

What's New in ePCT

10 & 12 October 2023

Q&A Report


No.	Questions	Answers
I. Connections - access rights		
1	Once a connection has been made, does the eOwner still have to give access rights to international applications, e.g. eOwner, eEditor or eViewer?	Yes, the connection allows users to share access rights, but this is not automatic. Once a connection is established, you still have to give access rights to your associates for the applications concerned. You can refer to our video tutorial on Connections and on Managing Access Rights
2	Do you need to be an agent/attorney to have an ePCT Account? Can docket/assistant personnel have a WIPO Account and be connected to an application through "connections"?	Anyone can create a WIPO Account and file PCT applications, however please note that the request form PCT/RO101 should be signed by anyone who is authorized to sign e.g. Agent / Applicant. You can make a connection with the attorney and then share access rights with that person to the international application in order for the attorney to sign documents.
3	If you have an eHandshake already, do you need to do it again with the new connection?	You do not need to add it again, your existing eHandshakes remain in your connections list.
4	How do I make a connection?	Please watch our tutorial video on Connections . You can also refer to the following FAQ articles on Connections for instruction:
5	Can you limit access to the connection	When a connection is established, this does not mean that this person has automatically access to your international applications. It just means this person appears in your list of connections, and that you can assign access rights to that person if you wish to do so, but this is not automatic. Please see our FAQ articles on Connections .

6	How do we set up a group so that certain connections automatically have access rights to a filed international application?	For instructions on how to use this feature, please refer to the following FAQ article on Access rights group .
7	Can access rights be given in the address book to access rights groups? Or only to individuals?	No, group access rights cannot be assigned for the address book, you have to select each connection individually.
8	When I give access rights to another person, would he/she be able to make any changes on my IAs submitted on my account? Is there any way to limit their access, any read only access to another person?	<p>With eOwner access rights to an international application, you can assign three levels of access rights:</p> <p>eOwner: The original eOwner can give access rights to other users with whom he has associated his user account by way of a connection, whereas an eEditor or eViewer cannot. There can be and should be more than one eOwner for an international application and each eOwner is entitled to assign eOwner, eEditor or eViewer access rights to other users with whom they have a connection.</p> <p>eEditor : An eEditor can view the contents and take all actions on an international application, but cannot grant or remove access rights with respect to other users. eEditors can only remove their own access rights.</p> <p>eViewer: (read only access) An eViewer can view and download the contents of an international application but do not have 'editing' rights apart from the possibility to edit their own 'My Comments' and 'Warning'. eViewers can only remove their own access rights.</p>
9	Are there any changes to Access Rights now that eHandshakes are now Connections?	No, the way to assign access rights to your international applications to a connection (or former eHandshake) remains unchanged.
10	Is it possible to make a connection without a WIPO Account?	No, to make a connection both users must have a WIPO Account.
11	Are there any future plans to make the ePCT similar to the EPO eOLF so more than one person can access the system?	In ePCT the logic is that each user should have only one individual WIPO Account and share access rights with another WIPO Account holder to international applications and Address Book, so as you can share access rights between users and as there are three levels of access rights , there is no need to have several users sharing the same WIPO Account.

12	I currently have many contacts saved in my address book in ePCT. Will these still be available with the update, or will I need to re-enter them?	The new version of ePCT will not affect your existing address book, connections or international applications in your Workbench.
13	Can the address book be shared within a firm?	In order to share an address book within your firm, all your colleagues should have a WIPO Account and you can give them access rights to your Address book in order for them to be able to use and modify the contact list (depending on the level of access rights that you have given them). Each WIPO Account holder can create his own address book and share it with other connections. Please note that the address book's contact list can be downloaded using the 'Download list' link in the Address Book screen. For further information, please refer to the following FAQ article on the Address Book
II. ePCT Business Continuity Service		
14	Regarding the Business Continuity Service (BCS) - what can an applicant do in an emergency if their own IT system is down?	If your IT system is not working, you can access the BCS from your mobile phone or using a tablet. As you do not log into your WIPO Account to use this service, you only need to access your e-mail address to click the link in the BCS e-mail to access the service. The service can be reached as long as you have an internet connection.
15	What happens if the time (1 hour) expires when working in the PCT in the new backup system?	The link to access the service expires after 1 hour, this means that after you have entered your e-mail address in the BCS screen to request to use the service, you have 1 hour to click the link in the e-mail that you receive to access the service. If you don't click the link to access the BCS within 1 hour, you will have to register again in the BCS and indicate again your e-mail address to receive a new link. When you are preparing your PCT application in the BCS, the session times out after several hours, so you have the time to prepare your international application. For further information, please read our FAQ article on The ePCT Business Continuity Service
16	Can support staff send external signature links to agents when using the Business Continuity Service filing method?	No, the external signature feature does not exist in the emergency BCS service. However, please note that signing the request form RO/101 is not a requirement to

