

# WIPO



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**WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION**  
GENEVA

## **PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

**First Session**  
**Geneva, May 31 to June 4, 1999**

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENTS AND AUTOMATION  
OF THE AFRICAN REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY OFFICE (ARIPO)  
AND THE AFRICAN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION (OAPI):  
PROGRESS REPORT

*Prepared by the International Bureau*

1. As mandated by the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO in March 1998, the WIPOnet project seeks to establish a Global Information Network, addressing the needs of the Member States and the Intellectual Property community world wide, for speedy exchange of Intellectual Property Data, development of an access to Intellectual Property Information, and other specific tasks related to Intellectual Property operations.
2. The WIPOnet project, in particular, addresses the needs of the developing country intellectual property offices by providing them with the necessary infrastructure, such as hardware, software, network connectivity and training, enabling these offices to yield optimal benefits of the WIPOnet. This support shall expand to include assistance to the developing countries in establishing their Intellectual Property Data Libraries (IPDLs), as the basic infrastructure of providing network connectivity to all the member states envisaged for the current biennium has been achieved.
3. The work related to the establishment of the Global Information Network is at an advanced stage. Guided by the Standing Committee on Information Technology (SCIT), the International Bureau of WIPO is in the process of commissioning a contractor for providing necessary services for establishing the Information Network. A Request for Proposals, laying down the requirements for creating such a network through the use of the most modern and sophisticated but yet cost effective technologies, was made in February this year. The final selection of the contractor is planned to take place in July.
4. The planned activities of the WIPOnet project for the current biennium also envisaged the implementation of Pilot Projects to assess the functional and technical aspects of the network and gather practical knowledge and experience in the implementation of these projects. Accordingly, two Pilot Project Sites, namely the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), and the African Regional Industrial Property Organization (ARIPO) were selected.
5. The Pilot Projects at these offices include the provision of a workstation for each staff; servers, network printers, scanners, and other necessary equipment and software to establish Local Area Networks (LANs); connectivity through dedicated lines to the WIPOnet via Internet; establishment of Intranet facilities; and extensive training of staff. The projects are managed by the International Bureau with the support of local consultants and contractors.
6. The implementation of the Pilot Projects at these two offices started in October and November 1998, respectively. At the time of preparation of this document, the projects were well on their way to completion.
7. As their primary objective, the Pilot Projects link these two Organizations to WIPOnet. In addition they also enable them to have free Internet access facilities for electronic mail through the use of World Wide Web, and Intranet facilities for internal mail and messaging. The network computer environment and software provided under the Pilot Projects provide for the most modern office automation tools to these offices which is also likely to have a positive impact on their day to day functioning.

## OVERVIEW

8. The Internet access will connect ARIPO and OAPI member states onto the same Internet grid, to allow them to benefit from such connectivity. Ultimately, it is hoped WIPONET will encompass the public Internet structure together with secure Internet-based network system. This should be able to provide for the rapid exchange of information among industrial property offices and WIPO.

9. In the immediate future, the above will strengthen the activities of ARIPO and OAPI in the region. They will be better able to provide support to their member states, especially as receiving offices.

10. Internally, ARIPO and OAPI, through the Intranet with e-mail facilities will be able to process more efficiently intellectual property services.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF WIPONET

11. The project takes into account four aspects:

- Local Area Network (LAN) infrastructure
- Conduit for Internet connectivity
- Web-sites at ARIPO and OAPI
- Member states' connectivity to WIPO.

### LAN Infrastructure

12. The ARIPO Local Area Network was required in order to have the necessary functionality under the WIPONET. Administrative procurement phase was concluded, contract awards have been made and work is currently in progress. The OAPI Local Area Network was supplied by a WIPO computer supplier as this proved to be more cost effective in view of local costs.

13. The objective is to put in place a throughput LAN (with its constituent rack, hub, etc.), install an Intranet server and workstations and port over the old data to the new server.

### Conduit for Internet Connectivity

14. This relates to the ways of connecting ARIPO and OAPI onto the Internet backbone and to WIPO.

15. The national post & telecommunication agencies were requested to provide dedicated lines but it could well be that a wireless radio link might be the best option for ARIPO.

### Hosting Web-sites

16. Once the dedicated lines are in place and connection to the Internet Service Provider (ISP) completed, work will start for the installation and configuration of Web-sites. This will

allow for e-mail services, messaging, access to the WIPO Web-site and other Intellectual Property Digital Libraries (IPDLs).

#### Member States Connectivity to Web-sites

17. This will be part of Phase II of the WIPONET project, except for the pilot phase, which will involve the local patent offices (Cameroon and Zimbabwe). In order to make sure this is feasible, these offices will be provided with equipment and dial-up connectivity during Phase I of the WIPONET project.

18. Under this part, all member states will be provided with connectivity to the WIPO Web-site as well as the ARIPO and OAPI Web-sites.

#### WIPONET USERS

##### Web-sites and Content

19. Web information on ARIPO and OAPI including data on their member states will be on the Web-sites. These sites will function 24 hours per day and will also provide links to WIPO, other patent offices and their Intellectual Property Digital Libraries (IPDLs), as well as other domains having related data/information.

20. A chat facility will be implemented. This will be a virtual room, which will permit on-line discussions on various issues pertinent to intellectual property.

21. As ARIPO and OAPI have information of interest to users, there will be the facility to do file transfers from the Web-site to addresses of requesting users.

##### Year 2000 (Y2K) Compatibility and Security

22. In order to tackle the problem of malicious programs and bugs, the Web-sites will have firewalls and proxies running (among other security measures), to authenticate access to the system and to assist in checking for malicious programs. Year 2000 compatibility has been taken into account in order to ensure that the system does not crash at that time.

#### VALUE ADDED SERVICES

##### Training Center

23. ARIPO and OAPI receive requests for training assistance. As it is also envisaged that their member states will eventually automate their procedures, they have established training centers to be used for all types of training, from computer training to intellectual property administration.

### Research and Search Assistance

24. ARIPO and OAPI assist their members with searches. They will have equipment which will allow visitors to sit at the consoles and do their own search on intellectual property-related matters. To that end, there will be a help/support desk for the public and member states.

25. There will be links to other intellectual property digital libraries, which should allow the user to have access to intellectual property information on a global scale.

### The WIPO Worldwide Academy and Distance Learning

26. WIPONET will be an important vehicle for the dissemination of information and curricula with appropriate case studies in the field of intellectual property to the public and private communities such as universities, research institutions, industry, etc.. To this end it is hoped that ARIPO and OAPI will become WIPO Worldwide Academy tele-centers. The tele-centers will be equipped with video conferencing services.

27. The tele-centers will be regionally oriented; thus providing teaching with case studies suited to the member states and the region.

### CONCLUSION

28. Implementing the above will be of great benefit to both ARIPO and OAPI, and in particular will help to:

- ❑ ensure that member states have the necessary means (hardware, software and training) for network connectivity, allowing enhanced access to intellectual property information and supporting modernization of their intellectual property systems;
- ❑ promote the use of intellectual property information by member states, the intellectual property community and public at large, thereby fostering the adequate protection and effective enforcement of intellectual property rights; and
- ❑ provide a tool for technology transfer and economic development for the benefit of developing countries and their inventors, industry, universities and research and development institutions.

*29. The Permanent Committee is invited to note the information contained in this document and make any comment it may wish on the content thereof.*

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