

Functional Description of AGCS Biomethan Register Austria

V2.0

(Annex 1 to the Biomethane T&C)

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Document Management

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1 General Principles

This functional description of AGCS Biomethan Register Austria (Biomethane Registry Austria) sets out the general principles of how this registry works and is therefore addressed to all registry participants. Participants will each be assigned one of the following predefined roles within the registry:

- **Biomethane plant operator**
- **Biomethane electrification plant operator** (having filed a funding application with the Green Power Settlement Agent OeMAG)
- **Registry user** (buyers and sellers of biomethane certificates)
- **Auditor**

Market participants of the registry thus include, without limitation, biomethane producers, biomethane buyers and sellers, biomethane electrification plant operators (power generators) claiming funding under the Green Electricity Act 2012 (Ökostromgesetz, ÖSG), suppliers blending biomethane to their consumption amounts, CNG filling station operators, other applicants for funding, etc.

The Biomethane Registry Austria is an account-based electronic system designed for registering energy amounts of biomethane injected into the grid, for the generation of biomethane certificates as set out in § 21 ÖSG (Green Electricity Act) 2012, and for ownership transferring such biomethane certificates between different registry account holders and special entities, such as the Green Power Settlement Agent [OeMAG Abwicklungsstelle für Ökostrom AG]. The registry enables its users to manage biomethane certificates in terms of energy amount, quality, origin, and production month within a uniform IT-based documentation system. Based on the account system of the Biomethane Registry Austria, it is possible to also transfer partial energy amounts of the original biomethane certificate. The transfer of certificates in the Biomethane Registry Austria is handled by the buyers and sellers themselves, without any intervention on the part of the registry operator.

Upon request of authorised participants, the Biomethane Registry Austria will issue cancellation statements, which participants can use to furnish proof as needed to third parties (business partners and other recipients). Such cancellation statements not only provide structured documentation on the energy amounts from biomethane injected into the grid, but also indicate whether, and if so, which audit annotation an auditor attached to the relevant biomethane certificate.

2 Context and General Mode of Operation

2.1 Two Levels of Documentation

Before providing specific information on how the Biomethane Registry Austria works, the broader context is briefly explained. It is necessary to distinguish between two different levels:

- **Balance group level** (comparison of schedules and measured values, as well as determination of imbalance energy amounts)
- **Certificate level** (documentation of the biomethane certificate, as well as transfer and cancellation)

2.2 Balance Group Level

Biomethane is injected into the natural gas grid. The physical injection of biomethane is mapped on balance group level and measured by the grid operator. The injection metering data supplied to the balance group coordinator by the grid operator are recorded at the balance group level by the respective balance group coordinator (A&B for the market areas of Tirol and Vorarlberg, AGCS for Market Area East) using components specifically set up for this purpose.

As soon as the biomethane has been injected into the natural gas grid, it will no longer be physically or chemically traceable as such and can be withdrawn at any other point of the grid only on an accounting basis. The physical biomethane volumes are treated in the same way as gas volumes.

Within the registry system, it is possible to execute the ownership transfer of biomethane certificates between market participants. Such transfers are entirely independent of any physical traceability of the biomethane gas flow. Injection and withdrawal are not correlated in time.

The participants must agree among themselves on the prices for physical biomethane volumes and biomethane certificates, with the registry operator not having any influence on these decisions. The Biomethane Registry Austria neither documents nor records prices.

The balance group coordinator's balancing system and the biomethane registry's certificate system are independent systems and platforms. Biomethane injection metering data is transmitted from the balancing system to the certificate system via an interface. The data is used as the basis for the generation of biomethane certificates.

2.3 Certificate Level

The Biomethane Registry Austria operates at the certificate level. Certificates can be transferred and cancelled. Splitting is an option for transferring subsets of a biomethane certificate, the minimum unit being 1 kWh. However, the minimum unit for international cross-border ownership transfers is 1 MWh (1,000 kWh). For each participant, the Biomethane Registry Austria records any ownership transfers the participant is involved in.

In the case of cancelled certificates, the registry will issue cancellation statements on the request of authorised participants.

