

Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP)

Thirty-Second Session
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**REPORT ON WOMEN AND IP: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES,
STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

prepared by the Secretariat

1. The Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) at its twenty-sixth session, held from July 26 to 30, 2021, while discussing the topic “Women and Intellectual Property (IP)” under the agenda item IP and Development, took the following decision:

“The Committee considered the Follow-up Proposal by Mexico on “Women and IP” contained in document CDIP/26/10 Rev. The Committee approved the proposal contained in that document” (para. 7 of the Summary by the Chair)

2. The mentioned Follow-up Proposal by Mexico, *inter alia*, requested the Secretariat to undertake a series of actions and decided “to revisit the issue of “Women and IP” periodically, when WIPO Secretariat deems to be necessary, under the IP and Development agenda item, starting at the CDIP spring session of 2023”.

3. This document reports on WIPO’s strategic action plan for supporting and empowering women in the field of IP, as well as provides an overview of the complementarity of WIPO’s internal and externally-facing activities. It also responds to the Committee’s request to assess further work to be undertaken in this area. The reporting period covers the year 2023.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND INTERNAL EFFORTS

4. WIPO recognizes that the equal participation of women and men, in all their diversity, in the creativity and innovation ecosystems at large is at the core of its mission to contribute to “a world where innovation and creativity from anywhere is supported by IP for the good of everyone”. A lack of diversity in the IP ecosystems limits the maximization of benefits and perpetuates systemic inequalities. Diversity and inclusion are foundational to innovative, forward-looking, and creative systems and organizational environments.

5. This vision was embraced by the goals and strategic objectives of WIPO’s Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2022-2026,¹ and was operationalized by several internal strategies and guiding documents, such as the IP and Gender Action Plan (IPGAP),² and the Human Resources (HR) Strategy 2022-2026.³

6. To further anchor this vision within the Organization, WIPO developed and recently launched a revised Policy on Gender Equality. This Policy succeeds WIPO’s first Policy on Gender Equality,⁴ and frames WIPO’s work on gender equality at large. It focuses on two main objectives: i) strengthening institutional gender mainstreaming and enabling WIPO to incorporate gender aspects in all areas of its work; and ii) fostering an inclusive and diverse organizational culture and advancing equal representation at all grades and levels. The Policy incorporates the requirements of system-wide accountability frameworks, such as the United Nation’s (UN) System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP 2.0) and the findings of internal and system-wide evaluations and reviews. It aims to build inclusive structures, processes, and initiatives, while addressing gender gaps in access to rights and opportunities. As such, it works in synergy with other internal documents dedicated to diversity and inclusion, for example, WIPO’s Disability Inclusion Strategy,⁵ thus addressing multilayered aspects of exclusion and marginalization.

7. To support institutional gender mainstreaming, WIPO continued to implement the UN-SWAP framework and to make progress towards full compliance. WIPO improved gender mainstreaming in planning and programming within the annual work planning cycle, providing tailored internal guidance, and strengthening indicators and the related data collection. In 2023, WIPO introduced a UN-aligned gender equality marker to track investments and results related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. At the UN inter-agency level, the Organization remained active in the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and the UN-SWAP networks. Among its efforts to improve equal representation and inclusive organizational culture, WIPO continued to be an active member of the network of IP Offices on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA). The network met regularly to exchange good practices, learn from each other and to collaborate on initiatives and projects, such as, an annual joint message on International Women’s Day⁶ or the Global Mentoring Pilot⁷ connecting IP Offices around the world through inter-office mentorships.

¹ The Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2022 – 2026 is available at: www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc_details.jsp?doc_id=541373

² The IPGAP is available at: **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

³ The Human Resources (HR) Strategy 2022-2026 is available at: www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc_details.jsp?doc_id=548453

⁴ WIPO’s first Policy on Gender Equality was issued in 2014.

⁵ The Disability Inclusion Strategy is available at: <https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/disability-inclusion/en/docs/inclusion-strategy-2023.pdf>

⁶ The 2023 Joint Message is available at: www.wipo.int/women-and-ip/en/news/2023/news_0001.html

⁷ Further information about the Global Mentoring Pilot is available at: www.uspto.gov/initiatives/equity/mentoring-programs/global-mentoring-pilot

STRATEGIC DIRECTION ON IP AND GENDER

8. The year 2023 marked the formal and public launch of the IPGAP⁸ – the Organization’s first strategic action plan framing and guiding WIPO’s contribution to overarching and worldwide efforts toward achieving economic equality and empowerment for women and girls. The vision of the IPGAP is a world where innovation and creativity by women anywhere are supported by IP for the good of everyone. Throughout the reporting period, the IPGAP supported the establishment of new collaborations and partnerships with the Organization’s external stakeholders in the IP and innovation ecosystem. The IPGAP dovetails with WIPO’s 2022 – 2026 MTSP timeline and has been designed to flow from and complement the MTSP pillars of work, allowing all WIPO Sectors an opportunity to plan and budget accordingly for the IPGAP and related activities in the Work and Budget programs. As well, the 2024-2025 Program of Work and Budget included a new Key Performance Indicator (KPI) tracking progress on “implementation of the WIPO IP and Gender Action Plan.” Importantly, the new KPI is cross-organizational, and accountability is shared across all WIPO Sectors.

9. The IPGAP’s initiatives include: i) government support for incorporating a gender perspective into IP legislation, policies, programs, and projects; ii) research to identify the scope and nature of the gender gap in IP and ways to close it; and iii) new gender-oriented projects in the IP environment to effectively educate and enhance the IP skills of women and the institutions that support them.

