

Harnessing Geothermal Energy with the Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator and Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Heat Exchanger

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Keywords: geothermal energy, electricity, desalinization, clean environment, Geothermal Power, Electricity, Importing Seawater, In-Line-Pump, In-Line-Generator, Renewable Energy, Heat Exchanger, Desalinization, Potable Water, Lithium, Environment, Wildlife Sanctuary, Tourism.

ABSTRACT

There is an infinite source of energy under our feet, whether it is a few miles underground or on the ground surface in locations such as Hawaii. The question was, until now, how to harness it expediently and efficiently? Presented methodology capitalizes on our planets natural internal heat. The essence of the Scientific Geothermal Technology is transferring heat from heat sources to the power units with completely closed-loop systems. The Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator (SCI-GGG) system uses several completely closed-loop systems and generates electricity down at the heat source and transmits it up to the ground level by using electrical cables. The SCI-GGG apparatus consists of: a boiler; a turbine; a converter; a generator; a condenser distributor; and a condenser that is arranged to function in confined spaces such as in a wellbore. The SCI-GGGG absorbs heat from the heat source (hot rocks, lava, geothermal reservoir, geysers, etc.) and generates electricity at the heat source which is then transmitted by cable to the ground surface to electrical grids for use in houses and industry. In the process of cooling the engine compartments with a separate closed-loop system which is the Self Contained In-Ground Heat Exchanger (SCI-GHE system) additional electricity is generated on the ground surface.

The Self Contained In-Ground Heat Exchanger (SCI-GHE) system is an integral part of the SCI-GGG system and can function independently. The system consists of a closed-loop thermally insulated line with 2 coiled pipes (heat exchangers) with at least one "In-Line-Pump". The first heat exchanger is lowered at the heat source and the second heat exchanger is coupled into the evaporator of a binary power unit on the ground surface which produces electricity by using the Organic Rankine Cycle (ORC).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Note:

Presented paper with the title "Harnessing Geothermal Energy with the Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator and Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Heat Exchanger" is a segment of the comprehensive design for the long-term solution for the restoration of the Salton Sea (Lake in California). The solution for the restoration of the Salton Sea includes an architectural element which harmoniously implements several breakthrough technologies into a self-sustaining organism. There are five phases (segments) of the project including harnessing solar and hydro energy which are excluded for this occasion as not relevant to the geothermal issue. Each of the phases (segments) is essential for the final result of the project. Either of two presented systems "Harnessing Geothermal Energy with the Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator" and "Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Heat Exchanger" is a fundamental segment of the comprehensive design on which function of other segments depend.

For this occasion, the paper "Harnessing Geothermal Energy with the Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator and Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Heat Exchanger" is marked as a (Segment II). For a complete understanding of this segment, it is necessary to review the other two integral parts of the comprehensive design with titles "Harnessing Energy and Water in the Salton Sea" as a (Segment I), and "System for Drilling Deeper and Wider Wellbores" as a (Segment III).

1.2 Overview of the contemporary geothermal power plants:

Contemporary geothermal power plants are limited to geothermal reservoirs. The production wells need to be drilled into the geothermal reservoirs to bring hot water to the power plant on the ground surface. Then, after removing silica steam is used to spin turbines creating mechanical energy. The shaft from the turbines to the generator converts mechanical energy into electrical energy. The used geothermal fluid is then returned down through injection well into the reservoir to be reheated, to maintain pressure, and to sustain the reservoir. Contemporary geothermal power plants are limited to the location with a geothermal reservoir. The experimental Enhanced Geothermal Systems (EGS) needs the formation of the geothermal reservoir – at least 1 cubic kilometer – which is a serious limitation. There is an infinite source of energy under our feet, whether it is a few miles underground or on the ground surface in locations such as Hawaii. The question was, until now, how to harness it expediently and efficiently?

1.3 Summary of the Self-Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator (SCI-GGG):

The "Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator" (SCI-GGG) system for harnessing geothermal energy (hot rocks, hydrothermal reservoir) to produce electricity consists of:

- a) Lowering the (SCI-GGG) apparatus into a pre-drilled well bore deep to the source of heat;
- b) Absorbing heat from the source of heat and generating electricity at the source of heat and transmitting electricity to the ground surface by using electric cable;

- c) In the process of cooling engine compartments with separate closed-loop system additional electricity is generated on the ground surface with the binary power unit by using the Organic Rankine Cycle (ORC).

The "Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator" (SCI-GGG) system consists of several main compartments: a boiler compartment; a turbines compartment; a generator compartment; a condenser distributor compartment; and a condenser compartment that is arranged so to function in limited space such as a wellbore (See Fig. 1).

The boiler is exposed to the heat of hot rocks while the rest of the apparatus is thermally insulated from the heat and is additionally cooled with a second closed loop system. The second closed-loop system is engaged with the third closed-loop system on the ground surface, which is Binary Power Unit, and can function separately as an independent apparatus – explained further as the "Self Contained In-Ground Heat Exchanger" (SCI-GHE) system. If needed, the Organic Rankine Cycle (ORC) is applicable here. The condenser compartment is formed between two cylindrical walls which surround turbines, generator, and condenser distributor compartment, and is cooled by circulating water through the condenser with a second closed-loop system. Heated water is brought up on the ground surface to a heat exchanger which is engaged with a third closed-loop system which is Binary Power Unit (See Fig. 2). By lowering SCI-GGG apparatus in a predrilled wellbore to the hot rocks, or hydrothermal reservoir, electricity is generated below the ground and transmitted up to the ground surface by an electric cable and subsequently through an electric grid to the houses and industry.

