

SBI 7 Side Event: Accelerating Progress on the Cali Fund – Towards a Testing (Pilot) Phase and Update on Informal Work



On **5 August 2026**, the Informal DSI Dialogue Partnership, with the support of the **European Commission** and the **Government of Norway**, organized the SBI 7 side event "**Accelerating Progress on the Cali Fund: Towards a Testing (Pilot) Phase and Update on Informal Work**" in Nairobi. The event, **moderated by Suhel al- Janabi (Informal DSI Dialogue Partnership, GeoMedia)** attracted approximately **100 participants**, reflecting the high level of interest among Parties, IPLC's, international organizations, industry representatives, academia and civil society in the operationalization of the Multilateral Mechanism (MLM) on Digital Sequence Information (DSI) and the Cali Fund. The event was opened by **Mery Ciacci (European Commission)**, who recalled that the Global Informal Dialogue aims at offering an informal space for open discussion on DSI, on the way to COP17. **Ida Hellmark (Government of Norway)** concluded the session with a summary of the key messages and reflections emerging from the discussions.



Following the opening, **Charlotte Germain-Aubrey (CBD Secretariat, CCC)** provided an overview of the formal intersessional process and the DSI-related agenda under consideration at **SBI 7**, including the mandates arising from COP Decision 16/2 and the issues to be addressed in preparation for **COP 17**. This was followed by a presentation from **Carlos Ham (Informal DSI Dialogue Partnership, CCC)** which outlined the objectives, activities and progress of the informal support process also highlighting the roadmap of upcoming regional dialogues, knowledge products and further technical exchanges designed to support the formal CBD negotiations. Particular attention was given to the outcomes of the **Global Informal DSI Dialogue held in Leuven (March 2026)**, the subsequent stakeholder consultations and webinars, and the emerging "**construction sites**" presented by **Pierre du Plessis (DSI expert and former negotiator)** —the key technical and policy issues requiring further clarification before the Multilateral Mechanism can become fully operational.

A central feature of the side event consisted of **two interactive discussion rounds**, which provided an opportunity for participants to exchange views on the implementation challenges and possible solution pathways for the Cali Fund and the MLM. The discussions featured contributions from **Melissa Cotterill (Government of Australia)**, **Preston Hardison (International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity – IIFB)**, **Jasmina Muminovic (Bayer AG)**, **Elly Barrett (International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture – ITPGRFA)**, **Natalie Feltman (Government of South Africa)**, **June Rubis (Building Indigenous Initiatives in Heritage – BiiH, Sarawak)**, **Mery Ciacci (European Commission)** and **Daphne Yong D'Herve (International Chamber of Commerce – ICC)**,

complemented by active interventions from participants representing governments, Indigenous Peoples, industry and civil society.

Across the discussions, participants highlighted a number of priority areas requiring further technical work to facilitate the operationalization of the Multilateral Mechanism and the Cali Fund. These included the need to further define the **scope of the MLM**, in particular clarifying where benefit-sharing obligations begin and end along DSI value chains, as well as key terms (such as “direct and indirect use” of DSI); the role of **certificates** in enhancing legal certainty, transparency and recognition of contributions; the need to work on incentives and enabling frameworks for companies, and the design of **fair, equitable and effective disbursement modalities ("Money Out")**, including practical approaches to facilitate **direct access for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities**. Some speakers stressed the importance to work on all the elements of the MLM (as they are connected) to make concrete progress. Others emphasized the importance of reflecting the **CARE Principles** in future public DSI database governance arrangements and ensuring that IPLC perspectives are adequately reflected in the principles governing DSI databases and related information infrastructures.



The discussions also underscored the importance of adopting a **learning-by-doing approach** through a structured **testing or pilot phase**. Valuable lessons could be drawn from the early implementation phases of other multilateral benefit-sharing mechanisms, particularly the **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**, and that practical pilot activities could help validate operational modalities before full implementation. This included the use of **sandbox approaches** to test contribution-related features ("Money In"), while simultaneously developing practical case studies for the allocation and disbursement of benefits ("Money Out"), ideally based on already existing local structures with benefit sharing experiences. Participants further stressed the importance of ensuring that financial contributions from commercial users remain **proportionate to the scale and intensity of DSI utilization**, while others suggested exploring complementary modalities that could encourage broader private-sector participation, including **product- or service-based contribution models** alongside entity/sectoral -based approaches.

A recurring message throughout the discussions was that the implementation of the Multilateral Mechanism is **still at an early stage**, requiring realistic expectations regarding the pace of progress. At the same time, participants widely acknowledged that the formal and informal dialogue process has already generated significant momentum by building understanding and trust among stakeholder groups e.g. in identifying the principal implementation challenges ("construction sites"), and developing increasingly concrete options to support the operationalization of the Cali Fund and inform negotiations in the lead-up to **CBD COP 17**. For the intersessional period to COP 18 some participants called for more technical and conceptual exchanges on DSI within the formal CBD process itself - such as an Open Ended Working Group - and improved interchanges and transparency between different informal and formal activity streams, including the work of the Steering Committee.

More Information on the work of the Informal DSI Dialogue Partnership:

www.geo-media.de/dsi-informal-dialogues ; www.cbd.int/dsi-gr/resources.shtml