Gold Standard for the Global Goals

ACTIVITY REQUIREMENT

AGRICULTURE ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS

Publication Date: 22/12/2025

Version: 1.0

Next Planned Update: 22/11/2028

SUMMARY

This Agriculture Activity Requirements document describes the eligibility requirements for agriculture activities and enables such eligible projects to undergo design and performance certification, including issuance of Certified Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Impact Statements and Products. The overarching conditions are explained in this document. Any specific requirements in the impact quantification methodologies supersede the conditions given in this document.

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1| SCOPE, APPLICABILITY, AND ENTRY INTO FORCE

1.1 | SCOPE

1.1.1 | This document outlines the certification requirements for eligible agriculture projects under the Gold Standard for Global Goals (GS4GG).

1.1.2 | Eligible projects shall apply the requirements in this document in conjunction with other core GS4GG documents. This includes compliance with Principles & Requirements, applied methodology, and applicable product requirements such as GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Product Requirements.

1.1.3 | A certified project is eligible to be issued Gold Standard Verified Emissions Reductions (GSVERs) and other certified products corresponding to its verified outcomes.

1.1.4 | Agriculture projects shall also comply with all relevant annexures of the Forestry Activity Requirements.[1]

1.2 | APPLICABILITY

1.2.1 | This document outlines eligible projects/activities in Section 3.1 | below.

1.2.2 | Other eligible agriculture project activities may be added in the future. Stakeholders may also submit a request for inclusion of new activity types, following the requirements and procedures described in Principles & Requirements.

1.3 | ENTRY INTO FORCE

1.3.1 | The document enters into force on the date of its publication**.** Activities may apply these requirements any time after this date. All activities submitted for preliminary review after 30 days from entry into force will be mandated to apply these requirements. All design certified activities shall transition to these activity requirements at the next renewal of certification or by 01/01/2028, whichever is earlier.

2| TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

2.1.1 | In addition to the definitions contained in the GS4GG Glossary, the following terms apply in this document.

[1] Until the date Forestry Activity Requirements enters into force, all relevant annexures of Land-Use & Forests Activity Requirements shall be complied with.

Table 1. Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Agriculture	According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, agriculture refers to the cultivation of crops, animal husbandry, forestry, fisheries, and the development of land and water resources. For more information, visit FAO's Terminology Portal at http://www.fao.org/faoterm/en/.
Agroforestry system	Agroforestry is a collective term for land-use systems and technologies in which trees (see "trees" definition) are deliberately used on the same land-management units as agricultural crops and/or animals in some form of spatial arrangement or temporal sequence. In an agroforestry system, there are both ecological and economic interactions between the different components. Agroforestry is a dynamic, ecologically based natural resource management system that, through the integration of trees on farms and in the agricultural landscape, diversifies and sustains production for increased social, economic, and environmental benefits for land users at all levels. (Adapted from FAO's Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Toolbox.) Projects implementing agroforestry activities shall also follow the Forestry Activity Requirements[2], as applicable, for eligibility criteria and the Afforestation/Reforestation Methodology for accounting of greenhouse gas (GHG) sequestration in tree biomass.
Animal husbandry	Animal husbandry is a kind of farming in which people raise livestock (see "livestock" definition) for meat, milk, eggs, etc. It is also a branch of agriculture involved with the production and care of domestic animals. (Adapted from FAO's Terminology Portal: http://www.fao.org/faoterm/en/.)
Carbon credit ownership	Carbon credit ownership grants the holder the rights to any benefit that could be generated from the certification of the carbon sequestration or GHG reduction by the project. Carbon credit ownership rights are held by the owner of the land (or a user who has legal rights to use the land and the products from the land) where the project activity takes place—except when such rights have been expressly transmitted to another person or entity by the landowner or when an authority act, a decision, an order, or a regulation assigns such rights to a person other than the landowner.

[2] Until the date Forestry Activity Requirements enters into force, all relevant annexures of Land-Use & Forests Activity Requirements shall be complied with.

