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WIPO
WORLD
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION

Program and Budget Committee

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REVISED POLICY ON LANGUAGES AT WIPO

prepared by the Secretariat

I. BACKGROUND

1. In response to the decision by Member States for more extended language services in the activities of the Organization, a first proposal for a comprehensive Policy on Languages at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) (hereinafter referred to as the Language Policy) was considered by the Forty-Eighth Series of Meetings of Assemblies of the Member States in 2010 (documents A/48/11 and A/48/11 Add.). Following the decisions of the 2010 Assemblies and the subsequent discussions in the Program and Budget Committee (PBC) in June and September 2011 (documents WO/PBC/17/5 and WO/PBC/18/15), an updated comprehensive Language Policy was submitted to, and adopted by, the Forty-Ninth Series of Meetings of Assemblies of the Member States in 2011 (document A/49/15), thus extending coverage in the six United Nations (UN) languages to all meeting documents of the Main Bodies, Standing Committees and Working Groups. The Language Policy was successfully implemented across the Organization by the end of 2017 in a phased manner, as reported to Member States in the WIPO Program Performance Report for 2016/17 submitted to the 28th session of the PBC.

2. At the 30th session of the PBC, during the discussions on the Draft Proposed Program and Budget for 2020/21, Member States agreed to the inclusion of two new performance indicators in Program 19 (Communications) covering the translation of the executive summaries of WIPO flagship publications and WIPO global publications on substantive intellectual property (IP) topics into all official UN languages. The PBC also requested the Secretariat to propose a revision to the Language Policy at the 31st session of the PBC.

3.   Due to the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat was not in a position to submit a revised Language Policy to the 31st session of the PBC as the policy review process would require time and extensive consultation both internally and with Member States.

4.   Subsequently, Member States requested the Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive revised version of the Language Policy to the 32nd session of the PBC, including a sustainable roadmap for a phased multi-year implementation. Member States noted that the promotion of multilingualism should be comprehensive and address a broader range of issues, including a review of the language regimes and communication strategies in the different WIPO business areas, the potential of AI-based modern translation technologies, and the need for new translation business models that integrate human and machine intelligence as a means to further promote multilingualism, in a cost effective manner, beyond the translation strategies that are currently deployed.

II.   INTRODUCTION

5.   WIPO recognizes the importance of multilingualism both as a core value of the Organization, and as a means to reach out worldwide to explain the potential for IP to improve the lives of everyone, everywhere and for supporting governments, enterprises, communities and individuals to use IP as a tool for growth and sustainable development. Multilingualism is furthermore important to ensure inclusive access to WIPO information and services.

