



Romania

Topic:
Intellectual Property

Achievement:
Resilience through
Intellectual Property

Sector:
Artistic Crafts

IP case study: Black pottery of Marginea

In the heart of Romania's Bucovina region, the village of Marginea preserves a centuries-old pottery technique that produces ceramics with a distinctive black colour without any additives. Recognised by a registered trademark since 2006, Marginea's black pottery not only safeguards cultural heritage but also attracts visitors, boosting tourism and the local economy.

Challenge

Marginea's artisans faced the risk that their unique craft could be undervalued or imitated, particularly as tourism expanded and cheap souvenirs from abroad flooded markets. Without recognition and protection, the authenticity and quality of this ancient tradition could have been lost.

Solution

To protect the uniqueness of its ceramics, the trademark "Marginea" has been registered in pottery-related classes at the Romanian State Office for Inventions and Trademarks (OSIM) in 2006. This official protection distinguished the authentic products, enhanced their reputation, and encouraged artisans to maintain high standards of craftsmanship.

Impact

The trademark increased global recognition and safeguarded the identity of Marginea's original products in the market. Tourists are drawn not only to buy the pottery but also to experience the making process first-hand, witnessing artisans polish, decorate, and fire clay using a method passed down through generations. As a result, the community benefits from both cultural preservation and economic opportunities by exploiting the IP system, since trademarks help differentiate products from others, and consequently identify (the authentic) products produced in the Marginea region.

Milestones & Learnings

An ancient burning technique creates the distinctive black colour without additives.
Unique in Europe, with Marginea the only place worldwide where this process is preserved.
Trademark registration in 2006 to identify original products and thus attest their authenticity and quality.
Recognition and branding strengthened tourism appeal and global sales.
IP rights can protect cultural heritage while supporting local economies.

Key Takeaways

- Trademark registration strengthens global recognition and provides a seal of a particular quality and authenticity.
- Cultural heritage can be both preserved and leveraged as a driver for tourism.
- IP rights help traditional crafts survive and thrive in modern markets.

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