One power plant consists of a few dozen wellbores with SCI-GGG apparatuses; a cooling system exchanging heat on the ground surface using a multi-phase cooling system and binary production units which also produces additional electricity; and a control center (See Fig. 5). The production capacity of the power plants depends on the number of the wellbores, and diameter and the length of the apparatus, and of course, the temperature of the hot rocks. Deeper we drill the higher temperature of the rock formation we can reach. The (SCI-GGG) system uses several completely closed-loop systems and eliminates the issues of pumping geothermal fluid on the ground surface, filtration, separation, equipment corrosion, scaling, and groundwater pollution, etc., and at no time is there any contact with the environment by the working fluid or the heat exchange fluid, therefore, it doesn't pollute environment.

Although the main purpose of the (SCI-GGG) system is to use limitless dry hot rocks for production of electricity, the (SCI-GGG) system is not limited to dry hot rocks - it can be lowered into existing hydrothermal reservoir or can be suspended with cable over lava flow (lava tube) in locations such as Hawaii.

Here is introduced radical change in how geothermal energy can be harnessed more efficiently. This system is not limited to a hydrothermal reservoir. Instead of having an injection well and production well and formation of fractured rocks between them (nest) and needed of, at least one cubic kilometer, of water as is the case in the EGS, which is extremely difficult to find these days, and a single power unit - the presented system introduces a "Vertical approach" – multi wellbores – completely closed-loop system – and multi (smaller) power units using piston system instead of turbines although turbines can be used too. With a new drilling methodology, presented in Segment III, that can be achieved because now we can search for and reach a permanent source of energy and not be excessively dependent to the geothermal reservoirs as is the case in the conventional system for harnessing geothermal energy.

1.4 Summary of the Self-Contained Geothermal Heat Exchanger (SCI-GHE):

The "Self-Contained In-Ground Heat Exchanger" (SCI-GHE) system is an integral part of the "Self-Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator" (SCI-GGG) system and can operate independently. The SCI-GHE system is less powerful than the SCI-GGG system because generate electricity only on the ground surface, but is easier to build and maintain. The "Self-Contained In-Ground Heat Exchanger" (SCI-GHE) system consists of a closed-loop thermally insulated line with two heat exchangers (the first heat exchanger and a second heat exchanger - coiled pipes) and at least one In-Line-Pumps (See FIGs. 3,4 and 7). The first heat exchanger is lowered at the source of heat and the second heat exchanger is coupled into the evaporator of a binary power unit on the ground surface which produces electricity.

The SCI-GHE system can be used in many applications with minor modifications. In the presented application which is relevant to the restoration of the Salton Sea the boiler is filled with salty water from the bottom of the Lake to the level "H" (See Fig. 7). The water in the boiler is heated with second heat exchanger. The generated steam feeds the "piston power unit" which generates electricity (See Fig. 7-10). Electricity is then transmitted through an electric grid. Exhausted steam enter condenser where potable water is generated as a byproduct. Remaining water from boiler level "L" is injected into the wellbore to improve conduction of the heat from surrounding hot rocks to the first heat exchanger. After a certain period wellbore will be filled with brine from the boiler and periodically pumped up trough excavation line to the mineral extraction facility to be used as a source for extraction of lithium. Different methods for extraction of lithium can be used including ion-imprinted polymers.

One of many Power Plant consists of 24 wellbores drilled in a circle of radius of about 500 meters. Each wellbore has the "Self-Contained In-Ground Heat Exchanger" (SCI-GHE) system. The power plant has four identical modular quarters each having mineral extraction facility (See FIGs. 5 and 6).

The presented the "Self-Contained In-Ground Heat Exchanger" (SCI-GHE) system is designed for a location where there is a substantial heat source and where heat flux is not an issue. For locations where heat flux is an issue, the SCI-GHE system can be modified to incorporate in-line pump for steering hot fluid around first heat exchanger and/or can be modified to incorporate motorized drill-head to drill and move whole drilling/heat exchange apparatus deeper in search for hotter temperatures (See Fig. 7). That system is presented in more details in segment III – the System for Drilling Deeper and Wider Wellbores

2. DISCLOSURE - (ILLUSTRATIONS) - THE SELF CONTAINED IN-GROUND GEOTHERMAL GENERATOR AND SELF CONTAINED IN-GROUND GEOTHERMAL HEAT EXCHANGER (SEGMENT II)

Segment (II)

