PD IEC/TS 61724-3:2016

BSI Standards Publication

Photovoltaic system performance

Part 3: Energy evaluation method

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National foreword

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The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted to Technical Committee GEL/82, Photovoltaic Energy Systems.

A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

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Published by BSI Standards Limited 2016

ISBN 978 0 580 89970 6
ICS 27.160

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This Published Document was published under the authority of the Standards Policy and Strategy Committee on 31 August 2016.

Amendments/corrigenda issued since publication

Date	Text affected

IEC TS 61724-3

Edition 1.0 2016-07

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

colour inside

Photovoltaic system performance – Part 3: Energy evaluation method

INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

ICS 27.160

ISBN 978-2-8322-3531-7

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FOREWORD

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Technical specifications are subject to review within three years of publication to decide whether they can be transformed into International Standards.

IEC TS 61724-3, which is a technical specification, has been prepared by IEC technical committee 82: Solar photovoltaic energy systems.

IEC 61724-1, IEC TS 61724-2 and IEC TS 61724-3 cancel and replace the first edition of IEC 61724, issued in 1998, and constitute a technical revision.

The main technical changes with regard to the first edition of IEC 61724 (1998) are as follows:

– This first edition of IEC TS 61724-3 provides a method for quantifying the annual energy generation for a PV plant relative to that expected for the measured weather.

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

Enquiry draft	Report on voting
82/1069/DTS	82/1121/RVC

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

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

A list of all parts in the IEC 61724 series, published under the general title *Photovoltaic system performance*, can be found on the IEC website.

The committee has decided that the contents of this publication will remain unchanged until the stability date indicated on the IEC website under "http://webstore.iec.ch" in the data related to the specific publication. At this date, the publication will be

- transformed into an International standard,
- reconfirmed,
- withdrawn,
- replaced by a revised edition, or
- amended.

A bilingual version of this publication may be issued at a later date.

IMPORTANT – The 'colour inside' logo on the cover page of this publication indicates that it contains colours which are considered to be useful for the correct understanding of its contents. Users should therefore print this document using a colour printer.

INTRODUCTION

The performance of a PV system is dependent on the weather, seasonal effects, and other intermittent issues, so demonstrating that a PV system is performing as predicted requires determining that the system functions correctly under the full range of conditions relevant to the deployment site. IEC 62446 describes a procedure for ensuring that the plant is constructed correctly and powered on properly by verification through incremental tests, but does not attempt to verify that the output of the plant meets the design specification. IEC 61724-1 defines the performance data that may be collected, but does not define how to analyze that data in comparison to predicted performance. IEC TS 61724-2 and ASTM E2848-11 describe methods for determining the power output of a photovoltaic system, and are intended to document completion and system turn on, and report a short term power capacity measurement of a PV system, but are not intended for quantifying performance over all ranges of weather or times of year. IEC 62670-2 also describes how to measure the energy from a CPV plant, but does not describe how to compare the measured energy with a model.

The method described in this Technical Specification is intended to address testing of a specific deployed PV system over the full range of relevant operating conditions and for a sustained time (generally a complete year) to verify long-term expectations of energy production to capture all types of performance issues, including not only response to different weather conditions, but also outages or instances of reduced performance of the plant that may arise from grid requirements, operational set points, hardware failure, poor maintenance procedures, plant degradation, or other problems. The performance of the system is characterized both by quantifying the energy lost when the plant is not functioning (unavailable) and the extent to which the performance meets expectations when it is functioning.

Multiple aspects of PV system performance are dependent on both the weather and the system quality, so it is essential to have a clear understanding of the system being tested. For example, the module temperature is primarily a function of irradiance, ambient temperature, and wind speed; all of which are weather effects. However, the module-mounting configuration also affects the module temperature, and the mounting is an aspect of the system that is being tested. This technical specification presents a best-practice process for test development and clarifies how measurement choices can affect the outcome of the test so that users can benefit from streamlined test design with consistent definitions, while still allowing flexibility in the application of the test so as to accommodate as many unique installations as possible.

IECRE's Annual PV Project Performance Certificate incorporates measurements from this Technical Specification. Although this technical specification allows application in multiple ways, to maintain a consistent definition of the meaning of the IECRE certificate, when this technical specification is used for measurements for IECRE reporting, the method may be required to use a minimum level of accuracy for the measurements or other details as documented by IECRE.

PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM PERFORMANCE –

Part 3: Energy evaluation method

1 Scope

This part of IEC 61724, which is a Technical Specification, defines a procedure for measuring and analyzing the energy production of a specific photovoltaic system relative to expected electrical energy production for the same system from actual weather conditions as defined by the stakeholders of the test. The method for predicting the electrical energy production is outside of the scope of this technical specification. The energy production is characterized specifically for times when the system is operating (available); times when the system is not operating (unavailable) are quantified as part of an availability metric.

For best results, this procedure should be used for long-term performance (electrical energy production) testing of photovoltaic systems to evaluate sustained performance of the system over the entire range of operating conditions encountered through the duration of the test (preferably one year). Such an evaluation provides evidence that long-term expectations of system energy production are accurate and covers all environmental effects at the site. In addition, for the year, unavailability of the system (because of either internal or external causes) is quantified, enabling a full assessment of electricity production.

In this procedure, inverter operation and other status indicators of the system are first analyzed to find out whether the system is operating. Times when inverters (or other components) are not operating are characterized as times of unavailability and the associated energy loss is quantified according to the expected energy production during those times. For times when the system is operating, actual photovoltaic system energy produced is measured and compared to the expected energy production for the observed environmental conditions, quantifying the energy performance index as defined in IEC 61724-1. As a basis for this evaluation, expectations of energy production are developed using a model of the PV system under test that will serve as the guarantee or basis for the evaluation and is agreed upon by all stakeholders of the project. Typically, the model is complex and includes effects of shading and variable efficiency of the array, but the model can also be as simple as a performance ratio, which may be more commonly used for small systems, such as residential systems.

The procedure evaluates the quality of the PV system performance, reflecting both the quality of the initial installation and the quality of the ongoing maintenance and operation of the plant, with the assumption and expectation that the model used to predict performance accurately describes the system performance. If the initial model is found to be inaccurate, the design of the system is changed, or it is desired to test the accuracy of an unknown model, the model may be revised relative to one that was applied earlier, but the model should be fixed throughout the completion of this procedure.

The aim of this technical specification is to define a procedure for comparing the measured electrical energy with the expected electrical energy of the PV system. The framework procedure focuses on items such as test duration, data filtering methods, data acquisition, and sensor choice. To reiterate, the procedure does not proscribe a method for generating predictions of expected electrical energy. The prediction method and assumptions used are left to the user of the test. The end result is documentation of how the PV system performed relative to the energy performance predicted by the chosen model for the measured weather; this ratio is defined as the performance index in IEC 61724-1.

This test procedure is intended for application to grid-connected photovoltaic systems that include at least one inverter and the associated hardware.