

Gold Standard for the Global Goals – Claims Guidelines

NB: These Guidelines reflect an early draft for Consultation alongside Gold Standard for the Global Goals and will be updated following stakeholder input.

INTRODUCTION

Gold Standard is a standard and certification body that works to catalyse more ambitious action for climate security and sustainable development. Our holistic standard, Gold Standard for the Global Goals, enables activities that protect the climate to maximise, quantify, and verify their sustainable development impacts. Gold Standard was established in 2003 by WWF and other international NGOs as a best practice standard to ensure projects that reduced carbon emissions under the UN's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) also delivered on the dual mandate to foster sustainable development. Now with more than 80 NGO supporters and 1300+ projects in over 70 countries, Gold Standard projects have created billions of dollars of shared value from climate and development action worldwide.

These guidelines are intended to assist project developers, partners and funders in communicating accurately and appropriately about the benefits derived from Gold Standard projects. In addition they are designed to safeguard the reputation of Gold Standard and its stakeholders, the credibility of the Gold Standard trademark and Gold Standard activities and impacts, and confidence in the markets we operate in.

The key principles that underpin the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Claims Guideline (hereby known as the Guideline) are:

- **Transparency** – claims made should openly reflect the nature of the claimants involvement in the given Project or associated impact.
- **Rigour** – claims made should reflect the level of rigour and confidence associated with Gold Standard.
- **Accuracy** – claims made should be accurate and an honest reflection of the nature of involvement and achievement of the Project and/or Impact. They should also reflect the social and/or scientific basis of the claims made.
- **Verifiable** – claims made should be traceable back to Gold Standard certified project documentation.
- **Straightforward** – claims should be communicated simply and in 'plain English' and in line with the intended audiences expectation and level of understanding.

Scope and Applicability

These guidelines are intended for use by Gold Standard project developers, partners, and funders of Gold Standard projects or the certified impacts these projects deliver. For Gold Standard project developers, this document will form part of the Requirements. Material breach of the principles or content of these guidelines shall be treated as contravening the Gold Standard Terms and Conditions.

Claims that abide by all of the relevant rules in this document will be deemed to be 'authorised'. Any claim using the name Gold Standard that does not comply with these guidelines, will be treated as 'unauthorised'. At all times and in its sole discretion Gold Standard reserves the right to take any action against any entity that engages in unauthorised claims. Gold Standard reserves the right to introduce or amend a formal claims approval process as required.

Those who make false or misleading claims (i.e. outside the principles of these Guidelines) will face action from Gold Standard. It is therefore recommended that all stakeholders fulfil the requirements set out in these Guidelines to ensure that any claims made are in keeping with the values and principles of Gold Standard.

Finally, please see the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Terms and Conditions for further requirements.

