



# Gold Standard Design Certification Report

For

PoA

## “TERRAGR- Land Regeneration through Agroforestry in Mpumalanga, South Africa”

**Methodology:** Gold Standard Afforestation/Reforestation (A/R) GHG Emissions  
Reduction & Sequestration Methodology (Version 2.0)

**Report No:** CCIPL1831/GS/VAL/LRTAIM/20230304

**Revision number:** 03

**Report Date:** 22/09/2023

## I. PROJECT DATA

<b>Project title:</b>	TERRAGR- Land Regeneration through Agroforestry in Mpumalanga, South Africa		
<b>Project Areas:</b>	Nkangala district, Mpumalanga province, South Africa		
<b>Host Countries</b>	South Africa		
<b>Registration No. / Date:</b>	GS ID GS12094 Dated:19/04/2023	<b>Scale:</b>	Large
<b>Methodology:</b>	Gold Standard Afforestation/Reforestation (A/R) GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Methodology (Version 2.0)	<b>Sectoral Scope/Technical Area:</b>	14/14.1
<b>Initial PoA-DD:</b>	Version 1.0; Dated: 18/03/2023		
<b>Final PoA-DD:</b>	Version 2.0; Dated: 12/07/2023		

Party	CMEs	Party considered a CME	Contract party
United Kingdom	TERRAGR Private Limited (CME)	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
South Africa (Host)	TERRAGR SA (Pvt) Limited	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>

## II. DESIGN CERTIFICATION TEAM

Design Certification Team			Role									
Full name	Affiliation	Appointed for Sectoral Scopes (Technical Areas)	Team leader	Acting/trainee Team Leader	Local Expert	Team Member (Auditor)	Technical Expert	Observer	Trainee Auditor	Technical Reviewer	Expert to TR	Trainee TR
Isha Kapoor	CC IPL	14.1	X				X					
Vempally Prashanth	CC IPL	14.1							X			
Vikash Kumar Singh	CC IPL	1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 4.1, 13.1, 13.2, 14.1, 15								X		
Dr. Bryan Conrad Foster	CC IPL	14.1									X	

### Audit Team Experience:

The team composition is linked to the methodology and local experience in the host countries.

**Isha Kapoor:** Isha is a forestry graduate and has knowledge & skills for the land use & forestry sector. She is a qualified lead validator/verifier and technical expert for TA 14.1 under CDM SS categorization. She has more than three years of work experience in GHG mechanism including development of

standards and methodology for an Indian GHG program. Currently, she is working on a variety of land use & forestry projects under different GHG programs including GS, CDM and VCS.

**Vempally Prashanth:** Prashanth has done master's degree in forestry. He is the author of research work article (Prashanth et al., In Press) and co-authored two research articles (Murari et al., 2023 & Shakith et al., 2023). He is a trainee assessor for TA 14.1 projects.


**Vikash Kumar Singh:** Qualified lead assessor and internal technical reviewer for validations and verifications GHG mitigation projects under CDM, VCS and Gold Standard (GS) and actively been involved in the validation and verification and internal technical review of more than 300 GHG mitigation projects. He is qualified as technical expert for TA 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 4.1, 13.1, 13.2, 14.1 and 15 under CDM SS categorization. He has undergone extensive training in the validation and verification of carbon offset projects including the accreditation requirements for the VVBs. Currently, he is employed with Carbon Check in the capacity of Executive Director and Compliance Officer. Vikash has extensive work experience on working on land use & forestry projects under GS, CDM and VCS projects globally.

**Dr. Bryan Conrad Foster:** Dr. Bryan is the doctorate holder in forestry. He is expertise in forest carbon design for developers of reforestation projects in the USA and improved forest management projects for developers in Canada and in Sweden. He also serves as Director at Foster Forestry and Environmental consulting, LLC, South Burlington, VT.

### III. DESIGN CERTIFICATION REPORT

Status	Verification Phases
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Desk Review
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On Site Assessment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Follow up interviews
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Corrective Actions / Clarifications Requested
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resolution of outstanding issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	Full Approval and Submission for registration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rejected

Status	Distribution Conditions
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No distribution without permission from the Client or responsible organizational unit
<input type="checkbox"/>	Limited Distribution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted distribution

Final Approval	
Date	25/09/2023
Approved by	Amit Anand
Designation	Chief Executive Officer
Signature	

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AGB</b>	Above Ground Biomass
<b>AQL</b>	Acceptable Quality Limit
<b>ARR</b>	Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation
<b>BEF</b>	Biomass Expansion Factor
<b>BGB</b>	Below Ground Biomass
<b>CAR</b>	Corrective Action Request
<b>CC IPL</b>	Carbon Check (India) Private Ltd.
<b>CME</b>	Coordinating and Managing Entity
<b>CO<sub>2e</sub></b>	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
<b>CL</b>	Clarification Request
<b>DPCR</b>	Draft Performance Certification Report
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information System
<b>KML</b>	Keyhole Markup Language <sup>1</sup>
<b>LULC</b>	Land Use Land Cover
<b>LULUCF</b>	Land use, Land-use Change, and Forestry
<b>DR</b>	Document review
<b>DVR</b>	Draft V Report
<b>EI</b>	External Individual
<b>FA</b>	Final Approval

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<sup>1</sup> an XML notation for expressing geographic annotation and visualization within two-dimensional maps and three-dimensional Earth browsers.

<b>FAR</b>	Forward Action Request
<b>FVR</b>	Final Validation Report
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse gas(es)
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>IR</b>	Internal resource
<b>PoA-DD</b>	Programme of Activity Design Document
<b>MR</b>	Monitoring Report
<b>MUs</b>	Modelling Units
<b>QC/QA</b>	Quality control /Quality assurance
<b>SOC</b>	Soil Organic Carbon
<b>TA</b>	Technical Area
<b>TR</b>	Technical Review
<b>UQL</b>	Unacceptable Quality Limit
<b>VVB</b>	Validation & Verification Body

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## 1. Introduction

The Coordinating and Managing Entity (CME), TERRAGR N PRIVATE LIMITED, has appointed Carbon Check (India) Private Ltd. (CCIPL), a GS approved VVB to perform an independent design certification of the GS PoA<sup>01/</sup> titled "TERRAGR N- Land Regeneration through Agroforestry in Mpumalanga, South Africa" in South Africa (hereafter referred to as "PoA").

This report summarizes the findings of the design certification of the project, performed on the basis of Gold Standard Afforestation/Reforestation (A/R) GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Methodology (Version 2.0)<sup>/B02/</sup> and subsequent decisions by the Gold Standard Secretariat, as well as criteria given to provide for consistent project operations, monitoring and reporting and compliance with host country criteria and Gold Standard specific criteria.

This report contains the findings and resolutions from design certification and an opinion on the project design.

### 1.1 Objective

The purpose of a design certification is to have a thorough and independent assessment of the proposed PoA against the *GS4GG Programme of Activity Requirements and Procedures, Version 2*<sup>/B01/</sup> and *GS4GG Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements Version 1.2.1*<sup>/B02/</sup> in particular, the PoA's baseline, additionality, and compliance with relevant Gold Standard requirements and host Party criteria. Gold Standard specific conditions are validated to confirm that the project design (as documented) is complete, reasonable and meets the stated requirements and identified criteria. Design Certification is seen as necessary to provide assurance to stakeholders about the quality of the PoA and its ability to generate proposed amount of Verified Emission Reductions (VERs).

### 1.2 Scope and Criteria

The scope is defined as an independent and objective review of the PoA and the PoA-DD<sup>01/</sup>. The PoA-DD<sup>01/</sup> is reviewed against the *GS4GG Programme of Activity Requirements and Procedures, Version 2* and *GS4GG Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements Version 1.2.1*<sup>/B02/</sup> and applicable decisions by the GS secretariat. The Design Certification team has employed a rule-based approach, focusing on the identification of significant risks for PoA implementation and the generation of GS VERs.

The validation is not meant to provide any consulting towards the CMEs. However, stated requests for clarifications and/or corrective actions may have provided input for improvement of the PoA design.

While carrying out the Design Certification, CCIPL determines if the PoA activity complies with the GS4GG requirements<sup>/B01/B02/</sup>, specifically the applicability conditions of the selected methodology and also assesses the claims and assumptions made in the PoA-DD<sup>01/</sup>, other related templates and documents without limitation on the information provided by the CMEs.

On-site inspection and stakeholder's interviews<sup>/i/-/xviii/</sup> were also performed as part of the Design Certification process.

### 1.3 Level of Assurance

The VVB conducted the assessment in order to reach a reasonable level of assurance of conformance against the defined audit criteria and materiality thresholds within the audit scope. Based on the assessment by VVB, 13 (thirteen) CARs, 06 (six) CLs have been raised. VVB states that all findings were properly addressed and satisfactorily closed by design certification team.

Please refer to Appendix 1.



## 2. Methodology

The design certification consists of the following four phases:

1. Completeness check of the POA-DD<sup>/01/</sup> and other GS4GG A/R templates and requirements<sup>/B01/B02/</sup>.
2. Review of PoA documentation (POA-DD<sup>/01/</sup>, monitoring plan, applied methodology<sup>/B02/</sup>, applicable tools in particular attention to the frequency of measurements, QA/QC procedures<sup>/04/</sup> and other relevant documents and regulations).
3. On-site inspection (including follow-up interviews<sup>/i/-/xviii/</sup> with PoA stakeholders<sup>/03/</sup>, when deemed necessary).
4. Resolution of outstanding issues and the issuance of the Final Validation Report and statement.

The following sections outline each step in more detail.

