



**Africa Regional Review Meeting in Preparation for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-V) to be held on a Virtual Platform, from February 22 to 26, 2021**

**WIPO Deliverables for African Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020: Facts and Figures**

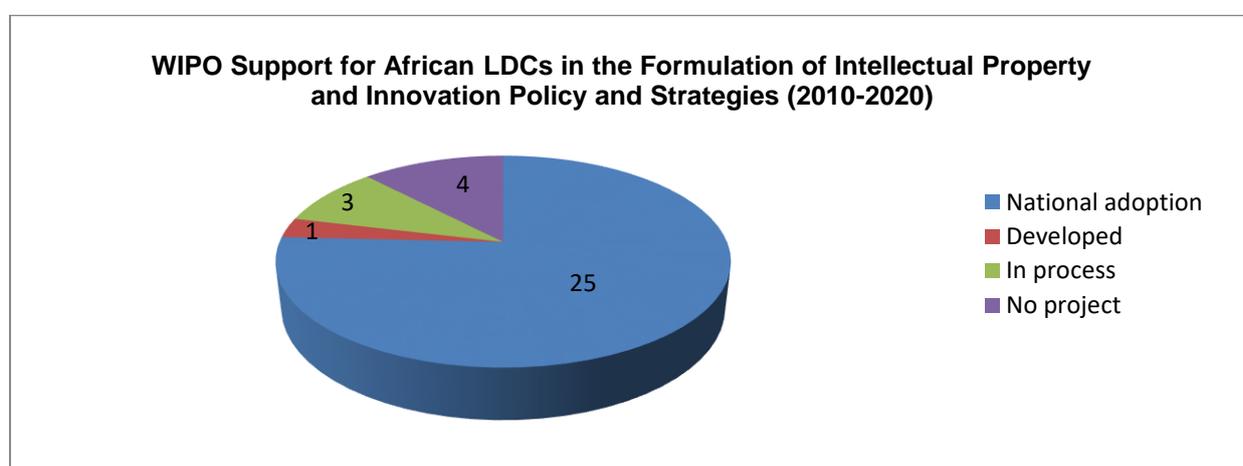
## Progress Made in the Implementation of WIPO Deliverables for African Least Developed Countries

This summary report provides an overview of the progress made in the implementation of WIPO deliverables for African least developed countries (LDCs), and of the relevant parts of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries in the decade 2010 to 2020.

### A. Intellectual Property and Innovation Policies and Strategies

WIPO assists LDCs in integrating intellectual property (IP) into their national development policies and strategies to strengthen their ability to generate economically valuable IP assets and create conditions where all national stakeholders can work together to create, own and exploit research results, innovations, new technologies and creative works. An IP strategy helps nations to unlock IP assets that can be commercialized in a sustainable way to generate wealth.

Since 2010, 25 of the 33 LDCs in Africa have adopted IP policies and strategies at the national level and are in the process of implementing them.



### B. Developing Human Technical Skills

In LDCs, the effective use of the IP system for economic, social, cultural and technological development is severely hampered by the lack of IP institutions, awareness-raising activities, and knowledge and expertise in this field.

There is therefore a need to promote greater awareness-raising in building IP institutions, and to develop professionalism in regard to legal, economic and business aspects of IP, and skills relating to access to scientific and technical IP information, as well as skills in areas such as trade and industry, finance, engineering, science and technology, health and culture. This should be disseminated widely enough to embrace a broad range of professional groups of potential IP owners and beneficiaries from various sectors.

Since 2015, WIPO has been organizing regional partnership initiatives for innovation and technological capacity-building in the LDCs in Africa, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. These partnership programs involve the assessment of capacities, the continuous development of project-based technical and institutional expertise in areas of innovation and technology for the benefit of the LDCs, and the provision of a platform for discussions among participants, who are mostly senior officials and policymakers, on the formulation and implementation of national projects. Senior officials from government ministries, IP offices, universities, research institutions and the private sector were invited to participate in these capacity-building activities.

Since 2015, four regional meetings for LDCs in Africa have been organized under this partnership initiative, with 137 senior officials and experts having taken part.

