

Greenhouse Gas Protocol

Standard Development and Revision Procedure

Version No.	Date adopted	Description of Amendment
1	26.11.2024	
1.1	16.10.2025	Revisions to 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.5.1, 4.5.2.
1.2	25.11.2025	Revision to 4.4.1

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1 Introduction

1.1 Definitions

- 1.1.1 “Adaptation” is a necessary adjustment to ensure a standard is relevant in the contexts where it is applied (e.g., for national or regional relevance, scale of enterprise, or for specific products or sectors).
- 1.1.2 “Clarification” is an informative explanation of the intent of a requirement of a standard, and may be provided without the need for stakeholder consultation.
- 1.1.3 “Co-Hosts” refers to the co-hosts of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol), i.e., the World Resources Institute (WRI) and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). GHG Protocol is a joint initiative of WRI and WBCSD.
- 1.1.4 “GHG Protocol” describes the partnership established between the Co-Hosts to work with governments, industry associations, NGOs, businesses, academia, and other organizations to develop internationally accepted greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting and reporting standards and tools, and to promote their adoption in order to achieve a low emissions economy worldwide.
- 1.1.5 “Interpretation” is a normative explanation of the intent or application of a requirement, where the interpretation has implications for how compliance may be assessed and where existing requirements and guidance are ambiguous or lacking.
- 1.1.6 “Pilot Testing Group” describes a group of stakeholders convened following development or revision of a draft standard to trial new methods or requirements in practice and provide feedback on their usability and value.
- 1.1.7 “Secretariat” describes the body that runs the day-to-day activities of the GHG Protocol, including drafting standards and supporting the Steering Committee and Independent Standards Board with their meetings and documentation.
- 1.1.8 “Standard” describes any normative document, informed by subject matter experts, and approved by GHG Protocol governance bodies, that provides guidance on the accounting of GHG emissions and supports implementation.
- 1.1.9 “Technical Working Groups” describes the multi-stakeholder bodies that support the development of the technical content of GHG Protocol standards according to the *Standard Development and Revision Procedure*.

1.2 Abbreviations

- 1.2.1 The following abbreviations are used in this document:

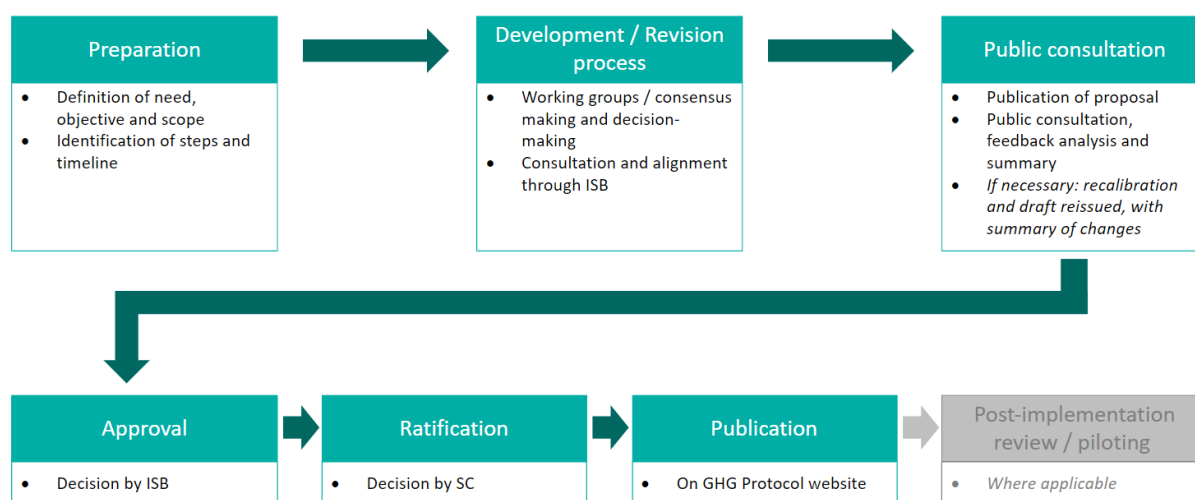
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GHG Protocol	Greenhouse Gas Protocol
ISB	Independent Standards Board
PTG	Pilot Testing Group
SC	Steering Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Technical Working Group
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WRI	World Resources Institute

