

Article 6 Registry Systems Administrator Forum

Concept Note

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I. Introduction

A. Background and mandate

1. At CMA 4, Parties decided to establish a voluntary forum of Article 6 registry system administrators and technical experts (RSA Forum) and requested the secretariat to establish an online platform to support its work.¹
2. Parties also decided at CMA 4 that, for participating Parties opting to apply the guidance referred to in annex I, chapter I.B of decision 6/CMA.4, the secretariat should develop standards for interoperability and relevant procedures for transactions of ITMOs, including with inputs from the RSA Forum.
3. SBSTA 58 recalled the request to the secretariat to establish the RSA Forum in the context of implementing and operating the infrastructure under Article 6, paragraph 2, and to provide input to the further development and implementation of such infrastructure, as necessary, and requested the secretariat to expedite the implementation of that mandate.

B. Purpose

4. This document provides an initial framework for the establishment and functioning of the RSA Forum. It aims at informing prospective participating Parties and stakeholders at the proposed objectives and method of work of the RSA Forum, with a view to establishing a solid foundation for its work going forward.

II. Vision

5. The purpose of the RSA Forum is to foster collaboration, facilitate knowledge exchange, enhance capacity building, and provide input on the further development of infrastructure, communication standards, and recommended practices for such infrastructure.
6. The RSA Forum aims to create an inclusive and dynamic platform where registry administrators from different countries can come together to share experiences, exchange knowledge, and collaborate towards the efficient and transparent implementation of tracking registries initiatives.
7. Through exchange, collaboration and mutual learning, the RSA Forum seeks to enhance the capacities of participants in managing registry systems, promote the harmonization of methodologies and tools, and support the adoption of innovative technologies. By actively contributing to the development of infrastructure and communication standards, the RSA Forum aims to ensure the consideration of registry administrators' perspectives and expertise in shaping robust and harmonized systems that facilitate secure, transparent, and efficient GHG emissions trading.

¹ Annex I contains the list of relevant mandates.

III. Objectives

A. Facilitate cooperation

8. The RSA Forum will provide an environment that will foster collaboration, communication and shared goals among its participants. Participants will be actively encouraged to contribute to the discussions, working groups, outputs, and share their insights.
9. The secretariat will play a key role in this regard through the organization of structured discussions and meetings focussing on specific areas of interest, where participants can share or contribute their ideas based on their experience.
10. The RSA Forum will also promote networking among participants, both within and outside of the forum.

B. Knowledge exchange

11. In the context of the RSA Forum, knowledge exchange refers to the sharing and dissemination of information, expertise, experiences, and best practices among the participants. The forum serves as a platform where RSAs can exchange knowledge related to the implementation, management, and operation of their registries, and the communications between them.
12. The primary objective of knowledge exchange within the RSA Forum will be to facilitate mutual learning and collaboration among the participants. It allows RSAs to share insights and lessons learned from their respective experiences, discuss challenges faced during their implementation of Article 6 or in the context of other emissions trading instruments, and explore potential solutions and improvements to existing solutions collectively.
13. Overall, knowledge exchange in the Article 6 registry system administrator forum is expected to be a dynamic process that aims to create a vibrant and interactive platform, promoting peer learning, and enhancing the overall implementation of Article 6.
14. The online platform that will support the work of the RSA Forum is expected to be a key enabler for knowledge exchange.

C. Enhance capacity building

15. By fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and technical support, the RSA Forum can contribute to capacity building efforts in the administration of tracking registries.
16. The RSA Forum will serve as a platform for registry administrators from different countries to exchange experiences, lessons learned, and best practices related to the design, implementation, and operation of tracking registries and interoperability between such registries. Participants will gain insights into effective approaches, tools, and methodologies, thus enhancing their capacities in managing registry systems.
17. The RSA Forum will help facilitate collaboration among registry administrators to develop common methodologies, tools, and guidelines for the accounting, tracking, and reporting of ITMOs.
18. The RSA Forum can also promote the adoption of innovative technologies and systems that enhance the efficiency, security, and reliability of tracking registries. By sharing

information on emerging technologies, participants can identify opportunities for upgrades or advancements in their respective systems, thereby improving overall performance, security, reliability, and data management capabilities.

