

Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO

Sixty-Sixth Series of Meetings
Geneva, July 8 to 17, 2025

APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL IN 2026

Memorandum prepared by the Secretariat

1. The term of office of the Director General will expire on September 30, 2026. In this respect, the present memorandum recalls the constitutional provisions concerning the nomination and appointment of Directors General of WIPO as well as the procedures for the nomination and appointment of Directors General of WIPO, adopted by the WIPO General Assembly in 1998 and amended in 2019.¹ The memorandum also explains the steps to be taken to initiate those procedures and sets forth a timetable for the implementation of the procedural steps.

Constitutional Provisions

2. The Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO Convention) contains the following provisions on the nomination and appointment of the Director General:

Nomination

Article 8(3)

“The Coordination Committee shall:

“...(v) when the term of office of the Director General is about to expire, or when there is a vacancy in the post of the Director General, nominate a candidate for appointment to such position by the General Assembly; if the General Assembly does not appoint its nominee, the Coordination Committee shall nominate another candidate; this

¹ See document A/59/4, paragraph 14(ii) and Annex III, and document A/59/14, paragraph 42(ii).

procedure shall be repeated until the latest nominee is appointed by the General Assembly”;

Appointment

Article 6(2)

“The General Assembly shall:

“(i) appoint the Director General upon nomination by the Coordination Committee”;

Article 6(3)

“(g) For the appointment of the Director General...the required majority must be attained not only in the General Assembly but also in the Assembly of the Paris Union and the Assembly of the Berne Union.”

Furthermore, the WIPO Convention contains the following provision on the appointment of the Deputy Directors General.

Article 9(7)

“The Director General shall appoint the staff necessary for the efficient performance of the tasks of the International Bureau. He shall appoint the Deputy Directors General after approval by the Coordination Committee.”

Procedural Steps

3. At its meeting in September 1998, the WIPO General Assembly adopted² procedures for the nomination and appointment of Directors General of WIPO, which were amended³ in 2019 by the WIPO General Assembly. The 2019 Procedures are set out in Annex I to this memorandum and referred to as the “2019 Procedures” hereinafter.

4. In accordance with the 2019 Procedures, the first procedural step consists of the sending of a circular by the Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee to all Member States of WIPO, inviting them to propose a national as candidate for the post of Director General of WIPO. This circular is planned to be sent on July 24, 2025. A copy of it is set out in Annex II to this memorandum. The deadline for submission of candidatures is three months after the dispatch of the circular.

5. Following the deadline for the submission of candidatures, the Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee will communicate to Member States, in one consolidated communication, all nominations received.

6. Concerning the nomination of a candidate for appointment to the post of Director General, and the subsequent appointment as such, the Director General will convene an extraordinary session of the WIPO Coordination Committee, and an extraordinary Session of the WIPO General Assembly, Paris Union Assembly, and Berne Union Assembly, respectively, in accordance with the timeframes stipulated in the 2019 Procedures, as outlined in the timeline below.

² See documents WO/GA/23/6, paragraph 5, and WO/GA/23/7, paragraph 22.

³ See document A/59/4, paragraph 14(ii) and Annex III, and document A/59/14, paragraph 42(ii).

Timeline

7. In accordance with the 2019 Procedures, the proposed corresponding timeline would be as follows:

July 24, 2025:	Dispatch of the circular inviting proposals for candidates
October 24, 2025:	Deadline for submission of candidatures
February 12 and 13, 2026:	Extraordinary Session of the Coordination Committee to nominate candidate for appointment to the post of Director General
April 21, 2026:	Extraordinary Session of the WIPO General Assembly, Paris Union Assembly, and Berne Union Assembly to appoint the Director General
October 1, 2026:	Term of office of the next Director General starts

8. *The WIPO General Assembly, the WIPO Coordination Committee and the Paris and Berne Union Assemblies, each in so far as it is concerned, are invited:*

(i) To take note of the circular set out in Annex II, to be dispatched as indicated in paragraph 7;

(ii) to approve the convening of the WIPO General Assembly, the Paris Union Assembly and the Berne Union Assembly on April 21, 2026;

(iii) to approve the timeline of procedural steps set out in paragraph 7.

