

### **Draft Kerala Intellectual Property Rights Policy, 2026**

*“Kerala Protecting Knowledge, Empowering Innovation”*

#### **Drafting Committee**

1. Dr. N. Anil Kumar, Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board (Chairman)
2. Prof. A. Sabu, Member Secretary, Kerala State Council for Science, Technology & Environment
3. Dr. K.C. Sunny, Former Professor, Department of Law, Central University of Kerala
4. Mr. R.S. Praveen Raj, Senior Principal Scientist, CSIR-National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science & Technology, Thiruvananthapuram
5. Dr. Narendran Thiruthy, Assistant Professor, Rajiv Gandhi School of Intellectual Property Law, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur
6. Dr. Binuja Thomas, Senior Principal Scientist, KSCSTE & Nodal Officer, Intellectual Property Rights Information Centre – Kerala

#### **PART I**

##### **Introduction**

1. Kerala is poised to evolve into a knowledge-driven economy by leveraging its well-educated workforce to foster innovation and inclusive development. The state’s consistent ranking in the Sustainable Development Goal India Index reflects its policy commitment. Infrastructure such as the Digital University, Science Parks, IT Corridors, and Skill Hubs, alongside initiatives like the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM), Patent Information Centre (PIC), Intellectual Property Rights Information Centre–Kerala (IPRIC-K), and the Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC), are strengthening the innovation ecosystem and contribute towards inclusive development.
2. Kerala’s contributions to healthcare, IT, and the creative industries provide a strong foundation for an IP-based economy for the state. Kerala produces a large pool of skilled professionals and hosts premier institutions in modern and traditional medicine. As the pioneer of India’s first e-literacy programme and IT park, Kerala has consistently championed digital empowerment. Its international presence in cinema, music, and design adds to its knowledge capital.
3. The 2008 IPR Policy offered a visionary starting point for fostering innovations and inclusivity by emphasising the protection of traditional knowledge, awareness, and institutional mechanisms. However, this Policy now shows limitations in meeting the evolving demands of a dynamic innovation environment in the state. To stay competitive, Kerala must urgently build on its innovation ecosystem to address shifting R&D priorities, evolving TRIPS provisions, provisions from the Doha Declaration on Public Health and other challenges raised by FTAs and RTAs through the creation of TRIPS plus provisions, the growth of MSMEs, and the increasing need to commercialise technologies.

4. The 2026 *Draft IPR Policy* identifies the state's high-potential sectors, such as Health, Food and Nutrition, Resilient Agriculture & Aquaculture, and Ethnobiology, and advocates to unlock their value through targeted application of modern science and technology, aligned with domestic and global market demand. The approach is to leverage Kerala's vibrant and readily accessible innovation ecosystems, particularly those anchored in its rich local community knowledge, technologies, and practical ingenuity. Special focus will be placed on domains where the state holds distinctive global recognition, such as its herbal and spice heritage, traditional cuisines, Ayurveda, backwater-linked fish diversity, and agrobiodiversity. This includes promoting R&D innovations in medicinal and food plant utilisation, heirloom/farmers' seed varieties, and grassroots agricultural and fishery technologies.
5. The 2026 *Draft IPR Policy* also recognises Kerala's rich knowledge heritage, particularly the Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCE), rooted within its diverse tribal communities, their distinct languages, and Geographical Indications that shape the state's cultural and economic identity. However, given the fluid and layered nature of TK, often interwoven with ethnic/tribal knowledge, biodiversity-linked practices, and cultural pride, it demands a distinct and context-sensitive policy approach. Unlike conventional intellectual property, TK is not easily codified or commodified; its governance must thus reflect its complexity, community ownership, language specificity, and evolving nature.
6. Therefore, the current Policy advocates TK -related governance as a separate stream of action, distinct from mainstream IPR mechanisms. This separation is supported by India's robust legal architecture, including the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (as amended in 2023), the Biological Diversity Rules, 2024, and the Biological Diversity (Access to Biological Resources and Knowledge Associated thereto and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits) Regulations, 2025, Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 and Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPV&FR) Act, 2001. The operational modalities are elaborated in detail under the Policy Action Area 10.
7. The **Annexure** to this document provides clear explanations for revising Kerala's 2008 IPR Policy. It highlights the strategic need to reposition the state on the global IPR map and outlines the implementation logic and governance mechanisms that support the revised framework.

## **Vision**

8. Transform Kerala into a dynamic global knowledge economy by harnessing innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship to drive sustainable and inclusive growth, leveraging the state's talents and intellectual assets for scientific, technological, artistic, and cultural advancement while ensuring sustainable and equitable development. (*Kerala Protecting Knowledge, Empowering Innovation*).

## **Mission**

9. Lead strategic, research-driven commercialisation in the state through a '*Mission-IPR Initiative*' to strengthen the state's IPR ecosystem, integrate traditional and local wisdom, modern advancements, and technologies while fostering rural innovations, enhancing data protection, and developing a skilled and creative workforce.

## PART II

### Objectives

10. The following six objectives, aligned with the National IPR Policy 2016, are designed to position Kerala as an active participant in the evolving global trade and IPR landscape. These objectives, together, aim to ensure a strategic approach for strengthening innovation ecosystems, fostering equitable and sustainable economic growth, and protecting traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and innovations.

