

**WUFI®**

# **Guideline for Assessing the Risk of Corrosion with WUFI® Corr**

**Date: January 2024**

## Basics

- Cause of Corrosion..... [slide 3](#)
- Corrosion Rate..... [slide 4](#)
- Mechanism of Corrosion..... [slide 5](#)

## Three Stage Evaluation Procedure

- Stage Description..... [slide 7](#)

## WUFI® Corr

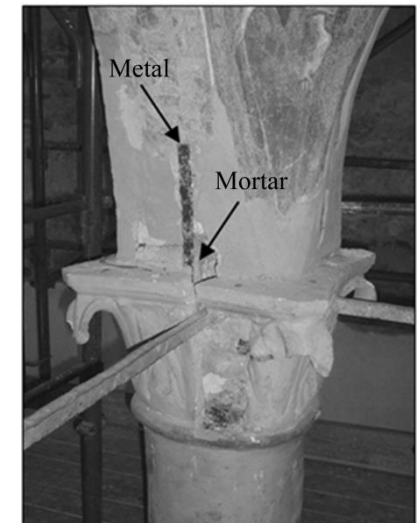
- Description of the Model..... [slide 11](#)
- Experimental Data..... [slide 12](#)
- Research Results..... [slide 13](#)
- Calculation Model..... [slide 14](#)
- Input Data..... [slide 16](#)
- Assessing Calculation Results..... [slide 19](#)
- Evaluation of the Results..... [slide 21](#)

## Examples..... [slide 22](#)

- A: Uninsulated Exterior Wall with Steel Anchors..... [slide 23](#)
- B: Exterior Wall with Interior Insulation and Steel Anchors..... [slide 41](#)

## Corrosion of metallic fixings:

- Common cause of damage to old buildings
  - **Corrosion** can occur when the **steel surface comes into contact with moisture** (e.g. condensate, rainwater, rising moisture).  
**Exception:** steel is protected by the alkalinity of the environment (e.g. in concrete).
  - Corrosion can **weaken metal** and **create oxides** that expand and lead to detachment of the top layer
- **Disadvantageous** for the **durability** of the construction
- Challenge for refurbishment!
- Possibilities:** Limiting the rate of corrosion by controlling the temperature and humidity conditions in the component or in the indoor air



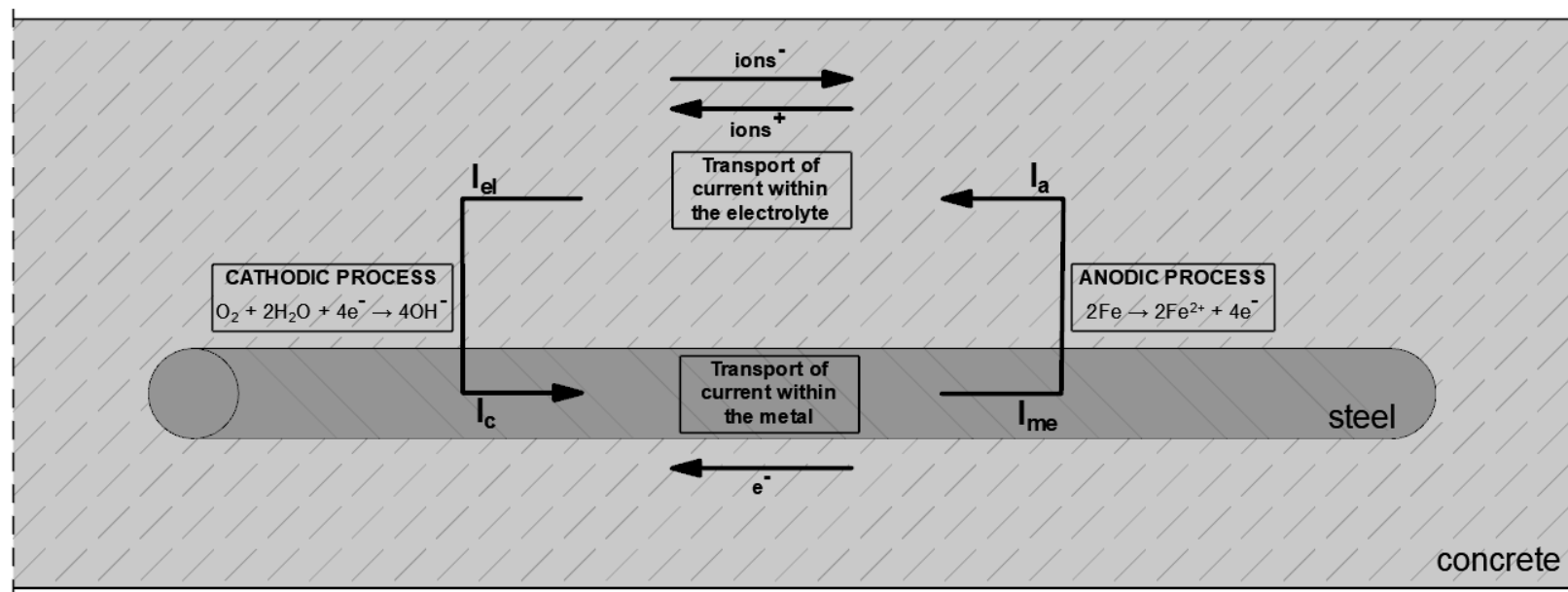
### Corrosion behaviour of embedded metals:

- Depends on the steel itself, on the embedded material and on the moisture conditions.
- Is **influenced by the microstructure of the embedded material** and the **chemical composition of solution contained in their pores**.
- Corrosion rate depends on the availability of **water and oxygen** in the pores of the embedding material near the steel surface.
- **Temperature and relative humidity** of the environment **influence** the **electrical resistivity** of the building materials and thus also the **corrosion rate**.

**In general:** the lower the moisture content, the higher the electrical resistivity of these materials and the lower the corrosion rate of steel.

## Basics: Mechanism of Corrosion

- **Circuit of the corrosion process**, where four complementary partial processes occur simultaneously, which means they occur at the same time and rate. → The **corrosion rate** will be **controlled by the slowest of the four partial processes**.
- The transport of current within the steel is always very fast and thus never has a limiting effect. The other three processes can occur very slowly and thus become the limiting ones.



The **corrosion rate becomes negligible** when one of the **following conditions exist**:

- The **anodic process is slow**, because the reinforcement is passive e.g. the steel is in contact with alkaline or non-carbonated mortars / concrete (unusual in historic constructions).
- The **cathodic process is slow**, because the rate at which oxygen reaches the surface of the reinforcement is low e.g. embedding material is permanently saturated by water (rare in buildings).
- The **electrical resistance** of the embedded material **is high**, e.g. if structure is exposed to dry environment with low relative humidity.

## Three Stage Evaluation Procedure

---

For the evaluation of the corrosion risk of reinforcement in mortar / concrete, lime mortar and gypsum, the temperature and humidity conditions in the structure at the position of the embedded steel are determined using hygrothermal simulations and then evaluated according to following stages:

### **Stage I:**

Evaluation of the limit moisture below which no corrosion is to be expected.

### **Stage II:**

Evaluation using a temperature and moisture dependent limit curve

### **Stage III:**

Evaluation of the corrosion behavior over time depending on the corrosion conditions and binder types

# Three Stage Evaluation Procedure

---

## Stage I:

Moisture at steel level

< 80 % RH for carbonated concrete

< 60 % RH for non-cementitious embedding materials

Here the lower moisture limit below which no corrosion is to be expected is used. For carbonated concrete, this is 80 % RH (NAVE report 2023). For other, non-cementitious embedding materials, the limit value is 60 % RH (ISO 13788:2013).

These criteria are clearly on the safe side. If the limits are not met, a more detailed design can be made for gypsum, lime and carbonated concrete/mortar, according to Stage II or Stage III. For other embedding materials, currently no specific information on corrosion of steel as a function of temperature and humidity conditions are available.

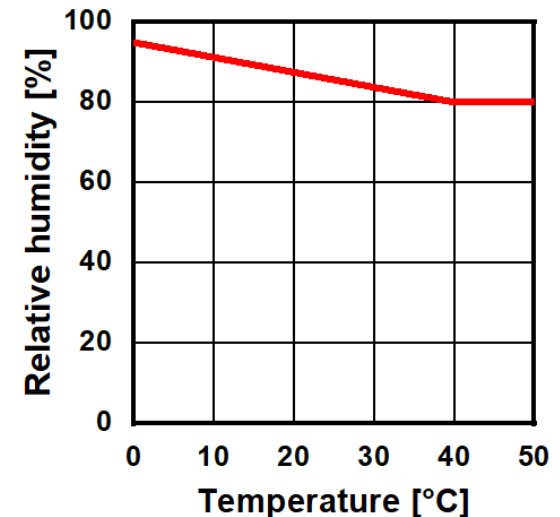


# Three Stage Evaluation Procedure

## Stage II:

The hourly values must remain below the temperature and moisture dependent limit curve

$$f(\vartheta) = \begin{cases} -0,375\vartheta + 95, & 0^{\circ}\text{C} < \vartheta < 40^{\circ}\text{C} \\ 80 & \vartheta \geq 40^{\circ}\text{C} \end{cases} \quad [\%]$$

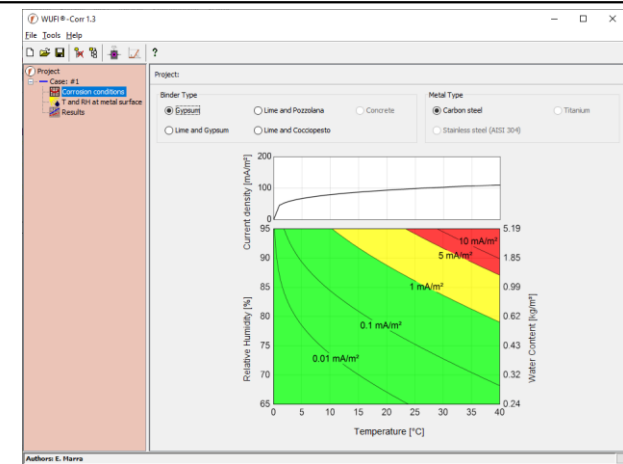


In evaluation stage II, the evaluation of the corrosion risk in carbonated mortar / concrete, lime mortar and gypsum in the reinforcement level is carried out via a temperature and moisture dependent limit curve according to the equation above. This limit curve represents a safe-side simplification of the transition to the critical (yellow) region of the corrosion maps for concrete in stage III. If the hourly values are below the limit curve, no corrosion is expected; for values above the limit curve, corrosion conditions are present, and it is recommended to perform a more detailed evaluation using stage III.

# Three Stage Evaluation Procedure

## Stage III:

Determination of the time depending corrosion behavior using corrosion maps.



In stage III, the evaluation of the corrosion risk in carbonated mortar / concrete, lime mortar and gypsum in the reinforcement level is carried out depending on the corrosion conditions and binder types (using corrosion maps) and thus the temporal corrosion behavior of the steel is determined. This can be done via the postprocessor WUFI® Corr, which is described on the following slides.

**traffic light  
evaluation scheme**

	$I_{\text{corr}}$ [mA/m <sup>2</sup> ]	Loss [µm/25years]
	≤ 1	≤ 30 µm
	≤ 5	≤ 150 µm
	> 5	> 150 µm

- The corrosion model describes the **effect of the environmental and material factors affecting corrosion of steel inserts** embedded in building components.
- It allows the **prediction of the corrosion rate** of steel inserts in porous building materials **over time** depending on temperature and relative humidity at the steel surface.
- The model allows:
  - Preventive conservation / restoration (of cultural heritage buildings)
  - Safe design (of new building components)
  - State-of-preservation assessment (if material sampling is not possible)
  - Design of measures to reduce / prevent corrosion of steel inserts

**Download-Link:** [WUFI® Add-ons | WUFI \(en\)](#)

- The model is based on **laboratory tests**, mainly **focused on heritage buildings and materials**.
- Prediction of the corrosion in mortar and bricks is possible.
- Following **four different kinds of mortars** were considered:
  - Two aerial mortars:  
gypsum and a mixture of lime and gypsum
  - Two hydraulic mortars:  
blending lime with two different types of hydraulic additions:  
Pozzolana (powdered volcanic minerals) and Cocciopesto (crushed clay bricks)
- The experimental studies are divided into **two different humidity ranges**:
  - The first one considered a humidity range up to the sorption equilibrium at 95 % RH (hygroscopic region).
  - The second one takes place at saturation.

- In the corrosion behaviour of steel inserts in masonry, **temperature, relative humidity and water content play a key role.**
- **Clear correlation between the corrosion rate of steel and the electrical resistivity** of each embedding material.  
→ the lower the resistivity of the embedding material, the higher the corrosion rate of the inserts.
- The resistivity can be related to both the temperature and the relative humidity of the environment  
→ correlation between the corrosion rate and the hygrothermal conditions of the environment.
- The corrosion rate is negligible in samples exposed to 65 % and 80 % RH (even at 40 °C).
- The corrosion rate reaches high values in wet environments or during the presence of liquid water.

