

## Program and Budget Committee

### Twenty-Second Session Geneva, September 1 to 5, 2014

#### PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WIPO LANGUAGE POLICY

*prepared by the Secretariat*

#### INTRODUCTION

1. At the Forty-Ninth Series of Meetings of the Assemblies in 2011, WIPO Member States decided that the language coverage for documentation for meetings of the WIPO Main Bodies, Committees and Working Groups, as well as for core and new publications, shall be extended to the six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish), in a phased manner that commenced in 2011. It was also decided that the cost of such language coverage for documentation of Working Groups should be assessed in light of the experience gained in 2012/13 and in the context of the 2014/15 Program and Budget; and that the translation requirements for the WIPO web site shall be examined in more depth in parallel with the restructuring of the said web site.

2. The issue on the extension of full language coverage to documentation of Working Groups was addressed in the Progress Report on the Implementation of WIPO Language Policy<sup>1</sup> at the Fifty-First Series of Meetings of the Assemblies in 2013, at which Member States approved the recommendation of the Program and Budget Committee, as follows:<sup>2</sup>

*“Based on the information contained in this document and the importance attached to ensuring the availability of documentation for the Working Groups in six languages, the following proposals are submitted for the consideration of Member States:*

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<sup>1</sup> Documents WO/PBC/21/15 and A/51/12

<sup>2</sup> Documents WO/PBC/21/21, WO/PBC/21/22 and A/51/14

- (a) The Secretariat will continue to apply the rationalization and control measures to further reduce the number and average length of working documents;*
- (b) At the same time, the six-language coverage, for the documentation for the Working Groups, will commence, in a phased and cost effective manner, during the biennium 2014/15, and the additional cost of such coverage reflected in the Program and Budget;*
- (c) The Secretariat will report to the next session of the PBC on the progress made in [this respect].*

3. The current document constitutes a progress report on the implementation of the Language Policy, including the progress made in respect of the above decision.

## **IMPLEMENTATION SINCE 2011**

### Status of Implementation

4. The Secretariat took up the implementation of the Policy, extending the six-language coverage, in phases, as follows:

- (a) Meeting documentation for all Standing Committees by the end of 2012.
- (b) Meeting documentation for all Main Bodies by the end of 2013.
- (c) Meeting documentation for the PCT Working Group and the Working Group on the Legal Development of the Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs in 2014. The same will be extended to the Working Group on the Legal Development of the Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks; the IPC Revision Working Group; and the Working Group on the Digital Access Service for Priority Documents, by the end of 2015. The coverage for the remaining working groups will be extended in the next biennium.

### Rationalization and Control Measures

5. In order to contain the increase in the workload, as a result of the expansion of the language coverage, the Secretariat instituted rationalization and control measures over the size of source texts in meeting documentation, i.e. working documents should not go beyond 3,300 words, or 10 standard UN pages; and for voluminous support documents, such as studies and surveys, executive summaries with no more than 3,300 words should be prepared, and only these executive summaries are to be translated into all the other official UN languages unless the document has been expressly requested by a Member State for translation in its entirety into another official language.

6. As noted in the Progress Report on the Implementation of WIPO Language Policy<sup>3</sup>, the adoption of the Policy generated a 53 per cent increase in the number of translation requests in 2012, as compared to 2011, which necessitated an increase in resources for outsourcing activities.

7. More rigorous application of rationalization and control measures helped to curb the rapid increase of workload in 2013. While a total of 18.24 million words (55,282 UN standard pages) were translated in 2012, it dropped to 14.93 million words (45,242 UN standard pages) in 2013. Due to this decrease in the number of words translated, the expenditure on outsourcing went down, as shown in Table 2.

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<sup>3</sup> Documents WO/PBC/21/15 and A/51/12

8. It is proposed to continue with such measures in order to provide “more concise working documents”, as desired by Member States<sup>4</sup>, as also to reduce the costs of translation.

### Outsourcing

9. In response to the requests by Member States, the share of outsourcing in total translation has increased sharply. Against the baselines of 30 per cent in 2010 and 45 per cent in 2011, the level of outsourcing increased to 56 per cent, in the 2012/13 biennium. In addition to outsourcing work to individual external translators, documentation in French and Spanish is also being outsourced to translation companies identified through international calls for tender issued in 2011 and 2012, respectively. With the experience gained in respect of these two languages, three more international tendering processes have been initiated simultaneously for Arabic, Chinese and Russian. By the end of 2014, more translation companies would have been engaged to undertake outsourced translation work for the Secretariat.

10. However, at the same time, attention has to be given to the quality of translation. During the discussions on the Language Policy, especially with regard to outsourcing, Member States expressed concerns over the quality of outsourced translations, and stressed the need to put in place quality control measures. Conscious of this need, the Secretariat has spelt out the concept of “quality at source”, ensuring that quality is built into the process at the earliest possible stages, commencing with the recruitment of competent translators. A new and streamlined procedure has been applied for the accreditation of external translation providers, comprising various steps such as evaluation of qualifications, on-site or on-line testing, and interviews.