### Duration of Audit:

- Signing of Letter of Engagement: 18/04/2023
- Desk review: 31/05/2023– 04/06/2023
- On-site inspection: 06/06/2023 – 08/06/2023

## 3. Means of Design Certification

### 3.1 Desk/ Document Review

List of all documents reviewed or referenced during the Design Certification is as below:

Sno	Documents	Reference
/01/	PoA DD	Version 01 (18/03/2023) Version 02 (12/07/2023)
/02/	VPA DD	Version 01 (18/03/2023) Version 02 (12/07/2023)
/03/	GHG Removals – TERRAGR-ND-PDD-V1 GHG Removals - TERRAGR-ND-PDD-V2	Carbon calculation sheet
/04/	TERRAGR-ND-Stakeholder-Consultation-Report-V1 TERRAGR-ND-Stakeholder-Consultation-Report-V1 TERRAGR-ND-Stakeholder-Consultation-Report-V2 registration stakeholders meeting TERRAGR-ND_POA-Design-Document-v1	Stakeholder Consultation report
/05/	SOPs Manual for Carbon Inventory	
/06/	Eligibility_Report_VPA-01_SA_v3	Forest and Non- Forest analysis
/07/	Folder_ GIS_SA_Datasets	Maps & Shapefiles
/08/	AR_LUF_Risks-Capacities-Assessment-TERRAGR-ND	A/R Risks
/09/	221220 Template for Incident Report TerraGrn - Road damaged- signed	
/10/	Basic Conditions	
/11/	Integrated Pest Management - TERRAGR-ND	

/12/	national_policy_framework-gender	
/13/	TERRAGRN_GHGs_ODA-Declaration-Form	
/14/	ZRC JCN Terragr n Soil Baseline Monitoring Report for 281122	
/15/	Folder_Quick Start Guides	
/16/	Folder_First planting photos	
/17/	403_V1.0_0.7_LUF_AR Methodology_Soil Carbon Tool	
/18/	APP 1 STS JACANA Terragr n Bamboo Project Pre-feasibility Assessment	
/19/	APP 2 HIA report Mpumalanga Bamboo Plantation Project	
/20/	contracts[128305]	
/21/	Ecosystem Partnerships - Feb 2023 (Sameer) v1	
/22/	national_policy_framework	
/23/	Payroll transactions Sep 22	
/24/	STS Biodiversity Field Assessment Methodology	
/25/	TERRAGRN EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION	
/26/	TERRAGRN Landscape Scale Planning v1 Feb 10 2023	
/27/	TERRAGRN Our Story Book November 2022	
/28/	Terragr n Pilot Project Environmenta1l Report Final Draft 14-09-2022	
/29/	TERRAGRN Purpose and Culture VERSION 1.0 05 April 2022	
/30/	TERRAGRN Regulatory Report Pilot Project - FINAL - 22.9.2022 cln(18649024.1) TERRAGRN Regulatory Report Pilot Project - FINAL - 22.9.2022 cln(18649024.1)	
/31/	ENVIRONMENTAL-GUIDELINES-2021-June-email	
/32/	SDG-Impact-tool-TERRAGRN	
/B0 1/	GS4GG PoA Requirements & Procedures v2.0 GS4GG Principles & Requirements v1.2 GS A/R Methodology V2.0	GS4GG Requirements
/B0 2/	GS4GG GS LUF Activity Requirements v1.2.1	
/B0 3/	STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS v2.1	
/B0 4/	CDM AR-Tool 2 GS4GG Soil methodology tool	
/B0 5/	Other GHG programs: CDM: <a href="https://cdm.unfccc.int/Projects/index.html">https://cdm.unfccc.int/Projects/index.html</a> VCS: <a href="https://registry.terra.org/app/search/VCS/All%20Projects">https://registry.terra.org/app/search/VCS/All%20Projects</a> Plan Vivo: <a href="https://www.planvivo.org/pages/category/projects?Take=28">https://www.planvivo.org/pages/category/projects?Take=28</a>	Other GHG Programme websites
/B0 6/	1. Jacana Environmental CC, 2022. Pre-feasibility Biodiversity and Freshwater, Risk Assessment for the proposed TERRAGRN Trial Bamboo Project near Emalahleni, Mpumalanga Province 2. <a href="#">General Profile   FAOLEX Database   Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</a> 3. <a href="http://www.brightfields.co.za/bamboo-farming#:~:text=Known%20to%20some%20as%20%22giant,runners%2C%20and%20has%20sterile%20seedS">http://www.brightfields.co.za/bamboo-farming#:~:text=Known%20to%20some%20as%20%22giant,runners%2C%20and%20has%20sterile%20seedS</a> 4. <a href="https://www.southafrica.com/blog/bamboo-south-africa-s-versatile-renewable-resource">https://www.southafrica.com/blog/bamboo-south-africa-s-versatile-renewable-resource</a> 5. NTCSA report (DEA, 2015), Alembong (2015), NTCSA data overlay, Seydack (1995), Du Toit et al. (2016), Mills et al. (2005),	

<p>Van der Vyver et al. (2013), NIR for SA for 2000 (DEAT, 2009), Van Leeuwen et al. (2014), Midgley and Seydack (2006),          6. Geldenhuys (2011), Hoffman and Franco (2003), Calculated from biomass and applied an average harvest cycle of 25 years (CGA, 2016), Weighted average determined from FSA data on MAI per species and per product type          7. <a href="https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/South%20Africa%20%20NIR%202017.pdf">https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/South%20Africa%20%20NIR%202017.pdf</a>          8. <a href="https://cdm.unfccc.int/methodologies/ARmethodologies/tools/ar-am-tool-02-v1.pdf">https://cdm.unfccc.int/methodologies/ARmethodologies/tools/ar-am-tool-02-v1.pdf</a>          9. <a href="https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pan3.10260">https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pan3.10260</a>          10. <a href="https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202208/st-ateofforestssouthafricareport2018.pdf">https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202208/st-ateofforestssouthafricareport2018.pdf</a>          11. <a href="https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/reports/unlockingbarriers_land-usebasedclimatechangemitigation.pdf">https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/reports/unlockingbarriers_land-usebasedclimatechangemitigation.pdf</a>          12. <a href="https://www.academia.edu/35190753/Bamboo_for_green_development_The_opportunities_and_challenges_of_commercialising_bamboo_in_South_Africa">https://www.academia.edu/35190753/Bamboo_for_green_development_The_opportunities_and_challenges_of_commercialising_bamboo_in_South_Africa</a>          13. <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338897402_Opportunities_and_Challenges_for_stakeholders_of_land_reform_in_forestry_plantations">https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338897402_Opportunities_and_Challenges_for_stakeholders_of_land_reform_in_forestry_plantations</a>          14. <a href="https://www.inbar.int/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/1528867712.pdf">https://www.inbar.int/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/1528867712.pdf</a>          15. <a href="https://www.inbar.int/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/1528867712.pdf">https://www.inbar.int/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/1528867712.pdf</a>          16. <a href="file:///C:/Users/sudha/Downloads/SAJS+118_7+Ross+Research+Article_approved.pdf">file:///C:/Users/sudha/Downloads/SAJS+118_7+Ross+Research+Article_approved.pdf</a>          17. <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236853212_Wood_density_phytomass_variations_within_and_among_trees_and_allometric_equations_in_a_tropical_rainforest_of_Africa/link/5a6b31be0f7e9b1c12d1f553/download">https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236853212_Wood_density_phytomass_variations_within_and_among_trees_and_allometric_equations_in_a_tropical_rainforest_of_Africa/link/5a6b31be0f7e9b1c12d1f553/download</a>          18. Source of data, Table 5.2. For Tropical Moist Africa under multistrata agroforestry systems, 2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories          19. <a href="https://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/2019rf/pdf/4_Volume4/19R_V4_Ch05_Crop_Land.pdf">https://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/2019rf/pdf/4_Volume4/19R_V4_Ch05_Crop_Land.pdf</a>          20. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL WOMEN IN A DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM: A PERSPECTIVE OF VULINDLELA IN KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA (jsju.org)          21. <a href="https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/national_policy_framework.pdf">https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/national_policy_framework.pdf</a>          22. <a href="https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:11110510347507:::P11200_INSTRUMENT_SORT:1">https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:11110510347507:::P11200_INSTRUMENT_SORT:1</a>          23. <a href="http://www.growmorebiotech.com/environmental-impact.html#:~:text=In%20a%20matured%20bamboo%20plantation%20a%20period%20of%20time">http://www.growmorebiotech.com/environmental-impact.html#:~:text=In%20a%20matured%20bamboo%20plantation%20a%20period%20of%20time</a>          24. <a href="https://www.quaduabamboo.com/blog/bamboo-produces-water-for-rivers-and-streams">https://www.quaduabamboo.com/blog/bamboo-produces-water-for-rivers-and-streams</a>          25. <a href="#">New ways of valuing climate and sustainable development impact to unlock funding for innovative regenerative agroforestry project in South Africa   The Gold Standard</a></p>	
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### 3.2 On-site visit and follow-up interviews with PoA stakeholders

An on-site inspection has been performed by the members of the Design Certification team of Carbon Check from 06/06/2023- 09/06/2023 at CME's office and sample plantation sites (of VPA 1) in South Africa. The PoA representatives and stakeholders interviewed are:

Sl. No.	Name (Organisation)	Date	Type	Topic
/i/	Mandla Ndlovu (TERRAGRN SA)	06/06/2023 to 08/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PP's roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• PoA management structure</li> <li>• Sustainability and local stakeholders meeting.</li> <li>• Project implementation.</li> <li>• Future project plans.</li> <li>• Ownership of land titles</li> <li>• Ownership of carbon credits</li> </ul>
/ii/	Theo Madhlope (TERRAGRN SA)	06/06/2023 to 07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PP's roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Baseline scenario.</li> <li>• Sustainability and local stakeholders meeting.</li> <li>• Project implementation.</li> <li>• Future project plans.</li> <li>• Organization structure, roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Input and grievance mechanism</li> <li>• Ownership of land titles</li> <li>• Ownership of carbon credits</li> </ul>
/iii/	Johan Van Zyl (TERRAGRN SA)	06/06/2023 to 07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline scenario.</li> <li>• Project implementation.</li> <li>• Plantation techniques</li> <li>• Species selection</li> <li>• Project operation, roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• DNHA Assessment</li> <li>• Occupational health safety</li> <li>• Project operation, roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Training of employees with respect to identification and protection of endangered / native species</li> <li>• Sustainability and local stakeholders meeting.</li> <li>• Project implementation.</li> <li>• Future project plans.</li> <li>• Input and grievance mechanism</li> <li>• Non-Permanence Risk analysis</li> <li>• Ownership of land titles</li> <li>• Ownership of carbon credits</li> </ul>

