Gold Standard For Sustainable Urban Development
Requirements

Version 1 – July 2017

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TEMPLATE TOOLS

Several organizations and individuals have contributed to the development of this standard. Special thanks to:

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The Governance and Management Systems criteria detailed in Tool 2 were developed based on Mitigation Action Assessment Protocol (MAAP) from World Bank.

This context module of GS4GG is developed through support from the Low Carbon City Lab (LoCaL).

LoCaL aims to reduce 1 Gt of CO_2 and mobilise €25 billion of climate finance for cities annually by 2050. It is an innovation platform aiming to provide cities with better tools for assessing greenhouse gas emissions, planning, investing and evaluating progress. Started in 2015, LoCaL is a growing community of more than 20 organisations dedicated to unlocking climate finance for cities. This report was realized as part of the project Result Based Financing for Cities (RBFC) under LoCaL. LoCaL is a Climate-KIC flagship programme.

http://local.climate-kic.org

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ABOUT CLIMATE-KIC

Climate-KIC is the EU's largest public private partnership addressing climate change through innovation to build a zero carbon economy. We address climate change across four priority themes: urban areas, land use, production systems, climate metrics and finance. Education is at the heart of these themes to inspire and empower the next generation of climate leaders. We run programmes for students, start-ups and innovators across Europe via centres in major cities, convening a community of the best people and organisations. Our approach starts with improving the way people live in cities. Our focus on industry creates the products required for a better living environment, and we look to optimise land use to produce the food people need.

PREFACE

The *Gold Standard for Sustainable Urban Development,* hereafter "the Requirements", is intended to function as a pathway to certification within the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Framework but is specifically tailored to urban Projects or programmes.

The Requirements are designed to help urban Projects achieve best practice and quantify their

climate and development impacts to help attract investments for low carbon development in urban areas. The design of the Standard hence includes assessment of key elements that align with investor criteria. The Requirements help urban authorities to plan, design, implement, monitor, and quantify the performance of a large scale urban Project following the best practices, thereby increasing investor confidence. The Requirements will help reduce the risks associated with the investments in the urban space by providing assurance that the Project follows good practice design principles, manages environmental and social risks, engages local communities, conducts robust MRV and delivers multiple development benefits thereby improving the risk-return profile of urban Projects and making them "investment ready."

These criteria are also aimed to help cities govern and manage their Projects better and continually improve their internal processes. The Requirements provide a framework to help urban authorities build capacity to efficiently plan, design, implement and monitor the performance of large scale urban Projects.

The Requirements are intended to be robust but easy to use for early-stage assessment of risks and estimation of development outcomes. It also provides a pragmatic approach for monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of the performance for urban Projects.

The Requirements propose direct/indirect involvement of city authorities like such as urban local bodies or municipal corporations. The private sector is also expected to play a key role in leading the low carbon development in urban areas. It shall be noted that Gold Standard requires demonstration of adherence to local laws and regulation and expects local authorities to be included as key stakeholders for all Projects where they are not directly involved.

The Requirements are intended for use by the following users (but not limited to) –

- Local government, city government, regional government, municipal authorities, associations, infrastructure providers, service providers, project developers, advisors, consultants or broader programme managers.
- Investors (public sector, private sector, impact investors), banks, donors, funds, and foundations.

The Requirements put forward the following value propositions for the target users –

De-risking – The Requirements incorporate the non-financial risk assessment criteria that are based on safeguarding principles that have been recently updated by UNDP after thorough public consultation and expert feedback process. All developers will be required to assess their Projects against these criteria and mitigate the risks identified. The identified mitigations measures will also have to be monitored to track the progress and outcome.

In addition, the Projects are required to carry out comprehensive stakeholder mapping and consultations to incorporate their feedback in the Project design. This approach creates a strategic buy-in from relevant stakeholders and mitigates a significant potential risks in future, which also threaten an investment and the overall project success.

Robust governance and management systems – The governance and management capabilities of urban authorities is vitally important to investors to create confidence that the authority is capable of delivering a project as designed. The Requirements include criteria to assess the governance capabilities and structure, including investment planning, inter-institutional coordination, track-record of implementing similar Projects, and management systems (including clearly designated roles and responsibilities etc.) of the designated authorities. From urban authorities' perspective, having such systems in place provides them with an important tool to manage their Projects and also will help continuously build capacities and improve their processes to govern and manage such Projects effectively.

Verified development outcomes for assurance and greater brand value – The Requirements include that the Project contribute to at least three Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It must make a positive impact to SDG 13 "Climate Action" and also contribute to two additional SDGs; these contributions must be monitored and reported annually. This key feature allows city authorities to prioritise the local actions and align their Projects with the global

development language of the SDGs. In addition, it assures investors that Projects contribute positively to global development goals. The annual MRV requirements also provide assurance to investors that desired outcomes from the investments are indeed achieved. This helps create strong brand value for the urban Projects, city authorities and for investors as well to gain recognition for their efforts.

Access to results based finance – The Requirements set out how to assess contribution to SDGs and MRV of the outcomes that create an option for the Project to monetise outcomes and access result based finance like climate or health finance, where relevant.

Ease of reporting and transparency – A user-focused online platform will be developed to make reporting easier and transparent thereby making information publicly available on Project's performance and outcomes.

Project aggregation for cost efficiencies – The Requirements act as an aggregation tool for multiple Projects thereby improving the risk-return profile of the portfolio for the investor and reducing development and monitoring costs for urban authorities.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document represents the requirements of Gold Standard certification standard for urban Projects. All urban Projects or programmes for which Gold Standard for Sustainable Urban Development certification is sought shall fulfill the requirements as set out in this document and those referenced or associated. The term Project represents the individual action and/or programme i.e., set of related Projects with common objective. The requirements set out in this document for individual Projects are applicable for programmes, unless stated otherwise.

1.2 In order to maintain the integrity of the module, Gold Standard reserves the right to issue updates and changes, clarifications or corrections to its requirements. Typically, this will involve a notice period and guidance will be provided on how to apply the new rules and requirements. Likewise, the Gold Standard reserves the right to require additional information and evidence to be supplied by the Project developer.

1.3 In addition to this document a number of guidelines, tools and templates are provided to assist developers with their Project and its certification.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY PRINCIPLES

2.1 In order to certify with Gold Standard all Projects and programmes* shall contribute to the vision and mission of Gold Standard, applied specifically through the following principles:

Principle 1: Contribution to Climate Security & Sustainable Development:

(a)   Projects shall be of a type pre-identified as eligible or shall submit to Gold Standard for approval of eligibility.

(b) Project shall define their baseline and project scenario for use in the following procedures and ongoing reporting.

(c) All Projects shall be of a type identified as making a direct contribution to Gold Standard's vision and mission. A number of Project-types are pre-identified as making such a contribution; these are identified in the SDG Assessment Tool.

Principle 2: Safeguarding Principles:

Projects shall conduct a Safeguarding Principles Assessment and conform to Gold Standard's Safeguarding Principles and Requirements.

Principle 3: Stakeholder Inclusivity:

Projects shall identify and engage relevant (meaning local, affected and interested) 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.

Principle 4: Demonstration of real outcomes:

All Projects shall:

(a) Design and develop an upfront monitoring plan.

(b) Undergo Validation and Design Review to achieve Design Certification as a Gold Standard Urban Development Project.

(c) Undertake monitoring in accordance with the Monitoring & Reporting Plan and produce monitoring reports. Projects shall undergo Verification and Performance Certification in order to achieve Gold Standard Certified Project status and to Issue Gold Standard Certified Impacts and Gold Standard Certified Products where sought.

(d) Undergo Gold Standard Certification Renewal in order to remain Certified and to continue to seek Gold Standard Certified Impacts and Gold Standard Certified Products where sought.

