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## Development of the complete model of the SHP with an asynchronous generator

**Abstrakt** Výskum malých vodných elektrární (MVE) ako významných zdrojov obnoviteľnej energie s negatívnym dopadom na životné prostredie patrí medzi aktuálne úlohy energetiky. Návrh parametrov MVE, určený analýzou dynamických javov pomocou špecifického simulačného modelu, ovplyvňuje výrobu elektrickej energie. Práca je venovaná oblasti modelovania systémov malých vodných elektrární so asynchrónnym generátorom s cieľom vytvoriť nástroj pre jednoduchý a presný návrh malých vodných elektrární a ich riadiacich štruktúr. Vyvinutý simulačný model MVE bol overený na dátach z reálnej MVE Dobšina III a následne použitý na skúmanie dynamiky rýchlych elektromechanických javov počas jednotlivých režimov spúšťania MVE. Skúmanie týchto javov má význam pre dosiahnutie optimálnych rozmerov elektrickej siete (vrátane káblov a ističov), ako aj pre zabezpečenie efektívneho návrhu a prevádzky MVE. Získané výsledky potvrdili správnosť navrhnutého modelu MVE a jeho univerzálnu použiteľnosť pri riešení problémov optimálneho riadenia a dimenzovania MVE.

**Kľúčové slová:** malá vodná elektráreň (MVE); modelovanie; asynchrónny generátor; experimentálne overenie; elektromechanické javy

**Abstract** The research of a small hydropower plants (SHP) as important sources of renewable energy with a negative impact on the environment belongs among the current tasks of power engineering. The design of the SHP parameters determined by analyzing dynamic phenomena using its specific simulation model affects the expected production of the electricity. The paper is dedicated to the field of modeling of small hydropower plant systems with an asynchronous generator, in order to create a tool for simple and accurate design of the small hydropower plants and their control structures. The developed simulation model of the SHP has been verified on data from real SHP Dobšina III and then used for investigation of the dynamics of fast electro-mechanical phenomena during individual start-up modes of the SHP. The investigation of these phenomena is important for achieving the optimal dimensions of the electrical grid (including cables and circuit breakers), as well as for ensuring the effective design and operation of the SHP. Obtained results confirmed correctness of the proposed SHP model and its universal applicability to solving the problems of the SHP optimal control and dimensioning.

**Keywords:** small hydropower plant (SHP); modeling; asynchronous generator; experimental verification; electro-mechanical phenomena

### I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, due to the growing consumption of electricity, the importance of small hydropower plants (SMEs) has been growing. This currently cover more than 2% of the total installed capacity of electricity in the world [1-2]. The production of electricity in hydroelectric power plants burdens the environment incomparably less than production based on traditional fossil fuels [3-4]. There does not exist no uniform definition of the SHP, but according to the IEEE Standard 1020-1988 [5] the SHP is defined as plant that unit power lies within the range between 100 and 5000 kW, its rated voltage is from 480 V to 13.8 kV and is equipped with an induction generator of a synchronous or asynchronous type.

Currently, multiple methods exist for simulating hydropower plants made up of individual subsystems [6-9]. These models are less complex than those for larger hydropower plants. This is because systems of smaller power capacities allow us to neglect certain factors, like the influence of water wave time constants, water hammer effects, and the role of surge chambers, due to their design and lower power capacities, [10-11]. At the same time, according to the scientific literature and papers [12-17], it is quite clear that the most frequently differing submodel of the overall hydropower plant simulation model is the submodel representing the hydraulic turbine and the processes associated with it. The difference lies in the authors' decision to proceed or not to with a linear, on otherwise strongly non-linear system, which

has a not insignificant impact on the accuracy of the simulation model as well as on its scale [18].

The SHP models presented in [11-12], [17] allow to investigate the properties from the dynamic point of view of the slow hydro-mechanical part of the SHP (its time constants are in the order of seconds to tens of seconds), which are important for the design of its control. For the analysis of much faster dynamic processes of the power generator, the model of the SHP must be completed by a detailed description of its electromechanical part together with the model of the mechanical coupling between the turbine and the generator.

