

# Design of Off-Grid Systems with Sunny Island 4.4M / 6.0H / 8.0H Devices



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# 1 Off-Grid Energy Supply

## 1.1 Necessity for an Off-Grid Energy Supply

According to European Union estimates, approximately 1.5 billion people worldwide live without access to an electrical energy supply. Alone in Europe, there are approximately three hundred thousand homesteads and buildings that are not connected to the utility grid.

The high capital expenditure costs involved in expanding the utility grid coupled with low electricity demand often preclude remote areas from being connecting to the utility grid. Off-grid systems based on photovoltaic systems and other energy sources provide a viable alternative here, and are often an economically better solution.

## 1.2 Off-Grid Systems

Off-grid systems are autonomous utility grids that are fed with energy from various energy generators.

Off-grid systems can consist of the following components:

Components	Description
PV arrays	A PV array consists of several PV modules that produce direct current from solar energy.
PV inverter	The PV inverter (e.g. Sunny Boy or Sunny Tripower) converts the direct current produced by the PV array into grid-compliant alternating current and feeds this into the alternating current grid.  The PV inverter and the PV arrays must be dimensioned according to the chosen power (see Section 3.5 "PV System Design", page 15).
DC/DC charge controller	In an off-grid system, the direct current provided by the PV arrays can be used to charge a battery directly. A charge controller is necessary for this.
Batteries	Batteries store electrical energy and support the grid when other energy generators are not producing sufficient electricity. If more energy is produced than is consumed, the batteries can be charged again.  The capacity, nominal power and battery type must be taken into consideration when designing the batteries (see Section 3.4 "Battery-Storage System Design", page 14).
Battery inverter	As a voltage source, the battery inverter (e.g. Sunny Island) forms the stand-alone grid. The battery inverter regulates the balance between the energy that is generated and the energy that is used and incorporates a battery, PV array and load management system (see Section 2.1 "Working Principle of the Sunny Island Inverter", page 8).
Battery fuse	As an external DC fuse, the battery fuse safeguards the battery connection lines of the battery inverter. Furthermore, the battery fuse enables DC-side disconnection of the battery inverter.
Generators	Fuel powered generators (e.g. diesel generators) are often installed to supplement the energy supply when the state of charge of the batteries drops and there is insufficient energy being supplied by the PV array. These generators supply alternating current directly.

Components	Description
Wind turbine systems	Wind turbine systems convert wind energy into electrical energy and supply alternating current directly.
Hydroelectric power plants	Hydroelectric power plants use the kinetic energy of water to produce electrical energy. The hydroelectric power plant generators supply alternating current directly or are equipped with inverters to convert direct current into alternating current.

Off-grid systems can supply individual houses, settlements or even entire villages with electricity.

Various underlying conditions have to be taken into consideration when planning, designing and selecting an off-grid system. The optimum design of an electricity supply system depends on the following factors:

- Necessary connected rating
- Energy consumption
- Type of loads
- Utilization period
- Underlying meteorological conditions

## 1.3 Off-Grid System Types

### 1.3.1 AC Coupled Off-Grid Systems

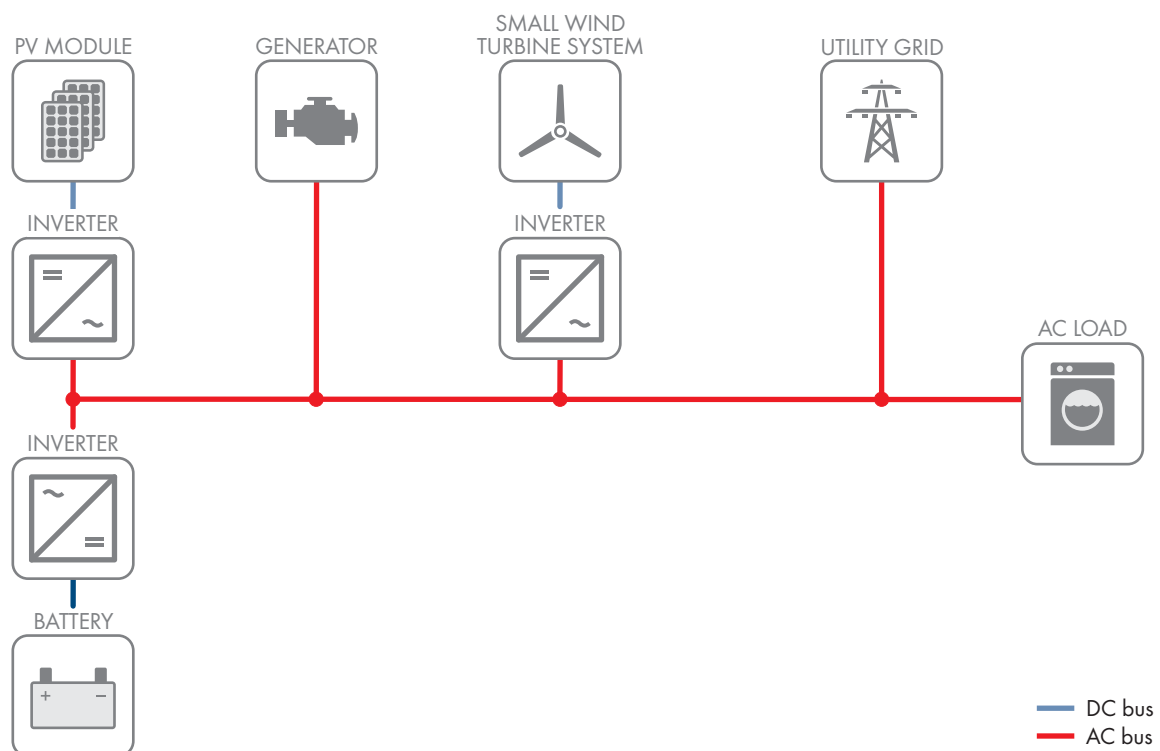


Figure 1: Example of an AC coupled system

In an AC coupled system, all loads and energy sources are coupled via an alternating current grid. The advantage here is that the off-grid system can be built and expanded flexibly with modular standardized components.

Depending on the application and availability, both renewable and conventional energy sources can be integrated. The connected energy sources charge the batteries and supply energy when necessary. Connection to the utility grid is possible, provided that the battery inverter and the combustion equipment are designed for this. AC coupled off-grid systems can be easily expanded with additional energy sources. Thus, they are able to satisfy increasing energy demands.

AC coupled off-grid systems can be used to supply conventional alternating current loads. They are therefore ideally suited for use in rural areas in developing- and newly industrialized countries, but also in industrialized countries in regions where a utility grid is not available.

The battery inverter connected to the battery, e.g. a Sunny Island inverter, forms the AC current grid.

In the medium-power range (1 kW to 300 kW), off-grid systems with a battery-storage system are significantly more attractive from an economic point of view than systems that are only equipped with generators. This is due to the high maintenance requirements, the short service life and the very low partial load efficiency of generators.

### 1.3.2 DC Coupled Off-Grid Systems

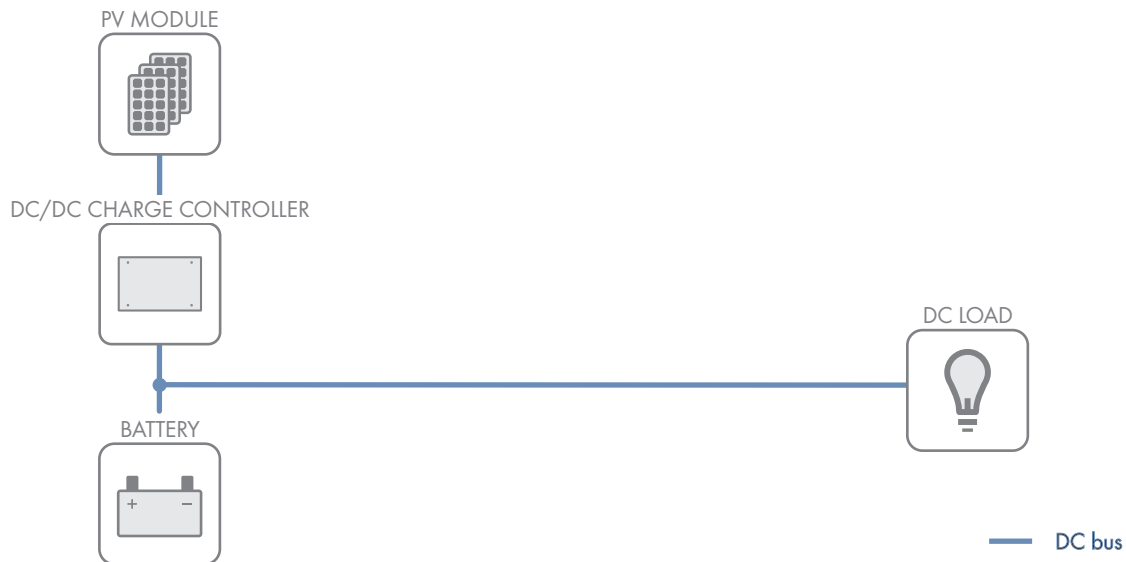


Figure 2: Example of a DC coupled system

In a DC coupled system, all energy sources are coupled via direct current. The PV array is integrated via special DC/DC charge controllers. During the day, the battery stores energy generated by the PV array. This stored energy is then available in the evening for operating the lighting.

DC coupling is suitable for simple system constellations and is beneficial in cases where the electricity supply is primarily used to operate lighting. An example of this application is the Solar Home System (SHS) with a power range of a few hundred watts.

Alternating current loads in a DC coupled off-grid system can only be operated via an additional small inverter.

