

Program and Budget Committee

Thirty-Fourth Session
Geneva, June 27 to July 1, 2022

ANNUAL REPORT ON HUMAN RESOURCES

prepared by the Secretariat

1. At its September 2012 session, the Program and Budget Committee (PBC) “requested that the Human Resources annual report to the WIPO Coordination Committee be also presented in the future to the autumn session of the PBC for its consideration.” Pursuant to this decision, the present document contains the Annual Report on Human Resources (document WO/CC/81/INF/1), which is being submitted to the WIPO Coordination Committee at its July 2022 session.

[Document WO/CC/81/INF/1 follows]

WIPO Coordination Committee

Eighty-First (53rd Ordinary) Session
Geneva, July 14 to 22, 2022

ANNUAL REPORT ON HUMAN RESOURCES

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In light of the convening of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO in July 2022, this Annual Report on Human Resources (HR) covers a calendar year for the first time, i.e. the period from January 1 to December 31, 2021. As such, it also includes some of the topics reflected in the previous [Annual Report](#), which covered the period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

2. The Report comprises all HR matters for which reporting to the WIPO Coordination Committee is required and other staff matters of interest to Member States. It also includes information on progress made towards staffing goals and an overview of HR-related policies, initiatives and activities aligned with WIPO's HR Strategy 2017-2021.

3. Besides the introduction, the Annual Report is structured as follows:

- Snapshot of key workforce trends;
- Matters for obligatory reporting to Member States;
- Challenges, new objectives and changes at WIPO; and
- Overall progress over the past year.

II. WORKFORCE AT A GLANCE

4. As at December 31, 2021, WIPO's total workforce stood at 1,588.
5. As compared to the last reporting period¹, the core² workforce decreased slightly (1,074 down from 1,083), representing 67.6 per cent of the total workforce, whereas the flexible³ workforce increased (514 up from 489), constituting 32.4 per cent of the total workforce.
6. From a gender perspective, women represented 53.2 per cent of the workforce (845), whilst men represented 46.8 per cent (743), noting that this representation varies across categories. With respect to the core workforce of 1,074 staff members, women represented 54.2 per cent (582) of this category with men representing 45.8 per cent (492). The combined average age of the core workforce was 49.6 years.
7. From an overall geographical representation perspective and as a result of a suite of outreach efforts, 121 Member States were represented at all levels and categories of staff, whereas 110 Member States were represented on posts subject to geographical distribution.⁴
8. A separate document containing key data and metrics on WIPO's workforce, diversity, talent sourcing, development and training as well as conflict management, either covering the same reporting period or by calendar year, is accessible online.

III. MATTERS FOR OBLIGATORY REPORTING TO THE WIPO COORDINATION COMMITTEE

TERMINATION OF APPOINTMENTS

9. WIPO Staff Regulation 9.2(g) requires the Director General to report to the WIPO Coordination Committee all cases of termination of appointments of staff. The following terminations took place between January 1 and December 31, 2021:
 - Four for health reasons in accordance with Staff Regulation 9.2(a)(2);
 - Nine in the interest of the good administration of the Organization and with the consent of the staff members concerned, in accordance with Staff Regulation 9.2(a)(5).

¹ In the last reporting period (July 2020 to June 2021), the total workforce was 1,572 with a 69/31 proportion between core and flexible resources.

² Staff holding a fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointment on regular budget funding.

³ Staff holding a temporary appointment on regular budget funding; Staff on non-regular budget funding (Reserves and Funds-in-Trust); UN staff on loan; Junior Professional Officers including United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) JPOs; Interns; Fellows; Monthly/daily translators/revisers; Individual Contractors; Agency Workers; External Providers; and individuals from the SYNI program of the Swiss Bureau of Subsidized Temporary Employment.

⁴ The posts subject to geographical distribution are all staff positions in the Professional and higher categories, which are funded under the regular budget except language positions and the post of Director General.

EXTENSIONS OF TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

10. At its annual meeting in September 2018, the WIPO Coordination Committee requested the Secretariat to include systematically in its Annual Report on Human Resources detailed information on the number of temporary appointments extended by the Director General beyond two years under Staff Regulation 4.16(a)⁵ and the rationale for the use of this exceptional measure.

