

## Application of the Oeko-Institut/WWF-US/ EDF methodology for assessing the quality of carbon credits

This document presents results from the application of version 3.0 of a methodology, developed by Oeko-Institut, World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US) and Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), for assessing the quality of carbon credits. The methodology is applied by Oeko-Institut with support by Carbon Limits, Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI), INFRAS, Stockholm Environment Institute, and individual carbon market experts. This document evaluates one specific criterion or sub-criterion with respect to a specific carbon crediting program, project type, quantification methodology and/or host country, as specified in the below table. Please note that the CCQI website [Site terms and Privacy Policy](#) apply with respect to any use of the information provided in this document. Further information on the project and the methodology can be found here: [www.carboncreditquality.org](http://www.carboncreditquality.org)

Criterion:	<a href="#">5.1 Overall program governance</a>
Carbon crediting program:	<a href="#">Gold Standard</a>
Assessment based on carbon crediting program documents valid as of:	<a href="#">30 June 2021</a>
Date of final assessment:	<a href="#">20 May 2022</a>
Score:	<a href="#">4.69</a>

**Contact**  
[info@oeko.de](mailto:info@oeko.de)  
[www.oeko.de](http://www.oeko.de)

**Head Office Freiburg**  
 P. O. Box 17 71  
 79017 Freiburg

**Street address**  
 Merzhauser Straße 173  
 79100 Freiburg  
 Phone +49 761 45295-0

**Office Berlin**  
 Borkumstraße 2  
 13189 Berlin  
 Phone +49 30 405085-0

**Office Darmstadt**  
 Rheinstraße 95  
 64295 Darmstadt  
 Phone +49 6151 8191-0

# Assessment

## Indicator 5.1.1

### Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program has a Secretariat comprised of paid and fully employed staff that is responsible for the administration of the program.”

### Information sources considered

- 1 Program website (<https://www.goldstandard.org/resources/faqs>), last accessed on 14 June 2021.
- 2 Program website (<https://www.goldstandard.org/about-us/our-team>), last accessed on 18 November 2021.
- 3 Gold Standard Standards setting procedures. Version 2.1. Document issued on 9 April 2021. Online available at: [https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/000.1\\_V2.1\\_Gov\\_Standards-Setting-Procedure.pdf](https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/000.1_V2.1_Gov_Standards-Setting-Procedure.pdf)
- 4 Gold Standard Technical Governance Committee Terms of Reference. Version 1. Document issued on 2 April 2020. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-3-gov-terms-of-references-tgc/>.
- 5 Technical Advisory Committee Terms of Reference. Version 2.1. Document issued on 9 April 2021. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-3-gov-terms-of-references-tac/>

### Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, Website-FAQ: “Gold Standard's day-to-day activities are run by the Secretariat and overseen by the Governance Board who provide financial oversight and strategic governance. Our Technical Advisory Committee is responsible for ensuring the rigor and integrity in all our work, proven existing programs and innovative new initiatives.”
- Provision 2 Source 3, section 1.1.1, page 2: “The Gold Standard Secretariat, governed by the Technical Governance Committee (TGC) is responsible for the development (including the initiation, design, authoring and development) of all Standards under Gold Standard for the Global Goals (GS4GG). ‘Standard’ is used as an overarching term throughout this document and may refer to the following list and any associated procedures, guidelines, templates:

- Provision 3 Source 3, section 2.1.2, page 3: “The creation or revision of these modules may be undertaken by Gold Standard either as: a. Self-initiated in line with pre-planned reviews or the strategic objectives and priorities of the organisation. b. By initiation via request by any stakeholder and subsequent acceptance by Gold Standard.”
- Provision 4 Source 3, section 2.1.3, page 3: “The TGC is responsible for mandating the development and approval process of all Standards and Modules. It does so by reference to the Technical Governance Guiding Principles. New or updated Standards and Modules shall not be published or available for use unless approved in accordance with the mandate given to the TGC or appointed Committee as noted in the TGC Terms of Reference. Note that the TGC itself is not responsible for taking any such decisions. Instead it provides the necessary mandate to other Advisory Committees, Working Groups or the Secretariat as appropriate.”
- Provision 5 Source 3, section 2.1.4, page 3: “Standard approval decisions typically fall into two categories, summarised in TABLE 1, below. Typically, Category 1 decisions are made by TGC or a Technical Advisory Committee mandated by the TGC for that purpose. This could be an existing standing Committee, a sub-group or a newly formed Expert Working Group for the purpose. Project or function specific standing Committees are typically responsible for Category 2 decisions, though these may be supplemented by further experts and/or stakeholders where required.”
- Provision 6 Source 3, section 4.1.1, page 8: “All allegations, grievances and complaints regarding standards setting shall be directed through the Gold Standard Grievance Procedure.”
- Provision 7 Source 4, section 1.1 and 4.5, page 1 and 5: “The TGC is an independent group of experts appointed by the Gold Standard (GS) to oversee (in line with the Gold Standard Technical Governance Guiding Principles) all technical aspects of GS activity related to standards, assurance and certification. The specific responsibilities are as follows:
- Provide the mandate to the relevant Working Group or Committee for the approval of all GS Standards and Standards revisions (as defined in the Gold Standard Standards Setting Procedures).
  - Approval of the development, implementation and operation of the Gold Standard Standards Setting Procedures and all subsequent amendments and updates.
  - Oversight of all grievances and/or procedural complaints related to Standards Setting (where relevant to technical matters) where such complaints are not adequately dealt with or unresolvable by the GS Secretariat.
  - Review and comment on the GS annual workplan in relation to technical matters.
  - Other specific tasks as may be added to the agenda by GS Secretariat and/or Board.
  - Brief new members of the TGC including assisting in transition periods” [..]
- “Implementation – The Secretariat is responsible for implementation of the TGC decisions unless specifically determined otherwise.”
- Provision 8 Source 5, section 3.1 and 2, pages 3 and 4: “RESPONSIBILITIES OF TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
- 3.1 |Standards Development. Standards Development activities including approval of new standards, standards updates, rule changes and clarifications (where required), based on (not exhaustive)

Developments under the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other relevant reference frameworks  
 Developments in the end-user markets served by Gold Standard and GS4GG  
 Developments in best practice and research as relevant to Gold Standard and GS4GG  
 Proposals from Secretariat, Gold Standard Board and the NGO supporter community  
 Feedback and suggestions from market actors submitted to the TAC through Secretariat; and  
 Emergence of innovations suitable for addition to the Gold Standard activities.

In the context of Environmental Markets, the TAC is also the body in charge of operationalising any future scope expansions of Gold Standard for Global Goals based on previous 'in principal' Board approval. Decision on whether to approve a change of scope ideally requires consensus among TAC members (of the relevant committee like Energy/Land Use) or a two third absolute majority of the TAC committee. Such approval should be based on the advice of the Secretariat and informed by a public stakeholder consultation where required. [...]

The Certification process is managed by SustainCERT. All Certification decisions are made by SustainCERT, in line with the relevant requirements of the standards. As part of the certification process, at key review milestones, TAC is notified (by SustainCERT) of an impending review and certification decision. TAC Members may review and comment on project documentation at these times, such that SustainCERT takes account of any concerns, queries or clarifications requested as part of the review. In case of any grievance received on a project, TAC oversees the investigation process run by Secretariat.”

**Assessment outcome**

Yes (2 Points).

**Justification of assessment**

The above documentation clearly specifies that the indicator is fulfilled.