**Objective 1: IPR Awareness, Education, and Communication:** To expand IPR communication, education and public awareness across all sectors, especially the academic levels, conduct training programs for stakeholders, establish outreach centres to enhance public understanding about the potential of IPR, recognising the key role of limitations and exceptions to IP rights in achieving a fairer and more inclusive intellectual property system.

**Objective 2: IPR Generation and Utilisation:** To strengthen innovation ecosystems by supporting MSMEs, Startups, individual inventors, and academic/ research institutions in generating more IP registrations and ensuring its effective utilisation.

**Objective 3: IPR Administration & Management:** To launch ‘Mission-IPR’ initiative to promote and propagate IPR and enhance the IP output of the State, and to strengthen the Intellectual Property Rights Information Centre – Kerala (IPRIC-K) to implement IP governance, maintain a centralised IPR database, and streamline licensing, disclosure agreements, and research collaborations.

**Objective 4: IPR Legal and Legislative Framework:** To strengthen Kerala’s intellectual property governance, including the protection of TK / TCEs by ensuring compliance with national and international IPR laws and recognising the need for a mechanism to prevent the misappropriation of TK/ TCEs.

**Objective 5: IPR-Commercialisation:** To facilitate innovation-driven entrepreneurship through IP licensing, incubators, spin-offs, and equitable benefit-sharing models, ensuring effective commercialisation of patents, enhancement of rural innovations, technologies, and protection of TK/ TCEs.

**Objective 6: IPR Management Financial Resources:** To establish transparent and accountable financial mechanisms to support IPR promotional initiatives, including capacity-building programs, funding for various forms of IP filing and prosecution.

**Objective 1: IPR Awareness, Education, and Communication:** *With the Vision of “Kerala Protecting Knowledge, Empowering Innovation”, the state has to expand intellectual property (IP) awareness, education and communication reaching across all levels of academia, management institutions, the public; establish district-level outreach centres and strengthen stakeholder training programs.*

## **Policy Action Area 1: IPR Awareness, Integration in the Education System and Communication**

11. Integrating intellectual property education into science, technology and business streams and strengthening the institutions dedicated to intellectual property education, research, and policy is crucial for enhancing Intellectual Property Rights-related awareness and fostering commercialisation. Despite possessing strong intellectual capital, the state faces challenges in monetising knowledge due to inadequate structural support and an academic-driven culture that prioritises research publications over patents and other forms of intellectual property. To address this, a strategic shift is essential, one that redefines knowledge not only as an academic pursuit but also as a valuable economic asset, fostering a more innovation-driven and commercially viable IP ecosystem.
12. Towards this, a focused IPR Awareness, Education and Communication program is essential to effectively build awareness, foster innovation, and promote commercialisation across different sectors and geographies, including in rural and remote areas. The program should highlight the value of IP protection, facilitate industry collaboration, and ensure that all communities, including the tribal population, can actively participate in the knowledge economy. Intensive Awareness campaigns are needed to engage students, researchers, entrepreneurs, artisans, and knowledge holders to ensure that their contributions are recognised and protected.
13. To strengthen IPR awareness, education, and communication across Kerala, a Virtual IPR Academy will be established under the leadership of IPRIC-K, functioning as a dynamic knowledge and coordination hub. This Academy will serve as a digital interface linking institutional-level IPR Cells, academic institutions, research centres, and innovation ecosystems. IPRIC-K will collaborate with universities and the state Higher Education Department to integrate IPR education into school (optional), all graduate, postgraduate, and diploma courses and introduce certification courses on IPR, while also working to prevent misuse of IP rights and support stakeholders in IPR litigation.
14. As a key component of this initiative, a dedicated IPR Awareness Platform will be developed to feature government-recognised courses and programs such as NIPAM, SWAYAM-NPTEL, and WIPO's online IPR modules. It will also host a practical guide for researchers and innovators on conducting patent and trademark searches using key databases. To ensure ease of access and legal clarity, the platform will provide direct links to the official website of the Controller General of Patents, Designs & Trademarks for updated laws, rules, manuals, and application procedures, along with access to the WIPO portal for PCT filings.
15. The Academy will complement ground-level capacity-building efforts by offering blended learning opportunities and customised training programmes, especially for officials and elected representatives of Local Self-Governments. Strategic partnerships with institutions such as KILA and KIED will anchor outreach and mobilisation, ensuring that IPR awareness is not only disseminated broadly but also contextually understood and integrated into grassroots governance and innovation practices.