### 1.3.3 Hybrid AC and DC Coupled Off-Grid Systems

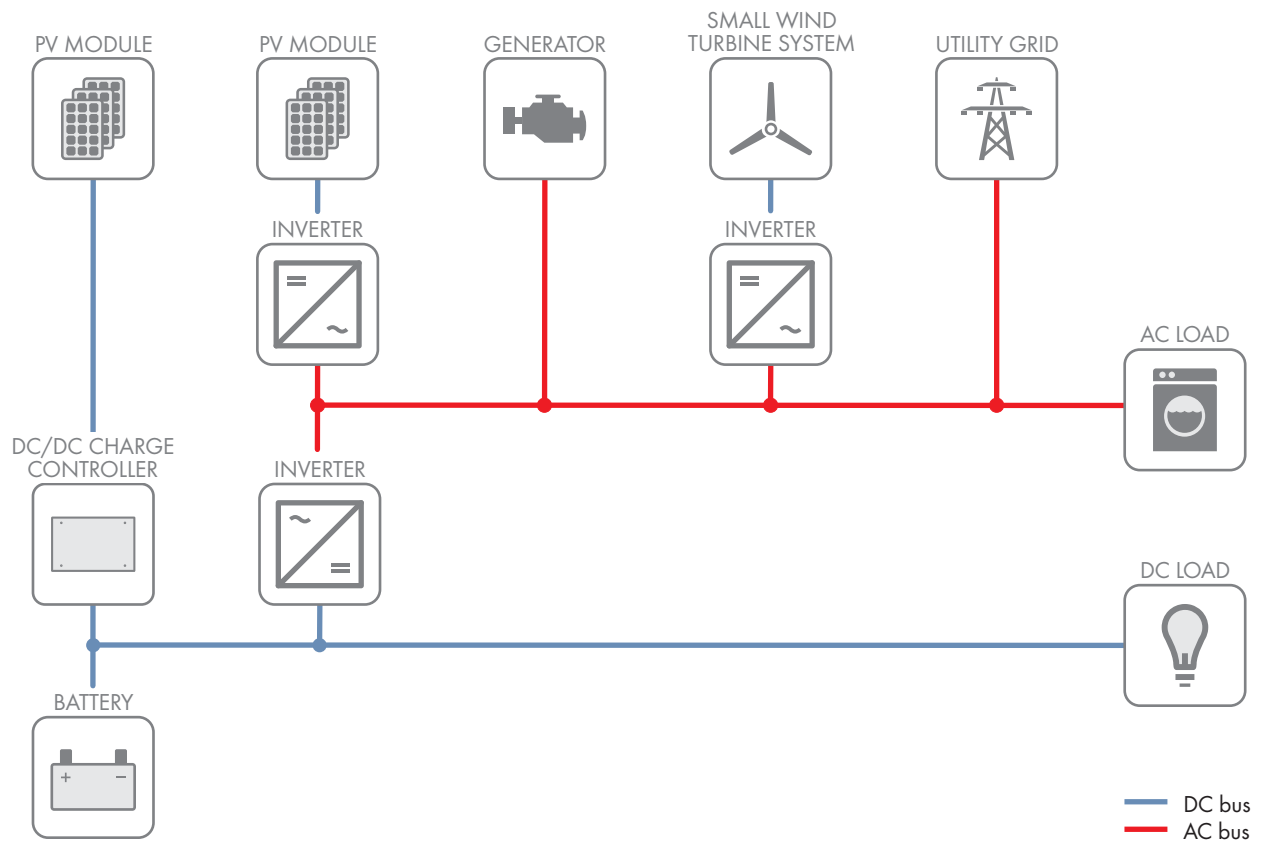


Figure 3: Example of a hybrid system with AC and DC coupling

Hybrid systems with AC and DC coupling are particularly well suited for coupling alternating current loads in the medium power range with DC energy sources. In hybrid systems, the battery can be charged via a generator at the same time. Hybrid systems are suited to supplying remote loads and satisfy higher energy demands. Accordingly, hybrid systems are used in ranches, smaller factories and on farms.

When designing the system, it must be ensured that the nominal power of the inverter is sufficient to supply the power to be consumed by the intended loads. Even if there is more power available from a PV system or wind turbine system, the inverter is the decisive factor in how much power is available on the AC side. The design of hybrid systems is much more complex than the design of purely AC coupled systems.

## 2 Off-Grid System with Sunny Island

### 2.1 Working Principle of the Sunny Island Inverter

The Sunny Island is a battery inverter that is connected directly to a battery-storage system. The Sunny Island forms the alternating current grid of the off-grid system and at the same time regulates the voltage and frequency in the alternating current grid.

Both electrical loads and energy generators are connected directly to the alternating current grid. Energy generators, e.g. PV inverters, feed into the alternating current grid of the off-grid system and thus supply the electrical loads.

The Sunny Island regulates the balance between the energy fed in and energy used and features a management system that manages the battery, generators and loads. If there is excess energy available (e.g. high solar irradiation and low consumption), the Sunny Island redirects energy from the alternating current grid and uses this to charge the battery. If there is insufficient energy available (low or no solar irradiation and high consumption), the Sunny Island supplies the alternating current grid with energy from the batteries.

The Sunny Island automatically checks the availability of the alternating current grid and system components. Therefore, additional control- and monitoring units are not necessary. This simplifies system operation and reduces capital expenditure.

### 2.2 Advantages of the Sunny Island Inverter

- Ideal for energy supply systems from 1 kW to > 300 kW
- Flexible configuration as a single system, single-phase parallel system or three-phase system
- Multicluster technology – combination of three-phase systems for the simple formation of a powerful energy supply.
- Expandable thanks to modular design
- Excellent overload characteristics
- Suitable for installation in extreme climate conditions
- Optimized battery management and state of charge monitoring for long lead-acid battery battery lives
- Compatible with many lithium-ion batteries (see technical information “List of Approved Batteries” at [www.SMA-Solar.com](http://www.SMA-Solar.com))
- Cost-efficient integration of alternating current loads, regenerative energy sources and generators
- Simple off-grid system commissioning



## 2.3 Modular Design

### 2.3.1 Single System

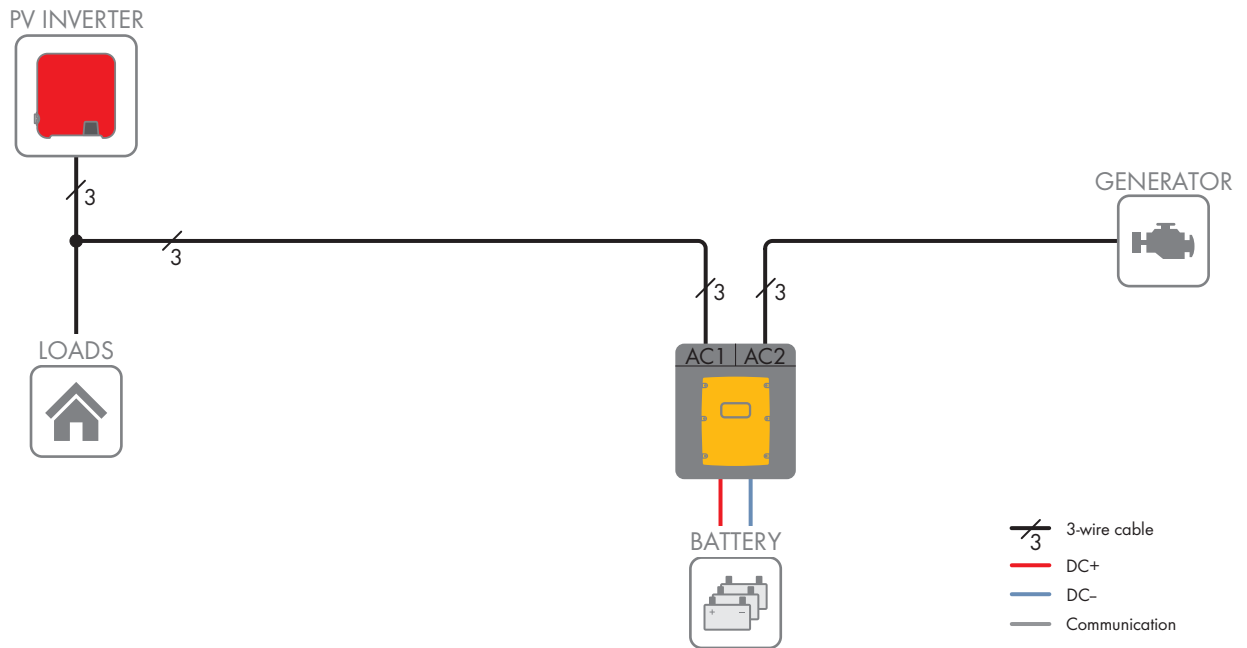


Figure 4: Principle of a single system

In a single system, one Sunny Island forms a single-phase stand-alone grid.

### 2.3.2 Single-Cluster System (Single-Phase)

#### **i** Required device types for single-phase single-cluster systems

In single-phase single-cluster systems, the Sunny Island inverters must be of device type SI6.0H-12 or SI8.0H-12.

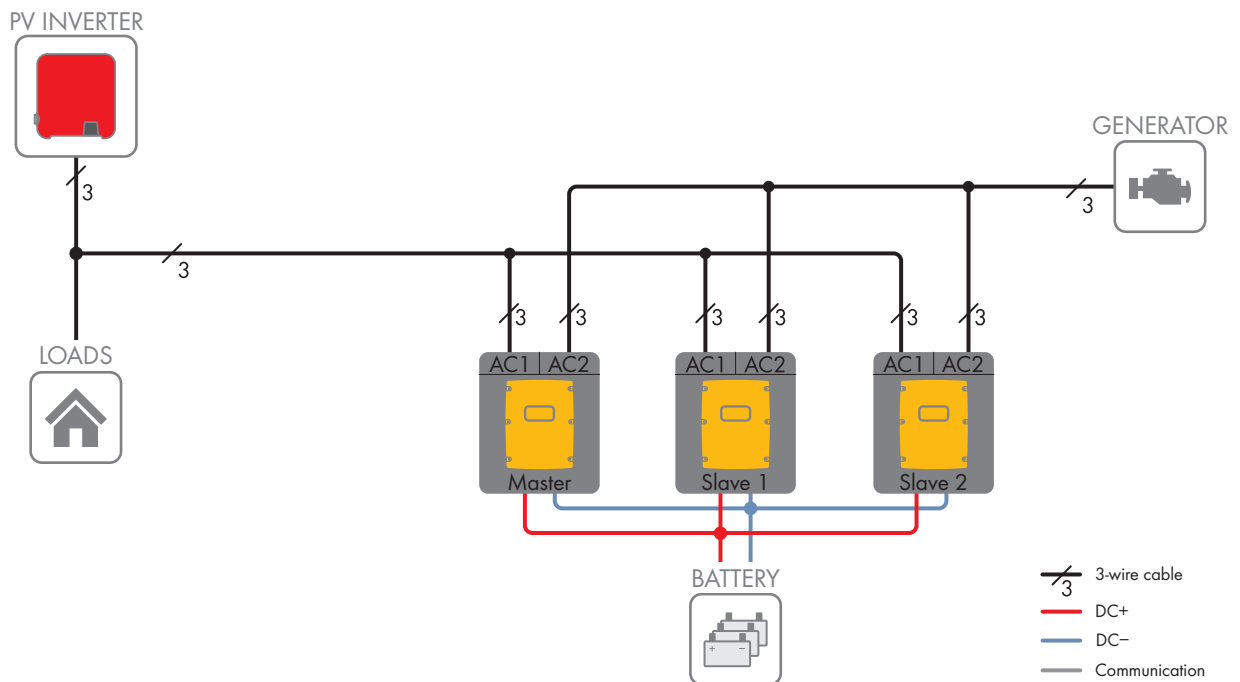


Figure 5: Principle of a single-phase single-cluster system

In a single-phase single-cluster system, up to three Sunny Island inverters are connected to one battery forming a cluster. The Sunny Island inverters are connected on the AC side to the same line conductor. If the device types within the cluster are different, the master must be an SI8.0H-12.

