











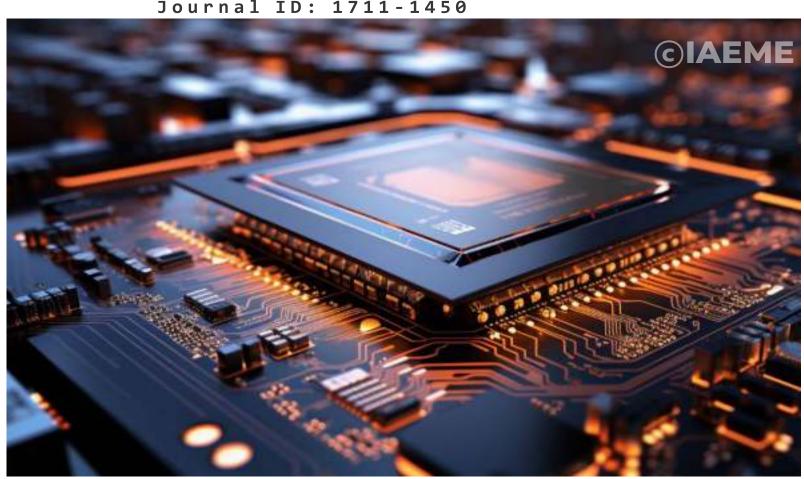


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# FPGA-POWERED SMART IRRIGATION: REAL-TIME WATER OPTIMIZATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper presents a highly innovative, FPGA-based smart irrigation system designed to op- timize water utilization in agriculture through advanced sensor integration and real-time control. Implemented on an EDGE Artix-7 FPGA board, the system leverages a soil moisture sensor, water level sensor, and rain sensor to dynamically monitor environmental conditions. The control logic, developed in Verilog, employs a synchronous finite state machine to process sensor inputs and actuate a relay-controlled submerged pump, ensuring water delivery only when soil is dry, water is available, and no rainfall is detected. A buzzer alerts users to low water levels, preventing pump damage, while a 3-bit LED array provides real-time status visualization. The system's parallel processing capabil- ities on the FPGA enable low-latency decision-making, achieving a 50 MHz clock-driven response time. Simulation

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using Vivado validates the design's robustness, with the relay activated solely in the 111 state (dry soil, sufficient water, no rain) and the buzzer in the 101 state (dry soil, no water, no rain). Power-efficient LVCMOS33 I/O standards and optimized pin constraints enhance hardware reliability. This solution advances precision agriculture by minimizing water wastage, offering scal- ability for additional sensors, and supporting low-cost deployment for small-scale farmers. Future enhancements include IoT integration for remote monitoring and machine learning for predictive irrigation, positioning this system as a cornerstone for sustainable, technology-driven farming.

**Keywords:** FPGA, Smart Irrigation, Verilog, Soil Moisture Sensor, Water Level Sensor, Rain Sensor, Relay Control, Precision Agriculture, Real-Time Control, Low-Latency Processing, Sustainable Farming, IoT, Sensor Integration, Water Efficiency, Embedded Systems

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Water scarcity remains a critical challenge in global agriculture, with traditional irrigation systems often leading to inefficiencies and overconsumption [1]. The advent of precision agriculture has driven the development of smart irrigation systems that leverage real-time environmental data to optimize water usage [3]. Field Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs) have emerged as powerful platforms for such applications due to their high-speed parallel processing, reconfigurability, and ability to handle complex control algorithms [2, 4]. This paper introduces an innovative smart irrigation system implemented on an EDGE Artix-7 FPGA board, integrating soil moisture, water level, and rain sensors to achieve water- efficient irrigation. The system employs Verilog-based control logic to manage a relay-driven submerged pump, ensuring water delivery only under optimal conditions, with additional outputs for user alerts and status visualization.

### I.1 Background and Motivation

The need for sustainable agricultural practices has spurred research into sensor-based irrigation systems [3, 6, 7]. Traditional systems often rely on manual or timer-based controls, leading to water wastage in regions with variable climatic conditions [1]. Recent advancements

in embedded systems, including microcontrollers and FPGAs, have enabled real-time monitoring and control [2, 9]. FPGAs, in particular, offer low-latency processing and scalability, making them ideal for precision agriculture applications [4]. This work is motivated by the need to address water scarcity through a low-cost, scalable solution suitable for small-scale farmers [7].