11. During the reporting period, from January 1 to December 31, 2021, 16 staff members on temporary appointments were extended beyond two years. The reasons for these exceptional extensions were as follows:

- Two temporary appointments were exceptionally extended (one for six months and one for 12 months) due to business needs.
- Nine temporary appointments were exceptionally extended (two for six months and seven for 12 months) to ensure business continuity, pending clarity on staffing needs.
- Five temporary appointments were exceptionally extended (two for three months and three for six months) to ensure business continuity, pending recruitment.

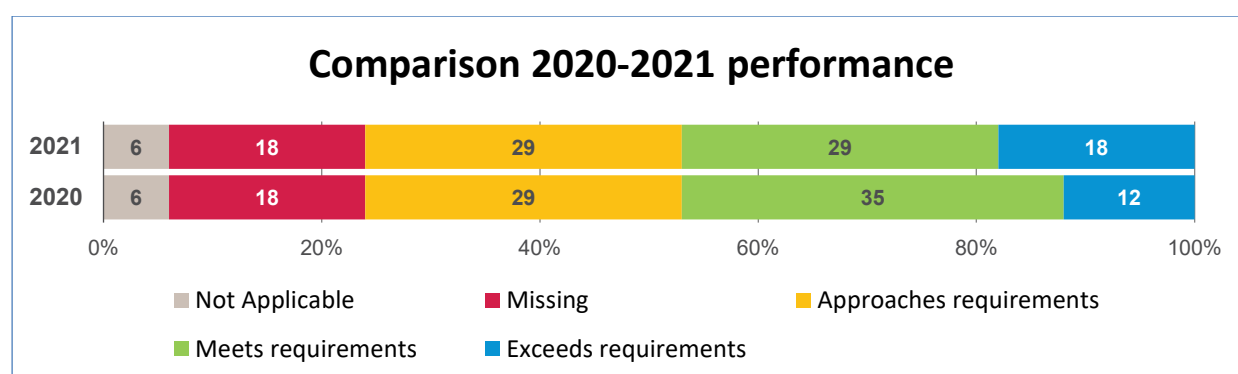
IMPLEMENTATION OF WIPO POLICY ON GENDER EQUALITY

12. WIPO has adopted a two-pronged approach in its efforts on gender equality and women's empowerment: it both implements gender-specific initiatives and mainstreams gender considerations across programs and functions.

Gender mainstreaming in organizational functions

13. With regard to UN system-wide work, in 2021, WIPO continued to implement the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).⁶ In 2021, WIPO met or exceeded requirements for 47 per cent of ratings, or eight indicators. Notably, WIPO increased the number of indicators for which it exceeds requirements, from two in 2020 to three in 2021 (Evaluation, Audit and Knowledge, and Communication).

14. The chart below reflects WIPO's UN-SWAP results for 2021 compared to 2020:



⁵ See document [WO/CC/75/3](#).

⁶ The UN-SWAP is an accountability mechanism approved by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). The UN-SWAP operationalizes the UN System-wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women adopted in 2006 by the CEB. WIPO's performance by indicator can be accessed [here](#).

Gender balance

15. As at December 31, 2021, women represented 47.9 per cent of all staff in the Professional and higher categories holding fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointments on the regular budget⁷, with 49.8 per cent of women in the Professional category and 33.3 per cent in the Director category. Women constituted 80 per cent of National Professional Officer staff, and 62.8 per cent of General Service staff.

16. With regards to gender parity targets, over the past biennium, both the P4 and D1 levels have met, and have remained on, their targets. Conversely, both the D2 and P5 levels have registered regressions, while remaining stable during the last year.

Grades	Status as at June 30, 2019	Status as at June 30, 2020	Status as at June 30, 2021	Status as at Dec. 31, 2021	Targets for December 2021
D2	15.4%	15.4%	10%	10%	24%
D1	36.8%	34.9%	37.1%	37.3%	37%
P5	32.4%	32.7%	29.7%	29.1%	43%
P4	48.7%	50.0%	50%	49.7%	50%

17. For the 2022/2023 biennium, WIPO has set new gender balance targets for the D2, D1, P5 and P4 levels, as follows:

Grades	Target
D2	33%
D1	41%
P5	35%
P4	50%

Gender mainstreaming in programming

18. To raise awareness on, and identify solutions to, the global gender gap in IP, in 2021, HRMD and the Development Agenda team organized three global, virtual sessions on “Closing the Gender Gap in IP”. The sessions brought together diverse stakeholders (IP Offices, IP associations, multi-stakeholder initiatives, NGOs, academia) from the global IP community to present good practices and lessons learned in IP service design, outreach and delivery, as well as in policy, capacity development and organizational culture. The sessions also provided an opportunity to present the results of WIPO’s work in this area. Globally, more than 700 participants from over 60 countries attended the information sharing sessions.

