

**INVESTIGATION OF LATCH-UP BEHAVIOUR IN 0.5 MICRON CMOS  
TECHNOLOGY**



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**JUNE 2005**

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**BY :**

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**TAJUK PENYELIDIKAN: INVESTIGATION OF LATCHUP  
BEHAVIOUR IN 0.5  $\mu$ m CMOS TECHNOLOGY**

Dengan hormatnya perkara di atas adalah dirujuk.

Sukacita dimaklumkan bahawa Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Penyelidikan ke-67 pada 30 Jun 2003 telah membuat keputusan:

- i. Bersetuju meluluskan cadangan penyelidikan yang telah dikemukakan oleh puan, Encik Mohd Jamil Napiah dan Puan Suhana Sulaiman.
- ii. Tempoh projek penyelidikan ini ialah 12 bulan, iaitu bermula 1 Julai 2003 hingga 30 Jun 2004.
- iii. Kos yang diluluskan ialah sebanyak RM 20,000.00 sahaja. Penggunaan geran yang diluluskan hanya akan diproses setelah perjanjian ditandatangani.
- iv. Semua pembelian peralatan yang kosnya melebihi RM 500.00 satu item perlu menggunakan Pesanan Jabatan Universiti Teknologi MARA (LO). Pihak puan juga dikehendaki mematuhi peraturan penerimaan peralatan. Panduan penerimaan peralatan baru dan pengurusannya, dilampirkan.
- v. Semua peralatan/kelengkapan penyelidikan yang dibeli adalah menjadi hak milik fakulti. Semua peralatan/kelengkapan hendaklah diserahkan kepada pihak fakulti setelah tamat penyelidikan untuk kegunaan bersama.
- vi. Seperti yang puan sedia maklum puan perlu membentangkan kertas kerja di Seminar Hasil Penyelidikan BRC setelah projek tamat dijalankan nanti.

- vii. Kertaskerja boleh dibentangkan di seminar selain daripada yang dianjurkan oleh BRC setelah 75% draf awal laporan akhir projek dihantar ke Biro untuk semakan. Walaubagaimanapun, puan perlu membuat permohonan kepada Biro penyelidikan dan Perundingan.
- viii. Pihak puan dikehendaki mengemukakan **Laporan Kemajuan** kepada BRC 3 kali setiap tahun iaitu pada bulan April, Ogos dan Disember sepanjang penyelidikan puan berjalan. **Laporan Akhir** perlu dihantar sebaik sahaja projek penyelidikan disiapkan. Format menulis laporan akhir boleh diperolehi di Biro Penyelidikan dan Perundingan.
- ix. Puan perlu menandatangani Borang Perjanjian Penyelidikan (disertakan) dan menyerahkannya kembali kepada pihak Biro dengan kadar segera.

Sekian, terima kasih.

**'SELAMAT MENJALANKAN PENYELIDIKAN'**

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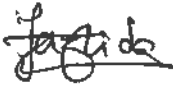
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**LAPORAN AKHIR PENYELIDIKAN "INVESTIGATION OF LATCHUP  
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Merujuk kepada perkara di atas, bersama-sama ini disertakan 3 (tiga) naskah Laporan Akhir Penyelidikan bertajuk "Investigation Of Latchup Behaviour In 0.5  $\mu$ M Cmos Technology".

Sekian, terima kasih.

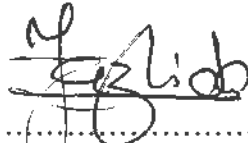
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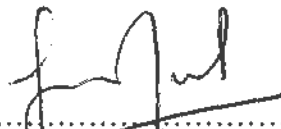
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## **PENGHARGAAN**

**Setinggi-tinggi penghargaan kepada MIMOS Berhad / MYSEM kerana membenarkan penggunaan peralatan, infrastruktur dan sampel di premis MYSEM.**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

BESOI	Bond-and-Etch-Back Silicon-On-Insulator
BJT	Bipolar Junction Transistor
BSOI	Bonded Silicon-On-Insulator
CMOS	Complementary Metal-Oxide-Semiconductor
DIBL	Drain-Induced Barrier Lowering
FDSOI	Fully-Depleted SOI
$g_D$	Drain Conductance
$g_m$	Gate transconductance
$I_{DS}$	Drain Current
$I_{p+}$	current from PMOS source/diffusion region
$L_g$	gate length
LNPN	Lateral NPN bipolar transistor
MIMOS	Malaysian Institute of Microelectronics System
MOSFET	Metal-Oxide-Semiconductor Field-Effect-Transistor
NMOS	n-channel MOSFET
PDSOI	Partially-Depleted SOI
PMOS	p-channel MOSFET
$r_D$	Drain resistance
SIMOX	Separation by Implantation of Oxygen
SOI	Silicon-On-Insulator
VDS	Drain-to-Source Voltage
VFB	Flat-band Voltage
$V_{p+}$	voltage at PMOS source/drain diffusion region
VPNP	Vertical PNP bipolar transistor

