

# Review of Mono- and Bifacial Photovoltaic Technologies: A Comparative Study

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**Abstract**—This article reviews the recent works on bifacial and monofacial photovoltaic (PV) technologies. Furthermore, the effectiveness of bifacial PV technologies over that of monofacial technologies is examined. Unlike monofacial PVs, bifacial PVs have light sensitivity on both the front as well as the rear surface and, therefore, have higher PV yield compared to monofacial PVs. However, because of higher energy output, thermal and electrical behavior are critical in bifacial PV, which needs to be optimized for bifacial PV cells to maintain the optimum cell efficiency. Studies show that bifacial thin-film Si-heterojunction PV cells have the maximum laboratory efficiency. Surface area, the fraction of light reflected, geographical location, economy, and efficiency are key contributing factors that govern the selection of bifacial PV systems. The dual use of land gives an edge to bifacial PV systems over monofacials. The dual use of land cases, such as agri-PVs with bifacial, vertical bifacial, and floating-PVs with bifacial, are unique systems where monofacial PV modules are less effective.

**Index Terms**—Agri-photovoltaic (PV) with bifacial, bifacial, bifaciality factor, floating-PV with bifacial, heterojunction cell, monofacial.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE major difference between bifacial and monofacial lies in how photovoltaic (PV) modules (panels) are installed to harness radiation on the back surface. The increased efficiency of bifacial PV cells is a result of applying high-efficiency concepts from monofacial PV cells. A high-efficiency monofacial PV cell with optimal surface passivation and high-quality substrate is a great bifacial PV cell [1], [2], [3]. A key factor for bifacial is two-faced light sensitivity. The thin-film category of Si-heterojunction (SHJ) PV cell shows maximum efficiency with minimal fabrication complexity [4], [5]. The passivated rear surface cells, such as p-type passivated emitter-rear [6], interdigitated backcontact (IBC) [1], and n-type passivated emitter-rear diffused [7] cells, are widely manufactured for bifacial PV panels. Here, the term passivated means to reduce the charge carrier's recombination loss with cell surface coating layers.

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Panel designs for bifacial and monofacial are similar, except for a few design considerations. The bifacial panel's oversaturated current flow is contained using electrical design optimization [8]. It is done to optimize the voltage–current ratio of the cell. The optimization process uses half-cut cells, multibusbar, and multiwire concepts. Optical design consideration for bifacial minimizes PV cell-to-panel loss [9]. Thermal behavior is essential for bifacial PV panels because of their high current generation [4]. Optical, electrical, and thermal modeling of bifacial PV panels are necessary to optimize maximum output.

The differentiating factor for bifacial and monofacial PV systems is the bifaciality factor and bifacial gain [10], [11]. It shows the quantitative benefits of bifacial systems over monofacial ones. Conventional systems use monofacial PV but the development of the bifacial PV system has risen because of the dual use of land cases. Vertical bifacial [12], [13], agri-photovoltaics (agri-PVs) with bifacial [14], and floating-PVs with bifacial [15] PVs are dual use of land examples. Because of optimum energy production compared with fixed and dual-axis tracking [16], single-axis tracking [17] is used for bifacial rooftop systems.

The rest of this article is organized as follows. Section II discusses the conventional monofacial PV technologies. Section III explains the bifacial PV technologies. Section IV briefly explains the bifacial panel design considerations. Section V presents bifacial PV systems and their recent advancements. Section VI discusses the leveled cost of electricity for bifacial PV systems. Section VII provides the future of bifacial PV. Finally, Section VIII concludes this article.

## II. CONVENTIONAL MONOFACIAL PV TECHNOLOGIES

The first-generation PV cell technology commercially used was crystalline cells [18]. The second generation is thin-film cells. Third-generation solar cells improve on first-generation silicon (Si) cells and second-generation thin-film cells. These cells typically employ unique technologies, such as multijunction designs, tandem topologies, or new materials, such as perovskites and organic semiconductors, to boost efficiency and broaden the absorption spectrum. These are aimed at increasing the efficiencies of single-bandgap devices and decreasing time-intensive fabrication processes [19]. Laboratory thin-film cells achieved a conversion efficiency of nearly 20% using non-single-crystal structures [20]. The losses were because of limitations to carrier performance mobilities. A minimal amount of material is required in such cell technology. Wafer thickness

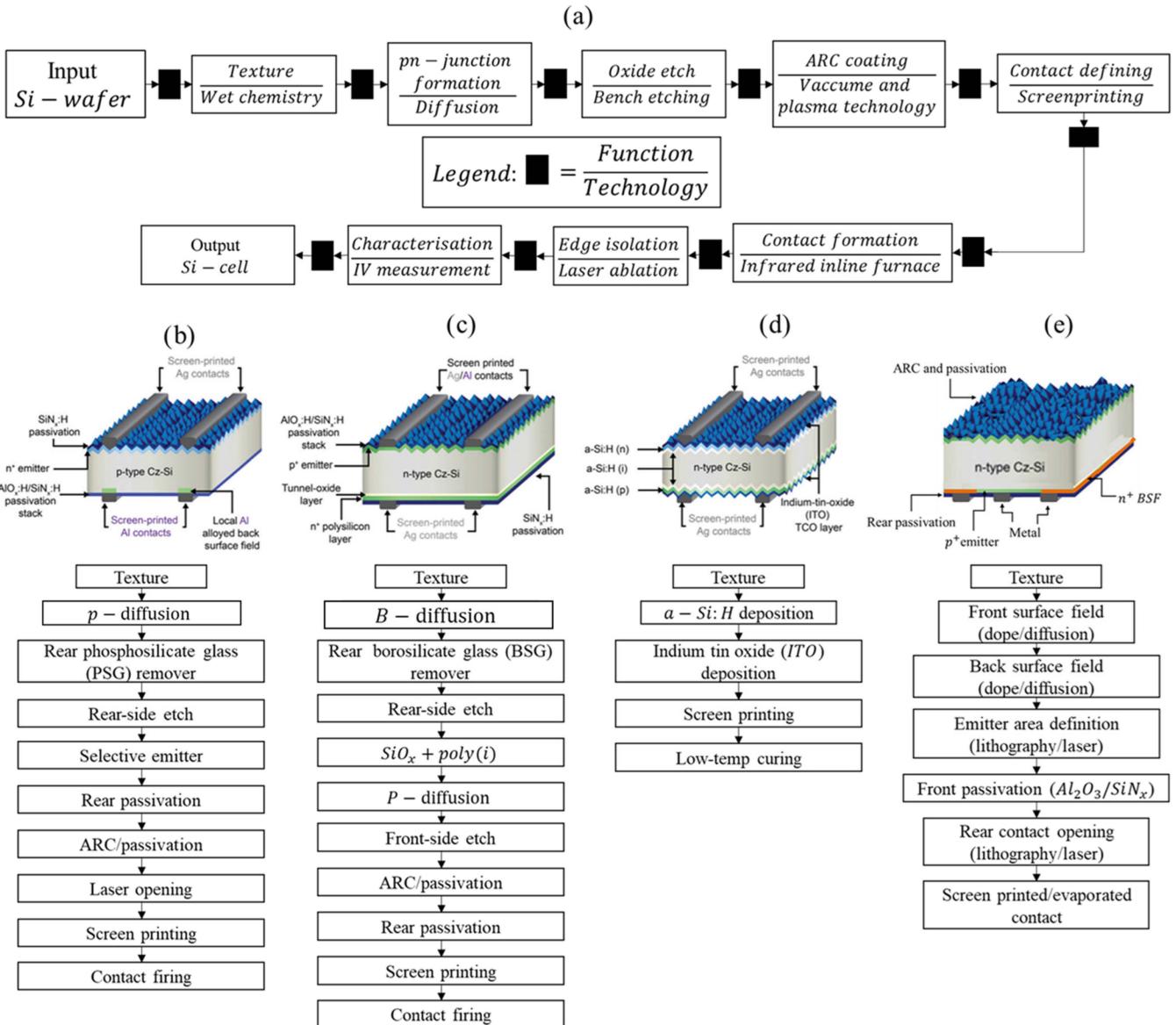


Fig. 1. (a) Industrial Si-cell fabrication diagram. Cell schematic-fabrication diagram: (b) PERC, (c) TOPCon, (d) SHJ, and (e) IBC.

is needed to be at (1–2)  $\mu\text{m}$  to deposit thin film fabrication. The materials approach photon current saturation within this range. However, crystalline silicon (c-Si) needs a large width for photon absorption. The types of thin-film PV cells are amorphous silicon (a-Si), cadmium telluride (CdTe), and copper–indium–gallium–diselenide (CIGS). The gallium arsenide (GaAs) is a cell material with high efficiency. The availability of indium is the limiting factor in thin-film materials. It is because of copper indium diselenide cells [21]. Knapp and Gay [22] showed the correlation between optical wavelength and photocurrent density for thin-film PV cells and compared them with c-Si and showed the saturation point occurrence for thin-film cells with optimum photocurrent density [23].

Fig. 1(a) depicts the industrial Si-cell fabrication process [24], [25]. The process varies based on the cell technology that is intended. The mainstream monofacial c-Si PV cells are

passivated emitter and rear cell (PERC), tunnel oxide passivating contact (TOPCon), SHJ, and IBC [26]. Fig. 1(b)–(e) provides the schematics and fabrication process for the mainstream c-Si PV cell technologies [27], [28]. Fig. 1 shows that the deposition of ARC/passivation layers is a key step among the c-Si PV cell configurations. The most commonly used process for manufacturing ARC/passivation layers is chemical vapor deposition (CVD), specifically plasma-enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD), low-pressure chemical vapor deposition (LPCVD), and atomic layer deposition (ALD). The primary technology for indium tin oxide layers in SHJ PV cells is physical vapor deposition (PVD) sputtering. The vapor states are what distinguishes PVD from CVD. In PVD, the vapor is made up of atoms and molecules that condense on the substrate; in CVD, the vapor conducts a chemical reaction on the substrate, resulting in a thin film [29]. Despite the fact that the

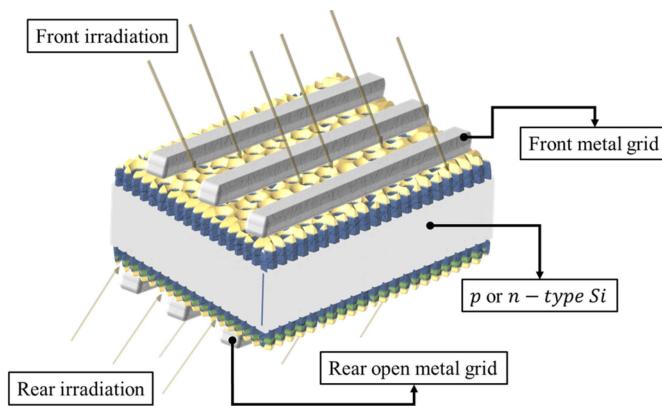


Fig. 2. Typical bifacial cell scheme.

process often requires corrosive gases, CVD films offer higher quality in terms of high purity and density, as well as better coverage on difficult surfaces than PVD films [30]. PECVD is a popular method for depositing thin films in the production of c-Si PV cells. On PERC and TOPCon PV cells, the current fabrication method uses PECVD-produced Si nitride ( $\text{SiN}_x$ ) as a front-side antireflection layer. PECVD  $\text{SiN}_x:\text{H}$  coated with PECVD or ALD  $\text{AlO}_x$  provides excellent passivation and is commonly utilized in the fabrication of PERC and TOPCon [31], [32]. LPCVD dominates the manufacture of polycrystalline Si (poly-Si) for TOPCon PV cells in the PV market. However, in order to reduce costs, LPCVD technological challenges such as higher deposition temperatures, reduced deposition rates, and wrap-around deposition issues that increase production energy consumption must be overcome [33], [34].