## Policy Action Area 2: Capacity Building and Specialised Training

16. The State will ensure continuous capacity building through training programs, seminars, symposia, and conferences, targeting scientists, entrepreneurs, MSMEs, administrators, educators, legal professionals, and enforcement authorities. Regular seminars and workshops should build capacity across sectors. Considering the necessity of sensitizing the enforcement agencies on the various aspects of IPR, dedicated specialised training will be provided for the judicial officers and enforcement agencies, which will strengthen enforcement capabilities. The state will also maintain comprehensive IP statistics to help in the filing and acquisition of IP rights and develop model agreements for licensing and research collaborations.
17. For this purpose, the IPRIC-K will undertake tasks such as developing an accessible IPR portal to benefit all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, while fostering partnerships with national programs like NIPAM to enhance IPR awareness and capacity-building efforts. Expanding IPRIC-K's reach through district-level satellite centres will ensure that stakeholders have access to specialised guidance. Scientific personnel, students, and innovators will have to regularly engage in focused IPR Awareness, Education and Communication activities in collaboration with IPRIC-K.
18. Currently, IPR is offered as a subject in some Universities, but its uptake remains low among students. To address this, the government considers making IPR education mandatory at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in all streams. Integrating the developmental perspective of IP into school curricula will also help nurture innovation from an early age. Comprehensive inclusion of IPR in formal, online, and distance learning will ensure widespread understanding and adoption. Although dissemination windows like IPRIC-K and selected universities have advanced IP education in the state, strengthening these institutions and encouraging others to establish similar centres remains critical for fostering a robust IPR ecosystem.
19. Many academic and student-led innovations in Kerala have patent potential but are not pursued due to limited awareness or support. Institutions must create a patent facilitation system to help inventors secure and benefit from their innovations/creations. Training scientists to protect their work before publication, supporting MSMEs and public research bodies, and encouraging corporate IP programs will contribute to a stronger innovation ecosystem. Efforts should also focus on preventing foreign monopolisation of domestic inventions. The demand for skilled IPR professionals, such as Patent Agents, Trademark Agents, and Technology Transfer specialists, is steadily increasing. Universities and Training Institutes should offer structured career pathways and mentorship programs in IP-related fields.

**Objective 2: IPR Generation and Utilisation:** *For achieving the vision of “Kerala Protecting Knowledge, Empowering Innovation”, IPRs are critical. The State needs to advance research, innovation, and commercialisation across Kerala’s scientific, technological, and creative sectors.*

## Policy Action Area 3: Comprehensive Assessment of IPR Potential

20. A state-level IP audit is proposed every two years to identify areas of strength across sectors such as biotechnology, engineering, agri-tech, healthcare, environmental science, digital technologies, fashion, and food innovation. Kerala, a home for many institutions

and universities, has high potential for bringing patentable outputs in areas such as biopharmaceuticals, Agro/dairy technologies, AI-driven conservation technologies, and cybersecurity. Their work in engineering, food sciences, and creative arts can yield protectable innovations with economic value.

21. IPR generation capability around the biodiversity-linked traditional knowledge and innovations will be assessed periodically by Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB), through its mechanisms such as People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs) and Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs). The PBR documentation exercise will be directed to focus on documenting separately the traditional knowledge of the ethnic communities by involving their youth and identifying the geographically unique products that merit Geographical Indication (GI) protection. Each panchayath in Kerala boasts at least one geographically unique product, with many families preserving and showcasing invaluable heirloom traditions. The current process of preparing the PBR will be strengthened for documenting such products and their safeguarding under the Geographical Indications (GI) system by enhancing the role of BMCs.

#### **Policy Action Area 4: Strengthening IPR Portfolios of Research Institutions**

22. Industry-Academia Collaboration is now in a very infantile stage in the state. Kerala's universities and research bodies must increase patent filing, especially in biopharma, AI, clean energy, nanotech, and sustainable agriculture. Many institutions in the state are well-positioned to lead in patenting and commercialisation of innovations related to agriculture, biodiversity, materials science, and biotechnology. Kerala Agricultural University, through its Centre for Intellectual Property Rights, facilitates Geographical Indication registration and recognises farmers for biodiversity conservation efforts. The centre has successfully supported the GI registration of multiple unique agricultural products from Kerala and helped numerous farmers and farming communities secure national recognition for their contributions to plant genetic resource conservation. By providing technical assistance, legal guidance, and awareness programs, KAU plays a vital role in safeguarding indigenous agricultural knowledge, ensuring equitable benefit-sharing, and strengthening the IP framework for Kerala's farming sector.
23. Kerala's innovation hubs like Technopark, Infopark, and Bio360 Life Sciences Park will work closely with universities and research institutions and ensure effective technology transfer to support the long-term economic growth of the state. Such institutions will lead research on medicinal plants and conservation technologies, biomedical and vaccine innovation. The Digital University and the reputed digital Institutions will lead in IP development in cybersecurity, fintech, and AI. Standardising IP policies across research institutions. Industry-supported research in Academic Institutions will be encouraged, which will result in more technology development and its commercialisation. The Institutions shall also encourage protection and promotion of all forms of IP.

**Objective 3: IP Administration & Management:** *The vision of "Kerala Protecting Knowledge, Empowering Innovation" will drive modernisation and strengthen Kerala's IPR administration and enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of the institutions overseeing IP governance.*

## Policy Action Area 5: Enhancing IPR Enforcement and Adjudication in Kerala

24. Kerala, with its decentralised governance system and strong institutional framework, is in a stronger position to enhance IPR enforcement and adjudication to protect innovators, creators, and traditional knowledge custodians. Establishing IPR cells in state police forces, coordinating enforcement with national agencies, and integrating technology-driven solutions to curb counterfeiting and piracy are crucial steps. Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms will be promoted to ensure the swift resolution of IP disputes. Collaboration between IPRIC-K, KSBB, and industry associations can facilitate awareness programs, skill development initiatives, and support mechanisms for small businesses and technology firms.

