

Collective Action FAQs

What is The Lens?

The Lens is a project of the social enterprise [Cambia](#) (doing business as The Lens) designed to provide inclusive access to knowledge so that more people can participate in innovation and problem solving. Originally launched as 'Patent Lens', The Lens has been running continuously for more than 20 years.

Why is Collective Action and The Lens important now?

Humanity faces an unprecedented urgency to address the problems that we collectively face, some of which we have collectively created. Only with connected actors coordinating their contributions can we have a fair go at innovating our way out of our current crises.

Digital abundance of information means that using the linked knowledge accessible through The Lens can help public institutions save as much as US\$1 billion annually while making the resources accessible to more people than can access them today. We can waste no time to redeploy resources to support productive outcomes and solve problems.

What is the business model of The Lens?

The business model of The Lens is LEAP: Lens Equitable Access Program. Briefly, this means that The Lens asks institutions to pay for services to support the financial sustainability of the platform. All of the services from The Lens are available at a fraction of the cost of closed, commercial alternatives.

The Lens has several revenue sources from institutions and individuals who support the mission of The Lens and/or derive value from The Lens services. These revenue sources are subscriptions, sponsorships and philanthropic donations.

- Subscriptions are provided to commercial users of The Lens and to users who choose to license one or more tools in the Institutional Toolkit. Subscriptions are renewable annually.
- Several types of sponsorships are available. These include sponsorship of specific platform enhancements, for example functionality or content. Sponsorship of public Lens Reports is also available.
- The Lens also actively seeks support from philanthropic donors who believe in the importance of inclusive access to knowledge and diverse participation in the innovation ecosystem.

For almost 20 years, The Lens was supported primarily by financial support from generous philanthropic donors and foundations who supported the mission to make knowledge accessible as a public good. More recently, The Lens was asked by donors to design and execute a financial sustainability strategy. It was as an outcome of this sustainability strategy that we developed the Lens Equitable Access Program and fee-based services.

How does The Lens maintain such low prices?

Well, actually, it is free for everyone on earth if they wish to access and use the site anonymously (i.e. as an unregistered guest user). Which is a pretty low price, we admit.

Our secret sauce is that we build on the contributions of others in the public good space: open source software, open data, open access publishing and new open machine learning tools. This is only possible with these shared approaches and it increases our quality rapidly and drops costs dramatically.

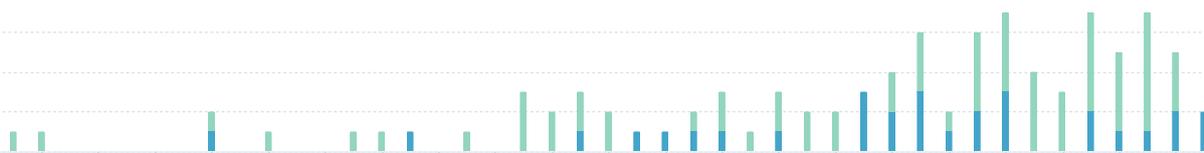
Our commitment to inclusive access to knowledge and LEAP, allows us to focus on enabling useful and actionable knowledge, not building expensive constraints and paywalls. Another reason the low prices are possible is because of 20 years of generous support from philanthropic donors and foundations who helped The Lens to build the foundation that we have today.

But the most important reason we can maintain low prices is because of you. Inclusive access means more people access the platform. Community supported infrastructure that really has the support of the community allows us to distribute costs across a wide base; it doesn't require a lot of money from each participant when there are lots of participants! The Lens believes that knowledge should be like the roads - infrastructure that facilitates the human activities of commerce and culture and as a result benefits us all.

What is Innovation Cartography?

Innovation Cartography is a process to view, analyze and understand knowledge in a way that enables action and decision making. The Lens is building an open platform for Innovation Cartography that is built on open content and tools but can have access rights that match the requirements of the user. In the patent world, an Innovation Cartography can be compared to a patent landscape. In the scholarly works domain, Innovation Cartography is similar to a dramatically expanded and dynamically updated literature review.

Innovation Cartography provides knowledge “maps” in specific disciplines or technology areas to identify the linked actors and inform about partnerships, opportunities, risks and trajectories. Innovation Cartography makes information enabled for decision making and action.



It is a priority for The Lens to build more capabilities around Innovation Cartographies, such as the [Lens Report Builder](#), in order to make the underlying knowledge as accessible, understandable and deployable as possible.

How can I participate in collective action?

If you agree there is urgency to solve the problems we face and you support the mission of inclusive access to knowledge, there are many ways to help. We are grateful for anything that you can do!

- Tell a friend (or many friends) about The Lens.
 - Create and share a saved search or dashboard.
 - Create and share a Collection - privately or publicly!
 - Start a chat group about analyzing and interpreting open content.
 - If you or your contacts use the Lens in an individual capacity for commercial purposes, we will happily license that use for a modest fee (about the price of a low-spec iPad, or a nice office chair). The individual commercial use gives you the customizable workspace, and full commercial permission to use it to do your work, legally, respectfully, confidentially and knowing that the modest fee goes to support a sustainable global resource.
- Tell us why you love The Lens. Share a specific use case that you think others might benefit from. [Drop us a line here](#).

This collective action includes financial support for The Lens.

- If you are an individual using The Lens for commercial purposes, subscribe to a commercial use license for individuals.
- Introduce The Lens to your institution. Encourage them to subscribe to the [Lens Institutional Toolkit](#). The Lens offers packages of tools for universities and other public good institutions as well as for commercial companies. The packages are a fraction of the price of commercial alternatives and they are open. Choosing them means you are participating in making knowledge accessible as a public good.
- If you have the resources, support The Lens financially with a donation. Visit the [Lens Collective Action Project GoFundMe](#) page.

Be a champion for inclusive access to knowledge to support problem solving! Tell a friend about Lens.org today!

Is Lens CAP a solution to the COVID Patent Waiver?

It's a big contribution to ensuring it's a fair and evidence-based negotiation. While there are urgent calls for a COVID Patent Waiver to make vaccines more accessible, the problem goes much deeper. Almost all the countries that are calling for such changes, are also hamstrung in improving and showcasing their domestic capabilities, forging partnerships and developing their own scientific contribution. Thus constraining their ability to negotiate, because they lack affordable, transparent open knowledge of the innovation process, especially patents and scholarly works.