## **Abstract**

The research project investigates available latch-up test structures from MIMOS Berhad and covers current-voltage characterization of silicon-controlled rectifier behaviour of parasitic BJTs in CMOS technology. Measurement setup utilizing the structures for IV measurements are designed. A suitable measurement routine for the testing of latch-up in MOS device engineering at wafer level is developed for use in research environment. Tests are done on available MIMOS test structures representing twin tub technology and silicon-on-insulator substrate using automatic semiconductor characterization system comprising of Semiconductor Parametric Characterization Software (SPECs), UFK200 automatic prober and Agilent 4073 tester. Avalanche induced latch-up of three types of device were demonstrated: SOI without thickness adjustment, SOI with thinner layer due to thickness adjustment and bulk silicon control device are demonstrated. Immunity towards latch-up is improved for devices on BSOI substrate.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Latch-up in CMOS ICs

Latch-up is the behaviour of Metal-Oxide-Semiconductor Field-Effect-Transistor (MOSFET) when parasitic Bipolar Junction Transistors (BJT) inherent in its structure turns on. The resultant current flowing can eventually lead to overheating, if not controlled. Integrated circuits (ICs) are often destroyed by overheating commonly attributed to the latch-up phenomenon.

Failure Analysis (FA) techniques are used after IC packaging to investigate cases of overheating in ICs and assumes that overheating may be the effect of latch-up. However, this does not explain the parasitic BJT behaviour nor does it allow any form of prediction of the susceptibility of the device technology against latch-up.

In MIMOS Berhad, test structures are obtained as part of previous technology transfer from Japan and Germany. However, the documentation on latch-up test structures are not detailed out and described to the basic level of understanding. This issue of device reliability and the source of overheating are often not described. The lacking of such understanding would eventually result in the local industry ignoring the possibility of latch-up that is detrimental to the circuit reliability.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

The motivation for the research work is to characterize the current-voltage behaviour of silicon-controlled rectifier behaviour of parasitic BJTs in CMOS technology. The research work aims to study the available latch-up test structures in industrial practice and suggest ways to utilize the structures. From a detailed understanding of the test structures, the work aims to develop a suitable measurement routine for the testing of latch-up in MOS device engineering at wafer level for use in industrial research environment. Applying the measurement setup established, the work compares latch-up behaviour of CMOS technology on bulk silicon substrates to SOI wafers.

## 1.3 Scope of Work

The laboratory work is carried out in MIMOS Berhad. The work focuses latch-up characterization using automatic semiconductor characterization system comprising of Semiconductor Parametric Characterization Software (SPECS), UFK200 automatic prober and Agilent 4073 tester.

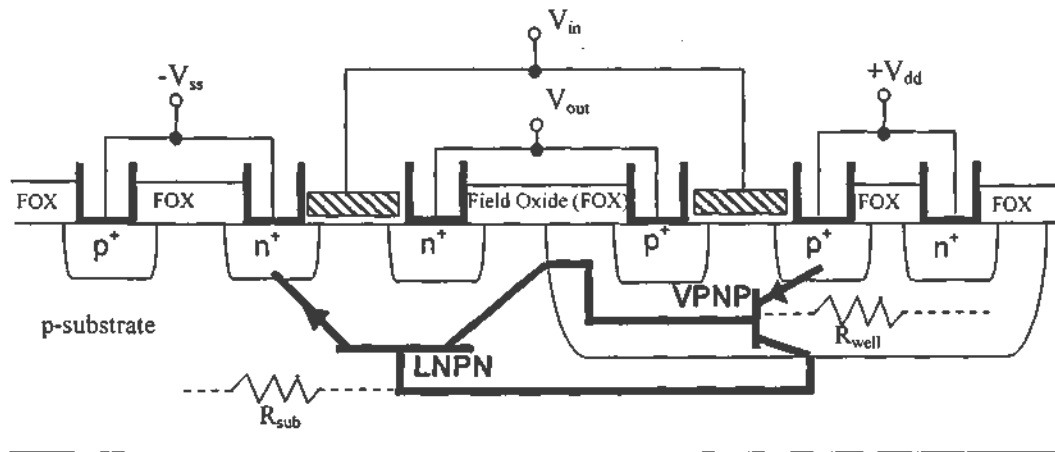
Tests are done on available MIMOS test structures representing twin tub technology and silicon-on-insulator substrate. Samples are taken from lot X126; wafer #2 to reflect CMOS technology on SOI substrate with mean thickness 1.5  $\mu\text{m}$ , wafer #9 to reflect SOI wafer with mean thickness 0.7  $\mu\text{m}$  and wafer #18 for bulk silicon CMOS technology.