Principle 5: Financial Additionality & Ongoing Financial Need:

All Projects must demonstrate impacts that are additional as compared to their baseline scenario (i.e. the benefits of the Project are beyond a business-as-usual scenario) as covered in Principle 1, above. In addition, Projects following certain Certification pathways (i.e. those seeking to use Certification to attract finance or issue market Products through the issuance of GS Certified Impact Products or Statements) shall demonstrate Financial Additionality and Ongoing Financial Need.

Note that for brevity the module refers to Projects throughout the text; this may be read as Projects or Programmes.

3.0 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

3.1 The following general eligibility criteria shall apply to all Projects and Programmes seeking Gold Standard Urban Development Certification:

(a) **Types of Project: Project**s that contribute to climate security and sustainable development from all sectors that are relevant within an urban context, including clean energy supply, energy efficiency, transport, housing, water & sanitation, land use planning, solid waste management, wastewater management, public lighting etc. are eligible for certification. For indicative list of Projects that can use the standard, refer to the SDG Assessment Tool. In addition to this list, any new Project may be submitted to Gold Standard for review and approval. Such approval shall be at the discretion of Gold Standard Technical Governance Committee. Such submissions shall demonstrate relevance and contribution to the Gold Standard vision and mission as well as be in compliance with all Gold Standard requirements.

(b) **Location of Project**: Project(s) within the geographical boundary of the urban area located in any part of the world are eligible.

(c) **Project Area, Project Boundary and Scale:** There is no limit on the scale of the eligible Project(s) unless specified in an approved Gold Standard Methodology, guideline or Product Requirements.

(d) **Host country requirements:** Project(s) shall be in compliance with host country's legal, environmental and social regulations as well as any civic and cultural rights. In addition, the designated national agency responsible for climate change actions such as Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) or Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) coordinating agency or Designated National Authority (DNA), as relevant, shall be notified about the Gold Standard certification process, preferably at the time of stakeholder consultation.

(e) **Contact details:** As part of the Project documentation the Project developer shall provide

their contact details.

(i) name AND

(ii) contact details AND

In case of an organisation

(iii) the legal Design Certification number AND

(iv) documentation by the governing jurisdiction that proves that the entity is in good standing (defined as being a legal or other appropriate entity registered in or allowed to operate within the required jurisdiction and with no evidence of insolvency or legal/criminal notices placed against it or any of its Directors). Gold Standard retains the right (at its own discretion) to refuse use of the Standard where reputational concerns are highlighted.

(f) **Legal ownership:** Full and uncontested legal ownership and title for the products of the Project that will be generated under Gold Standard certification (for example carbon credits) shall be demonstrated. Where such ownership is transferred from project beneficiaries this must be demonstrated transparently and with full, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

(g) **Legal title:** For the duration of the certification period under Gold Standard, the Project developer shall hold uncontested legal land title (where required for certain Projects) for area within the Project boundary and hold necessary permits to implement the Project. Alternatively, the developer shall demonstrate why land title is not required, for example, due to the nature of the Project proposed.

(h) **Other Rights:** As well as legal title and ownership the Project Developer shall also demonstrate where required uncontested legal rights and/or permissions concerning changes in use of other resources required to service the Project (*For example access rights, water rights etc.*). Any known disputes or contested rights must be declared immediately to Gold Standard by the Project Developer and resolved prior to further Project implementation and certification in affected areas.

4.0 SUD PROJECT CERTIFICATION CYCLE

The standard has a certification cycle designed to reflect the urban context, scale and longer/varied implementation timelines of Projects and/or programmes. The certification cycle is suitable for multi-phased programmes with multiple Projects with extended implementation period within a sector or in multiple sectors as is typically the case in urban low-carbon growth programmes. The individual steps in the urban Project certification cycle are as follows.

4.1 Listing, Validation and Project Design Certification

This section describes the steps that lead to Project or a programme Design Certification with Gold Standard. *[Unless stated otherwise, please note that 'Project' is used to refer both to Projects and programmes in the following sections.]*
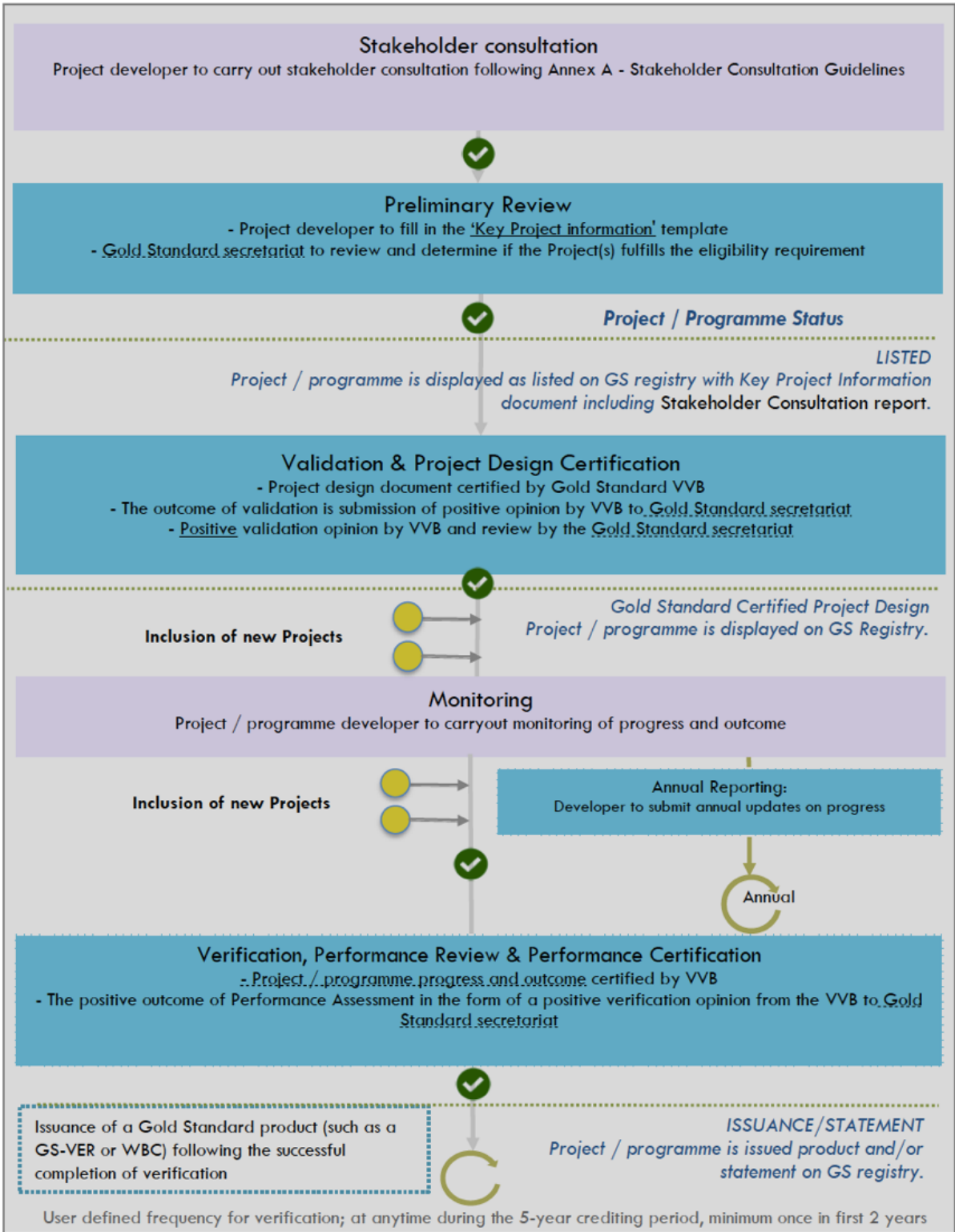
4.2 Project Start Date

4.2.1 The start date of the Project shall be the earliest date on which the developer has committed to expenditures related to the implementation or construction of the Project. This does not include the purchase or option to purchase the land upon which an Project is intended to take place.

