

## LESI 2020 WINTER PLANNING MEETING REPORT: NEW TASK FORCES AND CALL TO MEMBERS



When designing my Winter Planning Meeting held over 21-22nd February 2020, I chose the University of Padua, Italy as my venue to allow all the participants to retreat within the beauty of its buildings and amazing architecture to rethink our Renaissance of LESI. It was also my opportunity to launch 3 new Task Force through organising the corresponding initial Working Groups who could first meet and brainstorm at the WPM itself.

We also had a great panel by engaging representative from four IP offices from around the world with good insights of developments taking place and initiatives launched beyond just registration of IP but proactively supporting stakeholders management of IP.

### **BACKGROUND**

Renaissance was period in European history making the transition from Middle ages to modernity – covering the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the change to humanism, and how art, music & science could make life better for everyone.

Renaissance technology meant applied innovation extended to commerce. Science & art were intermingled in the early renaissance. What many forget or do not realise is that during the renaissance, Leonardo and Michaelangelo were the start ups of their time! They had new business model and business strategies. They were able to convince the financiers and venture capitalists to fund projects, some deeply experimental, others revolutionary, works that remain till today.

Today, high growth companies and start-ups are more important than ever, creating more ways to transact, digitize currency, be change agents, utilize AI, communicate, do business, innovate everything. They address energy efficiency, environmental impact, sustainability, social purpose. Funnily enough, the financiers during the Renaissance understood the value of the IP created. They were patrons of both the arts and science. Today, we have financial leaders still playing catch up in recognizing and appreciating IP.

The fact is two thirds or more of publicly traded company's value comes not from real estate or plant or equipment but its intangible assets such as patents, copyright and the brand it represents. Yet, this two-thirds of corporate value often does not even show up on the balance sheet.

### **LESI AND ADVANCING THE BUSINESS OF IP**

What does all this mean for LESI? Our tagline is "Advancing the business of IP." Founded in 1973 and incorporated in 2000, we find ourselves cresting into 2020 and it is almost unrecognizable compared to a decade ago. No elements of industry have remained untouched by the winds of change.

The shift signals an incredible rethink on the role of IP, its use and the commercialization of IP:

- what it does?
- who it is for?
- how it can be better?

We here are all converts; we know and believe IP has a function – it allows the creative, the technologist, the scientist, the entrepreneur, the intellectual to walk through all fields of possibilities.

When LESI was first established, it thrived because it was relevant, critical and the voice of IP and licensing, what was a key engine for conversion of R&D to economic growth. What can our role be for industries under siege?

Can we plug an unmet need of the start-ups? Can we be the bridge to MNCs? Can we be the outreach for the financial community still tentative about the value of IP? How do we upskill and retool for relevance?

## **THE RENAISSANCE OF LESI THROUGH INNOVATION**

We had an afternoon of breakout sessions where each group met and planned, 3 new working groups that were to ideate and 2 working groups to refine the existing work of WILA and the National Presidents Council.

The three new working groups established at the Winter Planning Meeting will be the Task Forces for my term 2020/2021. The idea is innovation can come in different forms and includes innovating from within LESI.

1. High Growth Enterprises (**HGE**- focusing on SMEs which represent a huge potential for the future growth of LES)
2. LESI Innovation Trends (**LIT**- important new areas of technology that will light our path ahead)
3. LESI Industry IP Festival (**LIIF** – integrating IP with the life of business)

Highlights of the discussion at the Winter Planning meeting relevant to these three working groups are captured in the attached along with photos of the contributing members.

I will discuss each in turn.

## High Growth Enterprises

<p><b>HGE: <i>Plugging into the innovation ecosystem: Engaging, Educating, and Supporting High-growth Enterprises, SMEs, Startups</i></b></p> <p><b>Facilitators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Ichiro Nakatomi(LES JP)</li><li>○ Tom Bereuter, (LES DE)</li><li>○ Yu Sarn Chiew(LES SG)</li></ul>	<p><b>Focus:</b> High-growth Enterprises, SMEs, Startups (HGEs) are increasingly important sources of innovation. If LES is to remain relevant and continue to advance the business of IP globally, LESI needs to solve the innovation and IP challenges of HGEs as well as it did in the past for large companies in the early history of IP licensing.</p>
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We recognise that SMEs, apart from accounting for the bulk of employment in many countries, form the backbone of many economies. Yet MNCs and large corporations have always received more attention.

