



Version 8

Pumping Systems My first project



PVsyst SA
www.pvsyst.com

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1 Basic Approach - My First Project

1.1 First Contact with PVsyst

The "Pumping Systems" in PVsyst refer exclusively to standalone pumping systems that operate based on the availability of sunlight, without using electrical storage or being connected to the grid. These systems typically consist of:

- **One or more pumps,**
- **A photovoltaic array,**
- **A controller or power conditioning unit,** sometimes accompanied by a small backup battery (very rarely).

To successfully implement such systems, it is essential to precisely define:

- **The hydraulic circuit** (whether it is a well, a borehole, pumping from a lake, or a pressurization system),
- **The water requirements,**
- **The total head,** depending on the flow rate and other potential parameters,
- **A storage tank.**

Other constraints may also need to be considered, such as the maximum drawdown in a deep well or managing a full reservoir.

System Operation: The system works by adjusting the power of the pump according to the power available from the photovoltaic generator at any given time. The total head (or fall) is determined by external conditions, such as the difference in level, the head loss in the pipes, or the drawdown in a deep well. Therefore, the water flow rate will be directly linked to the instantaneous power provided by the PV generator.

Modeling in the Simulation: The simulation requires a complete model of the pump to determine the flow rate based on power and head conditions. Since the total head varies with the flow rate (mainly due to head losses in the pipes or drawdown), the operating point is evaluated through successive approximations.

Advantages of Standalone Systems: One of the main advantages of these systems is the absence of a battery, which reduces maintenance costs related to battery replacement. Storage is achieved by accumulating water in a tank, avoiding the use of batteries. However, this requires a pump capable of operating over a wide range of power levels.

1.2 Pumping Tests

Before Drilling a Well, Key Questions to Ask:

It is essential to ask a few key questions, such as: "What quantity of water can I pump in the short and medium term, and what will be its quality?"

To answer these questions, a pumping test must be conducted.

What is a Pumping Test?

The principle is simple: water is extracted from a well or borehole, which causes the water level to drop. During this process, the water level and flow rate are measured over a given period, while other parameters are also observed. The analysis of variations in the water level allows us to determine the performance of the well and the hydraulic properties of the aquifer.

There are different types of tests, whether intermittent or continuous, short-term or long-term, with low or high flow rates.

One major challenge of studying groundwater is that the aquifer cannot be directly seen. Information about the well and the aquifer can only be inferred by observing how the water level responds to pumping.

Objectives of Pumping Tests

Pumping tests are used for various purposes, including:

- **Assessing the long-term performance of a well:** This helps determine whether the well is effective and how many people it can serve.
- **Evaluating the hydraulic performance of the well:** Characteristics such as flow rate and drawdown are analyzed to better understand its operation.
- **Determining the hydraulic properties of the aquifer:** Pumping tests are the primary method to assess the transmissivity and storage coefficient of the aquifer, or to detect potential hydraulic boundaries.
- **Testing the equipment:** Ensuring that the pumping and observation equipment is functioning properly to ensure safe and efficient operation.
- **Analyzing the effects on neighboring wells:** The test helps evaluate the impacts of pumping on other wells, particularly possible interferences.
- **Assessing the impact of extraction on the environment.**
- **Obtaining information on water quality.**
- **Anticipating potential issues,** such as the pumping of saline or polluted water after extended periods.
- **Determine optimal operating conditions:** Choose the most suitable pumping station for long-term use, and estimate potential pumping or treatment costs.
- **Decide on the ideal depth to install the pump in the well.**

Different Types of Tests

- **Step Drawdown Test:** This test aims to establish the short-term relationship between flow rate and drawdown of the well. It involves pumping in successive stages, gradually increasing the flow rate at each step, until the estimated maximum yield of the well is reached.
- **Constant Rate Test:** This test involves pumping at a constant flow rate for a longer period compared to a step test. Its main objective is to provide data on the hydraulic properties of the aquifer. Information on the storage coefficient can only be obtained if appropriate wells are used for observations.
- **Recovery Test:** After pumping is stopped, this test measures the recovery of water levels. It is often performed after a constant rate or step drawdown test and serves to validate the characteristics of the observed aquifer. However, it is only valid if a check valve is installed to prevent water from flowing back into the well.

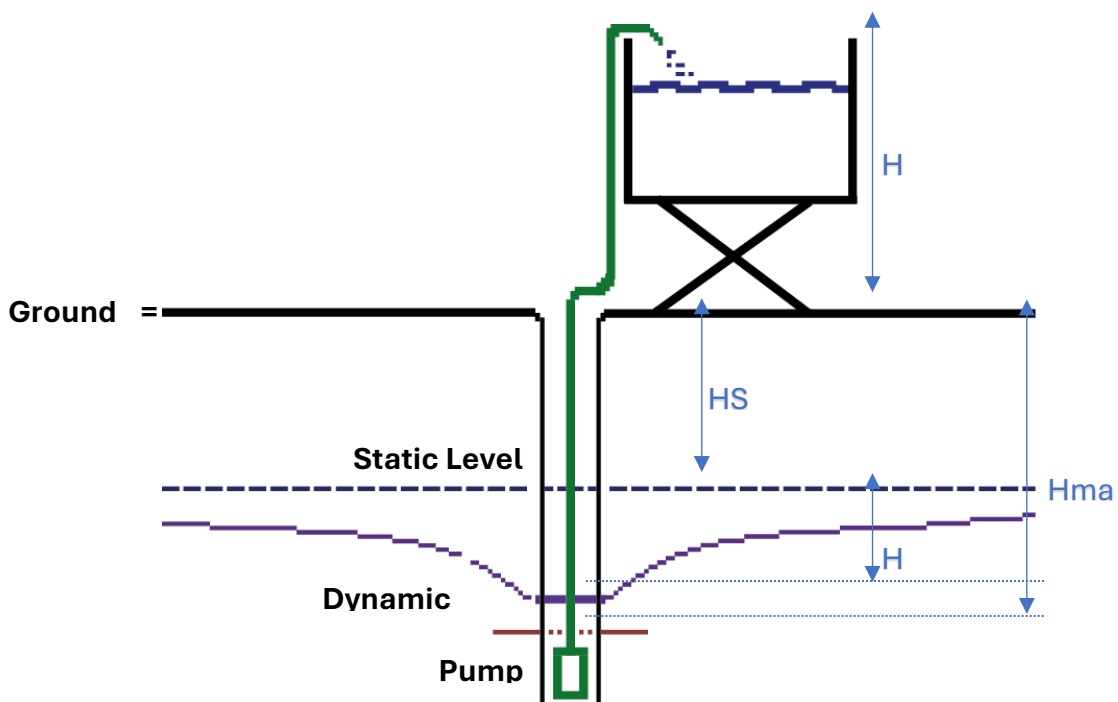
These tests can be performed individually or in combination. In general, a complete series starts with a step drawdown test to define the flow rate for the constant rate test and ends with a recovery test. The process can be adapted based on the size of the wells, with variations in pumping rates, test duration, and the complexity of the observation systems.