6.   The external environment has significantly evolved over the past ten years, and requires the Organization to adapt in order to remain competitive, efficient, agile, and future-proof. In particular, the digitization of communication and the emergence of new communication tools and platforms are changing the way that stakeholders access, receive and use information. Two of the challenges faced by the Organization are (i) to ensure that the right communication tools and platforms are being used to effectively reach and deliver expected impact to our target audiences, and (ii) to raise awareness and sensitize the youth of the benefits arising from a balanced IP system. The Secretariat recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the use of digital communication means. In this context, the revision of translation strategies needs to embrace both the challenges and opportunities emerging from the changing external environment.
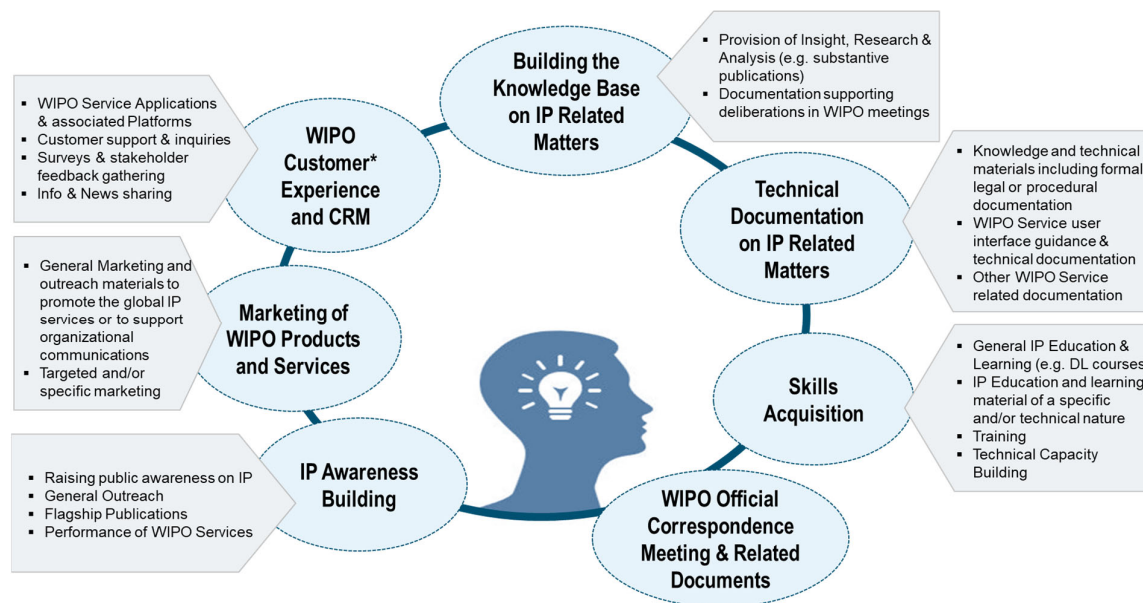
7.   The revised Language Policy is structured as follows: an outline of an approach to translation strategies based on impact (Section III); the proposed policy for translation (Section IV); the proposed policy for interpretation (Section V); and a multi-year phased implementation roadmap (Section VI). While language regimes and translation policies that are established under WIPO-administered Treaties and related regulations are excluded from the scope of this proposal, Member States discussions regarding those regimes that are ongoing in other competent WIPO bodies could be guided by the principles proposed in the present document.

III.   AN IMPACT-BASED APPROACH 2021-26

8.   To better inform the revised Language Policy, the Secretariat has conducted a comprehensive analysis of the different types of communications that WIPO delivers including a review of: (i) target audiences; (ii) means employed to deliver the communication; and

(iii) the expected impact. The WIPO communications landscape, illustrating the main types of communications delivered as an Organization, is presented in Chart 1.

Chart 1: WIPO Communications Landscape (*illustration*)

- WIPO Service Applications & associated Platforms
- Customer support & inquiries
- Surveys & stakeholder feedback gathering
- Info & News sharing

WIPO Customer* Experience and CRM

Building the Knowledge Base on IP Related Matters

- Provision of Insight, Research & Analysis (e.g. substantive publications)
- Documentation supporting deliberations in WIPO meetings

Technical Documentation on IP Related Matters

- Knowledge and technical materials including formal, legal or procedural documentation
- WIPO Service user interface guidance & technical documentation
- Other WIPO Service related documentation

- General Marketing and outreach materials to promote the global IP services or to support organizational communications
- Targeted and/or specific marketing

Marketing of WIPO Products and Services

Skills Acquisition

- General IP Education & Learning (e.g. DL courses)
- IP Education and learning material of a specific and/or technical nature
- Training
- Technical Capacity Building

- Raising public awareness on IP
- General Outreach
- Flagship Publications
- Performance of WIPO Services

IP Awareness Building

WIPO Official Correspondence Meeting & Related Documents

* WIPO Customers and Stakeholders. CRM = Customer Relationship Management

9.   Under an impact-based approach, WIPO's future translation strategies would be guided by three main considerations: (1) the audience for whom the translation is intended; (2) the degree of precision required for the translation; and (3) available translation technology.

10.   WIPO communications are directed towards a broad range of audiences with different expectations and different needs, ranging from the general public, existing and potential customers of WIPO Global IP Protection Services, IP Offices and participants in WIPO Meetings, to more targeted and niche audiences such as IP field experts, policymakers, researchers, universities, etc. In this respect, the Secretariat has identified that one of the key criteria to define the translation strategies is to duly consider the nature and size of the target audience(s) of the communication, and the intended readership.

11.   In due consideration of the need to balance the further promotion of multilingualism with the financial sustainability of the proposal, the Secretariat identified a second criteria to define the approach to translation strategies, namely the level of tolerance associated with varying precision of translation. For the purposes of this document, two levels of precision are recognized: first, "high precision of translation" which is required in cases where there could be an important reputational risk or potential legal implications if the translation is less accurate; and second, "reasonably accurate translation" where greater tolerance on the precision of translation emphasizes that the main objective of translation is to foster greater access to the information contained in the communication[1].