19. Gender mainstreaming work continues to strengthen across Sectors and functional areas, reflecting Member States’ interests in gender equality and in advancing women in the IP system. In the reporting period, several initiatives took place, for example:

- In 2021, WIPO launched two workshop series on gender mainstreaming for IP Offices in the Latin American region. The first series, comprising four sessions, targeted copyright offices and had two objectives: i) create a common understanding of gender equality issues in the context of IP; and ii) raise awareness among IP practitioners about the gender gap in IP. The second pilot series targeted seven IP offices in the Latin American region, and aimed at building and sharing knowledge on gender mainstreaming and providing analytical entry points to mainstream gender equality considerations in all the areas of work of an IP office. The series was well received and will be replicated in 2022 to engage with additional Offices in the region.

⁷ Based on post grade. Temporary staff and the executive category are excluded.

- In 2021, WIPO prepared the Guidelines on Inclusive Language, available in WIPO's six official languages. They constitute a clear, concise and straightforward awareness raising tool on how to approach the drafting of texts in a way that is consistent with WIPO's Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2022-2026 and which ensures that we "leave no one behind". They include two modules (gender inclusive language and disability inclusive language). The modular format is intended to provide flexibility so that additional modules can be added in the future, if needed.

20. The Director General's appointment of Deputy Director General Lisa Jorgenson as WIPO's first IP and Gender Champion, announced at the 2021 General Assembly, and the recent recruitment of a Senior Advisor IP and Gender will strengthen the strategic direction of WIPO's work to promote and increase the participation of women inventors, innovators, creators, and entrepreneurs in the IP system. These roles are in addition to the already existing position of Gender and Diversity Specialist in HRMD.

REWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM

21. At its annual meeting in September 2018, the WIPO Coordination Committee requested the Secretariat to report systematically on the implementation of its Rewards and Recognition Program (RRP) and on changes introduced since the previous Annual Report on Human Resources.

22. In light of the review by the Internal Oversight Division (IOD) of WIPO's Performance Management and Staff Development Framework, there were no monetary rewards as part of the 2021 RRP. Certificates of appreciation for outstanding performance as well as for voluntary service on the WIPO Appeal Board, the Joint Advisory Group or as Gender Focal Points were issued and made available to the concerned staff members in WIPO's Enterprise Content Management system.

REPORTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (ICSC) AND OF THE UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION BOARD (UNJSPB)

23. The attention of the WIPO Coordination Committee is drawn to the last annual reports of the ICSC (UN document [A/76/30](#)) and of the UNJSPB (UN document [A/76/297](#)).

IV. WHEN THE WORLD CHANGES

24. Faced with the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, the past couple of years have been a challenging period for the Organization and its staff as a whole.

25. With the arrival of a new Administration, HRMD was called upon to support a significant organizational realignment, involving the creation of a new Sector, the IP and Innovation Ecosystems Sector, and other focus areas. The principal objective of the realignment was to streamline and improve information flow and cross sector coordination. This reorganization was set against the backdrop of a new MTSP. The MTSP marks a move towards an increasingly employee-centric Organization, where a team-based culture and approach to work is encouraged, and enhancing the employee value proposition is not just a target, but becomes a reality.

26. To assist in implementing this new vision for human resources management at WIPO, an external HR Strategy Expert was engaged to conduct a comprehensive, consultative process with managers and employees in order to identify elements of HR management of which the Organization can be proud and others that can be strengthened. On this basis, a new HR Strategy was developed and submitted to the WIPO Coordination Committee in October 2021, setting the direction for the HR strategic work for the coming five years. The new strategy is centered on seven inter-related objectives – culture, organizational agility, diversity and inclusion, the management of people performance, learning and career development, leadership and management, and engagement and well-being.

Re-imagining How Work Gets Done

27. The pandemic prompted WIPO and HRMD to recognize and embrace an agile work culture. Since its onset, HRMD has had to consider how to manage a remote, more hybrid workforce, composed of employees working from home, in the office, part-time and under flexible working arrangements.

