

IP for the Good of Everyone

Report of the Director General
to the 2021 WIPO Assemblies



2021



Photos: WIPO / Beirrod

Foreword

2020 was a year like no other, as the world grappled with an unforeseen and devastating global crisis.

Since then, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a terrible toll on lives and livelihoods. At the same time, it has transformed ways of working and living – accelerating and amplifying already existing trends towards digitalization, technology and the use of innovation and creativity as engines of growth.

2020 also saw a change of leadership at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), with me and my Sector Leads taking the helm under extraordinary circumstances. Our shared belief is that WIPO needs to move beyond business as usual, so as to better support Member States to overcome the pandemic and build back better.

This annual report therefore outlines a new strategic direction for WIPO, built on the foundations established by previous WIPO Administrations but looking firmly to the future. This report is structured around the four Strategic Pillars and Foundation of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2022-2026.

Under our first pillar, WIPO will continue to broaden our communications and engagement efforts. By extending our reach beyond intellectual property (IP) professionals and specialists, our aim is to raise awareness amongst a wider audience – including entrepreneurs, youth and small and medium sized enterprises – of IP's potential to improve lives around the world.

This shift in approach has produced immediate results. In 2020, WIPO's social media following increased across Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and our website registered over 82 million unique page views. Our World IP Day 2021 pages saw a 94.5 percent increase.

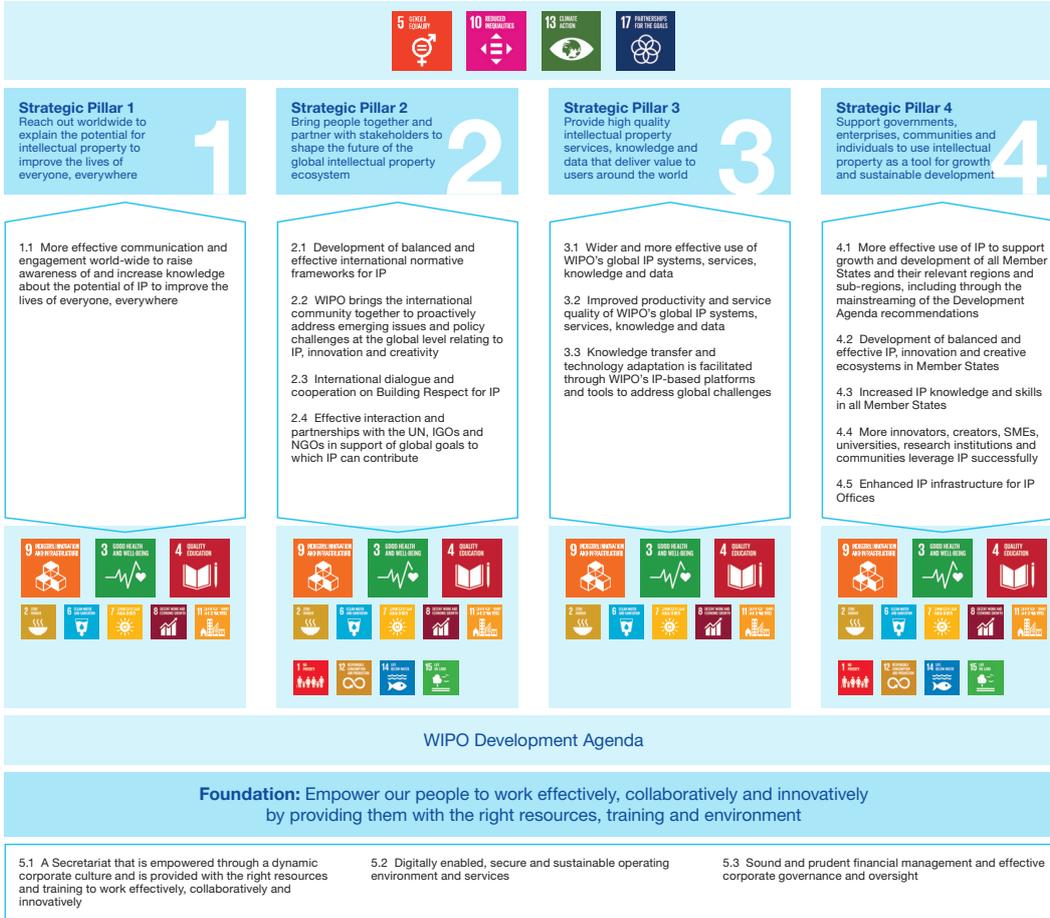
Under the second pillar, WIPO will continue shaping global IP norms, and being a global convener for the discussion of IP issues. In the face of disruptions precipitated by the pandemic, these roles have faced challenges. However, over the last year, we have found new ways of bringing the international community together to discuss the normative framework, build respect for IP and share ideas around emerging issues, through hybrid events such as our Conversations on IP and Frontier Technologies.

The number of Member States joining WIPO-administered treaties continues to expand, with 45 accessions and ratifications last year. Moreover, two new treaties entered into force in 2020: the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances and the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications.

WIPO has also stepped-up our engagement with other intergovernmental organizations.

A World where Innovation and Creativity from Anywhere is supported by Intellectual Property, for the Good of Everyone

WIPO leads the development of a balanced and effective global intellectual property ecosystem to promote innovation and creativity for a better and more sustainable future



For example, through our enhanced trilateral cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Trade Organization (WTO) we are supporting constituencies overcome the pandemic through initiatives such as capacity building workshops and a joint platform for trilateral technical assistance on access, IP and trade matters.

Our third pillar concerns the provision of global IP services, knowledge and data.

It is a testament to the commitment and expertise of WIPO staff that despite the challenges posed by the pandemic – including the pivot to remote working – we have been able to continue to provide our stakeholders with the global IP services they rely upon.

PCT filings increased by 3.5 percent in 2020, with users worldwide reporting high levels of satisfaction with the PCT system. While marginal declines were registered in both the Madrid (0.6 percent) and Hague Systems (1.7 percent), data shows that there has been a rebound in 2021, with Madrid filings up 18 percent and Hague filings up 9 percent over the first five months of the year.

WIPO will also continue to support the development of key reports such as the *Global Innovation Index* and the *World Intellectual Property Report*, as well our WIPO GREEN and WIPO Re:Search platforms that are helping to address global challenges such as climate change and public health. Other Global IP Protection Services like those offered by the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center also reported an increase in caseload and settlements last year.





IP and intangible assets are becoming ever more important to the world economy, reaching a global value of USD 65 trillion. Our fourth pillar concerns how, in this world, IP can be a powerful tool for growth and sustainable development. WIPO is committed to supporting Member States develop national IP ecosystems and enhance IP skills.

WIPO's Development Agenda is being refocused towards an impact-driven approach, tailored to the specific needs of individual Member States. We have also developed guidelines for the development of national IP strategies that support effective IP ecosystems.

In addition to technical IP knowledge, we will also place greater emphasis on building practical IP skills. Over the last year, the WIPO Academy has reviewed its courses as part of our efforts to foster a more inclusive and accessible IP ecosystem.

The foundation of all this work is the exceptional people that make up WIPO.

Time and again, colleagues have risen to meet the challenges of the last 12 months. This, combined with continuing demand for our services, has enabled the Organization to maintain its healthy financial position throughout 2020.

Going forward, WIPO will continue to modernize the ways in which we work. As well as continuing to progress WIPO's digital transformation, we are committed to building an open, collaborative and inclusive culture. More systematically, we have introduced a simpler, more streamlined strategic framework with the aim of increasing our accountability to Member States.

While these remain uncertain and highly volatile times, we know one thing for sure: it is through human ingenuity that we will overcome the pandemic and build back in a fair, inclusive and sustainable way.

As the MTSP and our new Strategy House make clear, our vision is simple yet bold: we want to build a world where innovation and creativity from anywhere is supported by intellectual property for the good of everyone.

WIPO looks forward to working with all of you to bring this vision to life.

