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# **Recovery of lignin and lignans enriched fractions from thermomechanical pulp mill process water through membrane separation technology: pilot-plant study and techno-economic assessment.**

M. Villain-Gambier<sup>a</sup>, M. Courbalay<sup>a,b</sup>, A. Klem<sup>c</sup>, S. Dumarçay<sup>b</sup> and D. Trebouet<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup>*Université de Strasbourg, CNRS, UMR 7178, F-67000 Strasbourg, France*

<sup>b</sup>*Université de Lorraine, Faculté des Sciences et Techniques, Laboratoire d'Etude et de Recherche sur le Matériau Bois (LERMAB), Bld des Aiguillettes, F-54500, Vandoeuvre-les-Nancy, France*

<sup>c</sup>*Norske Skog Golbey, Route Jean-Charles Pellerin, BP 109, 88194 Golbey, France*

Corresponding author:

Maud Villain-Gambier

Email: [maud.villain@unistra.fr](mailto:maud.villain@unistra.fr)

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## **Abstract**

Membrane process is a viable option for valuable compounds such as lignin and lignans recovery in aqueous discharges of thermomechanical pulp industries. Recovery of lignin and lignans with continuous mode ultrafiltration/nanofiltration installation has not been studied in detail previously. After flotation used to remove lipophilic matter of pulp mill effluent, the three steps membrane process was composed of a clarification step by a 150 kDa ultrafiltration used to remove suspended matter, followed by two nanofiltrations of 1 kDa and 300 Da to respectively retain lignin and lignans. A techno-economic evaluation of this process has been performed. The process with a plant capacity of 60 m<sup>3</sup>.h<sup>-1</sup> was able to produce 12 tons of lignin and 825 kg of lignans per month. The influence of plant capacity between 0.1 and 60 m<sup>3</sup>.h<sup>-1</sup> on extracts production cost allows determining a production cost equal or below 10 €kg<sup>-1</sup> as plant capacity reached 10 m<sup>3</sup>.h<sup>-1</sup>. Valorization of lignin and lignans as parts of the formulas of high added value products could allow thermomechanical plants to head towards

biorefinery and cleaner production concepts. Furthermore, the 300 Da permeate possessed the required characteristics to be re used and save fresh water utilization.

Keywords: biorefinery, lignans, lignin, membrane process, techno-economic assessment, thermomechanical pulp mill.

## 1. Introduction

The pulp and paper manufacturing industry is one of the world's biggest water consumers. The industry suffers from poor water recycling rates and there is a need for clean technologies able reducing fresh water use (Leithe, 2018). In the main time, effluent discharge of such industries is composed of unexploited valuable organic content. Wood based polymers and chemical could potentially be produced on a large scale in parallel with pulp production, generating additional revenue streams for the industry. Paper pulp can be produced with thermomechanical process (TMP) which is a high yield process retaining more than 90 % of the wood biomass in the end product (Sundholm, 1999). The organic loss mainly composed of hemicelluloses, lignin, lignin carbohydrate complexes (LCC), lipophilic and phenolic extractives (*i.e.* lignans) is dissolved in the process water representing the main side stream of TMP installations. Whereas lignin from chemical pulp process has found industrial applications as filler, additive in agriculture or as compounds of biobased materials (Laurichesse and Averous, 2014), lignin from TMP water is not yet considered as a valuable compound. Nevertheless, its native structure due to the soft conditions of TMP could make it as a suitable candidate for depolymerisation into a wide variety of bulk and fine aromatic and phenolic chemicals (Kuznetsov et al., 2018). Lignans can also be considered as molecules of

interest due to their applications in pharmaceutical and nutraceutical fields with their biological properties (Willför et al., 2006).

Contrary to chemical pulp process waters containing high amounts of lignin and hemicelluloses (Humpert et al., 2016; Kevlich et al., 2017), in TMP waters the concentration of wood components do not exceed 1-3 g.L<sup>-1</sup> (Zasadowski et al., 2014; Thuvander and Jönsson, 2016; Persson and Jönsson, 2017). Therefore, TMP waters are highly diluted side stream and they are currently not valorized and rejected to wastewater plants. However, their potential for valorization is significant as the flow rate of TMP water is of several hundred cubic meters per hour.

For the majority of mature chemical processes, separation step usually accounts for 60 to 80 % of the global process cost (Ragauskas et al., 2006). Dubreuil et al. (2017) have recently reported the need of cost-effective separation processes to fractionate biomass components at industrial scale.

Due to their low energy consumption and low impact on the biological molecules, their suitability as a separation technique for the recovery of substances at really low concentration, membrane techniques have recently received increased attention in the context of future biorefineries and cleaner production (*i.e.* for example reduction of water consumption and resources recovery) (Weinwurm et al., 2016; Dubreuil et al., 2017 ; Dilaver et al., 2018 ; Wang et al, 2019).

Membrane technology is a sustainable, soft and clean process where the separation does not have extensive heat or chemicals requirements. This latter advantage leads to end products of high quality, and makes it easier to comply with the many stringent requirements from both consumers and public authorities (Steinmetz et al., 2019). Many studies report the use of membrane technology for TMP waters fractionation for galactoglucomannans (GGM)

valorisation as biopolymer for example (Persson and Jönsson, 2010a; Thuvander and Jönsson, 2016) whereas only two studies had the objective of lignin and extractives valorisation (Persson et al., 2010b; Courbalay et al., 2018b). They are usually performed with discontinuous mode (*i.e.* batch and semi batch mode) with increasing volume reduction (VR) allows determining information on recovery rate of valuable solutes and permeate flow rate. In literature, only one article was found about hemicelluloses recovery in continuous pilot testing with TMP waters (Thuvander et al., 2019) whereas these continuous tests are essential to accurately evaluate techno-economic characteristics of large scale membrane installation. 30% of investment can be saved with optimal pilot testing (Suarez et al., 2015).

Therefore, as this type of study does not exist for joint recovery of lignin and lignans from TMP waters, the objectives of this study were to perform continuous pilot tests to (i) identify long-term performance parameters (the lifetime of membranes, their cleaning frequency as well as the type and impact of fouling), (ii) use these parameters to scale up the membrane process and (iii) perform a process economic evaluation and a cost estimation of produced extracts. Thanks to the model of Sethi and Wiesner (2000), this latter point (iii) aims at supplying information about investment and maintenance, which is usually dispersed, and setting out the relevant hypotheses, data and calculations to assess a complete membrane process cost.

The economic assessment of a membrane process and the production cost of generated lignin and lignans enriched fractions require the evaluation of both capital and operating expenditures named respectively CAPEX and OPEX.

The main CAPEX components include designing, constructing and installing membrane plant. OPEX is composed of amortization, energy, labor, membrane replacement and chemicals (cleaning and disposal) (Sethi and Wiesner, 2000).

Typically, these continuous experiments are performed at a representative scale (between pilot and semi-industrial scale) and they also allow producing larger quantities of valuable extracts. Therefore, companies from targeted markets could assess their interest for the fractions and membrane process could be adapted to reach quality requirements of specific markets. A feed capacity of  $0.1 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  was considered as an adequate scale as it would allow to supply partner companies in various fields of prospecting (food, nutraceutical, cosmetic, agriculture, chemistry, material). In order to assess the scale from which the economy of scale was noticeable, the influence of plant capacity from  $0.1$  to  $60 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  was assessed on CAPEX, OPEX and related production cost of extracts.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### **2.1 TMP water**

Process water came from a TMP mill with a mix of spruces and pines used as raw material (Norske Skog, Golbey, France). Main characteristics of process water, called clear filtrates are presented in table 1.

Mean values and corresponding standard deviation of table 1 came from the analyses in triplicates of 26 sampling events of process water spread during the four seasons of three successive years (Courbalay, 2018a). Before utilization in membrane process, process water was floated to remove lipophilic extractives as terpenes, fatty and resin acids prior to filtration step as these hydrophobic molecules cause severe membrane fouling. A Kadant Lamort column flotation cell was used. Flotation duration was function of turbidity decrease kinetics with the final turbidity decrease of 70 % in process water floated.

Table 1

Parameter	Mean value of each parameter $\pm$ sd
pH	6.2 $\pm$ 0.2
Turbidity (NTU)	430 $\pm$ 110
Conductivity ( $\mu\text{S}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$ )	1180 $\pm$ 150
Concentration ( $\text{mmol}_{\text{eq NaCl}}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ )	10 $\pm$ 1
Dry matter ( $\text{mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ )	3780 $\pm$ 690
Ash ( $\text{mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ )	650 $\pm$ 5
Suspended matter ( $\text{mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ )	220 $\pm$ 80
Polyphenols ( $\text{mg}_{\text{GAeq}}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) <sup>a</sup>	710 $\pm$ 60
Lignin ( $\text{mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ )	690 $\pm$ 70
Hemicelluloses ( $\text{mg}_{\text{Geq}}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) <sup>b</sup>	1170 $\pm$ 180
Lignans ( $\text{mg}_{\text{CAeq}}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) <sup>c</sup>	18 $\pm$ 14
Terpens and fatty acids ( $\text{mg}_{\text{HAeq}}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) <sup>d</sup>	7 $\pm$ 11
Phenolic acids ( $\text{mg}_{\text{SAeq}}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) <sup>e</sup>	0.5 $\pm$ 0.7

<sup>a</sup>  $\text{mg}_{\text{GAeq}}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ : in gallic acid equivalent ; <sup>b</sup>  $\text{mg}_{\text{Geq}}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ : in glucose equivalent ;

<sup>c</sup>  $\text{mg}_{\text{CAeq}}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ : in 4-hydroxy-3,5-dimethoxycinnamic acid equivalent ;

<sup>d</sup>  $\text{mg}_{\text{HAeq}}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ : in heneicosanoic acid equivalent ; <sup>e</sup>  $\text{mg}_{\text{SAeq}}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ : in syringic acid equivalent

## 2.2 Membrane filtration

A combined ultrafiltration/nanofiltration (UF/NF) stainless steel made set up was used (Firmus, France). The internal feed tank capacity of the set up was of 70 L.

