



**NTNU – Trondheim**  
Norwegian University of  
Science and Technology

***Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering***  
***Building and Construction Engineering-Group***  
***Building and Material Technology-Team***

**Mohamed Hamdy, Phd, M.Sc., Eng.,**  
**Associate professor – [my LinkedIn](#)**

Mobile : (+47) 92 05 28 76

Email : [Mohamed.Hamdy@ntnu.no](mailto:Mohamed.Hamdy@ntnu.no)

Visiting address: Høgskoleringen 7A, [Room 2-236](#)

# Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering



## Research groups:

- **Building and Construction engineering**
- Geotechnical engineering
- Road, transport and geomatics Engineering
- Marine civil engineering



## Research/Education profiles:

- **Building and material technology**
- Construction technology and production management
- Project management
- Facility and property management

# Visions and Missions

**We aim at achieving sustainable/energy-positive built environments optimized for comfort, health, and/or productivity throughout the whole building life.**

## **Our research and teaching focuses on:**

- Building performance simulation,
- Simulation-based optimization,
- Integrated building design,
- Cost-optimality, Life cycle cost analysis (LCC),
- Life cycle assessment (LCA),
- Benchmarking,
- Performance Gap- Simulation vs Reality
- Impact of climate change on building performance,
- Building flexibility,
- Advanced facades,
- Building information modelling,
- Etc.,

## Software:

IDA-ICE 4.7,  
EnergyPlus,  
DesignBuilder,  
MODELICA,  
SAM: System Advisor Model  
HOMAR  
SimaPro  
Etc.,

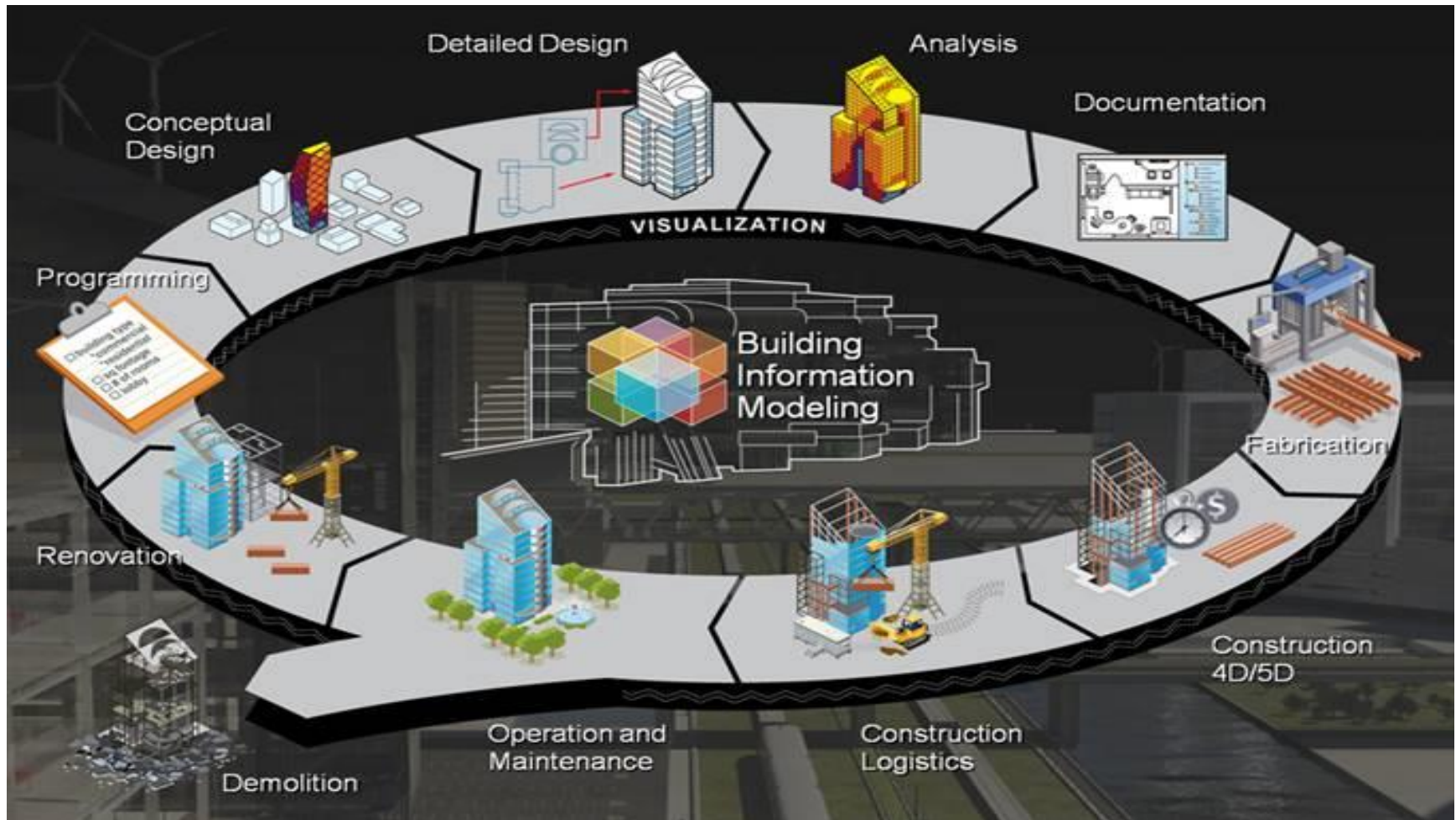
# Visions and Missions

We adopt a holistic optimization approaches;  
investigating all available and innovative technologies  
(e.g., advanced facades, renewables, construction, management  
techniques, BIM, etc.,)  
for meeting predefined stakeholders' criteria  
(i.e., national/international targets, energy-efficiency, cost-  
effectiveness, and well-being).

## Stakeholder

- architects,
- engineers,
- contractors and
- facility managers.

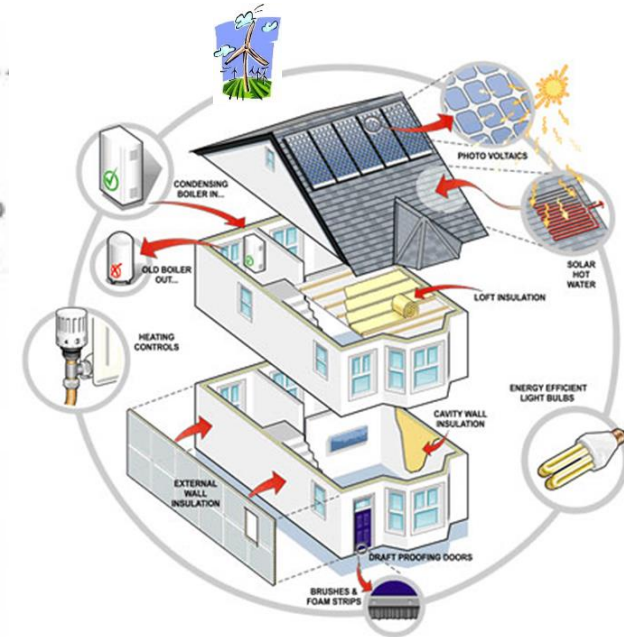
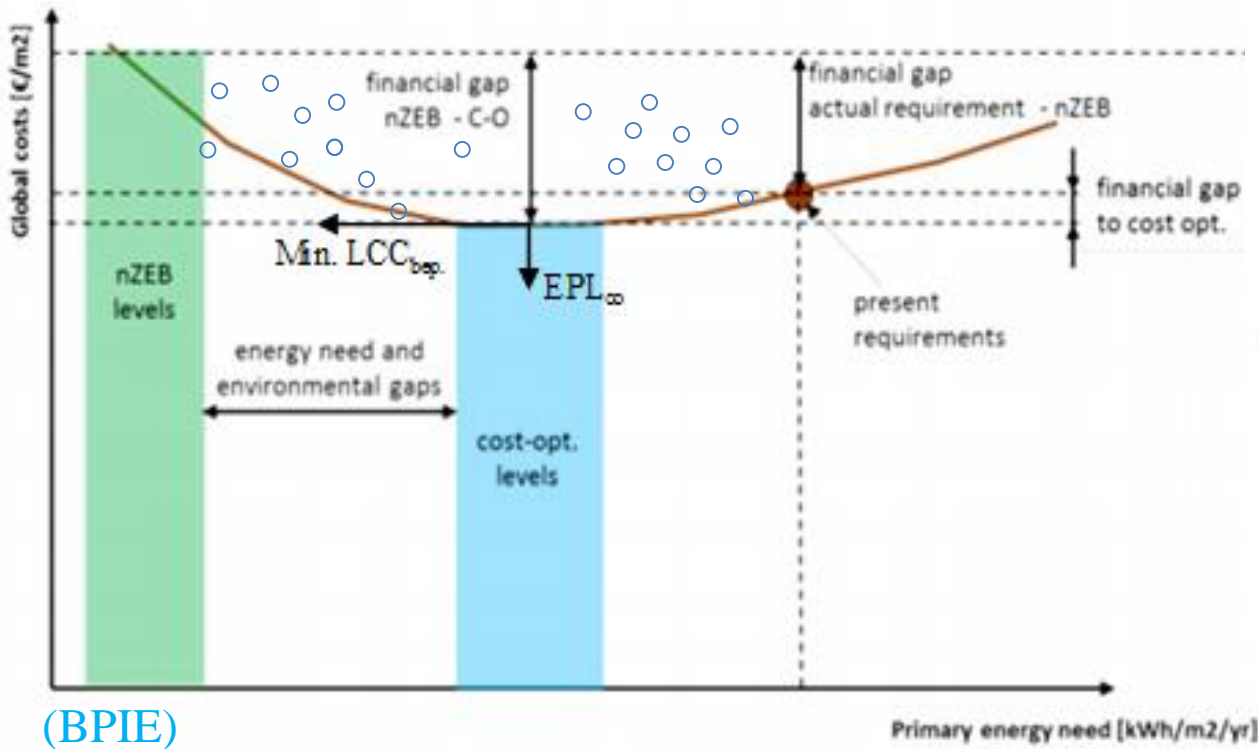
# Optimizing the Building Life Cycle



**BIM-based BPS**

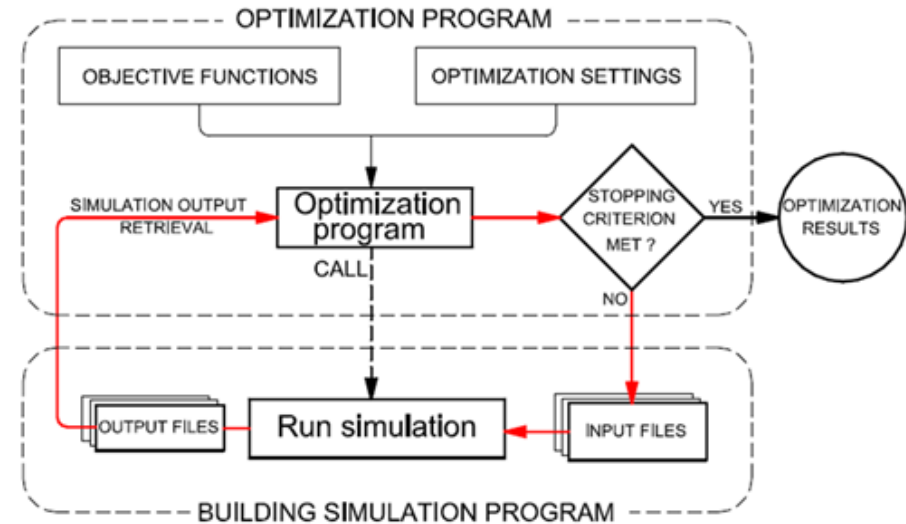
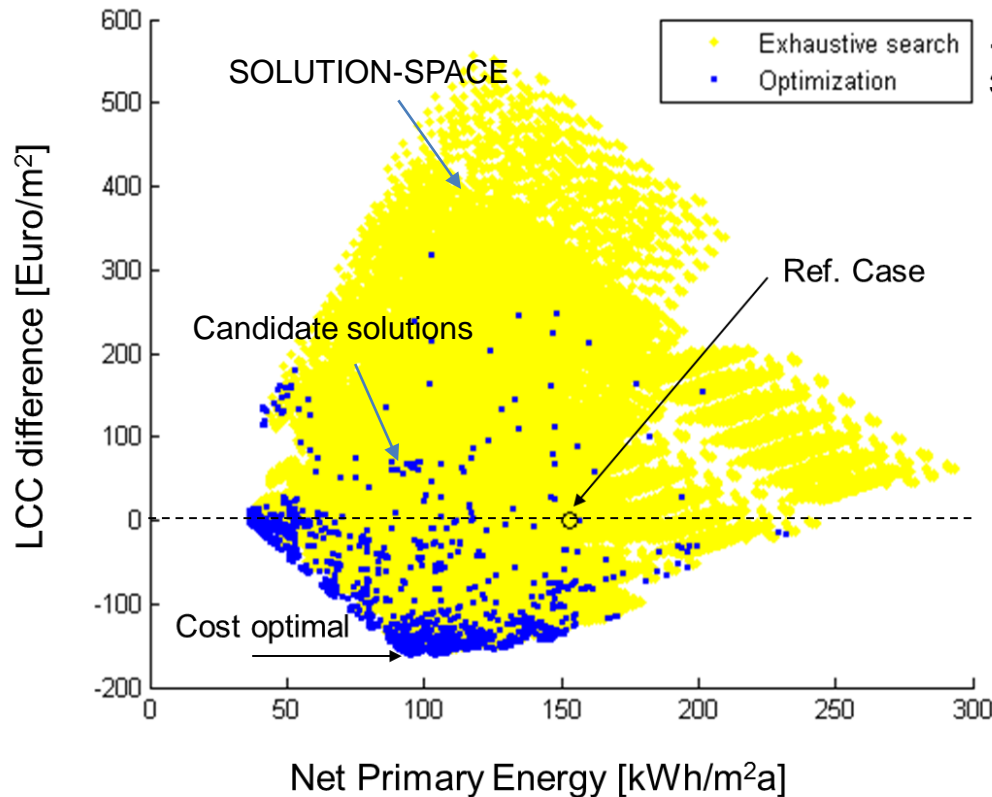
# Focus on cost-optimality framefowk

According to the European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD 2010/31/EU), all EU-Member states are obliged to continuously (*at least every 5 years*) apply analysis on cost-optimal levels of minimum energy performance requirements towards nearly/Net Zero Energy Buildings (nZEBs).



