



WIPO A Users' Guide

An Introduction
to the Organization
for Delegates



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A specialized agency of the United Nations, WIPO assists its 186 member states in developing a balanced international IP legal framework to meet society's evolving needs. It provides business services for obtaining IP rights in multiple countries and resolving disputes. It delivers capacity-building programs to help developing countries benefit from using IP. And it provides free access to unique knowledge banks of IP information.

How WIPO Began

WIPO was established in 1970, following the entry into force of the 1967 **WIPO Convention**, which sets out the terms governing WIPO's mandate, functions, finances and procedures.

WIPO's predecessor – the United International Bureaux for the Protection of Intellectual Property (known by the French acronym, BIRPI) – was set up in 1893 to bring together two small bureaus that administered the 1883 Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (Paris Convention) and the 1886 Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (Berne Convention).

The Paris Convention was the first major international treaty designed to help the people of one country obtain protection in other countries for their intellectual creations, in the form of industrial property rights.

In a similar way, the Berne Convention, the first multilateral treaty in the field of copyright, was crafted to help nationals of its member states to obtain international protection of their right to control, and receive payment for, the use of literary and artistic works.

Originally based in Berne, BIRPI moved to Geneva in 1960 to be closer to the UN and other international organizations. In 1970, when BIRPI became WIPO, the organization underwent structural and administrative reforms and established a secretariat answerable to its member states.



Core Activities

WIPO promotes the protection of IP throughout the world through cooperation among states and in collaboration with other international organizations.

It focuses on:

Norms

- Administering 26 multilateral treaties
- Working with member states to build agreement on and support the evolution of the international legal framework for IP

Services

- Providing global IP services – under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), Madrid, Hague and Lisbon systems – that make it easier and more cost-effective to obtain protection internationally for new inventions, brands, designs and appellations of origin
- Providing arbitration, mediation and other alternative dispute resolution services

Development

Assisting governments and organizations in:

- Establishing national IP and innovation strategies
- Developing appropriate regulatory frameworks for IP
- Building the infrastructure and human capacity needed to harness the potential of IP for economic development

Infrastructure

Providing technical infrastructure that includes:

- Facilitating access to WIPO's world-standard databases of IP information
- Training and tools for using IP information
- Technical platforms to facilitate exchange of information among IP offices

Respect for IP

Building awareness and understanding of and respect for IP, including:

- Playing a leading role in facilitating international dialogue on enforcement-related issues
- Providing training and education programs

Partnerships

Working in partnership with the UN and other organizations to identify and promote IP-based solutions to climate change, food security, public health and other global challenges



Member States and Decision- Making Bodies

WIPO's member states determine the strategic direction and approve the activities of the Organization. Delegates from member states meet in assemblies, committees and working groups.

WIPO currently has 186 member states (over 90 percent of the world's countries). Some 69 intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and 308 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are accredited as observers at WIPO meetings.

Governing Bodies

WIPO's main policy and decision-making bodies are:

- The WIPO General Assembly (for composition and functions see Article 6 of the WIPO Convention: www.wipo.int/treaties/en/convention/trtdocs_wo029.html)
- The WIPO Conference (see Article 7)
- The WIPO Coordination Committee (see Article 8)

These bodies meet annually in Geneva.

There are also assemblies of certain of the unions established under some WIPO-administered treaties – for example, the PCT Union Assembly and the Madrid Union Assembly.

Standing Committees

Standing committees are *ad hoc* committees of experts established for a particular purpose by the General Assembly. WIPO's standing committees are the:

- Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (**SCP**)
- Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (**SCT**)

- Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (**SCCR**)

When a standing committee determines that sufficient progress has been made in order to move towards treaty adoption, the General Assembly can decide to convene a **Diplomatic Conference**. This is a high-level meeting of member states, convened purely to finalize negotiations on a new treaty, such as the Diplomatic Conference on the Protection of Audiovisual Performances, held in 2012, which adopted the new Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances (not yet in force).

