

# ExRET-Opt: An automated exergy/exergoeconomic simulation framework for building energy retrofit analysis and design optimisation

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## Abstract

Energy simulation tools have a major role in the assessment of building energy retrofit (BER) measures. Exergoeconomic analysis and optimisation is a common practice in sectors such as the power generation and chemical processes, aiding engineers to obtain more energy-efficient and cost-effective energy systems designs. ExRET-Opt, a retrofit-oriented modular-based dynamic simulation framework has been developed by embedding a comprehensive exergy/exergoeconomic calculation method into a typical open-source building energy simulation tool (EnergyPlus). The aim of this paper is to show the decomposition of ExRET-Opt by presenting modules, submodules and subroutines used for the framework's development as well as verify the outputs with existing research data. In addition, the possibility to perform multi-objective optimisation analysis based on genetic-algorithms combined with multi-criteria decision making methods was included within the simulation framework. This addition could potentiate BER design teams to perform quick exergy/exergoeconomic optimisation, in order to find opportunities for thermodynamic improvements along the building's active and passive energy systems. The enhanced simulation framework is tested using a primary school building as a case study. Results demonstrate that the proposed simulation framework, provide users with thermodynamic efficient and cost-effective designs, even under tight thermodynamic and economic constraints.

## Keywords:

**building energy retrofit; exergy; exergoeconomics; building simulation; optimisation.**

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## 1. Introduction

39

40 Improving building energy efficiency through building energy retrofit (BER) is one of the most  
41 effective ways to reduce energy use and associated pollutant emissions. From an economic  
42 and environmental perspective, energy conservation and efficiency measures could hold  
43 greater potential than deployment of renewable energy technologies [1]. Computational  
44 modelling and simulation plays an important role in understanding complex interactions.  
45 Building performance modelling and simulation is a fast flourishing field, focusing on reliable  
46 reproduction of the physical phenomena of the built environment [2]. Several retrofit-oriented  
47 simulation tools have been developed in the last two decades, commonly using as the main  
48 energy calculation engine open source tools such as DOE 2.2® [3] and EnergyPlus® [4].  
49 Among the most recent developments are ROBESim [5], CBES [6] and SLABE [7]. Rysanek  
50 and Choudhary [8] developed an exhaustive retrofit simulation tool by coupling the transient  
51 simulation tool TRNSYS® [9] with MatLab® [10], having the capability to simulate large set of  
52 strategies under economic uncertainty.

53 Additionally, building energy design optimisation, an inherently complex, multi-disciplinary  
54 technique, which involves many disciplines such as mathematics, engineering, environmental  
55 science, economics, and computer science [11], is being extensively used in building design  
56 practice. Attia et al. [12] found that 93% of multi-objective optimisation (MOO) research is  
57 dedicated to early design; however, some studies have also demonstrated the strength of  
58 MOO for BER projects [13-15]. Improvement of the envelope, HVAC equipment, renewable  
59 generation, controls, etc., while optimising objectives, such as energy savings, occupant  
60 comfort, total investment, and life cycle cost have been investigated. Among the most notable  
61 contributions in applying MOO to BER design was Diakaki et al. [16]. The authors investigated  
62 the feasibility of applying MOO techniques to obtain energy-efficient and cost-effective  
63 solutions, with the objective of including the maximum possible number of measures and  
64 variations in order to facilitate the project decision making. To date, the most popular available  
65 MOO simulation tools are GenOpt, jEPlus, Tpgui, Opt-E-Plus, and BEOpt. Taking the  
66 advantages from these tools, retrofit-oriented optimisation studies have become more common  
67 in the last decade, considering different decision variables (retrofit measures), objective  
68 functions, and constraints, while also investigating a wide range of mathematical algorithms.

69

## 2. Exergy and exergoeconomics

### 2.1 Exergy and buildings

72 Although widely accepted at scientific and practical levels in building energy design, typical  
73 energy analysis (First Law of Thermodynamics) can have its limitations for an in depth

74 understanding of energy systems. Energy analysis cannot quantify real inefficiencies within  
75 adiabatic processes and considers energy transfers and heat rejection to the environment as  
76 a system thermodynamic inefficiency [17]. The main limitation of the First Law is that it does  
77 not account for energy quality, where thermal, chemical, and electrical energy sources, should  
78 not be valued the same, since they all have different characteristics and potentials to produce  
79 work. Thereby, as a result of a notorious lack of thermodynamic awareness among buildings'  
80 energy design, these presents poor thermodynamic performance with overall efficiencies  
81 around 12% [18, 19]. Exergy, a concept based on the Second Law of Thermodynamics,  
82 represents the ability of an energy carrier to perform work and is a core indicator of measuring  
83 its quality. Therefore, the main difference between the First and the Second Law is the  
84 capabilities of the latter to account for the different amount of exergy of every energy source  
85 while also calculate irreversibilities or exergy destructions.

86 In some sectors, such as cryogenics [20], power generation [21], chemical and industrial  
87 processes [22-23], and renewable energy conversion systems [24], exergy methods count with  
88 a certain degree of maturity that makes the analysis useful in everyday practice. Some of these  
89 methodologies have been supported with the development of simulation tools, especially in  
90 the process engineering field. Montelongo-Luna et al. [22] developed an open-source exergy  
91 calculator by integrating exergy analysis into Sim42®, an open-source chemical process  
92 simulator. The tool has the potential to be applied into the early stages of process design and/or  
93 retrofitting of industrial processes with the aim of locating sources of inefficiencies. Querol et  
94 al. [23] developed a Visual Basic add-on to perform exergy and thermoeconomic analysis  
95 with the support of Aspen Plus®, a commercial chemical process simulation software. The  
96 aim was to aid the design process with an easy to use interface that allows the engineer to  
97 study different alternatives of the same process. Later, Ghannadzadeh et al. [25] integrated an  
98 exergy balance for chemical and thermal processes into ProSimPlus®, a process simulator for  
99 energy efficiency analysis. The authors were capable of embedding the exergy subroutines  
100 within the commercial tool without the necessity of external software, making the design  
101 process easier for the engineer.

102 However, in buildings energy research, exergy analysis has been implemented at a slower  
103 rate, and it is almost non-existent in the industry [26]. A limited number of building exergy-  
104 based simulation tools have been developed with the intention to promote the concept of  
105 exergy to a broader audience, especially directed towards educational purposes, common  
106 practitioners, and decision makers. The first exergy-based building simulation tool can be  
107 traced back to the work of the IEA EBC Annex 37 [27], where an analysis tool capable of  
108 calculating exergy flows for the building energy supply chain was created. The tool was based  
109 on a spreadsheet built up in different blocks of sub-systems representing each step of the  
110 building energy supply chain. Based on this development, Sakulpipatsin and Schmidt [28]  
111 included a GUI oriented towards engineers and architects. Later, for the IEA EBC Annex49

112 [29], the tool was improved along with the creation of other modules (S.E.P.E. and DVP). The  
113 tool, called the '*LowEx pre-design tool*', is also a steady-state excel-based spreadsheet, but  
114 enhanced with the use of macros and a more robust database for the analysis of more system  
115 options. Schlueter and Thesseling [30] developed the GUI, with a focus to integrate exergy  
116 analysis into a Building Information Modelling (BIM) software. Other modelling tools have been  
117 developed for research purposes, where quasi-steady state or dynamic calculations have been  
118 applied mainly with the support of TRANSYS simulation software [31, 32]. However, these  
119 tools were developed to cover specific research questions and were not capable of rapidly  
120 reproducing their capabilities for different designs.

121

## 122 *2.2 Exergoeconomics, optimisation and buildings*

123 Exergy analysis is a powerful tool to study interdependencies, and it is common that exergy  
124 destructions within components are not only dependant on the component itself but on the  
125 efficiency of the other system components [33]. Rocco et al. [34] concluded that the extended  
126 exergy accounting method is a step forward to evaluate resource exploitation as it includes  
127 socio-economic and environmental aspects expressed in exergy terms. By applying this  
128 concept as optimisation parameter in a generic system, it provides a reduction of overall  
129 resource consumption and larger monetary savings when compare to traditional economic  
130 optimisation.

131 Exergy destructions or irreversibilities within the components have some cost implications,  
132 therefore, would have an environmental and economic effect on the output streams. As exergy  
133 is directly related to the physical state of the system, any negative impact would have an exergy  
134 cost which leads to a more realistic appraisal than solely based on monetary costs. Therefore,  
135 it can be said that exergoeconomics, and not simple economics (monetary cost), relates better  
136 to the environmental impacts. Exergoeconomics can be an effective method for making  
137 technical systems efficient by finding the most economical solution within the technically  
138 possible limits [35]. In exergoeconomic analysis, depletion of high quality fuels combined with  
139 low thermodynamic efficiencies is highly penalised, especially if the required energy demand  
140 does not match the energy quality supply.

141 Among recent studies using exergoeconomics, Kohl et al. [36] investigated the performance  
142 of three biomass-upgrading processes (wood pellets, torrefied wood pellets and pyrolysis  
143 slurry) integrated into a municipal CHP plant. From an exergy perspective wood pellets was  
144 the most efficient option; however, exergoeconomically, the pyrolysis slurry (PS) gives the  
145 highest profits with a robust reaction against price fluctuations. With the projected future prices,  
146 PS integration allows for the highest profit which a margin 2.1 times higher than for a stand-  
147 alone plant without biomass upgrading. Mosaffa and Garousi Farshi [37] used  
148 exergoeconomics to analyse a latent heat thermal storage unit and a refrigeration system. The

149 charging and discharging process of three different PCM were analysed from a second-law  
150 perspective. Due to lowest investment cost rate of 0.026 M\$ and lowest amount of CO<sub>2</sub>  
151 emission, the PCM S27 with a length of 1.7m and a thickness of 10mm provided the lowest  
152 total cost rate for the system (4094 \$/year). Wang et al. [38] applied exergoeconomics to  
153 analyse two cogeneration cycles (sCO<sub>2</sub>/tCO<sub>2</sub> and sCO<sub>2</sub>/ORC) in which the waste heat from a  
154 recompression supercritical CO<sub>2</sub> Brayton cycle is recovered for the generation of electricity.  
155 Different ORC fluids were considered in the study (R123, R245fa, toluene, isobutane,  
156 isopentane and cyclohexane). Exergy analysis reveals that the sCO<sub>2</sub>/tCO<sub>2</sub> cycle has  
157 comparable efficiency with the sCO<sub>2</sub>/ORC cycle; however, when using exergoeconomics, the  
158 total product unit cost of the sCO<sub>2</sub>/ORC is slightly lower, finding that the isobutane has the  
159 lowest total product unit cost (9.60 \$/GJ).

160

### 161 *2.2.1 Exergoeconomic optimisation*

162 An essential step when formulating exergoeconomic optimisation studies is the selection of  
163 design variables that properly define the possible design options and affect system efficiency  
164 and cost effectiveness [39]. Research have shown the importance of genetic algorithms (GA)  
165 in energy design practice. GA combined with exergoeconomic optimisation has been  
166 extensively used in thermodynamic-based research long time before. For example, Valdés et  
167 al. [40] used thermoeconomics optimisation and GA to minimise production cost and maximise  
168 annual cash flow of a combined cycle gas turbine. Mofid and Hamed [41] applied  
169 exergoeconomic optimisation to a 140 MW gas turbine power plant taken as decision variables  
170 the compressor pressure ratio and isentropic efficiency, turbine isentropic efficiency,  
171 combustion product temperature, air mass flow rate, and fuel mass flow rate. Optimal designs  
172 showed a potential to increase exergetic efficiency by 17.6% with a capital investment increase  
173 of 8.8%. Ahmadi et al. [42] applied a NSGA-II using exergy efficiency and total cost rate of  
174 product as objective functions to determine best parameters of a multi-generation system  
175 capable of producing several commodities (heating, cooling, electricity, hot water and  
176 hydrogen) Dong et al. [43] applied multi integer nonlinear programming (MINLP) and GA-  
177 based exergoeconomic optimisation for a heat, mass and pressure exchange water distribution  
178 network. A modified state space model was developed by the definition of superstructure.  
179 However, the authors found that due to large number of variables, the GA was not efficient to  
180 produce optimal results in a time-effective manner. Sadeghi et al. [44] optimised a trigeneration  
181 system driven by a SOFC (solid oxide fuel cell) considering the system exergy efficiency and  
182 total unit cost of products as objective functions recommending that the final design should be  
183 selected from the Pareto front. Baghsheikhi et al. [45] applied real-time exergoeconomic  
184 optimisation in form of a fuzzy inference system (FIS) with the intention to maximise the profit  
185 of a power plant at different loads by controlling operational parameters. It was shown that the

186 FIS tool is faster and more accurate than the GA. Deslauriers et al [46] applied  
187 exergoeconomic optimisation to retrofit a low temperature heat recovery system located in a  
188 pulp and paper plant. The results showed significant steam operation cost reduction of up to  
189 89% while reducing exergy destructions by 82%, giving the designer more options to be  
190 considered than traditional heat exchanger design methods. Xia et al [47] applied  
191 thermoeconomic optimisation of a combined cooling and power system based on a Brayton  
192 Cycle (BC), an ORC and a refrigerator cycle for the utilisation of waste heat from the internal  
193 combustion engine. The authors considered five key variables (compressor pressure ratio,  
194 compressor inlet temperature, BC turbine inlet temperature, ORC turbine inlet pressure and  
195 the ejector primary flow pressure) obtaining the lowest average cost per unit of exergy product  
196 for the overall system. Recently, Ozcan and Dincer [48] applied exergoeconomic optimisation  
197 of a four step magnesium-chlorine cycle (Mg-Cl) with HC1 capture. A thermoeconomic  
198 optimization of the Mg-Cl cycle was conducted by using the multi-objective GA optimisation  
199 within MATLAB. Optimal results showed an increase in exergy efficiency (56.3%), and a  
200 decrease in total annual plant cost (\$409.3 million). Nevertheless, a big limitation of these  
201 studies is the lack of an appropriate decision support tool for the selection of a final design,  
202 leaving the decision to the judgement of the engineering.

203

#### 204 *2.2.2 Exergoeconomics applied to building energy systems*

205 Despite the exergy-based building research developed in the last decade, the application of  
206 exergoeconomics and exergoeconomic optimisation research oriented to buildings is limited.  
207 The research from Robert Tozer [49, 50] can be regarded as the first buildings-oriented  
208 thermoeconomic research showing its practical application to buildings' services. The author  
209 presented an exergoeconomic analysis of different type of HVAC systems, locating those that  
210 provide best thermodynamic performance. Later, Ozgener et al. [51] used exergoeconomics  
211 to model and determine optimal design of a ground-source heat pump with vertical U-bend  
212 heat exchangers. Ucar [52] used exergoeconomic analysis to find the optimal insulation  
213 thickness in four different cities/climates in Turkey, using reference temperatures for the  
214 analysis ranging from -21 °C to 3 °C. It was found that exergy destructions are minimised with  
215 increasing insulation and ambient temperatures, but maximised with the increase of relative  
216 indoor humidity. The variation of reference temperatures highly affects the thermoeconomic  
217 outputs as these are strongly linked to exergy parameters, demonstrating the necessity to be  
218 very careful if the analysis is performed using static or dynamic reference temperature [53].  
219 Baldvinsson and Nakata [54] and Yücer and Hepbasli [55] applied the specific exergetic cost  
220 (SPECOC) method for the analysis of different heating systems. Recently, Akbulut et al. [56]  
221 applied exergoeconomic analysis to a GSHP connected to a wall cooling system calculating

222 exergy cost ranges for the compressor, condenser, undersoil heat exchanger, accumulator  
223 tank and evaporator, finding an exergoeconomic factor value of the energy system of 77.68%.  
224 Nevertheless, exergoeconomics can never replace long experience and knowledge of  
225 technical economic theory. Therefore, tailored methods combining these approaches must be  
226 developed. Exergy-based building simulation tools, despite having been created in the past  
227 decade, lack exergoeconomic evaluation and an orientation to assess retrofit measures. As  
228 shown in the literature, exergoeconomic-based multi-objective optimisations have proven to  
229 be valuable for early design and retrofit projects in power plants and chemical processes with  
230 common optimisation objectives such as cost, fuel cost, exergy destructions, exergy efficiency,  
231 and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; therefore, a potential exists for its implementation in building energy  
232 design. As such, the aim of this paper is to expand the current knowledge in building energy  
233 simulation and optimisation by presenting the details of ExRET-Opt, a building-oriented  
234 exergoeconomic-based simulation framework for the assessment and optimisation of BER  
235 designs, by showing the decomposition of the framework, and presenting modules,  
236 submodules and subroutines used for the tool's development. Additionally, it is important to  
237 show the application of exergoeconomic optimisation to a real case study, hoping that the  
238 study would set the foundation for future similar studies.

239

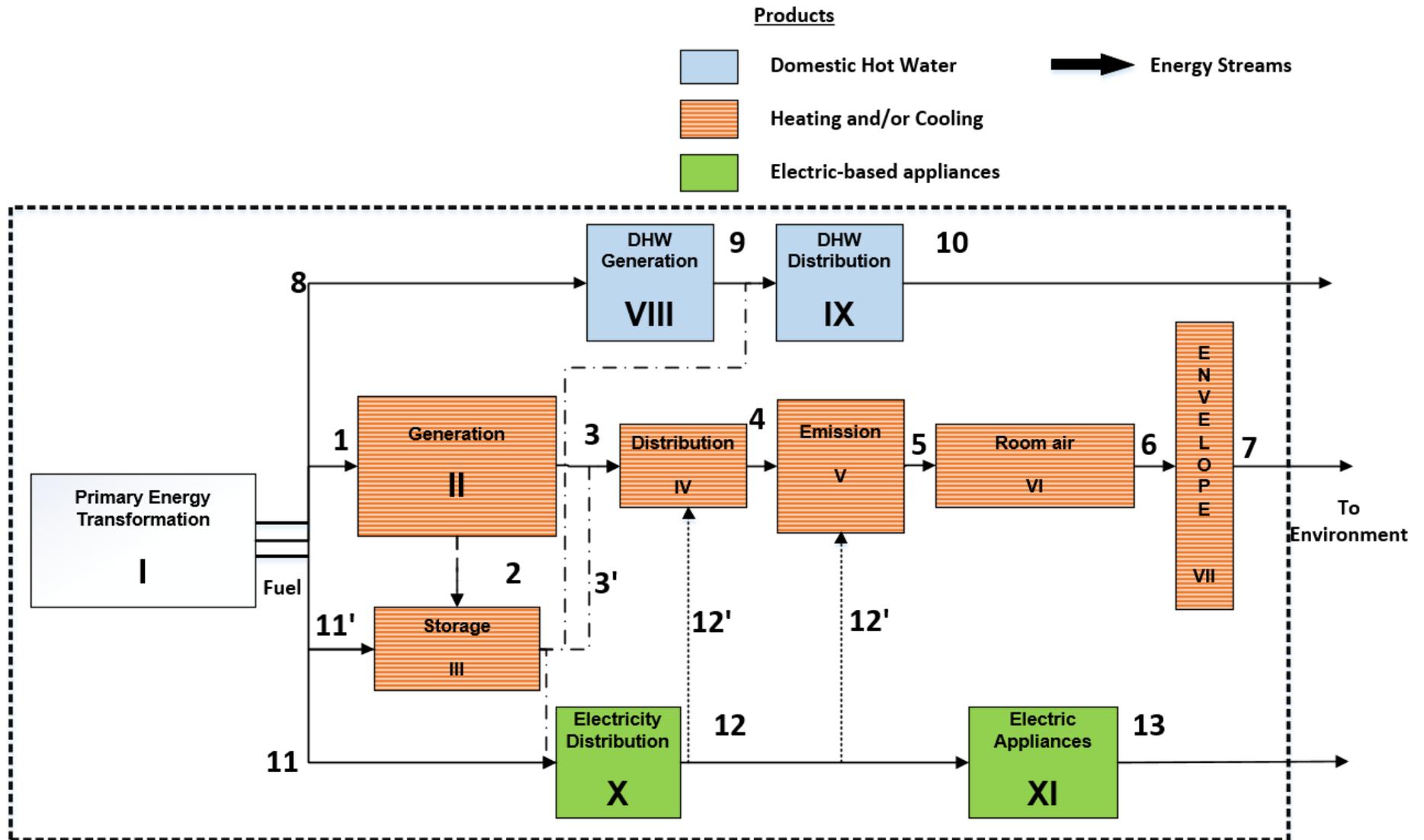
### 240 **3. Calculation framework**

241 The basic exergy and exergoeconomic formulae together with an abstraction of the building  
242 energy supply chain has been presented in previous publications [57, 58]. In this paper, the  
243 methodological calculation has finally been integrated into a software, where the modules  
244 details will be presented in the following sections.

