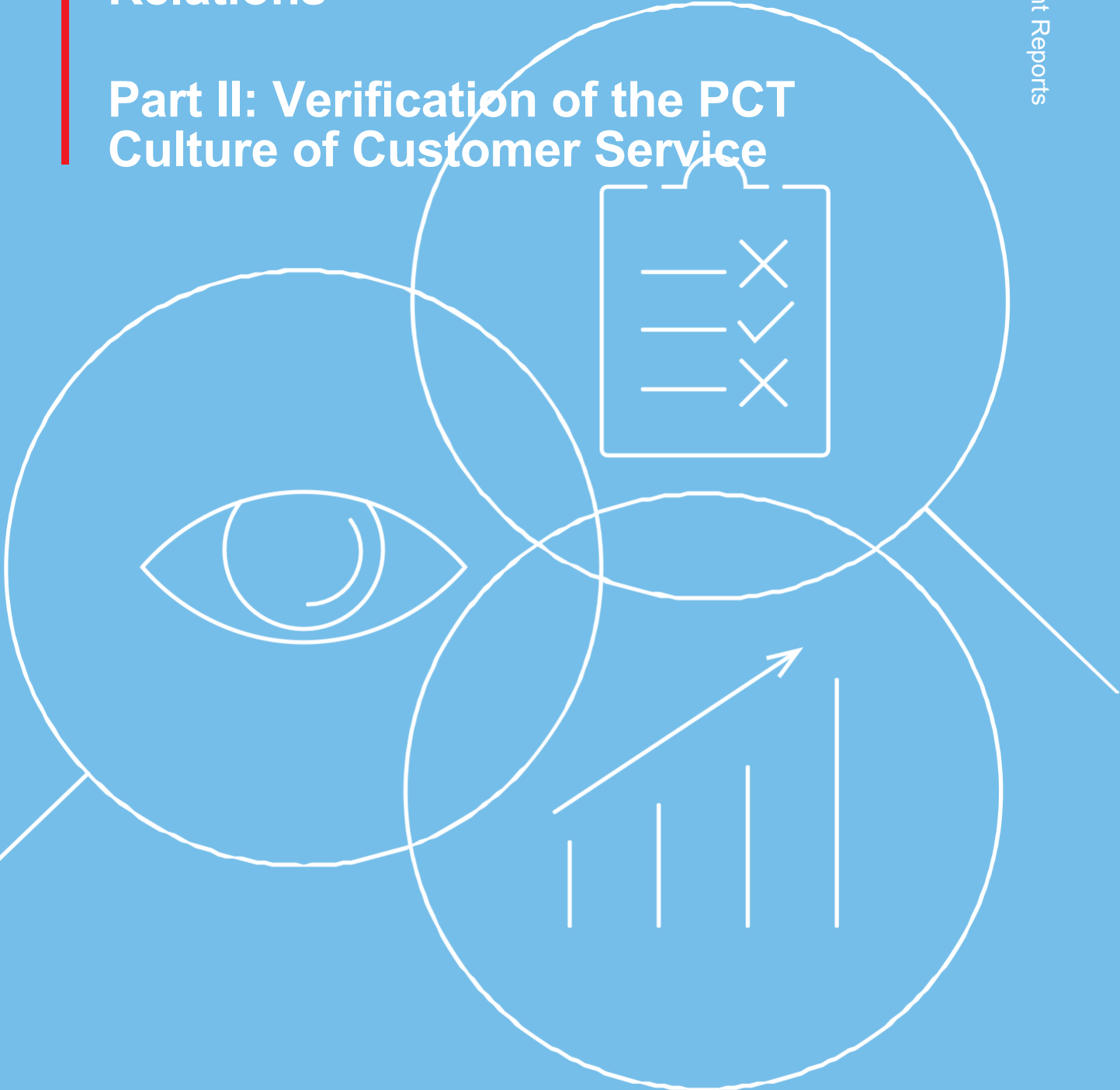


# Audit and Evaluation of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Operations and Customer Relations

## Part II: Verification of the PCT Culture of Customer Service





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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>ePCT</b>	Electronic Patent Cooperation Treaty portal
<b>EPO</b>	European Patent Office
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>HBR</b>	Harvard Business Review
<b>HRMD</b>	Human Resource Management Department
<b>IOD</b>	Internal Oversight Division
<b>IP</b>	Intellectual Property
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>MTSP</b>	Medium-Term Strategic Plan
<b>PCT</b>	Patent Cooperation Treaty
<b>PTS</b>	Patent and Technology Sector
<b>PCT LIAD</b>	PCT Legal and International Affairs Department
<b>PCT LURD</b>	PCT Legal and User Relations Division
<b>SG</b>	Strategic Goal
<b>SMART</b>	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>WIPO</b>	World Intellectual Property Organization

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Patents and Technology Sector (PTS), provides a unified procedure for filing and processing patent applications that facilitates the seeking of patent protection for inventions in 157 countries.
2. Fees associated with the PCT system constitute WIPO's primary source of revenue, amounting to 76.4 per cent.<sup>1</sup> WIPO acknowledges the indispensable role of its PCT customers in contributing to its mission and strives to prioritize their needs and provide exceptional customer service.
3. The specific objectives of the verification were to:
  - (a) Verify whether the culture of customer service is effectively implemented and aligned with the PCT's related performance objectives, expected results, and relevant strategic Pillars of the Organization's Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP);<sup>2</sup> and
  - (b) Identify opportunities to enhance services and customer relations through adaptive learning and behavioral science.
4. The main focus of this verification was the PCT Legal and International Affairs Department (the Department), which is responsible for the development of policies and the provision of strategic direction to preserve and strengthen the role of the PCT as the central node of the international patent system and to support the PCT system stakeholders, including Member States, the user community, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
5. The verification main findings are the following:
6. The Department's activities of customer service are in line with WIPO's Strategic Goals, objectives and core values and contribute to WIPO's Strategic Pillars 3 and 4 of the MTSP.
7. While a documented customer service and marketing and communication strategy are yet to be developed, the Department has continuously operated and developed initiatives to contribute to a culture of customer service. For instance, between 2020 and 2023, it allocated 209,415 Swiss francs<sup>3</sup> in conducting a biennial customer satisfaction survey.
8. The verification found that activities and contributions to customer service are spread thinly across various workplans. In several cases, they are not linked to expected results and performance measures that are still to be developed for internal management purposes. Moreover, the lack of an impact framework makes the Department vulnerable to various risks such as loss of institutional memory, a lack of guidance for the Organization's culture, underreporting of contributions or inconsistent approaches to customer service.

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<sup>1</sup> WIPO Annual Financial Report and Financial Statements, Year to December 31, 2022, Page 8, <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo-pub-rn2023-24-en-annual-financial-report-and-financial-statements.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> WIPO, WO/PBC/32/3, Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2022-2026 [https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/govbody/en/wo\\_pbc\\_32/wo\\_pbc\\_32\\_3.pdf](https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/govbody/en/wo_pbc_32/wo_pbc_32_3.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Including personnel and non-personnel budget. Source: WIPO Business Intelligence Dashboard, Program Management Performance & Budget, Budget Utilization, April 2024

9. The PCT Legal and User Relations Division (PCT LURD) within the Department, through the Customer Experience Section,<sup>4</sup> conducts a biennial customer satisfaction survey, which is distributed to a representative sample of users. As reported, the response rate for the 2023-2024 PCT Customer Satisfaction Survey was 12 per cent with 1,763 participants out of 22,971 having fully completed the survey, 919 customers who opened the survey but did not complete it, and another 1,012 customers, who only partially filled it out. This indicates that the survey process could be refined to encourage more customers to participate and provide valuable feedback.

10. The verification recommends that the Department:

(a) In coordination with the Customer Experience Section, review the frequency and length of the existing customer satisfaction survey, improving the means to provide real-time client feedback systematically;

(b) In collaboration with the PCT Services Department, develop an impact framework, such as a theory of change, to establish clear linkages between initiatives aimed at enhancing a culture of customer service and their contribution to customer satisfaction; and set SMART performance measures to monitor the effectiveness of the training in enhancing the PCT's customer service culture;

(c) In collaboration with the PCT Services Department, document the PCT's customer strategy to ensure a clear and concise understanding of the Organization's culture of customer service goals and objectives across the board and a standardized approach to measuring and communicating these goals and objectives;

(d) Develop a specific, easily accessible, and shared with other business areas repository for preserving institutional memory and sharing customer service lessons learned and good practices on gathering customer satisfaction metrics data, assessing the impact of a customer service culture on customer satisfaction, among others;

(e) Create more opportunities for continuing knowledge-sharing across WIPO business areas and sectors by (i) engaging relevant WIPO staff collaborating with the Department in PCT customer service conferences and workshops; (ii) setting up communities of practice to exchange lessons and good practices on customer service; (iii) identifying experts who can act as bridges between business areas and sectors to facilitate knowledge-sharing across teams;

(f) In collaboration with the Human Resources Management Department (HRMD), update the job descriptions of existing staff and ensure that job descriptions of new staff reflect the Organization's commitment to customer service; and

(g) In collaboration with HRMD, improve the existing HR contingency plan, which should include concrete actions (i) to establish expert pools readily available when necessary to fill in gaps due to staff turnover or mobility; and (ii) to seamlessly integrate new team members into the PCT's customer service culture.

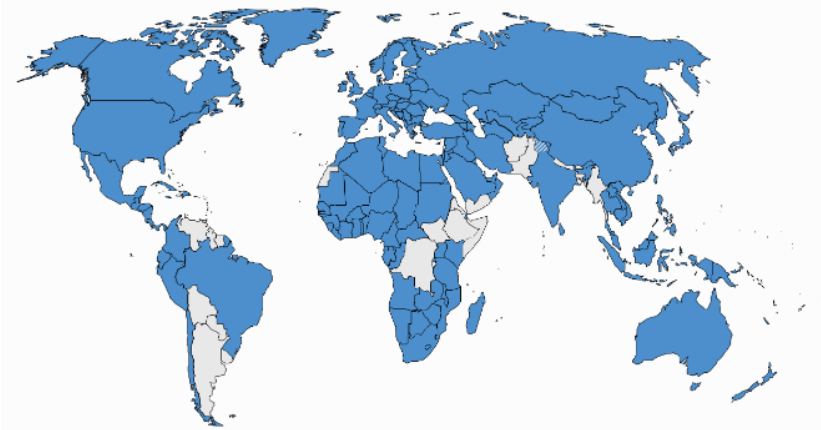
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<sup>4</sup> Infrastructure and Platforms Sector.

