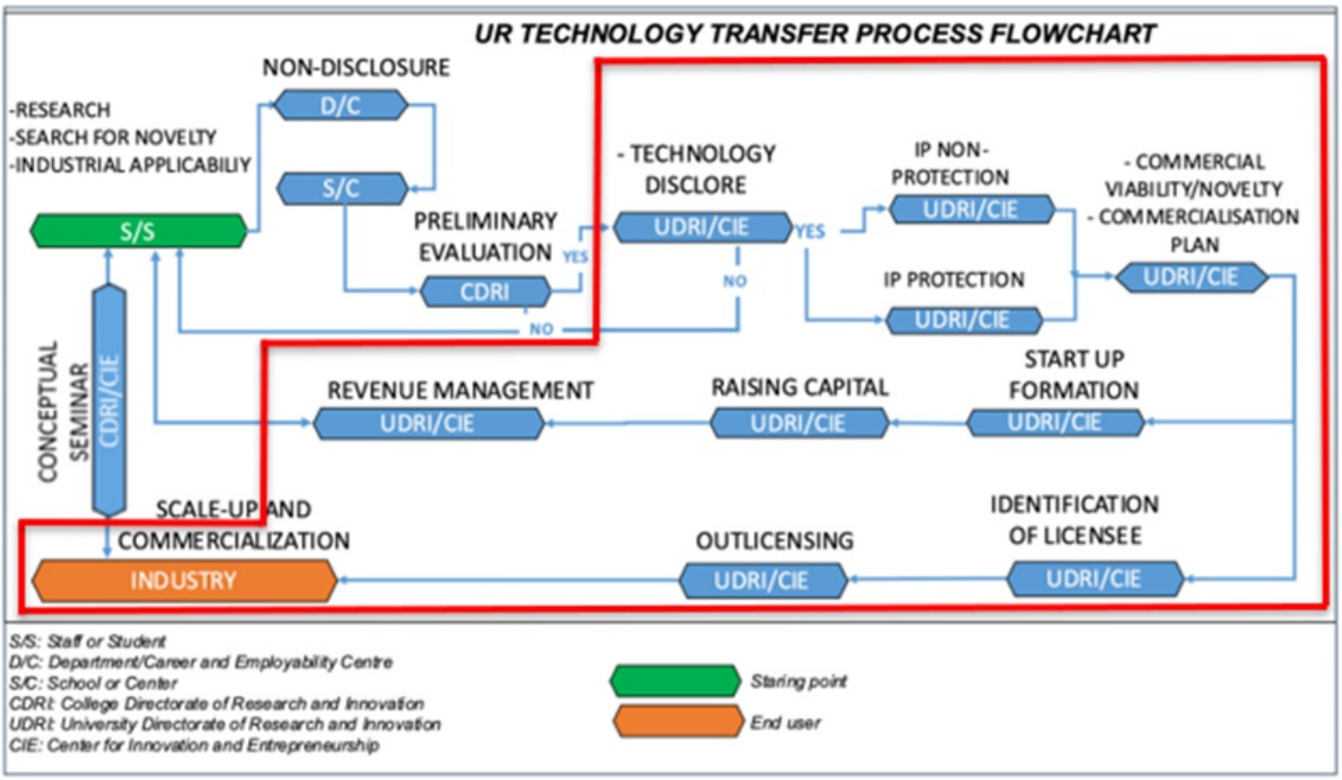
As part of efforts to fill the gaps associated with the lack of a well-established Information and Technology infrastructure and insufficient financial resources to support research and exploration of opportunities, the University of Rwanda has embarked on a journey to harness research for real life.

For the successful implementation of the newly elaborated Technology Transfer Strategy (TTS), the University of Rwanda aims at transferring the research outputs to benefit the society by fostering private sector engagement in science, technology, and innovation (STI).




Latest findings show that major part of the current university's research and innovation activities lacks practical dimension related to the commercialization of research outputs/results, implementation and technology transfer.

The existing university's strategic plan 2018-2025 stipulates number strategies among others to "establish a hub for knowledge dissemination and being better able to demonstrate the impact of research; and strengthen innovation and technology transfer through university-industry-government interactions".

***Insufficient use of Intellectual Property (IP) rights***

Dr. Nathan Kanuma Taremwa, the Director for Research and Innovation at the College of Agriculture, Animal Science and Veterinary Medicine (CAVM) of the University of Rwanda told participants at the Academia-Industry conference which took place on 12 December in Kigali that there are currently efforts to implement coherent and feasible transfer strategies.



***Dr. Nathan Kanuma Taremwa, the Director for Research and Innovation at the College of Agriculture, Animal Science and Veterinary Medicine (CAVM) of the University of Rwanda***

“We are exploring the technology transfer mechanisms into practical applications of the community and ensure that such intellectual property rights are properly managed and commercialized,” Dr Taremwa told delegates.

According to the new technology transfer strategic document, key to the university’s responsibilities is to contribute to solving national development-related problems and collaborate with other relevant organs, both public and private, or individuals to ensure quality education in order to impart knowledge and skills

needed to meet the labour market needs.

In efforts for the successfully implementation of strategic plan, considerable progress and investments have been made in terms of policies and strategies, research and innovation development, and infrastructure.

The document states that in addition to six colleges and respective schools and departments, there have been key investments to support and accelerate technology transfer and commercialization of research and innovation outputs at UR. These investments include, for example, the establishment a number of research centres and institutes to support the university to achieve and implement its vision and mandates, and to contribute to the national and regional advancement of technological products and services, share knowledge, good practices and experience, and research results to the market. Also, UR established based innovation incubators and centre for innovation with the purpose to foster technology transfer.

The ambitious Technology Transfer Strategy incorporates lessons from initial efforts by the University of Rwanda in conducting research that leads to innovation, business ideas, and technologies.

Challenges like limited capability to commercialize research outputs especially due to the lack of clear flow chain and steps needed to link up researchers and industry, however, persist, necessitating further innovation and funding.

***Science–policy–industry interface***

Effective collaboration between academic, researchers, entrepreneurial teams, and investors is described as a key to translating research into impactful commercial ventures.

Reacting to the new Technology Transfer Strategy, Alexandre Nzeyimana, Programme Development Manager at ActionAid , an international non-governmental organization whose stated primary aim is to work against poverty and injustice worldwide noted that when it comes to research impact in Rwanda, people are likely better at writing scientific papers, but the implementation is a challenge.




**Far left : Prof. Ignace GATARE, the Principal of the College of Science and Technology, University of Rwanda, and far right: Dr. Guillaume NYAGATARE Principal, UR – College of Agriculture, Animal Sciences and Veterinary Medicine(CAVM)**

“We need to have our fingerprint in these changes by translating research into impactful commercial ventures,” he said.

The needs for development of the new technology transfer strategy is consonant with National Science Technology and Innovation Policy (STI Policy) , which seeks to optimize the performance of the national innovation system (NIS) by boosting capability of adapting, inventing and innovating technology products and services towards sustainable socio-economic development.

However most of scientists point out that the absence of One stop center to guide industry at different colleges of University of Rwanda is needed.

Prof. Ignace Gatare, the Principal of the College of Science and Technology, University of Rwanda, stressed the need to adopt a reverse model of thinking about problems backwards, rather than forward where knowledge and technology transfer could also be streamlined from industry to academia

“It is also crucial for the university to gain the necessary industrial application knowledge that allows them to successfully translate and transform academic

knowledge to span the knowledge boundary with industry," Prof. Gatare said.