

# WIPO Disability Inclusion Strategy





Join the conversation  
on social media  
#WIPOdisability

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction: WIPO's Disability Inclusion Strategy</b>	<b>3</b>
WIPO's commitment to disability inclusion	3
Normative framework	4
Key approaches to implementation	5
Key drivers for change	5
<b>Governance and architecture</b>	<b>7</b>
WIPO Inclusion Steering Group	7
Supporting network	7
<b>Strategic framework</b>	<b>8</b>
Core areas of the UNDIS accountability framework	8
Leadership, strategic planning and management	8
Rights-based approach to inclusion	10
Rights-based approach to programming	12
Organizational culture	13
Areas of work by UNDIS indicators	15
<b>Resources, communication and oversight</b>	<b>16</b>
Resources	16
Communication	16
Oversight	16
<b>Annex</b>	<b>17</b>
UNDIS accountability framework	17
Acronyms and abbreviations	18
Glossary of key terms	19
Methodology	21
WIPO Inclusion Steering Group	21
<b>Notes</b>	<b>22</b>

# Foreword

One in seven of us experiences some form of disability in our lifetime. Empowering people living with disabilities to realize their full potential is, therefore, both an essential matter of human rights and an issue that should concern us all.

Supporting diversity and treating everyone with dignity, fairness and respect are among WIPO's core values. We aspire to create and sustain an inclusive working environment – one in which every individual is accepted and valued no matter who they are, where they are from or whether they live with a disability or not.

As an international organization and a member of the UN family, we have an important role to play in upholding disability inclusion and supporting its advancement in all regions of the world. As such, this strategy is a key milestone in WIPO's journey to foster both a diverse and enabling workplace and a global IP ecosystem that is accessible to all.

Although this is our first Disability Inclusion Strategy, we are not starting from scratch. Creating an enabling environment has long been a feature of our work, and we are proud of the positive impact that purpose-driven programs such as the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) are delivering around the world to those who are disadvantaged.

However, there remains more to do to mainstream disability inclusion across the full scope of WIPO's activities and to empower innovators and creators living with disabilities to use IP to develop their ideas or business. This is why the strategy comes with an annual action plan – so that we can move swiftly from aspiration to implementation. We believe that it is by being open and transparent about our strengths as well as the gaps to bridge that we will hold ourselves accountable and deliver lasting change.

Bringing this strategy to life will require an active contribution from every sector, team and member of WIPO personnel. The conversations prompted by this strategy will not always be easy, but they are the route toward delivering tangible progress and embedding disability inclusion firmly within our work.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the development of this strategy and who has helped to inform its ambitions. Together we can deliver positive change and build a global IP ecosystem that leaves no one behind.

**Daren Tang**  
Director General

# Introduction: WIPO's Disability Inclusion Strategy

This document sets out the Disability Inclusion Strategy (the Strategy) for the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) for the period 2022 to 2026.

The Strategy outlines WIPO's direction for the next five years, and will serve as the foundation for our progress on disability inclusion. It sets out our commitment to disability inclusion, the drivers for change, and the strategic framework with expected result areas. It will be complemented by an action plan.

"Persons with disabilities" refers to those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments. Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.<sup>1</sup> The resultant discriminations, conscious or unconscious bias, attitudes and stigma mean that people with disabilities are more likely to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes, and be excluded from participating in economic, social or decision-making opportunities on an equal basis with others.

## WIPO's commitment to disability inclusion

Innovators and creators, and the people who support innovation and creativity, are at the core of WIPO's mission. For everyone to be able to participate and express their talents and ideas, a supportive environment is needed that makes people – in all their diversity – feel welcomed, accepted and encouraged, both within WIPO and in the broader intellectual property (IP) ecosystem.

WIPO's Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) underlines the above by stating the importance of creating an organizational culture that is truly diverse and inclusive. Diversity, belonging and inclusion are foundational to an innovative, forward-looking and creative workplace and workforce, where all personnel – including people with disabilities – can contribute to "a world where innovation and creativity from anywhere is supported by intellectual property for the good of everyone."<sup>2</sup> This includes people living with disabilities, and neurodiverse people, in all their diversity. People living with disabilities enrich the IP system and our workforce, bringing new and additional perspectives and ideas.

With this vision in mind, in this strategic period, WIPO aims to:

- Support greater diversity in our workforce, ensuring accessibility, reasonable accommodation (see Glossary) and equal opportunities for all persons with disabilities;
- Facilitate a cultural shift toward a rights-based approach to disability, building trust and confidence among our personnel, partners and stakeholders with disabilities;
- Embed the rights of persons with disabilities into both the internal and external aspects of our work;
- Listen to, learn from and strengthen our engagement with diverse persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, to improve our inclusion of and accountability to all right holders;
- Mainstream disability across relevant initiatives and programs, improving access to IP services for persons with disabilities.

In recent years, WIPO has taken a more decisive stance on diversity and inclusion, including initiatives for personnel and IP stakeholders – promoting, for example, dialogue and exchanges on equality, allyship, inclusion, diversity and belonging.

However, WIPO also recognizes that more needs to be done to ensure that persons with disabilities – in all their diversity – do not experience marginalization and exclusion, including within WIPO.<sup>3</sup> The consultations for the preparation of this Strategy have highlighted how fear of stigma exists among personnel living with disabilities, that people with disabilities tend to be reluctant to disclose their status for fear of unequal treatment, and that, until now, a medical approach to disability has often been put in place instead of a human rights one. The consultations have also revealed that significant capacity and knowledge gaps exist on disability inclusion. As this directly affects policies, procedures and decisions which have an impact on well-being, these gaps need to be addressed as a matter of priority.

