

# The economic potential for rainfed agrivoltaics in groundwater stressed regions

Simon Parkinson<sup>1,2</sup> and Julian Hunt<sup>1</sup>

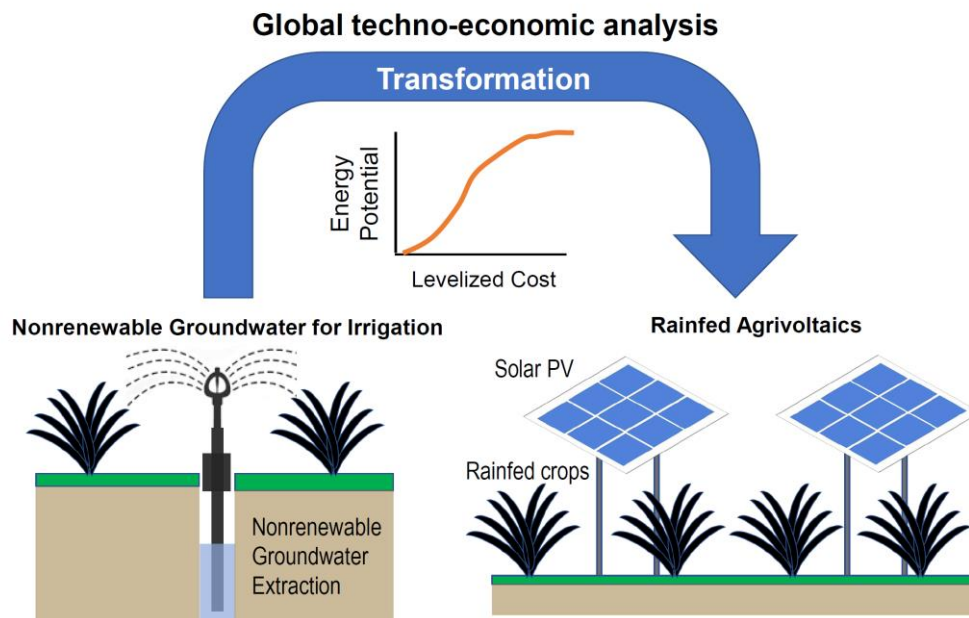
<sup>1</sup> International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Schlossplatz 1, A2361, Austria

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Integrated Energy Systems (IESVic), University of Victoria, PO BOX 1700 STN CSC, V8W 2Y2, Canada

Corresponding author: S. Parkinson, parkinso@iiasa.ac.at

## Abstract

Agrivoltaics co-locate crops with solar photovoltaics (PV) to provide sustainability benefits across land, energy and water systems. Policies supporting a switch from irrigated farming to rainfed, grid-connected agrivoltaics in regions experiencing groundwater stress can mitigate both groundwater depletion and CO<sub>2</sub> from electricity generation. Here, hydrology, crop, PV and financial models are integrated to assess the economic potential for rainfed agrivoltaics in groundwater stressed regions. The analysis reveals 11.2-37.6 PWh/yr of power generation potential, equivalent to 40-135% of the global electricity supply in 2018. Almost 90% of groundwater depletion in 2010 (~150 km<sup>3</sup>) occurred where the levelized cost for grid-connected rainfed agrivoltaic generation are 50-100 USD/MWh. Potential revenue losses following the switch from irrigated to rainfed crops represents 0-34% of the levelized generation cost. Future cost-benefit analysis must value the avoided groundwater stress from the perspective of long-term freshwater availability.



20

21

Table of Contents (TOC) Graphic

# 1 Introduction

2 Solar photovoltaics (PV) are mature low-carbon energy solutions with enough resource  
3 and technological potential to fully support global energy demand<sup>1</sup>. Recent analysis of pathways  
4 to achieve the Paris climate goal estimates that 0.24-1.55 trillion USD/yr of investment into similar  
5 renewable energies is needed to decarbonize electricity by 2050<sup>2</sup>. PV costs are competitive with  
6 fossil fuel generation<sup>3</sup>, and system operators are increasingly experienced with high penetrations  
7 of solar energy<sup>4</sup>. How to prioritize project development and siting to maximize societal benefits  
8 remains an open research question.

9 Groundwater stress is concurrent to the climate change challenge, and impacting an  
10 estimated 2 billion people<sup>5</sup>. Policies designed to conserve groundwater may restrict irrigation,  
11 reducing crop yields or shifting crops elsewhere<sup>6</sup>. These pressures could reduce agricultural jobs  
12 with detrimental impacts to local communities if the training to pursue alternative livelihoods  
13 locally is not supported<sup>7</sup>. Conversely, maintaining irrigation deliveries under groundwater  
14 conservation could lead to expansion of wastewater recycling and desalination, with the energy  
15 footprint making it more difficult and costly to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions<sup>8</sup>.

16 Integrated policies developed from a systems perspective leverage resource synergies that  
17 achieve benefits for multiple goals<sup>9</sup>. An integrated approach can reduce the costs of policy  
18 implementation when compared to situations where each policy is pursued on its own<sup>10</sup>.  
19 Livelihood shifting is an unexplored policy integration lever for groundwater and renewable  
20 energy transformations that could balance job impacts across the economy, enabling workers  
21 from impacted sectors to secure the income they need for a decent living.

22 In this context, agrivoltaics represent an attractive solution for reducing water use and  
23 energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by co-locating rainfed crops with utility-scale PV generation<sup>11,12</sup>.  
24 Farmers offset investment costs and diversify their income stream through zero-interest loans  
25 combined with power purchasing agreements from the utility. Field research demonstrates co-  
26 location of PV has limited impact on yields for many high value crop varieties<sup>13,14</sup>, and previous  
27 analysis indicates there are favorable operational conditions and massive resource potential on  
28 croplands globally<sup>12</sup>. Yet, there are no previous analyses quantifying the potential for rainfed  
29 agrivoltaics to contribute to the groundwater and climate policy agendas at global-scales.

