**CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION**

**Sixth session**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room II**

**30 May to 1 June 2016**

**Item 9 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund**

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| **Summary**Article 7(c) of the Convention requires that the Committee prepare and submit to the General Assembly for approval a draft plan for the use of the resources of the Fund. This document presents the draft plan recommended by the Committee for the period 2016-2017 and the first semester of 2018 (Annex I).**Decision required:** paragraph 25 |

1. Article 7(c) of the Convention requests the Committee to ‘prepare and submit to the General Assembly for approval a draft plan for the use of the resources of the [Intangible Cultural Heritage] Fund, in accordance with Article 25’. Article 25.4 of the Convention further provides that the use of the resources of the Fund by the Committee ‘shall be decided on the basis of guidelines laid down by the General Assembly’. Those guidelines were adopted by the General Assembly of the States Parties in its second session in 2008 and are found in Chapter II.1 of the Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention. The draft plan submitted by the Committee in its [Decision 10.COM 8](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/8), which is annexed to the present document, was prepared in conformity with those guidelines and based on the experience of implementing the Plan for the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 periods. The financial report for the period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015 is available in document ITH/16/6.GA/INF.9.1, along with an explanatory note.
2. While UNESCO’s programmes are defined for quadrennial periods, the General Conference decided ([36 C/Resolution 105](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002150/215084e.pdf)) to maintain the biennial cycle for the appropriation of the budget. Thus, the budget of the Organization continues to be approved by the General Conference at the end of an odd year and run for two consecutive years starting on 1 January of an even year and ending on 31 December of the following odd year. In accordance with Article 2 of its Financial Regulations, the Fund operates in the same financial period. However, a complication arises because the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention meets in ordinary session in even years, about six months after the start of UNESCO’s financial period.
3. At its sixth session in June 2016, the General Assembly is, therefore, requested to approve a plan for the use of the resources of the Fund that covers 24 months from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017 and, on a provisional basis, the first six months of the next financial period, i.e. from 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018 preceding the seventh session of the General Assembly. The provisional budget for the first semester of 2016 that was adopted by the fifth session of the General Assembly ([Resolution 5.GA 7](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-5.GA-Resolutions-EN__.doc)) will in turn be superseded by the present Plan once adopted by the sixth session of the General Assembly.
4. The draft plan submitted by the Committee is based on the unrestricted balance of the Fund as of 31 December 2015 (US$7,977,920). This total excludes restricted funds of three kinds: first is a Reserve Fund that has been set aside for emergency international assistance (see Article 6 of the Fund’s Financial Regulations); second is the earmarked contributions for specific purposes relating to specific projects (see Article 25.5 of the Convention); third is the sub-fund used exclusively for enhancing the human capacities of the Secretariat, in conformity with Resolution 3.GA 9.
5. The budget presented in the draft plan annexed below envisages allocating funds in each line in terms of percentages of the total resources available, rather than in absolute figures, in order to allow the Committee to make use of any significant unrestricted voluntary supplementary contributions (as described in Article 27) that might be credited to the Fund during the biennium. To reflect the possibility that a donor may wish to make a significant supplementary contribution, it is proposed that the General Assembly, as it did during its previous sessions, authorize the Committee to make immediate use of any such contributions upon receipt, in conformity with the percentages established in the Plan.
6. The Convention also confers upon the Committee the right to ‘accept contributions and other forms of assistance for general and specific purposes relating to specific projects, provided that those projects have been approved by the Committee’ (Article 25.5), which are referred to as ‘earmarked’ contributions. In order to allow a strategic and effective use of such contributions, it is also proposed that the General Assembly again, as it did in its previous sessions, authorize the Committee to make immediate use of them provided that those projects have been approved by the Committee prior to the receipt of the funds.
7. In the same vein of efficiency, it is noteworthy that the Committee, at its ninth session, took a step further and approved the Concept Note for the 2014-2017 Complementary Additional Programme entitled ‘Strengthening capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage for sustainable development’ ([Decision 9.COM 7](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/d%C3%A9cisions/9.COM/7?dec=decisions&ref_decision=9.COM)) developed by the Secretariat to extend the reach and effectiveness of that global capacity‑building strategy and to inform donors of the funding requirements of this programme. Indeed, in order to ensure that the Committee – as the Convention’s governing body deciding on the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund – and the General Conference of Member States – as UNESCO’s governing body that determines the policies and the main lines of work of the Organization – shared the same vision of UNESCO’s action priorities in the field of intangible cultural heritage, the Committee considered it appropriate to endorse the programmatic framework described in the Complementary Additional Programme insofar as it is strictly aligned with the Regular Programme. By extension, the Committee accepted, in that same decision, any future voluntary supplementary contributions that might be made to support capacity-building activities within the scope of that programmatic framework between two Committee sessions, authorized the Secretariat to make immediate use of them and requested it to report on the progress of implementation of any voluntary supplementary contributions it may have received since its last session.
8. The list of such donors and the amounts of their contributions can be found in the two information documents ITH/16/6.GA/INF.9.1 and ITH/16/6.GA/INF.9.2 covering two slightly different periods: annex I of the first document provides the list of voluntary contributions received under earmarked activities for the period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015 while the second document provides, *inter alia*, the list of such voluntary contributions received for the period 1 June 2014 to 31 March 2016, a period intended to cover the time between the fifth and the sixth sessions of the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 77 of the Operational Directives.

