

## **COP16 decision on DSI: Newly established mechanism will ensure the open access DSI ecosystem delivers value for researchers and for countries**

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The DSI Scientific Network welcomes the important milestone on sharing of financial benefits from genetic data that was reached at the UN Biodiversity Conference in Cali, Colombia. The agreement, which sets out modalities for operationalizing a multilateral mechanism, including a dedicated Fund<sup>1</sup>, is key to making the promises made at the previous conference in 2022 reality. The creation of the mechanism will ensure resources flow in support of biodiversity conservation, while building a system that incentivizes research and sharing of data.

The DSI Scientific Network is encouraged to see the COP16 decision reflect many of the scientific community's recommendations and priorities. These include clarity about which users have which obligations (monetary or non-monetary), preserving the open access DSI ecosystem, measuring and improving the sharing of non-monetary benefits from the use of DSI, and ensuring that the multilateral mechanism fosters broader use of DSI through capacity building. The mechanism will cover genetic data that is publicly available and for which the sharing of benefits is not provided for by other ABS international agreements.

From the perspective of the DSI Scientific Network, the main highlights are:

- **Non-commercial users are not expected to contribute money to the Fund:** The decision establishes a sector-based approach for sharing monetary benefits that focuses on commercial (for-profit) users. The DSI Scientific Network welcomes this approach as non-commercial users in research and academia generate non-monetary benefits through their use of DSI in the form of open data, open databases, open-source software, and open publications. These non-monetary benefits cost researchers time and money, they are not generally shared by for-profit users, and they are essential to maintain the infrastructure that allows open access to DSI globally. This distinction between the obligations of commercial and non-commercial users fairly reflects the contributions that different users make to the global system.
- **Databases should operate in a way that is consistent with Open Access:** The decision recognizes the importance of open access and ensuring that the mechanism protects and support this key principle for research. This is important because global research and innovation would be hindered if the current open access practices as provided through the International Nucleotide Sequence Database Consortium (INSDC) are not kept, which are more open than the FAIR, CARE, and TRUST principles also recognized in the CBD decision.
- **Non-Monetary Benefits and DSI capacity building cited as focus areas:** In addition to the financial component of the Fund, countries agreed that sharing non-monetary benefits is essential to the fair and equitable use of DSI. The decision also highlights the need for capacity building to enhance stakeholders' ability to benefit from DSI, while also supporting biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and the development of sustainable bio-economies. Both capacity building and non-monetary benefits are priorities for the DSI Scientific Network, as these reflect the activities and needs of many non-commercial researchers.

While the outcomes of COP16 are an important milestone, several of the elements that were not decided at COP16 need further elaboration. From the perspective of the Network, the role of databases in supporting transparency on the use of DSI, the mechanisms to support sharing and measuring of non-monetary benefits, and the impact of technological advances on the benefit sharing system are key issues that merit further consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Para 1 CBD/COP/16/L.32/Rev.1