## Policy Action Area 6: IPR-Information Management

25. A bilingual (English and Malayalam) *State Intellectual Property Rights Portal* is essential to provide seamless access to IPR resources, including authentic documentation related to the filing of various IPRs, biodiversity records, IPR laws, and government financial assistance schemes for IP filing. This portal is also to feature training resources, listing recognised IPR courses from WIPO and SWAYAM-NPTEL, as well as guidance for patent & trademark search. The networking capabilities will connect legal firms, IP experts, investors, startup-support institutions, and industry associations.
26. For networking, the portal will have pages to list the verified contact details of IP professionals, legal firms, registered Patent & Trademark Agents, and IP Mitras, and connect startups with investors, funding agencies, and industry bodies supporting technology transfer. Public initiatives such as Kerala Innovation and IP Days, an IP Hall of Fame, and sector-specific awards are expected to reinforce a culture of innovation. These efforts will be aligned with ongoing programs like the KKEM, KSUM, *Vijnana Keralam* People's Initiative, and the Kerala Industrial & Commercial Policy.

## Policy Action Area 7: A Mission Mode IPR Initiative and IPR Cells for IP Management

27. A *Mission mode IPR Initiative* is proposed to play a central role in encouraging innovations and creations, facilitating timely IP protection, ensuring benefit-sharing with creators, especially in the case of conserving Kerala's biodiversity, and protecting traditional knowledge. Through the Mission IPR Initiative, Kerala is set to enhance coordination between government agencies to negotiate and approve licensing agreements, ensuring best practices in IP administration. Researchers will receive specialised support in navigating IPR complexities.
28. Under this Mission, IPR Cells and Access and Benefit Sharing Cells with IP Management Committees will be established across research organisations and all needed educational institutions functioning in the State. Each institution is expected to frame its own IPR policy in alignment with state and national regulations, while also being encouraged to develop incubators, spin-off companies, and Special Purpose Vehicles to facilitate the IP commercialisation.
29. IPR Cells are set to foster a culture of innovation & creativity within institutions, ensuring proper protection of intellectual assets through timely acquisition while also

addressing issues like IP ownership at the institutional level. IP Management Committees to take charge of IP commercialisation, recognising its revenue-generating potential through licensing and outright sales, thereby reinvesting financial returns into further research and innovation.

#### **Policy Action Area 8: Management of IPR associated with Biodiversity**

30. The State will strengthen the role of the KSBB and BMCs by fostering functional integration with the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) and IPRIC-K, enabling more coordinated policy development and regulatory alignment. This includes streamlining approval mechanisms, operationalising equitable benefit-sharing structures, and improving stakeholder engagement with regulatory bodies. Through pragmatic coordination among entities such as NBPGR, NBAGR, NBFGR, PPVFRA, KSBB, and relevant national agencies, the State aims to reinforce biodiversity protection, traditional knowledge governance, and IP administration, contributing to a more coherent and responsive knowledge management ecosystem.
31. To support bioresource-based IP creation, the State will enhance service infrastructure by establishing helpdesks, preparing tailored training materials, and simplifying copyright & performer's rights permission processes. These efforts are intended to assist individual creators, enterprises, and institutions in navigating innovation with greater legal clarity and procedural ease, without imposing undue complexity or administrative burden.
32. In collaboration with Kerala Agricultural University, IPRIC-K will advance the registration of new and existing plant varieties, while simplifying procedures for seed development and farmer-led commercialisation. Strengthening institutional linkages with agricultural universities, research centres, NGOs, community-based organisations, and technology management hubs will help align plant variety protection efforts with biodiversity conservation goals and farmer-centric innovations.
33. The State will also engage with Custodian Farmers' Groups to safeguard indigenous plant and breed varieties, facilitate fair benefit-sharing, and promote research in agroecology and genetic diversity. By linking biodiversity conservation with agricultural innovation and community stewardship, these efforts will help prevent biopiracy and uphold farmers' rights through appropriate regulatory and institutional mechanisms.

#### **Policy Action Area 9: Establishing IP ownership in externally funded Projects**

34. The State acknowledges the importance of IP ownership in externally funded research, ensuring that public institutions are not limited to service providers for private entities. While collaborative research benefits institutions through targeted financial support, it should be affirmed that intellectual property ownership shall primarily rest with research and educational institutions. However, in the cases of externally funded projects, the IP ownership may be decided as per the guidelines of the funding agency and subject to negotiation between the parties, and it shall be mentioned in the terms of reference in the Agreement.

**Objective 4: IPR- Legal & Legislative Framework:** *Realising the vision of “Kerala Protecting Knowledge, Empowering Innovation” warrants a mechanism to prevent the misappropriation of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. This demands national and international IP monitoring mechanisms at the state level to identify potential risks to Kerala’s traditional knowledge and develop a strong stream of action.*

