

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

Criterion:	6.1 Robustness of the carbon crediting program's environmental and social safeguards
Carbon crediting program	Gold Standard
Assessment based on carbon crediting program documents valid as of:	30 June 2021
Date of final assessment:	20 May 2022
Score:	4.19

Contact
info@oeko.de
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 6.1.1

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires the project owners to identify and mitigate potential negative environmental and social impacts, including to local and affected stakeholder wellbeing."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-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/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 1.1.1, page 3: "Interventions are never one-dimensional. The interconnected nature of climate and development projects calls for appropriate safeguarding mechanisms. These safeguards help projects to identify, prevent and mitigate negative, unintended consequences that may arise from a given intervention. Credible safeguards are important in both ensuring development outcomes are not undermined as well as gaining public support for climate actions. The Gold Standard for the Global Goals Safeguarding Principles & Requirements are derived from a number of international conventions, including:
- UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES)
 - UN Environment's Environmental, Social and Economic Sustainability Framework
 - The World Bank's International Finance Corporation Performance Standard"
- Provision 2 Source 1, section 1.1.2, page 3: "All projects shall conform to the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Safeguarding Principles & Requirements as set out in this document. This document outlines the following overarching safeguarding principles that a project is required to meet throughout the entire project cycle."
- Provision 3 Source 1, section 2.1.2, page 4: "All Safeguarding Principles and corresponding Requirements apply to all Projects seeking Gold Standard certification."
- Provision 4 Source 2, principle 2, page 11: "Projects shall conduct a Safeguarding Principles Assessment and conform to Gold Standard Safeguarding Principles and Requirements."
- Provision 5 Source 2, section 4.1.19, page 11: "By successfully following these Requirements and Procedures:

- (a) The Project completes a Safeguarding Principles Assessment as per Safeguarding Principles and Requirements to define the relevance of the different Requirements to the Project (note, further guidance is also provided in specific Activity Requirements).
- (b) The Project demonstrates how all relevant Requirements are met.
- (c) The Project includes above points (a & b) in the Project Design Document, including the Monitoring & Reporting Plan.”

Assessment outcome

Yes (2 Points).

Justification of assessment

The Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements define overarching social, economic and environmental & ecological safeguarding principles that a project is required to meet throughout the entire project cycle.

Indicator 6.1.2

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program clearly defines the types of environmental and social impacts that the project owners must identify and mitigate.”

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 1 “Scope and Applicability”, page 3:

Table 1 Safeguarding Principles

Safeguarding Principles	
Social	Principle 1 Human Rights Principle 2 Gender Equality and Women's Rights Principle 3 Community Health, Safety and Working Conditions Principle 4 Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Peoples, Displacement and Resettlement Principle 5 Corruption

Economic	Principle 6 Economic Impacts
Environmental & Ecological	Principle 7 Climate and Energy
	Principle 8 Water
	Principle 9 Environment, Ecology and Land Use

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

Table 1 of the Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements (Provision 1) clearly defines the social, economic and environmental & ecological impacts that must be assessed.

Indicator 6.1.3

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program requires the project owners to assign roles and responsibilities for managing environmental and social risks of the project.”

Information sources considered

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Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

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Assessment outcome

No (0 Points).

Justification of assessment

This indicator assesses whether programs require the project owners to clearly assign responsibilities for managing environmental and social risks to senior staff members implementing the project. Clear assignment of responsibilities supports creating a project environment where adherence to safeguards is constantly monitored and risks are proactively managed. No such requirements were identified during the assessment of relevant Gold Standard provisions.

Indicator 6.1.4

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program assesses the institutional arrangements and capacities of the project owners to identify and manage the environmental and social risks associated with the project.”

Information sources considered

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Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

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Assessment outcome

No (0 Points).

Justification of assessment

This indicator assesses whether the carbon crediting program assesses the institutional capacities of the project owner to identify and manage the environmental and social risks associated with the project. Managing environmental and social risks is often a complex process that requires expert knowledge and the ability to proactively engage with a wide set of stakeholders with sometimes competing interests. Project owners who have institutionalized environmental and social risk management processes and can rely on established in-house capacities (or established and dependable networks with external expertise) are likely better positioned to ensure that safeguards are adhered to during project implementation. No such requirements were identified during the assessment of relevant Gold Standard provisions.

Indicator 6.1.5

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires the project owners to identify and adhere to any national or local legal requirements which may be relevant to the project."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 3 "General Eligibility Criteria", page 6: " The following General Eligibility Criteria applies to all projects seeking Gold Standard Certification:

[...]

(d) Host Country Requirements: Projects shall be in compliance with applicable Host Country's legal, environmental, ecological and social regulations.

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program requires that all projects are in compliance with the host country's legal regulations. The indicator is therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.6

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires the disclosure of all relevant information from the project owner's evaluation of environmental or social impacts. If an Environmental Impact Assessment is relevant or required to be carried out in the project's local legal context, the assessment is fully disclosed (except for any confidential information that is not relevant to the conclusions of the assessment)."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-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/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 2.1.11, table 2 "Safeguarding Assessment Information", page 5-6: "The Project shall provide the following information with regards to the Safeguarding Assessment at different project stages; [...] Information on draft Safeguarding Principles Assessment including a summary of environmental, social and economic impacts of projects shall be made available to Stakeholders to seek feedback during Consultations."
- Provision 2 Source 2, section 5.1.8, page 20: "The minimum requirements for submission of Project Documentation include Key Project Information and
- (a) A completed Stakeholder Consultation Report
 - (b) A substantially completed Project Design Documentation submission that captures:
 - i. Fully completed details required under Section – General Eligibility Criteria.
 - ii. A substantially completed Safeguarding Principles Assessment (meaning the majority completed, including any key matters that relate to the project type or context) including any Expert Stakeholder opinions and recommendations.
 - iii. Defined SDG Impacts including any Expert Stakeholder opinions and recommendations sought.
 - iv. Confirmation of certification pathway and any Gold Standard Approved Methodologies and Product Requirements followed including a demonstration of Financial Additionality where required.

v. A draft Monitoring Plan."

- Provision 3 Source 2, section 5.1.11, page 22: "With a successful Preliminary Review, the Project will obtain 'Listed' status in the Gold Standard Registry. This means that:
- (a) The Key Project Information, draft Project Design Documentation and supporting documentation are made publicly available, AND
 - (b) The Project Developer may promote the Project according to the Claims Guidelines as appropriate for Listed status Projects.
 - (c) The Project may proceed to Validation."
- Provision 4 Source 2, section 5.1.20, page 23: "During Design Review, all project documentation is made available to the Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and NGO Supporters for review."
- Provision 5 Source 2, section 5.1.33, page 25: "During the Performance Review, all Project Documentation are also made available to Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and NGO Supporters for their review."
- Provision 6 Source 2, section 5.1.36, pages 25-26 "The positive conclusion of the Performance Review period shall result in Gold Standard Certified Project status, which means that:
- (a) The Project Documentation, supporting documentation and Verification Report are made public via the Impact Registry.
 - (b) The Project can issue any Gold Standard Certified Products or Impact Statements upon payment of required fee.

Assessment outcome

No (0 Points).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program requires that project owners conduct a Safeguarding Principles Assessment for all projects. The results of the Safeguarding Principles Assessment, including a summary of environmental, social and economic impacts must be made available to Stakeholders to seek feedback during Consultations (Provision 1). A draft Safeguarding Principles Assessment must further be submitted for a preliminary review through Gold Standard before listing of the project (Provision 2). With successful listing, the Safeguarding Principles Assessment is made publicly available as part of the draft Project Design Documentation (Provision 3). During Design and Performance Review all project documentation is further made available to the Gold Standard Technical Committee and NGO supporters (Provisions 4 and 5). After the Performance review project documents are made publicly available on the impact registry (Provision 6). The indicator's requirement for the disclosure of the project owners' own evaluation of environmental or social impacts is therefore fulfilled.

The program's provisions however do not contain any requirements for project owners to disclose Environmental Impact Assessments that might be required by local legislation for the activity. This aspect of the indicator is therefore not fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.7

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires, at least for any potential negative impacts, that a validation and verification entity validates the evaluation of social and environmental impacts by the project owner prior to registration."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-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/>

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 2.1.2, page 4: "All Safeguarding Principles and corresponding Requirements apply to all Projects seeking Gold Standard certification."
- Provision 2 Source 2, section 2.1.3, page 4: "All Projects shall undertake an upfront assessment against the Safeguarding Principles and implement their Project in accordance with the stated Requirements. The assessment shall apply to the Project Scenario, although assessment questions and Requirements involve a comparison to the Baseline Scenario(s) and/or the implementation or decommissioning phases of a Project."
- Provision 3 Source 1, section 2.1.11, table 2 "Safeguarding Assessment Information", page 5-6: "The Project shall provide the following information with regards to the Safeguarding Assessment at different project stages;
[...]
Design Review - A completed Safeguarding Principles Assessment fully assessed by the Gold Standard Validation/Verification Body (GS-VVB)."

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

According to the Gold Standard Safeguarding principles and requirements, all projects seeking Gold Standard certification must undertake an upfront assessment against the Gold Standard Safeguarding Principles (Provision 1 and Provision 2). For the project design review, project owners must submit a completed Safeguarding Principle Assessment that is fully assessed by the Gold Standard Validation/Verification Body (Provision 3). The indicator is therefore fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.8

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires a follow-up on any potential negative impacts identified in the evaluation of social and environmental impacts prior to registration, e.g., by including measures to mitigate any negative impacts in monitoring plans."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Principles & Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/101-par-principles-requirements/>.
- 2 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.
- 3 TEMPLATE GUIDE Monitoring Report v. 1.1. Document issued on 14 October 2020. Online available at: https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/TGuide-PerfCert_V1.1-Monitoring-Report.pdf.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 4.1.22, page 11-12: "The Safeguarding Principles Assessment and evidence of conformity to the associated Requirements shall be included in the Project Design Document, including the proposed monitoring parameters in the Monitoring & Reporting Plan. The Monitoring & Reporting Plan shall capture any parameters that are required to be monitored and reported upon and/or reassessed in the future, in line with the Safeguarding Principles & Requirements. This shall be used to inform the ongoing Monitoring Reports, Verification and Performance Review."
- Provision 2 Source 2, section 2.1.11, table 2 "Safeguarding Assessment Information", page 5-6: "The Project shall provide the following information with regards to the Safeguarding Assessment at different project stages; [...] A completed Safeguarding Principles Assessment fully assessed by the Gold Standard Validation/Verification Body (GS-VVB). The monitoring report shall include:
- (a) An update on the implementation including information on relative success and failures, or improvements to proposed mitigation measures
 - (b) Monitoring and reporting on any key indicators identified, including against pre-set tolerances
 - (c) Information on any assessment questions answered 'Potentially' or where Requirements call for regular re-assessment"
- Provision 3 Source 3, section F: "Safeguards reporting", page 15: "Provide a report on the Safeguarding principles that were added to the monitoring plan. Refer to parameter boxes in D.2. where applicable. You should include:
- (a) An update on the implementation including information on relative success and failures, or improvements to proposed mitigation measures

- (b) Monitoring and reporting on any key indicators identified, including against pre-set tolerances
- (c) Information on any assessment questions answered ‘Potentially’ or where Requirements call for regular re-assessment”

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The program requires that the monitoring plan includes information on relative success and failures, or improvements to proposed mitigation measures, monitoring and reporting on any key indicators identified, and information on any assessment questions answered ‘Potentially’ or where Requirements call for regular re-assessment (Provision 1 and 2). Corresponding provisions are included in the guidelines for the monitoring plan template (Provision 3).

Indicator 6.1.9

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program requires, at least for any potential negative impacts, that social and economic impacts be monitored throughout the crediting periods of the project.”