D. Provide input on the further development of the infrastructure, communication standards and recommended practices

19. The involvement of the RSA Forum in providing input on infrastructure, communication standards, and recommended practices for tracking registries ensures that the perspectives and expertise of registry administrators are considered. This collaborative approach can lead to the development of robust and harmonized systems that facilitate transparent, secure, and efficient GHG emissions trading under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
20. The practical understanding of registry operations can inform the design and implementation of technical solutions that are workable, cost effective, and efficient.
21. By exchanging information on challenges faced, lessons learned, and successful practices, participants can contribute to the development of recommended practices and identify areas where infrastructure and communication standards may need improvement or clarification.
22. The RSA Forum can also identify needs and gaps in the existing infrastructure and can highlight areas that require further attention by the CMA.
23. Finally, the RSA Forum can collaborate with international standards organizations, technical bodies, and relevant stakeholders to contribute to the development and refinement of infrastructure and communication standards. By participating in discussions and working groups, the forum can provide input and expertise from the perspective of registry administrators, helping to shape standards that meet the needs of tracking registries.

E. Out of scope

24. Objectives that are out-of-scope of the RSA Forum include the following:
 - (a) Technical Assistance and Training: the RSA forum cannot provide direct technical assistance and training programs to support registry administrators in developing and implementing robust systems. Such assistance will need to be secured by registry administrators on a bilateral basis.
 - (b) The RSA Forum cannot directly coordinate, provide and/or support capacity building initiatives targeted at developing countries or those with limited resources and expertise. Such initiatives, that may include workshops, seminars, mentoring programs, and peer-to-peer exchanges, allowing registry administrators to gain knowledge and skills from more experienced counterparts, need to be secured on a bilateral basis.
 - (c) The RSA Forum is not tasked with the Article 6 technical expert review, or part of its scope, as identified in paragraph 2 of Annex II of decision 6/CMA.4. However,

individual RSAs have the opportunity to participate in the Article 6 technical expert review in their personal capacity if included on the Article 6 roster of experts.²

- (d) Defining, or refining, the features and functions of the Article 6.4 registry, the international registry, the Article 6 database and/or the CARP.
- (e) Drafting communication standards, procedures, and guidelines that are tailored to a specific GHG emissions trading club.³

IV. Implementation and Governance

A. Oversight

- 25. The RSA Forum will operate under the guidance and oversight of the CMA. The CMA may, from time to time, provide additional guidance with regards to the further work and direction of the RSA Forum.
- 26. The UNFCCC secretariat establishes, leads, and coordinates the work of the RSA Forum.

B. Participants

Registry System Administrators

- 27. Prospective participating Parties who wish to take part in the RSA Forum are expected to nominate at least one primary registry system administrator and at least one alternate registry system administrator and provide their contact details to the UNFCCC secretariat.
- 28. The National Focal Point of each Party is responsible for such nominations.
- 29. It is anticipated that RSAs actively engage during RSA Forum meetings and participate in working groups, as detailed below. RSAs are also expected to provide feedback on draft documents. RSAs may voluntarily take on the role of lead or co-lead of working groups (as outlined below).
- 30. RSAs should ideally possess a background in information technology and/or management, along with a comprehensive understanding of registry systems or similar systems. RSA Forum activities require strong coordination and communication skills, technical and analytical thinking, experience in implementing technical requirements stemming from policy instruments. Knowledge of carbon market functioning is considered an advantage.

Technical Experts

² To be eligible, they must be nominated to the UNFCCC roster of experts by a participating Party and have successfully completed the required training programme, in accordance with paragraphs 35 and 36 of Annex II of decision 6/CMA.4. Similar considerations apply if an RSA wishes to participate in Article 13 reviews.

³ A GHG emissions trading club, also known as a carbon emissions trading club or a greenhouse gas emissions trading club, is a cooperative arrangement between countries, regions, or entities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the implementation of emissions trading schemes.

