



IP Awareness and Enforcement Modular Based Actions for SMEs

INTRODUCTION

The “IP AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT: MODULAR BASED ACTIONS FOR SMEs” project brings together two existing important Europe-wide initiatives under one umbrella action: InnovAccess, a web portal created by the National Patent Offices to provide information on their services for the end user and IPR-Helpdesk, Helpline and training mechanism for current and potential contractors in EC-funded RTD Framework Programme projects. These initiatives, together with further actions foreseen in the project aim to target and improve usage of and access to research, exploitation and innovation in Europe.

The participation in the project of 20 National Patent Offices will boost the Europe-wide perspective of the project. It will provide a voice at national level in at least 20 Members States who are able to communicate directly with national governments, other national and regional actors, their members, individuals, businesses and the European Commission. The consortium also seeks to include new members from those countries not currently represented.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the project is to raise awareness of and knowledge of IPR in particular for SMEs, with a view to:

- Raise SMEs’ understanding of the need to integrate IP in their innovation strategies and their business planning;
- Improve the protection of SMEs’ IP rights through the increased registration of rights EU-wide and also internationally and increase the use of non-registered protection methods through the effective promotion of these methods;
- Improve protection and enforcement by SMEs of their IP rights from infringement whether this originates from within or outside the EU;
- Raise SMEs ability to fight counterfeiting and increase knowledge on the methodologies available to detect it;
- Develop actions to promote awareness on IPR protection to educate the fashion and design industries (textiles, leather, footwear and furniture) on the risks counterfeiting poses and on the existing means and procedures to combat it;
- Promote and support the use of IP rights in international research, development and technology transfer activities, providing an IP rights support service to actual and potential beneficiaries of CIP and Research Framework Programme actions, especially high-tech SMEs and Public Research Organisations.

ACTIVITIES

Some of the activities that will be developed by the “IP AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT: MODULAR BASED ACTIONS FOR SMEs” consortium in this framework are:

- Development of IPR SME awareness strategies for IPR usage and enforcement at EU and local levels, bringing together the main existing institutions and services;
- Development of a toolbox of materials on IPR and enforcement issues, including manuals and training materials;
- Provision of training for multipliers, in particular to the Enterprise Europe Network, a wide range of SME awareness and enforcement actions; and support for SME advice services;
- Delivery of awareness workshops in particular on counterfeiting and with particular reference to the design and fashion industries;
- Development of support services designed for SMEs;



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- Preparation of multilingual manuals, training materials and SME workshops for design industries to raise SME awareness on IPR and enforcement issues, both within and outside the EU;
- IPR support to potential beneficiaries of CIP and RTD Framework Programme actions (IPR Helpdesk);
- Capacity building, the creation of national and regional networks and synergies and enhanced European-wide cooperation in the IP and innovation field

OUTCOME

“IP AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT: MODULAR BASED ACTIONS FOR SMEs” will create an opportunity to develop networking and strategic cooperation between managers of service-related IPR programmes. The European status of the project allows also more effective dissemination of good practices across Europe.

Implementation of the “IP AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT: MODULAR BASED ACTIONS FOR SMEs” at a European level will significantly increase the scale of the work which can be carried out in the areas of services related IPR. The project also foresees wider impacts that can benefit all Member States, since the early introduction of effective service IPR policies and programmes can yield significant and highly positive socio-economic impacts in Member States and European regions.

Major results of the project include the following outputs and services:

- The development of a toolbox of IPR awareness and enforcement materials will be broadly used throughout the project and afterwards. This toolbox will provide regular and innovative services according to needs of targets of users (SMEs, repliers, intermediaries, etc) defined with other WPs leader;
- A web portal, for SMEs and other interested users. This website will contain documents, case studies, practical information for SMEs and other useful information such as contacts and signposting to relevant services;
- Setting up local contact points (helpdesks) for European SMEs and their advisors providing first-line support in IP and enforcement issues;
- Development of strategies on local IP awareness and enforcement;
- A Helpdesk and info-service providing an IP rights support service to actual and potential beneficiaries of CIP and Research Framework Programme actions

EUROPEAN CONTEXT

In the context of the Lisbon goal of establishing a knowledge based society, the “IP AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT: MODULAR BASED ACTIONS FOR SMEs” project aims to address EU industry needs in the area of IPR usage and enforcement issues, especially for SMEs and specific sectors of industry. However the Europe-wide unification of IPR services related to innovation, enforcement, etc represent a novel perspective for several Member States, in particular for New Member States. In addition, there is currently no transnational framework for national programmes in this field, and the cooperation activities developed until the date have been limited to certain areas and certain countries. In this framework DG Enterprise included in its Grants' Work Programme for 2007 a specific call devoted to an “IPR Awareness and Enforcement Project (including IPR Helpdesk)”. The “IP AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT: MODULAR BASED ACTIONS FOR SMEs” project won this call and will last for 3 years, starting on November 2007. The “IP AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT: MODULAR BASED ACTIONS FOR SMEs” project is looking to set a new process in motion to address these challenges.