Gold Standard for the Global Goals Renewable Energy Activity Requirements

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PREFACE

This Requirements document, hereafter ”the Requirements”, provides the pathway to certification within the Gold Standard for the Global Goals with the specific intention of enabling Renewable Energy activities to certify the project design and/or issue GS Certified Impact Statements and Products.

The Requirements is designed to be read in conjunction with the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles & Requirements and associated documents. Through conformity to these two documents and relevant Gold Standard Approved Methodologies and Product Requirements (for e.g. Emissions Reduction & Removals Product Requirements, Gold Standard REC labelling Product Requirements etc.), a Project may be issued with Gold Standard Renewable Energy Labels, Gold Standard VERs etc.

The Requirements is intended to provide Renewable Energy Project Developers with necessary guidelines while applying for Gold Standard certification in conjunction with Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles & Requirements and associated documentation.

A list of Renewable Energy technologies eligible for Gold standard certification is included in the Requirements.

INTRODUCTION

All Renewable Energy Projects for which Gold Standard certification is being sought shall fulfill the requirements as set out in this document and those referenced or associated.

In order to maintain the integrity of the standard, Gold Standard reserves the right to issue updates and changes, clarifications or corrections to its requirements. Typically, this will involve a notice period and guidance will be provided on how to apply the new rules and requirements.

Likewise, the Gold Standard reserves the right to require additional information and evidence to be supplied by the Project Developer.

1.0 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1.1 Eligible Project Types & Scope

1.1.1 In order to be eligible for certification, Gold Standard Renewable Energy Projects must meet the following Eligibility and Criteria:

(a) Project shall generate and deliver energy services (e.g. mechanical work/electricity/heat) from non-fossil and non-depletable energy sources

(b) Project shall comprise of renewable energy generation units, such as photovoltaic, tidal/wave, wind, hydro, geothermal, waste to energy and renewable biomass:

- Supplying energy to a national or a regional grid; or
- Supplying energy to an identified consumer facility via national/regional grid through a contractual agreement such as wheeling.

(c) Project supplying electricity to a mini-grid[1] shall refer to Gold Standard Community Services Activity Requirements.

(d) Projects generating energy on-site for captive consumption at an industrial facility shall refer the requrirements in this document.

1.1.2 For specific Renewable Energy project types like Hydropower, projects using biomass resources etc., additional eligibility criteria are prescribed in Annex A (Additional criteria for specific renewable energy project types) of this document

1.1.3 In relation to the above all Projects must therefore conform to the following documents:

(a) Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles & Requirements (and associated documents) AND

(b) Gold Standard Renewable Energy Activity Requirements

1.1.4 In addition, for those Projects seeking to be able to issue both Renewable Energy Labels and VERs the requirements in following documents shall also be met:

(a) Gold Standard Approved Methodologies for Emissions Reductions

(b) Gold Standard GHG Emissions Reduction and Sequestration Product Requirements

(c) Gold Standard Renewable Energy Labelling Product Requirements

1.2 General Eligibility Criteria

1.2.1 Types of project – Eligible projects shall include physical action/implementation on the ground. Pre-identified eligible project types are mentioned in Eligibility Criteria Section above.

1.2.2 Location of project: Eligible projects may be located in any part of the world. Hydropower projects may not be located in HCV areas. Please refer to annex A for further information on hydropower projects.

1.2.3 Project Area, Boundary and Scale: Project Area and Boundary shall be defined in line with the applicable product Requirements. The following scale categories are allowed:

1.2.4 Scale for RE projects is defined as follows

Microscale –

(a) RE project issuing emission reductions less than equal to 10,000 tCO_{2eq}

(b) RE project seeking any product other than emission reductions with installed capacity less than equal to 2 MW_{el} / 6 MW_{th}

Non microscale –

(a) RE project issuing emission reductions greater than 10,000 tCO_{2eq}

(b) RE project seeking any product other than emission reductions with installed capacity greater than 2 MW_{el} / 6 MW_{th}

1.2.5 For the purpose of applying UNFCCC methodologies for quantification of GHG reductions, 'small scale' is defined as Renewable Energy Project with installed capacity less than equal to 15 MW_{el} or 45 MW_{th}.