2020 in Numbers



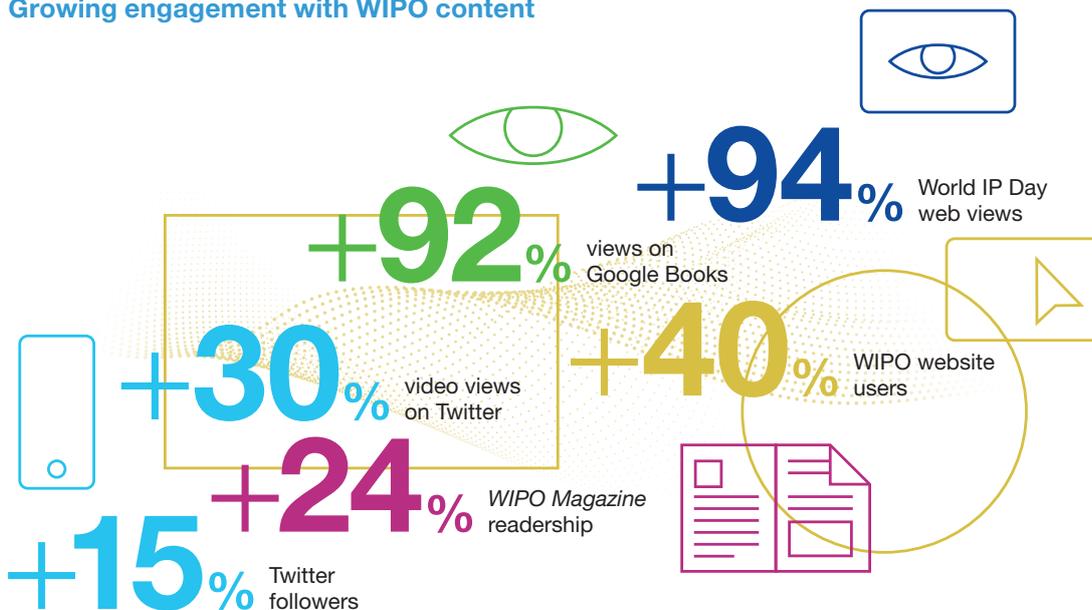
Explaining IP's Potential to Improve Lives



Photos: © Getty Images

Over the last year, we have begun an important shift in our communications approach, broadening out from a narrow direct dialogue with IP specialists to a wider conversation with the general public that raises awareness of IP's potential to improve the lives of everyone, everywhere.

Growing engagement with WIPO content



Storytelling to explain the impact of IP

In 2020, we saw good levels of growth in Twitter followership (15 percent) as well as in the reach of content published on Facebook and LinkedIn, with 1.9 and 2.6 million impressions respectively. Traditional media continued to report on WIPO news and the Organization was mentioned in over 49,000 press articles.

In early 2021, implementation of a new strategy on social media started, involving a more defined differentiation of content between channels to better cater for wider audiences, including entrepreneurs, creators, innovators and youth. In parallel, a revised social media policy laid the ground for an increased number of decentralized social media presences for WIPO programs and services as well as individual accounts, including for WIPO's Sector Leads, for official communication.

Our new content strategy involved a pivot to social-media-friendly storytelling videos, some 30 of which were produced from January to June 2021. Over the first half of 2021, media views increased by 30 percent on Twitter alone, compared to the same period the preceding year, and followers on Twitter and LinkedIn both grew beyond the 100,000 milestones, indicating a broader interest in our mission and vision.



“We will use cutting-edge digital tools to highlight the potential of IP for the benefit of people everywhere.”

Engaging new audiences and expanding reach

The importance of the WIPO website as the Organization’s central communications platform was evident in 2020, when we saw increases of 40.5 percent in the number of users to 17 million, 29.7 percent in the number of sessions to 35 million and 17.1 percent in the number of unique page views to 82 million. These figures rose again in 2021, with an additional 16.8 million users visiting the WIPO website in just the first six months. A multilingual web satisfaction survey confirmed that 87 percent of respondents were satisfied with the website, with 41 percent awarding it an “excellent” rating. The adoption of a new Content Management System commenced and is expected to conclude in 2022.

The theme of the 2021 World Intellectual Property Day campaign, IP & SMEs: Taking your ideas to market, was part of the broadening of focus for WIPO to engage, support and serve those who may not have been well served in the past. The theme drew a 94.5 percent increase in unique page views on the website compared with 2020, online advertisements delivered 6 million impressions and 1.5 million video views and WIPO’s external offices significantly increased their support of World IP Day to deliver 23,000 participants in their various events. Our campaign assets were developed with an eye to supporting the Organization’s outreach efforts well beyond the life of the campaign with, for example, a documentary explaining the relevance of IP for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which had 7,000 views.

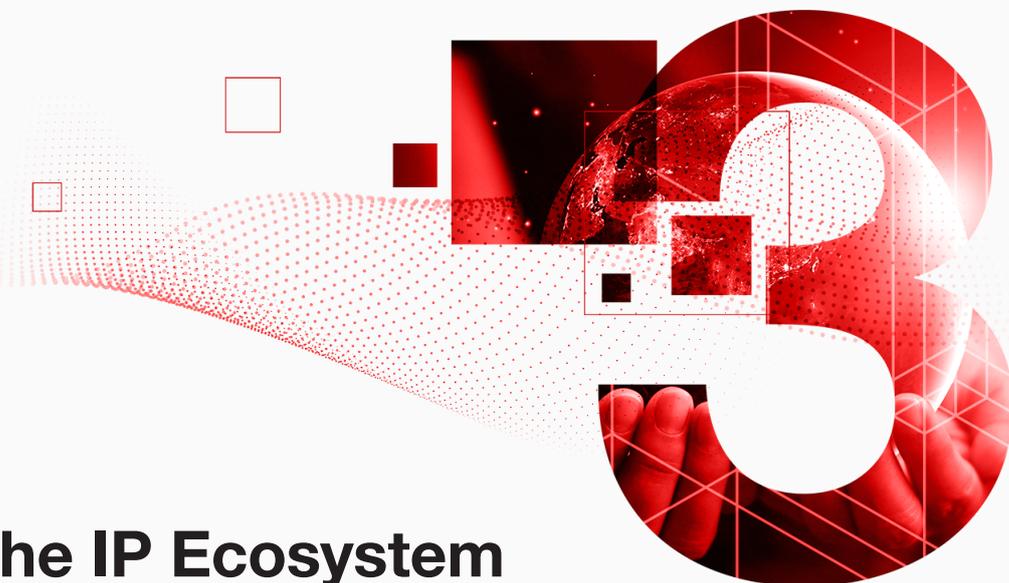
Under the current system of national WIPO Awards, 22 countries made a request for a total of 105 awards in 2020 and 93 awards were granted at the request of 20 countries in the first half of 2021. Preparations began for a new global WIPO Award program which will be founded on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the social impact of innovation, focusing on bringing to light those who, through their innovative and creative skills, contribute to economic and cultural progress to improve people’s lives. A pilot project to award innovative and creative SMEs will be deployed before the end of 2021.

WIPO publications were made available in increasing numbers of languages and formats, including Global Certified Accessible EPUB3, extending their reach to new audiences. This was seen in a 15 percent increase in downloads from the WIPO website to 3.7 million and a 92 percent rise in unique views on Google Books to 542,000. The *WIPO Magazine*, our flagship outreach publication exploring IP, innovation and creativity, is now published in eight languages. The magazine saw a 23.9 percent rise in readership over the reporting period.

Formerly known as the WIPO Library, the WIPO Knowledge Center pivoted its pre-COVID plans to hold physical exhibitions for the public to a fully online experience. The first virtual exhibition at WIPO, on the theme of artificial intelligence (AI), attracted some 5,000 visitors in its first two weeks.

In January 2021, we revamped the WIPO Briefings program, which attracted 1,155 virtual participants up to June.



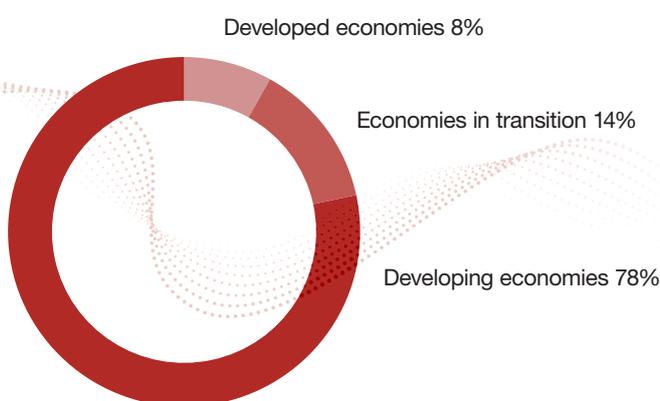


Photos: © Getty Images

Shaping the IP Ecosystem

WIPO's role as a convener of the global IP community has evolved rapidly in the face of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We adapted to provide new platforms for Member States to come together to shape the global IP ecosystem through the setting of norms and standards and the exchange of ideas and best practices. We also continued to strengthen our partnerships, to ensure that IP plays a part in helping us address complex global challenges.

Accessions to WIPO-administered treaties by type of economy 2020



Note: Classifications based on United Nations *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2020*.
Source: WIPO, 2021.

The normative framework

The normative framework creates a level playing field internationally for all IP stakeholders. Negotiations to conclude many of the 26 treaties administered by WIPO were driven by Member States in various standing committees and working groups, facilitated and supported by WIPO. These fora are needed to ensure that the international IP system remains balanced and effective – and that it keeps pace with change. Shifts to a responsive and creative approach to this important work began over the last year, with Member States showing flexibility in adopting new modalities for discussion and decision-making.

Accessions and ratifications to existing treaties

Despite the pandemic, Member States continued to join the WIPO-administered treaties in 2020, with 45 accessions and ratifications, demonstrating that the interest



in the international IP legal framework remains high. WIPO was particularly pleased to welcome a new Member State, the Republic of Nauru, bringing the total number of WIPO Member States to 193.

