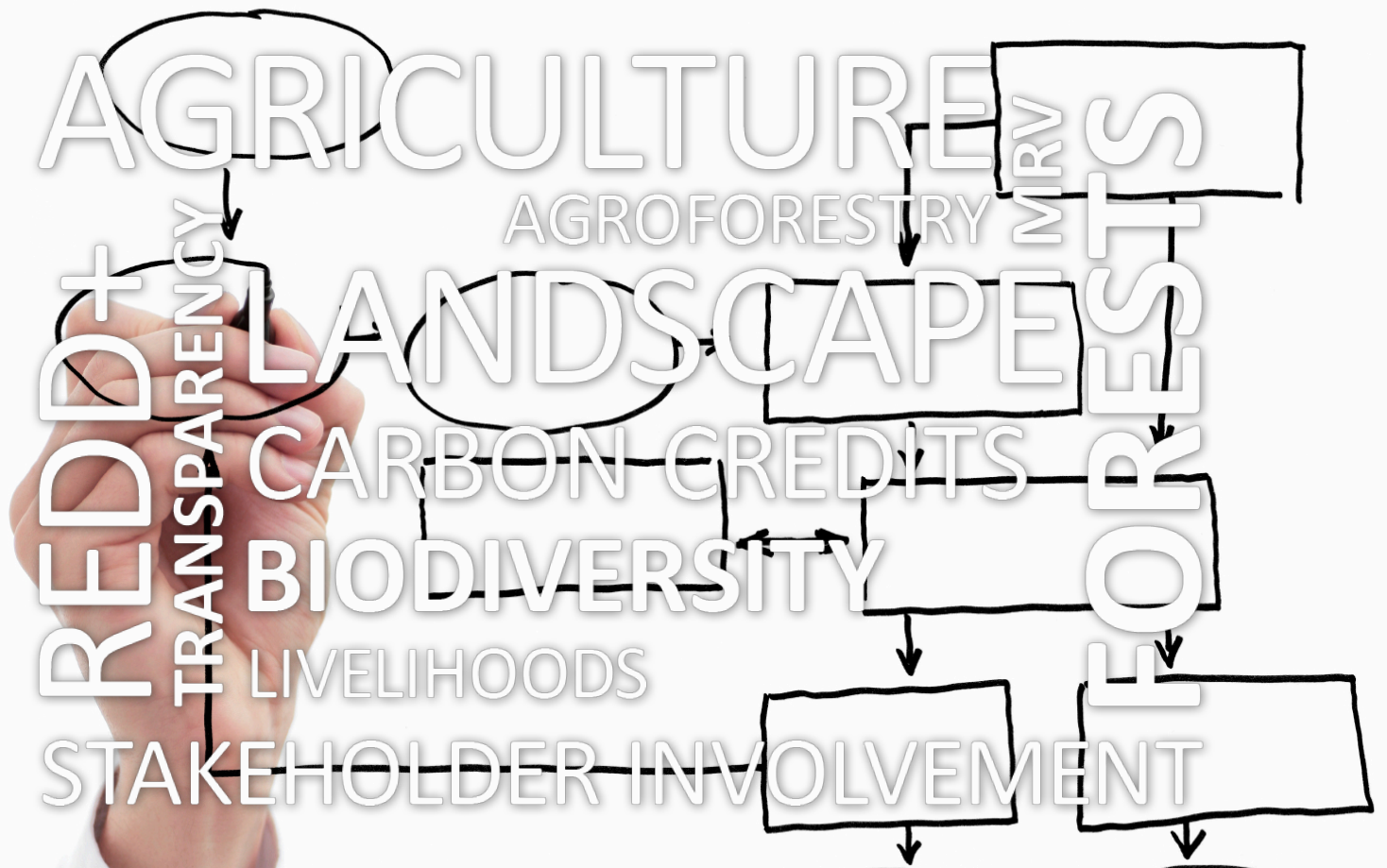


The Gold Standard

Methodology Approval Process Guideline

for 'Land Use & Forests'

Version 1.0
Valid since June 2015



Introduction

This guideline describes the procedure that needs to be followed for any methodology that seeks approval under the 'Gold Standard Land Use & Forests' scope.

