2027–2028

WIPO Training, Mentoring and Matchmaking Program on Intellectual Property for Women Entrepreneurs from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities from African Countries

Call for applications

Application deadline
July 12, 2026



WIPO

Why this program?

Entrepreneurship based on traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions celebrates the rich and diverse cultures and traditions of Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, around the world, strengthening their sense of identity and belonging, as well as creating jobs and generating income.

However, community entrepreneurs from Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, often face difficulties due to a lack of awareness of, and expertise on intellectual property.

Women from Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, many of whom play a key role as holders and custodians of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, represent a significant number of these entrepreneurs, often facing additional difficulties due to inequalities in access to education, funding, and support services.

The *WIPO Training, Mentoring and Matchmaking Program on Intellectual Property for Women Entrepreneurs from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities* aims to strengthen the capacity of women entrepreneurs from Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, to make strategic and effective use of intellectual property tools in support of their businesses.



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Since its launch in 2019, the program has completed eight cycles, supporting over 160 women entrepreneurs from Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, from over 80 countries worldwide.

WIPO is now pleased to call for applications for a new cycle of the program for ten African countries to take place from February 2027 to February 2028. The training phase of the program will be organized with the support from the Funds-in-Trust Japan Industrial Property Global (Fit Japan).

Program structure

The program has a practical approach and consists of a training phase, then a mentoring and matchmaking phase.

The **training phase** will take place in person in Gaborone, Botswana, from February 22-26, 2027. It will consist of a practical workshop that will include a mixture of short presentations, practical group work on case studies, individual work, and exchange of information and experiences amongst participants. It will also include time for the participants to reflect on what they learned and how to apply it to their businesses.

During the practical workshop, participants will have the opportunity to:

- Build capacity in intellectual property and acquire the skills necessary for an effective use of intellectual property tools, including in the digital economy
- Acquire basic knowledge of related fields useful in an entrepreneurial context, such as business planning, marketing, social media and market access strategies

The practical workshop will also provide the opportunity for participants to network and share experiences with other women entrepreneurs from Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, from the African region, and to further develop their community-based businesses.

The **mentoring and matchmaking phase** will start after the practical workshop and last until February 2028. During that phase, mentors will be assigned to individual participants to provide guidance and support in the implementation of the intellectual property components of the participants' businesses.

Mentoring will be provided through video chat, emailing and telephone communication by WIPO and/or its program collaborators.

In delivering the objectives of the program, WIPO will work with program collaborators and experts who bring deep and valuable experiences to the table.

Who can apply?

Women entrepreneurs who are recognized and active members of Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, particularly those who work jointly with other members of their communities, as part of a community-based business based on traditional knowledge or traditional cultural expressions, are encouraged to apply.

This call for Applications is addressed to the following countries:

- Botswana
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Malawi
- Namibia
- Nigeria
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zimbabwe

20 women entrepreneurs will be selected. Provided that an adequate number of suitable applications are received, every effort will be made to select at least one participant from each country.



Photo: Getty Images / micheldenijs

Language requirements

Participants should be able to effectively communicate in English.

Required prior knowledge

It is recommended that participants have or acquire a basic understanding of intellectual property prior to the practical workshop.

Candidates are encouraged to take the WIPO Primer on Intellectual Property (DL-001), which is a three-hour distance learning course offered free of charge by the WIPO Academy.

Participants can also benefit from the WIPO General Course on Intellectual Property (DL-101), which is also free of charge, building on the concepts presented in the Primer.

For more information or to access the WIPO Primer on Intellectual Property (DL-001) and the WIPO General Course on Intellectual Property (DL-101), visit the WIPO eLearning Center at https://welc.wipo.int.

Participants should have the necessary IT skills to be able to effectively participate in the program, as well as access to IT equipment and reliable internet connectivity for the duration of the program.

Costs

WIPO will cover the costs of travel, accommodation and subsistence associated with the participants' attendance to the practical workshop.



Application deadline

Candidates should submit a duly filled application form through the following link: https://surveys.wipo.int/s3/Application-Form-for-the-WIPO-Training-Mentoring-and-Matchmaking-Program-on-Intellectual-Property-for-Women-Entrepreneurs-from-Indigenous-Peoples-and-Local-Communities-from-African-Countries-2026

The application deadline is **July 12, 2026.**

Applications submitted after the closing date will not be considered.

Successful candidates will be notified by email. If selected, candidates must confirm their participation and their commitment to participate in all phases of the program.

Enquiries may be addressed to wep@wipo.int.



Photo: Getty Images / Dennis Diatel Photography

The training phase of the *WIPO Training, Mentoring and Matchmaking Program on Intellectual Property for Women Entrepreneurs from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities from African countries* will be organized with the support of FIT Japan and in cooperation with CIPA.

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