In PVsyst, the reference is taken at ground level, as shown in the figure (cf. fig):

$$HT = HG + HS + HD + HF$$

where:

- **HG** = Height of the water column between the ground and the filling level of the reservoir.
- **HS** = Static head due to the depth of the water level in the well, in the absence of any pumping.
- **HD** = Dynamic drawdown head: in a borehole, the effective water level is dynamically lowered by the extraction of water flow (see below). It depends on the flow rate at each moment.
- **HF** = Friction losses in the piping system, which depend on the flow rate.



1.3 Pumping Systems from a Lake or River

Pumping systems from a lake or river operate similarly to those from boreholes or wells, but with certain technical simplifications:

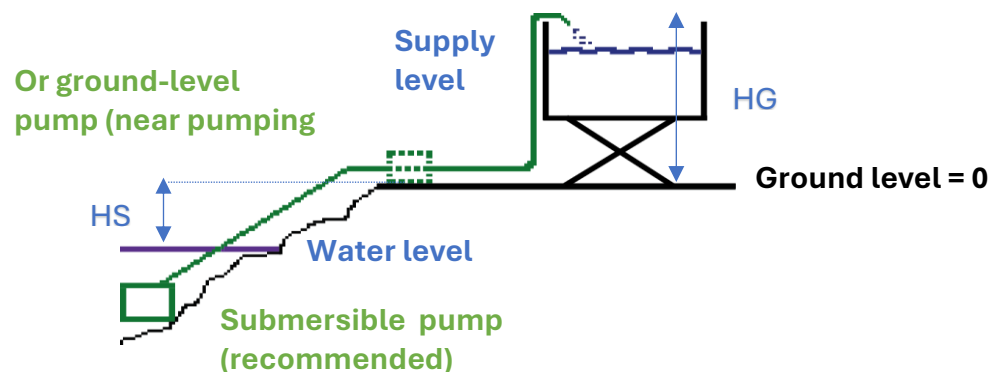
- The pump can be installed close to the source, at a maximum distance of 5 meters above the water surface. This distance should be further reduced at higher altitudes to avoid cavitation issues.
- There is no need to use a submersible pump, which makes the system less expensive and easier to maintain.
- It is important to note that the pressure or total head primarily depends on the difference between the inlet and outlet water levels. The pump must be able to provide a total head that results from several combined factors.

In PVsyst, we take the reference at ground level, as shown in the figure (cf. fig):

$$HT = HG + HS + HF$$

where:

- **HG** = Total head due to the height of the outlet pipe above the ground (assuming that the outlet pressure is negligible).
- **HS** = Static head due to the depth of the water level, relative to the ground.
- **HF** = Friction losses in the piping system, which depend on the flow rate.



For this system, in the "Pumping Hydraulic Definitions" dialog box, you will be asked to specify:

- **The level of the lake or river**, relative to ground level. It can also be given in seasonal or monthly values, in the "Water Needs" dialog box.

- **The depth of the pump.** It must be strictly less than 5 meters above the depth of the source, but it can also be submerged.

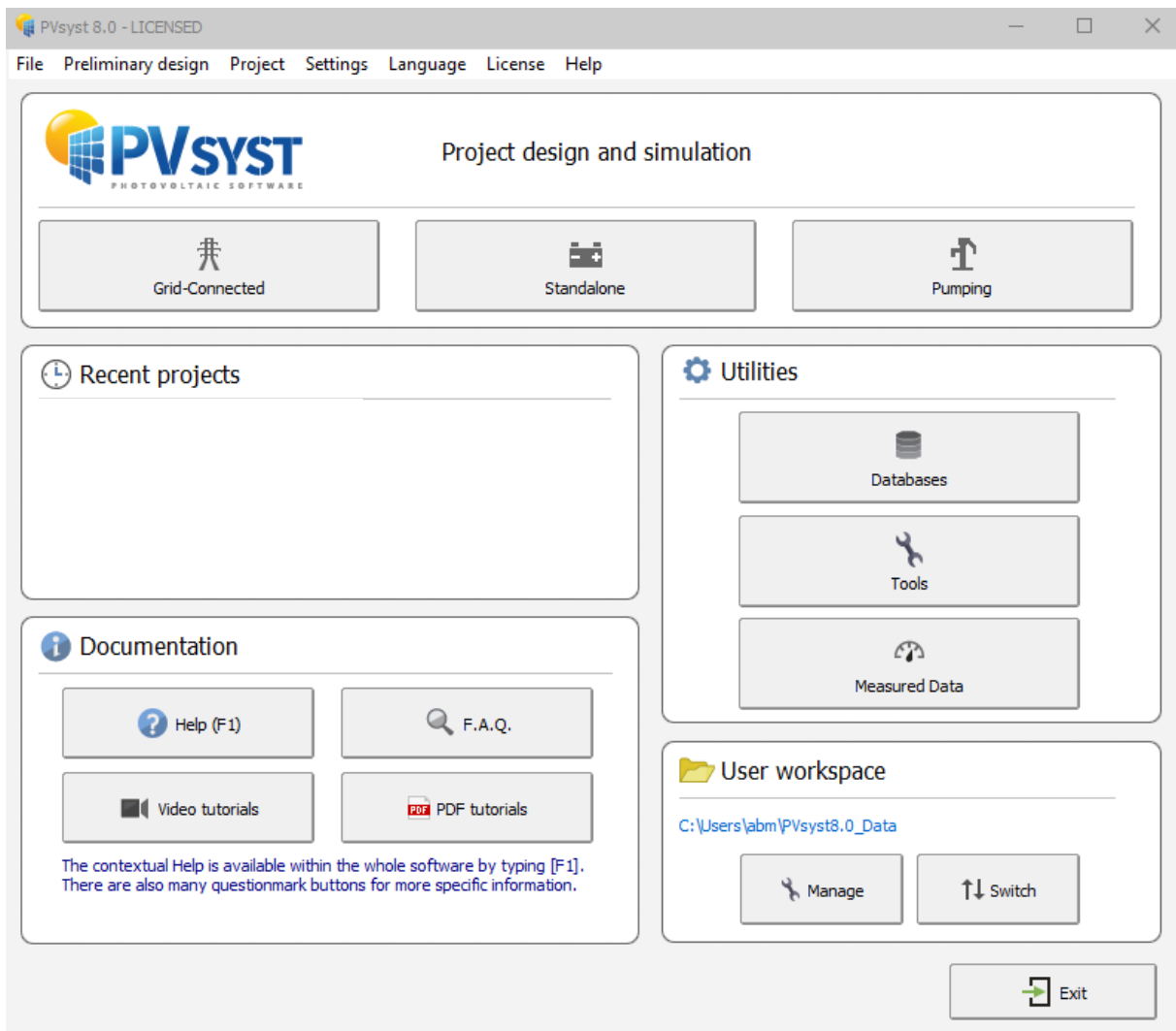
Conventional Pumping Systems

Conventional pumping systems, powered by an electrical grid (or potentially by a larger standalone system, such as a village mini-grid), operate at the specified grid voltage. The operating power is fixed and assumed to be available at all times. The system operates in an "ON/OFF" mode, based on water needs and the control system. Intelligent energy management can encourage pumping during sunny hours when solar energy is available.

