REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Kenia
Kenya National Innovation Agency

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2025

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1.KENYA NETWORK OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP INSTITUTIONAL LEADERS (KNEIL) STRENGTHENED.

The Kenya Network of Entrepreneurial Institutions Leaders (KNEIL) is a platform for institutional leaders to discuss, co-design and drive solutions to challenges of entrepreneurial and innovation prospects of institutions. KNEIL is created to encourage & grow institutions' potential to develop, promote, nurture and drive sustainable innovation & entrepreneurial ecosystems within the institutions and by extension the country.

KNEIL is currently implementing their 3 year strategic plan (2024-2027). Over the 3-year strategic period the KNEIL has opted to focus on five (5) strategic objectives of strategic positioning, innovation mainstreaming, innovation commercialization, ecosystem development and resource mobilization. The leadership also settled on three priority projects which are to establish a Technology Transfer as a Service, the spinoff the KNEIL into an independent entity and the development of an innovation exchange platform.

Quarter 1

The activities on the strengthening of the KNEIL revolved around work on commencing the registration process of KNEIL, development of a membership structure for the council and services offered, designing of a framework for establishment of Technology Transfer Offices and TTOaaS in KeNIA and development of a model for commercializing university innovations and commercialization of one innovation during pilot stage.

The agency through consultation with the council leadership identified a suitable form of registration of the council as a Trust, the membership structure and governance framework for the council which was presented to the vice chair of the council for input and concurrence.

Around the activity on designing a framework for establishment of Technology Transfer Offices as a service in KeNIA, the Agency onboarded a consultant as envisaged, and the consultant began the work. By the end of Q1, the consultant had submitted an inception report for the work to be undertaken and a preliminary report of findings and recommendations based on desk research and interviews conducted with the identified stakeholders.

On development of a model for commercializing university innovations and commercialization of one innovation during pilot stage, the Agency onboarded a consultant that began work. The consultant submitted a draft inception report and a preliminary report on the work.

Quarter 2

KNEIL Website was developed and a Soft launch completed with stakeholder feedback incorporated. The website serves as a hub for KNEIL activities and resources.New resources, including downloadable templates for innovation strategies, were added to the website to enhance utility for stakeholders.

Design framework for establishment of Technology Transfer Offices as a service in KeNIA has been completed and submitted by the consultant. The Agency got support from Lemelson to

run the TTOaaS office and operations, and the technical roles were advertised and expected to be onboard first month of Q3 to begin implementation.
Develop Model for Commercializing University innovations completed Piloting of the underway.

Quarter 3

During the quarter, KNEIL was officially registered under the Registration of Documents (RDA) Act, Cap. 285 of the Laws of Kenya, and incorporated as a Trust under the Trustees (Perpetual Succession) Act, Cap. 164. As part of the registration process, KNEIL opened KSH and USD bank accounts with ABSA Bank PLC and has now submitted an application for tax registration. Additionally, KNEIL developed membership guidelines and standard operating agreements to strengthen its governance structure and operational framework.

The TTOaaS in KeNIA was operationalised with the onboarding of the project management office team as follows: Project lead consultant, Project Administrator and Legal Support officer and Project Growth catalyst.

Five universities were selected to pilot the TTOaaS model which includes University of Embu, University of Kabianga, DeKUT, Meru University and Egerton University.These institutions will test the framework and provide feedback for refinement. Venture onboarding is ongoing, with a structured due diligence process applied to assess readiness for commercialization of the selected ventures.

The commercialization model for university innovations was completed and piloted at the University of Embu. The pilot focused on the Cracksfox Innovation, an advanced self healing cement technology. The pilot phase yielded valuable insights into the commercialization process, with final evaluation and refinement underway. The Model will be used by the TTOaaS to implement.

Quarter 4

During the quarter, KNEIL initiated member onboarding and contributions, with three institutions confirming their membership and contributing a total of Ksh. 1,500,000. Daystar University joined as a full member, while Riara University and South Eastern Kenya University subscribed as associate members.

The KNEIL Fund was also activated with support from RISA to pilot the Innovation Funding Framework, targeting nine innovators under Cohort 4 of the R2C program.

In addition, a three-day training was conducted for 33 faculty members from various Kenyan universities on the establishment and operationalization of Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs). The training covered the institutional need for TTOs and introduced key assessment tools, including Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs). It also emphasized the role of Intellectual Property (IP) in innovation, with a focus on the various forms of IP, particularly Industrial

Property Rights. The governance structures for TTOs were discussed, alongside the legal, technical, and regulatory considerations necessary for setting up and running effective TTOs.

Outcome:

KNEIL governance structure strengthened through well-established structures and guidelines. Increased commercialization of innovations within institutions fostering a stronger link between research and market opportunities.

2.INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME.

The program aims to enhance the entrepreneurial capabilities of universities by fostering collaboration and innovation, developing effective innovation funding frameworks, development of institutional entrepreneurial masterplans and establishing robust evaluation and monitoring systems.

Additionally, it seeks to cultivate a sustainable entrepreneurial culture within higher education and strengthen collaboration between universities and industry partners.

Currently the programme has onboarded 14 Institutions into the programme.

Quarter 1

During the quarter, the institutions under the program completed their Peer-to-peer Entrepreneurial Institutions Maturity Framework (EIMF) evaluations. EIMF peer evaluations exercise enabled institutions to determine their maturity levels. It serves as a baseline,

identifying gaps and guiding institutions on their journey to becoming world-class entrepreneurial universities.

Institutional visits were conducted to assess various universities' innovation funding initiatives. A visit to the Kenya Climate Innovation Center (KCIC) was also made to benchmark its effective management of a large innovation fund, where the center's structured funding strategy, rigorous validation process, and strong governance were highlighted as best practices. Following these assessments. a draft report on the Innovation Funding Framework (IFF) was prepared and presented at CEIL 2024.

University policies reviews were conducted for four during the quarter, and specific recommendations were made to strengthen their innovation ecosystems. After reviewing these policies, the consultant provided actionable recommendations tailored to each institution's strategic goals. The next phase will involve stakeholder engagement, with universities encouraged to involve key players such as faculty, students, industry partners, and government agencies in the process.