[Annexes follow]

PROCEDURES FOR THE NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS GENERAL OF WIPO

Procedures for the Announcement of an Impending Vacancy and for the Submission of Candidatures

1. At least six months before the meeting of the Coordination Committee which is to be convened for nominating a candidate for appointment to the post of Director General, the Chair of the Coordination Committee shall send a circular to all Member States of WIPO, inviting them to propose a national as candidate for the post of Director General of WIPO.
2. The candidature submitted by a Member State shall be accompanied by the curriculum vitae of the candidate.
3. The exact time (Geneva) and date of the deadline for submission of candidatures shall be specified in the circular sent by the Chair of the Coordination Committee inviting candidatures. That date shall be three months after the date of the circular.
4. The Chair of the Coordination Committee, with the collaboration of the International Bureau, shall communicate the various nominations to all the Member States immediately on receiving them. Immediately following the deadline for the submission of candidatures, the Chair shall communicate to the Member States, in one consolidated communication, all nominations received.
5. The Coordination Committee shall be convened in order to nominate a candidate for the post of Director General, no earlier than three months and no later than two months before the meeting of the WIPO General Assembly which is to appoint the Director General upon nomination by the Coordination Committee.
6. The decision of the Coordination Committee shall be notified to all the Member States by the Chair of the Committee immediately after the decision had been made.

Procedures for Nomination by the Coordination Committee of a Candidate to the Post of Director General

I. General principles

1. The selection of a candidate for Director General shall be guided by respect for the dignity of the candidates, as well as the countries nominating them, and transparency of the nomination process.
2. The nomination of a candidate for Director General should, if possible, be made by consensus. This will facilitate the appointment of the Director General by the General Assembly. However, it is recognized that voting will probably be a necessary means of building consensus for the nomination of a candidate.
3. Efforts to nominate a candidate *via* consultations leading to consensus are welcome at any stage of the selection process, but such efforts should not unduly delay the decision-making process.

II. Right to vote

It is established that, for the purposes of the nomination of a candidate for Director General by the Coordination Committee, all the members of the Coordination Committee, with the exception of associate members, may exercise their vote.

III. Decision-making process

1. Where there are more than three candidates, before any formal vote is taken, an indication of the relative support enjoyed by candidates may be assessed by means of a “straw poll.” The “straw-poll” will be conducted in such a way that each member of the Coordination Committee which has a right to vote will mark its first and second choice on the list of candidates on his voting paper. Voting will be by Secret Ballot. Where there are three or less candidates, the procedures in this paragraph and the next paragraph shall be omitted.

2. Formal voting by Secret Ballot will proceed in several steps, each time with adequate advance notice, with a view to the gradual reduction of the number of candidates to a short-list of three candidates. Following each vote, the candidate receiving the least number of votes will be ineligible to participate in the next vote. If, however, the number of candidates is large, in order to limit the frequency of votes, the two or three candidates receiving the least number of votes may be declared to be ineligible to participate in the next vote. The exact dimension of each step will be decided, after consultation, by the Chair in the light of the number of candidates remaining at any given time. These steps will be carried out in keeping with the spirit of the following illustrative example based on a notional field of 10 candidates: after the first formal vote amongst all the 10 candidates, participation in additional votes shall be restricted to the seven candidates having obtained the greatest number of votes. After the second formal vote, participation in additional votes shall be restricted to the five candidates having obtained the greatest number of votes. After the third formal vote, a short-list will be established of the three candidates having obtained the greatest number of votes.

3. If consultations on the basis of the short-list of three candidates are not progressing, the voting process will be continued. Following the vote on the candidates of the short-list, a final vote will be restricted to the two candidates having obtained the greatest number of votes. The Coordination Committee will then, no later than the final day of its meeting, take its final decision amongst two candidates in a vote.

4. The Chairman of the Coordination Committee will communicate the name of the candidate for appointment to the post of Director General to the Chairman of the General Assembly.

Appointment of Director General

The WIPO General Assembly which is to appoint the Director General upon nomination by the Coordination Committee shall be convened to meet not earlier than six months and not later than four months before the expiration of the term of the outgoing Director General.

[Annex II follows]

Circular to be Sent to WIPO Member States Inviting Proposals of Candidates for the Post of Director General

C. N ----

The Chair of the Coordination Committee of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) presents [his/her] compliments to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and has the honor to communicate to the Government of each State member of WIPO the following.

The term of office of the Director General of WIPO, Mr. Daren Tang, expires on September 30, 2026.

In accordance with the provisions of the Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization and pursuant to the Procedures for the Nomination and Appointment of Directors General of WIPO adopted by the WIPO General Assembly in September 1998, as amended in October 2019, the WIPO Coordination Committee will be convened in an extraordinary session on February 12 and 13, 2026, to nominate a person for appointment by the WIPO General Assembly as Director General. The decision to appoint the individual nominated by the WIPO Coordination Committee will be made by the WIPO General Assembly at its extraordinary session on April 21, 2026.

The Government of every State member of WIPO may, if it so desires, propose the name of one of its nationals as candidate for nomination by the WIPO Coordination Committee. Any proposal shall be accompanied by the curriculum vitae of the person proposed and should be addressed to the Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee, at the address of WIPO in Geneva, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Member State making the proposal. Proposals must reach WIPO before 5 p.m. on Friday, October 24, 2025.

July 24, 2025

[End of Annex II and document]