However, these conventional pumping systems are not explicitly implemented in PVsyst. They are treated as a load, just like any other electrical consumption.

Therefore, a pumping system defined in PVsyst cannot be integrated into another PV system, even if it is standalone. It must remain independent from any other electrical system.

2 Procedure for Developing a Pumping System



1. Orientation

Configure the orientation of the sensor array.

2. Pumping Circuit

Choose from the following three systems:

- Pumping from a well/borehole to a storage tank.
- Pumping from a lake or river to a storage tank.

3. Water Needs

Specify the water needs (in m³/day), with the option to define them annually, seasonally, or monthly. Also, specify the static pumping depth if it varies throughout the year.

4. Pre-Dimensioning

Go to the "System" page to access the "Pre-Dimensioning Suggestions," which estimate

parameters like reservoir volume, pump power, and PV generator power. Adjust these suggestions to better refine the simulation.

5.Pump

Choose a pump model on the "Pump Definition" page. Suitable pumps are marked in green, less optimal ones in orange, and unsuitable ones in red. You can also evaluate the selected pump's capabilities.

6.PV Module

Select a PV module and configure the subfield accordingly. The modules are also color-coded (green, orange, red) to indicate their suitability for the system.

7.Regulation Strategy

Define the regulation mode. The green, orange, and red colors indicate the most suitable or unsuitable choices based on the system type and selected pump model.

8.Control

Set up the control device, adjusting the operating limits, such as a full reservoir, dry running, or power and voltage limits.

9.PV Field Design

Adjust the number of modules in series and parallel according to the pump's power requirement, considering the constraints related to the MPPT controllers.

10.Launch Simulation

If no errors appear in red, launch the first simulation of the system.

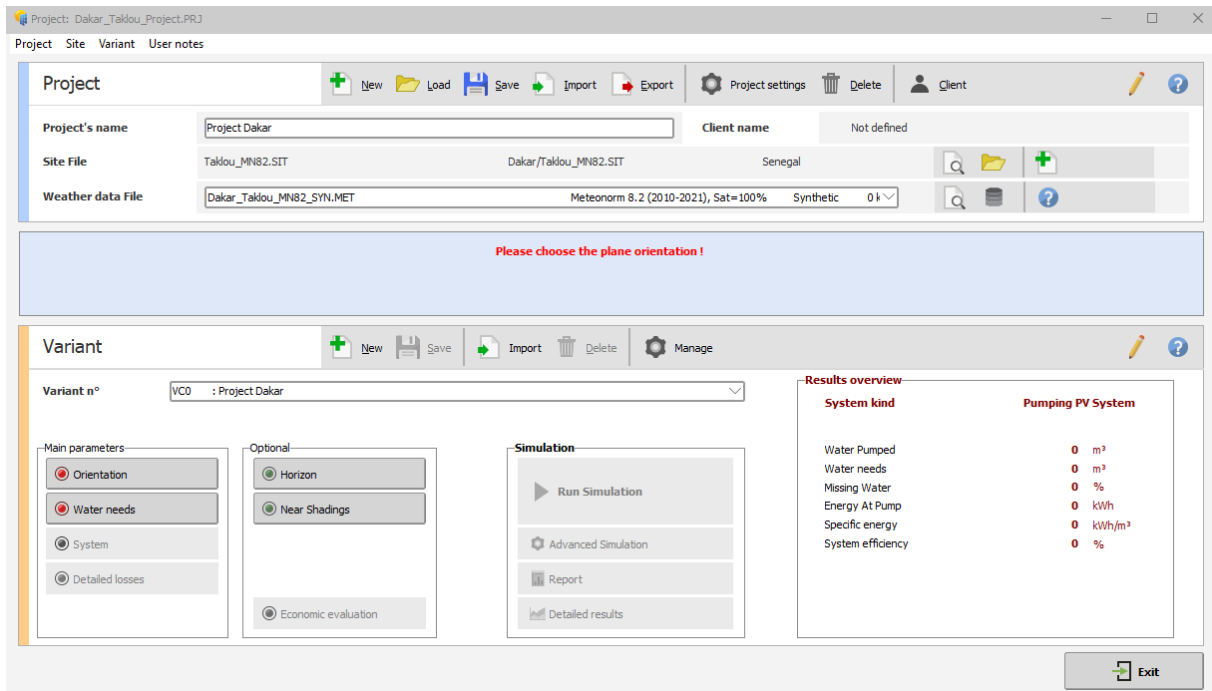
2.1 Creating the First Variant for Your Project

After defining the project site and meteorological data, you can proceed to create the first variant. At the beginning, on the left side of the interface, two buttons labeled "Orientation" and "Water Needs" appear in red. The red color indicates that this project variant is not yet ready for simulation and that additional information is required.

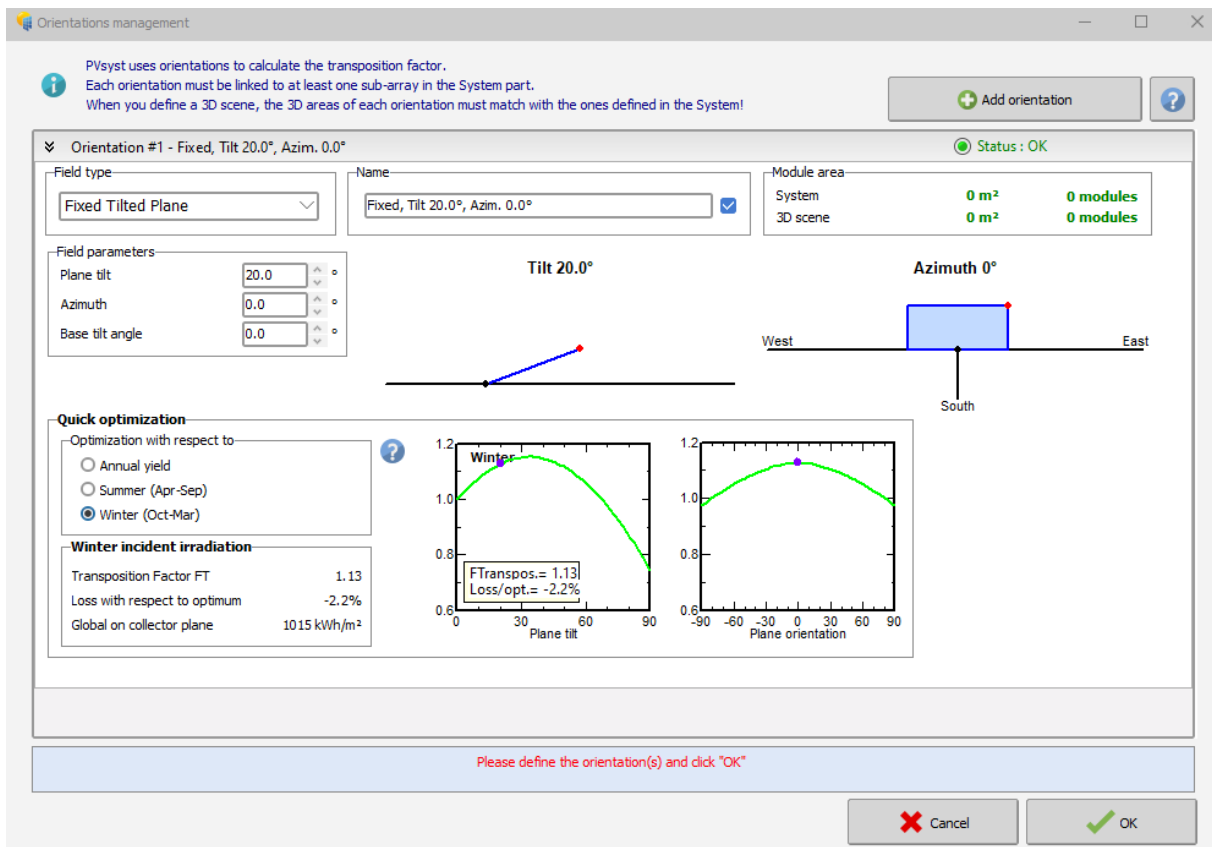
The basic parameters to be defined for all variants are:

- The orientation of the solar panels,
- The water needs,
- The type and number of PV modules,
- The type and number of pumps used.

These steps are essential for ensuring that the project is complete and ready for proper simulation.



Define the Orientation



This tool allows you to determine the most suitable orientation for a photovoltaic system. The transposition factor is defined as the ratio between the irradiation incident on the

inclined plane and the horizontal irradiation. In other words, it measures what you gain or lose by tilting the collector plane.

In **version 8 of PVsyst**, a new feature allows for defining **multiple orientations** within a single project. This provides greater flexibility to model complex systems with different tilt angles and photovoltaic field orientations. This option optimizes energy production for surfaces with varied inclinations.

The tool also allows you to select the optimization period: year, winter, or summer. Additionally, the optimization may depend on specific conditions related to distant obstacles such as mountains, which create distant shading. In such cases, you can define a horizon line, which will generally adjust the azimuth to maximize energy production.

2.2 Water Needs Definition

To complete the information related to your water needs, it is necessary to click on the "Water Needs" tab.

Project

Project's name: Project Dakar | Client name: Not defined

Site File: Takkou_MN82.SIT | Dakar/Takkou_MN82.SIT | Senegal

Weather data File: Dakar_Takkou_MN82_SYN.MET | Meteonorm 8.2 (2010-2021), Sat=100% | Synthetic | 0 k

**Error in User needs, Hydraulic circuit definitions:
Please define the nominal static level.**

Variant

Variant n°: VCO : Project Dakar

Main parameters

- Orientation *
- Water needs
- System
- Detailed losses

Optional

- Horizon
- Near Shadings
- Economic evaluation

Simulation

- Run Simulation
- Advanced Simulation
- Report
- Detailed results

Results overview

System kind: Pumping PV System

Water Pumped	0 m ³
Water needs	0 m ³
Missing Water	0 %
Energy At Pump	0 kWh
Specific energy	0 kWh/m ³
System efficiency	0 %

Exit

Once you have opened the "Water Needs" menu, you will need to define the following elements:

Type of Pumping System:

- Well/borehole to storage tank,
- Lake or river to storage tank,
- Pressurization system.

Characteristics of the Well/Borehole:

- **Static level,**
- **Drawdown or maximum flow rate** (only one of these two values is required, the other will be calculated automatically by the software using the following formula):

$$\text{Drawdown} = \frac{\text{Lower Dynamic Level} - \text{Static Level}}{\text{Max Flow Rate}}$$

- **Minimum dynamic level** (calculated by the software; if you modify this value, it will automatically adjust the drawdown or maximum flow rate. The minimum dynamic level must always be higher than the static level),
- **Pump level,**
- **Borehole diameter** (not used in calculations or simulations).

Reservoir:

- **Volume,**
- **Diameter,**
- **Maximum height (full):** This value is measured from the bottom of the tank and not from natural ground level,
- **Injection altitude** (particularly important if the reservoir is elevated, as it influences the pressure for distribution).

Hydraulic Circuit:

- **Type of piping,**
- **Piping length,**
- **Number of bends** (can be set to "0" for the simulation),
- **Other friction losses** (can also be set to "0" for the simulation).

Water Needs (next window).

In PVsyst, levels and distances are always indicated relative to natural ground level (TG)

Water Needs and Hydraulic Head / Pressure, Variant: "Project Dakar"

Comment:

Pumping Hydraulic Circuit:

Pumping System Type: Deep Well to Storage

Well characteristics

Static level: m

Specific drawdown: m/m³/h

Max. flowrate: m³/h

Lower dynamic level: m

Pump level: m

Borehole diameter: cm

Storage tank

Volume: m³

Diameter: m

Water full height: m

Feeding altitude: m

Bottom alimentation

Hydraulic circuit

Pipe choice:

Piping length: m

Number of elbows:

Other friction losses:

Model File

Now, you need to define the water needs. To do this, click on the "Water Needs and Pressure" tab.

The screenshot shows a software window titled "Water Needs and Hydraulic Head / Pressure, Variant: 'Project Dakar'". At the top, there is a "Comment" field containing "New User's needs". Below this, there are two tabs: "Pumping Hydraulic Circuit" and "Water needs and Head definitions", with the latter being active.

The main interface is divided into several sections:

- Water needs:** Contains three radio buttons: "Yearly Average" (selected), "Seasonal values", and "Monthly values". A blue question mark icon is present. To the right, a box labeled "Whole Year needs:" contains a text input field with "15.0" and the unit "m³/day".
- Well static depth variations:** Contains three radio buttons: "Yearly constant" (selected), "Seasonal values", and "Monthly values". A blue question mark icon is present. To the right, a box labeled "Whole Year:" contains a text input field with "15.0" and the unit "meterW".
- Additional heads:** A table listing various head components:

Additional heads	Feeding altitude	2 m
Dynamic heads	Pipes	0.2 meterW
(at flowrate = 3.0 m³/h)	Drawdown	2.6 meterW
- Hydraulic units:** Two dropdown menus: "Flowrate" set to "m³/h" and "Pressure" set to "meterW".
- Yearly summary:** A box containing a summary of values:

Water needs average	15.0 m³/day
Yearly water needs	5475 m³
Yearly Head average	17.0 meterW
Hydraulic Energy	254 kWh
PV needs (very roughly)	857 kWh

At the bottom, there is a "Model File" section with "Load" and "Save" buttons. On the far right, there are "Cancel" and "OK" buttons.