Quarter 2

The Entrepreneurial Institutions Maturity Framework (EIMF) tool was reviewed. The primary focus was to revise the evaluation questions based on feedback received during the peer evaluation process and throughout the development of the entrepreneurial and commercialization masterplans. The final review of these revisions took place in December 2024, with the revised questions set to be uploaded to the new EIMF digital platform upon its completion.

A validation workshop for the M&E framework of the institutional masterplans was held where the IWGs from the 14 institutions attended the workshop and they successfully evaluated their Institutional Masterplan using the M and E toolkit as well as providing areas of improvement for the toolkit.

During the Kenya Innovation Week (KIW) 2024, Institutional commerciliazation masterplans were formalised by the Vice Chancellors signed and launched. These masterplans serve as strategic blueprints for each university, outlining key objectives and actionable steps to drive entrepreneurial ecosystems and research commercialization within their institutions. The signing of these plans represents a commitment from the universities to implement structured initiatives aimed at transforming their innovation landscapes, fostering collaboration with industry, and enhancing their capacity to manage and commercialize research outputs.

At KIW 2024, the Innovation Funding Toolkit for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was officially launched. This toolkit is designed to provide universities with practical resources and guidelines for securing and managing funding for innovation and commercialization initiatives. By offering a comprehensive guide on how to navigate funding opportunities, the toolkit empowers universities to effectively access and utilize financial resources to support entrepreneurial projects, technology transfer activities, and research commercialization efforts, thus driving greater innovation within the higher education sector.

13 universities submitted their policies for review, and recommendations were provided.

Stakeholder validation ongoing across the universities.

Quarter 3

During the quarter the development of the Digital Platform for the Entrepreneurial Institutional Maturity Framework (EIMF) was successfully completed. The platform will facilitate data collection, assessment, and institutional planning, enabling universities to make evidence-based decisions regarding their entrepreneurial and commercialization initiatives.

Quarter 4

During the quarter, Stories of Change were documented through interviews conducted by Eljay Productions across the 14 participating institutions. These narratives highlight institutional transformation in areas such as innovation culture, leadership, and resource mobilization. A consolidated publication is currently being finalized and will be shared with partners and stakeholders.

The Innovation Funding Toolkit, continues to be utilized by institutions, with some adapting it to align with their internal financial policies. Efforts are underway to develop support mechanisms that will assist institutions in operationalizing their funding frameworks, particularly through partnerships and internal resource alignment.

The commercialization policy reviews were completed across all 14 institutions. Recommendations aimed at strengthening intellectual property management, licensing, and technology transfer were submitted and are being gradually adopted. Institutions are now working to align their policies with global best practices in commercialization.

The EIMF Digital Platform was operationalised across participating institutions, with dashboards and reporting tools actively in use. Technical support and training sessions were conducted to enhance institutional uptake and ensure consistent data entry and utilization. The platform has become a key tool for tracking progress and supporting planning efforts.

An open call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) to join Cohort 3 of the Institutional Support (IS) program was conducted where a total of 28 universities submitted applications. Following the evaluation, 11 new institutions were selected to join Cohort 3,which include: Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) ,he University of Eldoret ,Karatina University, Cooperative University of Kenya,Zetech University, USIU – Africa, Strathmore University, Pwani University, Kisii University,Murang'a University of Technology and Kabarak University

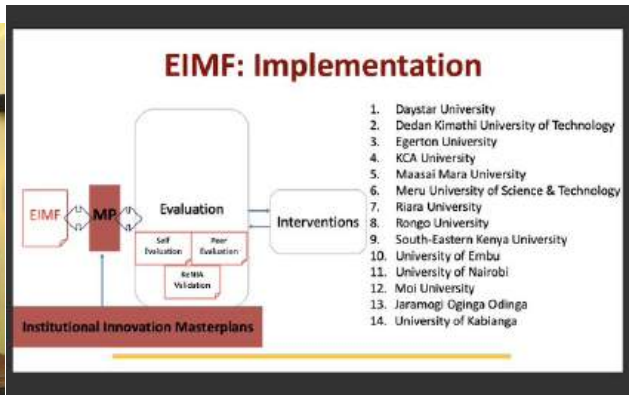
Outcome

A monitoring and evaluation toolkit developed that tracks the implementation of institutions' innovation and commercialization masterplans, highlighting successes, identifying areas for improvement, and pinpointing key intervention points.

Innovation funding framework developed that guides the Institutions on how to attract innovation funding as well as to how effectively manage the funds for impact.

The institutions of higher education internal systems are strengthened as they transform their entrepreneurial culture and mindset hence becoming more sustainable. This in turn has a ripple effect as the University can now address current existing societal challenges therefore improving the lives of their local communities. Additionally, through the spin off companies and startup companies that are generated in the university they will create job opportunities

for the local community hence improving lives across the country.



3.RESEARCH TO COMMERCILIAZATION PROGRAMME(R2C)

The program is informed by the need to support the creation of commercial value out of the research outputs in Universities and Research Centres. The target audience for the R2C program is researchers, academics, and entrepreneurs who wish to bridge the gap between innovative research ideas and commercial success.

KeNIA partners with Viktoria Ventures to implement the program, as an accelerator which strengthens the researcher's ability to design a business model and raise funding to commercialise their innovations.

The program is based on experiential training, mentorship and coaching towards pitching their ideas to potential investors and or commercialising their ideas.

Further, the R2C program involves a Train of Trainer to develop capacity of potential facilitators in institutions of higher learning.

The programme has been able to train 30 innovators and 38 trainer of trainers course. Over 48million has been raised by the innovators in the programme.The Agency plans to cascade the programme in institutions of higher learning for

Quarter 1

The Research to commercialization (R2C) TOT Cohort 5 Training commenced on from 22nd July 2024.The cohort had 20 participants, who were considered after successfully applying and meeting the merit thresholds of the call done by Viktoria Ventures in partnership with

KeNIA. The training was to orient the ToTS on how to set up and run a successful R2C Program in an institution.

Quarter 2

During the quarter 18 innovators exhibited and pitched under PIA R2C category during the KIW24.The winners were identified and shall be awarded alongside other PIA categories.

