Executive Summary

PCT Yearly Review 2026

WIPO

Executive Summary
Patent Cooperation Treaty Yearly Review 2026
The International Patent System

This executive brief identifies key trends in the use of the WIPO-administered Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT).

For fuller statistics, see the *PCT Yearly Review 2026* – available in English at: www.wipo.int/ipstats

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Key numbers for 2025

275,900 (+0.7%)
PCT applications filed

129 (+5)
Countries of origin of PCT applications

11.1% (+0.6 percentage point)
Share of the main technology field in PCT applications (digital communication)

18.1% (+0.2 percentage point)
Share of women among inventors in PCT applications

645,100 (–3.7%)
PCT national phase entries

53.3% (–2.3 percentage point)
Share of PCT national phase entries in worldwide non-resident patent application filings[1]

1 Note: The latest available year for PCT national phase entry data is 2024

Statistics on the international phase – PCT applications

PCT applications grew further by 0.7% in 2025

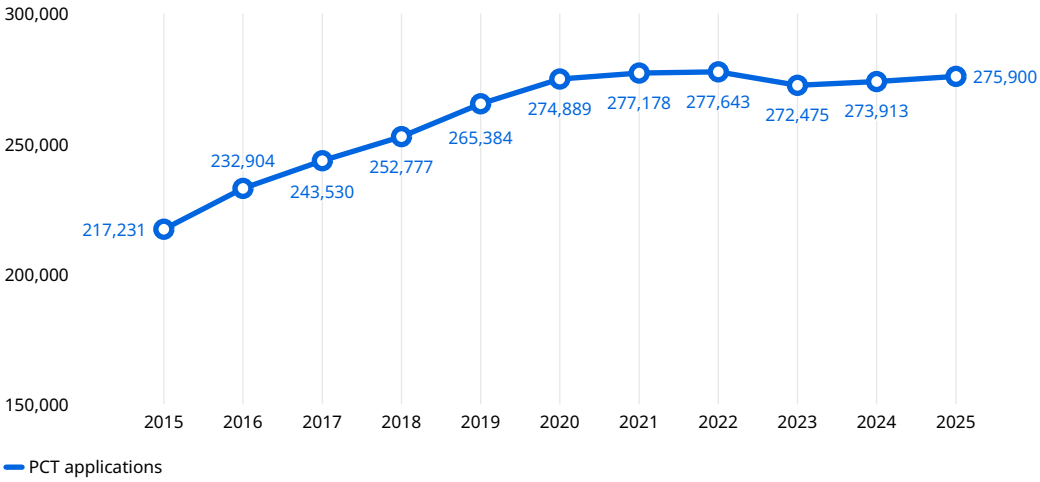
About 275,900 international patent applications (PCT applications) were filed via WIPO's Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) in 2025 (figure 1), representing a modest increase of 0.7% on the previous year. Over the 2020–2025 period, PCT applications grew by an average of just 0.1% per year.

In 2025, applicants filed 78,648 PCT applications at the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA), acting as a PCT receiving office. CNIPA was followed by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) (49,032), the Japan Patent Office (JPO) (46,409), the European Patent Office (EPO) (39,332), the Ministry of Intellectual Property of the Republic of Korea (MOIP) (24,950) and the International Bureau of WIPO (IB) (14,246).

In 2025, 158 countries were PCT members, with applicants from 129 countries filing PCT applications across 92 receiving offices (ROs). However, overall, the top 20 receiving offices accounted for almost 99% of total PCT applications filed.

In 2025, PCT applications filed rose slightly for a second consecutive year.

1. Trend in filings of PCT applications, 2015–2025



Source: WIPO Statistics Database, March 2026.

The top five origins accounted for over 78% of all PCT applications filed in 2025