Crop	A crop is a plant or fungus species that is purposefully cultivated and/or harvested to satisfy human and livestock needs.
Eligible area	The eligible area is the part of the project area which meets the applicability conditions of the applied Impact Quantification Methodology.
Forest	A forest is defined by the project's host country (refer to https://cdm.unfccc.int/DNA/index.html). a. In case no forest definition is provided by the Designated National Authority, the project developer can refer to the national forest definition of the project's host country. b. In case no forest definition is established by the host country, the project developer can refer to the forest definition provided by FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 Terms and Definitions: "Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or urban land use." Available here: https://www.fao.org/3/I8661EN/i8661en.pdf
Implementation proportion	The implementation proportion is used in Principle 5 – Financial Additionality and Ongoing Financial Need (Option 3 – Activity Penetration Rate). a. Implementation proportion refers to the ratio (expressed as a percentage) of farmers that consistently implement target practice(s) in a particular agricultural system compared to the total number of farmers in the activity penetration assessment area who are engaged in the same agricultural system. b. A target practice is a new or improved practice that results in the generation of Ecosystem Services and SDG Impacts. c. Agricultural systems are defined by the type of crop(s) and farming practice at the farm level (crop, crop rotation, and/or agroforestry system).
Livestock	Livestock comprises all domesticated terrestrial animals that are raised to provide a diverse array of goods and services, such as traction, meat, milk, eggs, hides, fibres, and feathers. (Also see "animal husbandry" definition.) (Source: FAO, available at FAO's Livestock Systems.)
Micro-scale project	A micro-scale project shall: a. have a maximum project area of 500 hectares (ha), and b. not generate more than 10,000 tCO_2e/yr emission reductions. If a micro-scale project generates more than 10,000 tCO_2e emission reductions in any monitoring year, the project issuance

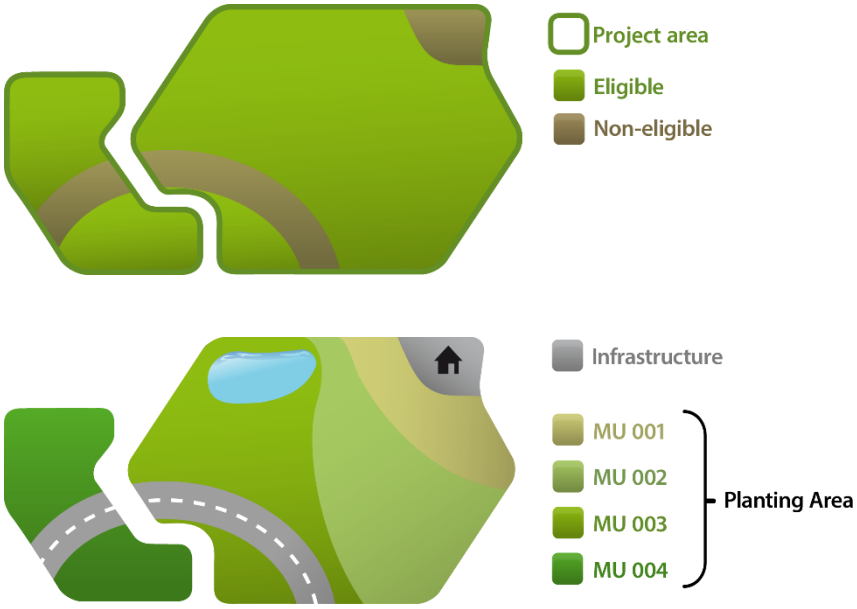
	will be capped at 10,000 tCO_2e. A monitoring year may be covered under two or more consecutive monitoring reports. A micro-scale project applying agriculture activity requirements may apply provisions of validation and verification per the micro-scale project requirements.
Modelling Unit (MU)	Modelling Units are distinct parts of the eligible area (see "eligible area" definition) where carbon stocks can be quantified following an Impact Quantification Methodology. To meet the precision level for the carbon stocks estimation, MU areas have homogeneous characteristics to quantify a certain SDG Impact (growth patterns, management treatment, and start date, among other relevant factors).
New area	A new area is a project area (see "project area" definition) that is added to a project after it achieves design certification.
Non-eligible area	A non-eligible area refers to an area, including water bodies, settlements, forests, protected grasslands, and lands dedicated as places of worship, which do not meet eligibility requirements as set out in the applicable Impact Quantification Methodology.
Project area	The project area is a spatial area or areas submitted for certification with clearly defined boundaries managed to a set of explicit long-term management objectives. a. The project area is the sum of all eligible and non-eligible areas, per Figure 1. b. The project area is divided into MUs for the calculation of the Certified SDG Impact Statement or Product (for example, GSVERs). The area of certification shall be limited to eligible areas, any riparian or other buffer zones located within eligible areas, and areas set aside for conservation. 

