

Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore

Fifty-Second Session
Geneva, March 4 to March 13, 2026

PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES: VOLUNTARY FUND

Document prepared by the Secretariat

NEED FOR REPLENISHMENT OF THE VOLUNTARY FUND

1. The amount available in the account of the WIPO Voluntary Fund for Accredited Indigenous and Local Communities (“the Fund”) minus the amount committed in respect of the Fifty-Second Session of the Committee was 6,175.40 Swiss Francs on January 15, 2026 (See document WIPO/GRTKF/IC/52/INF/4, page 4).
2. Since the last document of the kind (document WIPO/GRTKF/IC/51/3 dated April 17, 2025), the Government of Australia contributed 10,117.12 Swiss Francs (the equivalent of 20,000 Australian Dollars at the date) on November 18, 2025. Anonymous contributors contributed 2,392.95 Swiss Francs, an amount that was credited to the account of the Fund on July 31, 2025, following a call for voluntary contributions made by the Co-Chairs of the Committee during the Fifty-First Session of the Committee.
3. Under the present rules of the Fund as contained in Annex I¹, the extent of financial support that the Fund can provide depends exclusively on the voluntary contributions made by donors. It is recalled that after the disbursements made by the Fund in relation to the Diplomatic Conference on Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge that took place from May 13 to 24, 2024, and due to a lack of available funds afterwards, the Fund has not been able to finance the

¹ The rules of the Fund, all practical details on the Fund, its operation, and the application procedure, are also available on the WIPO website: <https://www.wipo.int/tk/en/igc/participation.html>.

participation of any of the applicants recommended for funding in respect of the Forty-Eighth, Forty-Ninth, Fiftieth and Fifty-First sessions of the Committee. Given the two recent contributions mentioned in paragraph 2, the Fund will be able to resume funding for the Fifty-Second Session of the Committee.

4. The WIPO Director General and the Chairs of the Committee have repeatedly encouraged Member States and interested public or private entities to contribute to the Fund in view of the crucial need to ensure participation by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. In its last report, the Advisory Board of the Fund indicated the following: “The Advisory Board strongly encouraged WIPO Member States and other potential donors to contribute further to the Fund so that the recommendations of the Advisory Board could be implemented with sufficient funding.” (See Annex to document WIPO/GRTKF/IC/51/INF/6, par. 3).

5. The Committee may recall that, in addition to previous recommendations issued by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) (see document WIPO/GRTKF/IC/51/3, para. 5), the UNPFII recommended the following as reflected in the Report on its Twenty-Fourth Session that took place from April 21 to May 2, 2025 (see UN Economic and Social Council document E/2025/43-E/C.19/2025/8 para. 21): “Noting the ongoing negotiations in the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore of the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Permanent Forum urges States to ensure adequate funding for the participation of Indigenous Peoples and to reach an agreement without delay.”

6. In relation to the modalities applicable to funding the participation of representatives of invited observers representing Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the Diplomatic Conference, the 2023 Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO took a decision that reads as follows: “(...) The funding will be provided by WIPO’s Voluntary Fund and, in case of insufficient resources, through the budget allocated to the Diplomatic Conference. The modalities of allocation for such funding will follow the rules of WIPO’s Voluntary Fund”.²

7. In accordance with the rules of the Fund, detailed and updated information is provided in the Information Note WIPO/GRTKF/IC/52/INF/4 to be communicated to the Committee before its present session. This Information Note includes *inter alia* the amount of the contributions received until the date of the Information Note, the amount available in the Fund, the names of the contributors, the name(s) of the applicant(s) recommended for funding in respect of the Fifty-First Session (who were not funded due to a lack of sufficient means in the Fund), the name(s) of the applicant(s) recommended for funding in respect of the Fifty-Second Session, the commitments made for such funding and, finally, the names of applicants who have applied for funding in respect of the Fifty-Third Session.

APPOINTMENT OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

8. The rules of the Fund provide that “[a]part from the *ex officio* member, the members of the Advisory Board will be elected by the Committee on the second day of each of its sessions, on a proposal by its Chair, following consultation with the Member States and their regional groups and, respectively, representatives of accredited observers. Apart from that of the *ex officio* member, their mandates will expire with the opening of the following Committee session” (Article 8).

² See document A/64/13, par. 29 (v). The 2023 Assemblies took place from July 6 to 14, 2023.