Design variables

# Simulation-Based Optimization (Traditional)

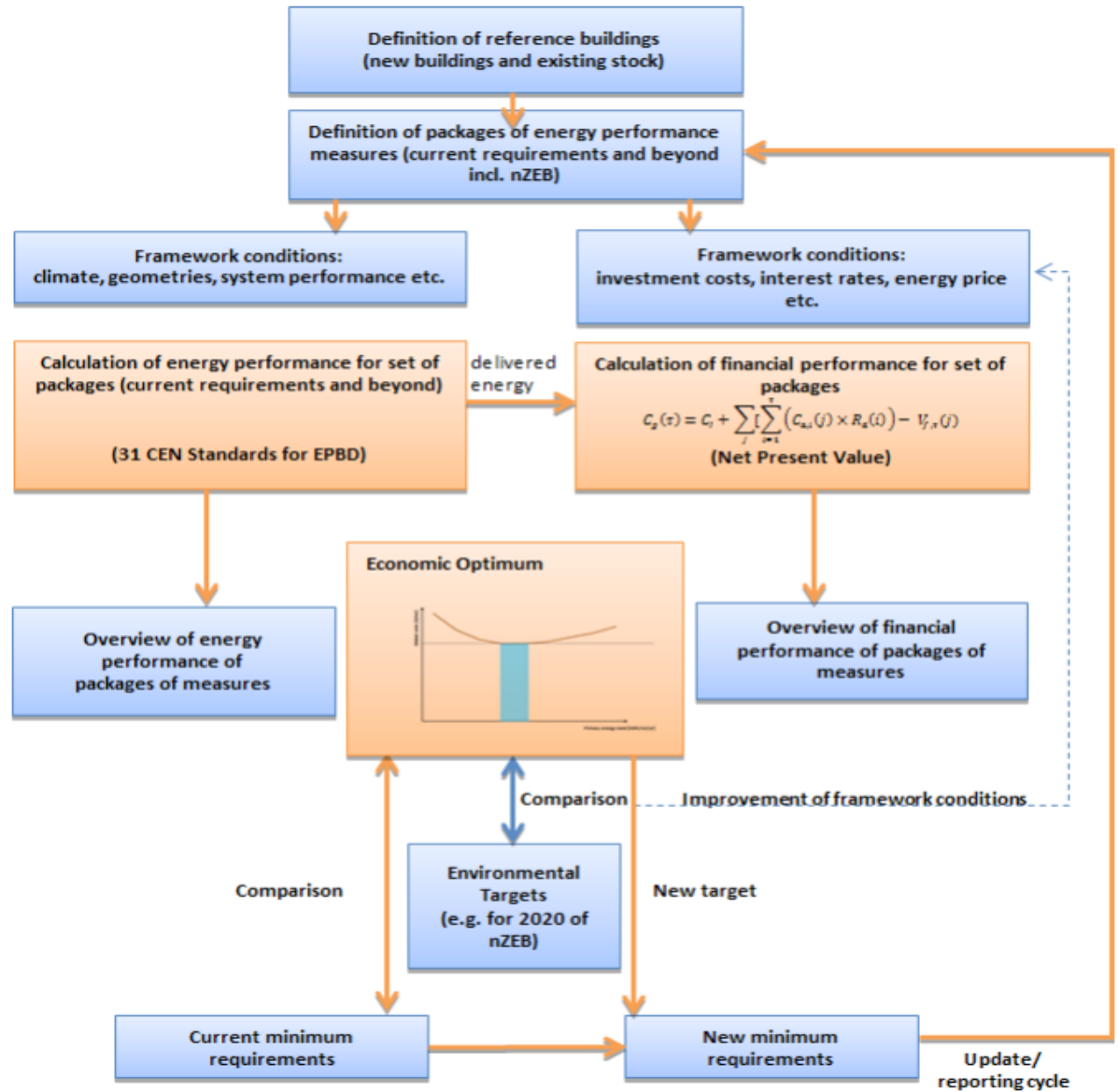


The usual structure of simulation-based optimization in building performance studies (Nguyen, Reiter, and Rigo 2014).

**Source:** Hamdy M., Hasan A. (2013). A Holistic Simulation-Based Optimization Approach for Dimensioning Cost Optimal and nearly-Zero-Energy Buildings. 1<sup>st</sup> IBPSA-Egypt Conference, Building Simulation Cairo 2013. 23rd- 24th June 2013.



# Challenges





# Challenges in the Design and Modelling of Green Buildings

Although it is common knowledge that the impact of design decisions is greatest in earlier design stages, detailed BPS software is rarely used to support early decision for optimal green buildings. This is mainly because:

- the lack of knowledge regarding how to select appropriate BPS tool,
- the lack of experience to correctly use the available BPS tool,
- the limitations of the existing BPS tools to model and integrate,
- the lack of time to conduct detailed enough simulation work,
- the lack of experience to analysis the simulation results,
- the limitations of the existing BPS tools to communicate with different stakeholder.

Handbook of Energy Systems in Green Buildings| Editorial Workflow

# Challenges in the Design and Modelling NZEN

- Wong [10] states that “the research in sustainable design and construction tends to be very fragmented. It is essential that a more holistic approach should be developed to better understand the relationship between urban, building, building systems, and material”.

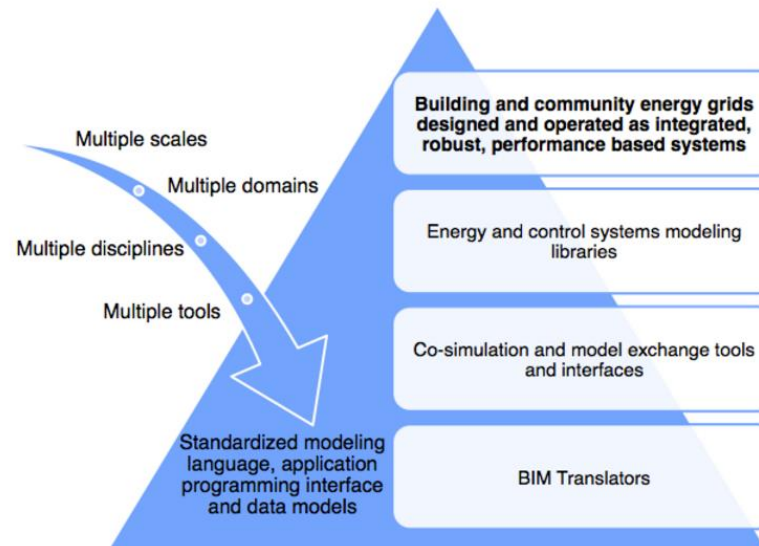
# IEA EBC Annex 60

## IEA EBC Annex 60

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### New generation computational tools for building and community energy systems based on the Modelica and Functional Mockup Interface standards



*Annex 60 overview.*

Annex 60 will share, further develop and deploy free open-source contributions of currently uncoordinated activities in modeling and simulation of energy systems of buildings and communities, based on the [Modelica](#) and [Functional Mockup Interface](#) standards.

# Trust is the biggest challenge

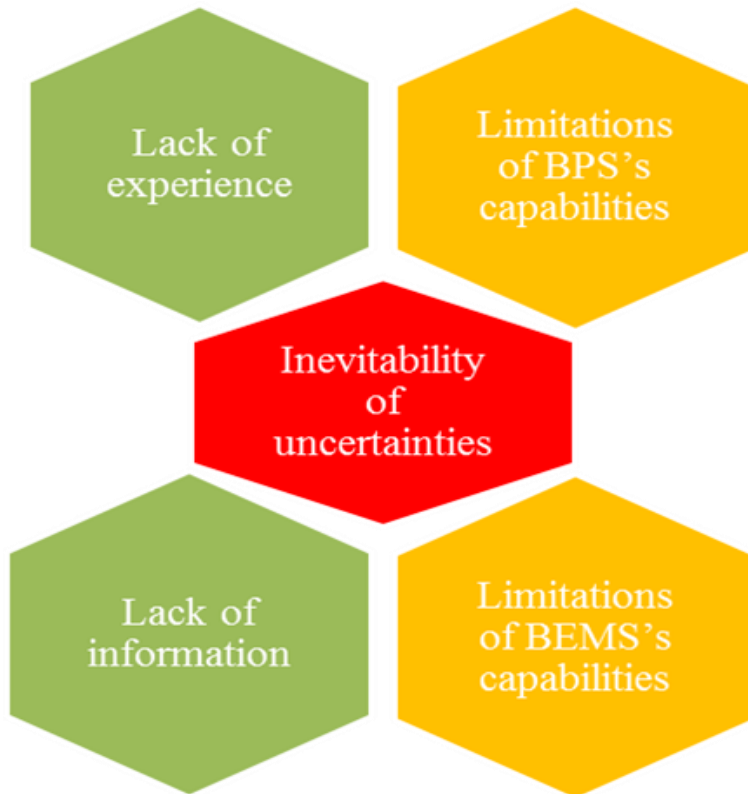
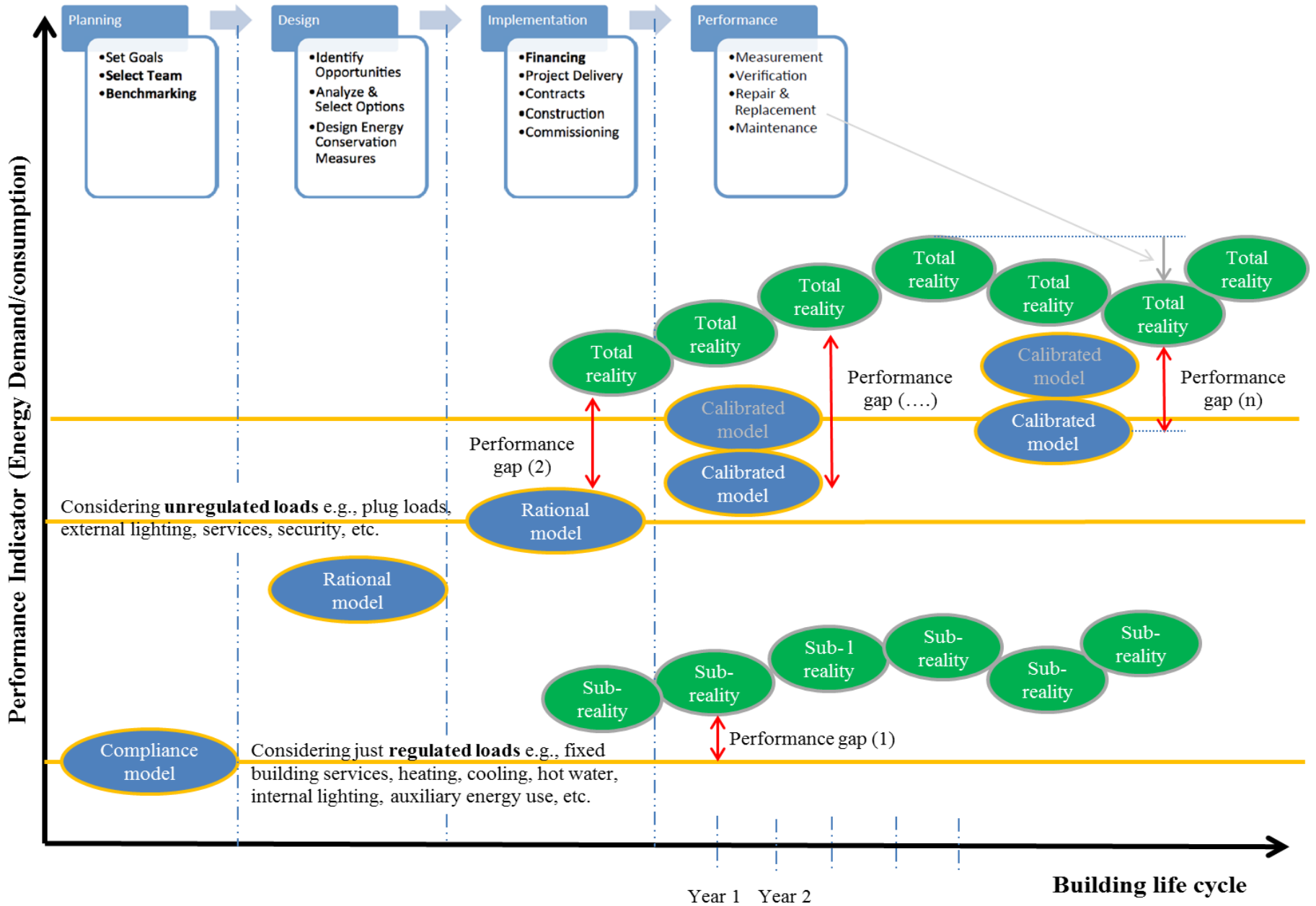


Figure 2 the main challenges of implementing the proposed discrepancies identification approach



# PhD proposal - ZEN

## A Comprehensive Optimization Platform for Accelerating Robust Zero Emission Neighborhoods in Practice.

- Integrated neighbourhood design is inherently a multi-objective optimization problem where two or more conflicting objectives must be minimized (i.e., carbon foot print, life cycle cost) and/or maximized (i.e., indoor environmental quality, energy flexible buildings).
- The complexity of finding compromises towards cost-effective net zero carbon neighbourhood (ZEN) has been dramatically increased, because the significant growth in energy-efficiency measures.
- The optimization problem become incredibly complex when different sources of uncertainty (i.e., financial, technical, climatic, and occupant behaviour assumptions/scenarios) are considered.

