PVsyst 7

3D Scene export procedures
INTRODUCTION

This document describes different 3D export and import procedures to PVsyst, from the following software packages:

- SketchUp
- Plug-in PV Archelios Pro
- PVcase Ground Mount
- PVcase Roof Mount
- PVcase to PVsyst 6.8
- Virto.CAD Ground Mount
# Table of contents

1. SketchUp .............................................................................................................................................. 4
2. Plug-in Archelios Pro .......................................................................................................................... 16
3. PVcase Ground Mount ........................................................................................................................ 19
4. PVcase Roof Mount ........................................................................................................................... 30
5. PVcase to PVsyst version 6.8 or earlier ............................................................................................ 34
6. Virto CAD .......................................................................................................................................... 39
7. Helios 3D ........................................................................................................................................... 45
Conclusions ........................................................................................................................................... 48
List of Figures .......................................................................................................................................... 49
1. SketchUp

1.1. The 3D scene in SketchUp

It is possible to model a 3D scene in SketchUp with buildings, trees and other objects that may shade the PV modules.

First you need to define the 3D scene, for example a simple building with a 25° sloping roof.

Here are the dimensions of the example below:

- Length: 20 meters
- Width: 12 meters
- Height under roof: 6.10 meters
- Total height: 8.89 meters

Once you have drawn the structure, you can create the PV module.

For this tutorial, a 300Wp PV module is considered with the following dimensions:

- Length: 1,640 meters
- Width: 0,99 meters
- Thickness: 0,09 meters
Draw the PV module using the dimensions shown.

1.2. Defining material

After the dimensioning, it is important to define the material of the active surface of the PV module. This is created using the Material palette on the right of the window.
Click on the logo to create a material.
Assign it a colour and a name. Give it the colour blue and the name **PVmodule**.

![Create Material dialog box](image)

Figure 4: Create a material in SketchUp

Assign the material to the surface of the PV module using the colouring tool.

![Colouring the surface of the PV module in SketchUp](image)

Figure 5: Colouring the surface of the PV module in SketchUp
1.3. Defining a component

It is important to define the PV module as a component.

Click 3 times on the drawn object.

Right-click and select "Make Component"

Figure 6 : PV module selection in SketchUp

Figure 7 : Creating a component in SketchUp
Complete the definition by giving a name (for example \textit{modulePV300Wc}).

Place a 9kWp PV array on the roof as shown in the drawing below.

\textit{Figure 8: Defining a component in SketchUp}

\textit{Figure 9: PV field in SketchUp}
1.4. Exporting the 3D scene in SketchUp

Once the final positioning of the PV modules on the roof has been defined, you can export the 3D scene.

Click on "File" in the top left corner.

Choose "Export", then "3D Model".

Figure 10: Exporting the 3D scene in SketchUp

Figure 11: Exporting the 3D scene to SketchUp
PVsyst recognizes the 3DS and DAE format from SketchUp.
Choose the **COLLADA(*.dae) file** format and save it in a folder provided for this purpose.

**Figure 12: Choosing the format for exporting the 3D scene in SketchUp**

**NB :** PVsyst prefers the **DAE** format because it is an open source format dedicated to the exchange of 3D drawings.
2. Importing the 3D scene into PVsyst

In PVsyst, open the **DEMO Residential system at Geneva** variant VC0 project. VC0.

2.1. Defining the 3D scene in PVsyst

To import your 3D scene into PVsyst, follow the steps below.

Click on "Near shadings" in the optional PVsyst parameters.

![Figure 13: Demo Residential project in PVsyst](image-url)
Click on "Construction/Perspective".

![Figure 14: Close shading in PVsyst](image)

Click on "File", "Import" and "Import a 3D scene (3DS, DAE, PVC)"

Choose the file exported from SketchUp in DAE format.

![Figure 15: Importing a 3D scene into PVsyst](image)
Once you have selected the DAE file, the window below appears.

![Scene details](image)

**Warning!** The DAE file default unit is in inches. If you have drawn in meters in SketchUp, leave the units as they are. PVsyst will convert them to meters.

