

THE GOLD STANDARD “TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE”

GOVERNANCE, GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mission of the Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC is an independent technical body of experts for The Gold Standard Foundation. It provides in a transparent, credible and timely manner expert advice and strategic input to The Gold Standard in order to ensure credibility, environmental integrity and a positive impact on sustainable development for Gold Standard project activities. The TAC oversees project registration/credit issuance procedures, approves methodologies and supports the continuous improvement and adaptation of The Gold Standard rules and procedures to market and stakeholder demands in both the Compliance and Voluntary Markets. The TAC is also the body in charge of operationalising any future scope expansions of The Gold Standard based on previous ‘in principal’ Board approval.

Responsibilities of The Gold Standard TAC

The TAC acts as an independent technical body of experts for The Gold Standard. Its main responsibilities are:

- **Strategic Development** of The Gold Standard activities including approval of rule changes and updates and new methodologies, based on:
 - Developments under the UNFCCC, the Kyoto protocol, in host countries and the carbon markets in general;
 - Suggestions from The Gold Standard Technical Team
 - Guidance given by the Foundation Board and the NGO supporter community;
 - Feedback and suggestions from market actors submitted to the TAC through The Gold Standard Secretariat; and
 - Emergence of new elements suitable for addition to the Gold Standard activities.

In the event there is a proposed fundamental change of scope, the TAC shall provide recommendations to and seek approval from The Gold Standard Foundation Board. Decision on whether a move is associated with a fundamental change of scope requires consensus among TAC members or a two third absolute majority of the TAC. The TAC also provides input to the Foundation Board strategic discussions via the TAC Chair.

- **Project Activities Registration, Credit and Label Issuance and Supervision of Validation and Verification practices**

The TAC oversees the review procedures for pre-feasibility assessment, internal validation, registration of project activities and issuance of credits and labels. It delegates the authority to make a final decision to the Quality Assurance Team of The Gold Standard Secretariat on a day-

to-day basis. The Quality Assurance Team is composed of senior staff from both The Gold Standard Technical and Operations Team, and headed by The Gold Standard Technical Director.

TAC members are alerted each time a registration review or a verification review is initiated and have the opportunity to intervene with requests for clarification and/or corrective actions anytime during the different review periods. The Quality Assurance Team in its decision-making must consider specific TAC requests.

The TAC also reviews validation/verification practices to adapt the respective guidelines if necessary.

Decisions made reflect the opinion of The Gold Standard as a whole. GS Secretariat staff and the TAC members are not individually liable for any decision made on behalf of The Gold Standard Foundation. Liability of The Gold Standard Foundation is governed through The Gold Standard Terms and Conditions.

All procedures for specific TAC tasks are described in The Gold Standard Requirements and Toolkit documents or in separate, or alternatively in publicly available (Gold Standard website) memos outlining the purpose, processes, responsibilities and timelines of a certain activity. These guidelines are binding for TAC members in order to safeguard the timely completion of Gold Standard responsibilities on deliverables of the Foundation towards market participants. The TAC retains the authority to define ad-hoc procedures for tasks and decisions not covered by existing procedures. In such cases, the procedure adopted will be published subsequently as part of the decision.

Working modalities

Strategic Development

Strategic issues and issues related to new methodologies and rule updates are discussed in plenary meetings, monthly conference calls and emails. In the case of methodologies for the voluntary market stream of The Gold Standard, the TAC reviews and potentially approves new methodologies submitted. Reviews by self-selected TAC members occur in parallel with the review by The Gold Standard Secretariat Technical Team and by two relevant external reviewers contracted by The Gold Standard Secretariat. The TAC also decides on whether a full review process (Inc. external reviews) or a simplified review process (internal review only) is needed for the approval of the revised version of an existing methodology.

The Chair of the TAC, or the Vice-Chair in the absence of the Chair, moderates the meetings and conference calls. Conference calls take place on a monthly basis with an agenda proposed by the Gold Standard Technical Director and sent at least 5 days prior to the call. TAC members may ask for a specific item to be discussed during an upcoming call by alerting the Gold Standard Secretariat on time (at least 10 days prior to the call) for the item to be included in the agenda. At a minimum, two in-person meetings per year are aimed at and typically take place during COP/MOP or The Gold Standard Academy.

Materials and suggestions from applicants to be reviewed and discussed by the TAC need to be made available to The Gold Standard Secretariat at least 15 working days in advance of a session. Agenda and supporting materials must be sent to TAC for review 5 working days in advance of a session by the Gold Standard secretariat.

