

PV Lifetime Project – 2024 NREL Annual Report

Chris Deline, Dirk Jordan, Bill Sekulic, Josh Parker, Byron McDanold, and Allan Anderberg

National Renewable Energy Laboratory

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Technical Report NREL/TP-5K00-90651 August 2024

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Contract No. DE-AC36-08GO28308

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Suggested Citation

Deline, Chris, Dirk Jordan, Bill Sekulic, Josh Parker, Byron McDanold, and Allan Anderberg. 2024. *PV Lifetime Project – 2024 NREL Annual Report*. Golden, CO: National Renewable Energy Laboratory. NREL/TP-5K00-90651. [https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy24osti/90651.pdf.](https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy24osti/90651.pdf)

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Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the work of the PV module measurement group at NREL in recording these indoor IV measurements, and our PV Lifetime counterparts at Sandia, particularly Josh Stein, Bruce King and Marios Theristis. This work was authored by Alliance for Sustainable Energy, LLC, the manager and operator of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) under Contract No. DE-AC36-08GO28308. Funding provided by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) under Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) Agreement Number 38535. The views expressed in the article do not necessarily represent the views of the DOE or the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government retains and the publisher, by accepting the article for publication, acknowledges that the U.S. Government retains a nonexclusive, paid-up, irrevocable, worldwide license to publish or reproduce the published form of this work, or allow others to do so, for U.S. Government purposes.

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Executive Summary

DOE's PV Lifetime project was initiated in 2016 with the goal of accurately characterizing the early-life evolution of photovoltaic (PV) field performance. Different PV cell and module technologies result in different initial degradation rates due to effects like light-induced degradation (LID) and light & elevated temperature-induced degradation (LeTID). To accurately characterize the initial field degradation of maximum power (Pmp) requires the use of high-accuracy indoor IV curve measurements at standard test conditions. Therefore, PV modules involved in this study are removed from the field once or twice per year and brought indoors for measurement under constant temperature and irradiance conditions.

Current samples deployed and monitored in this way include Jinko Solar (2016), Trina Solar (2016), Hanwha Q-Cells (2017), Panasonic (2018), LG (2018), Canadian Solar (2018), Mission Solar (2019). Modules from Sunpreme (2019), and LONGi (2020) have been deployed and were first reported on in the 2022 report. For this report, initial baseline measurements for two additional partners are included: REC (2023) and Solaria (2023).

Overall annual degradation rates are as follows: our first modules to be deployed (Jinko and Trina) have annual median degradation rate between −0.35%/yr and −0.55%/yr, mainly concentrated in the first year. The QCells mono-PERC and multi-PERC modules have an annual degradation rate of −0.4%/yr and −0.3%/yr respectively, also concentrated in the first year of operation.

Mission Solar, LG and LONGi modules are all displaying modest degradation, better than −0.25% / year. Indeed, Mission Solar fielded modules degraded less than their control modules which remain indoors and un-exposed. By comparison, the Sunpreme n-HIT bifacial modules are showing a rapid loss rate around -2% /yr, or almost -8% total to date. This is largely attributed to loss in front-side Isc, and this rapid loss has been corroborated by comparing against RdTools degradation analysis, using real-time field performance data.

Several module types exhibit strong seasonal performance change, consistent with LeTID susceptibility. This is characterized by lower indoor IV measurement after prolonged hightemperature exposure, and a recovery during cooler temperatures. This can result in a sawtoothtype response when sequential indoor measurements are taken in the spring and again in the fall. These types of profiles are visible in Jinko, Trina and Mission Solar module types. It is possible that Canadian Solar multi-PERC also follows this trend, but the measurement timing has not lined up to confirm this possibility.

An analysis was conducted on the initial module performance relative to their nameplate rating. Most module types had initial performance right at nameplate rating, or within 1%: Jinko, Trina, LONGi, Panasonic, QCells and REC N-peak (TOPCon). Other module types came in 2% − 3% below nameplate: Mission Solar and Solaria. The REC 405 Pure Alpha came 3%- 4% below nameplate, which is outside of its stated accuracy bounds. It wasn't all bad news - LG modules were measured at 2% above nameplate. Finally, the Sunpreme heterojunction modules had inconsistent measurements which made it difficult to make any statements on their nameplate accuracy.

Three related publications published in 2022 have made use of the PV Lifetime data included in this report, and can help provide greater context and additional information. M. Theristis et al., "Onymous early-life performance degradation analysis of recent photovoltaic module technologies" [\(http://doi.org/10.1002/pip.3615\)](http://doi.org/10.1002/pip.3615) provides additional analysis and measurements from New Mexico and Florida test sites for comparable module samples. An international round-robin test on LeTID stabilization processes was published by Karas et al., "Results from an international interlaboratory study on light- and elevated temperature-induced degradation in solar modules" [\(DOI: 10.1002/pip.3573\)](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pip.3573). Finally, a detailed discussion of LeTID kinetics and how this affects field performance and LCOE is provided in the MRS Bulletin, I. Repins et al., "Long-Term Impact of Light and Elevated Temperature Induced Degradation on Photovoltaic Arrays". [\(DOI: 10.1557/s43577-022-00438-8\)](https://doi.org/10.1557/s43577-022-00438-8)

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1 Introduction

In 2016, the US Department of Energy initiated the PV Lifetime project – an effort to procure, deploy and accurately characterize the initial performance degradation of commercial PV module samples. In the process of this project, NREL and Sandia national laboratories have collaborated to deploy and publish on the initial performance of over 950 different samples from 12 different manufacturers to date. This report represents a cumulative snapshot of field results for the PV modules deployed at NREL.