### 2.3.3 Single-Cluster System (Three-Phase)

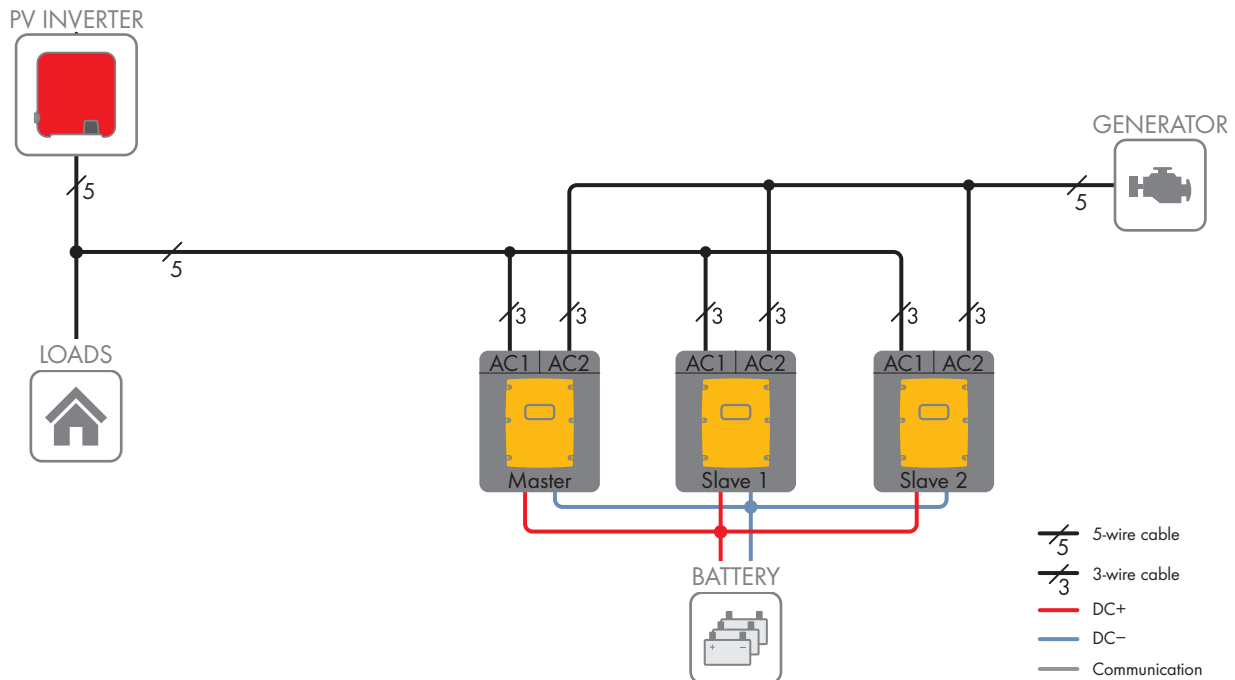


Figure 6: Principle of a three-phase single-cluster system

In a three-phase single-cluster system, up to three Sunny Island inverters are connected to one battery forming a cluster. The Sunny Island inverters are connected on the AC side to three different line conductors.

### 2.3.4 Multicluster System

#### **i** Required device types for multicluster systems

In multicluster systems for stand-alone grids, the following device types must be used:

- SI6.0H-12 (Sunny Island 6.0H)
- SI8.0H-12 (Sunny Island 8.0H)
- MC-BOX-6.3-11 (Multicluster-Box 6)
- MC-BOX-12.3-20 (Multicluster-Box 12)
- MC-BOX-36.3-11 (Multicluster-Box 36)

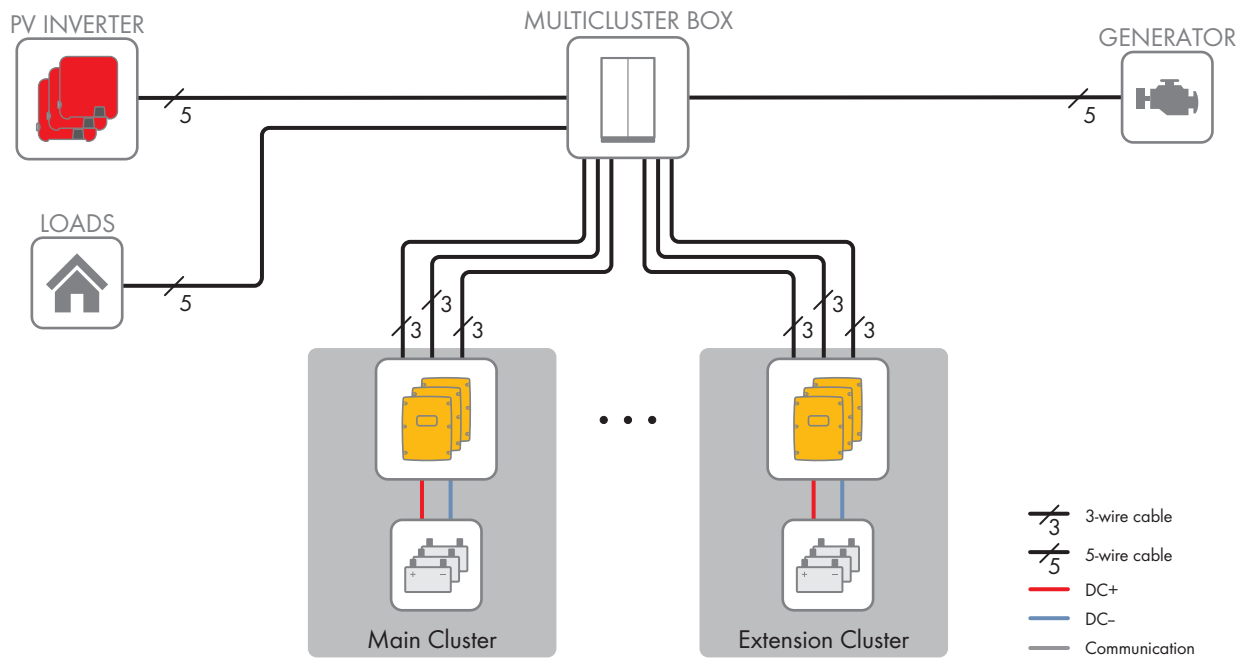


Figure 7: Principle of a multicuster system

Multicuster systems consist of several three-phase clusters. The individual clusters must be connected to a Multicuster-Box. The Multicuster-Box is an SMA multicuster technology device for off-grid systems, battery-backup systems and systems for increased self-consumption.

The Multicuster-Box is a main AC distribution board to which up to twelve clusters can be connected. Each three-phase cluster is made up of three DC-side, parallel-switched Sunny Island.

Only Sunny Island inverters of the same device type may be installed in a cluster: SI6.0H-12 or SI8.0H-12.

## 3 Designing an Off-Grid System

### 3.1 Procedure

It is fundamentally important for the economic viability and operational reliability of an off-grid system that it is designed based on demand. Aligning an off-grid system to the availability of PV energy as determined by geographic conditions as well as to the the energy behavior of the system user are both important components of the design.

As much information regarding an off-grid system is to be gathered as possible in order to facilitate an optimum design. It is imperative that information be gathered regarding the following:

- Intended purpose of the planned system
- Loads and utilization times
- Geographic characteristics of the planned installation site
- Possible energy generators
- Solar fraction (SF): Amount of PV energy as a proportion of the total energy supply in an off-grid system
- Battery bridging time

An initial design can be drawn up using the data gathered here which can provide information on the magnitude, the suitable energy suppliers and components.

The following sections describe the procedure for designing an off-grid system and build in part on one another.

Following the sequence of the individual sections is recommended (for an example of designing an off-grid system, see (see Section 4, page 20)).

You can use the planning tools provided by SMA Solar Technology AG as a support aid:

- Off-Grid Questionnaire (see [www.SMA-Solar.com](http://www.SMA-Solar.com))
- Sunny Design (see [www.SMA-Solar.com](http://www.SMA-Solar.com))

### 3.2 Estimating the Electrical Loads

The power and energy consumption of the loads is of significant importance in off-grid systems. The main questions to be answered here are:

- Which electrical loads are to be supplied by the off-grid system?
- How high will the energy consumption be per year or per day?
- What will be the maximum power in a day?

For orientation purposes, the following table gives an overview of popular loads, their power and their typical operating times per day.

Electrical loads	Nominal power	Typical operating time per day	Energy consumption per day
Air conditioner	3000 W	2 h	6 kWh
Dryer	1000 W	4 h	4 kWh
Washing machine	2000 W	1 h	2 kWh
Cooker (hob and oven)	2300 W	0.75 h	1.7 kWh
Dishwasher	1300 W	1 h	1.3 kWh
Water pump	200 W	3 h	0.6 kWh
Computer	250 W	2 h	0.5 kWh
Freezer 200 L	100 W	5 h	0.5 kWh

Electrical loads	Nominal power	Typical operating time per day	Energy consumption per day
Kettle	1800 W	0.25 h	0.45 kWh
Refrigerator	90 W	5 h	0.45 kWh
Vacuum cleaner	1800 W	0.25 h	0.43 kWh
Television (screen size 28")	100 W	4 h	0.4 kWh
Microwave oven	1200 W	0.25 h	0.3 kWh
Toaster	1200 W	0.25 h	0.3 kWh
Hairdryer	1000 W	0.25 h	0.25 kWh
Iron	1000 W	0.25 h	0.24 kWh
Printer	100 W	2 h	0.2 kWh
Amplifier	100 W	2 h	0.2 kWh
Heating circulation pump	70 W	2 h	0.14 kWh
Energy saving lamp	15 W	4 h	0.06 kWh
Satellite receiver	18 W	3 h	0.054 kWh
Mixer	200 W	0.25 h	0.05 kWh
DVD player	15 W	2 h	0.03 kWh
Sewing machine	80 W	0.25 h	0.02 kWh
Radio	5 W	3 h	0.015 kWh
Shaver	15 W	0.25 h	0.0038 kWh

### 3.3 Sunny Island and Multicluster-Box Design

#### 3.3.1 Recommendations on the Selection of Sunny Island / Multicluster-Box

The following information is necessary in order to determine the number of Sunny Island devices necessary in single-phase systems:

- Maximum power drawn by the loads per day ( $P_{\max}$ )
- Power of the Sunny Island inverter for 30 minutes at 25 °C ( $P_{30 \text{ min}}$ )

#### Calculation:

$$\text{Number of inverters Sunny Island} = P_{\max} : P_{30 \text{ min}}$$

#### Information on three-phase systems

The number of devices necessary in three-phase systems can be determined using the same method as that specified for single-phase systems. The result must, however, be rounded up to the next highest number that is divisible by three. This ensures that the inverters can be distributed symmetrically across the line conductors (see Section 3.3.2, page 14).

### 3.3.2 Sunny Island Inverter Selection

#### **i** Power-temperature curve

The active power specified for the Sunny Island is dependent on the ambient temperature (see the Sunny Island inverter datasheet for the power to temperature ratio). If constantly high ambient temperatures are to be expected at the planned installation site, a Sunny Island with a higher rated power than is necessary for the load requirements should be selected.