Water Needs (volume of pumped water) can be defined annually (as a constant value) or based on monthly or seasonal values. It is not relevant to specify needs in hourly terms

(daily distribution), as the pumping system usually includes sufficient storage for at least one day's consumption.

Note: The pre-dimensioning cannot account for these variations and will be based on the annual average.

The static level in the borehole can be specified in different ways:

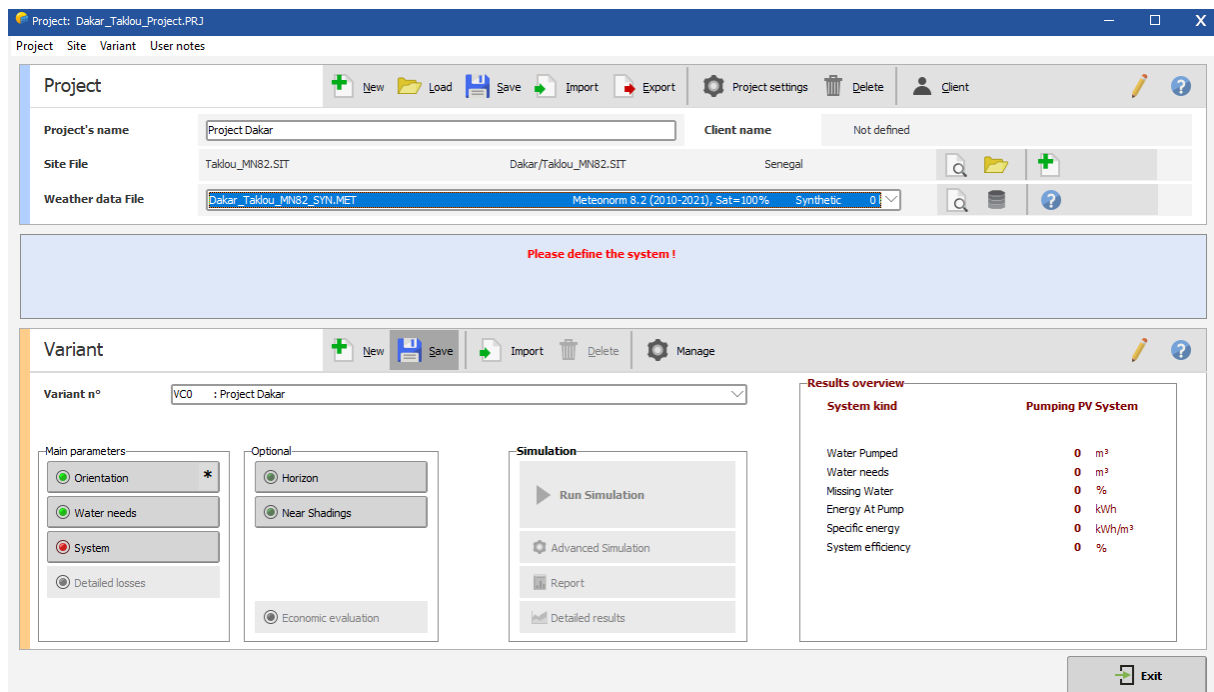
- **Constant throughout the year,**
- **Seasonal values,**
- **Monthly values.**

Any adjustment of this value in the window will influence the calculation of the drawdown and the dynamic level.

3 System Definition

You can now click on the "System" tab to define the following elements:

- **The pump:** select the technology, brand, and model.
- **The photovoltaic array:** choose the technology, brand, and model.
- **The pumping control system:** select the technology, brand, and model.



3.1 The pump

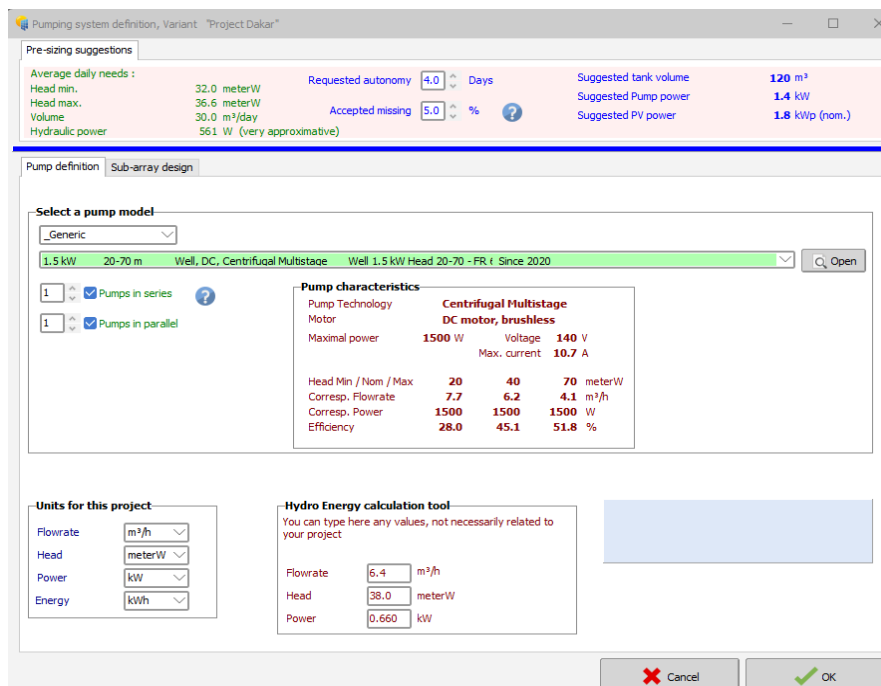
In this first window, you will need to select the model and the number of pumps for your circuit. Several pump manufacturers are already listed, providing you with a choice among:

- **Surface pumps,**
- **Submersible pumps,**
- **AC pumps,**
- **DC pumps,**
- **Etc.**

The pre-dimensioning tool provides recommendations based on your choices. However, its results are not automatically integrated into the definition of your system. You have the option to modify them without interfering with your system configuration. It calculates three key pieces of information:

1. **Recommended reservoir volume,** based on the expected consumption and desired autonomy,
2. **Recommended pump power,**
3. **Recommended PV power.**

You can adjust the autonomy and the "Accepted Shortfall" value according to the needs of your simulation. Any changes to these parameters will automatically recalculate the three values suggested by the software.



Selection of a Pump Model

To select the pump that best suits the characteristics of your system, the software performs a pre-selection based on the following criteria:

- **Total head (HMT), minimum and maximum,**
- **Flow rate,**
- **Power.**

As with other elements of the system, a green/orange/red color code is used to indicate whether the pump is optimal (green), compatible (orange), or incompatible (red) with your configuration.

Pumps in Parallel and Series

Whether for the electrical or hydraulic part, it is recommended to connect all pumps in parallel. Currently, PVsyst only supports series connections for centrifugal pumps with DC motors, as other configurations are not suitable. Here is why:

- **From an electrical perspective:**
Connecting two positive displacement pumps in series creates startup problems. After the first pump starts, once the peak startup current is exceeded, the current drops abruptly to its operating value. This total current may then be too low for the second pump to reach its own startup threshold, preventing it from functioning properly.
- **From a hydraulic perspective:**
It is not recommended to connect two pumps in cascade to increase the head at a constant flow rate. Non-linearities in pump behavior, as well as potential differences in electrical supply, can cause significant imbalances in head, particularly for positive displacement pumps.