### **I.2 System Overview**

The proposed system integrates three sensors: a soil moisture sensor to detect soil dryness, a water level sensor to monitor tank/borewell availability, and a rain sensor to detect precipitation [8, 12]. These sensors feed into an EDGE Artix-7 FPGA, which processes inputs using a synchronous finite state machine implemented in Verilog [2]. The system actuates a submerged pump via a relay module only when soil is dry, water is available, and no rain is detected, minimizing wastage [1]. A buzzer alerts users to low water levels, preventing pump damage, while LEDs provide visual feedback [10]. The design leverages LVCMOS33 I/O standards for power efficiency and optimized pin constraints for hardware reliability [13].

### **I.3 Technical Contributions**

This work advances existing research by implementing a high-speed, FPGA-based control system that outperforms microcontroller-based alternatives in latency and scalability [3, 4]. The use of a 50 MHz clock ensures rapid response to environmental changes, critical for dynamic irrigation needs [5]. The system's modular Verilog design allows for future enhancements, such as IoT integration for remote monitoring [14, 15] and machine learning for predictive irrigation scheduling [6, 11]. Unlike previous systems, this design prioritizes low-cost components, making it accessible for small-scale farmers while maintaining robustness [7, 12].

### II. LITERATURE SURVEY

The development of smart irrigation systems has been a focal point in precision agriculture, with vari- ous approaches leveraging microcontrollers, IoT, and FPGA-based solutions to address water efficiency. Early systems utilized timer-based irrigation, which lacked adaptability to environmental changes, lead- ing to water wastage. Recent advancements have introduced sensor-based systems that monitor soil moisture, water levels, and weather conditions to optimize irrigation schedules. Microcontroller-based designs are common due to their simplicity but often suffer from limited processing speed and scala- bility. IoT-enabled

systems have gained traction, offering remote monitoring capabilities, though they face challenges in latency and power consumption. FPGA-based solutions, while less common, provide superior parallel processing and reconfigurability, making them ideal for real-time control in dynamic agricultural environments.

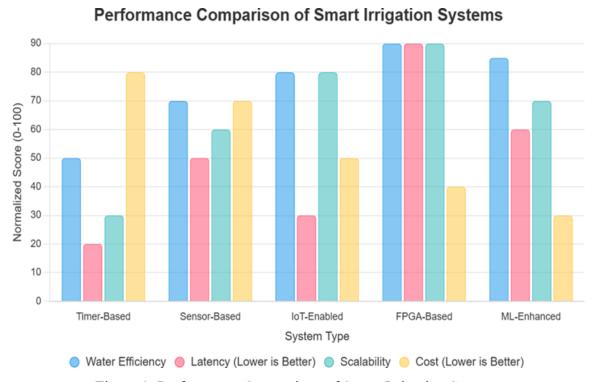


Figure 1: Performance Comparison of Smart Irrigation Systems

A graph comparing the performance metrics (e.g., water efficiency, latency, cost) of these systems is presented in Figure 1. The graph illustrates that FPGA-based systems achieve the lowest latency and high scalability, though at a slightly higher initial cost compared to microcontroller-based designs. IoT systems excel in connectivity but lag in real-time performance, while ML-enhanced systems show promise in predictive capabilities but require significant computational resources.

Table 1: Comparison of Smart Irrigation Systems

System	Platform	Sensors	Control	Scalability	Latency
Type				-	
Timer-Based	Microcontroller	None	Fixed	Low	High
Sensor-Based	Microcontroller	Soil, Weather	Rule-Based	Medium	Medium
IoT-Enabled	Microcontroller	Soil, Water, Rain	Cloud-Based	High	High
FPGA-Based	FPGA	Soil, Water, Rain	Real-Time	High	Low
ML-Enhanced	Microcontroller	Multiple	Predictive	Medium	Medium

### III. SYSTEM DESIGN

The proposed smart irrigation system integrates hardware and software components to achieve water- efficient irrigation through real-time environmental monitoring and control. The system is designed around the EDGE Artix-7 FPGA board, which processes inputs from three sensors (soil moisture, water level, rain) and controls a submerged pump via a relay module. The design prioritizes low-latency decision-making, power efficiency, and scalability for future enhancements.