31. Prospective participating Parties who wish to take part in the RSA Forum may also deem necessary to dispatch technical experts to the RSA Forum. Such participation may be limited in duration and/or in support of a specific topic.
32. The National Focal Point of each Party is responsible for such nominations and will provide the contact details of its technical experts to the UNFCCC secretariat.
33. Technical experts, like registry system administrators, are expected to actively participate in RSA Forum meetings, contribute to working groups, and provide feedback on draft documents related to the Article 6 GHG registry systems, based on their expertise.
34. It is anticipated that technical experts will possess excellent knowledge and experience in their respective fields. Strong communication skills and analytical thinking are highly desired for effective engagement in RSA Forum activities.

Other Relevant Experts

35. The participation in the RSA Forum may be expanded to include other relevant experts whose expertise can contribute to the topics being discussed. For instance, experts from institutions such as ICAO, World Bank, Swift, Interpol/Europol, as well as public and private carbon trading platforms, and specialists in areas like blockchain, anti-money laundering, and climate technology development and transfer, informed the work of the RSA Forum under the Kyoto Protocol. It is expected that a similarly diverse range of institutions, specialists, and topics will be relevant to inform the work conducted at the Article 6 RSA Forum.
36. The UNFCCC secretariat extends invitations to other relevant experts to participate in the RSA Forum. Their participation may be limited in duration and/or specific to a particular topic.
37. In the context of the RSA Forum, the Article 6.4 registry administrator, as well as the international registry administrator, are regarded as *Other Relevant Experts*.

C. Inputs

38. The inputs to the RSA Forum are currently formally limited to the mandates provided by Parties, as listed in Annex I.
39. In addition, the technical paper titled 'Options for Operationalizing the Guidance on Cooperative Approaches' (PA/A6.2/TP/1) contains relevant information that can be utilized as input for the RSA Forum's work.
40. Furthermore, the RSA Forum's previous work under the Kyoto Protocol, which involved the development of procedures, communication standards, and guidelines, could serve as input. However, it is important to note that due to the differences in infrastructure between registry systems under the Kyoto Protocol and Article 6.2, these procedures and guidelines will require significant revisions. For information, an overview of these procedures is provided in Annex III.

D. Outputs

41. The expected substantive outputs of the RSA Forum are as follows:

- (a) Inputs to the standards and recommended practices for electronic recording of data and information related to ITMOs, and communication standards for interoperability and transactions with ITMOs, including record-keeping arrangements, data security protocols, risk management and disaster recovery procedures, and other practices, as necessary.
 - (b) Recommendation, proposals or suggestions for the further development and implementation of the infrastructure, as necessary.
42. Procedurally, the secretariat will report on the work of the RSA Forum in the annual report to the CMA referred to in paragraph 36 of the annex to decision 2/CMA.3.

E. Timeframe and frequency

43. The inaugural RSA Forum, scheduled for October 2023, will be organized alongside the RSA Forum established under the Kyoto Protocol. This arrangement aims to minimize travel requirements for participants who wish to attend in person, while also facilitating remote participation.
44. Initially, the RSA Forum is anticipated to occur twice a year for the first two to three years (one hybrid meeting, organized back-to-back with the RSA Forum under the Kyoto Protocol, and one virtual meeting). Subsequently, the frequency of the meetings will be reduced to an annual occurrence.
45. Recognizing that participants reside in various time zones, the secretariat will carefully plan the meetings throughout the year to ensure fair timing for all attendees. This approach aims to accommodate the diverse geographic locations of participants and promote equitable participation throughout the RSA Forum meetings.

F. Agenda

46. The UNFCCC secretariat holds the responsibility of preparing the agenda, considering the guidance and inputs provided by registry administrators and technical experts. To ensure transparency and effective planning, a draft agenda is made available at least one month before each meeting. The draft agenda is reviewed and adopted as a first point of each meeting.

G. Communication

47. The UNFCCC secretariat bears the responsibility of establishing and maintaining a functional mailbox (i.e., a6rsaf@unfccc.int) that serves as a communication channel between the RSA community and the secretariat.

H. Working groups

48. The practical activities of the RSA Forum, which involve developing input on infrastructure, communication standards, and recommended practices for tracking registries, will be conducted through working groups. These working groups will be established by the RSA Forum as needed.
49. Each working group will focus on a specific topic, issue, or document. For instance, one working group might be assigned to examine security aspects, while another could address the reconciliation of records between GHG emissions registries.

