

The Gold Standard

Briefing for Potential Supporters

(July 2009)

1. What is The Gold Standard?

The Gold Standard is a certification scheme for premium quality CDM/JI and voluntary offset projects. It was designed as a market tool for promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency projects that foster sustainable development and deliver real, verifiable emissions reductions. The Gold Standard is currently endorsed by over 60 non-governmental environmental and development organizations worldwide (“NGO Supporters”). The backing of these NGO Supporters boosts the credibility and environmental integrity of The Gold Standard brand and allows Gold Standard credits to be sold for a premium price.

The Gold Standard certification scheme was the result of an extensive 12-month workshop and web-based consultation process conducted by an independent Standards Advisory Board composed of NGOs, scientists, project developers and government representatives. Nearly all NGOs consulted agreed on the intrinsic value of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects as an effective solution towards addressing the root-cause of global warming, namely anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels. This consensus reflects their commitment towards a standard that promotes a fundamental shift in the way that humans generate and consume energy.

The Gold Standard Foundation is comprised of three main bodies: The GS Secretariat, the Technical Advisory Committee (GS TAC) and The GS Foundation Board. The Secretariat is responsible for maintenance, promotion and education regarding The Gold Standard. The GS TAC is comprised of independent carbon market experts who supervise audits of a sample of validated/verified projects, review the efficacy of pilot projects, and review new methodology proposals. The Foundation Board is responsible for determining the strategic development of the Gold Standard, overseeing the budget and approving NGO Supporters.

2. How does The Gold Standard promote sustainable development?

Sustainable development must be assessed at the local or national level, rather than the international level. The Gold Standard created the following flexible tools to ensure that sustainable development is implemented locally:

- the ‘Do No Harm’ Assessment and the Sustainable Development Matrix;
- clear requirements for transparent public stakeholder consultations; and
- the application of environmental and social assessment procedures.

Gold Standard project developers must assess and measure all potential impacts of a given project, be transparent in reporting these impacts, and respond to any stakeholder concerns in order to ensure approval by the local community. Developers also perform long-term monitoring of select sustainable development indicators.

3. Why is NGO support important to The Gold Standard?

NGO support is crucial for several reasons. First, projects need support from NGOs active in the host country if they are to reflect the local concerns and the conditions in that country. Similarly, NGO Supporters can take an active part in the project development process, offering their expertise in the areas most suitable for the project type and project location, thereby lending further credibility to local sustainable development initiatives. Finally, every NGO that supports The Gold Standard helps strengthen the collective statement that the carbon market should foster transparency, environmental rigor and sustainable development. This further strengthens the Gold Standard brand and helps Gold Standard projects fetch premium prices, which translates into a stronger financial incentive to develop projects with tangible sustainability benefits.

4. Who can apply to become a Gold Standard NGO Supporter?

The Gold Standard is open to all non-governmental, and/or community-based non-profit organizations, particularly those that have an interest in promoting sustainable development or focusing on climate and energy issues, and do not represent industry.

Becoming a Gold Standard NGO Supporter does not require any financial commitment, nor does it commit a supporter to the purchase of Gold Standard credits. It also does not preclude a supporter from recognizing another standard or project type not encompassed within The Gold Standard methodology, or from critiquing a Gold Standard project.

5. What is the role of an NGO Supporter?

Supporters are invited to become involved at both the macro and micro level of The Gold Standard Certification Scheme.

At the macro or global level, NGO Supporters are invited to become involved in the operation and strategic direction of the Gold Standard – in effect NGO Supporters become Owners. This is accomplished in the following ways:

- Strategic amendments to the Gold Standard rules and regulations based on learning in the field or policy shifts require the approval of a majority of NGO Supporters and the GS Foundation Board. Proposals on new project types must be preceded by community consultations conducted by the proposing NGO Supporter.
- At least 50% of Gold Standard Foundation Board members and members of the GS TAC are recruited from NGO Supporters.

At the micro or local level, NGO Supporters are invited (but not required) to be involved with specific projects from start to finish. Valid issues raised by a NGO Supporter should be appropriately addressed by the project proponent. This process builds credibility for the Gold Standard process.

NGO Supporters are encouraged to give input to projects at the following times:

- Project Design Phase (Local Stakeholder Consultation): During the design phase of a project, the project proponent

conducts and invites the relevant NGO Supporters to the Local Stakeholder Consultation.

