

African Conference on the Strategic Importance of Intellectual Property (IP) Policies to Foster Innovation, Value Creation and Competitiveness

Topic 5: The Importance of IP Management in Universities and Public Research Organizations (PROs)

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Typology of the Presentation

- ▶ Brief Introduction
- ▶ Rationale/Importance of IP Management
- ▶ Challenges to Overcome
- ▶ Conclusion

Introduction/Contextual Issues

- ▶ The landscape of research is changing
 - ✓ Increasing interface with the private sector;
 - ✓ Increased research collaboration;
 - ✓ Restrictions on access to research information;
- ▶ The traditional role of Universities and PRO has changed
 - ✓ From “three legs” functions to “four legs” functions

Importance of IP Management

There are various reasons which compels Universities and RPOs to embrace IP Management:

1. A direct linkage between Research Management and IP Management
 - ✓ At every stage of the research process, there are critical IP issues which must be take into account:
 - Conception of the Idea
 - Proposal Writing
 - Carrying out of the research
 - Commercialization/Technology transfer

Importance of IP Management

2. As a way of Raising Research Funds
 - ✓ In most countries, the financial resources allocated for various university functions from the Government are dwindling – In the long run, effective IP Management may offer another stream of revenue collection to the University and PROs. This can be done through:
 - Licensing of IP assets
 - University –Industry collaboration
 - Accessing New Streams of Research Funding

Importance of IP Management

3. Productive Research Collaboration

- ✓ Increasing Research Collaboration Frameworks with other institutions necessitates universities and PROs to have in place effective IP management system, if they are to benefit from such arrangements.
- ✓ This is particularly the case with North –South Collaboration

Challenges

1. Changing the Old Mindset
 - ✓ IP Management involves integration of new research practices such as:
 - The use Of Research Notebooks;
 - Non-Disclosure Forms/Agreements
 - Restriction on reckless disclosures, e.g through seminars & conferences
 - Laboratory controls measures
- All these entails adoption of a new “culture” – some members of the University or PROs may tend to resist it either overtly or covertly.

Challenges

2. Budgetary Constraints

- ✓ Integration of IP management involves costs which the institution must set a separate budget. Costs for:
 - IP awareness
 - Establishment of IP Office
 - Production of Research Notebooks
 - Protection of IP
- ✓ With limited budget allocated to universities and PROs, setting funds for such activities may pose a challenge.

Challenges

3. Long Payback Period

- ✓ A natural inclination of any institution would be to allocate funds for programs that will yield immediate returns, this may not be the case with IP.
- ✓ It may take a relatively long period of time before the institution start to recoup the investment they have made in IP Management. This aspect may also put-off other institutions which may have other competing initiatives.

Conclusion

- ✓ Universities and PROs must look at IP and embrace IP Management not only for the sake of potential financial returns, but also for other equally important aspects of research management such as:
 - Developing Capacity in Contract Negotiation;
 - Mutual Beneficial Partnership with other institution;
 - Defensive Benefits;
 - Contribution to the economy – a long run achievement (broad developmental issues)

The End

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