

## **Key actors for technology transfer and commercialisation**

The technology transfer process is executed by the active participation and support of various actors whose main role is adding value to the process and acting as nodes of the supporting system. Considering the diversity of innovation systems the positioning, activity combination and population of these actors may vary across contexts.

Different institutional setups allow for various forms of organizational arrangements, establishment processes, degrees of autonomy etc. This means that all actors participating in the process are affected by the environment within which they operate while, at the same time, they contribute to its evolution and sustainability.

### **How do these actors contribute to technology transfer and commercialisation?**

Individuals, groups of individuals, organizations and other constellations of actors support and materialize the technology transfer process by:

- Educating entrepreneurs through on-the-job training on a broad range of practical skills related to the business growth.
- Connecting entrepreneurs to markets, capital, customers, partners, experts, information and role models through introductions, brokering and by creating bonds of trust and credibility.
- Assisting in the identification technical solutions for users of technologies and innovations, find users for new technologies.
- Finding and leveraging product development resources.
- Validating business ideas through strategic advice and direction, and by creating a supportive environment for business development experiments.
- Taking part in negotiations and business development, reduce transaction costs.
- Helping with IP issues in inward and outward licensing.
- Providing access to finance
- Offering consulting services, match-making, and with mentoring. Mentors act as gatekeepers to other forms of support and as connectors.

### **Who are the common key participants in technology transfer and commercialisation?**

Involved actors undertake activities that evolve around the production of knowledge, the provision of essential supporting services, training, market research and intermediation. Notwithstanding the variety of contexts and institutional setups, government's embracing the potential benefits of technology transfer and commercialisation encourage and support the activities of actors including:

- Scientists and engineers
- Universities
- Public research institutes (PRIs)
- Private research institutes
- Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs)
- Incubators, accelerators and S&T parks
- Extension service providers

## **Why is such variety important for technology transfer and commercialisation?**

The manner and intensity in which these actors relate and participate in technology transfer varies; namely, the existence of some of them is directly and exclusively linked to technology transfer (i.e. TTOs) while others form part of it due to their intrinsic characteristics (e.g. universities). This is an important distinction for understanding operational rigidities and the need for aligning their targets and objectives. The degree of dependence of an organization's wellbeing on the outcome of the technology transfer process differs substantially among these actors; hence policy intervention and target pressure is viewed through different perspectives. Such divergence of backgrounds requires that the industry is also prepared to communicate its needs in various manners and is willing to tap into different sources of knowledge.

Idiosyncratic organizational characteristics are common and present and their implications are twofold: on one hand, such variety accelerates the development of new ideas and the (re)combination of existing ones. On the other hand, it requires coordination of actions and the facilitation of fruitful communication. This is where policy makers take the lead and are called to facilitate technology transfer and commercialisation process through means that are tailored the actors capabilities and to a specific institutional context.

### **References:**

Zuniga, P., and Correa, P., 2013, Technology Transfer from Public Research Organizations: concepts and market and institutional failures, World Bank Policy Brief

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