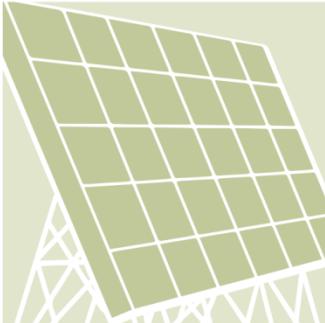


POWERING
AGRICULTURE:

AN ENERGY GRAND CHALLENGE
FOR DEVELOPMENT

TOOLBOX ON SOLAR POWERED IRRIGATION SYSTEMS (SPIS)



Module 4: Finance



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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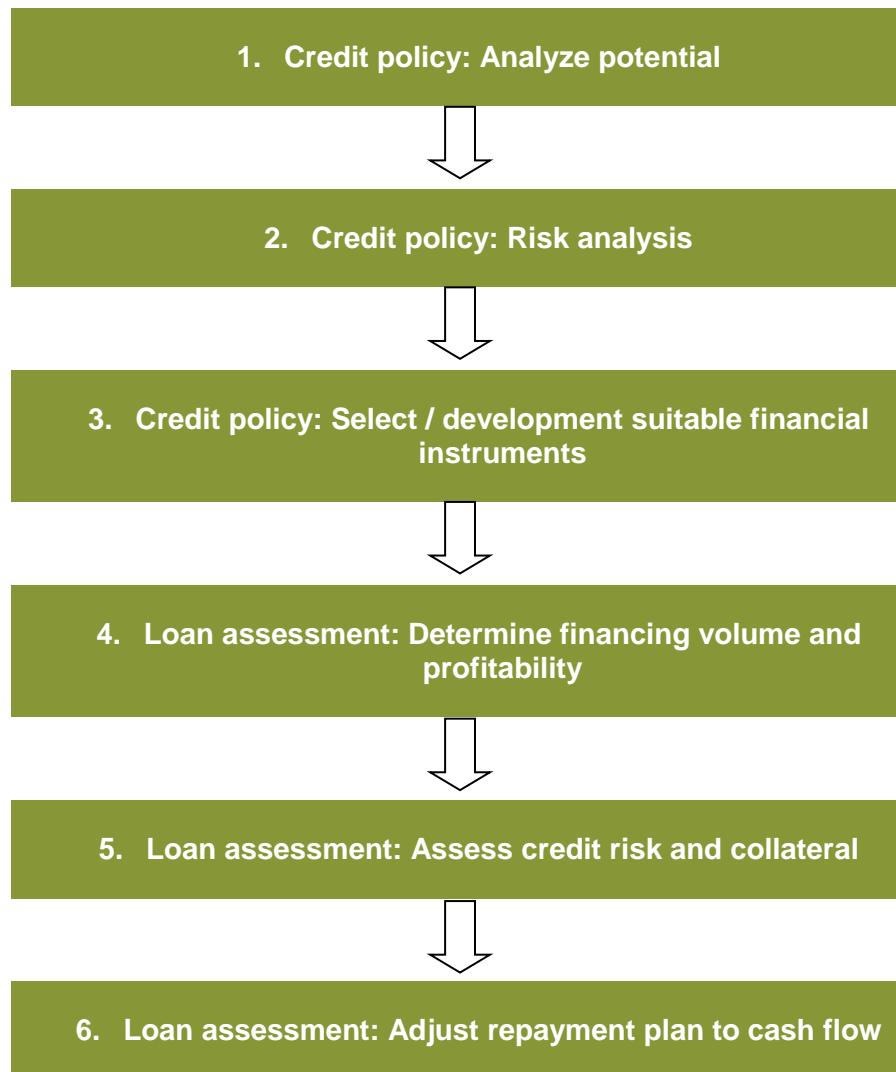
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ABBREVIATIONS