1.3 About this document

- 1.3.1 This document specifies the procedures to develop, revise, approve and maintain standards owned by GHG Protocol.
- 1.3.2 All procedures shall apply from the time this document is approved, without retrospective effect on any already ongoing activities for the development or revision of standards.
- 1.3.3 Further details on the different GHG Protocol governance bodies and their activities and roles within this context can be found in the *GHG Protocol Governance Overview* and applicable Terms of Reference (ToRs).
- 1.3.4 This document is the property of the GHG Protocol Co-Hosts and is approved by the GHG Protocol Steering Committee (SC), supported by advice from the Independent Standards Board (ISB) and GHG Protocol Secretariat (Secretariat).
- 1.3.5 The latest version of this document will be made publicly available on the GHG Protocol website and shall supersede any previous versions thereof. It is the user’s responsibility to check that any printed copies correspond to the current version.

2 Overarching Process

The development or revision of a standard shall include the following steps, with revisions undergoing these steps on a five-year cycle:



For information on Urgent Revisions, see Section 8.

3 Preparation for Development or Revision of a Standard

3.1 Need, Scope, and Objectives

- 3.1.1 In a first step and prior to the development or revision of a standard, its need, scope, and objectives shall be assessed and considered by the Secretariat and then presented to the ISB. Where relevant, particular reference shall be made to:
 - (i) Comments on standard development or revision needs received from stakeholders pursuant to Section 4.3.
 - (ii) New or emerging scientific evidence or changes in public policy.
 - (iii) Research on the existence and design of other comparable initiatives.

- (iv) Proactive engagement of organizations responsible for similar programs.
 - (v) Analysis of the standard's effectiveness pursuant to Section 4.9.1.
- 3.1.2 Upon finalization of a recommendation for the development or revision of a standard, the ISB shall advise the SC on the need for, scope and objectives of new and/or revised standards pursuant to Section 3.1.1 of the applicable ISB ToR.
- 3.1.3 The SC shall be the final arbiter of whether a new standard or a standard revision shall proceed.

3.2 Standard Development Plan and Workplan

- 3.2.1 Following a decision by the SC that a new standard or standard revision shall proceed and prior to the development or revision of a standard, the Secretariat shall draft a Standard Development Plan (SDP) based on the GHG Protocol *Standard Development Plan Template*.
- 3.2.2 Where applicable, the Secretariat shall engage with relevant stakeholders including with the TWGs pursuant to Section 4.2 in the definition or refinement of the SDP.
- 3.2.3 The SDP will serve as a general reference point for review and approval of a final version draft standard by the ISB, taking into consideration any refinements made.
- 3.2.4 In support of the SDP, the Secretariat shall identify the proposed workplan, including the procedural steps in the development or revision process, relevant timelines and clearly identified opportunities for stakeholders to contribute
- 3.2.5 Prior to commencement of the work, the SDP and workplan shall be approved by the ISB, as well as any subsequent amendments to either.
- 3.2.6 The identified workplan and its outcome shall be frequently assessed against SDP objectives and updated to reflect any necessary adjustments or changes that occur during the standard development or revision process.

3.3 Public Announcement and Documentation

- 3.3.1 The decision to develop or revise a GHG Protocol standard shall be publicly announced on the GHG Protocol website, together with the relevant SDP and any references to relevant decision-making procedures, where applicable.
- 3.3.2 Updates or changes to the above documents shall be reflected on the GHG Protocol website on an ongoing basis.
- 3.3.3 The Secretariat shall inform stakeholders of any decision to develop or revise a GHG Protocol standard through its mailing list, including details on:
- i. where to find further information on the GHG Protocol website
 - ii. how and when to get involved or provide comments during the relevant development or revision process.

4 Development or Revision Process

4.1 Convening of Technical Working Groups

- 4.1.1 At the start of the development or revision process, the Secretariat shall upon the request of the ISB convene TWGs, following the procedures outlined in the applicable TWG ToR.
- 4.1.2 The TWGs shall provide technical input to the Secretariat within their assigned scope, to support in developing proposals and recommendations to the ISB for the content of the applicable draft standard.

- 4.1.3 Further details on the remit and oversight, responsibilities, composition, appointment, and procedures of the TWGs can be found in the applicable TWG ToR.

4.2 Engagement of Stakeholders

- 4.2.1 During the development or revision of a standard, care shall be taken to ensure as balanced a stakeholder group as possible has been engaged for TWG participation and to provide comments and feedback during the public consultation.