The plants that inject biomethane into the grid are audited by auditors before commencing operations in the registry (initial audit) and whenever the plant undergoes modifications. Where funding bodies impose audits to be conducted during operations, the auditor will carry out such audits based on the audit criteria defined by the respective funding bodies. If the use of biomethane for specific application purposes requires audits to be conducted during operations, including, without limitation, when green energy funding has been applied for within the meaning of § 21 ÖSG 2012 for power generation, for the purposes of proof of compliance with sustainability criteria within the meaning of Articles 25-31 RED II, and for gas consumer disclosure within the meaning of § 130 Natural Gas Act (GWG), the auditor will carry out such audits based on the criteria set out in the applicable legal framework. The Biomethane Registry Austria permits auditors to add audit annotations to biomethane certificates. Such audit annotations will be automatically propagated to (inherited by) subsets of certificates when partial energy amounts are split for specific purposes.

To document the sustainability of a produced biomethane consignment, it is necessary to present valid Proof of Sustainability (PoS) in accordance with a voluntary scheme¹ recognised and approved by the EU Commission.

The Biomethane Registry Austria permits sustainability criteria to be documented within the biomethane certificate as well as attaching the Proof of Sustainability to the biomethane certificate. This function is reserved to auditors of the relevant biomethane plant, which is certified as sustainable. It is available only if the initial audit report furnishes proof that the biomethane plant was already capable of sustainable biomethane production at the time it was registered in the Biomethane Registry Austria.

The Biomethane Registry Austria itself does not add anything to, or remove anything from, or evaluate, the details entered by participants or by auditors. The Biomethane Registry Austria's sole function is to document the information entered in a structured manner. It offers registry account holders a reporting system to trace any and all account movements referring to ownership transfers.

3 Biomethane Application Purposes

3.1 Application Purposes

Once injected into the natural gas grid at any one point, biomethane can be withdrawn again at any other point and be used for different application purposes, including, without limitation, the generation of green electricity. Using the existing gas infrastructure to separate injection and withdrawal locations, makes biomethane available to all end consumers regardless of their location. The plant operator (biomethane producer) may sell the physical biomethane either jointly with the biomethane certificate or separately from it. Pricing for joint or separate marketing of physical biomethane and biomethane certificates is the responsibility of the participants.

A variety of competent bodies (see 7.2) have been tasked with documenting the use of biomethane for different application purposes. To prevent any risk of double counting of the same production amounts, AGCS has entered into cooperation agreements and set up technical interfaces with the competent entities (see 7.2).

3.2 Requirements for Funding Applications (Green Electricity Funding)

Requirements to be met to obtain funding under the Green Electricity Act 2012 include, on the one hand, the biomethane certificates issued by the balance group coordinator for injected energy amounts from biomethane, and on the other, compliance with the criteria defined by law (§ 21 ÖSG 2012). It is mandatory to have the biomethane certificates audited by an independent auditor to prove compliance with these statutory criteria (§ 21 ÖSG 2012). Auditors commissioned for this purpose must record the relevant information by adding an audit annotation to the respective biomethane certificates.

Another requirement for obtaining funding from the Green Power Settlement Agent in Austria is for applicants to register a biomethane electrification plant with its respective account with Biomethane Registry Austria. This account serves to record additional information and master data to describe, and uniquely identify, the CHP (combined heat and power) plant. To be able to request the green energy feed-in tariff, it is necessary to transfer certificates from a

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/renewable-energy/biofuels/voluntary-schemes_en

biomethane electrification plant account to the account of the Green Power Settlement Agent (OeMAG).

3.3 Disclosure of Quality Criteria for Specific Application Purposes

Whether the biomethane certificate must meet specific criteria for a specific application purpose is governed by the terms and conditions of the body verifying the biomethane certificate.

4 Biomethane Certificates

The "biomethane certificate" or "certificate of origin" is a general term used for all kinds of electronic documents that document the characteristics of the relevant biomethane and confirm the corresponding quality criteria. Biomethane certificates are electronic documents registered to the accounts of their owners in the Biomethane Registry Austria. Biomethane certificates document information on the energy amounts from biomethane injected into the gas grid as well as the corresponding quality criteria.

The biomethane certificates representing the energy amounts of the injected biomethane are generated each month by the registry operator and can be split into 1 kWh units as needed by market participants themselves. The minimum unit for international certificate exchanges (cross-border ownership transfer) is 1 MWh.