Ah	Ampere hour
CWR	Crop Water Requirement
DC/AC	Direct Current / Alternating Current
ET	Evapotranspiration
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Gd	Daily Global Irradiation
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GIWR	Gross Irrigation Water Requirement
GPFI	Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion
HERA	GIZ Program Poverty-oriented Basic Energy Services
H _T	Total Head
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IRR	Internal Rate of Return
IWR	Irrigation Water Requirement
MPPT	Maximum Power Point Tracking
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIWR	Net Irrigation Water Requirement
NPV	Net Present Value
m ²	square meter
PV	photovoltaic
PVP	Photovoltaic Pump
SAT	Side Acceptance Test
SPIS	Solar Powered Irrigation System
STC	Standard Test Conditions
TC	Temperature Coefficient
UV	Ultraviolet
Vd	Daily crop water requirement
W	Watt
Wp	Watt peak

FINANCE



MODULE AIM & ORIENTATION

Financing solar-powered irrigation can be an opportunity for financing institutions seeking to diversify their loan portfolio and expand their range of financial products. The **FINANCE** module focuses on product features for SPIS loans, considering direct financing by financial institution to a small and medium-scale agricultural end borrower. The module also points out how it is different from financing conventional irrigation systems. It provides guidance to financial service providers already financing or planning to finance SPIS. It thus addresses two groups:

1. stakeholders at **management level** who decide upon credit policies of a financial service provider.
2. **loan officers** who assess single loan applications for financing SPIS.

The **FINANCE** module, being part of a comprehensive toolbox, relates to the other modules in several ways. **GET INFORMED**, the first module of the toolbox gives basic information on SPIS and its components. Methods for its promotion are described in the **PROMOTE & INITIATE** module, including one process step on access to finance as an important precondition for promoting SPIS in a particular region. Natural limitations of the environment and a sustainable use of water and other resources are crucial when considering risks. These factors are described in the **SAFEGUARD WATER** module. The **DESIGN** module provides information, tools and examples on how to estimate the dimensions of a SPIS for a specific farming situation. It also includes guidance on the calculation of the financial viability of SPIS which is critical to assess the loan (financing volume and profitability). The **DESIGN** module aims at establishing the financial viability of a particular design, whereas the module **FINANCE** focuses on HOW to finance the

respective SPIS design. The modules **SET UP** and **MAINTAIN** describe aspects to be considered when installing and maintaining SPIS. Checklists and other tools in these two chapters are of specific value to banks when paying visits to clients with a running SPIS.

PROCESS STEPS

Three steps are elaborated in the **FINANCE** module to support the process of defining the financial service provider's credit policy on **management level**: First the analysis of the potential of the SPIS market segment; secondly the determination of general credit risks involved; and thirdly, the design and test of suitable financial instruments.

For the specific individual loan assessment process on **loan operations level**, three main steps are elaborated: First, the determination of the financing volume and calculation of the profitability of the investment; secondly, the assessment of credit risk and collateral of the potential borrower; and finally, the determination of the cash flow and the repayment plan for the single potential client, along with loan conditions.

1. CREDIT POLICY: ANALYZE POTENTIAL

Today, solar-powered irrigation is a technically mature and reliable option and an alternative to conventional irrigation approaches. When analyzing options for the development of credit policies for SPIS, the following aspects should be considered:

SPIS is likely to be a feasible option in a region if:

- energy provision for farming is a constraint (availability or cost of fuel, reliability of grid connection);
- an intensification of agricultural production is envisaged;
- producers are market-oriented and not working on subsistence level;
- producers are at least medium sized or organized in small holder groups;
- subsidized refinancing options for financial operators are available;
- grant schemes or subsidies are available to borrowers (producer);
- producers aim at specialized markets using environmental friendly technology (focusing on ecological production, which could give scope for premium pricing);
- technology distributors and system integrators available in the region;
- water is available and managed adequately so as to prevent ground water depletion in the long run.

However, compared to conventional pumping and irrigation methods, PV-based pumping solutions have:

- a comparatively high initial capital investment requirement;
- longer repayment periods or/and significantly higher repayment rates;
- higher credit risk.

