

SAIMM Pretoria Branch Technical Presentation

Theme:

Stop the leak. Stop copycats: Intellectual Property (IP) for Metallurgy Innovation

Date: 12 May 2026

Time: 17:00 – 19:00

Venue: University of Pretoria, Hatfield Campus



Agenda

1. IP options for mining and metallurgy innovations
2. Why IP matters in mining and metallurgy
3. What qualifies as an invention, and where it hides
4. Patenting procedure (with a South African perspective)
5. Case studies: commercialised technologies protected by patents

Abstract

Mining and Metallurgy innovation is costly to prove, scale and deploy, yet some high value improvements are lost before they become assets. In practice, Intellectual Property (IP) value is frequently destroyed not by competitors, but by early disclosure: a conference abstract, a thesis upload, or a vendor slide deck.

The session begins with an overview of the main forms of IP relevant to the mining and metallurgy industry, then shows participants how to recognise protectable inventions arising from routine plant and R&D work and how to protect them before they leak.

The talk then outlines the patenting procedure with a specific focus on South Africa. The session concludes with real world case studies of commercialised technologies protected by patents.

Christopher Mhangwane



Christopher Mhangwane is a South African Patent Attorney and Group Patent Attorney at Weir Minerals. He holds a BSc Engineering (Metallurgy & Materials) from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and an LLB from the University of South Africa (UNISA). Christopher advises on domestic and international patent matters, including the drafting and prosecution of patent applications across the chemical, mechanical, metallurgical, and materials fields. He also specialises in patent searches to support innovation strategy and risk management. Prior to joining Weir Minerals, he was a Senior Associate at a leading South African intellectual property law firm.

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