10. To promote effective internal and external strategic collaboration on all IP and gender initiatives and partnerships, an internal IP and Gender Working Group was launched in 2023. New and expanded collaborations with other international organizations are underway, particularly with economic and/or science-oriented organizations that share similar interest/focus on economic empowerment of women and other underrepresented communities. For example, in 2023, WIPO expanded its work with the International Trade Centre’s (ITC) *SheTrades* initiative, through which WIPO is extending its outreach and capacity-building resources to women entrepreneurs around the world, as well as with the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) *Gender Research Hub*, through which WIPO will contribute to and learn from research and data-oriented discussions aimed at deepening understanding of women’s economic empowerment.

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

11. WIPO worked to support women’s increased participation in the IP system on several fronts and significantly broadened its initiatives in 2023. Following the strengthened internal and external awareness-building and, importantly, an increased interest from Member States and the IP community, WIPO further enhanced its services and projects for women entrepreneurs and for policymakers interested in bringing more women into the innovation, creation, and IP ecosystem. The Organization continued to expand its direct on-the-ground activities with women entrepreneurs, national SME support institutions and women’s associations to provide concrete IP trainings as part of wider economic empowerment and entrepreneurship projects.

THEMATIC ACTIVITIES

Data and Analysis of the IP Gender Gap

12. WIPO continued to drive new methodologies and analyses of the subject of women, innovation and creativity, reinforcing the importance of collecting data on women’s and other groups’ participation in the IP system to help inform policymakers. On the International

⁸ WIPO established the IPGAP in 2022. Its internal implementation commenced in the second half of 2022.

Women's Day 2023, WIPO released a report on the global gender gap in patenting entitled "*The Global Gender Gap in Innovation and Creativity: An International Comparison of the Gender Gap in Global Patenting over Two Decades*".⁹ It provides the latest figures on women filing for patent applications through the WIPO's Patent Cooperation Treaty system and uses an improved World Gender Name Dictionary.

Sharing Sessions on Women and IP

13. Following a decision by the CDIP, a forum to raise awareness on the importance of empowering and increasing women's participation in the IP ecosystem was established through a series of sharing sessions on "*Closing the Gender Gap in IP*". In addition to raising awareness, the objective of these sessions was to promote the results of WIPO's work in this area, and to bring together stakeholders from various regions to share their experience and practices in addressing the constraints faced by women and girls in accessing the IP system. One such virtual session on "*Women in the Creative Industries*" took place on October 12, 2023,¹⁰ bringing together some 180 participants¹¹ from more than 100 countries. The session featured women from Pakistan, Kenya, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Hungary who shared their inspirational experiences in the creative industries and the role of IP in their journeys. It also highlighted women's predominant presence in the workforce and WIPO's commitment to addressing gender inequality through initiatives like the IPGAP.

Mentoring and Matchmaking

14. As impact-focused project work for women and IP has grown and evolved, mentorship models are increasingly being integrated into project design and implementation. For example, throughout the year, WIPO provided support to indigenous women and women from local communities. The "*WIPO Training, Mentoring, and Matchmaking Program on IP for Women Entrepreneurs from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities*" (the WEP)¹² focused on women's entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity related to traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions among indigenous peoples and local communities. The third global edition of the WEP (WEP 3) was launched in 2023. In addition, a regional edition was offered to women from Central Europe, Baltic States, and Mediterranean countries. The WEP 3 consists of two phases: i) a training phase (comprising the Practical Workshop, virtual Expert Clinics, and a Booster Practical Workshop next year); and ii) a mentoring and matchmaking phase.¹³ Since its launch in 2019, the WEP has supported over 100 women entrepreneurs and their communities from 63 countries worldwide. The WEP is delivered in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Trademark Association (INTA).

15. In another example, in Africa, a regional IP conference, held from May 15 to 17, 2023 in Rwanda, highlighted the crucial role women play in agriculture and agribusiness value chains and emphasized their potential contribution to a robust sector. In follow-up, WIPO initiated a project focusing on mentoring and coaching women in agribusiness to leverage the IP system for commercial success. The Mentoring and Coaching Program on "*IP for Women in Agribusiness*" aims to provide tailored mentorship of three months to 30 women entrepreneurs.¹⁴ Throughout the program, participants are receiving guidance on various

⁹ The report is available at: www.wipo.int/publications/en/details.jsp?id=4653

¹⁰ Further information can be found at: www.wipo.int/women-and-ip/en/news/2023/news_0002.html

¹¹ This figure indicates the number of participants who joined the session via the platform. In addition, a wide number of participants followed the sessions via the live webcasting.

¹² The project is implemented by the Traditional Knowledge Division of the WIPO Global Challenges and Partnerships Sector.

¹³ The matchmaking phase for the WEB 3 will start in 2024.

¹⁴ A story of Zimbabwean entrepreneur who is a beneficiary of the program can be found at: www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/stories/zimbabwe-peserverance-2024.html

crucial aspects for business success, including commercialization strategies, trademarks and branding, business plan development, drafting application documents, and IP assessment.

16. In the Asia and the Pacific, a mentoring program, spanning more than three months and focusing on IP assessment, was initiated for the benefit of 35 women scientists and researchers as part of Sri Lanka's University Business Linkage (UBL) program. The program consisted of 20 tailored IP coaching sessions, addressing beneficiaries' specific queries and skill needs. Notably, 67% of the beneficiaries felt prepared to mentor other women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields on IP and innovation topics, with several participants achieving success stories.¹⁵ Lessons learned highlighted the importance of professional collegiality among women, improving access to mentoring and networking opportunities, as well as addressing the gender assumptions that lead women to underestimate their own intellectual assets. Another example is the "*Asia-Pacific Women Innovators and Entrepreneurs Project*" in Sri Lanka where 30 participants were mentored in business plan development, offered in both English and Sinhalese. Through 40 mentoring meetings, participants received targeted one-on-one support, leading to increased IP filing activity and a heightened awareness of the importance of market research, validation, and sizing.¹⁶ During the same project in Indonesia, 62 Indonesian women participants were provided long-term mentoring in business plan development, offered in both Indonesian Bahasa and English.¹⁷ And in the Vietnam edition of the project, 30 Vietnamese women entrepreneurs were provided business planning mentorship in both Vietnamese and English. The program resulted in increased IP filings and usage of IP tools in innovation by Vietnamese women, with WIPO's intervention connecting beneficiaries to potential customers and providing regional exposure.¹⁸ Meanwhile, the Asia-Pacific Women Innovators and Entrepreneurs Weekly Wednesday meetings offered long-term mentorship to 150 participants in IP assessment, conducted in English, Vietnamese, and Indonesian Bahasa. Since its inception in March 2022, over 400 stakeholders in business, innovation, and STEM fields were engaged, fostering active usage of IP tools and resulting in a remarkable 73% of participants securing IP filings or rights. These success stories have been celebrated through *IP for Impact*¹⁹ stories and media publications.

