

# *Sustainable Manufacturing Of Oilfield Spare Parts Using 3D Printing: Mechanical Reliability, Economic Feasibility, And HSE Risk Mitigation In Libya*

Mussa M Shomata<sup>1</sup>, Abdelsalam Abuzreda<sup>2</sup>, Abubakr A.B. Mohammed<sup>3</sup>, Nagi. H. Ali<sup>4</sup>, Abdelaziz Y A. Gaderbuh<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, and Director of the Higher Institute of Engineering Technologies Benghazi, Libya.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor & Postdoctoral Research fellow, Senior Advisor Department of Health Safety and Environmental (HSE), Arabian Gulf Oil Company (AGOCO) and University of Benghazi, and the higher Institute of Engineering Techniques Benghazi, Libya

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, at the Higher Institute of Engineering Technologies Benghazi, Libya.

<sup>4</sup>Chairman of the board of directors petroleum research center, and Research doctor, Senior Advisor at Arabian Gulf Oil Company (AGOCO).

<sup>5</sup>CEO, Medoil-Istanbul, Mediterranean oil services, and Senior Advisor.



**Abstract:** This study evaluates the feasibility of using 3D printing technology to manufacture critical mechanical spare parts in Libyan oilfields, focusing on mechanical performance, economic efficiency, and HSE compliance. Using industrial-grade 3D printers (Markforged X7), valve components, gear housings, and pipe connectors were fabricated from PLA, ABS, and carbon-fiber-reinforced nylon (CFRN). Mechanical testing (ASTM D638/D695) and statistical analysis (ANOVA, Weibull modeling) revealed that CFRN achieved 70% of OEM steel tensile strength ( $72.3 \pm 4.1$  MPa vs. 103.5 MPa,  $p < 0.001$ ) with 50% weight reduction, while reducing lead time by 76.7% (30 → 7 days) and cutting costs by 50% per part. However, ABS emitted  $85 \pm 9.7 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  PM<sub>2.5</sub>, exceeding OSHA limits (\* $p=0.013$ \*), necessitating HEPA filtration and enclosed printing systems. The results demonstrate that CFRN is viable for non-critical parts, yielding \$2.1M/year savings for mid-sized oilfields, whereas ABS requires stringent HSE controls.

**Keywords:** Additive manufacturing, oilfield spare parts, mechanical reliability, economic feasibility, HSE compliance, carbon-fiber-reinforced nylon (CFRN), sustainable manufacturing.

## **1.Introduction:**

The Libyan oil industry, responsible for 1.2 million barrels of daily production (National Oil Corporation [NOC], 2022), suffers severe operational disruptions due to extended spare part lead times of 6–12 weeks and procurement costs averaging \$500–1,200 per component. These challenges are compounded by Libya's harsh Saharan environment, where diurnal temperature fluctuations (40–120°C) and abrasive sand particles accelerate mechanical degradation in conventional steel parts (Gibson et al., 2021). While additive manufacturing (AM) has demonstrated potential for decentralized production in temperate climates (Alghamdi, 2023), its adaptation to Libyan oilfields remains unexplored, particularly regarding material reliability under desert conditions, statistical validation of part lifespans, and health-safety-environment (HSE) risks from industrial-scale 3D printing.

This study addresses these gaps through an integrated experimental and analytical approach. Mechanical testing of carbon-fiber-reinforced nylon (CFRN), ABS, and PLA was conducted following ASTM D638/D695 standards, with thermal aging simulations replicating Saharan conditions. Weibull reliability modeling ( $\beta=15.6$  for CFRN) provided statistical validation of part durability, while regression analysis quantified lead time reductions (76.7%) and cost savings (50% per part). Concurrently, HSE assessments monitored particulate emissions (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and styrene levels against OSHA PELs, revealing CFRN's superiority for non-critical components (70% of steel strength at 50% weight reduction) and the necessity of \$8k HEPA systems for ABS processing. The findings offer Libyan operators a validated framework for AM adoption, balancing technical feasibility (ISO 2768-1 compliance), economic viability (\$2.1M annual savings), and regulatory compliance (NIOSH, 2023), thereby transforming spare part procurement in remote oilfields.

## 2. Objectives:

1. **Performance Validation** , Quantify mechanical properties (strength, thermal resistance, dimensional accuracy) of 3D-printed oilfield components under operational conditions
2. **Operational Impact Assessment** , Evaluate cost/time efficiency gains versus conventional procurement through empirical modeling
3. **HSE & Implementation Analysis** ,Identify critical health/safety risks and develop mitigation protocols for sustainable adoption.

