

**Branding Project for SMEs in Nigeria**  
**Official Closing Showcase**  
**February 20, 2025, United Nations, Abuja**

## **1. Introduction**

In 2021, to mitigate the adverse effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and to encourage economic recovery, WIPO created the COVID-19 Response Package subsequently redesigned as the WIPO Build Back Fund to help WIPO member states to address specific challenges post-pandemic through the launch of new, impact-oriented projects leveraging the effective use of intellectual property (IP). A special focus is dedicated to those typically underserved by the IP system such as women, youth, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), local communities and Indigenous Peoples.

To access this fund, member states are tasked with requesting for projects addressing national priorities, needs and challenges from WIPO. Responding to this call, the Trademarks Registry requested for a branding project to assist 60 SMEs in the food and beverage, cosmetics, and ICT sectors to utilize branding as a tool for strengthening market access and dominance.

The Branding Project for SMEs in Nigeria was designed in collaboration with the Trademarks Registry to strengthen the competitiveness of businesses in the food and beverage, cosmetics, and Information, Communications, and Technology (ICT) sectors. The project focused on helping SMEs leverage intellectual property (IP) and branding as critical tools for business growth and recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This project is supported by the Nigerian government and aligns with WIPO's commitment to addressing country-specific challenges in the post-pandemic era. It leverages WIPO's Build Back Fund, which is part of the WIPO's COVID-19 Related Services and Support. The fund ensures the continuity of projects initiated under the COVID-19 Response Package and continues to address the unique needs and priorities of member states in the aftermath of the pandemic.

In response to a call for applications published on May 31, 2024, on the WIPO website, 184 SMEs applied to be a part of the project. From these, 60 SMEs were selected for personalized training through the WIPO IP Management Clinic: 30 from the Food and Beverage sector (the largest applicant group), 15 from ICT, and 15 from Cosmetics. Additionally, the remaining 124 SMEs received scholarships to participate in the WIPO Academy's distance learning course on intellectual property, impacting a total of 184 businesses.

The training was conducted from October 2, 2024, to February 2025. A team of four IP experts and four business development experts provided guidance and mentorship to the selected SMEs.

To officially launch the project, WIPO and the Trademarks Registry hosted an information roundtable and onboarding event on September 24, 2024, at the UN House in Abuja. This gathering emphasized the strategic importance of trademarks and branding in enhancing business development and financing strategies for SMEs. The overarching goal of the event was to convene industry experts to explore how SMEs can use trademarking and branding strategies

to boost their market presence, improve operational performance, and drive sustainable revenue growth.

To officially conclude this impactful training project, WIPO organized a closing ceremony on Thursday, *February 20, 2025, at the United Nations House, Abuja by 10 a.m.* This event highlighted success stories from participating SMEs, showcasing how their knowledge of trademarks and branding has contributed to their business growth. It also served as a platform for key government and private sector stakeholders to engage and provide valuable insights to further support the SMEs.

*The project has 45 female and 16 Male Participants.*

## **2. Project Objectives**

The overall objective of the project was to support SMEs/Startups to utilize branding as an effective and strategic tool to further enhance their entrepreneurial activities. The overarching goal was to encourage the use of IP to enhance the productivity and marketability of SMEs in the three sectors in Nigeria.

In addition, the project:

- Provided guidance on how to build IP strategies that will enable the selected SMEs/Startups to attain a sound IP portfolio.
- Provided tailor-made IP related business strategies to selected SMEs/Startups to enhance their competitiveness.
- Provided business and marketing strategies on how to create or increase the brand value at the local or external levels; and
- Motivated SMEs/Startups to utilize IP as part of their overall business strategy.

## **3. Project Structure and Implementation through the IPMC**

- The SMEs received one-on-one IP and business expert advice tailor-made to their operational needs as well as hands-on orientation on the different options provided by the IP system to support their businesses.
- The selected SMEs/Startups were guided in the use of WIPO tools such as IP Diagnostics tool, IP for business guides and other publications to derive and develop, based on the clinics and the related interactions with the SMEs/Startups, new and complementary materials such as the IP Management Checklist (<https://www.wipo.int/sme/en/checklist.html>)
- There was a public closing showcase event on February 20, 2025, at the United Nations House in Abuja, where the SMEs shared their success stories showcasing how their knowledge of trademarks and branding has contributed to their business growth. It was also a platform for key government and private sector stakeholders to engage and provide valuable insights to further support the SMEs.

#### **4. Project Updates**

The project was officially launched on May 31, 2024, with a nationwide call for applications targeting SMEs in the food and beverage, cosmetics and ICT sectors. Over 180 applications were received, and 60 SMEs were selected to participate in the training program—30 from food and beverages, 15 from cosmetics, and 15 from the ICT sectors.

The training program began in October 2024 and spanned four months, wrapping up in January 2025. A mini workshop was held on November 22, 2024, to provide insights into the project's progress. The final showcase event took place on February 20, 2025, at the UN House, attracting over 100 participants onsite.