17. In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), multiple mentoring programs were initiated aimed at empowering women in STEM careers and women entrepreneurs in the region through effective IP management. The "*IP Management for Women in STEM Careers in Latin America*" program involved in total 18 participants and focused on key aspects of IP, commercialization of inventions and technology transfer. Additionally, the "*IP for Women Entrepreneurs in Latin American Countries: Creating Value through IP*" program included in total 24 participants and

¹⁵ For instance, Shahani Hettiarachchi, mentored on the strategic use of her innovation, the "Eco Z" Filter, won the USAID-funded Island Climate Initiative's Plastic Innovation Challenge, while Dilani Samanthika, mentored on branding and marketing with IP, won the Best Export Marketing Plan in Sri Lanka's Export Development Board competition.

¹⁶ Notably, beneficiaries, such as Ms. Arulpriya, founder of AgroFeed, benefited from IP-based strategies, revolutionizing the poultry industry with an eco-friendly innovation utilizing fish waste for animal feed, contributing to public health and improving food accessibility in low-income communities. AgroFeed's success led to its selection at the ITC SheTrades' Innovation Festival in Abu Dhabi in February 2024.

¹⁷ Notable beneficiaries include Dr. Noryawati Mulyono, co-founder of PT Seaweedtama BIOPAC, which manufactures seaweed-based packaging materials to replace single-use plastic, and Yafonia Hutabarat, co-founder of PetaNetra, an indoor navigation software for the visually impaired. With WIPO's assistance, Dr. Mulyono has protected her IP and navigated complexities in licensing and commercialization, while PetaNetra has made significant impact and recognition, being a top finalist in global innovation events.

¹⁸ Beneficiaries, such as Ms. Tran Thi Huong Giang, founder of Genatech Pharmaceuticals, and Dr. Nguyen Minh Tan, founder of Woltan Engineering, benefited from customized guidance on branding, marketing, and IP management, positioning their businesses for export and international ventures. Dr. Nguyen Thi Ngoan, founder of BIONA, strategically positioned her products as sustainable superfoods, expanding into online platforms and neighboring markets. Dr. Nguyen Thu Ha, a microbiologist, received training on strategic value proposition and IP management, enabling her to attract partners and investors for commercialization. Ms. Dao Anh Van, founder of VIG Biopharm, received tailored guidance on IP management and marketing strategies, empowering her to export products to ASEAN countries.

¹⁹ IP for Impact stories are available at: www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/stories/

emphasized elements of business plan development and its links to IP, as well as IP strategies for business. Similarly, the “*IP for Women Entrepreneurs (WEs) in the Caribbean: Creating Value Through IP*” program involved five participants and focused on IP assessment. These initiatives employed both speed mentoring (up to one month) and short-term mentoring (one to three months) to provide targeted support to women in STEM careers and women entrepreneurs.

18. The WIPO Global Awards program continued to offer a unique opportunity for individuals through the WIPO Global Awards mentoring program, providing longer-term mentorship lasting more than three months. This initiative, which welcomed a surge in global interest and increased participation from women in 2023, has focused on IP assessment and included support for commercialization endeavors. The successful conclusion of the mentoring program for the Award winners in 2022 enabled them to forge new business partnerships, secure funding, and attain international recognition.

Skills and Knowledge Building

19. The WIPO Academy strengthened its efforts to close the gender gap in IP knowledge. Between 2016 and 2023, WIPO Academy posted a positive record on gender parity, having continuously reported an overall gender balance in favor of women participants (52%) in relevant course offerings. In 2023, 94,702 women enrolled in the WIPO Academy Programs under its Professional Development, Summer Schools, Master’s and IP Colloquia, IP Training Institutes (IPTIs), and Distance Learning (DL).

| Academy Program | Female participation 2022 | Female participation 2023 |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Professional Development Program* | 148 | *60 |
| WIPO Summer Schools | 837 | 827 |
| WIPO Joint Master’s Degrees and IP Colloquiums | 407 | 663 |
| Distance Learning | 47,145 | 47,420 |
| Intellectual Property Training Institutes** | 46,575 | **45,732 |
| Overall Female Participants | 95,112 | 94,702 |

* Attributed to ongoing changes in this program.

** Attributed to those trained by IPTIs on the ground facilitated by Academy’s IPTI’s Trainers.

20. The WIPO Academy designed and implemented specialized training initiatives in 2023 to support women in the of field of IP, including:

(i) In collaboration with the UNESCO, a selected group of scientists from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-L’Oréal “*For Women in Science*” program was invited to the inaugural “*Leadership Workshop on IP, Science and Innovation for Women Scientists*” at WIPO in Geneva, Switzerland between April 25 to 28, 2023. The workshop focused on the potential journey of their research from “concept to market”, and how IP rights could be leveraged as a tool for commercial success. Participants interacted with established female scientist-entrepreneurs, learned from their success stories, and engaged in immersive problem-solving exercises. The workshop also comprised a Roundtable with leading female innovators and IP professionals on the sidelines of World IP Day on April 26, 2023.