Bifacial cells use transparent substrates, compatible with the fabrication of the front and rear p-n junctions. For monofacial cells, the p-n junction is fabricated on the front side. It involves the diffusion of (dopants) boron and phosphorus to the Si wafer and needs annealing to activate dopants. Bifacial cell fabrication of a front-side p-n junction is similar to monofacial cells, where rear-side transparency and reflection are the additional aspects [35]. The front-side antireflection coating is crucial for optimizing front-side light capture for mono- and bifacial. In monofacial cells, a reflective layer covers the rear side to prevent photons from escaping. The rear surface has metal contacts for electrical connectivity. However, bifacial cells are designed for photons reaching the rear side [36]. A lightly textured surface is included at the rear side. The rear surface has metal contacts and a rear-emitter design to maximize light collection. Group III elements form a strong bond that remains stable under heat cycling. It acts as a p-type donor, resulting in a heavily doped product. A severely doped p-region produces an impurity gradient, which causes an electric field to force holes back into contact [37]. The front-contact is opaque to light that blocks photons from entering the cell. The area of the front-contact is lessened for the absorption-deducing process of photons. Besides, the resistance of the contact increases for a small area of the front-contact. This is because of the proximity of the connection to the front surface. Annealing the contact material causes it to infiltrate into Si and shorten the connection [7]. As the current in the

contacts increases, so must the cross-sectional area of the contacts. It allows the contact to resist overall current limitations because of voltage loss. Monofacials contain metal gridlines made of Ag and Al, which are imposed on the front surface. It acts as an electrical conductor which forms a grid pattern. It permits light to travel through and reach the semiconductor material's front surface. The emitter region of the front-side cell allows the separation and collects electron–hole pairs generated through solar irradiance. However, bifacial cells have an additional set of contacts on the rear side to collect electrons [38]. For bifacial, rear metal gridlines are applied to the rear surface. Its purpose is to allow light to penetrate through the back surface and reach the rear-emitter portion of the cell. Bifacial cell's rear-emitter region is heavily doped. It acts as a separate p–n junction on the rear side allowing electron–hole pair separation and collection on the rear side [39].

### III. BIFACIAL PV TECHNOLOGIES

Bifacial PV cells have partially metallized backside. As seen in Fig. 2, bifacials effectively respond to light from the front and back sides. Most production-level PV cells are p-type Si cells [40]. A bifacial panel is simply a monofacial PV module made with bifacial cells. It is structured with a reflecting sheet, a substance between and behind the cells. Transmitted illumination gets absorbed toward the cells, increasing the efficiency of the panel [41], [42]. A transparent back cover is used to integrate bifacial cells into a panel. They are based on glass or transparent foil. The bifacial panels produce higher energy output than standard monofacial panels. It is because of the extra energy created by rear irradiation [43].

The original technique for creating a bifacial cell was building a  $p^+np^+$  structure by creating a  $p^+$  junction on both surfaces of an n-type Si-wafer [44], [45].

Zhao et al. [46] fabricated front and rear p-n junctions in bifacial GaAs PV cells, where the twin junction design increases the efficiency of long-wavelength photon gathering. It was done to avoid restricting solar cell efficiency because of minority carrier diffusion durations in bulk Si. In this context, forming a connection on both surfaces increases surface passivation. The primary benefits of  $n^+$ ,  $pn^+$  or  $p^+$ , and  $np^+$  structures were improved photon collecting effectiveness and used for long-wavelength photons as well as surface passivation [47], [48]. A back-surface field (BSF) with a similar doping-type base material reduces recombination and improves the  $V_{oc}$  [49], [50]. The challenge of collecting carriers at the back surface resulted in physical mechanisms for surface and bulk recombination. Many of today's sophisticated PV cell designs with passivated rear surfaces, such as p-type passivated emitter and rear contact cell (p-PERC), IBC cell, and n-type passivated emitter rear totally-diffused (n-PERT), evolved together with bifacial PV cells [7], [38].

Bifacial and monofacial cells in the same panel setup in a high-albedo site found that the short-circuit current  $J_{sc}$  ratio between the two was consistently close to 1.45 [51], [52], [53]. A ratio of 1.55 was found to be significantly higher in the early morning or on cloudy days [51], [54]. Based on panel output

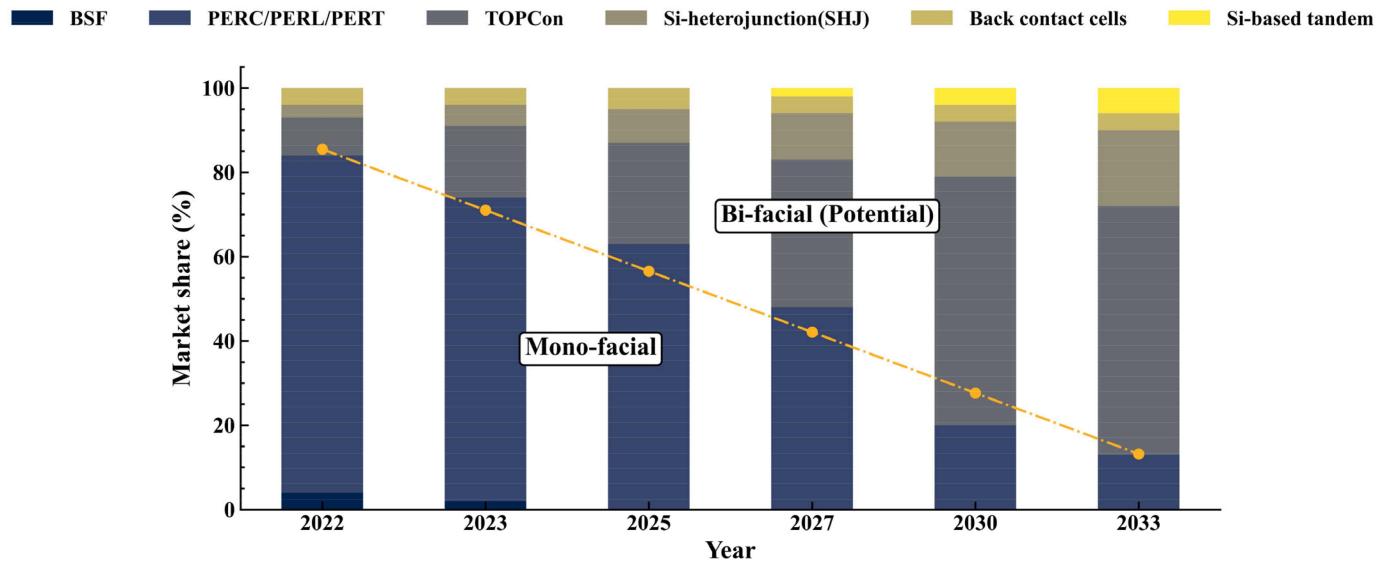


Fig. 3. ITRPV technology share projection: World market share for numerous cell technologies.

powers, a bifacial panel would generate approximately 50% more electrical power than a conventional monofacial panel [55]. The rear-side recombination of the backside surface and the lifetime in p-type Cz or multi-crystalline material were the constraints of p-type aluminum back-surface field (Al-BSF) PV cells. Thus, overcoming recombination on the backside was necessary to improve efficiency. This leads to cells with a PERC. The backside is protected by a dielectric layer, with just local aluminum (Al) connections [6], [56]. To bypass the bulk lifetime constraints, a method was to use an n-type base material. The n-type has a longer lifetime and is less susceptible to metal impurities than the p-type [57], [58]. As a result, it is used in high-efficiency cell designs such as n-type heterojunction or IBC PV cells.

Fig. 3 depicts the expected share of various technologies till 2033 [59]. The TOPCon technology has the prospect to gain a 60% market share by 2033 while all other technologies have been bifacialized. The “PERX”-PERC, PERT, and PERL technology dominate the market. It is determined by n-type structures that which technology will dominate. It also depends on the market impact of bifaciality and how carrier-selective contacts are implemented. Similar to back contact concepts, SHJ technology has an 18% market share. IBC and supertandem technologies are gaining popularity. Perovskites, GaAs nanowires, and CIGS are supertandem PV cells that are mounted on a c-Si PV cell. The devices are bifacial with front-side efficiencies exceeding 30% [59].

#### A. Bifaciality Factor

The bifaciality factor is an essential parameter of a bifacial device [60]. It denotes the proportion of the device’s rear and front responses. A panel’s bifaciality factor is used to calculate the additional energy generated by rear irradiance. For current density  $J_{sc}$ , voltage  $V_{oc}$ , power, and efficiency, the bifaciality

factor [61], [62]

$$\varphi_{J_{sc}} = \frac{J_{sc_r}}{J_{sc_f}} \quad (1)$$

$$\varphi_{V_{oc}} = \frac{V_{oc_r}}{V_{oc_f}} \quad (2)$$

$$\varphi_{P_{max}} = \frac{P_{max_r}}{P_{max_f}}. \quad (3)$$

Here,  $J_{scf}$  and  $J_{scr}$  represent the short-circuit current density for the front and rear sides at standard test conditions (STCs) under single-sided illumination, respectively. Stray light on the dark side makes measuring the front and rear  $I-V$  characteristics of bifacial cells problematic [63].

The parameters that determine the bifaciality factor contain the rear surface texture, an antireflection coating, metal coverage as well as doping-passivation on the backside, and base resistivity. The first three features influence light coupling into the cell, which results in the formation of charge carriers. The remaining variables determine whether charge carriers recombine or are collected at the electrodes, contributing to the creation of electricity [64]. The texture and antireflective coating on the back  $J_{sc}$  are similar to those on the front. The texture and antireflective coating are optimized for a low reflection and optimal light coupling to maximize the bifaciality factor and increase the rear  $J_{scr}$ . It should be done without compromising the rear surface passivation by lowering the front-side short-circuit current  $J_{scf}$ . Typically, the optimization of the parameters results in a varied texture on the front and back surfaces [10]. Bifacial cells are metallized in an  $H$ -pattern and have three to six busbars and fingers. Balanced recombination losses at the contacts, shading losses for rear-side lighting, resistive losses, and silver paste consumption define the number and width of the fingers and busbars on the rear-side metal grid. The metallization fraction on the rear influences the rear current  $J_{scr}$ . Resistive losses in Si affect the grid’s fill factor (FF), contact resistance, and lateral

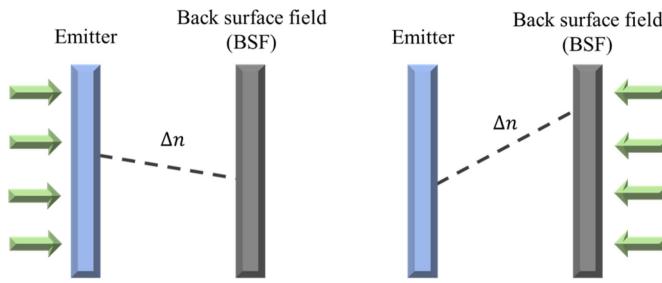


Fig. 4. Gradient in carrier concentration of bifacial PV cell for the front (left) and rear (right) irradiance.

conductivity. Recombination at the contact harms both  $V_{oc}$  and FF [65], [66]. Passivation and conduction are optimized in the BSF. It is done to supplement the base's lateral conductivity.

