



# NEGOTIATIONS ON BIODIVERSITY THE STORY SO FAR

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# Foreword

What should be done to ensure that biodiversity is conserved, used sustainably and benefits people who have protected it for centuries? Over 30 years ago, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was established to find answers and provide solutions to the problems being faced in conservation. But things have not improved through the years. Successive plans have failed, and the latest—the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), adopted in 2022—is also struggling. The framework has set 23 targets to be met by 2030 and 4 goals for 2050.

In an effort to meet the targets, the CBD has shifted gears. One notable change that happened at COP16 held in 2024, was the inclusion and recognition of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs). A new subsidiary body was created to discuss and collate solutions rooted in traditional knowledge. The involvement of indigenous people could be transformative, but whether this approach works will become clear only in 2030.

For success, it is imperative that the Global North supports developing countries that not only hold most of the remaining biodiversity but also the knowledge related to its use. History does not support this. During early negotiations before 1992, the Global North wanted to classify biodiversity as a “common heritage of mankind”, advocating for open access. The Global South countered that countries should have sovereign rights over biodiversity, with access allowed only at the discretion of national authorities through bilateral agreements. This debate was still very evident during the discussions on benefits earned from digital sequence information (DSI), where developed countries vocally opposed India’s demand that countries should be allowed to retain sovereign rights over DSI.

CBD’s approach to biodiversity conservation is voluntary, lacking binding obligations for meeting targets. The KMGBF is no exception.

In this report, we have identified a few targets that must be monitored stringently over the coming years to understand whether the framework is truly making a difference.

# Chapter 1: Introduction and context



The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is one of the most crucial multilateral agreements set to protect nature. It was adopted in June 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where two other conventions—on climate change and on desertification—were also put in place. This was 20 years after the three conventions were discussed at the first UN Conference on the Human Environment, which took place in 1972 at Stockholm, Sweden.

As of now, all countries, except USA and the Vatican, have ratified the CBD. The US, despite negotiating to water down the document, chose not to ratify it. Ostensibly, this is to protect its biotech industry.

The Convention has three core objectives: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits earned from the use of genetic resources.

The Convention has failed on all three counts.

According to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), between 2 to 6 per cent of species are being lost every decade. In 2019, IPBES predicted that up to a million species face extinction in the coming decades. The Living Planet Report 2024 notes that between 1970 and 2020, the average size of monitored wildlife populations declined by 73 per cent. The report is based on the Living Planet Index (LPI), which tracks nearly 35,000 population trends and 5,495 species of amphibians, birds, fish, mammals, and reptiles. Habitat degradation and loss, primarily driven by the food system, is the

## WORKING OF CBD

The secretariat of the CBD is in Montreal and headed by an executive secretary who represents the CBD at the United Nations General Assembly meetings or other environmental and biodiversity related conventions. Until recently, the CBD had two subsidiary bodies—the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) which provides scientific and technical perspective to the Conference of Parties (COP); and The Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) which helps prepare COP decisions from an implementation perspective. At the COP held in 2024, a third subsidiary body was put in place—the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the CBD—to hold the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

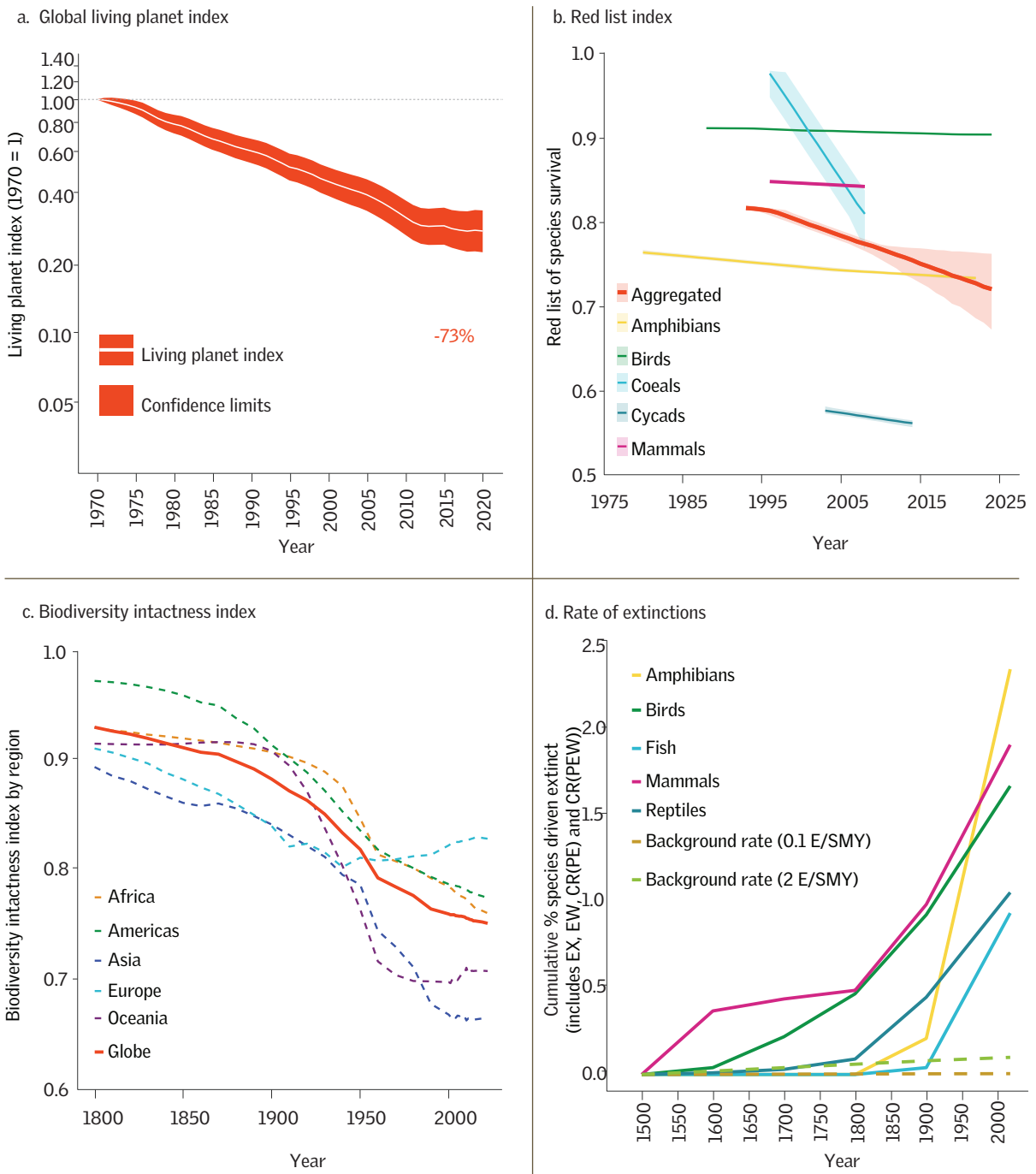
Other than this, COP can bring together permanent or time-bound working groups and Ad Hoc Technical Expert Groups (AHTEGs) with specific mandates.

The Parties meet every two years.

The convention has the following three protocols:

1. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2000): Ensures safe transfer, handling, and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) that may have adverse effects on biodiversity.
2. The Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress (2010): Provides international rules and procedures on liability and redress for biodiversity damage resulting from LMOs.
3. The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their Utilisation (2010): Provides an international framework for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources, including appropriate access to genetic resources and transfer of relevant technologies.

The Inter-governmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was established in 2012 to strengthen the use of scientific knowledge in decision-making related to biodiversity.



**Graph 1: The graphs show biodiversity trends over time: (a) Living Planet Index tracks animal populations, (b) Red List Index indicates extinction risk, (c) Biodiversity Intactness Index highlights long-term change since 1800, and (d) Rate of extinctions shows cumulative extinctions since 1500**

Source: <https://wwflpr.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/2024-living-planet-report-a-system-in-peril.pdf>

most reported threat, followed by overexploitation, invasive species, and disease.<sup>1</sup> In 2022, IPBES reported that as many as 50,000 wild species support the needs of billions of people. One in five people rely on wild species for food and income; over 10,000 wild species are harvested for human consumption; and one in three depend on fuel wood for cooking.<sup>2</sup> There is little data to confirm whether this dependence is sustainable. However, the continuous loss of biodiversity suggests it may not be.

There is simply no data available on access and benefit-sharing (ABS). An analysis of the data on the ABS clearing-house hosted by the CBD shows that most of the access to biodiversity is of non-commercial nature, suggesting limited or no benefit-sharing. Only 25 countries have established ABS procedures.<sup>3</sup> IPBES, founded in 2012, is yet to venture into this quagmire.

There is a lack of progress on longstanding issues. For example, at the 1992 Earth Summit, a clear association was recognised between climate change, biodiversity, and desertification. This was reiterated in the latest report by IPBES suggesting that all these issues have continued to be dealt separately over the years.<sup>4</sup>

## **The latest on CBD**

COP16, held in Colombia, was the first meeting of the Parties since the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) in 2022. The framework has four overarching global goals to protect nature and 23 environmental targets to be achieved by 2030. These targets are divided into three categories:

Reducing threats to biodiversity (Target 1–8); meeting people’s needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing (Target 9–13); tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming (Target 14–23).

KMGBF is often described as the biodiversity equivalent of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Both demand bold action and swift implementation.

At COP16, it was expected that substantial progress would have been made in the intervening years. However, this was not the case. Final decisions on many crucial issues could not be taken in Colombia. COP16 was resumed in February 2025 in Rome to finalise these pending decisions. Though decisions were taken, these can only be considered as developments as we are yet to see if these developments translate into improvements. This report presents a snapshot of the situation on the ground for some major decisions taken during COP16. These include digital sequence information and ABS; Article 8(j) and protected areas; and resource mobilisation and nature-based solutions (NbS).



## IPBES REPORTS

Overall, there have been 11 assessments carried out by IPBES. These include four regional assessments on the status of biodiversity across the earth.

2024

### **Thematic Assessment of the Underlying Causes of Biodiversity Loss and the Determinants of Transformative Change and Options for Achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity:**

This assessment provides options to achieve transformative change to halt biodiversity collapse. It looks at the underlying causes of the biodiversity crisis and options for a just and sustainable world. The assessment indicates that immediate action could generate USD 10 trillion in business opportunities and support 395 million jobs by 2030.

### **Thematic Assessment of the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food, and Health:**

This report calls for integrated solutions to five interlinked global crises—biodiversity, water, food, health, and climate change. Over 70 response options are assessed for maximum co-benefits across cascading or compounding challenges. Generally short-term financial returns are prioritised while ignoring costs to nature. It is estimated that the unaccounted costs of current approaches to economic activity—reflecting impacts on biodiversity, water, health and climate change, including from food production—are at least USD 10–25 trillion per year.

2019

### **Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:**

The overall scope of the assessment is to assess the status and trends regarding biodiversity and ecosystem services, the impact of biodiversity and ecosystem services on human well-being, and the effectiveness of responses, including the strategic plan and its Aichi biodiversity targets. It is anticipated that this deliverable will contribute to the process for the evaluation and renewal of the strategic plan for biodiversity and its Aichi biodiversity targets.

