

# Gold Standard for the Global Goals: Claims Guidelines

## INTRODUCTION

Gold Standard is a standard and certification body that works to catalyse more ambitious action for climate security and sustainable development. Our standard, Gold Standard for the Global Goals, enables projects to maximise, quantify, and certify their impacts toward climate security and sustainable development. 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) delivered on the dual mandate for environmental integrity and to foster sustainable development. Now with more than 80 NGO supporters and 1300+ projects in over 80 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 Guidelines (hereby known as the Guidelines) 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.

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# 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.

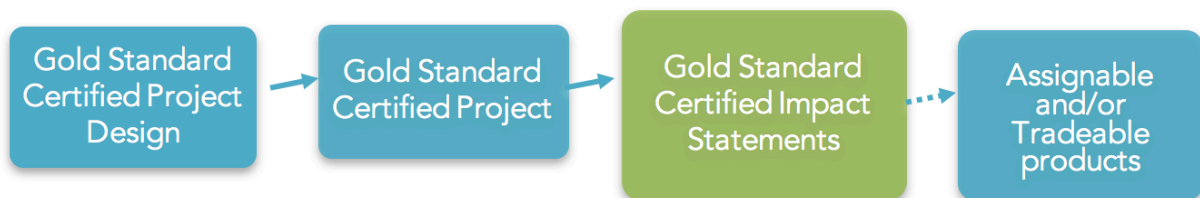
Claims that abide by all of the relevant rules in this document will be deemed to be ‘authorised’. Any claim using the name Gold Standard that does not comply with these guidelines, will be treated as ‘unauthorised’. At all times and in its sole discretion Gold Standard reserves the right to take any 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.

# PROJECT AND IMPACT CERTIFICATION AND CLAIMS

<u>Project certification</u>	<u>Impact certification</u>	<u>Product issuance</u>
Design certification	Performance certification	(optional, for monetisation)
		<i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ VERs and CERs</li> <li>■ Renewable Energy Labels</li> <li>■ Water Benefit Certificates</li> <li>■ ADALYs</li> </ul>



All digital communications promoting a Gold Standard project and/or marketing the Certified SDG Impacts it delivers should include hyperlinks to [www.goldstandard.org](http://www.goldstandard.org) and when possible link to any relevant activities.

## 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 (VVB).
- Following this the project has been reviewed by Gold Standard and is subject to overarching independent review by the Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) 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 a VVB 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 Certified SDG Impacts have been validated and verified as required by an accredited, approved third party VVB.
- Following this, the project has been reviewed by Gold Standard and is subject to overarching independent review by the Gold Standard TAC and NGO Supporters.

Gold Standard Certified Projects can claim:

- **Stakeholder inclusion.** The project has been developed in line with best practice following 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 to prevent unintended consequences and manage trade offs where needed.
- **Multiple contributions to Global Goals.** This project has contributed holistically to three Sustainable Development Goals. All impacts 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 “gender sensitive.” Relevant projects may also claim to be “water sensitive.”
- Any and all Certified SDG Impacts or financial products issued from this project activity are disclosed in a transparent, third-party registry.

- **Civil society support.** The process followed is endorsed by Gold Standard’s network of 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.



**Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts™** must be a significant and primary effect of the projects and must be lasting. Certified SDG Impacts are third-party verified and certified by Gold Standard and are reported in the Project Impact Statement.

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

When a project follows a Gold Standard-approved methodology and demonstrates Financial Need for a given Certified SDG Impact (for example, Gold Standard Verified Emission Reductions, Gold Standard-labeled Renewable Energy Certificates, or Gold Standard ADALYs), these are issued as individually assignable and/or tradeable products and can be monetised or sold. These products are listed in the Gold Standard public registry and can be assigned to a funder or sponsor. These products also have additional rules or requirements governing their issuance, use, and claims; Please refer to Product Claims Guidelines.

Projects and their funders are encouraged to use the logo for “Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts” in their communications. Those that follow Gold Standard-approved methodologies and demonstrate Financial Need may also use relevant SDG icons paired with the Gold Standard logo, as shown below, using SDG 3, Health as an example for projects that have issued ADALYs:



### >>Important note on management of health-related claims

To ensure credibility and rigour and avoid over-claiming, making ANY health-related claims requires expert stakeholder input and clear academic justification. Absent of such substantiation, neither project nor funder shall make a claim to have improved health.

For clean cooking and heating technologies that have neither applied the Gold Standard-approved ADALYs methodology nor provided expert stakeholder input and clear academic justification, the SDG contribution claims are limited to:

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

## 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 project 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

Funders or sponsors must disclose the exact impacts they 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 these Guidelines. Impact-specific claims must refer to each separate Product Claims Guidelines.

A sponsor or funder of Certified SDG Impacts must not claim to have funded other Certified SDG Impacts for which they have not provided direct finance. They can, however, include a description of all Certified SDG Impacts 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:

- 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 Impacts 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 Impacts 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.