The three successive filtration steps are presented in Figure 1.

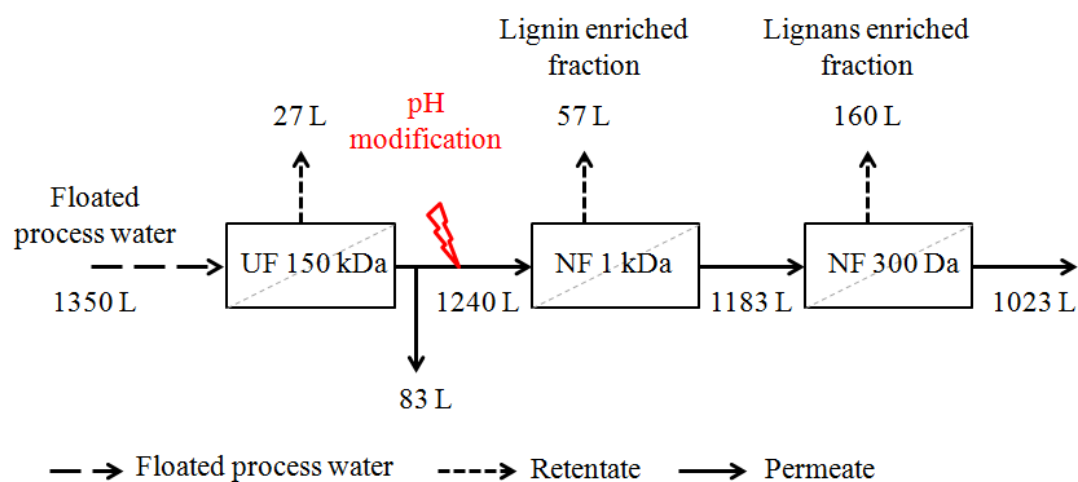


Figure 1

150 kDa permeate pH was adjusted to 4 (acetic acid 13 mM). This pH was chosen thanks to a previous optimization study about the influence of 150 kDa permeate pH on 1 kDa and 300 Da membranes productivity (i.e. permeate flux), membrane fouling propensity and selectivity of 1 kDa membrane for high lignin retention and limitation of lignans retention. The different filtrations were realized in semi batch mode which means that retentate was recycled to the feed tank and permeate was withdrawn continuously. An additional pumping system was used to bring in feed tank a feed flow equal to the permeate flow in order to maintain a constant retentate volume. This method allows filtration of large volumes of process water and obtention of high VR. VR was calculated as the ratio between permeate and feed volumes.

The characteristics of the membranes used in these experiments are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

<b>Membrane type</b>	<b>UF 150 kDa</b>	<b>NF 1 kDa</b>	<b>NF 300 Da</b>
<b>Module type</b>	Ceramic tubular		Organic Spiral wound
<b>Membrane material</b>	TiO <sub>2</sub> -ZrO <sub>2</sub>		Polyamide
<b>Number of channels</b>	19	61	-
<b>Dimensions (mm)</b>			
Lenght		1,178	
External diameter		25	
Hydraulic diameter (d <sub>h</sub> )		3.5	
<b>Membrane Area (A<sub>m</sub>) (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0,245	0,45	2,6
<b>Supplier</b>	Orelis environnement/Kleansep™		GE Power & Water
<b>Reference</b>	KLMBWU3	KLMBWN1	DL2540F30
<b>Transmembrane pressure (bars)<sup>a</sup></b>	2.5	6.4	6.0
<b>Temperature (°C)</b>	60		48
<b>Cross flow velocity (u) (m.s<sup>-1</sup>)<sup>a</sup></b>	5		1

<sup>a</sup>Optimized transmembrane pressure and cross flow velocity were determined at pH 6.2 for 150 kDa membrane and pH 4 for 1 kDa and 300 Da.



The filtrations were realized at optimized operating conditions (Table 2) (*i.e.* transmembrane pressure and cross flow velocity) obtained for each membrane in total recirculation mode (retentate and permeate were totally recycled to the feed tank). Pressures, temperature, permeate and retentate flows were recorded on a data acquisition device (Ecograph T, Endress+hauser). The different filtration steps were running at constant transmembrane pressure. This way of operation implied that permeate flux decreased with time due to membrane fouling.

Transmembrane pressure was calculated as the difference between the average pressure between the inlet and outlet pressures on membrane module and permeate pressure.

Retention rate (RR) of targeted compounds, expressed as a percentage, was calculated with the following equation (1):

$$RR = \left( \frac{C_{feed} - C_{permeate}}{C_{feed}} \right) \times 100 \quad (1)$$

Where  $C_{feed}$  and  $C_{permeate}$  represent respectively the concentration in the feed and permeate of targeted compounds.

### 2.3 Analytical methods

Samples were dried with a rotavapor (40°C ; 25 mbar) until constant weight. The residue was weighed and divided by the initial volume of the sample to obtain dry matter concentration. Total phenolic content was analyzed with the Folin-Ciocalteu colorimetric method (760 nm) (Singleton et al., 1999). To obtain hemicelluloses content of samples expressed in glucose equivalent, the colorimetric anthrone method was used (625 nm) (Dubois et al, 1956). For phenolic (lignans and phenolic acids) and hydrophobic extractives (terpenes and fatty acids) identification, Gas Chromatography (GC)-Mass Spectrometry (MS) method was adapted from Kebbi-Benkeder et al. (2014). GC-MS analysis was performed on a Clarus 680 gas chromatograph coupled to a Clarus SQ8 mass spectrometer (Perkin Elmer Inc., USA).

Lignin content was obtained thanks to the following mass balance equation (2) (m for mass):

$$m_{lignin} = m_{polyphenols} - (m_{lignans} + m_{phenolic\ acids}) \quad (2)$$

Concentration of lignin was then obtained with the ratio between the mass of lignin on initial volume of process water sampled.

## 2.4 Techno-economic evaluation

### 2.4.1 Dimension calculations of membrane set-up with capacity of $0.1 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$

Membrane set up was developed to treat  $0.1 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  of floated process water. Calculations of required membrane area for each filtration stage ( $A_{m150}, A_{m1}, A_{m300}$ ) were performed with equation (3) (expressed for  $A_{m150}$  assessment).

$$A_{m150} = \frac{Q_{150}}{J_{150}} \quad (3)$$

$Q_{150}$  corresponds to the total feed flow entering 150 kDa UF in  $\text{L} \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ .  $J_{150}$  is the mean 150 kDa permeate flux in  $\text{L} \cdot \text{m}^{-2} \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  obtained in part 3.1.1.

Recirculation rate for filtration with ceramic membranes (150 and 1 kDa membranes) was calculated by multiplying the cross flow velocity ( $u$  in  $\text{m} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ ) by the membrane total section ( $S$  in  $\text{m}^2$ ).  $S$  was obtained with the equation (4):

$$S = \frac{d_h \times p_e}{4} \quad (4)$$

where  $d_h$  corresponds to the hydraulic diameter of the membrane and  $p_e$  is the total perimeter of membrane channels. Both parameters are expressed in m.

Recirculation rates in 300 Da spiral wound membrane modules are data obtained from the membrane supplier. A flowchart with techno-economic procedure is presented in figure 2.

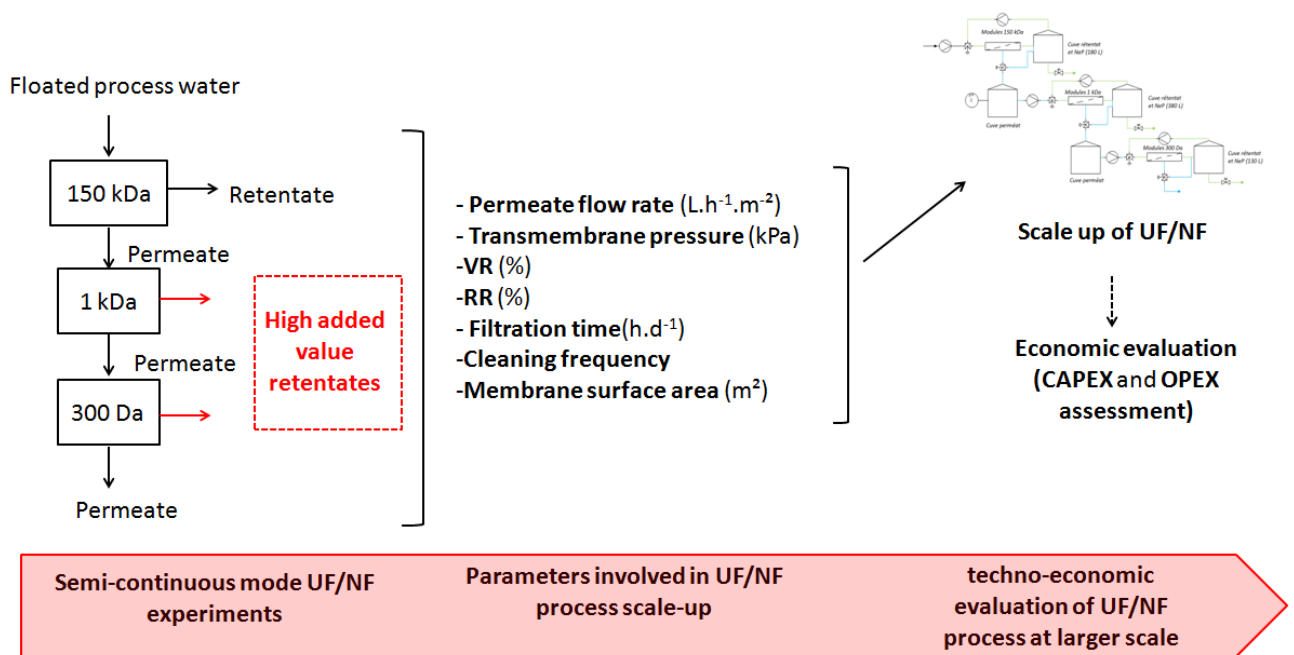


Figure 2

#### 2.4.2. Economic evaluation

The model developed by Sethi and Wiesner (2000) and adapted by Suarez et al. (2015) was used to assess the CAPEX and OPEX of membrane process with a treatment capacity of  $0.1 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ .

Calculation template of the economic model for production of enriched fractions in lignin and lignans is presented in figure 3 and a complete description of the model used and associated equations were provided in appendix. Table 3 presents the general data used for economic assessment of membrane set up.

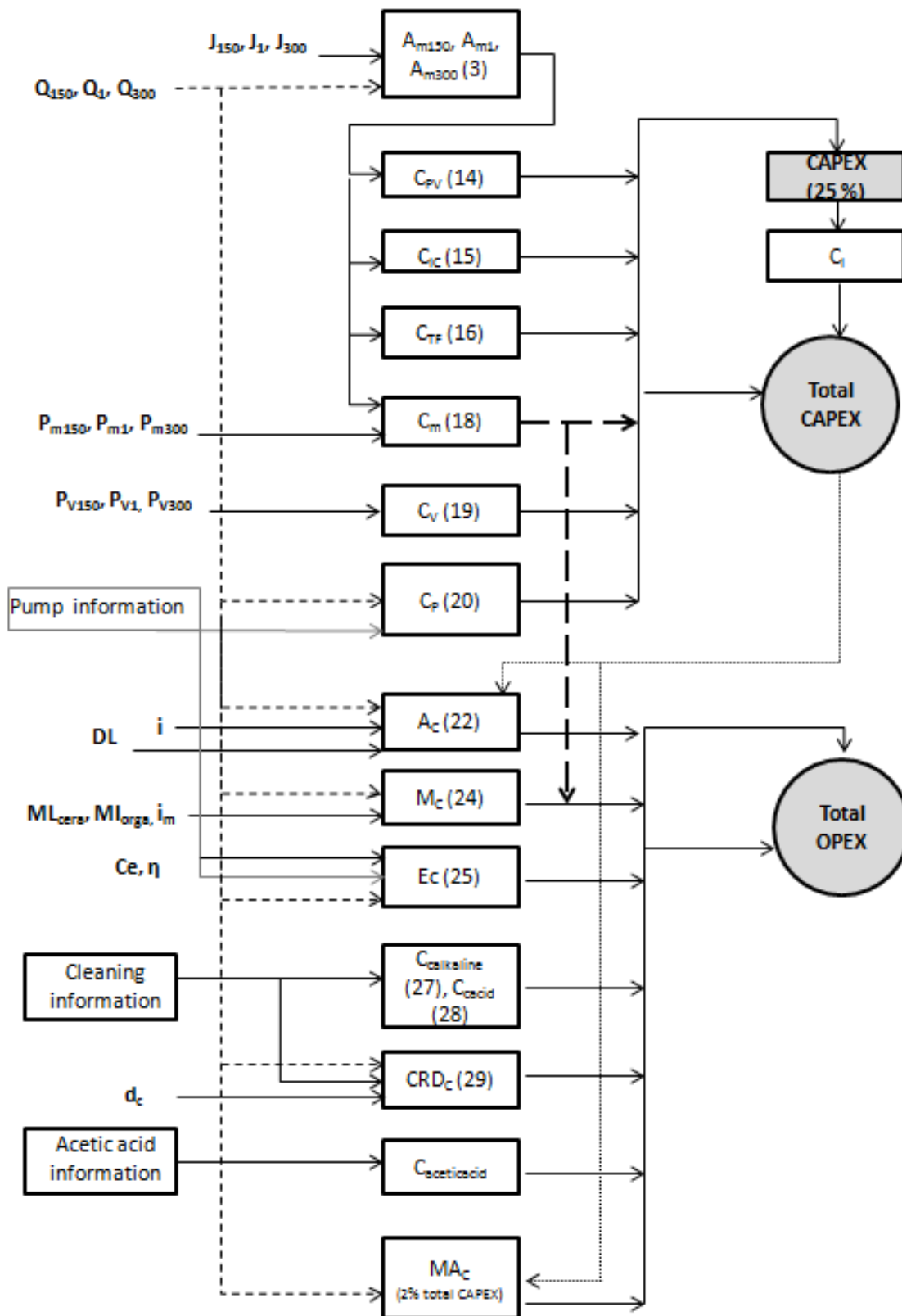


Figure 3

Abbreviations: Ac: amortization constituent,  $C_{\text{aceticacid}}$ : Cost of acetic acid, Cc: cost of chemicals (alkaline or acid cleaning), CI: cost of installation, CIC: instruments and controls capital cost, Cm: membranes capital cost, CP: pumps capital cost, CPV: pipes and valves capital cost, CTF: tanks and frames capital cost, Cv: pressure vessels capital cost, CAPEX: capital expenditure or investment, CRDc: disposal costs of the cleaning and rinsing solutions, Ec: total cost of energy, Mc: membrane replacement costs, MAc: maintenance costs, OPEX: operating and maintenance costs, Symbols: Am: membrane area, ce: energy cost, DL: design life of the plant, dc: factory demineralized water cost, i: interest rate, im: interest rate for membrane replacement, J: permeate flow rate, ML: membrane life time,  $\eta$ : pump efficiency, Pm: membrane price per unit area, Pv: pressure vessel price per membrane module, Q: flow entering membrane step in  $\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$

With the obtained values of total CAPEX and OPEX, the production cost due to filtration process ( $C_{\text{production}}$ ) in  $\text{€kg}^{-1}$  of the extracts could be calculated with the following formula (5) proposed by Roda (2017):

$$C_{\text{production}} = \frac{1}{M_{\text{annual}}} \cdot \left( \text{Total OPEX} \cdot V_{\text{annual}} + \frac{\text{Total CAPEX}}{\text{IRR}} \right) \quad (5)$$

Where  $M_{\text{annual}}$  and  $V_{\text{annual}}$  represent respectively the mass of extracts produced in kg (dry matter) and the volume of process water used in  $\text{m}^3$  yearly. IRR corresponds to the internal rate of return in year.

Table 3:

Parameters	value	abbreviations
150 kDa membrane cost ( $\text{€m}^{-2}$ ) <sup>a</sup>	938	$P_{m150}$
1 kDa membrane cost ( $\text{€m}^{-2}$ ) <sup>a</sup>	1471	$P_{m1}$
300 Da membrane cost ( $\text{€m}^{-2}$ ) <sup>a</sup>	385	$P_{m300}$
ceramic module cost ( $\text{€}$ ) <sup>a</sup>		
150 kDa (one module of 0.75 m <sup>2</sup> with 3 membranes) <sup>a</sup>	2,000	$P_{V150}$
1 kDa (one module of 1.75 m <sup>2</sup> with 7 membranes) <sup>a</sup>	3,600	$P_{V1}$
Organic 300 Da module cost ( $\text{€}$ ) <sup>a</sup>	400	$P_{V300}$
(one module of 9 m <sup>2</sup> )		
Interest rate (%) <sup>b</sup>	7	$i, i_m$
Design life of the plant (year) <sup>b</sup>	15	DL
Ceramic membrane lifetime (year) <sup>a</sup>	5	$ML_{\text{cera}}$
Organic membrane lifetime (year) <sup>a</sup>	3	$ML_{\text{orga}}$
Acetic acid concentration ( $\text{L.m}^{-3}$ )	2	concentration <sub>aceticacid</sub>
Acetic acid cost ( $\text{€L}^{-1}$ ) <sup>d</sup>	3.06	cost <sub>aceticacid</sub>
Energy cost ( $\text{€Wh}^{-1}$ ) <sup>c</sup>	$5.10^{-5}$	Ce
Pump efficiency (%) <sup>b</sup>	70	$\eta$
Cleaning volume for 150 kDa membrane (m <sup>3</sup> )	$5.1.10^{-3}$	$V_{C150}$
Cleaning volume for 1 kDa membrane (m <sup>3</sup> )	$1.6.10^{-2}$	$V_{C1}$
Cleaning volume for 300 Da membrane (m <sup>3</sup> )	$6.1.10^{-2}$	$V_{C300}$
Rinsing volume for 150 kDa membrane (m <sup>3</sup> )	$1.01.10^{-3}$	$V_{R150}$
Rinsing volume for 1 kDa membrane (m <sup>3</sup> )	$3.2.10^{-3}$	$V_{R1}$
Rinsing volume for 300 Da membrane (m <sup>3</sup> )	$1.22.10^{-2}$	$V_{R300}$
Alkaline detergent concentration for ceramic membranes ( $\text{kg.m}^{-3}$ )	15	concentration <sub>b150,1</sub>
Alkaline detergent cost for ceramic membranes ( $\text{€kg}^{-1}$ ) <sup>d</sup>	2.3	cost <sub>b150,1</sub>
Surfactant concentration ( $\text{kg.m}^{-3}$ )	0.75	concentration <sub>S150,1</sub>
Surfactant cost ( $\text{€kg}^{-1}$ ) <sup>d</sup>	35.2	Cost <sub>S150,1</sub>
Alkaline detergent concentration for organic membrane ( $\text{L.m}^{-3}$ )	20	concentration <sub>b300</sub>
Alkaline detergent cost for organic membranes ( $\text{€L}^{-1}$ ) <sup>d</sup>	4.5	cost <sub>b300</sub>
Acid detergent concentration ( $\text{L.m}^{-3}$ )	20	concentration <sub>a</sub>
Acid detergent cost ( $\text{€L}^{-1}$ ) <sup>d</sup>	4.5	cost <sub>a</sub>
Demineralized water cost ( $\text{€m}^{-3}$ ) <sup>a</sup>	0.12	dc

<sup>a</sup>Data from membrane supplier

<sup>b</sup>Data from Suarez et al., 2015

<sup>c</sup>Data from paper producer NorskeSkog

<sup>d</sup>Data from chemical supplier

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1 Pilot plant study for the production of lignin and lignans enriched fractions in semi batch mode: assessment of parameters for the scale-up

##### 3.1.1 Mean flux and cleaning frequencies assessment

The initial permeate flux of floated process water with the 150 kDa UF was  $440 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$  (Figure 4, (A)).

