Africa’s carbon market is moving into a more practical phase as governments, investors and project developers turn their attention from setting rules to financing and delivering projects, with Rwanda preparing to host a major regional summit on the sector.

The Carbon Markets Africa Summit (CMAS) will be held in Kigali from Oct. 13 to 15, bringing together policymakers, project developers, investors and carbon-credit buyers to discuss how African projects can attract capital and reach international markets.

The summit’s programme, released by Rwanda’s Ministry of Environment, focuses on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, project development, finance, buyer demand, investment priorities and the structuring of carbon-market transactions. It will also examine issues including carbon-credit measurement, reporting and verification, project bankability and the implementation of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA).

The meeting comes as Rwanda works to put its own carbon-market framework into operation.

Rwanda launched its National Carbon Market Framework in 2023, establishing rules and institutional arrangements for participation in international and voluntary carbon markets. The framework is intended to support transparent decision-making on projects that generate carbon credits while helping the country attract climate finance.

In March 2025, Rwanda and the Global Green Growth Institute launched a two-year project to strengthen implementation of the framework. The initiative is supporting capacity building, governance systems and development of a pipeline of carbon-reduction projects in sectors including agriculture, forestry, energy, transport and waste.

Rwanda has also begun establishing bilateral arrangements that can create a route for credits generated by projects in the country to be used internationally.

In May 2025, Rwanda and Singapore signed an agreement under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement to cooperate on carbon credits. The agreement provides a framework for trading high-quality credits while supporting investment and sustainable development.

In January 2026, the two countries opened applications for carbon-credit projects in Rwanda. Projects approved under the arrangement can generate Article 6-compliant credits, while eligible Singapore-based companies can use such credits to offset up to 5% of their taxable emissions under Singapore's carbon-tax system.

The arrangement illustrates one of the key questions facing African carbon markets: whether countries can develop credible projects and market systems that attract international buyers while generating tangible development benefits at home.

The Kigali summit is expected to address that challenge through discussions on investment-ready projects, deal structuring, early-stage finance and market infrastructure. Its programme also includes projects in areas such as nature-based solutions, regenerative agriculture, carbon removals, waste-to-value and blue carbon.

For Rwanda, the push comes as the country seeks to expand participation in carbon markets as one source of climate finance. Its national framework requires carbon-market activities to operate within established approval, governance and regulatory arrangements, with an emphasis on transparency and environmental integrity.

The summit is hosted by Rwanda's Ministry of Environment, with the United Nations Development Programme and African Development Bank as host organisations, the Development Bank of Southern Africa as host partner and AUDA-NEPAD as a strategic institutional partner.

The focus on investment reflects a wider shift in the carbon market, where the challenge is increasingly moving beyond creating frameworks to developing projects capable of attracting financing, producing verifiable emissions reductions and securing buyers.

The transition could determine how African countries effectively carbon markets translate the continent's climate projects into financing for emissions reductions and sustainable development.