Characteristics of International Search Reports Small Group Discussion

Megan McTavish – Program Manager – International (PCT)

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Characteristics of International Search Reports Small Group Discussion

- QSG Small Group Discussion on PCT Characteristics was held October 8, 2026
- CIPO, ILPO, ATO, PRH, INAPI (Brazil), IPO
- Survey sent before discussion

Survey

Survey Questions

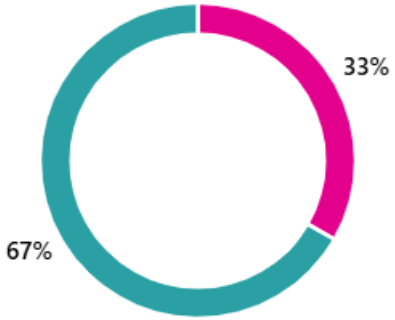
1. How frequently does your office use the WIPO IP Statistics Data Center for ISR characteristics?
2. How frequently does your office use the annual Characteristics Report?
3. Which departments/groups in your organization are looking at the information provided?
4. For what purposes are the report or Data Center used in your office?
5. Which indicators are most valuable to your office?
6. Which offices do you use as comparators and why?
7. What is the most valuable insight your office gains from the Characteristics Report or Data Center?
8. What is the biggest challenge preventing your office from making greater use of these resources?
9. If the International Bureau could make one improvement to the reports or Data Center, what should it be?
10. What is one question about your office's search performance that the current reports or Data Center cannot answer, but that you wish it could?
11. Which topics would you most like to discuss during the session?

Survey Findings

Frequency of Use and User Groups

Survey responses were identical for both the WIPO IP Statistics Data Center and the annual ISR Characteristics Reports and are therefore presented together.

Frequency of Use



Frequently during the year (every month or so)	0
Occasionally during the year (quarterly-based)	2
Rarely (once a year, when the related QSG paper is out)	4
Never	0

Who Uses These Resources?

Respondents indicated that the information is reviewed by:

- Quality management groups
- PCT operational units
- Patent examination management
- Analytics and development teams
- Training and outreach functions

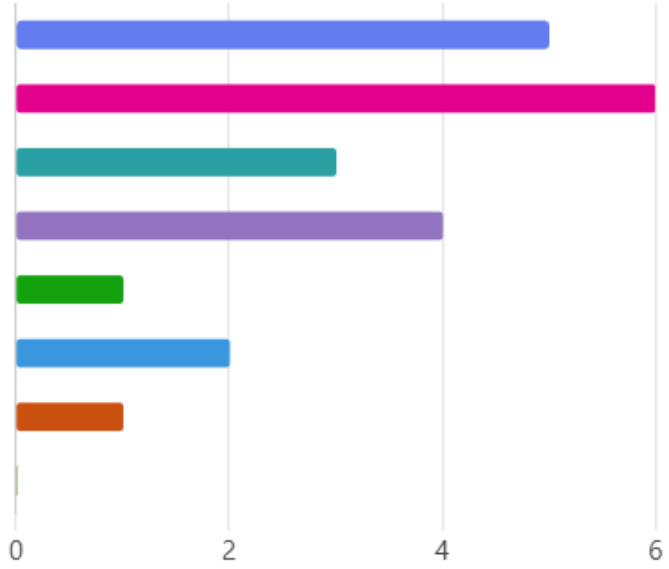
Key observations:

Most responding Authorities use both the WIPO IP Statistics Data Center and the annual ISR Characteristics Reports on an occasional basis. These resources are used by a broad range of stakeholders, including quality, operational, management and analytical functions.

Survey Findings (cont'd)

How Are the Reports and Data Center Used?

Benchmarking against other Authorities	5
Trend analysis over time	6
Quality management activities	3
Management reporting	4
Examiner training or awareness	1
Strategic planning	2
Technology-specific analysis	1
Other	0



Key observations:
Survey responses suggest that trend analysis and benchmarking are the primary uses of the ISR Characteristics Reports and the WIPO IP Statistics Data Center. Several Authorities also use these resources to support quality management, management reporting and strategic planning activities.

Survey Findings (cont'd)

Comparators and Insights Gained

Comparator Selection

- IP5 Offices
- Offices of similar size
- Offices operating in similar environments
- Comparators selected according to the indicator being reviewed

Insights Gained

- Identification of trends and differences
- Information on applicant filing behaviour
- Support for training activities
- Identification of potential quality initiatives
- Identification of questions for further analysis

Key observations:
Responses illustrate that comparisons can provide different types of insights depending on an Authority's needs, from identifying trends and differences to informing training or quality-related initiatives.