Through the implementation of this Strategy, the rights of persons with disabilities will be systematically embedded into our work, internally across operations, and externally through programming. With the aim of building trust and confidence among persons with disabilities to ensure that they are valued, and their dignity and rights are respected, WIPO is committed to creating an enabling environment in which they can fully and effectively participate on an equal basis with others.

Toward this vision, our organizational culture is a building block. WIPO has committed to evolving our organizational culture and the ways we work, to one where personnel feel safe to disclose disabilities, request the necessary support, and challenge negative assumptions and stereotypes about their experiences and work-related performance.

## Normative framework

In line with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) and its framework of indicators, this Strategy establishes WIPO's commitment to, and vision for, disability inclusion. It creates the institutional framework for WIPO to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the related aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

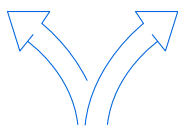
The purpose of the CRPD is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. The human rights of all persons with disabilities are inalienable, integral and indivisible from all other human rights. The CRPD reaffirms the respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity, and the principle of equality between men and women.

As such, in addition to the CRPD, this Strategy also aligns with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other international human rights instruments. This includes the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. As a UN specialized agency, WIPO is committed to upholding the principles set out in the CRPD and all human rights treaties.

In addition, in 2019, the UN Secretary General developed the UNDIS, supported in its implementation by an accountability framework, which consists of four focus areas and 15 performance indicators. Like other accountability frameworks in the United Nations, it uses a graduated aspirational five-point rating system. WIPO, together with the other UN entities, reports on these indicators annually. The indicators' requirements have guided the development of this Strategy and of the annual action plans.

## Key approaches to implementation

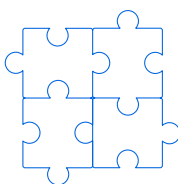
This Strategy applies three key approaches to guide its successful implementation, in alignment with the UNDIS.



### Twin-track

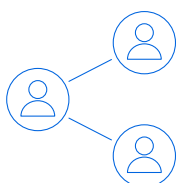
A twin-track approach includes both specific and mainstreamed activities. Using a twin-track approach, WIPO will mainstream disability within all activities, while also promoting and delivering specific disability-related initiatives.

Disability-sensitive measures will be integrated into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programs and disability-specific initiatives. Targeted support will be tailored to address the specific needs of all persons with disabilities.



### Coherence and coordination

A coherent and coordinated approach is essential to accelerate progress, building on, promoting and reinforcing common goals within the UN system and consistent working methods across entities. WIPO will be an active member of the UNDIS community and will strive to share lessons learned and good practices with the rest of the UN system, and to facilitate a constant flow of knowledge and information to build awareness and capacities within WIPO.



### Transparency

The transparent sharing of information, with our people and stakeholders, on the progress and obstacles registered during the implementation of this Strategy is key to accelerate engagement, both internally and externally, and therefore implementation. WIPO's senior management will ensure that information is adequately and regularly shared.

In addition, WIPO is committed to taking an approach which recognizes that persons with disabilities may experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

## Key drivers for change

Taking a holistic organizational approach to deliver progressively on our commitment to disability inclusion, the following key drivers will be embedded within the Strategy:



### Participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations: "Nothing about us without us" (CRPD, Article 29)

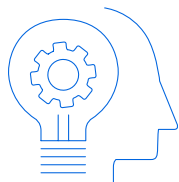
Disability inclusion cannot effectively take place without the active and meaningful engagement of persons with disabilities across all areas of our internal and external activities, be this through our personnel, partners and/or external experts. Ultimately, people with lived experience of facing barriers are best placed to guide WIPO in the implementation of this Strategy.

Working with persons with disabilities as well as coordinating and collaborating with organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) that represent the interests of a diverse range of people is critical for any efforts related to disability inclusion, and is an essential driver for change in this Strategy. This collaboration is also a legal obligation for the States Parties under Article 4(3) of the CRPD. The active and meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations – for example, the World Blind Union (WBU) – has already brought multiple benefits for WIPO in designing initiatives that are fit for purpose. Persons with disabilities were consulted in the writing of this Strategy.



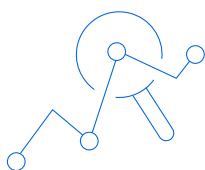
### **Accessibility: “Accessibility as a prerequisite for inclusion” (CRPD, Article 9)**

Accessibility means taking appropriate measures to ensure access for persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to all the activities that WIPO organizes. This encompasses the physical environment, information and communications technologies and systems, events and learning opportunities provided by WIPO, and other facilities and services, among other examples. Granting equal accessibility includes the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers.



### **Capacity development: “Change starts with people” (UNDIS)**

WIPO acknowledges the importance of supporting the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes on diversity, inclusion and accessibility, as they are foundational to creating an organizational culture in WIPO that is truly diverse and inclusive. The preparation of this Strategy has highlighted, as noted elsewhere, that there are significant knowledge and capacity gaps, including among managers. Addressing capacity gaps comprehensively and systematically will ensure that a human rights-based approach to disability is reflected in our work across individual, organizational, programmatic and system-wide levels. Capacity development initiatives will be intensive, interactive, and delivered as part of broader organizational capacity-building efforts. They will address existing behavioral issues linked to stigmatization and exclusion that currently limit the opportunities of people living with disabilities.