Device type	Rated power	Power for 30 minutes at 25 °C	Application			
			Single System	Single-phase single-cluster system	Three-phase single-cluster system	Multicenter system
SI4.4M-12 (Sunny Island 4.4M)	3300 W	4400 W	yes	no	yes	no
SI6.0H-12 (Sunny Island 6.0H)	4600 W	6000 W	yes	yes	yes	yes
SI8.0H-12 (Sunny Island 8.0H)	6000 W	8000 W	yes	yes	yes	yes

### 3.3.3 Multicenter-Box Selection

Device type	Rated power	Number of inverters	Number of clusters
MC-BOX-6.3-11 (Multicenter-Box 6)	55 kW	6	2
MC-BOX-12.3-20 (Multicenter-Box 12)	138 kW	12	4
MC-BOX-36.3-11 (Multicenter-Box 36)	300 kW	36	12

## 3.4 Battery-Storage System Design

The battery capacity necessary, the battery voltage and the suitable battery type are decisive factors when selecting the battery.

### Battery capacity

The starting point when selecting a battery is the necessary battery capacity. The necessary battery capacity depends primarily on the following factors:

- Bridging time  
The bridging time is the time period, in days, for which the off-grid system can supply the loads exclusively from the battery. A bridging time of two days should be planned for off-grid systems with generators.
- Energy consumption per year ( $E_{\text{Anno}}$ )  
The energy consumption in the off-grid system to be expected per year is dependent on the loads installed and their energy requirements (see Section 3.2, page 12).
- Average battery efficiency during electric discharge ( $\eta_{\text{Batt}}$ )  
The average battery efficiency during electric discharge is approximately 0.9 in off-grid systems.

The battery capacity is normally specified in kWh or Ah.

**Calculation:**

$$\text{Battery capacity [kWh]} = \frac{\text{Bridging Time} \cdot \frac{E_{\text{Anno}}}{365}}{\eta_{\text{Batt}}}$$

$$\text{Battery capacity [Ah]} = \text{Battery capacity [kWh]} \cdot \frac{1000}{\text{Nominal battery voltage}}$$

**i Observe the usable battery capacity**

In order to achieve the longest possible battery service life, only the usable range of the battery should be used for charging and discharging. The battery capacity calculated here is based on this usable range. With lead-acid batteries, a usable range of approximately 50% of the nominal capacity is typical, with that of lithium-ion batteries being approximately 80% (see battery manufacturer documentation).

**i Observe standard sizes**

Batteries are not available in all sizes. Battery manufacturers offer standard sizes. Selecting the next highest standard size is to be recommended. Observe the usable battery capacity when selecting.

**Nominal battery voltage**

All Sunny Island devices use batteries with a nominal voltage of 48 °V.

**Battery type**

The Sunny Island is compatible with the following battery types:

- Lead-acid batteries

The battery room must be ventilated in accordance with the battery manufacturer specifications and with the locally applicable standards and directives (see battery manufacturer documentation).

- Lithium-ion battery

If connecting a lithium-ion battery, the following must be observed:

- The battery must comply with the locally applicable standards and directives and must be intrinsically safe.
- The lithium-ion battery must be approved for use with the Sunny Island. The list of lithium-ion batteries approved for the Sunny Island is updated regularly (see the technical information "List of Approved Batteries" at [www.SMA-Solar.com](http://www.SMA-Solar.com)).
- If none of the lithium-ion batteries approved for use with the Sunny Island can be used, lead-acid batteries must be used.

**Battery fuse**

As an external DC fuse, the battery fuse safeguards the battery connection lines of the battery inverter. Furthermore, the battery fuse enables DC-side disconnection of the battery inverter.

A battery fuse must always be installed between the battery and the Sunny Island. SMA Solar Technology AG recommends the use of a battery fuse specially aligned for use with the Sunny Island from enwitec electronic GmbH & Co.KG.

The fuse links in the battery fuse must also be aligned for the Sunny Island (see Sunny Island battery inverter installation manual).

## 3.5 PV System Design

### 3.5.1 Estimation of the Nominal PV System Power

**Influencing factors**

The nominal PV system power depends on the following factors:

- Energy consumption per year ( $E_{\text{Anno}}$ )
- System efficiency ( $\eta_{\text{Sys}}$ )  
The system efficiency is approximately 0.7.
- Solar fraction (SF): Amount of PV energy as a proportion of the total energy supply in an off-grid system  
The solar fraction depends on the amount of PV energy typically available at the installation site.
- Specific PV energy yield ( $E_{\text{PV}}$ )  
The specific energy yield depends on the amount of energy typically available at the installation site and on the nominal PV system power.

### PV energy yield and reasonable solar fraction in the off-grid system

Region (examples)	Specific energy yield per year*	Solar fraction of the energy supply
Germany	800 kWh/(kWp * a) to 900 kWh/(kWp * a)	50% to 70%
Southern Europe	1300 kWh/(kWp * a) to 1450 kWh/(kWp * a)	60% to 90%
North Africa, South Africa or South America	1450 kWh/(kWp * a) to 1700 kWh/(kWp * a)	60% to 100%
Saudi Arabia	1800 kWh/(kWp * a)	60% to 100%

\* Example: 800 kWh/(kWp \* a) is a specific energy yield of 800 kWh in 1 year per 1 kWp installed nominal PV system power

### Calculation:

An approximation of the nominal PV system power can be calculated using the above listed values.

$$P_{\text{PV}} = E_{\text{Anno}} \cdot \frac{1}{\eta_{\text{Sys}}} \cdot \frac{\text{SF}}{E_{\text{PV}}}$$

### Information on design

The design of the PV array and the selection of the PV inverter depends on the necessary nominal PV system power (see Section 3.5.2, page 16).

- The nominal PV system power results from the rated power of the installed PV inverters.
- In off-grid systems, the nominal PV system power may not be more than double the total nominal AC power of the Sunny Islands inverters (see Section 3.3, page 13).
- The battery capacity per installed kWp of the PV array must be at least 100 Ah. Example: with a PV array with 5 kWp, the battery capacity must be at least 500 Ah (see Section 3.4, page 14).

### 3.5.2 Selecting the PV Inverter

You can install the following PV inverters in off-grid systems. The PV inverters must be equipped with the firmware version stated in the table or higher. If this is not the case, perform a firmware update (see PV inverter documentation).

PV inverter	Firmware version	Information
<b>Sunny Boy (SB)</b>		
SB1.5-1VL-40	2.05.01.R	-
SB2.5-1VL-40	2.05.01.R	-



PV inverter	Firmware version	Information
SB3.0-1AV-40	1.2.18.R	-
SB3.6-1AV-40	1.2.18.R	-
SB4.0-1AV-40	1.2.18.R	-
SB5.0-1AV-40	1.2.18.R	-
SB 3000TL-21	2.60.03.R	-
SB 3600TL-21	2.60.03.R	-
SB 4000TL-21	2.60.03.R	-
SB 5000TL-21	2.60.03.R	-
SB 6000TL-21	2.80.02.R	-
<b>Sunny Tripower (STP)</b>		
STP 5000TL-20	2.50.01.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems
STP 6000TL-20	2.50.01.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems
STP 7000TL-20	2.50.01.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems
STP 8000TL-20	2.50.01.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems
STP 9000TL-20	2.50.01.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems
STP 10000TL-20	2.53.02.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems
STP 12000TL-20	2.53.02.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems
STP 15000TL-10	2.22.17.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems
STP 15000TL-30	2.83.03.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems
STP 20000TL-30	2.81.07.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems
STP 25000TL-30	2.81.07.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems
STP 50-40	1.1.19.R	Can only be used in three-phase off-grid systems

### Maximum PV system power

In off-grid systems, the maximum PV system power depends on the total power of the Sunny Island inverters.

- Maximum output power of the PV system per SI4.4M-12: 4600 W
- Maximum output power of the PV system per SI6.0H-12: 9200 W
- Maximum output power of the PV system per SI8.0H-12: 12000 W

The maximum output power of the PV system must be observed to ensure stable operation of the off-grid system.

### Configuration of Stand-Alone Mode

All mentioned inverters can be configured for the stand-alone mode. To do this, there must be selected a country data set valid for the stand-alone mode or a valid set country standard (see the PV inverter documentation).

## 3.6 Generator Design

The nominal power of the generator(s) should be approximately 80% to 120% of the total nominal power of the planned battery inverter. Preferentially, this value should be below 100%; this ensures that the utilization of the generators will always be optimal. This will ensure a long service life as well as good utilization of the fuel, e.g. the diesel.

## 3.7 Estimating the PV System Costs

Using the rough design laid out here, an initial estimation of the PV system costs can be calculated. The costs in the estimation shown here comprise of:

- Battery inverter costs
- Battery-storage system and battery fuse costs
- PV system costs (modules and PV inverter)
- Generator costs
- Mounting and installation costs

Due to the variety of options for the systems, not all possible positions can be taken into consideration. Additional positions can be taken into consideration in a more specific calculation.

## 3.8 Planning Tools

### 3.8.1 Data Gathering with the Off-Grid Questionnaire

The SMA Solar Technology AG Off-Grid Questionnaire enables the systematic gathering of all information that is necessary for designing an off-grid system (download available at [www.SMA-Solar.com](http://www.SMA-Solar.com)). The Off-Grid Questionnaire can be used as preparation for designing the PV system later.

## 3.8.2 PV System Design with Sunny Design

**SUNNY DESIGN WEB** | English > | Project Neues Projekt >

My Sunny Design > | Kristin Schwarz >

Enter project data | Define Load Profile | Configure PV system | Configure storage system | Configure Genset | Wire sizing | **Analyses of the energy and power in the system** | Overview of results | Project Documentation

Navigation | Help

Power

Energy

Solar fraction

### Analyses of the energy and power in the system

You will receive an analysis of the energy flows and the power distribution in the system here.

▼ Power

✔ System conditionally compatible

System proposal	
Nominal AC power PV inverters	4.6 kW
Nominal AC power storage system	9.9 kW
Nominal AC power genset	500 kW
Power reserve	0 kW
Energy deficit	0 kWh
Nominal AC power PV inverters / storage system	0.46
Nominal AC power genset / storage system	50.51
Usable storage capacity	80 kWh
Autonomous time	5.3 d
Average annual solar fraction	99.2 %

Information and solution proposals (1 note)

Energy

Solar fraction

#### Next steps

In the next step, you can check the entries and results in the overview.

Overview

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Figure 8: Example for designing an off-grid system with Sunny Design Web

Sunny Design is a software package for planning and designing PV systems and PV hybrid systems. Sunny Design provides you with recommendations on possible designs for your PV system or your off-grid system.

Sunny Design is available as an online version - Sunny Design Web - and as a desktop version - Sunny Design 3. You can only use the Sunny Design Web online version via the Internet ([www.SunnyDesignWeb.com](http://www.SunnyDesignWeb.com)). You must install the desktop version of Sunny Design 3 on your computer, but once registered, you do not need an Internet connection (for documentation and download, see [www.SMA-Solar.com](http://www.SMA-Solar.com)).

## 4 Example of Designing an Off-Grid System

### Initial values and necessary information

The following example describes designing an off-grid system in North Africa and serves as orientation and a starting point for in-depth system planning.