28. This is a world in flux and the world of work is no different, with technology increasingly influencing how work is performed. In light of this and on the basis of the new HR Strategy, a 'One-Stop-Shop' service model for HRMD was announced at the end of 2021 to take effect in February 2022.

29. The new model will allow HRMD to focus on service delivery, and integrates thematic areas, rather than functions. The model aims at facilitating the transition of WIPO to an open, transparent and human-centered organization. Moreover, it aims to ensure that people and processes are better integrated, thereby enabling a smoother, less disjointed experience for internal and external users of HRMD's services. Under the new model, and with the creation of a new Talent Management Service, HRMD will aspire to work horizontally, alongside the business as a 'partner', co-owning outcomes with other stakeholders and assisting business areas to adapt and transform.

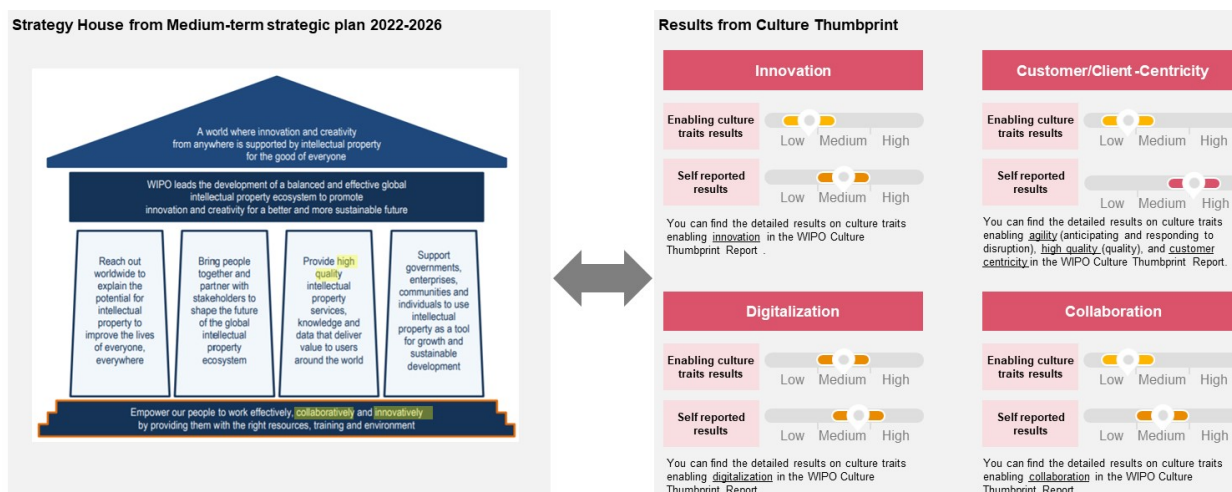
30. The 'explosion' in technology and its influence on the world of work requires a dedicated service to ensure that HRMD is able to reap the benefits of technology, effective data management and critical analysis, as well as improve customer service and inform talent management. The creation of a new HR Technology and Data Unit within HRMD recognizes the importance of integrating technology into HR.

31. The year also witnessed the review and overhaul of the longer-term, strategic, workforce planning process launched in 2014. The aim is to assess the 'state' of WIPO's human resources and provide guidance on HR actions required to ensure the successful delivery of business results. The process was reviewed and lessons learned to refine the longer-term workforce planning process and is currently being rolled out across all Sectors as 'the WIPO Talent Review 2022/23 and Beyond'.

32. Furthermore, an HR Dashboard, providing HR analytics that will be instrumental for workforce planning at all levels, will be available to managers. The dashboard will provide easy access to key information, such as staffing, gender and geographical representation, retirement, absence and performance amongst other data. This tool will also strengthen the capacities of supervisors to manage their workforce, track and monitor their teams, as well as improve the gender and geographical representation of their workforce.

A Culture that Builds Skills and Embraces Adaptability

33. In 2021, Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) conducted a review of WIPO's Performance Management and Staff Development System. Recognizing the importance of culture in performance management, a Cultural Thumbprint was established for WIPO as part of this review. This analysis summarized five significant traits that characterize the WIPO Culture, namely, *Empires*, *Professional and respectful*, *Pillar of stability*, *'Follow the rules'* and *Reputation for competence*. While all traits embrace certain strengths, they also come with challenges. The analysis of culture at WIPO concluded that there is a need for greater realignment between WIPO's strategic aspirations and the current Organizational culture.