245

#### 246 *3.1 Exergy analysis*

247 To develop a holistic exergy building exergy analysis framework that considers most of the  
248 energy systems located in a building, several exergy methodologies have been merged. For  
249 the tool, calculations for thermal end uses and for renewable generations were taken from EBC  
250 Annex49 [29] and Torio [59] with some modifications; while for electric-based energy flows,  
251 the work from Rosen and Bulucea [60]. The developed holistic method provides with  
252 comprehensive means to understand the interactions between the building envelope and the  
253 building energy services (Fig. 1).



254  
255

Fig. 1 Thermodynamic abstraction of a generic building energy chain in a building (HVAC, DHW, and electric appliances) [58]

256 3.2 Exergoeconomic analysis

257 From a wide range of thermoeconomic methods, the SPECOC (specific exergy cost) method  
258 [61, 62] was considered ideal for the proposed framework. It is considered the most adaptable  
259 framework for BER due to its robustness and widely tested methodology in other energy  
260 systems research. The method is based on the calculation of exergy efficiencies, exergy  
261 destructions, exergy losses, and exergy ratios (destructions/inputs) at a component and  
262 system level, giving the advantage of an ability to locate economically inefficient systems and  
263 processes along the whole energy system. After identifying and calculating the exergy  
264 streams, the method follows two main steps:

- 265 1. definition of fuel and product costs considering input cost, exergy destruction cost, and  
266 increase in product costs, and,
- 267 2. identification of exergy cost equations.

268 However, for the SPECOC method to be useful in BER design, a novel levelized  
269 exergoeconomic index, the *exergoeconomic cost-benefit indicator*  $Exec_{CB}$ , has been  
270 developed. This is calculated as follows:

$$271 \quad Exec_{CB} = \dot{C}_{D,sys} + \dot{Z}_{sys} - \dot{R} \quad (1)$$

272 where  $\dot{C}_{D,sys}$  is the building's total exergy destruction cost,  $\dot{Z}_{sys}$  is the annual capital cost rate  
273 for the retrofit measure, and  $\dot{R}$  is the annual revenue rate. All three parameters are levelized  
274 considering the project's lifetime (50 years) and the present value of money. The outputs are  
275 given in £/h. The indicator tries to solve the gap of integrating exergoeconomic evaluation in  
276 typical economic analysis for BER design, by expressing exergy losses and its relative cost  
277 into an indicator that is straightforward to understand. Specifically, for BER analysis, first, a  
278 benchmark value has to be calculated for the pre-retrofitted building. This indicator will only be  
279 composed of exergy destruction costs  $\dot{C}_{D,sys,baseline}$  ( $\dot{Z}_{sys}=0$  and  $\dot{R}=0$ ). After the retrofit analysis  
280 is performed, if the retrofitted building presents a  $Exec_{CB}$  lower than the baseline  $\dot{C}_{D,sys,baseline}$ ,  
281 the design represents both a cost-effective solution and an improvement in exergy  
282 performance.

$$283 \quad \text{Exergy-efficient and cost-effective} \quad \rightarrow \quad Exec_{CB} > \dot{C}_{D,sys,baseline}$$

$$284 \quad \text{Exergy-inefficient and cost-ineffective} \quad \rightarrow \quad Exec_{CB} < \dot{C}_{D,sys,baseline}$$

285 The proposed exergy/exergoeconomic framework aims to allow the practitioner to quantify the  
286 First and Second Law parameters in order to locate more opportunities for improvement.  
287 Several steps with different activities exist in common BER practice [63]. The proposed  
288 framework, consists of three levels and is illustrated in Fig. 2.

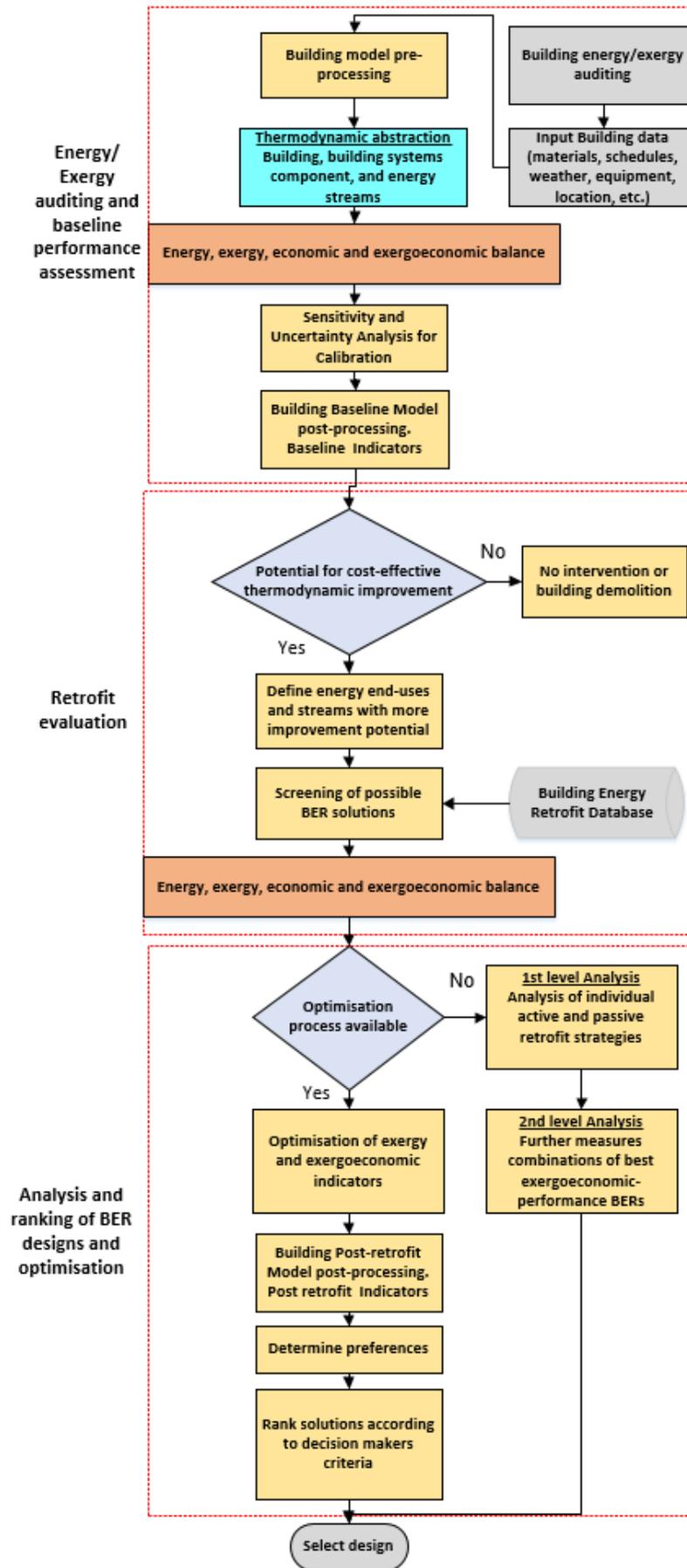


Fig. 2 Exergy and exergoeconomic analysis methodology for BER

#### 291 4. ExRET-Opt simulation framework

292 ExRET-Opt, a simulation framework consisting of several software subroutines, was  
293 developed combining different modelling environments such as EnergyPlus, SimLab® [64],  
294 Python® [65], and the Java-based jEPlus® [66] and jEPlus + EA® [67]. This software was  
295 chosen for four main reasons:

- 296 a. Open source software that can be modified and adapted according to the research  
297 necessities.
- 298 b. EnergyPlus was selected for First Law analysis as it is the most widely used building  
299 performance simulation programme in academia and industry, allowing simulation of  
300 HVAC systems and building envelope configurations.
- 301 c. Python programming language is ideal as a *scripting tool* for object-oriented system  
302 languages, which also supports post-processing analysis by including data analysis  
303 packages.
- 304 d. All chosen software has the ability to work with text based inputs/outputs which  
305 facilitates the communication between the environments.

306 ExRET-Opt was designed to be modular and extensible. This framework gives the possibility  
307 to study a wide range of BER measures and optimise designs under different objective  
308 functions, such as energy and exergy use, exergy destructions and losses, exergy efficiency,  
309 occupants' thermal comfort, operational CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, capital investment, life cycle cost,  
310 exergoeconomic indicators, etc. The modelling engine is based on different existing modelling  
311 environments and five modules:

312 **Module 1.** Input data and baseline building modelling

313 **Module 2.** Building model calibration

314 **Module 3.** Exergy and exergoeconomic analysis (and parametric study)

315 **Module 4.** Retrofit scenarios

316 **Module 5.** GA optimisation and MCDM

317 Additionally, ExRET-Opt has three operation modes:

318 Mode I. **Baseline evaluation:** A dynamic energy/exergy analysis and  
319 economic/thermoeconomic evaluation is performed to obtain baseline values and  
320 benchmarking data.

321 Mode II. **Parametric retrofit evaluation:** Using a comprehensive retrofit database, a  
 322 parametric analysis can be performed for comparison and exploration of a wide range  
 323 of active and passive retrofit measures

324 Mode III. **Optimisation:** Considering all possible combinations of retrofit measures, and  
 325 based on constraints and objectives given by the user, ExRET-Opt can use a genetic  
 326 algorithm-based optimisation procedure to search for close-to-optimal solutions in a  
 327 time-effective manner

328 Depending of the operation mode, ExRET-Opt modules that are active are the following:

329 **Table 1 Active modules depending on ExRET-Opt operating mode**

ExRET-Opt	Mode I	Mode II	Mode III
<b>Module 1:</b>			
Input data and baseline building modelling	x	x	x
<b>Module 2:</b>			
Building model calibration	x	x	x
<b>Module 3:</b>			
Exergy and exergoeconomic analysis (and parametric study)	x	x	x
<b>Module 4:</b>			
Retrofit scenarios		x	x
<b>Module 5:</b>			
MOGA optimisation and MCDM			x

330 Following sections will focus on describing these modules in detail by explaining the simulation  
 331 process involved and the coupling of different software environments and routines.

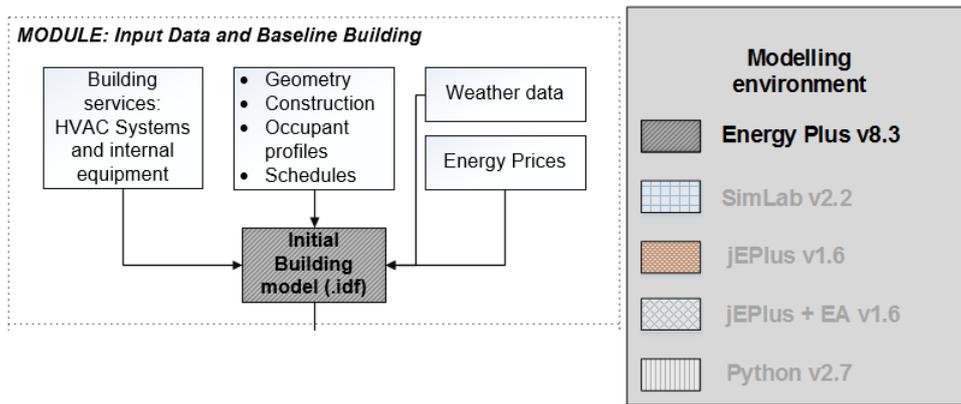
332

333 *4.1 Modules and process description*

334

335 *4.1.1 Module 1: Input data and baseline building modelling*

336 First, a pre-processing phase is involved were data collection, with regards to the building  
 337 physical characteristics, occupancy profiles, energy systems, weather data, and energy prices,  
 338 should be carried out, in order to construct a pre-calibrated baseline building model. A  
 339 significant number of data sources is required for this specific task. Most common approaches  
 340 are site visits and BMS data, which represent the best source of information. When data is  
 341 missing or is hard to measure (i.e. occupancy levels, envelope thermal characteristics, internal  
 342 heat gains, etc.), other sources of information, such as CIBSE [68] and ASHRAE [69] guides  
 343 can be used to support the building modelling process [70]. Fig. 3 illustrates the modelling  
 344 environments involved within this module.



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346

**Fig. 3 ExRET-Opt Module 1 simulation process**

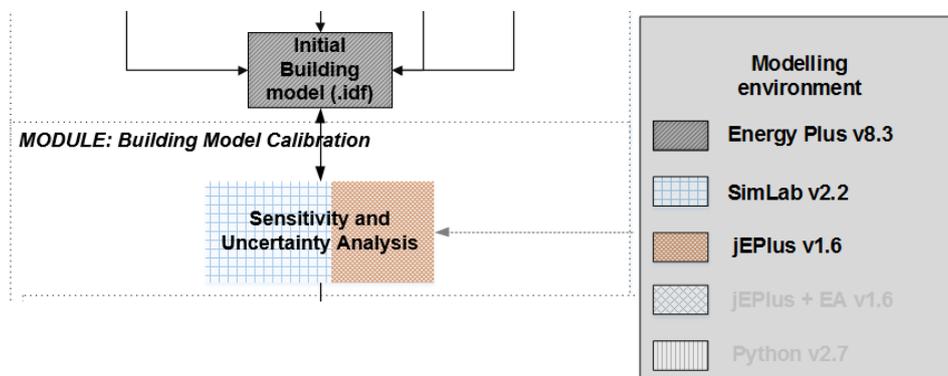
347 For the buildings' energy modelling, ExRET-Opt has its foundation on EnergyPlus 8.3. Its  
348 biggest strength is the fact that it works with .txt files, which makes it possible to receive and  
349 produce data in a generic text files form, making it easy to create third party add-ins.

350

351 *4.1.2 Module 2: Baseline building model calibration*

352 Considering the effects of uncertainties in building energy modelling, as a second step in the  
353 modelling process, ExRET-Opt has included a 'calibration module'. The module was included  
354 mainly for deterministic calibration purposes. For the calibration process, a three-software  
355 process is required. Apart from EnergyPlus, both SimLab 2.2 and jEPlus 1.6.0 are necessary.  
356 SimLab is a software designed for Monte Carlo (MC) based uncertainty and sensitivity  
357 analysis, able to perform global sensitivity analysis, where multiple parameters can be varied  
358 simultaneously and sensitivity is measured over the entire range of each input factor. On the  
359 other hand, JEPlus is a Java-based open source tool, created to manage complex parametric  
360 studies in EnergyPlus. Fig. 4 illustrates the module's process.

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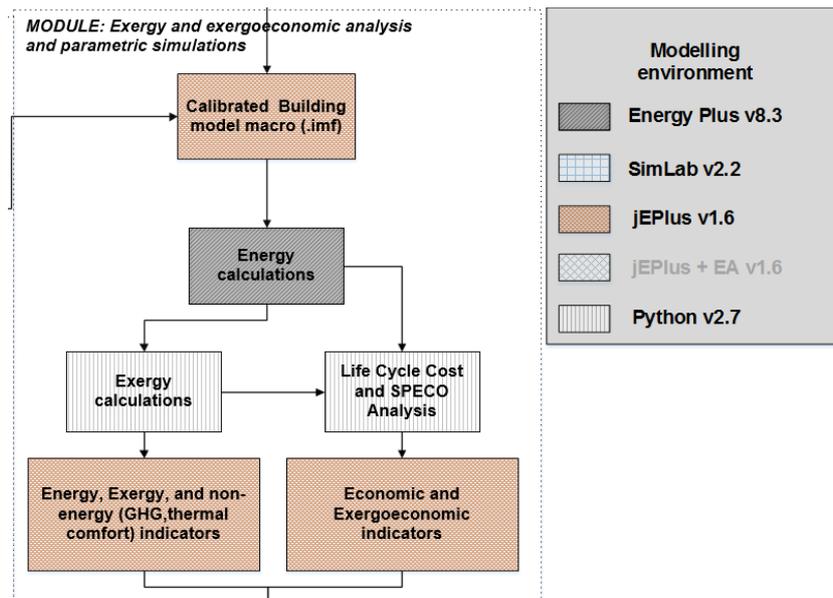
**Fig. 4 ExRET-Opt Module 2 simulation process**

364 The sampling method is based on Latin Hypercube Sampling (LHS) in order to keep the  
365 number of required simulations at an acceptable level. SimLab creates a spreadsheet with the  
366 new sample to be introduced to EnergyPlus. Then, with the aid of jEPlus, ExRET-Opt handles

367 the spreadsheet where the new EnergyPlus building models (.idf files) are created. Following,  
 368 jEPlus passes the jobs to EnergyPlus for thermal simulation, where parallel simulation is  
 369 available to make full use of all available computer processors. The final calibrated baseline  
 370 energy model should meet the requirements of the ASHRAE Guideline 14-2002: *Measurement*  
 371 *of Energy Demand and Savings* and is selected by having the lower Mean Bias Error (MBE)  
 372 and Coefficient of Variation of the Root Mean Squared Error (CVRMSE).