The following initial values have been specified:

- The energy requirements of the electrical loads is approximately 4500 kWh/year (see Section 3.2, page 12).
- The maximum power needed per day by the loads is 5 kW.
- The bridging time of the off-grid system is to be 2 days.
- The off-grid system is to be single-phase.
- One generator is to be installed to support the energy supply when the PV power available is low.

The following information is needed:

- How many Sunny Island inverters are to be installed?
- What is the battery capacity to be?
- Which PV inverters are to be installed and how many?
- What is the nominal power of the generator to be?

### Step 1: Determining the number of Sunny Island inverters necessary

In this example, the Sunny Island 6.0H is to be installed (see Section 3.3.2, page 14).

$$\text{Number of inverters Sunny Island} = P_{\max} : P_{30 \text{ min}}$$

$$\text{Number of Inverters Sunny Island} = 5 \text{ kW} : 6 \text{ kW} = 0.8$$

The result must be rounded up. Therefore, in this example 1 Sunny Island 6.0H is necessary.

### Step 2: Determining the battery capacity

The average system efficiency when discharging the battery is made up of the Sunny Island inverter efficiency and the battery efficiency. A good value based on experience is the factor 0.9.

$$\text{Battery capacity [kWh]} = \frac{\text{Bridging Time} \cdot \frac{E_{\text{Anno}}}{365}}{\eta_{\text{Bat}}}$$

$$\text{Battery capacity [Ah]} = \text{Battery capacity [kWh]} \cdot \frac{1000}{\text{Nominal battery voltage}}$$

$$\text{Battery capacity [kWh]} = \frac{2 \text{ days} \cdot \frac{4500 \text{ kWh}}{365}}{0.9} = 27.4 \text{ kWh}$$

$$\text{Battery capacity [Ah]} = 27.4 \text{ kWh} \cdot \frac{1000}{48 \text{ V}} = 570 \text{ Ah}$$

The battery capacity necessary in this example is 27.4 kWh or 570 Ah.

#### **i** Observe the usable battery capacity

In order to achieve the longest possible battery service life, only the usable range of the battery should be used for charging and discharging. The battery capacity calculated here is based on this usable range. With lead-acid batteries, a usable range of approximately 50% of the nominal capacity is typical, with that of lithium-ion batteries being approximately 80% (see battery manufacturer documentation).

Based on the necessary battery capacity and the usable range of the nominal capacity, the battery to be used in the off-grid system can be selected (see Section 3.4, page 14).

### Step 3: Determining the nominal PV system capacity

The off-grid system is to be installed in North Africa. This furnishes us with additional initial values to be used in the following calculation:

- It is recommended that a specific energy yield of 1450 kWh per year per kWp of the nominal PV system power be assumed (see Section 3.5.1, page 15).
- It is recommended that the solar fraction of the off-grid system energy supply is assumed to be 70% (see Section 3.5.1, page 15).

$$P_{PV} = E_{\text{Anno}} \cdot \frac{1}{\eta_{\text{Sys}}} \cdot \frac{SF}{E_{PV}}$$

$$P_{PV} = 4500 \text{ kWh/a} \cdot \frac{1}{0.7} \cdot \frac{70\%}{1450 \text{ kWh}/(\text{kWp} \cdot \text{a})} = 3.10 \text{ kWp}$$

In this example, the nominal PV system capacity is 3.1 kWp. This means that a PV inverter with a rated power of at least 3100 W must be used in this system. The maximum rated power of the PV inverter is based on the selected Sunny Island. Therefore, in the present example, the rated power may be up to 9200 W (see Section 3.5.2, page 16).

A suitable design for the PV modules and the PV inverter as well as the correct cabling can be calculated simply using Sunny Design (see Section 3.8.2, page 19).

### Step 4: Determining the nominal power of the generator

The nominal power of the Sunny Island inverter is 4600 W. This means that the nominal power of the generator should be between 3680 W (80%) and 5520 W (120%). In order that the generator is ideally utilized, a nominal power of less than 4600 W (100%) is recommended (see Section 3.6, page 18).

## 5 Appendix

### 5.1 Accessories

The following overview provides a summary of the accessories available for your product. If required, these can be ordered from your distributor.

Designation	Brief description	SMA order number
SI-SYSCAN.BGx	Communication interface for communication between clusters in a multicluster system	SI-SYSCAN-NR
BAT-TEMP-SENSOR	Battery temperature sensor of the type KTY with connection line (length: 10 m)	BAT-TEMP-SENSOR

### 5.2 Additional Sunny Island Inverter Functions in the Off-Grid System

#### 5.2.1 Grid- and Generator Management

##### 5.2.1.1 Typical External Energy Sources

The Sunny Island enables switching over to the external energy source grid and disconnection from the grid. External energy sources are voltage sources and determine the voltage and frequency of the electricity grid. Typical external energy sources are generators and the utility grid.

#### Generators as an external energy source

A generator is used as an energy reserve in the off-grid system. If there is insufficient energy available for the loads from AC sources in the stand-alone grid (e.g. PV inverter), the Sunny Island can use the energy provided by a generator.

Possible generators	Explanation
Autostart generators	These generators are started and stopped with a single contact. This means that the Sunny Island can control the generator directly.
Generators without an autostart function	These generators do not have electric starting devices. These generators are started via a cable pull or a crank, for example.
Generators that can be remote-started electrically and do not have their own control system	These generators have two control contacts: one contact for the starter and one contact for ignition or for preheating. An external generator control device is necessary.

#### The utility grid as an external energy source

With the Sunny Island, you can use the utility grid in various ways:

- As an energy reserve
- As the main supplier of loads in the stand-alone grid

If the utility grid is the main supplier of the loads, then this is a battery-backup system. If the utility grid fails, the Sunny Island disconnects the stand-alone grid from the utility grid and switches to stand-alone mode. In stand-alone mode, the Sunny Island supplies the stand-alone grid with energy from the battery.

#### Generators and the utility grid as external energy sources

The utility grid and a generator can also be connected to the off-grid system in combination. This is particularly useful in the event of long-term grid failures where the battery capacity is no longer sufficient to bridge the grid failure after a period of time. In the event of long-term grid failures, you can switch to the generator.

The generator and utility grid cannot feed electricity into the off-grid system at the same time. Therefore, switching between the generator and utility grid operation must be possible. Since the Sunny Island does not have an integrated automatic transfer switch, an external automatic transfer switch is necessary in systems with both a generator and the utility grid connected as external energy sources.

In multicluster systems with the Multicluster-Box 12 (MC-BOX-12.3-20), for example, the Grid-Connect-Box takes on the role of the automatic transfer switch.

### 5.2.1.2 Synchronization of the Stand-Alone Grid with External Energy Sources

Synchronization enables the Sunny Island to connect the stand-alone grid to the external energy source.

If external AC voltage is present at the Sunny Island, the Sunny Island synchronizes the stand-alone grid with the external AC voltage. When the stand-alone grid is synchronized with the external energy source, the Sunny Island closes its internal transfer relay. When the internal transfer relay is closed, the external energy source determines the voltage and frequency in the stand-alone grid.

### 5.2.1.3 Interactions between External Energy Sources and the Stand-Alone Grid

External energy sources have an influence on the power control of the AC sources (e.g. on PV inverters). The Sunny Island regulates the power output of the connected AC sources via the stand-alone grid frequency. The higher the stand-alone grid frequency, the lower the amount of power that is fed into the stand-alone grid from the PV inverters and the wind power inverters (see Section 5.2.3 "Frequency Shift Power Control", page 24).

If you start a generator manually, the Sunny Island synchronizes the frequency of the stand-alone grid with the frequency of the generator voltage and connects the stand-alone grid to the generator voltage. This means that the Sunny Island can no longer use the frequency of the stand-alone grid to regulate the AC sources in the stand-alone grid. Power regulation of the AC sources in the stand-alone grid is not possible during synchronization.

## 5.2.2 Load Control

### 5.2.2.1 Overload Capacity

The Sunny Island is optimized for both thermal- and electrical overload conditions. It adjusts the maximum power directly to the ambient conditions.

With the patented OptiCool cooling system, SMA Solar Technology AG offers a technical solution that combines both passive- and active cooling together. The intelligent temperature management system comprises of a two-chamber system with a water-tight area for the electronics and an airflow-ventilated area with the relevant heat sources. This ensures exceptional protection with extraordinary overload behavior and the greatest level of reliability.

In the event of high inrush currents, soft start functions are activated: The Sunny Island 6.0H/8.0H can supply a current of 120 A for 60 ms. The inverter supplies overcurrent at a magnitude of 2.5 for up to 3 s. Only then – for example in the event of a permanent short circuit – is the device disconnected for safety reasons. 16 A circuit breakers with B characteristic are triggered within 100 ms, also satisfying the safety requirements of grid-parallel installations.

### 5.2.2.2 Load Shedding

Load shedding prevents battery deep discharge and controls the supply of energy to the loads. Load shedding provides the option of disconnecting specific loads from the system.

Load shedding is necessary for an off-grid system that is exclusively supplied with PV energy or wind energy.

The Sunny Island controls up to two load-shedding contactors depending on the state of charge of the battery. You can install two types of load shedding:

- One-level load shedding

If the battery state of charge limit has been reached, one load-shedding contactor disconnects all loads at the same time. Depending on the configuration, the load-shedding contactor closes when the battery has been sufficiently charged or when the stand-alone grid has been switched to an external energy source.

- Two-level load shedding  
 In two-level load shedding, there are two thresholds for the state of charge of the battery in order to control two load-shedding contactors. When the first threshold for the state of charge of the battery is reached, the first load-shedding contactor disconnects a group of loads. When the second threshold for the state of charge of the battery is reached, the second load-shedding contactor disconnects the remaining loads.

### 5.2.3 Frequency Shift Power Control

If PV inverters are connected on the AC side in stand-alone mode, the Sunny Island must be able to limit their output power. This limitation becomes necessary when, for example, the Sunny Island inverter battery is fully charged and the PV power available from the PV system exceeds the power requirement of the connected loads.

To prevent the excess energy from overcharging the battery, the Sunny Island recognizes this situation and changes the frequency at the AC output. This frequency change is monitored by the PV inverter. As soon as the power frequency increases beyond the value specified in **f Start Delta**, the PV inverter limits its output power accordingly.