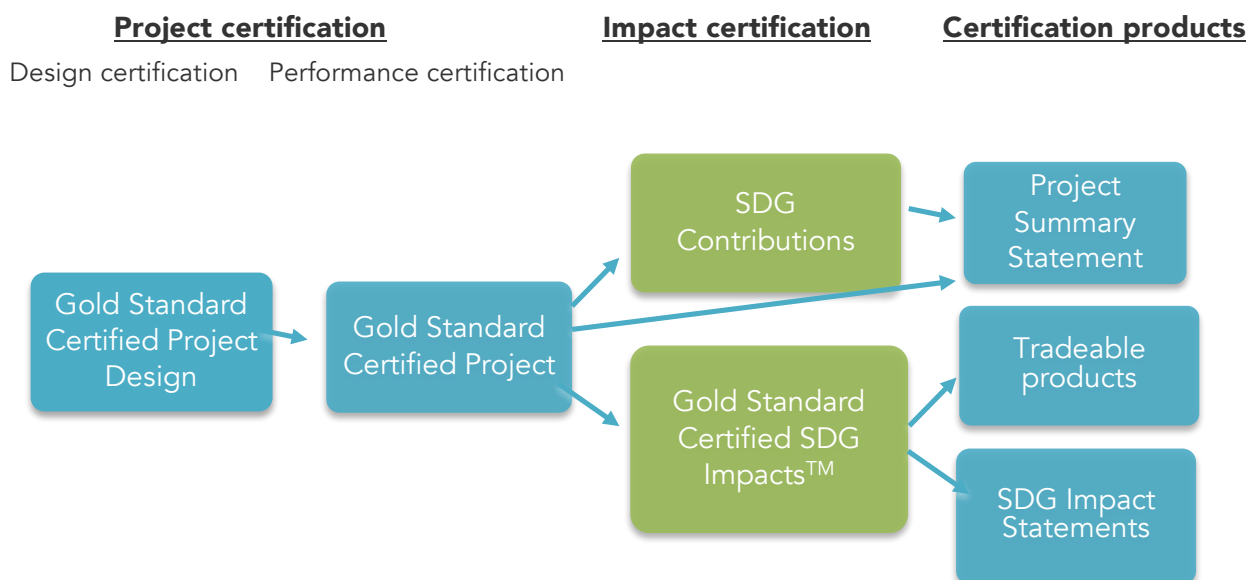
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Claims guidelines are broken down into different categories depending on the nature of the claim and the stakeholder's role.

1. Project and impact claims
2. Claims for sponsors/funders of projects or impacts
3. Carbon/Climate neutral claims (for organisations, products, events, etc)

All communications should include hyperlinks to www.goldstandard.org and when possible link to any relevant activities.

1. Gold Standard Project and Impact Certification and Claims



PROJECT-LEVEL CERTIFICATION AND CLAIMS

>>Design Certification:

Successful completion of Gold Standard Project Design Certification means that a project can claim to have achieved '**Gold Standard Certified Project Design.**'

Gold Standard Project Design Certification means:

- The project design and planning has met the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Requirements, including Safeguarding Principles, Stakeholder Engagement, and Sustainable Development Goal requirements and has created a compliant Monitoring Plan.
- The project design and ex-ante impact assessment has been validated by an accredited, approved third party Gold Standard Validation and Verification Body.
- Following this the project has been reviewed by Gold Standard and is subject to over-arching independent review by the Gold Standard Technical Committee and NGO Supporters.

It does NOT mean or imply:

- That any impacts have been realised or will be realised or that these have been verified by an auditor or Certified by Gold Standard (see below).

>>Project Certification:

Successful completion of Gold Standard Project Certification means that a project can claim to be a **Gold Standard Certified Project.**

This status is retained by successfully completing ongoing Verification and Performance Reviews. It is conversely suspended in the event of non-conformity to the Requirements (see Section 7 of Gold Standard Requirements) or terminated in the event of failure to complete Verification and Performance Review in the timelines required.

Gold Standard Project Certification means that:

- The project has met Gold Standard for the Global Goals Requirements, including Safeguarding Principles, Stakeholder Engagement, and Sustainable Development Goal requirements and has created and followed a compliant Monitoring Plan, producing and submitting Monitoring Reports for Verification.
- Any Certified SDG Impacts stated to have been achieved are real.
- The project and its SDG contributions and impacts have been validated and verified as required by an accredited, approved third part Validation and Verification Body.

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- Following this, the project has been reviewed by Gold Standard and is subject to overarching independent review by the Gold Standard Technical Committee and NGO Supporters.

Gold Standard Certified Projects can claim:

- **Stakeholder inclusion** The project has been developed in line with best practice with a process that is inclusive of affected stakeholders and ensures their objectives and concerns are represented
- **Safeguard management.** The project has been developed in line with best practice following rigorous safeguards.
- **Multiple contributions to Global Goals.** The project has contributed holistically to the Sustainable Development Goals, demonstrating environmental, social, and economic benefits. All outcomes have been tracked according to robust monitoring plans, verified by an approved independent third party, and certified by Gold Standard. All projects may also claim to be “water aware” and “gender aware.”
- **Transparency.** Any and all Certified SDG Impacts and financial products issued from this project activity are disclosed in a transparent, third-party registry.
- **Civil society support.** The process followed is endorsed by a network of 80+ NGO supporters who can access and provide input to project reviews.