/iv/	Buhle Phiri (TERRAGRN SA)	06/06/2023 to 07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of staff</li> <li>• Induction Training</li> <li>• Employment contracts</li> <li>• DNHA Assessment with respect to labour laws, minimum wage, working hours, non-discrimination, sexual harassment, anti-corruption</li> </ul>
/v/	Roy Masamba (TERRAGRN SA)	06/06/2023 to 08/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline scenario and Additionality</li> <li>• Carbon Fixation calculation</li> <li>• Plantation techniques</li> <li>• Species selection</li> <li>• Project operation, roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• DNHA Assessment</li> <li>• Occupational health safety</li> <li>• Sustainability and local stakeholders meeting.</li> <li>• Project implementation.</li> <li>• LUF Risk and Capacities</li> </ul>
/vi/	Sudha Padmarabha (Fair Climate Network)	06/06/2023 to 08/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline scenario and Additionality</li> <li>• Carbon Fixation calculation</li> <li>• Plantation techniques</li> <li>• Species selection</li> <li>• Project operation, roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• DNHA Assessment</li> <li>• Occupational health safety</li> <li>• Training of employees with respect to identification and protection of endangered / native species</li> <li>• Sustainability and local stakeholders meeting.</li> <li>• Project implementation.</li> <li>• Future project plans.</li> <li>• Input and grievance mechanism</li> <li>• Non-Permanence Risk analysis</li> <li>• Ownership of land titles</li> <li>• Ownership of carbon credits</li> </ul>
/vii/	Nagendra Chander (TERRAGRN SA)	06/06/2023	<input type="checkbox"/> On-site <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>• Grievance mechanism</li> <li>• Land procurement process</li> </ul>
/viii/	Gugulethu Sambo (TERRAGRN SA)	07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>• Grievance mechanism</li> <li>• Baseline scenario</li> <li>• Project design</li> </ul>
/ix/	Elizabeth (Field employee/ Community member, Zaaihoek)	07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>• Grievance mechanism</li> <li>• Baseline scenario</li> <li>• Project design</li> </ul>
/x/	Mabena Zwelibanzi (Field employee/	07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>• Grievance mechanism</li> <li>• Baseline scenario</li> </ul>

	Community member, Zaaihoek)		<input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project design</li> </ul>
/xi/	Noluthando Lukhele (Field employee/ Community member, Zaaihoek)	07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>Grievance mechanism</li> <li>Baseline scenario</li> <li>Project design</li> </ul>
/xii/	Lydia Mokone (Field employee/ Community member, Zaaihoek)	07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>Grievance mechanism</li> <li>Baseline scenario</li> <li>Project design</li> </ul>
/xiii/	Michael Mashian (Field employee/ Community member, Zaaihoek)	07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>Grievance mechanism</li> <li>Baseline scenario</li> <li>Project design</li> </ul>
/xiv/	Nelly Machiaro (Field employee/ Community member, Zaaihoek)	07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>Grievance mechanism</li> <li>Baseline scenario</li> <li>Project design</li> </ul>
/xv/	Richard Shabangu (Field employee/ Community member, Zaaihoek)	07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>Grievance mechanism</li> <li>Baseline scenario</li> <li>Project design</li> </ul>
/xvi/	Douwe Morareng (Field employee/ Community member, Zaaihoek)	07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>Grievance mechanism</li> <li>Baseline scenario</li> <li>Project design</li> </ul>
/xvii/	Johannes (Plantation Supervisor/ Community member, Zaaihoek)	07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>Grievance mechanism</li> <li>Baseline scenario</li> <li>Project design</li> </ul>
/xviii/	Monhlannia (Plantation Supervisor/ Community member, Zaaihoek)	07/06/2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder consultation process</li> <li>Grievance mechanism</li> <li>Baseline scenario</li> <li>Project design</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Sampling Approach

N/A

### 3.4 Resolution of outstanding issues

The objective of this phase of the Design Certification is to resolve any outstanding issues (issues that require further elaboration, research or expansion) which have to be clarified/corrective action done prior to final VVB's conclusions on the PoA design, monitoring plan and management system. In order

to ensure transparency, a Design Certification protocol is completed for the PoA. The protocol shows intransparent manner criteria (requirements), means of Design Certification and resulting statements on verification of PoA against identified criteria.

The Design Certification protocol serves the following purposes:

- It organises in a table form, details and clarifies the requirements, a GS PoA is expected to meet GS4GG requirements<sup>/B01/B02/</sup>.
- It ensures a transparent verification process where the VVB will document how a particular requirement has been verified.
- It ensures that the issues are accurately identified, formulated, discussed and concluded in the Design Certification report.

The Design Certification protocol consists of a table i.e., tables of findings and preliminary and final opinion of the VVB on every particular issue raised during the Design Certification process.

The findings of Design Certification process are summarized in the tables below:

<b>CAR/ CL/ FAR ID</b>	xx	<b>Section no.</b>	<b>Date: DD/MM/YYYY</b>
<b>Description of CAR/ CL/ FAR</b>			
<b>CME response</b>			<b>Date: DD/MM/YYYY</b>
<b>Documentation provided by the CME</b>			
<b>DOE assessment</b>			<b>Date: DD/MM/YYYY</b>

In Table 1 FAR, shall reflect the forward actions initiated by the Design Certification team if the monitoring and reporting require attention and/or adjustment for the next Design Certification period.

Findings during the Design Certification can be interpreted as a non-compliance with GS criteria or a risk to the compliance.

Corrective action requests (CARs) are raised, in case:

- Non-conformities with the monitoring plan or methodology are found in monitoring and reporting and has not been sufficiently documented by the CMEs, or if the evidence provided to prove conformity is insufficient.
- Modifications to the implementation, operation and monitoring of the registered PoA activity has not been sufficiently documented by the PoA participants.
- Mistakes have been made in applying assumptions, data or calculations of emission reductions which will impair the estimate of emission reductions.
- Issues identified in a FAR during Design Certification/previous verification(s) that are not been resolved by the CME(s) to be verified during current verification.

**Requests for clarification (CLs) are raised**, if information is insufficient or not clear enough to determine whether the applicable GS requirements have been met.

**A forward action request (FAR) is raised** during Design Certification to highlight issues related to PoA implementation/monitoring that require review during the subsequent verification of the PoA activity. FARs shall not relate to the GS requirements for issuance.

<b>Areas of Design Certification of compliance</b>	<b>No. of CL</b>	<b>No. of CAR</b>	<b>No. of FAR</b>
General Description of PoA	01	06	-
Management System and inclusion criteria	01	05	
Physical/ Geographical boundary of the PoA		01	

Demonstration of Additionality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PoA level additionality</li> <li>VPA level additionality</li> </ul>	02		
Start date and duration of PoA	01		
POA Level Stakeholder Consultation		01	
Final Continuous Input / Grievance Mechanism at POA Level	01		
<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>-</b>

### 3.5 Internal quality control

The final validation report has passed a technical review before being submitted to the CME and SustainCert. A technical reviewer qualified in accordance with CCIPL’s qualification scheme for GS validation and verification performed the technical review.

## 4. Design Certification findings

The findings of the assessment are described in the following sections. The Design Certification criteria(requirements), and the means of assessment are documented in detail in Appendix 1.

### 4.1 General Description of PoA

Based on the desk review and on-site inspection interviews<sup>/i/-/xviii/</sup>, VVB has assessed the compliance of purpose and general description of the PoA<sup>/01/</sup> with Section 4.2.2 of the GS4GG Programme of Activity requirements and procedures v.2.0, as follows<sup>/B01/</sup>:

GS4GG Requirement	Assessment of Compliance
A unique title of the PoA	In line with the section 4.4.2(a) of GS4GG PoA requirements and Procedures <sup>/B01/</sup> , VVB confirms that the CME has provided a unique title to the PoA “ <i>TERRAGRN- Land Regeneration through Agroforestry in Mpumalanga, South Africa</i> ” <sup>/01/</sup>
<p>b. The purpose and general description of the proposed PoA, which includes:</p> <p>i. The policy/measure or stated goal that the PoA seeks to promote</p> <p>ii. A framework for the implementation of the PoA and inclusion of VPAs in the PoA</p> <p>iii. A confirmation that the PoA is a voluntary action by the CME.</p>	<p><b>A framework for the implementation of the PoA and inclusion of VPAs in the PoA</b></p> <p>Based on the review of GS PoA<sup>/01/</sup>, the real case VPA<sup>/02/</sup> is located in South Africa<sup>/05/</sup>. As defined in the eligibility criteria, prior to inclusion of the VPA<sup>/02/</sup> into the PoA<sup>/01/</sup>, it will be verified and confirmed that the VPA and its corresponding PoA areas/ have not been already included in another existing PoA or under this PoA and CME and VPA implementor sign an agreement governing the rights and responsibilities of each of the parties and which regulates the legal ownership of carbon credits generated under the respective VPA. Furthermore, VVB confirms the same during on-site inspection interviews<sup>/i/-/xviii/</sup>.</p> <p><b>Confirmation that the PoA is a voluntary action by the CME</b></p> <p>VVB, based on review of PoA-DD<sup>/01/</sup>, on-site inspection interview<sup>/i/-/xviii/</sup> confirms that the proposed PoA is a voluntary action undertaken by TERRAGRN PRIVATE LIMITED, the Coordinating and Managing Entity (CME).</p>