4.2.2 Examples of start date may be the date on which contracts have been signed for equipment or construction/operation services required for the Project. Minor pre-Project expenses such as the contracting of services /payment of fees for feasibility studies or preliminary surveys, should not be considered in the determination of the start date as they do not necessarily indicate the commencement of implementation of the Project.

4.2.3 The start date of a Programme shall be considered to be the date of submission of the Programme level stakeholder consultation report on the Gold Standard registry.

In the case of a Programme, the start date of the Projects that are part of programme can be

Stakeholder consultation
Project developer to carry out stakeholder consultation following Annex A - Stakeholder Consultation Guidelines

Preliminary Review
- Project developer to fill in the 'Key Project information' template
- Gold Standard secretariat to review and determine if the Project(s) fulfills the eligibility requirement

Project / Programme Status

LISTED
Project / programme is displayed as listed on GS registry with Key Project Information document including **Stakeholder Consultation report.**

Validation & Project Design Certification
- Project design document certified by Gold Standard VVB
- The outcome of validation is submission of positive opinion by VVB to Gold Standard secretariat
- Positive validation opinion by VVB and review by the Gold Standard secretariat

Inclusion of new Projects

Gold Standard Certified Project Design
Project / programme is displayed on GS Registry.

Monitoring
Project / programme developer to carryout monitoring of progress and outcome

Inclusion of new Projects

Annual Reporting:
Developer to submit annual updates on progress

Annual

Verification, Performance Review & Performance Certification
- Project / programme progress and outcome certified by VVB
- The positive outcome of Performance Assessment in the form of a positive verification opinion from the VVB to Gold Standard secretariat

Issuance of a Gold Standard product (such as a GS-VER or WBC) following the successful completion of verification

ISSUANCE/STATEMENT
Project / programme is issued product and/or statement on GS registry.

User defined frequency for verification; at anytime during the 5-year crediting period, minimum once in first 2 years

earlier than the start date of the Programme.

4.3 Preliminary Review

4.3.1 The Preliminary Review is conducted once at the outset (i.e. at an early stage of project design and before Listing on the GS Registry) of a Project. The developer shall complete the Key Project Information template and shall submit to Gold Standard for Preliminary Review. It includes a desk review of Project Eligibility Principles as well as Methodology applicability amongst other matters. It involves one of two pathways described, dependent on the type of activity. Gold Standard shall decide which pathway a Project is required to undertake though guidelines are provided in the "Gold standard for the global goals Principles & requirements".

4.3.2 CARs/FARs/OBs may be raised during this review that must be addressed during Validation. Matters pertaining to Eligibility Principles shall be addressed prior to Listing

however. The Completeness Check pathway consists of a Preliminary Review period of 2 weeks, conducted by Gold Standard

4.3.3 In case, the developer intends to develop a programme with similar or different Project(s) within one or multiple sector, the developer shall submit the programme level information with key eligibility criteria (for example, type of technology, geographical location etc.) for Projects that will be included in the programme at later stage. In such cases, it is not required to submit individual Project(s) for Preliminary Review to Gold Standard. However, if the Projects are not in compliance with Gold Standard requirements, Gold Standard reserves right to reject the Project(s) at Design Certification stage.

4.4 Listing

4.4.1 With a successful Preliminary Review, the Project obtains 'listed' status that allows the developer to promote their Project to potential investors etc. Listed status does not constitute or convey certification and does not provide any guarantee that the Project will ultimately achieve certification.

4.4.2 With a successful Preliminary Review, the Project will obtain 'listed' status in the Gold Standard registry on submission of signed 'Terms and Conditions' and payment of applicable fee (if any). This means that:

(a) Key Project information and supporting documentation is made publicly available, AND

(b) The Project developer may promote the Project according to the Gold Standard claims guidelines as appropriate for listed status Projects.

(c) the Project may proceed to Validation.

4.4.3 Listed status does not constitute or convey Certification and does not provide any guarantee that the Project will ultimately achieve Certification.

4.4.4 After reaching listed status, the Project may proceed to validation and then Project Design Certification by Gold Standard. The validation and Design Certification steps confirm that the Project design complies with all Gold Standard requirements and that it is ready for verification.

4.4.5 With a successful validation and Gold Standard Secretariat review, the Project obtains the 'Gold Standard Certified Project Design' status, which constitutes and conveys certification by Gold Standard of the up-front Project design and proposed monitoring plan.

By becoming Certified in this way, the Project may further pursue verification, performance review and issuance as per section below.

4.5 Validation and Project Design Certification

4.5.1 Validation is carried out by Gold Standard VVBs who assesses the up-front design and monitoring plan for a Project against the Eligibility Principles, Criteria and Requirements. It includes an assessment of:

(a) Project documentation including the Monitoring plan

(b) Stakeholder consultation

(c) Safeguarding principles assessment

(d) Sustainable development contributions

(e) Any supporting information required by any aspect of Gold Standard or included by the developer as containing evidence of conformity to all applicable Gold Standard Requirements.

4.5.2 Following Listing a Project may proceed to Validation and finally Design Certification of the Project by Gold Standard.

4.5.3 The Project shall complete Validation (defined as the date of submission of Validation Report by the GS-VVB) within two years of successfully completing Preliminary Review.

4.5.4 Validation shall be carried out by a GS-VVB. The GS-VVB shall be appointed directly by the Project Developer, selected from the list of approved GS-VVBs, eligible for the Project type

and pathway proposed. The GS-VVB appointment shall include for responding to clarifications, queries, OBs, FARs and CARs raised by Gold Standard during Design Certification Review.

4.5.5 Validation begins when the developer has:

(a) The Project Developer has contracted an eligible, approved GS-VVB AND,

(b) Submitted full Project Documentation and Supporting Documents to the GS-VVB AND,

(c) The Project Developer has notified Gold Standard of the commencement of Validation and the indicative date for completion and submission.

4.5.6 Validation ends when the Gold Standard VVB has conducted a site visit and submitted a complete validation report, with no open corrective action requests in the opinion of the VVB, to Gold Standard.

4.5.7 Following submission of the validation report by the Gold Standard VVB and payment of a Design Certification fee by the Project developer, Gold Standard conducts a project Design Review of the Project documentation and validation report. During the Design Review, the Project documentation is also open to Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee and NGO Supporter comment.

4.5.8 The Project Design Review period concludes at the later of 4 weeks post-commencement of review or when all corrective action requests are closed. The Gold Standard VVB shall be retained by the Project Developer to respond to clarification requests and corrective action requests raised by Gold Standard and until the conclusion of the Design Certification decision.

4.5.9 The date of Design Certification is the last day of the Project Design Review period, even if the review itself extends beyond this date (i.e. the date of Project Design Certification is retrospectively confirmed).

4.5.10 The positive conclusion of the Project Design Review period shall result in the Project achieving Design Certification.

This means that:

(a) The Project documentation, supporting documentation Monitoring & Reporting Plan and final validation report shall be made public.

(b) The Project becomes eligible for verification and certified SDG Impact Statements or issuance of products.

(c) The Project developer may promote the Project according to the Gold Standard claims guidelines as appropriate for Gold Standard Certified Project Design status.

4.6 Programmes

In case of a programme with similar or different Project(s) within one or multiple urban sectors, the developer shall submit the programme with at least one representative real case Project per sector to pursue validation and obtain Programme Design Certification status. The Project developer shall define the eligibility criteria and monitoring plan for Projects that would be included in the programme and ensure compliance with these eligibility criteria each time a Project is included in the Programme. The developer can include individual Projects under the Certified programme at any time. However, if the Projects are not in compliance with Gold Standard requirements, Gold Standard reserves right to reject the Project(s) at later stage. Additional requirements may also be laid down in product specifications/methodologies. The requirements mentioned in this section are applicable for a Programme where individual Projects are spread over space and time.

