Performance and Low Frequency Noise of 22nm FDSOI down to 4.2K for Cryogenic Applications

Bruna Cardoso Paz, Mikaël Cassé, Christofooros Theodorou, Gérard Ghibaudo, Fellow IEEE, Thôrsten Kammler, Luca Pirro, Maud Vinet, Silvano de Franceschi, Tristan Meunier and Fred Gaillard

Abstract—This work presents the performance and low frequency noise of 22nm FDSOI CMOS technology. The experimental measurements and the analysis are performed as a function of temperature for the first time, focusing on cryogenic applications, down to 4.2K. The back bias impact on device performance is evaluated. The results reveal that the threshold voltage tuning is found to be temperature independent, allowing extra drain current improvement. This is particularly interesting for short channel devices, whose drain current gain with temperature lowering is expected to be smaller in comparison to long channel MOSFETs. Low frequency noise is characterized by means of time-domain current sampling measurements. Moderate and strong inversion regimes are investigated. The carrier number with correlated mobility fluctuations model can well describe the 1/f noise behavior down to 4.2K. The physical origin behind the drain current low frequency noise to signal power augmentation with temperature lowering could be mainly attributed to the normalized transconductance improvement.

Index Terms—Cryogenic applications, FDSOI MOSFET, low frequency noise.

I. INTRODUCTION

The interest in cryogenic electronics relies on several applications, such as space and cooling systems [1], [2], and has been recently boosted by the quantum computing field [3], [4]. Recently, monolithic integration between qubits and readout circuitry has been demonstrated at 2K in 22nm FDSOI technology [5], and the electrical performance of several CMOS technologies has shown to be significantly improved with temperature (T) decrease [6]–[8]. On the other hand, in [9] it is indicated that the low frequency noise to signal powers increases at cryogenic T, especially in the presence of subband scattering mechanisms [10]. Moreover, in [11] the authors claim that low frequency charge noise is one of the key parameters to improve qubit fidelity in Si spin qubits.

To the best of our knowledge, the performance of 22nm FDSOI MOSFETs at deep cryogenic temperatures has not been explored yet, especially regarding the device optimization by means of forward back biasing (FBB). Furthermore, there is a lack of information on low frequency noise (LFN) behavior at cryogenic temperatures available in literature for commercial technologies. In this work, our goal is to cover the above mentioned topics, concerning advanced FDSOI MOSFET characterization at 4.2K, with special focus on the origin of LFN down to 4.2K and the underlying physics.

II. DEVICES CHARACTERISTICS AND METHODOLOGY

Si NMOSFETs and SiGe (with Ge content around 25%) PMOSFETs fabricated with gate-first High-K Metal Gate integration in commercial 22nm FDSOI CMOS technology [12] were evaluated in this work. The undoped semiconductor channel is about 6nm thin, whereas the buried oxide thickness is 20nm and the equivalent oxide thickness (EOT) is around 1.3nm.

Experimental measurements were performed down to 4.2K using a manual cryogenic probe station. Fast IV module B1530A from Agilent was used for low frequency noise characterization through time-domain current sampling measurements [13]. For spectral analysis, Welch function was used to apply the Fourier transform and obtain the power spectral density.

III. PERFORMANCE DEPENDENCE ON TEMPERATURE

Fig. 1 presents the drain current (I_D) as a function of the gate voltage (V_GS) at high and low drain bias (V_DS), for N- and PMOS, down to 4.2K. Temperature lowering leads to expected threshold voltage (V_TH) and I_DS increase, in absolute values, for both N- and PMOS. As T decreases, the balance between mobility increase and V_TH shift towards higher absolute value originates the zero-temperature coefficient (ZTC). Since the T-dependence of V_TH, |ΔV_TH/ΔT|, is higher for PMOS (≈0.71mV/K, in comparison to ≈0.57mV/K for NMOS), larger V_DS dependence if found for V_ZTC [14].