12.   The Secretariat embraces the rapid evolution of AI-based technologies, in particular with respect to machine translation. Expanding the use of machine translation, initially through

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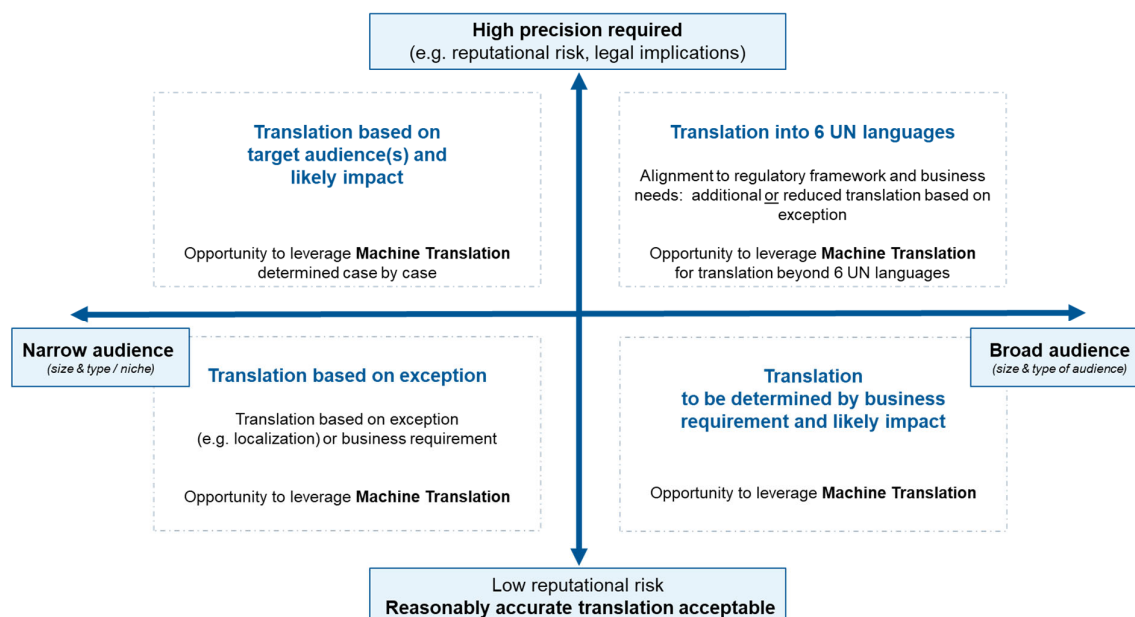[1] Often referred to as gist translation.

pilots as part of the phased multi-year implementation roadmap, could offer numerous opportunities for the promotion of multilingualism. These could include increasing the reach of the Organization across different types of communication, and increasing WIPO's impact by enhancing its ability to translate materials for the benefit of a wider audience. Candidates for machine translation pilots are identified in Section IV below.

13.   For the purposes of this document, "machine translation" may refer to machine translation with intensive post-editing, machine translation with light post-editing, or machine translation with no post-editing (raw machine translation), as defined in ISO Standard 18587:2017.

IV.   PROPOSED POLICY FOR TRANSLATION

14.   Considering WIPO's complex communications landscape and the broad spectrum of audiences, the Secretariat proposes a tailored approach to the translation strategies based on the criteria described in Section III. The proposed translation strategies presented in Chart 2 describe size and type of audience on the one hand, and the level of tolerance associated with precision of translation to deliver the expected impact of communication, on the other hand.

