

The DSI Informal Dialogue Partnership

Informal Stake- and Rightsholders' Exchange on the DSI Multilateral Mechanism and its Cali Fund

21st to 23rd of September 2026, Leuven, Belgium

REPORT

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¹ Disclaimer: This report was prepared for the use and benefit of the participants of the *Informal Stake- and Rightsholders' Exchange on the DSI Multilateral Mechanism and its Cali Fund* in Leuven, Belgium, 23rd to 25th September 2026, and it is provided for information purposes only. It contains a compilation of the participants' contributions and discussions. The report, however, does not purport to reproduce all debates and interventions in full. According to the Chatham House Rule, under which the informal retreat was held, the information provided is not attributed to the source. The presenters are, with their explicit permission, identified in the report. The statements in this report do not represent the views or opinions of the European Commission and the Government of Norway. The organizers, GeoMedia and Centro de Colaboración Cívica (CCC), do not assume any liability for the accuracy or completeness of the report.

Short overview and outcomes

On behalf of the European Commission and the Government of Norway, the *Informal Stake- and Rightsholders' Exchange on the DSI Multilateral Mechanism and its Cali Fund* was organized by the DSI Informal Dialogue Partnership. The Exchange was held at Hotel Martin's Klooster in Leuven, Belgium, from 21st to 23rd September 2026.

The Informal DSI Exchange, held ahead of CBD COP17, brought together stakeholders, rightsholders and negotiators to move the discussion on the Multilateral Mechanism (MLM) and Cali Fund from broad principles towards **practical implementation**. Participants recognised that Decision 16/2 provides the basic framework and that good progress has been made on institutional and procedural elements, but also identified unresolved legal, conceptual and operational questions that need further work.

A central message was that the process has moved from **whether a multilateral system should exist to how it can be made operational**. Governance, institutional arrangements and allocation have seen considerable progress, while fundamental questions remain around the **definition and scope of DSI, proportionality of contributions, legal certainty, interaction with national and other ABS regimes, DSI ownership and control, and the long-term architecture of the MLM**. Different constituencies place different emphasis on these issues: industry particularly stresses legal certainty, proportionality and avoiding overlapping obligations, while IPLCs and civil society place greater emphasis on fairness, direct access, provenance, conservation outcomes and effective benefit-sharing.

The Exchange developed four main **solution pathways**. First, **certificates of compliance** were proposed as a key instrument for creating legal certainty, provided COP17 clarifies their meaning and encourages recognition by Parties. This would need to be accompanied by alignment between national ABS systems and the MLM, proportionate verification and clearer approaches to database accountability.

Second, a **practical self-assessment/decision-tree tool** could help users determine whether and how they use DSI, including borderline cases, while supporting proportionality and a more consistent application of the system.

Third, the **fairness pathway** focused on making contributions and allocations more proportional, evidence-based and oriented towards biodiversity outcomes. This includes exploring how contributions could better reflect the significance or value of DSI use, while further clarifying direct allocation to IPLCs and the application of the allocation formula. Sandboxes could be used to test alternative approaches, including needs- and value-based criteria, in advance of the review at COP18.

Fourth, participants proposed a **structured intersessional testing phase**, using time-bound pilots and sandboxes involving countries, contributors and beneficiaries to generate evidence and allow the system to evolve through experience rather than attempting to resolve every operational question through negotiation.

Across groups, there was substantial convergence around several messages: the need for a **workable multilateral solution; greater legal certainty; clearer scope and terminology; proportionality; effective recognition of IPLC interests; avoidance of overlapping obligations; and an inclusive, structured and evidence-based intersessional process**. At the same time, important differences remain concerning how proportionality should be determined, the scope of direct and indirect DSI use, the legal effect of certificates, traceability and database governance, and the modalities for direct access and allocation to IPLCs.

The subsequent dialogue with negotiators confirmed that these issues remain central to COP17. Participants discussed whether contributions should begin before the COP18 review, how far obligations should extend along value chains, possible bases for determining proportionality, the content and national recognition of certificates, the interface between the MLM and national ABS requirements, and how to balance legal provenance and transparency with research and open access. There was recurring

support for **testing practical solutions during the intersessional period**, although views differed on whether testing should focus on existing modalities or also include alternative approaches.

Overall, the exchange reinforced the value of the informal process as a **trust-building and problem-solving space between formal negotiating sessions**. Its main contribution was to identify concrete areas where solutions could be tested and refined. The emerging approach is, therefore, one of **implementation, learning and adjustment**: COP17 can provide political direction on the key unresolved issues, while the period towards COP18 can be used for pilots, sandboxes, further clarification and evidence generation. Participants nevertheless stressed that implementation will require the continued engagement of **Parties, industry, IPLCs, researchers, civil society and other actors**, and that the system should avoid unnecessary complexity and unintended disincentives for research, innovation and the bioeconomy.

Opening of the Exchange

Mery Chiacci, DG Environment, European Commission welcomed participants to the second and final round of the informal process ahead of COP17, held in partnership with the Government of Norway. She stressed the urgency created by the climate crisis and biodiversity loss and the need to advance work now to establish a fair and equitable approach to benefit-sharing that also supports local development. She highlighted the need to address the functioning of the Cali Fund, including its legal and administrative dimensions. The past two years have generated valuable learning, showing that while Decision 16/2 provides an important framework, some aspects need adjustment and improvement. With governments, industry and IPLCs willing to engage, the focus should now be on being clear and concrete about what needs to be improved. She thanked participants for their continued engagement, including at the IPLC and Industry representatives meeting in Utrecht, and expressed appreciation to the GeoMedia and CCC teams for the excellent organisation.

Technical introduction

The co-facilitator reminded participants that the meetings were structured as a **two-day stake- and rightsholder exchange**, followed by a **one-day relay of messages to negotiators**, and concluding with a **two-day dialogue among negotiators**. After providing an overview of the agenda for the exchange and relay (see [Annex 1](#)) she highlighted that the process aims to identify **building and stumbling blocks**, explore **possible pathways towards solutions**, develop **messages for negotiators**, and then present and discuss these messages with negotiators. The discussions were held under the **Chatham House Rule**² to enable open and candid exchange.

A quick sociogram gave an overview about who is in the room: mainly representatives of industry, and some representatives of IPLCs and non-commercial research institutions.

Setting the Scene and update on the informal process

Members of the organising team outlined the **formal CBD process alongside the informal global dialogue**, which began in early 2026 (see slide in [Annex 2](#)). The first Leuven dialogue identified key “**construction sites**”, including the idea of a **piloting/testing phase for the Cali Fund**. A subsequent industry–IPLC meeting was highlighted as an important exchange between key stakeholders and rights-holders involved in implementation, both as contributors and as actors in biodiversity conservation. Other activities included a webinar clarifying **key terms in the DSI discussion**, as well as SBI7 side events on dealing with **database management, AI tools, terminology issues such as “direct access,” and the status of the various construction sites**.

Update on the formal process by the SCBD

The formal process was traced from COP 14 (2018) through COP 15, where Decision 15/9 established the **Geneva Principles** as a framework for future implementation, to COP 16, which operationalised the **Multilateral Mechanism and Cali Fund** and set out modalities concerning the Fund’s scope, contributors and allocation of resources.

The Cali Fund became operational in February 2025. Its governance arrangements cover the roles of the Steering Committee and Secretariat, fund flows, reporting and legal arrangements. The **Terms of Reference and Operations Manual** provide the main operational framework, supported by the report of the Steering Committee to COP. The legal establishment of the Fund is based on an MoU between the relevant UN entities, which distinguishes between **contributors (users of DSI)** and **donors (non-users of DSI)**. The Operations Manual translates the Terms of Reference into practical procedures.

² When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

Following SBI7, work has continued on the **modalities of the mechanism**, a study on **data accountability and transparency**, and the **review methodology** presented by the Steering Committee. The discussion on the MoU raised additional questions, with an online exchange planned ahead of COP.

Issues expected to be brought to COP include a **joint study on contribution rates**; the **allocation methodology** developed by the AHTEG, based on four design principles and a formula incorporating four criteria, including one relating to traditional knowledge and IPLCs and an **equality base** to ensure meaningful allocations to countries with lower indicator values; and the **Steering Committee's report and advice** on certificates, direct access, allocation to IPLCs, non-monetary benefit-sharing and enabling conditions. The **SBI 7 recommendation** will also feed into the COP discussions.

Following the presentation (see [Annex 3](#)) the SCBD representatives responded to clarification questions from participants:

- **Use of funds:** Countries are being asked to develop documents explaining how they intend to use Cali Fund resources. The Fund is expected to support activities contributing to biodiversity, with safeguards on eligible expenditure.
- **Earmarking: Contributors cannot earmark their contributions**, whereas **donors can earmark funding for specific projects**.
- **Country discretion and safeguards:** Countries have flexibility in determining how funds are used but must demonstrate a link to biodiversity objectives. Continued disbursements can be withheld if agreed conditions are not met.
- **Contribution proportionality:** Questions remain about how contribution rates should reflect companies' use of publicly available DSI, particularly across different company sizes.
- **Certificates:** Certificates were highlighted as a potential mechanism for providing greater clarity and addressing the different circumstances of **large, medium and small companies**.
- **Outstanding modalities and rates:** Further discussion – and potentially decisions at **COP 18** – may be needed on the detailed modalities and contribution rates.
- **COP 17 process:** Stakeholder concerns regarding unclear terminology, contribution rates and implementation are expected to be reflected in the **draft COP 17 documents/decision**.
- **Unresolved issues:** Although the Steering Committee has had substantive discussions, some issues remain unresolved, including **confidentiality in scientific and commercial research**.

MLM Landscape: Building blocks and stumbling blocks

In order to frame the further discussions, the team members introduced a landscape of DSI construction sites, structured around six clusters of topics (see slide in [Annex 4](#)). They stressed the need to consider **interlinkages and impacts across construction sites** and to identify the issues that negotiators need to understand to advance the **operationalisation of the MLM and Cali Fund** and cautioned against **adding further complexity** to the process.

Participants were tasked with identifying building and stumbling blocks in stakeholder specific group work and reminded that the informal process is increasingly seen as important, with **stakeholders and rightsholders playing a greater role as implementers in shaping the formal process**. This greater influence also brings greater responsibility. The value of the dialogue lies in **building mutual understanding**, and the more concrete and actionable the discussions are, the more useful they are for negotiators.