## 1. BACKGROUND

11. The PCT system is an important tool for inventors, companies, universities, and research institutions wanting to protect their innovations internationally.<sup>5</sup> The PCT administered by WIPO's PTS, provides a unified procedure for filing and processing patent applications that facilitates the seeking of patent protection for inventions in 157 countries.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1: Map of PCT Member States**

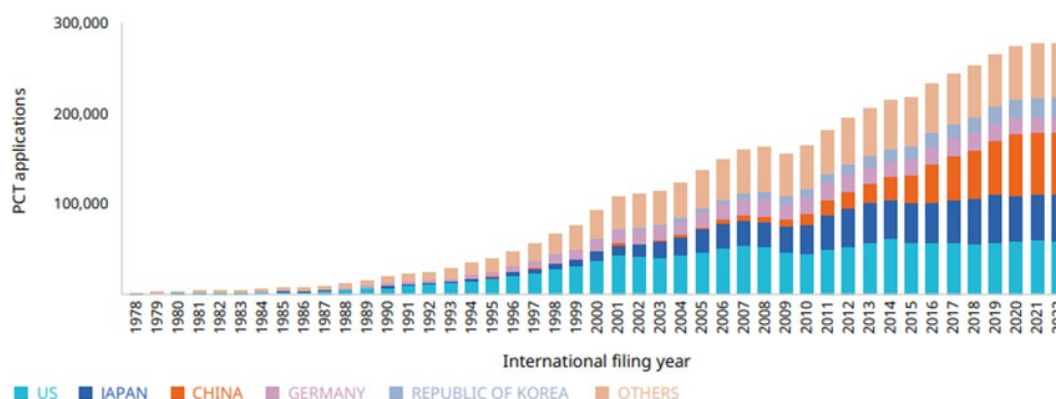


Source: WIPO website, February 2024

12. The PCT assists applicants in seeking patent protection internationally for their inventions, helps patent offices with their patent granting decisions, and facilitates public access to a wealth of technical information relating to those inventions. By filing one international patent application under PCT, applicants can simultaneously seek protection for an invention in 157 countries.

13. Since 1978, the PCT applications filed have increased every year, except in 2009 and 2023. As Figure 2 demonstrates, between 1979 and 2022, PCT applications grew by 11.5 per cent per year on average. In 2021 and 2022, however, a challenging global economic environment led to historically low growth rates close to zero.

**Figure 2: Trend in filings of PCT applications, 1978–2022**



Source: WIPO Statistics Database, March 2023.

<sup>5</sup> World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) (2023). PCT Yearly Review 2023: The International Patent System. Geneva: <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo-pub-901-2023-en-patent-cooperation-treaty-yearly-review-2023.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.wipo.int/pct/en/pct\\_contracting\\_states.html](https://www.wipo.int/pct/en/pct_contracting_states.html)

14. In 2023, PCT filings decreased by 1.8 per cent over 2022, totaling 272,600. China continued to be the largest origin of PCT filings, followed by the United States of America. The top 10 countries of origin with their respective percentage share of all PCT filings in 2023, were as follows:<sup>7</sup>

1.	China	69,610	25.5%
2.	United States of America	55,678	20.4%
3.	Japan	48,879	17.9%
4.	Republic of Korea	22,288	8.2%
5.	Germany	16,916	6.2%
6.	France	7,916	2.9%
7.	United Kingdom	5,586	2.0%
8.	Switzerland	5,382	1.9%
9.	Sweden	4,323	1.6%
10.	Netherlands	4,258	1.5%

Source: [PCT NEWSLETTER \(wipo.int\)](https://www.wipo.int/pct/en/newsletter/march-2024) March 2024

15. The increase in the PCT membership over time can be divided into three periods. Between 1979 and 1990, 25 countries joined PCT, representing 2.3 new member states per year, on average. Most of these were European member states. From 1991 to 2007, the number of PCT member states increased sharply, with an average of 5.8 new members per year. Among the 93 countries that joined the PCT system during this 16-year period, 29 were from Africa, 24 from Asia, 20 from Europe, 18 from Latin America Countries and two from Oceania. Since 2008, due to the then widespread coverage, only 19 countries joined PCT, of which nearly half were from Asia. This represents, on average, 1.4 new members per year. The four countries that became members of PCT in 2022 made that year the most active in terms of the PCT accessions since 2008.<sup>8</sup> One further country – Mauritius - joined the PCT in 2023.

16. The total revenue of WIPO for 2022 was 498.5 million Swiss francs, representing an increase of 4.9 per cent compared to the 2021 total revenue of 475.1 million Swiss francs. The largest source of revenue during 2022 was PCT system fees, accounting for 76.4 per cent of total revenue, as depicted in Figure 3. Revenue from the PCT system fees rose by 5.3 per cent compared to 2021.<sup>9</sup>

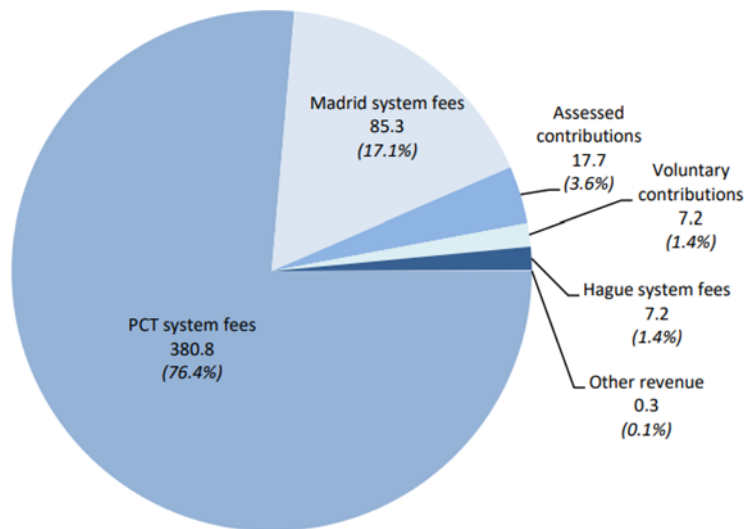
<sup>7</sup> <https://www.wipo.int/pct/en/highlights/>

<sup>8</sup> World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) (2023). PCT Yearly Review 2023: The International Patent System. Geneva: <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo-pub-901-2023-en-patent-cooperation-treaty-yearly-review-2023.pdf>, page 9

<sup>9</sup> WIPO Annual Financial Report and Financial Statements, Year to December 31, 2022, Page 8.



**Figure 3: Composition of WIPO's 2022 revenue on an IPSAS (International Public System Accounting Standards) basis (in millions of Swiss francs)**



Source: WIPO Annual Financial Report and Financial Statements, Year to December 31, 2022, Page 8.

17. The PCT system fees are paid by PCT applicants, the majority of whom are based in the United States, Japan, China, Germany, and the Republic of Korea, as depicted in Figure 2 above. As the leader in developing a balanced and effective international intellectual property (IP) system that promotes innovation and creativity for the benefit of all, WIPO's mission hinges on several critical factors, including the support of its stakeholders, staff, and necessary resources. Given the PCT customers' indispensable role in WIPO's mission, the Organization invests considerable efforts in prioritizing their needs and cultivating a culture of exceptional customer service among PCT staff.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

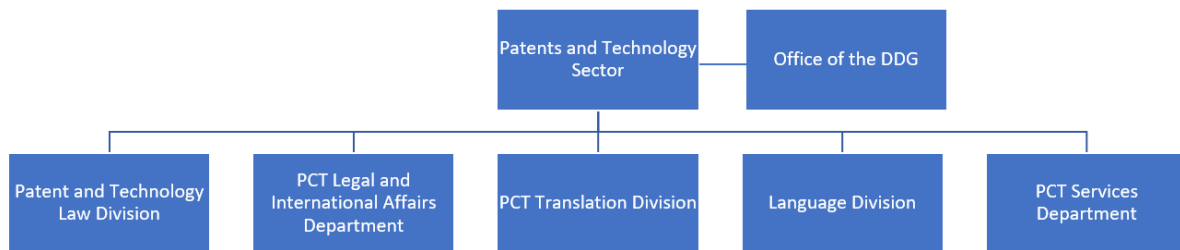
18. WIPO's Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2022-2026 highlights the importance of paying attention to the evolving needs of its customer segments and striving to ensure that its services continue to bring value to customers<sup>10</sup> worldwide. This is only possible if a culture of customer service is embraced by every WIPO staff member in functions aligned and committed to creating superior value for customers.<sup>11</sup>

19. PTS is one of the seven WIPO sectors and comprises the following functions:

<sup>10</sup> WIPO, WO/PBC/32/3, Medium Term Strategic Plan 2022-2026, Geneva, Switzerland, June 7, 2021, p. 13

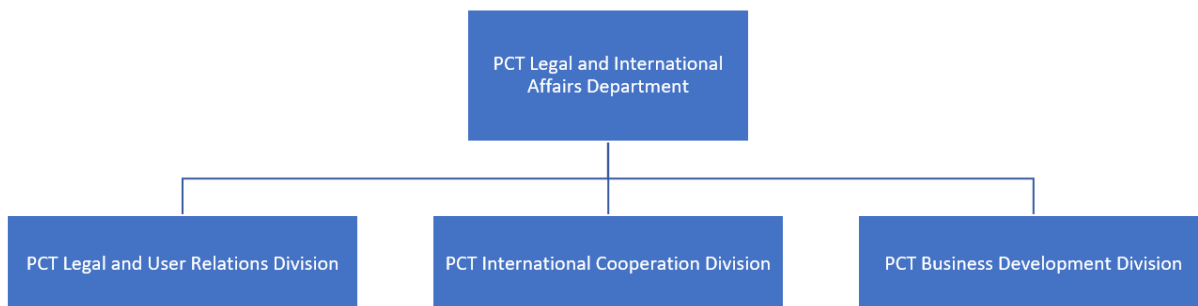
<sup>11</sup> Dr. L. Brown and C. Brown, The Customer Culture Imperative, A Leader's Guide to Driving Superior Performance, Mc Graw Hill Education, New York, 2014, Introduction Section

**Figure 4: Structure of the Patents and Technology Sector**



20. The PCT Legal and International Affairs Department, hereafter referred to as “the Department”, was the main subject of this verification that was done between January and July 2023. The Department is responsible for the development of policies and the provision of strategic direction to preserve and strengthen the role of the PCT as the central node of the international patent system and to support the PCT system stakeholders, including Member States, the user community, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. At the time of the verification, the Department comprised the following divisions:

**Figure 5: Structure of the PCT Legal and International Affairs Department at the time of the Verification**



21. The Department, through its work, contributes to the delivery of the Strategic Goals and Expected Results, as depicted in Figure 6 below:

**Figure 6: Legal and International Affairs Department Results Framework**



Source: Data extracted from WIPO Business Intelligence Workplan Activity Listing 2023.