## 3. Materials and Methods

This study employed a multi-disciplinary methodology to evaluate the feasibility of 3D-printed spare parts for Libyan oilfields, integrating mechanical testing, economic modeling, and HSE risk assessment. The experimental design directly addressed the three research objectives: performance validation, operational impact analysis, and HSE compliance.

### 3.1 Materials and Equipment

Industrial-grade polymers were selected to represent a range of mechanical and thermal properties:

- **PLA** (NatureWorks 4043D) for baseline comparison
- **ABS** (Stratasys ABS-M30) for intermediate strength
- **Carbon-fiber-reinforced nylon (CFRN)** (Markforged Onyx) as the advanced material
- **Control:** OEM steel parts (AISI 4140)

Fabrication utilized a **Markforged X7** industrial 3D printer ( $\pm 0.1$  mm precision), chosen for its capability to print fiber-reinforced composites. Mechanical testing was conducted using an **Instron 5969** universal testing machine, while thermal imaging employed a **FLIR A655sc** infrared camera.

### 3.2 Experimental Design

#### Mechanical Performance Validation

- **Tensile/compression tests** (ASTM D638/D695) with  $n=30$  samples per material
- **Fatigue testing:**  $10^6$  cycles at  $R=0.1$  stress ratio to simulate operational loads
- **Thermal aging:** 14-day exposure to 60–120°C cycles (simulating Saharan diurnal variations)

#### Dimensional Accuracy Assessment

- 3D scanning (Geomagic Control X) compared printed parts to CAD models
- Evaluated against ISO 2768-1 "fine" grade tolerances ( $\pm 0.2$  mm)

## HSE Risk Quantification

- **Particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>):** Measured during printing using NIOSH-compliant monitors
- **VOC emissions:** Styrene concentrations monitored for ABS per OSHA 1910.1200

## 3.3 Analytical Methods

- **Statistical analysis:**
  - ANOVA with Tukey HSD post-hoc tests for material comparisons
  - Weibull reliability modeling (95% CI) for fatigue life prediction
- **Economic modeling:**
  - Linear regression of cost/time vs. part complexity
  - NPV calculation for ROI estimation (10% discount rate)

## Rationale for Methodology Selection

The ASTM/ISO protocols ensured industry-standard mechanical evaluation, while the Weibull model ( $\beta=15.6$  for CFRN) provided statistical rigor for reliability claims. HSE measurements directly addressed OSHA/NIOSH compliance gaps identified in Libyan oilfields. This comprehensive approach enabled quantitative comparisons between traditional and AM workflows, as presented in Results (Tables 1–5).

## 4. Results:

The experimental results of this study demonstrate the significant potential of 3D printing technology for manufacturing spare parts in Libyan oilfields. As shown in Table 1, carbon fiber-reinforced nylon (CFRN) exhibited superior mechanical properties with a tensile strength of  $70 \pm 4.1$  MPa (approximately 70% of conventional steel's strength) while achieving a 50% weight reduction, along with excellent reliability (Weibull modulus  $\beta=15.6$ ). Table 2 reveals that printed components maintained high dimensional accuracy, with valve handles showing minimal deviation ( $0.20 \pm 0.03$  mm), compliant with ISO 2768-1 "fine" grade tolerances, though more complex geometries like gear housings required additional post-processing ( $0.40 \pm 0.07$  mm deviation).

Thermal performance testing (Table 3) confirmed CFRN's stability under Saharan conditions, retaining 95% of its strength at 120°C, while PLA showed significant deformation above 60°C. The economic analysis in Table 4 highlights substantial benefits, including a 76.7% reduction in lead time (from 30 to 7 days) and 50% cost savings per part (\$500 to \$250). However, Table 5 indicates important HSE considerations, with ABS emitting hazardous PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels ( $85 \pm 9.7$   $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) exceeding OSHA limits, whereas CFRN operations only required N95 respiratory protection.

Optimization algorithms (Table 6) improved manufacturing efficiency, reducing failure rates by 46.7% and increasing material utilization by 21.4%. The environmental impact model (Table 7) quantified key degradation factors, showing a 4.5% strength reduction per 10°C temperature increase and significant sand abrasion effects (coefficient -0.30). These comprehensive findings provide critical insights for implementing 3D printing technology in Libya's oil sector while addressing technical, economic, and HSE requirements.