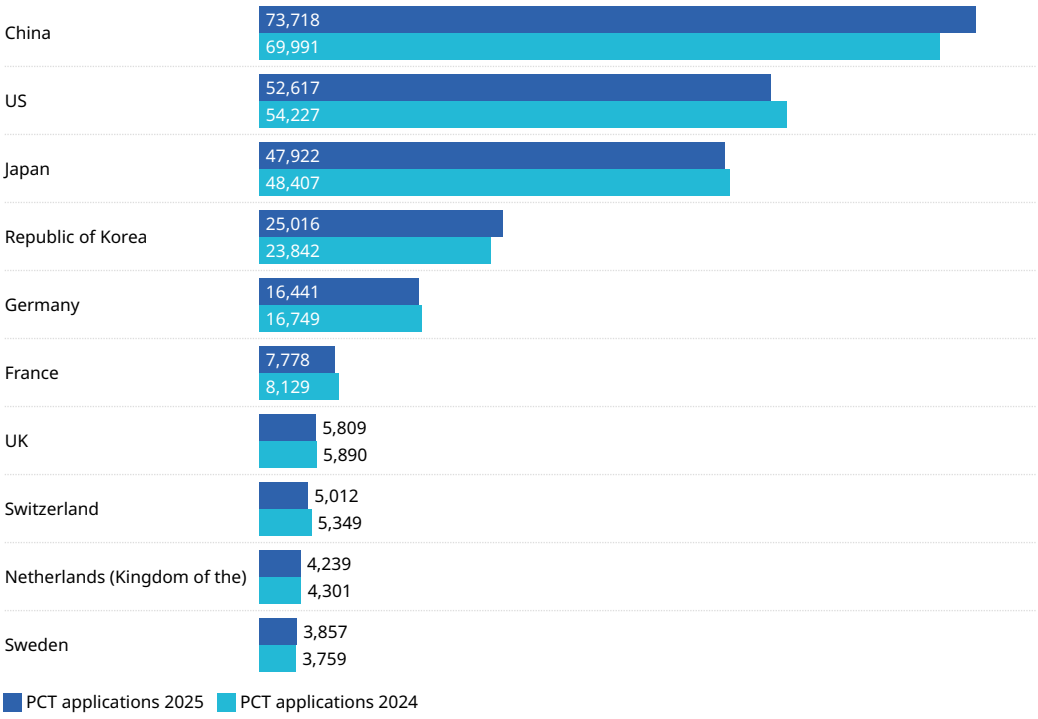
In 2025, applicants residing in China filed the highest number of PCT applications (73,718), followed by those in the United States of America (US) (52,617), Japan (47,922), the Republic of Korea (25,016) and Germany (16,441) (figure 2). Collectively, these top five origins accounted for 78.2% of all PCT applications.

Compared with 2024, half of the top 20 origins recorded growth in 2025. Finland (+43.8%) and Singapore (+12.9%) posted the only double-digit increases, while India (–32.4%), Israel (–7%) and Switzerland (–6.3%) registered the steepest declines. Among the top five origins, filings grew in China (+5.3%) and the Republic of Korea (+4.9%), but fell in the US (–3%), Germany (–1.8%) and Japan (–1%) – each marking a third consecutive year of decline.

The top 20 origins comprised 17 high-income countries (predominantly European) and three middle-income economies: China, India and Türkiye. Outside the top 20, other large middle-income economies recorded notable – though smaller – volumes of PCT filings. They included Brazil, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico, South Africa and Thailand, with totals ranging from 160 to 620. Of the 18 PCT applications filed by applicants residing in low-income countries, most came from Uganda (7), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (6) and the Syrian Arab Republic (3).

Applicants from China filed by far the highest number of PCT applications in 2025.

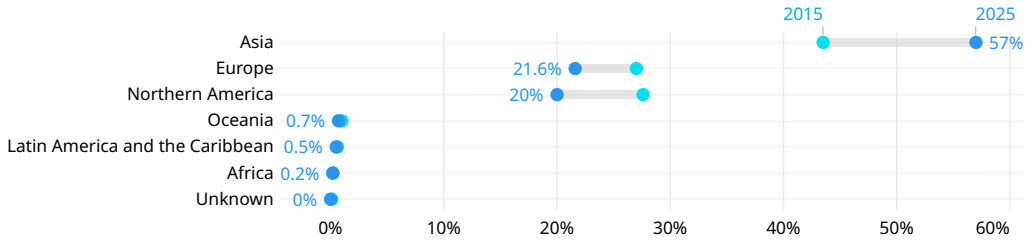
2. PCT applications for the top 10 origins, 2025



Source: WIPO Statistics Database, March 2026.

Most PCT applications originated from Asia.

3. Distribution of PCT applications by region, 2015 and 2025



Note: LAC is Latin America and the Caribbean.

Source: WIPO Statistics Database, March 2026.