During the program, participating SMEs benefited from tailored mentorship provided by experienced IP and business experts, aimed at promoting business growth and strengthening their IP management capabilities.

Below are the details of the Experts:

##### **Food and Beverage – Group 1 – 15 SMEs**

- Prof. Kasim Waziri – IP Lecture at the University of Abuja
- Ms. Pelumi Fadairo – Business Development Expert

##### **Food and Beverage – Group 2 – 15 SMEs**

- Ms. Similoluwa Oyelude – Partner at G Elias Law Firm
- Mr. Ashiwel Ochui – Business Development Expert

##### **Cosmetics – 15 SMEs**

- Ms. Lara Kayode – Partner, O Kayode & Co Law Firm
- Mr. Ronald Mmekaka – Business Development Expert

##### **ICT – 15 SMEs**

- Mr. Senator Ihenyen – Partner at Infusion Lawyers Law Firm and Chairman of the NBA-SBL IP Session
- Mr. Mohammed Jega – Business Development Expert

#### **5. Highlights of the Closing Showcase**

##### **i). Opening Session**

The official closing showcase event was held at the United Nations House in Abuja on Thursday, February 20, 2025. The program began with opening remarks from Dr Shafiu Adamu Yauri, Registrar of Trademarks Registry representing the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Mr. Dafang Sule representing the Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, and Mr. Oluwatobiloba Moody, Director of the WIPO Nigeria Office (WNO).

The event was attended by key government stakeholders responsible for SMEs in Nigeria, who delivered special remarks in support of the SMEs. Key participants included the Director General of the Nigerian Export Promotion Council represented by Mr. Onoga Ella, Mr. Charles Odii, the Director General of SMEDAN, Ms. Weyinmi Eribo, the Director General of Women Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, Dr. Chudi Ugwuada-Ezirigwe, the Acting MD/CEO, Abuja Enterprises Agency, and Mr. Chris Kalanje, Counselor, IP for Business Division, WIPO.

The above agencies work directly with SMEs in Nigeria. In their remarks, they congratulated and educated the SMEs passing out of the project about the support their agencies provide to the SMEs. The session also highlighted Government's and WIPO's commitment to SMEs Development and showcase collaborative efforts with WIPO and other government agencies.

## **ii). Success Stories from Beneficiaries of the Project**

This segment provided an overview of the project's journey so far, highlighting its impact on businesses in Nigeria. The goal was to showcase how the initiative has empowered SMEs to leverage intellectual property (IP) for growth and sustainability.

Six SMEs from the Food & Beverages, Cosmetics, and ICT sectors shared their success stories, demonstrating how the project has transformed their businesses. The National Coordinating Project Officer for WIPO's Build Back Fund in Nigeria, Ms. Olaronke Famuyiwa, facilitated an engaging discussion. She posed key questions to both the SMEs and experts—asking the SMEs how the project changed their understanding of IP and how they plan to apply their newfound knowledge. For the experts, the discussion centered on their reflections regarding the project's broader impact on small businesses and the Nigerian economy.

### **SMEs Who Shared Their Success Stories:**

- i). Ms. Aishat Adebayo – Aish Naturals Cosmetics
- ii). Okwy Ohagwa – Ates Okwy Ltd Cosmetics
- iii). Mmaduabuchi Anoro – Elwin Amanchasis Co. Ltd
- iv). Ms. Omolade Hassanat Kehinde – Haftaj Fresh Fruit Juice Limited
- v). Izu Freeman – Capsule Business Technology Limited
- vi). Faith Dawah – Faitech and Tribes Computer

The impact of the training was evident in their testimonies. Ms. Omolade, for instance, was selling 1,000 bottles of fresh fruit juice per month in Abuja before the training. By the end of the program, after rebranding her business, her sales surged to over 5,000 bottles per month.

Similarly, Mr. Anoro, who sells locally made cashew nuts in Anambra, expanded his market reach significantly. Before the training, his products were available in 22 stores; within just four months, he scaled up to 64 stores.

Another remarkable achievement came from Ms. Ohagwa and Ms. Adebayo, who are now in the process of expanding their businesses beyond Nigeria's borders.

Meanwhile, in the ICT sector, Mr. Freeman and Ms. Dawah benefited from specialized guidance on identifying the IP within their technological solutions. They are now prepared to register and leverage their IP for business growth.

This segment was the highlight of the event, as it clearly demonstrated the tangible impact of the project on its beneficiaries. To commend their dedication and progress, each SME was presented with a certificate of achievement at the end of the session.

## **6. Conclusion**

The event successfully marked the conclusion of the Branding Project for SMEs in Nigeria celebrating its impact and achievements.

## **7. Next Steps**

- A post-event survey was distributed to attendees to gather further feedback and suggestions.
- A post-project Level 3 survey will be conducted six months after the program to assess how the participating SMEs have applied the lessons learned during the project.
- Identification of further support opportunities for the SMEs, including such as SMEDAN who have indicated interest in pitching support and grants for the SMEs, as well as NEPC, NIPC, and WCCIMA etc.

[End of Report]