**Table 1: Mechanical Properties of 3D-Printed Materials**

Material	Tensile Strength (MPa)	Elastic Modulus (GPa)	Impact Energy (kJ/m <sup>2</sup> )	Weibull Modulus ( $\beta$ )
PLA	$50 \pm 3.2^*$	$3.5 \pm 0.4$	$2.0 \pm 0.5$	8.7

Material	Tensile Strength (MPa)	Elastic Modulus (GPa)	Impact Energy (kJ/m <sup>2</sup> )	Weibull Modulus (β)
ABS	40 ± 2.8	2.3 ± 0.3	5.0 ± 1.1	10.2
CFRN	70 ± 4.1	8.0 ± 0.9	15.0 ± 2.3	15.6

#### Description Analysis:

1. This table compares the mechanical properties of three 3D-printed materials (PLA, ABS, CFRN) against OEM steel parts. Key metrics include tensile strength, elastic modulus, impact energy, and Weibull modulus (reliability).
2. **CFRN** outperformed PLA and ABS in tensile strength (70 ± 4.1 MPa) and elastic modulus (8.0 ± 0.9 GPa), achieving ~70% of steel's strength while reducing weight by 50%.
3. **Weibull modulus (β=15.6)** indicates high reliability for CFRN, making it suitable for load-bearing parts.
4. **Statistical significance (ANOVA, p<0.001)** confirms material differences, with CFRN being the best choice for oilfield applications.

**Table 2: Dimensional Accuracy vs. Original CAD Models**

Part	Mean Deviation (mm)	95% Confidence Interval	R <sup>2</sup> (Regression Fit)
Valve Handle	0.20 ± 0.03	[0.17, 0.23]	0.98
Gear Housing	0.40 ± 0.07	[0.33, 0.47]	0.94
Pipe Connector	0.30 ± 0.05	[0.25, 0.35]	0.96

#### Description Analysis:

1. This table evaluates the dimensional accuracy of 3D-printed parts (valve handle, gear housing, pipe connector) compared to their CAD models, reporting mean deviation and regression fit (R<sup>2</sup>).
2. **Valve handles** met ISO 2768-1 "fine" tolerance (±0.2 mm), with high precision (R<sup>2</sup>=0.98).
3. **Gear housings** showed larger deviations (±0.4 mm), requiring post-machining (p=0.002 vs. OEM).
4. **Implication:** Complex geometries may need additional processing, but most parts (89%) met industrial standards.

**Table 3: Thermal Performance in Desert Conditions**

Material	Heat Distortion Temp (°C)	Dimensional Change at 60°C (%)	Strength Retention (%)
PLA	60	2.5 ± 0.6	85 ± 4.2
ABS	85	1.8 ± 0.4	90 ± 3.8

Material	Heat Distortion Temp (°C)	Dimensional Change at 60°C (%)	Strength Retention (%)
CFRN	120	0.5 ± 0.2	95 2.1

#### Description Analysis :

1. This table assesses thermal stability (heat distortion temperature, dimensional change, and strength retention) of materials under simulated Saharan conditions (40–120°C).
2. **CFRN** exhibited the best performance: minimal dimensional change (0.5% at 60°C) and 95% strength retention.
3. **PLA** deformed significantly (>2.5%) at 60°C, disqualifying it for surface equipment.
4. **Regression model (R<sup>2</sup>=0.89)** confirmed temperature as the dominant factor in material degradation.

**Table 4: Economic Feasibility Analysis**

Metric	Traditional (Mean ± SD)	3D Printing (Mean ± SD)	Cost Savings (%)
Lead Time (days)	30 ± 5.2	7 ± 1.8	76.7*
Part Cost (\$)	500 ± 75	250 ± 45	50.0*

#### Description Analysis:

1. This table compares traditional procurement vs. 3D printing in terms of lead time and part cost.
2. **Lead time** reduced by **76.7%** (30 → 7 days, p<0.001), critical for minimizing downtime.
3. **Cost savings** of **50%** per part (\$500 → \$250), with projected annual savings of \$2.1M for mid-sized oilfields.
4. **ROI:** High initial printer costs (\$100k) break even in 8 months at 20 parts/month.
5. **Statistical Significance:** Lead time reduction: t(18)=9.3, p<0.001 (paired t-test).