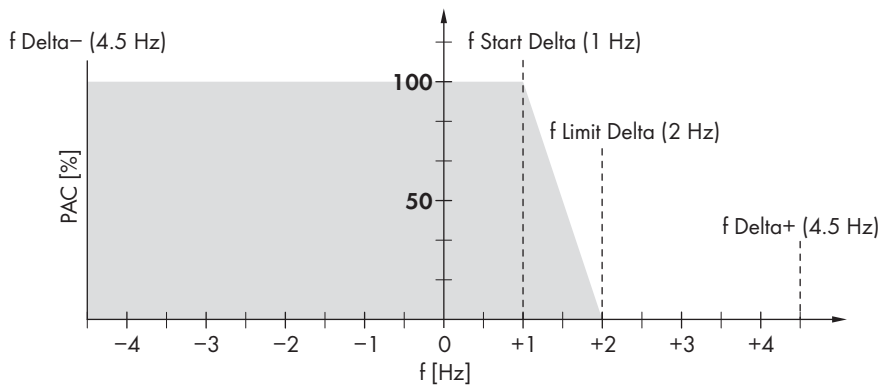


Figure 9: Function of the frequency shift power control

Designation	Explanation
<b>f</b>	Base frequency of the stand-alone grid (50 Hz)
<b>f Delta-</b> to <b>f Delta+</b>	Maximum range in relation to the base frequency in which the PV inverter is active.
<b>f Start Delta</b>	Frequency increase in relation to the base frequency, at which point the power regulation via frequency begins.
<b>f Limit Delta</b>	Frequency increase in relation to the base frequency, at which point the power regulation via frequency ends. The power of the PV inverter at this point is 0 W.

If the frequency falls below the limit **f Delta-** or exceeds the limit **f Delta+**, the PV inverters disconnect from the stand-alone grid. If a generator is operating in the stand-alone grid, the generator determines the frequency and the PV inverters react to certain frequency changes due to the generator. With generators, the frequency of the output voltage under load is 50 Hz. For this reason, in most cases the PV inverters will feed their entire power into the stand-alone grid, even when the generator is in operation. If the current battery voltage is greater than the rated battery voltage and is also to be synchronized with a generator, the Sunny Island will temporarily increase the frequency and the PV inverters will disconnect from the stand-alone grid via frequency control (overfrequency). The Sunny Island then synchronizes with the generator.

### 5.2.4 Control and Monitoring via Internal Multifunction Relay

Using two multifunction relays, each Sunny Island can control various functions and can display operating states and warning messages.



Possible function or output	Explanation
Controlling PV arrays	The multifunction relay activates if a PV array request is received from the Sunny Island inverter's generator management system. With the multifunction relay, you can control PV arrays with an electrical remote-start function or connect a signal generator for PV arrays with no autostart function.
Controlling load-shedding contactors	The multifunction relay is activated depending on the state of charge of the battery. Depending on the configuration, you can install a one-level load shedding with one multifunction relay or a two-level load shedding with two multifunction relays. You can also adjust the thresholds for the battery state of charge to be dependent on the time of day (see the Sunny Island inverter installation manual).
Time control for external processes	The multifunction relays can be time-controlled (see the Sunny Island inverter installation manual).
Display of operating states and warning messages	Each multifunction relay can display either one event or one warning message (see the Sunny Island inverter installation manual).
Control of a battery-room fan*	The multifunction relay is activated when the charging current causes the lead-acid battery to emit gasses. A connected battery room fan is switched on for at least one hour (see the Sunny Island inverter installation manual).
Control of an electrolyte pump*	Depending on the nominal energy throughput, the multifunction relay is activated at least once a day (see the Sunny Island inverter installation manual).
Use of excess energy	In off-grid systems, a multifunction relay is activated during the constant voltage phase, and thus controls additional loads (see the Sunny Island inverter installation manual). By switching on additional loads, any excess energy that may be available and which would otherwise have to be dissipated can be put to good use.

\* for lead-acid batteries

## 5.2.5 Operation and User Guide

The basis of the Sunny Island inverter operation concept is the "single point of operation". All settings, switching procedures and system variables can be summarized and thus displayed and changed on a single display.

The "single point of operation" allows for a closed system overview and enables the setting of parallel units and connected charge controllers to be performed from one device. Information on external sources or loads can be viewed, because all automatic switching procedures are also activated via the battery inverter. Via an internal communication structure, all relevant information is shared between system components that support this function.

## 5.2.6 Data Recording and Data Storage

A major part of the internal operation menu is concerned with the history of all operating states arising. Peak values and important information and events are stored in an internal, permanent memory. An integrated data recording system records all measurements, calculations and evaluations. Thus, a comprehensive picture of all activities – from charging procedures through to automatic load shedding – can be built up.

With the SMA Cluster Controller, the Sunny Island inverter data recording capabilities can be expanded simply. For example, simple and comprehensive remote monitoring is made possible.

## 5.3 Further Information on Battery Management for Lead-Acid Batteries

### 5.3.1 Advantages of Battery Management

The Sunny Island inverter battery management system for lead-acid batteries is based on a very accurate determination of the state of charge. By combining the three most common methods for recording the state of charge, the Sunny Island reaches a measuring accuracy of more than 95%. This way, battery overcharge and deep discharge are avoided.

Another feature of the battery management system is the extremely gentle charging control. It automatically selects the optimum charging strategy for the battery type and the situation in which it is used. This means that overcharging can be reliably prevented and that the battery can be fully charged regularly. Use of the available charging power is always optimized.

### 5.3.2 Battery State

#### 5.3.2.1 Nominal Capacity and Battery Aging

##### **i** Nominal capacity as specified by the battery manufacturer

The nominal capacity is specified by the battery manufacturer as being the amount of energy that can be drawn from the battery over a specified discharging period. If, for example, a current of 20 A can be drawn from a fully charged battery for ten hours, then this battery has a nominal capacity of 200 Ah. Because of the ten-hour discharge duration, the specification of the nominal capacity of 200 Ah must be accompanied by the suffix C10.

In order to be able to compare the nominal capacity of different batteries meaningfully, the nominal capacity of each battery must be based on the same discharge duration (see battery manufacturer documentation).

The usable capacity of a new battery corresponds to the nominal capacity, specified by the manufacturer, for a ten-hour electric discharge (C10). As the battery ages, its usable capacity drops due to the following reasons:

- **Calendrical aging**

The usable battery capacity drops over time (even if the battery is not used).

- **Cycling**

The battery ages through use. This aging is mainly influenced by the depth of the discharge cycles.

Battery aging is also influenced by various other factors, e.g. by insufficient charging, excessive charging voltages, deep discharges and temperature. With the correct choice of the battery parameters, the battery management system can influence these factors and conserve the battery.

#### 5.3.2.2 Current State of Charge

The battery management system displays the current state of charge of the battery (SOC) as the parameter **Current battery state of charge** and the estimated error of the state of charge as the parameter **Current battery state of charge**.

The estimated error of the state of charge provides information regarding the accuracy of the currently calculated battery state of charge. The estimated error is at its lowest immediately after a full charge or equalization charge and then increases over time until the next completed full charge or equalization charge.

#### 5.3.2.3 Current Usable Battery Capacity

The battery management system displays the current usable battery capacity expressed as a percentage of the nominal capacity as the value SOH (state of health). After commissioning, the Sunny Island adopts the set nominal capacity (Parameter **Rated battery capacity**) as the usable battery capacity and thus sets the state of health initially to 100%.

During operation, the Sunny Island learns to define the adopted state of health of 100% more and more precisely. This learning process only works in Sunny Island systems in which the battery is operated cyclically. Furthermore, there must also be regular idle phases during which the battery is not charged and is only operated under low electrical loads. A low electrical load is approximately 1.5% of the nominal capacity for a ten-hour electric discharge, e.g. 150 W for a 10 kW battery. It is therefore important to regularly check the state of health, especially in the first few months after the Sunny Island has been commissioned.

The Sunny Island is able to determine the state of health with an accuracy of  $\pm 15\%$ . To determine a more accurate state of health, the battery capacity must be measured. For this, electrically qualified persons with special measuring equipment must be on site, e.g. members of the battery manufacturer service staff.

### Effect of the battery temperature on the current usable battery capacity

The current usable battery capacity depends on the temperature of the battery. At temperatures of 20°C and below, the usable capacity of a battery drops significantly. The battery management system corrects the usable battery capacity state of health by -1% per °C, starting from 20°C.

#### 5.3.2.4 Battery Temperature

The battery management system continuously monitors the battery temperature. The Sunny Island adjusts the specification of the current usable battery capacity and the charging voltage to the current battery temperature (see Section 5.3.5 "Automatic Temperature Compensation", page 29).

The battery management system issues a warning message if one of the following events occurs:

- The battery temperature is within 5°C of the maximum permissible battery temperature.
- The battery temperature is less than -10°C.

If the maximum permissible battery temperature is exceeded, the Sunny Island switches off. As soon as the battery has cooled down to a specified temperature, the Sunny Island restarts.

### 5.3.3 Charging Phases

The parameters stated can be adjusted to the values specified by the manufacturer of the installed battery.

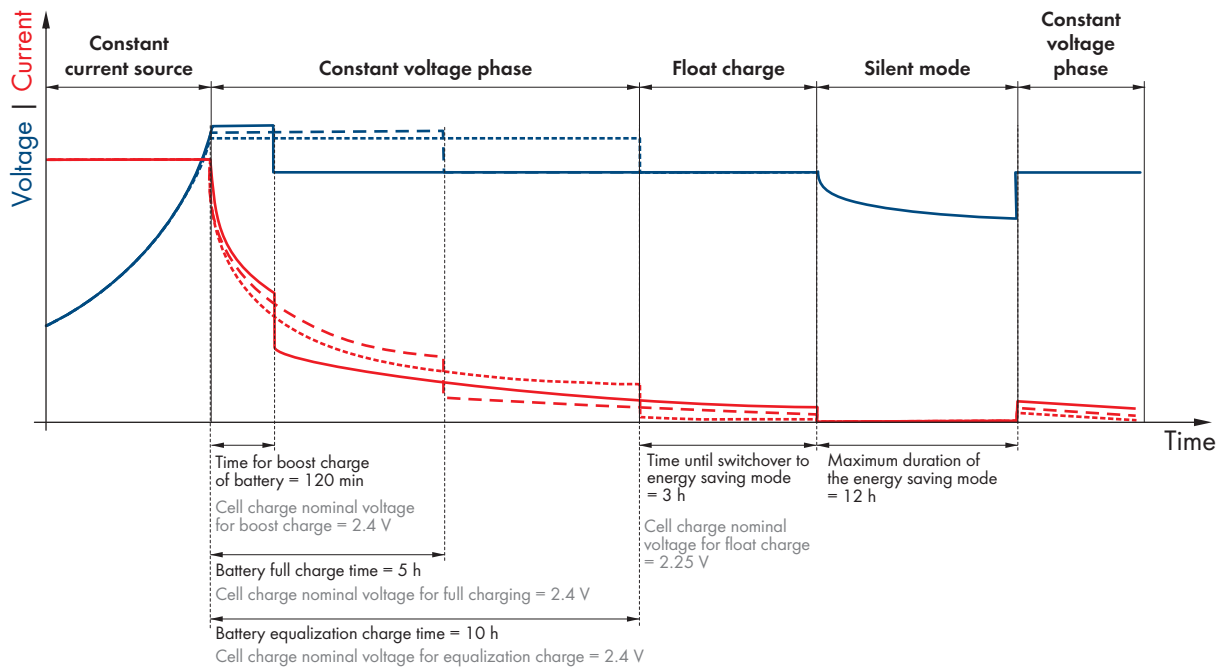


Figure 10: Sunny Island inverter charging phases with sample values for an AGM battery.

