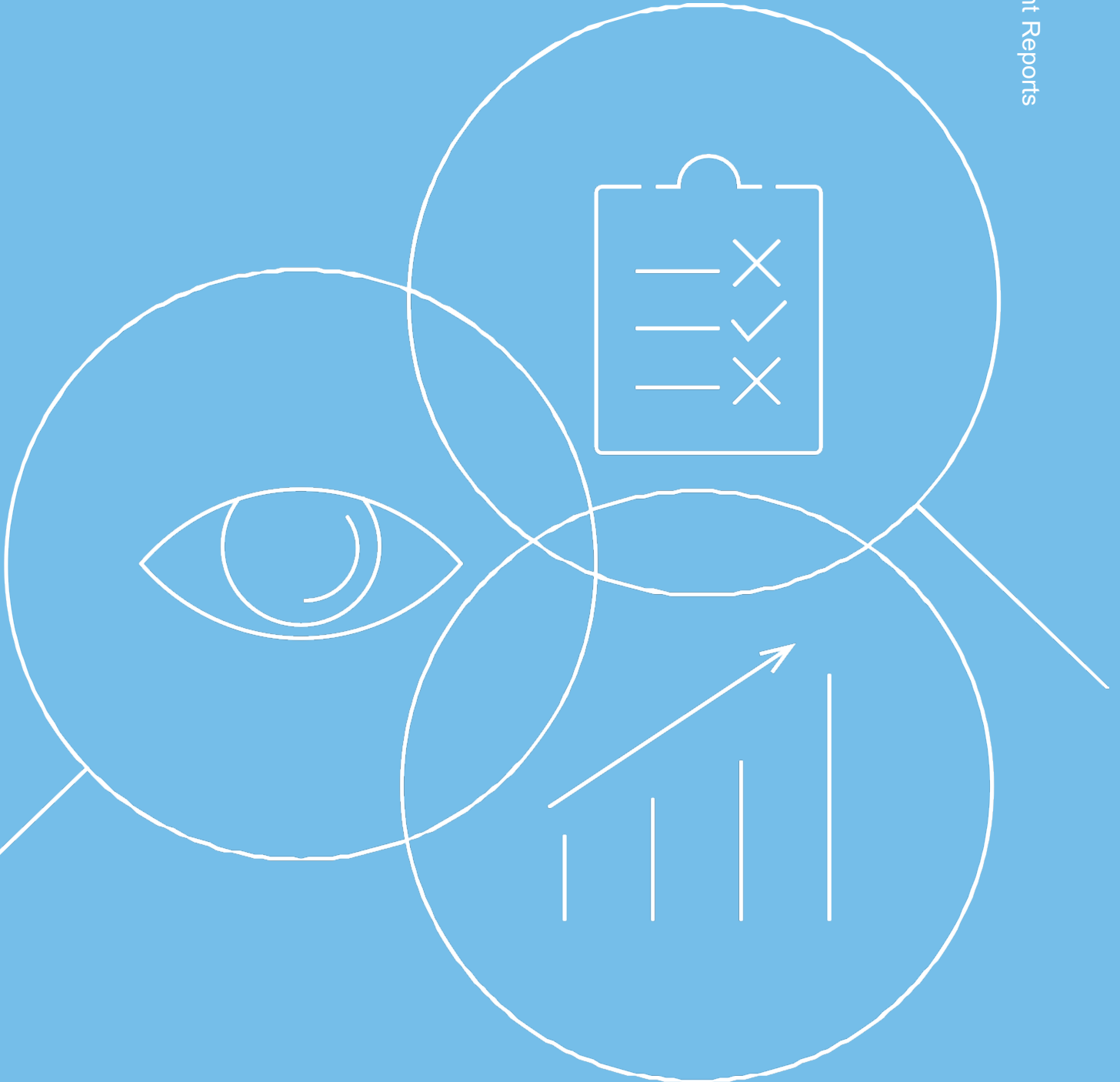


Review of the WIPO Japan Office

Internal Oversight Reports



IOD Ref: IA 2022-02
November 25, 2022
Internal Audit Section

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADG	Assistant Director General
AIMS	Administrative Integrated Management System
APPI	Japan Act on the Protection of Personal Information
BCC	Business Continuity Coordinator
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
FIT	Funds-In-Trust
FWA	Flexible Working Arrangements
HQ	Headquarters
ICS	Individual Contractor Services
ICTD	Information and Communication Technology Department
IOD	Internal Oversight Division
IP	Intellectual Property
JPO	Japan Patent Office
OI	Office Instruction
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WJO	WIPO Japan Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Japan Office (WJO) was established in 2006 to, among others, promote WIPO's global Intellectual Property (IP) services for patents, trademarks and industrial designs, as well as its global databases, IP advantage and multi-stakeholder initiatives, to Japanese users. The primary budget of WJO is made up of the Japan Industrial Property Global Funds-in-Trust (FIT), in addition to a regular budget.

2. The Internal Oversight Division (IOD) did not find any critical issues during the review of WJO. However, IOD highlighted a number of opportunities to further enhance risk management, effectiveness of internal controls processes, information and resource management, and compliance. These include, among others, updating the business continuity plan, developing relevant internal guidelines, reviewing compliance with local data protection regulations, completing mandatory trainings, complying with relevant Office Instructions (OI), and enhancing segregation of duties in cash management.

3. IOD found that while formal Host Country Agreements exist for the other WIPO External Offices, WJO was established by means of two "Notes Verbales" issued by the Government of Japan to WIPO. For clarity, completeness, and consistency, it would be relevant that the organizational template be used for establishing all Offices.

4. Overall, the Office has been able to fulfill its mandate with its current structure. However, IOD is of the view that the current human resource approach may not be sustainable. The human resource approach is less than optimal due to among others, the inherent turnover of staff in the Office. For instance, between 2012 and 2022, around 29 staff members including Agency workers and Individual Contractor Services (ICS) have worked in WJO filling-in nine roles of which five are fixed term, two ICS, and two agency worker positions. IOD found that the Office could benefit from new contract types to stabilize human resources and reinforce delivery and institutional memory, among others. Further, WJO has been using consultants to implement regular and recurrent tasks instead of for tasks limited in time, intermittent or irregular as prescribed in the Policy on the use of ICS. This suggests that a reassessment of the type of resources required would be beneficial.

5. There are opportunities to further enhance the current less than optimal flow of information and communication between WJO and Headquarters (HQ), which can be partly attributed to the large turnover among other things. For instance by designating an information management focal point, who will ensure that key information and changes in processes and tools are fully captured, integrated and timely operationalized by the Office, as well as support any measures to heighten institutional memory and consistency.

6. WJO prepares a FIT work plan in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders including the Japan Patent Office, which subsequently approves the plan. IOD positively notes that the work plan activities are detailed, and include estimated costs, linkage to WIPO Results Framework, and relevant performance indicators. However, the process could be further strengthened by systematically setting targets as currently, only a small number of performance indicators have a target. Further, the Office does not systematically and timely analyze surveys results following activities, and hence does not benefit from the early warning and learning opportunities provided by the feedback mechanism. Finally, the Office would benefit from further strengthening the integration of risk management in the development of the FIT work plan.

7. IOD makes 10 recommendations covering governance, program and resource management, internal control processes, and risk and information management. WJO will be addressing these recommendations during the course of 2023.