

TEMPLATE

DEVIATION REQUEST FORM

PUBLICATION DATE **11.04.2021**

Version **5.0**

A. To be completed by Gold Standard

1 | Decision

1.1 | Date – 21/09/2023

1.2 | Decision

The Deviation request is Approved.

The project developer has shown the intent to comply with the requisite conditions, and in a demonstrable way, if needed. However, it is also not clear from the submission whether any inventory exercise happened after 20/10/2022.

In light of the justification provided by the developer, the secretariat is of the opinion that the delay of around 10 months is acceptable, and the project developer can proceed with the performance review ensuring full compliance with GS4GG requirements.

The Project developer shall note that deviation request approved is exclusively for the current monitoring period only. The Developer must comply with all the Principles & Requirements next monitoring period onwards. Under any circumstance, the next monitoring cycle shall start only after the end date of the inventory cycle or the monitoring period of the current submission, whichever is later. This shall be clearly

established in the VVB report, so that it can be ensured that there is no overlap between this inventory cycle and the next monitoring cycle in the next performance review.

The project developer shall document the deviation request, its implications, and GS' decision in the appropriate section of the PDD.

The Validating/verifying VVB shall, through appropriate means at its disposal, evaluate the project's compliance with the above-mentioned conditions and provides its opinion in the Validation/ Verification Report.

SustainCert shall review both the project developer's response and the VVB's assessment/opinion of the same and take appropriate steps.

1.3 | Is this decision applicable to other project activities under similar circumstances?

No

B. To be completed by the Project Developer/Coordinating and Managing Entity and/or VVB requesting deviation (Submit deviation request form in Microsoft Word format)

2 | Background information

Deviation Reference Number	DEV_515	
Date of decision	21/09/2023	
Precedent (YES/NO)	No	
Precedent details	NA	
Date of submission	01/09/2023	
Project/PoA/VPA	Project	ID – GS3007
	<input type="checkbox"/> PoA	ID – GSXXXX
	<input type="checkbox"/> VPA	ID – GSXXXX
Project/PoA/VPA title	Sodo Community Reforestation Project	
Date of listing	Date of GS registration - 11/11/2013 (GS crediting period start-date - 08/05/2013)	
GS Standard version applicable	Gold Standard Afforestation/Reforestation GHG Emissions Reductions and Sequestration methodology Version 0.9	
Date of transition to GS4GG (if applicable)		
Date of transition to Gold Standard from another standard (e.g. CDM) (if applicable)		
Date of design certification/inclusion (if applicable)		
Location of project/PoA/VPA	Host country(ies) – Ethiopia	
Scale of the project/PoA/VPA	<input type="checkbox"/> Microscale <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small scale <input type="checkbox"/> Large scale	
Gold Standard Impact Registry link of the project/PoA/VPA	https://registry.goldstandard.org/projects/details/511	
Status of the project/PoA/VPA	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Listed <input type="checkbox"/> Certified design <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certified project	
Title/subject of deviation	Lapsed timeframe to complete the 5-year performance review	

Specify applicable rule/requirements/methodology, with exact paragraph reference and version number	<p>Verification and Performance Review must take place once every five years.</p> <p>Refer to Land-use & Forests Activity Requirements – Gold Standard for the Global Goals:</p> <p>3.1.12 Verification & Issuance review (Performance Certification): The performance review may take place either alongside or after Project Design Certification and must occur at least once during the 5-year Certification cycle.</p> <p>(b) A/R specific: Verification shall be completed at least every 5 years until the end of the crediting period</p>
Specify the monitoring period for which the request is valid (if applicable)	<p>Start date 2/10/2016 End date 1/10/2021</p>
Submitted by	<p>Contact person name: Silvio Dorati, Rob Kelly</p> <p>Email ID: Silvio.Dorati@worldvision.com.au, Rob.Kelly@worldvision.com.au</p> <p>Organisation: World Vision Australia</p> <p>Project participant: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
Validation and Verification body (VVB opinion shall be included, where required by the applicable rules/requirements or request is submitted by the VVB).	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes; VVB name:</p> <p>VVB Staff name(s):</p>
Any previous deviations approved for the same project activity/PoA/VPA(s)?	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

3 | Deviation detail

3.1 | Description of the deviation:

**Guidance* Use the space below to describe the deviation and substantiate the reason for requesting deviation from applicable rules/requirements. Please include all relevant information in support of the request. You are requested to follow the principles for requesting deviations, given in the [Deviation Approval Procedure/Design Change Requirements](#).*

3.1.1 | Deviation detail (to be completed by Project developer):

