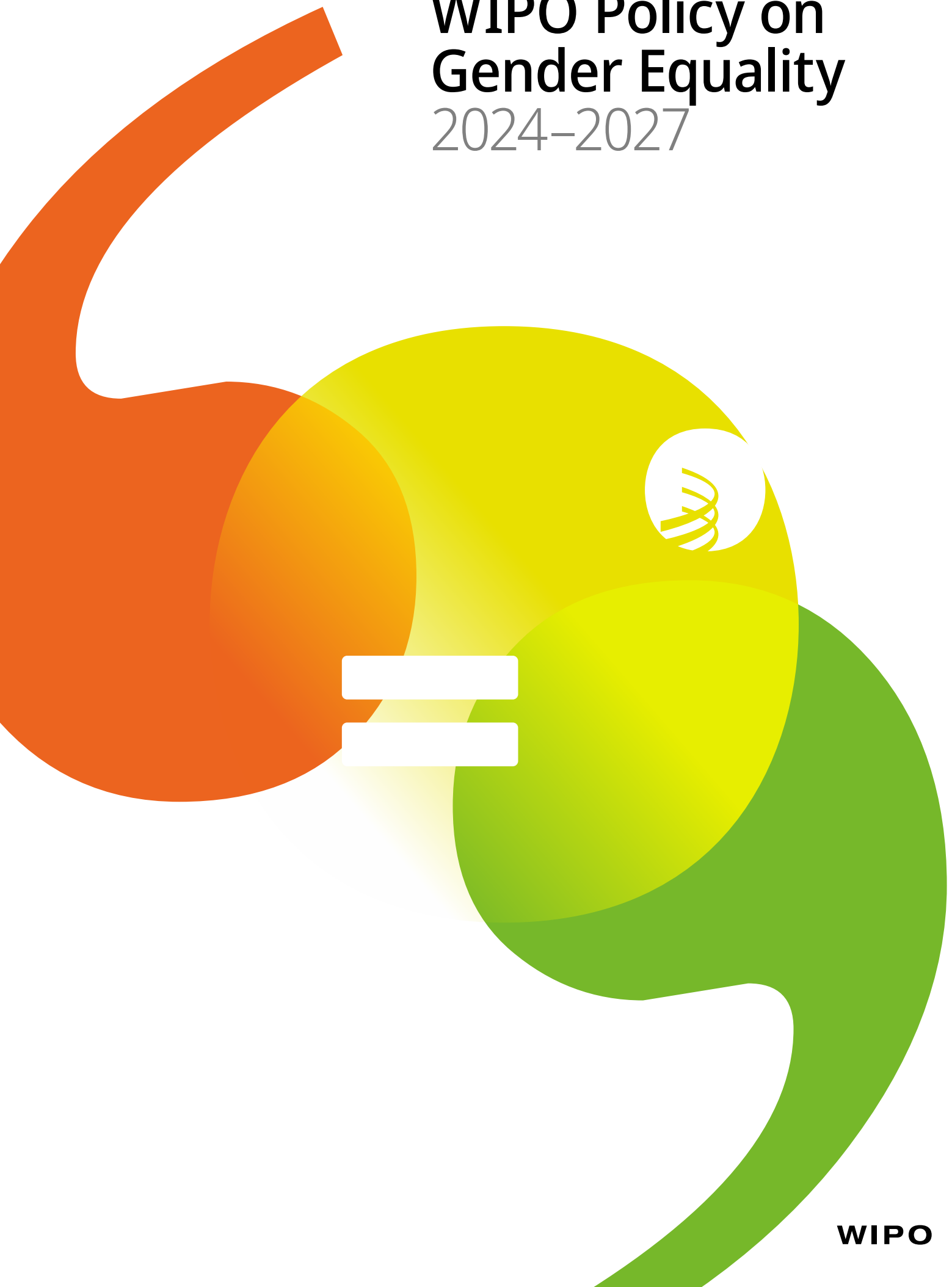# WIPO Policy on Gender Equality
2024–2027

WIPO

Why a policy on gender equality?

Innovators and creators, and the people who support innovation and creativity, are at the core of WIPO's mission. For everyone to be able to participate and express their talents and ideas, a supportive environment is needed, one that empowers people – in all their diversity – both within WIPO and in the broader intellectual property (IP) ecosystem.

The equal participation of diverse women and men, in both the innovation ecosystem and in the structures and organizations that support it, is therefore essential to the success of WIPO's work. This vision is embraced by the goals and strategic objectives of WIPO's Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2022–2026: "a world where innovation and creativity from anywhere is supported by intellectual property for the good of everyone."[1]

WIPO recognizes that, despite advances on gender mainstreaming at the organizational level[2] over the past decade, more work is needed to achieve full compliance. Similarly, and notwithstanding gains over the past decade, a gender gap persists both in the use of the global IP system by women and girls, and the representation of women in IP organizations like WIPO. Women, including from underrepresented groups, continue to be only represented marginally in formal innovation and creativity processes, and in innovation and creativity governance and management structures.

