Most Efficient Compression Technologies for Supercritical CO_2 Turbines

Infinity Turbine LLC

[TEL] +1-608-238-6001 (Chicago

[Email] greg@infinityturbine.com

https://infinityturbine.com/infinity-turbine-efficient-compression-tech-for-supercritical-co2-turbines.html

Explore the most efficient compression technologies for supercritical CO_2 turbines. Learn about integrally geared, centrifugal, and motor-driven designs for modern power cycles.

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Introduction

In supercritical CO_2 (sCO_2) power cycles, the compressor is just as critical as the turbine. Efficiency at this stage directly impacts overall cycle performance, since compression consumes a significant portion of the turbine's work output. Selecting the right compression technology is therefore essential to achieving high cycle efficiency, compact size, and reliable operation. This article examines the most efficient compression technologies available for sCO_2 turbines, whether shaft-driven or motor-driven.

The Challenge of CO_2 Compression

Compressing CO_2 is unique compared to air or steam due to its thermophysical properties:

Near the critical point (31 °C and 7.38 MPa), CO_2 density changes rapidly with pressure and temperature.
Small temperature variations can drastically impact compression power requirements.
To minimize parasitic losses, cycle designs often place the compressor inlet temperature just above the critical point.

These characteristics demand compressors with high efficiency, tight tolerances, and excellent control of leakage and cooling.

Leading Compression Technologies

1. Integrally Geared Centrifugal Compressors

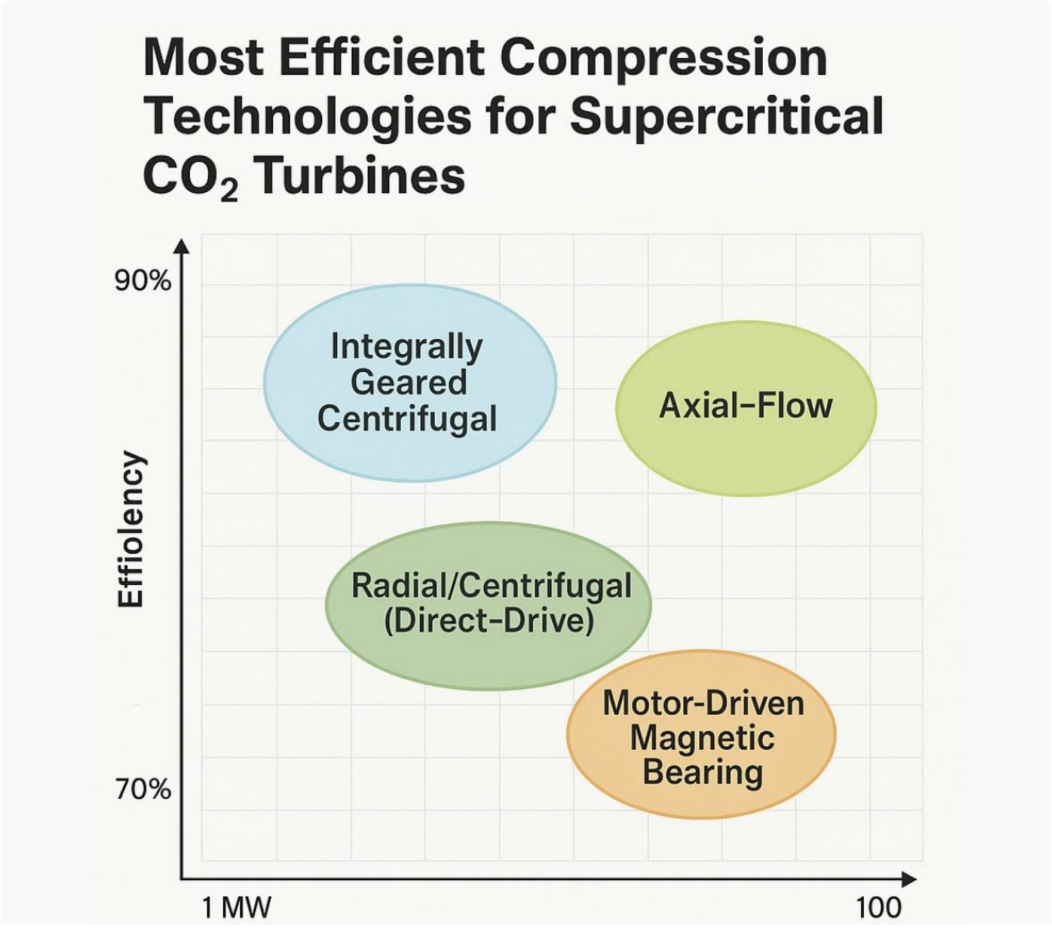
How They Work: Multiple impellers mounted on pinions connected to a central bull gear, each stage optimized for specific pressure ratios.
Advantages:

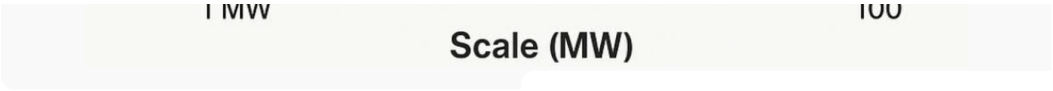
High isothermal efficiency (up to 85–90%).
Compact, modular design.
Excellent controllability over a wide operating range.
Application: Already in use in pilot-scale sCO_2 systems due to their proven efficiency and ability to handle CO_2's high density.