	Figure 1: Project Area and MUs
Project developer[3]	The project developer is the person or entity that holds or is applying for certification and therefore is responsible for demonstrating compliance with the requirements on which Gold Standard certification is based. A project developer may be an individual (smallholder or not), a group of individuals (e.g., agriculture cooperatives, other form of associations recognised by local customs, and/or host country laws), or an entity (e.g., privately owned dairy facility).
Project start date	The project start date shall be the earliest date when physical implementation of the project activities take place on ground. For example, for a project that involves a shift in agricultural practice, the start date is the date of the first instance of shifting to the improved agricultural practice.
Reference area	A reference area is an extension of land encompassing the project area and leakage belt that serves to collect reference data and trends as required by applicable activity requirements and/or Impact Quantification Methodology. A reference area can be expanded over time through new area certifications or the addition of Voluntary Project Activities (VPAs) within a Programme of Activities (PoA).
Silvopasture	Silvopasture is a type of agroforestry system that combines forestry and grazing of domesticated animals on pastures, rangelands, or farms. (Adapted from FAO Terminology Portal.)
Small-scale projects	Small-scale projects have emission reductions or removals with a maximum up to 60,000 tCO_2e/yr. A small-scale project may apply a small-scale or large-scale Gold Standard–approved Impact Quantification Methodology.
Smallholder project	A smallholder project shall: a. be either a small-scale or micro-scale project, and b. generate no more than 16,000 tCO_2e/yr emission reductions, and c. be designed in a participatory manner complying with GS4GG Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Requirements, and d. have participants that are defined by the host country as low-income communities, and e. include only project areas where an individual participant owns or leases no more than 3 ha of land in the host country. In the case of leased land, the project must provide evidence that the lessee has been leasing the

[3] *Activity Developer* is used in the place of *Project Developer* in some GS4GG documents. Both terms mean the same.

	land for the past five years. In the case of a project involving community-owned land, the project developer must provide evidence that the average land assigned to each community member is 3 ha or less.
Smallholder project developer	A smallholder project developer: a. owns or leases maximum 3 ha of land in total in the host country, and b. meets the host country's definition of a low-income group/community. In the case of leased land, the project developer shall provide evidence that the lessee has been leasing the land for the past five years. In the case of a project involving community-owned land, the project developer shall provide evidence that the average land assigned to each community member is 3 ha or less.
Wetlands	Wetlands 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. Wetlands have one or more of the following attributes: a. At least periodically, the land predominantly supports plants that typically occur in wetlands. b. The substrate is predominantly undrained, water-saturated soil. 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. (Source: Cowardin et al. 1979, Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States)

3| ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

3.1 | ELIGIBLE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

3.1.1 | The following activity types are eligible:

a. Activities that increase soil organic carbon (SOC) stocks ("SOC projects"). Refer to Annex 1 of the SOC Activity Module's approval procedure for non-exhaustive list of eligible SOC activities. Activities that simply avoid the loss of SOC stocks against a baseline are not eligible.
b. Activities that enhance soil inorganic carbon (SIC) using microbiological agents in agricultural land.
c. Activities that combine agriculture activities with forestry (agroforestry) and/or livestock management (silvopasture) or a combination of these (agro-silvopasture).

d. Activities that involve agricultural fields and/or livestock management activities that reduce methane and/or nitrous oxide emissions are eligible.
    i. Activities that are undertaken on agricultural fields and reduce GHG emissions; may include emissions reduction from water regime management, crop residue burning, or nitrogen management through fertiliser application
    ii. Activities that reduce methane emissions from enteric fermentation from livestock through various mechanisms, including capture and reduction

3.1.2 | Other activities may be proposed by developers as necessary and would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Gold Standard Secretariat.

3.1.3 | Activities in which biomass undergoes an industrial process and results in alterations to the original biomass (e.g., breaking down the composition and/or additives that are non-biogenic), resulting in a new product which would store carbon dioxide (CO_2), are to be considered within the scope of the Engineered Removals Activity Requirements.