How to read the document

- Dashed underlined words are defined below in alignment with the *Agriculture Requirements v0.9* and the *A/R Requirements v0.9*.
- *Italics* are used to improve the readability and understanding.
- **Shall** indicates requirements that must be followed in order to conform.
- **Should** indicates that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required.

Methodology approval procedures

This guideline allows for two procedures to be followed according to the background of the proposed methodology. The methodology developer will identify which procedure to follow. If it is not clear than please contact the Gold Standard secretariat.

1. Regular procedure

To be followed when submitting a methodology that has never been approved under any certification scheme.

2. Fast track procedure

To be followed when the submitted methodology has been previously approved by another credible carbon scheme (e.g. CDM, VCS, CAR, CFI Australia, ACR) or a domestic offset scheme.

1. Regular procedure

The following steps need to be adhered to if the submitted methodology has never been approved under any certification scheme.

Eligibility Check

1. The *methodology developer* shall contact the Gold Standard secretariat to assess the eligibility of the new methodology. Eligibility requirements are the following:
 - (a) The proposed methodology shall not yet be covered by another approved Gold Standard methodology or a Gold Standard methodology under development. In the case when the activity is already partly covered by another Gold Standard methodology, modifications to the existing methodology should be proposed.
 - (b) Evidence shall be provided that the proposed methodology can reach significant scale in contributing to global net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions.

Preparation

2. If eligibility is confirmed by the Gold Standard secretariat the *methodology developer* shall prepare and submit to the Gold Standard secretariat:
 - (a) a draft methodology document, together with
 - (b) a project description that shows how the methodology is applied (full project information is not required).
- 2.1. The *draft methodology document* shall include at least the following key elements:
 - (a) Title of the methodology
 - (b) Summary of the methodology (max. 100 words)
 - (c) Definitions and terms specific to the methodology or that deviate from definitions used in the *Agriculture Requirements v0.9* and the *A/R Requirements v0.9*
 - (d) Possible additional requirements for the chapters 'Do-No-Harm' and 'Sustainable Development'
 - (e) Crediting period
 - (f) Frequency of 'Performance Certification'
 - (g) Applicability conditions
 - (h) Selected emission pools and sources
 - (i) Baseline
 - Stratification
 - Baseline scenario
 - Baseline monitoring
 - (j) Project activities
 - Stratification
 - Project activities scenarios
 - Project activities monitoring
 - (k) Leakage
 - (l) Other emissions
 - (m) Amount of CO₂-certificates (including buffer)
 - (n) List of References
 - (o) History of versions / reasons for update
- 2.2. The *draft methodology document* shall also consider the following quality criteria:
 - (a) Clear, logical, concise and precise formulation
 - (b) Layout and terminology is streamlined with the *Agriculture Requirements v0.9*¹
 - (c) Adequate use of proper UK English

Secretariat review + selection of reviewers

3. The Gold Standard secretariat will conduct a review on the *draft methodology document* to assess if the requirements under 2.1 and 2.2 are met.

When deemed necessary, the *methodology developer* maybe asked to revise the *draft methodology document* before continuing in the methodology approval process. The Gold Standard secretariat reserves the right to not accept the *draft methodology document*.

- 3.1. Once a draft methodology has been accepted for progression, the Gold Standard secretariat will identify external and internal reviewers to assess the *draft methodology document*.

The two external reviewers will be appointed by the Gold Standard secretariat from the Gold Standard's expert network.

