

Promoting Technology Transfer in Developing Countries: Lessons from Public-Private Partnerships in the Field of Pharmaceuticals

Executive Summary

In this paper, empirical examples of technology transfer activities in the developing world are used to illustrate that Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), can, and do, work for less developed countries in the area of technology transfer.

The paper suggests that there is a growing body of evidence that IPRs are, and have been, important for the promotion of innovative, inventive and technology transfer activities in developing countries, including in industrial sectors like pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. In fact, the paper suggests that while the international community is busy debating the desirability of IPRs to developing countries, there has been significant and visible activity in these countries that have resulted in the successful exploitation of local IPRs. In particular, bottom-up technology transfer has increasingly been taking place through public-private partnerships involving native research institutes.

Examining a number of commercialisation initiatives arising from public-private partnerships in China, India and across South East Asia, Africa and South America, the paper concludes that research bodies consider IPRs to be an important platform in their ability to successfully commercialise their innovations and bring new products to market. In particular the paper finds that these partnerships have been an effective way of addressing the problems of neglected tropical diseases that predominantly affect poorer nations

Above all, the paper concludes that technology transfer activities that are based on the exploitation of IPRs in public-private collaborations provide a significant and distinct contribution to the economic strength and well being of countries in which such activities take place.