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# Patenting life: The life of a patent

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## Abstract

In 1989 a group of Spanish researchers were granted a patent of "An improved method for determining the nucleotide base sequence of a DNA molecule". The improvement was provided by the activity of a DNA polymerase of virus F29, a phage of bacteria *Bacillus subtilis*. Their research on that enzyme dated 1984, and from then until the patent granting, a set of routines and strategic alliances played to construct the meaning of an enzyme as an industrial innovation. From then until the commercialization of the kit for DNA amplification the history of the patent is traced back so as to show this type of documents as an insightful tool in the history of science and as a process of knowledge production. The patent consisted of a biological process that finally was packed in a kit, after being produced in a research project based on the molecular biology of a microorganism. The tool and the process combined and allow offering a story of standardization, normalization and knowledge control in which travel played a central part, as it was by the circulation of practices and cultures between the research laboratory and the firm that promoted the patenting that the life of this patent developed.

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