

Policy Briefing: from access to use—untangling the international legal frameworks that govern microbial resources

Davide Faggionato ^{1,†}, Melania Muñoz-García ^{1,†}, Tanja Kostic ², Mariana L. Ferrari ^{3,4}, Pascale Vonaesch ⁵, Mathilde Poyet ^{6,7}, Perrine Portier ^{8,4}, Matthew J. Ryan ⁹, Djamila Djeddour ⁹, Cornelia Stumptner ¹⁰, Giovanna Cristina Varese ^{10,11}, Aurora Zuzuarregui ^{10,12}, Mathieu Groussin ^{10,13}, Michael Schloter ¹⁴, Robert D. Finn ¹⁵, Aylin S. Haas ¹⁵, Ian Probert ¹⁶, Gerard Verkley ¹⁷, Jörg Overmann ¹⁸, Amber H. Scholz ^{1,*}

¹Leibniz Institute DSMZ-German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures, Department of Science Policy & Internationalisation, Inhoffenstraße 7B, 381124 Braunschweig, Germany

²Center for Health & Bioresources, Bioresources Unit, AIT Austrian Institute of Technology, Konrad Lorenz Strasse 24, 3430 Tulln, Austria

³Institut Pasteur, Université Paris Cité, Biological Resource Center of Institut Pasteur, F-75015 Paris, France

⁴Microbial Resource Research Infrastructure (MIRRI-ERIC), Headquarters 4700-000 Braga, Portugal

⁵University of Lausanne, Department of Fundamental Microbiology, UNIL-Sorge, 1015, Lausanne, Switzerland

⁶Institute of Experimental Medicine, Kiel University, 24105 Kiel, Germany

⁷Global Microbiome Conservancy

⁸University of Angers, Institut Agro, INRAE, IRHS, SFR QUASAV, CIRM-CFBP, MIRRI-ERIC, F-49000 Angers, France

⁹CABI, Silwood Park, Buckhurst Road, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7PY, United Kingdom

¹⁰Diagnostic & Research Centre for Molecular Biomedicine, Diagnostic & Research Institute of Pathology, Medical University of Graz, Neue Stiftingtalstrasse 6, 8010 Graz, Austria

¹¹Mycoteca Universitatis Taurinensis, University of Torino, Department of Life Sciences and System Biology, 10125 Turin, Italy

¹²Spanish Type Culture Collection (CECT-UV), Universitat de València, Edificio 3 CUE, Parc Científic Universitat de València, Catedrático Agustín Escardino 9, 46980 Paterna (Valencia), Spain

¹³Institute of Clinical Molecular Biology, Kiel University, 24105 Kiel, Germany

¹⁴Helmholtz Center Munich-German Research Center for Environmental Health, 85764 Neuherberg, Germany

¹⁵European Molecular Biology Laboratory, European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI), Wellcome Genome Campus, CB10 1SD Hinxton, Cambridge, United Kingdom

¹⁶Sorbonne Université, CNRS, FR2424, Roscoff Culture Collection, Station Biologique de Roscoff, Roscoff 29680, France

¹⁷Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute Uppsalalaan 8, 3584 CT Utrecht, Netherlands

¹⁸Leibniz Institute DSMZ-German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures, Microbial Ecology and Diversity, Inhoffenstraße 7B, 381124 Braunschweig, Germany

*Corresponding author. Leibniz Institute DSMZ-German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures, Department of Science Policy & Internationalisation, Inhoffenstraße 7B, 381124 Braunschweig, Germany. E-mail: amber.h.scholz@dsmz.de

†These authors contributed equally to this work.

Abstract

The wide geographic distribution of microorganisms, combined with their vast taxonomic and functional diversity, make them indispensable reservoirs of genetic variation that sustain ecosystem resilience and fuel biotechnological innovation. However, to use this diversity, microbiologists must navigate a complex legal and regulatory landscape governed by multiple United Nations treaties and their respective access and benefit-sharing frameworks as well as regulatory frameworks specific to particular ecosystems, biosecurity, pathogens, and intellectual property. This complex regulatory web is also actively growing and changing, which makes it immensely challenging for a “regular” microbiologist to navigate. For policymakers and negotiators, it is also difficult to appreciate the full complexity that practitioners experience. This policy briefing provides a concise regulatory guide for practitioners and policymakers alike, summarized in a graphical overview, to provide more clarity and understanding for those at the edge of decision-making and practice.

