

A6.4 SB MEETING REPORT

A6.4 SB-005,
31 May – 3 June 2023



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Report

Article 6.4 Mechanism Supervisory Body Fourth Meeting

31 May to 03 June 2023

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Summary

- The Supervisory Body meetings currently resemble intersessional work of the UNFCCC process prior to major COPs: extensive 100+ page documents go into the sessions, and come out without a significant reduction in page size. While this is not surprising, given the gigantic number of tasks and the complexity of the issues the SB is facing, the sheer page numbers of the documents in the process suggest that the SB is far from reaching any consensus. At SB 005, the crunch issues “removals” and “requirements for methodologies” were thus discussed again at length without any major breakthroughs (except one, see below), while some progress was made on how to best structure the debate and to involve external stakeholders.
- Regarding removals, the debate revolved around the well-known topics and crunch issues with SB members conducting a very rich discussion but without taking any substantive steps towards consolidation. A remarkable exception is the controversial “tonne-year accounting”, which the SB decided to exclude from its recommendations. A second step forward is the insight that the classification into “land-based” and “engineering-based” removals is not always helpful. The SB decided to only apply this differentiation where necessary in the future, taking on board concerns raised by both SB members and stakeholders. As mandated by the CMA, the SB launched a call for a ‘structured public consultation’, which is open until the next SB meeting.
- On requirements for methodologies, the SB discussed extensively debated yet another revised version of its comprehensive ‘information note’ on the topic. It was based on discussions in the small group of members tasked with meth requirements as well as stakeholder inputs and comprised a large set of new proposals for 15 issues complementing the existing draft text from the SB’s Sharm-el-Sheik session. The new proposals range from encouraging ambition over time, sharing mitigation outcomes to policies, measures and circumstances and data source and uncertainty issues. At the meeting, SB members exchanged views on all of these topics, and discussed new concepts and options. In the end, however, the SB did not take any substantive decision, but tasked the secretariat to revise the current text based on the discussion, putting special emphasis on consolidating the text and on proposals to frame, implement, or operationalize elements that were discussed at the meeting. SB 006 in July will take up the discussion again.
- As regards the transition of CDM activities to the Art. 6.4 mechanism, the SB decided that it would open the process for receiving transition requests from 30 June 2023 onwards as requested by the CMA. The underlying standard and procedure, however, were not adopted but will be revised at the next meeting, in order to account for the persisting divergent views, especially in terms of the new requirements of the “Paris world”. The secretariat will set up a submission interface on the UNFCCC website.
- Some progress was made on regulatory framework for processing Art. 6.4 activities, namely on documents regulating the activity cycle, a procedure to develop and revise methodologies (including Standardized Baselines), and rules for accrediting auditors. While none of these documents was finalized, SB members substantively advanced the texts so that an adoption within this year seems feasible.

- The SB had received a record number of 104 public comments on the agenda prior to this meeting – most of them with comments on the removals discussion. Against this background, the SB decided to conduct two webinars ahead of the next meeting – prior and after the publication of the annotated agenda. There will also be a concept note on interaction with indigenous people representatives as well as on gender issues at the agenda of the next meeting. Furthermore, the SB decided to hold stakeholder interactions on the draft activity standards, validation and verification standards and activity cycle procedures prior to their adoption.

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Discussion of overarching issues and principles

Regulation of removal activities

Addressing the agenda item “removal activities under Art. 6.4” was carried out on different levels at this meeting. The Supervisory Body

- continued its own discussions on developing recommendations to CMA8 later this year¹,
- dealt with the submissions from Parties and stakeholders that had answered the CMA call for inputs (according to decision 7/CMA.4), with a deadline 15 March²
- considered further 104 inputs received as comments to the annotated agenda of this SB meeting (mostly on removals, but also covering other agenda items)
- prepared a so-called ‘structured public consultation’ that had also been mandated by CMA4 in order to facilitate and support the discussion process within the SB in 2023

The secretariat’s information note prepared ahead of the meeting had caught considerable public pushbacks by industry representatives. It had called engineering-based removal activities “technologically and economically unproven, especially at scale”, posing “unknown environmental and social risks”, concluding that they “do not serve any of the objectives of the Article 6.4 mechanism”. In response, the SB chair and the secretariat therefore saw the need to clarify at the beginning of the meeting that the function of the document is purely informative and supporting the process, and does not carry

official UNFCCC status or reflect any positioning by the SB.