**Policy Action Area 10: Effective-mechanism to protect Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCE)**

35. The evolving global landscape of IP and TK/TCEs protection is shaped by developments at the international level, including the adoption of different treaty frameworks, movements like Open Knowledge Source and governance of Digital Sequence Information on genetic resources, alongside shifts in TRIPS and GATT relations due to trade conflicts. Kerala, with its rich TK heritage, must navigate these changes strategically by taking the TK-related IPR governance as a separate stream of action for fostering participatory knowledge-sharing platforms while ensuring rightful ownership for custodians. Establishing a decentralised TK database at the state level and adopting frameworks inspired by the National Innovation Foundation can protect TK from misappropriation while promoting grassroots innovation. The state must balance best global practices with community-driven policies, ensuring sustainable development and equitable benefit-sharing in an era of shifting trade regulations.
36. The State acknowledges the richness and diversity of Kerala’s traditional knowledge systems, including tribal and other languages, cultural practices, and ecological wisdom that are integral to its identity. With 36 Scheduled Tribes contributing to this heritage, there is a need for respectful and inclusive mechanisms to recognise and safeguard such knowledge within appropriate IPR frameworks. As a measured step, the State will explore the development of a Traditional Knowledge Docketing System (TKDS) to enable docketing and recognition of community-owned traditional knowledge and traditionally protected plant & animal genetic resources. The proposed TKDS would include indicative details such as the location of the knowledge, the custodian community, the nature and type of knowledge, and any relevant community protocols. It is intended as a facilitative repository to aid identification and support recognition processes, without prejudicing community rights or triggering unintended claims. This initiative shall be undertaken with the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and active involvement of the communities.
37. Although People’s Biodiversity Registers, as mandated under Section 41 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, to document Traditional Knowledge associated with bio-resources, they typically record such knowledge under the broad category of 'People', without specific cultural attribution. In cases where culturally distinct communities are recognised as custodians of unique forms of TK/TCE, a more tailored and ethically sensitive approach is required. In this context, the TKDS framework becomes effective as it can capture granular details, including the geographical location of the knowledge, the identity and sociocultural characteristics of the custodian community, the nature and domain of TK/TCE, and any community-established access protocols.
38. The TKDS can function as a specialised, community-centric log or record that complements the PBRs, ensuring that culturally embedded knowledge is docketed and managed through the knowledge society approach of the respective community.

However, subject to further consultation and safeguards, KSBB may be considered for a facilitative role in issuing letters of recognition and assigning unique docket numbers through TKDS, upon acceptance of applications.

39. For other forms of TK, such as indigenous medicine, artisanal crafts, and agricultural practices, existing institutions need to be strengthened. The Ayush Department can govern traditional medicinal knowledge, handicraft boards can oversee artisanal heritage, and agricultural research institutions can regulate traditional farming practices. Additionally, legislations such as the Patents Act, 1970 (which prevents biopiracy), the Geographical Indications Act, 1999 (which safeguards region-specific products), and the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001 (which ensures farmers' control over traditional crops) will be implemented in a coordinated way.

#### **Policy Action Area 11: Organising and empowering BMCs and LSG Institutions**

40. Recognising TK as a community right remains challenging, but empowering TK holders through registered societies or trusts can safeguard their heritage. The State Government will support these efforts by facilitating research, enabling patenting of TK-based innovations, and assisting communities in monetising their knowledge while negotiating with potential stakeholders. TK holders and communities will be encouraged to establish formal legal entities with the guidance and support of the Biodiversity Management Committees and/or the LSGIs directly under national laws. Once recognised, custodians can govern and commercialise TK while being empowered to patent significant innovations derived from it. The legal entities formed by individuals, families, or groups with exclusive ties to TK will be promoted in the form of trusts, societies, or companies.
41. The National Biodiversity Authority, State Biodiversity Boards, BMCs, and the People's Biodiversity Register mechanisms already oversee registration, regulation, and equitable benefit-sharing, ensuring robust governance for TK linked to biological resources. The progress made in the coordination of IP activities in the state will be strengthened, considering the National Biological Diversity Act 2002, the Forest Rights Act 2006, and other relevant legislations and guidelines that comprehensively regulate TK associated with biodiversity.

**Objective 5: Promoting Commercialisation of IPRs:** *To realise the goal of "Kerala Protecting Knowledge, Empowering Innovation, it is essential to facilitate innovation-driven entrepreneurship through IP licensing, incubators, spin-offs, and equitable benefit-sharing models, ensuring effective commercialisation of patents and traditional knowledge.*

#### **Policy Action Area 12: Facilitating IP Commercialisation in the State**

42. IPRIC-K should support MSMEs and startups in filing, licensing, and commercialisation. The policy will promote technology transfer, licensing, and monetisation through Agencies like the IPRIC-K, KSUM, and Industries Department, which facilitates industry-academia collaboration and supports startups in leveraging their IP for business growth. Cross-sector partnerships will accelerate the application of IP in key domains such as biotech, digital innovation, and agritech. Kerala's MSME sectors, such as coir, Ayurveda, textiles, and spices, should be supported through incentives for IP acquisition and commercialisation.

43. The IPR portal managed by IPRIC-K will be a central digital place for showcasing patented inventions generated by Universities, Colleges, and Research Institutions that are ready for technology transfer and commercial deployment. Institutions such as the Inter University Centre for IPR Studies at CUSAT, along with similar centres across other Universities, will be strengthened with targeted financial support to facilitate decentralised commercialisation efforts and promote institutional innovation pathways.
44. In parallel, IPRIC-K will collaborate with the Industries Department to extend customised IPR support for the industrial ecosystem, especially for MSME-led innovation. Key initiatives will include the establishment of IP Cells in all District Industries Centres (DICs), the operation of IPR Clinics to safeguard grassroots innovations, organisation of IPR Training Camps to build a cadre of local IPR facilitators, and provision of Entrepreneurial Incentives to recognise and reward ventures that effectively leverage IPR for business development. The Portal will also feature a State Hall of Fame, celebrating exemplary innovators from across sectors, thereby reinforcing a culture of intellectual achievement throughout Kerala.
45. Kerala's strong research ecosystem, supported by various institutions/universities, IPR Cells in educational institutions, and various research centres, provides a solid foundation for IP commercialisation. The IPRIC-K will have to initiate steps to facilitate the commercialisation of IPs from Academic/Research Institutions through effective collaboration with the respective IPR Cells, Kerala Startup Mission and the Industries Department. To unlock the economic value of IPRs, entrepreneurship must be actively encouraged, integrating IP-oriented services within startup incubators and accelerators. KSUM, which has been instrumental in fostering innovation, can expand its efforts to connect IP creators with investors, ensuring better support for commercialisation. Additionally, IPRIC-K should collaborate with industrial clusters and MSMEs, guiding licensing, patent pooling, and technology transfer to bridge gaps between research institutions and industry stakeholders.
46. In alignment with national innovation frameworks, the State envisages the establishment of a dedicated State-level Institute, modelled on the National Research & Development Corporation (NRDC). This entity will be entrusted with the responsibility of nurturing patented inventions and technologies emerging from academic and research institutions and will actively facilitate their commercialisation within Kerala through structured handholding, market linkages, and translational support.