### **Data disaggregation and data analytics (UNDIS): “What is not counted is not visible”**

The lack of disability-related data, both qualitative and quantitative, is one of the major barriers to understanding the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, both within WIPO and among our IP stakeholders. Data disaggregation is key to informing strategies for inclusion and ensuring that they support the rights of persons with disabilities in all their diversity. WIPO recognizes the need to take steps toward consistently gathering disability-disaggregated data across internal and external initiatives to identify gaps, in order to monitor progress and inform policies and programs. Once data has been collected, sound data governance policy is crucial to maintain high standards of data protection and trust, to fight stigma. In this regard, the WIPO Secretariat will collaborate with groups and initiatives on disability-related data gathering and collection in the UN system.



# Governance and architecture

The tone from the top is critical in any culture-change process. For this reason, WIPO has set up an Inclusion Steering Group.

## WIPO Inclusion Steering Group

The Inclusion Steering Group will provide overall direction, guidance and high-level monitoring on all matters related to inclusion at WIPO, including disability, gender equality and other forms of diversity that could potentially result in marginalization and/or loss of potential for both the Organization and the affected individuals.

To be able to focus on all the different aspects of inclusion, the Steering Group has a composite structure that reflects WIPO's different organizational functions, levels of seniority and professional expertise. This facilitates coordination and input across topics, leveraging synergies. In addition, it may invite external experts and partners to share their expertise to further hone the way forward.

The Steering Group meets regularly, taking up one specific topic related to inclusion at each meeting based on WIPO's priorities.

General support and coordination will be provided by the Gender and Diversity Specialist, who will also be a member and serve as Secretary of the Steering Group.

## Supporting network

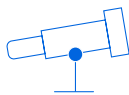
At the working level, the Steering Group is supported by a network comprising the business owners for each of the 15 UNDIS indicators, and by volunteer personnel interested in supporting disability inclusion at WIPO. The network includes representatives from different sectors and functional areas, with a minimum representation of one focal point per sector. Focal points will be in the role for two years, and will dedicate up to 20 percent of their time to focal point functions. Focal points will liaise with personnel, relaying issues to management.

The network will systematically exchange ideas with the Steering Group, including by participating in its meetings, as applicable. The network will meet at least twice a year to promote the sharing of knowledge, experiences and approaches.

# Strategic framework

WIPO's strategic framework for disability inclusion is aligned with the four core areas and 15 indicators of the UNDIS accountability framework (see diagram below). It provides the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the work of the United Nations and sets out WIPO's current state and priority actions.

## Core areas of the UNDIS accountability framework



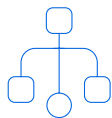
Core area 1  
Leadership, Strategic Planning and Management



Core area 2  
Inclusiveness



Core area 3  
Organizational Culture



Core area 4  
Programming

For each area, the Strategy presents a brief summary of where WIPO stands and some strategic directions for future work, in alignment with the UNDIS indicators.

## Leadership, strategic planning and management

Valuing diversity and treating all people with fairness, dignity and respect are part of WIPO's core values. Commitment to inclusion at all levels – including by senior leadership – is foundational to the successful implementation of this Strategy.

To support the Strategy, WIPO has appointed a Sector Lead as the Disability Inclusion Champion. The Disability Inclusion Champion will model inclusion principles at the senior leadership level by driving efforts related to disability inclusion and the necessary related cultural shifts, and will communicate with our people on progress and lessons learned during the implementation of this Strategy.

Further awareness of the CRPD requirements needs to be built across WIPO, in particular among senior managers, to reinforce an understanding of duties and responsibilities and to support ownership and accountability. Building on the leadership that WIPO has demonstrated in administering the Marrakesh Treaty – including through collaborations with OPDs – and by being a Signatory to the Charter on Accessible Publishing, WIPO will continue to promote the CRPD across all our areas of work.

## Future directions

### Leadership (UNDIS Indicator 1)

#### **Senior managers internally and publicly champion disability inclusion**

The Director General and the Disability Inclusion Champion will champion disability inclusion both internally and externally. In addition, an inclusivity component will be integrated into the onboarding process of managers and other decision-makers, to build WIPO's capacities to better understand duties and responsibilities under the CRPD. Senior managers will be exposed to the diverse experiences of people living with disabilities in order to raise awareness and mitigate unconscious bias.

#### **Implementation of WIPO's Disability Inclusion Strategy is reviewed by senior management annually, with remedial action taken as needed**

The progress in the implementation of this Strategy will be presented to and discussed by the Sector Leads at least annually. Their input will inform future directions.

#### **A specific senior-level mechanism is in place for ensuring accountability for disability inclusion**

The Inclusion Steering Group will monitor the implementation of this Strategy. The Steering Group will engage with the senior leadership of the global disability movement, as relevant, seeking feedback and guidance. Feedback received from personnel, including via internal mechanisms such as surveys and questionnaires, will be evaluated by the Steering Group, with general feedback made available to all colleagues. Additionally, WIPO will explore ways to ensure senior leaders personally commit to inclusion objectives.

### Strategic planning (UNDIS Indicator 2)

#### **Disaggregation of data by disability and sex**

The MTSP 2022–2026, approved by member states in 2021, references<sup>4</sup> diversity and inclusion and their importance for WIPO in achieving its mission. Stemming from the MTSP, the biennial Program and Budget establishes the results that member states wish to see achieved by the Organization over each biennium and authorizes the programs and resources necessary for the realization of those results. The annual planning of activities takes place through the preparation of the annual Work Plans, to which all Sectors contribute.