Most PCT applications were filed in Asia

Asian countries accounted for 57% of all PCT applications in 2025 (figure 3), up markedly from the 43.5% recorded in 2015, driven largely by increased filings from China and the Republic of Korea. Europe held the second-largest share at 21.6%, followed by Northern America at 20%. By contrast, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and Oceania together represented just 1.4% of total PCT filings.

The business sector accounted for the vast majority of PCT filing activity

In 2025, the IB published nearly 265,200 PCT applications, an increase of 0.4% compared to 2024. The business sector accounted for 89.6% of all published PCT applications, followed by universities (5.3%), individuals (3.5%) and government and public research organizations (PROs) (1.6%).

Among high-income countries, the business sector dominated published applications in each of the top 20 origins, except for the Russian Federation. In Finland, Japan and Sweden, the business sector's share exceeded 96%. Among the top 20 middle-income economies, the business sector accounted for most applications published in 10 origins, including shares above 90% in China,

Indonesia and Mauritius. By contrast, individual applicants filed over 75% of applications originating from Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Ukraine.

Huawei Technologies led PCT filings for the ninth straight year in 2025

For the ninth consecutive year, Huawei Technologies, a telecommunications company based in China, was the top PCT applicant, with 7,523 published applications in 2025 (figure 4). Samsung Electronics of the Republic of Korea followed in second place, with 4,698 PCT applications, trailed by Qualcomm of the US (3,227), LG Electronics of the Republic of Korea (2,400) and Contemporary Amperex Technology of China (2,203).

Half of the top 10 applicants experienced double-digit growth in published PCT applications in 2025. Among them LG Energy Solution (+34.8%), Panasonic (+21.9%) and LG Electronics (+15.2%) exhibited the fastest growth.

Companies active in digital communication headed the list of top PCT users in 2025. Of the top 10 applicants, Beijing Xiaomi Mobile Software, Huawei Technologies, LG Electronics, Qualcomm and Samsung Electronics were mainly active in digital communication. Four other companies were mostly filing in electrical machinery, whereas BOE Tech was mainly active in semiconductors.

Huawei Technologies remained by far the top PCT applicant in 2025.

4. Top 10 PCT applicants, 2025

Ranking	PCT applicant	Origin	2025	2024	Growth rate
1	Huawei	China	7,523	6,600	14.0%
2	Samsung	Republic of Korea	4,698	4,640	1.3%
3	Qualcomm	US	3,227	3,848	−16.1%
4	LG Electronics	Republic of Korea	2,400	2,083	15.2%
5	Contemporary Amperex	China	2,203	1,993	10.5%
6	Panasonic	Japan	2,094	1,718	21.9%
7	LG Energy Solution, Ltd.	Republic of Korea	1,958	1,452	34.8%
8	BOE Technology	China	1,946	1,959	−0.7%
9	Xiaomi Mobile Software	China	1,921	1,889	1.7%
10	Mitsubishi	Japan	1,835	1,956	−6.2%

Source: WIPO Statistics Database, March 2026.

The University of California was by far the largest PCT user among educational institutions in 2025

Among educational institutions, the University of California remained the most active user of the PCT System in 2025, with 488 published applications. Tsinghua University moved up one place to rank second (227 applications), followed closely by the University of Texas (226).

Universities from nine countries featured in the top 50. The US had 24 universities, while China and the Republic of Korea each had seven. Japan accounted for five, Singapore and the United Kingdom (UK) for two each, and Denmark, India and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for one each.

Shenzhen Institute of Advanced Technology was the top PCT applicant within the government and PRO sector

With 342 published applications, China's Shenzhen Institute of Advanced Technology remained the leading government and PRO applicant in 2025. Germany's Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der angewandten Forschung ranked second, with 233 applications, followed by France's Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique et aux Énergies Alternatives (CEA) and Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale (INSERM), and Singapore's Agency for Science, Technology and Research.

Applicants from 12 countries featured in the top 30 PRO list for 2025. The Republic of Korea had the most applicants (7), followed by China (4), Japan (4), and France, Germany and the US (3 each).

Digital communication remained the main technology field in PCT applications in 2025

In 2025, the technology sector of electrical engineering accounted for 41.1% of all published PCT applications, followed by that of chemistry (22%), mechanical engineering (15.9%) and instruments (15.1%). Over the past decade, electrical engineering has recorded the largest increase in share, rising from 35% in 2015 to 41.1% in 2025. The three largest technology fields in 2025 were all within the electrical engineering sector.