Fig. 2 (a) shows V_TH as a function of T for NMOS at V_DS = 50mV and 0.9V, and at a back gate bias (V_B) of 0V and 1.4V. The applied 1.4V at the back bias gives the same V_TH value as for the device

![Graph showing I_D versus V_GS at V_DS = 50mV and 0.9V for N- and PMOS, varying T from 300K to 4.2K.](image-url)

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B. C. Paz, M. Cassé, M. Vinet and Fred Gaillard are with CEA-Leti, Université Grenoble Alpes, MINATEC Campus, 38054 Grenoble, France. (bruna.cardosopaz@cea.fr)

C. Theodorou and G. Ghibaudo are with IMEP-LAHC, CNRS, Université Grenoble Alpes, MINATEC Campus, 38016 Grenoble, France.

T. Kammler and L. Pirro are with GlobalFoundries, 01109 Dresden, Germany.

S. de Franceschi is with CEA-IRIG, 38054 Grenoble, France.

T. Meunier is with Institut Néel, 38042 Grenoble, France.
operating at room temperature. Fig. 2 (b) indicates the $V_B$ required to shift $V_{TH}$ back to its value at 300K for each temperature operation. FBB is an efficient way to correct the significant $V_{TH}$ increase with T lowering and, therefore, enhance power efficiency. The measured Drain-Induced Barrier Lowering (DIBL) is $\approx 74mV/V$ at both conditions, at 300K with $V_B = 0V$ and at 4.2K with $V_B = 1.4V$.

Fig. 3 (a) presents $V_{TH}$ as a function of $V_B$ for short-channel N- and PMOS at 300K and 4.2K. The back bias efficiency, evaluated through the body factor ($\gamma = \Delta V_{TH}/\Delta V_B$) does not change with T. This is because the doping concentration of the back planes in ultra-thin body and buried oxide MOSFETs is high enough to be always activated in such a way that they do not suffer from any freeze-out effects [15], which could reduce $\gamma$ at low T. Fig. 3 (b) shows $\gamma$ as a function of $T$ for N- and PMOSFETs with three different channel lengths, $L = 24nm$, $70nm$ and $1\mu m$. Fig. 3 (b) confirms that $\gamma$ is T-independent, since $\Delta \gamma/\Delta T < 5\%$ for all studied devices. Therefore, the back bias remains a powerful tool down to cryogenic T and can still be used to facilitate circuits design [16]. We can observe slightly lower $|\gamma|$ as the channel length becomes shorter, likely due to stronger influence of source and drain potentials inside the channel in shorter transistors. The difference between $\gamma$ in N- and PMOS is expected since the position of the inversion layer in the channel (centroid of charges) differs according to the type of carriers (hole versus electron) and channel material (SiGe versus Si) [17].

![Fig. 2. $V_{TH}$ versus $T$ at $V_DS = 50mV$ and 0.9V, and at $V_B = 0V$ and 1.4V (a). $V_B$ needed to shift $V_{TH}$ back to its value at 300K for each temperature operation, at $V_DS = 50mV$ (b).](image1)

![Fig. 3. $V_{TH}$ versus $V_B$ (a) and $\gamma$ versus $T$ (b) for N- and PMOS, at $|V_{DS}| = 50mV$.](image2)

![Fig. 4. $I_{ON}$ versus $T$ for NMOS, at $V_{GS} = V_{DS} = 0.9V$, and varying $V_B$ (a). $I_{ON}/I_{OFF}$ versus $T$ for long and short channels NMOS, at $V_{GS} = V_{DS} = 0.9V$, and at $V_B = 0V$ and 1.4V (b).](image3)

![Fig. 5. $g_{m,peak}$ versus $T$ (a) and $f_{T,peak}$ versus $T$ (b) for N- and PMOS, at $V_B = 0V$ and at $V_B$ needed to keep $V_{TH}$ constant = $V_{TH,300K}$ at $V_DS = 0.9V$.](image4)

