Comprehensive Journal of Science
Volume (10), Issue (38), (Dec, 2025)
ISSN: 3014-6266

مجلة العلوم الشاملة
المجلد (10) ملحق العدد 38 ديسمبر 2025
ردمد: 3014-6266

Design and Simulation of a Solar-Powered Reverse OsmosisDesalination System for Brackish Water in Arid Regions: A Case Study for Al-Egailat -Libya

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تاريخ الاستلام:2025/12/8 –تاريخ المراجعة: 2025/12/12 – تاريخ القبول: 2025/12/19 – تاريخ للنشر : 2026 /1/17

1- Abstract

Desalination powered by renewable energy is still not widely applied. Its development is limited to pilot plants and small units, mainly located in remote areas. This paper proposes the ***Water Higher Technical Institute (WHTI)*** – Al-Egailat city for theoretical study of such a system to desalinate brackish water using RO system powered by solar PV on small scale. All the data used are based on a statistical solar energy available from historical charts and the proposal data of a PV-powered RO system suited for such design purpose from trusted manufactured company.

Al-Egailat city (**South Mediterranean coast**) is highly qualified for testing of such systems since it has a huge water aquifer and several water well of a salinity of (2500) ppm., the paper presents the design of the PV-powered RO water desalination system.

Based on the climate conditions in Al-Egailat, the paper presents a comprehensive design and simulation of a **standalone solar-powered reverse osmosis (RO) desalination system** for brackish water producing **20 m^3/day** of freshwater. The study covers:

- **System sizing** (PV, battery, RO units).
- **Energy-water nexus optimization**.
- **Simulation results** (PVsyst, HOMER Pro).
- **Economic and environmental benefits(health and social conditions)**.

- **Building up of local capabilities and expertise** in the field of water desalination by solar electric systems.

The proposed system uses **18 KWp solar PV, 138 kWh $LiFePO_4$ storage, and four parallel 5 m^3/day RO units**, achieving a **Levelized Cost of Water (LCOW) of $0.50–0.80/$m^3$**, making it viable for off-grid communities.

Keywords: Solar desalination, Reverse Osmosis (RO), Brackish water, Al-Egailat, Libya, Renewable energy, Off-grid systems, Photovoltaic power systems.

\1. Introduction

1-1 Background

- Water scarcity in arid regions like **Libya** has driven interest in **sustainable desalination**. Reverse Osmosis (RO) is the most energy-efficient desalination method, while **solar photovoltaic (PV) integration** reduces reliance on fossil fuels
- Libya faces **acute water scarcity**, relying on fossil-fueled desalination and depleting groundwater **[1]**.
- **Solar-powered RO** offers a sustainable solution, leveraging Libya's **high solar irradiance (6.2 kWh/m^2/day)[2]**.
- **Libya has a large number of rural villages lacking for water and electricity networks** as well as for internal asphalted roads and sewage systems.
- **Libya has one of the highest solar energy potentials** of all countries of the world. It enjoys over 3500 sunshine hours every year **[2].**
- **The above figures** are encouraging for utilization of solar energy for electricity generation and desalination of brackish water, especially in non-electrified rural villages or when the main national source halted or under maintenance.
- **Brackish water is available in large amounts in some areas of Libya**, particularly in Jabal Al-Garby and Jabal Al-Agthar and Al-Wahat.
- **Al Egailat city**, which is located in the west of Libya contains a lot of brackish water is a very qualified rural area for erection of a solar-powered water desalination pilot project, contains also a **center for water research and higher education (WHTI**).

1-2 Objectives

Implementation of such a project will demonstrate the provision of potable water through exploitation of the available brackish water and will have also the following results:

1. Design a **20 m^3/day solar RO system** for brackish water (2,500 ppm TDS).
2. Optimize **energy storage (battery) and PV sizing** for 24/7 operation.
3. Simulate system performance under Al-Egailat-Libya's climate.
4. The implementation can be conducted and supervised by the ***Higher Technical Water Institute Expertise***.

2. Literature Review

2-1 Solar Desalination Technologies

- **The desalination plants** presently producing fresh water from saline water are operating mainly on the processes: multistage flash(MSF), multi effect desalination (MED) vapor compression (VC), electro dialysis (ED) and reverse osmosis (RO).
- **Reverse Osmosis is a separation phenomenon**, which separates fresh water from seawater or brackish water through semipermeable membranes. Admitting hydrostatic pressure of about 12 bar, which over compensates the osmotic pressure difference, desalinated water is separated from the concentrated phase through the membrane to the dilute phase. The obtained fresh water has a salinity in the range **300–500 ppm** with a conductivity of about **450 µs/cm[3-5].**
- **During the last decade, an increasing field of RO application for desalination of brackish water and sea water has been developed**. The advantage of RO over the other processes is in the lower energy consumption rate. For example, while a MSF-plant requires approximately 3–5 kWh electrical energy plus about 60–80 kWh thermal energy per m^3 distillate, independent of the salt content of the raw water, **the electrical energy requirements of RO-plants are about 5 kWh/m^3 of product for raw water with a salt content of 3500 ppm and increase to about 15 kWh/m^3 for sea water with salt content**

of 35,000 ppm[3-5].Therefore, most renewable energy powered desalination plants are RO.

- **Various renewable energy sources are available in different parts of the world**. The main renewable energy sources used for desalination are solar energy, wind power, and geothermal energy. **Table 1** shows some renewable energy desalination plants in different countries[6]. **Table 2** shows a numerical breakdown of Libya's brackish water potential, including estimated volumes, costs, and key metrics[7 and 8].

TABLE 1 . SELECTED RENEWABLE ENERGY DESALINATION PLANTS

Desalination plant name	Location	Desalination technology	Capacity, m^3/d	Renewable energy source
Kimolos	Greece	MED	200	Geothermal
Keio University	Japan	MED	100	Solar collectors
PSA	Spain	MED	72	Concentrating solar power (CSP)
Ydriada	Greece	RO	80	Wind turbine
Morocco	Morocco	RO	12–24	Photovoltaics (PV)
Oyster	Scotland	RO	n/a	Wave energy

- **RO dominatesfor brackish water(TDS < 10,000 ppm)desalination** [9] due to lower energy needs than sea water desalination (~3 kWh/m^3) vs. thermal methods.
- **Solar PV-RO systems** are viable for **off-grid communities**, with energy demands of **2–4 kWh/m^3** for brackish water and proven in MENA region [10].
- **Energy recovery devices (ERDs)** can reduce powerof energy from brine stream consumption by **30–50%**and reduces RO system energy to **2-2.5 kWh/m^3** for brackish water[11].
- A **solar-powered RO plant** in **Al-Khafji, Saudi Arabia**produces **60,000 m^3/day** using PV + **battery storage**, [12]
- A **PV-RO system** in **Ait Baamrane, Morocco**provides **10 m^3/day** for rural areas[13].
- Small-scale solar desalination projects in **Sirte and Benghazi**, **Libya** show **feasibility for decentralized water supply**, [14].
- A comprehensive review of reverse osmosis (RO) desalination, covering key aspects such as water sources, membrane technology, and major challenges in this fieldare discussed in [15].