To compensate for the conductivity of a significant path length, the doping level must be increased if the partial metallization at the rear has a bigger pitch. At the back, the  $J_{sc}$  is susceptible to surface recombination. It is more common in cells with a front-side junction, and it also contributes to auger recombination in the back. Auger recombination is a nonradiative mechanism that transfers excess energy from electron–hole recombination to electrons or holes that are stimulated to higher energy levels within the same band rather than emitting photons [72].

The schematic for the more substantial gradient of excess carrier concentration  $\Delta n$  and average excess carrier concentration under rear illumination is shown in Fig. 4. High  $\Delta n$  at the back causes an increase in the recombination current  $J_{recomb}$  at BSF.  $J_{recomb}$  is affected by both the doping concentration  $N_d$  and the excess concentration  $\Delta n$  in the base material at BSF [73]

$$J_{recomb} = J_{0_{BSF}} \frac{(N_D + \Delta n) \Delta n}{n_i^2}. \quad (4)$$

Here  $J_{0_{BSF}}$  is the recombination parameter of the BSF. Under back illumination on the emitter side, recombination is reduced. The difference in  $\Delta n$  between the front and back illumination at the emitter is substantially lower than at the BSF. A higher doping concentration equates to a lower base resistance ( $N_D \sim 1/\rho$ ). At short-circuit conditions  $\Delta n \ll N_D$ , the recombination increases with decreasing resistivity [73]. Bifacial PV cell design is similar to monofacial cell design in that it is determined by the base material (p-type or n-type), junction creation, and metallization. As a result, bifacial variants of monofacial cell concepts, such as heterojunction, n-PERT, PERC+, and IBC cells, have emerged. The design of each type of bifacial PV cell is determined by the connectivity technology, number of busbars, and cost optimization [74].

#### B. Bifacial Heterojunction PV Cell

Bifacial SHJ PV cells (see Fig. 5) have the advantage of combining high efficiency with a small number of manufacturing steps. It has the potential for cells with conversion efficiencies greater than 25% [5], [75]. Furthermore, it has a low-temperature coefficient of open-circuit voltage ( $V_{oc}$ ) ( $-0.3\text{%/}^\circ\text{C}$ ) and a high

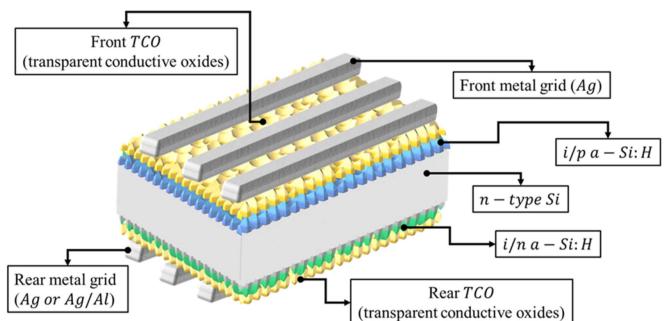


Fig. 5. Bifacial SHJ cell layout.

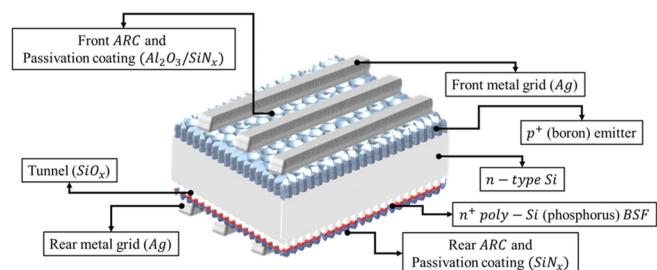


Fig. 6. Bifacial TOPCon cell layout.

bifaciality ( $>92\%$ ), resulting in a high energy yield for bifacial heterojunction modules [75], [76].

Han et al. developed bifacial heterojunction cells with reduced transparent conducting oxide (TCO) thickness. They presented three types of  $\text{In}_2\text{O}_3$ -based TCOs, tin-doped, fluorine-doped, and tungsten-doped  $\text{In}_2\text{O}_3$ , as well as minimized thickness [5]. From materials to devices, Liu et al. assessed the current state of research on high-efficiency c-Si heterojunction PV cells. They principally showcased SHJ technology based on hydrogenated amorphous Si (a-Si:H), poly-Si, and dopant-free passivating contact technology based on metal compounds as well as organic materials [77], [78].

#### C. Bifacial TOPCon PV Cell

TOPCon is an efficient n-type Si cell technology (see Fig. 6). It is constructed on an n-type Si substrate with a thin tunneling oxide layer applied before an extra layer composed of heavily doped n or p poly-Si that links the metal at both ends. As these restrict one type of carrier, such tunneling oxide contacts are referred to as passivating contacts [79]. The TOPCon bifacial cell efficiency ranges between 22% and 25% [68], [80]. Wang et al. [81] proposed high-efficiency n-TOPCon bifacial cells with selective poly-Si-based passivating contacts. Sen et al. [82] presented accelerated damp-heat testing at the of bifacial Si-TOPCon cells using sodium chloride.

#### D. Bifacial n-PERT PV Cell

The PERT cell design based on n-type material (see Fig. 7) offers easy-to-manufacture bifacial solar cells with high bifaciality and front cell efficiencies between 21% and 22% [83].

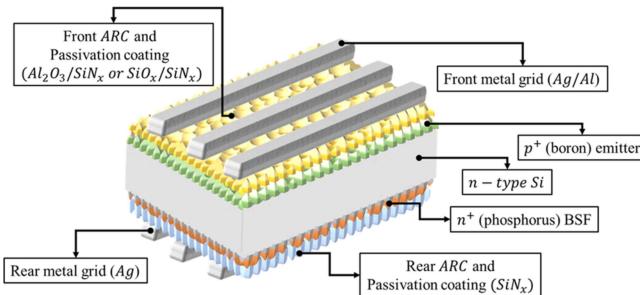


Fig. 7. Bifacial n-PERT cell layout.

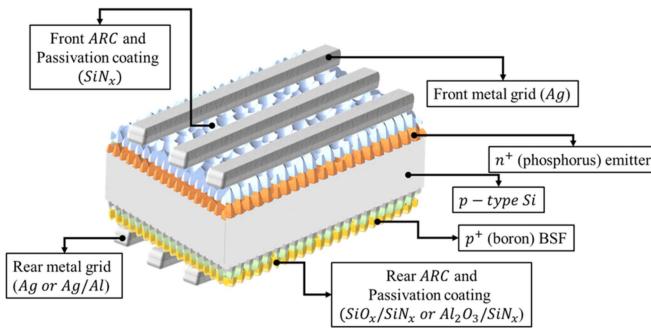


Fig. 8. Bifacial p-PERT cell layout.

The concept is easy to impose in p-type PV cell manufacturing processes [83]. Nakamura et al. [84] created the front junction bifacial n-PERT cells on thin wafers to examine the effects of wafer thinning on cell performance. Luo et al. researched potential-induced deterioration (PID) in the glass–glass n-PERT bifacial c-Si PV modules. They proposed that PID advancement is highly influenced by bias voltage and stress temperature [85].

#### E. Bifacial p-PERT PV Cell

The resistance of p-type Si to high-energy space radiation compared with n-type Si was the primary factor in p-type Si taking the lead in the PV sector for terrestrial applications (see Fig. 8) [39], [86]. On multi-c-Si, p-PERT PV cells were examined as an alternative to single-face PERC cells. Lohmuller et al. [35] exhibited 88% bifaciality for 6-in bifacial p-type Cz-Si passivated emitter and rear cells (bi-PERC) and increased their rear-side energy conversion efficiency to 18% through minimal manufacturing procedure changes. Fichtner et al. reported on the gettering efficacy of a technique that used doped glasses deposited before diffusion by air pressure chemical vapor deposition (APCVD). They hypothesized that uniform sheet resistances and doping profiles are suitable for creating inexpensive commercial APCVD-based codiffusion passivated emitter and backside diffused cell technology [87].

#### F. Bifacial p-PERC+ PV Cell

Bifacial PERC+ PV cells are made in the same manner as standard monofacial PERC cells produced by leading PV cell manufacturers. Monofacial PERC cells currently account for

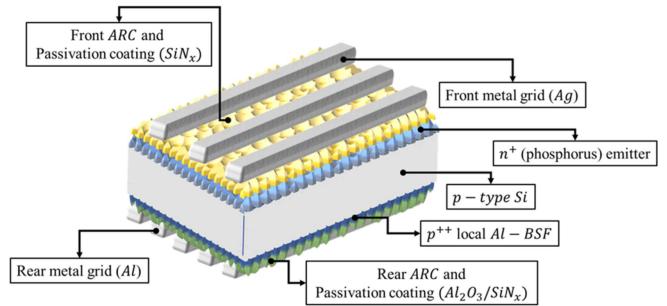


Fig. 9. Bifacial p-PERC+ cell layout.

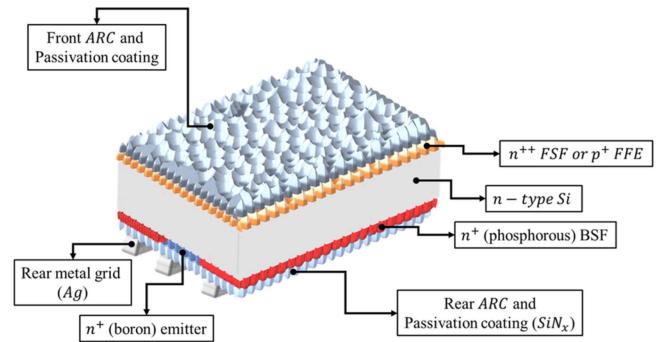


Fig. 10. Bifacial IBC cell layout.

80% of worldwide production capacity however it is expected to decrease because of the popularity of TOPCon cells. Around 13% market share for bifacial ones in the next decade is expected for PERC cells [59]. The Al-screen-print is changed from a full-area to an H-pattern design, and the depth of the rear-side passivation coating is adjusted for antireflective qualities that convert a monofacial PERC cell fabrication method into a bifacial PERC+ cell [88].

A PERC+ PV cell's cross-section layout is shown in Fig. 9. The PERC+ cell offers a path toward bifacial PV cell fabrication for monofacial PERC cell [88]. It is because of feasible production from monofacial PERC. In 2015, ISFH and SolarWorld began developing a bifacial PERC cell design independently, and later cooperatively, by using a screen-printed rear Al finger grid. It avoided the full-area Al-rear layer. It used an identical PERC fabrication process, with minor changes for rear passivation, and printing Al screen [2].

#### G. Bifacial Back Contact PV Cell

The metal electrode polarities on the backside of the IBC-Si PV cells (see Fig. 10) are visible. It provides benefits over traditional contacting cells. A few examples include the front-side shading loss absence, the possibility of wide coverage of backside grid metal, and the potential for a simple coplanar connector layout [89]. The cell layout is adjusted for front-side illumination of IBC PV cells and is manufactured using a variety of technologies, ranging from high-efficiency minimal-dimension processes to large-area conventional module cells [89]. Kim and Shafarman [90] demonstrated a CIGS-based

PV cell structure, which is a bifacial layout and a back-wall design. Edoff et al. [91] discovered an effect of passivation that increases the current density of cells having passivation. To overcome the energy mismatch band, Farrell et al. investigated innovative back-contact film layers. They discovered the optimal metasurface and electrical structures and the interfacial diffusion of elements [92].