373 **4.1.3 Module 3: Energy/Exergy and Exergoeconomic analysis**

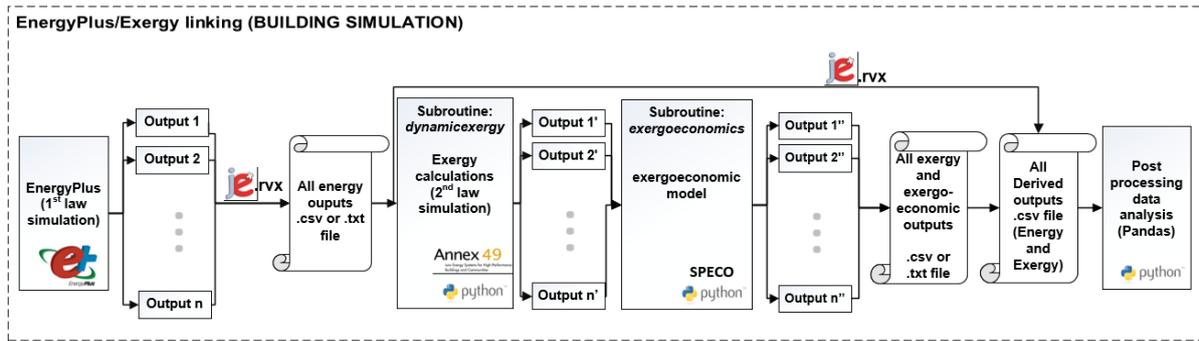
374 Undoubtedly, Module 3 can be considered as the most important main routine within ExRET-  
 375 Opt. The entire modelling process of Module 3 is based on two subroutines: 'subroutine:  
 376 *dynamicexergy*' and 'subroutine: *exergoeconomics*'. The code of these subroutines is based  
 377 on the mathematical formulae described in previous publications and that were further  
 378 implemented in Python scripts. The strengths of Python programming language and the main  
 379 reason of its integration in the tool is its modularity, code reuse, adaptability, reliability, and  
 380 calculation speed [2]. Fig 5 illustrates the interaction among the different modelling  
 381 environments involved in Module 3.



382  
 383 **Fig. 5 ExRET-Opt Module 3 simulation process**

384 To further detail the module process, before ExRET-Opt calls the first subroutine, the reference  
 385 environment has to be specified. As the exergy method only considers thermal exergy, the  
 386 .epw weather file with hourly data on temperature and atmospheric pressure has to be used.  
 387 Exergy analysis calculated by the 'subroutine: *dynamicexergy*', performs the analysis in the  
 388 four different products of the building (heating, cooling, DHW, and electric appliances). This  
 389 procedure is used to split the typical approach of a single stream analysis into multiple streams'  
 390 analysis, able to calculate exergy indicators of each product in more detail. Following the end  
 391 of the first subroutine, the 'subroutine: *exergoeconomics*' is called by ExRET-Opt and finally  
 392 produces all the needed thermodynamic and thermoeconomic outputs.

393 For the integration of the subroutines into EnergyPlus, jEPlus is required. JEPlus latest  
 394 versions provide users with the ability to use Python scripting for running own-made processing  
 395 scripts, where communication between EnergyPlus and the Python-based exergy model is  
 396 mainly supported through the use of .rvx files (extraction files data structure represented  
 397 in JSON format). These files also allow the manipulation and handling of data back and forth  
 398 among EnergyPlus, Python, and jEPlus. The detailed process of joining EnergyPlus and the  
 399 developed subroutines is illustrated in Fig. 6.



400

401 **Fig. 6 Flow of Energy/Exergy co-simulation using EnergyPlus, Python scripting and jEPlus**

402 After both, 'subroutine: *dynamicexergy*' and 'subroutine: *exergoeconomics*' are called and  
 403 calculations are performed, a new spreadsheet version is obtained with all the required  
 404 outputs. The current version of the model is capable of providing 250+ outputs between  
 405 energy, exergy, economic, exergoeconomic, environmental, and other non-energy indicators.

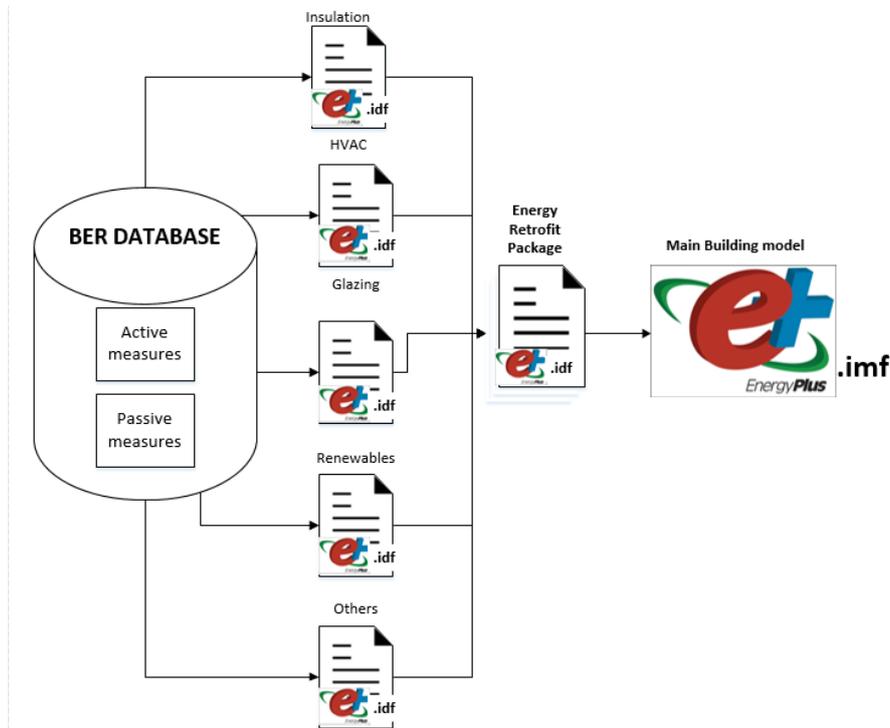
406

407 **4.1.4 Module 4: Retrofit scenarios and economic evaluation**

408 As building energy efficiency can usually be improved by both passive and active technologies,  
 409 a comprehensive BER database including both technology types was compiled as part of the  
 410 framework. This module encompasses a variety of retrofit measures (parameters) typically  
 411 applied to non-domestic buildings in the UK and Europe [71, 72]. The module includes more  
 412 than 100 individual energy saving measures. Consequently, attached prices are provided per  
 413 unit (either kW or by m<sup>2</sup>) since the model automatically calculates the total capital price for  
 414 either individual or combined measures. The list of technologies, variables, and prices<sup>1</sup> for all  
 415 retrofit measures are detailed in Appendix A. To reduce economic uncertainties, several other  
 416 considerations were included in the model such as future energy prices and government  
 417 incentives (RHI and FiT). Depending on the retrofit technology, this could play a major role in  
 418 the financial viability of some BER designs. To code each measure, these were implemented  
 419 by developing individual stand-alone code recognisable ('.idf files') by EnergyPlus. Since the  
 420 manual evaluation of retrofit measures is not feasible, ExRET-Opt uses parametric simulation

<sup>1</sup> If prices for some measures were not in local currency (GBP), conversion rates from 25<sup>th</sup>-October-2015 were considered.

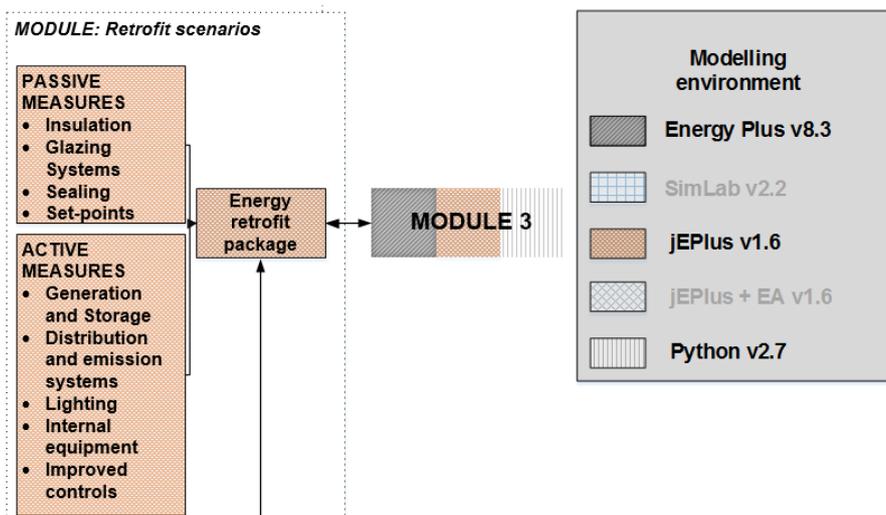
421 to manipulate models, modify building model code, and simulate them. By using the EP-Macro  
 422 function within EnergyPlus and coupling the process with jEPlus, it is possible to handle these  
 423 'pieces of code' and introduce them into the main building model (Fig. 7).



424  
 425 **Fig. 7 Building model construction using ExRET-Opt BER database**

426 After the building model is finally constructed with its corresponding retrofit measures, including  
 427 its techno-economic characteristics, a post-retrofit performance and prediction has to be  
 428 performed. For this, ExRET-Opt Module 3 'subroutine: *dynamicexergy*' and 'subroutine:  
 429 *exergoeconomics*', have to be called again. Fig. 8 illustrates the entire process of Module 4.

430

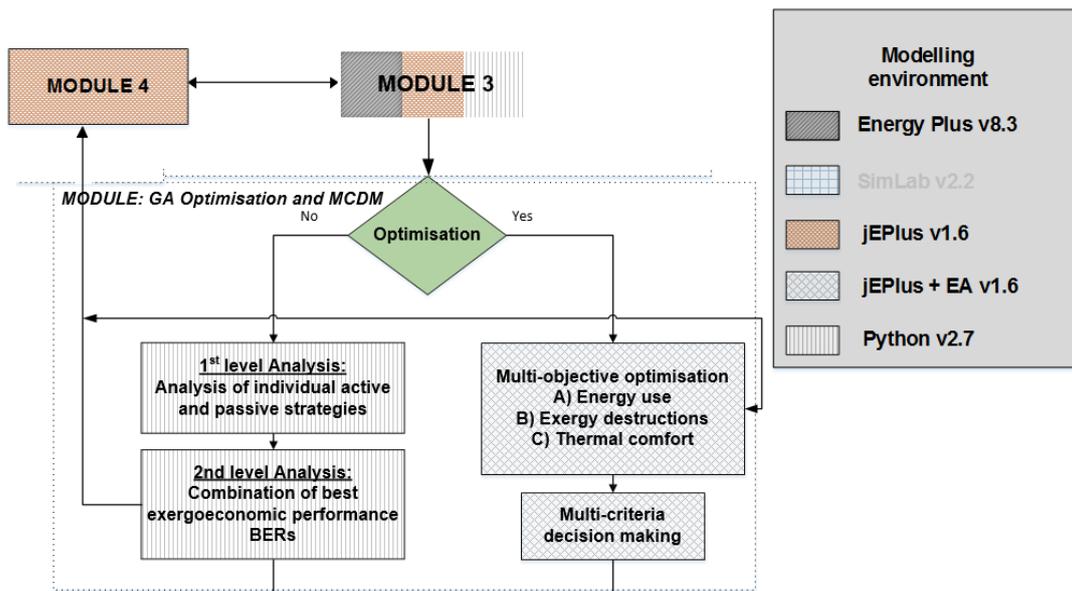


431  
 432 **Fig. 8 ExRET-Opt Module 4 simulation process**

433 4.1.5 Module 5: Multi objective optimisation with NSGA-II and MCDM

434 Modules 3 and 4 have the capability to perform parametric or full-factorial simulations where  
 435 an automation process of creating and simulating a large number of building models can be  
 436 done. However, this process has its limitations, mainly depending on time constrains and  
 437 computing power. For this reason, ExRET-Opt has the option of being used with an  
 438 optimisation module, able to tackle multi-objective problems, reducing computing time, and  
 439 achieving sub-optimal results in a time-effective manner.

440 To couple the framework with the optimisation module, a call function is required to  
 441 automatically call the different generated building models, process the simulation, and return  
 442 outputs for the subsequent energy/economic and exergy/exergoeconomic analysis. As seen  
 443 in Fig. 9, this process is integrated within ExRET-Opt with the help of the Java platform  
 444 JEPlus+EA. JEPlus+EA provides an interface with little configuration where the necessary  
 445 controls (population size, crossover rate and mutation rate) are provided in the GUI or can be  
 446 coded using Java commands. Meanwhile, the communication between platforms is done with  
 447 the help of the .rvx file (jEPlus extraction file), where, in addition, objective functions and  
 448 constraints have to be defined.



449  
 450 **Fig. 9 ExRET-Opt Module 5 simulation process**

451 The advantages of using NSGA-II as the optimisation algorithm, is the ability to deal with large  
 452 number of variables, ability for continuous or discrete variables' optimisation, simultaneous  
 453 search from a large sample, and ability for parallel computing [73].

454

455 4.1.6 Module 5a: Solution ranking - MCDM submodule

456 The Pareto front(s) generated by Module 5 provides the decision maker with valuable  
457 information about the trade-offs for the objectives involved. A method that can be used at this  
458 stage to rank optimal solutions depending on the user's needs is Multi Criteria Decision Making  
459 (MCDM). In ExRET-Opt, MCMD was included as a post-processing external module, where  
460 Pareto solutions have to be exported to an Excel-based spreadsheet. For ExRET-Opt, similar  
461 to Asadi et al. [14], compromise programming (CP) was selected as the MCDM method. CP  
462 allows reducing the set of Pareto solutions to a more reasonable size, identifying an ideal or  
463 utopian point which serves as a reference point for the decision maker. Thus, the decision  
464 model has to be modified by including only one criterion. For this, a distance function has to  
465 be analysed to find a set of solutions closest to the ideal point. This distance function is also  
466 called Chebyshev distance and is defined as:

467 
$$d_j = \frac{|Z_j^* - Z_j(x)|}{|Z_j^* - Z_{*j}|} \quad (2)$$

468

469 Where  $Z_j(x)$  is the objective function,  $Z_j^*$  is the utopian point which represents the ideal minimum  
470 solution, and  $Z_{*j}$  is the anti-ideal (nadir) point of the  $j$ th objective. The normalised degrees  $d_j$   
471 are expected to be between 0 and 1. If  $d_j$  is 0 it means that it has achieved its ideal solution.  
472 On the other hand, if  $d_j$  achieves 1, the objective function is showing the anti-ideal or nadir  
473 solution.

474 In practical terms, for compromise programming there is a need to know only the relative  
475 preferences of the decision maker for each objective. This process can be done by the  
476 weighted sum method. The method can transform multiple objectives into an aggregated  
477 objective function. The corresponding weight factors ( $p_{ith}$ ) reflect the relative importance of  
478 each objective. This allows the decision maker to express the preferences by assigning a  
479 number between 0 and 1 to each objective. However, the sum of weight coefficient has to  
480 satisfy the following constraint:

481 
$$\sum_{j=1}^n p_j = 1 \quad (3)$$

482

483 Therefore, the problem definition for compromise programming results in the following:

484 
$$\alpha_j \geq \left( \frac{|Z_j^* - Z_j(x)|}{|Z_j^* - Z_{*j}|} \right) * (p_j) \quad (4)$$

485

486 where a minimisation of the Chebyshev distance  $\alpha_j$  is sought.

487

488 **5. ExRET-Opt subroutines verification**

489

490 To ensure that ExRET-Opt is reliable, a validation or verification process is necessary. Due to  
 491 lack of empirical exergy data, both an '*Inter-model Comparison*' using an existing tool and an  
 492 '*Analytical Verification*' using various case studies found in the literature, are performed.

493

494 *5.1 Inter-model verification (steady-state analysis)*

495 The last version of the Annex 49 LowEx pre-design tool dates back in 2012. However,  
 496 compared to ExRET-Opt, the LowEx tool lacks transient/dynamic calculation as it only relies  
 497 on a steady-state energy balance analysis included in the spreadsheet. Additionally, it only  
 498 considers heating and DHW as energy end-uses, lacking equations to calculate cooling and  
 499 electric processes. Nevertheless, with the aim to test Module 3 within ExRET-Opt, steady-  
 500 state calculations were performed. For the selection of the case study, the LowEx tool contains  
 501 numerical examples of real pre-configured building cases. For this task '*The IEA SHC Task 25*  
 502 *Office Building*' is selected. The steady-state analysis considers a reference temperature of 0  
 503 °C and an internal temperature of 21 °C. The case studies input data can be seen in Table 2.

504

505 **Table 2 Input data for simulation (Annex 49 pre-design tool example building)**

Baseline characteristics - A/C Office	Verification 1
<i>Case study</i>	The IEA SHC Task25 Office Building
<i>Number of floors</i>	1
<i>Floor space (m<sup>2</sup>)</i>	929.27
<i>Orientation (°)</i>	0
<i>Air tightness (ach)</i>	0.6
<i>Exterior Walls</i>	U <sub>value</sub> =0.35 (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Roof</i>	U <sub>value</sub> =0.17 (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Ground floor</i>	U <sub>value</sub> =0.35 (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Windows</i>	U <sub>value</sub> =1.10 (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Glazing ratio</i>	32%
<i>HVAC System</i>	GSHP COP=3.5
<i>Emission system</i>	Underfloor Heating: 40/30°C
<i>Heating Set Point (°C)</i>	20.5
<i>Cooling Set Point (°C)</i>	--
<i>Occupancy (people)*</i>	12.5
<i>Equipment (W/m<sup>2</sup>)*</i>	1.36
<i>Lighting level (W/m<sup>2</sup>)*</i>	2

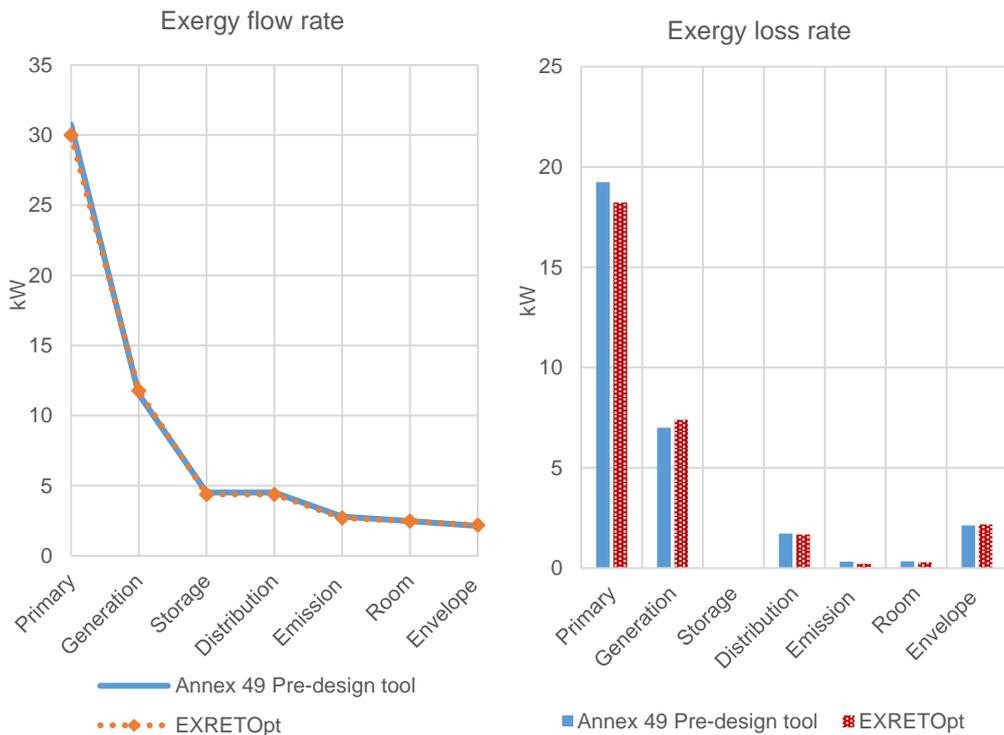
506 5.1.1 Verification results

507 The comparison between the tools' outputs, is given in Table 3. Deviations between  
 508 outputs are no larger than 5% with similar results in assessing energy supply chain  
 509 exergy efficiency.