Against this background the stakeholder specific groups identified issues where:

- **Good progress** has been made on **green cards**;
- some progress has been made, but **still open questions** on **yellow cards**;
- there are still **substantial difficulties** on **red cards**;

The results of the group work were visualised on boards (see [Annex 5](#)) and can be summarised as follows:

The groups agreed that the process has moved from **whether a system should exist** toward **how to make the emerging system operational**. The green areas were mainly institutional and procedural. The yellow areas concerned the design and implementation of the system. The red areas were largely the **fundamental political, legal and conceptual questions**—definitions and scope, proportionality/contributions, legal certainty and interaction with national/other regimes, ownership and control of DSI, and the long-term architecture of the MLM. Commonalities and differences between the groups can be summarised as follows:

Issue	Common ground	Main difference in emphasis
Multilateral mechanism	Broad recognition that a multilateral solution remains the basis for the process	Some <i>industry</i> participants are concerned that national approaches could undermine the multilateral solution
SC/governance	Clear progress and broadly positive assessment	Questions remain about SC powers and longer-term governance
Allocation	Considerable progress	Industry focuses on proportionality; <i>IPLC/CSO</i> on fairness and access
Contributions	Not yet sufficiently resolved	<i>Industry</i> sees this as a major legal/business uncertainty; others focus more on fairness
Certificates	Seen as potentially important/central	<i>Industry</i> stresses legal certainty; <i>IPLC/CSO</i> question whether certainty will actually be delivered
Databases	No appetite for simply creating one unified database	<i>IPLC/CSO</i> focus on ownership/control; <i>mixed stakeholders</i> on private DB roles; <i>industry</i> on avoiding unnecessary new infrastructure
Scope/definitions	Major unresolved issue across groups	<i>Industry</i> stresses commercial scope and sectoral coverage; <i>mixed stakeholders</i> highlight conceptual problems with definitions
Mutual supportiveness	Need to connect MLM with other systems recognised	<i>Industry</i> stresses obligation stacking; <i>mixed stakeholders</i> focus on modalities and recognition of other systems
IPLC access	Direct access is being seriously considered	<i>IPLC/CSO</i> focus on rights and conservation; <i>industry</i> focuses on practical design
NMBS	Increasingly recognised	<i>IPLC/CSO</i> see the lack of concrete mechanisms as a more serious deficiency
Trust	Informal process has improved mutual understanding	<i>Industry</i> stresses regulatory certainty; <i>IPLC/CSO</i> stress transparency and inclusion
Long-term vision	Need for a workable, scalable system	Particularly strong concern from <i>industry</i> about where the MLM is ultimately heading

Developing solution pathways

Building on the discussions, participants were tasked in a short brainstorming exercise to prioritize COP 17 construction sites and to outline respective possible solution pathways and landing zones (for the result see [Annex 6](#)).

Based on personal interest and expertise, participants then formed mixed groups to develop possible solution pathways for the identified topics:

- 1) Governance at scale – participants decided to address governance in plenary;
- 2) Legal certainty;
- 3) Clarity;
- 4) Fairness;

5) Intersessional process.

Each group presentation of a potential solution pathway addressing the specific topic was followed by a short round of clarification questions (for the group work result see [Annex 7](#)). The presentation can be summarised as follows:

Legal certainty

The main pathway is to use **certificates of compliance as a practical instrument for creating legal certainty and trust** between the MLM, Parties and contributors. COP17 could clarify what certificates would mean at national level and encourage Parties to recognise them, while avoiding the stacking of national and MLM obligations. The certificate system should be connected to **alignment between national ABS systems and the MLM**, so that contributors have greater certainty about what their payment fulfils.

A second element is **proportionate verification**. Rather than requiring companies to disclose confidential information, a third-party or other verification mechanism could provide assurance that contributions have been calculated and made appropriately. This could be linked to a formula reflecting the value or use of DSI rather than relying solely on indicative contribution rates. **Database accountability** is another component of legal certainty, including appropriate access and potentially issues such as provenance and FPIC. The Steering Committee could take these elements forward, with COP17 putting certificates explicitly on the agenda and providing political guidance on their recognition.

Clarity

The proposed pathway is to develop a **practical self-assessment system for companies and other entities**, potentially based on a decision-tree approach similar in concept to how requirements of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are interpreted according to the type and context of information and its use.

The tool would help entities determine **whether, where and for what purpose they use DSI**, taking account of different company sizes and potentially allowing companies to assess the relative significance of DSI to their activities. This could help address proportionality and contribute to a more level playing field.

A key prerequisite is to **define and test categories of DSI use**, including less obvious or borderline cases such as DSI-based food-safety or hygiene testing. The solution is therefore not simply a sector list, but a clearer understanding of different types and purposes of use. The intersessional process could develop and test the decision tree and self-assessment toolkit, including how it would work for multinational companies with DSI use distributed across different parts of the organisation.

Fairness

The pathway focuses on making the **contribution and allocation system more proportional, evidence-based and outcome-oriented**. For contributions, there is a need to explore how the level of payment can better relate to the **value or significance of DSI use**, while recognising the diversity of businesses and avoiding an overly complex system.

For allocation, particular attention is needed to **direct IPLC allocation**, including clearer criteria and clarification of how the 50% IPLC allocation is calculated. The allocation formula should not become purely mechanistic. Further guidance, reporting requirements and a connection between the Steering Committee and the 8(j) process could support this.

The group also proposed shifting the focus towards **biodiversity outcomes and needs**: allocation should ultimately contribute to conservation and sustainable use, while also recognising the biodiversity financing gap. This could involve testing alternative allocation approaches, including combinations of **needs-based and value-based criteria**, through sandboxes. The group also saw merit in considering complementary financing approaches, including the possible future role of **Nagoya Protocol Article**

10, and in clarifying how the Cali Fund relates to other biodiversity financing instruments. A defined review period towards COP18 would allow the allocation system to evolve based on evidence.

Intersessional process

The main solution pathway is to use the intersessional period for **structured, time-bound sandboxes and pilots** involving countries, contributors and beneficiaries. Several models could be tested:

- **Justification-based contributions**, where contributors explain why a particular contribution level applies, increasing transparency.
- **Conditional cash transfers**, where payments or other benefits are linked to agreed conditions, such as recognition of certificates or agreement on direct/indirect DSI use.
- **Tiered contribution levels**, potentially linked to greater recognition, visibility or earmarking options.
- **Additional voluntary contributions/donations**, potentially accompanied by tax incentives.
- **Coalitions of participating countries and companies** willing to test particular approaches.

For COP17, the proposed pathway is to **invite Parties and stakeholders to submit sandbox proposals and indicate their willingness to participate**, while ensuring that the allocation methodology is sufficiently flexible to allow testing within the MLM. Sandboxes should remain **linked to the formal process**, be clearly time-bound and have defined learning objectives and outcomes. They should generate evidence for the wider multilateral system rather than establish permanent parallel arrangements.

The intersessional process should also include an early **stocktake of non-monetary benefit-sharing (NMBS)** and lessons from comparable mechanisms and funds. The overall approach is therefore to use the period between COP17 and COP18 to **test, learn and adjust**, rather than attempting to resolve all operational questions through negotiation alone.

Key messages of DSI users and other stake- and rightsholders on the topics discussed

Based on these outcomes, the participants were asked to identify and agree on stake- and rightsholder specific key messages (same groups as in the session “*MLM Landscape: Building blocks and stumbling blocks*”) to the negotiators and policymakers meeting at COP17 to agree on outstanding issues related to the DSI Multilateral Mechanism (MLM) and its Cali Fund.

Industry 1

- The private sector is committed to conservation and sustainable use of **biodiversity** and supports a **workable multilateral solution**.
- **Ensure certainty** that the receipt of a **certificate** after contributing to the MLM ensures full compliance with obligations under national laws and other international instruments, to avoid stacking of obligations.
- Safeguard fair benefit sharing expectations that are **proportionate** to the actual **value** resulting from the direct use of publicly available DSI, based upon **objective assessment criteria**.
- Ensure clarity on scope and **key terms**.
- To enable advancing on these key items, with a focus on the development of objective assessment criteria, an **inclusive intersessional process** should be endorsed at COP17. Private sector stands ready to engage in this process.

Industry 2

- **Fairness:** Benefit-sharing from public DSI is narrow while benefit-sharing from nature is broader. Criteria should be drawn up by COP18 both **for allocation and contribution sides**, so that they are fair and proportionate to scope of the MLM and aligned with **closing the biodiversity finance gap**.
- **Certificate:** Significant contributions to the Cali Fund are **conditional on practical arrangements co-created in partnership** with the private sector following COP17, establishing the process to obtain **certificate, its legal recognition under national law, and clarity on its scope**.

- **Clarity:** A certificate requires **clarification of key terms** allowing users to establish their license to operate under the MLM, unless DSI equals “nature” which would attain legal certainty without defining e.g. DSI.
- **Governance:** Attracting and managing e.g. contributions and certificates under the MLM needs a **governance system** that is stable in the long term, engenders mutual trust, is inclusive of all rights- and stakeholders, is effective, efficient and generates **more benefits than costs**, across 196 CBD Parties and possibly encompassing 20,000+ companies.
- **Intersessional:** Leading up to COP18, we need **innovative partnerships** which can be co-created with Parties, private sector, IPLCs and others to **generate evidence** through a process that is inclusive, structured, outcome-driven and time-bound.

Industry 3

- Understand concerns around **MoU** but should **not dominate the agenda** as there are many other important issues to resolve.
- Continue to ensure input from all rightsholders and stakeholders in **informal and formal process**.
- Clarify that the interpretation of "use" and "indirect use" only imposes obligations on companies that use **publicly available DSI directly** in their R&D, and not on those that only incorporate products /ingredients/services that were developed using publicly available DSI.
- Ensure that contribution assessment methodologies proportionally reflect **actual use of and value created** from publicly available DSI through clarification at COP17 or a process between COP17-18.
- To **broaden the contributor base**, clarify that the indicative list of sectors is not seen as exhaustive list.

Mixed stakeholders

- Enable **time-bound flexibility** to test various aspects of the MLM for learning purposes in collaboration with the Steering Committee.
- Explore practical ways and means of enhancing **mutual supportiveness** and adaptation between ABS instruments to streamline processes and avoid stacking of obligations.
- Explain the notion of "**indicative rate**" learning from the evidence in the SCBD's study on contribution rates and competitiveness impacts.

IPLCs/CSO

- Strengthen **role of certificates** from Cali Fund as incentive to contribute to the fund.
- Strengthen research ethics by requiring all uploaders of DSI to **provide information on legal provenance**.
 - Legal certainty applies both to providers and users of DSI.
- Increase impact of funding by prioritizing support for **direct access by biodiversity stewards**, in accordance with 8j, 10c and other provisions.
- Broaden the base for multilateral benefit sharing by implementing **Article 10 of the Nagoya Protocol**.
- Develop additional modalities for sharing of non-monetary benefits arising from the use of DSI.

Relay of user messages to key negotiators

During the afternoon of the 2nd day of the DSI Exchange, stake- and rightsholders had the opportunity to meet with the participants of the Negotiator's Dialogue who were meeting from the 24th to the 25th of September at the same venue (see separate report) to discuss and elaborate on outstanding issues related to the DSI multilateral mechanism (MLM) and its Cali Fund in preparation for CBD COP17 in October 2026.

Opening of the Relay

Representatives of the sponsors and the incoming COP Presidency welcomed the participants of the Stake- and Rightsholders Exchange and the Negotiators Dialogue.

Monika Henksey, Director for Green Diplomacy and Multilateralism, DG Environment, European Commission, highlighted the value of the informal dialogue process launched in March, particularly its role in creating space for mutual understanding and practical exchange among stakeholders and rightsholders. Against the backdrop of the growing biodiversity and climate crises, she stressed the need to move from the commitments of COP Decision 16/2 towards implementation and to maintain collective and continuous engagement. She supported a phased, learning-oriented approach to operationalising the MLM and Cali Fund, allowing experience to build confidence and helping address outstanding concerns, including governance arrangements. She emphasised that the discussions and concrete proposals emerging from the dialogue would be important for strengthening trust and informing the negotiations at COP17 in Yerevan.

