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Protecting Intellectual Property



Photo: Mahmoud Shawkat

Business, government and academic leaders discussed the importance of intellectual property during IP Week.

Before joining the World Trade Organization in 2000, Jordan was regarded as a weak enforcer of intellectual property rights, hindering the country's participation in international trade and hurting local businesses. As part of a comprehensive effort to support Jordan's membership in the WTO, USAID helped the government reform its laws, prompting the International Intellectual Property Association to remove Jordan from its watch list, a critical first step for building the country's credibility in intellectual property issues.

"Jordan's success in promoting intellectual property rights has helped legitimate businesses capitalize on their IP assets and operate without fear of illegal competition," says Murad Bushnaq, chairman of the Jordan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA).

USAID and JIPA continue to support the enforcement of the new laws and raise awareness of the economic benefits of ensuring intellectual property rights. With USAID support, JIPA organized IP Week in 2003, a world-class event that attracted more than 300 participants to from Jordanian business, academia and government to discuss intellectual property issues.

"Jordan is now regarded as a regional leader in the enforcement of intellectual property laws," said Mamoun Talhouni, director general of the Department of the National Library. "We have seen a sharp increase in the number of copyright infringement cases we are able to refer to the courts and today 80 percent of those cases result in convictions."