ePCT – WIPO’s online service for filing and managing patent applications under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)

https://pct.wipo.int
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What is ePCT? (1)

- Web system developed by WIPO that provides PCT online services for both applicants and IP Offices
  https://pct.wipo.int

- User interface available in all PCT publication languages

- Provides secure and direct interaction with PCT applications maintained by the International Bureau

- ePCT-Filing at 70+ PCT receiving Offices

- ePCT allows applicants to conduct a number of electronic PCT transactions (‘Actions’) with the IB and other participating IP Offices
What is ePCT? (2)

- RO, ISA, IPEA + DO role-based access to PCT applications via secure ePCT Office accounts

- Increasing number of IP Offices now using ePCT for their regular PCT business using services hosted by WIPO

- ‘Office profile’ function allows you to look up if an Office is using ePCT and other useful reference data
2020 ePCT Statistics

- Applicants filed about 44,500 PCT applications using ePCT in 2020, an increase of 29.4% compared to 2019.

- Top 5 origins of ePCT filings: US, KR, IT, IN, CA
% ePCT Filings (Jan - Nov 2021)

- RO/IB = 87%
- RO/US = 36%
- RO/AU = 97%
- RO/CA = 93%
- RO/KR = 52%
- RO/JO, KE, LV, NZ, OM, PH, PT, QA, SG, TN = 100 %
WIPO IP Portal - ePCT Integration (1)

- IP Portal launched in September 2019
  [https://ipportal.wipo.int/](https://ipportal.wipo.int/)

- Centralizes WIPO’s online IP services with a single WIPO Account

- Access the online IP services from MENU in the navigation bar

- Notifications (bell icon in the navigation bar) include all your messages from WIPO, e.g., ePCT, Madrid, WIPO Current Account, etc.
WIPO IP Portal - ePCT Integration (2)

WIPO IP Portal

WIPO IP Portal
Easy access to all online IP Services

FILE YOUR INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS
We provide a fast, efficient and cost-effective route for obtaining IP protection in multiple countries.

PATENTS
The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) System

TRADEMARKS
The Madrid System

DESIGNS
The Hague System

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AND APPELLATIONS OF ORIGIN
The Lisbon System
Example of Dashboard - customizable by the user
WIPO IP Portal - ePCT Integration (4)

- MENU - always available across the portal
New ePCT Homepage

**WHAT IS ePCT?**

ePCT is a secure browser-based system available in the 10 languages of publication offering a wide range of functions for applicants, IP Offices and third parties. Users with the relevant access rights can log in to ePCT using their WIPO Account to access the latest bibliographic data and documents on record at the International Bureau (IB), including before publication. Login with strong authentication is required to access confidential information.

**WHY USE ePCT?**

Applicants can file new international applications to participating PCT receiving Offices and manage all subsequent processes using ePCT.

IP Offices can use the online functions hosted and maintained by WIPO to perform their functions as receiving Offices (RDO), International Searching Authority (ISA), International Preliminary Examining Authority (IPEA) and/or designated Office (DO), potentially economizing both the effort and expense required to develop their own electronic systems.

**BENEFITS OF ePCT**

- **WORLDWIDE COVERAGE**
  - Web-based system in 10 languages with no software to install or update.
  - Learn More

- **TRUSTED & SECURE**
  - Secure access to live PCT data & documents on record at the IB.
  - Learn More

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**
  - Access rights model for secure collaboration with trusted associates.
  - Learn More
WIPO IP Portal - ePCT Integration (6)

**ePCT Workbench**

- Link to IP Portal
- Link to ePCT Homepage
- User logged in with Strong Authentication
- User profile & more functionalities
- Link to WIPO Homepage
- Help
- Integrated messages
ePCT - with / without Strong Authentication

- **Single WIPO Account** (username and password) gives access to ePCT and WIPO’s other online services
  - Create a WIPO Account
    - [https://www3.wipo.int/myaccount/en/](https://www3.wipo.int/myaccount/en/)

- **ePCT without** strong authentication
  - Limited functionality, e.g. upload documents
  - Practical alternative to mail and fax (only very limited fax transmissions with the IB available as of 01 January 2020)

- **ePCT with** strong authentication
  - Additional identity verification allows access to all services and functions including the filing of PCT applications
  - Access to PCT applications filed as of 01 January 2009, including before publication
ePCT Strong Authentication

- Best practice - set up at least 2 strong authentication methods
  - Authenticator App with one-time password on a mobile device or equivalent app for computer, e.g. WinAuth
  - SMS with one-time password
  - A digital certificate from WIPO (EPO smart cards are also supported)
- Set-up instructions available on ePCT HELP page
Main Functionalities