The biennial Program and Budget offers a good opportunity to pilot data collection disaggregated by disability, in both internal and programmatic work. New indicators disaggregated by disability will be introduced into the Program and Budget proposal submitted to member states, from the 2024/25 biennium. Intersectionality will be systematically factored into the choice of indicators. While the number of intersectional variables used in data disaggregation is expected to increase over time, WIPO will, as a minimum, disaggregate relevant data by disability and sex, as gender is recognized as a significant intersecting factor in disability-related marginalization. WIPO's enterprise resource-planning applications may be used as a source of supplementary data, for internal purposes.

Managers responsible for program development and implementation will actively contribute to the identification of indicators, under the overall technical facilitation by the Program, Planning and Budget Division (PPBD) and expertise provided by the Human Resources Management Department (HRMD). Indicators are monitored annually.

### Disability-specific policy/strategy (UNDIS Indicator 3)

#### **Policy/strategy on mainstreaming disability inclusion is in place and implemented. It is reported in line with UNDIS requirements**

The present Strategy mainstreams disability inclusion considerations at WIPO.

In addition, WIPO will carry out an assessment of the policies and procedures currently in place, to identify opportunities to integrate a disability inclusion perspective as they are progressively revised. This process will be supported by external experts. These include, for example, policies

related to information and telecommunication technologies, human resources, medical support, security, events, buildings and procurement.

#### **Institutional setup (UNDIS Indicator 4)**

##### **WIPO has a unit/individual with substantive expertise on a human rights-based approach to disability**

WIPO will ensure appropriate resources are allocated to access and strengthen available expertise, as needed, in support of the implementation of this Strategy, in line with CRPD principles and articles. WIPO intends to diversify the external expertise with which it will consult by engaging with persons with disabilities that represent diverse lived experiences and different disabilities.

##### **Coordinate a focal point network on disability, including all relevant departments and offices**

WIPO has established a network to support the daily implementation of the Strategy. It comprises the business owners who are responsible for the implementation of the 15 UNDIS requirements and volunteer personnel interested in supporting disability inclusion at WIPO, representing different sectors and functional areas, with a minimum representation of one focal point per sector. The network will systematically exchange ideas with the Inclusion Steering Group, including by participating in its meetings, as applicable.

#### **Rights-based approach to inclusion**

Internally, WIPO recognizes that current attitudes and practices do not reflect a rights-based approach to disability inclusion, in line with the CRPD. WIPO aspires to create and sustain an inclusive organizational environment in which every person, regardless of their characteristics, is valued and encouraged to fully use their talents, where all of our people feel safe to speak up and disclose their personal circumstances, if they so wish, and where every request for accommodation is approached with a human rights model in mind. To do so, WIPO will revise how decisions on reasonable accommodation are made to fully reflect the CRPD principles. Lastly, WIPO is committed to embracing an intersectional approach when this contributes to meaningful inclusion and reduces the risk of exclusion.

Externally, WIPO has developed relationships with OPDs representing blind and partially sighted persons through its Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) initiative. This relationship has brought significant value to WIPO and its related programmatic work. Based on this positive experience, WIPO intends to build further trusted, consultative and active relationships with a broader representation of persons with disabilities and their organizations.

WIPO has taken steps in recent years to improve the accessibility of its internal and external digital platforms, information and communications, conferences and events, and headquarters premises. However, accessibility remains limited in some areas. Through this strategy, WIPO will take a comprehensive approach to accessibility and systemically ensure that provisions concerning accessibility are in place across policies, budget programs and practices.

#### **Future directions**

##### **Consultation with persons with disabilities (UNDIS Indicator 5)**

##### **Systematic close consultation with, and active involvement of, OPDs on all disability-specific and broader issues**

To improve consultative processes, including for localized programs and operations, WIPO will establish regular consultations with organizations representing people living with disabilities, including persons with non-visible disabilities, in order to connect with a diverse range of rights-based OPDs. In addition, WIPO will consult as frequently as relevant with personnel living with disabilities.

**Guidelines for consultation are in place**

WIPO will align with the UNDIS principles on consultations. OPDs will be consulted whenever relevant in the development and review of policies, guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs).

**Accessibility (UNDIS Indicator 6)****A baseline assessment on accessibility is complete**

Accessibility is a prerequisite for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society. In consultation with OPDs, WIPO will complete a comprehensive accessibility assessment to encompass the built environment, digital platforms and tools, meetings and events (see Indicator 6.1 below), using approved international standards (e.g., ISO 21542:2021 on accessibility and usability of the built environment, and WCAG 2.1 Level AA on web content accessibility) as benchmarks. This assessment will serve as the basis for a comprehensive action plan to address progressively the gaps identified.

**Accessibility policy/strategy is in place and has been implemented**

WIPO will develop and implement a comprehensive organizational accessibility policy or equivalent to guide accessibility efforts, supported by adequate financial and human resources. WIPO's Inclusion Steering Group will provide accountability and monitor information on the quality of implementation and its results, at least annually.

**Accessibility of conferences and events (UNDIS Indicator 6.1)****Baseline assessment of accessibility and reasonable accommodation for conferences and events has been completed**

WIPO will conduct an assessment on accessibility for conferences and events, in the framework of the baseline assessment mentioned above.

**Policies and guidelines on accessibility of conference services and facilities are in place and accessibility targets are established and met**

Accessibility targets for conferences and events will be incorporated into WIPO's accessibility activities. As part of this, guidelines and SOPs on the accessibility of conference services and facilities will be introduced and implemented.