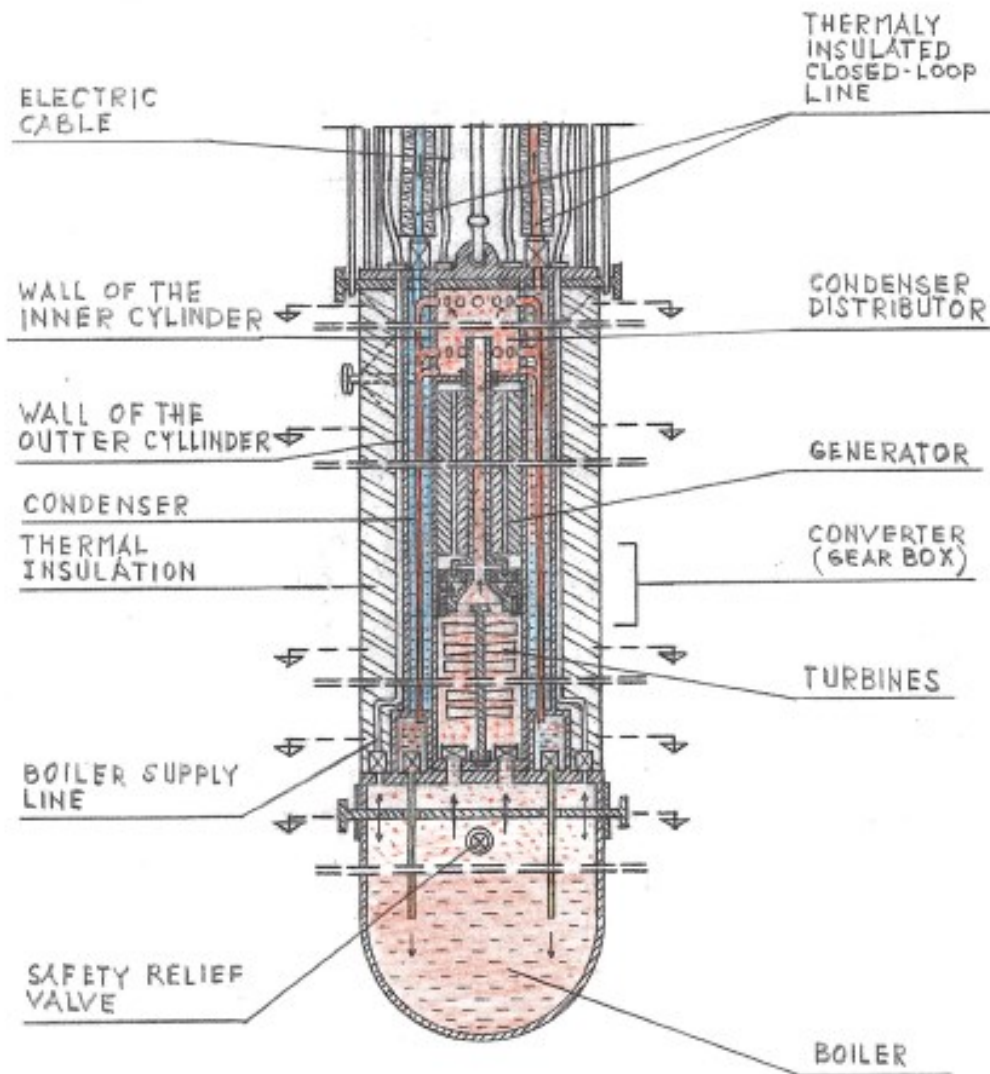


FIG. 1 – Cross-Sectional view of the Self-Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator

Segment (II)

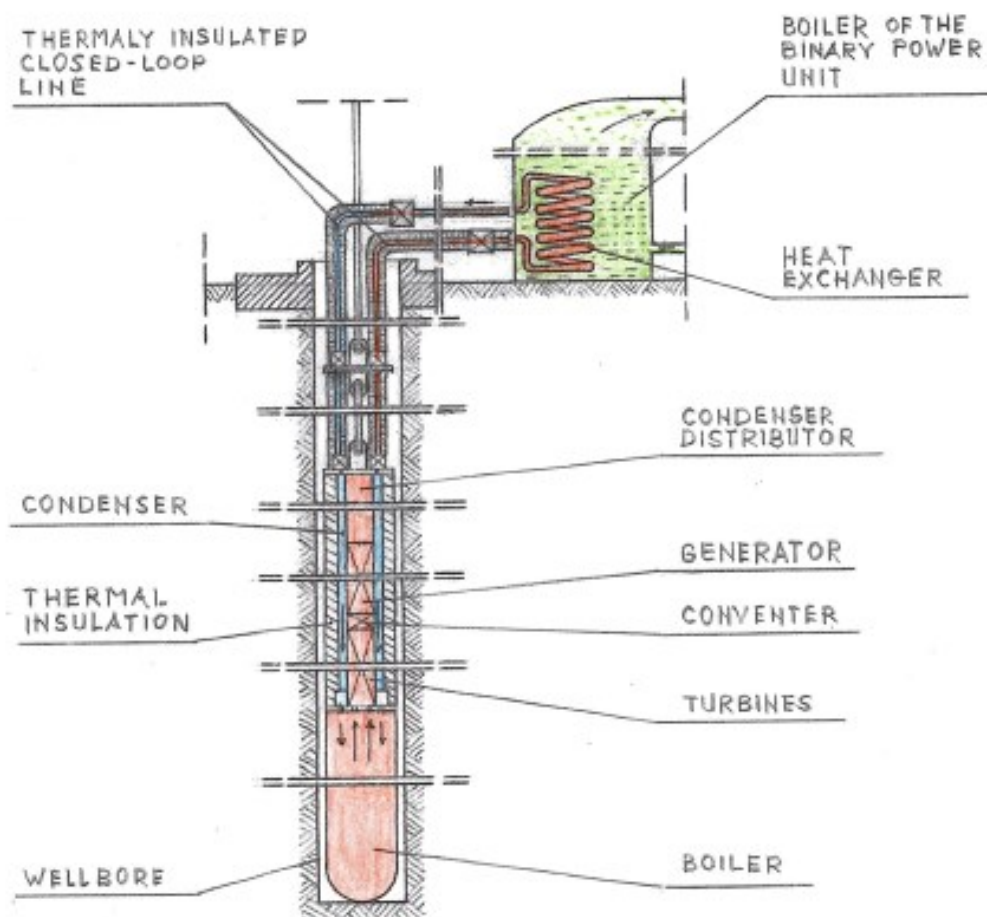


FIG. 2 – Schematic Diagram of a Self-Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator

Segment (II)