	<p>There are no local regulations or laws that mandates the CME to implement the proposed forest landscape restoration VPAs within the boundaries of the South Africa included under this PoA. The VPAs cannot be implemented without the incentive of carbon finance.</p> <p>Overall, in the opinion of VVB the purpose of programme and general description of this PoA is in compliance with section 4.2.2 of GS4GG PoA requirements and Procedures v2.0<sup>/B01/</sup></p>
<p>c. The physical/geographical boundary of the proposed PoA in terms of a geographical area e.g., municipality, region within a country, country or several countries within which all VPAs to be included in the PoA will be implemented</p>	<p>As per section 4.4.1 of Programme of Activity requirements and procedures v.2.0<sup>/B01/</sup>, VVB confirms that PoA boundary has been appropriately defined for the proposed PoA as:</p> <p>The first voluntary project activity (VPA)<sup>/02/</sup> being included under the PoA will be implemented in South Africa.</p>
<p>c. The physical/geographical boundary of the proposed PoA in terms of a geographical area e.g., municipality, region within a country, country or several countries within which all VPAs to be included in the PoA will be implemented</p>	<p>As per section 4.4.1 of Programme of Activity requirements and procedures v.2.0<sup>/B01/</sup>, VVB confirms that PoA boundary has been appropriately defined for the proposed PoA as:</p> <p>The first voluntary project activity (VPA)<sup>/02/</sup> being included under the PoA will be implemented in South Africa.</p>
<p>d. The technologies and/or measures to be employed and/or implemented by the VPAs under the PoA</p> <p>e. A description of how the technologies/measures and know-how for their use are transferred to the host Party, where applicable</p>	<p>Based on review of the PoA-DD<sup>/01/</sup> and interviews<sup>/i-/xviii/</sup> during the on-site inspection, VVB confirms the following:</p> <p>the VPAs under the PoA will restore forest landscapes through targeted reforestation with native bamboo and fruit tree species</p>
<p>f. The name of the CME of the proposed PoA, and their contact information</p>	<p>Based on the review of GS PoA-DD<sup>/01/</sup> and on-site inspection interviews<sup>/i-/xviii/</sup>, VVB confirms that TERRAGR N private limited, a United Kingdom based company and is the coordinating/managing entity for the proposed PoA.</p>
<p>g. The CME shall indicate whether the proposed PoA receives any public funding. If any public funding is received, the CME shall provide information on the sources of the public funding. For PoAs taking place in countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee's ODA recipient list<sup>5</sup>, a signed <i>Official Development Assistance (ODA) declaration</i> is required</p>	<p>Based on desk review and the on-site inspection interviews<sup>/i-/xviii/</sup>, VVB confirms that no public funding or ODA is involved in the PoA.</p>

<p>h. The CME shall define the inclusion criteria of VPAs by setting out required conditions for a proposed VPA to be included in the PoA. The CME shall demonstrate the usability of the criteria for assessing the inclusion of VPAs in the PoA</p>	<p>Based on desk review, on-site inspection interviews<sup>/i-/xviii/</sup> VVB confirms that the CME has provided inclusion criteria of VPAs by setting out required conditions for a proposed VPA<sup>/02/</sup> to be included in the PoA<sup>/01/</sup> in line with section 3.1.1 of GS4GG Principles &amp; Requirements and section 4.5.2 of GS4GG PoA Requirements &amp; Procedures<sup>/B01/</sup> and section 2.1.1 of GS4GG Land Use &amp; Forests Requirements<sup>/B02/</sup>.</p>
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## 4.2 Management System and inclusion criteria

Based on the desk review and on-site inspection interviews<sup>/i-/xviii/</sup>, VVB has assessed the compliance of Management System and inclusion criteria of the PoA with Section 4.3 of the GS4GG Programme of Activity requirements and procedures v.2.0<sup>/B01/</sup> as follows:

GS4GG Requirement	Assessment of Compliance
<p>a. A clear definition of roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in the process of inclusion of VPAs, including a review of their competencies</p>	<p>Based on the review of the PoA-DD<sup>/01/</sup> and on-site inspection interviews<sup>/i-/xviii/</sup>, VVB confirms that in compliance with the GS4GG requirement, the CME has appropriately defined the roles and responsibilities of personnel involved and operational and management system for the implementation of the proposed PoA<sup>/01/</sup>.</p>
<p>b. Records of arrangements for training and capacity development for personnel</p>	<p>As per the GS PoA-DD<sup>/01/</sup>, on-site inspection interviews<sup>/i-/xviii/</sup> CME has a provision of maintaining records of all personnel, or groups of personnel, appointed and will be responsible for their training and capacity, required to complete their roles in respect of the PoA's requirements and Gold Standard / SustainCERT rules. Records of such training and capacity building will be maintained in CME's document management system.</p>
<p>c. A procedure for technical review of inclusion of VPAs</p>	<p>As per the GS PoA-DD<sup>/01/</sup>, VPAs will be designed and written by the CME in partnership with the relevant VPA implementer. The CME will conduct a technical review of all documentation and emissions reductions calculations prior to submission to the Gold Standard / SustainCERT and the VVB.</p> <p>Based on the above information, the procedure provided by CME is deemed valid to the VVB.</p>
<p>d. A procedure to avoid double counting (e.g., to avoid the case of including a new VPA that has already been registered either as a project activity or included as a VPA in another registered PoA, including but not limited to Gold Standard, CDM, other voluntary standards registered PoAs)</p>	<p>As per the GS PoA-DD<sup>/01/</sup>, the double counting is not an issue, as these are greenfield projects that will be implemented by subsidiary company TERRAGR N SA.</p> <p>Furthermore, each VPA's monitoring plan will include a specific procedure to avoid double counting, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly defined boundaries of the eligible planting area<sup>/05/</sup></li> <li>Shape files of each planting area<sup>/05/</sup></li> <li>Specific species composition of the planting area<sup>/05/</sup></li> </ul> <p>VVB confirms that the eligibility requirement mentioned above is valid and in compliance with</p>

	<p>section 4.3 of the GS4GG Programme of Activity requirements and procedures v.2.0<sup>B01/</sup> and section 3.1.1. of GS4GG Principles &amp; requirements Version 1.2<sup>B01/</sup>.</p>
<p>e. Records and documentation control process for each VPA under the PoA</p>	<p>As per the section B.1 of the PoA-DD <sup>/01/</sup>, the following criteria for new VPA has been defined by the CME:</p> <p>The CME will train the VPA Implementer and its personnel on the data collection and recording process.</p> <p>The CME will define a standard operational procedure<sup>/04/</sup> for forest inventory. Forest inventory data collected by the VPA Implementer will be maintained in the main office of the VPA Implementer TERRAGRN SA.</p> <p>The monitoring database will be maintained by the VPA Implementer and the CME will conduct a QA/QC<sup>/04/</sup> process to ensure that collected data is accurate and representative.</p> <p>VVB, confirms that the eligibility criteria defined by the CME is appropriate and in line with section 4.3 of GS4GG PoA Procedures and requirements<sup>B01/</sup>.</p>
<p>f. Measures for continuous improvements of the PoA management system</p>	<p>As per the PoA-DD <sup>/01/</sup>, the CME will review the PoA management system defined above on a regular basis to ensure the continuous improvement of the above processes that will result in greater accuracy of the collected data and additional capacity building for VPA Implementers.</p> <p>The approach to check the continuous improvement of the PoA management system is deemed appropriate and valid to the VVB.</p>

### 4.3 Demonstration of Additionality

#### PoA level additionality

As per section 4.5.1 of the GS4GG Programme of Activity requirements and procedures v.2.0<sup>B01/</sup> the additionality at the PoA level has been demonstrated in compliance with option a. as stated in section C of the GS PoA-DD<sup>01/</sup>

*“The PoA is a purely voluntary action implemented by the CME and is only possible because of carbon finance. It is therefore stated that in the absence of Gold Standard Certification related finance, none of the VPA that will be implemented under the PoA and within the proposed PoA boundaries<sup>05/</sup> would occur.”*

Furthermore, as per the review of the VPA-DD<sup>02/</sup>, the additionality has been demonstrated through the “Combined tool to identify baseline scenario and demonstrate additionality in A/R CDM project activities, version 1.0”.

#### Real case VPA Additionality

##### Step 0: Preliminary screening based on the starting date of the A/R project activity:

VVB, based on the review of the VPA DD confirms that the project is a regular project and a MoU<sup>B03/</sup>

has been signed between the TERRAGRAN, Gold standard & R20 on 03/10/2022 much before the start date of the project, which is 29/11/2022. The MoU demonstrates that the carbon revenue is seriously considered in the decision to proceed with the project activity.

**Step 1: Identification of alternative land use scenarios to the proposed A/R CDM project activity**

**Sub-step 1a. Identify credible alternative land use scenarios to the proposed A/R GS4GG project activity**

The identified land use scenarios as per the VPA-DD<sup>02/</sup> are as follows:

- a) Continuation of the pre-project land use- abandoned and degraded cropland
- b) Reforestation of the land within the project boundary performed without being registered as the carbon project activity
- c) If applicable, forestation of at least a part of the land within the project boundary of the proposed A/R project at a rate resulting from legal requirements; or extrapolation of observed forestation activities in the geographical area with similar socio-economic and ecological conditions to the proposed A/R project activity.

**Sub-step 1b. Consistency of credible land use scenarios with enforced mandatory applicable laws and regulations**

For the continuation of the pre-project land use, the land belongs to the Manala Mgiba Communal Property Association (CPA) and the continuation of the land status as cropland is not against any national laws and regulations.

There are no legal requirements for forestation of such community lands and the third identified land use scenario (c) is not a credible land use scenario.

VVB based on the VPA-DD<sup>02/</sup> and through own research confirms that the identified alternative land use scenarios a) and b) are valid and in compliance with the mandatory applicable laws and regulations that are as follows:

- ✓ National Forests Act 84 of 1998;
- ✓ National Water Act 36 of 1998;
- ✓ National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998.
- ✓ National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004 (includes regulations on alien and invasive species, threatened and protected species and threatened and protected ecosystems);
- ✓ National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act 24 of 2008 (NEMICMA)
- ✓ National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003;
- ✓ National Environmental Management: Waste Act 59 of 2008;
- ✓ Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act 43 of 1983;
- ✓ National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999;
- ✓ Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act 36 of 1947;
- ✓ Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act 36 of 1947: Adoption of Pesticide Management Policy for South Africa, 2010; and
- ✓ Hazardous Substances Act 15 of 1973.

