

**Establishment of a USPTO Email Box for Submitting General
Questions Related to the Patent Cooperation Treaty and
Applications Filed or Submitted Thereunder**

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is establishing, on a one-year pilot basis effective January 1, 2022, an email address (PCTHelp@uspto.gov) for submitting inquiries regarding the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) and the procedures applicable to international applications filed under the PCT and U.S. national stage applications submitted under 35 U.S.C. § 371. The option to submit inquiries via email is intended to improve the overall customer service experience for those needing information regarding the PCT and international and national stage applications in the USPTO.

Since 1993, the USPTO has maintained a PCT Help Desk for telephonic inquiries regarding PCT issues. The PCT Help Desk is available for external customers to ask questions regarding general PCT practice, including those about how to file international applications under the PCT, how to submit national stage applications under 35 U.S.C. § 371, how to file “bypass” applications under 35 U.S.C. § 111(a), how to check the status of pending applications, how to respond to communications issued in such applications, and other PCT-related matters. The annual call volume at the PCT Help Desk has been as high as 40,910 calls, with an average of over 23,000 calls annually over the last three fiscal years. The PCT Help Desk is staffed by experienced attorneys, legal examiners, special program examiners, and paralegals from the USPTO’s International Patent Legal Administration (IPLA).

The IPLA is always looking to improve service to meet customer needs. Recent customer feedback has indicated a desire to permit the use of email to contact the PCT Help Desk. The new email address is being established in response to this customer feedback.

The email address is not intended for case-specific or time-sensitive inquiries, such as those in which a petition may be the proper response or an established deadline is imminent. Those inquiries should still be directed by telephone to the PCT Help Desk. Rather, the email account is intended to respond to general questions. It will permit those faced with substantial time differences to submit queries outside of USPTO business hours. Additionally, by taking general and non-time-sensitive inquiries out of the PCT Help Desk’s queue, the email account should enable customers to experience improved response times.

Date

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Performing the Functions and Duties of the Under Secretary of
Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United
States Patent and Trademark Office