WIPO, in cooperation with the Government of Sweden, the Swedish Intellectual Property Office (PRV) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), organizes training programs for the benefit of LDCs. Between 2010 and 2020, 511 participants from African LDCs participated in these joint training programs on the use of IP rights for the economic growth and development of LDCs.

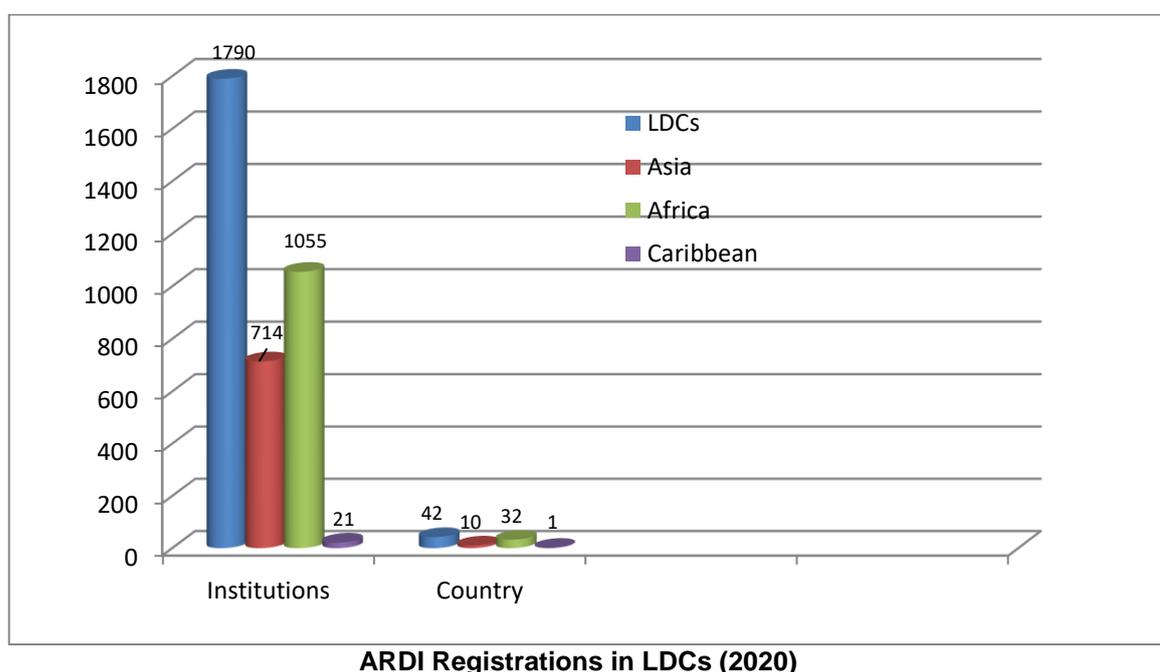
The WIPO Academy's Academic Institutions Program provides access to higher education in IP, especially for participants from developing countries, LDCs and countries with economies in transition. The Program offers joint master's degree programs with partner universities and institutions around the world. Several of the joint master's programs are also organized in cooperation with sub-regional and national IP administrations. Since 2010, 194 students from African LDCs have participated in joint master's degree programs on IP for LDCs with financial support from WIPO.

### C. Facilitating Access to Knowledge and Building Knowledge Infrastructure

The aim of WIPO-LDC cooperation and partnership was to focus on building the knowledge infrastructure in LDCs in order to contribute to reducing the knowledge gap. This would be done by facilitating access to the knowledge databases available globally in specialized databases within the IP system, and to patents, scientific and technical literature, together with support on how to use and exploit these databases at the national level through the involvement of relevant sectors and institutions. The goal is therefore to facilitate access to technological and scientific knowledge for users in LDCs, and to stimulate innovation and development.

Under this important initiative, a total of 1,055 organizations and institutions from 32 African LDCs have been trained in and used the Access to Research for Development and Innovation (ARDI) program, which was launched in 2009. This important program is coordinated by WIPO, together with its partners in the publishing industry, to increase the availability and use of scientific and technical information in developing countries and LDCs.

In addition, around 33 African LDCs have been participating in various training programs under the similar Access to Specialized Patent Information (ASPI) program, which is a public-private partnership established in 2010 and administered by WIPO in cooperation with leading patent information providers.