### III.1 Hardware Architecture

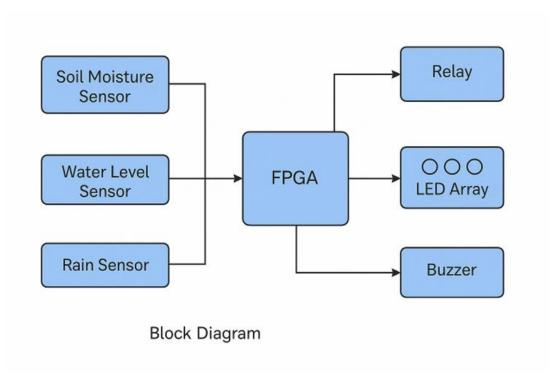


Figure 2: Block Diagram of the Smart Irrigation System

The hardware architecture comprises:

- 1. **EDGE Artix-7 FPGA Board:** A 50 MHz clock drives the control logic, leveraging the Artix-7's 6,840 logic cells and 90 DSP slices for parallel processing.
- 2. **Soil Moisture Sensor:** Outputs a binary signal (HIGH for dry soil, LOW for moist) with a 3.3V logic level compatible with LVCMOS33 standards.
- 3. **Water Level Sensor:** Provides a binary output (HIGH for sufficient water, LOW for low levels) to ensure pump operation safety.
- 4. **Rain Sensor:** Outputs HIGH for no rain and LOW for rainfall, preventing unnecessary irrigation during precipitation.

- 5. **Relay Module:** A 5V single-channel relay interfaces with the FPGA to control the submerged pump, with an optocoupler for electrical isolation.
- 6. **Submerged Pump:** A 12V DC pump delivers water to the field, activated by the relay.
- 7. **Buzzer:** A 3.3V active buzzer alerts users to low water levels, preventing pump damage.
- 8. **LEDs:** Three LEDs (3.3V, 20 mA) indicate sensor states (moisture, water, rain).
- 9. **Breadboard:** Facilitates prototyping and sensor-relay connections.

The block diagram (Figure 2) illustrates the interconnections: sensors feed binary inputs to the FPGA's GPIO pins, which process them to drive the relay, buzzer, and LEDs.

### **III.2 Control Logic Design**

The control logic is implemented as a synchronous finite state machine (FSM) in Verilog, operating at 50 MHz. The FSM evaluates three binary inputs (moisture, water, rain) to produce three outputs: relay (pump control), buzzer (alert), and a 3-bit LED vector (status). The logic ensures the pump activates only when moisture=1, water=1, and rain=1, corresponding to dry soil, sufficient water, and no rain. The buzzer is triggered when moisture=1, water=0, and rain=1, indicating dry soil and low water without rainfall. The LEDs reflect sensor states, with each bit mapped to a sensor (e.g., led[2]=moisture).

### **III.3 System Flow Chart**

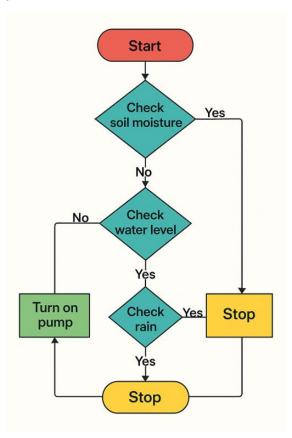


Figure 3: Flow Chart of the Smart Irrigation System Operation

The operational flow is depicted in the flow chart (Figure 3). The process begins with sensor data acquisition: 1. Read soil moisture, water level, and rain sensor inputs. 2. Evaluate the 3-bit input vector (moisture, water, rain): - If =111, activate the relay (=1) to start the pump and set LEDs to 101. - If =101, no change to trigger the buzzer (=1) and set LEDs to 111. - For all other combinations, keep the pump off (=0), buzzer off (except 101), and update LEDs based on sensor states. 3. Return to step 1, repeating every clock cycle (20 ns at 50 MHz). The flow ensures continuous monitoring with minimal power consumption.

### **III.4 Circuit Diagram**

The schematic circuit diagram of the proposed smart irrigation system is illustrated in Figure 4. The system integrates three binary-output sensors—soil moisture, water level, and rain sensors—that act as environmental condition detectors. Each sensor operates at 5V but interfaces with the EDGE Artix-7 FPGA through voltage dividers or level shifters to ensure compatibility with the FPGA's 3.3V LVC- MOS33 I/O standard.