1.2.6 In certain cases Gold Standard methodologies allow for a Suppressed Demand baseline scenario to be assumed. In such cases, the application of Suppressed Demand baseline is limited to Small Scale Projects. Where a Suppressed Demand baseline is applied, it is not possible to 'stack' Gold Standard Certified SDG Impact Statements or Products as the definition of baseline may be contradictory.

2.0 GOLD STANDARD FOR THE GLOBAL GOALS – APPLIED ELIGIBILITY PRINICPLES

This section describes the additional requirements and/or deviations from Gold Standard for the Global Goals. These Additional Requirements must be met in order for the Renewable Energy project to achieve Gold Standard certification.

The Certification cycle for Renewable Energy projects is as detailed in Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles & Requirements. Upon successful certification, the Renewable Energy Projects successfully completing Performance Certification shall be issued with a project-level Gold Standard Certified Project Statement as per the Gold Standard Claims Guide, along with a number of Certified SDG Impacts corresponding to the eligible Renewable Energy Products successfully certified.

Certified SDG Impacts can be stacked for a single Renewable Energy project, however, there can be additional requirements based on product Requirements and such requirements should be applied and will supersede the generic requirements stated in this document. For instance, GS-VER and REC labels cannot be stacked for the same MWh, however, other product stacking maybe permitted based on the relevant product Requirements.

2.1 Principle 1 – Contribution to Climate Security & Sustainable Development

2.1.1 Projects shall make positive contributions to a minimum of 3 Sustainable Development Goals

2.1.2 One of the positive contributions shall mandatorily concern SDG 13 (Climate Action) while the other two contributions can be proposed by the Project Developer. It is recommended to include contribution to SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) as one of the other 2 contributions.

2.2 Principle 2 – Safeguarding Principles

Project developers shall conduct a Safeguarding Principles Assessment and conform to Gold Standard for the Global Goals Safeguarding Principles and Requirements document.

2.3 Principle 3 – Stakeholder Inclusivity

Renewable Energy projects shall identify and engage relevant stakeholders and seek expert stakeholder input where necessary in the design, planning and implementation. Specific stakeholder consultation requirements for hydropower projects/renewable biomass based projects are given in Annex A of this document.

2.4 Principle 4 – Demonstration of Real Outcomes

2.4.1 The definition of start date is as per Gold Standard for the Global Goals, including for Retroactive Project Design Certification (under which a Project must achieve this status within two years of its start date).

2.4.2 Projects may receive Issuance of Gold Standard Renewable Energy products for a

maximum of three Gold Standard for the Global Goals Certification Cycles (a total of 15 years Certification and Issuance). Information in the Product Requirements on total crediting period shall supersede information in the Requirements.

2.4.3 Certification Renewal in the case of RE projects is mandatory every 5 years.

2.4.4 An eligible, GS-Approved VVB shall validate or verify Gold Standard Renewable Energy Projects as per Gold Standard for the Global Goals Validation & Verification Body Requirements.

2.5 Principle 5 – Financial Additionality & Ongoing Financial Need

2.5.1 Projects seeking issuance of Gold Standard Certified Impact Statements or Products (for example GS-VERs) shall demonstrate financial additionality and ongoing financial need (using evidences of costs, subsidies, taxes etc.) unless otherwise stated in specific Product Requirements.

2.5.2 Unless mentioned otherwise in Product Requirements, the projects shall follow the additionality requirements specified under section 3.5.1 of the Gold Standard for the Global Goals Principles & Requirements document.

2.5.3 Microscale

Micro scale projects that meet any one of the criteria defined below (and meet the eligibility requirements) shall be deemed additional:

(a) The project is located in a Least Developed Country (LDC), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) or Land Locked Developing Country (LLDC)[2]

The project is located in a special underdeveloped zone of the host country identified by the Government. Project developers shall refer to the list published on UNFCCC website (http://cdm.unfccc.int/DNA/submissions/index.html)

(b) The project is located in any host country or part of host country different from those defined above but PPs can demonstrate that project implementation will essentially benefit poor communities. No specific definition of 'poor communities' is pre-established. The international or national definitions to define populations below pvert line can serve as the basis to assess the eligibility of the targeted communities. PPs shall seek approval from The Gold Standard Foundation on the basis of a formal request providing detailed arguments as to how the activity will benefit poor communities.