Received: 15 December 2025. Revised: 22 January 2026. Accepted: 26 January 2026

© The Author(s) 2026. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of Applied Microbiology International. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. For commercial re-use, please contact reprints@oup.com for reprints and translation rights for reprints. All other permissions can be obtained through our RightsLink service via the Permissions link on the article page on our site—for further information please contact journals.permissions@oup.com

Sustainability statement

Global microbial research, powered by the planet's vast and diverse microbial genetic resources, has the potential to accelerate progress across many United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this policy briefing, we focus on the need to balance scientific advancement with environmental protection and social justice as exemplified by the SDGs' target 15.6 to "Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed." We provide a broad overview of how to ensure international access and benefit-sharing frameworks are respected and where and how other legal frameworks for biodiversity conservation, intellectual property, and biosafety regulations complement each other.

Keywords Nagoya Protocol, Convention on Biological Diversity, BBNJ Agreement, World Intellectual Property Organization, Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing, Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

Microbial diversity on planet Earth is immense. It is estimated that there are between 10^6 and 10^{12} bacterial and archaea taxonomic units on Earth (Louca et al. 2019, Lennon and Locey 2020), of which only a small fraction has been characterized through molecular methods, and an even smaller subset has been successfully isolated in culture (Lewis et al. 2021). Geographical distribution analysis shows that prokaryotes are rarely endemic to individual countries (Overmann and Scholz 2017, Louca 2022), while alongside microalgae and fungi they play a crucial role in global biodiversity, biogeochemical cycling, ecosystem homeostasis (Loreau et al. 2001, Anantharaman et al. 2016, Voolstra et al. 2024), and offer substantial translational potential from One Health interventions and precision agriculture to biotechnological innovations for climate resilience (D'Hondt et al. 2021, Callens et al. 2022, Ibáñez et al. 2023). Over the past decade, to understand complex environmental communities, many microbiologists have focused on "microbiomes" (Berg et al. 2020) to investigate the intricate cross-talk between microscopic and macroscopic life.

Given all of the above, it is common practice to procure environmental samples that represent snapshots of microbial and host communities from soil, water, air, plants, and animals (including humans). Yet, microbes (Gilbert, 2025) and, indeed, all of biodiversity, are regulated by a variety of international legal frameworks that originated from various United Nations (UN) instruments. This policy briefing provides high-level guidance for scientists who must navigate the resulting regulatory complexities and for policymakers who often focus on a single legal framework and thus might overlook the existing policy complexity. The following sections provide brief summaries of each legal instrument which are compiled together in Fig. 1 and complemented by a list of abbreviations and acronyms in Table 1.

All (non-human) biological samples: UN Convention on Biological Diversity

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which entered into force in 1993, is an international treaty with near-universal participation of 196 Parties (Webpage—Convention on Biological Diversity). The CBD's third objective is the "fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources" (Webpage—Convention on Biological Diversity). The CBD explicitly confirmed that countries have sovereign rights over biodiversity but excludes human genetic resources (i.e. the 23 chro-

mosomes of *Homo sapiens*). National laws governing access to biodiversity emerged from the CBD.

CBD's Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol (NP) is a supplementary legally-binding agreement to the CBD (Fig. 1) (Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity 2011). It is the primary international legal framework governing access to and use of most (non-human) biodiversity. It was adopted in 2010 and entered into force in 2014 and creates concrete legal obligations for contracting Parties. The NP is complex to comply with because each country creates its own national framework. It also can create significant legal repercussions. Thus a separate article focused only on the NP appears in this issue (Faggionato, 2026).

CBD's Digital Sequence Information

The CBD and NP address genetic resources, i.e. physical samples. However, in 2016, given the explosion in genetic data stored in open databases (Webpage—INSDC, Karsch-Mizrachi et al. 2024), the question of how commercial outcomes that used these data could and should be shared became a source of tension in the CBD (Rohden and Scholz 2022), which led to negotiations on Digital Sequence Information (DSI)—a policy term that refers broadly to genetic sequence data and potentially other biomolecular information. In 2024, the 16th CBD Conference of the Parties operationalized a new multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism for the use of publicly available DSI including a new global fund, the "Cali Fund", into which large commercial DSI-using entities are expected to begin contributing (Blom et al. 2025). The agreement ensures that DSI databases can remain open access and that academia has no monetary obligations (Muñoz-García et al. 2025, Orozco and Scholz 2025).

