

Euroseeds shares its thoughts in the run-up to the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15)

Brussels, 07 December 2022

From 7 to 19 December 2022, the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) will take place in Montreal, Canada, and will be attended by representatives from governments all over the world to set goals to guide global action through 2030 to halt and reverse nature and biodiversity loss. In the context of a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, world leaders will be discussing about targets for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefit-sharing for the coming decade. In relation to the target on access and benefit-sharing, the inclusion of digital sequence information (DSI) in the scope of the CBD's access and benefit-sharing framework will be addressed.

As the current bilateral ABS system based on the CBD and its Nagoya Protocol poses already several challenges to plant breeding, Euroseeds does not believe that specifically regulating access and use of DSI will bring the expected outcome. On the contrary, adding regulation on DSI will generate additional administrative burden and transaction costs both for users and providers, preventing exchanges and research in plant breeding.

In view of the COP 15 discussions on DSI, Euroseeds therefore calls on negotiators to keep in mind:

- that continued access and use of publicly available digital sequence information without administrative burden, will sustain needed innovation. Open and free access to DSI creates a level playing field among public and private entities both in the developed and the developing world.
- that tracking and tracing the use of any information is completely impossible and the wish to link it with a given origin is neither possible nor justified. Any option involving tracking and tracing of DSI would thus be unworkable and unenforceable and should be avoided.
- that the current bilateral ABS framework under the CBD, as applied to plant genetic resources, does not work and fails to deliver on the objectives of conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources as well as on benefit-sharing. Instead of putting another layer of unworkable ABS legislation in place for DSI, Parties should rather reflect

on the current system and the reasons for its failure and take this opportunity to re-think the overall ABS framework.

- that DSI generated from plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, including its crop wild relatives, should be taken care of under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT PGRFA).

"To successfully contribute to long-term food security, under even more challenging climatic conditions, breeders will have to be able to continue breeding varieties that are resistant to emerging pests and diseases, are resilient to climate change and are offering pathways towards more nutritious and healthy diets." - Euroseeds Secretary General Garlich von Essen remarked and added that "putting administrative and regulatory burden on the use of genetic resources and DSI, which is part of the breeders' toolbox, will hamper timely innovation."

An agreement at the international level on the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is important for all CBD Parties and so it is for our industry, which is actively engaged in the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic diversity. Any future framework should however embrace and foster innovation in all possible ways to harness its maximum potential for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.



Avenue des Arts 52
1000 Brussels

www.euroseeds.eu

[#EmbracingNature](https://twitter.com/EmbracingNature)