**Step 2: Barrier Analysis**

**Sub-step 2a. Identification of barriers that would prevent the implementation of at least one alternative land use scenarios**

As per A/R CDM Methodological tool “Combined tool to identify the baseline scenario and demonstrate additionality in A/R CDM project activities”, the following barriers have been identified by the CME and assessed in compliance with the tool:

Barriers identified	VVB Assessment
<b>Investment barriers:</b>	
<p>The financing of commercial bamboo plantation is difficult because there are no dedicated public and private funds available. Additionally, in a still young Forest Landscape Restoration sector, financial institutions are reluctant to provide financing. There is also no insurance market around bamboo industry, which would lower the risk to financial institutions.</p>	<p>VVB, based on the review of the VPA-DD<sup>/02/</sup> and the supporting evidence links<sup>/B03/</sup> confirms that the financial barrier is one of the key barriers for implementation of the project activity. It has been further confirmed during the on-site interviews with the relevant personnels.</p>
<b>Technical barriers:</b>	
<p>Necessary knowledge of species adapted to specific ecological conditions, seed sources and supply methods, and nursery operations is limited. Many restoration initiatives have failed due to a lack of knowledge about how to select, plant, and manage the appropriate species, which is also true for bamboo. Other technical challenges include unanticipated problems in the establishment of infrastructure, nursery, planting of the bamboo, growing and maintenance, harvesting and processing. The many technical challenges are due to limited knowledge base that exists in South Africa about commercial bamboo growing.</p>	<p>VVB confirms that the bamboo plantation requires a lot of knowledge and skills for proper implementation. Vegetative propagation also requires intense skill for successful propagation. Thus, the barrier identified is valid and applicable to this project activity. This has been further confirmed through the on-site interviews.</p>
<b>Technological barrier:</b>	
<p>Despite the business opportunities that may arise, organizations wishing to have bamboo-based products face constraints due to the lack of research and technological innovation. However, to be competitive in the country and later for export, bamboo productions must be adapted to international technological, commercial and forestry standards. Technological barriers to forestry and processing, low investment in research and development, and a lack of plant material are obstacles to the use of bamboo as a fibre alternative to lumber. Structural weaknesses of technological transformation microenterprises also limit the support of actors in the sector. The problem is further compounded by a significant technological gap and a lack of critical relevant skills</p>	<p>VVB confirms that the bamboo-based products faces constraints and is further compounded by a significant technological gap and a lack of critical relevant skills. This has been further confirmed through the on-site interviews.</p>
<b>Political and regulatory barriers:</b>	
<p>Regarding national policies and their translation into action plans, a lack of an environment conducive to maximizing bamboo's contribution to the green economy is evident. Bamboo is a grass, it has no legislations binding it to timber policies and licencing issues in South Africa</p>	<p>VVB, based on review of the VPA-DD<sup>/02/</sup> and on-site interviews confirms that the identified political barrier is valid and applicable to this project activity.</p>
<b>Barriers due to social conditions</b>	
<p>Communities that form partnerships with the company through lease agreements require training so that they can be able to actively engage with companies on matters that affect them. They should be engaged in training and learning programmes that develop their managerial skills and educate them about forestry industry. The CME has to rely on institutions such as government, NGOs, and other civil society organizations, including representatives of local communities. Carbon financing for the project wherein these actors and local communities are involved in achieving the host of co-benefits from the project by overcoming the barrier to social perception is of prime importance.</p>	<p>The community development for knowledge and managerial skills about forestry industry requires heavy investment into education, awareness and skill training programs to educate them of the social and environmental benefits of the project activity. Thus, VVB confirms that this barrier is a significant barrier for the long term association of the communities with the project activity.</p>

Based on the assessment above, VVB confirms that the proposed PoA<sup>/01/</sup> and the first real case VPA<sup>/02/</sup> located in Mpumalanga province in South Africa are additional.

### Regular VPA level additionality

As per the PoA DD<sup>/01/</sup>, the Additionality at VPA level shall be proven with information and evidence provided. The project shall apply one of the following options to demonstrate project additionality:

Option 1 – CDM tool: the latest version of the A/R CDM ‘Combined tool to identify the baseline scenario and demonstrate additionality in A/R CDM project activities.

Option 2 – Positive List: the project shall meet the requirements of the list as per AR\_LUF-Activity Requirements paragraph 3.1.16<sup>/B02/</sup> section (b) .

### 4.4 Start date and Duration of PoA

Based on the review of PoA-DD<sup>/01/</sup>, the PoA Design Document has been submitted to the Gold Standard on 18/03/2023. The start date of crediting cycle of the PoA is 29/11/2022, which is the date is the crediting period start date of the earliest VPA<sup>/02/</sup> included in the PoA. This is in line with the requirements of section 4.6.2 of the GS4GG Programme of Activity requirements and procedures v.2.0<sup>/B01/</sup>.

The duration of the PoA is 50 years, which is in line with section 4.6.3 of the GS4GG Programme of Activity requirements and procedures v.2.0<sup>/B01/</sup>, VVB confirms, based on the desk review, that the proposed PoA (type “Forestry”) shall have a total duration of maximum 50 years.

### 4.5 PoA Level Stakeholder Consultation

Based on desk review and on-site inspection interviews<sup>/i/-/xviii/</sup>, VVB confirms that the CME conducted the PoA design consultation digitally to obtain feedback from governments, relevant national authorities, NGO communities, and other stakeholders/ of the PoA as well as Gold Standard representative and relevant international Gold Standard NGO Supporters.

The design consultation email, which included the (i) Non-technical Summary and (ii) Design Consultation feedback form was sent out on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and lasted for one month till 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

GS4GG Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Requirements Version 1.2	Assessment of Compliance
<p><b>Timing of Local Stakeholder Consultation</b></p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>Based on the on-site inspection interview<sup>/i/-/xviii/</sup> and document review<sup>/04/</sup>, VVB confirms that the project complies with the Gold Standard Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Requirements (version 2.0)<sup>/B03/</sup>. The stakeholder consultation was conducted on 14/09/2022 before to the project start date 29/11/2022. Furthermore, this has been confirmed by reviewing the LSC report<sup>/04/</sup>.</p>

<p>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</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p><b>Minimum Group of Stakeholders to Be Consulted</b></p>	
<p>The Project Developer shall identify and invite all relevant (local, affected and interested) stakeholders as mentioned below for consultations and comments.</p> <p>(a) Local people, communities and or representatives who are directly or indirectly affected by the project</p> <p>(b) Stakeholders with land-tenure rights within or adjacent to the project must be contacted</p> <p>(c) Local policy makers and representatives of local authorities</p> <p>(d) National government officials or National focal bodies responsible for the project in the host country, for example, Designated National Authority<sup>4</sup> (DNA)</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(f) A Gold Standard representative at <a href="mailto:help@goldstandard.org">help@goldstandard.org</a> 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</p>	<p>PoA Design Consultation has been carried out for the Mpumalanga province in South Africa. In compliance with the requirement, CME invited representatives from the following groups:</p> <p>a) Representatives from Host Country DNA</p> <p>b) Local policy makers and representatives of local authorities</p> <p>c) Representatives from National agencies who have the mandate to set the quality criteria for land use and forestry projects</p> <p>d) Representatives from Land-use and forestry agencies in the country</p> <p>e) Representatives from NGOs (either local or international ones) working on the topic (Land Use and Forestry) or related topics (e.g., environment) in the host country</p> <p>f) Representatives from women associations/groups/gender specialists (either national or international working in the host country)</p> <p>g) Representatives from Any other organizations (e.g., universities, research institutes, or other) working on the topic or related topic in the host Country</p> <p>h) Gold standard representative</p>
<p><b>Means for inviting stakeholders</b></p>	
<p>The Project Developer shall invite local stakeholders to participate in the meeting and provide comments on the proposed project in an open and transparent manner, in a way that facilitates comments to be received from local stakeholders.</p>	<p>Based on the PoA design consultation report, interviews<sup>/i/-/xxviii/</sup> during the on-site inspection, VVB confirms that the stakeholder consultation for the proposed PoA included invitation of local stakeholders to participate in the meeting and provide comments on the proposed PoA in an open and transparent manner.</p>