(ii) “*IP for Women Researchers*” project in Egypt aims to empower 70 women scientists and researchers with comprehensive IP training, equipping them to navigate IP law and strategy effectively. Additionally, 10 women researchers will receive personalized support to develop and implement IP strategies, fostering their success in the

marketplace. Scheduled from May 2023 to February 2024, this initiative seeks to enhance the professional growth and leadership of women innovators in Egypt's research community.

(iii) "*Master Class on IP for Digital SMEs for Scaling-Up Women-Led Digital Businesses*" initiative, conducted in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) eTrade for Women initiative, empowered women entrepreneurs from Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as from Asia and the Pacific by providing essential training on IP management. In Quito, Ecuador, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 24 and 30 women entrepreneurs respectively participated in these master classes, gaining invaluable knowledge and skills to scale up their digital businesses. Additionally, through the Advanced International Certificate Course on IP Asset Management for Business Success (AICC), two female scientists from Jordan and Viet Nam were sponsored by WIPO to attend an in-person training component in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

(iv) A module "*Women Exporters*" was integrated into the existing DL-730 (IP and Exports) course to address the specific challenges faced by women exporters in Latin America and the Caribbean, showcasing their IP success stories. Ongoing efforts have included the development of a Distance Learning Course tailored for women entrepreneurs in Egypt, focusing on IP training, vocational development, and soft skills enhancement, thereby fostering their growth and success in the region.

(v) As part of an ongoing partnership with UNCTAD and eTrade for Women, in December 2023, WIPO Academy organized a half-day event titled "*Bringing the Gender Gap for Women Digital Entrepreneurs*". This training session empowered 25 women advocates and leaders from multiple regions, aiming to address and bridge the gender gap in digital entrepreneurship.

(vi) Under the IPTIs program, "*IP as a Leveraging Tool for Salvadoran Women*" project empowered women entrepreneurs and creators in El Salvador through open training programs and the "*Women's Marcatón*" competition. Collaborating with university groups, the project provided technical support to 20 selected entrepreneurs and creators, resulting in successful trademark applications for all participants. The top three proposals received personalized mentoring from WIPO consultants to implement their business plans.

(vii) The IPTIs Program in the Dominican Republic, the "*Capacity Building Program for Women Entrepreneurs and Innovators*", provided specialized IP training and support, enhancing IP knowledge and skills among participants from May to December 2023. Similarly, in Ukraine, the "*IP Capacity-Building Project for Ukrainian Women in the Visual Arts*" focused on empowering women in the creative sector through online training from April to August 2023.

COVID-19 Response Package

21. Under the COVID-19 response package, a range of projects were launched, number of which were directed toward empowering women entrepreneurs and local communities. For example, in Uganda's Acholi sub-region, a project has aimed to empower women and local communities producing shea butter products to effectively utilize geographical indications (GIs) in order to enhance their market access and competitiveness. In Liberia, a project has supported local brands, industries and women-led SMEs, offering training and mentorship to build awareness of IP, innovation, e-commerce, and IP management clinics. This endeavor

seeks to equip women entrepreneurs with essential skills to successfully navigate the digital economy.²⁰

Multilateral Discussions

22. In December 2023, heads of the G7 IP Offices,²¹ along with the Director General of WIPO, convened virtually to address the theme of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) within the IP ecosystem. During the conversation, participants shared recent research findings on women and IP from their respective countries, highlighting national-level initiatives aimed at enhancing diversity among users of the IP system. They also identified emerging areas for further collaboration and deeper engagement. Additionally, discussions centered on internal D&I efforts within their own Offices, emphasizing organizational approaches to promote diversity and inclusion within the IP community. This meeting underscored a collective commitment among G7 IP Offices and WIPO to foster a more inclusive and diverse environment within the IP ecosystem.

World IP Day

23. World IP Day 2023, with the theme “*Women and IP: Accelerating Innovation and Creativity*,”²² celebrated women innovators, creators, and entrepreneurs, emphasizing their groundbreaking contributions. In collaboration with Member States and partners, WIPO’s campaign aimed to raise awareness, promote inclusivity, and foster diversity in IP ecosystems for accelerated innovation and business growth. Users from 209 countries/territories visited the World IP Day webpages, and combined impressions across all platforms totaled nearly 40 million. Over 400 World IP Day events (onsite, online, and hybrid) were celebrated across 131 countries, highlighting the importance of women’s participation in IP, innovation, and creativity. A key aspect of the campaign was a video competition with the theme “*When women enter the IP universe, we accelerate innovation and creativity and everyone’s a winner*”. This attracted 23,161 participants who voted for winners from 183 entries (73 countries). The 2023 World IP Day Gallery featured 203 women from 62 countries around the world who are forging new horizons with their groundbreaking ideas and included contributions supporting women from around the world. A highlight of the campaign was the World IP Day Film Screening on April 26, 2023. The event, held at WIPO headquarters, featured the film, “*Un Mundo para Julius*”, followed by an insightful questions-and-answers session with the film director, Ms. Rossana Diaz Costa. Work is underway for the 2024 WIPO World IP Day, the theme of which is “*IP and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Building our common future with innovation and creativity*”. World IP Day 2024 will explore how IP encourages and can amplify the innovative and creative solutions that are so crucial to building our common future based on 17 SDGs, including SDG 5 on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

International Women’s Day

24. WIPO continued its annual celebration of International Women’s Day on March 8. The occasion was used to highlight the importance of IP in fostering women’s entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity, which in turn contributes to technological advancement, cultural enrichment and economic growth. In 2023, for the theme “*DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality*”, WIPO joined thirty-five IP Offices from around the world in a joint message²³ pledging support for women in creativity and innovation, and renewing commitment to empower women’s participation in the IP ecosystem. In honor of the International Women’s

²⁰ Both projects span from 2023 to 2024.