Figure 1. Overview of the NREL PV Lifetime field samples ca 2018

As of 2024, the following module types have been deployed at each of the PV Lifetime locations:

Company	Model	Type	Number in NM	Number in CO	Number in FL
Jinko Solar	JKM260P 260W	Multi	28	28	56
Jinko Solar	JKM265P 265W	Multi	28	28	
Trina Solar	TSM-PD05.05 255W	Multi		28	
Trina Solar	TSM-PD05.08 260W	Multi	56	28	56
Canadian Solar	CS6K-270P 270W	Multi	48		
Canadian Solar	CS6K-275M 275W	Mono	48	$\overline{}$	
Canadian Solar	CS6K-300MS 300W	PERC	$\overline{}$	28	$\overline{}$
Hanwha Q-Cells	O.Plus BFR-G4.1 280	PERC	48	28	
Hanwha Q-Cells	Q.Peak BLK G4.1 290	Mono-PERC	48	28	
Solar World	SW 245W Mono	Mono	21		
LG	LG320N1K-A5 320W	$N-Si$	48	30	
LG	LG400Q1C-A6	N-IBC	30	$\overline{}$	
Panasonic	VBHN330 330W	N-HIT	48	28	
Mission Solar	MSE360SO65 300W	Mono-PERC	48	20	
Sunpreme	$HxB-400$	Bifacial HIT	$\overline{}$	20	
LONGi	LR6-72BP-360M	Bifacial PERC	\blacksquare	20	
LONGi	LR6-72PH-365M	Monofacial	$\overline{}$	20	
REC	REC405AA Pure Black	N-type HIT	28	10	
REC	REC360NP2	N-type TOPCon	\blacksquare	12	-
Solaria	PowerX-400R	Mono, shingled	28	14	
Program Total			>950 modules		

Table 1. PV Lifetime Modules under test in Albuquerque, NM, Golden, CO and Cocoa, FL.

The objective of the PV Lifetime Project is to determine and communicate module degradation profiles over time, including the uncertainty and any differentiation between module types. This will be done by:

- Annual flash testing of PV modules operated in the field in a variety of locations and climates.
- Analysis of periodic data to detect system degradation rates and causes.
- Sharing of reviewed results and data publicly.

For additional information on the PV Lifetime project background and initial module performance, see the WCPEC conference publication for additional details: J. Stein et al. [PV](https://pvpmc.sandia.gov/download/6888/) [Lifetime Project: Measuring PV Module Performance Degradation: 2018 Indoor Flash Testing](https://pvpmc.sandia.gov/download/6888/) [Results,](https://pvpmc.sandia.gov/download/6888/) WCPEC-7 (2018).

1.1 PV system descriptions and initial LID performance

The PV Lifetime systems currently deployed at NREL are described below. Where initial LID performance is stated, it is based on repeated indoor flashing of modules following small increments of outdoor light soak exposure in the range of $5 - 20$ kWh/m².

Figure 2. NREL PV Lifetime installations. Jinko Solar (left) and Trina Solar (right)

Jinko Solar. PV systems composed of 28 modules each of Jinko JKM260P-60 and Jinko JKM265P-60 modules were deployed outdoors in October 2016 following initial baseline PV measurements in September 2016. The systems are grid-tied through an ABB TRIO 20.0 inverter, in two strings of 14 modules apiece. Due to a delay in system electrical configuration, the PV system was not grid-tied until April 2017. An initial light-induced degradation of up to 1.5% was detected following 10+ kWh/m² of light exposure of the control modules.

This system was offline (open circuit) in 2023 due to failure of the ABB TRIO inverter (7 years of field operation). The system was offline from April – August 2023 and was replaced with a Fronius SYMO 20.0-3 480 inverter. During this time period the system size was reduced from 28 modules to 14 modules per type to make room for additional new partners.

Trina Solar. PV systems composed of 28 modules each of Trina TSM-PD05.08 260W and Trina TSM-PD05.05 255W (Black backsheet) modules were deployed in October, 2016. The systems are grid-tied through an ABB TRIO 20.0 inverter, in two strings of 14 modules apiece. The PV system was grid-tied in April, 2017. An initial light-induced degradation of ~0.4% was detected following 10 kWh/m^2 of light exposure of the control modules.

