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Highlights of the IP and business coaching programme for young women-led businesses

June 1, 2026

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Why IP matters for women entrepreneurs

IP can help women entrepreneurs:

- ✓ protect their innovations and creations,
- ✓ build the value of their brand,
- ✓ attract partners and investors, and
- ✓ turn innovation into business growth.

Women are innovating BUT remain underrepresented in formal IP systems.

- Women represented only **18% of inventors listed in international patent applications in 2024** (parity 2077 at current pace)
- Women account for around **one in five designers** behind registered product designs.

Key challenges:

- Limited awareness of IP asset or how to leverage brands, designs, content, software, know-how and trade secrets.
- IP is often seen as legal, costly or too technical.
- Limited access to tailored advice on how to protect and commercialize innovation
 - » *How ITC and WIPO are partnering to address this challenge...*

SMEs that apply for patents, trademarks or designs are more likely to grow quickly and succeed than those that do not.



ITC SheTrades Innovation Festival

Overview

The SheTrades Innovation Festival is a pitch contest designed to **spotlight young women entrepreneurs who are leveraging digital innovation to solve real-world challenges** and advance sustainable, green and inclusive trade. Through a rigorous and competitive selection process, the festival identifies a pool of outstanding women entrepreneurs with high-potential, scalable solutions. These innovators are provided with a global platform to showcase their enterprises, refine their business models, and connect with key partners.

What we offer

All finalists received tailored support, including:

- Technical training delivered by ITC experts
- One-on-one coaching and mentorship from ITC partners and industry experts
- Pitch preparation and support

USD 5,000 prize for best investment-ready pitch

Two editions

1st Edition (2024): Innovation driving gender equality, youth inclusion, digital & green trade

2nd Edition (2026): digital solutions built in Africa to drive impact across climate resilience, food systems, digital inclusion, and healthcare.



About the IP Business Coaching Programme

6-month program centered on capacity building on intellectual property (IP)

- Designed to empower young women entrepreneurs and small business owners by improving their expertise in the vital areas of **intellectual property (IP) protection and management**.
- Coaching, networking, and matchmaking opportunities.
- Equip women entrepreneurs with the tools and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of IP protection for sustained business growth.

Programme Structure



- **Matching:** Pairing with corresponding WIPO women entrepreneurs for collaboration.
- **One-on-One Mentorship Sessions:** Tailored sessions (1-2 per month).
- **Workshops and Training:** Interactive workshops and training sessions covering intellectual property basics.
- **Progress Review:** Mid-term check -ins to assess status and additional areas for support.
- **Graduation Ceremony:** Celebratory closing ceremony at the end of the program.

What's next

- SheTrades Innovation Festival 2026: Post-event coaching programme for all finalists
- WTO-ITC WEIDE Fund: IP questions incorporated into ITC's MSME Diagnostic Tool to identify, protect and leverage IP assets across Mongolia, the Dominican Republic, Nigeria and Jordan.





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Zein Altawil
YELLO
United Arab Emirates



Maud Bouresche
Novetech Surgery
Monaco



Medina Ali
Dr. Chashi
Bangladesh



Rebecca Osewa
Yield Initiatives
United Kingdom



Granny Lesiamang
Clauseph Enterprises Pty Ltd.
Botswana



Maryna Kuzmenko
Petiole LTD
United Kingdom



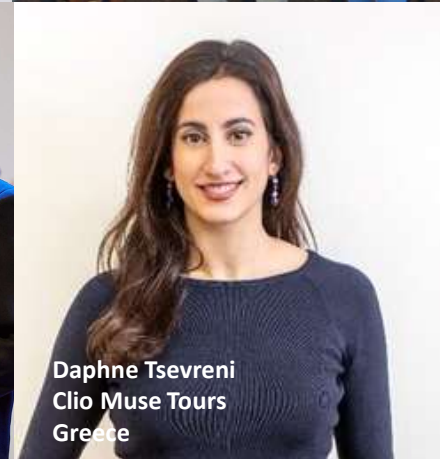
Eden Tadesse
Invicta
Ethiopia



Elizabeth Bohner
SheGuardian
France



Yafonia Hutabarat
PetraNetra
Indonesia



Daphne Tsevreneri
Clio Muse Tours
Greece

Women Entrepreneurs Shaping the Future

Women-led businesses need stronger IP strategies, access to funding and commercialization to leverage IP for growth and expansion

Purpose of the Program

- ❑ Strengthen women-led businesses through IP and business coaching
- ❑ Help develop IP strategy with growth objectives
- ❑ Build understanding of IP protection, management, and commercialization
- ❑ Support in market expansion and competitiveness

Participating Industries

- ❑ Agriculture & Agritech
- ❑ Information Technology & Digital Platforms
- ❑ Healthcare / MedTech
- ❑ Manufacturing & Biofuels
- ❑ Sustainable Fashion
- ❑ Self-Defense & Safety Services
- ❑ Tourism & Digital Content

Main Challenges

- ❖ Low awareness of international IP systems (Madrid, PCT, Hague)
- ❖ Lack of integrated IP and business strategies
- ❖ Limited access to legal/IP expertise
- ❖ Limited funding for IP protection and international registration
- ❖ Weak commercialization and licensing capabilities
- ❖ Limited use of NDAs, contracts, and confidentiality tools

Key results: From IP awareness to action

The program helped young women entrepreneurs recognize IP as a strategic business asset and take concrete steps toward protection, branding and market growth.