- Project Validation Phase (Stakeholder Feedback Round, (SFR)): NGO Supporters are consulted during the SFR, which normally occurs before, or in parallel with, the project validation. The SFR is crucial for ensuring that either previous issues raised or new issues that have arisen are properly addressed by the project proponent before validation is complete.
- Project Registration Phase (GS 8-week Registration Review Period): Projects that successfully pass validation enter into an 8-week registration review period, during which all NGO Supporters are alerted to the validation report and validated project documents. NGO Supporters have 6 weeks to provide anonymous requests for clarification or corrective action to the GS Secretariat. The GS Secretariat summarizes these requests before forwarding them to the validator/project proponent.
- Credit Issuance Phase (GS 3-week Verification Review Period): Projects that successfully pass verification enter into a 3-week verification review period, during which NGO Supporters have 2 weeks to review the verification and sustainability monitoring report and provide requests for clarification or corrective action to the GS Secretariat. The GS Secretariat summarizes these requests before forwarding them to the verifier/project proponent.

6. How can your organization apply to become a Gold Standard NGO Supporter?

The application process to become a GS NGO Supporter has four steps:

- 1) Submit via post and (if possible) email an official copy of your organization's Charter, or other proof of non-profit status to:

The Gold Standard Foundation
Avenue Louis Casaï 79
CH-1216 Geneva-Cointrin
Switzerland
info@cdmgoldstandard.org

2) Provide a short Cover Letter describing the motivation for becoming a GS NGO Supporter, including a brief description of the NGO's main objectives or mission.

3) Clearly indicate in the checklist below the extent to which you would like to contribute your time or expertise. (Checking one or more of the boxes does not obligate you to engage in every case, but does provide the GS Secretariat with a better idea of your level of interest).

4) Sign the official support statement on the last page of this form. (Please note that this statement does not affect the NGO's right to criticize a particular project).

The completed application will be submitted to the Gold Standard Foundation Board for review. The final decision for accepting a new NGO Supporter rests with the Gold Standard Foundation Board, which meets on a quarterly basis.

7. What happens after becoming a NGO Supporter?

Following your acceptance as a NGO Supporter, you will start to receive information regarding project review periods and you may be contacted by projects in your region to attend stakeholder consultations.

We will also consult you from time to time on strategic issues, and we are happy to receive applications from individuals within your organization for TAC or Board membership. You will also be listed on our website and on our materials as a "Gold Standard NGO Supporter." Furthermore, you will be eligible to open a free account in the GS Registry/Project administration system. This will allow you to review project documents during the review periods mentioned above.

Finally, you will be polled every two years to verify your continued interest as a NGO Supporter.

Gold Standard NGO Supporter Opportunities Checklist

Recognizing the mutual benefits of being an official GS NGO Supporter, we would like to indicate our level of interest via the following channels:

- Just the minimum (i.e. consultation when there is a proposed strategic amendment to the GS scheme; invitations for input during the four main phases of project development).
- Actively offering my assistance to conduct structured and in-depth project reviews during the 8-week registration review process.
- Actively offering logistical assistance to project developers or local experts to help organize stakeholder consultation meetings or capacity building events (This interest is communicated to project developers in your area).
- Actively offering my technical assistance during GS-internal micro-scale validations. [Internal micro-scale validations (for projects generating less than 5,000 tonnes of CO₂e annually) do not require the site visit of a DOE/validator and therefore local expertise is extremely useful. The GS TAC, with help from an upcoming roster of experts, including select NGO-Supporters, performs these micro-scale assessments].
- Actively willing to apply for and be listed on a Roster of Experts, whereby a DOE/Validator can contact me to verify site-specific project information, or the GS Secretariat can request my assistance with project assessments (This will require a formal application with the GS Secretariat, along with proof of your specific expertise).

Gold Standard Support Form

NAME OF ORGANISATION:

Supports the Gold Standard as a methodology that, if correctly implemented, will ensure that CDM/JI and voluntary carbon market projects meet the objectives of Articles 6 and 12 of the Kyoto Protocol and in particular that projects:

- Will provide a real contribution towards sustainable development in host countries
- Will deliver real, measurable and long term emissions reductions

Signed:

Position:

Date:

Contact details of Focal Point:

If you would like to be included in local consultations, please also provide us with a list of countries in which you are active and the contact details of these respective offices. This will allow us to directly invite your local representative and to provide comments.

**Please return by fax or email to: +41 (0)22 788 7082
info@cdmgoldstandard.org**