The discussion on the removals topic took up a considerable part of the meeting, with deliberations taking place every day. The deliberations started once again with a debate on the mode of work, but got into substantive work later.

The discussion followed the ‘questions and guidance’ mode developed at the last SB meeting. The questions also served as a basis for the call for public inputs that was issued after the meeting.

In terms of content, the debate revolved around the well-known topics and crunch issues with SB members conducting a very rich discussion but without taking any substantive steps towards consolidation. A remarkable exception is the controversial “tonne-year accounting”, which the SB decided to exclude from its recommendations. A second step forward is the insight that the classification into “land-based” and “engineering-based” removals is not always helpful. The SB decided to only apply this differentiation where necessary in the future, taking on board concerns raised by both SB members and stakeholders.

In terms of the structured public consultation mentioned above, the SB decided to use the question and answer format of the current SB deliberations as the basis for the call, i.e. covering definitions, monitoring / reporting, accounting, crediting periods, reversals, leakage, and

¹ Access the current information note at <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/a64-sb005-aa-a09.pdf>

² Cp. the secretariat’s summary of the inputs at <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/a64-sb005-aa-a10v1.pdf>

avoidance of negative environmental and social impacts, as well as cross-cutting questions. Stakeholders are encouraged to use the questions for structuring their inputs. Submissions to the structured consultation can be uploaded from 5-19 June at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/article-64-mechanism/calls-for-input/sb005-removals-activities> (late submissions will be accepted).

Requirements for methodologies

The SB continued its discussion on basis principles and requirements for mechanism methodologies. Based on discussions in the small group of members tasked with meth requirements as well as stakeholder inputs³, the secretariat had developed a large set of new proposals for 15 issues complementing the existing draft text from the SB's Sharm-el-Sheik session. The new proposals range from encouraging ambition over time, sharing mitigation outcomes to policies, measures and circumstances and data source and uncertainty issues⁴. The proposals were presented via 50+ slides in the meeting and discussed intensely. In the following, a brief encounter of discussions and the decisions taken on selected issues is given.

Encouraging ambition over time

Several stakeholders had sent in comments on this crucial element, which also comprises the controversial feature of the baseline contraction factor (BCF). The secretariat had developed six additional proposals, covering removing barriers to deployment of clean technologies, enabling an expanded user base of low-carbon solutions after initial deployment, continually improving methodologies, or including default discounting of baseline emissions.

³ View the sec's full compilation of the stakeholder inputs at <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/a64-sb005-aa-a08.pdf>

Body members welcomed the proposals, but asked the secretariat to show how generic proposals such as "removing barriers" could be operationalized. Including default discounting needs to be related to the possible BCF requirements, commented one member. A concept and a concrete method should be developed here, the SB members demanded, possibly merged with the discussion on scalability.

On a general level, SB members asked the secretariat to change the wording of the issue from "should" to "shall" on selected issues, in order to properly reflect original RMP text.

Real, transparent, conservative, credible and below BAU baseline setting

Here, the secretariat had included a few basic principles on what BAU is, complemented by additional requirements such as using performance standards, transparently showing each step of the emissions calculation, adopting life-cycle approaches and the related emissions, choosing the lowest emissions baseline when multiple sources of data are available, and avoiding double counting risks.

SB members comments that most of these items are already covered by the text developed by the SB in Sharm-el-Sheik, so that further work and a consultation with the SB's small working group on methodologies was recommended. Adopting life-cycle approaches should not be made mandatory and this should be clarified unless it is required by a specific methodology, the SB members posited.

Equitably sharing mitigation benefits

New proposals here include that sharing provisions are included by design, owing to short crediting periods or the SOP for adaptation, but

⁴ Download the information note with the new proposals at <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/a64-sb005-aa-a07.pdf>

also through setting baselines well below BAU, including through the application of a BCF.

Many SB members agreed to leaving the operationalizing this requirement via the specific methodologies themselves. Some pointed out that there is also the option to leave all mitigation benefits to the host country, in the form of the mitigation contribution. The controversy around the BCF, however, does persist, the discussions revealed. Co-benefits should be addressed in the activity cycle, the SB decided.

