

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.

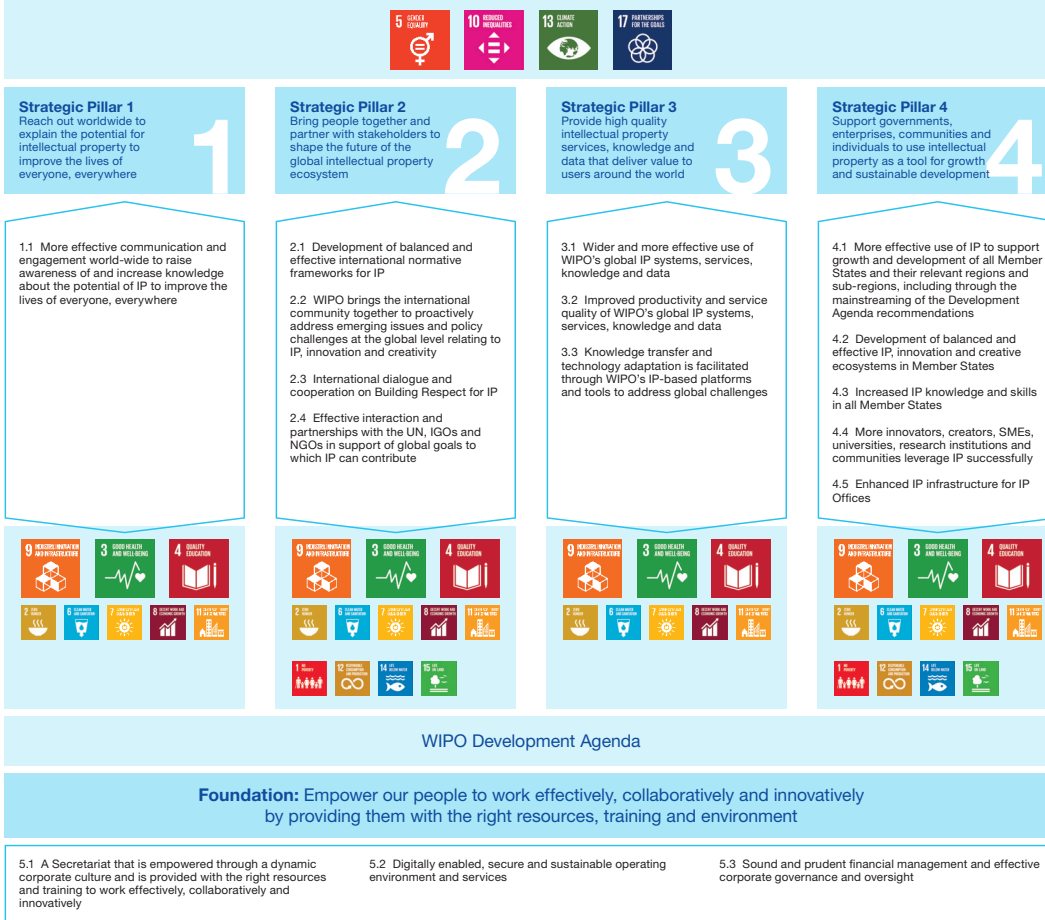
Under the second pillar, WIPO will continue shaping global IP norms, and being a global convener for the discussion of IP issues. In the face of disruptions precipitated by the pandemic, these roles have faced challenges. However, over the last year, we have found new ways of bringing the international 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