30 In this paper, we fill this knowledge gap by addressing the following research question:  
31 what are the potential economic costs of switching from irrigated farming to rainfed agrivoltaics  
32 in groundwater stressed regions when accounting for the geospatial distribution of solar  
33 resources, existing infrastructure and crop yield impacts? The theory of change in the analysis is  
34 that future investments into solar energy under the Paris Agreement can be translated into  
35 financing for utility-scale PV generation that is owned and operated by farmers in groundwater  
36 stressed regions. PV investments configured in this way would bring both reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> from  
37 fossil power generation and unsustainable groundwater extractions from irrigation. For example,

1 the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is an international CO<sub>2</sub> trading framework where  
2 high-income countries invest in low-cost renewable energy projects in developing regions and  
3 account for the emission reductions within their own national emissions inventory<sup>15</sup>. Similar  
4 financing if reframed from an integrated water-energy-land perspective could enable farmers to  
5 switch from unsustainable groundwater irrigation to harvesting rainfed crops and solar energy  
6 in support of food, climate and groundwater sustainability goals.

## 7 Materials & Methods

8 The steps in the geospatial analysis are depicted in Figure 1. Groundwater stressed areas  
9 are identified using outputs from the global hydrological model PCR-GLOBWB<sup>16</sup>. This  
10 framework is modeling the water balance in half degree grid-cells that include vertically stacked  
11 layers representative of the land surface and soil column at a daily time-scale. Multi-sector human  
12 water withdrawals and return flows interact with the soil moisture calculations to estimate  
13 groundwater stress. We assume grid cells are groundwater stressed where non-renewable  
14 groundwater extraction is used in the model to fulfill the water demands and depletion occurs<sup>17</sup>.  
15 The analysis considers the complete switching of groundwater stressed irrigated area to rainfed  
16 area (i.e., no irrigation). Irrigated area within each groundwater stressed grid cell is delineated by  
17 intersecting it with a global map of irrigated areas<sup>18</sup>.

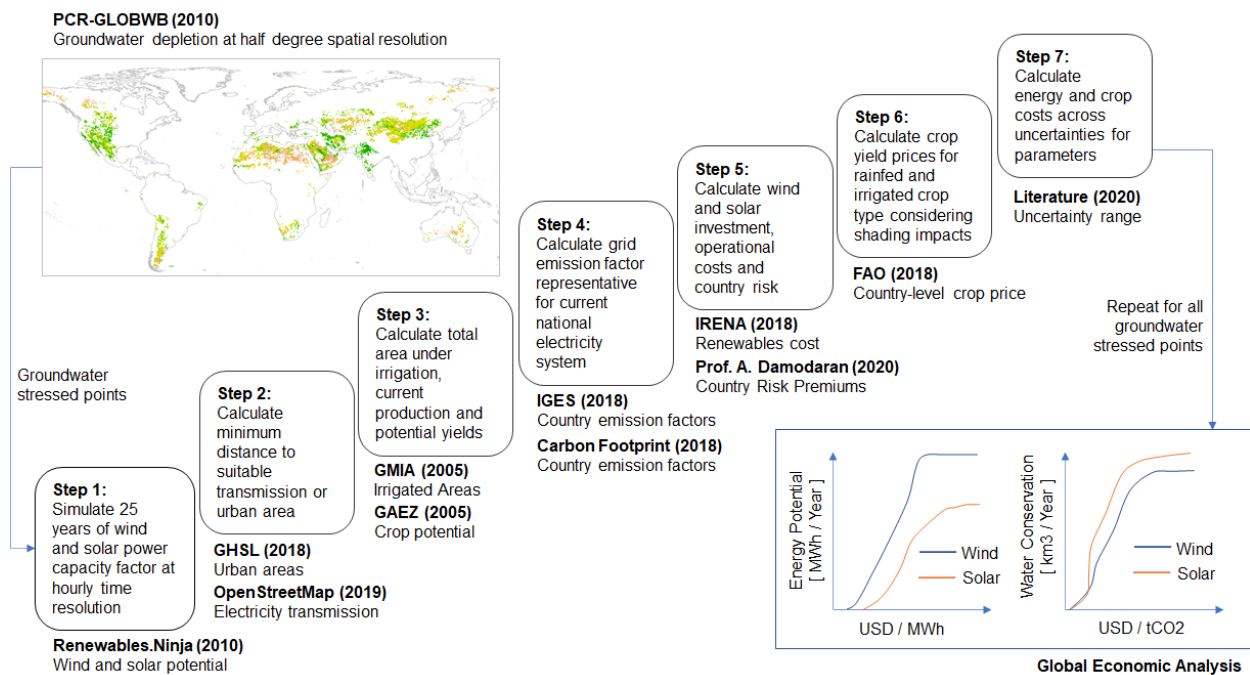
18 For benchmarking the results, the analysis compares PV with wind power technology.  
19 Twenty-five (25) years of sequential hourly PV and wind power production data are generated  
20 at each groundwater stressed location using calibrated resource potential and power plant  
21 performance models<sup>19,20</sup>. The resource data are based on the MERRA-2 re-analysis of satellite  
22 measurements and calibration to performance data in Europe. The data has known over-biases  
23 in Europe (~10% on average), with additional uncertainties expected outside of Europe. These  
24 over-biases suggest that estimates in this paper could be overly optimistic. The power plant  
25 simulations consider generic utility-scale systems of 1 MW capacity. Siting density assumptions  
26 (i.e., the intensity of land use per unit of installed capacity) translate the performance simulations  
27 into gross power generation and land use at each location.