Decisions on strategic issues, rule changes or methodology approvals are in principle taken by consensus and in the absence of consensus with a simple majority vote.

At least 50% of the TAC members plus one, with among them the Chair or the Vice-Chair must provide an opinion on the considered item, either during the meetings/conference calls or via e-mails to or calls with The Gold Standard Secretariat in the week following or preceding the meeting/call, for a decision to be valid. In case of simple majority decisions, the simple majority is calculated based on the number of TAC members that provided opinions.

Project Registration, Credit and Label Issuance - Supervision of Validation and Verification Practice

The Quality Assurance Team can seek TAC members' opinion at its discretion on any issue related to a specific project activity.

If a project activity is rejected by the Quality Assurance Team on the basis of a pre-feasibility assessment, an internal validation, a registration review, or a verification review project proponents may appeal the decision and request a full review by the TAC. In the case of such a review, the respective review period is suspended until the TAC makes a decision.

TAC members are alerted via emails each time a project activity is submitted for registration review or verification review and can access the full set of project documentation via The Gold Standard Registry. They have the opportunity to request corrective actions or clarifications for each one of these project activities within the 6/8-week registration or 2/3-week issuance period respectively. These requests are compiled by The Gold Standard Secretariat and must be addressed by the project applicants.

Gold Standard NGO Supporters can also request a full registration review or verification by the TAC for a given project activity in addition to the review conducted by the Quality Assurance Team. This request must be made through The Gold Standard Secretariat within the first week of the registration review period or the first week of the verification review period, respectively.

Project-related decisions by the TAC are in principle taken by consensus and in the absence of consensus with a simple majority vote. The Quorum for a valid decision requires 4 TAC members at least, with among them the Chair or the Vice-Chair, to have provided an opinion on the considered issue, either during the meetings/conference calls or via e-mails to or calls with The Gold Standard Technical Director in the week following or preceding the meeting/call, the simple majority is calculated based on the number of TAC members that provided opinions.

Confidentiality, Transparency

Members of the TAC are listed on The Gold Standard website with their names, country of residence and professional affiliations. All TAC members act in personal capacity.

TAC discussions are confidential, but TAC proceedings with information for the public domain are made available on The Gold Standard website on a regular basis.

TAC members commit to disclose all conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest arising from professional duties in conjunction with the service on the Gold Standard TAC to the Chair of The Gold Standard and the Gold Standard Secretariat. The TAC Chair, the TAC Vice-Chair, or any member of the TAC as well as the Gold Standard Secretariat can ask TAC members to abstain from the decision making process or to be excluded from the discussions if there is a perceived conflict of interest. Market participants wanting to restrict information to certain TAC members must give credible and transparent reasons to the Gold Standard Secretariat. The final decision lies with the TAC Chair or the acting TAC Vice-Chair, who if in doubt can put such a request forward for a vote by the entire TAC.

TAC Constitution

The election of the Chair of the TAC by the TAC members requires a two third absolute majority vote of all sitting TAC members. The Chair is elected for a period of 4 years, renewable. The Gold Standard Foundation Board shall approve the TAC Chair as a Board member within 6 months after taking tenure.

Each member of the TAC is expected to serve as Vice-Chair of the TAC on a 6-month rotational basis, nominated in chronological order of joining the TAC. The Vice-Chair acts as the Chair whenever the Chair cannot attend a monthly meeting or conference call. If neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair can attend the monthly meeting or conference call, no final decisions can be adopted without a confirmation from either of them within the week following the meeting or conference call or at the next session.

The members of the TAC are recruited through The Gold Standard Secretariat in cooperation with the TAC Chair and based on an open call for nominations. Candidates must provide The Gold Standard Technical Director with a letter of motivation and a CV for consideration by the TAC. New TAC members must be confirmed by a unanimous vote of the current TAC. All TAC members are contracted in their function through a separate and individual service provision contract with The Gold Standard.

The TAC should consider a fair distribution between developed and developing country representatives, a suitable geographic distribution and professional/organisational background in addition to expert qualification. Affiliation to NGO supporters is an asset but not a condition.

Each TAC member is expected to participate in at least 6 monthly TAC meetings/conference calls in a year. The TAC Chair shall invite TAC members who do not cope with this requirement or did not attend a TAC meeting/conference call in 6 months to resign.

TAC members are expected to commit at least 5% of their time to GS activities.