²¹ Canada, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

²² The 2023 World IP Day webpages, Gallery and campaign materials are available at: www.wipo.int/ip-outreach/en/ipday/2023/

²³ The joint message is available at: www.wipo.int/women-and-ip/en/news/2023/news_0001.html In 2024, WIPO and other IP Offices will develop a joint message on the theme “*Invest in women: Accelerate progress*”.

Day 2023, the WIPO Academy's DL program extended 50 scholarships to female applicants hailing from developing countries, least developed countries (LDCs) and countries in transition, enabling them to enroll in advanced DL courses. These scholarships were allocated proportionally based on region and language.

25. WIPO, through its Coordination Office in New York, organized an Exhibition on Women in Science, highlighting the crucial role of women in Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI). Themed "*Gender & Science, Technology, and Innovation*", the exhibition aimed to engage and inspire the general public, particularly women and youth under 35, showcasing the contributions of women in various fields. Attendees included representatives from government, IP Offices and missions, women in the creative sector, and individual women, fostering effective interaction and partnerships with the UN, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This exhibition served as a platform to emphasize the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women in driving innovation and sustainable development.

Innovation to Address Global Challenges

26. WIPO conducted a series of interview sessions focusing on various aspects of innovation and entrepreneurship, including "*Women in Green*" and "*By Women, For Women: Femtech Entrepreneurs*". Both series aim to enhance communication and engagement worldwide to raise awareness of IP's potential and foster successful IP utilization among innovators and SMEs. "*Women in Green*", launched in March 2020, targets the general public with a focus on the green tech industry with two articles published in 2023. Meanwhile, "*By Women, For Women: Femtech Entrepreneurs*" caters to female innovators and entrepreneurs/investors in the MedTech sector and released its first episode in 2023 with plans for a second episode in January 2024.

27. The "*Access to Water in Tajikistan*" project, which operates under WIPO GREEN's Acceleration Projects, focuses on improving water access, sanitation, and quality of life in rural Tajikistan. With a significant portion of the male population migrating for employment, women are often left to manage households and seek self-reliance, emphasizing the importance of enhancing water infrastructure to alleviate their burdens. Not only does this project aim to provide better water access, but it also creates additional employment and SME opportunities, particularly benefiting female innovators and entrepreneurs in public health, agriculture and tourism sectors, as well as the female population in remote mountainous regions of Tajikistan.

28. WIPO participated in a roundtable discussion "*The New Rural: Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture and Gender Equality Through Innovation*", held at the WTO Public Forum 2023, which brought together stakeholders to address challenges and promote innovation in sustainable agriculture and gender equality on a global scale.

29. WIPO's "*Mission Imagination*",²⁴ another WIPO interview series, has showcased conversations with women entrepreneurs, innovators, and creators, including in the public health domain, aerospace, finance and beyond, addressing challenges faced in male-dominated industries, while emphasizing the importance of IP rights in innovation and entrepreneurship.

30. Through the UN Coordination Office in New York, WIPO marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities with a webinar titled "*Changing the 'Face' of Tech Leadership: Celebrating Persons with Disabilities Leading in Technology and Innovation*". The event

²⁴ The full Mission Imagination series of videos is available at:
youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsm_LOEppJay6Ri7OGuISvLaGWWbpiqyK&si=afr9WzISFPsY8YPL

spotlighted women with disabilities in the tech sector, showcasing their contributions and leadership. Attendees included government representatives, IP Offices and missions, women entrepreneurs, inventors, scientists, researchers, schools/universities, NGOs, public research institutions, and youth. This webinar served as a global platform to acknowledge and celebrate the pivotal role of persons with disabilities, particularly women, in shaping innovation and technology.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

a) Africa

31. The “*Project for the Development, Protection, and Commercialization of the GI “Madd de Casamance”*” has been focused on enhancing the value chain, safeguarding the GI, and supporting producers in marketing their products. Notably, the project was initiated at the request of small units of women who transform the Madd, and the GI Association established to manage it is predominantly led by women. Another initiative, based in Casamance, Senegal, has been ongoing since 2019 and it is set to continue through 2024.

32. The “*Project for Women Entrepreneurs in Namibia*” focused on enhancing the IP understanding of 50 women entrepreneurs. Throughout its duration from June 2022 to July 2023, this initiative provided practical guidance on generating IP and leveraging its value. It also included a speed mentoring program lasting up to one month. Mentees engaged in various activities, including implementing measures to safeguard the secrecy of their cosmetic formulations, registering trademarks across multiple classes, negotiating business expansions into foreign markets, and securing a market presence at airport shops. Recognizing the value of mentorship as an ongoing process, the project advocates for continuous support through volunteer mentoring, supplemented by potential crowdfunding from partners to further bolster the implementation of IP strategies.²⁵

33. Webinars titled “*Women Entrepreneurs: Boost your Business with the Madrid System*” aimed to empower women entrepreneurs by leveraging the Madrid System to enhance their business potential. The pilot webinar, held on 25 April 2023, featured a panel of successful women entrepreneurs from Africa, including from Botswana, Rwanda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, along with a representative from Trinidad and Tobago. They shared their experiences and journeys in protecting their marks nationally and internationally using the Madrid System.

