

GOLD STANDARD FOR THE GLOBAL GOALS MICROSCALE PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

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GOLD STANDARD FOUNDATION VISION & MISSION

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GOLD STANDARD FOUNDATION VISION & MISSION

OUR VISION: Climate security and sustainable development for all.

OUR MISSION: To catalyse more ambitious climate action to achieve the Global Goals through robust standards and verified impacts.

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PREFACE

Unless stated otherwise in this document, rules provided in Gold Standard for the Global Goals [Principles & Requirements](#) apply to this scheme. In case of any discrepancy, the rules in this document shall prevail.

Projects applying the Gold Standard [Land-use & Forest Activity Requirements](#) shall apply the Microscale Project Requirements contained in that document. The Requirements included in this document are not applicable to Gold Standard Land-use & Forest Projects.

1.0 PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

(a) Scale of the project: Projects are eligible under the microscale scheme if the annual emission reductions achieved are limited to a maximum of 10,000 tonnes of CO₂eq in each and every year of the crediting period or as defined within respective [Activity Requirements](#). Whenever actual emission reductions as per the verification report exceed the upper threshold for a given registered project, the project can still request for issuance, but the claimable emission reductions are capped at 10,000 tonnes of CO₂eq per year.

(b) Type of project: Eligible project types are as defined by the Gold Standard for the Global Goals [Principles & Requirements](#) except (LU&F Projects) and that comply with the GS specific eligibility requirements listed in [Activity Requirements](#).

(c) Host country: Projects can be located in any host country.

(d) Project cycle: Both regular and retroactive cycle projects are eligible to apply under this scheme.

(e) Date of first submission: The date of first submission of a microscale project is defined as the upload of project documents for Preliminary Review.

2.0 PROJECT CERTIFICATION PERIOD

2.1 Projects must follow the certification & crediting period rules as defined in the Gold Standard for the Global Goals [Principles & Requirements](#) or in [Activity Requirements](#) where applicable.

3.0 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

3.1 A two-step stakeholder consultation must take place as per the Gold Standard [Stakeholder Consultation & Engagement Procedure, Requirements & Guidelines](#).

3.2 Project developers shall also implement the continuous input/grievance mechanism to solicit feedback from stakeholders on unforeseen issues throughout the certification period of the project.

4.0 BASELINE, PROJECT SCENARIO & MONITORING

4.1 Baselines, project scenario and monitoring shall be defined as per [GS-Approved Methodology](#) (including approved CDM Methodologies). The latest methodology version applicable at the time of first submission to The Gold Standard shall be used. Alternatively, a new methodology may be described and submitted as part of the project documentation for approval as per the Gold Standard for the Global Goals [Principles & Requirements](#).

4.2 New simplified, conservative approaches (e.g. based on default factors) as well as the consideration of suppressed demand elements are encouraged in order to further streamline the evaluation of SDG Impacts, as long as convincing arguments are provided as to why the approach proposed is conservative enough. The simplified methodology is submitted as part of the Project Design Document.

4.3 Once approved as part of a given project, new methodologies can be used by all project developers for future standalone microscale projects.

4.4 When The Gold Standard Foundation is not in a position to evaluate with sufficient confidence if the new submitted methodology is appropriate and conservative enough, the proposed methodology will be sent out for external review, as per procedures for approval of new methodologies under The Gold Standard. In such a case, and unless the applicant decides to withdraw the methodology, the cost of this external review must be covered by the applicant.

5.0 DEBUNDLING RULES

5.1 No debundling rules apply to this scheme. However, the scheme can be discontinued anytime upon decision of The Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in case it is shown as being abused. In such a case, projects already submitted remain eligible for their entire crediting period.

6.0 BUNDLING AND POAS

6.1 Projects can be submitted within a bundle, however the upper threshold outlined under section 1.0 applies to the bundle as a whole. Project Developers shall refer to the Programme of Activity Requirements rules for the submission of microscale projects under a programme.

7.0 ADDITIONALITY

7.1 The additionality criteria for microscale projects as defined in the applicable Activity Requirements shall apply. In the absence of specific Activity Requirements the Gold Standard for the Global Goals [Principles & Requirements](#), Section 3.5 shall apply.