3.2 | GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

3.2.1 | The eligible area shall not meet the definition of forest[4] at the project start date or at any time in the 10 years prior to the project start date, except for specific cases outlined in 3.2(b) below. The following exceptions may apply:

a. In the case when the eligible area has been deforested during the last 10 years prior to the project start date, the project developer shall:
    i. provide evidence that the deforestation activity has not taken place with an intention to implement proposed project activity, and
    ii. submit a request with evidence to demonstrate the eligibility of the project area, as part of the preliminary review.

b. In case of agricultural activities introduced into existing agroforestry and/or silvopastoral systems that meet the definition of forest,[5] the project developer shall:
    i. demonstrate that the agroforestry and/or silvopastoral systems existed at least 10 years prior to the start of the activity and on the start date, and
    ii. submit a request along with an assessment report to demonstrate the eligibility of the proposed activity, as part of the preliminary review, and

[4] Refer to Annex C of Land-Use & Forests Activity Requirements for further guidance.
[5] Refer to Annex C of Land-Use & Forests Activity Requirements for further guidance.

iii. provide an assessment report that includes remote sensing-based analysis and ground-based assessments with expert opinion to confirm that the eligible project area does not include lands where there has been a conversion from forest to agroforestry and/or silvopastoral systems within 10 years before the start date of the proposed activity.[6]

3.2.2 | The SOC pool of agroforestry activities for both forest and agriculture interventions shall be governed by this document, while all other pools for the forestry component of agroforestry will be governed by the Land-Use & Forests Activity Requirements.

3.2.3 | The eligible area shall not fall (totally or partially) on wetland areas at the project start date or at any time in the 10 years prior to the project start date. (See the Land-Use & Forests Activity Requirements for guidance.)

3.3 | CERTIFICATION OF SOIL ORGANIC CARBON PROJECTS

3.3.1 | Certification of SOC projects is governed by the extant provisions in the Soil Organic Carbon Framework Methodology and associated activity modules. The carbon stock change adjusted for project emissions and leakages shall be assessed according to the Soil Organic Carbon Framework Methodology.

3.3.2 | Performance Shortfall Guidelines and associated requirements apply to SOC projects that underperform (meaning *ex post* CO_2 performance is lower than expected *ex ante* CO_2 performance) and address reversal events (including areas leaving a project).

3.4 | SECURED TITLES

3.4.1 | The following information and evidence shall be provided:

a. Name and contact details of all project participants, e.g., farmers, land owner(s)
b. Each entity's project developer or coordinating and managing entity, legal registration number, and documentation by the governing jurisdiction that proves the entity is in good standing

3.4.2 | For the duration of the crediting period, the project developer shall:

i. hold the carbon credit ownership rights for the project area where a Gold Standard Certified Statement or Product (e.g., GSVERs) is sought, and
ii. hold an uncontested legal land title for the project area, and

[6] For example, cocoa farms might appear as forest areas because of their spectral signature. If the cocoa farms have been in existence for at least 10 years before the start date, such areas can be excluded from the applied definition of forest. However, if there has been a conversion from forest to cocoa farm within 10 years before the start date, such lands are to be excluded from eligible areas.

iii. own the rights for agricultural products for the project area, and

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

3.4.3 | If the project developer does not meet all of the requirements stipulated in list above, the persons or legal entities that do meet those respective requirements shall endorse the proposed project through an agreement that aligns with the duration of the crediting period.

3.4.4 | The project developer shall develop and implement mechanisms to inform all project participants about the notifications shared with Gold Standard on the project, including any amendments such as additions or edits in the details of project participants and information received from the Gold Standard Secretariat.

3.4.5 | Depending on the structure of the project, the project developer shall follow either of the requirements below:

a. **Requirement 1** – The project developer acts on behalf of project participants. For such cases, each project participant shall sign an agreement with the project developer which confirms the following:

   i. The project participant holds the carbon credit ownership rights that are associated with the project activities and has passed these on to the project developer.

   ii. The project participant holds all necessary rights to implement the project activities (e.g., rights to harvest).

   iii. The legal land title or similar entitlement[7] for the land on which the project activities are implemented is uncontested. These agreements shall include all of the following:

      a. Contact details of the project participants

      b. The legal registration number and documentation by the governing jurisdiction that proves the entity is in good standing (in case of an organisation)

      c. Contact details of the landowner (if differing)

      d. Length of lease contract (if applicable)

      e. The roles, responsibilities, obligations, and benefits for the person or entity to implement the project activities.