4.3 General and Special Comment Periods

- 4.3.1 A form shall be made publicly available on the GHG Protocol website on an on-going basis, allowing stakeholders to submit any comments or questions on existing standards and make proposals for the development of new standards in between any standard development and revision phases.
- 4.3.2 Informed by comments, questions, and proposals received pursuant to Section 4.3.1, the Secretariat may launch, via survey, a special comment period prior to the development of a new or revision of an existing standard. This survey shall collect targeted comments, questions and/or proposals relating to a particular standard or subject matter area. All feedback received during the special comment period shall be made publicly available on the GHG Protocol website and shall, at minimum, identify the stakeholder type, sector, and region of the respondent. The Secretariat may further publish a summary of feedback on the GHG Protocol website.
- 4.3.3 In exceptional circumstances where good cause exists (e.g., providing commercially sensitive information or pre-publication research findings in support of feedback otherwise subject to public disclosure), a respondent may request that the affected feedback not be made publicly available. Any such requests must be submitted and approved prior to the submission of the affected feedback.
- 4.3.4 During the standard development or revision process, the collection of general comments or questions relating to a particular standard or subject matter area shall be paused – any comments or questions arising shall instead be submitted once the relevant Public Consultation period pursuant to Section 4.4 has commenced.
- 4.3.5 The Secretariat shall keep a record of all comments, questions and proposals received at any point in time pursuant to the provisions in Section 11. When a special comment period is held, comments, questions and proposals received during that special comment period shall form the basis for the decision to develop a new standard or revise an existing standard. When no such special comment period is conducted, all comments, questions and proposals reflected in the record may be considered.

4.4 Public Consultation

- 4.4.1 A formal public consultation shall be carried out for all draft new standards or major revisions during the standard development and revision process, consisting of at least one round of sixty (60) days for submission of comments by stakeholders, with the option for a longer initial duration and/or a further round of consultation upon approval by the ISB.
- 4.4.2 The Secretariat shall announce the launch of any consultation period on the GHG protocol website, together with:
- i. the draft standard
 - ii. details on how to provide comments including deadlines.

- 4.4.3 In addition, all stakeholders identified pursuant to Section 4.2 shall be invited to provide comments on the draft standard.
- 4.4.4 At the end of the consultation period, the Secretariat shall carry out an analysis of the number and variety of stakeholders that have submitted comments to determine whether these are representative of all key groups.
- 4.4.5 If the Secretariat determines that insufficient input has been received from any key stakeholder group(s), the Secretariat shall proactively seek to engage additional experts for their input to be incorporated as part of the public consultation feedback.

4.5 Analysis of Comments and Public Response

- 4.5.1 All feedback received during the public consultation period shall be made publicly available on the GHG Protocol website and shall, at minimum, identify the stakeholder type, sector, and region of the respondent.
- 4.5.2 In exceptional circumstances where good cause exists (e.g., providing commercially sensitive information or pre-publication research findings in support of feedback otherwise subject to public disclosure), a respondent may request that the affected feedback not be made publicly available. Any such requests must be submitted and approved prior to the submission of the affected feedback.
- 4.5.3 Following conclusion of any consultation period pursuant to Section 4.4, the Secretariat shall prepare a summary of all comments received, including those provided during any special comment periods pursuant to Section 4.3, highlighting key themes and proposed areas for amendment.
- 4.5.4 The Secretariat may publish a summary of the public consultation on the GHG Protocol website following conclusion of the consultation period.
- 4.5.5 All stakeholders who have provided comments upon the request of the Secretariat pursuant to Section 4.4.3 shall be informed of the publication of the summary, if relevant.
- 4.5.6 The Secretariat shall keep a record of all comments received during the public consultation pursuant to the provisions in Section 11 which shall form the basis for the further development or revision of a standard.

4.6 Recalibration and Reissuing of Draft

- 4.6.1 Based on the comments received during the public consultation period and as necessary, the Secretariat shall, together with the TWGs and ISB, review and revise the draft standard.
- 4.6.2 When the Secretariat, together with the TWGs, has produced a final draft standard, the Secretariat shall:
 - i. Submit the standard for approval to the ISB, or
 - ii. Make a proposal to the ISB on any further consultation or pilot testing required before the standard is submitted for approval.
- 4.6.3 If the ISB perceives the need for further work and amendment of any standard received, it shall revert the standard back to the Secretariat, with detailed comments on the issues identified and a proposed approach for how to resolve these.
- 4.6.4 Any proposal by the Secretariat for further consultation shall include details on the need, recommended duration and subject matter focus.
- 4.6.5 Any proposal by the Secretariat for pilot testing shall include details on the need, proposed approach, recommended duration, stakeholders to be involved and process for collection of feedback.

