

Benchmarking critical technologies

Building an evidence base for an informed
critical technologies strategy

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with Baani Grewal, Cheryl Yu, Saki Kikuchi, Matthew Page, Jackson Schultz and Tilla Hoja



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Contents

What's the problem?	3
What's the solution?	3
1. Introduction to the Benchmarking Critical Technologies Project	4
2. Overall assessment	6
3. Energy technologies	8
3.1 Hydrogen energy	8
3.2 Solar PV	15
4. Biotechnologies	23
4.1 Genetic engineering	23
4.2 Vaccines and medical countermeasures	31
5. Conclusion and recommendations	40
Appendix: Methodology	42
Notes	44
Acronyms and abbreviations	48

What's the problem?

Technology policy formulation has recently gained a renewed importance for governments in the era of strategic competition, but contextual understanding and expertise in deciding where to focus efforts are lacking. As a result, decision-makers might not understand their own national strengths and weaknesses. It's difficult to judge whether a country's R&D outputs, no matter how advanced, and its development of production capacity, no matter how significant, align with the country's intended strategic objectives or can be used effectively to achieve them.

The ability to measure the relative strengths and weaknesses of a country by weighing specific strategic objectives against technical achievements is of paramount importance for countries. This is especially true as nations seek to resolve supply-chain resilience problems underscored by the Covid-19 pandemic. China's rejection of the Quad's vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, willingness to use economic coercion and the resulting strategic competition, call further attention to multiple technology sectors' heavy reliance on a single source. A solution must be found that can exploit synergy across multiple technology sectors among collaborating countries while ensuring supply-chain resilience.

What's the solution?

Governments' ability to ensure that strategic objectives pertaining to critical technologies are both well articulated and achievable, and researchers' and industry's ability to collaborate in meeting those objectives, would be greatly enabled by the development of an objective and repeatable methodology for measuring technical achievements against clearly defined strategic goals for the critical technology sector. The most pressing challenge should be a relatively straightforward one to resolve: standardise metadata about national objectives and R&D efforts to enable business analysis.

The Quad Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group is an important step towards building collaboration in the research, development and production of critical technologies among like-minded governments. While in nascent stages, the group is gathering momentum and working towards addressing the September 2021 objective to monitor trends in critical and emerging technologies for cooperation, with an initial focus on biotechnology. We recommend as follows:

- Conduct detailed analysis to understand current and emerging gaps in critical and emerging technologies, starting with biotechnology, among like-minded countries.
- Develop a partnership between like-minded countries with advanced technological capabilities to deliver a secure technology supply chain for critical tech. This should include a commitment to a set of core principles for technology development and delivery, including 'baking in' democratic principles to the technology and agreeing to share any civilian advances on market terms and refrain from coercion.
- Establish a Quad or Quad Plus critical technologies fund to which participating states pledge investment funds that are then disbursed to address current and emerging critical technologies gaps.

1. Introduction to the Benchmarking Critical Technologies Project

Benchmarking Critical Technologies is a pilot project at ASPI ICPC that examines the development of a handful of critical technologies in the context of strategic partnership and strategic competition. ‘Critical technologies’ broadly refers to strategically important technology areas.¹ Australia, for example, defines ‘critical technology’ as ‘technology that can significantly enhance or pose risks to Australia’s national interests, including our prosperity, social cohesion and national security’.² For this pilot study, we focus on the biotechnology and energy technology sectors in China and in the Quad—the quadrilateral Indo-Pacific diplomatic network consisting of Australia, India, Japan and the US. This project will be expanded over the course of 2022 to include more technology areas and countries.

During the Quad Leaders’ Summit in March 2021, the Quad Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group was announced. The communiqué from the summit said that the working group was intended to ‘ensure the way in which technology is designed, developed, governed and used is shaped by the Quad countries’ shared values and respect for universal human rights’.³ The communiqué didn’t directly name China, but China was clearly implied in its pledge to recommit to ‘promoting the free, open, rules-based order, rooted in international law and undaunted by coercion, to bolster security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond’.⁴

It’s clear that China is the key strategic competitor that the Quad countries are hedging against. They’re technology and manufacturing powerhouses with strong geopolitical influence in the region, which makes the competition both more important and more difficult. As the Quad works to develop capabilities in a range of critical sectors, the Quad members will need to also understand how to leverage each other’s strengths and overcome collective weaknesses to guarantee supply-chain resilience, among other strategic objectives.⁵ They will also need to triangulate the effects of each nation’s digital enmeshment in Chinese supply chains and the net effects of that in particular sectors.

There’s a lack of empirical data to ground decision-makers’ advice on everything from capability gaps to priority investment areas. This project is an attempt to begin to bring additional empirical data to the decision-making process. Our intent is to offer improved clarity on each country’s strengths and weaknesses in each critical technology. After consultation with the Australian Government, we decided to focus on hydrogen energy and solar photovoltaic (solar PV) technologies from the energy sector, and genetic engineering and vaccines and medical countermeasures in the biotechnology sector. The broader technology areas that these specific technologies sit within are of clear strategic importance. The Quad Leaders’ Summit communiqué established that biotechnology would be the starting point for the Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group’s collaboration. It also highlighted, in the context of the recent COP26 conference, that the Quad would coordinate to ‘establish responsible and resilient clean-energy supply chains’.⁶

To assess national capabilities, we measured each country’s R&D and infrastructure development efforts using patent and patent impact data and academic impact data, and compared those results against the country’s technology-specific policy goals. For patents, we collected two measures for each critical technology: the quantity and quality of the patents. IP Australia provided ASPI ICPC with patent data to analyse the quantity of patents for each critical technology. Additionally, using the

commercial product PatentSight developed by LexisNexis, we assessed patent quality with the Patent Asset Index (PAI).⁷ The tool assesses patent quality across various measures in the overall ecosystem of a technology field. Those measures are technology relevance (TR), indicating how much future patents in the field depended upon the patent; market coverage (MC), indicating how much of the global market the patent offers protection of; and competitive impact (CI), the aggregate of TR and MC indicating the economic value of the patent. The aggregate economic value of all patents in the field then constitutes the field’s PAI. For academic impact factors, we used the CiteScore (CS) methodology for measuring impact factors embedded within Elsevier’s Scopus commercial database product. We also drew on background interviews with industry specialists and senior officials in relevant government departments. Budget data was more challenging to collect, normalise and assess. Consequently, it isn’t treated as a separate metric, but included with general policy analysis. (For more on our methodology, see the Appendix.)

We recognise that both the policies and technologies on which we base our assessments are evolving. Technology development doesn’t always move in a linear trajectory, and current capabilities aren’t the only indicator of future outcomes. Moreover, the strategic interests and desired policy outcomes one country seeks might not align simply or easily with those of another. Therefore, it isn’t possible to directly compare countries against each other. Rather than arbitrarily rating each country’s progress against the others, we’ve rated each country’s progress in achieving the strategic objectives that it has outlined for each technology area (Figure 1). The progress indicator’s location should be interpreted as being dynamic, given that both policies and technologies will evolve.

Figure 1: Rating scale—country progress in meeting national policy objectives



Rating scale legend

- 1. Some high-level policy objectives specific to the technology area have been set, but there’s little evidence of efforts making progress towards meeting those objectives.
- 2. Despite the articulation of some policy objectives pertaining to the technology area, those are still relatively unclear. The country’s R&D and production capabilities don’t appear to be sufficient to contribute to realising the country’s stated policy objectives.
- 3. There’s some evidence that the country is developing actionable policy in the technology area. There’s clear progress in the country’s ability to contribute to the R&D of the technology, or production capacity. It isn’t clear, however, whether this progress aligns with the country’s stated policy objectives.
- 4. There’s evidence that stated policy objectives, research and investment are beginning to translate into aligning capabilities.
- 5. There’s strong evidence that stated policy objectives, research and investment have already translated into aligning capabilities.

Source: Image produced by ASPI.

2. Overall assessment

- *Quantity doesn't mean quality, at least in terms of the way patents and research shift global knowledge and capabilities in the overall ecosystem of a technology field.* Our findings on patent impact—measured by how often a patent is cited or purchased—highlighted that China, with the highest number of patent applications filed, didn't have a correspondingly high impact factor. Australia and India, and to a lesser extent Japan, filed far fewer patents, but those few patents had impact more on par with US patents, which were high in both number and impact. One patent can significantly influence the evolution of a technology; others might incrementally advance knowledge or create offshoot fields. Impact factors in these types of analysis can be an objective measure for determining scientific advances or commercial success but aren't necessarily useful in indicating whether national capabilities support policy objectives. If the point of benchmarking critical technologies capabilities at a national level is to understand what makes a country capable of meeting national policy objectives, competitive in a strategic competition and well placed to work with like-minded partners, then the ability of individual researchers or organisations to advance a technology field doesn't tell us how competitive a country is in translating concepts to capabilities that align with its strategic objectives. For example, ASPI ICPC believes that in China, the disproportionately large number of patents filed internally is most likely attributable to companies patenting specific applications of technology. In the Quad, countries such as Australia and India have been more impactful for a fewer number of patent applications filed and research papers significantly advance the field.
- *Success in connecting policy objectives to outcomes isn't yet entirely measurable.* Our comparison of national policies pertaining to each critical technology we research shows that China, followed by the US, tends to have more clarity about what it seeks to achieve by investing in R&D and production capabilities, and following that up with actions that will achieve those objectives. India, Japan and Australia don't lack policy development or innovative capacity, but we believe they have been less effective at connecting concepts to capability. This assessment is no doubt at least partially because the development of policy objectives postdates most of our data.
- *Metrics don't explain the context in which innovation is taking place, including incentive structures, and how that affects a country's ability to meet specific objectives.* In China, the incentive structure is designed so that researchers are working to meet specific policy objectives. In fact, companies closely collaborate with the state in technical standards development. According to the revised 2017 Standardisation Law,⁸ the Standardisation Administration of China (an agency under the State Administration for Market Regulation) is required to oversee standards initiation and implementation, and in practice technical committees for standards setting under the Standardisation Administration tend to consist of both companies and research institutes. We believe the knock-on effect of the incentive structure in China is that the R&D base is disadvantaged, while companies and researchers focus on implementing specific applications of technology that meet policy needs. China's National Patent Development Strategy (2011–2020) was designed as a 'long-term and comprehensive plan to use the patent system and patent resources to enhance the country's core competitiveness'.⁹ The strategy document prioritises 'encourag[ing] and supporting[ing] enterprises to upgrade the core technologies and key technologies with patent rights in China's advantageous fields to national and international standards'.¹⁰ We believe

companies are seeking to achieve those objectives by owning the market first, and patents support that approach. They're adding economic value by increasing the quantity of applications, and owning the market comes before efforts to refine the product. Many PRC-originated technologies are being exported globally (see ASPI ICPC's *Mapping China's Tech Giants* project), no matter what the overall quality of the product in comparison to competitors, and that proliferation is probably achieving some market power and incumbency. It's a cumulative and individual challenge for the Quad nations to move more rapidly from concept to capability in order to avoid the PRC leading in meeting strategic objectives with that technology.

3. Energy technologies

Energy forms a key pillar in the ‘free and open Indo-Pacific’ strategy first introduced by former Japanese Prime Minister Abe,¹¹ then adopted by the US¹² and subsequently by the Quad as a whole.¹³ Initiatives such as the US Asia EDGE (Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy) project have placed the energy sector at the forefront of that strategic effort.¹⁴

3.1 Hydrogen energy

Hydrogen energy refers to the expanded hydrogen value chain. That includes the production, transportation, use and externalities associated with the use of hydrogen energy. Hydrogen represents an ideal form of energy carrier and storage for renewable energy generation because the storage capacity of hydrogen cells doesn’t degrade over time or with use.

Aggressive growth in the production and application of carbon-free green hydrogen¹⁵ and carbon-neutral blue hydrogen¹⁶ transportation and storage, as well as the extended value chain, is a key dimension of future strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific has the fastest rising regional energy demand,¹⁷ and an estimated 420 million people still lack access to electricity.¹⁸ Hydrogen energy is also crucial in achieving carbon neutrality—a goal aggressively pursued by the UN and individual countries including China¹⁹ and the Quad²⁰ members. This is largely because of hydrogen’s energy density and because it promises relatively mature energy storage methods that can be carbon free, or at the very least carbon neutral.

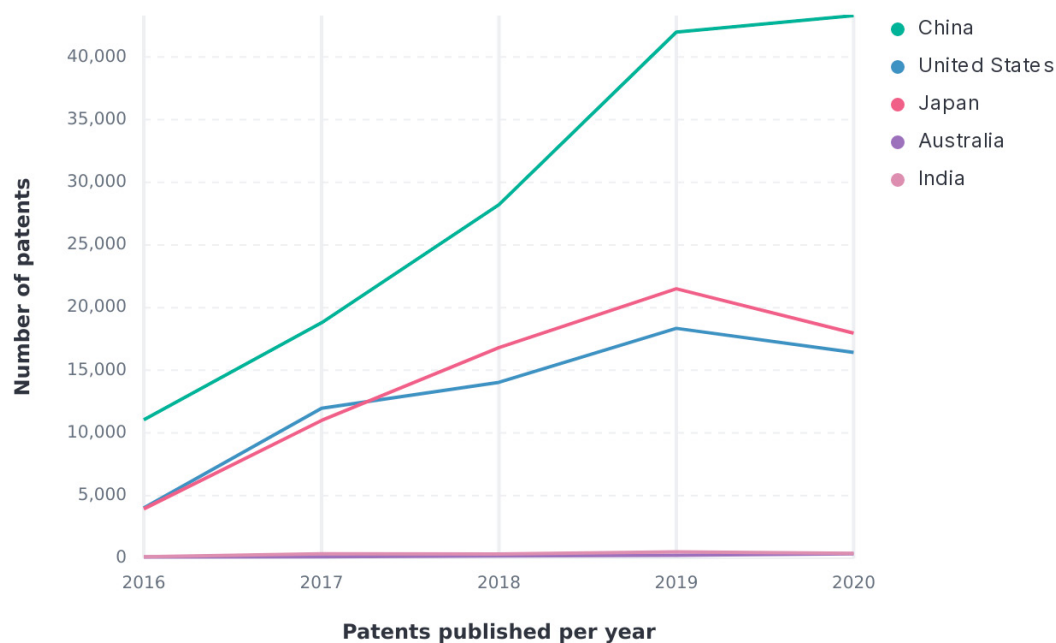
Hydrogen is an energy carrier. It doesn’t exist in its exploitable gaseous form on Earth and inputting energy is needed to produce it. This contrasts with energy such as that from fossil fuels and sunlight, which are energy sources because their exploitable form can be found in the natural environment. The development of hydrogen as an energy carrier has complemented and benefited significantly from the maturation and lowering costs associated with other renewable energy technologies, such as solar panels and wind turbines, which function as energy sources from nature. To that end, many countries have established their own hydrogen strategies (Table 1). The International Energy Agency estimates that the global demand for hydrogen in a net-zero scenario will rise from 88.48 megatonnes (Mt) in 2020 to 210.56 Mt in 2030.