Digital communication remained the leading technology field in 2025, representing 11.1% of all PCT applications. It was followed by computer technology (9.6%), electrical machinery (9%), medical technology (6.3%) and pharmaceuticals (4.3%). Together, these top five fields accounted for 40.3% of the total.

Among the top 10 technology fields, digital communication (+6.1%), semiconductors (+6.1%) and electrical machinery (+4.6%) saw the sharpest increases in 2025. By contrast, measurement (–4.2%), biotechnology (–3.9%) and medical technology (–3%) recorded the steepest declines.

In 2025, only 18.1% of inventors listed in PCT applications were women

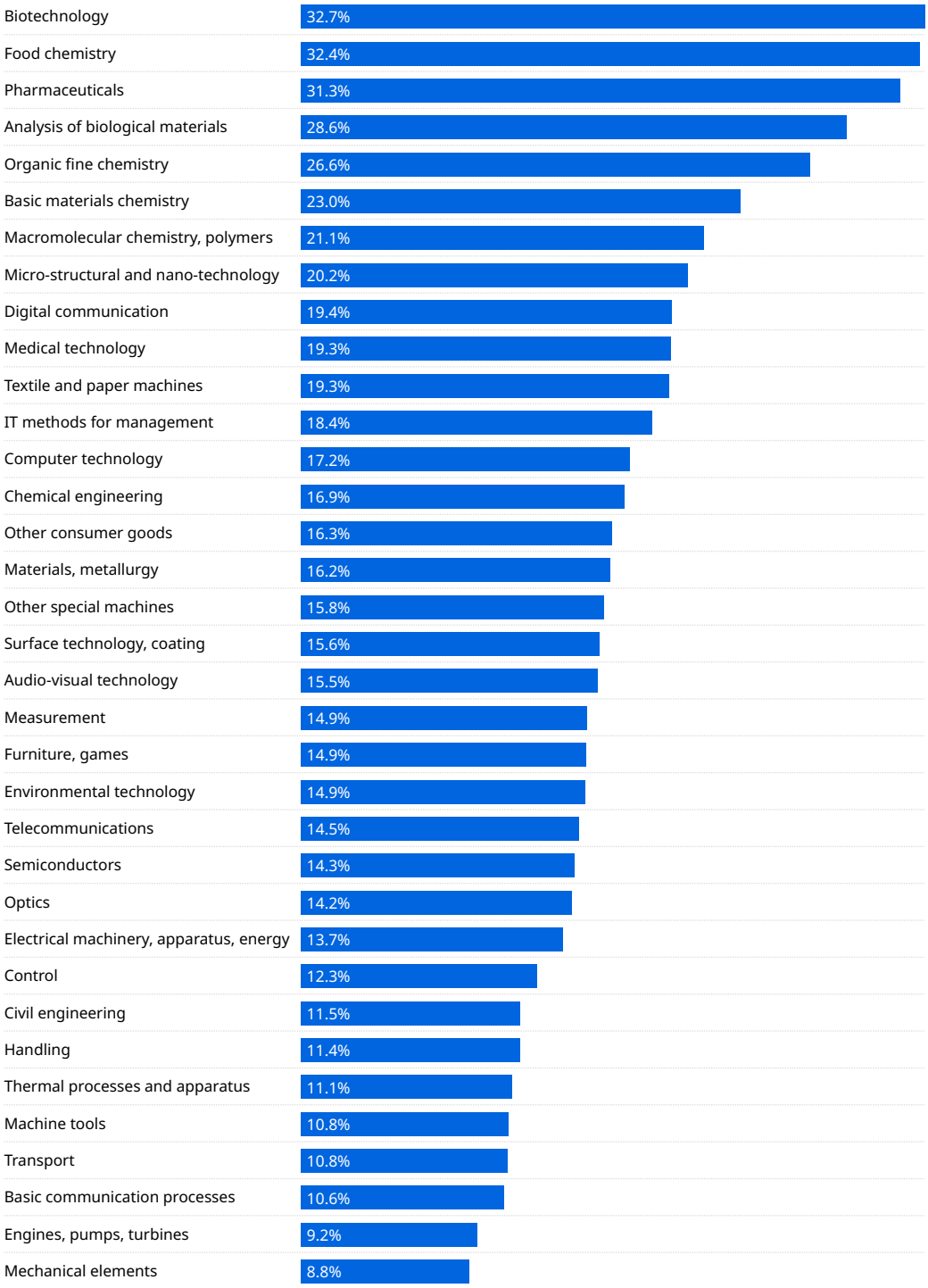
In 2025, women accounted for 18.1% of all inventors named in PCT applications, a modest increase of 0.2 percentage points compared with 2024. Over the past 15 years, the share of women inventors has risen steadily, increasing by a total of 6.7 percentage points.