b. **Requirement 2** – The project developer acts on its own. In such cases, the project developer shall provide evidence that:

[7] 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 person or entity to acquire property by its use, and 2) neighbours or the neighbouring community agree that the land has been used for such time by the person or entity claiming it.

i. it holds the carbon credit ownership rights and the rights for any other Certified SDG Impact Statement or Product that are associated with the project activities, and
ii. it holds all necessary rights to implement the project activities (e.g., rights to harvest), and
iii. the legal land title or similar entitlement for the land on which the project activities are implemented is uncontested.

3.5 | NEW AREA CERTIFICATION

3.5.1 | To add new areas to a design certified project, the following requirements apply:

a. The inclusion of new areas and its certification shall follow Design Change Request Requirements and Procedures.
b. For new areas proposed for inclusion, the crediting period end date shall be the same as that of the design certified activity.

3.5.2 | New areas added to retroactive projects shall follow the requirements for retroactive issuance per the Principles & Requirements, GHG Emissions Reductions & Sequestration Product Requirements, and the requirements stated in this document.

3.6 | REMOVAL OF AREAS

3.6.1 | Removal of a certified area or reduction in size of a certified area may be requested by the project developer following the design change procedure. This may be combined with the performance certification or renewal of design certification. Materiality of the change and its implication on the project's capacity to continuously deliver SDG impacts shall be assessed by the Validation and Verification Body (VVB).

3.7 | SMALLHOLDER PROJECTS

3.7.1 | For a smallholder project that is defined as a small-scale project and generates (or are capped at) a maximum of 16,000 tCO_2e emission reductions in any monitoring year, the project issuance will be capped at 16,000 tCO_2e. A monitoring year may be covered under two or more consecutive monitoring reports.

3.7.2 | If a smallholder project also involves measures/technology that are eligible under GS4GG activity requirements other than the Agriculture Activity Requirements, the emission cap defined above is applicable only to the component corresponding to the Agriculture Activity Requirements. In such cases, the project developer shall define each component separately in a manner that clearly differentiates emissions reduction/removal units for each component correspondingly.

4| ELIGIBILITY PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS

4.1 | PRINCIPLE 1 – CONTRIBUTION TO CLIMATE SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.1.1 | Increasing resilience in dealing with impacts of climate change is crucial for achieving income stability, food security, and long-term development. Therefore, preserving and increasing adaptive capacity for project participants should be a key element of every project. As part of project design and development, the project developer should do the following:

1. Review and identify the likely changes in climate and weather caused by the impact of climate change in the project area. The relevant information on potential impacts may be sourced from peer-reviewed publications, official publications, and studies conducted by reputable local or international organisations (e.g., Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], FAO, World Wide Fund for Nature [WWF]).
2. Discuss the likely effect with the magnitude of identified impacts with the project participants as part of the stakeholder consultation process. For example, potential impacts may include the following:
    i. Impact on livelihood of participants
    ii. Impact on farm productivity
3. Identify adaptation activities aligned with the scope and context of proposed project in consultation with the project participants. This may include an implementation and monitoring plan as part of the project design document. For example, adaptation activities may include the following:
    i. Practices that may increase the resilience of farming systems
    ii. Measures to improve the efficiency of water use and soil fertility
    iii. Crops (crop breeds) with improved characteristics
    iv. Crop rotation schemes
    v. Knowledge-sharing of traditional and new agricultural practices
    vi. Diversification of livelihoods, such as increased agricultural productivity, a greater variety of cultivated crops, and identification of other income streams

4.2 | PRINCIPLE 2 – SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS

4.2.1 | The project developer shall conduct the full assessment of the proposed project following the Safeguarding Principles & Requirements. Additionally, for agriculture project activity, the project developer shall identify and manage:

a. existing patches of native tree species, and
b. single solitary stems of native tree species, and

c. habitats of rare, threatened, and endangered species, and
d. areas relevant for habitat connectivity.