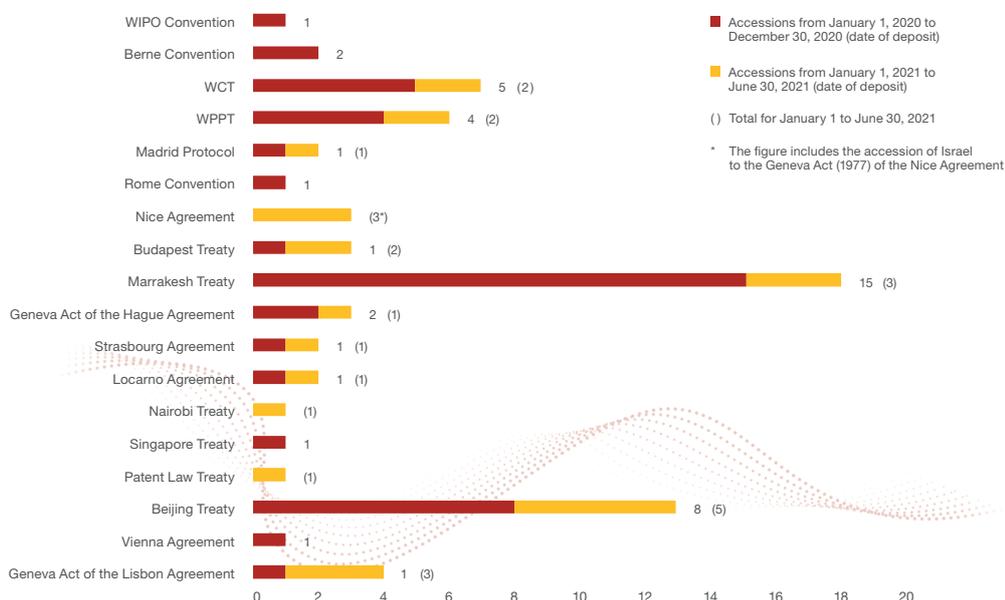
Out of the 26 treaties administered by the Organization, seven treaties now have over 100 Contracting Parties. A trend that continued from previous years is the strong presence of developing countries among the new contracting parties in 2020.

The Organization reached further milestones when two WIPO-administered treaties entered into force in the first months of 2020: the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications on February 26, 2020, and the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances on April 28, 2020.

Copyright treaties once again enjoyed high accession and ratification activity in 2020. The Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled garnered the greatest number of accessions and ratifications, followed by the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances, and the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT).

The rate of WIPO treaty accessions and ratifications has remained high during 2021, with 26 accessions from January 1 to June 30.

Accessions to WIPO-administered treaties in 2020 and in the first half of 2021



Source: WIPO, 2021.

Legislative and policy advice

WIPO continued to build awareness of and provide advice on WIPO-administered treaties, when requested. This included cooperation before joining treaties, as well as support after joining. These activities aim to: (i) enhance the capacities of Member States in shaping a balanced and effective IP ecosystem; and (ii) address the interplay between IP law and other areas of technology law, as well as between IP policies and other related policies, such as innovation, trade, biodiversity and health.



Normative and technical committees

Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP) and Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Committee for Technical Cooperation

The SCP continued its discussions on five main topics: (i) exceptions and limitations to patent rights; (ii) quality of patents, including opposition systems; (iii) patents and health; (iv) the confidentiality of communications between clients and their patent advisors; and (v) transfer of technology. The Committee continued to assemble information and best practices relating to national and regional laws, addressing policy, legal, practical and operational matters on all five topics.

The PCT Committee for Technical Cooperation held its 31st session and recommended that the Eurasian Patent Office (EAPO) be appointed as an International Searching Authority (ISA) and International Preliminary Examining Authority (IPEA) under the PCT.

Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications

The WIPO Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT) managed to meet for its 43rd and 44th sessions, held in hybrid mode. The two SCT sessions saw a strong engagement from all delegations and made progress in the areas of graphical user interface (GUI) design protection, temporary protection of industrial designs shown at international exhibitions, nation-brand protection and geographical indications.

Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR)

The SCCR met in hybrid, mainly remote sessions once in 2020 and once in 2021. Despite the limits on substantive in-person discussion, the sessions were positive and constructive. The SCCR was able to consider extensive reports and studies on topics ranging from limitations and exceptions, to music copyright in the digital environment, to the rights of theatre stage directors, and the artist's resale royalty right.

Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore

WIPO conducted intersessional activities to prepare participants for the resumption of substantive in-person negotiations in the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC). In August 2021, the IGC met and agreed to recommend to the WIPO General Assembly the renewal of its mandate for 2022–2023.

Operational facilities established under treaties

Budapest Treaty

The Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of Deposits of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure (Budapest Treaty) provides a practical solution when pursuing patents involving biological material. It expanded its geographical coverage in 2020 with the accession of three new States, bringing the number of Contracting States to 85. There are now 48 International Depositary Authorities (IDAs) operating under the Budapest Treaty in 26 countries, covering all continents. The number of microorganisms deposited under the Budapest Treaty remained stable in 2020 at 6,756, though there

was a significant decrease in the number of samples furnished by IDAs to authorized parties in 2020, with only 950 samples furnished during the year.

Protection of State emblems and emblems of international organizations (Article 6ter of the Paris Convention).

The cumulative number of emblems protected under Article 6ter of the Paris Convention stands now at 4,062. During 2020, WIPO communicated 89 State emblems and emblems of international organizations to the Paris Union and WTO members through an electronic publication in the Article 6ter Express database. The number of signs communicated in the first half of 2021 stood at 110.

Convening leading discussions on IP

WIPO is a forum of exchange of information and experiences, convening discussions around emerging IP issues. These activities help shape the IP ecosystem and build networks across the IP community.

The WIPO Conversation and IP and frontier technologies

The WIPO Conversation was established to provide stakeholders with a leading global and inclusive forum to engage with and facilitate discussion and knowledge-building on the fast-moving and complex field of AI and its impact on IP.

Three sessions of the WIPO Conversation have been held, attended by more than 2,000 registrants from over 100 countries, with more than 60 percent participation from developing and least-developed countries.

In 2021, the Organization broadened the scope of the WIPO Conversation to exploring the impact of frontier technologies on IP, such as big data, blockchain, Internet of Things and genetic engineering. These technologies are raising a wide-ranging set of questions around how they can enhance the existing systems for IP administration and how the IP system can continue to foster innovation and creation in the digital world where intangible assets are increasing in importance for everyone, everywhere. The Organization plans to continue holding two sessions of the WIPO Conversation annually.

WIPO continues to update and expand the IP and Frontier Technologies Clearing House to enable information sharing.

Building respect for IP

International dialogue and cooperation around building respect for IP is integral to a healthy IP ecosystem.

In this area, WIPO provided legislative and capacity-building assistance to Member States and intergovernmental organization (IGO) and non-governmental organization (NGO) stakeholders and convened online meetings and activities, including its Advisory Committee on Enforcement (ACE) Online Dialogue in September 2021 on New Developments in Combatting Counterfeiting and Piracy on the Internet.

WIPO welcomed new members to the WIPO ALERT database, which enables national agencies to share lists of copyright-infringing websites with the advertising sector. Six new Authorized Contributors and five Authorized Users from the advertising industry



joined in 2020, with a further two Contributors and three Users joining in the first half of 2021. Eleven Member States now participate in WIPO ALERT, which contains over 6,700 domains.

Engaging with the United Nations (UN), other IGOs and non-governmental stakeholders

To support Member States in their post-COVID 19 crisis recovery efforts, WIPO actively engaged in the work of the UN system and relevant IGOs.

Trilateral cooperation and multilateral coordination to meet global challenges

Particularly notable was our engagement in the trilateral cooperation on public health, IP and trade with the WHO and WTO. In June 2021, we met with the Directors General of the WHO and WTO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, to discuss salient health, trade and IP needs of our constituencies vis-à-vis the COVID-19 pandemic. We agreed to strengthen our trilateral cooperation to support global efforts to end the pandemic and develop sustainable solutions to public health challenges. We agreed to organize a series of technical capacity-building workshops, and to create a joint platform for trilateral technical assistance, offering a one-stop shop for assistance on access, IP and trade matters.

Connecting regularly with other sister agencies of the UN, including through our WIPO New York Office, we worked directly with multiple partners on topics involving IP and innovation, technology, climate change, the digital divide, health and the SDGs. Through contributions to IGO and major industry meetings and targeted inputs to reports, we coordinated our efforts and pooled expertise as part of our commitment to system-wide coordination and coherence.

”We will actively engage existing and new partners on cross-cutting international issues, strengthening understanding of the central role IP and innovation play in achieving sustainable solutions to global challenges.”