#### 1.4 Structure of Report

The theoretical background of parasitic BJT behaviour leading to latch-up is covered in chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents the material preparation and the available resources and infrastructure utilized in the project. These include the device fabrication of the samples and the equipment setup. Chapter 4 details out the findings of investigation on available test structures and the measurement algorithm developed to generate the necessary data using HPBASIC. Chapter 5 then compares latch-up behaviour of 0.5 micron bulk CMOS technology and 0.5 micron CMOS technology on SOI substrate.

## Chapter 2: Theory: Latch-up in CMOS Technology

### 2.1 Parasitic Bipolar Junction Transistors



**Figure 2.1: Cross-section of bulk silicon CMOS inverter showing vertical PNP and lateral NPN parasitic bipolar transistor forming a feedback loop [1].**

Inherent in the CMOS structure are two types of parasitic bipolar transistors - vertical PNP (VPNP) and lateral NPN (LNPN) bipolar transistors. VPNP is formed by the p+ source as emitter, the n-well as base and the p-type substrate as collector; LNPN by the n+ drain as emitter, p-type substrate as base and the n-well as the collector as shown in Figure 2.1.

As the CMOS are scaled down, the distance between the n+/p+ source/drain diffusion distances to the edge of the well is reduced. The closer the distance, the better the performance of unwanted bipolar transistors. The closer distance leads to a thinner base. Since the collector of each Bipolar Junction Transistor (BJT) drives the base of the other, a feedback loop is formed with a loop gain  $\beta_{NPN}\beta_{PNP}$ . The transistors are turned on if the



base-emitter junctions of the parasitic BJTs are forward biased, possibly due to transient or lateral currents in the substrate. If the loop gain is greater than 1 and a positive feedback is established, the silicon controlled rectifier like connection results in the device to be in low-impedance high-current state known as latchup [2].

## 2.2 Triggering Mechanisms

One possible event that can trigger the latch-up behaviour is supply voltages exceeding the absolute maximum ratings. Ratings in data sheets are indication of maximum voltages that can safely be applied. Anything in excess or even close to the conditions may result in breakdown of an internal junction and hence damage to the device or degrade long-term reliability. Ratings should be observed even during both on and off as the triggering mode could result from transients on supply rails.

Input/output pin voltage exceeding either supply rail by more than a diode drop is another possible event triggering latch-up. This could occur as a result of a fault on a channel or input. When part of a system is powered on prior to the supplies being present at a CMOS switch, for example, the powered part of the circuit would be sending signals to other devices in the design which may not be able to handle the voltage levels presented. The resulting voltage levels could exceed the maximum rating of the device, and possibly result in latch-up. Again, this could occur as a result of spikes or glitches on input or output channels.

Another possible event that could lead to latch-up is poorly managed multiple power supplies. CMOS switches that have multiple power supplies tend to be more susceptible to latch-up resulting from improper power-supply sequencing. Such switches usually have two analog supplies,  $V_{DD}$  and  $V_{SS}$ , and a digital supply,  $V_L$ . In some cases, when the digital supply is applied

prior to the other supplies, it may be possible for maximum ratings to be exceeded and the device to enter a latch-up state.

### 2.3 Latchup Models

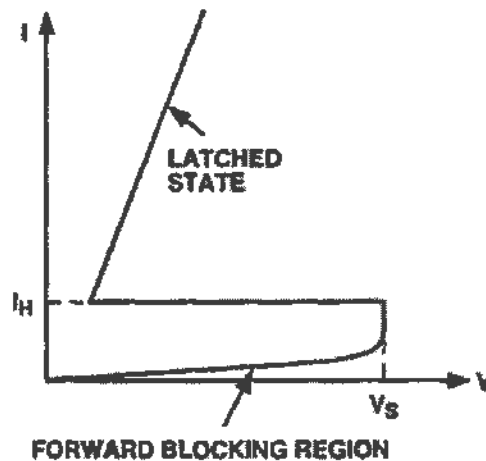


Figure 2.2: IV curve for NMOS exhibiting latch-up behaviour under gate bias with different regions of operation

The generic IV curve for NMOS exhibiting latch-up behaviour under gate bias with different regions of operation is shown in Figure 2.2. The linear and saturation regions governed by standard MOS equations. Region 3 is the bipolar or snapback region. The NMOS transistor operates in the linear and saturation regions under normal conditions. However, it goes into high current regions, namely avalanche breakdown and snapback, during ESD and latchup events. The avalanche generation of carriers in the high-field region near the drain results in the hole current  $I_{sub}$  being injected into the substrate.  $I_{sub}$  increases the voltage drop across  $R_{sub}$  and raises the local substrate potential  $V_b$ , and eventually causes the source-substrate junction to become forward-biased [3].

