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## Research Article

# STANDARTIZATION OF SOLAR ENERGY TERMINOLOGY

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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays almost all countries are faced with the challenge of solving energy security problems and developing national strategies in the energy sector. The People's Republic of China is one of the largest energy producers and consumers as a country with more than one billion energy consumers. The development of energy production from alternative energy sources will increase the share of "Clean Energy" in China's energy structure, protect the environment, and the country will develop economically and socially. In China, it is important to further develop alternative energy, standardize industry terms in the construction of power plants and various electrical facilities. This article explains in detail why the standardization of terms is needed and how this process began. It is known that the field of terminology is constantly changing and enriching. Phenomena of polysemy, synonymy and homonymy occurring in terminology creates uncertainty in the practical application of terms and hinders the communication of specialists. In order to combat the diversity of terms, terminological standardization and unification is a very necessary process. Currently, standardization is carried out at four levels: international, national, regional and local.

## KEYWORDS

Alternative energy, solar energy, terminology, standardization of terms, standardization organizations of terms.

## INTRODUCTION

The standardization of solar energy terminology refers to the ongoing efforts to create a unified framework of terms and metrics in the solar energy sector, essential for fostering clear communication and effective collaboration among stakeholders. As the global demand for renewable energy intensifies, the inconsistency in terminology and metrics exemplified by the identification of over 51 unique metric terms across various studies has emerged as a significant barrier to progress and understanding within the industry.[1][2]. This need for standardization is underscored by the growing complexity of solar technologies, policy frameworks, and governance, necessitating a coherent

approach to terminology that can facilitate knowledge transfer and improve interoperability between systems and products.[1][3].

Key organizations, such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), are at the forefront of these standardization efforts, developing critical international standards that guide various aspects of solar energy operations, from design to maintenance.[2][4]. The establishment of these standards is pivotal in enhancing safety, efficiency, and compatibility within the solar sector, allowing manufacturers and developers to align their

practices and expectations while improving the reliability of solar technologies for investors and consumers alike.[5][6].

However, the path to standardization is fraught with challenges, including institutional inertia, diverse metric terms, and the systemic drivers of inconsistency within energy policies that often favor traditional fossil fuel systems.[3][7]. These hurdles underscore the necessity for coordinated reform and collaboration across sectors to develop a common vernacular and ensure that the benefits of solar energy are equitably distributed.[3][8]. Future directions in standardization must not only address these challenges but also adapt to emerging technologies and evolving methodologies, supporting the ongoing transformation of the solar energy landscape toward more sustainable practices.[9][10].

The urgency of these standardization efforts is further amplified by the increasing deployment of solar technologies worldwide, which requires a clear and consistent framework to assess performance metrics such as capacity factors and land-use efficiency[1][2]. As global collaboration on renewable energy standards expands, engaging diverse stakeholders and fostering consensus will be critical in shaping a unified approach that enhances the reliability and impact of solar energy initiatives across the globe.[2][10][11].

### Historical Background

The historical evolution of solar energy terminology and its standardization reflects a growing awareness of the need for clarity and consistency within the field. The systematic literature review conducted on solar energy-land relationships highlighted significant disparities in the geographical distribution of research outputs, revealing that the majority of studies originated from the United States, with minimal representation from South America, China, and Africa[1]. This uneven landscape has implications for the terminology used, as differing terminologies across regions can lead to confusion and hinder collaboration.

Initial research on solar energy metrics saw a substantial gap from 1980 to 2002, where only a handful of articles were published that met inclusion criteria for standardized analyses[1]. Following this period, there was a notable increase in publications, particularly from 2002 onwards, with a peak in activity observed in 2017. This surge can be attributed to the growing recognition of solar energy's role in

sustainable development and the accompanying need for consistent metrics to evaluate its effectiveness and impact[1].

The emergence of new metrics and terms in rapidly evolving fields like solar energy has raised calls for standardization, which is crucial for facilitating knowledge transfer and enhancing the comparability of findings across different studies[1] [12]. Researchers have underscored that standardizing metrics not only aids in clearer communication but also assists in the systematic documentation of metadata, thereby allowing for the aggregation of trends in related topics[1]. This need for standardized terminology has been echoed in various discussions about the solar industry, where a well-defined glossary could significantly improve communication among stakeholders and contribute to the development of best practices[12].