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Principles & Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/101-par-principles-requirements/>.
- 2 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 4.1.22, page 11-12: “The Safeguarding Principles Assessment and evidence of conformity to the associated Requirements shall be included in the Project Design Document, including the proposed monitoring parameters in the Monitoring & Reporting Plan. The Monitoring & Reporting Plan shall capture any parameters that are required to be monitored and reported upon and/or reassessed in the future, in line with the Safeguarding Principles & Requirements. This shall be used to inform the ongoing Monitoring Reports, Verification and Performance Review.”
- Provision 2 Source 2, section 2.1.4, page 4: “A non-exhaustive list of assessment questions set out against each Principle is provided in the table below. The Project shall provide responses to these questions, including justifications for responses following the below guidance:

(a) ‘Yes’ – Meaning that the risk or expected issue identified in the assessment question is relevant to the Project and context. The Requirements apply and adherence shall be demonstrated. All information must be included in the Monitoring & Reporting Plan and future Monitoring Reports.”

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program requires that monitoring parameters related to safeguards must be included in the project’s monitoring & reporting plan (Provision 1). Potential impacts that are relevant for a project (those where the answer to the assessment questions of the Safeguarding Principle is “yes”) must be included in all future monitoring reports for the project (Provision 2).

Indicator 6.1.10

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program requires the project owners to establish an environmental and social management plan, at least for projects that the program classifies as having high environmental and social risks.”

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-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 Claims Guidelines. Version 1.0. Document issued on 30 June 2016. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/105-par-claims-guidelines/>.
- 4 TEMPLATE GUIDE Monitoring Report v. 1.1. Document issued on 14 October 2020. Online available at: https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/TGuide-PerfCert_V1.1-Monitoring-Report.pdf.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 2.1.11, Table 2 “Safeguarding Assessment Information”, page 5-6: “The Project shall provide the following information with regards to the Safeguarding Assessment at different project stages; [...] A completed Safeguarding Principles Assessment fully assessed by the Gold Standard Validation/Verification Body (GS-VVB). The monitoring report shall include:

- (a) An update on the implementation including information on relative success and failures, or improvements to proposed mitigation measures

(b) Monitoring and reporting on any key indicators identified, including against pre-set tolerances

(c) Information on any assessment questions answered 'Potentially' or where Requirements call for regular re-assessment"

Provision 2 Source 2, section 2.2.1, page 5: "Gold Standard Certified Project status is achieved by successfully undergoing Verification and performance review (Performance Certification), which means:

(a) The project has followed a Monitoring Plan approved at the time of Design Certification and has submitted Monitoring Report for Verification.

(b) The project and its Certified SDG Impacts have been validated and verified as required by an accredited, approved third party VVB.

(c) Following this, the project has been reviewed by Gold Standard and is subject to an over-arching independent review by the Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and NGO Supporters."

Provision 3 Source 4, section F: "Safeguards reporting"; page 15: "Provide a report on the Safeguarding principles that were added to the monitoring plan. Refer to parameter boxes in D.2. where applicable. You should include:

(a) An update on the implementation including information on relative success and failures, or improvements to proposed mitigation measures

(b) Monitoring and reporting on any key indicators identified, including against pre-set tolerances

(c) Information on any assessment questions answered 'Potentially' or where Requirements call for regular re-assessment"

Assessment outcome

No (0 Points).

Justification of assessment

While program requires the inclusion of safeguards in the monitoring plan and subsequent reports, there are no provisions that require a dedicated environmental and social management plan for projects that have high environmental and social risks.

Indicator 6.1.11

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program has a grievance mechanism in place that allows local stakeholders to submit grievances throughout the lifetime of the project without any barriers (e.g. liability for expenses associated with the investigation). Such grievances must be duly considered by the carbon crediting program."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Grievance Approval Procedure. Version 3.0. Document issued on 3 July 2020, Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-8-gov-grievance-approval-procedure/>
- 2 Sustain CERT Website - Resources: Complaints and Grievances <https://www.sustain-cert.com/home/complaints-appeals/>, last accessed on 10 January 2022.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 1.1. 3, page 2: "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 1.1.4, page 4: "It is not within the scope of the Gold Standard Grievance procedure to directly accept project related grievances as listed below. In these cases, stakeholders shall first submit concerns to the SustainCERT grievance procedure:

- Non-compliance of standard requirements as applicable to a project, including but not limited to, stakeholder consultations and grievance mechanism, sustainable development impact, and safeguards assessment including monitoring activities
- Certification decisions, including but not limited to, design certification, performance review, GHGs emission reductions monitoring, calculation approaches and any other certification related decisions
- VVB audits"

Provision 3 Source 2: "SustainCERT is committed to providing a fair, transparent, and objective procedure for any stakeholder who wishes to make a Complaint about its performance, a VVB's performance, or register any suspected non-compliance of a project with Gold Standard rules. It also provides the same principles to allow a Project Representative to Appeal a certification decision.

[...]

A Grievance is a special type of Complaint defined as a Complaint about a suspected non-compliance of a project with Gold Standard rules (whether it be the result of SustainCERT's decision making or not)

Complaints can be made by sending an email to compliance@sustain-cert.com and will be managed by the Compliance Director."

Provision 4 Source 2: "Upon receiving a Complaint, SustainCERT will confirm receipt of the email;

- within 10 days of confirming receipt, determine if it has sufficient information to decide on appropriate action or request further information from the Complainant;
- within 20 days of receiving sufficient information,
 - o determine if the Complaint will be processed as a Grievance and inform Gold Standard
 - o provide a contact person during the review of the Complaint;
 - o provide details of the staff engaged in reviewing the Complaint, confirming that they are different to those who took the decision; and
 - o determine the indicative timelines and steps involved in reviewing the Complaint
- review the Complaint according to the indicative timeline and, in case of delay, promptly inform the Complainant.
- upon conclusion of a Complaint, take any necessary corrective actions and share these with the Complainant

SustainCERT will publish the conclusion of all Complaints processed as Grievances.

If the Complainant is non-responsive for more than 20 days during an investigation into a Complaint, SustainCERT reserves the right to close the Complaint.

SustainCERT will keep a record of all Complaints and resulting actions to be made available for internal audits and management reviews.”

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program provides a grievance mechanism for stakeholder to submit complaints and grievances about a project. The mechanism is not managed directly by the program but by SustainCERT which acts as the operative arm of the program, managing the certification processes (Provision 1 and Provision 2). The procedures of the grievance mechanism stipulate that SustainCERT must consider grievances and outlines timelines and documentation requirements (Provision 3 and Provision 4). The indicator is therefore fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.12

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program requires that project owners have a culturally appropriate grievance mechanism in place for local stakeholders to submit grievances to them throughout the lifetime of the project. Such grievances must be duly considered by the project owner.”

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Principles & Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019.
Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/101-par-principles-requirements/>.

- 2 Gold Standard 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 4.1.34, page 13: "The Project shall have a formal input, feedback and grievance mechanism in place and the grievance mechanism shall be discussed during the Stakeholder Consultations as per Stakeholder Consultation & Engagement Requirements."
- Provision 2 Source 2, section 7.1.1, 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."
- Provision 3 Source 2, section 7.1.2, page 6: "The project shall discuss the potential options with stakeholders and agree on an appropriate method."
- Provision 4 Source 2, section 7.1.3, page 6: "At a minimum, Continuous Input and Grievance Expression Process Book shall be made available at an agreed location."
- Provision 5 Source 1, section 5.1.42, page 26: "The Annual Report shall focus on information since the last Annual Report or Verification Report as appropriate and provide following information
- [...]
- (b) A clear statement on how stakeholders may provide inputs/grievances,
- (c) A list of all inputs/grievances that have been received since the last Annual Report together with their respective answers/actions"

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program requires project owners to establish a formal grievance mechanism for enabling stakeholders to raise grievances (Provision 1 and Provision 2). The provision further stipulates that the opportunity to submit feedback or raise grievance must be available during the entire project time (Provision 2). Furthermore, the method for the grievance mechanism must be developed and agreed jointly with stakeholders, including through discussions in the stakeholder consultation (Provision 1 and Provision 3). Although there is no specific provision that the mechanism has to be culturally appropriate the ability of stakeholders to shape the design of the mechanism is considered as fulfilling this aspect of the indicator. Furthermore, the project owner must report in each annual report on the respective answers and actions on inputs and grievances received (Provision 5). This is considered as fulfilling the requirement of the indicator that project owners must duly consider grievances raised. All aspects of the indicator are therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.13

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires that the grievance mechanism to be established by the project owners provide the possibility of providing anonymous grievances."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard 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 7.1.1, 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."
- Provision 2 Source 1, section 7.1.2, page 6: "The project shall discuss the potential options with stakeholders and agree on an appropriate method."
- Provision 3 Source 1, section 7.1.3, page 6: "At a minimum, Continuous Input and Grievance Expression Process Book shall be made available at an agreed location."

Assessment outcome

No (0 Points).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program provisions require project owners to discuss potential options for the grievance mechanism with the stakeholders and jointly agree on an appropriate method for submitting and processing grievances (Provision 2). In principle, this would allow stakeholders to agree on procedures that allow for anonymous submission of feedback and grievances. It is however not a prescriptive requirement by the program to provide for this option. The indicator is therefore considered not to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.14

"The program requires that grievances received by the carbon crediting program and/or the project owners must be responded to within a specific response time."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Grievance Approval Procedure. Version 3.0. Document issued on 3 July 2020, Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-8-gov-grievance-approval-procedure/>

- 2 Sustain CERT Website - Resources: Complaints and Grievances <https://www.sustain-cert.com/home/complaints-appeals/>, last accessed on 10 January 2022.
- 3 Gold Standard 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/>
- 4 Program website: Grievances & Deregistration (<https://www.goldstandard.org/our-story/grievances-deregistration>), last accessed on 10 January 2022.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 4.1.2, page 5: "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."
- Provision 2 Source 1, section 4.1.3, page 5: "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."
- Provision 3 Source 1, section 4.1.4, page 6: "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."
- Provision 4 Source 1, section 4.1.5, page 6: "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."
- Provision 5 Source 1, section 4.1.6, page 6: "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."
- Provision 6 Source 1, section 4.1.7, page 6: "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."
- Provision 7 Source 1, section 4.1.8, page 6: "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.”

Provision 8 Source 1, section 4.1.9, page 6: “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.”

Provision 9 Source 1, section 4.1.10, page 6: “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 10 Source 2: “Upon receiving a Complaint, SustainCERT will

- confirm receipt of the email;
- within 10 days of confirming receipt, determine if it has sufficient information to decide on appropriate action or request further information from the Complainant;
- within 20 days of receiving sufficient information,
 - o determine if the Complaint will be processed as a Grievance and inform Gold Standard
 - o provide a contact person during the review of the Complaint;
 - o provide details of the staff engaged in reviewing the Complaint, confirming that they are different to those who took the decision; and
 - o determine the indicative timelines and steps involved in reviewing the Complaint
- review the Complaint according to the indicative timeline and, in case of delay, promptly inform the Complainant.
- upon conclusion of a Complaint, take any necessary corrective actions and share these with the Complainant

SustainCERT will publish the conclusion of all Complaints processed as Grievances.

If the Complainant is non-responsive for more than 20 days during an investigation into a Complaint, SustainCERT reserves the right to close the Complaint.

SustainCERT will keep a record of all Complaints and resulting actions to be made available for internal audits and management reviews.”

Provision 11 Source 3, section 7.1.1, 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.”

Provision 12 Source 3, section 7.1.2, page 6: “The project shall discuss the potential options with stakeholders and agree on an appropriate method.”

Provision 13 Source 3, section 7.1.3, page 6: “At a minimum, Continuous Input and Grievance Expression Process Book shall be made available at an agreed location.”