22. During the verification period, the Department had 45 staff members with women making up 58 per cent of the staff, while men accounted for 42 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

23. At the managerial level, the Department exhibited a significant representation of male staff at the D2, D1, and P5 managerial levels.

24. During the comment phase of this report (August 2023 – April 2024), the Department underwent several restructuring processes, resulting in the modification of its organizational structure. However, it is important to note that the verification was conducted based on the Department's structure that existed at the time of the verification between January and July 2023 (Figure 5).

#### (A) VERIFICATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

25. This was not a comprehensive evaluation but a verification, that aimed to provide a checklist of the factors that need to be monitored in the future as part of a customer service culture.

26. The verification focused on two main objectives:

(a) Verify whether the culture of customer service is effectively implemented and aligned with the PTS's related performance objectives, expected results, and relevant strategic Pillars of the Organization's MTSP; and

(b) Identify opportunities to enhance services and customer relations through adaptive learning and behavioral science.

27. The main scope of the verification covered the PCT Legal and International Affairs Department (the "Department") and focused only on the initiatives aimed at contributing to the PCT culture of customer services between 2018 and 2022; however, for analytical review, corroborative purposes and gaining specific insights, the period covered in some instances extended beyond the stated scope. In addition, the verification included consultations with the PCT Operations Division within the PCT Services Department to verify whether the culture of customer service is effectively implemented and aligned with the PCT's related performance objectives, expected results, and relevant Strategic Pillars.

28. The PCT Operations Customer Support Section<sup>13</sup> was included in the audit part of the engagement<sup>14</sup> but was not covered in this verification. The Evaluation Section, however, sought the input of the PCT Operations Customer Support Section solely for the purpose of verification.

29. The verification focused on advancing the PCT customer service culture rather than customer management approach.

30. The verification took place between January and July 2023. The planning phase and drafting of terms of reference (ToR) took place between August and December 2022. While this was an unusual lengthy planning process, it enabled the establishment of a common understanding between the evaluators and the Department.

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<sup>13</sup> Renamed to PCT International User Outreach and Support Section, Information Circular No. 10/2024, March 18, 2024

<sup>14</sup> IOD report, Audit and Evaluation of the PCT Operations and Customer Relations. Part I: Results of the Audit of the PCT Operations, <https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/about-wipo/en/oversight/docs/iaod/audit/audit-pct-operations-and-customer-relations-part1.pdf>

(i) Inception phase

31. The evaluation team collaborated with the Department to refine the ToR and questions that would serve as the basis of the assessment. The final ToR are included in Annex I. The design of the verification questions was informed by the essential components of a culture of customer service.

32. During the inception phase, the verification undertook the following:

- (a) Designed the methodology;
- (b) Identified the components of the PCT culture of customer service which would serve as the basis for the verification;
- (c) Reviewed relevant documentation including unit reports, program and budget documents, strategy documents, program reviews, among others;
- (d) Prepared a relevant inventory of the department's activities related to the implementation of the culture of the customer service; and
- (e) Developed the methods and verification questions as included in Section C of this report, and data collection tools such as questionnaires and interview protocols.

(ii) Data Collection Phase

33. During this phase, the verification focused on verifying and assessing the culture of customer service, the alignment of organizational processes, the data and cross-cutting support provided to the Department. In addition, the following was done:

- (a) The Department's staff were interviewed; and
- (b) The Department's implicit strategy as well as the extent these contribute to the PCT culture of customer service, were reviewed.

(iii) Reporting phase

34. The evaluation team prepared the verification report following the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports<sup>15</sup>, UNEG Norms and Standards<sup>16</sup>, and UNEG Guidance on Gender and Human Rights.<sup>17</sup> Preliminary findings, conclusions, and recommendations were shared and discussed with the PTS Senior Managers before the report was finalized.

(B) METHODOLOGY

35. For this verification, the evaluation team utilized a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather and analyze data. The primary methods employed included:

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<sup>15</sup> UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports, <http://uneval.org/document/detail/607>

<sup>16</sup> UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016), <http://uneval.org/document/detail/1914>

<sup>17</sup> Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance, <https://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>

- (a) A desk review of 105 documents, such as WIPO strategic documents, surveys, customer service rules, guiding documentation, presentations, studies, and other documentation pertinent to customer services included in Annex II;
- (b) Consultations with 50 staff members through individual interviews, workshop sessions, and a survey; and
- (c) Qualitative data analysis, which involved the assessment of roughly 247 comments resulting from open questions posed in the workshops and survey. The survey template can be found in Annex III of this report.

36. The evaluation team used a verification survey to gather primary data as part of the consultation process. The survey was customized based on input from the Department and the PCT Operations Customers Support Section during workshops and consultations held between February and March 2023.

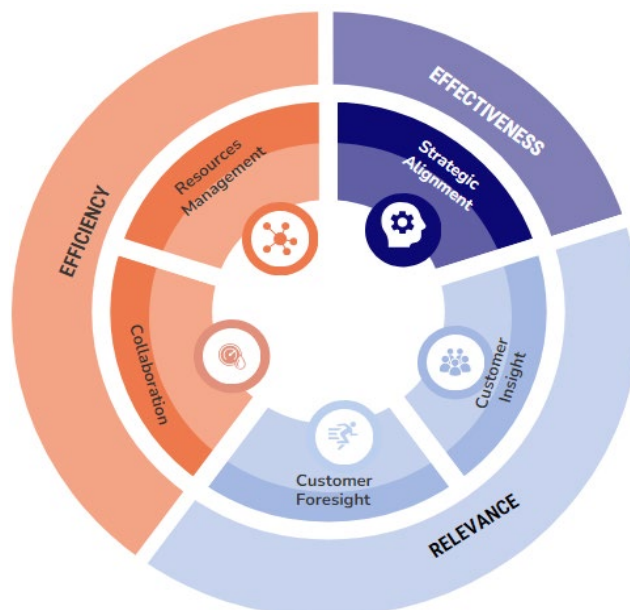
37. Establishing a customer-centric culture is a complex and multi-faceted process. To ensure the success of this endeavor, it was agreed to focus on three verification criteria namely relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, and five customer services categories (Strategic Alignment, Customer Insights, Customer Foresights, Collaboration and Resources Management) as illustrated in Figure 7 below.

### (C) VERIFICATION QUESTIONS

38. The verification questions were crafted after desk review and consultations with the Department and the PCT Operations Customers Support Section through workshops held between February and March 2023. The results from the consultative process were aggregated to reflect on the future directions of the Department.

39. The verification utilized triangulation of methods and of sources to establish the internal validity of its findings and conclusions.

**Figure 7: Culture of Customer Service - Evaluation**



Source: Dr. L. Brown and C. Brown, *The Customer Culture Imperative, A Leader's Guide to Driving Superior Performance*, McGraw Hill Education, New York, 2014, Introduction Section. Customized for WIPO PCT by WIPO IOD Evaluation Section, Geneva, May 2023

(i) Relevance

40. Customer insights refer to the needs and behaviors of customers that go beyond what they explicitly communicate. By understanding customers' experience and feedback on products or services, deeper insights can be gained. To assess the extent to which the PCT culture of customer service responds to customer needs, the verification process focused on two key questions:

- (a) How does the Department identify its customer needs?**
- (b) Is the current approach towards monitoring customer satisfaction effective?**

41. The verification process assessed the extent to which the Department's staff anticipate emerging customer needs and take appropriate actions to ensure customer satisfaction. The ability to connect with potential customers and understand their future needs and ideas for possible new solutions can come from anyone inside or outside WIPO if it is fostered as an expected practice or behavior. However, customer foresight needs to be nurtured to become an organizational capability. Therefore, the verification process focused on an additional question: **Is customer foresight considered a fundamental aspect of the PCT customer service culture?**

(ii) Effectiveness (Strategic Alignment)

42. As part of the effectiveness analysis the verification focused on strategic alignment. When all staff members, from the front desk to senior management, understand and act upon WIPO's vision, mission, strategic objectives, and expected results, the organization can create and deliver value for customers and stakeholders. Strategic alignment fosters a strong culture that encourages commitment and shared understanding at all levels and across business areas. Each individual's actions contribute to creating customer value, making strategic alignment crucial for the organization's success. The verification process focused on three key questions:

- (a) Does the PCT customer service culture align with WIPO's goals and expected results?**
- (b) Is the adoption of a customer-centric culture effectively ingrained within each individual, team, and business area?**
- (c) Are staff provided with the necessary strategic guidance?**

(iii) Efficiency

43. As part of the efficiency analysis, the verification process prioritized collaboration, resource management, and knowledge sharing. The main goal was to address the following questions:

- (a) How does the Department identify good practices and lessons learned from its partners?**
- (b) How does the Department identify good practices and lessons learned from other business areas and sectors?**
- (c) Is the Department's resources management aligned with fostering a customer service culture?**

**(d) How can the Department demonstrate adaptability while upholding its commitment to its long-term personnel?**

44. A list of customer service definitions used in this report can be found in Annex IV.

**(D) LIMITATIONS**

Limitations	Mitigation Strategies
The selection of staff and stakeholders to assess the culture needed to be unbiased. A biased staff selection can reduce the assignment's reliability and usefulness, reducing the opportunities for learning.	Staff and stakeholders selection was done objectively based on criteria agreed upon with IOD.
The effectiveness of the assignment could be reduced by delaying the process unnecessarily.	The Evaluation Unit clarified the timeline and feedback timings to avoid unnecessary delays.
Staff and stakeholders might not understand the tools and questions, which could jeopardize the assignment's results.	The Evaluation Unit customized the tools in collaboration with the business areas' focal points and tested them in advance.
Low-level participation of stakeholders and staff could reduce the effectiveness of the assignment.	The Evaluation Unit in collaboration with the Department, identified strategies for increasing the levels of participation.