In large hydropower plants, a synchronous machine is commonly used as the generator [8-9], but small hydropower plants prefer asynchronous generators as:

1. Asynchronous generators do not require additional excitation sources. This is crucial, especially when the plant operates in island mode, where it is not connected to the wider grid. Asynchronous generators can start producing electricity without an external excitation source.
2. Simple construction and operation: Asynchronous generators have less complex construction and are easier to maintain. This simplicity is advantageous for small plants where ease of maintenance and reliability are key.
3. Grid connection: Asynchronous generators can be easily connected to the electrical grid. Their operation is robust and adaptable.

The article contains a description and models of individual MVE subsystems, from which its complete model was compiled using the MATLAB/SIMULINK program. The emphasis here is on the modeling of the electromechanical part of the SHP, where the current-flow model IM was used for the generator model instead of its simplified model based on the Kloss relation, which is most often used in the SHP models with an asynchronous generator [6], [9]. The proposed model (especially its hydro-mechanical part) was verified on data from the real SHP Dobšiná III.

This model has been utilized to explore the dynamic behavior of the electro-mechanical subsystem during the initial modes of Small Hydropower (SHP) operation. The investigation focused on three key modes: starting up the turbine to match the electrical grid speed, connecting the generator to the grid, and switching the SHP to power control mode. Throughout these modes, certain unwanted effects, such as current overshoots, may occur. It is critical when these phenomena do not meet the limits set by the grid's regulations. Exceeding these thresholds can cause operational disruptions within the SHP or its grid substations, and result in financial penalties if contracted energy quotas are breached.

The verification and simulation results proved that proposed model is universal and can be used for diagnosis, and analysis practically all problems related to the optimal control and dimensioning of the SHP.

## II. THE SHP SIMULATION MODEL DEVELOPMENT

The basic topology of a small hydropower plant simulation model composition could be divided into several parts or smaller subsystems, respectively:

- Subsystem of Hydraulic Turbine Control (Governor)
- Subsystem of Servodrive controlling the water supply to the hydraulic turbine (Servo)
- Subsystem of Hydraulic Turbine
- Subsystem of other Eletromechanical parts of the system (Electrical Subsystem)

The complete model of the SHP is obtained by modeling its individual subsystems and their interconnection according to Fig. 1. Description of the used quantities in Fig. 1 are shown in Tab. 1.

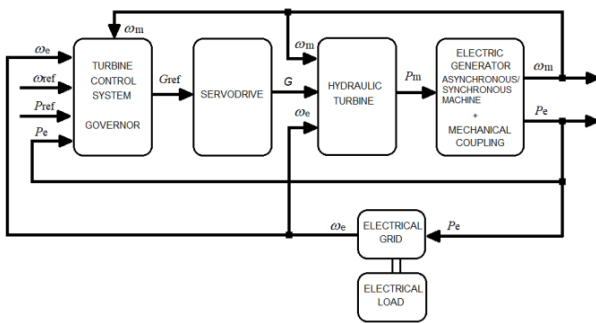


Fig. 1 Block diagram of a small hydropower plant

### A. Model of Hydraulic Turbine Control (Governor)

For the purpose of developing our simulation model of a small hydropower plant, we have relied on the knowledge obtained from the description of different methods and procedures for the design of control structures for hydropower plants [6-9].

TABLE I  
Description of the SHP Quantities

Variable	Unit
$\omega_{ref}$ – the reference value of the shaft angular speed which is the same as the electrical angular frequency of the grid	[rads <sup>-1</sup> ]
$P_{ref}$ – turbine reference power	[W]
$P_e$ – electrical power of the generator	[W]
$\omega_g$ – electric grid angular speed	[rads <sup>-1</sup> ]
$G$ – servo drive position	[%]
$G_{ref}$ – servo position reference value	[%]
$P_m$ – mechanical power on the turbine shaft	[W]
$\omega_m$ – mechanical angular speed of the shaft	[rads <sup>-1</sup> ]

The turbine control fulfils two tasks:

- 1) turbine speed control in the generating area of the generator
- 2) control of the supplied power to the electrical grid (if required).