Encouraging broad participation

The secretariat presented several new proposals in this regard, such as avoiding complexity, or harmonizing methodology requirements across standard-setting bodies, and covering as many sectors, technologies and measures / practices as possible.

Body members reminded the secretariat that the SB wants the Art. 6.4 mechanisms to be the top standard, so that aligning with other standards might not be the way forward. Also, many of the times mentioned were seen as general principles that should guide the work of the SB, not necessarily in the methodological area only.

Additionality

On additionality, stakeholders had proposed to work with positive lists and that when renewing the crediting period, new laws and regulations need to be considered, as well as barriers re-assessed. The secretariat's new text proposals cover a long range of additionality tests (including new approaches such as target surplus test, regulatory surplus test), posit that data sources must be transparent and justified, and the option for developing positive lists, also in the context of SBL.

SB members pointed out that considering laws can be vital, but in how far they are enforced on the ground needs to be looked at also. Others

underlined that the Glasgow provisions make it clear that enforcement rates must not be taken into account. The secretariat was asked to come up with definitions for lock-in, negative lists, and check which parts of the text belong to an additionality tool, and to look at consistency with the project cycle procedure.

Leakage and reversals

A few new measures to address minimize leakage were proposed by the secretariat, including mandatory scrapping of baseline equipment; lifecycle assessment and robust monitoring systems; and inspection of the area surrounding a project, the "leakage belt". On non-permanence and reversals, new proposals include implementing pooled buffers (as in many VCM standards), and managing biological and geological carbon cycles separately, considering the different risks of reversal.

These areas have obviously an overlap with the removals discussion, which was pointed out several times by SB members. Therefore, the buffer and other non-permanence discussions, some body members felt, should be discussed in the removals section. On minimized leakage, members again posited that life-cycle analysis is not a mandatory requirement and that technology dumping could also be a consequence of an ambitious NDC. All in all, members were in favour to stick to the original text and use this new text for possible tools or guidance documents.

Further areas of discussion included recognizing suppressed demand, aligning with the host country NDC as well as with the PA's long-term goals, taking into account policies and measures, as well as standardized baselines.

Finally, the SB tasked the secretariat to revise the current text based on the discussion, putting special emphasis on consolidating the text and on proposals to frame, implement, or operationalize elements that were discussed at the

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meeting. SB 006 in July will take up the discussion again.

Standards and procedures for the Art. 6.4 mechanism

Activity cycle

In the context of developing provisions for processing Art. 6.4 mitigation activities, the SB at SB 005 first considered the activity cycle procedure. The secretariat thus presented text proposals for such a procedure, based on input received at the previous meeting.

These cover the basic requirements needed for projects at this stage (PoAs will be dealt with later, and in a separate document). Issues not covered include the post-issuance process (forwarding, voluntary cancellation etc) and appeals and grievances; these will get separate procedure documents; also, removals are not dealt with, as the secretariat suggested to wait for the according CMA decisions first.

The proposed registration process resembles the one of the CDM with a few changes, mainly regarding the role of the host Parties, cp. **Figure 1**.⁵

These additional roles and responsibilities of host Parties comprise

- Specifying activity types that host Parties would consider approving (mandatory as per the RMPs)
- Specification of methodological approaches and renewability of the crediting periods for activities hosted (optional)

