

OPTIONAL REQUIREMENT

GHG EMISSIONS REDUCTION & SEQUESTRATION PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS

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SUMMARY

This document provides specific rules and requirements for projects/PoAs seeking issuance of GS4GG specific products, namely Gold Standard Verified Emission Reductions (GSVERs), Gold Standard labels for Certified Emission Reductions (GSCERs) and Gold Standard Planned Emissions Reductions (PERs) for Land Use & Forests. It also provides the requirements for projects/PoAs transitioning from other standards to GS4GG.

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1| SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- 1.1.1 | This document represents the Product Requirements for the issuance of:
 - a. Gold Standard Verified Emission Reductions (GSVERs)
 - b. Gold Standard labels for Certified Emission Reductions (GSCERs)
 - c. Gold Standard Planned Emissions Reductions (PERs) for Land Use & Forests
- 1.1.2 | Certain Requirements noted in this document are not applicable to Projects applying the Gold Standard [Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements](#) (hereafter "LUF requirements"), these are noted as "**LUF – N/A**".
- 1.1.3 | Claims made regarding Gold Standard Voluntary Emission Reductions (GSVERs), Certified Emission Reductions (GSCERs) or Planned Emission Reductions (PERs) shall be in line with the [Claims Guidelines](#).
- 1.1.4 | Unless otherwise indicated in this document or associated documents, all projects applying these Requirements shall be consistent with applicable UNFCCC rules and requirements for [Clean Development Mechanism \(CDM\)](#) or [Joint Implementation](#) (JI) projects, as periodically updated.

2| GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 2.1.1 | Unless otherwise stated elsewhere in the [Principles & Requirements](#), Projects involving a mix of eligible and ineligible components can only claim credits for the Emission Reductions and/or sequestration associated with the eligible component of the project.
- 2.1.2 | Bundled Projects¹: Where Projects are submitted together for certification within a bundle, each Project within the bundle shall individually conform to all GS4GG Requirements. Eligibility criteria with regards to the scale of the Project shall apply to the bundle as a whole and not to the individual Projects.
- 2.1.3 | Programme of Activities (PoA): **(LUF – N/A)** Where a group of Projects are submitted together for Gold Standard Design Certification within a Programme of Activities, each of these Projects shall conform to all Requirements including the [Programme of Activity Requirements](#). A microscale VPA can only be part of a Microscale PoA and shall conform to all requirements including those listed in Annex A of the [Programme of Activity Requirements](#).

¹ Several project activities which form a single project activity or portfolio without the loss of distinctive characteristics of each component.

3| LOCATION OF PROJECT

3.1 | GSVER project

3.1.1 | VER Projects may be located in any host country or state. However, where host countries or states have mandatory operational schemes² to reduce GHG emissions in any form (e.g. cap & trade, carbon tax etc.), Projects shall only be eligible if the Project Developer has either:

- a. provided Gold Standard with satisfactory justification that no double counting of emission reductions occur or
- b. has committed to retiring eligible units equal to the quantity of Gold Standard VERs. Refer to [Annex A](#) of this document.

3.2 | GSCER project (LUF – N/A)

3.2.1 | CDM Projects shall be located in a [Non-Annex I country](#), as defined by the UNFCCC.

3.2.2 | JI Projects shall be located in an [Annex I country](#) with a commitment inscribed in [Annex B of Kyoto Protocol](#), as defined by the UNFCCC.

4| ELIGIBLE GREENHOUSE GASES

4.1.1 | Only Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄) and/or Nitrous Oxide (N₂O) are eligible for GSVERs or GSCERs, provided Projects comply with all GS4GG Requirements and eligibility criteria.

4.1.2 | Projects involving the reduction of both eligible and non-eligible greenhouse gases shall be eligible for the crediting of emission reductions associated with eligible gases only.

5| TYPES OF PROJECT

5.1 | GSVERs and GSCERs project

5.1.1 | The Following Project types are eligible for issuance of GSVERs or GSCERs:

- a. **Renewable Energy Supply:** Project activities that generate and deliver energy services (e.g. mechanical work/electricity/heat) from non-fossil and renewable energy sources. Note that specific requirements apply with regards to the issuance of Gold Standard

² Alignment with Paris Agreement rules may be required in the future. Please refer to relevant Gold Standard Requirements, as applicable.

Labelled Renewable Energy GSCERs and GSVERs, as listed in section 2 of the [Renewable Energy Activity Requirements](#).

- b. **End-Use Energy Efficiency Improvement:** Project activities that reduce energy requirements as compared to baseline scenario without affecting the level and quality of services or products, where the end user of the products and services are clearly identified and when the physical intervention is required at the user end. For example, efficient cooking, heating, lighting, etc.
- c. **Waste Handling & Disposal:** The waste handling and disposal category refers to all waste handling Projects that deliver an energy service (e.g. LFG with some of the recovered methane used for electricity generation) or a usable product with sustainable development benefits (e.g. composting).
- d. **Land Use and Forests:** including Afforestation/Reforestation and Agriculture Projects (CDM A/R projects are not eligible for issuance of GSCERs, however project may issue GSVERs after transitioning to GS4GG)

6| ODA DECLARATION

6.1 | GSVERs and GSCERs project

- 6.1.1 | Projects are ineligible for carbon crediting under GS4GG if the OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA) is provided to the project under the condition that the credits generated by the Project will be transferred, either directly or indirectly, to the donor country providing ODA support. The OECD defines ODA as financial flows:
 - a. To developing countries and multilateral institutions;
 - b. Provided by government agencies (e.g. USAID);
 - c. Whose main objective is the economic development and welfare of developing countries; and
 - d. That are concessional in character, conveying a grant element of at least 25%.
- 6.1.2 | Project Developer submitting a Project located in a country named by the OECD Development Assistance Committee's ODA recipient [list](#) shall sign and submit the [ODA Declaration](#).
- 6.1.3 | Where there is a material change in the role of ODA for the development or implementation of a Project, the Project Developer shall immediately submit an amended [ODA Declaration](#).

7| FINANCIAL ADDITIONALITY & ONGOING FINANCIAL NEED

7.1 | GSVER projects

- 7.1.1 | All Projects shall be demonstrated to be additional, meaning that they shall reduce anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases below those that would have occurred in the absence of the proposed Project.
- 7.1.2 | All Projects shall demonstrate Ongoing Financial Need at Certification Renewal following latest version of [Principles & Requirements](#) available at the time of renewal of their crediting period, unless otherwise stated in the relevant [Activity Requirements](#).
- 7.1.3 | If the stakeholder consultation for the Project was conducted after the start date of the Project, the Gold Standard reserves the right to require that the Project Developer demonstrate the revenues from carbon credits were seriously considered in the decision to implement the Project. Evidence to support carbon revenue consideration and continuous actions may include contracts, draft versions of Project information, correspondence with financial institutions or other stakeholders, minutes and notes of Board/Management meetings, agreements or negotiations with auditors, publications in newspapers.

7.2 | GSCER projects (LUF – N/A)

- 7.2.1 | Gold Standard CDM and JI Projects are not required to carry out additional assessment for demonstration of additionality over and above what has been done for registration/determination with the CDM EB/JISC unless the Project falls into a category that is deemed non-Additional in an applicable GS4GG [Activity Requirement](#). In such cases the relevant Activity Requirement shall take precedence.
- 7.2.2 | Gold Standard CDM and JI Projects shall demonstrate Ongoing Financial Need at Certification Renewal following latest version of [Principles & Requirements](#) available at the time of renewal of their crediting period, unless otherwise stated in the relevant [Activity Requirements](#).

8| ELIGIBLE METHODOLOGIES

8.1 | General Requirement

- 8.1.1 | All Projects shall

- a. conform to the relevant [Activity Requirements](#) and Gold Standard Approved [Methodologies](#), including eligible [CDM Methodologies](#)³.
- b. also meet the additional GS4GG methodology eligibility requirements, where applicable. Refer to eligible [CDM Methodologies](#).

8.1.2 | The Gold Standard, subject to decision from the TAC, reserves the right to enforce revision to the applied methodology(ies) at any point, in case its application by a project/VPA has resulted and/or will result in overestimation of emission reductions.

8.2 | GSVER projects

8.2.1 | GSVER Projects shall apply a Gold Standard [Approved methodology](#). The Project shall apply the latest version of the methodology and applicable tools available at the time of first submission (preliminary review) of the Project. For transition projects, refer to [Annex B](#) for methodology version applicability requirements.

8.2.2 | The methodology and tool version applied at the time of first submission (preliminary review) may be used for Design Certification as long as the Project is submitted for validation⁴ within six months after the time of first submission for Preliminary Review. If this condition is not met, the latest version of the methodology and applicable tool(s) available at the time of submission for validation shall be applied.

8.2.3 | GSVER Projects shall apply the latest version of the methodology and applicable tools available at time of submission for validation⁵ of Crediting Period Renewal. Please refer to relevant GS4GG requirements on Crediting Period Renewal for further guidelines.

8.3 | GSCER projects (LUF – N/A)

8.3.1 | CDM and JI Projects seeking issuance of GSCERs shall use an approved [CDM methodology](#) and applicable tools available at the time of registration with CDM. The project shall also meet additional GS4GG methodology eligibility requirements, where applicable. Refer to eligible [CDM methodology](#).

8.3.2 | CDM and JI Projects shall update to the latest version of an approved [CDM methodology](#) and applicable tools available at the time of renewal of crediting period.