4.2.2 | The project developer shall maintain buffer zones for all water bodies, excluding irrigation channels, on both sides of any permanent or temporary water bodies, such as natural lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands. The following riparian buffer width parameters shall be considered when designating the buffer zones:

a. 5 metres (m) horizontal width along both sides of water courses between 1 m and up to 5 m wide
b. For farms < 2 ha, buffer width may be reduced to 2 m on both sides
c. 8 m horizontal width along both sides of water courses between 5 m and 10 m wide and around springs, wetlands, and other water bodies
d. 15 m horizontal width along both sides of rivers wider than 10 m wide
e. No additional non-application zones required alongside fully established riparian buffers

4.2.3 | In addition, in these buffer zones, the project developer shall ensure that:

a. all existing native trees are kept, and
b. no fertiliser or pesticides are used, and
c. no logging activities take place, unless required as part of management practice (logging cannot be for commercial purposes), and
d. no heavy machinery is used for agricultural practices, and
e. in case trees are planted, they shall be:
    i. native tree species, or
    ii. non-native tree species which have a clear and established climate change benefit, especially with reference to water conservation. Introduction of non-native species in buffer zones shall also specifically demonstrate adherence with Section P.9.12 of the Safeguarding Principles & Requirements.

4.2.4 | If the project area is situated in a watershed where it has been demonstrated that the groundwater table has been decreasing over the last 10 years, then the project activity shall not increase groundwater extraction.

4.2.5 | It shall be ensured that water bodies are not polluted by the activities, including runoff from project fields.

4.3 | PRINCIPLE 3 – STAKEHOLDER INCLUSIVITY

4.3.1 | The project developer shall refer to the Stakeholder Consultation Engagement Requirements for requirements.

4.4 | PRINCIPLE 4 – DEMONSTRATION OF REAL OUTCOMES

4.4.1 | The total length of the combined crediting period shall be a maximum of 20 years. The length of the individual crediting period and the frequency of its

renewal or the length of the fixed crediting period shall be defined by the Impact Quantification Methodology.

4.4.2 | The crediting period starts either with the project start date or three years prior to the date of project design certification, whichever occurs later. 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.

4.5 | PRINCIPLE 5 – FINANCIAL ADDITIONALITY AND ONGOING FINANCIAL NEED

4.5.1 | Retroactive cycle projects shall submit the request for design certification with positive validation opinion to Gold Standard within five years of its start date. Projects submitted for design certification at a date later than five years from the project start date will not be eligible for Gold Standard certification regardless of listing status.

4.5.2 | Submission of retroactive cycle projects for preliminary review shall meet the requirements in Principles & Requirements.

4.5.3 | The project developer shall demonstrate that the proposed activity is neither directly mandated by law nor otherwise triggered by legal requirements (e.g., legally binding agreements, covenants, consent decrees, or contracts with government agencies or private parties). If such legal requirements are identified, crediting for the activity shall be allowed only until the date the legal requirements take effect.

4.5.4 | The project shall apply one of the following options to demonstrate the project's additionality, unless otherwise stated in the Impact Quantification Methodology.

Option 1 – Approved Additionality Tools

4.5.5 | The latest version of GS4GG-approved additionality tools may be applied to demonstrate additionality. The project developer shall refer to the GS4GG requirements for additionality when applying the additionality tool.

4.5.6 | Other options may be proposed by the stakeholder following the procedure for development, revision, and clarification of methodologies and methodological tools.

Option 2 – Positive List

4.5.7 | The project developer may choose to apply a positive list to demonstrate additionality if the project meets the following requirements:

a. The project area is located in a country or region with the most recent United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Indicator[8] below 0.55 or in a small island developing state (SIDS).
b. The project activities are not 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. For high-income countries, all legal requirements shall be deemed to be enforced. For countries other than high-income countries, legal requirements shall only be deemed to be unenforced based on authoritative, up-to-date information of non-enforcement that is relevant and applicable to the mitigation activity.
c. In addition, at least one of the following requirements shall be met:
    i. In the project area, a minimum of five native crop species are being cultivated in a locally adapted agroforestry system.
    ii. The project is a smallholder or micro-scale project and results in GSVERs of less than 16,000 tCO_{2eq} per annum.

4.5.8 | The project developer shall provide a detailed justification for each selected criterion in the project design document, and the VVB shall validate the relevance of selected criteria during activity validation. As an illustration: When applying optional criteria from the positive list to a methane reduction from rice cultivation project, the criterion ”In the project area, a minimum of five native crop species are being cultivated in a locally adapted agroforestry system” would NOT be applicable because the project focuses on methane reduction techniques in rice paddies.

