

Influence. Innovate. Inspire.

The Gold Standard

Retroactive Guideline

for 'Land Use & Forest' projects

Version 1.0
Valid since February 2015

AGRICULTURE
AGROFORESTRY
LANDSCAPE
CARBON CREDITS
BIODIVERSITY
LIVELIHOODS
STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT
REDD+
TRANSPARENCY
MRV
FORESTS

Introduction

The following guideline is based on input from several stakeholders during the road-testing period of the 'A/R Requirements v0.9'. It replaces the current rules of 'retroactive crediting' in the 'A/R Requirements v0.9' and the 'Agriculture Requirements v0.9'.

Terms

The following terms are the same as in the 'Gold Standard Agriculture Requirements v0.9'.

Project start | The project start is the date when the project begins to implement project activities that lead to the certification of one or several ecosystem services.

Crediting period | The crediting period is the time span in which the carbon sequestration or greenhouse gas reduction can be accounted for and is subject to monitoring.

The duration of the crediting period is specified in the relevant methodology.

Retroactive Crediting

A project can issue CO₂-certificates only within its crediting period. The crediting period cannot start before the project start, but may start after.

If a project has its Initial Certification later than the project start, retroactive crediting of up to 3 years is possible. In the case that new areas are added to a project (New Area Certification), its crediting period may not be moved earlier to the date of the existing crediting period.

Gold Standard expanded its scope to 'Land Use & Forests' in 2012. Before this, it was not possible for these types of projects to become certified under the Gold Standard. Thus, the Gold Standard provides an exception to the 'early movers' of this market to projects which started activities some time ago, but did not begin certification due to the circumstances of the market at the time. This exception allows a retroactive crediting of 10 years for A/R projects and 5 years for agriculture projects. This exception is valid for projects that submit their initial documentation to the Gold Standard secretariat before January 1, 2016 for A/R projects and January 1, 2017 for agriculture projects.

Pre-Feasibility-Assessment (PFA) & Additionality

In case a project has its Initial Certification later than the project start, it shall

- undergo a Pre-Feasibility-Assessment (PFA), AND
- neither use the "Positive list" nor the "5% Option" to prove its additionally.

The project shall prove its additionality based on the time of the project start. Hereby, evidence for *early carbon consideration* by credible documentation shall be provided. It is essential for the

- Gold Standard secretariat to double-check in the PFA process, AND
- auditor during the Initial Certification

that this documentation is not faked (backdated). Means of verification can include: documents that were signed by multiple people, the project having been communicated by several organizations, studies for the project written by independent third parties, and interviews with stakeholders.

Stakeholder participation

In case a project has its Initial Certification later than the project start, it shall be checked if it had any kind of stakeholder engagement in the past. If so, the Gold Standard secretariat will identify during the PFA the gaps between this stakeholder meeting and the regular Gold Standard 'Local Stakeholder Consultation (LSC)'. These gaps shall than be closed by a physical and non-physical meeting (the stakeholder feedback round) or during the certification of the auditor, depending of on the nature of gaps identified. If no stakeholder consultation has taken place in the past, a full LSC according to the Gold Standard 'Guideline - LSC' shall be conducted.