Quarter 3

During the quarter the Research to Commercialization Phase 3 Kickoff meeting was held, bringing together KeNIA, the RISA Fund, and Viktoria Ventures as implementing partners. A Letter of Intent was Signed between KeNIA, the RISA Fund, and Viktoria Solutions Limited committing to collaborate in executing the program.

The 3rd phase of R2C will focus on: Implement the Venture Builder Program to support startups and innovators; Expand commercialization capacity across 25 universities and research institutions and Host key industry engagements and knowledge-sharing forums.

Quarter 4

During the quarter, the inaugural training for the first cohort of 25 Deputy Vice Chancellors (DVCs) was conducted. Anchored in the Entrepreneurial Institutional Maturity Framework (EIMF), the training aimed to build a solid foundation in institutional commercialization and innovation governance. Key sessions covered strategic visioning, funding models, innovation ecosystems, and strengthening industry linkages. Experiential learning methods were integrated, including case studies, peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, and workshops facilitated by both local and international experts. Each participating university conducted a self-assessment using the EIMF to identify priority areas for institutional transformation.

Outcome

The researchers' capacity strengthened on shaping business models for their research outputs and crafting resource mobilization and commercialization models for their innovations.

Strengthened Institutions Technology Transfer Offices through the Train of Trainers program, equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to run R2C programs effectively.

4.INNOVATION ACADEMY

Capacity building of innovators, one of the functions of KeNIA, is done through the innovation Academy program. The Academy is a special purpose vehicle for all forms of innovation related capacity building coordinated at KeNIA.

Quarter 1

The second session of the Entrepreneurial Leaders Training Program (ELTP) - Vice Chancellor Edition took place on July 25, 2024. It comprised a local tour to two key institutions: the Chandaria Incubation Centre at Kenyatta University and the Technology Transfer Office at the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) in Nairobi. Seven Vice Chancellors and three Vice Chancellor representatives participated in this session.

The third session of ELTP was held on August 28, 2024, at Pride Inn Paradise in Mombasa, as a pre-event to the CEIL summit. Eleven Vice Chancellors attended this session, which addressed two main topics: building inclusive interactions in higher education innovation ecosystems and the challenges and successes in leading an entrepreneurial institution. Key areas of focus included integrating entrepreneurship into curricula, fostering industry-academia partnerships, and developing new resource mobilization methods.

The WIPO Academy and Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA) joined forces to organize a unique Executive Training Program from September 16 to 20, 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya. The program brought together close to 40 participants driving innovation, research and technology transfer activities in public and private institutions. The participants harnessed the opportunity to boost their intellectual property (IP) management skills and capabilities. A particular focus was dedicated to integrating IP into business models, innovation processes

and commercialization strategies, which unlocks future growth and ultimately contributes to sustainable development.

Quarter 2

(ELTP for Vice Chancellors edition held a training bootcamp in India from October 14th to 18th , 2024. The bootcamp was attended by 12 Vice Chancellors 2 parliamentarians from the Social Protection Sector and representatives from KeNIA. The bootcamp was designed to empower participants with the necessary leadership skills to create dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystems within their institutions, focusing on innovation and commercialization.

The final session of ELTP for Vice Chancellors edition took place during the KIW24 which facilitated by East Africa Venture Capital Association (EAVCA). During the session, a graduation ceremony the 14 Vice Chancellors' were awarded with certificates of completion.

6th to 8th November 2024 a training workshop was held for 25 KeNHA staff on Research, Innovation, and Monetization. It focused on aligning research and innovation strategies with institutional goals, fostering partnerships, and leveraging tools like the KeNHAVATE portal for idea generation and implementation.

Quarter 3

During the quarter, The Startup School was launched which is a transformative program aimed at empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs, innovators, and ecosystem leaders. It provides world-class skills, tools, and resources to help build and scale sustainable businesses. As part of The Startup School, the Educator Edition was introduced. This initiative is specifically designed to equip faculty members with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to inspire entrepreneurial thinking and innovation among students. The training bridges the gap between theory and practice, reimagining traditional teaching methods and highlighting the vital role of entrepreneurship education in driving economic growth, creating societal impact, and nurturing resilient entrepreneurial ecosystems.

The first cohort of the Educator Edition enrolled 26 participants from entrepreneurial departments across 17 institutions of higher learning in Kenya. The training took place from January to April 2025.The program was structured into three modules: Module 1: Understanding the ‘Why’; Module 2: What Does the 21st-Century Startup Student Really Need?;Module 3: Evidence of Success – A Focus on Local and Global Impact through Showcasing Success Stories and Engaging with the Ecosystem

Quarter 4

During the quarter, thirty representatives from State Corporations participated in a specialized training on Designing an Organizational Innovation Strategy. This program targeted Heads of Departments responsible for shaping their organizations’ strategic direction and enhancing competitiveness within their respective industries. The training aimed to deepen their understanding of the evolving role of organizations in driving innovation to support the country’s economic growth.

In parallel, thirty representatives from universities and research institutions took part in Module 1 of a training course titled ‘Setting and Operationalizing a Technology Transfer Office’. The course, designed for Heads of Research, Innovation, or Technology Transfer Offices,

focused on building capacity for the commercialization of research outputs and innovations. This training is structured in two modules.

Additionally, the 37 PIA Awardees for 2024–2025 underwent an intensive bootcamp covering critical areas such as the stages of design thinking, legal and intellectual property (IP) considerations, business modeling, pivoting strategies, strategic planning for startups, and partnership development for startup growth.

A total of 200 university students from both public and private universities who are passionate about solving societal challenges were engaged in a training program titled 'Re-Imagining Innovation Within a University Innovation System'. The program offered a unique platform for students to interact with industry experts and thought leaders across the National Innovation System and the startup ecosystem.

Finally, the graduation ceremony for the ELTP – Educator Trainees marked the completion of the Startup School – Educator Edition, celebrating 24 faculty members who had successfully completed an intensive three-module training program on institutional innovation and entrepreneurship. Held as part of the broader Startup Festival, the event brought together university leaders, development partners, and key stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem to recognize the cohort's achievements and reflect on the wider impact of the initiative.