OUTCOME / PRODUCT

- Study on potential of financing SPIS and recommendations for financial service provider.

DATA REQUIREMENTS

- Profile end customers (cropping patterns, irrigation techniques, pumping systems, market);
- current offer of loan products available for potential SPIS customer;
- water and energy provision regime in region;
- support/advice structures and subsidy schemes (refinancing) available for the region;
- environmental impact assessment (long term perspective).

PEOPLE / STAKEHOLDERS

- Management of financial service providers;
- market analysts/consultants;
- research and training institutions;
- public entities promoting or/and subsidizing SPIS initiatives;
- donors refinancing solar-powered initiatives;
- associations of producers / potential borrowers;
- technology providers;
- service providers.

IMPORTANT ISSUES

- Solar-powered irrigation technology is mature, reliable and systems costs have decreased.
- SPIS generally require higher investment cost than other irrigation system, but operation costs are lower.

2. CREDIT POLICY: RISK ANALYSIS

Every SPIS demands a specific solution, since it combines a new energy providing technology with irrigation and cropping systems which can be manifold in its combination.

Therefore, there are no standard “off the shelf” solutions, a thorough loan analysis is indispensable, especially when starting with this loan type.

Typical **financial advantages** when changing to solar powered irrigation could be:

- higher profitability when introducing high value crops and higher degree of irrigation efficiency;
- reduced and stable current energy costs due to change in energy source (no transport costs or risks for supply of fuel or lubricants);
- environmental friendly technology (avoid water losses, use of water saving technology, prevent diesel pollution, etc.) can give access to subsidized funds or grants.

SPIS, being based on agricultural activities, follow specific liquidity patterns, such as:

- irregularity, seasonality;
- farming-household mix;
- several cash generating activities;
- system risks (climate, weather, pest, disease, prices).

This requires specific agri-lending tools. Thereby the following risks should be considered:

Financial Risks

- High initial capital investment requirements lead to higher credit risks resulting in longer repayment periods and higher interest rates for clients comparing to alternative energy sources;

- financing agriculture as such has specific risks.

Technology Risks (see the following modules **DESIGN**, **SET-UP**, **MAINTAIN** for further details).

- High value cropping and water saving irrigation technology is needed;
- pumps have to be “oversized” in order to meet peak water demands;
- management capacities to handle the technology should be available;
- daily operating hours are limited;
- feasible PV-generator and pump dimensioning implies orientation towards low pressure output;
- suitability of location for SPIS;
- construction risk;
- over-use of water threatens long term cultivation as well as the environment.

Framework Risks

- Long term availability of water and good groundwater management is indispensable; (see **SAFEGUARD WATER** module)
- people involved – loan officers, producers, (gender!) technology and service providers, agricultural advisors;
- theft or misuse.

OUTCOME / PRODUCT

- Credit risk policy, considering thorough single case assessment, adequate portfolio management and pro-active closing of the information gap.

DATA REQUIREMENTS

- Specifics to agri-lending liquidity patterns of borrowers;
- asset structure of borrowers (potential for collateral);
- cropping patterns and profitability of crop types (alternative markets and water availability);
- organization & management reliability (see **MAINTAIN** module);
- technology risks (see **DESIGN** module);
- re-financing options for the region.

PEOPLE / STAKEHOLDERS

- Management of financial service providers;
- public entities promoting or/and subsidizing SPIS initiatives;
- associations of producers / potential borrowers;
- market analysts/consultants;
- technology providers;
- service providers;
- research and training institutions (e.g. environmental agency).

IMPORTANT ISSUES

- Consider SPIS specific risks with respect to their long term financing requirements, technological implications (cf. **DESIGN** module), environmental impact (cf. **SAFE GUARD WATER** module) and framework conditions.
- Assume manifold SPIS settings - there is no "off the shelf" loan analysis.
- Minimizing risks can result in potentially high(er) transaction costs for all parties involved, compared to conventional pumping systems.