28 The production time-series are combined with average technology investment and  
29 operational costs to estimate the total levelized costs of agrivoltaic energy (LCOE) at each  
30 groundwater stressed location. The LCOE represents the unit cost of electricity generated and is  
31 calculated with the following equation<sup>29</sup>:

$$LCOE = \frac{CAPEX + \sum_{t=1}^N OPEX_t \cdot (1 + WACN)^{-t}}{\sum_{t=1}^N ELEC_t \cdot (1 + WACR)^{-t}} \quad (1)$$

32 where *CAPEX* and *OPEX* are the capital and operational expenditures respectively, *WACR* is the  
33 real weighted average cost of capital (with inflation) and *WACN* is the nominal value (without  
34 inflation), and *ELEC* is the electricity supplied by the project in a given year *t* and over its lifetime  
35 *N*. Electricity supply is quantified from the hourly power plant simulations. Depreciation rates

1 are used to scale power generation yields in future years<sup>29,30</sup>. Grid-connection costs are included  
 2 in the CAPEX and calculated using either OpenStreetMap<sup>22</sup> or the urban areas from Global  
 3 Human Settlement Layer (GHSL) for 2019<sup>21</sup>. The datasets are compared to find the minimum  
 4 distance to each groundwater stressed location. Grid extension costs are expressed per unit  
 5 capacity and distance to provide a site-specific investment multiplier for the CAPEX input to the  
 6 LCOE calculation. Groundwater stressed locations with grid expansion distances greater than  
 7 200 km are excluded from the analysis due to high investment costs. Country risk premiums are  
 8 used to estimate weighted average cost of capital for discounting future cash flows and assuming  
 9 a risk-free premium of 3.1%<sup>26,29,31</sup>. Economies-of-scale are not included in the calculations.



10  
 11 **Figure 1:** Spatially-explicit approach for calculating agrivoltaic economic potential in groundwater stressed regions.  
 12 Groundwater stressed locations are estimated following the analysis of groundwater depletion in Wada et al. (2014)<sup>16</sup>.  
 13 Datasets input to each calculation step are indicated with the most recent year reported in the dataset. Data sources  
 14 are: Renewables.Ninja<sup>19,20</sup>; Global Human Settlement Layer (GHSL)<sup>21</sup>, OpenStreetMap<sup>22</sup>, Global Map of Irrigated Areas  
 15 (GMIA)<sup>18</sup>, Global Agro-ecological Zones (GAEZ)<sup>23</sup>; Institute for Global Environment Strategies (IGES)<sup>24</sup>; Carbon  
 16 Footprint<sup>25</sup>; International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)<sup>3</sup>; A. Damodaran<sup>26</sup>; and United Nations' Food and  
 17 Agriculture Organization (FAO)<sup>27</sup>. Polygons from the Global Administrative Areas Database (GADM) are used to  
 18 categorize the groundwater stressed points by country<sup>28</sup>. An open-source online repository stores the R programming  
 19 script performing the geospatial analysis steps ([https://github.com/sparkinson/gw\\_renewables](https://github.com/sparkinson/gw_renewables)).

20 Uncertainties are reflected using a range of cost and performance assumptions (Table 1).  
 21 For example, PV panel shading helps protect crops prone to heat stress, leading to a net increase  
 22 in crop yields<sup>13,32</sup>. Conversely, for other crops, yields vary proportionately with shading level<sup>33,34</sup>.  
 23 Panel density in turn impacts power generation potential. Half-spacing typical in agrivoltaic  
 24 operations reduces the power density per unit area compared with a conventional PV plant.

Parameter	Unit	Range	Source(s)
<i>1 MW Solar PV</i>			
Investment	USD/kW	1210 (796, 2745)	3
Operations & Maintenance	USD/kW-yr	15 (11, 24)	35
Panel density <sup>1</sup>	MW/km <sup>2</sup>	15 (10, 30)	36
Depreciation <sup>2</sup>	% / year	0.5 (0.2, 0.9)	29
Lifetime	Years	25 (20, 30)	35
<i>1 MW Wind Turbine</i>			
Investment	USD/kW	1499 (1174, 2439)	3
Operations & Maintenance	USD/kW-yr	48 (11, 150)	35
Turbine density	MW/km <sup>2</sup>	5 (2.5, 6)	37
Depreciation <sup>2</sup>	% / year	1.6 (0.5, 1.8)	30
Lifetime	Years	25 (20, 30)	35
<i>Grid Connection<sup>3</sup></i>			
Investment	USD/kW-km	3.7 (1.1, 5.3)	38,39
<i>Crop Yield Change<sup>4</sup></i>			
Wheat	%	-13 (-27, 0)	11
Rice	%	-38 (-67, -19)	34
Pulses	%	-13 (-27, 0)	Assumed
Maize	%	-12 (-20, 0)	33,34
Fodder	%	-12 (-20, 0)	Assumed
Sugarcane	%	-38 (-67, -19)	Assumed
Fruit	%	0 (-20, +40)	13,32
Vegetables	%	0 (-20, +20)	13,14
Cotton	%	0 (-20, +40)	32

<sup>1</sup>Average is half panel density on unoccupied land.

<sup>2</sup>Power production yield depreciation due to device degradation.

<sup>3</sup>Operational costs for grid extensions excluded due to lack of data.

<sup>4</sup>Change in yields from crop shading (included for solar PV).