11. In addition, outsourced translations are checked by the in-house core team in accordance with a number of pre-defined quality characteristics, such as accuracy, comprehension, completeness, terminological correctness, readability, style and usability. A quality control process has also been developed and uniformly applied, with different measures, ranging from formatting, editing, reviewing, to partial and full revision. The quality of translation is also being linked to the payment of remuneration.

### Translation Costs, Efficiencies and Savings

12. Despite the rationalization and control measures, the extension of language coverage from two (English/French) or three (English/French/Spanish) to all the six UN languages (Arabic/Chinese/Russian as well) has resulted in the increase of the translation workload in 2012/13 by over 35 per cent as compared to that of the 2010/11 biennium. It is to be noted that the increase of such workload before the implementation of the Language Policy was marginal, as shown in the following table.

Table 1

Translation Volumes and Per-Page Costs

Biennium	TOTAL		Variation Over previous biennium	Percentage Outsourced	Per-Page Cost (Swiss francs)
	Words	Pages (UN Standard)			
2008/2009	23,704,560	71,832	--	28	227
2010/2011	24,529,287 <sup>5</sup>	74,331	+3.5%	38	213
2012/2013	33,173,126	100,524	+35.2%	56	191

<sup>4</sup> Document A/48/11 ADD, paragraph 2 (v)

<sup>5</sup> Excluding words reviewed as part of the quality control process (revision, reviewing and proofreading) for translated documents, which were added for computing costs.

13. However, while the translation workload increased by 35 per cent in 2012/13, the total resources on Language Services were augmented only by 15 per cent in the same period. This augmentation was mainly reflected in the non-personnel costs, i.e. for outsourcing translation and upgrading IT tools to facilitate translation and quality control processes.

14. The total annual cost on translation services (since the implementation of the Language Policy in 2010/11) is provided in Table 2. It would be seen that while the cost on in-house personnel has generally been around the same level, the costs on outsourcing have fluctuated according to the workload.

Table 2

Total Costs of Translation  
(in thousands of Swiss francs)

Costs	2010	2011	2012	2013
Personnel Resources	7,627	7,430	7,116	7,348
Outsourcing	1,027	1,562	2,702	2,103
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,654</b>	<b>8,992</b>	<b>9,818</b>	<b>9,451</b>

15. Due to the higher level of outsourcing; current contract mix of in-house and external translators; enhanced efforts to rationalize business processes, both upstream and during the translation process; as well as effective use of translation-related IT tools, there have been some cost savings, with the average cost of translation per page reducing from 213 Swiss francs in 2010/11 to 191 Swiss francs in 2012/13. The cost efficiencies resulting therefrom were 2.2 million Swiss francs. The reduction in cost per page also conforms to the performance indicator (10%) fixed for the 2012/13 biennium.

16. Cost efficiencies were also due to the outsourcing of translation work to external agencies into French and Spanish, with an average unit cost at 38 per cent lower than that of individual translators. Though the work outsourced to agencies, which started in the last biennium, required a higher level of in-house review as a part of the quality control process (thereby taking up more time of the in-house staff), it resulted in a net cost saving of some 99,000 Swiss francs in 2013. It is expected that with the assignment of translation work to similar agencies in other languages, without compromising on quality, such savings would increase in the future.

#### Computer-assisted Translation and Terminological (CATT) Tools

17. As another measure to promote efficiency, improve quality and increase productivity, the Secretariat enhanced its use of CATT tools during the 2012/13 biennium. Following a rigorous process of identification and selection, new CATT tools were acquired and deployed in 2013. The preliminary experience after a year's use have shown some benefits such as: standardization of terminology; automatic recognition of previously translated text; consistency; productivity; and quality control.

### Extension of Six-Language Coverage to Web Site

18. The restructured and redesigned WIPO web site (Phase 1) was launched in November 2013. Prior to the launch, and as part of the restructuring, many outdated or unnecessary pages were removed, while new texts and pages were created, including a complete overhaul of the portal and all landing pages (IP services, policy, cooperation, reference, about IP, and inside WIPO). The portal and all top-level pages were launched in the six official languages. Translation and implementation of the site into six languages is progressing, based on work plans and available resources. Phase 2 of the web site redesign will include a further elimination or clean-up of lower-level pages, as well as ongoing translation and implementation of the language versions.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

19. The present document was prepared by the Secretariat to report on the progress made on the implementation of the Language Policy and the steps taken to reduce costs, modernize systems and to improve the quality of documentation.

20. The following decision paragraph is proposed.

21. *The Program and Budget Committee took note of the Progress Report on the Implementation of WIPO Language Policy (document WO/PBC/22/16), and:*

(i) *acknowledged:*

(a) *the enhanced rationalization and control measures implemented to limit the increase in the translation workload;*

(b) *the cost efficiencies achieved;*

(c) *the increased share of outsourcing while ensuring quality of translation; and*

(ii) *urged the Secretariat to continue its efforts in this regard and report back to the PBC thereon in the context of the Program Performance Report for 2014.*

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