



**Gold Standard**<sup>®</sup>  
for the Global Goals

## RULE UPDATE

### APPLICABILITY OF MINIMUM SITE VISIT REQUIREMENTS BY VVB

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#### Related Documents

- [Principles and Requirements](#)
- [GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Product Requirements](#)
- [Validation and Verification Body Requirements](#)

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## BACKGROUND

Gold Standard version 2.0 instituted minimum site visit frequency requirements for Validation/Verification Bodies (VVBs) as part of the project verification process, subject to reasonable exceptions. This rule update provides requirements and guidelines for VVBs to address the instances when the project/VPAs are in non-compliance with the minimum site visit requirements.

## RULE UPDATE

PROJECT CATEGORY: N/A

### 1| SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- 1.1.1 | This rule update (and requirements contained therein) applies to all standalone projects, Programme of Activities (PoAs) and project activities (VPAs/CPAs) (hereafter termed as projects) undergoing verifications, scale and activity type, where a project is in non-compliance with minimum site visit requirements.
- 1.1.2 | This rule update is also applicable to projects registered with Gold Standard V1.0.
- 1.1.3 | The relevant paragraphs to GSCERs projects have been notified, where applicable.

### 2| REQUIREMENTS

The VVB may approve a deviation to address a non-compliance with the minimum site visit requirement as follows;

#### 2.1 | Validate the reason for gaps in site visit:

- 2.1.1 | The reasons for non-compliance with site visit requirements could be either Force Majeure or Non-Force Majeure<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> **a. Force-Majeure:** Any cause constituting force majeure i.e., an event beyond the control of the project developer and not involving the developer's fault or negligence and not foreseeable. Such events may include, but are not limited to;

- any act of war (whether declared or not), invasion, revolution, insurrection, terrorism, or any other acts of a similar nature or force, that prevents VVB travel to project site
- Natural disaster like flood, earthquake, etc.
- Change in Governmental requirements, policy, etc that affect the project implementation and operation
- Any other situation which meets the definition above

Force majeure does not include shortage of personnel, industrial action, economic downfall, sickness of personnel, breach of contract by subcontractors and liquidity or solvency problems.

**b. Non Force majeure:** Any other cause that is not covered under force majeure

## 2.2 | Deviation approval

2.2.1 | VVB may approve such deviation as per the following paragraphs.

2.2.2 | **First site visit:** In case the VVB site visit is not conducted within first two years after the start of crediting period,

- i. If the start date of the crediting period (as specified in registered PDD) is after the project registration date, the VVB shall review the project's compliance with paragraph 3.1.3(b) of the [Design Change Requirements](#) and the start date of the crediting period can be updated accordingly. The reasons for delays could be either Force or Non-force majeure.
- ii. If the start date of the crediting period is before the project registration date and the delays were due to;
  - a. Force majeure, the project crediting period start date may be postponed for a maximum upto two years. In such a case, the VVB shall validate that no changes have occurred to the baseline, otherwise a conservative approach needs to be followed.
  - b. Non-Force Majeure, no deviation is allowed. The VVB shall not verify the monitoring period falling before two-year of the site visit date. Under similar circumstances for GSCERs projects, CERs only for two years before the site visit date shall be labelled as GSCERs.

2.2.3 | **Follow-up site visits** – In case follow-up site visits are not conducted within three years after the previous site visit, and the delays were due to:

- i. Force Majeure, the VVB shall submit a request for deviation to Gold Standard.
- ii. Non-Force Majeure, the VVB shall not verify the monitoring period falling before three years of the site visit date. Under similar circumstances for GSCERs projects, CERs only for three years before the site visit date shall be labelled as GSCERs.

2.2.4 | The project may have more than two years (first site visit) or three years (follow up site visit) of monitoring periods before the site visit date, the remaining years of the retroactive periods will be foregone without any extension of crediting period.

## 2.3 | Verification requirements

2.3.1 | VVB shall ensure that the deviation detail and VVB opinion are included in the appropriate section of the monitoring and verification report (for the relevant Monitoring Period).

2.3.2 | The VVB shall ensure no monitoring gaps exist within the eligible Monitoring Period(s). However, if gap(s) exist, the VVB shall ensure that conservative approach(es) have been applied and verified in line with section 3 of the [Deviation Approval Requirements and Procedures](#) (version 1.1) and overarching Gold Standard principles (as applicable).