■ Create new international application
■ eOwnership request
  - At the time of filing
  - After filing
■ Establish e-Handshakes with other WIPO account holders
■ Manage access rights
■ Access to documents as held by the IB, but also other Authorities (RO, ISA, IPEA)
■ Perform Actions on IAs, including upload documents
ePCT-Filing

- Web-based filing of PCT applications available to all PCT applicants
- Request form can be prepared in all PCT publication languages
- Real-time validation of data against the electronic processing system of the International Bureau
- Fill in the screens in the order in which they appear to benefit from re-use of certain data
- More detailed information in ePCT-Filing on the HELP page
File View

- Shortcut links for navigating to each section
- DATA: publication date and front page preview available
### IA Dropdown Menu

- Quick access to a number of useful ePCT functions

**D-EXSIG PCT/IB2021/040222**

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eOwnership and Access Rights

- Access rights (eOwnership) allow you to manage a PCT application in ePCT
- eOwnership is automatic when using ePCT-Filing
- If ePCT-Filing is not used, additional steps are required to take eOwnership (e.g. PCT-SAFE, JPO-PAS, eOLF)
- eOwnership can be obtained for all PCT applications, paper-filed or electronically-filed
- Access rights can be assigned even to drafts prior to filing - practical for signing purposes for ePCT-Filing
- eOwner can share access with eHandshake contacts
- Other roles: eEditor and eViewer
Share Access Rights - eHandshake

- First step in sharing access rights to PCT applications
- Association and trusted recognition between different WIPO User Accounts with strong authentication before access rights can be shared
- eHandshakes do not directly result in shared access rights which have to be specifically assigned (default access rights options can be pre-defined)
- Best practice - always have at least 2 eOwners to facilitate access rights management
Upload Post-filing Documents

- ‘Upload documents’ (mostly PDF format) to the IB and also to participating Offices in capacity as RO, ISA, IPEA
  - Types of document selectable depend on recipient selected
  - A cover letter is automatically generated - user can type a message to be included in the cover letter

- Simple, secure alternative to sending documents by fax or mail

- Current date and time at the recipient Office is displayed in the interface and set as date of receipt

- After upload, documents are visible under Documents and the recipient Office is notified by the system
Access to Documents on Record

Access to documents on Record as held by the IB, but also documents submitted to ePCT participating Offices in their capacity as RO, ISA, IPEA.

![Documents on Record as held by the IB and submitted to ePCT participating Offices](image-url)
ePCT Actions

- Full suite of Actions only available if signed in to ePCT with strong authentication and with eOwner or eEditor access rights to an application

![Actions List]

- Amendments Under Article 19 (text format only)
- Create Power of Attorney
- Declarations under Rule 4.17
- Licensing Availability Request
- Make international application available to DAS
- Observations on close prior art
- Obtain priority document from DAS
- Online Payment
- Prepare and submit indications relating to biological material (RO/124)
- Request for Early Publication
- Rule 92bis change request
- Submit Chapter II Demand
- Translation for international publication
- Upload Documents
- Withdraw Chapter II Demand
- Withdraw Designation(s)
- Withdraw Election(s)
- Withdraw International Application
- Withdraw Priority Claim(s)
Benefits of using ePCT Actions

- ‘Actions’ should be used instead of the equivalent document upload
- User benefits from pre-filled bibliographic data and automated validations to avoid errors; time limit checks
- Data and documents submitted through Actions are directly imported for processing with no need for retyping (reduces potential transcription errors)
- Secondary workflow benefits, e.g.,
  - Action to withdraw application automatically prevents publication if technical preparations not yet complete
  - Action to submit Chapter II Demand reroutes to IB if required for time limit (e.g., time limit just expired at IPEA/AU)
ePCT HELP (1)

- Use the ‘HELP’ link in the ePCT header
  https://www.wipo.int/pct/en/epct/support.html

- FAQs and user documentation
  - Database of help info - use ‘Search’ feature to pinpoint a topic
  - Webinars on ePCT
  - Useful video tutorials

- **Contingency upload service** available via HELP page to submit PDF documents to the IB (to be used only if the ePCT system is not available)
ePCT HELP (2)

- Look up ePCT reference data held in IB data base - the basis for extensive validations in the system, including Office profiles, closed dates, fees, etc. [https://pct.wipo.int/ePCTExternal/pages/home.xhtml](https://pct.wipo.int/ePCTExternal/pages/home.xhtml)

- PCT eServices
  - Tel:  +41 22 338 9523
  - E-mail:  pct.eservices@wipo.int
  - Monday to Friday, 9am-6pm Geneva time
  - Chat feature available
Useful ePCT Articles

- Getting started
- ePCT strong authentication methods
- eOwnership
- eHandshakes and Access Rights
- External signature
- Actions
- ePCT Filing
  - Filing at RO/IB (as an example of ePCT-Filing)
  - Filing at RO/US using ePCT in combination with EFS-Web
Thank you!