Permanent Committees

Any of the governing bodies can constitute committees as required, for example the:

- Program and Budget Committee (PBC)
- Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP)
- Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC)
- Advisory Committee on Enforcement (ACE)

In addition, the international classification treaties (i.e., the Locarno (industrial designs), Nice (marks), Strasbourg (patents) and Vienna (figurative elements of marks) Agreements) established permanent committees of experts with a mandate to periodically revise and update the classification systems.

Working Groups

A standing committee or any of the assemblies can decide to establish a working group to examine a particular question in more detail (e.g., the Working Group on the Legal Development of the Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks).

The *WIPO General Rules of Procedure* apply to all WIPO governing bodies as well as any subsidiary bodies.

They are available at www.wipo.int/freepublications/en/general/399/wipo_pub_399.pdf

WIPO provides simultaneous interpretation into English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish at its meetings. Conference service staff can provide information on booking meeting rooms and/or interpretation services for group meetings of delegates.

WIPO seeks to involve IGOs, NGOs, industry groups and other stakeholders as widely as possible in consultation processes and debates about current issues. The Organization welcomes the inclusion of stakeholder organizations and interest groups as **observers** at formal meetings of member states. Organizations seeking permanent observer status are invited to submit a request to the WIPO Secretariat, which then presents that request to the Assemblies of the member states for approval.



Development Agenda

The **WIPO Development Agenda**, adopted in October 2007 by the General Assembly, consists of 45 recommendations aimed at strengthening the development dimension in all areas of WIPO's work. A priority for the Organization, the Development Agenda's principles and activities are being mainstreamed into all WIPO programs.

The Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP), established in 2007 by the General Assembly, is mandated to:

- Develop a work program for implementing the 45 Development Agenda recommendations
- Monitor, assess, discuss and report on implementation of the recommendations
- Discuss any other IP and development-related issues as agreed by the Committee



WIPO Treaties

WIPO administers a group of treaties that set out internationally agreed rights and obligations, and common standards for protecting IP rights, while maintaining a balance with the general public interest. The Organization actively encourages states to join these treaties and enforce their provisions. Widespread membership and consistent enforcement help maintain a stable international environment, inspire confidence that IP rights will be respected around the world, encourage investment and contribute to economic and cultural development.

Current **membership figures** (as of June 2013) for some of the 26 international treaties administered by WIPO are:

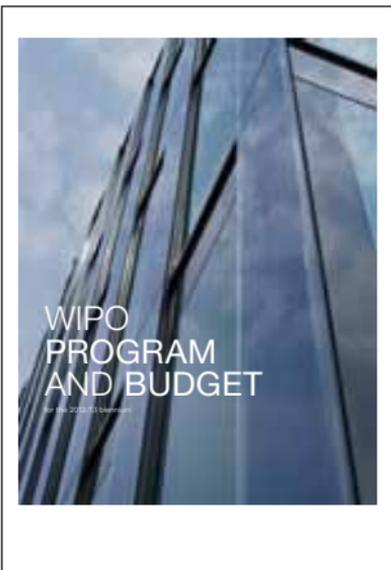
- Paris Convention – 174 contracting parties
- Berne Convention – 166 contracting parties
- Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) – 147 contracting parties
- Patent Law Treaty (PLT) – 33 contracting parties
- Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks (and the Protocol to the Madrid Agreement) – 91 contracting parties (in the Madrid Union Assembly)
- Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks – 30 contracting parties
- Hague Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs – 60 contracting parties
- Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration – 28 contracting parties
- WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) – 90 contracting parties
- WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT) – 91 contracting parties
- Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure – 78 contracting parties

Program and Budget

Every two years, WIPO's Director General presents a Program and Budget to member states for approval. It details objectives, performance measures and **budgetary planning** for all proposed program activities.

