

SESSION 8:

THE STATE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP) IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WATER SECTOR

Chair: Eva Phago (WRC) | Venue: Ballroom 3

The role of the WRC as an enabler of technological progress in the water sector and the broader National System of Innovation (NSI) is well recognised. According to the United Nations (Global Governance Working Paper, 2011), transferred water technologies are seen as “tools, not only to combat water scarcity or poor sanitary conditions, but also to alleviate poverty, ensure gender equality, and improve health and the environment”. It is in this vein that the WRC has established a Technology Transfer Office (TTO) to accelerate the development of research and development (R&D) outputs into products and services in the market.

In order to map the water-innovation landscape in the South African context, the WRC TTO elected to initiate an audit on water-related intellectual property (IP) in the custody of higher learning institutions. In undertaking the audit, the TTO engaged with the technology transfer functions of universities to acquaint itself with the various projects carried out by these institutions. The purpose of this, among others, was to launch a baseline for the status of water-IP and innovation in South African universities, as well as to build partnerships for accelerated transfer of same to the broader society.

The TTO therefore engaged with 21 institutions to gather insight into water-related research and development (R&D) projects in the institutions’ portfolios, as well as to understand the challenges faced in commercialisation of R&D outputs and other water-IP related issues. The aim of this session is to discuss the documented findings with water sector stakeholders.

PROGRAMME

14:00 – 14:35	State of water-related IP in the NSI	Thabo Mthombeni (WRC)
14:35 – 14:50	Panel discussion of findings	Brian Dube (CGS) Tebogo Machete (UJ) Thabo Mthombeni (WRC)
14:50-15:00	Discussion	