Figure 4. Trina Solar initial LID data showing 0.4% LID loss for both module types. (Data from repeated indoor IV measurements)

This system was offline (open circuit) in 2023 due to failure of the ABB TRIO inverter (7 years of field operation) which was in common with the Jinko system. The system was offline from April – August 2023 and was replaced with a Fronius SYMO 20.0-3 480 inverter. During this time period the system size was reduced from 28 modules to 14 modules per type to make room for additional new partners.

Figure 5. NREL PV Lifetime installations. QCells (left) and Panasonic (right)

QCells. PV systems composed of 28 modules each of QCells Q.Plus BFR-G4.1 280 (multi-PERC) and Q.Peak BLK-G4.1 290 (mono-PERC, black backsheet) modules were deployed in October, 2017 following baseline measurements in July 2017. The systems are grid-tied through an ABB TRIO 20.0 inverter, in two strings of 14 modules apiece. An initial light-induced degradation of around 1% was detected following 10 kWh/m² of light exposure.

Figure 6. QCells initial LID data showing 0.9% LID loss for Qplus (multi PERC) 280W and 1.2% LID loss for QPeak (monoPERC) 290W. Data from repeated indoor IV measurements. Dashed lines shown for select modules.

Panasonic, Canadian Solar, LG. Three separate PV systems were deployed in 2018 composed of 30 modules of Panasonic VBHN3305A16 (Heterojunction "HIT"), 28 modules of Canadian Solar CS6K-300MS (Mono-PERC) and 28 modules of LG LG320N1K-A5 (N-Type Mono-Si "NeON2"). The systems are grid-tied through HiQ ProHarvest inverters, in either two-string (Canadian, LG) or three-string (Panasonic) configurations. PV module baseline data were taken in June 2018, with modules installed June − October 2018. Initial LID performance changes following 20 kWh/m² of light exposure depended on product technology: Canadian Solar: −0.5%. LG: 0%. Panasonic: +0.6% improvement.

Figure 7. Panasonic initial light-soak data showing +0.6% performance gain and Canadian CS6K-300MS showing −0.5% decline. Data from repeated indoor IV measurements. Dashed lines shown for select modules.

Mission Solar, Supreme, LONGi Bifacial tracker. A 10-row single-axis tracked system was installed at NREL in 2018−2020. The site supports three PV Lifetime systems: 20 modules each of Mission Solar MSE360SQ6S (Mono-PERC), Sunpreme Maxima HxB 400 (bifacial HJT) and LONGi (bifacial and monofacial mono-PERC). The systems are grid-tied through SolarEdge SE20k inverters, and utilize module-level power optimization to identify module-level mismatch

throughout the system. The other rows in the system are part of a separate research program on bifacial PV energy gain and field durability. A detailed study of LID loss in the first 10−20 kWhm-2 light exposure was not conducted for these modules.

Figure 8. NREL 75-kW tracking PV system supporting PV Lifetime performance data

REC 360NP2 (TOPCon), REC 405AA Pure Black (HIT), Solaria PowerX-400R. These next module types have undergone initial characterization and were deployed in late 2023. These module technologies include n-type silicon heterojunction (HIT) and TOPCon technology from REC, as well as shingled p-type PERC solar cells from Solaria. All three module types utilize half-cut solar cells, and feature all-black module frame and backsheet. A total of 10-14 modules of each type was deployed.

Figure 9. REC 360NP2 (left), 405AA Pure Black (middle) and Solaria PowerX-400R (right)

1.2 Program measurement methodology

Rather than focusing on in-situ performance monitoring under prevailing meteorological conditions, the PV Lifetime project instead takes periodic indoor IV curve measurement at 25 °C and 1000 W/m². On a regular schedule of 1–2 times per year, a subset of fielded PV modules

are brought indoors for high accuracy STC flash test measurement. In between measurements, the modules are returned outdoors and put back under grid-tied conditions.

Un-exposed indoor control modules are also maintained for each module type to distinguish between field-induced changes and other factors. These can include simulator setting changes or sample instability. Since we are measuring the inherent performance of the PV module as it changes in time, we use the term 'degradation rate' in reporting on module STC loss over time. The wider term 'performance loss rate' refers to system-level AC performance of a fielded system as it changes with time. The DC degradation rate is a subset of all system-level performance losses, which also include items like module soiling, tracker pointing errors or AC availability, which are not considered here.

1.2.1 Initial simulator measurement (Spire 5600)

Indoor IV curve measurements at NREL are conducted on multiple test platforms with various stability and accuracy specifications. The highest accuracy measurement is the Module Self-Reference (MSR) methodology, with a stated accuracy of 1.1% [\(Levi et al, 2017;](https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/8366752) [Ndione et al,](https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/9300723) [2020\)](https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/9300723). This is a time-consuming method that is only conducted once per module type at the beginning of the experiment. The faster approach is to take flash measurements on a Spire simulator. The flash simulator can result in offset errors due to illumination level setting, but is relatively stable over time. It is therefore useful in identifying relative levels of change.