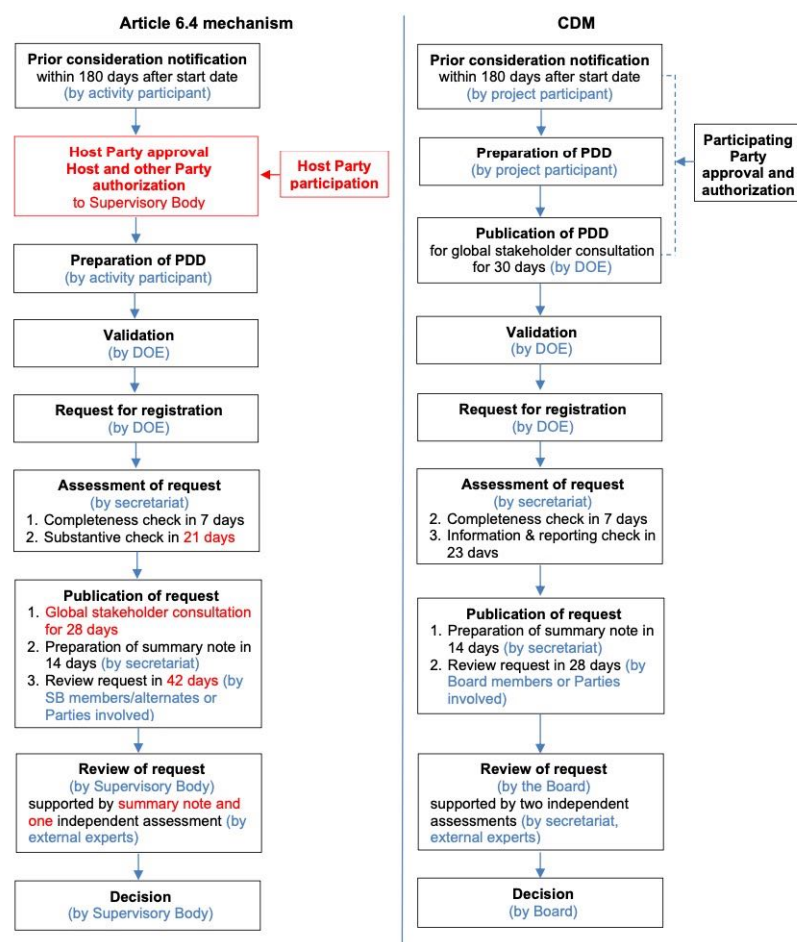


Figure 1: Comparing the CDM / Art. 6.4 registration process; differences from the CDM highlighted in red. Source (of all figures in this report): UNFCCC

- Notification to the SB on Art.6.4 activities approved, activity participants authorized, use of ERs issued which was authorized

Specification on activity types and methodologies will be processed via an internet interface, so that this information is accessible for relevant stakeholders. The secretariat suggests that any

⁵ The draft procedure can be downloaded at <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/a64-sb005-aa-a03.pdf>

revisions in this context shall not apply retroactively. The notifications on host country approval et al. will be dealt with in the prior consideration notification, see figure.

The majority of the subsequent steps are similar to the CDM framework, apart from global stakeholder consultation. Although not required by the RMPs, the secretariat proposed to (i) introduce it here and (ii) to differ from the CDM in the sequencing of the steps required: the global stakeholder consultation is foreseen from the date the registration request is published on the UNFCCC website, so that stakeholders get better insights into the project (validated PDD and validation report can be assessed), but also comments by stakeholders go directly to the SB, who can take them into account when deciding whether the registration request should undergo a review or not.

The SB members discussed, among others, the new roles and responsibilities of the host Parties, how to select DOEs, especially in cases when validation and verification is to be carried out by the same DOE, and the timing and deadlines of the stakeholder participation process.

Finally, the SB tasked the secretariat to revise the activity cycle procedure and to come back at the next meeting. The main points of revision will be:

- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the host Parties, especially the implications of Art.6.4 activities on implementation the respective NDC
- Providing sufficient information and time for host Parties to approve projects and convey this decision
- Giving enough flexibility to project participants during the request for issuance to address any practical issues that may come up (without compromising integrity)

- Developing options for selecting DOEs
- Ensuring enough time for activity proponents to address stakeholder comments

The SB also looked at key issues for developing the activity standard, i.e. the document containing requirements relating to design, implementation and other attributes of the process. The SB noted that this document is closely interlinked with the validation and verification standard, so that drafts for these documents will be dealt with at later SB meetings throughout the year⁶. For the moment, the SB requested the secretariat to have, when developing these documents, an eye on double registration and double issuance risks.

Regarding appeals and grievances, the SB decided that the secretariat develop a concept note, and to also include a reference to the appeals process in the activity cycle procedure.

CDM transition

Based on the discussions at SB 004, the SB discussed the secretariat's proposals for organizing the transition of CDM projects to the Art. 6.4 mechanism. The CMA had requested the SB to develop and operationalize the transition process by June 2023. The proposed regulation covers a transition standard, which contains the required activity design and attributes, as well as a document on the process to follow (transition procedure).

