

The JPO has started to pilot a Patent Prosecution Highway Program using PCT search results (PCT-PPH) on January 29, 2010. The JPO plans to continue this pilot program for two years (namely, to January 28, 2012), and then, we believe, the PCT-PPH would become available formally.

The "PCT search results" mean a Written Opinion of the International Search Authority (WO/ISA), a Written Opinion of the International Preliminary Examination Authority (WO/IPEA) or an International Preliminary Examination Report (IPER). The PCT-PPH is available when WO/ISA, WO/IPEA or IPER indicates allowability of at least one claim. Please note that: at this point, the JPO specifically limits the ISA or IPEA for the PCT-PPH to the USPTO, the EPO and the JPO.

By using the PCT-PPH, disclosure of prior art document and comparison between the claimed invention and the invention described in prior art can be omitted in an accelerated examination procedure, which will largely reduce the cost and time of the applicant.