Research has proven that diverse perspectives make systems and organizations more resilient[3] and help them better navigate through crises[4]. Diversity, belonging and inclusion are therefore foundational to innovative, forward-looking and creative ecosystems. Advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the core of WIPO's mission.

To this end, WIPO embraces inclusion and transformation as fundamental prerequisites to achieving gender equality. It recognizes that, in addition to putting in place inclusive structures, processes and initiatives, there is a need to address systemic barriers and close gender gaps in access to rights and opportunities. WIPO also recognizes the different and complementary nature of equality and equity, and commits to embed both in its activities, after appropriate analysis.

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1   Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2022–2026, page 8.
2   As measured annually by the indicators of the UN System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).
3   Duchek, S., Raetze, S. & Scheuch, I. The role of diversity in organizational resilience: a theoretical framework. *Bus Res* 13, 387–423 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-019-0084-8
4   Zenger, J & Folkman, J, "Research: Women Are Better Leaders During a Crisis", Harvard Business Review, Dec 2020.

Key objectives

The present policy provides a framework to guide WIPO's efforts related to gender equality and the empowerment of women for the period 2024–2027.

The document builds on the work of the first Policy on Gender Equality (2014), and the lessons learnt,[5] and takes into consideration relevant UN System-wide reviews and analysis and other good practices stemming from the private sector. It also supports and complements the 2022-2026 IP and Gender Action Plan (IPGAP), which guides the Organization in its external efforts related to increasing the participation of women in the IP ecosystem. Lastly, this policy should be read in conjunction with other documents related to diversity and inclusion at WIPO, for example, WIPO's Disability Inclusion Strategy.

The key objectives of the policy are to:

1. Strengthen institutional gender mainstreaming and enable the Organization to incorporate gender aspects in all areas of its work, by:

– **Increasing the knowledge and capacity of WIPO personnel to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.** Integrating gender dimensions into all areas of WIPO's work requires dedicated focus at all levels. Understanding and using basic gender concepts in context, comfortably being able to discuss inclusion issues and possessing basic analytical skills for gender equality are some of the key capacities that WIPO colleagues should possess to be able to support gender equality work. Relevant skills and knowledge will be embedded in WIPO's learning and development framework and will cascade down to each Sector. Tools, such as capacity assessments, will be used to determine the level of understanding, knowledge and skills personnel possess on gender equality to inform required training.
– **Increasing internal knowledge sharing and collaboration on gender equality and the empowerment of women, complementing the external activities outlined in the IPGAP.** WIPO will strengthen its internal mechanisms to guarantee optimal coordination and communication among the different teams and sectors that contribute to our work on gender equality.
– **Continuing gender mainstreaming in functional technical areas, including promoting the use of financial and programmatic tracking mechanisms.** Managers and relevant personnel will be supported on how to use the Gender Equality Marker[6] (GEM) and other related tags. Through the GEM, WIPO will be able to extract and use data related to the integration of gender equality into programmatic and, eventually, non-programmatic work. To strengthen

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5 It also responds to the recommendations of the Policy's evaluation and audit, "Make Gender Equality a Habit" carried out in 2019.
6 The Gender Equality Marker is an UN-system wide tool designed to provide data on how an activity contributes to Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW), and on the financial resources invested to this end. It is based on standardized codes, which are applied across the United Nations system.

data-driven decisions related to gender equality, GEM data will be complemented by an expanded use of sex-disaggregated data. More broadly, gender analysis will inform, whenever possible, programming by providing relevant insights. With regards to gender mainstreaming, WIPO will continue to assess its mainstreaming practices and apply good practices from the private and public sector as well as the United Nations system, whenever relevant.

2. Foster an inclusive and diverse organizational culture and advance equal representation at all grades and levels, by:

– **Attracting and retaining a diverse, gender-balanced workforce.** With a more diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve, WIPO will be better able to support the attainment of our vision of maximizing IP's benefits for all, including women. Following this principle, WIPO will strive to ensure gender balance in the composition of all internal advisory and decision-making bodies.
– **Ensuring an enabling work environment and inclusive, gender-responsive internal policies.** These are not only critical to achieving gender equality within WIPO, but they also ensure we are a competitive employer that maximizes the innovative potential of its diverse workforce and adapts to the changing nature of the world of work. Inclusive facilitative policies, for example, help narrow gender gaps in the workplace, by acknowledging that the unequal distribution of caregiving responsibilities has an impact on the equal participation of all individuals.
– **Supporting senior and middle managers to walk the talk on gender equality and the empowerment of women.** The coherence between managerial messages, decisions, actions and practice will determine the effectiveness and sustainability of the objectives set forth by this policy.

