

## 'New policy supports startup ecosystem'

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India's recently revised patent policy that came into effect on May 16, is going to be the agency that will speed up the process of patent registration from two-and-a-half years to a year-and-a-half by March 2018.

This 'tatkal' road was implemented in response to process and move the 237,000 patent applications which are currently stuck in India's four patent offices. This will also support the startup ecosystem that is booming in the country right now.

Notwithstanding the fact that the current Intellectual property rights (IPRs) policy will lead to a higher number of patents, but it still does not account for the long-term innovation growth that should have been incorporated into the policy. However, many companies, fresh players rather than the existing ones, are about to face innumerable and obvious challenges when securing the resources, financial and organisational, among others, for its growth and survival.

Thus, there is going to be a growing trend of using client patents or at least patent applications as evidence of the company being well managed and also for instilling faith in investors for the fact that a certain proposed product will define and carve out a market niche at some point of time.

Patents carry a real development component, as well as a pure certification component. It is an exclusive right granted to the inventor by the government. It's an asset that can be bought, licensed and sold, which successfully makes way for applications that trigger an upward adjustment in investor estimates of the startup's future value, beyond what would otherwise be predicted. The proliferation of patents mostly in technological markets as well as the other verticals has proven effective in providing the incentive and motivation to competitors as well as new entrepreneurs to innovate and pin point the pain points. But before you even begin with an idea, a mental preparation is highly suggested.

### Moving in the right direction

The National IPR policy statement by the government of India is a forerunner to larger legislative and administrative reforms envisioned by the union government in the fields of IPR and technology transfer for India in the near future.

As of today, one for sure cannot predict the nature and extent to which this policy will create innovation in different technological spheres given the ever changing dynamics of the knowledge sector.

However, it is commendable that the

union government has explicitly linked innovation, entrepreneurship and socio-economic development in its vision statement. This effort may be seen as a critical attempt to provide an environ for effective knowledge creation and sharing.

The policy further endeavours to connect innovators to users, buyers and funding institutions. We believe that this vision would provide a perfect conduit for sustainable R&D initiatives marked by continuous inflow of funds.

At the same time, the government has also emphasised corporate responsibility towards public policy issues like access to healthcare. On the whole, the National IPR policy statement may be seen as judicious approach for developing reliable, responsible and socially useful science.

### Developing new tech

Developing new technologies seems to be one of the objectives of the union government. Indications to this effect are present in the National IPR Policy statement. From our standpoint, salient features of the statement that have caught our attention include:

- Inculcating IP awareness among research scientists- We believe that creative programmes emphasising scientific documentation, key processes in the innovation cycle and product development and the need to commercialise science would be featured.

- IP audit in specific technological sectors - IP audits on specific technological areas would provide key R&D perspectives that would help identify and direct innovative potential in key segments, and this in turn would result in new technologies, products and solutions in the specific sector.

- Facilitating corporate to generate and utilize IPRs - Here we look forward to intensify our due diligence capacities to identify key market players, markets for our products and prospects for IP licensing.

- Increasing the ambit of the traditional knowledge database - We believe this would be of immense use to the natural ingredients sectors, wherein follow-on innovations are possible when modern analytical tools in diverse areas of biological sciences are applied to traditional knowledge. We are also aware that the government would incorporate measures to prevent misappropriation of traditional knowledge without stifling genuine scientific progress.

- Tax benefits for R&D.
- Funding for innovative product marketing and also encouragement for creating brand equity from IP rights.

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