9. At the Fifty-First Session of the Committee, the Chair proposed, and the Committee elected by acclamation, the following eight members of the Advisory Board to serve in an individual capacity:

- (i) as members of delegations of WIPO Member States:
Mouhamed Nour-Dine ASSINDOH (Mr.); Aelita MUSSABAYEVA (Ms.); Takashi ONO (Mr.); Pornpimol SUGANDHAVANIJA (Ms.); Ligia Fanny UTITIAJ ANKUASH (Ms.);
and,
- (ii) as members of accredited observers representing Indigenous Peoples and local communities or other customary holders or custodians of traditional knowledge or traditional cultural expressions:
Ann CAINDEC (Ms.); Jessica FORERO (Ms.); Aaron JONES (Mr.).

10. At the Fifty-First Session of the Committee, the Chair of the Committee nominated Audrey NEEQUAYE (Ms.), Vice-Chair of the Committee, member *ex officio*, to serve as the Chair of the Advisory Board.

11. Since the mandate of the current members of the Advisory Board expired at the beginning of its Fifty-Second Session, the Committee would need, on or before the second day of its Fifty-Second Session, to elect the members of the Advisory Board. The rules governing the Fund leave open the possibility of past members being re-elected.

12. *The Committee is invited:*

(i) to strongly encourage its members and all interested public or private entities to contribute to the Fund in order to ensure the Fund's operation; and

(ii) to undertake the election of the members of the Advisory Board of the Fund on the basis of the proposal of the Chair on or before the second day of its session.

[Annexes follow]

Establishment of the WIPO Voluntary Fund
for Accredited Indigenous and Local Communities
as approved by the WIPO General Assembly (32nd session) and as subsequently amended
by WIPO General Assembly (39th session)

Resolved to take appropriate measures to facilitate and encourage the participation of indigenous and local communities, and other customary holders or custodians of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, in the work of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) concerning intellectual property relating to genetic resources, traditional knowledge and folklore;

Recognizing that the effectiveness of these measures depends in particular on appropriate financial support;

Recognizing moreover that the existence of an appropriate coordinated framework aimed at financing this participation would encourage such contributions;

[If the WIPO General Assembly decides to renew the mandate of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore in its current form or in a different form, or if the Assembly decides to create a new body responsible for the matters within the Intergovernmental Committee's remit in its current form (the possible bodies being designated hereinafter by the generic term "the Committee"),³ *then* in that it is recommended that the Assembly [should decide]⁴ to create a voluntary contribution fund, the name, objective, criteria for support and operation of which would be as follows:

I. NAME

1. The Fund will be known as the "WIPO Voluntary Fund for Accredited Indigenous and Local Communities", hereinafter the "Fund".

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

2. The Fund is established exclusively to finance the participation in the work of the Committee and other related activities of WIPO of the nominated representatives of accredited observers which represent indigenous or local communities, or otherwise represent customary holders or custodians of traditional knowledge or traditional cultural expressions.

2 *bis*. Intersessional Working Group meetings that are part of the Committee's work program as referred to by the General Assembly, hereinafter "IWG meetings", will be considered as a related activity of WIPO within the scope of Article 2.

3. Since participation in the Committee's work is restricted by its rules of procedure to its members and accredited observers, and in order to ensure their capacity to participate fully in the Committee's work, the funded representatives should only be the nominated representatives of observers which are duly and previously accredited to the Committee, either as ad hoc observers accredited by the Committee itself, or as observers accredited to WIPO.

³ Note from the Secretariat: the General Assembly has taken such a decision. See par. 202 of the report of its Thirty-Second Session (document WO/GA/32/13)

⁴ Note from the Secretariat: the General Assembly has taken such a decision. See par. 168 of the report of its Thirty-Second Session (document WO/GA/32/13)

4. The creation of the Fund and its operation will not prejudice other established procedures, in particular by the general WIPO Rules of Procedure (WIPO 399 (FE) Rev. 3) implemented in document WIPO/GRTKF/IC/1/2 for the accreditation of indigenous and local communities and other observers, or to organize the effective participation of their members in the sessions. The operation of the Fund shall not pre-empt or override decisions by members of the Committee regarding accreditation and participation in the work of the Committee. It is understood that other direct contributions and other possible forms of direct assistance, either existing or in the future, designed to finance or facilitate such participation, may be pursued outside the framework of the Voluntary Fund, at the choice of the contributor.