- Hygroscopic region (up to 95 % RH):

- Exponential relationship between corrosion rate, temperature and relative humidity.

$$i_{corr,1} = d_1 \cdot g \cdot e^{(a_1 \cdot g + b_1 \cdot RH + c_1)} \quad (1)$$

- Saturation (with partial submersion):

- Power relationship between corrosion rate and temperature

$$i_{corr,sat} = a_{sat} \cdot g^{b_{sat}} \quad (2)$$

In case of 0 °C,  
corrosion rate is  
set to zero!

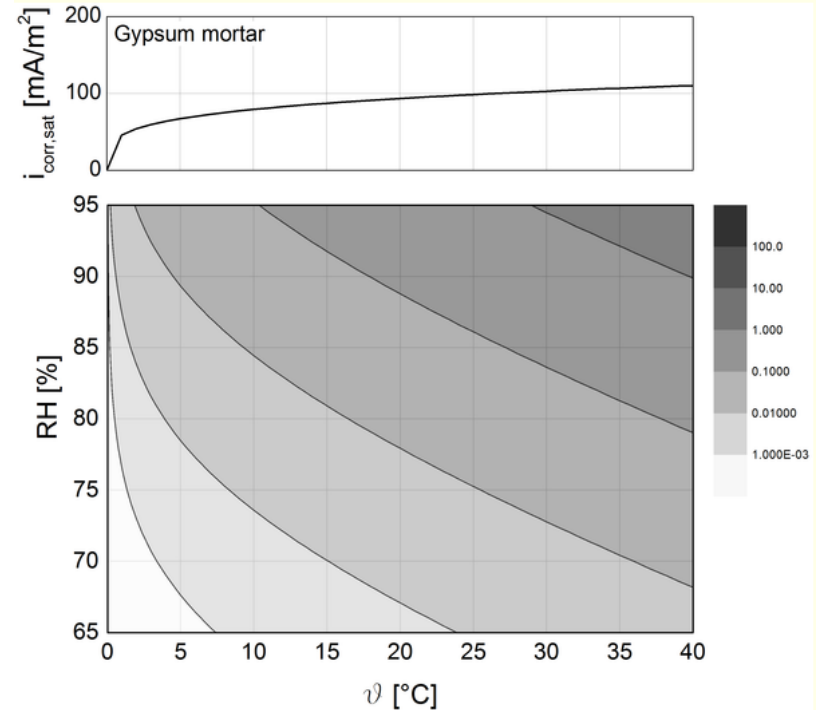
- Capillary water region (95 to 100 % RH)

- Mathematical approach, as it is difficult to precisely measure the moisture content in this high humidity levels.

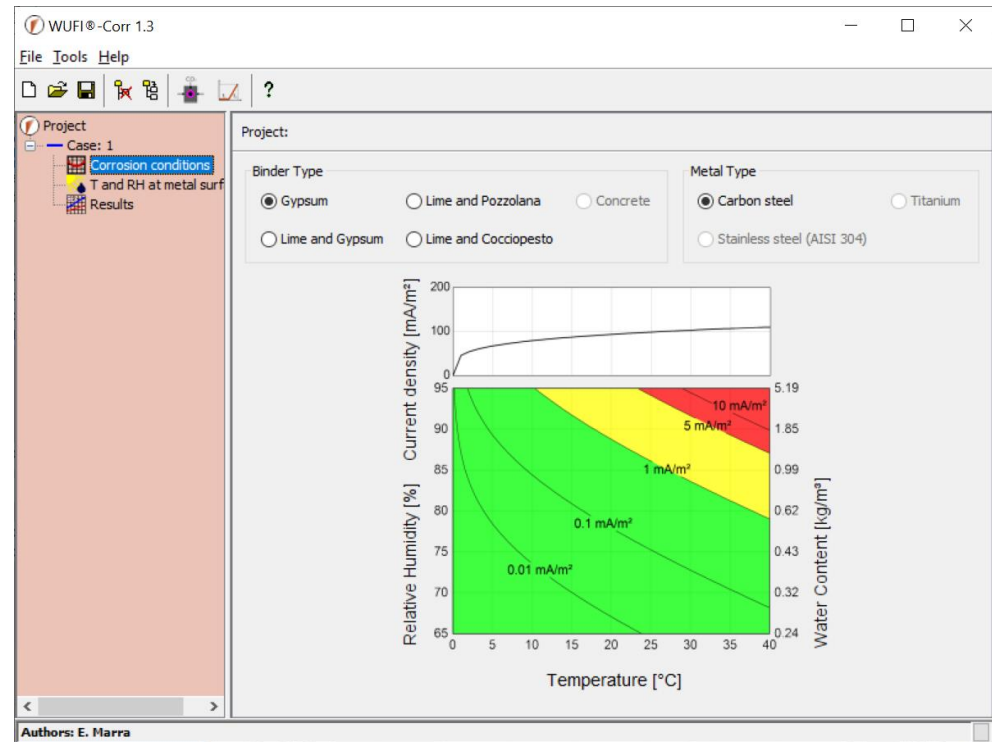
$$i_{corr,2} = i_{corr,sat} \cdot \frac{(k - 100) \cdot RH}{k - RH} \cdot \frac{1}{100} \quad (3)$$

$$k = a_2 \cdot g^{b_2} + c_2 \quad (4)$$

- Using equation (1) a corrosion map can be created for the specific material.
- On x- and y-axis temperature and relative humidity are plotted. The isolines represent the corrosion rate in a logarithmic scale and the different grey-scale gradations correspond to different rates of corrosion. The range of the graph is limited to the range of the laboratory tests (RH up to 95 %).
- In the upper part of the figure the corrosion rate as a function of temperature at saturation is represented, according to equation (2).



- Corrosion conditions are determined by the **selection of the binder / embedded material and the metal** (currently only carbon steel available).
- The type of embedding material influences the corrosion behaviour of the steel with its microstructure and the chemical composition of the pore solution. Included at the moment:
  - Gypsum
  - Lime and Gypsum
  - Lime and Pozzolana
  - Lime and Cocciopesto

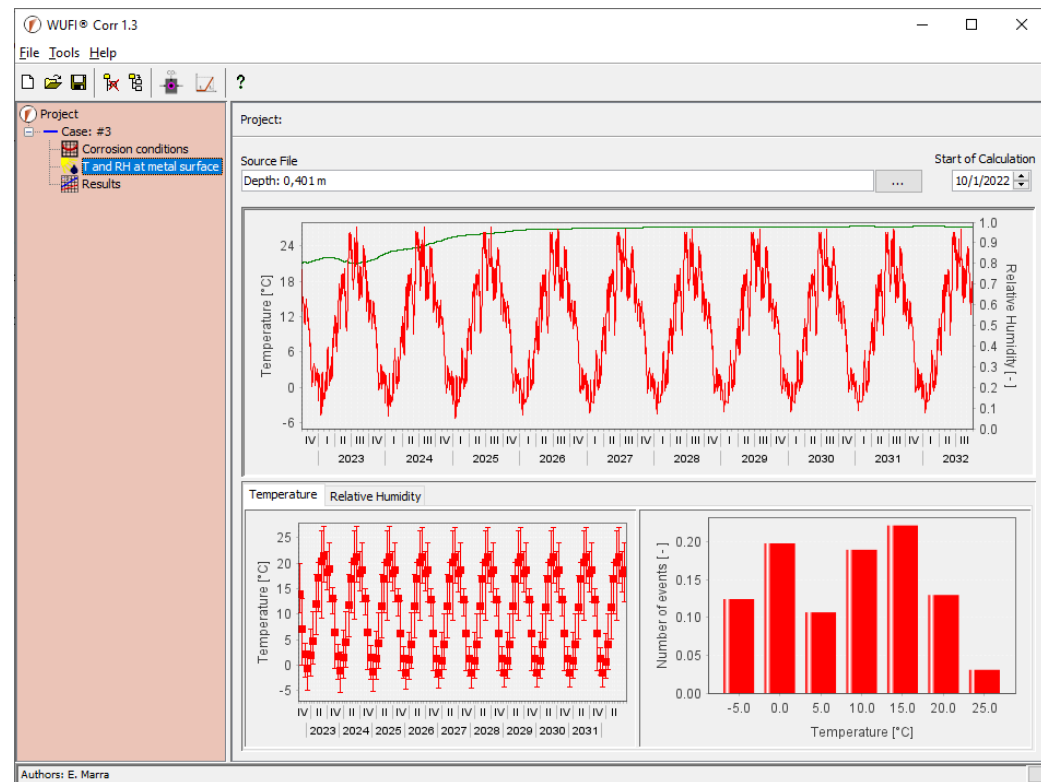




Notes:

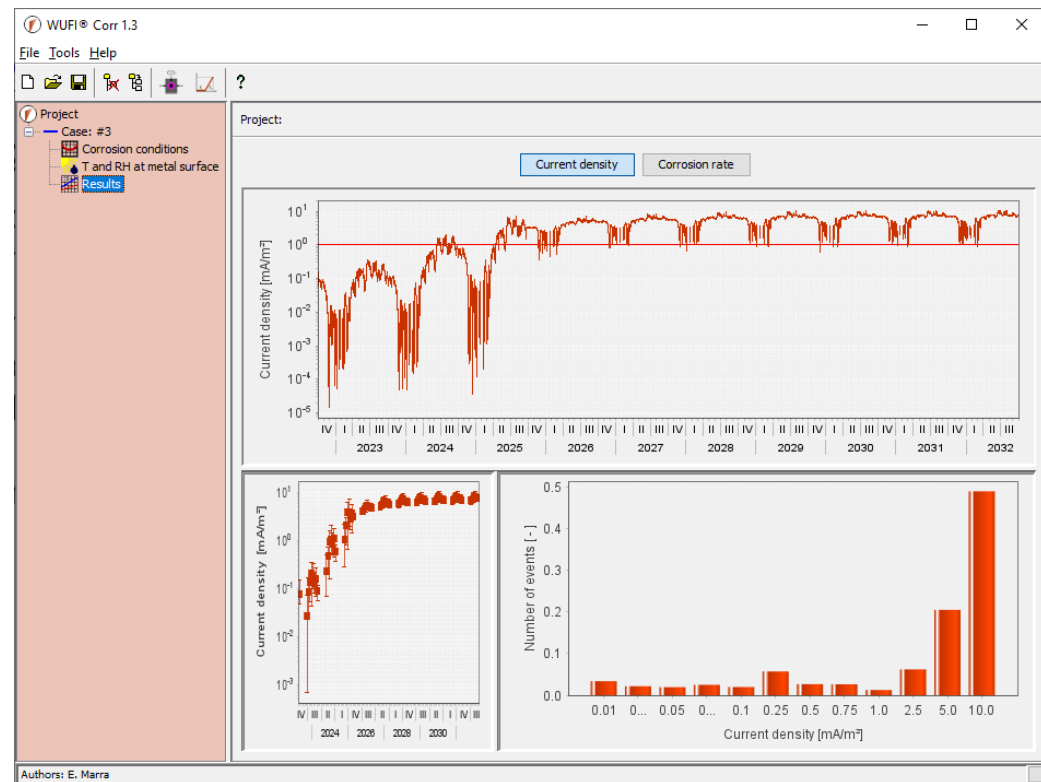
- **Concrete** itself **as well as the traffic light scheme** (slide 10) have **not** yet been **implemented**, since investigations on the corresponding scales and limits are still going on.
- Simplified and on the safe side, **carbonated concrete** can be **considered** in the simulation **by a hydraulic mortar** (preferably lime-pozzolana), since this is most similar to concrete in its chemical composition of the pore solution.
- To account for a **more aggressive mineral environment**, one of the **gypsum mortars (pH about 4.5 – 6)** can be used.

- The **transient local hygrothermal conditions** (hourly values for temperature and relative humidity) **at the contact surface** between the steel and its embedding material (measured or from a hygrothermal simulation).
- When opening WUFI® Corr from Animation1D, the climate conditions are automatically transferred to WUFI® Corr and displayed.
- Otherwise, temperature and relative humidity can be imported manually.