**Table 1:** Cost and performance assumptions for the analysis.

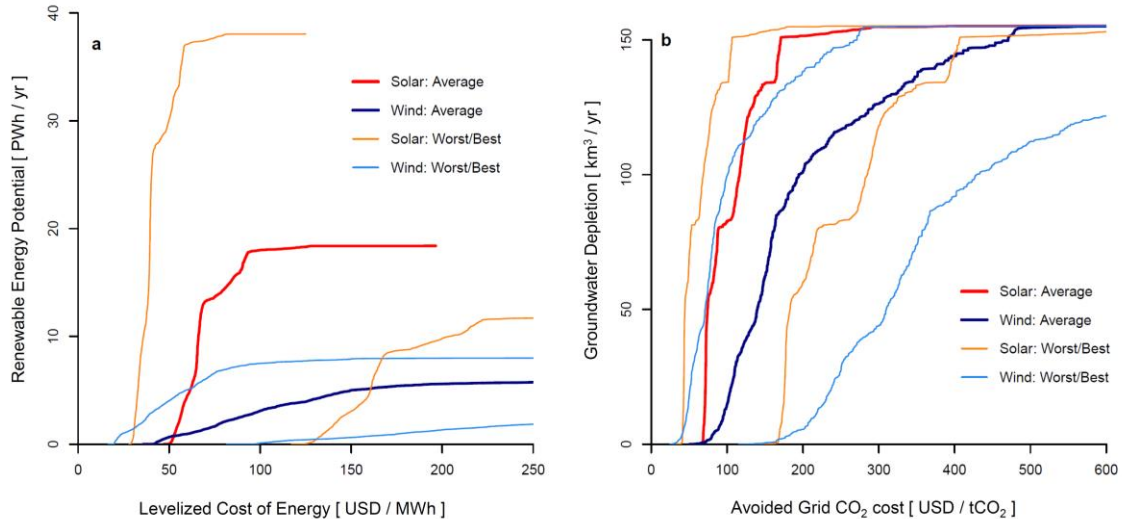
Following the approach described by Gernaat et al. (2017)<sup>40</sup>, the LCOE incorporates the cost of agricultural land loss caused by switching from irrigated to rainfed operations. The difference in land value (irrigated minus rainfed) is added to OPEX in equation (1). The crop-type that maximizes land value is selected for the difference calculation. A land value map with 5 arc minute spatial resolution is generated based on the potential agricultural yields calculated with the Global Agro-Ecological Zones (GAEZ) model<sup>23</sup>. The analysis considers eight crop-types: wheat, rice, maize, pulses, cotton, sugarcane, fruit and vegetables. Historical national crop price ranges over the past 5 years are obtained from FAOSTAT<sup>27</sup>, and mapped to the crop-types considered for GAEZ. Crop prices are held constant in future years, and averages are used where data is missing.

The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions impact of PV development at each water stressed location is further estimated using the United Nations' ACM0002 baseline methodology for CDM projects<sup>15</sup>. The avoided CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the displaced grid generation are initially quantified by multiplying the average annual agrivoltaic generation by the corresponding national grid CO<sub>2</sub> emission factor<sup>24,25</sup>. The CO<sub>2</sub> price required to pay for the agrivoltaic CAPEX and OPEX is then estimated by dividing the discounted lifecycle system costs by the avoided CO<sub>2</sub>. It is important to emphasize the simplifications, including the exclusion of future cost reductions projected for solar PV technology<sup>29</sup>, revenue from electricity pricing, and the impacts from power system flexibility and dispatch strategy. For example, solar PV might be used preferentially to offset the most carbon-intensive generating units in a utilities' fleet, making the average grid emission factors utilized overly pessimistic. Additional energy storage technologies and approaches may also be needed in some locations to aid in grid-integration, particularly at high PV penetrations<sup>4</sup>.

# 1 Results and Discussion

2 Results of the global analysis are summarized as economic supply curves for electricity  
3 generation potential, avoided CO<sub>2</sub> and groundwater depletion (Figure 2). Globally, 11.2-37.6  
4 PWh/yr of agrivoltaic generation potential is found to exist on groundwater stressed irrigated  
5 area, equivalent to 40-135 % of global electricity generation in 2018. An estimated 150 km<sup>3</sup> of  
6 groundwater depletion would be displaced from the switch to rainfed operations (~90% of the  
7 global total in 2010). The average levelized costs for agrivoltaic systems, accounting for power  
8 production and crop yield impacts, are 50-100 USD/MWh (Figure 2a). The equivalent avoided  
9 grid CO<sub>2</sub> costs are 75-200 USD/tCO<sub>2</sub> (Figure 2b). These results compare well with recent pilot  
10 project analysis in Germany<sup>41</sup>.

11 Solar PV potential exceeds wind potential in most locations, with global wind potential in  
12 groundwater stressed regions ranging from between 2.7-8.4 PWh per year (Figure 2a). Under  
13 half-spacing typical in agrivoltaic operations<sup>14,42</sup>, PV continues to provide more power density  
14 per unit area than wind turbines. The extreme performance scenarios show that wind and solar  
15 PV potential are similar if the cost and density assumptions for PV are less optimistic. The analysis  
16 identifies more than 1.3 PWh of wind power potential that is less expensive than solar PV under  
17 average performance assumptions in Table 1. Additional uncertainties exist due to e.g., the use  
18 of reanalysis data, future prices and system integration barriers.



19 **Figure 2:** Global economic supply curves for agrivoltaic systems in groundwater stressed regions and comparison to  
20 equivalent wind operations. a. cumulative renewable electricity generating potential across the distribution of levelized  
21 costs; and b. cumulative groundwater depletion across the distribution of avoided grid CO<sub>2</sub> costs. The uncertainty  
22 range is obtained from calculating the potentials under the worst/best combinations of the parameters in Table 1.  
23

24 Co-location of PV and the switch to rainfed operations impacts crop yield potential. The  
25 quantified economic impact of the reduced crop yield represented on average 6 % of the LCOE  
26 (ranging from 0-34 %). Crop shifting to varieties benefitting from panel shading did not lead to

1 net increases in crop revenue. Crop-types maximizing yield revenues can differ for irrigated and  
2 rainfed operations. This leads to a presumptive switch in crop-type under agrivoltaic  
3 transformation. Switching leads to an unintuitive gain in the yield potential for the rainfed crop-  
4 type that is offset by the reduction in yield potential for the irrigated crop-type present prior to  
5 switching. At a country-level, largest impacts of PV co-location on the revenue generation  
6 potential of farmers occurs for vegetable crops (Table 2). The result is driven by the high prices  
7 offered for vegetable crops within national and international markets relative to other crops such  
8 as wheat, rice or maize. We find that India and Iran with the most groundwater depletion within  
9 economic distance to existing infrastructure (Table 2) also have the most to lose in terms of rice  
10 yield potential: an important staple in local diets. However, yield losses across all crop types are  
11 relatively small compared to overall national production rates, and could likely be recovered  
12 economically through additional crop shifting and imports<sup>43</sup>.

