

# Managing technology transfer

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UNIVERSITIES continuously come up with potentially impactful ideas and technologies generated through research and development initiatives to benefit businesses and communities, and they have the responsibility to transfer the knowledge to society at large.

At Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) the role of managing technology transfer is taken on by Putra Science Park (PSP) through activities such as intellectual property (IP) management, promotion and commercialisation of ideas and technology.

From UPM's 2,000 IPs in various fields of research, PSP has facilitated the commercialisation of 166 technologies to diverse groups of industry players, including local and international companies, with a gross sale of more than RM61 million. Due to the efficiency and effectiveness in managing IPs, the varsity has won several major prizes for the National Best Intellectual Property Management for the organisation category in years 2008, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

PSP's Innovation Promotion and Marketing Division Translational Research And Innovation Programme head, Dr Mohamad Fakri Zaky Ja'afar, said as the centre of innovation management and technology transfer at UPM, PSP acts as the bridge to partner with business entities to commercialise the university's innovations.

"We always welcome local and international companies to collaborate with the university in commercialising innovative products that would contribute to the country and society," he said.

PSP pioneered an innovative commercialisation approach called the Innohub Programme in 2013, which has been instrumental in developing 57 start-up companies that has generated production and sales on an industrial scale, with a total capitalisation RM7.8 million. The initiative provides a supportive and fertile ecosystem for innovation to grow into commercialised products, especially within the innovative technology sector.

"Over the years we have tried and tested so many ways of transferring our technology and



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SAMSILAH ROSLAN  
Putra Science Park director



PSP's Innovation Promotion and Marketing Division Translational Research And Innovation Programme head, Mohamad Fakri Zaky Ja'afar, with National Best Intellectual Property Management awards won by Universiti Putra Malaysia through the years.

knowledge to the industry, and one of the most effective ways is for the researcher to venture out as entrepreneurs. This is a key feature of the Innohub programme.

"This programme is unique because our graduate students are paired up with our researchers in start-up companies to work on testing and validating which business model will work for the technology that they are developing.

"We have many new technologies entering the market because of this effort. We have vaccines, fertilisers, engineering, information and communications technology and medical products, for example. This in-house programme has secured many pre-commercialisation grants from government agencies, which aim to build and grow the respective businesses, such as through the building of pilot plants to produce products and services," Mohamad Fakri Zaky said.

Armed with this experience, through Putra Dynamics, under the Innovation Promotion and

Marketing Division, PSP has implemented a series of training and development opportunities to help other universities and research agencies with their technology transfer activities.

The training programmes are aimed to enable technology transfer officers, management personnel, IP managers, business incubation managers, start-up chief executive officers, researchers and law officers, who are directly involved in technology transfers at local universities, research institutes and agencies to continue to develop and extend their professional skills and knowledge.

"We provide hands-on solutions through practical information sharing to solve research and commercialisation challenges. We have a proven track record, delivering public and in-house courses for local universities, SME companies, and government organisations," said PSP director Professor Dr Samsilah Roslan.

PSP previously collaborated with the Higher Education Leadership Academy and Innovation and Technology Managers Association in developing curriculum for technology transfer officers and personnel for other universities and institutes of higher learning.

Among PSP's training programmes are Intellectual Property Awareness Workshop, Intellectual Property Valuation Workshop, Lean Market Validation/Start-up coaching, IP and Commercialisation Workshop, Technology Pitching Workshop, Hands-on Industrial Design, Negotiation, and other technology transfer organisation-based needs.

"Plus, with expert trainers, who are experienced practitioners in their field, our training moves beyond theory, giving valuable real-world insights using our latest module. With blended learning experiences and accelerated learning techniques, PSP is able to help the target organisation to achieve training goals either for individuals or the workforce as a whole. We also offer customised course content based on an organisation's specific training needs," Samsilah said.

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PSP offers training packages to private and public universities, research institutes and agencies to develop expertise in technology transfer.