

Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP)

Twenty-First Session
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PROJECT PROPOSAL FROM THE DELEGATIONS OF CANADA, MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON INCREASING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP, ENCOURAGING WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO USE THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SYSTEM

prepared by the Secretariat

1. By way of a communication dated March 16, 2018, addressed to the Secretariat, the Permanent Mission of the United States of America has submitted a project proposal entitled “Project on Increasing the Role of Women in Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Encouraging Women in Developing Countries to Use the Intellectual Property System”, on behalf of the Delegations of Canada, Mexico and the United States, for consideration by the twenty-first session of the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP).

2. The above-mentioned project proposal is contained in the Annex to this document.

3. *The CDIP is invited to consider the Annex to the present document.*

[Annex follows]

**DEVELOPMENT AGENDA RECOMMENDATIONS 1, 10, 12, 19, 31
PROJECT PROPOSAL FROM THE DELEGATIONS OF CANADA, MEXICO, AND THE
UNITED STATES,**

1. SUMMARY	
<u>Project Code</u>	DA_1_10_12_19_31_01
<u>Title</u>	<i>Increasing the Role of Women in Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Encouraging Women in Developing Countries to Use the Intellectual Property System</i>
<u>Development Agenda Recommendation(s)</u>	1, 10, 12, 19, 31
<u>Brief Description of Project</u>	<p>This project will focus on assisting women in developing countries to utilize their innovative and entrepreneurial potential by encouraging and supporting them in using the intellectual property (IP) system. In particular, the project will assist and support women innovators, broaden their awareness and knowledge of the IP system, and encourage their further advancement as inventors and entrepreneurs by creating or expanding women inventor support programs and other mentoring and networking opportunities and events.</p> <p>More specifically, the proposed project will identify opportunities for reinforcing the contribution made by WIPO to women's innovation and entrepreneurship by creating, enhancing and/or expanding the services provided to women inventors and entrepreneurs with respect to obtaining patent protection for their inventions and using their IP.</p>
<u>Implementing Program(s)</u>	TBD
<u>Links to other related Program(s)/ DA Project(s)</u>	DA_8_01, DA_8_02, DA_19_30_31, DA_16_20_01 and DA_16_20_02, DA_16_20_03
<u>Links to Expected Results in the Program and Budget</u>	<p>III.2 (Program 9) Enhanced human resource capacities able to deal with the broad range of requirements for the effective use of IP for development in developing countries, LDCs and countries with economies in transition.</p> <p>IV.2 (Programs 9 and 14) Enhanced access to, and use of, IP information by IP institutions and the public to promote innovation and creativity.</p>
<u>Project Duration</u>	36 months
<u>Project Budget</u>	<p>Non-personnel costs: To be determined later.</p> <p>Personnel costs: To be determined later.</p>

* Subject to approval by the Program and Budget Committee.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1. Background and Project Justification

Women constitute about 49.6 per cent of the world's population and make a critical contribution to social and economic development of countries and to the success of enterprises around the world. Nonetheless, even in developed countries women still represent a minority among entrepreneurs, with e.g. only 17 per cent of startups in the United States in 2017 having at least one female founder. A number of factors contribute to this gender gap in entrepreneurship, including lack of support for women entrepreneurs. A research project conducted in 2008-2010 by the International Women Working Group on Women Business Incubation (IWWG), and supported by the InfoDev program of the World Bank, identified the lack of information, the lack of supportive networks and the lack of knowledge among the factors contributing to the gender gap with respect to business incubation.¹

Intellectual property (IP) is an important factor in the success of many enterprises. The IP system plays a key role in nurturing the growth of innovators and innovation-driven small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). IP helps innovators protect their inventions or creations, as well as to monetize and commercialize their inventions or creations. Finding investors and forming partnerships often depends on having IP rights to a technology or product, especially for technology-oriented startups. However, research clearly shows that women engage in the IP system less than men. For instance, in 2015, only 29 per cent of patent applications worldwide had at least one woman inventor, and only 4.3 per cent came from women-only inventors, highlighting the extent of the gender gap in international patent filings.²

Lack of access to or knowledge of opportunities, as well as the exclusion of women from information-sharing or professional networks, also helps explain the under-representation of women in the IP system.³ Other factors underlying the IP gender gap include: that women tend to focus less on the commercialization of their inventions in comparison to men; and that women-only networks typically have fewer members with patenting experience.⁴ Interestingly, a study evidenced that female executives in the information technology industry were well-aware of a gender gap in patenting, whereas their male counterparts either did not believe such a gender gap exists, or did not believe it existed within their own institutions.⁵

¹ World Bank, "Gateway to Economic Development through Women Empowerment and Entrepreneurship" InfoDev, International Women Working Group, April 2010, <https://www.infodev.org/infodev-files/resource/idi/document/Women%27s%20working%20group%20final%20report.pdf>