#### **Policy Action Area 13: Regulatory Streamlining and Public Sector Support**

47. Public-funded research laboratories and universities will play an active role in commercialising their research outcomes, and the government stands committed to offer incentives to help them deploy IPR-based innovations. Technology commercialisation and IP-driven industry expansion need to be prioritised. Encouraging open-source innovation and collaborative IP generation between universities, industries, and funding agencies can help drive commercialisation efforts. Enhanced coordination with all stakeholders, including governments at different levels, will be promoted to ensure alignment with global best IP commercialisation practices. Further, technology acquisition and development funds will be mobilised to help MSMEs and individual innovators scale their intellectual property assets.

**Objective 6: Financial Capital for Intellectual Property Development:** *To realise the vision of “Kerala Protecting Knowledge, Empowering Innovation”, adequate finance must be mobilised, alongside building a skilled workforce by developing IPR professionals, training key stakeholders, and recognising innovators contributing to Kerala’s industrial and research advancements.*

**Policy Action Area 14: Building a Robust Financial Mechanism to sustain IP development**

48. By integrating financial infrastructure, institutional support, and industry collaborations, Kerala can emerge as a model state for sustainable and progressive IP commercialisation. The state needs to advocate for IP Funds to support patent filing, GI registration, plant variety registration, commercialisation efforts, capacity-building programs, and enforcement measures. Mobilising resources through government grants, industry partnerships, and international collaborations will ensure equitable access to financial support for innovators and TK custodians. Models with regard to structured IP financing with government-backed funds, industry collaborations, and IP valuation frameworks may be followed. To sustain the IPR initiatives, the state shall develop transparent and accountable financial mechanisms, drawing inspiration from the National, State, and Local Gene Funds that support biodiversity conservation.
49. Additionally, structured consultation mechanisms between the NBA, IPRIC-K, KSBB, PPVFRA, and relevant departments, especially the Department of Industries & Commerce and the Science and Technology Department, can streamline financial support for patent, GI and plant variety filing and commercialisation efforts. Kerala’s decentralised governance system allows effective resource allocation at the district and the local self-government levels, ensuring financial assistance reaches inventors, research institutions, and small-scale entrepreneurs and innovators. By mobilising resources through government grants, industry partnerships, and international collaborations, the State will ensure that innovators, TK custodians, and enterprises have equitable access to adequate and timely financial support.

**Policy Action Area 15: Strengthening Kerala’s Institutional Framework for IPR Growth**

50. Kerala’s highly educated workforce and robust institutional architecture position it uniquely to lead in intellectual property (IP) and traditional knowledge (TK) development. By strengthening key institutions such as IPRIC-K, KSBB, and other state-level entities, the State can foster thought leadership, research excellence, and innovation stewardship. Kerala’s proven model of People’s Biodiversity Registers and Biodiversity Management Committees across Local Self Governments offers a scalable foundation for participatory governance in TK protection. Expanding this model into IP policy frameworks not only deepens grassroots engagement but also builds the credibility and institutional readiness needed to attract public and private investment into community-driven innovation and bioresource-linked IP ventures.
51. At the institutional level, Kerala will establish IP Chairs in universities, deepen research collaborations with global and national organisations such as WIPO, WTO, and DPIIT, and develop digital learning modules to expand access and capacity. The State’s

decentralised governance system allows local governments, industry associations, and civil society to actively contribute to IP awareness and skill development, creating a fertile ground for innovation-linked financing and entrepreneurship. By encouraging TK/TCE holders and biodiversity conservers at the community level, Kerala will bridge the gap between IP policy and grassroots innovation, laying the groundwork for community-led IP ventures that can attract targeted funding. The establishment of specialised IPR cells within Innovation and Technology Centres and major research institutions will further streamline enforcement and commercialisation, enhance investor confidence and enable financial flows into scalable IP-based enterprises

### **PART III**

#### **Implementation and Governance of IPR Policy in Kerala**

*Kerala, with its decentralised governance system and strong institutional framework, must adopt a coordinated and integrated approach to effectively implement its IPR Policy to realise the Vision of “Kerala Protecting Knowledge, Empowering Innovation”.*

#### **Policy Action Area 16: Promote a Coordinated IP Governance**

52. To enable inclusive and outcome-driven implementation, a comprehensive IPR Implementation Strategy will be developed that translates the six strategic objectives into actionable pathways. This strategy will be backed by dedicated financial instruments, such as IP Funds, to support patenting, benefit-sharing, and enterprise development for innovators, MSMEs, startups, students, and knowledge-holding communities. The Mission-IPR Initiative will serve as the central delivery mechanism, leveraging the State’s decentralised governance architecture and institutional depth to foster convergence across legal, technological, economic, and socio-cultural domains.
53. IPRIC-K, under KSCSTE, will continue as the nodal agency, coordinating with KSBB, KSUM, universities, and Local Self Governments to ensure responsive and integrated action. Institutional roles will be harmonised to reinforce enforcement capacities, expand interdisciplinary IP education, and facilitate technology transfer and traditional knowledge recognition through locally embedded systems. Strategic partnerships with national and global IP platforms will amplify Kerala’s leadership in inclusive innovation, academic excellence, and community-rooted IP stewardship.

