

The global standard is not an end in itself – it is a tool for realizing the project objectives – improving accountability standards, reducing transaction costs, creating space for civil society.

The global standard is a reference standard – it is not designed to replace existing standards but rather drive alignment across standards, regulatory regimes, donor frameworks etc.

Global standard should be open to everyone to use.

Its use should be voluntary and the cost of using it should be low or zero, with this depending to some degree on how it is used

We noted that alignment will mean different things for different end users.

In relation to organisations that manage standards, we have discussed three meanings of alignment so far:

- A sliding scale of alignment with the content of the global standard e.g. 20, 40, 60% etc
- Alignment with the informing principles, content areas and feedback mechanisms in the global standard but the commitments and associated action in each content area can be adapted to suit the local context.
- Full alignment with the commitments and actions with or without justifiable exceptions
- Other combinations of the above.

We recognized that some form of verification of alignment may help drive alignment amongst some end users e.g. self-assessment, peer review, third party certification etc.

We also noted that there are pros and cons to the project getting involved in driving alignment beyond simply providing and promoting the standard and the guidance document and possibly providing some training and a self-assessment tool.

We discussed at least two ways that this verification could be done in practice:

Organisations can choose to use in **“light way”**

- They can self-assess against the standard
- they can pick and choose which parts of the standard are relevant to them
- they can adapt those parts in ways which are appropriate to their context.

Organisations which use the standard in a “light way” should not be able to publicly claim to be aligned with the standard or use the registered global standard trademark in ways which suggest they are aligned with the standard.

The project will provide a self-assessment tool, worked examples, case studies etc.

Organisations can also choose to use it in a **“heavy way”**

- They must align with the global standard according to some agreed criteria

- The alignment must be verified through a peer review or through third party.

Organisations which use the standard in a “heavy way” can publicly claim to be aligned with the standard and could use a global standard quality mark.

The project will provide the criteria, the peer review mechanism, the quality mark etc.

We noted that the project could offer both options i.e. they are not mutually exclusive

How we would like to see it used will vary depending on the type of organization.

For organisations that manage accountability standards:

- Obligation on partner agencies to use it in a heavy way, noting that we cannot pre-determine the outcome.
- Strong preference that other new/existing standards also use it in heavy way.

For CSOs

- In countries where a standard already exists, then we want that standard to align with the global standard and we want CSOs be signatories to the country standard.
- In countries where a standard does not exist then we will encourage development of an aligned standard.
- In countries where this is not possible then CSOs can use it in a light way.