4.7 Pilot Testing

- 4.7.1 The Secretariat may make a proposal for pilot testing pursuant to Section 4.6.2 to trial new methods or requirements in practice and to provide feedback on their usability and value.
- 4.7.2 If pilot testing has been approved by the ISB, the Secretariat shall
 - i. Issue an open call for participation in pilot testing via the GHG Protocol website;
 - ii. Create a list of proposed pilot testing participants, ensuring a range of industries and geographies are represented;
 - iii. make a proposal for a final Pilot Testing Group (PTG) to the ISB for approval.
- 4.7.3 Upon confirmation by the ISB, the Secretariat shall convene the PTG and initiate the pilot testing.
- 4.7.4 A pilot testing period shall last at least sixty (60) days, to provide an opportunity for a PTG to review and pilot any draft standard.
- 4.7.5 At the end of a pilot testing period, the Secretariat shall collate all feedback received and prepare and publish a general summary on the GHG Protocol website.
- 4.7.6 All members of the PTG shall be informed of the publication of the summary.
- 4.7.7 Based on the feedback received, the Secretariat shall, together with the TWGs, review and revise the draft standard as necessary and submit it to the ISB.

4.8 Publication of a Final Standard

- 4.8.1 Where a final version draft standard has been approved by the ISB following receipt from the Secretariat, the ISB shall present this for ratification to the SC pursuant to the applicable ISB ToR.
- 4.8.2 To support ratification, the ISB Chair shall direct the Secretariat to prepare a report that:
 - i. Describes the standard's development process to date, demonstrating how the approved procedures have been implemented, including a clear description of any departure from the approved procedure together with the justification for any such departure.
 - ii. Summarizes the main issues of contention and concerns raised by TWG members during the process and how the Secretariat has responded to these.
 - iii. Summarizes all comments received during any public consultation periods, and pilot testing, if any, and an explanation of how these have been responded to in the final draft of the standard.
 - iv. Includes a statement that this summary has been published on the GHG Protocol website, and that stakeholders have been informed of the publication of the summary.
 - v. Includes as an Annex the final version of the standard that is submitted for approval.
- 4.8.3 Following ratification, the standard shall be published on the GHG Protocol website by the Co-Hosts in a timely manner, including any associated guidance or explanations.

4.9 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- 4.9.1 Following publication of a standard and subject to available funding, the Secretariat shall endeavor to conduct or contract a cost/benefit analysis or study of the standard's effectiveness in achieving its stated objectives.
- 4.9.2 The findings of such a study, if relevant, shall be made publicly available on the GHG Protocol website.
- 4.9.3 Any published findings shall inform the need for, scope and objectives of subsequent standard revisions.

5 Variation of Procedures

- 5.1.1 The procedures in this document shall be followed for the development of all new standards or revisions of existing standards and shall form the basis for any decision on procedural adherence by the ISB.
- 5.1.2 In the case of clarifications, administrative and non-substantive changes (Section 6), interpretations and adaptations (Section 7), and urgent revisions (Section 8), the special provisions of those respective sections shall apply.
- 5.1.3 Departures from the procedures contained within this document may be approved by the ISB in exceptional circumstances, when compliance is not possible for reasons beyond the control of the Secretariat or the ISB, or when the ISB advises that an alternative process would better achieve the GHG Protocol's objectives.
- 5.1.4 The Secretariat shall document any such departures in writing and include a description and explanation in a report submitted when ISB approval for the final standard is sought.
- 5.1.5 The ISB shall keep the SC informed in writing of any such departures and, in cases deemed significant, will seek SC support prior to giving approval.

6 Administrative and non-substantive changes

6.1 Procedure for Administrative and Non-Substantive Changes

- 6.1.1 A need for an administrative or non-substantive change to a GHG Protocol standard may be identified, such as the correction of typographic, formatting or citation errors or updates to factual content.
- 6.1.2 Administrative and non-substantive changes to a GHG Protocol standard may be made at any time at the discretion of the Secretariat and do not require a formal standard revision process nor approval by the ISB and SC.
- 6.1.3 Any changes that are made pursuant to this Section shall:
 - (i) require the publication of a new version number of the standard, to be published on the GHG Protocol website, including a summary of the specific changes in the version control section of the updated standard.
 - (ii) be notified to stakeholders via an announcement on the GHG Protocol website and in any subsequent revision process.