III. CRITERIA FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

5. Financial support from the Fund will correspond exclusively to the objective set out in Article 2 and 2 *bis* and to the following conditions:

- (a) support from the Fund will be strictly limited to the maximum resources actually available in the Fund;
- (b) each provision of support will relate to a single Committee session and any related activities held consecutively with the Committee session and/or to a single IWG meeting. Provision of support on one occasion shall not prejudice possible support for the participation of the same beneficiary on other Committee sessions or IWG meetings;
- (c) to be eligible for financial support, persons would need to satisfy each of the following criteria:
 - (i) be a natural person;
 - (ii) belong, as a member, to an accredited observer which represents indigenous or local communities, or otherwise represents customary holders or custodians of traditional knowledge or traditional cultural expressions;
 - (iii) have been duly nominated in writing by the observer to represent it at the Committee session and/or the IWG meeting designated for the support and as possible beneficiary of support from the Fund;
 - (iv) be able to participate effectively and contribute to the Committee session and/or the IWG meeting intended for the support, such as through expressing experience in the field and the concerns of indigenous and local communities and other customary holders and custodians of traditional knowledge or traditional cultural expressions; and
 - (v) and whom the Advisory Board considers would not be able to take part in the Committee session and/or the IWG meeting concerned without support from the Fund, owing to a lack of alternative financial resources.
- (d) in ensuring a broad geographical spread of participation among the seven geo-cultural regions recognized by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Advisory Board should take due account of the need to support those who lack alternative financial resources, and particularly of those observers based in developing and least developed countries and small island developing countries.
- (e) the financial support granted by the Fund will cover:

- (i) as far as it relates to Committee sessions or IWG meetings, the purchase of a return economy class ticket, including taxes connected with the ticket, between the domicile of the beneficiary and Geneva or any other meeting place, by the most direct and cheapest route;
 - (ii) as far as it relates to Committee sessions only, living expenses in the form of a daily subsistence allowance at the rate specified by the United Nations for Geneva or for the city where said meeting is held, with an additional sum to cover expenses incurred at the time of departure and arrival at the applicable rate under the United Nations system;
 - (iii) as far as the financial support for hotel accommodation and living expenses for any particular IWG meeting is concerned, the WIPO Director General, acting as the manager of the Fund and using exclusively the financial means of the Fund, will apply the same funding arrangement that is applicable to funded State representatives who participate in the same IWG meeting; and
 - (iv) all other expenses related to the participation of the beneficiaries in the Committee session or/and the IWG meeting concerned will be excluded from the Fund's support.
- (f) if an applicant who has been selected to benefit from Fund support has to withdraw or is unable to take part in the Committee session and/or the IWG meeting concerned, any sums unexpended and recovered, apart from possible cancellation charges, will be transferred to the reserve of the resources available to the Fund and the choice which was made with regard to said applicant shall be considered null and void. The applicant will nonetheless be entitled to submit a new request for the following Committee session(s) and/or the following IWG meeting(s), provided that information is submitted giving a good reason for the withdrawal or nature of the event which otherwise made participation impossible.

IV. OPERATING MECHANISM

6. The Fund will operate as follows:

- (a) fund resources will come exclusively from voluntary contributions by governments, NGOs and other private or public entities, and specifically shall not be drawn from the regular WIPO budget;
- (b) the administrative costs associated with the operation of the Fund shall be kept to a strict minimum and shall not entail the drawing of specific funds in credit from the regular WIPO budget;
- (c) the voluntary contributions paid into the Fund will be managed by the WIPO Director General, assisted by an Advisory Board. In this respect, the financial administration by the WIPO Director General and the auditing of the Fund accounts by the WIPO auditor will be undertaken in line with the procedures established, in accordance with the WIPO Financial Regulations, for the funds-in-trust set up to finance certain development cooperation activities conducted by WIPO;
- (d) decisions to extend financial support will be taken, for formal purposes, by the WIPO Director General, following an express recommendation by the Advisory Board. The recommendations made by the Advisory Board relating to the choice of beneficiaries will be binding on the Director General and not subject to appeal; and

