# Presentation of the Africa IP SME Helpdesk: supporting the internationalisation of SMEs to South Africa

#### **Andrea IORI**

Africa IP SME Helpdesk Project Manager









#### Why should you protect your ideas?



Current patent filing trends indicate that the technology in the field of concentrated solar energy generation is maturing

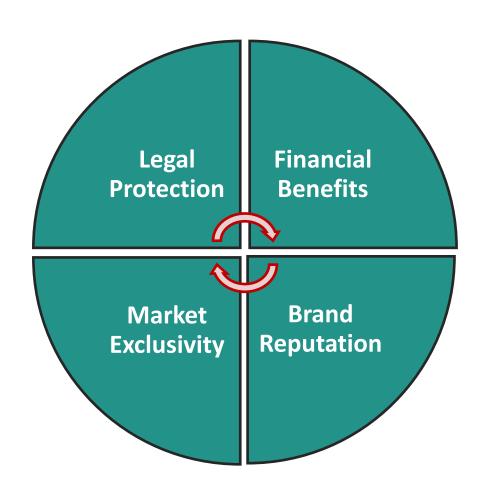
The concentrated solar market is expected to grow rapidly over the next years

A company established a niche in the market and filed a patent in South Africa

This strategy provided the company with the necessary space to operate while building its projects in South Africa

Conclusion: successful market players should tailor their IP portfolios and business strategies to the markets

### Why intellectual property?













#### **International IP SME Helpdesks**











### Africa IP SME Helpdesk

An EU funded project implemented by the EUIPO

Under the scope of the Project AfrIPI: a cooperation program focusing on IP and innovation in Africa





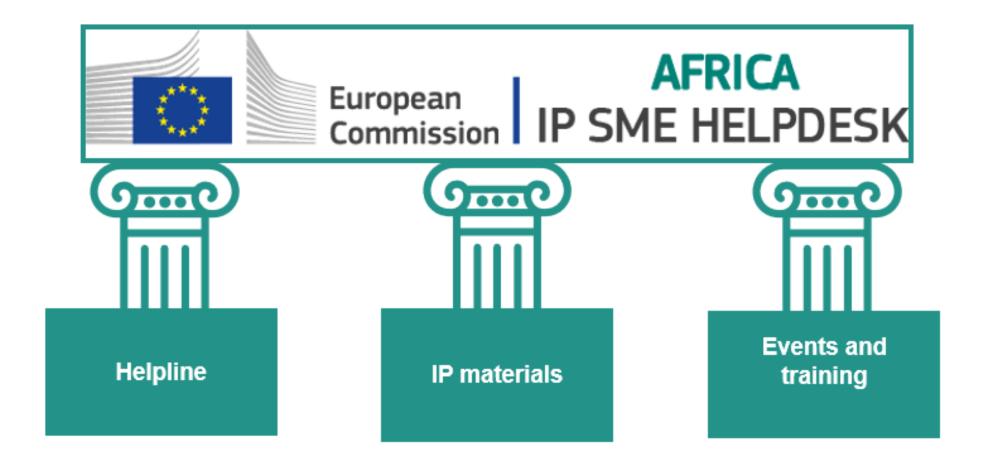








#### Africa IP SME Helpdesk's services











### Helpline

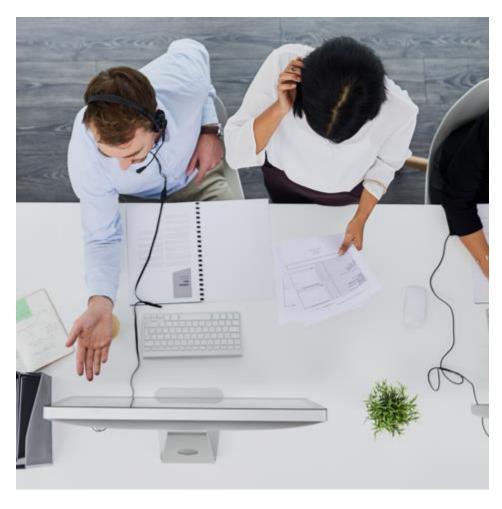
Free of charge first-line IP support

Confidential, personal and "to the point"