Table 1: National policies on hydrogen energy

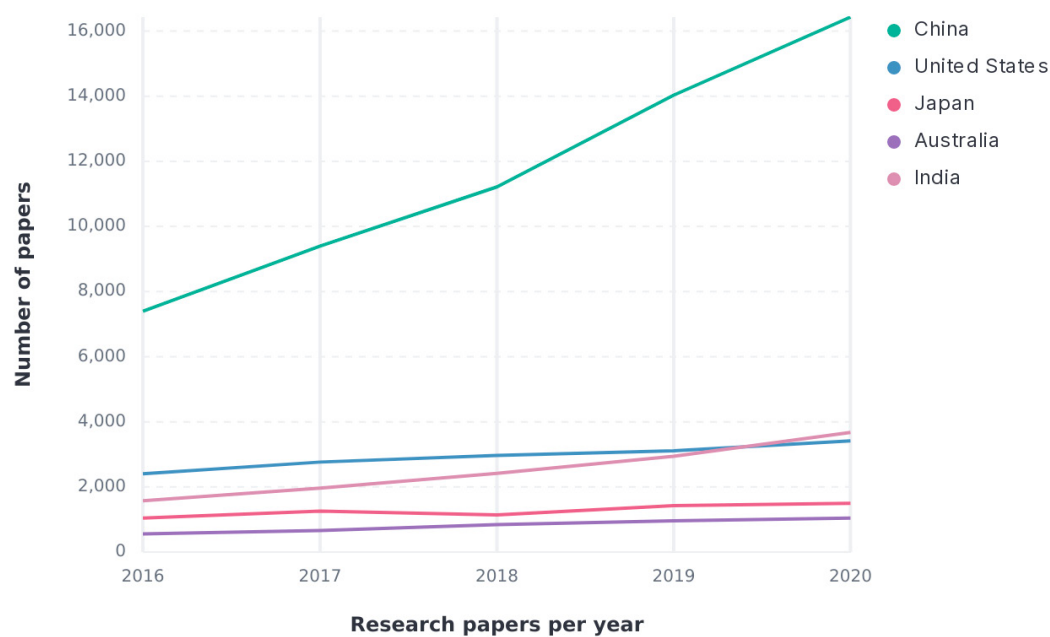
Country	Policy summary
Australia	Australia has committed to a national goal of net zero emissions by 2050. The Long-Term Emissions Reduction Plan ²¹ and the government's 2020 Technology Investment Roadmap and Low Emissions Technology Statement ²² name clean hydrogen as a priority technology. Australia's National Hydrogen Strategy (2019) said that Australia should be a globally competitive player in the renewable hydrogen export industry by 2030. ²³ Prior to 2019, the Australian Government's investment in hydrogen energy was on par with investments in other renewable energy technologies, solar excluded, and several millions of dollars in research grants were awarded to universities through the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and the Australian Research Council. In 2018, for example, ARENA awarded a total of \$22.1 million across 16 hydrogen projects expected to produce outcomes that would deliver cost reductions and efficiency gains. ²⁴ Then, in 2019, ARENA launched the Renewable Hydrogen Development Funding Round, and in May 2021 announced that it had conditionally approved awards under the funding round of \$103.3 million towards three commercial-scale hydrogen projects. ²⁵
India	India committed to a national goal of net zero emissions by 2070 and a target to achieve 50% of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030. The Indian Government has included the promotion and development of green hydrogen energy in its push to switch from fossil fuel to renewable energy. In 2021, Prime Minister Modi announced the intention to make India the 'world's largest green hydrogen hub'. ²⁶ India announced a National Hydrogen Mission in 2021 to research and develop efficient hydrogen energy (at the time of writing, the budget had not been announced). ²⁷ The mission is intended to be a long-term incentive and R&D strategy with the aim of developing India into a 'global hub for manufacturing of hydrogen and fuel cells technologies across the value chain'. ²⁸ The Indian Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has classified hydrogen energy as a 'new technology' and has a focus on the development of hydrogen fuel cells for transport vehicles. ²⁹
Japan	Japan declared in October 2020 that it aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. ³⁰ Following the declaration, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and related ministries formulated the Green Growth Strategy through Achieving Carbon Neutrality in 2050. ³¹ The strategy identifies 14 growth sectors, including hydrogen, and provides policy tools to support the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2050, including budgets. A ¥2 trillion fund called the Green Innovation Fund Project supports R&D in several technology areas. ³² The first selected projects under the fund that were related to hydrogen energy totalled ¥384 billion.
United States	The US has set a national goal of net zero emissions by 2050 and a target to achieve a 50%–52% reduction in economy-wide net greenhouse gas pollution in 2030. ³³ Research, development and deployment of clean hydrogen fuel cell technologies has been a priority focus area for the US's net zero emissions targets through a multi-year R&D strategy first launched in 2003. ³⁴ The Biden administration's flagship Bipartisan Build Back Better Act and Framework is the primary legislation aiming to meet its climate target and goals. ³⁵ Development and research in clean hydrogen energy received a major boost under the Build Back Better Act, which allocated over US\$9.5 billion investment in clean hydrogen energy, including US\$1.5 billion towards clean hydrogen manufacturing and advancing recycling research, development and demonstration (RD&D). ³⁶ In 2020, separately, the US Department of Energy published its updated Hydrogen Program Plan, which provides a framework for RD&D activities for clean hydrogen energy. The 2020 Hydrogen Strategy (under the Hydrogen Program Plan) is the primary government strategic framework aimed at accelerating the R&D of hydrogen technologies. ³⁷
China	China's 14th Five-Year Plan outlined top-level goals that could be achieved with hydrogen energy, and under the objective of developing and growing strategic new industries listed hydrogen energy technology as one of the cutting-edge technologies that would support the modernisation of the country's industries. ³⁸ More specific policy targets were postulated and recommended by the semi-official China Hydrogen Alliance in its 2019 <i>China hydrogen energy and fuel cell industry White Paper</i> . ³⁹ According to the White Paper, from the technology perspective, the 2025 objective is to actively promote the scale-up of hydrogen production from renewable energy power generation, biological hydrogen production and other technology RD&Ds. That includes developing hydrogen production methods based on local conditions by using industrial by-products and renewable energy-based electrolysis and increasing storage capacity by developing low-temperature liquid, solid-state storage, and low-temperature liquid pipeline transport. In 2021, the Chinese Government allocated ¥795 million (US\$124.49 million) for the development of hydrogen technology for green hydrogen production and large-scale transfer systems, hydrogen-safe storage and a rapid transportation and distribution system, and fast hydrogen reforming and high-efficiency power system. ⁴⁰

Figure 2: Hydrogen energy patent applications published in China and the Quad and relative research output, 2016 to 2020

Hydrogen Energy patents - China + Quad



Hydrogen Energy research - China + QUAD

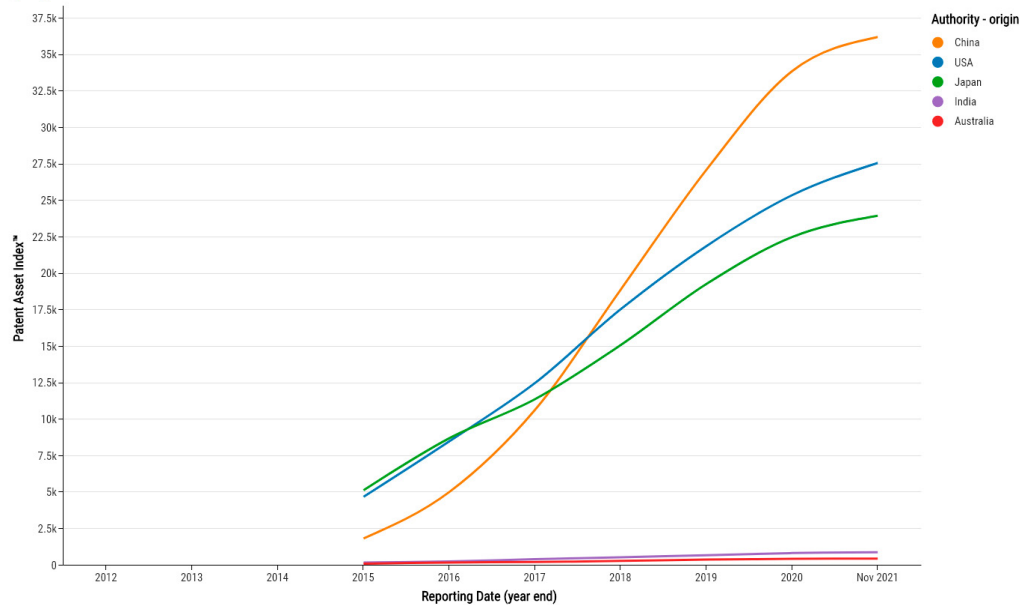


Note: While India and Australia are producing very few patents on most technologies, hydrogen energy patents are particularly low, next to the high numbers originating from China, the US and Japan. India has a far greater relative investment in hydrogen energy research than patent development and commercializing their work. The opposite is seen from Japan; they are filing large numbers of patent applications, but their research output is comparatively low, particularly relative to their research output across other fields.

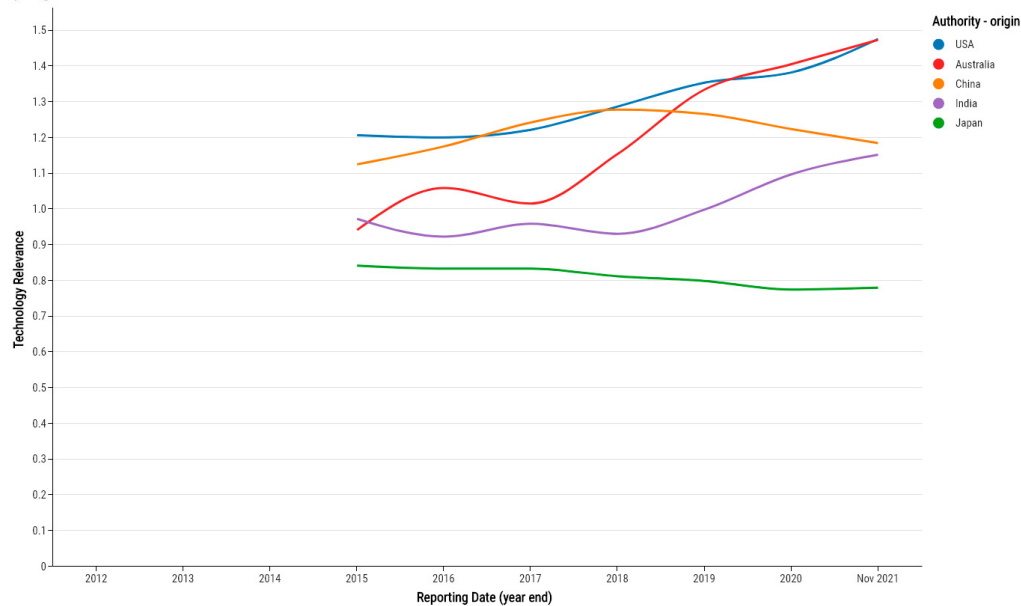
Source: Images produced by ASPI ICPC using data generously provided by IP Australia (PATSTAT Spring 2021 ed.) and the Scopus research database.

Figure 3: Hydrogen energy patents outlined with Patent Asset Index and technology relevance, by country, 2015 to 2021

Hydrogen Patents 2015-2021



Hydrogen Patents 2015-2021

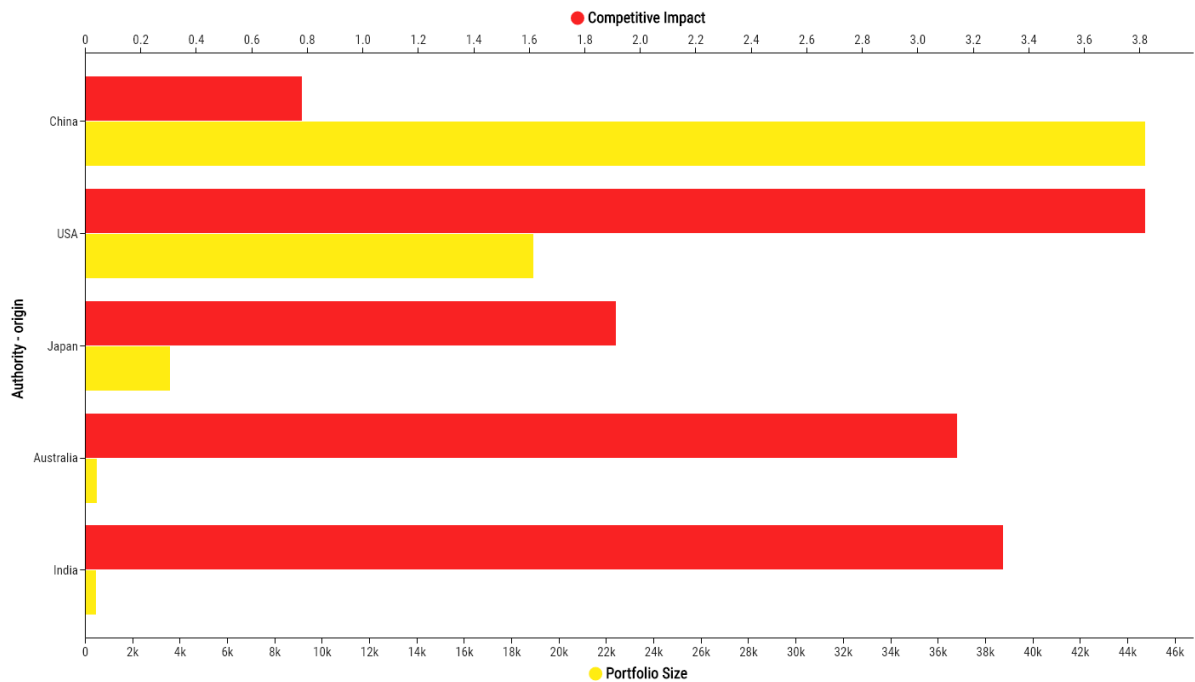


Note: The Patent Asset Index graph indicates the total economic impact of patents, while the 'technology relevance' graph reflects how the patent helps with subsequent R&D in the field. Because the PAI indicates total economic worth, both the quality and quantity of patents are factors. Technology relevance indicates, for lack of a better term, the 'quality' of the patents; this is measured by whether they're being cited to advance the field. Thus, a high PAI can be a result of a large quantity of low-quality patents or a small quantity of high-quality patents.

Source: Images produced by ASPI ICPC using PatentSight.

Figure 4: Hydrogen energy patents—portfolio size and competitive impact organised, by country, 2015 to 2021

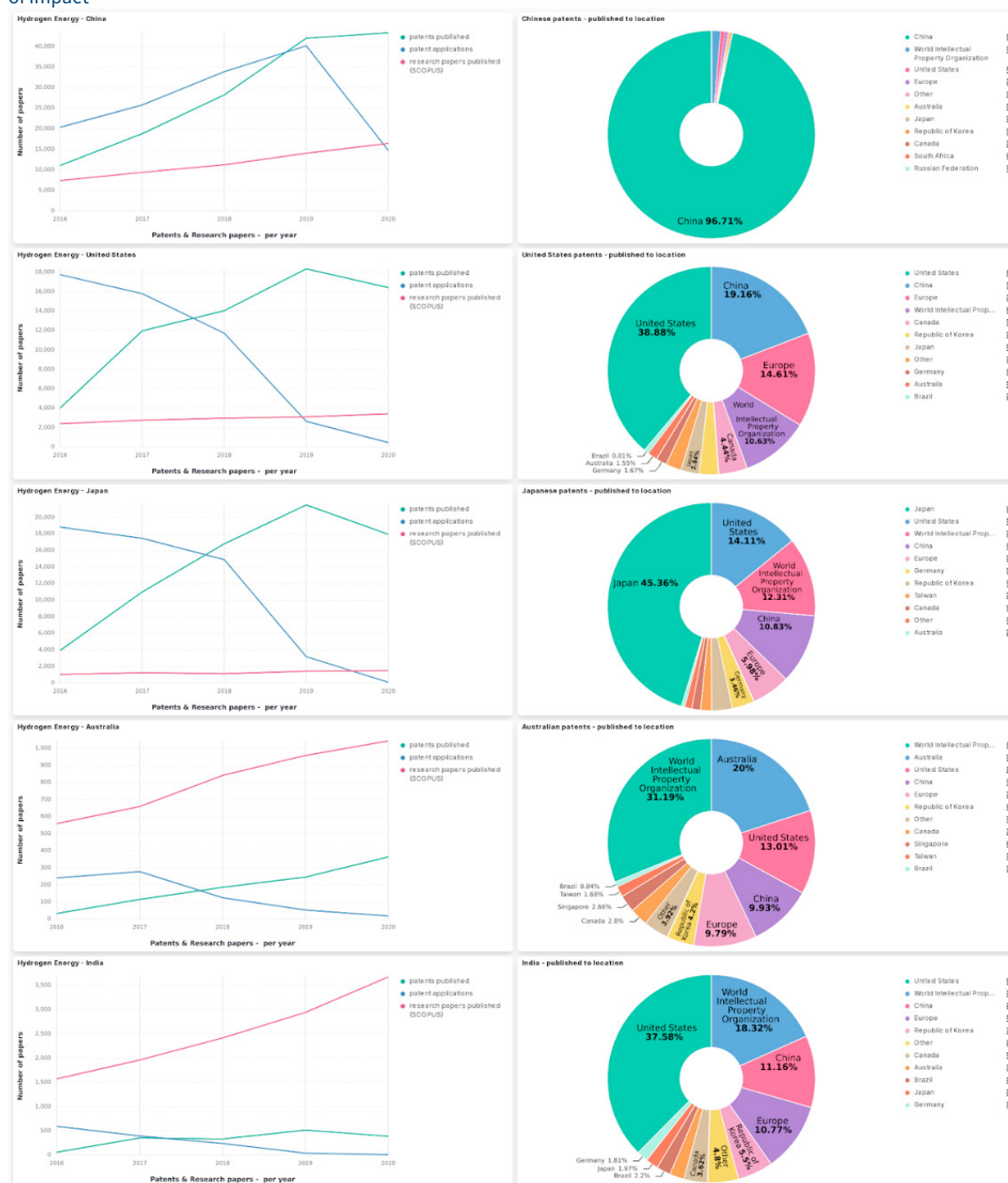
Hydrogen Patent 2015-2021



Note: The yellow bar illustrates the quantity of patents through portfolio size, while the average competitive impact (the economic value of individual patents defined by both the technological relevance and the market coverage of the patent) for the country in each field is represented by the red bar. For example, China has an enormous quantity of patents but relatively low competitive impact, which means the quality and market coverage of the average patent are extremely low according to the PatentSight metric.