By ticking the ModulePV box, you define the ModulePV material as a PV object.
2.2. Setting up the 3D scene in PVsyst

Once the 3D scene has been imported into PVsyst, there are several steps to complete before finalization.

1. The orientation of the 3D scene is not defined in the same way as in SketchUp. After the import into PVsyst, it is reversed by 180°. To alter it, you need to shift the reference.

   Click on the button at the top right:

   ![Reference](image)

2. Change the reference shift in the azimuth difference box; by indicating 160°: the resulting azimuth will be 20°. Click on « Confirm button ».

3. Click on:

   ![Reference](image)
4. The scene orientation is now correct. The scene and modules are oriented at 20° as defined in the "Orientation" tab.

![Figure 18: The 3D scene oriented 20° South in PVsyst](image)

5. In the "Tools" tab, check "Deactivate verification of field interpenetration" and confirm.

![Figure 19: Deactivate the verification of field interpenetration in PVsyst](image)

This parameter is useful for checking the interpenetration of the PV field with other objects drawn in the 3D scene. This parameter must be ticked, otherwise PVsyst will display an error message. The active surface is located 1 cm above the drawing of the frames and PVsyst requires a minimum safety margin of 2-3 cm. If the 3D drawing has been done correctly, you can tick this box, and no problems will arise in calculating the scene.

The import of the 3D scene into PVsyst is now complete. The project simulation can begin.
2. Plug-in Archelios Pro

The Archelios Pro plug-in offers a wide choice of PV modules. You are advised to access the tutorials produced by Archelios Pro on their website.

Take the previous example with the house scene. Choose a PV module model and implement the configuration as shown in the following image.

Below is the 3D scene drawn in SketchUp with the PV modules from the Archelios Pro plug-in:

![3D scene with the Archelios Pro plug-in in SketchUp](image)

*Figure 20: 3D scene with the Archelios Pro plug-in in SketchUp*

Once you've finished drawing in SketchUp, simply export your design in 3DS or DAE format.

*It is important to respect the dimension of the active surface between the defined system and the 3D scene. PVsyst accepts a tolerance of 8%.*

2.1. The project on PVsyst

You need to carry out the same procedure as in Chapter 2.

When importing, it is important to select the box that will activate the material(s) as an active surface. It is not necessary to assign a material as the Archelios plug-in has already done this. Depending on the imported format, the name of the assigned material is different.
2.2. The 3DS format

For the 3DS format, it is important to check the units and click on PV_singl.

![Image of Import result]

Warning! The 3DS file defaults to the units chosen in your SketchUp drawing. If you have drawn in meters, in SketchUp, PVsyst will display the units in meters.

Tick the PV_singl box

Figure 21: Importing a 3DS file into PVsyst

Once you have imported the SketchUp 3D scene in the format of your choice, follow the same process as in chapter 2.2.
2.3. The DAE format

For the DAE format, it is important to check the units and click on PV-singlecrystalline.

Once you have imported the SketchUp 3D scene in the format of your choice, follow the same process as in chapter 2.2.

Warning! The DAE file defaults to units in inches. If you have drawn in meters, in SketchUp, leave the units as they are. PVsyst will convert them into meters.

Tick the PV-singlecrystalline box

Figure 22: Importing a DAE file into PVsyst
3. PVcase Ground Mount

You can export a project created in PVcase to PVsyst. There are two PVcase plug-ins for AutoCAD:

- PVcase Ground Mount
- PVcase Roof Mount

In the first part of this tutorial, we will show an example using PVcase Ground Mount and in the second part, an example using PVcase Roof Mount.

For this tutorial, we will create 2 example projects in PVcase Ground Mount:

1. Project without a plot of land or topography
2. Project with land and existing topography imported from the internet.

3.1. Example of a project without land and topography

3.1.1. Defining the project in PVcase

For this tutorial, you will first need to create a project in PVcase with no imported plot of land or topography.