³ In case any CDM methodology is not present in the GS4GG list of eligible CDM methodologies, the PD/CME may reach out to standard@goldstandard.org for further steps.

⁴ The time of submission for validation is the date when the VVB is contracted for the Validation of the Project, as formally confirmed by the VVB in the audit report.

⁵ The time of submission for validation for crediting period renewal is the date when the VVB is contracted for the re-validation of the Project, as formally confirmed by the VVB in the audit report.

9| PROJECT SCALE

9.1 | GSVER Projects

9.1.1 | GSVER Projects may be registered as 'large scale', 'small scale' (for the applicability of methodologies and tools only) or 'microscale'. Scale is defined in the relevant [Activity Requirements](#) or where these do not exist then per following paragraphs.

9.1.2 | All Projects exceeding the small scale thresholds are defined as large scale. Small scale projects are defined in accordance with [CDM project standard for project activities](#), as below;

- a. **Type 1: Renewable energy Projects:** maximum output capacity of 15 MW(e) or 45MW(th). In this context:
 - i. "Output" is the installed/rated capacity as indicated by the manufacturer of the equipment or plant, irrespective of the actual load factor of the plant. The installed/rated capacity of renewable electricity generating units that involve turbine generator systems shall be based on the installed/rated capacity of the generator;
 - ii. Regarding the "appropriate equivalent" of 15 MW, refers to MW, but the project participants may refer to MW(p)⁶, 3 MW(e) or MW(th). As MW(e) is the most common denomination, MW is defined as MW(e), and otherwise an appropriate conversion factor shall be applied;
 - iii. For biomass, biofuel and biogas project activities, the maximal limit of 15 MW(e) is equivalent to a 45 MW thermal output of the equipment or the plant (e.g. boilers). For thermal applications of biomass, biofuels or biogas (e.g. cookstoves), the limit of 45 MW(th) is the installed/rated capacity of the thermal application equipment or device(s) (e.g. biogas stoves). For electrical or mechanical applications, the limit of a 15 MW installed/rated output shall be used. In the case of co-firing renewable and fossil fuels, the rated capacity of the system when using fossil fuel shall apply;
 - iv. For thermal applications of solar energy project activities, "maximum output" shall be calculated using a conversion factor of 700 W(th)/m² of aperture area of glazed flat plate or evacuated tubular collector, that is, the eligibility limit in terms of aperture

⁶ For solar photovoltaic applications, 15 MW(p) may be defined by manufacturers' specifications under testing conditions of 1000 W/m² and 25 deg C or 600 W/m² and 35 deg C.

area is 64,000 m² of the collector⁷. The project participants may also use other conversion factors determined, but shall then justify why the chosen conversion factor is more appropriate to the project activity;

Example of technologies includes but not limited to solar photovoltaic, hydro, wind and renewable biomass that supply electricity to grid, minigrid, individual households/users or groups of households/users.

b. Type 2: End-use energy efficiency project improvement:

activities that reduce energy consumption, on the supply and/or demand side, with a maximum energy saving of 60 GWh per year (or an appropriate equivalent) in any year of the crediting period. In this context, for project activities that improve thermal energy efficiency, the maximum energy saving of 60 GWh(e) per year is equivalent to 180 GWh(th) per year saving;

Examples of technologies and measures include high efficiency biomass fired project devices (cookstoves or ovens or dryers) to replace the existing devices and/or energy efficiency improvements in existing biomass fired cookstoves or ovens or dryers.

c. Type 3: Other project activities: project involves technologies such Safe Water Supply, Waste management, etc. not included in Type I or Type II that result in GHG emission reductions not exceeding 60,000 ton CO₂e per year in any year of the crediting period.

Examples of technologies and measures include solid waste composting, Water purification technologies including, but are not limited to, water filters (e.g. membrane, activated carbon, ceramic filters), solar energy powered ultraviolet (UV) disinfection devices, solar disinfection techniques, photocatalytic disinfection equipment, pasteurization appliances, chemical disinfection methods (e.g. chlorination), combined treatment approaches (e.g. flocculation plus disinfection), boreholes, wells, water kiosks.

9.1.3 | 'Microscale' Projects are those projects associated with annual emission reductions of less than or equal to 10,000 tCO₂eq in each year of the crediting period. In case of A/R Projects with a maximum project area of 500ha are classified under microscale. It should be noted that the Gold Standard definition of 'microscale projects' is different from the CDM's definition of 'microscale projects'.

⁷ This conversion is not applicable for solar thermal parabolic and trough-type collectors used for high-grade solar thermal energy applications.

- 9.1.4 | Where the maximum level of allowable annual emission reductions for a small scale or microscale Project has exceeded during project operation, that Project shall only be eligible for GSCERs, GSVERs or ERUs up to the maximum number of allowable credits corresponding to project scale definition per year as per defined Project scale. For e.g., when a micro-scale project achieves emission reductions greater than 10,000 tonnes of CO₂eq in a given year, the claimable emissions reductions shall be capped at 10,000 tonnes of CO₂eq.
- 9.1.5 | GSVER project and VPAs applying suppressed demand baseline, irrespective of the applied methodology (approved GS or CDM methodology) and individual technology units, shall demonstrate compliance with applicable project type Small Scale thresholds at the aggregate level of the project or VPA, as defined in paragraph 9.1.1 |above. Refer to Rule update for further details and CORSIA eligibility- [Application of Suppressed Demand, Project Type And Applicable Scale Threshold](#).

9.2 | GSCER projects (LUF – N/A)

- 9.2.1 | Gold Standard CDM or JI Projects may be 'large scale' or 'small scale' Projects. All Project exceeding the small scale thresholds are defined as large scale. The applicability of methodologies is defined in accordance with [CDM project standard for project activities](#).
- 9.2.2 | Small Scale Projects are defined as per section - Project type and eligibility, [CDM project standard for project activities](#), summarised herein :
- a. Type I: Renewable energy project activities with a maximum output capacity of 15 MW (or an appropriate equivalent)
 - b. Type II: Energy-efficiency improvement project activities < = 60 GWh(e) or 180 GWh(th) energy savings per year
 - c. Type III: Other project activities not included in Type I or Type II < = 60,000 tCO₂eq per year
- 9.2.3 | A small-scale CDM project activity may contain more than one component, each belonging to one of the three project types referred above. In this case, the sum of the scale of components belonging to the same project type shall not exceed the limit of that project type.
- 9.2.4 | Microscale CDM projects are defined as per para 121, [CDM project standard for project activities](#) as follows;
- a. Type I: project activities with up to 5 MW output capacity that employ renewable energy as their primary technology
 - b. Type II: project activities that aim to achieve energy savings at a scale of no more than 20 GWh per year; or
 - c. Type III: Other project activities not included in Type I or Type II that aim to achieve GHG emission reductions at a scale of no more than 20 kt CO₂e per year.
- 9.2.5 | GSVERs may be claimed for eligible Project elements that are not covered by a CDM Project as long as the eligible elements are validated and verified separately as a GSVER activity.

10| CREDITING CYCLE & ISSUANCE

10.1 | Crediting Period

a. GSVER projects

10.1.1 | Gold Standard Projects are eligible to claim GSVERs for no more than:

- a. The maximum Certification Renewals/Cycles (i.e. Crediting Period) as stipulated in the relevant [Activity Requirements](#) OR
- b. A maximum of one Certification Renewal Cycle (i.e. Crediting Period of 10 years) in the absence of the Activity Requirements

NOTE

- Project, PoA/VPAs registered with previous versions of Gold Standard and renewing their crediting period under GS4GG shall maintain their existing crediting cycle and maximum crediting periods following [Transition Requirements](#).
- Project, PoA/ CPAs registered with other standards like CDM seeking transition to GS4GG for GSVERs issuance shall refer to [Annex B](#) of this document as applicable.

10.1.2 | Where a Gold Standard Project has been or is registered under one or more other carbon standards or certification schemes, the total aggregated crediting period under all schemes combined shall not exceed the standard crediting period allowed under Gold Standard. Gold Standard status shall immediately be withdrawn from any activities that are found to have violated this requirement and the Gold Standard reserves its right to pursue remedies in accordance with and pursuant to [Gold Standard Terms & Conditions](#). Refer to [Annex B](#) for further details on crediting period requirements for transition projects.

b. GSCER projects

10.1.3 | CDM or JI Projects are eligible to claim GSCERs for no more than:

- a. The maximum Certification Renewals/Cycles (i.e. Crediting Period) as stipulated in the relevant [Activity Requirements](#) OR
- b. A maximum of one Certification Renewal Cycle (i.e. Crediting Period of 10 years) in the absence of the Activity Requirements

10.1.4 | For CDM or JI projects, registered crediting period cannot be changed/extended.

10.1.5 | For CDM or JI projects, the labelling of emission reductions after registration with GS4GG is allowed up to maximum crediting period as per relevant GS4GG activity requirements or end of crediting period with standard X, whichever occurs first. The following examples explain how this requirement shall be applied –

If a given project applies for labelling of emission reductions and is registered with Standard X with

- fixed crediting period (10 years): the project can seek labelling under GS4GG for maximum up to 10 years but shall not be extended beyond the end date of crediting period with Standard X.
- renewable crediting period (7*3 year): the project can seek labelling up to the maximum crediting period allowed under relevant GS4GG activity requirements. For example; under GS4GG, the maximum crediting period allowed for renewable energy project is 15 years.
 - o A renewable energy project that has already claimed 5 years under Standard X can claim labelling for 15 years of remaining crediting period after transitioning to GS4GG.
 - o A renewable energy project that has already claimed 10 years under Standard X can claim labelling for 11 years of remaining crediting period after transitioning to GS4GG, i.e., the end date of crediting period with Standard X.

