

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) maintains a plot of compiled values of highest confirmed conversion efficiencies for research cells, from 1976 to the present, for a range of photovoltaic technologies.

Devices included in this plot of the current state of the art have efficiencies that are confirmed by independent, recognized test labs (e.g., NREL, AIST, Fraunhofer) and are reported on a standardized basis. The measurements for new entries must be with respect to Standard Test or Reporting Conditions (STC) as defined by the global reference spectrum for flat-plate devices and the direct reference spectrum for concentrator devices as listed in standards IEC 60904-3 edition 2 or ASTM G173. The reference temperature is 25°C and the area is the cell total area or the area defined by an aperture.

Cell efficiency results are provided within different families of semiconductors: (1) multijunction cells, (2) single-junction gallium arsenide cells, (3) crystalline silicon cells, (4) thin-film technologies, and (5) emerging photovoltaics. Some 26 different subcategories are indicated by distinctive colored symbols.

The most recent world record for each technology is highlighted along the right edge in a flag that contains the efficiency and the symbol of the technology. The company or group that fabricated the device for each most-recent record is bolded on the plot.

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