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The Gold Standard grievance approval process includes time-limited provisions for the program to consider grievances received (Provision 1 to Provision 9). However, these provisions are only applicable to grievances on the program's provisions and procedures. Project related provision must be submitted via the grievance mechanism of SustainCERT. Here, specific response time apply as well (Provision 10). The program provisions do not include requirements for specific response times for the grievance mechanisms set up by the project owners. As methods for these mechanisms will be agreed by project owners and stakeholders on a project-by-project basis (Provision 12), stakeholders in principle may be able to agree on rules with specific response times. The indicator is therefore fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.15

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires the project owners to conduct an assessment of which local stakeholders will be impacted by the project."

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/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 2, Principle 3 Stakeholder Inclusivity, 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 2 Source 2, section 4.1.24, 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."

Provision 3 Source 1, section 3.1.1, page 3: The Project Developer shall identify and invite all relevant (local, affected and interested) stakeholders as mentioned below for consultations and comments.

- (a) Local people, communities and or representatives who are directly or indirectly affected by the project
- (b) Stakeholders with land-tenure rights within or adjacent to the project must be contacted
- (c) Local policy makers and representatives of local authorities
- (d) National government officials or National focal bodies responsible for the project in the host country, for example, Designated National Authority (DNA)
- (e) Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Women Groups working on topics relevant to the project or working with communities who are likely to be affected by the project
- (f) A Gold Standard representative
- (g) Relevant international Gold Standard NGO Supporters with representation in your region and all Gold Standard NGO Supporters located in the host country of the project

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program included Stakeholder Inclusivity as one of the program eligibility principles and requirements. Accordingly, project owners must engage relevant stakeholders and seek expert stakeholder input where necessary in the design, planning and implementation of the Project (Provision 1). To comply with these principles the project must demonstrate how it has identified, engaged, and consulted with relevant stakeholders (Provision 2). This requirement is also mirrored in the program's Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Requirements which stipulate that the project owner identifies all relevant stakeholder for the project and stipulates what different groups of stakeholders must be considered and invited (Provision 3). The indicator is therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.16

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"In assessing which local stakeholders will be impacted by the project, the program explicitly requires, at least for projects affecting land use, that the project owners identify local stakeholders that hold any legal or customary tenure or access rights to the land."

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/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 3.1.1, page 3-4: "The Project Developer shall identify and invite all relevant (local, affected and interested) stakeholders as mentioned below for consultations and comments.

- (a) Local people, communities and or representatives who are directly or indirectly affected by the project
- (b) Stakeholders with land-tenure rights within or adjacent to the project must be contacted
- (c) Local policy makers and representatives of local authorities
- (d) National government officials or National focal bodies responsible for the project in the host country, for example, Designated National Authority (DNA)
- (e) Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Women Groups working on topics relevant to the project or working with communities who are likely to be affected by the project
- (f) A Gold Standard representative at help@goldstandard.org
- (g) Relevant international Gold Standard NGO Supporters with representation in your region and all Gold Standard NGO Supporters located in the host country of the project"

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement requirements stipulate that stakeholders with land-tenure rights within or adjacent to the project must be contacted by the project owner (Provision 1). The indicator is therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.17

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires the project owners to conduct a local stakeholder consultation in a way that is inclusive and culturally appropriate for local communities (taking into account, e.g., literacy, culture and language)."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at:
https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/102_V1.2_PAR_Stakeholder-Consultation-Requirements.pdf

- 2 Gold Standard Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Guidelines. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at:
https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/102G_V1.2_PAR_Stakeholder-Consultation-and-engagement-Guidelines.pdf

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 1.1.2, page 3: "All Gold Standard projects shall "take gender issues into account". This requires local stakeholder consultation processes to reach a wide range of community representatives in ways that ensure equal and effective participation of both women and men, and that gender issues are fully factored into comprehensive social and environmental impact assessments." Project Developers are referred to the Gold Standard Gender Equality Requirements & Guidelines and Gender Policy."
- Provision 2 Source 1, section 4.1.2, page 4: "The Project Developer shall invite the stakeholders selecting an invitation method that is most appropriate to the context and for the region, taking into account local and national circumstances, including appropriate language and measures and using adequate and effective means."
- Provision 3 Source 1, section 4.1.3, page 4: "Projects shall ensure that the stakeholders are invited in a 'gender-sensitive' manner and efforts must be made to solicit input from women and marginalised groups."
- Provision 4 Source 1, section 4.1.4, page 4: "The Project Developer shall not deny anyone access to the consultation. It shall be open for anyone wishing to participate"
- Provision 5 Source 1, section 5.1.1, page 5: "Prior to the consultation, the Project Developer shall provide information in a manner including format, language(s) that allows local stakeholders to understand and engage with the project. The information to be made available to stakeholders shall include, inter alia:
- (a) A non-technical summary of the project including information on project design, technology, objectives, scale, duration and implementation plan (so far as known)
 - (b) Summary of the economic, social and environmental impacts of the project as per Safeguarding Principles & Requirements
 - (c) Contact details to get further technical detail and project information, should any stakeholder be interested
 - (d) Other relevant information to help stakeholders understand the project
 - (e) Means and method to provide feedback for those who are not able to join the consultation meeting"
- Provision 6 Source 1, section 6.1.2, page 5: "Where necessary, other means and approaches that are appropriate for local and national circumstances can be used to conduct stakeholder consultation meetings. For example, due to the nature of the project, instead of one big physical consultation meeting, several meetings at different locations may be conducted to ensure that relevant stakeholders can participate."

- Provision 7 Source 1, section 6.1.3, page 5: "The project shall encourage equal and effective participation by both men and women in the stakeholder consultation (this also includes the suitability of place and timing of the consultation(s))."
- Provision 8 Source 2, section 2.1.3, page 3 to 4: "The Gold Stakeholder consultation process comprises of at least two rounds of consultation. The project should consider different gender relationships and roles in the project area while preparing for consultations. Women and men typically fulfil different roles and responsibilities, depending on the context and the country. Virtually no role is always exclusively performed by just women or men. Because women often are assigned lower social status relative to men, women tend to have lower confidence, less influence and less involvement in the design, decisions and engagement with projects. In developing a project, "taking gender issues into account" requires that local stakeholder consultation processes reach a wide range of community representatives in ways that ensure equal and effective participation of women and men, and that gender issues are fully factored into comprehensive social and environmental impact assessments." Project Developers are referred to the Gold Standard Gender Equality & Requirements Guidelines and Gold Standard Gender Policy."
- Provision 9 Source 2, section 3.1.2, page 6: "The Project Developer should ensure all stakeholder groups are engaged, particularly the stakeholders that are often marginalised, including women, youth, the poor informal sector workers, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, disabled or elderly people, and members of the LGBTQ community."
- Provision 10 Source 2, section 3.1.3, page 6: "Where it is not appropriate to engage with stakeholder groups, for example indigenous peoples, the project should make provisions to engage with their legitimate representatives (this may include community leaders, regional or national political groups and NGOs)."
- Provision 11 Source 2, section 4.1.1, page 7: "To schedule the physical meeting, the Project Developer should take into account the stakeholder's work arrangements, accessibility, cultural or religious sensitivities. Particular attention should be given to women and the needs of marginalised groups to ensure their participation."
- Provision 12 Source 2, section 4.1.2, page 7: "The Project Developer should ensure that the physical meeting(s) is organised in an atmosphere that allows all participants to express their views and concerns freely."
- Provision 13 Source 2, section 4.1.3, page 7: "When one meeting is not adequate due to social, cultural, logistics and other barriers, the Project Developer should consider organising focus groups or smaller meetings for specific groups. For example,
- A women's only meeting may be required in order to register their concerns and insights
 - In some communities, power relations play a part in who may or may not voice an opinion or concern in a meeting. Therefore, excessive representation of a hierarchy in a physical meeting could be intimidating for particular stakeholder groups. For example, a senior government official and a female widowed farmer may have different perspectives and positions of power, which might affect their contributions in the meeting. In

such cases, the developer may need to organise several meetings in different locations to ensure that all stakeholders can participate and contribute to the discussion and share their views.”

- Provision 14 Source 2, section 5.1.3, page 8: “The Project Developer should select an invitation method taking into account local and national circumstances, including appropriate language and measures to ensure a gender-sensitive communications process, using adequate and effective means.”
- Provision 15 Source 2, section 5.1.4, page 8: “The invitations should include both oral and written invitations – for example door to door announcements, announcements in newspapers, radio or television, emails, announcements in public meetings, phone messages and calls, announcements at places which stakeholders visit frequently, for example, community centres, cultural centres, health clinics, post offices, municipality offices, schools and places of worship (churches, shrines, temples, mosques, etc.).”
- Provision 16 Source 2, section 5.1.5, page 8: “The Project Developer should also use alternative means of invitations considering the local context. For example, the written notice is not a useful mode of communication with an illiterate group of stakeholders. In cases, where the majority of stakeholders are illiterate, the Project Developer should use oral means – like radio announcement or hand-delivered invitation in the local language.”
- Provision 17 Source 2, section 6.1.4, page 9: “The Project Developer should consider some key points to decide the format in which project information should be prepared and presented to stakeholders - level of technical detail; local language and dialects; cultural sensitivity; and the roles of women and men, including the impact of the project on gender relations, ethnic composition of communities, literacy levels, community leadership structures, and local methods of disseminating information within stakeholder groups.”
- Provision 18 Source 2, section 7.1.3, page 10: “The Project Developer should identify a respected local facilitator(s) to assist with engaging all stakeholders present and avoid allowing a single person or stakeholder group to set an atmosphere that prevents others from sharing their views and concerns. Particular attention should be given to encourage women to voice their opinions and if this is not possible given local customs, consider conducting a separate meeting, for example, a separate consultation for women only.”

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The Gold Standard requires the local stakeholder consultation to reach a wide range of community representatives in ways that ensure equal and effective participation of both women and men (Provision 1 and 9). If it is not appropriate to engage directly with stakeholder groups, the project is required to make provisions to engage with their legitimate representatives (Provision 10). When scheduling the physical meeting, the Project Developer should consider the stakeholder's cultural or religious sensitivities (Provision 11). The project owner must invite the stakeholders selecting an

invitation method that is most appropriate to the context and for the region, considering local and national circumstances, including appropriate language and measures, and using adequate and effective means (Provision 2 and 14). If a meeting is not suitable because of social, cultural, logistics and other barriers, the Project Developer is required to consider organising focus groups or smaller meetings for specific groups (Provision 13). In addition, the requirements state that project developers must not deny anyone access to the consultation (Provision 4).

Indicator 6.1.18

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires that the local stakeholder consultation be conducted before the decision of the project owners to proceed with the project and before the validation of the project."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Principles & Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019.
Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/101-par-principles-requirements/>.
- 2 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/>.
- 3 Gold Standard Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Guidelines. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at:
https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/102G_V1.2_PAR_Stakeholder-Consultation-and-engagement-Guidelines.pdf

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 3, section 1.1.3, page 3: "Involving the relevant stakeholders at an early stage of the project cycle helps them to understand the project, participate in decision-making and exchange views and/or concerns regarding the project impacts and opportunities. This generates a sense of ownership and helps to improve the long-term results for the project."
- Provision 2 Source 2, section 2.1.1, page 3: "The Stakeholder Consultation shall be conducted prior to the start date of the Project so that the stakeholders can truly influence the project design, planning and its implementation."
- Provision 3 Source 2, section 2.1.2, page 3: "If the Consultation is conducted after the start date, the stakeholders shall be provided with an opportunity to comment on the project and the Project Developer shall provide further explanation of how comments received during the consultation were taken into account."
- Provision 4 Source 1, section 4.1.39, page 14: "The Project start date is the earliest date on which the Project Developer has committed to expenditures related to the implementation of the Project. This does not include the purchase or option to purchase the land upon which a Project is intended to take place."