50. A working group consists of interested RSAs, technical experts, and other relevant experts, with support from the secretariat. Each working group is chaired or co-chaired by a registry administrator and/or a technical expert. A working group will provide updates to the RSA Forum, either upon completing its work if it is short-term, or periodically if it is established for an extended period of time.
51. For reference, Annex II contains the list of working groups that were established during the lifetime of the RSA Forum under the Kyoto Protocol. For information, Annex III contains the list of practices that were established by these working groups.
52. While acknowledging that the discussions and outcomes of the inaugural RSA Forum will shape the decision regarding working groups, the secretariat suggests the establishment of the following working groups from the outset:
 - (a) Contact Management: this working group aims to provide input to an effective contact management procedure.
 - (b) Communication Standards, with a view to provide input to the definition of the communication standards, including:
 - (i) The format of data and data transfers;
 - (ii) What is considered valid data, including what constitutes a valid transfer of ITMO or A6.4ERs;
 - (iii) The various types of processes and exchanges that may occur between registries, including execution time expectations and timeouts;
 - (iv) Security of communications between registries;
 - (v) How participants keep time synchronized;
 - (vi) How multiple languages are supported.
 - (c) Change Management, with a view to providing input to a change management procedure;
 - (d) Infrastructure recommendation, with a view to providing input to the further development and implementation of such infrastructure, as necessary, in-line with the mandates from the CMA and the request by the SBI.

I. Online platform

53. CMA 4 requested the secretariat to “establish an online platform for information exchange and to support the forum of Article 6 registry system administrators in identifying topics of interest and relevant activities, including for public engagement”.
54. The anticipated functions of this online platform are outlined below:
 - (a) Acting as a knowledge hub:
 - (i) The platform should serve as a centralized repository of knowledge and information related to the RSA Forum activities.

- (ii) It should provide a user-friendly interface for accessing and navigating through the available resources.
- (b) Maintaining the list of contacts:
 - (i) The platform should include a contact management feature to store and manage a comprehensive list of contacts.
 - (ii) It should allow for adding, editing, and deleting contact information.
 - (iii) The platform should provide search and filtering capabilities to easily locate specific contacts.
- (c) Sharing documentation:
 - (i) The platform should support the sharing of documents among users.
 - (ii) It should enable users to upload, download, and manage various types of documents.
 - (iii) Proper access controls should be implemented to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of shared documents.
- (d) Collaborative editing of documents:
 - (i) The platform should facilitate collaborative editing of documents among multiple users.
 - (ii) It should allow RSAs to simultaneously work on the same document, track changes, and merge edits seamlessly.
 - (iii) Real-time collaboration features, such as concurrent editing and commenting, should be supported.
- (e) Integrating with MS Teams:
 - (i) The system should integrate with MS Teams to provide seamless communication and collaboration within the platform.
 - (ii) It should enable users to access and interact with the system directly from within the MS Teams interface.
 - (iii) Relevant notifications and updates from the system should be integrated into MS Teams channels.
- (f) Keeping archives of meeting materials and documentation:
 - (i) The platform should allow archiving meeting materials, including agendas, minutes, presentations, and related documents.
 - (ii) Archived materials should be organized and easily accessible for future reference and retrieval.
- (g) Providing search and filtering functionality:

- (i) The platform should include robust search capabilities to allow users to quickly find specific information within documents, contacts, or other system components.
 - (ii) Filtering options should be available to refine search results based on various criteria, such as date, category, or keywords.
- 55. Features and functions supported by the online platform will be amended from time to time based on the feedback from RSAs and technical experts.
- 56. Given the requirement of supporting RSAs from multiple Parties across different time zones, the online platform will be available 24/7.

J. Resource requirements

- 57. The table below shows the resource requirements for the RSA Forum, the communication platform and the establishment of the relevant procedures and guidelines.