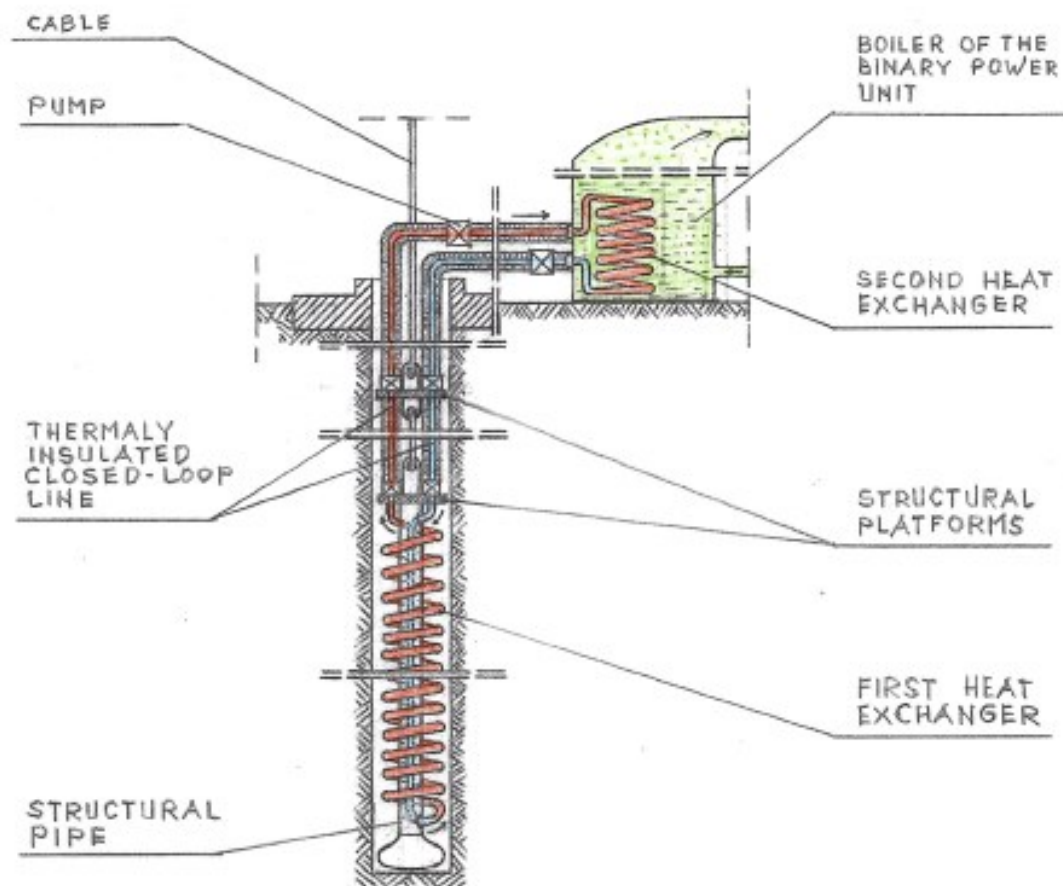


FIG. 3 – Schematic Diagram of a Self-Contained In-Ground Heat Exchange System

Segment (II)