Scope of protection, protection routes, good practices

Answer within 3 working days

Email, phone and web











#### Online resources

Country & sector factsheets

**IP Guides** 

Case studies

Infographics



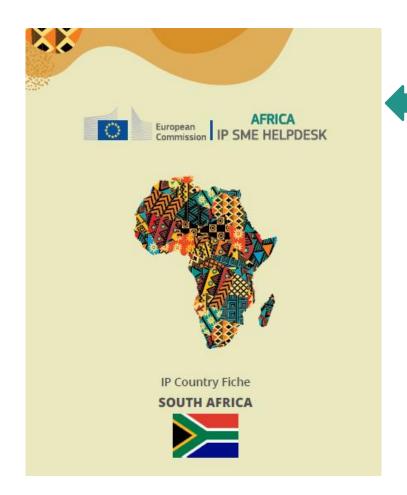








#### Specific publications on South Africa





Case study on patents in South(ern) Africa



#### **CASE STUDY:**

Comparison of patent portfolios in relation to business strategies and market position in the concentrated solar sector, with an emphasis on Southern Africa

#### Background

Concentrated solar energy generation is a subset of renewable energy generation. Current patent filing trends indicate that the technology in the field is maturing, with the number of new patent families filed peaking in the 2010-2013 period.

The concentrated solar market is expected to grow rapidly over the next five years and is estimated to be worth between USD 20-25 billion by 2027 (from USD 7 billion in 2022). The present case study looked at the filing trends for two market players – a large Spanish group of companies (Company A) and an American solar start-up (Company B) – in order to analyse different IP portfolios and strategies suitable for businesses in different phases of development.

#### Action undertaken

Company A was started in the 20th century and has maintained an interest in concentrated solar power production via a number of its subsidiaries. Company A presently operates concentrated solar power plants across the world, including projects in South Africa. Company A currently maintains a very large patent portfolio in the concentrated solar market segment, with most of their portfolio tracing back to applications over the 2009-2015 period. The portfolio further spans a large number of jurisdictions, but is especially concentrated in Spain, South Africa and Chile. As such, Company A can be said to be a dominant market participant with a large and mature portfolio. This portfolio is highly suitable for maintaining its market position going forward, and places Company A in an advantageous position relative to market entrants. A large patent portfolio allows an established market player with large reserves to enforce a 'patent thicker' strategy-wherein smaller entities are forced to content with multiple infringement cases (or the threat thereof) when attempting to enter the particular market segment that the portfolio holder claims.

The protection and enforcement of IP in Southern Africa is especially amenable to such strategies as it currently maintains a depository system. Here a patent application is not examined except with regard to the formalities of filing. As a result, obtaining a granted right is quick and simple. In the broader Southern African region, the ARIPO regional patent system also simplifies the process of obtaining rights across multiple countries. Here an ARIPO application is examined by an ARIPO examiner, but once granted the application will normally be valid in any of the Member States the patented edesignated at the start of the application process.

While Company A's principal interests are in direct power generation from concentrated solar, Company B is attempting to establish a niche in high-temperature concentrated solar power for direct use in industrial applications using advanced heliostat control systems. To this end, Company













#### Training courses and events



Online and on-site

Connecting SMEs with each other and with multipliers

**Capacity building** 

Participation in matchmaking events

Collaboration with local experts and stakeholders

On countries' IP landscapes, regional IP systems, industries, key amendments









#### Relevant webinars

16 May - past

Practical intellectual property support programme for SMMEs

9 October

The impact of commercialisation strategies and benefits for SMEs

30 October

The enforceability of trade marks in Africa

27 November

Counterfeit goods and e-commerce sites in Nigeria and South Africa









#### Contact

Website <a href="http://africaiphelpdesk.eu">http://africaiphelpdesk.eu</a>

Phone +34 96 513 9810

Email <u>africa.iphelpdesk@euipo.europa.eu</u>

Facebook <u>@AfricalPR</u>

Twitter <a href="https://twitter.com/AfricaIPR">https://twitter.com/AfricaIPR</a>

LinkedIn <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/africaipr">https://www.linkedin.com/company/africaipr</a>





## Thank you