- (e) deadline for submission will be settled as follows:
 - (i) duly documented requests for financial support enabling participation in a Committee session will be sent to the WIPO Director General by the applicants in their own name, so as to arrive at least 60 days before the opening of the Committee session which precedes the Committee session for which support is requested. Later requests will be considered at the following Committee session; and
 - (ii) separate and duly documented requests for financial support enabling participation in a particular IWG meeting will be sent to the WIPO Director General by the applicants in their own name, so as to arrive at least 60 days before the opening of the Committee session which precedes the IWG meeting for which support is requested, or by such earlier date as the Secretariat may, for practical reasons, determine and announce. Later requests will be considered at the following session of the Committee.
- (f) before each Committee session, the WIPO Director General will communicate for the information of participants an information note setting out:
 - (i) the level of the voluntary contributions paid into the Fund on the date on which the document was drafted;
 - (ii) the identity of the contributors (unless individual contributors have expressly requested to remain anonymous);
 - (iii) the amount of the resources available taking into account the funds disbursed;
 - (iv) the list of people who have benefited from the Fund's support since the previous information memorandum;
 - (v) the people chosen to benefit from the Fund but who withdrew;
 - (vi) the amount of the support allocated to each beneficiary; and
 - (vii) a sufficiently detailed description of the applicants seeking support for the following session or/and following IWG meeting(s).

This document will also be addressed by name to the members of the Advisory Board for examination and deliberation.

- (g) following the election of its members, the Advisory Board will be convened by the WIPO Director General to meet on the margins of the Committee session which precedes the Committee session or/and the IWG meeting(s) for which support is being considered, without prejudice to the right of its members to discuss informally any questions concerning their mandate between sessions of the Committee.
- (h) the Advisory Board must ensure that all the criteria for eligibility of applicants set out above, in particular in Article 5, are satisfied during its deliberations, and should agree on a recommended list of eligible applicants who should benefit from Fund support. The Advisory Board should also ensure, when adopting its recommendation, that:

- a balance is maintained between the male and female beneficiaries, and between the geo-cultural regions from which they come, in successive Committee sessions or/and IWG meetings insofar as is possible; and
- where necessary, the benefits are taken into account which the Committee's work may derive from the repeated participation in its sessions of the same beneficiary.

Finally, when adopting its recommendation the Committee shall take account of the available resources as reported by the Director General in the information note referred to in Article 6(f), and in particular it shall identify those applicants who are agreed and for whom funding is available, and those applicants who are agreed in principle but for whom insufficient funds are available. Those in the latter category should be given priority in decisions on funding for subsequent sessions of the Committee or/and IWG meetings.

The Advisory Board will be provided with administrative assistance for its deliberations by the WIPO International Bureau, in accordance with Article 6(b).

- (i) the Advisory Board will adopt its recommendation before the end of the Committee session on the margins of which it meets. This recommendation will identify:
 - (i) the subsequent Committee session and, should the case arise, the IWG meeting(s) intended for financial support (i.e. the subsequent session of the Committee);
 - (ii) the applicants whom the Advisory Board agrees should be supported for that Committee session and/or the IWG meeting(s), for whom funds are available;
 - (iii) any applicant or applicants whom the Advisory Board agrees should be supported in principle but for whom insufficient funds are available;
 - (iv) any applicant or applicants whose application has been rejected in accordance with the procedure in Article 10; and
 - (v) any applicant or applicants whose application has been postponed for further consideration until the next Committee in accordance with the procedure in Article 10.

The Advisory Board will immediately forward the contents of the recommendation to the Director General who will take a decision in accordance with the recommendation. The Director General will inform the Committee immediately and, in any cases, prior to the end of its current session, by means of an information note specifying the decision taken concerning each applicant.

- (j) the WIPO Director General will take the administrative measures necessary to implement his decision for the Committee session and, should the case arise, for the IWG meeting(s) concerned, in accordance with Article 6(b).

V. OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE ADVISORY BOARD

7. The Advisory Board will comprise nine members, including:

- the Chair of the Committee, appointed *ex officio* or, where that proves to be impossible, one of the Vice-Chairs nominated by the Chair as his or her deputy;

- five members from the delegations of WIPO Member States taking part in the Committee, reflecting an appropriate geographical balance; and
- three members from accredited observers representing indigenous and local communities or other customary holders or custodians of TK or TCEs.

The members will serve on an individual basis and will conduct their deliberations independently, notwithstanding any consultations that they might consider as appropriate.

8. Apart from the *ex officio* member, the members of the Advisory Board will be elected by the Committee on the second day of each of its sessions, on a proposal by its Chair, following consultation with the Member States and their regional groups and, respectively, representatives of accredited observers. Apart from that of the *ex officio* member, their mandates will expire with the opening of the following Committee session.