**3. VERIFICATION FINDINGS**

**(A) RELEVANCE**

**(i) How does the Department identify its customer needs?**

45. To better comprehend customers' requirements and perspectives, the Department leverages various communication channels, including the PCT User Satisfaction Survey, which offers insights into areas that work well and those that require improvement.

46. The Department allocated 209,415 Swiss francs between 2020 and 2023 to conduct the biennial Customer Satisfaction Survey<sup>18</sup> with the aim of gaining a better understanding of its customers' needs. The survey is administered to the PCT applicants and agents who had filed a PCT application, as well as to users who had not necessarily filed PCT applications, such as PCT users making payments or paralegals using ePCT (IP Portal).

47. The Department also conducts national and regional meetings, trainings, and workshops to create a shared understanding of the system among users and potential users. Such events offer a platform for stakeholders to learn about the latest trends, policies, and best practices, thus enhancing their experience and ensuring optimal utilization of the PCT services.

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<sup>18</sup> Including personnel and non-personnel budget. Source: WIPO Business Intelligence Dashboard, Program Management – Performance and Budget, Geneva, Switzerland, April 2024.



48. Although the Department already collects customer feedback through satisfaction surveys, meetings, and workshops, it is crucial to consolidate existing data and supplement these efforts with more targeted and systematic needs analysis and market research to comprehensively understand customers' requirements.

49. The Department could explore different approaches to assess these needs when undertaking needs analysis. This could include:

- (a) "Design thinking and innovation"<sup>19</sup> - a problem-solving approach with a unique set of qualities: it is human centered, possibility driven, option focused, and iterative. Design thinking asks the question "What if anything were possible?" as staff begin to create ideas. Facilitators focus on generating multiple options and avoid putting all eggs in one solution basket. Because staff are guessing about their stakeholders' needs and wants, staff also expect to be wrong sometimes. So, staff should put multiple irons in the fire and let the stakeholders tell them which work for them.<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 8: Design Thinking - Shaping the Innovator's Journey**

What makes design thinking a social technology is its ability to counteract the biases of innovators and change the way they engage in the innovation process.

Problem	Design thinking	Improved outcome
Innovators are trapped in their own expertise and experience.	Design thinking <b>provides immersion</b> in the user's experience, shifting an innovator's mindset toward...	...a better understanding of those being designed for.
Innovators are overwhelmed by the volume and messiness of qualitative data.	Design thinking <b>makes sense</b> of data by organizing it into themes and patterns, pointing the innovator toward...	...new insights and possibilities.
Innovators are divided by differences in team members' perspectives.	Design thinking <b>builds alignment</b> as insights are translated into design criteria, moving an innovation team toward...	...convergence around what really matters to users.
Innovators are confronted by too many disparate but familiar ideas.	Design thinking <b>encourages the emergence</b> of fresh ideas through a focused inquiry, shifting team members toward...	...a limited but diverse set of potential new solutions.
Innovators are constrained by existing biases about what does or doesn't work.	Design thinking <b>fosters articulation</b> of the conditions necessary to each idea's success and transitions a team toward...	...clarity on make-or-break assumptions that enables the design of meaningful experiments.
Innovators are lacking a shared understanding of new ideas and often unable to get good feedback from users.	Design thinking <b>offers pre-experiences</b> to users through very rough prototypes that help innovators get...	...accurate feedback at low cost and an understanding of potential solutions' true value.
Innovators are afraid of change and ambiguity surrounding the new future.	Design thinking <b>delivers learning in action</b> as experiments engage staff and users, helping them build...	...a shared commitment and confidence in the new product or strategy.

Source: Why Design Thinking Works. It addresses the biases and behaviors that hamper innovation, Jeanne Liedtka, Harvard Business Review, September – October 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/09/why-design-thinking-works>

<sup>19</sup> J. Liedtka, Why Design Thinking Works, Harvard Business Review, September 2018 <https://hbr.org/2018/09/why-design-thinking-works>

<sup>20</sup> <https://jeanneliedtka.com/>



- (b) Value Proposition Design<sup>21</sup> - an approach that helps invent and improve value propositions by understanding the patterns of value creation and leverage the experience and skills of the team. It helps organizations avoid wasting time with ideas that will not work and minimize the risk of a flop.



“Design Thinking and Innovation” and “Value Proposition Design” are just two of the many useful approaches for identifying customer needs. Once identified, these needs can be integrated into existing consultative initiatives, or new ones can be created to better serve customers.

**(ii) Is the current approach towards monitoring customer satisfaction effective?**

50. The PCT LURD within the Department, through the Customer Experience Section,<sup>22</sup> conducts a biennial customer satisfaction survey, which is distributed to a representative sample of users. As reported, the response rate for the 2023-2024 PCT Customer Satisfaction Survey was 12 per cent with 1,763 participants out of 22,971, having fully completed the survey, 919 customers who opened the survey but did not complete it, and another 1,012 customers, who only partially filled it out. This indicates that the survey process could be refined to encourage more customers to participate and provide valuable feedback.

51. The verification revealed some lessons that could be utilized to enhance the existing customer satisfaction monitoring practices further. These include:

**(a) Lesson learned on further strengthening of existing PCT monitoring practices**



The Department would benefit from complementing existing monitoring data with additional internal monitoring measures and gathering customer satisfaction data more systematically and regularly. This will improve feedback reporting, facilitate the decision-making process, provide a comprehensive view of customer satisfaction, and enable informed decisions to enhance the PCT services.

Various PTS business areas have already identified different metrics to measure customer satisfaction, such as through calls, surveys, or emails. While each of these metrics is relevant to measuring customer satisfaction, consistently defining metrics for gathering feedback from different communication channels across the Department and even the Sector would be beneficial.

Whether the service was provided via a call, a video conference, an email, or the WIPO website, the real-time feedback gathered through all these different channels added to the survey feedback would build the basis to create a composite indicator for customer services. The responsibility for determining whether the composite indicator is used for reporting to Member States or for internal management purposes lies with the Department and the Sector Lead.

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<sup>22</sup> Infrastructure and Platforms Sector.

**(b) Lesson learned on analyzing monitoring data**

<b>i</b>	<p>With PCT being the only global patent application filing system, it is important to focus on identifying ways to move satisfied and neutral customers towards becoming very satisfied. Currently, “very satisfactory and satisfactory” survey results are merged into one positive satisfaction result in customer satisfaction reports. Although this practice is methodologically approved, it must be exercised with caution when interpreting the results.</p> <p>According to a review published in the Harvard Business Review (HBR),<sup>23</sup> customer satisfaction is crucial because “very satisfied” customers are loyal customers.</p> <p>Where there are limited choices, customers may remain loyal despite their low or average satisfaction levels. For instance, customers who are only “satisfied” would immediately switch to a better service option if they had one. Satisfaction scales need to be interpreted accordingly in settings like WIPO and government offices offering public services. One well-researched and effective option is the “net promoter” measure depicted in Figure 9.</p>
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**Figure 9: Interpreting survey results in settings with little or no competition**

Rating scale	Loyalty behavior
Very satisfied	Very loyal customer. These customers would stay with WIPO even if there would be competition
Satisfied and neutral	This group of customers would easily switch if there was a competitor
Dissatisfied	No loyalty at all

Source: Thomas O. Jones and W. Earl Sasser, Why Satisfied Customers Defect, Market Research, Harvard Business Review, 1995.

**(c) Lesson learned on the effectiveness of the PCT survey**

52. The second objective of the verification, as stated in the ToR, was to identify opportunities to enhance services and customer relations through adaptive learning and behavioral science.

<b>i</b>	<p>The process of collecting feedback from WIPO’s customers could be improved by emphasizing the value of the customers’ feedback and informing customers about the improvements made based on their feedback. Annex V provides a sample letter that can be used to encourage customers to give feedback and make them feel appreciated through non-financial reward mechanisms. Annexes VI and VII contain explicit clarification on the nudges used in the sample letter.</p>
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<sup>23</sup> T. O. Jones, W.E. Sasser, Why Satisfied Customers Defect, Market Research, Harvard Business Review, Magazine November-December 1995

53. During the verification, two concerns were raised by the Department staff, namely, survey consistency and survey fatigue resulting in fewer respondents.

54. With regards to survey consistency, it has been acknowledged that while changes to the survey may require a review of the current approach and may impact future reporting for one biennium, they may also improve the feedback quality and monitoring to identify areas for improvement in a timely manner.



To address the survey fatigue, the evaluation team has provided a brief clarification in Annex VIII, outlining strategies to mitigate survey fatigue.

55. In addition, the evaluation team emphasizes the importance of systemic real-time client feedback to enable management to track service performance and make timely improvements. Currently, the survey is conducted biennially, which may result in a decrease in feedback accuracy due to time lapse and difficulty in reaching respondents.

#### Recommendation

1. In coordination with the Customer Experience Section, the Department should review the frequency and length of the existing customer satisfaction survey, improving the means to provide real-time client feedback systematically.

(Priority: Medium)

#### (iii) Is customer foresight considered a fundamental aspect of the PCT's organizational culture?

56. Overall, customer foresight is a fundamental aspect of the PTS culture of customer service, and to better understand the needs of potential customers, some business areas are exploring new markets and improving products based on user feedback. The Department has improved its website, the *PCT Applicant's Guide* (eGuide),<sup>24</sup> and *PCT Newsletter* based on feedback.

57. The Department assists IP offices' customers through technical support, capacity-building activities, and developing new tools and projects. It regularly reviews its services and explores new ideas to remain relevant to customers. By analyzing user feedback, the Department identifies potential areas for future action, delivering long-term improvements to the system and customer service.