**Indicator 5.1.2**

**Relevant scoring methodology provisions**

“The program provides contact details for the Secretariat on the program’s website.”

**Information sources considered**

- 1 Program website (<https://www.goldstandard.org/about-us/our-team>), last accessed on 18 November 2021.

## Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Not applicable.

## Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

## Justification of assessment

The program website lists all members of the Gold Standard Secretariat, their related functions and contact details.

## Indicator 5.1.3

### Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program defines who is responsible for the administration of the program and has established formally defined procedures for the decision making process on key programmatic functions, such as the approval of the normative program documents, the registration of projects, and the issuance, transfer and cancellation of carbon credits.”

### Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Standards setting procedures. Version 2.1. Document issued on 9 April 2021. Online available at: [https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/000.1\\_V2.1\\_Gov\\_Standards-Setting-Procedure.pdf](https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/000.1_V2.1_Gov_Standards-Setting-Procedure.pdf)
- 2 Gold Standard Technical Governance Committee Terms of Reference. Version 1. Document issued on 2 April 2020. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-3-gov-terms-of-references-tgc/>.
- 3 Technical Advisory Committee Terms of Reference. Version 2.1. Document issued on 9 April 2021. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-3-gov-terms-of-references-tac/>.
- 4 Gold Standard Validation & Verification Body Requirements. Version 2.0. Document issued on 14 January 2021. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/109-par-validation-verification-body-requirements/>.
- 5 Gold Standard Principles & Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/101-par-principles-requirements/>.
- 6 SustainCert – Website. Last accessed on 03 March 2022: <https://www.sustain-cert.com/environmental-markets/>
- 7 The Gold Standard Foundation – Registry Terms of Use (last updated November 2013) and Gold Standard Terms & Conditions (last updated May 2014), available at [https://www.goldstandard.org/sites/default/files/gold-standard-registry\\_tou\\_tcs.pdf](https://www.goldstandard.org/sites/default/files/gold-standard-registry_tou_tcs.pdf)

## Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 1.1.1, page 2: “The Gold Standard Secretariat, governed by the Technical Governance Committee (TGC) is responsible for the development (including the initiation, design, authoring and development) of all Standards under Gold Standard for the Global Goals (GS4GG). ‘Standard’ is used as an overarching term throughout this document and may refer to the following list and any associated procedures, guidelines, templates:

- 000 Series –Technical Governance Principles & Requirements
- 100 Series –Principles & Requirements
- 200 Series –Activity Requirements
- 300 Series –Contextual Requirements
- 400 Series –Impact Quantification Methodologies
- 500 Series –Product Requirements”

Provision 2 Source 1, section 2.1.6 and 2.1.1, page 2: “Between regular or planned updates to the Standard there may be urgent clarifications or corrections required, for example, if Gold Standard receives substantial feedback from stakeholders that warrants an immediate review of a specific requirement in the Standard. Where such circumstances occur, Gold Standard will update the requirements in discussion with Technical Governance Committee (TGC) or appointed Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The updates will be published, and stakeholders notified. Where required, further stakeholder engagement sessions may follow, dependent on the nature of the changes. The precise process for decision, publication and further engagement on unplanned updates shall be discussed with the TGC or appointed TAC on a case-by-case basis [...]

Gold Standard develops and implements Standards and Modules that may take a number of different forms, as defined in 1.1.1 | above. The development of these Standards and Modules may be newly initiated or constitute an update or revision to existing documents.”

Provision 3 Source 1, section 2.1.2, page 3: “The creation or revision of these modules may be undertaken by Gold Standard either as:

- a. Self-initiated in line with pre-planned reviews or the strategic objectives and priorities of the organisation.
- b. By initiation via request by any stakeholder and subsequent acceptance by Gold Standard.”

Provision 4 Source 1, section 2.1.3 and 2.1.4, page 3: “The TGC is responsible for mandating the development and approval process of all Standards and Modules. It does so by reference to the Technical Governance Guiding Principles. New or updated Standards and Modules shall not be published or available for use unless approved in accordance with the mandate given to the TGC or appointed Committee as noted in the TGC Terms of Reference. Note that the TGC itself is not responsible for taking any such decisions. Instead it provides the necessary mandate to other Advisory Committees, Working Groups or the Secretariat as appropriate.

Standard approval decisions typically fall into two categories, summarised in TABLE 1, below. Typically, Category 1 decisions are made by TGC or a Technical Advisory Committee mandated by the TGC for that purpose. This could be an existing standing Committee, a sub-group or a newly formed Expert Working Group for the purpose. Project or function specific standing Committees are typically responsible for Category 2 decisions, though these may be supplemented by further experts and/or stakeholders where required. [...]”

**Table 1 – Categories of Standards Setting decisions**

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2
<b>Cross cutting and strategic issues</b>	<b>Activity specific matters</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New standards and standard updates e.g. GS4GG</li> <li>- New products and product revisions e.g. GS4SUD, REC labels</li> <li>- New cross cutting products and revisions, tools and guidelines e.g. additionality, double counting</li> <li>- Cross cutting methodologies, tools and guidelines e.g. Gender</li> <li>- First of its kind methodologies, tools and guidelines e.g. ADALYs</li> <li>- New development and revisions to technical processes, procedures and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management of and updates to standards, tools and guidelines.</li> <li>- New development of and updates to Activity Requirements, tools and guidelines e.g. RE Activity Requirements</li> <li>- Activity specific methodologies (noting that first of its kind methodologies captured as Category 1) e.g. Agriculture emission reduction quantification methodology</li> <li>- Activity specific application of Product Specifications e.g. crediting periods/renewals</li> <li>- Activity specific auditor eligibility within overall VVB Requirements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>structures e.g. Grievance Procedure, Validation &amp; Verification Requirements (VVB)</li> <li>- New project types</li> </ul>	

Provision 5 Source 2, section 4.5, page 5: “The TGC is an independent group of experts appointed by the Gold Standard (GS) to oversee (in line with the Gold Standard Technical Governance Guiding Principles) all technical aspects of GS activity related to standards, assurance and certification. The specific responsibilities are as follows:

Provide the mandate to the relevant Working Group or Committee for the approval of all GS Standards and Standards revisions (as defined in the Gold Standard Standards Setting Procedures).

Approval of the development, implementation and operation of the Gold Standard Standards Setting Procedures and all subsequent amendments and updates.

Oversight of all grievances and/or procedural complaints related to Standards Setting (where relevant to technical matters) where such complaints are not adequately dealt with or unresolvable by the GS Secretariat.

Review and comment on the GS annual workplan in relation to technical matters.

Other specific tasks as may be added to the agenda by GS Secretariat and/or Board.

Brief new members of the TGC including assisting in transition periods”

Provision 6 Source 3, section 3.1 and 3.2, page 3 and 4: “RESPONSIBILITIES OF TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

3.1 | Standards Development. Standards Development activities including approval of new standards, standards updates, rule changes and clarifications (where required), based on (not exhaustive)

Developments under the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other relevant reference frameworks

Developments in the end-user markets served by Gold Standard and GS4GG

Developments in best practice and research as relevant to Gold Standard and GS4GG

Proposals from Secretariat, Gold Standard Board and the NGO supporter community

Feedback and suggestions from market actors submitted to the TAC through Secretariat; and

Emergence of innovations suitable for addition to the Gold Standard activities.

