

PROJECT REPORT ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR EASTERN AFRICA

Date & Venue:

Held on 11th June – 29th June 2007, with a follow-up on 30th August-31st August 2007.
At International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), Nairobi, Kenya.

Organisers:

Centre For Intellectual Property Policy (CIPP), McGill University
University Of Nairobi
International Centre Of Insect Physiology (ICIPE)
Southern Environmental And Agricultural Policy Research Institute (SEAPRI)
Kenya Intellectual Property Institute (KIPI)

Funded By:

International Development Research Council (IDRC)
Trust Africa
Foundation For Sustainable Enterprise And Development (FSED)

Introduction

The training was conceptualized and executed upon the realization that there is now increasing evidence that economic development in East African countries is hampered by, among other factors, a lack of knowledge and capacity in the area of intellectual property and its strategic uses. This is because sufficient attention has not been placed on the strategic use of IP developed within the East African region and the practices, institutions and policies that are needed to support such a use. Sometimes, this lack of strategy leads to the failure to translate important research into practice.

Program Objectives

The overall purpose of this program is to build local capacity in IP which will in turn result in vigorous business and research communities in the health and agricultural biotechnology sectors in Eastern Africa. This will be achieved by providing industry players, researchers and government policy-makers with the requisite knowledge and skills to audit important public and private IP policies, practices and strategies in order to encourage the development of a strong health and agricultural research, development and commercialization sector in the region.

Expected Project Impact and outputs

These include:

- Audit of the region's intellectual property practices by trained locals
- Produce a realistic action plan based on audit results
- Improve general knowledge of intellectual property and empower the local community to build a strong intellectual property network

Structure of the Training

▪ Trainees

The Program attracted twenty six (26) trainees from the five Eastern African Countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Ethiopia. More specifically, there were 21 trainees from Kenya, two trainees from Rwanda and one trainee from each of the other three countries. Further, the trainees came from diverse sectors which included: universities; public research institutions in the fields of Health, Agriculture and Industrial Research; Private sector; and Government Agencies dealing with IP issues.

▪ Trainers

The trainers were drawn from all the collaborating institutions as well as from other local as well as international partners. The local trainers included IP practitioners from both public and private institutions as well non-governmental institutions. The participating institutions (other than the collaborators) included the International Livestock Research Institute, The Kenya Copyright Board, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Services, Bioversity International and Health Action International (Nairobi office). We were also able to secure the attendance of a representative from the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) to assist in the training.

▪ Curriculum

The training curriculum included a wide range of issues which are of relevance to the region. These ranged from a basic presentation of the major IP regimes and international agreements, to different strategic and business models on how to use IP together with an examination of the policy implications of the various approaches.

▪ Training Methodology

So as to make the training as effective as possible, different training methods were used. Presentations and lectures were used to impart the "raw" knowledge on IP issues. Once sufficiently educated, the trainees would be sent into break-out groups to discuss the material in detail and also to seek practical ways of applying the knowledge in their

every-day activities. The group deliberations would then be reported in plenary where further discussions would be held.

Take-away assignments were also given so as to enable the trainees mull over the issues away from the training room-setting. In addition to this, there was experience sharing among the trainees and trainers.

There were also industrial visits organised for the trainees. In this regard, they visited the Kenya Industrial Property Institute (KIPI) one of the IP regulatory Agencies in Kenya as well as the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI), a public sector institution engaged in commercialisation of industrial research output in Kenya.

In the third week of Training, the trainees were also involved in preparing for their projects on IP and IP management audits.

▪ **IP and IP Management Audit Projects**

As part of the hands-on training, the trainees were expected to audit their institutions' IP policies, practices and strategies. The process required the trainees to examine the type of IP issues that their institutions regularly confront and how they deal with them. Following the audit, the trainees reported back to each other and the trainers on what they learned and then prepared reports for submission to their institutions on their findings. The reporting back session was held on the 30th-31st of August 2007, with the audit process having been conducted throughout July and August, 2007

Achievements

The training program was successfully executed. Specific achievements included:

- The targeted number of trainees was realized
- Trainees were drawn from all the targeted countries
- We were able to attract local as well as international trainers
- The IP and IP Management Audit projects were successfully completed and a publication of these reports is being finalized and will soon be available for distribution.

Evaluation of Achievements against Expected Output

So far, the expected output of improving the general knowledge of intellectual property and empowering the local community to build a strong intellectual property network has been realised. A significant achievement was the output on auditing the intellectual property practices of institutions in the region by trained locals. This has formed a basis for producing a realistic action plan based on the audit results for each institution audited.

The awareness raised by the course further underscored the capacity deficit in the area of IP management and generated a lot of requests from participants that similar courses be organized for wider audiences in their institutions and respective countries. Such a follow-up meeting with one group of participants to monitor and assist them in achieving their action plan is being planned for 2009, subject to funding. It is apparent that more training of a similar kind would be useful.