The evolving complexity of the solar energy sector, particularly in relation to governance and policy, also necessitates a refined approach to terminology. The interplay between technological advancements and the socio-political landscape has resulted in an intricate tapestry of concepts that must be cohesively integrated into a standardized framework to avoid misinterpretation and inefficiencies[12]. As the solar energy sector continues to grow, the establishment of clear, standardized terminology will be essential for fostering effective collaboration among architects, builders, policy makers, and other stakeholders involved in the solar energy transition.

### Current Standards

The standardization of terminology and practices in the solar energy sector is critical for ensuring compatibility, efficiency, and safety across various components and systems. Key organizations involved in this process include the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), both of which are based in Geneva, Switzerland[2]. ISO, established in 1947, has developed over 17,500 international standards across multiple disciplines, while IEC, founded in 1906, focuses on electrical and electronic technologies[2].

### International Standards Overview

Several international standards have been specifically defined for the solar energy industry. These standards encompass various phases of photovoltaic (PV) plant operations, including design, procurement, construction, and maintenance. Notably, the IEC 61724-1 standard pertains to the performance monitoring of PV systems[4]. Compliance



with these standards is crucial as they dictate the instruments required for monitoring solar irradiance and environmental conditions, impacting the overall efficiency and safety of solar installations[4].

### Importance of Standardization

Standards serve as a universal language that promotes interoperability among products from different manufacturers, thereby improving reliability for solar manufacturers, developers, financing parties, and engineering procurement teams[5][6]. The increasing deployment of renewable energy technologies necessitates a shift from standards primarily focused on conventional energy technologies to those addressing the unique needs of renewable systems, including solar energy[2].

### Challenges and Future Directions

Despite the establishment of these standards, challenges remain, particularly in the realm of data availability and consistency in performance metrics across different products and technologies. There is a need for comprehensive performance data that can be compared on a level playing field, as current methodologies vary widely between manufacturers [9]. This inconsistency can lead to confusion and misinterpretation of system capabilities, highlighting the importance of developing unified standards for performance evaluation and reporting.

Furthermore, the standardization process must continue to evolve to incorporate future methodological advancements and support emerging technologies within the solar sector. This evolution will facilitate a more accurate understanding of metrics such as capacity factor and land-use efficiency, which are vital for assessing the energy output of PV systems in various geographic areas [1].

One of the significant challenges in the standardization of solar energy terminology is the presence of institutional path dependency. Historical decisions have created a complex framework of rules and regulations that favor existing technologies and practices, particularly those supporting fossil fuel energy systems. This inertia can lead to inconsistencies in energy policies, as the legacy institutions often impede the integration of new, standardized terminology into current frameworks[3].

### Systemic Drivers of Inconsistency

Several systemic issues contribute to this policy misalignment. Institutional structures, shaped over decades, exhibit strong resistance to change, which complicates the efforts to implement standardized metrics across the solar energy sector[3]. For example, various ministries—such as those overseeing energy, finance, and environment—often work in silos, producing contradictory outcomes when there is a lack of coordinated planning[3]. Furthermore, the reliance on diverse metric terms can lead to confusion and hinder effective communication among stakeholders in the solar energy field[1].

### Diverse Metric Terms and Units

The proliferation of different metric terms and units used to describe solar energy-land relationships poses another challenge for standardization. In a systematic review, 51 unique metric terms and 34 different units of measure were identified across various studies, reflecting a significant inconsistency in how metrics are reported[1]. The interchangeable use of capacity-based and generation-based units, without clear contextual definitions, can lead to misinterpretation of land-use efficiency and energy generation, further complicating comparisons across studies[1].

To effectively overcome these challenges, coordinated reform is necessary. Strategies such as instituting regulatory sandboxes can provide controlled environments for testing new terminologies and practices, allowing for institutional learning and adaptation to emerging standards[3]. Additionally, developing cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms is crucial for aligning the priorities of various stakeholders, which can help mitigate policy conflicts that arise from disparate goals[3].