- Provision 5 Source 1, section 5.1.1, page 19: "Gold Standard for the Global Goals Project Certification is based on a five year renewable certification cycle, with key features as follows:
- (a) All Projects must LIST with the Gold Standard by undertaking a Preliminary Review and uploading Key Project Information, draft Project Design Document and completed Stakeholder Consultation Report.
 - (b) Projects may then seek Gold Standard Certified Design status by successfully completing Validation (within two years of the date of Listing) and a subsequent Design Review. [...]"
- Provision 6 Source 1, section 5.1.3, page 19: "The Preliminary Review (time of first submission) is conducted once at the outset (i.e., at an early stage of project design and before Listing on the Gold Standard Impact Registry, see below) of a Project. During the Preliminary Review, Gold Standard conducts a desk review of the Key Project Information and Draft Project Design Document. This review considers whether the Project has the potential to conform to the Gold Standard Requirements and may therefore progress to Listed status."
- Provision 7 Source 1, section 5.1.4, page 20: "The Preliminary Review includes a desk review of the Project Eligibility Principles as well as the applicability of the methodology amongst other matters, based on the Key Project Information, draft PDD and Stakeholder Consultation Report. [...]"
- Provision 8 Source 1, section 5.1.7, page 21 "The Preliminary Assessment starts when the Project Developer has:
- (a) signed and submitted the Terms and Conditions AND
 - (b) submitted the Project Documentation AND
 - (c) paid the fee for the Preliminary Review, where required."
- Provision 9 Source 1, section 5.1.8, page 21: "The minimum requirements for submission of Project Documentation include Key Project Information and
- A completed Stakeholder Consultation Report [...]"

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The Gold Standard stipulates that the stakeholder consultations be conducted prior to the start date of the project (Provision 2). In exceptional circumstances where the stakeholder consultation take place after the start date, stakeholders should receive an opportunity to comment on the project (Provision 3). The project start date is defined as the earliest date on which the Project Developer has committed to expenditures related to the implementation of the Project (Provision 4). The aspect of the indicator that requires that stakeholder consultations take part before the decision of the project owners to proceed with the project is therefore considered to be fulfilled.

The Gold Standard further requires projects to undertake a Preliminary Review before they may proceed to Validation (Provision 5). The Preliminary Review includes a desk review of the Stakeholder Consultation Report from the project owners. The submission of a completed stakeholder consultation report is a minimum requirement for initiating the preliminary review (Provision 6, 7, 8 and 9). be conducted before the validation of the project and this aspect of the indicator is considered to be fulfilled as well.

Indicator 6.1.19

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires the project owners to take due account of any input received in the local stakeholder consultation and to publicly document how inputs received are addressed."

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 Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Guidelines. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at:
https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/102G_V1.2_PAR_Stakeholder-Consultation-and-engagement-Guidelines.pdf

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 2, Principle 3 Stakeholder Inclusivity, 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 2 Source 2, section 4.1.24, 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) 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 3 Source 1, section 8.1.2, page 6: “The project shall consider the comments provided by the Stakeholders and report on how the comments have been accounted for. It may also involve changes in the project design, where appropriate. The Project Developer shall provide justifications when any comments have not been incorporated or addressed.”

Provision 4 Source 1, section 8.1.3, page 6: “The Stakeholders shall be provided with the feedback on how their comments have been taken into account as part of the stakeholder feedback round.”

Provision 5 Source 1, section 9.1.1, page 6: “Ongoing Monitoring & reporting project Developer shall provide information in the annual and monitoring report, as applicable, for the following:

(a) Concerns that have been identified and raised by stakeholders during the stakeholder consultations and the mitigation measures put in place to address those.

(b) Any feedback given by stakeholders as part of the project’s grievance mechanism”

Provision 6 Source 2, section 5.1.39, page 26: “Transparent, annual update reports need to be provided for Projects that have achieved the Project Design Certification stage or have successfully transitioned to Gold Standard for the Global Goals. An annual report shall be submitted for each monitoring year by end of next calendar year for which verification is not completed. If a verification is in progress but not completed, then an Annual Report is still required by the end of calendar year.”

Provision 7 Source 2, section 5.1.41, page 26: “The Annual Report shall be submitted to Gold Standard which will be made publicly available.” (Section 5.1.41 of the Gold Standard Principles and Requirements)

Provision 8 Source 2, section 5.1.42, page 26: “The Annual Report shall focus on information since the last Annual Report or Verification Report as appropriate and provide following information

(a) A summary of the recent activities, events and actions related to the Project,

(b) A clear statement on how stakeholders may provide inputs/grievances,

(c) A list of all inputs/grievances that have been received since the last Annual Report together with their respective answers/actions,

[...]

Provision 9 Source 3, section 7.1.4, page 10 to 11: "To conduct the physical meeting, following an agenda and discussion points are recommended. The Project Developer may deviate from the agenda; however all elements listed below should be covered to ensure a meaningful consultation.

[...]

(j) At the end of the meeting, invite the stakeholders to complete the evaluation form. Explain the follow-up action plan and how stakeholders can access the minutes of the meeting. It is also important to let attendees know how their comments are recorded and how they may find out about the follow-up actions to address the comments. Also, share the information on the Stakeholder Feedback Round."

Provision 10 Source 3, section 8.1.1, page 12: "Feedback evaluation and follow up actions are a crucial part of the consultations process. The following steps provide guidance on how the follow up actions and feedback should be shared after the meeting."

Provision 11 Source 3, section 8.1.2, page 12: "All the comments/suggestions raised by the stakeholders in the meeting or via evaluation forms or other means must be documented by categorising as positive, neutral or negative."

Provision 12 Source 3, section 8.1.3, page 13: "The Project Developer should consider all the comments and identify the comments that are serious, reasonable and proportional and therefore should be taken into account."

Provision 13 Source 3, section 8.1.4, page 13: "The Project Developer should compare its own sustainable development and safeguarding assessment with the outcome of the stakeholder consultation meeting. All the differences should be identified, and the project documentation should be updated accordingly."

Provision 14 Source 3, section 8.1.7, page 13: "If some stakeholders' concerns seem unwarranted, make a case as to why this is so. Negative stakeholder comments are not necessarily a reason to stop a project's progress, however, all stakeholder concerns should be addressed and accounted for or justified."

Provision 15 Source 3, section 8.1.9, page 13: "After assessing the comments, the Project Developer should decide whether to change or amend the Project Design. Changes to the Project Design generally increase local ownership of and interest in the project and enhance sustainable development."

Provision 16 Source 3, section 8.1.10, page 13: "The Project Developer shall document any alterations that will be made to the Project Design resulting from the Stakeholder Consultation meeting in the respective section of the project documentation."

Provision 17 Source 3, section 8.1.11, page 13: "The Project Developer should document any comments, criticisms or improvements that were made to the input and grievance expression methods discussed at the physical meeting."

Provision 18 Source 3, section 9.1.1, page 13: "The Stakeholder Feedback Round (i.e., the second round of consultation) covers all the issues raised in the first round of consultation (i.e., physical meeting). The Project Developer should provide feedback to the

stakeholders on how comments from the physical meeting have been considered and provide another opportunity to seek comments from stakeholders.”

Provision 19 Source 3, section 9.1.2, page 14: “All stakeholders invited to participate in the first consultation should be invited to the Stakeholder Feedback Round.”

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program included Stakeholder Inclusivity as one of the program eligibility principles and requirements. Accordingly, project owners must engage relevant stakeholders and seek expert stakeholder input where necessary in the design, planning and implementation of the Project (Provision 1). To comply with this principle the project must demonstrate the records of the consultation and how the outcomes of the consultation have positively influenced the project design and implementation. These must further be included in the in the Project Design Document, including the Monitoring & Reporting Plan (Provision 2).

The carbon crediting program Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Requirements mirror these provisions by stipulating that the project owners must consider the comments provided by the Stakeholders and report how the comments have been accounted for, including by changing the project design (Provision 3, 15 and 16). The project owner must further provide justifications when any comments have not been incorporated or addressed (Provision 3). Feedback must be provided directly to stakeholders on how their comments have been addressed (Provision 4). The information on stakeholder comments and how they have been addressed must be reported via the annual reports (Provision 5, 7 and 8). The Monitoring Report and the Annual Report will be made publicly available by Gold Standard Secretariat (Provision 7). All aspects of the indicator are therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.20

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program requires that a validation and verification entity assesses whether the project owners have taken due account of all inputs received in the local stakeholder consultation.”

Information sources considered

1 Gold Standard Principles & Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019.
Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/101-par-principles-requirements/>

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 2, section 8.1.2, page 6: “The project shall consider the comments provided by the Stakeholders and report on how the comments have been accounted for. It may also involve changes in the project design, where appropriate. The Project

Developer shall provide justifications when any comments have not been incorporated or addressed."

- Provision 2 Source 2, section 8.1.2, page 6: "The Stakeholders shall be provided with the feedback on how their comments have been taken into account as part of the stakeholder feedback round."
- Provision 3 Source 1, section 5.1.8, page 21: "The minimum requirements for submission of Project Documentation include Key Project Information and
- (a) A completed Stakeholder Consultation Report
 - [...]
- Provision 4 Source 3, section C.3., page 4

C.3. Assessment of comments from all consultations above

Please complete the table below

Gender of Stakeholder	Stakeholder comment	Was comment taken into account (Yes/ No)?	Explanation (Why? How?)

- Provision 5 Source 1, section 5.1.14, page 23: "Validation includes a site visit by a VVB who assesses the up-front design and monitoring plan for a Project against applicable Requirements. This includes Validation of:
- (a) The Project Documentation including the Project Design Document and Monitoring & Reporting Plan, including any updates to the Key Project Information after Listed Status has achieved.
 - (b) Any supporting document and evidence to demonstrate conformity to all applicable Gold Standard Requirements."

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point)

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program requires that project owners include information on the stakeholder consultation process in the project design document (Provisions 1 – 4). The validation process includes a validation of the project documentation (Provision 5). The indicator is therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.21

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires that project owners make key information on the project available to local stakeholders prior to conducting the local stakeholder consultation, such as the project design documents and any supplemental project documentation."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard 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 5.1.1, page 5: "Prior to the consultation, the Project Developer shall provide information in a manner including format, language(s) that allows local stakeholders to understand and engage with the project. The information to be made available to stakeholders shall include, inter alia:

- (a) A non-technical summary of the project including information on project design, technology, objectives, scale, duration and implementation plan (so far as known)
- (b) Summary of the economic, social and environmental impacts of the project as per Safeguarding Principles & Requirements
- (c) Contact details to get further technical detail and project information, should any stakeholder be interested
- (d) Other relevant information to help stakeholders understand the project
- (e) Means and method to provide feedback for those who are not able to join the consultation meeting"

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The requirements state that the Project Developer shall provide information for the stakeholders prior to the consultation. in a manner including format, language(s) that allows local stakeholders to understand and engage with the project. This includes a non-technical summary of the project design, technology, objectives, scale, duration and implementation plan. The indicator is therefore fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.22

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires free, prior and informed consent if indigenous, tribal or traditional people are directly affected by a project (e.g., in case of re-locations or where property rights or land inhabited or used by people is affected)."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 3.4.13, page 14: "The Project Developer shall recognize and respect the indigenous people's collective rights to own, use, and develop and control the lands, resources and territories that they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired, including lands and territories for which they do not yet possess title."
- Provision 2 Source 1, section 3.4.14, page 15: "The Project Developer shall respect, protect, conserve and shall not take the cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)."

Assessment outcome

Yes (2 Points)

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program requires that project owners recognize and respect indigenous people's collective rights (Provision 1) and does not take the cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) (Provision 2). The indicator is therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.23

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires the project owners to establish mechanisms for ongoing communication with local stakeholders in a manner appropriate to the context of the stakeholders (e.g., literacy, culture and language) and take due account of input received."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Principles & Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/101-par-principles-requirements/>.