IMPACT-LEVEL CERTIFICATION AND CLAIMS

Gold Standard for the Global Goals specifies that all projects shall demonstrate a clear, direct contribution to Sustainable Development, defined as making demonstrable, positive contributions to at least three SDGs, one of which must be SDG 13, Climate Action.

There are two types of impacts that a project can claim:

1. SDG contributions
2. Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts™

>>SDG Contributions

SDG contributions are consistent with what carbon markets historically referred to as ‘co-benefits.’ SDG contributions arise from the SDG Tool within activity guidelines, and must be a significant and primary effect of the projects and must be lasting. However, to claim SDG contributions, a project does not follow the Gold Standard-approved methodology for impact quantification and certification has not successfully completed a Financial Needs Assessment. Refer to Section 2.1.3 of Gold Standard for the Global Goals for complete information.

SDG contributions are certified and are reported in the Project Summary Statement.

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Claims made around SDG contributions in project or funder communications must include an easily accessible footnote or hyperlink to a statement that describes the methodology for monitoring the benefits.

>>Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts™



Certified SD Impacts (for example, Gold Standard Verified Emission Reductions) can be used to unlock impact-specific financial flows; they must follow a Gold Standard approved impact quantification methodology including a financial needs assessment. If a project issues Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts, it can claim a direct contribution to meeting a specific target or indicator within the relevant Sustainable Development Goal. Please refer to Impact-specific Claims Guidelines for the claims eligible for a given Certified SDG Impact.

Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts are reported in Project Summary Statements, listed in the Gold Standard public registry and can be assigned to a funder or sponsor. If multiple funders support Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts (either same impact or different impacts) from a single project, this will be disclosed in the Gold Standard public registry.

Issuance of Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts enables a project or its funders to use the logo for “Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts” logo above, as well as the SDG icon paired with the Gold Standard logo, as shown below for demonstration only, using SDG 3, Health as an example:



In some cases, for example with Verified Emission Reductions (VERs), Certified Emission Reductions (CERs), Gold Standard-labeled Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs), these Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts are issued as 'tradeable products,' or financial instruments that can be sold in a secondary market and that may have additional rules or requirements governing their issuance and use. These are also listed and their transactions in Gold Standard's public registry.

2. FUNDER/SPONSOR CLAIMS

Funders or sponsors can include impact investors, traditional investors, corporates, foundations, development agencies, multinationals, governments, or even individuals. Funders or sponsors may claim they have supported a Gold Standard Certified Design and/or a Gold Standard Certified Project and may therefore use a Gold Standard logo in their communications if they:

- Finance a Gold Standard project, once it reaches 'Design Certification' status in the Gold Standard registry
- Fund or sponsor Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts [NOTE: Further guidance on thresholds of impact funding required to use the Gold Standard logo to be developed at a later date]

Funders or sponsors must disclose the exact impacts funded or sponsored in their communications. These will also be disclosed in Gold Standard's public registry. Finally, funders or sponsors must sign Gold Standard Terms & Conditions in order to use the Gold Standard logo.

Claims must follow the requirements listed for Gold Standard Certified Projects and Gold Standard Certified SDG impacts as designated in this manual. Impact-specific claims must refer to each separate impact-specific guideline.

A sponsor or funder of Certified SDG Impacts must not make claims for other Certified SDG Impacts that they have not directly funded. They can, however, include a description of all SDG contributions as part of a project narrative, but must indicate clearly and precisely what their funds supported.