**TABLE I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extricated Threshold Voltage</th>
<th>22nm FDSOI – THIS WORK</th>
<th>28nm Bulk [6]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300K</td>
<td>0.24V</td>
<td>0.33V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7K</td>
<td>0.36V</td>
<td>0.50V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4 (a) shows the on-state current ($I_{ON}$) as a function of $T$ for NMOS at $V_{GS} = V_{DS} = 0.9V$ and varying $V_B$. The $I_{ON}$ gain observed with T decrease is attributed to the effective mobility increase due to suppression of phonon scattering contribution [18], whereas the $I_{ON}$ gain with FBB is the consequence of the $V_{TH}$ shift, and thus gate voltage overdrive ($V_{GR} = V_{GS} - V_{TH}$) increase. Fig. 4 (b) shows $I_{ON}$ normalized by $I_{OFF}$ extracted at 300K and no back bias, $I_{ON}/I_{OFF,ref}$, as a function of $T$ for short and long NMOSFETs. The $I_{ON}$ gain with T reduction and FBB is higher for the long channel MOSFET in comparison to short channel one. This could be explained by the fact that shorter MOSFETs suffer from shorter self-heating effect [19], due to higher normalized input power, but also from larger access resistance impact and stronger contribution of T-independent transport mechanisms, related to neutral defect scattering and/or ballisticity effect [20].
Fig. 6. $I_{DS}$ versus $V_{GS}$ (a) and $\partial V_{GS}/\partial (\log I_{DS})$ versus $I_{DS}/(W/L)$ (b) for short channel NMOS, at $V_{DS} = 50\text{mV}$.

Fig. 5 (a) shows the maximum transconductance ($g_{m,\text{peak}}$) and (b) the respective cutoff frequency ($f_{\text{p,peak}}$) as a function of $T$. The $f_{\text{p,peak}}$ values in this work were calculated from $g_{m,\text{peak}}/(2\pi C_{\text{ox}}W/L)$ where $C_{\text{ox}} = 0.028\text{F/m}^2$ is the oxide capacitance per unit area, and are very similar to those obtained using RF characterization in [12], at 300K. Curves are presented for two bias configuration, at fixed $V_{G} = 0\text{V}$ and at $V_{G}$ required to keep $V_{TH}$ constant at its value obtained at 300K ($V_{TH,300K}$). A very small $V_{B}$ impact in $g_{m,\text{peak}}$ (around $\pm 3\%$) is observed for the short channel transistors in Fig. 5, while for long channel MOSFETs, FBB is found to improve $g_{m,\text{peak}}$ results in a more significant way (up to $+1\%$, not shown). This indicates that power consumption optimization can be achieved by means of back biasing, while $>450\text{GHz}$ cutoff frequency is kept. Moreover, we clearly observe the $g_{m,\text{peak}}$ gain (and therefore $f_{\text{p,peak}}$) improvement with $T$ lowering for both NMOS (up to $38\%$) and PMOS (up to $16\%$). The results obtained in this work for 22nm FDSOI are benchmarked against 28nm Bulk CMOS technology [6]. RVTn and HVTp flavors from [6] were chosen for comparison to match similar $V_{TH}$ to our devices, as indicated in Table I. From the $f_{\text{p,peak}}$ values in Fig. 5 (b), it is observed that FDSOI outperforms Bulk, especially for the NMOSFET, where a large $g_{m,\text{peak}}$ gain is obtained at cryogenic temperatures.

