



LES International Management & Delegates Meeting (IMDM)
Dublin
26 April 2026

2026 LES Society Fact Sheet

Thank you for providing us with an updated LES Society Fact Sheet. This information helps us share your annual activities with the LESI Board and the Membership Committee. We have also asked for some data on your members (while helpful, we appreciate that not all societies might have this data).

LES SOCIETY INFORMATION

SOCIETY NAME: LES South Africa

<p><u>CONTACT PERSON</u> <i>(This person is responsible for communication with & timely submissions to the LESI's Administrative Team)</i> Name: Madelein Kleyn Company: Mad K IP Consulting (Pty) Ltd Address: Phone: E-mail: madelein.kleyn@outlook.com Website: www.licensing.co.za Social Media used (please provide links): (13) Licensing Executives Society South Africa: Overview LinkedIn</p>	<p><u>CURRENT SOCIETY OFFICERS</u> President: Joanne van Harmelen Secretary: Nolene Singh Treasurer: Alan Lewis Society Administrator(s): Lea-Shelly Chapman Communications POC/Social Media contact: Madelein Kleyn</p> <p>Delegates for the upcoming IMDM: <i>(please provide delegate e-mail addresses)</i> Joanne van Harmelen – joanne.vanharmelen@adams.africa Madelein Kleyn – madelein.kleyn@outlook.com</p>
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Term of Current Society Officers/ Date of Next Change of Officers:
(please notify LESI with a complete list of officers when the change takes place by emailing nne@lesi.org)
15 October 2026

Annual Membership Dues: ZAR 3050
(please note currency and any categories of membership -- including corporate or student rates)

Date and location of your next Annual Society meeting: 15 October 2026

MEMBERSHIP DATA

Category	Total Number	% Change from last year
Total Number of Members: <i>(please also note the below categories)</i>	72	0%
<i>Corporate</i>	7	-22.2%
<i>Law Firm</i>	38	-11.6%
<i>IP consulting or Services</i>	2	+50%
<i>University</i>	19	+10.5%
<i>Other</i>	6	+83.3%
Young Members (< 40 years of age):	23	-13.0%

SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

Notable Society Activities / Educational Events during the past year: *(please include the date, purpose and number of attendees)*

Publications, Webinars and Events

Publications

Assignment of Invention Affecting Patent Validity—South Africa, Madelein Kleyn and Janusz Luterek, Les Nouvelle N_8_5335 p.159-167

Abstract

In a recent judgment by the Court of the Commissioner of Patents (Republic of South Africa) in the case “Regents of the University of California and Others v. Eurolab (Pty) Ltd and Others” (2024-039643; 2023-108509) [2025] ZACCP 1 (25 February 2025), the court found that the right for an applicant to apply for a patent where such right is as the consequence of an assignment by the inventor(s) to the applicant, must have been acquired from the inventor(s) before making the application for a patent. On the facts presented to the court, it was found that no assignment existed at the time of the application and the court revoked the patent on the grounds of not meeting the requirements of Section 27(1) of Patents Act 57 of 1978.

Key Webinars and Events

Young Members Committee (YMC)

The annual LES SA young members committee networking event took place on Friday the 26th of September 2025 at the University of Pretoria's Future Africa campus. The programme director was Ms Refilwe Ngoato from University of Pretoria (LES SA board member & director responsible for LES SA YMC) who also organized the event. The event was a resounding success and it kicked off with a presentation entitled "where AI & IP collide" by Ms Lita Miti-Qamata, a partner from Adams & Adams. Participants asked lots of questions since most people use AI on a daily basis and there are risks associated with unregulated AI. The Q & A session was followed by a quiz. Participants who answered questions correctly won prizes. This was followed by entertainment in the form of musical performances (a solo violinist, a singer and a keyboard player who performed a duet). The event concluded with refreshments and networking. LES SA and Adams & Adams are greatly acknowledged for sponsoring the event.

Understanding the EU AI Act – Implications for South Africa

On 6 February 2025 LES SA hosted insightful online training session focused on the EU AI Act and its potential impact on South African developers and legal professionals. The session was led by Ms Leanne Voerman, a South African-qualified attorney and AI governance expert currently based in the Netherlands.