Item	Mandate	Resources required
<i>Initial developments (first two years)</i>		
Initial development of the communication standards and procedures	Decision 6/CMA.4, paragraph 32	Staff: 0.5 P4, 0.5 P3, 0.5 GS Consultancy: 200.000 EUR
Operation of the RSA Forum and its working groups	Decision 6/CMA.4, paragraph 34	Staff: 0.5 P4, 0.5 P3, 0.5 GS Consultancy: 100.000 EUR
Setting up of online platform	Decision 6/CMA.4, paragraph 33	Consultancy: 50.000 EUR
Total		Staff: 1 P4, 1 P3 and 1 GS Consultancy: 350.000 EUR
<i>Operation (beyond first 2 years)</i>		
Maintenance and updates to the communication standards and procedures	Decision 6/CMA.4, paragraph 32	Staff: 0.5 P4, 0.5 P3, 0.5 GS Consultancy: 50.000 EUR
Operation of the RSA Forum and its working groups	Decision 6/CMA.4, paragraph 34	Staff: 0.5 P4, 0.5 P3, 0.5 GS Consultancy: 20.000 EUR
Operation of online platform	Decision 6/CMA.4, paragraph 33	Consultancy: 10.000 EUR
Total		Staff: 1 P4, 1 P3 and 1 GS Consultancy: 80.000 EUR

Annex I – Mandates

The table below lists the relevant mandates in support of the RSA Forum.

Reference	Provision
Decision 2/CMA.3, annex, para. 29	Each participating Party shall have, or have access to, a registry for the purpose of tracking and shall ensure that such registry records, including through unique identifiers, as applicable, authorization, first transfer, transfer, acquisition, use towards NDCs, authorization for use towards other international mitigation purposes, and voluntary cancellation (including for overall mitigation in global emissions, if applicable), and shall have accounts as necessary.
Decision 2/CMA.3, annex, para. 36	The secretariat shall: (a) Maintain public information on cooperative approaches and ITMOs by extracting relevant non-confidential information from the information submitted by participating Parties pursuant to chapter IV above (Reporting); (b) Maintain links to the publicly available information submitted by participating Parties on the cooperative approaches in which they participate; (c) Provide an annual report to the CMA on the activities in relation to this chapter, including information on recorded ITMOs, corresponding adjustments and emission balances
Decision 6/CMA.4, paragraph 32	Further requests the secretariat to develop, publish and periodically update, for participating Parties opting to apply the guidance referred to in annex I, chapter I.B, standards and recommended practices for electronic recording of data and information related to internationally transferred mitigation outcomes, and communication standards for interoperability and transactions with internationally transferred mitigation outcomes, including record-keeping arrangements, data security protocols, risk management and disaster recovery procedures, and other practices, as necessary, including with inputs from the forum referred to in paragraph 34 below, and to publish relevant outputs in a dedicated area on the centralized accounting and reporting platform;
Decision 6/CMA.4, paragraph 34	Also requests the secretariat to establish a voluntary forum of Article 6 registry system administrators and technical experts of participating Parties to facilitate cooperation

	among them, including sharing knowledge and experience in the context of implementing and operating infrastructure, and to provide input to the further development and implementation of infrastructure, as necessary;
Decision 6/CMA.4, paragraph 35	Further requests the secretariat to establish an online platform for information exchange and to support the forum of Article 6 registry system administrators in identifying topics of interest and relevant activities, including for public engagement;
FCCC/SBSTA/2023/L.6 (To be replaced when the report of SBSTA 58 is available)	The SBSTA recalled paragraph 34 of decision 6/CMA.4 regarding the request to the secretariat to establish a voluntary forum of Article 6 registry system administrators and technical experts of participating Parties to facilitate cooperation among them, including sharing knowledge and experience in the context of implementing and operating the infrastructure under Article 6, paragraph 2, and to provide input to the further development and implementation of such infrastructure, as necessary, and requested the secretariat to expedite the implementation of that mandate.
Article 6.1 and 6.2	<p>1. Parties recognize that some Parties choose to pursue voluntary cooperation in the implementation of their nationally determined contributions to allow for higher ambition in their mitigation and adaptation actions and to promote sustainable development and environmental integrity.</p> <p>2. Parties shall, where engaging on a voluntary basis in cooperative approaches that involve the use of internationally transferred mitigation outcomes towards nationally determined contributions, promote sustainable development and ensure environmental integrity and transparency, including in governance, and shall apply robust accounting to ensure, inter alia, the avoidance of double counting, consistent with guidance adopted by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to this Agreement.</p>

Annex II – Working Groups and guidelines established by the RSA Forum under the Kyoto Protocol

The table below contains the list of working groups that were established by the RSA Forum under the Kyoto Protocol, along with a brief description of each group's objective.