Multilateral debate on IP and competition policy

WIPO continued its work on IP and competition policy and strengthened its position in relevant multilateral fora. WIPO’s work focused on monitoring case law on IP and competition in developing and emerging economies, with an emphasis on the pharmaceutical industry, the issue of standard essential patents, and the possible use of IP data to define relevant markets in innovative industries. We continued to participate actively in the IP and Competition Interest Group, cooperating with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), WTO and the Organisation for Economic Co-



operation and Development (OECD). WIPO also strengthened its participation in the International Competition Network, notably in the Unilateral Conduct Working Group, by contributing to discussions on IP-related competition issues and bringing a pro-competitive IP perspective to the competition agencies community.

NGO partnerships to broaden our reach

Working with a wide range of stakeholders, WIPO participated in public-private programs that offer access to information, such as the Access to Specialized Patent Information (ASPI) program facilitating access to commercial patent databases, and the Access to Research for Development and Innovation (ARDI) program offering access to subscription-based scientific and technical journals.

As of July 2021, the Pat-INFORMED database contained 236 records (INN Sets) from 21 companies, and 21,029 patents in 653 patent families.

Participating authorized entities in the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) delivered over 90,000 accessible titles from the ABC Global Book Service catalogue to persons with print disabilities in 2020, up from 68,000 in 2019. The ABC also launched a new online course in the latest accessible book production techniques to deliver remote technical assistance and capacity building activities in developing and least developed countries.





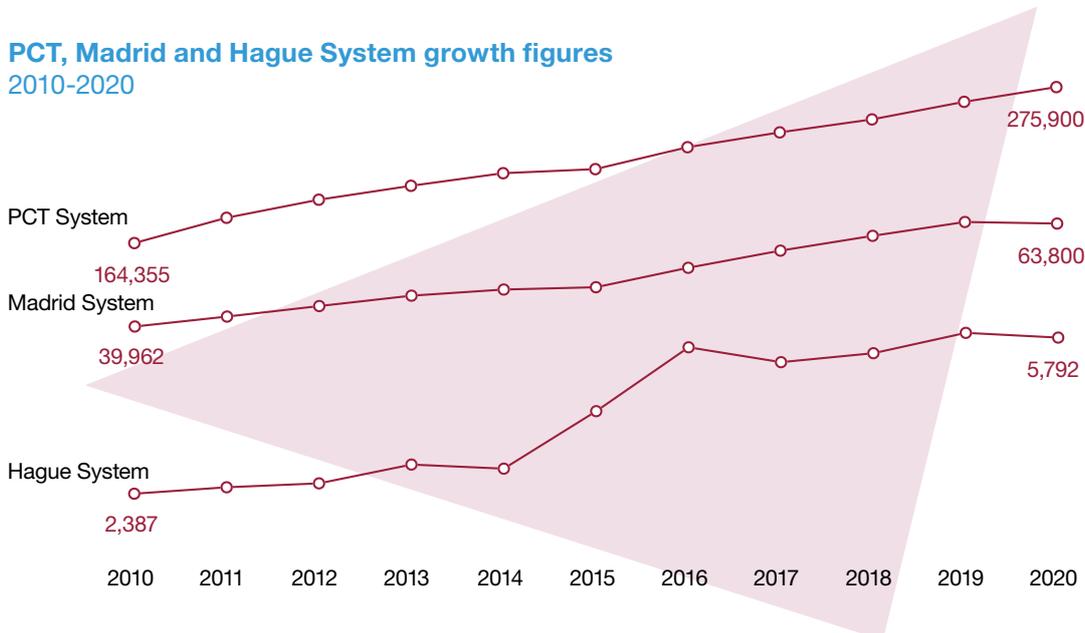
Photos: © Getty Images

High-Quality Services, Knowledge and Data

When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in early 2020, the key priorities for WIPO were to ensure that the Global IP Services continued to function and to support users in the challenges they were facing. Despite the considerable challenges in pivoting to remote working for the first time in WIPO's history, our personnel worked hard and creatively to adapt to this new way of working whilst ensuring that outputs and targets were maintained.

The digitalization of processes and communications was accelerated, and we also took steps to offer extensive legal relief to users struggling with deadlines. As a result of these measures, we were able to continue providing our users with our Global IP Services throughout the crisis.

PCT, Madrid and Hague System growth figures 2010-2020



Source: WIPO, 2021.

Global IP Protection Services

Work continued to create a smooth customer journey for users of the Global IP Services, whatever their profile. Development of the WIPO IP Portal continued with the integration of six additional WIPO applications and the migration of nine applications into the common look and feel. Other major milestones included the deployment of an enterprise-oriented data analytics platform, and the implementation of a web analytics

tracker in 39 IP Portal-integrated applications and for the WIPO website. New payment methods were also introduced for the online payment of PCT-related fees, with the go-live of ePay fully integrated within the WIPO IP Portal.

“The WIPO IP Portal will continue improving organizational convergence through a product-oriented and customer-centered approach that will create transformative opportunities for WIPO’s digitalization journey.”

The PCT System

The PCT system continued to be in very good health and performed consistently, delivering value to its users and developing positively. PCT users around the world also continued to communicate very high levels of satisfaction with the PCT system and its services.

In 2020, there was an increase in filings of 4 percent over 2019. While a slight decrease materialized during the first two months of 2021, by the end of the first quarter the figures were back in the low positive range and we expect moderate growth for the year.

The average cost of processing a PCT application by the International Bureau (IB) fell in 2020 and WIPO also experienced greater efficiency, consistency and validation of transfers of fees between PCT collecting and beneficiary offices due to the formal introduction and expansion of the WIPO Fee Transfer Service.

Productivity and quality of formalities examination continued to improve in 2020. With the same number of staff, the productivity of formalities examination increased by 8.4 percent, compared to 2019, and the aggregate quality index increased from 96.9 percent in 2019 to 98.0 percent in 2020. These trends are likely to continue in 2021.

Among the most significant information technology developments in 2020 was the continued growth in use and reach of the ePCT application filing and management platform: in 2020, 71 PCT receiving offices (ROs) accepted ePCT filings, and more than 16 percent of all PCT filings were filed using it.

PCT information technology (IT) services continued to be assured with 99.9 percent service availability of all major systems, despite significant resourcing challenges. Software modernization efforts continue to be delivered, resulting in greater system agility and reduced technical debt. Development of next-generation PCT processing automation has been initiated, initially focusing on RO/IB processing.



“We will further enhance the quality and value of the PCT by engaging with PCT Offices and Authorities in order to provide critically important services and data to our users, and seek to increase compliance with PCT time limits.”



The Madrid System

The impact of the global health crisis on Madrid filings turned out to be less severe than originally feared. By the end of 2020, Madrid filings only saw a modest decline of 0.6 percent compared to 2019, which contrasts with the much more severe drop of 14 percent witnessed in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008–2009. Since then, the filing rate has picked up quickly in the first part of 2021. Based on current trends, the filing target originally set in the 2020/21 Program and Budget prior to the crisis might very well be exceeded by the end of 2021.

In line with the Organization’s Medium-Term Strategic Plan, we have recently embarked upon a multi-year effort to unlock the potential of the Madrid System, particularly in terms of its use by small and medium-sized enterprises.

The geographical scope of the Madrid System has been widened by the arrival of two new members, Trinidad and Tobago and Pakistan, bringing the total number of countries covered to 124.

Apart from digitized communications with users and offices, good progress was also made in other aspects of the development of a new Madrid IT Platform. This includes the entry into production of a more robust and reliable notification back-end system, the release of a number of online forms improving the customer journey for the execution of certain transactions, the introduction of payment by credit card for new applications in more than 80 countries and the establishment of a blueprint for the modernization of the current IT system’s architecture.

The Madrid System has expanded its outreach and awareness activities held in virtual mode, allowing wider participation and reaching close to 20,000 participants in over 135 countries.

In 2020, the unit cost for processing Madrid applications and related service requests dropped and improvements in pendency were achieved for most Madrid transactions.

The Hague System

The Hague System showed some resilience in 2020 in the face of the pandemic, with applications filed dipping by only 1.7 percent. Furthermore, whilst after 14 years of growth, designs contained in applications declined by 15 percent, this phenomenon owed more to the growing proportion of filings coming from, and made for, jurisdictions with single design systems in place.

In contrast to this decline on the filing front, the numbers of international registrations and of designs registered both reached new records in 2020, underscoring the

Organization's successful migration to a remote-working environment. New records were also set in the numbers of designs renewed and office decisions received and processed. In the first half of 2021, applications filed and designs contained have both rebounded beyond expectations and, together with the number of office decisions, are well set to reach yet new record marks.

The Geneva Act welcomed two new members in 2020, namely Mexico and Suriname, the latter upgrading its status from being a 1960 Act member only. In the first half of 2021, Belarus deposited its instrument of accession to the Geneva Act, expanding total coverage to 92 countries.

The Hague Externalization Project, a user-focused project that aims at delivering sustainable, user-driven services and enhanced standardized integrations with offices, delivered its first features during the period under review. These included all data exchange with offices successfully upgraded to the latest data standard, the development of the new Hague web services (machine to machine), the end-to-end automation of office decisions, and the greater integration of the user electronic filing and managing environment with the WIPO IP Platform.

