



**International Chamber of Commerce**

*The world business organization*

## **Department of Policy and Business Practices**

### **Intellectual property related activities in chambers of commerce**

Organisation:	National Chamber of Commerce and Services of Uruguay (NCCSU)
Country:	Uruguay
Contact Person:	Javier Peña Capobianco
Contact Details:	<a href="mailto:jpc@cncs.com.uy">jpc@cncs.com.uy</a>
Website:	<a href="http://www.cncs.com.uy">http://www.cncs.com.uy</a>

#### **1. General comments**

Our country is a small market, with inadequate incentives to motivate innovation and sophistication of business; we have also scarce investment in research & development. There is also no business culture with regard to using the Intellectual Property system.

However, within a context of liberalization of markets and strong competitive pressure, one of the main challenges for firms in Uruguay, particularly for small and medium enterprises (SME), is to be able to modernize and improve their offer of products and services, introducing technology and adding value to products by means of a better differentiation. Investment in innovating activities, especially technological innovation activities, is a requirement to export products with a bigger added value, contributing thus to the economic development of the country.

Nevertheless, if we analyze the present usage of the intellectual property in Uruguay we notice that it has been very seldom used by national enterprises. This shows that among the enterprises innovating, and even among those stating that they carry out innovations with an international scope, there is a very limited usage of the system.

The evidence of different studies on the usage of IP by SME shows that the main reasons for its limited usage usually are the lack of knowledge, the lack of access to specialized services, costs, complexity of the system and lack of consultancy services. People usually link IP to a strictly legal subject and to be carried out only by big enterprises and as a cost. Likewise, in general, enterprises are not aware of the value of the intangible assets of their enterprise or of the instruments they need to generate them. Said instruments, once they are identified and well managed are very important mechanisms to improve the competitive position of the enterprises.

In view of the above, the Chamber has decided to promote IP as a strategy asset to generate competitiveness within the companies. For that the Chamber has created the Centre to Promote IP.

**International Chamber of Commerce**

38, Cours Albert 1er, 75008 Paris, France  
Telephone +33 1 49 53 28 28 Fax +33 1 49 53 28 59  
Website [www.iccwbo.org](http://www.iccwbo.org) E-mail [icc@iccwbo.org](mailto:icc@iccwbo.org)

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The Centre to Promote IP was launched in a specific event in September of 2008 but the Chamber has been working in the IP field since 2005.

The main objective of the Centre is to promote at the entrepreneurial level a culture of IP, especially among SMEs, in order to improve their competitiveness and to stimulate innovation. The specific objectives are to train professionals, to raise awareness about the importance of the subject, to introduce specialized services, and to articulate between the supply and demand of services or between companies and innovators with the institutions and stakeholders that are related to the subject.

It is important to mention that, at the international level, the Chamber, as a National Committee of the ICC in Uruguay, it has a member in the IP Commission of ICC and has played an active role in the Task Force to create the IP Toolkit for Chambers and has also proposed the creation of a manual to develop IP services in Chambers of Commerce.

In this scenario, the Chamber has been invited to present its experience in different international events such as the 5th. World Chamber Congress, which took place in Turkey in 2007, and in events organized by WIPO and ICC in Peru, Honduras and Geneva during 2008 and 2009. It is important to point out that the main objective in taking part in these events is to try to persuade other Chambers of Commerce to consider IP as an important subject matter that deserves close attention in order to create a strong network to exchange experiences and to learn from each other.

## 2. Communication Tools

*What kind of communication tools do you offer? Please elaborate.*

The Chamber has created a space for IP in the web site and in the newsletter.

It has also introduced the issue in the courses of its Business School and in the Chamber's subject about Entrepreneurship in the School of Sciences (University of the Republic of Uruguay). Additionally, we are doing presentations in different universities to spread the message among the future professionals, in particular in the faculties of designers, engineers, and communications.

With the support of WIPO and a private company the Centre printed a guide about "IP and Companies", which is distributed in all seminars and workshops.

## 3. Training

*Do you offer any training programs? Please elaborate.*

Based on the objective to train professionals in order to have local experts to provide services and technical assistant to companies, the Chamber has held different workshops and seminar with WIPO, WTO, the IP office, the Council of Copy Rights and different IP Agents.

In addition, the Chamber has been the first chamber in creating a "Diploma in IP and Management of Intangible Assets".

It is important to mention that in this framework, the Centre has also promoted franchising by doing different workshops, seminars and consulting activities.

### Internal training:

It is important to mention that one of the first things that we made is to study the subject. That is why we attended in 2005 a WIPO workshop for SME support institutions. Its name was "Workshop on Practical Intellectual Property Issues for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Support Institutions".

We also visited two different countries, which have an important experience in this field. First of all we visited Italy, where Chambers of Commerce have an important and active role in the registration process and also in providing services to companies. And we also visited Finland, where innovation is one of the most important subjects to understand its growth.