Attributes are data fields within the electronic document (certificate) which contain information on the production plant, energy amount and quality of the feedstock used (substrates) and production process. From a technical point of view, attributes are data fields in the registry's IT system. From an organisational point of view, such attributes must be both comprehensive and meaningful, so as to adequately describe the biomethane product even in cases where traders and buyers cannot check the production process in person. For biomethane certificates to be transferable on both the national and the European market, their attributes must be harmonised.

Given the different legal frameworks, the functions, applications, and relevance of biomethane certificates will vary along with different application purposes. Attributes (information on quality criteria) constitute the core part of biomethane certificates and are crucial for the overall value of the biomethane product.

5 Ownership Transfer of Biomethane Certificates

The Biomethane Registry Austria offers transfer functions between participant accounts to support ownership transfer of biomethane between market participants.

Transfers fall solely within the responsibility of the market participants. The seller initiates a transfer, which is then offered to the buyer in a personalised transfer list provided by the registry system. The buyer can individually verify the biomethane certificates in the transfer list. By clicking on Accept or Reject, the buyer decides which of the biomethane certificates offered in the transfer list it will accept or reject. Accepted biomethane certificates are transferred to the buyer's account, which serves as documentation of the ownership transfer. Status messages during transfer are communicated to both seller and buyer via e-mail.

The transfer processes are automatically and fully recorded in the registry system, making ownership transfers of biomethane certificates secure and traceable.

6 Cancellation of Biomethane Certificates

6.1 Cancellation Function

Certificates can be cancelled at any time to document that the corresponding biomethane has undergone final consumption. After cancellation, it is no longer possible to transfer a cancelled certificate. Cancellation is a prerequisite for the issuance of cancellation statements, which can be used in dealings with third parties, including the use in annual reports, financial audits, biomethane as biofuel, applications for statutory compensation and remuneration, etc.

Certificates transferred to the accounts of funding bodies must be cancelled by these funding bodies, thereby removing the certificates from the market with final effect.

6.2 Cancellation Statement

At the request of authorised participants, the registry operator will issue cancellation statements for cancelled biomethane certificates (see 3.24 Biomethane T&C). After cancellation, it will no longer be possible to transfer or use the respective biomethane certificate. Cancellation statements contain the following information:

- Mandatory
 - ◆ Unique identification number
 - ◆ Certificate owner
 - ◆ Injecting biomethane plant
 - ◆ Production period (injection month)
 - ◆ Energy amount from biomethane injected in kWh
- Optional
 - ◆ Biomethane certificate characteristics
 - ◆ Biomethane certificate audit annotations
 - ◆ Sustainability criteria: greenhouse gas emissions (carbon value), mass balancing, voluntary scheme and ID number of Proof of Sustainability
 - ◆ Auditor

6.3 Verification of Cancellation Statements

The registry operator assigns a unique identification number to every cancellation statement. This number is assigned during the cancellation process and is not identical to any other identification numbers managed in the Biomethane Registry Austria. The Biomethane Registry Austria provides the following procedure for verifying the existence of cancellation statements:

The identification number assigned to the cancellation statement by the Biomethane Registry Austria enables verification whether a cancellation with the indicated number is documented in the system and whether a confirmation statement was issued for such cancellation. Market participants of the Biomethane Registry Austria may also address written inquiries to the registry operator to obtain such information.

7 Participants of the Biomethane Registry Austria

7.1 Registry Operator

The operator of the Biomethane Registry Austria is responsible for the management of operations of the registry, and for making the electronic account system available. The registry operator of the Biomethane Registry Austria is AGCS Gas Clearing and Settlement AG.

