REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

DEVELOPMENT OF A PUBLIC TRACKER OF NATIONAL REGULATIONS ON CARBON MARKETS

Date 1st December 2023

Context

Gold Standard is a civil society NGO and a standards body that promotes the best that can be achieved in climate and development projects. It was established in 2003 by WWF and other international NGOs as a best practice standard to ensure that projects which reduce carbon emissions also deliver credible, high-integrity sustainable development benefits. In close collaboration with its network of partners (civil society, governments, and private sector), Gold Standard leads several global innovation programs and supports 2000+ climate and development projects in over 80 countries worldwide.

Over the past six years Gold Standard has played an active role in discussions and capacity-building across the voluntary market on the transition to the Paris Agreement
era, through several initiatives enabling private and public sector actors to take ambitious action under the Paris Agreement through carbon markets and other mechanisms. Building on its most recent work supporting early-mover implementation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, in November 2023 Gold Standard launched a new programme - ‘Enabling National Ownership in a High-Integrity Carbon Market’. Through this programme, Gold Standard is seeking to respond to and support the growing involvement of governments across the world in the regulation of voluntary carbon market activities, and to ensure the retention of benefits locally. The programme has been established through funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK), and this Request for Proposals forms part of the initiative.

The past year has seen the introduction of new regulations or frameworks governing carbon market activities in multiple jurisdictions, as well as a number of governments looking at the development of national crediting frameworks, to either sit alongside or replace established international standards. It is expected that more governments will introduce regulations over the coming years, both to underpin their use of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, and to either monitor or regulate carbon market activities within their jurisdiction, whether or not these operate under Article 6.

For project developers, investors and other market actors, these new regulations are important factors, for instance for the management of existing activities, for planned or potential investments, and for credit purchase choices. For many market actors, there is currently an information gap, with limited understanding and awareness of the status of regulatory development, as well as the implications of new regulations once they are in force. Access to this information can be important for market certainty, as well as for helping policymakers to learn from the steps that their counterparts in other jurisdictions are taking.

**Overview and Purpose of the Assignment**

Gold Standard is seeking an implementing partner to manage and maintain an online public information repository, providing information on carbon market-regulations globally. This repository would act as a public access hub for any user seeking to find information on the development and implementation of carbon market regulations across the world. It would include links to relevant regulations as well as short
summaries of the most pertinent elements of the regulations for market actors, using a standardised format to enable comparison between jurisdictions.

The repository would focus on regulation related to baseline-and-crediting market activities (i.e., activities that lead to the issuance of carbon credits) in the voluntary carbon market, as well as those operating under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. Carbon tax policies and emissions trading systems are considered out of scope unless they include the use of carbon credits. It is anticipated that it will include at least basic information on regulations in all countries globally where relevant regulations exist and where information can be found, though Gold Standard is open to applicants proposing a more limited scope if required to remain within the maximum budget. As far as possible, it should include information on regulations that are planned or under consultation, as well as regulations that have been implemented and are in force.

This repository would be hosted on the Gold Standard website. The initial uploading of information and web design of the website page would be the responsibility of Gold Standard, with the Implementing Partner responsible for the formatting, research, production, verification, and ongoing maintenance and uploading of information on carbon market regulations.

This repository would build on Gold Standard’s recent Article 6 readiness assessment in selected countries, though would differ in several ways: it is intended to be broader in jurisdictional coverage, to be maintained over a period of time, and to rely on publicly available information.

The implementing partner will be expected to follow Gold Standard’s brand guidelines and donor visibility requirements, and prepare information in a way that is professional and visually appealing in line with the technical requirements to be defined during the development of the tracker repository web application.

**Description of the Assignment**

The implementing partner will have flexibility to structure their work in the way that they consider most suitable to achieve the mandate and objectives of this assignment. That said, Gold Standard envisages that the assignment will include the following key phases:
1. **Phase I – Scope confirmation**: Agreement with Gold Standard of the scope of the assignment, and the format and presentation of information for each country included in the repository. For this, the implementing partner will be required to prepare and have approved a short ‘scope confirmation’ document or presentation, as well as a proposed standard template. The information required for the tracker is expected to be simple, factual, and in a standard format (to be defined during scoping).

2. **Phase II – Preparation of initial repository**: Desk-based research and work to build an initial repository of information on carbon market-related regulations, as well as preparation of summary overviews in accordance with the agreed format.

3. **Phase III – Communications support**: Gold Standard will take responsibility for initial publication of the repository on its website, and its communication. However, the implementing partner will be expected to provide light support, including information and participation in one public event.

