



UPDATE – October 2024

Digital Sequence Information | Pre-CBD COP16 Informal Work

Sponsored by the Government of Norway & Bezos Earth Fund

Document prepared by Meridian Institute and Access and Benefit-Sharing Capacity Development Initiative

Overview

As announced in November 2023 at the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources (DSI) in Geneva, Switzerland, the Government of Norway and Bezos Earth Fund have provided funding to the [Meridian Institute](#) (Meridian) for broad and inclusive informal work on DSI through the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16). The Government of Norway also announced the continued co-financing of the multi-donor [Access and Benefit-Sharing Capacity Development Initiative \(ABS CDI\)](#), hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. Other governments and interested organizations are providing support for additional informal activities.

The informal work of Meridian and ABS CDI is distinct from both the formal CBD negotiation process and the DSI Informal Advisory Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources (IAG). Meridian and ABS CDI will seek to build on the work of the OEWG. Meridian and ABS CDI will coordinate closely with the CBD Secretariat and the co-chairs of the IAG to ensure complementarity – in both timing and substance – between the informal work and ongoing formal processes.

On 8 December 2023, the Government of Norway released a call for suggestions from CBD National Focal Points (NFPs) on the informal process on access and benefit-sharing, and has received a number of responses as of January 2024. Meridian and ABS CDI have developed a joint workplan for a series of informal meetings to be convened during the intersessional period (see table below). The workplan reflects suggestions from NFPs as well as conversations with various negotiators, stakeholders, and rightsholders regarding how informal discussions can add value to the formal process.

The aim of Meridian and ABS CDI is to conduct an informal process that is broad, inclusive, and transparent. The organizers will strive to engage and gather perspectives from a diverse range of stakeholders, rightsholders, and parties with the aim of aiding negotiators in their understanding of DSI generation, storage, and use, as well as policy options for benefit-sharing

from the use of DSI. In particular, Meridian will carry out ongoing consultations with representatives from the private sector with the aim of ensuring they are well acquainted with and participating in the CBD processes. Meridian and ABS CDI will also author and/or commission knowledge products to inform and complement the outputs of the meetings outlined below as another way to support the formal negotiation process.

Ultimately, the activities outlined below are intended to help negotiators, stakeholders, and rightsholders come to a mutual understanding about DSI with the goal of fulfilling the mandate set out in [COP15 decision 15/9](#) for COP16. By nature of the limited time remaining until COP16, an informal process will not be able to address all areas in which there is a need for further discussion outlined in the annex of CBD/WGDSI/1/3. Furthermore, while Meridian and ABS CDI will begin to execute the activities listed below immediately, both organizers will remain open to adjusting the workplan plan as possible and appropriate to adapt to advancements in the negotiations and other unforeseen circumstances.

The meetings, unless indicated otherwise in the description, are by invitation only. The organizers will aim to identify relevant and appropriate negotiators, stakeholders, and rightsholders to participate in each meeting, and will keep the groups large enough to allow for a diverse range of views yet small enough to facilitate candid and productive informal exchange. If you have questions about a specific meeting listed below or feel you would be a good candidate to participate based on the 'target participants' listed, please reach out to the lead organization for the activity. Meridian and ABS CDI will update this list as dates, locations, and exact topics are determined.

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In-person and Online Meetings

Meeting	Purpose	Dates & Locations	Participants	Modality	Lead Organizer
European User & Negotiator Dialogue: “User Perspectives on the CBD Multilateral Mechanism for Benefit-sharing from the Use of DSI”	Discuss modalities for a multilateral access and benefit-sharing mechanism for DSI and react to the outcomes of OEWG1.	18-21 Mar 2024 Vilm, Germany	European Industry and Academic Users & Select Negotiators (Invite only)	In person	Meridian
African Science-Policy Dialogue Preparation Webinar	Prepare participants attending the African Science-Policy Dialogue.	Mar 2024	African Negotiators & Users (Invite only)	Webinar	ABS CDI
African Regional Science-Policy Dialogue on DSI	Form a network to share and learn about regional DSI use and policy implications.	24-26 Apr 2024 Nairobi, Kenya	African Negotiators & Users (Invite only)	In person	ABS CDI
Stakeholder & Rightsholder Dialogue	Discuss data governance and relationship with/implications for benefit-sharing.	07-09 May 2024 Paris, France	Global Stakeholders from Industry and Academia & Indigenous and Local Rightsholders (Invite only)	In person	Meridian
Southern Negotiators Informal Science-Policy Dialogue	Exchange views on DSI use and policy implications.	08-10 Jul 2024 Cali, Colombia	Global South Negotiators, IPLCs, & Industry and Academic Users (Invite only)	In person	Meridian
Group of Latin American and the Caribbean (GRULAC) Informal Dialogue	Form a network to share and learn about regional DSI use and policy implications.	11-12 Jul 2024 Cali, Colombia	GRULAC Negotiators (Invite only)	In person	Meridian
Official Side events during OEWG DSI 2	Inform negotiators and stakeholders about the outcomes of the informal process.	12-16 Aug Montreal	Open Invitation	Side events	Both
Informal Asia-Pacific Regional Science-Policy Dialogue	Form a network to share and learn about regional DSI use and policy implications basing the discussions on the outcomes of the African Group and GRULAC Science-Policy Dialogues.	29 Aug 2024	Asian Negotiators & Industry and Academic Users (Invite only)	Virtual meeting	Both
Global Exchange of DSI Users and Regulators	Increase common understanding of expectations in and functions of the DSI system; also analyze post-OEWG 2 outcomes and plan for COP16.	16-18 Sep 2024 Pretoria, South Africa	Global Negotiators, Stakeholders from Industry and Academia & Indigenous and Local Rightsholders (Invite only)	In person	Both
Third Informal DSI Retreat	Increase the understanding of positions and convergence/divergence before COP16.	18-20 Sep 2024 Pretoria, South Africa	Global Negotiators and Other Guests (Invite only)	In person	ABS CDI

Meeting	Purpose	Target Dates & Locations	Target Participants	Modality	Lead Organizer
High-Level Dialogue on Nature Management, Scientific Innovation, Benefit-Sharing and the CBD	Sharing perspectives and building trust regarding priorities and considerations for the establishment of a multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism from the use of DSI at Climate Week.	24 Sep 2024 New York, New York	Environmental Ministers and Vice-Ministers, Business Leaders, and Leaders of IPLC Groups (Invite only)	In Person	Meridian
LSE Roundtable on Global Biodiversity Finance and Digital Sequence Information	Provide independent evaluation of the options to be addressed by policy makers at COP16 on benefit-sharing triggers and other financial-related aspects of the DSI MLM.	27-28 Sep 2024 London, England	Financial Experts, Relevant Academics, and Global Negotiators (Invite only)	In Person	Meridian
Official Side events during COP16	Inform negotiators and stakeholders about the outcomes of the informal process.	21 Oct– 01 Nov 2024 Cali, Colombia	Open Invitation	Side events	Both