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## Triple-cation perovskite/silicon tandem solar cell

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**Abstract.** A tandem solar cell consisting of perovskite cell overlaid upon silicon cell is a promising option for surpassing the Shockley–Queisser limit for single-junction solar cells. We investigate photovoltaic properties of a triple-cation perovskite/silicon four-terminal tandem solar cell composed of a semitransparent  $\text{CS}_{0.06}(\text{MA}_{0.17}\text{FA}_{0.83})_{0.94}\text{Pb}(\text{I}_{0.83}\text{Br}_{0.17})_3$  layer-based perovskite cell placed onto industrial *n*-type monocrystalline bifacial PERT silicon solar cell. The power-conversion efficiency of 26.6% achieved by us is one of the highest values among those reported for the four-terminal perovskite/silicon tandem solar cells.

**Keywords:** perovskites, tandem solar cells, power-conversion efficiency, silicon *p–n* junctions.

**UDC:** 535.215

### 1. Introduction

Ever-increasing demands for energy needs make it necessary to look for new ways of increasing the contribution of renewable energy sources into global power generation. One of the most promising and environmentally friendly energy sources is electricity generated by solar cells (SCs). Currently, near 90% of the SCs produced worldwide are from silicon [1, 2]. Power-conversion efficiency (PCE) of a single-junction SC reaches 27.6% thanks to a technology of thin passivating a-Si heterojunction intrinsic layers and inter-digitated back contacts on *n*-type silicon wafers [3]. The thermodynamic efficiency limit for a Si-based SC is around 29.8% for the real AM 1.5 solar spectrum [4]. This theoretical limit is extremely difficult to reach, although the experimental values of the PCE are now slowly approaching it. One of the reasons of the above challenge is associated with the fact that the solar photons with the energies higher than the forbidden energy gap create electron–hole pairs, and the excess energy is transmitted to photo-induced carriers, thus making them hot ones [5]. As a result, the hot-carrier photovoltage  $U_{hot}$  is induced across a cell. The polarity of  $U_{hot}$  is opposite to that of the classical photovoltage resulted from the electron–hole pair generation [6, 7]. Therefore, light-induced carrier heating reduces the efficiency of SCs. To diminish the influence of hot carriers on the photovoltage across *p–n* junction, one can use a multi-junction tandem SC [8]. The negative effect of hot carriers can also be considerably reduced by means of coating silicon SCs with thin perovskite layers absorbing high-energy photons [9].

A tandem SC may have different configurations. In two-terminal configuration, both SCs are monolithically integrated, so that a wide-bandgap cell is fabricated directly on a narrow-bandgap cell [10–15]. The two cells are electrically connected in series through a recombination layer or a tunnel junction [12]. The total output voltage of such a tandem is the sum of the voltages of the

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individual cells. The two-terminal tandem SCs need not only good electrical connection between the top and bottom component cells but also require current matching, which complicates a relevant fabrication process and increases production costs [16, 17]. In four-terminal configuration, two cells are joined together mechanically, with a wide-bandgap cell being stacked onto a narrow-bandgap cell [18–21]. The cells operate electrically independently. The total power is the sum of the powers generated by each of the separate cells. The basic requirements for any configuration are the same: the top cell must be a good absorber of visible light and transparent to infrared light. A perovskite layer is the most suitable material for fabricating the top cells due to its excellent optoelectronic properties such as strong light absorption across the entire visible range enabling usage of thin perovskite films [21], high carrier mobility [23, 24], long carrier diffusion length [25], high defect tolerance [26], and long lifetime of generated charge carriers [27, 28].

Below we will deal with the details of fabrication of a semi-transparent triple-cation perovskite SC. We will also report on experimental studies of the structure and the optical properties of perovskite  $\text{Cs}_{0.06}(\text{MA}_{0.17}\text{FA}_{0.83})_{0.94}\text{Pb}(\text{I}_{0.83}\text{Br}_{0.17})_3$  layers, as well as the photoelectric properties of perovskite/silicon tandem SCs.