Source: <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment>

2018

### **Four Regional Assessment Reports on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services—Americas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and Central Asia:**

The regional reports make policy-relevant knowledge accessible and useful, using a multidisciplinary and multi-knowledge systems approach. These reports enhance the science-policy interface, aiming to improve governance of sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

### **Assessment Report on Land Degradation and Restoration:**

This assessment covers the global status and trends in land degradation, by region and land cover type; the effect of degradation on biodiversity values, ecosystem services and human wellbeing; the state of knowledge, by region and land cover type; ecosystem restoration extent and options. It aims to enhance the knowledge base for policies for addressing land degradation, desertification, and restoration of degraded land.

2022

### **Methodological Assessment regarding the Diverse Conceptualisation of Multiple Values of Nature and its Benefits, including Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functions and Services:**

The assessment of diverse values and valuation of nature provides guidance to navigate pathways for reconciling people's good quality of life with life on Earth and advancing the intertwined economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner. It includes an understanding of the relations between different worldviews, a values typology, guidelines for designing and implementing valuation methods and processes, and for embedding the diverse values of nature into decision-making and policymaking.

Source: <https://www.ipbes.net/the-values-assessment>

### **Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species:**

The assessment considers various approaches of enhancing sustainability regarding the use of wild species, and strengthens related practices, measures, capacities, and tools for their conservation through such use, while acknowledging multiple worldviews and knowledge systems that operate within different social-ecological systems. It highlights drivers of sustainability and compares the effectiveness of policy options to better govern the sustainable use of wild species.

Source: <https://www.ipbes.net/sustainable-use-assessment>

2016

### **Assessment Report on Pollinators, Pollination, and Food Production:**

This assessment covers changes in animal pollination as a regulating ecosystem service that underpins food production, and its contribution to gene flows and restoration of ecosystems. It addresses the role of native and exotic pollinators; the status of and trends in pollinators, pollination networks and services; drivers of change; impacts on human well-being; food production of pollination decline and deficits; and the effectiveness of responses to pollination decline and deficits. The assessment informs enhanced policy responses to declines and deficits in pollination by identifying policy-relevant findings for decision-making in government, the private sector and civil society, as well as helping to demonstrate how an essential ecosystem service contributes to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

### **Methodological Assessment Report on Scenarios and Models of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:**

This assessment presents a best-practice toolkit for the use of scenarios and models in decision-making on biodiversity, human-nature relationships, and the quality of life. The toolkit helps governments, private sector, and civil society to anticipate change—such as loss of habitat, invasive alien species, and climate shifts—and reduce the negative impacts on people and make use of opportunities.

Source: <https://www.ipbes.net/>



## Chapter 2: Digital sequence information on genetic resources



At COP16, Parties approved a multilateral mechanism for sharing benefits earned from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources.<sup>5</sup> DSI refers to genetic data such as nucleotide sequences (DNA and RNA), and protein sequences of organisms, which can be used instead of the actual organism—the exact definition of DSI is still being discussed. Its non-physical nature (the data can be stored digitally) complicates the traditional methods of managing access and benefit-sharing established under CBD’s Nagoya Protocol which was adopted in 2010 and came into force in 2014. Nagoya Protocol mandates that countries hold sovereign rights over their biodiversity and supports bilateral ABS agreements

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with communities. However, there is no clarity about these rights in case of DSI, as it is available freely in databases around the world.

To address this, a multilateral mechanism was set up to ensure that communities benefit from the use of DSI available in these databases. Under this system, industries using biodiversity and crossing a certain income threshold are expected to contribute 1 per cent of profits or 0.1 per cent of revenue to the Cali Fund, launched at COP16. Developed countries have reluctantly agreed to the move.<sup>6</sup>

The multilateral fund is part of KMGBF's Target 13 and it is hoped that it would ensure that benefits earned from the use of biodiversity is shared equitably with the custodians of the resource and the knowledge on its use. However, as the contribution to the fund is non-binding and voluntary, there are doubts about its efficacy in the near future. The Fund was formally launched at the resumed meeting of the Parties in Rome in February 2025 but as of now, no funds have been received.<sup>7</sup>

## **Nuts and bolts of DSI**

The multilateral mechanism had to be set up as large amounts of DSI are present in public repositories, often without indicating the source and without the knowledge of the communities. In such cases, bilateral agreements cannot be implemented.

There are over 1,700 databases and repositories of biological data globally. These databases usually do not indicate the exact place of origin of the material or whether it was accessed on mutually agreed terms with the communities that hold the rights over it. Without this information, users of sequences from these databases are under no obligation to share benefits with these communities that have preserved the genetic material. Moreover, since these databases are open source, it is usually difficult to identify the users.

Most of the databases are in the Global North. A prominent example is the International Nucleotide Sequence Database Collaboration (INSDC), which consists of three large databases—European Nucleotide Archive based in the UK; GenBank in the US, and DNA Data Bank of Japan. Together, just these three banks receive over 23 million sequences per year. Most DSI users are also from the Global North. They have consistently opposed the implementation of this multilateral mechanism and pushed to dilute its effectiveness. These users have support of the Global North. For example, the DSI Scientific Network represents nearly 100 scientists who want to ensure that they have continued unrestricted access, and this Network receives funds from governments of Germany, Norway, and the US.



## HISTORY OF DSI

**2011**

The World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization (WHO) adopts the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework, which includes guidelines for sharing influenza viruses and their genetic material to enhance global preparedness for influenza pandemics. The framework includes reference to "genetic sequence data" and implications for benefits-sharing.

**2013**

The issue of DSI emerged in international discussions at the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

**2016**

The 20th SBSTTA meeting of CBD held informal discussions on synthetic biology and the implications of DSI for biodiversity. Later in the year, the topic of DSI was introduced at COP13 in Cancun, Mexico and discussions began on its potential impact on biodiversity and synthetic biology.

**2018**

During the 22nd SBSTTA, extensive discussions took place on the implications of DSI for the objectives of CBD. The same year, at COP14 held in Egypt, CBD established the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on DSI to study its implications and make recommendations for benefit-sharing mechanisms. The same month, WHO emphasised DSI's role in strengthening public health, particularly for influenza preparedness.

**2020**

The AHTEG released a report detailing key issues around DSI and its implications for biodiversity and the Nagoya Protocol. This report provides recommendations on how to integrate DSI into benefit-sharing mechanisms. The COVID-19 pandemic put the spotlight on the role of DSI, with the WHO highlighting the critical need for transparent sharing of genetic sequence data to speed up vaccine development and pandemic response. FAO initiated conversations on how DSI could support the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture by enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of these vital resources.

**2021**

In August, CBD secretariat highlighted documents from the AHTEG at a meeting. Discord amongst the developing countries and the developed countries was visible. Developing countries wanted an ABS system to be put in place along with equitable access to DSI, while the developed countries preferred open access to DSI, suggesting that monetising DSI would be a distraction from research and inconsistent with the CBD. WHO again emphasised the criticality of DSI for pandemic preparedness, noting that timely sharing of data can enhance response times during outbreaks.

**2022**

In September, the FAO Governing Body adopted a resolution on DSI to address its role in food and agriculture. In December, COP15 adopted Decision 15/9, towards establishing a multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism for DSI, including a global fund to ensure equitable distribution of benefits. WHO also integrated DSI into the Pandemic Treaty, advocating equitable access to DSI within global health strategies and ensuring inclusive benefits during health crises.

**2023**

In July, the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture underscored DSI's role in food security and agricultural biodiversity. It highlighted that nearly 1.3 million scientific publications cited DSI, showcasing its significance in advancing agricultural science. In November, the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on DSI of CBD discussed key themes, sparking intense debates on monitoring, funding, data governance, and IPLC rights.

**2024**

In May, the 26th SBSTTA meeting discussed the implications of DSI for the Nagoya Protocol and how DSI governance intersects with benefit-sharing obligations. The same month, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) adopted the treaty on intellectual property, genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, which mandates patent applications to disclose the source of any genetic resources or traditional knowledge used in their inventions. The second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the CBD was held. In October, COP16 took the decision to operationalise a multilateral fund for sharing benefits.

**2025**

The Cali Fund was launched at the resumed meeting of COP16 in February. The fund is yet to receive money.

Source:

- Convention on Biological Diversity <https://www.cbd.int/>
- Food and Agriculture Organization <https://www.fao.org/home/en>
- World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/>
- World Intellectual Property Organization <https://www.wipo.int/portal/en/index.html>
- International Institute for Sustainable Development <https://www.iisd.org/>



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The issue of digital sequence information was recognised much before the Nagoya Protocol was adopted in 2010. In 2011, the World Health Assembly adopted the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework and established guidelines for sharing influenza viruses and DSI to enhance global preparedness for influenza pandemics. Similarly, since 2013, DSI has also been under discussion at the FAO's International Treaty on Genetic Resources on Food and Agriculture. The issue of DSI was introduced at CBD's COP13 in Cancun, Mexico in 2016, initiating discussions on its potential impact on biodiversity and synthetic biology. Since then, DSI has remained on the agenda in the meetings of World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and CBD.

Since 2016, Parties to the CBD have discussed the issue of DSI multiple times. Finally, at COP15 in Montreal in December 2022, Parties agreed that a multilateral system for benefit-sharing would be established and set up an Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of DSI on Genetic Resources. Based on the discussions of the working group, the secretariat prepared a note that was discussed at COP16.

At COP16, it was quite clear that developed countries were not in favour of regulating access and benefit sharing and setting up a multilateral mechanism for this. Despite 12 days of discussion, Parties could not reach a consensus on the final text. COP16's president prepared the text used for discussions at the final plenary but this document was not acceptable to the developing countries. The main issue was whether countries should retain sovereign rights over biodiversity and the related DSI available in public databases. Though the issue was unresolved, a final text was presented to the plenary.

Developed countries—such as Norway, EU, Japan, Canada, South Africa, Mexico, and Switzerland—accepted the text, satisfied with its “non-binding” agreement. Panama and Peru also accepted, though they expressed some reservations. Panama wanted full autonomy over the funds and sought to earmark 10 per cent of the proposed fund for capacity building. Bolivia called for including a reference to “other knowledge systems” in the preamble. India, however, refused to accept unless the text was modified to ensure that countries continued to hold sovereign rights over their resources, a position it had consistently maintained and even submitted a mail regarding this to the secretariat. This stance disrupted the meeting and developed countries like Switzerland and Norway refused to accept these changes. After an hour of informal discussion over a break, Susanna Muhamad, COP16's president accepted India's proposal—stating that “what India wants does not affect the meaning of the text.” However, the evident displeasure shown by developed countries such as Switzerland, Norway, and the EU indicates that this change is significant.

## THE MULTILATERAL MECHANISM AND THE WORKINGS OF THE NEW FUND TO SHARE BENEFITS FROM DSI

- Industries that must contribute include those involved in pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, cosmetics, plant and animal breeding, biotechnology, laboratory equipment associated with the sequencing and use of digital sequence information on genetic resources. This includes reagents and supplies, as well as information, scientific and technical services related to DSI on genetic resources, including artificial intelligence.
- Companies that, on their balance sheet dates, exceed at least two of the three criteria—total assets of USD 20 million, sales of USD 50 million, or profit of USD 5 million—averaged over the preceding three years, should contribute to the global fund 1 per cent of their profits or 0.1 per cent of their revenue, as an indicative rate.
- While public databases, academic and public research institutions are exempted from monetary contributions to the fund, they would need to ensure that the source of the genetic material and legality of its access can be determined.
- Other than the monetary benefits, users will also need to pay non-monetary benefits. These include support to requirements identified by the communities. The sharing of non-monetary benefits will be facilitated through an existing clearing-house under the convention, which will primarily provide information on demand for capacity-building needs, knowledge exchange, and showcasing and reporting ongoing non-monetary benefit-sharing activities.
- Users can make their payments directly to the fund or through a national authority. A certificate will be issued to the user once the money reaches the global fund. It will be used towards conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including implementation of activities described in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
- At least half of the global fund will be reserved to support the self-identified needs of indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and youth. These disbursements may be made directly to institutions identified by indigenous peoples and local communities or through governments.
- 10 per cent of the fund will be used to support technical development so that the Global South, especially the least developed countries, has access to necessary tools and expertise to fully participate and benefit from DSI on genetic resources.
- A formula for allocations, prepared by the secretariat, will be finalised at COP17. Funding to Parties will be disbursed through direct allocations to countries, which must set up a body to receive them. The fund will be administered by the UN through its Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office.