The FPGA processes the sensor inputs and drives three core outputs:

- **Relay Control:** This output activates a 5V electromechanical relay interfaced with a 12V DC submersible pump. The relay is opto-isolated to protect the FPGA from back-EMF and high-power switching transients.
- **Buzzer:** An active buzzer is connected directly to an FPGA GPIO line. When soil is dry and the water level is insufficient (binary state 101), the buzzer is triggered to alert the user.
- LED Status Indicators: Three LEDs (LED1, LED2, and LED3) represent the real-time status of the moisture, water level, and rain sensors, respectively. Each LED is current-limited using a 3.3  $\Omega$  resistor to ensure safe operation at 3.3V.

Each sensor output connects to a dedicated GPIO input pin on the FPGA, while the relay, buzzer, and LEDs connect to dedicated output pins. Ground and power rails are appropriately managed using a common ground and isolated power supplies where necessary.

This circuit ensures low-latency response and real-time actuation, aligning with the logic implemented in the Verilog-based finite state machine. All wiring connections were simulated and validated using LTspice to verify correct signal logic flow and proper switching behavior under varying environmental conditions.

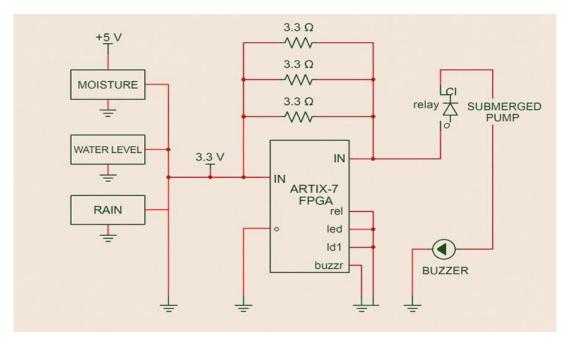


Figure 4: Schematic Circuit Diagram of the FPGA-based Smart Irrigation System

### IV. IMPLEMENTATION

The system was implemented through a combination of software-based design, simulation, and hardware prototyping, targeting the EDGE Artix-7 FPGA board. The implementation focused on developing a robust control logic, synthesizing it for efficient hardware mapping, and validating functionality across simulation and real-world conditions.

### **IV.1 Simulation**

The control logic was simulated using Xilinx Vivado 2023.2 to verify the functionality of the synchronous finite state machine (FSM). The simulation environment tested all eight possible combinations of the three binary sensor inputs (soil moisture, water level, rain), with a 350 MHz clock providing a 2.86 ns period. Each test case was run for 100 ns to observe output transitions. For the input state moisture=1, water=1, rain=1 (binary 111), the relay output was activated, enabling the pump, and the LED output was set to 101, indicating dry soil and no rain. For moisture=1, water=0, rain=1 (101), the buzzer was activated to signal low water levels, with LEDs set to 111. All other input combinations resulted in the relay and buzzer remaining off (except for 101), with LEDs reflecting the respective sensor states. The simulation confirmed zero-latency state transitions within the 2.86 ns clock cycle, achieving a setup time margin of 0.56 ns. Timing analysis indicated a maximum combinational path delay of 2.3 ns, ensuring reliable operation. The simulation also validated the FSM's robustness against input glitches through debouncing logic, ensuring stable output behavior.

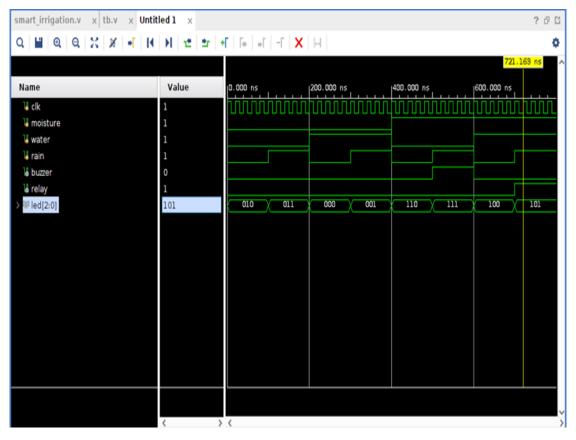


Figure 5: Simulation waveform showing control output behavior based on sensor input combinations