7 Clarifications, Interpretations and Adaptations

7.1 General Considerations

- 7.1.1 A need for a clarification, interpretation or adaptation of a GHG Protocol standard may be identified.
- 7.1.2 A clarification shall be taken to mean an *informative* explanation of the intent of a requirement of a standard. Clarifications may be provided without the need for stakeholder consultation.
- 7.1.3 An interpretation shall be taken to mean a normative explanation of the intent or application of a requirement, where the interpretation has implications for how compliance may be assessed and where existing requirements and guidance are ambiguous or lacking.

- 7.1.4 An adaptation shall be taken to mean a necessary adjustment to ensure the standard is relevant in the contexts where it is applied (e.g., for national or regional relevance, scale of enterprise, or for specific products or sectors).

7.2 Procedure for Clarifications

- 7.2.1 To support with clarification questions, the Secretariat shall maintain a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the GHG Protocol website, addressing key questions.

7.3 Procedure for Interpretations

- 7.3.1 Where the need for an interpretation is identified, the Secretariat shall prepare and share a proposal paper with the ISB, which includes at least the following:
- i. Scope of the issue for interpretation.
 - ii. Need, objective and considerations.
 - iii. A draft proposal for review.
 - iv. Where applicable: Planned consultation process, including timeline and opportunities for stakeholders to contribute.
 - v. Decision-making process – including how decisions are made and by whom.
- 7.3.2 Procedures to support interpretations shall be subject to a minimum consultation period of thirty (30) days.
- 7.3.3 Following approval by the ISB, the Secretariat shall announce the commencement of the consultation period and shall make the draft proposal publicly available on the GHG Protocol website.
- 7.3.4 Upon conclusion of the consultation period, the Secretariat shall prepare a summary of input received and develop a revised draft interpretation for approval by the ISB and ratification by the SC.
- 7.3.5 Once an interpretation has been ratified, it shall come into immediate effect.
- 7.3.6 Any interpretations that are made pursuant to this Section shall:
- (i) be notified to stakeholders via an announcement on the GHG Protocol website.
 - (ii) where relevant, be incorporated into the relevant standard during its next revision.

7.4 Procedure for Adaptations

- 7.4.1 Where the need for adaptations is identified, the Secretariat shall prepare and share a proposal paper with the ISB, which includes at least the following:
- i. Scope of adaptation.
 - ii. Need, objective and considerations.
 - iii. Proposed process for development of the adaptation, including timeline and opportunities for stakeholders to contribute.
 - iv. Decision-making process – including how decisions are made and by whom.
- 7.4.2 Procedures for adaptation of a standard shall be subject to a consultation period pursuant to Section 4.4.
- 7.4.3 If an adaptations of a standard is developed, any substantive differences between the original standard and adapted version shall be documented and made publicly available on the GHG Protocol website, following approval by the ISB.

8 Urgent Revisions

8.1 Procedure for Urgent Revisions

- 8.1.1 The ISB, upon the recommendation of the Secretariat, may determine that there is a need for an urgent revision to a standard.
- 8.1.2 This may be the case, but is not limited to the following circumstances:
- i. Formal complaints raised by stakeholders that are deemed to have merit as per the *GHG Protocol Complaints Procedure*.
 - ii. Problems of implementation which affect multiple organizations.
 - iii. Perceived threats to GHG Protocol's credibility.
 - iv. Changes in legislation or international obligations that affect the implementation of a GHG Protocol standard.
- 8.1.3 If the ISB determines that there is a need for an urgent revision, it shall make a recommendation to the SC to launch the procedures for urgent revisions.
- 8.1.4 Upon confirmation of the recommendation by the SC, the ISB shall request the Secretariat to draft a proposal for how the standard in question may be revised.
- 8.1.5 Prior to any incorporation of the proposed revision into the standard, the proposal must be submitted to the ISB for approval.
- 8.1.6 Urgent revisions shall not be required to undergo a public consultation process.
- 8.1.7 If the ISB determines that an urgent revision is not required it shall:
- i. Provide reasons for the decision to the Secretariat.
 - ii. Where applicable, take and document alternative measures that it considers to be appropriate.
- 8.1.8 Any revisions that are made pursuant to this Section shall:
- (i) require the publication of a new version number of the standard, to be published on the GHG Protocol website, including a summary of the specific changes in the version control section of the updated standard.
 - (ii) be notified to stakeholders via an announcement on the GHG Protocol website and in any subsequent revision process.
 - (iii) be included in the subsequent regular standard revision and consultation process.