Source: <https://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop?m=cop-16>, decision 16/2

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The first point of the annex “Modalities for operationalising the multilateral mechanism for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, including a global fund” now states: “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 the national legislation, digital sequence information on genetic resources...”. With this, a multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing in form of a voluntary global fund, Cali Fund, was operationalised.

Users such as the pharmaceutical industry openly displayed dissatisfaction with the outcome. In a press release, David Reddy, director general of International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA)—which represents over 90 pharmaceutical companies and associations—said “the decision adopted does not get the balance right between the intended benefits of such a mechanism and the significant costs to society and science that it has the potential to create”. Reddy stated that, “The ability to rapidly use scientific data known as ‘digital sequence information’ is essential for developing new medicines and vaccines. Any new system should not introduce further conditions on how scientists access such data and add to a complex web of regulation, taxation, and other obligations for the whole R&D ecosystem—including on academia and biotech companies. New technologies that use DSI can contribute to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and should be encouraged.”<sup>8</sup> This reaction signals a potential challenge. If industries refuse to contribute to the Cali Fund, all the effort could go to waste.

Other than WHO and FAO, where DSI is being actively discussed, the issue of DSI, the issue is also relevant to discussions under United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea’s Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction agreement (BBNJ), and World Intellectual Property Organization’s Treaty on intellectual property, genetic resources and traditional knowledge.

The issue is still being discussed in loops at these fora. In April 2025, benefit sharing was discussed at the Thirteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System under the ITPGRFA. Here, a subscription-only system was discussed to ensure predictable benefit sharing by making users contribute annually, instead of waiting for them to commercialise. In the subscription system, the recipients of the genetic resource must make an annual periodic payment based on the sales of all of the PGRFA products (seeds) in their portfolio, provided recipients have turnover beyond a certain threshold. This was vetoed down by developed countries such as Canada and the United States.<sup>9</sup>

The World Health Organization is also trying to figure out the Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing System (PABS) under its Pandemic Agreement which is in the making since 2021 now. On April 16, 2025, the International Negotiating Committee (INB) finally managed to agree on a draft which will be discussed at the World Health Assembly in May. However, even though the document is likely to be adopted, the negotiations on an Annex detailing the Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing mechanism will continue after the assembly. PABS is a system through which pharmaceutical corporations will allocate a portion of the resulting medical product for further supply to countries through WHO. During the negotiations, it was clear that the INB was leaning towards the industry. The proposed text guarantees only a 10 per cent donation while flexible access to another 20 per cent could in a situation of pandemic emergency. Civil society had asked that at least 20 per cent of the supply should be guaranteed.<sup>10</sup>



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## Chapter 3: Article 8(j)



The indigenous peoples and local communities had a major victory at COP16 and a new permanent “Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and other Provisions” was set up. Article 8(j) pertains to preservation and sustainable use of knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities, and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use. The body will work on issues related to the implementation of the article and enhance the participation of IPLCs in all convention processes. Working of the subsidiary body would be developed by the next COP.<sup>11</sup>

The creation of this body is particularly significant, as this change occurred 26 years after the establishment of the working group for implementing Article 8(j).<sup>12</sup>

At COP16, Parties also adopted a “New Programme of Work and Institutional Arrangements on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities”. This new programme “sets out specific tasks to ensure meaningful contribution” from IPLCs towards the three objectives of the convention as well as in implementing KMGBF. It also aims to ensure inclusion of traditional knowledge in biodiversity policies.<sup>13</sup>

COP16 also recognised the important contributions of Afro-descendant communities in biodiversity conservation, ensuring they have access to resources and are included in future biodiversity conferences, starting with COP17 in 2026.<sup>14</sup> This recognition acknowledges the diverse roles various communities play in biodiversity conservation.

While the important role IPLCs played in protecting the environment through their traditional practices and the knowledge they have gained over generations was recognised even when the CBD was adopted, it has taken more than 30 years for them to get any legal support.<sup>15</sup>

Article 8(j) was included in the working of CBD in 1992, but actual work began only in 1996 when delegates at COP3 in Buenos Aires, Argentina discussed the significance of traditional knowledge. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) was established at COP4 at Bratislava, Slovakia in 1998. The working group aimed to review progress in implementing Article 8(j) and set a foundation for future discussions. In 2000, at COP5 in Nairobi, Kenya, Parties adopted a programme of work to implement the commitments. By COP6 in The Hague, Netherlands, in 2002, the Bonn Guidelines on Access and Benefit-sharing were adopted to protect indigenous rights and prevent misappropriation of traditional knowledge. This laid a foundation for integrating traditional knowledge into national biodiversity strategies and saw strong support at COP7, which was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2004.

COP8 in 2006 at Curitiba, Brazil reaffirmed the objectives of Article 8(j) in the context of island biodiversity. At COP9 in Bonn, 2008, discussions reconvened around ABS and how Article 8(j) fits within this agenda. The importance of IPLCs continued to gain traction at COP10 in 2010, Nagoya, Japan where the Nagoya Protocol was adopted. This protocol was a significant milestone which explicitly linked traditional knowledge to genetic resources, stipulating that such knowledge could only be accessed with the prior informed consent of IPLCs, ensuring fair benefit-sharing.

COP11 in Hyderabad, 2012, marked a shift towards implementation following the agreement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. At COP12, 2014 in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, a significant agreement was reached to formally use the term “Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities” in all CBD processes. The discussions at COP13, 2016, Cancún, Mexico reiterated the need for integrating the objectives of Article 8(j) with other environmental and developmental frameworks. COP14 in 2018, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt adopted the Rutzolijirisaxik Guidelines for

## ELEMENTS OF THE NEW PROGRAMME OF WORK

The new programme of work has 8 elements:

### **Element 1. Conservation and restoration**

To promote and support the conservation, protection and restoration of biological diversity led by indigenous peoples and local communities, thereby contributing to the implementation of relevant goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

### **Element 2. Sustainable use of biological diversity**

To promote, encourage and ensure the sustainable use of biological diversity, inter alia, to respect and protect the customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities, thereby contributing to the implementation of Article 10(c) of the convention, the Plan of Action on Customary Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity and relevant goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Element 3. Sharing of benefits from the utilisation of genetic resources and digital sequence information on genetic resources, as well as traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources

To promote the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources, traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources and digital sequence information on genetic resources, thereby contributing, inter alia, to the implementation of relevant goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

### **Element 4. Knowledge and culture**

To support the transmission and protection of traditional knowledge, including to future generations, and ensure that traditional knowledge and other knowledge systems are valued equally, thereby contributing to the implementation of Article 8(j) of the convention and relevant goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

### **Element 5. Strengthening implementation and monitoring progress**

To contribute to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework through the full and effective implementation of decisions, principles, and guidelines of relevance for indigenous peoples and local communities, and to strengthen the integration of Article 8(j) and other provisions of the convention in the work undertaken under the convention and its protocols.

### **Element 6. Full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities**

To enable the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, including women, girls and youth from indigenous peoples and local communities, in decision-making related to biodiversity and the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

### **Element 7. Human rights-based approach**

To contribute to the enhancement of the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in line with a human rights-based approach, in accordance with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

### **Element 8. Access, including direct access, to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of biodiversity.**

To promote the implementation of the relevant targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, in particular by supporting access, including direct access, to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities in the context of national policies, plans, projects, programmes or systems, as appropriate.

Source: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/e9e0/a4aa/b61bd2ab1285c0754e3b557c/cop-16-l-05-en.pdf>

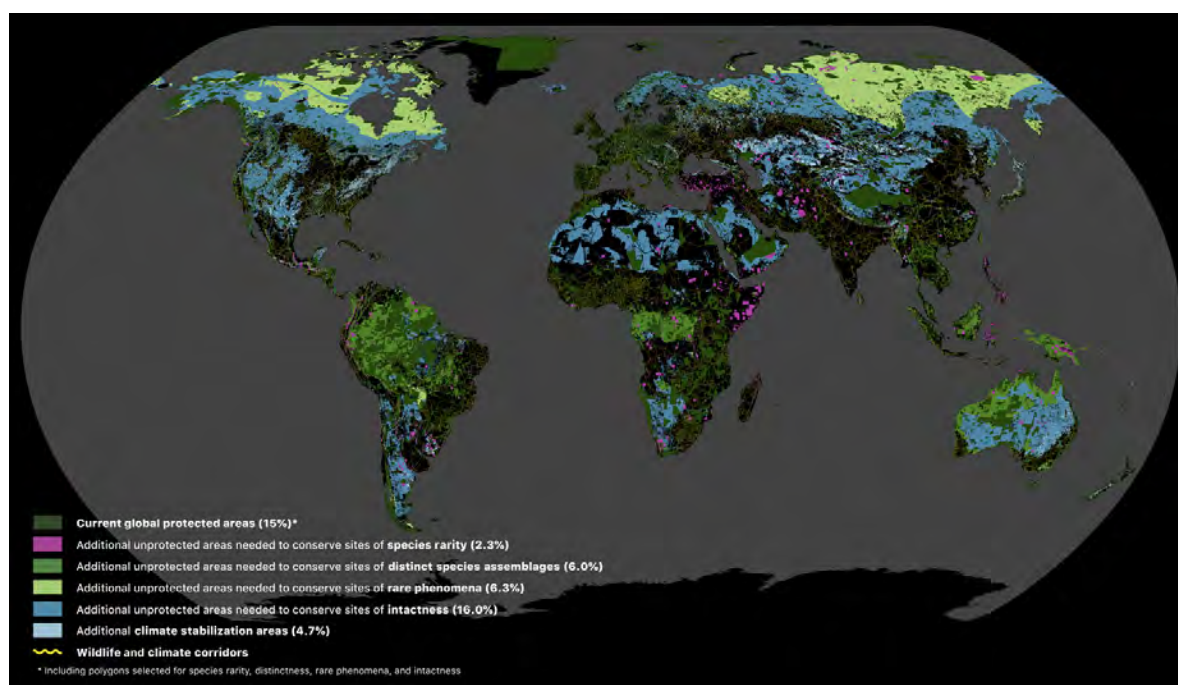


Figure 1: Areas of the terrestrial realm where increased conservation action is needed to protect biodiversity and store carbon

Source: <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.abb2824>

repatriation of traditional knowledge, honouring the intellectual property rights of IPLCs. COP15, held in Montreal in 2022, reinforced commitments to uphold indigenous rights and the principles enshrined in Article 8(j).<sup>16</sup>

Overall, it must be ensured that there are tangible benefits for indigenous communities, by including IPLC voices and traditional knowledge in global biodiversity governance. Till date, there have been several voluntary guidelines to facilitate engagement with indigenous knowledge holders.