Source: Images produced by ASPI ICPC using PatentSight.

Figure 5: Hydrogen energy academic research, compared with to patent applications and publishing, as a measure of impact

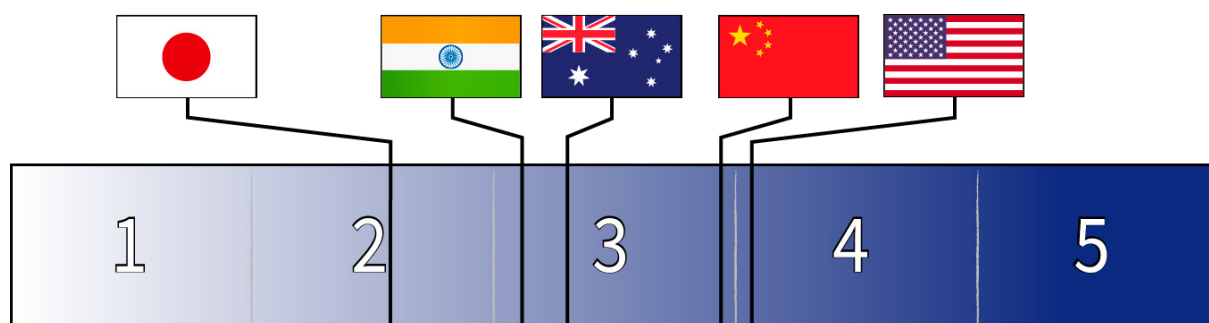


Note: The downturn on patent applications (blue line), where it crosses the still rising patents published (green line), indicates when the majority of patent applications were still filed but not yet published. The 'publication lag' from first filing can be up to two years in Australia and then there is additional time for patent application acceptance or rejection. The publishing lag depends on a variety of internal policy and legal factors that are similar across the world but can differ across jurisdictions such as China. Additionally, a longer lag time can often be desired by industry, as it gives it time to innovate and evolve its strategy before the details are made public. Combined with the fact that inventors in China primarily only file patents in China, our findings show that Chinese patents are published 2 to 3 times faster on average (0.78 years) than in the Quad countries (1.89 to 2.04 years), which enables China to commercialise its technology and transition to production more quickly. ASPI ICPC assesses that China's fast patent lifecycle, combined with a relatively smaller volume of published research, provides supporting evidence for a fast-paced and iterative approach to technology delivery in China.

Australia and India both produce significantly more research papers than patent applications, which indicates either a new or primary investment in ideas generation, or that they face challenges in commercialising those ideas themselves, unlike Japan, China and the United States.

Source: Images produced by ASPI ICPC using data generously provided by IP Australia (PATSTAT Spring 2021 ed).

Figure 6: Hydrogen energy—country progress in meeting national policy objectives



Source: Image produced by ASPI.

Australia has outlined specific policy objectives and, despite low output in terms of innovation, the research is of high quality and is cited nearly as often as output from the larger countries, despite the enormous difference in population size. It isn't clear, however, that this progress aligns with policy objectives, which are still relatively nascent in form, or that it carries through to industry. It's likely that research is leading the policy objectives rather than the other way around.

China has clear policy objectives and a relatively high economic impact for research, but the quality isn't necessarily high. Patents are published quickly. While their individual impact on the field and economic value are relatively low, their aggregate impact may have a positive effect on Chinese companies being able to quickly seize the market and on China translating policy objectives into aligning capabilities.

India has clear policy objectives and strategy for achieving designated R&D, production capability, and quality research for hydrogen energy. However, as it currently stands, no domestic producers have significant capacity. Consequently, the country is still incapable of functioning as a production base for hydrogen energy. Several Indian companies have announced plans to establish hydrogen energy production facilities; however, those plans will take 5–10 years to be realised.⁴¹

The **US** has a clear strategy for hydrogen energy development, strong innovation capacity and budget allocations to build production capabilities, which will help the US translate policy objectives into aligning capabilities. However, its investment in hydrogen research falls well behind its investment in solar research.

Japan has policy objectives for the use and production of hydrogen energy, and there are new investments in achieving those objectives and signs that targets are being met, but Japan's current R&D capacity doesn't necessarily align with the objectives. Its relative research effort lags behind that of the other Quad countries, and Japan produces less than half the number of papers on hydrogen energy than on solar energy or vaccines and medical countermeasures, suggesting that this policy has yet to transition into action.

3.2 Solar PV

Solar PV refers to electrical power systems that rely on solar power by means of photovoltaic cells. Photovoltaic cells are made with semiconductor materials, such as silicon and cadmium telluride.⁴² The PV cells enable the conversion of light into electricity through the photoelectric effect.

According to research by GlobalData, the Indo-Pacific region's cumulative capacity in the global solar PV market is leading at 58.9%.⁴³ China occupies the largest share of the market, followed by Quad members US, Japan and India.⁴⁴ Australia is much further behind. With carbon neutrality squarely in its sight, the Indo-Pacific region is looking at reaching 1,500 gigawatt hours (GWh) per year by 2030.⁴⁵

Solar power is one of the most mature renewable energy sources, and under ideal scenarios solar power schemes now offer the cheapest electricity in human history.⁴⁶ The two major power-generation schemes using solar power are concentrating solar power (CSP), which uses mirrors to focus sunlight and store the heat generated for later use, and solar PV, which uses the photoelectric effect to convert sunlight directly into electricity.⁴⁷ CSP has a higher rate of energy conversion and can be done on a larger scale to be 'dispatchable', the energy industry's power output can be adjusted as needed without using batteries, but CSP has higher costs per kilowatt under current technology. Solar PV has lower efficiency and can't generate power without continuous sunlight,⁴⁸ but the cost of utility-scale solar PV generation has dropped by 85% since 2010.⁴⁹ Consequently, solar PV is one of the fastest growing sources of renewable electricity generation and is expected to increase by 145 terawatt hours, or 18%, in 2021.⁵⁰

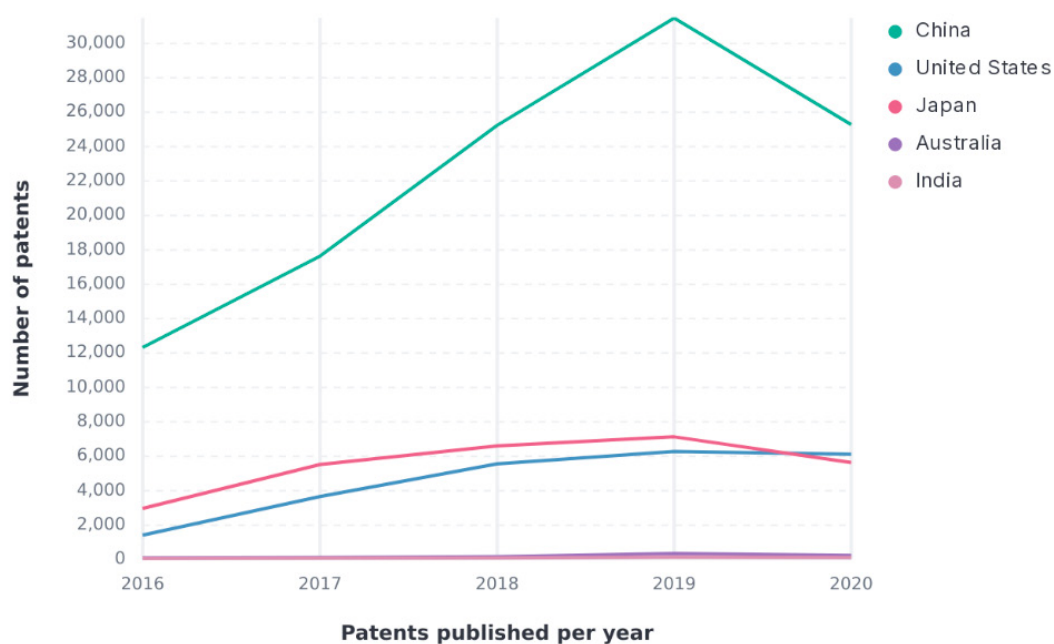
Table 2: National policies on solar PV

Country	Policy summary
Australia	<p>The solar PV household installation rate in Australia is high, and solar generated about 10% of Australia's electricity in 2020.⁵¹ But high adoption rates aren't necessarily matched by a clear research priority. Solar PV isn't a listed 'priority technology' in the Australian Government's 2020 Technology Investment Roadmap and Low Emissions Technology Statement,⁵² but solar energy was identified as a key supporting technology for other innovations, such as clean hydrogen production.⁵³ The government's documents identified a stretch goal of lowering the cost of solar energy production to \$15/MWh as a pathway to powering low-cost clean hydrogen production, manufacturing low-emissions steel and aluminium, and other emerging technologies. More recently, in 2021, Australia committed to a national goal of net zero emissions by 2050 ahead of the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, releasing a corresponding Long-Term Emissions Reduction Plan. In the plan, 'ultra-low-cost solar' was reiterated as a key technology in reducing Australia's carbon emissions. Since ARENA and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation were established by the Australian Government in 2012, more than a billion dollars in funding has been directed towards solar PV energy technology.⁵⁴ In 2013, the Australian Centre for Advanced Photovoltaics was established through ARENA funding with a focus on solar PV R&D and forming national and international relationships with academic institutions and industry partners.⁵⁵ Since 2012, ARENA has provided over \$230 million towards about 130 solar R&D projects, of which about \$80 million has been allocated to the Australian Centre for Advanced Photovoltaics.⁵⁶ Since 2016, most solar PV funding has been directed through competitive grants administered through ARENA's Large-Scale Solar (LSS) Funding Round, complemented by funding through long-term debt financing by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.⁵⁷</p>
India	<p>India has committed to a national goal of net zero emissions by 2070 and a target to achieve 50% of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030.⁵⁸ Solar energy is the core driver of India's renewable energy push. India has set an ambitious target of installing 450 GW of mixed-source renewable energy capacity by 2030, of which 280 GW (over 60%) will be from installed solar,⁵⁹ with a mid-term goal of achieving 175 GW installed renewable energy capacity by 2022,⁶⁰ again with the majority from solar energy. The National Solar Mission, initiated in 2010, aims to establish India as a global leader in solar energy.⁶¹ The mission is a multiyear, multiphase project—with differing targets for each phase—using a mixture of government subsidies and incentives.</p> <p>In 2020, the Indian Government launched a solar PV research and manufacturing scheme to establish a domestic high-efficiency solar module industry through an investment of approximately US\$600 million (45 billion rupees) over five years.⁶² India has also made solar energy a focal part of its international climate change policy through the creation of the International Solar Alliance.⁶³</p>
Japan	<p>In October 2020, Japan declared that it aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.⁶⁴ Following the declaration, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the other related ministries formulated the Green Growth Strategy through Achieving Carbon Neutrality in 2050.⁶⁵ The strategy identifies 14 growth sectors, including solar, and provides policy tools to support the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2050, including budgets. As a mid-term goal, Japan aims to increase the proportion of renewable energy to 22%–24% of its total energy mix by 2030.⁶⁶ Thanks to the Feed-In Tariff Scheme implemented in July 2012, the progress rate for solar power was 87% in 2018.⁶⁷ To maximise the introduction of renewable energy, the government will optimise the feed-in system to reduce power-generation costs.⁶⁸ A ¥2 trillion fund called the Green Innovation Fund Project supports R&D in several technology areas.⁶⁹ Under the fund, there's currently an open call for solar PV projects, for which a total of ¥49.8 billion is to be allocated.⁷⁰</p>
United States	<p>The US has set a national goal of net zero emissions by 2050 and a target to achieve 100% carbon pollution-free electricity by 2035.⁷¹ Most of this push towards clean energy is proposed to be through solar energy; in its Clean Energy Blueprint, the US Department of Energy expects more than 40% of US electricity to be solar powered by 2035.⁷² The RD&D of solar energy infrastructure is a national priority under the Biden administration's flagship Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal and Build Back Better Agenda, which aims to significantly accelerate solar deployment by 2030 through large-scale investment in 'infrastructure, manufacturing, innovation, and incentives' for solar energy.⁷³ The Department of Energy has a dedicated solar PV R&D support program under its Solar Energy Technologies Office.⁷⁴ Solar energy is also a core part of the Biden administration's climate-change foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific.⁷⁵</p>

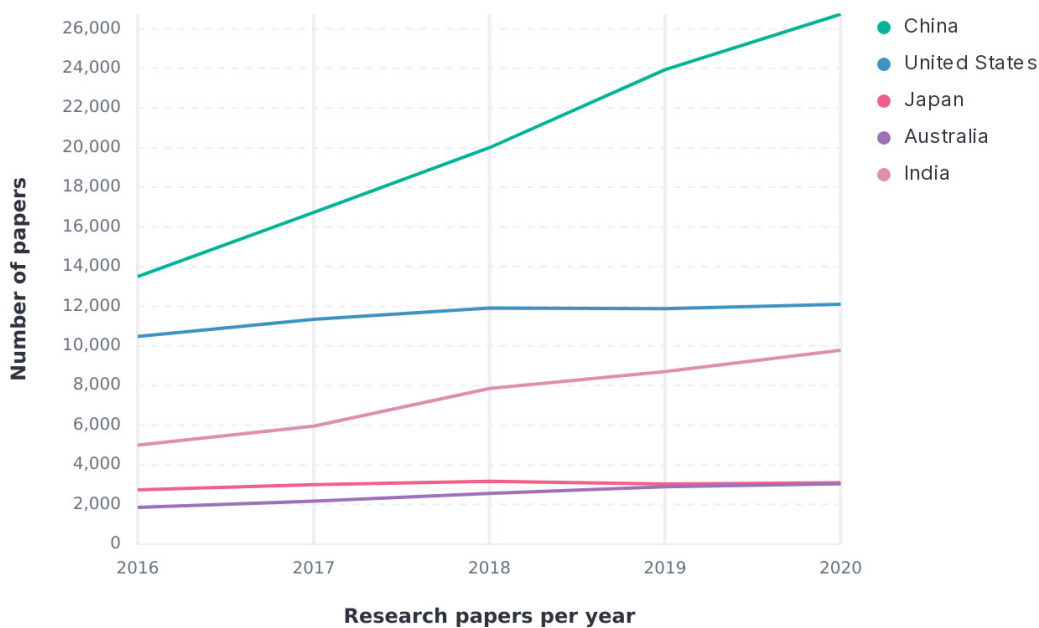
China	<p>In December 2020, Xi Jinping proposed at the Climate Ambition Summit that China plans to ‘bring its total installed capacity of wind and solar power to over 1.2 billion kilowatts’ by 2030.⁷⁶ Following his speech, the National Energy Administration established a goal to have wind and solar power account for about 11% of the country’s electricity consumption by the end of 2021.⁷⁷ China’s solar energy strategy has been outlined in specific five-year plan policy documents since 2011.⁷⁸ The 13th Five-Year Plan for Solar Energy Development, covering 2016 to 2020, called for enhancing capacity, lowering costs and advancing technology.⁷⁹ It called for China’s installed capacity of solar power generation to reach 110 million kilowatts, of which PV power-generation capacity should reach 105 million kilowatts. It also said that the installed capacity of solar thermal power generation should reach 5 million kilowatts, the solar heat collectors should cover 800 million square metres, and the annual utilisation of solar energy should reach more than 140 million equivalent tonnes of standard coal. Although the official 14th Five-Year Plan for solar energy hasn’t been published yet, Ren Yuzhi, who is Deputy Director in the New Energy Department at the National Energy Administration, stated that the scale of the installed PV power generation will be a lot higher than that specified in the 13th Five-Year Plan.⁸⁰ He also stated that, during the 14th Five-Year Plan period, new industries and new formats such as PV + energy storage, PV hydrogen production and photovoltaic direct supply will be initiated.⁸¹ China also faces severe challenges in sunseting its ubiquitous subsidies for the PV industry: the total subsidy for solar power in 2021 was set at ¥3.38 billion (US\$530 million),⁸² and the goal for 2022 is set at ¥2.28 billion (US\$357.2 million).⁸³ From 2016 to 2020, a total of ¥137.337 billion (US\$21.51 billion) was spent on solar power subsidies.⁸⁴</p>
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Figure 7: Solar PV patent applications published in China and the Quad and relative research output, 2016 to 2020