Transition standard

The standard operationalizes key requirements as laid down in the RMPs, grouped into two sections: transition requirements on (i) crediting periods, and (ii) activity design. In cases where guidance from the CMA was missing, the

⁶ View the activity standard presentation here https://unfccc-events.azurewebsites.net/sites/default/files/2023-06/2.3_7_SB005_Activity%20standard.pdf

secretariat had inserted own regulatory proposals. The documents clarify the following elements⁷:

Crediting period requirements

- must be active as of **1 January 2021**
- **starts** on 1 January 2021, **ends** at the end of current crediting period as if under CDM, or 31 Dec 2025, or as specified by the host Party (whichever is earlier)
- the **number of renewals** remains as under CDM, unless specified by the host Party
- regarding PoA, the transition of CPA is combined with the transition of the PoA; for provisional requests for registration of CPA inclusion, the same rules apply as for any new Art. 6.4 activities.

Activity design requirements

- **Activity types** must comply with those specified by the host Party; emission reduction that are attributable to non-specified activity types must be discounted (applies also to CPAs if a PoA is modified)
- CDM **methodologies** can be applied until renewal or 31 Dec 2025, whichever is earlier;

can be voluntarily (or required to be) replaced; specific PoA requirements apply

- **Additionality** is deemed to be fulfilled as long as the CDM methodology is applied
- **Global warming potentials** must be applied as per IPCC AR5

New activity design requirements as per Art. 6.4

- Regarding the new requirement “real, measurable and long-term benefits”, the secretariat suggested two options: (i) rely on host country approval, (ii) apply universal requirements on activity types, and/or baseline approach
- On addressing **non-permanence risks**, the secretariat proposed to request an analysis of the risks, information on the planned monitoring and possible countermeasures
- On avoiding **negative social impacts**, the host countries are requested to develop monitoring and remedial measures

Transition procedure

On how the transition process shall be carried out, the secretariat explained the foreseen steps according to a diagram, cp. **Figure 2**. The submission process is two-fold, the

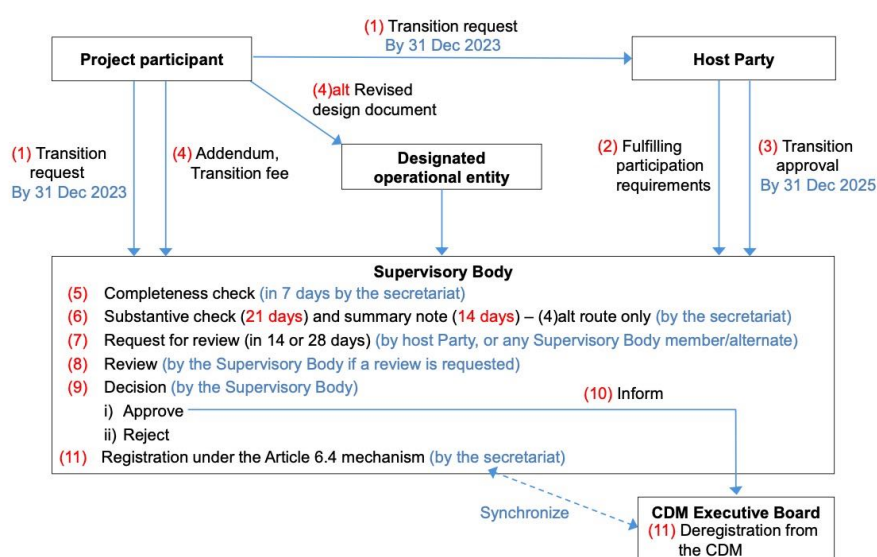


Figure 2: Flow chart of the transition process; Source: UNFCCC

⁷ View the full draft transition document proposals at <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/a64-sb005-aa-a02.pdf>

registration fee is set at the same rate as for any new Art. 6.4 activity case.

A controversial discussion ensued among the SB members, especially regarding the new areas of the Art. 6.4 RMP, which do not apply to CDM projects. This included, among others, how to ensure a robust additionality check in the case the CDM methodology is “carried over”. On minimizing impacts, it became clear that the RMPs foresee a broader consideration (they talk about “environmental and social impacts”). Further, how to deal with CDM A/R projects and temporary crediting sparked another debate on technical details, which could not be solved. An overarching question included who carries the cost of additional testing and demonstrating new attributes.

Regarding the procedure, SB members discussed, among others, how to operationalize completeness as well as substantive assessment checks and which body would be responsible for this step.