**Budget lines and allocations**

1. Compared to the current Plan for the use of the resources of the Fund, the budget lines remain essentially identical in scope. Percentages have in three cases been proposed for reduction or increase and are applied to the balance of the Fund as of 31 December 2015 less the amount that the Committee proposed to transfer to the Reserve Fund (US$24,190) in order to set its total amount at US$1 million. However, considering that the initial balance that serves as the basis for the Plan has increased (24% of that balance as at 31 December 2013), the constant allocations of all budget lines will be increased, with one exception noted below (paragraph 14).
2. In line with the priorities set by the Guidelines for the use of the resources of the Fund in Chapter II.1 of the Operational Directives, it is once again proposed that the majority of resources (**budget line 1**, 59%) be allocated for providing international assistance to States Parties to supplement their national efforts for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Although so far the funds available under this line have been widely underutilized, the tenth session of the Committee proposed to increase the percentage of resources allocated to international assistance from 54% to 59%. At its last session, the Committee’s decisions opened the possibilities detailed in paragraphs 20 and 21 of the present document that give hope that the trend of under-utilization of the resources available for international assistance may be reversed in the current biennium.
3. The percentage of the funds budgeted for granting preparatory assistance (**budget line 2**) is proposed to be maintained at 5.5%. In addition to preparatory assistance for nomination files for the Urgent Safeguarding List and for proposals for the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices, the Committee decided to use this line to provide technical assistance to States Parties for preparing international assistance requests, as decided by the Committee ([Decision 8.COM 7.c](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/8.COM/7.c)). Considering that States have required technical assistance much more than preparatory assistance in the traditional form, it is proposed that funds available under this line continue to be used for the provision of experts, as described in Article 21 of the Convention, to assist a State Party to develop its ideas and requirements, from a brief concept note into a fully-fledged request. Furthermore, it is expected that this technical assistance will increase the chances of success for a larger number of requests, which also justifies the increase of the percentage of funds allocated to budget line 1.
4. **Budget line 3**, ‘other functions of the Committee’, would also be maintained at 20%. Such functions are listed under Article 7 of the Convention. The Secretariat makes use of these funds to assist the Committee in performing these functions, as required by Article 10 of the Convention. The Secretariat will, therefore, use these funds primarily for promoting the objectives of the Convention and encouraging and monitoring its implementation (Article 7 [a]). To this end, funds allocated to this budget line will continue to provide essential support for a number of cross-cutting needs of the capacity-building programme, such as developing training content and materials, strengthening the network of expert facilitators and monitoring, evaluating and adapting the strategy accordingly. Similarly, this budget line will be vital to ensure the steady improvement in the management of knowledge and information, including the Convention’s website that allows the Secretariat to continue to deliver services to States Parties and to the governing bodies of the Convention, as timely and accurately as possible. In order to assist the Committee to meet its responsibilities to promote the Convention, funds allocated to this budget line should also contribute to ensure better visibility of activities undertaken worldwide under the Convention’s umbrella and enhance its ability to influence and impact on development policies sector along the lines of the 2030 development agenda, especially through renewed efforts to raise awareness of the importance of intangible cultural heritage and of ensuring mutual appreciation. Finally, these funds will be used to support the Committee in providing guidance on measures for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. Throughout the assistance provided to the Committee, the Secretariat will seek to follow-up on the recommendations of the UNESCO’s Internal Oversight Service (IOS) on UNESCO’s standard-setting work of the Culture Sector concerning the Convention, as it already did during the previous biennium. A significant number of such follow-up actions on which the Secretariat reports in document ITH/16/6.GA/6 were possible thanks to the support of this budget line.