9. The Advisory Board will meet regularly on the margins of Committee sessions, subject to the requirement that a quorum of seven members, including the Chair or one of the Vice-Chairs, should be present.

10. A recommendation for the selection of any beneficiaries will require the agreement of at least seven members of the Advisory Board. If an application is not agreed upon, it may continue to be examined at the following session, unless that application received three votes or fewer. In the latter case, the request will be considered to have been rejected, without prejudice to the right of the applicant to submit a new request at a later date.

11. Each member of the Advisory Board who has a direct association with an observer which has applied for funding for a representative shall disclose that association to the Advisory Board, and shall abstain from any vote concerning any applicant nominated by that observer.

[Annex II follows]

WIPO Voluntary Fund for Accredited Indigenous and Local Communities

FUND-RAISING

CASE FOR SUPPORT

I. **CONTEXT**

In 1998, WIPO launched a fresh policy initiative aimed at protecting traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions (or, expressions of folklore) against their misuse and improper dissemination and managing the interface between intellectual property (IP) and genetic resources. Indigenous Peoples and local communities are those mainly affected since their traditions, knowledge systems and cultural expressions form the basis of their identity and future development. Appropriate and effective protection requires a concerted approach by States. The WIPO Member States decided therefore to create a WIPO body expressly tasked with examining the standards which might be adopted at the international level to ensure protection. This body is the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (the IGC).

A need to facilitate the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the WIPO IGC

Indigenous Peoples and local communities rightly consider that they should be able to participate in decision-making processes relating to matters which affect them. Article 18 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 13, 2007, also stipulates that “Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights...”

Indigenous Peoples and local communities provide the IGC with experience, information, comments and suggestions which are essential to ensuring that the decisions taken meet the needs and expectations of beneficiaries.

The government delegations in the IGC have therefore unanimously recognized that “the participation of indigenous and local communities is of great importance for the work of the Committee”.

The need to facilitate participation has been even more pressing since December 2009, when the IGC embarked on **intense negotiations** on one or more international legal instruments to provide effective protection.

II. THE VOLUNTARY FUND: OBJECTIVES, OPERATION AND RESULTS

Concrete measures have been taken by the WIPO Member States to ensure the effective and active participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as observers in the IGC.

Since April 2001, a fast-track accreditation procedure has been in operation in the IGC for all non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations; the IGC currently has more than 100 accredited observers, many of whom represent Indigenous Peoples and local communities. IGC sessions are opened with an Indigenous panel, in which members of Indigenous Peoples and local communities speak of their experiences and perspectives. In 2011, the WIPO General Assembly asked the IGC to review its procedures with the view to “enhancing the positive contribution of observers” to the IGC process. The IGC adopted various practical initiatives in this regard in February 2012.

In parallel, many Indigenous Peoples and local communities have stressed and still stress that they encountered **insurmountable difficulties in financing the travel and accommodation costs** of their representatives during IGC meetings, and that those costs prevent them from participating effectively.

In order to address this legitimate concern, and following extensive consultations and a review of best practices prevailing within the United Nations system, **the WIPO General Assembly took the decision in 2005 to create the WIPO Voluntary Fund** for Accredited Indigenous and Local Communities in order to finance the participation in the IGC of accredited observers representing Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The objective of this indispensable financing instrument and its rules of operation were clearly set out by the General Assembly, in formal decisions that provide the legal basis of the Fund¹.

Objective of the Fund

The Fund is designed exclusively to provide financial support to accredited observers representing Indigenous Peoples and local communities, by covering the purchase by their representatives of a return economy class ticket by the cheapest route, and granting them a daily allowance and in some cases an additional flat rate to cover incidental expenses incurred at the time of departure and arrival.

Source of funding

The WIPO Secretariat is not authorized to draw on the WIPO budget to keep the Fund in operation. **The Fund relies exclusively on voluntary contributions from donors.** That means that the Fund cannot operate unless it receives contributions from donors.

