



Ethiopia Triple Helix Conference
Transforming University-Industry Government Relations in Ethiopia

MANAGEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER OFFICES: LESSONS FOR BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Objective of the study

- This paper analyzes the importance of the role played by Brazilian University TTOs, from the standpoint of their organization, policy and performance.
- To strengthen the diagnosis, the case of TTO of Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul is presented.



The Technology Transfer Office Model

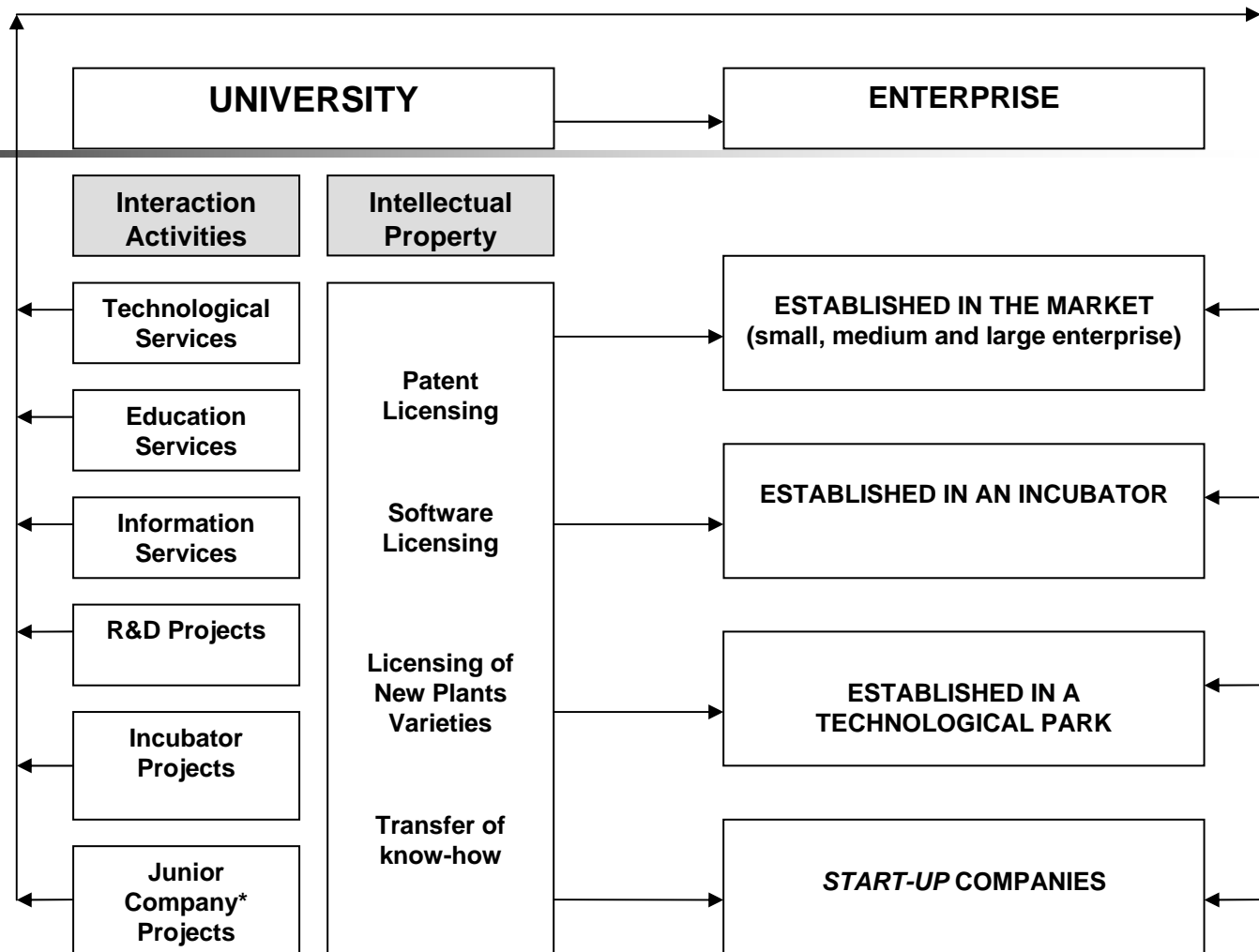
- The setting-up of TTOs derives from the necessity to improve the university performance, in order to better correspond to social demands.
- The more precise the concept of technology transfer, the more focused will be the activities developed by TTO.



Which is the main objective of a TTO?

- To facilitate the movement of academic research discoveries from the laboratory towards the market, aiming the public benefit.
- In some universities, including Brazilian ones, the role played by TTOs is not restricted to the activities related to intellectual property only, but it is characterized by broader objectives.

The university-enterprise technology transfer process



* It is a consultancy company that provides services to established companies, through an academic unit, at a low cost, and managed by students and a technical support provided by academicians.

Survey Results



- 143 Brazilian universities surveyed
- 18% questionnaires return rate
- 25 TTOs in operation
- 68% TTO of Public University
- Diversity is the main characteristic
- Budget
- Staff
- Educational activities
- Performed activities



Case Study: the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul

- Federal, public university
- Founded in 1934, in Porto Alegre, capital of the State of Rio Grande do Sul
- The largest university in southern of Brazil
- 30,000 students (undergraduate and graduate)
- About 500 research groups in around 900 different areas of knowledge



The TTO: Interaction and Technology Transfer Office (EITT)

- Created in 1997
- Firstly as an Office of Projects Consultancy
- The dynamic had to be changed towards a Triple Helix concept.
 - It has to be created a “tailor-made” model, putting new emphasis in the connection of the University to the market
- External forces: a new national scenario in the intellectual property laws.



EITT Main Functions

- Very simple structure, small staff, clearly defined functions.
- It takes care of:
 - Protection of intangible assets, from the invention disclosure to the patenting and licensing.
 - Negotiation of sponsored research projects, in IP matters.
 - Technology transfer agreements and contracts – NDA, MTA and Patent Licensing.
 - Technology diffusion through events to bring the internal community closer to external partners.
 - Training activities in order to increase the staff specialization.



Relationships with the market

- The portfolio of services has been conditioned by the internal capacity of attention to the demands
- Differentiation strategy : Focus on IP management
- Stimulus to partnerships with different sectors through different institutional arrangements
- Win-Win approach as a negotiation strategy



EITT Results

- A TT task becomes fruitful only after a long time
- Results involve some factors that not depend directly on EITT's actions
- From March 1997 to December 2004
 - 44 filed patents (3 of them abroad)
 - 8 requested trademarks
 - 8 issued softwares
 - 12 new plant varieties registered
 - About 150 people trained per year
 - Around US\$ 50,000 in royalties
- Qualitative results are more important than the quantitative ones.

Conclusions



- Technology transfer is a very complex task, and involves, essentially, a cultural change in the university as well as enterprises.
- The success of TT activities in universities depends, fundamentally, on the way they are inserted in the institutional context.
- The University's top management has to perform a visible leadership in the conduction of the policies and the operation of the programs with enterprises.
 - It is essential to guarantee all the institutional human and financial resources for its execution.

Conclusions



- Legal devices alone are not enough to guarantee advances: governmental policies + good practices are fundamental.
- Informal relationships are very important in the TT process.
- Finally, it is important to mention that we have great expectation with the implementation of Innovation Law signed in 2004:
 - Institutionalization of TTOs activities
 - New opportunities of funding for R&D and also for TTOs activities
- With this new Law and governmental programs that stimulate university-enterprise joint research projects, and the articulation among these three sectors, which already happens, we are, in fact, putting the Triple Helix concept into practice.



Thank you!

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