

**Ministry of Colleges and
Universities**

Office of the Minister

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September 29, 2023

Ms. Karima Bawa
Chair
Intellectual Property Ontario
Karima.Bawa@ip-ontario.ca

Dear Ms. Bawa,

I am pleased to share our government's 2024-25 priorities for Intellectual Property Ontario (IPON).

As a board-governed provincial agency, Intellectual Property Ontario (IPON) is a vital partner in ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to Ontarians. By supporting the development and protection of intellectual property (IP) and improving the commercialization outcomes of research and new inventions in Ontario, IPON plays a key role in advancing our province's economic growth and competitiveness.

As Chair, you play a vital role in helping IPON achieve its mandate. It is important that your agency's goals, objectives, and strategic direction continue to align with our government's priorities and direction. As part of the government of Ontario, agencies are expected to act in the best interests of the people of Ontario and ensure that they provide value for money to taxpayers. Agencies are also required to adhere to government policies and directives.

Per the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, this letter sets out my expectations for IPON for 2024-25, including government-wide commitments as well as specific key priorities from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) in partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT).

Government-wide priorities

Our government's 2024-25 priorities for IPON include the following government-wide commitments for all board-governed provincial agencies:

1. Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management

- Operating within the agency's financial allocations.
- Complying with applicable direction related to accounting practices and supply chain centralization, including leveraging Supply Ontario's bulk purchasing arrangement and working with Supply Ontario on strategic procurement initiatives.
- Complying with realty interim measures for agency office space.
- Leverage and meet benchmarked outcomes for compensation strategies and directives.
- Identifying and pursuing opportunities for revenue generation, efficiencies and savings through innovative practices, where appropriate, and/or improved program sustainability.

2. Transparency and Accountability

- Abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting.
- Adhering to accounting standards and practices, and responding to audit findings, where applicable.
- Identifying appropriate skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively support the board's role in agency governance and accountability, and providing the Minister with annual skills matrices to ensure boards have qualified appointees.
- Reviewing and updating agency KPIs annually to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

3. Risk Management

- Developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment and mitigation of agency risks, including cyber security, and any future emergency risks.

4. Workforce/Labour Management

- Optimizing your organizational capacity to support the best possible public service delivery, including redeploying resources to priority areas, where needed.
- Supporting the implementation of the Community Jobs Initiative (CJI) by identifying opportunities to relocate new or existing agencies to lower cost communities across Ontario (as per MBC Realty Directive, s. 5.4), as applicable. Including:
 - Working closely with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Infrastructure Ontario (IO) to implement government-wide real estate initiatives, including the Community Jobs Initiative and the Centralization of Broader Real Estate Authority. IPON will engage Infrastructure Ontario as the

agency's broker of record and work through IO to enter into and/or renew leases for a headquarters in Kitchener-Waterloo and, pending Treasury Board / Management Board of Cabinet approvals, satellite offices in Toronto and/or Ottawa.

- Aligning Human Resource and Accommodations strategies with OPS directives and policy.
- Adhering to TB/MBC labour and bargaining mandates.
- Prudently and efficiently managing operational funding and workforce size.

5. Diversity and Inclusion

- Developing and encouraging diversity and inclusion initiatives by promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace.
- Adopting an inclusion engagement process to ensure all voices are heard to inform policies and decision-making.

6. Data Collection, Sharing and Use

- Improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information sharing and reporting, to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery.
- Increasing data sharing with Supply Ontario when applicable regarding procurement spending and planning, contract arrangements and vendor relations to support data-driven decision-making.

7. Digital Delivery and Customer Service

- Exploring and implementing digitization for online service delivery to ensure customer service standards are met.
- Using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations.

Please see the attached guide for further details of each government-wide priority.

IPON-specific priorities

I am also sharing several priorities specific to IPON for the 2024-25 fiscal year:

I. IP Services to Clients: Scale-Up Phase and Building to Maturity

Consistent with government's previous direction, IPON is to continue to follow a phased approach to its development, moving from an initial "beta test phase" to a "scale-up phase" and finally, enter its "mature" state. The government's expectation is that IPON will use an evidence-based approach incorporating data, performance measures, best practices, client, stakeholder and Ministry feedback, as well as utilizing its Board of Directors to refine and improve each of these phases.

Following the successful completion and evaluation of the beta phase (40 clients), IPON's primary objective for the 2024-25 fiscal year will be to scale up its core IP services as the agency builds towards its mature state. The ministry expects that IPON will have completed all the necessary operational activities to support scale up (e.g., formalized its operational structure, hired / retained key talent at the executive / staff level and that the necessary IT and corporate service functions are in-place).

A. Scale-Up Phase

- Informed by learnings from the beta phase, the scale-up phase should include a revised suite of programs and services, with the goal to onboard 150+ active clients.
- Interim scale-up activities (e.g., client recruitment, program development, by-law change(s) etc.) will begin following Ministerial approval to proceed¹. Final approval of IPON's scale-up plan will come upon receipt and acceptance of your 2024-27 Business Plan.
- In addition to the requirements outlined in the Agencies and Appointments Directive, the Business Plan must include a detailed operational plan for the agency's scale-up phase, including a description of program and service activities, as well as an update and timeline to implement a new performance management framework.