Below is an example of a plot of land measuring 400 meters long and 300 meters wide.

![Figure 23: Scene without imported plot of land in PVcase](image)

3.1.2. Exporting the project to PVsyst

In the main menu, go to the Tools bar.

![Figure 24: PVcase menu bar](image)
Click on "Export to PVsyst".

A new window appears from which you can choose the format to export to PVsyst. The choice of format depends on your version of PVsyst:

- If your version of PVsyst is 6.8 or lower, you must export in .DAE format.
- If your version of PVsyst is 7.0 or higher, you should export in .PVC format.

**NB:** For this tutorial, .PVC format will be chosen.

Click on "Export" and choose the location.
3.1.3. Importing the PVC file into PVsyst

Click on “Near shadings”.

The “Near shadings definition” window opens. Click on “Construction/Perspective”.
The 3D scene window opens. This is where you import the .PVC file.

Click on "File".

Click "Import" and "Import a 3D scene".

A file explorer opens. Select the PVC file.

Click "Import PVC file to the 3D scene".

Click "Import" and "Import a 3D scene (3DS, DAE, PVC)".

A file explorer opens. Select the PVC file.

Figure 29: Import PVC file to the 3D scene

Figure 30: Selection of PVC file to import to the 3D scene
A window allows you to check the details of the scene. It is essential to check that the unit of the input file is the same as that of the output file.

![Import results](image)

**Figure 31: Import results**

Click on the "OK" button.

![Imported 3D scene in PVsyst](image)

**Figure 32: Imported 3D scene in PVsyst**

The scene precisely matches the predefined scene in PVcase. Click on "Close scene".
3.2. Example of a project with a plot of land and topography

3.2.1. Defining the project in PVcase
The project will be created in PVcase with:

- The site with the satellite photo of the imported site
- The topography imported from the internet or created by yourself
- The generated mesh for the plot
- A few trees positioned on the lower side

![Figure 33: PVcase project window on a topography imported from the Internet](image)

The targeted zone represents a rectangle measuring 400 meters by 300 meters.
3.2.2 Exporting the project to PVsyst

Exporting occurs in the same way as before (see 4.1.2), except for two details, as defined below.

When you click on "Export to PVsyst", you have a choice between two export modes:

- the PV field only, "FRAMES"
- the PV field with topography, "TERRAIN AND FRAMES".

By selecting "TERRAIN AND FRAMES", you export the topography with the PV field.

For this tutorial, only the "FRAMES" PV field will be imported.

Click on "FRAMES", then select the file output format PVC and finally select the file location.
3.2.3 Importing the PVC file into PVsyst

The procedure for importing a PVcase project into PVsyst is the same as above (see 4.1.3)

Once the project has been successfully imported, you can see that the scene precisely matches the same scene defined in PVcase.

In this configuration, depending on the topography, the PV tables will have several orientations. In addition, the trees defined in PVcase have also been imported.
3.2.4 Orientation management

A pedagogical tool for understanding orientation is available to help you visualizing and understanding the difference between the orientation options. You can consult it in "Tools", and in "Pedagogical tool for understanding orientation".

![Pedagogical tool for understanding orientation](image)

**Figure 37:** 3D scene in PVsyst with a pedagogical tool for understanding orientation.

This tool allows you to view the plan orientation according to 3 parameters:

- Nominal tilt
- Nominal azimuth
- Base slope

![Pedagogical tool for understanding orientation](image)

**Figure 38:** Pedagogical tool for understanding orientation.
By changing the base slope, a new real tilt and a new real azimuth will be calculated. The graph shows a blue curve for the tilt and a red curve for the azimuth. The x-axis shows the slope of the base. The real value is the point that crosses the two graphs as a function of the base slope.

Orientation management is an important tool to know and understand.

Click on "Tools", then on "Orientation management".

![3D scene in PVsyst after import with orientation management](image)

When defining PV fields in a shading scene, PVsyst will always try to identify their orientations automatically, by grouping all similar fields in the same orientations.