## Management of Carbon/Climate neutral claims

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

- Carbon Neutral
- Climate Neutral
- Climate Positive

If Gold Standard Emissions Reductions (VERs or CERs) were purchased in pursuit of any of these claims, the Gold Standard logo may be used on any communications citing such claims. Organisations are also encouraged to specify the volume of Gold Standard VERs or CERs purchased and the percentage that represents among the organisation’s carbon credit purchase.

**Note that Gold Standard Planned Emission Reductions cannot be used in pursuit of these claims if they are not bundled with eligible emission reductions.** See product claims for Certified SDG 13 Impacts, Emission Reductions for more information.

## CLAIMS FOR TRANSITION PROJECTS

In general, projects that transition to Gold Standard for the Global Goals from earlier versions of our standards (Energy, Land Use & Forests or Water) are eligible to make the same claims as projects that initiate under Gold Standard for the Global Goals. Potential restrictions are limited to claims around enhanced safeguards that are required at the beginning of project design, like “gender sensitive” or “water sensitive.” However, projects that can demonstrate during the transition process how the key principles or requirements of these safeguards were followed will be given clearance to make such claims.

## 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.

## PRODUCT CLAIMS GUIDELINES FOR MONETISABLE ASSETS

### CERTIFIED SDG 13 IMPACTS – EMISSION REDUCTIONS

These guidelines are applicable for climate mitigation claims for the following products:

1. Gold Standard Verified Emission Reductions (VERs) and Gold Standard labels for Certified Emission Reductions (CERs)
2. Gold Standard Planned Emission Reductions for sequestration

#### Overview

‘Emissions Reductions’ represent the reduction or sequestration of one metric tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e). This ‘basket’ of gases within the ‘carbon dioxide equivalence’ includes Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and/or Nitrous Oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O).

Under Gold Standard for the Global Goals, the quantification and certification of tCO<sub>2</sub>e and subsequent issuance of Gold Standard VERs or Gold Standard CERs represents a Certified SDG Impact to SDG 13<sup>[1]</sup> through its contribution to climate change mitigation.

Under Gold Standard for the Global Goals, a limited number of Planned Emission Reductions may also be issued for certain project types. A Planned Emission Reduction represents the expected (i.e future) sequestration of 1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e.

The Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact logo may be used in conjunction with issuance and funding of these products.



## 1. Product Claims – Gold Standard VERs and Gold Standard CER Labels

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

- Project [NAME/NUMBER] made a contribution to SDG Target 13: issuing X,000 [Gold Standard VERs/ Gold Standard CERs] on [DATE]. This represents a direct and quantifiable impact on climate change mitigation, monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

For those retiring Gold Standard VERs and Gold Standard CER labels: These assets can be used in pursuit of ‘carbon neutral,’ ‘climate neutral,’ and ‘climate positive’ claims. In addition to the allowed claims for supporting a Gold Standard Certified Project, the funder may also make the following claim:

- Organisation X has made a contribution to SDG Target 13 by funding X,000 [Gold Standard VERs/Gold Standard CERs] on [DATE]. This represents a direct and quantifiable impact on climate change mitigation, monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

The buyer/retiree must not make claims for other Gold Standard Certified SDG Impacts that they have not directly funded (e.g., Black Carbon and/or ADALYs). They can, however, include a description of SDG Impacts as part of a project narrative, but must indicate clearly and precisely what their funds supported.

## 2. Product Claims – Planned Emission Reductions (through sequestration)

A Planned Emission Reduction represents the expected (i.e., future) sequestration of 1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e but does not represent an actual sequestration and accordingly shall not be used for carbon neutral claims until its conversion to a Verified Emission Reduction takes place.

The following claims are valid with regards to Planned Emission Reductions:

- Project [NAME/NUMBER] is designed to contribute to SDG 13, issuing X,000 Gold Standard Planned Emission Reductions on [DATE]. This represents an expected sequestration of emissions that, once converted to a Verified Emission Reduction, will have a positive impact on climate change mitigation monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

For those purchasing Planned Emission Reductions: In addition to the allowed claims for supporting a Gold Standard Certified Project, the funder may also make the following claim:

- Organisation [XXXX] made an investment toward a contribution to SDG 13 by funding X,000 Gold Standard Planned Emission Reductions on [DATE]. This represents an expected sequestration of emissions that, once converted to a Verified Emission Reduction, will have a positive impact on climate change mitigation monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

For those funders seeking to ensure their investments also contribute to actual emission

reductions, Gold Standard allows project developers to bundle Planned Emission Reductions with supplemental Gold Standard Emission Reductions. In such cases the claims may be amended by adding a further line as follows:

- Organisation [XXXX] made an investment toward a contribution to SDG 13 by funding X,000 Gold Standard Planned Emission Reductions and also an equivalent number of supplemental Gold Standard Emission Reductions on [DATE]. This represents both an actual reduction or sequestration and an investment into future sequestration of CO<sub>2</sub> – making a direct and quantifiable impact on climate change mitigation monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

By purchasing Gold Standard Emission Reductions bundled with Gold Standard Planned Emission Reductions, buyers or funders can use each bundle as a single unit eligible for carbon neutral claims.