These guidelines aim to facilitate the participation of IPLCs in environmental assessment processes and ensure the respectful handling of their traditional knowledge. Four of these guidelines are significant—the Akwé: Kon Voluntary Guidelines which focuses on conducting cultural, environmental, and social impact assessments regarding proposed developments on sacred sites and lands, traditionally occupied by indigenous communities; the Tkarihwaié:ri Code of Ethical Conduct which ensures respect for the cultural and intellectual heritage of IPLCs; the Mo'otzKuxtal Voluntary Guidelines which establishes mechanisms for obtaining the “prior and informed consent” of indigenous communities for accessing their traditional knowledge and innovations; and finally, the Rutzolijirisaxik Voluntary Guidelines for the repatriation of traditional knowledge.



**Table 1: Conservation projects**

Sustainable management and restoration of threatened ecological corridors in Kenya	Kenya	35,58,676	1,25,00,000
Effective protection of Mozambique's Miombo woodlands and marine hotspot conservation areas enhancing global coping mechanisms to climate change	Mozambique	43,23,400	1,69,71,324
Restoring forest ecosystem functions through community-based management in the Royal Botanic Garden of Jordan	Jordan	7,44,521	
Strengthening transboundary conserved area management of the Sangha Tri-National (TNS)	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Regional	64,60,126	4,64,000
Advancing ABS implementation in Cambodia	Cambodia	11,82,877	
Delivering Target 3 at the regional scale in Peru: Applying the ecosystem approach in the Northern Transversal Economic Corridor of Peru (Northern TEC)	Peru	1,12,32,110	2,41,30,333
Community-based conservation for biodiversity and livelihoods in the context of climate change in DRC	Congo DR	58,40,868	1,20,00,000
Reimagining national parks for people and nature—leveraging durable financing mechanisms for Mega Living Landscapes (MLL) to achieve Target 3 in South Africa	South Africa	44,37,156	
Scaling up biodiversity-positive and culturally inclusive agrifood and agritourism systems in Palau	Palau	10,09,361	20,00,000
Advancing integrated participatory spatial planning to enhance Samoa's globally significant biodiversity at a national scale	Samoa	10,09,361	26,66,667
Addressing outstanding barriers and leveraging durable financial mechanisms to achieve Target 3 in Gabon	Gabon	13,64,496	
Mex30x30: Conserving Mexican biodiversity through communities and their protected areas	Mexico	1,66,72,477	11,55,49,532
Caatinga Protected Areas Program—ARCA	Brazil	89,64,220	
Biodiversity conservation in indigenous lands	Brazil	90,64,221	1,79,00,000

Source: [https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/database?f%5B0%5D=funding\\_source%3A2084](https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/database?f%5B0%5D=funding_source%3A2084), as accessed on April 4, 2025

The new permanent subsidiary body established for Article 8(j) will start its work within the next two years and develop policies to ensure that IPLCs play an active role in biodiversity decisions. Regular assessments will be needed to track progress and ensure that the commitments made at COP16 result in meaningful support and empowerment for indigenous communities.

KMGBF mentions IPLCs in six of its 23 targets and they play an important role in meeting these goals. For instance, Target 3 mandates that at least 30 per cent of land, inland water, and coastal and marine areas must be conserved.<sup>17</sup> Two critical elements needed to achieve this target are land and money. The most biodiverse regions on Earth are governed by IPLCs.

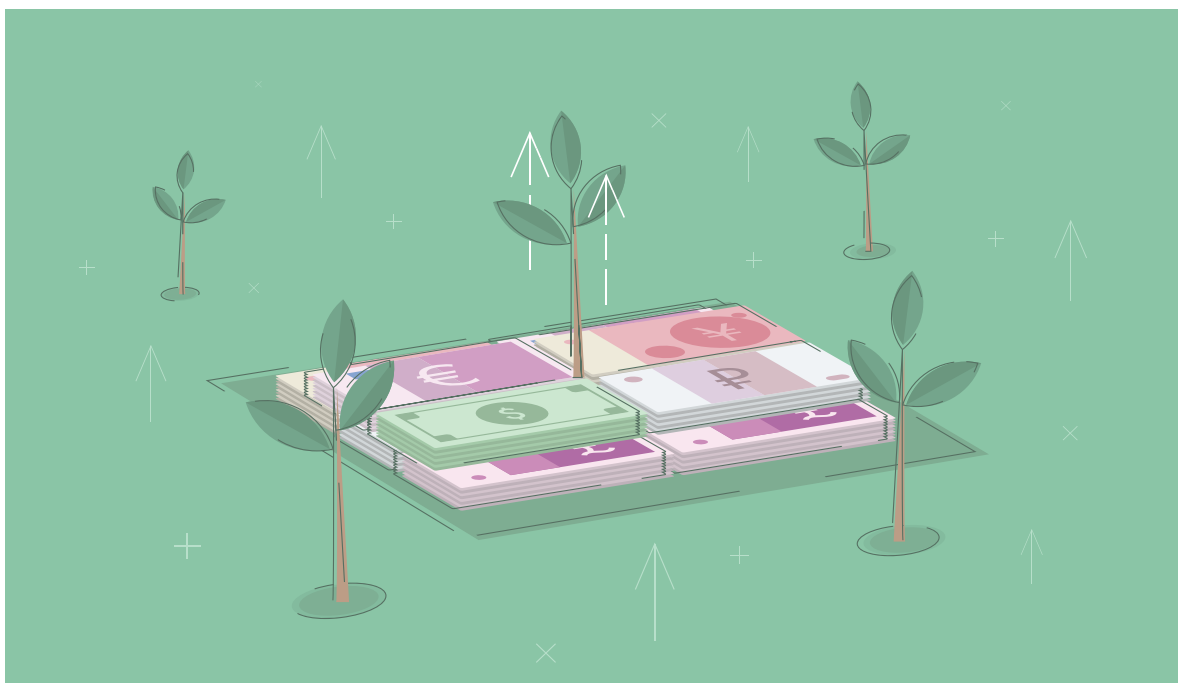
This is one likely reason that the Framework has been devised to be more inclusive of the communities. It is doubtful that the land with the IPLCs can be protected in the conventional form as this land is a source of livelihood for the people and any change in the way that they can use this resource would negatively impact incomes. A model of conservation is needed where IPLCs are not just token participants, but are custodians and managers. With the subsidiary body on Article 8(j) in place, many of the concerns may get addressed during the course of time.

Efforts are also being made to provide funds to IPLCs for conservation projects. Between June 2022 to December 2024, Global Environment Facility (GEF) approved over USD 3 billion in support of the KMGBF, leveraging more than USD 22 billion in co-financing, including USD 1.9 billion from the private sector.<sup>18</sup>

The GEF also hosts the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF), created at request from COP15. As of March 2025, 40 projects have been approved under this fund. While concepts of all 40 projects are approved, only 14 projects have actually been allocated money. Many of these projects are specifically benefitting communities in the global south.

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## Chapter 4: Resource mobilisation



Under Target 19 of the KMGBF, Parties need to secure USD 200 billion annually by 2030 from all sources, including USD 30 billion per year from developed countries. Parties failed to formulate a strategy towards achieving this target in Colombia due to lack of time and this issue was resolved only at the resumed COP16 meeting in Rome. Here, Parties agreed to establish a new financial mechanism in accordance with Articles 21 and 39 of the convention while simultaneously working on improving existing financial instruments. A roadmap outlining the activities and decision-making milestones was put in place, beginning from present and spanning the 17th, 18th, and 19th COP meetings.<sup>19</sup>

At COP15, it was agreed that a range of instruments, mechanisms and institutions would be tapped into for mobilisation of the funds needed for implementation of the KMGBF. Funds can now be mobilised from national and subnational governments, private and philanthropic resources, multilateral development banks, blended finance, and other approaches.

## **TARGET 19: MOBILISE USD 200 BILLION PER YEAR FOR BIODIVERSITY FROM ALL SOURCES, INCLUDING USD 30 BILLION THROUGH INTERNATIONAL FINANCE**

Substantially and progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources, in an effective, timely and easily accessible manner, including domestic, international, public and private resources, in accordance with Article 20 of the convention, to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans, mobilising at least USD 200 billion per year by 2030, including by:

- (a) Increasing total biodiversity-related international financial resources from developed countries, including official development assistance, and from countries that voluntarily assume obligations of developed country Parties, to developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition at least USD 20 billion per year by 2025, and USD 30 billion per year by 2030;
- (b) Significantly increasing domestic resource mobilisation, facilitated by the preparation and implementation of national biodiversity finance plans or similar instruments, according to national needs, priorities, and circumstances;
- (c) Leveraging private finance, promoting blended finance, implementing strategies for raising new and additional resources, and encouraging the private sector to invest in biodiversity, including through impact funds and other instruments;
- (d) Stimulating innovative schemes such as payment for ecosystem services, green bonds, biodiversity offsets and credits, and benefit-sharing mechanisms, with environmental and social safeguards;
- (e) Optimising co-benefits and synergies of finance targeting the biodiversity and climate crises;
- (f) Enhancing the role of collective actions, including by indigenous peoples and local communities, Mother Earth centric actions and non-market-based approaches, including community-based natural resource management, and civil society cooperation and solidarity aimed at the conservation of biodiversity;
- (g) Enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of resource provision and use.

Target 19 of the KMGBF is closely related to Target 18, which aims to reduce harmful incentives by at least \$500 billion per year by 2030, and scale up positive incentives for biodiversity. Targets 14 and 15 are also linked to Target 18 to some extent and therefore work in tandem with Target 19. Target 14 hopes to integrate biodiversity in decision-making at every level while Target 15 strives to ensure that businesses assess, disclose, and reduce biodiversity-related risks and negative impacts.

Source: <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets>

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## What is the status of funding?

The global economy heavily relies on natural resources and the ecosystem services they provide. A report, *Managing Nature Risks: From Understanding to Action*, published in April 2023 by PwC shows that about \$58 trillion, or 55 per cent of global GDP, is dependent on nature. This figure has increased by \$14 trillion since 2020, indicating increasing reliance on ecosystems for economic activities.<sup>20</sup> This underlines the urgent need to invest in nature.

A note by the CBD secretariat, “Exploration of the biodiversity finance landscape”, published on October 8, 2024 suggested that estimates of funds required and the current biodiversity financial flows vary significantly based on the methodologies and data sources used. These can be in the range of USD 78–91 billion per year to USD 124–143 billion per year.<sup>21</sup> It was based on these figures that the target of USD200 billion was set. But there is no clarity on what is needed and what is available. For example, there are estimates that suggest we have already met this target. For example, the *Biodiversity Finance Factbook*, published in October 2024, indicates that \$208 is already available from various sources.<sup>22</sup> Such variations need to be resolved to provide a clear picture of funds available and its sources.

