

---

**Multilateral Mechanism for the Fair and Equitable Sharing  
of Benefits from the Use of Digital Sequence Information  
on Genetic Resources, Including the Cali Fund**

---

Distr.: General

22 May 2025

English only

**Steering Committee**

**First meeting**

Online, 16–18 June 2025

Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

**Adoption of the project document for 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**

**Project document for 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**

**Note by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity acting as the interim  
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**

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, requires a secretariat to support its functioning. The annex to the present document contains a draft project document<sup>1</sup> for such a secretariat, for the consideration of the Steering Committee. Upon approval by the Committee, the Committee Co-Chair from among the United Nations entities will sign the project document.

---

\* MMDSI/SC/2025/1/1.

<sup>1</sup> The draft project document, including the terminology used therein, is based on a template provided by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

## Annex

### Draft project document for 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

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project title</b><br>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                                                                                                                | <b>Recipient United Nations organization</b><br>United Nations Environment Programme / Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Project contact person</b><br>Charlotte Germain-Aubrey<br>Address: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, Canada<br>Email: califund@un.org                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Project location</b><br>Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, Canada                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Project description</b><br>Secretariat support                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Total project cost</b><br>871 046 United States dollars for 2026<br>3 037 393 for 3 years (2026-2028)                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Project start date</b><br>Date of first transfer to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund<br><b>Proposed project duration</b><br>Three years                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>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</b><br>Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity | <b>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</b><br>To be determined |
| <b>Recipient United Nations organization and signatory</b><br>Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity<br><br>Astrid <b>Schomaker</b><br>Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity<br><br>Date:                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

## 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. Efforts to reduce, halt and reverse biodiversity loss are underfunded, and benefits from the use of genetic resources are not fairly and equitably shared with the countries and communities from which they arise.
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 Cali Fund

5. 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.
6. The goal of the Cali Fund is to use the third objective of the Convention as an incentive and support for the realization of the other two objectives of the Convention, in particular for least developed countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition, through the delivery of activities described in national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Funding will also support scientific research on biodiversity; benefit indigenous peoples and local communities at the global level, including women and youth within those communities; and support the development and building of capacity to generate, gain access to, use, analyse and store digital sequence information on genetic resources.

### C. Participating organizations

7. The Cali Fund will be implemented through government entities, United Nations organizations and non-United Nations organizations.
8. 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 Cali Fund**

9. 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.

10. 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**

11. The Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism is administered and hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and located within its headquarters, in Montreal, Canada. The Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism is responsible for compiling and finalizing the Cali Fund workplan, the programming cycle and its funding windows. It also takes the lead in initiating planning and implementation of the process, along with developing documents for discussion and approval by the Steering Committee. Last, it is responsible for the coordination and day-to-day management of the Fund.

**F. Responsibilities of the Secretariat**

12. The functions of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism, which are 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**

13. 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) Coordinating with the Secretariat of the Convention the monitoring of the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans by Governments;
- (g) Developing risk management strategies, monitoring all risks and keeping the list of risks up to date.

**2. Capitalization and external relations**

14. Functions related to capitalization and external relations comprise:

- (a) Putting in place the mechanism for engaging and following up with private sector companies and other users of digital sequence information on genetic resources as potential contributors;
- (b) Issuing certificates for contributions to the Cali Fund;
- (c) Proposing a stakeholder engagement plan and a communication and branding strategy and plan to the Steering Committee; and developing and implementing them, resources allowing;

(d) Developing and issuing targeted guides on the Cali Fund for all stakeholders, including countries and indigenous peoples and local communities eligible to receive funds; companies and other users of digital sequence information on genetic resources as potential contributors to the Fund; entities operating and supporting digital sequence information on genetic resources databases; all Parties; and the general public;

(e) Developing investment plans and strategies produced in relation to the Cali Fund and ensuring that they are aligned with the Fund theory of change and programming cycle.

### 3. Operations

15. Functions related to operations comprise:

- (a) Servicing the meetings of the Steering Committee;
- (b) Consolidating the narrative reports submitted by participating entities;
- (c) Supporting the due diligence process for all prospective partners, in partnership with the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office as the administrative agent;
- (d) Planning and preparing 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

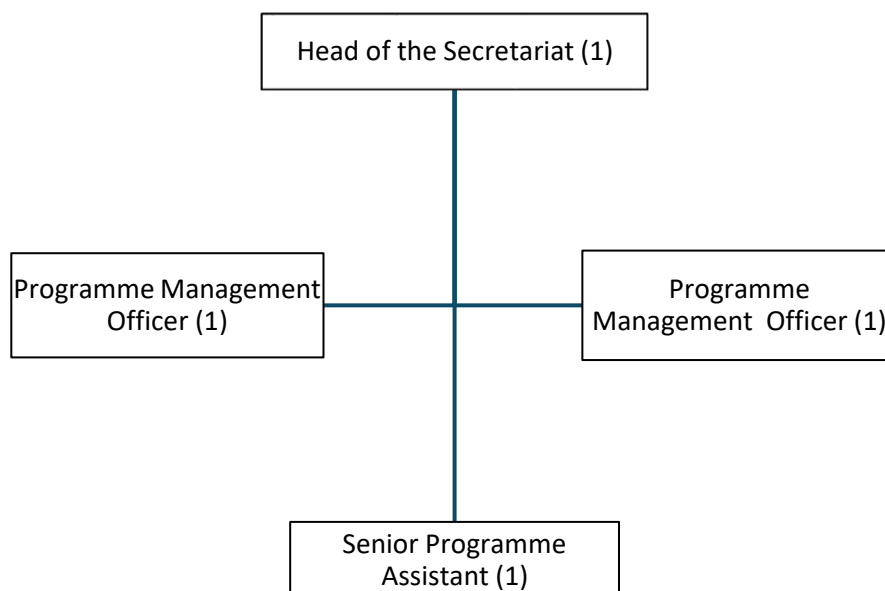
16. All staff will report to the Head of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism, who will be under the supervision of the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

### 1. Immediate staffing needs

17. 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 establishing the vision and strategy of the Fund, 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.

