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Swiss-Serbian Intellectual Property Project, Phase II – SSIP II

The objective of the SSIP II project is to strengthen the use of intellectual property rights in Serbia in order to contribute to higher competitiveness, add more value to Serbian products, and have a positive impact on Serbia's economic development.

Project background and context

The integration of Serbia into the international system of intellectual property rights (IPRs) is well advanced. The country has acceded to the most important treaties relevant to IPRs, apart from the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement), which is planned in the near future. As in many other countries in transition, institutional constraints continue to impede effective enforcement of IPRs. Furthermore, rights holders have not yet fully exploited the potential of these rights. Both are, in part, the result of limited public awareness.



One of the project activities is support of the registration and marketing of a traditional cheese from Zlatar region

The overall goal of SSIP II is to contribute to the increased competitiveness of the local economy through an improved business environment, access to knowledge, and finding ways to diversify the market. The protection of IPRs plays an important role in the development of the knowledge-based technology in the country. It encourages innovation

and investment, and represents an essential ingredient to the success of the Serbian economy in both the EU common market and globally.

Quick project facts

Project duration

2018 - 2022

Total budget

CHF 771,400

Donor agency

Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs – SECO

Implementing partners

Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property – IPI

Republic of Serbia – Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development

Republic of Serbia – Intellectual Property Office IPO

Republic of Serbia – Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection

Serbia country context

Population: 7 million

Area: 77,474 km²

Annual GDP growth: -1.8% (2014)

Annual income per capita: USD 13,400 (2014)

The protection of geographical indications (GIs) is of particular interest to the Government of Serbia. The cooperation between Serbia and Switzerland in the field of GIs began in 2009. GIs are a useful tool for promoting territorial development and adding value to products through specific qualities linked to natural conditions or traditional know-how. This part of the project builds upon the results of the first project phase.

Goals and objectives

Selected areas of high importance to Serbia include:

- improving the legal and institutional framework as well as the enforcement of GIs in order to facilitate the economic and social benefits of producers and consumers;
- strengthening capacities for market valorisation of GI products to better market traditional products for the benefit of rural and artisanal communities; and
- increasing the demand of IP users to protect and capitalise on their IPRs.



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Activities

Considering the advanced stage of Serbia's intellectual property system, this niche approach of the SSIP II project of "filling specific gaps" adds most value and is the best strategy to achieve sustainable results.

The project provides **specialised advice and support in selected areas**, where Switzerland is able to offer strong expertise and achieve a tangible impact. Within these thematic areas, activities mainly consist of **technical capacity building through training**, workshops, education programmes and **expert input** led by national and international consultants. These activities will improve the legal and institutional framework of GIs and increase the demand of IP users to protect and capitalise on their IPRs. In addition, the SSIP II will support the concrete **protection and development of GI products** in different regions of the country.

Alignment with Serbia's general development priorities

Serbia's main development objectives include the improvement of its business environment and the gaining of competitive advantages in the global markets. Serbia will therefore implement some necessary reforms towards the knowledge-based and services-oriented economy. The high-tech industry, especially the IT, biotech and med-tech sectors, though currently small, are expected to show significant growth. Only where legitimate IPRs are protected and enforced will enterprises be able to amortise their significant investments in research and development (R&D) as well as in brand building. This is why SSIP II matches **the Government of Serbia's key socio-economic development priorities** through facilitating the integration of the IPR system in doing business, encouraging R&D and knowledge transfer, supporting innovation activities, improving the business environment to attract investment and new technologies, and enhancing adding value to local products or eventually GI-protected services.

Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of SSIP II are the **Serbian Intellectual Property Office**, the **Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection**, and the Accreditation Body of Serbia. In addition, producers of GIs and their associations will also directly benefit from SSIP II. **Local small and medium enterprises (SME)** and relevant associations are expected to benefit from tailor-made workshops and training, while other economic actors, as well as the wider Serbian public, should benefit indirectly through the improved **competitiveness of Serbian goods and products**. The impact of the SSIP II project also extends to more vulnerable segments of the population such as rural communities, mainly through the use of GIs to market their local specialties.



Variety of traditional cheeses at a Serbian market. Many products could benefit from GI protection.



Paprika is an important ingredient in famous GI products such as Leskovac Ajvar.



One of the first protected appellations of origin within the international Lisbon System was honey from Homolje.

For more information contact

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