58. The Department has demonstrated its commitment in keeping users informed through the following information resources:

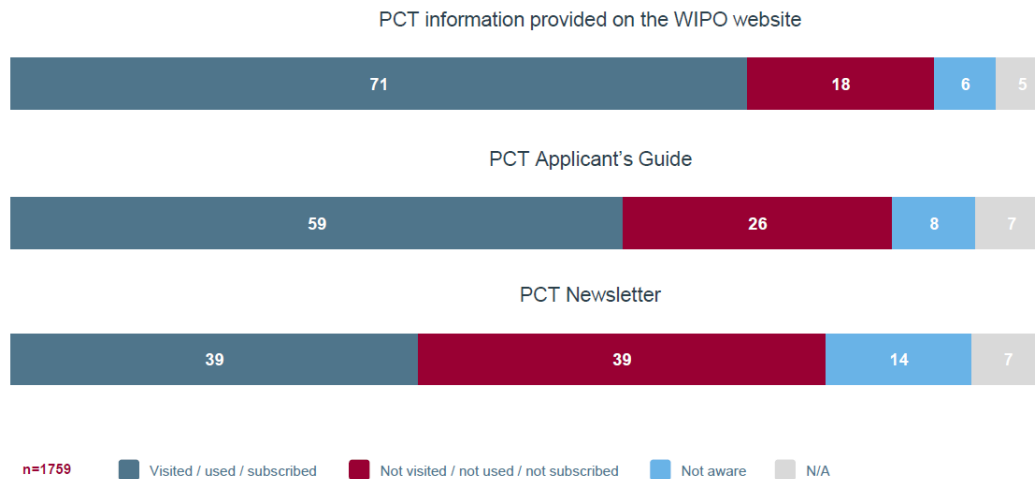
- (a) The WIPO PCT website section with guidance for new users;
- (b) "Highlights" section of the website which is aimed at a particular subset of users (lawyers and managers); and
- (c) The *PCT Newsletter* and PCT Yearly Reviews.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.wipo.int/pct/en/guide/index.html>

59. The Department also informs existing and potential users about PCT via webinars and presentations at the national and international levels, in all relevant PCT languages.

60. According to focus groups and interviews, some of the information resources provided by the Department are tailored to specific audiences. For instance, the PCT Highlights are developed for lawyers and managers. As a result, it is not expected that all PCT customers will have subscribed to these resources.

**Figure 10: Used PCT Information resources in the last 12 months preceding the 2023/24 PCT User Satisfaction Survey (in % out of 1759 responses suitable for analysis)**



Source: 2023/24 PCT User Satisfaction Survey Results

61. In view of the findings and lessons learned gathered during the data collection process and analysis, the verification suggests the following actions to improve the customer foresight activities:

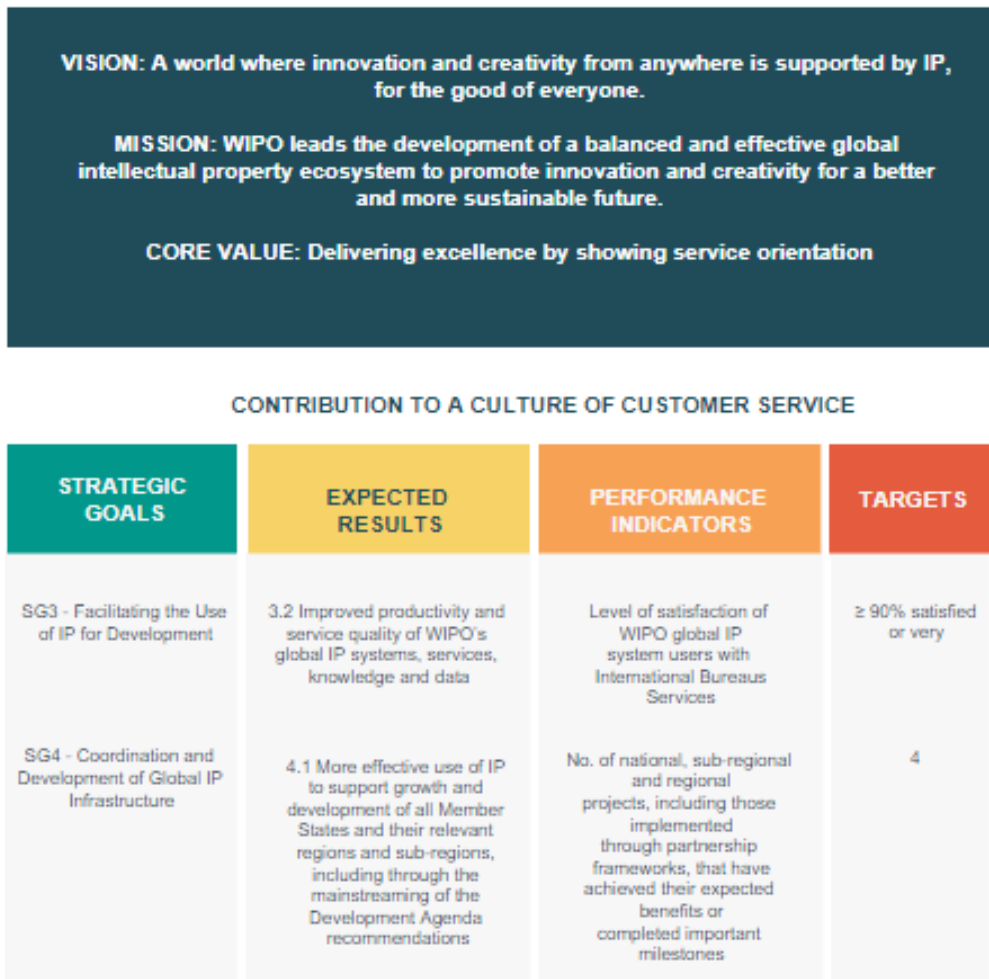
- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| <i>i</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Evaluate which information resources would be relevant to customers not receiving the PCT Newsletter or Highlights (70 to 80 per cent of potential customers);</li> <li>B. Collaborate with specialized marketing and communication experts to develop a comprehensive customer foresight strategy, including communication plan and products. Additionally, it is suggested that newly redesigned products undergo testing to identify the most effective approach to reach existing and potential customers;</li> <li>C. Request feedback on these information resources only from the users of these products to avoid misleading statistical data; and</li> <li>D. Improve the existing newsletter: Although aimed at a limited number of clients, some issues of the <i>PCT Newsletter</i> are quite lengthy, spanning more than 15 pages. Annex IX identifies some effective practices for newsletters that could be considered.</li> </ul> |
|----------|---|

(B) EFFECTIVENESS: STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

(I) Does the PCT customer service culture align with WIPO’s Strategic Goals and Expected Results?

62. The Department’s reported activities of customer service are in line with the WIPO’s Strategic Goals and objectives and contribute to the WIPO’s Strategic Goals 3 and 4, as depicted in Figure 11.

**Figure 11: PCT Culture of Customer Service Results Framework**



Source: WIPO Program of Work and Budget 2022/2023

63. The culture of customer service within the PCT system is monitored through key performance indicators (KPIs). The primary KPI is the level of satisfaction expressed by WIPO’s global IP system users with WIPO’s services.

64. Over time, the PCT culture has placed emphasis on customer satisfaction while also aligning with the legal framework of PCT, the WIPO administration, the PCT Contracting States, and WIPO’s core value of service orientation.

65. The focus on service orientation in WIPO as an organization and PTS as a sector is characterized by "anticipating, understanding, and effectively addressing business needs

while providing high-quality services that meet the needs of its customers to the highest standards of organizational delivery”.<sup>25</sup>

66. Service orientation is achieved by the Department balancing legal requirements and customer demands, particularly by showing service orientation and through various means such as PCT Working Groups, surveys, national consultations, and technical assistance activities, among others, all of which allow for an understanding of the needs of service recipients.

67. While 90 per cent of surveyed PCT users were satisfied<sup>26</sup> with the PCT customer service, the verification found that activities and contributions to customer service are spread thinly across various workplans.

68. As a result, there is room for improvement in measuring and reporting contributions towards a customer service culture. For instance, the Department is currently collaborating with the WIPO Academy’s Internal Training Program to enhance the customer service skills of the Department’s staff.

#### **Recommendation**

2. In collaboration with the PCT Services Department, the Department should (i) develop an impact framework, such as a theory of change, to establish clear linkages between initiatives aimed at enhancing a culture of customer service and their contribution to customer satisfaction; and (ii) set SMART performance measures to monitor the effectiveness of the training in enhancing the Department’s customer service culture.

(Priority: Medium)

#### **(ii) Is the adoption of a customer service culture ingrained within each individual, team, and business area?**

69. The Department has an implicit strategy in place, and all staff are working towards delivering a higher level of user satisfaction. However, it is imperative that this implicit strategy be documented to mitigate the risks of loss of institutional memory, a lack of guidance for the organization’s culture, underreporting of contributions, inconsistent approaches to customer service, and a lack of standardization in customer participation, metrics, and strategy communication plans.

#### **Recommendation**

3. In collaboration with the PCT Services Department, the Department should document the customer strategy to ensure a clear and concise understanding of the Organization’s culture of customer service goals and objectives across the board and a standardized approach to measuring and communicating these goals and objectives.

(Priority: Medium)

<sup>25</sup> WIPO Core Values and Organizational Competencies, [https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/erecruitment/en/pdf/core\\_values\\_and\\_competencies.pdf](https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/erecruitment/en/pdf/core_values_and_competencies.pdf)

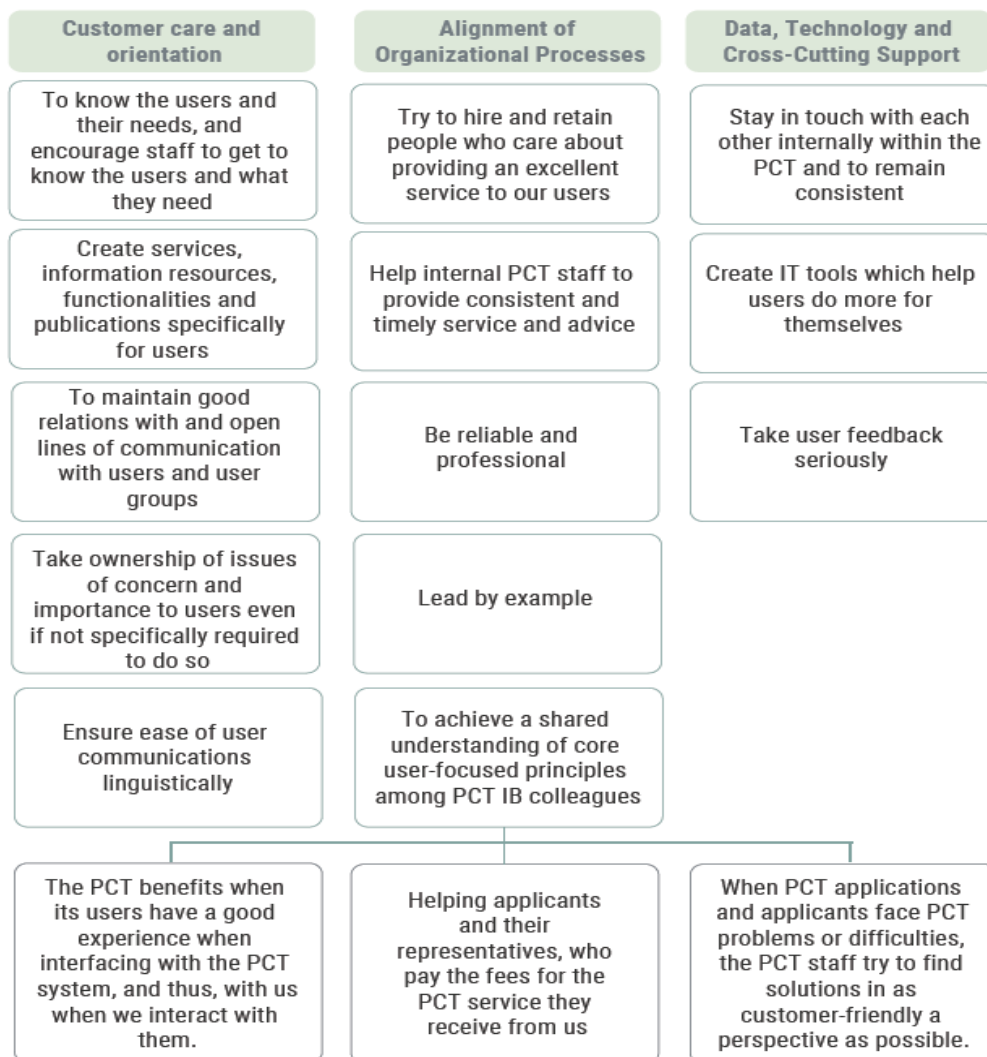
<sup>26</sup> 2023/2024 PCT User Satisfaction Survey: Summary, Geneva, January 2024, <https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/pct/en/docs/activity/pct-user-survey-2023-2024.pdf>