Key highlights from the session included:

- Cross-border Relevance: The EU AI Act has significant implications for South African developers creating AI tools for use in the EU.
- Regulatory Alignment: South Africa is in the process of developing its own AI regulatory framework, likely to be influenced by European standards.
- Compliance Complexity: Attendees were encouraged to upskill in AI governance to better support clients and navigate emerging legal landscapes.
- Risk Allocation Insights: The EU's approach to risk allocation under the AI Act was of particular interest, with expectations that similar principles may be adopted locally.

The session emphasized the importance of staying informed and proactive in the evolving AI regulatory space.

Data Licensing in the Evolving Digital Economy

LES Italy and LES South Africa hosted a joint webinar by the LESI Innovation Trends Committee & LES SA Patent & Technology Licensing Committee on 13 March 2025 with expert insights into navigating the complexities of data licensing. The session moderated by Antonio Di Bernardo – President of Thinx & Treasurer of LES Italy and with expert speakers Arved Waltemathe from Waltemathe Anwaltskanzlei, Annarita Nicoletto, Legal Counsel at EPFL and Madelein Kleyn, Chief Legal & IP Officer at Omnisient examined regulatory and contractual challenges in the data economy, with a focus on European and global perspectives.

Key Topics Included:

- EU Regulatory Framework: Insights into the EU Data Act and its intersection with data protection, IP, and trade secrets.
- Contractual Strategies: Licensing models, FRAND principles, and transparency obligations.
- Case Study: Omnisient, a South African data monetization start-up, shared real-world experiences.
- Global Perspectives: Comparative analysis of international best practices in data licensing.

Kids IP Day – Inspiring Young Innovators

On 17 March 2025, Ms Refilwe Ngoato from University of Pretoria (LES SA Board Member & director responsible for LES SA YMC) organised and presented at the annual LES SA Kids IP Day with engaging presentations at Pinnacle College (Centurion) and Glenmark Christian School (Mamelodi), reaching nearly 600 learners. Students were introduced to the world of IP, sparking curiosity around innovation.

Highlights included:

- Interactive presentations followed by a quiz with prizes.
- Learners actively participated, asking insightful questions.
- Two students shared their own inventions and expressed excitement about pursuing IP protection and commercialisation.

The event was made possible through the collaboration of LES SA, the University of Pretoria, and the school principals, whose support was instrumental. The initiative planted a seed of innovation, with hopes of nurturing future inventors across South Africa.

WIPO Inventor Assist Program (IAP): IP protection and commercialisation support for inventors and small businesses

On 20 March 2025, I was excited to moderate a hybrid, co-hosted event by LES South Africa, the WIPO Inventor Assist Program (IAP), and UVU Africa focused on IP protection and commercialisation support for inventors and small businesses. The session came about because of the visit to South Africa by Ms Allison Mages, who heads the IP Commercialization Section, in the IP for Business Division, IP and Innovation Ecosystems Sector at WIPO. Speakers were André Marè from Von Seidels (LES SA director), who shared best practices for IP commercialisation, and Allison Mages, who introduced the IAP and its support services ranging from patent drafting to international prosecution. Attendees also learned from Allison about the new partnership between LESI and WIPO IAP, offering commercial advice to IAP beneficiaries through expert volunteer consultations and contract drafting support. The event concluded with a video testimonial from South African inventor Virendra Ramlakan showcasing the real-world impact of the IAP.

Gauteng Technology Transfer Forum

I was invited together with Dr Madelein Kleyn (Vice President LES SA) to speak at the 3rd edition of the Gauteng Technology Transfer Forum on 24 April 2025 which addressed the theme “Expanding Innovation Networking Platforms: Current Opportunities”. This forum is the gathering of the technology transfer offices of the Gauteng region of Universities and other public research institutions. We were able to provide the attendees with information into the operations of LES as an organisation and the many benefits of membership. We have seen additional members join as a result of the event and plan to hold more of these around the country to encourage growth of the organisation locally from this sector.

International Delegates Meeting and LESI Conference, Singapore

I was very pleased to be able to attend my first LESI International Delegates Meeting and Conference in Singapore in April this year. This really was the highlight of my calendar and the Conference which had the theme of SMART CITIES, SMARTER IP did not disappoint, with so many excellent sessions that it was impossible to attend all of them. It was very special to get to meet in person with so many of the LESI members from around the world who I have worked with virtually over the years. Clifford Pier at the Fullerton Bay Hotel provided a stunning venue for the networking reception on the first day of the Conference, and the Gala Dinner event at Flower Field Hall, in the Flower Dome, at Gardens by the Bay was an unforgettable evening. I would like to congratulate the organisers for putting on an absolutely exceptional Conference.