² The statistics are drawn from two studies conducted by the UK Intellectual Property Office (UKIPO) and WIPO, which evaluated the extent of the gender gap in patenting. The WIPO study examined approximately 9 million patent applications filed through the Patent Cooperation Treaty, and the UKIPO study examined 59 million patent applications from the Worldwide Patent Statistics database. See: Gema Lax Martinez, Julio Raffo, and Kaori Saito, 'Economic Research Working Paper No. 33- Identifying the gender of PCT inventors', Economics & Statistics Series, World Intellectual Property Organisation, November 2016, http://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_econstat_wp_33.pdf; UKIPO, 'Gender Profiles in Worldwide Patenting: An analysis of female inventorship', UK Intellectual Property Office Informatics Team, September 2016, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/514320/Gender-profiles-in-UK-patenting-An-analysis-of-female-inventorship.pdf.

³ See Martinez, Raffo, and Saito, 3; UKIPO, 'Gender Profiles in Worldwide Patenting: An analysis of female inventorship'.

⁴ See e.g., Sue V. Rosser, "The Gender Gap in Patenting: Is Technology Transfer a Feminist Issue?", *NWSA Journal*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2009; UNCTAD, 'A Survey on Women's Entrepreneurship and Innovation', *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 2014, 33- 35, http://empretec.unctad.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/UNCTAD_DIAE_ED_2013_1.pdf.

⁵ Rosser, 73-74.

Improving support for women inventors and entrepreneurs can therefore be considered essential to reducing the gender gap in innovation and entrepreneurship and ultimately reinforcing the contribution of women to social and economic development.

Certain countries have already taken active steps to improve support for women innovators and entrepreneurs through initiatives such as Mexico's SMEs Women's Program created by the National Entrepreneur Institute (INADEM) in collaboration with the National Institute for Women (INMUJERES) and the Victoria 147 platform established by Academy Victoria 147 in Mexico. The SMEs Women's Program provides micro, small and medium-sized enterprises led by women with access to preferential financing and business development, while the Victoria 147 platform offers training, incubation, acceleration, and networking features for women entrepreneurs and executives.

There are already a number of programs and resources at WIPO that provide support and services to innovators and creators in transitional, developing and least developed countries. For instance, the existing WIPO Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) program provides innovators in developing countries with access to locally based, high quality technology information and related services, helping them to exploit their innovative potential and to create, protect, and manage their IP rights.⁶ Currently, there are over 500 TISCs operating worldwide. TISCs are actively supported by national and regional industrial property authorities. Another example is the Inventor Assistance Program (IAP), a WIPO initiative in cooperation with the World Economic Forum, which matches developing country inventors and small businesses with limited financial means with patent attorneys, who provide pro bono legal assistance to secure patent protection.

However, the above-cited data suggests that there may be a need for more targeted services to help women inventors to receive assistance and support with respect to protecting and managing their IP, and more particularly patent rights. The present project proposes to use the existing WIPO programs as a resource and/or model for creating or expanding a network of women inventor support programs, or, where appropriate, to build additional capacity and expand services of the existing WIPO programs by creating specific support programs and events for women, in close coordination and collaboration with existing national associations of women inventors and innovators.

2.2. Objectives

The proposed project aims to assist women in developing countries to utilize their innovative and entrepreneurial potential by encouraging and supporting their use of the IP system for business development. In particular, the project will assist women inventors, broaden their awareness and knowledge of the IP system and encourage their further advancement as inventors and entrepreneurs by:

1. Creating Women Inventor Resource Centers ("WIRCs") that would provide inventor services to women inventors and entrepreneurs in an all-women environment;
2. Establishing or expanding a network of women inventors and entrepreneurs that will provide continuous support to inventors and entrepreneurs in the country or region. Organizing regular national and/or regional networking events for women inventors and entrepreneurs;

⁶ <http://www.wipo.int/tisc/en/>

3. Establishing or expanding Women's IP mentorship programs that would provide mentoring to new inventors and entrepreneurs in the country or region, as well as outreach to schools and universities; and
4. Establishing or expanding a legal support program for women inventors in order to assist them with protecting their IP in the country or region.
5. At the end of the pilot, creating a toolkit and/or a compilation of best practices/lessons learned in order to assist other countries to establish or expand women inventor support programs.