#### IV. PANEL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR BIFACIAL PV

Bifacial panels have the potential to be used in large PV facilities as well as on residential flat-white roofs. It provides the possibility of investigating unique PV application possibilities, such as sound barriers and vertical installations [100]. The objective is to exploit the bifacial benefit for plants, such as a significant reduction of levelized cost of electricity (LCOE) with an optimum investment [101]. Optimization is concerned with the availability of backside irradiation with the light reaching the rear side of a bifacial panel. It is difficult to achieve light nonuniformity throughout the entire panel backside because of diffused and reflected indirect irradiance from the back-side. When the panel height above ground is increased, the rear-side homogeneity improves [102]. With diffuse irradiation, shadowing on the backside, such as mounting structures, has less of an influence than on the front side. It is subjected to direct illumination. The most apparent choice for bifacial panels is a glass/glass construction. These panels can function without a panel frame. They reduce the panel and balance of system costs by using mounting clamps. Frameless panels contain minimal sensitivity to the self-shading of the panel edge. Because of performance decline, soiling typically collects along the frame. It obstructs the natural drainage of the soiling layer. The glass/glass panel architecture, by definition, increases the structural load of the cell. It is because of the cells located on the panel's flat structural axis. In this regard, tensile stress, which causes cell cracking, is not applied. A glass backside, as opposed to polymer back sheets, acts as a humidity barrier. A double-glass structure reduces the weight of the panel. Besides, thermally tempered glass has a thickness of 2 mm [103]. A panel with a 2 mm front and back side has a structural as well as chemical durability advantage over a glass/back panel. It has a 4 mm [104] front cover without added weight to the panel. Furthermore, translucent back sheets enable the construction of lightweight bifacial panels [104].

The junction box design and its location are the most difficult challenges for a bifacial PV panel. Placing connection boxes on light-sensitive portions of the backside results in unwanted shadowing. The junction box is lowered in size or located near the panel's edge to keep the panel size constant. Because of the current created by the panel backside, the smaller junction boxes take higher currents [105]. By splitting the cells in half, the problem is solved. It reduces cell current and resistive losses, improving cell-to-panel performance [105]. Bifacial PV panels are useful for rooftops, building-integrated PVs (BIPVs), and urban applications. Non-standard-vertical installation designs provide energy production regardless of orientation. The design is implemented by using partially transparent panels with larger

cell spacing [14]. It gives daylighting while also reducing self-shading [14].

##### A. Bifacial PV Cell-to-Module (CTM) (Panel) Loss

The PV cells suffer losses throughout the panel construction process. Encapsulation affects the optical performance of the cell. PV cell coupling causes losses that impair the electrical performance of the panel. Because of the loss in the breakdown process, the panel power is less than the collective energy. The variance between entire cell power and panel power is referred to as CTM power loss. Losses in standard monofacial cells have been extensively studied [106], [107], [108]; however, bifacial ones need more extensive study relating to panel losses. CTM loss can be characterized as optical, resistive, and mismatched degradation.

Bifacial cells transmit radiation in the wavelength range of (900–1200) nm [109]. As a result, extra caution is necessary while measuring cells to optimize error for current measurement. Measuring bifacial cells on reflecting and nonreflective chucks results in differing cell current values, which are known as optical losses. In this regard, long-wavelength light enters the cell that is directed to the cell and affected by chuck reflectivity. Traditional monofacial measurement chucks are gold-plated and shiny. When compared with nonreflective chuck measurements, chuck reflectance adds to a 1% overestimation of cell current [109], [110]. A nonreflective background is used to measure bifacial panels. If the cells are tested with a reflecting chuck and the panel is measured with a nonreflective backdrop, the current-matched tandem (CTM) optical loss for bifacial panels is overestimated. To do an accurate CMT analysis, bifacial cells must be measured with a nonreflective chuck [111]. The resistive parts used to connect the PV cells cause a resistive loss in a wafer-based PV panel. Additional series resistance in the decentralization process is generated by parts such as the soldering ribbon, bussing ribbon, and contact resistance between the cell bus bar and the junction box. Because of background albedo, bifacial panels draw more current in real-world situations [112] and the resistive loss is proportional to the operating current squared. It is a major concern with bifacial panels. The current flow pattern in bifacial cells differs from that of monofacial cells. The ribbon's effective resistance for bifacial cells is more than for monofacial cells using traditional Al-BSF. It is because of differing metallization patterns on the cell's backside [54], [113]. As a result, when bifacial cells are integrated into panels, they have a larger resistive loss than monofacial cells.

##### B. Optical Panel Design With Bifacial PV Cells Scheme

Two different panel architectures enclose bifacial PV cells. One is glass/glass, while the other is nontransparent glass/back sheet [114]. When utilized with bifacial PV cells, both panel configurations have distinct advantages and disadvantages. The bifacial cells contained in the bifacial structure absorb albedo from the back of the panel using clear rear glass. When compared with a monofacial panel, it efficiently increases the energy yield. Because of a lack of acceptable measurement standards, the benefit is not reflected in STC measurements. Most panel

manufacturers measure bifacial glass/glass modules using only front-side light and a nonreflective cover on the backside [114], [115]. The partial transparency of bifacial panels is an important consideration. It modifies Yusufoglu et al.'s [116] proposed self-shading fix. The degree of transparency is influenced by factors such as cell-to-cell spacing and the optical properties of both glass panels. The transparency of bifacial PV panels is limited (5%–10%) [116]. When partial transparency is not used, the share of ground-reflected light to rear irradiance because of self-shading remains (90%–95%) of the total [117], [118].

While both monofacial and bifacial PV panels have comparable considerations for increasing light absorption and minimizing reflection, bifacial panels add the complexity of absorbing light from both sides. Bifacial gain and albedo are essential variables in the optical design of bifacial panels, making them more adaptive in specific deployment scenarios, especially when placed in areas with high ground reflectance. Monofacial panels are designed to absorb and reflect as much sunlight as possible from the front side. The optical design promotes sunlight absorption while lowering reflection in the active layers of PV cells. To reduce reflection losses, monofacial panels commonly use antireflection coatings on the front surface. These coatings are designed to lower the amount of light reflected off the surface, allowing more light to pass through and be absorbed by the PV cells. To capture sunlight, bifacial panels require an adequate optical design on the front side. Antireflection coatings and surface texturing can improve light absorption. Bifacial panels are distinguished by the fact that they gather light from both the front and back of the panel. One of the optical issues is the design of the rear surface to efficiently reflect and guide sunlight to the active layer. A reflecting material or coating on the back surface aids in light capture. Bifacial panels can also benefit from light reflected off the ground (albedo). The optical design considers the albedo of the ground surface, and the panel's direction and height above the ground are selected to capture reflected sunlight. For light to reach the backside of bifacial panels, the backsheet needs to be translucent. Backsheets that are transparent or have specific optical qualities can be used. Optical simulation methods are commonly used to predict bifacial gain while accounting for panel tilt, albedo, and ground cover. This contributes to the optimization of the design for maximum energy yield. Tracking devices that follow the path of the sun can greatly help bifacial panels. A tracking system's optical design tries to maximize the exposure of both the front and back sides of the panels to sunlight throughout the day. Julien et al. [119] proposed backside light management of four-terminal bifacial perovskite/Si-tandem PV panels considering realistic conditions. Yin et al. [120] presented optical enhanced effects on the electrical performance and energy yield of bifacial PV panels. Cote et al. [121] evaluated light management in bifacial PV with spectrally selective mirrors.

### C. Electrical Design for Bifacial PV Cells Scheme

Traditional PV panels made up of bifacial PERC+ or n-PERT PV cells connect in the same way that monofacial PV panels do. An H-pattern metal grid is used to metalize the PV cells

on both the front and back sides [8]. Metal fingers collect photocurrent from Si wafers and transport it to busbars. To build an electrical contact between the front of a PV cell, Cu tabs with solder plating are joined to busbars. When comparing a PV panel to a naked PV cell, resistive losses in the cell-to-cell connections take precedence. The losses are proportional to the series resistance of the connecting tab multiplied by the square of the current. The current is affected by the coloration of the metallization grid and the connecting components. The interconnection material determines the series resistance, number of interconnecting parts, and cross section. Because of the double-sided lighting of the panels, bifacial panels generate more current [8]. The multibusbar interconnection is a scheme where round wires replace rectangular tabs. The wires reduce the contact area between the cell's metallization and the linking material, allowing no busbars to be used. According to the manufacturer, the wires reduce the reflection losses associated with flat tabs, hence enhancing light capture. Companies are promoting these multibusbar linking solutions. Schmid pioneered the multiwire technique [122], and Yao et al. [123] developed the *SmartWire* technology as pioneered by *Day4Energy* [124].

To minimize resistive losses in cell-to-cell interaction, the transport current must be reduced. At constant current density, reducing cells by half and three-quarters reduces the overall current per cell by 50% and 30%, respectively [125]. It lowers the variation in FF from CTM (panel). The cell strings are partially parallel linked to keep the normal parameters of a 1 m × 1.6 m panel with half-cells or quarter-cells within the range of a full-size 60-cell panel so that the overall current is twice that of the half-cells and the panel voltage is 60× that of a single cell [125]. Because it does not increase edge recombination losses, cutting cells does not affect  $V_{oc}$ . In addition to enhancing output at conventional current and voltage levels, the partial parallel connection blocks have a slight effect on sensitivity to partial shading [125]. Inhomogeneous photocurrents in PV cells are caused by shadows on a panel. The serial connectivity forces the actual current for cells in the loop to be the same. Detour diodes bypass the current flowing across a covered string while restricting the system's power output. The parallel connection of cells forces the voltage to be the same; yet, the volume of illumination has little effect on the output voltage. A combination of serial and parallel connections is used to compensate for inhomogeneous irradiance. It is caused by shadowing or soiling. Bifacial panels with half-cells are less susceptible to the unevenness of the rear-side irradiation. It is accomplished by fusing serial and parallel connections. Each substring is made up of 60 cut cells [126] that are joined in a row. The substrings create two parallel strings when cells are divided in half and three parallel strings when cells are divided in thirds [126], [127].

The shingled interconnection panel, which is similar to slate roof shingles, is where the PV cells partially overlap. It produces a high-packing-volume PV panel and is done with both monofacial and bifacial PV cells [128], [129], [130]. *Sun Power* is one of the manufacturers producing commercial shingled panels. Shingled PV panels are made up of PV cells that have been sliced into tiny stripes along the busbars. One cell strip's

p-busbar connects to the other's n-busbar, forming a shingled pattern. The shingled panels are made from monofacial cells. Like monofacial cells, bifacial cells are paired to form a shingled bifacial PV panel. Bifacial cells, as opposed to monofacial cells, use shingled connections. Front and rear metallization grids, cell overlap, number of cell stripes, as well as strong connections that form a panel are optimized for the shingled bifacial panel [131], [132].

