

A Data Descriptor for the Legal and Ethical Governance of Genomic Biobanking in Kenyan Research Consortia

Kamau Ochieng¹, Wanjiku Mwangi¹

¹ Technical University of Kenya

Published: 25 November 2025 | **Received:** 01 August 2025 | **Accepted:** 31 October 2025

Correspondence: kochieng@aol.com

Author notes

Kamau Ochieng is affiliated with Technical University of Kenya and focuses on Medicine research in Africa. Wanjiku Mwangi is affiliated with Technical University of Kenya and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Abstract

Background:

The growth of genomic biobanking within African research consortia requires clear, context-appropriate governance. In Kenya, this activity occurs amidst a complex interplay of national legislation, international partnerships, and developing ethical standards. A systematic description of the operative frameworks from 2021 to 2025 is needed to support consistent and credible practice.

Purpose and **objectives:**
This data descriptor aims to catalogue and characterise the legal instruments, ethical guidelines, and operational policies governing genomic data sharing and biobanking within Kenyan research consortia. Its objective is to produce a structured, accessible resource for researchers, ethicists, and policymakers operating in this field.

Methodology:

A systematic document analysis was undertaken. Sources included Kenyan statutes, regulatory authority guidelines, consortium-specific data access and material transfer agreements, and institutional ethics committee policies published or in force between 2021 and 2025. Documents were analysed thematically to extract core governance principles and requirements.

Findings/Key

insights:

Analysis identified a predominant theme of conditional data sharing, with most consortia agreements requiring layered, project-specific approvals beyond initial broad consent. Governance documents consistently mandated local scientist co-leadership and capacity building as a prerequisite for international data transfer. The landscape is characterised by an emphasis on national oversight and equitable collaboration.

Conclusion:

The governance environment for genomic biobanking in Kenyan consortia is multifaceted, actively balancing international collaboration with national oversight priorities. This structured data resource clarifies the operational parameters for lawful and ethical research.

Recommendations:

Stakeholders should use this descriptor as a reference for developing new protocols and auditing existing practices. Future work until 2026 should focus on harmonising these frameworks to reduce administrative duplication while upholding ethical rigour.

Key

words:

Biobanking, genomic data, data sharing, governance, ethics, legal frameworks, Kenya, research consortia.

Contribution

statement:

This data descriptor provides a consolidated overview of the legal and ethical governance instruments for genomic biobanking across Kenyan research consortia, serving as a foundational resource for the field.

Keywords: *Genomic biobanking, Research ethics, Data governance, Sub-Saharan Africa, Research consortia, Health policy, Biobank regulation*