

Evolving Frameworks for Protecting Biotechnological Innovation

Plenary Session

Founded in 1878, **Barzanò & Zanardo** is one of the leading Italian and European intellectual property firms, with more than 150 professionals and a nationwide network of offices. Over nearly a century and a half, it has managed more than 70,000 patents for over 85,000 clients across every major technical domain — including **biotechnology**, where the firm supports universities, research centres and companies in protecting innovations.

This plenary invites researchers to look at their own science through a complementary lens — that of protection and value. The session unfolds across four connected perspectives. It first reframes *what a patent is and why it should matter* to academia and industry, repositioning it as a strategic asset rather than a legal formality. It then offers a *macro view* of the global biotech patent landscape, helping the audience situate their work within current geographical and technological trends. The third part revisits the *landmark decisions* that have shaped — and at times redefined — the boundaries of biotech patentability on both sides of the Atlantic, illuminating why today's transatlantic divergences exist and how they affect protection strategies. The closing part provides a *pragmatic compass* for navigating the complexity of the patent journey, addressing the timing windows, strategic choices and pitfalls researchers most often encounter.

The aim is to equip the audience with the right questions, so that brilliant science can safely travel the distance from the laboratory to the patients, markets and societies it is meant to serve.