# PhD proposal - ZEN

## A Comprehensive Optimization Platform for Accelerating Robust Zero Emission Neighborhoods in Practice.

- This proposal aims at developing a comprehensive optimization platform to support robust optimal decisions for future-proof net zero carbon neighbourhood.
- The platform will be customized based on the financial, technical, climatic, and occupant behaviour patterns in Norway for achieving predefined target such “reducing embodied CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in buildings by 50% while reducing the energy demand for operation by 20% for new buildings and 60% for retrofitted buildings, compared to current Norwegian Building Codes”



# Complexity-components

The cost-optimal solution is function of :

1- Solutions Space

2- assumptions/ scenarios

The complexity of finding a cost-optimal solution increases as long as :

the solution-space expands because of the new technologies

the scenarios increase seeking for robust cost-optimal solution

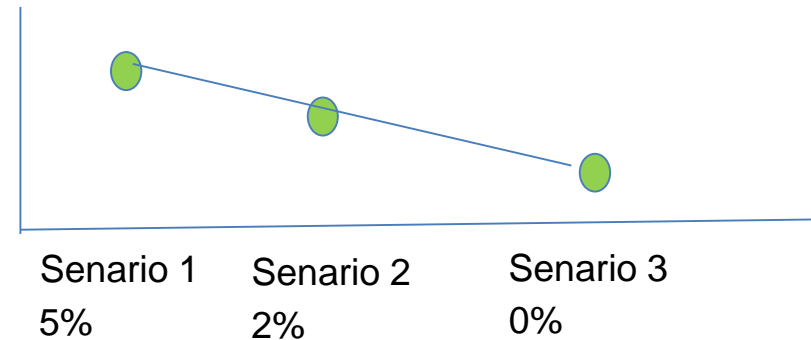
Optimization-based

Sensitivity Analysis

Optimization-based  
Sensitivity Analysis

Optimal decision  
(e.g., cost optimal  
investment cost)

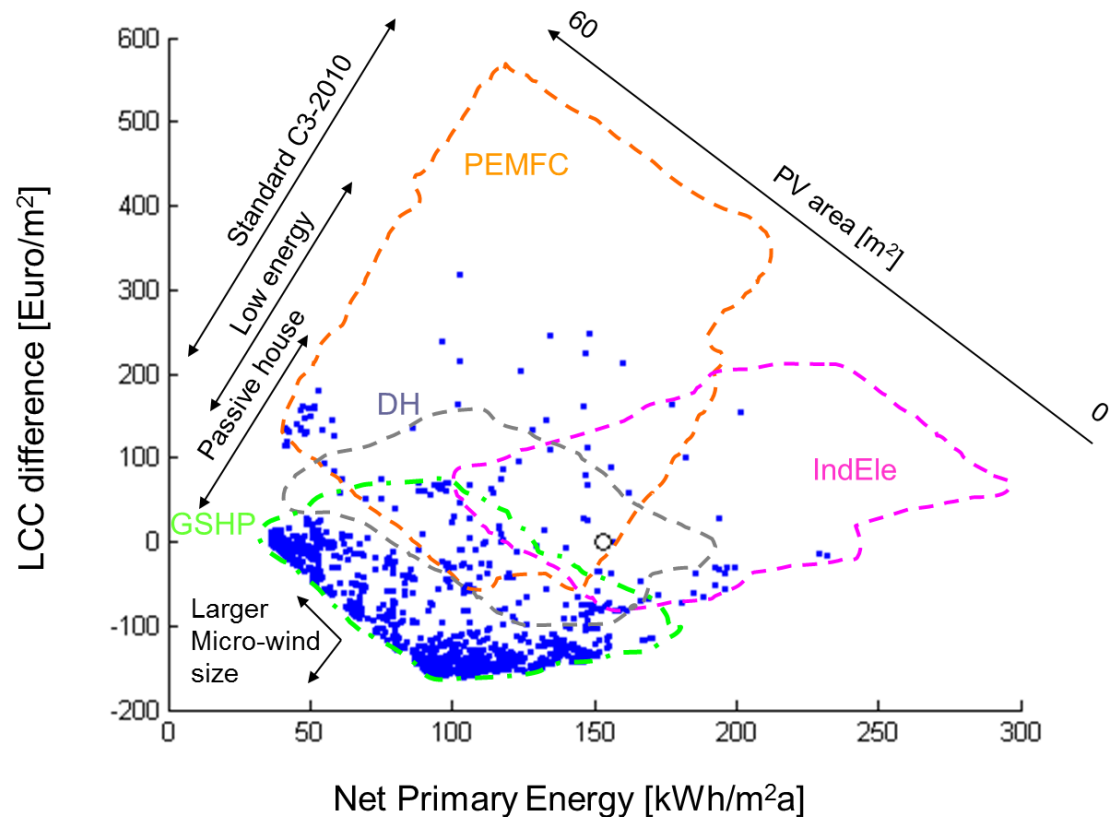
Inflation rate :



# Complexity-components

The cost-optimal solution is function of

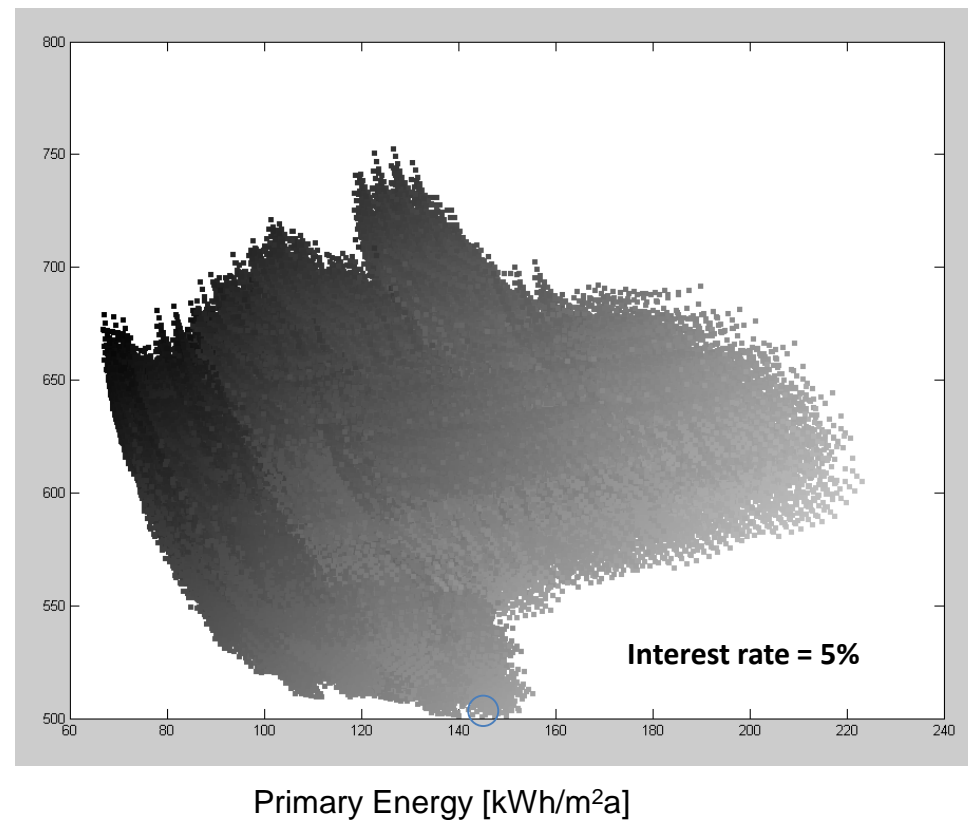
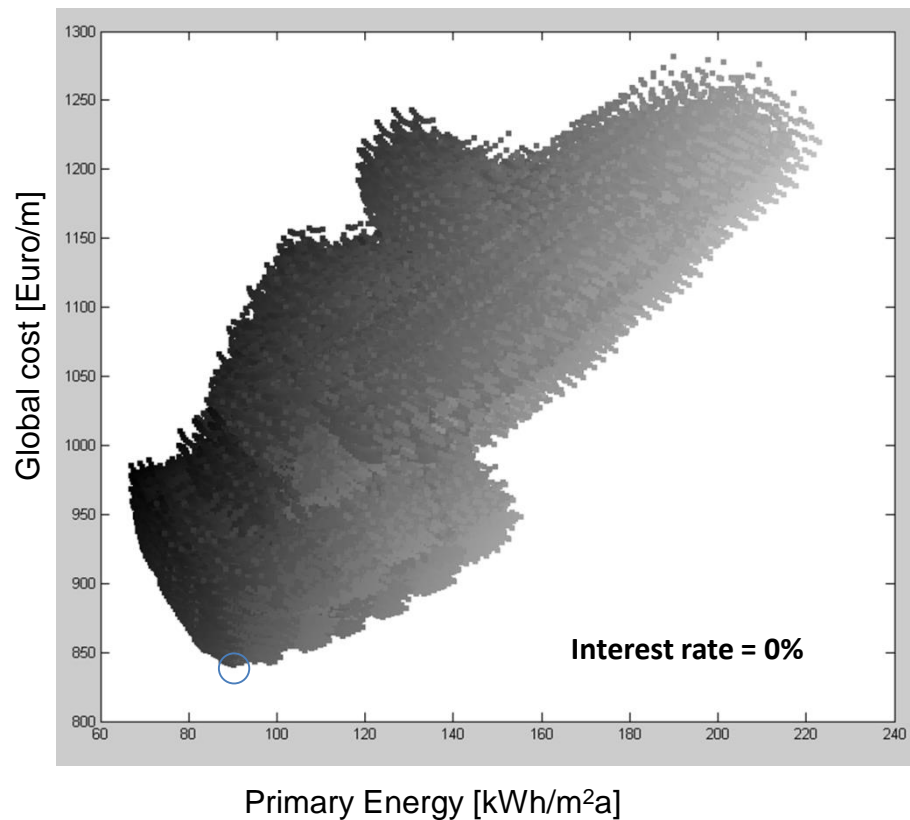
1- The possible design/operation options (Solution-Space)



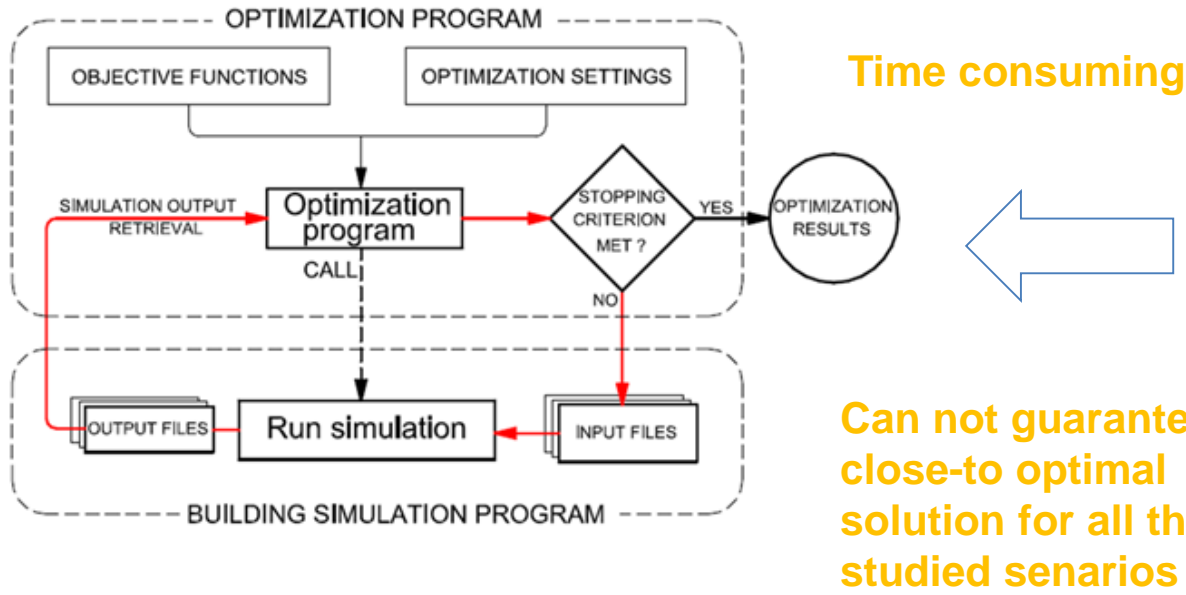
# Complexity-components

The cost-optimal solution is function of

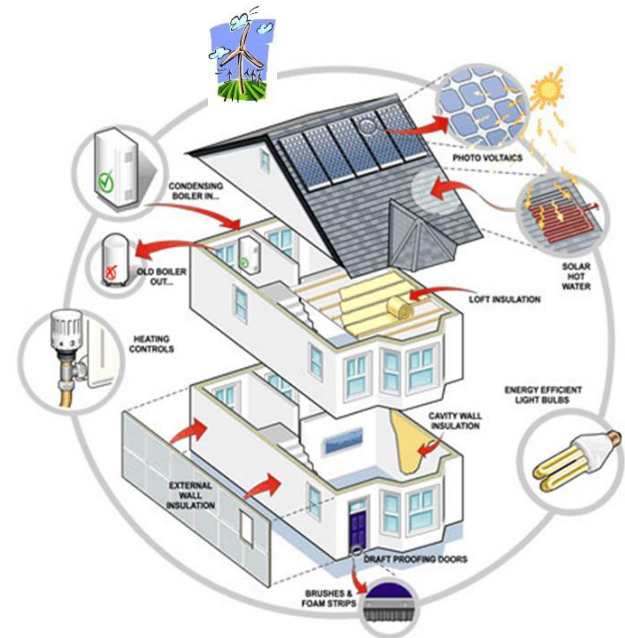
2- technical assumptions as well as financial and climate scenario (e.g., lifespan and interest rate)



# Traditional Simulation-Based Optimization

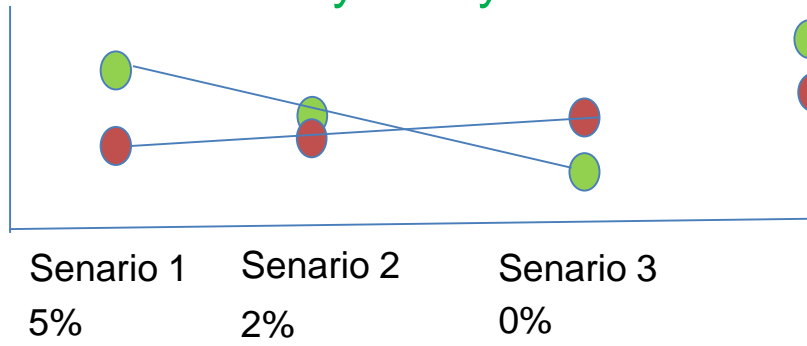


**Can not guarantee close-to optimal solution for all the studied scenarios**



## Optimization-based Sensitivity Analysis

Optimal decision (e.g., cost optimal investment cost)