Solar PV patents - China + Quad



Solar PV research - China + QUAD

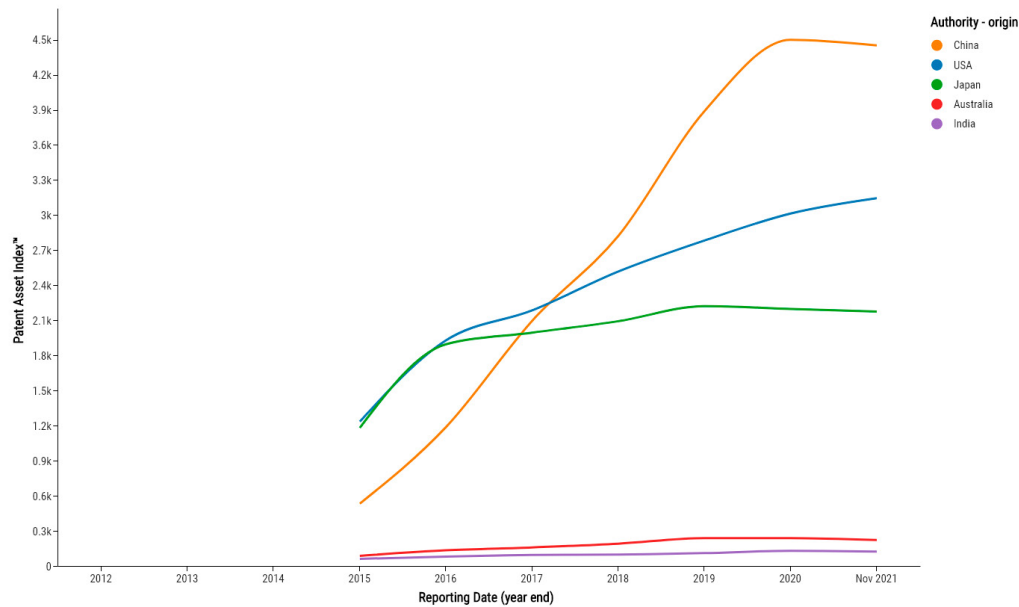


Note: Solar PV research either matches or significantly outstrips patent publishing across the board, except Japan. The dip in patent publishing for all technologies and countries in 2020—probably related to Covid-19—is particularly significant in China's case for solar PV, although the specific cause is unclear.

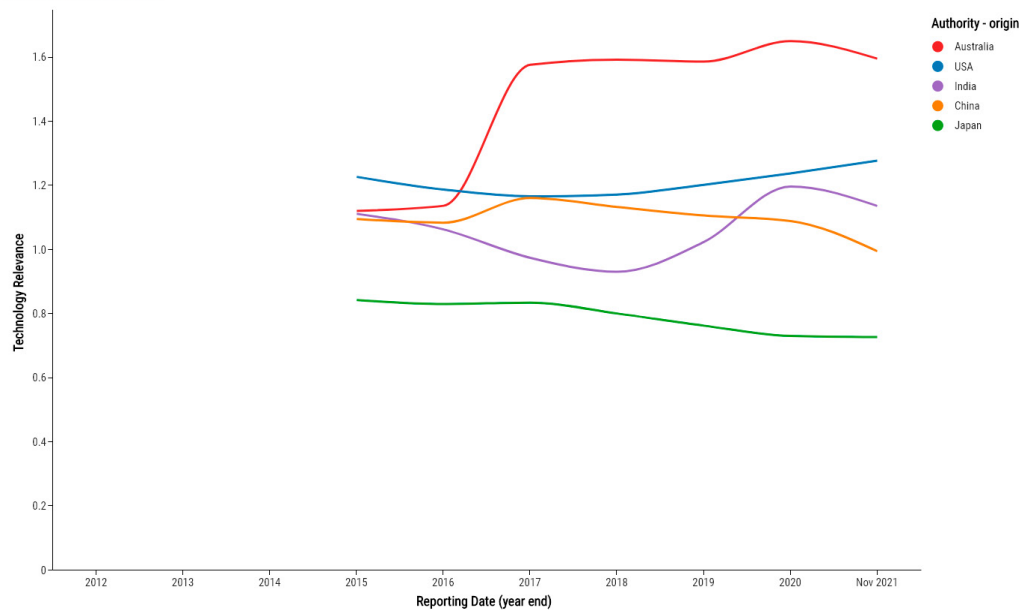
Source: Images produced by ASPI ICPC using data generously provided by IP Australia (PATSTAT Spring 2021 ed.) and the Scopus research database.

Figure 8: Solar PV patents outlined with Patent Asset Index and technology relevance, by country, 2015 to 2021

Photovoltaics 2015-2021



Photovoltaics 2015-2021

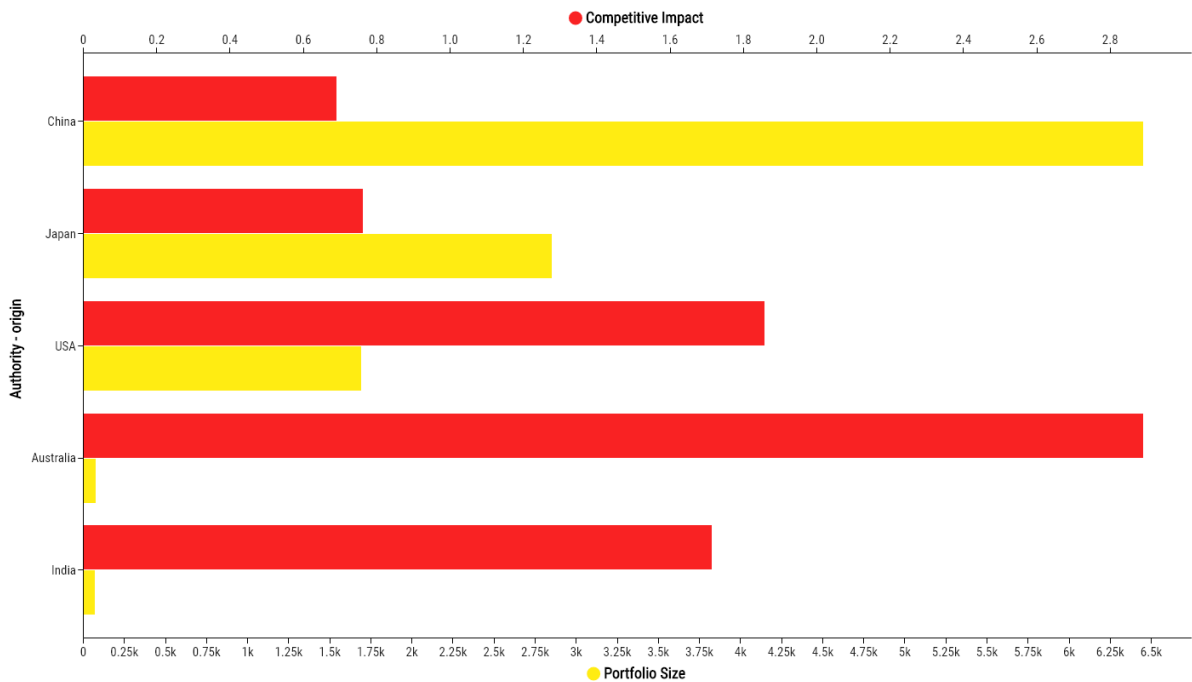


Note: The Patent Asset Index graph indicates the total economic impact of patents, while the ‘technology relevance’ graph reflects how the patent helps with subsequent R&D in the field. Because the PAI indicates total economic worth, both the quality and quantity of patents are factors. Technology relevance indicates, for lack of a better term, the ‘quality’ of the patents, which is measured by whether they’re being cited to advance the field. Thus, a high PAI can be a result of a large quantity of low-quality patents or a small quantity of high-quality patents (see Appendix: Methodology).

Source: Images produced by ASPI ICPC using PatentSight.

Figure 9: Solar PV patents—portfolio size and competitive impact, by country, 2015 to 2021

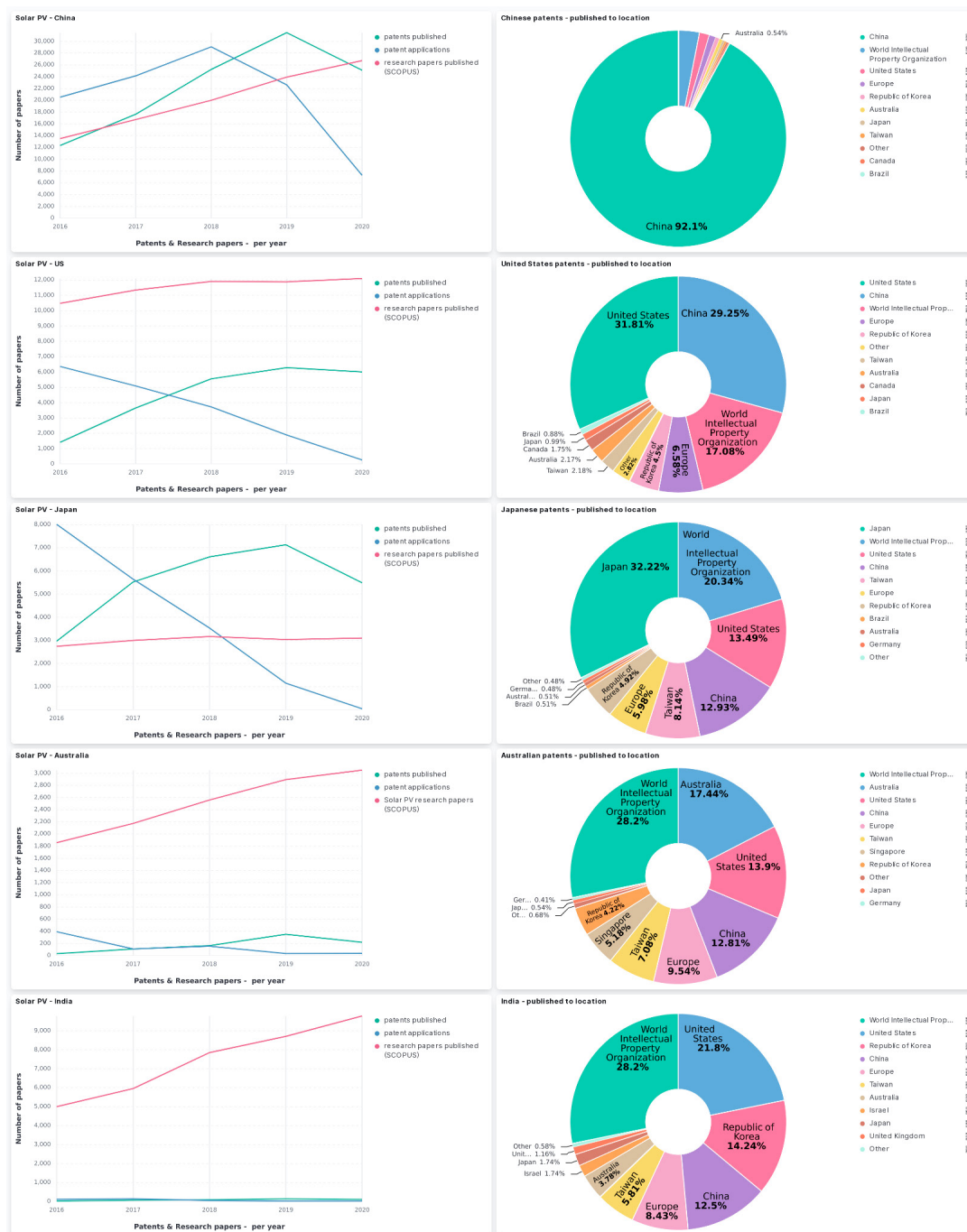
Photovoltaics Patents Quality vs Quantity



Note: The yellow bar illustrates the quantity of patents through portfolio size, while the average competitive impact (the economic value of individual patents defined by both the technological relevance and the market coverage of the patents) of the country in each field is represented by the red bar. For example, China has an enormous quantity of patents but relatively low competitive impact, which means the quality and market coverage of the average patent are extremely low according to the PatentSight metric.

Source: Image produced by ASPI ICPC using PatentSight.

Figure 10: Solar PV academic research, compared with patent applications and publishing, as a measure of Impact

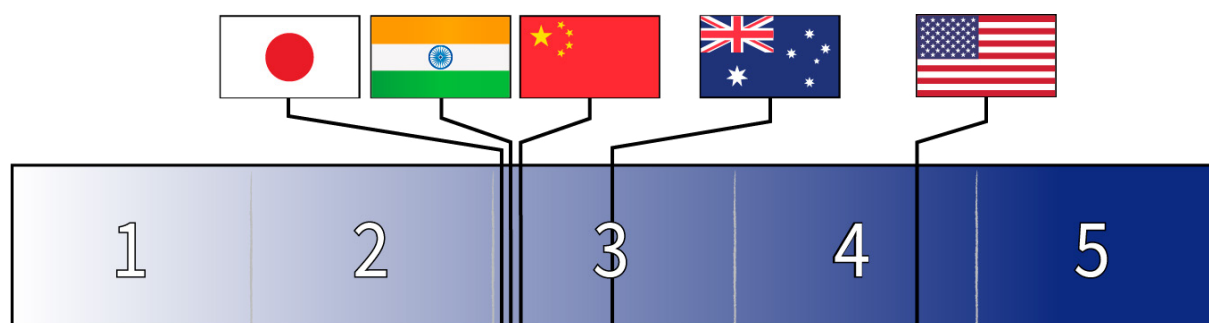


Note: The downturn on patent applications (blue line), where it crosses the still rising patents published (green line), indicates when the majority of patent applications were still filed but not yet published. The ‘publication lag’ from first filing can be up to two years in Australia and then there is additional time for patent application acceptance or rejection. The publishing lag depends on a variety of internal policy and legal factors that are similar across the world but can differ across jurisdictions such as in the case for China. Additionally, a longer lag time can often be desired by industry, as it gives it time to innovate and evolve its strategy before the details are made public. Combined with the fact that inventors in China primarily file patents only in China, our findings show that Chinese patents are published 2–3 times faster on average (0.8 years) than those of the Quad countries (1.85 to 2.06 years), which enables China to commercialise its technology and transition to production more quickly. ASPI ICPC assesses that China’s fast patent lifecycle, combined with a relatively smaller volume of published research, provides supporting evidence for a fast-paced, iterative approach to technology delivery in China.

Australia and India both produce significantly more research papers than patent applications, which indicates either a new or primary investment in ideas generation or that they face challenges in commercialising those ideas themselves, unlike Japan, China and the US.

Source: Images produced by ASPI ICPC using data generously provided by IP Australia (PATSTAT Spring 2021 ed.).

Figure 11: Solar PV—country progress in meeting national policy objectives



Source: Image produced by ASPI.

Australia has outlined specific policy objectives and high-impact research outputs, but, while Australia has the world's highest per capita installed solar capacity, the domestic solar industry is behind in terms of investment and Australian installed capacity uses offshore suppliers, not from Quad partners, and primarily from Chinese suppliers.

China has clear policy objectives and a relatively high economic impact for research, but the quality is declining. Patents are published quickly, but with diminishing returns on relevance and economic value. However, changing policy in China on phasing out solar PV subsidies may affect future alignment. A phasing out of solar subsidies may affect deployment plans, as well as the quantitative advantage that holds up the total economic impact of China's solar PV patent portfolios.

India has clear policy objectives and an existing strong domestic private solar energy industry in mixed use (commercial and residential) solar installation, on- and off-grid solar installation and the development of solar energy plants and parks. It isn't clear that progress in those areas is on track for meeting the policy objectives.