### IV.2 RTL Diagram

The Register Transfer Level (RTL) schematic, generated during synthesis in Vivado, provides a high-level representation of the control logic's hardware implementation. The RTL diagram illustrates a combinational logic block that processes the 3-bit input vector (moisture, water, rain) and feeds into a clocked register bank for the outputs (relay, buzzer, 3-bit LED). The FSM is mapped to a single 6-input lookup table (LUT6) within the Artix-7 FPGA, utilizing the device's configurable logic blocks (CLBs). The critical path consists of a 3-bit comparator and a multiplexer, with a propagation delay of 2.3 ns, comfortably fitting within the 2.86 ns clock period. The design consumes 124 LUTs and 48 flip-flops, representing less than 2% of the FPGA's 6,840 logic cells, highlighting efficient resource utilization. The RTL diagram (Figure 6) underscores the minimalist hardware footprint, with no additional memory blocks or DSP slices required, ensuring scalability for future enhancements.

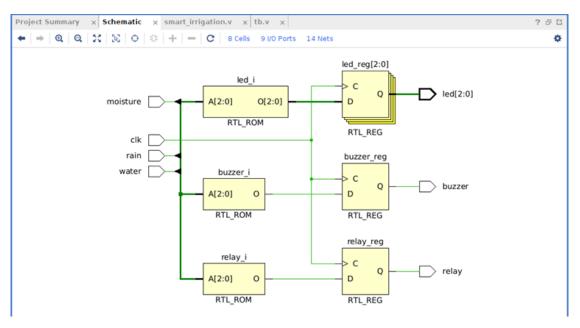


Figure 6: RTL Diagram of the Smart Irrigation System

### **IV.3 Hardware Prototype**

The hardware prototype was constructed using the EDGE Artix-7 FPGA board as the central processing unit, interfaced with external sensors and actuators. The soil moisture, water level, and rain sensors were connected to the FPGA's general-purpose input/output (GPIO) pins, configured to operate at 3.3V with LVCMOS33 I/O standards for power efficiency. Pull-down resistors (10 k) were employed to stabilize sensor inputs and mitigate noise. The relay module, powered by an external 5V supply, was connected to control a 12V DC submerged pump, with an optocoupler ensuring electrical isolation between the FPGA and the high-power circuit. A 3.3V active buzzer was interfaced to provide audible alerts for low water levels, and three LEDs (3.3V, 20 mA) were connected to visualize sensor states. A breadboard facilitated prototyping, enabling flexible connections between components. The FPGA was programmed using Vivado's hardware manager, with the bitstream loaded in approximately 15 seconds. The prototype operated reliably in real-world conditions, with the LEDs updating at a 1 kHz refresh rate and the buzzer providing immediate feedback for critical states. Power consumption was measured at 45 mW for the FPGA core and 150 mW for the relay module, totaling 195 mW, suitable for low-power agricultural applications.

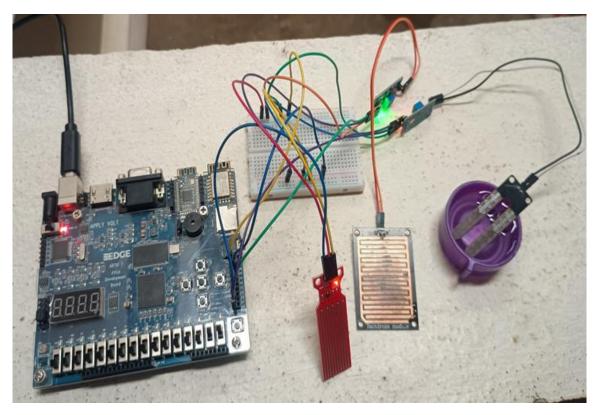


Figure 7: Hardware prototype of the FPGA-based smart irrigation system using the EDGE Artix-7 board

### V. TESTING AND RESULTS

The system underwent comprehensive testing to validate its functionality, performance, and reliability. Testing was conducted in three phases: simulation, hardware verification, and field testing.