- Optimization results (close-to-optimum)
- Optimization results

# Robustness of optimization

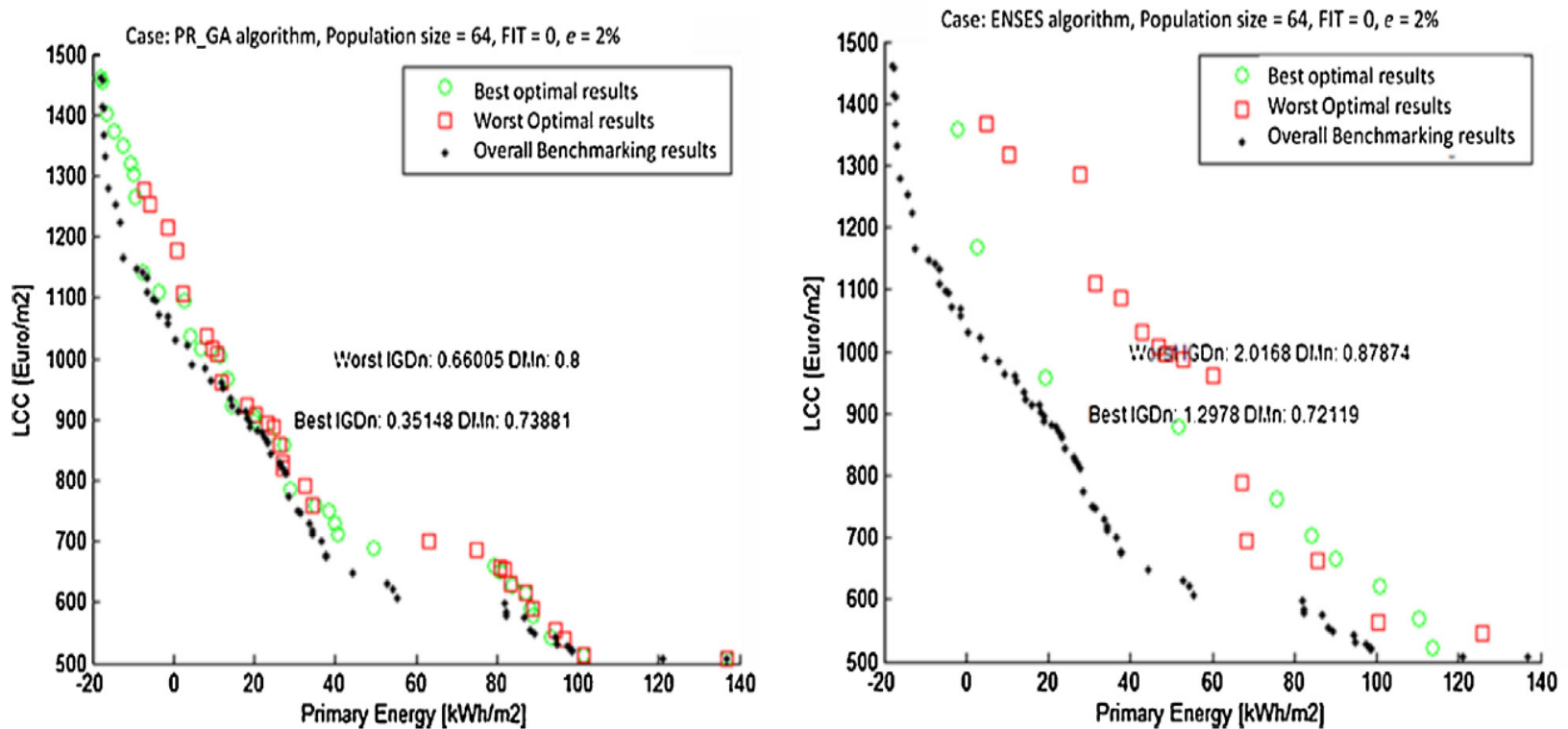


Fig. 7. The best and the worst obtained tradeoff solutions of the PR.GA and the ENSES, in terms of IGDA and DMn, compared with the benchmarking Pareto (Case A2—after 27 generations).

# Robustness of optimization

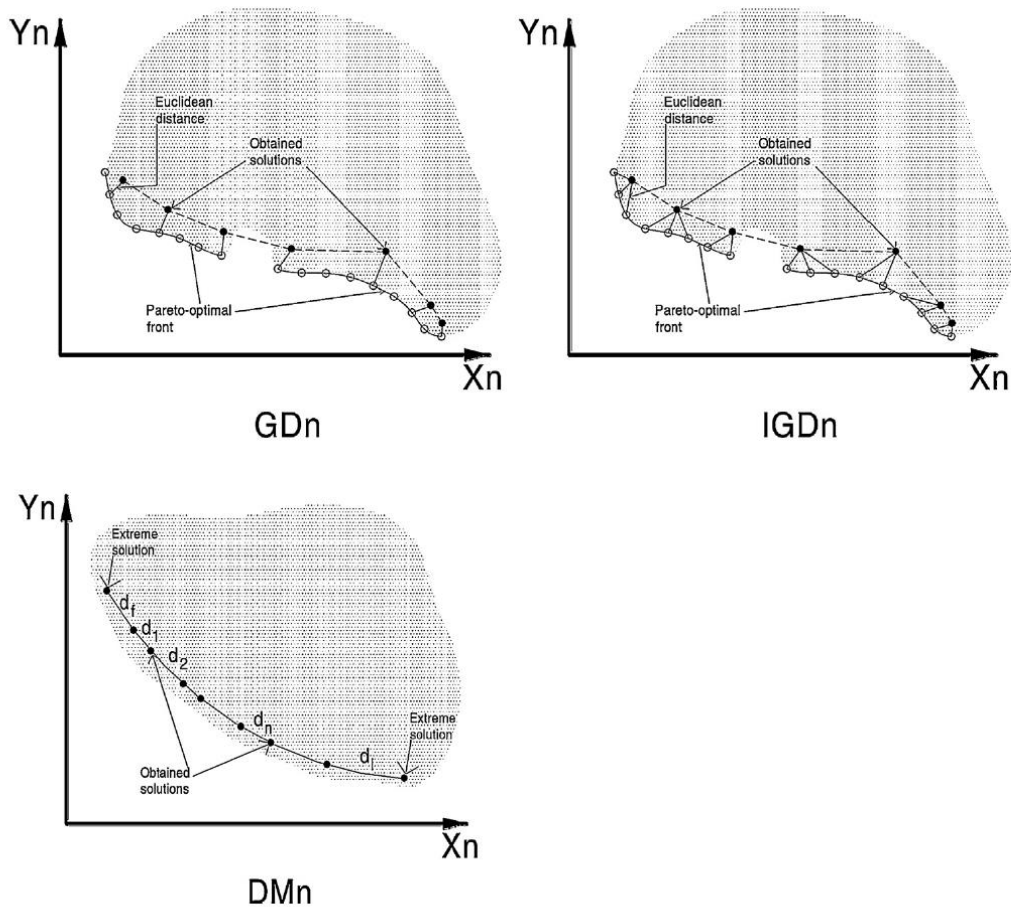
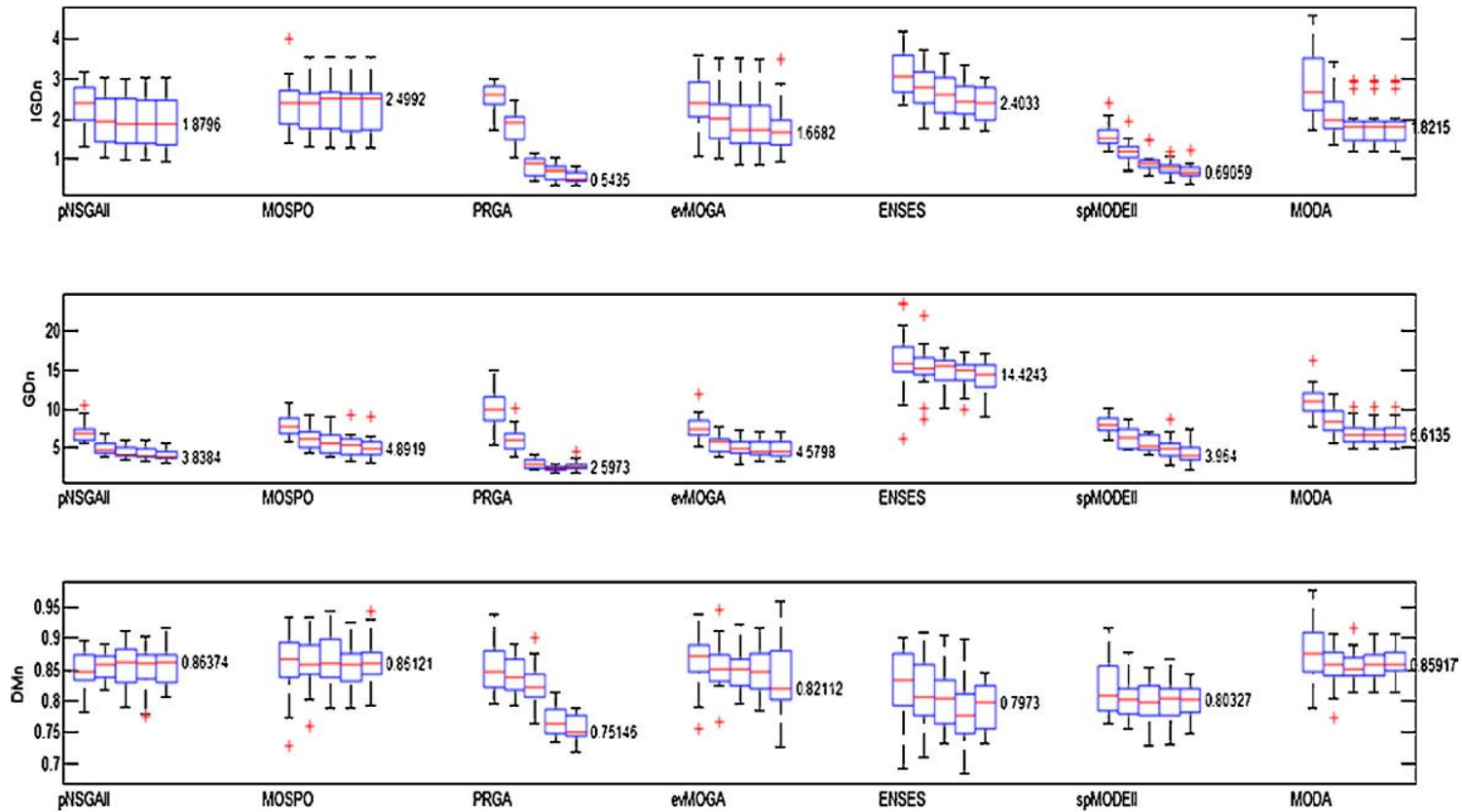


Fig. 4. The concept of the GDn, IGDn, and DMn (adapted from [45,46]).