8.0 VALIDATION OF THE PROJECT

8.1 Validation shall be conducted in one of the following ways:

(a) The contracting of an eligible GS-VVB, (hereafter VVB) (as per the Gold Standard [Validation & Verification Body Requirements](#)), as for any other project. The project must make use of an existing methodology or submit the new methodology to Gold Standard for approval prior to Validation by the VVB.

(b) The submission to *The Gold Standard Internal Validation process*. This option implies the payment of a flat fee to The Gold Standard Validation Fund, to initiate the validation of the project. Please refer the [fee](#) schedule for details.

(c) If the project proposes a new methodology for the accounting and monitoring of SDG outcomes, the internal validation process includes the approval or rejection of the proposed new approach by Gold Standard, unless, as discussed above, the new methodology is sent for external review.

8.2 For The Gold Standard Validation Fund option, the following procedures apply:

(a) The Gold Standard Secretariat shall be notified of the use of the Validation Fund option.

(b) The completed [PDD](#) with information on baseline and monitoring and the Validation Appraisal Report must be uploaded to the GS Registry.

(c) The Project Developer is notified on whether the project will be selected for an external validation by a VVB, or will be validated internally by Gold Standard. In both cases, the Validation Fund covers the costs. At all times, any assistance from The Gold Standard Validation Fund is subject to the availability of funds. This decision is made through a 'target-random' selection among microscale projects opting to make use of the Validation Fund. In case project is selected for external validation by the VVB, Gold Standard will contract and pay the VVB from validation fund. The project will follow the steps of a regular validation.

(d) For an internal validation, the Project Developer is notified on whether the project is selected for an appraisal of sustainable development aspects including SDG 13 by an Objective Observer, or if these aspects will be validated internally by Gold Standard alone. The Validation Fund will cover these costs. At all times, any assistance from The Gold Standard Validation Fund is subject to the availability of funds. This decision is made through a 'target-random' selection among microscale projects opting to make use of the Validation Fund (section 10.0 details the Sustainable Development Assessment Process).

9.0 VERIFICATION

9.1 Verification shall be conducted in either of the two following ways:

(a) The contracting of a VVB as for any other project

(b) Submission to *The Gold Standard Internal Verification process*. This option implies the payment of a flat fee to The Gold Standard Verification Fund, to

initiate the verification of the project. the first fee being paid within nine months after registration.

9.2 The following procedure applies for The Gold Standard Verification Fund option:

- (a) The Gold Standard Secretariat shall be notified of the choice of the Verification Fund option.
- (b) The Monitoring Report and Verification Appraisal Report must be uploaded into the registry with all necessary supporting documentation.
- (c) The project developer is notified on whether the project is selected for an external verification by a VVB or will be verified internally by Gold Standard. In both cases, the Verification Fund covers the costs. At all times, any assistance from The Gold Standard Verification Fund is subject to the availability of funds. This decision is made through a 'target-random' selection among microscale projects opting to make use of the Verification Fund. Project Developers requested to have a project externally verified must provide The Gold Standard with at least three competitive offers from VVBs contract the GS selected VVB, and follow the steps of a regular Verification.
- (d) For an internal verification, the Project Developer is notified on whether the project is selected for an appraisal of sustainable development aspects including SDG 13 by an Objective Observer, or if these will be verified internally by Gold Standard alone. The Verification Fund will cover these costs. At all times, any assistance from The Gold Standard Verification Fund is subject to the availability of funds. This decision is made through a 'target-random' selection among microscale projects opting to make use of the Verification Fund. If a microscale project has not been selected for appraisal by an Objective Observer during validation then it must be subjected to an Objective Observer appraisal and site visit at least once within two years of date of project design certification or start of certification/crediting period, whichever is later. (Section 10 details the Sustainable Development Assessment Process)

9.3 It is possible for fraud to occur when Project Developer has deliberately provided information that is incorrect, and used to obtain Gold Standard status, or to inflate the SDG outcomes and impacts from the project. If fraud were suspected, it would be determined through the several rounds of requests for clarification and/or corrective action. If the Verification shows that the project documentation is fraudulent, and if Gold Standard has credible evidence that shows the negative intent of the Project Developer, the party submitting the project is permanently disqualified and this is publicly announced (see [Gold Standard Terms & Conditions](#) for more details).