This value decreased by 69 % to reach a VR of 98 % with a permeate flux of  $138 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$  after 22 h of filtration. The evolution of 150 kDa permeate flux with time could be divided into three distinct zones. Loss of permeate flux was rapid initially as after one hour of filtration a value of  $300 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$  was measured. This loss of 150 kDa permeate flux was due to first fouling establishment by cake formation with suspended matter which took place as 150 kDa membrane was in contact with floated process water. After the initial rapid flux decline the flux stabilized somewhat and decreased steadily with  $10 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$  per hour during the 15 hours it took to reach VR 74%. A progressive pore blocking occurred. The last part showed the establishment of an almost steady state permeate flux with a diminution of  $3 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$  per hour of filtration. Membrane cleaning was performed as soon as permeate flux reached 10 % of its initial value. It allows defining the cleaning frequency of the membrane. Mean permeate flux of 150 kDa UF step was assessed at  $135 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$ . With the assumption of a constant permeate flux loss of  $3 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$  per hour of filtration and considering final VR reached of 98 %, filtration with 150 kDa UF could have been proceeded 32 h before reaching the permeate flux limit of  $44 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$ . Therefore alkaline cleanings have to be done every 54 h.

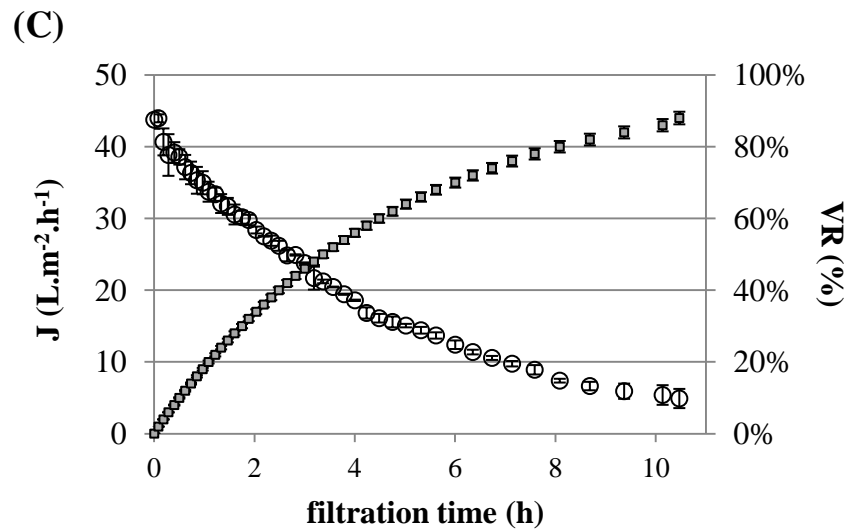
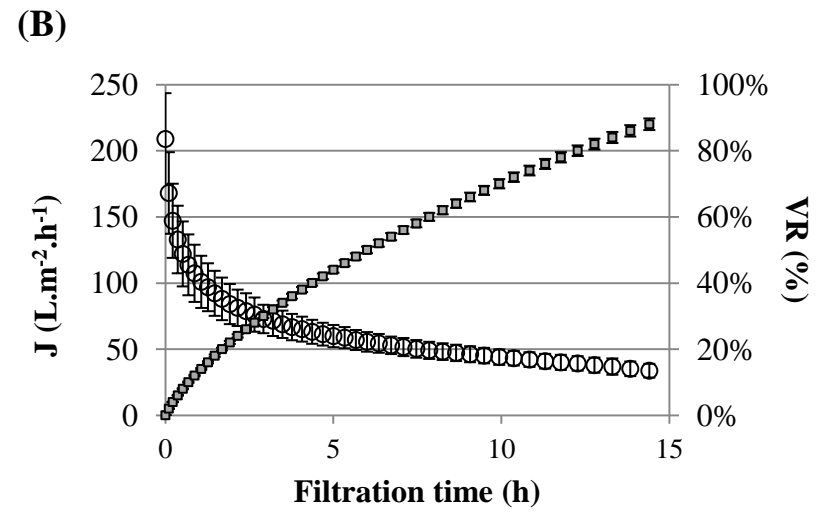
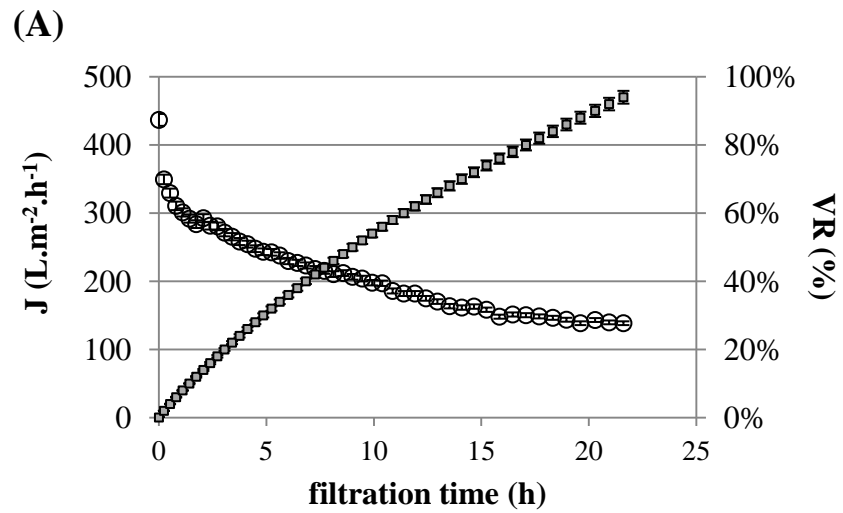


Figure 4



NF 1 kDa filtration was performed during 14 h (Figure 4, (B)). The initial permeate flux was  $210 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$  and reached a final value of  $30 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$  with a VR of 95 %. During the first hour of filtration, permeate flux decreased to 48 % of its initial value due to external fouling establishment related to the residual part of suspended matter ( $14 \text{ mg.L}^{-1}$ ) initially present in TMP waters which remained at that stage. Then a slight permeate flux loss of  $3 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$  per hour of filtration was measured until the filtration end. To reach 10 % of initial 1 kDa permeate flux value at a constant VR of 95 %, NF 1 kDa could have run 5 h more. Therefore a cleaning frequency of 19 h can be defined. Mean permeate flux of 1 kDa NF was around  $50 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$ .

With an initial permeate flux of  $44 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$ , filtration 300 Da was running during 11 h and has reached a VR of 86 % with a low final flux of  $5 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$  (Figure 4, (C)). 300 Da membrane fouling was mainly external (99 %) and associated with progressive pore blocking and concentration polarization phenomena (data not shown). A CIP will be performed every 11 h on NF 300 Da. Mean 300 Da permeate flux was  $10 \text{ L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$ .

### 3.1.2 Fractions characterization and retention

The different characteristics of fractions obtained at final VR of semi-batch experiments are presented in Table 4. The main objective of 150 kDa UF was to clarify floated process water. This goal was clearly reached as only 2 % of polyphenols (*i.e.* lignin and lignans compounds) was retained (Figure 5). Clarification was efficient due to the retention of 28 % of dry matter mainly corresponding to suspended matter and hemicelluloses specifically stopped at 25 %. Hemicelluloses were mostly composed of GGM with identified sizes comprised between 0.2 and 20 kDa and some additional molecular weights higher than 100 kDa (Thuvander and Jonsson, 2016). Stack et al., (2014) mentioned that those hemicelluloses with high molecular

Table 4:

VR (%)	Fraction	Hemicelluloses (g <sub>Geq</sub> .L <sup>-1</sup> )	Polyphenols (g <sub>GAeq</sub> .L <sup>-1</sup> )	Dry matter (g.L <sup>-1</sup> )	Lignans (mg <sub>CAeq</sub> .L <sup>-1</sup> )	Lignin (mg.L <sup>-1</sup> )
-	Floated water	1.2 ± 0.2	0.65 ± 0.01	3.67 ± 0.10	30 ± 5	690 ± 70
98	Retentate 150 kDa	14 ± 2	0.93 ± 0.03	24.3 ± 4.0	-	1400 ± 200
	Permeate 150 kDa	0.9 ± 0.2	0.64 ± 0.02	2.65 ± 0.20	30 ± 3	620 ± 100
95	Retentate 1 kDa	15 ± 3	4.35 ± 0.20	27.4 ± 3.0	170 ± 20	6400 ± 500
	Permeate 1 kDa	0.20 ± 0.06	0.43 ± 0.01	1.40 ± 0.02	25 ± 5	290 ± 50
86	Retentate 300 Da	1.5 ± 0.3	2.90 ± 0.20	7.40 ± 1.0	175 ± 70	1700 ± 300
	Permeate 300 Da	0.010 ± 0.002	0.045 ± 0.005	0.40 ± 0.01	2.0 ± 0.6	40 ± 5

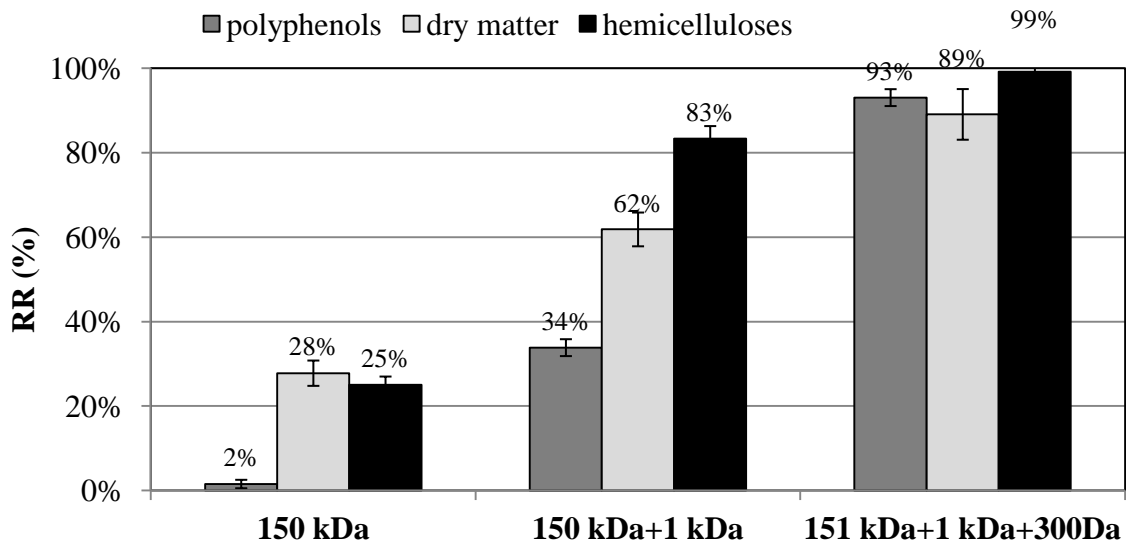


Figure 5

weights could be formed by adsorption on process water colloidal matter content. This phenomenon could explain hemicelluloses retention observed with 150 kDa UF.