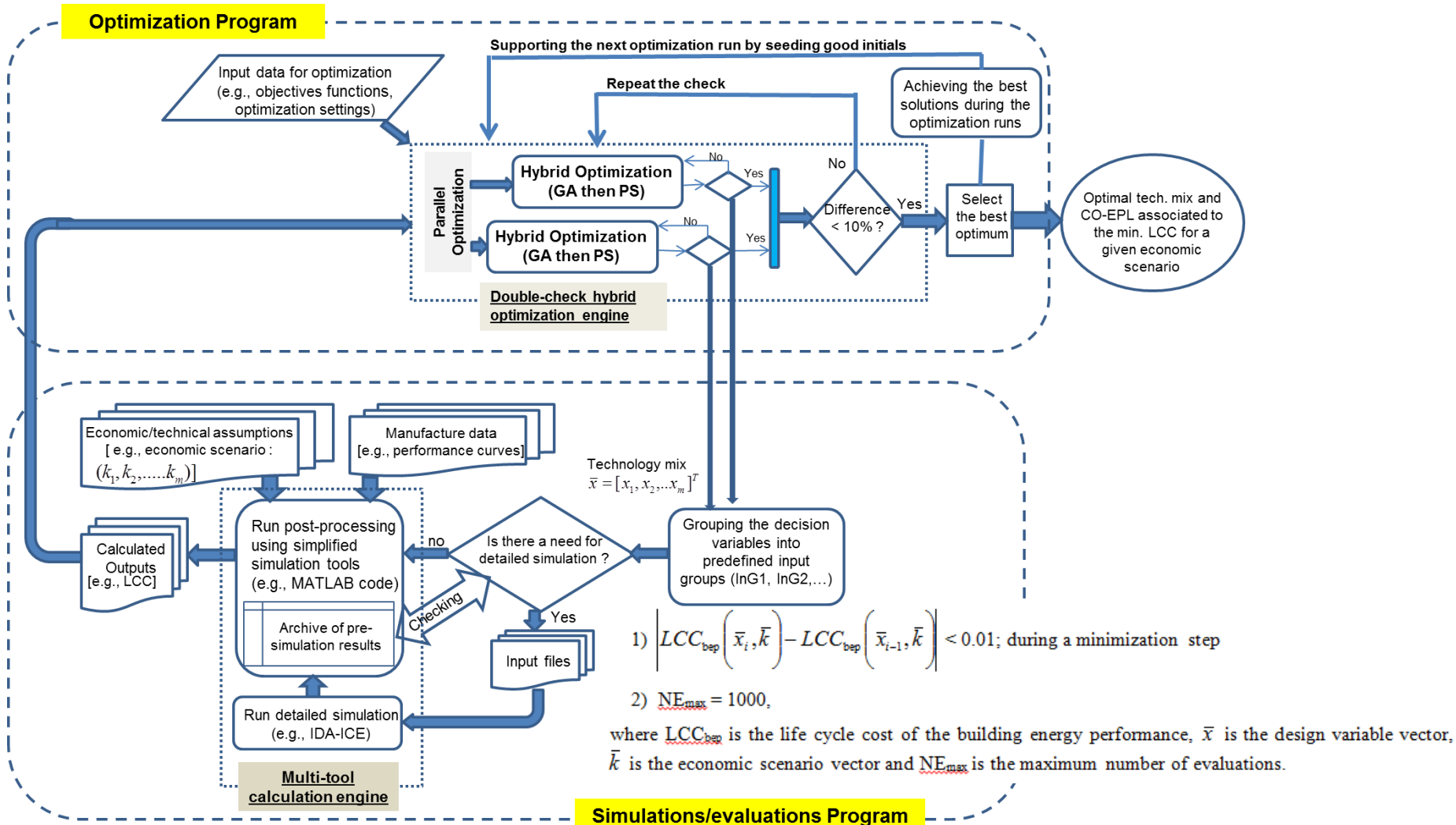
# Robustness of optimization



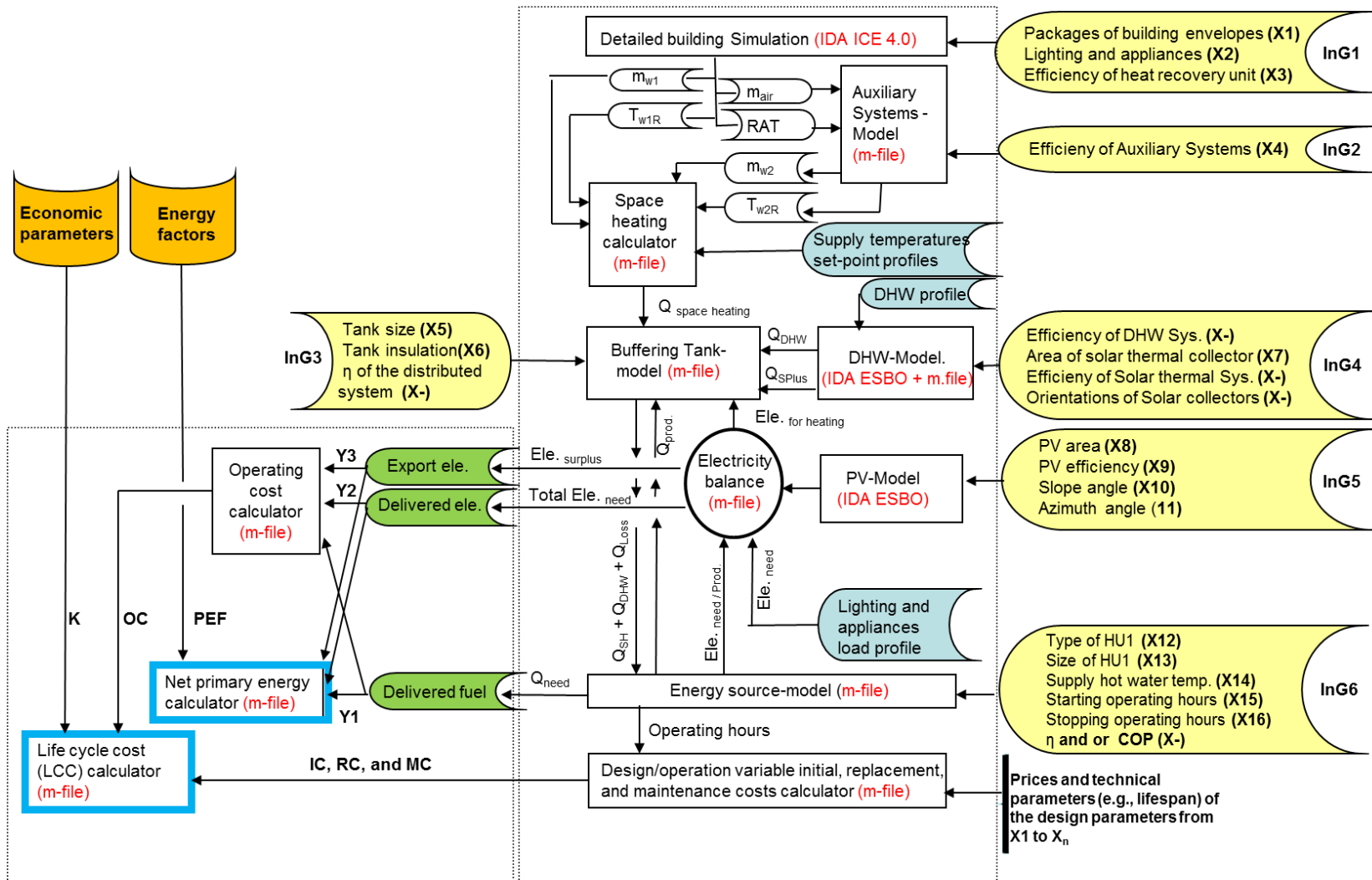
**Fig. 9.** The IGDn, GDn and DMn of the tested algorithms—Test case A2: population size = 64 individuals; financial assumption: FIT = 0, e = 2%. For each algorithm, optimization was executed 20 times, then the number of generations jumped from one to another value, i.e. from 3 to 9, 15, 21, 27 generations ( $\approx 200, 600, 1000, 1400, 1800$  evaluations), respectively.



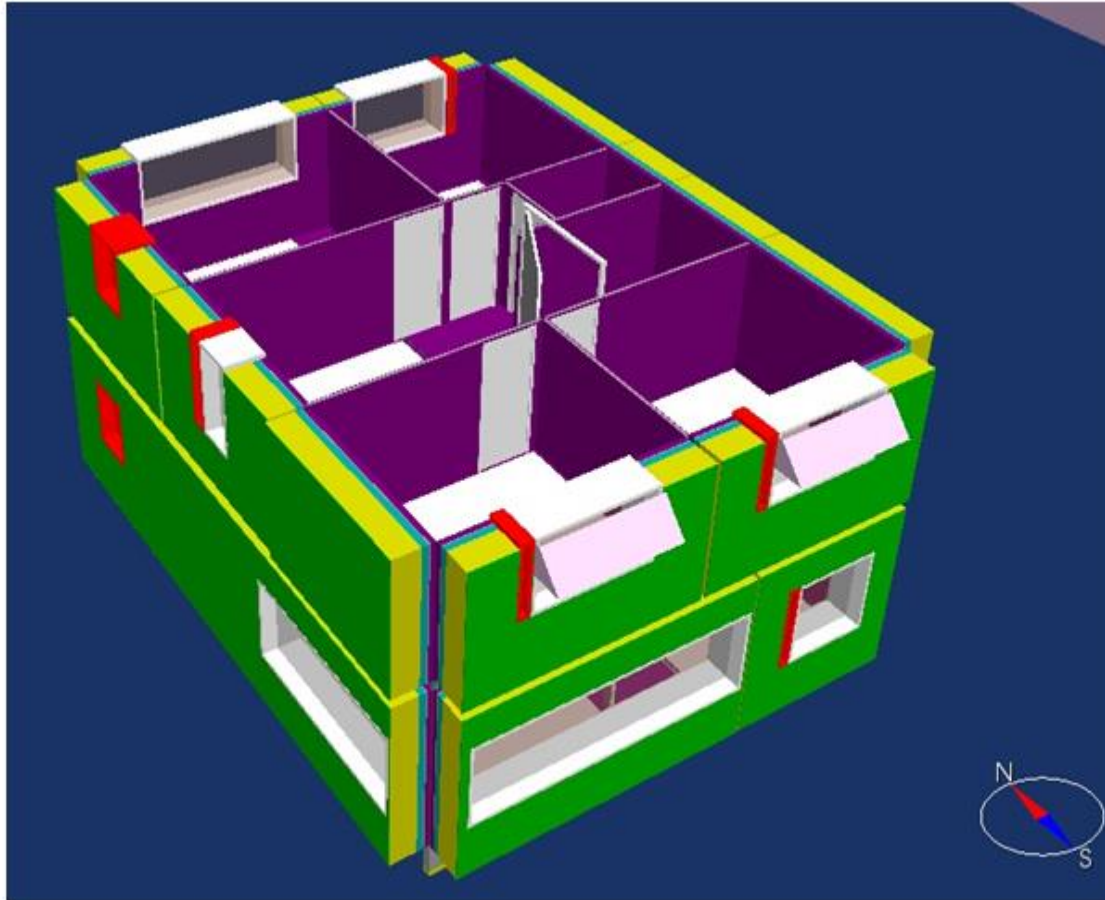
# A Multi-aid Optimization Scheme (MAOS)



# The multi-tool calculation engine



# A Case Study / The Building



**Figure 5** The studied single-family house. The small windows (red) are operable for free cooling to provide natural ventilation in summer.

# A Case Study / Solution-Space

	Decision variables	X	Possible options	No.	Costs
ESM <sub>s</sub>	Package of building envelope (PBenv.)	X1	From PBenv. 1 (standard building envelope acc. to C3 [46]) to PBenv. 8 (Passive house's building envelope acc. to [43]).	8	From 8,000 €, *1 to 17,000 €, *1
	Efficiency of lighting and appliances	X2	Standard (Incandescent lighting + appliance energy-class A) or High efficient (mix of fluorescent and Incandescent lighting + energy-class A++)	2	According to [4 and 5]
	Type of heat recovery unit (efficiency %)	X3	Cross-flow heat exchanger (60%) Cross-flow heat exchanger (70%) Regenerative heat exchanger (80 %)	3	1,500 €, 2,000 €, 2,500 € [7] *3
	Efficiency of auxiliary systems (fans and pumps)	X4	60 or 80 %	2	800 €, 1500 €,
	Size of buffering tank	X5	100, 300, 1000, or 1500 litter	4	$370 * V_{\text{tank}} + 1720$ [6]
	Insulation level of the buffering tank ( $Th_{\text{ins}}$ )	X6	40, 100, 200, 400 mm	4	$150 * A_{\text{tank}} * Th_{\text{ins}}$ [7]
RET <sub>s</sub>	Area of solar thermal collectors	X7	0, 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, or 28 m <sup>2</sup>	8	492 A <sub>StH</sub> + 500; Table 3
	Area of photovoltaic module	X8	0, 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 40 m <sup>2</sup>	11	$3.1A_{pv2} + 202A_{pv} + 1983$ ; Table 3
	Overall efficiency of the photovoltaic	X9	10 or 13 %	2	70% of the given price 100% of the given price
	Slope angle of photovoltaic module	X10	45, 60, 75 °	3	-
	Azimuth angle of photovoltaic module	X11	0, 15, 30 or 45 ° from south to west.	4	-
Sys.	Type of primary heating unit	X12	District heating (DH), Air source heat pump (ASHP), Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP), PEMFC with On/off operating mode, or PEMFC with thermal tracing	5	Table 3
	Size of the primary heating unit	X13	0:0.5: 6 kW *4	13	-
	Supply water temperature from the primary heating unit ( $T_s$ )	X14	40, 50, or 60 °C	3	-
	Operating hour start at	X15	from first of August to end of September (step 15 days)	5	-
	Operating hour stop at	X16	from first of May to end of June (step 15 days)	5	-

# A Case Study / Economic Scenarios

Table 2 Financial parameters [51], [11], [12].

Financial parameters	Alternatives	No of alternatives
Nominal interest rate ( $i$ )*	0.0, <u>3.2</u> or 10 %	3
Inflation rate ( $f$ )*	0.0, <u>1.7</u> or 8 %	3
Escalation rate of energy price ( $e$ )*	1.0, <u>5.0</u> or 10 %	3
Feed-in-tariff ( <i>FIT</i> : no tariff or full tariff)	0.0 or 100 %	2
Investment grant (IG: purchasing discount as a percentage of the investment cost)	0.0 or 25 %	2

\*) The last ten years average is underlined

# Results / Time-Saving

**Table 3** Number of simulations each design variable option would be calling during one optimization run with the traditional approach and number really simulated (in brackets) using MAOS.

Parameters	Option No	Option No													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
ESM <sub>s</sub>	Package of building envelope (PB <sub>env</sub> )	X1	12 (2)	2 (2)	3 (2)	66 (5)	51 (6)	<u>262</u> <b>(4)</b>	18 (4)	91 (6)	-	-	-	-	-
	Efficiency of lighting and appliances	X2	<u>470</u> <b>(19)</b>	35 (12)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Type of heat recovery unit (efficiency %)	X3	117 (9)	<u>371</u> <b>(16)</b>	17 (8)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Efficiency of auxiliary systems (fans and pumps)	X4	<u>410</u>	95	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Size of buffering tank	X5	<u>424</u>	21	24	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Insulation level of the buffering tank (Th <sub>ins</sub> )	X6	42	7	40	<u>416</u>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RET <sub>s</sub>	Area of solar thermal collectors	X7	<u>391</u> <b>(1)</b>	26 (1)	38 (1)	18 (1)	2 (0)	3 (1)	18 (1)	9 (1)	-	-	-	-	-
	Area of photovoltaic module	X8	<u>406</u>	1	8	24	12	14	9	15	1	12	3	-	-
	Overall efficiency of the photovoltaic	X9	<u>451</u>	54	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Slope angle of photovoltaic module	X10	106 (5)	<u>341</u> (5)	58 (4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Azimuth angle of photovoltaic module	X11	98 (3)	41 (3)	30 (3)	<u>322</u> (3)	14 (2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sys.	Type of primary heating unit	X12	4	<u>427</u>	40	22	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Size of the primary heating unit	X13	52	21	8	3	<u>343</u>	11	24	28	0	4	11	0	0
	Supply water temp. from the primary heating unit (T <sub>s</sub> )	X14	<u>432</u>	60	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Operating hour stop at	X15	<u>376</u>	63	20	9	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Operating hour start at	X16	108	105	10	6	<u>276</u>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The optimal design/operation option is underlined and highlighted in bold font.

In this example MAOS is reducing the time needed for full simulations during one optimisation run from 303 hours (0.6 hour \* 505 building simulations) to ~19 hours (0.6 hour \* 31 simulations). This results to 284 h time-saving on a Windows-based PC with a 2.83 GHz processor and 8 GB of RAM.



**Table 4** Number of each combination of the first three decision variables (X1, X2, and X3) required to be evaluated during one optimization run using the traditional approach and number of really executed simulations (in brackets) using MAOS.