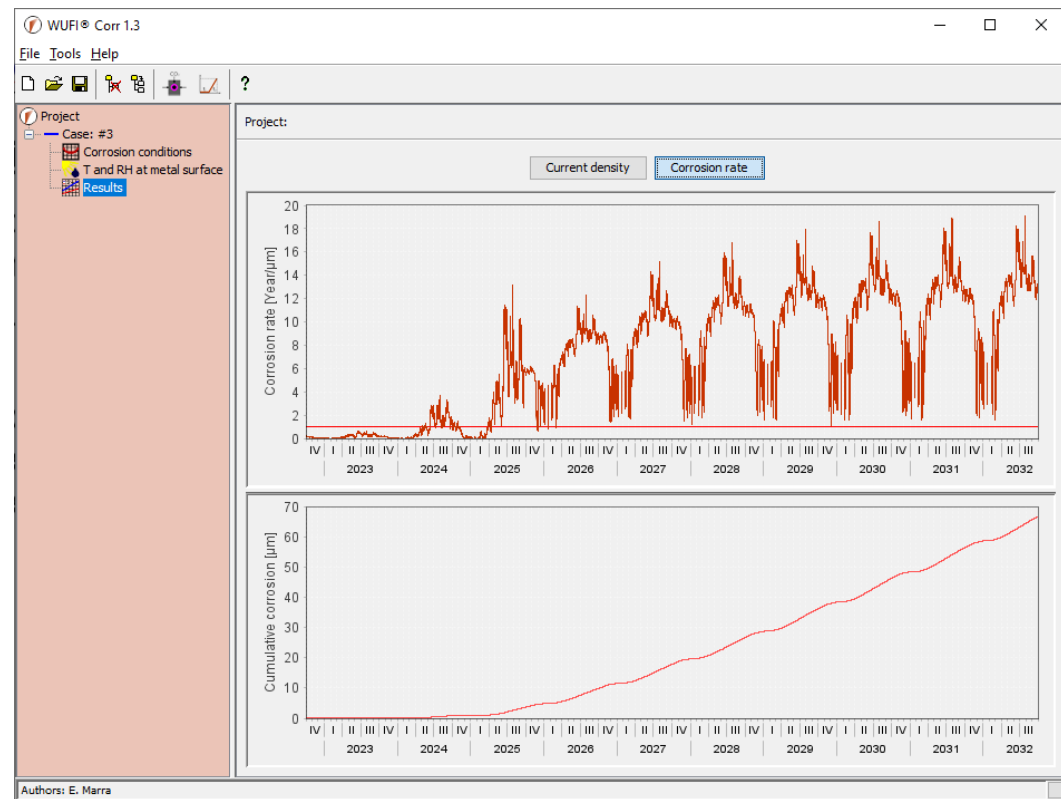
## Current density [mA/m<sup>2</sup>]

- Top diagram: calculated corrosion rate of the metallic insert over time given as current density [mA/m<sup>2</sup>] and the critical threshold.
- Bottom diagrams: monthly mean values (left) and the frequency values of the current density (right).



## Penetration rate [ $\mu\text{m}/\text{year}$ ]

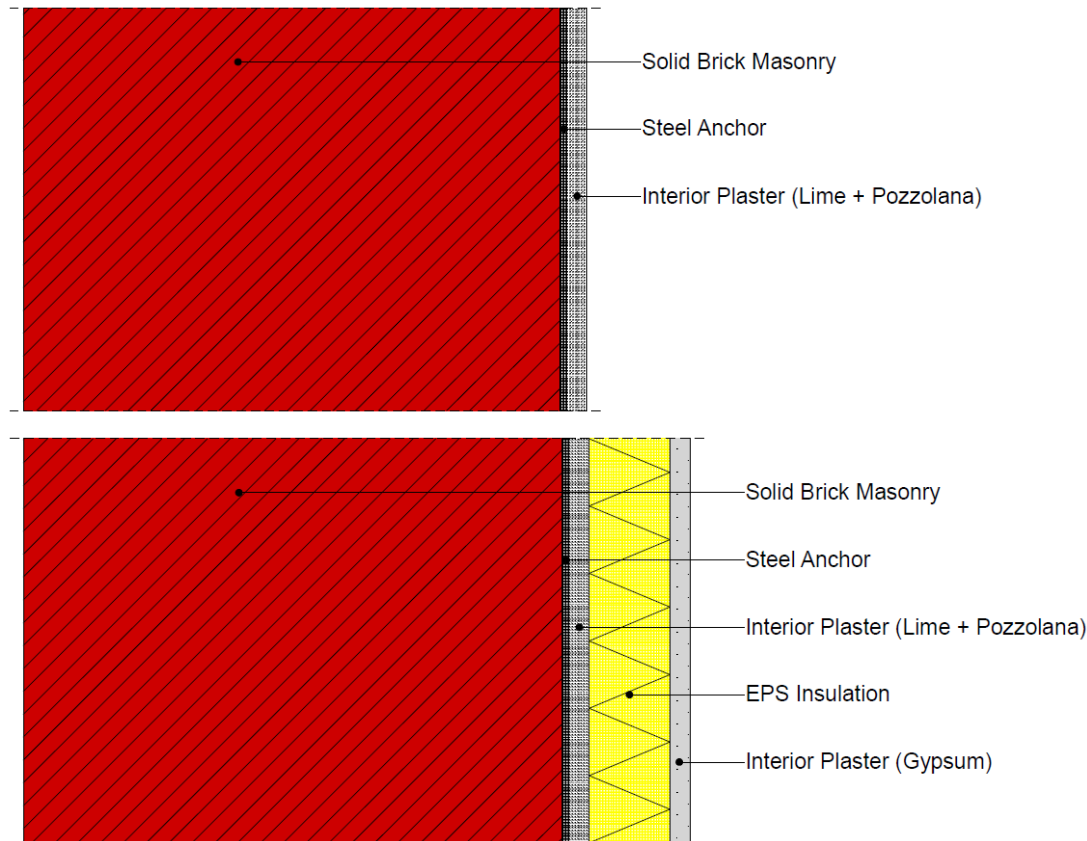
- Top diagram: calculated corrosion rate of the metallic insert over time given as penetration rate density [ $\mu\text{m}/\text{year}$ ] and the critical threshold.
- Bottom diagram: Cumulative penetration of corrosion in the metallic insert during the whole period of calculation.



- The **calculation result** is meant to provide a semi-quantitative **criterion for comparing and ranking different construction variants**.
- The traffic light scheme on slide 10 can be used as a first suggestion for corrosion in carbonated concrete.
- If the corrosion rate exceeds the critical threshold only by a small amount or for a short period, corrosion should not necessarily be expected in a real building component, since the model contains a few safety factors to make sure that the prediction “no corrosion” can be relied on.
- **Note:** Corrosion rate is generally assumed negligible if lower than 1  $\mu\text{m}/\text{year}$  and severe if above 10  $\mu\text{m}/\text{year}$ .

## Examples – Description of the Problem

The procedure for assessing the corrosion risk is explained using the example of an uninsulated exterior wall (Example A) and an exterior wall with interior insulation (Example B) with a steel anchor.



## Example A: Component Assembly and Boundary Conditions

---

### Assembly:

- Solid Brick Masonry 0.4 m
- Interior Plaster (Lime + Pozzolana) 0.015 m

### Boundary Conditions:

- Exterior wall, orientated to the West
- Red Brick ( $\alpha = 0.68$ )
- Outdoor climate: Holzkirchen
- Indoor climate: Medium moisture load +5%
- Calculation period: 25 years  
(for easier application to the traffic light scheme)

# Example A: Component Assembly

Input: Component - Assembly / Monitor Positions

The screenshot shows the WUFI Pro 6.7 software interface. The main window is titled 'Case: uninsulated exterior wall with steel anchor'. The 'Assembly/Monitor Positions' tab is active. The 'Layer Name' is 'Mortar (historical): Lime + Pozzolana' and the 'Thickn. [m]' is '0,015'. The 'Exterior (Left Side)' is '0.4' and the 'Interior (Right Side)' is '0,015'. The main workspace displays a red wall layer and a green grid representing a steel anchor. A blue arrow points to the green grid with the annotation 'Set monitor at the position of the steel anchor'. Another blue arrow points to the steel anchor position with the annotation 'position of the steel anchor'. A green box at the bottom right contains the text 'Enter wall assembly' and 'Adjust layer thicknesses if necessary'. The bottom status bar shows 'Units: SI' and 'No calculation results available.'

WUFI Pro 6.7

Project Inputs Run Outputs Options Database Result Analysis ?

Project

- Case: 1 uninsulated exterior wall v
- Component
  - Assembly/Monitor Positions
  - Orientation
  - Surface Transfer Coeff.
  - Initial Conditions
- Control
- Climate

Case: uninsulated exterior wall with steel anchor

Assembly/Monitor Positions Orientation/Inclination/Height Surface Transfer Coeff. Initial Conditions

Layer Name

Thickn. [m]

Mortar (historical): Lime + Pozzolana

0,015

Exterior (Left Side) 0.4 Interior (Right Side) 0,015

Material Data

Sources, Sinks

New Layer

Duplicate

Delete

position of the steel anchor

Set monitor at the position of the steel anchor

Enter wall assembly  
Adjust layer thicknesses if necessary

Material Database

Example Cases

Grid

Automatic (II)

100 Fine

Copy Auto. Grid Def. for Manual Editing

Thickness

ness: 0.415 m

Total Thermal Performance

R-Value: 0,61 (m² K)/W

U-Value: 1,256 W/(m² K)

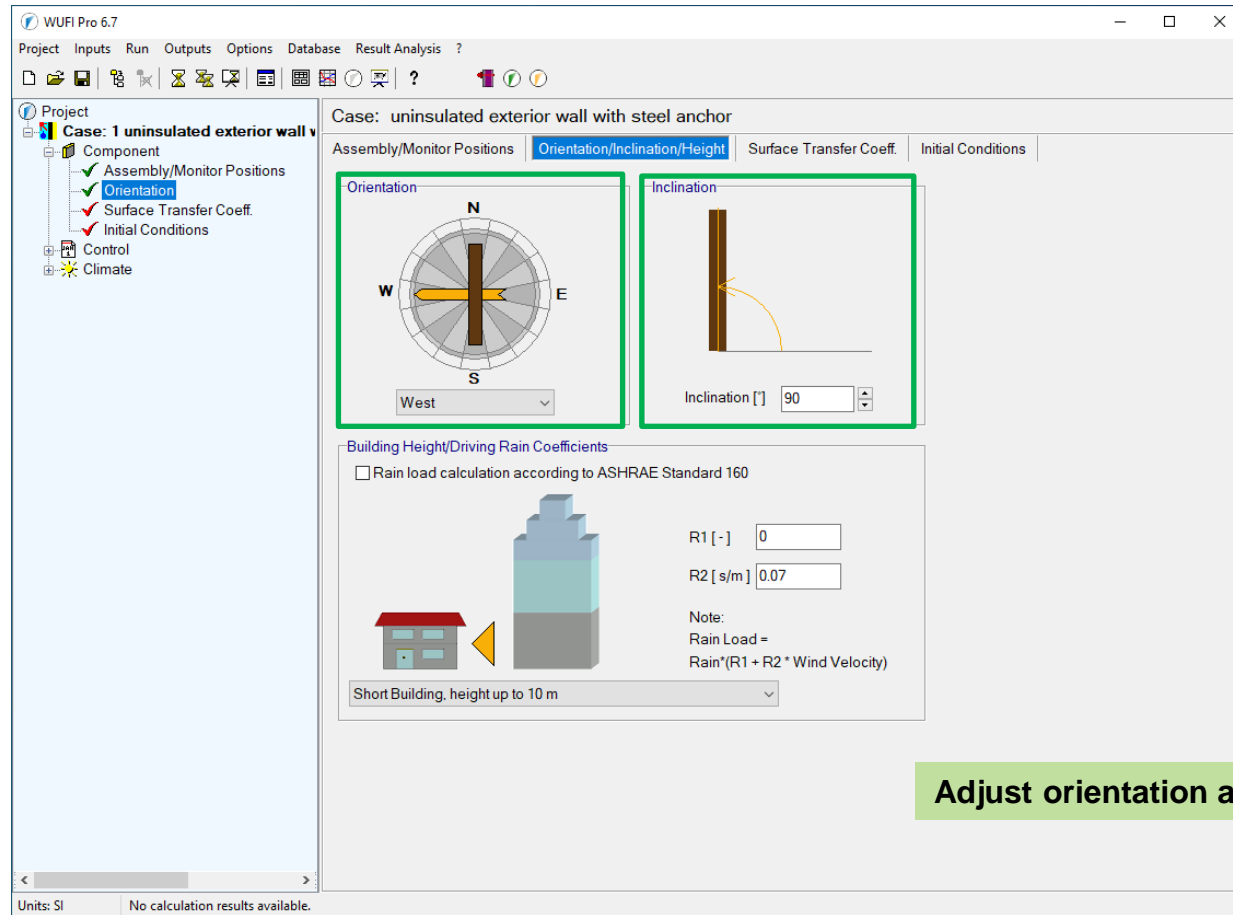
Units: SI

No calculation results available.



# Example A: Orientation and Inclination of the Component

Input: Component - Orientation



Adjust orientation and inclination

# Example A: Surface Transfer Coefficients

Input: Component – Surface Transfer Coefficients

WUFI Pro 6.7

Project Inputs Run Outputs Options Database Result Analysis ?

Project

- Case: 1 uninsulated exterior wall v
- Component
- Assembly/Monitor Positions
- Orientation
- Surface Transfer Coeff.
- Initial Conditions
- Control
- Climate

Case: uninsulated exterior wall with steel anchor

Assembly/Monitor Positions Orientation/Inclination/Height **Surface Transfer Coeff.** Initial Conditions

Exterior Surface (Left Side)

Heat Transfer Coefficient [W/(m² K)] 17 External Wall

includes long-wave radiation parts [W/(m² K)] 6.5

wind-dependent ☐

sd-Value [m] ---- No coating

Note: This setting does not affect rain absorption

Short-Wave Radiation Absorptivity [-] 0.68 Brick, red

Long-Wave Radiation Emissivity [-] ----

Reduction factors caused by shading:

for absorptivity [-] ---- No shading

for emissivity [-] ----

Explicit Radiation Balance ☐ Note: This option takes radiative cooling due to long-wave emission into account. Sensitive cases may require sufficiently accurate counter-radiation data in the weather file.