Strong satisfaction and relevance

- ❑ **100%** satisfied or very satisfied with the overall program
- ❑ **100%** rated the content relevant to their business activities
- ❑ Mentoring and IP clinics were among the most valued elements

Improved IP and business capabilities

- ❑ **100%** identified new IP assets in their businesses and reported improved IP knowledge and technical skills
- ❑ Participants began seeing IP as “an asset, not a cost”

Concrete follow-up actions

- ❑ **62%** developed an IP strategy
- ❑ **50%** filed or considered filing an IP application
- ❑ **88%** considered developing a branding strategy
- ❑ **75%** considered exploring new markets

What participants valued most

Personalized mentoring, practical IP clinics, and guidance on applying IP to branding, financial planning, market expansion and business growth.

“
It was truly a great honour for me to participate in the programme. Additionally, it was inspiring to have so many successful women from WIPO and ITC (and othe organisations) as speakers in our sessions.”

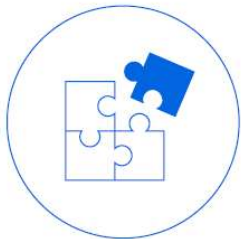
- Maryna Kuzmenko, CEO, Petiole

WIPO's IP and Gender Action Plan (IPGAP)

IPGAP initiatives and foundations

Initiative 1

Strategic advice for member states



IP and gender integration

Initiative 2

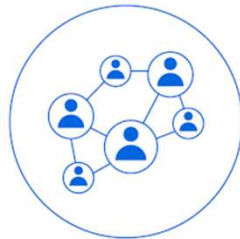
Data collection and analysis



Identifying the scope and nature of the IP and gender gap

Initiative 3

Creating opportunities



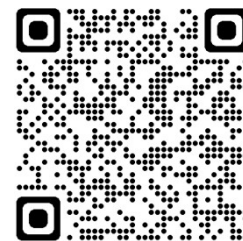
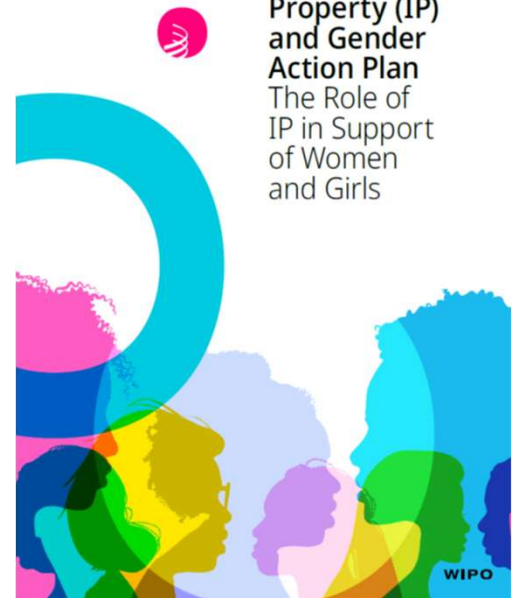
Piloting projects, building capacity, networking

← **Collaboration (internal and external)** →
Working groups, partnerships and advisory board

← **Customer-oriented communications** →
Inspiring and educational web and social media presence

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**WIPO
Intellectual
Property (IP)
and Gender
Action Plan**
The Role of
IP in Support
of Women
and Girls



Available
in the 6
UN
languages

What is IP for Her?

IP for Her is a digital platform for women to connect and collaborate, learn more about how IP can maximize the full potential of their ideas, and advocate for better IP policies that support women in IP.

Photo: Getty Images / miniseries

WIPO Resources

WIPO's Women and IP landing
page



More about WIPO's activities -
Women and IP: Internal and
External Activities, Strategic
Direction, 2025



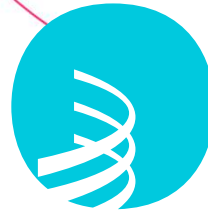
Women and IP Symposium for IP
and Innovation Offices 2026



IPGAP Global Research Experts
Meeting on Improving Women's
Participation in Innovation, Creativity,
and IP



IP resources for
women innovators and
entrepreneurs

**WIPO**