The 2-4 internal reviewers will be identified by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) where:

- (a) 2 reviewers will be from the Gold Standard 'Land Use & Forests sub-committee', and
- (b) 1 reviewer from the 'Energy sub-committee' and/or the 'Water sub-committee' in case the context of the proposed methodology is relevant to one or both of these scopes

The reviewers will assess the draft methodology based on the following:

- (a) Requirements outlined in 2.1 and 2.2.
- (b) Alignment with the *Gold Standard Principles*¹
- (c) Alignment with the existing Gold Standard social and environmental requirements
- (d) Reputational risks for the Gold Standard

The Gold Standard secretariat and the TAC shall choose reviewers to ensure no conflict of interest among the parties involved. In case a TAC member participates in the development of a methodology, the respective member shall not participate in the discussions and subsequent vote of the methodology.

External review

4. An introductory call between the *methodology developer*, all reviewers and the Gold Standard secretariat shall be conducted in order to initiate the review process. This will be coordinated by the Gold Standard secretariat.
5. Over a period of 2 weeks the external reviewers will conduct their assessment and open Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and Observations (OBSs) in a dedicated CAR/OBS list provided by the Gold Standard secretariat.

The *methodology developer* shall revise the *draft methodology document* in order to address any CARs raised by the external reviewers and re-submit the revised *draft methodology document* to the Gold Standard secretariat.

6. The Gold Standard secretariat reviews the revised *draft methodology document* and liaises with the *methodology developer* to close all CARs.

Stakeholder consultation

7. Once all CARs from the external reviewers have been successfully closed, the revised *draft methodology document* will be published for public consultation for a period of 4 weeks.

The comments received by the public will be integrated through the Gold Standard secretariat.

Internal review

8. Once all comments from the public consultation have been incorporated, the *draft methodology document* is forwarded to the internal reviewers.

Before the internal reviewers start their work, an *update call* shall be conducted between the internal reviewers, the *methodology developer*, interested TAC members and the Gold Standard secretariat to provide insights about the progress so far.

9. Over a period of 2 weeks the internal reviewers will conduct their review and open CARs and OBSs in a dedicated 'Online CAR/OBS list' provided by the Gold Standard secretariat.

The *methodology developer* then has to revise the *draft methodology document* in order to address the raised CARs of the internal reviewers.

¹ Gold Standard Principles www.goldstandard.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/The-Gold-Standard-Principles-FINAL-270513.pdf