5. As in preceding Plans for the use of the Fund, the Committee again delegated to its Bureau the authority to decide upon the utilization of the funds allocated under budget line 3, on the basis of specific proposals to be prepared by the Secretariat ([Decision 10.COM 8](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/8)). In that same decision and along the lines of the previous practice, the Committee authorized the Secretariat to make transfers between activities within budget line 3 up to a cumulative amount equivalent to 2% of the initial total allocation likely to be proposed for this purpose to the General Assembly. Such authorization is similar to that by which the General Conference authorizes the Director-General to make transfers between appropriation lines of UNESCO’s regular programme up to an amount of 2% of the initial appropriation.
6. The participation in statutory meetings by experts in intangible cultural heritage representing developing States Parties is covered either by **budget line 4** when they are members of the Committee or by **budget line 5** when they are not. In the proposed Plan, the latter would remain identical in terms of percentage compared to the previous Plan while the former would decrease from 2.75% to 2.25%. The funds foreseen for the participation of experts from developing States Members of the Committee is largely sufficient to cover their participation in the Committee and the Bureau. The number of eligible States Members of the Committee is limited, and the slightly reduced percentage is still expected to be more than adequate, especially as in absolute values the reduction is of US$6,816. Furthermore, with the establishment of the Evaluation Body, representatives of States Members of the Committee cannot be part of it and, therefore, no costs related to the evaluation of files will be charged to that line. On the other hand, individual members of the Evaluation Body now participate as representatives of a State Party and the costs of their participation in the meetings of the Body are, therefore, to be charged to budget line 5. Considering that the maintained 2.75% represents an increase in allocation for the next biennium (17.74% of the 2014-2015 allocation representing an increase of US$32,953), funds available under this line should continue to allow participation in the Committee of experts in intangible cultural heritage representing developing States Parties in addition to that of members of the Evaluation Body at its meetings.
7. **Budget line 6** is similarly proposed to be maintained at 4.5%. In the previous biennium, this has proven to be adequate to cover the participation of experts in intangible cultural heritage representing accredited non-governmental organizations both in the sessions of the Committee – when coming from developing countries – and in the meetings of the Consultative Body in 2014 and those of the Evaluation Body in 2015 – when they are elected members. In addition, as indicated in the previous paragraph, since individuals sitting in the Evaluation Body are no longer members as independent experts but as representatives of a State Party, this line will now be relieved from this expenditure and funds should be sufficient for the needs.
8. **Budget line 7** covers the costs of advisory services provided at the request of the Committee (6%). The proposed increase from 5.5% to 6% – absorbing the reduction of budget line 4 – is due to the need to have an amount available, early in even years, which is sufficient to establish the contracts of members eligible for financial compensation from the Evaluation Body. The Committee establishes the Evaluation Body at the end of each year and the Body then meets, for the first time during a cycle, in the first quarter of the year. Members entitled to be contracted must be so in advance of their travel. Therefore, the budget required to cover all contracts must be available at the beginning of the year, even though payments will be made throughout the year. In even years, however, funds available at the beginning of the year correspond to a quarter of the amount allocated for the previous biennium, pending the session of the General Assembly in June which decides on the allocation of the whole biennium. Thus, a higher percentage is necessary to ensure that a quarter of the total allocation is sufficient to cover all contracts in even years.
9. The Financial Regulations of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund require that a **Reserve Fund** be established to meet emergency requests for assistance, as foreseen in Article 22.2 of the Convention. As at 31 December 2015, the Reserve Fund totalled US$975,810 (Statement II in document ITH/16/6.GA/INF.9.1). Considering that this reserve would be tapped for emergency assistance *only* when funds are no longer available in budget line 1, the Committee decided, pursuant to Article 6 of the Financial Regulations, to set the amount of the Reserve Fund at US$1 million ([Decision 10.COM 8](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/8)). Therefore, the draft plan annexed below proposes to transfer to the Reserve Fund only the amount needed to reach US$ 1 million (US$24,190) and no longer a fixed percentage.