In the end, the SB decided that it would open the process for receiving transition requests from 30 June 2023 onwards, while the underlying standard and procedure will be revised at the next meeting, in order to account for the persisting divergent views, especially in terms of the new requirements. The secretariat will set up a submission interface on the UNFCCC website accordingly.

At the next meeting, the SB will discuss revised drafts of the transition standard and procedure, with special attention to:

- Demonstrating long-term benefits to climate change
- Addressing non-permanence risks
- Minimizing and avoiding negative environmental and social impacts
- Assessing additionality
- Enhancing stakeholder consultation.

Regarding A/R projects, the SB decided not to develop any guidance on this topic until the

CMA has adopted requirements for removal activities.

Developing methodologies

At SB 004, the SB had adopted key decisions on how to develop and revise methodologies and related tools. These build on the CDM and foresee the set-up of a 10-member methodological expert panel (or shortly: meth panel), chaired by two SB members, drawing on a roster of experts. The latter will be grouped into working groups, which will be formed as required. Decisions will be taken by the SB case-by-case, based on recommendations by the meth panel, cp **Figure 3**. Additional, simplified fast-track routes can be introduced in the future.

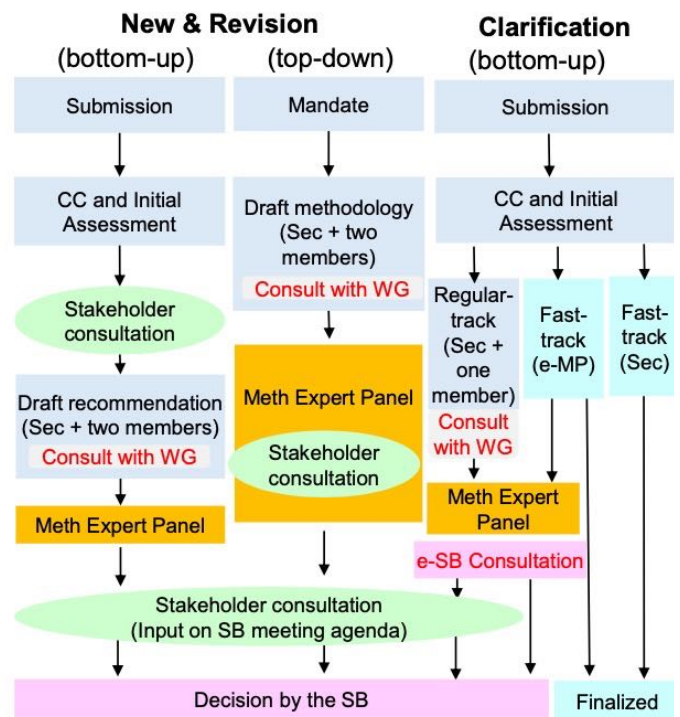


Figure 3: Methodology process under CDM and Article 6.4 (changes highlighted in red); Source: UNFCCC

At SB 005, the secretariat presented a draft methodology development procedure⁸, with the following basic changes compared to the CDM system:

- Top-down development of prioritized methodologies, p.ex. for LDCs / SIDS or related to specific PoAs and small / micro-businesses (this goes back to CMA decisions)
- New methodological tools can be proposed bottom-up by stakeholders
- Faster feedbacks on methodology clarifications
- Enhanced consultation of the meth panel with sectoral experts ahead of decisions
- Inclusion of further guidance in the meth procedure, such as guidelines on sampling and surveys.

The SB members welcomed the proposals and the draft texts developed by the secretariat. Based on the discussions at the meeting, the secretariat will present revised drafts at the next SB meeting. Body members raised in particular the following aspects to be included in the revision:

- Developing selection criteria for the top-down development of methodologies
- Introducing regular reviews and updates of approved methodologies
- Making the development of methodologies easier and more open, p.ex. through supporting documentation, guides, or opening up the process for stakeholders who are not project participants)
- Providing examples of the methodological tools that the secretariat mentions in its concept note

Standardized Baselines

The draft procedure to develop Standardized Baselines (SBL) was processed in a similar way. The secretariat first presented its current text proposals⁹, highlighting the following issues it

had addressed upon request by the SB members:

- Like for the overall methodology development, SBL for LDCs / SIDS or related to specific PoAs and small / micro-businesses should be developed top-down
- SBL assessment reports by external experts should be introduced
- Developing SBL by groups of Parties should not be allowed any more
- Consultations with the relevant methodology panel working group should be carried out when developing an SBL

The SB members discussed, among others, the role of the DNAs in SBL development. This was triggered by one SB member who argued that the role of the host Party in the document was not entirely clear. The SB therefore tasked the secretariat to clarify in draft text that it is the host country DNA who submits the SBL and that project proponents intending to submit a SBL should do so through this route as well. The DNAs should be supported through capacity building measures, the SB demanded.