To account for a change in rear illumination in bifacial electrical models, a mismatch function based on relative standard deviations in irradiance  $G$  must be constructed [133]. The irradiance of a PV cell in a string is determined as it varies according to position and effective self-shading. The accumulation of irradiances is used to compute the relative standard deviation concerning the mismatch loss function. The ratio of  $P_{\text{string}}$  (maximum power of a string for inhomogeneous irradiance) and the sum of  $P_{\text{cell}}$  gives the mismatch  $F_m$ . When the technique is repeated across several illumination ranges, a trend line for mismatch loss forms. The trend line is used to calculate the mismatch function  $F_m$  for each circumstance with a given irradiance ( $G$ ). A more complex way is to use an electronic circuit simulator in the modeling software for each time step. For bifacial panels, the electrical configuration alters since the location of the connection box is the most noticeable variation. Typically, the series resistance of a bifacial PV panel takes into account the impact of the electrical structure, cross connectors, and linkage to the junction box or boxes [134], [135].

#### D. Thermal Behavior Modeling of Bifacial Schemes

The electrical behavior of bifacial PV panels responds directly to small and major fluctuations in irradiance. The temperature of the PV cells takes significantly longer to achieve thermal equilibrium with the constantly changing environment. To accurately simulate or forecast the actual temperature of operation for bifacial PV panels, a comprehensive dataset with adequate small-time steps containing ambient temperature, irradiance, wind speed, and direction is required [136]. The temperature of the bifacial panel is affected by the varied optical materials used in comparison to monofacial panels. Around 10% of the surface of the bifacial panel is transparent, indicating that light enters the substrate instead of being reflected or consumed by the back sheet [137]. By thermalizing excited electrons or other processes such as free carrier absorption, photons do not elevate the temperature of the panel over the ambient temperature [137]. The increased power production caused by rear-side incident light suggests that the PV cells are heating up because of thermalization and free carrier absorption. Higher photogenerated current and resistive losses in cells, as well as cell-to-cell connections, contribute to increased power production. They are proportional to the current, and the heat generated by an increase of resistive losses. Building-integrated and building-adapted panels have much greater working temperatures than panels installed on open frames, such as typical monofacial panels on sloped roofs. Bifacial panels are installed in the field on open frames; free-flowing air cools the panel more than panels installed on a sloped roof. The qualities of glass

and polymer back panels differ in terms of heat conductivity, emissivity, and heat transmission to air [138], [139].

#### E. Testing Standards for Bifacial Panels

The International Electrotechnical Commission's (IEC) technical committee (TC) oversees PV certification programs. Experts in the IEC-appointed TC committees are actively examining current rules and identifying the need for new regulations embracing bifacial PV technology, especially on PV panel standards [140], [141], [142] and technical parts of PV systems [143], [144], [145]. Table III lists the IEC standards according to themes that are critical for standardizing bifacial PV scheme testing. Despite significant contributions from IEC committees, standardizing bifacial PV requires years. IEC frequently introduces helpful techniques in response to specific market demands.

Precise assessment procedures are developed to evaluate the PV energy production of bifacial PV panels, taking into account their ability to generate energy from both the front and back surfaces, and such standards are outlined in *IEC TS 60904-1-2* [143]. The standard defines methodologies for evaluating bifacial power output in daylight or using PV simulator tools, widely used in the PV industry for assessing cell and panel efficacy. Three primary phases are critical in using PV simulators to characterize the generated power of bifacial PV panels: calculating rear-irradiance, induced power increase yield (*BiFi*), and power output under 100 W/m<sup>2</sup> as well as 200 W/m<sup>2</sup> rear irradiances.

The comparative efficiency of the rear side of bifacial panels is represented by bifaciality factors, which are described as three ratios in *IEC TS 60904-1-2* [143]. These ratios are derived at STC conditions of 1000 W/m<sup>2</sup> irradiance, 25 °C, and an air mass of 1.5. If the spectral responses on the front as well as back sides differ, a spectral mismatch correction according to *IEC 60904-7* [146] should be used. The ratio of rear to front-side maximum power is characterized as  $\varphi_{p\max}$  and is a crucial relation for bifaciality factor standards determination. The  $\varphi_{p\max}$  values for n-PERT bifacial modules range from 75% to 95%, for p-type PERC bifacial panels from 60% to 70%, and for heterojunction technology bifacial panels from >90%. The technique of determining the bifaciality factor at STC is depicted in Fig. 11. A nonreflective clear background ensures a maximum of 3 W/m<sup>2</sup> at any place on the PV device's nonilluminated surface.

The maximum output power ( $P_{\max}$ ) is determined utilizing a front irradiance of  $G_f = 1000 \text{ W/m}^2$  and numerous rear irradiance ( $G_r$ ) levels. The  $G_r$  values must cover at least two of the following ranges in (5), which represent the vast majority of common rear-side irradiances encountered during field operations [143], [146]

$$G_{ri(i=1,2,3,\dots)} = \begin{cases} 0 < G_{ri} < 100 \text{ W/m}^2 \\ x \leq G_{ri} < 200 \text{ W/m}^2 \\ G_{ri} \geq 200 \text{ W/m}^2 \end{cases} . \quad (5)$$

Based on the applicable PV model, the current TS IEC 60904-1-2 [143] provides two options for achieving single and double-side illumination. The single-side illumination approach facilitates the assessment of the maximum power output ( $P_{\max}$ ) employing a comparable irradiance  $G(E)$  for PV models with

TABLE I  
DIFFERENT BIFACIAL PV CELL PARAMETERS

Cell concept	Bi-faciality factor	Si –base	Junction and <i>BSF</i> method for doping	Contacts	Front potential efficiency
Heterojunction [67]	92%	<i>n</i> – type	<i>a</i> – <i>Si</i> : <i>H p</i> – type and <i>n</i> – type	TCO/ <i>Ag</i>	22% – 25%
TOPCon [68]	85%	<i>n</i> – type	Boron–phosphorus diffusion	<i>Ag, Ag/Al</i>	21% – 25%
n-PERT [69]	90%	<i>n</i> – type	Boron–phosphorus diffusion	TCO/ <i>Cu</i>	21% – 22%
p-PERT [70]	90%	<i>p</i> – type	Phosphorus–boron diffusion	<i>Ag, Ag/Al</i>	21% – 22%
PERC+ [71]	80%	<i>p</i> – type	Phosphorus diffusion, local <i>Al</i> – <i>BSF</i>	<i>Ag, Al</i>	21% – 22%
IBC [1]	70%	<i>n</i> – type	Boron–phosphorus diffusion	<i>Ag, Ag/Al</i>	22% – 23%

TABLE II  
EFFICIENCIES OF INDUSTRIAL PERC+ PV CELL

Ref.	Year	Efficiency% (Front/Rear)	Organization	Comments
[93]	2021	21.5/16.7	ISFH	No rear <i>Ag</i> pads
[36]	2021	20.3/not published	Trina Solar	Optimized for optical performance in <i>BIPV</i>
[94]	2022	20.7/13.9	Big Sun Energy Technology Inc.	-
[95]	2023	21.5/16.1	Jinko Solar	-
[96]	2023	21.4/not published	Neo Solar Power	-
[97]	2023	21.6/17.3	LONGi Solar	-
[98]	2017	21.6/not published	ISFH	The rear side is optimized for mono-facial use.
[99]	2018	22.1/not published	ISFH	Busbar, <i>Ag</i> front grid design

TABLE III  
PV PANEL STANDARDS RELATING TO IEC

Ref.	Theme	Standards of IEC	Modifications for bifacial
[143], [144]	Calibration issues, particularly in estimating electrical power	IEC 60891, IEC60904-X	IEC TS 60904-1-2
[140]	Device compliance evaluation	IEC 61215-X, IEC 61730	Under progress
[142], [145], [147]	PV components and materials	IEC 62852, IEC, 62790, IEC 62930	No changes proposed to date
[141]	Energy Classification	IEC 61853-X	Under progress

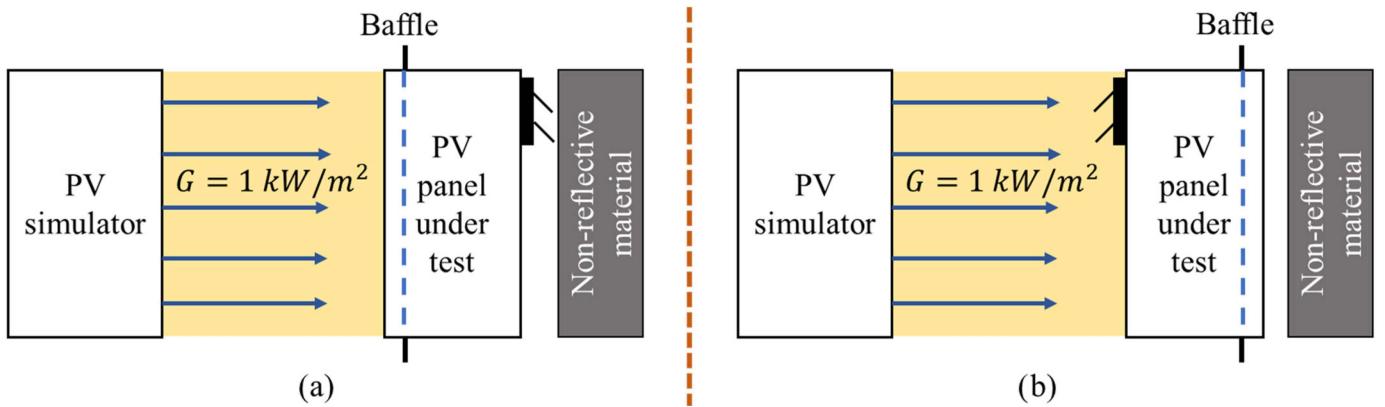


Fig. 11. *IEC TS 60904-1-2* test method for *I*–*V* measurement of bifacial PV modules characterization. (a) Front side. (b) Backside.

just one illumination source, as defined in IEC 60904-9 [148]

$$G(E) = 1000 \frac{W}{m^2} + (\varphi \times G_{ri}) \quad (6)$$

$$\varphi = \text{Min}(\varphi_{I_{sc}}, \varphi_{P_{max}}). \quad (7)$$

The double-sided lighting strategy was created for a PV model with two light sources and adjustable irradiance levels. It is possible to illuminate the front side with  $G_f = 1000 \text{ W/m}^2$  and the backside with at least two irradiance levels in the above ranges. Irrespective of the strategy, a  $P_{max}$  versus  $G_r$  map is essential and  $G_r$  is calculated using (6) for the  $G(E)$  approach or

assessed for the double-side illumination method. The estimated value of data points is driven to cross the *Y*-axis at  $P_{max}$  STC. The slope of such a graph is represented by *BiFi*, which stands for bifacial power gain. The *BiFi* slope is used with the assumption that interpolation can anticipate the device's efficiency based on the front STC and rear irradiance.