For example, in the case of a Gold Standard Improved Cookstove project that issues both VERs and ADALYs:

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- VER funder: Can claim to have funded Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact for SDG 13, Climate Action and may include a project narrative around the project's other SDG contributions like new job creation and reduced time spent collecting wood. They may also reference the project's health impacts but must not suggest or imply to have funded them.
- ADALYs funder: Can claim to have funded Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact for SDG 3, Health and may include a project narrative around the project's other SDG contributions like new job creation and reduced time spent collecting wood. They may also reference the project's climate impacts but must not suggest or imply to have funded them.

3. Carbon/Climate neutral claims (for organisations, products, events, etc)

This section refers to any of the following claims that use Gold Standard Emissions Reductions (VERs or CERs) to satisfy the following claims:

- Climate Neutral
- Carbon Neutral
- Climate Friendly
- Climate Positive

If Gold Standard Emissions Reductions (VERs or CERs) were purchased in pursuit of any of these claims, the Gold Standard logo must be used on any communications citing such claims. The volume of Gold Standard VERs or CERs purchased and the percentage that represents among the organisation's carbon credit purchase must also be transparently disclosed.

If an organisation pays a price equal to or greater than those established by the Fairtrade Climate Standard [\[LINK\]](#), they may also claim to have paid a sustainable price. For project types not specified in the Fairtrade Climate Standard, this threshold is \$10/tonne.

SDG 3: Health Claims

Overview

To ensure credibility and rigour, making ANY health-related claims requires expert stakeholder input and clear academic justification. Absent of such substantiation, the icon for SDG 3 shall not be used in project communications.

The following specifies what claims are possible without expert stakeholder input and clear academic justification.

Claim for SDG contributions for SDG 3

For clean cooking and heating technologies that have not applied the ADALYs methodology, the SDG contribution claims are limited to:

- Many improved cookstoves are associated with reduced smoke, which can lessen exposure to dangerous indoor air pollution.

Claims Guidelines for Gold Standard Certified SDG 3 Impacts - ADALYs

1.0 Overview

Averted Disability Adjusted Life Years (ADALYs) are a measure of avoided mortality and morbidity, commonly used in public health reporting. They represent the number of years of healthy life made possible / arising from by interventions that lead to, for example, reduction in personal exposure to air pollution in the form of particulate matter (PM2.5) or through provision of safe drinking water.

Gold Standard certifies ADALYs outcomes from activities as a contribution to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 (Good Health). Projects achieving certification for following Gold Standard ADALYs methodologies are issued with a Certified ADALYs Statement and ADALYs units for the monitoring period and number of ADALYs achieved.

2.1 Project Developers may receive Certified ADALYs Statements by following and achieving certification under one of the following methodologies:

- Gold Standard Methodology to Estimate and Verify Averted Disability Adjusted Life Years (ADALYs) from Cleaner Household Air

2.2 Developers may receive Certified ADALYs in conjunction with a mention of the Certified Impacts in the project summary statement. The following other Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts can be issued from the same project (subject to following the relevant requirements set down in each):

	Other Methodologies		
ADALYs Methodology	TPDDTEC (GS VERs)	Black Carbon (Certified Black Carbon Statements)	Gender
Cleaner Household Air	Yes	No	Yes

3.0 Issuance Rules & Requirements

3.1 Asset issued – ADALYs are issued by Gold Standard to the developer’s project account on the Gold Standard Registry. This will appear both as in the project summary statement document and as unitised ADALYs.

3.2 Use of ADALYs – ADALYs may be assigned to a sponsor or funder, meaning that either:

- The ADALYs will be visible in the sponsor/funders Registry account or
- The ADALYs may be assigned to a proxy on behalf of the sponsor/funder (for example where an organisation is unable to open an account) in which case the assignment comments shall clearly state the final sponsor/funder

ADALYs may be divided amongst a number of sponsors/funders by any amount. Where multiple Certified SDG Impacts are issued for one project or where the Certified SDG Impacts are sponsored by multiple funders the developer shall demonstrate that all funders/sponsors are aware that multiple funders/buyers are involved. This can be via correspondence between Developer and Funders or via redacted copies of relevant contracts. It is not necessary to share the details of different funders or amounts funded with other funders.