Across all regions, the proportion of women inventors has grown over the past decade. In 2025, LAC recorded the highest share, with women representing 24.5% of PCT inventors. LAC was followed by Asia (18.8%), Northern America (18.2%), Africa (18.1%), Oceania (16.7%) and Europe (16.3%).

Technology fields relating to the life sciences had comparatively high shares of women among inventors listed in PCT applications published during 2023-2025 (figure 5). Overall, women represented more than one-quarter of inventors in the fields of analysis of biological materials, biotechnology, food chemistry, organic fine chemistry and pharmaceuticals.

Technology fields with the highest proportion of women were biotechnology, food chemistry and pharmaceuticals.

5. Share of women among listed inventors in PCT applications by field of technology, 2023–2025



Source: WIPO Statistics Database, March 2026.

The five largest geographic clusters together accounted for nearly one-third of all PCT applications

The top 50 PCT geographic clusters accounted for 63% of all PCT applications published between 2021 and 2025. Tokyo–Yokohama remained the largest cluster over this period, with 132,669 PCT applications, or 10.1% of the overall total. It was followed by Shenzhen– Hong Kong–Guangzhou (9.2%), Seoul (5.6%), Beijing (4.1%) and San Jose–San Francisco (3.8%). Together,

these five clusters accounted for nearly one-third of all PCT applications. Paris was the highest-ranked European cluster, placing 10th globally.

Computer technology and digital communication ranked among the top three fields in each of the six largest clusters. Computer technology was the leading field in Seattle (43.5%), Hangzhou (27.7%) and San Jose–San Francisco (23%). Digital communication accounted for a large share of applications in San Diego (44.9%), Beijing (32.5%) and Shenzhen–Hong Kong–Guangzhou (27.4%).

Statistics on PCT national phase entries

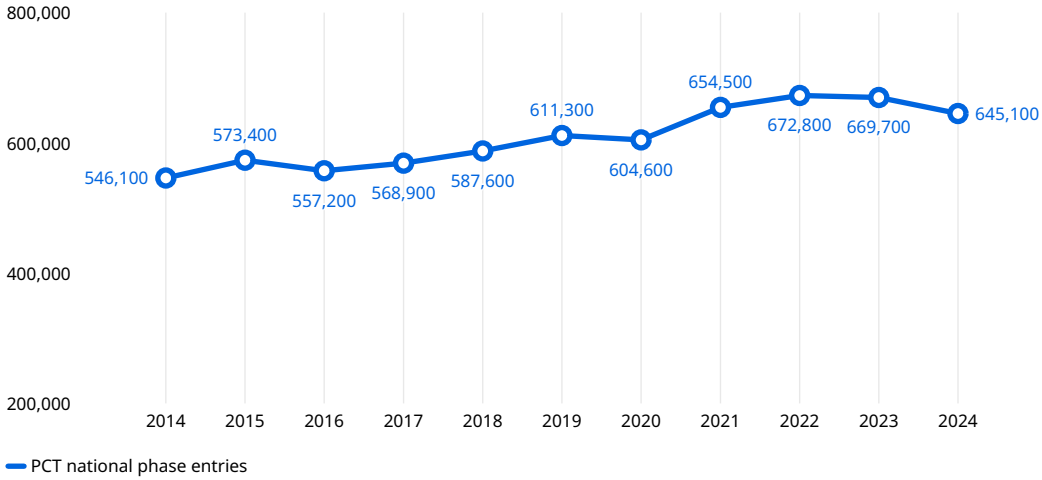
In 2024, PCT national phase entries dropped for a second consecutive year

About 645,100 PCT national phase entries (NPEs) were initiated worldwide in 2024 – the latest year for which data are available (figure 6).[2]This represents a 3.7% decline from 2023, driven mainly by a decrease in NPEs from applicants residing in the US. This is the second consecutive year of decline. In 2023, NPEs had dropped by 0.5%.