SPIS in India

(Source: Lennart Woltering)

3. CREDIT POLICY: SELECT/DEVELOP SUITABLE FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

When selecting or developing a loan product for SPIS it is important to ask the following questions:

- **Who?** Market oriented producers, no subsistence production, producer groups possible;
- **What?** Finance for energy source and pumping system used for irrigation; energy and/or water saving technology;
- **How much?** Establish range of loan sum; % own-contribution of producer; % subsidy;
- **When?** Range of loan period (years); repayment frequency (months); disbursement in tranches;
- **Interest rate?** From ..x..% p.a. to ..x..% p.a. (range);
- **Collateral?** Equipment, mortgages, additional collateral (guarantee scheme), non-traditional collateral (future harvest, warehouse), leasing scheme with equipment providers.

Loan products for financing SPIS usually:

- have higher initial investment sums with consequently longer repayment periods and/or high installment rates;
- need alternative guarantee schemes / unconventional collateral;
- have higher interest rate payments due to higher credit risk and long investment period;
- focus on innovative clients, usually investing in high(er) value crops;
- should be strictly oriented towards water capacity available and the farm's specific requirements;

- use no blueprint; every farm / enterprise is unique!

In order to **prevent prohibitive loan transaction costs**, consider:

- guarantee funds with public support or insurance;
- leasing schemes with pumping system providers and others;
- group financing approaches for producer groups;
- public subsidies and sponsoring;
- favorable re-financing options for the financial institution (e.g. subsidized interest rates offered by donors/public entities).

In order to **overcome the information gap** in respect of the new technology, introduce additional activities such as:

- encouraging (potential) clients to get informed and consult technical advice;
- training and sensitization of loan staff on basics about the technology;
- monitoring loan performance closely;
- continuous dialogue with solar power sector.

Note: SPIS clients could become future clients for other financial products (cross selling).



Automated irrigation system in Morocco – largely subsidized by the state

(Source: Lennart Woltering)

OUTCOME / PRODUCT

- **Guidelines and Procedures:** including assessment and decision guidelines, target key performance indicators (KPIs).

DATA REQUIREMENTS

- Comparable clients liquidity pattern in current agricultural portfolio.

Compute, prepare

- repayment plan (with varying interest rates, repayment periods and repayment frequencies);
- profitability margins by crops and farm sizes;
- tables for evaluating types of collateral;
- list of eligible crops;
- list of eligible irrigation systems and average investment cost per component;
- list of eligible SPIS configurations and average investment cost per component (see DESIGN and GET INFORMED);
- list of eligible types of collateral.

PEOPLE / STAKEHOLDERS

- Management level of financial service providers;
- experienced credit staff (senior, agrifinance);
- associations of producers / potential borrowers;
- agricultural extension services;
- research and training institutes (e.g. environmental agency);
- providers of service, technology and inputs.

IMPORTANT ISSUES

- Prevent prohibitive transaction costs for borrowers;
- overcome information gap of financial operator;
- note that standardization potential is limited.
- select excellent loan staff for this segment with corresponding background and experience (train them!).

4. LOAN ASSESSMENT: DETERMINE FINANCING VOLUME AND PROFITABILITY

While the previous process steps focused on the policy makers, the next steps focus on the loan officers who assess single loan applications for financing SPIS.

Loan officers generally prefer to use the tools provided by their institution, but it is useful to use the tools **DESIGN – Farm Analysis Tool** and **DESIGN – Simplified Financial Viability Tool** as they are specifically designed for SPIS and can provide an first estimation of viability. In fact these tools can be provided to borrowers/loan applicants to verify their own assumptions.

Note: Transaction costs for loan review can be high, especially if the technology has limited scope for standardization. Using specific tools, and encouraging loan applicants to use the same, can minimize unnecessary effort.