Clients are hindered by a lack of exact nominal power specifications for bifacial PV panels. The majority of manufacturers base the power rating on the front side's commonly used STC output power, with others assuming a contribution from the back. There are no clear standards for bifacial PV panel-rated output power nor are there any criteria for how the bifacial

TABLE IV  
ELECTRICAL DATA: AN EXAMPLE LABEL FOR A BIFACIAL PV PANEL RATED AT STC AND BSTC (PROPOSED BY *TÜV RHEINLAND*)

Category	STC	BSTC
Nominal power	300 W ( $\pm 3\%$ )	330 W ( $\pm 3.5\%$ )
Open-circuit voltage ( $V_{oc}$ )	38.5 V ( $\pm 1\%$ )	39 V ( $\pm 1.2\%$ )
Short-circuit current ( $I_{sc}$ )	9.4 A ( $\pm 2.8\%$ )	10.2 A ( $\pm 3\%$ )
Bi-faciality ( $\varphi$ )	0.7 ( $\pm 0.05$ )	
Maximum system voltage	1000 V IEC	
Maximum OC protection rating	20 A	
Power Temp. coef. ( $P_{mpp}$ )	-0.4% ( $\pm 0.05\%$ )	
Voltage Temp. coef. ( $V_{oc}$ )	-0.31% ( $\pm 0.02\%$ )	
Current Temp. coef. ( $I_{sc}$ )	-0.05% ( $\pm 0.01\%$ )	

attributes should be incorporated on the PV panel's sign or in the company's specification. The IEC is looking into adequate rated output power criteria to provide consistency in the labeling procedure for bifacial PV panels. *TÜV Rheinland* has proposed specific bifacial STCs with front-side irradiances of  $1000 \text{ W/m}^2$  and rear-side irradiances of  $135 \text{ W/m}^2$  [149]. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) [150] and Sandia National Laboratories [151] developed the rear-side irradiance definition, which is related to the following conditions: albedo factor of 0.21, clearance height of 1 m, inclination angle of  $37^\circ$ , and front-side irradiance of  $1000 \text{ W/m}^2$ . The optimum power rating of the bifacial panel at bifacial standard testing conditions (BSTCs) is later established to have a standard irradiance of  $G(E) = 1000 \text{ W/m}^2 + \varphi \times 135 \text{ W/m}^2$ . The IEC firmly considers the BSTC as a criterion for power rating. Table IV [152] depicts an example label for bifacial PV panels with BSTC power characterization [152].

Two criteria are used to assess the quality of PV panel products: module design qualification testing (MQT) according to the IEC 61215 series [140] and module (panel) safety qualification testing (MST) according to the IEC 61730 series [140]. Additional certification requirements for bifacial PV panels are mostly owing to the higher operating electrical currents of these panels. Table V examines the potential additional standards for bifacial PV panels. In 2018, *TÜV Rheinland* presented a unique test technique 2PfG 2665/06.18 [152] to meet the additional certification testing standards for bifacial PV panels. Greater test currents ( $I_{mpp}$  or  $I_{sc}$ , depending on testing) must be approximated at an equivalent irradiance ( $G(E) = 1000 \text{ W/m}^2 + 300 \text{ W/m}^2$ ) or the  $G(E)$  must be used where necessary. However, the STC testing is still used to determine pass/fail requirements ( $1000 \text{ W/m}^2$  on both front and rear sides) depicted in Fig. 11.

The IEC 61853 guideline set [141] provides a suitable framework for calculating the energy of monofacial PV modules installed in an open rack. The PV industry understands the significance of expanding the energy rating to include developing technologies such as bifacial. On the other hand, the methodology, assessment processes, and associated variability are debated. The advanced PV energy rating (PV-Enerate) European EMPIR project investigated the feasibility of expanding the IEC 61853 guideline sequence to include bifacial devices [141] and Table VI highlights the findings.

## V. BIFACIAL PV SYSTEMS

Bifacial PV produces excess yield energy compared with monofacials because of the panel's two-sided light sensitivity. The uncertainty surrounding the actual output of anticipated systems limits potential investment [161], [162]. The approved classification criteria are the measurement of nominal power under standardized conditions (STCs) via a monofacial panel for optimization of a bifacial panel. With simulation tools, predicting the system's energy output with appropriate accuracy is rather simple for monofacials. This is not the case with bifacial devices and systems. When compared with monofacial devices, uncertainty is created by intricate situations. The advantage of bifaciality is related to the intensity of light on the panel's back-side. It is determined by ground reflectivity, seasonal weather, light homogeneity, and the system size; smaller bifacial systems tend to have higher backside rear irradiance than large bifacial systems (the edge effect on the rear irradiance). Shade effects at the backside of the PV device and the reflecting ground are unavoidable for free-standing panels. The multiple-panel system includes features such as direct shading by neighboring row panels or indirect shading by surrounding panels. As a result, the rear-side irradiation is lowered. Analyzing power plant energy output is a method of determining the efficiency of precise installations. Furthermore, data from larger systems are uncommon because of installation and shadowing conditions [163].

$$G_{\text{bifacial}} = \frac{E_{\text{bifacial}} - E_{\text{monofacial}}}{E_{\text{monofacial}}} \times 100\%. \quad (8)$$

Here,  $G_{\text{bifacial}}$  denotes the bifacial gain.  $E_{\text{monofacial}}$  and  $E_{\text{bifacial}}$  are the specific yield ( $\text{kWh/kWp}$ ) of monofacial and bifacial PV panels under identical conditions. The bifacial gain is used to represent the benefit of bifaciality. It refers to the difference in energy yield between bifacial and monofacial devices with identical installation conditions. The  $\text{kWh/kWp}$  ratio is typically examined. The STCs front-side measurement of the bifacial panel is reflected in the  $\text{kWp}$  data. Because of the lack of consideration over the influence of shading factors on bifacial output, a comparison of measurement data from different systems reveals significant variation. The higher energy yield is the attraction of bifacial PV. Monofacial panels are ineffective for several applications. In this regard, the vertical mounting of PV systems in an E-W configuration is the most widely discussed. It is very beneficial in snowy areas and desert locations [164]. It helps to ensure continuous energy production throughout the day, which improves the alignment of electricity production and demand.

In the case of vertical E/W systems, factors become more intricate, and there are fewer sources of information available. In these cases, the panel type and albedo are significant, but so is the mounting configuration of the reference panel and the installation latitude. When compared with a vertically installed monofacial panel, a bifacial gain of more than 100% (Table VII) is observed.

Besides, a comparison with a slanted south-oriented monofacial panel is more intriguing. In high latitudes, where the amount

TABLE V  
SAFETY AND QUALITY CONFIGURATION OF BIFACIAL PV PANEL

Test	Practice for Mono-facial PV	Bi-facial testing issues
Thermal cycling test ( <i>MQT 11/MST 51</i> ) [153]	The experiment was carried out in an atmospheric setting with constant temperature fluctuations ranging from $-40$ to $+85^{\circ}\text{C}$ . To further stress the soldering joints, a current equal to $I_{\text{mpp}}$ is introduced.	The maximum possible current must account for the influence from the backside.
Bypass-diode test ( <i>MQT 18/MST 25</i> ) [154]	For the first hour, the current being applied is $-I_{\text{sc}}$ , and for the second hour, it is $-1.25 \times I_{\text{sc}}$ .	The heating effects are amplified when the current input from the backside is incorporated.
Hot-spot endurance test ( <i>MQT 09/MST 22</i> ) [155]	The power loss at just one shaded cell is set to the maximum allowable, which is defined by the panel's maximum electrical current ( $I_{\text{mpp}}$ ).	The maximum power current must account for the influence from the rear.
Temperature test ( <i>MST 21</i> ) [155]	The element and material benchmark temperatures correspond to a $1000 \text{ W/m}^2$ front irradiation and a $40^{\circ}\text{C}$ room temperature.	The higher the rear-side irradiance of bi-facial PV panels, the higher the temperatures.
Reverse current overload test ( <i>MST 26</i> ) [132]	This test guarantees that inverse currents generated during outdoor exercise will not cause panel problems because of welding joint heating. The test current is $1.35 \times$ the maximum reverse current specified on the panel supplier's nameplate.	The maximum reverse current should correspond to the most extreme outdoor scenario, such as $1300 \text{ W/m}^2$ front-side irradiance with a high albedo and sun tracking.

TABLE VI  
PV ENERATE EXTENSION OF THE IEC 61853 STANDARD SERIES TO BIFACIAL PV PANELS

Ref.	Aspect	Monofacial PV	Bifacial PV
[156]	Scenarios of mounting	With a $20^{\circ}$ inclination angle and towards the equator	Add an east–west (E–W) rack with a low albedo.
[157]	Irradiance from the rear	Not available	Hourly data for rear-side irradiance were gathered for a medium/high albedo (Equator facing at $20^{\circ}$ ); the data were considered homogenous.
[158], [159]	Factor of spectral correction	Exclusively at the front	The spectral response at the panel's back and the spectral albedo beneath the panel have been revised.
[160]	Profiles of climate	For the front side	Angle of inclination for the new planes (E–W and inclination plane's backside), spectral irradiance, beam, and diffuse on the inclined plane's back-side

TABLE VII  
BIFACIAL GAINS FOR VARIOUS N-PERT PANEL PLACEMENT SCHEME

Ref.	Geometry of bi-facial installation and latitude	Mono-facial reference installation geometry	Albedo	Bi-facial gain
[165]	<i>San Felipe, Chile</i> ( $32^{\circ}\text{S}$ ) has a slanted fixed tilt	Fixed tilt (slanted)	65%–75%	30%
[166]	Vertical installation in the <i>United States</i>	Vertical	Not measured	100%
[167]	<i>Winterthur, Switzerland</i> ( $47^{\circ}\text{N}$ ) vertical installation	Slanted fixed tilt	25%	10%
[168]	Vertical installation at <i>Saar</i> ( $49^{\circ}\text{N}$ ), <i>Germany</i>	Slanted fixed tilt	25%	10%
[169], [170]	Vertical installation in <i>El Gouna</i> ( $27^{\circ}\text{N}$ ) <i>Egypt</i>	Slanted fixed tilt	25%	–5%
[171]	In <i>La Silla, Chile</i> ( $29^{\circ}\text{S}$ ), a single axis was tracked	Single-axis tracked	25%	15%

of scattered sunlight is greater and the vertical mounting is closer to the optimal tilted angle, an electrical gain of 10% is obtained, whereas an electrical loss of 5% was found in low latitudes [180], [181], [182]. This application is still appealing for a variety of reasons, including minimal ground coverage, a higher generating peak, and fewer soiling issues with vertical installations. Table VII lists numerous setups and the accompanying bifacial gains for n-PERT panels. *MegaCell* [183] and *Enel* [184] employ typical monofacial panels with white backsheets as a foundation for comparison in large bifacial systems in Chile and observed that the experimental bifacial advantages differ slightly. Several incidences with varying albedo in the case of the fixed-tilt S/N panel system have already been observed across the world. Depending on the substrate albedo (25% for raw sand and 75% [185] for white stones), bifacial improvements of 15% to 30% are attainable.

Fig. 12(a) [59] shows the development of PV panels for special markets and regional applications. Based on regional environments, the development of specialized panels for a specific

market is required; however, the modifications are not that significant. The modifications are mostly based on bifacial panels compared with monofacial ones [186], [187]. Fig. 12(b) [59] and Table VIII depict the various specific PV system implications for the next two decades and the fundamental factors of floating and agri-PV, respectively. It can be observed that although water bodies are abundant compared with land, agri-PV will be a dominant endues PV system for the next decade compared with floating PV [59] because of the agri-PV system's maintenance and initial installation cost being much lower than floating PV systems. The agri-PV and floating PV systems are effective when bifacial PV panels are used instead of monofacial PV panels. It is because, in these unique PV end-use systems, vertical panel installation is an effective option. Since bifacial panels respond to solar irradiation on each surface of the panel, therefore, in these unique PV end-use systems, bifacial panels are more effective than monofacial ones.