Lighting and appliances	Heat recovery option No	Building envelope option No								Sum
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Standard lighting and appliances	1	8(1)	0(0)	0(0)	47 (1)	11(1)	4(1)	5(1)	32(1)	107(6)
	2	4(1)	1(1)	1(1)	12(1)	31(1)	<u>255(1)</u>	6(1)	43(1)	353(8)
	3	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(1)	3(1)	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	10(5)
High-efficient lighting and appliances	1	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	2(1)	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	7(1)	10(3)
	2	0(0)	0(0)	2(1)	4(1)	3(1)	1(1)	5(1)	3(1)	18(6)
	3	0(0)	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	2(1)	0(0)	0(0)	4(1)	7(3)
<b>Sum</b>		12(2)	2(2)	3(2)	66(5)	51(6)	262(4)	18(4)	91(6)	505(31)

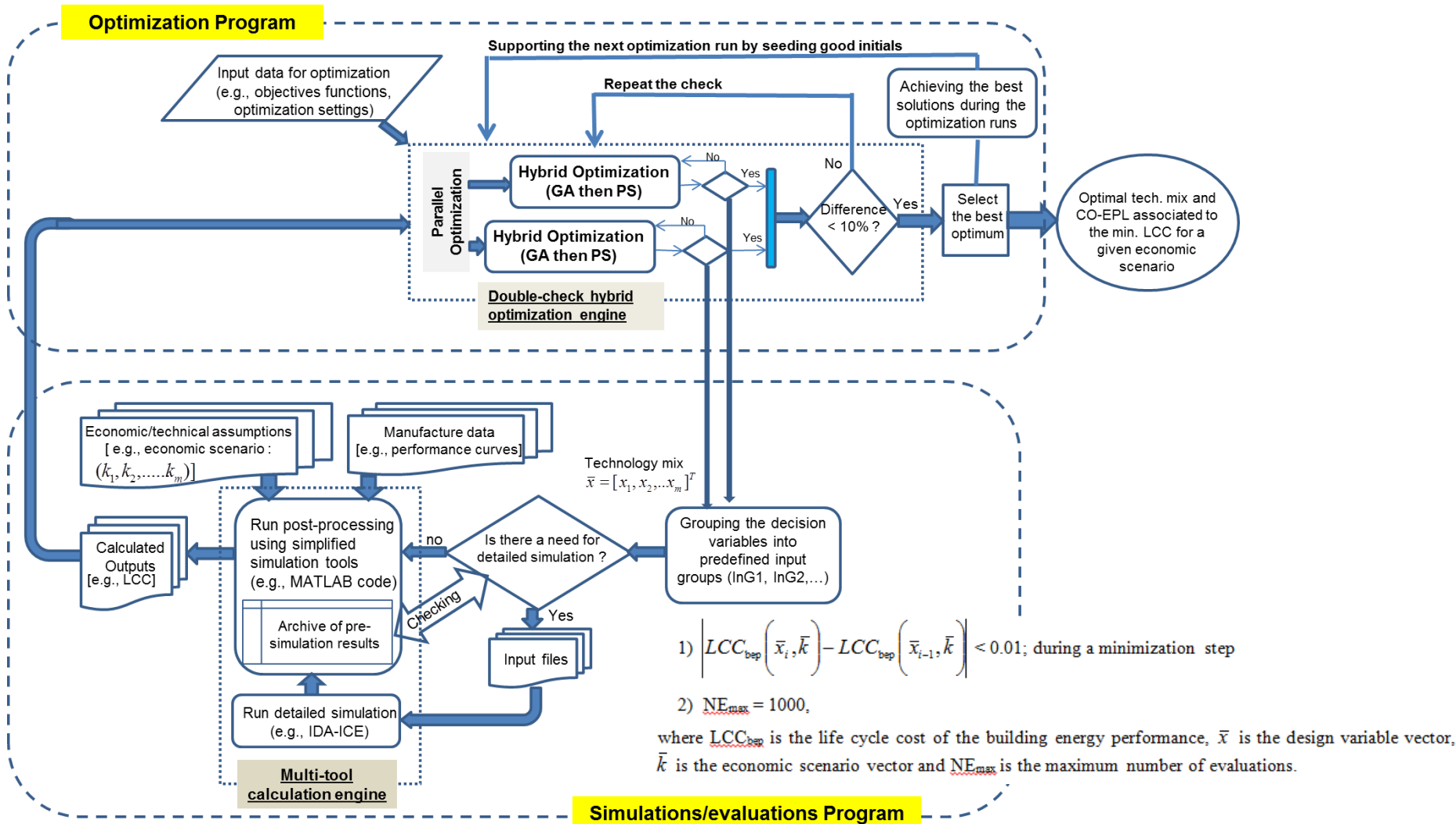
The optimal combination is underlined.

**Table 5** Number of each combination of PV module azimuth and slope angles (X10 and X11) required to be evaluated during one optimization run and number really simulated (in brackets) using MAOS.

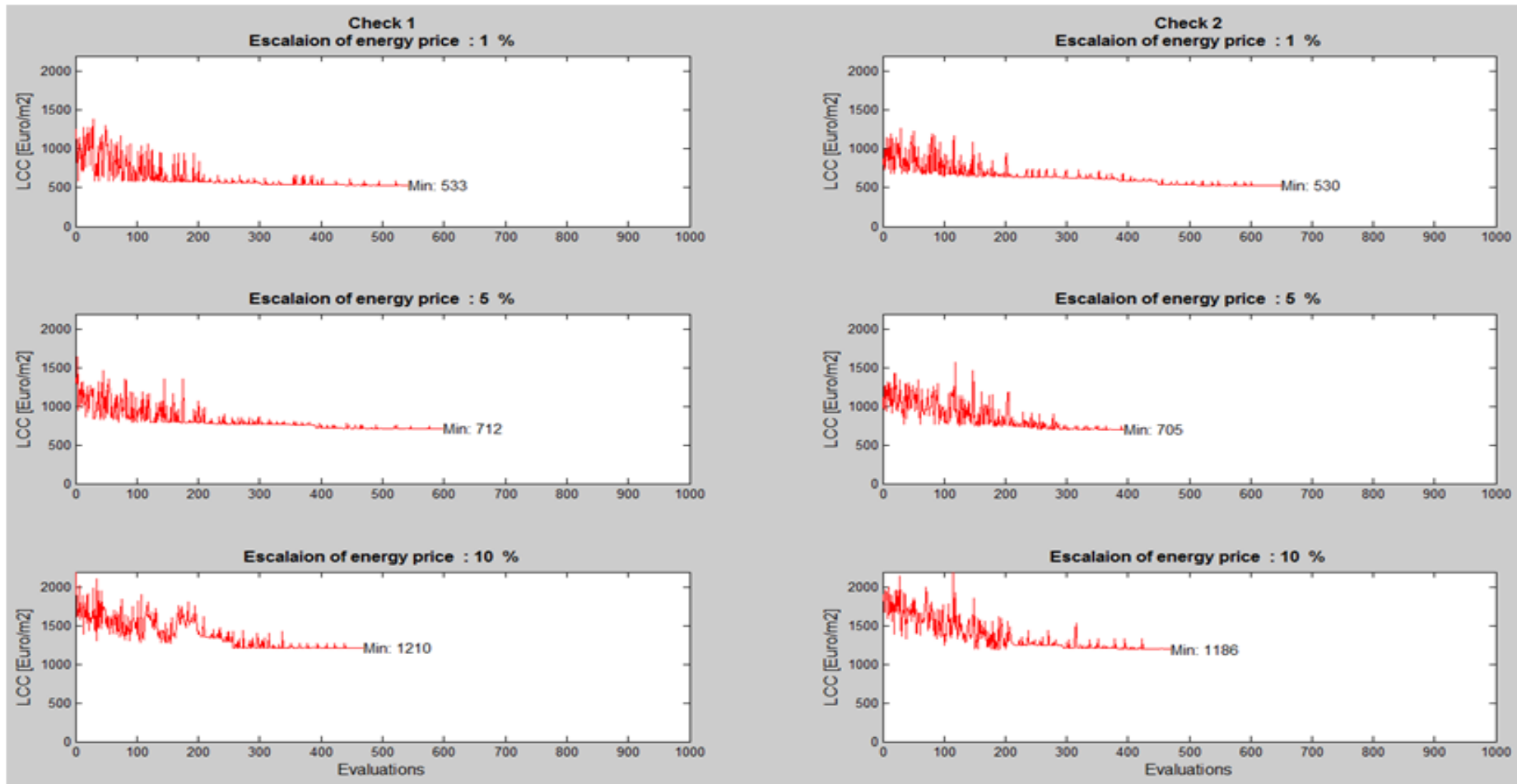
Slope angle of photovoltaic module option No	Azimuth angle of photovoltaic module option No					Sum
	1	2	3	4	5	
1	74 (1)	9 (1)	5 (1)	12 (1)	6 (1)	106 (5)
2	14 (1)	18 (1)	6 (1)	<u>296 (1)</u>	7 (1)	341(5)
3	10 (1)	14 (1)	19 (1)	15 (1)	0 (0)	58 (4)
<b>Sum</b>	98 (3)	41(3)	30 (3)	323 (3)	14 (2)	505(14)



# A Multi-aid Optimization Scheme (MAOS)



# Double-check test



**Figure 6** Three repeated optimization runs assuming 1%, 5%, and 10% escalation rates, respectively, where  $i = 3.2\%$ ,  $f = 1.7\%$ ,  $FiT = 0\%$ ,  $iG = 0\%$ .

# Repeatability of optimization results

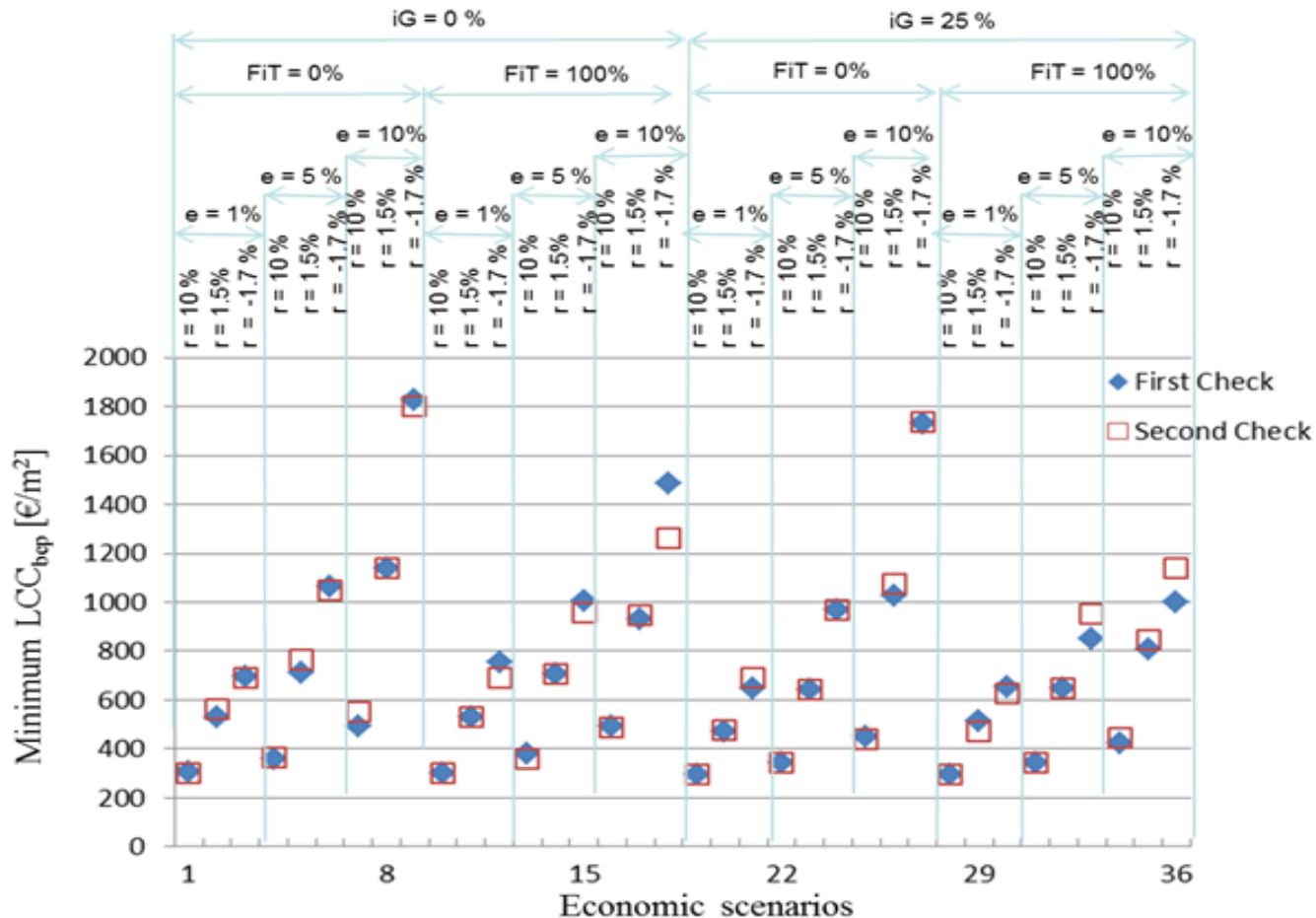


Figure 7 A sample for testing the repeatability of the optimization results. Optimization results of the first and second run for 36 economic scenarios.