10.1.6 | CDM or JI projects that were registered with previous versions of Gold Standard (i.e. prior to release of the Gold Standard for the Global Goals) are allowed to seek labelling of issued CERs up to their maximum CDM crediting period, i.e., 10 or 21 as per Section 3.0 of [Transition requirements](#).

10.2 | Crediting Period Start Date

a. GSVER projects

10.2.1 | The start date of Crediting Period is the date of start of operation (start of planting for A/R Projects) or a maximum of two years (three years for A/R & AGR) prior to the date of Project Design Certification, whichever occurs later.

10.2.2 | In case the start date of the Crediting Period is after date of Project Design Certification then it may be postponed in line with the requirements listed in paragraph 3.1.3 (b) and (c), of the [Design Change requirements](#). **(LUF – N/A)**

b. GSCER projects

10.2.3 | CDM or JI project seeking GSCERs, the start date of the crediting period with Gold Standard shall be the start date of the crediting period under CDM or maximum of two years prior to the date of first submission (submission for preliminary review), whichever occurs later.

10.3 | ISSUANCE of GSVERs or GSCERs

10.3.1 | Upon completion and approval of the Performance Review the Gold Standard shall certify the entire amount of emission reductions specified in the monitoring report and achieved by the Project. Certification of only part of

total volume of emission reductions specified in the report approved by Gold Standard is not allowed.

- 10.3.2 | Once issued, GSVERs remain valid until they are permanently retired in the Impact Registry or until the time they are used for compliance or retired in an authorised registry (GSCERs). Once issued, GSCERs, or GSVERs cannot be retroactively cancelled.

10.4 | Issuance for Retroactive Period

a. GSVER projects

- 10.4.1 | Projects may be eligible for retroactive crediting for realised emission reductions for maximum two years (three years for A/R and AGR) Projects.

Note - Retroactive crediting of 10 years for A/R Projects and 5 years for agriculture projects is allowed as an exception if time of first submission (preliminary review) was before 01 January 2016 for A/R Projects and 01 January 2017 for agriculture projects.

b. GSCER projects

- 10.4.2 | The project shall be eligible for retroactive crediting for a maximum of two years. However, the total duration of the crediting period of the project shall not exceed the standard crediting period allowed under relevant GS4GG activity requirements.

10.5 | Issuance of GSVERs or GSCERs with REACs

- 10.5.1 | Co-issuance of Renewable Energy Attributes Certificates (REACs)⁸ with GSVERs or GSCERs for same MWh of electricity generated is not permitted. It is, however, possible for a Project to request issuance of either GSVERs or Gold Standard Labelled Renewable Energy Products – see the [Renewable Energy Label Product Requirements](#) for further details.

- 10.5.2 | Furthermore, if the Project also applies the Gold Standard Renewable Energy Label Product Requirements, then the [Gold Standard Validation/Verification Body](#) (hereafter VVB) shall check for double counting at both validation and verification stages by reviewing all relevant registries that could hold REACs from the considered project activity. The list of registries examined by the VVB shall be reported in the Validation Report and Verification Report. Refer to [Renewable Energy Label Product Requirements](#) for further details.

⁸ For example; Green or White Certificates

10.6 | GSCERs Project Cycle (LUF – N/A)

10.6.1 | CDM Project seeking labelling of issued CERs (GSCERs) shall mirror the CDM crediting period renewal cycle for Certification Renewals (e.g. 7 years).

10.7 | Pre-CDM GSVERS and Parallel Registration

10.7.1 | Project Developers can claim pre-CDM GSVERS for a maximum of two years before start of the CDM or JI crediting period (date of Design Certification/determination under UNFCCC) provided that the project enters into an agreement with the Gold Standard committing to surrender to the Gold Standard, for immediate retirement, CERs or ERUs that will be issued in respect of GHG Reductions generated by the Project during the CDM or JI crediting period in an amount equal to the Pre-CDM VERs or Pre-JI VERs. The agreement shall make use of the [Emission Reduction Acquisition Agreement template](#) and no delivery is required for a grace period of the initial two years of issuance after CDM Design Certification/JI determination.

10.7.2 | An eligible project may be submitted for Design Certification to both the GS CDM/JI stream and the GSVER stream in parallel.

- a. If the proposed CDM/JI Project is successfully registered under the UNFCCC, Project Developer shall immediately inform The Gold Standard and the GSVER Project shall be cancelled.
- b. If the proposed CDM/JI Project is rejected by the UNFCCC, Project Developer shall immediately inform the Gold Standard. Only if the Project was rejected due to inapplicability of the methodology, can it continue to Design Certification stage under the GSVER stream.

10.8 | Project Design Change

10.8.1 | Permanent changes in project or PoA/CPAs design shall be assessed as per the requirements listed in the [Design Change Requirements](#).

11 | LAND USE & FORESTS SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

11.1 | Compliance Buffer

11.1.1 | For projects applying the [LUF Requirements](#), 20% of the issued PERs and GSVERS shall be transferred into the Gold Standard Buffer. The transfer is distributed pro rata according to the vintage years. Upon written notice to the Gold Standard at or prior to issuance, the Project Developer may transfer issued GSVERS from other Gold Standard certified Projects to the Gold Standard Conformity Buffer in lieu of the carbon credits from the Project.

11.2 | Planned Emissions Reductions (PERs)

11.2.1 | After a successful Project Design Certification or subsequent Performance Certification, A/R Projects may issue PERs for maximum 5 years and Agriculture Projects may issue PERs up to 3 years.

- 11.2.2 | Annex C contains a guideline that provides an overview of the issuance, transfer and retirement of Planned Emissions Reductions and GSVERs issued from Projects following the [LUF Requirements](#).
- 11.2.3 | PERs may be issued by Projects following the [LUF Requirements](#). They are subject to the following requirements:
- a. PERs shall be issued only from project areas that have scientifically robust carbon modelling as required by the relevant GS [Approved Methodology](#).
 - b. PERs shall be issued only from project areas where the VVB confirms, by certification, that trees have been planted or activity has taken place.
 - c. PERs shall be issued only after a successful Design Certification or subsequent Performance Certification.
 - d. 80% of the PERs shall be issued to the project's registry account according to their expected vintage years (years of delivery). The remaining 20% shall be issued to the Compliance Buffer.
 - e. All transfers and assignments of PERs shall be recorded in the [Impact Registry](#).
 - f. After Performance Certification, where the effective emission reductions are verified, the PERs are converted into GSVERs, which are issued into the [Impact Registry](#).
 - g. Project Developers shall transparently communicate the differences between PERs and GSVERs as described by the definitions of the [Claims Guidelines](#).

11.3 | Bundled PERS

- 11.3.1 | Gold Standard allows for the 'bundling' of PERs with other GSVERs and GSCERs. The applicability, eligibility and Requirements can be found in the Gold Standard Bundled PER Guidelines & Requirements.

11.4 | Carbon Performance

- 11.4.1 | The Project Developer must ensure that the project carbon stocks are aligned with the number of issued PERs and GSVERs over time. This section also defines the activities that shall be implemented if the project carbon stocks decline below the levels of issued PERs and GSVERs. For the Performance Certification the project owner shall provide documentation using the most recent version of the Carbon Performance template.
- a. At any time during a crediting period, the Project Developer shall ensure that
 - the quantity of the PERs with respect to the project is equal or less than to the project's expected carbon stocks
 - the quantity of GSVERs with respect to the project is equal or higher (not less) to the project's expected carbon stocks.

- b. Incidents, or events, that affect compliance with requirement (a) shall be reported to the Gold Standard. If they occur outside a certification process, the incidents or events shall be reported to the Gold Standard no more than 30 days after their discovery. The Carbon Performance template shall be used for this reporting.
- c. If compliance with requirement (a) is not maintained, the project will be in a performance shortfall scenario. The Project Developer shall follow the requirements in the Performance Shortfall Guidelines and shall demonstrate to the Gold Standard how the project will realistically address the performance shortfall and recover appropriate levels of carbon stocks to comply with requirement (a).
- d. The Project Developer shall use one or more of the following approaches according to the requirements in the Performance Shortfall Guidelines:
 - retiring/locking of PERs or GSVERs from the project which are not yet transferred or retired/locked
 - purchasing of GSVERs or GSCERs from any other Gold Standard projects (these can also be from non LUF project types such as renewable energy)
 - replanting of an appropriate planting area and recovery of the project carbon stocks over time
 - planting of new areas to generate further GSVERs

11.4.2 | During the period where the project owner is not in compliance with requirement 11.4.1 |a, above, an equal number of PERs or GSVERs from the Gold Standard Compliance Buffer will be put 'on-hold'. Further PERs or GSVERs shall only be issued for the project after the project owner has complied with requirement 11.4.1 |a, above. If after 5 years, the project developer cannot demonstrate that compliance with requirement 11.4.1 |a, above will occur, the project owner shall follow the Non-Conformity process as per Principles & Requirements.

