



ACP SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMME

Empowering knowledge transfer in the Caribbean through effective IPR & KT regimes - IPICA

Innovation systems in the Caribbean will be reinforced by empowering the generation, application and transfer of scientific knowledge for enhanced energy access and efficiency. Different innovation system stakeholders – higher education institutions (HEIs), national intellectual property offices, ministries and international organisations, researchers, enterprises, as well as students – will be trained to modernise national and institutional intellectual property and knowledge transfer policies and strategies. This will create practical support to facilitate knowledge transfer and to promote innovation culture in Caribbean societies.

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Universidad de Alicante (UA), Spain

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Challenge

The Caribbean region has weak innovation systems. With research and development (R&D) investments being among the lowest in the world (< 0.5% of GDP), the development of a knowledge-based economy that builds on the use of science and technology to tackle important challenges for Caribbean societies is stifled. Within the context of limited private investment and a scarcity of research institutions, higher education and public research organisations constitute the main sources of knowledge and innovation. To reinforce the impact of research investment, policy makers need to ensure that knowledge is transferred from education and science to society. Understanding knowledge transfer and the associated role of intellectual property rights (IPR) is important in order for public policy to support new growth opportunities. The Caribbean innovation system and the way science and technology contribute to sustainable economic development can be improved through effective knowledge transfer (KT) mechanisms, as they provide incentives for creative and innovative activities, improve the climate for investment and international collaboration, mobilize market forces, and provide new business models.

Focus

The need to build the capacity of Caribbean science, technology and innovation (STI) systems to find, absorb and use existing technologies will be addressed through promoting the strategic use of IPR and KT tools in research. IPICA will reinforce policies, know-how and capacities to identify and transfer state-of-the-art solutions and create strategies for their deployment. The knowledge transfer value chain will be enhanced for the deployment of energy efficiency and access solutions as a pilot area, while the main outcomes will directly stimulate all fields of STI.

Rationale

There is a lack of policy actions in the Caribbean region to stimulate IPR in general, and even more so in the area of STI. By using IP tools more strategically (in education, research, business), Caribbean societies could benefit significantly, for example through identifying and transferring existing technologies, as well as creating value for local products through branding and other tools.

IPICA will establish a stakeholders' forum to evaluate whether the design of the current IP system is fit for the new innovation landscape, and how best to cope with growing demand to protect and trade ideas. With regard to institutions involved in STI (mainly higher education institutions - HEIs) it is vital to recognize that good management of intellectual assets is important to the competitiveness of most organisations, private or public, and to their attractiveness for investors. Key elements need to be addressed, such as well-defined regulations on IP ownership and the participation of researchers in technology transfer to society, in addition to performance incentives for researchers balancing entrepreneurial and scientific achievements. IPICA will focus also on the intellectual property and knowledge transfer (IP/KT) policies and processes in place at the HEIs and design strategies for improvement.



IPICA



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The project consortium at the kick-off meeting and fact-finding mission carried out in March 2014 in Alicante and Madrid (Spain).

transfer can work effectively in the region while signposting the areas that need improvement. An online platform will offer knowledge transfer support in the region, through e-learning materials, a forum for exchange of good practices among peers, and other relevant resources (process descriptions, model contracts and procedures...).

Culture.

The innovation culture and an awareness of how KT and IPR can be used to create value and new business models will be promoted through a tailored dissemination, designed to address each stakeholder group in the most effective way. For example: for students and future entrepreneurs, science promotional events and ideas competitions will be organised; for policy makers, this will be discussion forums and conferences. Capacity building and dissemination exercises offering opportunities to network and showcase success stories shall gradually stimulate the perception of innovation, knowledge transfer and IP as powerful tools for the development of Caribbean societies.

Results

- National and regional STI regimes evaluated for their adequacy to promote knowledge transfer (KT) and value creation from IPR.
- Online repository of relevant documentation and training materials.
- Analytical reports published: *'IPR as a tool for knowledge transfer & value creation: a comparative study of Caribbean policy frameworks'*; *'IPR & KT management practices in Caribbean higher education & research organisations'*.
- Policy recommendations to improve three national IP regimes and STI institutional KT policies presented to decision makers.
- Enhanced capacities across the innovation system stakeholders - policy makers, researchers and research managers, students, entrepreneurs - to manage, evaluate, transfer and exploit STI results for knowledge-based development.

Method

IPICA actively involves a wide range of stakeholders: from policy level (IP offices, ministries), to research organisations (HEIs), individuals involved in research and enterprises (researchers, KT practitioners, entrepreneurs) and international organisations. It covers a varied mix of activities: analysis and evaluation, action research, capacity building, multi-stakeholder working groups and forums, events, publications and policy recommendations. These activities are reinforced by a tailored dissemination and awareness-raising strategy including special events, competitions and conferences. The project will receive active support from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

IPICA tackles the following three key elements of the innovation system:

Policy

Following an analysis of STI policy frameworks and a benchmarking study, particularly looking at the innovation system and the use of IPR, recommendations for policy improvements will be developed at national and regional multi-stakeholder meetings. Target groups are policy makers and leaders of STI organisations, i.e. intellectual property offices, ministries involved in STI, higher education and research organisations.

Practice

Capacity building workshops will be conducted to reinforce knowledge transfer capacities of all innovation system actors in the field of energy in the Caribbean (policy makers, researchers and research managers, students and entrepreneurs). Pilot projects will showcase how knowledge

ACP regions and countries involved

Caribbean – Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago

Programme theme(s)

Energy access and efficiency

Sector

Education policy and administrative management
 Education facilities and training
 Teacher training
 Educational research
 Higher education
 Advanced technical and managerial training
 Government and civil society, general
 Public finance management
 Power generation / renewable sources
 Energy research
 Business support services and institutions

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