The Sunny Island regulates the charging of the battery in the following three phases:

- Constant current phase (I phase / bulk phase)

- Constant voltage phase (absorption phase /  $V_0$  phase)
- Float charge phase (V phase)

When operating on the utility grid and Silent Mode is active, there is also a silent phase.

### Constant current phase

During the constant current phase, the primary task of the battery management system is to limit the current to the maximum permissible battery current. The maximum charging current can be limited to the value specified by the battery manufacturer by changing the parameter **Max. battery charging current**. The battery charging current available is also limited by the following parameters:

- Nominal currents of the external energy sources (parameters **Maximum current from public grid** and **Rated generator current**)
- Maximum AC charging current of the Sunny Island inverter (parameter **Maximum AC battery charge current**)

The first value to be reached limits the battery charging current. While the charging current is maintained within the thresholds specified, the battery voltage increases as the battery is charged. The constant current phase ends when the cell voltage of the battery reaches the setpoint specified for the respective battery type.

### Constant voltage phase

In the constant voltage phase, the battery voltage is kept at a constant value. As a result, the battery current decreases continuously. For the constant voltage phase, the battery management system selects one of the following three charging processes (see Section 5.3.4 "Charging Processes", page 29):

- Boost charge
- Full charge
- Equalization charge

For each of these three charging processes, you can adjust the voltage and charging time to the levels specified by the battery manufacturer in the Sunny Island. Once the specified charging time has been reached, the constant voltage phase ends and the Sunny Island switches to the float charge phase.

### Float charge

The purpose of the float charge phase is to maintain the battery in a fully charged state without overcharging it. At the beginning of the float charge phase, the battery management system reduces the charging voltage in steps until the float charge setpoint specified has been reached. The battery management system then maintains this charging voltage until the end of the float charge phase. The float charge phase ends when one of the following conditions is met:

- The sum of all battery discharges has reached 30% of the nominal capacity.
- The current state of charge is less than 70% of the available charging capacity.

The battery management system switches from the float charge phase to the constant current phase. If the stand-alone grid is connected to the electricity grid, the battery management system can also switch from the float charge phase to silent mode.

### Silent mode

In silent mode, the Sunny Island switches to standby, thus saving energy. Once the time set for the float charge (parameter **Time until change-over to energy saving mode**) expires in systems connected to the utility grid, the battery management system switches to silent mode and any connected loads are supplied exclusively from the utility grid. The Sunny Island leaves silent mode at definable intervals (parameter **Maximum duration of energy saving mode**) or whenever the battery voltage per cell drops by 0.14 V. This way, the battery always remains fully charged.

### 5.3.4 Charging Processes

When moving to the constant voltage phase, the battery management system selects one of the following charging processes:

- Boost charge
- Full charge
- Equalization charge

#### Boost charge

With the boost charge process, a high charging voltage is applied to the battery. The battery is to be charged to between 85% and 90% of its current usable capacity in a very short time. You can adjust the charging voltage (parameter **Cell charge nominal voltage for boost charge**) and the duration (parameter **Battery boost charge time**) in accordance with the recommendations for the battery used.

#### Full charge

The objective of the full charge process is to recharge the battery to a state of charge of at least 95%. This should compensate for effects caused by any insufficient charging and should also increase the service life of the battery.

The Sunny Island performs a full charge of the battery when one of the following conditions is met:

- The specified cycle time for the full charge has expired (parameter **Cycle time full charge**).
- The sum of all discharges since the last full charge is eight times the nominal capacity of the battery.

You can adjust the charging voltage (parameter **Cell charge nominal voltage for full charging**) and the duration (parameter **Battery full charge time**) in accordance with the recommendations for the battery used.

#### Equalization charge

With the equalization charge process, the Sunny Island neutralizes any differences in the state of charge of individual battery cells which have arisen due to the different behaviors of the battery cells. By doing so, the Sunny Island prevents the premature failure of individual battery cells and extends the service life of the battery.

The Sunny Island performs an equalization charge of the battery if the automatic equalization charge function is activated and if one of the following conditions is met:

- The specified cycle time for the equalization charge has expired (parameter **Cycle time equalization charge**).
- The sum of all discharges since the last equalization charge is 30 times the nominal capacity of the battery.

You can adjust the charging voltage (parameter **Time for equalization charge**) and the duration (parameter **Battery equalization charge time**) in accordance with the recommendations for the battery used.

To maintain or service the battery - for example, in systems that are only operated seasonally - you can start an equalization charge manually (see the Sunny Island inverter operating manual at [www.SMA-Solar.com](http://www.SMA-Solar.com)).

### 5.3.5 Automatic Temperature Compensation

The charging capability of the battery is dependent on temperature. To prevent overcharging and insufficient battery charging, the battery management system is equipped with automatic temperature compensation. At temperatures above 20°C, the battery management system decreases the charging voltage. At temperatures below 20°C, the battery management system increases the charging voltage.

### 5.3.6 Battery Protection Mode

The battery protection mode protects the battery. If the battery state of charge falls below the thresholds, the battery protection mode is activated. In battery protection mode, the Sunny Island switches to standby mode or switches itself off. The battery protection mode has three levels. One state of charge threshold can be set for each level. Levels 1 and 2 of the battery protection mode have specific start and end times and are therefore dependent on the time of day.

## Level 1

If the state of charge falls below the threshold for level 1, the Sunny Island switches to standby between the start time and end time. In this way, you can specify preferred times for the stand-alone grid to be switched off in the event of insufficient energy.

## Level 2

If the state of charge falls below the threshold for level 2, the Sunny Island switches to standby. During the day, when PV inverters are able to supply energy, the Sunny Island attempts to charge the battery. Using the start time and end time, you specify the time period during which the Sunny Island starts every two hours in order to charge the battery. If no energy is available to charge the battery, the Sunny Island remains on standby.

## Level 3

If the state of charge falls below the threshold for level 3, the Sunny Island switches itself off. This protects the battery against deep discharge and severe damage. To charge the battery again, the Sunny Island must be switched on and started manually.

At all three levels, the Sunny Island will only switch to standby mode or switch itself off if no charging current has flowed into the battery for six minutes. You can adapt the thresholds for battery protection mode to the system (for setting the battery protection mode, see the Sunny Island inverter installation manual)

## 5.4 Further information on Generator Management

### 5.4.1 Generator Management Tasks

The Sunny Island inverter generator management system performs the following tasks:

- Requesting the generator in automatic generator operation.
- Controlling the Sunny Island inverter for switching the stand-alone grid to the generator voltage.
- Maintaining generator run times in order to prolong the generator service life.
- Protecting the generator against overload and backfeed.
- Controlling the switching operations in the Sunny Island for disconnecting the generator.
- Making reactive power available for the generator.

The generator management system enables the use of generators that have a low output power in relation to the nominal load of the Sunny Island inverter (see the technical document "Sunny Island - Generator White Paper" at [www.SMA-Solar.com](http://www.SMA-Solar.com)).

### 5.4.2 Generator Request Dependencies

In order to adapt the generator management system to the requirements of the off-grid system, you can change the generator request dependencies.

Generator request	Explanation
State-of-charge-dependent generator request	The generator management system requests the generator for battery charging depending on the state of charge. In this way, the battery management system prevents the battery from being discharged too deeply. Tip: You can also configure the generator request to be dependent on the time of day, e.g. to avoid starting the generator at night wherever possible.
Load-dependent generator request	If the load in the stand-alone grid exceeds a configured limit, the generator management system requests the generator. The generator then supplies the loads. This reduces the load on the battery. Where necessary, the Sunny Island and the generator supply the loads in the stand-alone grid together. The sum of the two power sources is available to the stand-alone grid.

Generator request	Explanation
Time-dependent generator request	You can configure on which day, at which time and for how long the generator management system requests the generator.
Charging-procedure-dependent generator request	The generator is requested for full charge and equalization charging. You can configure whether the generator is requested for full charge, equalization charge or both charging processes.

### 5.4.3 Electrical Generator Thresholds

Through the configuration of electrical thresholds, the generator management system can prevent the generator from becoming overloaded and can detect and react to malfunctions.

Configurable limit	Explanation
Maximum generator current	The generator management system limits the consumption of generator current to a set maximum value. This prevents the generator from becoming overloaded.
Frequency of generator voltage Generator voltage magnitude	The thresholds for the frequency and magnitude of the generator voltage define the range within which the Sunny Island and the generator operate. These thresholds directly affect the power quality in the stand-alone grid.
Maximum generator reverse power	Reverse power in the generator can occur if AC sources in the stand-alone grid supply more current than is required in the off-grid system. The generator is powered by the generator reverse power. Depending on the generator, the generator reverse power leads to the automatic disconnection, instability or destruction of the generator.  You can set the active power of the reverse power and the permitted time for reverse power. If the reverse power exceeds the thresholds, the generator management system disconnects the generator from the stand-alone grid. This protects the generator.

### 5.4.4 Generator Run Times

Generator run times specify time frames for generator operation. The generator run times are only interrupted in the event of a fault. This allows the generator management system to operate the generator with as little wear as possible and energy-efficiently. The energy efficiency increases due to the generator management system being able to use an operating generator for as long as possible at a high generator efficiency.

You can adjust and optimize the run times to suit the generator and the off-grid system requirements.

Generator run time	Explanation
Warm-up time	So as not to subject the generator to a load when it is cold, the generator warms up during the warm-up time. The warm-up time reduces generator wear. After the warm-up period, the Sunny Island connects the stand-alone grid to the generator.
Minimum run time	The minimum run time begins after the warm-up time has ended. During the minimum run time, the generator supplies current in order to charge the battery and to supply the loads. The minimum run time prevents short generator run times.

Generator run time	Explanation
Power-down time	Once the minimum run time has expired and the reason for the generator request no longer exists, the generator management system disconnects the generator from the stand-alone grid. The power-down time starts upon disconnection. During the power-down time, the generator operates without a load and the operating materials slowly cool down.
Minimum stop time	The minimum stop time begins after the power-down time. The generator does not operate during the minimum stop time. In this way, the generator management system prevents frequent generator starts. Frequent starts result in the generator motor wearing faster.

### 5.4.5 Generator Operating Modes

The generator management system differentiates between automatic generator mode and manual generator mode.

#### Manual generator mode

In manual generator mode, you can control generators with an autostart function and generators with external generator control at any time via the user Sunny Island interface. The following options are available for controlling the generator:

- Starting the generator at the Sunny Island.  
If you start the generator manually at the Sunny Island, you must also stop it manually.
- Stopping the generator at the Sunny Island.
- Starting the generator for one hour at the Sunny Island.  
With this option, you do not have to stop the generator again. The generator runs for 1 hour.

#### Automatic generator mode

In automatic generator mode, the generator management system controls the generator.

##### Automatic generator mode and generators without an autostart function

The generator management system can control a signal generator via a multifunction relay. The signal generator can send you a signal when you are to start or stop the generator.

In automatic generator mode, the generator can be started and stopped manually at any time. If the generator has stopped and the minimum stop time has expired, automatic mode is continued.