In 2024, non-resident applications accounted for 84.4% of all NPEs. Resident NPEs were concentrated at a few offices, led by the JPO and the USPTO, which resident NPEs accounted for 40.1% and 19.3% of their total NPEs, respectively.

In 2024, PCT national phase entries initiated worldwide dropped by 3.7%.

6. Trend in PCT national phase entries, 2014–2024



Source: WIPO Statistics Database, March 2026.

Most of the top 20 offices saw a decrease in PCT NPEs in 2024

In 2024, Asia remained the region with the highest PCT NPE activity, initiating 38.9% of all NPEs. This marks a notable increase from 2014, when Asia accounted for nearly 31% of global NPEs. Europe and Northern America followed in 2024, representing 29.7% and 28.9% of all NPEs, respectively. Together, Africa, LAC and Oceania made up 1.7% of global NPEs.

In 2024, applicants from the US initiated 6.3% fewer NPEs than in 2023

In 2024, applicants residing in the US initiated 178,256 NPEs, followed by applicants from Japan (124,639), China (66,039), Germany (47,444) and the Republic of Korea (39,155) (figure 7). Together, the US and Japan accounted for 47% of all NPEs initiated worldwide, representing 27.6% and 19.3% of total NPEs, respectively. Overall, the top 20 origins accounted for almost 95% of total NPEs.

2 The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) modified its methodology for extracting NPE data in 2025, by removing requests for continued examination (RCE), and has revised its NPE data for the period 2000–2023. Due to the high number of NPEs initiated at the USPTO, the NPE data presented in this section may differ from those in earlier editions.

Among the top 10 origins, only the Kingdom of the Netherlands (+1.5%) and China (+0.1%) initiated slightly more NPEs in 2024 than in the previous year. The remaining eight origins recorded a decline, with Sweden (–12.3%), Switzerland (–11.2%), the US (–6.3%), the UK (–5.6%) and Germany (–4.6%) showing the sharpest decreases.

In 2024, just over 53% of patent applications filed abroad used the PCT System

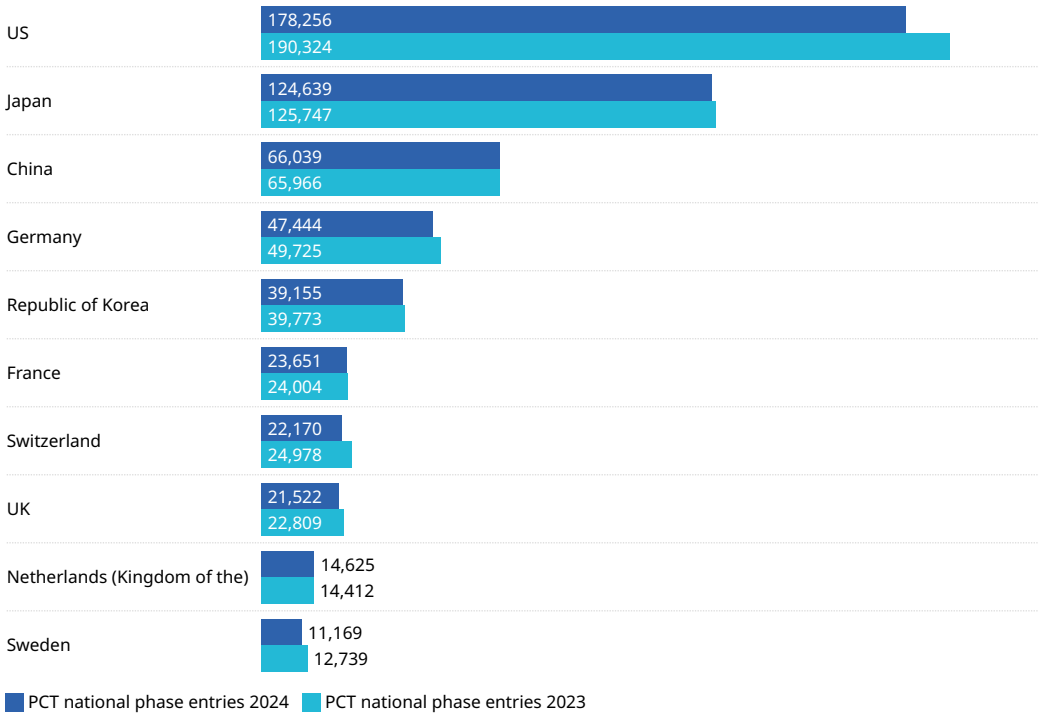
A total of 544,700 non-resident PCT NPEs were initiated in 2024, accounting for 53.3% of non-resident patent applications filed worldwide (figure 8). This represents a 2.3 percentage point decrease from the previous year. The PCT global share peaked at 55.7% in both 2021 and 2022. The 2024 share (53.3%) is about the same as during 2014–2020 period (53%).

