



# THE ECONOMICS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Suggestions for Further Research  
in Developing Countries and Countries  
with Economies in Transition



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INTELLECTUAL  
PROPERTY  
ORGANIZATION



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## PREFACE

Over the past decade, there has been increasing interest by policymakers, academics, businesses and civil society organizations in understanding the economic and social impact of intellectual property (IP) rights. The growing importance of knowledge and innovation has placed IP rights under the spotlight and highlighted the need to clearly assess how intellectual property interfaces with development in different socio-economic contexts. Legislative reform in the field of intellectual property, and the modernization of the IP infrastructures of many countries has raised expectations on how the IP system can be used to promote economic development.

In the field of economics, the literature on intellectual property has been rapidly expanding over recent years, particularly in some developed countries. As access to data on IP has improved, methodological tools for understanding its role in the economy have become increasingly sophisticated, and our understanding of the economic trade-offs has been enhanced. Nevertheless, the empirical literature from developing countries and countries with economies in transition has remained very limited, which has constrained the ability of policy-makers to take evidence-based decisions on IP matters and choose between different policy options.

It is against this background that WIPO embarked on a series of projects, both at the national and international level, to promote more empirical economic literature on intellectual property in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The series of papers in this publication were commissioned from renowned international economists from all regions. They review the existing empirical literature on six selected themes relating to the economics of intellectual property, identify the key research questions, point out research gaps and explore possible avenues for future research.

Drafts of the papers contained in this publication were discussed at the WIPO International Roundtable on the Economics of Intellectual Property, which was held in Geneva on November 26 and 27, 2007, and attended by international economists from all regions working on a wide range of IP issues. Given the richness of the comments provided by discussants at the Roundtable, the current publication includes them, along with the six papers.

I would like to thank all the economists who have contributed to this publication and hope that the papers will be useful to encourage and guide future researchers in developing countries and countries with economies in transition in undertaking empirical economic research on intellectual property. While economists are the main target audience of this publication, it is also hoped that it will be of interest to policy-makers who are interested in understanding the interface between intellectual property and economic development and exploring areas in which additional economic evidence could be useful to guide decision-making in this field.



Francis Gurry  
Director General

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