

NCP GB8-016 MYPoW/DSI - Submission of views and other information on “Digital Sequence Information”

Contribution by the Government of the Netherlands

Terminology used in this area

- At this stage ‘DSI’, nor digital sequence data can be defined or framed.
- The term ‘DSI’ is used as a place holder, and reference should be made to the ongoing CBD process, under which a dedicated AHTEG will work on clarifying the concept, scope and possible appropriate terminology. Nevertheless, developments are at such a rapid pace any attempt for reaching agreement on a definition will most likely be outdated before any agreement is reached.
- In our view more precise terminology should be based on terms commonly used in the scientific community in the context of genetic research. “Genetic Sequence Data” (GSD) for instance is a commonly used term, also in the context of the WHO PIP Framework. ‘DSI’ and GSD are not equivalent to a genetic resource, and access to ‘DSI’ is not equivalent to access to genetic resources from which it is generated. ‘DSI’ can be generated, following access to particular genetic resources, and therefore conditions to get access to genetic resources should also include permission to generate and to further use ‘DSI’ or any information related to the genetic resource accessed.
- Access to publicly available ‘DSI’ should not be restricted, and making ‘DSI’ publicly available should be further promoted. Open access to publicly available ‘DSI’ is crucial for research and innovation, and will directly contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.
- ‘DSI’ is often ‘re-used’ and transferred to other users, even more frequently than genetic resources. This particularly applies to ‘DSI’ in the public domain and ‘DSI’ deposited in public databases. This will make tracking and tracing very complicated. In addition, individual sequences are not unique, and its uniqueness cannot be proven.

Actors involved with DSI on PGRFA

- A large diversity of actors is involved in both commercial and non-commercial use, including research, breeding, governmental institutions and civil society organizations. Access to ‘DSI’ should not be subject to administrative measures that will limit research, innovation and knowledge development, or restrict exchange of information. Restricting access will also have negative effects on smaller actors, who directly rely on public data and analysis tools.

The types and extent of uses of DSI on PGRFA, such as: characterization; breeding and genetic improvement; conservation; identification of PGRFA

- The use of ‘DSI’ on PGRFA ranges from characterization and identification of PGRFA to conservation, genetic improvement and innovation. Genetic improvement and development of new varieties is based on the effective use of both genomic and phenotypic data. Biological research benefits from open access to ‘DSI’. Restrictions to access will have negative consequences, and for specific research areas it may be even impossible to continue the work.

The relevance of DSI on PGRFA for food security and nutrition

- The use of ‘DSI’ on PGRFA is already fully integrated in research, innovation and breeding processes.
- Access to ‘DSI’ and related technologies is crucial for any stakeholder and country, in order to reach long term food security objectives, to be able to adapt to climate change, to deal with human health issues, and to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.