

## Who belongs to WIPO?

Membership of WIPO is open only to states.  
On April 15, 2001, the following States  
were members of WIPO:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda,  
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Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium,  
Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina,  
Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso,  
Burundi,

Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African  
Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica,  
Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic,

Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of  
the Congo, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic,

Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia,  
Ethiopia,

Fiji, Finland, France,

Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada,  
Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana,

Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary,

Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland,

Israel, Italy,

Jamaica, Japan, Jordan,

Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan,

Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho,  
Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania,  
Luxembourg,

Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania,  
Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique,  
Myanmar,

Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger,  
Nigeria, Norway,

Oman,

Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru,  
Philippines, Poland, Portugal,

Qatar,

Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian  
Federation, Rwanda,

Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the  
Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi  
Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia,  
Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan,  
Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland,

Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of  
Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey,  
Turkmenistan,

Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom,  
United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay,  
Uzbekistan,

Venezuela, Viet Nam,

Yemen, Yugoslavia,

Zambia, Zimbabwe (177).

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## FAQs

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## What is the World Intellectual Property Organization?

Established in 1970, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is dedicated to promoting the protection and use of intellectual property rights throughout the world for the benefit of all. Based in Geneva with an international staff of some 700, WIPO counts 177 states among its members – more than 90 percent of the world's countries. The Organization became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1974.

## What is intellectual property?

Intellectual property refers to creations of the mind: inventions, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names, and images used in commerce. Intellectual property is divided into two categories:

■ **Industrial Property** includes inventions, industrial designs, integrated circuits, trademarks, and geographic indications.

■ **Copyright** includes literary works such as novels, poems and plays, films, musical works, artistic works such as drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures, and architectural designs. **Rights related to copyright** include those of performing artists in their performances, producers of phonograms, and those of broadcasters in their radio and television programs.

## What are intellectual property rights?

Intellectual property rights are like any other property rights – they allow the creator, or owner, of a patent, trademark, or copyright to benefit from his or her own work or investment. These rights are outlined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which sets forth the right to benefit from the protection of moral and material interests resulting from authorship of any scientific, literary, or artistic production.

## Why does intellectual property need to be promoted and protected?

There are several compelling reasons. First, the progress and well-being of humanity rests on its capacity for new creations in the areas of technology and culture. Second, the legal protection of these new creations encourages the expenditure of additional resources, which leads to further innovation. Third, the promotion and protection of intellectual property spurs economic growth, creates new jobs and industries, and enhances the quality and enjoyment of life.

## How does the average person benefit?

Intellectual property rights reward creativity and human endeavor, which fuel the progress of humankind. Some examples: studies have estimated that nearly two-thirds of all modern medicines would not have been developed without the assurance of patent protection, allowing for future revenues to fund research; the multi-billion dollar film, recording, publishing, and software industries, which bring

pleasure to millions of people in all parts of the world, would not exist without copyright protection; and consumers would have no means to confidently buy products or services without reliable, international trademark protection and enforcement to discourage counterfeiting and piracy.

## How does WIPO promote the protection of intellectual property?

As part of the United Nations, WIPO exists as a forum for its member states to create and harmonize rules and practices to protect intellectual property rights. Most industrialized nations have protection systems that are centuries old. Many new and developing countries, however, are now building up their patent, trademark, and copyright laws and systems. With the rapid globalization of trade during the last decade, WIPO plays a key role in helping these new systems evolve through **treaty negotiation, registration, and enforcement**. legal and technical assistance and training in various forms, including enforcement of intellectual property rights. WIPO also provides global registration systems for patents, trademarks, and industrial designs.

## How is WIPO funded?

WIPO generates nearly 85 percent of its annual budget through its widely-used international registration and publication activities. The remainder comes from contributions by member states. WIPO's annual budget is approximately 200 million Swiss francs.