Implementation

Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women is the shared responsibility of each member of personnel, and of different teams and functions within WIPO. Management – both at the senior and middle levels – has a key duty to lead the implementation of this policy and its transformation into results.

WIPO recognizes that behaviors, both at the individual and group levels, can make or break our work on gender equality and support or impede the effective implementation of this policy. To this end, WIPO will promote behaviors that are foundational to inclusion and gender equality through socializing and reinforcing values, attitudes and skills, such as respect for colleagues regardless of their characteristics, the ability to listen effectively and show empathy, openness to learn, and willingness to be exposed to, and be challenged by, different points of view.

Internal and external collaboration and cooperation are foundational to a successful implementation. Internally, Sector Leads will ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated in sectoral work plans, as applicable, and that synergies are sought and nurtured across WIPO's cross-sectoral activities related to gender equality. Similarly, external collaboration and cooperation with public and private organizations and institutions dedicated to gender equality will amplify the impact of WIPO's efforts, by offering insights and disseminating good practices that can, in turn, enhance the internal implementation of this policy.

This policy is accompanied by a separate, high-level Implementation Plan, which supports the implementation of the policy's objectives and the distribution of responsibilities by delineating its areas of work. The areas of work are intended to be flexible to adapt to the needs of the Organization as well as the needs of WIPO's stakeholders and personnel. WIPO will work both through gender mainstreaming and targeted activities, adjusting its approach to maximize results.

Architecture

The tone from the top is critical in any cultural change process. The **Sector Leads** will monitor the implementation of the policy twice a year. They will be responsible for reviewing progress and ensuring that sufficient human and financial resources are in place to advance action.

An **Inclusion Steering Group** provides overall direction, guidance and high-level monitoring of WIPO's diversity and inclusion work. It represents both leadership and staff, including staff representatives and affinity groups, through all diversity dimensions. It meets regularly, taking up specific topics related to inclusion at each meeting based on the Organization's priorities.

The Inclusion Steering Group is supported by a **Network of Inclusion Focal Points**. The Network includes representatives from different functional areas and sectors, including WIPO's programmatic work. It will work with agility and flexibility to support

WIPO's vision and objectives. The Network systematically exchanges ideas with the Inclusion Steering Group, including by participating in its meetings, as applicable. The network meets regularly to promote the sharing of knowledge, experiences and approaches.

The **Gender and Diversity Specialist**, who is also a member and serves as Secretary of the Inclusion Steering Group, provides general support and coordination of the policy's architecture.

Resources

The implementation of the Gender Equality Policy is supported by adequate financial and human resources. The Inclusion Steering Group will provide high-level guidance on priorities and on the general resources required.

Sector Leads have a responsibility to ensure that gender equality aspects are adequately reflected in their respective sectoral work plans. Cascading down from this, and in consultation with relevant managers and stakeholders, Sector Leads will plan and allocate budget for gender equality work within their Sectors.

Each biennium, the Program Performance and Budget Division (PPBD) will exchange with relevant teams to allocate resources.

Communication

Tailored and targeted communication products will be used to connect stakeholders, support organizational and peer learning and drive awareness raising. Overall coordination, content coherence and consistency will be provided by the Gender and Diversity Specialist, in close collaboration and with the support of the News and Media Division and relevant communication colleagues within WIPO. Messaging will cascade down to the Sectors. In its communication, the Organization will align with the recommendations of the WIPO Guidelines on Inclusive Language.

The responsibility to maintain coherence in messaging and format lies with each team.

Monitoring and evaluation

Gender equality is a long-term endeavor to which this policy strives to contribute within its timeframe. The Sector Leads and other senior managers will monitor the implementation of this policy under their respective areas of responsibility, at least annually. Progress will be shared with the rest of the Sector leads at least twice a year during the regular Sector Leads' meetings. Lessons learnt and results will be shared with the Inclusion Steering Group, which will support in catalyzing efforts, as necessary.

To enhance clarity among all stakeholders, the Implementation Plan features a theory of change. To help retain direction and measure overall impact during implementation, WIPO will introduce specific performance indicators in the Program of Work and Budget. At the end of the implementation period, to support organizational learning, the results of this policy will be evaluated by the Internal Oversight Division to take stock, assess progress and outline any changes that may be required for the next strategic period. WIPO will also engage with other oversight bodies as relevant in relation to audit matters.

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