Among the top 20 offices for non-resident patent applications, 17 received most of their non-resident filings through the PCT route. The offices of Brazil, Indonesia and Israel had PCT shares above 90%, whereas the offices of Germany, the UK and US had much lower PCT shares.

Among the top 20 origins filing abroad, applicants from the US (67.6%) and Italy (61.2%) relied most heavily on the PCT route. In contrast, applicants from Canada (33.6%) and India (30.6%) filed a large proportion of applications directly at foreign offices via the Paris route.

In 2024, only two of the top 10 origins saw an increase in PCT national phase entries.

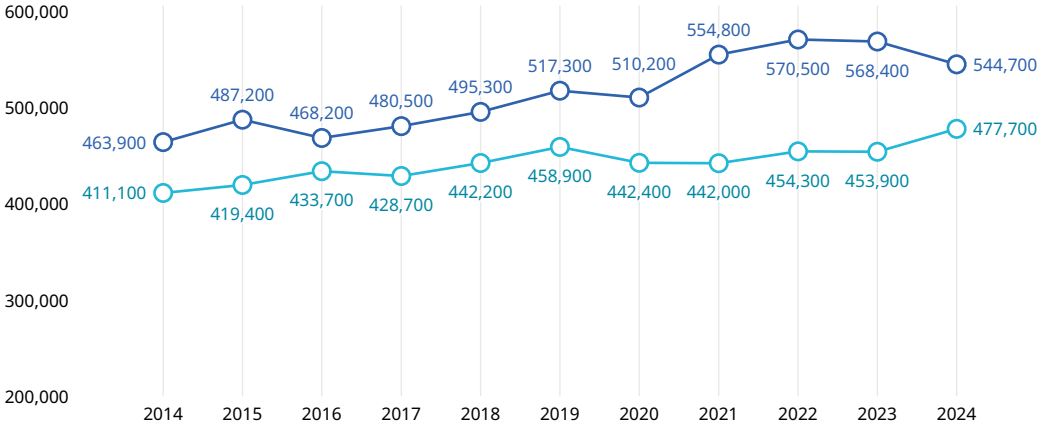
7. PCT national phase entries for the top 10 origins, 2024



Source: WIPO Statistics Database, March 2026.

The share of PCT national phase entries in all non-resident patent applications filed worldwide dropped to 53.3% in 2024.

8. Trend in non-resident applications by filing route, 2014–2024



Source: WIPO Statistics Database, March 2026.

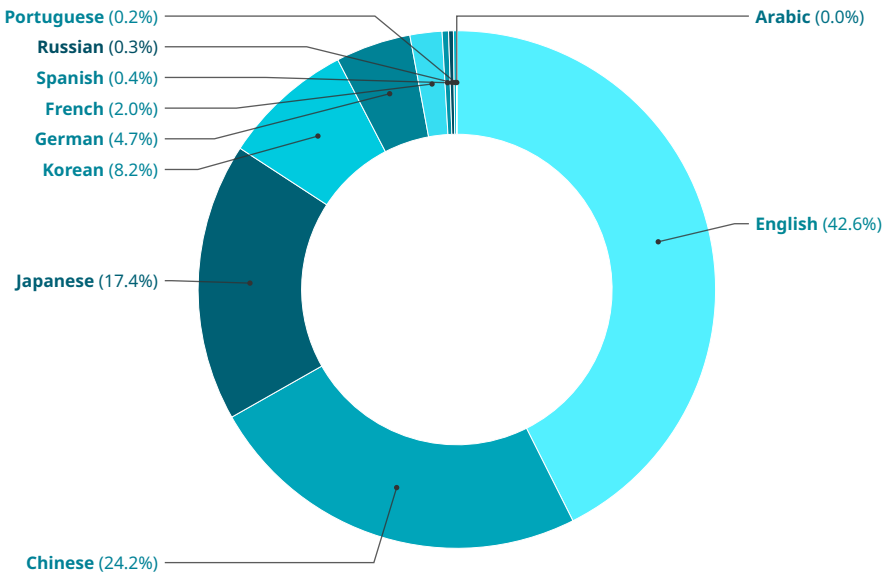
Statistics on the performance of the International Bureau

