

**Intellectual Property Technology Transfer Office (IPTTO)  
University of Benin**

**Report on 5-Day Training for Academic Staff and Students on Innovation Development held at Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) from February 20-24 2023.**

**Organized by:** University of Benin Intellectual Property Technology Transfer Office (IPTTO) in Collaboration with CERHI

**Number of Participants: 122**

## **1. Introduction**

The University of Benin, through its Technology Transfer Office (TTO), successfully organized a **5-day training program on Innovation Development** aimed at equipping academic staff and students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and practical tools to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and the commercialization of research outputs. The training also sought to encourage collaboration between the academic community, industry, and government stakeholders.

The training aimed to create an environment conducive to the development of new ideas, research commercialization, and the creation of start-ups. Participants were introduced to various aspects of the innovation process, including intellectual property (IP) management, market research, product development, and venture creation.

## **2. Objectives of the Training**

The key objectives of the 5-day training program were to:

- **Develop an understanding of innovation:** Define the concept of innovation, its types, and its importance in both academia and industry.
- **Learn about IP management:** Provide participants with an understanding of intellectual property rights, patent filing, and protecting innovative ideas.
- **Encourage research commercialization:** Train participants on how to move ideas from research to market, with a focus on technology transfer, licensing, and collaboration with industry.
- **Foster entrepreneurship:** Equip participants with the skills to build start-ups and scale innovative ideas into viable businesses.
- **Provide networking opportunities:** Create avenues for participants to connect with industry leaders, mentors, and investors.

### 3. Training Agenda

The 5-day training program was structured as follows:

Day	Topic	Session Details	Facilitator(s)
Day 1	Introduction to Innovation and Creativity	- Understanding the concepts of innovation, creativity, and their role in research and development. - Types of innovation: Incremental vs. disruptive.	Prof. Ighedosa, Innovation Expert
Day 2	Intellectual Property Rights and Protection	- Importance of intellectual property in innovation. - Types of IP: Patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets. - Practical steps in patent filing.	Dr. Flora Onomnerhinor, IP Consultant
Day 3	Commercializing Research and Technology Transfer	- Steps to take research from the lab to the market. - Understanding technology transfer models. - Licensing and collaboration with industry.	NOTAP Official
Day 4	Entrepreneurship and Start-up Development	- Developing an entrepreneurial mindset. - Business model development for start-ups. - Validating ideas and securing funding.	Professor Ernest Izevbigie, Entrepreneur & Mentor
Day 5	Pitching and Funding Innovation	- Crafting an effective pitch. - Approaching investors and securing funding. - Networking with potential investors and partners.	Professor C. Osunbor, Investment Specialist

### 4. Training Highlights and Key Sessions

#### Day 1: Introduction to Innovation and Creativity

The first day focused on introducing participants to the concept of innovation and creativity. Professor Ighedosa delivered an engaging session, emphasizing that innovation is not just about technology but includes creative problem-solving to address real-world challenges. Participants learned about the **types of innovation** (incremental vs. disruptive) and discussed examples of successful innovations that have impacted society.

## Day 2: Intellectual Property Rights and Protection

On Day 2, participants were introduced to the critical topic of **Intellectual Property (IP) Rights** by Dr. Flora Onomnerhinor a lawyer and an IP consultant. The session covered the importance of protecting innovative ideas, the process of patent filing, and how intellectual property can enhance the value of research outputs. Hands-on exercises allowed participants to explore the steps involved in securing IP rights for their innovations.

## Day 3: Commercializing Research and Technology Transfer

Day 3 was dedicated to the process of **research commercialization** and **technology transfer**. Mr. Dennis Aigbe, a TTO Specialist from NOTAP, led participants through the steps involved in moving ideas from the laboratory to the marketplace. The session covered licensing agreements, partnerships with industry, and the importance of collaborating with stakeholders to bring innovations to market. Real-life examples of successful technology transfers were shared to inspire the participants.

## Day 4: Entrepreneurship and Start-up Development

On Day 4, participants learned the essential elements of starting a successful venture. Professor Ernest Izevbigie, an entrepreneur and mentor, took participants through the fundamentals of **business model development** and discussed how to create sustainable start-ups. Participants also explored strategies for market validation, customer acquisition, and funding opportunities for new ventures.

## Day 5: Pitching and Funding Innovation

The final day focused on **pitching innovations** to potential investors and securing funding. Professor C. Osunbor, an investment specialist, led a practical session on creating a compelling pitch, emphasizing the need to present a clear value proposition, market potential, and financial projections. Participants were also given the opportunity to practice their pitches and receive feedback. The day concluded with a networking session, where participants interacted with potential investors, industry leaders, and mentors.

## 5. Participant Engagement and Feedback

The 5-day training program saw active participation from both academic staff and students. The sessions were highly interactive, with participants sharing ideas, asking questions, and engaging in group discussions and activities.

Key feedback from the participants included:

- **95% of attendees** found the training informative and relevant to their academic and entrepreneurial interests.
- Participants appreciated the **practical exercises** and real-world examples, which helped them better understand how to apply the concepts taught.
- The **IP protection** and **commercialization sessions** were highlighted as particularly valuable, as they gave participants the tools to safeguard their innovations and explore commercialization pathways.

- Many participants expressed a desire for **ongoing mentorship** and follow-up training on topics such as business plan development and investor relations.

## 6. Key Takeaways

- **Innovation is a Process:** Innovation requires a clear, structured process that involves creativity, research, and collaboration with industry partners.
- **Intellectual Property is Key:** Protecting intellectual property through patents and trademarks is vital for the commercialization of new ideas.
- **Technology Transfer Matters:** Moving from research to market involves navigating various stages, including licensing, partnerships, and product development.
- **Entrepreneurship is Accessible:** With the right mindset and tools, both academic staff and students can engage in entrepreneurship and create successful start-ups.
- **Pitching is Critical:** Effectively pitching your idea to investors requires clarity, confidence, and a strong value proposition.

## 7. Recommendations for Future Training

Based on feedback from participants, the following recommendations are suggested for future training programs:

- **Follow-Up Workshops:** Organize workshops on **business plan development, market research, and investor negotiations** to build on the foundational knowledge gained in this training.
- **Mentorship Opportunities:** Establish a mentorship program that connects participants with successful entrepreneurs and industry professionals for ongoing support.
- **Sector-Specific Innovation:** Introduce specialized sessions tailored to different sectors such as **healthcare innovation, agricultural technology, and ICT** to allow participants to explore specific industry opportunities.

## 8. Conclusion

The 5-day training program on innovation development was a resounding success. It provided academic staff and students at the University of Benin with valuable knowledge and practical tools to foster innovation, protect intellectual property, and explore pathways to commercialization. The Technology Transfer Office (TTO) remains committed to supporting the growth of a robust innovation ecosystem and will continue to offer similar programs to encourage entrepreneurial activity within the academic community.

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February 27, 2023



Cross-section of participants during the 5-days training