The **US** has a clear strategy for solar power implementation, strong innovation capacity and budget allocations to build production capabilities. There's evidence that will help the US translate policy objectives into aligning capabilities. Patent growth isn't as dramatic as in other countries in solar energy, which is probably due to it being a well-established technology in the US, and strong, consistent research investment continues.

Japan has policy objectives for the use and production of solar PV, and there are new investments into achieving those objectives and signs that targets are being met, but Japan's current R&D capacity isn't necessarily sufficient in the longer term.

4. Biotechnologies

The outbreak of Covid-19 in Wuhan, China, in 2019 had significant geopolitical implications for the Indo-Pacific region and the globe.⁸⁵ The rapid adoption and maturation of techniques such as the polymerase chain reaction screening methods and mRNA vaccines has made them household terms. Amid these developments, a gene-editing method, CRISPR-Cas9, pioneered by US and French scientists, won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2020,⁸⁶ while a Chinese biophysicist who used that technique to create gene-edited babies was sentenced to prison for ‘illegal medical practice’ over that research.⁸⁷ Biotechnologies have applications for human health as well as across agriculture and the wider plant and animal world, and involve positive and negative security and ethical issues along with the science and applications.

4.1 Genetic engineering

Genetic engineering refers to the tools and techniques for directly modifying one or more of an organism’s genes. Applications for genetic engineering include making crops that are more nutritious or require less water or pesticides, treating genetic diseases by replacing faulty genes with working copies, and cell therapies that treat diseases by extracting, modifying and reimplanting patients’ own cells.

Genetic engineering has been a controversial issue since the first recombinant DNA was created in the 1970s.⁸⁸ Genetic engineering promises to eradicate disease, develop resilient food crops and advance research on the human genome. Unrestricted use of genetic engineering, however, would threaten ecological disasters, and risk weaponisation to create genetically engineered bioweapons.⁸⁹

The CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing method significantly altered the landscape by allowing scientists to cut and insert DNA wherever desired, but also introduces powerful negative potentials such as the ability to edit out genes deemed undesirable by less than scrupulous individuals, groups or even, potentially, nations.⁹⁰ Those concerns, and more specific ones such as germline editing that may lead to heritable traits in humans, have precipitated the UN Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights in 1997,⁹¹ the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (a supplement to the Convention on Biological Diversity) in 2000, and the follow-up Nagoya Protocol in 2010. As of 2020, the Cartagena Protocol had been signed by 173 parties,⁹² highlighting the universal concern over the potential negative implications of genetic engineering.

The Indo-Pacific region contains many isolated islands and infectious animal and human diseases that provide a unique mix of opportunities for genetic engineering.⁹³ Furthermore, China’s use of genomic data for biosurveillance programs that violate human rights⁹⁴ shows that its intended use cases for genetic engineering technologies could undermine the interests of the Quad and like-minded countries.⁹⁵ And the lack of transparency involved with the combination of research and government action that has played out in understanding the beginnings of the Covid global pandemic makes those uncertainties not simply hypothetical. Consequently, a closer look at the technology is of paramount importance for the future of Indo-Pacific and the Quad.

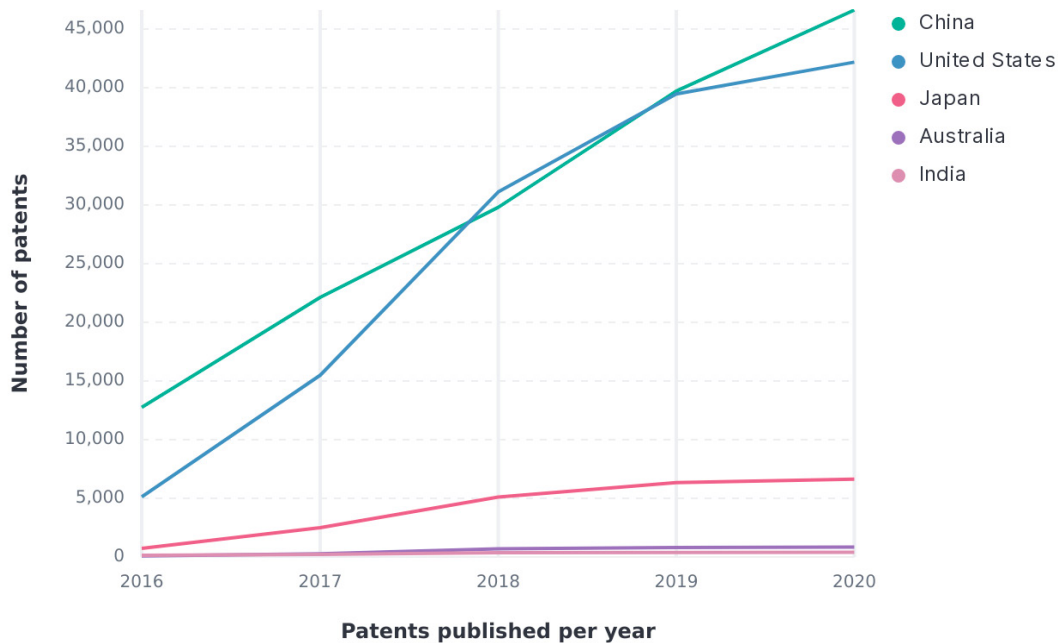
Table 3: National policies on genetic engineering

Country	Policy summary
Australia	<p>Australia defines critical technologies as ‘current and emerging technologies with the capacity to significantly enhance or pose risk to Australia’s national interest’.⁹⁶ The newly established Australian Government Critical Technologies Policy Coordination Office has identified gene technology, which includes genetic engineering and genome sequencing, as one of nine priority critical technologies in the health sector that are ‘likely to have a major impact on Australia’s national interest in the next decade’.⁹⁷ The Australian Government’s research commitment for genetic engineering and gene therapies is predominantly through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) initiative managed by the Department of Health.⁹⁸ A subprogram of the MRFF, the Genomics Health Futures Mission, is a 10-year, \$500 million investment introduced in the 2017–18 Budget for research into genomics.⁹⁹ The Genomics Health Futures Mission has said that it aims to position Australia as a global leader in genomics, citing the transformative effect that this research would have in medicine. Additionally, the Department of Defence’s Next Generation Technologies Fund (NGTF) lists ‘enhanced human performance’ as one of its nine priority technology investment areas,¹⁰⁰ which potentially includes research in genetics. NGTF funding is distributed to university partners, the defence industry and publicly funded research organisations such as the CSIRO.</p>
India	<p>India’s latest National Biotechnology Strategy (2021–2025) aims to develop India as an advanced bioeconomy and a ‘global biomanufacturing hub’ through an industry growth target of US\$150 billion by 2025.¹⁰¹ The strategy identifies gene editing, gene therapies and CRISPR-Cas technology as being among multiple new and emerging technologies that require government support in capacity building and infrastructure to meet the needs of the growing biotechnology sector.¹⁰² The Department of Biotechnology, under the Ministry of Science and Technology, is the premier government body developing a genetic engineering policy framework and has a research focus on genetic disorders and Indian genome sequencing. Multiple government departments, subdepartmental organisations and research institutions have research programs in genetic engineering technologies, both agricultural and biomedical, under guidelines set in 1989 under the <i>Environment Protection Act 1986</i>.</p> <p>Government-funded R&D programs for genetically engineered crops and livestock exist, but the use of genetically modified crops in India is a controversial domestic political issue.¹⁰³ To regulate a growing genetic editing and testing industry—including research and practices by private labs and companies—draft national guidelines on genetic engineering were written in 2020.¹⁰⁴</p>
Japan	<p>Japan’s 2019 Bioeconomy Strategy¹⁰⁵ aims to establish Japan as the ‘world’s most advanced bioeconomy society by 2030’ through an expansion of its domestic biotechnologies industry, including biopharmaceuticals, regenerative medicine, cell therapy and gene-therapy-related industries worth US\$837 billion (¥92 trillion).¹⁰⁶ The strategy identifies agriculture and human genetic engineering in its nine priority market areas; each market area has a specific road map to achieve the goal.¹⁰⁷ The Bioeconomy Strategy will be updated annually in order to respond quickly to domestic and international situations involving biotechnology.</p>
United States	<p>The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and their reporting institutes, notably the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI, famous for its sequencing of the human genome in 2003) are the premier genetic engineering organisations in the US. In its 2020 Strategic Vision, NHGRI emphasised ‘responsible stewardship [as] a central aspect of being at (and pushing forward) the forefront of genomics’.¹⁰⁸ NHGRI receives approximately US\$500 million per year for research across its subdivisions of genome science, genome medicine and genomics and society.¹⁰⁹ NHGRI’s recent work has included compiling datasets used for studying common diseases in all patient populations, with a focus on ‘ethnic minority populations, underserved populations, or populations who experience poorer medical outcomes’.¹¹⁰ The Population Architecture using Genetics and Epidemiology Consortium is also ‘analysing the relationship between genomic variants and a range of common diseases and traits, with a special focus on non-European ancestry populations’.¹¹¹ NHGRI is further building off its incipient human genome project with ENCODE (<i>The encyclopedia of DNA elements</i>) in an effort to identify the parts of the human genome that are functional, with nearly 900 publications thus far.¹¹²</p>

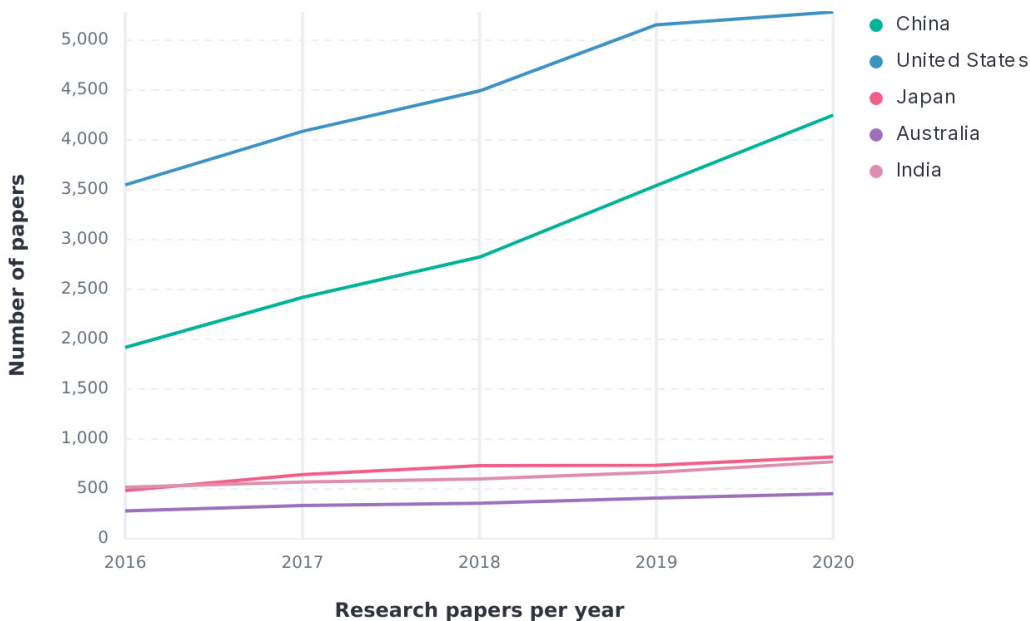
<p>China</p>	<p>The PRC's biotechnology strategy is outlined in the Outline of the National Medium and Long-term Science and Technology Development Plan (2006–2020),¹¹³ the 13th Five-Year Special Plan for Biotechnology Innovation,¹¹⁴ the 13th Five-Year Plan for Biotechnology Industry Development, and the 14th Five-Year Plan and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035.¹¹⁵ The most recent of those, the 14th Five-Year Plan and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035, specified that biotechnology is one of nine strategic emerging technologies that it plans to develop and expand during the period, and genetics and biotechnology are listed as one of seven cutting-edge scientific and technological fields.¹¹⁶ This includes establishing biotech and pharmaceutical national laboratories, promoting the integration and innovation of biotechnology and information technology, accelerating the development of biomedicine, biobreeding, biomaterials, bioenergy and other industries, and expanding and strengthening the bioeconomy. More specific R&D spending on genetic engineering has included ¥240 million (US\$37.58 million) on stem cell and stem cell transformation research for 2020¹¹⁷ and ¥37.7721 million (US\$5.91 million) on safety evaluations of genetically modified food and animal feed between 2016 and 2020.¹¹⁸</p>
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Figure 12: Genetic engineering—patent applications published in China and the Quad and relative research output, 2016 to 2020

Genetic Engineering patents - China + Quad



Genetic Engineering research - China + QUAD

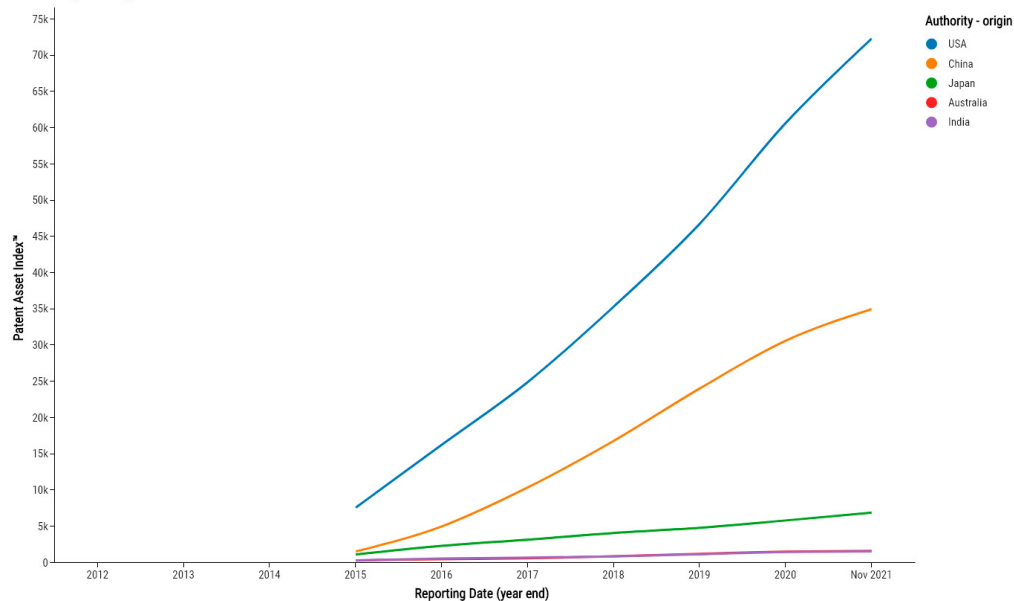


Note: The United States is dominant in this field, in both research and patent applications filed. In both biotechnology fields, there was no notable drop in patent applications or research from 2019 to 2020 around the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

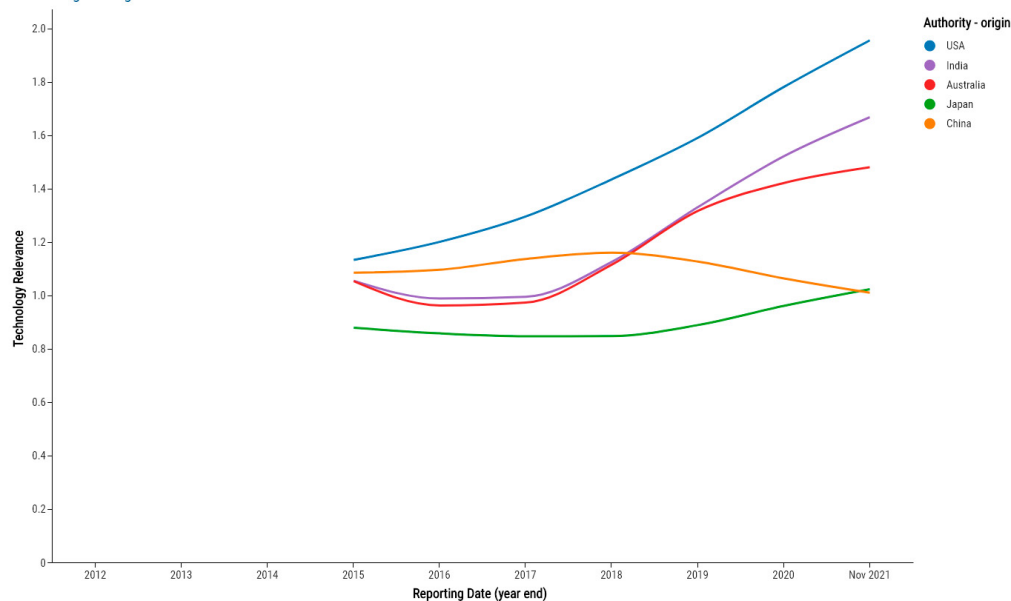
Source: Images produced by ASPI ICPC using data generously provided by IP Australia (PATSTAT Spring 2021 ed.) and SCOPUS research database