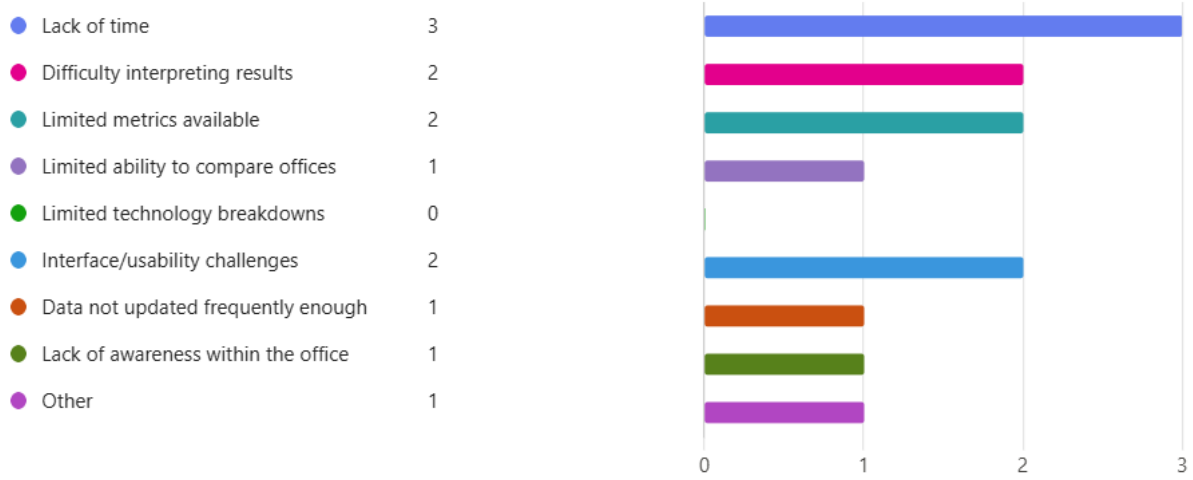
Survey Findings (cont'd)

Most Valuable Indicators and Key Challenges

Most Valuable Indicators

- Timeliness indicators
- Citation indicators
- NPL-related metrics
- Comparative statistics
- Filing and origin data

Biggest Challenges Limiting Greater Use



Key observations:
Respondents identified a broad range of valuable indicators, covering timeliness, citations, filing patterns and comparative information. At the same time, Authorities reported several barriers to greater use, including limited time, challenges interpreting results, and limitations in the available metrics and tools.

Survey Findings (cont'd)

Future Enhancements and Information Gaps

Suggested Enhancements

Respondents suggested:

- Improved handling of large datasets
- Availability of current-year data
- AI-supported data analysis
- AI assistance with interpreting results

Information Not Currently Available

Respondents expressed interest in information such as:

- Certain previously available citation-related statistics
- Use of ISR citations during the national phase
- Subsequent use of ISR/WO products in PPH during the national phase

Key observations:
Respondents expressed interest in both enhanced analytical capabilities and additional metrics. Several responses suggested that future improvements should focus not only on providing more data, but also on helping Authorities better understand and interpret the information already available.
Several respondents also suggested that AI-assisted analysis could help users explore trends, answer specific questions and gain greater value from the available data.

Discussion Highlights

Benchmarking and Interpretation

Key discussion points:

- Authorities use different comparator offices depending on the objective.
- Comparisons should be interpreted carefully.
- Differences may reflect:
  - Applicant profiles
  - Technical fields
  - Filing patterns
  - Search practices
  - National office environments
- Outliers can help identify areas for further analysis and discussion.
- Data can be used to prepare for discussions with other offices.

Key observations:
Participants noted that benchmarking is most valuable when results are interpreted in the context of each Authority's operating environment.

Discussion Highlights (cont'd)

Practices and Challenges in Using the Data

Best practices:

- Share results and trends with examiners.
- Use reports as part of training activities.
- Review unusual results and trends.
- Use benchmarking results to support quality initiatives.
- Review available data before bilateral or multilateral meetings.

Key observations:
While Authorities use the reports in different ways, participants identified regular review, knowledge sharing and contextual analysis as important factors for maximizing their value.

Common challenges:

- Limited time and resources for detailed analysis.
- Difficulty identifying the causes behind observed differences.
- Challenges interpreting results without additional context.
- Limitations in available metrics and supporting data.
- Difficulty linking international phase outputs to downstream outcomes.
- Certain previously available citation-related statistics are no longer available.

Discussion Highlights (cont'd)

Future Analytical Opportunities

International Phase / National Phase Linkages:

- Better understanding the use of ISR citations during national phase examination.
- Reuse of ISR and Written Opinion work products.
- Links between ISR products and PPH requests.
- Tracking the downstream impact of international phase work products.

Potential New Metrics:

- Origin and language of citations.
- Enhanced NPL-related metrics.
- Unity of invention statistics.
- Additional search fee invitations.
- Non-searchable subject matter.
- Metrics derived from XML ISR and WO data.

Key observations:
The discussion identified opportunities to expand available metrics and improve understanding of how international phase outputs contribute to later stages of patent processing.

Discussion Highlights

Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Analytics

Suggestions discussed:

- Use AI to assist with analysis and interpretation.
- Generate customized analyses and comparisons.
- Combine ISR characteristics data with:
  - Applicant profiles
  - Office size
  - Workload information
  - Other relevant datasets.

Additional observations:

- Participants noted ongoing exploration of AI applications for statistical reporting.
- Participants highlighted the importance of careful prompting and validation of AI-generated outputs.

Key observations:
Participants recognized the potential of AI-assisted analysis to support deeper exploration of ISR Characteristics data, provided appropriate safeguards and validation measures are applied.

Conclusions

Key Messages

- The reports and Data Center remain valuable tools for benchmarking and quality-related analysis.
- Authorities use the data in different ways but share common interests and challenges.
- Opportunities exist to enhance available metrics, analytical capabilities and understanding of downstream impacts.
- The discussion provided useful input for future QSG work on ISR Characteristics.

Thank You

Thank you to all participants for sharing their experiences, practices and perspectives.