

BOTSWANA INNOVATION HUB INTELLECTUAL PROTECTION POLICY

The Botswana Innovation Hub (BIH) has been established pursuant to an Act of Parliament as a science and technology park to inter-alia foster Botswana's transition to a knowledge based economy, that actively responds to the needs of the people of the Republic of Botswana. The Botswana Excellence Strategy of 2008 envisages a transformation of Botswana into a technology-driven and knowledge based economy through promotion of a culture of innovation and competitiveness.

In line with the National Policy on Research, Science, Technology and Innovation of 2012, and our national vision pillar to be a "prosperous, productive and innovative nation" 2016, the Government of Botswana envisages a stronger role of STI in the national economy going forward. Of particular emphasis is demand driven research and commercialisation, adoption of Indigenous knowledge systems, strengthened national systems of innovation and a supportive legal framework through protection of Intellectual Property Rights which is critical for wealth creation and economic diversification. Botswana envisages a two percent (2%) contribution of Gross Domestic Product to be invested in Research and Development (R&D) in partnership with private sector, hence unlocking funding support to commercialisation of R&D towards economic prosperity beyond 2016.

It is under these premises that BIH has been established as a special purpose vehicle as part of the implementation of the National Policy to provide a support structure for commercialisation of technology, innovations, R&D for equitable benefits of the nation. The BIH Office of Technology Transfer presides over the implementation of a Policy Framework that seeks to foster the identification, protection, management and commercialisation of IP, with a particular emphasis on fostering the development of innovations that will be developed for the benefit of the people of the Republic of Botswana.

This BIH IP Policy seeks to:

- Instill confidence on all stakeholders (its clients and resident companies, higher education institutions, national research institute, Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), IKS holders and the general public), dealing with the Office of Technology Transfer on IP matters;
- Address all IP related issues from originators seeking advice on their innovations; provide guidance on the approach to assistance to high tech companies seeking to license out technologies to local entities for commercial value;
- Provide a framework for governing the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders in relation to IP arising from their activities; and
- Provide certainty in respect of the assistance that BIH TTO provides in respect of accessing foreign developed IP and technologies.

The Policy will support the national efforts towards IKS Commercialisation, economic diversification (new products and services development and roll out), SMEs, national research institutes' commercialisation efforts, and higher education institutions' adoption of research intensive strategies and further enhancement of Botswana's national system of innovation with overall increased competitiveness as a country.

Botswana Innovation Hub acknowledges the support of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in facilitating the development of the policy. The policy has also been endorsed by the Botswana Innovation Hub Board.