Outcome

The ELTP sessions provided practical insights and strategies for transforming universities into entrepreneurial hubs. Participants engaged in critical discussions about establishing innovation centers, managing intellectual property, and cultivating industry collaborations. The programs facilitated peer learning and the exchange of best practices, leading to concrete plans for implementing entrepreneurial strategies within their respective universities. The Vice Chancellors also explored new methods of resource mobilization, including attracting philanthropic support through effective institutional structures and strong corporate governance.

During the ELTP Vice Chancellor India bootcamp they managed to signed partnership agreements with IITH and IITM aimed at fostering and implementing various programmes on commercialization of Innovations between the Institutions

During the final session a partnership agreement was signed between the Agency, KNEIL, and EAVCA aimed at fostering initiatives of resource mobilization for the innovators and startups as well as capacity building of innovators.

Participants of the WIPO Executive Course gained a comprehensive understanding of intellectual property (IP) fundamentals and strategies, covering key areas such as the importance of IP for innovation, cost-effective IP management, and selecting appropriate protections in Africa. The course also explored conducting IP audits and due diligence, safeguarding intangible assets for business growth, monetizing innovation through IP exploitation, integrating IP into innovation strategies, and maximizing returns across the IP lifecycle.

WIPO Academy mandated KeNIA to serve as the focal institution for WIPO in Kenya, providing interested participants with access to WIPO Academy's e-learning courses.

The Startup School Educator Edition capacitated the educators on how to bridge the gap between theory and practice, enabling students to gain the practical skills essential for success in today's fast-paced, innovation-driven economies.

Designing of an Organization Innovation Strategy Enhanced the understanding of the evolving role of organizations in driving innovation for enhanced economic growth of the country.

setting and operationalizing technology transfer office training capacitied the officers on the role of the TTO office in their institution and how to set and operationalize the office.

5.KENYA INNOVATION WEEK 2024

Kenya Innovation Week (KIW) is the premier innovation forum in Kenya, organized by the Kenya National Innovation Agency. It brings together innovators, entrepreneurs, policymakers, investors, and experts and other stakeholders from around the world to celebrate the innovative spirit of Kenyans and showcase practical skills that lead to innovations with a positive impact on people, while advancing the national priorities of the Kenya Vision 2030.

Quarter 1

On 12th August 2024, the Kenya Innovation Week (KIW) 2024 Roadmap and Concept Note were officially unveiled to key stakeholders during an exclusive breakfast meeting held at the Movenpick Hotel Nairobi. The session graced by the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee for Social Protection Hon. Alice Ng'ang'a brought together industry leaders, innovators, policymakers, and partners to discuss the strategic direction and objectives of KIW 2024 - Africa Edition, scheduled for November 25-29, 2024.

The Commercialisation and Entrepreneurial Institutions Leaders' (CEIL) Summit 2024, held from 28th to 29th August 2024, was a pivotal pre-event for the upcoming Kenya Innovation Week (KIW) 2024. The summit was officiated by the Principle Secretary State Department for Higher Education and Research Dr. Beatrice Inyangala. The summit included pre-events on the KNEIL network, the Institutional Support programme, and the Research to Commercialization Accelerator.

Hosted at Pride Inn, Mombasa, the summit brought together leaders from academia, research, and entrepreneurial institutions to discuss strategies for scaling innovations and enhancing commercialization pathway. The focus was to catalyze a paradigm shift in Kenya's research and entrepreneurial ecosystems, focusing on Youths, Jobs, and Wealth Creation.

On 6th September 2024, the Kenya Innovation Week (KIW) 2024 Co-Creation Meeting was held at the STEM Impact Center, focusing on partner engagements aimed at co-creating the upcoming KIW2024 - Africa Edition. The interactive session brought together diverse stakeholders, including innovators, businesses, academic institutions, and government agencies, to discuss collaborative opportunities for shaping the event. Participants explored ways to enhance innovation ecosystems across Africa, foster entrepreneurship, and drive impact through partnerships. KeNIA invites potential partners to join this exciting journey in advancing Africa's innovation landscape by contributing to the success of KIW2024

The CRIW event, was held from September 16th to 19th, 2024, was a dynamic gathering of innovators, entrepreneurs, and key industry stakeholders. The event kicked off with hands-on workshops on innovation and research project management, alongside pitch coaching sessions.

Keynote speeches and plenary sessions were major highlights, with speakers from KeNIA offering insights on research commercialization and government support for innovation. The

event featured exhibitions from KeNIA and other public and private sector organizations, showcasing their initiatives and engaging with participants. The CRIW event concluded with an awards ceremony.

The International Association of Science Parks (IASP) Conference 2024 was held from 24th to 27th September 2024 at the Edge Convention Centre. KeNIA highlighted its initiatives, during the various sessions and exhibited throughout the week. In addition, KeNIA was formally welcomed to the IASP network with one board member representing KeNIA in the welcoming session. KeNIA CEO received the "New Member" acknowledgement award for the Agency.

Quarter 2

The Kenya Innovation Week (KIW) 2024, Africa Edition, held from November 25–29, 2024, at the Edge Convention Centre, Nairobi, brought together visionaries, innovators, investors, and policymakers to shape Africa's innovation trajectory. With over 7,700 delegates and 306 exhibitors from more than 30 countries, the event cemented Kenya's position as a continental innovation leader, showcasing its ecosystem as a driver of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

This year's theme, Re-imagining Africa's Future through Kenya's Innovative Spark, emphasized leveraging innovation to address pressing challenges, stimulate economic growth, and create inclusive opportunities. The event featured 25 summits, and side-events that fostered collaboration, generated transformative ideas, and supported the growth of startups.

H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto, President of Kenya, reaffirmed Kenya's commitment to innovation as a cornerstone of economic transformation, aligning with the African Continental Free Trade Area goals.

Quarter 3

During the quarter, the draft KIW 2024 report and design work were finalized. The report will be shared with key stakeholders for review and approval by KeNIA leadership. It is scheduled for an official launch on April 24, 2025, during the KeNIA Innovation Ecosystem Development breakfast meeting.