Table 2. Brackish Water potential in Libya: Key Data & Statistics

Category	Estimated Value	Notes
Total Brackish Water Reserves	~3,000–5,000 million m^3 (MM^3)	Mainly in coastal aquifers & inland saline groundwater.
Salinity Range	1,000–10,000 mg/L TDS	Lower salinity (1,000–5,000 mg/L) is easier to desalinate.
Desalination Potential	~500–1,000 MM^3/year (with investment)	Requires ~50–100 medium-sized brackish water RO plants (5–10 MM^3/yr each).
Desalination Cost	\$0.50–\$1.00/m^3	Cheaper than seawater desalination (\$1.50–\$2.50/m^3).
Irrigable Land (Brackish Water)	50,000–100,000 hectares (if utilized)	Suitable for salt-tolerant crops (dates, barley, olives).
Aquaculture Potential	5,000–10,000 tons/year of fish	Tilapia, mullet, and shrimp farming in treated brackish water.
Investment Needed (Infrastructure)	\$1–3 billion (2030 target)	Includes desalination plants, pipelines, and solar energy integration.
Energy Requirement (Desalination)	2–4 kWh/m^3 (with solar potential)	Solar-powered plants could reduce costs by 30–50%.
Groundwater Depletion Rate	~1.5–2.0 m/year (in some aquifers)	Brackish water could reduce freshwater over-extraction.

2-2 Libya's Water-Energy Challenges

Energy-intensive desalination strains Libya's grid and **decentralized solar RO** can serve remote communities **[16]**,a key reference for policymakers and engineers working on **sustainable water solutions** in arid regions. It aligns with global goals (SDG 6: Clean Water, SDG 7: Affordable Energy **[17].**

2-3 Al-Egailat Summary Site

The old Arabic traditional name of thesewells is **Hammam AL-EGAILAT AL SEYAHEY**which means Bath of Al-EGAILAT. It is elevated at 5 m above sea level in the western part of the Libya (Longitude: 12.37 ˚ Latitude: 32.76˚).

Since the village contains **hot mineral wells**, it is usually visited in winter by many people for natural therapy. The city is known with hot summer months,the annual-daily average is 22.8°C, **[18].**

The presence of mineral hot wells, its mild warm climate (Mediterranean weather) in winter and its rural location in a pasture land, make it a promising potential site, that its infra-structure can be properly developed by solar energy systems. The city is qualified especially for ecotourism projects based on exploiting the **mineral wells for natural therapy**. For all these reasons we propose it for erection of the first demonstration project in West Libya using PV for water desalination.

3- System Layout proposals

The construction of the proposed RO plant is illustrated in **Figure 1**. The brackish water is fed by the well submersible pump into the raw water two storage tank (**each of 20 m^3 capacity**). Before entering the desalination system, the raw water passes a sand filter and a cartridge filter to remove excess turbidity or suspended solids, which may cause problems in pump operation and instrumentation, if they enter the RO system, may plug the flow passage or deposit on the membrane surfaces causing changes in product water and salinity. The four RO-modules are served by four boost high pressure pumps each of 420liter/h capacity at 12bars. The feed water is distributed across the membranes by means of transverse stream filtration and by this a part of the water is desalinated as it permeates the membranes. The remaining brine is drained off. The pure water flows from the modules to a storage tank. The desalination plant is divided into four units so that in case of a break-down in one unit the remaining one is still operational. The operating pressure is adjusted by manually operated valves. The product water is stored in an intermediate tank. This potable water will be pumped to other storage tank where it can be chlorinated to prevent bacteria contamination.

3-1 System Design and Sizing (Methodology)

Design and sizing of the PV-powered RO desalination systems depend mainly on the daily fresh water requirement, salinity of brackish water and the climate parameters on the plant site [3-5]which are illustrated in table 3 below:

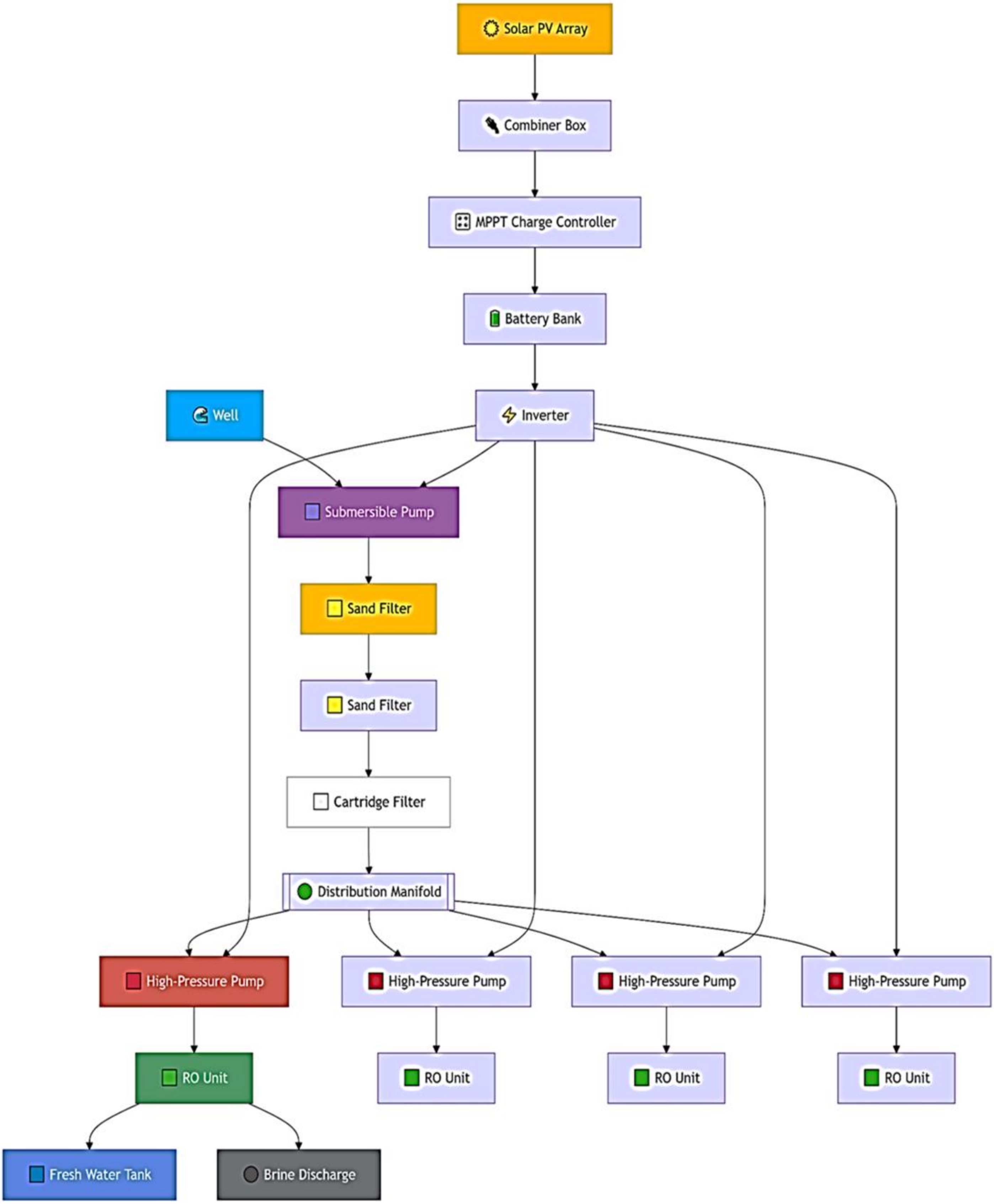

FIGURE 1 Block diagram of the proposed solar PV-powered RO desalination plant for brackish water in Al-Egailat city

Table 3 Brackish water salinity and climate parameters for Al-Egailat wells

Salinity of brackish water	2500 mg/ Lit (ppm)
Conductivity	4964 µs/cm
Temperature of brackish water	22.8°C
Fresh water requirement (daily average)	20 m^3/day

Table 4 monthly climatological table for Al-Egailat (near Tripoli, Libya) based on NASA POWER (2001-2022, [18]) data, design Parameters for the PV-Powered RO Desalination Plant

Month	Avg. Solar Radiation ($kWh/m^2/day$)	Avg. Temperature (°C)	Avg. Relative Humidity (%)	Avg. Sunshine Hours (monthly total)
Jan	4.1	14.2	68	210
Feb	4.8	15.8	64	225
Mar	5.6	18.3	60	260
Apr	6.3	21.7	58	285
May	6.9	25.4	56	315
Jun	7.2	28.9	54	330
Jul	7.4	30.5	53	345
Aug	7.1	30.8	55	325
Sep	6.5	28.2	59	285
Oct	5.4	24.1	63	255
Nov	4.3	19.6	67	225
Dec	3.9	15.5	70	200
Annual Average	**5.8**	**22.8**	**60**	**3260 (Total)**

3-2 Sizing the Brackish Water Pumping System

This guide covers pump selection, pipe sizing, and hydraulic calculations for a brackish well (2,500 ppm TDS) feeding a 20 m^3/day (833 L/hr) RO system in Al-Egailat, Libya.The daily amount of brackish water needed will be 40 m^3 **[19 - 21].**

1- Key design parameters

Table 5 Design parameters of the brackish water pumping system

Parameter	Value
Water Demand	20 m^3/day (833 L/hr)
RO Recovery Rate	50% → Feedwater = 40 m^3/day (1,666 L/hr)
Well Depth	30–50 m (Al-Egailat well)
Static Water Level (SWL)	20 m (Assumed)
Drawdown	10 m (Dynamic Water Level = 30 m)

Pipe Length	50 m (Well to RO system)

2- Pump Selection Criteria

A. Flow Rate Requirement

- **RO feedwater needed**: **1.7 m^3/hr** (1,666 L/hr).
- **Safety factor (20%)**: **2.0 m^3/hr** design flow.

B. Total Dynamic Head (TDH)

$$TDH = Vertical\ Lift\ + Friction\ Loss + Pressure\ at\ Delivery \rightarrow 1$$

1. **Vertical Lift** = Dynamic Water Level (30 m) + Elevation to RO (5 m) = **35 m**.
2. **Friction Loss** (Hazen-Williams Equation):
   - **Pipe Material**: HDPE (C = 150).
   - **Pipe Diameter**: 1" (25 mm) → **Friction loss ≈ 5 m/100 m**.
   - **Total Friction Loss** = 50 m×0.05=2.5 m.
3. **Pressure at RO Inlet**: **2 bar (20 m)** required for pretreatment.
4. **Total TDH** = 35 m + 2.5 m + 20 m = **57.5 m**.

C. Pump Power Calculation

$$P = \frac{Q\ x\ TDH\ x\ \rho\ x\ g}{3.6\ x\ 10^6\ x\ \eta} \text{in KW} \rightarrow 2$$

Where:

- Q = Flow rate (2.0 m^3/hr).
- TDH = 57.5 m.
- ρ = Density (1,000 kg/m^3).
- g = Gravity (9.81 m/s^2).
- η = Pump efficiency (60% = 0.6).

$$P = \frac{Q\ x\ TDH\ x\ \rho\ x\ g}{3.6\ x\ 10^6\ x\ \eta} = \frac{2.0\ x\ 57.5\ x\ 1000\ x\ 9.81}{3.6\ x\ 10^6\ x\ 0.6} = \mathbf{0.52}\ KW$$

3. Recommended Pump Specifications

Table 6 pump specification

Parameter	Specification
Type	Submersible (for deep wells) or Surface Centrifugal (if shallow)
Material	Stainless Steel (SS316) for corrosion resistance
Flow Rate	2.0 m^3/hr
Total Head	60 m
Power	1.0 kW (1.5 HP) for safety margin
Voltage	220V AC (or DC if solar-direct)

Example Models	Grundfos SQ2-60 (1.2 kW, 60 m head, 2.5 m^3/hr).
	Franklin Electric 1.5 HP 4" Submersible

4. Pipe Sizing & Material

- **Diameter**: **1" (25 mm) HDPE** (low friction loss, UV-resistant).
- **Flow Velocity**:

$$\boldsymbol{v = \frac{Q_{total}}{Q_{pipe}}} \rightarrow \mathbf{3}$$

$$\boldsymbol{v} = \frac{2.0\ m^3/hr}{0.00049\ m^2} = 1.13\ \ m/sec$$

*(Acceptable range: 0.6–1.5 m/s to avoid cavitation.) *

3-3 Sizing the RO System Model

The RO system consists of **4 units** where each one will have the following specifications:

- **Fourunitseach 5 m^3/day** (units in parallel operation for redundancy).
- **Energy Recovery Device (ERD)** reduces power to **2.5 kWh/m^3**.
- **Recovery Rate (R)**: 50% → 40 m^3/day feed for 20 m^3/day product.