To judge the overall accuracy of the Spire 5600 simulator, in [Figure 10](#page-14-0) and 11 we plot the high accuracy MSR measurements taken for all module types against comparable Spire 5600 measurement. The Spire 5600 flash platform is generally below the dashed black 1:1 line, indicating that it is measuring a lower Pmp value than the MSR platform. For the Panasonic, Jinko, Trina, LONGi and Mission Solar modules, the Spire measurement is within 1% of the true value, but for Canadian, REC, Solaria and QCells the Spire values are 2% −3% low, and for LG modules the Spire values are measuring 4.4% below the true value. A tremendous difference in the two platforms of $6\% - 8\%$ was found for the Sunpreme HJT modules, which should be investigated further. The difference in measurement platforms should be considered when looking at the figures in the remainder of this report, all of which were measured with the Spire 5600 flasher. These values may be adjusted by the offset shown in [Figure 10](#page-14-0) and 11 to arrive at a more accurate absolute power value..

[Figure 10](#page-14-0) and 11 also provide a comparison between a module's nameplate rating and its actual measured value. In the figure, nameplate values are represented by vertical dashed lines with color corresponding to the given module type. In the case of Canadian, Jinko, Trina, LONGi, Panasonic and REC TOPCon, initial baseline measurements are right at expected nameplate rating. LG was measured at 2% above nameplate. QCells was within 1% but consistently low, and Mission Solar and Solaria were 3% below nameplate. The two REC 405Pure AA modules were at 2% and 4% below nameplate rating, which somewhat falls outside of its stated nameplate accuracy of 3%. The Sunpreme HxB heterojunction modules had a lot of variability in their initial measurement, with the Spire 5600 showing initial performance 3% − 4% below nameplate, but the higher accuracy MSR measurement showing performance at $2\% - 6\%$ above nameplate. The cause of this discrepancy is under investigation.

Figure 10. Initial baseline characterization of the first half PV Lifetime modules. MSR measurement (1.1% absolute accuracy) compared with Spire 5600 measurement (lower accuracy). Vertical lines represent nameplate rating of each module type.

Figure 11. Initial baseline characterization of the second half PV Lifetime modules. MSR measurement (1.1% absolute accuracy) compared with Spire 5600 measurement (lower accuracy). Vertical lines represent nameplate rating of each module type, either 360 W (closed symbols) or 400-405 W (open symbols).

1.2.2 Recent Spire 4600 measurements (2022)

For a brief period in 2021−2022 the PV Lifetime project switched to taking measurements on even another flash simulator platform. The Spire 4600 flash simulator user facility at the NREL VTIF building has lower absolute accuracy than the Spire 5600 instrument described above, but has much more time availability. For one example of reduced accuracy, building temperature is only controlled within +/− 5 C vs 0.1 C, leading to a requirement for temperature correction of these measurements. Furthermore, simulator uniformity, spectral match and aperture area is worse, leading to systematic offsets in measurements. To allow recent Spire 4600 measurements to be compared directly with earlier Spire 5600 measurements, control modules of each module type were measured on both platforms, allowing a correction factor to be developed [\(Figure 12\)](#page-15-1). For some module types (Jinko, Trina) the Pmp error is small, < 1W. For the largest discrepancy (QCells) the measurement difference is on the order of 5−6W.

Figure 12. Comparison of Spire 4600 vs Spire 5600 control module measurements. Fill Factor was measured higher on all modules. Isc was either higher or lower based on module type, leading to variability in Pmp offset. The largest power offset was for QCells leading to a 5-6W measurement difference. Data taken on this platform is corrected to remove this simulator offset.

For data plotted in this report, measurements taken on the Spire 4600 will be indicated with square markers, post-correction. Stability of this correction factor will be monitored over time by comparisons between Spire 4600 and 5600 each subsequent measurement period. Because of reduced accuracy of these measurements, we returned to measurement on the Spire 5600 in 2023−2024.

2 Field measurement results

Each module type when received by NREL underwent initial light-soak stabilization of $10 - 20$ $kWh/m²$ to remove initial LID effects before our first 'true' baseline measurement is taken. For some module types, we monitored the fast change in performance over this initial light soak – for others we did not. For all module types, we are using our first post- light-soak indoor *Pmp* measurement as the time zero reference point — subsequent changes are stated as a % of this initial measurement.

2.1 Jinko JKM260

Figure 13. Jinko JKM260 flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red). Square markers indicate Spire4600 measurement (post-correction). Seasonality may still be present, but is not recorded with new annual measurements. A new cohort of 14 modules was measured for the final time when they were de-integrated and removed from further test.

2.1.1 Initial light soak

Jinko JKM260 experienced ~0.5% initial loss due to LID following 22kWhm-2 light exposure

2.1.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

Jinko JKM260 control modules showed a modest overall change of −1% over the entire measurement period.

2.1.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

The first thing to mention on the plot this cycle is that a large number of additional modules were measured. Because the Jinko JKM260 system was cut down from 2 strings to 1, an additional 14 modules were removed from test and re-measured after 7 years.

 Compared with the relatively stable control modules, the fielded modules demonstrate seasonal performance change, related to inherent instability of this module type. For additional information see [Repins, 2020]. In particular, this module type has been tested and found to be LeTID sensitive per the procedure described in Karas, 2022 which is an early draft version of IEC TS 63342.

