Intellectual property and sustainable development

The subject of intellectual property and sustainable development deals with the intellectual property aspects of biodiversity, traditional knowledge, climate change, the transfer of clean technologies to developing countries, agrobiotechnology and food security.

Development is considered sustainable if it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This definition was formulated in the *Our Common Future report* (also known as the Bruntland Report) published by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. According to this definition, social, economic and environmental dimensions should be considered within the framework of sustainable development, even though conflicting goals or tensions between these areas can sometimes occur. In addition, the concept of sustainable development contains both a temporal and a north-south dimension, which must also be considered.

Due to the different dimensions of sustainable development, there are several areas of common ground with intellectual property. In this context, intellectual property and sustainable development deals with the following questions:

- Is intellectual property an incentive or an obstacle to the development of clean technologies and their transfer to developing countries?
- Which system of intellectual property rights protection does it take to sufficiently incentivise breeders of plant varieties without calling into question economic viability and freedom of choice for farmers and smallholders?
- What contribution can intellectual property make to ensure that the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples is protected and that their social structures continue to exist?
Climate

In the ongoing negotiations on climate change, intellectual property also continues to be a theme repeatedly raised by various interest groups. There is an overlap between climate and intellectual property rights, particularly in relation to the development of environmentally friendly technologies, the transfer of these technologies to developing countries and the dissemination of the relevant knowledge and know how.

WIPO Green

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) launched the WIPO Green technology initiative in 2013. WIPO Green - The Sustainable Technology Marketplace is an online platform that brings together providers and users of sustainable technologies.

DOCUMENTS & LINKS

- The IPI Annual Report 2010/11 (p. 11-13)
- Biodiversity at the World Intellectual Property Organization
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- UN Climate Convention (UNFCCC)
- Federal Office for the Environment FOEN international climate policy
- WIPO Green