- 2 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/>.
- 3 Gold Standard Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Guidelines, Version 1.2, document published in October 2019. Online available at: https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/102G_V1.2_PAR_Stakeholder-Consultation-and-engagement-Guidelines.pdf

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 2, Principle 3 Stakeholder Inclusivity, 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 2 Source 2, section 4.1.24, 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) 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 3 Source 1, section 4.1.35, page 14: "The Project shall have a formal input, feedback and grievance mechanism in place and the grievance mechanism shall be discussed during the Stakeholder Consultations as per Stakeholder Consultation & Engagement Requirements."
- Provision 4 Source 2, section 7.1.1, 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."
- Provision 5 Source 2, section 7.1.2, page 6: "The project shall discuss the potential options with stakeholders and agree on an appropriate method."
- Provision 6 Source 2, section 7.1.3, page 6: "At a minimum, Continuous Input and Grievance Expression Process Book shall be made available at an agreed location."

- Provision 7 Source 2, section 8.1.2, page 6: "The project shall consider the comments provided by the Stakeholders and report on how the comments have been accounted for. It may also involve changes in the project design, where appropriate. The Project Developer shall provide justifications when any comments have not been incorporated or addressed."
- Provision 8 Source 3, section 10.1.2, page 14: "The Project Developer should record and address any feedback given by stakeholders as part of the project's grievance mechanism and include in the monitoring report."

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program included Stakeholder Inclusivity as one of the program eligibility principles and requirements. Accordingly, project owners must demonstrate that an appropriate system for the ongoing capture, recording and responding to stakeholder concerns is developed (Provisions 1 and 2).

The carbon crediting program further requires that all projects set up a formal input, feedback and grievance mechanism which stakeholders can use to submit comments during the full project lifetime (Provision 3 and 4). The appropriate method for the mechanism must be developed jointly with the stakeholders (Provision 3 and 5). Project owners are required to record comments received and report how they have been accounted for (Provisions 7 and 8). The indicator is therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.24

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires that a record of how issues from the local stakeholder consultation, grievances communicated to project owners and ongoing communication have been addressed is made publicly available or made available upon request ."

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 Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Guidelines. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at: https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/102G_V1.2_PAR_Stakeholder-Consultation-and-engagement-Guidelines.pdf

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 7.1.1, 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."
- Provision 2 Source 1, section 8.1.2, page 6: "The project shall consider the comments provided by the Stakeholders and report on how the comments have been accounted for. It may also involve changes in the project design, where appropriate. The Project Developer shall provide justifications when any comments have not been incorporated or addressed." (Section 8.1.2 of the Gold Standard Public Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Requirements)
- Provision 3 Source 1, section 9.1.1 page 6: "Ongoing Monitoring & reporting Project Developer shall provide information in the annual and monitoring report, as applicable, for the following:
- (a) Concerns that have been identified and raised by stakeholders during the stakeholder consultations and the mitigation measures put in place to address those.
 - (b) Any feedback given by stakeholders as part of the project's grievance mechanism"
- Provision 4 Source 2, section 10.1.2, page 7: "The Project Developer should record and address any feedback given by stakeholders as part of the project's grievance mechanism and include in the monitoring report." (Section 10.1.2 of the Gold Standard Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Guidelines)
- Provision 5 Source 3, section 5.1.1, page 22: "With a successful Preliminary Review, the Project will obtain 'Listed' status in the Gold Standard Registry. This means that:
- (a) The Key Project Information, draft Project Design Documentation and supporting documentation are made publicly available
 - [...]"
- Provision 6 Source 3, section 5.1.24, page 24: "The Project Design Document, supporting documentation, Monitoring & Reporting Plan and final Validation Report shall be made public (unless otherwise agreed with Gold Standard, for example in the case of commercially or personal security sensitive information)."

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

Gold Standard requires project owners to establish a formal input, feedback and grievance mechanism (Provision 1). The Project Developer must record and address any feedback given by stakeholders, this record must be included in the monitoring report (Provision 2, 3 and 4). The

monitoring report is made publicly available (Provision 5 and 6). Therefore, the indicator is considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.25

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program requires project validation and verification entities to contact and engage with affected local stakeholders during validation.”

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Principles & Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/101-par-principles-requirements/>.
- 2 Gold Standard Validation / Verification Body Requirements. Version 2.0. Document issued in January 2021. Online available at https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/109_V2.0_PAR_Validation-Verification-Body-Requirements.pdf

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 5.1.14, page 23: “Validation includes a site visit by a VVB who assesses the up-front design and monitoring plan for a Project against applicable Requirements. This includes Validation of:

- (a) The Project Documentation including the Project Design Document and Monitoring & Reporting Plan, including any updates to the Key Project Information after Listed Status has achieved.
- (b) Any supporting document and evidence to demonstrate conformity to all applicable Gold Standard Requirements.”

Provision 2 Source 2, section 7.6.5.1, page 16: “A validator or verifier shall have auditing knowledge and skills and the ability to apply them to perform validation or verification/certification activities including:

- a. Data, information and system auditing techniques and methodologies;
- b. Risk assessment techniques and methodologies;
- c. Data and information sampling techniques and methodologies;
- d. Application of the concepts of materiality and level of assurance;
- e. Collection of information through effective interviewing, listening, observing and reviewing documents, records and data;
- f. Verification of the accuracy of collected information, evaluation of the sufficiency and appropriateness of gathered evidence to support validation or verification/certification findings and conclusions;
- g. Preparation of validation or verification/certification opinions and reports.”

Assessment outcome

No (0 Points).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program requires that all project documentation is validated during the validation and verification process. By extension this includes also the stakeholder consultation report (Provision 1). Knowledge and skill required by VVBs include “Collection of information through effective interviewing, listening, observing and reviewing documents, records and data” (Provision 2). However, there is no explicit provision that requires that validation and verification entities contact and engage with affected local stakeholders during validation. Therefore, the indicator is not fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.26

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program requires that projects be subject to public consultation on the global level via online facilities (e.g., submitting comments on an online platform or portal) prior to project registration.”

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 Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Guidelines, Version 1.2, document published in October 2019. Online available at:
https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/102G_V1.2_PAR_Stakeholder-Consultation-and-engagement-Guidelines.pdf

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 2.1.1, page 3: “The Stakeholder Consultation shall be conducted prior to the start date of the Project so that the stakeholders can truly influence the project design, planning and its implementation.”
- Provision 2 Source 1, section 3 “Minimum Group of Stakeholders to be Consulted”, page 3: “The Project Developer shall identify and invite all relevant (local, affected and interested) stakeholders as mentioned below for consultations and comments.
- (a) Local people, communities and or representatives³ who are directly or indirectly affected by the project
 - (b) Stakeholders with land-tenure rights within or adjacent to the project must be contacted
 - (c) Local policy makers and representatives of local authorities

- (d) National government officials or National focal bodies responsible for the project in the host country, for example, Designated National Authority⁴ (DNA)
- (e) Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Women Groups working on topics relevant to the project or working with communities who are likely to be affected by the project
- (f) A Gold Standard representative at help@goldstandard.org
- (g) Relevant international Gold Standard NGO Supporters⁵ with representation in your region and all Gold Standard NGO Supporters located in the host country of the project"

- Provision 3 Source 1, section 6.1.1, page 5: "The Stakeholder Consultation shall comprise of a minimum two rounds of consultation including one mandatory physical meeting and one stakeholder feedback round lasting for at least two months."
- Provision 4 Source 2, section 9.1.2, page 14: "All stakeholders invited to participate in the first consultation should be invited to the Stakeholder Feedback Round."
- Provision 5 Source 2, section 9.1.3, page 14: "The Stakeholder Consultation documentation and revised project documentation should be made accessible via a website or online platform. In addition to publishing the project documents via a website, the Project Developer should consider providing hard copies of the documents available at community places; for example, the local post office or municipality office, library, community health centre, or nursery or primary school."
- Provision 6 Source 2, section 9.1.4, page 14: "The Stakeholder Feedback Round remains open for a minimum of 60 days."

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program's provisions do not distinguish between local and global stakeholder consultations but set out a single process for stakeholder consultations. The provisions require that stakeholder consultations must take place prior to the start date of the project (Provision 1) and be composed of at least two rounds of stakeholder consultations. These must include one physical meeting and one stakeholder feedback round lasting for at least two months (Provision 3). The provisions further define a minimum group of stakeholders that must be invited to both meetings. This includes next to local stakeholders also representatives of international NGO supporters that are active in the region (Provisions 2 and 4). For the stakeholder feedback round the project owner must make the revised documentation accessible via a website or online platform (Provision 5) and accept comments for a period of at least 60 days (Provision 6). The indicator is therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.27

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires that global public consultations of projects make available key information on the project, such as the project design documents and any supplemental project documentation."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Guidelines, Version 1.2, document published in October 2019. Online available at:
https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/102G_V1.2_PAR_Stakeholder-Consultation-and-engagement-Guidelines.pdf

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 2, section 9.1.3, page 14: "The Stakeholder Consultation documentation and revised project documentation should be made accessible via a website or online platform. In addition to publishing the project documents via a website, the Project Developer should consider providing hard copies of the documents available at community places; for example, the local post office or municipality office, library, community health centre, or nursery or primary school."

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program requires for the stakeholder feedback round (see indicator 6.1.26 for definition and information) to make available the revised project documentation via a website or online platform (Provision 1).

Indicator 6.1.28

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires that input received through global public consultations of projects is publicly documented, that the project owners must take due account of the inputs received, and that it is publicly documented how inputs received are addressed."

Information sources considered

Refer to indicator 6.1.19

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Refer to indicator 6.1.19

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program's provisions do not distinguish between local and global stakeholder consultations but set out a single process for stakeholder consultations. As assessed in indicator 6.1.19 the project owners must take due account of the inputs received during this process and document how inputs received are addressed. The indicator is therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.29

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires that a validation and verification entity assesses whether the project owners have taken due account of all inputs received in the global stakeholder consultation."

Information sources considered

Refer to indicator 6.1.20

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Refer to indicator 6.1.20

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program's provisions do not distinguish between local and global stakeholder consultations but set out a single process for stakeholder consultations. As assessed in indicator 6.1.20 verification and validation include an assessment of the respective project documentation. The indicator is therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.30

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program has established provisions that allow the public (both global and local project stakeholders) to submit comments to the program about a project at any time during project operation. This includes provisions for the program's due consideration of the comments received and possible action to address the concern (e.g., halting the issuance of credits, deregistering the project, or requiring compensation for over-issuance)."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Principles & Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019.
Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/101-par-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 7.1.1, page 30: "The Project Developer shall report any potential or actual Non-Conformity against the Requirements and any associated Guidelines, Tools or Methodologies immediately upon discovery (and no later than 30 days after the Non-Conformity event discovery). Potential or actual non-conformities may also be submitted to Gold Standard by any party at any time for review."
- Provision 2 Source 1, section 7.1.2, pages 30-31: "Gold Standard shall undertake a review of the Non-Conformity, including potentially commissioning an independent investigation and an expert peer review of any recommended action taken. During the investigation Gold Standard reserves the right to suspend activities related to Certification and/or Registry, including the assignment, transfer or retirement of Gold Standard Certified Impact Statements or Products."
- Provision 3 Source 1, section 7.1.3, page 31: "Gold Standard shall decide upon the action taken in response to a confirmed Non-Conformity. This may include; a requirement for immediate rectification or change, a suspension of a Project until rectification has been Verified or a removal of Gold Standard Certified Design status from the Project. Factors that influence Gold Standard's consideration of the severity of the issue shall include, but are not limited to:
- (a) If the issue is repeated/systematic or fundamental to the project.
 - (b) If the issue has resulted in an inappropriate certification decision or over-issuance of Gold Standard Certified Impact Statements or Products.
 - (c) If the issue has continued over a longer period of time or affects a significant area or population.
 - (d) If the issue has caused the endangerment of life, livelihoods, ecology or the environment.
 - (e) If the Project Developer failed to notify Gold Standard, take appropriate steps to limit any damage or disruption caused or has attempted to cover up the issue.

