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**Item No. 20 on the Agenda: UNIDROIT New Website**

(prepared by the UNIDROIT Secretariat)

<i>Summary</i>	<i>Summary of revamping operations and illustration of the new website features</i>
<i>Action to be taken</i>	<i>None</i>

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Many developments have occurred in web design and technology since 2014, when the current UNIDROIT website was designed, and the Secretariat has been seeking ways in which to modernise it and enhance its performance, while bearing in mind the core elements of its purpose:

- (a) **Repository:** The website serves as a repository for documents relating to the work of the Institute, including materials related to the negotiation, development and promotion of UNIDROIT instruments, as well as documents relating to institutional meetings such as those of the General Assembly, Governing Council, and Finance Committee.
- (b) **Activity report:** The website provides up-to-date information about the activities of the Secretariat, including news items, upcoming events, and ongoing projects.
- (c) **Presentation of the Institute:** The website displays information relating to the Institute's history, Member States, governing bodies, and other items.
- (d) **Relay center:** The website acts as a relay point for information relating to UNIDROIT's partner organisations, other channels of information, as well as collaborative efforts.
- (e) **Topic locator:** The website is topic-oriented, and aims to help users find the necessary information on a specific topic in as efficient and convenient manner as possible.

2. Over the years, the Secretariat has received various comments and suggestions regarding ways to improve the display on information on UNIDROIT. In some instances, rather than adding segments to the website, which would have been difficult due to its structure, individual projects such as the Cultural Property Academic Project, or the MAC Protocol Diplomatic Conference have resorted to building their own separate websites.

3. In addition, in order to enhance the display and categorisation of information on the website, thematic portals were developed in 2018 to cover Agriculture, Capital Markets, Civil Procedure, Contract Law, Cultural Property, and Secured Transactions. These portals, while providing

information in a more organised and easier to read manner, still relied upon the original website for documentation and access to instruments. As such, they were only a minor improvement to UNIDROIT's web presence and were growing out of date.

4. The 2014 website created a quasi-total reliance on one IT officer who is proficient in Joomla (current website format) to update the text and structure. This sometime resulted in delays as all legal officers provide their instructions in both website languages to this person, which caused bottlenecks. The Secretariat therefore deemed it necessary to create a new website on a CMS that would allow a select group of staff members to input updates directly, without having to encumber the IT officer.

5. In late February 2021, having earmarked the necessary funding to support the estimated breadth of the action required, the Secretariat opened a selection procedure for the revamp.

## **II. THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

6. A call for expressions of interest was issued on Social Media ([Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#)) and the UNIDROIT news section on 26 February 2021, requesting interested web-development firms to submit expressions of interest and portfolio to [website@unidroit.org](mailto:website@unidroit.org) by 8 March 2021.

7. The call garnered eight expressions of interest and, based on an assessment of the presented material, seven firms were provided with a detailed call for proposals (Annexe 1), requesting the submission of a proposal and quote by the 20<sup>th</sup> of March.

8. Six of the firms provided a proposal and, upon submission underwent an assessment by a team made up of three members of the Secretariat (the assessment team).

## **III. MEETING FOR A FIRST ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS**

9. The three met on 26 March to provide a ranking of the 6 firms based on 7 criteria: Design, Portfolio, Cost, CMS, Timing, SEO, Languages.

10. Each criteria was assigned a maximum score: 10, 20, 25, 15, 10, 10, 10, respectively, and each candidate was ranked by consensus against the weighted scoring system as follows. Governing Council members have a detailed chart with the scoring should they wish to consult it.

11. Based on the scores, the group proposed inviting the three top shortlisted contenders (offers and EoIs available upon request) to present and discuss the details of their offer and the aspects requiring clarification. The firms Art&Design, P3F and ItLab 360 were invited to provide a more detailed presentation of their proposal on Friday 9 April 2021, in the presence of the initial assessment team and the Secretary General. The meetings provided the contenders with an opportunity to clarify the requirements and the Secretariat to provide feedback on the proposals.

12. Each firm was invited to provide reformulations of their proposals, based on the clarifications provided, within the following week, by the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2021.