Ground Short-Wave Reflectivity [-] 0.2 Standard value

Adhering Fraction of Rain [-] 0.7 Depending on inclination of component

Interior Surface (Right Side)

Heat Transfer Coefficient [W/(m² K)] 8 (External Wall)

sd-Value [m] ---- No coating

Units: SI No calculation results available.

Heat Transfer Coefficient for Wall = 17 W/m²K

Surface Color of the Brick Masonry ( $\alpha = 0.68$ )

No Explicit Radiation Balance

Rain Water Absorption depending on inclination of component

Adjust surface transfer coefficients!

# Example A: Initial Conditions

Input: Component – Initial Conditions

The screenshot shows the WUFI Pro 6.7 software interface. The 'Project' pane on the left lists the components: Case: 1 uninsulated exterior wall v, Component, Assembly/Monitor Positions, Orientation, Surface Transfer Coeff., Initial Conditions (highlighted), Control, and Climate. The main window displays the 'Initial Conditions' tab for the selected component. The 'Initial Moisture in Component' and 'Initial Temperature in Component' sections are highlighted with green boxes. Both sections have the 'Constant Across Component' radio button selected. The 'Initial Relative Humidity [-]' is set to 0.8, and the 'Initial Temperature in Component [°C]' is set to 20. Below these, a table titled 'Initial Water Content in Different Layers' lists two layers: Solid Brick Masonry and Mortar (historical): Lime + Pozzolana, with their respective thicknesses and water content values.

No.	Material Layer	Thickn. [m]	Water Content [kg/m³]
1	Solid Brick Masonry	0.4	18.0
2	Mortar (historical): Lime + Pozzolana	0.015	8.36

Units: SI    No calculation results available.

No changes required

# Example A: Calculation Period

Input: Control – Calculation Period / Profiles

WUFI Pro 6.7

Project Inputs Run Outputs Options Database Result Analysis ?

Case: uninsulated exterior wall with steel anchor

Calculation Period / Profiles Numerics

Calculation	Profiles	Date	Hour
Start	Profile 1	01.10.2023	00:00:00
End	Profile 2	01.10.2048	00:00:00

New

Delete

Copy

Insert

Time Steps [h] 1

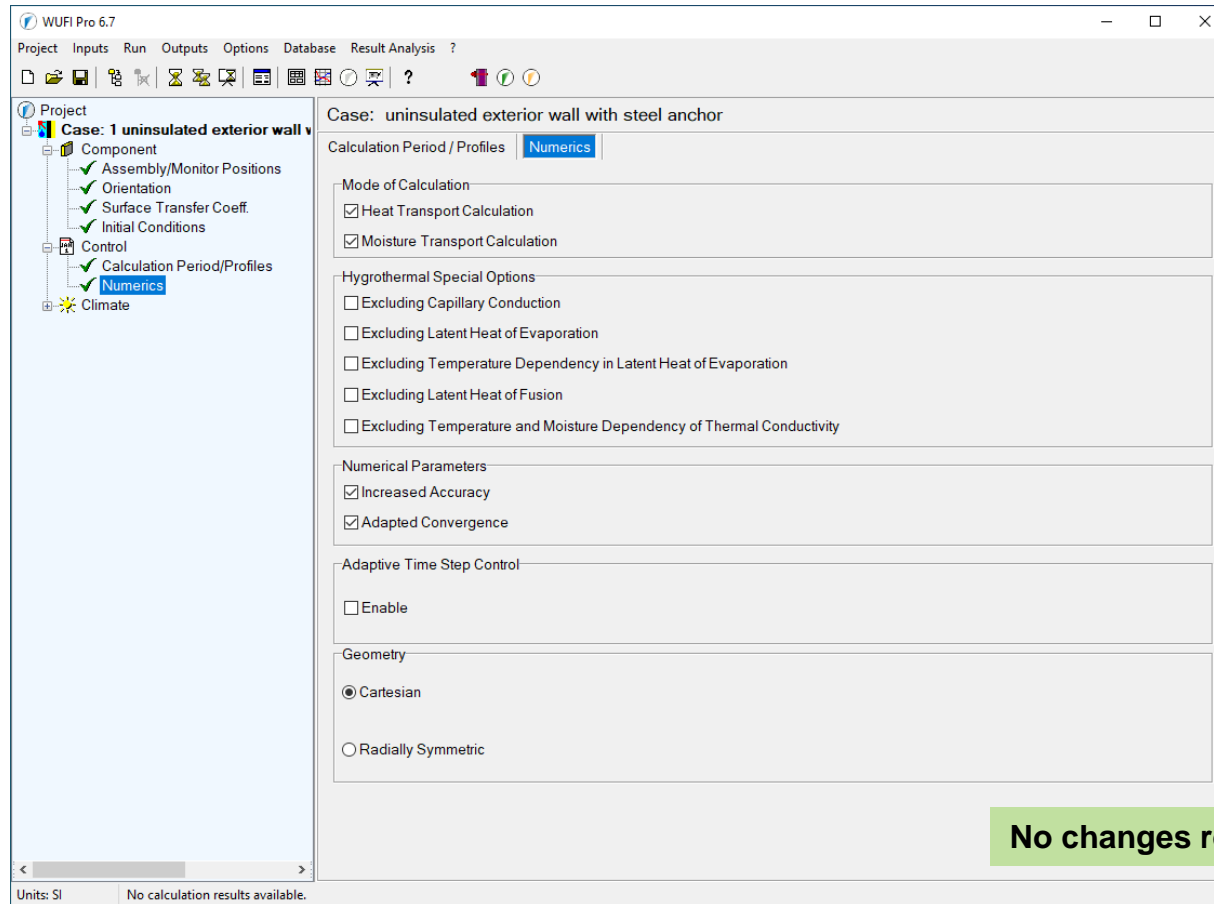
18.12.2023 00:00:00

Adjust calculation period (here: 25 years)

Units: SI No calculation results available.

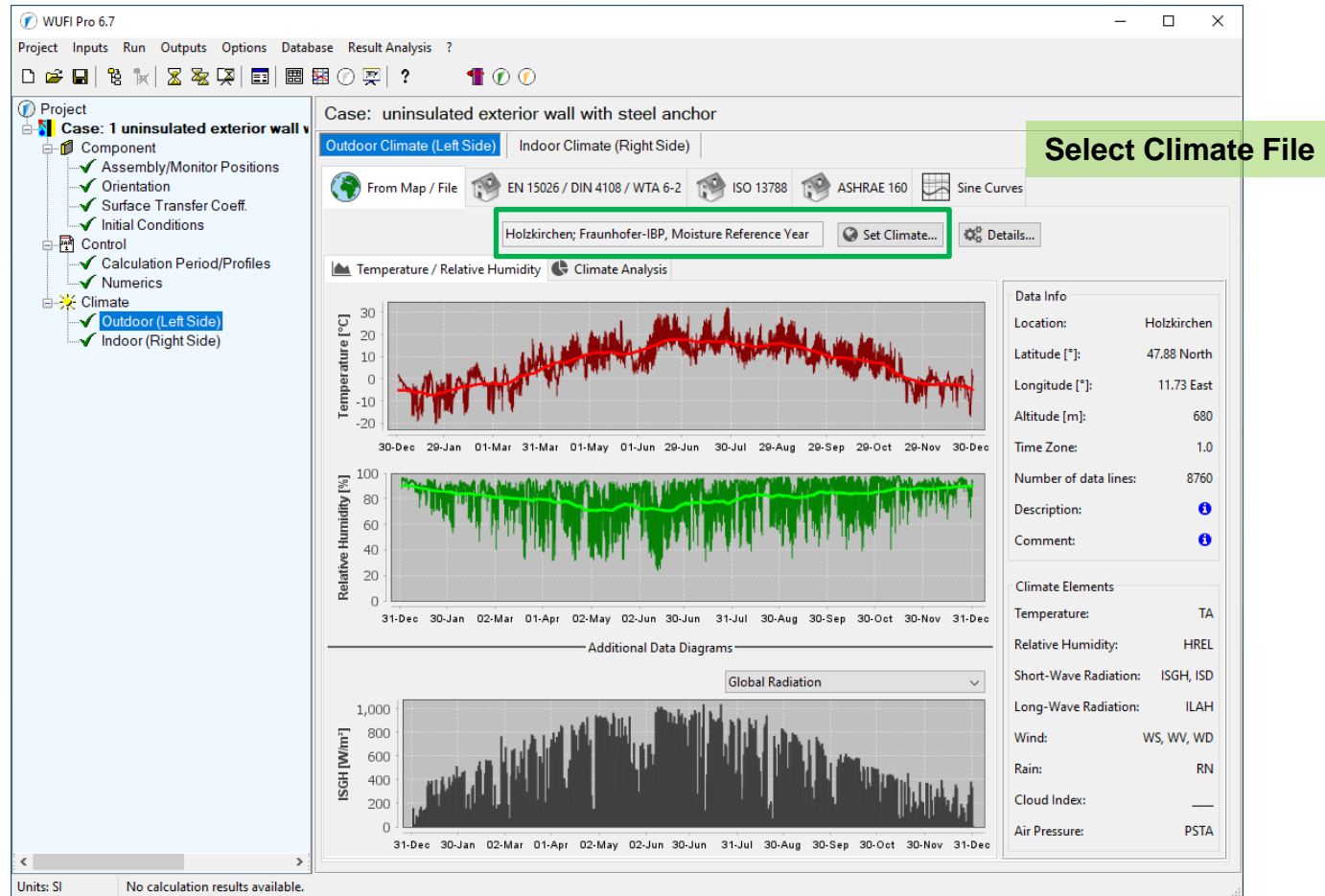
# Example A: Numerics

## Input: Control – Numerics



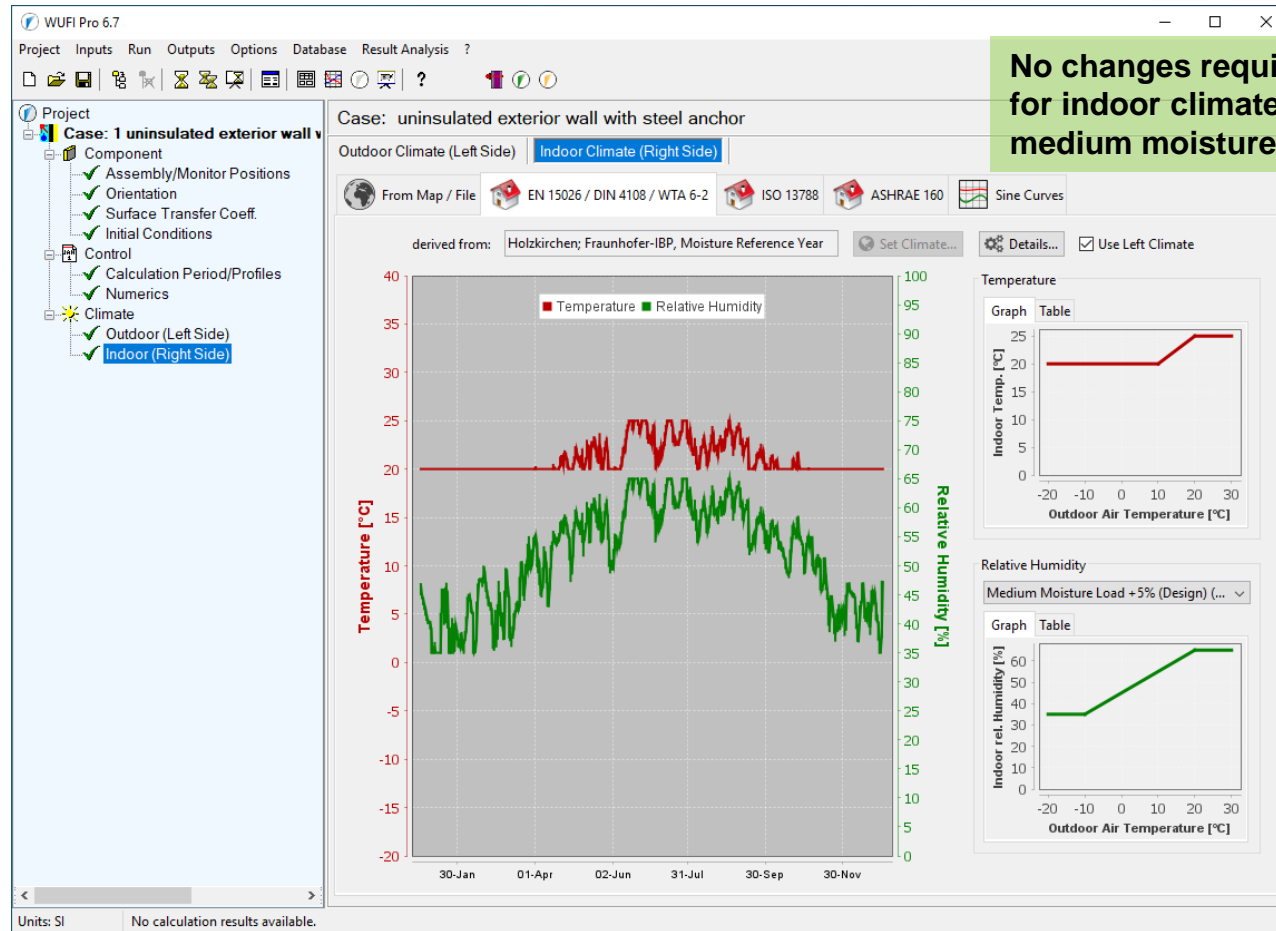
# Example A: Outdoor Climate

## Input: Climate – Outdoor (Left Side)



# Example A: Indoor Climate

## Input: Climate – Indoor (Right Side)



No changes required  
for indoor climate with  
medium moisture load + 5%

# Example A: Evaluation - Numerics

## Evaluation: Numerics

Status of Last Calculation

Status of Calculation

Calculation: Time and Date	18.12.2023 10:12:43
Computing Time	5 min,44 sec.
Begin / End of calculation	01.10.2023 / 01.10.2048
No. of Convergence Failures	0