(c) The project feeds electricity into the regional or national high voltage grid if convincing evidence can be provided to demonstrate that the implementation of the project will significantly improve electricity access for the local communities, households or SMEs.

(d) The project employs solar technologies (Photovoltaic and solar thermal electricity generation), off-shore wind, marine technology, household rooftop wind turbine of size upto 100 kW or biomass integrated gasification combined cycle. Other specific renewable energy technologies or measures recommended by the host country DNA and approved by the CDM EB (http://cdm.unfccc.int/DNA/submissions/index.html) OR approved by The Gold Standard Foundation as part of a positive list.

2.5.4 In case the deemed additionality criteria are also valid at the time of renewal of Crediting Period the ongoing needs assessment is deemed to be met. The baseline shall be reassessed at the time of crediting period renewal.

ANNEX A – ADDITIONAL CRITERIA for SPECIFIC RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT TYPES

Hydropower project activity

1. Hydropower project activities located in High Conservation Value (HCV)[3] areas shall NOT be eligible under The Gold Standard. Project Developers must assess whether their activity

takes place in such a High Conservation Value area, based on both consultations with the local authorities (e.g. protected areas such as national parks) AND existing international sources of information such as the World Database on protected planets (IUCN, UNEP)[4] , the Ramsar list of wetlands[5] , and the United Nations list of protected areas[6] . The outcome of the assessment shall be provided in the documentation submitted for preliminary review (retroactive activities).

2. Unless already addressed satisfactorily as part of an existing Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), the opinion of an independent, relevant expert(s) shall be provided at a minimum on all of the following issues – the opinion may be that an issue is not relevant for the considered project, but evidence must be provided to demonstrate so:

(a) Are there any competing uses of water resources at the project location, of what nature and how severe are they? Convincing evidence must be provided that the hydropower project does not divert water from other current users or that these are in agreement with the shift of use. The expert opinion must be provided on time for validation, and be reflected in the Monitoring Plan for verification along the crediting period.

(b) What minimal ecological flow shall be complied with at any point in time, accounting for the specificities of local ecosystems and for seasonality? What quality assurance and control procedures must be put in place for an appropriate continuous monitoring over the crediting period? The expert opinion must be provided in time for validation.

(c) Is the groundwater level seriously affected by the hydropower project? What quality assurance and control procedures must be put in place for an appropriate continuous monitoring over the crediting period? The expert opinion must be provided in time for validation.

(d) Is the design of the fish passages and screens (water intake structure) installed in line with internationally recognised guidance? The expert opinion must be provided in time for validation. Are these measures indeed effective over the crediting period, and if not what must be done to improve the situation? The expert opinion must be provided in time for verification.

(e) What sediment management plan shall be considered? The expert opinion must be provided in time for validation. Is it indeed effective over the crediting period, and if not how must it be improved? The expert opinion must be provided in time for verification.

(f) What mitigation measures shall be put in place to prevent soil erosion? The expert opinion must be provided in time for validation. Are they effective and if not, what complementary action must be taken? The expert opinion must be provided in time for verification.

3. Besides the issues listed above, the expert(s) is free to include any other issue that he/she identifies as being relevant for the project. Project Developers have the opportunity to provide their views on the identified issues and their relevance as part of the report to be delivered by the expert in the context of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between The Gold Standard Foundation, the Project Representatives and the independent expert. For regular cycle projects, the independent expert(s) shall be invited to the LSC and will identify the list of issues for which an independent expert opinion will be needed on time for validation and/or verification. This list is approved by The Gold Standard Foundation as part of the review of the stakeholder consultation report. For retroactive projects, fast-tracking is NOT allowed. The independent expert(s) shall be contracted on time to deliver as part of the documentation submitted for preliminary review the list of issues for which an independent expert opinion will be needed on time for validation and/or verification. This list is reviewed and potentially approved by The Gold Standard Foundation as part of the preliminary review.

4. Project developers shall plan for, and conduct a one-day training for the hydropower plant staff on the different issues identified by the independent expert. This training must be included in the Monitoring & Reporting Plan.