# Repeatability of optimization results

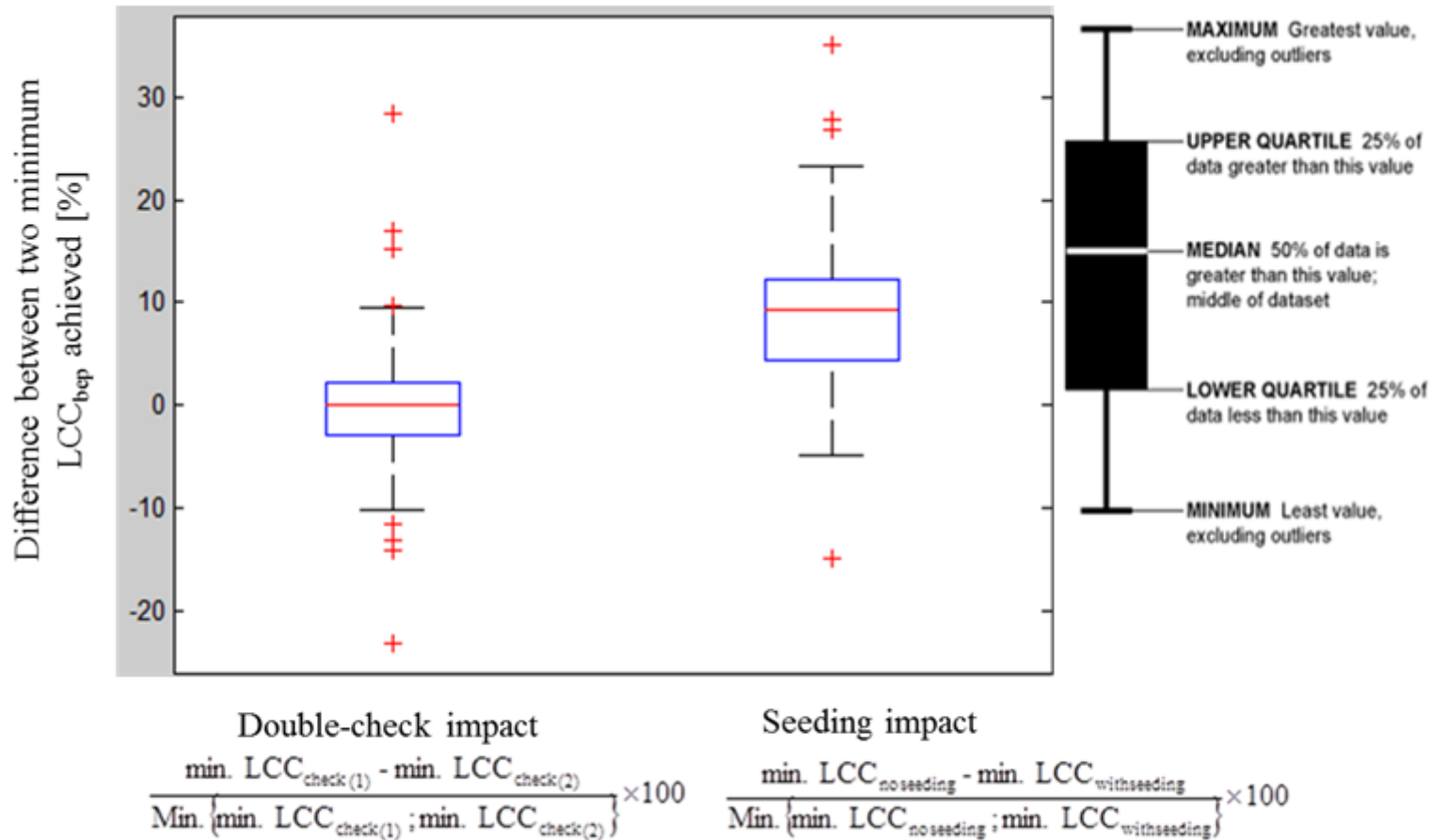


Figure 8. The impact of using the double-checking and seeding techniques.

# Repeatability of optimization results

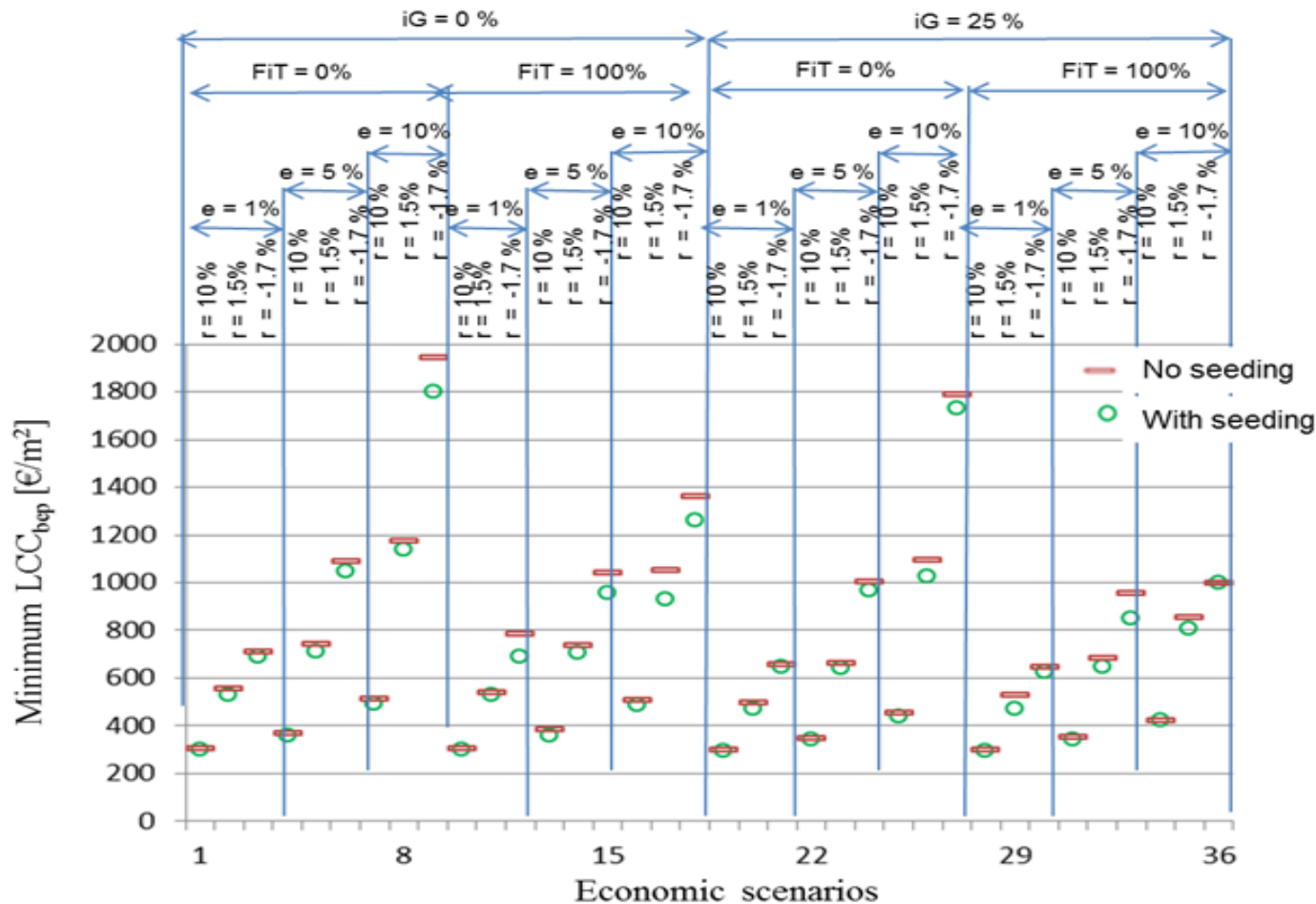


Figure 9 Comparison of the optimization performance when the hybrid optimization algorithm (*GA-PS*) is used with and without good initial population from previous optimization runs. 36 economic scenarios are shown.

# Advantages of the seeding technique

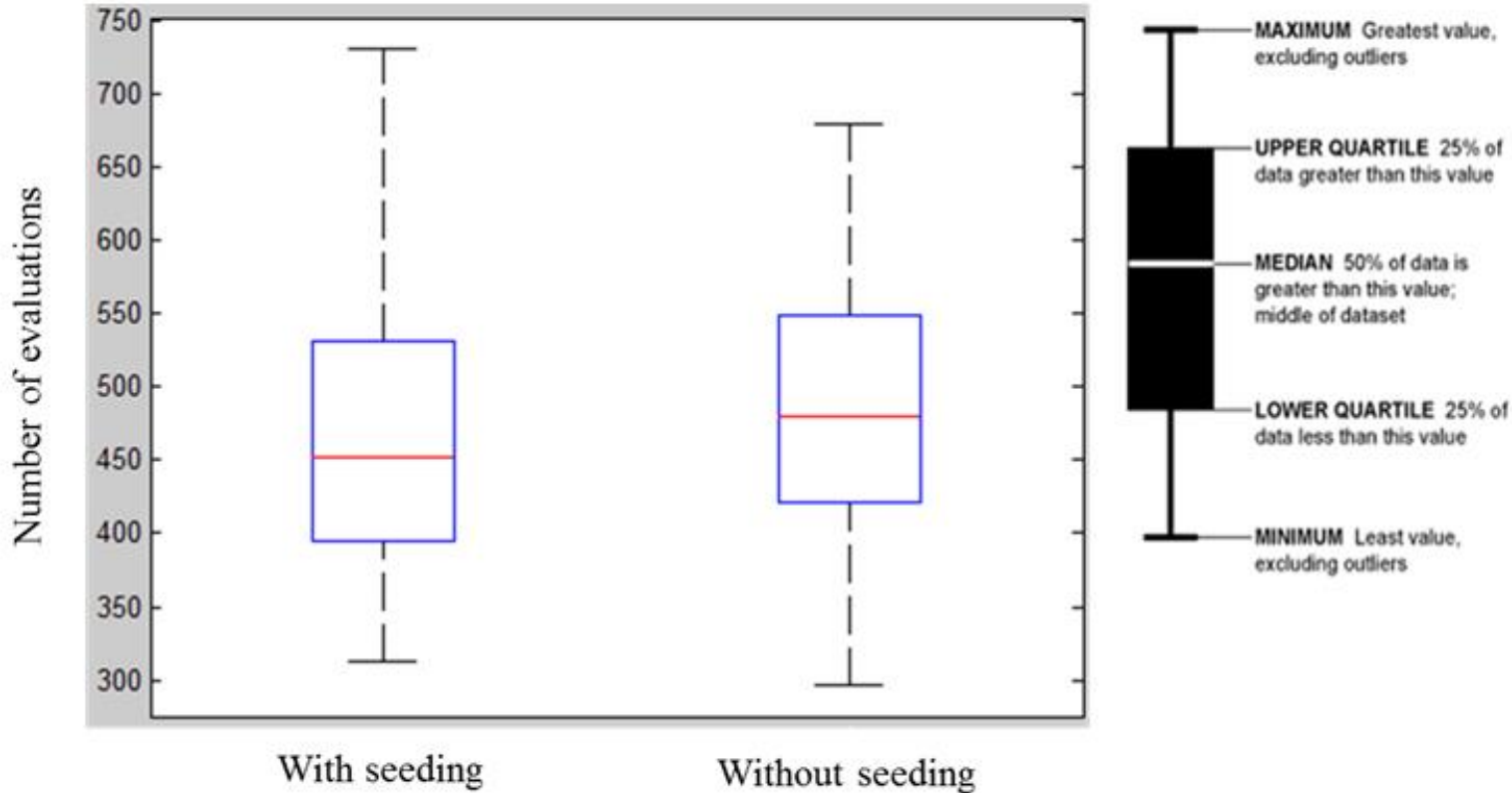


Figure 10 Boxplot presents the range of number of evaluations used for optimizing the 108 cases with and without applying the seeding technique.

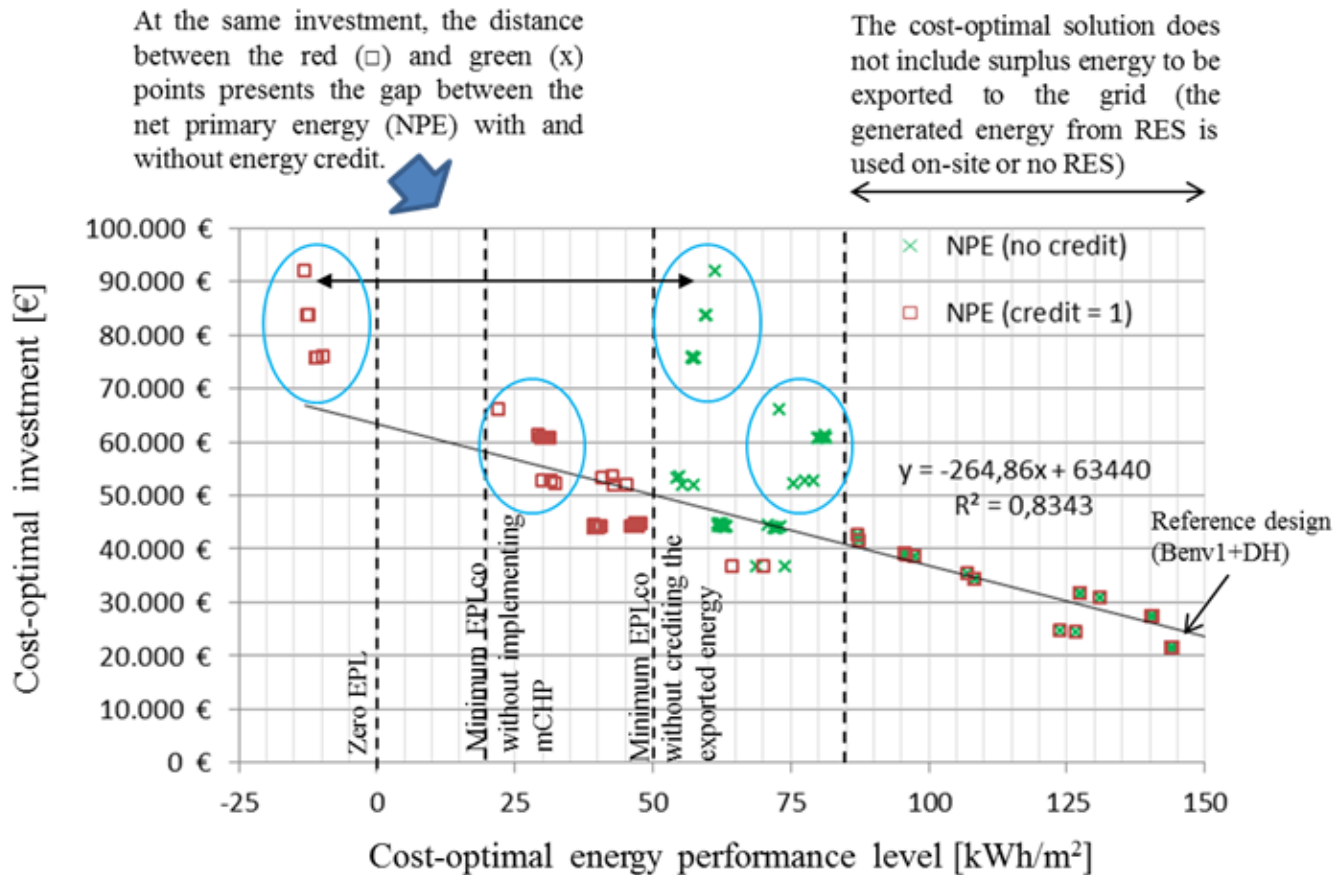


Figure 11 cost-optimal investment versus cost-optimal energy performance level for all addressed economic scenarios leading to  $EPL_{co}$  less than the reference ( $\sim 150$  kWh/m<sup>2</sup>a).  $\square$  CHP solutions circumscribed.