4. **Phase IV – Maintenance of repository**: Ongoing maintenance of the repository for the remainder of the contract period, including the addition of new – or newly discovered - information and revision of existing information in response to regulatory developments globally.

As stated above, no international travel is expected to complete this assignment. The implementing partner will be expected to communicate virtually (via email, telephone and video-conference) with Gold Standard and any other individuals or organisations. The implementing partner will be expected to regularly update Gold Standard on progress with implementation of the assignment, and either party may request a meeting with the other where this is required. The implementing partner may also request Gold Standard’s support to communicate with particular external organisations or individuals, though the implementing partner is generally expected to undertake such communication independently.

**Anticipated outputs and timeline**

The anticipated timeline for preparation of the required outputs is outlined below. This timeline will be confirmed as part of the Service Provider Agreement signed between Gold Standard and the selected implementing partner.
Gold Standard may seek to extend maintenance of the public repository following the end of the assignment period subject to a separate contract.

**Methodology and Work Plan**

Applicants should submit proposals relevant to the purpose and description of the assignment including all elements outlined below. Proposals should be no more than ten pages, and should include:

1. Overview of the organisation(s), highlighting relevant experience and evidence of related projects;
2. Profiles of the participating consultant(s) demonstrating suitable qualifications and experience (these may be annexed and in addition to the ten pages);
3. A high-level work plan for the assignment taking account of key touchpoints, including:
   i. *Scope confirmation.*
   ii. *Research.* This should include information on how the applicant intends to identify relevant information, and the capabilities and/or relevant experience that the applicant has to do so.
   iii. *Preparation of public information repository.* This should include information on the type of product the applicant intends to prepare, initial proposals for the format, and any distinguishing features.
   iv. *Communications support.*
4. A budget, broken down between the phases outlined above.

The proposed budget must include day rates, man days and the total price of the assignment as well as payment terms. All figures should be presented in Euros (€).

Please note that whilst our maximum budget is €64,000, our tender evaluation will consider price as one of the key factors.
Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on, but not limited to, the following formal criteria:

1) **Timeliness.** The proposals must be submitted on or before the stated deadline in order to be considered for further evaluation.

2) **Proposal Format.** The proposals shall follow the requested format and include all of its elements.

3) **Proposed Scope of Work.** Gold Standard will assess to what extent the proposal clearly addresses the needs of the assignment.

4) **Qualifications and Team.** Gold Standard will assess whether the proposed team possesses expertise and relevant experience to assure successful completion of the work and delivery of good quality outputs.

5) **Work plan.** The proposed work plan and approach will be assessed for efficiency, relevance, risk management and technical feasibility.

6) **Budget.** Gold Standard will assess if the budget is reasonable, adequate for the proposed work and provides good value for money.

Contract Award

Gold Standard will award a contract to the proposal that best meets the needs of our project, the requirements of the funding institution and the principles of the Gold Standard procurement policy. We may also find that no proposal completely fulfils these needs and choose not to award a contract or alternatively to negotiate directly with one or more of the contractors to refine their proposals.

Proposals may be disqualified on the following grounds:

- Submission of an incomplete proposal
- Illegal conduct or attempts to influence the evaluation process
- Material misrepresentation in the proposal
- Determination that the contractor is in a conflict of interest or is unlikely to fulfil the terms or conditions of the proposal
- Requested changes by a contractor in the proposal representations made after the closing date
- Changes in laws or regulations affecting the solicitation
Confidentiality

Proposals should not include proprietary or confidential information. Each recipient of this Request for Proposals should treat the contents of the solicitation as business confidential and should use and disclose the contents of the solicitation only for the purposes of preparing and submitting a proposal.

Applications and closing date

Please submit your complete proposal to plamena.georgieva@goldstandard.org no later than 5th January 2023 18:00 CET.

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<th>Indicative timeline</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<td>Release of the Request for Proposals</td>
<td>1st December 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing date of the application process</td>
<td>5th January 2024</td>
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<td>Indicative date for award of a contract</td>
<td>Late January 2024</td>
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Questions and Answers