For the fielded modules (4 of the typically monitored modules plus 14 additional ones), overall median degradation was −3.9%. Based on the few modules measured with more regularity, the majority (-3%) of this loss occurred in Year 1. It's expected that a similar degradation profile applied to the other 14 modules, but no interim data was measured to confirm. The overall annualized Pmp loss works out to −0.5%/yr.

Figure 14. Jinko JKM260 IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance from 2017 to 2024 for Jinko JKM260 is due to primarily Isc, as well as Voc loss.

It should be noted that all Jinko and Trina modules in this field withstood a large hailstorm that came through the Golden area on May 2017. Although no SLTE modules experienced broken glass, there were a number of cracked cells that showed up in module EL following their deintegration and final characterization. The below image of module M1609-0008 is typical of the type of damage that occurred – a handful of visible cracks and impact centers.

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Figure 15. Jinko module EL image at test conclusion in 2024 illustrating 3-4 cracked cells due to hail exposure in 2017. This image is typical of those taken from the field.

Figure 16. Jinko JKM265 flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red). Starting in 2022, seasonality may still be present, but is not recorded with annual measurement frequency. A new cohort of 14 modules was measured for a final time when they were deintegrated and removed from further test.

2.2 Jinko JKM265

2.2.1 Initial light soak

Jinko JKM265 experienced 1.5% initial loss due to LID following 22kWhm-2 light exposure

2.2.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

Jinko JKM265 control modules were stable over the measurement period of 2017−2024.

2.2.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

Similar to the other Jinko modules, the JKM265 system was reduced from 2 parallel strings of 14 to just one. The 14 modules removed from the system were characterized a final time after 7 years in the field.

Compared with the stable control modules, the JKM265 fielded modules show a relatively high seasonal performance difference depending on the season of measurement. This makes cumulative performance loss difficult to quantify. Based on measurements made in the spring of 2021, post-LID degradation was -1.67% , or -0.37% /yr. However using the more recent (and lower) fall 2022 measurement as an endpoint, degradation was −3.66% or −0.61%/yr. As with the Jinko JKM260 modules, any ongoing seasonality post-2022 was hidden when measurements moved from biannual to annual frequency. Based on the most recent cohort of 14 modules, the overall median degradation was −4.1% or −0.56%/yr.

Figure 17. Jinko JKM265 IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance from 2017 to 2024 for Jinko JKM265 includes contributions from all three parameters - Isc, Voc and Fill Factor.

2.3 Trina TSM255

Figure 18. Trina TSM255 flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red). Square markers indicate Spire4600 measurement (post-correction).

2.3.1 Initial light soak

Trina TSM255 experienced 0.4% initial loss due to LID following 10kWhm-2 light exposure

2.3.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

Trina TSM255 control modules showed a modest overall change of −1% from 2017-2024.

2.3.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

The TM255 fielded modules showed only modest annual performance change and a slight amount of seasonality. Year 1 degradation was roughly −1%. Overall post-LID degradation from 2017 through early 2024 was −2.5%, or −0.34%/yr. Some seasonality in performance may still be happening, but is difficult to determine with the annual measurement frequency.

Figure 19. Trina TSM255 IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance from 2017 to 2024 for Trina TSM255 is split pretty evenly between Isc, Voc and Fill Factor.

2.4 Trina TSM260

Figure 20. Trina TSM260 flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red)

2.4.1 Initial light soak

Trina TSM260 experienced 0.4% initial loss due to LID following 10kWhm-2 light exposure

2.4.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

Trina TSM260 control modules showed a modest overall change of −0.6% from 2017−2021. These modules were not re-measured in 2022.

2.4.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

Similar to the Jinko modules, a group of 14 modules was removed from the field to re-configure the Trina TSM260 system into a single string. These modules were measured for the final time, and results were similar to the other (well-behaved) modules in this system.

Year 1 field module degradation was roughly −2% aside from the outlier module M1610-0043 which declined −3.8% in year 1 and continued its low performance. Upon measuring EL, dramatic cell-cracks over 1/3 of the module was visible. It's difficult to know if these cell cracks pre-date

Figure 21. EL image of low performing module M1610-0043 taken in 2023. The nature of the damage (3 parallel tracks across the cell width, centered between busbars) tends to indicate manufacturing damage vs a 'bullseye' crack which would arise from a hail impact. This module's underperformance also predates the May 2017 hail event at NREL.

The TM260 fielded modules (aside from one outlier) showed only modest annual performance change. Overall post-LID degradation from 2017-2024 was −3.2%, or −0.46%/yr.

Figure 22. Trina TSM260 IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance from 2017 to 2024 for Trina TSM260 is due to both Isc, Voc and Fill Factor. The outlier module Module M1610-0043 declined most significantly in FF, which may be indicative of cell-level mismatch within the module.

