

# Intellectual Property Awareness and Use Survey, 2019

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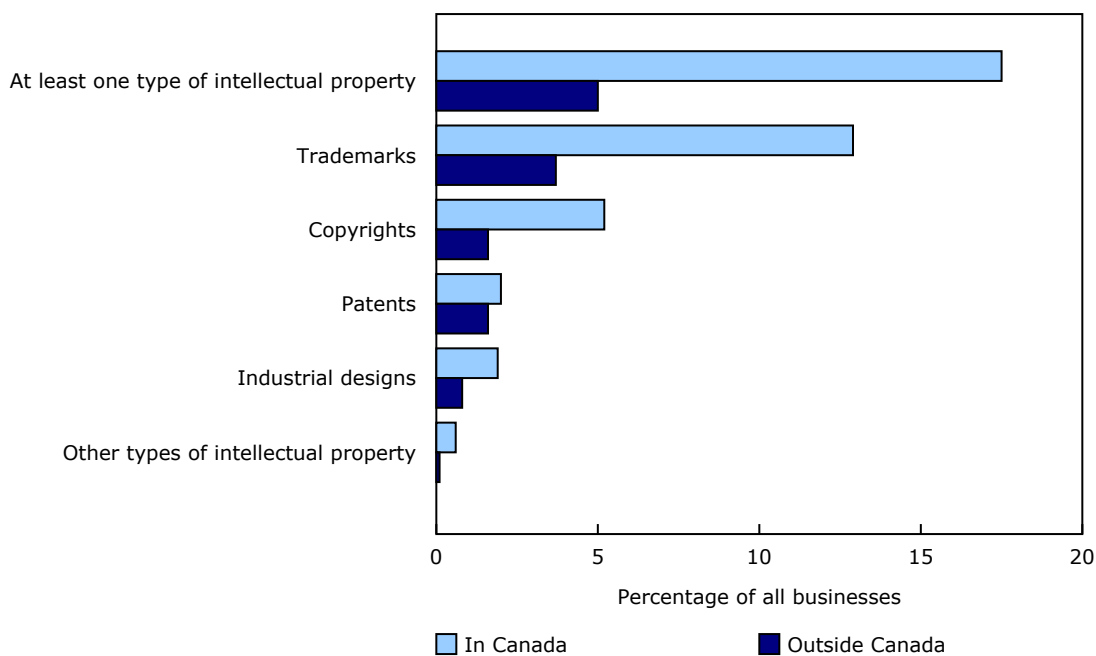
## Nearly a fifth of all businesses in Canada owned intellectual property

From 2017 to 2019, approximately one-fifth of businesses (18.2%) in Canada reported that they owned at least one type of intellectual property (IP), including IP owned outside Canada.

Intellectual property is a distinct form of creative endeavour such as an invention, literary and artistic work, image or design that may be protected by formal legislation or common law or that has provided commercial value. Protected IP owned by businesses includes trademarks, copyrights, patents, and industrial designs.

During this period, trademarks were the most commonly owned form of IP, with 12.9% of businesses holding trademarks in Canada and 3.7% outside Canada.

**Chart 1**  
Intellectual property ownership rate of Canadian businesses, in and outside Canada, by type of IP



Source(s): Table 33-10-0271-01.

Larger firms were more likely to own IP than smaller firms. Specifically, 72.6% of businesses with 500 employees or more owned at least one type of IP, compared with 13.5% of businesses with fewer than 5 employees.

Moreover, 19.0% of businesses whose primary decision maker was female reported owning IP, a slightly higher proportion than businesses with a male primary decision maker (18.1%). In addition, 10.1% of businesses with an Indigenous primary decision maker owned some form of IP.

