

WIPO Coordination Committee

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ANNUAL REPORT ON HUMAN RESOURCES

prepared by the Secretariat

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This Annual Report on Human Resources (HR) covers the period from January 1 to December 31, 2023, and comprises all HR Matters for which reporting to the WIPO Coordination Committee is required, as well as an overview of HR-related policies, initiatives, and activities of interest to Member States.

Workforce at a Glance

2. As of December 31, 2023, WIPO's total workforce stood at 1,705. The core¹ workforce represented 61.3 per cent (1,045) of the total workforce (a decrease of nearly 4 per cent as compared to 2022), whereas the flexible² workforce constituted 38.7 per cent (660) of the total workforce.

3. Women represented 54.8 per cent of the overall workforce (934), whilst men represented 45.2 per cent (771). This representation varies across categories and grades. Considering only staff members from the core workforce, women represented 54.4 per cent (568) of the 1,045 staff, and men 45.6 per cent (477). The combined average age of the core workforce was 49.7 years which is a slight decrease from last year (50.2) after a constant increase since 2019.

¹ Staff holding a fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointment on regular budget funding.

² 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 SYN1 program of the Swiss Bureau of Subsidized Temporary Employment.

4. From an overall geographical representation perspective and as a result of a suite of outreach efforts, 122 Member States were represented at all levels and categories of staff, whereas 112 Member States were represented on posts subject to geographical distribution³.

5. Complementing this report is a separate [HR Workforce](#) brochure containing key data and metrics as of December 31, 2023, on WIPO's workforce, geographical and gender diversity, talent sourcing, development and training, as well as conflict management. Additionally, Member States are provided twice a year with a confidential report on posts subject to Geographical Distribution. The report provides details on representation by post grade on a country basis, per geographical region as well as by WIPO groups.

Implementing the HR Strategy 2022-2026

6. The year 2023 has been key in setting the stage for critical changes in people engagement at all levels, some of which, while conceptualized in 2023, will be implemented in 2024. The Human Resources Management Department (HRMD) made progress on several initiatives, stemming from the HR Strategy 2022-2026 and aligned with WIPO's Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP).

7. These initiatives require the Organization, with HRMD at the core, to develop a strong foundation that includes, among other things, the six objectives set out below:

01 a vibrant organizational culture supportive of open dialogue, collaboration, knowledge sharing and teamwork	02 organizational agility, flexibility and mobility to meet evolving staffing needs while enhancing diversity and inclusion	03 management of people performance adds value by improving organizational performance and developing staff skills	04 strategic view of learning and career development as integral parts of talent development	05 enhanced staff engagement and wellbeing	06 a “ one stop shop ” service model adapted to the needs of the business units
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8. It is encouraging that since the launch of the HR Strategy, a notable change has been observed, with HRMD's approach and programs reflecting increasingly the mindset of the new culture. For example, HR operational policies have evolved towards a trust-based approach compared to the prior focus on controls and enforcement. The transition from a transactional HR mindset to a strategic and consultative people and culture approach is happening by allocating business driven and client-focused HR Talent Business Partners to every business unit to support the leaders and team members. Through these actions HR is becoming a more integrated, strategic function so that it can create programs and processes that effectively support and retain talent and help the business achieve its objectives. By engaging proactively to advance the culture agenda we are laying the groundwork for a robust Organization that successfully adapts, develops, and evolves to navigate uncertainty, change and disruption.

³ 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.

9. In addition, HRMD is proactively enhancing its own capabilities, ensuring it has the skills needed to advance this transformative journey within the Organization. Collaborating closely with the WIPO Academy, HRMD is working on developing its Learning Matrix, to strengthen its competencies. This initiative ensures that HRMD is equipped with the skills required for the future, such as data analytics, strategic workforce planning, and change management, essential for driving innovation and fostering organizational change.

10. Having arrived at the mid-way point in the implementation of the MTSP, there has been a steady evolution in the understanding that the Organization's people are the joint responsibility of everyone, supported by HRMD. This gradual change is happening through increased communication between managers and teams, ensuring that everyone is aligned and working towards the same goals in support of WIPO's mission. By fostering a more inclusive and integrated approach to managing people, we ensure that everyone is invested in each other's success, and people management becomes a critical skill for all.

11. The different HR initiatives do not stand in isolation - each activity influences others. All the elements of the employee life cycle from attraction through to talent management, development and performance need to connect to drive a more coherent, streamlined, and improved employee experience. This should be kept in mind in reading this report.

