

Moroccan-Swiss Intellectual Property Project

The project objective is to contribute to enabling entrepreneurs, creators, researchers and producers in Morocco to benefit from effective IP use.

Project background and context

Morocco is considered a lower middle income-country and is at the cusp of economic transformation. Recent political reforms have brought about stability and an increase in the rule of law. These have been complemented by economic reforms which aimed to increase privatisation and restructure the financial system. Despite these reforms, Morocco has experienced significant deceleration because of droughts and an increase in inflationary pressures. The government's more recent initiatives include new regulations for private investment and tax reforms. In this context, a robust intellectual property framework is vital to maintaining Morocco's position as an investment hub for commerce between Europe and Africa.

The role of IP in socio-economic development is recognised by Morocco. The Moroccan Industrial and Commercial Property Office (OMPIC) has a comprehensive strategy for the period between 2022-2026. One of the pillars of this strategy is to build a favourable IP ecosystem for entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity. Indeed, Morocco has IP legislation in place in the areas of industrial property, trademarks, copyright, and a sui generis system for GIs. It is also a member of several WIPO administered treaties and participates in cooperation projects on an ad-hoc basis. Despite having these solid foundations in the area of intellectual property, the full potential of its intellectual property system is untapped. There is potential for increased inter-agency coordination and a more comprehensive national strategic approach towards IP. Some of the IP laws can be updated and the enforcement efforts strengthened to adequately fight piracy and counterfeiting. There would also be benefits to increasing IP awareness in Morocco to improve the effectiveness of IP frameworks for consumers and businesses. In addition, the country's free trade agreements (among them the one with EFTA states) can be further used to internationally trade "Made in Morocco" goods and services.

The project was planned in consultation with the main Moroccan stakeholders of the national IP system. It represents their expressed needs and priorities and aims to strengthen the capacities of the Moroccan public and private sectors to benefit from IP rights with a view to economic growth. Furthermore, the project intends to support the efforts of the Moroccan government in the economic development of the country as set in its Nouveau Modèle de Développement, which depicts the vision until 2035.

Goals and objectives

Selected goals and objectives of high relevance to Morocco to be achieved by the project include:

- Developing **IP legislation and strategies** that contribute to better framework conditions for investment and innovation;
- Improving **IPR registration and administration entities** for providing efficient and user-friendly services;

Quick project facts

Project duration

Jan. 2024 – Dec. 2027

Total budget

CHF 1,500,000

Donor agency

Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (**SECO**)

Implementing institution

Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (**IPI**)

Main partner

- Office Marocain de la Propriété Industrielle et Commerciale (**OMPIC**)

Morocco country context

Population: 32.56 million
Area: 710,850km²
Annual GDP growth: 1.1% (2022)
GDP per capita:
USD 3,527.9 (2022)

- Strengthened capacity of IPR entities, academia and private sector representatives in the **promotion, acquisition, use and transfer of IPRs** to potential users;
- Strengthened national capacities in relation to the **enforcement of IPRs**.

Activities

The project aims to contribute to effective IP protection to the benefit of the Moroccan entrepreneurs, creators, researchers and producers. To this end, various activities will be implemented to strengthen the legal framework of IP protection such as contributing to the review and updating of IP legislation, rules, and regulations. Specifically, project activities will focus on improving the quality of patents, trademarks, and GIs while improving their enforcement. Enforcement will also be supported through the project by carrying out interventions in the area of capacity building for alternative dispute resolution and the creation of a national visibility campaign on the use of GIs. With respect to improving IP awareness, the project will focus on supporting knowledge and technology transfer and improving awareness about how businesses can commercialise IP. Finally, the project will aim at further enhancing IP enforcement by the relevant authorities through best practices and exchange with international peers.

Alignment with Morocco's general development priorities

The New Model of Development (2021-2035) contains the overall vision of the Government of Morocco. This plan includes making Morocco a hub of innovation, research and higher education, a champion of low carbon energy, and improve the quality and competitiveness of Moroccan products using the "Made in Morocco" marker. The OMPIC's strategy of 2022-2026 also prioritises creating a conducive environment for innovation and creativity, creating efficient and modern services for the protection of intangible assets, becoming a proactive and efficient organisation and ramping up its own digital transformation. The New Model of Development also recognises the need for enhancing intangible capital through research and innovation and increase the value Morocco adds to global value chains.

The activities planned under the project will complement Morocco's objectives and ambitions in its national development approach. The review of IP legislation and capacity building activities will further contribute to the project partners' services and objective of being proactive and efficient institutions. Crucially, activities aimed at further consolidating inter-agency cooperation will help Morocco identify synergies in various government activities that can be used to foster innovation and creativity in its economy.

Beneficiaries

Direct beneficiaries: The Moroccan government will be a direct beneficiary, specifically the *Office Marocain de la Propriété Industrielle et Commerciale (OMPIC)* under the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce.

Other direct beneficiaries include selected stakeholders of the national IP system such as the *Bureau Marocain du Droit d'Auteur (BMDA)* under the Ministère de la Jeunesse, de la Culture et de la Communication, *Administration des Douanes et Impôts Indirects*, *Ministère de l'Agriculture, de la Pêche Maritime, du Développement Rural et des Eaux et Forêts*, *Direction de la Préservation du Patrimoine de l'Innovation et de la Promotion - Ministère du Tourisme du Transport Aérien de l'Artisanat et de l'Economie Sociale*, *Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA)*, Chambers of Commerce, Technology and Innovation Support Centres (TISCs), Universities, research centres, IP consultants; and selected Geographical Indications (GI) producers associations.

For more information, contact

Nathalie Hirsig, Project coordinator, Bern, Switzerland: Nathalie.Hirsig@ipi.ch • +41 31 377 72 03

Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property – IPI
www.ipi.ch