510 **Table 3 Comparison of exergy rates results for inter-model verification**

Subsystems	Annex 49 Pre-design tool	ExRET-Opt	Difference kW-(Deviation %)
Envelope (kW)	2.13	2.18	0.05 (+2.3%)
Room (kW)	2.47	2.47	0.00 (0.0%)
Emission (kW)	2.79	2.69	0.10 (-3.6%)
Distribution (kW)	4.51	4.37	0.14 (-3.1%)
Storage (kW)	4.51	4.37	0.14 (-3.1%)
Generation (kW)	11.51	11.77	0.26 (+2.3%)
Primary (kW)	30.75	30.00	0.75 (-2.4%)
Exergy efficiency $\psi$	6.95%	7.26%	--

511 Fig. 10 shows the exergy flow rate and the exergy loss rate by subsystems. As can be noted,  
 512 no larger differences exist, and the model under steady-state conditions performs well.



513 **Fig. 10 Comparison of exergy flow rates and exergy loss rates by subsystems**  
 514

515  
 516 By looking at the inter-model verification, it can be concluded that ExRET-Opt under steady-  
 517 state calculation presents comprehensive results.

518 5.2 Analytical verification of subroutines

519 For the analytical verification, ExRET-Opt is compared against two numerical examples from  
 520 the literature. The intention of this analysis is to verify the two 'Module 3' subroutines separately  
 521 ('subroutine: *dynamicexergy*' and 'subroutine: *exergoeconomics*'). Although the research in  
 522 dynamic building exergy and exergoeconomic analyses is limited, two highly cited articles can  
 523 be relied on. Sakulpipatsin et al. [31] work can be used to verify the dynamic exergy analysis  
 524 outputs, while Yücer and Hepbasli [55] work to verify exergoeconomic outputs.

525

526 5.2.1 Dynamic exergy analysis verification and results

527 Sakulpipatsin et al. [31] presented an exploratory work showing the application of dynamic  
 528 exergy analysis in a single-zone model. These dynamic calculations were implemented in  
 529 TRNSYS dynamic simulation tool. The case study building is a cubic-box with a net floor area  
 530 of 300 m<sup>2</sup> spread along 3 stories. The heating system is based on district heating supplying  
 531 hot water at 90 °C. The cooling system is based on a small-scale chiller with a COP of 1.5.  
 532 Both systems supply the thermal energy to a low-temperature heating/high-temperature  
 533 cooling panels. For the reference temperature, the De Bilt, Netherlands weather file is used as  
 534 it was the reference weather file used in the original research. The full input data of the building  
 535 and its HVAC system can be seen in Table 4.

536 **Table 4 Input data for analytical verification of subroutine: *dynamicexergy* within ExRET-Opt**

Baseline characteristics A/C Office	Verification
<i>Case study</i>	Office building
<i>Location</i>	De Bilt, Netherlands
<i>Number of floors</i>	3
<i>Floor space (m<sup>2</sup>)</i>	300
<i>Orientation (°)</i>	0
<i>Air tightness (ach)</i>	0.6
<i>Natural ventilation rate (m<sup>3</sup>/h)/m<sup>3</sup></i>	4
<i>Exterior Walls</i>	U-value=0.511 (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Roof</i>	U-value=0.316 (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Ground floor</i>	U-value=0.040 (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Windows</i>	U-value=1.300 (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Glazing ratio</i>	42.5% (south façade only)
<i>HVAC System</i>	Heating: District Heating, T: 90 Cooling: Small Chiller COP: 1.5 (In both cases, distribution pipes have a temperature drop of 10 °C)
<i>Emission system</i>	Low temperature Heating: 35/28°C High Temperature Cooling: 10/23 °C
<i>Heating Set Point (°C)</i>	20
<i>Cooling Set Point (°C)</i>	24
<i>Occupancy (people)*</i>	30 (75 W per person)
<i>Equipment (W/m<sup>2</sup>)*</i>	23
<i>Lighting level (W/m<sup>2</sup>)*</i>	1.33

537 Table 5 compares two groups of data (heating and cooling) between the research data and  
 538 ExRET-Opt outputs. The results show the exergy demand at each part of the supply chain,  
 539 considering auxiliary energy for the HVAC system components. The corresponding differences  
 540 in absolute value and in percentage are also shown. Results show that ExRET-Opt is capable  
 541 of accurately predicting the heating exergy performance of the system. In the cooling case,  
 542 larger deviations' percentage can be noted, mainly due to lower values, where small absolute  
 543 value discrepancies can represent larger deviations. If compared to the heating case, the  
 544 absolute values for cooling are much lower. However, since different weather files are used,  
 545 the outputs seem reasonable. Nevertheless, efficiency values are rather similar.

546 **Table 5 Comparison of annual exergy use results for analytical verification of ExRET-Opt**

	Sakulpipatsin et al. [31]	ExRET-Opt	Difference - (Deviation %)
<b>Heating case</b>			
<b>Subsystems</b>			
Building (kWh/m <sup>2</sup> -y)	5.66	4.51	1.15 (-20.31%)
Emission (kWh/m <sup>2</sup> -y)	16.17	13.93	2.24 (-16.6%)
Distribution (kWh/m <sup>2</sup> -y)	19.57	16.46	3.11 (-15.9%)
Primary Generation (kWh/m <sup>2</sup> -y)	33.03	33.78	0.75 (+1.14%)
Exergy efficiency $\Psi$	17.13%	13.35%	--
<b>Cooling case</b>			
<b>Subsystems</b>			
Building (kWh/m <sup>2</sup> -y)	0.17	0.37	0.20 (+117.6%)
Emission (kWh/m <sup>2</sup> -y)	0.25	0.80	0.55 (+220.0%)
Distribution (kWh/m <sup>2</sup> -y)	0.33	0.88	0.55 (+166.6%)
Primary Generation (kWh/m <sup>2</sup> -y)	2.63	4.39	1.76 (+66.9%)
Exergy efficiency $\Psi$	6.46%	5.95%	--

547 Considering that the analysis is done at an hourly rate, the 'subroutine: *dynamicexergy*' seems  
 548 to provide reliable results. However, the cooling calculations need further testing.

549

### 550 5.2.2 Exergoeconomics verification and results

551 In existing relevant literature, no comprehensive example of a dynamic exergy analysis  
 552 combined with an exergoeconomic analysis applied to a building exists. However, Yücer and  
 553 Hepbasli [55] performed a steady-state exergy and exergoeconomic analysis of a building's  
 554 heating system, based on the SPECO method. The limitation of this research is that the exergy  
 555 outputs are presented for just one temperature, neglecting the dynamism of an actual  
 556 reference environment. For the case study, a house accommodation of 650 m<sup>2</sup> is considered.  
 557 The reference environment is taken as 0 °C, with an internal temperature of 21 °C. The HVAC

558 system is composed of a steam boiler, using fuel oil that provides thermal energy to panel  
 559 radiators to finally heat the room. Solar and internal heat gains have been neglected. The  
 560 characteristics of the case study can be seen in Table 6.

561 **Table 6 Input data for analytical verification of subroutine: exergoeconomics within ExRET-Opt**

<b>Baseline characteristics A/C Office</b>	<b>Verification</b>
<i>Case study</i>	House accommodation building
<i>Location</i>	Izmir, Turkey
<i>Number of floors</i>	3
<i>Floor space (m<sup>2</sup>)</i>	650
<i>Orientation (°)</i>	0
<i>Air tightness (ach)</i>	1.0
<i>Natural ventilation rate (m<sup>3</sup>/h)/m<sup>3</sup></i>	--
<i>Exterior Walls</i>	U <sub>value</sub> =0.96 (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Roof</i>	U <sub>value</sub> =0.43 (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Ground floor</i>	U <sub>value</sub> =0.80 (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Windows</i>	--
<i>Glazing ratio</i>	--
<i>HVAC System</i>	Heating: Oil Boiler, T: 110 °C (Distribution pipes have a temperature drop < 10 °C)
<i>Emission system</i>	Radiator panels Heating: 35/28°C
<i>Heating Set Point (°C)</i>	21
<i>Cooling Set Point (°C)</i>	--
<i>Occupancy (people)*</i>	--
<i>Equipment (W/m<sup>2</sup>)*</i>	--
<i>Lighting level (W/m<sup>2</sup>)*</i>	--

562 However, another limitation exists for the exergoeconomic analysis, as the authors have  
 563 reduced the subsystems' analysis from seven to just three: generation, distribution, and  
 564 emission subsystems. Since the capital cost of the subsystem is essential for this analysis, this  
 565 is provided in Table 7.

566

567 **Table 7 Components capital cost of the building HVAC system**

<b>Subsystems</b>	<b>Capital cost (\$)<sup>2</sup></b>
<i>Distribution pipes</i>	3,278
<i>Radiator panels</i>	5,728
<i>Steam boiler</i>	13,810
<i>Envelope</i>	3,959

568 The exergy price of the fuel is fundamental for exergoeconomic analysis as is it the product  
 569 price entering the analysed stream. Only the heating mode is analysed, where fuel oil is

<sup>2</sup> Monetary values (USD) given as per original source

570 utilised. As the energy quality for oil is set at 1.0, both the energy price and exergy price are  
 571 considered similar (0.096 \$/kWh).

572 Table summarises the results for this verification. First, a comparison of the steady-state exergy  
 573 analysis is done to ensure that exergy values are within acceptable range. Some deviations  
 574 are found, with the greatest at the room air subsystem (31.9%). However, as the deviations  
 575 for the other subsystems are lower and the overall exergy efficiency of the whole system is  
 576 similar, the obtained results seem acceptable.

577 **Table 8 Comparison of exergy rates results for subroutine: exergoeconomics verification**

Subsystems	Yücer and Hepbasli [55]	ExRET-Opt Exergy analysis	Difference (Deviation %)
<i>Envelope (kW)</i>	3.78	3.11	0.67 (-17.7%)
<i>Room (kW)</i>	11.93	8.13	3.80 (-31.9%)
<i>Emission (kW)</i>	12.61	13.20	0.61 (-4.6%)
<i>Distribution (kW)</i>	17.15	18.09	0.94 (+5.5%)
<i>Generation (kW)</i>	82.38	94.98	-12.60 (+15.3%)
<i>Primary (kW)</i>	107.09	101.44	-5.65 (-5.3%)
<i>Exergy efficiency <math>\Psi</math></i>	3.53%	3.06%	--

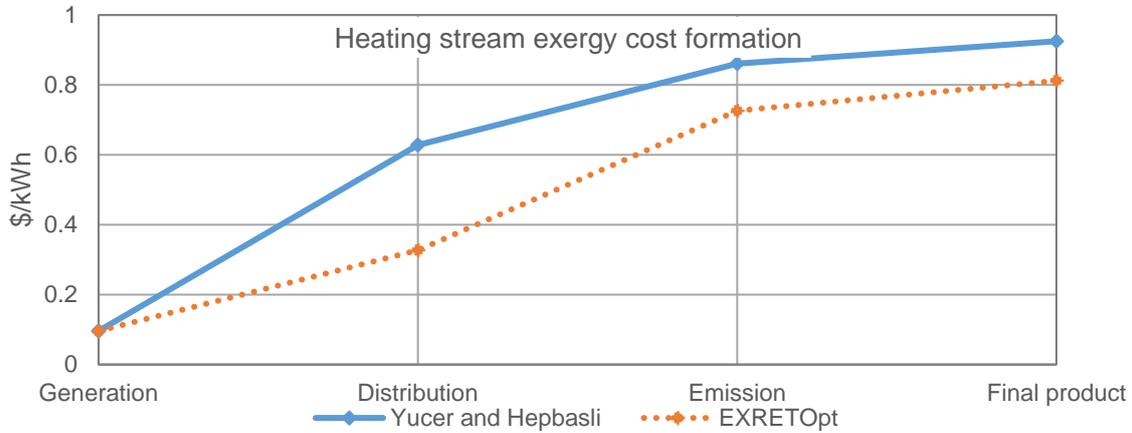
578

579 Table shows the verification of the exergoeconomic outputs for the reduced system analysis.  
 580 Cost of fuels and products at each stage of the energy supply chain presented a similar  
 581 increase trend. However due the simplicity of the steady-state approach by Yücer and Hepbasli  
 582 [55], a great part of exergy destruction cost is not accounted correctly. On the other hand,  
 583 ExRET-Opt calculates the exergy cost formation throughout the whole thermal energy supply  
 584 chain.

585 **Table 9 Exergoeconomic comparison between research and ExRET-Opt**

Subsystems	Yücer and Hepbasli [55] Exergoeconomic analysis			ExRET-Opt Exergoeconomic analysis			Difference (Deviation %)		
	C, product \$/kWh	Z \$/h	C, fuel \$/kWh	C, product \$/kWh	Z \$/h	C, fuel \$/kWh	C, product \$/kWh	Z \$/h	C, fuel \$/kWh
<i>Generation</i>	0.096	0.46	0.628	0.096	0.44	0.327	0.00 (0.0%)	0.02 (-4.3%)	0.301 (-48.1%)
<i>Distribution</i>	0.628	0.07	0.861	0.327	0.07	0.726	0.301 (-48.1%)	0.00 (0.0%)	0.135 (-15.7%)
<i>Emission</i>	0.861	0.17	0.925	0.726	0.18	0.812	0.135 (-15.7%)	.01 (+5.9%)	.0113 (-12.2%)

586 Fig. 11 illustrates the stream cost increase comparison. The exergy cost formation increase is  
 587 due to the system inefficiencies in the energy supply system with high volumes of exergy  
 588 destructions. At each stage, an amount of economic value is added to the energy stream when  
 589 it passes the energy supply chain.



590

591

**Fig. 11 Exergoeconomic cost increase of the stream**

592 Although the graph shows a similar behaviour, the deviations can be related to several factors.  
 593 One is that ExRET-Opt performs the calculation for a supply chain composed of 7 subsystems,  
 594 so exergy formation is more detailed and considers inefficiencies of different type of  
 595 equipment. Another factor, is that the author does not mention the number of hours that the  
 596 equipment is working, which affects the capital cost rate ( $\dot{Z}$ ) and thus affects the exergy cost  
 597 formation of the stream. However, final cost deviation was only found at 12.2%.

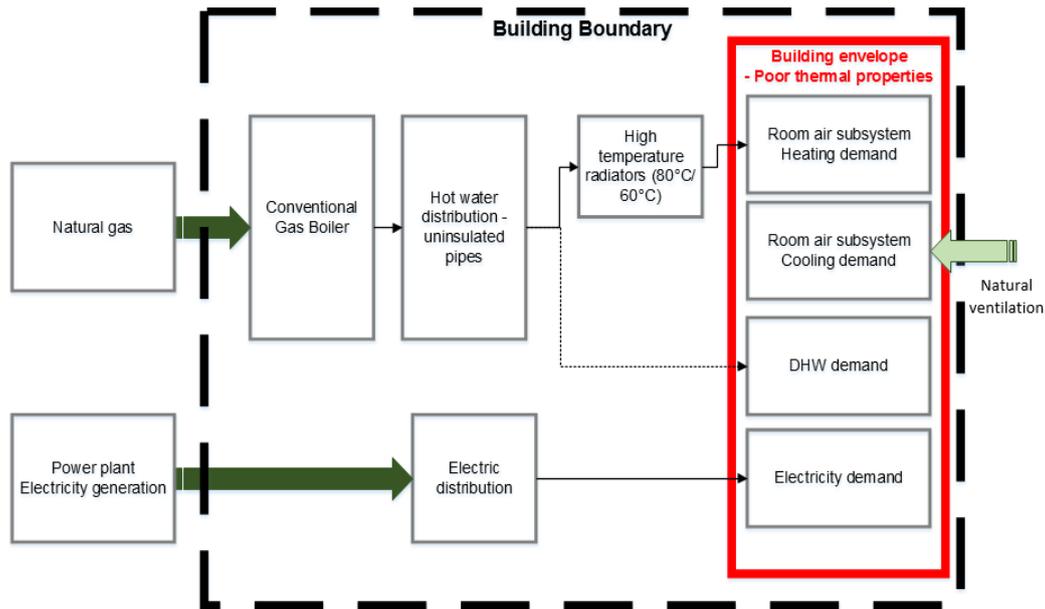
598

## 599 6. ExRET-Opt application

600

### 601 6.1 Case study and baseline values

602 To demonstrate ExRET-Opt capabilities, this has been applied to recently retrofitted primary  
 603 school building (1900 m<sup>2</sup>) located in London, UK. The simulation model consists of a fourteen-  
 604 thermal zone building. The largest proportion of the floor area is occupied by classrooms, staff  
 605 offices, laboratories, and the main hall. Other minor zones include corridors, bathrooms, and  
 606 other common rooms. Heating is provided by means of conventional gas boiler and high  
 607 temperature radiators (80°C/60°C) with no heat recovery system. As no artificial cooling  
 608 system is regarded, natural ventilation is considered during summer months. A schematic  
 609 layout of the building energy system is illustrated in Fig. 12. Buildings thermal properties as  
 610 well as energy benchmark indices are presented in Table 10. Properties such as occupancy  
 611 schedules and inputs as well as environmental values are taken from the UK NCM [74] and  
 612 Bull et al. [75].