(iii) **Are the Department's staff getting adequate customer service strategic guidance?**

70. Overall, the staff at the Department are committed to WIPO's core value of "Showing Service Orientation"<sup>27</sup> by anticipating and addressing business needs effectively and delivering services of high quality, as highlighted in the PCT survey results 2021/2022. The feedback received from the PCT users through its customer survey may serve as evidence that the Department is providing adequate guidance to the staff.<sup>28</sup>

71. Figure 12 shows the existing PCT LURD internal culture of customer service.

**Figure 12: PCT LURD internal culture of customer service**



Source: PCT Legal and User Relations Division, WIPO

<sup>27</sup> WIPO Core Values and Organizational Competencies, [https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/erecruitment/en/pdf/core\\_values\\_and\\_competencies.pdf](https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/erecruitment/en/pdf/core_values_and_competencies.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> WIPO, PCT 2021/2022 PCT User Satisfaction Survey: Summary, Geneva, May 2023, <https://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/pct/en/docs/activity/pct-user-survey-2021-2022.pdf>



(C) EFFICIENCY

(i) **How does the Department identify good practices and lessons learned from its partners?**

72. Through effective interaction, collaboration and engagement with relevant stakeholders, WIPO aims to raise awareness about the value of IP protection for innovation and creativity, essential for addressing global challenges.<sup>29</sup>

73. The Department monitors similar organizations and shares information with relevant WIPO business areas to identify new risks and learn lessons. The discussions typically focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the PCT system as a whole or WIPO's place within it.



Looking forward, it would be advantageous to adopt a more systematic and unified approach across the Department to establish and identify best practices and lessons learned, particularly concerning innovative customer services or products.

(ii) **How does the Department identify good practices and lessons learned from other business areas and Sectors?**

74. First steps along the path to 'Working As One' across and within Sectors and breaking the 'silo' mentality have been taken.<sup>30</sup> The Coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic brought about significant changes in the way WIPO works and collaborates, and this affected PTS as well. To continue providing services, the Department had to quickly adapt and automate its processes, such as using ePCT for remote service provision. This new way of working opened new opportunities for learning and keeping teams agile. However, it also requires new collaboration approaches, especially for cross-sectoral collaboration, to ensure the uninterrupted continuation of the PCT services.

75. Under the new WIPO leadership since 2020, there has been an increase in cross-sectoral collaboration on initiatives such as digitalization, infrastructure improvements, and staff training initiatives that span multiple Sectors. In addition, the Department closely collaborates with the Customer Experience Section on the customer satisfaction survey development and data gathering. The Department team frequently engages with colleagues from other relevant Sectors through joint outreach events, regular meetings, and email communications.

76. The Department actively supports its colleagues by providing the team with essential knowledge sharing tools such as the PCT Legal Issues database, which was developed and is maintained by the Department. The PCT Legal Issues database is a reliable repository that helps the Department's staff ensure that responses they provide to customers are complete, accurate, and consistent with past precedent.

77. While the existing initiatives are commendable, the following actions could be implemented to improve collaboration:

<sup>29</sup> WIPO Risk Appetite Statement, Program and Budget Committee, Thirty-Fourth Session, Geneva, June 27 to July 1, 2022, document WP/PBC/34/13, Geneva, Switzerland

<sup>30</sup> WIPO (WO/CC/82/INF/1), Annual Report on Human Resources, WIPO Coordination Committee, Eighty-Second (54<sup>th</sup> Ordinary) Session, Geneva, July 6 to 14, 2023



### Recommendation

4. The Department should:
- a. Have a specific, easily accessible, and shared with other business areas repository for preserving institutional memory and sharing customer service lessons learned and good practices on gathering customer satisfaction metrics data, assessing the impact of a customer service culture on customer satisfaction, among others.
  - b. Create more opportunities for continuing knowledge-sharing across WIPO business areas and sectors by (i) engaging relevant WIPO staff collaborating with the Department in PCT customer service conferences and workshops; (ii) setting up communities of practice to exchange lessons and good practices on customer service; (iii) identifying experts who can act as bridges between business areas and sectors to facilitate knowledge-sharing across teams.

(Priority: Medium)

### (iii) Is the Department's resource management aligned with fostering a customer service culture?

78. The Department was allocated a total budget of 48,121,603 Swiss francs between 2020 and 2023, with 83 per cent earmarked for personnel and 17 per cent for non-personnel expenditures.

79. For the year 2023, the Department was allocated a budget of 12,629,078 Swiss francs, and a budget utilization rate was 85 per cent.

	PCT Legal and International Affairs Department <sup>31</sup> 2023 Budget and Actuals in Swiss francs					
	Budget			Actuals		
	PCT LURD	PCT ICD	PCT BDD	PCT LURD	PCT ICD	PCT BDD
Personnel Resources	5,473,800	2,515,775	1,949,000	4,768,340	2,376,598	2,103,352
Non-Personnel Resources	647,941	810,340	1,232,222	251,232	263,333	1,001,587
Total per Division	6,121,741	3,326,115	3,181,222	5,019,572	2,639,931	3,104,939
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>12,629,078</b>					
<b>Total Actuals, as of December 31, 2023</b>	<b>10,764,442</b>					

80. While a documented customer service strategy is yet to be developed, the Department has continuously operated and developed initiatives to contribute to a culture of customer service. The Department allocated earmarked funds with a focus on three key areas:

- (a) Meeting customer expectations and informing them of progress and setbacks;
- (b) Gathering customer insights such as feedback through surveys and consultations, as well as product testing; and

<sup>31</sup> At the time of the verification, the PCT Legal and International Affairs Department consisted of the PCT Legal and User Relations Division (PCT LURD), PCT International Cooperation Division (PCT ICD) and the PCT Business Development Division (PCT BDD).

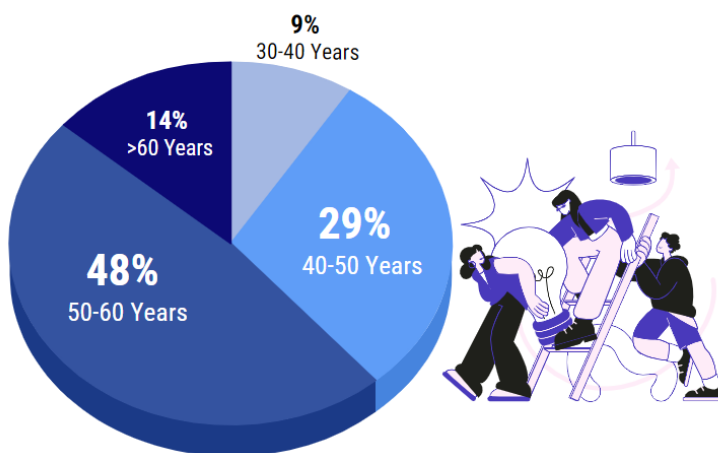
(c) Collaboration with its customers by providing training and technical assistance to build the capacity of the PCT users and potential users.

(iv) **How can the Department demonstrate adaptability while upholding its commitment to its customers and its staff?**

81. At the beginning of the verification, the Department comprised 45 regular employees. Overall, 52 per cent of the regular staff (23 individuals) have been employed by the Department for more than two decades.

82. A majority of the regular staff members (27 employees or 61 per cent) at the Department are aged above 50 years. Consequently, the Department is likely to witness retirements of the same proportion in the next 10-15 years, as illustrated in Figure 13.

**Figure 13: Staff age distribution in 2022**



Source: WIPO HRMD Business Intelligence Dashboard, Staff Headcount, December 2022.

83. Furthermore, the Department's staff should possess not only the necessary experience but also customer-focused qualities such as empathy, friendliness, and problem-solving skills. Upon review of several PCT job descriptions, it was found that not all align with these customer-centric principles,<sup>32</sup> and only a few referenced the importance of delivering high-level customer service to users.

**Recommendations**

5. The Department, in collaboration with HRMD, should update the job descriptions of existing staff and ensure that job descriptions of new staff reflect the Organization's commitment to customer service.

(Priority: Medium)

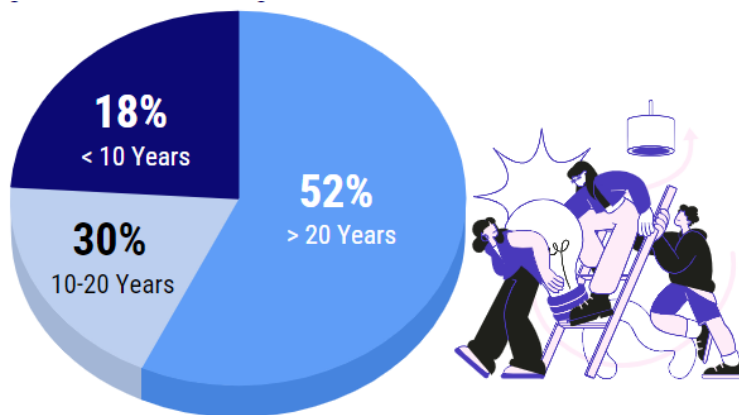
6. The Department, in collaboration with HRMD, should improve the existing HR contingency plan, which should include concrete actions (i) to establish expert pools readily available when necessary to fill in gaps due to staff turnover or mobility; and (ii) to seamlessly integrate new team members into the PCT's customer service culture.

