

Green Patents – Before and After the Copenhagen Summit

The European Patent Office (EPO) has recently conducted a study in patenting trends in clean energy technologies.

Initial results show that over the last few years patent activity in clean energy technologies has significantly increased, compared with the fossil fuel sector.

The study involved analyzing worldwide patent data relating to clean energy technologies such as wind, hydro/marine, solar and geothermal energy, biofuels and clean coal.

The most activity was in the fields of wind power, solar photovoltaic and carbon dioxide storage. Patent activity in these green technologies has jumped– particularly in the US, Japan, Germany, Korea, the UK and France – during the ten years following the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

Technology transfer and licensing was found to be most active in developed countries. However, growing economies such as Brazil, Russia, India and particularly China have also been experiencing a surge in patent transfer and licensing.

The initial results of the study were presented at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in December 2009.

We anticipate that there will be a further jump in green technology patenting following the agreement reached in Copenhagen.

We expect that this boom in clean energy patenting will be assisted by the accelerated examination available for “green” patent applications. This process is already available in the UK, Japan and the US, with more countries sure to follow suit.

Accelerated prosecution is available upon request for all European patent applications, regardless of the subject matter.

The full results of the EPO study will be published during the first half of 2010. We will provide our analysis of the results as soon as they are available.

Please do not hesitate to contact us here at Forresters if you have any questions or if you would like further information.