Programmatic document for the Secretariat of the Steering Committee for the Multilateral Mechanism for the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources, including the Cali Fund

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<tr><td>Project title
Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism for the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources, including the Cali Fund</td><td>Recipient United Nations organization
United Nations Environment Programme / Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity</td></tr>
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Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, Canada</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Project description
Secretariat support</td><td>Total project cost
3 155 094 for 3 years (2026-2028)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Project start date
Date of first transfer to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund
Proposed project duration
Three years</td></tr>
<tr><td>Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the Multilateral Mechanism for the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources, including the Cali Fund, from among the United Nations entities
Astrid Schomaker
Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity</td><td>Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the Multilateral Mechanism for the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources, including the Cali Fund, from among the members from Parties
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Antigua and Barbuda</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Recipient United Nations organization and signatory
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Astrid Schomaker
Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Date:</td></tr>
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Project overview

A. Background

1. The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the restoration of ecosystems are crucial for humanity's survival. Nature underpins all life on Earth: it provides food, medicine, energy, clean air and water and protection from natural disasters, as well as recreation and cultural inspiration. However, the rapid and extensive loss of biodiversity jeopardizes the continued provision of nature's contributions to people and threatens human security and well-being.

2. The topic of digital sequence information on genetic resources in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity came to the fore in 2016, after several years of negotiations on ways to address emerging challenges to the implementation of the third objective of the Convention, namely, the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

3. At its fifteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention established a multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, including a global fund, and set up a process to develop modalities for its operationalization (decision 15/9).

4. At its sixteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted the modalities for operationalizing the multilateral mechanism, including the global fund (decision 16/2), and decided that the global fund would be known as the Cali Fund for the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources. The multilateral mechanism and its fund will both operate according to the principles of inclusivity, equity and transparency.

B. Purpose and functions of the Multilateral Mechanism, including the Cali Fund

5. The multilateral mechanism for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources covers, without prejudice to national legislation, digital sequence information on genetic resources as specified in decision 16/2 (Annex para 1). The modalities for operationalizing the multilateral mechanism stipulate that all users of digital sequence information on genetic resources under the multilateral mechanism should share benefits arising from its use in a fair and equitable manner (Annex para 2). Users of digital sequence information on genetic resources in sectors that directly or indirectly benefit from its use in their commercial activities should contribute a proportion of their profits or revenue to the global fund, according to their size, as further specified in the modalities (Annex para 3).

6. As a multi-partner trust fund, the Cali Fund is the financial engine behind the sharing of monetary benefits from the Multilateral Mechanism for the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources.

7. Funding should support the realization of the objectives of the Convention in developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, and Parties with economies in transition, especially the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including through the delivery of activities described in national biodiversity strategies and action plans; contribute to scientific research on biodiversity; benefit indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and youth within those communities; and support the building of capacity, in accordance with Article 16 of the Convention, to generate, access, use, analyze and store digital sequence information on genetic resources according to capacity needs. Funding will also be available for those purposes to indigenous peoples and local communities in developed countries, where appropriate. In the event that any other intergovernmental forums decide to make use of the multilateral mechanism to share the benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, the funding should also support the realization of their objectives.

8. Additional activities in the CBD decision 16/2 and relating to the Executive Secretary of the CBD are not in the scope of the work of the Steering Committee of the Multilateral Mechanism, including the Cali Fund.

C. Participating organizations

9. The objectives of the Cali Fund will be implemented through government entities, United Nations organizations and non-United Nations organizations.

10. Each Party will designate participating entities for receiving funding. Parties may designate or establish a national entity, such as a national biodiversity fund, to receive funds and distribute them in a transparent way. Alternatively, they may designate an international, regional or subregional entity to fulfil the function of a national entity. Direct payments will also be made through institutions identified by indigenous peoples and local communities. Programmes or projects will therefore be implemented by participating government entities, United Nations organizations and non-United Nations Organizations. Such entities must meet internationally recognized fiduciary standards and provide for appropriate environmental and human rights safeguards.

D. Governance and management of the Multilateral Mechanism, including the Cali Fund

11. The Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism for the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources, including the Cali Fund, (hereinafter referred to as the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism) answers to and acts upon instruction from the Steering Committee of the Mechanism. Its role is to support the Committee in the implementation of its decisions and to facilitate the overall operation of the Cali Fund, ensuring strict separation of oversight and implementation functions.

12. The Steering Committee provides overarching, high-level strategic oversight, direction and cohesion for the Cali Fund, aligned with the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

E. Rationale for secretariat support

13. The Secretariat of the multilateral mechanism supports the functioning of the multilateral mechanism for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, including the global fund, in line with decisions of the Conference of the Parties as the governing body of the mechanism, and as guided by the Steering Committee.

F. Responsibilities of the Secretariat

14. The functions of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism, as set out in enclosure V to the annex to decision 16/2 and in the terms of reference of the Cali Fund, are listed below.

1. Programming

15. Programming functions comprise:

(a) Preparing the operations manual;

(b) Ensuring that criteria for disbursements are respected;

(c) Providing guidance to participating entities;

(d) Leading the monitoring of and narrative reporting on the Cali Fund, including against the fund standard indicators defined and approved by the Steering Committee;

(e) Preparing periodic reports and analyses on the use of the Cali Fund, on the basis of information provided by the recipient entities;

(f) Developing risk management strategies, monitoring all risks and keeping the list of risks up to date.