Aram Meymaryan, Vice Minister of Environment, Armenia, described DSI as one of the critical issues for COP17 and welcomed the opportunity for stakeholders and negotiators to discuss outstanding issues and identify possible landing zones. He stressed that the Armenian COP Presidency would support meaningful participation of IPLCs, industry, academia and NGOs and promote action-oriented discussions. He identified implementation of the GBF, resource mobilisation, effective participation of IPLCs under Article 8(j), synergies among the Rio Conventions, and the operationalisation of the DSI MLM and fair benefit-sharing as key Presidency priorities. In relation to DSI, he highlighted unresolved questions around the allocation of resources, thresholds, the definition and scope of DSI, direct and indirect use, and direct and indirect disbursement, including how resources can effectively reach IPLCs. He emphasised that finding solutions must start with listening to each other.

Ida Hellmark, Senior advisor at Norad, Norway, reaffirmed Norway's commitment to operationalise the MLM and Cali Fund and thanked Armenia and the CBD Secretariat for their preparations and for making the relevant documentation available. She noted that many complex issues still need to be resolved within a limited timeframe before COP17. She therefore called for a constructive and solution-oriented dialogue in which participants listen carefully, seek common ground and work towards practical solutions. She stressed the importance of using the dialogue to maintain momentum and move from discussion towards implementation.

Technical Introduction

The co-facilitator of the event provided a brief overview of the agenda (see [Annex 1](#)) and reminded participants that the meeting is taking place under the Chatham House Rule³. With a view to create a trustful, constructive atmosphere, several brief exercises provided the opportunity for participants to get to know who is in the room.

³ When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

Presentation and discussion of messages from stake- and rightsholders to negotiators

The presentation of the messages (see above) triggered a lively discussion with the negotiators around the following topics:

Timing: Participants discussed whether contributions should wait until the COP 18 review or start earlier. A possible middle ground was seen in enabling **significant initial contributions before COP18 while continuing to refine the system**.

Scope of DSI use: Questions remain about **direct versus indirect use**, particularly how far obligations should extend down value chains and whether downstream uses of DSI-based tools should trigger contributions.

Proportionality: There was broad support for proportionality, but differing views on its basis. Options discussed included **company size, sectors, products or the value/benefits derived from DSI**. Product-based approaches were seen by some as potentially useful, but concerns were raised about complexity and administrative burden.

Certificates and legal certainty: Certificates were seen as potentially important for **legal certainty and trust**, including for smaller contributors. Key unresolved questions concern their content, recognition by Parties, and interaction with national ABS requirements.

MLM–national interface: Participants stressed the need for clarity on how **MLM contributions, certificates and national ABS obligations** would interact, and cautioned against creating overlapping or cumulative requirements.

Traceability and databases: There was support for establishing **legal provenance and greater transparency on DSI use**, but concerns that extensive track-and-trace requirements could hinder research and continued open access to databases.

Research and IPLC perspectives: Participants stressed both the importance of **protecting research and open access** and recognising IPLC contributions, legal provenance and non-monetary benefit-sharing.

Way forward: A recurring message was to **start testing practical solutions rather than wait for a perfect system**, potentially through sandbox approaches, while using the intersessional period to build trust and refine the mechanism ahead of COP18.

Positioning exercise on concrete suggestions on how a specific critical issue could be resolved

Standing in a circle, participants were invited to make brief suggestions how a critical issue could be resolved. In reaction to each suggestion, other participants moved further into or away from the centre depending on how much they agreed or disagreed with the suggestion. Facilitators then asked a few participants about the rationale for where they stand. The resulting exchange can be summarised as follows:

Prioritising IPLCs: Broad support for prioritising initial Cali Fund resources for IPLCs, with reservations around direct access, national circumstances and administrative feasibility.

Further dialogue on data governance: Views ranged from seeing sufficient work already done to supporting further stakeholder exchange. Several stressed the need for inclusive participation and practical engagement on CARE/FAIR principles.

Contribution formula/proportionality: Strong interest in further work on proportionality and/or a contribution formula, though some questioned whether a new formula is feasible or desirable at this stage and stressed the need to build on the agreed indicative rates.

Informal exchange before COP17: Generally seen as useful for building understanding and trust, but concerns were raised about timing, resources and ensuring inclusive participation.

Safe space for testing modalities: Broad support for enabling practical testing and learning. Differences centred on whether existing modalities should first be implemented as agreed or whether new/alternative approaches should also be tested in parallel.

Incentives for bio-based businesses: Broad recognition that the mechanism should avoid discouraging biodiversity-based innovation and, where possible, create incentives for sustainable bio-based business. Questions remained about how incentives should interact with obligations and national measures.

FAIR/CARE-compliant data use: Support for encouraging database managers and researchers to respect relevant principles and national ABS requirements, alongside recognition that practices vary and practical incentive mechanisms remain unclear.

Indirect/secondary users: Broad concern that contributions should not unintentionally discourage uptake of bio-based products. Discussion focused on avoiding duplicate contributions while clarifying when downstream or secondary users would trigger obligations.

Reflection and concluding remarks

Value of dialogue: Participants welcomed the opportunity to hear diverse perspectives and stressed the importance of continued exchange among Parties, stakeholders and rightsholders. The positioning exercise was seen as particularly useful.

Urgency and funding: IPLC perspectives highlighted the urgent biodiversity challenges faced in their territories and the need to mobilise funding. At the same time, several participants stressed that greater clarity on scope, definitions, proportionality and expected contributions is needed to get contributions flowing.

Industry engagement: Participants valued industry input and suggested stronger involvement of industry representatives in future negotiator dialogues and the intersessional process.

Broadening the perspective: Concerns were raised that the discussion could become too industry-focused. Public research infrastructure, non-commercial researchers, civil society and local research make important contributions to the availability and use of DSI and should also be recognised, including in relation to non-monetary benefit-sharing.

Proportionality and implementation: Further work is needed to unpack and test the concept of proportionality, including beyond products, and on practical approaches to implementation. One view was that bringing some contributors into the system with greater clarity may be more effective than attempting to define everyone as being in scope from the outset.

Bioeconomy: The importance of the bioeconomy was emphasised, alongside the need to ensure that the emerging system does not create unintended disincentives for its development.

Mutual understanding: Negotiators stressed the value of listening to stakeholders and rightsholders, while also noting that dialogue needs to work in both directions. The discussions reinforced the importance of understanding the different interests and dependencies among Parties, industry, researchers, civil society and IPLCs.

Overall message: The dialogue was viewed as a useful opportunity to build mutual understanding and trust, while identifying concrete areas where further clarification and practical work are needed.

Closing of the Relay Day and the Stake- and Rightsholders Exchange

Mery Chiacci, EU Commission, highlighted that the discussions were an **inspiring and valuable experience**, particularly for the intersessional period, urging all to **listen to each other, to recognise the urgency, and to accept that there may be no perfect solution** given the many open questions. She encouraged participants to **follow up with Parties** on issues requiring further discussion and expressed her hope that the stake- and rightsholder messages will support **constructive negotiations in the coming days**.

Annex 1: Agenda of the meeting

Monday, 21 September: EXCHANGE

9.30	Registration (with coffee/tea)
10.30	Welcome and introduction - Background and objectives; Setting the scene Towards COP 17: State of processes (SCBD) - What is on the table after SBI 7? What is expected from COP 17?
12.30	Lunch
14.00	MLM Landscape: Building blocks and stumbling blocks Stakeholder-specific perspectives: Industry / Non-commercial research / IPLC
15.30	Coffee/Tea
	Key challenges to tackle at COP17 Towards a joint short list
17.30	End of day's sessions

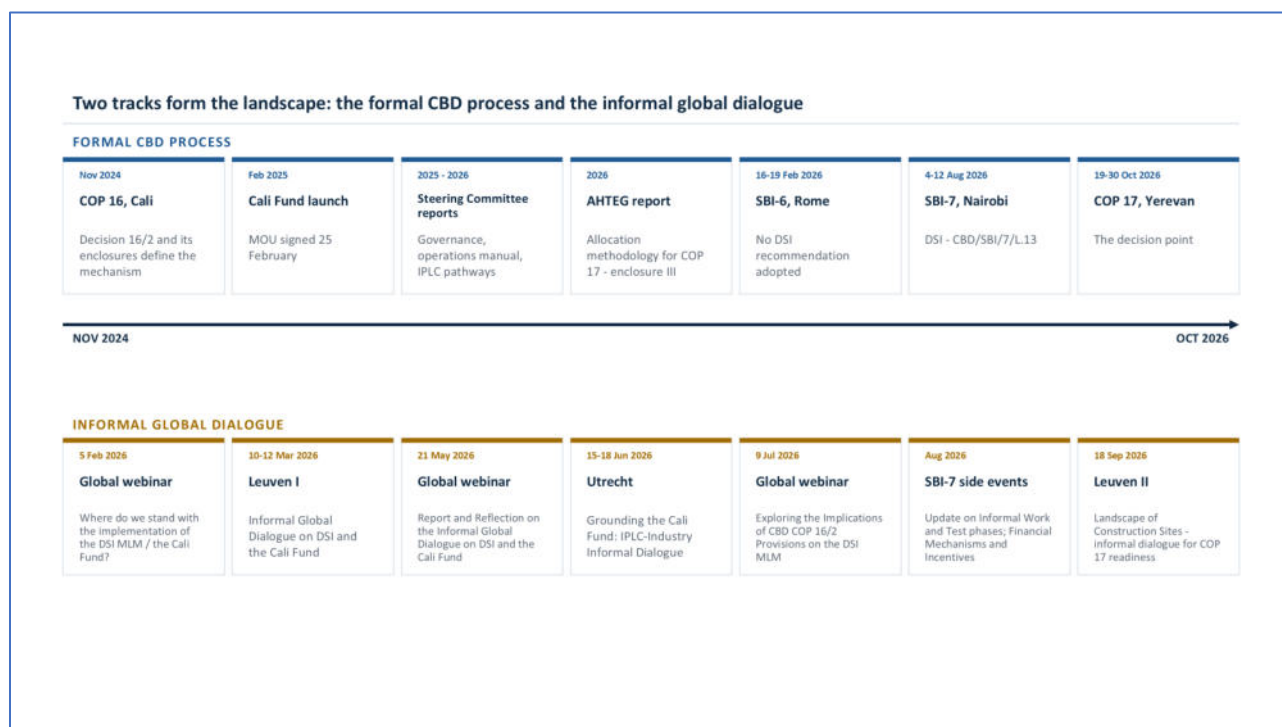
Tuesday, 22 September: EXCHANGE

9.00	Developing solution pathways towards COP 17 Building on ongoing discussions/suggestions derived from formal and informal processes
10.30	Coffee/tea
11.00	Developing solution pathways towards COP 17 (cont.) Plenary exchanges
12.30	Lunch
14.30	Developing messages to negotiators Stakeholder-specific messages: Industry / Non-commercial research / IPLC
15.30	Coffee/tea
16.00	Developing messages to negotiators (cont.) Identifying joint messages to negotiators
17.30	End of Exchange
18.30	Joint dinner with negotiators Structured Exchanges

Wednesday, 23 September: RELAY WITH NEGOTIATORS

9.00	Welcome and introduction - Background and objectives; Overview report from Exchange Presentation of messages from stake- and rightsholders to negotiators - Industry / Non-commercial research / IPLC / Joint messages
10.30	Coffee/tea
11.00	Discussion of messages Q&A; Initial reactions
12.30	Lunch
14.00	Co-creating solution pathways for critical issues Suggestions and reactions
16.00	Coffee/tea
16.30	End of Relay
17.00	Optional: Side event: Update Actions of DB managers in response to the guidance in 16/2
18.00	Optional: Reception (tbc)

Annex 2: Slide “The formal CBD process and the informal global dialogue”



Annex 3: Presentation “Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources: the Multilateral Mechanism and the Cali Fund” by SCBD representatives

Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources: the Multilateral Mechanism and the Cali Fund

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



- 1) Recap DSI and decisions
- 2) Cali Fund information
- 3) Formal negotiations: SBI & COP
- 4) Questions!