It is clear, however, that resource mobilisation since the adoption of KMGBF has been slow. For one, developed countries have failed to meet the target of USD 20 billion by 2025. According to the *Biodiversity and Development Finance 2015–2022* report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in September 2024, contributions of development finance to the KMGBF were 23 per cent below its Target 19a.<sup>23</sup>

The funds provided by governments are directed via GEF and countries can use these directly or generate money through co-financing from governments, private sector, and other donors. As per CSE’s analysis of biodiversity funding using the GEF database, since its inception and until the end of January 2025, the GEF has funded 6,317 projects, contributing USD 26.23 billion in direct funding and USD 179.63 billion in co-financing. Out of these, 2,360 projects focused on biodiversity and directly received USD 11.06 billion and USD 71.90 billion as co-financing.<sup>24</sup>

GEF also manages the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund, which was set up at COP15 in 2022. This fund can accept contributions from not only governments, but also the private sector and philanthropies. To date, 11 donor countries and the Government of Quebec have pledged nearly USD 400 million to the GBF Fund, with USD 163 million pledged during COP16.<sup>25</sup> In addition, in May 2024, the government of China and UNEP launched the Kunming Biodiversity Fund



**Table 2: Total funds, grants, and co-finance for each GEF replenishment**

GEF replenishments	Number of projects	Number of biodiversity projects	Total funds (bn)	Total funds for biodiversity (bn)	GEF grants for biodiversity (bn)	Co-finance for biodiversity (bn)
8	603	291	205.86	19.37	2.23	18.99
7	838	313	43.66	22.34	2.49	19.85
6	795	256	35.21	15.43	1.53	13.90
5	1188	379	38.69	10.76	1.51	9.24
4	847	322	21.13	4.82	0.94	3.88
3	916	244	14.94	3.93	0.86	3.07
2	629	287	9.52	2.45	0.70	1.75
1	382	206	4.19	1.34	0.45	0.89
Pilot phase	120	62	3.38	0.05	0.31	0.15

Source: <https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/database>

(KBF).<sup>26</sup> This has received a contribution of USD 200 million from China for funding projects on biodiversity and sustainable development. Other than this, the Cali Fund, launched at COP16, aims to generate funds for nature conservation using digital sequence information. However, Cali fund is voluntary in nature and developed countries showed reluctance to contribute to it. As of now, this fund has not received any money.<sup>27</sup>

## Private funds

Although philanthropic organisations and businesses contribute to the funds available for biodiversity conservation and this contribution has increased over the years, information on these contributions is piecemeal.

The OECD reported that philanthropic flows grew from USD 501 million in 2017, peaking at USD 932 million in 2021, before decreasing to USD 700 million in 2022.<sup>28</sup> Among the 40 foundations included in the OECD database that reported on biodiversity-related activities, Bezos Earth Fund, the Postcode Lottery Group, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation were the most significant donors, providing 51 per cent of the total biodiversity-related philanthropic funding during 2017–2022. Groups like Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the MAVA Foundation and the Arcadia Fund demonstrate the strongest focus on biodiversity, allocating more than two-thirds of their annual grant-making to the conservation of nature and related aspects.

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At COP16, a commitment of \$51.7 million was made by 11 philanthropies to establish high-quality marine protected areas (MPAs) in the high seas. This funding is the largest private philanthropic commitment to high seas conservation to date and is aimed at accelerating the development and governance of MPAs towards the 30x30 target. This partnership includes key foundations such as Arcadia, Becht Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Vere Initiatives, Schmidt Ocean Institute, Bezos Earth Fund, Blue Action Fund, Blue Nature Alliance, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Oceans 5, and Paul M. Angell Family Foundation.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, businesses too are contributing to available funds to support the overall world economy. An assessment by Nature Finance shows that around USD 570 million is committed by global corporations and investors. These include companies such as Apple which has committed USD 57 million annually for restoration work, and Astra Zeneca which has committed USD 57 million annually for tree plantation programmes.<sup>30</sup>

### **Innovative financing**

As public, private, philanthropies and business are providing just a mere sliver of what is needed, there is increased dependence on innovative financing. Various methods for generating funds under innovative financing have been included in Target 19. These include nature-based solutions (NbS) such as payment for ecosystem services, green bonds, biodiversity offsets and credits, and benefit-sharing mechanisms.



While bio-credits are similar to carbon credits which are used to control greenhouse gas emissions, they are not designed to compensate for actions with negative impacts on biodiversity. Instead, proceeds from the sale of bio-credits are used to protect and restore biodiversity where it exists. Biodiversity credits enable companies to fund projects that benefit biodiversity, allowing them to contribute for ecosystem and wildlife conservation, while also fulfilling their environmental commitments. It is hoped that this difference will ensure that bio-credits do not become a greenwash mechanism.

According to estimates by the World Economic Forum 2023, the global market for biodiversity credits could reach USD 2 billion by 2030 and potentially grow to USD 69 billion annually by 2050, if the market matures and more companies participate.<sup>31</sup>

However, as of now, the bio-credit market is underdeveloped and there are ongoing efforts to ensure ethical standards and tangible biodiversity support. The Biodiversity Credit Alliance was launched in 2022 at COP15. At COP16, on October 28, the International Advisory Panel on Biodiversity Credits introduced the Framework for High-Integrity Biodiversity Credit Markets to help guide the creation of a biodiversity credits market. This framework sets standards and monitoring systems to attract investments to conserve and restore ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as address the issue of greenwashing.<sup>32</sup>

In a related development, in September 2023, the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNDF) released recommendations to help businesses shift global financial flows away from nature-negative outcomes and towards nature-positive outcomes. Industry can meet TNDF recommendations by purchasing bio-credits, the proceeds of which can be used to fund restoration and conservation projects. This provided credibility to bio-credits and the biodiversity credit market is already growing.<sup>33</sup>

There is still not much data on biocredits but there are efforts to bridge this gap. The Pollination Group, an advisory firm based in London, released its second report on Voluntary Biodiversity Credit Markets on September 30, 2024.<sup>34</sup> The report indicates that by 2020, between \$325,000 and \$1.87 million worth of credits were sold. This money has helped projects cover about 26,000–125,000 hectares of land.

Their results are based on a global online survey conducted in May–June 2024. A total of 16 organisations working with biodiversity credits participated in the

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survey. Out of these, eight sell credits, and reported that while most sold fewer than 100 credits, one organisation has managed to sell over 100,000 credits. Prices for these credits vary widely. Some organisations sold their credits for USD 200–700 each (13 per cent), while others sold their credits for USD 25 or less (13 per cent) or USD 2–10 each (50 per cent).

The survey identified large companies, banks, and small businesses as major buyers, mostly located in Europe (44 per cent), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (25 per cent), and Oceania and North America (19 per cent). Around 81 per cent of the respondents stated that buyers want credits from projects close to their operations.

The survey also highlighted the involvement of indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs) in biodiversity projects. Around 75 per cent respondents said that these groups take part in helping to implement projects and share benefits. Many respondents (20 per cent) noted that credits from projects involving IPLCs tend to be more expensive, with price increases of 15–300 per cent.

Regeneration projects, which aim to improve nature over time, are the most common activities supported by these schemes. All respondents confirmed their programmes help generate credits for terrestrial ecosystems (100 per cent), freshwater ecosystems (63 per cent), and coastal ecosystems (56 per cent).

Most survey respondents expected to sell over 100,000 biodiversity credits in the next five years, with just 25 per cent unsure about future sales. Companies that are involved in bio-credits include Terrasos, Leaf Coalition, OpenEarth, WilderLands, Ecomarkets and Value Nature.

Some examples of bio-credits on the ground include the “Ocean Conservation Commitments (OCCs)” launched in September 2023 by the Government of Niue and the non-profit Tofia Niue. A total of 127,000 OCCs available (based on the size of Niue’s Moana Mahu Marine Protected Area, which spans 127,000 square kilometers) and interested buyers can purchase one OCC for 20 years at the rate of USD 148 (NZD \$250). Non-governmental organisations such as the Blue Nature Alliance, Conservation International and private donors have already come forward and invested. Another example is Besparingsskog, a Swedish forest cooperative, which sold bio-credits to Swedbank to protect 13 hectares of forested area over a period of 20 years. Similarly, pharma major GlaxoSmithKline purchased bio-credits from rePLANET to protect Cusuco National Park in Honduras. Initiatives

like Colombia's Bosque de Niebla cloud forest project demonstrate how biodiversity credits can protect endangered species and restore vital ecosystems.

Countries such as India and Scotland are currently discussing or developing biodiversity credit markets and related policies. India is initiating a Green Credit Programme which includes efforts for water conservation and afforestation.

Similar to bio-credits, biodiversity offsets too are facing criticism. The challenges include difficulties in establishing equivalence between biodiversity losses in one area and gains in another. According to a study published in 2020, a total of USD 6–9 billion is invested annually in conservation through biodiversity offsets.<sup>35</sup>

Unlike credits, biodiversity offsets aim at compensating a negative impact on nature with an equivalent positive impact on biodiversity. Biodiversity offsets mobilise particularly from initiatives like wetland and stream mitigation banks. Despite their prevalence, the effectiveness of these schemes is often questioned, as many fail to achieve the goals of “no net loss” or “biodiversity net gain”.

At least 56 countries have established laws or policies that specifically require biodiversity offsets or some form of compensatory conservation. These countries include, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Columbia, France, Germany, India, Mexico, New Zealand, and South Africa. For instance, Australia initiated its Biodiversity Offset Scheme in 2016, which serves as a foundation for compliance and voluntary offsets.<sup>36</sup>

Other nature-based solutions being explored across the world include payment for ecosystem services (PES) and green financial products.

The PES mechanism facilitates financial compensation from beneficiaries of ecosystem services to resource owners and relies on voluntary financial transactions between service users and providers, based on mutually agreed-upon resource management rules. UNEP tracked approximately USD 3.5 billion in private financing allocated to PES initiatives in 2023. OECD also estimated USD 9.8 billion in funding for 153 PES programs in 2021.<sup>37</sup> Though effective, there are challenges in tracking PES programs due to the absence of a universally accepted definition for ecosystem services, complicating the assessment of active initiatives globally.

Green financial products, facilitate the flow of investment capital into companies and projects that have a positive impact on biodiversity. An estimated total of



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USD 4–6 billion is invested annually in biodiversity conservation through green financial products.<sup>38</sup> Though green bonds are promising, as they can complement sustainable land use and other biodiversity projects. However, many conservation projects are too small for the green bond market. Concerns have also been raised about their actual impact for forest conservation. Many fear that largely, to date, they have more been an effective mechanism for greenwashing. Green bond markets are projected to reach USD 1 trillion by 2030, and in June 2024, the World Bank announced a new bond expected to raise USD 200 million to support its sustainability activities and reforestation in Brazil’s Amazon.

Instead of depending on such solutions for resource mobilisation, civil society representatives suggest that more public funding should be made available. This would also ensure that the rights of IPLCs are protected from the threat of land grabs and displacement of indigenous and local communities. To support this cause, at COP16, there were demands that more money should be made available to IPLCs. For example, at least half of the contributions to the Cali Fund is likely to be provided to meet the needs of indigenous people and local communities, emphasising equity and collaboration in funding conservation initiatives.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion



It is more than two years since the adoption of KMGBF, and there is an urgent need to track progress against its 23 targets. Parties are expected to submit national reports to the CBD by February 2026. These national reports will feed into the global stocktake scheduled the same year at COP17 in Armenia.

To monitor progress, a framework was outlined by COP15 in its decision 15/5.<sup>39</sup> This framework has a set of headline and binary indicators that can be used by Parties to monitor and report their progress. Some of the indicators track actions and policies that support the implementation of the KMGBF. For example, these can be used to monitor the establishment of protected areas. Others track actions that reduce the drivers of biodiversity loss. For example, there are indicators for monitoring pollution. There are also indicators to measure the outcomes such as the risk of losing species and ecosystems and to measure the provision of ecosystem services and nature's contributions to people. Headline and binary indicators are mandatory in the national reporting template, whereas the component and complementary indicators are optional.