5. The Gold Standard Foundation will evaluate on a case-by-case basis the eligibility of hydropower activities with an installed capacity greater than 20 MW_{el} at the time of preliminary review. This 20 MW_{el} capacity threshold shall apply to each one of the project activities as part

of a bundle, and not to the overall bundle, and to each one of the CPA/VPA as part of a PoA. The project developer shall provide the following additional information as part of the documentation to be reviewed:

6. A Stakeholder Consultation Report, in accordance with the relevant guidelines for a Stakeholder Consultation. For project activities involving existing dams (such as dams built for irrigation purposes), the stakeholder consultation shall include a site-visit by local stakeholders taking part in the consultation.

7. A report ('Compliance Report') showing that the project is in compliance with the latest WCD guidelines[7], validated by a GS-VVB.

Project activity using biomass resources

1. Project activities making use of non-renewable biomass resources shall NOT be eligible for Gold Standard registration. Project developers shall therefore provide convincing evidence that the project activities make use of renewable biomass resources[8] . These criteria shall be monitored along the crediting period and therefore be included in the Sustainability Monitoring Plan.

2. Project activities expected to make use of biomass resources already in use shall NOT be eligible for Gold Standard registration unless convincing evidence is provided showing that the current users are in agreement with the envisioned shift of use (potential leakage associated to such a shift must be taken into account). In the absence of such an agreement, Project Developers shall demonstrate that their project activity makes use of surplus biomass for each type of biomass resources used[9] . They must do so once, ex-ante on time for validation for small-scale project activities (installed capacity upto 15 MW_{el} or 45 MW_{th}), and in time for validation and for each one of the verifications (inclusion in the Sustainability Monitoring Plan) for project activities greater than 15 MW_{el} or 45 MW_{th}.

3. Project Developers shall demonstrate that their project will only make use of degraded land[10] and shall include this criterion in the Sustainability Monitoring Plan to ensure there is no diversion of land from other essential purposes like food production. Two exceptions may be considered: convincing evidence is provided showing that the envisioned energy crop is part of a traditional rotational cropping, OR an increase of the productivity is obtained, locally and to the benefit of the current users, through measures implemented in the context of the activity so as to at a minimum compensate for the part of the land newly allocated to growing the energy crop. Compliance with these criteria above must be monitored over the crediting period and thus be part of the Sustainability Monitoring Plan.

4. Activities making use of GMOs shall declare so in a transparent way. Local stakeholder's opinion on GMOs shall prevail and appropriate mitigation measures shall be put in place to address their concerns, if any, in a satisfactory way.

5. Avoidance of methane from biomass decay shall be eligible as long as biomass is used as a substitution for non-renewable fuels in project activities delivering energy services or for the production of usable product with sustainable development benefits (e.g. composting).

6. The use of non-renewable fuel in biomass heat and/or electricity generation plants is authorised as long as the renewable fuel share reaches 50%[11] after the first 3 years[12] of operation for retrofit projects, and represents 80%4 from the outset for Greenfield projects.

7. The eligibility of project activities making use of Palm oil and/or palm oil mill by-products or residues for electricity and/or heat generation, and/or for biofuel production shall be evaluated on a case-by case basis by The Gold Standard Foundation, at the time of preliminary review. The project developers shall provide the following on top of the usual project documentation:

8. A Stakeholder Consultation Report, in accordance with the guidelines for conducting a Local Stakeholder Consultation, and provided as part of the documentation to be reviewed at the time of the preliminary review.

9. A report ('Compliance Report') showing that the project is in compliance with the latest

version of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil guidance document on Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Palm Oil Production[13] (including the national interpretations), validated by a GS-VVB, and provided as part of the documentation to be reviewed at the time of the registration review. Project Developers must demonstrate that they have started the process for RSPO compliance at the time of preliminary review. If the project is located in a country where a national interpretation of the RSPO principles has not been established and approved by the RSPO, compliance shall be established against the international RSPO Criteria. In such a case, the certification body must develop local indicators through a consultative process, available in the local language.