Customer relations and outreach activities have also benefited from further digitalization. A modern Hague System Customer Service was deployed in 2020, enabling granular data gathering and continuous monitoring of key performance indicators (KPIs), and work has begun on turning the dedicated website into a more dynamic and easy-to-navigate environment. Outreach and capacity-building activities continue to be held in virtual mode, allowing wider participation.

The Lisbon System

The Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement entered into force in February 2020. While its impact was inevitably delayed by the global health crisis, accession and filing rates picked up quickly. Based on current trends, the targets originally set in the 2020/21 Program and Budget prior to the crisis will be fully met and even largely exceeded. The first half of 2021 already saw a 500 percent increase in applications for international registrations. The total number of transactions is also projected to grow, with an expected increase in 2021 of 700 percent over average annual transactions since 2016.

The Lisbon System extends to 55 countries, 34 of which are covered by the Geneva Act. The new accessions have had an impact on the composition of the membership of the Lisbon Union, confirming the increasing interest among producers from developing countries in protecting and commercializing their origin products worldwide. The international registration of the geographical indication Kampot Pepper by Cambodia in October 2020 is a clear illustration of this trend.

The IT project eLisbon began development. It will deploy a modern management system for the Lisbon Registry and provide online services for users of the Lisbon System, such as filing and centralized management of portfolio.

Outreach and capacity building activities moved online, allowing wider participation. A series of public webinars on the Lisbon System was launched, in addition to targeted activities in response to specific WIPO Members' requests. In 2021, work began to overhaul the dedicated Lisbon website to make it more dynamic and user-friendly, and the Lisbon Newsletter was launched.



“We will further digitalize our services and consolidate WIPO’s position as the go-to place for the international registration of trademarks, industrial designs and geographical indications for the benefit of branding businesses worldwide.”



WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center

The Center’s mediation and arbitration caseload increased by 24 percent in 2020, with further growth in 2021, while the mediation settlement rate grew to 78 percent. Meetings and hearings were conducted remotely using WIPO tools, including a new WIPO Checklist for online proceedings.

As brand owners further shifted their business to online channels, they stepped up their brand enforcement on the Internet. To counter the growth of counterfeiting, phishing and other online trademark abuse in the pandemic, right holders in 2020 filed 4,204 cases with the Center under the WIPO-initiated Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) – an increase of 14 percent over the caseload in 2019, with growth continuing in 2021. With the addition in 2021 of the .SA and السعودية (Saudi Arabia) domains, the number of country code top-level domains for which WIPO provides dispute resolution services grew to 79 registries in all regions. The Center continued its active policy engagement to safeguard rights protection in the evolving domain name space.

Enhancing service quality, communication and customer feedback gathering

WIPO Contact Center

Customer experience was further improved through various initiatives, including the establishment of the WIPO Contact Center, the implementation of a live chat service and the organization-wide deployment of a system to automatically channel calls to customer service teams.

A Customer Satisfaction Index for both the PCT and the Madrid system was created by incorporating a WIPO customer satisfaction framework in the respective biennial surveys, enabling consistent reporting, comparability of data and common interpretation of data through the IP services.

A new survey platform was deployed to support different mechanisms for customer insight data collection and to measure the impact of WIPO’s activities. The new platform contributes to the streamlining and alignment of customer insight data.

Building the IP knowledge base

WIPO generates, collates and curates IP data to create information and knowledge products that are topical, relevant and accessible to a wide range of stakeholders.



IP statistics and global databases

IP statistics continue to be a key performance metric for a large variety of decision-makers. With the generous support of Member States, we have continuously expanded the geographical coverage of our statistics, which are freely available through the IP Statistics Data Center, and the key trends are reported in our major statistical reports, World IP Indicators and the Yearly Reviews of the PCT, Madrid and Hague Systems.

Work has continued to improve the geographical coverage and completeness of the WIPO Global Databases. New national patent collections have been added to PATENTSCOPE, as well as searchable descriptions and claims, bringing the total number of national and regional patent collections to 73. Work has also started to include open access non-patent literature documents to PATENTSCOPE with the addition of almost 200,000 documents from Wikipedia and from the publisher Nature. Five new national trademark collections representing more than 2 million new records were added to the Global Brand Database, while five national industrial designs collections were added to the Global Design Database.

A number of functional improvements were made to the databases. PATENTSCOPE was upgraded to include the possibility to search Markush structures, making this expert functionality available for free online to universities, SMEs and IP offices for the first time. An improved version of image similarity search for the Global Brand Database has been deployed, improving the precision (relevancy) and recall (completeness) of searches for mixed trademarks logos containing both text and figurative elements.

“We’re working to provide a better environment, built around the needs of the customer, to improve access to knowledge and data for the benefit of all.”

Flagship knowledge products

The *Global Innovation Index (GII)* takes the pulse of the latest innovation trends worldwide and ranks the innovation ecosystem performance of 132 economies. The 2021 edition assesses how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected global innovation performance.

Many Member States have embraced the *GII* to gain insight into the strengths and weaknesses of their national innovation systems. Based on the *GII*, governments have brought together the various national stakeholders that make up an innovation system with a view to strengthening and refining the policy framework that promotes a vibrant innovation economy.

Innovations in technology can help grow economies and have the potential to make a huge impact on individual lives. In the area of assistive technology, advances in technology can affect the 1 billion people living with physical or cognitive impairments who need assistive technologies to be more independent and interact fully with the world. *WIPO Technology Trends: Assistive Technologies* was published in March 2021, focusing on trends in patenting in this area and how close these new technologies are to

coming to market. The publication was accompanied by an interactive platform showing the technology readiness, number of patents, ease of adoption and expected impact on assistive technologies.

IP-based platforms and tools to address global challenges

WIPO hosts a number of platforms and tools in collaboration with civil society, universities and research organizations, and the private sector, which are important forums for knowledge transfer and technology adaptation.

WIPO GREEN

The WIPO GREEN technology exchange platform publicizes nearly 200 needs from 91 countries worldwide and offers more than 6,000 environment-friendly technologies addressing climate change, environmental and food-security challenges in seven categories of green technology.

WIPO GREEN's transformation into a green business intelligence hub is underway, with new database architecture, improved and AI-based search functions, new filter functions, saved searches, bookmarks, user dashboard, auto-matching, knowledge material, and relevant PCT listings from PATENTSCOPE. It serves the public and over 1,800 registered users from 133 countries, including SMEs, academia and multinational companies.

WIPO GREEN has 127 partners – 31 of whom are in Japan, through the efforts of the WIPO Japan Office – and the network continues to grow. Acceleration projects constitute its core means of engagement. It launched an acceleration project in Indonesia to limit greenhouse gas emissions from palm oil mill waste. To date, 20 mills and 41 technology providers representing 10 different technologies have been contacted. Government of Japan funding enabled WIPO GREEN to enhance its climate-smart agriculture acceleration project (launched in 2019) in Latin America.

WIPO Re:Search

WIPO Re:Search celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2021. This public–private consortium has grown from an initial 30 members to an international network of 155 organizations spanning 45 countries on six continents. Its membership includes eight of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, plus academic and research institutions – all dedicated to sharing IP to advance science on neglected tropical diseases, malaria, and tuberculosis. Fifty-five scientific collaboration agreements fostered by WIPO Re:Search are ongoing and 10 are advancing through key early-stage research and development (R&D) milestones.





Photos: © Getty Images

IP for Growth and Sustainable Development

IP is a powerful tool for growth and sustainable development, and acts as a catalyst for job creation, economic development and social vibrancy. By shifting the focus from the legal aspects of IP to its economic potential, WIPO is supporting national innovation and creative ecosystems that in turn drive growth and sustainable development.

The positive relationship between innovation and development

● Performing above expectations for level of development



Source: WIPO, *Global Innovation Index 2021*.



Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP)

Through WIPO's development and capacity-building programs and activities, WIPO directly or indirectly supports the SDGs, many of which depend on the development and diffusion of innovative technologies.

The CDIP is the Member State forum which guides our development work, as do the recommendations of the Development Agenda (DA). The DA project teams adopted a flexible approach and designed mitigation plans in response to global restrictions. Progress was registered with respect to the crosscutting project Tools for Successful DA Project Proposals and Registration of the Collective Marks of Local Enterprises as a Cross-Cutting Economic Development Issue, which is being implemented in Bolivia, Brazil, Tunisia and the Philippines.

Leveraging IP to support growth and development

Through its regional and external office support structure – strengthened after the internal reorganization – WIPO engaged with Member States at the regional and national level. There was strong focus on enhancing horizontal work among the sectors during the reporting period, with regular sector-to-sector working meetings. and defining, where required, operating procedures to clarify roles and to seize opportunities for mandate implementation.

Regional and national partnerships

The regional and external offices were able to expand their work to more actors in IP ecosystems and deepen their impact via partnerships. One lesson from the past year is that while virtual working can extend the reach of activities, physical presence is often required to develop the relationships that often lead to partnerships, and in this our network of external offices has been important.