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<th>Questions from applicants</th>
<th>Answers from Gold Standard</th>
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<td>Q1. The proposal call mentions &quot;basic information on regulations in all countries globally where relevant regulations exist and information can be found&quot;, but is open to a more limited scope. Is there a minimum number of countries needed for the repository to be viable?</td>
<td>A1. We have not specified a minimum number, though we wanted the RFP to be open to a more limited scope, if applicants wished to propose focusing on a narrower set of countries based on reasonable thresholds/criteria. If an applicant proposes a more limited scope, we will consider this amongst other factors when reviewing bids.</td>
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<td>Q2. Is the tracker meant to be a static repository of PDFs alone (irrespective of the language), or does Gold Standard expect analysis and commentary on policy changes?</td>
<td>A2. No, we do not expect analysis or commentary. We will though expect high-level overviews of key information in a standardised format.</td>
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<td>Q3. Does Gold Standard expect registry-level data on projects/credits transacted alongside the final tracker product? Or is it solely looking for a tracker?</td>
<td>A3. We are solely looking for a tracker.</td>
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<td>Q4. Does Gold Standard use Office 365 and is a Power BI Pro license available as</td>
<td>A4. Yes, we use Office 365 across the organisation but we currently do not have a Power BI Pro license. We could consider</td>
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1 last updated on 20th December 2023
part of the Office 365 package? obtaining one if necessary for the successful project delivery.

**Q5.** We understand that the aim is to cover global regulations and policies linked to carbon credits (voluntary, those under Article 6, and those where credits are linked to compliance mechanisms). We also saw the initial work done on Article 6 readiness in selected countries. We wanted to confirm:

- **a.** Do sub-national programs need to be covered (e.g. WCI program that allows offsets, or Tokyo as a city that is exploring a provision for offsets) or only national level regulations?

- **b.** Do we limit ourselves to regulations/policies carbon credits quantifiable into CO2, or do we also take into account other mechanisms to promote sequestration and nature based solutions (e.g. the green credit program in India)?

**A5a.** Our expectation is for national-level coverage in the tracker, though the tracker need not necessarily be restricted to this.

**A5b.** Similarly, our expectation is only for carbon credits quantifiable in CO2e.

**Q6.** With regards to Phase IV - Maintenance of repository, how frequently are the updates expected to be done in the database after the initial repository is built? Is this meant to be updated in near-real-time i.e. track/update daily? Or would updation once a month also work? Or some other frequency?

**A6.** We have not specified this in the RFP, though in practice, we do not think that anything close to daily updating would be necessary.

**Q7.** After reviewing the guidelines, we have some questions that we would like to discuss with you or any of your colleagues who are leading this process. We would like to suggest, as long as Gold Standard rules allow it, to have a quick phone call.

**A7.** Thank you for your inquiry, we are happy that you are interested to bid for the public tracker. We accept questions in writing, however we cannot offer individual consultations to ensure equal treatment of all applicants.

**Q8.** In order to make a proposal, we would like to ensure that the following conditions can be fulfilled in relation to the assignment:

- Consultant’s name is clearly mentioned as implementation partner of any final output.
- The repository links to another product of the consultant.
- We can use the data for our own internal purposes
- We phase the mapping overtime –

**A8.** We are not in a position to discuss or agree such conditions with individual organisations, prior to the submission and review of applications. We are following our tender procedure which requires equal treatment of all applicants and selecting the best application in competition according to the set criteria.

However, it would be reasonable for you to include these in your application, if you wished to make one. With respect to your first condition, we can confirm that it is
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<td>Q9. I have a question regarding the wording below. &quot;This repository would be hosted on the Gold Standard website. The initial uploading of information and web design of the website page would be the responsibility of Gold Standard, with the Implementing Partner responsible for the formatting, research, production, verification, and ongoing maintenance and uploading of information on carbon market regulations.” Does this indicate that the implementing partner needs to “develop” and “publish” the website designed by the Gold Standard?</td>
<td>A9. We confirm that there is no expectation from the consultant to develop or design the web application. The consultant will be required to provide data in a standard format following Gold Standard’s brand guidelines and donor visibility requirements and to upload updated information during the agreed maintenance period.</td>
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<td>Q10. We understand from the RfP that Gold Standard will be responsible for web design and that the consultant will provide the information for uploading into an agreed format. However, we also note that the RfP states “The implementing partner will be expected to follow Gold Standard’s brand guidelines and donor visibility requirements, and prepare information in a way that is professional and visually appealing in line with the technical requirements to be defined during the development of the tracker repository web application.” We would like to clarify Gold Standard’s expectations from the consultant in terms of visual design for the web application. Our understanding is that the consultant would provide the data structure and ideas for formatting, rather than doing the design work itself. Could you confirm whether this is indeed the case?</td>
<td>A10. We confirm that there is no expectation from the consultant to design the web application. The requirement to follow Gold Standard’s brand guidelines and donor visibility requirements concerns the standard format in which the data needs to be provided.</td>
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<td>Q11. I wanted to ask whether you are considering extending the bid deadline?</td>
<td>A11. We need to follow our programme’s schedule. An extension will be considered if we do not receive enough applications by 5th January or none of the applications fulfils our requirements.</td>
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