		file the international application, you can submit the signatures later and the receiving Office will certainly send you an invitation to correct this defect
17	Does the business continuity service create a PCT zip file to file with the RO/US/? how would we secure the attorney signatures if external signatures are not available to BCS?	<p>Regarding filing with RO/US, in the BCS the data and documents are package as in the ePCT system, so you can create your zip file with the BCS in the usual way, and the zip file will have to be uploaded to the USPTO's filing service for submission.</p> <p>Signing the request form is not a requirement to obtain an international filing date. If the request form is not signed, you will receive a warning message, but this will not prevent filing the application. You will then need to correct this defect and the receiving Office will certainly send you an invitation to do so.</p> <p>Please note that the BCS is a service to ensure continuity in order to enable the urgent submission of documents and filing of international applications before the end of a time limit. Waiting for a signature might need to be considered in light of that objective.</p>
18	I am not clear regarding the point you shared regarding requesting access rights possible only after receipt of Form IB/301 in BCS. can you please explain again?	<p>In the BCS service you can only file the international application, you will not have immediate access rights to it, nor can you assign access rights to the application to one of your connections.</p> <p>This means that after submission of the international application to the receiving Office, you will have to wait for the International Bureau to send you form IB/301 (the notification of receipt of the record copy) in order to use the code at the bottom right-hand corner of that form to request access rights to the application in ePCT.</p> <p>Please see our FAQ article on Action - Request access rights to an international application after filing</p>
19	Does the BCS services work only for the initial PCT filing?	You can use the BCS Service to submit a new international application and to submit post-filing documents.
20	After filing a PCT Application with the Business Continuity Service, must the applicant file again the application in ePCT?	No, the BCS service will transmit the application to the receiving Office selected that will process it as any other international application, so there is no need to file the application again. Please note that the PCT/RO/101 request form of an application filed using the BCS will have the indication that it was filed with the BCS.

		For further information, please refer to our FAQ on the ePCT Business Continuity Service
III. ePCT-Filing		
21	Could you please give instructions on how to make the PDF-files from Word for example so that they are really black and white, i. e. compliant with the Annex F?	<p>You can refer to the FAQ article on PDF documents</p> <p>Please note that the validation message '<i>JPEG image contains color/greyscale and will be converted to black and white by the IB for further processing. You are advised to upload black and white JPEG images only.</i>' is an information only message that does not prevent filing and that is likely to appear for most of the images in the Docx specification and may be due to the color settings of your computer or the thickness of black lines. You can view how the specification will look like when it will be processed at the International Bureau by clicking on 'View document as it will be rendered at the IB', we strongly recommend that you click this button to check that your specification is complete and rendered correctly when converted to PDF by the ePCT system.</p>
22	Sometimes the system indicates that there is no abstract, though there is one. Other times that there are too many words in the abstract (often counts line numbers as well).	<p>The messages for the empty abstract or regarding the number of words in the abstract are normally indicated as 'information only' messages so non-blocking, so you should be able to file the application.</p> <p>We presume that you are attaching a PDF file containing the abstract. Is your PDF a scanned PDF? If possible, please create your PDF with a PDF converter or directly from your text editor if it has the option 'Save as PDF'. We also advise to use Page breaks at the end of each section rather than hitting the Enter key of the keyboard to create blank lines.</p> <p>We also advise to click on 'View document as it will be rendered at the IB' after attaching your specification in order to check that the specification is complete including the abstract and rendered correctly.</p>
23	Yesterday, while preparing a draft application, we had a problem indicating, in the International Search field, that the Document was Already available to the ISA (the option was not available). After saving the draft, exiting and entering again, we could finally	<p>We were not able to reproduce this issue at our end.</p> <p>When preparing your application, please make sure to enter the priority claim and click on 'Save draft' before going to the International Search section to select your earlier application.</p>