4.7 Regular vs Retroactive

4.7.1 Project Design Certification may take place under a Regular or Retro-active procedure.

4.7.2 Regular Projects are those where the Stakeholder Consultation (according to Gold Standard Stakeholder Guidelines, Annex A) meeting has taken place prior to the Project Start Date. The report of the Stakeholder Meeting shall be submitted to Gold Standard within three months of the event (though this date may be after the Project Start Date).The Stakeholder

Consultation should ideally take place before Project has achieved listed' status and before Project start date.

4.7.3 Retro-active Design Certification may be sought for Projects where the Project start date has already occurred prior to the application for Gold Standard certification (defined as date of first submission of documents for Preliminary Review to Gold Standard) and no stakeholder consultations as per Gold Standard requirements (Annex A) have been carried out.

4.7.4 For retroactive Projects, Gold Standard may raise additional stakeholder consultation requirements, to be complied with after listing stage.

4.7.5 For certain methodologies, Certified SDG Impact Statements and Products (for example Verified Emissions Reductions), specifications of the requirements for retroactive Design Certification may differ. These should be checked carefully by the developer. Likewise, some product specifications require prior consideration of revenues to demonstrate financial need in order to be eligible to receive an issued product and may limit or extend the maximum period of certification prior to Design Certification.

4.8 Combining Project Design Certification and first Performance Certification:

4.8.1 Project developers may choose to combine validation and Design Certification with their first verification and Performance review. The Gold Standard VVB may combine site visits and consider their reports concurrently. This may occur where the Project Start Date is prior to the envisaged Design Certification Date.

4.8.2 Design Review and concurrent Performance Review commences when the GS-VVB submission of positive Validation and Verification Reports (i.e. with no open NCs or CARs) concurrently to Gold Standard.

4.8.3 Following receipt of the GS-VVB Reports Gold Standard shall carry out a 6 week review period that covers both the Project Design and the Performance Review, in line with the Design Review procedure.

4.8.4 Successful conclusion of concurrent certification shall lead to both Project Design Certification and Performance Certification (and issuance) taking place concurrently.

4.9 Monitoring, Reporting and Verification

4.9.1 With successful design certification, every Project shall monitor the progress and outcomes according to the approved monitoring plan. The Project developer submits annual reports of progress and outcomes. The annual reports are meant to keep Gold Standard updated on the status and progress of the Project. To report the progress and outcomes of a programme, a sample of Project(s) can be monitored and the results can be consolidated at programme level.

4.9.2 The Project/programme developer engages the Gold Standard VVB for verification and certification of outcomes following the requirements in the section below.

4.10 Annual Reporting

4.10.1 The developer shall submit an annual report that shall be made public via the Gold Standard Registry. The developer shall also make the annual report available for access to stakeholders identified in stakeholder consultation.

4.10.2 Reports shall be submitted within 12 months of the date of Design Certification and every subsequent 12-month period thereafter. It is not required for years when a Verification is completed. Failure to provide Annual Reports as required shall result in the de-Certification of the Project.

4.10.3 The annual report shall focus on information since the last annual report. It shall include:

(a) a summary of the recent events/actions related to the Project(s)

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

(c) a list of all inputs/grievances which have been received together with all of their respective answers/actions

(d) any incidents or events that may impact the outcomes or impacts delivered to date (in terms of loss) or the ongoing performance of the Project

(e) any legal contest or dispute that has arisen

(f) any updates to the Key Project Information, Project Documentation and Monitoring & Reporting Plan

(g) a brief descriptive summary of all monitoring information collected during the year

(h) any update of the list of stakeholders (with contact details) who will receive the 'Annual Report'

(i) any update of the 'Project Participants & Secured Titles' (in case of changes)

(j) Updates to the governance and management systems

(k) Capacity building activities undertaken by the developer

4.10.4 The Project Developer shall attest to the accuracy of the information provided by its signature on the annual report. The signatory shall be an individual with legal signing authority within the Project developer organisation.

4.10.5 Annual Reporting does not represent Certification nor any decision-making or agreement to any design change by Gold Standard. Annual Reporting is intended as an opportunity to share progress and make key updates with formal review of conformity to Requirements and any changes in approach shall be undertaken at Verification/Performance Certification only. Annual Reporting also confirms to Gold Standard that the Project remains active.

4.10.6 The Gold Standard Secretariat will conduct spot-checks of annual reports of Projects based on target-random approach. If risks are identified during the spot check assessment, the developer may be asked to submit the Projects for full verification.

4.11 Verification, Performance Review & Issuance

Verification

4.11.1 All Projects applying for certification under the standard shall submit the Project for verification atleast once during the 5-year certification period. Developers shall still submit annual reports to Gold Standard.

4.11.2 The developer can combine and submit more than one Projects of a Certified programme for Performance Certification.

4.11.3 Verification may take place either alongside or after Design Certification (see Section 4) and must occur at least once during the 5 year Certification cycle. The first Verification shall be completed either within two years of project Implementation Date or Design Certification, whichever is later. Where project implementation is completed after Design Certification the certification period shall start at completion of implementation thereby allowing full five years post-implementation.

4.11.4 Project implementation is defined as the date at which physical activity first becomes operational, for example the commencement of energy generation or distribution of household technology.

Verification

4.11.5 Verification shall be commenced once a Project achieves Gold Standard Certified Design status (or concurrently as noted above).

4.11.6 Verification shall include all Gold Standard Requirements as well as those contained in any Methodologies, Certified SDG Impact Statements and Product Specifications that are included in the application by the Project Developer.

4.11.7 Verification shall be undertaken by a GS-VVB who is eligible for the scope of Project and any GS Methodology being applied. The GS-VVB is directly appointed by the Project Developer and shall be retained by the Project Developer to review and respond to queries raised during the Performance Review.

4.11.8 In some circumstances a different GS-VVB is required to undertake Verification than was used for Validation. This is as stipulated in the relevant Methodology or Product Specification. Unless otherwise stated the same GS-VVB may undertake both steps for a given Project.

4.11.9 Verification starts when the Project Developer has:

(a) contracted an eligible GS-VVB AND

(b) submitted the Monitoring Report to the GS-VVB who shall upload to the Gold Standard Registry AND

(c) notified Gold Standard of the commencement of Verification (via regional contact). Failure to do so may result in a delay to the commencement of Performance Review.

4.11.10 Verification ends when the GS-VVB provides a written Verification Report to The Gold Standard. A positive Verification Report shall have no pending or open CARs in the opinion of the GS-VVB.

Performance review and Performance Certification:

4.11.11 Following submission of the Verification Report by the GS-VVB and payment of the Performance Certification fee by the Project Developer the Gold Standard conducts a Performance Review of the Monitoring Report and Verification Report. During the Performance Review the Project Documentation is also open to Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee and NGO Supporter comment.

4.11.12 Unless otherwise stated in a specific Activity Requirement, Methodology or Product Requirement the Performance Review period concludes at the later of 3 weeks post commencement of review or when all CARs are closed. The GS-VVB shall be retained by the Project Developer to respond to clarification requests and CARs raised by Gold Standard.

4.11.13 During the Performance Review new CARs, FARs and OBS may be raised by any party, including Gold Standard. If any new CARs or FARs are opened, these shall be addressed by either the Project Developer and/or the GS-VVB.

4.11.14 The Performance Review period concludes at the later of the conclusion of 3 weeks or when all CARs are closed.

4.11.15 The positive conclusion of the Performance Review period shall result in:

(a) Gold Standard Certified Project status wherein the Project Documentation, supporting documentation and Verification Report are made public via the Gold Standard Registry.

