



BSI Standards Publication

Land usage of photovoltaic (PV) farms - Mathematical models and calculation examples

National foreword

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TECHNICAL REPORT



Land usage of photovoltaic (PV) farms – Mathematical models and calculation examples

INTERNATIONAL
ELECTROTECHNICAL
COMMISSION

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	7
1 Scope.....	8
2 Normative references	9
3 Terms and definitions	9
4 Azimuth and hour angle coordinates.....	11
5 Coordinate systems (Figures 3 to 6).....	13
5.1 Ground Horizontal Coordinates (<i>GHC</i>)	13
5.2 Equatorial Coordinates (<i>EC</i>).....	14
6 Boundary conditions	15
7 Land use calculations for fixed PV arrays on flat land (Figure 7).....	18
7.1 Boundary conditions	18
7.2 Calculation models for the fixed PV arrays on flat land.....	18
7.3 Example of land usage for fixed PV arrays on flat land.....	19
8 Special consideration of non-south direction and sloped land	20
8.1 General.....	20
8.2 Boundary conditions	20
8.3 Calculation models.....	21
8.4 Example for fixed PV arrays with non-south direction.....	22
8.5 Example for fixed PV arrays on sloped land	23
9 Land usage for solar altitude tracking in ground horizontal coordinates (Figures 10 and 11).....	24
9.1 Boundary conditions	25
9.2 Calculation models for solar altitude tracking	27
9.3 Example of land usage for 4-times adjustment.....	27
10 Land usage calculation for horizontal <i>E-W</i> tracking in equatorial coordinates (Figure 14)	29
10.1 Boundary conditions	29
10.2 Calculation models.....	29
10.3 Example – Land usage for horizontal <i>E-W</i> tracking.....	30
11 Land usage for pole-axis tracking (Figure 16).....	31
11.1 Boundary conditions	32
11.2 The calculation for <i>E-W</i> distance	32
11.3 The calculation for <i>S-N</i> distance	33
11.4 Example 1: no-shading distance is set within 75 % day length on winter solstice	33
11.5 Example 2: no-shading period is from 9:00am to 3:00pm on winter solstice	34
11.6 Example 3: Calculation for high-efficiency PV modules	35
11.7 Land usage for pole-axis tracking	36
12 Land usage calculation for double-axis tracking in equatorial coordinates (Figure 17) ...	38
12.1 Boundary conditions	38
12.2 Calculation model for <i>E-W</i> distance	38
12.3 Calculation for <i>S-N</i> distance	39
12.4 Example 1: no-shading distance is set within 75 % day length on winter solstice	41
12.5 Example 2: no-shading period is from 9:00am to 3:00pm on winter solstice	41

12.6	Land usage for equatorial double-axis tracking	42
13	Land usage calculation for tilted <i>E-W</i> tracking	43
13.1	Boundary conditions	43
13.2	Why optimized <i>S-N</i> tilt is equal to 1/2 latitude	43
13.3	The calculation model for <i>E-W</i> distance	44
13.4	Example of <i>E-W</i> distance calculation	44
13.5	The calculation model for <i>S-N</i> distance	45
13.6	Example of <i>S-N</i> distance calculation	47
13.7	Land usage of tilted <i>E-W</i> tracking	47
14	Land usage calculation of double-axis tracking in ground horizontal coordinates (Figure 23)	48
14.1	Boundary conditions	48
14.2	Calculation model for <i>S-N</i> distance	48
14.3	Example 1: calculation for <i>S-N</i> distance at 75 % day-length on winter solstice (Table 6)	50
14.4	Example 2: calculation for <i>S-N</i> distance at 9:00am on winter solstice (Table 7)	51
14.5	Example of <i>E-W</i> distance calculation	52
14.6	Land usage for horizontal double-axis tracking	53
15	Land usage calculation for azimuth tracking in ground horizontal coordinates (Figure 25)	54
15.1	Boundary conditions	54
15.2	Calculation model for <i>S-N</i> distance	54
15.3	Example 1: calculation for <i>S-N</i> distance at 75 % day-length on winter solstice (Table 8)	55
15.4	Example 2: calculation for <i>S-N</i> distance at 9:00am on winter solstice (Table 9).....	56
15.5	Example of <i>E-W</i> distance calculation	57
15.6	Land usage for horizontal azimuth tracking	58
16	Array length and width ratio	59
17	Summary of calculation results (Table 12)	62
18	Back tracking technology	63
18.1	General.....	63
18.2	<i>E-W</i> tracking in equatorial coordinates	64
18.3	Double axis tracking in ground horizontal coordinates.....	68
Annex A (informative) Acronyms and abbreviated terms		73
Figure 1 – Current definition of azimuth and hour angle coordinates		12
Figure 2 – Definition of azimuth and hour angle coordinates for this document		12
Figure 3 – PV array in ground horizontal coordinates		13
Figure 4 – PV array in equatorial coordinates		14
Figure 5 – Equatorial tracking systems		14
Figure 6 – Relationship between A , Ω and ω		15
Figure 7 – Fixed PV array on flat land.....		18
Figure 8 – Relationship of solar beam and PV array.....		18
Figure 9 – Relationship of solar beam and PV array and the distance between arrays		21
Figure 10 – Manual adjusted supporting structure		24
Figure 11 – Manual adjusted PV array		25