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Over the last two years, progress seems inadequate. Here are some examples:

As of now, only 49 Parties have submitted national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) while 128 Parties have submitted national targets instead.<sup>40</sup>

In case of Target 3, popularly known as the 30x30 target, the Protected Planet Report 2024 indicates that only 17.6 per cent of land and inland waters and 8.4 per cent of the ocean and coastal areas are protected as yet. This needs to reach 30 per cent by 2030 in both cases. On the positive side, the report reveals that 177 countries have completed protected area management effectiveness assessments.<sup>41</sup>

For monitoring progress towards Target 2 of KMGBF, the Society for Ecological Restoration has developed the resource guide offering advice and tools to implement restoration projects. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration released Standards of Practice in early 2024 to guide ecosystem restoration and promote community engagement. The EU adopted its nature restoration law in June 2024, setting legally binding targets for ecosystem restoration across the continent.<sup>42</sup>

In case of the impact of conservation efforts, we are continuing to lose species and the number of species at risk of extinction is still on an upward trend. This is indicated by data provided by IUCN. Currently, out of more than 166,000 species assessed for the IUCN Red List, more than 47,000 are threatened.<sup>43</sup> In the 2017–2020 report, the data stood at 35,765 threatened species out of 128,918 species assessed.<sup>44</sup> The 2024 Living Planet Index reports about an average decline of 73 per cent in wildlife populations since 1970.

In the case of Target 6 which mandates that invasive species are controlled, the IPBES Invasive Alien Species Assessment published in 2023, suggests that only 17 per cent of countries have national laws or regulations specifically addressing invasive alien species. This can lead to huge losses as the 37,000 alien species have been introduced to regions and biomes with have estimated cost exceeding USD 423 billion annually.<sup>45</sup>

In the case of Target 13, the multilateral mechanism for sharing benefits generated using DSI was adopted and a system to share the funds generated was established. However, the formula for fund allocation is still under discussion.

Progress on Target 19, focused on resource mobilisation, remains fragmented, with the world set to miss the 2025 target for mobilising USD 20 billion from developed countries.<sup>46</sup>

Target 23 of the KMGBF stresses that gender equality and empowerment of women and girls is crucial for successful implementation. For a gender-responsive approach for biodiversity action, Women4Biodiversity and UNEP-WCMC have collaborated with several Parties and stakeholders to develop a methodology for a component indicator to track national implementation of the gender plan of action.<sup>47</sup>

Overall, progress remains slow and unquantified as per the indicators. As this gap is expected to be addressed at COP17, there needs to be concerted effort towards meeting the targets.







# Annexure

## History of negotiations

Over the last 3 decades and more, the Convention on Biological Diversity has met 16 times. We have used the Convention's website, coverage of each Conference of Parties by the International Institute for Sustainable Development's Earth Negotiation Bulletin, and by Down To Earth magazine to highlight the major developments over the years.

COP	Year	Country	Beginning	End	Days	City	Major developments
1.	1994	 Bahamas	28.11.1994	09.12.1994	12	Nassau	Adoption of medium-term work program, CHM, GEF implemented
2.	1995	 Indonesia	06.11.1995	17.11.1995	12	Jakarta	Operationalisation of CHM, biosafety, location of CBD secretariat at Montreal, Canada, Jakarta Mandate on marine and coastal biodiversity
3.	1996	 Argentina	04.11.1996	15.11.1996	12	Buenos Aires	Agricultural BD, MoU with GEF
4.	1998	 Slovakia	04.05.1998	15.05.1998	12	Bratislava	Integration of BD in different sectors
5.	2000	 Kenya	15.05.2000	26.05.2000	12	Nairobi	Adoption of Cartagena Protocol on biosafety, work programmes on Article 8(j), dry and sub-humid lands, and incentive measures
6.	2002	 Netherlands	07.04.2002	19.04.2002	13	The Hague	Bonn Guidelines on ABS and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation
7.	2004	 Malaysia	09.02.2004	20.02.2004	12	Kuala Lumpur	ABS for access and benefit sharing, work programmes on mountain biodiversity, protected areas, technology transfer, the Akwé: Kon Guidelines, and the Addis Ababa Principles and guidelines for sustainable use
8.	2006	 Brazil	20.03.2006	31.03.2006	12	Curitiba	Work program on island BD, Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI)
9.	2008	 Germany	19.05.2008	30.05.2008	12	Bonn	A resource mobilisation strategy, and scientific criteria and guidance for marine areas in need of protection
10.	2010	 Japan	18.10.2010	29.10.2010	12	Nagoya	Adoption of Nagoya Protocol, launch of strategic plan for BD 2011–2020, including the Aichi targets, and implementation of the resource mobilisation



11.	2012	 India	08.10.2012	19.10.2012	12	Hyderabad	Doubling biodiversity-related international financial resource flows, national BD strategies
12.	2014	 South Korea	06.10.2014	17.10.2014	12	Pyeongchang	Implementation of "Pyeongchang Roadmap", integrate work of IPLCs under the convention and its protocols
13.	2016	 Mexico	04.12.2016	17.12.2016	14	Cancun	Cancun declaration, Aichi targets, DSI, gene drive, BD across different sectors, synthetic biology, review of strategic plan for BD 2011–2020
14.	2018	 Egypt	13.11.2018	29.11.2018	16	SharmEl-Sheik	Open-ended Working Group on the GBF, established Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) to continue work on DSI, adopted Rutzolijirisaxik voluntary guidelines
15.	2022	 Canada	07.12.2022	19.12.2022	13	Montreal	Adoption of KMGBF, multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing, overall capacity building
16.	2024	 Colombia	21.10.2024	01.11.2024	12	Cali	Article8(j), DSI, Cali fund, establishment of permanent subsidiary body, review of NBSAPs, operationalisation of a multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism of DSI, recognition of Afro-descendent communities

Source: Convention on Biological Diversity. Available at [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int) ; International Institute for Sustainable Development. Available at <https://www.iisd.org/>; Earth Negotiations Bulletin. Available at <https://enb.iisd.org/> ; Down To Earth. Available at [www.downtoearth.org.in](http://www.downtoearth.org.in)

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## **COP1**

**Place:** Nassau, Bahamas

**Dates:** 28 November–9 December, 1994

The primary focus of COP1 was on creating organisational structures, frameworks, policies, and commitments necessary for future actions. A work programme was adopted to guide work from 1995 to 1997, covering areas such as the Convention's secretariat, financial mechanisms, national reports on implementation, and the Convention's interactions with other international organisations. A clearing-house mechanism was also created to promote technical and scientific cooperation among countries, facilitating the sharing of information and resources. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice was put in place to provide scientific guidance, help shape policies and decision-making. The Global Environment Facility was chosen as the interim financial mechanism for the convention and even at that time many delegates, especially from developing nations, expressed concerns about the Facility's ability to meet its financial commitments and effectively support biodiversity projects.

Delegates recognised the areas of concern which included coral reefs, biosecurity, and rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). The International Coral Reef Initiative was launched to raise awareness and promote best management practices. Impact of genetically modified organisms on biodiversity was discussed and acknowledged that while these might offer agricultural benefits, they could also harm the ecosystem, such as reducing genetic diversity. A biosafety protocol to protect biodiversity from the risks associated with GMOs was envisaged.

The meeting ended with the Bahamas Ministerial Declaration, which called for collaborative action in biodiversity conservation and highlighted the vital role of indigenous communities.

## COP2

**Place:** Jakarta, Indonesia

**Dates:** 6–17 November, 1995

One of the central discussions during COP2 was the importance of biodiversity for supporting societal well-being. Delegates emphasised that conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity is critical for cultural, economic, and health benefits, underscoring that diverse ecosystems are foundational to human prosperity.

A major topic of debate was the potential development of a biosafety protocol to regulate the handling and transfer of living modified organisms to mitigate risks posed to biodiversity. Participants called for the creation of guidelines and a legally binding framework to ensure safety in biotechnological advancements. Thus, an Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on Biosafety was created to develop these guidelines further and work on a biosafety protocol that can effectively address the risks associated with modified organisms.

The conference also focused on the operationalisation of the clearing-house mechanism, which was designed to promote scientific and technical cooperation among signatory nations, and delegates stressed the urgency of making it functional.

Concerns over threats to marine and coastal ecosystems, such as pollution and overfishing, were addressed. Delegates underscored the necessity for specific measures and strategies to protect marine life, crucial for both ecological reasons and for the livelihoods of communities that depend on these resources. Financial mechanisms to support biodiversity initiatives were discussed as well, with the Global Environment Facility identified as the interim institutional structure for these mechanisms.

The issue of access to genetic resources and the rights of countries over their genetic resources was discussed along with the importance of creating fair agreements that ensure mutual benefits for both providers and users of these resources. This included recognition of traditional knowledge and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), as well as their vital role in biodiversity conservation.

The relationship between forests, biodiversity, and IPLCs gained prominence, with a call to engage local communities in biodiversity conservation efforts, acknowledging the value of their traditional knowledge and rights in managing and conserving forested ecosystems.

Montreal, Canada, was designated as the permanent location for the convention's secretariat.

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## **COP3**

**Place:** Buenos Aires, Argentina

**Dates:** 4–15 November, 1996

Just as COP1 established the basic machinery of the Convention and COP2 adopted decisions for programming, COP3 sought to address implementation in the context of these decisions.

Work programmes on agricultural and forest biodiversity were put in place. Delegates highlighted the importance of creating guidelines and action plans to enhance the management and conservation of these biodiversity areas. An agreement was reached to hold an intersessional workshop specifically addressing Article 8(j), which deals with traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Another key topic was the relationship between the COP and the Global Environment Facility. After extensive negotiations, a memorandum of understanding was established to formalise the operational relationship between the two and to ensure that the Facility would continue to support the financial mechanisms of the convention, facilitating funding for biodiversity projects.

During the sessions, delegates discussed the clearing-house mechanism, which aims to promote and facilitate technical cooperation related to biodiversity. The assessment and review of the clearing-house mechanism highlighted that it should be needs-driven and decentralised, with a focus on capacity building for countries with limited resources.

Biosafety emerged as another crucial topic, with the adoption of a decision to support the ongoing work for the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on Biosafety. The COP urged the development of a protocol on biosafety, expressing the urgent need to address issues related to living modified organisms.

Additionally, discussions were held on access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources, and the role of traditional knowledge in managing biodiversity. Delegates recognised the need to create national legislations and guidelines that reflect these principles.



## COP4

**Place:** Bratislava, Slovakia

**Dates:** 4–15 May, 1998

Delegates addressed a wide range of topics at COP4, which included inland water, marine and coastal biodiversity, agricultural and forest biodiversity, as well as the implementation of Article 8(j), which focuses on traditional knowledge.

One key area of focus was the need to enhance the integration of biodiversity concerns into various sectors, such as tourism, and the role of the private sector in achieving the objectives of the convention. The ministers and special guests participating in a ministerial round-table discussed ways of incorporating biodiversity issues into broader activities.

COP4 faced some organisational challenges; however, it achieved significant outcomes such as the adoption of work programmes on various thematic issues and the establishment of a working group dedicated to the implementation of Article 8(j), which emphasises the importance of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in biodiversity conservation.

Another major topic was the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other international agreements. Parties discussed synergies with global biodiversity initiatives, aiming for cooperative frameworks that can strengthen actions towards biodiversity conservation.

The working group for inland water ecosystems discussed conservation options and the importance of monitoring and assessment. Marine and coastal biodiversity called for a precautionary approach, in light of threats such as coral bleaching.