When removing these 14 extra modules from the field, EL images were captured to assess the damage due to exposure to the May 2017 hail storm. While no glass cracking occurred, internal module damage and cell cracking was evident. The figure below shows an EL image taken from one of the modules that was removed in 2024. The damage to cell corners/edges and visible cracks on 10%-30% of the cells is typical of the hail-damaged modules.

Figure 23. Trina TSM260 cell cracking following 2017 hailstorm. Damage impact and resulting measured power ranged from slight (M1610-0025, left. 255.4W) to moderate (M1610-0042, right. 251.2W).

2.5 QCells Qplus280

Figure 24. QCells Qplus280 flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red). Square markers indicate Spire4600 measurement (post-correction). In 2024 the flash simulator was changed to a different reference module, resulting in a +0.6% shift in both control and field measurements.

2.5.1 Initial light soak

QCells QPlus280 experienced 0.4% initial loss due to LID following 10kWhm-2 light exposure

2.5.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

In 2024 the QCells QPlus280 control modules showed a sharp increase of 1.8 W (+0.6%) compared to its previous measurements. This is an instrumentation shift that has been isolated to a change in the reference module used to set the Spire 5600 light level. This change will show up in field measurements for this module type as well, and mainly affects Isc. Field degradation statistics will not be corrected for this control module shift.

2.5.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

Year 1 post-lightsoak field module degradation was roughly −1.5%.

The QPlus280 fielded modules showed overall post-LID degradation from 2017-2022 of −2.9%, or −0.56 %/yr. Including the timespan to 2017-2024 makes the overall median change −2.0% or −0.3 %/yr. This reflects the relative stability of the field samples, plus a shift in control and field measurements due to a 0.6% change in the indoor flash tester setting.

Figure 25. QCells QPlus280 IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance from 2017 to 2024 for QCells QPlus280 is more modest compared with the 2022 measurements due to a 0.6% positive shift in measured Isc.

2.6 QCells QPeak290

Figure 26. QCells Qpeak290 flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red). Square markers indicate Spire4600 measurement (post-correction).

2.6.1 Initial light soak

QCells QPlus290 experienced 1.2% initial loss due to LID following 10kWhm-2 light exposure

2.6.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

QCells QPeak290 control modules showed relatively unstable performance. Overall change in control modules was −2.0% on average from 2017-2024. Unlike with the QPlus280 modules, QPeak290 measurement in 2024 retained the use of the original reference module with the flash simulator. Therefore there is no instrumentation shift in measured control or field modules.

2.6.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

The QPeak290 fielded modules showed overall post-LID degradation from 2017-2024 of −2.8%, This is a slight improvement over the 2022 measurement of −3.4% and results in an annual rate of −0.4 %/yr.

Figure 27. QCells QPeak290 IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance from 2017 to 2024 for QCells QPeak290 is due to modest changes in Isc, Fill factor and Voc.

2.7 Canadian CS6K-300MS

Figure 28. Canadian CS6K flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red). Square markers indicate Spire4600 measurement (post-correction).

2.7.1 Initial light soak

Canadian CS6K-300MS experienced −0.5% initial loss due to LID following 10kWhm-2 light exposure

2.7.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

Canadian CS6K-300MS control modules showed relatively stable performance with overall change < 0.25% from 2018−2024.

2.7.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

The CS6K-300MS fielded modules had initial stability in year-1 with only −0.4% degradation (post-LID). However, degradation accelerated starting in year-2, then stabilized in the third year. Starting in 2023 there was an apparent partial recovery, possibly as LID or LeTID effects have stabilized and recovered. Overall loss from 2018−2023 was -1.8%, or -0.37 %/yr. One unexplored factor in the Canadian Solar performance may be un-detected seasonality in the performance, similar to Jinko or Trina modules. This is because measurements shifted from

springtime in year-1 to fall in years 2 and 3, and back to springtime in year-4. This could be leading to the lower measurements in the fall and higher measurements in the spring. Remeasurement of a subset of these modules in the fall may help isolate this factor.

Figure 29. Canadian CS6K-300MS IV curve parameter overall change.

Degradation from 2017 to 2022 for Canadian CS6K-300MS is due primarily to Voc.

2.8 LG 320N1K

Figure 30. LG 320N1K flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red). Square markers indicate Spire4600 measurement (post-correction).

2.8.1 Initial light soak

LG 320N1K had no change to module performance following outdoor light soaking. This may be due to the N-type silicon technology which is not affected by the standard B-O light induced degradation effect.

2.8.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

Following initial light soaking, LG 320N1K control modules showed slight performance changes. Performance initially increased by roughly 0.3%. from 2018−2022, but declined from 2023−2024 for a total change of −0.4%. There was no apparent change in the indoor flash tester configuration during this time, so this may be a physical change in both control and field modules.

2.8.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

The LG 320N1K fielded modules showed variable performance with modules increasing in performance for 3−4 years and more recently declining. This leads to overall median post-LID degradation from 2018-2024 of −1.2%, or −0.21%/yr. One module (M1806-0005) was found to have cell cracking which led to low performance and it was removed and will be monitored in a separate cell-crack testbed.