Key Equations:

1- **Feed Flow Rate per RO Unit**:

$$\boldsymbol{Q_f} = \frac{\boldsymbol{Q_{total}}}{\mathbf{4}} \rightarrow 4$$

$$\boldsymbol{Q_f} = \frac{40\ m^3/day}{4} = 10\frac{m^3}{day} = 0.42\ m^3/hr$$

2- **Membrane Area and Flux per RO Unit Calculation:**

$$\boldsymbol{A_m} = \frac{\boldsymbol{Q_P}}{\boldsymbol{J_w}} \rightarrow \mathbf{5}$$

$$\boldsymbol{J_w = A\,.\,(\Delta P - \Delta\pi)} \rightarrow \mathbf{6}$$

Where:

- A_m = Permeate area (m^2)
- Qp = Permeate flow rate (5 m^3/day = 0.21 m^3/hr).
- Jw = Membrane (Permeate) flux (20 LMH for BWRO).
- A=Membrane permeability (1.5LMH/bar).
- ΔP= Pressure drops across the RO membrane (bar or Pa).
- $\Delta\pi$=Osmotic pressure(~2.5 bar for 2,500 ppm, for NaCl $\Delta\pi = 0.77\ Cf$).

$$\boldsymbol{A_m} = \frac{\frac{0.21m^3}{hr}\ x\ 1000\ L/m^3}{20\ LMH} = 10.5\ m^2$$

→ Use **2 × Filmtec BW30-4040 membranes** (7.9 m^2 each) per unit.

3- SaltRejection:

$$R = 1 - \frac{C_P}{C_f} \rightarrow 7$$

- *Cf = feed water TDS (2500 ppm)*
- *Cp=Permeate TDS(<100ppm).*

4- Feed Pressure per RO Unit Calculation:

$$P_f = \Delta\pi + \Delta P_{membrane} + \Delta P_{friction} \rightarrow 8$$

Where:

- ΔPmembrane = 8–10 bar (BWRO).
- ΔPfriction = 1–2 bar.

  → **Total Pf ≈ 12 bar**.

5- Pump Power per RO Unit Calculation:

$$P_{pump} = \frac{Q_f \; x \; P_f}{3600 \; x \; \eta} \rightarrow 9$$

$$P_{pump} = \frac{0.42 \; x \; 12 \; x \; 100}{3600 \; x \; 0.6} = 0.23 \; kW$$

→ **1.5 kW pump selected** (oversized for startup surge).

3-4 Sizing the Solar PV Array System Model

1. **Energy Demand**:
   - **RO Energy**: (Specific Energy Consumption =3 kWh/m^3) × 20 m^3/day = **60 kWh/day**.
   - **Auxiliary Loads**(pumps, controls, lighting): **10** kWh/day (estimated).
   - **Total Daily Energy demand (E_{daily})**:

   E_{daily}=**60**kWh (RO)+**10**kWh (aux)**=70kWh/day**

2. **Autonomy Days**

- **Libya's Solar Variability**: Assume **1.5 days of autonomy** to cover cloudy periods.
- **Total Energy to Store**:

  $E_{storage}$=**70**kWh/day×**1.5**days=**105**kWh

3. **PV Array Capacity and output**:

$$P_{PV} = \frac{E_{daily}}{G \times \eta_{PV}} \rightarrow 10$$

Where:

- G = Peak sun hours (**5.5 hrs/day** in Al-Egailat-Libya).
- η_{pv} = PV Array system Efficiency (0.8 for losses).

$$P_{PV} = \frac{70\ kWh/day}{5.5 \times 0.8} = 15.9\ kWp$$ **Kilowatt-Peak**

→ **Round to 18 kWp** (accounting for dust/temperature).

- **Output:**

$$P_{PV}(t) = \eta_{PV} \cdot A_{PV} \cdot G(t) \cdot (1\text{- Soiling}) \cdot (1\text{-Temp Loss}) \rightarrow 11$$

- **Daily Energy**: 70–90 kWh (seasonal variation).
- Small **time interval** Δt for discrete calculations (e.g., **1 hour in simulations**).
- **Role**:
  - Used in **numerical integration** (e.g., energy harvested by PV over a day):

$$P_{PV} = \sum_0^T P_{PV}(t) \cdot \Delta t \rightarrow 12$$

4. **Panel Configuration**:
   - **Modules Number**: 40 × 450W mono PERC.
   - **String Design**: 5 panels in parallel and × 8 strings in series (185V DC, 88A).

5. **Hourly Irradiance**:

$$G(t) = G_{max} \cdot \sin\left(\frac{\pi t}{T}\right) \text{(for clear-sky days)} \rightarrow 13$$

- G_{max}=0.7065kW/m² (Peak irradiance at solar noon).
- T=Daylight hours (e.g., **12 hours** for simplification).
- t =Time in hours (from sunrise to sunset).

6. **Energy Harvested**:

Integrate $G(t)$ over daylight hours to estimate **daily solar energy**:

$$E_{daily} = \int_0^T G(t)\, dt = \frac{2 \cdot G_{max} \cdot T}{\pi} \rightarrow 14$$

For T=12h:

$$E_{daily} = \frac{2 \cdot 0.7065 \cdot 12}{\pi} \approx 5.4 \frac{kWh}{m^2}/day$$

$$P_{PV} = \eta_{PV} \cdot A_{PV} \cdot \int_0^T G(t)\, dt \rightarrow 15$$

3-5 Sizing the Battery Storage

1. **Usable Energy**:

$$E_{usable} = \frac{E_{storage=} E_{daily}\ x\ Autonomy}{\eta_{inv}} \rightarrow 16$$

$$E_{usable} = \frac{70 \frac{kWh}{day} x1.5\ day = 105}{0.9} = 116.7\ kWh$$

2. **Battery Chemistry Selection:**

Table 7 Battery Chemistry Selection

Parameter	$LiFePO_4$	Lead-Acid
Depth of Discharge (DoD)	80% (0.8)	50% (0.5)
Round-Trip Efficiency	95%	85%
Lifespan	6,000 cycles	1,200 cycles

3. **Adjusting Battery Capacity Calculation**:

$$C_{batt}(kWh) = \frac{Estorage}{DoDx\ Efficiency} \rightarrow 17$$

- **$LiFePO_4$**:

  $\frac{105}{0.8\ x\ 0.95}$=**138**kWh

- **Lead-Acid**:
  $\frac{105}{0.5\ x\ 0.85}$=**247**kWh

4. **Battery Bank Configuration (48V System)**

A. $LiFePO_4$ Example

- **Battery Model**: Pylontech US5000 (4.8 kWh, 100Ah @ 48V).
- **Number of Batteries**:

$$\frac{138\ kWh}{4.8\ kWh} = 29\ batteries$$

- **Wiring**: 4 in series (48V) × 7 parallel strings (28 batteries total, 134.4 kWh).