At final VR of 95 % and 86 %, polyphenols concentrations of retentates of NF 1 kDa and 300 Da membranes were respectively of 4.35 and 2.90 g<sub>GAeq</sub>.L<sup>-1</sup>. 39 % of lignin was retained at this stage. 29 % of lignin and 70 % of lignans were retained with the 300 Da membrane. Both fractions still contained hemicelluloses with concentration of 15 g.L<sup>-1</sup> in 1 kDa retentate and 1.5 g.L<sup>-1</sup> in 300 Da retentate. This result was also obtained by Oinonen et al. (2015) in their 1 kDa retentate of thermomechanical process water of spruce wood. They affirmed that in 1

kDa retentate, part of hemicelluloses were free GGM as another part was linked to a part of lignin content to form LCC. Steinmetz et al. (2019) have proposed the following composition in 1 kDa retentate of thermomechanical process water: 40 % of LCC, 35 % of GGM, 7 % of free lignin, 8 % of ash and 10 % of others (included lignans content). LCC are now considered as valuable compounds because they possess unique applications (bio materials, cosmetics, pharmaceutical) resulting from the combination of lignin and hemicelluloses properties (Oinonen et al, 2016 ; Sakagami et al, 2016). Therefore, depending on the targeted activity of the fractions by the companies, fractions 1 kDa and 300 Da could be used just after membrane filtration or further isolation and concentration processes could be required if high purity of lignin, LCC, GGM or lignans are wanted.

Due to its chemical characteristics, 300 Da permeate could be directly reintroduced in TMP process as industrial water. The implementation of such membrane process could lead to a reduction on the environmental impact of pulp and paper factories as it was proved in other sectors as wineries (Giacobbo et al, 2017).

### **3.2 Technical evaluation of membrane set up**

For the treatment of  $0.1 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  of floated process water, the following membrane set up is proposed in Figure 6.

It was assumed that membrane installation was directly constructed on the thermomechanical pulp mill site as the company already has the flotation system for process water pretreatment and also to avoid transport costs. The membrane plant capacity was considered to run in continuous mode *i.e.*  $333 \text{ days} \cdot \text{year}^{-1}$  and  $8000 \text{ h} \cdot \text{year}^{-1}$  with a global factory stop for maintenance purpose of  $32 \text{ days} \cdot \text{year}^{-1}$ . Each stage of membrane installation worked at constant transmembrane pressure therefore permeate flow rates decreased with time. The cleaning steps were carried out when permeate flux reached 10% of its initial value.

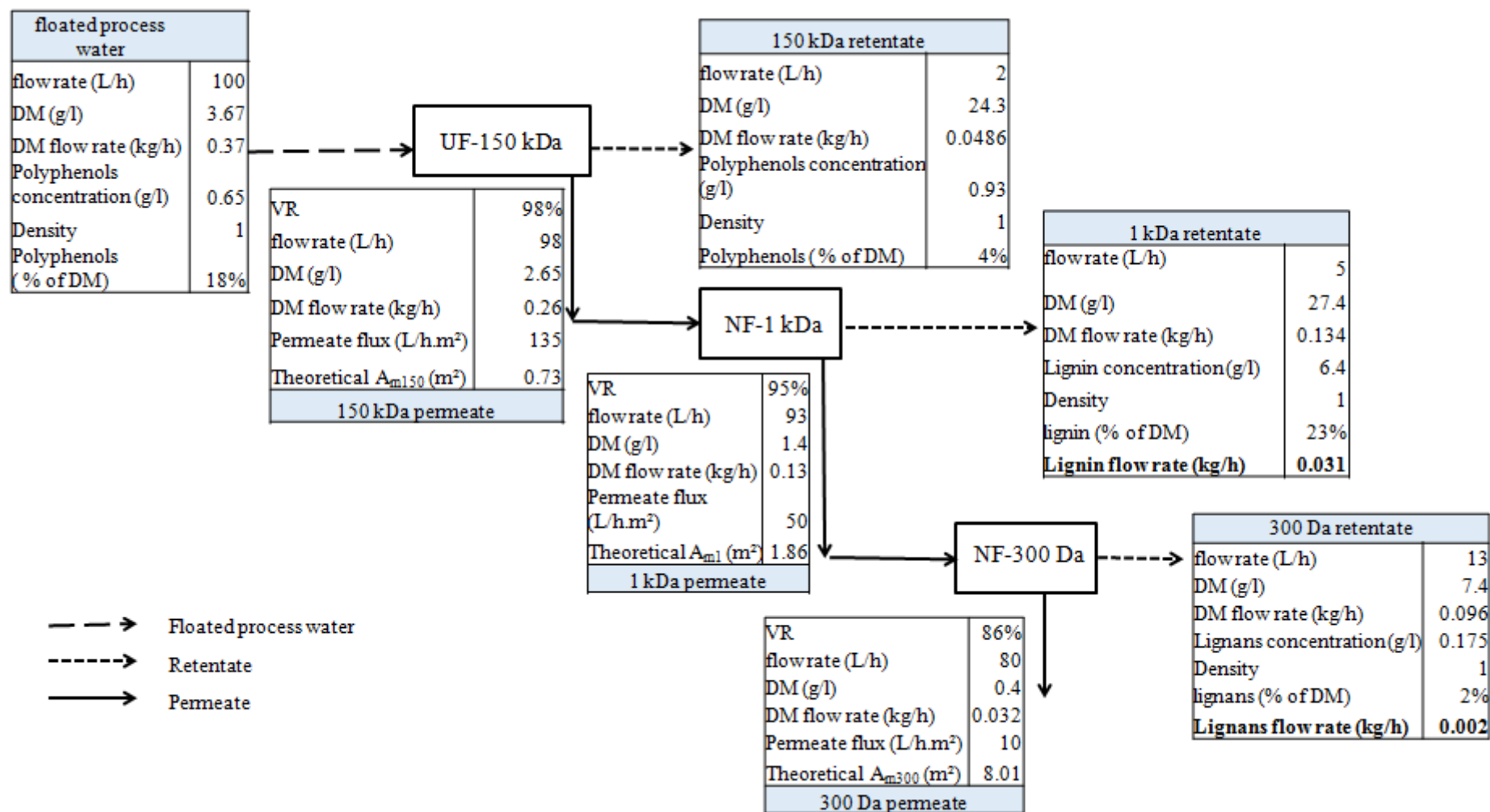


Figure 6

Based on a continuous mode of operation ( $8000 \text{ h}\cdot\text{year}^{-1}$ ) and duration of each filtration between cleaning step found in part 3.1.1, the alkaline and acid cleaning frequencies can be estimated. This implies that 150 kDa filtration was done during  $7668 \text{ h}\cdot\text{year}^{-1}$  and with respective alkaline and acid frequencies of 142 ( $\text{Freq}_{\text{b}150}$ ) and 36 times per year ( $\text{Freq}_{\text{a}150}$ ).

NF 1 kDa can have a yearly filtration time of 7106 h. Alkaline and acid frequencies were of 374 ( $\text{Freq}_{\text{b}1}$ ) and 94 times per year ( $\text{Freq}_{\text{a}1}$ ) respectively.

NF 300 Da has a total filtration time of  $6578 \text{ h}\cdot\text{year}^{-1}$  and with alkaline and acid cleaning frequencies of 598 ( $\text{Freq}_{\text{b}300}$ ) and 150 ( $\text{Freq}_{\text{a}300}$ ) times per year respectively.

Figure 6 gives the theoretical membrane areas obtained to treat floated process water at VR of 98 % for UF 150 kDa, 95 % for NF 1 kDa and 86 % for NF 300 Da. These theoretical membrane areas were of 0.73, 1.86 and  $8.01 \text{ m}^2$  for UF, NF 1 kDa and NF 300 Da respectively. For economic evaluation (*i.e.* CAPEX and OPEX determination) real membrane areas available from membrane suppliers substituted for theoretical areas. Therefore for UF and NF of 1 kDa and 300 Da used membrane areas were 0.75, 1.75 and  $9 \text{ m}^2$  respectively (Table 3).

With this configuration and according to the results of table 4 , membrane set up allows to produce  $0.134$  and  $0.096 \text{ kg}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$  of DM which respectively contained 23 % of lignin (1 kDa retentate) and 2 % of lignans (300 Da retentate). Therefore monthly 87.4 kg with 20.4 kg of lignin (1 kDa retentate) and 58.1 kg with 1.4 kg of lignans (300 Da retentate) could be produced. These masses are adequate to supply partner companies in various fields of prospecting (food, nutraceutical, cosmetic, agriculture, chemistry, material).

