



Gold Standard
for the Global Goals



PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

Sustainable rice programme of activities in Vietnam

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BACKGROUND

Gold Standard implemented the programme Scaling carbon markets access for sustainable rice producers in Vietnam in partnership with the International Rice Research Institute and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, through the Business Partnerships Platform. Under this programme, the partners have produced different resources to support the development of sustainable rice projects.

This guidance document provides an introduction to Programmes of Activities (PoA) certified under Gold Standard for the Global Goals (GS4GG). It outlines the main features of a PoA, how a PoA differs from a standalone project activity, and the relevance of the PoA model for rice cultivation activities. It is primarily intended for project developers new to GS4GG.

Users considering developing a PoA should consult the *Programme of Activity Requirements and Procedures*. It sets out the minimum requirements and procedures for designing, implementing, and monitoring a PoA. It should be read together with other core GS4GG documents, including the *Principles and Requirements*, relevant *activity requirements*, the applicable *Impact Quantification Methodology*, and *GHG Emission Reductions & Sequestration Product Requirements*.

Users should also consult the supporting resources hosted on Gold Standard's *Rice Sustainability Hub*. These include pre-filled design documents for an example sustainable rice activity at both the PoA and Voluntary Project Activity level. These example templates can help stakeholders understand the type of information that would be included for a sustainable rice activity. They can also access project documentation from real life rice activities via the Gold Standard *Impact Registry*.

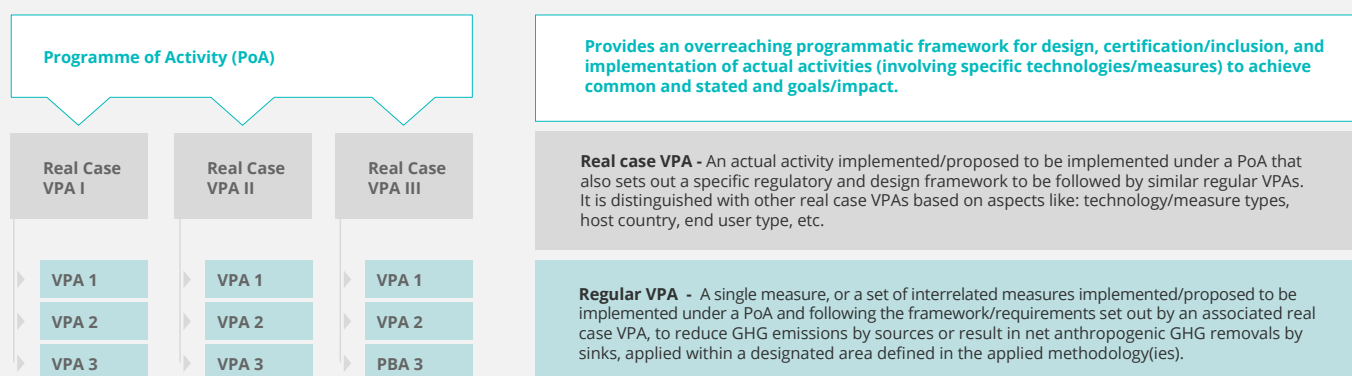
INTRODUCTION TO POAS

What is a PoA?

A **PoA** is the overarching framework under which actual activities – referred to as **Voluntary Project Activities (VPA)** – are implemented. The key features of the intervention are established at the PoA level. These include the goal or measure that is to be promoted, the geographical scope of the underlying activities, the technologies/measures that are covered, and the criteria for including VPAs.

VPAs are actual activities, implemented on the ground. There can be different types of VPA under a single PoA – for instance, adopting different technologies/measures, or implemented in different countries – but they must be consistent with the objectives of the PoA.

There are two types of VPA. The **real case VPA** is the first VPA that serves as template for regular VPAs applying a particular technology/measure implemented under a PoA. There can be multiple real case VPAs under one PoA. **Regular VPAs** are subsequent project activities that correspond to a design certified real case VPA (i.e., applying the methodology, emission reductions or removals estimation approach, and monitoring plan as established in the real case VPA).



There are two main entities involved in a PoA. The Coordinating and Managing Entity (CME) is responsible for managing implementation of the PoA, including oversight of VPAs, project documentation, and all interactions with Gold Standard. The VPA implementer, which may or may not be the same entity as the CME, is responsible for implementing VPAs on the ground.

What are the benefits of a PoA?

PoAs were originally introduced to improve access to carbon markets by reducing transaction costs and making it easier to implement smaller scale activities. There are several features of a PoA that may be beneficial for project developers.

— **Scalability:** VPAs can be added throughout the PoA's lifetime, allowing the coverage of PoA to increase grow over time. This contrasts with a regular project, the scale and coverage of which is set at the outset.