World IP Day – 26 April 2026

LES SA celebrated World IP Day and its theme “IP and the SDGs: Building Our Common Future with Innovation and Creativity” by posting messages on social media for the call to action for all of us—innovators, creators, businesses, and policymakers—to explore how IP supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). From clean energy and sustainable agriculture to inclusive healthcare and education, IP is a crucial driver in turning bold ideas into real-world impact.

Influencer marketing and intellectual property

LES SA through its Copyright Committee and Women in Licensing Alliance (“WILA”) presented a virtual webinar on 22 May 2025, exploring the interaction between influencer marketing and intellectual property. WILA Ambassador for South Africa, Dr Madelein Kleyn kicked off the session sharing an oversight of WILA’s mission, leadership structure and mentorship programme.

Femke van Dyk from Adams & Adams (LES SA member) facilitated the webinar which included presenters Alicia van der Walt and Marcelle Samons from Adams & Adams and Angeli Marais, CEO of Novella and Co, entrepreneur, and influencer. The practical examples included in the presentation quickly revealed that influencer marketing and intellectual property are no doubt inextricably intertwined in the digital economy and that influencers are key players in the marketing industry. As brands collaborate with influencers and leverage influencers' reputations to ensure relevance in the current marketplace, opportunities and challenges arise for brand owners and influencers.

Copy That! The License You Can't Refuse

On 3 July the LES SA Copyright Committee hosted a webinar on the groundbreaking decision of the South African Copyright Tribunal that granted the country's first-ever compulsory copyright licence in a commercial dispute involving Allcopy Publishers (Pty) Ltd and a group of textbook authors.

The dispute centred on a series of Grade 8 and 9 mathematics textbooks, where three of the four co-authors supported continued licensing with Allcopy, while the fourth author, Mr Phillips, withheld consent. The Tribunal, presided over by Judge Moshwana, ruled in favour of the applicants in March 2025, compelling the licence extension under provisions of the Copyright Act that allow for such action when a licence is unreasonably withheld. Mr Phillips had also initiated copyright infringement proceedings, which were stayed pending the Tribunal's decision. He has since sought leave to appeal both the stay and the compulsory licence ruling. This case sets a significant precedent in South African copyright law and highlights the delicate balance between author rights and public interest in educational access.

Webinar: Protecting IP in Life Sciences Software

On 23 October 2025 a virtual webinar "Bioinformatics and Digital Health – Why protecting the IP in your life sciences software is commercially useful and how to go about it" was presented. Joanne van Harmelen was joined by expert UK & European patent attorneys from HLK, Lauris Kemp and Caroline Day where practical strategies for securing, defending, and licensing bioinformatics and digital health IP—especially in key markets like Europe and the USA was discussed.

LES SA Annual Conference: Innovation, Sustainability & Licensing in a Changing World

LES South Africa hosted an extremely successful 2025 Annual Conference from 9–11 November 2025 at the Asara Boutique Hotel in Stellenbosch, bringing together almost 80 leading IP practitioners, in house counsel, academics, licensors, licensees and innovators from across South Africa and abroad.

Taken from our submission to Global News the following can be noted:

Under the theme "**Innovation, Sustainability & Licensing in a Changing World**," delegates explored how IP and licensing are evolving in response to new technologies, ESG imperatives and shifting global regulation.

The conference opened on Sunday evening with a **Welcome Cocktail Reception** on the Courtyard Terrace, giving LES SA members, speakers and international guests the opportunity to reconnect and network informally to the sounds of live "acoustic" music of singing frogs.

Global Trends, Local Impact

On Monday, **Dr Joanne van Harmelen** (Partner, Adams & Adams and President, LES SA) formally welcomed delegates, setting the stage for two days of practical, forward looking discussion.