13. Following the assessment of the reformulated proposals that UNIDROIT had received after the first round of interviews, the assessment team met with the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General, to exchange views and to select one of the three candidate firms.

14. Following some discussion on the merits of the offers, all of which now included a dedicated hosting component, it emerged that, out of the two firms that offered the most competitive prices,

one had more experience with comparable international organisations and presented a stronger profile in terms of portfolio and references.

15. The Contract was therefore awarded to Art & Design, which designed the website presented at the 100<sup>th</sup> session of the UNIDROIT Governing Council. Art & Design's partners, Fin Green Tech, were selected as new hosting providers, so that UNIDROIT could benefit from its own hardware machine server on which to migrate the family of UNIDROIT websites, including the Academic Projects and the Foundation. This should result in a considerable increase in capacity and, specially, in security.

#### **IV. MAIN FEATURES OF THE NEW WEBSITE**

16. The UNIDROIT website covers a large variety of content. Each different category of content has many subcategories. In such a situation, it is important to present the content in an easy to navigate manner such that users can easily find the information they have come to the website for.

17. The homepage and pages relating to resources was built with the users in mind. As such, all of UNIDROIT's core instruments are showcased in an appealing manner which invites a user to learn more and dwell deeper in the knowledge of our organisation's workstream. The design is now clean and simple, with functionality as the paramount focus. Any new visitor is now capable of readily finding the most basic things on the site, such as treaties, news, events, and contact information. The intuitive navigation makes it easier to find important information and more appealing to explore the different areas of our work.

##### *New Layout and Drop Down Sticky Menus*

18. For a website displaying information and serving as a repository of documents such as UNIDROIT, the menu is perhaps the most important element in facilitating a smooth user experience. The new structure now provides a horizontal primary dropdown menu on the top of the page. Such a menu is multi-functional and complex and allows users to quickly move from step to step in finding their required resource.

##### *The Thematic Approach*

19. The new website also provides the user with a clearly visible and distinctive overview of the various branches of the Work Programme, providing a choice of color coded, thematic pathways that the user can navigate to explore the vast content of the website.

##### *Static side and footer menus*

20. Users can now also benefit from a consistent menu that remains visible when navigating through the entire website. A footer menu, as many users tend to scroll to the bottom even before pages fully load, is also available, and provides quick links to the thematic areas, as well as important technical, legal, and informational resources about the website.

##### *Call to Action buttons*

21. In order to maximise user engagement, well-designed and thought-out call-to-action buttons are now available across the website. They are mainly featured where users are most likely to engage with the content, such as download a document, access or share content across social media platforms, or simply "read more" content of a news item.

*Typeset and readability*

22. The text on the new website is easily readable, with a well-defined typeset that is used in a consistent manner across the website, guiding the user's attention to items, which the Secretariat is looking to prioritise, while keeping other information available as appropriate.

*Integration with video content*

23. More recently, video content has become the primary driver of traffic on most platforms. As such, with UNIDROIT's YouTube channel developing at a fast pace, and more instrument specific videos to be produced in the future, the incorporation of video elements on the website can serve as a useful eye-catching tool to boost user engagement and retention.

*Design across devices*

24. The new web-design now automatically ensures that the website works well on all display sizes and devices. It features a responsive design, which can be scaled down to smaller screen sizes, which is of paramount importance considering that over 52% of web traffic comes from mobile devices.

*Social Media Integration*

25. Social media has served as the largest driver of traffic onto the UNIDROIT website since 2017. As such, it is important for the website to be integrated with UNIDROIT's social media channels, whereby working share buttons, as well as social media feeds and cross-links should be inserted in any new design. UNIDROIT currently has four Social Media Profiles and the new website interacts with all of them: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

*Independent content insertion*

26. The new CMS, Wordpress, now allows each individual team member to input updates directly, without having to encumber the IT officer, although a centralised final check still remains for quality control purposes.

**V. TRAINING AND ROLL-OUT**

27. At the time of finalisation of this document, the new website is being finalised and its content is being uploaded onto the new platform.