613

614

**Fig. 12 Schematic layout of the energy system for the Primary School base case**

615

**Table 10 Primary school baseline building model characteristics**

<b>Baseline characteristics</b>	<b>Primary School</b>
<i>Year of construction</i>	1960s
<i>Number of floors</i>	2
<i>Floor space (m<sup>2</sup>)</i>	1,990
<i>Orientation (°)<sup>+</sup></i>	227
<i>Air tightness (ach)<sup>+</sup></i>	1.0
<i>Exterior Walls<sup>+</sup></i>	Cavity Wall-Brick walls 100 mm brick with 25mm air gap $U_{\text{value}}=1.66$ (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Roof<sup>+</sup></i>	200mm concrete block $U_{\text{value}}=3.12$ (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Ground floor<sup>+</sup></i>	150mm concrete slab $U_{\text{value}}=1.31$ (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Windows<sup>+</sup></i>	Single-pane clear (5mm thick) $U_{\text{value}}=5.84$ (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
<i>Glazing ratio</i>	28%
<i>HVAC System<sup>+</sup></i>	Gas-fired boiler 515 kW $\eta = 82\%$ No cooling system
<i>Emission system</i>	Heating: HT Radiators 90/70°C Cooling: Natural ventilation
<i>Heating Set Point (°C)<sup>+</sup></i>	19.3
<i>Cooling Set Point (°C)<sup>+</sup></i>	--
<i>Occupancy (people/m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>+</sup>*</i>	2.1
<i>Equipment (W/m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>**</sup></i>	2.0
<i>Lighting level (W/m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>**</sup></i>	12.2
<i>EUI electricity (kWh/m<sup>2</sup>-y)</i>	45.6
<i>EUI gas (kWh/m<sup>2</sup>-y)</i>	142.3
<i>Annual energy bill (£/y)</i>	19,449
<i>Thermal discomfort (hours)</i>	1,443
<i>CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Tonnes)</i>	214.8

616 By end-use, heating represents 58.1% of the total energy demand, meaning that the 515 kW  
 617 gas fired boiler consumes 781.7 GJ/year of natural gas. This is followed by 238.2 GJ/year for  
 618 DHW (17.7%) and 59.0 GJ/year of electricity for interior lighting (13.7%). Fans, mainly used  
 619 for mechanical cooling and extraction also have an intensive use, demanding 66.1 GJ/year,  
 620 representing 4.9% of the total energy demand.

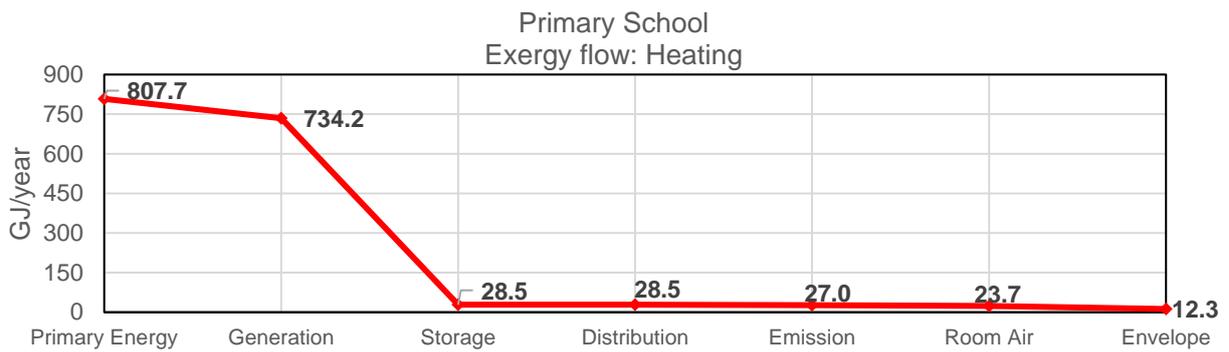
621 The outputs from the economic analysis deliver an annual energy bill of £19,449.3 for the  
 622 building, where £10,949.6 is needed to cover electricity demand and £8,499.6 for natural gas.  
 623 In addition, the LCC (over 50 years) obtained is found at £500,425 (£251.5/m<sup>2</sup>).

624

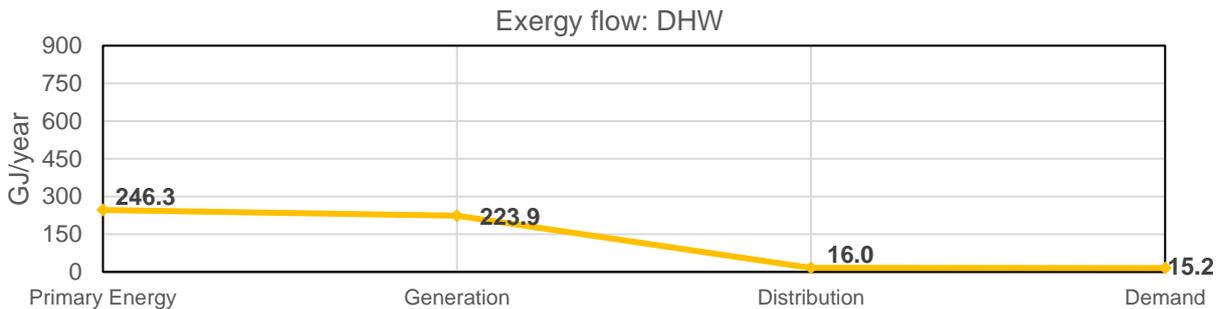
625 *6.1.1 Primary School baseline exergy flows and exergoeconomic values*

626 The building requires a total primary exergy input of 1,915.9 GJ/year (264.4 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>-year). By  
 627 product type, electric-based equipment requires the largest share of 861.9 GJ (45%), followed  
 628 by heating with 807.7 GJ (42.2%) and DHW with 246.3 GJ (12.8%). Fig. 13 shows the annual  
 629 exergy flows for the three products analysed. Exergy flow diagrams give a first insight in the  
 630 exergy behaviour inside the different building energy systems.

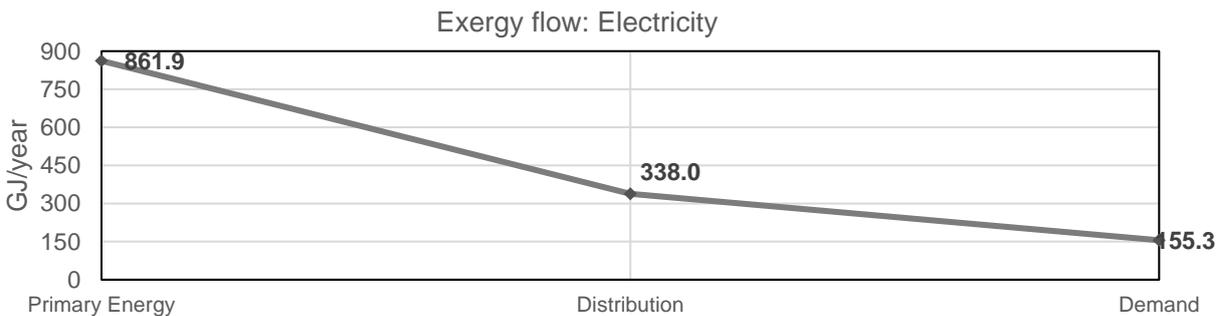
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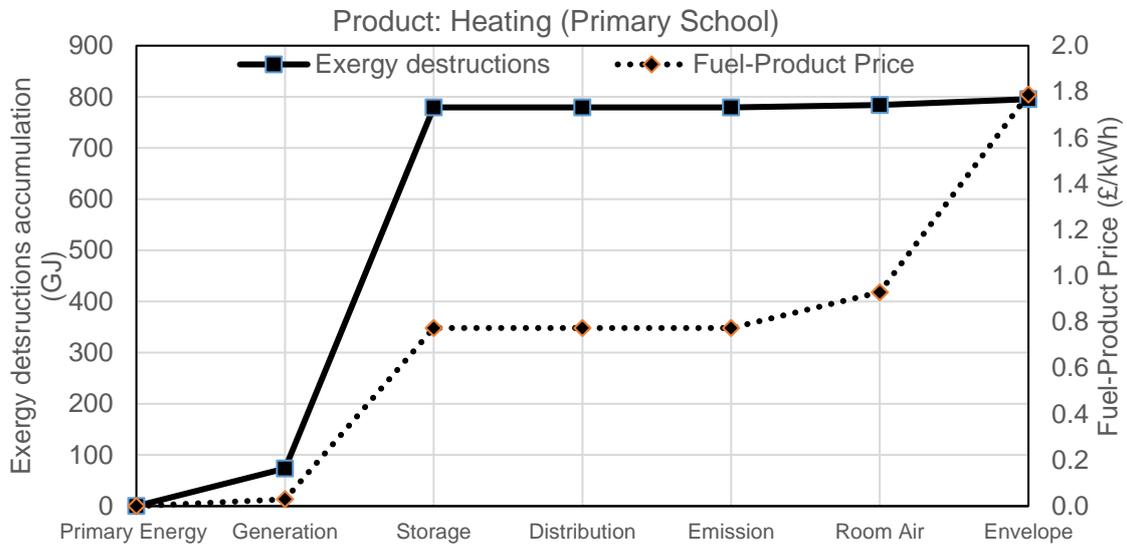
633



634

**Fig. 13 Exergy flows by product type. Primary School**

635 Fig. 14 illustrates the building heating product cost formation throughout the energy supply  
 636 chain, showing that the heating product at the thermal zone increases from £0.03/kWh (gas  
 637 price) to £1.79/kWh, with a total relative cost difference  $r_k$  of 58.66.



638  
 639 **Fig. 14 Exergy destruction accumulation vs product cost formation for the heating stream.**  
 640 **Primary School**

641 Until now, as no retrofit strategy has been implemented, no capital cost and revenue can be  
 642 calculated ( $\dot{Z}_{sys} = 0$ ,  $\dot{R} = 0$ ). Therefore, the  $Exec_{CB,baseline}$  or  $\dot{C}_{D,sys}$  has a value of £2.72/h  
 643 (£17,672.9/year). By products, exergy destructions cost from heating processes represents  
 644 67%, electric appliances 26%, and DHW 7%. The baseline exergy and exergoeconomic values  
 645 can be seen in Table 11.

646

Table 11 Baseline exergy and exergoeconomic values	
Baseline characteristics	Primary School
Exergy input (fuel) (GJ)	1915.9
Exergy demand (product) (GJ)	182.8
Exergy destructions (GJ)	1733.1
Exergy efficiency HVAC	1.5%
Exergy efficiency DHW	6.2%
Exergy efficiency Electric equip.	18.0%
Exergy efficiency Building	9.5%
Exergy cost fuel-prod HEAT (£/kWh) $\{r_k\}$	0.03—1.79 {58.66}
Exergy cost fuel-prod COLD (£/kWh) $\{r_k\}$	----- {---}
Exergy cost fuel-prod DHW (£/kWh) $\{r_k\}$	0.03—0.44 {13.66}
Exergy cost fuel-prod Elec (£/kWh) $\{r_k\}$	0.12—0.26 {1.16}
$D$ (£/h) Exergy destructions cost (energy bill £; %D from energy bill)	2.72 {17,672.9; 90.8%}
$Z$ (£/h) Capital cost	0
Exergoeconomic factor $f_k$ (%)	1
<b>Exergoeconomic cost-benefit (£/h)</b>	<b>2.72</b>

## 647 6.2 Optimisation

### 648 6.2.1 Algorithm settings

#### 649 a) Objective functions

650 As mentioned, an energy optimisation problem requires at least two conflicting problems. In  
651 this study three objectives that have to be satisfied simultaneously are going to be investigated.  
652 These are the minimisation of overall exergy destructions, reduction of occupant thermal  
653 discomfort, and maximisation of project's Net Present Value:

654 I. Building annual exergy destructions (kWh/m<sup>2</sup>-year):

$$655 Z_1(x) \min = Ex_{dest,bui} = \sum Ex_{prim}(t_k) - \sum Ex_{dem,bui}(t_k) \quad (5)$$

656

657 II. Occupant discomfort hours:

$$658 Z_2(x) \min = (PMV | > 0.5) \quad (6)$$

659

660 III. Net Present Value<sub>50 years</sub> (£):

$$661 Z_3(x) \max = NPV_{50years} = -TCI + \left( \sum_{n=1}^N \frac{R}{(1+i)^n} \right) + \frac{SV_N}{(1+i)^N} \quad (7)$$

662 However, for simplification and to encode a purely minimisation problem, the NPV is set as  
663 negative (although the results will be presented as normal positive outputs). Therefore:

$$664 Z_3(x) \min = -NPV_{50years} = - \left\{ -TCI + \left( \sum_{n=1}^N \frac{R}{(1+i)^n} \right) + \frac{SV_N}{(1+i)^N} \right\} \quad (8)$$

#### 665 b) Constraints

666 Furthermore, it was chosen to subject the optimisation problem to three constraints. First, as  
667 a pre-established budget is one of the most common typical limitations in real practice, it was  
668 decided to use the initial total capital investment as a constraint. From a previous research  
669 [58], a deep retrofit design for this exact same building was suggested with an investment of  
670 £734,968.1; therefore, this budget was taken as an economic constraint. In this instance, the  
671 aim is to test ExRET-Opt to deliver cheaper solutions with better energetic, exergetic,  
672 economic, and thermal comfort performance. Additionally, DPB is also considered as a  
673 constraint, sought for solutions with a DPB of 50 years or less, giving positive NPV values.  
674 Finally, a third constraint is the maximum baseline discomfort hours, subjecting the model not  
675 to worsen the initial baseline conditions (1,443 hours). Hence, the complete optimisation  
676 problems can be formulated as follows:

677 Given a ten-dimensional decision variable vector  
 678  $x = \{X^{HVAC}, X^{wall}, X^{roof}, X^{ground}, X^{seal}, X^{glaz}, X^{light}, X^{PV}, X^{wind}, X^{heat}\}$ , in the solution space  $X$ ,  
 679 find the vector(s)  $x^*$  that:

680  
 681 *Minimise:*  $Z(x^*) = \{Z_1(x^*), Z_2(x^*), Z_3(x^*)\}$

682 *Subject to follow inequality constraints:*  $\begin{cases} TCI \leq \text{£}734,968 \\ DPB \leq 50 \text{ years} \\ Discomfort \leq 1,443 \text{ hrs} \end{cases}$  {constraints}

683

684 **c) NSGA-II parameters**

685 As GA requires a large population size to efficiently work to define the Pareto front within the  
 686 entire search space, Table 12 shows the selected algorithm parameters.

687 **Table 12 Algorithm parameters and stopping criteria for optimisation with GA**

Parameters	
<i>Encoding scheme</i>	Integer encoding (discretisation)
<i>Population type</i>	Double-Vector
<i>Population size</i>	100
<i>Crossover Rate</i>	100%
<i>Mutation Rate</i>	20%
<i>Selection process</i>	Stochastic – fitness influenced
<i>Tournament Selection</i>	2
<i>Elitism size</i>	Pareto optimal solutions
Stopping criteria	
<i>Max Generations</i>	100
<i>Time limit (s)</i>	$10^6$
<i>Fitness limit</i>	$10^{-6}$

688

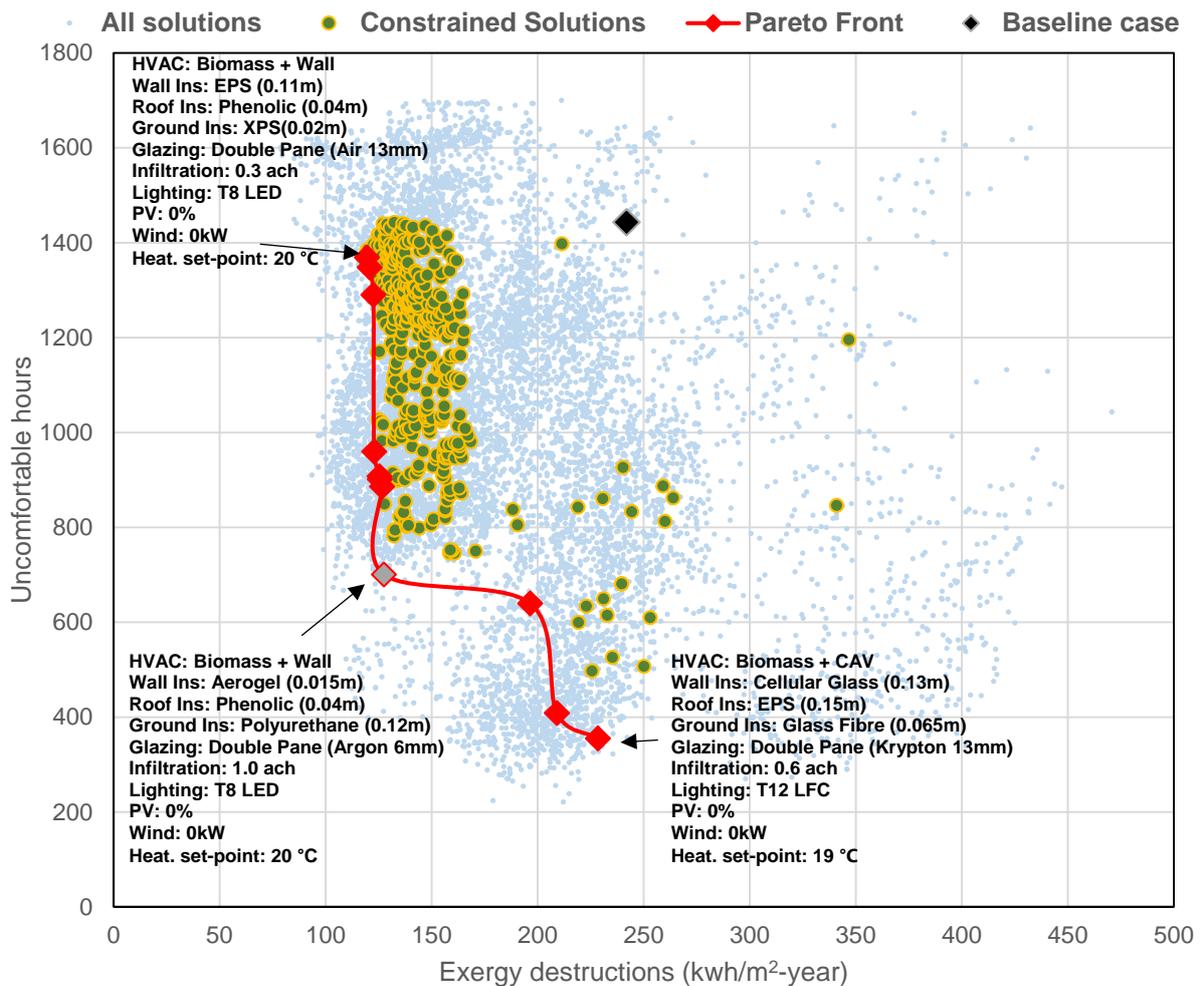
689 **6.3 Results optimisation**

690

691 **6.3.1 Dual-objective analysis**

692 In this section, the performance of the system can be presented as a trade-off between the  
 693 pairs of objectives to easily illustrate Pareto solutions. This represents an analysis of the three  
 694 sets of dual objectives: 1) *Exergy destructions – Comfort*, 2) *Exergy Destruction – NPV*, and  
 695 3) *Comfort – NPV*. All simulated solutions, the solutions constrained by the selected criteria,  
 696 the baseline case, and the Pareto front are represented in the following graphs. Each solution  
 697 in the Pareto front has associated different BER strategies.