Figure 31. LG 320N1K IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance from 2018 to 2024 for LG 320N1K is stable, without much change in any particular parameter.

EL imaging of module M1806-0005 shows clear cell cracking in five locations, corroborating the drop in performance.

Figure 32. EL image of LG M1806-0005 showing cell cracking. The cause is unknown, but may have happened during installation.

2.9 Panasonic VBHN330

Figure 33. Panasonic flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red)

2.9.1 Initial light soak

Panasonic VBHN330 showed an actual increase in module performance of 0.5% through light soaking. This may be due to the N-type silicon heterojunction technology which is not affected by the standard B-O light induced degradation effect.

2.9.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

Following initial light soaking control modules showed a relative decline of −1%.

2.9.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

Year 1 field module performance showed three modules increasing slightly, and one module declining in performance. Following this year-1 increase, all modules continued to decline at a consistent rate.

Although it was monitored for several years, this low-performing module (M1803-0002) was found to have a backsheet that was scratched during shipping that was identified prior to installation. It was eventually removed from this experiment, and diverted to a separate cellcrack monitoring experiment. In 2024, two different field modules were measured in the place of this cracked module

The VBHN330 fielded modules measured in 2024 showed median post-LID degradation from 2018-2024 of −2% or −0.37%/yr. Interestingly, the newly measured modules flashed 3−4W higher than those previously measured, despite the same exposure history and indoor measurement setup.

Figure 34. Panasonic VBHN330 IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance for Panasonic is due mainly to decreases in Voc offset by increases in Isc. The one module showing overall degradation was actually due to a large drop in Fill Factor, which might be indicative of cell-level mismatch. As mentioned above, this module had some handling damage, and the reduced fill factor indicates multiple cracked cells. Followup electroluminescence imaging investigation shows that three cells are damaged.

Figure 35. Panasonic module M1803-0002 showing three damaged cells.

2.10 Mission Solar MSE360

Figure 36. Mission Solar flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red)

2.10.1 Initial light soak

Mission Solar MSE360 modules did not have initial measurements taken of the first 10kWhm⁻² of light exposure. However, a pronounced LeTID sensitivity was identified via indoor test screening. Two samples showed a recoverable 3%-5% LeTID performance change in response to the LeTID screening procedure of Karas et al (2022).

2.10.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

Mission Solar MSE360 control modules showed an initial fast degradation over the first year which leveled out, showing a total degradation of -1% in 2022. An additional decline was found again in 2024, for a total change of −1.6%. Initial performance loss is visible by periodic indoor IV curves as the control modules are maintained in dark storage. No specific changes were made in the indoor flash test procedure, so this may either be a physical effect or an as-yet unidentified instrumentation shift.

2.10.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

Outdoor exposed fielded modules on the other hand are showing seasonal performance changes, which may be indicative of LeTID sensitivity. These modules in particular were shown to be LeTID sensitive per LeTID screening tests and described in [Repins, 2020].

Overall post-LID performance of the field modules is showing median performance change of -0.7% or -0.1%/yr. As with Jinko and Trina modules, some seasonality may still be present in the Mission Solar measurements, but with annual measurement frequency this is not visible in the figures. Interestingly, at this point in the experiment the indoor control modules have declined more than the outdoor exposure modules for Mission Solar MSE360.

Figure 37. Mission Solar MSE360 IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance for Mission Solar MSE360 is characterized by only marginal changes in IV parameters.

2.11Sunpreme HxB-400 (n-type heterojunction) Bifacial

Figure 38. Sunpreme flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red). Square markers indicate Spire4600 measurement (post-correction).

2.11.1 Initial light soak

Sunpreme bifacial modules did not have initial measurements taken of the first 10kWhm⁻² of light exposure.

2.11.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

Sunpreme HxB-400 control modules are stable, showing an actual performance increase of 0.2% from 2019- 2024.

2.11.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

Outdoor exposed fielded modules have experienced major losses, visible in the figure above. Overall post-LID performance of the field modules is showing median performance change of -7.9% overall or -1.9% per year. To confirm this large decline, real-time field data was analyzed during the string's operation. A similar -2%/yr degradation rate was also found using the RdTools analysis package, giving confidence in these numbers.

Figure 39. Sunpreme HxB-400 bifacial IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance for Sunpreme HxB-400 is characterized by a large decrease in Isc. The other two parameters —Voc and Fill Factor are relatively stable. Further study is ongoing to understand the causes of this Isc decline. It is primarily present in front-side Isc decline, rather than the backside of the bifacial module. UV degradation and PID-p (polarization type) degradation are being probed.

2.12LONGi LR6-72BP-360M (mono-PERC bifacial)

Figure 40. LONGi flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red)

2.12.1 Initial light soak

LONGi LR6-72BP-360 bifacial modules did not have initial measurements taken of the first 10kWhm-2 of light exposure.

2.12.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

LONGi LR6-72BP control modules showed a recent decline in 2024, with a total reduction of −0.5%. As with other module types which showed comparable declines in control module performance, this might either be a physical effect in the modules or an as-yet unidentified shift in the flash simulator instrumentation.