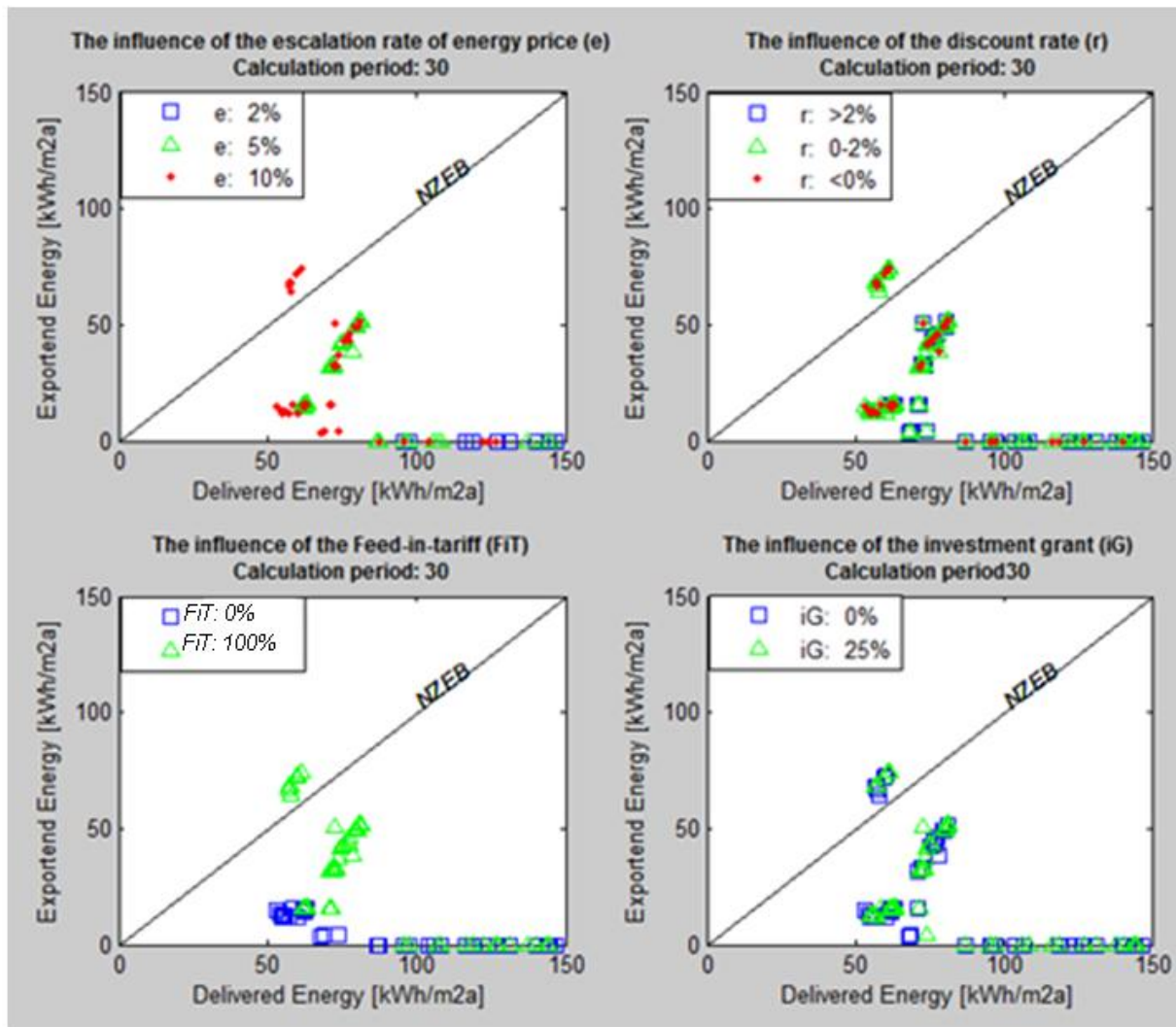


Figure 12 The influence of the economic parameters on the delivered versus exported yearly primary energy balance of the cost-optimal solutions for all addressed economic scenarios which lead to EPLco less than the reference value (150 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>a).

# Optimization-based Sensitivity Analysis

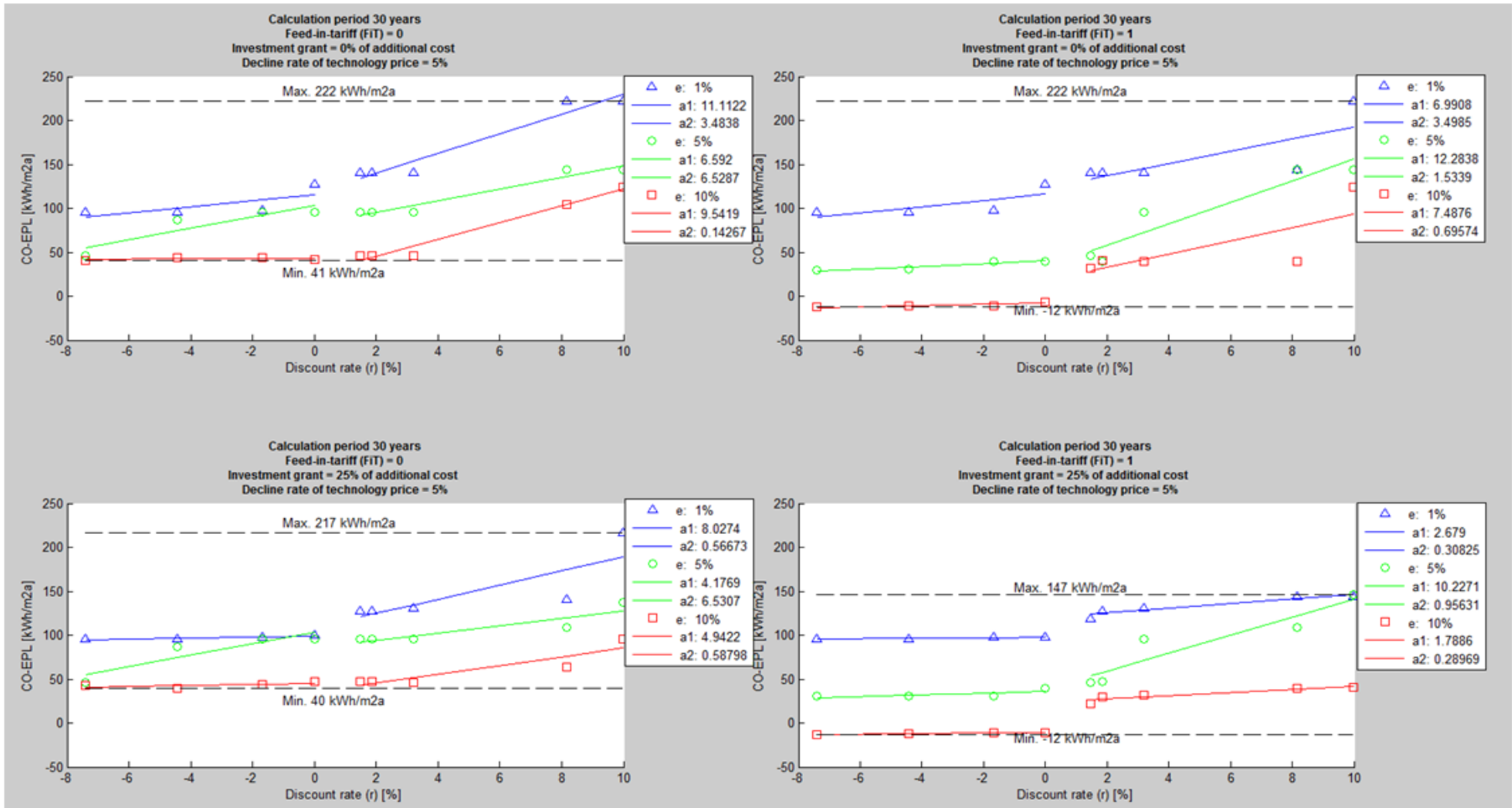


Figure 13 cost-optimal energy performance level (CO-EPL) versus discount rate (r) assuming: 1%, 5% and 10% energy price escalation rates (e) for each subplot;  $\overline{FIT}=0$  and  $\overline{FIT}=1$  for the left and right hand side subplots, respectively; and  $\overline{iG}=0\%$  of additional investment and  $\overline{iG}=25\%$  of additional investment for the top and bottom subplots, respectively. Where **30-year** calculation period is assumed. Energy credit (100% credit) is given for exporting the surplus energy to the grid.

# Optimization-based Sensitivity Analysis

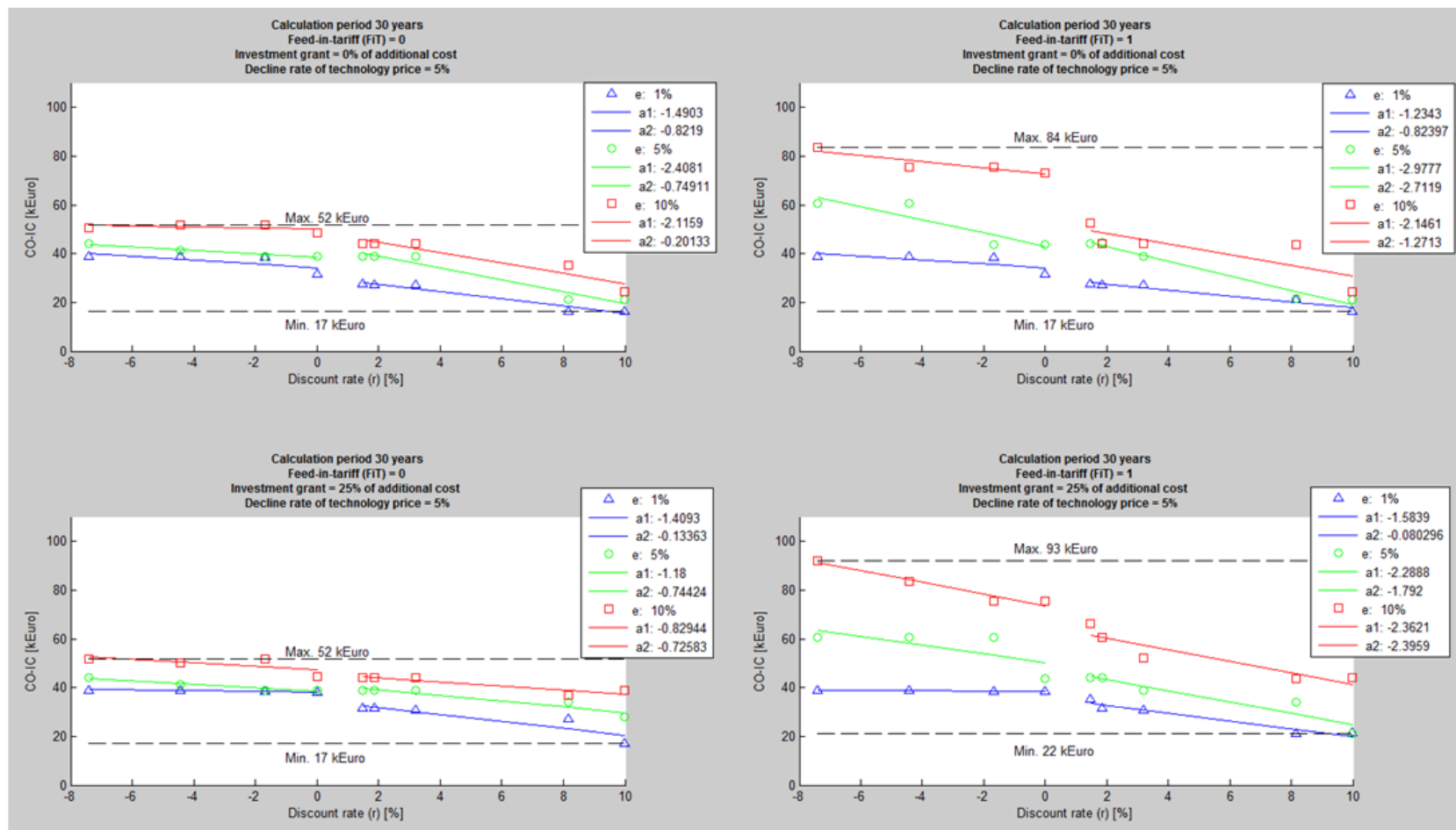


Figure 15 cost-optimal investment (CO-IC) versus discount rate (r) assuming: 1%, 5% and 10% energy price escalation rates (e) for each subplot;  $FIT=0$  and  $FIT=1$  for the left and right hand side subplots, respectively; and  $IG=0\%$  of additional investment and  $IG=25\%$  of additional investment for the top and bottom subplots, respectively. Where **30-year** calculation period is assumed. |

# Conclusions

- The complexity of our optimization problems is increasing dramatically.
- The execution time of simulation-based optimization can be reduced significantly ( possibility 90%) by using smart optimization approach.
- The double-checking test is important for ensuring high quality of the optimised minima.
- Seeding good initials for the combined Genetic Algorithm and Pattern Search is improving the quality of the results by finding deeper minima than without seeding and by reducing the required number of computational evaluations.
- As a final conclusion, the introduced scheme (MAOS) can be considered as practical tool to increase the investors' confidence and trust in investment towards nZBs by providing fast and comprehensive analysis.



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# Thank You

**Mohamed Hamdy, Phd, M.Sc., Eng.,**  
 Associate professor – [my LinkedIn](#)

Department of Civil and Transport Engineering

Mobile : (+47) 92 05 28 76  
 Fax : (+47) 73 59 70 21  
 Email : [Mohamed.Hamdy@ntnu.no](mailto:Mohamed.Hamdy@ntnu.no)  
 Skype : MHamdy82



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**Mohamed Hamdy**

Eindhoven University of Technology  
 Energy, HVAC, Building, Simulation, Optimization.  
 Verified email at tue.nl - [Homepage](#)  
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