B. Building Toward Maturity

- Building on lessons learned from the scale-up phase, IPON should plan for its transition to maturity during the 2024-25 fiscal year. Mature state activities should include a full suite of IP services available to clients with the objective to increase service delivery to 400 clients or more.
- Prior to entering the mature state, IPON must submit a mature-state operational plan, to be approved by the Minister, which must include:
 - Lessons learned, client feedback, proposed changes to program / service delivery, detailed budget forecast, implementation timeline and any proposed changes that may require Minister or Ministry approval (e.g., by-law changes, regulation amendments etc.).
 - Please work closely with the Ministry on the development of this plan, including establishing a timeline to transition to a mature state in 2024-25.

¹ Note: Interim scale-up activities anticipated to begin in late 2023-24.

II. Partnerships and Collaboration with Innovation Intermediaries

IPON will continue to build a strong coalition of partners within the business, innovation and post-secondary sectors, and continue to coordinate program and service delivery with key stakeholders in the provincial IP ecosystem. As part of this priority, IPON will:

- Work together with Invest Ontario to develop and strengthen a partnership to ensure alignment on intellectual property priorities and measurement with a goal to protect and maximize the value of home-grown innovations.
- Continue to work collaboratively with the Ontario Centre of Innovation (OCI), the Regional Innovation Centres (RICs) and other intermediaries to ensure IPON provides service offerings to support the needs of innovation clients;
- Develop in coordination, referral tracking and metric reporting protocols between IPON and RICs to ensure measurement of advanced referral outcomes, subject to MCU/MEDJCT approval;
- Provide input to MEDJCT on metrics needed to assess IP outcomes of innovation intermediaries and contribute to the development of an annual report on RIC client IP performance; and
- Continue to keep the Ministry informed on IPON partnership-building efforts with ElevateIP recipients, including memoranda of understanding and key performance indicators.

III. Commercialization Mandate Policy Framework (CMPF)

IPON will continue to advise on Ontario's publicly-assisted postsecondary education institutions' progress on the Commercialization Mandate Policy Framework, including:

- Delivering recommendations to the Minister of Colleges and Universities on behalf of the Joint Working Group (JWG), on implementing commercialization metrics formulated specifically for colleges and universities, that can be reported in future Annual Commercialization Plans (target of Spring 2024). If it is anticipated that the JWG should need to be extended for an additional term (including to test and validate metrics), the Chair of the JWG will submit an extension request to the Ministry by March 31, 2024.
- The Ministry of Colleges and Universities and Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade are reviewing the proposed recommendations/recommended actions identified by IPON in its first annual report on the postsecondary sector's Annual Commercialization Plans, should any be formally accepted and approved by either ministry, it is expected that IPON will collaborate and work closely with the ministries on implementation.

IV. Additional Advisory Services

IPON will continue to act as a centre of intellectual property expertise and provide advice to the government on issues within or aligned with its mandate and operations, as appropriate. As IPON builds out its operational plan to transition to maturity, IPON should incorporate how it can operationalize and resource this priority. It is the Ministry's expectation that IPON will:

- Develop policy papers, with key topics and areas of focus to be confirmed by government. The Ministry's expectation is that, during the planning stage, IPON would share research themes and topics for the papers and the timeline of their expected release. When the papers are completed, it is expected for IPON to share advanced copies and seek approval for planned publication with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.
- Explore opportunities, including partnerships, to demonstrate provincial / national intellectual property leadership. This could include building on the IP Summit to convene intellectual property thought leaders, experts, policy makers, and key stakeholders on IP issues that intersect with innovation and economic development.
- Detail any other advisory roles that IPON and its stakeholders have identified for the Agency, as being critical to advance its mandate.

V. Performance Management Framework

IPON will develop and seek Ministerial approval on a comprehensive performance management framework, which, once approved by the Minister, will form the basis for IPON's regular progress reporting to the Ministry. The framework should include both output- and outcome-based measures, benchmarks/performance targets for key performance indicators and align with the work of innovation sector partners, including RICs and post-secondary institutions (e.g., CMPF commercialization metrics). Please work closely with both MCU and MEDJCT on the development of this framework.

A strong and collaborative relationship between IPON and the ministries is critical to ensure continued alignment of priorities and fosters the innovation and economic outcomes we collectively seek to deliver for Ontarians. Please work closely with my Ministry and MEDJCT on the above priorities.

I would be pleased to discuss these priorities during our next meeting, and I look forward to hearing how they will be reflected in the agency's upcoming business plan and in ongoing agency operations.

Thank you and your fellow board members for your continued commitment to IPON. Your work and ongoing support is invaluable to me and the people of Ontario.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Deputy Minister David Wai at David.Wai@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jill Dunlop', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Jill Dunlop
Minister of Colleges and Universities

Attachment:

- Government Priorities for Agency Sector Chart

- c: The Honourable Victor Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
Ali Veshkini, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
David Wai, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Colleges and Universities
Scott Allinson, Chief of Staff (Interim), Ministry of Colleges and Universities
Heather Potter, Chief of Staff, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
Drew Price, Director, Agencies and Governance Branch, Treasury Board Secretariat
Peter Cowan, Chief Executive Officer, Intellectual Property Ontario