According to the above information, and taking into account the results published so far in this field [6-9], [11-12], [17] follows that the simplest model of such control is the control structure in Fig.2, which contains two controllers [9]. The angular speed controller  $R_\omega$  is PID type and the power controller  $R_P$  of PI type. The switching to power control is provided by the logic signal  $d_{ref}$ .

In order to prevent the unwanted influence of rapid changes in the desired angular speed, a first-order filter with a time constant  $T_f$  is used in the control structure. At the turbine start-up,  $\omega_{ref}$  may be different from  $\omega_g$ , because the grid is not yet connected. When the angular speed of the turbine is synchronized with the electrical angular speed of the grid, the value of  $\omega_{ref}$  is identical to  $\omega_g$ .

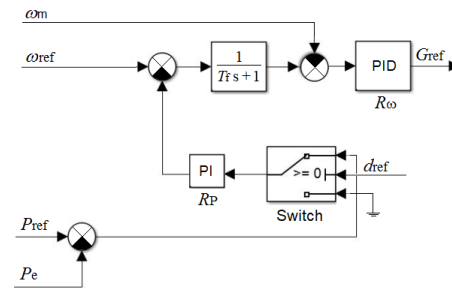


Fig. 2 Turbine control subsystem – Governor

### B. Servo Drive Model

Our proposed simulation model of a small hydropower plant considers the use of a servo-drive in the position of the actuator providing the change of position, or opening and closing of the water supply to the hydraulic turbine. The model is represented as a second-order dynamic system in a block diagram (Fig.3), with the guide vane opening speed  $G_s$  and position  $G$ , as its state variables. In case where hydroelectric plants experience high water column levels, rapid changes in the servo-drive position can lead to phenomena like water hammer and cavitation. To enhance operational safety, the model includes a restriction on the speed at which the main valve can open. Additionally, there is a limit on the servo-drive output position to define the effective operational range where the turbine response to opening adjustments is significant. The servo-drive gain is denoted by  $K_a$ , and its time constant by  $T_a$ .

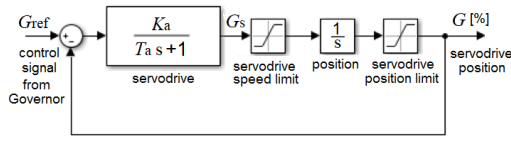


Fig. 3 Servo drive model

### C. Hydraulic Turbine Model

The hydraulic turbine is considered the core component of a hydroelectric power plant, playing a crucial role in generating electricity. It is modeled as a complex nonlinear dynamic system. Ensuring the precision of this model is important for proper control methods and for the hydropower plant dynamic behavior to external load and factors [12].

Different turbine models vary in their approach how to include the turbine efficiency and its impact on the output mechanical power  $P_m$  [12, 16-17]. The paper utilizes a hydraulic turbine model that considers the flow efficiency at no load (denoted as  $q_{noload}$ ) designed on the mathematical description presented in [12]. The hydraulic turbine block diagram is depicted in Fig. 4.

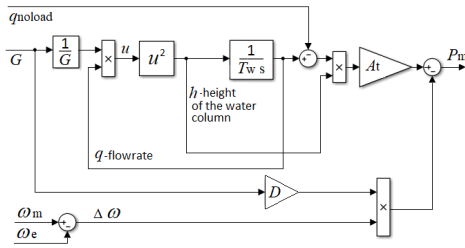


Fig. 4 Hydraulic Turbine model

The term  $q_{noload}$  denotes the turbine constant power losses, which are deducted from the current flow rate passing through the turbine. The adjusted flow is then multiplied by the water column height  $h$ . The variable  $\Delta\omega$  indicates the difference between the mechanical angular speed of the shaft and the grid angular speed. The constant  $D$  represents the turbine load damping factor, related to the Penstock diameter, while  $G$  is the percentage of guide vane opening [%]. The water flow time constant  $T_w$ , also known as the water time constant or water starting time, along with the hydraulic turbine gain  $A_t$  were determined according [7].