Chart 2: Proposed Translation Strategies
(*matrix quadrants*)

High precision required
(e.g. reputational risk, legal implications)

Translation based on target audience(s) and likely impact

Opportunity to leverage **Machine Translation** determined case by case

Translation into 6 UN languages

Alignment to regulatory framework and business needs: additional or reduced translation based on exception

Opportunity to leverage **Machine Translation** for translation beyond 6 UN languages

Narrow audience
(size & type / niche)

Broad audience
(size & type of audience)

Translation based on exception

Translation based on exception (e.g. localization) or business requirement

Opportunity to leverage **Machine Translation**

Translation to be determined by business requirement and likely impact

Opportunity to leverage **Machine Translation**

Low reputational risk
Reasonably accurate translation acceptable

15.   The proposed language translation strategies present opportunities to leverage machine translation. For cases where a greater tolerance regarding translation precision is identified, and where "reasonably accurate translation" is acceptable, machine translation could be considered. For cases where the precision of translation required is high, the opportunity for using machine translation could be considered to expand translation beyond the six UN languages. The opportunity to translate beyond the six UN languages could be explored in cases where a potential is identified to reach new or broader audiences with gist translation at minimal cost, provided the quality of translation is sufficient to provide the reader with a general understanding of what the communication is about.

16.   The translation strategies apply across all means of communication, including but not limited to:

- Printed and digital forms of publications and documents;
- The WIPO Website[2], e-Forums, etc.;
- WIPO Service Applications (web-based & mobile apps) & on-line Platforms;
- Audiovisual tools & multimedia clips (translation via sub-titles); and
- Material disseminated at events.

17.   As regards social media, the Secretariat recognizes the opportunity of using social media platforms to communicate with more diverse audiences. However, a tailored and pragmatic approach is required due to the specificities of social media platforms (i.e. different platforms from one country/region to another, live, two-way communication component, speed of content publishing, the reliance on availability of translated content on linked websites, etc.), and the observation that the main platforms already embed powerful auto-translation features.

18.   Table 1 summarizes the mapping of the communication types identified in the communications landscape against the translation strategies, duly taking into account expected impact, audience, and the tolerance on precision required.

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[2] The Secretariat notes that many WIPO website users are already using publically available Machine Translation tools (e.g. Google Translate) to access the website.

Table 1: Translation Strategies
By type of communication

Matrix Quadrant	Applicable Types of Communication	Language Strategy	Opportunity for Machine Translation
Narrow audience (size & type, or niche) **High precision required**	• IP Education and learning material of a specific and/or technical nature • Knowledge and technical materials including formal, legal or procedural documentation • Technical documentation supporting deliberations in WIPO meetings • WIPO official correspondence	Translation based on target audience(s) and likely impact	To be determined case by case
Broad audience **High precision required**	• Skills acquisition material of a General nature on IP (e.g. main DL courses) • WIPO circulars, meeting notifications, official texts and meeting documents • Flagship Publications - Executive Summaries[3]	Translation into 6 UN Languages (base)	**Yes**
Broad audience **Reasonably accurate translation is acceptable**	• Raising Public Awareness on IP • Marketing and outreach materials to promote the global IP services or to support organizational communications • Flagship Publications - full reports[4] • Targeted and/or specific marketing materials • IP Service Applications and associated platforms, accessible via the IP Portal • Reports on the Performance of WIPO Services • Substantive Publications (i.e. studies and/or working papers supporting provision of insight of IP related issues, research & analysis) • Information notices, Newsletters and other CRM related materials • Provision of WIPO Customer support & enquiries • Surveys & stakeholder feedback gathering	Translation to be determined by business requirement and likely impact	**Yes**
Narrow audience (size & type, or niche) **Reasonably accurate translation is acceptable**	• WIPO Service user interface guidance & technical documentation (i.e.: for the use of IP Service Applications and associated platforms) • Technical capacity building materials • Training materials • Materials prepared for local exhibitions & events	Translation based on exception (default)	**Yes**

19.   Machine translation has already been successfully deployed across the Global IP Protection Services for primarily European languages and PATENTSCOPE for all languages. In the case of the PCT, the savings have been estimated at 34,000 Swiss francs per week, whereas in the case of the Madrid System, the price per word paid for outsourced post-editing translation work has been halved. In the case of PATENTSCOPE, machine translation is used for the translation of two to three million words per day. It is noted that the quality of

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[3] At minimum, executive summaries are to be translated into six UN languages. In cases of primarily data tables, translation is not always required.
[4] The opportunity for machine translation may be considered for full reports that are not currently translated into the six UN Languages (e.g. full reports of the Yearly Reviews for PCT, Madrid, and the Hague).

machine translation is currently uneven across language combinations, and it can vary substantially depending on the languages being paired.