The High Seas' BBNJ Agreement: marine genetic resources

The new agreement on "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction" (aka BBNJ Agreement) (United Nations 2023) under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was adopted in June 2023 and came into force on January 17, 2026 (Webpage—SDG Knowledge Hub). The BBNJ Agreement includes benefit-sharing provisions for marine genetic resources (MGR) collected from international waters (200 nautical miles offshore) and their DSI.

Table 1 Acronyms.

Acronym	Definition
ABS	Access and Benefit-Sharing
aTK	associated Traditional Knowledge
BBNJ Agreement	Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
DSI	Digital Sequence Information
DURC	Dual-Use Research of Concern
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone(s)
EU	European Union
GR	Genetic Resource(s)
INSDC	International Nucleotide Sequence Database Collaboration
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
IVDR	In Vitro Diagnostics Regulation
MGR	Marine Genetic Resources
NP	Nagoya Protocol
PABS	Pathogens ABS
PIP	Pandemic Influenza Preparedness
SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
sMTA	Standard Material Transfer Agreement
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WIPO GRATK	WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge

sure plants with potential infectious agents do not cause new outbreaks as they move between borders (Fig. 1) ([Webpage—IPPC](#)). Beyond plants, other frameworks including the CBD govern invasive species (Shine 2007).

Pandemic flu

The World Health Organization (WHO)'s Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework is a multilateral ABS instrument which governs pandemic influenza strains ([Webpage—WHO PIP Framework](#)) (Fig. 1). Non-commercial researchers can access PIP material through a standard material transfer agreement (SMTA2) from WHO's Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) system ([Webpage—WHO GISRS](#)).

Pathogens with pandemic potential

A new WHO treaty, the WHO Pandemic Agreement, was adopted in May 2025 and includes benefit-sharing provisions for pathogens with potential to cause pandemics ([Webpage—WHO Pandemic Agreement](#)) (Fig. 1). However, no agreement could be reached on how the pathogen access and benefit-sharing (PABS) system will work ([Webpage—Think Global Health](#)). Thus an Intergovernmental Working Group will work until at least May 2026 to agree on topics including which pathogens will be covered, how DSI will be handled, if open access will be maintained, and how databases and collections should handle PABS material and sequences. Once

the PABS Annex is agreed, the Pandemic Agreement will be open for ratification.

Dual Use Research of Concern

Pathogens are also in the scope of national and international biosecurity regulations, often referred to as “dual-use research of concern” (DURC). These rules, such as European Regulation No. 2021/821 (European Parliament and Council 2021), aim to ensure that research on/with highly infectious or toxic agents (mainly including pathogens but also proteins and toxins from non-pathogenic cyanobacteria and fungi) will not be used for malignant purposes. Here, microbiologists must consider the pathogenic nature or the presence of toxins in their samples (Fig. 1).

Ethics of human-derived samples

Research involving human-derived microbiome samples must comply with international ethical frameworks such as the Helsinki Declaration and the Oviedo Convention Regulation ([Webpage—WMA Declaration of Helsinki](#), [Webpage—Council of Europe](#)), and in the European Union (EU), also with the In Vitro Diagnostics Regulation (IVDR) (EU Reg. 2017/746) and the Data Governance Act (EU Reg. 2022/868) (European Parliament and Council 2017, European Parliament and Council 2022).

World Intellectual Property Organization

Budapest Treaty

In addition to regulations specific to the type and provenance of the samples, if research leads to intellectual property claims, researchers must deposit the corresponding strains in a collection recognized as an International Depositary Authority under the Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure (Fig. 1) ([Webpage—WIPO Budapest Treaty 1977](#)).

GRATK

Furthermore, a new World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge (WIPO GRATK) was adopted in May 2024 (Fig. 1). It requires patent applicants to disclose the country of origin of the GR and explicitly acknowledge Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) who provided associated traditional knowledge (aTK) used to develop the invention ([Webpage—WIPO GRATK Treaty](#)). The treaty will enter into force after 15 countries ratify it.