## 2. Fabrication and characterization of perovskite cell

The methods and procedures suggested and detailed in Refs. [9, 29–31] were used to fabricate a perovskite cell suitable for our tandem SC. Glass substrates with the size  $25 \times 25 \text{ mm}^2$  coated by fluorine-doped tin oxide layer (TEC 10 (3.3 mm), Ossila, UK) were taken as a base of the top perovskite cell. Prior to formation of the cell, a  $\sim 5 \text{ mm}$ -wide strip of fluorine-doped tin oxide layer was removed (etched) from one edge of a glass substrate. Zn powder and 4 M HCl solution were used for etching fluorine-doped tin oxide. Unless otherwise noted, these and the other precursors were from Sigma-Aldrich (MO, USA). After etching fluorine-doped tin oxide, the substrates were cleaned for 20 min with a 2% Helmanex solution in an ultrasonic bath (S40 H, Elmasonic, Germany). Then the substrates were thoroughly rinsed several times with deionized water and ultrasonicated in isopropanol during 20 min. Finally, the substrates were dried by compressed Ar flow and treated for  $\sim 5 \text{ min}$  in a low-pressure oxygen plasma cleaner (Atto, Diener electronic GmbH + Co. KG, Germany).

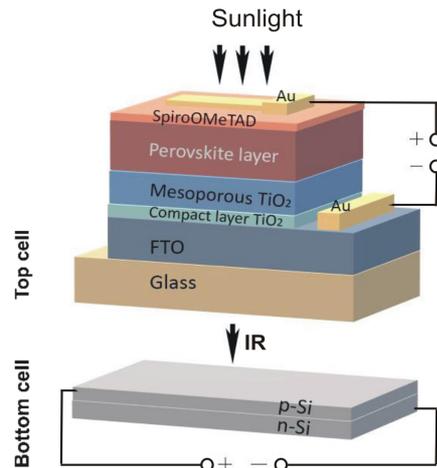
A  $\sim 30 \text{ nm}$ -thick layer of compact (dense)  $\text{TiO}_2$  was formed on the substrates by spraying a solution composed of titanium diisopropoxide (bis) acetylacetonate ( $\text{Ti}(\text{acac})_2\text{O}i\text{Pr}_2$ ) and isopropanol (1:9 vol. ratio) and then sintering it for 15 min at  $450^\circ\text{C}$  on a hotplate (PZ 28-3T Prazitherm, Gestigkeit GmbH, Germany). The sintered  $\text{TiO}_2$ -coated substrates were left on the hotplate for  $\sim 6 \text{ h}$  for natural cooling. After this, a spin-coating method was used to deposit a 150–220 nm-thick layer of mesoporous  $\text{TiO}_2$  on a compact  $\text{TiO}_2$  layer. The mesoporous  $\text{TiO}_2$  layer was grown using a 30-nm  $\text{TiO}_2$  particle paste (Dyesol 30NRD/ethanol) diluted in ethanol to the 1:6 wt. ratio. 150  $\mu\text{L}$  of the  $\text{TiO}_2$  solution thus prepared was pipetted with an automatic pipette (Eppendorf Research Plus, Eppendorf AG) on a surface of the substrate placed on a centrifuge table (SPIN 150i POLOS, SPS-Europe B.V.). The following spinning program was used: 4,000 rpm for 20 s, with acceleration 2,000 rpm/s.

Mesoporous  $\text{TiO}_2$  was formed by sintering the layer in a dry air for 30 min at  $450^\circ\text{C}$ . Then a sample was cooled down to  $150^\circ\text{C}$  and placed immediately into a glovebox (MBRAUN MB-10-G from M. Braun Inertgas-Systeme GMBH, Germany) with controlled atmosphere. The relative humidity  $\leq 0.5 \text{ ppm}$  of  $\text{N}_2$  was continuously maintained. The perovskite structures were grown on mesoporous  $\text{TiO}_2$  by a one-step precipitation method from the precursor solution prepared as described

