

World Intellectual Property Rights Organization (WIPO)

Key features

Type of organisation: United Nations specialized agency

Charter/Constitution: WIPO Convention;
www.wipo.int/treaties/en/text.jsp?file_id=283854

Membership:

- Nature: States
- Number: 191

Year of establishment: 1967

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

Country offices: External offices in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Beijing, China; Tokyo, Japan; Moscow, Russia; Singapore, Singapore.

UN Liaison Office: New York, U.S.A.

Secretariat staff: 1 200

Total budget: CHF 388 million (2016) (approx. EUR 336 million)

Type of activity: Policy dialogue, data collection, research and analysis, information exchange, discussion of good regulatory practices, development of legal instruments, dispute settlement.

Sectors of activity: Intellectual property

Webpage: www.wipo.int/portal/en/

Members

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Niue, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Relationship with non-members

Membership of WIPO is equally open to any state that is a "Member of the United Nations, any of the Specialized Agencies brought into relationship with the United Nations, or the International Atomic Energy Agency, or is a party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice." (Article 5(2), WIPO Convention). Other countries that are invited by the WIPO General Assembly may also become Members of WIPO.

Observers

WIPO has given an official observer status to over 400 non-governmental organisations, other international organisations, stakeholder organisations and interest groups, giving them the right to participate at the formal meetings of WIPO member states. Palestine also has an observer status.

Mandate

Overall, the mission of WIPO is to lead the development of a balanced and effective international intellectual property (IP) system that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all. The two main objectives pursued by WIPO as per its constitutive treaty are (i) to promote the protection of intellectual property through co-operation among States and, where appropriate, in collaboration with any other international organization; and (ii) to ensure administrative co-operation among the intellectual property Unions established by the treaties that WIPO administers.

IRC processes taking place within the World Intellectual Property Rights Organization



Categories of legal and policy instruments

	Is it taking place within the IO?	Approximate number
Treaties for ratification by States (excluding the funding one)	√	26
Legally binding decisions		
Recommendations	√	3
Political declarations		
Model treaties or law		
Production of technical standards	√	49
Non-binding guidance/best practices document		

Interactions with other international organisations active in the field

Mechanisms of interaction	√	Approximate number of IOs involved	Examples
Develop joint instruments	√	3	WIPO has established formal and informal relations with a large number of IOs. Examples of a joint instrument are a 1995 Agreement between WIPO and WTO/OMC, and other arrangements with such IOs as FAO, IFAD, ILO, IMF, ITU, UN, UNESCO, AU and EU.
MoU or other agreements	√	58	
Participate in co-ordinating institution	√	3	
Joint meetings that provide forum for co-ordination	√	6	
Observe relevant actions of other bodies	√	30	
Exchange information	√	30	

History

The need for international protection of intellectual property (IP) became evident at the end of the 19th Century. The Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property was adopted in 1883, covering industrial property in the widest sense, including patents, trademarks, industrial designs, utility models, service marks, trade names, geographical indications and the repression of unfair competition. It was soon followed by the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works in 1886. The secretariats administering these two Conventions were combined in 1893 in the United International Bureaux for the Protection of Intellectual Property (known under its French acronym, BIRPI). The BIRPI was transformed into WIPO in 1970, a member-state led inter-governmental organisation. WIPO became a specialized agency of the United Nations system in 1974.

Source: Updated from OECD (2016), *International Regulatory Co-operation: The Role of International Organisations in Fostering Better Rules of Globalisation*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264244047-en>