Figure 13: Genetic engineering patents outlined with Patent Asset Index and technology relevance, by country, 2015 to 2021

Genetic Engineering 2015-2021



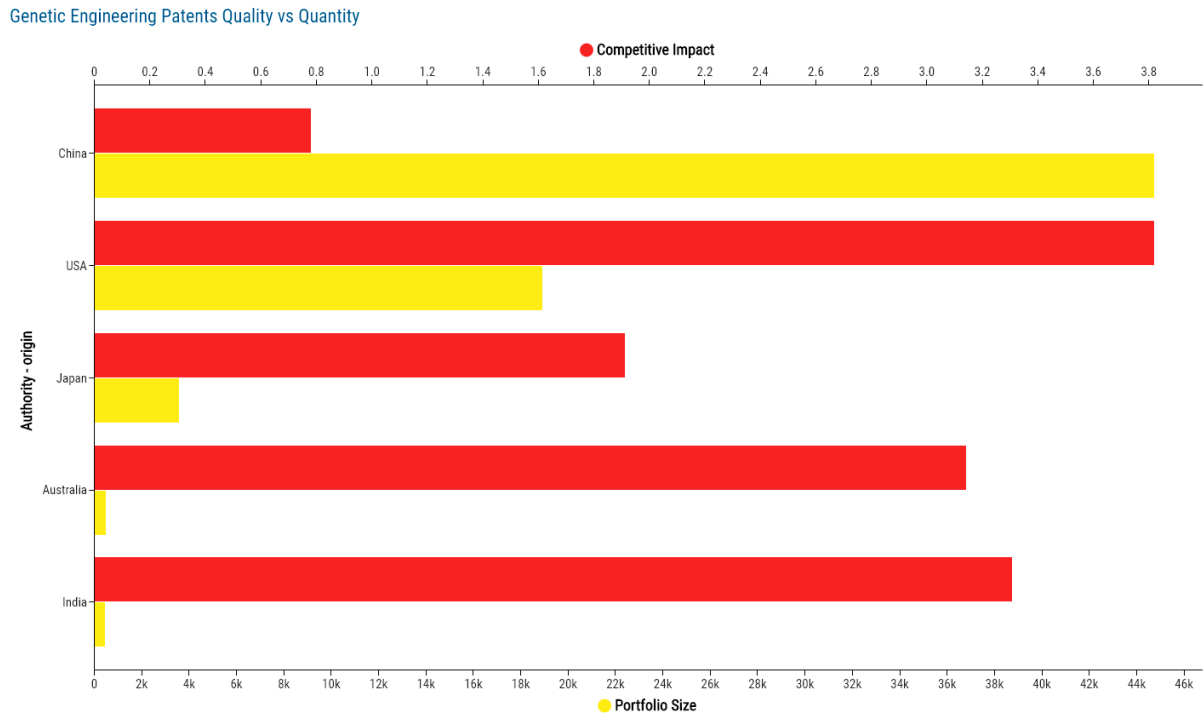
Genetic Engineering 2015-2021



Note: The Patent Asset Index graph indicates the total economic impact of patents, while the ‘technology relevance’ graph reflects how the patent helps with subsequent R&D in the field. Because the PAI indicates total economic worth, both the quality and quantity of patents are factors. Technology relevance indicates, for lack of a better term, the ‘quality’ of the patents; this is measured by whether they’re being cited to advance the field. Thus, a high PAI can be a result of a large quantity of low-quality patents or a small quantity of high-quality patents.

Source: Image produced by ASPI ICPC using PatentSight.

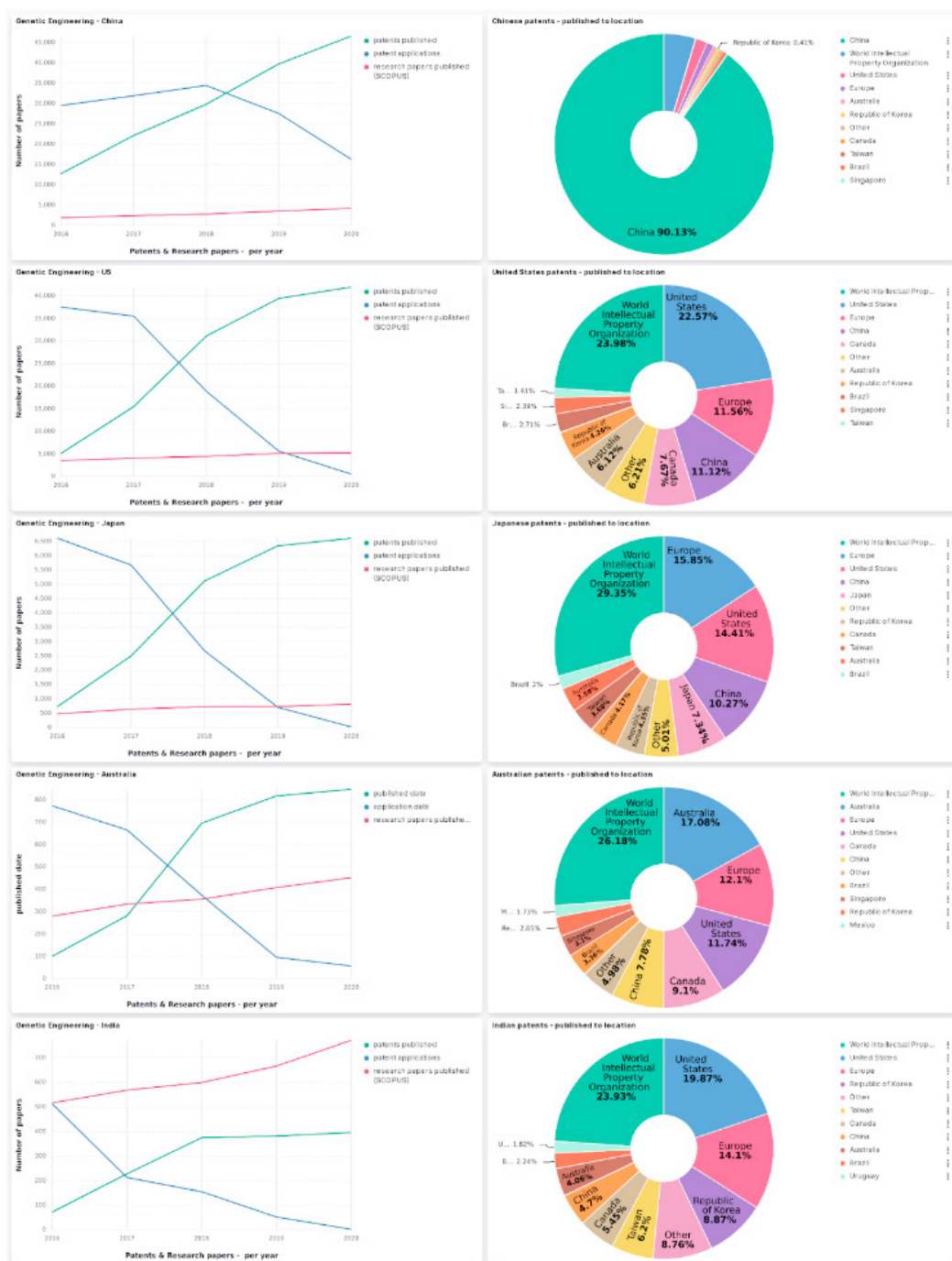
Figure 14: Genetic engineering patents—portfolio size and competitive impact, by country, 2015 to 2021



Note: The yellow bar illustrates the quantity of patents through portfolio size, while the average competitive impact (the economic value of individual patents defined by both the technological relevance and the market coverage of the patents) of the country in each field is represented by the red bar. For example, China has an enormous quantity of patents but relatively low competitive impact, which means the quality and market coverage of the average patent are extremely low according to the PatentSight metric.

Source: Image produced by ASPI ICPC using PatentSight.

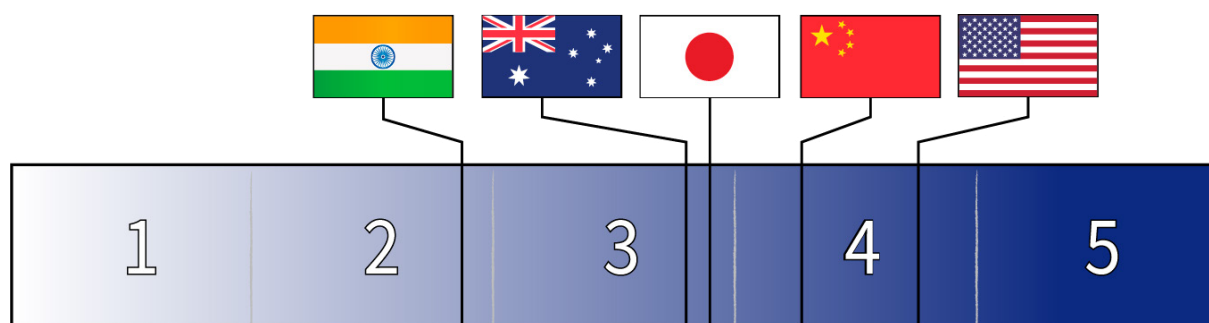
Figure 15: Genetic engineering— academic research, compared with patent applications and publishing, as a measure of impact



Note: The downturn on patent applications (blue line), where it crosses the still rising patents published (green line), indicates when the majority of patent applications were still filed but not yet published—the ‘publication lag’ from first filing can be up to two years in Australia and then there is additional time for patent application acceptance or rejection. The publishing lag depends on a variety of internal policy and legal factors that are similar across the world but can differ across jurisdictions such as in the case for China. Additionally, a longer lag time can often be desired by industry, as it gives it time to innovate and evolve its strategy before the details are made public. Combined with the fact that inventors in China primarily file patents in only China, our findings show that Chinese patents are published 2to 3 times faster on average (0.92 years) than those of Quad countries (2.26 to 2.49 years), which enables China to commercialise its technology and transition to production more quickly. ASPI ICPC assesses that China’s fast patent lifecycle, combined with a relatively smaller volume of published research, provides supporting evidence for a fast-paced, iterative approach to technology delivery in China. All countries have demonstrated slow and steady research progress over the period. Australia has been significantly more successful in bridging research output with patent applications than in other technologies, as has India though research papers still dominate.

Source: Image produced by ASPI ICPC using data generously provided by IP Australia (PATSTAT Spring 2021 ed).

Figure 16: Genetic engineering— Country progress in meeting national policy objectives



Source: Image produced by ASPI.

Australia has outlined specific policy objectives and high-impact research outputs. We believe there's a clearly forming alignment of policy objectives to the development of capabilities.

China has clear policy objectives and a relatively high economic impact for research, but the quality isn't necessarily high. Patents are published quickly, with high volume and low technology relevance, but in this case the economic impact, while rising, suffers from low market coverage, meaning that they may have less international impact when compared with other critical technology patents China is a part of. It's also hard to know whether this is having the intended policy impact.

India doesn't yet have a clearly articulated policy, although the research contributions from specific activities are resulting in some high-impact patents.

US research is a clear leader in genetic engineering, as US papers are being cited significantly more often by other researchers around the world. The US's policy approach to genetic engineering largely conforms to its academic approach, so alignment is relatively high, but outside of this it isn't clear that the US has a clear strategic direction in its genetic engineering research.

Japan has a concrete strategy and targets, but research impact is still relatively low. There's evidence that Japan is developing capabilities, but it isn't clear how closely those will align with achieving policy objectives.

4.2 Vaccines and medical countermeasures

Vaccines and medical countermeasures (MCMs) are the tools and techniques to quickly develop and manufacture vaccines, drugs, biological products and devices used to diagnose and treat emerging infectious diseases and medical conditions caused by exposure to harmful chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear substances. Applications for vaccines and MCMs include public health emergencies, industrial accidents and defence.

As the location for the initial Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent controversy,¹¹⁹ China and its surrounding Indo-Pacific region have been engulfed in the development, production and dissemination of vaccines and MCMs since the pandemic began.

The pandemic has brought the importance of vaccines and MCMs to the forefront of the biological sciences. While records in vaccine development time frames have been achieved and more records are planned,¹²⁰ major powers, including China, the US, Russia and India, are also awakening to the realisation that vaccine development and production are potent geopolitical levers.¹²¹ China's Health Silk Road,¹²² Xi's 'People's War' against the virus,¹²³ the Trump administration's executive order mandating the inclusion of vaccine and MCM production under the Defence Production Act¹²⁴ and the subsequent 'vaccine diplomacy'¹²⁵ all but ensured the category's place within the strategic competition framework for all countries involved.

Table 4: National policies on vaccines and medical countermeasures

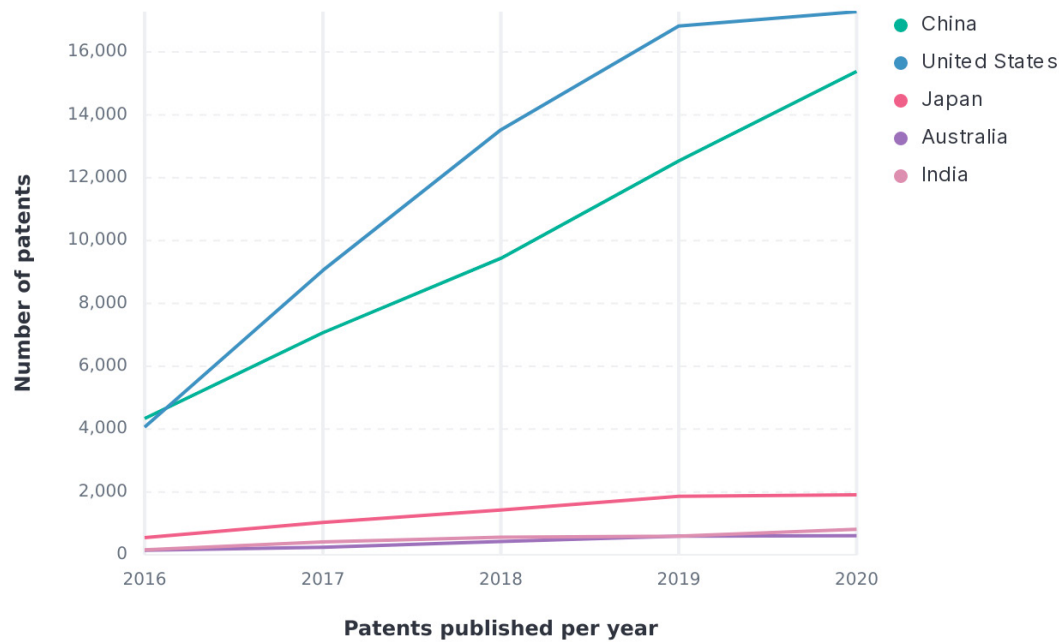
Country	Policy summary
Australia	<p>Australia defines critical technologies as ‘current and emerging technologies with the capacity to significantly enhance or pose risk to Australia’s national interest’.¹²⁶ The 2021 Australian Government Blueprint for Critical Technologies recognises vaccine R&D as a critical technology opportunity to improve health and social outcomes.¹²⁷ The newly established Australian Government Critical Technologies Policy Coordination Office has identified MCM products, which include vaccine R&D, as one of nine priority critical technologies in the health sector that are ‘likely to have a major impact on Australia’s national interest in the next decade’.¹²⁸ Prior to Covid-19, vaccine research was already a critical part of the Department of Health’s \$20 billion¹²⁹ ongoing Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) initiative’s investment priorities,¹³⁰ particularly in the area of combating antimicrobial resistance developed through Australia’s relatively high rates of antibiotic use.¹³¹ That priority was included in both the 2018–2020 and 2020–2022 versions of the MRFF strategies.¹³² Since 2016, the MRFF has released three iterations of its two-yearly Medical research and innovation priorities documents, as well as a five-year strategy and 10-year investment plan. In addition to the MRFF, research into medical countermeasures is also supported by the Australian Government through the Medical Countermeasures Consortium, which began in late 2012. It’s a four-nation partnership between the health and defence departments of Australia, the UK, Canada and the US, coordinated at Australia’s end by the Defence Department’s Defence, Science and Technology (DST) Group.¹³³ DST Group also directs funding to this research through its Next Generation Technologies Fund (NGTF), which is a \$1.2 billion fund with a 10-year ‘forward-looking’ mandate on R&D in nine priority technology areas, one of which includes ‘medical countermeasure products’. NGTF funding is distributed to university partners, the defence industry and publicly funded research organisations such as the CSIRO.¹³⁴ In March 2021, Prime Minister Morrison announced that Australia would contribute \$100 million to the Quad Vaccine Partnership.¹³⁵</p>
India	<p>India’s latest National Biotechnology Strategy (2021–2025) aims to develop India as an advanced bioeconomy and a ‘global biomanufacturing hub’ through an industry growth target of US\$150 billion by 2025.¹³⁶ Before Covid-19, government-funded vaccine and MCM research was aimed at developing and funding efficient low-cost vaccines and measures to manage traditional disease burdens in India. Most government R&D funding is provided through the Department of Biotechnology, its flagship programs such as the National Biopharma Mission and international cooperation programs such as the Indo-US Vaccine Action Program and Ind-CEPI Mission.¹³⁷ Since the advent of Covid-19, the Indian Government has increased R&D support for multiple Covid-19 vaccines and MCMs and committed to supporting scaling up Covid-19 vaccine production under the Indian Covid-19 Vaccine Development Mission through a US\$120 million (9 billion rupees) fund.¹³⁸ Covid-19 vaccine R&D was listed as a priority area in the latest National Biotechnology Development Strategy (2021–2025),¹³⁹ which recommended a dedicated biotechnology policy mission for the development of vaccines and biosimilars as a national priority. Government funding for biotechnology and health science research received a significant 25% boost in the 2021 budget.¹⁴⁰ In March 2021, as part of the Quad Vaccine Partnership, the four Quad members committed to donating 1.2 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccine to developing countries, of which 1 billion doses were to be manufactured in India by the end of 2022.¹⁴¹ India is a world leader in vaccine manufacturing and meets over 50% of global immunisation needs.</p>