18. 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).

## 2. Long-term vision

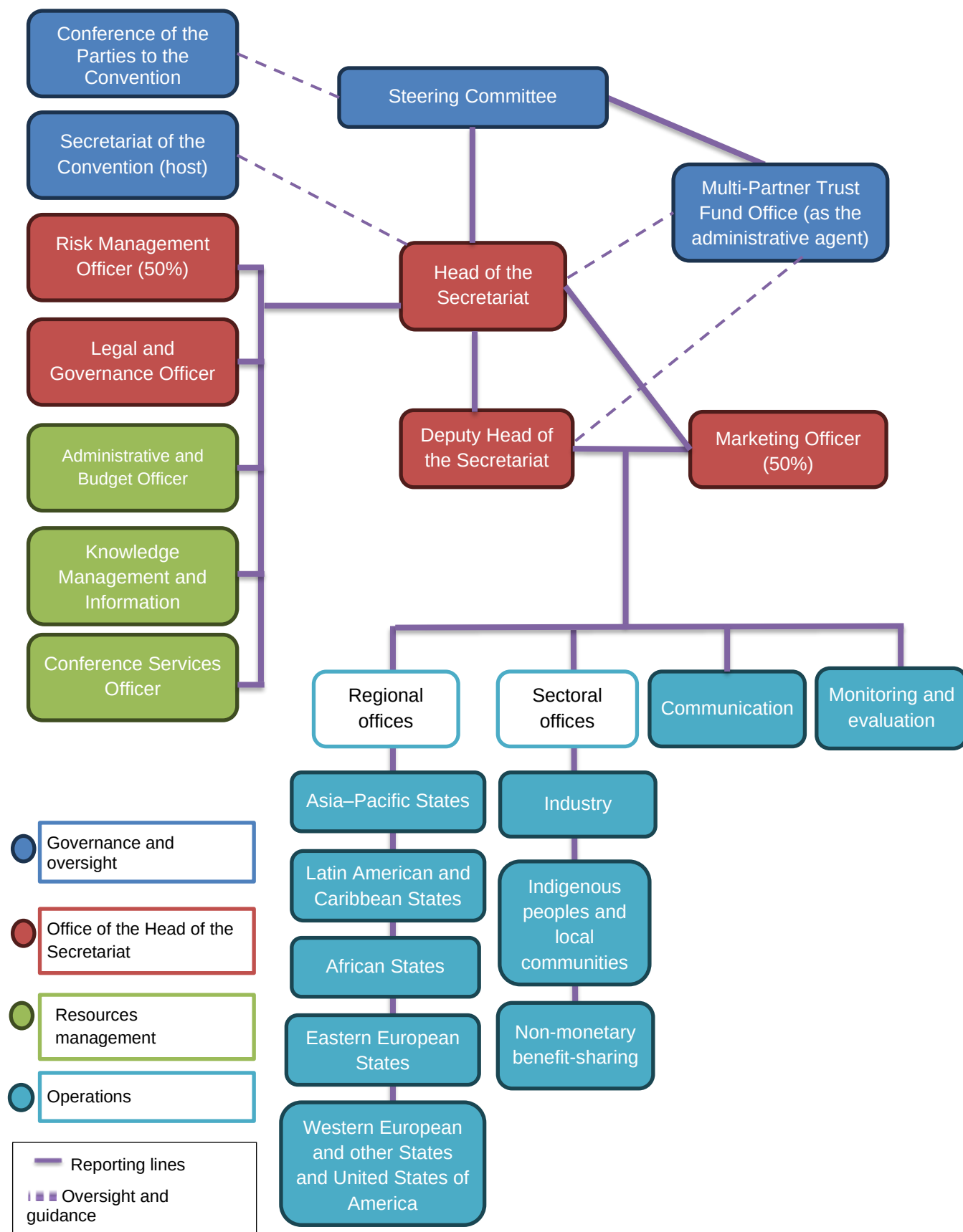
19. The organigram below shows the structure of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism expected in the long term. The achievement of that vision will depend on available resources and could change.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 2

### **Structure and operational framework of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism expected in the long term**

---

<sup>2</sup> The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is currently undergoing a functional review, whereby some of the posts envisaged for the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism may be proposed to be shared between the two Secretariats or with other secretariats hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention, as deemed appropriate and efficient. It should therefore not be assumed that all the posts shown in the chart will be full-time posts.



## H. Budget and resources

20. The operations of the multilateral mechanism will be financed through the Cali Fund. In the time leading up to June 2029, government and other voluntary contributions may be specifically directed to cover the cost of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism and its activities.

21. 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)

| <i>Category</i>                            | <i>2026</i>    | <i>2027</i>      | <i>2028</i>      |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Staff and other personnel                  | 711 700        | 731 700          | 751 700          |
| 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          |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                            | <b>814 062</b> | <b>999 562</b>   | <b>1 025 062</b> |
| Programme support costs (7 per cent)       | 56 984         | 69 970           | 71 754           |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>871 046</b> | <b>1 069 532</b> | <b>1 096 816</b> |