7.2 Cooperation: National and International

A number of competent bodies have been tasked with documenting the use of biomethane for the different application purposes in Austria. Further registries or funding agencies may open accounts in the AGCS Biomethane Registry Austria manages, including the Green Power Settlement Agent (OeMAG Abwicklungsstelle für Ökostrom AG), which is responsible for the documentation of funding granted for renewable electricity generated from biomethane. AGCS has taken measures to prevent any risk of double counting of the same production energy amounts. To this end it has entered into cooperation agreements and set up technical interfaces connecting the Biomethane Registry Austria with the competent bodies listed below:

- OeMAG Abwicklungsstelle für Ökostrom AG (Green Power Settlement Agent), for power generation from biomethane and funding applications;
- eINa Biokraftstoffregister der Umweltbundesamt GmbH (Austrian Biofuel Registry), when biomethane is used as a sustainable biofuel in transport;
- Database of guarantees of origin of E-Control, for issuing guarantees of origin for the disclosure of the supply mix;
- Biogas Register Germany, which is operated by dena Deutsche Energie Agentur, for the exchange of biomethane certificates between Austria and Germany;
- Biomethane registries from other European countries, for carrying out cross-border transfers through European cooperation schemes.

7.3 Registries Outside Austria

To enable cross-border ownership transfers of energy amounts from biomethane, the Biomethane Registry Austria has set up interfaces with non-Austrian registries. Generally, the connections are set up via centrally organised European platforms that are part of a European scheme for the standardised cross-border ownership transfer of biomethane certificates. Any transfer to or from a non-Austrian registry will be fully and transparently documented using accounts (export, import) set up for this purpose in the Biomethane Registry Austria.

7.4 Biomethane Plant Operators (Biomethane Producers)

The operators of biomethane plants play a specific role in the Biomethane Registry Austria. Every legal entity can register any number of biomethane production plants, which are assigned to the account of the plant operator.

Every biomethane plant that injects biomethane into the grid must be registered in the Biomethane Registry Austria. After registration, a certificate stating the corresponding number of kWh and bearing a unique identification is generated automatically in the Biomethane Registry Austria once a month for the energy amount from biomethane injected into the grid, with the amount also being recorded in the AGCS clearing system. The fossil energy amount of additives, which must be entered by the plant operator, is deducted from the energy amount injected in the grid, with the result being the amount recorded on the biomethane certificate.

The biomethane certificate thus created is assigned to the account of the respective biomethane plant operator, who is then free to use the certificate as needed.

7.5 Biomethane Electrification Plant Operators

The operators of biomethane electrification plants (operators of combined heat and power units, CHP) have a specific role in the Biomethane Registry Austria. Every legal entity can register any number of biomethane electrification plants, which are assigned to the account of the operator. Based on such assignment, these accounts provide additional information in the master database needed when requesting funding from the Green Power Settlement Agent. The Green Power Settlement Agent (OeMAG) will accept only biomethane certificates received from the account of a biomethane electrification plant. The funding process is subject to the terms and conditions of the Green Power Settlement Agent. In accordance with the requirements of the Green Power Settlement Agent, the holders of such accounts must comply with the processes and/or auditing procedures and criteria laid down by the Green Power Settlement Agent. The Green Power Settlement Agent website (www.oem-ag.at) provides a description of how to use the biomethane registry in the funding process as well as a list of the documents and materials needed for this purpose.

Electrification plant operators that have applied for funding with the Green Power Settlement Agent must transfer their certificates to this body once a month. These certificates must meet the funding criteria stipulated by the Green Power Settlement Agent.

Generally, account holders may transfer biomethane certificates assigned to a power generator account back to any other registry account; the use of the certificates is in general not limited to the application for funding from the Green Power Settlement Agent.

7.6 Registry Users

Registry users of the Biomethane Registry Austria are other natural persons or legal entities that enter into an agreement on the use of the registry with the registry operator on the basis of the Biomethane T&C, including Annexes. Upon conclusion of such agreement, the Biomethane Registry Austria participants are granted access rights to Biomethane Registry Austria and may transfer or cancel certificates as needed. This role applies to all registry users other than biomethane plant operators, biomethane electrification plant operators and auditors.

7.7 Users with Access Rights

Users with access rights are persons authorised by the individual participants who are granted electronic access to the corresponding registry account after completing the relevant application process. See 3.6 Biomethane T&C.

7.8 Auditors

See 4.4 Biomethane T&C.

8 Accounts in the Biomethane Registry Austria

8.1 Personalised registry accounts

Every participant that has concluded a user agreement with the registry operator will be assigned a registry account in the Biomethane Registry Austria. Participants may use the registry account functionalities in accordance with their respective roles by accessing the system with their login data; these functionalities include the transfer function, the cancelling of certificates and access of their master data.