Negotiations on DSI to date

- “Digital sequence information” on genetic resources (DSI) first emerged as an issue under the CBD and the Nagoya Protocol in 2016.
- 2018: COP14 Decision 14/20:
 - Noted the importance of DSI for the 3 objectives of the Convention
 - Established further work regarding benefit-sharing from the use of DSI
- 2022: COP15 Decision 15/9:
 - Agreed that the benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources should be shared fairly and equitably;
 - Established a multilateral benefit sharing mechanism from the use of DSI, include a global fund
 - Noted that the solution should meet the criteria listed in paragraph 9
- 2024: COP16 Decision 16/2:
 - Adopts the modalities to operationalise the multilateral mechanism for benefit sharing, including the Cali Fund.
 - Establishes further intersessional work on potential additional modalities and new tools, models (including databases).



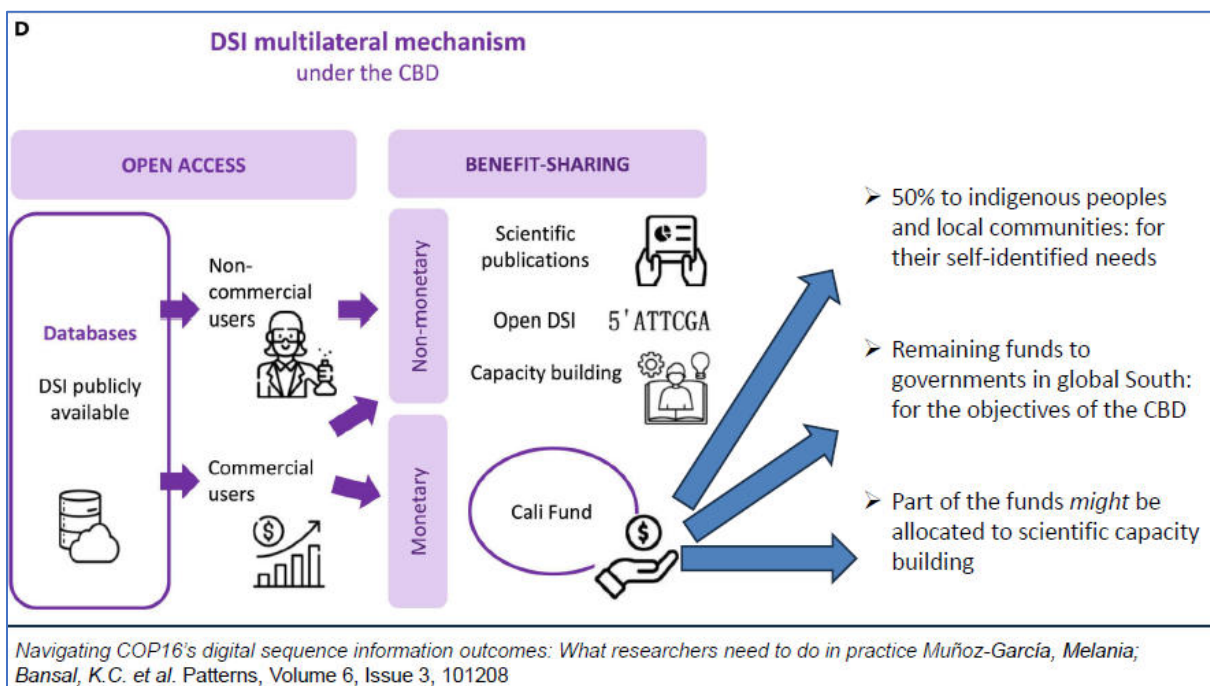
Decision 15/9 – the ‘Geneva principles’

9. Also agrees that a solution for fair and equitable benefit-sharing on digital sequence information on genetic resources should, inter alia:
- (a) Be efficient, feasible and practical;
 - (b) Generate more benefits, including both monetary and non-monetary, than costs;
 - (c) Be effective;
 - (d) Provide certainty and legal clarity for providers and users of digital sequence information on genetic resources;
 - (e) Not hinder research and innovation;
 - (f) Be consistent with open access to data;
 - (g) Not be incompatible with international legal obligations;
 - (h) Be mutually supportive of other access and benefit-sharing instruments;
 - (i) Take into account the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including with respect to the traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that they hold;
10. Recognizes that the monetary and non-monetary benefits arising from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources should, in particular, be used to support conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and, inter alia, benefit indigenous peoples and local communities;



Decision 16/2-the Multilateral Mechanism

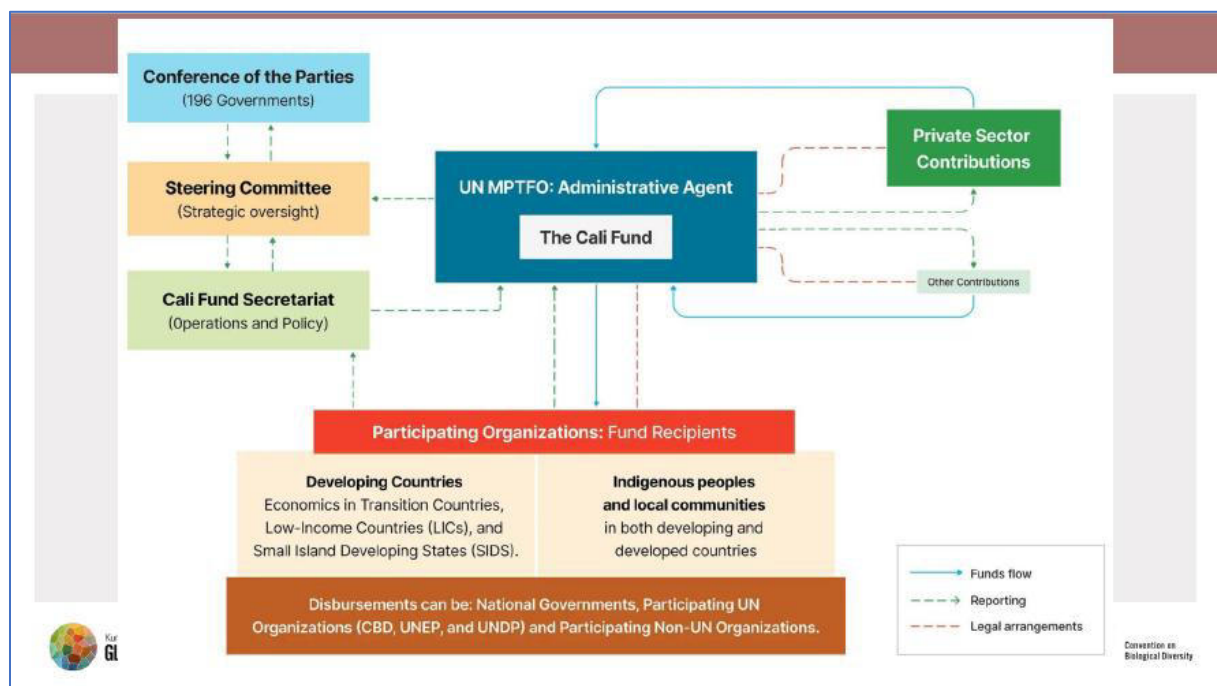
Main body of text of 16/2	Annex of 16/2: modalities	Enclosures
- Adopted the modalities for operationalizing the multilateral mechanism, as set out in the annex to the decision (para. 1) - Decided that the global fund will be known as the Cali Fund for the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources (para. 2) - Decided on a further work process, including: 2x requests for synthesis of views and 3x studies	- Scope of DSI under the mechanism (para. 1) - Thresholds/contribution rates (para. 3) - Non-monetary benefit sharing (para. 6-8) - Database provisions (para. 9-12) - Certificates (Para. 15) - Funding/disbursements (Para. 17-21) - Implementation (Para 23-28) - Review (Para. 21-31)	- I – Indicative sector list - II – Indicative funding criteria - III – TOR for AHTEG - VI- TOR of Steering Committee - V – Functions of the Secretariat - VI – Factors for the review

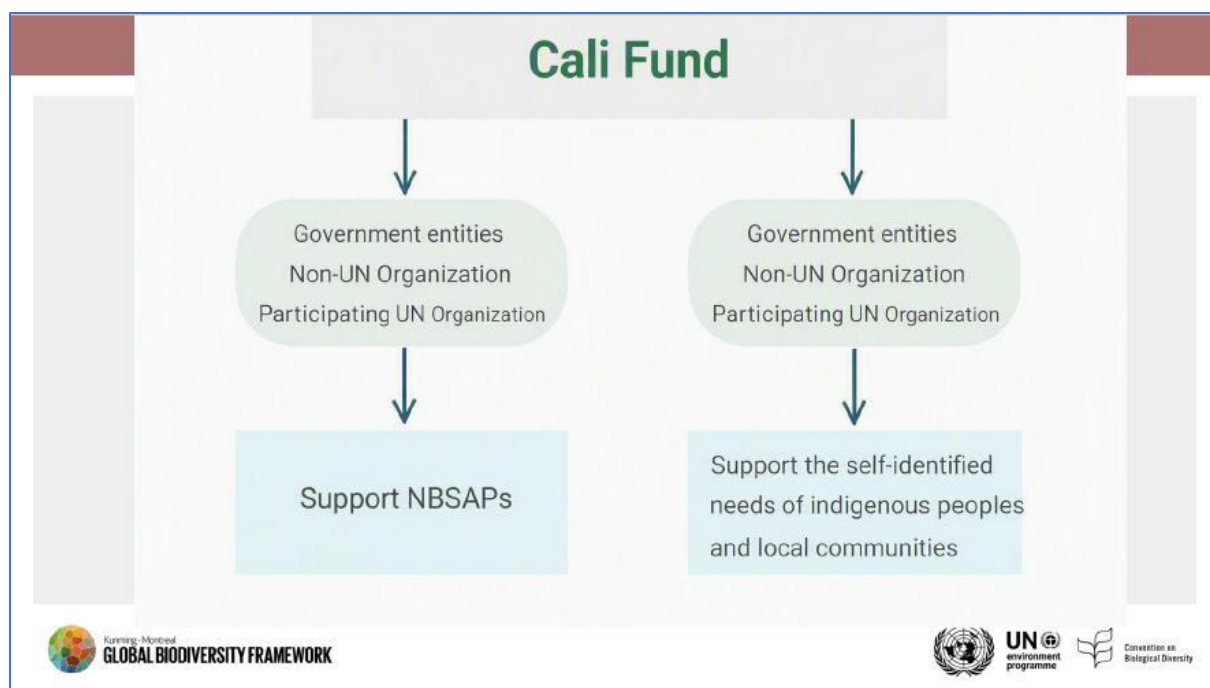


The Cali Fund

- Opened and launched at the resumption of COP16.2 (Rome, February 2025)
- Opened and enabled establishment of the Steering Committee via Memorandum of Understanding between 3 UN agencies, with Terms of Reference annexed
- 2 contributions to date- \$6000
- Steering Committee met four times so far
- Interim Secretariat fulfilling the function of Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism*