For example, engagement with universities and research institutions was strengthened in the Arab and Latin American and Caribbean Regions, providing training and assisting them in the development of IP policies and technology transfer practices and infrastructure in order to better harvest and use the IP which they create. Similarly, the WIPO Algeria Office (WAO) forged connections with universities and is supporting their development of IP policies.

WIPO launched an initiative, in cooperation with the Eurasian Patent Organization, to create a dialogue with technoparks in Central Asian, Caucasus and Eastern European Countries around their role in supporting SMEs, universities and research institutions in their use of IP. A pilot project began development, targeting selected think-tanks in the Arab Region, sensitizing them to the impact of IP on innovation and creativity and identifying the best practices for the integration of IP into their work. The WIPO Brazil Office reached out to partners in the agri-business sector, in view of its significance to the national economy and the potential for branding and geographical indications to promote growth.

We also continued to promote and expand the use of the Global IP Services, including through roving webinars which promoted the use of the services to around 2,000 participants. The WIPO Office in China (WOC) took advantage of the easing of pandemic restrictions to participate in person in the numerous mega events held in China, reaching thousands of users and potential users. Meanwhile, the WIPO Japan Office (WJO), as well as the WOC, engaged with individual businesses, which are very large users of the Global IP Services, to provide tailored advice and feedback in their languages.

The co-location in the WIPO Singapore Office (WSO) of a member of the Industrial Property Office Business Solutions Division (IPOBSD) covering Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asian countries continued to provide a good example of how our presence in the field can be leveraged to deepen and extend our coverage in countries and regions.

The convening power of WIPO's geographic divisions continued to be fully utilized through the organization of heads of IP office meetings. These fora, held in the Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Arab Regions, not only provided WIPO with an excellent way of coordinating with IP offices across the breadth of our cooperation with them, but also provided a platform for IP offices to learn from and share experiences with each other. The meetings were tailored to address specific issues of interest to heads of IP offices, such as, in Asia, financial management, and in the Pacific, branding and geographical indications.

Developing IP ecosystems

Over the last year, we have begun to refocus development strategies in close cooperation with the Member States so that they are evidence based and impact driven.

“Through future collaboration across WIPO and with our external partners, we will provide a more strategic approach to the implementation of policies, guidelines and recommendations by Member States to strengthen their national IP systems.”

National IP policies and strategies

After a stocktaking exercise, and with a view to strengthening project design and sustainability, WIPO developed guidelines for the development of national IP strategies in support of effective IP ecosystems. The guidelines emphasize the criticality of high-level support in Member States, the importance of local needs in driving developments, solid preparatory work, clear articulation of sought-after outcomes and a focus on implementation.

In a related vein, the reporting period also witnessed the continuation of a shift towards both more holistic and targeted policy advice support. For example, we worked with Mexico to develop policy specifically focused on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Going forward, the idea is to assist Member States look at IP and innovation policies and strategies from an ecosystem perspective through the further development of in-house expertise on these matters.





IP dispute resolution

An important component of any IP ecosystem, IP disputes can be resolved through the courts or through alternative mechanisms, such as arbitration and mediation.

As part of its tailored services for specific sectors, the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center updated its guidance for disputes concerning fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory (FRAND) terms licensing for standard-essential patents; offered new facilities for disputes involving SMEs; and developed options to facilitate contract negotiation and dispute resolution in the life sciences sector.

To assist national judiciaries, the Center expanded its collaboration with IP authorities and courts to promote and adopt alternative dispute resolution (ADR) options, with eight new collaborations concluded for a total of 53 covered Member State entities.

At the same time, the WIPO Judicial Institute continued its work to build judicial capacity in the adjudication of IP disputes. The annual WIPO IP Judges Forum was conducted in a virtual format in 2020, extending its reach to over 400 judges from 89 jurisdictions and cementing its stature as the premier global venue for judicial exchange. A series of WIPO Webinars for Judges was also launched to enable continued global engagement throughout the year.

WIPO has increased the availability of, and access to, free-of-charge information on judiciaries and IP, as well as resources for all IP stakeholders. The WIPO Lex database now holds a total of 16,187 laws across 199 jurisdictions. WIPO Lex Judgments was launched in 2020, providing access to leading judicial decisions in IP from around the world, with dynamic crossreferencing, powerful search functionality, machine translation support, and information on national judicial systems. It includes nearly 800 decisions from 13 countries and one regional jurisdiction.

IP knowledge and skills

The global restrictions on travel and in-person meetings generated a huge demand for IP education and training, especially through distance learning. The WIPO Academy was able to respond to that demand thanks to its previous investments in its eLearning Center.

The need to adapt from in-person education and training to online teaching environments impacted on the Academy's higher education programs, summer schools, and the national IP Training Institution projects. Curricula and programs were adapted for online teaching, enabling continuity in the higher education services offered by the Academy.

The WIPO Academy remained the global leader in providing IP education and training worldwide. Over the last year, it focused on IP skills-building, with a particular emphasis on users of the IP system: the private sector, SMEs and entrepreneurs. All of the Academy's courses were reviewed and adapted to help achieve this. This new focus led to a shift in the balance of the courses offered from traditional lectures to more interactive sessions highlighting areas such as skills-building for IP licensing and negotiation, and technology transfer. The Academy has also continued its process of reviewing and updating its courses to ensure that they remain relevant and valued by participants.

The Academy also gave greater focus to IP education for young people. The Academy's IP4Youth&Teachers Service, together with its partners, is providing a hub of resources and advisory services to Ministries of Education, certification courses, workshops,

sub-regional seminars for teachers, an upcoming competition for youth and teachers, in addition to roundtables for policymakers. These achievements have relied heavily on the support and cooperation of partners, in particular, the governments of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Reaching all IP stakeholders

WIPO has an important role in supporting a wide range of stakeholders within national innovation and creative ecosystems. The last year has seen concerted efforts to extend our engagement to new and underserved groups.

Innovators and SMEs

Since October 2020, there has been a new focus on developing tools and materials that support innovators and businesses in using the IP system effectively.

The IP self-assessment tool WIPO IP Diagnostics, a beta version of which was made available in June 2020, was translated and made available in all six UN languages. In addition, to support young entrepreneurs and startups a simple easy-to-read guide on IP for startups, *Enterprising Ideas*, was completed and launched.

Work also began on projects to support SMEs via IP offices and other intermediaries. The first is a program of assistance for IP offices wanting to help SMEs, already in motion in the Central European and Baltic States (CEBS) countries, and the second is a project to integrate IP services into the services for SMEs provided by intermediary institutions.

Given the increasing interest of Member States in how IP may be used to access finance and consequently issues related to the valuation of IP, we launched a project to understand the different practices of countries in this regard with the expectation of deriving good practices to be scaled up.

We also began to reach out to innovative companies to provide them with IP management support. The first example was completed in collaboration with WIPO GREEN, where the IP strategies of seven green technology companies were analyzed and support provided to improve their use of the IP system in their business strategies.

In the area of patenting assistance, WIPO's Patent Drafting Program focuses on the development of practical patent drafting skills where participants are guided by experienced patent professionals. In 2020, more than 280 participants were trained through the program.

The Inventor Assistance Program (IAP) offers inventors the support of an experienced patent professional in their own country and in selected jurisdictions at no cost. In 2020, Peru became the sixth country to participate in the IAP, joining the ranks of Colombia, Ecuador, Morocco, South Africa and the Philippines. Also in 2020 the IAP Online Platform was launched. By the end of 2020, more than 100 inventors had benefited from the Program.

The Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) program supports access to technological information found in patent documents and scientific and technical publications, and provides assistance and advice on IP management and commercialization. There are currently 80 national TISC networks comprising over 1,250 individual TISCs in host institutions, which received an estimated 1.4 million inquiries in



2020. Training and capacity-building activities shifted from traditional onsite to digital online delivery.

Working in collaboration with the regional divisions of WIPO, TISC service-level agreements are being finalized with Kazakhstan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkmenistan. Nationally, the WIPO Office in the Russian Federation played an important role in working with the Russian TISC association, IP office and chambers of commerce and industry to improve what the existing 170 centers in the country can offer to innovators.

TISC networks benefited from the launch of the WIPO INSPIRE platform at the end of 2020. It is a hub for information and knowledge on patent databases, patent registers, patent analytics and technology transfer that integrates various digital products and tools, such as the eTISC platform and Patent Register Portal.

Another key resource for innovators and businesses was the publication of the second report in the *WIPO Technology Trends* series, focusing on trends in innovation in assistive technology to support people with functional limitations, and its accompanying interactive platform showing the technology readiness, number of patents, ease of adoption and expected impact on assistive technologies. Guides on identifying and using inventions in the public domain were also published in all six UN languages, making these publications available to a wider range of users of the TISCs.

Women and young people

Healthy innovation and creativity ecosystems need to embrace and empower everyone. This can only be achieved by prioritizing women and youth.