Efforts to standardize terminology and metrics in the field of solar energy have become increasingly important as the industry continues to grow rapidly. The need for uniformity is evident in the ongoing work to create common frameworks that can guide stakeholders in solar energy development, ensuring that all parties share a mutual understanding of key concepts and metrics.

### Literature Review and Methodological Advances

A systematic literature review conducted on land-related properties of photovoltaic (PV) and concentrated solar power (CSP) technologies highlighted the need for metric standardization in the solar energy sector. This review evaluated a broad range of peer-reviewed articles,

conference proceedings, and technical reports to identify existing terminologies and metrics in use, ultimately aiming to harmonize data across studies to facilitate better knowledge transfer and interpretation of results[1]. Standardization not only aids in documentation and metadata management but also supports the aggregation of trends in related research areas[1].

### Collaborative Efforts

Various organizations have recognized the importance of standardized practices and are actively working towards achieving this goal. For instance, a community has committed to equitable distribution of benefits from renewable energy projects, organizing working groups focused on key issues like public participation and siting-related risk assessment. These groups aim to establish best practices that stakeholders can adopt for effective solar project siting[7].

Additionally, standardized toolkits have been proposed to create a common language among team members, which enhances collaboration and coordination within the industry[8]. Engaging manufacturers, trade associations, and local governments is crucial for ensuring that all parties involved in solar energy projects are aligned in their understanding of key metrics and practices[9].

### Future Directions

The future of solar energy terminology standardization is poised to be shaped by ongoing research and development, as well as the growing demand for interoperability and consistency across the industry. As the need for standardized metrics becomes increasingly evident, future studies should focus on creating a common vernacular that can facilitate clearer communication among stakeholders involved in solar energy development[1][2]. This approach will not only enhance collaboration but also aid in the harmonization of data across various research initiatives, thereby supporting informed decision-making processes within the field[1].

Future directions must also address systemic challenges that hinder effective policy alignment and project implementation. This includes navigating the complex interplay of responsibilities among federal, state, and municipal governments, as well as different ministries overseeing energy, environment, and economy[3]. Establishing clear standards and regulations will be crucial to overcoming existing inconsistencies and ensuring that ambitious national renewable energy targets are met through

coordinated planning and updated regulatory frameworks[3].

The adoption of new technologies, particularly Building-Integrated Photovoltaics (BIPV), highlights the necessity for clear product definitions and standards within the industry. Current processes for certifying BIPV products often involve navigating multiple standards from both the solar and construction sectors, leading to increased costs and uncertainties that impede commercialization efforts[9][13]. Future initiatives should aim to streamline certification processes and develop comprehensive design resources that align with real-world applications, thereby facilitating the growth of BIPV technologies[9].

### Global Collaboration on Renewable Standards

As international trade and investment in renewable energy expand, collaboration among countries will be essential for developing unified standards. Initiatives like the APEC's guidelines for biofuels represent steps toward establishing international norms that can enhance the reliability and sustainability of renewable energy sources[2]. Such collaborations should be encouraged to foster innovation, promote energy efficiency, and ensure that all participating nations can align their policies with global best practices in renewable energy deployment[2][10].

Furthermore, engaging local stakeholders and fostering consensus among diverse groups will be vital for the successful implementation of standardized practices in solar energy. Initiatives like the "Uncommon Dialogue" organized by Stanford have demonstrated that cross-sector engagement can lead to meaningful agreements that address environmental challenges while promoting clean energy solutions[11]. Continuing to prioritize stakeholder involvement in the development of standards will ensure that the needs and concerns of all parties are considered, ultimately leading to more equitable and effective outcomes in solar energy deployment.

As the demand for alternative energy production sources continues to grow, the relevance of energy terminology, its standardization, and unification remains high. In scientific discourse, any term, regardless of its origin, must be well-founded. Otherwise, terminology as a whole may lead to misunderstandings. Knowing the definitions of terminology and terms is crucial for specialists in any field. For professionals in the energy sector, knowledge of terms directly affects the safety of their work. Therefore, it is



essential to regularly and critically review terminological systems.

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