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The carbon crediting program provisions stipulate that any party at any time may submit potential or actual non-conformities against the program's requirements and associated guidelines tools or methodologies (Provision 1). Upon receipt the program must undertake a review of the non-

conformity which might include an independent investigation (Provision 2). During the investigation, certification and registration activities might be suspended (Provision 2). If a non-conformity is confirmed the program might decide on a requirement for immediate rectification or change, a suspension of a Project until rectification has been Verified or a removal of Gold Standard Certified Design status from the Project (Provision 3). The indicator is therefore considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.31

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program provisions explicitly ban any violation of human rights by the project owner or any other entity involved in project design or implementation.”

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Principles & Requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued in October 2019.
Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/101-par-principles-requirements/>

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, Principle 1 – Human Rights, page 10: “The Gold Standard Certification:

- (a) Recognises the centrality of human rights to sustainable development, poverty alleviation and ensuring fair distribution of development opportunities and benefits; and supports “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all”.
- (b) Does not recognise or support Projects that may contribute to violations of a State’s human rights obligations and the core international human rights treaties, and seeks to support the protection and fulfilment of human rights.
- (c) Upholds the principles of accountability and the rule of law, participation and inclusion, and equality and non-discrimination, noting that prohibited grounds of discrimination include race, ethnicity, gender, age, language, disability, sexual orientation, religion, political or other opinion, national or social or geographical origin, property, birth or other status including as an indigenous person or as a member of a minority.”

Provision 2 Source 1, section 3.1.1, page 10: “The Project Developer and the Project shall respect internationally proclaimed human rights and shall not be complicit in violence or human rights abuses of any kind as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

Provision 3 Source 1, section 3.1.2, page 10: “The Project shall not discriminate with regards to participation and inclusion.” (Section 3.1.2 of the Gold Standard Principles & Requirements)

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

Human rights are a stand-alone principle of the carbon crediting principles and requirements (Provision 1). Projects must respect internationally proclaimed human rights and must not be complicit in human rights violations (Provision 2 and 3). The above documentation therefore clearly specifies that the indicator is fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.32

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program has safeguards in place that require preserving and protecting cultural heritage in projects."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 3.4.1, page 13: "The Project shall not involve or be complicit in the alteration, damage or removal of any sites, objects or structures of significant cultural heritage."

Provision 2 Source 1, section 3.4.2, page 13: "Where a Project proposes to utilise Cultural Heritage, including the knowledge, innovations, or practices of local communities, affected communities shall be informed of:

- (a) Their rights under Applicable Law,
- (b) The scope and nature of the proposed commercial development; and
- (c) The potential consequences of such development."

Provision 3 Source 1, section 3.4.3, page 13: "The Project shall provide for equitable sharing of benefits from commercialisation of such knowledge, innovation, or practice, consistent with their customs and traditions."

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The program has provisions in place that ensure the preservation, protection and promotion of cultural heritage (Provision 1 to Provision 3).

Indicator 6.1.33

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program has safeguards in place in relation to health that at least address the need to avoid or minimize the risks and impacts to (community) health, safety and security that may arise from projects."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, principle 3 "Community Health, Safety and Working Conditions", page 11-12:
"The Gold Standard Certification:

- (a) Ensures that projects anticipate and avoid adverse impacts on the health and safety of affected communities during the Project's life cycle from both routine and non-routine circumstances.
- (b) Ensures that projects to provide workers with safe and healthy working conditions and to prevent accidents, injuries, and disease."

Provision 2 Source 1, section 3.3.1, page 12: "The Project shall avoid community exposure to increased health risks⁶ and shall not adversely affect the health of the workers and the community."

⁶: Such as (but not limited to) transmission of communicable diseases to water-borne, water-based, water-related, and vector-borne diseases, and communicable diseases (e.g. HIV, TB and malaria) that could result from the Project, taking into consideration the differentiated exposure to and higher sensitivity of marginalised groups, including communities living in voluntary isolation

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The program provisions specifically address the need to avoid or minimize the risks and impacts to community health, safety and security that may arise from projects.

Indicator 6.1.34

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program provisions specifically require that projects avoid physical and economic displacement in its projects and that, in exceptional circumstances where avoidance is not possible, displacement occurs only with appropriate forms of legal protection and compensation as well as informed participation of those affected."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.
- 2 UNDP Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement. Online available at: https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Standard%205.aspx.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, section 3.4.5, page 13: "The Project shall not involve and shall not be complicit in the involuntary relocation of people."
- Provision 2 Source 1, section 3.4.6, page 13: "Projects shall avoid physical (i.e., relocation or loss of shelter) and economic displacement (i.e., loss of assets or access to assets that leads to loss of income sources or means of livelihood), and mitigate displacement impacts on displaced persons and host communities when displacement cannot be avoided. In such cases, the Project shall integrate into the Project documentation a Resettlement Action Plan or Livelihood Action Plan as appropriate. Please refer to UNDP Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement requirements for further details in this regard."
- Provision 3 Source 2, section "Introduction": "UNDP seeks to avoid physical and economic displacement in its projects. In exceptional circumstances and where avoidance is not possible, displacement may occur only with full justification, appropriate forms of legal protection and compensation, and according to the following requirements."
- Provision 4 Source 2, section "Objectives": "Objectives
- To recognize and respect the prohibition on forced evictions
 - To anticipate and avoid, or, when avoidance is not possible, minimize adverse social and economic impacts from land or resource acquisition or restrictions on land or resource use
 - To enhance and restore the livelihoods of all displaced persons, and to improve the standards of living and overall socioeconomic status of displaced poor and other displaced groups and to support efforts to progressively realize the rights to adequate housing and adequate standards of living for displaced populations
 - To ensure that resettlement activities are planned and implemented collaboratively with the meaningful and informed participation of those affected"

- Provision 5 Source 2, section “Requirements”: “Prohibit forced evictions, allowing evictions in exceptional circumstances only: Prohibit forced evictions in all supported activities. Forced eviction is defined here as the permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection. Forced evictions constitute gross violations of a range of internationally recognized human rights. Any evictions that may be associated with project activities shall occur only in exceptional circumstances and be carried out lawfully with full justification and meet all of the following criteria: authorized by national law; carried out in full accordance with relevant provisions of international human rights and humanitarian law; (c) undertaken solely for the purpose of promoting the general welfare; (d) are reasonable and proportional, and (e) follow due process standards and are regulated so as to ensure full and fair compensation and rehabilitation. The protection provided by the requirements herein applies to all affected persons and groups, irrespective of whether they hold title to home and property under domestic law.”
- Provision 6 Source 2, section “Monitoring and completion analysis”: “Directly-affected persons are consulted on implementation of plans and collaborative monitoring with affected persons and communities is considered. Projects with significant displacement impacts prepare periodic monitoring reports and inform affected persons about monitoring results.”

Assessment outcome

Yes (2 Points)

Justification of assessment

Principle 4.2 (Forced Eviction and Displacement) of the Gold Standard safeguarding principles requires projects to seek to avoid physical and economic displacement in its projects (Provision 1 and Provision 2). The program's displacement provisions, which incorporate the UNDP Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement requirements, correspond to the requirements of this indicator. (Provision 3 to Provision 6).

Indicator 6.1.35

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program has safeguards in place in relation to labour rights that at least require projects to ensure decent and safe working conditions, fair treatment, sound worker-management relationships and equal opportunity for workers.”

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, principle 6 “Economic Impacts”, page 15: “The Gold Standard certification:

- (a) Promotes equitable, sustainable economic growth and stability and Projects that are appropriate and considerate of the economic situation in which they are developed.
- (b) Ensures that projects respect and promote worker’s rights, promote the right to decent work, fair treatment, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity for workers, and avoid the use of forced labour and child labour.
- (c) Prioritises appropriate and properly considered local employment and procurement wherever possible”

Provision 2 Source 1, section 3.6.1, page 16: “The Project Developer shall ensure that there is no forced labour and that all employment is in compliance with national labour and occupational health and safety laws, with obligations under international law, and consistency with the principles and standards embodied in the International Labour Organization (ILO) fundamental conventions. Where these are contradictory and a breach of one or other cannot be avoided, then guidance shall be sought from Gold Standard. It requires that;

- (a) Workers shall be able to establish and join labour organisations.
- (b) Working agreements with all individual workers shall be documented and implemented. These shall, at minimum, comprise:
 - i. Working hours (must not exceed 48 hours per week on a regular basis), AND
 - ii. Duties and tasks, AND
 - iii. Remuneration (must include provision for payment of overtime), AND
 - iv. Modalities on health insurance, AND
 - v. Modalities on termination of the contract with provision for voluntary resignation by employee, AND
 - vi. Provision for annual leave of not less than 10 days per year, not including sick and casual leave.”

Provision 3 Source 1, section 3.6.2, page 16-17: “Child labour, as defined by the ILO Minimum Age Convention is not allowed. The Project Developer shall use adequate and verifiable mechanisms for age verification in recruitment procedures. Exceptions are children for work on their families’ property as long as:

- (a) Their compulsory schooling (minimum of 6 schooling years) is not hindered, AND
- (b) The tasks they perform do not harm their physical and mental development, AND

(c) The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the project design.

(d) The Project Developer shall ensure the use of appropriate equipment, training of workers, documentation and reporting of accidents and incidents, and emergency preparedness and response measures.”

Provision 4 Source 1, section 3.6.3, page 17: “The Project Developer shall demonstrate the financial sustainability of the Projects implemented, also including those that will occur beyond the Project Certification period.”

Provision 5 Source 1, section 3.6.4, page 17: “The Projects shall consider economic impacts and demonstrate a consideration of potential risks to the local economy and how these have been taken into account in project design, implementation, operation and after the Project. Particular focus shall be given to vulnerable and marginalised social groups in targeted communities and that benefits are socially-inclusive and sustainable.”

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

Provision 1 to Provision 5 contain requirements related to labour rights that are consistent with the requirements of this indicator.

Indicator 6.1.36

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program has safeguards in place in relation to environmental issues that at least address air pollution, water pollution, soil and land protection, waste management, and biodiversity.”

Information sources considered

1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 3.7.1, page 17: “Projects shall not increase greenhouse gas emissions over the Baseline Scenario unless this is specifically allowed within Activity Requirements or Gold Standard Approved Impact Methodologies.”

Provision 2 Source 1, section 3.8.1, page 18: “The Project shall ensure that water resources are conserved. For surface waters this means:

(a) Maintaining credible environmental flows, demonstrated by providing a verifiable calculation that shows conservation is maintained at a level as advised by the independent Expert Stakeholder, and

(b) Ensuring that any discharged wastewater is of a high enough standard to allow beneficial reuse. For ground water this means limiting abstractions to levels less than, or equal to, rates of recharge. Managed aquifer recharge may be used to conserve groundwater resources. The project can use historical records, ongoing monitoring and reporting through data logging of physical measurements, online sources and/or government data to assess the project risks/impacts.

Recommended methods: Quantitative documentation of all sources and volumes of water abstractions. Use of weirs and gauges, flow meters, pump energy consumption, transpiration rates, government data, remote sensing.”