698 Fig. 15 illustrates the simultaneous minimisation of exergy destructions and discomfort hours,  
 699 localising the constraint solutions and the Pareto front, formed by eleven designs. Models with  
 700 better outputs in the objectives that are not part of the Pareto front are due to the established  
 701 constraints, either related to thermal comfort, capital investment, or cost-benefit. When  
 702 analysing the Pareto front, the most common HVAC systems are H10: Biomass boiler with  
 703 CAV system and H28: Biomass Boiler with wall heating, both with a frequency of 27.3%. For  
 704 insulation, no measures with exact technology and thickness repeat; however, the most  
 705 common technology is EPS for the wall, Polyurethane and EPS for the roof, and polyurethane  
 706 for the ground floor. In respect to the infiltration rate, 0.7 *ach* is the most common value. For  
 707 active systems, the T8 LED lighting system, with no PV panels and wind turbines are the most  
 708 frequent variables. The minimum value for exergy destructions is achieved by the system H28,  
 709 while the minimum value for discomfort by the H10. The whole description of the BER designs  
 710 for both optimised extremes can be seen in the graph. Also, the BER design that represents  
 711 the model closer to the 'utopia point' is presented. The utopia point is represented by a  
 712 theoretical solution that has both optimised values.



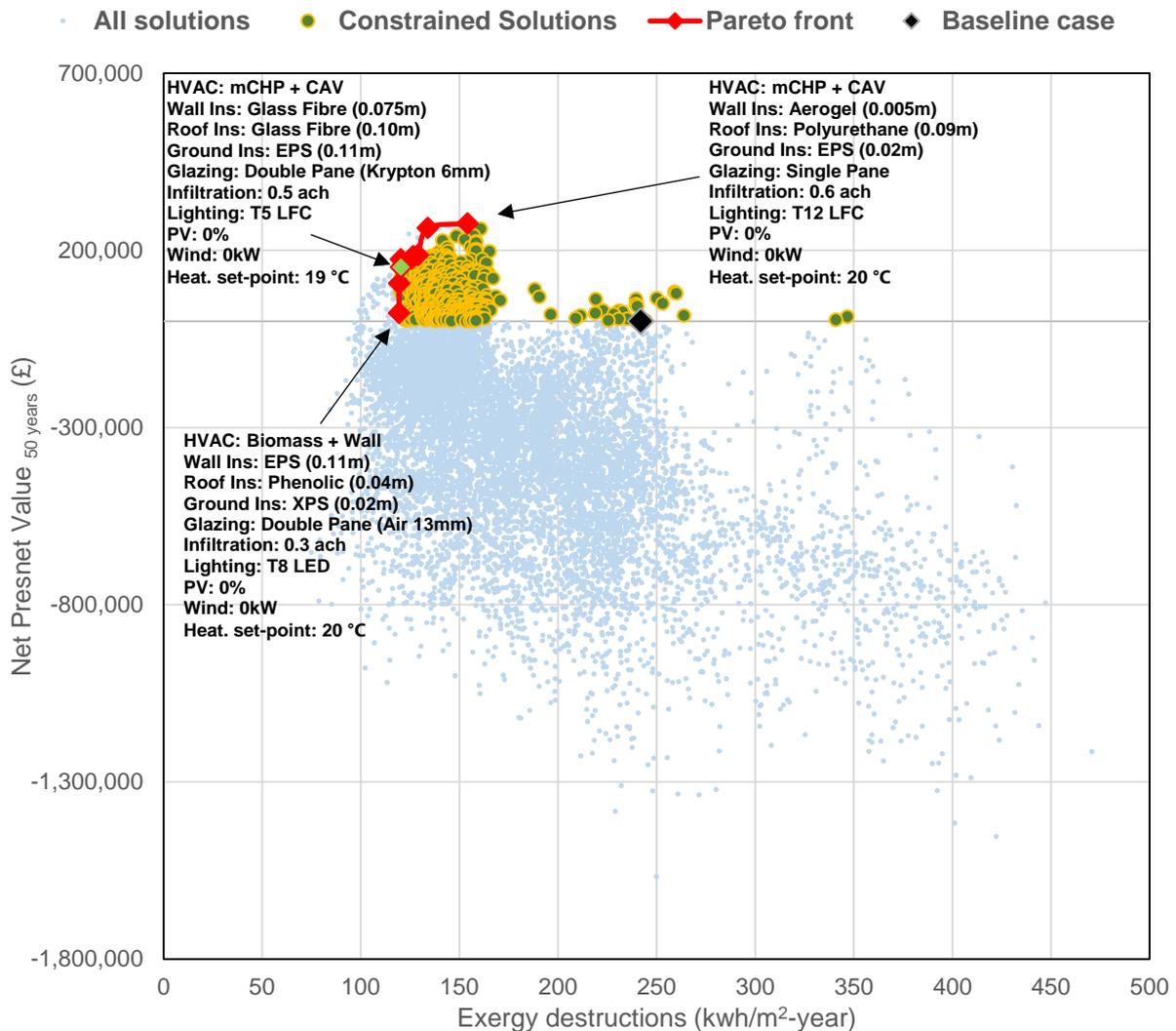
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715

**Fig. 15 Optimisation results and Pareto front (Exergy destructions - Comfort) for the Primary School**

716 Fig. 16 illustrates the simultaneous minimisation of exergy destructions and maximisation of  
 717 NPV. In this case, the Pareto front is formed by nine designs. The most frequent HVAC design  
 718 is H31: microCHP with a CAV system, presented in eight of the nine cases. The only other  
 719 system is H28: Biomass boiler and Wall heating. For the wall insulation, the most frequent  
 720 technologies are EPS and glass fibre, while for both roof and ground is EPS. The most  
 721 common infiltration rate is 0.4 *ach*, with a frequency of 44.4%, while the most frequent glazing  
 722 system (33.3%) is double glazing with 6 mm gap of Krypton. For the lighting system it is T5  
 723 LFC, and again no renewable systems are common, where just one of the models includes a  
 724 20 kW wind turbine.

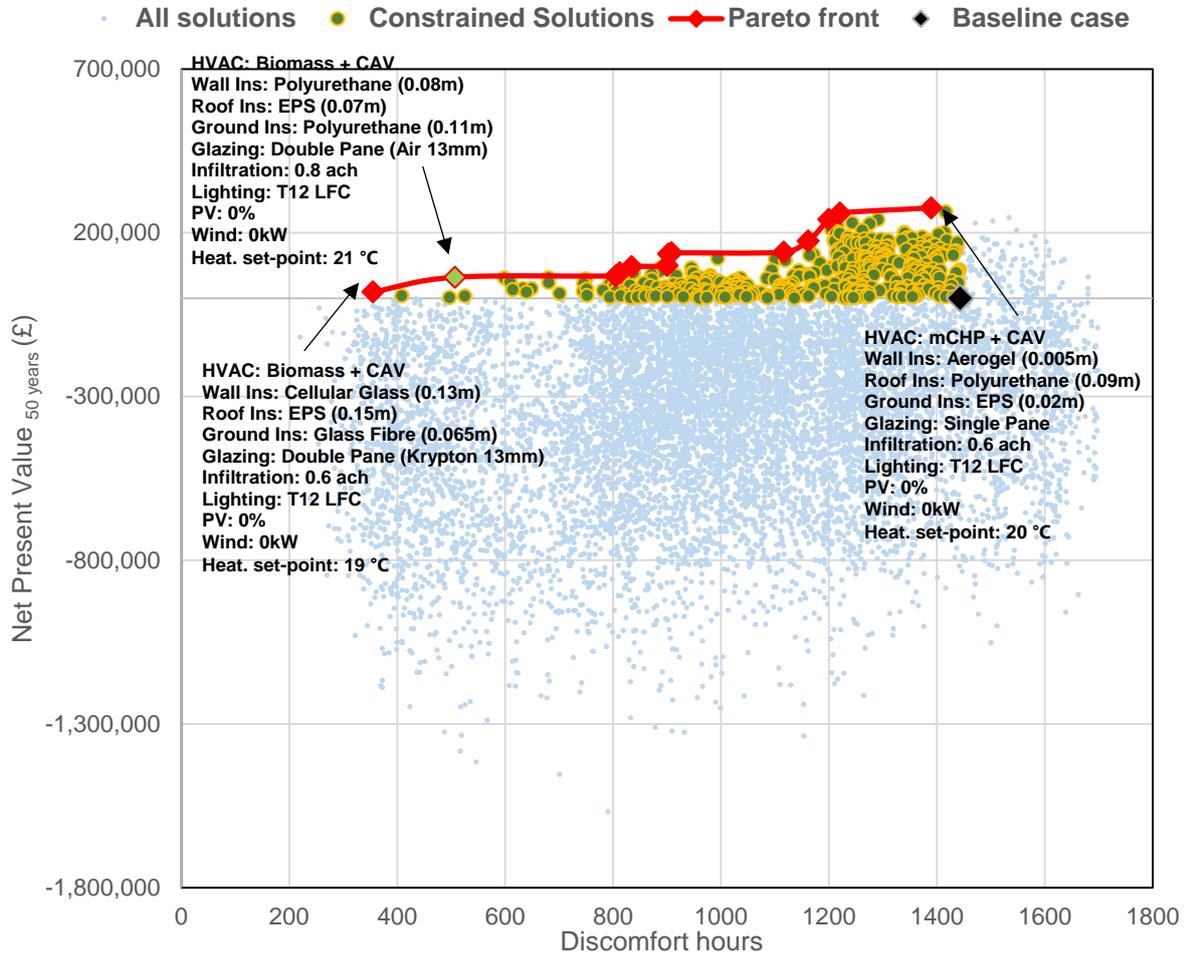


725  
 726 **Fig. 16 Optimisation results and Pareto front (Exergy destructions - NPV) for the Primary**  
 727 **School**

728

729 The results for the dual optimisation of thermal comfort and NPV are illustrated in Fig. 17. The  
 730 Pareto front is formed by thirteen solutions. The most common HVAC system is H28: Biomass  
 731 boiler and wall heating with a recurrence of 46.2%. The most common insulation measures

732 are cellular glass and cork board for the walls, EPS for the roof, and polyurethane for the floor.  
 733 The infiltration rate that dominates the optimal solutions is 0.8 ach, with no retrofit in the glazing  
 734 system. Regarding active systems, the baseline's T12 LFC is the most common solution with  
 735 no installation of PV panels and wind turbines.



736  
 737 **Fig. 17 Optimisation results and Pareto front (Comfort - NPV) for the Primary School**  
 738

739 **6.3.2 Triple-objective analysis**

740 The constrained solutions' space consists of 417 models, of which the Pareto surface is  
 741 composed of only 70 possible solutions. Given the constraints, the Pareto results suggest that  
 742 the optimisation study found more models oriented to minimise exergy destructions and  
 743 maximise NPV, while struggling to optimise the thermal comfort objective. This is also  
 744 complemented by the fact that the majority of optimal solutions present high values of  
 745 infiltration levels ( $0.5 < x < 1.0$  ach). This might be the case for obtaining average improvement  
 746 in occupant thermal comfort. Nevertheless, the Pareto front also obtained models with good  
 747 thermal comfort performance, with discomfort values of 400 hours or less annually. Regarding  
 748 the HVAC system, H31: mCHP with CAV system is presented in the majority of optimal

749 solutions. On the other hand, the optimisation suggests not to retrofit the glazing systems due  
 750 to its high capital investment costs. In respect to insulation, Polyurethane is found to be the  
 751 most frequent technology among all three parts of the envelope. The most common insulation  
 752 thicknesses are found to be 5 cm, 1cm, and 2 cm for wall, roof, and ground respectively. Fig.  
 753 18 shows the frequency distribution of the main BER solutions in the Pareto front.

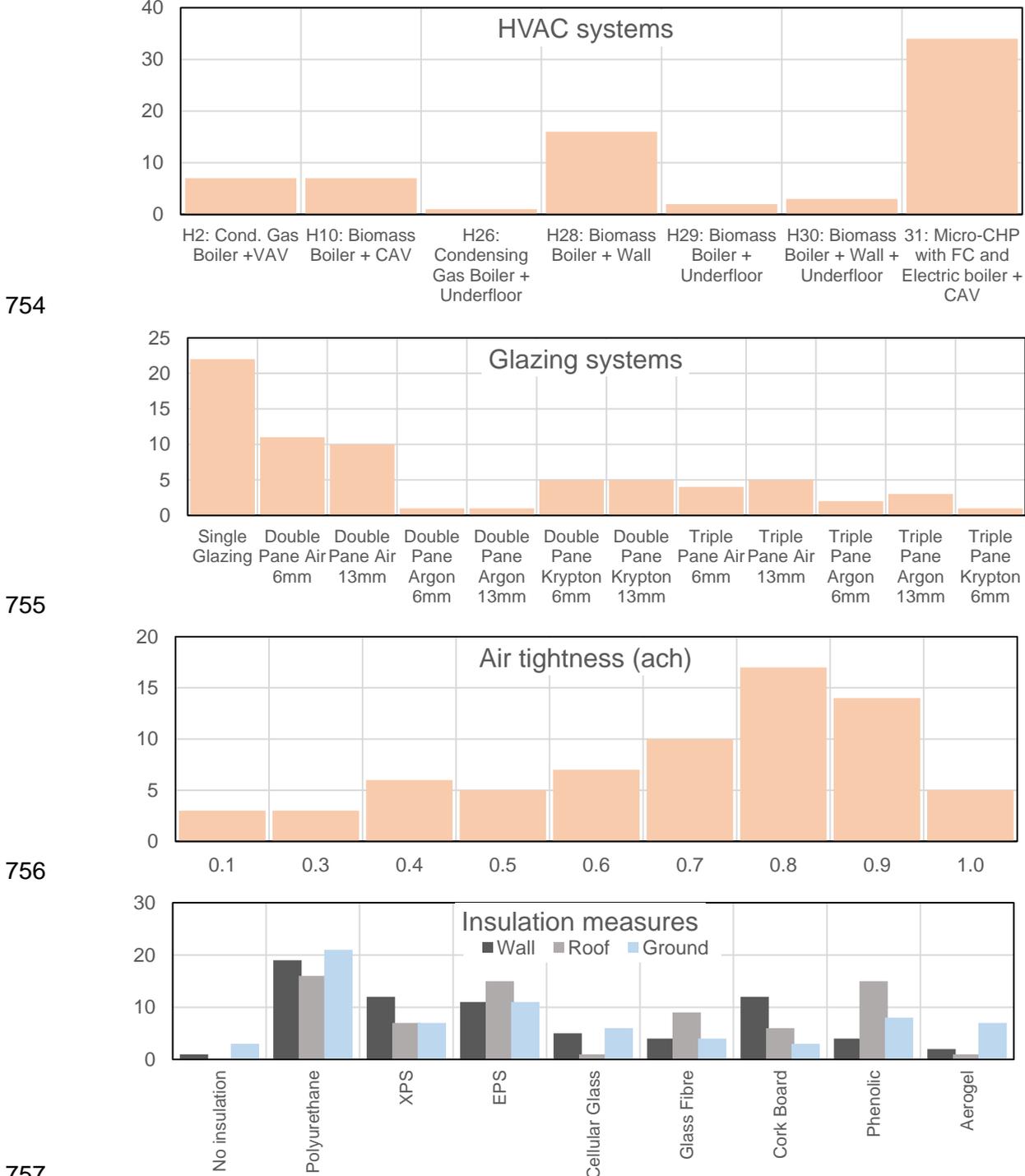


Fig. 18 Frequency distribution graphs of main retrofit variables from the Pareto front for the Primary School case study

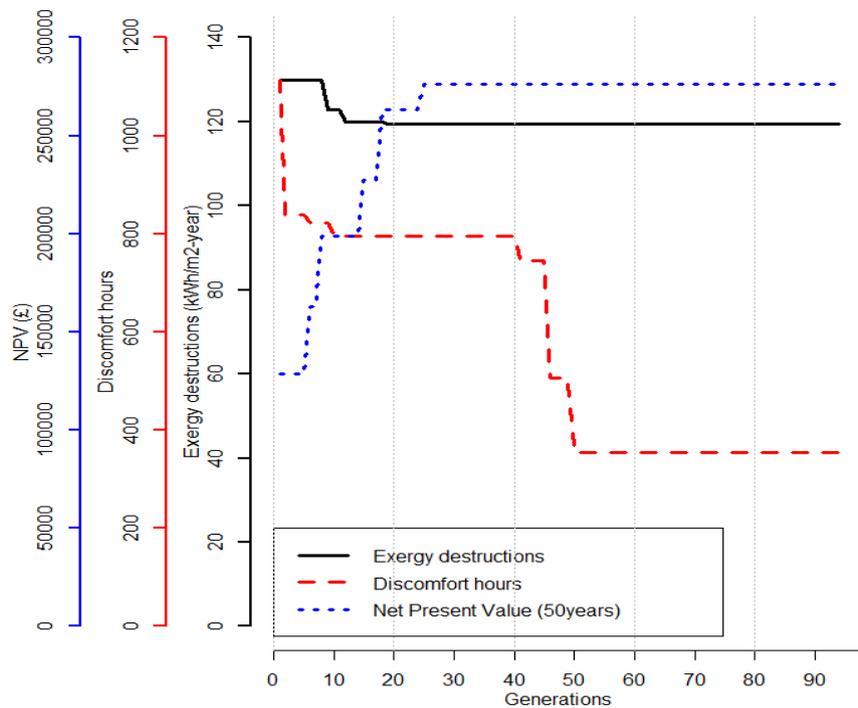
760 Other design variables that are not illustrated and dominate the Pareto front are T12 LFC for  
 761 the lighting system, the implementation of a 20 kW wind turbine, lack of installation of PV roof  
 762 panels, and a heating set-point of 18 °C. This set-point variable also impacts the poor  
 763 improvement in thermal comfort.

764

765 *6.3.3 Algorithm behaviour - Convergence study*

766 For both cases, the convergence metrics were computed for every generation. Fig. 19  
 767 illustrates the evolution of the three objective functions corresponding to each generation and  
 768 its convergence with an allowance of one hundred generations. The results demonstrate that  
 769 exergy destructions converged after the nineteenth generation (119.4 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>-year),  
 770 discomfort hours converged after the fiftieth (355 hours), and NPV after the twenty-fifth  
 771 generation (£276,182). As it can be seen, the minimum value for exergy destructions found in  
 772 the first generation (129.8 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>-year) is similar to the one found in the last generations,  
 773 meaning that the algorithm selected a ‘strong’ and ‘healthy individual’ (building model) from  
 774 the first generation. However, due to the model’s strict constraints, larger number of  
 775 generations are required for the discomfort hours to converge within an acceptable value.