### D. Electro-mechanical subsystem model

The electro-mechanical subsystem consists of a model of the electric generator and a model of the mechanical coupling of the shaft connecting the turbine and the generator. The electro-mechanical model block diagram, shown in Fig. 5, includes  $U_1$  as the grid voltage amplitude,  $f_1$  as the grid frequency, which corresponds to the electrical angular velocity  $\omega_e$ , and  $T_e$  is the generator electrical torque.

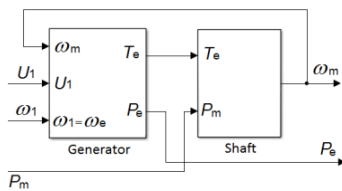


Fig. 5 Block diagram of generator

### Model of the Mechanical Coupling

The generator-shaft subsystem coupling is depicted in Fig.6.

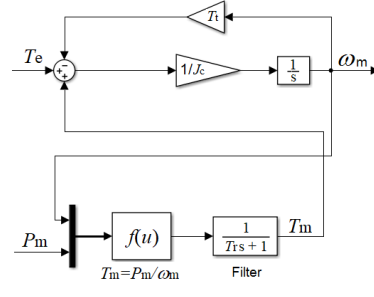


Fig. 6 Generator-shaft subsystem model

The model was proposed according to the model referenced in [12]. Here,  $T_f$  denotes the friction torque (frictional losses),  $T_m$  represents the turbine mechanical torque,  $T_r$  is the time constant of the rotor in an asynchronous generator, which is associated with the rotor resistance and  $J_c$  is the total moment of inertia on the shaft.

### Model of the generator

An IM was used as a generator in our model of the SHP. This type of generator is modeled in the SHP models in a simplified way based on the Kloss relation for its moment [12-14], [17]:

$$T_e = \frac{2U_1 s s_{\max}}{s^2 + s_{\max}^2} \quad (1)$$

The block diagram of such a model is in Fig. 7, where  $U_1$  is IM stator voltage,  $s$  and  $s_{\max}$  are IM slip and its maximum slip,  $n_p$  represents number of poles,  $P_e$  is the generated electrical power on the shaft, which in case of an asynchronous machine is proportional to product of its torque  $T_e$  and the rotor angular speed  $\omega_m$ .

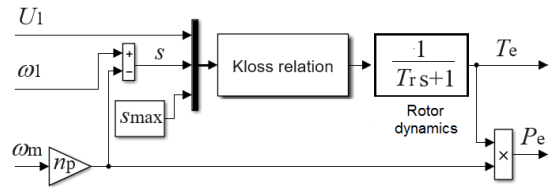


Fig. 7 Simplified block diagram of IM as a generator

Because our goal is to create the best possible SHP model with an asynchronous generator, suitable for accurate modeling and investigation of its fast electromagnetic phenomena, we replaced this simplified IM model with its complete model.

Several dynamic models of an IM are known in the literature, depending on the choice of state variables and the rotating coordinate system [19-20]. If the stator current and the rotor flux is chosen as the state variables, then the IM is described by a system of 5 nonlinear differential equations in the reference frame rotating by the synchronous speed, having the form:



The correctness of the simulation model was verified by comparing the course of the mechanical angular speed  $\omega_m$  of the turbine during its start-up to the grid speed before phasing the generator to the electrical grid. Figure 9 shows the start-up process of MVE Dobšiná III from the control system of real operation. From the graph it can be seen that the turbine will start up to the speed corresponding to the grid frequency in 25 seconds, i.e. the course of the transition of its mechanical angular speed  $\omega_m$  stabilizes in the given time.