II. TOWARDS A VIBRANT ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

12. Culture is the DNA of the Organization. It is made up of people's values, assumptions, behaviors, and attitudes. While HR does not own the Organization's culture, it has a critical role to play in influencing and shaping organizational behavior that attracts and retains employees who can make an impact and become part of a mission-driven organization. In 2020, the outcome of a cultural thumbprint survey initiated in the context of a review of the performance framework showed WIPO as a top-down hierarchical Organization, where silos, a lack of collaboration across the Organization and limited space to learn from failures prevented a vibrant, collaborative culture from emerging.

13. As a result, WIPO has adopted a holistic approach to cultural change, and engaged in an organization-wide consultation process to continuously articulate how everyone should contribute to achieve the goals of the Organization as reflected in the MTSP.

14. While the cultural thread transcends many areas of the HR Strategy, this mid-mandate assessment of progress highlights specific initiatives through which WIPO is actively working to positively influence this important cultural transformation.

Cultural Influencers

15. To drive the right behavior requires the right *mindset*. WIPO leaders have a key role to play in bringing about cultural change. This is clearly reflected in the HR Strategy, which calls for more investment in leadership and management training. In this regard, the cross-sectoral Learning and Development Taskforce placed great emphasis on creating a suitable Leadership Training Program, instituting team learning for WIPO managers, aligning Leadership Goals across different levels and enriching technical expertise with effective leadership skills. More resources were devoted in 2023 to provide Leadership and Management training to managers, regardless of level (35 per cent of the internal training budget was invested in leadership and management courses). The aim is to enable managers to be more accessible, open, and transparent; as well as to prioritize two-way communication by listening to employees and opening the door for frank dialogue in a safe environment, while consistently reinforcing the Organization's purpose, mission, and values through both words and actions. Additionally, good leadership plays a critical role in boosting the mental wellbeing of employees. So beyond

evolving our culture,
investing in
leadership
development is
essential to enhance
employee wellbeing.

16. WIPO introduced annual employee engagement surveys in 2022 that trigger, *inter alia*, team discussions at all levels on actions that can **positively influence practices** that are value-driven, inclusive, and grounded in trust and appreciation. The outputs from the annual surveys combined with other inputs, are then also used to inform the design of a yearly Management Retreat that focuses on identifying ways in which WIPO can improve at the organizational level. Through these surveys, and by encouraging employees to voice their views, WIPO now regularly assesses employee sentiment across the Organization.

17. Developing and embedding the right '**abilities**' in its workforce is a further critical influencer of cultural change. The new, streamlined, performance management approach designed in 2023 and launched in January 2024, emphasizes the importance of giving and receiving feedback on behaviors and values as much as it does on deliverables. Encouraging experiential learning and on the job capacity building through temporary assignments and other mobility initiatives as identified and piloted in 2023 will be the basis for a consolidated mobility framework in 2024, to contribute to a culture that embraces movement and where mobility is perceived as a prerequisite to growth.

18. Our new culture required some rethinking of WIPO's organizational design and the departmental and team, structures, as well as adapting our ways of working to support **more horizontal cross-cutting teamwork** to meet the demand of stakeholders. Recent restructuring has focused on enabling decision-making, communication, knowledge transfer and other critical elements that hardwire the behaviors, habits, and mindsets essential to a cultural transformation. For example, the recent restructuring of the Regional and National Development Sector (RNDS) aims at enabling more thematic projects, sharing of lessons learned, and approaching all types of intellectual property (IP) holistically in a world where industrial and digital innovation is merging. Several horizontal task forces have been established, some on critical cross-cutting topics such as artificial intelligence (AI), but also to support the evolution of our working models. For example, the information technology (IT) transition task force has been playing a critical role in the establishment of a new optimized operating model using a product-based approach for IT in the context of the restructuring of the function.

19. Lastly, a critical foundation for the road to change will be choosing to understand and recognize how **the right processes and systems** influence the Organization's ability to shift the way we work. Various initiatives are underway to introduce increased efficiency across WIPO's systems and procedures. The 2023 Management Retreat resulted in the establishment of a 'cutting red tape' taskforce that will focus on streamlining but also revisiting the current delegation of authority to empower staff. In the same vein, HRMD is, where appropriate, shifting to trust-based approaches, working closely with the internal and external auditors to ensure we keep the required controls while facilitating processes where the risks are minimal. In 2023, HR participated in the preparatory work, including a review of administrative processes, with respect to the Capital Master Plan (CMP) Project on Phase I of the AIMS 2.0 Transformation. Looking forward, HR will play a key role in defining new ways of working and implementing behavior change interventions to close potential gaps.

20. Through the above initiatives and others, WIPO aims to enable the behaviors, habits, and mindsets that are essential for a culture transformation.

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