34. The Regional Conference on “*IP for Women in Agribusiness*”, held from 15 to 17 May 2023, aimed to raise IP awareness among African women entrepreneurs in agriculture. The event provided participants with customized IP knowledge, tools, and resources essential for the success of their businesses. Participants had the opportunity to network with other women entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector, engage in discussions, and share their experiences, including best practices and common challenges. Moreover, they interacted with IP experts to learn from their expertise and to express their specific IP-related needs.

b) Arab Countries

35. The “*Empower Her: Petra Women Entrepreneurs Project*” in Jordan focused on cultivating the IP skills of a select group of women entrepreneurs in the region. This initiative, which ran from April 2022 to March 2023, resulted in the development of a collective mark named “Rose Hands”. This mark aims to enhance the marketing and commercialization

²⁵ The project is managed by the Projects Team of the Regional and National Development Sector (RNDS).

endeavors of these women, thereby fostering economic growth and empowerment within Petra's entrepreneurial community.²⁶

36. Aligned with the 2023 World IP Day theme "*Women and IP: Accelerating Innovation and Creativity*", the Virtual Regional Arab Meeting on IP and Women took place from 6 to 7 June 2023, attracting over hundred participants from various Arab countries. The event aimed to raise awareness about the role of IP in advancing women's entrepreneurship, providing practical tools for Arab women entrepreneurs to leverage the IP system, and foster networking and knowledge-sharing among them in the region. WIPO speakers delivered insightful presentations highlighting WIPO's strategic direction under the IPGAP and emphasizing activities supporting women and policy guidance for Member States on IP and gender integration. Efforts to pilot new projects facilitating capacity building and networking among women entrepreneurs were also underscored. Additionally, the utilization of the IP system for business competitiveness was emphasized, with a focus on WIPO registration tools, such as PCT, Madrid, and the Hague to support global product commercialization. Tools and services provided by WIPO for women entrepreneurs, including the IP Diagnostics tool for identifying IP assets, were highlighted. The empowerment of young women in entrepreneurship was also discussed, with a call for early IP education and the introduction of WIPO initiatives, such as the IP Youth Ambassadors Program, IP4Youth and Teachers Program, ADR Young, the Young and GREEN series. Statistics revealed a significant contribution of Arab women inventors, representing 16% of the overall innovation system in Arab countries.

37. Together with the League of Arab States (LAS), a virtual regional meeting on "*Innovation and IP Ecosystems in the Arab Region and Women Entrepreneurs*" took place in 2023. The meeting addressed the role of the innovation and IP ecosystems in advancing Arab women's entrepreneurship skills and offered practical and user-friendly tools to use the innovation and IP ecosystem to their advantage. It provided an opportunity for networking and sharing of best practices among women entrepreneurs in the Arab region.

38. The "*Project on IP and Women Entrepreneurship in Egypt*" has supported over 50 women entrepreneurs and artisans in the Tally embroidery industry in Sohag, providing assistance in utilizing IP tools, branding, and marketing to enhance the value of their products and tap into new market opportunities. Operating from August 2023 to July 2024, this initiative empowers women entrepreneurs in Egypt to thrive in their businesses and contribute to economic growth.²⁷

c) Asia and the Pacific

39. A webinar "*Empowering Women Creators and Creative Entrepreneurs in the Music Sector*" was held in February 2023 and equipped women creators and entrepreneurs with valuable knowledge and skills for producing and marketing their musical works in both local and international markets by leveraging copyright. Targeting women in the creative sector across South Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, it provided a platform for fostering empowerment and advancement in the music industry.

40. Chinese women entrepreneurs, scientists and researchers convened on February 2023 to discuss the trajectory of China's IP development and to foster collaboration with WIPO. Further engagement took place during a "*Symposium for Women Inventors, Scientists, and Entrepreneurs in the New Era*", held on March 8. Participants in both meetings were also encouraged to take part in global events, such as the World IP Day and the WIPO Global Awards.

²⁶ The project is managed by the Projects Team of the Regional and National Development Sector (RNDS).

²⁷ The project is managed by the Projects Team of the Regional and National Development Sector (RNDS).

41. The “*Asia-Pacific Women Innovators and Entrepreneurs Project*” was launched regionally on 8 March 2022, to unite women innovators and entrepreneurs across Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Viet Nam. Led by WIPO, discussions on women’s issues were facilitated to bridge the gap between IP and potential female beneficiaries. Tailored programs were designed to address the unique challenges faced by local women in accessing IP services. In Sri Lanka, WIPO partnered with the National Innovation Agency, in Indonesia with “*WeMean Business*”, and in Viet Nam with the Centre of Science & Technology Application and Start-up (COSTAS) of the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST). These projects align with the objective of utilizing IP more effectively to support growth and development in the Asia-Pacific region, as outlined in the Development Agenda recommendations. Completed in December 2023 in Sri Lanka, scheduled to be completed in June 2024 in Viet Nam, and by July 2024 in Indonesia, the projects aim to empower women entrepreneurs and scientists, contributing to regional development and gender equality initiatives.

42. The “*Women and IP – Storytelling Project*” took place from 9 February to 26 April. It aimed to inspire women entrepreneurs, SMEs, inventors, and those in the creative sector in the ASEAN to utilize IP for economic and social progress. The project showcased the achievements of women in innovation and creativity, emphasizing their positive contributions and economic impact.

43. In Malaysia’s Sabah and Sarawak regions, vibrant celebrations for the World IP Day unfolded from 22 to 26 May 2023. Organized jointly with the IP Corporation of Malaysia, the event aimed to engage women entrepreneurs and innovators, sensitizing them to IP issues. Through workshops and activities and inclusion of university faculty and students, attendees were empowered with knowledge about IP rights and learned about WIPO’s programs and best practices for women entrepreneurs in the region.

44. In collaboration with the IP Office of the Philippines (IPOP HL), a webinar entitled “*IP & Women: Training on Patents & the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) for Women Innovators and Entrepreneurs*” was hosted on 15 November 2023. The webinar provided a comprehensive exploration of patent-related matters, with a particular emphasis on elucidating the intricacies of the PCT and its relevance to women in innovation and entrepreneurship. Speakers from IPOP HL and WIPO delved into crucial topics ranging from the fundamentals of IP to practical insights into patent acquisition processes. Attendees also gained valuable insights into “*WIPO’s Inventor Assistance Program*”, aimed at supporting inventors in navigating the complexities of IP rights.