Regarding prioritization, SB members asked for criteria to guide prioritizing, as well as for types and examples of standardized baselines. On having the assessment report conducted by stakeholders outside the process, SB members asked the secretariat to develop options for preparation of assessment report by a DOE. Last not least, the SB asked the secretariat to develop further guidance on standardized baselines for groups of Parties. A revised version of the draft procedure will be presented at the next SB meeting.

Accreditation framework

The secretariat presented revised proposals for a framework that regulates the accreditation of

⁸ See the full meth procedure draft at <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/a64-sb005-aa-a05.pdf>

⁹ Read the SBL draft procedure at <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/a64-sb005-aa-a06.pdf>

Designated Operational Entities (DOEs). It had revised the texts according to on input received at SB 004. These cover selected areas, where changes to the CDM accreditation system would be needed, while the bulk of the CDM system can be used as a basis (cp. **Figure 4**)¹⁰. The revised changes to the CDM system cover liability issues and competence requirements. The SB had further requested the secretariat to include a pros and cons analysis and to take into account any inputs by the DOE/AIE coordination forum.

As regards liability, the secretariat proposed to include the principle of the risk-based approach as per ISO 17029:2019, so that consistency with other systems is achieved. Further, DOEs would get guidance in making decisions in response to unanticipated situations, as the accreditation standard will not be able to prescribe detailed requirements to cover all scenarios.

On additional competence requirements, the secretariat suggested to include additions in areas not yet covered by the CDM, such as the assessment of SD benefits.

The SB agreed to the secretariats proposals; a draft accreditation standard and procedure for the Art. 6.4 mechanisms will be presented at SB 007.

Regarding temporary solutions addressing the current lack of DOEs, the SB asked the secretariat to further elaborate its proposals presented at this meeting (allow CDM DOEs to act under Art. 6.4 depending on certain circumstances), combined with detailed justifications.

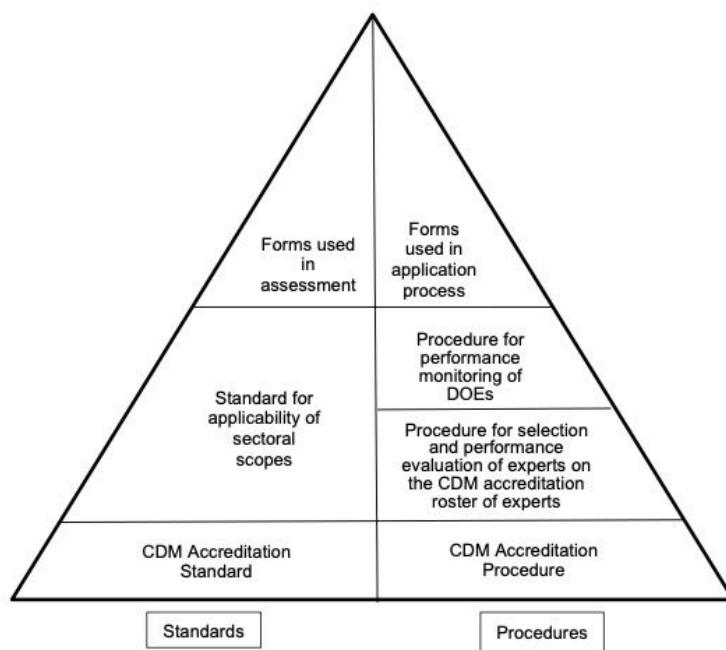


Figure 4: CDM accreditation system and related regulatory documents. Source: UNFCCC

Other regulatory documents and decisions

With regard to the **appeals and grievance process** of the mechanism, the body tasked the secretariat to present a draft procedure at the 7th meeting of the body in September this year.