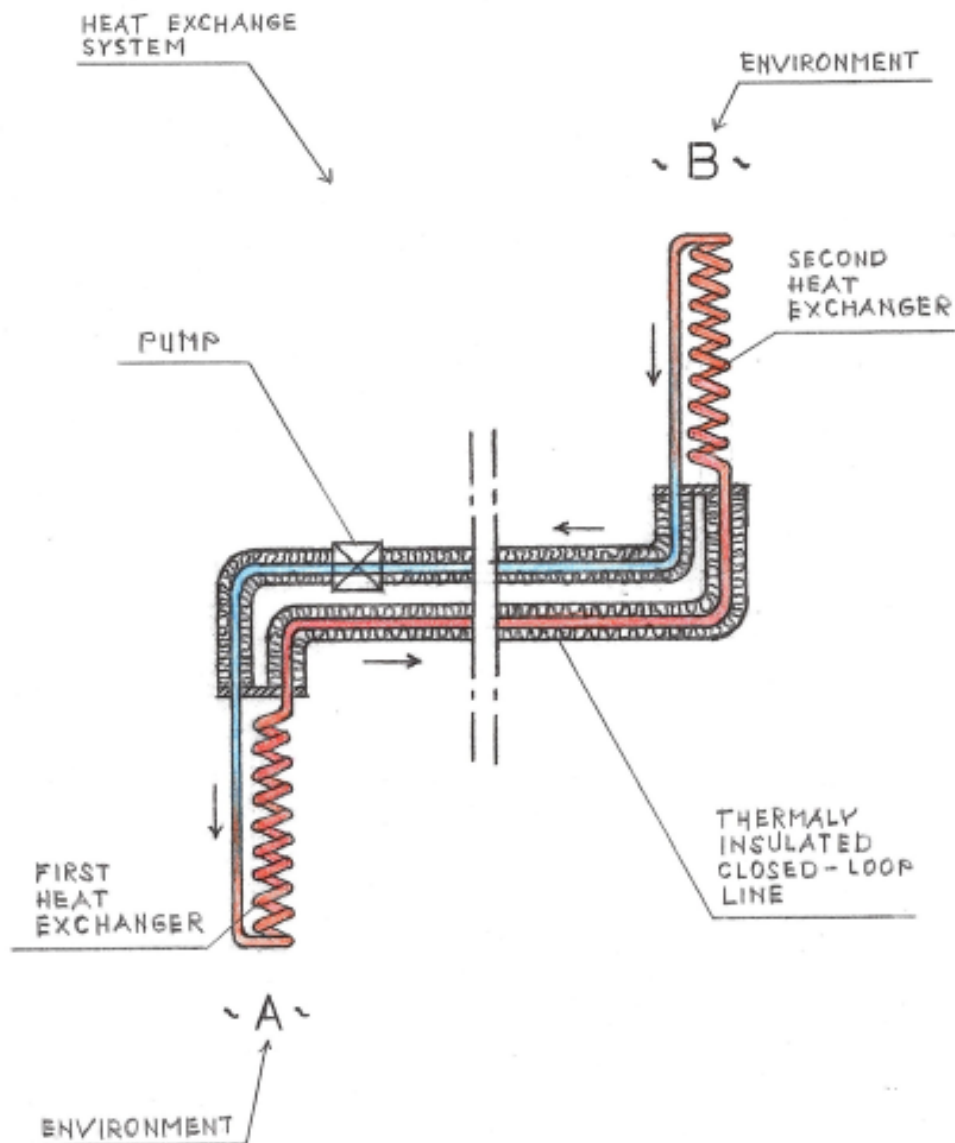


FIG. 4 – Schematic Diagram of an Universal Heat Exchange System

Segment (II)

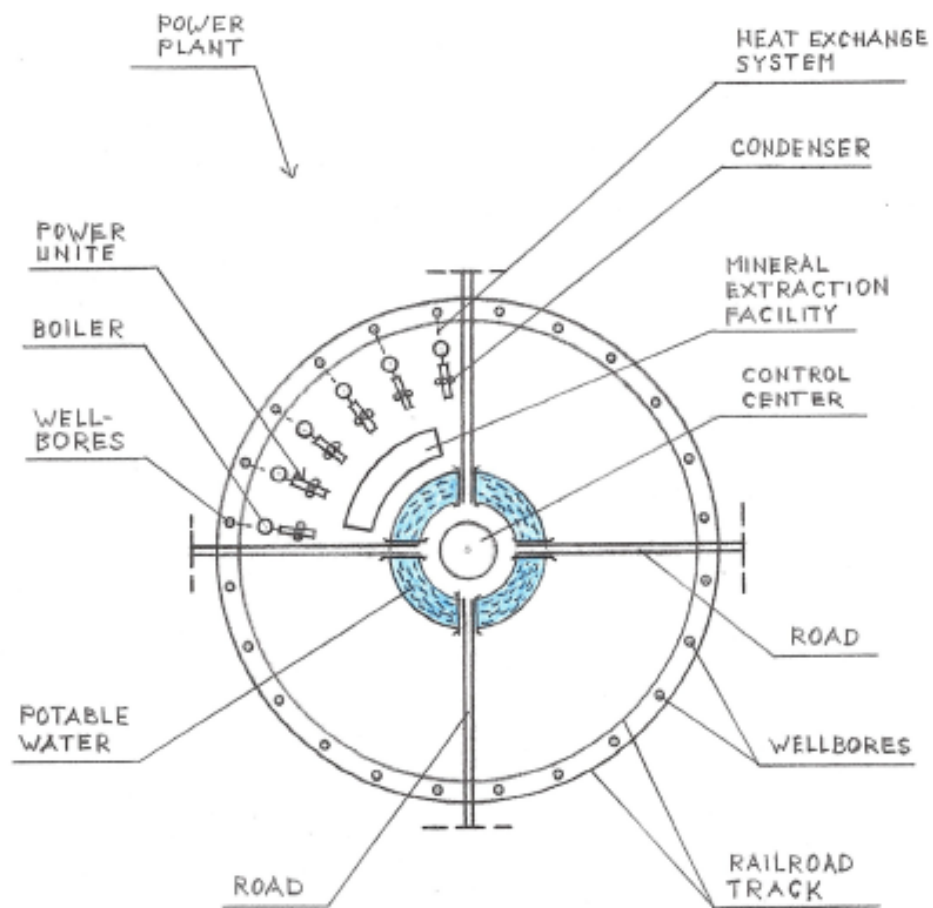


FIG. 5 – Plain View of a typical Power Plant

Segment (II)