45. The “*Project for Women Entrepreneurs in Embroidery and Related Crafts in Pakistan*” provided crucial support to 48 women entrepreneurs in the embroidery business. Over the course of its implementation until December 2023, the project enabled these entrepreneurs to generate IP and capitalize on its commercial potential for business development. As a result, the project facilitated the submission of 18 trademark applications, two design applications, and the creation of 10 tailored business plans.²⁸

d) Latin America and the Caribbean

46. A training program entitled “*IP Management for Women in STEM Careers in Latin America*”, with a mentorship component, was implemented to empower women in STEM careers to develop their IP skills and extract value from their technological innovations. Participants gained knowledge in IP protection, business strategies, commercialization, licensing, collaboration, funding scouting for patent filing, scale-up partnerships, technology valuation and incubation agreements. The target audience comprised women scientists or researchers from Latin America. The training took place from 22 September 2022 to

²⁸ The project is managed by the Projects Team of the Regional and National Development Sector (RNDS).

30 April 2023 in Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic and Peru. It will continue from 15 December 2023 to 31 May 2024, in Argentina, Costa Rica, Peru, and Uruguay. Another example included a series of training programs aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs through effective IP management and value creation. The first “*IP for Women Entrepreneurs in Latin American Countries: Creating Value through IP*” initiative focused on developing IP skills and knowledge among women entrepreneurs in Latin America, including Argentina, El Salvador, Panama and Paraguay, from 15 September 2022 to 31 January 2023. The second “*IP for Women Entrepreneurs (WEs) in the Caribbean: Creating Value Through IP*” initiative benefitted women entrepreneurs in the Caribbean countries, and was piloted in Jamaica, from October 2022 to June 2023. A Regional Forum was convened on “*IP for Women in STEM and Entrepreneurs*” from 11 to 13 December 2023, bringing together a group of 26 women who had reached the mentoring phase in training projects conducted between 2020 and 2023 in Latin America. The forum aimed to deepen participants’ understanding of the value of these projects and the adequacy of their methodologies, while also providing an opportunity for participants to share their experiences and foster a community of women in IP.

47. The “*Project for the Commercialization of the GI “Seda de Cajonos” in Oaxaca, Mexico*”, conducted from 2022 to 2023, emphasized training and coaching of women entrepreneurs involved in producing the GI to enhance their commercialization and marketing strategies. Specific training modules, including quality control and collective management, were implemented, alongside the development of branding and commercialization tools, such as logos and promotional materials. The “*Project on IP for Quilombola Women*” has empowered 40 Afro-descendant female entrepreneurs in Brazil with practical IP skills. Running from December 2023 to May 2024, it aims at offering knowledge and skill-building regarding the value of IP for their products while preserving cultural heritage.²⁹ Meanwhile, the “*Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in the Caribbean Through IP*” initiative has aimed to equip up to 45 women entrepreneurs from Belize, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with essential IP skills. The project, running from December 2023 to May 2024, focuses on enhancing access to networks and fostering potential partnerships. The initiative supports women entrepreneurs to create value by leveraging IP and driving economic growth across the Caribbean region.³⁰

e) Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

48. Webinars and national awareness raising workshops for women entrepreneurs focusing on “*The Use of IP for the Promotion of Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment*” were conducted in 2023, aiming to enhance technical skills and knowledge in utilizing the IP system for branding, product development, and commercialization among women entrepreneurs. In April 2023, in Tanzania, 60 women entrepreneurs from Dar es Salaam and Arusha were mentored, while in June 2023, in Cambodia, 70 women entrepreneurs from Siem Reap were involved. The cooperation involved targeted mentorship facilitated by WIPO in partnership with national stakeholders, paving the way for concrete outcomes, such as IP registration and showcasing success stories of women effectively utilizing IP for commercialization. Another webinar featuring presentations on “*The Use of IP for the Promotion of Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment*” was conducted on 20 June 2023, in partnership with the ITC’s SheTrades initiative, raising awareness about IP and its strategic advantages for businesses, particularly among women-led enterprises and business support organizations already benefiting from SheTrades’ technical assistance. The online workshop attracted 250 participants from 61 countries. Notably, the majority of attendees were from LDCs with significant representation from Bangladesh, the Gambia, Nepal, Uganda and Zambia, indicating a widespread interest in utilizing IP for business development and empowerment, particularly among women entrepreneurs in these regions. Launched in June

²⁹ The project is managed by the Projects Team of the Regional and National Development Sector (RNDS).

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2023, the “*Project for Women Entrepreneurs in Bangladesh*” has supported 25 women-led businesses in leveraging IP for growth. It aims to empower female entrepreneurs, fostering economic development and gender equality in Bangladesh.³¹

f) Transition and Developed Countries

49. Throughout the reporting period, a series of webinars were held in transition and developed countries. In March 2023, as part of the “*IP and Women Entrepreneurs Project*”, WIPO conducted a webinar on alternative dispute resolution, engaging youth and women entrepreneurs from developed countries. On 12 April 2023, a webinar titled “*IP for Women Entrepreneurs in the Industrial Design Sector*” showcased the experiences of female designers and entrepreneurs from the Central European and the Baltic States (CEBS) and Caucasian, Central Asian and Eastern European Countries (CACEEC), demonstrating through case studies the use of the industrial design system, and the advantages of the Hague System. A webinar celebrating the World IP Day was held in April 2023 entitled “*Women in Games: Empowering Innovation and Creativity*” as part of the project on “*Videogame Development: A Quest for IP*”, coinciding with World IP Day. The event convened women game developers, industry leaders, and IP experts to discuss how to better support women in the gaming industry and explore the role of IP in videogames. Additionally, the webinar provided an overview of WIPO research on diversity, innovation, and creativity in the gaming sector. A “*Regional Webinar on the PCT System for Women*” was held in June 2023 to raise awareness among women inventors in the CACEEC countries about the benefits of the PCT system.