8.2 User Access Data

Authorised users can initiate actions for the relevant participant in their assigned registry accounts. For this purpose, every authorised user is given personalised access data for the relevant registry account. The access data consists of a unique user alias and the corresponding access password.

8.3 Possible Actions of Biomethane Registry Austria Participants

Participants have a comprehensive range of actions to choose from in the Biomethane Registry Austria. The specific actions are restricted to the participant's own registry account. The options available for specific certificates change when the status of the certificates change.

The registry operator provides User Manuals for each of the roles defined in the registry system on Biomethane Registry Austria website (www.biomethanregister.at). The summary below presents the main options available to participants within the registry:

8.3.1 Biomethane Plant Operators

- Viewing of own master data
- Receipt of monthly certificates (automatically, without requiring user interaction) as owners of a registered biomethane production plant
- Transfer of biomethane certificates
- Use of the bulletin board
- Retrieval of account statements and messages
- Cancellation statements

8.3.2 Registry Users (e.g., biomethane traders, biomethane electrification plant operators and other biomethane users)

- Viewing of own master data
- Transfer of biomethane certificates
- Use of the bulletin board
- Retrieval of account statements and messages
- Cancellation statements

8.3.3 Auditors

- Viewing of own master data
- Viewing of the master data of companies assigned to them
- System messages
- Auditing of certificates

- Uploading of audit reports
- Entering audit annotations

8.4 Auditors in the Biomethane Registry Austria

The Biomethane Registry Austria enables participants to have the biological origin characteristics of the energy amounts from biomethane underlying their certificates confirmed by an auditor. For this purpose, the auditors commissioned by the plant operator are assigned a registry account in the Biomethane Registry Austria. The scope of the audit as well as the deadlines for meeting funding criteria are defined by the respective funding bodies or are governed by law. By adding an audit annotation to a biomethane certificate in the registry, the auditor confirms compliance with the respective quality criteria. The participants and the auditors are solely responsible for ensuring that all statutory requirements in terms of biological origin characteristics are complied with at the time of issuance of the certificates.

8.5 Confirmation by an Auditor in the Biomethane Registry Austria

Auditing, which is generally optional, can be provided for any kind of certificate generated based on monthly injection amounts. By entering an audit annotation, the auditor confirms, at a minimum, that the audit carried out establishes conformity with the information provided about the concerned plant with respect to the following:

- Plant name
- Plant operator
- Plant profile
- Injection point (meter number)
- Injection amount per month
- Additives per month
- Quality per month
- Year of commissioning

9 Registry Operator Rights

9.1 Registry Operator Rights in Cases of Abuse

The registry operator shall endeavour to prevent and eliminate abuse and errors in the Biomethane Registry Austria. The registry operator also has the right to take measures in any manner whatsoever to eliminate abuse and errors in the system as rapidly and effectively as possible.

9.2 Registry Operator Rights Regarding Electronic Documents

The registry operator reserves the right to remove electronic documents deposited in the registry by authorised users and auditors from the registry if they contain, or are suspected to contain, malware. Furthermore, the registry operator reserves the right to limit the size of the electronic documents that can be deposited in the registry.

10 Communication between the Biomethane Registry Austria and Participants

To notify participants of any events of relevance for them, the Biomethane Registry Austria IT system will send automated messages to the e-mail addresses on record in the registry and/or publish messages in the protected-access area of the registry. Participants and/or their authorised users must ensure that their contact details (especially e-mail addresses) are kept up to date.

In addition to primary and secondary authorised users of a participant, it is also possible to enter further contact persons in the Biomethane Registry Austria, specifically for

- invoicing,
- contractual and general matters, and
- operations.

These contact persons will not be given personalised access to the Biomethane Registry Austria as authorised users, and the fact that they are named as contacts does not give them any other special rights. In this case as well, the users are responsible for keeping the contact details on record up to date.

Participants may contact the Biomethane Registry Austria by telephone by calling the support hotline or by sending an e-mail to the registry operator (info@biomethanregister.at). The contact details are available on the website of the Biomethane Registry Austria at www.biomethanregister.at.