

MUAST Hosts National IP and Innovation Workshop

The Directorate of Research, Innovation, Industrialisation and Enterprise Development at Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology hosted a national Innovation and Intellectual Property workshop on 12 May 2026 at Bushman Rock Safaris.

Held under the theme “Building Institutional Capacity for Innovation and IP Management in Zimbabwean Universities,” the workshop brought together 29 delegates from universities, research institutions, government agencies, and IP bodies. The meeting aimed to strengthen institutional frameworks for innovation and IP management in line with Education 5.0, National Development Strategy 2, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Participating universities included Africa University, Arrupe Jesuit University, Great Zimbabwe University, Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences, Midlands State University, National University of Science and Technology, and Zimbabwe Open University. They were joined by the National Biotechnology Authority, Kutsaga Research Station, Zimbabwe Intellectual Property Office, African Regional Intellectual Property Organization, and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development. The diversity of institutions enriched discussions on IP governance, commercialisation strategies, and policy implementation.

In his opening remarks, MUAST Vice Chancellor Prof. J. Nyamangara emphasized the evolving role of universities as innovation-driven institutions capable of contributing directly to industrialisation, job creation, and national development. Prof. L. Macheke highlighted a critical gap in the sector: while Zimbabwean universities generate significant research outputs, IP protection and commercialisation remain low, with only one local university currently holding a granted patent in the ARIPO system.

Prof. T. Garikayi outlined five pillars for building effective university innovation ecosystems: governance and policy, technology transfer, spin-out creation, industry partnerships, and global engagement. He stressed that commercialisation requires strong institutional support beyond the academic function. Sessions led by ZIPO and ARIPO provided practical guidance on national and regional patent filing, utility models, industrial designs, and cross-border protection pathways.

Ministry officials commended MUAST for convening the platform and encouraged institutions to strengthen IP policies, awareness, and support systems through ongoing engagement with national and regional bodies.

The workshop achieved a shared understanding of current IP frameworks, identified key institutional gaps such as weak IP policies and limited commercialisation capacity, and strengthened collaboration networks. Key recommendations include developing comprehensive institutional IP policies, rolling out regular IP awareness and training,

strengthening partnerships with ZIPO and ARIPO, encouraging patent filing and commercialisation, and establishing national platforms for sharing best practices.

Facilitated by Ms. Zvikomborero Chidavaenzi, IP Manager, the workshop reinforced MUAŠT's commitment to driving research uptake, industrialisation, and socio-economic transformation through innovation.