



# Understanding Intellectual Property when working with CSIRO

## What is IP and its importance in R&D and CSIRO?

Intellectual Property (IP) refers to certain ‘creations of the mind’, including inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, symbols, names, and images used in commerce. In the context of research and development (R&D), IP plays a critical role in creating impact from innovation.

As Australia’s National Science Agency, we produce high-value IP through R&D that drives innovation, collaboration and technological advancement. Effective IP management is vital to our mission: to deliver impactful science and technology for the benefit of Australia. Working with us to leverage IP can also be a powerful driver of impact in your business.

By understanding and working intelligently with IP rights – from patents, and plant breeders’ rights through to copyrights for software, we’re positioned to make strategic decisions about how to leverage collaborative innovation for the biggest impact. This gives our collaborators and investors’ confidence in our partnerships, which go on to create impact and benefit for all.

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### TOP TIP FOR COLLABORATORS:

Every collaboration or project is unique, there is no ‘one-size fits-all’ approach to IP. Talk to us and let’s go through the IP implications together, right from the start.

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Zee: prototype hexapod robot equipped with a streaming camera sensor and a real-time 3D scanning LIDAR.

### Four things to know about IP:

- 1. IP is not all the same:** Different types of IP—patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets—each have unique purposes and protections.
- 2. Owning IP may not be the best option:** You can use IP through licensing agreements without owning it, which can often be more cost-effective and less administratively burdensome while still generating the business impact you need.
- 3. IP protection is not always automatic:** IP protection often requires formal registration and adherence to strict confidentiality systems and processes.
- 4. IP is not just for big companies:** IP can generate impact for organisations of all sizes, including startups and small businesses.



## How to get ready for IP discussions – Top Tips

Understanding IP and how we manage it at CSIRO can help maximise the value of your innovations when you collaborate with us. It enables you to make informed decisions and better understand your options, such as determining the most cost-effective way to safeguard the IP.

**1 Read our IP Principles**  
Our [Principles](#) guide our approach to IP, and it helps to be familiar with this before starting discussions, so we're all on the same page.

**2 Consult industry resources**  
Familiarise yourself with the IP landscape for your sector and read case studies for insights and lessons learned.

**3 Research the market**  
Do a detailed analysis of your business landscape, including competitors, consumers, industry and others' existing published IP.

**4 Consider existing IP for leverage**  
Determine what pre-existing or 'background' IP each of us might bring into the project, or if the project will use a third party's IP.

**5 Consider obligations to third parties**  
Identify any limitations on relevant IP rights due to obligations to third parties, such as funding bodies.

**6 Consider a protection strategy**  
Consider what IP might need to be registered or otherwise protected before using or disclosing it, the right timing and the best way to protect it cost-effectively.

**7 Consider practical applications**  
Think about how relevant IP can be applied in real-world scenarios.

**8 Understand IP's potential value**  
Assess the potential market value and impact of relevant IP.

**Important note:** This guide is intended for projects involving complex IP considerations. For activities such as testing, feasibility studies, or technical services, detailed IP discussions may not be necessary.