(b) The Project becomes eligible for receipt of any applicable ongoing Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact including the issuance of any Gold Standard Certified Products or SDG Impact Statements.

4.11.16 Certified SDG Impact Statements and/or Certified Products shall be provided once the Project is both eligible (as above) and the required fees have been paid to Gold Standard.

4.11.17 This process may take into account Retro-active Certified Outcome Statements and/or Issuance. The maximum time for Retro-active Certification is the later of the Project Start Date or three years prior to the date of Design Certification unless otherwise stated in a specific Methodology, Certified Impact Statement and/or Product Specification.

4.12 Retroactive Verification, Performance Review and Issuance

4.12.1 Projects may apply for Performance Certification for a period of up to three years prior to Project Design Certification.

4.12.2 This option may be adjusted by a given methodology, certified SDG outcome statement or product specification and these requirements should be checked carefully by the Project developer.

4.13 Project Certification Renewal

The baseline for a Project must be renewed once every five years after Project Design Certification date. Please follow the "Gold standard for the global goals Principles & requirements" for further details.

4.14 Non-Conformity

4.14.1 The Project Developer shall report any potential or actual non-conformity against the requirements and any associated guidelines, tools or methodologies immediately upon discovery.

4.14.2 In the event of non-conformity the Gold Standard Grievance and Non-Conformity Procedure shall be followed.

5.0 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

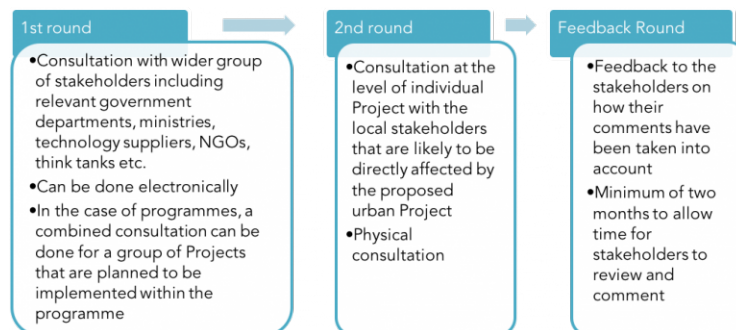**Why are these Why requirements important?**

Stakeholder consultation provides an opportunity for a Project developer to engage with stakeholders and share and promote understanding about the Project. It also provides an opportunity for affected stakeholders to have a say in the design of the Project.

What are the key requirements?

The stakeholder guidelines are tailored to recognise the scale and wide variety of affected and interested stakeholders whose views must be captured and incorporated while finalising the design of the Project. The key requirements of stakeholder consultations:

- Demonstrate information exchange with stakeholders on Project:

    - Its objective
    - Scale and duration
    - Contribution to sustainable development
    - Interaction of energy, land use and water and safeguard screening reports
    - Should be ideally conducted prior to the start date of the Project

- Shall include at least one public in-person meeting and one feedback consultation

1st round	2nd round	Feedback Round
• Consultation with wider group of stakeholders including relevant government departments, ministries, technology suppliers, NGOs, think tanks etc. • Can be done electronically • In the case of programmes, a combined consultation can be done for a group of Projects that are planned to be implemented within the programme	• Consultation at the level of individual Project with the local stakeholders that are likely to be directly affected by the proposed urban Project • Physical consultation	• Feedback to the stakeholders on how their comments have been taken into account • Minimum of two months to allow time for stakeholders to review and comment

How to meet the requirement?

For detailed requirements on stakeholder consultation, refer to Annex A – Stakeholder Consultation Guidelines

6.0 SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

Why are safeguarding principles important?

A key requirement for Gold Standard certification is that the Project does not adversely affect social, environmental and economic safeguarding principles. If risks are identified, they need to be mitigated, monitored, and verified by a third party. This assessment gives confidence to the investors that the Project does no unintended harm and helps to de-risk the investment. These safeguards also provide an opportunity to the Project developer to mitigate any adverse impacts that their Project might have on issues like human rights, air quality, biodiversity, water

access, etc.

What are the key requirements?

All Projects shall assess, monitor and report on the safeguarding principles and requirements as set out in the safeguarding principles procedure. The safeguards tool is organised in the form of a series of key safeguarding principles and a series of assessment questions and requirements for each principle. All assessment questions shall be comprehensively answered by the Project and the requirements set out against each item shall be met. Whenever a risk is identified, it shall be mitigated and monitored. The monitoring plan shall capture any elements of the safeguarding principles assessment that are required to be reported upon and/or reassessed in future, in line with the Gold Standard Safeguarding Principles & Requirements document.

In case of a programme with group of similar Projects, the risk assessment shall be carried out at the programme level considering the potential risks of individual Projects that are planned or will be included in future.

How to meet these requirements?

For detailed requirements on the safeguarding principles, refer to 101.4 GS4GG Safeguarding Principles & Requirements. All assessment questions shall be comprehensively answered with justification by the Project and the requirements set out against each item shall be met.

7.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

Why is the sustainable development assessment important?

The standard enables urban Projects to quantify their contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby helping them align their Projects with the global development agenda, which is providing a common framework for many stakeholders, from NGOs and development agencies to corporates and investors. It will also help give confidence to investors that the contributions to SDGs are real, measureable and long-term (please see MRV requirements).

What are the key requirements?

Urban Projects applying for Gold Standard certification are required to show a positive contribution to SDG 13 "Climate Action" (an environmental dimension of sustainable development). Under SDG 13, Projects can show a contribution to GHG mitigation or climate adaptation. In addition, they must also show positive contributions to sustainable development under any other two SDGs. Developers can propose bottom-up approaches to assess contributions to climate adaptation that will be reviewed by Gold Standard before approval.

For assessment of SDG contributions, developers shall first choose a relevant indicator and then use one of the following options to monitor and quantify the outcome based on the chosen indicator:

(a) Use an existing Gold Standard approved methodology to claim absolute number of outcomes like GHG reductions or ADALYs. They may refer to other protocols like the Global Protocol for Communities (GPC) or WRI's GHG Protocol for Project Accounting, but they must first be endorsed by Gold Standard. By using this option, a developer cannot issue carbon credits or any other product but can claim outcomes like GHG reductions by specifying the level of uncertainty resulting from the application of the protocol.

(b) Propose a new bottom-up quantification approach for review and approval by Gold Standard as part of the approval process.

One or more of the minimum three SDG chosen by the Project developer may be taken forward to an issued product (such as Gold Standard VERs or CERs) or a certified SDG outcome statement. This approach requires use of existing Gold Standard approved methodologies or the developer may submit a methodology for review and approval by Gold Standard, where appropriate.

How to meet these requirements?

The standard provides simple-to-use best practice guidelines on SDG outcomes for Projects designed and implemented in urban settings, in the form of an SDG Assessment tool. The tool is based upon SDGs and their associated targets. Within this tool, Project assessment filters are developed that prioritise which targets are relevant to a given Project type. Accordingly, the predefined indicators or Project-specific indicators can be selected for annual monitoring to capture the progress towards contribution to chosen SDG Target.

The SDG Assessment tool is available as Tool 1 – SDG Assessment Tool.

8.0 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Why are governance and management systems important?

Determining the governance capabilities/structure including investment planning, inter-institutional coordination, track-record of implementing similar Projects and management systems (including clearly designated roles and responsibilities etc.) is seen to be important from an investor's perspective as investors' due diligence typically involves an assessment of these aspects. These criteria are designed to give an investor the confidence that the Project developer has the necessary capabilities to implement and manage the Project smoothly. From a cities/municipality perspective, having such systems in place gives them an important tool to manage their Projects and also will help continuously improve their processes to govern, manage and train their staff on such Projects.

What are the key requirements?