Quarter 4

During the quarter, the Kenya Innovation Week and CEIL Summit reports were consolidated, designed, and finalized. The reports were subsequently printed and disseminated to partners and stakeholders. They are now accessible on KeNIA's website: https://kenia.go.ke/resources/publications.

Outcome

The pre-events and KIW have increased the visibility of the innovation agency. As a result, the agency has received recognition. Further, the Agency has been able to articulate the mandate and impact through the event.

During the co-creation breakfast, Partner made commitments and agreements for supporting KIW 2024

KeNIA was onboarded into the International Association of Science Parks (IASP), a move that will significantly boost the agency's efforts in promoting innovation. It will also enhance

KeNIA's visibility on a global scale, allowing for greater collaboration and opportunities in the innovation ecosystem.

CEIL summit Recommendation and Resolutions were:

1. Kenya Network of Entrepreneurial Institutions Leaders (KNEIL) to Formalize and admit members.
2. Institutional Commercialization Support (IS) Program Phase 3:Additional Universities, Enable running of R2C at institutional level and enhance Stronger Institutional Working groups
3. Entrepreneurial Institutions Maturity Framework (EIMF):Mainstream in the culture of the 14 institutions and sign off and operationalize the 14 entrepreneurship an institutional commercialization masterplans on 26th November 2024.
4. National TTOaS (shared TTO) hosted at KeNIA:Operationalize the TTOaaS, accessible to KNEIL members; Guide commercialization of 3-5 projects and Coordinate capacity building of institutional TTOs
5. Structured Innovation Funding: Establish a fund to support early stage innovation and announce the fund at CEIL 2025.Involve Private sector/Partner supported fund and Deal signing at CEIL 2025
6. Entrepreneurial Leaders Training Program: Explore VC training level 2 as well as Introduce Entrepreneurial Leaders training for Directors and DVCs
7. Innovation Sectors/Value Chains: Guide and Mainstream engagement of Clusters and Value chain.
8. CEIL Summit 2025 shall be Tentatively 28th to 29th Aug 2025.It will Target 40% value based private sector participation . EIMF findings and insights of each institution shall be shared.

At KIW H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto made the following pronouncement to the Agency:

1. Moving of the Agency to the Office of the President.
2. A KES 500 million increase in the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA) budget.
3. A KES 1 billion allocation to the Start-Up Fund to support commercialization and reduce venture risks.

KIW Recommendation and Resolutions were:

1. Launching an Annual Innovation Outlook,
2. Completing the National IP Policy,
3. Targeting a top 50 position in the Global Innovation Index by 2034.

kiw

Future Cities: The Role of Smart Cities to Drive
kiw

6. INNOVATION AGENCIES IN AFRICA NETWORK

IDRC commissioned and funded a study on "Mapping of Innovation Systems and Innovation Agencies in Africa" in 2023/2024 to understand the role of innovation agencies in stimulating and accelerating innovation in developing countries.

Later, KeNIA responded to a call to steer the establishment of the Network of Innovation Agencies in Africa.

The initial project term is a 3-year pilot phase, with the three coordinating institutions expected to develop a longer-term sustainability plan for the network beyond the funding cycle.

The project is structured into three main work-packages with the respective agencies leading them:

1. Work Package 1 – Network Establishment and Governance (KeNIA)
2. Work Package 2 – Joint Innovation Programmes
3. Work Package 3 – Research, Evidence Generation and Capacity Building

The project is funded by IDRC to the tune of Canadian Dollars 1,550,000 (CAD 1.5M), with KeNIA's work package 1 receiving CAD 1 million over the three-year period. The official project start date will be 1st November 2024. KeNIA is set to receive the grant agreement from IDRC at the beginning of Q2 for signing prior to the official start of the project.

KeNIA Role in the is to; Host the network office in Nairobi, Kenya; develop and implement a governance structure for the network ;member recruitment for the network; capacity build Agencies and stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem; create awareness and position the network across the continent; develop and implement a financial sustainability strategy beyond the 3-year and Mobilize resources for the network activities to supplement grant funds

Quarter 1

KeNIA participated in a writeshop for proposal Development at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa from **19th -21st August 2024** with the other 2 coordination institutions. During the writeshop a proposal was developed and the budget for the work packages that KeNIA will be overseeing.

Quarter 2

The Agency signed the grant agreement with IDRC and subsequently communicated the grant financing to The National Treasury through the Ministry. Funds that have been received from IDRC KES 5.7M

3 Stakeholder sessions have been held with prospective members drawn from Sub-Saharan African countries to apprise them on the network :

a. Virtual session in November 2024
b. Presentations and initial member recruitment initiative during the SGCI Conference held in Botswana on November 2024
c. Roundtable session at the Kenya Innovation Week in November 2024
d. Project kick-off meeting with funders and the three implementing agencies on the sidelines of Kenya Innovation Week in November 2024

Advertisement and subsequent interviews for 6 project staff positions were conducted in December 2024.

Quarter 3

During the quarter, the Project Management Office (PMO) team was onboarded to coordinate and oversee the network's activities. The team includes a Project Coordinator, multiple Project Assistants (focusing on Capacity Development, Communication, Advocacy, and Administration), as well as an Accounts and Administration Officer and a Project Administration Assistant.

A comprehensive joint work plan for the first pilot year was collaboratively developed, outlining key activities and deliverables for the three project teams: KeNIA, National Commission of Research Science and Technology Namibia (NCRST), and (University of Johannesburg under the Trilateral Research Chair in Transformative Innovation(UJ-TRCTI).

To refine the network's approach, a validation workshop was held to gather input from the coordinating team on the Value Proposition, IAA Network Governance Structure, and Online Training Needs Assessment.

Additionally, a mapping exercise was conducted to identify national innovation agencies and hubs across 14 countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa, Namibia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Cape Verde. As a result, four organizations from Cape Verde, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, and Uganda expressed interest in joining the network. Plans to onboard Science Granting Councils (SGCs) are also in progress, with initial mapping of current leads completed and an introductory meeting held with the Programme Management Officer for the SGCI Programme.

To raise awareness and attract memberships, one-on-one sessions were conducted with the KeNIA CEO. Engagements were also held with key institutions, including the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Ghana, and the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH).