34. The analysis provides a basis from which HRMD can launch the critical task of engaging in a cultural transformation program for WIPO. This will ensure that the prevailing culture enhances organizational resilience, and provides the entire Organization with a common vision of success.

35. The review also identified the need for a number of key changes in WIPO's performance management, expressed by employees and managers. These included the need for more objectivity, recognition and development supported by a more user-centric process; increased support in managing under-performance and the need for a deep cultural evolution of mindsets and behaviors around performance. It was also noted that to address key performance management challenges, WIPO would need to shift to a more customer-centric approach, as well as develop a "growth mindset" across the Organization. Overall, the report made eight recommendations that will support the Organization towards a more fit-for-purpose performance management framework. One of those recommendations was to introduce performance calibration for more consistency and fairness. To this end, a performance calibration process for P4 employees and above was introduced for the 2021 performance cycle. The calibration process sought to establish a common understanding across the Organization of the two highest evaluation ratings.

36. Work on developing a new performance system, and ensuring that performance management is more closely linked to development and other talent processes, will be an integral part of the work of the Employee Experience Unit of the Talent Management Service together with managers and other stakeholders.

37. Going forward it is recognized that personal and professional development is key to managing and motivating performance. At the same time, it has become clear that WIPO must invest in its human capital to ensure that the Organization has the skills to meet current and future demands. To this end, opening up and improving talent mobility has shown to be a powerful management initiative to engage employees, while also enabling management to identify internal skills that reduce the need to constantly look externally for talent – investing internally instead of solely relying on “buying in”. Significant progress has been made across the year in identifying Talent Market Platforms and their offerings to enable WIPO to launch a formal Request for Proposal later in 2022 with a view to piloting in 2023. Additionally, following positive feedback, HRMD extended its pilot project allowing staff on fixed-term, continuing and permanent appointments to be temporarily assigned to temporary positions and project posts, whilst retaining their contractual status and related benefits and entitlements.

38. Finally, a significant change in the restructuring of HRMD concerned the transfer of responsibility for the implementation and delivery of learning programs to the WIPO Academy. The primary aim of this transfer is for the Academy to use its expertise in the building of knowledge and skills to benefit WIPO staff. To ensure that training programs are strategically focused, a Training and Development Task Force was set up to recommend changes needed to improve WIPO’s approach to training, with the WIPO Academy and HRMD collaborating to fashion a learning and development framework for WIPO and oversee its implementation.

V. THE “NEW NORMAL”

39. The onset of the pandemic in 2020 brought a new set of challenges to HRMD given the impact on the psychosocial aspects and mental health of employees. Throughout this period, HRMD played a key role in crisis management, remote working, risk handling, redeployment of the workforce, as well as safety and wellbeing.

Health, wellbeing and work-life balance

40. The mental health and wellbeing of employees has always been of the utmost importance for WIPO and the pandemic accelerated the reassessment of WIPO’s working practices. There is no doubt that the past couple of years has renewed the opportunity of making flexible working a more standardized practice in order to improve work-life balance. Most notably, perhaps, flexible practices are no longer seen as an add-on, but as an essential part of working life.

41. HRMD has been instrumental in expanding this new approach to support the work-life balance of staff, particularly realizing that a flexible approach to working is business critical, and contributes to WIPO being an attractive employer. As such:

- WIPO’s new policy on working hours and flexible working arrangements was issued in October 2021 and entered into force in January 2022. It introduced teleworking as a flexible working arrangement, drawing from the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. While business needs take precedence, the changes made will give staff more flexibility to organize their work and manage their working hours according to their personal preferences and needs, thus supporting work-life balance. These changes will also give supervisors more latitude to manage their teams’ working arrangements according to both organizational and individual needs.

- Significant changes were also made to the policy on parental leave, to the benefit of staff and in support of work-life balance. The changes further aim to promote gender equality and inclusion, notably by recognizing that care responsibilities should be equally shared between parents. To this end, the leave entitlements were increased for most types of appointment and forms of parenthood, and more flexibility was granted for the use of these entitlements.
- For the first time, an Organization-wide policy was developed on compensatory leave for staff in the Professional and related categories who have been required to work overtime for substantial or recurrent periods. The new policy lays the foundation for compensatory leave to be granted to these categories of staff in a fair, transparent and consistent manner.