**Reasonable accommodation (UNDIS Indicator 7)****Reasonable accommodation policy is developed and implemented with an adequate funding mechanism in place**

Reasonable accommodation is any necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure persons with disabilities enjoy or exercise on an equal basis with others all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Reasonable accommodation is an anti-discrimination measure that enables persons with disabilities to exercise their rights on an equal basis with others. It may benefit a specific individual, may modify or complement standard policies and services, may be provided in specific circumstances, and may or may not have cost implications.

Working closely with OPDs, WIPO will lead the development of a reasonable accommodation policy that will ensure non-discrimination for personnel and visitors and other stakeholders with disabilities who engage with WIPO. As reasonable accommodation may have cost implications and is relevant in all contexts (for example, capacity building, travel, meetings and events, and workspaces) financial resources will be made available through the appropriate planning processes.

**Entity keeps a record of reasonable accommodations requested and provided and the level of satisfaction with the provision of reasonable accommodation**

The HRMD and Diplomatic Engagement and Assemblies Affairs Division (DEAAD) will establish a centrally administered system to document personnel and other stakeholders' requests for reasonable accommodation in a confidential manner. This will be supported by a data

management protocol that supports the privacy of the individual. A formalized feedback system will be introduced to track and monitor client and employee satisfaction in relation to reasonable accommodation measures. Data will be used to help inform reasonable accommodation budget cycle estimations.

### Procurement (UNDIS Indicator 8)

#### **Procurement policies ensure that relevant goods and services acquired are accessible or do not create new barriers, and that the procurement process is accessible**

WIPO's new edition of the recently issued Procurement Manual lists sustainability as one of the criteria to be considered in procurement, including social sustainability, noting the relevance of "addressing needs of more vulnerable members of society, such as those with disabilities."<sup>5</sup> With reference to WIPO financial regulations, member states decided at the Thirty-Fourth Session of the WIPO Program and Budget Committee (PBC) that sustainability should be discussed after the Director General presents a comprehensive assessment report on this issue at the Thirty-Fifth Session of the PBC.

In close consultation with OPDs, the Procurement and Travel Division (PTD) will create guidance on WIPO minimum accessibility standards for procurement and embed them into procurement procedures. WIPO will also align with the HLCM Procurement Network Guidelines related to the UNDIS, whenever possible. In addition, the accessibility of its supplier-facing procurement system will be guaranteed.

#### **Target is established and met for number/percentage of relevant procurement documents that have accessibility as a mandatory requirement**

Progressively, accessibility will be made a mandatory requirement in all relevant tendering documents, criteria evaluation and selection processes. Working toward this objective, the PTD will monitor progress in the number of documents satisfying this requirement.

### Rights-based approach to programming

WIPO intends to mainstream disability inclusion across all sectors and initiatives, including those reaching out to creators and innovators using – or intending to use – the IP system. Innovators and creators living with disabilities continue to be under-represented among the inventors and creators protected by the IP system. A rights-based approach to IP programming – capacity building, outreach, dissemination, etc. – can help redress this imbalance and make the IP ecosystems more inclusive.

The ABC is WIPO's flagship disability-specific program. It is a public-private partnership managed by WIPO to support the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty. It aims to increase the number of books available worldwide in accessible formats – such as braille, audio, e-text and large print – and to make them available to people who are blind, have low vision or are otherwise print disabled.

### Future Directions

#### **Programs and projects (UNDIS Indicator 9)**

#### **Guidance note or equivalent adopted on mainstreaming disability inclusion at all stages of the program/project cycle**

WIPO will identify suitable rights-based resource(s) and collaborate with OPDs to support teams to progressively mainstream disability inclusion across all programmatic activities, exploring ways to do so. With this long-term aspiration in mind, WIPO recognizes that disability inclusion first needs to be mainstreamed in internal processes and programs, to develop a sustainable base for any external-facing activity. WIPO's efforts will be informed by the lessons learned from the implementation of the ABC initiative.

## Evaluation (UNDIS Indicator 10)

### **Evaluation guidelines contain guidance on how to address disability inclusion**

#### **Disability inclusion is mainstreamed effectively throughout the evaluation process and reflected in the terms of reference, inception and evaluation report(s)**

WIPO will adhere to UN guidelines related to disability inclusion at the different stages of the evaluation process. It will also engage with United Nations Evaluation Group relevant working groups, other UN entities and OPDs to exchange good practices and learning.

WIPO's evaluation function will include a human rights approach to disability, striving for data disaggregation during evaluation processes. It will also evaluate the strategy or any aspect of it when deemed appropriate. It will provide advice to other business units in identifying and implementing behavioral insights interventions and nudges to accelerate organizational changes in connection with the objectives of the present strategy.

Moreover, the WIPO Evaluation Section will provide advice and support the design nudges and behavioral insights approaches to support WIPO in tackling behavioral-related issues.

## Joint initiatives (UNDIS Indicator 12)

### **Entity participates actively in inter-agency coordination mechanism(s) on disability inclusion**

To support agency-to-agency knowledge exchange around disability inclusion in meeting UNDIS requirements, WIPO will continue to strengthen engagement with existing inter-agency networks and share research findings and expertise on innovation technology issues related to disability.

## Organizational culture

WIPO recognizes that people thrive and grow in diverse, open, safe and accessible working environments, driven by, and modeled on, strong leadership. Ownership, learning and accountability across the Organization represent the foundations for a culture of inclusion for all people. Disability inclusion must be an integral part of this vision and the transformations it implies. Respecting diversity is a core value of WIPO.