*Steering Committee and Secretariat of the Cali Fund also serve as the Steering Committee and Secretariat of the Multilateral Mechanism





Steering Committee

- Meeting minutes available at:
<https://www.cbd.int/conferences/dsi-sc>



Set up: work of the Steering Committee

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee organizational processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Role of the Committee; (b) Designation of the Co-Chair from among the members from Parties. Terms of reference of the Cali Fund Rules of procedure for meetings of the Steering Committee. Operations manual Programme document for the Secretariat Capitalization strategy Conflict of interest guidelines Confidential information procedures and handling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificates for businesses contributing to the Cali Fund Non-monetary Benefit-Sharing platform Review methodology Disbursements to indigenous peoples and local communities: interim and longer-term arrangements Report to the COP Manual of Operations |
|--|---|



How is the MOU set up for a benefit-sharing Fund?

Financial contributions to Cali Fund and due diligence process (MoO) / MOU

Contributor/DSI user	Donor/non-DSI user
☒	☒
☐ Letter of Intent	☐ Standard Administrative Arrangement (SAA)
☐ Letter of Intent template	☐ SAA template
☐ Receives Cali Fund certificate	☐ Does not receive CF certificate



☐ Letter of Intent

☐ Standard Administrative Arrangement (SAA)

☐ [Letter of Intent template](#)

☐ [SAA template](#)

☐ Receives Cali Fund certificate

☐ Does not receive CF certificate

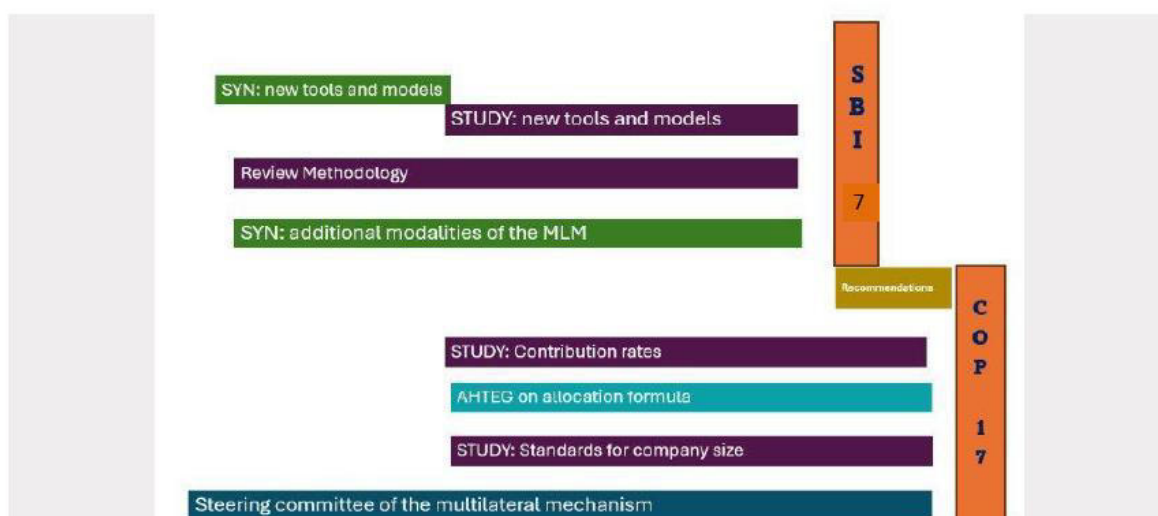


Operations Manual

- Context of the Fund, Objectives of the Cali Fund, Theory of Change
- Governance arrangements: Steering Committee, Fund Secretariat, Administrative Agent
- Fund administration: Financial contributions, Process to issue the Multilateral Mechanism Certificate of Contribution, Allocations of funding to Participating Organizations, Allocation methodology, Access for Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs), Access for Non-UN Organizations (NUNOs), Access for Government entities
- Programme cycle: Identification of Participating Organization and development of programmatic document, Non-UN Organizations (NUNOs) and national entity eligibility, Review and confirmation of programmatic document, Transfer of Funds, Revision of programmatic document, Closure of programme
- Monitoring, evaluation, reporting, audit and learning: Monitoring and evaluation (M&E), Reporting, Updates by Participating Organizations (mid-year), Narrative Reports for Participating Organizations, Financial Reports for Participating Organizations, MPTF reports, Audit
- Risk management,
- Communication and public disclosure
- Fund closure



Road to COP17



DSI at SBI 7: L13

Memorandum of Understanding of the Cali - recommendation includes that COP consider a possible appropriate course of action on the MOU and its annexes- [SCBD to facilitate an online information session before COP](#)

1. Potential additional modalities of the MLM – products/services contribution – [now or at COP18 or later?](#)
2. Data accountability & transparency – [study to peer review? + educational/information materials](#)
3. Review methodology – presented by Steering Committee [online discussion ahead of the COP to finish going through the text](#)



COP17: Item 11 – topics

1. Contribution rates / identification of small, medium and large entities
 - Joint study/executive summary [\(17/6/Add.3\)](#)
2. Allocation methodology
 - Outcome of the work of the AHTEG [\(17/6/Add.2\)](#)
3. Steering Committee report and advice
 - Steering Committee Report [\(17/6/Add.1\)](#)
4. SBI Recommendations – [\(SBI 7/L13\)](#)
 - MOU
 - Potential additional modalities
 - Data tools/models for making DSI more transparent/accessible
 - Review methodology



1. Contribution rates and firm thresholds

-Joint study/executive summary (17/6/Add.3)

- "The Conference of the Parties will establish thresholds and contribution rates at its seventeenth meeting and review them periodically thereafter." (16/2 annex para 4)



2. Allocation methodology

-AHTEG Report (17/6/Add.2)

- "A formula will be determined by the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth meeting on the basis of the work of a group established with the terms of reference provided in enclosure III. " (15/2 annex para 19)



2. Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on allocation methodology

Adopted report to COP providing advice on allocation methodology for funds from the Cali Fund including:

- **Design principles**
- **Allocation formula based on indicative list of criteria in 16/2**
- **Recommendations for future work**

Report of the AHTEG posted



<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/DSI-AHTEG-2026-02>



UN
environment
programme



Convention on
Biological Diversity

2. Allocation methodology - principles

1. Equity, fairness and impact, ensuring a fair and equitable allocation outcome to developing country Parties, in particular -least developed countries and small island developing States, and Parties with economies in transition and in allocations to indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and youth within those communities;
2. Efficiency of the datasets and indicators used for the formula, and due regard to sustainability and custodianship;
3. Transparency and confidence to ensure open data and easy communicability of the methodology;
4. Scalability and longevity, taking the Fund's growth and evolution over time into consideration for future amendments and adjustments.



Kunming-Montreal
GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK



UN
environment
programme



Convention on
Biological Diversity

2. Allocation methodology - formula

$$B + w1 * C_A + w2 * C_B + w3 * C_C + w4 * C_D$$

B = equality base,

w1 = weight one, C_A = criterion (a) on biodiversity richness accounts for biodiversity richness of a country,

w2 = weight two, C_B = criterion (b) on the geographic origin of the genetic resources,

w3 = weight three, C_C = criterion (c) on capacity needs for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity,

w4 = weight four, and C_D = criterion (d) on measures related to traditional knowledge and indigenous peoples and local communities.



2. Allocation methodology – further work

Short term: the update of data sources as soon as they become available, the establishment of a work programme to create an indicator for criterion (b), and the exploration of linkages between some criteria and that of the use of the National Biodiversity Strategic Actions Plans and National Capacity Development Plans as data sources;

Longer term: an overarching review of the weightage of the criteria once new or updated data has become available, building standards for the assessment of robustness of all criteria, running sensitivity analyses on the formula, considering data governance and custody, and developing a biodiversity-stewardship index which would encompass all criteria.



3. Steering Committee report and advice

-Steering Committee Report (17/6/Add.1)

- “Report and provide advice to the Conference of the Parties” (Enclosure IV of 16/2)
- RoP rule 11 on Steering Committee members terms of office (and selection)
- Certificate – small group work - Parties recognition
- Disbursements of IPLCs: direct access and allocation
- Non-monetary benefit sharing
- Enabling conditions, budget for Secretariat