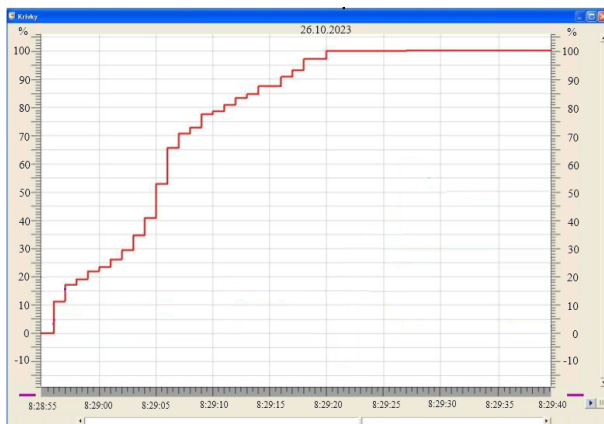


Fig. 9 Run-up of the small hydropower plant Dobšiná III. to the speed corresponding to the grid frequency - 100% ( $f_1=50$  Hz), obtained from control system

The course of the mechanical angular speed  $\omega_m$  of the turbine during its start-up to the grid speed obtained from the simulation model in the MATLAB/Simulink program is shown in Fig. 10., where due to the different normalization of the quantity  $\omega_m$ , its value of 60% corresponds to the value of 100% in Fig. 9.

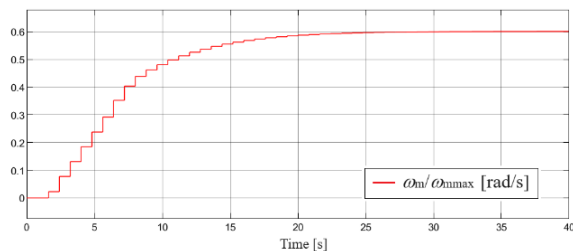


Fig. 10 Run-up of the small hydropower plant Dobšiná III. to the speed corresponding to the grid frequency - 60% ( $f_1=50$  Hz) obtained from proposed simulation model of the SHP

From Fig. 9 and Fig. 10, we see that the dynamics of the transition of the mechanical angular speed  $\omega_m$  of the turbine during its start-up to the grid speed is the same. It means that the turbine runs up to the grid speed and is ready to connect the generator to the electrical grid in time  $t=25$  seconds. In this way, we verified the accuracy of the hydromechanical part of the simulation model, which includes all the properties of its subsystems, especially the turbine model itself, its nonlinearities, as well as the Governor control subsystem (speed control). The resulting differences during the transition of the mechanical angular speed  $\omega_m$  can be caused, for example, by the output from the speed sensor installed in the Dobšiná III power plant, as well as by possible differences in the topology of its speed control, which were not known to us in detail.

#### IV. SIMULATION OF THE SMALL HYDROPOWER PLANT START-UP

With the help of such verified simulation model of the SHP, the start-up of a small hydropower plant with an induction generator was carried out. The research aims to perform a detailed examination of the electrical phenomena within the generator and its effects on the power grid, particularly concerning the emergence of unwanted effects such as stator current overshoots. These overshoots should remain within the limits set by the grid when the generator is connected to the grid and the SHP is switched to power control mode.

The SHP start-up has three basic modes:

1. the turbine start-up to the grid speed,
2. the generator connection to the electric grid,
3. the SHP switching to power control.

The SHP performance during the all start-up modes is depicted in Fig. 11a. In the first mode ( $t = 0 \div 50$  s) the mechanical power on the shaft ( $P_m$ ) is delivered by the turbine, which starts to run up to the grid electrical angular speed  $\omega_e$ .

At time  $t = 50$  seconds, the generator is connected to the power grid. Upon this connection, the generator behaves like an unexcited electrical machine, presenting minimal stator resistance to the grid. This leads to significant short-term overshoots in stator currents, that are stabilized at time  $t = 100$  seconds. The generator is then in an excited mode and the turbine can be switched to the power control mode.