Check for numerical quality

Integral of fluxes, left side (kl,dl)	[kg/m²]	1059,65 -932,85
Integral of fluxes, right side (kr,dr)	[kg/m²]	0,49 108,63
Balance 1	[kg/m²]	17,67
Balance 2	[kg/m²]	17,67

Water Content [kg/m²]

	Start	End	Min.	Max.
Total Water Content	7,33	24,98	6,89	34,4

Water Content [kg/m³]

Layer/Material	Start	End	Min.	Max.
----------------	-------	-----	------	------

☐ Calculation locked

Close

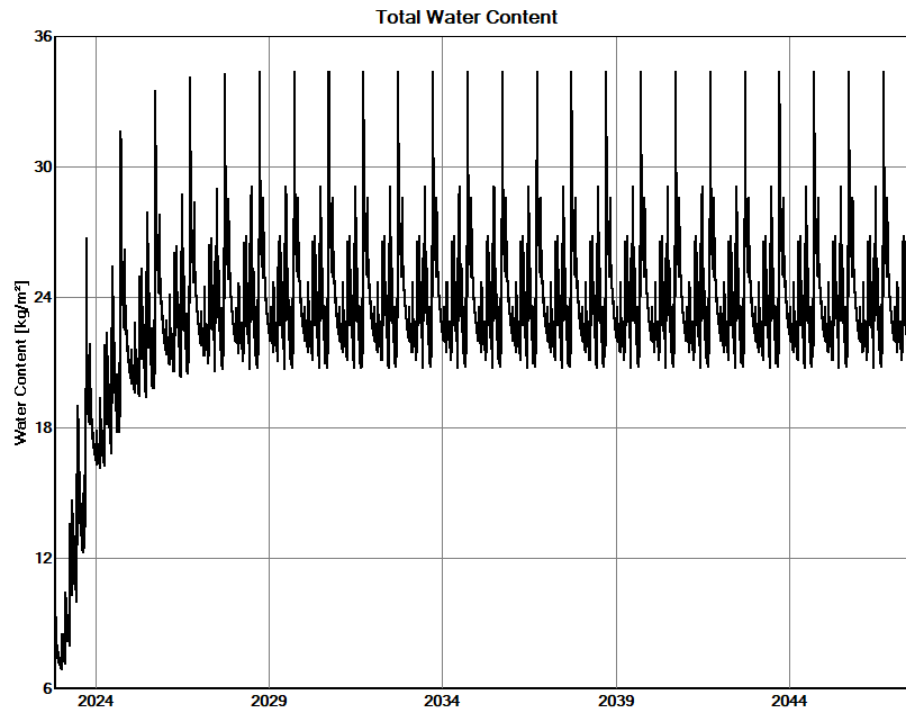
Help

No convergence failures and no balance differences!



## Example A: Evaluation Total Water Content

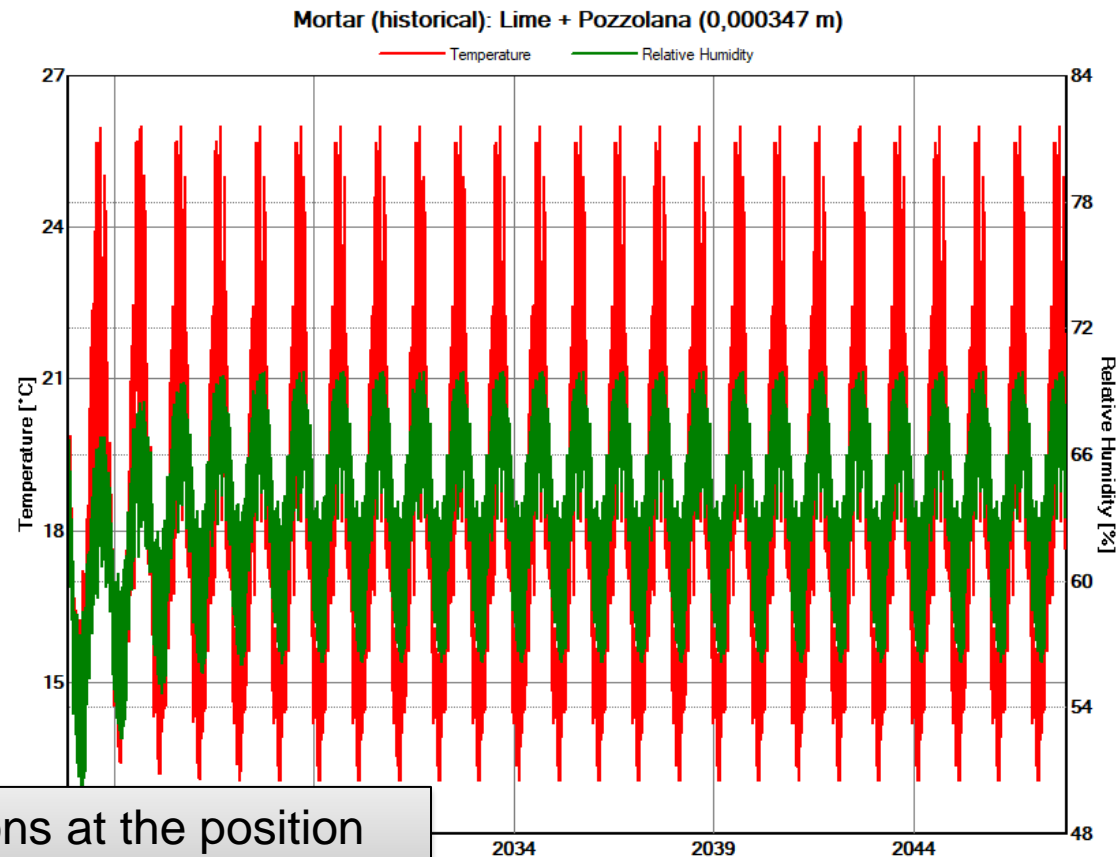
Evaluation: Total Water Content



Steady state conditions after 5 years.

## Example A: Evaluation Moisture Conditions at Steel Anchor


Evaluation: Monitor at the position of the steel anchor

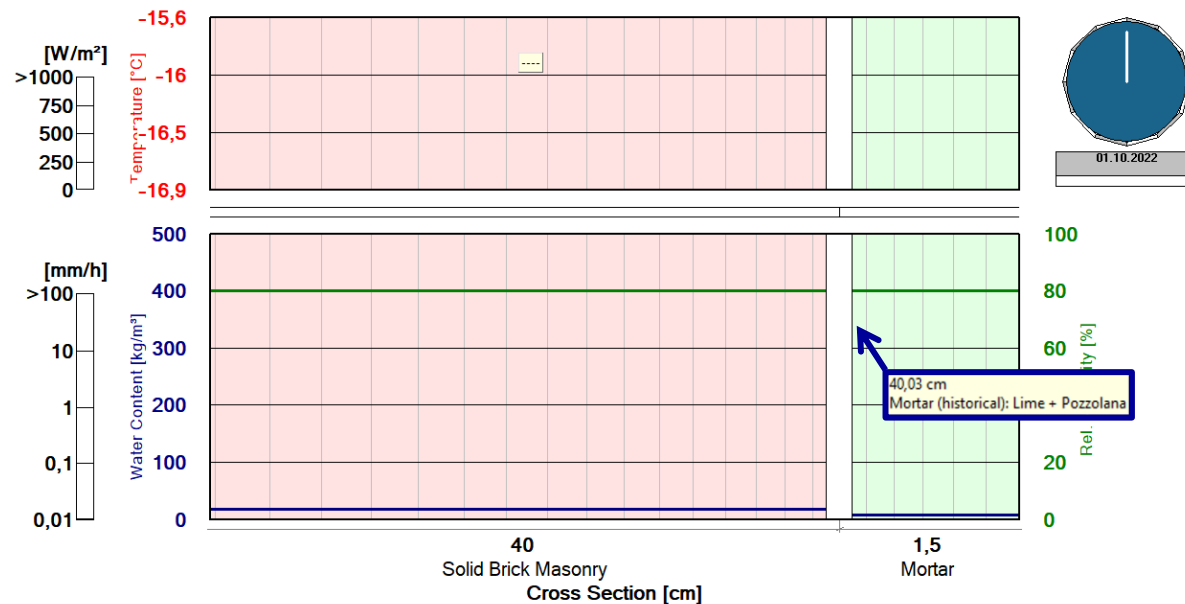


Local conditions at the position  
of the steel anchor

# Example A: Evaluation Moisture Conditions at Steel Anchor

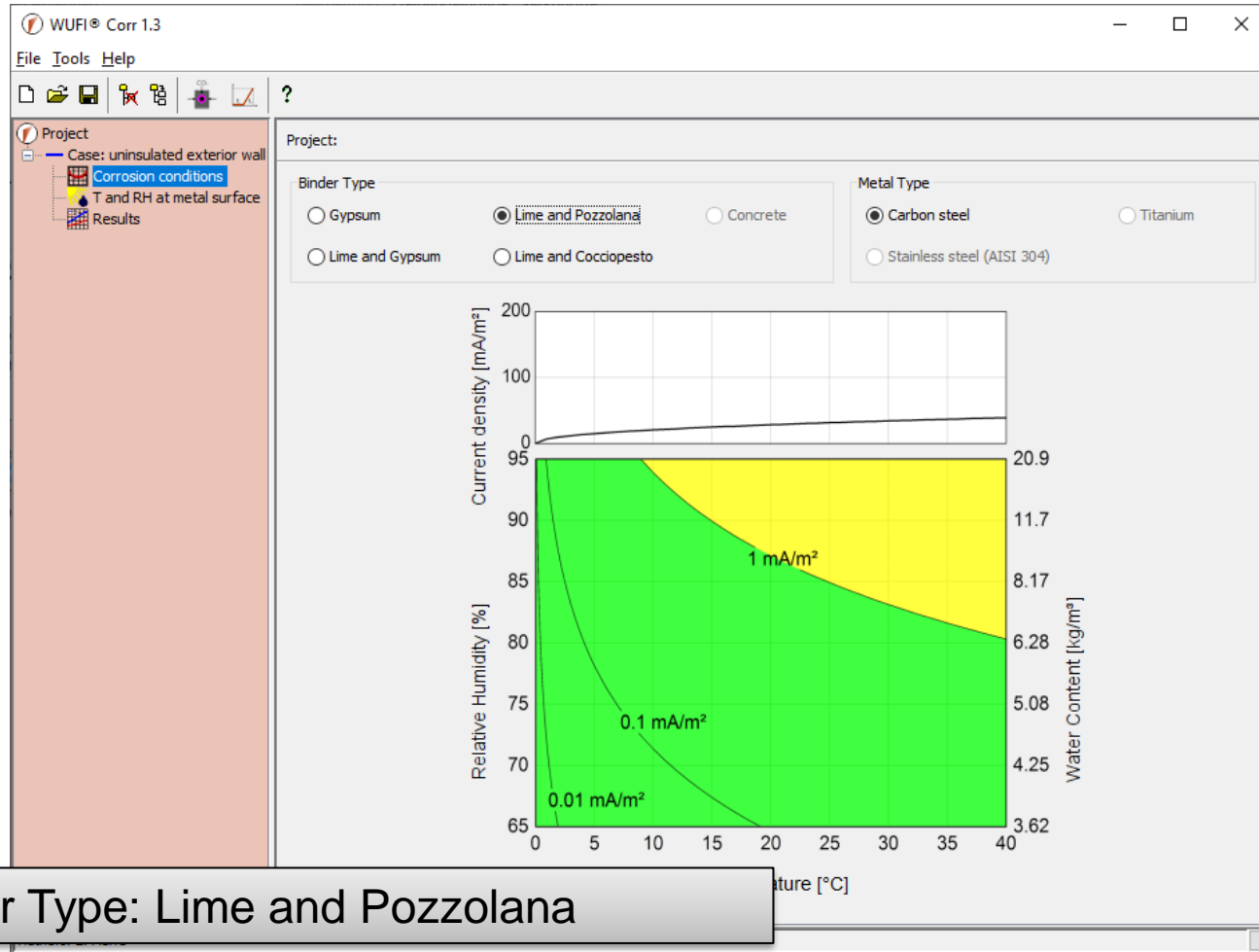
Evaluation: Corrosion risk at the position of the steel anchor

- Open WUFI® Animation
- Zoom in on the boundary layer of solid brick masonry / interior plaster (while holding down the left mouse button: drag the box from top left to bottom right)
- Press the WUFI® Corr icon  in the task bar and select the outermost element of the interior plaster.



