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Management of IP in a multi – collaborative framework: DST/Mintek Nanotechnology Innovation Centre as a case study

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Abstract

The Department of Science &Technology /Mintek Nanotechnology Innovation Centre (NIC) was established in 2007 as one of the major implementing agencies of the national nanotechnology strategy to focus primarily on the social cluster (health and water). In addition, the focus of the Mintek NIC is to drive South Africa's transformation from resource-based economy towards a knowledge-based economy with nanotechnology. The three way (see figure 1) partnership of the NIC was developed to allow the flow and retention of information and technology among people, institutions and enterprises which underpin the principle of the National System of Innovation (NSI).

The management of intellectual property (IP) in a multi-collaborative framework it is a challenge and this was also made worse by the recently approved South African IP act, 2008. The consortium agreement was signed before the Act was approved therefore all IP related matters were delegated to the Principal consortium member (Mintek). The South African Intellectual Property Rights from Public Financed Research and Development Act, Act No 51 of 2008 is applicable to intellectual property emanating from publicly financed research & development. The consortium is at a stage where some of the IP developed is about to be exploited. This paper presents the challenges of IP management and the expectations of the consortium members now that the IP Act is in place.

Biography

Makhafola is currently the General Manager: Research & Development at Mintek. He worked as Lecturer in Analytical Chemistry at Tshwane University of Technology and University of Venda. In 2004 was appointed Director: Quality Assurance at Walter Sisulu University). Dr Makhafola was the Director: Quality Assurance at the University of Venda until he joined University of Kwa-Zulu Natal as the Director Quality Promotion & Assurance in July 2010, part of his responsibility was to lead the World University Rankings project. Dr Makhafola served as member of various boards and committees. He is currently the Chairperson of DST/MINTEK NIC Steering Committee. He did the post-doctoral training at Indiana University and presented his research work in more than 19 international conferences and published in credible journals