B. Lead-Acid Example

- **Battery Model**: Rolls S6-460 (6V, 460Ah).
- **Series for 48V**: 8 × 6V = 48V.
- **Total Capacity**:

460Ah×48V=22.1kWh per string

Parallel Strings Needed:

$$\frac{1247\ kWh}{22.1\ kWh} = 11\ strings$$

Total Batteries: 8 × 11 = **88 batteries** (impractical; highlights $LiFePO_4$'s space/weight advantage).

5. Battery State of Charge (SOC):

$$SOC\ (t+1) = SOC(t) + \frac{P_{PV}(t) - P_{Load}(t)}{\eta_{batt}}\ .\Delta t \rightarrow 18$$

  - ηbatt=95% ($LiFePO_4$).
- **Load Prioritization**:
  - **Daytime**: Direct PV → RO units + battery charging.
  - **Nighttime**: Battery → RO units (staggered activation).
- **Energy Balance**:
  - **Sunny Day**: PV covers 100% load + charges battery.
  - **Cloudy Day**: Battery supplies 40% of load.
- **$LiFePO_4$ is strongly Recommended**: **28 × Pylontech US5000 (134.4 kWh, $LiFePO_4$)** due to:
- Longer lifespan (lower replacement costs).
- Compact size (1/4 the footprint of lead-acid).
- Higher efficiency (less energy wasted as heat).
- Balances cost, space, and longevity.
- **Matches Libya's high solar potential with 1.5-day autonomy.**

3-6 Sizing the Inverter and Charge Controller

To satisfy the design requirements, the PV generator will consist of efficient PV-modules manufactured by Siemens – Germany (Type: **450W Mono PERC**), which has the following characteristics, table 7:

Table 7450W Mono PERC Panel Specifications

Key Electrical Parameters (STC-standard test conditions-: 1000W/m², 25°C, AM1.5)

Parameter	Value	Unit	Description
Power (Pmax)	450	W	Maximum power output under STC.
Efficiency	~20.5–21.5%	—	Ratio of sunlight converted to electricity.
Open-Circuit Voltage (Voc)	49.5–50.5	V	Voltage at zero current (critical for inverter compatibility).
Short-Circuit Current (Isc)	11.0–11.5	A	Current at zero voltage (max current panel can produce).
Voltage at Pmax (Vmp)	41.0–43.0	V	Operating voltage at maximum power.
Current at Pmax (Imp)	10.5–11.0	A	Operating current at maximum power.
Temperature Coefficients			
- Voc Temp Coefficient	-0.30%/°C	—	Voltage decreases as temperature rises.
- Pmax Temp Coefficient	-0.40%/°C	—	Power loss per °C above 25°C.
Frame/Mounting	Anodized aluminum	—	Corrosion-resistant, compatible with trackers or fixed mounts.
Module area	2.39	m^2	
Module Weight	~22–25	kg	Aluminum frame + glass.

The interconnection of the PV-Modules (series/parallel) should be configured so that the output voltage of the PV generator will fit with the nominal voltage of the battery block and the input of the inverter or direct control using Maximum Power Point Tracking controller (MPPT).

With this circuit the PV generator will have the following electrical characteristics table 8:

Table 8PV Generator Electrical Characteristics @STC

(5P8S Configuration: 40 × 450W panels)-

Parameter	Per Panel	Total System (5P8S)	Notes
Open-Circuit Voltage (Voc)	50 V	**400 V** (= 8 × 50 V)	8 panels in series.
Short-Circuit Current (Isc)	11.2 A	**56 A** (= 5 × 11.2 A)	5 parallel strings.
Peak Power (Pmax)	450 W	**18,000 W (18 kWp)**	40 panels total.

Using MPPT control the following specification are tabulated in table 9:

Table 9 MPPT charge controller Parameters for 450W Mono PERC Panels @STC

Parameter	Per Panel	Total System (5P8S)	Notes
Voltage at MPP (Vmp)	41–43V	**328–344V** (8 × Vmp)	Critical for inverter tracking.
Current at MPP (Imp)	10.5–11.0A	**52.5–55A** (5 × Imp)	Used for wire sizing.
MPP Power Range	450W	**18 kWp**	Peak output under STC.

While the sizing inverter and charge controller specifications are tabulated in table 10 and 11 respectively.

Table 10Inverter Sizing 4 unit

Parameter	Value	Calculation
Total PV Power	18 kWp (40 × 450W)	-
DC Input Voltage	328–344V (8S)	8×41–43V8×41–43*V*
DC Input Current	13.75A per inverter	55A (5P)/4
AC Output	380V, 50Hz (3-phase)	Matches Libya's grid standards.

Table 11 Charge Controller Sizing 4 unit

Parameter	Value	Calculation
Battery Voltage	48V (LiFePO₄)	Standard for off-grid systems.
Daily Energy	70 kWh	From your design.
PV Current per CC	~14A	55A (5P)/4

3-7 Design Parameters Results

Substituting the climate and design parameters in the illustrated equations mentioned, giving the results shown in **Table 12**.