20.   To facilitate the effective translation of communication materials, the Secretariat notes that particular attention should be given to the level of clarity and quality of the initial language version of the material. The introduction of pre-editing services could be considered in order to provide guidance and editorial support to the business areas and authors of communication materials. Securing good quality and clear writing of the initial language version will facilitate the translation work by substantially reducing the efforts involved in translating into multiple languages.

21.   The Secretariat has identified pilots for the further use of machine translation, which would be conducted as part of the multi-year phased implementation plan:

- ▪ The first pilot would be conducted on carefully ring-fenced pages of the WIPO website, using machine translation for the six UN languages; and

- ▪ Further pilots would expand the use of machine translation for additional languages across the website, and for the translation of targeted published documents (e.g. the Madrid Yearly Review).

22.   The revised Language Policy would be implemented following a multi-year three phase approach, presented in Section VI below. The cost impact of the proposed strategies for translation would depend on the volume of translation, the means employed to translate the communication materials, and the level of post-editing for material produced by machine translation. This will be assessed throughout the pilot phases, and will be reported back to Member States on an annual basis[5]. The cost impact will be assessed based on two criteria: (i) volume of translation (workload); and (ii) the cost of translation determined by productivity and related unit costs. Chart 3 illustrates the impact of machine translation on productivity in the case of processing PCT abstracts from English into French. Chart 4 provides an indication of the differences in cost of translating website content into the six UN languages, depending on the translation method used.

Chart 3: PCT English-French Abstracts Workload Processed by Day
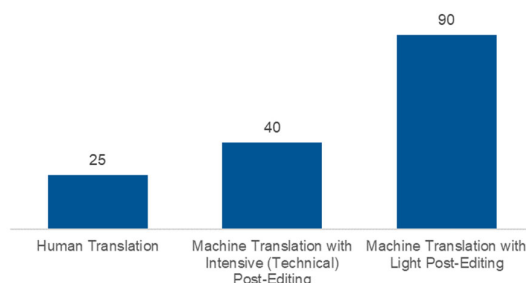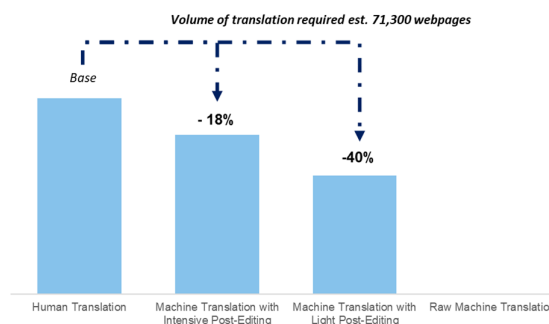*(Number of)*

Chart 4: WIPO Website Translation into the six UN Languages
(in million Swiss francs)

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[5] In consecutive WIPO Performance Reports.

V.   PROPOSED POLICY FOR INTERPRETATION

23.   It is recalled that although interpretation was referenced in the 2010/11 Language Policy, no specific language regimes were proposed. In practice, for Diplomatic Conferences, the Assemblies[6], the Coordination Committee, Standing Committees, IGC, Committees of Experts and Working Groups[7], interpretation services are provided in the six UN languages. All other meetings and events are serviced by interpretation based on request, and at the discretion of the organizing Sector(s), considering capacity constraints and budget.

24.   With the objective to provide a consistent level of service to stakeholders in light of increasing demand for interpretation, and considering an increasingly complex meeting landscape (namely with the introduction of virtual and hybrid formats), a language regime would be applied by type of meeting or event, as indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Proposed Language Regimes for Interpretation Services, *By type of Meeting (or Event)*

	Meetings of the Main Bodies and Meetings of an International Nature	Informal Consultations	Inter-regional, regional and sub-regional meetings	Events and activities, including development cooperation meetings
Examples of types of meetings	Diplomatic Conferences, Standing Committees, Committees of Experts and Working Groups Example of an International Meeting: Conversation on AI	Informal consultations in the context of on-going official meetings (both during and outside of the meeting dates)	Meetings of a regional or a bilateral nature (mainly held outside headquarters)	Events with WIPO involvement held both inside or outside headquarters (including workshops, seminars etc..)
Meeting format	Physical, Hybrid and/or Virtual			
Language Regime **Principle**	**6 UN Languages**	**EN / FR / ES**	**Up to 3 Languages**	**Up to 3 Languages**
Exceptions / Justifications for additional language requests or reduced languages	**+** Official meeting held in another country than that of 6 UN languages, which could require additional non-UN languages for interpretation[6]* **-** No business requirement[7]	**+** or **-** Based on business requirement And subject to logistics capacity and/or constraints	Up to 3 languages, e.g. local language in case of meeting hosted outside of WIPO HQ (e.g. EO). 2nd & 3rd language based on business requirement *Note: Interpretation services are arranged locally when possible and/or with partners when not financed by WIPO*	Up to 3 languages based on business requirement *Note: Interpretation services are arranged locally when possible and/or with partners when not financed by WIPO*