13 In terms of avoided CO<sub>2</sub> costs (Table 2), projects in India are estimated to be more  
14 economical than in Iran because India has a combination of lower investment risk (determined  
15 by the weighted average cost of capital) and its electricity grid has a higher CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
16 intensity (determined by the national grid emission factor). Understanding these differences  
17 across regions helps identify where investments bring the largest impacts on both CO<sub>2</sub> and  
18 groundwater. However, it is important to emphasize the grid dispatch strategy might focus PV  
19 integration on the displacement of the most CO<sub>2</sub>-intensive generating source (e.g., coal), leading  
20 to similar avoided emissions intensities across countries. In this situation, the location specific  
21 financial risk, crop yield and solar resource indicators would continue driving levelized cost  
22 heterogeneities across groundwater stressed regions.

23 Existing policies need tweaking to take advantage of the multi-faceted benefits  
24 agrivoltaics offer. Project financing must take an integrated view and consider the influence of  
25 PV development on water resources. For example, there are concerns in groundwater stressed  
26 areas of South Asia that subsidized expansion of PV could lead to increased groundwater stress  
27 due to reduced electricity costs for groundwater pumping<sup>44</sup>. PV subsidies in similarly  
28 groundwater stressed irrigated areas should be focused on promoting agrivoltaics and include  
29 financing to cover crop yield impacts from the switch to rainfed operations. This paper has  
30 demonstrated the massive untapped potential to generate solar power on groundwater stressed  
31 irrigated area, and the relatively minor impacts of panel shading and crop yield losses from the  
32 switch to rainfed operations.

33 The switch to rainfed operations liberates irrigation deliveries, which can be allocated to  
34 groundwater flows that sustain some perennial rivers<sup>45</sup>. Yet, rainfed operations miss  
35 opportunities for managed aquifer recharge through intelligent irrigation<sup>46</sup>. Future cost-benefit  
36 analysis of agrivoltaic systems must include a hydro-economic assessment of avoided  
37 groundwater use and opportunities for conjunctive management with surface water resources.  
38 These interactions are complex but may have an important influence on agrivoltaic economics,

1 particularly where liberated irrigation deliveries help to avoid investments in unconventional  
2 freshwater supply options (e.g., desalination)<sup>8</sup>.

3 Other uncertainties unaccounted for in this work include the influence of farm size and  
4 how cooperation across farms can achieve economies-of-scale. These partnerships might be  
5 appealing in developing regions where farmers may lack sufficient land area or investment  
6 financing for utility-scale power generation<sup>47</sup>. Importantly, the analysis did not consider the costs  
7 of power system integration, which may present barriers to widespread PV deployment due to  
8 its impacts on system reserve requirements<sup>4</sup>. Smart control of on-farm electricity uses may  
9 provide a leverage for demand response that supports system integration. Diversification of on-  
10 farm revenue in agrivoltaic systems and the interplay with technological learning and climate  
11 resilience represent other economic benefits requiring future research. Importantly, there  
12 continue to be major PV technology innovations that could halve the CAPEX in the next 10 years<sup>29</sup>,  
13 with implications for the levelized cost calculations. Finally, the analysis did not consider the  
14 corresponding energy and emissions impacts from shifts in on-farm machinery and the land-  
15 based emissions from different crops<sup>48</sup>, or the influence of climate change and future crop prices<sup>6</sup>.

16 Future research is needed to address these research gaps, requiring multi-sector modeling  
17 tools that consider the co-dependent transformations in water, energy and land systems. The  
18 multi-dimensional supply curves and framework presented in this paper support the integration  
19 of agrivoltaics into long-term planning models used by decision-makers.



