



# VeraSol

## Stakeholder Questions and Answers

MARCH 2020

This document contains the questions asked by stakeholders about VeraSol during the 2020 Off-Grid Solar Forum & Expo and the two informational webinars hosted on March 11 and 19, 2020.

### **Where can I access third-party data on standalone off-grid appropriate appliances tested through VeraSol?**

You can access data on standalone off-grid appropriate appliances via [Equip Data](#). We will be migrating these data to [VeraSol.org](#) later this year.

### **When will VeraSol start issuing their own certification documents?**

We plan to begin issuing verification letters and specification sheets under the new VeraSol brand in mid-2020. These documents will indicate that VeraSol was formerly Lighting Global Quality Assurance to ensure they're accepted by parties who might not recognize the new brand.

### **Does VeraSol charge a fee to quality-verify products?**

VeraSol is primarily donor-funded, but we do charge a fee for companies that want to get their products quality-verified. The VeraSol program fee will vary depending on the service fees applicable to your product. Please refer to the table on [this page](#) to estimate your VeraSol program fees.

### **Are you planning to integrate different platforms that can operate various off-grid appliances in this program?**

Historically VeraSol has focused mainly on packaged kits, but as we've expanded into solar home system kits, we've had to think about the range of appliances that could be included with those kits. If you anticipate that your product won't fit into our existing framework, please [reach out to us](#) so we can do our best to respond to the market's needs.

### **What is the thinking behind developing quality standards for standalone off-grid TVs and fans?**

The current VeraSol framework evaluates TVs and fans within plug-and-play systems, but this framework isn't applicable to appliances used with component-based systems or mini-grids. Currently, market buyers do not have the resources they need to compare and differentiate standalone appliances.

To help address this issue, the VeraSol team has been piloting a quality assurance framework for standalone off-grid TVs and fans based on similar principles to the quality standards for pico-solar products and SHS kits including performance reporting, truth-in-advertising, durability, quality & safety, and consumer protection. We are also seeking feedback from the sector about the future of quality assurance for these products. Learn more [here](#) or [contact us](#) if you'd like to provide feedback.

### **Will solar streetlights be included in the upcoming IEC standards for standalone solar energy kits?**

No, solar streetlights will not be included in the upcoming IEC quality standards. We are currently working on developing a framework for solar streetlights, but it's at an early stage. We expect to have a draft of the test methods in the next few months and then will seek stakeholder input on that draft. You can learn more about what will be contained in the IEC quality standards [here](#).

### **Will VeraSol be working on standards for substations and/or power lines for mini-grids?**

No, we are not currently looking to develop standards for substations and/or power lines for mini-grids, though there are existing IEC standards for specific components. Our focus is on standalone solar products and appliances that are used with those products, but we do recognize the potential application of standalone off-grid appliances for mini-grids. This document entitled '[Quality Assurance](#)

[Framework for Mini-Grids](#)’ from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in Colorado, USA is a useful resource on using quality standards for mini-grids.

**Are there standards related to anti-tampering for PAYG products?**

No, VeraSol doesn’t currently have any standards or requirements related to anti-tampering. If you think there is a need for anti-tampering requirements and VeraSol could add value to this process, please [contact us](#).

**Have you considered developing a resource that describes how PAYG platforms should be designed for consumer data protection?**

To date, our program has not focused on consumer data protection for PAYG platforms. If you are interested in this, please [contact us](#) so we can discuss further.

**How do you check if products meet the quality standards once they’re in the market?**

VeraSol conducts market surveillance through two pathways: market check testing and market observations. Market check testing verifies that the quality and performance of products sold in the market match the levels measured during program entry testing. Market observations assess quality-verified products in the marketplace or online to verify that the consumer-facing information meets the quality standards. We encourage institutions to build in budget for market surveillance and contact us if they have a need to check on quality-verified products that are a part of their program.

**At what stage in the process of developing or revising standards are consumers consulted?**

Prior to developing the first quality standards for pico-solar products and solar home system kits, VeraSol did substantial consumer research to understand what’s most useful to that group. We are considering doing more consumer research related to quality standards in the future.

**Is there any published information on the pilot standards for component-based system pilots in Vanuatu and Uganda?**

All the forms for the Vanuatu program are available [here](#). One of the key documents related to this program is the [Subsidy Implementation Manual](#).

### **Is it possible to simplify the test methods?**

Since the test methods are IEC documents, we have to work through the IEC revision process to make any changes. To do this, VeraSol and GOGLA would reach out to stakeholders to determine any potential changes to the test methods, and then we'd submit feedback to the IEC. If you have any suggestions on changes to the test methods, please [reach out to us](#) to provide feedback.

### **Do the daily energy service calculations for pico-solar products and solar home system kits reflect real-world scenarios?**

The daily energy service calculations are intended to be a standard, comparable metric, so they don't necessarily reflect real-world figures for all circumstances. We do, however, take into consideration metrics such as the performance of the PV module, solar energy input over a standardized simulated solar day, and efficiency losses through PV module charging, the battery charge/discharge cycle, circuit and ports, and appliances. We combine all these factors with individual measurements to calculate the daily energy that could be available for that product.

### **You noted that the VeraSol team is training five new labs in Sub-Saharan Africa to test pico-solar products and solar home system kits. Do you think this will help grow the manufacturing industry in this region and/or push governments to adopt the IEC standards?**

We do expect that IEC publication of the quality standards and having more test labs in this region will lead to an increase in national adoption of the standards on a harmonized basis. More test labs in the region could support local manufacturing, but there are many other factors that influence the potential development of local manufacturing (e.g. manufacturing costs; tax and duty policy; grid reliability).

### **Currently you have specific test labs designated to test specific off-grid appliances. Is there a plan to allow other labs to do this testing?**

We welcome other test labs that have the capability to test off-grid appropriate appliances to join the [VeraSol test lab network](#). The VeraSol team provides essential training and round-robin testing to ensure test labs in our network produce consistent, reliable, and repeatable test results. The appliance test labs currently in the VeraSol network were selected using a competitive bidding process. If you know

of a test lab that is interested in becoming a part of our network, please encourage them to [contact us](#) for more information.

### **Are the labs that VeraSol has engaged to do off-grid appliance testing already testing these appliances?**

Yes, many [labs in our network](#) came with existing experience in testing on-grid household appliances and products. The VeraSol team selected these test laboratories through a competitive bid process and provided training. The laboratories we engaged are qualified to test off-grid appropriate appliances and productive uses, and they are already testing products. You can find these tested products on [Equip Data](#). We will also be adding a new lab to our network to test electric pressure cookers later this year.

### **What appliance voltages is it envisaged that the component-based solar home system testing program will cover?**

The component-based solar home system framework will cover systems that can power a wide range of standard DC and AC appliances (e.g. 5 VDC, 12 VDC, 120 VAC, 230 VAC, etc.).

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### **About VeraSol**

An evolution of Lighting Global Quality Assurance, VeraSol supports high-performing, durable off-grid products that expand access to modern energy services. VeraSol builds upon the strong foundation for quality assurance laid by the World Bank Group and expands its services to encompass off-grid appliances, productive use equipment, and component-based solar home systems. VeraSol is managed by CLASP in collaboration with the Schatz Energy Research Center at Humboldt State University. Foundational support is provided by the World Bank Group's Lighting Global program, UKaid, IKEA Foundation, and others. Please visit [VeraSol.org](#) for more information.