Forest biodiversity remained a significant concern, with recognition of the importance of traditional knowledge and indigenous rights in conservation efforts.

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## **COP5**

**Place:** Nairobi, Kenya

**Dates:** 15–26 May, 2000

At COP5, delegates discussed and adopted decisions on key topics, including protecting biodiversity in dry and sub-humid lands, accessing genetic resources, managing alien species, promoting sustainable use, and connecting biodiversity with tourism.

A major focus of COP5 was a new work programme that aimed to improve how biodiversity is managed, while also addressing challenges related to tourism and incentives for better practices. Delegates emphasised the importance of working together across countries and sectors to integrate biodiversity protection into broader development efforts.

The conference also featured a high-level segment centered on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which is crucial for managing genetically modified organisms. This protocol was adopted a few months earlier in January at a special meeting. This segment highlighted the need for building capacity in countries so they can effectively implement the protocol. A significant achievement of this meeting was that 68 countries signed the Cartagena Protocol, showing their commitment to protecting biodiversity.

However, the United States, which has not yet signed the Convention on Biological Diversity, maintained its distance from the biosafety protocol. India, while not a signatory either, expressed hope of signing the protocol at the next UN meeting in New York in May 2001. The protocol is important as it ensures safe practices for the transfer and use of genetically modified organisms, which are a growing concern in international trade.

Another important discussion was about access and benefit-sharing (ABS). Delegates called for equitable sharing of benefits derived from genetic resources, and addressed the complexities regarding intellectual property rights. The need for creating rules and guidelines to manage ABS and the importance of building capacity in developing countries to handle these resources was also discussed.

The topic of invasive alien species was a major concern, with emphasis on establishing guidelines for preventative measures and mitigate their impacts on local ecosystems.

Delegates stressed the importance of shifting from creating policies to actually implementing actions that address the loss of biodiversity.

## COP6

**Place:** The Hague, Netherlands

**Dates:** 7–19 April, 2002

One of the main topics of discussion at COP6 was protection of forests. Delegates formulated the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity. They shared various ideas on prioritisation of forests, curbing illegal logging, and ensuring that local communities benefit from forest resources. A key issue was the need for securing financial support from wealthier nations to help with conservation efforts. It was agreed that the Convention on Biological Diversity should collaborate with other international groups working towards forest conservation, like the United Nations Forum on Forests.

Invasive species or non-native plants and animals that harm local ecosystems, were another major topic of discourse. Delegates discussed how to deal with these invasive species and adopted the Guiding Principles for the Prevention, Introduction, and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species that threaten Ecosystems, Habitats, or Species. The question of financial burden for managing invasive species also came up, highlighting the potential costs involved.

On the topic of access and benefit-sharing, the aim of the conference was to make sure that countries rich in biodiversity would receive fair benefits from the use of their plants and animals. The delegates agreed on the Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits arising out of their Utilisation. The discussions also touched on the roles of patents and the rights to use genetic resources, with calls for companies to pay fairly to the countries providing these resources.

Traditional knowledge was also a key topic, focusing on the need to protect the knowledge of indigenous peoples about using plants and animals. Delegates agreed on involving these communities in processes as they have valuable knowledge on managing resources sustainably.

The conference also developed a strategic plan for the 2002–2010, outlining the main goals and priorities for the future. COP discussed the money and resources needed to put the goals into action. They recognised that significant funding is necessary to support conservation work and related activities.

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## **COP7**

**Place:** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Dates:** 9–20 February, 2004

The conference built on the outcomes of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. Access and benefit-sharing remained a central theme. Delegates worked toward an international regime to ensure fair benefit-sharing from the use of genetic resources, support developing countries, and uphold the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs). They focused on developing guidelines to help manage access to genetic resources and sharing of benefit more effectively, based on experiences gathered from the Bonn Guidelines.

Protecting marine and coastal biodiversity was another significant topic. Delegates talked about creating marine protected areas and setting specific conservation targets. The need for financial and technical support to implement the proposed work programme effectively, and the importance of supporting local communities in managing these protected areas, was highlighted. Mountain biodiversity was also on the agenda. A dedicated work programme was discussed to protect mountain ecosystems, stressing international cooperation and the need for financial resources to support local communities and conservation efforts in mountainous regions.

The conference addressed the integration of biodiversity into other areas, like tourism. Guidelines for sustainable tourism were adopted to protect biodiversity and support local communities. They recognised tourism's dual potential to harm or support biodiversity, with a call for balanced approaches.

The meeting discussed the strategic plan, setting realistic targets and indicators to monitor progress towards the goal of reducing biodiversity loss by 2010. The aim was to create a framework to help countries align national targets with the Convention's global objectives.

A key achievement was the adoption of the Akwé: Kon Guidelines—voluntary frameworks for conducting cultural, environmental, and social impact assessments in areas inhabited by indigenous communities. This initiative deals in the importance of understanding indigenous perspectives and integrating their knowledge into decision-making processes. The Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for Sustainable Use were adopted, promoting sustainable biodiversity management through supportive policies and practices. These guidelines aim to minimise negative impacts on ecosystems and advocate equitable benefit-sharing. Other issues discussed including communication, education, and public awareness; incentive measures to enhance biodiversity conservation; and the management of inland water ecosystems. Delegates discussed the need for sustainable financing and capacity-building in developing countries to implement these actions.

## COP8

**Place:** Curitiba, Brazil

**Dates:** 20–31 March, 2006

One of the key discussions revolved around access and benefit-sharing. Delegates emphasised the urgency of establishing an international framework for negotiations, ideally aiming for a consensus by 2010. The discussions reaffirmed the involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), advocating for their participation in policies that directly affect their rights and livelihoods.

Protected areas (PAs) emerged as another major theme. Delegates reviewed the implementation of programmes designed to create and sustain PAs, calling for better reporting by member states and improved financial support for developing countries to protect biodiversity. Special attention was paid to marine protected areas beyond national jurisdictions, recognising that such areas require immediate and robust conservation efforts.

The necessity of integrating biodiversity considerations into national climate policies was highlighted. Delegates acknowledged the role of biodiversity in adapting to climate impacts and called for enhanced cooperation among environmental agreements to maximise effectiveness.

Another critical subject was island biodiversity, where the new work programme dedicated to island ecosystems was well received. It aimed to reduce biodiversity loss in small island developing states, given their unique vulnerabilities.

The Global Taxonomy Initiative was also a focal area. Delegates discussed the importance of taxonomy in understanding and managing biodiversity. They noted that many regions, especially developing nations, face a “taxonomic impediment” due to a lack of expertise and resources. Actions were proposed to enhance taxonomic capacities and promote global cooperation to improve biodiversity data accessibility. Additionally, the conference addressed communication, education and public awareness, emphasising the need to raise awareness and engage the public and stakeholders. Delegates called for increased resources for educational programmes on biodiversity.

Discussions on dry and sub-humid lands underscored the importance of conserving these ecosystems, concerning their role in climate change adaptation and socio-economic contributions. The agenda called for improved synergy with the Convention to Combat Desertification and better data collection methods for biodiversity assessment.

Importance of traditional knowledge, under Article 8(j), was reaffirmed. Delegates stressed the need for IPLC participation in talks on access and benefit sharing and supported sui generis legal systems to protect traditional knowledge. A voluntary fund to support indigenous participation and development of indicators to measure traditional knowledge’s role in biodiversity conservation was proposed.



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## **COP9**

**Place:** Bonn, Germany

**Dates:** 19–30 May, 2008

Agricultural biodiversity was a major focus, especially that concerning biofuels. Delegates discussed the need for guidelines to ensure biofuel production is sustainable and does not harm food security or the environment. The European Union pushed for these guidelines, while many African countries emphasised caution with large-scale biofuel projects.

The global strategy for plant conservation was also addressed, with agreement to continue this strategy beyond 2010 and enhance international cooperation to protect plant biodiversity. Delegates recognised the importance of developing national strategies and adapting to climate change impacts on plant life.

Discussions on invasive alien species stressed the need for better management and international cooperation to limit their negative effects. Delegates highlighted the importance of sharing information and building capacity to tackle IAS effectively. Emphasis was placed on understanding how climate change and land-use affect their spread.

Forest biodiversity was addressed with emphasis on sustainable governance. Delegates urged for strict risk assessments before the release of genetically modified trees and highlighted the need of financial support for sustainable forest management.

On incentive measures, delegates explored ways to create positive incentives for biodiversity conservation while discouraging harmful practices. They noted the potential negative effects of incentives arising from certain agricultural practices, especially in relation to biofuels.

The ecosystem approach was promoted as a useful framework for integrating biodiversity into national policies. Delegates urged countries to apply this approach in land-use and agricultural planning. Progress toward the 2010 target for reducing biodiversity loss was discussed, emphasising the need to keep evaluating progress. The conference aimed to align biodiversity goals with broader millennium development goals, reinforcing the crucial role of biodiversity conservation for sustainable development.

On the topic of financial resources, participants worked on a resource mobilisation strategy to support biodiversity initiatives. They stressed the importance of developed countries fulfilling their financial commitments and explored innovative financing mechanisms to support conservation efforts.

Delegates also discussed the need for collaboration with the private sector and the importance of facilitating transfer of technologies that support biodiversity conservation.

## COP10

**Place:** Nagoya, Japan

**Dates:** 18–29 October, 2010

At COP10, over 7,000 delegates, UN agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, indigenous and local communities, academia, and industry gathered to discuss strategic, substantive, administrative, and budgetary issues. The conference concluded with the adoption of 47 key decisions, marking a notable success in the history of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

A major outcome was the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation. This protocol provides a framework for countries to share benefits derived from genetic resources fairly, ensuring indigenous communities and countries of origin receive an equitable share of profits. This decision, finalised after seven years of negotiations, was hailed as a milestone in biodiversity governance.

Delegates also approved the CBD strategic plan for 2011–2020, outlining ambitious goals to halt biodiversity loss and ensure that ecosystems remain healthy and capable of providing essential services, such as clean water and food. The plan sets specific targets for countries to achieve over the next decade, urging all nations to take action by integrating conservation efforts into their development plans.

Delegates focused on the need to conserve marine ecosystems and manage coastal resources sustainably. Strategies were discussed to protect these vital areas from threats like pollution and overfishing. The impacts of climate change on biodiversity were a major concern. Delegates put emphasis on collaborative efforts to mitigate climate impacts on ecosystems.

The meeting reiterated the role of traditional knowledge and the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), underscoring the importance of protecting and integrating traditional knowledge into biodiversity policies. Effective implementation of agreements that govern access to genetic resources and ensure that benefits are shared fairly among those who contribute to conservation efforts was highlighted.

The need for financial resources and strategies for increasing funding, including innovative financing mechanisms to support biodiversity initiatives, was discussed extensively. There was significant debate on geo-engineering, involving large-scale interventions in the Earth's natural systems to combat climate change. The conference established a de facto moratorium on these practices, reflecting a precautionary approach while further research is conducted on potential impacts. COP10 also aimed to improve cooperation between biodiversity-related conventions, like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), to foster a more coordinated global response to environmental challenges.

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## **COP11**

**Place:** Hyderabad, India

**Dates:** 08–19 October, 2012

The conference focused on implementing the strategic plan and addressing financial resource mobilisation, a major concern due to the funding needed to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. A key outcome of COP11 was the adoption of 33 decisions addressing various issues, including the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the status of biodiversity. Delegates underlined the need to balance financial support for biodiversity conservation with poverty eradication goals, especially for developing countries, recognising that effective implementation requires both strategic action and investment.