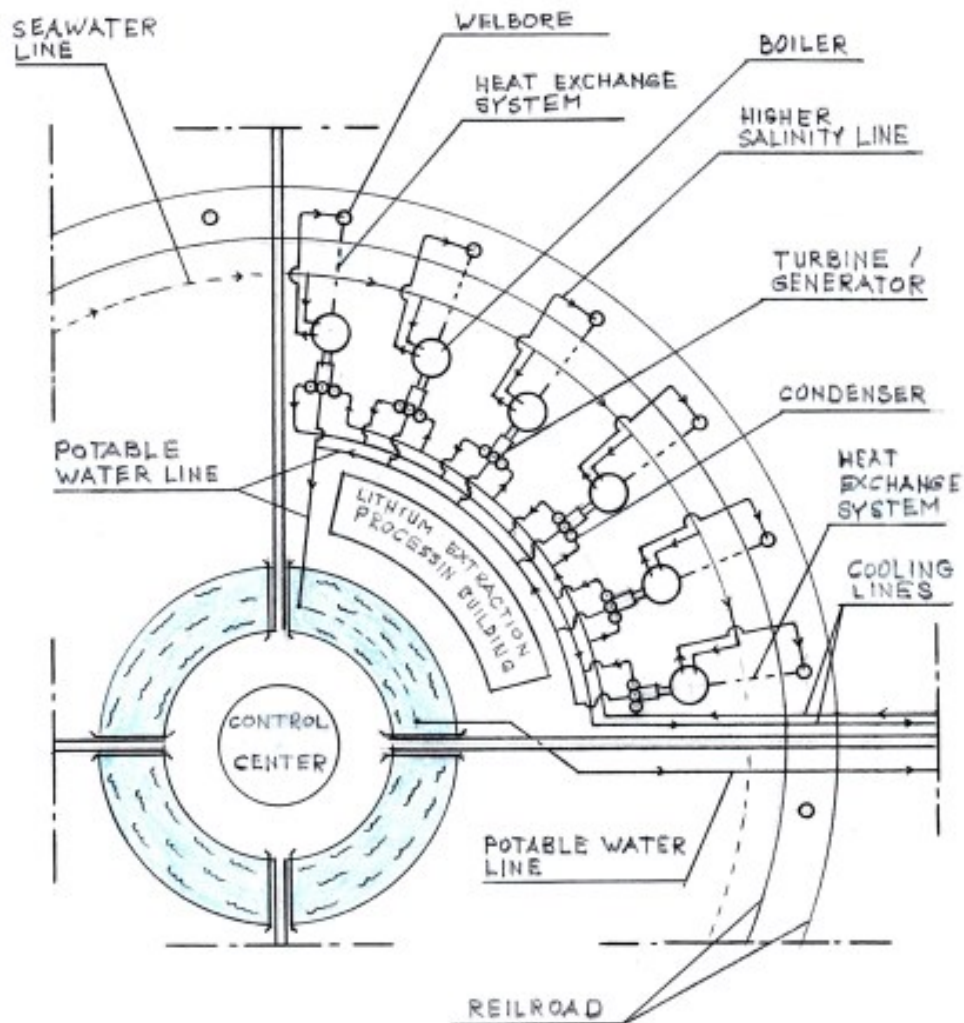


FIG. 6 – Plain View of a section of typical Power Plant

Segment (II)

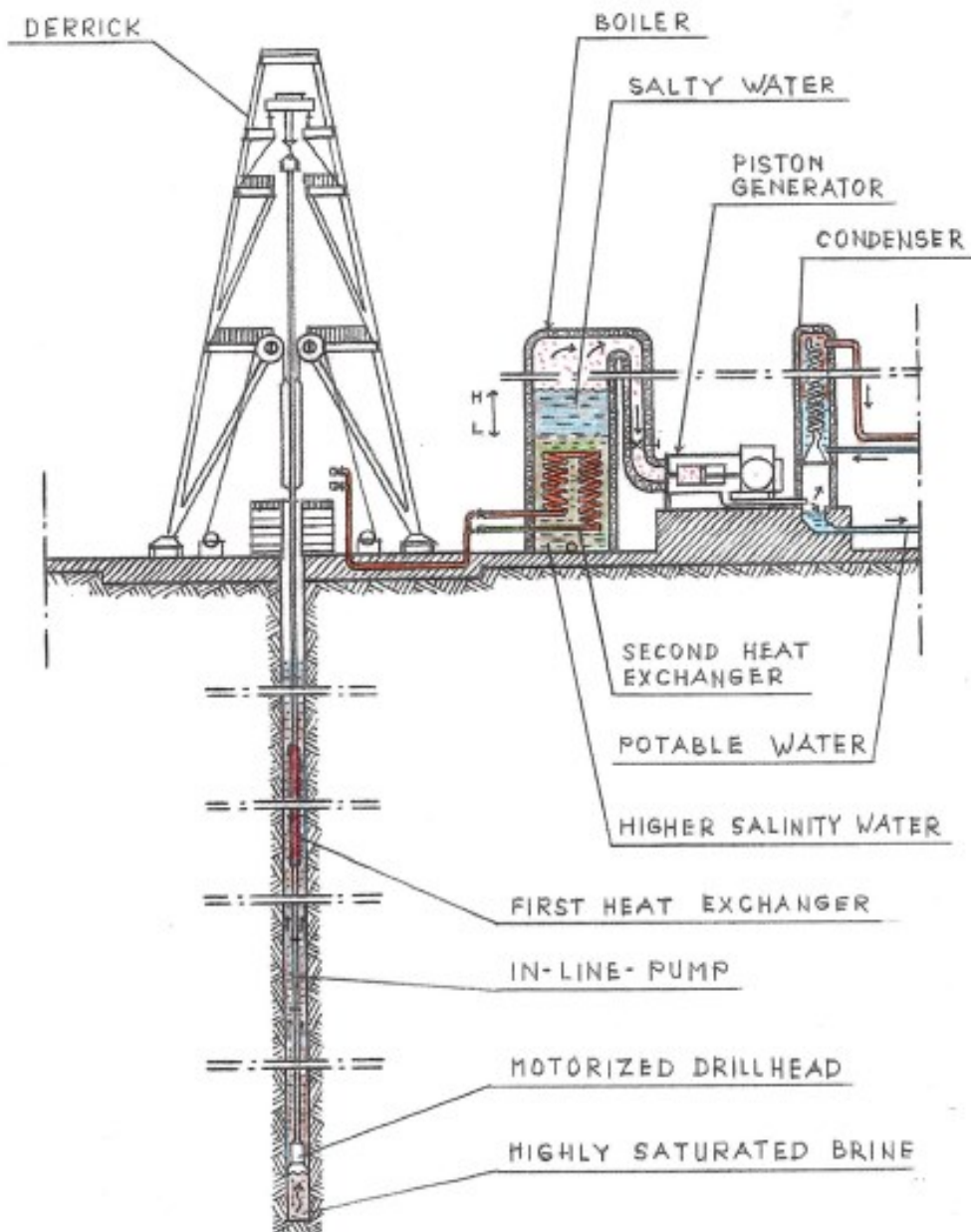


FIG. 7 – Schematic Cross-sectional View of a typical Power Plant

Segment (II)