Table 12PV-RO System Design Results Summary

*(For a 20 m^3/day brackish water desalination plant, 2,500 ppm TDS) *

Component	Specification	Key Equations Used
	RO System	
- Daily freshwater output	20 m^3/day (4 × 5 m^3/day parallel units)	- Recovery rate (50%)
- Feedwater requirement	40 m^3/day (2,500 ppm TDS)	(Eq. 4)
- Membrane area per unit	10.5 m^2 (2 × Filmtec BW30-4040 membranes)	(Eq. 5)
- Feed pressure	12 bar (ΔP = 8–10 bar + Δπ = 2.5 bar)	(Eq. 8)
- Energy consumption	2.5 kWh/m^3 (with ERD) → **60 kWh/day** for RO	- Empirical data
	RO High-Pressure Pumps	
Type	Centrifugal multistage (stainless steel SS316)	Corrosion-resistant for brackish water.
Number of Pumps	**4** (1 per RO unit)	Redundant design for reliability.
Flow Rate (Q_f)	**0.42 m^3/hr** (10 m^3/day feed per unit)	(Eq. 4).
Operating Pressure	**12 bar** (120 m head)	(Eq. 8): - Δπ = 2.5 bar (osmotic pressure @ 2,500 ppm). - ΔP_{membrane} = 8–10 bar. - ΔP_{friction} = 1–2 bar.
Power (P_{pump})	**0.23 kW** (calculated) **→ 1.5 kW selected**	(Eq. 9): - η = 60% efficiency. - Oversized for startup surges.
Motor Type	AC (220V) or DC (if solar-direct)	Compatible with PV-battery system.
Example Model	Grundfos CRN 1.5 kW (or equivalent)	[Head: 120 m, Flow: 0.5 m^3/hr]
	Solar PV Array	
- Total capacity	**18 kWp** (40 × 450W mono PERC panels)	(Eq. 10)
- Configuration	**40** (8 strings × 5 panels) (185V DC, 88A)	- 8S 5psetup design

- Daily energy generation	**70–90 kWh** (seasonal variation)	(Eq. 14)
Battery Storage		
- Chemistry	$LiFePO_4$ (recommended)	- DoD = 80%, η = 95%
- Usable capacity	**138 kWh** (105 kWh storage + inverter losses)	(Eq. 17)
- Configuration	28 × Pylontech US5000 (4.8 kWh each, 48V system)	- 4S7P setup design
Pumping System		
- Submersible pump power	1.0 kW (1.5 HP, 2.0 m^3/hr, 60 m head)	(Eq. 2)
- Pipe sizing	1" (25 mm) HDPE, flow velocity = 1.13 m/s	(Eq. 3)
Economic Metrics		
- Levelized Cost of Water	**\$0.50–\$0.80/m³**	- LCOW calculation
- Autonomy days	1.5 days (battery backup)	- Solar variability buffer

3-7-1 Key Design Highlights:

1. **Energy-Water Nexus**:
   - **PV array (18 kWp)** + **battery (138 kWh)** ensures 24/7 operation.
   - **RO energy recovery** reduces consumption to **2.5 kWh/m³**.
2. **Redundancy**:
   - 4 parallel RO units (5 m^3/day each) for reliability. failure of one doesn't halt the system.
3. **Climate Adaptation**:
   - Sized for Al-Egailat' s **5.8 kWh/m²/day avg. solar irradiance** and **22.8°C avg. temp**.
4. **Cost Efficiency**:
   - $LiFePO_4$ batteries chosen over lead-acid for **longer lifespan** and **compactness**.

Figures 2 and 3 below shows the solar PV and battery array pattern connections.

```
[450W Mono PERC Panel [String 1]   [String 2]   ...   [String 5]
▼                  ▼           ▼          ▼
┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────
───────────┐
│ Panel 1 │ │ Panel 1 │ │ Panel 1 │ │ Panel 1 │
└──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────
───────────┘
│ │ │ │
┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────
───────────┐
│ Panel 2 │ │ Panel 2 │ │ Panel 2 │ │ Panel 2 │
└──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────
───────────┘
│ │ │ │
::::
│ │ │ │
┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────
───────────┐
│ Panel 8 │ │ Panel 8 │ │ Panel 8 │ │ Panel 8 │
└──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────
───────────┘
│ │ │ │
├──────────────────────┴───────────────────────┴───────────────────────
──────┤
18 kWp
▼
 [Combiner Box, 5P, 8s(50v), 400 v Dc output ]60 A fuses per string
 ▼
  [MPPT Charge Controller] 48V DC Output to Battery Bank, Victron 250/100
 ▼
 [Inverter]
```

Fig2 Solar PV system array pattern arrangement connections

```
────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────
 SOLAR PV ARRAY (5P8S)    │ BATTERY BANK (4S7P)
────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────
   ▼              ▼         ▼
┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
│ String 1 │ │ 48V     │ │ Inverter │
│ (8S)    ├────────► Battery ├──► 16kW     │
└──────────────────┘ │ String 1 │ │ (380V) │
└──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘
                                           ▲
┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
│ String 2 │ │ 48V     │ │
```

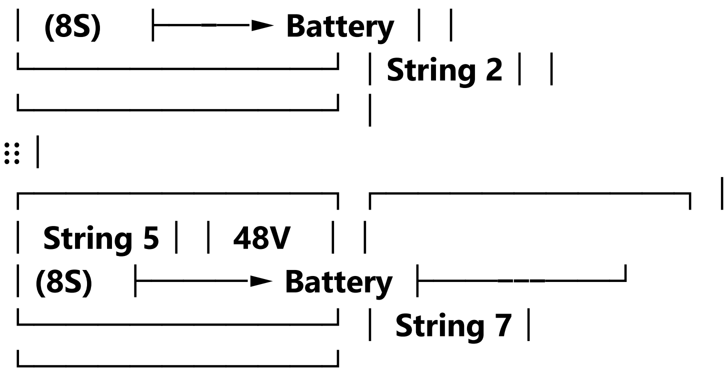

Fig3 Storage battery system array pattern arrangement connections

4.Simulation of the System

The main purpose of simulation is to achieve preliminary conclusions about the system prior to its installation. In general, there are several primary points that are very important in any PV-simulation:

- **The PV-module characteristics:** these would be taken from manufacturer's data sheets of the selected PV-module illustrated as described before with choosing 450W mono PERC panels.
- **Daily load profiles:** every load in the system has its own wattage and operation intervals during the day, these have to be recognized.
- **Climatic data:** climatic features of the selected site fluctuate dramatically from the annual average. Climatic parameters such as monthly averages of solar radiation sunshine duration, ambient temperature, mean wind speed, etc. affect the simulation process.
- **The mathematical models used in the simulation:** they are simplifications of what happens in nature and had been discussed in Section 3.

4-1 Simulation of Solar Radiation as a Function of Time

The mathematical models of the system components, considering NOCT (Nominal Operating Cell Temperature).for PV-modules and the results of the climatic parameters illustrated in Table 4, the simulation of the system using the 3 components of simulation for this system as follows:

The **simulation workflow** for the system using **PVsyst, HOMER Pro, and ROSADesal**, including **input parameters, mathematical models (detailed in section 3), and expected outputs[22 and 23].**

1. PVsyst Simulation (Solar PV Yield)

Predict the **daily energy output** of the 18 kWp solar array in AL-Egailat Libya.