The body also discussed the need for a condensed and graphic visualisation on **roles and responsibilities for host countries**, taking into account how to fulfil participation requirements, conditions on crediting periods and requirements for methodology development, how to specify activity types and how to communicate with different stakeholders. The secretariat will draft such an overview in form of a presentation.

Further, the SB noted that as of 3 June 2023, 40 DNAs had been established so far. The body asked the secretariat to develop a concept for establishing an **Article 6.4 DNA forum**.

¹⁰ See the accreditation framework draft proposals at [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/a64-sb005-aa-a04 .pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/a64-sb005-aa-a04.pdf)

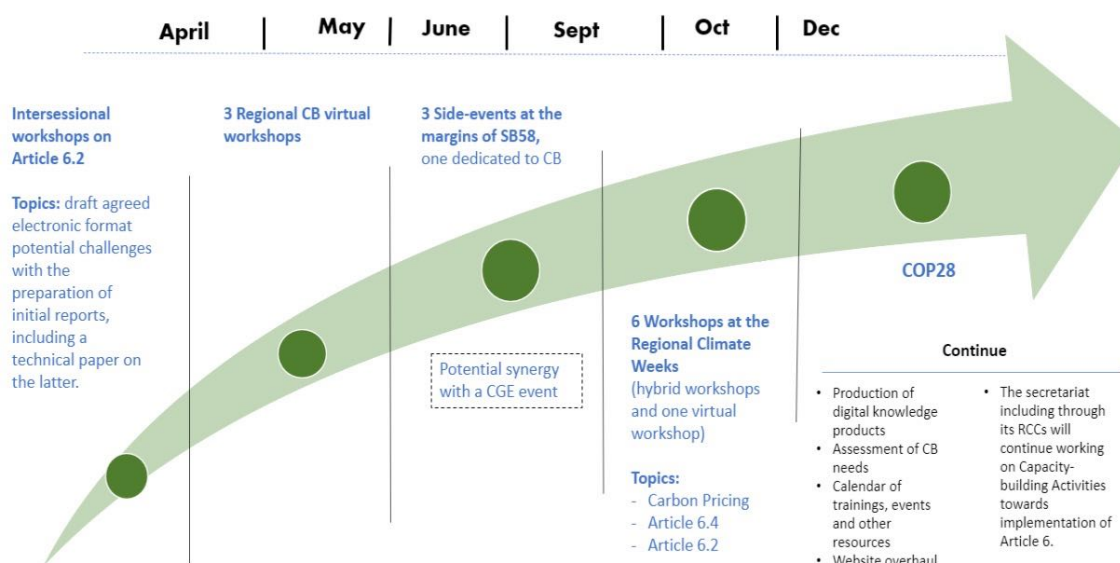


Figure 5: Capacity building plan for 2023; Source: UNFCCC

Capacity building

The secretariat presented an overview of its recent capacity building activities in the first quarter 2023. Among other things, four regional experts were hired for the Regional Collaboration Centres (RCCs), tasked specifically with capacity building efforts related to Article 6. Further, a collaboration with the West African Alliance or Carbon Markets was initiated and an overall help desk facility for technical assistance was installed. For an outlook on further activities, please refer to **Figure 5**. A comprehensive, 70-page account of all activities is available online¹¹.

Body members welcomed the report, but stressed that the secretariat should also work on country-level, and not only in regions or globally. In this context, the SB noted that the RCCs should also expand to Eastern Europe and other regions not covered yet. Also, simple explanations of SB decisions and support for baseline development and data collection should be put more into view. Last not least, the body asked the secretariat that when developing relevant material, those should be both online and print

so that it is accessible for as many stakeholders as possible.

¹¹ See <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/a64-sb005-aa-a11.pdf>

Relations with stakeholders

The SB had received a record number of 104 public comments on the agenda prior to this meeting – most of them with comments on the removals discussion. Against this background, the SB decided to conduct two webinars ahead of the next meeting – prior and after the publication of the annotated agenda. There will also be a concept note on interaction with indigenous people representatives as well as on gender issues at the agenda of the next meeting.

Further, the SB decided to hold stakeholder interactions on the draft activity standards, validation and verification standards and activity cycle procedures prior to their adoption.

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