



## Payment of Search Fees to EPO in RMB Starting from December 1, 2024

Starting from December 1, 2024, users participating in the Patent Cooperation Treaty (hereinafter referred to as “PCT”) pilot project between the CNIPA and EPO will have the option to pay international search fees directly in CNY (RMB) through CNIPA for applications designating the EPO as the International Searching Authority (hereinafter referred to as “ISA”).

The EPO and CNIPA jointly announced that their collaborative PCT pilot project has entered its next phase. This development offers enhanced convenience for Chinese applicants filing PCT applications with the EPO as the ISA: **starting from December 1, 2024, they can settle the relevant search fees in CNY (RMB) via CNIPA.**

On December 1, 2020, the pilot’s first phase was officially launched. The second phase builds on this foundation by further streamlining application procedures, allowing nationals and residents of the People’s Republic of China to make payments in CNY (RMB), thereby facilitating access to high-quality international searches and written opinions from the EPO.

By selecting the EPO as their ISA, applicants can accelerate the process of obtaining European patent protection. Moreover, key benefits of the second phase remain intact, such as the ability to submit an international preliminary examination request under PCT Chapter II to the EPO, a 75% reduction in examination fees when entering the European phase, and the elimination of the need for a European supplementary search and translation of the PCT application, thus saving both time and costs.

**Currently, the pilot project is limited to 3,000 applications per year.**



## Riyadh Design Law Treaty Successfully Concluded

From November 11 to 22, 2024, the Diplomatic Conference for the conclusion of the World Intellectual Property Organization (hereinafter referred to as “WIPO”) Design Law Treaty was held in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, during which the Riyadh Design Law Treaty was successfully concluded. Representatives from the CNIPA, the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva, and the Chinese Embassy in Saudi Arabia formed the Chinese government delegation attending the conference.

### ■ Objectives of the Treaty

**The Treaty aims to harmonize and unify application procedures and formalities for design applications across different countries**, which includes standardizing requirements for application documents, representation, determination of filing dates, grace periods, amendments or divisional applications, publication, renewal, time limits relief, right restoration, and other related provisions. The goal is to facilitate more convenient, rapid, and cost-effective protection of designs both domestically and internationally.

### ■ Key Provisions of the Riyadh Design Law Treaty

1. **Establishing a Closed List of Required Elements:** Sets a limit on the list of descriptions or elements that must be submitted by design applicants, establishing a predictable framework for design protection procedures.
2. **Flexible Representation Methods:** Allows applicants to choose how they present their designs in applications—through drawings, photographs, or videos (if permitted by the relevant intellectual property office).
3. **Multiple Designs per Application:** Under certain conditions, applicants can include multiple designs within a single application.
4. **Filing Date Determination:** Regulates the requirements for determining the filing date of design applications, crucial because delays in this field can result in irrevocable loss of rights.
5. **Grace Period for Novelty:** Provides a 12-month grace period after the first public disclosure of a

design, ensuring that such disclosure does not impact its novelty status.

6. **Deferred Publication Option:** Applicants can opt to keep their design applications unpublished for at least six months following the acquisition of the filing date.

7. **Relief Measures and Flexibility:** Offers measures to prevent applicants from losing rights due to missed time limits, recognizing that such a loss is often irreparable for a design application.

8. **Simplified Renewal Procedure:** Streamlines the process for requesting the renewal of design registrations.

9. **Promotion of Electronic Systems:** Encourages the adoption of electronic systems for design applications and the Digital Access Service (DAS) for priority documents.

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