In discussions on financial resources, developing countries called for doubling international biodiversity finance, targeting at least USD 300 billion annually by 2020. They also sought robust monitoring of park management effectiveness and financial contributions. However, these discussions were contentious, with differences between developed and developing nations over commitments and responsibilities under the Rio Principles.

Marine biodiversity received substantial attention, specifically the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) and recognition of ecologically and biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs). Delegates agreed to develop guidelines for environmental impact assessments in marine environments.

Climate change and its link to biodiversity were discussed, particularly through mechanisms like REDD+ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation). Member states agreed on voluntary safeguards to prevent negative impacts from REDD+ on ecosystems. Biofuels also raised concern due to their potential adverse effects on biodiversity. Delegates noted these risks but also acknowledged the technologies that could mitigate them.

The issue of invasive species was addressed, with a focus on enhancing cooperation to manage harmful species introduced through means such as pets and aquariums. On land and resource management, the Peru delegation proposed strengthening links between biodiversity and agriculture, highlighting the sustainable use of genetic resources. The partnership between the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was prioritised to promote sustainable agricultural practices.

The high-level segment (HLS) of the conference featured discussions on how biodiversity underpins economic development and livelihoods. Countries emphasised the need to incorporate biodiversity into national strategies for sustainable development, particularly in the context of the post-2015 agenda. Progress on various other Aichi Targets was reviewed, including those related to protected areas. Parties recognised these areas must be well-managed and adequately funded to effectively conserve biodiversity.

## COP12

**Place:** Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea

**Dates:** 06–17 October, 2014

The main outcome of COP 12 was the adoption of the “Pyeongchang Roadmap” which focused on 5 issues: mid-term review of progress towards the Strategic Plan and Aichi targets, biodiversity and sustainable development, review of implementation support, cooperation with other conventions, and resource mobilisation.

During this meeting, the Nagoya Protocol entered into force and the meeting marked the first COP/MOP. The Nagoya Protocol provides a legal framework to ensure that benefits from natural resources and their commercial derivatives are shared with local communities.

Findings from the fourth Global Biodiversity Outlook, indicated that most countries were unlikely to meet the Aichi targets by the deadlines. COP12 expanded action on invasive alien species and issued guidance on addressing risks from alien species introduced as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, live bait and, live food.

On financing, COP12 failed to make progress. While the members upheld the Hyderabad Commitment to double financial funding by 2015, they introduced a loophole for countries to renegotiate this decision at COP13. A reference to domestic resource mobilisation was included, in the face of initial opposition from some large developing countries wary of releasing the Global North from its historic responsibilities. The High-Level Panel on Global Assessment of Resources for Implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 estimated a need for USD 150–440 billion annually, far exceeding the USD 50 billion being spent at the time.

Marine issues were an area of concern, as countries with strong fisheries interests insisted that areas beyond national jurisdiction fall under an ongoing UN General Assembly process, not the CBD.

Ministers adopted the Gangwon Declaration, which invites the UN General Assembly to integrate CBD objectives, the strategic plan and the Aichi Targets in the post-2015 development agenda.

COP12 produced two decisions—one on biodiversity integration into the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDGs), as well poverty eradication and sustainable development; another on biodiversity and human health. The Ebola crisis highlighted biodiversity’s role in public health.

Approximately 3,000 delegates attended the meetings and a total of 33 decisions were adopted

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## **COP13**

**Place:** Cancun, Mexico

**Dates:** 04–17 December, 2016

COP13 was held under the theme ‘Mainstreaming biodiversity for well-being and led to a total of 33 decisions. More than 8,000 delegates attended the Conference.

One of the major developments was the adoption of the Cancun Declaration on the need for immediate action to stop biodiversity loss. This was the outcome of the high-level segment which brought together ministers responsible for the agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism sectors and focused on mainstreaming conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in those sectors. The declaration highlighted the importance of incorporating biodiversity into all areas of economy and society.

A key focus was reviewing the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, set during COP10 in Nagoya, Japan. This had a deadline of 2020 and while some progress was there, significant gaps remained. The Parties discussed ways to improve national reporting and encouraged countries to share best practices and lessons learned from their experiences.

The issue of digital sequence information on genetic resources was also addressed, acknowledging advances in biotechnology. An ad hoc technical expert group was established to examine potential implications of the use of DSI on genetic resources.

The relationship between biodiversity and climate change was another major theme. Delegates called for integrated approaches to tackle both issues and for better cooperation between biodiversity and climate conventions to create synergies in implementation.

Resource mobilisation was identified as crucial for achieving biodiversity goals and COP13 explored innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships. Countries were urged to increase their financial contributions, especially to support biodiversity efforts in developing nations.

The Parties discussed a number of items on emerging technologies, such as synthetic biology to ensure that the Convention remains relevant in future environmental governance. COP13 commended the work of the online forum and the ad hoc technical expert group on synthetic biology. It also acknowledged the operational definition of synthetic biology as a further development and new dimension of biotechnology that combines science, technology, and engineering to accelerate understanding, design, redesign, manufacture, and/or modify genetic materials, living organisms, and biological systems.

The conference concluded with a strong call to accelerate implementation and global cooperation to address the biodiversity crisis.



## COP14

**Place:** Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt

**Dates:** 13–29 November, 2018

The primary theme of the 14th Conference of the Parties was “Investing in Biodiversity for People and Planet”.

The Parties adopted 38 decisions which include a review of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; the process for the preparation for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and for the Global Biodiversity Outlook.

A number of technical issues were addressed, including: scenarios for the 2050 Vision; mainstreaming; gender; links with health and with climate change; pollinators; wildlife management; protected areas; marine and coastal biodiversity; invasive alien species; digital sequence information; synthetic biology; traditional knowledge; and liability and redress.

The high-level segment focused on mainstreaming conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in manufacturing and processing, infrastructure, energy and mining, and health sectors. This part of the conference concluded with the adoption of the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration on the need for collaborative actions to reverse biodiversity loss and ensure sustainable development.

There were discussions on digital sequence information on genetic resources. An Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group was established to delve deeper into this matter, with parties required to submit their views and information on regulation and related benefit-sharing mechanisms.

The Rutzolijirisaxik Voluntary Guidelines to facilitate the repatriation of traditional knowledge to its original holders was adopted.

Another important discussion revolved around synthetic biology, particularly regarding engineered gene drives and genome editing technologies. Delegates recognised the potential risks associated with these technologies and called for careful monitoring and a precautionary approach, requiring that case-by-case risk assessments be conducted before any releases into the environment.

The conference also addressed the issue of invasive alien species (IAS), where decisions were made to enhance capacity-building efforts and implement measures to prevent unintentional introductions of IAS. Many countries underscored the need for stringent regulations and collaboration in managing IAS.

On the financial side, discussions covered resource mobilisation and the financial mechanisms necessary for implementing the protocols effectively. Many developing countries emphasised the need for increased financial support and capacity building to meet their obligations under the relevant agreements.

The conference resulted in pressing calls for action to address the dual challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change. The need for integrating biological conservation into various economic sectors, including agriculture, fisheries, and urban development, was a recurring theme throughout the discussions.

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## **COP15**

**Place:** Montreal, Canada

**Dates:** 07–19 December, 2022

The Parties adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), which sets out ambitious goals and targets to be achieved by 2030, with a long-term vision for 2050. A total of 23 targets and 4 goals were put in place. Among the ambitious targets was the one on effective conservation and management of at least 30 per cent of the world’s lands, inland waters, coastal areas and oceans.

Parties also agreed to mobilise at least \$200 billion per year in domestic and international biodiversity-related funding from all sources by 2030. Along with this, international financial flows from developed to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and countries with economies in transition, would need to reach at least US\$ 20 billion per year by 2025, and to at least US\$ 30 billion per year by 2030.

The agreement also obligates countries to monitor and report every five years or less on a large set of “headline” and other indicators related to progress against the GBF’s goals and targets.

There were discussions on the controversial topic of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources. It was agreed that a multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of DSI should be established, aiming to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources while allowing countries control over their biodiversity. COP15 delegates agreed to establish a multilateral fund for the equitable sharing of benefits between providers and users of Digital sequence information on genetic resources.

The Global Environment Facility was requested to establish a Special Trust Fund to support the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework. The fund would complement existing support and scale up financing to ensure the timely implementation of the GBF with adequate, predictable and timely flow of funds.

## COP16

**Place:** Cali, Colombia

**Dates:** 21 October–01 November, 2024 and February xx-xx, 2025

At COP16, the national biodiversity strategies were assessed and the submission of a total of 119 national targets and 44 updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) was acknowledged. Countries were urged to continue implementing these strategies and to seek adequate support for their initiatives, particularly from international funding sources.

There was a discussion on protecting ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs). After eight years of negotiations, delegates adopted guidelines for implementing marine conservation targets under the KMGBF, a development celebrated for its potential to enhance marine biodiversity conservation efforts.

Delegates adopted a decision to improve coordination across international efforts, recognising that integrated strategies that consider the links between climate change and biodiversity loss are necessary to address both crises.

A landmark decision at COP16 was the establishment of a permanent subsidiary body focusing specifically on indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs). This new body is intended to ensure that the voices and rights of IPLCs are integrated within biodiversity conservation efforts. “New Programme of Work and Institutional Arrangements on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities”.

A multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism for digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources was operationalised. A global fund, known as the Cali fund, was established to support this mechanism and to ensure that benefits derived from DSI are shared fairly.

Afro-descendant communities were recognised for their essential role in biodiversity conservation. This would ensure their inclusion in discussions and resource allocations.

Negotiations regarding resource mobilisation and financial mechanisms were addressed at the resumed meeting of the COP16 in February 2025. Parties agreed on a resource mobilisation strategy to close the global biodiversity finance gap. There was also a commitment to establish permanent arrangements for the financial mechanism while simultaneously working on improving existing financial instruments. This is likely to happen only by 2030.

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**More than three decades have gone by since the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted. This report documents the progress so far. The verdict: We have not done enough to protect biodiversity and the knowledge about its use.**

**FACTSHEET**



**WHERE'S THE MONEY FOR BIODIVERSITY?**



**FACTSHEET**

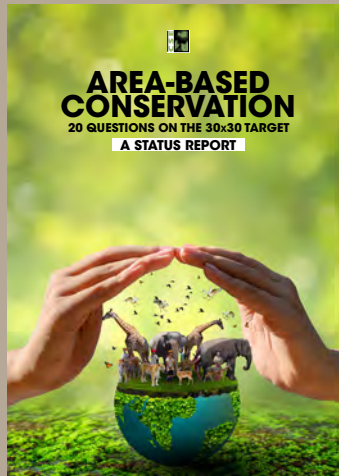


**THE ISSUE OF DIGITAL SEQUENCE INFORMATION ON GENETIC RESOURCES**

Digital Sequence Information refers to genetic data such as nucleotide sequence, protein sequence of organisms. It finds use in multiple areas, but its non-physical nature complicates the traditional methods of managing access and benefit-sharing established under the Convention on Biological Diversity to handle tangible genetic resources

COP16 will finalise the mechanism for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from use of DSI. Negotiators will set down a system for operationalization of the mechanism, as well as for a clear framework for both monetary and non-monetary benefits

Recommendations will address questions such as how financial contributions from users of DSI should be calculated and how they should be shared equitably with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities



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