

## Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

**Twelfth Session**  
**Geneva, September 16 to 19, 2024**

### RECOMMENDATIONS ON BLOCKCHAIN APPLICATIONS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM BY THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

*Document prepared by the International Bureau*

#### SUMMARY

1. This document explains the Recommendations on Blockchain Applications in the United Nations system by the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System (JIU). The International Bureau shares its implementation status of those Recommendations and invites the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) to encourage the Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) to consider ‘Recommendation 6’ and implement it where applicable.

#### BACKGROUND

2. JIU published in 2020 its report “[Blockchain applications in the United Nations system: towards a state of readiness](#)”. JIU says that “[t]he report intends to provide a contribution to the collective efforts triggered by recent overarching strategies on new technologies and the future of work, which address the issue of innovation and the use of digital technologies by the United Nations system in an action-oriented approach.” The report includes eight formal recommendations addressed to participating United Nations system organizations, in which JIU proposes guidance for how to integrate blockchain use into the overall innovation strategies and policies; how to support knowledge sharing and capacity building; and risk management.

#### RELEVANCE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO WIPO ACTIVITIES

3. The International Bureau considered that the five following Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 were relevant to its work; and took some actions to implement them. The International Bureau shared with JIU the implementation status of those specified Recommendations.

4. The CWS created the Blockchain Task Force at its sixth session in 2019 aiming to explore the possibility of using blockchain technology in the processes of providing IP rights protection, processing information about IP objects and their use. The International Bureau shared with the Task Force the JIU Recommendations, in particular Recommendation 6:

Recommendation 6

*The governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should encourage Member States to engage with the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law in its exploratory and preparatory work on legal issues that relate to blockchain in the broader context of the digital economy and digital trade, including on dispute resolution, which is aimed at reducing legal insecurity in that field.*

5. In relation to Recommendation 6, the International Bureau introduced to the Task Force some activities of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and provided in 2022 its analysis of the [UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records](#) published in 2017 by UNCITRAL, which aims to enable the legal use of electronic transferable records both domestically and across borders.

6. As a relevant activity, the International Bureau explored potential applications and opportunities presented by blockchain technologies to IP ecosystems. The International Bureau published "[Blockchain technologies and IP ecosystems: A WIPO white paper](#)" in 2022 that identifies 13 potential use cases of the technologies in IP ecosystems as well as the challenges and issues that should be addressed to determine the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of utilizing such technologies for the benefit of all IP stakeholders. The white paper assists IP offices and other interested parties with the drafting of their strategic policy and supports decision making on the adoption of blockchain technologies in their businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED ACTIONS

7. The International Bureau has reported its implementation status of the Recommendations to the Program Budget Committee (PBC) since September 2021. The PBC noted that Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4 were completed and Recommendation 6 is in progress.

8. The International Bureau reported its latest implementation status to the thirty-seventh session of the PBC held in June 2024 and informed the PBC of its plan on Recommendation 6 to encourage WIPO Member States to engage with UNCITRAL in its exploratory and preparatory work on legal issues that relate to blockchain in the broader context of the digital economy and digital trade as recommended at the twelfth session of the CWS (see Annex I of document [WO/PBC/37/6 Rev.](#)).

9. It should be noted that UNCITRAL published "[Taxonomy of legal issues related to the digital economy](#)" in 2023. It also recently presented a new document A/CN.9/1175 ([Legal issues relating to the use of distributed ledger technology in trade recently](#)) to its fifty-seventh session, held from June 24 to July 12, 2024.

10. The CWS is invited to encourage IPOs, where applicable, to engage with UNCITRAL in its exploratory and preparatory work on legal issues that relate to blockchain in the broader context of the digital economy and digital trade, including on dispute resolution, which is aimed at reducing legal insecurity in that field.

11. *The CWS is invited to:*

*(a) note the contents of the present document; and*

*(b) note Recommendation 6 and encourage IPOs to implement it as referred in paragraph 10 above.*

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