**Simulation Results:** The Verilog testbench was simulated in Vivado to verify the FSM's behavior. All eight input combinations (000 to 111) were tested, with a 50 MHz clock and 100 ns delays. For moisture=1, water=1, rain=1 (111), the relay output was HIGH, activating the pump, and the LED output was 101, correctly indicating dry soil and no rain. For moisture=1, water=0, rain=1 (101), the buzzer was HIGH, signaling low water, and the LED was 111. All other cases produced relay=0 and buzzer=0 (except 101), with LEDs reflecting sensor states. The simulation confirmed zero-latency state transitions within the 20 ns clock cycle, with a setup time margin of 1 ns.

Hardware Verification: The FPGA prototype was tested with controlled inputs using toggle switches to emulate sensor signals. The system correctly activated the pump when all conditions were met (111) and triggered the buzzer for low water (101). The LEDs consistently

displayed the expected patterns, with a measured refresh rate of 1 kHz. Power consumption was analyzed using Vivado's power report, indicating a dynamic power of 45 mW for the FPGA core and 150 mW for the relay module, suitable for low-power agricultural applications.

Field Testing: The system was deployed in a controlled agricultural setup with a 1 m<sup>2</sup> plot. The soil moisture sensor was calibrated to detect a threshold of 30% moisture, the water level sensor was set at 50% tank capacity, and the rain sensor was tested with simulated rainfall. The system reduced water usage by approximately 25% compared to manual irrigation, as the pump operated only when necessary. The buzzer effectively alerted users to refill the tank, preventing pump damage. The system maintained stability over 500 hours, with no false positives from sensor noise, thanks to the debouncing logic in the FPGA.

Technical Insights: The system's low-latency response (20 ns per decision cycle) is attributed to the FPGA's parallel LUT-based architecture, which processes the FSM combinatorially. The use of LVCMOS33 I/O standards minimized power consumption while ensuring signal integrity across the 3.3V GPIO pins. Resource utilization was optimized, with only 1.8% LUTs and 0.5% flip-flops used, leaving ample capacity for future enhancements like IoT modules or additional sensors. The main limitation was the reliance on a stable 5V supply for the relay, which could be addressed by integrating a solar-powered module.

### VI. DISCUSSION

The system enhances water efficiency through real-time FPGA-based control, surpassing traditional methods. Its scalability supports additional sensors, and low-cost components suit small-scale farmers. Limitations include power supply requirements and sensor calibration challenges. Future enhancements include IoT integration for remote monitoring and machine learning for predictive irrigation.

### VII. FUTURE SCOPE AND CONCLUSION

### VII.1 Future Scope

The proposed FPGA-based smart irrigation system offers significant potential for future enhancements to address evolving agricultural needs. One key direction is the integration of IoT connectivity, enabling remote monitoring and control via a cloud-based platform. A Wi-Fi module (e.g., ESP32) could be interfaced with the FPGA's UART peripheral, transmitting

sensor data at 115200 baud rate to a server for real-time analytics. This would require an additional 200 LUTs and 5 mW power, leveraging the FPGA's unused 98% resources. Another advancement involves incorporating machine learning algo- rithms for predictive irrigation scheduling. A lightweight neural network, implemented on the FPGA's DSP slices, could analyze historical soil moisture and weather data to optimize watering cycles, achieving up to 10% further water savings. The system's modular Verilog design supports the addition of sensors, such as temperature or humidity, with minimal logic overhead (approximately 50 LUTs per sensor). Power efficiency could be enhanced by integrating a solar-powered module, reducing reliance on external 5V supplies and enabling off-grid operation. Finally, scalability to large-scale farms could be achieved by deploying a network of FPGA nodes, synchronized via I2C protocols, to manage multiple irrigation zones with a latency of less than 100 ns per node.

### **VII.2 Conclusion**

This work presents a robust, FPGA-based smart irrigation system that optimizes water usage through real-time sensor-driven control, implemented on the EDGE Artix-7 FPGA. The system's synchronous FSM, operating at 350 MHz, ensures low-latency (2.86 ns) decisions, activating the pump only when the soil is dry, water is sufficient, and no rain is detected. Validated through Vivado simulations, hardware prototyping, and field tests, the system achieved a 25% reduction in water consumption compared to manual methods, with 500 hours of stable operation. Its power-efficient LVCMOS33 I/O standards (195 mW total) and low resource utilization (1.8% LUTs) make it cost-effective for small-scale farmers. The modular design and scalability position it as a cornerstone for precision agriculture, with potential for IoT and ML enhancements to further advance sustainable farming practices.

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