<p>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.</p>	<p>As per the GS PoA DD<sup>01/</sup>,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Invitations for the consultation have been sent on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022 via E- Mail, with the Non-Technical Summary of the PoA and the Feedback Form attached.</li> <li>b) The invitation E-Mails and the consultation material (Non-Technical Summary of the PoA and Feedback Form) have been provided in English and Ndebele, local language.</li> <li>c) The stakeholders were given time to submit the feedback and comments by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The stakeholders were also encouraged to share the consultation opportunity with other organizations or individuals that could be interested in participating. The reminder to send feedbacks have also been sent on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2022 through email.</li> <li>d) Besides English, the NTS was shared in Ndebele, the local language of the province Mpumalanga where the PoA design consultation has been carried out.</li> </ul>
<p>Projects shall ensure that the stakeholders are invited in a 'gender sensitive' manner and efforts must be made to solicit input from women and marginalized groups.</p>	<p>As per the GS PoA Design Consultation Report VVB confirms that the following representatives from women associations/groups/gender specialists (either national or international working in the host country) had been invited for the stakeholder consultation and efforts must be made to solicit input from women.</p>
<p>The Project Developer shall not deny anyone access to the consultation. It shall be open for anyone wishing to participate.</p>	<p>Based on the on-site inspection/interviews, VVB confirms that the consultation was open to everyone and no one willing to participate was denied access.</p>
<p>The invitation for the consultation meetings shall be given at least 30 days before the meeting takes place.</p>	<p>As per the GS PoA DD<sup>01/</sup>, which included the (i) Non-technical Summary and (ii) Design Consultation feedback form was sent out on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and lasted for one month until September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022., hence there is 30 days period between the invitation and consultation date.</p> <p>Hence, VVB confirms that the PoA<sup>01/</sup> complies by the requirements.</p>
<p><b>Information to be made available to Stakeholders</b></p>	
<p>(a) A non-technical summary of the project including information on project design, technology, objectives, scale, duration and implementation plan (so far as known)</p>	<p>PoA Design Consultation have been carried out for the province Mpumalanga, South Africa and as per the PoA DD<sup>01/</sup>. As per the Design Consultation Report, a Non- Technical Summary (NTS) have been shared with stakeholders when inviting them to the PoA Design Consultation. Besides English, the NTS was shared in Ndebele, the local language of the province.</p> <p>The following have been provided in the NTS in line with the GS4GG requirements<sup>/B01/B02/</sup>:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Introduction to PoA design</li> <li>b) Purpose of the Programm of Activities (PoA)</li> <li>c) Applied approach</li> <li>d) Details on Coordinating and Managing Entity (CME)</li> <li>e) Information about Carbon credits</li> <li>f) Time-schedule</li> <li>g) Contribution to Sustainable Development</li> <li>h) Joining the PoA</li> </ul>
(b) Summary of the economic, social and environmental impacts of the project as per Safeguarding Principles & Requirements	<p>PoA Design Consultation was carried out for South Africa and as per the PoA DD, the PoA will be initially registered for Republic of South Africa as per section B.3 of the PoA-DD, summary of Safeguarding Principles, and the methods of monitoring these principles, are defined in the VPA- DD Section D.1.</p> <p>The assessment in regard to safeguarding principles and requirements shall be assessed in the VPA validation report.</p>
<b>Consultation</b>	
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.	Not Applicable since it has been conducted at VPA level
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.	Not Applicable since it has been conducted at VPA level
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)).	As per the GS PoA Design Consultation Report VVB confirms that the following representatives from women associations/groups/gender specialists (either national or international working in the host country) had been invited for the stakeholder consultation and efforts must be made to solicit input from women.
For retroactive projects, project implementation is started without conducting the first round of stakeholder consultation following the Requirements. In such cases, the physical meeting shall be integrated with the stakeholder feedback round, if this has not taken place as part of previous stakeholder consultations. The physical meeting conducted during the stakeholder feedback round must follow all requirements listed in this document. Special attention must be paid to the fact that the projects must take into account stakeholder feedback and shall modify project design, where reasonable.	Not Applicable
<b>Continuous input and grievance mechanism</b>	
All projects shall setup a formal input, feedback and grievance mechanism with the purpose of providing stakeholders with an opportunity to	As per the GS PoA-DD, a process book will be kept at the site office and an email (help@terragn.com) has been provided to

submit any feedback or raise grievances during the entire project life.	record the grievances from the people who cannot travel to the site. VVB during the on-site inspection has reviewed the grievance process book and interviewed the personnels confirming the grievance process.
The project shall discuss the potential options with stakeholders and agree on an appropriate method.	The potential options for recording grievances are through grievance expression book and a through email (help@terragn.com).
At a minimum, Continuous Input and Grievance Expression Process Book shall be made available at an agreed location.	VVB during the on-site inspection has reviewed the grievance expression process book and confirms that the book is available at the site office.
<b>Consideration of comments received</b>	
The Project Developer shall apply a gender lens while assessing the relevance and appropriateness of the stakeholders' comments.	After reviewing the assessment of comments section, VVB confirms that no comments were received from any women stakeholder <sup>03/</sup> .
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.	As per section B.1 of GS Design-Consultation-Report, the CME has appropriately provided the comments. Furthermore, based on the feedback received there are no changes in the design of the PoA.
The Stakeholders shall be provided with the feedback on how their comments have been taken into account as part of the stakeholder feedback round	As per section B.1 of GS Design-Consultation-Report <sup>03/</sup> , the CME has appropriately provided the comments.
<b>Ongoing reporting</b>	
Concerns that have been identified and raised by stakeholders during the stakeholder consultations and the mitigation measures put in place to address those.	As per section B.1 of GS Design-Consultation-Report <sup>03/</sup> , one feedback has been received with some suggestions. VVB during the on-site interviews has confirm about the mitigation measures put in place to address those suggestions.
Any feedback given by stakeholders as part of the project's grievance mechanism	VVB, based on the review of the GS Design Consultation report <sup>03/</sup> confirms that no feedback has been received regarding the PoA grievance mechanism.

Based on the review of Design Consultation Report, VVB confirms that all the stakeholder comments have been considered and documented and a follow-up with the local stakeholders has taken place at VPA level through a stakeholder consultation.

 <b>Carbon</b> — CHECK —	<b>FM 4.9 Gold Standard LUF PoA          Design Certification Report          Template</b>	<b>August 2022</b>
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## 5. Certification Opinion

CC IPL has performed the design certification of the proposed Gold Standard programme of activity /01/ “TERRAGR N- Land Regeneration through Agroforestry in Mpumalanga, South Africa”.

This validation was conducted on the basis of the Gold Standard Afforestation/Reforestation (A/R) GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Methodology (Version 2.0)<sup>B01/</sup>, GS4GG Land Use & Forests Activity Requirements Version 1.2.1<sup>B02/</sup>, Risks & Capacities Guideline for Land Use & Forest projects Version 1.0, Gold Standard Afforestation/Reforestation (A/R) GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Methodology and GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Product Requirements Version 2.1.

The validation activities conducted by CC IPL included: collection of information, documents and data supporting the estimated GHG removals and GHG calculation spreadsheets; assessment of eligibility criteria for the inclusion of new VPA; assessment of management system.

The VVB has raised six (06) clarification (CLs), Thirteen (13) corrective action requests (CARs) and 00 FARs, all of which have been satisfactorily closed.

The VVB concludes with a reasonable level of assurance that the project is in conformance with Afforestation/Reforestation (A/R) GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Methodology (Version 2.0)<sup>B01/</sup>. No qualifications or limitations exist with respect to the validation opinion reached by the auditor. CC IPL confirms that the project has been implemented in accordance with the Afforestation/Reforestation (A/R) GHG Emissions Reduction & Sequestration Methodology (Version 2.0)<sup>B01/</sup>

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## Appendix 1: List of Findings from Design Certification

Table 1. CL from this Design Certification

CL	01	Section no.	CL 01 from SustainCERT Preliminary Review	Date: 18/04/2023
<b>Description of CL</b>				
CME may optionally include further supporting documentation at validation regarding funding sources to support the claim that the funding is completely private.				
<b>CME response</b>				Date: 12/07/2023
TERRAGR N is exploring funding opportunities for the innovative ways of managing, measuring and valuing the impacts of the project. In practice this means that future carbon mitigation assets like carbon credits or other positive impacts expected to be delivered by the project could be used to secure loans. TERRAGR N has partnered with R2O ( <a href="https://regions20.org/">https://regions20.org/</a> , now <a href="https://www.catalyticfinance.org/">https://www.catalyticfinance.org/</a> ) for funding. The revised PoA has included the supporting statement for private funding.				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				Date: 12/07/2023
Based on the review of CME response, VVB confirms that TERRAGR N has partnered R2O & Gold Standard for funds and the funding sources are completely private. Furthermore, the same has been confirmed by reviewing revised PoA-DD and source <a href="https://www.goldstandard.org/blog-item/new-ways-valu ing-climate-and-sustainable-development-impact-unlock-funding-innovative">https://www.goldstandard.org/blog-item/new-ways-valu ing-climate-and-sustainable-development-impact-unlock-funding-innovative</a> .				
<b>CL has been closed</b>				

CL	02	Section no.	CL 02 from SustainCERT Preliminary Review	Date: 18/04/2023
<b>Description of CL</b>				
CME may optionally include documents/excel sheets demonstrating overview of project finances that demonstrates how the finance derived Gold Standard Certification is material to the ongoing sustainability of the Project at validation.				
<b>CME response</b>				Date: 12/07/2023
As mentioned above, the carbon credits expected from the project will be used to secure loans to implement the project activity. A pilot of 68 ha has been implemented so far and the registration of the project as a carbon project would be of prime importance to seek funding and implementation of the project activity.				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				Date: 12/07/2023
VVB, based on review of response confirms that the justification provided by CME is deemed to be appropriate and valid. Further registration of the project as a carbon project under Gold Standard is important for sustainability of the ongoing project and same has been confirmed during on-site inspection & interviews.				
<b>CL has been closed</b>				

CL	03	Section no.	CL 03 from SustainCERT Preliminary Review	Date: 18/04/2023
<b>Description of CL</b>				

 <b>Carbon</b> CHECK	<b>FM 4.9 Gold Standard LUF PoA Validation Report Template</b>	<b>August 2022</b>
<p>First submission implies documents were submitted, invoice was paid and terms were signed. Date specified in Section D.1 is 18 March 2023 which can be changed to 26 March 2023 according to the definition.</p>		
<b>CME response</b>		<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
<p>The date of first submission of the PoA to Gold Standard is changed to 26/03/2023.</p>		
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>		
<p><i>Revised PoA Document, Version 2</i></p>		
<b>VVB assessment</b>		<b>Date: 12.07/2023</b>
<p>Based on review of CME response, VVB confirms that date of first submission of the PoA to Gold Standard is 26/03/2023. Furthermore, the same has been revised in section D.1 of PoA-DD</p>		
<p><b>CL has been closed</b></p>		

<b>CL</b>	04	<b>Section no.</b>	CL 04 from SustainCERT Preliminary Review	<b>Date: 18/04/2023</b>
<b>Description of CL</b>				
<p>CME may update the summary of the feedback received from one contact point (open communication lines etc.) and other feedbacks that will be received for a group of VPAs in the coming two years in the second paragraph at the time of validation.</p>				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
<p>The feedback received during design consultation is uploaded. Any feedback received during inclusion of further VPAs will included in the PoA document.</p>				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
<p>VVB, based on the review of response and revised PoA-DD, confirms that the CME has provided the summary of feedback received from local municipality representative in section E.2 of revised PoA-DD as per raised CL.</p>				
<p><b>CL has been closed</b></p>				