In the context of Environmental Markets, the TAC is also the body in charge of operationalising any future scope expansions of Gold Standard for Global Goals based on previous ‘in principal’ Board approval. Decision on whether to approve a change of scope ideally requires consensus among TAC members (of the relevant committee like Energy/Land Use) or a two third absolute majority of the TAC committee. Such approval should be based on the advice of the Secretariat and informed by a public stakeholder consultation where required. [...]

The Certification process is managed by SustainCERT. All Certification decisions are made by SustainCERT, in line with the relevant requirements of the standards. As part of the certification process, at key review milestones, TAC is notified (by SustainCERT) of an impending review and certification decision. TAC Members may review and comment on project documentation at these times, such that SustainCERT takes account of any concerns, queries or clarifications requested as part of the review. In case of any grievance received on a project, TAC oversees the investigation process run by Secretariat.”

Provision 7 Source 4, section 1.1.1.3, page 3: “Gold Standard’s approach to certification decision making is overseen by the Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Changes to the certification approach laid out in these Requirements shall be approved by TAC.”

Provision 8 Source 4, section 6.1.1.1-6.1.1.3, pages 7-9: “SustainCERT, Gold Standard’s appointed certification/assurance body is responsible for confirming certification decisions. There are a number of safeguards in place to ensure that this process maintains the principles set out in section 5|above, as described in this section.

Gold Standard certification decision making is undertaken as a five-step process, with specific timings and details dependent on the certification pathway sought by the project. The steps are as summarised in Figure 1 and briefly described below



**Figure 1 . Certification decision making**

**STEP 1** –The project developer appoints a GS VVB, eligible for the specific certification pathway sought. The appointment and contracting are between the project developer and the VVB and shall include the scope of work that is comprehensive and suitable for the certification pathway sought.

**STEP 2** –The VVB conducts Validation or Verification (as appropriate to project status) of the Project. This involves audit team appointment, audit planning, site visit, assessment of conformity to the Principles & Requirements, or earlier versions of Gold Standard and associated standard documents and submission of a Validation or Verification Report with opinion (positive or negative) to SustainCERT.

**STEP 3** –If the Validation or Verification Report provides a positive opinion, then a review is initiated by SustainCERT. This involves peer review by at least one expert (in some cases a second reviewer is also appointed at SustainCERT’s discretion, for example, high risk or first-of-kind projects). The documentation is also posted for review and comment by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and NGO Supporters. During this step, Non-conformities (NCs), Corrective Action Requests (CARs), Observations (OBs)/Clarifications (CLs)and Forward Action Requests (FARs) may be raised, beyond those that may have already been raised by the VVB. Certification can only proceed if these are addressed.

**STEP 4**–Certification is provided if:

- i. The VVB provides a Validation or Verification Report with positive opinion (and has not subsequently removed or changed this position during the review by SustainCERT).
- ii. The peer review carried out by SustainCERT is satisfied that all CARs and NCs are fully resolved (including any associated with TAC, NGO Supporters, or stakeholder inputs as below).
- iii. There are no outstanding TAC or NGO Supporter comments unresolved (see 6.1.1.3 |below).

**STEP 5**–The certification decision along with any certificates are published on the Gold Standard Impact Registry as confirmation.

NGO Supporters and other actors (as defined by Gold Standard in certain Activity Requirements) are stakeholders to the certification process, as opposed to decision makers. Their comments shall be discussed with the TAC if they cannot be resolved directly between SustainCERT and the NGO Supporter. The decision on if/how to address stakeholder comments therefore lies with the TAC.”

Provision 9 Source 5, section 2.2.1, page 5: “Gold Standard Certified Project status is achieved by successfully undergoing Verification and performance review (Performance Certification), which means: [..]

(e) A project may be issued Certified Impact Statements and Products such as Gold Standard Verified Emission Reductions (VERs). This is subject to successful Performance Certification of the Project's conformity to applicable Gold Standard Impact Quantification Methodology and Product Requirements.

Provision 10 Source 7, Section 7: "The Account Holder must notify The Gold Standard through The Gold Standard Registry platform upon transferring, selling, assigning, disposing of, or otherwise dealing with or acting upon Units that are listed on The Gold Standard Registry. The Account Holder shall record the action in The Gold Standard Registry.

7.2. Upon receiving notification from the Account Holder of an action in The Gold Standard Registry in accordance with clause 7.1 and subject to Clause 9:

a. if the action involves a transfer of Units to a purchaser with an account in The Gold Standard Registry, The Gold Standard Registry will notify the purchaser of the transaction through The Gold Standard Registry. Upon approval of the transaction by the purchaser, The Gold Standard Registry will transfer the listed Units into the purchaser's account on The Gold Standard Registry;"

### Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

### Justification of assessment

Provision 2 to 8 contain information regarding governance and decision making. The responsibilities and decision making process on key programmatic functions, such as the approval of the normative program documents is described in Provision 1 to 8. The administration of the program by the Gold Standard Secretariat is assisted by different committees. The certification process, including registration of projects and the issuance of credits, is managed by SustainCERT (Provision 6 and 9). Provision 8 and Source 5 describe the certification process, and source 7 gives more information on the transfer and cancellations of credits (e.g. provision 10). The indicator is therefore fulfilled.

### Indicator 5.1.4

#### Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program is overseen by a Board of Directors or Trustees."

#### Information sources considered

- 1 Program website (<https://www.goldstandard.org/resources/faqs>), last accessed on 12 June 2021.
- 2 Program website: Governance (<https://www.goldstandard.org/about-us/governance>), last accessed on 12 June 2021.

#### Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, website: "Gold Standard's day-to-day activities are run by the Secretariat and overseen by the Governance Board who provide financial oversight and strategic

governance. Our Technical Advisory Committee is responsible for ensuring the rigor and integrity in all our work, proven existing programs and innovative new initiatives.”

Provision 2 Source 2, website: “The Gold Standard Board of Directors supports our vision and mission by providing financial oversight and strategic governance.”

### Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

### Justification of assessment

The above documentation specifies that the indicator is fulfilled. There are no provisions in the Gold Standard documents related to the Gold Standard Board of Directors.

## Indicator 5.1.5

### Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“All non-staff individuals serving in a professional capacity to support the administration of the program (e.g., members of the Board, advisory groups or expert committees) are subject to conflict of interest provisions to address any financial or other conflicts that may arise in their role supporting the administration of the program (e.g., in providing expert opinions or reviewing quantification methodologies).”

### Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Technical Governance Committee Terms of Reference. Version 1. Document issued on 2 April 2020. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-3-gov-terms-of-references-tgc/>.
- 2 Gold Standard Technical Governance Guiding Principles. Version 1.0. Document issued on 1 July 2017. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-2-gov-technical-governance-guiding-principles/>.
- 3 Technical Advisory Committee Terms of Reference. Version 2.1. Document issued on 9 April 2021. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-3-gov-terms-of-references-tac/>.

### Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 2.5 and 2.6, page 2: “With their appointment the members accept these present Terms of Reference of the TGC. All members and as applicable all observers, experts and staff shall: [...] Declare all conflicts of interest at nomination and on an ongoing basis [...]”

In order to ensure confidentiality (see 3.2) and to avoid potential recurring conflicts of interest, none of the voting TGC members shall be directly employed by or working on an operational level for GS Secretariat (note working in consortium or joint funded work arrangements is permitted). TGC members shall inform Secretariat where they are engaged to undertake work for any other standards and/or certification bodies.

Members are expected to do the same in relation to informing other employers of their work with the GS.”

