Call for submissions: Access to information in international organizations

Submission by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

1) Does your organization have an access to information policy? If so, please provide a link or copy of it. Please also respond to the following questions, as appropriate:

WIPO has an array of policies and practices to ensure transparency and public access to a wide range of information about the Organization. Although not formally labeled an "access to information policy," WIPO ensures the public has free and timely access to key materials.

- All documents submitted to the sessions of the Assemblies and other bodies of the Member States of WIPO and of the Unions administered by WIPO are made available online. Such materials are circulated and posted on the WIPO website typically two months before the meetings are held, in all six official UN languages. In addition, summary meeting reports are adopted on the last day of the meeting, and made available immediately. Full, verbatim, records of the meetings are thereafter made available within several weeks. Other documentation made available publicly includes WIPO's financial results and financial management reports, WIPO's Programs and Program Performance Reports, WIPO's Medium-Term Strategic Plans, the Annual Report on Human Resources, and Reports by the External Auditor, among others.

- Deliberations of WIPO's governing bodies are "webcast" live; the recordings are subsequently made available on the website as "video on demand" archives.

- The public has free access to WIPO's extensive and innovative databases, including "Patentscope" (containing all relevant information on international applications of patents filed with WIPO), the Global Brand Database, and the Global Design Database. Such Databases contain, respectively, over 58 million patent documents, 28 million trademarks, appellations of origin and emblems records, and 1,8 million industrial design registrations.

- WIPO runs programs specifically aimed at helping institutions and individuals access the wealth of information contained in WIPO's databases, such as the Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) program.

- Under the Terms of Use of WIPO's website (http://www.wipo.int/tools/en/disclaim.html), anyone may reproduce, distribute, adapt, translate and publicly perform the content on the website, without explicit permission, provided that the content is accompanied by an acknowledgement that WIPO is the source.

- All WIPO publications are available for free downloading from the WIPO website. In addition, in November 2016, WIPO announced a new Open Access Policy, which introduces the use of Creative Commons licenses to facilitate the access to and re-use of information in WIPO publications.

WIPO also engages in regular communications with the press and the public through its website and social media.

Moreover, WIPO coordinates – in collaboration with science and technology publishers and content providers – an Access to Research for Development and Innovation (ARDI) program, which provides

access to scientific and technical information to national patent offices, as well as academic and research institutions, so as to stimulate innovation and promote the use of industrial property rights in least developed and developing countries.

WIPO also coordinates an Access to Specialized Patent Information (ASPI) program, which provides access to advanced tools and services for retrieving and analyzing patent data to designated patent offices, as well as to academic and research institutions so as to support developing countries in more fully exploiting their innovative potential by developing new solutions to technical problems faced at the local and international levels.

In addition to these types of proactive disclosures, WIPO operates a Customer Service Center that responds to individual requests for information.

1. *What are or were the key considerations supporting your organisation's decision to develop an access to information policy?*

WIPO's approach to disclosing information is based on the understanding that WIPO's work should be open and transparent, except insofar as specific and concrete concerns require confidentiality (e.g., disclosure is likely to endanger the safety or security of an individual, violate his or her rights, or invade his or her privacy.) WIPO also seeks to protect the authenticity, integrity, and accessibility of its records.

WIPO's Open Access Policy states the following:

> "WIPO has adopted an Open Access Policy in support of its commitment to the sharing and dissemination of knowledge, and to make its publications easily available to the widest possible audience.
>
> WIPO believes that a fundamental purpose of a balanced and effective intellectual property (IP) system is to provide frameworks and incentives that encourage the creation, dissemination and use of works of the human mind for the economic, cultural and social benefit of all.
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> WIPO takes a leading role in facilitating universal access to the wealth of knowledge and technology information generated by the international IP system. As the world reference source of IP-related information, WIPO also makes available extensive collections of publications, data, studies, reports, and learning resources. WIPO's Open Access Policy formalizes this commitment to knowledge- sharing, providing [more streamlined] access to these resources, and enabling policy-makers, researchers, practitioners and the general public to easily use and build upon them."

2. *Please describe the process that led to the adoption of the policy, including any internal processes and external consultations. To what extent have your organization's Member States and Observers, and the general public, been involved in its development? Did your organization face any constraints or challenges in creating the policy?*

As noted above, WIPO has a range of policies to ensure openness and transparency; these policies are not the result of a single or uniform process. Instead, these policies and practices were developed and modified as needed over time to address the needs of WIPO, its member States, the media, and the public.

3. If your policy does not provide such information, please indicate the practical arrangements made by your organisation to ensure that the right of access to information can be effectively exercised. For instance, who or what office in your organisation has the responsibility to respond to the requests made by the public?

As noted above, the WIPO Customer Service Center handles inquiries from individual members of the public, including inquiries by telephone, email or the "contact us" form on the WIPO website. The WIPO Customer Service Center receives over 600 such inquiries per month. In addition, the WIPO Library, which is open to the public and offers, inter alia, a unique collection of texts and titles – from the 1883 Paris Convention founding today's IP system, to the most recent IP journals.

4. Please provide any data related to the implementation of the policy, including information on (i) the number of requests your organisation has received under the policy; (ii) the type of applicants seeking information (e.g. individuals, organizations, private sector, etc…); (iii) the type of information requested; and (iv) the percentage of requests that are denied.

As noted above, WIPO makes extensive information publicly available on a proactive basis, without requiring individuals or organizations to request information, as well as offering (through the Customer Service Center, the WIPO Library, and other tools for the general public as well as users of WIPO services) facilities for the receipt of information.

2) If your organization has not yet developed an access to information policy, please explain why it does not have such a policy in place. Please also indicate the measures your organisation has adopted, or intends to adopt, if any, to make available or otherwise disclose information in the public interest.

WIPO continuously reviews and updates its policies and practices to ensure openness, transparency, the widest possible access to its materials, and to the dissemination and sharing of knowledge.