# The International Tracking Standard Foundation

*Founder of I-REC*

# GUIDANCE NOTE

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# Guidance for API users and Platform Operators

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# BACKGROUND

## ABOUT THE DOCUMENT

The International Tracking Standard Foundation (I-TRACK Foundation) owns the International Attribute Tracking Standard (Standard), a tracking standard that is used as the basis for Accrediting entities that work to implement various tracking products such as electricity, hydrogen, biomethane, and others.

### THREE MANDATORY ROLES

- The Code Manager,
- The Issuer, and
- The Registry Operator

The Code Managers serve as the central coordinating and contracting body for a tracking product. Code Managers must operate, or appoint a Registry Operator to maintain the primary records (Core Records) of the full cycle of ownership (issuance, trade, redemption) of the Product Certificates within that Code.

However, while Registry Operators ensure the integrity of these Core Records, additional user services may be needed. This is where Platforms and Platform Operators play a role. They provide third-party tools and services that enhance functionality and user experience, while remaining fully compliant with the requirements of the Standard and other associated governance requirements. Any organisation may develop such services by integrating its IT system with the Registry through the Automated Programme Interface (API). However, the Registry Operator remains accountable for maintaining the Core Records. All lifecycle events of a Product Certificate (issuance, transfer to other users, redemption) must be immediately and accurately recorded, without delay, within the Registry This document outlines the types of services that can be integrated with the Registry and the process for doing so under the Electricity Code. In this context, the integration with the Registry Operator specifically refers to the Evident Registry for Electricity, also known as I-REC(E).

# BACKGROUND

## MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE I-REC(E) ENVIRONMENT AS A WHOLE

As multiple Accredited Entities and service providers participate in the I-REC(E) market, maintaining the integrity and consistency of the overall I-REC(E) ecosystem is essential. The robustness of the system depends on strong controls at both the beginning and end of an I-REC(E) lifecycle (from issuance to redemption).

At the point of issuance, strict verification ensures that only legitimate and accurately measured renewable generation data enter the system. At redemption, controls guarantee that certificates are redeemed correctly and that claims are transparent and traceable. Between these two points lies the transfer or trading phase, during which certificates may change ownership but not be altered. No data may be added, removed, or modified during transfer; all information recorded at issuance remains intact throughout the lifecycle. This strict data preservation ensures that every I-REC(E) retains its full traceability, credibility, and value across the market.

### Issuance
All certificate issuances are verified and approved by the responsible and Accredited Issuer.

### Trade
Facilitated by registered Participants or on trading platforms. The transfer of ownership is recorded in the registry. No details or clearing is offered through the registry. Market entrance is controlled by Issuers (see left) and market exit (redemption) to be controlled through the use of standardized redemption statements (see right).

### Redemption
The end-of-life with a Beneficiary being listed as the owner of the associated attributes.

Accredited Platforms and other Registry Users that integrate with the system through an API remain fully responsible for the performance, accuracy, and reliability, at all times, of their own services. While the I-TRACK Foundation and Evident conduct verification and oversight checks as part of the Accreditation and monitoring process, these checks do not constitute a warranty or guarantee. Accordingly, the I-TRACK Foundation and Evident cannot ensure third-party or additional services will function as intended at all times.

# 1. What can an integrated Platform do?

Any action that can be organised by a user can be facilitated by a Platform. Services can be automated, visualised, or tailored for a specific audience. The range of services is limited only by national legislation and any relevant rules or restrictions set by the Code Manager and the I-TRACK Foundation. As long as certificate ownership records are promptly communicated to the Registry, and other contract-specific requirements are observed and maintained, the Platform will remain fully compliant.

EXAMPLES OF SERVICES A PLATFORM MAY PROVIDE INCLUDE:

- facilitating marketplaces, exchanges, or bulletin boards,
- support in requesting certificate issuance,
- facilitating certificate transfers,
- simplifying certificate redemption,
- visualisation tools for 24/7 matching, and
- services in other languages.

# 2. API Integration and User Functions

An organisation offering services within a specific Product market must hold one or more user functions in the Registry. The primary user functions are,

- Registrant,
- Participant, and
- Platform Operator.

Each user function comes with distinct rights, responsibilities, and access levels, which will be explained in more detail below.