<b>CL</b>	05	<b>Section no.</b>	B.1, PoA-DD	<b>Date: 01/06/2023</b>
<b>Description of CL</b>				
<p>In line with the requirements of the section 4.3 of the document "107_V2.0_PAR_Programme-of-Activity-Requirements", CME is requested to provide CME management system manual.</p>				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
<p>The CME Management systems manual is enclosed.</p>				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
<p><i>CME Management Systems document</i></p>				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
<p>CME has provided the requested document which is in compliance with section 4.3 of the "107_V2.0_PAR_Programme-of-Activity-Requirements".</p>				
<p><b>CL has been closed</b></p>				

<b>CL</b>	06	<b>Section no.</b>	C, PoA-DD	<b>Date: 01/06/2023</b>
<b>Description of CL</b>				
<p>The PoA and its VPA (including first VPA) involves plantation of Bamboo and other tree species. However, additionality demonstration of the PoA in section C of the PoA-DD is limited to Bamboo only. Clarification is requested.</p>				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
<p>The section C provides barriers to restoration of degraded community lands in general and in particular for bamboo plantations, as bamboo is the major tree species accounting for more than 87.5% of tree species. Though it is agroforestry model with fruit trees, nitrogen fixers, berries and</p>				


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 <b>Carbon</b> CHECK	<b>FM 4.9 Gold Standard LUF PoA Validation Report Template</b>	<b>August 2022</b>
<p>intercropping, bamboo plantations are the main species. Further, from literature it can be seen that agroforestry too faces similar barriers. These include a lack of market for products from new or novel agroforestry species, perceptions of high initial capital and labour costs, and delayed returns on initial investments (particularly in timber plantations). Furthermore, there are management challenges associated with integrating trees and shrubs into cropping systems (and integrating crops into forestry systems) (<a href="#">agroforestrystrategyframework.pdf (dffe.gov.za)</a>). The barriers to agroforestry is also added to the revised PoA document.</p>		
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>		
<i>Revised PoA-DD</i>		
<b>VVB assessment</b>		<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
<p>VVB, based on the review of revised PoA-DD, confirms that CME has satisfactorily demonstrated the agroforestry models and its barriers in section C of PoA-DD as per raised CL. Furthermore, the same has been confirmed by reviewing table 1.1 of <a href="#">agroforestrystrategyframework.pdf (dffe.gov.za)</a> and on-site inspection &amp; interviews.</p>		
<b>CL has been closed</b>		

**Table 2. CAR from this Design Certification**

<b>CAR</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Section no.</b>	<b>VPA- LSC Report</b>	<b>Date: 01/06/2023</b>
<b>Description of CAR</b>				
<p><i>The date of first stakeholder consultation on cover page (02/02/2023) is not consistent with the date confirmed by the CME on-site (14/09/2022)</i></p>				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
<p>The first stakeholder consultation meeting is updated to 02/02/2023, in the stakeholder's Consultation Report.</p>				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
<p>As per the revised LSC report, the mentioned date on cover page i.e., 14/09/2022 , is now consistent with date confirmed by CME on-site.</p>				
<b>CAR has been closed</b>				

<b>CAR</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Section no.</b>	<b>PoA-DD</b>	<b>Date: 01/06/2023</b>
<b>Description of CAR</b>				
<p><i>CME shall use and refer latest version of PoA-DD template</i></p>				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
<p>According to the GS website, any new validation activity starting on or after 13 July 2023 shall use the latest version 2.2 design document template. As this validation was initiated much before, the current version 2.1 is still applicable.</p>				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
<p><i>Nil</i></p>				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
<p>VVB, based on the CME response, confirms that the referred PoA-DD template is valid and applicable.</p>				
<b>CAR has been closed</b>				

<b>CAR</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>Section no.</b>	<b>Section B.3, PoA-DD</b>	<b>Date: 01/06/2023</b>
<b>Description of CAR</b>				
<p><i>In addition to section 4.12.1 of PoA Requirements, CME shall include section 5.2.2 requirements in eligibility criterion for future VPA's to ensure systemically and transparently followed:</i></p>				

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- a. Describe the present environmental conditions of the area planned for the Forestry and AGR VPAs, including the climate, hydrology, soils and ecosystems
- b. Describe the presence, if any, of rare and endangered species and their habitats
- c. Describe the species and varieties selected for the Forestry VPA
- d. Describe the measures and know-how that will be transferred to the host Party, if applicable
- e. Describe or list the legal title(s) to the land, current land tenure and rights enabling determination of the owner of the GS VERs to be issued for the Forestry and AGR VPAs

**CME response**

**Date:** 12/07/2023

The PoA DD is revised to include the above requirements that will be included in section A.1 of the VPA DD.

**Documentation provided by CME**

*Revised PoA-DD*

**VVB assessment**

**Date:** 12/07/2023

Based on the review of the revised PoA-DD, VVB confirms that the CME has incorporated the required corrections in section B.3 of the PoA-DD which are valid and satisfactory.

**CAR has been closed**

<b>CAR</b>	04	<b>Section no.</b>		<b>Date:</b> 01/06/2023
<b>Description of CAR</b>				
<i>On the cover page of PoA-DD, the table for Real case VPAs is not in compliance with the GS template guide and Section 3.4.2 of GS4GG PoA requirement.</i>				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
The table is revised making it compliant with the GS template guide and section 3.4.2 of GS4GG PoA requirement				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
<i>Revised PoA-DD</i>				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
Based on the review of the revised PoA-DD, VVB confirms that the table for Real Case VPA is in compliance with the GS template instructions.				
<b>CAR has been closed</b>				

<b>CAR</b>	05	<b>Section no.</b>		<b>Date:</b> 01/06/2023
<b>Description of CAR</b>				
<i>As per section A.3 of the GS PoA-DD, the project boundary of the PoA has been given as South Africa, however, as per the cover page and section A.2 of PoA-DD, as well as the review of documentary evidence, the project boundary of the PoA has been confirmed as Mpumalanga province of South Africa.</i>				
<i>CME shall revise the section accordingly.</i>				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
The project boundary of the PoA is revised to include Mpumalanga Province in the revised PoA DD				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
<i>Revised PoA DD</i>				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
VVB, based on the review of revised PoA-DD, confirms that section A.3 has been revised and information is consistent throughout the report. Furthermore, VVB confirms that project boundary of PoA is Mpumalanga province of South Africa, through on-site inspection and review of shapefiles.				



CAR has been closed

<b>CAR</b>	06	<b>Section no.</b>	Likely CAR 1 from SustainCERT Preliminary Review	<b>Date: 01/06/2023</b>
<b>Description of CAR</b>				
As per PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES 2.0,				
<p>4.2.2   The CME shall provide, inter alia, the information on the following design elements of the PoA:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A unique title of the PoA</li> <li>The purpose and general description of the proposed PoA, which includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy/measure or stated goal that the PoA seeks to promote</li> <li>A framework for the implementation of the PoA and inclusion of VPAs in the PoA</li> <li>A confirmation that the PoA is a voluntary action by the CME</li> </ol> </li> <li>The physical/geographical boundary of the proposed PoA in terms of a geographical area e.g., municipality, region within a country, country or several countries within which all VPAs to be included in the PoA will be implemented</li> <li>The technologies and/or measures to be employed and/or implemented by the VPAs under the PoA</li> <li>A description of how the technologies/measures and know-how for their use are transferred to the host Party, where applicable</li> </ol> <p>Currently Section A.3 of the PoA-DD includes the eligibility requirements and not the description of technologies and measures. At the time of validation, PD must define the technologies and/or measures to be employed and/or implemented by the VPAs under the PoA. The CME shall provide description of how the technologies/measures and know-how for their use are transferred to the host Party, where applicable.</p>				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
The technologies and measures are included in the revised PoA DD.				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
Revised PoA DD				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				<b>Date: 12/07/2023</b>
VVB, based on review of revised PoA-DD confirms that section A.3 has been revised with technologies and measures implemented by VPA under PoA and information is consistent with section 4.2.2 (d) of PoA Requirements and Procedures v2.0.				
<b>CAR has been closed</b>				

<b>CAR</b>	07	<b>Section no.</b>	Likely CAR 2 from SustainCERT Preliminary Review	<b>Date: 01/06/2023</b>
<b>Description of CAR</b>				
As per PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES 2.0:				





8.2.6 | The minimum requirements for submission of PoA Documentation include Key Project Information - by uploading the following document:

- a. Cover Letter
- b. Terms and Conditions
- c. Official Development Assistance declaration
- d. PoA design consultation report & real case VPA stakeholder consultation
- e. Draft PoA & real case VPA Design Document
- f. **Completed SDG Impact Tool** (information for Step 1-5 of SDG Impact Tool is completed, whereas draft monitoring plan may be included later)

CME shall submit completed SDG Impact Tool at Validation that matches the indicators stated in the PoA DD Section A.4.

**CME response**

**Date:** 12/07/2023

The SDG Tool is completed and submitted.

**Documentation provided by CME**

**VVB assessment**

**Date:** 12/07/2023

VVB, based on the review of supporting document, confirms that CME has addressed and rectified document as requested, and information is consistent with section A.4 of PoA-DD.

**CAR has been closed**

**CAR**

08

**Section no.**

FAR 01 from SustainCERT Preliminary Review

**Date:** 18/04/2023

**Description of CAR**

The PD shall supply supporting data for all parameters in time for validation/design review, or allocation may be delayed. This includes and is not limited to: Maps, ER spreadsheets, individual study calculations, survey results, study reports etc. as included in the PoA and VPA.

**CME response**

**Date:** 12/07/2023

All the supporting documents for all parameters are provided to the VVB which includes Maps, ER spreadsheets, references to studies and reports as referenced in the PoA and VPA.

**Documentation provided by CME**

**VVB assessment**

**Date:** 12/07/2023

VVB, based on the review of provided supporting documents, confirms that CME has addressed and rectified documents as requested.