ADALYs Statements may only be assigned once, they cannot be traded onwards after first assignment. There is no retirement function associated with ADALYs.

4.0 Claims Guidelines

4.1 For Project Developers: In addition to the allowed claims for being a Gold Standard Certified Project the Developer may also make the following claim:

- Project [NAME/NUMBER] made a contribution to SDG Target 3.9: issuing X'000 Averted Disability Adjusted Life Years (ADALYs) on [DATE]. This represents a direct and quantifiable impact on human health, monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

The Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact logo may also be used in conjunction with this claim.



4.2 For sponsors/funders: In addition to the allowed claims for funding Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts or sponsoring a Gold Standard Certified Project, the funder may also make the following claim:

- Organisation X has made a contribution to SDG Target 3.9 by funding X'000 Averted Disability Adjusted Life Years (ADALYs) from Project [NAME/NUMBER] issued on [DATE], This represents a direct and quantifiable impact on human health, monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.



A sponsor or funder of certified ADALYs must not make claims for other Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts that they have not directly funded, for example, Black Carbon and/or VERs. They can, however, include a description of SDG contributions as part of a project narrative, but must indicate clearly and precisely what their funds supported.



LOGO USAGE

Please refer to Gold Standard Terms and Conditions and Gold Standard Brand Guidelines for all specifications related to the Gold Standard corporate logo and the Gold Standard for the Global Goals standard logo.



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for the **Global Goals**

Gold Standard hereby certifies that Project GS1111 [NAME] is a **Gold Standard Certified Project**.

The project has been verified to abide by all Gold Standard principles and requirements, including:

- **Stakeholder inclusion.** The project has been developed in line with best practice with and a process that is inclusive of affected stakeholders and ensures their objectives and concerns are represented
- **Safeguard management.** The project has been developed in line with best practice following rigorous safeguards.
- **Multiple contributions to Global Goals.** The project has contributed holistically to the Sustainable Development Goals, demonstrating environmental, social, and economic benefits. All outcomes have been tracked according to robust monitoring plans, verified by an approved independent third party, and certified by Gold Standard. This project is also certified to be “water aware” and “gender aware.”
- **Transparency.** Any and all Certified SDG Impacts and financial products issued from this project activity are disclosed in a transparent, third-party registry.
- **Civil society support.** The process followed is endorsed by a network of 80+ NGO supporters who can access and provide input to project reviews.

Project GS1111 has also followed the Gold Standard Improved Cookstoves Activity Requirements and the Community Development module to ensure adherence to the appropriate additional Safeguarding Principles, Stakeholder Engagement, and Monitoring Plan requirements.

SDG contributions

Project GS1111 has been verified and certified to have made the following contributions to sustainable development:

- 130,000 people (mostly women and children) benefit directly from having to spend less time for collecting firewood

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- 150 jobs created (26% for women), 7 manufacturing centres built
- During 350 school visits 50,000 pupils taught about climate protection
- 2.5 tonnes of wood or 1 tonne of charcoal avoided

Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts



>>SDG 13: Climate Action



According to the Gold Standard Methodology 'Technologies and practices to displace decentralized thermal energy consumption (TPDDTEC)', project GS1111 made a contribution to SDG Target 13.a, issuing 300,000 Gold Standard Verified Emissions Reductions [LINK TO REGISTRY] on [DATE], representing the mitigation of 300,000 tonnes of CO₂e. This represents a direct and quantifiable impact on climate security, monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

[Serial numbers ABC – YYZ]

>>SDG 3: Good Health



According to the Gold Standard Methodology to Estimate and Verify Averted Disability Adjusted Life Years (ADALYs) from Cleaner Household Air, Project GS1111 made a contribution to SDG Target 3.9: issuing X'000 Averted Disability Adjusted Life Years (ADALYs) [LINK TO REGISTRY] on [DATE]. This represents a direct and quantifiable impact on human health, monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

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[Serial numbers ABC – YYZ]