API integration is governed by the rights associated with the organisation's user function(s). Entities holding multiple user functions (e.g., both Registrant and Participant) will receive separate (and different) API keys for each function. The assigned user function determines the type of services that can be offered, the contracts that must be signed, and the fee structure.

| | Registrant | Participant | Platform Operator | Issuer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Account Mgmt | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Beneficiary creation | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| Device Mgmt | Yes (requesting) | No | No | Yes (verifying) |
| Issuance | Yes (requesting) | No | No | Yes (verifying) |
| Transfer Mgmt | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| Redemption | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| Mgmt 3rd party account | No | No | Yes | No |

Figure 1 – Functions

## 2.1 REGISTRANT API INTEGRATION

As illustrated in Figure 1, the primary functionalities of a Registrant are requesting device registrations and initiating the issuance of I-REC(E). While API integration does not expand the functionalities of a Registrant, it allows customisation of the interface through which requests are made.

For example, a Registrant wants to use its own software to make requests to the Issuer and have the software communicate with the Registry. The API enables this integration while preserving the overall robustness and security of the system.

The retention of API access for a Registrant is contingent upon the organisation maintaining an active Registrant Account on the Registry. As a result, any removal of the Registrant function will result in the removal of the associated API.

## 2.2 PARTICIPANT API INTEGRATION

As seen in Figure 1, a Participant's primary functionality is focused on the trade and redemption of I-REC(E), either for themselves or on behalf of clients. Many Participants also trade in other EACs, such as Guarantee of Origins in Europe and US-RECs, and could benefit from integrating their I-REC(E) activities into their internal systems. This integration allows them to serve clients a variety of products from a single account, eliminating the need to log in to multiple EAC Registries.

Participants, like utilities, may also use the API to set up green tariff programs or have mass-redemption requests for large groups of End-Users requesting a specific product. In these cases, individual redemptions for hundreds or even thousands of beneficiaries could be automated and tracked directly within the Registry.

Retention of API access for a Participant is contingent on the organisation maintaining an active Participant Account in the Registry. If the Participant function is removed, all associated API access will automatically be revoked.

## 2.3 PLATFORM OPERATOR API INTEGRATION

The role of the Platform Operator can best be compared to a Participant account with a few key differences. Like Participants, Platform Operators maintain a trade and redemption account, but the following differences apply:

- Accreditation: A Platform Operator requires accreditation from the I-TRACK Foundation, whereas generally any organisation can sign up for a Participant account.
- Branding and Recognition: A Platform Operatoris mentioned on the I-TRACK Foundation website and may use the logo of the I-TRACK Foundation in line with the guidelines. Market players, such as Participants, cannot use this logo.
- Ownership: The Platform Operator has no legal ownership of the I-REC(E) in its Custodial Trade account
- -Account Access: Platform Operator may have access to I-REC(E) from other Participants' Trade Accounts through Encumbrance Trade Accounts, which allow for third-party account management, as is shown below in Figure 1. This applies to Platform Operators who want to have that functionality.
- Access to the Encumbrance Account is restricted to Accredited Platform Operators only.
- Contracts: A Platform Operator must sign the Platform Operator contract rather than the Participant contract
- Fees: A Platform Operator has a different fee structure than the Participant

### 2.3.1 CUSTODIAL ACCOUNT PLATFORM OPERATOR

The role of the Platform Operator can best be compared to a Participant account with a few key differences. Like Participants, Platform Operators maintain a trade and redemption account, but the following differences apply:

<u>Getting I-REC(E) in the Custodial Trade account of the Platform Operator</u>

1. Via issuance: A Registrant can fill in the Custodial Trade Account of a Platform Operator as the destination account when requesting issuance.
2. Via transfer: A Participant can transfer an I-REC(E) into the Custodial Trade Account of the Platform Operator (action D3 in Figure 2).
3. Alternatively, and only if the Platform Operator allows for this functionality, the Participant could use the Encumbrance Model as explained below (action T1).

<u>Redemption / Getting I-REC(E) out of a Custodial Trade Account of a Platform Operator</u>

1. When an entity without a Participant account purchases and redeems an I-REC(E) on the Platform, the I-REC(E) will be redeemed on the Custodial Redemption Account of the Platform Operator. The Platform Operator is free to choose the fee they charge the End-User for this redemption, but the fee paid by the Platform Operator to the Code Manager is fixed at €0.08/MWh (action R3).
2. When an entity with a Participant Account purchases an I-REC(E) on the Platform, the Participant can, if possible on the Platform, choose to redeem directly on the Platform (Platform Operator will be charged €0.08/MWh; action R3) or to let the purchase trigger a transfer between the Custodial Trade Account of the Platform Operator into the Trade Account of the Participant (action T1). This Participant would then be the legal owner of the I-REC(E) and could choose to further trade the certificate or redeem it against the normal tariff of €0.06/MWh in their own Participant redemption account.

