



Colombian-Swiss Intellectual Property Project (COLIPRI)

The objective of the COLIPRI project was to strengthen the use of intellectual property rights in Colombia in order to contribute to higher competitiveness, add more value to Colombian products and make a positive impact on Colombia's economic development.

Project background and context

The integration of Colombia into the international system of intellectual property rights (IPRs) was well advanced. The country has acceded to the main important treaties relevant to IPRs, including the Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) on its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995. While Colombia's legal and institutional framework in the field of IPRs was already well developed, challenges still remained. As in many other emerging countries, institutional constraints continued to impede the effective enforcement of IPRs. Furthermore, right holders had not yet fully exploited the potential of these rights. Both were partly the result of limited public awareness. Promoting the use of those types of IPRs that allowed Colombia to capitalise on its internal strengths, such as geographical indications (GIs), was of particular interest to the Government of Colombia. The COLIPRI project was initiated at the specific request of the Colombian government to the Swiss Confederation.



One of the activities of the COLIPRI project was to support the GI protection and market access of local traditional products such as Bocadillo veleño guava paste SMEs (Santander Dept.).

Quick project facts

Project duration

January 2013 – December 2016 (extended to Sept. 2018)

Total budget

CHF 3,100,000.00

Donor agency

Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs – **SECO**

Implementing partners

Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property – **IPI**
Colombian Superintendence of Industry and Commerce – **SIC**
Colombian Ministry of Interior – **MinInterior**

Colombia country context

Population: 46 million
Area: 1,138,910 km²
Annual GDP growth: 4.6%
Annual GDP per capita PPP: USD 13,400

Goals and objectives

Selected objectives of the COLIPRI project included:

- **Strengthening capacities in the SIC departments** of trade marks, patents, IP searches and training in order for the SIC to be able to deliver new and enhanced services to IPR users
- **Expert input and capacity building** of the national geographical indications protection system
- Formulating a **national knowledge and technology transfer strategy** and fostering collaboration between the institutions working within it
- Establishing a **regional innovation cluster**
- Providing support for the **registration of a new GI food product** and supporting the national handicraft promotion organisation in **enhancing the promotion of handicraft GI products**
- Supporting Colombian stakeholders in starting work on a **national traditional knowledge protection policy**

Activities

In light of the relatively advanced stage of Colombia's intellectual property system, the COLIPRI project aimed at addressing specific needs and requests that added the most value and appeared to be the best strategy in achieving sustainable results.

The project has provided **specialised advice and support in selected areas** where Switzerland was able to offer strong expertise and achieve a tangible impact. Within these thematic areas, the activities mainly consisted of **technical capacity building** through training, workshops, education programmes and **expert input**, which was led by national and international consultants. These activities **have increased the capacity** of the SIC and other IP-related organisations in delivering professional services. Furthermore, the project supported the concrete **implementation of GI supply chains** in different regions, i.e. the *Bocadillo veleño* guava paste in the region of Vélez, Santander Department, and several GI handicrafts throughout the country under the umbrella of the national handicraft organisation, Artesanías de Colombia (see photos). The registration and use of the GI for these traditional specialty products were expected to **increase the income of local producers**. In addition to registration, the project also supported community development and product marketing activities.

Alignment with Colombia's development priorities

The COLIPRI project was aligned to the **key socio-economic development priorities of the Government of Colombia**, in particular the aim of modernising and diversifying its economy and narrowing the income gap between its rural and urban population. A well-balanced intellectual property system encourages investment in modern technology, the building of strong local brands and technological innovation, all of which are needed to make Colombian companies more competitive at a global level.

A strong intellectual property system in Colombia (as a major emerging market) is also in the interests of Switzerland, as a reliable and competent local intellectual property office (i.e. the SIC) can provide protection for patents, trademarks and GIs of Swiss companies. The free trade agreement signed between Colombia and Switzerland/EFTA entered into force in 2011 thus underlining the importance of this emerging market.

Beneficiaries

The main beneficiaries through direct technical capacity building were the **Department of Industrial Property under the SIC, the Ministry of Interior, the National Planning Department (DNP), the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation - Colciencias, the Colombian Confederation of Chambers of Commerce (Confecámaras)**. In addition, **local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and relevant associations** benefited from tailor-made workshops and training programmes, while other economic actors as well as the wider Colombian public benefited indirectly through improved SIC services and an improvement in the quality and **competitiveness of Colombian goods and products**. The impact of the COLIPRI project also extended to more vulnerable segments of the population such as rural communities and ethnic minorities, mainly through the use of GIs to market local specialties and the protection of traditional knowledge respectively.



Fabrication of the GI-protected Sombrero Aguadeño hat in Aguadas, Antioquia Department.



Bijao leaves are cleaned and processed to wrap the traditional Bodadillo veleño guava paste, Vélez, Santander Department.



Project partner presenting his proposals for creating the federation which will administrate the GI-protected product, Vélez, Santander Department.

Photos: The COLIPRI project

More information and contact

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