28. The roll-out of training courses has been planned to train the IT manager first on the structural maintenance that will need to be carried out on a regular basis and troubleshooting.

29. A second series of training courses is being planned for delivery to a select group of staff members who will be able to independently insert content onto the platform (editors). These people will report to an administrator, who will ultimately be the one to proofread and approve content for publication.

30. The launch of the website will take place after training has been completed, and the most important information to be made available to the public constituting the crucial website content has been uploaded.

31. The rest of the content will be uploaded when the website is already live, and when the Secretariat will have the opportunity to address any issues or suggest improvements to the design team.

**VI. ACTION TO BE TAKEN**

32. *The UNIDROIT Secretariat would invite the Governing Council to take note of the developments in relation to the revamping of the UNIDROIT website and the new hosting service, and to provide any feedback and comments it deems useful to enhance the new presentation.*



**Call for Proposals  
Rome, February 2021**

UNIDROIT 2021

**Redesigning the UNIDROIT Website: Call for proposals**  
(prepared by the UNIDROIT Secretariat)

<i>Summary</i>	<i>Explanation of the requirements and expectations of the Secretariat in respect of the redesigning and rebranding of the UNIDROIT website</i>
<i>Related documents</i>	<i>Current website: <a href="http://WWW.UNIDROIT.ORG">WWW.UNIDROIT.ORG</a></i>

## INTRODUCTION

UNIDROIT is seeking a website developer to rebrand its website, which is the best and easiest introduction to the organisation in its almost one hundred years of activity. Over the years, the website has continued to serve as a useful tool for those looking for resources regarding the activities of the Institute, or conduct research on the instruments prepared by UNIDROIT.

The scope of work of the website developer will include the transfer of all the content of the website into a new design, responding to the Fundamental Purposes and the Requirements listed below, as well as provide support and maintenance (the "**Scope of Work**").

## MAIN FUNCTIONS OF THE UNIDROIT WEBSITE & ITS EVOLUTION

Many developments have occurred in web design and technology since 2014, when the current UNIDROIT website was designed, and the Secretariat is seeking to modernize it and enhance its performance.

### FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSES OF THE UNIDROIT WEBSITE:

- Serve as an easy-to-use and navigate **repository for documents** relating to the work of the Institute, including materials related to the negotiation, development and promotion of UNIDROIT instruments, as well as documents relating to institutional meetings such as those of the General Assembly, Governing Council, and Finance Committee.
- Provide up-to-date and easy to access information about the **activities of the Secretariat**, including news items, upcoming events, and ongoing projects.
- Display in a user-friendly manner, information relating to the **Institute's history, Member States, governing organs**, and other items.
- Act as a **relay for information** relating to UNIDROIT's partner organisations, other channels of information, as well as collaborative efforts.
- To help users to find the necessary information on a specific topic in as efficient and convenient manner as possible.

Over the years, the Secretariat has received various comments and suggestions regarding ways to improve the display on information on UNIDROIT. In some instances, rather than adding segments to the website, which would have been difficult due to its current structure, individual projects such as the [Cultural Property Academic Project](#), or the [MAC Protocol Diplomatic Conference](#) have resorted to building their own separate websites.

To enhance the display and categorisation of information on the website, thematic portals were developed in 2018:

- [Agriculture](#)
- [Capital Markets](#)
- [Civil Procedure](#)
- [Contracts](#)
- [Cultural Property](#)
- [Secured Transactions](#)

These portals, while providing information in a more organised and easier to read manner, still relied upon the original website for documentation and access to instruments. As such, they were only a minor improvement to UNIDROIT's web presence. They are no longer up to date.