The Platform Operator's Custodial Trade Account allows Participants to transfer I-REC(E) into the Platform to make use of the services of the Platform. Legally, the Participant is still the owner of the I- REC(E). Still, users should be aware of any terms and conditions that are maintained by the Platform Operator prior to making use of the service. For this, among other reasons, it was the preference of many Participants to enable the possibility to make use of additional services of Platforms without having to transfer the I-REC(E) out of their account. This is the purpose of the Encumbrance Account.

## 2.3.2 ENCUMBRANCE TRADE ACCOUNT

The Encumbrance Trade Account was created to allow the Participant to grant a Platform Operator controlled access to a designated sub-account while retaining the ability to revoke that authorisation at any time. Functionally, an Encumbrance Trade Account is much like any other trade account, with one important difference: the Participant authorises a single Platform (owned by an Accredited Platform Operator) to serve as the sole interface through which modifications to the account can be made.

By giving this permission, the I-REC(E) held in the Encumbrance Trade Account becomes directly visible within the Platform interface operated by the Platform Operator. Depending on the specific functionality of that specific Platform:

- Participants may modify the I-REC(E) through the Platform interface, or
- The I-REC(E) may be made available for purchase by another entity with accounts on the Platform.

Redemptions made through an Encumbrance Trade Account are recorded with the Participant listed as the Redeeming Entity, corresponding to Action R2 shown below. Alternatively, the Platform Operator may redeem the I-REC(E) directly, if permitted, following Actions T1 and then R3 below.

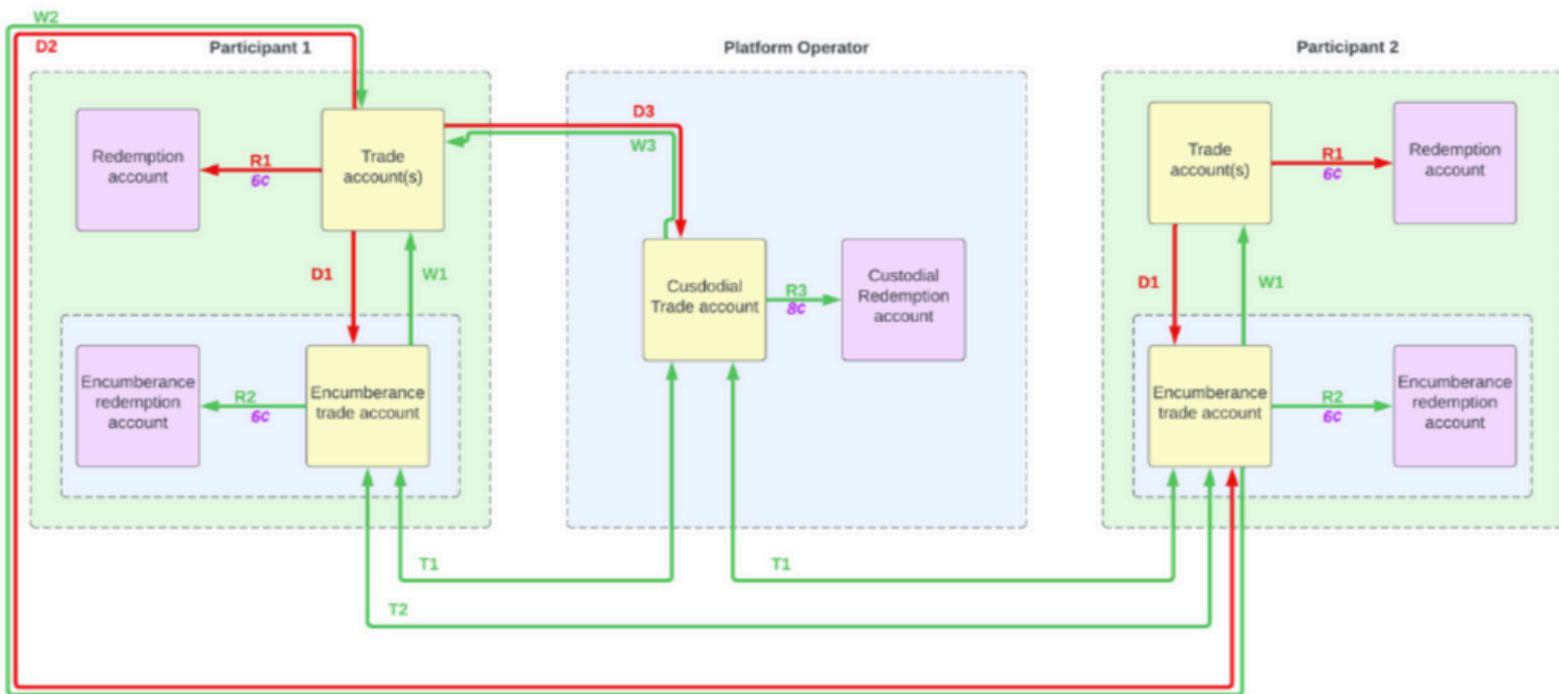The figure below shows all the possible interactions of a Participant with a Platform Operator.