Outlook

The global nature of contemporary microbiological research increasingly requires engagement with a growing array of regulatory frameworks. New frameworks such as the CBD DSI multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism (2024), the BBNJ Agreement (2023), the WHO's PABS framework (2024), and the WIPO GRATK Treaty (2024) represent major new international law that will affect microbiologists. These policy requirements demand early and deliberate institutional planning and may reshape the conditions under which biological samples and data are accessed, shared, and utilized. Research institutions, databases, biobanks, collections, journals, and funders must embed legal and regulatory considerations at the earliest stages of project design, data stewardship, sample management, editorial process, and international collaboration.

At the same time, policymakers must ensure that emerging and existing regulatory frameworks are coherent, practical, and do not inadvertently hinder scientific innovation. A more harmonized and responsive policy ecosystem, developed taking in consideration the experience of the scientific community, will be crucial to ensuring that research can advance responsibly while supporting equitable benefit-sharing and the full realization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Sett et al. 2025).

Acknowledgements

The outline and policy content of this article were developed within Work Package 5, "Legal and ethical framework for microbiome biobanking", of Horizon Europe project MICRObiome Biobanking (RI) Enabler (MICROBE). The manuscript's policy analysis was subsequently discussed and peer-reviewed at a 2025 meeting of the Horizon Europe Microbes-4-Climate project, with additional input from the Horizon Europe projects MICROBE and

European Viral Outbreak Response Alliance (EVORA). Subsequent rounds of review by project-affiliated authors and members of the MICROBE Advisory Group further refined and consolidated the content.

The manuscript's policy content was also presented and discussed at Europe Biobank Week 2025 and at the MikroBioKosmos Society & Central and Eastern Europe Symposium of Microbial Ecology 2025.

We would like to thank Scarlett Sett of the CSIRO Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness for her comments during the preparation of this manuscript.

The figure was generated using biorender.com:

Figure 1: Created in BioRender. Faggionato, D. (2026) <https://BioRender.com/t578mte>

Author contributions

Davide Faggionato (Conceptualization [lead], Visualization [lead], Writing—original draft [lead], Writing—review & editing [lead]), Melania Muñoz-García (Visualization [lead], Writing—original draft [lead], Writing—review & editing [lead]), Tanja Kostic (Conceptualization [lead], Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Mariana L. Ferrari (Conceptualization [lead], Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Pascale Vonaesch (Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Mathilde Poyet (Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Perrine Portier (Conceptualization [lead], Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Matthew J. Ryan (Conceptualization [lead], Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Djamilia Djeddour (Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Cornelia Stumptner (Conceptualization [lead], Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Giovanna Cristina Varese (Conceptualization [lead], Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Aurora Zuzuarregui (Conceptualization [lead], Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Mathieu Groussin (Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Michael Schloter (Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Robert D. D. Finn (Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Aylin S. Haas (Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Ian Probert (Writing—review & editing [supporting]), Gerard Verkleij (Writing - review & editing [supporting]), Jörg Overmann (Conceptualization [lead], Visualization [supporting], Writing—review & editing [supporting]), and Amber Hartman Scholz (Conceptualization [lead], Visualization [lead], Writing—original draft [lead], Writing—review & editing [lead])

Conflicts of interest

No conflict of interest declared.

Funding

D.F., T.K., P.P., J.O., A.H.S. and R.D.F. acknowledge support from the Horizon Europe project MICRObiome Biobanking (RI) Enabler (MICROBE) (Grant agreement ID: 101094353).

P.P., M.J.R., D.D., A.Z., and G.C.V. acknowledge support from the Horizon Europe project Microbes-4-Climate (Grant agreement ID: 101131818).

A.S.H. and A.H.S. acknowledge support from the Horizon Europe project European Viral Outbreak Response Alliance (EVORA) (Grant agreement ID: 101131959).

C.S. obtained funding from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research funded project BBMRI.at (grant number 2023-0.752.780).

G.C.V. acknowledges support from the European Commission—NextGenerationEU, Project SUS-MIRRI.IT "Strengthening the MIRRI Italian Research Infrastructure for Sustainable Bioscience and Bioeconomy", code n. IR0000005. Furthermore, we acknowledge the contribution and support from the RI MIRRI-IT.

Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Horizon Europe Program. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

M.M.G. and A.H.S. acknowledge support from the German Alliance of Scientific Organization's project "Access and Benefit Sharing Information Platform".

M.P. and M.G. acknowledge support from the DFG (German Science Foundation) within the Collaborative Research Center (CRC) 1182 on the Origin and Function of Metaorganisms (Project-ID 261376515–SFB 1182, project C5.1 to M.G., project C5.2 to M.P.) and within the Cluster of Excellence 2167 "PrecisionMedicine in Chronic Inflammation (PMI)" (EXC 2167). They also acknowledge support for the Global Microbiome Conservancy from the Center for Microbiome Informatics and Therapeutics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA. M.G. also received funding from the ERC (VESICULOME, 101126254).

P.V. acknowledges support from the Swiss National Science Foundation through the NCCR Microbiome, supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (Grant number 180575), as well as an Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship (no. PCEFP3_194545) and a SNSF Starting Grant (no. TMSGI3_218455).

Co-funded by the European Union.

Data availability

All relevant data are contained within this article.

References

- Anantharaman K, Brown CT, Hug LA *et al.* Thousands of microbial genomes shed light on interconnected biogeochemical processes in an aquifer system. *Nat Commun* 2016;**7**:13219 <https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms13219>
- Berg G, Rybakova D, Fischer D *et al.* Microbiome definition re-visited: old concepts and new challenges. *Microbiome* 2020;**8**:103 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40168-020-00875-0>
- Blom C, Jaspars M, Muminovic Rilak J *et al.* From frameworks to finance: how sharing benefits from the use of digital sequence information can evolve to contribute to biodiversity conservation. *Nat Biotechnol* 2025;**43**:1599–602 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41587-025-02820-8>
- Callens K, Fontaine F, Sanz Y *et al.* Microbiome-based solutions to address new and existing threats to food security, nutrition, health and agrifood systems' sustainability. *Front Sustain Food Syst* 2022;**6**:1047765 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2022.1047765>
- Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity: Text and Annex. 2011
- D'Hondt K, Kostic T, McDowell R *et al.* Microbiome innovations for a sustainable future. *Nat Microbiol* 2021;**6**:138–42. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41564-020-00857-w>
- European Parliament and Council. Regulation–2017/746–EN—Medical Device Regulation—EUR-Lex. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/746/oj/eng> (19 November 2025, date last accessed)
- European Parliament and Council. Regulation–2021/821–EN—EUR-Lex. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/821/oj/eng> (12 December 2025, date last accessed)
- European Parliament and Council. Regulation–2022/868–EN—EUR-Lex. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/868/oj/eng> (19 November 2025, date last accessed)
- Faggionato D, Muñoz-García M, Kostic T *et al.* Policy in practice: How to "do" the Nagoya Protocol: common misconceptions, challenges and best practices for access and benefit-sharing compliance. *Sustainable Microbiology* 2026. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sumbio/qvag007>
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. 2001
- Gilbert JA, Scholz AH, Bello MGD *et al.* Safeguarding microbial biodiversity: microbial conservation specialist group within the species survival commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature. *Sustainable Microbiology* 2025;**2**. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sumbio/qvaf024>
- Ibáñez A, Garrido-Chamorro S, Barreiro C. Microorganisms and climate change: a not so invisible effect. *Microbiology Research* 2023;**14**:918–47. <https://doi.org/10.3390/microbiolres14030064>
- Karsch-Mizrachi I, Arita M, Burdett T. The international nucleotide sequence database collaboration (INSDC): enhancing global participation. *nar* 2024;**53**:D62–D66. <https://doi.org/10.1093/nar/gkae1058>
- Lennon JT, Locey KJ. More support for Earth's massive microbiome. *Biol Direct* 2020;**15**:5. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13062-020-00261-8>
- Lewis WH, Tahon G, Geesink P *et al.* Innovations to culturing the uncultured microbial majority. *Nat Rev Micro* 2021;**19**:225–40. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41579-020-00458-8>
- Loreau M, Naeem S, Inchausti P *et al.* Biodiversity and ecosystem functioning: current knowledge and future challenges. *Science* 2001;**294**:804–8. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1064088>
- Louca S, Mazel F, Doebeli M *et al.* A census-based estimate of Earth's bacterial and archaeal diversity. *PLoS Biol* 2019;**17**:e3000106. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3000106>
- Louca S. The rates of global bacterial and archaeal dispersal. *ISME J* 2022;**16**:159–67. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41396-021-01069-8>
- Muñoz-García M, Bansal KC, Bao Y *et al.* Navigating COP16's digital sequence information outcomes: what researchers need to do