Therefore, it is better to choose a pump that directly supports the required nominal pressure, rather than combining multiple pumps in an attempt to achieve this pressure.

3.2 The Photovoltaic Array

With this tool, you have the option to define either an area or a maximum power to be installed. Once one of these values is entered, the software suggests a wiring configuration using the photovoltaic design tool.

The screenshot shows the 'Pumping system definition, Variant "Project Dakar"' window. It is divided into several sections:

- Pre-sizing suggestions:**
 - Average daily needs: Head min. 32.0 meterW, Head max. 36.6 meterW, Volume 30.0 m³/day, Hydraulic power 561 W (very approximative).
 - Requested autonomy: 4.0 Days
 - Accepted missing: 5.0 %
 - Suggested tank volume: 120 m³
 - Suggested Pump power: 1.4 kW
 - Suggested PV power: 1.8 kWp (nom.)
- Pump definition / Sub-array design:**
 - System information:** Chosen pump: Well 1.5 kW Head 20-70 - FR 6 m3_h; Technology: Centrifugal Multistage; Max. power: 1500 W; Head: 20.0 - 70.0 meterW; Flowrate: 7.70 - 4.07 m³/h.
 - Pre-sizing Help:** Radio buttons for 'No sizing' and 'Planned power' (selected, 1.8 kWp) or 'or available area' (0 m²). A 'Resize' button is present.
- Select the PV module:**
 - Available Now: dropdown menu.
 - Generic: dropdown menu.
 - Selected: 400 Wp 32V Si-mono Mono 400 Wp 72 cells Since 2020. Open button.
 - Approx. needed modules: 4
 - Sizing voltages: Vmpp (60°C) 33.0 V, Voc (-10°C) 52.0 V.
- Select the control mode and the controller:**
 - Universal controller: checked.
 - control mode: MPPT-DC converter.
 - All manufacturers: dropdown menu.
 - Options: 1000 W, MPPT-DC converter, Universal MPPT - DC Converter, Generic device, Adaptabl. Open button.
 - Note: The operating parameters of the generic default controller will automatically be adjusted according to the properties of the system.
- PV Array design:**
 - Number of modules and strings:** Mod. in series: 3 (should be: only possibility 3), 2 (between 1 and 2). nb. modules: 6, Area: 13 m².
 - Operating conditions:** Vmpp (60°C) 99 V, Vmpp (20°C) 117 V, Voc (-10°C) 156 V.
 - Plane irradiance:** 1000 kWh/m².
 - Electrical parameters:** Impp 21.0 A, Isc 22.2 A, Isc (at STC) 22.2 A.
 - Power:** Max. operating power (at 1000 W/m² and 50°C) 2.2 kW, Array nom. Power (STC) 2.4 kWp.

Buttons for 'Cancel' and 'OK' are at the bottom right.

3.3 System Configurations and Possible Coupling Strategies

Direct Coupling

Between the PV generator and the pump(s), no power conversion is used. This type of configuration is only possible with pumps powered by a DC motor. Despite its simplicity, this solution requires very precise electrical optimization and does not guarantee optimal efficiency under all operating conditions.

The direct coupling mode can be optimized using several specific regulation modes, although they are rarely used:

- **Booster:** An electronic device that helps overcome the high starting current, which is particularly important due to friction losses.
- **Cascade for multiple pumps:** A cascade operation mode when multiple pumps are used.
- **PV field reconfiguration:** A fairly simple, although uncommon, method that uses a control device with relays to modify the configuration of the panels.
- **Buffer battery systems:** These systems use a battery to regulate the operation of the pump over a certain period. The battery works as in a standard standalone system, allowing the pump to always operate under optimal conditions at the battery's nominal voltage.

PowerConditioning

This refers to a device that adapts the voltage/current characteristics of the PV generator to meet the specific requirements of the pumps. This type of conditioning is essential, particularly for AC pumps, which require the use of an inverter. For DC motors, power conditioning allows for more precise management of the current, which is a crucial operating parameter.

It is possible to consult the simulation results to compare the performances of these different regulation strategies.

Current

Practice

Today, the direct coupling mode is largely abandoned. It is now common to use an electronic device to adapt the power provided by the photovoltaic array to the power required by the pump, whether it is alternating current (AC) or direct current (DC).

3.4 Controller + Power Conditioning

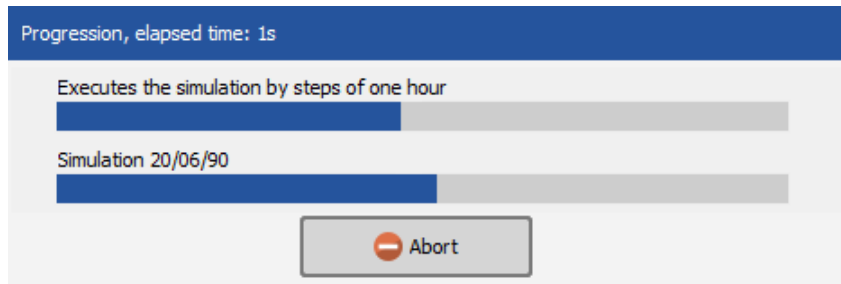
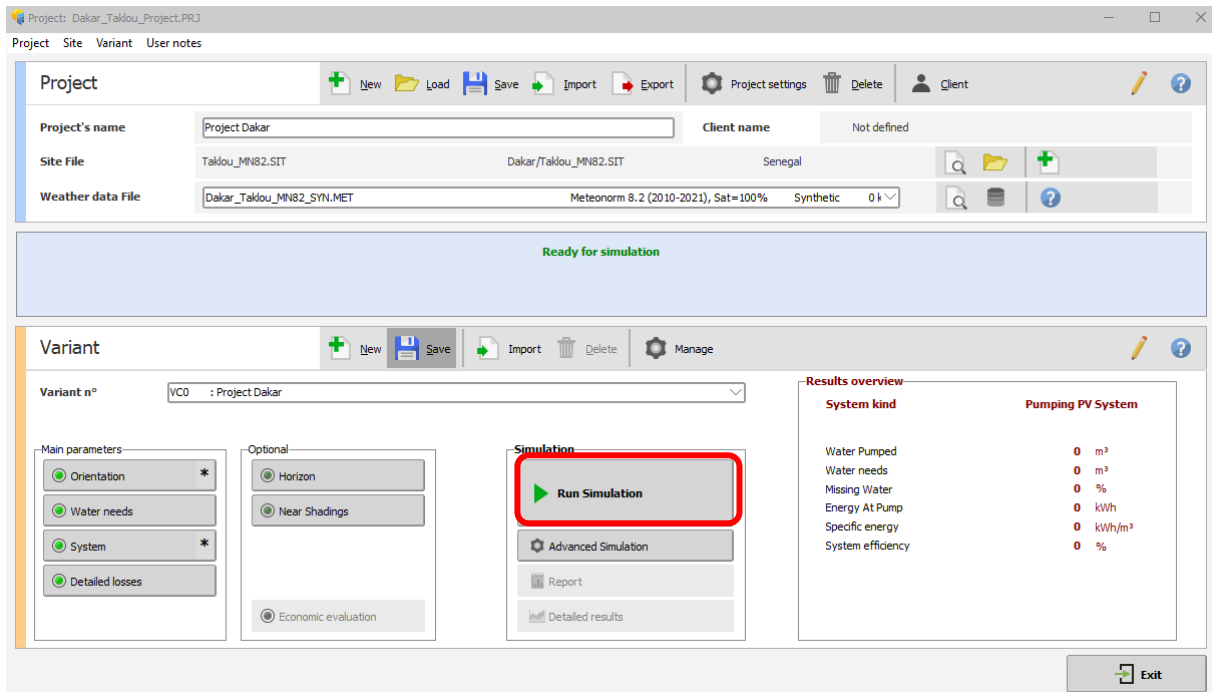
Even for the simplest configurations, such as direct coupling, it is essential to have a control device to ensure the following functions:

- **Manual On/Off,**
- **Automatic pump shutdown when the reservoir is full,**
- **Pump shutdown if the water level drops below the suction threshold (to avoid dry running),**
- **Thermal protection for the motor if the temperature exceeds allowable limits,**
- **Protection against overloads of power, current, or voltage exceeding the specified limits for the pump.**

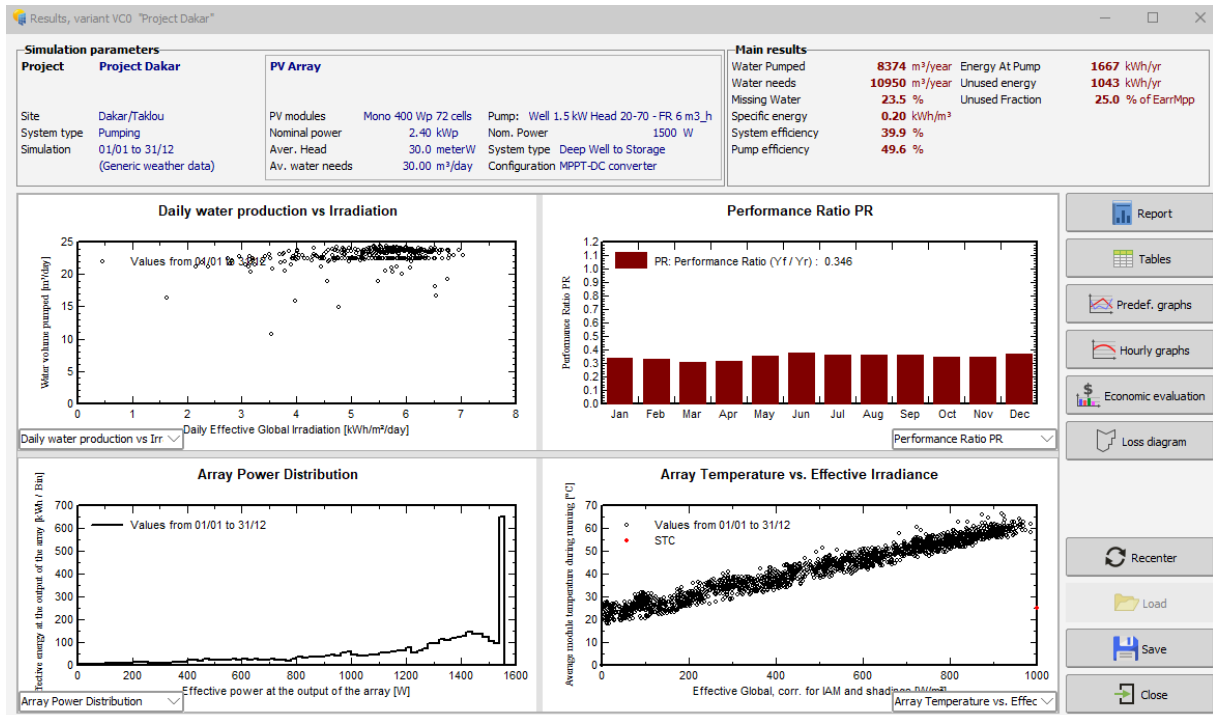
These sizing constraints are closely related to the specific system configuration.

4 Running the first simulation

On the project dashboard, all the buttons are now green (possibly orange) or turned off. The "Simulation" button is active, and you can click on it.



A progress bar appears to indicate the remaining part of the simulation to be completed. Once the simulation is finished, the "OK" button becomes active. By clicking on it, you are redirected directly to the "Results" dialog box.



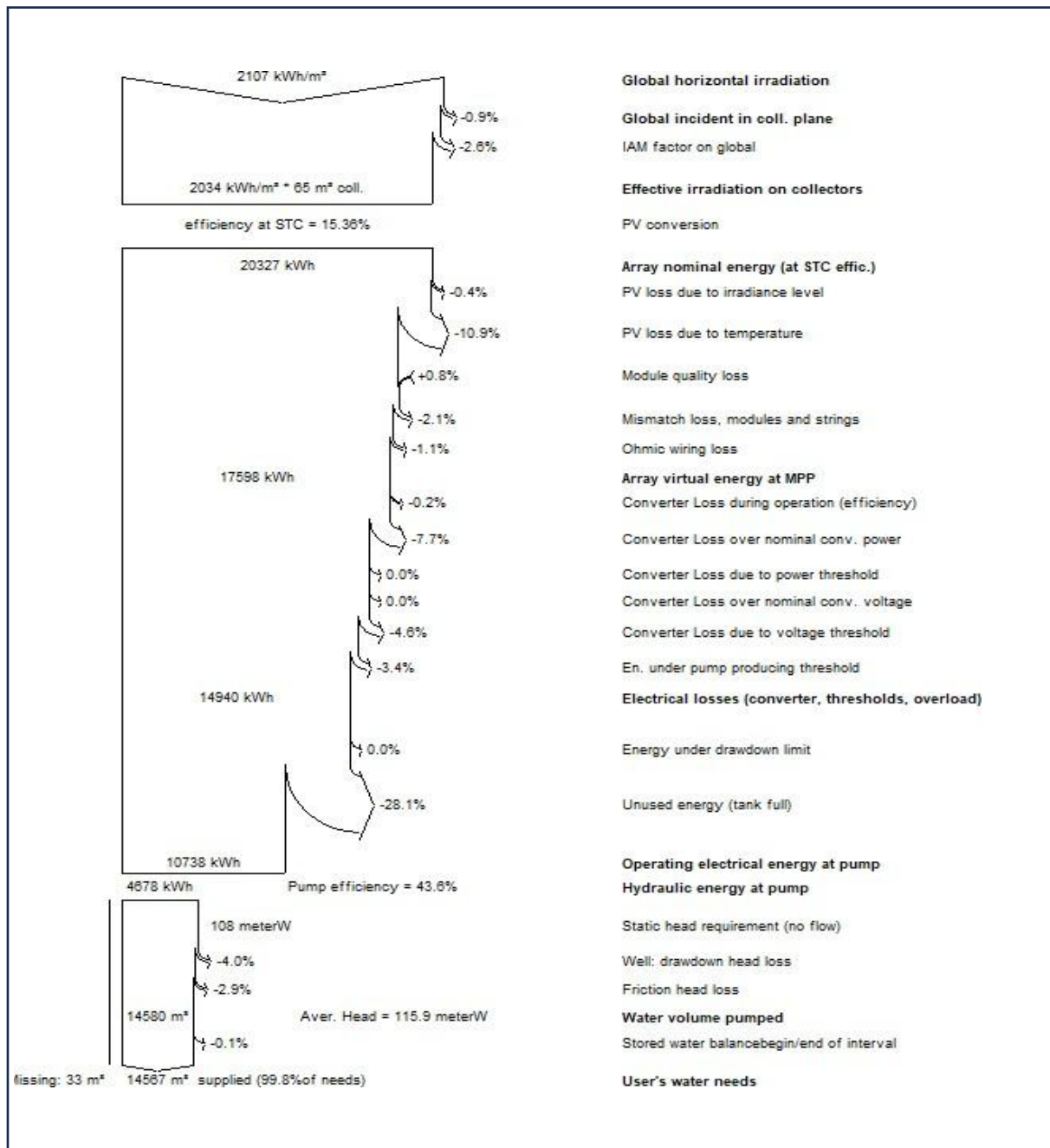
This dialog box presents, at the top left, a summary of the main simulation parameters. It is important to check them to ensure that no errors have been made in the input parameters.