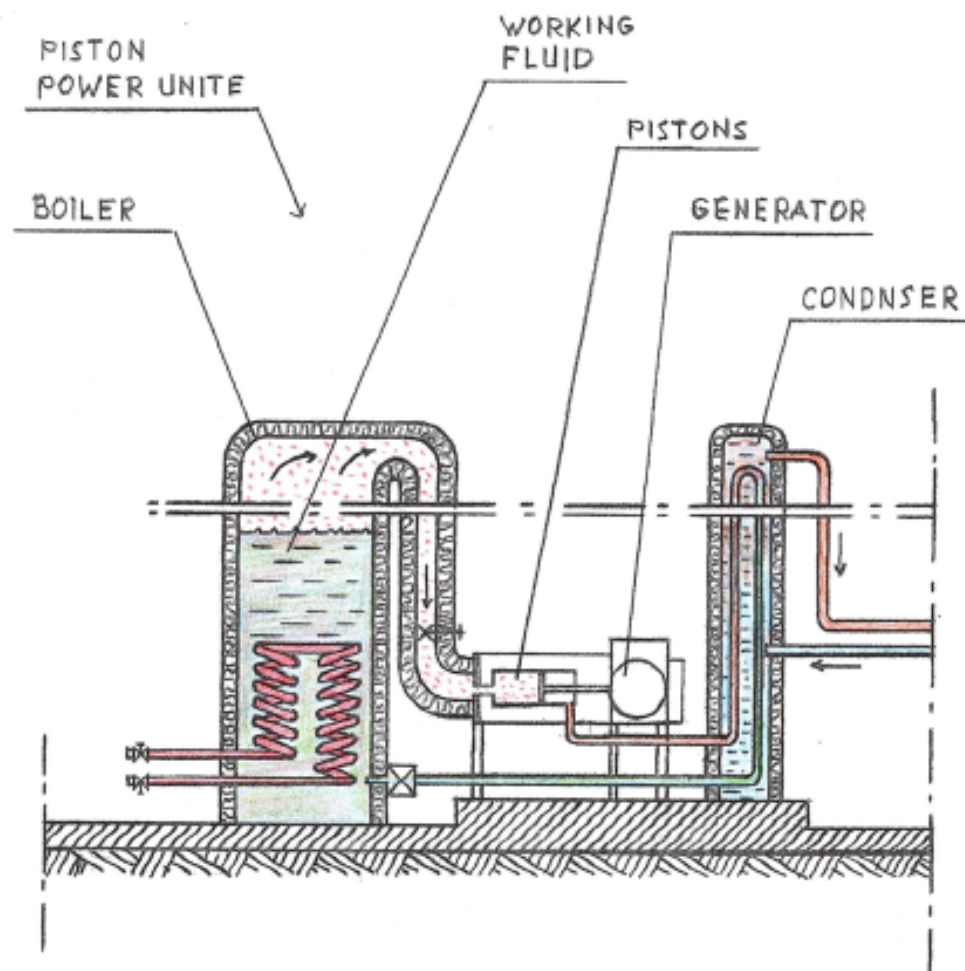


FIG. 8 – Schematic Cross-sectional View of the
Piston Power Unit

Segment (II)