2.3. Delivery Strategy

The project objective will be achieved through the following outputs:

1. Mapping of existing models and examples of women inventor assistance/support programs, networking structures, mentorship programs and other related activities in the pilot country.
2. Women Inventor Resource Centers (WIRCs), where women can receive training and assistance with patent and other IP-related search, as well as information on IP procedures, local government initiatives for innovation, and other support in an all-women environment, are created.
3. Networking opportunities for women inventors and entrepreneurs that would allow them to interact with other women inventors and entrepreneurs through the participation in networking events, such as conferences, roundtables, seminars, as well as web-based groups are created.
4. Women's IP mentorship programs that would provide IP support and mentorship to girls and women with an interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are created.
5. Where possible and practical, legal support programs such as a pro bono program and/or law school clinic program that would assist women inventors with protecting their IP in the country or region, are created or expanded.
6. A toolkit and/or compilation of best practices/lessons learned on creating or expanding women inventor support programs in developing countries.

The project outputs will be produced through the following activities:

1. WIPO will collect information about existing structures and programs, if any, that provide support to women inventors and innovators in the pilot country in order to develop some points of reference and build on the existing experience and expertise, whenever possible and practical.
2. WIPO will work with national associations of women inventors and innovators in creating WIRCs, which will provide information and assistance for women inventors. WIPO will partner with universities, research institutions, and/or national IP offices in beneficiary countries to identify the target audience that would benefit from such services and to advertise such services. As part of their work, the WIRCs may also collect data in respect of the services and initiatives offered, as well as in respect of the representation of women in IP in the pilot countries.

3. WIPO will work with universities, government research institutions and/or the private sector in organizing and conducting networking events and other opportunities for women inventors.
4. WIPO will work with schools, colleges, universities and national associations of women inventors and innovators to create women's IP mentorship programs for girls and women in order to encourage their innovation activity in STEM; to promote greater awareness of how IP contributes to protecting and fostering innovation, including by facilitating the commercialization of inventions. The women's IP mentorship programs will provide mentoring to inventors and entrepreneurs in the country or region, as well as outreach to schools and universities.
5. Where possible and practical, WIPO will work with local law associations and law schools/law departments at universities to create a legal support program for women inventors.
6. At the end of the pilot project, WIPO will compile best practices and lessons learned and create a toolkit in order to assist other countries to establish or expand women inventor support programs.

Four countries with existing national associations of women inventors and innovators will be initially selected for this project. The selection of three pilot countries, in addition to Mexico, will be based on the following criteria:

1. Existence of a national framework for IP protection;
2. Demonstrated interest and ability of the local beneficiaries, including IP offices and universities to engage effectively in the implementation of the project;
3. Business and legal environment conducive to the formation of new technology-based companies; and
4. Some patent activity by local applicants.

In addition, pilot countries will be selected with a view to achieving diversity in terms of geography and socio-economic development.

Member States interested in participating in the project as pilot countries will submit a proposal containing the following elements:

- (a) Indication of a national association of women inventors and innovators willing and able to engage in this project;
- (b) Indication of a lead agency/institution responsible for coordinating country-level activities in coordination with the WIPO Secretariat (e.g., national IP office, national technology transfer or technology commercialization authority; research and/or educational institutions); and
- (c) Capacity of the lead agency/institution and other stakeholders to continue with the implementation of the proposed strategies, once the current project is concluded.

The above-mentioned selection process will enable the project team (lead agency/institution at country level and WIPO project management team) to assess the commitment and the actual capacities of prospective candidates to invest time and resources in the process.

2.4. <u>Risks and Mitigation Strategies – To be determined (TBD)</u>	
<i>Risk:</i> Absence of mentors to participate in the mentorship program.	
<i>Mitigation:</i> Cooperation with national associations of women inventors and innovators.	
3. REVIEW AND EVALUATION	
3.1. <u>Project Review Schedule</u>	
The project will be reviewed once a year with a progress report submitted to the CDIP. At the end of the project, an independent evaluation will be carried out and its report submitted to the CDIP.	
3.2. <u>Project Self-Evaluation TBD</u>	
In addition to the project self-evaluation, an independent evaluation will be undertaken for the project.	
<i>Project Outputs</i>	<i>Indicators of Successful Completion (Output Indicators).</i>
1. Mapping of existing support programs and structures for women inventors and entrepreneurs	Information about existing support programs and structures for women inventors and entrepreneurs is collected by (date to be defined).
2. Women Inventor Resource Centers (WIRC)	Agreements with coordinating institution(s) concluded by (date to be defined).
3. Networking opportunities	Conference, roundtable, or seminar organized or web-based groups created by (date to be defined).
4. Women's IP Mentorship Programs	First mentorship meeting organized by (date to be defined).
5. Legal support programs	Agreements with patent attorneys concluded by (date to be defined).
<i>Project Objective(s)</i>	<i>Indicator(s) of Success in Achieving Project Objective (Outcome Indicators)</i> TBD

Resources, Implementation Timeline -TBD

[End of Annex and of document]