776



777

778 **Fig. 19 Convergence of Primary School optimisation procedure for the three objective**  
 779 **functions**

780

781 *6.4 Multiple-criteria decision analysis (compromise programming)*

782 In order to tackle the multi-objective optimisation procedure within ExRET-Opt, the MCDM  
 783 module is used. In compromise programming, firstly, the non-dominated set is defined with  
 784 respect to the ideal (Utopian -  $Z^*$ ) and anti-ideal (Nadir -  $Z_*$ ) points, which represent the  
 785 optimisation and anti-optimisation of each objective individually. For this study, the process  
 786 can be written as follows:

$$787 \alpha_{exergy\_dest} \geq \left( \frac{|Z_{exergy\_dest}(x) - Z^*_{exergy\_dest}|}{|Z^*_{exergy\_dest} - Z_*_{exergy\_dest}|} \right) * (p_{exergy\_dest}) \quad (9)$$

$$788 \alpha_{discomfort} \geq \left( \frac{|Z_{discomfort}(x) - Z^*_{discomfort}|}{|Z^*_{discomfort} - Z_*_{discomfort}|} \right) * (p_{discomfort}) \quad (10)$$

$$789 \alpha_{NPV} \geq \left( \frac{|Z^*_{NPV} - Z_{NPV}(x)|}{|Z^*_{NPV} - Z_*_{NPV}|} \right) * (p_{NPV}) \quad (11)$$

790 For the application of compromise programming, the weighting procedure by scanning different  
 791 combinations for the three objectives is subject to the following constraint:

$$792 \sum_{j=1}^n p_j = p_{exergy\_dest} + p_{discomfort} + p_{NPV} = 1 \quad (12)$$

793

794 Finally, as an individual distance ( $\alpha_j$ ) is obtained for each objective, these are added up for  
 795 every solution:

$$796 \alpha_{cheb} = \sum_{j=1}^n \alpha_j = \alpha_{exergy\_dest} + \alpha_{discomfort} + \alpha_{NPV} \geq 0 \quad (13)$$

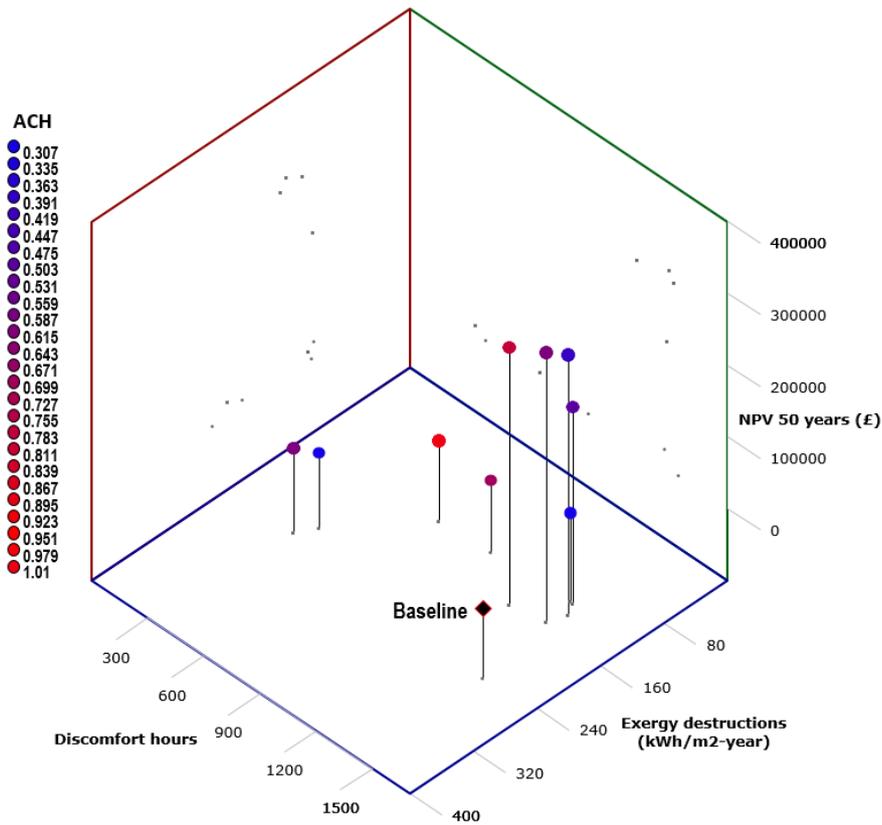
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798 The method then scans all the feasible sets and minimises the deviation from the ideal point,  
 799 obtaining the minimum Chebyshev distance ( $[\min]\alpha_{cheb}$ ):

$$800 [\min]\alpha_{cheb} = \min \sum_{j=1}^n \alpha_j \quad (14)$$

801

802 For the case study, the entire range of defined criteria and different weights of coefficient  
 803 values is summarised in Appendix B. The table shows the best solution for each weighting  
 804 design showing the BER retrofit parameters code (Appendix A) along the obtained results for  
 805 each objective function. Having this type of information gives the decision maker the flexibility  
 806 and possibility of a straightforward BER design change, if new insights arise as a result of the  
 807 objectives' priorities adjustment. From a detailed analysis of the outputs, it is found that only  
 808 nine solutions are considered by the MCDM, as similar BER design repeats in different  
 809 weighting coefficients (Fig. 20).

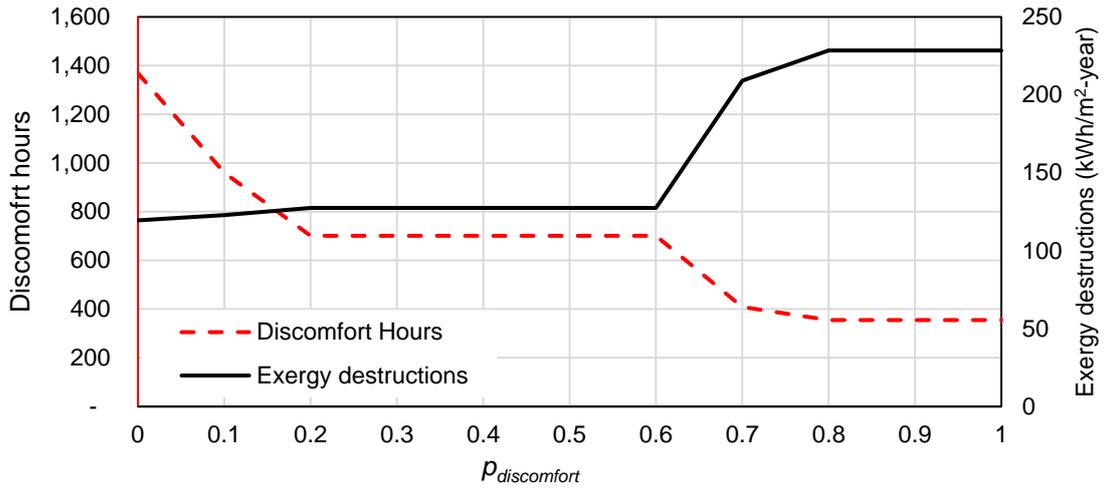


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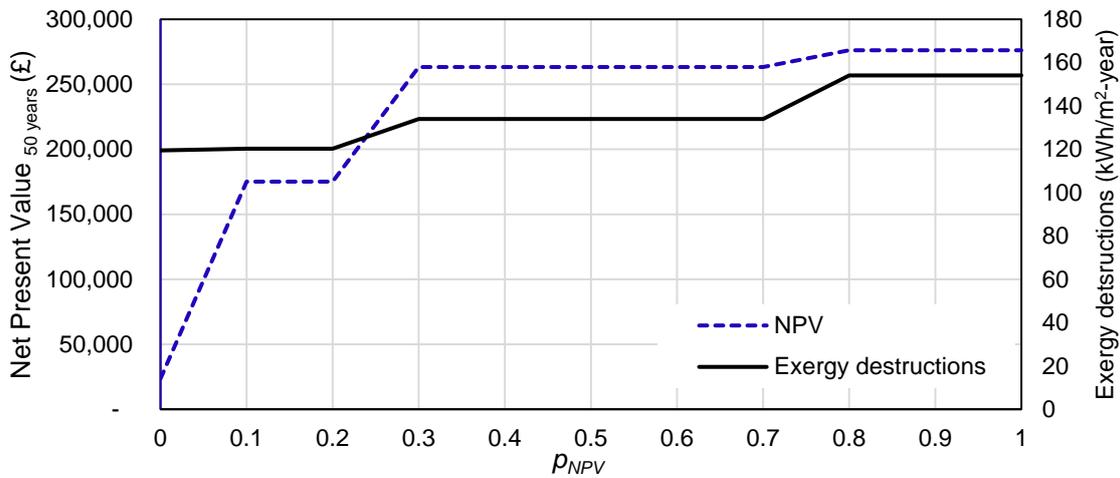
811 **Fig. 20 Primary School optimal solutions found by Compromise Programming MCDM method**

812

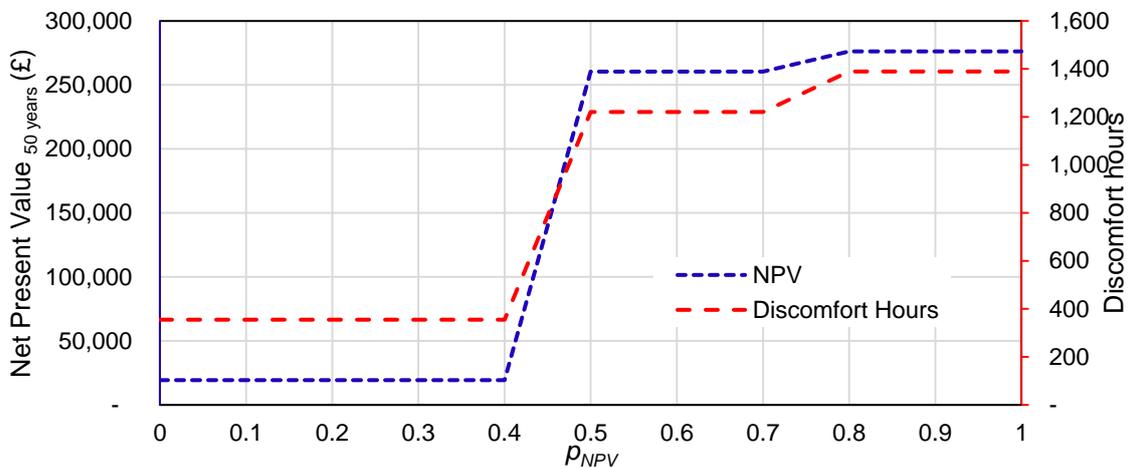
813 Fig. 21 shows the compromise solutions for different weights for all pairs of objective functions  
 814 combinations, demonstrating how the objective functions' outputs change with respect to the  
 815 coefficient weight. These graphs show the competitive nature of all three objectives. For  
 816 example, as a result of demanding more exergy to cover internal thermal conditions, an  
 817 increase in exergy destructions leads to a decrease in occupant thermal discomfort. However,  
 818 meeting at  $p_{exergy}=0.4$  and  $p_{discomfort}=0.6$  good solutions for both objectives can be obtained.  
 819 When comparing NPV and exergy destructions, it demonstrates that projects with higher NPV  
 820 merely increase exergy destructions, meaning that a compromise in building exergy efficiency  
 821 could lead to a more profitable project. Finally, a less profitable project (low NPV) is required  
 822 to obtain good internal conditions as a result of two reasons: the necessity of more energy  
 823 leading to a larger expenditure and/or the need to have a higher capital investment for  
 824 technology that leads to better internal conditions.



825



826



827

828 **Fig. 21 Changes in the Primary School objective function values with respect to the weighting coefficient**

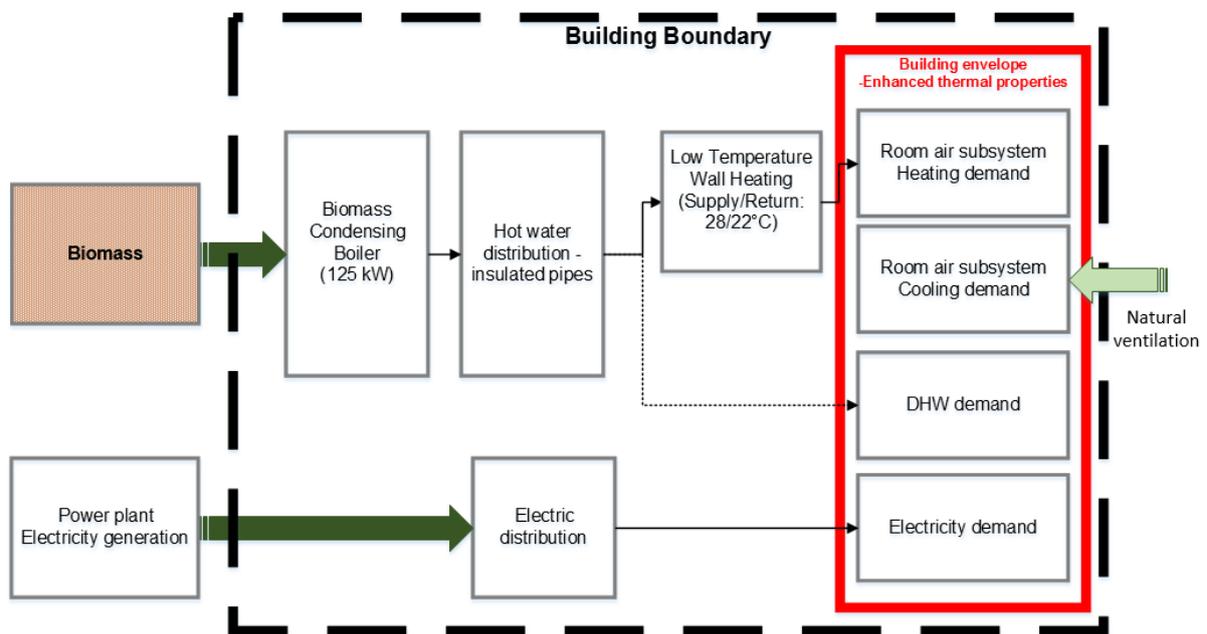
829

830 *6.5 Utopian solution vs baseline case*

831 For a final comparison, the utopian solution is selected. The utopia point is a theoretical model  
 832 which contains the minimum value for each of the three objectives optimised individually. To  
 833 find this particular model, a weight coefficient with similar values has to be considered  
 834 ( $\rho_{exergy\_dest}=0.33$ ,  $\rho_{discomfort}=0.33$ , and  $\rho_{NPV}=0.33$ ).

835 For the case study, the retrofitted model close to the utopia consists of an HVAC system H28:  
 836 a 125 kW biomass-based condensing boiler connected to a low temperature wall heating  
 837 system working with a heating set-point at 20 °C. The insulation for the wall is composed of  
 838 Aerogel with a thickness of 0.015m, while the roof insulation is composed of 0.04m of phenolic  
 839 board, and the ground of 0.12m of polyurethane. The infiltration rate keeps the baseline levels  
 840 of 1.0 *ach*, while the glazing system is retrofitted with double-glazed, with a 6mm gap of Argon  
 841 gas. For active systems, the lighting system is retrofitted to install T8 LEDs. Furthermore, the  
 842 BER design does not consider any implementation of renewable electricity generation (PV or  
 843 wind turbines). A schematic diagram of the building energy system in Fig. 22.

844



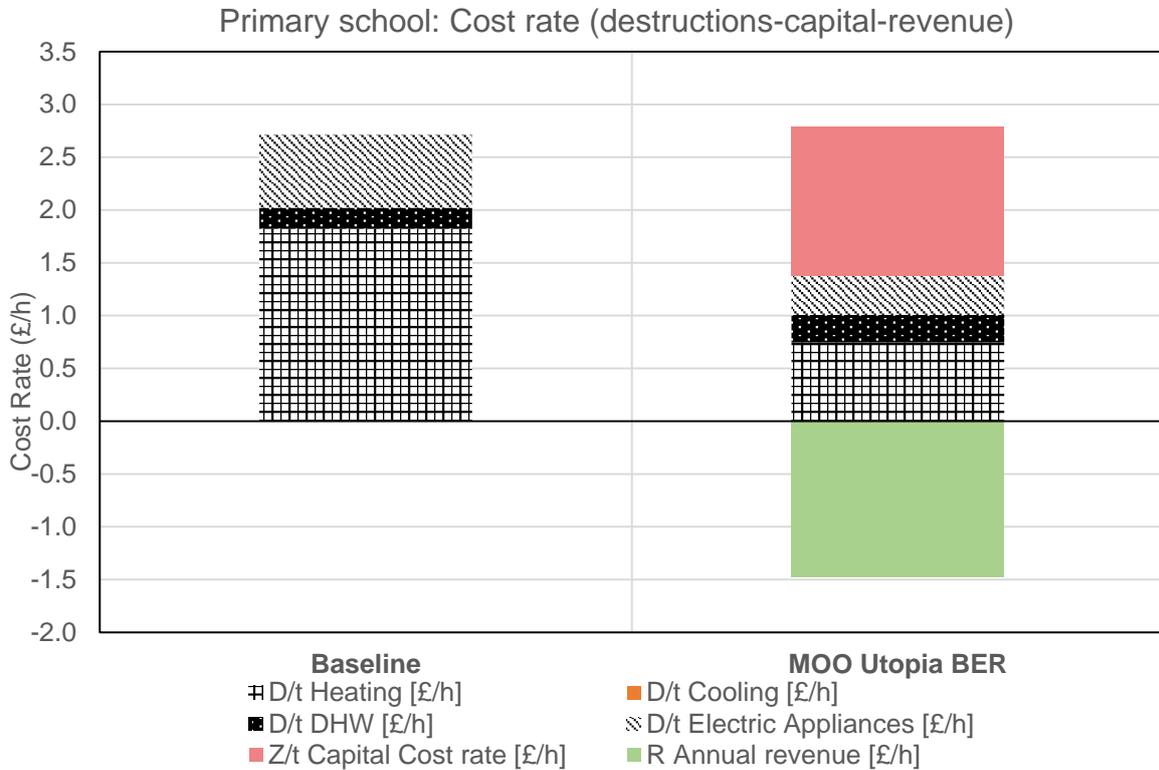
845

846 **Fig. 22 Schematic layout of the energy system for the Primary School 'close to Utopia' BER**  
 847 **model**

848 From the baseline value of 187.9 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>-year for energy use, the utopian model reduces it to  
 849 118.1 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>-year. The utopian model compromises on greater energy use savings, as the  
 850 optimisation process has a constraint to achieve a DPB of 50 years or less with a maximum  
 851 budget of £734,968. This utopian model requires a retrofit capital cost of just £329,856,  
 852 achieving a DPB of 49 years. Nevertheless, the utopian model improves on thermal comfort  
 853 levels from a baseline value of 1,443 uncomfortable hours to 701 hours for the post-retrofit  
 854 building. Additionally, the optimised design was able to reduce carbon emission baseline value  
 855 up to 72.8%.