By default, PVsyst will try to automatically identify the orientations from your scene with a maximum of 8 different orientations. The orientation management tool lets you manually define the orientations of your scene, grouping PV fields as required. It also provides you a lot of information about current and expected PV areas and orientations, to match the variant definition.
By default, PVsyst sets the orientation tolerance to 1°. Depending on the complexity of the topography, PVsyst will group the orientations. In this example, PVsyst grouped the orientations into 8 groups. You can continue the project by setting your system for 8 orientations.

You can reduce the number of orientations by increasing the tolerance. In this example, set the tolerance to 20° and click on "Identify the orientations".

You can observe that the tool has reduced the orientations to 1. You can close and continue with the configuration of your system.
4. PVcase Roof Mount

4.1. Defining a project

First you must define a project with the PVcase Roof Mount plug-in.

A building with a large roof was selected. Using PVcase, PV modules were automatically placed with an azimuth of 45° and a tilt of 20°. Also, 4 trees were placed in the top right-hand corner. The azimuth configuration in PVcase is the same as in PVsyst.

4.2. Export procedure

In the main menu, go to the "Actions" toolbar.

Then click on "Export to PVsyst".
AutoCAD will ask you to select the elements to be exported. Select the entire 3D scene.
The window will open and ask you to choose the format. Click on .PVC format, then on "Export".

Select the file location, and the export is complete.

4.3. Import to PVsyst

In PVsyst, click directly on "Near shadings" without defining "Orientation" nor "System".
Click on "Construction/Perspective".

Then click on "File", "Import", and finally "Import a 3D scene (*3DS, CAD, PVC)"

Figure 46: "Close shading" window

Figure 47: 3D scene before import
Click on "OK".

The scene has been imported into PVsyst. You can see that all the elements defined in PVcase have been imported.
5. PVcase to PVsyst version 6.8 or earlier

It is possible to import a PVcase project into PVsyst version 6.8 or earlier. The procedure is explained below.

5.1. Defining a project

Let's go back to the previous project example, a PV system on a topography with objects that needs to be created.

![Figure 50: PVcase project window on a topography imported from the Internet for PVsyst v. 6.8](image-url)
5.2. Export procedure

To export, click on "Export to PVsyst", and select "FRAMES" to export PV tables and objects only.

![Export to PVsyst](image1)

Figure 51 : Choice of export on PVcase Ground Mount for PVsyst v. 6.8

Choose the DAE format to export to PVsyst version 6.8 or earlier and click on "Export", then save the file in a dedicated folder.

![Choice of DAE format for PVsyst v. 6.8](image2)

Figure 52 : Choice of DAE format for PVsyst v. 6.8
5.3. Importing a DAE file into PVsyst

In PVsyst version 6.8, click on "Near shadings".

[Figure 54: PVsyst version 6.8 project window]

Then click on "Construction/Perspective".

[Figure 53: Near shading window PVsyst version 6.8]
Then click on "File", then on "Import" and finally on "Import a 3D scene (3DS, DAE)".

![Figure 55: 3D scene in PVsyst version 6.8](image)

Note that in the new "Import results" window, you must define the PV object. Click on "PV objects" and select "Frames".

Click on "OK" to confirm.

![Figure 56: Import Result window PVsyst version 6.8](image)
You have now imported a project from PVcase into PVsyst with shading objects, namely the trees.

Figure S7: 3D scene window in PVsyst version 6.8
6. Virto CAD

With the Virto.CAD plug-in in AutoCAD, you can define a scene on a terrain or on a building and export it in PVC format, to then import it into PVsyst.

As a reminder, it is not necessary to export the topography to PVsyst, as this will have no influence on the shading calculation.

In this description, a simple scene with no topography and no shading objects will be used.

6.1. Defining a project

You must first define a project using the Virto.CAD plug-in. The project is a PV field without imported topography. The field measures 300 meters by 200 meters.

6.2. Export procedure

To export a file to PVsyst, carry out the following steps:

In the Virto.CAD ribbon, go to "AutoCAD", then to the "Extra" section and finally to "PVsyst PVC Export".