Provision 2 Source 1, section 4.2.2.4, page 5: “When a decision before the TGC constitutes a conflict of interest for any of its members, the affected member(s) will be excluded from voting on this decision and the quorum adjusted accordingly. Conflicts of interest must be announced by the relevant member(s) to the Chair before the item is considered, preferably when the agenda is agreed upon during the opening of the meeting. Responsibility for declaration of conflicts of interest lies with the members.”

Provision 3 Source 2, section 1, page 3: “PRINCIPLE: All Gold Standard developments, including standards setting, development of tools and guidance, assurance and oversight and governance shall be governed and decided upon independently and impartially. IN PRACTICE: This means that:

A robust Conflict of Interest policy shall be implemented at all times.”

Provision 4 Source 3, section 6.6., page 7: “When a decision before the TAC constitutes a conflict of interest for any of its members, the affected member(s) will be excluded from voting on this decision and the quorum adjusted accordingly. Conflicts of interest must be announced by the relevant member(s) to the Chair before the item is considered, preferably when the agenda is agreed upon during the opening of the meeting. Responsibility for the declaration of conflicts of interest lies with the members. The TAC Chair or Vice-Chair or any other TAC member, as well as the 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.”

### Assessment outcome

No (0 Points).

### Justification of assessment

Provisions 1 and 3 include requirements to declare conflicts of interest for technical committees. No conflict of interest provisions were identified explicitly for board members.

## Indicator 5.1.6

### Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program has established a code of conduct (or similar document) that identifies the provisions by which program staff and registry administrators must conduct themselves, including conflict of interest provisions to address any conflicts that may arise in the administration of the program (e.g., in registering projects or issuing carbon credits).”

### Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Technical Governance Guiding Principles. Version 1.0. Document issued on 1 July 2017. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-2-gov-technical-governance-guiding-principles/>.

### Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 1, page 3: “PRINCIPLE: All Gold Standard developments, including standards setting, development of tools and guidance, assurance and oversight and governance shall be governed and decided upon independently and impartially. IN PRACTICE: This means that:

A robust Conflict of Interest policy shall be implemented at all times.”

Provision 2 Source 1, section 7, page 7: “6. Impartiality Standards systems identify and mitigate conflicts of interest throughout their operations, particularly in the assurance process and in governance. Transparency, accessibility and balanced representation contribute to impartiality.”

### Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

### Justification of assessment

The registry is owned and managed by the program itself. The program confirmed that the Conflict of interest policy mentioned in Provision 1 has to be signed by all staff members. Therefore the indicator is fulfilled.

## Indicator 5.1.7

### Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program's provisions and requirements are developed in accordance with formally defined procedures.”

### Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard’s Standard setting procedure. Version 2.1. Document issued on 9 April 2021. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-1-gov-standards-setting-procedure/>.
- 2 Impact Quantification Methodology Approval Procedure. Version 1.0. Document issued on 22 October 2018. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/401-sdqiq-methodology-approval-procedure/>.

### Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 1.1.1, page 2: “The Gold Standard Secretariat, governed by the Technical Governance Committee (TGC) is responsible for the development (including the initiation, design, authoring and development) of all Standards under Gold Standard for the Global Goals (GS4GG). ‘Standard’ is used as an overarching term throughout this document and may refer to the following list and any associated procedures, guidelines, templates:

- 000 Series –Technical Governance Principles & Requirements
- 100 Series –Principles & Requirements
- 200 Series –Activity Requirements
- 300 Series –Contextual Requirements
- 400 Series –Impact Quantification Methodologies
- 500 Series –Product Requirements”

Provision 2 Source 1, section 3, page 4: “The Standards Setting Procedures (SSP) sets out the requirements, processes and procedures to be applied under the following development scenarios:

- a. For developing new Standards documentation
- b. For review and update to existing Standards documentation
- c. Or corrective action or suspension of existing approved Standards

The purpose of the document is to make clear the SSP for the above elements and provide details of compliance for all Gold Standard stakeholders in line with the aforementioned ISEAL Codes. It also provides clear guidance as to the governance and approval requirements in line with the Technical Governance Guiding Principles.“

Provision 3 Source 2, section 1.1, page 1: “This document outlines the Impact Quantification methodology approval process under the Gold Standard for the Global Goals (GS4GG)”

### Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

### Justification of assessment

The Gold Standard’s Standards Setting Procedure (Provision 1) defines the development and revision of standards, tools, guidelines, methodologies and procedures. It includes the following provisions: Technical Governance Principles & Requirements, Principles & Requirements, Activity Requirements, Contextual Requirements, Impact Quantification Methodologies, Product Requirements, and any associated procedures, guidelines, templates.

### Indicator 5.1.8

#### Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“Material program updates (e.g., new or updated normative program documents) are subject to public consultation and the process for doing so is clearly defined in the program’s provisions.”

#### Information sources considered

- 1 Technical Governance: Guiding Principles. Version 1.0. Document issued in July 2017. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-2-gov-technical-governance-guiding-principles/>.

- 2 Impact Quantification Methodology Approval Procedure. Version 1.0. Document issued on 22 October 2018. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/401-sdgiq-methodology-approval-procedure/>.
- 3 Gold Standard Standards setting procedures. Version 2.1. Document issued on 9 April 2021. Online available at: [https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/000.1\\_V2.1\\_Gov\\_Standards-Setting-Procedure.pdf](https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/000.1_V2.1_Gov_Standards-Setting-Procedure.pdf)
- 4 Gold Standard Public Stakeholder Consultation Policy. Version 2.0. Document issued on 3 June 2022. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-7-gov-stakeholder-consultation-policy/>.

### Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 2, page 4: “PRINCIPLE: The approach to, and outcomes of governance and decision making for all Gold Standard technical developments shall be transparent.

Stakeholders shall be represented in technical governance and can participate in developments and assurance.

IN PRACTICE: This means that:

Gold Standard shall publish the Guiding Principles, Standards Setting Procedures, Grievance Procedures, Assurance and Oversight Procedures and relevant Terms of Reference to the Gold Standard website.

For major new developments and updates, Gold Standard shall publish a notification and appropriate rationale to its website and notify stakeholders early in the development. Feedback shall be sought from stakeholders at this early stage as appropriate.

Technically focused public consultations shall be undertaken for new developments and major updates. Gold Standard shall take active steps to engage with stakeholders during consultation periods.

Technical decisions and supporting rationale shall be published to the Gold Standard website.

Decision making committees and working groups shall aim to include representatives of key stakeholder groups, experts and a cross section of gender and geographic user groups.

Assurance and oversight decisions shall be made available to Gold Standard stakeholders for comment.”

Provision 2 Source 2, section 3.1.1.1 and 3.1.1.5, page 2 and 6: “The decision for stakeholder consultation shall be at the discretion of the Gold Standard Technical Governance Committee or another appointed committee. For example, new cross-cutting, first-of-kind, complex methodologies or, in some cases, new methodologies or updates may require a 30-day public consultation.

Once all CARs/ OBs have been successfully closed, the revised draft methodology document may be published for public consultation for a 30-day period following the Gold Standard “Standard Setting Procedures”. Please refer to Figure 1 for further details. The Gold Standard Secretariat shall compile and share the comments received during the public consultation with the methodology developer who shall address the relevant comments and incorporate them in the draft methodology document.”

Provision 3 Source 3, section 1.1.4-1.1.6, page 2: “The TGC has the authority over any changes to the SSP.

In the case of non-substantive changes to the standard (for example corrections of error, language clarification), Gold Standard does not conduct a formal revision process but instead includes notification of any changes in the subsequent review and revision process.

