

Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) Serving Innovation

As technological development multiplies around the globe, nations, companies, and researchers find themselves in confusion regarding intellectual property rights (IPRs). The global trend towards ever-stronger intellectual property rights regimes which took place in the past two decades, has progressed in different dimensions. Protection has extended from : invention to discovery, from mechanical devices to living organisms; from privately funded research and development to publicly funded scientific and technological results. Certain conceptions have changed accordingly. Research that was usually published after applying for a patent; is now kept protected under trade secrets; and the world of open science has shrunk in favor of appropriable technology or exclusive rights.

These recent approaches raised concerns that they might lead to the possibility of challenging the philosophy behind patent and IP systems, turning them from a legal tool to promote innovation and creativity to obstacles hindering development.

The impact on scientific activities is amplified by the specific manner in which science is carried out in developing countries.