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As Calls for CDM Reform Intensify, The Gold Standard Amplifies Project Assistance and Certification Capacity in Key Developing Countries

The world's premium certification standard for carbon offset projects, "The Gold Standard" said it will double its efforts to support renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in key developing country markets starting January 2009.

During the first two weeks of December, delegates from 190 nations are convening in Poznan, Poland to negotiate a new treaty for mitigating climate change. Key issues include defining means for developing countries to help curb climate change. With the support of the Federal German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, The Gold Standard Foundation now offers developing countries with rapidly growing energy needs free assistance through its global "Local Expert" program. In addition, The Gold Standard will increase staff to reduce certification periods.

The Gold Standard Foundation plans to hire experts in seven developing countries encompassing the most dynamic energy markets, including China, India and Brazil. These experts will support project developers in the application of the Gold Standard's rules and serve as readily accessible information hubs for national authorities, non-governmental organisations and auditors reviewing projects. Michael Schlup, Director of the Gold Standard Foundation remarked, "The only true barrier to sustainable development through renewable energy and energy efficiency projects is human capacity – both on the development side and the certification side. The speed at which we can bring deserving projects to market will increase, bringing much relief to all market players."

At present, 240 renewable energy and energy efficiency projects with an annual volume of 18 million credits are at various stages in the Gold Standard project cycle. The Gold Standard criteria specify that projects utilize local stakeholder involvement and include an in-depth assessment and monitoring of sustainable development contribution. Meinrad Burer, Technical Director for The Gold Standard, remarked, "The local experts will be our eyes and ears on the ground, and they will be able to accompany projects from the getgo, reducing both costs and time for achieving registration."

The Gold Standard Foundation has launched the Gold Standard Registry, operated by APX, and a new set of rules, the Gold Standard version 2, earlier this year in an effort to facilitate market access for eligible projects. Supported by over 60 NGOs worldwide, the Gold Standard is a benchmark for quality in the carbon markets and achieves considerable price premiums for its credits.

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