

## **Summary of Rule Updates and Changes to Standard Documents**

### **BACKGROUND:**

According to ISEAL Alliance "Setting Social and Environmental Standards" Code of Best Practice, Gold Standard for the Global Goals is updated on a regular basis to account for broader stakeholder inputs and to consider updates in the sector.

### **PERIOD OF CONSULTATION:**

A 60-day public consultation to solicit stakeholder feedback was held between 17/06/2019 and 18/09/2019. The comments received during the feedback were consolidated and fed into the Standard's rule update. The main updates to the standard documents are summarized in table below.

### **SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO STANDARD DOCUMENTS:**

<b>Standard document</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>
Principles and requirements	<p>1. Harmonisation of key terms and clarification on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Certification outcomes that can be achieved using Gold Standard for the Global Goals</li><li>- SDG impact assessment approach</li><li>- Project cycle and project documentation required for each step</li><li>- Preliminary review lasts for 4 weeks for both the completeness check pathway or the detailed preliminary review pathway</li><li>- Projects are eligible for retroactive performance certification for a maximum of two years prior to the date of Project Design Certification, unless otherwise stated in the activity/product requirements</li><li>- Project Developers shall report any potential or actual non-conformity against the Requirements, and any associated Guidelines, Tools or Methodologies, immediately upon discovery. And in no circumstances later than 30 days after the non-conformity event discovery.</li><li>- Process clarified for the design change approval for permanent design change and temporary deviations</li><li>- Conflict and emergency zones validation and verification process</li></ul>

	<p>2. Annual report requirements: To streamline and simplify the annual report submission process, the following changes have been introduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. As per revised requirements, an annual report shall be submitted for each monitoring year for which verification is not completed. For example, if a project does not complete the verification for monitoring year 2019 by 31st December 2020, the project shall submit an annual report for monitoring year 2019 latest by 31st December 2020.</li> <li>ii. Annual Report shall be submitted to Gold Standard and will be made publicly available.</li> </ul>
<p>Microscale Project requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Harmonisation of key terms and clarification on the validation and verification steps and requirements, including the role of Objective Observer</li> <li>2. The following clarifications have been made on the information required and approval process for simplified methodologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. As per the clarified requirements, simplified methodology submissions will need to contain certain information, e.g. applicability conditions, description of the baseline, project scenario etc.</li> <li>b. If the submitted simplified methodology requires external review, it will be processed under the fast track process as outlined in the impact quantification methodology approval procedure.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Community Services Activity Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Harmonisation of key terms and clarification on the certification renewal cycle.</li> <li>2. CSA activities can now also demonstrate additionality if they are listed in the CDM tool "Positive list of technologies".</li> </ul>

