

## Commercialization of Intellectual property remains the weakest point in Public Universities

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Commercialization of Intellectual property (IP) remains the weakest point in public universities in Kenya.

This was revealed by the Lead Audit Consultant, Prof. Tom Ogada during the Intellectual Property Audit Validation and Intellectual Property Commercialization Workshop on Monday July 23, 2018 at Taifa Hall.

Between the period of 1993-2017 a total of only 125 patent applications have been made from all the public universities in Kenya. The University of Nairobi only has over 33,000 Masters and PhD dissertations. This is research and ideas that have not been commercialized.

After screening 5,500 projects from the UoN, 144 projects were identified with potential for IP protection. 144 is a big number compared to the current UoN portfolio of 27 IP applications since 1993.

Prof. Ogada Congratulated the University of Nairobi for being the first and only institution to ask for an IP Audit in Africa. "With an IP Policy and support structure in place since 2006, UoN should be in a position to fully benefit from the Intellectual property it has," he said.

Joyce Banya, Senior counselor, Africa, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) urged all the academic staff, students, both undergraduate and postgraduate to make use of the system of IP. Mrs. Banya explained how her organization supports institutions in setting up structures such as, technology transfer scientific centers and the process of commercialization from an idea.

On his part, Prof. Peter Mbithi, UoN Vice Chancellor, said that the real wealth is in the Intellectual Property and that IP is the asset that should come on top while the University is accounting for its assets.

The Director, IPMO, Prof. Francis Mulaa strongly recommended for establishment of technology transfer office. He encouraged faculty to form University based companies where their ideas can be packaged in a business format for commercialization.

Although UoN is the only Public University that has post graduate programs in IP, the level of conversion of IP applications into grants is still low; the IP potential of several colleges has not been exploited.

Some of the other challenges highlighted are weak marketing capacity, limited outreach, low visibility, limited resources and personnel, lack of incentives for IP champions among others.

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