PV MODULE REFLECTION – GLARE

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When light falls on a surface it is split; some of the light traverses the surface (transmission), some light enters the surface and is lost (absorption) and some is redirected away from the surface (reflection). In order for a PV module to produce as much power as possible, the cover glass is optimized for high transmission. This is why Hanwha Q CELLS PV modules have cutting-edge anti-reflective coatings (ARC) in order to maximize transmission and limiting the possibility for reflections.

Each of these actions, transmission, absorption and reflection, can be measured as a proportion of the original light falling on the surface, eg. T + A + R = 100 %. For our purposes it is only necessary to look at the proportion of this original light, as the intensity of the light falling on the surface of the PV module glass will change with numerous factors including different system configurations, locations and times of both the day and year.

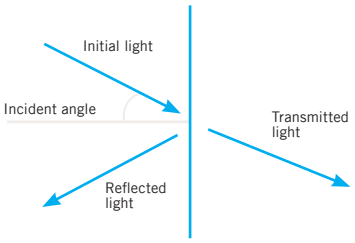

Figure 1: Light falling on a surface

The proportion of light reflected from any surface is dependent upon the angle at which the light hits the glass, called the incident angle where 0° is direct light and 90° is parallel to the surface. The proportion of reflected light can be calculated for different incident angles using the Fresnel equations. For a sheet of glass it would be necessary to calculate the reflection twice, once for the frontside of the glass and once for the backside. However as the rear of PV module glass is connected to an EVA and light absorbing PV cell it is only necessary to consider the frontside effect. To calculate the reflection the refractive index of the involved media is needed. As an example air has an index of 1, for normal "window" glass the value is around 1.5, for water it is 1.33 and for PV module glass it is around 1.25. From these figures alone it is possible to, correctly, presume that the glass used in PV modules creates less reflected light than normal "window" glass or a body of water. Figure 2 shows the curves of these different cases, along with measurements by TÜV Rheinland of Hanwha Q CELLS modules. It can be seen that the proportion of light reflected starts close to zero but rises as the incident angle gets closer to 90°.

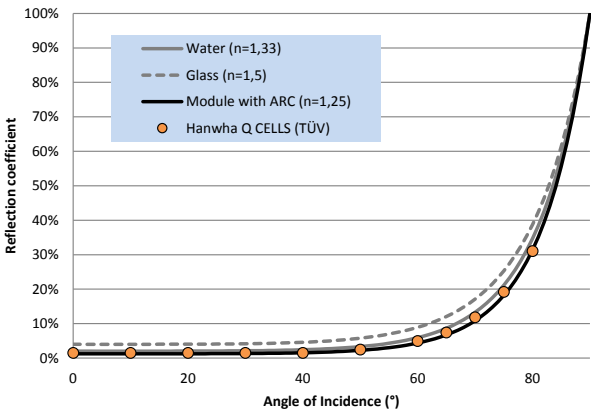

Figure 2: Reflection vs. incident angle

CONCLUSION

From both the theoretical and measured data it is clear that ARC glass used in all Hanwha Q CELLS currently produced PV modules reflects less light than both naturally occurring features, such as bodies of water, and common manmade structures. Moreover for incident angles below 55° less than 4 % of the initial light is reflected away from the PV module.

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