<p>GHG Emission Reduction and Sequestration Product Requirements</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Harmonisation of key terms and clarification on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Co-issuance of products e.g. GS-VERs and RECs, ODA declaration</li> <li>- Data used for Grid Emission Factors must be the most recent available at the time of submission of the project for validation. The data vintage for other purposes is, if not mentioned specifically in the requirements, the most recent available at time of first submission of the project to Gold Standard i.e. for preliminary review</li> <li>- Aggregation of crediting periods, when the project has been certified under multiple schemes/standards, shall not be greater than the Gold Standard crediting period</li> <li>- Process for issuance of PERs under LUF scope: added reference to the Performance Shortfall Guidelines; added clarification on the process of PERs issuance in Annex C</li> </ul> </li>   <li>2. Gold Standard has adopted the CDM definition on thresholds for Type 1 (Renewable Energy), Type 2 (Energy Efficiency) and Type 3 (Other) small-scale and micro-scale projects, based on cap at unit/device level.</li>   <li>3. Requirements on converting CERs to Gold Standard labelled CERs or transitioning CDM projects to Gold Standard for the Global Goals have been simplified for easier adoption.</li> </ol>
<p>Land Use and Forests Activity Requirements</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Harmonisation of key terms and clarification on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Single area project and group project</li> <li>- Project start</li> <li>- Eligibility criteria</li> <li>- FSC dual certification</li> <li>- Secured titles</li> <li>- New Area Certification</li> <li>- Specific Safeguarding Principles and Requirements</li> <li>- Crediting period and cycle</li> <li>- Financial additionality and ongoing financial need</li> <li>- Procedures to address uncertainty of LUF parameters</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requirements for smallholder and microscale projects</li> <li>- Guidelines to conduct a spatial forest/non-forest assessment</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Terminology on projects boundaries has been updated for LUF projects. The term “planting area” refers only to A/R projects and was confusing for agricultural projects. Therefore, terminology has been updated from “Project area = planting area + non-eligible area (rivers, roads, conservation area)” to “Project area = eligible area + non-eligible area”. Eligible area is now a common term to all LUF projects, and in the case of A/R refers to the planting area.</li> <li>3. Requirements of shapefiles to be submitted by project type have been harmonised for A/R and Agriculture projects. Also, it is now indicated which shapefiles must be submitted at each certification stage.</li> <li>4. Requirements applicable to smallholders and microscale projects have been consolidated into one single section. Also, some requirements have been deleted as they were a duplication of what is already represented in the LUF Activity Requirements.</li> <li>5. The Terms and Definitions section has been updated to include only one section on Project Area, which applies to either A/R or Agriculture projects.</li> <li>6. All sections regarding the certification of New Areas have been compiled into one single section. And additional guidance (on the process) has been provided.</li> </ol>
<p>Programme of Activity Requirements</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Harmonisation of key terms and clarification on the following aspects of GS PoAs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CDM requirements as listed in the PoA standard for Programme of Activities must be used when specific requirements are not listed in the Gold Standard Programme of Activity Requirements.</li> <li>- Time of first submission, duration and crediting period of GS PoAs and GS CDM PoAs</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular and retroactive VPA/VPA certification cycle steps</li> <li>- Version of additionality tool and methodology to be applied</li> <li>- PoA/VPA/CPA level stakeholder consultation</li> <li>- Application of safeguarding principles and requirements</li> <li>- Selection of multiple methodologies for application within the same PoA</li> <li>- Sample based approach for site-visit by VVB at time of inclusion/renewal of PoA/CPA/VPA has been explained and list of issues to be considered for using this approach are mentioned.</li> <li>- Design change rules and fee.</li> </ul> <p>2. Harmonisation of key terms and clarification on the following aspects of Gold Standard micro-PoAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requirements on VPA inclusion and verification</li> <li>- Role of Objective Observer</li> </ul>
Renewable Energy Label Product Requirements	<p>1. Harmonisation of key terms and clarification on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Process for CDM projects claiming RE labels is explained</li> <li>- Conditions for co-issuance of RE label and carbon credits (GS-CER or VER) is explained</li> <li>- Certification cycle of RE labelled projects</li> <li>- Annual reporting requirements</li> </ul> <p>2. Requirements on eligibility criteria for projects seeking retroactive design certification are formally introduced.</p>
Renewable Energy Activity Requirements	<p>1. Harmonisation of key terms and clarification on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- additionality and ongoing financial need</li> <li>- additional eligibility criteria for specific project types.</li> </ul> <p>2. Introduction of new eligibility requirements for RE projects – RE projects submitted for Gold Standard certification are required to meet certain eligibility criteria to qualify. Exceptions to the rule maybe provided under certain circumstances. The list of eligibility criteria is provided in the document.</p>

	<p>3. Waste incineration and gasification is now allowed if the additional criteria for eligibility (as listed in the document) are met.</p>
<p>Safeguarding Principles and Requirements</p>	<p>The text in this document has been re-arranged to make the requirements clearer to Project Developers and VVBs. The assessment questions are provided in the form of a checklist before the main requirements. The assessment questions must be answered as per the requirements that follow later in the document.</p>
<p>Stakeholder consultation and Engagement Procedure, Requirements and Guidelines</p>	<p>The Stakeholder Consultation Requirements and Guidelines have been split into 2 documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>The stakeholder consultation and engagement requirements:</b> Provide the core rules that must be followed in planning, conducting a stakeholder consultation for all GS projects and follow-up after the consultation meeting has been done.</li> <li>2. <b>The stakeholder consultation and engagement guidelines:</b> Support the requirements by providing additional guidance on how each requirement of the stakeholder consultation and engagement process can be met.</li> </ol>