The keynote address by **Jean Christophe (JC) Troussel** (Partner, Bird & Bird, and President, LES International) provided a global overview of IP and licensing trends, with a focus on:

- **the EU's developing framework for AI and data,**
- **reforms in the life sciences and pharmaceutical sectors,**
- **experience with the Unified Patent Court, and**
- **evolving technology transfer and competition rules.**

Green Economy, Data, and Litigation

A panel on IP & Licensing in the Green Economy, moderated by **Dr Madelein Kleyn**, examined how South African and African innovators can take clean tech solutions from lab to market. Panellists from Sasol (Male), PowerOptimal (Moolman) and HYENA (Fletcher) unpacked:

- **building defensible portfolios in clean fuels, hydrogen and distributed energy,**
- **structuring field of use and territorial licences to support scale, and**
- **balancing commercial returns with measurable decarbonisation impact.**

This was followed by **Anton Grutzmacher** (Omnisient) on data licensing in the changing consumer market, focusing on:

- **the shift to first party, consented data under POPIA,**
- **privacy preserving data collaboration (e.g., data clean rooms and hashed IDs), and**
- **commercial models and safeguards for data partnerships between retailers, brands and financial institutions.**

The afternoon saw:

- **a Women in Licensing & Innovation Leadership panel** featuring **Dr Joanne van Harmelen** (Adams & Adams), **Dina Biagio** (Spoor & Fisher), **Alessia del Bianco** (PlaynGo) and **Dr Madelein Kleyn** (Omnisient), sharing candid perspectives on leadership, negotiation and inclusion in IP heavy industries; and
- **a highly practical Workshop on Recent IP Litigation and Impacts on Transactions**, led by **Danie Dohmen** (Adams & Adams), with a panel of leading litigators (**Lana Giliomee** (Trade Mark Attorney, Von Seidels Attorneys), **Regardt van der Merwe** (Trade Mark Attorney, Von Seidels Attorneys), **Alissa Naran** (Partner, Adams & Adams) and **Salomé le Roux** (Partner, Spoor & Fisher), distilling key takeaways from recent South African trade mark, patent, copyright and design cases for transactional lawyers and deal makers.

The day concluded with a hosted wine tasting and networking hour at Asara Wine Estate.

AI, Startups, Sports Brands and Cross Border Deals

Tuesday, Day 2, opened with a **Fireside Chat on AI & Data Licensing – Managing Rights in the Age of Algorithms**, moderated by **Dérick Swart** (Managing Partner and Founder, Swart Attorneys) with **Dr Andrew Rens** (CEO: Tequity), **Jacques du Toit** (CTO: Spatialegde), and **Zinhle Novazi** (Law and Technology and International Trade Finance Lecturer in the Mercantile Law Department of Stellenbosch University).

The discussion covered:

- **ownership and control of training data and outputs,**
- **data governance and sovereignty in an AI driven economy, and**

- **regulatory and ethical considerations for algorithmic decision making.**

The programme then turned to **Licensing Strategies for Startups**, moderated by **Andrè Maré** (Partner, Von Seidels Attorneys, Director LES SA), with input from **Will Green** (CEO, CoLab), **Christine Strutt** (Partner, Von Seidels Attorneys), **Vanessa van Copenhagen** (Consultant, Spoor & Fisher South Africa and Advisory Member of LES SA Board), providing founders and advisors with:

- **practical licensing models for scaling young ventures,**
- **investor expectations around IP strategy, and**
- **common pitfalls in partner and channel agreements.**

A highly engaging workshop, **“From Try Line to Trademark: Building and Protecting a Rugby Player’s Brand from Grassroots to Global Stage,”** explored name, image and likeness strategies, endorsements and long term brand building for professional athletes, led by **Johan du Preez** (Retired Intellectual Property Lawyer, former Partner, Adams & Adams), **Juandre Kruger** (CEO, Healthcare Industry & Former Springbok Professional Rugby Player) and **Eugene Henning** (CEO, My Players).

After a networking finger lunch at Sansibar, a **Workshop on Cross Border Licensing Opportunities** with Dr Madelein Kleyn (Chief Legal Officer, Omnisient), **Theo Doubell** (Director, Bouwers Inc) and **Darren T Olivier** (Partner, Adams & Adams) examined:

- **structuring international licences,**
- **enforcement and risk management across multiple jurisdictions, and**
- **trends in technology, data flows and trade affecting global IP exploitation.**

This was followed by an **Expert Talk on Technology Transfer & University Licensing Models**, moderated by **Nolene Singh** (Deputy Director, Technology Transfer at Innovus Stellenbosch University) with **Saberi Marais** (Technology Transfer Specialist, Innovus, Stellenbosch University), **Ian van Zyl** (Technology Transfer Specialist, Innovus, Stellenbosch University) and **Monique Heystek** (Technology Transfer Specialist, IP & Contracts at University of the Western Cape), who shared practical experience on spinning out university IP, licensing frameworks and public interest considerations.