Japan	<p>Japan launched some projects to counter novel infectious diseases in the 2000s and early 2010s in response to the pandemics of SARS, MERS and novel influenza,¹⁴² but the projects were short term due to the relatively low number of cases in Japan, the high standard of public health, a lack of economic rationality, and vaccine avoidance by the public.¹⁴³ On 1 June 2021, against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Cabinet Office decided on the Strategy to Strengthen Vaccine Development and Production System.¹⁴⁴ The strategy confirms that having the ability to develop and produce vaccines domestically is extremely important not only for public health but also for diplomacy and national security. In the strategy, the Japanese Government aims to clarify the factors that have delayed vaccine development in Japan and rebuild the necessary systems and a long-term, continuous strategy to resolve the issues. In 2019, the government published its Bioeconomy Strategy 2019.¹⁴⁵ The strategy defines biotechnology as a core solution for Japanese society's challenges, such as climate change, environmental conservation and an ageing population. To realise the world's most advanced bioeconomy society by 2030, the government identifies nine market areas as measures for a back-casting approach in the strategy. The sixth area is for MCMs (biopharmaceuticals, regenerative medicine, cell therapy and gene-therapy-related industries). The Bioeconomy Strategy will be updated annually to respond quickly to domestic and international situations involving biotechnology. Each market area has a specific road map to achieve the goal. While the Cabinet Office manages the grand strategy, the road maps are under the jurisdiction of the ministries in charge.¹⁴⁶ In March 2021, the Japanese Government announced that it would provide US\$41 million in grant aid and provide new concessional loans as part of the Quad Vaccine Partnership to developing countries to assist in their vaccination efforts.¹⁴⁷</p>
United States	<p>In 2004, the US Congress established Project BioShield to help create incentives for the private sector to develop MCMs against high-priority chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats by 'providing multi-year funding to support advanced research, clinical development, manufacture and procurement'.¹⁴⁸ Two years later, in 2006, the Congress established the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) to procure and develop MCMs primarily against bioterrorism as well as pandemics and emerging diseases. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, BARDA has also been responsible for strengthening MCM manufacturing capacity of ancillary supplies in order to secure national supply chains. Project BioShield's 2021 projects include 'late stage development and procurement of a next-generation anthrax vaccine, new antibacterial drugs, chemical agent MCMs, a product to temporise burn injuries resulting from chemical agents, MCMs to detect and treat acute exposure to ionising radiation and making available intravenous formulations of stockpiled smallpox antiviral drugs for special populations and those who are severely ill.' Congress also provided the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) with an additional US\$535 million to support ongoing Ebola efforts.¹⁴⁹ Both agencies report to ASPR and are involved with the procurement of drugs and materials (such as PPE) for the Strategic National Stockpile. In 2019, the Congress increased the authorisation for Project BioShield from US\$2.8 billion over five years to US\$7.1 billion over ten.¹⁵⁰ ASPR's FY 2021 budget request is for US\$2.6 billion, divided between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US\$1.4 billion for BARDA, including US\$562 million for advanced R&D, US\$535 million for Project BioShield and US\$306 million for pandemic influenza research • US\$705 million for the Strategic National Stockpile • US\$258 million for the Hospital Preparedness Program • US\$92 million for the National Disaster Medical System and the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps • US\$15 million for a new Preparedness and Response Innovation program.¹⁵¹ <p>The Congressional Budget Office has further estimated that 'BARDA alone has spent US\$19.3 billion on Covid-19 vaccine development' as part of 'Operation Warp Speed'.¹⁵²</p> <p>The US Department of State is another important actor in the MCM space, with an annual budget of between US\$6 billion and US\$9 billion for its Global Health Program.¹⁵³ The department's FY 2020 funding request for the program states its 'support for programs to control the HIV/AIDS epidemic, prevent child and maternal deaths, and combat infectious disease threats and to build healthier, stronger, more self-sufficient nations'.¹⁵⁴ In March 2021, the US announced that it would commit at least an additional US\$100 million to regional immunisation efforts.¹⁵⁵</p>

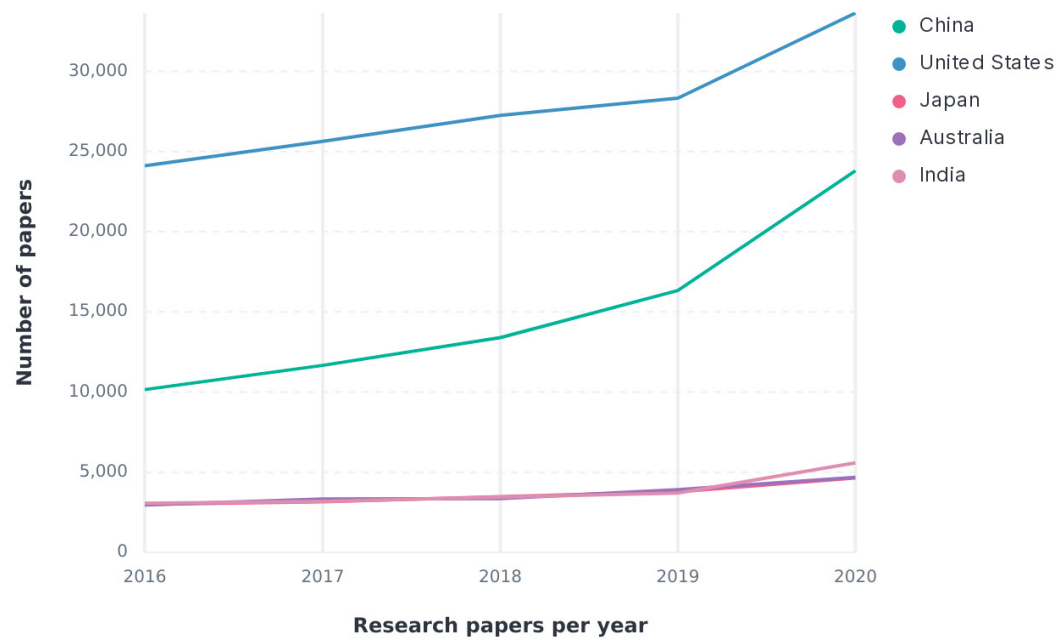
<p>China</p>	<p>In March 2020, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasised that major scientific and technological achievements in the fields of life safety and biosafety are the country's important pillars. The epidemic prevention and control and public health emergency systems are important parts of the state's strategic systems.¹⁵⁶ The 14th Five-Year Plan and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035, published in March 2021, emphasised the importance of strengthening the state's strategic technology power by strengthening original and leading scientific and technological research. The PRC would concentrate superior resources to research key and core technologies in fields including the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases and biosafety risks, and pharmaceuticals and medical equipment. In addition, the plan also mentioned the promotion of the construction of a 'healthy China', including setting up a strong public health system that strengthens the monitoring and early-warning capability of the disease prevention and control system. Prior to Covid-19, the PRC stated that it would improve the high-level biosafety laboratory system in the 13th Five-Year Plan for Biotechnology Industry Development. This includes constructing and improving the high-level biosafety laboratory system, consolidating the basic conditions for the prevention and control of severe and major infectious diseases, biological prevention, the development of the biological industry in China and enhancing the ability of independent innovation in biosafety technology. In the 13th Five-Year Plan for National Technology Innovation, new drug creation is one of the national science and technology major projects. Measures include strengthening the R&D of vaccines and antibodies, supporting the development of drugs with industrialisation prospects, and building the country's ability in critical technology and basic research. The 13th Five-Year Plan also devoted ¥7.092 billion (US\$1.11 billion) to 704 line items concerning new pharmaceuticals¹⁵⁷ and ¥3.373 billion (US\$530 million) to 115 line items concerning communicable diseases.¹⁵⁸</p>
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Figure 17: Vaccines and medical countermeasures patent applications published in China and the Quad and relative research output, 2016 to 2020

Vaccines & Medical Countermeasures patents - China + Quad



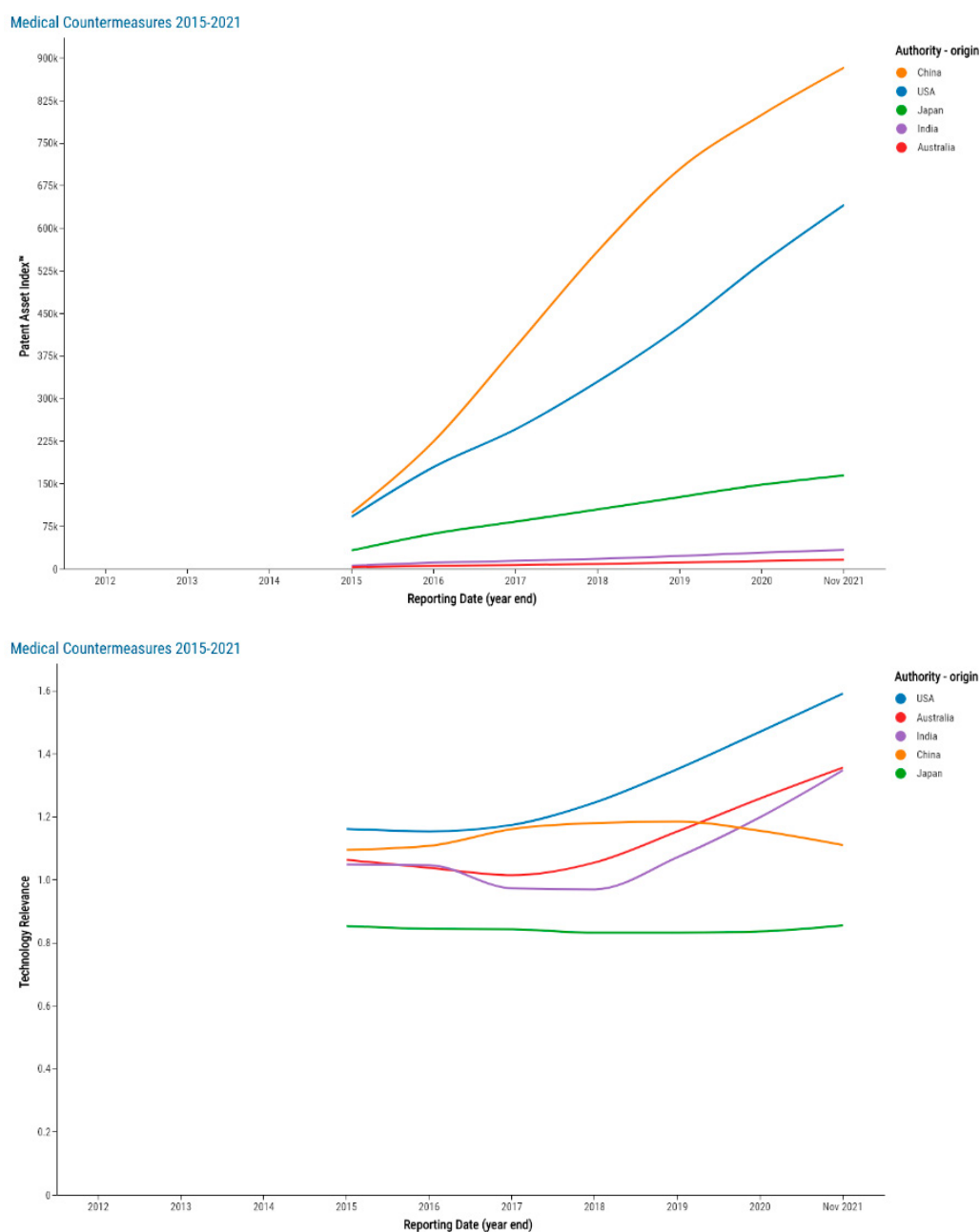
Vaccines & Medical Countermeasures research - China + QUAD



Note: Unlike the other critical technologies assessed in this project, there is no drop in patent applications or research from 2019 to 2020, due to the reprioritisation of global medical resources towards COVID-19 vaccine development. Australia's contribution to vaccine and medical countermeasure research matches the efforts by Japan and India, countries with approximately 5 and 50 times Australia's population, which indicates an extremely impressive per capita contribution, particularly when paired with high citation scores.

Source: Images produced by ASPI ICPC using data generously provided by IP Australia (PATSTAT Spring 2021 ed.) and SCOPUS research database

Figure 18: Vaccines and medical countermeasures patents outlined with Patent Asset Index and technology relevance, by country, 2015 to 2021

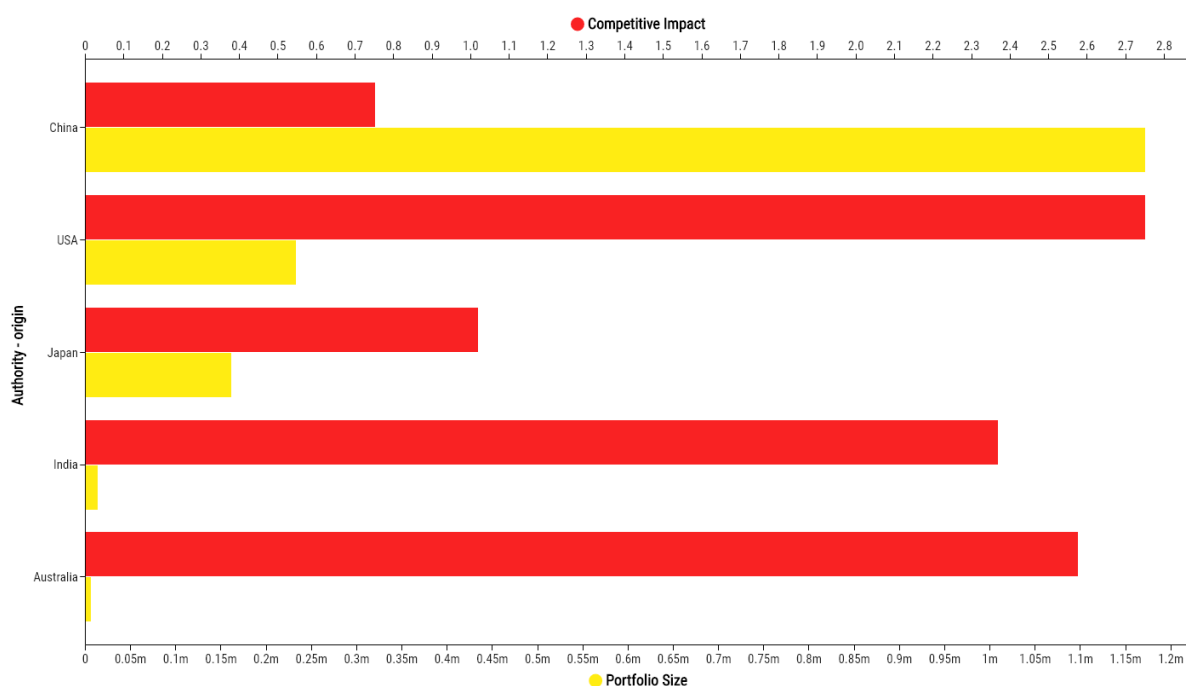


Note: The Patent Asset Index graph indicates the total economic impact of patents, while the ‘technology relevance’ graph reflects how the patent helps with subsequent R&D in the field. Because the PAI indicates total economic worth, both the quality and quantity of patents are factors. Technology relevance indicates, for lack of a better term, the ‘quality’ of the patents; this is measured by whether they’re being cited to advance the field. Thus, a high PAI can be a result of a large quantity of low-quality patents or a small quantity of high-quality patents.

