Researchers call for better coordination of the rules for benefit sharing for the use of digital sequence information

Researchers, leibniz institute dsmz, germany, call for better global coordination of the rules for benefit sharing for the use of digital sequence information

Amber Hartman Scholz, PhD, Leibniz Institute DSMZ, Braunschweig/Germany

Main building of the Leibniz Institute DSMZ on the Science Campus Braunschweig-Süd

BRAUNSCHWEIG, LOWER SAXONY AREA, GERMANY, November 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- 'Various UN bodies are simultaneously developing rules for the benefit sharing of digital sequence information. It is extremely important for research to have global harmonisation of these rules,' informs Dr. Amber Hartman Scholz. She is the corresponding author of an article in Nature Communications on the topic and head of the Department of Science Policy and Internationalisation at the Leibniz Institute DSMZ-German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures. The 16th United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP16) begins in Cali, Colombia, on 20 October. This conference can and should initiate the lead management for the global harmonisation of the different regulations on digital sequence information, as its negotiations are already well advanced. The Leibniz Institute DSMZ is participating in COP16 with seven researchers and several international partners to elucidate this message on site. The importance of having freely accessible digital sequence information globally has been

demonstrated in the fight against COVID. International cooperation and the sharing of the virus´ genetic sequence information were prerequisites for the rapid development of diagnostic procedures and vaccines.

Research must be fair and unrestricted

Open and free access to digital sequence information (DSI) is a basis of life science research. In their article, the authors call for the development of harmonised mechanisms for the use of DSI that are compatible with scientific practices and database structures. At the same time, these mechanisms should maximise shared use to achieve the goals of the legal frameworks. 'International policymakers have the mandate to conduct negotiations in their area. But science knows no legal and jurisdictional boundaries. Researchers use genetic data and need open access to the large central public databases around the world. If negotiators develop new rules for use in the commercial sector with UN instruments, these rules clash with the scientific practice,' explains Dr. Amber Hartman Scholz.

Research needs legal certainty

A harmonised multilateral system for Open DSI must have clear and simple standardised terms of use for all publicly available data. The authors of the Nature Communications publication call for international and uniform legal certainty in the interest of scientific progress. Harmonising the existing frameworks is challenging because they each serve a different purpose: conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (CBD/NP/BBNJ), detection, prevention and eradication of diseases (PIP, WHO CA+) and food security (IPTGRFA). Each set of rules has different decision-making processes, compliance measures and designated national negotiators (often from different governmental departments) with mandates that don´t overlap or even compete for budgets and political priorities. If benefit-sharing from DSI is designed in isolation for each of these forums rather than in an interconnected global context, there is a real risk that legal uncertainty and red tape will reduce the value of the data.

Original publication: Sett, S., Kress, W.J., Halewood, M. et al.: Harmonize rules for digital sequence information benefit-sharing across UN frameworks. Nat Commun 15, 8745 (2024), https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-024-52994-z

Press contact:
PhDr. Sven-David Müller, Head of Public Relations, Leibniz Institute DSMZ-German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures GmbH
Phone: ++49 (0)531/2616-300
Mail: press@dsmz.de

About the Leibniz Institute DSMZ

The Leibniz Institute DSMZ-German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures is the world's most diverse collection of biological resources (bacteria, archaea, protists, yeasts, fungi, bacteriophages, plant viruses, genomic bacterial DNA as well as human and animal cell lines). Microorganisms and cell cultures are collected, investigated and archived at the DSMZ. As an

institution of the Leibniz Association, the DSMZ with its extensive scientific

services and biological resources has been a global partner for research, science and industry since 1969. The DSMZ was the first registered collection in Europe (Regulation (EU) No. 511/2014) and is certified according to the quality standard ISO 9001:2015. As a patent depository, it offers the only possibility in Germany to deposit biological material in accordance with the requirements of the Budapest Treaty. In addition to scientific services, research is the second pillar of the DSMZ. The institute, located on the Science Campus Braunschweig-Süd, accommodates more than 88,000 bioresources and has almost 230 employees. www.dsmz.de

The Leibniz Association
The Leibniz Association connects 96 independent research institutions that range in focus from natural, engineering and environmental sciences to economics, spatial and social sciences and the humanities. Leibniz Institutes address issues of social, economic and ecological relevance. They conduct basic and applied research, including in the interdisciplinary Leibniz Research Alliances, maintain scientific infrastructure, and provide research-based services. The Leibniz Association identifies focus areas for knowledge transfer, particularly with the Leibniz research museums. It advises and informs policymakers, science, industry and the general public. Leibniz institutions collaborate intensively with universities – including in the form of Leibniz ScienceCampi – as well as with industry and other partners at home and abroad. They are subject to a transparent, independent evaluation procedure. Because of their importance for the country as a whole, the Leibniz Association Institutes are funded jointly by Germany's central and regional governments. The Leibniz Institutes employ around 21,300 people, including 12,200 researchers. The financial volume amounts to 2,2 billion euros. www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de

PhDr. Sven David Mueller, M.Sc.
Leibniz-Institut DSMZ
+49 531 2616300
email us here
Visit us on social media:
Facebook
X
LinkedIn
Instagram
YouTube
Other
