



Gold Standard
for the Global Goals

TEMPLATE

DEVIATION REQUEST FORM

PUBLICATION DATE **11.04.2021**

Version **5.0**

A. To be completed by Gold Standard

1 | Decision

1.1 | Date – 24/11/2023

1.2 | Decision

The deviation request is approved only for this monitoring period.

However, the verifying VVB shall demonstrate how, without the performance of a physical or remote site visit in this conflict zone, it was possible to comply with §2.1.6 of Annex B of the Principle and Requirements v1.2. and other relevant means of verification as per the Validation and Verification Standard V1.0.

Compliance with above mentioned paragraph shall be reflected in its Verification report and explain how the remote audit allowed the VVB to reach to a conclusion on its verification.

Additionally, the PD shall:

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Climate Security and Sustainable Development

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Ensure that a continuity in the Project's monitoring activities has been maintained and PD is able to justify that no monitoring gaps exist (especially for SDG parameters) within the Monitoring Period(s). However, if gap(s) exist, the project shall justify that conservative approach(es) have been applied in line with section 3 of the Deviation Approval Requirements and Procedures (version 1.1) and overarching GS principles (as applicable).

Document the deviation request, its implications, and GS' decision in the appropriate section of the GS Monitoring Report (for the relevant MP) and the verifying VVB shall, through appropriate means at its disposal, evaluate the Project's compliance with the above condition and provide its opinion in the Verification Report.

Ensure that the verification site visit frequency stated under clause 3.1 of the Site Visit and Remote Audit Requirements and Procedures – V2.0 will be followed in the subsequent verifications.

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

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Deviation Reference Number	DEV_577	
Date of decision	24/11/2023	
Precedent (YES/NO)	No	
Precedent details	N/A	
Date of submission	17/11/2023	
Project/PoA/VPA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project	ID – GS10735, GS10736 & GS10737
	<input type="checkbox"/> PoA	
	<input type="checkbox"/> VPA	
Project/PoA/VPA title	GS1247 VPA 256 Northern Ethiopia Community Safe Water GS1247 VPA 257 Northern Ethiopia Community Protected Springs GS1247 VPA 258 Northern Ethiopia Community Protected Springs	
Date of listing	GS10735- 09/04/2021 GS10736- 09/04/2021 GS10737- 23/04/2021	
GS Standard version applicable	TPDDTEC V3.1	
Date of transition to GS4GG (if applicable)	N/A	
Date of transition to Gold Standard from another standard (e.g. CDM) (if applicable)	N/A	
Date of design certification/inclusion (if applicable)	N/A	
Location of project/PoA/VPA	Ethiopia	
Scale of the project/PoA/VPA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Microscale <input type="checkbox"/> Small scale <input type="checkbox"/> Large scale	
Gold Standard Impact Registry link of the project/PoA/VPA	GS10735 GS Registry (goldstandard.org) GS10736 GS Registry (goldstandard.org) GS10737 GS Registry (goldstandard.org)	
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	Deviation to physical and remote site visit due to ongoing regional tension and violence	

Comentado [MP1]: Insert

Comentado [MP2]: Insert VPA links

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Specify applicable rule/requirements/methodology, with exact paragraph reference and version number	Section 3.1.1 of the Site Visit and Remote Audit Requirements and Procedures Version 1.0
Specify the monitoring period for which the request is valid (if applicable)	Start date End date Ongoing
Submitted by	Contact person name: Matthew Pike
	Email ID: matthew.pike@co2balance.com
	Organisation: co2balance UK Ltd
	Project participant: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Validation and Verification body (VVB opinion shall be included, where required by the applicable rules/requirements or request is submitted by the VVB).	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes; VVB name: VVB Staff name(s):
Any previous deviations approved for the same project activity/PoA/VPA(s)?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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):

This project was recently approved for a deviation request to deviate from a physical site visit requested by the ongoing Verification reviewing VVB, in place of a remote audit due to the ongoing the civil conflict directly in the project area

The project developer is now requesting a deviation against the remote audit as the situation on the ground has since escalated and does not allow for an effective or safe remote audit to be conducted. Mobile phone networks and internet have been down in

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the region for the last months. A standard desk based review is requested in it's place for this verification.