Bifacial systems based on single-axis tracking have attracted greater attention in recent years since experimental results in

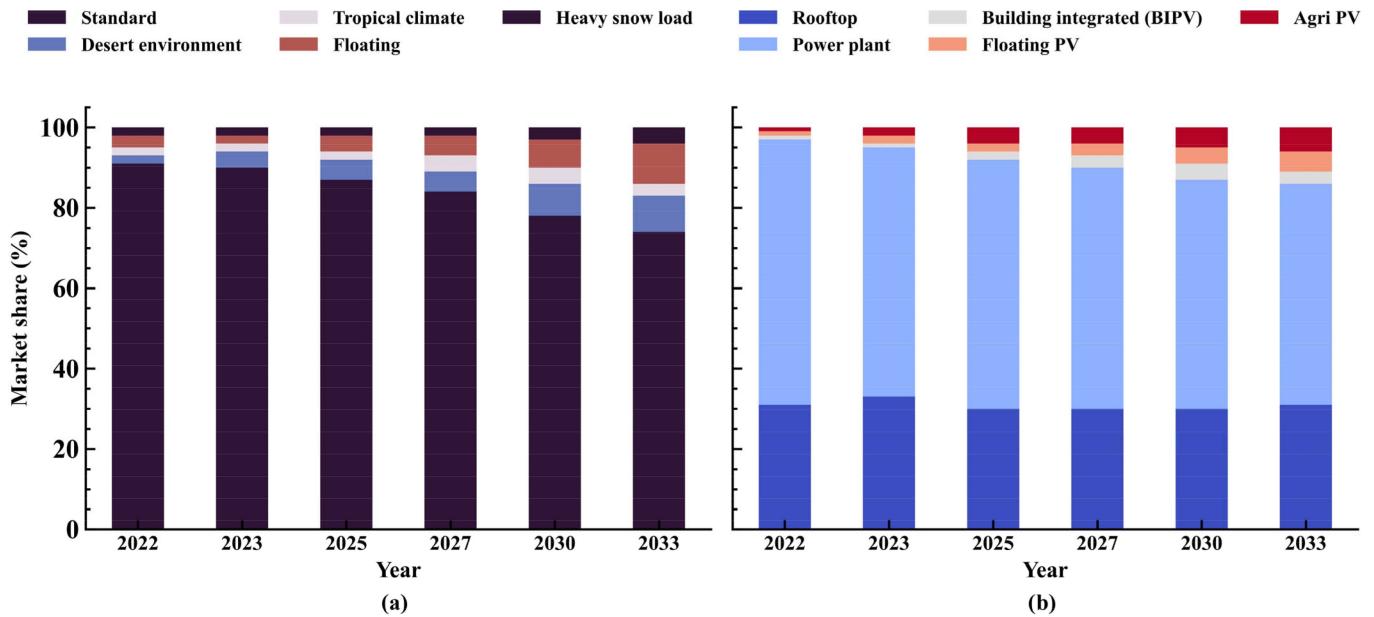


Fig. 12. ITRPV technology share projection. (a) Regional application. (b) Different PV end-use system.

TABLE VIII  
FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS BETWEEN GROUND-MOUNTED AND FLOATING BIFACIAL PV SCHEME

Ref.	Theme	Ground installed PV	Floating PV
[172], [173]	Structure for PV module support	Steel-based racking structure	Floats constructed primarily of high-density polyethylene
[174]	Wiring	Standard	Waterproof and marine-grade materials
[173], [174]	Stability	Pile pushed with a concrete foundation	Mooring lines are used for bank or bottom anchoring.
[175]	Preparation of the site	Geotechnical investigation, soil leveling, and grading	Bathymetry study, hydrodynamic survey, and geotechnical investigation
[174]	Factors of external loading	Wind and snow	Wind, snow, waves, water currents, water depth, and variation in water level
[176]	Tilt Angle	33°	10°
[177]	Levelized operation and maintainers (\$/kW - yr)	18	15.5
[178]	IP (ingress protection) Rating	Lower than IP66	Greater than IP67
[179]	Sales tax, shipping and handling, and a contingency fund	5%, 0%, 3%	5%, 5%, 5%
[177], [179]	Overhead for the developer, EPC (engineering procurement construction) overhead, and net profit	7.7%, 10.9%, 7.84%	7.7%, 10.9%, 7.84%

large systems demonstrated that the bifacial gain in those conditions is likewise extremely important. Numerous tracking mount solutions are near optimal for bifacial panels since they are located high above the ground and have a wide row distance. As a result, the bifacial gains show advantages over monofacial single-axis tracking and are quite comparable to fixed-tilt systems. This was initially reported by *Enel in la Silla* [171]. Combining single-axis tracking with bifacial panels leads to electrical benefits of more than 40% over fixed-tilt monofacial panels in systems with high albedo [188].

#### A. Vertically Planted Bifacial PV System

Bifacial systems with a south orientation are appealing for installation schemes that would be impossible with standard monofacial systems. An attractive alternative is a vertical installation with an east/west orientation. It is a promising application

strategy [181], [189], [190]. The installation design avoids the largest power-generating peak at noon. As a result, the generation profile becomes diverse [182], [191]. New concepts include broadening the generating profile and reducing dust deposition or snow load with the use of simulation data and measurements on single, vertically placed modules [12], [13]. Vertically placed systems experience significant shadowing, and the energy generation is strongly dependent on the precise layout of the PV installation [192], [193]. The bifacial panels are dual-purpose gadgets. One example is functional for buildings such as noise barriers. The other are the subjects of scientific investigation into the behavior of vertical bifacial systems. Bifacial panels have become more affordable in recent years as demand has increased and manufacturing capacity has expanded [192]. The vertical installation concept has gained popularity and is now employed in utility-scale ground-mounted systems.

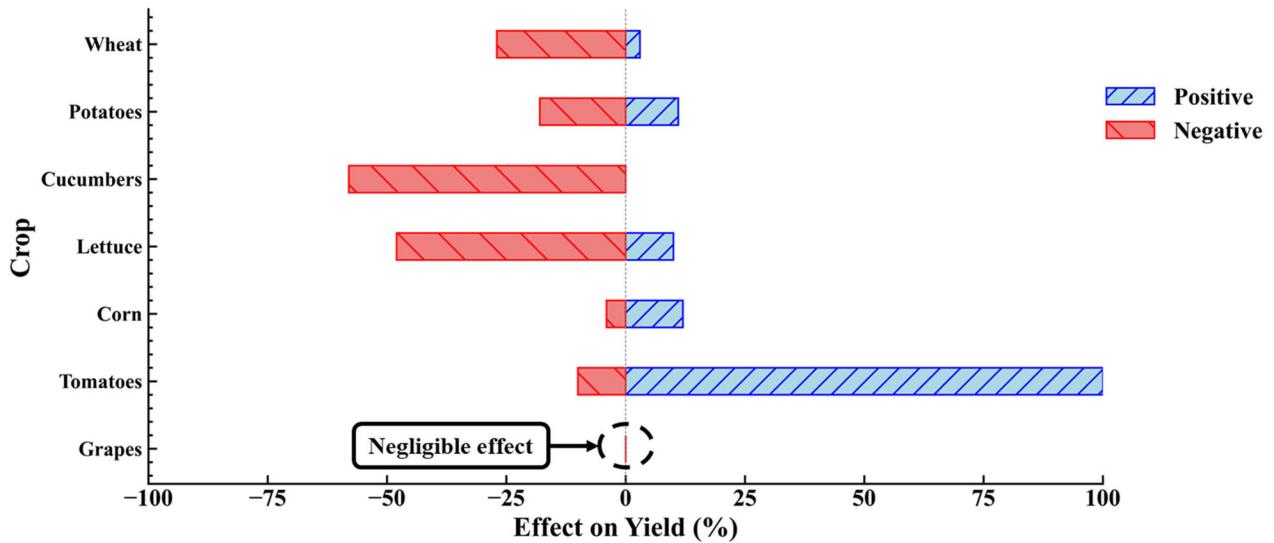


Fig. 13. Crop yield impact for agri-bifacial PV across numerous landscapes.

#### B. Agri-Photovoltaics System With Bifacial

Agri-PV is the combination of farming and PV within the same area of land. The elevated installation of PV panels at a height of 4 m [194] from the ground is a popular solution for agri-PV. It allows agricultural machinery to drive through and utilize the area below [194], [195]. The shadows on the ground are caused by the panel array. It might be advantageous or disadvantageous depending on the environment and crops to be grown. Vertical bifacial PV plants are an innovative approach to agri-PVs. There is no ground coverage or effect on irradiation dispersion or rainfall for vertical E/W installation. The row pitch of these installations is 10–20 m [196]. It allows conventional agricultural machinery to use newer GPS-controlled machines [196].

Fig. 13 illustrates a variety of cultivars with yield variations dependent on location and environment [197], [198], [199], [200], [201], [202], [203]. The selection of plant species and cultivars for vegetative, grazing, as well as crop production, is crucial to the success of an agri-PV venture. The purpose of InSPIRE [204] research and other research programs is to establish which plants and cultivars are best suited to specific places that are significantly influenced by geographical environment and water-soil quality. Vegetation selection is frequently included in a larger framework of locally influenced choices, such as the owner's preference for native species or local ecotypes. Types that thrive in partial shade are occasionally surprising; for example, researchers were surprised when "sun-loving" kinds of grass outnumbered "shade-loving" grass types in research testing patches at an ecosystem service InSPIRE study location in Colorado [205]. Furthermore, as revealed by InSPIRE research in Western Oregon, different cultivars of the same plants, such as potatoes, act dramatically differently under identical conditions [206]. Crop rotation is critical over numerous years because crops such as nightshade affect soil conditions. Crop vegetation success is measured yearly for agricultural goods

and five years after the first planting for vegetation/ecosystem projects.

Table IX lists the agri-PV with bifacial applications such as crop and food production, livestock production, ecosystem service provision through vegetation management, and PV greenhouses [207], [208], [209]. These uses are not mutually exclusive, and various activities can take place on the same site at the same time or even in the same area of the location at various times of year. Numerous projects have distinct zones for agricultural production or ecosystem service production, while others use the same zones for diverse reasons, such as targeted grazing in pollinator habitat zones for tactical vegetation control at certain times of the year. The limited shade of PV architecture has an impact on crop production systems; crops are planted precisely beneath panels and in between rows of panels. Crop management is done by hand or with mechanical equipment.