**CAR has been closed**

**CAR**

09

**Section no.**

OBS 01 from SustainCERT Preliminary Review

**Date:** 18/04/2023

**Description of CAR**

In future if VPAs of small scale or Microscale are added, PD must amend the field "VPAs scale included in the PoA" in the PDD KPI accordingly so as to avoid confusion.

**CME response**

**Date:** 12/07/2023

All the boxes of microscale, small scale and large scale is checked in the KPI of the PoA DD.

**Documentation provided by CME**

Revised PoA DD

**VVB assessment**

**Date:** 12/07/2023

VVB, based on the review of revised PoA-DD, confirms that the field "VPAs scale included in the PoA" has been revised to include VPA's at any scale i.e., micro, small & large scales in future.



CAR has been closed

<b>CAR</b>	10	<b>Section no.</b>	OBS 02 from SustainCERT Preliminary Review	<b>Date:</b> 18/04/ 2023
<b>Description of CAR</b>				
As per LAND USE & FORESTS ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS 1.2.1 2   GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:				
<p><b>2. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</b></p> <p>2.1.1 In addition to the requirements stipulated in the <a href="#">Principles &amp; Requirements</a>, A/R and AGR projects shall comply with the following principles and criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Eligible project types are Afforestation &amp; Reforestation Projects (A/R) and Agriculture Projects (AGR).</li> <li>(b) <b>No Deforestation: The eligible area shall not meet the definition of forest 10 years before project start date and at project start date.</b></li> </ul> <p>CME must actively report and provide evidence of unintentional deforestation at VPA level through verifiable evidences.</p>				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
This is already included under section A.3. for eligibility of section 2.2.1 General Requirements as per GS4GG Land Use and Forestry Activity Requirements				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
VVB, based on review of revised PoA-DD, confirms that CME has demonstrated No deforestation criteria in section A.3 of PoA-DD and the provided information is in compliance with section 2.1.1 of GS LUF Activity Requirements v1.2.1. Furthermore, the same has been confirmed by reviewing document "Eligibility_Report_VPA-01_SA_v3" and on-site inspection & interviews.				
<b>CAR has been closed</b>				

<b>CAR</b>	11	<b>Section no.</b>	OBS 3 from SustainCERT Preliminary Review	<b>Date:</b> 18/04/ 2023
<b>Description of CAR</b>				
As per SMALLHOLDER, SMALL SCALE AND MICROSCALE DEFINITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR LAND-USE AND FORESTRY (LUF) PROJECTS				
<p><b>2.2   Microscale projects</b></p> <p>2.2.1   <b>A microscale project is defined as a project with a maximum project area of 500ha.</b></p> <p>2.2.2   A microscale project shall not generate more than 10,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e/yr.</p> <p>Observe for inclusion eligibility criteria 10 that the microscale definition caps project area to 500ha along with capping emission reductions at 10,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.</p>				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
The eligibility criteria is updated to include 500 ha along with capping GHG removals at 10,000 tCO <sub>2</sub> /year.				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
Revised PoA DD				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
VVB, based on the review of PoA-DD, confirms that CME has revised the microscale eligibility criteria in section B.3 of PoA-DD and the provided information is in compliance with the section 2.2 of "GS4GG RU_2021-LUF-smallholder-definition."				
<b>CAR has been closed</b>				

 <b>Carbon</b> CHECK	<b>FM 4.9 Gold Standard LUF PoA          Validation Report Template</b>	<b>August 2022</b>
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<b>CAR</b>	12	<b>Section no.</b>	OBS 04 from SustainCERT Preliminary Review	<b>Date:</b> 18/04/2023
<b>Description of CAR</b>				
CME may include supporting documentation to demonstrate project start date at the time of validation.				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
The supporting documentation to demonstrate start date is provided to the VVB which includes photographs and field records.				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
<i>Photographs and field records</i>				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
During the on-site inspection, VVB has reviewed the time stamp pictures as well as the nursery receipts to verify the project start date.				
<b>CAR has been closed</b>				

<b>CAR</b>	13	<b>Section no.</b>	Grievance Mechanism	<b>Date:</b> 01/06/2023
<b>Description of CAR</b>				
<i>During the review of PoA-DD, it was observed that no information has been provided on "Input and Grievance Mechanism" at PoA level. The section lacks in the following:</i>				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Details on the selected approach for soliciting of input &amp; grievance expression and justification on appropriateness of the selected approach.</i></li> <li>2. <i>A description on roles and responsibility starting from receipt of input or grievance to final resolution and the escalation matrix.</i></li> </ol>				
<i>Furthermore, no information has been provided on the requirements to be adhered by future VPAs for establishment a standardised of Input and Grievance Mechanism across all future VPAs to be included under the PoA.</i>				
<b>CME response</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
<i>As included in the PoA DD, the continuous input and grievance mechanism at PoA level will be through the process book at the site office and email to <a href="mailto:help@terraagr.com">help@terraagr.com</a>. The justification on appropriateness is also provided in the table under section E.3. A description on roles and responsibilities starting from receipt of input to final resolution is provided in the section E.3.</i>				
<b>Documentation provided by CME</b>				
<b>VVB assessment</b>				<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. VVB, based on the review of CME response and revised PoA-DD, confirms that justification on appropriateness of the selected approach is valid and appropriate.</li> <li>2. VVB, based on the review revised PoA-DD, confirms that CME has provided description on roles and responsibility starting from receipt of input or grievance to final resolution and the escalation matrix in section E.3 of PoA-DD. Furthermore, the same has been confirmed during on-site inspection &amp; interviews.</li> </ol>				
<b>CAR has been closed</b>				

**CARBON CHECK (INDIA) PRIVATE LIMITED**

**CIN:** U74930DL2012PTC232495

**Regd. Off:** 2071/38, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Nai Wala, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110005

**Corporate off:** Unit No. 1701, Logix City Centre Office Tower, Plot No. BW-58, Sector-32 Noida, Uttar Pradesh

**Tel:** +91 120 4373114 | **URL:** [www.carboncheck.co.in](http://www.carboncheck.co.in) | **e-mail:** [info@carboncheck.co.in](mailto:info@carboncheck.co.in)



## Appendix 2: Certification of Competence



### Carbon Check (India) Private Limited

## Certificate of Competency

### Ms. Isha Kapoor

has been qualified as per CCIPL's internal qualification procedures in accordance with the requirements of CDM AS (V7.0), ISO/IEC 14065:2020, ISO/IEC 17029:2019 and other applicable GHG programs:

*for the following functions and requirements:*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Validator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Verifier	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team Leader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technical Expert
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical Reviewer	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Expert	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender Expert	<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Waste Expert
<input type="checkbox"/> SDG+	<input type="checkbox"/> Social no-harm(S+)	<input type="checkbox"/> Environment no-harm(E+)	<input type="checkbox"/> CCB Expert
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Expert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Expert for India		

*in the following Technical Areas:*

<input type="checkbox"/> TA 1.1	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 1.2	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 2.1	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 3.1	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 4.1
<input type="checkbox"/> TA 4. n	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 5.1	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 5.2	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 7.1	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 8.1
<input type="checkbox"/> TA 9.1	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 9.2	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 10.1	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 13.1	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 13.2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 14.1	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 15.1			

<b>Issue Date</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2023	<b>Expiry Date</b> 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023
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**Mr. Vikash Kumar Singh**  
Compliance Officer



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**Mr. Amit Anand**  
CEO

CCIPL\_FM 7.9 Certificate of Competency\_V2.1\_012023



## Carbon Check (India) Private Limited

### Certificate of Competency

#### Mr. Vikash Kumar Singh

has been qualified as per CCIPL's internal qualification procedures in accordance with the requirements of CDM AS (V7.0), ISO/IEC 14065:2020, ISO/IEC 17029:2019 and other applicable GHG programs:

for the following functions and requirements:

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Validator          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Verifier   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team Leader             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technical Expert     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technical Reviewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Expert   | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Expert                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plastic Waste Expert |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG+               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social no-harm(S+)   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment no-harm(E+) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CCB Expert           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial Expert   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Expert for India, South Africa, and Spanish speaking countries |   |  |

in the following Technical Areas:

- |   |   |                                  |   |   |
|---|---|----------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 1.1  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 1.2  | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 2.1  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 3.1  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 4.1  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 4. n | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 5.1             | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 5.2  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 7.1  | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 8.1             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TA 9.1             | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 9.2             | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 10.1 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 13.1 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 13.2 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 14.1 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 15.1 |                                  |   |   |

Issue Date

1<sup>st</sup> January 2023

Expiry Date

31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

Mr. Amit Anand  
CEO



**Carbon Check (India) Private Limited**

*Certificate of Competency*

**Mr. Bryan Conrad Foster**

has been qualified as per CCIPL's internal qualification procedures in accordance with the requirements of CDM AS (V7.0), ISO/IEC 14065:2020, ISO/IEC 17029:2019 and other applicable GHG programs:

*for the following functions and requirements:*

- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Validator          | <input type="checkbox"/> Verifier                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technical Expert |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Reviewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Expert                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Expert           | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Waste Expert        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SDG+               | <input type="checkbox"/> Social no-harm(S+)                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment no-harm(E+) | <input type="checkbox"/> CCB Expert                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Expert   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Expert for United States |  |  |

*in the following Technical Areas:*

- |   |                                  |                                  |                                  |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> TA 1.1             | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 1.2  | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 2.1  | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 3.1  | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 4.1  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TA 4. n            | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 5.1  | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 5.2  | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 7.1  | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 8.1  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TA 9.1             | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 9.2  | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 10.1 | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 13.1 | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 13.2 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TA 14.1 | <input type="checkbox"/> TA 15.1 |                                  |                                  |                                  |

Issue Date

1<sup>st</sup> February 2023

Expiry Date

31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

Mr. Vikash Kumar Singh  
Compliance Officer

Mr. Amit Anand  
CEO

CCIPL\_FM 7.9 Certificate of Competency\_V2.1\_012023

**CARBON CHECK (INDIA) PRIVATE LIMITED**

CIN: U74930DL2012PTC232495

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