

**LESSON 4:  
HOW TO CARRY OUT  
A PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW FOR  
VVB VALIDATION AND DESIGN CERTIFICATION**



**Preliminary Design Review Process**



**Third-Party Validation (By VVB)**



**Project Design Review (By SustainCERT)**



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## VVB APPOINTMENT

On the Gold Standard website, you can find a list of VVBs that have been accredited with their corresponding eligible auditors. Project Developers have the flexibility to select any of these VVBs for GS4GG certification, taking into consideration the project type and certification pathway. Please note that the list is updated on an ongoing basis to ensure it reflects the most recent status of applications.

The approved VVBs are classified by project category type:

- ✓ **Community Services Activities**
- ✓ **Energy & Waste**
- ✓ **Transport**
- ✓ **Land-use and Forests**
- ✓ **Renewable Energy Labelling**
- ✓ **Gold Standard micro-scale**
- ✓ **Gold Standard for Sustainable Urban Development**

[Validation & Verification Bodies – Gold Standard for the Global Goals](#)

After the appointment of the VVB, the Project Developer is responsible for submitting a completed Project Design Document (PDD) and all relevant supporting documentation for VVB validation.

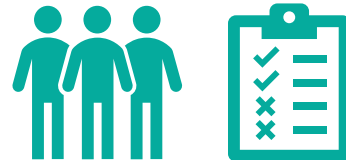


## PROJECT VALIDATION BY VVB

Independent assessment conducted by an accredited validation and verification body ([VVB](#)) is an important element of the GS4GG assurance model. This third-party assessment takes place during the **Preliminary Design Review** and **Performance Review** processes. The objective of the former is achieving **Design Certification** (Validation) while the latter aims at achieving **Performance Certification** (Verification).

At both stages, the GS-VVB would need to perform a **desk review** and **field visit**. The expected output is the independent confirmation that the project is in line with the Gold Standard Requirements.

To provide consistent project assessment, Gold Standard provides a [Validation and Verification Standard](#) (version 1.0; published on 06.03.2023) for accredited VVBs to follow.



## PROJECT VALIDATION BY VVB

### Desk Review

As part of the **Preliminary Design Review** process, the Gold Standard performs a desk review of the completed **Project Design Document** (PDD). The purpose of this review is to assess the project's potential to meet the Gold Standard Requirements and advance to the **Project Design Review** and achieve **Design Certified** status.





## PROJECT VALIDATION BY VVB

### Field visit

The objective of a field visit is to ensure that project activities are executed in accordance with the planned descriptions. Typically, this entails engaging with project personnel, interacting with participants, and observing the ongoing activities.

A Third-party Validation (during Design Certification or Design Certification Renewal) of a project does not require a mandatory physical site visit by the VVB. However, a physical site visit by VVB is obligatory for the initial verification of a project (see Lesson 6 on Performance Review for more information). In addition, if the project developer and VVB choose to combine Preliminary Design Review with the first verification of the Performance Review, the first physical site visit may encompass both validation and verification audits.



# PROJECT VALIDATION BY VVB

## Remote Field visit

Remote audit techniques involve incorporating appropriate technology, such as smartphones, wearable technologies, and other devices, to gather and transmit information for assessments, both locally and remotely.

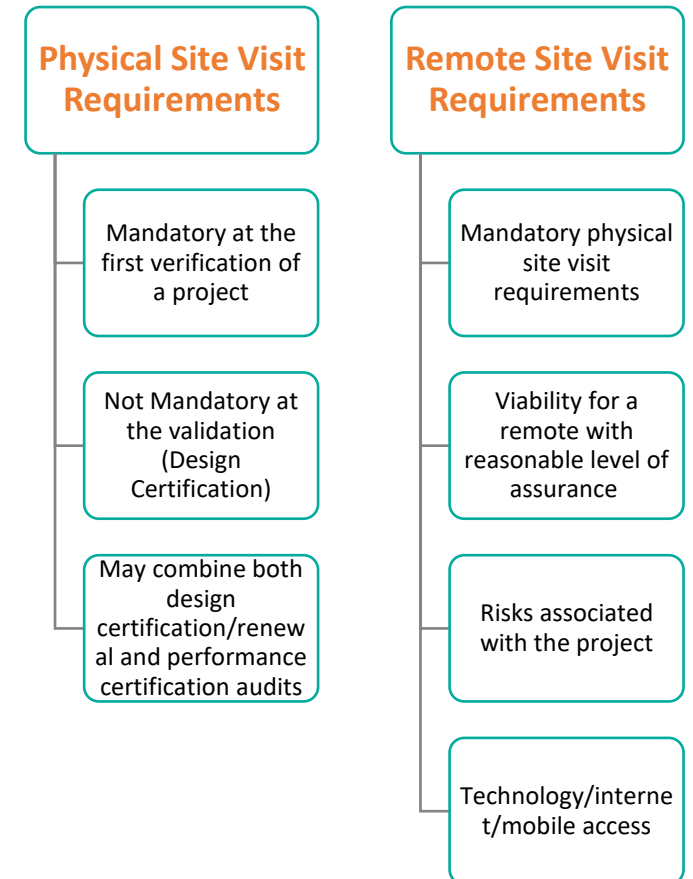
Therefore, Gold Standard has mainstreamed remote assessments and audit techniques as credible alternatives to supplement physical site visits.

It is important to note that remote audit approaches do not imply a reduction in audit requirements or quality, nor an increase in audit costs. Remote audit techniques can complement existing site visit obligations, providing flexibility to projects within the rules and requirements of the Gold Standard for the Global Goals (GS4GG).

Considering the interplay and dependencies between physical site visits and remote audits, it is crucial to develop new requirements and procedures. For example, clear timelines for remote and follow-up audits and a well-defined scope of criteria covered in different audit types should be established. Gold Standard intends to retain minimum physical site visit requirements for validation and verification events while allowing remote audits for other occasions.

Note: The remote assessment requirements outlined in this section are not applicable to the following, due to their separate design and development:

- ✓ Land Use & Forest Projects
- ✓ Programs of Activities (PoAs), including microscale PoAs





## PROJECT VALIDATION BY VVB

### VVB Final Validation Report

After the VVB has provided a positive validation opinion, PD can submit to GS (SustainCERT):

- ✓ VVB approved Project Design Document (PDD).
- ✓ VVB Final Validation Report.
- ✓ Pay the Design Review Fee.

### Project Design Review by GS

- ✓ SustainCERT reviews documentation and requests clarifications and resolutions of corrective actions where required.