- in practice. *Patterns* 2025;**6**:101208. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.patter.2025.101208>
- Orozco P, Scholz AH. The Cali Fund promises conservation benefits, but only if countries and businesses take action. *Nat Rev Biodivers* 2025;**1**:276–8. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44358-025-00050-z>
- Overmann J, Scholz AH. Microbiological research under the Nagoya Protocol: facts and fiction. *Trends Microbiol* 2017;**25**:85–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tim.2016.11.001>
- Rohden F, Scholz AH. The international political process around Digital Sequence Information under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 2018–2020 intersessional period. *Plants, people. Planet* 2022;**4**:51–60. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ppp3.10198>
- Sett S, Kress WJ, Halewood M *et al.* Harmonize rules for digital sequence information benefit-sharing across UN frameworks. *Nature Communications* 2025;**15**. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-024-52994-z>
- Shine C. Invasive species in an international context: IPPC, CBD, European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species and other legal instruments*. *EPPO Bulletin* 2007;**37**:103–13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2338.2007.01087.x>
- United Nations. Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable use of marine Biological Diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. 2023
- Voolstra CR, Raina J-B, Dörr M *et al.* The coral microbiome in sickness, in health and in a changing world. *Nat Rev Micro* 2024;**22**:460–75. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41579-024-01015-3>
- Webpage—CITES Permit system. *CITES Permit System | CITES*. https://cites.org/eng/prog/Permit_system (12 December 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—CITES. *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora | CITES*. <https://cites.org/eng/disc/text.php> (19 November 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—Convention on Biological Diversity. *Convention on Biological Diversity*. <https://www.cbd.int/> (17 November 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—Council of Europe. *The Oviedo Convention and Human Rights Principles Regarding Health—Human Rights and Biomedicine—Www.Coe.Int*. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-and-biomedicine/the-oviedo-convention-and-human-rights-principles-regarding-health> (19 November 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—INSDC. *International Nucleotide Sequence Database Collaboration*. <https://www.insdc.org/> (19 November 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—IPCC. <https://www.ipcc.int/en/> (December 12, 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—SDG Knowledge Hub. *With 60 Ratifications, BBNJ Agreement to Enter into Force in January 2026*. <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/with-60-ratifications-bbnj-agreement-to-enter-into-force-in-january-2026/> (19 November 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—Think Global Health. *Fate Unknown: the Pandemic Agreement's Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing*. <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/fate-unknown-pandemic-agreements-pathogen-access-and-benefit-sharing> (12 December 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—WHO GISRS. *Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)*. <https://www.who.int/initiatives/global-influenza-surveillance-and-response-system> (12 December 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—WHO Pandemic Agreement. *World Health Assembly Adopts Historic Pandemic Agreement to Make the World More Equitable and Safer from Future Pandemics*. <https://www.who.int/news/item/20-05-2025-world-health-assembly-adopts-historic-pandemic-agreement-to-make-the-world-more-equitable-and-safer-from-future-pandemics> (12 December 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—WHO PIP Framework. *Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework*. <https://www.who.int/initiatives/pandemic-influenza-preparedness-framework> (19 November 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—WIPO Budapest Treaty. *Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure*. <https://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/registration/budapest/index.html> (19 November 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—WIPO GRATK Treaty. *WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge*. <https://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/gratk/index.html> (19 November 2025, date last accessed)
- Webpage—WMA Declaration of Helsinki. *WMA—The World Medical Association—WMA Declaration of Helsinki—Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Participants*. <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki/> (12 December 2025, date last accessed)

Received: 15 December 2025. Revised: 22 January 2026. Accepted: 26 January 2026

© The Author(s) 2026. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of Applied Microbiology International. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. For commercial re-use, please contact reprints@oup.com for reprints and translation rights for reprints. All other permissions can be obtained through our RightsLink service via the Permissions link on the article page on our site—for further information please contact journals.permissions@oup.com