

The Intellectual Property Implementation Group was established by former Minister of State Conor Lenihan in 2010 to progress the work of implementing the recommendations of the [Innovation Taskforce Report](#) of earlier that year. The goal of the Implementation Group's work was to ensure that all enterprises, from small businesses to multinationals, can access to Government-supported intellectual property and can then use it to create jobs and drive economic recovery. The Implementation Group comprised IP experts from business, the VC community, Technology Transfer Offices of universities. It was supported by an IP lawyer and chaired by [Dr Jim Mountjoy](#).

Following a launch on 8 June at [NovaUCD](#), UCD's Technology Transfer Office, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation is shortly to publish the full report on its website. Venture Legal Services were afforded access to a printed copy of the report and this article summarises the main conclusions of the report and offers some practical perspectives.

### Summary Conclusions

A central technology transfer office (cTTO) for Ireland is in the course of being established to act as a hub and a central point of contact for companies looking to engage with technology transfer offices (TTOs) in individual institutions around the country. The cTTO will also develop and assist in the consistent adoption of best practice by individual TTOs around the country.

The commercial terms on offer to commercial parties seeking to engage with research organisations are being made more transparent, objectively fair and balanced and relatively generous in an international context.

The Report makes it clear that the aim of Government, led by Minister Richard Bruton and Minister of State Seán Sherlock, is to develop and firmly embed an effective culture of engagement between public sector research and private sector exploitation and job creation.

In the appendices, the Report contains some useful template documents such as a term sheet, collaborative research programme plan and a licence. This is a very useful and practical support to the sector.

### Practical Perspectives

There is a risk that a cTTO will simply act as another layer of bureaucracy and cost in a system that is already arguably well resourced. However, the potential benefits to streamlining and standardising existing processes and offering a single point of contact to businesses interested in interacting with Irish publicly-funded research organisations probably make this a risk worth taking.

There is a notable lack of any closed-minded or exclusively domestic focus on how IP developed by Irish research organisations can be exploited. While this open approach might be seen as creating a risk that the

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fruits of Irish-funded research may be harvested abroad, it is also a recognition of the fact that the best publicly funded research is now playing on a global field and that is where businesses must now compete.

There has already been a lot of good work done in getting publicly-funded research out of the lab and into the market by organisations such as the [National Digital Research Centre](#) (NDRC) and TTOs in universities the length and breadth of the country. The consistency and standardisation envisaged by the report – if properly implemented – should do a lot to remove ‘friction’ (delays and costs) from the current processes. However, the experience in Ireland of ‘top down’ mandated standard form approaches has been generally discouraging and it remains to be seen if a grass roots revival will be nurtured and grown as a result of the work of the Implementation Group.

It is as yet unknown how the Report’s recommendations will interact with other public and private sector organisations and programmes that have begun to achieve significant traction in the development and commercialisation of research (such as the [EU FP7 programme](#), the [Digital Hub](#) and the [International Digital Services Centre](#) (IDSC)).

There is scope to build on the template documents contained in the Report and to do so either in an open-source or a centrally sponsored and approved way. Each option has its advantages and it seems that building on these foundations will be a key piece of work for the cTTO once established.

### [Implications for TTOs](#)

TTOs around the country will now have a new single set of guidelines to adhere to. They will however have to review and assimilate the guidelines and mandatory requirements of the report to ensure that their processes are compliant. This review generally gives the opportunity for TTOs to reassess what they are doing in light of the benchmarks set by the Implementation Group’s report.

### [Implications for Industry](#)

There are now clear pathways for industry to engage with the Government funded research sector. When the cTTO is fully established and operational it should act as an effective and efficient clearing house and a central point of contact for industry and research to come together.

### [Next steps](#)

For information on intellectual property protection and licensing, technology transfer and investment in intellectual property, please call us or email [ip@venturelaw.ie](mailto:ip@venturelaw.ie).

This briefing is correct as at 15 June 2012.

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