856 Notwithstanding, interesting outputs come from the exergy and exergoeconomic analyses. Fig.  
 857 23, showing that total exergy destruction rates are £1.38/h for the utopian model; representing  
 858 a major improvement from the baseline case (£2.7/h). Moreover, BER capital cost rate - **Z** (in  
 859 light red) and annual revenue rate - **R** (in light green) are illustrated for the utopian model. The

860 utopian model achieves a **Z** of £1.41/h and an **R** of £1.47/h. When analysing the  $Exec_{CB}$   
 861 indicator with the aim to find the best possible exergoeconomic design, this results in a value  
 862 of £1.31/h, meaning that the obtained design provides better overall exergy/exergoeconomic  
 863 performance compared to the pre-retrofitted building.  
 864



865  
 866 **Fig. 23 Primary school exergy destruction, BER capital cost and annual revenue cost rate**

867 The framework developed in this research has demonstrated to provide designs with an  
 868 appropriate balance between active and passive measures, while consistently accounting for  
 869 energy use, irreversibilities, and exergetic and economic costs along every subsystem in the  
 870 building energy system. Meanwhile, the application of the exergoeconomic cost-benefit index  
 871 could be a practical solution to supports building designers in making informed and robust  
 872 economic decisions.

873 **7. Conclusions**

874 This paper presented ExRET-Opt, a retrofit-oriented simulation framework, which has become  
 875 a part of EnergyPlus in performing exergy and exergoeconomic balances. The addition was  
 876 done thanks to the development of external Python-based subroutines, and the support of the  
 877 Java-based software jEPlus. ExRET-Opt, apart from providing the user with exergy data and  
 878 pinpointing sources of inefficiencies along the energy supply chain, gives the possibility to  
 879 perform a comprehensive exploration of a wide range state-of-the-art building energy  
 880 technologies, with the intention to minimise energy use and improve thermodynamic efficiency

881 of existing buildings. The retrofit technologies include high and low temperature HVAC  
882 systems, envelope insulation measures, insulated glazing systems, efficient lighting, energy  
883 renewable generation technologies, and set-points control measures. Moreover, integration of  
884 exergoeconomic analysis and multi-objective optimisation into EnergyPlus allows users to  
885 perform a comprehensive exergoeconomic optimisation similar to those found in the  
886 optimisation of chemical or power generation processes. It means that indicators such as  
887 energy, exergy, economic (capital cost, NPV), exergoeconomic, and carbon emissions  
888 combined with occupants' thermal comfort, can be used as constraints or objective functions  
889 in the optimisation procedure. The limited availability of robust and comprehensive test data  
890 has restricted the application of full validation tests to the results of ExRET-Opt. However, an  
891 inter-model and analytical verification processes was performed. By reviewing different  
892 existing exergy tools and exergy-based research, the calculation process of the two main  
893 subroutines developed for ExRET-opt, has been verified with acceptable results.

894 To demonstrate the strengths of ExRET-Opt in a real case study, the framework was applied  
895 to a school building. A hybrid-thermodynamic MOO problem, considering net present value  
896 (First Law), exergy destructions (Second Law), and occupant thermal comfort as objective  
897 functions was performed. Outputs demonstrate that by using exergy and NPV as objective  
898 functions it is possible to improve energy and exergy performance, reduce carbon and exergy  
899 destructions footprint, while also providing comfortable conditions under cost-effective  
900 solutions. This gives practitioners and decision makers more flexibility in the design process.  
901 Additionally, the results show that even with the imposed constraints, the NSGA-II-based MOO  
902 module was successfully applied, finding a large range of better performance BER designs for  
903 the analysed case study, compared with their corresponding baseline case. However, a tight  
904 (constrained) budget means missing out on some low-exergy systems, which require higher  
905 capital investment, such as district heating/cooling systems and ground source heat pumps.  
906 Finally, to compare the strength of an exergy-based MOO-MCDM, the utopian model was  
907 selected for a final comparison against the pre-retrofitted case. This solution represents the  
908 model closest to the optimal objectives, if they were optimised separately. These final selected  
909 solutions improved overall building's energy performance, exergy efficiency and buildings' life  
910 cycle cost while having low initial capital investments.

911 It is suggested that BER designs should result from a more holistic analysis. Exergy and  
912 exergoeconomics could have an important future role in the building industry if some practical  
913 barriers were overcome. The proposed methodological framework can provide more  
914 information than the typical optimisation methods based solely on energy analysis. The  
915 addition of exergy/exergoeconomic analysis to building optimisation completes a powerful and  
916 robust methodology that should be pursued in everyday BER practice. By utilising popular  
917 buildings' simulation tools as the foundation, practical exergy and exergoeconomics theory  
918 could become more accessible, reaching a wider audience of industry decision makers as well

919 as academic researchers. Combined with other methods, such as multi-objective optimisation  
 920 and multi criteria decision making, exergy finally could hold a good chance to find a place in  
 921 the everyday practice.

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## 926 Nomenclature

927	$BER$	building energy retrofit
928	$\dot{C}_D$	exergy destruction cost (£)
929	$c_f$	average cost of fuel (£/kWh)
930	$c_p$	average cost of product (£/kWh)
931	$DPB$	discounted payback (years)
932	$EUI$	energy use index (kWh/m <sup>2</sup> -year)
933	$Ex$	exergy (kWh)
934	$\dot{E}x_D$	exergy destructions (kWh)
935	$Exec_{CB}$	exergoeconomic cost benefit factor (£/h)
936	$f_k$	exergoeconomic factor (-)
937	$NPV$	net present value (£)
938	$R$	annual revenue (£)
939	$TCI$	total capital investment (£)
940	$\dot{Z}_k$	capital investment rate (£/h)
941	<b>Greek symbols</b>	
942	$\alpha_{cheb}$	Chebyshev distance
943	$\psi_{tot}$	exergy efficiency (-)

## 944 Appendix A. Characteristics of building retrofit measures [58]

945 **Table A.1 Characteristics and investment cost of HVAC systems**

HVAC ID	System Description	Emission system	Cost
H1	Condensing Gas Boiler + Chiller	CAV	<i>Generation systems</i> • £160/kW Water-based Chiller (COP=3.2) • £99/kW Condensing gas boiler ( $\eta=0.95$ ) • £70/kW Oil Boiler ( $\eta=0.90$ ) • £150/kW Electric Boiler ( $\eta=1.0$ )
H2	Condensing Gas Boiler + Chiller	VAV	
H3	Condensing Gas Boiler + ASHP-VRF System	FC	
H4	Oil Boiler + Chiller	CAV	
H5	Oil Boiler + Chiller	VAV	
H6	Oil Boiler + Chiller	FC	
H7	Electric Boiler + Chiller	CAV	
H8	Electric Boiler + Chiller	VAV	

H9	<i>Electric Boiler + ASHP-VRF System</i>	FC	• £208/kW Biomass Boiler ( $\eta=0.90$ )
H10	<i>Biomass Boiler + Chiller</i>	CAV	• £1300/kW ASHP-VRF System (COP=3.2)
H11	<i>Biomass Boiler + Chiller</i>	VAV	• £1200/kW GSHP (Water-Water) System (COP=4.2)
H12	<i>Biomass Boiler + ASHP-VRF System</i>	FC	• £452/kW ASHP (Air-Air) (COP=3.2)
H13	<i>District system</i>	CAV	• £2000/kW PV-T system
H14	<i>District system</i>	VAV	• £27,080 micro-CHP (5.5 kW) + fuel cell system
H15	<i>District system</i>	Wall	
H16	<i>District system</i>	Underfloor	
H17	<i>District system</i>	Wall+Underfloor	
H18	<i>Ground Source Heat Pump</i>	CAV	
H19	<i>Ground Source Heat Pump</i>	VAV	
H20	<i>Ground Source Heat Pump</i>	Wall	Emission systems
H21	<i>Ground Source Heat Pump</i>	Underfloor	• £700 per CAV
H22	<i>Ground Source Heat Pump</i>	Wall+Underfloor	• £1200 per VAV
H23	<i>Air Source Heat Pump</i>	CAV	• £35/m <sup>2</sup> wall heating
H24	<i>PVT-based system (50% roof) with supplemental Electric boiler and Old Chiller</i>	CAV	• £35/m <sup>2</sup> underfloor heating
H25	<i>Condensing Boiler + Chiller</i>	Wall	• £6117 per Heat Recovery system
H26	<i>Condensing Boiler + Chiller</i>	Underfloor	
H27	<i>Condensing Boiler + Chiller</i>	Wall+Underfloor	Other subsystems:
H28	<i>Biomass Boiler + Chiller</i>	Wall	• £56/kW District heat exchanger + £6122 connection charge
H29	<i>Biomass Boiler + Chiller</i>	Underfloor	
H30	<i>Biomass Boiler + Chiller</i>	Wall+Underfloor	• £50/m for building's insulated distribution pipes
H31	<i>Micro-CHP with Fuel Cell and Electric boiler and old Chiller</i>	CAV	
H32	<i>Condensing Gas Boiler and old Chiller. Heat Recovery System included.</i>	CAV	

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**Table A.2 Characteristics and investment cost of lighting systems**

Lights ID	Lighting technology	Cost per W/m <sup>2</sup>
L1	T8 LFC	£5.55
L2	T5 LFC	£7.55
L3	T8 LED	£11.87

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**Table A.3 Characteristics and investment cost of renewable energy generation systems**

Renewable	Technology	Cost
R1	PV panels 25% roof	PV: £1200/m <sup>2</sup>
R2	PV panels 50% roof	
R3	PV panels 75% roof	
R4	Wind Turbine 20 kW	Turbine: £4000/kW
R5	Wind Turbine 40 kW	£/kW

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**Table A.4 Characteristics and investment cost of different insulation materials**

Ins. ID	Insulation measure	Thickness (cm)	Total of measures	Cost per m <sup>2</sup> (lowest to highest)
I1	<i>Polyurethane</i>	2 to 15 in 1 cm steps	14	£6.67 to £23.32
I2	<i>Extruded polystyrene</i>	1 to 15 in 1 cm steps	15	£4.77 to £31.99
I3	<i>Expanded polystyrene</i>	2 to 15 in 1 cm steps	14	£4.35 to £9.95
I4	<i>Cellular Glass</i>	4 to 18 in 1 cm steps	15	£16.21 to £72.94

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15	<i>Glass Fibre</i>	6.7, 7.5, 8.5, and 10 cm	4	£5.65 to £7.75
16	<i>Cork board</i>	2 to 6 in 1 cm steps, 8 to 20 cm in 2 cm steps, 28 and 30 cm	14	£5.57 to £85.80
17	<i>Phenolic foam board</i>	2 to 10 in 1 cm steps	9	£5.58 to £21.89
18	<i>Aerogel</i>	0.5 to 4 in 0.5 cm steps	8	£26.80 to £195.14
19	<i>PCM (w/board)</i>	10 and 20 mm	2	£57.75 to £107.75

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**Table A.5 Characteristics and investment cost of glazing systems**

<b>Glazing ID</b>	<b>System Description (# panes – gap)</b>	<b>Gas Filling</b>	<b>Cost per m<sup>2</sup></b>
G1	<i>Double pane - 6mm</i>	Air	£261
G2	<i>Double pane - 13mm</i>	Air	£261
G3	<i>Double pane - 6mm</i>	Argon	£350
G4	<i>Double pane - 13mm</i>	Argon	£350
G5	<i>Double pane - 6mm</i>	Krypton	£370
G6	<i>Double pane - 13mm</i>	Krypton	£370
G7	<i>Triple pane - 6mm</i>	Air	£467
G8	<i>Triple pane - 13mm</i>	Air	£467
G9	<i>Triple pane - 6mm</i>	Argon	£613
G10	<i>Triple pane - 13mm</i>	Argon	£613
G11	<i>Triple pane - 6mm</i>	Krypton	£653
G12	<i>Triple pane - 13mm</i>	Krypton	£653

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**Table A.6 Characteristics and investment cost for air tightness improvement considering baseline of 1 ach**

<b>Sealing ID</b>	<b>ACH (1/h) Improvement %</b>	<b>Cost per m<sup>2</sup> (opaque envelope)</b>
S1	10%	£1.20
S2	20%	£3.31
S3	30%	£6.35
S4	40%	£10.30
S5	50%	£15.20
S6	60%	£20.98
S7	70%	£27.69
S8	80%	£35.33
S9	90%	£43.88

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**Table A.7 Cooling and heating indoor set points variations**

<b>Set-point ID</b>	<b>Set-point Type</b>	<b>Value (°C)</b>	<b>Cost</b>
SH18	<i>Heating</i>	18	(-)
SH19		19	
SH20		20	
SH21		21	
SH22		22	
SC23	<i>Cooling</i>	23	(-)
SC24		24	
SC25		25	
SC26		26	
SC27		27	

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960 **Appendix B. Multi-criteria decision making outputs**

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**Table B-1 Sample of 'optimal solutions' obtained from Primary School Pareto front using Compromise Programming**

$p_{ex}$	$p_{com}$	$p_{NPV}$	[min] $\alpha_{cheb}$	$Ex_{dest,bui}$ (kWh/m <sup>2</sup> - year)	<b>Discomfort</b> (hours)	$NPV_{50years}$ (£)	$X^{HVAC}$ (Type)	$X^{wall}$ (m)	$X^{roof}$ (m)	$X^{ground}$ (m)	$X^{seal}$ (ach)	$X^{glaz}$ (type)	$X^{light}$ Light techn.	$X^{PV}$ % roof panels	$X^{wind}$ (kW)	$X^{heat}$ (°C)
1	0	0	0.00	119.4	1,369	23,493	28	3.11	7.04	2.02	0.3	2	3	0	0	20
0.9	0.1	0	0.08	122.8	960	2,069	28	3.02	4.05	4.12	0.7	1	3	0	20	19
0.9	0	0.1	0.04	120.3	1,382	175,127	31	5.075	5.1	3.11	0.5	5	2	0	0	19
0.8	0.2	0	0.11	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.8	0.1	0.1	0.14	120.3	1,382	175,127	31	5.075	5.1	3.11	0.5	5	2	0	0	19
0.8	0	0.2	0.08	120.3	1,382	175,127	31	5.075	5.1	3.11	0.5	5	2	0	0	19
0.7	0.3	0	0.14	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.7	0.2	0.1	0.20	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.7	0.1	0.2	0.17	120.3	1,382	175,127	31	5.075	5.1	3.11	0.5	5	2	0	0	19
0.7	0	0.3	0.09	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.6	0.4	0	0.16	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.6	0.3	0.1	0.23	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.6	0.2	0.2	0.27	120.3	1,382	175,127	31	5.075	5.1	3.11	0.5	5	2	0	0	19
0.6	0.1	0.3	0.18	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.6	0	0.4	0.08	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.5	0.5	0	0.19	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.5	0.4	0.1	0.25	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.5	0.3	0.2	0.32	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.5	0.2	0.3	0.27	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.5	0.1	0.4	0.17	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.5	0	0.5	0.08	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.4	0.6	0	0.22	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.4	0.5	0.1	0.28	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.4	0.4	0.2	0.34	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.4	0.3	0.3	0.35	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.4	0.2	0.4	0.26	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.4	0.1	0.5	0.16	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.4	0	0.6	0.07	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.3	0.7	0	0.23	209.1	409	7,548	10	3.08	3.11	6.05	0.3	5	0	0	0	18
0.3	0.6	0.1	0.31	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20
0.3	0.5	0.2	0.37	127.4	701	13,964	28	8.015	7.04	1.12	1	3	3	0	0	20

0.3	0.4	0.3	0.43	160.8	1,220	260,385	31	6.05	3.1	0	0.8	1	0	0	0	21
0.3	0.3	0.4	0.35	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.3	0.2	0.5	0.25	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.3	0.1	0.6	0.16	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.3	0	0.7	0.06	134.0	1,417	263,272	31	3.14	3.15	1.11	0.4	0	0	0	0	20
0.2	0.8	0	0.15	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0.2	0.7	0.1	0.25	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0.2	0.6	0.2	0.34	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0.2	0.5	0.3	0.44	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0.2	0.4	0.4	0.41	160.8	1,220	260,385	31	6.05	3.1	0	0.8	1	0	0	0	21
0.2	0.3	0.5	0.33	160.8	1,220	260,385	31	6.05	3.1	0	0.8	1	0	0	0	21
0.2	0.2	0.6	0.24	154.1	1,389	276,182	31	8.005	1.09	3.02	0.6	0	0	0	0	20
0.2	0.1	0.7	0.15	154.1	1,389	276,182	31	8.005	1.09	3.02	0.6	0	0	0	0	20
0.2	0	0.8	0.05	154.1	1,389	276,182	31	8.005	1.09	3.02	0.6	0	0	0	0	20
0.1	0.9	0	0.08	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0.1	0.8	0.1	0.17	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0.1	0.7	0.2	0.26	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0.1	0.6	0.3	0.36	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0.1	0.5	0.4	0.45	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0.1	0.4	0.5	0.38	160.8	1,220	260,385	31	6.05	3.1	0	0.8	1	0	0	0	21
0.1	0.3	0.6	0.31	160.8	1,220	260,385	31	6.05	3.1	0	0.8	1	0	0	0	21
0.1	0.2	0.7	0.22	154.1	1,389	276,182	31	8.005	1.09	3.02	0.6	0	0	0	0	20
0.1	0.1	0.8	0.12	154.1	1,389	276,182	31	8.005	1.09	3.02	0.6	0	0	0	0	20
0.1	0	0.9	0.02	154.1	1,389	276,182	31	8.005	1.09	3.02	0.6	0	0	0	0	20
0	1	0	0.00	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0	0.9	0.1	0.09	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0	0.8	0.2	0.19	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0	0.7	0.3	0.28	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0	0.6	0.4	0.37	228.4	355	19,333	10	4.13	3.15	5.065	0.6	6	0	0	0	19
0	0.5	0.5	0.44	160.8	1,220	260,385	31	6.05	3.1	0	0.8	1	0	0	0	21
0	0.4	0.6	0.36	160.8	1,220	260,385	31	6.05	3.1	0	0.8	1	0	0	0	21
0	0.3	0.7	0.28	160.8	1,220	260,385	31	6.05	3.1	0	0.8	1	0	0	0	21
0	0.2	0.8	0.19	154.1	1,389	276,182	31	8.005	1.09	3.02	0.6	0	0	0	0	20
0	0.1	0.9	0.10	154.1	1,389	276,182	31	8.005	1.09	3.02	0.6	0	0	0	0	20
0	0	1	0.00	154.1	1,389	276,182	31	8.005	1.09	3.02	0.6	0	0	0	0	20

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