



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### Assessment determines SSM has Immense Capacity for IP Development

An assessment of intellectual property (IP) policies and procedures being utilized in Sault Ste. Marie and the Algoma region has determined that the area has immense potential to develop IP for local economic growth.

As the exclusive legal rights that protect information, ideas and other intangibles from being copied or stolen, IP improves an organization's investment readiness and marketability.

Facilitated by Science Enterprise Algoma (seA), the study investigated and identified IP strengths and weaknesses that exist in the local science and technology community, in hopes of encouraging research, innovation and commercialization.

"The report from Gowlings is a very valuable tool for the community," says Errol Caldwell, executive director of seA.

"It not only confirms the potential for innovation among our science and technology organizations, but it also emphasizes the need for better understanding of the protection of IP as part of the process for commercialization of research."

With the help of Gowlings law firm, information was collected by means of confidential interviews.

Individuals and organizations interviewed included sole inventors, academic institutions, private companies and government organizations spanning a variety of industry sectors.

On behalf of seA, the SSM Economic Development Corporation secured funding under the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines' Northern Communities Investment Readiness program to conduct the assessment. The Community Development Corporation covered the costs of hosting an IP workshop through their Local Initiative Fund.

As IP experts themselves, Gowlings evaluated the data collected and made a number of recommendations to improve the area's IP capacity. Some of their findings include that the Sault Ste. Marie region:

- Has an abundance of potentially commercializable IP;
- Requires educational seminars to improve the region's basic understanding of IP principles;
- Should consider hiring an IP advisor or services firm to present IP seminars and answer basic questions that arise in the community;
- Needs to establish and oversee its own pool of venture funds/seed money for investment in suitable new technologies from the area;
- Requires a technology transfer/business development officer to help export and promote emerging technologies from the Sault region, foster joint initiatives and liaise with other regions and/or organizations with similar R&D interests; and
- Needs a centralized and coordinated approach for disseminating IP information.

"Overall, after conducting the interviews and assessment, it is clear that SSM is a budding community at the onset of what could be a commercially attractive, IP-driven economy," says Dr. Hans Schroeder, Gowlings partner and director of the IP assessment.

"Needed is the foundation in education to protect and leverage the knowledge that is already in place here."

Based on the observations of the assessment, Gowlings will present a workshop on Thurs, Sept 20<sup>th</sup> for local S&T organizations to obtain information about IP protection and commercialization, as well as discuss their difficulties in the area.

The workshop will focus on fundamental IP topics including the requirements for patentability, the benefit of strong IP policies, how to implement them, the difference between patentability and freedom to operate, the basics of infringement, how to identify hidden IP in your organization and what to do once you find it.

Following the seminar, time will be devoted to one-on-one consultations with the presenters where specific IP questions or concerns can be discussed in private.

For more information about the IP assessment or workshop, contact Dr. Hans Schroeder at [hans.schroeder@gowlings.com](mailto:hans.schroeder@gowlings.com) or (613) 783-8808, or Errol Caldwell at [e.caldwell@seainnovation.com](mailto:e.caldwell@seainnovation.com) or (705) 541-5558.

To view the final report of the IP assessment, visit the seA website at [www.seainnovation.com](http://www.seainnovation.com).

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