WIPO is unusual among the family of UN organizations in that it is largely self-financing. Over 90 percent of the Organization's budgeted expenditure of 674.4 million Swiss francs, for the 2012-2013 biennium, comes from revenue from WIPO's global IP services (the PCT, Madrid, Hague and Lisbon systems). The remainder is primarily made up of revenue from WIPO's arbitration and mediation services, plus contributions from member states. These contributions are relatively small, with the five largest contributing countries each donating about one-half percent of the Organization's budget.

A **Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP)**, covering the six-year period from 2010 to 2015, was presented to the General Assembly in September 2010.



The MTSP addresses:

- **Changes** in the external environment in which WIPO operates
- **Challenges** and **opportunities** that this presents for IP and for WIPO in the medium term
- **Outcomes** the Organization will seek to deliver over the six-year period
- **Strategies** that will enable it to do so

Strategic Goals

The nine strategic goals, which provide the framework for the Program and Budget as well as the MTSP are:

- A balanced evolution of the international normative framework for IP
- Provision of premier global IP services
- Facilitating the use of IP for development
- Coordination and development of global IP infrastructure
- World reference source for IP information and analysis
- International cooperation on building respect for IP
- Addressing IP in relation to global policy issues
- A responsive communications interface between WIPO, its member states and other stakeholders
- An efficient administrative and financial support structure to enable WIPO to deliver its programs



Secretariat

WIPO's staff of over 1,200 employees, drawn from more than 100 countries, includes experts in all fields of IP law and practice, as well as specialists in administration, economics, information technology, public policy and translation.

The WIPO Secretariat is responsible for:

- Coordinating the meetings of member states and implementing their decisions
- Administering the international IP registration systems
- Developing and executing the programs designed to achieve WIPO's goals
- Providing a repository of IP expertise to assist its members

WIPO cooperates with other UN agencies and specialized bodies in Geneva and around the world, with the aim of ensuring that its activities contribute effectively to achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals and to other UN-wide initiatives.

WIPO's **partnership initiatives** include:

- An **external relations** function, which enables a coherent organizational approach to relations with the external community, including the UN and other international organizations
- **WIPO External Offices** – based in New York, Rio de Janeiro, Singapore and Tokyo – which help to manage the network of relationships with international, regional and national partner organizations
- Efforts to mobilize **extrabudgetary resources** by seeking out new partners and potential donors able to provide additional resources for development-related projects
- The **WIPO Voluntary Fund**, created to ensure that indigenous and local communities can take an active part in the discussions of the IGC

Strategic Realignment

Following the appointment of Director General Francis Gurry in October 2008, WIPO embarked on a major program designed to better equip the Organization to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing IP environment. The **Strategic Realignment Program** (SRP) has redefined WIPO's strategic-level goals to bring the Organization's structures, cultural values, processes and resources into alignment with the new goals (for further details, see www.wipo.int/about-wipo/en/strategic_realignment).



The SRP focused on implementing a set of multiple, interconnected initiatives grouped under WIPO's four core values:

- **Service orientation** – increasing WIPO's responsiveness to global stakeholders and their satisfaction with the Organization's services
- **Working as one** – working as an integrated, responsive and efficient entity that is fit for purpose and delivers value for money
- **Accountability for results** – taking ownership of performance and achieving results
- **Environmental, social and governance responsibility** – performing in an ethical manner and caring about WIPO's staff, its community and the environment

Financial Regulations and Rules

The financial activities of WIPO are governed by the Financial Regulations and Rules (www.wipo.int/about-wipo/en/pdf/wipo_financial_regulations.pdf). Since January 2010, WIPO has used an accounting and reporting system based on the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

Oversight

An Internal Audit and Oversight Division (IAOD), an External Auditor and an Independent Advisory Oversight Committee help to ensure the **accountability, transparency and oversight** of WIPO's operations and activities.

