Cost-competitiveness of organic photovoltaics for electricity self-consumption at residential buildings: A comparative study of Denmark and Greece under real market conditions

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To address sustainability challenges, photovoltaics (PV) are regarded as a promising renewable energy technology. Decreasing PV module costs and increasing residential electricity prices have made self-consumption of PV-generated electricity financially more attractive than exporting to the grid. Organic photovoltaics (OPV) are an emerging thin-film PV technology that shows promise of greatly improving the environmental and economic performances of PV technologies. Previous studies have estimated the current and future costs of OPV technologies, but the attractiveness of investing in OPV systems has not been evaluated under real market conditions, especially under PV self-consumption schemes. In this study, we investigate the self-consumption of electricity generation from conventional and organic PV systems installed at residential houses in two different countries, Denmark and Greece, under current PV regulatory frameworks. We then focus on modelling and assessing the cost-competitiveness of organic PV technologies based on cost estimations for existing pilot-scale (kW-range), and projected scale-up (100MW) and industrial-scale (100GW) manufacturing capacity levels. Our generic results applying to all PV technologies show that PV systems installed at residential houses in Greece perform economically better than those in Denmark do in terms of self-sufficiency and gross electricity bill savings (i.e. excluding PV costs). Using the two country cases, which present very different settings, we characterise and discuss the influence of three key parameters of the economic performance of PV systems, namely the PV regulatory scheme, the solar irradiation level and the temporal match between the electricity consumption and solar irradiation profiles. Focusing on organic PV systems developed in an industrial-scale cost setting (1.53€/Wp), we find that they deliver significant electricity bill savings for residential houses in Greece (38%) under current conditions, while they may not be sufficiently attractive for residential houses in Denmark (6.5%) due to mainly the different PV regulatory schemes. Based on these findings, we therefore recommend investors interested in renewable energy technologies to pursue scaling up the manufacturing capacity of OPV technologies, as well as assess a large number of countries to identify and prioritise financially attractive settings for PV self-consumption.

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