

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Motivation . . . . .	1
1.2	Research Hypothesis . . . . .	2
1.3	Objectives . . . . .	3
1.3.1	General objectives . . . . .	3
1.3.2	Specific objectives . . . . .	3
1.4	Structure of the Thesis . . . . .	3
1.5	Scope of the Thesis . . . . .	4
<b>2</b>	<b>Crystalline Silicon Photovoltaic Module Components</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	General Description of the Components . . . . .	5
2.2	Detailed Description of the Components . . . . .	6
2.2.1	c-Si solar cell . . . . .	6
2.2.1.1	Standard c-Si solar cell . . . . .	6
2.2.1.2	High-efficiency c-Si solar cells . . . . .	11
2.2.2	Metallization . . . . .	15
2.2.3	EVA encapsulant . . . . .	18
2.2.4	Polymeric backsheet . . . . .	21
2.2.5	Soda-lime front glass . . . . .	23
2.2.6	Junction box and bypass diodes . . . . .	25
2.2.6.1	Junction box enclosure and pottant . . . . .	26
2.2.6.2	Bypass diodes . . . . .	28
<b>3</b>	<b>Failure Modes and Degradation Mechanisms for Fielded c-Si PV Modules</b>	<b>30</b>
3.1	Operating in Desert Climatic Conditions . . . . .	30
3.2	Operating in Diverse Climatic Conditions . . . . .	31
3.2.1	c-Si solar cell . . . . .	31
3.2.1.1	Snail tracks/trails . . . . .	31
3.2.1.2	Cracks . . . . .	33
3.2.1.3	Hot-spots . . . . .	34
3.2.2	Metallization . . . . .	47
3.2.3	EVA encapsulant . . . . .	49
3.2.3.1	Discoloration (browning or yellowing) . . . . .	49
3.2.3.2	Delamination . . . . .	51
3.2.4	Polymeric backsheet . . . . .	54
3.2.4.1	Delamination (interlayer adhesion) . . . . .	54

3.2.4.2	Bubbles . . . . .	56
3.2.4.3	Cracks and embrittlement . . . . .	57
3.2.4.4	Discoloration (browning or yellowing) . . . . .	58
3.2.5	Soda-lime front glass . . . . .	60
3.2.5.1	Cracking, shattering or chipping . . . . .	60
3.2.5.2	Abrasion or soiling . . . . .	61
3.2.5.3	Corrosion or weathering . . . . .	63
3.2.6	Aluminum frame . . . . .	64
3.2.6.1	Corrosion or weathering . . . . .	64
3.2.6.2	Distortion, bending and detachment . . . . .	66
3.2.7	Junction box and bypass diodes . . . . .	67
3.2.7.1	Detachment . . . . .	67
3.2.7.2	hot-spots and arcing . . . . .	68
3.2.8	PV module in general . . . . .	71
<b>4</b>	<b>Field Inspection Methods for Fielded PV Modules</b>	<b>75</b>
4.1	Visual Inspection . . . . .	76
4.1.1	IEC 61215-1 . . . . .	76
4.1.2	ASTM E1799 . . . . .	80
4.1.3	IEC PAS 62257-10 . . . . .	81
4.1.4	NREL visual inspection data collection tool . . . . .	86
4.2	I-V Curve Measurements . . . . .	89
4.2.1	IEC 60904-1 . . . . .	89
4.2.1.1	Equipment list (with specifications) . . . . .	89
4.2.1.2	Inspection procedure . . . . .	90
4.2.1.3	Calculations and corrections . . . . .	91
4.2.1.4	Test report . . . . .	91
4.2.2	ASTM E1036 . . . . .	91
4.2.2.1	Equipment list (with specifications) . . . . .	91
4.2.2.2	Inspection procedure . . . . .	93
4.2.2.3	Calculations and corrections . . . . .	94
4.2.2.4	Test report . . . . .	95
4.3	Thermal Imaging . . . . .	95
4.3.1	Basic principles of radiometry . . . . .	95
4.3.2	IEC TS 62446-3 . . . . .	98
4.3.2.1	Equipment list (with specifications) . . . . .	98
4.3.2.2	Inspection procedure . . . . .	100
4.3.2.3	Evaluation . . . . .	101
4.3.2.4	Inspection report . . . . .	104
4.3.3	IEA PVPS Review on IR Imaging for PV Field Applications . . . . .	105
4.3.3.1	Camera requirements . . . . .	105
4.3.3.2	Environmental conditions . . . . .	108
4.3.3.3	Inspection procedure . . . . .	109
4.3.3.4	Evaluation . . . . .	110
4.4	Electroluminescence Imaging . . . . .	112
4.4.1	Basic principles of Electroluminescence . . . . .	112
4.4.2	IEA PVPS Review on EL-Imaging for PV Field Applications . . . . .	114