- **Quicker certification:** Regular VPAs proposed for inclusion in a design certified PoA and real case VPA do not need to undergo full validation, as would be required with a separate project activity. Instead, a streamlined process can be followed. This also lowers the risk to the CME.
- **Lower transaction costs:** Quicker certification timelines, together with the streamlined inclusion process, result in lower transaction costs. This is especially so for small scale projects, for which fixed costs (e.g., validation) will be proportionately greater.
- **Geographical flexibility:** PoAs can cover VPAs in more than one country. In this instance, a separate real case VPA must normally be submitted for each country covered by the PoA.

How does PoA certification work?

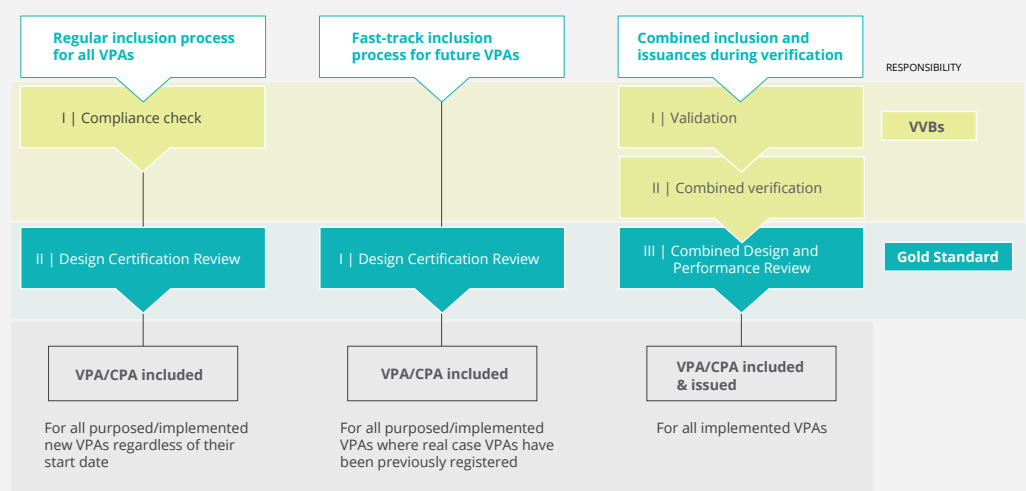
The overall certification process for a PoA is largely the same as that of a regular project activity. An overview of the GS4GG certification process can be found on the [Gold Standard website](#). The main points to note regarding certification of a PoA include:

- The maximum duration of a PoA for agricultural activities is 20 years. Credits can only be issued from underlying VPAs during this period.
- The PoA design document must be submitted for design review with at least one real case VPA design document. Validation must occur within two years of the successful listing of the PoA and its real case VPA(s).
- Regular VPAs – effectively new project activities corresponding to a real case VPA – can be included in a design certified PoA in a streamlined manner. There are three different pathways (see below for more information).
- New real case VPAs can be included in the PoA at a later stage. This will require a request to change the design of the PoA (see [Design Change Requirements](#)). The new real case VPA will undergo preliminary review, validation, and design review.

STREAMLINED INCLUSION FOR REGULAR VPAS

There are three different pathways for including regular VPAs into a design certified PoA.

— **Regular Inclusion Pathway:** The Validation and Verification Body (VVB) completes a compliance check of the regular VPA, ensuring it meets the inclusion criteria established at the POA and real case VPA levels. Gold Standard



will then conduct a two-week Design Certification Review. This pathway is open for all proposed or implemented regular VPAs.

- **Fast-track Inclusion Pathway:** A four-week Design Certification Review is conducted by Gold Standard, without the need for a VVB compliance check. This pathway is open for all proposed or implemented regular VPAs that are implemented in the same country, correspond to a design certified real case VPA, and apply the methodology or combination of methodologies as established in the real case VPA.
- **Combined Inclusion/Issuance Pathway:** The VVB conducts a validation/compliance check for real case and regular VPAs, respectively. The VVB will also carry out a verification of all new/existing VPAs. Gold Standard will then undertake a combined, six-week Design and Performance Review. This pathway is open for implemented VPAs.

The graphic above shows the three inclusion pathways. A full explanation can be found in section 8.4 of the *Programme of Activity Requirements and Procedures*.

POAS FOR SUSTAINABLE RICE CULTIVATION

There are several features that may make the PoA model attractive for developers of sustainable rice projects. For instance, a developer (CME) is implementing a small-scale activity (the real case VPA) in Vietnam. Following the success of this activity, the developer plans to implement additional activities following the same design (regular VPAs) in different parts of the country in the coming years. Under the PoA approach, certification of these subsequent activities would be easier, quicker and cheaper than if they were done individually as standalone projects. The design and documentation of the regular VPAs will follow that of the real case VPA, reducing the time and effort needed. The shorter times for inclusion in the PoA mean that the regular VPAs will also be able to issue credits sooner than would a standalone project, providing cashflow benefits to the developer. The developer can continue to add regular VPAs to the POA during its lifetime, as and when they are implemented.

FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find out more about the rice methodology and Programme of activities through the resources provided beside.

HUB

Resources for the rice methodology

CONTACT

Helpdesk contact via email

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