

Photovoltaics and Hydropower Reservoirs in Switzerland – Synergies and Potential

Photovoltaics (PV) play a major role in the Swiss Energy Strategy 2050. Compared to a conventional installation in urbanized areas, high-alpine PV may yield a 30% better performance due to stronger solar irradiation and lower panel temperatures. Hydropower reservoirs are often situated at high altitudes and already offer a good accessibility. Therefore, they could provide an ideal base infrastructure for the installation of PV. There are two main options for PV operations at reservoirs: PV panels mounted to the dam structure and floating PV panels on the reservoir (Fig. 1). Since reservoirs are multi-purpose infrastructures, future PV operation should have no negative impacts on other uses, hydropower production in particular. In addition, dam safety may not be impaired.



Fig. 1: Renderings of PV installed at Muttsee dam, 2474 m a.s.l. (Axpo Power AG), and Albigna dam, 2165 m a.s.l. (EWZ), floating PV test rig on Lac des Toules, 1810 m a.s.l. (Romande Energie)

Within this master's thesis, the potential for high-alpine PV installations at reservoirs in Switzerland will be assessed. A special focus will be given to PV integration and its effect on special reservoir operation states, e.g. drawdowns and flood discharge. The results of the work thus contribute to a successful implementation of the Swiss Energy Strategy 2050.

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Remarks:

Group work possible for project work