12| GS-VVB REQUIREMENTS

- 12.1.1 | Gold Standard Project Developers may use a [GS-VVB](#) as stated in the Gold Standard [Validation & Verification Body Requirements](#).
- 12.1.2 | VVB is required to conduct a site-visit as part of all Validation and Verification.
- 12.1.3 | GS4GG requirements for validation and verification site visits shall supersede the CDM requirements for GSCER & GSVER projects, PoA/CPAs. A CDM project or CDM PoA/CPA may be exempted from undertaking an audit site visit for CDM validation or CDM verification process but it shall comply with the GS4GG requirements in order to pursue Gold Standard Design Certification and Performance Certification for issuance and labelling of CERs.
- 12.1.4 | Gold Standard Project administration is managed through [Impact Registry](#). All Project Developers seeking to apply for Design Certification under the Gold

Standard CDM, JI or VER streams shall [open an account](#) in the [Impact Registry](#).

13| UPGRADING PROJECT FROM OTHER CARBON STANDARDS OR CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

13.1 | Transition of Project, POA/CPA from Other Standards

13.1.1 | Project, PoA/CPA registered with other carbon standard or certification scheme, for example CDM may transition and register with GS4GG to issue GSVERs following the applicable requirements and guidelines provided in [Annex B](#).

13.1.2 | It is possible to upgrade an eligible A/R project from both [CDM/JI](#) & [VERRA/CCBA](#) to GSVERs following applicable requirements and guidelines provided in [Annex B](#).

13.2 | GSCER Project to GSVER Project

13.2.1 | The Project Developer may convert registered GSCER Project into a GSVER Project following applicable requirements and guidelines provided in [Annex B](#).

13.3 | Issued GSCERs to GSVERs (LUF – N/A)

13.3.1 | The Project Developer may convert issued GSCERs into GSVERs following the applicable requirements and guidelines provided in [Annex B](#).

13.4 | GSVER to GSCER/JI Project (LUF – N/A)

13.4.1 | Project Developers may seek to convert a GSVER Project to a Gold Standard CDM/JI Project at any time during the crediting period with respect to future emission reductions, provided the Project Developer either applies under the Gold Standard CDM/JI stream before any GSVERs have been issued, or enters into an agreement with the Gold Standard according to which they commit to surrender to the Gold Standard, for immediate retirement, CERs or ERUs that will be issued in respect of GHG Reductions generated by the Project in an amount equal to VERs already issued. The agreement shall make use of Emission Reduction Acquisition Agreement template.

ANNEX A – DOUBLE COUNTING REQUIREMENTS

1| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prior to 2013 the Kyoto Protocol provided for the management, accounting and reporting of greenhouse gases across the international Claims. While the EU and other countries continue to base accounting on Kyoto generally the international approach and the markets that serve them have become increasingly fragmented and unregulated. It appears very likely that for the period until 2020 and potentially beyond, this state of uncertainty will remain.

In the absence of a robust global architecture the possibility for double counting of emissions reductions exists. It is therefore critical to the authority and reputation of the Gold Standard that a rule/process is provided to guard against this. In line with the principles and spirit of the Gold Standard the new approach must be of the highest rigour and transparency and remove any doubt as to the possibility of double counting where GSVERs are involved.

It remains uncertain how this situation will evolve over time but wherever VERs are issued by a project within an affected host country or region this will remain an issue. This guideline does not affect other Gold Standard products such as labelling of CERs or Water Benefit Certificates.

2| INTRODUCTION

These Requirements are intended to apply where the potential exists for Double Counting of emissions reductions due to issuance of Gold Standard VERs. It is intended to protect the transparency, credibility and robustness of all Gold Standard VERs. At the same time there are increasing market demands for Gold Standard VERs generated within countries that have cap on GHG emissions.

Typically, the potential for Double Counting arises where there is a government-regulated system/programme for the constraint and monetisation of GHG emissions (such as international emissions trading, cap and trade or carbon tax mechanisms). Examples may include national/international schemes such as the Kyoto Protocol, the EU ETS or sub-national, various regional schemes such as the Chinese, Canadian and American provincial/state-based schemes.

Under these systems/programmes the potential exists for the Gold Standard VERs to be inadvertently or intentionally captured and monetised outside of the Gold Standard issuance-transfer-retirement practice.

The above scenario is typified (though not exclusively) by a cap and trade system whose accounting is managed via Assigned Amount Units (AAUs) or scheme-based compliance credits. Such accounting mechanisms vary widely in quality, rigour and content with differing examples of sector and scope inclusion. The scenario may also occur where a carbon tax exists, for example in South Africa.

This guideline provides a robust response to resolve this issue across the relevant Gold Standard activities.

NOTE that in light of the Paris Agreement the Requirements contained in this Annex are subject to continuous review as new policy is agreed. The Requirements will be updated as the new international agreements and mechanisms are developed.

3| DEFINITION OF DOUBLE COUNTING OF VERS

Double Counting – The scenario wherein the benefit of a single GHG Emission Reduction (ER) unit is used on more than one occasion to:

- Sell to third parties for the purpose of financial gain, VER offsetting or to achieve regulated targets AND/OR
- Include in an account or inventory to avoid the requirement to purchase ER units under a regulated system

Double Counting of ERs is therefore defined as the benefit or value of one ER unit being inadvertently (or indeed intentionally) used twice or more.

This is best illustrated through the following examples:

Example 1 – GSVER issued in a Kyoto Annex B Country⁹ that has achieved its targets: In this example both a VER is issued by Gold Standard and an AAU surplus could be created by the host country. The amount of this surplus includes for the ER created by the GSVER project. This results in two potential purchasers (one for the VER and one for the AAU, typically a second Annex B country) both using the unit to offset their respective emissions.

Therefore, for two tons emitted only one ton (inadvertently issued twice) is used to offset them. We are therefore left with net one ton emitted where there should be none. In this example while the 'extra' AAU is not directly linked to the activity itself it only exists because of the presence of the Gold Standard VER project.

Example 2 – Gold Standard VER issued in a Kyoto Annex B Country that has failed to achieve its target: In this example the reverse is true. This time the host country has failed to achieve its target and reports the excess emission reductions, which are misleadingly higher due to the presence of the Gold Standard VER project. This means that the host country is able to purchase fewer AAUs to balance its account than it otherwise would have done.

⁹ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-kyoto-protocol/what-is-the-kyoto-protocol/kyoto-protocol-targets-for-the-first-commitment-period>

Therefore, for two tons emitted (one by the purchaser of VER and the other from the host country) only one is offset. This is because the Gold Standard VER offsets one ton and the host country has not purchased an AAU to offset theirs. This results in a net one ton being emitted where there should be none.

Example 3 – Gold Standard VER issued in a country with a domestic ETS: In this example there is the potential for both the Gold Standard VER and a domestic unit to be issued, both representing the same ER. This results in the same scenario as example one wherein for two tons emitted only one is genuinely offset.

Example 4 – Carbon Tax: In this example a Gold Standard VER is issued in a domestic carbon taxation scheme. This results in the issuing project receiving the financial benefit of the VER as well as a reduced tax burden. It also means that two parties – the issuing facility and the purchaser of the VER in effect using the same emissions reduction.

Therefore, for two tons emitted one is offset (via Gold Standard VER) and the other is not reported within the domestic taxation scheme (as it has been claimed by a third party elsewhere). This results in a net one ton where there should be none.

NOTE – there are a number of incentive schemes available to certain activities (for example subsidies for solar installations domestically). These matters are a consideration for additionality assessment unless an offset unit is issued. Where they occur in Annex B countries they are already accounted for by the Kyoto Protocol mechanism and don't represent a 'third' count.

The following table provides further definition as to the types of Double Counting that potentially exist:

Type of Double Counting	Dealt with in proposed rule	Definition	Example	Mitigation
Double Claiming ¹⁰	NOT REQUIRED	Wherein the GHG benefits are claimed by multiple parties	Where a Gold Standard VER is issued and used to demonstrate carbon neutrality of a manufacturer and also its product. The carbon neutrality of the product may also be	Not considered 'double counting' as both claims can be considered true. This is because the offset is used

¹⁰ Note – this guideline is not intended to address issues of 'stacking' of assets – either as multiple assets from the same project activity or multiple activities within the same project.

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			claimed by the product purchaser.	against a single emission only.
Double Selling	CONSIDERED DOUBLE COUNTING BUT MEASURES ALREADY EXIST (REGISTRY, ETC)	Wherein the GHG benefit is sold multiple times by the same entity.	Where the owner of a Gold Standard VER trades the same asset multiple times. Alternatively, where a Gold Standard VER is also sold separately as a REC.	While this is considered double counting (because a single offset unit would be applied to multiple emissions) the existing Gold Standard Impact Registry procedures and rules to track ownership and retirement provide for transparency in this respect. Gold Standard does not currently police the activity of retailers beyond the Gold Standard Impact Registry . No change proposed within this guideline.
Double Accounting against a target (no financial/offset measure in place)	UNDER REVIEW	Wherein the GHG benefits are accounted for on multiple occasions.	Where a Gold Standard VER is issued in a country or region where an accounting/reporting procedure exists for GHG emissions (for example a carbon tax, national account or in the future INDCs). The GHG benefit is accounted under Gold Standard and within the country or regional accounting system.	UNDER REVIEW AS INDC MECHANISMS DEVELOP
Double Counting of Unit	REQUIRED	Wherein the GHG ER benefit is unitised and made available	Where a Gold Standard VER is issued in a policy, country or region that operates	Considered Double Counting – two units from a single

		for accounting or trade under multiple mechanisms/products.	within an international or domestic GHG Cap and Emissions Trading Scheme or carbon tax that thereby realises the same ER unit on multiple occasions.	emissions reduction may be used on more than one occasion. Therefore, proposed rule change for Double Counting outlined in this document.
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4| APPLICABILITY / SCOPE

This guideline replaces earlier rules and requirements within the Gold Standard documents on double counting.