<sup>32</sup> D. L. Yohn, 6 Ways to Build a Customer Centric Culture, Customer Centricity, Harvard Business Review, October 2, 2018

(Priority: Medium)

84. The evaluation team noted that the Department and WIPO Academy are working jointly on upgrading existing staff skills. This is particularly important for 82 per cent of Department's staff, as depicted in Figure 14, who have been in the Organization for more than 10 years.

**Figure 14: The Department's Staff Length of Service Distribution in 2022**



Source: WIPO Business Intelligence Database, June 2023

85. To enhance the customer service skills of the PCT staff, the Department received support from HRMD and WIPO Academy with 14 customer service courses made available on LinkedIn, between 2022 and 2023. One of the courses is "Become a customer service specialist", which includes a follow-up session by the Department from three to six months later to validate the implementation of knowledge and skills acquired during the online and face-to-face training.

86. The WIPO Academy also developed a tailored customer service training for the PCT staff, which was successfully delivered in October 2023, with a follow-up session in January 2024.

87. At the PCT's request, the WIPO Academy will design a customer orientation training specifically for the Department, scheduled for delivery in 2024 - early 2025.

88. WIPO is actively promoting motivation and flexibility by offering opportunities for staff mobility across relevant Sectors. Increased mobility can uplift morale, enhance job satisfaction, boost employee engagement, and improve overall performance. With the right planning and support, mobility can become a reality for the Department's staff looking to explore new opportunities within WIPO.



The possibility of mobility is a solution to support staff with lateral moves. However, for the Department to provide high-quality services with the right level of expertise in customer service, it is imperative to strike a balance between retaining experienced and knowledgeable staff and offering career development opportunities within their business areas rather than constantly training new recruits with short-term contracts. Achieving this balance is crucial for the success of the Department in delivering quality services to its clients.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In coordination with the Customer Experience Section, the Department should review the frequency and length of the existing customer satisfaction survey, improving the means to provide real-time client feedback systematically.

(Priority: Medium)

2. In collaboration with the PCT Services Department, the Department should (i) develop an impact framework, such as a theory of change, to establish clear linkages between initiatives aimed at enhancing a culture of customer service and their contribution to customer satisfaction; and (ii) set SMART performance measures to monitor the effectiveness of the training in enhancing the Department's customer service culture.

(Priority: Medium)

3. In collaboration with the PCT Services Department, the Department should document the customer strategy to ensure a clear and concise understanding of the Organization's culture of customer service goals and objectives across the board and a standardized approach to measuring and communicating these goals and objectives.

(Priority: Medium)

4. The Department should:
  - a. Have a specific, easily accessible, and shared with other business areas repository for preserving institutional memory and sharing customer service lessons learned and good practices on gathering customer satisfaction metrics data, assessing the impact of a customer service culture on customer satisfaction, among others.
  - b. Create more opportunities for continuing knowledge-sharing across WIPO business areas and sectors by (i) engaging relevant WIPO staff collaborating with the Department in the PCT customer service conferences and workshops; (ii) setting up communities of practice to exchange lessons and good practices on customer service; (iii) identifying experts who can act as bridges between business areas and sectors to facilitate knowledge-sharing across teams.

(Priority: Medium)

5. The Department, in collaboration with HRMD, should update the job descriptions of existing staff and ensure that job descriptions of new staff reflect the Organization's commitment to customer service.

(Priority: Medium)

6. The Department, in collaboration with HRMD, should improve the existing HR contingency plan, which should include concrete actions (i) to establish expert pools readily available when necessary to fill in gaps due to staff turnover or mobility; and (ii) to seamlessly integrate new team members into the PCT's customer service culture.

(Priority: Medium)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

*IOD wishes to thank all relevant colleagues for their assistance, cooperation, and interest during this assignment.*

*Pictures in this report have been extracted from VENNGAGE, for which IOD has a license, and the WIPO website.*

*Prepared by: Julia Engelhardt, Senior Evaluation Officer; with the support of Veridiana Mansour Mendes, Evaluation Officer, and Viktoriya Azizova, Assistant.*

*Reviewed by: Adan Ruiz Villalba, Head, IOD Evaluation Section; Julie Nyang'aya, Director, IOD*

*Approved by: Julie Nyang'aya, Director, IOD*

**TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

No	Recommendations	Priority	Person(s) Responsible	Other Stakeholder(S)	Management Action Plan	Deadline
1.	In coordination with the Customer Experience Section, the Department should review the frequency and length of the existing customer satisfaction survey, improving the means to provide real-time client feedback systematically.	Medium	Senior Legal Information Officer, PCT LURD	PCT LIAD, Customer Experience Section	i) Review the length and frequency of the PCT User Survey ii) Evaluate mechanisms for obtaining real-time feedback from PCT users after contact with PCTLURD colleagues in various capacities	Q2 2025 (before starting preparations for the next Survey)
2.	In collaboration with the PCT Services Department, the Department should (i) develop an impact framework, such as a theory of change, to establish clear linkages between initiatives aimed at enhancing a culture of customer service and their contribution to customer satisfaction; and (ii) set SMART performance measures to monitor the effectiveness of the training in enhancing the PCT's customer service culture.	Medium	Director PCT LURD	PCT LIAD, PCT Services Department	i) Develop an impact framework, with input from other PCT areas (ICD and PCT Services Department) ii) Develop: SMART performance measure	Q4, 2025
3.	In collaboration with the PCT Services Department, the Department should document the PCT's customer strategy to ensure a clear and concise understanding of the Organization's culture of customer service goals and objectives across the board and a standardized approach to measuring and communicating these goals and objectives.	Medium	Director PCT LURD	PCT LIAD, PCT Services Department, Customer Experience Section	i) Develop a draft PCT Customer Strategy ii) Consult PCT staff and PCT management on the draft strategy iii) Adopt the strategy iv) Continuously monitor and review the customer service strategy.	Q4, 2025

4.	<p>The Department should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Have a specific, easily accessible, and shared with other business areas repository for preserving institutional memory and sharing customer service lessons learned and good practices on gathering customer satisfaction metrics data, assessing the impact of a customer service culture on customer satisfaction, among others.</li> <li>b. Create more opportunities for continuing knowledge-sharing across WIPO business areas and sectors by (i) engaging relevant WIPO staff collaborating with the Department in PCT customer service conferences and workshops; (ii) setting up communities of practice to exchange lessons and good practices on customer service; (iii) identifying experts who can act as bridges between business areas and sectors to facilitate knowledge-sharing across teams.</li> </ol>	Medium	Director PCT LURD	PCT LIAD, PCT Services Department and other areas across WIPO, as relevant	<p>Repository Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Create the indicated shared repository (can be a document management system, a knowledge management tool, or even a simple file-sharing platform. Store relevant documents, presentations, and other materials related to customer service)</li> <li>ii) Study and evaluate examples of similar repositories used in practice</li> <li>iii) Draft terms of reference and business requirements for the indicated repository</li> <li>iv) Collaborate with other relevant areas, as appropriate, in the development and testing of the repository</li> </ol> <p>Knowledge sharing support actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Establish a team on knowledge-sharing practices</li> <li>ii) Collaboratively brainstorm about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opportunities to engage non-PCT staff in PCT customer service conferences and workshops;</li> <li>• establishing internal customer service-related communities of practice; and</li> <li>• identification of “bridge” focal points for the purpose of facilitating knowledge-sharing</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Implement the best and most feasible ideas.</p>	Q4, 2025, subject to the support from relevant areas
5.	The Department, in collaboration with HRMD, should update the job descriptions of existing staff and ensure that job descriptions of new staff reflect the	Medium	Director PCT LURD	HRMD	With the support from HRMD ensure staff members' job descriptions reflect the current customer service-related needs and goals of the organization and the PCT.	Q4, 2025

	Organization's commitment to customer service.					
6.	The Department, in collaboration with HRMD, should improve the existing HR contingency plan, which should include concrete actions (i) to establish expert pools readily available when necessary to fill in gaps due to staff turnover or mobility; and (ii) to seamlessly integrate new team members into the PCT's customer service culture.	Medium	Director PCT LURD	HRMD	With the support from HRMD: i) review existing HR contingency plan ii) create expertise rosters for use during mobility or turnover.  Once the new PCT customer service strategy has been agreed, create training materials for integration of new team members into PCT's customer service culture.	Q4, 2025

[Annexes follow]



## ANNEXES

<b>Annex I.</b>	Verification ToR
<b>Annex II.</b>	Reference List Desk Review
<b>Annex III.</b>	Culture of Customer Service Survey
<b>Annex IV.</b>	Definitions
<b>Annex V.</b>	Sample letter to encourage customers to participate in a satisfaction survey
<b>Annex VI.</b>	Clarification on the Nudges
<b>Annex VII.</b>	Why this Nudge?
<b>Annex VIII.</b>	Strategies to Reduce Survey Fatigue
<b>Annex IX.</b>	What Have We Learned from the PCT Newsletter?

## ANNEX I: VERIFICATION TOR



Final ToRs  
VERIFICATION PCT L

[Annex II follows]

## ANNEX II: REFERENCE LIST DESK REVIEW

1. Kumar and Werner Reinartz, Customers Relationship Management Concept, Strategy, and Tools, 3rd ed. 2018, Springer Texts in Business and Economics, Atlanta, USA, and Koeln, Germany
2. WIPO PCT Document on How PCT at WIPO (IB) created a strong culture of customer service.
3. The Innovation Toolkit on Enabling Environment Scan, United Nations. Dr Linden R. Brown and Chris L. Brown: The customer culture imperative: A leader's guide to driving superior performance, McGraw-Hill Education, New York, United States, 2014
4. WIPO, Internal Organization of WIPO: PCT Services and PCT Legal and International Affairs Departments in the Patents and Technology Sector, No. 18/2023, General distribution, May 16, 2023
5. WIPO, 2022 Mid-Year Review, Patent and Technology Sector (PTS), 2022 Mid-Year Workplan Review, June 7 & 8 2022
6. WIPO, PCT Newsletter, No. 10/2021, October 2021
7. WIPO, PCT Newsletter, No. 06/2021, June 2023
8. WIPO PCT, 2021/2022 PCT User Satisfaction Survey: Summary, May 2023, Geneva
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[Annex III follows]

### **ANNEX III: CULTURE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY**

The survey attached is the version agreed with the Department's team. The survey was distributed only to relevant staff in the Department. Overall 13 PCT staff member were invited to participate in this survey.