**Prospects for future budget cycles**

1. As at date, the 166 States Parties to the Convention represent more than 60% of the total assessed contributions to UNESCO’s regular budget, with the rates for assessed contributions to the Convention established at 1% of each State’s contribution to UNESCO’s regular budget. As for the previous biennium, the Fund shall therefore receive about US$4 million in assessed contributions from States Parties in 2016-2017 (US$3.5 million compulsory and US$0.5 million voluntary assessed contributions). In every previous biennium, the income to the Fund has exceeded expenditures and the balance of unrestricted and unencumbered funds at the end of the biennium has grown steadily. However the unrestricted and unencumbered fund balance as of 31 December 2015 shows a similar increase (18%) compared to the previous biennium (16%).
2. Two factors largely explain this situation: first is that States Parties have been contributing to the Fund since the Convention entered into force in 2006, while the primary mechanism for using the Fund – international assistance – was established only in 2008. The first requests for such assistance were presented to the Committee in 2009 and implementation began in 2010. There was thus a steady accumulation of income for four years before expenditures got underway in earnest. Second, while in accordance with paragraph 66 of the Operational Directives, the resources of the Fund ‘shall be used primarily for granting international assistance’, the rate of utilization of such funds, which depends in the first place on the number of requests submitted by States Parties and approved by the Committee or its Bureau, remains very low (13% for the 2014-2015 period).
3. Although the number of requests for international assistance submitted by States Parties is still modest (an average of 16 per year since 2010), a number of proactive measures were proposed by the Committee at its last session. As announced in paragraph 10, a prospect is opened by the revision of the Operational Directives recommended by the Committee and examined by the General Assembly at its present session in document ITH/16/6.GA/7. By increasing the maximum amount of requests that can be examined by the Bureau from US$25,000 to US$100,000, States will have the chance to see both a request up to US$100,000 and a nomination considered in the same year, since it will no longer be the same body that will be in charge of their examination. Moreover, because those requests can be submitted any time throughout the year and the Bureau meets three to four times a year – including by electronic consultation – while the Committee meets only once, there should be more opportunities to grant such requests.
4. The other prospect refers to the more complete interpretation of Article 21 and the promotion of assistance that does not necessarily take the form of a grant of funds but rather that of services provided by UNESCO. To date, Article 21 of the Convention regarding the forms of international assistance has been interpreted both by States Parties and the Secretariat in a restricted manner, only in the sense of paragraph (g), namely financial assistance, and in particular the granting of donations. However, Article 21 refers to other forms of assistance, such as studies concerning various aspects of safeguarding (paragraph [a]), the provision of experts and practitioners (paragraph [b]), the training of all necessary staff (paragraph [c]), the elaboration of standard-setting and other measures (paragraph [d]), the creation and operation of infrastructures (paragraph [e]) or supply of equipment and know-how (paragraph [f]) that do not necessarily involve a transfer of funds but rather provision through the Fund of services to support the requesting State in its safeguarding efforts. By promoting these other forms of international assistance and in particular, those foreseen under paragraphs b and c, it is expected that the States would be free from the burden of having to