

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

# VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION STANDARD

March 2023

### **Why did Gold Standard create this new document?**

The VVS was created to provide a framework for efficient and consistent assessment of the compliance of projects and programmes with the Gold Standard for the Global Goals. We are consistently working to ensure our VVBs have the right tools to provide high quality services to assure the credibility of project impacts and claims, and the VVS is part of a collection of documents being developed to support this effort.

The VVS brings together a wide variety of requirements that were referenced in different Gold Standard documents, including the CDM Validation/Verification Standard, the Programme of Activities Requirements, the Principles and Requirements, etc. Most of the content of the new VVS simply brings together all of these requirements in one single, comprehensive, and structured document.

### **What is new compared to existing validation and verification requirements?**

There are two main areas that are newly introduced or made clearer in the VVS, compared to previous requirements:

#### **Sampling**

The VVB shall:

- select a sample to cover all the risks inherent in the validation/verification, with due account of materiality
- select a sample independently and without bias from the project developer, (e.g. 6.3.2.b.iii,)
- report the sampling approach and selected sample transparently (e.g. 7.16.6.f, 9.7.2 d, 17.2.8.c)

#### **Consent**

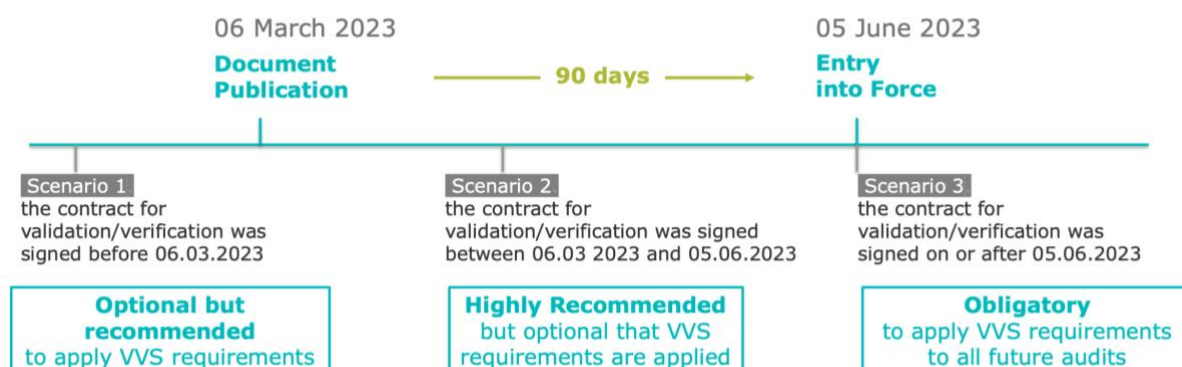
Consent from interviewees is required in order to disclose private information, such as names, on the Gold Standard Impact Registry. To ensure compliance with legal privacy requirements, the VVB is required to seek consent from interviewees (for example, employees of the project, technology users, stakeholders, etc.) and ensure that where no consent for disclosure is provided, the names and details of interviewees are reported in a separate annex, which can be provided for review but excluded from the documentation made public on the Gold Standard Impact Registry. See sections 7.16.6.e and 9.7.2.e for validation and verification reports, respectively. This is related to section 8 of the VVB Terms and Conditions.

### **When should VVBs begin to apply the VVS (entry into force)?**

The new standard document was published in early March and will come into force on 05 June 2023. VVBs may apply the new standard requirements to projects before the date of entry into force, and are encouraged to do so, however it does not become obligatory until 05 June 2023.

**Please note:** the entry into force depends on the date of signature of the validation/verification contract, and not, as is more common, on the date of submission for design/certification review. Should you have contracts that are multi-year, please take into account the date of confirmation of the site visit or another relevant date.

The timeline below illustrates the applicability of the document over the next few months.



### How does the VVS relate to other GS4GG documents?

The document makes it easier for VVBs to raise and justify findings during audits, and for the certification body to raise and justify findings during reviews.

The VVS will give VVBs more clarity of the minimum requirements for validation and verification activities under GS4GG, making it easier, for example:

- for quality managers: to check the completeness of audit templates
- for team leaders and technical reviewers: to check the completeness of audit plans and audit report
- for validators/verifiers: to justify findings to project developers

It will also help Gold Standard in general, to improve the quality and consistency of GS4GG validation and verification activities performed by different teams and VVBs, and to reduce the length of the review process.

### What other steps is GS taking to improve the quality of the assurance system? When will this come into effect?

In our continued effort to improve the quality and consistency of the GS4GG assurance process:

- In January 2021, we revamped our general [Validation and Verification Body Requirements](#) to ensure VVBs have the right quality management and team capacity

- in November 2021, learning from the COVID-19 interim measures, we introduced the [Site Visit and Remote Audit Requirements to allow for flexibility through remote audits while maintaining audit rigour](#).
- In August 2022, we introduced the [GS-VVB Terms and Conditions](#) to ensure the legal framework between Gold Standard and the VVBs.
- Later in 2023, we will introduce new standardised audit reporting templates to streamline services and enable more efficient, improved, and consistent reviews. We hope that this will standardise the audit and review process and reduce the rounds of review significantly. We are currently developing these and expect to road-test them with you in **Q2 2023**.

### **When are the new associated templates being released?**

These new requirements will be supported with new standardised reporting templates to streamline services and enable more efficient, improved, and consistent reviews. We hope that this will standardise the audit and review process and reduce the rounds of review significantly. We are currently developing these and expect to have them available for testing in Q2 2023.

### **Does my VVB need to change its templates now or wait for the ones provided by Gold Standard?**

If you anticipate signing/starting new projects in the next 3-6 months, we recommend that you review your templates, policies and procedures against the VVB standard as soon as possible, and you start introducing them into audits. The new GS templates will only enter into force later this year.