![Field scene PV Virto.CAD](image)

![Virto.CAD ribbon](image)
A new window opens, in which you need to specify the exported file destination.

Click on ...

Choose a dedicated folder to export the PVC file.
Figure 62: Choice of export option to PVsyst

"Common": specify the options you wish to export.
- 3D ground meshes: for PV systems with topography
- 3D shading objects: for PV systems with ground and/or roof objects
- Rooftop modules individually: for rooftop systems only

"Boundaries": you can select part or the whole 3D scene.
Warning! You can only select boundaries within the same orientation. If you have different orientations, different exports must be made for each orientation.

"Process": click on "Start" to create the export file.
6.3. Importing a Virto.CAD PVC file into PVsyst

In PVsyst, click directly on "Near shadings" without defining "Orientation" nor "System".

In this new window, click on "Construction/Perspective".

Figure 64: PVsyst Virto.CAD project window

Figure 63: PVsyst dialog to define shading
The new 3D scene window opens. Click on "File", then on "Import". Select "Import a 3D scene (3DS, DAE, PVC)".

Select the PVC file previously exported with Virto.CAD. The import results window displays the PVC file information. Leave the translation options set to automatic, PVsyst will center the scene.

Click on "OK".

![Figure 65: Shading scene PVsyst-import PVC](image)

![Figure 66: Import results](image)
The 3D scene is imported and centered.

Figure 67: PVC imported into the shading scene
7. Helios 3D

7.1. Defining a project

A project must be defined beforehand using the HELIOS3D plug-in in Civil3D. The project is a PV field on a topographic surface configured with the Civil 3D tools.

7.2. Export procedure

To export a file to PVsyst, follow the below procedure:

Under the HELIOS3D tab, click on "Output", then on the PVsyst button to export a file in .h2p format.
In the export window, save your file in .h2p format to the desired location by clicking on the "Save" button.

![Figure 70 Export .h2p file](image)

Your project is exported in .h2p format.

7.3. Importing an .h2p file into PVsyst

In PVsyst, click directly on "Near shadings" without defining "Orientation" nor "System".

![Figure 71 General PVsyst window](image)
In this new window, click on "Construction/Perspective".

![Near shading dialogue box](image1)

The new 3D scene window opens. Click on "File", then on "Import" and finally on "Import a Helios3D (H2P) file".

![Import 3D scene file in PVsyst](image2)
Select the \textit{h2p} file previously exported with Helios3D.

The \textit{h2p} file is correctly imported into the PVsyst 3D scene.

\textbf{Conclusion}

This document describes various scenes and projects exports from different software packages, such as SketchUp, Archelios Pro, PVcase Ground Mount, PVcase Roof Mount, Virto.CAD Ground Mount and Helios 3D. Consequently, it is possible to combine several software packages to carry out your simulations.
List of Figures