Cali Fund - industry - English

CaliFund@un.org

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-cali-fund>

<https://thecalifund.org/>

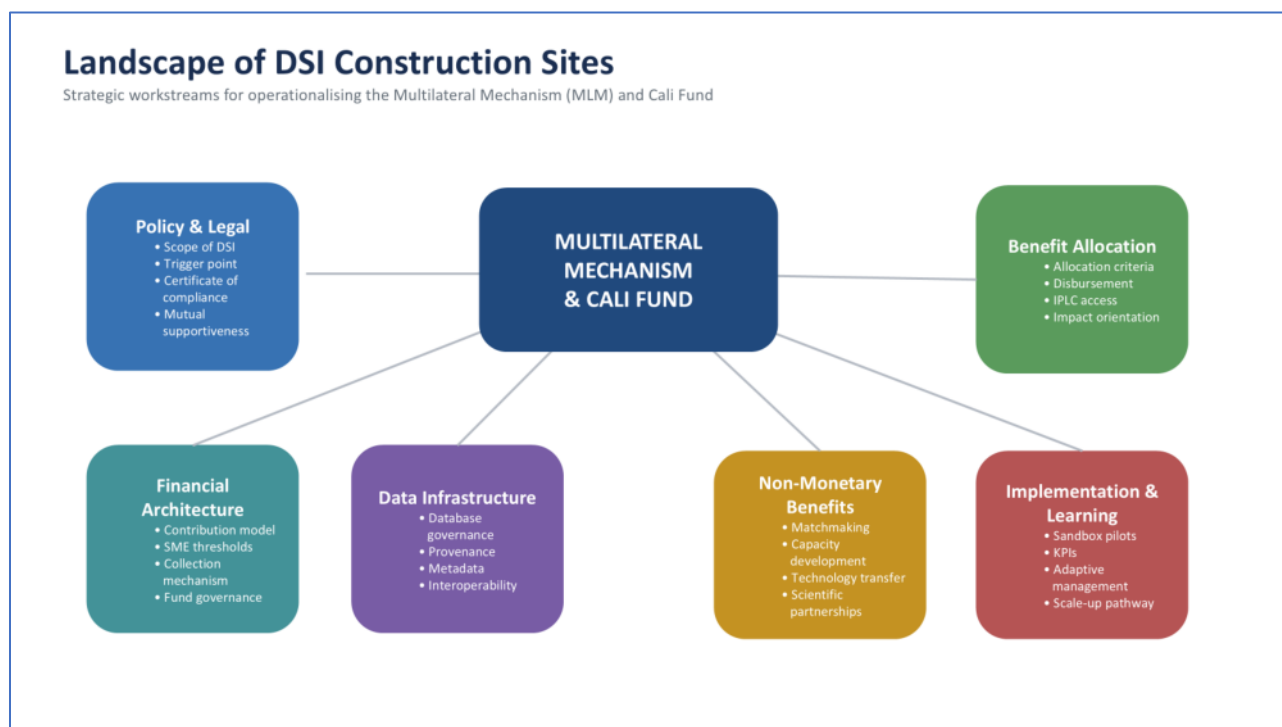


Database Guide - English



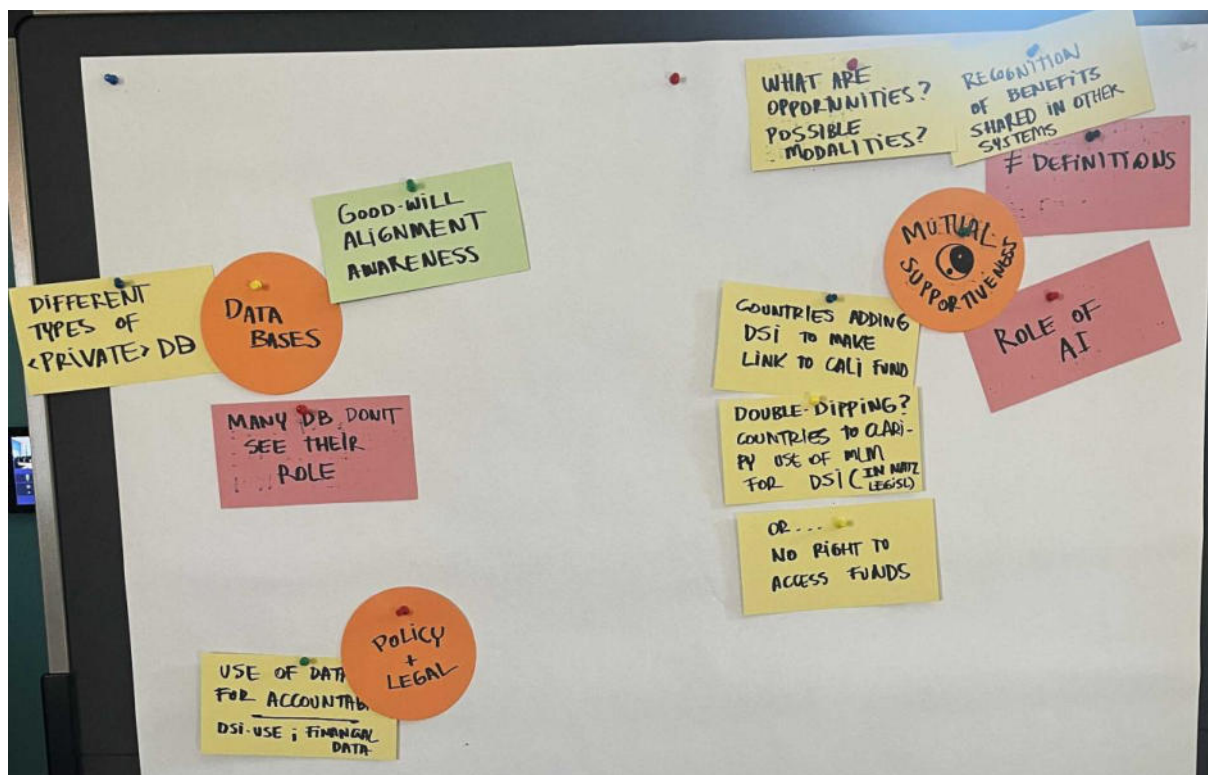
Parties Guide - English

Annex 4: Slide “Landscape of DSI construction sites”



Annex 5: Group work “Identification of building blocks and stumbling blocks”

Mixed stakeholders



● Green – good progress

- **Databases:** There is growing awareness of the need for alignment and recognition that databases are an important part of the system.
- **Mutual supportiveness:** There is recognition of the need to consider links with other systems, including the Plant Treaty and WHO, as well as national legislation.
- **Accountability/data:** There is recognition that substantial amounts of data exist that could help improve understanding of DSI use and financial flows.

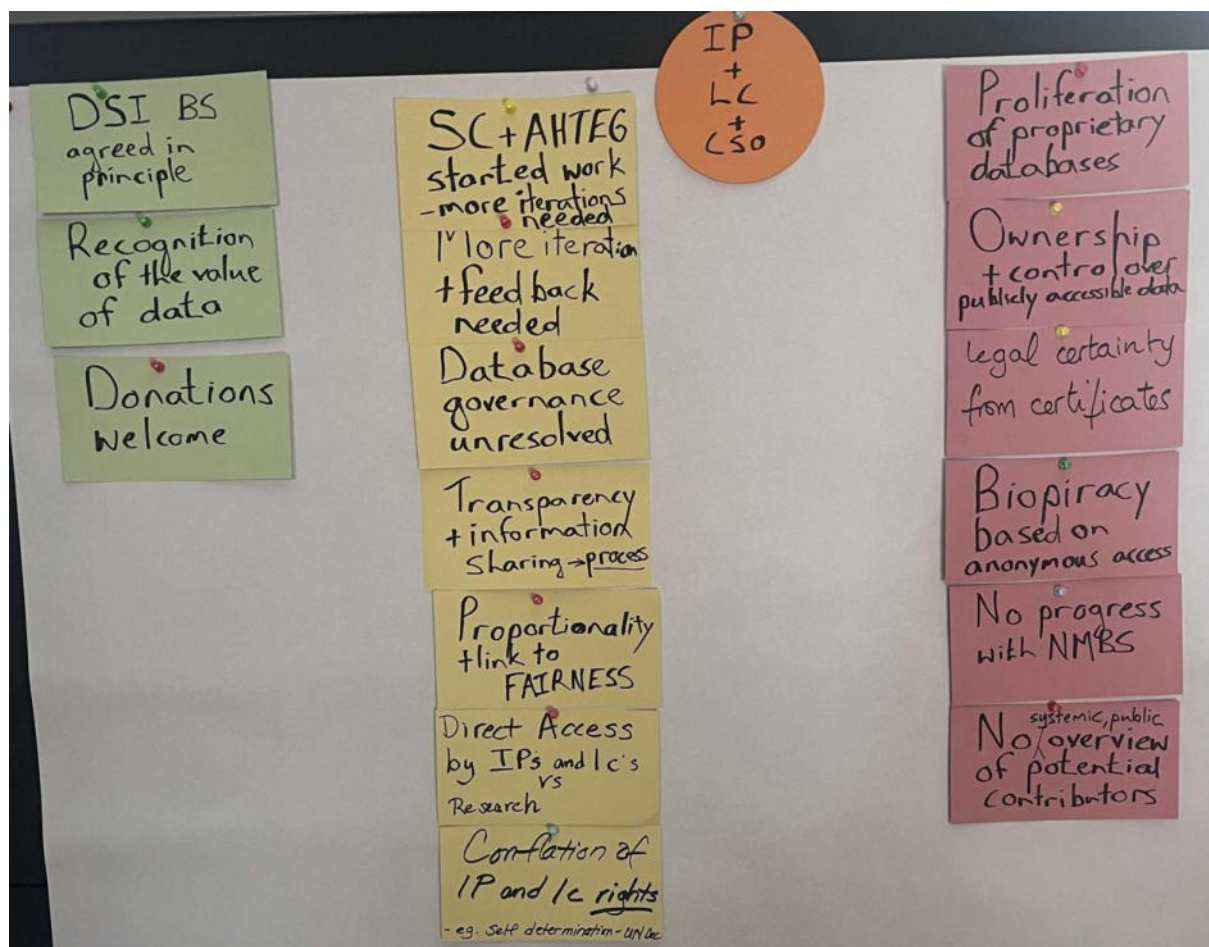
● Yellow – progress, but open questions

- **Databases:** The role and definition of **private databases** remain unclear, particularly what different types of private databases should contribute to or do within the MLM.
- **Mutual supportiveness:** Important questions remain on how to recognise benefits shared through other systems, how countries could link DSI to the Cali Fund through national legislation, and how to avoid **double dipping** or overlapping claims.
- **Policy/legal:** Further work is needed on how DSI-use data and financial data can be used for **accountability and monitoring**.

● Red – substantial difficulties

- **Databases:** Many databases do not currently see themselves as having a role in the MLM.
- **Definitions:** Lack of clarity on key definitions remains a fundamental obstacle.
- **AI:** The role and implications of AI in relation to DSI remain unresolved.

IPLC/CSO



● Green – good progress

- **Basic principle:** There is agreement in principle that DSI benefit-sharing is a good idea.
- **Value of biological data:** Recognition of the value of biological data has increased.
- **Donations:** Donations to the Cali Fund are welcomed as an additional source of support.