Figure 2 – Possible Interactions with Platform
Red actions – to be available to the Participant only.
Green actions – to be available to the (user of a) Platform Operator (PO) only.

<u>Depositing certificates into a PO's system.</u>

**D1** A Participant can deposit certificates into their own Encumbered Trade Account

**D2** A Participant can deposit certificates into another Participant's Encumbered Trade Account

**D3** A Participant can deposit certificates into a Custodial Trade Account, owned directly by the Platform Operator.

<u>Withdrawing certificates from a PO's system.</u>

**W1** A Participant can withdraw certificates (through the PO's system) from their own Encumbered Trade Account, into a normal trade account owned by themselves.

**W2** A Participant can withdraw certificates (through the PO's system) from their own Encumbered Trade Account into a normal Trade Account owned by another Participant organisation (in the above graphic, this must be initiated by Participant 2)

**W3** A Participant can withdraw certificates (through the Platform Operator's system) from the Platform Operator's Custodial Trade Account, into their own normal Trade Account.

<u>Transferring certificates within the PO's system.</u>

**T1** A transfer may take place between two parties within the Platform Operator's system: where one of those parties does not have a Participant account within the Evident Registry, the Platform Operator will take custodianship of these certificates on behalf of the party without an Evident Registry account.

**T2** A transfer may take place between two parties within the Platform Operator's system, where both parties have Participant accounts on the Evident Registry.

\*\* Transfers between two parties where neither has a Participant account within the Evident Registry do not need to be recorded directly in the Evident Registry. Providing that the certificates being transferred are held within the Platform Operator's Custodial Trade Account (this applies only to transfers and not to redemptions)

<u>Redeeming certificates within the PO's system.</u>

**R1** A Participant may redeem any certificates held in a normal Trade Account into a normal Redemption Account held within the same organisation (these will be charged at 6¢ per redemption)

**R2** A Participant may redeem certificates held in their Encumbered Trade Account into an Encumbered Redemption Account held within the same organisation (these will be charged at 6¢ per redemption)

**R3** A Platform Operator may redeem certificates held in their Custodial Trade Account into a Custodial Redemption Account held within the same Platform Operator organisation. These are to represent a user of the Platform Operator's system, who does not have a Participant account on the Evident Registry (these will be charged at 8¢ per redemption)

** Redemption can only be made from a Trade Account (of any type) owned by the same organisation. To redeem certificates cross-organisationally, a Participant must first initiate a transfer and then a redemption (T2 -> R2, or W2 -> R1)

# 3. How to integrate

The I-REC(E) Registry is operated by Evident Services. Any organisation wishing to integrate its services with the Registry must go through Evident. The integration requirements vary depending on the type of organisation and the type of services that will be offered.

## 3.1 REGISTRANT AND PARTICIPANT

Registrants and Participants seeking integration must sign the API contract with Evident. The contract can be requested at <u>helpdesk@evident.global.</u>

Once the contract is signed, the Registrant or Participant may be granted access to a sandbox environment for API testing. Access to the live environment can be provided upon request. Evident can provide supporting documentation to guide organisations in using the API.

**Important**: API users are fully responsible for the consequences of their actions. Any requests, transfers, redemptions, or any other actions performed via the API – whether fees are incurred – cannot be undone. Users should exercise caution when interacting with the Registry.

# 3.2 PLATFORM OPERATOR

Integration for Platform Operators involves a more extensive process as they provide services not only for their own use but also on behalf of third parties. Platforms act as an extension of the Registry and, like the Registry itself, require Accreditation from the I-TRACK Foundation.

Once Accredited, Platform Operators gain several benefits, including being listed on the I-TRACK Foundation website as an officially Accredited Platform Operator (Accredited Entity) with associated benefits such as being allowed to use the name and logo of the I-TRACK Foundation (within the guidelines of the brand).

