

IP readiness checklist

Twenty questions to answer before you file, pitch to investors or negotiate a licence.

Ownership

- ☐ Who created the invention, design, code or brand – and are they all identified?
- ☐ Do employment contracts and contractor agreements assign IP to the company?
- ☐ Were any university, grant or partner resources used, and what do those agreements say about ownership?
- ☐ Is the IP held by the right legal entity (for example, the company rather than a founder)?

Protection

- ☐ Has anything been disclosed publicly (talks, papers, websites, pitch decks) before filing?
- ☐ Which rights apply: patents, trade marks, registered designs, copyright, trade secrets?
- ☐ Are filing deadlines and renewal dates recorded and owned by someone?
- ☐ Do your filings cover the countries where you will make, sell or license the technology?
- ☐ Are trade secrets identified and protected with NDAs and access controls?

Freedom to operate

- ☐ Have you looked for third-party patents that could restrict your product?
- ☐ Are you using open-source software, and do its licences allow your business model?
- ☐ Is your brand name clear for use and registration in your key markets?

Commercialisation

- ☐ Who are the most likely licensees, partners or acquirers, and what do they need?
- ☐ What field, territory and exclusivity could you offer in a licence?
- ☐ How might value be shared: upfront fees, milestones, royalties or equity?
- ☐ Do you have a one-page, non-confidential summary of the technology?

Investment and due diligence

- ☐ Is there an up-to-date IP register listing every asset, owner and status?
- ☐ Are all relevant agreements (licences, collaborations, NDAs) signed and filed?
- ☐ Are there any disputes, challenges or encumbrances on your IP?
- ☐ Can you explain clearly how your IP protects your competitive position?