Operation of the Fund

– **Transparency**

- The list of contributors and amount of donations, the financial situation of the Fund, the list of candidates for financial support and the list of funded participants with the

¹ See the Annex to document WO/GA/32/6 as approved by the WIPO General Assembly (32nd session) and as subsequently amended by WIPO General Assembly (39th session) reproduced in Annex I of the present document. The rules of the Fund are also available on https://www.wipo.int/documents/d/igc/docs-en-vf_rules.pdf.

amount spent for each of them are communicated to the IGC at each of its sessions through an official Information Note²;

- the nine members of the Fund Advisory Board, which selects candidates to receive funding, are elected by the IGC plenary on the proposal of its Chairperson. Their mandate expires in practice at the end of the IGC session which elected them;
- the funding criteria, including geographical balance criteria, as well as the conditions governing financial support from the Fund, are clearly established by the Fund's rules;
- the WIPO Advisory Board adopts a formal report at the end of each of its meeting; the content of the report is sent to the WIPO Director General and communicated by him to the IGC through an official Information Note in an expeditious manner³.

– **Independence and inclusiveness**

- The nine members of the Fund Advisory Board serve independently and take their decisions in their personal capacity;
- candidates for funding are required to provide documents to support their application, in practice in the form of an application form and *curriculum vitae*, which facilitates the review of their application based on the funding criteria;
- the Advisory Board's recommendations are binding on the WIPO Secretariat which merely provides the necessary administrative support and implements these recommendations in strict conformity with the Fund's rules; and,
- three members of the Advisory Board are from accredited observers representing one or more Indigenous Peoples or local communities.

– **Efficiency: no deductions from the Fund for administrative costs**

- The members of the Advisory Board meet on the margins of the IGC session in which they are participating. They are not paid or compensated for the tasks that they carry out;
- the Advisory Board is required to conclude its deliberations before the end of the session during which it meets;
- the WIPO Secretariat is not authorized to draw on the Fund to cover any administrative costs; and,
- a specific clause in the Fund's rules is designed to keep administrative costs to a strict minimum.

² See for example WIPO Information Note WIPO/GRTKF/IC/51/INF/4. dated April 17, 2025, available on https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/tk/en/wipo_grtkf_ic_51/wipo_grtkf_ic_51_inf_4.pdf.

³ See for example WIPO Information Note WIPO/GRTKF/IC/51/INF/6 dated June 4, 2025, available on https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/tk/en/wipo_grtkf_ic_51/wipo_grtkf_ic_51_inf_6.pdf.

Results (April 2006 – January 14, 2025)

A total of 713 applications⁴ for funding in view of 42 sessions of the IGC (Fifty-First Session of the IGC included) and 2 meetings of the Intersessional Working Group (IWG) have been processed during 40 meetings of the Fund's Advisory Board.

From the Tenth until the Fifty-First Sessions of the IGC included and two meetings of the IWG, out of the 248 applications recommended for funding by the Advisory Board, 165 applications were funded by the Voluntary Fund, in support of the participation of 77 different representatives of various Indigenous Peoples and local communities⁵.

In respect of the Diplomatic Conference on Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge (Geneva, WIPO Headquarters, May 13-24, 2024), 11 applications were funded concurrently by the Voluntary Fund and through the budget allocated by the Diplomatic Conference, in line with the recommendation adopted by the Fund's Advisory Board at an extraordinary meeting on December 11, 2023.

III. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUND

Provisions relating to contributions

- There are no restrictions regarding the minimum or maximum amount of a donation;
- the names of the contributors and the level of contributions and pledges received are publicized by an Information Note before each IGC session. Further modalities of acknowledgment can be discussed with contributors. However, donors may remain anonymous if they so wish;
- all contributions are allocated directly and exclusively to financing the participation of accredited Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the sessions of the IGC; no administrative costs are borne by the Fund;
- taking into account that it is a collective Fund, it is not possible to depart from the Fund's rules in relation to any particular contribution; contributions cannot be earmarked by the donor for a particular category of beneficiary or expense;

⁴ For the purpose of the present "Case for support", any application which was re-submitted to the Advisory Board as a result of a previous postponement of its consideration by the Board is assimilated with an application that is different from the application that had been postponed.