● Yellow – progress, but open questions

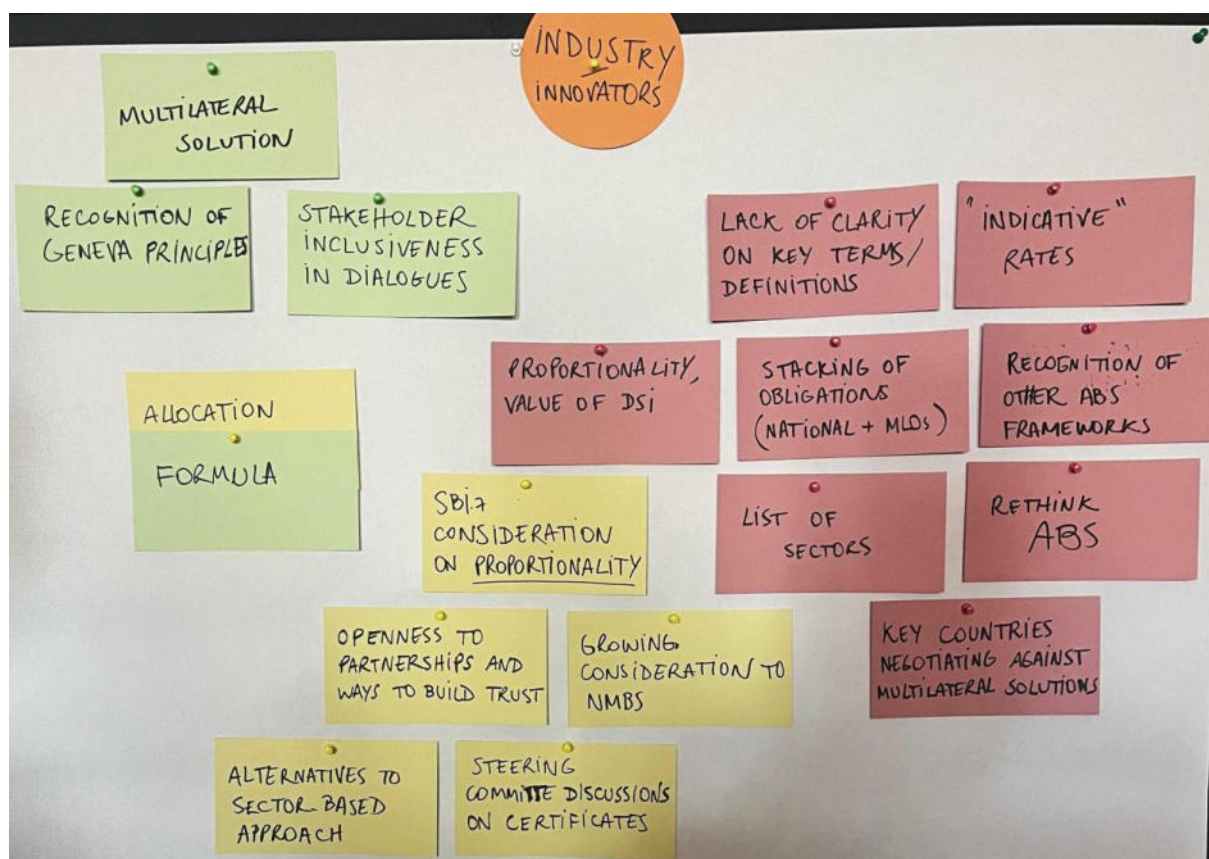
- **SC/AHTEG:** The structures are in place and work has started, but more iteration, feedback and engagement with the wider community are needed.
- **Database governance:** Governance arrangements remain unresolved.
- **Transparency and information-sharing:** There is a need for more systematic feedback from the SC to the wider DSI community.
- **Proportionality/fairness:** Work is progressing, but perceptions of fairness need to be explicitly considered alongside the technical formula.
- **Direct IPLC access:** There is ongoing discussion about direct access for IPLCs and how to ensure funding is linked to conservation rather than being captured by other interests.
- **IP and local communities:** Greater clarity is needed around the distinction between the rights of indigenous peoples and those of local communities, including self-determination and intellectual property aspects.

● Red – substantial difficulties

- **Proprietary databases:** The proliferation and control of proprietary databases remains a major concern, although government- or IPLC-controlled databases may offer alternative models.

- **Ownership/control of public DSI:** Fundamental questions remain over who owns or controls publicly accessible data.
- **Legal certainty:** Users remain uncertain about whether the certificate will actually provide meaningful legal certainty.
- **Anonymous access/biopiracy:** Anonymous access to DSI continues to raise concerns about biopiracy.
- **NMBS:** There has been little concrete progress, particularly on developing good practice and mechanisms such as licensing.
- **Potential contributors:** There is still no systematic public overview of who the potential contributors to the Cali Fund are.

Industry 1



Green – good progress

- **Multilateral approach:** Continued engagement around a multilateral solution remains a positive development.
- **Geneva principles:** Recognition of the Geneva principles provides an agreed reference point.
- **Inclusiveness:** Stakeholder inclusiveness in the informal process is recognised as important.

Yellow – progress, but open questions

- **Allocation formula/proportionality:** The existence of a formula is seen as progress, with proportionality receiving increasing attention, including through SBI 7.
- **Partnerships/trust:** There is greater openness to partnerships and approaches that can build trust.
- **Sectoral approach:** Alternatives to a strictly sector-based approach are being considered.
- **NMBS:** There is growing consideration of non-monetary benefit-sharing.

- **Certificates:** SC discussions are advancing, but the final role and operation of certificates remain open.

● Red – substantial difficulties

- **Key terms:** Definitions and the meaning of terms such as “indicative” and “proportionality” remain unclear.
- **Other ABS frameworks:** The relationship with existing ABS frameworks is unresolved.
- **Obligation stacking:** Concerns remain about overlapping obligations under the WHO system, Plant Treaty and national legislation.
- **Multilateralism vs. national circumstances:** Diverging positions among countries on the role of the multilateral mechanism remain a major challenge.

Industry 2



● Green – good progress

- **Partnerships:** There is clear scope and interest in public-private partnerships to make the system work.
- **Informal process:** The informal process is strongly appreciated as a space for practical problem-solving and trust-building.
- **SC arrangements:** Good progress has been made on the Steering Committee's practical arrangements and governance procedures.
- **Certificate:** The certificate is increasingly recognised as a potential **lynchpin of the MLM**.
- **Database approach:** There is broad recognition that creating a **single, unified database is not the right approach**, with no new database seen as necessary.

● Yellow – progress, but open questions

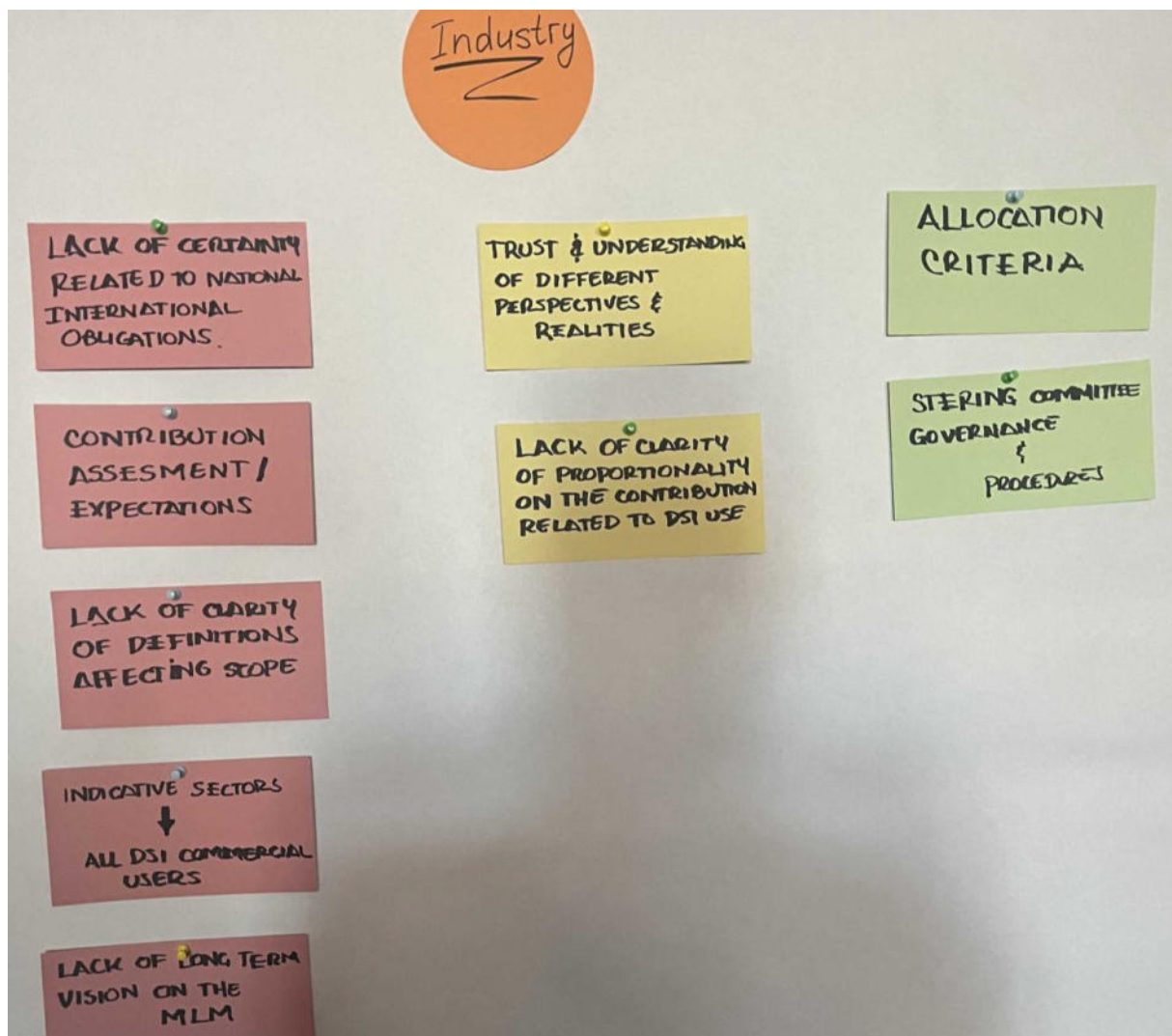
- **Certificate:** Progress has been made, but implementation may require changes or action under national ABS legislation.

- **IPLC direct access:** The issue is being actively worked on, including through the SC, but important questions remain.
- **Proportionality:** There has been progress on proportionality on the **allocation side**, but the contribution side remains unresolved.
- **Piloting/testing:** There is agreement on the need to test the system to generate evidence for review, but the appropriate structured approach and design of pilots remain under discussion.

● **Red – substantial difficulties**

- **Definitions and scope:** Lack of clarity over key terms remains a major obstacle.
- **Indicative contribution rates:** There is no common understanding of what “indicative” rates mean and what expectations they create.
- **Contribution proportionality:** Fundamental questions remain about what constitutes a proportionate contribution in relation to the value and use of DSI.
- **Obligation stacking:** Concerns remain about overlapping obligations under national legislation and other international instruments.
- **National sovereignty vs. multilateralism:** National approaches and sovereignty concerns could undermine the functioning of a genuinely multilateral mechanism.
- **MoU vs. MLM:** Concerns remain that discussions around the MoU could weaken or derail the multilateral solution.
- **Scalability/governance:** Questions remain about how the Cali Fund can operate at scale across countries and how governance, Secretariat functions and SC powers would work.
- **Industry as a DSI uploader:** The implications of industry being a creator/uploader of publicly accessible DSI remain unresolved.

Industry 3



● Green – good progress

- **Allocation criteria:** Progress has been made on the allocation criteria.
- **SC governance:** The SC governance and procedural arrangements are considered to have progressed well.