In recognising the contributions of this sector, we note that innovation and the need for IP is not restricted in size or type of company but by their potential to grow. This includes start-ups and spin-out companies from research institutes and/or MNCs and large corporations.

For this reason, we have described our Task Force as one targeted at High Growth Enterprises rather than to limit this to any traditional definition of an SME or a start-up.

This task force will be focusing on engaging High Growth Enterprises, particularly their decision makers, on the topic of the use of IP for business growth.

Please look out for the special edition of Les Nouvelle to be published in June 2020 which is a collaborative effort between EPO and LESI. Our Co-Chair of the HGE Task Force Thomas Bereuter has worked tirelessly to prepare this special issue which will cover the 3 main pillars that will be developed further by the HGE Task Force - i.e. business decision makers, the work of IP professionals serving HGEs, and the ecosystem stakeholders such as government and financiers.

## LESI Innovation Trends

<p><b>LIT: <i>Adapting LESI strategy for the future: Innovation Trends</i></b></p> <p><b>Facilitator:</b> Patrick Terroir (LES FR) Secretariat: Bayani Loste (LES PH)</p>	<p><b>Focus:</b> To identify change factors in the fields of innovation that have significant impact on professional practice across industries as represented in LESI. Determine whether the IP system in line with (and supporting) the innovation trend.</p>
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From its inception, LESI was always known for being at the forefront of IP licensing and commercialisation and exercising thought leadership in this field.

Based on the work of the LESI Long Range Planning committee, a few issues have been highlighted for action:

#### A. Need for International and Relevant Content

From the Action Plan summary from LESI USC Phoenix Meeting 2019: *Developing and Delivering International Content, Education and Publications*

- **Focus:** *Developing and distributing content in ways that are more accessible to members of the profession, including current and prospective members. Increasing access to existing content and developing new, timely content that showcases the activities of various LES societies and targets prospective members, including younger professionals.*
- **Action Steps:** *Focus on content that makes LES more relevant; move away from publishing only for ourselves vs. using publications to draw in more member and engage in public discussion on core issues (use articles as a source of engagement vs. only a member benefit)*

#### B. Updated & Current Material

From the LRP Report: *International Professional Education*

- *There is much competition in teaching licensing. Most of it is basic and focused on the law and practice of a particular country. Most licensing, however, is international in impact. Most license agreements are subject to the laws of many jurisdictions. LESI, taking advantage of its international overview, should offer and widely-market advanced professional development programs. ...*
- *LESI used to have a publication committee that published works by various LESI committees. Sale of such works, while not generating meaningful revenue, **did raise the LESI profile. The burden of updating the material led to discontinuance of publications***

The LESI Innovation Trends (LIT) Task force will be our think tank for identifying new content, emerging areas of IP law and technology innovation sectors to assist LESI in channelling our energies into these areas of interest, whether for publication, seminars/webinars and discussion forums. The relevance of these new and emerging trends will not only address the interests of current and prospective members, but also key stakeholders we intend to and will engage with, such as policy makers, government agencies and IP Offices.

Accordingly, the preliminary mandate that the LIT Task Force worked on at the WPM was:

- identifying factors of change in the fields of innovation that have significant impact on IP system and thus professional activity either in industry or professional
- hence define a LESI strategy to address future developments in these fields of innovation

- this working group is a starting point. The purpose of the LIT session at the WPM was to identify the roadmap for further and deeper analysis and propose a method to follow up from this WPM session.

The short list of topics for brainstorming at the WPM:

Factors of change in innovation
New domains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IoT – Internet of Things</li> <li>• AI – Artificial Intelligence</li> <li>• Robotics</li> <li>• Blockchain</li> </ul>
New actors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities (basic research...)</li> <li>• SMEs and start-up</li> </ul>
New context: open science, sustainable development goals
New inputs in innovation: data, software
New production of innovations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more complexities</li> <li>• more collaborations</li> <li>• more interdependence</li> <li>• more international</li> </ul>
Changes in outputs: Increased obsolescence, faster replacement
More competition in innovation

A more complete report has been prepared by the Chair of the LIT Task force, Patrick Terroir, and will be further discussed among the task force members. The LIT Task Force will convene a meeting soon to move this forward and design an action plan.

## LESI Industry IP Festival

<p><b>LIIF: Engaging Industry:</b>  <b>LESI Industry IP Festival</b></p> <p><b>Facilitators:</b>          Audrey Yap &amp; John Paul</p>	<p><b>Focus:</b> LESI’s Industry IP Festival” (LIIF <i>pronounced as “Life”</i>). This activity seeks to bring together High Tech, CEEM and Consumer Products Committees and focus more resources on engaging industry.</p>
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In the late 90’s/early 00’s, LESI was the place to be for IP networking and IP deals. The focus of this group at the WPM was to consider putting together an event or other activities that focus not only on education but on bringing interested parties together to further IP licensing and collaboration.