Figure 11a illustrates that during this mode of the SHP start-up, the generated power by the turbine ( $P_m$ ) is transferred via the shaft to the generator and then delivered to the grid ( $P_e$ ).

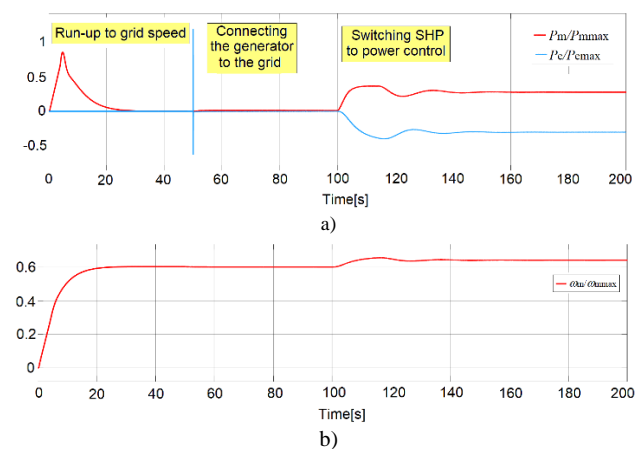


Fig. 11 Simulation of the SHPP start-up  
a) in terms of performances;  
b) mechanical angular speed of the shaft.

Following the stabilization of dynamic phenomena at time  $t = 100$  seconds, the turbine reaches an oversynchronous angular speed (represented by the mechanical angular speed of the shaft  $\omega_e$ ), which correlates to the required turbine power ( $P_{ref}$ ) (see Fig. 11b).

Upon direct connection of the generator to the grid at time  $t = 50$  seconds, the stator currents show four times higher overshoots than the rated currents, as depicted in Fig. 12.

Excessive current peaks are unwelcome in the electrical grid as they may lead to operational disruptions, including the activation of safety mechanisms like circuit breakers, or escalate financial expenditures due to the need for larger grid infrastructure or higher charges from energy



providers. Consequently, accurately simulating these phenomenon is crucial for the conceptualization and sizing of SHP, particularly when they operate under non-standard conditions.

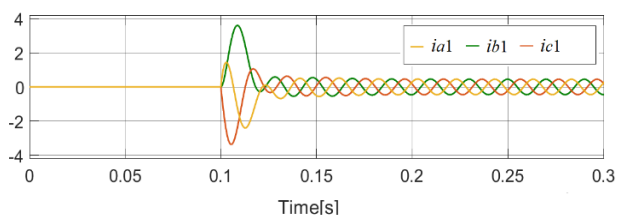


Fig. 12 Course of the stator current  $I_i/I_R$  components of the generator when connected to the electrical grid

## V. CONCLUSION

Energy power systems computer models simplify and accelerate their design process, while also reducing implementation costs. The complete SHP simulation model presented in the paper employs a current-flow model of an induction machine as a generator. This approach differs from earlier SHP models that used a simplified induction machine model based on the Kloss relation. It facilitates the modeling of all critical SHP subsystems, both hydro-mechanical and electrical, along with their interconnections.

The properties, mainly, of the hydro-mechanical part of this model have been verified on data obtained from real existing SHP Dobšiná III. The result proved that the model was set up and designed properly and corresponds to the real measured outputs from the simulated system. Utilizing proposed simulation model, the dynamic properties of fast electromagnetic phenomena have been analyzed throughout the SHP start-up modes. It is important to model these phenomena because transitions between operational modes may cause adverse effects on the SHP functionality, leading to economic consequences. Additionally, it is significant for meeting the electrical grid standards, which include the proper dimensioning of cables, circuit breakers, and other components.

The verification and simulation outcomes indicate that the proposed SHP simulation model is an effective tool for precisely analyzing its operational modes. It proves to be practical for addressing nearly all issues associated with the designing and control of the SHP.

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