### 3.3 Economic evaluation of membrane set up of 0.1 m<sup>3</sup>.h<sup>-1</sup> capacity

Economic assessment of membrane set up with a treatment capacity of 0.1 m<sup>3</sup>.h<sup>-1</sup> developed to obtain extracts enriched in lignin and lignans are presented in tables 5 and 6. All the parameters mentioned in both tables came from performed experiments and data collected in table 3. Tables 5 and 6 exhibit a complete description of the calculations. In figure 4, a calculation template is presented to clearly show the method used to obtain results of both tables. With this information, CAPEX and OPEX of membrane installation with a plant capacity of 0.1 m<sup>3</sup>.h<sup>-1</sup> were of 149,500 € and 35.4 €m<sup>-3</sup> respectively. The calculated CAPEX present a deviation of 18.7 % with a commercial offer proposed by a membrane equipment supplier for a membrane set up with the same global characteristics and objectives. This difference could come from the CIP disposal cost which was not taken into account in the present study due to the lack of information whereas it was the case in the commercial offer. Suarez et al., (2015) used also the economic model developed by Sethi and Wiesner (2000) in their economic assessment of a reverse osmosis (RO) plant with a feed capacity of 20 m<sup>3</sup>.h<sup>-1</sup> of condensate from a dairy factory. They obtained a deviation of 13.7 % between their capital cost estimations and an economic offer. This deviation was the lowest obtained as compared with the ones assessed with the six-tenths power rule model (33.9 and 29.1 % with data from Jönsson et al., (2008) and Shen et al., (2014) respectively)

Table 5

Costs	Parameters	Equations	Results (€)
$C_{PV150}$	conv : 1996 : \$1 = €0.81 CEPCI = 603.1/381.7	$C_{PV150} = 5962.13 \cdot A_{m150}^{0.42} \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	6,8
$C_{PV1}$	$A_{m150} = 0.75 \text{ m}^2$ $A_{m1} = 2.38 \text{ m}^2$	$C_{PV1} = 5962.13 \cdot A_{m1}^{0.42} \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	11,0
$C_{PV300}$	$A_{m300} = 9 \text{ m}^2$	$C_{PV300} = 5962.13 \cdot A_{m300}^{0.42} \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	19,2
$C_{PV}$		$C_{PV} = \sum C_{PV150} + C_{PV1} + C_{PV300}$	36,9
$C_{IC150}$		$C_{IC150} = 1445.5 \cdot A_{m150}^{0.66} \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	1,5
$C_{IC1}$		$C_{IC1} = 1445.5 \cdot A_{m1}^{0.66} \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	3,3
$C_{IC300}$		$C_{IC300} = 1445.5 \cdot A_{m300}^{0.66} \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	7,9
$C_{IC}$		$C_{IC} = \sum C_{IC150} + C_{IC1} + C_{IC300}$	12,7
$C_{TF150}$		$C_{TF150} = 3047.21 \cdot A_{m150}^{0.53} \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	3,3
$C_{TF1}$		$C_{TF1} = 3047.21 \cdot A_{m1}^{0.53} \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	6,2
$C_{TF300}$		$C_{TF300} = 3047.21 \cdot A_{m300}^{0.53} \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	12,5
$C_{TF}$		$C_{TF} = \sum C_{TF150} + C_{TF1} + C_{TF300}$	22,0
$C_{m150}$	$P_{m150} = 938 \text{ €m}^2$	$C_{m150} = A_{m150} \cdot P_{m150}$	0,7
$C_{m1}$	$P_{m1} = 1471 \text{ €m}^2$	$C_{m1} = A_{m1} \cdot P_{m1}$	3,5
$C_{m300}$	$P_{m300} = 385 \text{ €m}^2$	$C_{m300} = A_{m300} \cdot P_{m300}$	3,5
$C_m$		$C_m = \sum C_{m150} + C_{m1} + C_{m300}$	7,7
$C_V$	$N_{150, 1, 300} = 1$ $P_{V150} = 2,000 \text{ €module}^{-1}$ $P_{V1} = 3,600 \text{ €module}^{-1}$ $P_{V300} = 400 \text{ € module}^{-1}$	$C_V = \sum N_{150} \cdot P_{V150} + N_1 \cdot P_{V1} + N_{300} \cdot P_{V300}$	6,0
$C_{P150}$	$Q_{150} = 0.1 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ $P_{150} = 325 \text{ kPa}$ $Q_{R150} = 10 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ $P_{R150} = 160 \text{ kPa}$	$C_{P150} = 389.12 \cdot ((Q_{150} \cdot P_{150})^{0.39} + (Q_{R150} \cdot P_{R150})^{0.39}) \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	10,8
$C_{P1}$	$Q_1 = 0.098 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ $P_1 = 715 \text{ kPa}$ $Q_{R1} = 31.8 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ $P_{R1} = 210 \text{ kPa}$	$C_{P1} = 389.12 \cdot ((Q_1 \cdot P_1)^{0.39} + (Q_{R1} \cdot P_{R1})^{0.39}) \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	17,9
$C_{P300}$	$Q_{300} = 0.093 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ $P_{300} = 620 \text{ kPa}$ $Q_{R300} = 1.4 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ $P_{R300} = 100 \text{ kPa}$	$C_{P300} = 389.12 \cdot ((Q_{300} \cdot P_{300})^{0.39} + (Q_{R300} \cdot P_{R300})^{0.39}) \cdot conv \cdot CEPCI$	5,6
$C_P$		$C_P = \sum C_{P150} + C_{P1} + C_{P300}$	34,3
$C_I$		$C_I = 0,25 \cdot (C_{PV} + C_{IC} + C_{TF} + C_m + C_V + C_P)$	29,9
<b>Total CAPEX</b>			<b>149,5</b>

Table 6

costs	Parameters	Equations	Results (€m <sup>-3</sup> )
A <sub>c</sub>	i = 7% DL = 15 years CAPEX = 149,520 € DF <sub>150</sub> = 7668 h.year <sup>-1</sup> Q <sub>150</sub> = 0.1 m <sup>3</sup> .h <sup>-1</sup>	$A_c = \frac{i \cdot (1-i)^{DL}}{(1+i)^{DL} - 1} \cdot \frac{CAPEX}{DF_{150} \cdot Q_{150}}$	21.410
M <sub>c150</sub>	i <sub>m</sub> = 7% ML <sub>cera</sub> = 5 years C <sub>m150</sub> = 703 € C <sub>m1</sub> = 2,574 €	$M_{c150} = \frac{i_m}{(1+i_m)^{ML_{cera}} - 1} \cdot C_{m150}$	0.159
M <sub>c1</sub>	Q <sub>1</sub> = 0.098 m <sup>3</sup> .h <sup>-1</sup> DF <sub>1</sub> = 7106 h.year <sup>-1</sup> C <sub>m300</sub> = 3,462 €	$M_{c1} = \frac{i_m}{(1+i_m)^{ML_{cera}} - 1} \cdot \frac{C_{m1}}{DF_1 \cdot Q_1}$	0.857
M <sub>c300</sub>	Q <sub>300</sub> = 0.093 m <sup>3</sup> .h <sup>-1</sup> DF <sub>300</sub> = 6578 h.year <sup>-1</sup>	$M_{c300} = \frac{i_m}{(1+i_m)^{ML_{orga}} - 1} \cdot \frac{C_{m300}}{DF_{300} \cdot Q_{300}}$	1.637
M <sub>c</sub>		$M_c = \sum M_{c150} + M_{c1} + M_{c300}$	2.653
E <sub>c150</sub>	P <sub>150</sub> = 325 kPa Ce = 5.10 <sup>-5</sup> €Wh <sup>-1</sup> η = 70% P <sub>R150</sub> = 160 kPa Q <sub>R150</sub> = 10 m <sup>3</sup> .h <sup>-1</sup>	$E_{c150} = \frac{Q_{150} \cdot P_{150} \cdot 1000 \cdot Ce}{\eta \cdot Q_{150}} + \frac{Q_{R150} \cdot P_{R150} \cdot 1000 \cdot Ce}{\eta \cdot Q_{R150}}$	0.010
E <sub>c1</sub>	P <sub>1</sub> = 715 kPa P <sub>R1</sub> = 210 kPa Q <sub>R1</sub> = 31.8 m <sup>3</sup> .h <sup>-1</sup> P <sub>300</sub> = 620 kPa	$E_{c1} = \frac{Q_1 \cdot P_1 \cdot 1000 \cdot Ce}{\eta \cdot Q_1} + \frac{Q_{R1} \cdot P_{R1} \cdot 1000 \cdot Ce}{\eta \cdot Q_{R1}}$	0.018
E <sub>c300</sub>	P <sub>R300</sub> = 100 kPa Q <sub>R300</sub> = 1.4 m <sup>3</sup> .h <sup>-1</sup>	$E_{c300} = \frac{Q_{300} \cdot P_{300} \cdot 1000 \cdot Ce}{\eta \cdot Q_{300}} + \frac{Q_{R300} \cdot P_{R300} \cdot 1000 \cdot Ce}{\eta \cdot Q_{R300}}$	0.014
E <sub>c</sub>		$E_c = \sum E_{c150} + E_{c1} + E_{c300}$	0.042
C <sub>aceticacid</sub>		$C_{aceticacid} = \frac{1}{DF_1 \cdot Q_1} \cdot V_{aceticacid} \cdot (cost_{aceticacid} \cdot concentration_{aceticacid})$	2.10 <sup>-6</sup>
C <sub>calcaline</sub>	V <sub>C150</sub> = 5.1.10 <sup>-3</sup> m <sup>3</sup> V <sub>C1</sub> = 1.6.10 <sup>-2</sup> m <sup>3</sup> V <sub>C300</sub> = 6.1.10 <sup>-2</sup> m <sup>3</sup> Freq <sub>b150</sub> = 142 year <sup>-1</sup> Freq <sub>b1</sub> = 374. year <sup>-1</sup> Freq <sub>b300</sub> = 598. year <sup>-1</sup>	$C_{calcaline} = \sum \frac{1}{DF_{150,1,300} \cdot Q_{150,1,300}} \cdot (V_{C_{150,1,300}} \cdot Freq_{b_{150,1,300}}) \cdot (cost_{b_{150,1,300}} \cdot concentration_{b_{150,1,300}}) \cdot (cost_{s_{150,1}} \cdot concentration_{s_{150,1}})$	5.875
C <sub>ccacid</sub>	Freq <sub>a150</sub> = 36. year <sup>-1</sup> Freq <sub>a1</sub> = 94. year <sup>-1</sup> Freq <sub>a300</sub> = 150. year <sup>-1</sup>	$C_{ccacid} = \sum \frac{1}{DF_{150,1,300} \cdot Q_{150,1,300}} \cdot (V_{C_{150,1,300}} \cdot Freq_{a_{150,1,300}}) \cdot (cost_a \cdot concentration_a)$	1.544
CRD <sub>c</sub>	dc = 0.12 €m <sup>-3</sup> V <sub>R150</sub> = 1.01.10 <sup>-3</sup> m <sup>3</sup> V <sub>R1</sub> = 3.2.10 <sup>-3</sup> m <sup>3</sup> V <sub>R300</sub> = 1.22.10 <sup>-2</sup> m <sup>3</sup>	$CRD_c = dc \cdot \sum \frac{1}{DF_{150,1,300} \cdot Q_{150,1,300}} \cdot ((V_{R_{150,1,300}} \cdot Freq_{b_{150,1,300}}) + (V_{R_{150,1,300}} \cdot Freq_{a_{150,1,300}}))$	0.002
MA <sub>c</sub>		$MA_c = \frac{0,02 \cdot CAPEX}{DF_{150} \cdot Q_{150}}$	3.900
<b>OPEX total</b>			<b>35.4</b>