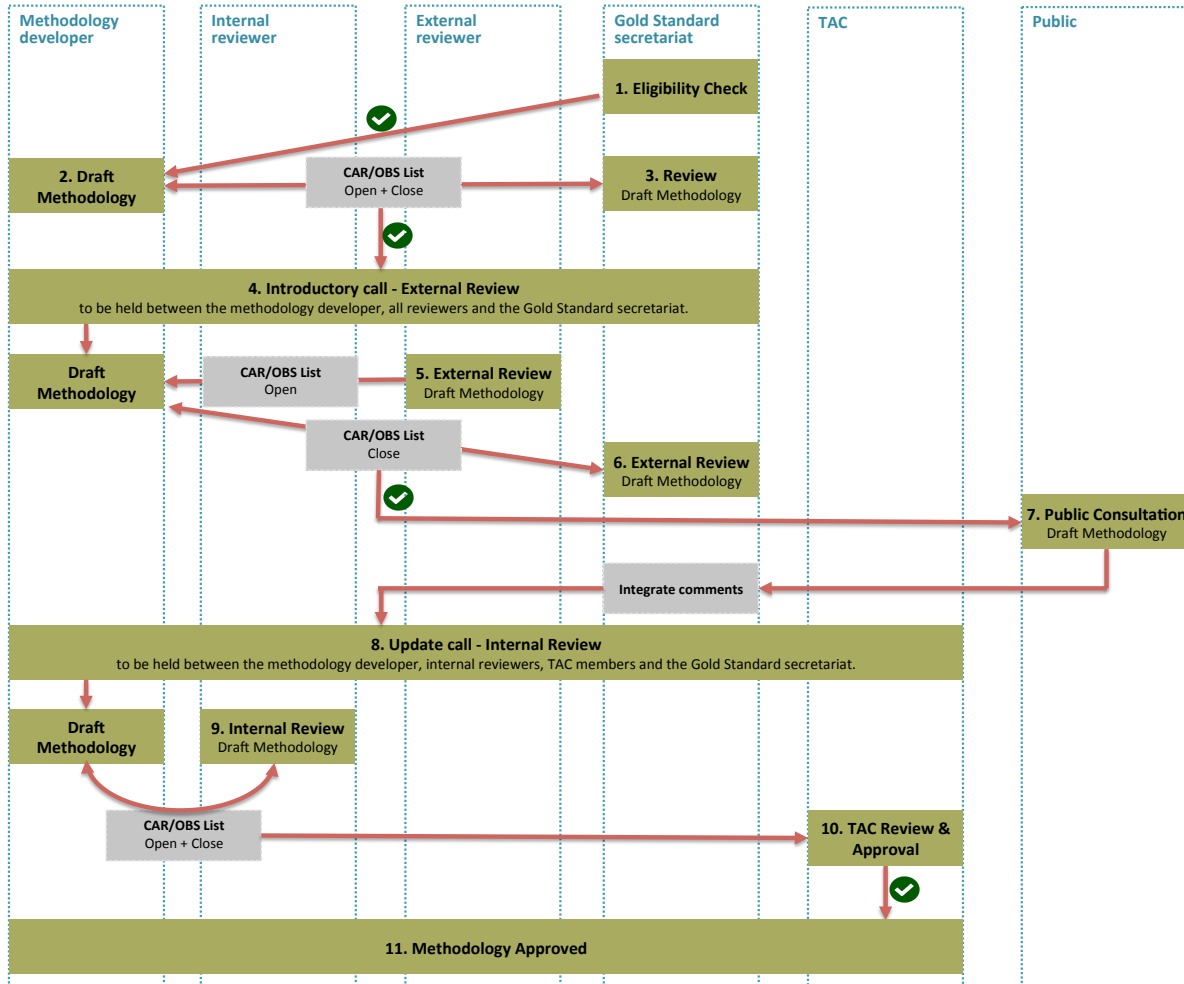
TAC review

10. *Once all CARs from the internal reviewers have been successfully closed, the draft methodology document is forwarded to the TAC. The TAC will conduct their review and can open CARs and OBSs in a dedicated 'Online CAR/OBS list' provided by the Gold Standard secretariat.*

The methodology developer then has to revise the draft methodology document in order to address CARs raised by the TAC.

11. *Once all CARs from the TAC members have been successfully closed, the draft methodology document is ready for its approval vote by the TAC. With the successful approval vote, the methodology is accepted as a Gold Standard methodology.*

Overview: Methodology Approval Process



2. Fast Track procedure

The following simplifications apply if a submitted methodology has been previously approved by another certification scheme (e.g. CDM, VCS, CAR, CFI Australia, ACR) or a domestic offset scheme.

- Only 1 *external* reviewer is required (see step 3.2).
- No *internal* reviewers are required (see step 3.2). After the external review the methodology will directly proceed to the TAC review. However, if deemed necessary by the Gold Standard secretariat (e.g. if the methodology is relevant to other Gold Standard scopes like energy or water) an internal review may be required.

Cost Structure

Estimations for associated costs as per type of procedure are indicated below.

1. **Regular procedure** \$ 15,000
2. **Fast Track procedure** \$ 7,500

Costs might be adapted based on the complexity of the proposed methodology. Please contact the Gold Standard secretariat for further information.

The *methodology developer* needs to pay for all expenses that are associated with the methodology approval process.

The Gold Standard reserves the right not to accept a proposed methodology based on its internal setting of priorities.

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