2.12.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

Outdoor exposed fielded modules showed performance comparable to the indoor control modules. Rear measurements (not shown) show stable performance.

Overall post-LID performance of the field modules is showing median performance change of −0.6% or −0.17%/yr. This is comparable to the −0.5% shift in the control modules.

Figure 41. LONGi LR6-72BP-360M bifacial IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance for LONGi LR6-72BP is characterized by a slight reduction in Isc and stable performance in Voc and FF.

2.13LONGi LR6-72PH-365M (mono-PERC monofacial)

Figure 42. LONGi LR6-72PH flash measurements. Field modules (black) and indoor controls (red)

2.13.1 Initial light soak

LONGi LR6-72PH-365 monofacial modules did not have initial measurements taken of the first 10kWhm-2 of light exposure.

2.13.2 Control module change (post-lightsoak)

LONGi LR6-72PH-365 control modules actually declined more than field modules, showing a performance decline of −2.8% from 2019− 2024.

2.13.3 Field module change (post-lightsoak)

Outdoor exposed fielded modules have only modest declines relative to the indoor control modules. Overall post-LID performance of the field modules is showing median performance change of -1% or -0.2% /yr.

Figure 43. LONGi LR6-72PH-365 monofacial IV curve parameter overall change.

Overall change in performance for LONGi LR6-72PH-365 is characterized by relatively stable performance from 2019-2024.

3 Degradation Summary

Cumulative results are provided below for the various manufacturer and module types, for the median fielded module. Values are total cumulative percentage change, except for annualized values where noted. Values do not correct for any performance change in indoor control modules or instrumentation shifts unless noted above.

		Year	Pmp Median	Pmp	Voc	lsc	FF
Manufacturer	Module type	deployed	[Annual %/yr]	Median	Median	Median	Median
Jinko	JKM260	10/2016	-0.50	-3.92	-1.27	-2.30	-0.26
Jinko	JKM265	10/2016	-0.55	-4.06	-1.10	-1.95	-1.05
Trina	TSM255	10/2016	-0.36	-2.55	-0.71	-0.84	-1.04
Trina	TSM260	10/2016	-0.43	-3.25	-0.74	-1.40	-1.17
Q-Cells	Qplus280	10/2017	-0.32	-1.97	-0.72	0.31	-1.58
Q-Cells	Qpeak290	10/2017	-0.42	-2.76	-1.31	-0.81	-0.71
Mission Solar	MSE360	12/2018	-0.15	-0.73	-0.08	-0.27	-0.65
LG	LG320N1K	8/2018	-0.22	-1.44	-0.52	-0.21	-0.39
Canadian Solar	CS6K-300MS	8/2018	-0.39	-1.83	-1.53	0.18	-0.52
Panasonic	VBHN330	6/2018	-0.34	-2.06	-1.50	0.43	-0.63
SunPreme	$HxB-400$	3/2019	-1.86	-7.88	-1.63	-6.52	-0.26
LONGi	LR6-72BP-360M	11/2020	-0.23	-0.62	-0.11	-0.43	-0.13
LONGi	LR6-72PH-365M	11/2020	-0.24	-1.08	-0.39	-0.07	-0.51

Table 2. Overall change in performance [%] over the deployment period

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Appendix 1 – Raw Data Results

Extract of all IV curve data for control and field modules. Measurements may be normalized depending on simulator settings which changed from 2016 - 2017 for the Jinko and Trina measurements, and all measurements which were made on the Spire 4600.

A.1 Jinko JKM260 Controls

A.2 Jinko JKM260 Modules

A.3 Jinko JKM265 Controls

A.4 Jinko JKM265 Modules

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This report is available at no cost from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory at www.nrel.gov/publications.

A.5 Trina TSM255 Controls

A.6 Trina TSM255 Modules

A.7 Trina TSM260 Controls

A.8 Trina TSM260 Modules

This report is available at no cost from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory at www.nrel.gov/publications.

A.9 Q-Cells Q.Plus280 Controls

A.10 Q-Cells Q.Plus280 Modules

A.11 Q-Cells Q.Peak290 Controls

A.12 Q-Cells Q.Peak290 Modules

This report is available at no cost from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory at www.nrel.gov/publications.

A.13 Mission MSE360 Controls

A.14 Mission MSE360 Modules

A.15 LG 320N1K Controls

A.16 LG 320N1K Modules

A.17 Canadian CS6K-300MS Controls

A.18 Canadian CS6K-300MS Modules

A.19 Panasonic VBHN330 Controls

A.20 Panasonic VBHN330 Modules

This report is available at no cost from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory at www.nrel.gov/publications.

A.21 Sunpreme HX-150 Controls

A.22 Sunpreme HX-150 Modules

A.23 LONGi Bifacial Controls

A.24 LONGi Bifacial Modules

A.25 LONGi Monofacial Controls

A.26 LONGi Monofacial Modules

A.27 REC 400W SHJ Modules

A.28 Solaria 400W PERC Modules

A.29 REC 360W TOPCon Modules

