



INNOVATION COUNCIL

Innovation Council Statement – WIPO Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (Tech Transfer)

16 October 2024

I would like to present recent research that features the tech transfer experiences of Innovation Council members.

One of the members of Innovation Council is Merck Life Science. I worked with the company two years ago to publish a paper called Making Biologics. It's available on our website (innovationcouncil.org). This paper looks at what governments can do to enable the emergence of centers of excellence, in this case in the biologics space. To write this paper, we looked at historic evidence and I interviewed 15 biologics industry leaders in different countries. Based on this information, we were able to identify four key pathways for building biomanufacturing and innovative capacity; they are described in the paper. All the pathways require collaboration and tech transfer, along with legally certain business environments that include IP protection. One strategy we uncovered for building vaccine production capacity is called "backwards integration". This involves companies starting with activities like fill and finish, then working side-by-side with tech transfer partners over many years to gain expertise and move up the value chain, ultimately performing R&D and activities like bulk antigen production.

One backwards integration success story is Biovac (in South Africa), which is another Innovation Council member. I've just written a detailed case study tracing the company's evolution over twenty years from contract manufacturer and Vx importer to become an innovator in its own right. The leadership of Biovac did a lot of things right during this journey, and it's also important to recognize the role of Biovac's global tech transfer partners along the way.