A strategic programme has been designed to strengthen Africa's innovation ecosystem by fostering cross-border partnerships and enhancing the capacities of innovation hubs and national innovation agencies. With a focus on green, digital, and inclusive innovation, the programme aims to address key challenges and drive the commercialization of high-potential innovations.

Several project activities will be implemented such as Capacity Building, Website and knowledge portal Development Consultant and Awareness creation Across Africa.

A dedicated landing page for the network was created and integrated into the IAA website. Additionally, the official IAA Network logo was developed, reviewed, and approved. Social media platforms, including LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, have also been launched to enhance visibility and engagement.

https://www.linkedin.com/company/iaafricanetwork/
https://www.facebook.com/iaafricanetwork/
https://x.com/IAAfricaNetwork

Quarter 4

During the quarter, a formal governance structure for the IAA Network was approved, marking a major milestone in the network's institutional development. Implementation has commenced, beginning with the formation of the Steering Committee. This achievement followed a highly consultative process, which included two validation workshops and a series of in-depth, iterative discussions during the tri-weekly Project Team meetings.

The Expression of Interest (EOI) for Pilot Joint Collaborative Programme 1 (JCP1) was also finalized and circulated. Led by the National Commission on Research, Science, and Technology (NCRST), the EOI invites IAA Network members to participate in JCP1—an initiative aimed at fostering a co-created, participatory model where African innovation agencies and partners define shared priorities, design joint projects, and mobilize resources to advance regional innovation. The EOI was developed through an iterative and collaborative process within the Project Team meetings.

Additionally, three countries—Tanzania, Uganda, and Cape Verde—were officially onboarded into the network during the quarter. A dedicated onboarding session was held to introduce the network's mission and engage new members in aligning expectations and exploring collaborative opportunities.

Outcome

Enhanced operational capacity of innovation agencies in Africa.

Strengthened national and regional innovation ecosystems, that promotes cross-border collaborations.

Increased capability of member agencies to champion transformative innovation policies across Africa.

Call for
Expression of Interest
Joint Collaborative Programme
Programme Objectives
Who Can Apply?
How to Apply?
Evaluation Criteria
Location
Africa
Thematic Areas
Ocean, Digital and Inclusive Innovation
TIMELINE
Submission Deadline
16 July 2025, 23:00 (GMT/UTC+2)
Collaboration Kickoff
1 August 2025
Co-design Proposal
4 - 29 August 2025
Proposal Evaluation and Awarding
01 - 12 September 2025
Contracting and Funds Disbursement
till September 2025
CONTACT INFORMATION

7.NATIONAL INNOVATION OUTLOOK 2024

The overarching objective of the KIO24 report is to produce an informative, annual tracker to monitor the progress of the innovation system in Kenya. Regular assessment of wider science, technology and innovation performance is important for any nation to drive policies, competitiveness, and benchmarking. Cognizant that investments in science, technology and innovation (STI) are at the heart of sustainable development and critical to ensuring long-term and inclusive growth and is committed to commissioning high-quality research that directly improves people's lives in a way that is inclusive and leaves no one behind. It is also important that the research is easily accessible to decision makers in the Kenyan Government, academia, private sector, civil society and in the broader development community. The report is therefore supposed to align with the 10-year national innovation masterplan and provide indicators and be a basis for reporting the M&E for implementation of the masterplan.

Quarter 1

FCDO and KeNIA developed the terms of reference for the consultancy for KIO and a consultant was onboarded. A project steering team was formed consisting of leaders in the ecosystem and representatives from the funder and KeNIA.

A detailed inception report was also submitted by the consultant and approved by KeNIA and the funder detailing the project workplan, consultants for the work, stakeholders to be interviewed and data sources to be used for the research and development of the report.

The consultant has begun desk research and conducting interviews with the identified stakeholders.

Quarter 2

The draft KIO report was subjected to a stakeholder review workshop in November 2024 and comments and feedback incorporated with a final draft being shared at the end of Q2 for KeNIA's onward presentation to the Board.

The KIO data platform was also developed and technically reviewed by KeNIA team and comments incorporated. The platform was presented to stakeholders at KIW 2024 and feedback received on areas of improvement.

Quarter 3

During the quarter the draft KIO was finalized as well as design work. The report shall be launched on April 24, 2025, during the KeNIA Innovation Ecosystem Development breakfast meeting.

Quarter 4

During the quarter, the KIO 2024 was launched and disseminated. Detailed insights provided across the five pillars are;

1. Human Capital: Increased TVET enrolment (642,000 in 2023, up from 451,000 in 2020) and rising female participation in TVETs (42% to 46%). Most universities assessed were at EIMF Level 2, indicating early-stage entrepreneurial maturity.
2. Access to Finance: Startups raised $692 million in 2023, though a drop from $1.15 billion in 2022. A significant 81% of funding came from international sources,

highlighting a local investor gap. Women-led startups received only 12% of total funding (2019-2023).

3. Access to Markets: Strong momentum in fintech, agtech, and healthtech innovation, with regional opportunities via AfCFTA and COMESA. However, limited commercialization of research due to weak academia-industry links was noted.
4. Infrastructure: Nairobi leads with over 50 innovation hubs, but regional disparities persist. Broadband and renewable energy investments are expanding, though rural access remains low. Policy: The 10-Year Innovation Masterplan now guides national strategy. The Startup Bill (pending since 2021) promises formal startup support, and IP reforms aim to boost research protection and commercialization. Enhanced Monitoring Tool: The development of the Innovation Master Plan (IMP) Reporting Tool provides a sustainable mechanism for tracking, evaluating, and reporting on the progress of Kenya's Innovation Master Plan.
5. Increased Stakeholder Engagement: The project fostered greater collaboration and knowledge sharing among diverse ecosystem players through interviews, workshops, and validation calls.
6. Global Positioning: The report contributed to strengthening Kenya's innovation standing in global indices, such as the Global Innovation Index (ranked 96th in 2024).

Outcome

KIO 2024 report and online data platform developed that provides insights into the progress of the 10-year innovation master plan's pillars implementation across various innovational ecosystems in the country.

