



Role of WIPO in Fostering Competitiveness of SMEs

International Bureau of WIPO



WIPO's New Focus

- In September 2000, the WIPO Assemblies approved the proposal of the International Bureau that:
 - certain activities planned for 2001 be realigned or refocused towards SMEs
 - “...a substantial new program of activities, focusing on the intellectual property-related needs of SMEs worldwide, be included in the draft Program and Budget for the next [2002-2003] biennium”
- SMEs Division established in October 2000



Why Focus on IP and SMEs?

- More than 90% of enterprises in all economies are SMEs, making a significant contribution to employment, trade, investment and economic growth
- SMEs are proven **innovators** and are the driving force behind a number of technological breakthroughs
- In the new knowledge economy, intangible assets, including innovative ideas, information and know-how have become central business assets



SMEs in Asia

- Over 95% of the total number of enterprises fall under the national definitions of SMEs
- SMEs employ between 40% to 80% of the workforce
- Estimated contribution to GDP somewhere between 30% to 60%
- Recent study of 8 non-OECD Asian countries indicate that SMEs accounted for 35% of direct exports



The Challenge

- SMEs worldwide largely under-utilize the intellectual property system as many studies show opting for informal methods of protection (UK, Norway, Derwent)
- Some reasons for low use of IP System by SMEs:
 - Lack of awareness of the IP system and its usefulness
 - Perceived high costs and complexity of IP system
 - Lack of easily accessible assistance
- Concrete barriers to SME use of the IP system + importance of IP rights in a knowledge economy provide a rationale for intervention at a national and international level



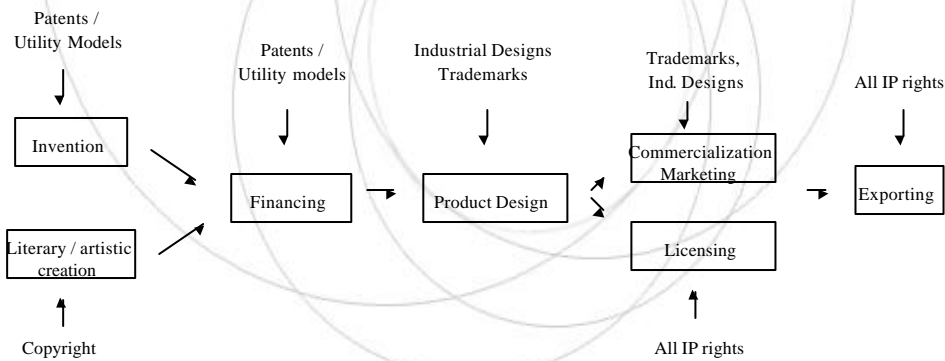
Objective

- To enhance SME competitiveness through a wider and more effective use of the intellectual property system
- HOW?
 - Promoting awareness to enable SMEs to make informed decisions on how to exploit their innovative and creative capacity
 - Improving the policy framework and business environment to make it conducive and easier for SMEs to use the IP system



Basic Message

- IP may add value at every stage of the innovation - commercialization process:



Basic Message

- IP should be integrated within the overall business strategy of the SME
- SMEs' IP strategy will depend considerably on their innovative capacity, financial resources, field of technology, competitive environment, etc.
- ***BUT: Ignoring the IP system altogether, as is often the case for SMEs, is in itself an IP strategy and may eventually prove costly***



WIPO's SME Strategy, 6 main pillars

1. Targeting a new audience
2. Establishing new partnerships
3. Creating simple SME-friendly material
4. Focusing on new areas
5. Gathering and providing useful information
6. Strengthening outreach activities of IP offices



1. Targeting a New Audience

- Bringing intellectual property issues to SME and business events worldwide
- Bringing the business community to IP events: e.g. inviting SME associations and other business representations to events organized by WIPO
- Presenting IP from a business perspective: IP in marketing, IP in product development, IP in design, IP in financing, etc. —▶ How can IP be incorporated into the overall business strategy