## PRODUCT CLAIMS GUIDELINES FOR

### CERTIFIED SDG 13 IMPACTS – BLACK CARBON/SLCP REDUCTION STATEMENTS

#### Overview

Short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) include compounds such as black carbon (BC), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), tropospheric ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), and many hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). These compounds have short lifetimes in the atmosphere compared to greenhouse gases (GHGs). Although lifetimes in the atmosphere are shorter lived, their effects on climate are significant and happen at a more localized level. Black carbon, also known as ‘soot,’ is a solid form of mostly pure carbon that is one of the most effective solar-absorbing aerosols. Beyond its climate impact, black carbon also has other negative effects to the environment and health.

Under Gold Standard for the Global Goals, the quantification and certification of reductions of black carbon and other SLCPs through the introduction of efficient cookstoves represents a Certified SDG Impact to SDG 13<sup>[2]</sup> through its contribution climate change mitigation.

The Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact logo may be used in conjunction with issuance and funding of certified impact statements for black carbon/SLCP reductions.



#### Product claims

This product comes in the form of a certified impact statement that captures the quantification of black carbon and other SLCP emission reductions.

For project developers, the following claims are can be made:

- Project [NAME/NUMBER] made a contribution to SDG 13, certifying X,000 black carbon/SLCP emission reductions on [DATE]. This represents a direct and quantifiable impact on climate change mitigation, monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

For funders or sponsors of certified impact statement: In addition to the allowed claims for



supporting a Gold Standard Certified Project, the funder may also make the following claim:

- Organisation [XXXX] made a contribution to SDG 13 by funding the reduction of black carbon/SLCP emission on [DATE]. This represents a direct and quantifiable impact on climate change mitigation, monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

## PRODUCT CLAIMS GUIDELINES FOR CERTIFIED SDG 13 IMPACT – RENEWABLE ENERGY LABELS

### Overview

A Gold Standard Renewable Energy Label is a quality attribute for renewable electricity market instruments, which are also referred to as renewable energy certificates, renewable energy credits, or other names depending on the market. These market instruments are tradable, non-tangible energy commodities that represent proof that 1 megawatt-hour (MWh) of electricity was generated from an eligible renewable energy resource (renewable electricity) and was fed into the shared system of power lines which transport energy.

The Gold Standard Renewable Energy Label ensures that a buyer's purchase of a renewable electricity market instrument results in real-world emissions reductions, new renewable energy capacity and sustainable development benefits. Under Gold Standard for the Global Goals, the issuance of Gold Standard Renewable Energy Labels represents a Certified Impact to SDG 7 by increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

### Product Claims

The Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact logo may be used in conjunction with issuance and funding of these assets.



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 7.2: issuing X,000 Gold Standard Labelled Renewable Energy Certificates [STATE TYPE, e.g., I-RECs] on [DATE]. This represents a direct and quantifiable impact on increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix, monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

For sponsors/funders: In addition to the allowed claims for supporting a Gold Standard Certified Project, the funder may also make the following claim:

Organisation X has made a contribution to SDG Target 7.2 by purchasing X,000 Gold Standard Labelled Renewable Energy Certificates [STATE TYPE e.g. I-RECs] from Project [NAME/NUMBER] issued on [DATE]. This represents a direct and quantifiable impact on increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix, monitored, verified and certified by Gold Standard.

## PRODUCT CLAIMS GUIDELINES CERTIFIED SDG 3 IMPACT –

# ADALYS

## 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.

## Product claims

The Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact logo may be used in conjunction with issuance and funding of these assets.



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.

For sponsors/funders: In addition to the allowed claims for supporting 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 Impacts as part of a project narrative, but must indicate clearly and precisely what their funds supported.

## SAMPLE CERTIFIED PROJECT IMPACT STATEMENT

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.** This project has been developed in line with best practice following rigorous safeguards to prevent unintended consequences and manage trade offs where needed.

- **Multiple contributions to Global Goals.** This project has contributed holistically to three Sustainable Development Goals. All impacts 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 “gender sensitive.”
- 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 the Gold Standard network of 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.

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

Project GS1111 also demonstrated financial need for additional finance in order to secure the following impacts, and applied a Gold Standard-approved methodology for quantification and certification.

#### >>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 CO<sub>2</sub>e. 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. [Serial numbers ABC – YYZ]

## Endnotes

[1] Unlike other SDGs the targets and Indicators associated with SDG13 cross-reference the Paris Agreement. A specific target is therefore not provided, Gold Standard interprets this as mitigation, measured as tco<sub>2</sub>e for the purpose of this document.

[2] Unlike other SDGs the Targets and Indicators associated with SDG13 cross-reference the Paris Agreement. A specific Target is therefore not provided, Gold Standard interprets this as mitigation, measured as tco<sub>2</sub>e for the purpose of this document.