42. Furthermore, HRMD, in coordination with the Medical Unit and the Staff Counsellor, provided comprehensive advice as well as a broad range of support to staff. Mental health recommendations and guidance for employees were developed with the aim of boosting individual and collective resilience. In 2021, WIPO participated in the United Nations Health Intelligence (UNHI) Health and Wellbeing Survey conducted among 24 UN organizations, including WIPO. The response rate was high at 37 per cent in the Organization. The survey assessed physical and mental health, the COVID-19 pandemic experience, working patterns and office setup, domestic abuse and several other issues. The results highlighted that 43 per cent of respondents fall in the medium/high health risk categories, as evaluated through a Health Risk Stratification method; 39 per cent reported that their physical health deteriorated and 39 per cent that their mental health and wellbeing decreased significantly during the pandemic. Many had inadequate health care during the pandemic. In addition, and of serious concern, domestic abuse - also aggravated by the pandemic - was reported at surprisingly high levels (17 per cent). Overall, the prevailing complaints were body pain, work related stress, and mental health symptoms. High levels of stigma surrounding mental health issues were recorded. WIPO is planning to conduct further analysis of the survey data along with UNHI, yearly or bi-yearly resubmission of the survey to its staff and is working on a set of measures to address the findings in coming years.

43. Similarly, efforts were pursued to promote a respectful and harmonious workplace, with zero tolerance for harassment. Notably, the policy on workplace-related conflicts and grievances was amended to remove the previous time limit of 90 days to submit a complaint of harassment (including sexual harassment), discrimination and/or abuse of authority. This change ensures consistency with the UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment issued by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), which states that formal reports of sexual harassment should not be subject to deadlines.⁸ The policy was also amended to ensure that *all* allegations of misconduct, including allegations of harassment, discrimination and/or abuse of authority are referred to the Internal Oversight Division (with the exception of allegations of retaliation, which remain with the Ethics Office).⁹

⁸ See the CEB's UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment at: https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/imported_files/UN%20System%20Model%20Policy%20on%20Sexual%20Harassment_FINAL_0.pdf

⁹ See [WO/CC/80/3](#) of August 3, 2021 ("Amendments to Staff Regulations and Rules"), at paragraph 17.

Diversity

44. In 2021, WIPO completed 26 recruitments for temporary vacancies and 39 recruitments for fixed-term vacancies advertised in 2020 and 2021. Out of the 39 recruitments for fixed-term positions, sixteen were internal candidates (permanent, continuing and fixed-term contracts), 26 when also including employees working for WIPO on other contracts. As regards to the sixteen internal selections, fifteen resulted in promotions out of which (53 per cent) were female staff members. A project is ongoing to update and improve WIPO's recruitment pages on the Internet. By making information easier to understand and more engaging, as well as adhering to best practices regarding accessibility for inclusion purposes, the aim of the project is to attract an even more diverse talent pool.

45. WIPO continues to work towards its gender parity targets and to ensure geographical diversity among its staff through various initiatives, particularly at senior levels. WIPO, either directly and/or through its partner organizations, conducts outreach campaigns through various social media channels, at times specifically tailored to female professionals. It also enlists the services of executive search firms and participates in career fairs. In 2021, 978 female candidates submitted an expression of interest for our Senior Female Talent Pool alone, while 2,534 of the 4,444 professionals who submitted expressions of interest through all of our talent pools were women (57 per cent). In addition, WIPO's Business Intelligence (BI) HR Dashboard has been further enhanced making immediate real time gender data available at the touch of a button so that staff and managers can see gender data quickly and easily. WIPO also participated in three virtual career fairs in 2021, one of which was targeted on the Middle East and North Africa region, with the other two on global outreach.

46. WIPO further strengthened its Focal Points Initiative¹⁰, which aims at attracting a diverse candidate pool to apply to vacancies, especially candidates from un- and underrepresented Member States. Eight capacity-building presentations were made to in-country focal points during 2021. Several information-sharing meetings were held with Permanent Missions who are also considering actively participating in this initiative. In 2022, HRMD intends to conduct a survey amongst all focal points to ascertain what is working well, share best practices and thereby build capacity internally amongst the focal points of the network.