cost their needs and priorities by presenting to the Governing Bodies requests that result from a close cooperation between the requesting State and the Secretariat. By consequence, the use of resources dedicated to international assistance is likely to improve. The Committee endorsed this more complete and accurate interpretation of Article 21, as evidenced by its [Decision 10.COM 8](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/8) by which it requested the Secretariat to ‘revise the Form ICH-04 in such a way that it better reflects the provisions in Article 21 of the Convention regarding the forms of international assistance.’ It is however important to note that both perspectives will entail a significant increase in the workload of the Secretariat.
5. Greater use of the combined ICH-01bis form ([Decision 9.COM 9](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/9.COM/9)), permitting States Parties to simultaneously nominate an element for inscription to the Urgent Safeguarding List and request international assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund to support the proposed safeguarding plan, and of technical assistance for the elaboration of international assistance requests through the provision of experts should also result in an increase of the use of international assistance. In the longer term, the support of the Fund for the capacity-building programme (thanks both to earmarked contributions for specific operational programmes and funds under budget line 3 which were used, among others, to develop specific training materials on international assistance) is also likely to have a positive impact on the use of the funds budgeted for international assistance.
6. In general, as for all extrabudgetary funds, effective implementation also depends on accurate activity costing, including staff time. The Secretariat’s efforts to apply the Organization’s cost recovery policy when using the resources of the Fund, as requested by the Committee ([Decision 8.COM 11](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/8.COM/11)) in accordance with Article 5.2 of the Financial Regulations, should also result in better implementation of international assistance by allowing the recovery of staff costs directly incurred in the implementation of funded projects or technical assistance.
7. The target set for the use of the resources of the Fund during the past biennium was that expenditures be equal to or even exceed the income in assessed contributions for this same period, which should have resulted in a fund balance at the end of 2015 no larger than that at the end of 2013. Considering that that objective was not achieved, it seems reasonable to set the same target for the current biennium, that is implementing all of the US$7,953,730 of the Plan for the use of the resources of the Fund so that the balance at the end of the biennium does not increase compared to that at the beginning.
8. Although voluntary supplementary contributions to the Fund are not subject to the Plan for the use of the resources of the Fund that requires the General Assembly’s approval, it is worth mentioning that voluntary support to the Convention through the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund is experiencing a clear decline in terms both of earmarked contributions for the capacity-building programme and of contributions to the sub-fund for enhancing human resources of the Secretariat[[1]](#footnote-1). For the former, the underutilization of this modality is unfortunate since it has proven to be particularly suited to the spirit of the capacity-building strategy as it allows effective use of resources by UNESCO, from a thorough needs assessment and consultation with national counterparts to project implementation. For the latter, it is equally unfortunate since, without discrediting the merits of the other modalities, the sub-fund is the only mechanism that can secure a sustainable workforce adapted to the statutory functions that the Secretariat must perform.