The KIO report provides the following key recommendations to further strengthen Kenya's innovation ecosystem:

1. Coordinate Ecosystem Efforts
2. Engage Corporates
3. Leverage Clean Energy Strength
4. Centralize Innovation Data
5. Mobilize Local Investors
6. Improve Global Rankings
7. Enhance ESO Quality
8. Use Public Procurement
9. Strengthen IP Support

8. THE NATIONAL INNOVATION POLICY

The development of the National Innovation Policy is being funded and supported by WIPO.The main deliverables are: Developing a comprehensive National IP Policy and Formulating a three-year Implementation Strategy (2024-2027).

Key partners for the program include; KeNIA, Kenya Intellectual Property Institute (KIPI), Kenya Copyright Board (KECOBO), Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), National Research Fund (NRF), National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and Anti Counterfeit Agency. The partners are collaborating to offer technical guidance and expertise towards the development of the policy.

Quarter 1

The lead Consultant was onboarded and begun work with desk research.

Quarter 2

A steering committee composed of the heads of the 7 key Agencies was formed , which set the process of developing a comprehensive National IP Policy in motion as well as provided strategic guidance and oversight throughout the policy development process.

A situational analysis report was developed based on an extensive desk reviews and interviews from various stakeholders which aimed to assess the current state of intellectual property frameworks and identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.

The report was subjected to stakeholder validation during a stakeholders' conference. The conference adopted a thematic approach, exploring specific niches within the intellectual property landscape. Stakeholders, guided by the technical committee, proposed policy considerations tailored to address the identified gaps and opportunities. The views were collected and are in use as a guiding tool in drafting a the NIPPS.

Quarter 3

During the quarter the draft IP Policy was submitted to the technical and steering committee by the consultant for adoption. Awaiting further stakeholder validation before the policy can be subjected to public participation.

Quarter 4

During the quarter, the draft policy was finalized. The policy aims to address key gaps in existing legislation, institutional capacity, commercialization pathways, enforcement mechanisms, and public awareness. It emphasizes the importance of regional and international collaboration, the integration of emerging technologies, and the promotion of inclusivity across gender, geographic regions, and economic sectors. Specifically, the policy seeks to:

a) Reform outdated laws and introduce new legal instruments to address emerging technologies, align with international treaties, and expand the scope of IP protection including trade secrets and geographical indications.

b) Enhance inter-agency coordination by establishing a National IP Coordination Office, decentralizing services to counties, and operationalizing specialized IP courts and tribunals.

c)Increase national R&D funding to 2% of GDP, dedicate 5% of public research funds to IP protection, and support Technology Transfer Offices, Collective Management Organizations, and innovation hubs to facilitate commercialization.

d)Equip enforcement agencies such as the Anti-Counterfeit Authority and Kenya Copyright Board with adequate resources, improve border controls, raise public awareness, and impose stricter penalties to combat counterfeiting and piracy.

e) Advance gender equity in innovation, expand access for the informal sector, and implement targeted outreach to increase representation and participation across all communities.

f) Embed IP education in national curricula at all levels and run nationwide campaigns to foster an IP-conscious culture from early learning through to professional sectors.

g) Develop policy guidance for AI-generated IP, biotechnology, and digital assets, and establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to review implementation progress every three years.

Outcome

National Innovation Policy developed that will guide the Country's intellectual property framework which shall safeguard rights, foster creativity, and maximize innovation exploitation.

9.PRESIDENTIAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE AND AWARD

The Presidential Innovation Award (PIA) is a programme run by the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports that intends to develop the entrepreneurial capacity of innovators across the country within the national priority areas. It recognises and awards the innovative work of top innovators; Youths out of school, Student in Universities, Researchers, and Startups that create jobs and drive economic growth.

PIA targets Youths in 47 Counties with innovations in Health Care, Food Security and Agriculture, Digital Transformation, Entertainment and gaming and Climate Action and Green Energy.

Through PIA, KeNIA can scout and identify most promising innovative ideas and solutions from across the country; showcase the most promising innovations and start-ups at the Kenya Innovation Week; recognise the achievements of the most promising innovators and start-ups and support the commercialisation of the promising innovations through a Presidential accelerator programme.

Quarter 1

During the quarter a draft Concept note was developed as well as enhancing the PIA online portal from the feedback received from the last year PIA.

Quarter 2

During the quarter, the PIA 2024 Cohort 11 was officially launched on October 11, 2024, with online applications opening on November 17, 2024. A total of 481 complete applications were received across four categories: R2C Category, Startup Category, Youth Out-of-School Category, and University Category.

The R2C Category group showcased their innovations and pitched during the 2024 Kenya Innovation Week, with 18 innovators participating in the pitching session. Winners for the PIA R2C category were identified from these participants.

Additionally, the evaluation of applications for the Startup, Youth Out-of-School, and University categories was completed. Shortlisting of innovators in these categories for the final pitching and awarding event, scheduled for Q3 FY 2024-2025, was also finalized to determine the overall winners.

Quarter 3

During the quarter, due diligence was conducted on four shortlisted startups in the R2C Category Finals. These included Afyalishe and Ongataki from Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Crackfox from the University of Embu, and Green Enzyme Technologies Limited from the University of Kabianga. These final four research-based startups will now join the TTOaaS program to support their scaling and go-to-market strategies.

Additionally, 86 innovators were shortlisted for the final pitching exercise, which includes;20 innovators in the Startup Category;44 innovators in the Youth Out-of-School Category and 22 innovators in the University Category.

Following the pitching exercise, thirty five county winners for Youth Category and three overall winners each from Youth out of school category, Startup category and University category were identified. These selected innovators will receive awards and join an acceleration program to support their further development and growth.

Quarter 4

During the quarter, PIA awards and disbursements were issued to thirty (30) County Winners, each receiving Ksh. 500,000. In addition, three (3) R2C national winners received a total of Ksh. 10 million, distributed as follows: Winner – Ksh. 5 million, 1st Runner-Up – Ksh. 3 million, and 2nd Runner-Up – Ksh. 2 million.