Our current approach to talent management and capacity building does not yet sufficiently include disability considerations. Initiatives are underway that seek to eradicate outdated assumptions and negative stereotypes, and shift attitudes around disability. To do this, we need to fill the gaps between current knowledge of, attitudes toward and capacity for applying principles of equality and non-discrimination in the workplace. We also need to understand how intersectionality plays a part in disability inclusion, and our practices. However, culture shifts take time to develop. The success of this Strategy depends on our ability to empower our people to commit to change, with allocated resources, to create safe environments for learning, meaningful dialogue and peer exchange.

## Future directions

## Employment (UNDIS Indicator 13)

### **Employment policy/strategy and other human resources-related policies/strategies include provisions to attract, recruit, retain and promote career development of personnel with disabilities**

To begin with, the WIPO Secretariat will strive to make job platforms fully accessible, so that every applicant, regardless of disability, has a chance to present their profile for selection, improving the diversity of candidates that seek employment at WIPO. The WIPO Secretariat will offer reasonable accommodation so that all candidates can participate in all stages of the selection process and are not excluded by unnecessary barriers. In addition, the WIPO Secretariat commits to conducting specific reviews so that candidates living with disabilities meeting requirements are shortlisted.<sup>6</sup> To complement these measures, when designing new talent programs, the WIPO Secretariat will strive to include people with disabilities to represent fully the breadth and diversity of our societies.



In the longer term, the WIPO Secretariat will progressively assess all relevant human resources-related policies and strategies to detect any potential practice that may be unintentionally discriminatory toward personnel on the basis of disability, as well as personnel who support dependents living with disabilities. The WIPO Secretariat is fully committed to ensuring persons with disabilities receive equal opportunities as compared to their peers across all stages of the employee life cycle. In this respect, a high retention rate of personnel living with disabilities is an important precondition to ensure that WIPO continues building a diverse workforce.

In these endeavors, the WIPO Secretariat will embrace a human rights model for the employee life cycle, in alignment with the CRPD, discontinuing medicalized approaches and practices related to disability.

**Personnel with disabilities report satisfaction and well-being at a level similar to that of the general personnel body**

The WIPO Secretariat will seek regular feedback from personnel, including those with disabilities, through internal mechanisms such as surveys and key informant interviews, to determine the level of i) engagement, ii) well-being and iii) overall satisfaction, with a target of consistent reporting levels across the workforce. Specifically, WIPO will work toward adopting regular tracking of well-being levels of personnel living with disabilities. In order to do this, the WIPO Secretariat will work toward building trust among personnel, in particular those with disabilities, so that feedback can be collected, and data is made available and analyzed.

The WIPO Secretariat will ensure that there is a mechanism in place to discuss at least annually with personnel with disabilities what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities. It will also make every effort when personnel become disabled to ensure they stay in employment with WIPO.<sup>7</sup>

The findings of these exercises will be reported to the Inclusion Steering Group, which will be responsible for coordinating responsive actions and their implementation.

**Capacity development for personnel (UNDIS Indicator 14)**

**Entity-wide learning and/or training opportunities are available to increase the capacity of personnel at all levels in disability inclusion**

**Successful completion of learning activities and use of available learning resources on disability inclusion are tracked**

The successful implementation of this Strategy is linked closely to the level of awareness of concepts, approaches and requirements for disability inclusion by personnel, at all levels. All of WIPO's people play a role in making the Organization more inclusive, either by creating a supportive and safe environment for colleagues, or by taking and implementing decisions about policies, procedures and practices that affect the experience and well-being of all. The preparation of this Strategy has provided several opportunities to personnel at all levels of responsibility to exchange and learn from experts and representatives of OPDs about disability inclusion.

The WIPO Secretariat recognizes that, currently, there is a knowledge gap on disability inclusion that needs to be bridged. To do this, WIPO will integrate modules on disability inclusion to existing courses (for example, on respect for diversity, unconscious bias, etc.) and will provide learning activities on topics (such as reasonable accommodation, accessibility standards and requirements, CRPD obligations, equality and non-discrimination through an intersectional lens, inclusive programming) to colleagues covering key functions which have an impact on inclusion.

In addition, peer-to-peer exchange and mentoring opportunities will be provided to personnel, to facilitate discussion and learning from each other's experiences.

In the design and delivery of these learning activities, WIPO will continue to work closely with persons with disabilities and OPDs. Their support in the training conducted so far has proven extremely valuable and has increased the impact of each learning opportunity.

Completion of learning opportunities will be tracked via WIPO's learning management platform.



### **Tailored learning activities and learning resources on disability inclusion are available, in particular for senior managers**

Disability inclusion awareness is key among senior managers. Gradually, a suite of learning materials will be sourced from external providers and/or other UN agencies within the UNDIS inter-agency community to provide learning opportunities and exposure to the experiences of persons with disabilities.

### **Communication (UNDIS Indicator 15)**

#### **Guidelines/procedures are in place to ensure that internal and external communication are respectful of persons with disabilities**

Communication at the WIPO Secretariat is informed by WIPO's Guidelines on Inclusive Language, which include a dedicated module on disability inclusion. The Guidelines are applicable to every form of communication issued by WIPO and are available in the six official languages. The Guidelines are a living document, regularly updated to adapt to the evolving nature of inclusion; in particular, disability inclusion. In addition, documents and other communication products are systematically produced in an accessible format.