Country	GWD <sup>1</sup> [km <sup>3</sup> ]	CO <sub>2</sub> Price <sup>2</sup> [USD / tCO <sub>2</sub> ]	Solar <sup>3</sup> [TWh / yr]	Wind [TWh / yr]	Wheat [kton-DW / yr]	Rice [kton-DW / yr]	Cotton [kton-DW / yr]	Pulses [kton-DW / yr]	Maize [kton-DW / yr]	Fruit [kton-DW / yr]	Vegetables [kton-DW / yr]
India	54.07	73 (44,178)	5605 (3475,11708)	1421 (665,1987)	0 (0,0)	-39.16 (-0.16,-144.83)	3.56 (3.16,3.4)	0.32 (0.09,0)	45.76 (17.79,120.02)	0 (0,0.72)	-94.92 (-161.16,0)
Iran	23.86	127 (79,301)	1766 (1095,3689)	486 (228,680)	3.25 (1.00,9.06)	-45.54 (-45.31,-45.97)	0 (0,0)	3.64 (1.05,3.95)	0 (0,0.77)	0 (0,0)	0.1 (0.04,1.69)
USA	18.16	116 (68,290)	2871 (1780,5997)	1196 (560,1673)	1.17 (0.84,1.83)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.03 (-0.01,-0.19)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0.17)	-86.22 (-91.09,-81.5)
Pakistan	16.63	166 (103,396)	1554 (964,3246)	380 (178,531)	0 (0,0)	-10.88 (-10.88,0)	0 (0,0)	0.08 (0,0.38)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-41.39 (-42.24,-30.09)
China	13.44	82 (48,203)	3121 (1935,6521)	1187 (555,1659)	-0.01 (-0.01,0.01)	0 (0,0)	0.02 (0.02,0.09)	-16.19 (-20.13,-14.61)	-0.37 (-0.37,-1.94)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0.01)
S. Arabia	11.03	85 (50,210)	329 (204,688)	114 (53,159)	0 (0,0)	-0.38 (-0.38,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (-0.22,0)	0 (-0.08,0)	-9.38 (-9.53,-9.08)
Mexico	6.36	115 (68,283)	792 (491,1654)	216 (101,301)	0.02 (0.02,0.03)	0 (0,0)	0.02 (0.01,0.06)	0 (0,0.35)	0.65 (0,0.76)	0 (0,0)	-19.18 (-20.7,-16.83)
Libya	1.72	86 (52,208)	79 (49,164)	33 (15,46)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0.08 (0,0.18)	0 (0,0)	-0.98 (-0.98,0)	-2.62 (-2.67,-0.71)
UAE	1.40	99 (58,246)	49 (30,102)	13 (6,18)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-1.48 (-1.48,-1.48)
Russia	0.99	257 (153,627)	103 (64,215)	58 (27,81)	0 (0,0)	-1.62 (-2.74,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0.15 (1.43,-1.66)
Turkey	0.98	282 (172,677)	169 (105,354)	46 (22,65)	0.08 (0.12,0)	0 (-0.9,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.06 (-0.18,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-3.35 (-3.76,-2.86)
Uzbekistan	0.77	117 (69,286)	255 (158,533)	95 (44,133)	0.01 (0.01,0.02)	-0.18 (-0.18,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-7.88 (-8.17,-7.44)
Argentina	0.56	212 (132,494)	111 (69,232)	45 (21,63)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0.15)	-3.61 (-3.87,-3.31)
S. Africa	0.48	66 (39,161)	101 (62,210)	29 (14,40)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0.03 (0.01,0.08)	0 (-0.62,0)	0 (0,0.25)	-3.04 (-3.25,-1.95)
Egypt	0.46	150 (93,359)	122 (76,255)	38 (18,53)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0.06 (0.04,0.06)	-0.11 (-0.05,-0.11)	-2.49 (-2.49,-2.49)	0 (-0.05,0)
Spain	0.43	239 (142,588)	172 (107,360)	59 (28,83)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-5.19 (-5.95,-4.42)
Morocco	0.37	101 (61,246)	92 (57,192)	26 (12,36)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-1.17 (-1.3,-0.91)	0.12 (0.1,0.14)
Yemen	0.36	185 (117,427)	179 (111,373)	33 (15,46)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-3 (-2.11,-3.07)	-1.57 (-1.66,-1.53)	0 (-0.63,0)
Australia	0.32	73 (42,180)	100 (62,209)	47 (22,66)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0.01 (0,0.06)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0.14 (0,0.89)	-4.51 (-4.94,-4.15)
Mauritania	0.27	123 (75,294)	15 (10,32)	7 (3,10)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0.01)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,-0.08)	-0.46 (-0.46,-0.28)
Kazakhstan	0.25	128 (76,311)	89 (55,186)	37 (17,51)	0 (0,0)	-0.13 (-0.11,0)	0 (0,0.1,0)	0 (0,0)	-2.72 (-2.76,-0.46)	0 (0,0)	-0.06 (-0.26,-1.8)
Romania	0.21	215 (129,527)	185 (115,386)	84 (39,117)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-3.39 (-4.53,-2.25)
Algeria	0.21	143 (89,339)	47 (29,98)	17 (8,24)	0.07 (0.06,0.17)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.15 (-0.15,0)	0.05 (0.04,0.07)	-1.66 (-1.87,-1.68)
Brazil	0.20	375 (226,910)	25 (16,53)	12 (6,17)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0.01 (0,0.03)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0.01)	-0.5 (-0.54,-0.44)
Italy	0.18	228 (137,558)	20 (12,41)	9 (4,12)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0.13 (0,0.17)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,-0.11)	-1.11 (-1.11,0)
Israel	0.13	78 (46,194)	16 (10,34)	3 (2,5)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.55 (-0.59,-0.52)
Peru	0.13	108 (63,264)	28 (17,58)	5 (2,6)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.01 (-0.01,-0.01)	0 (0,0)	-0.5 (-0.5,-0.5)	0 (0,0)
Ukraine	0.12	208 (130,492)	76 (47,158)	43 (20,61)	0 (0,0)	0 (-2.1,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (-0.01,0)	0 (0,0)	-1.08 (0,-1.42)
Iraq	0.10	155 (95,363)	12 (7,25)	5 (2,7)	0 (0,0.09)	-0.27 (-0.33,0)	0 (0,0)	0.03 (0.02,0.03)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.05 (-0.31,0.04)
Senegal	0.10	125 (76,303)	13 (8,27)	6 (3,8)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.42 (-0.42,-0.42)
Qatar	0.09	87 (52,217)	3 (2,6)	1 (0,1)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.1 (-0.1,-0.1)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)
Tunisia	0.08	159 (98,381)	26 (16,53)	11 (5,16)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.06 (-0.09,0.01)	0.06 (0,0.16)	-1.18(-1.18,0)	0.09 (0.15,0.26)	-0.4 (-0.4,0)
Kyrgyzstan	0.08	144 (88,342)	46 (29,97)	8 (4,11)	0 (0,0)	-0.18 (-0.18,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,-0.05)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.07 (-0.46,0.21)
Canada	0.07	483 (282,1203)	23 (14,48)	15 (7,21)	0.03 (0,0.03)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.18 (-0.21,-0.11)
Bolivia	0.06	114 (68,273)	8 (5,16)	2 (1,2)	-0.01 (-0.01,-0.02)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.01 (0,-0.01)	0 (0,0)	0 (-0.02,0)	0 (0,0.03)
Bulgaria	0.06	169 (102,416)	73 (45,152)	23 (11,32)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.86 (-1.37,-0.36)
Venezuela	0.05	350 (224,799)	5 (3,10)	2 (1,3)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0.09 (0.05,0.11)	0 (0,0)	-0.03 (-0.04,-0.02)
Chad	0.05	121 (73,289)	2 (2,5)	1 (1,2)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.08 (-0.08,-0.08)
Mongolia	0.04	98 (59,228)	9 (6,19)	3 (2,5)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.03 (-0.04,-0.03)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.01 (-0.01,0)
Oman	0.03	102 (61,247)	4 (3,9)	1 (0,1)	0 (-0.02,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	-0.14 (-0.14,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (-0.06,0)

<sup>1</sup> GWD = Annual groundwater depletion that is classified within economic distance (200 km) to existing transmission or urban areas.