	select this option. It was a bug of the system or we did something wrong?	
24	When we make payment to WIPO, no invoice is sent. You send proof that the fee has been paid. Is it possible to send an invoice?	<p>Form PCT/RO/102 is the official notification that the fees have been paid. Therefore, once the fees have been paid this form will be issued with the indication "0" under balance to confirm that the fees have been paid.</p> <p>You should also be able to see your payment in your WIPO Pay > Payment History</p> <p>by clicking the 'basket' icon at the top right-hand side of the screen  .</p> <p>However, it has come to the attention of the International Bureau that PCT applicants and agents are receiving invitations to pay fees that do not come from the International Bureau of WIPO and are unrelated to the processing of international applications under the PCT. Whatever registration services might be offered in such invitations ("invoices", "offers", "notifications", etc.), they bear no connection to WIPO or to any of its official publications. Please refer to this article.</p>
25	Is there any function to update the receiving office in our draft request form?	<p>If the selected receiving Office is not RO/IB, you have a one-time opportunity to change the selected receiving Office to RO/IB, for example, if it is necessary to request the restoration of the right of priority and the previously selected receiving Office does not accept such requests.</p> <p>For further details, please read our FAQ article on Change receiving Office .</p>
26	Will the checkbox for the signature of the applicant bypass the need for a power of attorney?	<p>Please note that the IB is waiver in the requirements of Power of Attorney at the time of filing. A Power of Attorney is only required when there is a change of Agent or for any withdrawal. This checkbox will only appear when signing the request form RO/101 on behalf of a company or a legal entity in an international application with the IB as receiving Office.</p>
27	If there is more than one applicant in the request form do you need to choose a common representative? If so, can it be the Applicant (meaning company)	<p>You can choose a common representative. If not and no representative is named in the request form, the first named applicant on the RO/101 request form who has the right to file with the RO will be considered as the "deemed common representative". The applicant or the common representative can be a natural person or a legal entity.</p>

28	Is it possible to indicate USPTO customer numbers when preparing PCT/RO101 Requests in ePCT?	There is no Customer number field for US filings in ePCT, however, the agent's registration number needs to be indicated and is added in the Signature section of the request form.
29	We are registered attorneys with the US, but when filing using IB as the RO, we cannot appear as agents, only for correspondence; is that still the case? Is there any reason to be an agent instead of correspondent for IB RO matters? Is it possible to become agents for IB RO cases?	<p>The receiving Office of the International Bureau (RO/IB) will apply the requirements of national Offices corresponding to the applicant(s) nationality and residence, so if you are filing with the RO/IB and at least one of the applicants has US nationality and residence, then you should be eligible to represent the applicants as a US agent with foreign filing license following the requirements of the RO/US.</p> <p>Only if you do not have the right to represent the applicant(s) as an agent before the RO of the nationality and residence of the applicant(s), e.g. representing a European applicant as a US attorney, then RO/IB will record you as address for correspondence. If you are recorded as an address for correspondence, then you will need for each submission the signature of the applicant.</p> <p>The situation is different for an in-house attorney who is authorized to sign on behalf of a legal entity as applicant; the attorney is thus signing as an applicant not as an agent.</p>
30	Can you please provide some further information regarding the external signature link?	Please refer to our FAQ articles on External Signatures and on Signature options at the time of filing, including external signature
IV. New drawings features		
31	Regarding adding the text of the figure that should accompany the abstract for international publication, if it is a graph with a labels "x" and "y" for the axis, should we include those labels in the box?	Adding the text of the drawing that will accompany the abstract on the international publication's front page is optional. However, we recommend our users to indicate the text of the drawing. In case of axis and for example "x= time" and "y= date", then yes please indicate "x=time" and "y=date". It will help our translation section to translate these words in French for the French Gazette.
32	If the ISA later chooses another Fig. for International publication (for the Fig. that will accompany the Abstract), than what the Applicant had selected at time of filing the IA (in the RO/101), and the Applicant had entered text that accompanies that Figure initially	Yes, our translation section will be notified that the figure to be published with the abstract has changed and they will translate the new one.

	selected, will that text (which may not apply to the Fig. that the ISA selected for Int'l. publication) be updated?	
V. PCT Direct		
33	When filing a PCT Direct before the corresponding ISA, is it sufficient to file informal observations in form of a letter? Do we need to accompany these observations with previous research and modifications, if any?	Informal observations submitted under PCT Direct should be submitted in the form of a letter ("PCT Direct letter"). The letter can be accompanied by a marked-up copy of the description and claims in case of modifications. Even if a mark-up copy is not mandatory, it might be helpful to the examiner in order to take your observations into account. It is usually not necessary to accompany these observations with a copy of the results of the earlier search since the International Searching Authority that is going to establish the search report and written opinion is the same Authority that conducted the search on the earlier application.
VI. Article 19 amendments		
34	With respect to claim amendments, do you anticipate accepting such amendments via ePCT in PDF format as well as in Docx? What advantages are there in submitting such amendments in Docx?	It is possible to submit amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 in PDF format via the document upload function. However, we recommend our users to submit the Art. 19 amendments in text format via the ePCT Action – Amendments under Article 19 (text format only) as the validation system will prevent some errors and it will facilitate processing by the IB in preparation for international publication.