OUTCOME / PRODUCT

- Profitability analysis of investment (and alternatives);
- cash flow analysis;
- financial projections on investment costs (CAPEX) (and alternatives);

PEOPLE / STAKEHOLDER

- Loan officers financing or planning to finance SPIS;
- producer(s) / potential borrower(s);
- management of financial service providers (operational level);
- agricultural extension services and promotion agencies (e.g. for subsidies);
- providers of service, technology and inputs;
- research and training institutes.

DATA REQUIREMENTS

Research, collect, analyze, cross-check

- prices for components to be financed;
- cropping pattern and crop prices (fluctuation, trends);
- prices for O&M costs and inputs (incl. other options);
- sales revenues
- purpose and sums provided as subsidies or/ and through sponsors;
- macro-economic variables (inflation, interest rates, etc.);
- tax policies (corporate income tax, VAT dynamics, etc.).

Compute, prepare

- water unit cost;
- annual revenue and operating expenses (OPEX) --> Annual gross margin of production (current and future);
- CAPEX (capital expenditure); i.e. total/annual sum for financing investment in SPIS (and alternative system);
- cash flow projections (current, future, alternative energy source);
- life cycle cost of SPIS investment;
- Payback Period (PP), Net Present Value (NPV) and Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of SPIS investment.

IMPORTANT ISSUES

- Compare PV with alternative pumping solutions and consider varying profitability of different SPIS (crops, size).
- Work with excellent loan staff.

5. LOAN ASSESSMENT: ASSESS CREDIT RISK AND COLLATERAL

Apart from “normal” credit risks applying to agricultural loans, such as variations related to external shocks and an irregular cash flow based on seasonality, financing SPIS brings additional challenges. These are mainly related to technological risks or risks in respect to operation and maintenance. Also, high initial investment costs increase the overall financial risk. Finally oversizing of the pumping system can be an issue.

When **valuing assets for collateral**, the view should broaden by considering the whole farm as well as the overall family situation, and not only specifically the planned investment. The borrower should be encouraged to contribute with own capital and alternative collateral should be accepted more broadly by the financial operator. PV-Panels can be used as collateral, if there is a market for second hand panels.

Since solar power is considered an **environmental friendly technology, given that water is used adequately** (**SAFEGUARD WATER** module), there is a scope for external public or donor funded guarantee schemes and subsidies where producers can adhere to. These opportunities should be actively explored and assessed.

OUTCOME / PRODUCT

- Family/farm balance sheet;
- total value of collateral and/or types of guarantees;
- general risk analysis;

DATA REQUIREMENTS

Research, collect, analyze

- market for respective crops, inputs, etc.;
- availability of risk guarantee options / opportunities or insurance.

Compute, prepare

- valuation of farm (and family) assets and liabilities;
- borrower's own (capital) contribution;
- review of collateral or/and guarantee schemes;
- assessment of technology and O&M risk (**DESIGN, SET UP, MAINTAIN**).

PEOPLE / STAKEHOLDERS

- Loan officers financing or planning to finance SPIS;
- producer(s) / potential borrower(s);
- management of Financial Service Providers (operational level);
- public entities promoting or/and subsidizing SPIS initiatives;
- sponsors.

IMPORTANT ISSUES

- Look for alternative types of collateral (e.g. guarantee schemes) and assess if PV panels could be a guarantee.
- Minimize risk of theft or damage of the collateral (e.g. fencing of panels, guards, insurance).

6. LOAN ASSESSMENT: ADJUST REPAYMENT PLAN TO CASH FLOW

SPIS, being based on agricultural activities, follows **specific liquidity patterns**, such as:

- irregularity, seasonality;
- farming-household mix;
- several cash generating activities (agricultural, non-agricultural);
- external shocks (climate, weather, pest, disease, prices).

Determining specific loan features (disbursement pattern, repayment rate, collateral, repayment frequency) should be based on cash flow projections of a particular case.