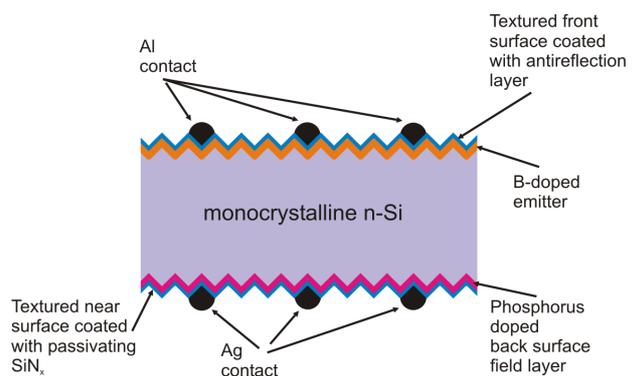
above. A mixture of anhydrous N, N-dimethylformamide (DMF) and dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO) was used as a solvent, with the volume ratio of the components being equal to 4:1. The contents of the precursors in our DMF/DMSO mixture were as follows: 1.1–1.3 M of  $\text{PbI}_2$ , 0.2 M of  $\text{PbBr}_2$ , 1 M of formamidinium iodide (FAI) and 0.2 M of methylammonium bromide (MABr). Then Cs ions were added to the precursor solution. A 1.5 M CsI solution in DMSO was used as a source of Cs and the concentration of CsI in the precursor solution was equal to 6%. According to the literature, the solution of this composition can be used to form the perovskite  $\text{Cs}_x(\text{MA}_{0.17}\text{FA}_{0.83})_{1-x}\text{Pb}(\text{I}_{0.83}\text{Br}_{0.17})_3$  compound [31].

To deposit the perovskite layer on mesoporous  $\text{TiO}_2$ , the sample was placed on a centrifuge table, and 150  $\mu\text{L}$  of the precursor solution was dropped with an Eppendorf pipette. Immediately after that, a two-step spin program was initiated. At the first step, spinning at 1,000 rpm for 10 s was applied, with the acceleration 200 rpm/s. The parameters of the second step were 6,000 rpm, 30 s and 1,000 rpm/s. Before ending the spin-coating program ( $\sim 10$  s), 150  $\mu\text{L}$  of chlorobenzene was dropped on the surface of our sample to remove any residuals of the solution. The samples were then transferred from the centrifuge table on a hotplate (Isotemp Fisherbrand from Thermo Fisher Scientific, USA) and annealed in inert-gas atmosphere for 60 min at  $100^\circ\text{C}$ . After annealing and natural cooling for  $\sim 10$  min, a hole transport layer covering the perovskite layer was formed. The samples were placed again on the centrifuge table, poured with 150  $\mu\text{L}$  of 70 mM 2-N,2-N,2-N',2-N',7-N,7-N,7-N'-octakis(4-methoxyphenyl)-9,9'-spirobi[fluorene]-2,2',7,7'-tetramine (Spiro-OMeTAD) solution. Then a proper spin-coating program was initiated immediately (4,000 rpm for 25 s, with the acceleration 2,000 rpm/s). Prior to this procedure, 17  $\mu\text{L}$  of Li-bis(trifluoromethylsulfonyl)imide (Li-TFSI) salt in anhydrous acetonitrile and 28.8  $\mu\text{L}$  of 4-tert-butylpyridine (TBP) solution were added to Spiro-OMeTAD solution. Li-TFSI concentration in the solvent was equal to  $10 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{mL}^{-1}$ . 70 nm-thick Au contacts were deposited in a vacuum chamber of a thermal-evaporation equipment “VAKSIS PVD Vapor-5S\_Th” (Vaksis R&D and Engineering, Ankara, Turkey) on the top of the hole transport layer and on the open side of the fluorine-doped tin oxide.

A scheme of our perovskite SC is shown in Fig. 1. To compose our perovskite/silicon tandem SC, an industrial (DS New Energy, China) *n*-type monocrystalline bifacial passivated emitter rear totally diffused silicon SC was used as a bottom cell (see Fig. 2). A boron diffused  $\text{p}^+$  emitter was situated on its top surface to ensure electrical matching between the perovskite cell and the silicon cell.



**Fig. 1.** Architecture of our triple-cation perovskite/silicon tandem SC composed of a top perovskite cell and a bottom silicon cell (not to be scaled).