⁵ During this period, 25 applications were withdrawn by the relevant applicants. 55 applications recommended for funding by the Advisory Board could not be funded due to a lack of sufficient means in the Fund in respect of the Nineteenth Session (one applicant), the Twenty-Fourth Session (one applicant), the Twenty-Sixth Session (four applicants), the Twenty-Eighth to Thirty-Third Sessions (twenty-one applicants), the Thirty-Sixth Session (three applicants), the Thirty-Seventh Session (three applicants), the Thirty-Eighth Session (two applicants), the Thirty-Ninth Session (two applicants), the Fortieth Session (two applicants), the Forty-Sixth Session (one applicant), the Forty-Seventh Session (two applicants), the "back-to-back" Forty-Eighth and Forty-Ninth sessions (four applicants), the Fiftieth Session (four applicants) and the Fifty-First Session (five applicants). One recommended applicant, who was first in the order of priority, was offered partial funding in respect of the Thirty-Eighth Session but declined the offer and was not funded. The recommended applicant who was second in the order of priority accepted this offer and was partially funded in respect of the Thirty-Eighth Session. One recommended applicant deceased before benefitting from the support of the Fund. None of the two recommended applicants in respect of the Forty-First Session and Forty-Second Session were funded, due to restrictions and policies in place at that time in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Those two recommended applicants were funded in respect of the Forty-Third Session.

- the Fund's Advisory Board independently selects candidates for support; if a contributor is represented within the IGC as a Member State, it may stand for election as a member of the Fund's Advisory Board;
- contributions are used in the order received in the Fund's bank account.

Reporting to donors

Standard and public reporting regarding the use of the Fund is provided through an Information Note.

Additionally, the exchange of letters formalizing the contribution agreement between the donor and WIPO may include a clause for a more detailed periodic financial report on the use of the contribution.

The operation of the Fund is also subject to internal auditing.

IV. NEED FOR REPLENISHMENT

Since its creation in 2005, the Voluntary Fund **has benefited from a wide range of contributions:**

in chronological order,

- the Swedish International Biodiversity Programme (SwedBio/CBM) (the equivalent of 86,092.60 Swiss Francs)
- France (the equivalent of 31,684 Swiss Francs)
- the Christensen Fund (the equivalent of 29,992.50 Swiss Francs)
- Switzerland (the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property) (150,000 Swiss Francs)
- South Africa (the equivalent of 5,965.27 Swiss Francs)
- Norway (the equivalent of 98,255.16 Swiss Francs)
- Switzerland (the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property) (100,000 Swiss Francs)
- South Africa (the equivalent of 12,500 Swiss Francs)
- Anonymous donor (500 Swiss Francs)
- Australia (the equivalent of 89,500 Swiss Francs)
- Australia (the equivalent of 15,000 Swiss Francs)⁶
- New Zealand (the equivalent of 4,694.40 Swiss Francs)
- Australia (the equivalent of 37,835 Swiss Francs)
- Canada (the equivalent of 18,268.75 Swiss Francs)
- Finland (the equivalent of 16,227.93 Swiss Francs)
- Germany (the equivalent of 16,158.98 Swiss Francs)⁷
- Germany (the equivalent of 14,233.70 Swiss Francs);
- Anonymous donors (817.10 Swiss Francs);
- Australia (the equivalent of 29,795.36 Swiss Francs);
- Anonymous donors (872.60 Swiss Francs);
- *Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas* of Mexico (the equivalent of 8,239.99 Swiss Francs),

⁶ 782.22 Swiss Francs were reimbursed on September 2, 2013 to the Government of Australia in accordance with the agreed terms for the use of the contribution made by the Government of Australia.

⁷ 16,158.98 Swiss Francs were reimbursed on January 8, 2021 to the Government of Germany in accordance with the agreed terms for the use of the contribution made by the Government of Germany.

- The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (the equivalent of 18,518.24 Swiss Francs),
- Anonymous donors (2,392.95 Swiss Francs); and
- Australia (the equivalent of 10,117.12 Swiss Francs)

Total amount of the voluntary contributions credited to the Fund until January 15, 2026:
797,661.65 Swiss Francs.

Total amount of the reimbursements made to donors until January 15, 2026:
16,941.20 Swiss Francs.

Net total of the voluntary contributions made to the Fund until January 15, 2026:
780,720.45 Swiss Francs.

The balance of the Fund, taking into account the commitments made in respect of the Fifty-Second Session of the Committee, was 6,175.40 Swiss Francs as of January 15, 2026.

Funding depends on the replenishment of the Fund through voluntary contributions. Member States and potential donors are invited to contribute.

For more information

Rules concerning the objective and operation of the Voluntary Fund:

https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/tk/en/igc/docs/vf_rules.pdf

Details regarding the Voluntary Fund available online:

<https://www.wipo.int/tk/en/igc/participation.html>

[End of Annexes and of document]