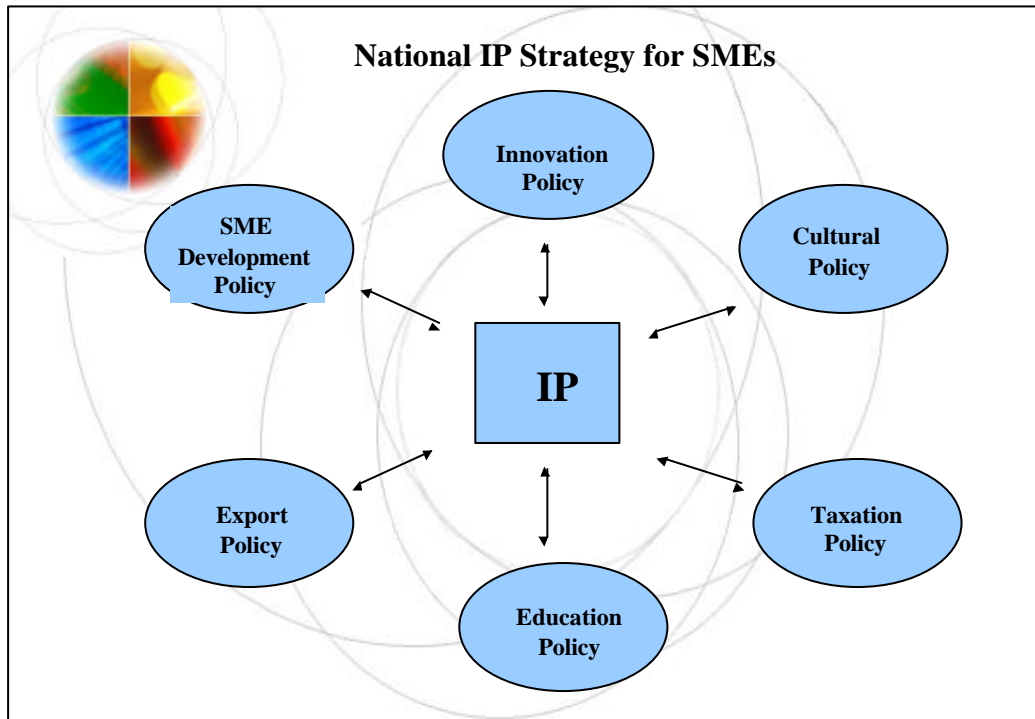
Targeting a New Audience


- Examples:
 - Summit Economic Forum of the Central European Initiative, Trieste, Italy (November 2001) 1,200 participants from SMEs, SME associations, investors, governments, etc
 - Ten IP sensitization workshops for SMEs in India in cooperation with the Ministry for Small Scale Industry (Over 1,000 participants primarily from SMEs and SME assocs) “Training the trainers”