## Current Situation

### Benchmarks

Upon conducting a comparative analysis with the websites of other intergovernmental organisations such as the [HCCH](#), [FAO](#), [ICAO](#), [WFP](#), [IFAD](#), [UNCITRAL](#), [World Bank](#), and [UNOOOSA](#), the Secretariat has identified various design and presentation issues. The key elements of any good website are the following:<sup>1</sup>



When compared, while the UNIDROIT website has good load times, and adequate automated search engine optimisation (SEO), it could be strengthened by including some the elements nowadays required to make a state of the art website. The following table examines the weaknesses identified in the present website, and the new features any new design should incorporate in order to augment the user-experience.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.spin.cw/blog/elements-of-a-good-website>

### **Main Issues with the Website and Requirements**

#### **POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS CONCERNING NAVIGATION, OVERALL LAYOUT AND VISUAL APPEARANCE, QUALITY OF IMAGES AND VIDEOS**

The UNIDROIT website covers a large variety of content. Each different category of content has many subcategories. In such a situation, it is important to present content in an easy to navigate manner such that users can easily find the information they have come to the website for.

The homepage and pages relating to resources must be built with the users in mind. As such, all of UNIDROIT's core products (its instruments) must be showcased in an appealing manner which invites a user to learn more. The design should be clean and simple with functionality being the paramount focus. As such, when focussing on navigation, the following questions must be considered:

- Can a visitor readily find the most basic things on the site, such as treaties, news, events, and contact information?
- Is the site navigation easy and intuitive?
- How easily can important content be seen?
- Are the main items still up-to-date, attractive and appealing to discover?<sup>2</sup>

The overall layout and visual appearance of the website, alongside navigation helps improving the user experience. It is important for the site to have a visually appealing outlook, with the use of pictures, videos, typography, colours, shapes, and graphics.<sup>3</sup> The user experience in this regard could be augmented by adding features such as the following:

#### **REQUIREMENT: DROPDOWN STICKY MENUS AND LAYOUT**

For a website displaying information and serving as a repository of documents like UNIDROIT, the menu is perhaps the most important element in facilitating a smooth user experience.

All websites of other international organisations considered follow a theme whereby a horizontal primary dropdown menu can be found on the top of the page. Such a menu is multi-functional and complex and allows users to quickly move from step to step in finding their required resource.

These menus have largely replaced static sidebar navigation options such as that presently found on the UNIDROIT website. This is because they offer more flexibility in terms of the number of sub-items which they can display, as well as in expanding upon the user hovering over the menu rather than having to click it.

The main benefit which static sidebar menus could be the option to deliver a consistent menu visible to users when navigating through the entire website, but UNIDROIT's current static menu moves away when a user scrolls on any page. Further potential improvements could be including a dropdown menu designed to 'stick' to the top of the page whenever a user scrolls on the website. This would allow users to be able to easily navigate to other parts of the website at any point in time.

Besides the primary navigation menu, importance also needs to be given to developing a footer menu, as many users tend to scroll to the bottom even before pages fully load. The footer should be used to facilitate navigation, as well as provide important technical, legal, and informational resources about a website.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.purposemedia.co.uk/2014/02/17/creating-business-case-invest-new-website/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.b3multimedia.ie/12-key-elements-of-modern-web-design/>



**REQUIREMENT: CALL TO ACTION BUTTONS**

One of main goals of any website is to maximise user engagement. This can be done by inserting well-designed and thought-out call-to-action buttons across the website.

Call-to-action buttons should exist on most pages, wherein prominent objects indicating actions such as 'access now', 'download', 'view', 'read more', or 'click here' should be inserted to encourage users to engage with the content.

**REQUIREMENT: UNIQUE AND LARGE TYPOGRAPHY**

The text on any website should be easily readable – the UNIDROIT website generally accomplishes this. However, using a complementary font is ideal for headings or accents, with most good websites having three well-defined typefaces of different sizes and colours.

Using unique and large typography in a consistent manner across the website ensures that users can pay the right amount of attention to items, which the Secretariat is looking to prioritise, while keeping other information available as appropriate.

**REQUIREMENT: PAGE SPECIFIC IMAGES**

The use of quality images across the website would drive additional traffic and encourage users to share items on the website on social media platforms. Consideration should be given to including images carefully selected and placed on most pages of value.

**REQUIREMENT: SHORT VIDEO CONTENT**

More recently, video content has become the primary driver of traffic on most platforms. As such, with UNIDROIT's YouTube channel developing at a fast pace, and more instrument specific videos to be produced in the future, the incorporation of video elements on the website can serve as a useful eye-catching tool to boost user engagement and retention.

**POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS REGARDING DESIGN**

A responsive web-design automatically ensures that a website works well on all display sizes and devices. The UNIDROIT website ought to feature a responsive design, which improves our current, fixed column-based structure, which cannot be scaled down to smaller screen sizes. As such, the present website is difficult to use on mobile phones and presents many complications:

**REQUIREMENT: MOBILE-FRIENDLINESS**

With over 52% of web traffic coming from mobile devices<sup>4</sup>, it is imperative for all websites to be designed in a mobile friendly manner. Any website designed in a responsive manner will automatically adapt to mobile phones and can display separate types of menus for mobile phones making navigation easy on any device

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4 <https://www.purposemedia.co.uk/2014/02/17/creating-business-case-invest-new-website/>

**REQUIREMENT: SCALABILITY**

Responsive websites are automatically scalable. As such, regardless of the user’s screen size or device, a responsive website will automatically scale to fit content in a readable way to their frame. Adding responsive design and scalability to any website boosts its user retention and has a positive impact on search engine optimisation.

**REQUIREMENT:CONSISTENT LINKS**

A website reflects the brand any organisation needs to portray. As such, a strong website is consistent in its appearance and layout, and echoes a sense of trustworthiness during browsing. The UNIDROIT website, especially since the development of thematic portals, suffers from consistency issues that need to be addressed in the newly developed website.

The new website must ensure that it does not have any broken links or links that change over time, to ensure search engine optimisations, and performance on social media.

**REQUIREMENT:INTEGRATION WITH FACEBOOK, LINKEDIN,TWITTER AND YOUTUBE ACCOUNTS**

Social media has served as the largest driver of traffic onto the UNIDROIT website since 2017. As such, it is important for the website to be integrated with UNIDROIT’s social media channels, whereby working share buttons, as well as social media feeds and cross-links should be inserted in any new design. UNIDROIT currently has four Social Media Profiles it needs the website to interact with:

- [Facebook](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [YouTube](#)

**REQUIREMENT: A PLATFORM THAT IS EASY TO UPDATE**

At present, UNIDROIT staff must rely on one IT officer who is proficient in Joomla (current website format) to update text. This sometime results in delays as all legal officers provide their instructions in both website languages to this person, which can cause bottlenecks

UNIDROIT is now seeking a platform and a CMS that allows each individual team member to input updates directly, without having to encumber the IT officer, although a centralised final check should continue to exist for functionality and quality control purposes.

Any proposal that will ease workflow in this respect, including Content Management Systems such as Wordpress, for instance, will be taken into special and preferential consideration.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR WEB DESIGNER OFFER

UNIDROIT's ideal web-developer must respond to a series of requirements as listed below:

- a. Proficient in English and Italian or French as a working language
- b. Provide a portfolio including work for comparable international organisations
- c. Provide references from past clients
- d. Be able to deliver the website ready for launch in **August 2021**
- e. Include all-inclusive cost for website design and preparation + annual fee for website maintenance and/or staff training, and traffic monitoring if required. All proposals must include details regarding the following:
  - o The CMS the web developer proposes to use
  - o The number of staff which the web developer will deploy to work on the website
  - o Details regarding the webhosting services the developer intends to use or provide
  - o Additionally, the cost proposal must include:
    - The rounds of revision included
    - Costs related to additional services and edits on the website
    - Costs related to the design of graphics and other elements

UNIDROIT would be grateful if firms wishing to formulate proposals could kindly send their offer to [v.vigano@unidroit.org](mailto:v.vigano@unidroit.org) by **20 March 2021**. Offers may be in Italian based on the assumption that staff involved in the project is able to receive instructions and work in English.

## CLARIFICATION – TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS OF CURRENT WEBSITE

The current website currently features 3033 articles, 595 thematic categories, and 9949 items in an allocated space of 4.7Gb.

Requests for clarification and technical specifications are welcome, and may be sent to IT manager Mr. Stefano Muscatello at [s.muscatello@unidroit.org](mailto:s.muscatello@unidroit.org).