Between regular or planned updates to the Standard there may be urgent clarifications or corrections required, for example, if Gold Standard receives substantial feedback from stakeholders that warrants an immediate review of a specific requirement in the Standard. Where such circumstances occur, Gold Standard will update the requirements in discussion with Technical Governance Committee (TGC) or appointed Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The updates will be published, and stakeholders notified. Where required, further stakeholder engagement sessions may follow, dependent on the nature of the changes. The precise process for decision, publication and further engagement on unplanned updates shall be discussed with the TGC or appointed TAC on a case-by-case basis.”

Provision 4 Source 3, Table 2, section 3.1.1, page 4: “Table 2 explains the types of documents and categories (as related to Table 1, above) of decision making within Gold Standard:”

**Table 2 – Categories of Documents and Technical Developments**

Document Series	CATEGORY 1 Matters reviewed and mandated by the TGC	CATEGORY 2 Matters reviewed and approved by a permanent Committee
000 – Technical Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guiding Principles</li> <li>- Standards Setting Procedures</li> <li>- Grievance Procedures</li> <li>- TGC Terms of Reference</li> <li>- Public consultation not required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Committee Terms of Reference</li> <li>- Public consultation not required</li> </ul>
100 – Principles & Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Principles, Requirements, Procedures and Guidelines</li> <li>- Major review and update to the above</li> <li>- Publication of terms of reference / key principles and rationale</li> <li>- 2 rounds (60 days and 30 days) of public consultation required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Activity-specific application of Principles &amp; Requirements (typically through Activity Requirements, see below)</li> <li>- Rule clarifications and updates</li> <li>- Public consultation at discretion of Committee</li> </ul>
200 – Activity Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Activity-types Requirements (when outside given Committee scope)</li> <li>- Publication of terms of reference/key principles and rationale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Activity Requirements or updates to same (within a given Committee scope)</li> <li>- Public consultation at discretion of Committee</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 round (30 days) of public consultation required</li> </ul>	
300 – Context Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Context Requirements, Tools and Guidelines.</li> <li>- Publication of terms of reference/key principles and rationale</li> <li>- 1 round (30 days) of public consultation required</li> </ul>	
400 – Impact Methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New cross-cutting or first of its kind (outside given Committee scope)</li> <li>- Publication of terms of reference/key principles and rationale</li> <li>- 1 round (30 days) of public consultation required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New methodologies or updates to same (within a given Committee) scope</li> <li>- 1 round (30 days) of public consultation at discretion of Committee</li> </ul>
500 – Product Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New cross-cutting Product Requirements (outside given Committee Scope)</li> <li>- Publication of terms of reference/key principles and rationale</li> <li>- 1 round (30 days) of public consultation required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Product Requirements (within given Committee scope)</li> <li>- Publication of terms of reference/key principles and rationale</li> <li>- 1 round (30 days) of public consultation required</li> </ul>

Provision 5 Source 4, section 2.1, page 2: “Where a decision or rule requires a public stakeholder consultation process, the Gold Standard will publish a call for stakeholder comments through its website, announcements and other reasonable communication channels.

The call for comments will include any supporting documentation that must be considered for interested stakeholders to be fully informed. It will also clearly identify where stakeholder comments should be submitted. All public stakeholder consultations will be open for comment for a minimum of thirty (30) calendar days.”

### Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

### Justification of assessment

The process for public consultations in relation to material program updates is defined in Source 1 to 3. Generally, Provision 1 specifies that “[t]echnically focused public consultations shall be undertaken for new developments and major updates” and require the program to notify stakeholders for major new developments and updates and to “publish a notification and appropriate rationale to its website”. Concerning methodologies, Provision 2 specifies that “the revised draft methodology document may be published for public consultation for a 30-day period following the Gold Standard ‘Standard Setting Procedures’”. Provision 3 requires public consultation (30 days) for “new cross-cutting or first-of-kind methodologies”. The process of material program updates is described in detail in source 3. The program additionally describes the processes and consultation requirements for different documents types in two categories (Provision 4). While major program updates do require public consultation, some updates to documents do not – especially under category 2. For example, for “new methodologies or updates to same” the decision on public consultation is at the discretion of a permanent committee (Provision 4). Through correspondence with the program, it was clarified, that only minor changes to documents that constitute clarification/revisions or rule updates can be implemented without consultation and are indeed at the discretion of a permanent committee. Considering the extend of detail in the relevant program documents, and that the guiding principles for these processes are compatible with the ISEAL Credibility Principles, the indicator is considered to be fulfilled.

### Indicator 5.1.9

#### Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program actively performs outreach to gather public input when conducting public consultations on material program updates (e.g., through messages on their websites or messages to email listservs).”

#### Information sources considered

- 1 Technical Governance: Guiding Principles. Version 1.0. Document issued in July 2017. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-2-gov-technical-governance-guiding-principles/>.

## Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 2, page 4: “PRINCIPLE: The approach to, and outcomes of governance and decision making for all Gold Standard technical developments shall be transparent.

Stakeholders shall be represented in technical governance and can participate in developments and assurance.

IN PRACTICE: This means that:

Gold Standard shall publish the Guiding Principles, Standards Setting Procedures, Grievance Procedures, Assurance and Oversight Procedures and relevant Terms of Reference to the Gold Standard website.

For major new developments and updates, Gold Standard shall publish a notification and appropriate rationale to its website and notify stakeholders early in the development. Feedback shall be sought from stakeholders at this early stage as appropriate.

Technically focused public consultations shall be undertaken for new developments and major updates. Gold Standard shall take active steps to engage with stakeholders during consultation periods.

Technical decisions and supporting rationale shall be published to the Gold Standard website.

Decision making committees and working groups shall aim to include representatives of key stakeholder groups, experts and a cross section of gender and geographic user groups.

Assurance and oversight decisions shall be made available to Gold Standard stakeholders for comment.”

## Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

## Justification of assessment

Provisions 1 states that the program needs to notify stakeholders for major new developments and updates and to “publish a notification and appropriate rationale to its website.”

## Indicator 5.1.10

### Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“Material program updates (e.g., new or updated normative program documents) are developed with the participation of experts (e.g., through advisory groups or expert committees).”

## Information sources considered

- 1 Impact Quantification Methodology Approval Procedure. Version 1.0. Document issued on 22 October 2018. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/401-sdgiq-methodology-approval-procedure/>.
- 2 Technical Governance: Guiding Principles. Version 1.0. Document issued in July 2017. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-2-gov-technical-governance-guiding-principles/>.
- 3 Gold Standard Standards setting procedures. Version 2.1. Document issued on 9 April 2021. Online available at: [https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/000.1\\_V2.1\\_Gov\\_Standards-Setting-Procedure.pdf](https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/000.1_V2.1_Gov_Standards-Setting-Procedure.pdf)
- 4 Technical Advisory Committee Terms of Reference. Version 2.1. Document issued on 9 April 2021. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-3-gov-terms-of-references-tac/>.

## Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 3.1.1.3, page 5: “Once a draft methodology has been accepted for progression, the Gold Standard Secretariat will identify external and internal reviewers to conduct the in-depth review of the draft methodology. Two external subject matter experts with relevant background will be identified and appointed by the Gold Standard Secretariat. In addition, two internal reviewers will be identified by the sectoral Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) where:

- a) One reviewer will be from the relevant sectoral Gold Standard TAC, and
- b) One reviewer from the ‘Energy TAC’, ‘Land-use TAC, and/or the ‘Water TAC’, in case the context of the proposed methodology is relevant to more than one sectors

The reviewers will assess the draft methodology based on the following:

- a) Requirements outlined in 3.1.1.2.
- b) Alignment with the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles & Requirements<sup>2</sup>and the respective Activity Requirements
- c) Alignment with the latest version of the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Safeguarding Principles & Requirements
- d) Reputational risks for the Gold Standard

The Gold Standard Secretariat and the TAC shall choose reviewers to ensure no conflict of interest among the parties involved. In case a TAC member participates in the development of the methodology, the respective member may participate in the discussions but shall not vote on the methodology approval/ rejection decision.”