- World Vision Australia (WVA) was aware of the need to complete the Performance Review by 20/10/2022 and began planning for the verification in 2021.
- WVA appointed Point Advisory as Technical Services Provider for the period 1/07/2021 to 31/07/2022; Point Advisory provided technical services to support the field audit of WV's carbon forestry projects including Sodo. The contract's Schedule 1 - TORs indicate the field audit was anticipated for Feb-March 2022 with the verification report by July 2022, well within the Gold Standard five-year timeframe.
- Point Advisory was bought out by ERM in mid-2022 leading to a complete change of staff engaged in the consultancy; new staff commenced work in September 2022. This led to unexpected delays in finalizing the Monitoring Report and supplementary documents for the audit.
- It should be noted that the Project Developer, in consultation with the Technical Services Provider, decided in 2021 to combine the Performance Review of both Sodo and Humbo community forestry projects to improve cost efficiencies, logistics and timeliness. However, this in turn substantially lengthened the period of time to finalize documentation for both projects; this had not been factored into the work plan.
- WVA sought out a VVB to complete the combined Performance Reviews; Carbon Check India Pty Ltd (CC IPL) was appointed by WVA on 24/06/2022 for the verification of MP2 (02/10/2016 – 01/10/2021). The Sodo Monitoring Report v1 was provided to CC IPL on 04/07/2022 with the site visit commencing on 11/07/2022.
- Finalization of the DVR took an unexpectedly long period of time: DVR v1 was provided to WVA on 13/09/2022 with a response returned on 11/10/2022. DVR v2 18/10/2022 – response returned on 28/10/2022. DVR v3 3/01/2023 - response returned on 08/02/2023. DVR v4 17/03/2023 - response returned on 29/03/2023. DVR v5 29/03/2023 - response returned and uploaded on 3/05/2023 (delayed due to travel by the Technical Services Provider personnel). An email from VVB on 14/06/2023 indicated the documentation in the project's shared folder had been corrupted, which took further time to resolve.
- The DVR then went to CC IPL's internal quality review process, which raised the need to adjust and updated version numbers and dates. A final pack was shared by VVB to WVA on 2/08/2023.

- Documents were then uploaded to the Sustain Cert share folder on 12/08/2023
- To facilitate the review of the FVR, WVA had advised Sustain Cert ahead of time of the upcoming performance review on 5/12/2022 with invoice being paid in early 2023.
- VVB did not advise WVA of the need to submit a Deviation Request Form, and completion of the DRF was then not included in their assignment; the same occurred for the GS Transition Form (GS4GG).
- Site visits by project staff were also hampered in 2021 and 2022 by government and organizational travel restrictions due to presence of COVID and insecurity near to the field location; these factors also contributed to placing the site visit further back than earlier anticipated.
- In conclusion, WVA recognizes the period to conduct and complete the Performance Review was protracted and deviates from the GS Land-use & Forests Activity Requirements. Unfortunately, despite efforts to accelerate the process, there remained a set of unforeseen and significant administrative and documentation delays outside the control of the Project Developer.

3.1.2 | VVB opinion (to be completed by VVB, if applicable):

**Guidance* If required by SustainCERT or Gold Standard for this particular deviation, please add here the VVB's opinion.*

Not applicable

3.2 | Assessment of the deviation:

**Guidance* Use the space below to describe how the deviation complies with the requirements, and, where applicable, the accuracy, completeness and conservativeness is ensured. Please include all relevant information in support of the request.*

3.2.1 | Deviation assessment (to be completed by Project developer):

Due to the reasons outlined in 3.1.1, the Project Developer asserts that missing the date for the completion of the performance review was out of their control and that the changes are temporary in nature. As the crediting period is over 30-years, this temporary deviation will not result in an overestimation of emission reductions compared to the ex-ante emission reduction calculated in the PDD.

The project will revert back to its original design for the 4th monitoring period, with monitoring to be undertaken in the first half of 2026 in order to complete performance certification by October 2027.

3.2.2 | VVB opinion (to be completed by VVB, if applicable):

**Guidance* If required by SustainCERT or Gold Standard for this particular deviation, please add here the VVB's opinion.*

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3.3 | Impact of the deviation:

**Guidance* Use the space below to describe the impact of the deviation on project design, safeguarding principles assessment, SDG assessment, emissions reductions, monitoring frequency, data quality, potential risk or any other relevant aspect of the project. Please substantiate the impact assessment with relevant and verifiable data/information.*

3.3.1 | Impact assessment (to be completed by Project developer):

The Project Developer sees no material impact on the ongoing implementation and sustainability of the Sodo forestry project as a result of this Deviation Request. The Request does not specify changes to the Monitoring Period dates, in which case there is no material impact to the Monitoring Report or supporting documentation for MP2.

Given the due-date for the current performance review was 20/10/2022, WVA will seek to complete the next performance review by 21/10/2027.

3.3.2 | VVB opinion (to be completed by VVB, if applicable):

**Guidance* If required by SustainCERT or Gold Standard for this particular deviation, please add here the VVB's opinion.*

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3.4 | Documents:

**Guidance* List of documents provided (note that once a decision has been made by Gold Standard, this deviation form along with supporting documents will be made public on the Gold Standard website. If any of the supporting documents are confidential, please indicate here to ensure they are omitted.)*

Version number	Release date	Description
5	11.04.2022	Additional information added: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - date of listing, design certification, transition - standard version - specific reference to a requirement deviated from - any previous deviations/design changes approved Guidance on VVB opinion
4	14.01.2021	
3	16.07.2020	
2	03.05.2018	
1	01.07.2017	Initial adoption