4.1 | Type of Double Counting

This guideline addresses the specific Double Counting issues caused by 'Double Counting of Unit' and their subsequent action as defined in Section 1 of this document.

The aim of mitigating Double Counting is to protect the environmental and financial integrity of the Gold Standard VER/claimant as well as (so far as possible) the integrity of the regulator/inventory from which the issue arises. It is noted that in many countries it is not necessarily feasible to 'balance' the host inventory by cancelling units originated there. It is therefore noted that:

Cancelled units are to be valid for the regulatory regime wherein double counting arises as this protects both the Gold Standard VER and the inventory.

Cancelled units should balance the international inventory (i.e. units do not have to originate from host country).

4.2 | Scopes

This guideline addresses the topic of Double Counting within all activities of the Gold Standard that are associated with issuance of carbon emission reductions. Here, it affects the issuance of all Gold Standard VERs (validated and verified).

When the Gold Standard issues labels for CDM credits (CERs) it does not create a separate asset or replicate the UN's accounting and registry systems. Therefore, as there is no possibility that application of Gold Standard can result in one ER unit benefit being realised twice. This guideline does not therefore apply to Gold Standard labelled CERs.

The guideline does not affect the Gold Standard Water projects. As this sector develops, individual cases will be reviewed and further guidelines provided in due course.

Finally, this guideline does not address stacking of assets e.g. the issuance of VERs and Water Benefit Certificates for example. This topic is dealt with in the Principles & Requirements and associated Activity Requirements.

4.3 | Time

Applicability of these guidelines shall be determined at the point of project 'Listing' as per Gold Standard Requirements. Accordingly, an assessment of Double Counting risk will be undertaken at eligibility check at the time of preliminary review. At that time the position is fixed for that project as follows:

- For 'Energy & Waste' projects – fixed until conclusion of first crediting period (at which point applicability shall be assessed again)
- For 'Land Use & Forest' projects – for entirety of crediting period

Gold Standard justifies this process on the basis that should a GHG Emissions Trading Scheme (for example) commence in a given country during the crediting period then the Gold Standard project would have notified the Designated National Authority already during stakeholder consultation process. It would be for the new regulatory scheme at that point to take account of any Gold Standard projects currently in operation.

5| REQUIREMENTS

5.1 | Assessment by Gold Standard

Either at preliminary review, application for Listing or application for Renewal Gold Standard shall conduct a desk-review to establish if there is a risk of Double Counting as defined in this document. This results in two possible scenarios:

- a. Gold Standard does not consider project to represent risk of Double Counting – proceed as per standard requirements.
- b. Gold Standard considers there to be a risk of Double Counting:

Scenario 1 – Project Developer may proceed to investigate and demonstrate to Gold Standard that the risk of Double Counting does not exist or is mitigated external to this guideline. Approval of such cases shall be at the discretion of Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

Scenario 2 – Project Developer may commit to cancel Eligible Cancellation Units alongside/back to back with issuance of Gold Standard VERs.

Gold Standard desk appraisal will consider only whether the potential conditions exist for Double Counting and will not review in detail a Scenario 1. This option may be investigated by project owner and shall ultimately be determined by Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee at project design certification stage. Due to the

complexity of such evidences, it is likely that this will involve further rounds of query and would likely extend the typical timelines for certification.

While Gold Standard will review each project on case by case basis, the following provides guidance as to those countries that would be considered to fall under Double Counting definitions. This list is not exhaustive and may evolve/change over time:

- Any Kyoto Protocol Annex B country
- Any country with an international commitment that includes the potential for trade of emissions with other countries.
- Any country, region or locality that includes for a regulated, domestic level emissions trading scheme or carbon tax that accounts for the Scope of the Gold Standard Activity¹¹. A useful source for tracking such countries can be found at <https://icapcarbonaction.com>

Gold Standard shall confirm the position and findings of the desk appraisal to project owner to assess and confirm how they wish to proceed as per the options above.

Scenario 1

Should Gold Standard confirm that a risk of Double Counting exists for a given project then project owner may proceed as per Option 2a above and investigate further scenarios that could demonstrate that no such risk exists. Such evidence shall be considered by Gold Standard TAC on a case-by-case basis.

Such proof shall be provided to Gold Standard as a requirement for the 'Design Certification' of the project. Beyond Listing no such evidence shall be considered by Gold Standard unless a significant change in the regulatory scheme occurs (for example where a scheme is dissolved, removed or replaced).

The project owner shall demonstrate with documentary evidence that no Double Counting can occur by fulfilling one of the following options under scenario 1. The project owner shall demonstrate that:

- The GHG emissions reductions/removals scope (e.g. sector or activity) are not accounted within the relevant system of the host country/regional regulator, OR
- Participation in the regulatory scheme is voluntary (e.g. there is not mandated or automatic capture of emissions reduction within the regulators inventory),
OR

¹¹ The CERs are cancelled for the sole purpose of backing-up the Emissions Reduction. To provide some safeguard as to the quality of the credits cancelled these additional criteria are provided however the Gold Standard does not endorse any Sustainable Development contribution beyond that assured by a GS label.

- The host country/regional regulator does not account for voluntary GHG emissions reduction/removal contributions. This must be demonstrated credibly either through a policy instrument or by the regulator cancelling AAUS/Scheme units in lieu of Gold Standard VERs. Such removal must be demonstrated as permanent.

Scenario 2

If none of the above options under scenario 1 can be demonstrated, then the project owner shall demonstrate that Eligible Cancellation Units (see list below) are cancelled by or on behalf of the project.

Eligible Cancellation Units include:

Units eligible within the respective GHG Emissions Trading Scheme that are valid at the time of issuance (for example valid for a given commitment period).

For Kyoto Protocol participants this is limited to:

- AAUs
- CERs with further eligibility as follows:
 - Must be from scopes/sectors eligible for Gold Standard labelling
 - Must have completed the UNFCCC SD Tool¹²
 - Units may not be temporary/validated (tCER and ICERs from CDM A/R are not eligible).

The eligible units may come from any vintage and country of origin so long as they have been issued and can be demonstrated via attestation from the relevant registry to have been cancelled for the purposes of the respective Gold Standard project to address the topic of Double Counting.

An equivalent number of Eligible Cancellation Units shall be cancelled prior to each issuance of an affected project. The Gold Standard VER issuance process will occur in line with the timescales as appropriate under the Gold Standard Rules and Requirements, but Gold Standard VER issuance will not be completed until the

¹² The CERs are cancelled for the sole purpose of backing-up the Emissions Reduction. To provide some safeguard as to the quality of the credits cancelled these additional criteria are provided however the Gold Standard does not endorse any Sustainable Development contribution beyond that assured by a GS label.

cancellation of an equivalent number of Eligible Cancellation Units has been confirmed/attested.

Gold Standard justifies the selection of Eligible Cancellation Units as follows:

- To avoid any built-in discrepant accounting, the units must be from an accounting mechanism that is either:
 - Equivalent to the one implemented by host regulatory bodies (e.g. AAUs) to mitigate any risk of discrepant accounting
 - Equivalent to the GSVER issued (e.g. another Gold Standard VER)
- One that Gold Standard has assessed and accepts as robust (e.g. CDM)
- Must be issued in a transparent registry that allows for clear serial numbering and unequivocal attestation as to purpose. For example, at the point of a cancellation some registries (for example UNFCCC Voluntary Cancellation Platform) allow for the attestation of purpose to be stated in the receipting. This attestation is required to demonstrate to Gold Standard that the purpose of cancellation was voluntary and explicitly for the mitigation of double counting risks. The attestation should therefore include the Gold Standard Project number (if known) and clear reference to the topic of Double Counting (e.g. Retired on behalf Gold Standard Project 1234 to resolve Double Counting).

6| PROCEDURES

At first submission to Gold Standard a desk appraisal shall be conducted to establish the presence of a Double Counting risk. This appraisal shall be completed by Gold Standard and provided to the project owner for consideration. Project owner may pursue further options as per Section 4 of this document. To enable Registration (and Issuance) to occur then such evidence requires approval from the Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee.

The Project Owner shall notify the DNA and any relevant regulatory bodies concerning the voluntary activity/issuance of voluntary emissions reductions no less than two months prior to Design Certification. Any comments raised by such bodies in response to notifications shall be fully and satisfactorily addressed prior to Design Certification. Gold Standard reserves the right to reject project Listing or Design Certification should the host/DNA/Regulatory body object to project on the basis of potential Double Counting risks.

Should a regulatory scheme be proposed/commence development during the project crediting period the project owner shall notify the host/DNA or any newly formed regulatory body of the presence of their voluntary project in the jurisdiction and that steps should be taken to avoid Double Counting on the regulatory side.

Note, that in case the project owner has to follow Scenario 2, the Gold Standard does NOT require the project owner to cancel the respective amount of Eligible Cancellation

Units at the beginning of Gold Standard application process. It is recommended to wait until the final amount of GSVER has been confirmed by the audit report. Before issuance of GSVER takes place evidence on the cancellation shall be provided.

7| IMPLICATIONS

7.1 | For Project Owners

The implication for project owners is, if they are at all affected by the topic of 'Double Counting', there could be additional cost to purchase and retire Eligible Cancellation Units as part of the GSVERs issuance process (Scenario 2). Conversely this mechanism protects the credibility of GSVERs to the benefit of all project owners.