**Table 5: Particulate Emissions & Toxicity**

Material	PM <sub>2.5</sub> (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	VOC Emissions (ppm)	OSHA Compliance	Mitigation Measures
PLA	12 ± 3.1	<1	Yes	Basic ventilation
ABS	85 ± 9.7	15 (Styrene)	No	HEPA + Local exhaust
CFRN	35 ± 5.2	5	Conditional	N95 masks required

#### Description Analysis:

1. This table quantifies emissions (PM<sub>2.5</sub>, VOCs) from 3D printing and evaluates OSHA compliance.
2. **ABS** emitted hazardous levels of PM<sub>2.5</sub> (85 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) and styrene (15 ppm), exceeding OSHA limits (p=0.013).
3. **CFRN** required N95 masks (35 µg/m<sup>3</sup> PM<sub>2.5</sub>).

4. **Mitigation:** Enclosed printers and HEPA filters are mandatory for ABS, adding \$8k/system to costs.

**Table 6: Dynamic Programming Optimization for Cost and Lead Time Reduction**

Parameter	Baseline Value	Optimized Value (Post-Algorithm)	Savings (%)	Mathematical Formulation
Manufacturing Time (days)	30	7	76.7	$T_{new}=T_{old}\times\alpha$ $T_{new}=T_{old}\times\alpha$
Part Cost (\$)	500	250	50.0	$C_{new}=C_{old}-\beta\times C_{old}$ $=C_{old}-\beta\times C_{old}$
Material Efficiency (%)	70	85	21.4	$\eta=\frac{\text{Used Material}}{\text{Total Material}}\times 100$ $\eta=\frac{\text{Total Material}}{\text{Used Material}}\times 100$
Failure Rate (%)	15	8	46.7	$\lambda=1-\text{Weibull Reliability}$ $\lambda=1-\text{Weibull Reliability}$

**Description and Analysis:**

- Dynamic Programming (DP)** was applied to optimize resource allocation (time, cost, materials) across additive manufacturing (AM) stages. The algorithm minimizes waste by iteratively solving sub-problems (e.g., layer printing paths, material usage).
- Time Reduction ( $\alpha$ ):** The 76.7% reduction in lead time ( $T_{new}=7$  days) aligns with empirical findings (Table 4). DP optimized printer scheduling and parallelized non-critical tasks.
- Cost Savings ( $\beta$ ):** The 50% cost reduction stems from DP-driven material efficiency ( $\eta=85\%$ ), reducing support structures and failed prints.
- Failure Rate:** The Weibull-based reliability model ( $\lambda$ ) shows a 46.7% improvement, corroborating CFRN's superior performance (Table 6).

**Table 7: Multiple Regression Model for Environmental Impact on Material Durability**

Independent Variable	Regression Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	p-value	Effect	Model Equation
Temperature (°C)	-0.45	<0.001	Strength degradation	$S=92.3-0.45\times\text{Temp}$ $S=92.3-0.45\times\text{Temp}$

Independent Variable	Regression Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	p-value	Effect	Model Equation
Humidity (%)	-0.12	0.03	Marginal strength loss	$S = S_{base} - 0.12 \times \text{Humidity}$
Sand Exposure (hours/day)	-0.30	0.01	Accelerated wear	$S = S_{base} - 0.30 \times \text{Sand}$
Material Type (CFRN=1)	+15.6	<0.001	Enhanced durability	$S = S_{base} + 15.6 \times \text{Material}$

#### Description and Analysis:

##### 1. Regression Model:

The equation  $S = 92.3 - 0.45 \times \text{Temp}$  predicts CFRN's strength retention (95% at 60°C, Table 7).

##### 2. Key Findings:

- 2.1. **Temperature** is the most significant factor ( $\beta = -0.45, p < 0.001$ ), justifying thermal controls for Saharan operations.
- 2.2. **Sand Exposure** ( $\beta = -0.30$ ) confirms field observations of abrasive wear, necessitating protective coatings.
- 2.3. **CFRN's Superiority** ( $\beta = +15.6$ ) aligns with Weibull results ( $\beta = 15.6$ , Table 7).

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Mechanical Performance Validation

The ANOVA results ( $F(2,87) = 48.32, p < 0.001$ ) from Table 1 confirm significant differences between materials, with CFRN showing superior tensile strength ( $72.3 \pm 4.1$  MPa) compared to ABS ( $40 \pm 2.8$  MPa) and PLA ( $50 \pm 3.2$  MPa). Post-hoc Tukey tests revealed all pairwise comparisons were significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). The Weibull modulus ( $\beta = 15.6$  for CFRN, 95% CI [14.2-17.0]) indicates significantly higher reliability than ABS ( $\beta = 10.2$ ) or PLA ( $\beta = 8.7$ ), supporting CFRN's use in non-critical applications.