- The **IAOD** carries out objective, systematic and independent reviews of program implementation and operations, including audits, inspections, investigations and evaluations. The division supports the Director General in his management responsibilities and assists program managers in attaining WIPO's objectives.
- The **External Auditor**, appointed by the General Assembly for a non-renewable six-year term, provides an opinion on WIPO's financial statements and on the compliance of transactions with the Financial Regulations and Rules.
- The WIPO **Independent Advisory Oversight Committee** is an external expert advisory body that assists member states in the oversight of WIPO's operations.

WIPO Buildings

Construction of the **WIPO New Building** was completed at the beginning of 2011. The New Building has four underground levels, an atrium-style ground floor with a cafeteria and five floors of offices with 560 workplaces. Its design, by Behnisch Architekten of Stuttgart, Germany, includes a cooling system that uses water from nearby Lake Léman.

Work began in 2011 on a **conference hall** seating 900 that will adjoin WIPO's headquarters. The new hall, also designed by Behnisch Architekten, gives priority to sustainability. A wooden main structure and interior finishing, natural light, hybrid ventilation combining natural and mechanical means and a cooling system similar to the one mentioned above are among the most significant environmentally-friendly features of the new hall.

Some facts about the **AB building**:

- The 13-story AB Building, designed by Pierre Brillard (Geneva), was completed in 1978.
- The wall fountain in the lobby – 6 meters high, 11 meters wide – symbolizes the emergence of life. Flowing ribbons of multicolored marble set in the floor represent human ingenuity and creativity and culminate in a golden sunburst mirroring the gilded cupola above.
- Cupola inscription: “Human genius is the source of all works of art and invention; these works are the guarantee of a life worthy of men; it is the duty of the State to ensure with diligence the protection of the arts and inventions.”
- The sapphire-blue color of the windows was obtained by placing a fine dusting of silver oxide powder on the inner surface of one of the two panes, which were then hermetically sealed.



Practical Information

The **WIPO Library** is a specialized legal reference library that supports the information needs of WIPO staff, delegates of WIPO member states and external researchers. Located in the New Building, the library's collections consist of some 35,000 monographs and 300 periodicals covering all aspects of IP law, as well as topics such as biotechnology, plant varieties, traditional knowledge, economics and information technology. Delegates may visit the library or search its holdings via the Internet (*www.wipo.int/cgi-bin/koha/opac-main.pl*). The Library is open from 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Its staff are available to respond to specific requests, and the Library offers free use of its public computers.

WIPO has two **cafeterias**, one located to the right upon entering the PCT Building (on Chemin du Pré-de-la-Bichette) and the other on the ground floor of the New Building. They are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday. Also available is a comfortable coffee/tea lounge (with coin-operated machines) on the 13th floor of the AB Building.

The **WIPO Information Center**, open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 to 6 p.m., offers a selection of publications and souvenirs. Multilingual staff are on hand to answer questions.

The WIPO Customer Service Center:

- Provides general information on IP and WIPO to customers and stakeholders
- Ensures a prompt and appropriate reply to enquiries
- Liaises with specialized internal support teams
- Resolves problems and complaints

Enquiries at www.wipo.int/contact or by calling 022 338 8787.

WIPO's Carbon Neutrality Project

aims to

- Make the Organization's in-house practices more environmentally friendly
- Improve resource efficiency
- Reduce WIPO's carbon footprint



In 2009, WIPO took part in the first-ever UN-wide Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory. As a result, WIPO established its baseline GHG Inventory against which it measures future performance.