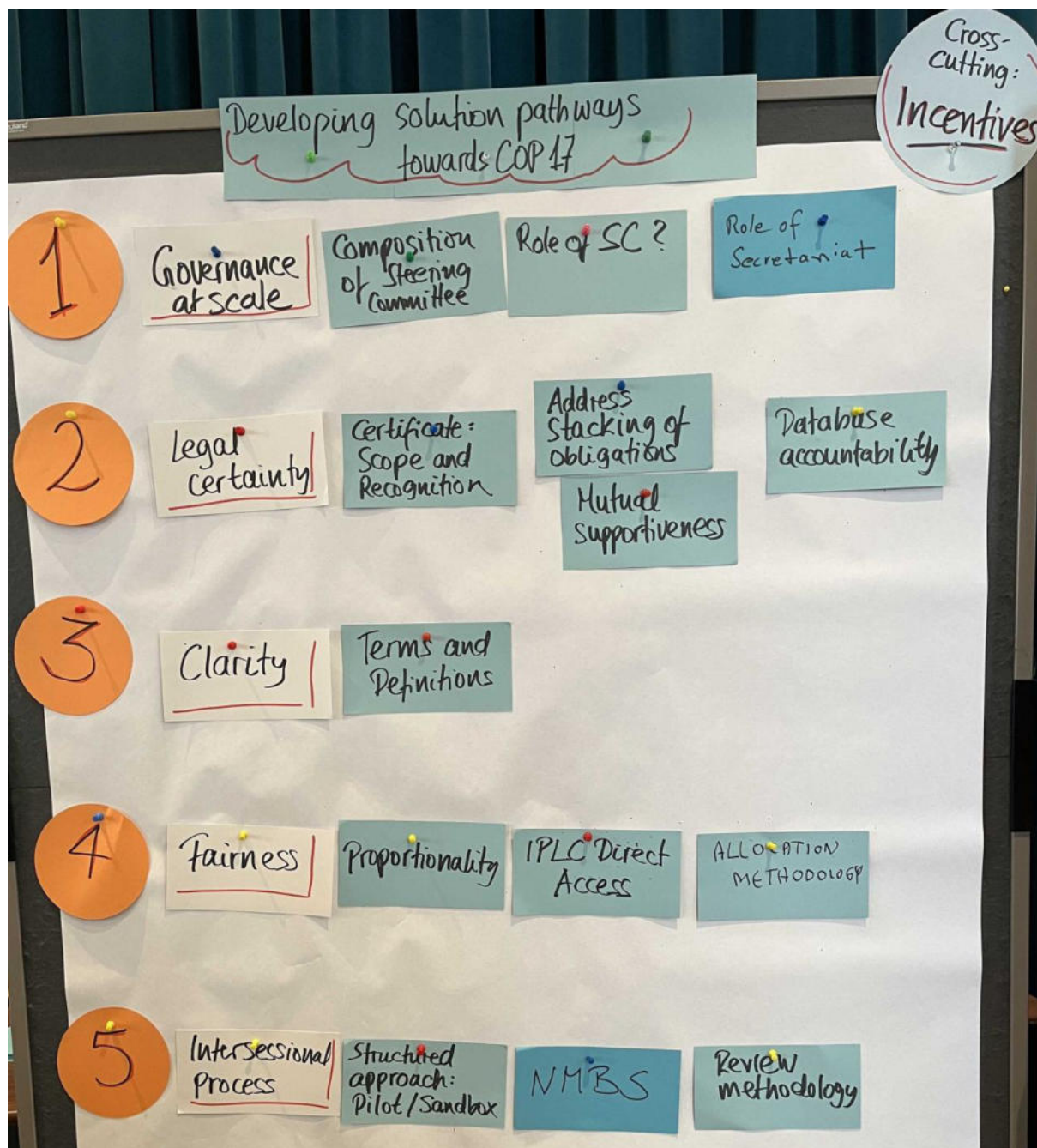
● Yellow – progress, but open questions

- **Trust and understanding:** The informal process has improved understanding and inclusiveness, but further engagement is needed.
- **Proportionality:** There is ongoing consideration of how contribution expectations can be made proportionate.

● Red – substantial difficulties

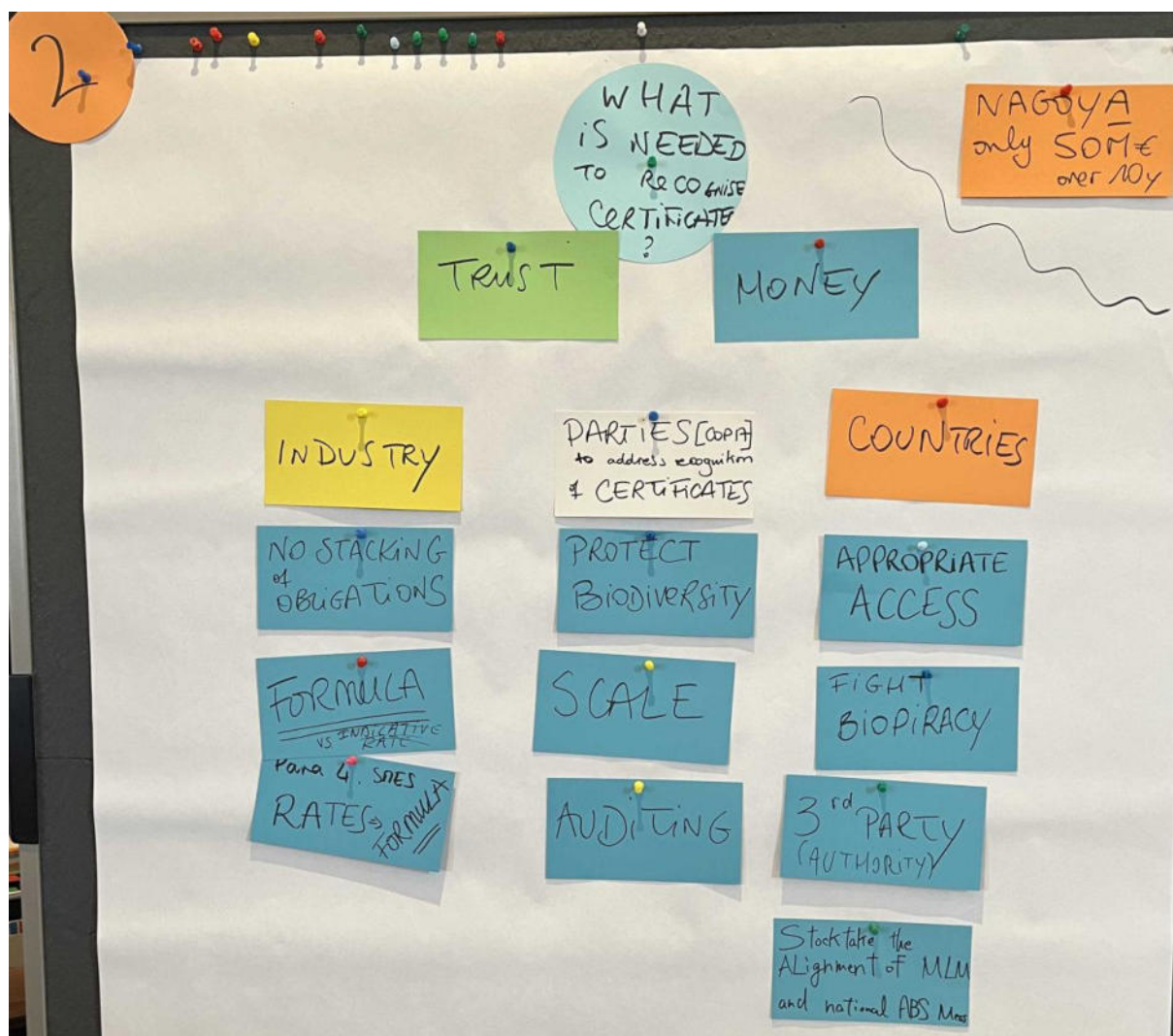
- **Legal/regulatory certainty:** There remains insufficient clarity on the consequences of making a contribution and on the relationship between national and international obligations.
- **Contribution assessment:** There is no sufficient clarity on how contributions will be assessed and what level of contribution will be expected.
- **Scope:** The scope remains contested; in particular, the sectoral list is seen as potentially too narrow compared with an approach covering all commercial users of DSI.
- **Long-term vision:** There is still no sufficiently clear shared vision of where the MLM and Cali Fund are intended to go over the longer term.

Annex 6: Plenary "Topics for solution pathways"

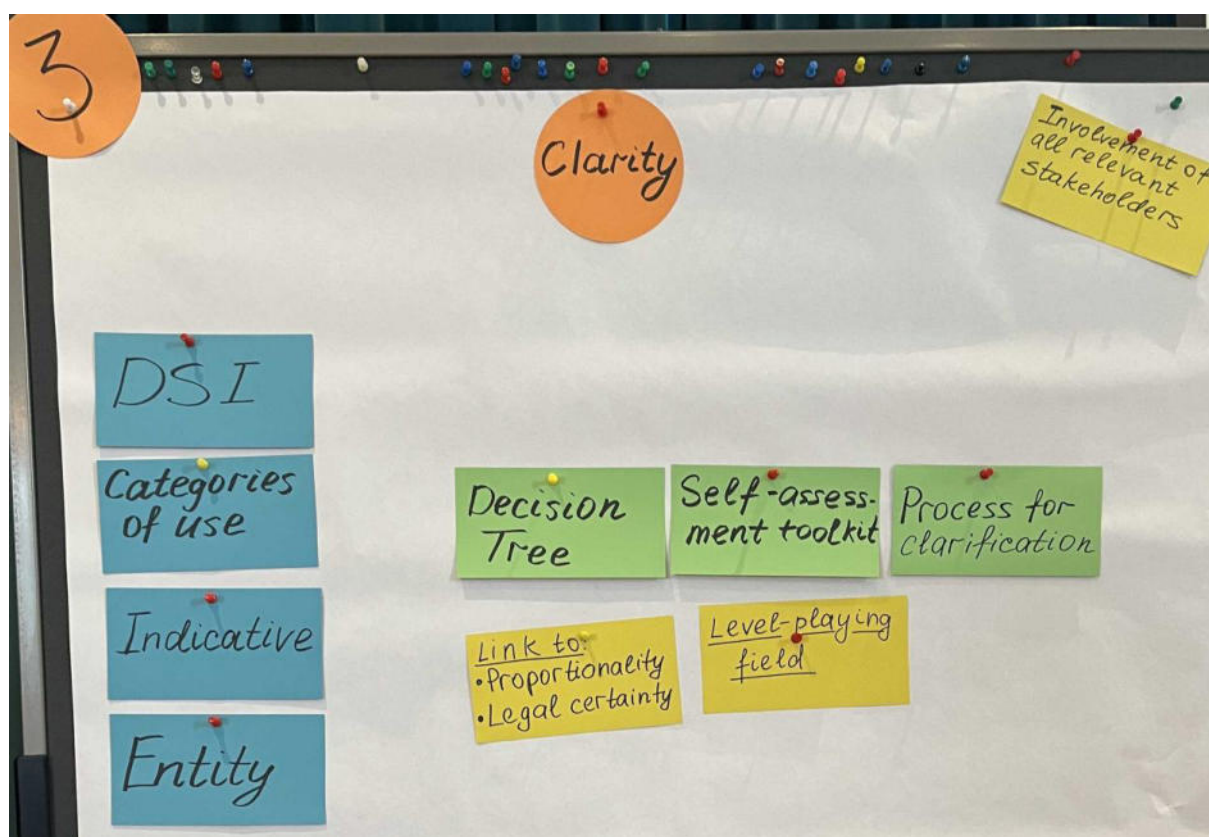


Annex 7: Group work "Proposed solution pathways for identified topics"

Group 2 – Legal certainty



Group 3 – Clarity



Group 3 - Fairness



Group 5 – Intersessional process

