

THE ENABLING INNOVATION ENVIRONMENT (EIE) PROJECT FOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND TECHNOLOGY

“To help countries build a networked community of technology transfer actors who can use intellectual property to transact, negotiate and collaborate in technology development”

Improving a country's economic development and strengthening its innovation ecosystem are goals expressed by many countries, both developed and developing. Increasing the utilization of intellectual property (IP) and harnessing it for stimulating and sustaining economic growth are one of several ways to achieve these goals.

The objective of the Enabling Innovation Environment (EIE) Project for IP and Technology is to assist countries make better use of IP at the university and research institute level in order to help a country to maximize its own innovative capacity. By improving ways to capture valuable outcomes from research, the EIE project aims to improve economic development and social welfare.

1. WIPO and Supporting Development in Innovation

IP is generally a core component in facilitating the protection of investments in creative endeavors and is one way that value can be captured from innovation. It is one factor behind successful economic growth by improving technology innovation and commercialization.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations and exists to enable innovation and creativity. WIPO does this by working with governments, businesses, individuals and civil society around the globe to create a balanced and effective IP system that gives innovation and creative value.

Within the EIE project, WIPO is working to develop institutional and human capacities in key areas of the innovation and technology transfer lifecycle in synergy with each participating country. By supporting the technology innovation environment, we seek to stimulate creative forces to invent and improve products, services and enterprises that can benefit the public.

2. What is the Enabling Innovation Environment (EIE) Project?

The EIE project targets the long-term impact of making technology transfer, occurring between technology generators and technology users, more effective through the better use of IP. The vision is for the participant countries to build a networked community of technology transfer actors who can use IP to transact, negotiate and collaborate in technology development.

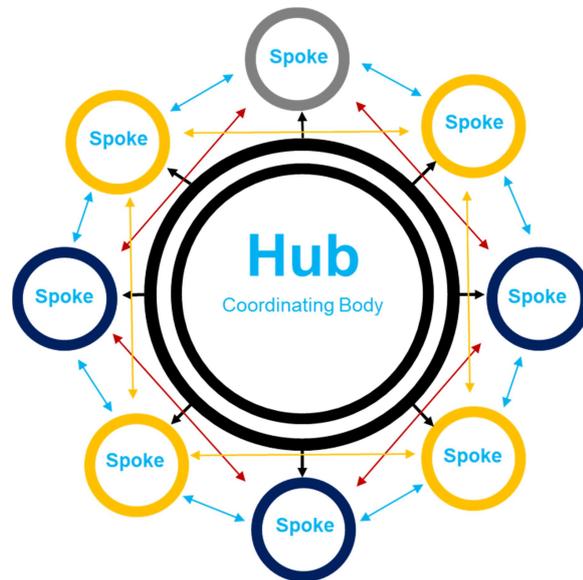
This network involves supporting the development of technology generating institutions, their institutional IP policies, structure, and the practitioners and professionals working within those institutions who use IP as a tool of innovation. Ultimately, this is to provide a framework for linking inventors to the innovation stakeholders.

Within the EIE project, WIPO works in synergy with key local partners in each country to help develop capacities in key areas of the innovation & technology transfer lifecycle. This is done with the strong support the Japan Patent Office (Japan Funds in Trust) to WIPO as the main sponsor of the EIE project.

EIE 'Hub & Spoke' Structure

To achieve a vision of building a networked community of technology transfer actors, the EIE project has a core principle of bringing together and supporting the establishment of a community of technology generating institutions (Spokes), who are connected to an administrative and infrastructural center (Hub). The Spokes are universities or public research institutions.

In each country, WIPO and each Hub work to build the capacity of technology generators, individuals, and other actors to use IP to actively engage in the process of transforming inventions and technologies into products, services and enterprise using IP tools and methods. By utilizing in-house, local and international resources, the project works to collectively establish a sustainable network of institutional and human capabilities within each of the EIE participating countries.



This network of direct communication links also applies to the individual professionals in these institutions who are implementing the Project. Altogether, there are 49 Spokes in the five active participant countries of Malaysia (7), the Philippines (15), Sri Lanka (11), Thailand (6) and Viet Nam (10).

Other Stakeholders and Supporters

The Hub and Spokes structure establishes a stable framework foundation for the EIE system, but other important and necessary actors also participate. These include:

- relevant government agencies in the participant countries, who have functions supporting the governmental administrative hubs, or those supporting the university or research institutions;
- select supporters and accelerators of activities linked to the innovation lifecycle, include technology business accelerators, entrepreneurs and investors; and
- the Secretariat and the Steering Committees members being established in EIE participant countries, who supporting and direct the activities of the networked technology community.