- Provision 3 Source 1, section 3.8.2, page 18: “At each Performance Certification the Project shall assess whether it is in an area of physical water stress or scarcity. The project can conduct an analysis of the water scarcity within the Project’s physical area of influence (e.g., basin, watershed) and shall monitor the impact frequently. The project can use Aqueduct, GWSP Digital water Atlas, Water Risk Filter, WBCSD Global Water Tool, Water Stress Index Maplecroft, Water Scarcity Index Pfister or other recognised tools for water stress and scarcity assessment within the Project’s physical area of influence.”
- Provision 4 Source 1, section 3.8.3, page 18: “The Project shall provide verifiable evidence of water stress experienced in the basin(s) in which the Project is active, and demonstrate that consumption of water by the Project (over Baseline) is negligible or will bring positive impacts or, at a minimum, not increase the overall annual basin stress.”
- Provision 5 Source 1, section 3.8.4, page 18-19: “The risk(s) of the Project negatively impacting the catchment shall be assessed and addressed to ensure its ongoing, long-term viability and impact on surrounding social-economic and environmental assets. The project can use mapping tools, or other appropriate nationally recognised tools in this regard. Recommended methods include online tools, engineering or physical assessment, historical flow records, land use records, and verbal or written surveys with local agencies and residents. Examination of longitudinal and lateral conductivity to check connectivity of flows, including vertical connectivity (i.e., sufficient flows or dead zones).”
- Provision 6 Source 1, section 3.8.5, page 19: “Where the Project is involved in abstraction from water resources required to support biodiversity and other ecosystem services, an eflow assessment consistent with good practice, including a modern method outlined in one of the key references listed below must be undertaken. Alternatively, where local, national or regional regulation exists or where alternative approaches may be more appropriate then these may be put forward to Gold Standard for approval.”
- Provision 7 Source 1, section 3.8.6, page 19: “Where environmental flow assessments are impractical, the Project is required to demonstrate that the flow rate and variability is maintained from the abstracted water resource. A verifiable calculation shall be

provided for each water source demonstrating total flow rates do not fall below levels that are contextually appropriate, as advised by an independent Expert Stakeholder.”

- Provision 8 Source 1, section 3.8.7, page 19: “The opinions and recommendations of Expert Stakeholder(s) shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the project design and Monitoring Plan.”
- Provision 9 Source 1, section 3.8.8, page 19: “The risk of the Project negatively impacting the catchment and any risks impacting the Project’s success shall be assessed and addressed. The project shall ensure its ongoing, long-term viability and impact on surrounding social-economic and environmental assets. The project shall assess the sensitivity of the physical area of influence due to low percentage of impervious cover in a project (e.g., basin, catchment), susceptibility to erosion and water body instability, and lack of terrestrial habitat connectivity. The project can use mapping tools, or other appropriate nationally recognised tools, academic or published studies on the relevant area. The recommended methods include online tools, visual inspection, engineering or physical assessment, historical land use records, aerial photographs, and verbal or written surveys with local agencies and residents on the characterisation of geomorphology of water bodies.”
- Provision 10 Source 1, section 3.8.9, page 19: “The Project shall demonstrate that measures to ensure soil protection and minimised erosion are in place prior to the commencement of the Project.”
- Provision 11 Source 1, section 3.8.10, page 19: “The Project shall demonstrate that measures will be undertaken to ensure that surface and ground waters are protected from erosion and that these measures are in place prior to the commencement of the Project.”
- Provision 12 Source 1, section 3.8.11, page 20: “Measures shall be incorporated to reduce soil erosion on slopes (e.g., hedge and tree rows, natural terracing, infiltration strips, permanent ground cover). For these measures, the concept of the effective slope length shall be taken into account.”
- Provision 13 Source 1, section 3.8.12, page 20: “Impact shall be reassessed at a frequency appropriate to the context of the ecosystem affected. The monitoring approach and frequency shall be justified by reference to natural patterns and variations.”
- Provision 14 Source 1, section 3.8.13, page 20: “Where the Project takes place in a water scarce or water stressed area, the opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder shall be sought and demonstrated as being considered and incorporated into the project design.”
- Provision 15 Source 1, section 3.9.1, page 20: “The Project shall identify the functions and services provided by the landscape and demonstrate no net degradation in existing landscape function and services.”
- Provision 16 Source 1, section 3.9.2, page 20: “To ensure healthy soils the following aspects shall be identified, and appropriate measures shall be put in place to protect them:

(a) Soil types, AND

(b) Biota, AND

(c) Erosion"

Provision 17 Source 1, section 3.9.3, page 20: "Measures shall be incorporated to minimise soil degradation (e.g., through crop rotation, composting, no use of heavy machinery, use of N-fixing plants, reduced tillage, no use of ecologically harmful substances)."

Provision 18 Source 1, section 3.9.4, page 20: "Projects that involve the production, harvesting, and/or management of living natural resources by small-scale landholders and/or local communities shall adopt the appropriate and culturally sensitive sustainable resource management practices."

Provision 19 Source 1, section 3.9.10, page 21-22: "All potential pollution sources that may result from the Project that cause the degradation of the quality of soil, air, surface and groundwater within the Project's area of influence shall be identified. Appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring shall be implemented to ensure the protection of resources. The project can use historical records, ongoing monitoring and reporting through data logging of physical measurements, online sources, government data. The recommended methods include quantitative documentation of all sources and volumes of water abstractions, use of weirs and gauges, flow meters, pump energy consumption, transpiration rates, government data."

Provision 20 Source 1, section 3.9.11, page 22: "Projects shall avoid or, when avoidance is not feasible, minimise and control release of hazardous materials resulting from their production, transportation, handling, storage and use in the Project. Where avoidance is not possible, the health risks, including potential differentiated effects on men, women and children, of the potential use of hazardous materials shall be addressed appropriately."

Provision 21 Source 1, section 3.9.12, page 22: "Projects shall consider the use of less hazardous substitutes for such chemicals and materials and will avoid the manufacture, trade, and use of chemicals and hazardous materials subject to international bans or phase-outs due to their high toxicity to living organisms, environmental persistence, potential for bioaccumulation, or potential for depletion of the ozone layer."

Provision 22 Source 1, section 3.9.13, page 22: "All sources of waste and waste products shall be identified and classified. Waste products include amongst others:

- (a) Chemical wastes, AND
- (b) Containers, AND
- (c) Fuels and oils, AND
- (d) Human waste, AND
- (e) Rubbish (including metals, plastics, organic and paper products), AND
- (f) Abandoned buildings, machinery or equipment."

Provision 23 Source 1, section 3.9.14, page 22: "Where waste generation may not be avoided, the Project shall reduce the generation of waste, and recover and reuse waste in a manner that is safe for human health and the environment."

Provision 24 Source 1, section 3.9.15, page 22-23: "Where waste may not be recovered or reused, it shall be treated, destroyed, or disposed of in an environmentally sound manner that includes the appropriate control of emissions and residues resulting from the handling and processing of the waste material."

Provision 25 Source 1, section 3.9.16, page 23: "If the generated waste is considered hazardous, reasonable alternatives for its environmentally sound disposal will be adopted while adhering to the limitations applicable to its transboundary movement."

Provision 26 Source 1, section 3.9.17, page 23: "The Project shall not make use of chemicals or materials subject to international bans or phase-outs. For example, DDT, PCBs and other chemicals listed in international conventions such as the Stockholm Conventions on Persistent Organic Pollutants or the Montreal Protocol."

Provision 27 Source 1, section 3.9.32, page 25-26: "No Project that potentially impacts identified habitats as identified above shall be implemented unless all of the following are demonstrated:

- (a) The risk of the Project negatively impacting the catchment and risks impacting project success shall be assessed and addressed to ensure its ongoing, long-term viability and impact on surrounding HCV and ecological assets.
- (b) No measurable adverse impacts on the criteria or biodiversity values for which the critical habitat was designated, and on the ecological processes supporting those biodiversity values;
- (c) A robust, appropriately designed, and long-term Habitats and Biodiversity Action Plan is in place to achieve net gains of those biodiversity values for which the critical habitat was designated."

Provision 28 Source 1, section 3.9.33, page 26: "Within the Project the area that is managed by the Project Developer and the area of impact downstream, the following shall be identified and protected/enhanced. In the case of downstream impacts, the Project shall ensure mitigation is in place within the Project Boundary such that the Project shall not adversely affect these areas:

- (a) Existing patches of native tree species, AND
- (b) Single solitary stems of native tree species, AND
- (c) All freshwater resources including rivers, lakes, swamps, ephemeral water bodies and wells
- (d) Habitats of rare, threatened and endangered species, AND
- (e) Areas relevant for habitat connectivity shall be identified and managed to protect or enhance biological diversity."

Provision 29 Source 1, section 3.9.34, page 26: "If the Project is located in such habitats; the Project Developer shall:

- (a) Minimise unwarranted conversion or degradation of the habitat.

(b) Identify opportunities to enhance the habitat as part of the Project. For Projects applying the Land Use & Forest Activity Requirements Projects, a minimum 10% of the Project area shall be identified and managed to protect or enhance the biological diversity of native ecosystems. For this, the HCV approach should be followed (www.HCVnetwork.org). This area has to be located within the project region and managed by the Project Developer. The area may also include the areas of the requirement (for example, buffer zones for water bodies in the case of Land Use & Forests)."

Provision 30 Source 1, section 3.9.35, page 26: "The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the Project design. The project can use mapping tools such as LEFT, IUCN Red List, IBAT or other appropriate nationally recognised tools may be used or visual inspection. The recommended methods include online tools, visual inspection, engineering or physical assessment, use historical data and verbal or written surveys with local residents."

Provision 31 Source 1, section 3.9.36, page 27: "Under no circumstances shall the Project lead to the reduction or negative impact of any recognised Endangered, Vulnerable or Critically Endangered species."

Provision 32 Source 1, section 3.9.37, page 27: "Habitats of endangered species shall be specifically identified and managed to protect or enhance them."

Provision 33 Source 1, section 3.9.38, page 27: "The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder shall be sought and demonstrated as being considered and incorporated into the project design."

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The Gold Standard has provisions in place for sustainable use of water (Provision 2 to Provision 14), the protection of soil and land (Provision 15 to Provision 18), the mitigation of air pollution (Provision 1 and Provision 19), avoidance or minimization the generation of hazardous and non-hazardous substances and wastes (Provision 20 to Provision 26), and the protection of biodiversity (Provision 27 to Provision 33). Therefore, the indicator is fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.37

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program requires, at least for specific project types as defined by the program, the establishment of a specific benefits-sharing mechanism with local stakeholders (e.g., that part of carbon credit proceeds are made available for community activities)."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section 3.4.15, page 15: "The Project Developer shall ensure that the indigenous people are provided with the equitable sharing of benefits to be derived from utilisation and/or commercial development of natural resources on lands and territories or use of their traditional knowledge and practices by the Project. This shall be done in a manner that is culturally appropriate and inclusive and that does not impede land rights or equal access to basic services including health services, clean water, energy, education, safe and decent working conditions and housing."

Assessment outcome

No (0 Points).

Justification of assessment

The program provisions require the project owner to ensure that indigenous people are provided with the equitable sharing of benefits. The way this provision is written it is unclear whether it does apply to non-indigenous local stakeholders. The indicator is therefore not fulfilled

Indicator 6.1.38

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program explicitly prohibits the introduction of invasive non-native species, where relevant (e.g. land use projects)."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-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 Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements, Version 1.2.1. Document issued in April 2020 https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/203_V1.2.1_AR_LUF-Activity-Requirements.pdf

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

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Assessment outcome

No (0 Points).

Justification of assessment

Neither the Gold Standard Principles & Requirements nor the Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements or Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements include any provisions that prohibit the introduction of non-invasive species. The indicator is therefore not fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.39

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program requires experts to support processes dedicated to avoiding physical and economic displacement and to free, prior and informed consent from indigenous people.

OR

The program requires experts to support all safeguard processes which are included in the program’s provisions.”