Dedicated programs for women were developed over the last year, such as the Latin American Network on IP and Gender, which focuses on working together to develop and launch initiatives to engage women more in IP ecosystems, created in partnership with national IP offices. The specific “sharing sessions” on Women and IP held under the auspices of the CDIP are also notable. Other examples of nation-focused and practical activities aiming to empower women to use IP include cooperation with a community-based NGO in Uganda to provide IP training for women entrepreneurs from rural and suburban areas, and the support and mentoring of women entrepreneurs in obtaining trademark registration in areas such as fashion, tea, wine production, confectionary and fruit-processing sectors. We are grateful to the Swedish IP office and development agency for its support for the Advanced International Training Program on IP for Least Developed Countries from which these successful activities emerged.

Meanwhile, the youth populations in all countries demand attention – and represent a great opportunity. In 2021, WIPO initiated a youth engagement program and began mapping WIPO’s existing and planned youth-focused activities, to inform development of an organization-wide strategy, and a youth focal point has been appointed to engage with regional divisions and external offices to help craft additional dedicated programs in this area. An example is the WIPO Nigeria Office (WNO), which partnered with the Nigerian Government, the IP registries and relevant local associations to hold a national essay competition in IP for students from 50 educational institutions across the country.

Academic institutions

To support Member States and their academic institutions in leveraging their IP for development and growth, WIPO continued to provide assistance in developing national models of IP and to support individual universities and R&D institutions to draft their



institutional IP policies, through online mentoring and coaching sessions using the WIPO IP Toolkit for Universities and R&D Institutions as a template and guidelines.

Bringing together good practices, the Database of IP Policies for Universities continued to be updated and now holds 740 institutional policies from 75 countries worldwide, searchable by keyword, as well as national models of IP policies created on the basis of the WIPO IP Toolkit.

WIPO also supported the development of national IP associations and Regional Technology Transfer Networks, to facilitate exchange of best practices, peer review and access to information by technology managers from academic institutions in the Baltic States.

Indigenous peoples and local communities

WIPO's work on genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions featured: (i) a pivot to virtual training, mentoring and matchmaking programs for officials, indigenous peoples and local communities, scientists and other beneficiaries; (ii) the rapid development of materials on technological developments in the life sciences related to genetic resources and genetic data; (iii) special initiatives enabling indigenous peoples and local communities to remain engaged in WIPO's work; and (iv) the launch of an innovative activity for youth.

In cooperation with the International Trademark Association, WIPO strengthened the Indigenous and Local Community Entrepreneurship Program that currently benefits 60 women entrepreneurs. This program's training webinars have reached up to 2,000 participants. The WIPO Creative Heritage Project resumed, enabling indigenous peoples and local communities to leverage IP rights in their digitized cultural heritage.

On genetic resources and genetic data, WIPO launched a new distance learning course flanked by an interactive online mentoring and matchmaking platform, and in collaboration with the Swedish IP Office we continued with an international training program for participants from 10 Asian and African countries on the use of IP systems and genetic resources and data in relation to food security, biodiversity, health and climate change. We also updated our core publication in this area, *Key Questions on Patent Disclosure Requirements for Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge*.

To keep connected with indigenous peoples and local communities in the absence of in-person meetings, WIPO ran an online quiz, briefings and a short-story competition, and continued with translation of core materials and the popular Yakuanoi animation into indigenous languages. We also launched a photography competition for indigenous peoples and local communities, targeted at young people, on the theme of climate change and climate action.

The Lisbon Registry continued to work closely with local communities to develop, protect and commercialize their geographical indications, including the Cambodian producers of Koh Trung Pomelo and Kampot Sea Salt, the Senegalese producers of Madd de Casamance¹ and the Togolese producers of Riz de Kovié. The implementation of these field projects on geographical indications is supported by the WIPO Funds-in-Trust (FIT) China, as well as external partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and UNCTAD.

1 <https://www.wipo.int/ipadvantage/en/details.jsp?id=11582>





Creators

During 2020, 1,900 stakeholders participated in WIPO technical assistance programs and projects on copyright and related rights in 56 developing countries and least-developed countries, and one regional organization. In the first half of 2021, new types of technical assistance programs were designed and delivered to reach new audiences, including women creators, young entrepreneurs, managers of creative start-up companies, in addition to national copyright institutions. The revised approach allowed us to reach 74 countries, one regional organization and 1,665 participants in total.

In the area of copyright management, nine new copyright management organizations (CMOs) started using WIPO Connect in 2020, and six more in the first half of 2021. This brings the total number to 21, representing a 200 percent increase since January 2020.

A new initiative was launched in 2020, WIPO for Creators, a public-private partnership with the Music Rights Awareness Foundation. Its objective is to raise awareness about creators' rights and related processes and ensure recognition and fair reward for all creators regardless of their geographical, cultural or economic conditions.

“We will nurture the copyright ecosystem to be the catalyst for a dynamic and inclusive creative economy, for the benefit of all.”

Enhancing IP infrastructure

WIPO has been providing core IP management systems to IP offices in developing and least-developed countries for nearly 20 years. Today, 90 IP offices rely on systems provided by WIPO for reception, processing, examination, publication and management of IP rights. These offices are managing 15 million IP rights using WIPO-provided systems, and many of them have been fully digitized and integrated into global IP systems.

Over the last year, WIPO has improved the provision of services and platforms to IP offices, so that they can increasingly offer their users modern and efficient IP services.

AI applications

The Advanced Technology Applications Center (ATAC) keeps improving its internally developed AI tools for IP offices and other users. To assist with access to multilingual content, WIPO Translate, the translation tool for patent documents, has new improved language models, notably for texts in Korean, Italian and Finnish, while WIPO's Speech2Text now covers Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. The tool is available on demand to produce transcriptions for any conference or meeting. The PATENTSCOPE OCR tool, which enables the production of high-quality full texts for patent publications in an efficient manner using proofreaders, has been upgraded to cover the Arabic language and is available to interested IP offices.

International classifications and standards

The international classifications organize information concerning inventions, trademarks and industrial designs into indexed, manageable structures for easy retrieval. The classifications keep pace with the recent acceleration of technologies and product life cycles through continual modifications. Member States adopted 2,478 modifications for International Patent Classification 2022.01, including 1,570 new subdivisions, through intensified discussions on the IPC Eforum, while 548 modifications to the 2021 version of the 11th edition Nice Classification for Goods and Services were adopted, including 442 new entries for the 2022 version, and 111 modifications to the ninth edition of the Vienna Classification.

The combination of a hybrid meeting and two rounds of “evoting” (pre- and post-session voting) enabled the Committee of Nice Union to tackle the enormous number of pending proposals utilizing the Nice Classification Revision Management Solution (NCLRMS). It was also agreed that the revision period for new editions for Nice Classification and the interval of revision sessions for Vienna Classification would be shortened to three years.

WIPO Standards are at the heart of digital transformations happening in the IP community around the world. At the eighth session of the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS), Member States adopted four new standards, which are: (i) ST.90 on the Web Application Programming Interface (API); (ii) ST.69 on multimedia marks; (iii) ST.61 on trademark legal status data; and (iv) ST.88 on electronic representations of industrial designs. The CWS also approved the revisions of three existing standards, including ST.26, which helps applicants prepare biological sequence listings in a common XML format. In close collaboration with IP offices and end users, WIPO developed the WIPO Sequence Suite, a software application for applicants and IP offices that supports the implementation of ST.26. The first trial version was released in November 2020.



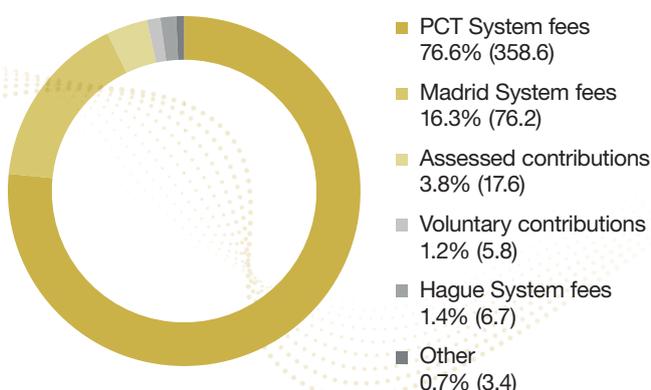
Empowering Our People and Managing Our Resources



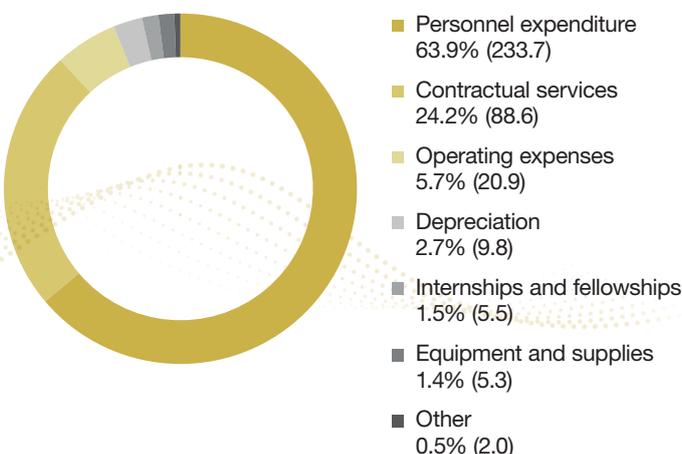
Photos: © Getty Images

Faced with the unanticipated and unprecedented situation of the current global health crisis, the past year has been challenging for the Organization and its staff as a whole. Throughout this period, WIPO has led its staff through crisis management, remote working, risk handling, redeployment of the workforce, safety and wellbeing – putting the “human” back into human resources (HR). While the impact on our way of working was dramatic, the measurable impact on financial performance was more limited and the financial situation of the Organization continues to be sound and stable.