<sup>2</sup> Levelized price per unit of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions mitigated from the national electricity systems by the agrivoltaic project.

<sup>3</sup> Averages presented with the minimum and maximum from the uncertainty analysis included in brackets.

<sup>4</sup> Green shading indicates net gains in yield; orange shading indicates net losses in yield.

Note: The analysis finds negligible impacts to sugarcane when aggregated and the entries are excluded.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6

**Table 2: Solar PV and wind potential, CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation costs and impacts on maximum crop yield potentials for the top 40 countries ranked by groundwater stress.**

## 1 Acknowledgements

2 The authors acknowledge funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and  
3 Innovation Programme under grant agreement No. 821124 (NAVIGATE). We thank Iain Staffell  
4 and Stefan Pfenninger for their assistance in the generation of the wind and solar power  
5 geospatial time-series data with the Renewables.Ninja application programming interface. We  
6 also thank Yoshihide Wada for sharing data on groundwater hydrology and Tom Gleeson for  
7 early discussions on the directions of this work.

## 8 Associated Content

9 The open source R programming code used for the analysis is available online at:  
10 [https://github.com/scparkinson/gw\\_renewables](https://github.com/scparkinson/gw_renewables).

## 11 References

- 12 1. Haegel NM, Atwater H, Barnes T, et al. Terawatt-scale photovoltaics: Transform global  
13 energy. *Science*. 2019;364(6443):836 - 838. doi:10.1126/science.aaw1845
- 14 2. McCollum DL, Zhou W, Bertram C, et al. Energy investment needs for fulfilling the Paris  
15 Agreement and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. *Nat Energy*. 2018;3(7).  
16 doi:10.1038/s41560-018-0179-z
- 17 3. *IRENA Renewable Power Generation Costs 2018*, International Renewable Energy Agency,  
18 2019.
- 19 4. Bird L, Lew D, Milligan M, et al. Wind and solar energy curtailment: A review of  
20 international experience. *Renew Sustain Energy Rev*. 2016;65:577-586.  
21 doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rser.2016.06.082
- 22 5. Gleeson T, Wada Y, Bierkens MFP, van Beek LPH. Water balance of global aquifers  
23 revealed by groundwater footprint. *Nature*. 2012;488(7410):197.
- 24 6. Pastor A V, Palazzo A, Havlik P, et al. The global nexus of food–trade–water sustaining  
25 environmental flows by 2050. *Nat Sustain*. 2019;2(6):499-507. doi:10.1038/s41893-019-0287-  
26 1
- 27 7. Biggs EM, Bruce E, Boruff B, et al. Sustainable development and the water--energy--food  
28 nexus: A perspective on livelihoods. *Environ Sci Policy*. 2015;54:389-397.
- 29 8. Parkinson SC, Djilali N, Krey V, et al. Impacts of groundwater constraints on Saudi  
30 Arabia’s low-carbon electricity supply strategy. *Environ Sci Technol*. 2016;50(4):1653-1662.
- 31 9. Liu J, Mooney H, Hull V, et al. Systems integration for global sustainability. *Science*.  
32 2015;347(6225):1258832.

- 1 10. McCollum DL, Krey V, Riahi K. An integrated approach to energy sustainability. *Nat*  
2 *Clim Chang*. 2011;1(9):428-429. doi:10.1038/nclimate1297
- 3 11. Dupraz C, Marrou H, Talbot G, Dufour L, Nogier A, Ferard Y. Combining solar  
4 photovoltaic panels and food crops for optimising land use: Towards new agrivoltaic  
5 schemes. *Renew Energy*. 2011;36(10):2725-2732.  
6 doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.renene.2011.03.005
- 7 12. Adeh EH, Good SP, Calaf M, Higgins CW. Solar PV Power Potential is Greatest Over  
8 Croplands. *Sci Rep*. 2019;9(1):11442. doi:10.1038/s41598-019-47803-3
- 9 13. Barron-Gafford GA, Pavao-Zuckerman MA, Minor RL, et al. Agrivoltaics provide mutual  
10 benefits across the food–energy–water nexus in drylands. *Nat Sustain*. 2019;2(9):848-855.  
11 doi:10.1038/s41893-019-0364-5
- 12 14. Dinesh H, Pearce JM. The potential of agrivoltaic systems. *Renew Sustain Energy Rev*.  
13 2016;54:299-308.
- 14 15. UNFCC. *CDM Methodology Booklet.*, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change,  
15 2013.
- 16 16. Wada Y, Wisser D, Bierkens MFP. Global modeling of withdrawal, allocation and  
17 consumptive use of surface water and groundwater resources. *Earth Syst Dyn*.  
18 2014;5(1):15-40. doi:10.5194/esd-5-15-2014
- 19 17. Wada Y, van Beek LPH, Bierkens MFP. Nonsustainable groundwater sustaining  
20 irrigation: A global assessment. *Water Resour Res*. 2012;48(6). doi:10.1029/2011WR010562
- 21 18. Siebert S, Henrich V, Frenken K, Burke J. *Update of the Digital Global Map of Irrigation Areas*  
22 *to Version 5.*; 2013.
- 23 19. Staffell I, Pfenninger S. Using bias-corrected reanalysis to simulate current and future  
24 wind power output. *Energy*. 2016;114:1224-1239.
- 25 20. Pfenninger S, Staffell I. Long-term patterns of European PV output using 30 years of  
26 validated hourly reanalysis and satellite data. *Energy*. 2016;114:1251-1265.
- 27 21. Florczyk A, Corbane C, Ehrlich D, et al. *GHSL Data Package 2019.*; 2019.  
28 doi:10.2760/290498
- 29 22. OpenStreetMap. OpenStreetMap. 2019. www.openstreetmap.org, [accessed 2020--01--15].
- 30 23. Fischer G. *Global Agro-Ecological Zones (GAEZ v3. 0)-Model Documentation*, 2012.
- 31 24. IGES. *IGES List of Grid Emission Factors V10.7*, 2019.
- 32 25. Carbon Footprint Ltd. *Country Specific Electricity Grid Greenhouse Gas Emission Factors.*;  
33 2019.
- 34 26. Damodaran A. Country Default Spreads and Risk Premiums, 2020,  
35 [http://pages.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New\\_Home\\_Page/datafile/ctryprem.html](http://pages.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New_Home_Page/datafile/ctryprem.html)