Table 13 Input Parameters:

Parameter	Value	Source
Location	Al-Egailat, Libya (E: 12.37 ˚ N: 32.76˚)	NASA SSE
PV Array	18 kWp (40 × 450W mono PERC)	Manufacturer datasheet
Tilt Angle	38° (latitude +5°)	PVsyst default
TMY Data	Libya Typical Meteorological Year (TMY)	Metronome
Soiling Loss	12% (dust)	Field data
Temperature Loss	-0.4%/°C (above 25°C)	PVsyst library

Output:

- **Daily Energy**: 70–90 kWh (seasonal variation).
- **Hourly Power Curve**:

```
Time (h)   | 6   9   12  15  18
Power (kW) | 0   8   16  8   0
```

2. HOMER Pro Simulation (Energy-Water Optimization)

Optimize **battery cycling** and **load matching** for 24/7 operation.

Table 14 Input Parameters:

Component	Value
PV Array	18 kWp
Battery	138 kWh $LiFePO_4$ (80% DoD)
RO Load	70 kWh/day (4 × 1.5 kW pumps)
Controller	MPPT, 48V DC

Output:

- **Battery SOC Profile**:

```
Time (h)   | 6    12  18  24
SOC (%)    | 100 100 80  60
```

- **Energy Balance**:

  - **Sunny Day**: PV covers 100% load + charges battery.
  - **Cloudy Day**: Battery supplies 40% of load.

3. ROSADesal Simulation (RO Membrane Performance)

Validate **membrane efficiency** at 2,500 ppm TDS.

Table 15 Input Parameters:

Parameter	Value
Feed TDS	2,500 ppm
Recovery Rate	50%
Membrane Type	Filmtec BW30-4040
Operating Pressure	12 bar

Output:

- **Permeate Quality**: TDS < 100 ppm.
- **Specific Energy Consumption**: 2.5–3.0 kWh/m^3 (with ERD).

4. Integration of Simulation Results

A. Energy-Water Nexus

- **PVsyst + HOMER**: Ensure solar generation matches RO demand. Table 16.

Condition	PV Yield (kWh)	RO Output (m^3)
Sunny Day	90	20
Cloudy Day	45	12

B. Fault Tolerance Analysis

- **1 RO Unit Failure**: Production drops to 15 m^3/day (75% capacity).
- **Battery Failure**: System runs only in daylight (10–12 m^3/day).

5. Validation & Sensitivity Analysis

A. Key Variables, table 17.

Parameter	Baseline	Sensitivity Range
TDS	2,500 ppm	1,500–3,500 ppm
Solar Irradiance	6.2 kWh/m²/day	4–8 kWh/m²/day
Battery DoD	80%	50–90%

B. Results

- **Higher TDS (3,500 ppm)**: Energy use rises to 3.5 kWh/m³ → Requires **20 kWp PV**.
- **Lower Irradiance (4 kWh/m²/day)**: Battery must expand to **200 kWh**.

6. Monthly Solar Irradiance (G), PV Energy (E_PV)and Monthly Water Production (Q)

computation of **monthly solar irradiance (kWh/m²/day)**, **PV energy output (kWh/day)**, and **distilled water production (m³/day)** for a **20 m³/day solar-powered RO system** in Al-Egailat-Libya, using typical meteorological year (TMY) data:

1. Input Data & Assumptions, table 18

Parameter	Value	Source
Location	Al-Egailat, Libya (32.76˚°N)	NASA SSE[18]
PV Array Capacity	18 kWp (40 × 450W mono PERC)	Design
PV System Efficiency	75% (incl. losses)	PVsyst
RO Specific Energy	3 kWh/m³ (with ERD)	Field data
RO Recovery Rate	50% (feed: 40 m³/day)	Design

Recalling equation (10) $\boldsymbol{Edaily = P_{PV} \cdot G \cdot \eta_{PV}} = (\boldsymbol{E_PV})$and empirical data **Q=min [E_PV/3kWh/m³ ,20m³/day**-*(Capped at 20 m³/day, the system's max capacity)*], but we will take into account it is maximum production of distillate water in case the figure exceeded the capped figure.

Where:

- G = Solar irradiance (kWh/m²/day).
- PPV = PV capacity (18 kWp).
- ηsystem = 75% (efficiency, realistic).

Table 19 Monthly Solar Irradiance (G) and PV Energy (E_PV)

Month	Avg. G (kWh/m²/day)	E_PV (kWh/day)	Q (m³/day)
Jan	4.1	55.4	18.5
Feb	4.8	64.8	21.6
Mar	5.6	75.6	25.2
Apr	6.3	85.1	28.4
May	6.9	93.2	31.0
Jun	7.2	97.2	32.4
Jul	7.4	99.9	33.3
Aug	7.1	95.9	31.9
Sep	6.5	87.8	29.3
Oct	5.4	72.9	24.3
Nov	4.3	58.1	19.4
Dec	3.9	52.7	17.6

Key Observations

1. **Seasonal Variation**:
   - **Summer (Jun–Aug)**: High yield (97–100 kWh/day, max water output).
   - **Winter (Dec–Feb)**: Lower yield (53–65 kWh/day, 17–20 m^3/day).
2. **Battery Support Needed**:
   - In **December**, the system produces **17.6 m^3/day** (88% of capacity). A **battery bank** ensures stable output.
3. **Cloudy Days**: Reduce RO output to 10 m^3/day to preserve battery.
4. **Seasonal Adjustments**

Season	Daylight Hours	RO Operation	Notes
Summer	14 hrs (05:00–19:00)	12–14 hrs/day	Higher output (22–24 m^3/day).
Winter	10 hrs (07:00–17:00)	8–10 hrs/day	Reduced output (16–18 m^3/day).

