Gold Standard launches major step in tackling black carbon – opening the door to address an overlooked climate factor responsible for nearly 20% of global warming

Geneva, Tuesday 31 March 2015

The Gold Standard, experts in climate and development, have launched a pioneering methodology for quantifying and monitoring emissions from black carbon and other short-lived climate pollutants, in an effort to drive finance into projects that provide an immediate and measurable impact on mitigating climate change at a local level.

Black carbon, seen as soot, is the unwanted byproduct of burning diesel, coal, firewood, or crop residue. It is categorised as a 'short-lived' climate pollutant but its negative impacts are both fast-acting and extensive—black carbon increases the melting of ice and glaciers, harms public health, reduces food security and disrupts weather patterns. With the reduction of carbon dioxide taking a priority under the Kyoto Protocol, mitigating short-lived climate pollutants, such as black carbon, have taken a back seat. However, recent studies show that black carbon may be responsible for close to 20% of the planet's warming, making it the second highest contributor to climate change after carbon dioxide. This provides us with a real opportunity to make an immediate impact on climate change.

This methodology has been developed in collaboration with Project Surya, The Energy and Research Institute (TERI), the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, Nexleaf Analytics and the University of California at San Diego (UCSD), with funding from the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) as part of the 'Reducing SLCPs from Household Cooking and Domestic Heating' initiative and with extensive input from experts within the scientific and development finance communities. It quantifies the emissions of black carbon and other short-lived climate pollutants when wood, charcoal, animal dung or coal, are burned for cooking. The methodology also measures the reductions of these harmful emissions when improved cookstove technologies or clean burning fuels are introduced.

The challenge for implementing clean cookstoves at scale lies in finance, as the technologies are often unaffordable to families in the developing world. This first-of-its-kind methodology provides a verified outcome that can be used in a 'results-based finance' funding scheme to drive investment into these much needed climate and development initiatives—delivering immediate climate change mitigation whilst improving health and livelihoods for local communities.

Project Surya Director, Professor V. Ramanathan of UCSD, says: "Urgent actions are required to slow down climate change in the near term. Rapidly scaling up the use of less polluting cookstoves will not only slow down the melting of Himalayan glaciers but will also save millions of lives during the coming decades. Financing less polluting cookstoves is one of the few win-win potions for the planet. Surya is proud to have played a lead role in this effort"

"This new black carbon methodology will help unlock the necessary finance required to implement these important and life-changing projects," states Marion Verles, CEO of The Gold Standard Foundation. "Being able to quantify black carbon emission reductions from cookstove projects represents an important step towards demonstrating the immediate effect on mitigating climate change, delivering long-term sustainable development and the certification of broader development impacts."

"Innovative financing mechanisms are critical to scaling up the adoption of cleaner and more efficient technologies by the five hundred million households globally that cook using open fires or inefficient stoves", says Radha Muthiah, CEO of the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves. "This new methodology will help drive more funding towards implementing clean cooking solutions that will save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women, and protect the environment."

"By controlling both short-lived climate pollutants and long-lived greenhouse gases we can increase the chances of limiting our global temperature rise to below 2° C, while also supporting sustainable development around the world" says Nexleaf Analytics President, Nithya Ramanathan.

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About Gold Standard

The Gold Standard works to ensure every dollar of climate and development funding goes as far as it can. We design and implement processes that amplify the impact of our projects and verify, measure and report their outcomes. By minimising project risk, we inspire greater confidence and drive investment funds to accomplish even greater results. We are a global non-profit organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland, established in 2003 by WWF and other NGOs to maximise positive environmental and social outcomes by ensuring quality, integrity, and strong governance in climate change initiatives. With more than 1200 projects in over 50 countries, Gold Standard projects have delivered billions of dollars in reductions of global greenhouse gas emissions and life-changing sustainable development in local communities. Learn more about us at www.goldstandard.org.

About the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves

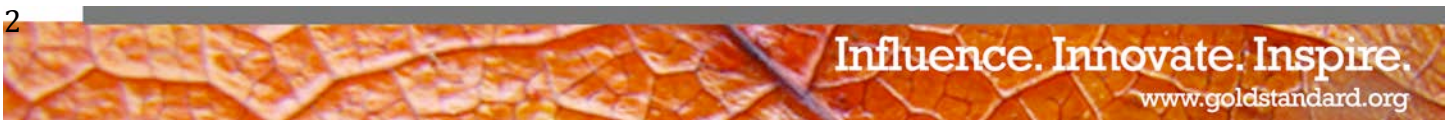
The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves is a public-private partnership hosted by the United Nations Foundation that seeks to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women, and protect the environment by creating a thriving global market for clean and efficient household cooking solutions. The Alliance works with more than 1,000 public, private, and non-profit partners to help accelerate the production, deployment, and adoption of clean cookstoves and fuels in developing countries. Learn more about us at www.cleancookstoves.org.

About Nexleaf Analytics

Nexleaf Analytics, a co-lead in Project Surya and leader in development of scalable low-cost wireless sensing technologies, is a non-profit technology company focused on improving public health and environmental interventions through access to data and analytics from the field. Nexleaf Analytics works in more than 8 countries to improve access to safe vaccines and increase the distribution and sustained use of the most advanced improved stoves. www.nexleaf.org.

About Project Surya

Project Surya aims to mitigate the regional impacts of global warming by immediately and demonstrably reducing atmospheric concentrations of **black carbon**, **methane**, and **ozone**. Project



Surya will replace the highly polluting cookstoves traditionally employed in rural areas with clean-cooking technologies. Metaphorically, Surya will create a black carbon hole within weeks of introducing the energy-efficient technologies. Project Surya employs innovative sensing technologies to measure the positive climate and health impacts that result from this dramatic reduction in black carbon in unprecedented scale and resolution. For more information http://www.projectsurya.org

The Energy and Research Institute (TERI)
A dynamic and flexible organisation with a global vision and a local focus, TERI was established in 1974, with the initial focus on documentation and information dissemination. Research activities, initiated towards the end of 1982, were rooted in TERI's firm conviction that efficient utilization of energy and sustainable use of natural resources would propel the process of development. Our vision is to create innovative solutions for a sustainable future. http://www.teriin.org

About the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC)
The CCAC is a voluntary international coalition of governments, international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which focuses on addressing short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs). The CCAC was created in February 2012 by Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Mexico, Sweden and the US, together with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). It is open to countries and non-state actors, and currently has 103 partners consisting of 46 country partners and 55 non-state partners.

SLCPs include black carbon, methane, tropospheric ozone and some HFCs. These pollutants have a near-term warming influence on the climate, and, in many cases, are also harmful air pollutants that affect human health, agriculture and ecosystems. The objectives of the CCAC include raising awareness of impacts and transformative mitigation strategies of SLCPs. It also seeks to: enhance and develop new national and regional actions; promote best practices and showcase successful efforts; and improve scientific understanding of SLCP impacts and mitigation strategies.
http://www.ccacoalition.org