Working Group	Objective
Security	Defining a cost-effective Information Security Management System (ISMS) that enables protection of information critical to the system of Kyoto registries and defining options for development and implementation of this ISMS.
Fraud	Raising awareness and enhancing collaboration to address the vulnerabilities of carbon markets related to fraud and other criminal activity, identifying, and documenting proactive measures that can be undertaken in registry systems to detect, prevent, or reduce criminal activities and reactive measures that can be undertaken in the case of (potential) criminal activities.
Blockchain	Defining the context in which the blockchain technology could be used and identification of the opportunities and risks for this technology in registry systems used under the Kyoto Protocol.
Second Commitment Period	Assessing impacts on registries and the ITL after the establishment of second commitment period, including the duration of CP2, different participants compared to CP1, eligibility criteria for Parties, LULUCF activities, commitment period reserve, standard electronic format and reporting requirements as well as work on true-up and reporting following true-up period and lessons learned and recommendations for the second commitment period.
Fragmentation	Investigating problems caused by the unit-block fragmentation in the registry system, analysing available options for addressing the issue and developing a recommendation for the problem resolution.
Reconciliation	Establishing a common understanding of the purpose and structure of the reconciliation procedure including analysis, scheduling considerations and manual interventions.
Registries Extranet	Establishing SharePoint platform for dedicated collaboration environment for the national registries and defining its main functionalities.

Release Management	Establishing the release management procedure and identifying areas and approaches for further development.
Standard Electronic Format	Developing Standard Electronic Format Technical Guidance for registry administrators and providing technical information on the calculations required by the reporting tables.
Standard Independent Assessment Report	Establishing the procedure for the Standard Independent Assessment Report and aligning it with review process in supporting completeness check as well as substantive analysis. Providing assessment report templates for review process.
Terms of Use	Establishing common operational procedure on the Terms of Use for the International Transaction Log which sets forth the terms under which Users may access and use ITL Services provided by the ITL Administrator.
Web Services Encoding	Conducting an in-depth assessment and analysis of risks related to the RPC/Encoded usage in the scope of the registry system, deciding on the risk response and producing recommendations of concrete procedural, technical or combined measures to reduce possible risks of the RPC/Encoded style.

Annex III – Practices and procedures established by the RSA Forum under the Kyoto Protocol

The table below contains the list of practices and procedures that were established by the RSA Forum under the Kyoto Protocol, along with a brief description of each practice or procedure' purpose.

Practice or Procedure	Purpose
Data Exchange Standards	To describe the interoperability standard(s) between registry systems, including: (a) The format of data and data transfers;

	<p>(b) What is considered valid data, including what constitutes a valid transfer of ITMO or A6.4ERs;</p> <p>(c) The various types of processes and exchanges that may occur between registries, including execution time expectations and timeouts;</p> <p>(d) Security of communications between registries;</p> <p>(e) How participants keep time synchronized;</p> <p>(f) How multiple languages are supported.</p>
Independent Assessment	To undertake an independent assessment of the extent to which a registry fulfils the requirements established by the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP).
Change Management	To manage changes to the communication standards and to the supporting procedures and processes.
Release Management	To coordinate release of changes throughout registry systems.
Testing	To document how coordinated tests are to be performed before a registry is allowed to interact with other registries in production mode.
Incident Management	To describe how incidents are managed.
Security Incident Management	To coordinate the response(s) to security incidents.
Problem Management	To describe how technical problems are handled within the registry system network.
Correction of transaction	To document how erroneously completed transactions are to be corrected.
Reconciliation	To manage reconciliation of records between registry systems.
Contact Management	To guarantee that registry administrators are identified, and their contact details are up-to-date;