Military fighting and tension is still ongoing in the project area and has only escalated since the last deviation submission and approval.

Our project partner in the region has expressed concerns for the safety of the team to conduct the remote audits effectively.

Random Sampling was conducted by the VVB to consider which HHS would be required for the remote audit, however the project partner confirmed to the project developer and VVB that these would be impossible due to the ongoing situation.

The project was design certified on 09/04/2021 and the CP start date is in 2020. A remote audit was successfully carried out on 14th January 2022 as part of the previous verification process with no concerns raised.

The project has not been able to conduct a physical site visit due to the ongoing situation. PD had hoped the situation would have improved over the last period but that is not the case.

Northern Ethiopia has seen war in the last two years, during the projects activity, which impacted the Tigray and Amhara regions. The situation remains complex and ever-changing.

The control of towns, regions and strategic points in the project area has changed between Fano forces and federal forces since the start of August 2023. Quoted as an "ever-escalating conflict in Ethiopia's Amhara region" (September 29, 2023) conflict persists and tensions remain high in the region (September 26, 2023). A senior member of the Ethiopia Human Rights Defenders Centre went as far as saying "the Amhara region has escalated into full-scale warfare, with severe consequences for civilians" (September 26, 2023).

According to residents and eyewitnesses in the Amhara region, the conflict has further spread to various woredas (districts) of the region which has exposed civilians to greater risk, including extrajudicial killings by state security forces (September 18,

2023).

The federal government maintains that this conflict can be managed through “might”, despite calls by civil society, religious institutions, and the international community to look for a peaceful resolution. Fano meanwhile have refused local reconciliation initiatives, instead looking to international actors to create a space for further negotiations.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/fighting-ethiopias-amhara-kills-least-183-un-says-2023-08-29/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-66496137>

<https://www.voaafrica.com/a/un-war-crimes-continue-in-ethiopia-post-conflict-/7273010.html>

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/reflection-conflict-amhara-region-ethiopia>

<https://addisstandard.com/news-analysis-despite-state-of-emergency-and-leadership-changes-amhara-region-grapples-with-persistent-conflict-violence/>

<https://ehrc.org/amhara-region-concerning-human-rights-violations-in-the-context-of-the-armed-conflict/>

The PD elects to continue to monitor the situation closely, as they have since the project’s inception, and make arrangements for a physical VVB site visit at the earliest safe opportunity to do so.

For the purpose of this already significantly delayed review, the PD requests for the review to be able to continue as a desk-based review by the PDD.

Opportunity will be made available to the VVB to interview the PDD and implementation partner if required.

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.*

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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):

The conflict and ongoing situation in the region is beyond the PD's and implementation partners control; however, the nature of this deviation is temporary, and a future physical site visit will be conducted when deemed safe and appropriate. The implementer has other similar projects within Ethiopia which follow the same design where successful OO site visits have been achieved.

A desk based audit, to be conducted by CarbonCheck VVB as part of the current ongoing verification will allow for comparable findings- they have a track record of high quality reviews.

Opportunity will be made available to the VVB to interview the PDD and implementation partner if required.

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):

A desk based review by the VVB will be effective and appropriate in verifying the project for this MP. Additional opportunity to interview the PD and project implementer will support this.

Desk based reviews were successful during COVID periods where physical visits and remote audits were not viable. This situation should be considered much the same.

Regional issues can impact the project’s ongoing activities- however PD is confident in how the project has been managed until now considering the challenges and the implementers success in running successful GS carbon projects for many years.

The regional situation only compounds the need for projects like this locally and successful verification and issuance is critical to ensuring the projects ongoing funding of safe water provision for local communities

Further action (e.g. additional deviation measures) may be requested if other activities are impacted as deemed necessary by the VVB during the desk based review. The project has managed to achieve other activities during the monitoring period.

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