2. Capitalization and external relations

16. Functions related to capitalization and external relations comprise:

(a) Support the Steering Committee in mobilizing resources from private sector entities and other potential contributors;

(b) Issuing certificates for contributions to the Cali Fund;

(c) Propose a stakeholder engagement plan and communication and branding strategy and plan to the Steering Committee and implement them, as resources allow;

(d) Issue guides for all stakeholders with relation to the Cali Fund, including: countries and indigenous peoples and local communities eligible to receive funds; entities and other potential contributors to the Fund; entities operating and supporting DSI databases; all Parties and the general public; and

(e) Ensuring any investment plans align with the fund's theory of change and programming cycle.

3. Operations

17. Functions related to operations comprise:

(a) Service the meetings of the Steering Committee;

(b) Consolidating the narrative reports submitted by participating Organizations;

(c) Support the due diligence process for all prospective partners, in partnership with the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office as the administrative agent;

(d) Plan and prepare reporting documents for meetings of the Steering Committee;

(e) Undertaking any other tasks determined or required by the Steering Committee.

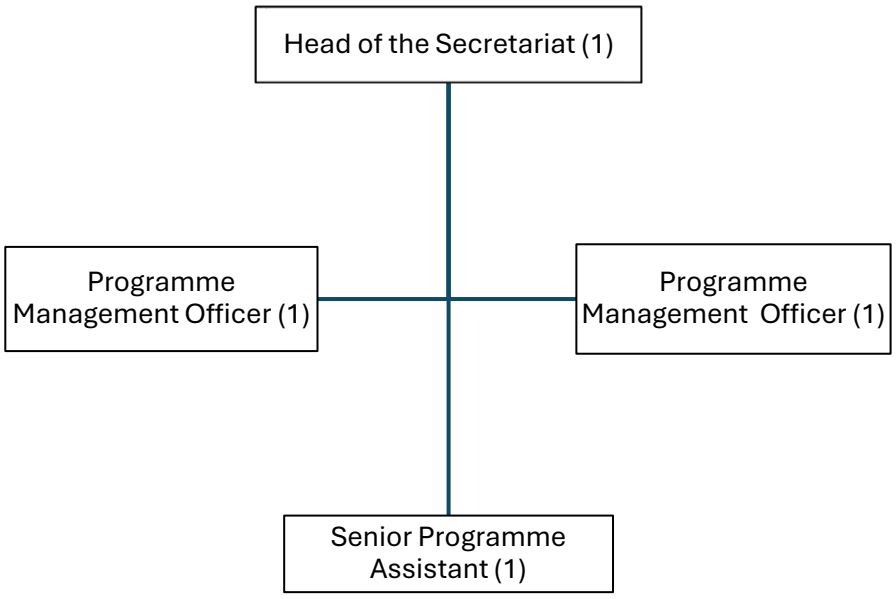
G. Structure of the Secretariat

18. All staff will report to the Head of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism, who will be under the supervision of the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

1. Immediate staffing needs

19. The immediate staffing needs of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism are illustrated and described below.

Figure 1
Initial structure of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



(a) *Head of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism (1).* The Head will have overall responsibility for implementing the vision and strategy of the Fund, established in the Terms of References, risk management and prioritizing the work of the Secretariat. The Head will also provide advice and support to the Steering Committee, manage the Secretariat, identify and develop strategic partnerships and oversee resource mobilization and relevant advocacy activities;

(b) *Programme Management Officer (1).* The Officer will lead activities in the areas of communication and public relations, partnerships and resource mobilization for the Cali Fund. The Officer will develop and implement communication, media and public relation strategies and knowledge products, targeting the key audiences. He or she will also assist with the annual consolidation of all progress reports;

(c) *Programme Management Officer (1).* The Officer will lead the direct disbursements from the Cali Fund to developing countries and indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as associated capacity-building for participating organizations. He or she will also assist with the annual consolidation of all progress reports;

(d) *Senior Programme Assistant (1)*. The Assistant will be responsible for providing administrative and logistical support and services and for assisting with communication tasks.

20. The approach taken is to start with a lean model that will eventually evolve into a fully staffed secretariat. Additional staff may be considered as needs arise, and the Cali Fund evolves. It is expected that consultants will be needed to support the set-up of various aspects of the Cali Fund (e.g. implementing partner strategy, communication strategy, public relations and branding, representation network of and legal support for indigenous peoples and local communities, monitoring and evaluation).

21. In accordance with this document, the immediate staffing needs of the Cali Fund have been identified as a matter of priority. Central to these needs is the urgent appointment and funding of the Head of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism and the Cali Fund, who will establish and lead the initial Secretariat office.

H. Budget and resources

22. The operations of the multilateral mechanism will be financed through the Cali Fund. As a transitional measure, until sufficient funds are available as determined the Steering Committee, the costs of the Secretariat may be funded by voluntary contributions.

23. The provisional budget below covers the operational costs of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism, including staff costs, and the cost of convening meetings and of travel of Secretariat staff. The initial funding request is for the period leading up to the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, scheduled for the last quarter of 2026, to make it possible for the minimum staffing requirements to be met. The budget has been prepared using the best available information but remains subject to modification.

Annual budget for the initial Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism
(United States dollars)

Category	*2026*	*2027*	*2028*
Staff and other personnel	711 700	731 700	751 700
Head of Secretariat	272,700		
Programme Management Officers	362,000		
Programme Assistant	77,000		
Travel	27 500	33 000	38 500
Supplies, commodities and materials	44 862	44 862	44 862
General operational and other direct costs	30 000	30 000	30 000
Consultancy and support	–	50 000	50 000
Steering Committee meeting	110 000	110 000	110 000
Subtotal	**924 062**	**999 562**	**1 025 062**
Programme support costs (7 per cent)	64 684	69970	71 754
Total	**988 746**	**1 069 532**	**1 096 816**