Source: Images produced by ASPI ICPC using PatentSight.

Figure 19: Vaccines and medical countermeasures patents—portfolio size and competitive impact, by country, 2015 to 2021

Medical Countermeasures 2015-2021



Note: The yellow bar illustrates the quantity of patents through portfolio size, while the average competitive impact (the economic value of individual patents defined by both the technological relevance and the market coverage of the patents) of the country in each field is represented by the red bar. For example, China has an enormous quantity of patents but relatively low competitive impact, which means the quality and market coverage of the average patent are extremely low according to the PatentSight metric.

Source: Image produced by ASPI ICPC using PatentSight.

Vaccines & Medical Countermeasures - China

Number of papers

Patents & Research papers - per year

- patents published
- patent applications
- research papers published (SCOPUS)

Chinese patents - published to location

- China
- World Intellectual Property Organization
- United States
- Europe
- Other
- Australia
- Republic of Korea
- Canada
- Taiwan
- Singapore
- Brazil

Vaccines & Medical Countermeasures - US

Number of papers

Patents & Research papers - per year

- patents published
- patent applications
- research papers published (SCOPUS)

United States patents - published to location

- United States
- World Intellectual Property Organization
- China
- Europe
- Canada
- Other
- Australia
- Republic of Korea
- Brazil
- Singapore
- Mexico

Vaccines & Medical Countermeasures - Japan

Number of papers

Patents & Research papers - per year

- patents published
- patent applications
- research papers published (SCOPUS)

Japanese patents - published to location

- World Intellectual Property Organization
- United States
- Japan
- China
- Europe
- Republic of Korea
- Taiwan
- Other
- Canada
- Australia
- Brazil

Vaccines & Medical Countermeasures - Australia

published date

Patents & Research papers - per year

- patents published
- patent applications
- research papers published (SCOPUS)

Australian patents - published to location

- Australia
- World Intellectual Property Organization
- Europe
- United States
- China
- Canada
- Brazil
- Singapore
- Republic of Korea
- Mexico

Vaccines & Medical Countermeasures - India

Number of papers

Patents & Research papers - per year

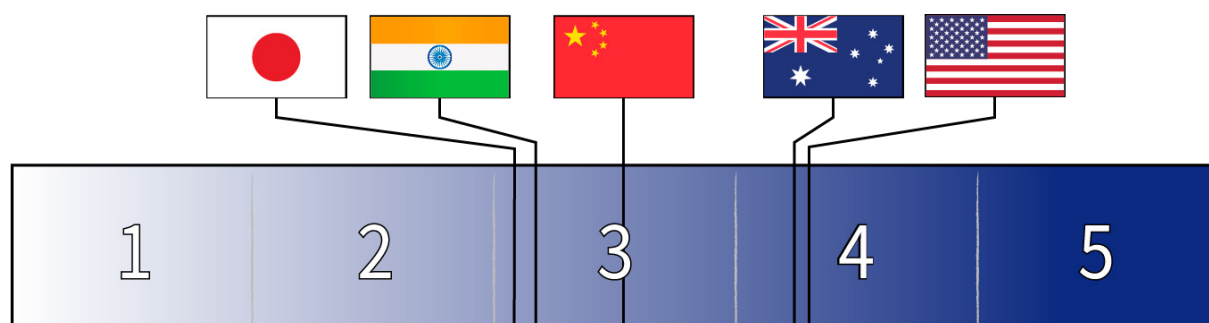
- patents published
- patent applications
- research papers published (SCOPUS)

Indian patents - published to location

- World Intellectual Property Organization
- Other
- United States
- China
- Europe
- Canada
- Singapore
- Taiwan
- Australia
- World Intellectual Property Organization
- Japan
- Singapore
- Canada
- Brazil
- China
- Europe
- Canada
- Singapore
- Taiwan
- Australia

Vaccine and medical countermeasure research has been a steady investment of effort over many years, with a clear increase in resourcing and publishing papers as the global Covid-19 pandemic struck, though it's still too soon to see how China's results have been realised in patent applications. Publishing lag is slightly longer for these patent applications across the board. While all countries produced far more research papers than patent applications, Australia made its greatest contribution of research papers in this space, particularly when considered on a per capita basis, yet without an equivalent increase in patent applications.

Figure 21: Vaccines and medical countermeasures— country progress in meeting national policy objectives



Australia has outlined specific policy objectives and has highly impactful research outputs, but more investment is needed to carry these successes through to industry. There is a need for the government to work collaboratively with industry to capitalise on high quality Australian research, to ensure commercial viability and remain aligned with strategic objectives.

China has clear policy objectives and a relatively high economic impact for research, but the quality of research outputs isn't correspondingly high.

India has low government research and funding into emerging infectious diseases, and that funding isn't currently a part of the national security apparatus (interviewees said this could change soon due to Covid-19).

The **US** has all the component parts for a successful realization of policy objectives in the vaccines and medical countermeasures field, but, to date, success in connecting capabilities to policy outcomes is not necessarily correspondingly high. US research is world-leading and US papers are cited far more often than those of the other countries, in part due to the successful commercialisation of the medical sector by the US's mighty pharmaceutical industry. However, in some cases policy objectives have been left behind as they diverged from the commercial drivers.

Japan has a strategy for strengthening vaccine development and production that's still very new. Its R&D capabilities are less advanced, although where that capability does exist, it's more impactful. The component parts exist for the successful realisation of policy objectives in the long term.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The race to develop critical and emerging technologies is becoming increasingly geopolitical and is an acknowledgement by states that technological capability translates to both economic and strategic advantage. The stakes for states are high. If they lack indigenous capability, there's the prospect of having access to key technologies arbitrarily cut off, and, regardless of local capacity, the risk of having new technologies used maliciously against them. Other than the superpowers, and even then not always, no state has the capability to create stand-alone, world-leading capability in all critical and emerging technologies, so deep partnerships—as we see beginning to emerge between the Quad partners through government leadership—have obvious utility. In this milieu, it's more important than ever to understand relative capabilities that individual states possess and to regularly assess where gaps exist or are emerging, as well as whether supply can be assured through the complementary activities of a network of reliable and like-minded nations.

There is not enough clarity in existing data holdings to build effective business intelligence on how the R&D ecosystem is performing in response to policy requirements. We assess, for example, that the 'low quality' patent indicator for China across the four technologies does not necessarily mean capabilities do not align with its policy objectives. We think this is instead due to Chinese companies patenting specific applications of technology, indicating a fast-paced and iterative approach to technology delivery in China. As Chinese companies export their products globally, they are probably achieving some market power and incumbency even if the product quality is by objective metrics inferior. This pattern might be more pronounced across the other critical technologies ASPI ICPC will examine as the Benchmarking Critical Technologies project evolves in 2022, such as artificial intelligence and data science and storage technologies. This will be a challenge for the Quad nations as they seek to move more rapidly from concept to capability.

Meanwhile, for the Quad, research outputs (patents and academic publications) pre-date most policy documents on strategic objectives, while any new patent or academic data aligning more closely with strategic objectives wouldn't necessarily be published yet. For government officials tasked within governments to advise on these matters a tough job lies ahead. Rotated into position, they don't necessarily have technology backgrounds and certainly not across all of them.

On the international stage, as we build collaborative relationships such as the Quad, there is a critical need for specialist 'technology diplomacy' support to foreign policy organisations to enable them to identify key issues as they engage with foreign technology industries. Critical technologies are increasingly intersecting with economics, national security, democratic values and geopolitical issues, and key to navigating these issues and leveraging the Quad partnership effectively will be an understanding of the technology, the state-of-play of key R&D and commercial sectors and their critical dependencies, such as supply chains.

With this in mind, we recommend as follows:

1. For governments to ensure that strategic objectives pertaining to critical technologies are both well articulated and possible to meet, and for researchers and industry to collaborate in meeting those objectives, they must first develop an objective and repeatable methodology for quantifying technical achievements within each clearly defined critical technology sector. This includes the

development of a common language or lexicon of keywords for published research, keywords in patent documents, and the high-level language used in policy documents. This will provide the connective tissue to create alignment and a level of orchestration by policymakers and the response by academia, resulting in possible practical technology applications through patents.

2. The Quad Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group is an important step towards building collaboration in the R&D and production of critical technologies by like-minded governments. During the formative stages of the working group, we recommend that it consider the following:
 - Identify key indicators of capability and develop a clear methodology for assessing the capability of each nation to understand current and emerging promising and complementary capabilities and strengths, along with gaps among like-minded countries, in critical and emerging technologies.
 - One aim should be to develop a network of like-minded countries with advanced technological capabilities that connect to the Quad nations and their research communities. The network should commit to a set of core principles, including 'baking' democratic principles into the technology and agreeing to share any civilian advances on market terms and to refrain from coercion. This will build on strong existing partnerships that each Quad nation has with other partners.
 - Understanding the impact of Quad nation's partnerships, and partnerships within their research and corporate communities, in critical technology will be essential in considering competitive advantage, complementarity and where Quad resilience may need to be strengthened when considered from the perspective of strategic technological competition.
 - The partners should establish a Quad or Quad Plus critical technologies fund to which participating states pledge investment funds that are then disbursed to address current and emerging critical technologies gaps. Co-investment approaches between Quad government agencies and private investors should be considered in order to leverage government funding more effectively than simply through grants or incentives.
3. The ability to measure relative strengths and weaknesses among collaborating countries will enable the measurement of the comparative advantages of each country in 'on-shoring' certain parts of the technology supply chain. Such individual country assessments could then support policy focuses where particular national strengths compensate for or augment other Quad nations' vulnerabilities or weaknesses and build the resilience of the network.

Appendix: Methodology

While considering Australian national interests, we settled on the four technologies for this pilot program through consultation with experts and officials from the public and private sectors. Innovation begins with R&D for a given technology sector, and individuals or companies will patent the parts with potential practical implications. Should the application of the particular technology have sufficiently far-reaching benefits and consequences, that would incentivise the government and private sector to devote additional resources to that technology. Therefore, in assessing national capabilities, we collected data from four categories: policy, high-level budget allocations, patents, and academic publications.

Policy summaries and budget allocations

For policy documents, we focused on collecting central and national-level strategic and planning documents concerning the given critical technology and how they fit into the overall strategic goal of the country. Part of our policy analysis included investigations into each country's high-level budgetary allocations for the critical technologies, so we collected budgetary data from central government ministries and departments, including for R&D, infrastructure and subsidies, where appropriate. However, we ultimately decided against isolating budgetary allocations as a distinct category of analysis. The principle methodological issues concern the fact that not only does private investment in various sectors constitute a significant portion of investment, but that each country has different approaches and levels of influence and regulation over how private investment may be directed; for example, Chinese private investment is highly regulated, especially in key sectors such as energy and telecommunications. We also recognise that, even for government budgets, line items rarely fall neatly within the definitions of each critical technology, and occasionally subjective judgement is required on the inclusion or exclusion of line items. This issue may introduce a certain degree of uncertainty into the final aggregated figure for each technology and country. Also, significant funding may be missing because we couldn't include very general funds that could be applied to many technology areas outside the scope of our research (for instance, funds marked for 'general medical research').

Patents

We collected two measures for each critical technology: the quantity and quality of the patents. They were organised by the country of origin of the applicant or inventor where the patent was originally filed. For the quantitative data on patents, IP Australia provided ASPI ICPC with carefully curated extracts from PATSTAT Spring 2021 to analyse the quantity of patents for each critical technology.

Using the commercial product PatentSight developed by LexisNexis, we broke down patent data across the same categories to assess patent quality with the Patent Asset Index (PAI),¹⁵⁹ employing proprietary measures of technology relevance, market coverage and competitive impact.

The technology relevance (TR) of a patent represents how much future development in the field is built upon that patent. TR calculates how often it's been cited in the same field compared to all other patents and is adjusted for the patent's age, since older patents usually receive more citations than new ones.

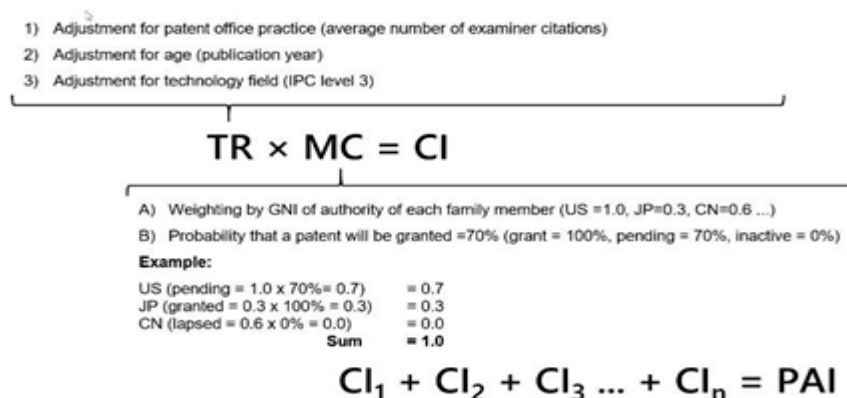
Market coverage (MC) of a patent represents how much of the global market within this field is protected by this patent. MC calculates coverage based on the size of the US market as defined by gross national income (GNI).

Competitive impact (CI) is derived from both TR and MC and represents the total economic impact of a given patent. The PAI represents the aggregate of CI within a given field—in our case, a rigorously defined set of classifications delineating each critical technology.

Figure 22 shows the calculation of the PAI.

Figure 22: Calculation of the Patent Asset Index

Calculation of the Patent Asset Index (PAI)



Academic publications

We used CiteScore (CS) methodology for measuring impact factors embedded within Elsevier's commercial database product Scopus. Compared with the more widely used journal citation reports impact factor, CS indexes more journals but has a longer evaluation interval (four versus two years), while evaluating a wider range of materials:¹⁶⁰

$$CS_y = \frac{\text{Citations}_y + \text{Citations}_{y-1} + \text{Citations}_{y-2} + \text{Citations}_{y-3}}{\text{Publications}_y + \text{Publications}_{y-1} + \text{Publications}_{y-2} + \text{Publications}_{y-3}}$$

Patent search strategy

For the full patent search strategy, see [online](#).

Notes

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 2. A decarbonisation (Decarb) scenario, which 'assumes policies drive a 95% reduction (from 2005 levels) in the grid's carbon dioxide emissions by 2035 and a 100% reduction by 2050', with standard predictions for future energy demand.
 3. A decarbonisation with electrification (Decarb+E) scenario, which includes 'large-scale electrification of end uses [and] envisions decarbonization of the broader US energy system through large-scale electrification of buildings, transportation, and industry'.
- The study found that, even under the reference scenario (in which concerted policy effort doesn't eventuate), grid emissions will decline by 45% by 2035 and 61% by 2050 relative to 2005 levels based on market forces and technology advances alone. While solar deployment will need to increase fourfold to reach those rates in conjunction with implementing the other recommendations of the study, it shows that despite previous policy inertia US solar is beginning to move in the right direction.
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Acronyms and abbreviations

ASPR	Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (US)
BARDA	Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (US)
CI	competitive impact
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CSP	concentrating solar power
DST Group	Defence Science and Technology Group
GWh	gigawatt hour
LSS	large-scale solar
MC	market coverage
MCM	medical countermeasure
MRFF	Medical Research Future Fund
Mt	megatonne
NGTF	Next Generation Technologies Fund
NHGRI	National Human Genome Research Institute (US)
NIH	National Institutes of Health (US)
PAI	Patent Asset Index
PPE	personal protective equipment
PRC	People's Republic of China
PV	photovoltaic
R&D	research and development
TR	technology relevance
RD&D	research, development and demonstration
IP	intellectual property
UN	United Nations

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