Project developers are required to demonstrate that there are governance and management systems (GMS) in place to ensure smooth design, implementation and operation of the urban Project. Developers must also demonstrate that capacity development needs of stakeholders are considered, as this is an important component of sustainable development, and that steps are taken to ensure that the necessary capacity building measures are implemented. The requirements are laid down in the form of a series of indicators/criteria that must be used for self-assessment by the developer. These criteria also include levels of development which are aimed to help the developer achieve continuous improvement. The self-assessment reporting on these criteria are subject to Gold Standard VVB verification to ensure that ongoing improvement is demonstrated. Project developers are required to report on the continuous improvement on different criteria laid down in GMS (Annex D). The Gold Standard can conduct spot checks of the annual reports to check if continuous improvement has been demonstrated. In case, continuous improvement is not demonstrated, the Gold Standard will raise a FAR to ensure that this is addressed as part of the next annual report.

How to meet these requirements?

The governance and management systems criteria are available as Tool 2_Governance and Management Systems. Each of the criteria given in the Tool shall be self-assessed by the developer for a given Project as relevant. Annually the self-assessment shall be revisited to assess the improvement over previous year and shall be included in annual reporting and shall be audited by the Gold Standard VVB.

9.0 REGISTRY REQUIREMENTS

9.1 The developer shall open an account on the Gold Standard online platform and the Gold Standard registry.

(a) With these accounts, Project documentation, Project design documentation, monitoring plans, reports, supporting documentation and the Gold Standard VVB's validation and verification reports shall be submitted. Note that the Gold Standard VVB is responsible for uploading the final validation or verification Report.

(b) All Project documentation, except confidential information, shall be made publicly available

through the Gold Standard registry.

(c) All information shall be submitted in English, OR a language that has been agreed upon by the Project developer, the Gold Standard Secretariat and the Gold Standard VVB.

(d) Figures above one thousand shall be formatted with a comma (for example 1,000,000), and decimals will be separated by a point (for example 1.35).

(e) Pictures, graphs, tables and supporting documents within Project documentation shall be clearly marked with a unique ID.

ANNEX A – Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

1. Stakeholder consultation provides a critical opportunity for a Project Developer to engage with stakeholders in a gender sensitive manner and to share and promote understanding about and a sense of ownership of the Project. This may include exchanging views on risks (and mitigation), impacts, benefits and opportunities. It provides a valuable entry point to improve the Project Design and outcomes and help the Project Developer to identify and control external risks.

2. The Gold Standard stakeholder process shall comprise of a minimum two rounds of consultation. The first round of stakeholder consultation shall include a physical meeting. Where necessary other means shall also be used to reach out to stakeholders who may not be physically present. A group of interventions (applying for Gold Standard Project Design Certification as one) are required to conduct an additional round of consultation at programme level, which can be physical or electronic. This consultation shall be with a wider group of stakeholders including relevant Government departments/ministries, technology suppliers, NGOs/think tanks etc. to seek feedback on design of the programme. This consultation shall take place before finalizing design of the programme. See Stakeholder Consultation Requirements and Guidance section for further information.

3. The next round of consultation is conducted at the level of individual project, which is the local stakeholder consultation for stakeholders that are likely to be directly affected by the proposed urban project. In case of single project, the other stakeholders as mentioned above may be invited together with local stakeholder for physical meeting. This meeting is to be conducted physically. Where necessary other means shall also be used to reach out to stakeholders who may not be physically present. For the group of projects this consultation could be carried out along with the consultation defined in paragraph above but must be conducted physically to collect feedback from stakeholders directly affected. The physical consultation could be done for single or group of projects.

4. The project developer shall also conduct a Stakeholder Feedback Round. This covers all issues raised in the previous rounds of consultations and how due account was taken of all stakeholder's comments/suggestions. It may also include a physical meeting although this is not mandatory. The essential basic steps of the stakeholder consultation process are outlined below. More detail on each step is provided in the subsequent sections.

5. All consultations shall consider different gender relationships and roles. Women and men typically fulfill 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 societal 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 would require that local stakeholder consultation processes reach a wide range of community representatives in ways that ensure equal and effective participation of women and men in consultation, and that gender issues are fully factored into comprehensive social and environmental impact assessments."

6. There are five key steps to the Stakeholder Consultation process as follows:

1. Prepare

2. Hold Consultation

3. Document

4. Incorporate Feedback

5. Provide feedback

Step 1 – Prepare

1. It is important to review the Gold Standard Requirements and Project Cycle and prepare a clear workplan. As part of this it is useful to prepare a formal "Stakeholder Consultation plan" that considers;

- What is the purpose of consultation?
- What is the process (in line with this document)?
- Who are your stakeholders (both directly and indirectly affected)?
- Are you including everyone? Who is missing?
- How will you engage them? What is the most appropriate format?

2. Be alert to social and other barriers that may prevent participation in community consultations

(a) Examples of obstacles to women's participation in public meetings and decision making can include:

- Ignorance and illiteracy including ignorance of rights
- The mockery, criticism, and other attitudes that confront women who speak out.
- Distrust from development workers and other members of the community.
- Traditional roles and power divisions.
- The higher control by men over information and resources relative to women.
- Meetings are organized in places andat times not suitable for women.
- Meetings are conducted in a non-local
- Lack of access to or control overfinancial resources.
- Lack of solidarity among women or conflict within the community.
- Lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem.

These issues and the social contexts should be carefully considered while preparing for the stakeholder consultation.

(b) Consider the following questions that relate to gender equality in stakeholder consultation planning:

- What measures and actions need to be put in place to ensure equal gender participation in stakeholder consultations. How should inputs and insights from women and men be sought out, listened to, considered, addressed and documented?
- Is it necessary to make any specific arrangements (i.e. to 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; adapting timing schedule to men's and women's working schedules)?

3. The scope of consultation is the Project design and the corresponding economic, social and environmental impacts (both positive contributions and potential risk). In order to present this and to seek stakeholder's opinions the Project Developer shall share the details of the Project concept, what potential economic, social and environmental impacts the Project may have and how communities can improve the project's reach, relevance and impact. This is carried out via the preparation of a "Key Project Information" note. This note shall be delivered in the most appropriate language(s)/format to the stakeholders and present a set of questions or options for stakeholders to consider.

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.
- US Aid: When to use a Gender stakeholder analysis. Integrating Gender into climate change projects

4. Key Project Information

(a) The 'Key Project Information' is a short summary, which is understandable for a lay-man and should ideally be no more than four pages long. During the meeting the 'Key Project Information' shall be presented in a format and appropriate local language(s) that is readily understandable and tailored to the target stakeholder group to allow them to understand and engage with the Project.

In case of first round consultation for group of projects, stakeholders shall also be provided with "Programme Information" note, which shall include a summary of the programme design.

(b) Points to consider in determining what form this information should take and how it gets presented include: level of technical detail, local language and dialects, cultural sensitivity, 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.

(c) Key Project Information shall include:

- Details of the project and its design
- Its proposed timetable (so far as is known)
- Social, economic and environmental benefits and impacts

5. Stakeholder identification

(a) The critical step in the process of stakeholder consultation is stakeholder mapping determining who the Project stakeholders are, and their key groupings and sub-groupings. The table below outlines the non-exhaustive list of required categories of invitees. In all cases, atleast the stakeholders mentioned in the table below shall be included and invited.

(b) Project Developers are obliged to notify the relevant government officials/department or the national focal point about your Project. This should happen at the same time as inviting your stakeholders for the stakeholder consultation. Note that Project Developers are not required to disclose confidential commercial information.

(c) Project Developers are also obliged to notify all stakeholders who hold land tenure for any area directly affected by the implementation of the project (i.e. within the project boundary). Records must be kept of unanswered notifications.