10.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

10.1 Under the microscale scheme a target-random approach is applied to the project appraisal making use of an Objective Observer, at the Validation and/or Verification stage.

10.2 Upon Gold Standard request and in time for validation or verification, PDs shall identify and provide the names and contact details of at least three independent experts (e.g. academics from local universities, staff from local NGOs or local consultancies, etc.) who shall appraise the project with respect to sustainable development aspects. The Gold Standard appoints one or more Objective Observers amongst the people suggested and/or other experts preferably chosen from The Gold Standard NGO Supporters, The Gold Standard Roster of Experts, or representatives of development organisations with host country experience such that environmental and socio-economic impacts can be credibly assessed. Experts are selected based on an assessment of the relevance of their expertise and knowledge of the local conditions.

10.3 The Objective Observers shall visit the site at validation or verification stage to provide an independent assessment of the following:

- (a) risks associated with the project with respect to The Gold Standard [Safeguarding Principles & Requirements](#) (human rights abuse, environmental degradation, non-adherence to labour laws, corruption, etc.).
- (b) contribution to three SDGs with mandatory contribution to SDG 13
- (c) completeness of stakeholder consultations

Validation stage

10.4 Project Developers shall carry out a self-assessment of the risks associated with the project with respect to The Gold Standard [Safeguarding Principles & Requirements](#) (human rights abuse, environmental degradation, non-adherence to labour laws, corruption, etc.) and shall identify positive contribution to at least three SDGs, with mandatory contribution to SDG 13. In case of project appraisal by an Objective Observer, the self-assessment shall be submitted for review by the Observer. The Objective Observer shall carry out a site-visit as part of the appraisal process.

10.5 During validation, when risks with regards to the Safeguarding Principles are identified as per the Objective Observer's appraisal, the Project Developer is required to prepare and submit an appropriate mitigation plan to the Objective Observer who will evaluate the appropriateness of the mitigation measures and they will be reported in the Validation Appraisal Report. Inputs from stakeholders during the Stakeholder Consultation (SC) and Stakeholder Feedback Round (SFR) shall be taken into account for this assessment. SDG impact indicators shall also be included in the monitoring plan and discussed with Stakeholders.

10.7 The Validation Report completed by the Objective Observer will be made available to Gold Standard TAC and Secretariat and NGO Supporters at the time of review and will form part of the project design certification process. The appraisal will be made publicly available following project Design Certification.

Verification stage

10.8 During verification, if the Objective Observer is selected for appraisal then he/she shall visit the site to:

- (a) Confirm the status of project operation,
- (b) Assess the SDG contribution by the project
- (c) Assess if the mitigation plan is effectively implemented and negative impacts and risks are being effectively mitigated,
- (d) Check that other negative impacts have not resulted due to implementation and operation of the project.

10.10 The Objective Observer may also report a new issue observed during the verification.

10.11 The Verification Appraisal Report will be made available to The Gold Standard TAC and Secretariat and to the GS NGO Supporters at the time of review and will form part of the issuance review. The Appraisal Report will be made publicly available after the issuance review.

10.12 Whenever a project is not selected for an appraisal by an Objective Observer(s) at verification stage, and in view of any request for issuance, the Project Developer shall confirm the status of the project operation, assess if the mitigation plan is effectively implemented and negative impacts and risks have been mitigated, and check that other negative impacts have not resulted due to implementation and operation of the project.

11.0 DESIGN CHANGE RULES

11.1 The project developer shall refer to the most recent version of The Gold Standard rules for design change requests.

Endnotes

[1] The scale of the project is not only defined by the maximum power generation capacity for power projects and maximum threshold of energy savings for energy efficiency project, but also refers to the volume of emission reductions from a project.

[2] Gold Standard will not conclude the Verification until the request for approval of changes has been approved.

[3] This can include situations like severe disease outbreak in a country or a part of country and where advisories are issued by national governments / health departments notifying people against travel to a particular region/ country. For example, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issues travel health notices to inform travellers about current health issues in specific destinations and warns them about the risks associated or avoiding non-essential travel. Refer to the website for more information – <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices#>

[4] This evidence includes, but is not limited to, written correspondence from two or more auditors refusing to go on-site in the conflict zone/ areas that pose high risk to life and / or health.