To strengthen these efforts, WIPO will develop guidance notes on disability-inclusive communication, including messaging about WIPO's commitment to being an equal opportunities employer and IP global player that strives for a diverse and inclusive workforce and IP community.

#### **Persons with disabilities are reflected in mainstream communications**

In all its communication products, WIPO strives to reflect the diversity of the inventors, innovators and creators that make up the global IP community that we serve. WIPO continues to provide visibility to the inventions that improve accessibility and quality of life for all, including people with disabilities, and to the stories of innovators living with disabilities who have broken down barriers for themselves and others. Within the strategic period, WIPO will redouble its efforts in this regard and will continue to ensure that its communication products are respectful and empowering.

### **Areas of work by UNDIS indicators**

The table below presents the different areas of work on which WIPO will focus. They are aligned with the UNDIS indicators.

<b>Leadership, strategic planning and management</b>	<b>Inclusiveness</b>	<b>Programming</b>	<b>Organizational culture</b>
Leadership	Consultations with people with disabilities	Program and projects	Employment
Strategic planning	Accessibility	Evaluation	Capacity development for personnel
Disability-specific policy/strategy	Accessibility of conference and events	Joint initiatives	Communication
Institutional setup	Reasonable accommodation		
	Procurement		

# Resources, communication and oversight

## Resources

This Strategy will be accompanied by a short annual action plan that will guide implementation. The plan will be supported by adequate financial and human resources for its implementation, coordination and dissemination.

## Communication

Under the guidance of the Inclusion Steering Group, WIPO personnel and stakeholders will be made aware of the progress in the implementation of this strategy. Communications targeting all personnel will be preferred, under a communication model already tested.

## Oversight

The annual monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy is the responsibility of the Inclusion Steering Group. At the end of the period, the results of this Strategy will be evaluated by the Internal Oversight Division (IOD). WIPO will also engage with oversight bodies such as the Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (IAOC) in relation to audit matters.

# Annex

## UNDIS accountability framework

This table outlines the core areas of responsibility for each of the 15 UNDIS performance indicators. Disability inclusion is a team effort: given the intersecting nature of the UNDIS requirements, some indicators have more than one contributing team/business owner.

No.	UNDIS indicator	Responsible teams
1	Leadership	Director General, Sector Leads, Inclusion Steering Group
2	Strategic planning	PPBD
3	Disability-specific policy/strategy	HRMD, PTD, Information Communication and Technology Department (ICTD) and other work units working on policy development
4	Institutional setup	Inclusion Steering Group, HRMD
5	Consultation with persons with disabilities	Inclusion Steering Group, HRMD
6	Accessibility	HRMD, ICTD
6.1	Accessibility of conferences and events	DEAAD
7	Reasonable accommodation	HRMD, DEAAD
8	Procurement	PTD
9	Programs and projects	Inclusion Steering Group, PPBD, HRMD
10	Evaluation	IOD
12	Joint initiatives	RNDS, all sectors
13	Employment	HRMD
14	Capacity development for personnel	WIPO Academy, HRMD
15	Communications	News and Media, Information and Digital Outreach Division

## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>ABC</b>	Accessible Books Consortium
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>DEAAD</b>	Diplomatic Engagement and Assemblies Affairs Division
<b>HRMD</b>	Human Resources Management Department
<b>IAOC</b>	Independent Advisory Oversight Committee
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>ICTD</b>	Information Communication and Technology Department
<b>IOD</b>	Internal Oversight Division
<b>IP</b>	Intellectual property
<b>MTSP</b>	Medium Term Strategic Plan
<b>OPDs</b>	Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
<b>PBC</b>	Program and Budget Committee
<b>PPBD</b>	Program, Planning and Budget Division
<b>PTD</b>	Procurement and Travel Division
<b>RNDS</b>	Regional and National Development Sector
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard operating procedures
<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UNDIS</b>	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
<b>WBU</b>	World Blind Union
<b>WIPO</b>	World Intellectual Property Organization

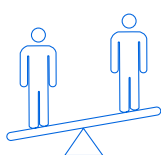
## Glossary of key terms



**Accessibility** is a precondition for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society.<sup>8</sup> It means that people with disabilities can have access to the environment around them, transportation, information, and communication technology and systems on an equal basis with others. It is not only about physical access, and people with disabilities have different access requirements and preferences.<sup>9</sup>

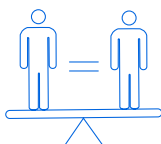


**Disability** Article 1 of the CRPD defines persons with disabilities as including “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.” The full inclusion of people with impairments in society can be inhibited by attitudinal and/or societal barriers (such as prejudice or discrimination), physical and/or environmental barriers (such as stairs), and policy and/or systemic barriers, which can create a disabling effect.<sup>10</sup>



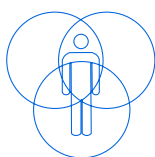
### Discrimination

- **Direct discrimination** occurs when one person is treated less favorably than another because of their background or certain personal characteristics.
- **Indirect discrimination** refers to laws, policies and practices that apply to everyone in the same way and may appear neutral, but have a worse effect on some people than others.
- **Intersectional discrimination** recognizes the complex, multifaceted dimensions of discrimination on the grounds of intersecting social categories or personal characteristics.