### 5.2 Dimensional Accuracy

As shown in Table 2, one-sample t-tests against the ISO 2768-1 standard ( $\pm 0.2$ mm) demonstrated that 89% of CFRN parts met specifications ( $t(28) = 1.92, p = 0.065$ ). However, complex geometries like gear housings showed significantly greater deviation ( $0.40 \pm 0.07$ mm;  $t(28) = 5.67, p < 0.001$ ), confirming the need for post-processing.

### 5.3 Thermal Performance

The linear regression model (Table 7:  $R^2 = 0.89, F(3,56) = 152.4, p < 0.001$ ) revealed temperature ( $\beta = -0.45, t = -8.92, p < 0.001$ ) and sand exposure ( $\beta = -0.30, t = -4.15, p = 0.001$ ) as significant predictors of strength degradation. CFRN maintained  $95.2 \pm 2.1\%$  strength at 120°C (Table 3), significantly better than ABS ( $90 \pm 3.8\%$ ) and PLA ( $85 \pm 4.2\%$ ) ( $F(2,87) = 39.15, p < 0.001$ ).



#### 5.4 Economic Impact

Paired t-tests (Table 4) showed significant reductions in lead time ( $t(18)=9.3$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and cost ( $t(18)=12.7$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The multiple regression model ( $R^2=0.91$ ) demonstrated part complexity significantly predicted both cost ( $\beta=0.78$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and production time ( $\beta=0.82$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

#### 5.5 HSE Compliance

Independent samples t-tests confirmed ABS emissions ( $85\pm 9.7 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3 \text{PM}_{2.5}$ ) significantly exceeded OSHA limits ( $50 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ;  $t(14)=3.45$ ,  $p=0.013$ ). The Pearson correlation showed strong association between printing duration and  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  levels ( $r=0.86$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

#### 5.6 Optimization Results

The dynamic programming algorithm (Table 6) achieved significant improvements in:

- Failure rate reduction (46.7%,  $\chi^2(1)=8.92$ ,  $p=0.003$ )
- Material efficiency (21.4% increase,  $t(14)=4.33$ ,  $p=0.001$ )
- Production time (76.7% reduction,  $t(14)=9.15$ ,  $p<0.001$ )

Key statistical findings support three main conclusions:

1. CFRN's mechanical properties are statistically equivalent to steel for non-critical applications (70% strength,  $p>0.05$  via equivalence testing with  $\Delta=5\text{MPa}$ )
2. The economic model shows significant ROI (NPV analysis, 10% discount rate:  $t=6.78$ ,  $p<0.001$ )
3. ABS requires engineering controls (emissions 70% above PELs,  $p=0.013$ )

### 6. Integrated Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 1. Mechanical Performance:

- CFRN (carbon fiber-reinforced nylon) demonstrated high reliability ( $\beta=15.6$ ) and achieved **70% of steel's tensile strength** ( $72.3 \pm 4.1 \text{ MPa}$ ,  $*p^* < 0.001$ ) with 50% weight reduction.
- ABS emitted hazardous particulates ( $85 \pm 9.7 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3 \text{PM}_{2.5}$ ,  $*p^* = 0.013$ ), requiring stringent engineering controls.

#### 2. Operational Efficiency:

- Additive manufacturing reduced lead times by **76.7%** ( $30 \rightarrow 7$  days,  $*t^*(18) = 9.3$ ,  $*p^* < 0.001$ ).
- Achieved **50% cost savings** per part ( $\$500 \rightarrow \$250$ ,  $*t^*(18) = 12.7$ ,  $*p^* < 0.001$ ).

#### 3. Optimization Outcomes:

- Dynamic programming algorithms reduced failure rates by **46.7%** ( $\chi^2(1) = 8.92$ ,  $*p^* = 0.003$ ).

#### Practical Recommendations:

##### 1. 3D Printing Implementation:

- **For non-critical parts:** Adopt CFRN for optimal strength-to-weight ratio.
- **For complex geometries:** Apply post-processing to ensure dimensional accuracy ( $\pm 0.2 \text{ mm}$ ).

##### 2. HSE Risk Management:

- Install **HEPA filtration systems** ( $\$8,000$  per unit) for ABS printing operations.



- Provide **N95 respirators** for workers handling CFRN.
- 3. **Training and Policy Development:**
  - Train technicians in desert-optimized additive manufacturing techniques.
  - Develop Libyan 3D printing standards aligned with **API/ASME** specifications.
- 4. **Future Research Directions:**
  - Investigate hybrid materials (e.g., nano-coated CFRN) for sand abrasion resistance.
  - Develop AI-driven predictive maintenance models.

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