7.2 | For Auditors

Increased Gold Standard project activities in countries and regions with GHG Emissions Trading Scheme will increase commercial opportunities for Gold Standard auditors outside of the traditional Gold Standard domain.

7.3 | For Stakeholders

It is vitally important that Gold Standard maintains and defends its reputation for rigour, transparency and integrity. While there is no direct impact on stakeholders it is clear that the absence of this rule would adversely affect the standing and market position of the Gold Standard Foundation.

7.4 | For the Gold Standard

The current international position and subsequent potential for 'Double Counting' of GSVERs requires that Gold Standard implement this guideline. Without the guideline GSVERs within the market would be subject to increased scrutiny and doubts as to the veracity of the claims made. Accordingly, it is considered that the guideline will be of benefit to the reputation and integrity of the Gold Standard.

ANNEX B – REQUIREMENTS & PROCEDURE TO TRANSITION PROJECTS FROM OTHER STANDARDS TO GOLD STANDARD FOR THE GLOBAL GOALS

1| SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- 1.1.1 | This annex provides the requirements and procedures for projects currently registered with other standards (e.g. CDM) to transition to GS4GG and to issue GSVERs or to convert emission reductions to GSVERs.

Note that Gold Standard Projects registered with previous versions of the Gold Standard (version 2.2 and earlier) are required to transition to GS4GG. For such projects, the developer should refer to [Transition requirements](#) for requirements, procedure and the timelines.

- 1.1.2 | The requirements are applicable to projects that intend to (i) issue GSVERs or (ii) convert issued emission reductions to GSVERs, for example to convert issued GSCERs to GSVERs.
- 1.1.3 | The requirements mentioned in previous sections or applicable standard documents and/or applicable activity requirements apply, unless otherwise stated in this annex.
- 1.1.4 | 'Other standard', where mentioned in this annex, refers to GHGs certification schemes, such as CDM, VERRA, CCBA, that issue carbon credits.

2| ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT

2.1 | General Requirements

- 2.1.1 | The project or CPA is eligible for transition to GS4GG, if the project or CPA;
- is a GS4GG eligible project type. Refer to 5| above TYPES OF PROJECT, above; AND
 - has a valid registration status with the other standard at the time of first submission (preliminary review) to Gold Standard; AND
 - has a crediting period start date with the other standard on or after 01 January 2016; OR
 - has a crediting period start date with other standard before 01 January 2016, but can demonstrate, at the time of preliminary review;
 - that project faces a serious risk of discontinuation without carbon revenue, and
 - how the project has been operational in the absence of carbon revenue, if carbon credits have not been issued to the project in recent years

OPTIONAL REQUIREMENT-

- 2.1.2 | For CDM PoAs, the eligibility requirements mentioned in paragraph 2.1.1, are applicable to the individual CPA requesting to transition to GS4GG, regardless of the PoA start date.
- 2.1.3 | The transition project, PoA/CPAs shall claim emission reductions of a given vintage only once and under one standard only. The project developer shall provide a declaration, in writing, in the monitoring report to state that the project developer has not or will not issue both a CER and a GSVER for the same vintage from a project that is registered under GS4GG.
- 2.1.4 | The transition project, PoA/CPAs shall provide Gold Standard specific project documentation or the project documentation provided under the other carbon certification scheme together with the [Transition Request Form](#).

2.2 | Deregistration from the other Standard

- 2.2.1 | A CDM project, PoA/CPAs -- including those that are already registered with GS4GG for CER labelling -- seeking to transition to GS4GG to issue GSVERs, are **not** required to deregister from CDM.
- 2.2.2 | Eligible CDM A/R projects are required to deregister from CDM to transition to GS4GG and issue GSVERs.
- 2.2.3 | A transition project, PoA/CPAs that is registered with a standard other than CDM will need to deregister the project and provide evidence to confirm deregistration to VVB before project submission for design review.

3 | FINANCIAL ADDITIONALITY & ONGOING FINANCIAL NEED

- 3.1.1 | CDM, JI projects and PoA/CPAs are **not** required to carry out additional assessment for demonstration of additionality over and above what has been done for registration/determination with the CDM EB/JISC, unless the project falls into a category that is deemed non-Additional in an applicable Activity Requirement. In such cases, the relevant GS4GG Activity Requirement shall take precedence.
- 3.1.2 | Transition project, PoAs/CPAs registered with standards other than CDM are required to undergo additionality revalidation to re-establish the validity of the underlying assumptions applied in the demonstration of additionality at the time of registration with the other standard.
- 3.1.3 | As applicable to all registered GS4GG projects, projects/PoAs/CPAs transitioning from other standards shall demonstrate Ongoing Financial Need as per the GS4GG requirements, available at the time of renewal of their crediting period under GS4GG.

4 | ELIGIBLE METHODOLOGIES

4.1 | General Requirement

- 4.1.1 | Transition project, PoA/CPAs shall

- a. Conform to the relevant [Activity Requirements](#) and Gold Standard Approved [Methodologies](#), including eligible [CDM Methodologies](#).
- b. Meet additional GS4GG methodology eligibility requirements, where applicable. Refer to [CDM Methodologies](#).

4.2 | Methodology and Tool Version

4.2.1 | Transition projects, PoAs/CPAs shall apply the version of the Gold Standard approved [CDM methodology](#)¹³ or methodology tool at the time of first submission (preliminary review) for transition to GS4GG as follows;

- a. Projects – version applied at the time of registration/renewal of crediting period with other standard, as applicable
- b. PoAs – version applied at the time registration/renewal of crediting period with other standard, as applicable
- c. CPAs – version applied for inclusion in the registered PoAs with other standard
- d. New CPAs/VPAs - latest version applied by the registered PoAs for inclusion of new VPAs after transition to GS4GG¹⁴ (Refer to paragraph 4.2.3 |below)

4.2.2 | Transition projects & PoAs/CPAs shall update to the latest version of GS approved [CDM methodology](#) or methodology tool available at the time of renewal of crediting period with GS4GG as follows;

- a. Projects – latest version available at the time of submission for validation of renewal of crediting period with GS4GG.
- b. PoAs - latest version available at the time of submission for validation of renewal of certification cycle with GS4GG
- c. CPAs/VPAs - latest version applied in the most recent version of PoA available at the time of submission for renewal of crediting period with GS4GG

4.2.3 | Transition PoA shall also apply the latest version of the methodology(ies) and applicable tool(s), for inclusion of new VPAs under GS4GG, if applicable. The Transition PoA may include the latest version of the methodology and applicable tool for inclusion of new VPA(s), at the time of first submission

¹³ In case any CDM methodology is not present in the GS4GG list of eligible CDM methodologies, the PD/CME may reach out to standard@goldstandard.org for further steps.

¹⁴ All new VPAs submitted for inclusion after end date of a crediting period of PoA shall follow the latest version of the PoA available at the time of submission for inclusion. For example, if a new VPA was listed before the end of 1st Crediting cycle of PoA, but submitted for inclusion after the start of 2nd crediting cycle of PoA, the VPA must be designed and included as per PoA Design Document version and applicable methodology registered for 2nd crediting cycle.

(preliminary review) or at any later stage of certification cycle, but before submitting the request for inclusion for new VPAs. In such cases, VVB shall validate the updated PoA and VPA documents as per applied version of the methodology and or methodology tool before or with the request for inclusion of new VPAs.

- 4.2.4 | Transition project, PoA/CPAs may apply the latest version of GS approved [CDM methodology](#) or methodology tool available at the time first submission (preliminary review for transition). In such cases, VVB shall validate the updated Project Documents as per applied version of the methodology and or methodology tool at the time of at the time of first submission (preliminary review).

5| PROJECT SCALE

- 5.1.1 | Refer to Section 9| above for requirements and definition of Scale.
- 5.1.2 | Transition project, PoA/CPAs shall not change their scale (for e.g. from small scale to large scale) at the time of transition.
- 5.1.3 | CDM project shall maintain project scale as registered in accordance with [CDM project standard for project activities](#).
- 5.1.4 | When the scale of a project, PoA/CPA gets changed due to circumstances outside the control of the CME/PD, the [Design Change Requirements](#) shall be followed.

6| CREDITING CYCLE & ISSUANCE

6.1 | Crediting Period

- 6.1.1 | Transition project & CPA seeking issuance of GSVERs or conversion of GSCERs to GSVERs shall issue GSVERs for a maximum crediting period allowed as per relevant GS4GG [activity requirements](#) or crediting period with the other standard, whichever ends first. Under no circumstance, can the crediting period registered with other standard be extended.
- 6.1.2 | Transition PoA duration shall not exceed 20 years or the crediting period of first CPA allowed as per GS4GG activity requirements plus 5 years, whichever is greater.

6.2 | Crediting Period Start Date

- 6.2.1 | The start date of crediting period for transition project or CPA remains unchanged and shall be the date as registered with other standard.
- 6.2.2 | Transition PoA start date is the crediting period start date of the earliest CPA included in the PoA that transitions to GS4GG.