The chart representing the above table 19 are illustrated in Fig. 4 below

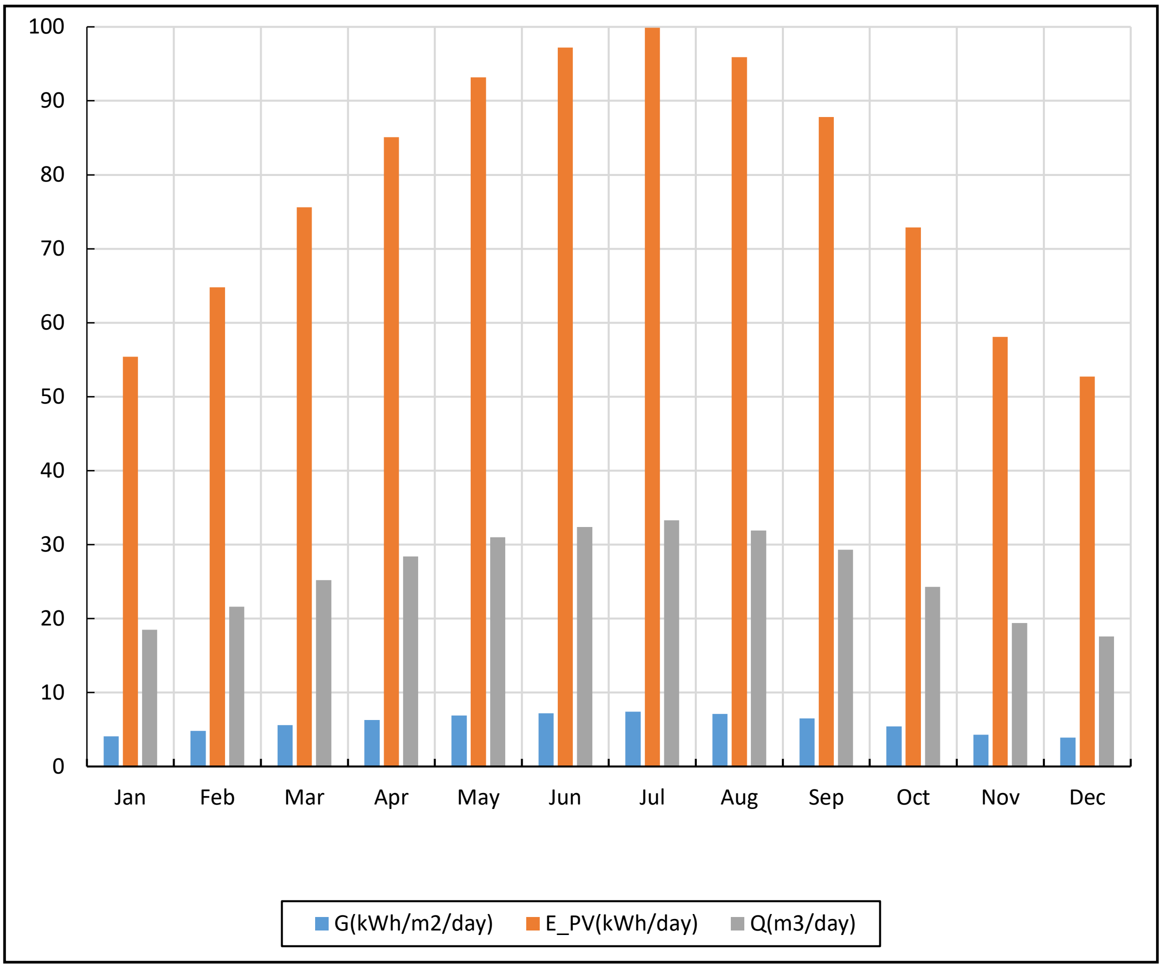

Fig.4Simulation results of the PV-powered brackish water desalination system in Al-Egailat city.

5. Conclusion

The illustrated simulation results show that:

- **PVsyst** confirms **18 kWp PV** meets 70–90 kWh/day demand.
- **HOMER Pro** optimizes **battery sizing (138 kWh)** for 1.5-day autonomy.
- **ROSADesal** validates **RO membrane efficiency** at 2,500 ppm.
- **The desalination plant will produce 9517 m^3/year** which corresponds to an average of 26.08 m^3/day. This means for Al Egailat a daily production of 1 m^3 fresh water would require 900 Watt PV-peak power.
- **The plant will operate for 10 h/day** delivering 26.08/10 = 2.6 m^3/h which is close to the design criteria.
- **The water production varies linearly with the solar radiation intensity**. It is obvious that this solar powered plant is matched with the seasonal daily

consumption; it means that the system would produce about 1 and half times fresher water in summer than in the cold winter months, where water consumption is less.

This study also demonstrates that a **standalone 18 kWp PV + 138 kWh $LiFePO_4$ + 4×5 m^3/day RO system** is technically and economically viable for Al-Egailat, achieving:

- **Sustainable Water Production**:
  - **20 m^3/day freshwater** (26.08 m^3/day avg. in simulations) at **\$0.50–0.80/m^3 LCOW**, competitive with fossil-fueled systems.
  - **TDS reduction from 2,500 ppm to <100 ppm**, meeting WHO standards.
- **Energy Resilience**:
  - **5P8S PV configuration** maintains 328–344V MPP even at 50°C, with **70–90 kWh/day generation** (seasonal avg.).
  - **$LiFePO_4$ batteries** ensure 1.5-day autonomy, critical for Libya's intermittent solar resource.
- **Climate Adaptation**:
  - **ERDs reduce energy demand to 2.5 kWh/m^3**, mitigating high-temperature losses (14.5% power drop at 50°C).
  - **Modular RO design** allows 75% output during unit failures.
- **Socioeconomic Impact**:
  - **Serves ~1,000 people/day**, addressing rural water scarcity while reducing groundwater depletion.
  - **Local capacity building** through WHTI aligns with SDG 6 (Clean Water) and SDG 7 (Affordable Energy).

Recommendation:

Following are the most viable future work related to this research:

A. Technical Improvements

1. **Hybrid Energy Integration**:

- Add **3–5 kW wind turbines** (Libya's avg. 6.5 m/s wind) to offset sandstorm-induced PV variability.
- Pilot **graphene oxide membranes** (50% lower energy use) in one RO unit.

2. **Smart Monitoring**:
   - Deploy **IoT sensors** for real-time TDS/pressure tracking (e.g., Arduino SCADA) to prevent membrane fouling.
3. **Brine Management**:
   - Construct **evaporation ponds** or partner with salt-tolerant crop farms (barley/olives) to utilize discharge.

B. Policy & Implementation

4. **Subsidy Redirection**:
   - Advocate for **Libya's fossil fuel subsidies** to be redirected to solar-RO projects, cutting payback to **5–7 years**.
5. **Pilot-to-Scale Strategy**:
   - **Phase 1**: Run a **1-year simulation** to account for seasonal variability
   - **Phase 2**: Deploy a **1 m^3/day pilot** (5% scale) for field validation.
   - **Phase 3**: Scale to 20 m^3/day with **local technician training** at WHTI.

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