

The Gold Standard Foundation: NGO Brief

1. What is The Gold Standard?

The Gold Standard is a global benchmark certification scheme that certifies high quality renewable energy and energy efficiency carbon offset projects in both the compliance and voluntary markets. All Gold Standard projects demonstrate real and permanent greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions and ensure that sustainable development benefits in local communities are measured, monitored and verified. For these reasons, The Gold Standard is the only certification scheme to be endorsed by more than 80 NGOs worldwide.

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, day-to-day operations, 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

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 organisations, 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 recognising 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 can contribute to the evolution of The Gold Standard.

- Strategic amendments to The Gold Standard rules and regulations based on field-based learning or policy shifts seek the approval of a majority of NGO Supporters and the GS Foundation Board.
- Supporters participate in global consultations related to ongoing strategy.
- At least a third of Gold Standard Foundation Board members and members of the GS TAC are usually recruited from NGO Supporters.

At the micro or local level, NGO Supporters are invited to be involved with specific projects from start to finish. The project proponent should appropriately address any valid issue raised by an NGO Supporter before the project can be successfully registered as Gold Standard. This NGO participation builds credibility for The Gold Standard process and ensures the development and implementation of high quality projects that help build local sustainable development.

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

- Project Design Phase (Local Stakeholder Consultation, LSC): 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 to the GS Secretariat. The GS Secretariat summarizes these requests before forwarding them to the validator and 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 to the GS Secretariat. The GS Secretariat summarizes these requests before forwarding them to the verifier and project proponent.

6. Why do NGOs want to be Gold Standard Supporters? What are the benefits?

- **Local input:** Supporters receive personalized invitations to participate in local stakeholder consultations when developers are obliged to ask local, national and international NGOs with local offices for comments on the proposed project activity
- **Project feedback:** NGO Supporters have the unique opportunity to review the online documents of projects applying for Gold Standard registration or credit issuance and to provide feedback

- **Shared values:** NGOs can endorse The Gold Standard's work to support transparency and sustainable development in carbon markets
- **Participation:** NGO Supporters are consulted from time to time on strategic issues regarding The Gold Standard Foundation's evolution
- **Strategy:** Senior individuals within an organization can apply for TAC or Board membership
- **Promotional benefits:** NGO Supporters are highlighted in Gold Standard website, newsletter and social media, and also have the possibility of collaborative marketing opportunities such as case studies, press releases and events, offering the NGO a global audience for increasing its visibility and networking potential
- **Remunerated opportunities:** In some regions, experienced NGO representatives with expertise in specific project types are asked to provide remunerated reviews for Gold Standard projects
- **Attendance sponsorship:** Depending on level of expertise or activeness, NGO Supporters can be sponsored to attend regional Gold Standard workshops, training academies or networking events
- **Co-hosting opportunities:** NGO Supporters are increasingly invited to co-host Gold Standard workshops

7. How can your organisation apply to become a GS NGO Supporter?

The application process to become a GS NGO Supporter is as follows:

1. Fill in the Supporter Form application template, which includes the motivation for wanting to become a GS NGO Supporter, a statement that the NGO has not been convicted of any criminal activity, an opportunities checklist, and official supporter statement.
2. Please also attach a scanned copy of proof of non-profit status (e.g. your organisation's Charter)

Scan and send the application via email to: info@cdmgoldstandard.org

Or submit via post to: **The Gold Standard Foundation, Avenue Louis Casai 79, CH-1216 Geneva-Cointrin, Switzerland**

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

Gold Standard NGO Supporter Application Form

I. We, _____ (name of NGO) hereby apply to become an official Gold Standard NGO Supporter. Our main motivation for wanting to become a GS NGO Supporter is as follows:

II. We, _____ (name of NGO) hereby declare that our organisation has not been convicted of any criminal and/or illegal activity and understand that such activity could result in a rejection of our application to become an NGO Supporter, or result in a removal from the NGO Supporter Network should the information be discovered at a later date.

III. Opportunities Checklist

Recognising the mutual benefits of being an official Gold Standard NGO Supporter, please check the box which best fits your organization's ability and interest:

Technical

- Attending or offering logistical assistance to project developers to help organise stakeholder consultation meetings or capacity building events in my region, on a volunteer basis (This interest is relayed to project developers in your area)*
- Offering my assistance to conduct structured and more in-depth project reviews during the 8-week registration review or 3-week issuance review process, on a volunteer basis*
- Offering my technical assistance during GS-internal micro-scale validations by applying to be listed on a GS Roster of Experts. (This will require a formal application with the GS Secretariat, along with proof of your specific expertise). Note: 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. Thus, local expertise is extremely useful*

General

- Being consulted when there is a proposed strategic amendment to the Gold Standard scheme*
- Co-hosting regional or international workshops with Gold Standard Foundation about carbon market and sustainable development themes, on a volunteer basis*
- Lobbying and campaigning with The Gold Standard Foundation to ensure that carbon markets place an emphasis on transparency and sustainable development, on a volunteer basis*

Legal

- In consideration for _____ [name of NGO] being accepted as Gold Standard NGO Supporter, _____ [name of NGO] voluntarily agrees to the following:

1. TO ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY RISKS OF LOSS, OR PERSONAL INJURY, INCLUDING DEATH that may be sustained by _____ [name of NGO], or any of its employees, agents, affiliates or assigns, including loss or damage to property owned by _____ [name of NGO], or any of its employees, agents, affiliates or assigns, while engaging in any activities pursuant to its Gold Standard NGO Supporter status.
2. TO RELEASE, WAIVE, HOLD HARMLESS, DISCHARGE, AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE THE GOLD STANDARD FOUNDATION, its trustees, officers, employees, agents, and staff (hereinafter referred to as "Releases") from any and all liability, claims, actions, demands, expenses, attorney fees, breach of contract actions, breach of statutory duty or other duty of care, warranty, strict liability actions, and causes of action whatsoever, that _____ [name of NGO], or any of its employees, agents, affiliates or assigns, might now have or may acquire in the future, arising out of or related to any loss, damage, or injury, including death, that may be sustained by _____ [name of NGO], or any of its employees, agents, affiliates or assigns, while engaging in activities pursuant to its Gold Standard NGO Supporter status, including, but not limited to, any claim that the act or omission complained of was caused in whole or in part by the negligence or carelessness of the Releases.
3. I hereby further agree that this Release shall be construed in accordance with the laws of Switzerland and that if any portion is deemed to be invalid, the remainder of the Agreement will still be binding and enforceable.

○ _____ [Name of NGO] acknowledges that it has received and reviewed a copy of The Gold Standard Terms and Conditions, and that _____ [name of NGO] agrees to comply with these Terms and Conditions as they are amended from time to time.

IV. Gold Standard Supporter Statement

[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:

Email:

Telephone:

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If you would like to be included in local stakeholder consultations, please 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

V. Please attach a copy of the organisational charter or proof of non-profit status