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

- Provision 1 Source 1, Principle 4.1 - Sites of Cultural and Historical Heritage, section 3.4.3, page 13: “The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder(s) shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the project design.”
- Provision 2 Source 1, Principle 4.2 - Forced Eviction and Displacement, section 3.4.6, page 13: “The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder(s) shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the project design [specifically related to forced eviction and displacement].”
- Provision 3 Source 1, Principle 4.4 - Indigenous people, section 3.4.16, page 15: “The opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder(s) shall be sought and demonstrated as being included in the project design.”

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point)

Justification of assessment

The above provisions require project owners to seek the opinions and recommendations of an Expert Stakeholder for Sites of Cultural and Historical Heritage (Provision 1), Forced Eviction and

Displacement (Provision 2) and free, prior and informed consent from indigenous people (Provision 3). The inclusion in the project design of those opinions and recommendations must be demonstrated. (Provisions 1, 2 and 3) Therefore, the indicator is fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.40

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program provides specific guidance for how each of its safeguards should be applied (for example, similar to the guidance notes of the IFC)."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Guidelines, Version 1.2, document published in October 2019. Online available at:
https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/standards/102G_V1.2_PAR_Stakeholder-Consultation-and-engagement-Guidelines.pdf
- 2 Gold Standard Safeguarding principles & requirements. Version 1.2. Document issued on 9 October 2019. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/103-par-safeguarding-principles-requirements/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

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Assessment outcome

No (0 Points).

Justification of assessment

The Gold Standard Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Guidelines (Source 1) provides specific guidance for its stakeholder consultation and engagement requirements. No similar guidance notes on the Safeguarding principles and requirements are provided.

Indicator 6.1.41

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

"The program has a dedicated gender policy, strategy or action plan that integrates gender considerations and women empowerment into all aspects of its operations."

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Gender policy. Version 1.0. Document issued on 9 August 2017. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-6-gov-gender-policy/>.

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section “Summary”, page 1: “This Gender Policy expresses the Gold Standard’s intention and commitment to enhancing and promoting the goals of gender equality, social inclusion and female empowerment within the Secretariat, throughout Gold Standard certifications procedures and as an integrated measure of the social dividends of GS certified projects. These goals are not ‘accidental’ co-benefits, but are deliberate and intentional goals at both the implementation level as well as at the portfolio aggregate level for all Gold Standard certifications.

The Gender Policy outlines the broad framework of requirements for the GS Secretariat, for the entities submitting projects for certification, for the Technical Governance Committee and the Gold Standard Foundation (GSF) Board of Directors, (see Governance structure) and for Third-Party Auditors (Gold Standard VVBs).”

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Indicator 6.1.42

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program explicitly requires that stakeholder consultations are conducted in a gender-sensitive manner, enabling equal participation.”

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Gender policy. Version 1.0. Document issued on 9 August 2017. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-6-gov-gender-policy/>.
- 2 Gold Standard Gender equality requirements & guidelines. Version 1.1. Document issued on 1 March 2018. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/104-par-gender-equality-requirements-and-guidelines/>
- 3 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 4.1.2, page 6-7: “This policy identifies two grades for certification:

- a. Foundational gender-sensitive requirement – This strengthens Gold Standard’s ‘do no harm’ approach and addresses safeguards to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts on women or men and girls and boys. Such action is mandatory for all projects seeking Gold Standard certification and includes compliance with the gender ‘do no harm’ safeguards, gender gap analysis and gender sensitive stakeholder consultations. [...]”

Provision 2 Source 1, section 4.1.4, page 7: "The foundational gender-sensitive standards will, among other things:

[...]

d. Ensure gender-sensitive approaches in stakeholder consultation: information sharing equitably with women and men stakeholders is a minimum standard, in which information is both available and presented in an accessible format across all stakeholder groups, including those more marginalized (e.g. women, youth, indigenous peoples, etc.). The approach also includes opportunities for stakeholders to share information in a two-way exchange, give regular feedback during implementation and ensure their views and priorities are incorporated in design and practice."

Provision 3 Source 2, section "Notes to Project Developers", page 4: "All projects submitted for Gold Standard certification must have GENDER-SENSITIVE PROCEDURES/STRATEGIES AND MUST ADHERE TO THE GENDER PRINCIPLES AS ESTABLISHED IN THE GOLD STANDARD GENDER POLICY. STEPS 1–3 require all project developers to complete a gender safeguards assessment and gender-sensitive stakeholder consultations as part of initial project design and feasibility. Meeting these requirements enables projects to claim to be 'Gender-Sensitive'. This is a mandatory foundational requirement that applies to all Gold Standard certifications. [...]"

Provision 4 Source 2, section 1.1.2, page 3: "All Gold Standard projects shall "take gender issues into account". This requires local stakeholder consultation processes to reach a wide range of community representatives in ways that ensure equal and effective participation of both women and men, and that gender issues are fully factored into comprehensive social and environmental impact assessments."¹ Project Developers are referred to the Gold Standard Gender Equality Requirements & Guidelines and Gender Policy."

Provision 5 Source 1, section 4.1.3, page 4: "Projects shall ensure that the stakeholders are invited in a 'gender-sensitive' manner and efforts must be made to solicit input from women and marginalised groups."

Provision 6 Source 3, section 2.1.3, page 3 to 4: "The Gold Stakeholder consultation process comprises of at least two rounds of consultation. The project should consider different gender relationships and roles in the project area while preparing for consultations. Women and men typically fulfil different roles and responsibilities, depending on the context and the country. Virtually no role is always exclusively performed by just women or men. Because women often are assigned lower social status relative to men, women tend to have lower confidence, less influence and less involvement in the design, decisions and engagement with projects. In developing a project, "taking gender issues into account" requires that local stakeholder consultation processes reach a wide range of community representatives in ways that ensure equal and effective participation of women and men, and that gender issues are fully factored into comprehensive social and environmental impact assessments." Project Developers are referred to the Gold Standard Gender Equality & Requirements Guidelines and Gold Standard Gender Policy."

- Provision 7 Source 3, section 5.1.3, page 8: "The Project Developer should select an invitation method taking into account local and national circumstances, including appropriate language and measures to ensure a gender-sensitive communications process, using adequate and effective means."
- Provision 8 Source 3, section 6.1.4, page 9: "The Project Developer should consider some key points to decide the format in which project information should be prepared and presented to stakeholders - level of technical detail; local language and dialects; cultural sensitivity; and the roles of women and men, including the impact of the project on gender relations, ethnic composition of communities, literacy levels, community leadership structures, and local methods of disseminating information within stakeholder groups."
- Provision 9 Source 3, section 2.1.4, page 4: "In addition, to the above questions, the Project Developer should consider the following questions to ensure gender equality while planning for Stakeholder Consultations:
- (a) What measures and actions need to be put in place to ensure equal gender participation in Stakeholder Consultations?
 - (b) How should inputs and insights from women and men be sought out, listened to, considered, addressed and documented?
 - (c) Is it necessary to make any specific arrangements to ensure that all constituencies are engaged in the consultation? (for example, speak to women and men separately; have focus groups for women and focus groups for men before gathering them together to ensure their meaningful participation; adapt timings to fit with men's and women's working schedules)
- A few examples of gender-sensitive consultation approaches are:
- FAO: SEAGA (Socio-economic and Gender Analysis): An approach based on an analysis of socio-economic patterns and participatory identification of women's and men's priorities. The objective of the SEAGA approach is to close the gaps between what people need and what development delivers.
 - CARE Canada: Stakeholder and institution mapping.
 - USAID: When to use a Gender stakeholder analysis. Integrating Gender into climate change projects ENERGIA: Elizabeth Cecelski; Soma Dutta (2011); Mainstreaming Gender in Energy Projects: A Practical Handbook"
- Provision 10 Source 3, section 3.1.4 and 3.1.5, pages 6-7: "Stakeholder mapping is one effective way to explore gender gaps. The Project Developer should ensure that gender-sensitive stakeholder mapping is conducted, and the selection of stakeholders is complemented with sex-disaggregated census data, where available.

Suggested guiding questions:

- (a) Who are the local stakeholders? Do they include women, men or both? Do they include different socio-economic groups?
- (b) Are there stakeholder groups from which women or men are excluded?

- (c) Which ones? Why? What do they lose through non-participation?
- (d) Are there stakeholder groups composed of women exclusively or men exclusively? If so, what is the focus of these groups? What do women/men gain from them?
- (e) What project activities are men and women involved in and when and where do these activities take place?
- (f) Who is most dependent on the resources at stake (women or men)? Is this a matter of livelihood or economic advantage?
- (g) Who has access to and control of resources and services and decision making? How are decisions made?
- (h) How do target groups interact with the project developer?
- (i) What are the constraints to access and participation?
- (j) Who has the capacity to contribute to gender equality in the project?
- (k) Who has the capacity to hinder efforts of gender equality in the project?

Provision 11 Source 3, section 8 “Consideration of Comments received” sub-section 8.1.8, page 13: “It may highlight unintended risks or harms from a gender perspective. Make sure to document individual differences⁶ as they relate to priorities, concerns and potential impacts (positive or negative). These should be categorised and evaluated separately.”

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The Gold Standard Gender Policy and Gold Standard Gender equality requirements and guidelines establish that all project developers must conduct stakeholder consultations in a gender sensitive manner (Provision 1 to Provision 4). Project owners further must ensure that the stakeholders are invited in a ‘gender-sensitive’ manner and efforts must be made to solicit input from women and marginalised groups (Provision 5). The program’s stakeholder consultation guidelines provide detailed guidance on how to ensure conducting the stakeholder consultations in a gender-sensitive manner (Provisions 6 – 11). The indicator is therefor considered to be fulfilled.

Indicator 6.1.43

Relevant scoring methodology provisions

“The program explicitly requires that project owners perform a gender safeguard assessment during project design.”

Information sources considered

- 1 Gold Standard Gender policy. Version 1.0. Document issued on 9 August 2017. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/000-6-gov-gender-policy/>.
- 2 Gold Standard Gender equality requirements & guidelines. Version 1.1. Document issued on 1 March 2018. Online available at: <https://globalgoals.goldstandard.org/104-par-gender-equality-requirements-and-guidelines/>

Relevant carbon crediting program provisions

Provision 1 Source 1, section “summary”, page 2: “b. To be eligible for Gold Standard certification, all applicants must satisfy the minimum criteria to prove the gender sensitivity of their project design and implementation. This includes compliance with the gender ‘do no harm’ safeguard, gender-gap analysis and gender sensitive stakeholder consultations. This is referred to as foundational gender-sensitive certification. [...]”

Provision 2 Source 1, section 4.1.4, page 7: “The foundational gender-sensitive standards will, among other things:

- (a) Establish basic gender equality safeguards and principles that apply to all projects such as requiring all project developers to conduct a gender assessment that identifies risks.
- (b) Address gender inequalities and gender-related risks identified in project gender analyses.
- (c) Outline mandatory ‘standard gender equality design elements’ to encourage women and men to participate equitably and meaningfully in project design and implementation; to mitigate risks of a project intervention to ensure that it does not increase gender inequity; as well as to increase the project benefits for women and men. [...]”

Provision 3 Source 2, section “Notes to Project Developers”, page 4: “All projects submitted for Gold Standard certification must have GENDER-SENSITIVE PROCEDURES/ STRATEGIES AND MUST ADHERE TO THE GENDER PRINCIPLES AS ESTABLISHED IN THE GOLD STANDARD GENDER POLICY. STEPS 1–3 require all project developers to complete a gender safeguards assessment and gender-sensitive stakeholder consultations as part of initial project design and feasibility. Meeting these requirements enables projects to claim to be ‘Gender-Sensitive’. This is a mandatory foundational requirement that applies to all Gold Standard certifications. [...]”

Assessment outcome

Yes (1 Point).

Justification of assessment

The above documentation clearly specifies that the indicator is fulfilled.

Scoring results

According to the above assessment, the carbon crediting program achieves 37 points for the indicators. Applying the scoring approach of the methodology, this results in a score of 4.19 for the criterion.