Internet Access and Online Resources

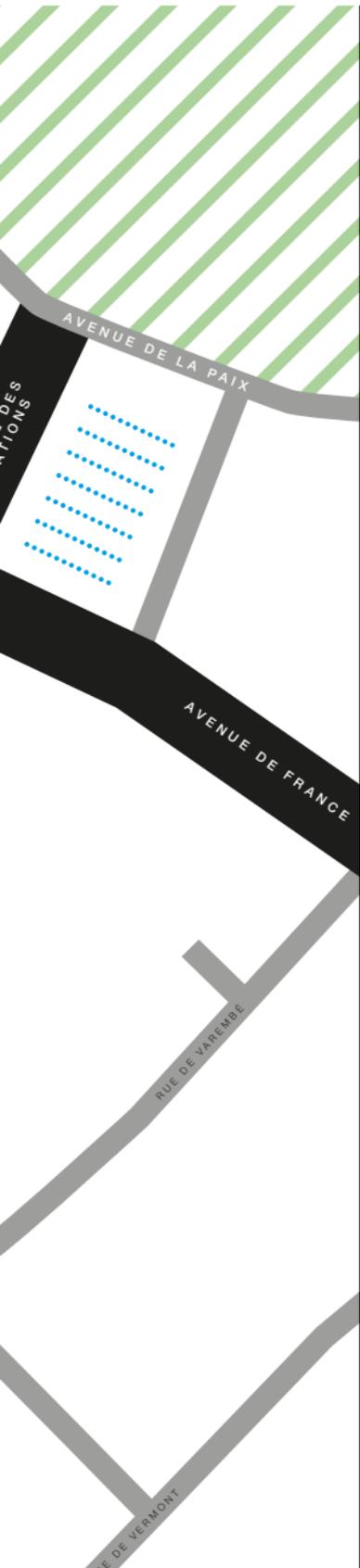
WIPO's public computers (with Internet access) are located in the Information Center on the ground floor of the AB Building and in the WIPO Library. The software for the visually impaired installed on these computers allows web pages to be read aloud to users. WIPO also provides free wi-fi Internet access.

Online resources:

- **Special portal for delegates:** This portal includes access to the Observatory, a password-protected financial status resource reserved for use by WIPO member states: www.wipo.int/portal/en/resources_delegates.html
- **WIPO Assemblies page:** Easy access to information on and documents for the WIPO Assemblies: www.wipo.int/about-wipo/en/assemblies
- **WIPO documents:** These can be requested from the WIPO Conference Service, or directly at the Room A documents desk during meetings. They are also available online, and searchable at www.wipo.int/meetings/en/archive.jsp
- **WIPO press releases:** Available online at www.wipo.int/pressroom
- **WIPO member states and observers:** Current information at www.wipo.int/members
- **WIPO treaties:** Texts of all WIPO treaties in html or pdf format and information on treaty membership at www.wipo.int/treaties
- The **WIPO Magazine**, available in print and online, offers a wide range of articles on innovation, creativity and IP at work in the world: www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine
- **WIPO Library:** Catalogue available online at www.wipo.int/cgi-bin/koha/opac-main.pl

- The **IP Advantage** database contains a wealth of IP case studies that describe the experiences of inventors, creators, entrepreneurs and researchers, demonstrating how IP works and can be used to promote innovation: www.wipo.int/ipadvantage
- **Distance learning:** In particular, the General Course on Intellectual Property (DL-101), offered through the WIPO Academy, that covers copyright, related rights, patents, trademarks, geographical indications, industrial designs, plant breeders' rights, unfair competition and international registration systems: www.wipo.int/academy/en/courses/distance_learning/pdf/dl_brochure.pdf
- **YouTube presence:** The WIPO Channel features documentaries and interviews with artists, creators and inventors who talk about the importance of creativity and innovation: www.youtube.com/user/wipo





- 1 – AB Building
- 2 – PCT Building
- 3 – GB Building
- 4 – New Building
- 5 – New conference center
(under construction)
- 6 – New entrance
(under construction)
- 7/8 – Cafeterias
- 9 – Coffee/tea lounge
(13th floor – vending machines)
- 10 – Library
- 11 – Information Center

Contact Information

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Customer service center:

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WIPO documentation desk (Room A):

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WIPO Library:

+4122 338 85 73

www.wipo.int/contact