ESG, Responsible Innovation and the Licensing Agenda

The conference closed with a plenary on Innovation, ESG, and the Licensing Agenda, chaired by **Jessica Blumenthal** (Executive, ENSafrica) with **Melaney Oldenhof** (Senior Business Development Associate, B Lab Africa) and **Carlyn Frittelli Davies** (Consultant, ENSafrica). The session explored:

- **how licensing can be used as a tool to support ESG and sustainable finance goals,**
- **the risks of greenwashing and misrepresentation in technology and impact claims, and**
- **how contractual frameworks can align innovation, compliance and impact.**

Dr Madelein Kleyn delivered the closing remarks, thanking speakers, sponsors and delegates, and emphasising LES South Africa’s ongoing role in building a collaborative community around IP, licensing and innovation in the region.

An optional vineyard tour and farewell drinks rounded off the 2025 event.

[LES 200 Advanced Training Course](#)

The first South African LESI–EPO Advanced Licensing Course was held in Stellenbosch on 12–13 November 2025, hosted at WorkShack in Techno Park. **Jointly developed by LESI and the European Patent Office, and presented by LES South Africa**, the course brought together seasoned IP experts, including board members from the LES South Africa chapter, with each speaker contributing 10–20 years of high-level experience in IP strategy and deal-making.

The programme offered a **practice-oriented roadmap** across the full lifecycle of IP commercialisation, covering IP strategy and alignment with business objectives, IP management and opportunity creation, patent filing tactics, licensing fundamentals, sector-specific insights from the life sciences industry, and IP valuation and royalty setting.

A major highlight – and repeatedly cited by participants as a stand-out element – was the **IP licensing negotiation masterclass and negotiation game** held on the second day. Working in coached teams on realistic deal scenarios, participants were required to **prepare, negotiate and close a licensing deal**, applying concepts such as value drivers, risk allocation, royalty structures and competitive positioning. The interactive “game” format created an energetic environment in which attendees could test strategies, receive direct feedback from expert coaches, and experience first-hand how different negotiation approaches impact outcomes and relationships. Many participants commented that this intensive exercise brought the entire course together, translating theory into **immediately usable negotiation skills** for real-world IP transactions.

Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with repeated 5/5 evaluations for both speakers and content, and comments such as “**insightful, practical and helpful**,” “**great value gathered from this session**,” and “**wonderful— wish to have more courses like this**.” Attendees highlighted the practical strategies gained across IP management, assessment of which IP to pursue, and valuation and royalty rate determination, as well as the **direct applicability of the negotiation game to their own licensing and collaboration deals**. Several respondents indicated that they would recommend the course—particularly to colleagues in the first five years of practice—and even suggested extending the duration to allow more time for the valuation and negotiation components.

Overall, the Stellenbosch LESI–EPO Advanced Licensing Course was a resounding success and has laid a strong foundation for hosting further such advanced licensing and negotiation programmes in South Africa.

Please List Your Professional Committees and primary contacts for each (e.g., Education, Life Sciences, Transportation, Branding):

Current Executive Committee

- President: Dr. Joanne van Harmelen

- Vice President: Dr. Madelein Kleyn
- Secretary: Nolene Singh
- Treasurer: Alan Lewis
- Immediate Past President: Johan du Preez

Additional Board Members:

- Danie Dohman
- André Marè
- Refilwe Ngoato

Committee Liaisons:

- Life Sciences: Dr. Joanne van Harmelen
- Patent Technology License and Women in Licensing Alliance: Dr. Madelein Kleyn/Kevin Dam
- Industry, University and Government Transactions: Nolene Singh, Refilwe Ngoato, and Dr. Hamilton Mphidi
- Website: Alan Lewis
- Entertainment Copyright, Trade Marks, Design and Merchandising: Johan du Preez
- Education: Danie Dohman
- High Technology: André Marè
- Young Members: Refilwe Ngoato
- Chemicals, Environment, Energy, and Materials Committee: vacant

Does your society have (or plan to start) a Young Members Congress (YMC)? Would your Society be interested in becoming more involved in WILA? If so, please provide a contact for each.

The Young Members Congress contact is Ms Refilwe Ngoato (refilwe.ngoato@up.ac.za).
Our WILA contact is Dr Madelein Kleyn (madelein@omnisient.com).

How can LESI or other LES Societies further support you?

Arrange a Winter Planning meeting in South Africa – the lions don't really roam the streets 😊

Report completed by :_Dr Joanne van Harmelen & Dr Madelein Kleyn_____ Date : _____