Final survey agreed  
with PCT.pdf

[Annex IV follows]

## ANNEX IV – DEFINITIONS

1. Customer culture is embraced by every individual, team, and business area. A customer culture embodies shared values across the entire business that translate into behaviors in all functions aligned and committed to creating superior value for customers in a profitable way. A strong customer culture delivers a customer experience that is consistently excellent along the whole service chain. The ultimate aim is to have the customer make your business the center for everything they do for your particular offering.
2. Customer experience: WIPO focuses on the development of an Organization-wide customer experience strategy and road map for its implementation and improving the brand experience of WIPO stakeholders and customers by, among other things: leveraging new technologies and automation to enhance customers' experience, gathering the voice of the customers through multiple channels and creating actionable insights for improving customers experiences and loyalty to WIPO and optimizing WIPO's marketing outreach through analytics and enhanced targeting.
3. Customer Relationships outline the relationship established and maintained with each customer segment. They explain how customers are acquired and retained.
4. Customer Segments are the groups of people and/or organizations a company or organization aims to reach and create value for with a dedicated value proposition.
5. Customers' value is critical to customer relations management. It refers to the economic value of the customer's relationship with the organization, expressed as a contribution margin or net profit. But customers are different, and so are their judgments. Hence, when we refer to the value of customers, we refer to the perceived customers' value, which can be deconstructed into the perceived benefits and perceived costs.
6. Impact: The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended, or unintended, higher-level effects. Note: Impact addresses the intervention's ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects. It seeks to identify the intervention's social, environmental, and economic effects that are longer-term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion. Beyond the immediate results, this criterion seeks to capture the intervention's indirect, secondary, and potential consequences. It does so by examining the holistic and enduring changes in systems or norms and potential effects on people's well-being, human rights, gender equality, and the environment.
7. Activity: Actions taken, or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance, and other types of resources, are mobilized to produce specific outputs.

[Annex V follows]



**ANNEX V – SAMPLE LETTER TO ENCOURAGE CUSTOMERS TO PARTICIPATE IN A SATISFACTION SURVEY**

Dear NAME,

I am Lisa Jorgenson, WIPO Deputy Director General; I would like to express our gratitude for choosing WIPO PCT services.

Our foremost commitment is to ensure that your experience with WIPO is a positive one, and we are always looking for ways to improve.

Therefore, we invite you to participate in a X minutes survey.

Your honest input is really valuable to us and will remain strictly confidential.

To participate, please click on your personal link provided below.

Your link will remain active for 10 days, so please don't miss this opportunity.

As a token of our appreciation, WIPO will publish the best idea for improvement in our upcoming *WIPO PCT Newsletter*.

If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us at: [wipo.uss@berent.com](mailto:wipo.uss@berent.com)

Thank you for choosing WIPO PCT services and being part of our mission to improve our services continuously.

Best regards,

ADD A SMALL PICTURE OF THE  
PERSON SENDING THE MESSAGE.

Lisa  
WIPO Deputy Director General

[Annex VI follows]

## ANNEX VI - CLARIFICATION ON THE NUDGES

Why this solution?	Current text	Text used in the intervention letter	Behavioral solution
Adding the user name to an otherwise generic text message increased the number of readers	Dear PCT user	Dear NAME	Salience
We are heavily influenced by who is communicating information. If BERENT sends the survey, then add the name of the researcher.	WIPO is conducting its biennial survey to understand your satisfaction with WIPO PCT services. WIPO has retained our company BERENT Deutschland GmbH, a leading provider of customer experience assessments, to conduct the survey on its behalf. Please find enclosed an introductory letter from WIPO about this survey.	I am Lisa Jorgenson, WIPO Deputy Director General; I want to express our gratitude for choosing WIPO PCT services.	Messenger effect
We seek to be consistent with our public promises and to reciprocate actions.		Our foremost commitment is that your experience with WIPO is a positive one, and we are always looking for ways to improve.	Commitment
Our attention time and attention are limited; the longer the survey, the more time is required, and the less it will be responded to.		Therefore, we invite you to participate in a 5 to 7 minutes survey.	Salient
People act in ways that make them feel better about themselves. We need to make them feel that their opinions matter.	Below you will find your personal link to this online survey. Your responses will remain completely confidential, so please answer all the questions frankly.	Your honest input is really valuable to us and will remain strictly confidential.	Ego
Our attention is drawn to novel things that seem relevant to us.	To access your personalized questionnaire form, please click on the URL below or copy and paste the URL into your Internet browser: <a href="https://www.berent-surveys.com/cgi-bin/SSWEB95.EXE?f=6901wk02+PP1yA1Qn">https://www.berent-surveys.com/cgi-bin/SSWEB95.EXE?f=6901wk02+PP1yA1Qn</a> Click to start	To participate, please click on your personal link provided below.	Salient
People do not like to lose		Your link will remain active for 10 days, so don't miss this opportunity.	Loss aversion
Our responses to incentives are shaped by predictable mental shortcuts, such as the strong desire to avoid losses.		As a token of our appreciation, WIPO will publish the best idea for improvement in our upcoming WIPO PCT newsletter.	Incentives

[Annex VII follows]

**ANNEX VII - WHY THIS NUDGE?**

Why this solution?	Current text	Text used in the intervention letter	Behavioral solution
Our responses to incentives are shaped by predictable mental shortcuts, such as the strong desire to avoid losses.		As a token of our appreciation, WIPO will publish the best idea for improvement in our upcoming WIPO PCT newsletter.	Incentives
	You can request additional survey links by contacting BERENT team at: wipo.uss@berent.com	If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us at: wipo.uss@berent.com	
People act in ways that make them feel better about themselves. We need to make them feel that their opinions matter.	On behalf of WIPO, we thank you in advance for your cooperation.	Thank you for choosing WIPO PCT services and being part of our mission to improve our services continuously.	Ego
Personalize your message, and adding a picture of the message will humanize your message even more.	Kind regards,  BERENT Since 1998' Minding Your Customers' Mind www.berent.com	Best regards, ADD A SMALL PICTURE OF THE PERSON SENDING THE MESSAGE.  Lisa WIPO Deputy Director General	Salient

[Annex VIII follows]

## ANNEX VIII - STRATEGIES TO REDUCE SURVEY FATIGUE

Do you ever feel like you are drowning in surveys? We get it - you're not alone! In today's world, clients are bombarded with requests for opinions on everything from WIPO services to social media platforms. But did you know this can lead to "survey fatigue"? This happens when people become tired of answering too many surveys, and their responses become biased or negative.

Despite survey fatigue, surveys are still incredibly useful for gathering customer feedback and improving our services. So, how can we find the right balance and ensure that our surveys do not contribute to fatigue? **Here are some tips that can help:**

**Incentives:** First, think about what will motivate your clients to participate. A reward system where clients feel inspired to complete surveys would help. But rewards don't have to be financial - knowing their feedback is being used to improve WIPO services can also be incredibly motivating. You can inform clients through stories on what improvements have resulted from the feedback and how this has helped other clients. The information can be shared via a newsletter, the WIPO website, or any other communication channel.

**Attention:** Keep your survey short and sweet. We all have short attention spans, and clients are more likely to respond to a survey that will take little time. Make sure to use clear, simple language and avoid complicated matrix questions. A progress bar can reduce uncertainty and inform respondents how long it will take to complete the survey.

**Timing:** It is recommended that the survey be sent as soon as possible after the service has been provided. This increases the response rates and ensures that clients' experiences are still fresh in their minds, allowing them to provide more specific feedback. It is advisable to avoid asking for feedback on all the services provided in a single survey, as clients may not have used all the services offered, resulting in an unnecessarily long survey. Instead, it is recommended to add real-time surveys to each service. For instance, when publishing a newsletter on the WIPO website, it is recommended that you seek feedback from users immediately after they have read the newsletter rather than waiting two years to ask how they found the newsletter. Users can be provided with a one to two-question rating system to assess the usefulness of the newsletter and give any ideas for improvement. This approach will enable you to gain specific feedback and improve the quality of your services.

By following these tips, we can ensure that our surveys are effective engaging, and do not contribute to survey fatigue.

[Annex IX follows]

## ANNEX IX - WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE PCT NEWSLETTER?

The following uptakes on *the PCT Newsletter* are also valid for other PCT information resources.

- Tailoring the content and format of PCT information material is crucial to meet the diverse needs of different user groups. While paralegal users may be interested in the current *Newsletter* with legal specificities, other users may require different information. However, expecting current staff to undertake the customization process is unrealistic, as this would require significant time investment and may affect their other responsibilities. Therefore, the Department would benefit from creating a digital newsletter version customized for different user groups.
- The primary aim of the *PCT Newsletter* is to disseminate important information to a specific group of the PCT users rather than to expand readership. However, there may be more effective ways to communicate the information than a 19-page newsletter. Therefore, it is recommended to have a concise newsletter that provides further reading options and links for readers seeking more in-depth information. The *Newsletter* should feature stories that resonate with its users. Training the staff on designing the *Newsletter's* appearance and content, including using nudges to attract both existing and new PCT users, would be highly beneficial.
- The current *Newsletter* titles and information could benefit from reframing, as the current titles may not persuade readers. Adding graphics and pictures wherever possible could also make the *Newsletter* more visually appealing and facilitate readership.
- To increase the number of *Newsletter* subscribers, it is recommended to nudge existing and potential users through all outreach programs. Adding the *Newsletter* registration link to every PCT presentation, webinar, training session, and other outreach platform would make the *Newsletter* more salient to users.
- Finally, while the Department deals with legal and technical issues, simplification techniques such as using plain English and avoiding complex legal terms would make the *Newsletter* easier to understand and more accessible. Including a section that informs users of how their feedback has improved processes, practices, or tools would also demonstrate responsiveness to user needs and feedback.

[End of Annexes and of document]

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