#### **Policy Action Area 17: Upgrade IPRIC-K into the Kerala State Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Centre (KSIPRCC)**

54. Recognising the strategic role of IPRIC-K in implementing the State’s IPR Policy and enabling inter-institutional coordination, the State will take steps to upgrade it into the Kerala State Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Centre (KSIPRCC). This transition will formalise KSIPRCC as the apex nodal entity for IPR facilitation, innovation support, and ecosystem convergence. Operating as a single-window interface, KSIPRCC will provide end-to-end support to inventors across technical, legal, financial, academic, and commercial domains through a structured Four “C”

Collaboration Model: Technical Collaboration (TC), Administrative/Legal Collaboration (AC/LC), Financial Collaboration (FC), and Commercial Collaboration (CC). The inclusion of Financial Collaboration as a core pillar will enable KSIPRCC to mobilise funding from government schemes, CSR initiatives, venture capital, and innovation-linked credit instruments—thereby unlocking financial capital for IP development. Additionally, the initiative will strengthen the institutional capacities of KSCSTE to evolve as a premier R&D hub, capable of guiding and enabling the commercialisation of patented inventions and attracting investment into Kerala’s research and innovation landscape.

### **Policy Action Area 18: Facilitate Oversight and Creative Sector Engagement**

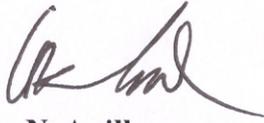
55. To ensure strategic oversight and adaptive governance, a Supervisory Council on Intellectual Property (SCIP), chaired by the Chief Minister and comprising state and national IP experts will be established. This high-level body will guide coordination, monitor progress, and align Kerala’s IPR ecosystem with evolving national and international frameworks. In parallel, IPRIC-K, in consultation with a Creative Industries Working Group, will explore sector-specific frameworks to support creators in literature, music, audiovisuals, design, and other cultural domains. Engagements with collective copyright societies and innovation platforms will help secure fair benefit-sharing, while catalysing incubation, commercialisation, and creative entrepreneurship across the State.

### **Time Frame and Monitoring Indicators:**

56. The Policy will be implemented over five years from the date of its release, guided by clearly articulated goals and milestones. Key outcomes will include enhanced institutional readiness and capacity for IP management across the State; increased accessibility and protection of TK for its custodians; tangible financial, reputational and developmental gains for innovators; improved IP performance of the State reflected in national and global rankings; the emergence of local IP champions and facilitators driving community-based innovation; greater industry-academia alignment for IP-led commercialisation; and demonstrable policy uptake through strengthened compliance, stakeholder trust, and multi-sectoral engagement. While output indicators will continue to be tracked, such as:

- Number of IP filings
- Patents granted and commercialised
- Institutional IP Cells established
- Instances of TK misappropriation prevented
- Innovations based on TK patented
- Number of TK holders benefited
- IP sensitisation campaigns conducted
- Persons educated in IPR
- Revenue generated through IP commercialisation
- IP based Special Purpose Vehicles

Equal emphasis will be placed on mapping transformative outcomes across legal, institutional, economic, and socio-cultural domains.



**Dr. N. Anilkumar**  
Chairman

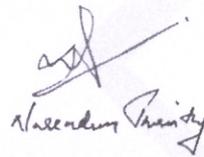
**Dr. N. ANIL KUMAR**  
Chairman  
Kerala State Biodiversity Board  
Thiruvananthapuram



**Mr. R.S. Praveen Raj**  
Member



**Dr. K. C. Sunny**  
Member

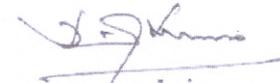


Narendran Thiruthy

**Dr. Narendran Thiruthy**  
Member



**Prof. A. Sabu**  
Member



**Dr. Binuja Thomas**  
Convenor

Thiruvananthapuram  
11-02-2026

## Acronyms Used

ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing
AC	Administrative Collaboration
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BMCs	Biodiversity Management Committees
CC	Commercial Collaboration
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DIC	District Industries Centre
DPIIT	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
FC	Financial Collaboration
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GI	Geographical Indication
IPRIC-K	Intellectual Property Rights Information Centre–Kerala
IT	Information Technology
K-DISC	Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council
KIED	Kerala Institute for Entrepreneurship Development
KILA	Kerala Institute of Local Administration
KKEM	Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission
KSBB	Kerala State Biodiversity Board
KSIPRCC	Kerala State Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Centre
KSUM	Kerala Startup Mission
LC	Legal Collaboration
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NBA	National Biodiversity Authority
NBAGR	National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources
NBFGR	National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIPAM	National IP Awareness Mission
NRDC	National Research & Development Corporation
PBRs	People's Biodiversity Registers
PCT	Patent Cooperation Treaty
PIC	Patent Information Centre
PPVFRA	Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority
SWAYAM-NPTEL	National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning
TC	Technical Collaboration
TCEs	Traditional Cultural Expressions
TK	Traditional Knowledge
TKDS	Traditional Knowledge Docketing System
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

