from Stakeholders (local governance meetings)

The Gold Standard ~~Foundation~~ recommends that, where practical, project developers have regular meetings to invite local stakeholders to give their feedback on the project, ensure that the project goals are understood and investigate if there are any improvements that could be made. These could be in the form of:

Annual project open days to allow local stakeholders to visit the site and see the project

A meeting (e.g. coincide with training and repairs, or at the same time as auditor *field visits*) that includes general information about the project, education about climate change and carbon offsetting, etc.

These regular meetings can be very useful for projects as they allow project developers to hear the views of local stakeholders (including employees) and, as they allow for greater communication and understanding, can improve relations between the project and the local community. If regular meetings are planned, they shall be mentioned at both rounds of the LSC and advertised in accordance with The Gold Standard requirements.

As part of the Validation, the ~~GS~~ VVB shall check whether the approved/selected methods of continuous *input & grievance* from the *SC Report* or other consultations have been implemented on site and discussed in the project documentation.

The continuous input & grievance log (the template table in Section 2.0) is part of the project documentation that the auditor shall use to audit the project. The GS VVB shall check:

~~(a)~~ That the project developer has responded in a reasonable manner to comments that have been raised.

(a)

~~(b)~~ That the responses are adequate, timely and appropriate to address the problem or comments raised.

(b)

(c) ~~(c)~~ That any issues the auditor considers serious are taken up as a Forward Action Request (FAR) for the project as part of the certification to ensure further monitoring of the issue.

The auditor shall make use of the comments when in discussions with local stakeholders as part of the *field visits*. The comments can provide useful starting points for conversations with the local stakeholders. If there are comments from a stakeholder that has chosen not to remain anonymous, the auditor can request to speak to this individual if they think an issue is of serious concern for the project.

Where the auditor has doubts about the activities of the project, or the comments raised relate to a serious problem, the auditor shall:

~~(a)~~ Confirm that the actions, as per the response from the project developer, recorded in the table have taken place.

(a)

~~(b)~~ Confirm that stakeholders accept the results.

(b)

(c) ~~(c)~~ Consider using a Forward Action Request (FAR) to ensure further monitoring of the issue.

If no comments have been made through the *input & grievance* mechanisms, the auditor shall record this information as part of their report. When engaging with local stakeholders they shall inquire whether stakeholders are aware of the continuous *input & grievance* mechanisms, whether there are any problems, concerns or comments about the project, and encourage the stakeholders and the project developer to use the continuous *input & grievance* mechanisms.

Endnotes

[1] http://katoombagroup.org/~katoomba/documents/tools/Pearson%20et%20al%20-%20Sourcebook%20for%20LULUCF.pdf

[2] (Source: FSC) The variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

[3] High Conservation Value www.hcvnetwork.org

[4] Native tree species (Source: FSC) Species, subspecies, or lower taxon, occurring within its natural range (past or present) and dispersal potential that is, within the range it occupies naturally or could occupy without direct or indirect introduction or care by humans.

[5] Same as footnote #4

[6] All endangered and critically endangered species as defined by the IUCN Red List – www.IUCNredlist.org

[7] Same as footnote #4

[8] Same as footnote #4

[9] UNDP Human Development Indicator: http://hdr.undp.org/en/data/profiles/

[10] See footnote #9

[11] SIDS: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sids/list

[12] Reference Area: an area with similar climatic and social conditions as defined by the Köppen-classification http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Köppen_climate_classification

[13] See footnote #9

[14] A locally adapted agroforestry system refers to land-use systems and practices where trees are deliberately integrated with crops and/or livestock on the same land management unit adapted to the local geophysical and social conditions.

[15] See footnote #9

[16] A *GIS vector layer* is any file format containing vector spatial data that can be opened and displayed with a software application. For assistance in creating *GIS vector layer* maps, contact the Gold Standard secretariat.

[17]

[18] See footnote #17

[19] Similar Entitlement: It is considered that similar entitlement exists, when 1) A person or entity has been using the land of the project as its owner, for the period of time that the applicable law requires for persons or entity to acquire property by its use, AND 2) Neighbours or neighbouring community agrees that the land has been used for such time by the person or entity claiming it

[20] See footnote #17

[21] See footnote #19

[22] See footnote #2

[23] Native ecosystem (Adapted from FSC) Sites to favour or restore native species and associations of native species that are typical of the locality, and for managing these associations and other environmental values so that they form ecosystems typical of the locality.

[24] See footnote #3

[25] See footnote #4

[26] Invasive species (Source: FSC) Species that are rapidly expanding outside of their native range. Invasive species can alter ecological relationships among native species and can affect ecosystem function and human health.

[27] See footnote #6

[28] See footnote #17

[29] See footnote #9

[30] Forest: A forest is defined by the Designated National Authority (DNA) of the project's host country: http://cdm.unfccc.int/DNA/index.html