Option 3 – Activity Penetration Rate

4.5.9 | A project developer may use this option for demonstrating additionality if the project is applying GHG Emissions Reductions & Sequestration Product Requirements and annual GHG reductions are less than 60,000 tCO_2e.

4.5.10 | The project activity is adopted by less than 5% of farmers in the activity penetration assessment area,[9] where the number of farmers adopting the project activity represents the farmers participating in the project.

4.5.11 | Adoption of practices in the activity penetration assessment area shall consider the number of farmers consistently implementing an activity over time. To assess the implementation proportion of a practice, it is necessary to conduct a temporal analysis that encompasses the most recent five years before the proposed project start date. A minimum of three years of data within this five-year period is required to carry out the analysis.

4.5.12 | If the implementation proportion over the period doesn’t show a clear trend and the average implementation rate is equal to or higher than the activity

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

[9] Area selected for the assessment of activity penetration is a demarcated area, clearly defined in the project documents, which is to be used only for the specific purpose to assess activity penetration.

penetration threshold, then the activity shall not demonstrate additionality by applying Option 3.

4.5.13 | If the implementation proportion over the period shows a decreasing trend and the average implementation rate is lower than the activity penetration threshold, the project developer shall demonstrate that the decreasing adoption rate is not driven by an expectation of becoming eligible for carbon credits.

4.5.14 | If the implementation proportion over the period shows an increasing rate and the average implementation rate is lower is considered eligible for the current crediting period (provided it remains below the threshold). However, the project developer shall assess the implementation rate at design certification renewal among the non-project participants. If the activity is found to breach the activity penetration threshold, then the project cannot renew its crediting period by continuing to demonstrate additionality by applying Option 3.

4.5.15 | Activity penetration assessment area requirements: The assessment area is essential for enabling accurate quantification of the rate of adoption of a certain activity. It ensures transparency, comparability, and scientific rigor in the assessment of activity penetration.

a. The minimum size of the activity penetration assessment area shall be determined according to Table 2.

Table 2. Minimum Assessment Area to Be Considered to Compute Activity Penetration Rate

Size of project area	Minimum size of assessment area
Project area is ≤1,000 ha	100% of project area
1,000 ha < project area <= 5,000 ha	80% of project area or 1,000 ha, whichever is larger
5,000 ha < project area <= 10,000 ha	60% of project area or 4,000 ha, whichever is larger
10,000 ha < project area <= 50,000 ha	40% of project area or 6,000 ha, whichever is larger

b. The Köppen-Geiger climatic class (10 m resolution) of the project area shall be the same as that in the activity penetration assessment area. If the project area falls on more than one Köppen-Geiger climatic class, then the activity penetration assessment area shall be split to include all the climatic classes the project area falls into. In this case, the size of the activity penetration assessment area in each climatic class will depend on the size of the project area in that climatic class (see requirement for size of activity penetration assessment area).

c. At least 90% of the activity penetration assessment area shall have the same cropping systems as 90% of the project area.

d. At least 90% of the activity penetration assessment area shall be under the same agricultural practices as 90% of the project area.

e. At least 90% of the activity penetration assessment area shall have the same soil types that are prevalent in 90% of the project area. When more than one soil type is found in the project area, then the proportion of each soil type in the activity penetration assessment area must not differ beyond ± 5% of the proportion of the soil type in the project area. For example:

    i. Project area soil types – Soil A: 30%, Soil B: 20%, Soil C: 50%

    ii. Acceptable reference area soil types – Soil A: 25%, Soil B: 15%, Soil C: 55%, Soil D: 5%

f. Land-tenure systems: At least 90% of the activity penetration assessment area should be governed by the land-tenure system that is prevalent in 90% of the project area. In case of multiple land-tenure systems, the proportion of land-tenure systems in the reference region must not differ more than ± 5% of the proportion of the same land-tenure system in the project area. For example:

    i. Project area land-tenure systems – System A: 30%, System B: 20%, System C: 50%

    ii. Acceptable reference area land-tenure systems – System A: 35%, System B: 20%, System C: 45%

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Version	Date	Description
1.0	22/12/2025	First version released

Published by Gold Standard

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