**PART IV:**  
**Annexure:**  
**Kerala IPR Policy 2026: Justification, Direction, and Implementation Strategy**

## **1. Rationale for Revision**

Kerala's decision to revise its Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy in 2026 emerges from a confluence of national and global imperatives. While India has made significant strides in patent filings—ranking sixth globally in 2023—the translation of innovation into equitable economic value remains uneven. India has made commendable progress in the IPR registrations area, ranking 6th globally in patent filings in 2023, with 64,480 filings, in which 55.2% of applications originated from domestic applicants, marking a notable shift. However, India still trails behind China (1.64 million), the United States (518,364), Japan (414,413), and South Korea (287,954). China's dominance, with 89.3% of filings from domestic innovators, highlights its strong focus on rural innovations.

National R&D investment continues to hover below 1% of GDP, and industry–academia linkages remain weak. Kerala, despite its vibrant research ecosystem and rich repository of traditional knowledge, ranks 13th in patent filings relative to research expenditure. This disconnect signals a need for strategic recalibration.

The revised policy is a response to systemic gaps in IP generation, protection, and utilisation. It seeks to reposition Kerala as a leader in inclusive innovation, where community rights, ethical governance, and strategic foresight converge to unlock the full potential of the state's knowledge systems.

## **2. Kerala's Strategic Positioning**

The 2008 IPR Policy laid a foundational vision for democratizing innovation and safeguarding community-held knowledge. The 2026 revision builds on this legacy, responding to shifts in global trade, digital transformation, and biodiversity governance. It envisions Kerala as a state that not only protects intellectual property but also empowers innovation through inclusive, rights-based frameworks.

Central to this vision is the transformation of the existing IPRIC-K into the Kerala State Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Centre (KSIPRCC), which will serve as the nodal agency for policy implementation. The policy proposes the establishment of IPR Cells and IP Management Committees across universities and government departments, ensuring that IP governance is embedded within institutional ecosystems. A Virtual IPR Academy will be launched to build capacity across sectors, complemented by district-level outreach centres that bring IPR literacy to the grassroots.

To safeguard traditional knowledge and cultural expressions, the policy introduces a TK Docketing System (TKDS) that will docket, validate, and protect community-held knowledge. This initiative will be anchored by the KSBB, aligning with the Biological Diversity Act (2002, amended 2023), and the ABS Regulations (2025).

Recognising the need for commercialisation and benefit-sharing, the policy proposes a Kerala-specific entity modelled on the National Research Development Corporation. This body will facilitate technology transfer, licensing, and equitable market access, especially for

MSMEs, startups, and community innovators. Structured IP Funds and district-level resource mobilisation mechanisms will reduce entry barriers and sustain innovation cycles.

### **3. Implementation Logic and Early Actions**

The policy's operational framework is built around six strategic objectives and eighteen action areas, structured into a five-year roadmap. These objectives address critical gaps in awareness, generation, governance, protection, financing, and institutional support. Rather than listing them as discrete items, the policy integrates them into a coherent narrative of transformation.

In its initial phase, the policy prioritises high-impact actions that are both feasible and catalytic. The Virtual IPR Academy will be launched alongside the integration of IPR modules into academic curricula. A comprehensive State IP Audit will map sectoral strengths and identify products eligible for Geographical Indication (GI) registration. IPR Cells will be operationalised in universities, District Industries Centres (DICs), and enforcement agencies, while a State IP Portal will be developed to serve as a hub for networking, training, and commercialisation. To celebrate grassroots innovation and build public engagement, IP Clinics and an IP Hall of Fame will be introduced.

These actions are designed to be scalable, inclusive, and responsive to Kerala's socio-cultural and ecological context, ensuring that innovations are protected, nurtured and shared.

### **4. Governance and Strategic Oversight**

The revised policy proposes a decentralised and convergent governance model that balances strategic leadership with institutional accountability. KSIPRCC will serve as the central coordinating body, supported by KSBB, Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM), universities, and Local Self-Government Institutions (LSGIs). Oversight will be provided by a high-level Supervisory Council on IP (SCIP), chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, ensuring that policy implementation remains aligned with Kerala's broader development vision. To integrate technical, legal, financial, and commercial support, the policy introduces the Mission-IPR Initiative, which adopts a Four "C" Collaboration Model—connecting Creators, Custodians, Catalysts, and Consumers reflects Kerala's commitment to participatory governance and ethical innovation.

The five-year roadmap includes measurable indicators such as IP filings, TK recognition events, commercialisation outcomes, and levels of community engagement. Yet the true measure of success lies in transformative outcomes: increased community ownership, improved innovation equity, and enhanced ecosystem resilience.

### **Conclusion**

Kerala IPR Policy 2026 is a strategic instrument that redefines the role of intellectual property in a knowledge society. It protects what is precious, empowers what is possible, and institutionalises justice at every level. By aligning global frameworks with local realities and embedding ethical governance into the heart of innovation, Kerala is set to transform itself as a national leader in inclusive, future-ready IPR stewardship.