(d) Where it is not appropriate to engage with indigenous people's as affected stakeholders then the project shall make provision to engage with their legitimate representatives (this may include community leaders, regional or national political groups and NGOs). In these circumstances the Project owner shall demonstrate that they have sufficient and appropriate experience and advice as required.

(e) Stakeholder mapping is one effective way to explore gender gaps. Gender-sensitive stakeholder mapping is considered emerging good practice and complements good sex-disaggregate census data. Findings from the stakeholder mapping should be documented.

Suggested Guiding Questions

- Who are the local stakeholders? Do they include women, men or both? Do they include different socio-economic groups? Who are the external stakeholders?
- Are there stakeholder groups from which women or men are excluded? Which ones? Why? What do they lose through non-participation?
- 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?
- What project activities are men and women involved in and when and where do these activities take place?
- Who is most dependent on the resources at stake (women or men)? Is this a matter of livelihood or economic advantage?
- Who has access to and control of resources and services and decision making? How are decisions made?
- How do target groups interact with project owner?
- What are the constraints to access and participation?
- Who has the capacity to contribute to gender equality in the project?
- Who has the capacity to hinder efforts at gender equality in the project?

Category Code	Category	Contact Details
A	i. Local people directly or indirectly affected by the project and their representatives*. For activities involving large construction (renewable energy for example) or land-use change then all stakeholders with land-tenure rights within or adjacent to the project must be contacted for e.g. dwellers of informal settlements/slum dwellers. ii. Other affected stakeholders not local to the project. For example those in line of sight of large construction. iii. Larger businesses/businesses operating in the area that could be affected or who may also be supporting local initiatives.	
B	i. Local policy makers and representatives of local authorities ii. Any regional authorities such as parks authorities.	
C	National government officials or National Focal Point	
D	Local non-governmental organisations working on topics	

E	The local Gold Standard expert who is located closest to your project location
F	Relevant international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) supporting The Gold Standard, with a representation in your region and All GS Supporter NGOs located in the host country of the project.

All information should be clearly documented and reviewed/analyzed. If an issue is presented it should be addressed?

A – Legitimate stakeholder representatives could be, but are not limited to: elected representatives of regional, local, traditional representatives, such as leaders (chairmen, directors) of local cooperatives, other community-based organisations, local businesses/business groups, local NGOs, and local women's groups, politicians and local government officials, school teachers, religious leaders.

6. Invitation

(a) Project Developers are required to proactively invite stakeholders from different categories for comments. The Project developer shall not deny a stakeholder access to the consultation AND shall select and invitation method most appropriate to the context. Send invitations via email, mail or by hand. If stakeholders do not respond to the invitation for comments via email or letter, pick up the phone and give them a call. In many cases, where phone numbers are unknown, visits to the area to hand deliver invitations will be required. This is particularly important where you have identified a risk to a particular group or authority as you will need to justify how these were consulted upon. Think also of using, for example, notices in newspapers or on the radio or television advertisements, displays in information centers etc. Contact local women's groups and or NGOs. Post invitations to attend the consultation in areas frequented by the community – for example health clinics, community centres, post offices, municipality offices, religious centres and schools and learning institutions. In the invitation, the objective of the consultation needs to be mentioned together with the feedback process for those not able to attend the physical meeting e.g. feedback via email, post or by other means. Also archive your invitation text or newspaper advertisements whenever possible.

(b) Project developers shall track all the invitations sent by completing the table (example below) in the stakeholder consultation documentation.

CATEGORY CODE	ORGANISATION (IF RELEVANT)	NAME OF INVITEE	MODE OF INVITATION	DATE OF INVITATION	CONFIRMATION

For those people who are unable to attend, provide an email address or physical office where stakeholders can submit their concerns and/or questions and get project information.

Step 2 – Hold Consultation Meeting

1. It is important to organise the stakeholder consultation meeting(s) when you are still genuinely open to comments that may require changes in project design. Depending on the nature of your project and the affected stakeholders you may need to arrange a number of meetings in different locations to ensure that all may participate. In certain cases a women's only meeting may be required in order to hear all the voices.

The first round of consultation in case of group of projects shall be organised at a convenient date and time for identified stakeholders. Also, invite officials from relevant Government departments / ministries, non-governmental organisation / think tanks representatives, technology suppliers and the Gold Standard secretariat, to provide useful and additional inputs on the design of the group of projects. If one meeting is not feasible for all stakeholder groups, an project developer can organize multiple smaller meetings for specific groups.

2. Plan the physical meeting at a convenient venue, date and time so that people who are affected by your project or are interested may attend. Schedule the meeting so that it does not conflict with their work arrangements or require them to travel far. Think especially about how to enable women and marginalised groups to attend. Provide evidence on how this was addressed. Consider organizing focus groups or smaller meetings for specific groups if one big meeting is insufficient.

3. When inviting attendees think of the best way to reach people and invite them in advance. Also take into account that you will invite local officials and non- governmental organization representatives, including Gold Standard NGO Supporters and allow sufficient time for them to make arrangements. Bear in mind that power relations will play a part in who may or may not voice an opinion or concern. For example, a senior government official and a female widowed farmer may have different perspectives and positions of power.

4. It is vital to make sure that everyone will be able to understand what is said during the meeting; arrange for interpretation if more than one language is used. Keep the agenda of the meeting clear, focusing on the explanation of your project and the potential economic, social and environmental impacts. This may be accomplished by discussing the default impacts from the SDG Framework for your specific project type and asking simplified questions for the Safeguarding Principles and Environmental Nexus tools. This can be done as a blind exercise as explained below.

5. Adapt or simplify the sustainable development assessment and Safeguarding Principles/Nexus to an appropriate level that meets the stakeholders' understanding – the key objective is to identify the issues that stakeholders have with a Project from their perspective.

6. After notifying all stakeholders through a stakeholder consultation invitation, sent together with the 'Key Project Information', prepare the agenda, self assessment of 'Sustainable Development ', participant list and the evaluation forms for your physical stakeholder consultation meeting.

7. Identify a respected local facilitator or facilitators to assist with engaging all people present, avoid allowing a single person or group of people to set the atmosphere, preventing others from being able to speak up. Especially encourage women to voice their opinions and if this is not possible given local customs, consider conducting several separate meetings e.g. a separate consultation for women only.

8. Agenda of the meeting:

The Gold Standard recommends the following agenda points and approach for the physical meeting. You may deviate from the agenda but all points here should be covered. Please refer below to the discussion of the principles behind each agenda point.

(a) Opening of the meeting

Introduce yourself and introduce (groups of) people in the audience. Invite stakeholders to introduce themselves. Explain that the goal of the meeting is to share and gather feedback and suggestions for improving the Project from all the people gathered.

(b) Explanation of the Project

This is to check stakeholders' understanding of the 'Key Project Information' and explain them in more detail what the aim of the project is. This includes its exact location, information about the initiators/implementers and their motivation, who else is involved, and the Project phases

and timelines. You may use your 'Key Project Information' as a basis for this. Make sure there is a focus on the practical implications the Project has for stakeholders.

Arrange some time for people to ask any questions to further clarify or understand the project idea. Check if stakeholders have had any experiences with similar Project types and check whether prejudices exist. Correct them if necessary. Consider asking the audience questions in order to check their understanding. Provide paper and pens for people to write down questions and / or concerns and encourage people to do so.

(c) Sustainable Development Exercise

Explain the project and its sustainable development impacts. Make sure to explain the expected Project impacts in a way that may be understood by the stakeholders. Ask which impacts they think are relevant to the project. [Subject to option – Note this is a blind exercise, the stakeholders are not aware of the results of your self-assessment yet].

List the potential positive impacts of your Project type and invite the audience/stakeholders to provide their feedback in the format presented below. You may also include other potential impacts, which you think are relevant or ask the stakeholders, if they think there are other impacts of the proposed project. In addition, you seek audience opinion on Safeguarding Principles.