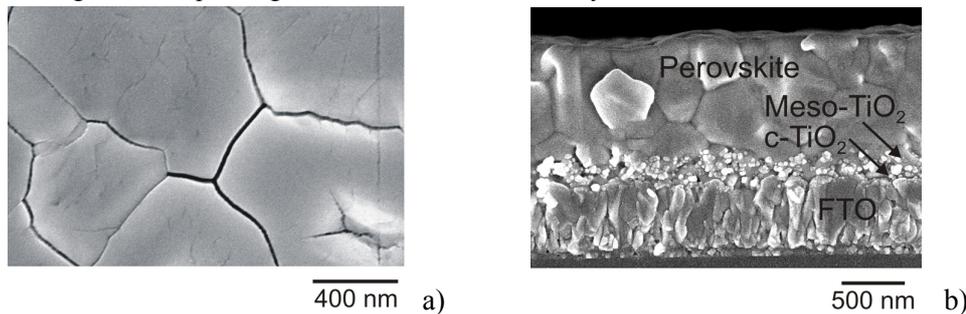


**Fig. 2.** Schematic cross-sectional view of a silicon SC used as a bottom cell of our perovskite/silicon tandem SC.

Photovoltaic characteristics of the perovskite SC were measured using a Keithley 2602A (Keithley Instruments Inc., Cleveland, USA) equipment. The  $100 \text{ mW/cm}^2$  irradiance was achieved using an AM 1.5 spectral lamp (a Newport model 67005, Newport Corp., Irvine, USA), which was placed at a proper distance.

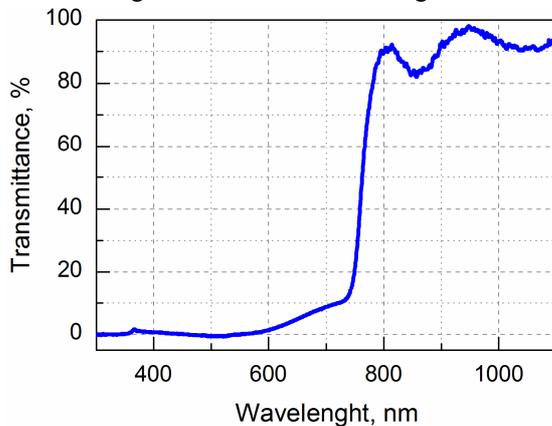
### 3. Results and discussion

Fig. 3a presents a top-view SEM image of our triple-cation perovskite film grown on the mesoporous titanium-dioxide layer. It is evident that the grain sizes are different. Some dimensions of the grains are larger than  $1000 \text{ nm}$ . The surfaces are flat and smooth, in agreement with the data reported elsewhere [32, 33]. A cross-sectional SEM image of the same perovskite film is shown in Fig. 3b. The thickness of the film is equal to  $(710 \pm 40) \text{ nm}$ . One can see that the film is composed of stacked grains not spanning the entire thickness of the layer.



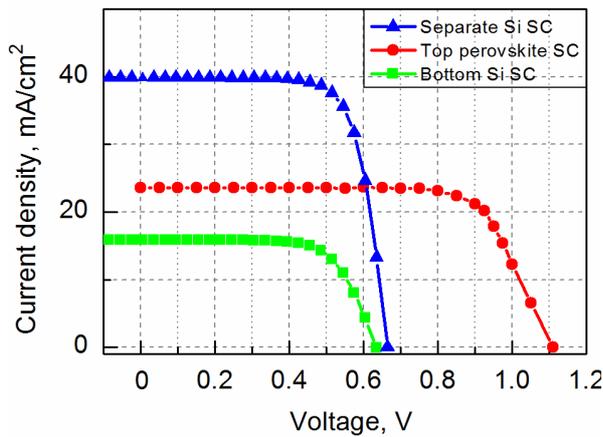
**Fig. 3.** Surface (a) and cross-sectional (b) SEM images of perovskite film grown on mesoporous titanium-dioxide layer.

The optical transmittance spectrum of the perovskite layer measured by us (see Fig. 4) testifies that this layer is a good absorber of visible light and remains semi-transparent in the infrared range. The transmittance is higher than 80% in the wavelength region  $800\text{--}1100 \text{ nm}$ .