Due diligence was conducted for the nine (9) overall national winners across three categories:

- Youth Category (Out of School): CropScan Smart Farming IoT Technology, Zerobionic, Ngeli Ventures Limited
- Startup Category: Bioethanol and Biohydrogen Production, Safe Sanitary Pads from Banana Fiber, Cloud Busy Innovations
- University Student Category: Nyansapo AI, Nakuru Tubers, Neural Labs Africa

Additionally, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) was carried out for eight (8) County Winners from the counties of Migori, Kisumu, Siaya, Vihiga, Laikipia, Kajiado, Taita Taveta, Mombasa, and Kilifi.

Outcome

The most promising innovations recognised, awarded and taken through the accelerator programme to support, commercialize their innovation.

10. A maturity framework for Startup intermediaries.

The Maturity Framework for Startup Intermediaries is a structured tool designed to assess, benchmark, and enhance the capabilities of Entrepreneurial Support Organizations (ESOs) such as incubators, accelerators, hubs, venture studios, and co-working spaces. These intermediaries play a critical role in nurturing startups by providing mentorship, market access, funding linkages, and capacity-building programs. However, the effectiveness of these ESOs varies widely, and many face challenges such as limited funding models, weak governance structures, and inconsistent service delivery.

Through a structured self-assessment model, intermediaries will be able to identify areas for growth, benchmark against international best practices, and access tailored capacity-building interventions. This initiative will also enable policymakers and investors to better understand which intermediaries are investment-ready and which require additional support to effectively serve startups.

Quarter 1

During the quarter a mapping exercise was undertaken to analyze existing maturity frameworks for startup intermediaries, both locally and internationally. This involved: Reviewing regional and global best practices from organizations such as the World Bank, GSMA, OECD, and ANDE to understand how intermediaries are assessed in different markets; Conducting a SWOT analysis of intermediaries in Kenya to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; Engaging key stakeholders, including representatives from innovation hubs, accelerators, co-working spaces, and government agencies, to gather insights on the operational gaps and needs of ESOs.

Quarter 2

During the quarter an in-depth desk research and gap analysis was conducted to shape a customized maturity framework for Kenya. Activities included: Analyzing the best-performing intermediaries in Africa and beyond to establish success factors that can be adapted to Kenya; Linking the gaps identified in the SWOT analysis to best practices to define practical indicators for measuring intermediary maturity; Structuring the framework into progressive maturity levels, ranging from nascent (early stage intermediaries) to advanced (high-performing, scalable ESOs).

Quarter 3

During the quarter, high-level stakeholder forums were convened to engage with key players in the startup ecosystem, including ASSEK, startup hubs, Jasiri, and development partners, to gather additional insights for the framework. The compilation of collected data is ongoing and will inform the Draft Maturity Framework for Intermediaries.

Quarter 4

During the quarter, significant progress was made in the development and validation of a tailored maturity framework for incubators and accelerators. This involved a comprehensive review of global best practices in incubator/accelerator assessments and institutional maturity models. A customized framework was then designed to align with Kenya's innovation ecosystem, focusing on key performance areas such as governance, program design, sectoral specialization, sustainability, partnerships, thought leadership, and knowledge systems. To ensure contextual relevance and stakeholder ownership, feedback was integrated from startups, funders, and ecosystem leaders across the country.

The framework was translated into a digital self-assessment tool, enabling Entrepreneurial Support Organizations (ESOs) to assess their maturity across the defined dimensions. The tool includes automated scoring and a dashboard for real-time feedback and performance tracking.

A pilot phase was launched, involving the identification and onboarding of five (5) ESOs from diverse counties to ensure geographical, thematic, and organizational diversity. The participating ESOs included: Green & Digital Innovation Hub (gDIH) – Machakos County; Makueni Tech and Innovation Hub – Makueni County; Nakuru Box and CoELIB – Nakuru County;EldoHub – Uasin Gishu County and Anza Village – Nairobi County

Outcome

A maturity framework for Startup intermediaries developed that aims to establish standardized performance metrics that assess intermediaries based on key dimensions, including governance & policy support, financial sustainability, infrastructure, talent development, innovation culture, market access, and sustainability impact.

10.The Kenya Startup Festival 2025

The Kenya Startup Festival 2025 was designed as an inaugural national convening of innovation stakeholders to amplify the visibility, support, and scale of startups across the country. The event served as a platform to foster collaboration, explore regulatory and

market opportunities, and accelerate Kenya's transformation into a startup powered economy. It was led by the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA), in partnership with key public and private sector actors.

Quarter 1

During the quarter, initial planning and stakeholder engagement took place, including internal consultations within KeNIA, engagement with funding partners (JICA and FCDO), and discussions with ecosystem enablers to scope the ambition and strategic pillars of the festival.

Quarter 2

During the quarter Development of key content tracks and curation of stakeholder themes were done. This included identification of focus sectors (Impact investment, commercialization, corporate venture building), drafting of early concept outlines, and securing institutional endorsements. Outreach to anchor partners and early convenings of sector stakeholders were also done.

Quarter 3

During the quarter a formal concept note was finalized outlining the vision, themes, and programming format of the festival. A dedicated secretariat was appointed by the CEO of KeNIA to oversee all operations. The secretariat included teams for programming, partnerships, logistics, communications, and documentation. Planning milestones were established, and operational timelines were confirmed.

Quarter 4

During the quarter the festival was successfully held on June 4th – June 5th, 2025. It featured main plenary and panel sessions, a corporate startup deal room and breakfast meetings (CEO's, ESO's and DVC's), an exhibition booth with 29 startups and innovation hubs, a policy roundtable, and curated masterclasses. Over 250 participants attended, including 50 startups, 48 innovation enablers, 34 investors, 33 corporates, 28 academic representatives, 10 government officials, and 18 speakers. Partnerships were facilitated, and insights captured for policy, funding, and ecosystem support.

Outcomes

The startup festival Strengthened partnerships across government, private sector, and innovation enablers.

Enhanced collaboration on data systems, research commercialization, and talent skilling.

Start up festival Kenya

KCK
Corporate Deal Room

Kenia
Kenya National Innovation Agency

+254-792 446 976
kenia.go.ke
info@kenia.go.ke
2nd Floor, Rainbow Tower - Westlands, Nairobi