DRAFT RESOLUTION 6.GA 9

The General Assembly,

1. Having examined Documents ITH/16/6.GA/9, ITH/16/6.GA/INF.9.1 and ITH/16/6.GA/INF.9.2,
2. Recalling Article 7(c) of the Convention and paragraphs 66 and 67 of the Operational Directives,
3. Approves the Plan for the use of the resources of the Fund for the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017 as well as for the period 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018 in Annex to this Resolution, it being understood that at the time of its seventh session in June 2018, it may readjust the budget plan from 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018;
4. Authorizes the Committee to make immediate use of any voluntary supplementary contributions that might be received during these periods, as described in Article 27 of the Convention, in accordance with the percentages laid out in the Plan;
5. Further authorizes the Committee to make immediate use of any contributions that it might accept, during these periods, for specific purposes relating to specific projects, provided that those projects have been approved by the Committee prior to the receipt of the funds, as described in Article 25.5 of the Convention;
6. Takes note that the Committee set the amount of the Reserve Fund at US$1 million;
7. Further takes note of the donors having provided voluntary supplementary contributions to the Fund since its last session, namely Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, China, Georgia, Japan, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and the United Arab Emirates as well as the Association for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Italy) and the Norwegian Centre for Traditional Music (Norway);
8. Thanks all the contributors that have supported the Convention and its Secretariat, since its last session, making use of different forms of support, financial or in-kind, such as earmarked supplementary voluntary contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund or the sub-fund for enhancing the human capacities of the Secretariat, Funds-in-Trust, or loaned personnel and encourages other States to consider the possibility of supporting the Convention through the modality of their choice.

**ANNEX**

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| **Draft plan for the use of the resources of the Fund** |  |  |
| For the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017, as well as for the period 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018, the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund may be used for the following purposes: | % of the total amount[[2]](#footnote-2) | Indicative amounts2016-2017 | Indicative amountsJan-June 2018 |
| 1. | International assistance, comprising the safeguarding of the heritage inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, the preparation of inventories, and the support for other safeguarding programmes, projects and activities; | 59.00% | $4,692,700  | $1,173,175  |
| 2. | Preparatory Assistance for nomination files for the Urgent Safeguarding List as well as for the proposals for the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices and international assistance requests; | 5.50% | $437,455  | $109,364  |
| 3. | Other functions of the Committee as described in Article 7 and in the Operational Directives; | 20.00% | $1,590,746  | $397,687  |
| 4. | Participation in the sessions of the Committee, its Bureau and its subsidiary bodies of experts in intangible cultural heritage representing developing States Members of the Committee; | 2.25% | $178,959  | $44,740  |
| 5. | Participation in the sessions of the Committee and its consultative bodies of experts in intangible cultural heritage representing developing States that are Parties to the Convention but not Members of the Committee; | 2.75% | $218,728  | $54,682  |
| 6. | Participation in the sessions of the Committee, its Bureau and its subsidiary and consultative bodies of public or private bodies, private persons, notably members of communities and groups, that have been invited by the Committee to be consulted on specific matters as well as of experts in intangible cultural heritage representing accredited NGOs from developing countries; | 4.50% | $357,918  | $89,480  |
| 7. | Cost of advisory services provided at the request of the Committee, including support to developing States whose representatives have been appointed to the Evaluation Body; | 6.00% | $477,224  | $119,306  |
| 8. | Reserve Fund to meet requests for assistance in cases of extreme urgency. | N/A | $24,190  | - |
| **TOTAL** | **100.00%** | **$7,977,920**  | **$1,988,434** |
| Funds that have not been committed at the end of the period of this Plan are carried over to the next financial period and shall be allocated in accordance with the Plan approved by the General Assembly at that time. |  |  |
| For the period of 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018, one-fourth of the amount established for the twenty-four-months of the financial period 2016-2017 shall be allocated on a provisional basis, except for the Reserve Fund whose amount was set by the Committee at US$1 million ([Decision 10.COM 8](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/8)). |  |  |

1. . At the time of its establishment in 2010, the General Assembly considered that the sub-fund, within the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, to be used exclusively for enhancing the human capacities of the Secretariat, should receive voluntary supplementary contributions in the amount of at least US$1,100,000 per year in order for the Secretariat to be able to respond appropriately to States Parties’ needs and requests. At the time of writing, the sub-fund had received just over a fifth of the estimated resources required for the period since its creation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . Percentages are applied to the balance of the Fund as of 31 December 2015 less the amount that the Committee proposed to transfer to the Reserve Fund (US$24,190) in order to set its total amount at US$1 million. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)