### Training for professionals, SME and entrepreneurial associations:

The followings are the seminars and workshops that we have made during 2006 and 2009. It is important to mention that all of them have been made thank to or in collaboration with other institutions, such as WIPO, IDB, WTO and the IP office of Uruguay.

- International seminar: "How to increase the value of your company? The SME and the Intellectual Property". April 2006. WIPO, Unioncamere.
- Services of Intellectual Property designed for SME. April 2006. WIPO, Unioncamere.
- First regional forum for the promotion of the use of Intellectual Property in the Agro-alimentary SME. July 2006. WIPO, DNPI.
- National workshop about TRIPS. May 2007. WTO.
- How to create your own franchising. September 2007.
- Seminars about trade marks. October 2007. WIPO, DNPI.
- The intellectual property and the SME. November 2007. IDB.
- The importance of IP in the International Trade. November 2007. International Business School.
- Training for trainers in the IP subject, May 2008. WIPO, DNPI.
- Workshop: The impact of Piracy in the Society. June 2008.
- Trade Marks at the International Trade. June 2008. International Business School.
- How to Finance Project of Innovation. August 2008. National Agency for Research and Innovation.
- Event to lunch the Centre to Promote IP. September 2008.
- Diploma about IP and management of intangible assets. March - December 2009. International Business School / WIPO.
- Workshop: The impact of Piracy in the Society. June 2008.

It is important to mention that, we also have introduced the subject in the formal courses of our International Business School.

## **4. Consultancy/ Advisory Services**

*Do you offer any IP-consultancy services? This could include a helpline, legal/ financial/ commercial/consulting services etc. Are Intellectual property aspects included in general commercial/business advice provided by your chamber?*

Through the Centre to Promote IP the Chamber provides general advice in the IP management.

The Centre gives general information about IP such as what assets can be protected, in which forms, and IP law infringements.

It also articulates between companies and innovators with the institutions and stakeholders that are related to the subject, the objective is to provide a comprehensive solution for members.

## **5. Information gathering/ awareness raising**

*Do you conduct surveys or gather information in any other way? Do you carry out any awareness raising activities? Please elaborate.*

We do awareness raising activities through:

- presentations in different universities, and also in the courses of our International Business School.
- a special section in our website and newsletter.
- seminars and workshops in different fields.
- supporting the Superbrands initiative.

## **6. SME case studies**

*Do you publish case studies of SMEs who have actively used IP in their businesses? Can you provide us with any such case studies?*

We present the best practices experiences of companies in specific seminars.

## **7. Facilitation of IP business opportunities**

*Do you provide any services to help businesses trade in IP eg IP business matchmaking, marketplaces etc?*

We offer business matchmaking and marketplaces, but they are not specialized for the IP subject.

We also refer companies to the institutions that can provide financial support to develop innovation projects.

## **8. Policy advocacy**

*Do you engage in policy advocacy in the IP field? Please provide details.*

At the national level, the Centre is a member in the National Commission to Fight Against Counterfeiting and Piracy, which makes awareness and enforcement activities with the police, judges and custom.

## **9. Encouragement of innovation and IP asset development**

*Do you have any initiatives to encourage innovation or the development of IP assets e.g. awards, competitions, technology showcases etc. ?*

We have the National Award of Services Exporters, where the innovation is present among the criteria of qualification. In this award there is a special mention for the most original service exporter too.

The Chamber also takes part in the Board of the Innovation and Research National Agency, which has different national programs to support and finance innovators.

## 10. Others

Lessons learnt:

If it is true that the chamber has held different activities to promote IP in Uruguay, the most important one has been to realize about its importance for companies, and in particular for the Chamber.

To recognize the IP's importance is not evident for a Chamber of Commerce, so the most challenging fact at the first time is to understand it.

Most of the activities that the chamber did in the last years were carried out thanks to the collaboration with other institutions that are specialists on the subject. Therefore, it is very important to do this kind of alliances, for example with WIPO, the local IP office, IP Agents or WTO.

To involve all actors (the IP office, universities, IP agents, etc.) and to articulate with them, is one of the most important clues to obtain their collaboration. It is very important to explain that the Chamber wants to collaborate and not to compete with them, in this way we prevent it from being considered a risk for them.

The use of the Chamber's previous advantages to introduce a new subject is very important. Based on that, it is possible to take advantage of the recognition of the Chamber as a quality services provider.

Last, but not least, is the opportunity to lead by action. The idea is to prove that the subject is strategic and really important for the Chamber, and the only way to do that is through action, doing things. According to its experience, after doing a lot of activities and obviously doing them in an appropriate manner, other institutions start to follow and to consider you as a leader in this subject.

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**We consent to the above information being posted on the ICC (International Chamber of Commerce) website.**

**Name: Javier Peña Capobianco**

**Position: Head of International Trade Department**

**Organization: National Chamber of Commerce and Services of Uruguay**

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