9 Scheduled Standard Review and Revision

9.1 Maximum time before assessment of need to review

- 9.1.1 Within a maximum of five years of the date of publication of a GHG Protocol standard, the Secretariat shall oversee a formal consultation with stakeholders to undertake a substantive review of the standard to ensure and improve its continuing relevance and effectiveness in meeting its objectives.
- 9.1.2 As input to a standard review, the Secretariat shall compile and analyze relevant data and information, including any learnings since the last revision from:
- i. Monitoring, evaluation and learning activities, including assessments of the effectiveness of the standard, and occurrence of unintended negative effects.
 - ii. Analysis of feedback received from stakeholders, particularly with respect to the standard's effectiveness, implementation, and scope.
 - iii. Any urgent substantive revisions implemented since the last revision of the standard.
 - iv. External research and industry best practices, including assessments of emerging sustainability risks and opportunities.
 - v. Changes to relevant legislation across the full scope of the standard.

- 9.1.3 If the review determines that a revision is necessary, the Secretariat shall follow the procedures outlined in Section 3 to obtain a decision to start the standard revision process.
- 9.1.4 If the review determines that a revision is not necessary, the Secretariat shall inform the ISB accordingly and request confirmation that the standard may be reaffirmed.
- 9.1.5 Any decision to reaffirm a standard shall be communicated publicly, including the rationale and a date for the proposed next review.

10 General Requirements for GHG Protocol Standards

10.1 Content and Structure

- 10.1.1 All new or revised standards shall include:
 - i. Objective and scope of the standard.
 - ii. Formal status of document (draft or approved for use).
 - iii. Date of approval and ratification, and in the case of an updated version the transition period that will apply before the updated version comes into effect.
 - iv. Statement to the effect that the approved English language version of the standard is the official version, and that in the event of inconsistencies with other (translated) versions, the approved English language version shall be definitive.
 - v. Date by when the standard will be reviewed pursuant to Section 9.1.
 - vi. Contact information.
 - vii. Glossary of key terms required to guide consistent interpretation and implementation.
 - viii. An International Standard Book Number or other appropriate unique identifier.

10.2 Form and Working Language

- 10.2.1 To facilitate application, all new or revised standards shall:
 - i. Be written so that conformity can clearly and demonstrably be assessed for any user within the scope of the standard, without the need for subsequent modification or adaptation.
 - ii. Use language which minimizes ambiguity.
 - iii. Not favor any particular technology or patented item.
- 10.2.2 The working language for the development or revision of a standard shall be English.
- 10.2.3 Where relevant, efforts shall be made to ensure that key documents are translated into selected languages.

11 Record keeping

- 11.1.1 For each standard development or revision process, the Secretariat shall ensure that the following records are kept for at least five years and are accessible for review on request:
 - i. Copies of drafts of the standard circulated for public review, and of the final approved version of the standard.
 - ii. Names and affiliations of organizations, groups and/or individuals invited to comment on the standard during each stage of its development or revision.
 - iii. Names and affiliations of the members of the ISB, SC, TWGs and invited experts who participated in the review and revision of each draft of the standard.

- iv. Copies of all comments received on drafts of the standard circulated for formal review.
- v. A synopsis of the comments received in response to each draft of the standard circulated for formal review, together with an explanation of how the comments were subsequently taken into account.
- vi. A copy of the policies and procedures that guided the standard development activity at the time.
- vii. A description of and explanation for any departures from the *GHG Protocol Standard Development and Revision Procedure* and associated documents.
- viii. The final report on the implementation of the standard development and revision procedure considered by the SC showing how the procedure was implemented.
- ix. All formal decisions of the SC and the ISB in relation to the development and approval of the standard.

12 Interpretation of Governing Documents

- 12.1.1 The GHG Protocol governance structures and processes to develop, revise and approve any standards owned, published, and maintained by the GHG Protocol, are governed by the ToRs and related documents, collectively referred to as the "Governing Documents," as detailed in the GHG Protocol *Governance Overview*.
- 12.1.2 These documents shall be interpreted together as a whole and not separately. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the provisions of any of the Governing Documents, the provisions shall be interpreted in a manner that gives effect to the overall governance and objectives of the GHG Protocol, to the fullest extent possible. Where necessary, any questions of interpretation should be referred to the body responsible for the approval of the respective ToR or document.