Project activity using Biogas (landfill gas and biogas from agro-processing, wastewater and other residues)

1. Methane recovery project activities shall be eligible for emission reductions from both methane avoidance (including from the flared biogas fraction) and non-renewable fuel substitution as long as evidence is provided on time for validation to demonstrate that the system was designed in a way to at least make use of some of the biogas recovered for the delivery of energy services (e.g. electricity, heat).

2. Methane recovery project activities at wastewater treatment plants related to Palm Oil production shall comply with all rules provided for palm oil related activities provided in this document

Project activity using Waster Heat/Gas recovery

1. Project activities involving waste heat recovery in industrial processes shall be eligible for emission reductions related to on-site energy consumption. Emission reductions related to the export of heat or electricity generated from the waste heat shall NOT be eligible unless it can be shown that the primary and unique source of energy for the industrial process is renewable energy. This requirement applies on an annual basis and the electricity generation profile does not have to necessarily match the on-site demand profile on an instantaneous basis.

2. Project activities involving the use of waste gases recovery in industrial processes shall be eligible for emission reductions related to on-site energy consumption. Emission reductions related to the export of heat or electricity generated from the waste gases recovered shall NOT be eligible unless it can be shown that the primary and unique source of energy for the industrial process is renewable energy. This requirement applies on an annual basis and the electricity generation profile does not have to necessarily match the on-site demand profile on an instantaneous basis. Emissions from the combustion of the recovered gases shall of course be taken into account in the calculation of project emissions.

Fossil co-generation

1. Fossil-fired co-generation project activities shall be eligible for emission reductions from end-use energy efficiency improvements, i.e. related to on-site energy consumption. Emission reductions related to the export of heat or electricity generated from the waste heat recovered shall NOT be eligible. This requirement applies on an annual basis and the electricity generation profile does not have to necessarily match the on-site demand profile on an instantaneous basis.

Waste incineration and gasification

1. Co-firing of non-renewable and renewable waste within incineration or gasification facilities shall NOT be eligible under Gold Standard

Waste handling and disposal

1. Project activities planning to make use of waste materials that are already in use in the pre-project situation shall NOT be eligible unless convincing evidence is provided to show that the current users are in agreement with the shift of use resulting from the project. In the absence of such an agreement, the Project Developers shall demonstrate that the project activity makes use of surplus waste materials[14] and shall include this analysis in the Sustainability Monitoring Plan. They must do so once, ex-ante on time for validation for small-scale projects (installed capacity upto 15 MW_{el} or 45 MW_{th}), and in time for validation and for each one of the

verifications (inclusion in the Sustainability Monitoring Plan) for projects greater than 15 MW_{el} or 45 MW_{th}.

Endnotes

[1] A mini-grid is defined as small-scale power system with a total capacity not exceeding 15 MWel (i.e. the sum of installed capacities of all generators connected to the mini-grid is equal to or less than 15 MWel) which is not connected to a national or a regional grid.

[2] List as per UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (Annex 1, 2 and 3)

[3] Please refer to High Conservation Value Resource Network for definition of High Conservation Value Area.

[4] www.protectedplanet.net

[5] www.ramsar.org/pdf/sitelist.pdf

[6] http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/UNLNP-2003.pdf

[7] www.dams.org

[8] Refer to EB 23, Annex 18 "Definition of Renewable Biomass or its update: http://cdm.unfccc.int/EB/023/eb23_repan18.pdf

[9] In accordance with the approach proposed in paragraph 18 of the Attachment C to Appendix B: General Guidance on Leakage in biomass projects (Attachment C to Appendix B of 4/CMP.1 Annex II) http://cdm.unfccc.int/Reference/Guidclarif/ssc/index_guid.html

[10] http://cdm.unfccc.int/methodologies/ARmethodologies/tools/ar-am-tool-13-v1.pdf

[11] Refers to the percentage of the total fuel consumed on an annual energy basis.

[12] The reference date for the 3-year period is the start date of crediting period.

[13] RSPO Website <http://www.rspo.org>

[14] In accordance with the approach proposed in paragraph 18 of the Attachment C to Appendix B: General Guidance on Leakage in biomass projects (Attachment C to Appendix B of 4/CMP.1 Annex II) http://cdm.unfccc.int/Reference/Guidclarif/ssc/index_guid.html