

The Asian Consortium for Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Microbial Resources (ACM)

Ken-ichiro Suzuki

NITE Biological Resource Center (NBRC), National Institute of Technology and Evaluation (NITE)

Kisarazu 292-0818 Chiba, Japan

ACM has established in 2004 at the occasion of ICCC10 at Tsukuba by representatives of twelve Asian countries. In the recent CBD era, countries with rich natural resources are interested in the biological resources in the countries. However, there are few schemes ensuring transparency for biologists to make international cooperative studies using biological resources. ACM is unique community in the following points: (1) the members participating both from the developing countries with rich biological resources and from those industrialized with high-tech companies, (2) the varieties of the members including government administrative staffs and culture collection curators as well as researchers on microbiology. The aims of ACM are establishment of framework for international cooperation to enhance microbiological researches, international standards for material transfer, and information networks. “Access and benefit-sharing” is also a common interest among the members. To achieve the above aims, microbial resource centers should play important roles as national focal points.

ACM holds meetings annually to exchange information of the activities of the members and country reports on political issues on biological resources. ACM has three taskforces for (1) information network and databases, (2) human resource development, and (3) standardization of material transfer agreement. The integrated database searchable of microbial strains through the culture collections in Asian countries is one of the visible output of the activities. It also assists small culture collections to establish and manage their own databases on the common structure to facilitate the integration of the databases.

The ACM members expect the expansion of the activities to reach the international standardized scheme to encourage microbiologists to study biological diversity to solve the global problems on environments and human welfare.