Provision 2 Source 2, section 4, page 4: “PRINCIPLE: Gold Standard technical governance shall be expert-led and focus on quality of outcome (for standards and methodologies) or on accuracy (for assurance and oversight).

## IN PRACTICE:

Gold Standard shall convene experts to govern and decide upon all technical developments. Where necessary, experts from outside the existing Gold Standard network shall be approached to join such groups and committees.

The Gold Standard Secretariat shall recognise the limitations of its technical expertise and supplement this as required.

For the development of standards and methodologies, best practice and quality of outcome shall be a core consideration, considering the views of stakeholders and matters of practicality as required.

For the development of assurance and oversight procedures, the accuracy and veracity of claims arising shall be a core focus, as well as quality of performance of those responsible for audit.”

Provision 3 Source 3, section 1.1.4-1.1.6, page 2: “The TGC has the authority over any changes to the SSP.

In the case of non-substantive changes to the standard (for example corrections of error, language clarification), Gold Standard does not conduct a formal revision process but instead includes notification of any changes in the subsequent review and revision process.

Between regular or planned updates to the Standard there may be urgent clarifications or corrections required, for example, if Gold Standard receives substantial feedback from stakeholders that warrants an immediate review of a specific requirement in the Standard. Where such circumstances occur, Gold Standard will update the requirements in discussion with Technical Governance Committee (TGC) or appointed Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The updates will be published, and stakeholders notified. Where required, further stakeholder engagement sessions may follow, dependent on the nature of the changes. The precise process for decision, publication and further engagement on unplanned updates shall be discussed with the TGC or appointed TAC on a case-by-case basis.”

Provision 4 Source 3, section 2.1.3, page 3: “The TGC is responsible for mandating the development and approval process of all Standards and Modules. It does so by reference to the Technical Governance Guiding Principles. New or updated Standards and Modules shall not be published or available for use unless approved in accordance with the mandate given to the TGC or appointed Committee as noted in the TGC Terms of Reference. Note that the TGC itself is not responsible for taking any such decisions. Instead it provides the necessary mandate to other Advisory Committees, Working Groups or the Secretariat as appropriate.”

Provision 5 Source 3, section 2.1.4, page 3: “Standard approval decisions typically fall into two categories, summarised in TABLE 1, below. Typically, Category 1 decisions are made by TGC or a Technical Advisory Committee mandated by the TGC for that purpose. This could be an existing standing Committee, a sub-group or a newly formed Expert Working Group for the purpose. Project or function specific standing Committees are

typically responsible for Category 2 decisions, though these may be supplemented by further experts and/or stakeholders where required.”

Provision 6 Source 3, section 2.1.5, page 3: “As a part of the Standard development or revision process, the Secretariat shall target key stakeholder groups which include both those who will be directly impacted by the implementation of the Standard and those who are indirectly affected, giving an opportunity to all groups to contribute to the development of the Standard.”

**Table 1 – Categories of Standards Setting decisions**

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2
<b>Cross cutting and strategic issues</b>	<b>Activity specific matters</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New standards and standard updates e.g. GS4GG</li> <li>- New products and product revisions e.g. GS4SUD, REC labels</li> <li>- New cross cutting products and revisions, tools and guidelines e.g. additionality, double counting</li> <li>- Cross cutting methodologies, tools and guidelines e.g. Gender</li> <li>- First of its kind methodologies, tools and guidelines e.g. ADALYS</li> <li>- New development and revisions to technical processes, procedures and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management of and updates to standards, tools and guidelines.</li> <li>- New development of and updates to Activity Requirements, tools and guidelines e.g. RE Activity Requirements</li> <li>- Activity specific methodologies (noting that first of its kind methodologies captured as Category 1) e.g. Agriculture emission reduction quantification methodology</li> <li>- Activity specific application of Product Specifications e.g. crediting periods/renewals</li> <li>- Activity specific auditor eligibility within overall VVB Requirements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>structures e.g. Grievance Procedure, Validation &amp; Verification Requirements (VVB)</li> <li>- New project types</li> </ul>	

Provision 7 Source 4, section 3.1, page 3: “RESPONSIBILITIES OF TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

3.1 |Standards Development. Standards Development activities including approval of new standards, standards updates, rule changes and clarifications (where required), based on (not exhaustive)

Developments under the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other relevant reference frameworks

Developments in the end-user markets served by Gold Standard and GS4GG

Developments in best practice and research as relevant to Gold Standard and GS4GG

Proposals from Secretariat, Gold Standard Board and the NGO supporter community

Feedback and suggestions from market actors submitted to the TAC through Secretariat; and

Emergence of innovations suitable for addition to the Gold Standard activities.

In the context of Environmental Markets, the TAC is also the body in charge of operationalising any future scope expansions of Gold Standard for Global Goals based on previous 'in principal' Board approval. Decision on whether to approve a change of scope ideally requires consensus among TAC members (of the relevant committee like Energy/Land Use) or a two third absolute majority of the TAC committee. Such approval should be based on the advice of the Secretariat and informed by a public stakeholder consultation where required."

Provision 8 Source 4, section 4, page 4: "On Secretariat's recommendation or on needs basis, the Technical Governance Committee (TGC) can establish and mandate new Technical Advisory Committees (TAC) to make decisions following the Standards Setting Procedure. The committees are set up on a permanent or semi-permanent basis as required. On Secretariat's recommendation or on needs basis, an appointed TAC may set up temporary working groups and dissolve once they have resolved their duties. The permanent committee defines specific decision-making modalities for Committees and Working Group that clarify any decision-making authority or limitations. With regards to Category 2 decisions as referred Standards Setting Procedure, two permanent TAC bodies are already in operation with the responsibility to oversee and administer Technical Governance;

- i. Energy Committee for Energy projects and
- ii. Land-use Committee for Land use portfolio of projects

The scope of responsibilities of these committees has been outlined in annex A of this document."

### **Assessment outcome**

Yes (1 Point).

### **Justification of assessment**

The above documentation clearly specifies that the indicator is fulfilled. Experts are engaged in the development of material program updates through two external reviewers and through two internal TAC members (Provision 1). The TAC is a body of independent technical experts responsible for Standards Development activities including approval of new standards, standards updates, rule changes and clarifications (Provision 4-6).

## **Indicator 5.1.11**

### **Relevant scoring methodology provisions**

"The program has established procedures for receiving complaints and resolving disputes from any carbon crediting program stakeholders. This includes the possibility for project owners to appeal decisions by the carbon crediting program relating to their projects."

## Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Public Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/102-par-stakeholder-consultation-requirements/>.
- 2 Gold Standard Principles & Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/101-par-principles-requirements/>.
- 3 Gold Standard Terms and Conditions, accessed 15.12.2021: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/terms-conditions/>
- 4 Gold Standard Grievance Procedure, Version 3.0, Document issued July 2020. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-8-gov-grievance-approval-procedure/>

## Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 7.1, page 6: “All projects shall setup a formal input, feedback and grievance mechanism with the purpose of providing stakeholders with an opportunity to submit any feedback or raise grievances during the entire project life. [...]”
- 7.1.2 The project shall discuss the potential options with stakeholders and agree on an appropriate method.
- 7.1.3 At a minimum, Continuous Input and Grievance Expression Process Book shall be made available at an agreed location.”
- Provision 2 Source 2, section 4, page 12: “Projects shall identify and engage Relevant Stakeholders and seek Expert Stakeholder input where necessary in the design, planning and implementation of the Project. Project design shall reflect the views and inputs of stakeholders and ongoing feedback shall be sought, captured and acted upon throughout the life of the Project.”
- Provision 3 Source 2, section 4.1.12, page 12: “By successfully following these Requirements and Procedures:
- a) The Project demonstrates how it has identified, engaged and consulted with relevant stakeholders. Where required, expert stakeholders are engaged in the process.
  - b) The Project demonstrates the records of the consultation and how the outcomes of the consultation have positively influenced the project design and implementation.
  - c) The Project demonstrates that stakeholder concerns have been addressed and any disputes have been resolved.
  - d) (d): The Project demonstrates that an appropriate system for the ongoing capture, recording and responding to stakeholder concerns is developed.
  - e) The Project includes the above points (a to d) in the Project Design Document, including the Monitoring & Reporting Plan.”

Provision 4 Source 3, Website section 12: “12. Appeals Mechanism (for Carbon projects only). If You disagree with a final decision made by SC in connection with the issuance or Labelling of a Unit, we offer an appeals mechanism in partnership with the International Bureau of the Permanent Court of Arbitration. Please contact help@sustain-cert.com for more information about the appeals mechanism.”

Provision 5 Source 4, section 1, page 1: “This document sets out the procedure to be followed for effective and timely resolutions to grievances relating to standard setting activities, procedures and Gold Standard itself, as well as, SustainCERT, Gold Standard Validation & Verification Bodies (VVBs) or the Oversight Body1 (if any).

The term “grievance” hereby refers to a “complaint,” “dispute,” “challenge,” “conflict,” and any similar term that expresses dissatisfaction with the Gold Standard procedure and functioning, including entities mentioned in 1.1.1 |above.

The scope of the Gold Standard Grievance procedure is to provide a formal process for addressing grievances related to:

Gold Standard policies, procedures (including Standard Setting) or personnel

Substantive complaints regarding the rules, requirements, content of the standard documents

SustainCERT performance matters (including the external experts appointed by SustainCERT to perform certification activity such as reviews, project site visits, etc.), Gold Standard VVBs or the Oversight Body (if any).”

### Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

### Justification of assessment

The above documentation clearly specifies that a process exists to receive and resolve complaints (Provisions 1, 2, 3, and 5) and that there is an appeals process (Provision 4). The indicator is fulfilled.

### Indicator 5.1.12

#### Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“Potential issues with the program’s provisions as identified through public consultation or complaints by any carbon crediting program stakeholders, are addressed and the process for doing so is clearly defined in the normative program documents.”

#### Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Standards setting procedures. Version 2.1. Document issued on 9 April 2021. Online available at: [https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/000.1\\_V2.1\\_Gov\\_Standards-Setting-Procedure.pdf](https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/000.1_V2.1_Gov_Standards-Setting-Procedure.pdf)

- 2 Gold Standard Grievance Procedure. Version 3.0. Document issued on 30 July 2020. Online available at: <https://www.goldstandard.org/our-story/grievances-deregistration>.
- 3 Gold Standard Public Stakeholder Consultation Policy. Version 2.0. Document issued on 3 June 20220. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-7-gov-stakeholder-consultation-policy/>
- 4 Gold Standard Public Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/102-par-stakeholder-consultation-requirements/>.

### Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 3.5.1, page 8: “As a part of the Standard development or revision process, the Secretariat shall target key stakeholder groups which include both those who will be directly impacted by the implementation of the Standard and those who are indirectly affected, giving an opportunity to all groups to contribute to the development of the Standard.”
- Provision 2 Source 1, section 3.5.2, page 8: “All stakeholder consultations shall follow the Gold Standard Stakeholder Consultation Policy. The Secretariat shall maintain a dedicated area on the organisation’s website for all ongoing consultation.”
- Provision 3 Source 1, section 4.1.1, page 8: “All allegations, grievances and complaints regarding standards setting shall be directed through the Gold Standard Grievance Procedure.”
- Provision 4 Source 2, section 1.1.1-3, page 1-2: “This document sets out the procedure to be followed for effective and timely resolutions to grievances relating to standard setting activities, procedures and Gold Standard itself, as well as, SustainCERT, Gold Standard Validation & Verification Bodies (VVBs) or the Oversight Body (if any).

The term “grievance” hereby refers to a “complaint,” “dispute,” “challenge,” “conflict,” and any similar term that expresses dissatisfaction with the Gold Standard procedure and functioning, including entities mentioned in 1.1.1 |above.

The scope of the Gold Standard Grievance procedure is to provide a formal process for addressing grievances related to:

- Gold Standard policies, procedures (including Standard Setting) or personnel
- Substantive complaints regarding the rules, requirements, content of the standard documents
- SustainCERT performance matters (including the external experts appointed by SustainCERT to perform certification activity such as reviews, project site visits, etc.), Gold Standard VVBs or the Oversight Body (if any)”

- Provision 5 Source 2, section 4.1.2-10, page 5-6: “Grievance letters shall be sent to [grievance@goldstandard.org](mailto:grievance@goldstandard.org) with the subject line “Grievance Submission to the Gold Standard.

Following the receipt of a valid grievance, the Gold Standard will conduct a desk review to determine the extent of the alleged breach of the Gold Standard Requirements. Gold Standard will respond in writing within thirty (30) days of

submission of grievance. If the grievance is found ineligible, Gold Standard will provide an explanation and a recommendation on how to address the grievance correctly, if possible. A grievance against a decision by SustainCERT is considered an appeal and will be dealt with following the appeal procedure managed by SustainCERT and not included in this document.

Within 20 days of completion of initial review Gold Standard shall conduct an assessment to decide if an investigation is required, then the Gold Standard will produce a written investigation plan. The investigation plan will include, but not be limited to, the scope of the investigation, a list of potential other stakeholders to be queried, and the timeline for resolution. If the complexity of the grievance requires it, Gold Standard, at its discretion may appoint an external agency to conduct the investigation and manage the grievance.

Gold Standard shall send a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to complainant. If any complainant party chooses not to sign the NDA, they shall not have access to the draft and final investigation reports, if Gold Standard decides not to make the investigation report public.

Following initial review, the Gold Standard may reach out to the complainant and/or parties involved to attempt to resolve the issue in an informal manner, unless such an attempt is reasonably considered an unnecessary exercise.

If the grievance cannot be resolved through informal discussion or mediation, Gold Standard will follow the process summarised in the figure below to resolve the grievance, within the indicative timelines.

Gold Standard shall conduct the investigation within 90 days after the initial review. Gold Standard reserves the right to extend the investigation deadlines, as required. The complainant will be informed about the revised timeline and expected dates.

During the initial review, investigation of grievance, Gold Standard may request additional information from complainant. If complainant is non-responsive for more than 30 days during initial review or investigation, Gold Standard reserves the right to close the grievance. Extended periods of slow or non-responsiveness will affect the overall timelines for the investigation.