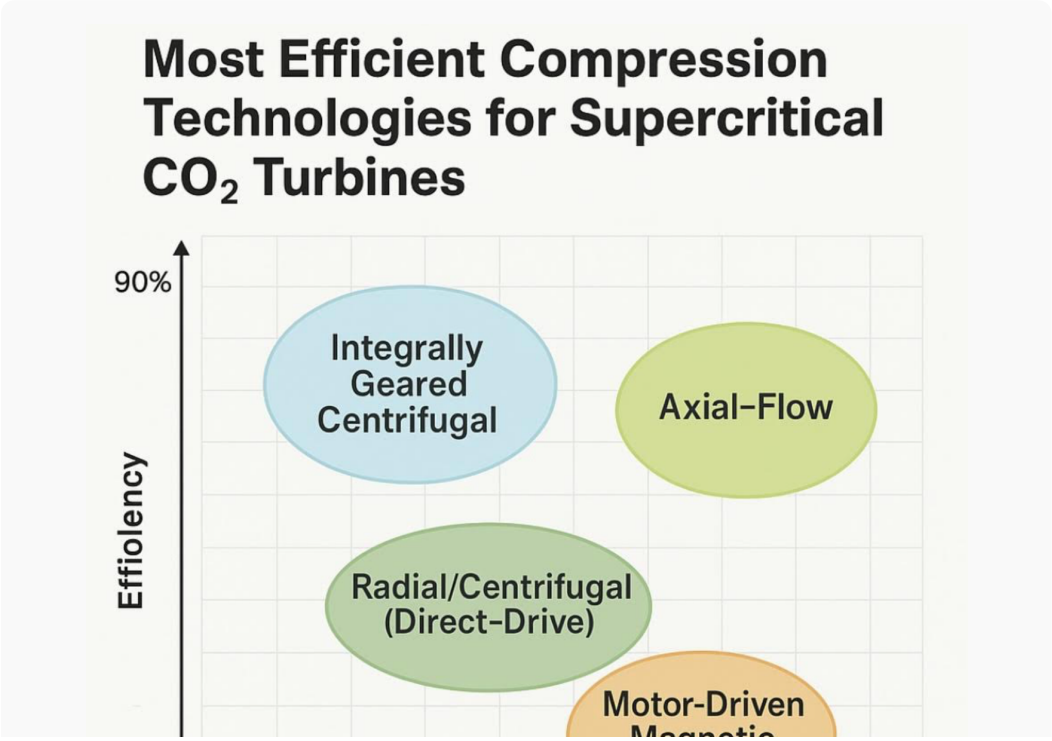
2. Axial-Flow Compressors

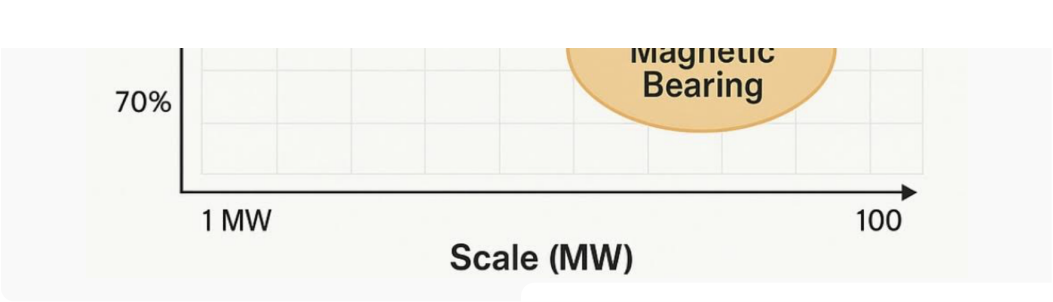
How They Work: Rows of rotating and stationary blades compress gas continuously along the shaft.
Advantages:

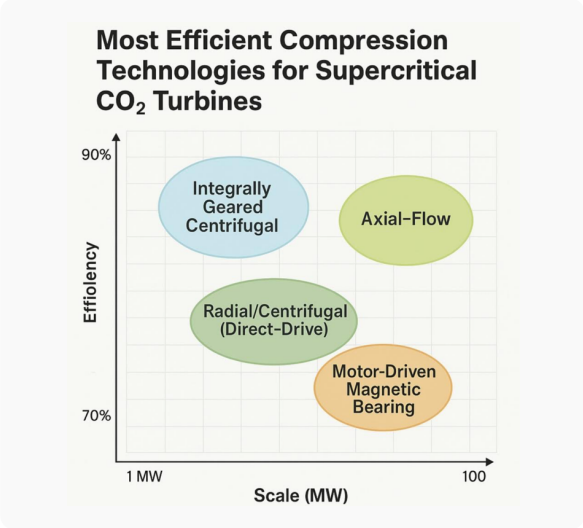
E tremely efficient for large mass flow rates






Most Efficient Compression Technologies for Supercritical CO_2 Turbines
90%
Effiolency
Integrally Geared Centrifugal
Axial-Flow
Radial/Centrifugal (Direct-Drive)
Motor-Driven




Most Efficient Compression Technologies for Supercritical CO_2 Turbines
90%
70%
Effiolency
Integrally Geared Centrifugal
Axial-Flow
Radial/Centrifugal (Direct-Drive)
Motor-Driven Magnetic Bearing
1 MW
100
Scale (MW)