Composition of 2020 revenue



Composition of 2020 expenses



Note: Figures are expressed in millions of Swiss francs.
Source: WIPO, 2021.

Sound and prudent financial and performance management

As the guardian of WIPO's operating platform, the overall objective of administrative support services is to ensure the provision of the foundation for the delivery of results² across the Organization in a highly digitized and secure manner.

The favorable position at the end of 2020 results from the continued demand for the fee-paying services of the Organization, which account for 94 percent of total revenue, as well as from the prudent approach taken towards budgeting and financial management. Because the Organization derives its revenue from market-based services, it is directly exposed to the health of the world economy. As uncertainties continue to cloud the global economic outlook, the continuation of our current cautious and prudent approach is justified.

The financial result for the year 2020 was a surplus of CHF 135.9 million. Revenue was CHF 468.3 million, an increase of CHF 11.2 million or 2.5 percent compared to 2019. Expenditure was CHF 365.8 million, a decrease of CHF 35.6 million compared to 2019. Investment gains of CHF 33.4 million were recognized.

The generation of robust surpluses is important for the financial health of the Organization. After the closure of an accounting period, any recorded surplus passes into the reserves of the Organization. The surpluses of recent years, in the form of reserves, have been used for several purposes. First, they have been used for capital projects approved by the Member States in accordance with the Capital Master Plan. These capital projects mainly cover investment in IT systems to ensure the continued competitiveness of the Global IP Systems and the enhanced delivery of the services of the Organization in general; the maintenance of the buildings and the campus; and safety and security. Second, the surpluses have contributed to increasing the level of liquidity in the reserves or net assets of the Organization, which would need to be relied upon in the event of a strong downturn in the global economy. Third, the surpluses have enabled the Organization to fund long-term liabilities such as after-service health insurance.

The Organization's net assets increased from CHF 364.2 million in 2019 to CHF 387.1 million by December 31, 2020. The net assets have nearly doubled since 2010.

Over the past year, despite the complexities and economic uncertainties, the administrative support services successfully underpinned the implementation of the Organization's program of work. CHF 2.3 million were devoted to digitalization, facilitating a smooth transition to working from home so that staff were at 90 percent productivity within three weeks of the lockdown. There was a reduction in travel costs of more than CHF 12 million compared to 2019 while savings of CHF 4.9 million were made from procurement negotiations and efficiencies, with 69 percent of procurement expenditure on long-term agreements and 18 percent on UN cooperation. Investments of CHF 117 million were made in 2020. Core and strategic cash investments recorded positive returns and operating cash assets were safeguarded from negative interest charges. Furthermore, active cash planning enabled the Organization to invest an additional CHF 117 million in 2020.



² Data quoted in this section refer to 2020, unless specified otherwise.



Modernizing the operating environment

To support the shift to an operating environment and services that are modern, digitally enabled, secure and sustainable, WIPO has introduced a new strategic framework and has begun restructuring internally.

Reform of WIPO's strategic framework and internal structure

In the context of refocusing Organizational priorities and further strengthening the results-based management approach, a simpler and streamlined strategic framework was established. Developed in a coordinated manner with a revamped budgeting process for the 2022/23 biennium, the key principles of the framework included:

- The definition of the four Strategic Pillars underpinning the Organization's Vision and Mission, dynamically interconnected and supported by the Foundation (represented in the Strategy House);
- Replacing the 31 Programs with a simpler view of eight sectors to enhance transparency and accountability;
- Cascading the Strategic Pillars and the Foundation into 16 Expected Results (compared with 38 in 2020/21);
- Streamlining of measurements of success into 76 KPIs (versus 240 in 2020/21); and
- Enhancing the Organization's approach to risks with a refined definition of 23 Organization and Sector Risks (in comparison to 53 Program-level Risks in 2020/21).

The first changes to the internal structure and appointment of the eight Sector Leads came into play from March 1, 2021, while the Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2022–2026 was noted by the Program and Budget Committee at its 32nd Session in July 2021.

Digital transformation

Embracing opportunities emerging from the “new normal” have been instrumental in accelerating WIPO's digital transformation. Steps along the digital journey are contributing to a more efficient and effective work environment for the Secretariat.

We have delivered customer-centric tools and platforms, servicing both internal and external customers, which include the initiation of the second-generation Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) (cloud-based) project, fortifying a robust and secure ecosystem of enterprise applications underpinning WIPO's operations.

Existing processes have been streamlined through the automation of invoicing, three-way matching, a new cloud-based treasury management system, and the deployment of an esourcing tool, contributing to reduce transactional workload and shift staff focus to more value-adding activities.

Transitioning to zero paper usage across the Organization, we began the move to enotifications for Global IP Services, resulting in reduced needs for printing and reduced mailing costs. PCT and Madrid postage reduced by 73 percent and 55 percent respectively in the 2022/23 Program and Budget in comparison to 2020/21.

The deployment of Enterprise Content Management (ECM) projects supported knowledge and record management processes and more inclusive and transparent information sharing, enabling cross-sector collaboration. New digital correspondence

processes were implemented to replace physical files and speed up the internal memorandum approval process and management of official correspondence, using electronic signatures for select external documents. Migration of email to the cloud and the introduction of Office 365 were successfully implemented.

Language and conference services

WIPO's language services continued to underpin its commitment to support its multilingual and diverse Member States and staff. A revised Language Policy was developed and proposed to Member States, centered on an impact-based strategic approach to leverage opportunities from modern translation technologies.

In line with its strategy of quality at source to ensure effective language services and linguistic quality, improvements to the translation management workflow enhanced collaboration and agility of translation services, resulting in the translation of 15.59 million words.

WIPO's conference services pivoted entirely from physical to virtual/hybrid conferencing models, successfully implementing all the necessary tools, procedures, logistics, security and other supporting services. This enabled an intensive calendar of meetings to resume smoothly from the second half of 2020, including successful Program and Budget Committee (PBC) and Assemblies meetings in hybrid format, with participants reporting 92 percent satisfaction. High priority was given to supporting over 6,000 delegates through the change to facilitate their active remote participation from every geographical region, including through more than 1,300 interpreter-days.

Safety and security

WIPO continued to support the safe and secure delivery of its mandate during the pandemic, both in terms of physical security and cybersecurity, with no major incidents.

A next-generation Information Security Strategy was developed. The strategy builds on existing capabilities and proactively addresses cybersecurity risks, allowing for the early detection and response to cyber incidents, to better prepare the Organization to recover from crises quickly, and reducing impact to business operations.

Adapting to the pandemic and a new corporate culture

WIPO staff responded with agility and resilience to a period of unprecedented change as we moved to remote work, fast-tracking progress towards the new administration's objective of a dynamic corporate culture where staff are empowered to work effectively, collaboratively and innovatively.

HR management

From the outset of the pandemic, WIPO adapted and streamlined many of its work processes to ensure continued delivery of services to employees and Member States. With respect to our workforce, we temporarily implemented measures and derogations to a number of policies and procedures to facilitate management in crisis mode. An array of new HR digital tools, processes and procedures were made available to staff, including leave and flexible working arrangements dashboards and a variety of remote learning options. Training offers had to be progressively adapted to the exclusively virtual environment, taking into account shorter attention spans through focused content and shorter sessions.



In response to the impact of the pandemic on the psychosocial aspects and mental health of employees, and especially during the times of mandatory teleworking and social isolation, the Medical Unit followed up on health matters and the Staff Counselor provided psychosocial support services to individuals. Training was also offered to staff at large, through dedicated intranet pages and thematic materials on psychosocial wellbeing.

We remain committed to recruiting diverse and qualified staff of the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity, supported by enhanced recruitment outreach programs and initiatives in partnership with Member States.

Changing culture

The global health crisis has highlighted the need for adaptability and resilience in WIPO's workforce, and the importance of people in the new normal. For the new administration, this change in WIPO culture is a key priority. As part of the preparatory work to be undertaken by the Organization as we make a fundamental shift in culture, an engagement survey will be conducted during the last quarter of 2021 and will be carried out every two years. The Human Resources Management Department (HRMD) will focus on a new training framework, which will include links to career development and internal mobility. Additionally, we will introduce diversity and inclusion initiatives to create an environment that promotes trust and engagement.



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