Crop production takes place within a standard ground-mounted PV installation, or the infrastructure is altered in terms of panel height, panel spacing, row spacing, or other design elements to accommodate changes in sunlight/shading patterns and compatibility with agricultural activities [208]. Innovative methods and configurations are being investigated to support types of crops and horticulture, such as orchards, vineyards, field crops, and other fruits [209]. Agri-PV systems for livestock and animal husbandry include grazing and animal management beneath, around, and directly adjacent to PV equipment. Practitioners have generally used sheep, cattle, poultry, honeybees, and rabbits to implement agri-PV systems, although other animal activities are also conceivable [168], [207], [209]. Depending on the demands of the PV site and the animal management, animals can be on-site year-round, seasonally, or on an as-needed basis. Animals do not get all of their nutrition from on-site resources, and they are required to be moved regularly or supplemented with nutrients from offsite sources. The connectivity of PV infrastructure with aquaculture activities is a

TABLE IX  
COMMERCIALLY DEPLOYED TYPES OF AGRI-BIFACIAL PV SCHEMES

Traditional utility scheme (fixed-tilt-slanted)	Alternate scheme	Comment	Bi-facial gain
Crop production	Vertical, tracker stilt mount	Crop grown in between rows	100% (vertical), [166] and 10% (Tracker stilt mount), [167]
Animal husbandry Ecosystem services	Elevated reinforced panels Greenhouse PV	Grazing in between and underneath panels Vegetation grown in between and underneath panels	15%, [171] 30%, [165]

growing use, although not all countries consider it an agri-PV category. Traditional utility-scale PV facilities do not need to be significantly altered in many cases to accommodate cattle grazing and veterinary activities; however, other site design changes such as vegetation planting and management, fencing, water supply, and animal access are included to ensure integration with animal husbandry practices. Agri-PVs for vertical bifacial systems have a lack of experience. Practical consequences are necessary to evaluate the feasibility of dual use of land farms with PV agriculture.

### C. Floating-PV System With Bifacial

Water as the foundation for bifacial PV is a new application field. The land use of ground-mounted bifacial PV systems is the cause for floating PV with bifacial panels. Land for large-scale PV is scarce, and it competes for agricultural use. There is insufficient acreage to supply renewable energy on a local scale. Given that water covers 71% of the earth's surface area, it appears sensible to explore floating PV with bifacial. Large patches of freshwater are available, while the water surface's function is not jeopardized. Energy generation and alternative water usage can occur concurrently. Commercial and agricultural irrigation reservoirs, gravel and sand extraction excavations, water bodies, and canals are some examples. Aside from freshwater uses, the seas and oceans have enormous surface area potential. Several systems and companies are attempting to construct at-sea autonomous PV power plant projects [210], [211]. The enormous scale of projects is a significant advantage of floating PV with bifacial schemes. Many water regions are vastly larger than available land areas, resulting in higher project scales and cheaper cost per kilowatt. The floating PV including the bifacial panel schemes system is more expensive than ground-mounted systems in terms of initial cost. Larger project scales and water benefits are predicted to result in a lower overall leveled cost of power for water-based systems over a duration of a larger period [212], [213].

### D. Single-Axis Tracked Bifacial PV System

Horizontal single-axis tracking has become a significant technology in maximizing energy yield in places near the equator. It is to minimize the electricity generation concerning the leveled cost of electricity. The bifaciality, combined with tracking, was thought not to be compatible. It is because of the contractor's belief that aggregating mechanical structures economically degrades the system's LCOE. Nevertheless, tracking with bifacial panels makes sense and leads to high power generation.

Horizontal single-axis tracking became popular in large PV system installations [3], [16], [214], [215], [216]. Barros E Silva et al. [217] presented simulation research comparing the properties and productivity of monofacial and bifacial PV panels as well as compared the employment of trackers in the creation of horizontal modules. Russell et al. [218] proposed DUET—a bifacial PV performance model that calculates optical and electrical performance based on a physically representative array geometry and incorporates single-axis tracking. Sreenath et al. [219] investigated the performance of conceptual bifacial PV systems under varied albedo conditions while taking a tracking system into account and considered a white-colored surface area of the BIPV system. Kalhoro et al. [220] created a system that mimics the bifacial paradigm and includes an economic benefit for developing countries having considered single-axis tracking.

## VI. LEVELIZED COST OF ELECTRICITY FOR BIFACIAL PV SYSTEMS

The cost of electricity generated by bifacial PV systems is an important consideration. It compares the efficiency of PV to that of traditional alternative energy sources. From an economic standpoint, it is an electricity-producing mechanism that discusses PV panel technology and how to configure a system for a certain use and territory. Research and development (R&D) initiatives in the PV manufacturing value chain aim to reduce the cost of bifacial PV-generated electricity. It begins with the purification of Si feedstock and finishes with the design and installation of PV systems. In terms of components, operation, and maintenance, the LCOE is a statistic that attempts to encompass all costs associated with the building and operation of a PV system, as well as all factors influencing total electricity output (kWh) over the lifetime of the PV system.

$$\text{LCOE} = \frac{\text{Total life cycle cost}}{\text{Total life time electricity generation}}. \quad (9)$$

Calculation of the LCOE of a specific project using (9) necessitates the use of information such as taxes, credits, and feed-in-tariffs. The system advisor model (SAM) was developed by the NREL, Sandia National Laboratory, and the United States Department of Energy, and it includes a freely accessible LCOE estimation application that allows for the selection of different economic models as well as the execution of the critical economic factors [221]. A thorough definition of the LCOE idea considers funding conditions as well as the fact that money spent in the future has a lesser value than money spent today. The latter is a key notion in financial mathematics and is implemented by the "net present value" concept. The

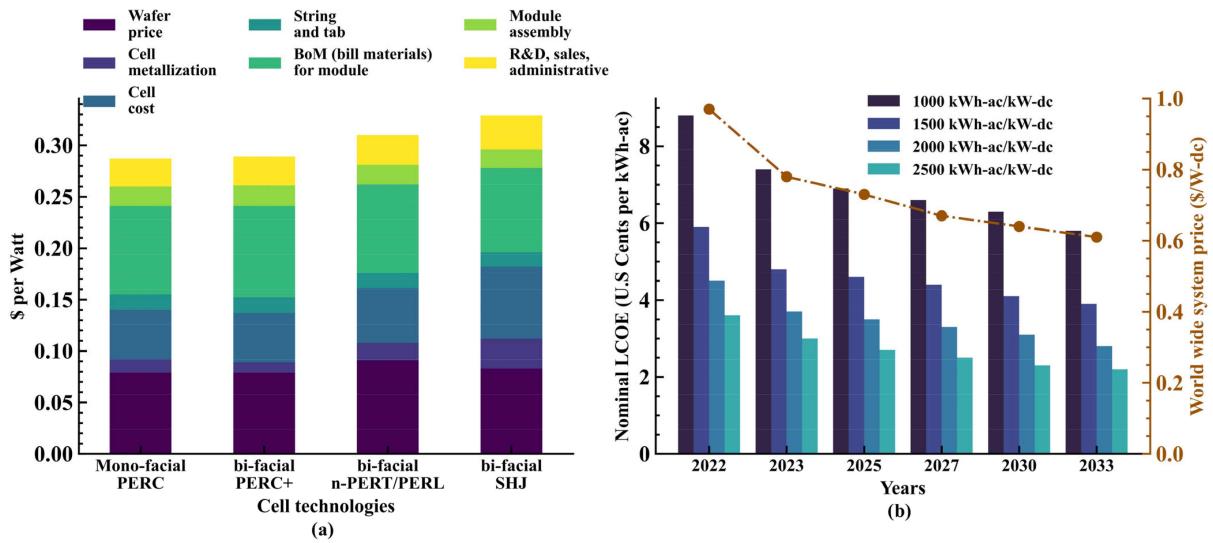


Fig. 14. (a) Module (panel) cost comparison for mono- and bifacial PVs. (b) Global LCOE for various insolation scenarios and capital costs: 2023 ITRPV survey.

LCOE is defined as the energy price (\$/kWh) at which the whole project cost's net present value is zero. The LCOE is the averaged levelized energy price (\$/kWh) across the project's entire lifecycle at which the project achieves a financial break [221].

$$\text{LCOE} = \sum_{t=1}^N \frac{(I_t + O_t)(1+d)^t}{E_t/(1+d)^t}. \quad (10)$$

Equation (10) is the detailed version of (9), where  $I_t$  is the repayment-debt and equity in year  $t$  and  $O_t$  is the expenses-operation as well as maintenance for year  $t$ .  $E_t$  and  $d$  are energy produced (kWh) in a year as well as the discount rate, respectively [222]. The initial energy yield kWh/kWp is used to compute the energy generation. It is determined by the location of the plant's design and the panel technology used. The total electricity generation for the first year of operation is calculated by multiplying the initial energy yield by the nominal plant capacity (Wp at STCs). To calculate the energy generation for each year of the power plant's lifetime, a yearly degradation rate of performance of the bifacial PV system is considered [223].

Fig. 14(a) compares the panel cost for monofacial and bifacial cell technologies based on the database of the NREL [150] PV panel production cost statistics. It shows that the R&D phase has a higher dollar per watt rate for bifacial compared with monofacial showing that bifacial technologies R&D investments are on the rise. However, the remaining aspects in terms of higher energy yield and panel dimension are relatively more cost effective for bifacial modules than monofacial ones. For PERC cells, the module assembly process contributes to the higher cost of bifacial PV modules. For n-PERT/PERL cells, the costs associated with Si-wafer and cell processing are the most significant aspects. Fig. 14(b) depicts the global LCOE for different insolation using the 2023 ITRPV [59] system survey, the predictions were performed using NREL's [150] SAM cash flow structure [221]. The LCOE predictions are applied for both mono- and bifacial PV systems. The predictions show that the

LCOE for bifacial PV systems is expected to have optimum conditions in the next decade.

## VII. FUTURE OF BIFACIAL PV

In the SNECS in Shanghai 2022 and Intersolar Europe in South America 2022 conferences, the presentation topics were comprised of bifacial panels [224], [225]. The vision of the main PV businesses was promoted. They presented high-efficiency, low-cost n-type bifacial technology. The devices used carrier-selective connections, which resulted in efficiencies of more than 25%, similar to what SunPower and Panasonic have been doing for years. The sole distinction is that the costs must be comparable to those of ordinary PV cells [226]. As predicted by ITRPV [59], more than 40% of the panels on the market are based on fundamental bifacial technologies. According to Bloomberg [227], PV is the most critical energy source. PV volume and cost projections have historically been understated. This is true for the Bloomberg study's 100 GWp market. PV's influence on bifaciality is more than projected, with a 100 GWp market share in less than five years [227], [228], [229].

## VIII. CONCLUSION

A comparative study of the monofacial and the bifacial technologies has been carried out, as reported in the literature. The current status and prospects of both cell technologies are discussed. Findings suggest that bifacial c-Si TOPCon, and SHJ cell technologies show high cell efficiency as well as bifaciality factor while having optimum fabrication techniques compared with alternate cell technologies. Study shows that electrical-optical-thermal modeling of bifacial PV panels is necessary to optimize bifacial cell efficiency, which also helps to minimize bifacial cell-to-panel loss. The bifacial PV panel's dual use of land cases, such as vertical bifacial, agri-PV with bifacial, and floating-PV with bifacial panels, gives a clear advantage over monofacial ones. Findings show that for the next few decades, agri-PV will surpass floating-PV with bifacial because of minimum maintenance and initial installation costs. The LCOE

(levelized cost of electricity) is a crucial evaluation metric for bifacial PV systems for the assessment of financial benefit over monofacial PV systems. It was found that in the next decade, the LCOE of the mono- and bifacial PV system's capital cost will drop by 40%, as claimed by recent ITRPV reports. Findings suggest that the bifaciality factor and bifacial gain provide the direct differentiating factor compared with monofacial PV systems.

Various Si cell technologies are rapidly adopting bifacial layout in the world market share of cell fabrication. In recent years, the cell fabrication to module layout cost comparison of mono- and bifacial PVs shows that the latter is cost-effective in terms of optimum energy yield and module/panel dimension.

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