### 3.4 Influence of membrane installation capacity on CAPEX, OPEX and extracts

#### production cost

In table 7, for the presented case study, different OPEX values for the filtration of 0.1, 1, 10, 30 and 60 m<sup>3</sup>.h<sup>-1</sup> were assessed. For a plant capacity of 10 m<sup>3</sup>.h<sup>-1</sup> the total OPEX was equal to 12.6 €m<sup>-3</sup>.

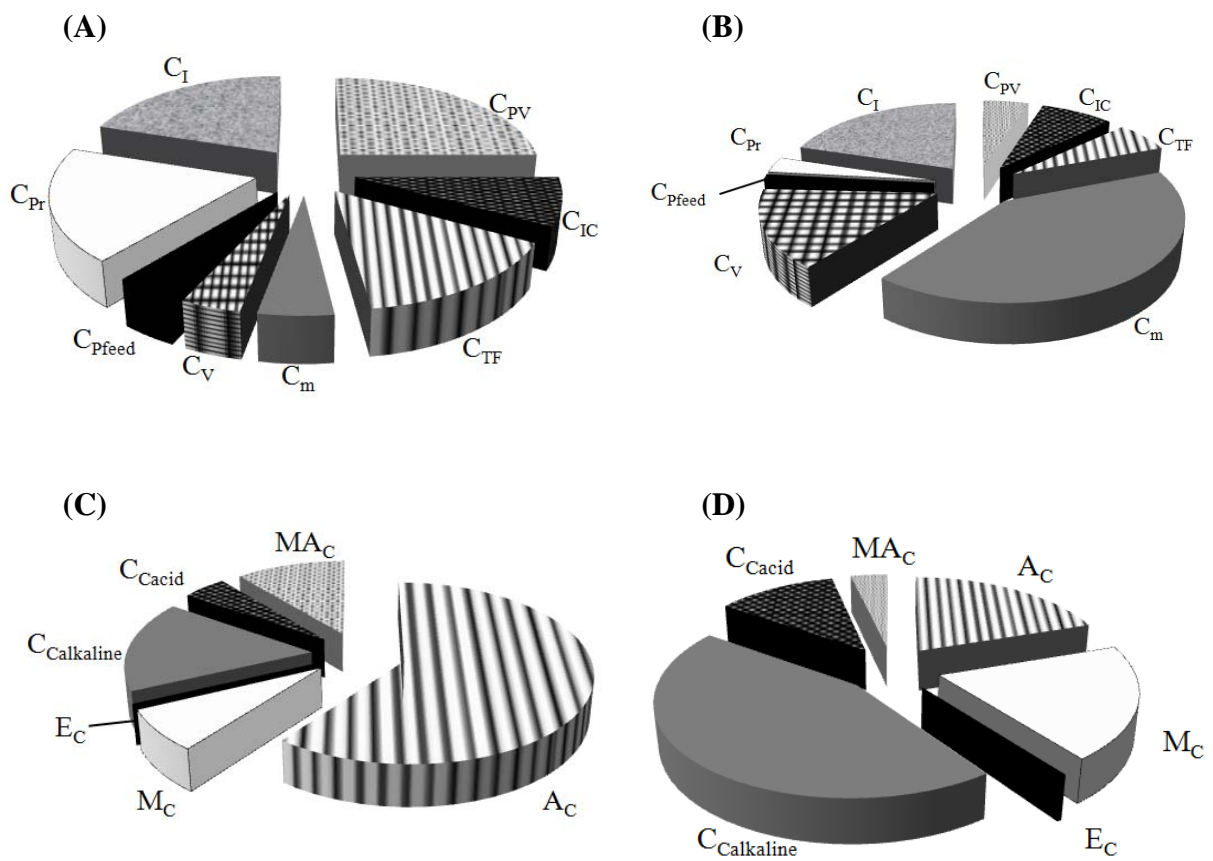
Table 7

Plant capacity (m <sup>3</sup> .h <sup>-1</sup> )	0.1	1	10	30	60
(m <sup>3</sup> .year <sup>-1</sup> )	767	7,670	76,700	230,100	460,200
Total membrane area (m <sup>2</sup> )	12.1	105.9	1047	3290	6405
CAPEX (k€)	149.5	502.6	2,266	5,481	9,637
OPEX (€m <sup>-3</sup> )	35.4	17.4	12.6	12.2	11.6
Annual 1 kDa extract production (ton <sub>DM</sub> .year <sup>-1</sup> )	0.96	9.6	96.1	288.4	576.8
Annual 300 Da extract production (ton <sub>DM</sub> .year <sup>-1</sup> )	0.64	6.4	64	191.9	383.9

This OPEX value was lower the one presented by Arvaniti et al. (2012) for the same installation size (23 €m<sup>-3</sup>) for the treatment of olive mill wastewater (OMWW) by a UF/RO system for nutrient and phenolic compounds recovery. The single operational cost with the higher contribution to the total OPEX value was the labor cost at 28.8 %. The authors specified that OMWW were collected from 50 different sites around the establishment area of UF/RO system. This labor cost includes transportation costs (evaluated at 0.25 €km<sup>-1</sup>) and work with loading equipment. This labor cost is not included in the present study as membrane system would be directly connected to the TMP process water network. Arkell et al. (2014) have concentrated lignin from softwood black liquor with UF/NF process. They found OPEX value around 5 €m<sup>-3</sup>. This reported OPEX cost is in the same range than the OPEX value obtained in Servaes et al. (2017) which concentrate and purify lignin from the spent liquor of the alkaline oxidation of woody biomass with UF/RO system. They obtained an OPEX value of 3 €m<sup>-3</sup> for the treatment of 10,000 m<sup>3</sup>.year<sup>-1</sup> when for equivalent plant

capacity the presented case study obtained a value around  $17 \text{ €m}^{-3}$  (value for  $1 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  which is equivalent to  $7670 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{year}^{-1}$ ). One of the significant difference which can be pointed out is the membrane price. Servaes et al. (2017) used ESP04 polymeric tubes in modified PES as UF step and 8040 spiral-wound module for RO treatment. They announced prices of  $142 \text{ €m}^{-2}$  for UF membrane and  $31 \text{ €m}^{-2}$  for RO membrane whereas the price of membranes varies from 385 to  $1471 \text{ €m}^{-2}$  in this study (Table 3).

The distribution of specific costs to the CAPEX and OPEX for plant capacities of 0.1 and  $60 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  are presented in figure 7.



Figure

It can be noticed the small relevance of membrane investment ( $C_m$ ) (5 %) in the capital cost of filtration plant of  $0.1 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  whereas this value increases until 40 % for a capacity of  $60 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ . It is also the case for membrane module cost ( $C_v$ ) contribution which is low (4 %) for the plant of  $0.1 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  capacity. This value was multiplied by 4 when capacity of plant was elevated to  $60 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ . Membrane cost (NF) fluctuate in the range of 20-30% in the case of plants treated between 200 and  $400 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  and this value increases to near 50 % for installation of larger sizes (Liikanen et al., 2006). Suarez et al. (2015) obtained a contribution of less than 5 % for their membrane cost of RO plant designed to treat  $20 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  and Servaes et al. (2017) announced a contribution between 10 and 20 % for UF/RO installation with capacity between 1.4 and  $140 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ . All the mentioned values from literature use only polymeric membranes whereas in the present study, two membrane steps are performed with ceramic ones. This difference of membrane material could explain the relative high contribution of membrane cost for installation treating  $60 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ . This factor is highly dependent on the membrane material chosen, the total membrane area installed and its associated cost (Ahmad et al., 2009). As installation cost ( $C_I$ ) presents a stable contribution to the total CAPEX (25 % of all the others CAPEX components), the contribution of all the others costs has decreased with the scale up of installation which is the benefits of the economy of scale. In contrast the cost of membranes during scale up is relatively linear. Therefore this phenomenon can also explain the more significant contribution of membranes cost in the cost repartition. The biggest part of OPEX for plant treating  $0.1 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  was the amortization constituent ( $A_C$ ) with a value of 60.4 %. This value drops until 19.8 % for plant capacity of  $60 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ . This last value well corresponds with value of Suarez et al. (2015) at 29.3 %. The membrane replacement costs (19.8 %) and the alkaline membrane cleaning (44.6 %) would also represent high cost of the global OPEX value for the treatment of  $60 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ . The production cost of extracts (*i.e.* sum of 1 kDa and 300 Da extracts) ( $\text{€kg}^{-1}$ ) calculated

with equation (13) was assessed depending on plant capacity and for IRR of 3 and 5 years (Figure 8).