3. Key Activities of the EIE Project (2016 – 2019)

National Workshops on Technology Transfer

Since commencing in 2016, within the context of the EIE Project, WIPO's and its experts have conducted a series of stand-alone national workshops with our participating countries on topics including establishing university & institutional IP policies, IP asset and TTO management.

Given the specialized nature of IP-based technology transfer, a dedicated workshops series focusing on practical issues faced by technology licensing and management officers within

universities have been conducted each year. The attendees targeted during the workshops include researchers/scientists and staff from the Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) of the participating Spokes, as well as relevant government agencies and ministries. From 2018, these workshops were expanded to include the participation of the enterprises from the private sector and chambers of commerce.

Patent Drafting and Patent Searching Skills Development Courses

To complement and augment the skills needed by professionals in the technology and innovation environment, a series of WIPO oriented workshops focusing specifically on topics of patent drafting and patent searching have been organized. These courses have aimed to ensure that TTO staff from the EIE Spokes have the requisite skills and knowledge to enable them to be effective in their daily roles surveying and protecting technologies originating from their respective research institutes.

The EIE Technology for Special Attention Project (2017)

In seeking to support in the technology commercialization process for the EIE Spokes, in 2017 all Spokes were invited to submit candidate technologies from their TTOs to WIPO as part of an early stage commercialization assessment. These technologies were assessed and shortlisted by WIPO's experts and considered for aspects regarding potential licensing or development purposes.

In total, 62 inventions / technologies were submitted, of which 8 were finally (2 per country) to receive a technology commercialization roadmap from the WIPO experts.

As a means to support the commercialization and IP development potential, technology transfer office staff of these 8 inventions / technologies were invited to attend Global Technology Entrepreneurship and Commercialization (G-TEC) Program, Osaka University on 20 – 25 August, 2018. This is an intensive training program on commercial technology support and entrepreneurial development for technology managers.

The EIE Remote Mentorship Program (2018 to 2019)

To further support the skills of the TTO technology managers from the Spoke institutions, an enhanced and direct assistance technology-based remote mentoring program was initiated in 2018 and will continue in 2019.

Based on the wide-ranging technologies being developed across the EIE countries, the Spoke institutions were invited to submit technology inventions / technologies for an enhanced program of technology-based mentoring assistance. Over 100 inventions / technologies disclosures have been submitted to date. Under this program, a pool of experienced IP commercialization experts will deliver remote guidance and virtual support to TTO professionals on a specific case-by-case basis for patentability assessment and technology commercialization potential.

In 2018, WIPO's technology commercialization experts have selected 8 technologies per country and provided remote support to the respective TTOs over a period of 6-months, from November 2018 to April 2019.

Following on the positive response to the remote mentorship program, an additional round of mentoring commenced in mid-2019 for new technologies submitted from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand. WIPO's technology commercialization experts will provide

remote support to TTOs for 10 technologies per country for 6-months, from October 2019 to March 2020.

Support to Establish Associations of Technology Transfer Professionals

From 2019, as part of the EIE project, support will be given to strengthening the development of associations of technology transfer practitioners to enhance the establishment of a professional network of those interested in furthering knowledge and skills sharing in the area of TTOs. By strengthening or establishing associations of TTOs in the EIE countries, it is viewed that the technology transfer environment in all countries will further benefit by improved communication and better awareness of the challenges faced by the TTOs in using the IP ecosystem.

Metric-Based Assessment and Analysis for Supporting Technology Transfer Officers

From 2019, a project component of the EIE will be to support the development of a framework by which TTOs will be able to identify, capture and better appreciate the relevant information needed in understanding their own operational efficiencies in the area of IP-based technology transfer. Under this work, an information collection tool will be used for obtaining key transaction information relevant to the conventional operations of an IP-based TTO that can assist them in better understanding their operations and which can aid further planning or administration of their office.

University Visits

Since the commencement of the EIE Project, international technology transfer professionals, acting as WIPO experts have conducted on-site visits with the Spokes institutions. By meeting with the researchers, faculty, administrators, management and other key persons involved the research & development process, the experts provide a platform to discuss technology and non-technology issues and other operational issues that the TTO may face in technology commercialization.

EIE Presidents' Summit

The Presidents' Summit is a series of meetings to share views and discuss topics relating to technology transfer with the senior decision makers including Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors, Presidents of Universities and key government ministries on the importance of IP management, TTO management and technology commercialization. Two summits were held in 2017, in Daejeon, South Korea, and in Osaka, Japan, with a summit in 2018 held in Okinawa, Japan.