47. Furthermore, a new [Young Experts Program](#) (YEP) was developed in 2021 to train the next generation of global IP leaders under the age of 35 to help build innovation ecosystems around the world. YEP is a two-year program for talented young experts to not only understand the technical aspects of IP, but to also apply them in practice. The Program was launched in November 2021 and attracted some 4,000 applicants, including more than 1,500 from Africa, 400 from Latin America and the Caribbean, almost 900 from Asia and Pacific, 350 from Eastern and Central Europe and Central Asia and over 200 from the Middle East. Eleven young and diverse professionals (six female, five male) were selected in December 2021 to start the pilot program in early 2022.

48. Lessons learned from the YEP include allowing more lead time for the advertisement and selection process, i.e. advertising much earlier in the year, providing more clarity and information regarding the program upfront for interested candidates to review, allowing for more contact with the hiring managers during the selection process, as well as providing more support (and earlier) to selected Young Experts prior to their arrival in Geneva, particularly regarding accommodation and navigating the formal administrative formalities with the relevant Swiss authorities.

¹⁰ Focal Points Initiative – WIPO collaborates with missions (predominantly under or unrepresented Member States) and IP national offices to identify national focal points for further outreach of vacancy announcements in-country.

Inclusion

49. In 2021, WIPO began work on its first Disability Inclusion Strategy, to comply with UN system-wide requirements as spelled out in the wider UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. WIPO's disability inclusion work will build on and strengthen initiatives that have already been put in place in the past, notably the improved physical accessibility of WIPO's premises and the "Accessible Books Consortium" initiative (ABC). Through these initiatives, WIPO has developed good relationships with Organizations of People Living with Disability, in particular those representing blind and visually impaired persons. Also, WIPO, in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), carried out an assessment of its e-recruitment platform to ensure accessibility by all users. The recommendations of the report are currently being implemented.

Other developments

50. For the past few years, HRMD has embarked on the implementation of a slate of new HR tools, processes and procedures, through a digital transformation process, in order to achieve an increasingly enabling HR function. The pandemic accelerated this transition to digital ways of working and also demonstrated how technology can be used to free-up time from repetitive, routine tasks.

51. In 2021, HRMD, in coordination with other internal units, introduced a new interface enhancing employees experience while connecting to the HR portal and continued the development of flexible working arrangements functionalities, including teleworking for an implementation in January 2022. It also completed the HR Digitization Project to digitize the current paper-based files of active staff members in order to improve the single digital repository of employee documents and records, and consequently strengthen HRMD's capability to consult information securely online from the office and remotely. Similarly, in order to better manage long-term sick leave, specific reporting was developed for use by the Medical Unit, enabling it to target cases requiring its support, to help the employee in question to resume work, and assist his/her department to adequately prepare the return to work.

52. Additionally, since last year, the entire recruitment process, from planning and talent sourcing to assessing, selecting and hiring, is conducted in a virtual environment. By using technology such as asynchronous video interviews and an online testing platform, this has provided a professional state of the art candidate experience, while enabling HRMD to more strategically use its time on value-added responsibilities. Along with this, HRMD recognized that remote onboarding, along with its own challenges, had also become a key part of virtual recruiting. A new project in this respect was launched and is expected to be completed by mid-2022.

53. HRMD puts significant efforts in the continuous review and updating of the rules and policies governing the conditions of service of WIPO employees, allowing WIPO to maintain a sound regulatory framework that swiftly adapts to, and supports, the changing needs and priorities of the Organization, while ensuring alignment with best practices in the United Nations common system. As part of the continued enhancement of the HR policy framework, some 20 new or revised Office Instructions and other administrative issuances were released during the reporting period, accompanied where necessary by general communications to ensure that personnel understood the policy developments.

54. Finally, as mentioned in our previous Annual Report, changing WIPO's culture, listening to the voice of its workforce in order to create a trust-based, dynamic and rewarding culture, is a key priority of the Administration. The intention is to put in place tools to identify what works and what does not, to better understand employee motivations and aspirations, how to improve

employee well-being and to include the voice of employees in business decisions. To this end, the process of launching an employee engagement survey in 2022 is currently underway and a contract was signed with LinkedIn Glint to provide a survey platform and consultancy services in December 2021. This platform will provide real-time and on-demand access to employee feedback and an understanding of key opportunities for managers and HRMD alike. This visibility, combined with the platform's prescriptive recommendations, should enable managers to take the most impactful actions to increase engagement, build stronger teams and improve performance across the Organization as a whole.

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