- 1 [accessed 2020--01--10]
- 2 27. FAOSTAT. Agricultural Producer Prices, 2020. <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/>. [accessed  
3 2020--01--15]
- 4 28. GADM database of Global Administrative Areas, version 2.8, 2015. <http://www.gadm.org>  
5 [accessed 2019--09--24].
- 6 29. Vartiainen E, Masson G, Breyer C, Moser D, Román Medina E. Impact of weighted  
7 average cost of capital, capital expenditure, and other parameters on future utility-scale  
8 PV levelised cost of electricity. *Prog Photovoltaics Res Appl*. 2019. doi:10.1002/pip.3189
- 9 30. Staffell I, Green R. How does wind farm performance decline with age? *Renew Energy*.  
10 2014;66:775-786. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.renene.2013.10.041>
- 11 31. Egli F, Steffen B, Schmidt TS. Bias in energy system models with uniform cost of capital  
12 assumption. *Nat Commun*. 2019;10(1):4588. doi:10.1038/s41467-019-12468-z
- 13 32. Schneider K, Schindele S. Agrophotovoltaics: High Harvesting Yield in Hot Summer of  
14 2018. *Press Release Fraunhofer ISE*. April 2019.
- 15 33. Reed AJ, Singletary GW, Schussler JR, Williamson DR, Christy AL. Shading effects on  
16 dry matter and nitrogen partitioning, kernel number, and yield of maize. *Crop Sci*.  
17 1988;28(5):819-825.
- 18 34. Sekiyama T, Nagashima A. Solar Sharing for Both Food and Clean Energy Production:  
19 Performance of Agrivoltaic Systems for Corn, A Typical Shade-Intolerant Crop.  
20 *Environments*. 2019;6(6):65.
- 21 35. NREL. Annual Technology Baseline: Electricity, 2019. <https://atb.nrel.gov/>, [accessed 2019-  
22 -12--04].
- 23 36. Ong S, Campbell C, Denholm P, Margolis R, Heath G. *Land-Use Requirements for Solar  
24 Power Plants in the United States*. National Renewable Energy Lab.(NREL), Golden, CO  
25 (United States); 2013.
- 26 37. Eureka K, Sullivan P, Gleason M, Hettinger D, Heimiller D, Lopez A. An improved global  
27 wind resource estimate for integrated assessment models. *Energy Econ*. 2017;64:552-567.  
28 doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eneco.2016.11.015>
- 29 38. NRECA. *Guides for Electric Cooperative Development and Rural Electrification*.; 2016.
- 30 39. Johnston J, Mileva A, Nelson JH, Kammen DM. SWITCH-WECC: Data, assumptions, and  
31 model formulation. *Univ Calif Berkeley, CA, USA*. 2013.
- 32 40. Gernaat DEHJ, Bogaart PW, van Vuuren DP, Biemans H, Niessink R. High-resolution  
33 assessment of global technical and economic hydropower potential. *Nat Energy*.  
34 2017;2(10):821.
- 35 41. Schindele S, Trommsdorff M, Schlaak A, et al. Implementation of agrophotovoltaics:

- 1 Techno-economic analysis of the price-performance ratio and its policy implications. *Appl*  
2 *Energy*. 2020;265:114737. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apenergy.2020.114737>
- 3 42. Younas R, Imran H, Riaz MH, Butt NZ. Agrivoltaic Farm Design: Vertical Bifacial vs.  
4 Tilted Monofacial Photovoltaic Panels. *arXiv Prepr arXiv191001076*. 2019.
- 5 43. Davis KF, Rulli MC, Seveso A, D'Odorico P. Increased food production and reduced  
6 water use through optimized crop distribution. *Nat Geosci*. 2017;10(12):919.
- 7 44. Shah T, Rajan A, Rai GP, Verma S, Durga N. Solar pumps and South Asia's energy-  
8 groundwater nexus: exploring implications and reimagining its future. *Environ Res Lett*.  
9 2018;13(11):115003.
- 10 45. de Graaf IEM, Gleeson T, (Rens) van Beek LPH, Sutanudjaja EH, Bierkens MFP.  
11 Environmental flow limits to global groundwater pumping. *Nature*. 2019;574(7776):90-94.  
12 doi:[10.1038/s41586-019-1594-4](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-019-1594-4)
- 13 46. Niswonger RG, Morway ED, Triana E, Huntington JL. Managed aquifer recharge  
14 through off-season irrigation in agricultural regions. *Water Resour Res*. 2017;53(8):6970-  
15 6992.
- 16 47. Samberg LH, Gerber JS, Ramankutty N, Herrero M, West PC. Subnational distribution of  
17 average farm size and smallholder contributions to global food production. *Environ Res*  
18 *Lett*. 2016;11(12):124010.
- 19 48. Rao ND, Poblete-Cazenave M, Bhalerao R, Davis KF, Parkinson S. Spatial analysis of  
20 energy use and GHG emissions from cereal production in India. *Sci Total Environ*.  
21 2019;654. doi:[10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.11.073](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.11.073)

22