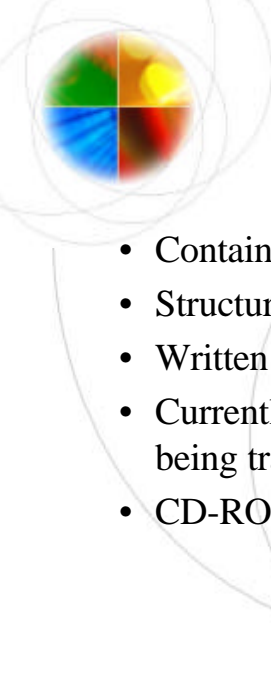
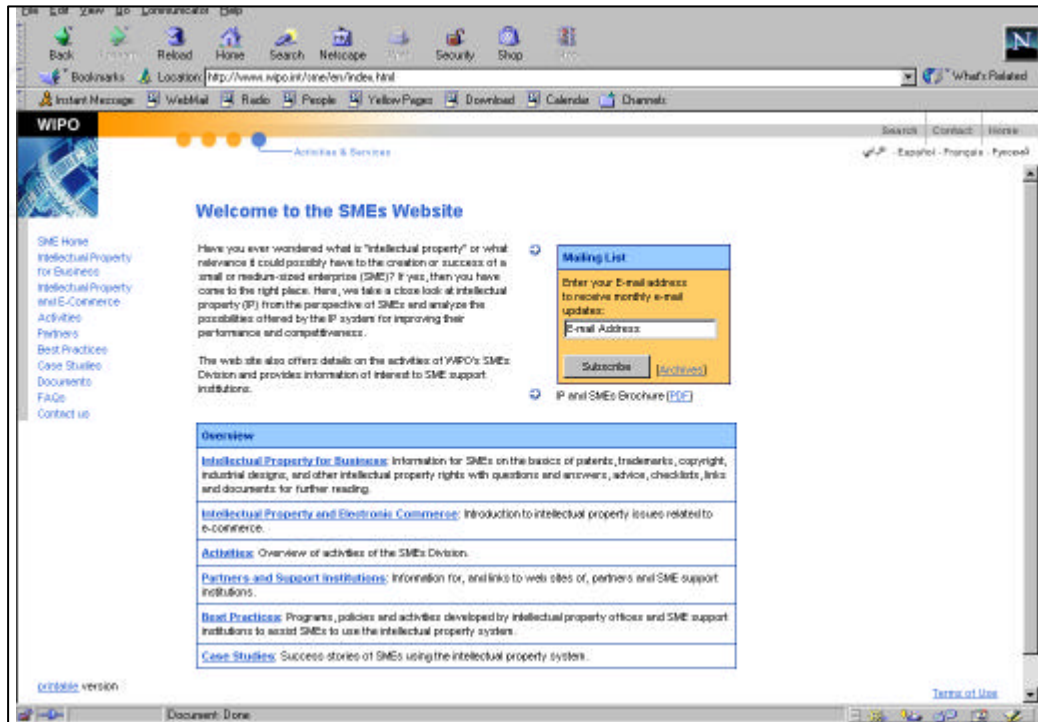


2. Establish New Partnerships

- New partners: focal point for SMEs in governments, SME associations, chambers of commerce, business incubators, business consultants, investors
- Aim: include IP within existing Business Development Services of all such institutions.
- IP as one element within a package of services to the SME community
 - Include IP within training programs for entrepreneurs
 - Include IP within policies to support development of specific sectors
 - Include IP within services and programs aimed at encouraging innovation



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- ### 3. Creating Simple SME-Friendly Materials
- Web site in English, Spanish and French, parts also available in Chinese, Russian
 - Practical IP guides such as licensing IP, SME and use of trademarks, patents, patent information, copyright, secret information (under preparation)
 - IP and SMEs Brochure
 - Articles for various magazines and web sites of partner institutions



The SMEs Web site: Main Features

- Contains **more than 100 pages of information**
- Structured primarily in the form of questions and answers
- Written in a **simple and business-friendly** language
- Currently available in English, French and Spanish and is being translated into other languages
- CD-ROM under preparation



The SMEs Web site:Aims

- Provide an overview of the main reasons why SMEs should consider IP issues when preparing their business strategies
- Provide reader-friendly information on how to acquire, manage, exploit and enforce IP rights
- Disseminate information on “best practices” on assisting SMEs to use the IP system and “case studies” on companies that have benefited from sound IP strategy
- Provide information on activities of WIPO in general and the SMEs Division in particular



4. Focus on New Areas

- Use of IP for financing (venture capital, securitization)
- Accounting and valuation of IP assets; IP audit
- Fiscal policies and IP (e.g. tax incentives for R&D activities, patenting, licensing, etc.)
- IP services to SMEs by incubators, technology parks, chambers of commerce and SME associations
- Copyright and SMEs in the cultural industries
- IP needs of SMEs in specific sectors such as biotechnology, agriculture, handicrafts, software
- Insurance and IP



5. Gather and Provide Information

- “Best Practices”
- Collection of case studies
- Studies and research:
- Development of Policy Guidelines
- Milan Plan of Action



6. Strengthen Outreach Activities of IP Offices

- Cooperation with IP offices for designing policies programs and services targeted at the SME sector
 - IP Guides
 - Awareness raising campaigns
 - Implementation of Best practices
 - Studies on the SME sector and access to the IP system



THANK YOU

Visit: www.wipo.int/sme/