50. A presentation was held in September 2023 regarding the Artistas Intérpretes, Sociedad de Gestión’s (AISGE) Study, shedding light on the representation of women in Spanish fiction productions. The research uncovered stark gender imbalances, revealing that in cinema, female characters only accounted for 37.8% of roles, with even fewer opportunities for leading roles where actresses secured a mere 34%. In Spanish series, despite a slight majority of male casts at 55.3%, women dominated only in younger age groups, with 55% of female protagonists under 35 years old, contrasting sharply with older age groups where men predominantly took leading roles.

51. Two knowledge and skills-building events, aimed at empowering tradition-based creators and innovators, were held for countries in the region, particularly focusing on women. The “*IP and Traditional Producers*” webinar, held on 16 May 2023, emphasized the utilization of IP tools for cultural preservation, branding, and digital adaptation, with 70% of the audience comprising women. A “*Follow-up Clinic on IP and Traditional Producers*”, held on 28 November 2023, facilitated discussions on traditional knowledge systems and community engagement, with 80% of attendees being women, supported by promotion efforts from the ITC’s SheTrades initiative.

LOOKING AHEAD

52. WIPO will continue to strengthen its efforts to support and increase women’s participation in the IP ecosystem. To this end, new initiatives and projects are underway and in planning, such as:

- (i) On Tuesday, April 23, 2024, as part of the World IP Day 2024 campaign and in continuation of the sharing sessions on “*Closing the Gender Gap in IP*”, WIPO will hold a webinar featuring speakers who have participated in WIPO women entrepreneurship and IP-focused activities. Five remarkable women beneficiaries of WIPO programs or projects will share insights gained through their involvement, each aligning their work, sector, or product with an SDG. This event’s overarching

³¹ The project is managed by the Projects Team of the Regional and National Development Sector (RNDS).

objective is to empower women seeking to thrive in the dynamic and innovative economy, fostering a more inclusive and impactful IP landscape.

- (ii) In Romania, a project spanning from 2024 to 2025, will be launched to support the use of IP tools to promote cultural sustainability and economic revitalization, through the protection of traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, and genetic resources, especially for underserved communities, including women.
- (iii) In February 2024, a new *“Project on IP and Women Entrepreneurship”* will be launched, aiming to establish a supportive system facilitating the management and commercialization of IP rights by women-led enterprises (less than 250 employees) in local communities, with a focus on Iraq, Palestine, and the Syrian Arab Republic. The main objectives encompass several key areas: i) raising awareness among target female beneficiaries in local communities about the main IP principles, systems, and tools, emphasizing the importance and value of IP to their businesses; ii) providing practical and simple IP tools/skills for target project beneficiaries, enabling them to effectively manage, commercialize, and brand their products, thereby increasing their income and promoting their businesses at both local and regional levels; iii) providing customized support to a selected group of beneficiaries through tailored coaching and mentorship on IP and their specific business models, with the overarching goal of capitalizing on their IP assets and enhancing their enterprises. The project is expected to run until December 2024 and build connections with a broader range of IP stakeholders, fostering crucial linkages between target project beneficiaries and the national IP Office, ultimately facilitating IP rights registration.
- (iv) The project *“IP for Women Entrepreneurs in Latin American Countries: Creating Value through IP”*, aims to develop IP skills and knowledge among women entrepreneurs in the region and facilitate value creation through the management of their intangible assets. This initiative, scheduled from May through August 2024, will provide hands-on IP mentoring to selected beneficiaries, facilitate access to peer networks and potential business partners, and promote the use of IP for business development.
- (v) A workshop on *“IP and Women in STEM”*, targeting women scientists or researchers in Lithuania, Slovenia, and Latvia, will be held in 2024, presenting relevant WIPO tools, programs, and success stories from the region.
- (vi) The *“IP Management Clinics FEM Tech”* project, scheduled for 2024, targets 20 to 30 SMEs and startups in the FemTech sector in Israel, providing tailored training workshops and expert advice to bolster their IP strategies.
- (vii) The *“IP and Women in Rural Areas”* project, planned for 2024, will focus on empowering women artisans in rural Spain with essential IP protection and management skills to promote gender equality and sustainable development.
- (viii) The *“Development and Implementation of the Project on Matchmaking Women-led Businesses”* project aims to provide IP skills to women entrepreneurs across various regions and cultures. It will commence with an online workshop offering foundational insights into IP, followed by a peer-to-peer coaching initiative involving 10 women

entrepreneurs over a two to three-month period. This project seeks to establish a network for collaboration and knowledge-sharing, culminating in a closing event dedicated to sharing experiences and promoting outcomes through diverse platforms and social media channels to enhance visibility and dissemination.

- (ix) The phase two of the IPTI's "*IP as a Leveraging Tool for Women*" program, working with women entrepreneurs in the creative sector, is planned for June to December 2024. Meanwhile, a forthcoming IPTI project in Peru is planned for June through December 2024, and will support women-led university spin-offs.
- (x) The WIPO Nigeria Office will host the "*IP and Women Business Summit*" on 28 March 2024, in celebration of International Women's Day. This event aims to empower women entrepreneurs through education on leveraging IP rights effectively. By convening diverse stakeholders, including entrepreneurs, legal experts, and policymakers, the Summit will foster collaboration and equip participants with tools for business success in Nigeria's evolving landscape.
- (xi) Additional webinars highlighting the benefits of the Madrid System for women entrepreneurs in boosting their businesses will be held from March to April and from November to December 2024. They will focus on ASEAN countries, India, Pakistan, and the Caribbean region. The success of the pilot activity in 2023 confirmed the need for further events in other regions.
- (xii) A new project scheduled for 2024 on "*Efficient Branding Strategies for Handicraft Communities*" will be launched for women from local communities in the Republic of Moldova, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Albania. It will focus on the development of certification and collective marks, and GIs for selected handicraft communities.

53. *The Committee is invited to take note of the information contained in this document.*

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