



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA'S VIEWS ON THE DIGITAL SEQUENCE INFORMATION ON GENETIC RESOURCES

In response to CBD Notification 2019-012, the Republic of Korea would like to provide its current views and information on Digital Sequence Information(DSI) on genetic resources. At the outset, the Republic of Korea reiterates that the term “DSI” is mere a placeholder as noted in the decision CBD/COP/DEC/14/20.

1. Clarification of the concept of digital sequence information on genetic resources including relevant terminology and scope

The Republic of Korea suggests that “digital” should be removed from the term “digital sequence information”. Biologists do not use the term “digital sequence” when referring to “sequence”. Considering the general usage of the word “digital”: digital technology, digital display, digital camera, etc., “digital” indicates particular technologies or devices dealing with discrete data. All sequences generated from genetic resources can be described, stored, and transferred digitally. As sequences themselves have a digital nature, the word “digital” in the term “digital sequence information” is redundant. Using the more commonly-understood term “genetic sequences” is appropriate as it delimits the scope of “sequences” related to genetic resources and provides clarity in the terminology.

As “information” is neither specific nor limited, “data” is a more appropriate term than “information”. The Oxford English Dictionary defines “data” as “facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis” and “information” as “facts provided or learned about something or someone”. Therefore the Republic of Korea prefers to use “data” in this discussion.

Inferred by the current discussion on the placeholder, DSI in CBD, the Republic of Korea prefers “genetic sequence data (GSD)”, since GSD is commonly used in the scientific field. However, we would like to reiterate that GSD is not a genetic material or genetic resource. Hereinafter, in this submission, the view and information on domestic measures on access and benefit-sharing and benefit-sharing arrangements from commercial and non-commercial use of DSI was written in considering, instead of DSI, the concept and scope of GSD.



2. If and how domestic measures on access and benefit-sharing consider digital sequence information on genetic resources

There are no domestic restrictive measures on access and benefit-sharing considering genetic sequence data on genetic resources in the Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea believes that free access to genetic sequence data would promote scientific advancement and contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

3. On benefit-sharing arrangements from commercial and non-commercial use of digital sequence information on genetic resources

As genetic sequence data is not genetic resources under the Convention on Biological Diversity, it is not subject to the Article 15 on CBD. The Republic of Korea is of a position that the priority should be imposed on building consensus among the Parties on whether GSD is subject to access and benefit-sharing prior to further discussion.