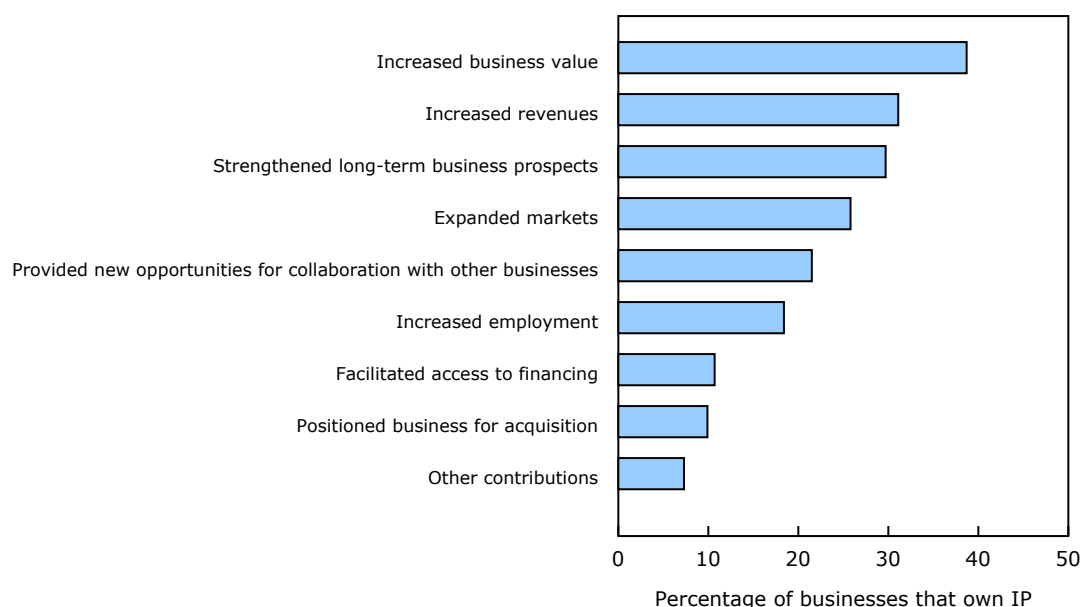
## Businesses in the clean technology industries among the most likely to own IP

Nearly half of businesses in the clean technology (47.8%) and the information and cultural industries (47.8%) owned at least one type of IP, followed by manufacturing (32.6%) and wholesale trade (31.0%) businesses. In contrast, the lowest rates of IP ownership were observed in businesses in the construction (10.6%), mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (9.8%), and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (8.3%) sectors.

## IP ownership tied to positive outcomes

More than half of businesses that owned IP credited it with improving their success in some capacity. The most commonly cited benefit was the increased value that IP brought to businesses (38.7%), such as competitive advantages, reputation and goodwill. Other reported benefits included increased revenues (31.1%), strengthened long-term business prospects (29.7%), and expanded markets (25.8%).

**Chart 2**  
Reported benefits of owning intellectual property, 2017 to 2019



Source(s): Table 33-10-0271-01.

The impact of IP ownership varied by firm size, with 4 in 5 (80.6%) large businesses (500 employees or more) reporting observable benefits from IP ownership, compared with approximately half (49.5%) of small businesses (fewer than 5 employees).

## Businesses sought advice on the use of intellectual property from various sources

Over the period from 2017 to 2019, 7.4% of all businesses reported that they sought information, guidance, or advice related to IP. Of these firms, 90.2% found that the guidance they received was sufficient for their needs.

External law firms or lawyers were the most sought-after source for IP information, with almost two-thirds of businesses seeking their counsel. This was followed by patent or trademark agents (26.7%) and the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (22.0%).

Large firms were more likely to seek out IP guidance than their smaller competitors. Over half (57.7%) of businesses with 500 employees or more reported seeking information, versus 4.6% of businesses with fewer than five employees. This difference is likely tied to the advantages that large firms have in terms of both resources and human capital.

The most common reason cited for seeking information or guidance on IP matters was to identify funding sources to protect IP (48.4%), such as funds available from financial institutions and the Government of Canada. This was followed by identifying the IP that companies may own (38.6%).

### **Some businesses experienced difficulty with filing for IP protection or registering their IP**

From 2017 to 2019, 4.0% of all businesses registered at least one type of IP or filed an application for protection. Of these businesses, 13.8% reported experiencing difficulties during this process.

Of the businesses that registered IP in Canada, the main obstacles encountered were the complexity of the procedure (56.3%) and the length of the filing or registration process (52.3%).

For businesses that registered IP or filed for IP protection outside Canada, complexity of the procedure (44.1%) was also identified as a primary obstacle, followed by the financial costs associated with the procedure (40.9%).

### **Some businesses chose not to protect their IP**

From 2017 to 2019, 5.9% of businesses said that they had IP that they chose not to formally protect. This proportion was higher among firms engaged in research and development (24.4%).