A. Subthreshold regime

Fig. 6 presents $I_{DS}(V_{GS})$ for a short device measured in 4 different dies at 4.2K (a), and the swing $\partial V_{GS}/\partial (\log I_{DS})$ for the normalized current at 300K and 4.2K (b). Unlike the room temperature operation, where the subthreshold swing (SS) can be easily extracted, the appearance of oscillatory regime likely due to quantum interference in the subthreshold region at cryogenic temperatures makes it difficult to extract SS at 4.2K, due to the strong dependence of this parameter on the current level used for the extraction. As shown in Fig. 6 (a), this phenomenon presents high variability. The extracted ideality factor ($\eta$) is $\approx 1.22$ at 300K, and more than 10 at 4.2K, which cannot be explained by an increase of the interface trap density, but the appearance of an exponential tail of states in the subband, as discussed in [21], [22], which leads to the SS saturation versus $T$ below $\approx 50\text{K}$. From a performance point of view, even though the experimental SS is much higher than the theoretical limit at 4.2K ($SS \approx 0.8\text{mV/dec}$), it induces an off-state current ($I_{OFF}$) reduction of several orders of magnitude in comparison to the room temperature operation, lying below the equipment accuracy (1fA).

Fig. 7. $S_{ID}/I_{DS}^2$ versus $f$ for NMOS, varying $T$, at $V_{GS} = 0\text{V}$ and at $V_{DS} = 50\text{mV}$ (a) and $0.9\text{V}$ (b).

IV. LOW FREQUENCY NOISE

Fig. 7 presents the normalized drain current power spectral density ($S_{ID}$) as a function of frequency ($f$), varying $T$, in linear (a) and saturation (b) regimes. From 300K down to 4.2K, both N- and PMOSFET (not shown) exhibit $1/f$ noise behavior. Moreover, $S_{ID}/I_{DS}^2$ increases with temperature reduction. In order to identify the sources of noise and explain its behavior with $T$, $S_{ID}/I_{DS}^2$ values at 10Hz are presented as a function of $V_{DS}$, from moderate to strong inversion in Fig. 8. The lines indicate the carrier number fluctuations with correlated mobility fluctuations (CNF/CMF) analytical model described in equation (1), where $\Omega$ is a noise parameter related to the Coulomb scattering coefficient and $S_{vb}$ is the flat band voltage power spectral density related to the trapping/detrapping of carriers in slow oxide states [23]. Since good agreement between the data and the model is obtained from 300K down to 4.2K, we can conclude that carrier number fluctuation and correlated mobility fluctuation are the sources of noise, and the $1/f$ noise to signal power increases with $T$ lowering because of the $g_{m,\text{DS}}$ improvement, on the same way as previously found for bulk CMOS [24]. Moreover, as the $1/f$ noise decays with exponent equal to 1, i.e. trap distribution exponential factor = 1, the oxide traps are mostly uniformly distributed in depth, inside the gate oxide.

Results of $S_{vb}$ were extracted using the equation (1), for N- and
PMOS. For all T conditions, Ω is found to be constant and equal to 4V⁻¹.

We can observe, in Fig. 9 (a), that V̇ FB values are roughly constant with T. The same behavior is verified for the calculated oxide trap density, Ṅ t, normalized by 1/kT in Fig. 9 (b). Fig. 9 (c) shows a large increase of the active trap density at cryogenic temperatures. This is because the accessed energy distribution gets closer to the conduction (for NMOS) and valence (for PMOS) bands as T reduces. The high Ṅ t values obtained at 50K and 4.2K can be explained by the existence of the disorder-induced exponential tail at the subband edges, where the Fermi level lies at very low temperatures [25].

V. CONCLUSION

In this work, we have shown that FDSOI is a good option for cryogenic-CMOS applications. While MOS performance significantly improves with T lowering, reaching I ON > 1.2mA/µm and f T close to 500GHz, high back bias efficiency remains a powerful tool for circuit optimization down to 4.2K. Back bias cannot be safely used for V TH tunability, improving circuits performance at low T, especially when low dynamic power consumption and high bandwidth are required, e.g. quantum integrated circuits [26]. The g m/I BS improvement was correlated to the normalized drain current power spectral density increase at cryogenic T, being the CNF + CMF model valid from 300K down to 4.2K. Both noise parameters S VH and Ω were found to be approximately constant with T, for the studied drain current range.

REFERENCES