At the top right, a box displays nine values that summarize the main results of the simulation. These pieces of information provide a simplified overview and allow you to quickly detect any obvious errors or get a first impression of changes or comparisons between different project variants.

For a complete description of your system, including all the parameters used and detailed results, you can refer to the simulation report.

The "loss diagram" presented at the end of the report provides a detailed analysis of the system's actual performance throughout the year and allows for an in-depth verification of its sizing.

Here are some examples of loss diagrams:

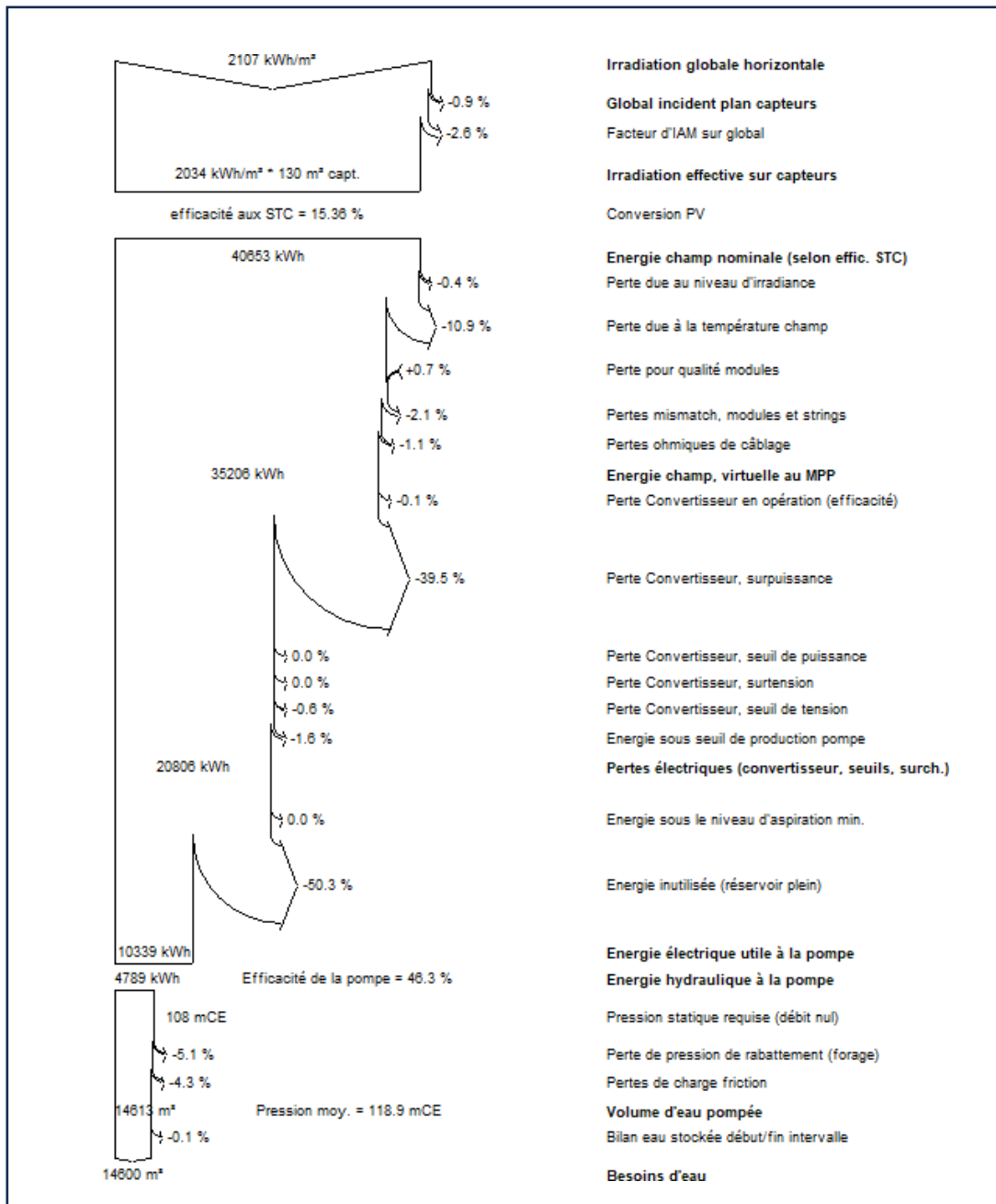


In this loss diagram, we observe an energy loss of 28.1%, labeled as "Unused Energy (full reservoir)."

This loss occurs in the following situations:

- When the water reservoir is undersized,
- When the PV array is oversized,
- When the water needs are low compared to the system's simulated capacity.

This loss is considered normal, as sunlight conditions and water needs can vary throughout the year. To fully meet the user's needs, the system must be sized for conditions less favorable than full sun. Inevitably, there will be periods during the year when production exceeds demand, leading to some unused energy.



In this loss diagram, we observe an energy loss of 39.5%, identified as "Converter Loss, Overpower."

This loss occurs when:

- The power of the PV array exceeds, at certain times of the day, the maximum power that the pump regulator can handle. This usually happens when the PV array is oversized compared to the converter's capacity.