4.4.2.1	Camera requirements . . . . .	114
4.4.2.2	Inspection procedure . . . . .	119
4.4.2.3	Evaluation . . . . .	120
<b>5</b>	<b>Inspection Data Collection Tool</b>	<b>123</b>
5.1	Methodological Strategy . . . . .	123
5.2	Main Criteria . . . . .	124
5.3	Inspection Data Collection Tool . . . . .	126
5.3.1	Fillable form (survey) . . . . .	126
5.3.2	Equipment and tools . . . . .	128
5.3.2.1	FLIR ONE pro . . . . .	129
5.3.2.2	Seaward PV210 . . . . .	131
5.3.2.3	iPad . . . . .	135
5.3.3	Procedure for field testing . . . . .	136
5.4	Characterization methodology . . . . .	137
5.4.1	Visual analysis . . . . .	138
5.4.2	Electrical analysis . . . . .	138
5.4.3	Thermal analysis . . . . .	140
<b>6</b>	<b>Field Test Campaign</b>	<b>142</b>
6.1	XV Arica and Parinacota Region [142] . . . . .	142
6.1.1	Geomorphological division . . . . .	144
6.1.2	Climate Zones . . . . .	145
6.1.2.1	Dry arid with abundant cloudiness climate (BWn) . . . . .	147
6.1.2.2	Normal dry arid climate (BW) . . . . .	147
6.1.2.3	Hot dry arid climate (BWh) . . . . .	147
6.1.2.4	Hot semi-arid climate (BSh) . . . . .	147
6.1.3	Ayllu Solar Map [143] . . . . .	147
6.2	Inspected zones . . . . .	148
6.3	Results and Analysis . . . . .	153
6.3.1	Visual damage of rear-side glass . . . . .	153
6.3.2	Visual damage of backsheet (polymer) . . . . .	153
6.3.3	Visual damage of wires . . . . .	159
6.3.4	Visual damage of connectors . . . . .	159
6.3.5	Visual damage of junction box . . . . .	159
6.3.6	Visual damage of frame grounding . . . . .	166
6.3.7	Visual damage of frame . . . . .	169
6.3.8	Visual damage of frame-less edge seal . . . . .	174
6.3.9	Visual damage of front glass . . . . .	174
6.3.10	Visual damage of encapsulant . . . . .	180
6.3.11	Visual damage of metallization . . . . .	182
6.3.12	Visual damage of silicon solar cells . . . . .	182
6.3.13	Electrical degradation of PV modules . . . . .	183
6.3.13.1	Degradation of the open-circuit voltage . . . . .	184
6.3.13.2	Degradation of the short-circuit current . . . . .	187
6.3.13.3	Degradation of the maximum power . . . . .	190
6.3.13.4	Degradation of the fill factor . . . . .	193

6.3.14	Thermal abnormalities of PV modules . . . . .	196
6.3.14.1	Temperature difference deviations . . . . .	196
6.3.14.2	Modules with hot cells . . . . .	202
6.3.14.3	Thermal abnormalities . . . . .	205
6.3.15	Relevant cases/modules in the campaign . . . . .	211
6.3.15.1	Case 1 . . . . .	211
6.3.15.2	Case 2 . . . . .	213
6.4	Discussion and Recommendations . . . . .	216
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Work</b>	<b>222</b>
7.1	Conclusions . . . . .	222
7.2	Recommendations for Future Work . . . . .	225
<b>Bibliography</b>		<b>229</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>Visual Inspection Form (English version)</b>	<b>243</b>
<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>Visual Inspection Form (Spanish version)</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>Appendix C</b>	<b>Supplementary Data Files</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>Appendix D</b>	<b>FLIR ONE Pro Camera Datasheet</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>Appendix E</b>	<b>Seaward PV210 Kit Datasheet</b>	<b>255</b>
<b>Appendix F</b>	<b>Cloud Coverage Chart (okta scale)</b>	<b>258</b>
<b>Appendix G</b>	<b>Matrix for thermal abnormalities of PV modules</b>	<b>259</b>