## 5.4.6 Operating Procedure for Generator Control

### 5.4.6.1 Operating Procedure with Generators with Autostart Function

Event or state	Result	Internal transfer relay
The generator management system requests the generator.	The Sunny Island starts the generator.	Open, the stand-alone grid is not connected to the generator.
The generator starts.	The generator voltage builds up.  The generator management system measures the time until the generator voltage is within the configured thresholds for voltage and frequency. If a maximum time is exceeded, the generator management system terminates the generator start.	
The generator voltage is within the configured thresholds for voltage and frequency.	The generator management system starts the warm-up time.	
The warm-up time is running.	-	
The warm-up time ends.	The Sunny Island synchronizes the stand-alone grid with the generator voltage.	
The stand-alone grid is synchronized.	The Sunny Island connects the stand-alone grid to the generator.	Closed, the stand-alone grid is connected to the generator.
The stand-alone grid is connected to the generator.	The generator feeds current into the stand-alone grid.  The generator management system starts the minimum run time.	
The minimum run time is running.	Even if the generator management system no longer requests the generator, the stand-alone grid remains connected to the generator.	
The minimum run time ends.	If the generator management system continues to request the generator, the stand-alone grid remains connected to the generator.	

Event or state	Result	Internal transfer relay
The generator management system no longer requests the generator.	The Sunny Island supplies the stand-alone grid and carries out load-free disconnection of the generator from the stand-alone grid.	Open, the stand-alone grid is not connected to the generator.
	The generator management system starts the power-down time.	
The power-down time is running.	During the power-down time, the generator management system cannot request the generator again and the Sunny Island cannot reconnect the stand-alone grid to the generator.	
The power-down time ends.	The Sunny Island stops the generator.	
	The generator management system starts the minimum stop time.	
The minimum stop time is running.	The Sunny Island cannot start the generator. It is also not possible to perform a manual start at the Sunny Island.	
	The generator management system cannot request the generator.	
The minimum stop time ends.	The generator management system can request the generator.	
	The generator can be started at the Sunny Island.	

#### 5.4.6.2 Operating Procedure with Generators without an Autostart Function

Event or state	Result	Internal transfer relay
The generator management system requests the generator.	The Sunny Island triggers a signal generator. The signal generator signals that you should start the generator.	Open, the stand-alone grid is not connected to the generator.
You start the generator (e.g. via a cable pull).	The generator starts.	
		The generator voltage builds up.
You close the load-break switch between the generator and the Sunny Island.	The generator is connected to the Sunny Island.	
The generator voltage is within the configured thresholds for voltage and frequency.	The generator management system starts the warm-up time.	
The warm-up time is running.	-	
The warm-up time ends.	The Sunny Island synchronizes the stand-alone grid with the generator voltage.	

Event or state	Result	Internal transfer relay
The stand-alone grid is synchronized.	The Sunny Island connects the stand-alone grid to the generator.	Closed, the stand-alone grid is connected to the generator.
The generator is connected.	The generator feeds current into the stand-alone grid. The generator management system starts the minimum run time.	
The minimum run time is running.	Even if the generator management system no longer requests the generator, the generator remains connected to the stand-alone grid.	
The minimum run time ends.	-	
The generator management system no longer requests the generator.	The Sunny Island stops triggering the signal generator. The signal generator signals that you should disconnect the generator from the Sunny Island.	
You open the load-break switch between the generator and the Sunny Island.	The Sunny Island opens the internal transfer relay.	
	The Sunny Island continues to supply the stand-alone grid without interruption. The generator management system starts the minimum stop time.	
The minimum stop time is running.	The Sunny Island does not detect when you restart the generator.	
	The generator management system cannot request the generator. The signal generator is not triggered.	
You stop the generator.	-	
The minimum stop time ends.	The generator management system can request the generator.	
	The Sunny Island detects a generator start.	

### 5.4.6.3 Operating Procedure with Generators with External Generator Control

Event or state	Result	Internal transfer relay
The generator management system requests the generator.	The Sunny Island signalizes to the external generator control that the generator has been requested.	Open, the stand-alone grid is not connected to the generator.
The external generator control starts the generator.	The generator voltage builds up.	
The warm-up time set at the external generator control begins.	The generator management system measures the time until the external generator control signals to the Sunny Island that the warm-up time has expired. If a maximum time is exceeded, the generator management system terminates the generator start.	
The external generator control signalizes to the Sunny Island that its warm-up time has successfully expired.		
The Sunny Island synchronizes the stand-alone grid with the generator voltage.	-	
The stand-alone grid is synchronized.	The Sunny Island connects the stand-alone grid to the generator.	Closed, the stand-alone grid is connected to the generator.
The stand-alone grid is connected to the generator.	The generator feeds current into the stand-alone grid. The generator management system starts the minimum run time.	
The minimum run time is running.	Even if the generator management system no longer requests the generator, the stand-alone grid remains connected to the generator.	
The minimum run time ends.	If the generator management system continues to request the generator, the stand-alone grid remains connected to the generator.	

Event or state	Result	Internal transfer relay
The generator management system no longer requests the generator.	<p>The Sunny Island supplies the stand-alone grid and carries out load-free disconnection of the generator from the stand-alone grid.</p> <p>The generator management system signalizes to the external generator control that the generator is no longer being requested.</p>	Open, the stand-alone grid is not connected to the generator.
The power-down time set at the generator management system begins.	-	
The power-down time is running.	During the power-down time, the generator management system cannot request the generator again and the Sunny Island cannot reconnect the stand-alone grid to the generator.	
The power-down time ends.	<p>The external generator control stops the generator.</p> <p>The external generator control signalizes to the Sunny Island that its power-down time has expired.</p>	
The generator management system starts the minimum stop time.	-	
The minimum stop time is running.	The Sunny Island suppresses every generator request. It is also not possible to perform a manual start at the Sunny Island.	
The minimum stop time ends.	The generator management system can request the generator.	
	The generator can be started at the Sunny Island.	

## 5.5 Further Information on the Grid Management Service

### 5.5.1 Tasks of the Grid Management Service

The grid management service performs the following tasks:

- The grid management service recognizes failures, disturbances and return of the utility grid.
- The grid management service controls the transition from stand-alone mode to grid operation.
- The grid management service controls the transition from grid operation to stand-alone mode.
- If the utility grid is being used as an energy reserve, the grid management service automatically connects the utility grid when required.

## 5.5.2 Dependencies for Requesting the Utility Grid

In order to adapt the grid management service to the requirements of the battery-backup system, you can change the dependencies for requesting the utility grid.

Requesting the utility grid	Explanation
State-of-charge-dependent request	The grid management service requests the utility grid for battery charging depending on the battery state of charge. In this way, the grid management service prevents the battery from being discharged too deeply. Tip: You can also configure the request to be dependent on the time of day.
Load-dependent request	If the requirements of the electrical loads in the battery-backup grid exceed a specified limit, the grid management service requests the utility grid. The utility grid then supplies the loads. This reduces the load on the battery.
Time-controlled request	You can configure on which day, at which time and for how long the grid management service requests the utility grid.
Charging-procedure-dependent request	You can configure whether the utility grid is requested for full charge, equalization charge or both charging processes.

## 5.5.3 Electrical Thresholds for the Utility Grid

If the utility grid exceeds the electrical thresholds, the grid management service detects a failure, disturbance, or overload of the utility grid.

Configurable limit	Explanation
Maximum grid current	The grid management service limits the drawing of current from the utility grid to a configurable maximum value.
Frequency of the utility grid voltage	You can adjust the thresholds for the frequency and magnitude of the voltage to the applicable local standards and requirements.
Magnitude of the utility grid voltage	The frequency and magnitude of the voltage in the utility grid directly affect the power quality in the battery-backup grid. If the utility grid exceeds the thresholds, the Sunny Island disconnects the utility grid from the battery-backup grid and switches to stand-alone mode.
Maximum reverse power in the utility grid	In the event of reverse power, the battery-backup system feeds power into the utility grid. Reverse power may be fed into the electricity grid during operation via AC sources. You can set the active power and the permitted time of the reverse power. If the thresholds are exceeded, the grid management service disconnects the utility grid from the battery-backup grid.

## 5.5.4 Operating Modes of the Utility Grid

The Sunny Island differentiates between the operating modes charge mode and energy-saving mode (silent mode).

### Charge mode

Charge mode on the utility grid is characterized by the Sunny Island charging the battery or receiving the battery charge.

## Energy-saving mode

In energy-saving mode, the Sunny Island is in standby and the utility grid supplies the loads. The Sunny Island switches out of energy-saving mode regularly to charge the battery. If the Sunny Island is in energy-saving mode, a grid failure can lead to a short-term failure of the battery-backup system. In this case, the loads are not supplied with any power for a short period.

### 5.5.5 Operating Procedure for Grid Control

Event or state	Result	Internal transfer relay
The grid management service re-requests the utility grid.	-	Open, the battery-backup grid is not connected to the utility grid.
The grid voltage is within the specified thresholds for voltage and frequency.	In order that the grid management service can detect a valid voltage, the utility grid must be within the thresholds for voltage and frequency for a minimum time.  If the grid management detects a valid voltage, the Sunny Island synchronizes the battery-backup grid with the utility grid.	
The battery-backup grid is synchronized.	The Sunny Island connects the battery-backup grid to the utility grid.	Closed, the battery-backup grid is connected to the utility grid.
The battery-backup grid is connected to the utility grid.	The utility grid feeds current into the battery-backup grid.	
The grid management service no longer requests the utility grid.	The Sunny Island disconnects the battery-backup grid from the utility grid and supplies the battery-backup grid.	Open, the battery-backup grid is not connected to the utility grid.

## 5.6 Further Information on Clusters

### Clusters in single-phase single-cluster systems

Device type	Potential device types within a cluster	Explanation
SI4.4M-12	-	The device type SI4.4M-12 must not be used in the single-phase cluster system.
SI6.0H-12	SI6.0H-12 or SI8.0H-12	A cluster can consist of one or both device types. If both device types within the cluster are used, the master must be of device type SI8.0H-12.
SI8.0H-12	SI6.0H-12 or SI8.0H-12	

### Clusters in three-phase single-cluster systems

Device type	Potential device types within a cluster	Explanation
SI4.4M-12	SI4.4M-12	Only the device type SI4.4M-12 may be installed in a cluster.
SI6.0H-12	SI6.0H-12 or SI8.0H-12	A cluster can consist of one or both device types. If both device types within the cluster are used, the master must be of device type SI8.0H-12.
SI8.0H-12	SI6.0H-12 or SI8.0H-12	

**Clusters in multicluster systems**

Device type	Potential device types within a cluster	Explanation
SI4.4M-12	-	The device type SI4.4M-12 must not be used in multicluster systems.
SI6.0H-12	SI6.0H-12 or SI8.0H-12	Only Sunny Island inverters of the same device type may be installed in a cluster: SI6.0H-12 or SI8.0H-12.
SI8.0H-12	SI6.0H-12 or SI8.0H-12	

A Multicluster-Box must also be selected when combining several three-phase clusters to form a multicluster system (see Section 3.3.3, page 14).





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