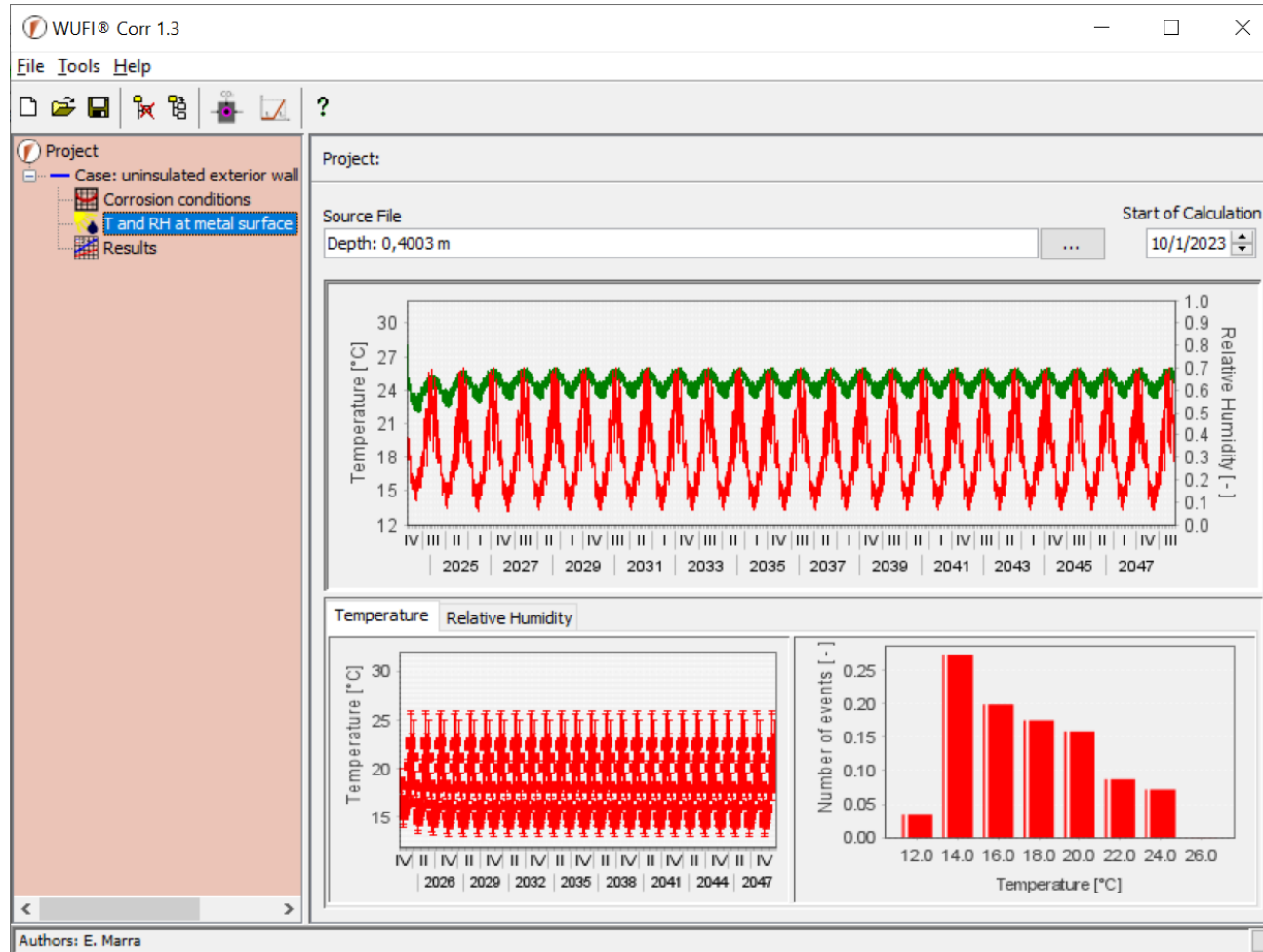
## Example A: Settings WUFI® Corr

Evaluation: Corrosion risk at the position of the steel anchor



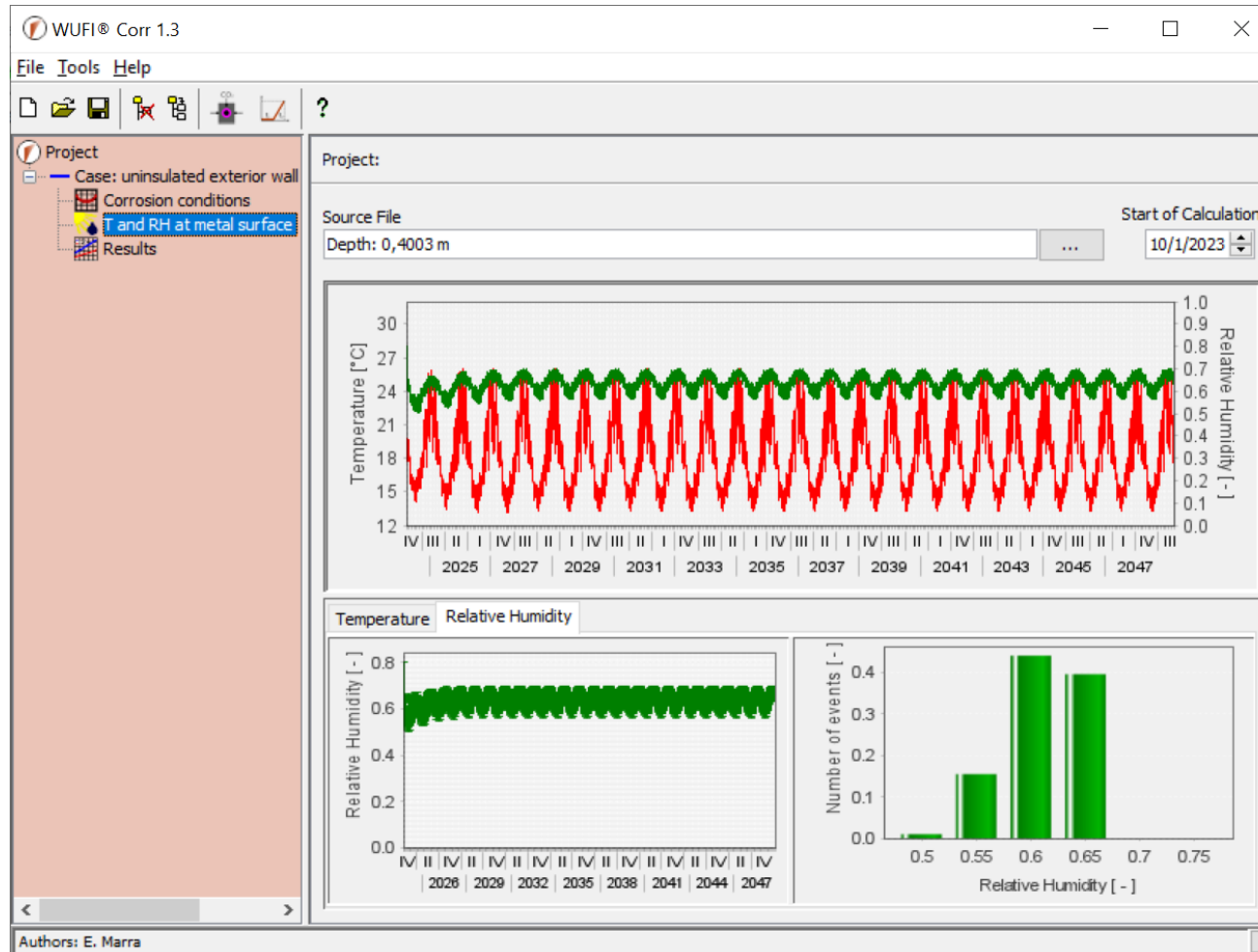
## Example A: Settings WUFI® Corr

Evaluation: Corrosion risk at the position of the steel anchor



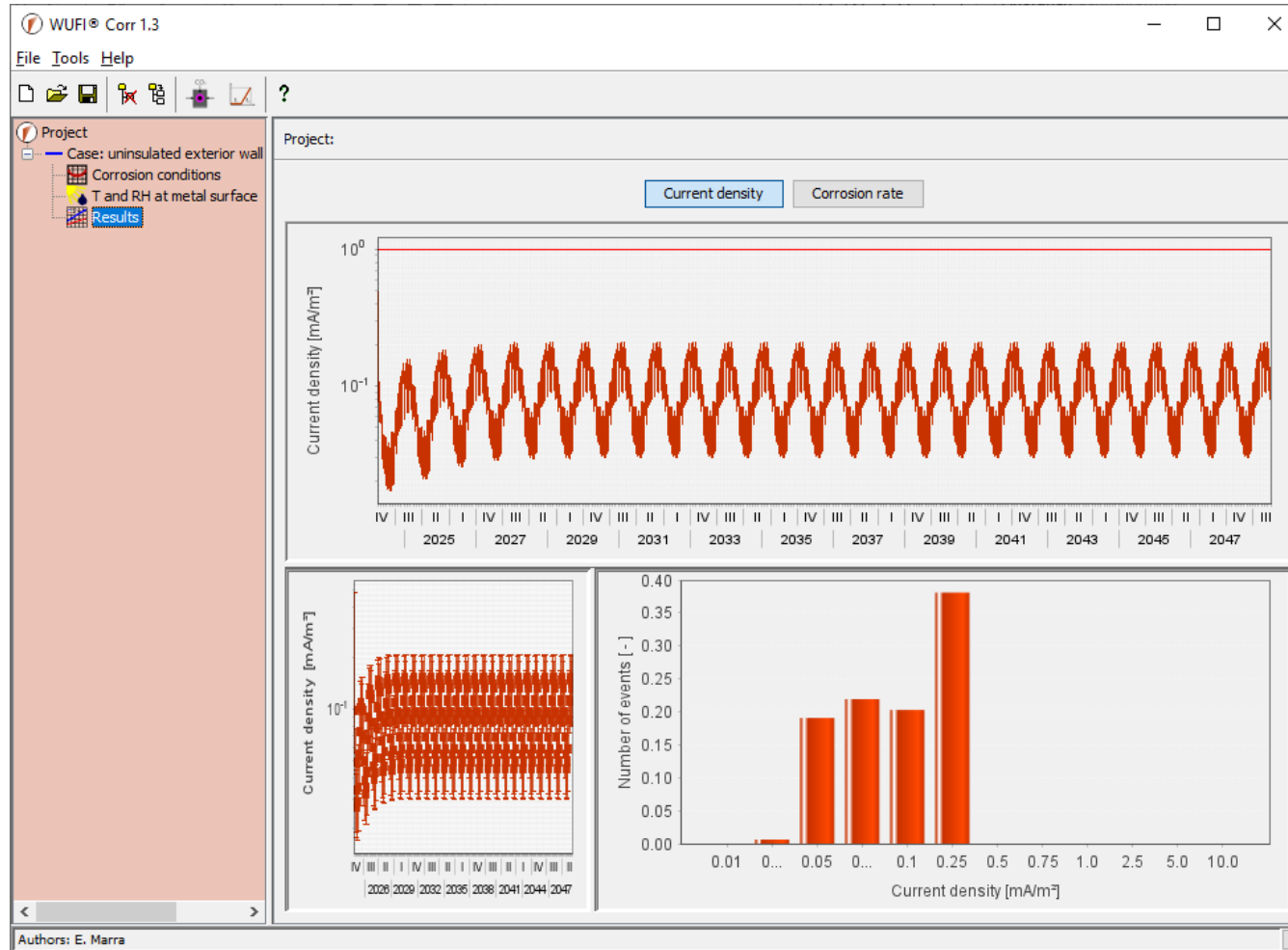
## Example A: Settings WUFI® Corr

Evaluation: Corrosion risk at the position of the steel anchor



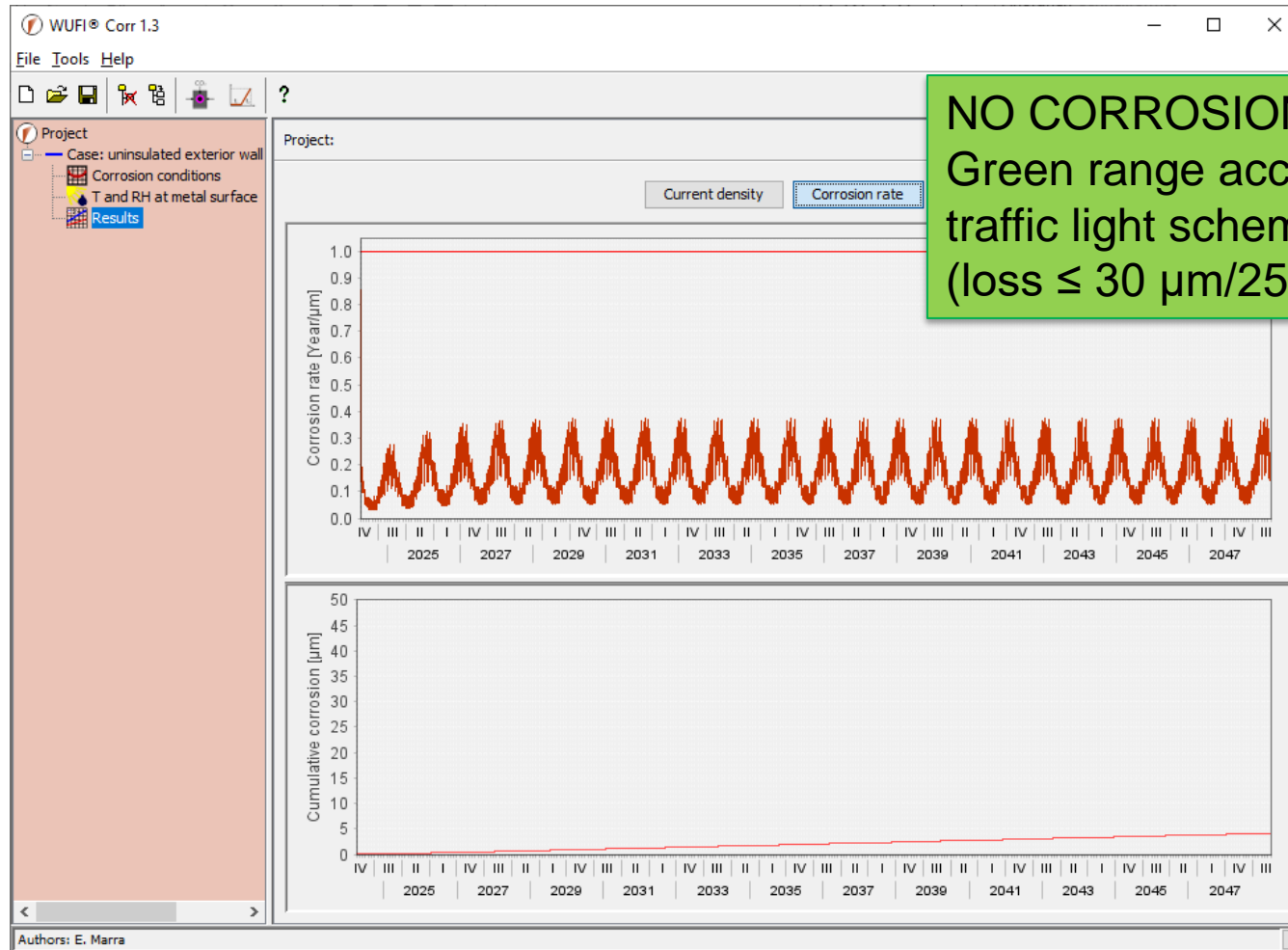
## Example A: Evaluation WUFI® Corr

Evaluation: Corrosion risk at the position of the steel anchor



## Example A: Evaluation WUFI® Corr

Evaluation: Corrosion risk at the position of the steel anchor





## Example B: Component Assembly and Boundary Conditions

---

### Assembly:

- Solid Brick Masonry 0.4 m
- Interior Plaster (Lime + Pozzolana) 0.015 m
- EPS (heat cond.: 0.04 W/mK – density: 15 kg/m<sup>3</sup>) 0.06 m
- Interior Plaster (Gypsum) 0.015 m

### Boundary Conditions:

- Exterior wall, orientated to the West
- Red Brick ( $\alpha = 0.68$ )
- Outdoor climate: Holzkirchen
- Indoor climate: Medium moisture load +5%

## Example B: Component Assembly

Input: Component - Assembly / Monitor Positions