Figure 1 : 3D Scene in SketchUp .................................................................................................................. 4
Figure 2 : 3D scene of a PV module in SketchUp ....................................................................................... 5
Figure 3 : Material palette in SketchUp ......................................................................................................... 5
Figure 4 Create a material in SketchUp ........................................................................................................ 6
Figure 5 : Colouring the surface of the PV module in SketchUp ................................................................. 6
Figure 6 : PV module selection in SketchUp .................................................................................................. 7
Figure 7 : Creating a component in SketchUp .............................................................................................. 7
Figure 8 : Defining a component in SketchUp ............................................................................................. 8
Figure 9 : PV field in SketchUp .................................................................................................................... 8
Figure 10 : Exporting the 3D scene in SketchUp .......................................................................................... 9
Figure 11 : Exporting the 3D scene to SketchUp .......................................................................................... 9
Figure 12 : Choosing the format for exporting the 3D scene in SketchUp .................................................. 10
Figure 13 : Demo Residential project in PVsyst .......................................................................................... 11
Figure 14 : Close shading in PVsyst ........................................................................................................... 12
Figure 15 : Importing a 3D scene into PVsyst ............................................................................................. 12
Figure 16 : The results of the import into PVsyst ........................................................................................ 13
Figure 17 : Scène 3D orientée Nord sous PVsyst ....................................................................................... 14
Figure 18 : The 3D scene oriented 20° South in PVsyst .............................................................................. 15
Figure 19 : Deactivate the verification of field interpenetration in PVsyst ..................................................... 15
Figure 20 : 3D scene with the Archelios Pro plug-in in SketchUp ................................................................. 16
Figure 21 : Importing a 3DS file into PVsyst ............................................................................................... 17
Figure 22 : Importing a DAE file into PVsyst ............................................................................................. 18
Figure 23 : Scene without imported plot of land in PVcase ........................................................................ 19
Figure 24 : PVcase menu bar ....................................................................................................................... 19
Figure 25 : Tools menu .................................................................................................................................. 20
Figure 26 : Window for choosing the export format .................................................................................... 20
Figure 27 : Projet in PVsyst ......................................................................................................................... 21
Figure 28 : Defining near shading ................................................................................................................ 21
Figure 29 : Import PVC file to the 3D scene .................................................................................................. 22
Figure 30 : Selection of PVC file to import to the 3D scene ....................................................................... 22
Figure 31 : Import results ............................................................................................................................. 23
Figure 32 : Imported 3D scene in PVsyst ....................................................................................................... 23
Figure 33 : PVcase project window on a topography imported from the Internet ........................................ 24
Figure 34 : Choix export sur PVcase Ground Mount .................................................................................. 25
Figure 35 : Import results ............................................................................................................................. 26
Figure 36 : Imported 3D scene in PVsyst ....................................................................................................... 26
Figure 37 : 3D scene in PVsyst with a pedagogical tool for understanding orientation. ............................... 27
Figure 38 : Pedagogical tool for understanding orientation. ........................................................................ 27
Figure 39 : 3D scene in PVsyst after import with orientation management .................................................. 28
Figure 40 : Orientation management window, default values ..................................................................... 29
Figure 41 : Orientation management window after tolerance modification ................................................. 29
Figure 42 : Example of a 3D scene project in PVcase Roof Mount ............................................................... 30
Figure 43 : PVcase Roof Mount menu toolbar ............................................................................................. 30
Figure 44 : PVsyst export format .................................................................................................................. 31
Figure 45 : PVsyst window ............................................................................................................................ 31
Figure 46 : "Close shading" window ............................................................................................................. 32
Figure 47 : 3D scene before import ............................................................................................................... 32
Figure 48 : Import Results ............................................................................................................................ 33
Figure 49 : 3D scene after import .................................................................................................................. 33
Figure 50: PVcase project window on a topography imported from the Internet for PVsyst v. 6.8
Figure 51: Choice of export on PVcase Ground Mount for PVsyst v. 6.8
Figure 52: Choice of DAE format for PVsyst v. 6.8
Figure 53: Near shading window PVsyst version 6.8
Figure 54: PVsyst version 6.8 project window
Figure 55: 3D scene in PVsyst version 6.8
Figure 56: Import Result window PVsyst version 6.8
Figure 57: 3D scene window in PVsyst version 6.8
Figure 58: Field scene PV Virto.CAD
Figure 59: Virto.CAD ribbon
Figure 60: Dialog to export to PVsyst
Figure 61: Dialog to export to PVsyst
Figure 62: Choice of export option to PVsyst
Figure 63: PVsyst dialog to define shading
Figure 64: PVsyst Virto.CAD project window
Figure 65: Shading scene PVsyst-import PVC
Figure 66: Import results
Figure 67: PVC imported into the shading scene
Figure 68: 3D scene in Civil3D
Figure 69: HELIOS3D tab
Figure 70: Export .h2p file
Figure 71: General PVsyst window
Figure 72: Near shading dialogue box
Figure 73: Import 3D scene file in PVsyst
Figure 74: 3D scene in PVsyst with imported file