Gold Standard shall communicate the decision regarding the resolution, including the reasons for the decisions, if applicable, any follow up actions and/or corrective measures to complainant and parties involved in the grievance.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, the complainant has the right to appeal the outcome of an investigation by notifying the Gold Standard that it would like to do so within 30 days of receiving the investigation findings. Their request will only be considered if they can present evidence of material information that has not been accounted for in Gold Standard's investigation."

Provision 6 Source 3, section 1.1, page 2: "The Gold Standard relies on public stakeholder consultations to ensure its rule-making is transparent, informed, and conservative. A stakeholder is classed as any individual or group that has an interest in any decision or rule made by Gold Standard. Comments from interested stakeholders allows Gold

Standard to make decisions that are based on evidence, experience, and the views of those local communities who will be most affected by the rules or decisions. Matters that require public stakeholder consultations include, but are not limited to, scope expansion, major revision to the Standard, and the inclusion of other environmental assets for certification.”

Provision 7 Source 3, section 2.1, page 2: “Where a decision or rule requires a public stakeholder consultation process, the Gold Standard will publish a call for stakeholder comments through its website, announcements and other reasonable communication channels. The call for comments will include any supporting documentation that must be considered for interested stakeholders to be fully informed. It will also clearly identify where stakeholder comments should be submitted. All public stakeholder consultations will be open for comment for a minimum of thirty (30) calendar days.”

Provision 8 Source 4, section 2, page 4: “2 – TRANSPARENCY AND INCLUSIVITY

**PRINCIPLE:** The approach to, and outcomes of governance and decision making for all Gold Standard technical developments shall be transparent. Stakeholders shall be represented in technical governance and can participate in developments and assurance.

**IN PRACTICE:** This means that:

Gold Standard shall publish the Guiding Principles, Standards Setting Procedures, Grievance Procedures, Assurance and Oversight Procedures and relevant Terms of Reference to the Gold Standard website.

For major new developments and updates, Gold Standard shall publish a notification and appropriate rationale to its website and notify stakeholders early in the development. Feedback shall be sought from stakeholders at this early stage as appropriate.

Technically focused public consultations shall be undertaken for new developments and major updates. Gold Standard shall take active steps to engage with stakeholders during consultation periods.

Technical decisions and supporting rationale shall be published to the Gold Standard website.

Decision making committees and working groups shall aim to include representatives of key stakeholder groups, experts and a cross section of gender and geographic user groups.

Assurance and oversight decisions shall be made available to Gold Standard stakeholders for comment.”

### **Assessment outcome**

Yes (1 Point).

### **Justification of assessment**

The above documentation clearly specifies that the indicator is fulfilled.

## Indicator 5.1.13

### Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The procedure for handling stakeholder disputes and complaints has defined time-bound requirements for the program to respond to disputes or complaints.”

### Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Grievance Procedure. Version 3.0. Document issued on 30 July 2020. Online available at: <https://www.goldstandard.org/our-story/grievances-deregistration>.

### Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 1.1.1-1.1.3, page 1-2: “This document sets out the procedure to be followed for effective and timely resolutions to grievances relating to standard setting activities, procedures and Gold Standard itself, as well as, SustainCERT, Gold Standard Validation & Verification Bodies (VVBs) or the Oversight Body<sup>1</sup>(if any).

The term “grievance” hereby refers to a “complaint,” “dispute,” “challenge,” “conflict,” and any similar term that expresses dissatisfaction with the Gold Standard procedure and functioning, including entities mentioned in 1.1.1 |above.

The scope of the Gold Standard Grievance procedure is to provide a formal process for addressing grievances related to:

- Gold Standard policies, procedures (including Standard Setting) or personnel

- Substantive complaints regarding the rules, requirements, content of the standard documents

- SustainCERT performance matters (including the external experts appointed by SustainCERT to perform certification activity such as reviews, project site visits, etc.), Gold Standard VVBs or the Oversight Body (if any).“

Provision 2 Source 1, section 4.1.2-4.1.10, page 5-6: “Grievance letters shall be sent to [grievance@goldstandard.org](mailto:grievance@goldstandard.org) with the subject line “Grievance Submission to the Gold Standard.

Following the receipt of a valid grievance, the Gold Standard will conduct a desk review to determine the extent of the alleged breach of the Gold Standard Requirements. Gold Standard will respond in writing within thirty (30) days of submission of grievance. If the grievance is found ineligible, Gold Standard will provide an explanation and a recommendation on how to address the grievance correctly, if possible. A grievance against a decision by SustainCERT is considered an appeal and will be dealt with following the appeal procedure managed by SustainCERT and not included in this document.

Within 20 days of completion of initial review Gold Standard shall conduct an assessment to decide if an investigation is required, then the Gold Standard will produce a written investigation plan. The investigation plan will include, but not be limited to, the scope of the investigation, a list of potential other stakeholders to be

queried, and the timeline for resolution. If the complexity of the grievance requires it, Gold Standard, at its discretion may appoint an external agency to conduct the investigation and manage the grievance.

Gold Standard shall send a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to complainant. If any complainant party chooses not to sign the NDA, they shall not have access to the draft and final investigation reports, if Gold Standard decides not to make the investigation report public.

Following initial review, the Gold Standard may reach out to the complainant and/or parties involved to attempt to resolve the issue in an informal manner, unless such an attempt is reasonably considered an unnecessary exercise.

If the grievance cannot be resolved through informal discussion or mediation, Gold Standard will follow the process summarised in the figure below to resolve the grievance, within the indicative timelines.

Gold Standard shall conduct the investigation within 90 days after the initial review. Gold Standard reserves the right to extend the investigation deadlines, as required. The complainant will be informed about the revised timeline and expected dates.

During the initial review, investigation of grievance, Gold Standard may request additional information from complainant. If complainant is non-responsive for more than 30 days during initial review or investigation, Gold Standard reserves the right to close the grievance. Extended periods of slow or non-responsiveness will affect the overall timelines for the investigation.

Gold Standard shall communicate the decision regarding the resolution, including the reasons for the decisions, if applicable, any follow up actions and/or corrective measures to complainant and parties involved in the grievance.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, the complainant has the right to appeal the outcome of an investigation by notifying the Gold Standard that it would like to do so within 30 days of receiving the investigation findings. Their request will only be considered if they can present evidence of material information that has not been accounted for in Gold Standard's investigation."

### **Assessment outcome**

Yes (1 Point).

### **Justification of assessment**

The above documentation clearly specifies that the indicator is fulfilled.

## **Indicator 5.1.14**

### **Relevant scoring methodology provisions**

"There is no evidence that the current program staff have ever engaged in fraud on behalf of the program or that key personnel have been convicted of fraud. Web searches or other publicly accessible information may inform this indicator."

### **Information sources considered**

-

### **Assessment outcome**

Yes (1 Point).

### **Justification of assessment**

Web searches or other publicly accessible information have not revealed any cases of noncompliance with laws and regulations or sanctions levied against the program.

## **Indicator 5.1.15**

### **Relevant scoring methodology provisions**

“The program has never been sanctioned by a regulator or other relevant authority for noncompliance with relevant laws and regulations, or for not complying with its own provisions. Web searches or other publicly accessible information may inform this indicator.”

### **Information sources considered**

-

### **Assessment outcome**

Yes (1 Point).

### **Justification of assessment**

Web searches or other publicly accessible information have not revealed any cases of noncompliance with laws and regulations or sanctions levied against the program.

## **Scoring results**

According to the above assessment, the carbon crediting program receives 15 out of 16 achievable points. Applying the scoring approach of the methodology, this results in a score of 4.69.