

Round 2 W+ Documents Comments and Response

Comments	Response	Notes
W+ Credit		
<p>The farthest the W+ Standard documents go toward clarifying what a W+ unit represents is the defined term:</p> <p>Social assets for purchase that represent the social and economic value of women associated with a specific W+ project.</p> <p>So is this a standard that should be leading to credits? Or is it a standard that is a more traditional Fairtrade or organic label that one ‘attaches’ to some other product?</p> <p>Is a W+ unit the best thing the standard could give us? Or would the best impact be if the standard provided a framework for giving us reporting metrics, such as number of women employed, hours of drudgery alleviated, number of girls educated, etc?</p>	<p>The unit represents the impact of an activity on women’s empowerment, rather than the social value of women. The application of the Standard can be for both credits AND for a label, depending on the needs of the buyer or project developer. The Standard does provide reporting metrics, through the unitization of the result, but through a formula that incorporates qualitative and quantitative data.</p>	<p>This will be changed in the next version.</p>
Additionality		
<p>The Executive Summary of the Standard states that use of the Standard will “...enable women’s empowerment so that women can contribute to sustainable development and poverty alleviation.”</p> <p>It is not clear whether additionality is required for recognition under the W+ Standard: would projects only be recognized in situations where there is gender discrimination?</p> <p>To put it another way, by what criteria does a project qualify to use the W+ Standard?</p>	<p>Additionality is required for the W+, and results are measured against a baseline determined with non-users (or those not benefiting) as a control group in the case of existing projects.</p>	
Standard and Program Guide		
<p>Currently, the Standard and Program Guide both describe justification for the standard and the process of implementing it. These are what VCS would classify as program guide material. The Standard is missing a number of elements that VCS considers important:</p>	<p>These are all very good recommendations which will be incorporated in the next version of the Standard and Program Guide.</p>	

- The concept of crediting period, if there are to be credits issued
- Determining when the project starts (establishing a start date) for crediting purposes
- Establishing the baseline and use of methodologies, if any
- Additionality concepts, if any
- Project scale limitations, if any
- Auditing requirements (validation and verification) and accreditation, if any
- Requirements specifying how will PDD deviations be handled

The Standard and Program Guide are not easily distinguishable and in a number of places they are redundant with one another. Some examples of areas of confusion include the following

- The Standard's sections 2, 3 and 4 (Reasons for using the W+ Standard, Who should use the W+ Standard, and How the W+ Standard is Administered) are not requirements but information about the W+ Standard Program.
- Some requirements that should be listed in the Standard are listed starting on page 6 of the PIN template.
- There are no specific requirements relating to stakeholder identification, so Annex 1 to the Program Guide should be split into requirements (in the Standard) and guidance (in the Program Guide or another guidance document).

Templates

As a body, the templates contain a lot of information that VCS suggests should also go into the Standard and/or the Program Guide

The method template was based on that designed for the Time Method. All methods are meant to be helpful guides to Project Developers, and are not required. However, if new methods (and indicators) are developed, these need to be validated. As with the CCB, the W+ Standard requirements are based on the processes and impacts.

The methodology template seems as though it were designed based on one project type and then generalized to serve as a model for other project types.

Though the W+ Standard aims to serve many different project types, VCS suggests WOCAN take as an example the CCB Standards, which does not set any requirements around the methodologies used by projects but rather requirements for the project's processes and impacts.

W+ Units; validation and verification vs. certification

W+ units are a way of generating income. It would be interesting to learn about potential sources of demand for W+ units

The documents clearly define how income from sales of the units is to be distributed. However, without specific requirements for project start date, baseline conditions and crediting period, W+ units will not have value.

It is not clear to VCS if requirements for start date, etc, will be set out in each methodology, but we recommend that they be specified in the Standard so that they are the same across project types.

Currently it seems that there is only one process for auditing the W+ Standard.

It should be considered whether that is a combined validation and verification step; users of the CCB Standards have found validation to be a

The project start dates are indicated within the PIN; the PDD indicates the baseline conditions and crediting period. This is what provides the boundaries for the generation of the units, to be sold or just held by the Project Developers.

Validation for the W+ is for the methods, not for each project. However, each PDD must be reviewed by WOCAN, as is stated in the Standard. However, this suggestion will be reviewed in the next round of edits.

This is a good recommendation, to meet the needs of buyers who are seeking certification rather than units and will be further explored.

<p>key step in establishing strong project design and in earning commitments from credit buyers.</p> <p>VCS suggests that WOCAN consider a certification model (similar to that of the Forest Stewardship Council) for the W+ Standard. This would eliminate the need to develop rules about accounting for W+ units but still generate an audited report for project investors.</p> <p>In either case, WOCAN needs to consider how audit bodies are accredited and rules around the composition of audit teams and processes.</p>	<p>Audits are to be conducted by individuals, not bodies as is the case with the VCS. One assurance provider, the Social Audit Network, has developed the training curriculum and accreditation rules for auditors. This information will be added to the next version of the Standard.</p>	
Miscellaneous		
<p>The Verified Carbon Standard is referred to as the Voluntary Carbon Standard in the Program Guide and the PIN template.</p>	<p>Noted. To be changed in the next version.</p>	