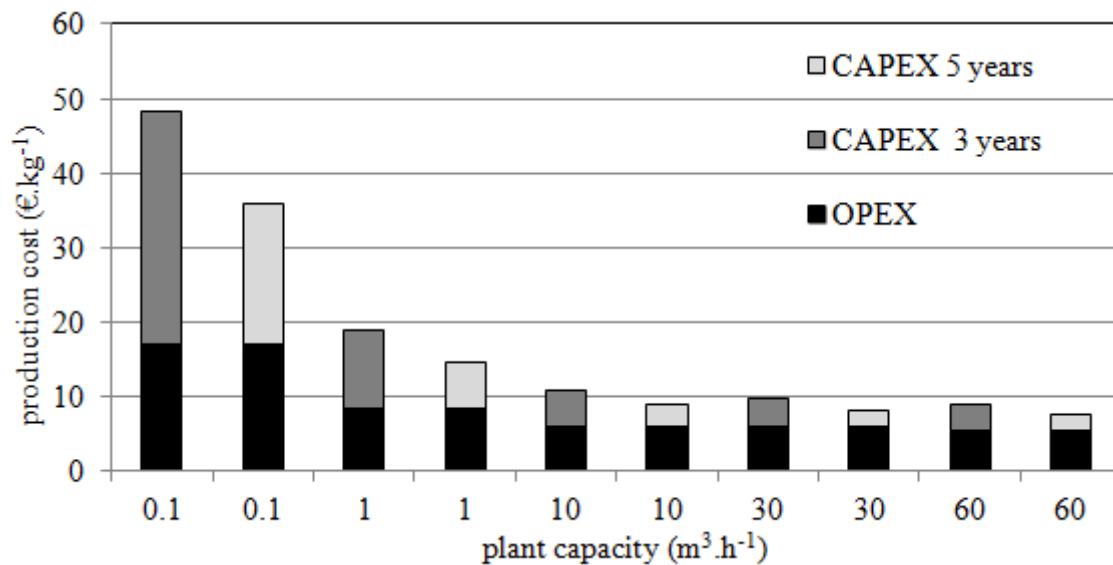


Figure 8

As confirmed by literature (Garcia et al., 2013; Servaes et al., (2017), total production cost decreases with the augmentation of plant capacity. For plant capacities equal or higher than 10 m<sup>3</sup>.h<sup>-1</sup>, OPEX contribution to the production cost of extracts was around 6 €kg<sup>-1</sup> and represents around 55 and 75 % of production cost for IRR of 3 and 5 years respectively. From installation able to treat 10 m<sup>3</sup>.h<sup>-1</sup> production cost of extracts was equal or below 10 €kg<sup>-1</sup>. Production costs of 46 €ton<sup>-1</sup> and 68 €ton<sup>-1</sup> were proposed by Arkell et al. (2014) for the NF filtration of lignin from softwood black liquor with respectively organic or ceramic NF. This price increased until 120 €ton<sup>-1</sup> (organic NF) and 430 €ton<sup>-1</sup> (ceramic NF) when softwood black liquor was pretreated with UF. With an UF process used to concentrate and purify by diafiltration lignin from the spent liquor of the alkaline oxidation of woody biomass, Servaes et al. (2017) obtained a production cost of 616 €ton<sup>-1</sup> for the treatment of 10,000 m<sup>3</sup> per year. This value increased until 1,175 €ton<sup>-1</sup> with an added RO system for the recovery of 80 % of UF permeate. The significant difference of production costs between cited literature and this study comes from the initial concentration of valuable compounds (*i.e.* lignin, lignans, LCC)

present in liquors from paper industries and their final concentration reached in produced extracts. Liquors from chemical pulp processes such as kraft or sulfite processes usually have higher contents of lignin as 30-190 g.L<sup>-1</sup> (Kevlich et al., 2017) and 30 g.L<sup>-1</sup> (Al-Rudainy et al., 2017) respectively. In comparison lignin content of process water from thermomechanical pulp system was in the range 700-1300 mg.L<sup>-1</sup> (Persson et al., 2010b; Zasadowski et al., 2014). As in this study dry matter concentrations were of 27.4 g.L<sup>-1</sup> in 1 kDa extract (23 % of lignin) and 7.4 g.L<sup>-1</sup> in 300 Da extract (2 % of lignan), 230 g.L<sup>-1</sup> of only lignin were measured in the final NF retentate of Arkell et al. (2014) and 17 g.L<sup>-1</sup> of lignin assessed in UF retentate of Servaes et al. (2017). Those high final concentrations of lignin after filtration processes lead to higher produced quantities and therefore lower productions costs. As fractions 1 kDa (enriched in native lignin and LCC) and 300 Da (enriched in lignan) could be reserved for high added value markets , a selling price including production cost (10 €kg<sup>-1</sup>) could be acceptable for targeted industrial sectors. This price could increase if higher purity of fractions is necessary and downstream processes such as evaporation or spray-drying could be used. The objective would be to adapt the purity of the fractions to obtain the planned specificity by companies and in the same time to limit cost production of the extracts. This would ensure the economic viability of the process.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Chemical pulp mill turned to a sustainable development many years ago and valorize as chemical or energy their main side streams. It is not yet the case for thermomechanical pulp mill, as their main aqueous discharge is considered as highly diluted and too expensive for organic content recovery. Therefore its valuable content composed of hemicelluloses, lignin, LCC and lignans directly goes to wastewater treatment plant which has a huge impact on

water disposal total cost for the factories. The present study developed a process containing three membrane steps: 150 kDa UF for suspended matter removal and 1 kDa and 300 Da NF for respectively retaining lignin and lignans. The fraction obtained in the 1 kDa retentate, contains 23 % of lignin and the one obtained in the 300 Da retentate 2 % of lignans. The process with a plant capacity of  $60 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  was able to produce 12 tons of lignin and 825 kg of lignans per month. It can be considered that both extracts are pre concentrated in lignin and lignans. The high added value of 1 kDa extract came from the native structure of the lignin preserved during thermomechanical process due to its soft conditions compared to classic chemical process. This characteristic is currently highly researched for a better production of aromatics molecules coming from lignin. The content of lignans can also be considered as highly valuable as many companies are searching for alternative sourcing of lignans less expensive than the current one sold at  $1 \text{ €mg}^{-1}$  for hydroxymatairesinol in nutritional supplement.

It is true that further concentration would be necessary if higher purity has been required. In order to obtain the best production cost of those extracts, it is important to adapt purity to the required demand of industries using the extracts. It can be considered that the produced extracts are reserved for markets at high added value. An economy of scale was noticeable as soon as plant capacity reached  $10 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  where the production cost of extracts dropped down below  $10 \text{ €kg}^{-1}$ . To conclude, valorization of TMP water with the proposed membrane installation could improve the profitability of TMP plants and in the same time efficiently saving fresh water and reducing the amount of generated wastes as 300 Da permeate had the required characteristics to be re used.

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## Nomenclature: abbreviations and notations

$A_C$	amortization constituent
AF	amortization factor
$AF_m$	specific amortization factor of membrane replacement
$A_m$	membrane area, $m^2$
$C_{\text{aceticacid}}$	cost of acetic acid addition
CAPEX	capital expenditures
$C_C$	cost of chemicals
$C_{\text{Acid}}$	cost of acid cleaning
$C_{\text{Alkaline}}$	cost of alkaline cleaning
$C_e$	energy cost, $\text{€Wh}^{-1}$
CEPCI	chemical engineer plant cost index
$C_{\text{feed}}$	concentration in the feed
$C_I$	installation cost
$C_{IC}$	instruments and control capital cost
CIP	cleaning in place
$C_m$	membrane capital cost
$C_P$	pumps capital cost
$C_{\text{permeate}}$	concentration in the permeate
$C_{\text{production}}$	production cost, $\text{€kg}^{-1}$
$C_{PV}$	pipes and valves capital cost
$CRD_C$	costs due to rinsing disposal
$C_{TF}$	tanks and frames capital cost
$C_v$	pressure vessels capital cost
dc	factory demineralized water cost
DF	Duration of filtration, $\text{h.y}^{-1}$
$d_h$	hydraulic diameter, m
DL	design life of the plant, years
DM	Dry matter
$E_C$	cost of energy
$E_f$	energy cost for pumping system of the feed
$E_R$	energy cost for pumping system of the recirculation
$\text{Freq}_a$	frequency of acid cleaning, $\text{times.y}^{-1}$
$\text{Freq}_b$	frequency of basic cleaning, $\text{times.y}^{-1}$
GC	gas chromatography
GGM	galactoglucomannans
i	interest rate, decimal %
$i_m$	interest rate for membrane replacement, decimal %
IRR	internal rate of return, year
J	Permeate flow rate, $\text{L.m}^{-2}.\text{h}^{-1}$
LCC	lignin carbohydrate complexes
$MA_C$	maintenance costs
$M_{\text{annual}}$	annual mass of extracts produced, $\text{kg.y}^{-1}$
$M_C$	membrane replacement costs
ML	membrane lifetime, years

$m_{\text{lignan}}$	mass of lignin
$m_{\text{lignin}}$	mass of lignans
$m_{\text{phenolic acids}}$	mass of phenolic acids
$m_{\text{polyphenols}}$	mass of polyphenols
MS	mass spectrometry
N	membrane module number
NF	nanofiltration
OMWW	olive mill wastewater
OPEX	operating expenditures
P	inlet pressure of membrane, kPa
$p_e$	total perimeter of membrane channels, m
$P_R$	pressure to compensate head-loss, Pa
$P_V$	membrane module cost
Q	feed flow entering each membrane step, $\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$
$Q'$	feed flow rate, $\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$
$Q_R$	recirculation flow rate, $\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$
$Q'_R$	recirculation flow rate, $\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$
RO	reverse osmosis
RR	retention rate
S	membrane total section, $\text{m}^2$
TMP	thermomechanical process
u	cross flow velocity, $\text{m} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$
UF	ultrafiltration
$V_{\text{annual}}$	annual volume of process water, $\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{y}^{-1}$
$V_C$	volume of cleaning solution, $\text{m}^3$
VR	volume reduction,
$V_R$	demineralized water volume, $\text{m}^3$
$\eta$	energy efficiency of pumping systems, decimal %