This means for the loan analysis process:

- in depth understanding of the farm and family economics;
- strong interaction with the potential borrower;
- networking with other sources of information in the sector and region;
- thorough understanding of the market and market trends;
- excellent staff with innovative attitudes.

SPIS goes along with **high initial investment sums**. These result in:

- long repayment periods (15-20 years);
- a need for high profitability of the SPIS;
- a need for a grace period at the beginning of the repayment plan.

Note: High installments resulting from very short loan repayment periods can create a threatening liquidity shortage – especially in the first years.

OUTCOME / PRODUCT

- Cash flow statement (current, projected);
- Tailor-made disbursement and repayment plan;
- financial risk analysis/adjustment;
- summarized risk analysis;
- tailor-made loan details for decision.

DATA REQUIREMENTS

Collect, compute, prepare:

- total farm liquidity analysis (including household liquidity analysis (current + projected with SPIS));
- borrower's own capital contribution;
- repayment potential;
- repayment plan;
- loan details.

PEOPLE / STAKEHOLDERS

- Loan officers financing or planning to finance SPIS;
- producer(s) / potential borrower;
- management of financial service providers (operational level);
- public entities promoting or/and subsidizing SPIS;
- sponsors.

IMPORTANT ISSUES

- Specific liquidity patterns need to be identified for every single case.
- Data collection process is challenging due to intermingled family-farm economy.
- High initial investment costs should ideally not lead to prohibitive transaction costs (consider bank-external subsidies);

- High initial investment costs should ideally not lead to liquidity shortages of the client due to high or very early installments (be flexible when defining installment plans).



0.5 ha solar powered drip irrigation system used by a woman's group in rural Northern Benin for production of lettuce and other vegetables.

(Source: Lennart Woltering)

FURTHER READING, LINKS AND TOOLS

Links

- Agriculture Finance Support Facility (AGRIFIN). Retrieved from <https://www.agrifinfacility.org/>
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Tools

There are no SPIS tools developed specifically for this module; however the following tools are relevant:

- **PROMOTE – SPIS Rapid Assessment:** includes a (financial) market analysis for financing of SPIS components
- **DESIGN – Farm Analysis Tool:** to determine the profitability of the farm enterprise
- **DESIGN – Simplified Financial Viability Tool:** to calculate the financial viability of a SPIS and compare that to other alternative pumping systems (diesel and grid power)

FINANCIAL GLOSSARY

Assets	Position in balance sheet which represents what a company owns.
Capital expenditures (CAPEX)	Are one-time expenses. Normally they are long-term investments in non-consumable parts of the business, for example money that is spent on pump, panels, machines, etc.
Cash Inflows	All cash receipts realized within a given period (e.g. from sales).
Cash Flow	Is the incoming and outgoing cash of a business. Cash outflows are considered as negative cash flows and cash inflows as positive ones.
Cash Outflow	Outgoing cash, all cash payments realized during a given period (e.g. for buying production inputs, loan installments, buying equipment).
Creditors	Payable occurring from past credit (money owed to suppliers for expenses).
Collateral	Property or other assets that a borrower offers a lender to secure a loan.
Credit Sales	Sales made without receiving cash.
Current Assets	Cash and other assets which are expected to be converted into cash or consumed during the normal operating cycle of a business.
Debtors	Receivables occurring from past credit sales.
Depreciation	A cost charged against fixed assets for their replacement. Note: "depreciation" is one of the few expenses for which there is no associated outgoing cash flow
Expenses / expenditure	Payment of cash or cash equivalent for good or services received. Cost of resources used up or consumed by the activities of the business.
Finished Good Stock	An inventory of final products ready for sale.
Financial Viability	Ability to generate sufficient income to meet operating expenditure, financing needs and, ideally, to allow profit generation. Financial viability is usually assessed using the Net Present Value (NPV) and Internal Rate of Return (IRR) approaches together with estimating the sensitivity of the cost and revenue elements. Both NPV and IRR are the most commonly used decision criteria of a cost-benefit analysis.
Fixed Assets	Assets required for long-term use and for physical use in the business (machinery, buildings, office equipment, cars, etc.).
Fixed Cost	Costs that do not vary with the level of production.
Fixed Investment	Investment made in fixed assets (e.g. machinery)

