

Contents

Acknowledgements	v
Abstract (English/Français)	vii
List of figures	xv
List of tables	xxvi
1 Introduction	1
1.1 What are transparent conductive oxides?	1
1.2 Fundamental properties of transparent conductive oxides	2
1.2.1 Electron transport in TCOs and mobility limiting mechanisms	3
1.2.2 Defects in crystalline and amorphous materials	4
1.2.3 Dopants in transparent conductive oxides	12
1.2.4 Effect of dopants on the optical properties of TCOs	14
1.2.5 Interband transitions, Burstein-Moss shift and optical bandgap in TCOs	16
1.2.6 Summary of TCO properties	20
1.2.7 Transparent conductive oxide design for silicon heterojunction photo-	25
voltaics	
1.3 This Thesis	28
1.3.1 Thesis outline	28

1.3.2	Contribution to the field	29
2	Thin-film fabrication and characterization techniques	33
2.1	Radio frequency magnetron sputtering	33
2.1.1	Thin-film growth and co-sputtering	34
2.2	Electrical properties	35
2.2.1	Hall effect in the van der Pauw configuration	35
2.3	Optical properties	38
2.3.1	Ultraviolet-visible-near infrared spectrophotometry	38
2.3.2	Fourier transform infrared spectrometer	39
2.4	Structural and chemical properties	40
2.4.1	Transmission electron microscopy and energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy	40
2.4.2	Electron diffraction	40
2.4.3	Thermal desorption spectroscopy	40
2.4.4	Rutherford backscattering and elastic recoil detection analysis	41
3	Defects and high-temperature defect-passivation of amorphous zinc tin oxide	43
3.1	Motivation and state of the art	44
3.2	Methods	46
3.2.1	Computational Methods.	47
3.3	Electrical properties: Hall mobility and free-carrier density	49
3.4	Effect of thermal treatments on the optical properties of a-ZTO	50
3.5	Film Composition and Microstructure	53
3.5.1	Rutherford backscattering and electron recoil detection analysis	53
3.5.2	Nanobeam diffraction and fluctuation electron microscopy	53

3.5.3	Thermal Desorption Spectroscopy on a-ZTO	55
3.6	Electron scattering mechanisms	57
3.7	Calculations and correlation with experimental results	59
3.7.1	Correlation with optoelectronic properties	61
3.8	A-ZTO as recombination junction for perovskite/Silicon monolithic tandem solar cells	63
3.9	Conclusion	66
4	Alternative low-temperature passivation route for Sn-based oxides	67
4.1	Motivation and state of the art	68
4.2	Methods	69
4.2.1	Experimental details	69
4.2.2	Computational methods	70
4.3	Trade-off in optoelectronic properties of a-ZTO	71
4.4	Co-deposition of SiO ₂ and Sn-based TCOs	71
4.4.1	Reducing sub-bandgap absorption in a-ZTO thin films	72
4.4.2	SiZTO microstructure and composition	73
4.4.3	Addition of SiO ₂ to SnO ₂	78
4.4.4	SiSnO ₂ microstructure and composition	79
4.4.5	A general process for Sn-based films	81
4.5	Si-modification to SnO ₂	81
4.5.1	Oxygen vacancies	82
4.5.2	Addition of silicon	84
4.6	Conclusions	85
5	Zr-doped In₂O₃: Transport limiting mechanisms and application in silicon hetero-junction solar cells.	87

5.1	Motivation and state of the art	88
5.2	Methods	90
5.3	Optoelectronic properties: effect of oxygen content and thermal annealing	91
5.3.1	Optical bandgap	91
5.4	Microstructure of $\text{In}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Zr}$	93
5.5	Transparency of $\text{In}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Zr}$ films of thickness < 100 nm	96
5.6	Mobility limiting mechanisms as a function of thickness for crystalline $\text{In}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Zr}$	99
5.7	Influence of annealing atmosphere on the optoelectronic properties of $\text{In}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Zr}$	102
5.8	$\text{In}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Zr}$ films of thickness < 80 nm as front contact in silicon heterojunction solar cells	104
5.9	Conclusion	107
6	Weighted Average Figure of Merit and TCO comparison	109
6.1	Solar spectrum and TCOs	109
6.2	Weighted averaged figure of merit (FOM)	110
6.3	FOM for $\text{In}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Zr}$	111
6.4	FOM of SnO_2 -based TCOs	114
6.5	Comparison between TCOs	115
6.6	Conclusion	118
7	Conclusions and perspectives	119
7.1	General Conclusions	119
7.1.1	Chapter 3	119
7.1.2	Chapter 4	120
7.1.3	Chapter 5	121
7.1.4	Chapter 6	121

7.2	Perspectives	122
7.2.1	Alternative dopants for SnO_2 -based oxides	122
7.2.2	Sputtered indium-free transparent conductive oxides with perovskite structure	122
7.2.3	Effect of ZrO_2 on $\text{In}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Zr}$	123
7.2.4	$\text{In}_2\text{O}_3:\text{Zr}$ in silicon heterojunction solar cells	123
A	Co-sputtering In-based and Sn-based TCOs as electrodes in silicon heterojunction solar cells	125
A.1	Film fabrication	125
A.2	Optoelectronic properties	126
A.3	Microstructure and composition	128
A.4	Application in silicon heterojunction solar cells	128
A.5	Conclusions	129
	Bibliography	150
	Curriculum Vitae	151