**Fig. 4.** Optical transmittance spectra of our triple-cation perovskite layer.

The experimental current–voltage characteristics of our triple-cation perovskite SC is depicted by red circles in Fig. 5. High enough short-circuit current density of the perovskite SC indicates a high quality of perovskite structure. The current–voltage characteristics of the silicon SC measured under the illumination  $100 \text{ mW/cm}^2$  is also shown in Fig. 5 (blue triangles). The short-circuit current density of the separate silicon SC is higher than that of the perovskite SC. Note that the current–voltage characteristics of the bottom silicon cell in the tandem SC corresponds to green squares in Fig. 5. Finally, some photovoltaic parameters derived for our triple-cation perovskite SC (the open-circuit voltage  $V_{oc}$ , the short-current density  $J_{sc}$ , the fill factor



**Fig. 5.** Current–voltage characteristics of our triple-cation perovskite SC (red circles) and a silicon SC (blue triangles), as obtained under illumination  $100 \text{ mW/cm}^2$ . Green squares correspond to the current–voltage characteristics of Si cell placed below the perovskite SC in the tandem cell.

$F$  and the PCE) are gathered in Table 1. A good optical transmittance and a high PCE of the semi-transparent triple-cation perovskite SC enables fabricating four-terminal tandem SCs basing on industrial silicon SC as a bottom cell.

**Table 1.** Some photovoltaic parameters of our perovskite SC, a separate silicon SC, and a silicon SC as a bottom cell in the tandem cell.

SC	$V_{oc}$ , V	$J_{sc}$ , $\text{mA} \cdot \text{cm}^{-2}$	$F$ , %	PCE, %
Top-perovskite	1.11	23.6	74	19.4
Separate-Si	0.67	40.0	72	19.3
Bottom-Si	0.64	15.8	71	7.2

When the perovskite SC is placed onto the silicon SC, the short-circuit current density of the latter drops down since most of the short-wavelength photons are absorbed in the top perovskite layer, and only a portion of the near-infrared photons can reach the bottom Si cell. The open-circuit voltage  $V_{oc}$  for the bottom cell is slightly lower than that of the separate silicon SC under the same illumination. The PCE of the bottom silicon SC in the tandem cell amounts to 7.2%. As a result, adding 19.4% corresponding to the top semi-transparent perovskite cell yields in the total 26.6% PCE of the four-terminal perovskite/silicon tandem SC, which is much higher than the efficiency of each separate subcell. The total PCE of our four-terminal perovskite/silicon tandem SC is higher than the value 25.2%, which has been achieved for the fully textured monolithic perovskite/silicon tandem SC [17]. It is close to the efficiency typical for the monolithic perovskite/silicon tandem SC with the nanocrystalline Si oxide interlayer [34]. Still, the parameter reported in the present work is higher than the value 15.15% reported in Ref. [35] for the four-terminal perovskite/silicon tandem SC.

#### 4. Conclusion

Spectrally semi-transparent triple-cation perovskite layers have been grown and employed in the four-terminal perovskite/silicon tandem SCs. The corresponding cells have been fabricated basing on the industrial  $n$ -type monocrystalline bifacial passivated emitter rear totally diffused silicon SC. The experimental studies of the main photovoltaic properties of the separate subcells and the whole four-terminal perovskite/silicon SC have been carried out. The top perovskite cell reveals a good optical transmittance in the wavelength region 750–1100 nm. The PCE of the perovskite subcell amounts to 19.4%. The efficiency of the four-terminal perovskite/silicon SC is equal to 26.6%, which is higher than the individual efficiencies of the separate cells.

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**Анотація.** Тандемний сонячний елемент, який складається з перовскитового елемента, поміщеного поверх кремнієвого елемента, є багатобічним варіантом для перевищення межі Шоклі–Квайссера для однопереїдних сонячних елементів. Ми дослідили фотоелектричні властивості трикатіонного чотириермінального тандемного перовскит/кремнієвого сонячного елемента, який складається з перовскитового елемента на основі напівпрозорого шару  $Cs_{0.06}(MA_{0.17}FA_{0.83})_{0.94}Pb(I_{0.83}Br_{0.17})_3$ , розміщеного на промислового кремнієвому монокристалічному двосторонньому сонячному елементі PERT *n*-типу. Досягнута нами ефективність перетворення енергії у 26.6% є одним із найвищих значень, зареєстрованих для чотириермінальних тандемних перовскит/кремнієвих сонячних елементів.