## 3.2.1 ACHIEVING ACCREDITATION

To achieve Accreditation, Platform Operators must complete and obtain approval from the I-TRACK Foundation for all requirements outlined in paragraphs 3.2.1.1 through 3.2.1.4.

Before receiving access to the sandbox environment, the Platform Operator must sign the required contract with Evident and submit a preliminary report.

Following testing in the sandbox environment and compliance with all additional requirements, Platform Operators can be granted access to the live environment and receive official Accreditation. Accreditation is confirmed through an official letter from the I-TRACK Foundation.

All required documents and guidance can be requested by contacting the I-TRACK Foundation at secretariat@trackingstandard.org.

### 3.2.1.1 DOCUMENTATION

To achieve Accreditation, Platform Operators must prepare and submit several key documents.

Preliminary report
The Preliminary Report is the first requirement and serves to inform the I-TRACK Foundation, Code Manager, and prospective users about the Platform. It should detail:
- How the Platform works,
- The types of services that will be available,
- The fee structure, and
- Any other important information about the Platform.

This report will be publicly listed on the I-TRACK Foundation's website if accreditation has been granted, allowing interested parties to learn more about all Accredited Platforms and Platform Operators. The Preliminary Report must be approved by the I-TRACK Foundation as part of the Accreditation process.

Contracts

Platform Operators must sign the Platform Operator contract with Evident and the I-TRACK Foundation. This contract will only be executed by the I-TRACK Foundation and Evident after all other Accreditation steps have been completed.

Screenshots of the interface and language

The Platform Operator must provide a user guide illustrating all Platform functionalities as described in the Preliminary Report. Since the Platform may function as an extension of the Evident Registry, the I-TRACK Foundation will review the user guide and other public communications to ensure that the language and terminology used are in line with the International Attribute Tracking Standard and the associated Product Code.

### 3.2.1.2 WALKTHROUGH OF THE PLATFORM

Once the Platform Operator has developed their Platform, tested its interaction with the Registry, and received positive feedback on the user guide, they must schedule a walkthrough call with the I-TRACK Foundation and Evident. During this call, the Platform Operator will demonstrate all Platform functionalities and its seamless interactions with the Registry. The purpose of this walkthrough call is to ensure that the Platform aligns with all Accreditation requirements.

### 3.2.1.3 INTEGRATION READINESS

After completing the walkthrough and all prior requirements, the I-TRACK Foundation will coordinate with the Registry Operator (Evident Services) to verify that the Platform's capabilities, outlined in the preliminary report and supported by screenshots, have been thoroughly tested in the sandbox environment.

**Important**: Neither the I-TRACK Foundation nor the Code Manager can be held responsible for actions performed on the Platform or any subsequent actions triggered on the Registry. Accreditation signifies recognition of the Platform's compliance with the rules, but does in no way guarantee its proper functionality.

### 3.2.1.4 ACCREDITATION FEES TO THE I-TRACK FOUNDATION

Platform Operators will pay annual Accreditation Fees to the I-TRACK Foundation as follows:

- Initial fee (year 1) – €15,000.00
- Annual fee (year 2 onwards) – €5,000.00

**All fees exclude applicable taxes.**

Platform Operator will be notified of changes to the Accreditation Fees before 1 October of each year. The Accreditation Fees, and any changes to them, will be published on the I-TRACK Foundation's website: www.trackingstandard.org.

## 3.3 INTERACTIONS BETWEEN ISSUERS AND PLATFORMS

The I-TRACK Foundation Accredited Issuers can become Platform Operators, just like any other entity. They may choose to implement Platforms for various reasons, such as creating localised portals or enabling procurement options within their markets. However, Issuers must ensure that their facilitation of options for the procurement of EACs does not compromise their neutrality in the market.

If an Issuer decides to implement a commercial tool to streamline the trading and procurement of EACs, several key requirements must be met. For example:

1. Registrants must always retain the freedom to choose whether to use an Issuer's Platform. Under no circumstances may an Issuer compel Registrants to use their Platform or prioritise issuance requests submitted through it.
2. An Issuer may offer the infrastructure to streamline trades and procurement; however, it must not actively serve clients or derive financial benefit from the value of trades (e.g., by taking a percentage of trade transactions).

For clarity, an Issuer may charge a fixed fee per trade or redemption conducted via its Platform, as Market Players retain the option not to make use of these services.