

## Public Call for Stakeholder Comments: The Gold Standard Foundation's Proposed Expansion of Scope to Certify Emission Reductions from Black Carbon

### About The Gold Standard Foundation

The Gold Standard is an award-winning certification standard for carbon mitigation projects and is globally recognized as the benchmark for quality and rigour in both the compliance and voluntary carbon markets. The Gold Standard certifies renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste handling and disposal, and land use & forest carbon projects to ensure real greenhouse gas reductions and sustainable development benefits in local communities that are measured, reported and verified.

All Gold Standard projects must adhere to a stringent and transparent set of criteria developed by The Gold Standard Foundation, overseen by its independent Technical Advisory Committee and verified by accredited independent auditors. The certification process uniquely requires the involvement of local stakeholders and NGOs.

### Background

Household indoor air pollution associated with cooking is responsible for four million deaths each year in developing countries. Scientists recently confirmed that decreases in black carbon emissions -- coupled with major cuts in carbon dioxide emissions -- can make a critical contribution to mitigating climate change. Moreover, reducing fine particulates, which includes black carbon emissions, can also deliver substantial improvements in global health. The Gold Standard intends to partner with The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves (<http://www.cleancookstoves.org>) and Project Surya (<http://www.projectsurya.org/>) to develop a methodology to allow black carbon emission reductions to earn carbon credits from household-based thermal energy consumption interventions. The methodology will be incorporated into the cookstove component of The Gold Standard methodology, "[Technologies and Practices to Displace Decentralized Thermal Energy Consumption.](#)"

There are several key challenges associated with enabling emission reductions from black carbon to be eligible for Gold Standard certification. The primary challenge is that the measurement, quantification and monitoring of black carbon emissions is complex. Certain technical questions need to be researched and analyzed in order to understand how a reduction of black carbon equates to one-ton reduction of carbon dioxide or its equivalent. For example, the US Environmental Protection Agency has not defined with certainty the absolute value for the global warming potential of black carbon, which is a critical metric for determining the carbon dioxide equivalency. Moreover, the US EPA says that, with the burning of biomass, organic carbon is released along with black carbon, of which some components have a cooling effect, and some components have a warming effect, on the atmosphere. The IPCC provides the global warming potential for black carbon over a 100-year period, but it needs to be determined whether such a long period is appropriate for black carbon. As a short-lived climate pollutant that exists in the atmosphere for weeks to months, actions taken today will have almost immediate effects. Finally, the effects from black carbon are regional in nature, rather than global in nature like carbon dioxide. Therefore, effective mitigation measures applied to different sources must take into account the regional geographies and changes in all emissions that influence warming.

The answers to these technical questions are critical prerequisites to the development of a black carbon methodology. If positive feedback is received from The Gold Standard's stakeholders, The Gold Standard and Project Surya will work collaboratively on writing the technical aspects of the methodology. The Gold Standard's partnership with The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves as part of this process will ensure that the methodology development process considers any complementary laboratory testing of black carbon emissions developed under ISO or Global Alliance processes. Currently the methodological approach will be developed only for technologies related to household-based thermal energy consumption devices such as improved cookstoves under the TPDDTEC methodology. In the future, this work may be expanded to other technologies and methodologies.

### **Feedback Requested**

The Gold Standard was founded by NGOs in part to ensure that civil society feedback is incorporated into carbon market processes and innovation. Therefore, before making any material change to the standard, The Gold Standard seeks feedback from its stakeholders. The crediting of black carbon emission reductions represents an expansion of scope beyond the three Kyoto gases that The Gold Standard currently certifies (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide). The Gold Standard is requesting feedback from its public stakeholders on the following questions:

- (1) What are the pros and cons of The Gold Standard expanding its scope to include black carbon as an eligible global warming pollutant? It should be considered that scope expansion is only to be discussed for household-based thermal energy consumption devices.
- (2) What safeguards should The Gold Standard incorporate into its guidelines for the measurement and monitoring of the black carbon emission reductions to ensure robustness?
- (3) What are other important risk factors that should be carefully considered for the crediting of black carbon emissions reductions?

### **Deadline**

The Gold Standard invites feedback from stakeholders on the questions outlined above. There is a tremendous opportunity to use The Gold Standard framework, under which more than 75% of all carbon-credited cookstove projects worldwide are certified, to incentivize reductions of black carbon emissions from household-based thermal based energy consumption devices in developing countries.

We look forward to, and encourage, the input of our stakeholders in order to develop a responsible and rigorous approach for the greater benefit of the environment and sustainable development.

**The Gold Standard requests all interested stakeholders to provide written feedback on or before 18 July 2014.** Please send your feedback to [vikash.talyan@goldstandard.org](mailto:vikash.talyan@goldstandard.org)