As of the date of preparation of this report, eight African LDCs were members of WIPO Re:Search, an initiative established by WIPO in 2011 in collaboration with BIO Ventures for Global Health and with the active participation of leading pharmaceutical companies and other private and public sector research organizations. Its aim is to stimulate the research and development of new and better treatment options and to provide access to IP for pharmaceutical compounds and technologies, and – most importantly – access to the available knowledge and data for the research and development of neglected tropical diseases, such as tuberculosis, schistosomiasis and malaria.

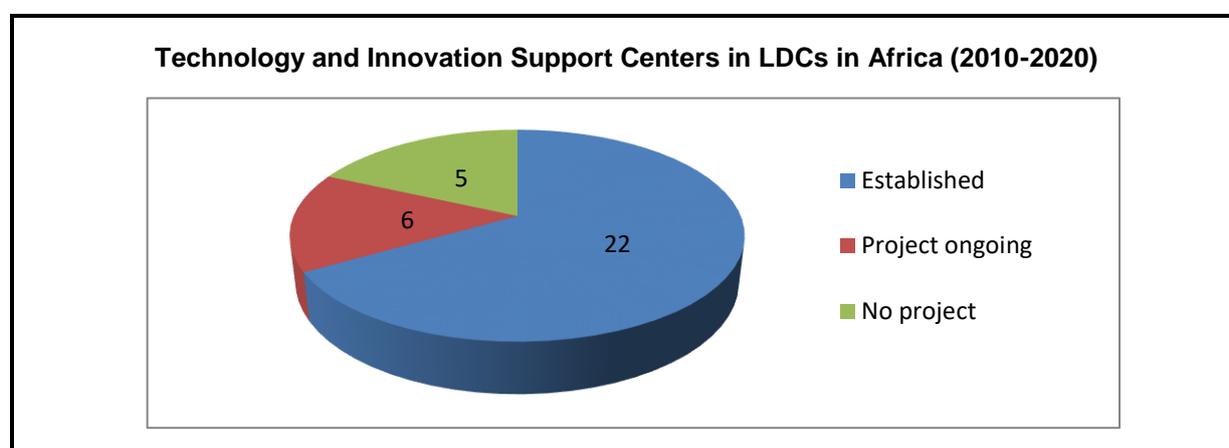
WIPO's office automation program assisted relevant institutions, including IP offices in LDCs, in modernizing their infrastructure and training their experts. In this connection, during the period from 2010 to 2020, the automation of IP offices has been completed in 11 African LDCs, namely Djibouti, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

#### **D. Establishment of Technology and Innovation Support Centers**

In addition to providing access to critical information resources through the ARDI and ASPI programs, WIPO has been supporting the effective use of these resources by helping to establish networks of Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs) in numerous countries around the world.

Located in institutions such as patent offices, universities, research centers and technology parks, TISCs provide specialized services designed to boost invention and innovative activity, encourage local ownership of IP rights and facilitate technology transfers. They provide the local research and business community with expert assistance in the search and retrieval of technological information.

Between 2010 and 2020, TISC networks were established by WIPO in 22 LDCs in Africa.



Overall, TISCs and the ARDI and ASPI programs seek to strengthen the capacity of LDCs to participate in the international knowledge economy, and to support inventors, researchers, entrepreneurs and other innovators in these countries in developing new solutions to the scientific and technical challenges faced at the local and national levels.

#### **E. Strategic Use of IP Tools – Branding**

An appropriate branding strategy, which makes use of, for example, a geographical indication, a trademark and a fair trade label, adds value to the product, helps to raise its market demand and increases the economic return for its producers. Such a strategy can be a key feature of national development owing to the benefits it can generate for local communities and, especially, for small enterprises, farmers and producers in LDCs.

WIPO offers its expertise in the area of strategy formulation and has contributed to capacity-building through technical assistance projects and training programs aimed at producers and farmers' associations, as well as government officials and staff in IP offices, focusing on technical IP issues, branding and commercialization options, and on raising the awareness of a range of stakeholders.