6.3 | Issuance of GSVERs

6.3.1 | The total duration of the crediting period shall not exceed the maximum crediting period allowed under relevant GS4GG [activity requirements](#). It also includes the period that project or CPA has been issued emission reductions for under other standard. The following example explains how this requirement shall apply –

If a given project was registered under Standard X with;

- *fixed crediting period i.e., 10 years: The total crediting period i.e., Standard X + GS4GG crediting period, must remain 10 years. If the project has issued emission reduction for 3 years under standard X, the project can be issued GSVERs for remaining 7 years of its eligible 10 year crediting period under GS4GG.*
- *renewable crediting period i.e., maximum of 21 years (7*3 year): The total crediting period i.e., Standard X + GS4GG crediting period must be equal to that allowed under relevant GS4GG [activity requirements](#). For example; [RE activity requirements](#) allows issuance of GSVERs for maximum 15 years. An eligible renewable energy project that has already claimed emission reductions for 5 years under Standard X, can issue GSVERs for 10 more years under GS4GG.*

6.4 | Issuance for Retroactive Period

6.4.1 | The transition project or CPA may request issuance of GSVERs or convert issued GSCERs to GSVERs, for retroactive period - which starts with crediting period start date with other standard or maximum two years before the date of first submission (submission for preliminary review), whichever occurs later. A/R projects are eligible for retroactive crediting for maximum three years.

6.5 | Project Cycle

6.5.1 | Transition project, PoA/CPAs shall follow GS4GG certification cycle for crediting period renewal (e.g. 5 years) in order to issue or convert issued emission reductions to GSVERs under GS4GG.

6.5.2 | The first crediting period renewal under GS4GG takes into account the crediting years that has already been issued with other standard. For example, if a project crediting period start date with standard X is 1st Jan 2019, the project shall renew its crediting period with GS4GG on or before 1st Jan 2024, irrespective of date of transition approval with GS4GG.

6.5.3 | Transition project, PoA/CPA may opt for early renewal of crediting period to follow GS4GG certification cycle.

6.6 | Project Design Change

- 6.6.1 | Permanent changes in project or PoA/CPAs design shall be assessed as per the [Design Change Requirements](#).

7| STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

- 7.1.1 | Transition project, PoA/CPAs shall demonstrate compliance with [Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Requirements](#) and establish an ongoing engagement process. Refer to [Transition Request Form](#) for guidance.

8| SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES & REQUIREMENTS

- 8.1.1 | Transition project, PoA/CPAs shall demonstrate compliance with [Safeguarding Principles & Requirements](#). Refer to [Transition Request Form](#) for guidance.

9| CONTRIBUTIONS TO SDGs

- 9.1.1 | Transition project, PoA/VPAs shall demonstrate a clear, direct contribution to sustainable development, defined as making demonstrable, positive impacts on at least three Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), one of which must be SDG 13 (defined herein as Emissions Reductions or Removals and/or Adaptation to climate change).
- 9.1.2 | SDG contributions shall be demonstrated for the representative baseline situations of the activity. If the activity specific baseline information does not exist anymore, the assessment shall be carried out, if justified, using representative example cases or based on documented evidence. For example, for an improved cookstove activity the assessment shall be carried out based on households that are still representative of project baseline situation i.e., using baseline cookstoves and are of same socio-economic circumstances of the project technology users; for a renewable energy activity the assessment can be based on documented evidence related to the project activity, which can provide sufficient information to justify the selected SDG contributions. In all situations, the sustainable development assessment shall be based on auditable and verifiable documentation and convincing arguments based on representative circumstances. Where data gap exists, the project must make conservative claims.

10| TRANSITION PROCEDURE

10.1 | Other Standard to GS4GG

- 10.1.1 | Transition project, PoA/CPA shall initiate a request for transition by submitting a [Transition Request Form](#).
- 10.1.2 | Transition project, PoA/CPA shall follow project certification cycle as provided in the [Principles and Requirements](#) and the [Programme of Activities](#)

[Requirements](#), as applicable. Please refer to Transition Request form for different options available to expedite the certification procedure.

- 10.1.3 | CDM project, PoA/CPA already registered under GS4GG for issuance of GSCERs may transition to GS4GG to issue GSVERs at any point by submitting the [Transition Request Form](#).

10.2 | GSCERs to GSVERs Conversion Procedure

- 10.2.1 | CDM project and CPAs for conversion of issued CERs to GSVERs, shall, upon completing the procedure outlined in para 10.1 |above take note of the following additional steps;

- a. Project, CPAs transfers the issued CERs, to the Gold Standard Swiss CDM Registry Account
- b. Gold Standard retires the transferred CERs and the associated labels
- c. Gold Standard issues an equivalent number of GSVERs to the project in the [Impact Registry](#), after payment of the relevant fee and retirement of the CERs

10.3 | Converting issued emission reductions from other standards to GSVERs

- 10.3.1 | Project transitioning from standard other than CDM to GS4GG shall reach out to Gold Standard to confirm the procedure for conversion of issued emission reduction units to GSVERs.

ANNEX C – LAND-USE & FORESTS ISSUANCE GUIDELINES

Projects may choose to issue Planned Emissions Reduction (PER) Certificates for the period of the 5 year certification cycle or up to 5 years following any Verification (3 years for Agriculture Projects). Projects may choose not to issue PERs if preferred.

1| DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATION AND ISSUANCE:

- 1.1.1 | **Step 1** – the Project Developer shall appoint an eligible [Gold Standard VVB](#) to conduct a Validation or Verification of the project. The Project Developer shall provide the PDD for Validation or Monitoring Report for the Monitoring Period to be Verified, to the VVB. This shall include the Carbon Performance and all other relevant templates.
- 1.1.2 | **Step 2** – The VVB conducts Validation or Verification and submits opinion to Gold Standard. If the VVB considers that the Project should be certified/issued then Gold Standard commences a Performance Review, based on the documentation. The review completes when all CARs and comments are closed. Note that PERs may be issued at Design Certification (maximum of 5 years forward issuance period). GSVERs may only be issued following successful Verification and Performance Certification.
- 1.1.3 | **Step 3** – At the closure of Review all documents are updated by the Project Developer/VVB in accordance with any changes required. Based on the Carbon Performance Template submitted the Project Developer shall confirm what issuance is being requested.
 - a. **Sub-step 3a: Issuance of PERs (optional):** PERs are issued pro-rata for each year for the forward period requested (up to a maximum of 5 years). 20% of the PERs are issued to the Gold Standard Buffer, the remaining 80% are issued to the Project Developers requested accounts.
 - b. **Sub-step 3b: Conversion of PERs into GSVERs:** PERs represent expected sequestration of emissions. During a Monitoring Period the PERs issue can be converted into GSVERs in the Gold Standard [Impact Registry](#). This replaces the PER (which is permanently removed) with the GSVER. 20% of the conversions shall take place in the Gold Standard Buffer with the Project Developer free to convert any of the remaining, associated PER (i.e. the remaining 80%)
- 1.1.4 | **Step - 4:** In the event of a shortfall between Verified as compared to PERs the Carbon Performance requirements shall apply. Refer to section 11|LAND USE & FORESTS SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS [above](#).

