



Brazil: INPI moves forward with projects on gender equity and social inclusion

Larissa Ormay and Rafaela Guerrante

INPI

05 January 2023

INPI representatives Larissa Ormay and Rafaela Guerrante outline some of the office's projects to improve DEI both at the registry and within the broader IP ecosystem

The Brazilian National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI) is paving the way for IP offices around the world in terms of DEI data analysis. In April 2022, it published an in-depth report, which revealed that limited access to IP systems, inequality in the IP grant process and underrepresentation within organisations (including INPI itself) are significant roadblocks to fostering innovation among diverse businesses.

ESG guidelines have gained momentum globally in recent years – one consequence of the pandemic is the urgent acceleration of such discussions. The whole world is seeking methods and shortcuts to achieve greater representation of social groups in equitable and inclusive ways at an unprecedented level. One key consideration – in all spaces, including intellectual property – is how to increase countries' and organisations' productivity through diversity and inclusion.

Context in Brazil

A 2013 study by UNCTAD demonstrated that while 96% of female entrepreneurs interviewed in Brazil took one or more actions to protect their intellectual property, a much smaller number of these – only 26% – actually obtained IP rights successfully. While female entrepreneurs and inventors are demonstrably interested in protecting their intellectual property in Brazil, the reality is that there is still chronic underrepresentation of women with registered IP rights. Certainly, women are particularly affected by lack of time due to social norms and expectations that are imposed on them, especially in relation to domestic and family care. Low representation of women in STEM and difficulties accessing funding both contribute to low representation of women as holders of IP assets.

Biased practices and procedures also perpetuate inequality within organisations. With regard to issues surrounding race, free labour in Brazil has been in place for 134 years, following three centuries of slavery. Brazil therefore needs to provide equal opportunities to all citizens and to overcome its outdated social structure built around the idea of white superiority – one of colonialism's most enduring legacies.

Steps taken in Brazil's IP space

INPI is a federal government agency responsible for stimulating innovation and competitiveness in Brazil through efficient IP protection. It also plays a crucial role in promoting gender equity and social inclusion in the Brazilian innovation space.

In 2022 INPI introduced a 24-person strong strategy committee to tackle the gender gap in the IP field, both internally and externally. In April the institute launched a report titled "Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in IP", which analysed levels of participation from women, people of colour, young people and persons with disabilities in Brazil's IP space. It then went on to suggest possible solutions to this situation.

To aid public policy development, INPI is now developing its first study on intellectual property and DEI in Brazil. The project will consist of gender and ethnicity data collection from more than 6,000 users of the Brazilian IP system to help us better understand how IP knowledge varies across regions, while also taking gender and ethnic factors into consideration. The study

will also identify how different groups use the IP system. Launching soon, the study will contribute to the generation of DEI and IP-related information in Brazil, and may be used to direct funding for INPI's future plans of action on inclusive and diverse IP awareness.

INPI is also collecting statistical data on its own staff, with regard to gender distribution within different areas and positions to support the establishment of internal diversity-related priorities. The institute is measuring female participation in courses, its Ombudsman service and in patent applications filed via the Patent Cooperation Treaty. All the generated data will be used to support the establishment of priorities to be tackled by INPI, with regard to diversity and social inclusion within the organisation.

In the academic field, INPI is developing a research project on IP appropriation and inclusion, which aims to create indicators to measure the effects of international IP standards in Brazil with regard to social and economic inequalities. It will focus primarily on race, gender, sexual orientation and class. Since DEI indicators are one of the main challenges for IP offices around the world, INPI hopes to exchange lessons learned, challenges, results and best practices with foreign IP offices.

National policy and beyond

INPI oversees the organisation and promotion of events on gender and intellectual property within the scope of Brazil's current IP strategy. In March 2023, INPI and WIPO will be coordinating an event on women and innovation.

Gender equality is also one of the United Nations' sustainable development goals. The institute has been involved in several activities organised by WIPO, holding bilateral and multilateral dialogues on inclusion. INPI is also building a benchmark on good practices in DEI.

In May 2022, INPI joined the Latin American Network on Intellectual Property and Gender, in which it has engaged in thematic committees of relevant regional impact. Its participation in this international network has facilitated processes for exchanging data and best practice, management strategies and experiences among IP offices in Latin America. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay are all members, in addition to WIPO as honorary founding member.

Next steps

In the next year, INPI plans to carry out further IP initiatives including a business mentoring programme (specially designed for women), develop new products and services (and/or adapting existing ones) with a focus on DEI, introduce DEI into INPI's IP in Schools programme and establish the creation of a DEI-related study group at the INPI Academy.

Larissa Ormay

Author | international relations analyst

INPI

Rafaela Guerrante

Author | IP researcher

INPI

Unlock unlimited access to all WTR content

[Subscribe Now](#)