Discuss the risk of the Project. Enquire into how these risks may be mitigated. Ask people about their concerns and how these concerns could be adequately addressed. Ask if there are suggestions to improve the mitigation measure(s). Try to reach a consensus among the people regarding the final proposed measure(s), whether the risks may be neutralised or whether there are still risks to be managed in time.

Follow with the positive impacts. Invite stakeholders to consider if people the Project is doing too little/enough/too much for every impact and invite their reasoning. Consider prompting people by asking them first to think in terms of their priorities and day to day realities and then of the priorities of future generations. Try to reach consensus on the assessment of the impacts during the discussion before continuing to the next agenda item – however, remember the exercise is challenging, so take care not to confuse and ask too much of your stakeholders. Simplify as much as possible and as necessary.

Gather as many comments as possible to improve and balance the project's impacts. Concerns and comments raised by participants should be carefully noted down with full reasoning. These will be presented as part of the 'Sustainable Development assessment' later in the Project stakeholder documentation.

For group of projects try to collect similar information from stakeholders during first round of consultation and use it during consultations with local stakeholders. Also discuss the implementation plan of the group of projects and their geographic spread. Provide details about the technologies covered.

(d) Discussion on 'Input & Grievance Mechanism'

Project developers are required to seek input from stakeholders on the best methods for continuous consultation, input and the submission and resolution of grievances. At the physical meeting, the complaint procedures and protocols should be explained and discussed to ensure that stakeholders agree that the selected methods are the most appropriate. The details shall be recorded in the following format –

Grievance mechanism methods	Method Chosen (include all known details e.g. location of book, phone, number, identity of mediator)	Justification
Continuous Input and Grievance Expression Process Book	Mandatory	

Telephone access	
Internet/email access	
Nominated Independent Mediator (optional)	
Other	

Particular attention shall be paid to feedback received from women or women's groups or other groups who are marginalized or fearful to come forward with a complaint.

(e) Discussion on monitoring sustainable development

Raise the subject of monitoring the sustainable development impacts. Do people have ideas on how this could be done in a cost effective and participatory way? What are the most appropriate ways for stakeholders to participate in project monitoring? Again, consider the abilities and capacity of your stakeholders and be reasonable in expectations.

(f) Closure of the meeting

Invite stakeholders to complete the evaluation form (see example in the table below). Explain what the follow-up will be and how people may access the minutes of the meeting. Give an indication of when and how you want to organize the Stakeholder Feedback Round. Close the meeting and collect Stakeholder Meeting Evaluation Forms as follows:

Name:	Written response:
Gender – Male/Female:	
What is your impression of the meetings:	
What do you like about the project?	
What do you not like about the project?	
Signature:	

Step 3 – Document

1. Take minutes at the meeting and, if you may, take pictures or if appropriate record a video; these will be useful for your Project stakeholder consultation documentation. It is also important to let attendees know how their comments are recorded and how they may find out how they were taken on board (see Step 4).

2. Appoint a trusted individual (e.g. community nurse, school principal) in advance to record the minutes of the meeting. Include all the comments/suggestions raised by the stakeholders in the consultation documentation immediately after the meeting as delays make it more difficult to recall exact comments and their context. Keep the meeting minutes short and focus on comments received during the meeting. List all comments received as positive, neutral or negative.

3. Invite stakeholders to fill-in the participant list (see example content below), to register their name and contact details, job or position and sign to indicate they were present.

- Date & Time
- Location:

- ┐ Name and Position of Participant (e.g. community roles etc.)
- ┐ Male/Female/Other/Prefer not to state:
- ┐ Contact Details
- ┐ Organisation (if relevant)
- ┐ Signature

Step 4 – Incorporate Feedback

1. Assess the comments made by stakeholders. Any comments/suggestions that are serious, reasonable and proportional shall be taken into account and the appropriate changes will need to be made to your project design to address these accordingly. Your judgment is key to this stage and will ultimately determine the final project design. *For example, if women provided feedback on the design of a cookstove, it is important to consider and understand the reasons behind the feedback, assuming that women are the primary cooks.* You shall be able to explain why you did, or did not, consider any comments or suggestions. Compare your own sustainable development assessment and Safeguards/Nexus with the resulting outcome of the blind exercise with your stakeholders.

2. Analyse the differences and consolidate your final assessment. If one or more aspects are still considered negative, you are requested to revisit your impact assessment with an independent party.

3. Feedback evaluation

The evaluation forms filled in by the stakeholders will allow you to gain an overall perspective of stakeholder opinion on your Project. Be sensitive to situations those stakeholders who are unable to read, write, see or hear and provide assistance as required. The following steps will guide you on how to follow up after the meeting.

(a) Analyse your evaluation forms and state your analysis and conclusion in your Project stakeholder consultation documentation. If you received any negative comments through the evaluation forms, you will need to revisit your sustainability assessment or escalate the discussion to next level.

(b) Evaluate and list all the comments from the stakeholders. Include the list of the comments in your documentation. If some stakeholder concerns seem unwarranted, make a case as to why this is so. While negative stakeholder comments are not necessarily a reason to stop a Project's progress, The Gold Standard does expect that all stakeholder concerns are addressed and accounted for or justified, if not done. This should be discussed in the Project stakeholder consultation documentation. Make sure to document individual differences as they relate to priorities, concerns and potential impacts (positive or negative). These should be categorized and evaluated separately.

(c) Discuss all comments received and assess how serious, reasonable and or proportional they are. Decide which comments should be considered for the development of the Project and which ones may be unnecessary with an appropriate and convincing justification. Define any alterations that will be made to the Project design. Applying a gender lens to the comments may highlight unintended risks or harms.

(d) Finalise your sustainable development assessment based on your consultation document.

(e) Finalise the stakeholder consultation documentation. The stakeholder consultation documentation shall also document any comments, criticisms or improvements that were made to the input and grievance expression methods discussed at the physical meeting.

4. Integrate outcome of stakeholder consultation to Project design

(a) After consideration of comments from stakeholders raised during the first consultation meeting, decide whether to change or amend the Project design. Changes to the Project

design generally increase local ownership of and increase in the Project and enhance sustainable development.

(b) Stakeholder comments have to be considered in terms of how reasonable they are; therefore not all comments have to result in a change to the Project design. You may report changes in the project design resulting from the stakeholder consultation meeting in the respective section of your Project documentation.

Step 5 – Feedback

1. You are required to give feedback to the stakeholders on how their comments have been taken into account. To do this you are required to organise a second round of consultation called a Stakeholder Feedback Round.

2. During the Stakeholder Feedback Round all stakeholder comments are captured alongside clarification of how they were responded to/incorporated. The Feedback Round remains open for a minimum of two months to allow time for stakeholders to review and comment.

3. The second consultation is the Stakeholder Feedback Round may also include a physical meeting. The Feedback Round covers all issues raised in the physical meeting and how due account was taken of all stakeholders' comments. All stakeholders invited to participate in the first consultation shall be invited to the Stakeholder Feedback Round.

4. The stakeholder consultation documentation and any revised Project documentation shall be made available to the stakeholders, who should be encouraged to comment on them. You may publish all information on a website and on The Gold Standard Registry, but this might not be sufficient to obtain stakeholders' feedback. As well as publication on a website you should consider making several hard copies of the documentation available at, for example, the local post office or municipality office, library, community health centre, nursery or primary school.

5. The documentation needs to be open for comments for a period of at least two months before the Validation of your Project is finalised. You may perform the Stakeholder Feedback Round in parallel to the Validation process but the contracted auditor shall be able to take feedback received into account to complete the Validation. You report on the Stakeholder Feedback Round in your Project documentation. You have to report how it was organised, what the outcomes were and how you followed up on the feedback.

ANNEX B – Gold Standard Safeguarding Principles & Requirements

Link to Document – HERE