Figure 1. Issuance of PERs

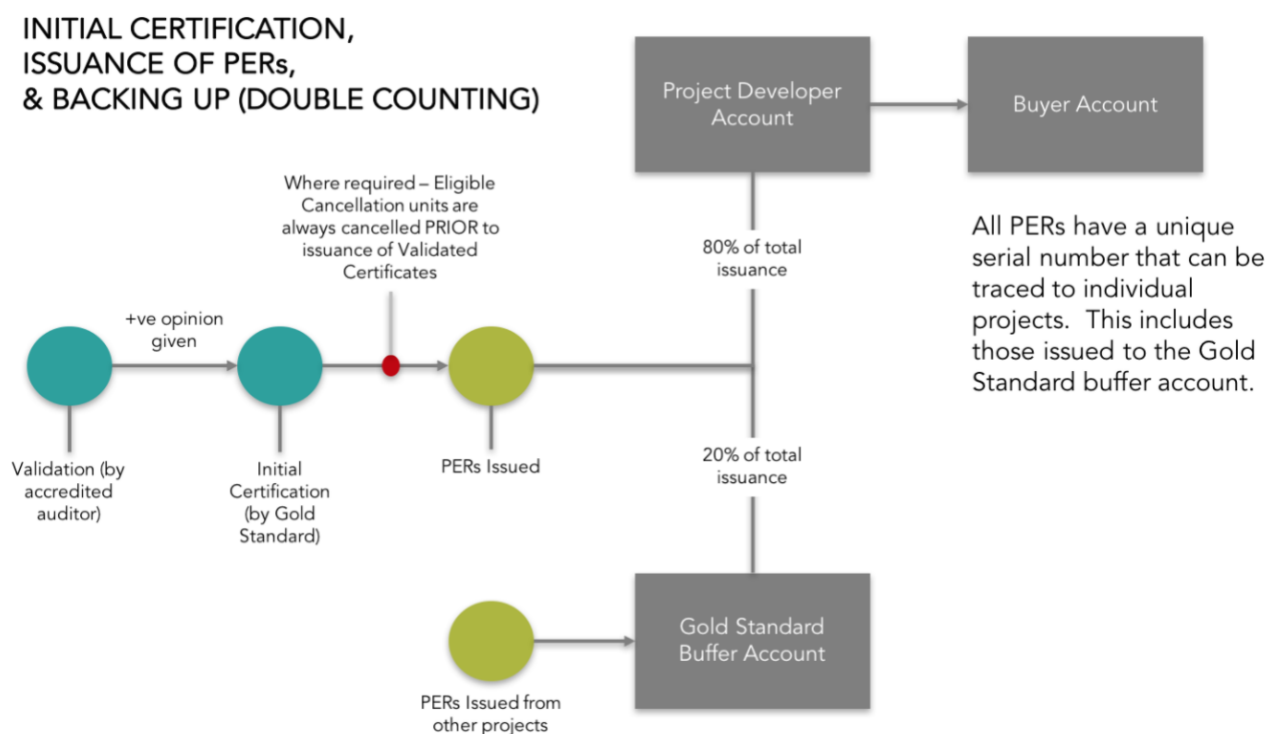


Figure 2: Conversion of PERs

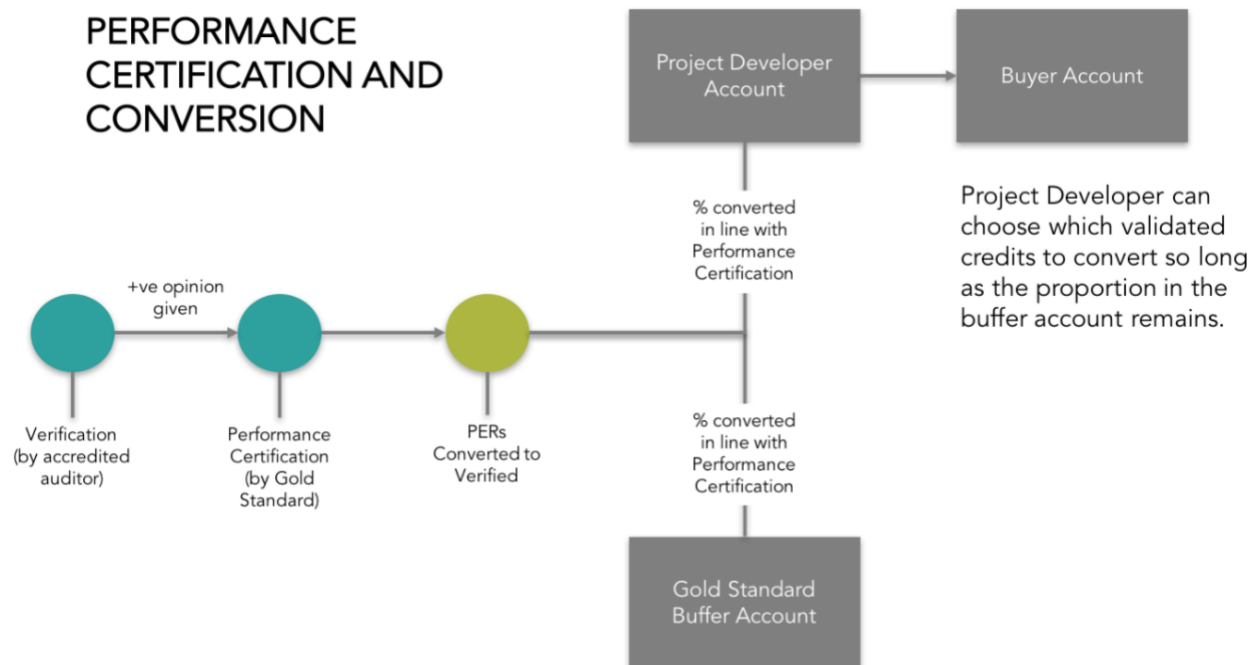


Figure 3: Carbon Performance – Conversion of PER to GSVER in the event of over or underestimation scenarios

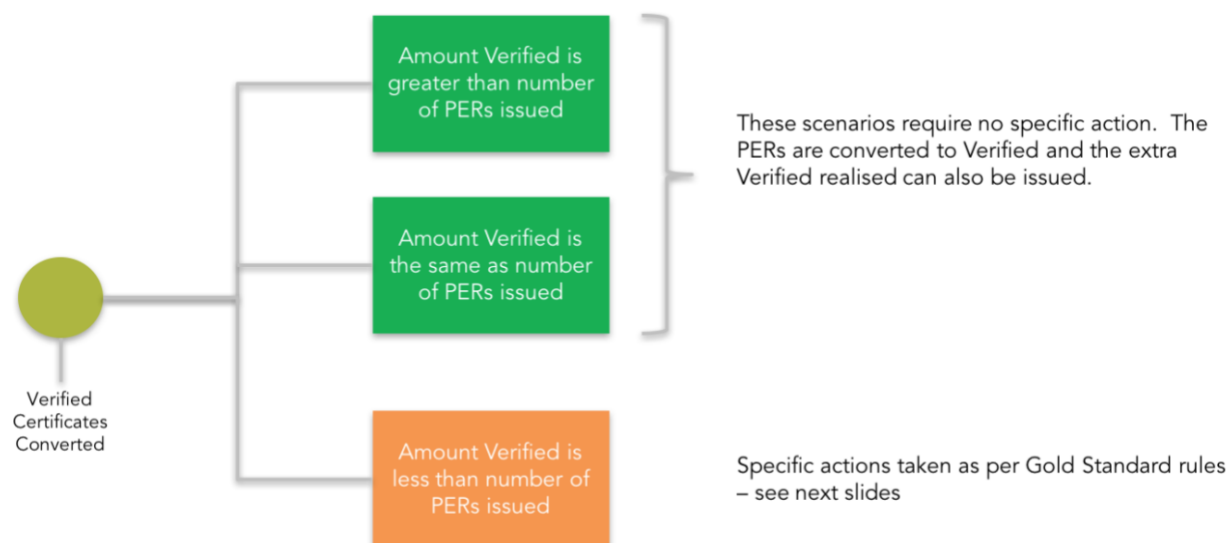
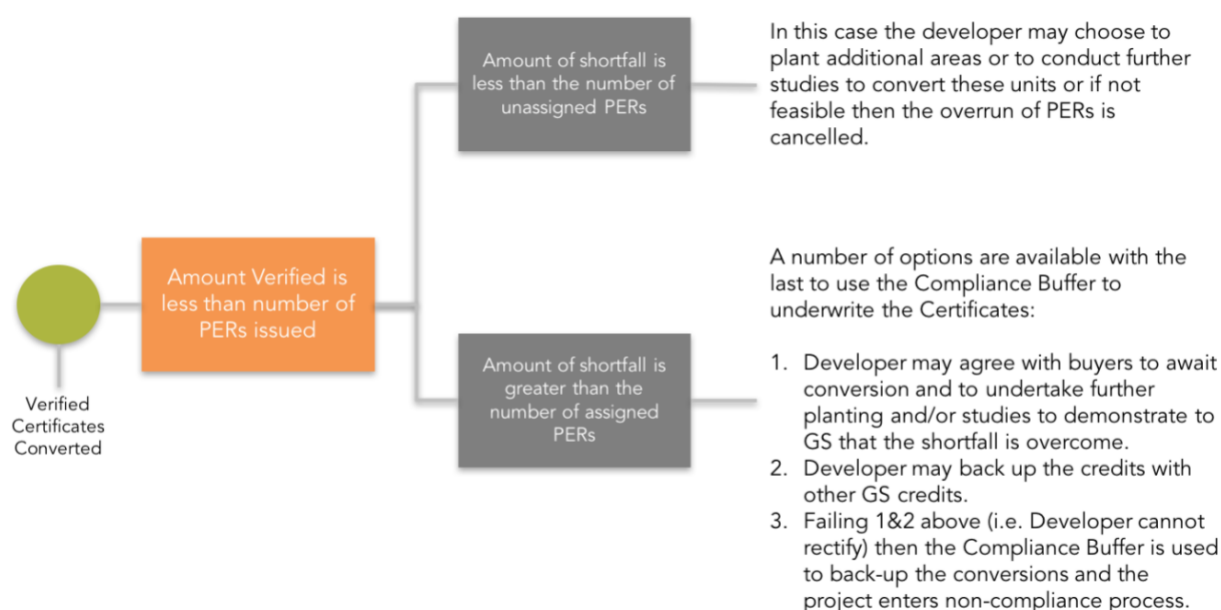


Figure 4: Carbon Performance Requirements in the event of shortfall



2| ASSIGNMENT AND RETIREMENT PROCEDURE

- 2.1.1 | PERs can be transferred to a buyers account; they can be assigned but they cannot be retired. They remain in the buyers account until converted at which point they are replaced as per 3c above.
- 2.1.2 | GSVERs can be transferred to a buyers account (and further transferred from there to other accounts) until they are permanently assigned or retired by the final user/owner. The retirement takes place in the Gold Standard [Impact Registry](#).

3| SUBSTITUTION OF COMPLIANCE BUFFER PROCEDURE

3.1.1 | Certificates from other Gold Standard certified projects may be transferred to the to the Gold Standard Compliance Buffer in lieu of the PERs or GSVERs from the project. This can only be done at the same time as any Issuance event, and not at any time thereafter. Written notification of the intention to transfer along with specific amounts, along with the fee for issuance of GSVERs from the buffer, shall be provided to registry@goldstandard.org

Document Revision History

Version number	Release date	Description
Version 2.1 (Current version)	Feb 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Revision of the document template b. Inclusion of project location requirements for GSCER projects c. Providing detailed rules and requirements for project scale for GSVER and GSCER projects d. Making editorial improvements
Version 1.2	October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Revision of the document template b. Defining 'Renewable Energy Supply' and 'Land Use and Forests' project types c. Introduction of two options and describing related rules and requirements for issuance of GSVERs for a CDM project d. Making editorial improvements
Version 1.1	March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inclusion of the concept of Performance Shortfall and

OPTIONAL REQUIREMENT-

		<p>reference to Shortfall Scenario Guidelines</p> <p>b. Providing clarity on crediting cycle and maximum crediting periods of transitioning projects</p> <p>c. Making editorial improvements</p>
Version 1.0	July 2017	Initial adoption