

INFOCUS

INSPIRE - International Standards and Patents in Renewable Energy



INSPIRE is an online platform designed to provide up-to-date information on standards and patents for renewable energy. The platform helps users search through, locate and analyse more than 2 million patents and around 400 international standards for renewable energy technology. INSPIRE was developed in collaboration with the European Patent Office (EPO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

WHAT IS A PATENT?

A patent is the exclusive right granted to a patent holder to commercially exploit an invention for a limited period of time. Patents are normally granted by a state, or by a regional office acting for several states. In exchange for this right, the patent holder makes technical information about the invention publicly available in the patent document. By rewarding ideas, patents encourage the development of innovations and new technologies in every field. Patent documents can provide valuable information about the state of technological innovation in renewable energy technologies as they offer insights into which countries and innovators are active in developing new

technologies; which are the potential markets where technologies need to be protected and; which are the trends in technology transfers from one country to another.

WHAT IS A STANDARD?

A standard is a repeatable, harmonised, agreed and documented way of doing something. Standards contain technical specifications or other precise criteria designed to be used consistently as a rule, guideline, or definition. In renewable energy, standards are essential to ensure quality which in turn is crucial to develop and increase the renewable energy uptake, awareness and confidence in the markets.

“The INSPIRE platform provides a strategic window into the renewable energy patents and standards, which can foster collaboration between innovators, spur improvement through product comparison and help identify partners by matching domestic energy needs to innovative energy solutions.”

- Adnan Z. Amin,
IRENA Director-General

WHO ARE THE MAIN USERS OF INSPIRE?

- » Renewable energy project developers and entrepreneurs
- » Technology innovators and manufacturers
- » Policy makers
- » Researchers and students

BENEFITS OF USING INSPIRE

INSPIRE offers three key elements: search engines, learning sections and a networking space. The combined resources available on the platform allow users to:

- » Search for renewable energy patent information to identify emerging innovative technologies suitable for a specific application as well as active actors in these technology fields.

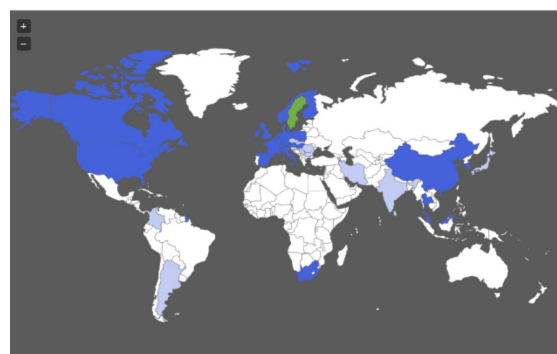
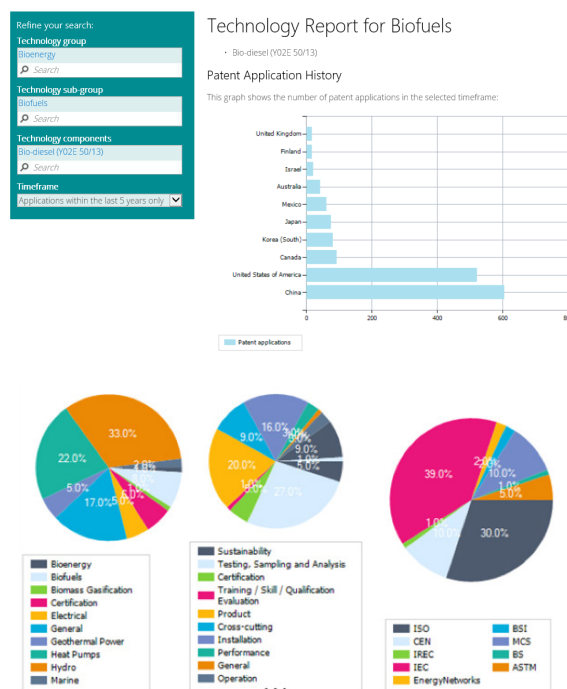
- » Search for international standards on renewable energy to identify methodologies that incorporate international good practices in the implementation of renewable energy projects.
- » Learn how to use standards and patent information.
- » Learn how to apply for patent rights.
- » Analyse patent trends for different renewable energy technologies by country or patent applicant, comparing developments within, or between, different technologies.
- » Access a catalogue of publications and resources.
- » Network using interactive maps reflecting key organisations involved in the filing of patents and the development of standards all over the world.

HOW DOES THE PLATFORM WORK?

INSPIRE can be used for multiple purposes. One example is renewable energy project development: if a government or a firm is planning to develop a national innovation programme for renewable energy with a specific technology, it can access the platform to search for patents related to this technology. The user can then refine the search according to data needs, including technology sub-group, technology component and the timeframe in which patents have been filed. The platform will generate a report reflecting the top 10 individuals or entities that have filed the largest number of patents in the selected timeframe, including the country of origin. With this information, the user can identify and analyse the latest technology trends for the needed application as well as the most active actors in this technology area to establish cooperative R&D networks. The user can then refer to an interactive map featuring contact details of patent offices and institutions around the world.

Once a technology has been identified, the user can search for standards associated to this technology and be directed to the site where the needed standard can be obtained. The search can also be filtered by technology, differentiated by aspects covered (such as installation, performance, operation, etc.) and include the organisations that develop and oversee these specific standards. This assists the user in consulting and analysing verified best practices for the successful implementation of renewable energy projects.

The platform provides interactive maps displaying contact information of local patent offices and technical committees on standards around the world, also identifying which countries participate in the process of developing international standards for specific technologies.



HOW DOES INSPIRE LINK TO OTHER IRENA INITIATIVES?

INSPIRE links to other IRENA tools and services that foster project development, financing and quality infrastructure. For instance, INSPIRE is linked with the [IRENA Project Navigator](#) where it assists in the development of project proposals for bankable renewable energy projects. The platform can also be used by applicants to the [IRENA/ADFD Project Facility](#) to identify available technologies and standards.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

» **Is there a fee for using the platform?**

All information on INSPIRE is free-of-charge.

» **How can I start using INSPIRE?**

No registration is required, users can access the website via: www.irena.org/inspire and explore the different modules of the platform.

» **How frequently is the information on INSPIRE updated?**

The databases are updated twice a year.

» **What are the steps to apply for renewable energy patents?**

The steps are as follows: Filing an application; formal and substantive examination by the patent office; grant/refusal; opposition and appeal. A full description of the patent granting procedure is available on [INSPIRE](#).

» **Who develops renewable energy standards?**

Renewable energy standards can be developed by international, regional or national standardisation bodies, as well as standard developing organisations. International standards bodies relevant to renewable energy are the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). Interactive maps displaying the scope and participating countries on each standard can be seen [here](#).

HOW CAN MEMBERS SUPPORT INSPIRE?

- » **Join a webinar:** Learn about the platform features and the latest information in patents and standards in a webinar about INSPIRE on December 7th 2016. Register [here](#).
- » **Share latest information on patents and standards:** Inform IRENA (inspire@irena.org) about the latest initiatives and projects carried out in your country in the field of patents and standards. This will provide an important contribution to updating the INSPIRE databases with latest information.
- » **Host or support a workshop on standardisation and innovation for renewable energy:** Workshops are provided for Member country representatives interested in enhancing their knowledge of patents and standards.

CONTACT DETAILS

For more information, please send an email to: inspire@irena.org

www.irena.org/inspire