



The Myanmar-Swiss Intellectual Property Project – MYSIPP

The overall objective of MYSIPP is to contribute to the establishment of an IP system in Myanmar, which is an essential component to create favourable conditions for sustainable trade.

Project background and context

Having recently opened up to world trade, foreign investment and development cooperation, Myanmar is endeavouring to update its intellectual property (IP) system in an attempt to fortify intellectual property rights (IPRs). Although Myanmar has been a Member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade since 29 July 1948, and is an original Member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), acceding on the day of its creation (1 January 1995), many of its IP laws require updating.

IP is currently overseen by the IP Department at the Ministry of Commerce. The IP Department, including all its staff, has recently moved there from the Ministry of Education.

As a Least Developed Country, Myanmar benefits from many flexibilities and exemptions related to the implementation of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) of the WTO. In addition to the WTO, Myanmar is also a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and joined the World Intellectual Property Organization on 15 February 2001. Myanmar is currently in the process of acceding to the 1991 Act of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV).

It is in this context that MYSIPP was developed. MYSIPP will work with various stakeholders from the government of Myanmar (principally the IP Department), the private sector (coffee producers) and educational institutions (University of Yangon). The project will aim to meet the objectives of the government of Myanmar to improve their services and knowledge in the IP field by working with these stakeholders.

Quick project facts

Project duration

January 2020 – December 2022

Total budget

CHF 514,000

Donor agency

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

Implementing partners

Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property – **IPI**;
Intellectual Property Office of Myanmar – **IPO**

Myanmar country context 2018

Population: 53.7 million

Area: 676,600 km²

Annual GDP growth: 6.2%

Gross National Income per capita:
USD 1,310

Goals and objectives

The project will focus on supporting the IP Department by achieving the following goals and objectives:

- building the capacity of its staff in the area of **financial and human resource management as well as communication**;
- providing **legal support** through the review of several IP laws and regulations;
- increasing **awareness of Geographical Indications (GIs)** among coffee producers; and
- **strengthening IP education** through technical assistance and the building of capacities in the university system of Myanmar.

Activities

The activities of MYSIPP have been designed to reflect the realities and current state of affairs in Myanmar. Therefore, MYSIPP delivers targeted activities to those institutions that will have the greatest impact on developing Myanmar's nascent IP system. First and foremost is the establishment of a functioning IP Department and updating Myanmar's IP legislation. For this, MYSIPP trains IP Department managers in financial management and budgeting procedures. In addition, MYSIPP reviews and comments on legislation and regulations that are pending before Parliament. These comments will be aimed at identifying any possible gaps with Myanmar's international obligations.

MYSIPP also introduces coffee producers to GIs as a possible form of IP protection. GIs offer producers a layer of protection that links their product with the unique qualities of the region it is from, as well as the reputation of quality that producers have earned.



Lastly, to further enhance the IP systems of Myanmar, MYSIPP works with the University of Yangon in order to update their teaching materials. The goal of this update is for these to be passed to all universities in Myanmar in order to help train and update government officials and private sector stakeholders.

Alignment with Myanmar's general development priorities

In taking a leading role in the implementation of MYSIPP, officials at the IP Department have expressed a desire to achieve the goals of the project. The government of Myanmar is dedicated to becoming a more open international player and sees the protection of IPRs as essential to achieving these objectives.

Beneficiaries

The main beneficiaries of this project will be the IP Department of Myanmar and the University of Yangon. The IP Department will benefit through the training provided to its staff on budgeting and financial planning. In addition, reviews and comments of legal texts by international experts will also benefit the IP Department in their efforts to update IP laws and regulations in Myanmar. The University of Yangon will benefit through updates of their training materials, which will then be disseminated throughout Myanmar.

Other direct beneficiaries include coffee producers and their cooperatives, as well as the Myanmar Coffee Association.

Indirect beneficiaries will include small and medium enterprises that rely on IP protections, as well as the general public.

More information and contact

Georges Bauer and Reto Meili – Project Coordinators MYSIPP

Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property – IPI

georges.bauer@ipi.ch / +41 31 377 72 14 & reto.meili@ipi.ch / +41 31 377 72 71