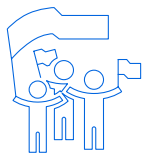


### Equality

- **Formal equality** is the concept that all people should be treated the same regardless of difference. However, this approach does not take systemic discrimination and individual difference into account and can result in indirect discrimination.
- **Substantive/de-facto equality** refers to equality of outcomes and takes the effects of discrimination and difference into consideration. It recognizes that rights, entitlements, opportunities and access are not equally distributed throughout society, and that a one-size-fits-all approach will not achieve equality. It demands the redistribution of resources, power and structures and increased access to resources and participation for those who are marginalized.
- **Inclusive equality** is defined as “a substantive model of equality” that incorporates “a) a fair redistributive dimension to address socioeconomic disadvantages; b) a recognition dimension to combat stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence and to recognize the dignity of human beings and their intersectionality; c) a participative dimension to reaffirm the social nature of people as members of social groups and the full recognition of humanity through inclusion in society; and d) an accommodating dimension to make space for difference as a matter of human dignity.”<sup>11</sup>



**Intersectionality** is a concept and a theoretical framework that facilitates recognition of the complex ways in which social identities overlap and create compounding experiences of discrimination and concurrent forms of oppression.<sup>12</sup>

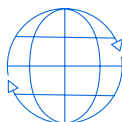


**Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs)** “should be rooted, committed to and fully respect the principles and rights recognized in the Convention. They can only be those that are led, directed and governed by persons with disabilities. A clear majority of their membership should be recruited among persons with disabilities themselves.”<sup>13</sup>



### **Reasonable accommodation**

Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure persons with disabilities enjoy or exercise on an equal basis with others all human rights and fundamental freedoms.<sup>14</sup>



**Universal Design** means the design of products, environments, programs and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Universal design shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.<sup>15</sup>

## Methodology

This Strategy was developed by WIPO with the support of external expertise, in partnership with WIPO's partner the World Blind Union (WBU), between 2021 and 2022. It was developed through an extensive consultation process based on WBU's Accessibility GO! tool: a resource co-developed with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations that takes a holistic organizational approach to supporting organizations to progressively deliver on their commitments to disability inclusion. Accessibility GO! aligns closely with the UNDIS accountability framework and upholds the CRPD and other international standards.

A variety of methods were used to consult WIPO personnel across a diverse range of organizational levels, roles and teams. The iterative feedback loop involved:

- **Review** of institutional policies and guidelines, case studies and reports using Accessibility GO!;
- **Reflection** via individual and team self-assessments and documentation of review/mapping findings;
- **Dialogue** through focus group discussions, key informant interviews and workshops with sector leads and a broad cross-section of personnel from the organisation.

The mapping and gap analysis findings were validated via focus group discussions, personnel interviews and personnel review of the draft mapping document, which was done anonymously to enable honest feedback. In order to increase ownership and improve the understanding of disability inclusion, several personnel workshops were organized while the Strategy was being developed to raise awareness around human rights, equality and non-discrimination among key internal stakeholders.

In addition, between February and March 2022, WIPO personnel were invited to take part in a survey in which they could share their view on i) disability-related experiences at WIPO, ii) general feedback on the topic and iii) suggestions for the way forward.

## WIPO Inclusion Steering Group

The Inclusion Steering Group includes personnel from across WIPO's different organizational functions, representing the different aspects of inclusion and different seniority levels, including senior management. Participants are appointed by the Director General and their names will be communicated to all personnel.

The Steering Group will meet at least quarterly, and each session will focus on a different aspect of inclusion. The Steering Group will invite colleagues and experts to observe or share their knowledge or perspective according to the agenda of each meeting. At least one annual meeting will be dedicated to disability inclusion.

The Steering Group will communicate regularly with personnel on WIPO's vision for disability inclusion and on the outcomes of its meetings, following the successful communication model put in place by the Crisis Management Team.

General support and coordination will be provided by the Gender and Diversity Specialist, who will also be part of the Steering Group.

# Notes

- 1 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines persons with disabilities.
- 2 MTSP, page 8 WO/PBC/32/ (wipo.int).
- 3 People with disabilities make up at least 15 percent of the world's population (World Bank, 2011). The low number of persons with disabilities identified across our workforce may indicate unconscious exclusion.
- 4 MTSP, page 24 WO/PBC/32/ (wipo.int).
- 5 WIPO Procurement Manual, page 9.
- 6 Inspired by the Two Ticks Disability Scheme.
- 7 Inspired by the Two Ticks Disability Scheme.
- 8 CRPD General Comment No. 2, 2014.
- 9 Sourced from *World Blind Union and CBM Global Disability Inclusion*, Al Jubeh, K., Dard, B., Zayed Y., (2020, November). *Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action, Delivering on 7 accessibility commitments*.
- 10 CRPD, <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>.
- 11 CRPD General Comment No. 6, 2018.
- 12 ILO, Guidance note on intersectionality, racial discrimination and protection of minorities, 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/30th-anniversary/2022-09-22/GuidanceNoteonIntersectionality.pdf>
- 13 CRPD General Comment No. 7, 2018.
- 14 CRPD Article 2.
- 15 Sourced from K. Al Jubeh, B. Dard and Y. Zayed, *Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action, Delivering on 7 Accessibility Commitments* (2020, World Blind Union and CBM Global Disability Inclusion).





World Intellectual Property Organization  
34, chemin des Colombettes  
P.O. Box 18  
CH-1211 Geneva 20  
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 338 91 11  
Fax: +41 22 733 54 28

For contact details of WIPO's  
External Offices visit:  
[www.wipo.int/about-wipo/en/offices](http://www.wipo.int/about-wipo/en/offices)

© WIPO, 2023



Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

The CC license does not apply to non-WIPO  
content in this publication.

WIPO Reference RN2022-23E  
DOI: 10.34667/tind.46966