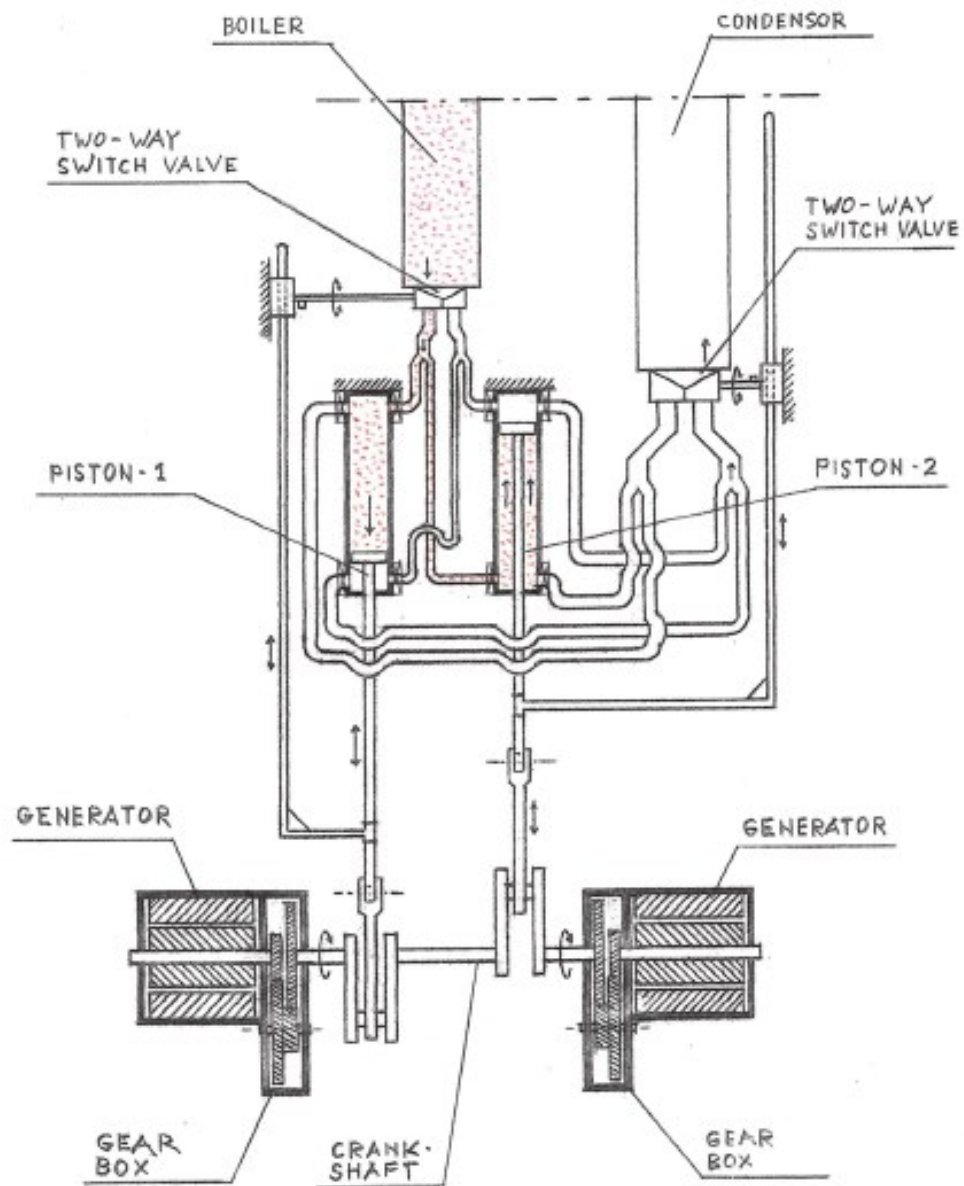


FIG. 9 – Schematic Diagram of a Piston Power Unit –
stroke one

Segment (II)

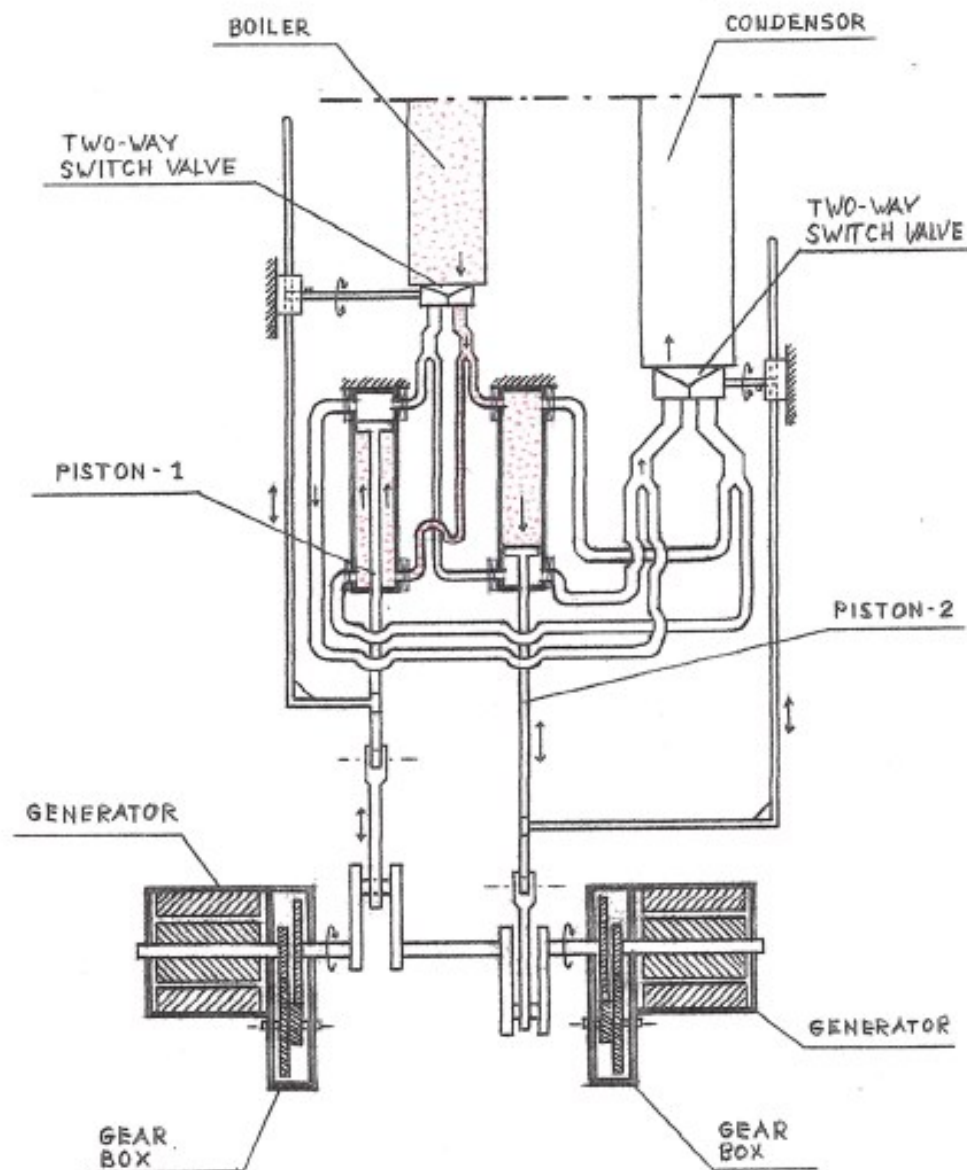


FIG. 10 – Schematic Diagram of a Piston Power Unit –
stroke two

3. CONCLUSION:

The essence of the presented technology - the SCI-GGG system - is using several completely closed-loop systems and generating electricity at the source of heat and transmitting electricity to the grid surface by using an electric cable.

Also, the essence of the presented technology - the SCI-GHE system - is transferring heat from heat sources to the power units with completely closed-loop systems.

Although the presented system is a part of geothermal power plant designed to incorporate the local condition of the Salton Sea area to generate electricity, to generate potable water, desalinate the Lake, and to generate the brine which can be used for the extraction of lithium - the presented system is not limited to this particular application.

REFERENCES

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- U.S. Patent No. 9,995,286; Entitled: "Self-Contained In-Ground Geothermal Generator and Heat Exchanger with In-Line Pump and Several Alternative Applications; Issued on: June 12, 2018;