* Other exceptions considered on case by case basis (e.g. World IP Day, additional languages for portion(s) of a meeting, requirement for sign language).

25.   Exceptions to the interpretation language regimes based on business requirements would be decided as follows, duly taking into account available resources and logistical constraints:

   (i)   in the case of Meetings of the Main Bodies, International Meetings and Informal Consultations, the WIPO Secretariat would decide in consultation with the Chair[8] of the relevant committees;

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[6] Following a decision of the General Assembly in 2000 (WO/GA/26/10), interpretation from Portuguese is provided in Diplomatic Conferences and the Assemblies.
[7] Due to the limited membership and/or participation, bilingual or trilingual interpretation is provided at some Working Group meetings, e.g. for the IPC Revision Working Group.
[8] Or Chair-Elect.

(ii)   in the case of other meetings, events and activities, the WIPO Secretariat
would decide in consultation with the co-organizer(s), if any.

26.   The cost impact of the proposed language regimes for interpretation would depend on the volume of exceptions. This will be assessed on an annual basis and reported back to Member States[9].

VI.   A PHASED IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

27.   The implementation of the revised Language Policy would be broken down into three phases. The detailed multi-year phased implementation roadmap is illustrated in Chart 5.

Chart 5: Revised Language Policy implementation roadmap, 2021-26
Breakdown by phase

2022-2023	2024 - 2025	2026 onwards
Key Milestones Phase 1	**Key Milestones Phase 2**	**Key Milestones Phase 3**

▪ Conduct pilots to extend the use of machine translation. Progressive migration to production of successful pilots for the website
 	
▪ Implement the Revised Language Policy on Interpretation
 	
▪ Implement the Revised Language Policy for :
  ✓ General IP education & learning material (i.e. main DL courses); and
  ✓ Communication materials related to building the knowledge base on IP related matters (e.g. Substantive Publications)
	▪ Confirm and implement further expansions to the use of machine translation, dependent on successful quality audits from 1st pilots. Progressive migration to production of successful pilots for the website and targeted publications
	
	▪ Explore dedicated approach for increased multilingualism on social media presences
	
	▪ Implement the Revised Language Policy for :
	  ✓ Flagship Publications (full reports)
	  ✓ IP Awareness Building communications;
	  ✓ Marketing of WIPO Services related communications; and
	  ✓ IP Education and learning material of a specific and/or technical nature
		▪ Implement the Revised Language Policy for :
		  ✓ WIPO Customer Experience and CRM (Customer Relation Management) related communications; and
		  ✓ Technical documentation IP related matters

28.   The cost of Phase 1 of the implementation roadmap would include the cost of machine translation pilots for the website estimated at 1.4 million Swiss francs, and the cost of implementing the revised Language Policy for main Distance Learning (DL) courses, which has been estimated at 150,000 Swiss francs. The cost of translating materials related to building the knowledge base on IP is difficult to estimate as it will depend on the actual volume to be translated.

29.   It should be noted that technology is expected to continue to rapidly evolve over the course of the implementation of the revised Language Policy, which would potentially provide additional opportunities to promote multilingualism more effectively and efficiently.

30.   The progress on implementation, in accordance with the roadmap illustrated above, and additional opportunities arising from new technologies would be reported back to Member States in consecutive WIPO Performance Reports (WPRs).

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[9] In consecutive WIPO Performance Reports.

31.   *The Program and Budget Committee (PBC) is invited to;*

(i)   take note of the contents of the present document;

(ii)   recommend to the Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned, the adoption of the proposed Revised Language Policy set out in Sections III, IV, V and VI, above.