



(43) International Publication Date
27 September 2012 (27.09.2012)

(51) International Patent Classification:

H01L 31/058 (2006.01) *F28D 15/02* (2006.01)
F24J 2/32 (2006.01) *F28D 15/06* (2006.01)
F24J 2/05 (2006.01)

(21) International Application Number:

PCT/GB2012/050621

(22) International Filing Date:

21 March 2012 (21.03.2012)

(25) Filing Language:

English

(26) Publication Language:

English

(30) Priority Data:

1104722.2 21 March 2011 (21.03.2011) GB

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

- with international search report (Art. 21(3))
- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments (Rule 48.2(h))

(54) Title: SOLAR ENERGY CONVERTER

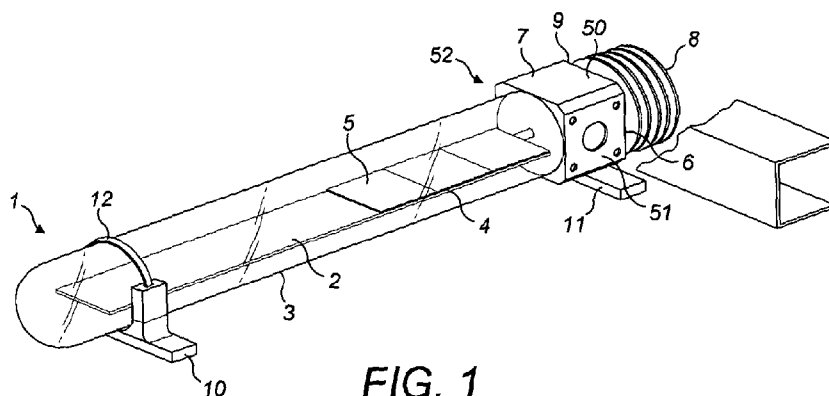


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: A solar energy converter comprising: a solar energy absorber, the solar energy absorber comprising a photovoltaic element; a heat transfer element in thermal contact with the solar energy absorber; a primary heat exchanger in thermal contact with the heat transfer element; a secondary heat exchanger; and a heat transfer control element; wherein the heat transfer control element is arranged to selectively place the secondary heat exchanger either in thermal contact with the heat transfer element or out of thermal contact with the heat transfer element.