PCT applications published in Chinese and English represented, combined, two-thirds of the 2025 total

In 2025, PCT applications published in English accounted for 42.6% of the total, followed by Chinese at 24.2% and Japanese at 17.4% (figure 9). The remaining seven languages together made up 15.9% of the total. Over the past 15 years, the share of applications published in Chinese has risen sharply – from 6.8% in 2011 to 24.2% in 2025 – while the share published in English declined from 54.3% to 42.6% over the same period.

Chinese and English, combined, accounted for two-thirds of PCT applications published in 2025.

9. Distribution of PCT applications by language of publication, 2025



Source: WIPO Statistics Database, March 2026.

The ePCT-filing service was used for nearly 45% of PCT applications filed in 2025

In 2025, 122,705 PCT applications were filed using ePCT, the online service for filing and managing PCT applications. This marked a 7% increase on the previous year and accounted for 44.5% of all PCT applications filed in 2025. Applicants from the US used ePCT the most, with 38,787 applications, followed by those from the Republic of Korea (24,981), Germany (8,771), France (5,536) and Switzerland (4,060). Among the top 10 origins filing the highest number of PCT applications via ePCT, Germany (+42.2%), the UK (+34.3%) and Sweden (+16.4%) saw the sharpest increases compared to 2024.

Statistics on the performance of the receiving offices

Eighteen of the top 20 receiving offices received more than 90% of PCT applications electronically in 2025

Of the top 20 ROs, six received all PCT applications electronically in 2025. At 13 of the top 20 offices, electronic filings accounted for more than 99% of PCT applications. By contrast, the Russian Federation (42.2%), France (16.3%) and Germany (6.9%) recorded relatively high shares of PCT applications filed on paper.

On average, receiving offices transmitted PCT applications to the International Bureau within 2.7 weeks

In 2025, ROs transmitted PCT applications to the IB within an average of 2.7 weeks after the international filing date. Finland, Israel and the Republic of Korea transmitted all applications to the IB within four weeks of filing. Among the top 20 ROs, 15 transmitted more than 90% of PCT applications within four weeks of filing.

Statistics on the performance of the International Searching Authorities

The office of Singapore issued nearly 30% more international search reports in 2025 than in the preceding year

In 2025, about 264,000 international search reports (ISRs) were issued. The EPO issued 81,819 ISRs and the office of China issued 69,143 (figure 10). Together, these two International Searching Authorities (ISAs) accounted for 57.2% of all ISRs issued. Among the top 10 ISAs, Singapore (+29.8%), India (+15.1%) and China (+6%) recorded the fastest growth, whereas the US (–18.1%), the EPO (–2.5%), Japan (–1.7%) and Türkiye (–1.7%) saw the steepest declines.

In 2025, 87.7% of ISRs required to be transmitted to the IB within three months of receipt of the application were transmitted within that deadline. Seventeen ISAs transmitted more than 90% of such ISRs within this three-month time frame. For ISRs required to be transmitted within nine months of the priority date, 98.1% met the deadline in 2025. Eleven ISAs transmitted all such ISRs within nine months, and 21 transmitted more than 90% within the required time frame.

The office of China saw a 6% increase in international search reports issued in 2025.

10. International search reports issued by the top 10 International Searching Authorities, 2025

International Searching Authorities	2025	2024	Growth rate
European Patent Office	81,819	83,893	–2.5%
China	69,143	65,253	6.0%
Japan	46,320	47,121	–1.7%
Republic of Korea	30,984	31,204	–0.7%
US	20,480	24,997	–18.1%
India	3,156	2,742	15.1%
Australia	2,251	2,178	3.4%
Canada	2,163	2,145	0.8%
Türkiye	1,810	1,842	–1.7%
Singapore	1,225	944	29.8%

Source: WIPO Statistics Database, March 2026.

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