Between 2010 and 2020, a wide range of training activities were organized by WIPO for 26 LDCs in Africa on the areas of branding and IP strategy, branding for businesses and communities, development, trademark protection, collective marks, branding for adding value, and branding and design for small and medium-sized enterprises. These also include training and capacity-building activities focused on increasing competitiveness and supporting the addition of value to specific products in LDCs through branding, such as: Tanzanian coffee; cotton and vanilla from Uganda; cloves from Zanzibar; and *Cabrito de Tete* meat from Mozambique. Moreover, during this period, WIPO has provided policy and legislative assistance to more than 13 African LDCs upon request on trademark, industrial designs and geographical indications.

Under the project on accession to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks and the Protocol relating to that Agreement, between 2010 and 2020, WIPO provided legal and technical assistance on accession preparations and post-accession activities in LDCs, such as the Gambia, Malawi, Rwanda, Sudan and Zambia, and with the African Intellectual Property Organization, which counts 12 LDCs among its member states.

## **F. Traditional Cultural Expressions and Traditional Knowledge**

The success of the efforts made by LDCs to protect, promote, manage and commercially exploit their rich traditional knowledge and folklore could also be the result of the documenting and recording of those resources by LDCs. A national database of traditional knowledge, genetic resources and folklore is one way of articulating a national policy and legal framework for their protection, promotion and exploitation. It may also help the holders of the traditional knowledge of LDCs to prevent unentitled applicants from obtaining patents based on that knowledge.

However, for LDCs, documenting traditional knowledge poses great challenges owing to constraints on technical, human and financial resources. WIPO offered its expertise to assist some LDCs in inventorying and documenting their national resources and developing IP strategies for their protection.

WIPO also provided its expertise to LDCs through the establishment of digital libraries on traditional knowledge. A national traditional knowledge, folklore and genetic resource database built by digitizing identified traditional knowledge with their owners' prior informed consent is a useful avenue for the protection of such knowledge in LDCs. WIPO assists LDCs with the IP aspects of the development of these national databases.

Between 2010 and the present, WIPO has undertaken studies, and provided legislative assistance and policy advice upon request to a number of African LDCs, including Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, on traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. Depending on the specific needs and requests of the beneficiary countries, this has included various activities, such as reviewing and providing comments on national IP action plans, assisting with the preparation of policy documents and national strategies and the revision of relevant laws, and setting up legal and institutional frameworks and databases for registering and protecting traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and genetic resources. WIPO has also organized national workshops, training programs and multi-stakeholder consultations in most of the above countries.

In addition, during this period, LDCs that are members of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization have been benefiting from WIPO technical assistance on implementing the Swakopmund Protocol on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Folklore.

Since 2016, WIPO has collaborated with PRV to provide international training programs on IP, genetic resources and traditional knowledge to a wide range of beneficiary countries, which includes African LDCs such as Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

Currently, a project on building capacity to use the IP system among holders of traditional medicinal knowledge in Ethiopia is being implemented by the University of Gondar, Addis Ababa University and the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office (EIPO), with the support of WIPO.

### **G. National Capacity-Building Based on Needs Assessment**

This WIPO deliverable aims to contribute to the economic, social, cultural and technological development of LDCs and, ultimately, to the alleviation of poverty, by using IP as a tool for sustained and stable economic growth and development.

The WIPO Appropriate Technology project, as well as other WIPO initiatives undertaken for the benefit of LDCs, serves as a good example for other United Nations and regional agencies on how to develop and implement a needs-based development project or program.

The successful conclusion of the project in the beneficiary LDCs in Africa since 2010 has resulted in the identification of a number of long-term solutions to specific development-related issues. These include appropriate technologies in the following areas:

In Ethiopia: (i) solar coffee drying and (ii) aquaculture;

In Rwanda: (i) solar water distillation and (ii) aquaculture;

In the United Republic of Tanzania: (i) processing of seaweeds to extract carrageenan and (ii) aquaculture;

In Zambia: (i) run-off rainwater harvesting and (ii) solar water distillation.

In addition, in 2018, a national project based on the analysis of development needs was launched in Mozambique, and other national projects are currently being implemented in Senegal and Uganda.

In relation to the project, WIPO is also providing training to technology leaders, as well as to a critical mass of senior officials from universities and national science and technology institutions in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

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