The screenshot displays the WUFI Pro 6.7 software interface. The main window shows a cross-section of a wall assembly. The left sidebar lists the project hierarchy, including 'Case: 2 exterior wall with interior insulation' and 'Assembly/Monitor Positions'. The main panel shows the 'Assembly/Monitor Positions' tab, with a table of layers and a corresponding cross-section diagram. The layers are defined as follows:

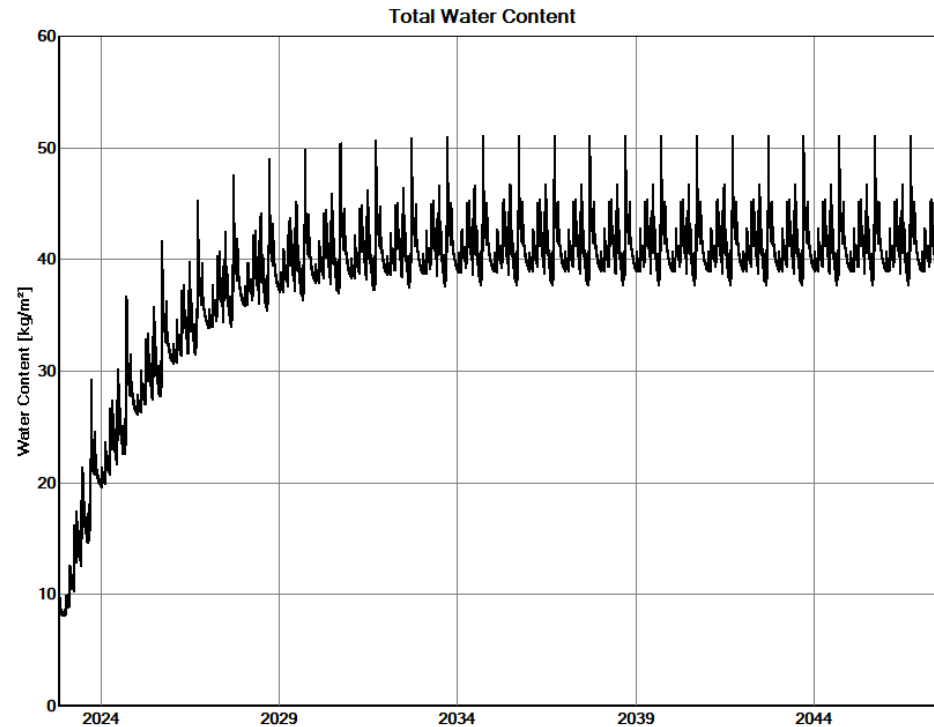
Layer Name	Thickn. [m]
Mortar (historical): Lime + Pozzolana	0,015
Exterior (Left Side)	0.4
Interior (Right Side)	0,015 0,06 0,015

The cross-section diagram shows a red exterior layer, a green interior layer, and a yellow steel anchor layer. A blue arrow points to the steel anchor layer, with a callout box stating: 'position of the steel anchor'. Another blue arrow points to the green interior layer, with a callout box stating: 'Set monitor at the position of the steel anchor'. A green callout box at the bottom right states: 'Enter wall assembly' and 'Adjust layer thicknesses if necessary'. The bottom status bar shows 'Units: SI' and 'Last Calculation: 18.12.2023'.

## Example B: Evaluation Total Water Content

---

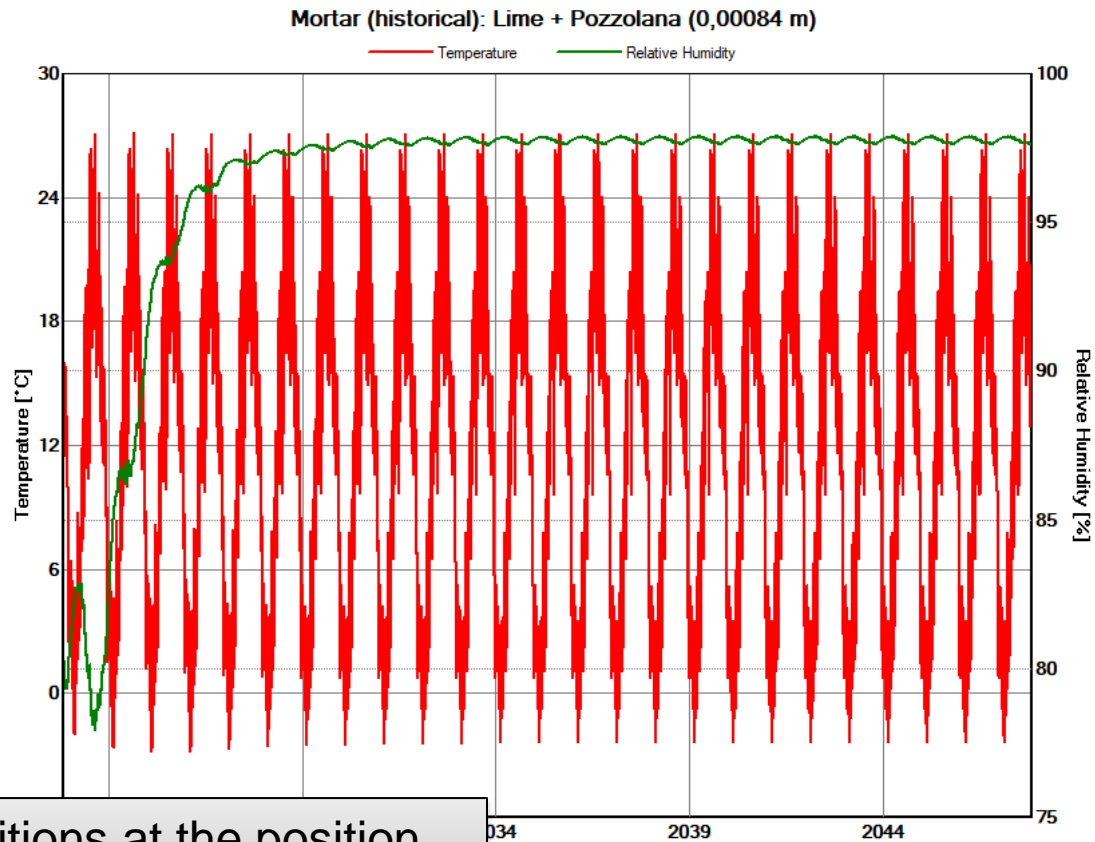
Evaluation: Total Water Content



Steady state conditions after 9 years.

## Example B: Evaluation Moisture Conditions at Steel Anchor

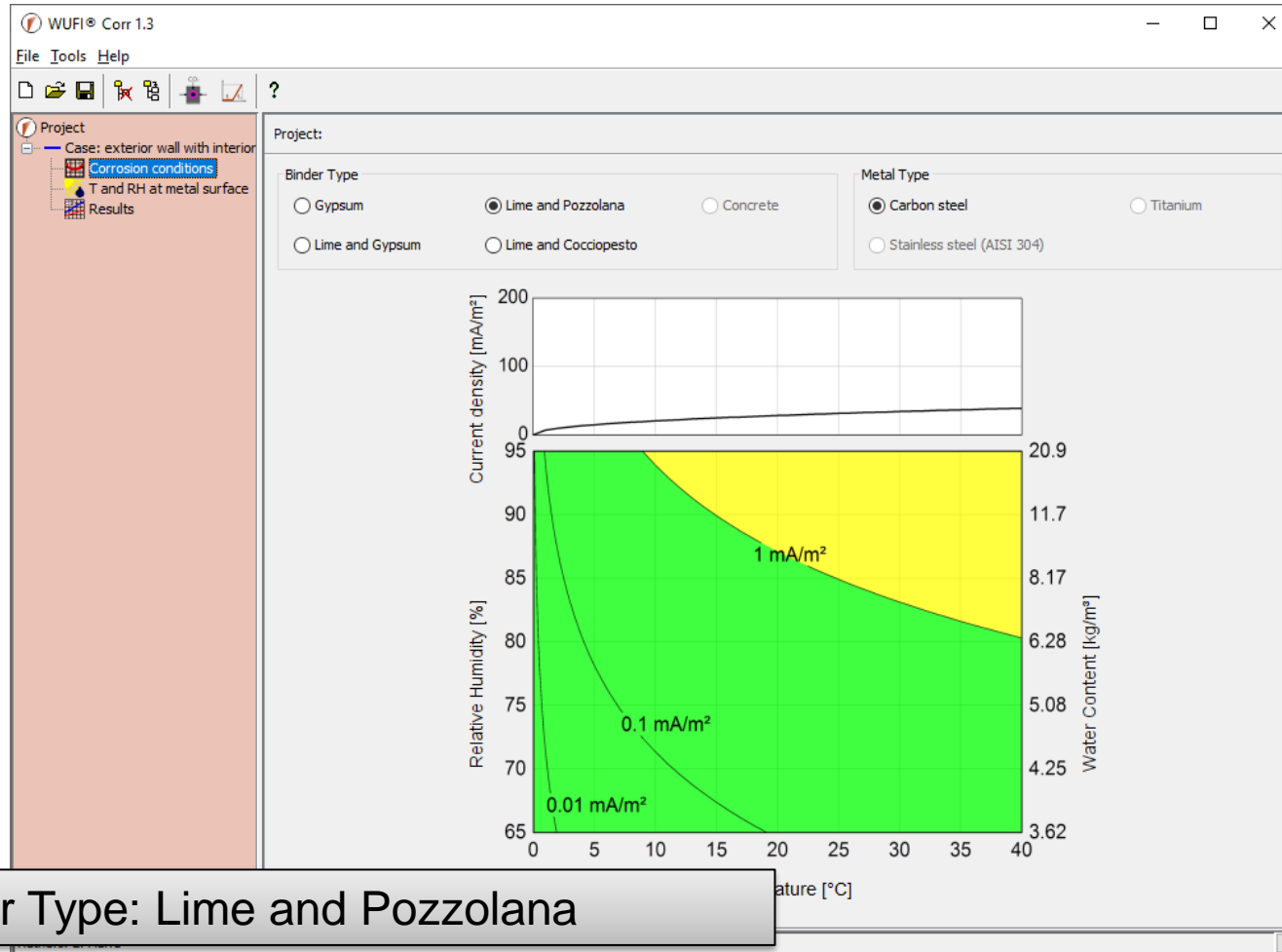
Evaluation: Monitor at the position of the steel anchor