Figure 12 – 2 times adjustment rules 26

Figure 13 – 4 times adjustment rules 27

Figure 14 – Horizontal *E-W* tracking 29

Figure 15 – Horizontal *E-W* tracking 30

Figure 16 – Pole-axis tracking..... 31

Figure 17 – Double tracking systems (hour-angle and solar declination) 38

Figure 18 – PV array and solar beam for double-axis tracking..... 40

Figure 19 – Tilted *E-W* tracking (horizontal main axis)..... 43

Figure 20 – *E-W* distance for tilted *E-W* tracking 44

Figure 21 – The relationship between PV array and solar beam 46

Figure 22 – *S-N* distance between PV modules 46

Figure 23 – Double axis-tracking in ground horizontal coordinates 48

Figure 24 – Distance items relevant with no-shading distance calculation 49

Figure 25 – Solar azimuth tracking (fixed PV tilt)..... 54

Figure 26 – Array configuration for horizontal double tracking 59

Figure 27 – Back tracking for *E-W* tracking..... 64

Figure 28 – No-shading between PV arrays by back tracking technology 65

Figure 29 – Back tracking for horizontal double-axis tracking 69

Table 1 – No-shading set time on winter solstice for various latitudes 16

Table 2 – Date and time when solar altitude is 20° and the sun is in the east..... 16

Table 3 – Proposed boundary conditions 17

Table 4 – Adjustment rules for solar altitude tracking 26

Table 5 – Annual average incidence angle for different latitudes and different tilts 44

Table 6 – *S-N* distances calculation at 75 % day length on winter solstice 51

Table 7 – *S-N* distances calculation at 9:00am on winter solstice 52

Table 8 – *S-N* distances calculation for azimuth tracking at 75 % day length 56

Table 9 – Distances calculation from the set time to noon time 57

Table 10 – Length and width ratio effect for 3 scenarios 60

Table 11 – Summary of 3 scenarios 61

Table 12 – Summary of the calculated results 62

Table 13 – Back tracking tilt calculation for *E-W* tracking on winter solstice 67

Table 14 – Back tracking tilt calculation for *E-W* tracking on spring equinox 68

Table 15 – Back tracking tilt calculation for *D*-tracking on winter solstice 71

Table 16 – Back tracking tilt calculation for *D*-tracking on spring equinox..... 72

INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

**LAND USAGE OF PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) FARMS –
MATHEMATICAL MODELS AND CALCULATION EXAMPLES**
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IEC TR 63149, which is a technical report, has been prepared by IEC technical committee 82: Solar photovoltaic energy systems.

The text of this technical report is based on the following documents:

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Full information on the voting for the approval of this technical report can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

This document has been drafted in accordance with the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

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INTRODUCTION

It is very important to calculate the land usage of PV power plants. If the plant is poorly designed, it would result in either a waste of land due to too large an area, or the loss of power generation because of shading between arrays. This TR gives a simple calculation for a quick guideline of the land usage of PV farms. For accurate and optimum land usage design, a more sophisticated numerical computation is encouraged.

The key factor to affect land usage of PV plants is the distance between PV arrays. The calculation of the distance between PV arrays is affected by the following factors:

- Sun-Earth relationship;
- solar declination angle (determining the date of a year);
- solar hour angle (determining the time of a day);
- latitude of the location of PV plant;
- azimuth of PV array;
- tilted angle of PV array;
- flat land or tilted land;
- efficiency of PV modules;
- mounting and tracking arrangements if used (e.g. fixed, single-axis tracking, double-axis tracking);
- the coordinates system (ground horizontal coordinates, equatorial coordinates);
- the ratio of length and width of PV array, and
- the possible maximum mechanical tilted angle of PV array, etc.

Increased land usage comes with power generation. To maximise generation and minimise land usage has many advantages including decreasing cost.

LAND USAGE OF PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) FARMS – MATHEMATICAL MODELS AND CALCULATION EXAMPLES

1 Scope

This document is aimed at building mathematical models for calculation of the distance between arrays, to farthest avoid shading and reasonably reduce the land usage of PV farms.

In general, there will be longest south-north shading on the day of the winter solstice. The boundary condition to calculate the south-north (*S-N*) distance between PV arrays used in this document is based on winter solstice. The longest east-west (*E-W*) shading is on the time when the sun is in the east. The users can change the boundary conditions (date and time) depending on local conditions (latitude, land limitation, facing direction, etc.), the formulas are all the same.

The shading distance calculation is based on date and time boundaries, not based on shading energy losses that may be very complicated. The no-shading distance calculation in this document is only for the distance between PV arrays, not for other surrounding objects, but the formula can also be used to calculate the no-shading distance between the objects and PV arrays. Where shading occurs on the PV array site other calculations are required that are not within the scope of this document. The no-shading distance calculation is based on the northern hemisphere in this document, but all formulas can also be used for the southern hemisphere.

The no-shading calculation model is different for fixed PV arrays and PV systems with solar trackers. This document derives mathematical models for both fixed PV arrays and solar trackers.

For solar trackers, there are 2 different coordination systems: the Ground Horizontal Coordinates (*GHC*) and Equatorial Coordinates (*EC*).

This document provides land usage calculations of PV farms for the following array types:

- Fixed PV array on flat-land and face to the south
- Fixed PV array on flat-land and face to non-south direction
- Fixed PV array on tilted land and face to the south
- Horizontal *E-W* tracking in Equatorial Coordinates
- Tilted *E-W* tracking in Equatorial Coordinates
- Pole-Axis tracking in Equatorial Coordinates
- Double tracking in Equatorial Coordinates
- Solar Azimuth tracking in ground horizontal coordinates
- Manual solar altitude tracking in ground horizontal coordinates
- Double tracking in ground horizontal coordinates

In the following clauses, the different coordinates systems are introduced and the land usage calculations for different operational models are provided.