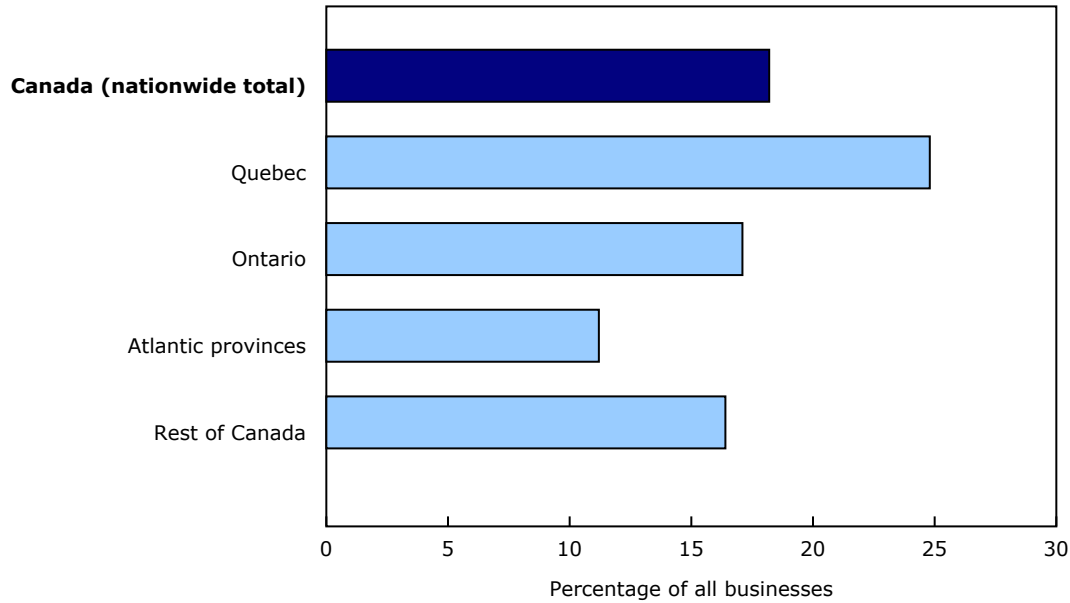
The main reasons cited by respondents who chose not to protect their IP were the financial costs associated with obtaining IP rights (49.0%), no observed benefits in protecting IP (42.2%), and difficulties enforcing IP rights (31.1%).

The decision to not protect IP was taken most often by large firms with 500 employees or more (30.2%).

### **Intellectual property ownership varied across regions**

Almost a quarter (24.8%) of businesses in Quebec reported owning IP. This was followed by Ontario (17.1%) and the rest of Canada, excluding the Atlantic region (16.4%). The Atlantic region had the lowest rate of ownership at 11.2%.

**Chart 3**  
**Percentage of Canadian businesses that own intellectual property in or outside Canada**



Source(s): Table 33-10-0271-01.

**Note to readers**

The Intellectual Property Awareness and Use Survey (IPAUS) was carried out by Statistics Canada in collaboration with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and the Canadian Intellectual Property Office. The first of its kind to look at intellectual property (IP) in Canada, this survey will help to better understand how Canadian businesses use IP for economic purposes.

Strategic use of IP is critical to the innovation and economic growth of Canadian enterprises. As a result, this survey was created to establish a baseline on familiarity with and use of IP by Canadian businesses. This survey is also part of the national Intellectual Property Strategy, which was designed to improve access to the IP system for all Canadians, including traditionally underrepresented groups, such as women and Indigenous peoples.

Businesses in Canada can own IP domestically and internationally. International IP protection is accorded through a registration process in the country of interest.

Data are available by enterprise size; by sector, according to the North American Industry Classification System; and by economic region, according to the Standard Geographical Classification, for the reference period from 2017 to 2019.

Available tables: [33-10-0271-01](#) and [33-10-0332-01](#) to [33-10-0336-01](#) .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5291](#).

The infographic "[Dimensions of intellectual property in Canada, 2017 to 2019](#)," part of the *Statistics Canada – Infographics* series ([11-627-M](#)), is now available. It provides a snapshot of results on IP awareness and use according to the structure, executive demographics and geographic location of businesses from 2017 to 2019.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).