Gross Margin	Gross income minus gross expenses.
Income	Income is money generated from the activities of the business.
Inflation	The rate at which the general level of prices for goods and services is rising and, consequently, the purchasing power of currency is falling.
Internal Rate of Return	Gives the discount rate over the life-span of a capital investment; i.e. the profit rate generated by a certain investment (amount) over its life-span. By calculating IRR of a project you can answer the question whether the money is well spent or if less risky investment alternatives might be more profitable in the long run, e.g. putting the money on a bank account to get interest on it.
Liabilities	Claims by creditors against the assets of a business.
Life Cycle Costing	Is a technique for evaluating total cost of ownership to compare different alternatives.
Material Stocks	An inventory of all raw materials not yet used in production.
Net Present Value	Determines the present worth of an investment by discounting the cash inflows and cash outflows generated by this investment over its life span. For the determination of the NPV you need to define the expected life span of the investment as well as a discount factor, which might be near to the interest rate on deposits. You could also use the NPV for comparison of alternative investment options.
Net Working Capital	Current assets minus current liabilities.
Operating expenses (OPEX)	Are the ongoing costs for running a business that are related with the operation and maintenance of it. They are the expenses related to the production activity of the business and they are divided into fixed and variable costs.
Payback Period (PP)	Is the length of time required to recover the cost of an investment.
Profitability	Income minus expenses. Is stated in the income statement (or Profit and Loss Statement), which reports a company's revenue, expenses, and net income over a period of time.
Raw Material Purchases	Cost incurred on purchase of raw material.
Revenue	Is the income earned by a business typically through selling goods/products or services.
Variable Cost	Cost that varies directly with the level of production delivered.

ANNEX – COLLECTION OF FORMULAE (FINANCES)

AVERAGE CASH FLOW*

*Definition: The “cash flow” is the incoming and outgoing cash of a business. Expenses (costs) are considered as negative cash flows and revenues as positive ones.

Formula: $(Revenue - R - Operating\ Expenses - C) = Cf. = Cash\ flow$

PAYBACK PERIOD* (PP)

*Definition: The payback period is the length of time required to recover the cost of an investment.

Formula: $I/(R-C) = PP = Payback\ Period$

I=Initial investment (CAPEX)

C=Average annual operating expenses (OPEX), excluding depreciation

R=Average annual revenue

$(R-C) = Cf. = Cash\ flow$

NET PRESENT VALUE* (NPV)

*Definition: The “Net Present Value” or NPV determines the present worth of an investment by discounting the cash inflows and cash outflows generated by this investment over its life span. For the determination of the NPV you need to define the expected life span of the investment as well as a discount factor, which might be near to the interest rate on deposits. You could also use the NPV for comparison of alternative investment options.

Formula:

$$NPV = \sum_{t=1}^n \frac{Cf_t}{(1+r)^t} - I_0 + S$$

r= Discount factor =: 6% (current deposit rate in Chile 4-5%)

S= Salvage Value = €0

I= Initial investment cost = €10,500

t= years counting from base year

n= lifetime of project (panels) = 15 years

INTERNAL RATE OF RETURN* (IRR)

*Definition: The “Internal Rate of Return” or IRR gives the discount rate over the life-span of a capital investment; i.e. the profit rate generated by a certain investment (amount) over its life-span. By calculating IRR of a project you can answer the question whether the money is well spent or if less risky investment alternatives might be more profitable in the long run, e.g. putting the money on a bank account to get interest on it.

Formula:

$$NPV = 0, \text{ or}$$

$$\sum_{t=1}^n \frac{Cf_t}{(1 + IRR)^t} - I_0 + S = 0$$