We see the opportunity particularly in areas where there are emerging technologies, especially disruptive technologies. Given our resources and network, LESI is in the best position to provide

opportunities to do business in licensing and other IP related transactions, and also to educate technology companies about best practices in IP management and transactions.

One possible objective would be to create a “platform” for players in this space to connect- this may be a physical event or a virtual one; a stand-alone event or with identified partners to co-host

This is also in line with the LRP report on expanding our marketing and international network:

### **Expand Marketing**

- *LESI and most member societies market their services, meetings and publications to LES members. This necessarily limits exposure of LESI initiatives. Publicizing LESI initiatives to LES members in an industry is not the same as publicizing to that entire industry. Publishing LESI position papers in les Nouvelles, given its limited circulation, does not bring such papers to the attention of relevant government agencies and businesses. In order to be a leader in international technology transfer, **LESI should develop a marketing and publicity program that will provide exposure to relevant constituencies worldwide.***

### **International Networking**

- *Certain committees of LESI have developed industry-specific networking programs, often by conference call. LESI should encourage and support more such international, industry-specific networking. Industry members often complain that LES meetings are populated with service providers seeking business, making industry-specific networking inefficient. Some member societies have industry-specific networking events and programming at their meetings, but these are usually open to all attendees. Efforts to hold meetings limited to a specific industry have been perceived as discriminating among members. Of course, competitive organizations, such as IPBC Global, employ such discrimination to encourage industry IP professionals to attend their for-profit meetings. The Committee does not suggest LESI promote industry-specific meetings, but the Committee believes that **LESI, by providing a venue (such as the conference calls) for licensing professionals in a specific industry to exchange ideas, will encourage more active LES membership from industry.***

## **CALL TO MEMBERS**

If you are willing to serve by participating in the activities plans and contribute to the growth of LESI with your talent, network and expertise, do sign up for the work of these Task Force and be prepared to be assigned a role in the workplan to be rolled out by the leaders in each Task Force. In giving, one receives. Very often by desiring to contribute, I have found I have learnt and gained the most in LESI.

Apart from the Task Forces set up, don't forget that we have many LESI committees that have leaders each working on exciting new areas.

Join an LESI Committee based on:

- A. Industry of interest, e.g., High Tech, Life Sciences, Consumer Products, CEEM (Chemicals, Energy Environment & Materials) or IUGT (Industry University Govt Technology); or
- B. Professional expertise: Patents & tech licensing; Copyright; Trademarks & Merchandising; Dispute Resolution; IP Valuation; or
- C. Regional interest- The Americas; The European or The Asia Pacific Committees. Activities serving the needs interests law and policies addressed by regional grouping.

There are LESI management committees that work to continue to support LESI's membership needs – these include the Publications Committee (les Nouvelles), Education Committee (training courses on licensing) and special interest areas YMC (Young Members Congress) WILA (Women in Licensing) or GTIF (Global Technology Impact Forum).

I highly recommend each and every LES member regardless of whether you are an international delegate, current national board member, whether you have been a member for many years or a new member, to sign up for an LESI committee today to better understand the mission and mandate of each and participate actively.

Let 2020 be that year where you changed your approach to LESI - not just passively receiving but contributing, participating, learning, teaching - vital signs of life in a professional. Be innovative in your approach to membership this year!

All the more with physical meetings disappearing from calendars, reach out for a continuing engagement with the LESI family. Use this time to open the doors of our minds for new opportunities and ideas. Resist the temptation to let the pandemic isolate us, but build relationships instead, and be open to new ways to connect, contribute and collaborate. This is what makes LESI meaningful and allows for friendships and networks to be built across the globe wherever you find LES. You are part of the great LESI team, so CONNECT and make your membership count.

I am confident that once the fog of the pandemic clears, we will witness the clear daylight of a new vibrant and innovative era, on multiple levels, both within LESI and externally in the IP ecosystem we work in.

The renaissance of LESI through innovation starts with you, members that want to make a change, first within yourself and by being part of this LESI licensing movement. Join to innovate and make LESI stronger, better, and more inclusive.

Let's Innovate!

**Audrey Yap**

LESI President Elect

12 May 2020