Local conditions at the position  
of the steel anchor

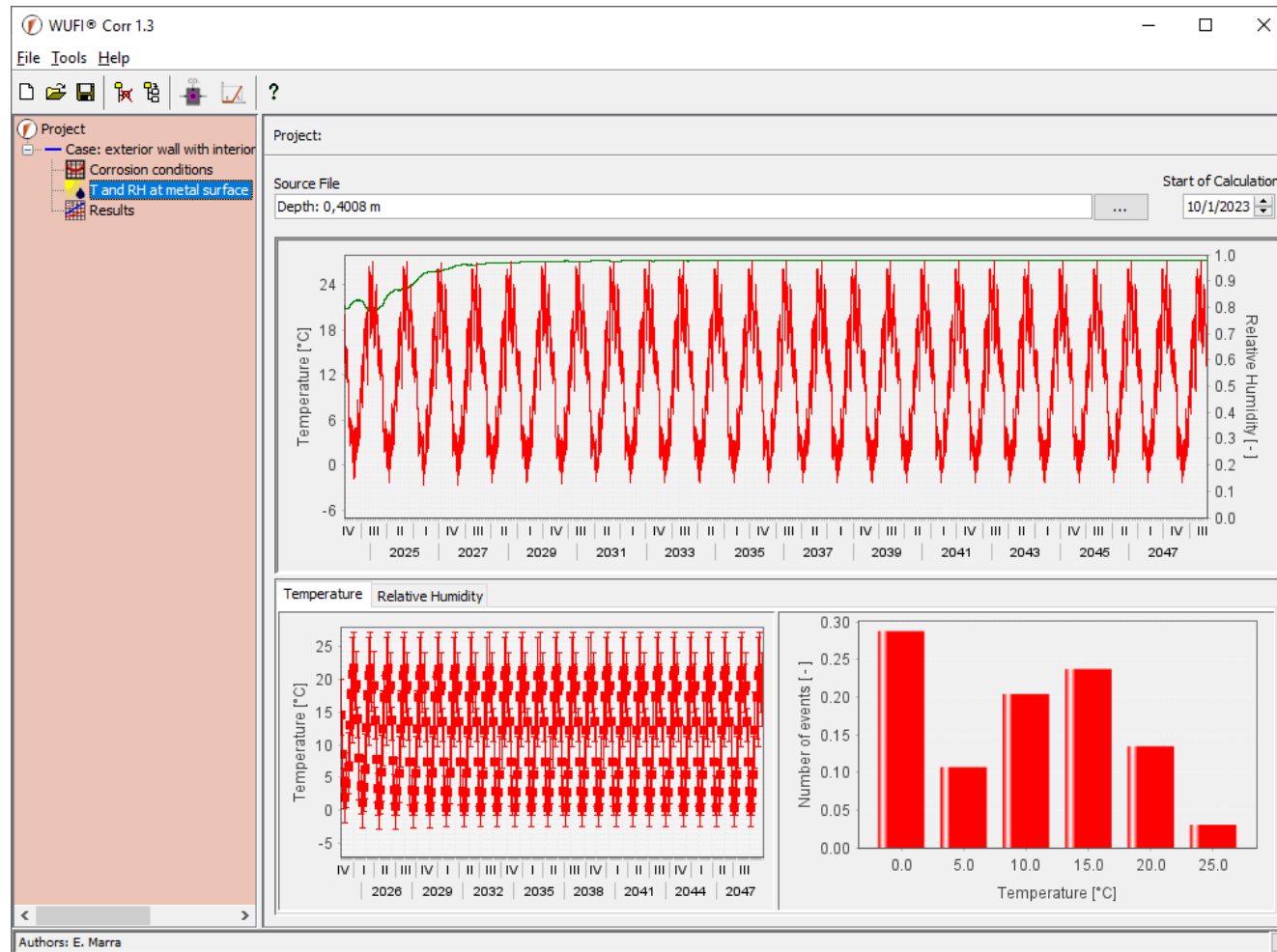
## Example B: Settings WUFI® Corr

Evaluation: Corrosion risk at the position of the steel anchor



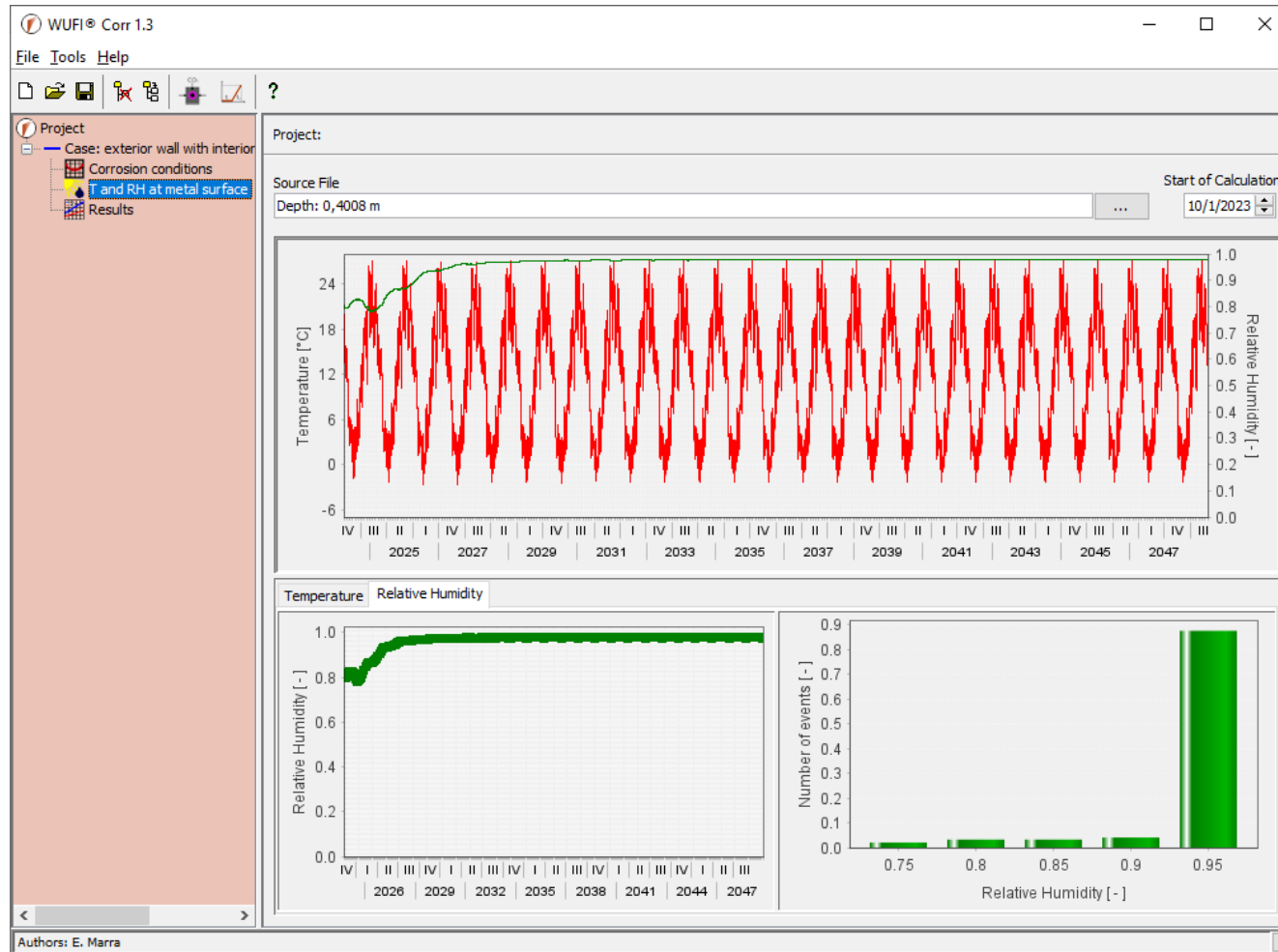
## Example B: Settings WUFI® Corr

Evaluation: Corrosion risk at the position of the steel anchor



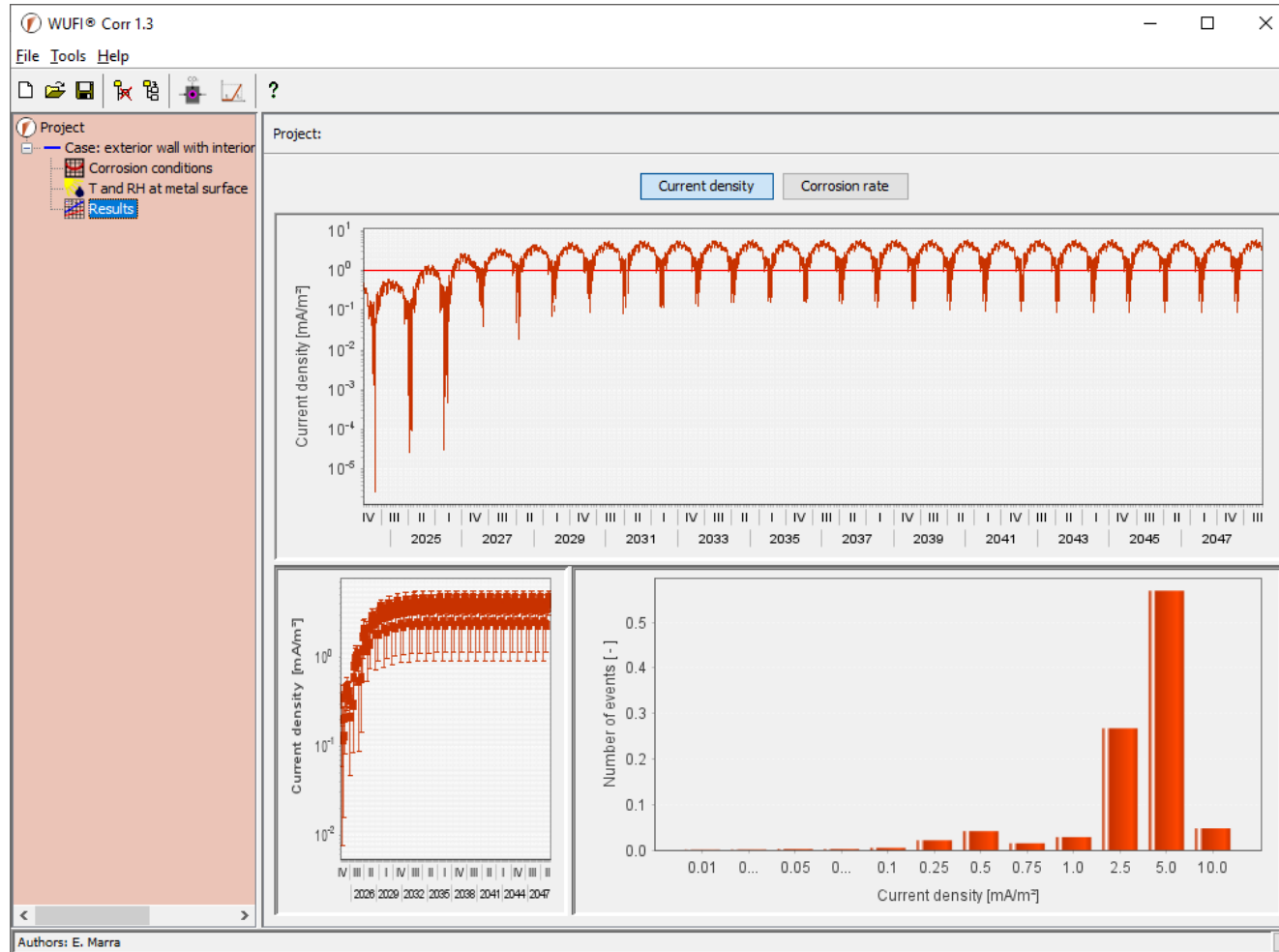
## Example B: Settings WUFI® Corr

Evaluation: Corrosion risk at the position of the steel anchor



## Example B: Evaluation WUFI® Corr

Evaluation: Corrosion risk at the position of the steel anchor





## Example B: Evaluation WUFI® Corr

Evaluation: Corrosion risk at the position of the steel anchor