Several models have been long reported such as the high-current device models shown in Figure 2.3(a) and (b), substrate resistance network model with external current injection shown in Figure 2.4 and 2.5 for multiple substrate current sources and multiple substrate contacts respectively.

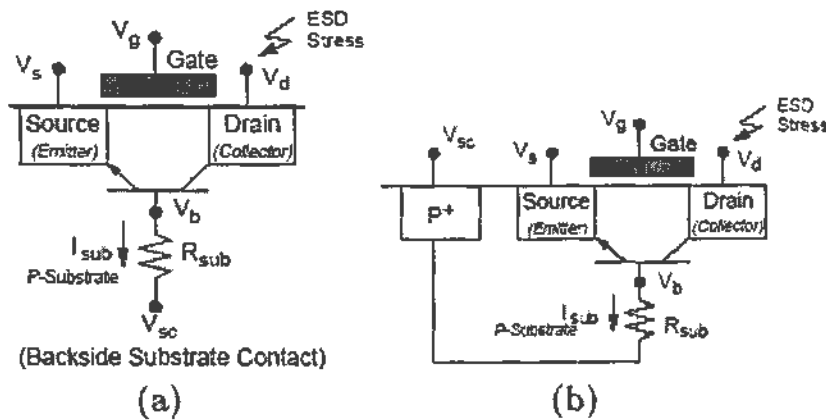


Figure 2.3: (a) Cross-section of an NMOS transistor showing the currents in the parasitic NPN transistor. (b) Cross-section of an NMOS transistor showing the parasitic NPN transistor and a topside substrate contact [4]

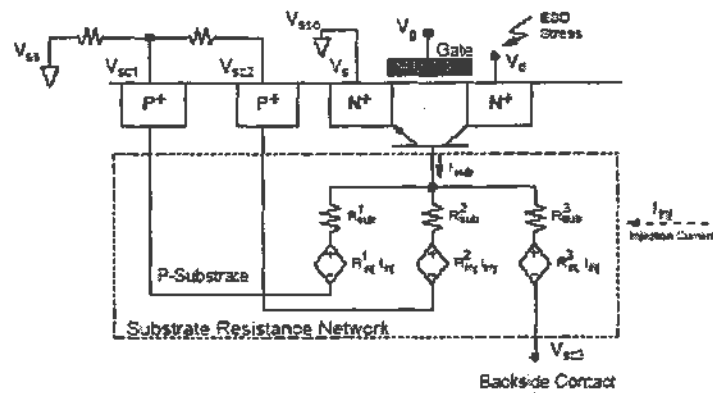


Figure 2.4: Substrate resistance model due to multiple current sources [5]

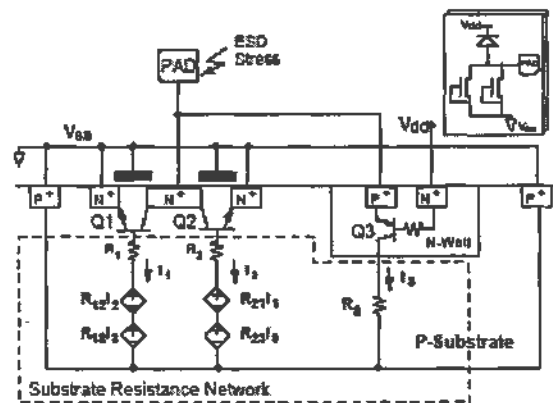


Figure 2.5: Substrate resistance models due to multiple substrate contacts [6]

## 2.4 Handling Latchup

In bulk silicon, latchup effects are minimized by a retrograde well, a  $p^-$  epitaxial layer for an n-well process [6] or a twin-tub process instead of an n-well. In SOI, it is possible to totally eliminate CMOS latchup. The excellent isolation that the Buried Oxide provides kill vertical PNP and lateral NPN bipolar transistors between PMOS and NMOS that otherwise would have instigated Silicon-Controlled Rectifier action leading to latch-up. Protection diodes could also be applied in CMOS switches.

If space and cost is a viable option, addition of a diode in series with Vdd could prevent base current from flowing. For cases with multiple supplies, Schottky diodes between the supplies will adequately prevent SCR behaviour and subsequent latch-up.

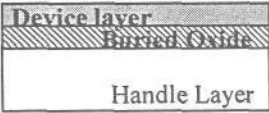
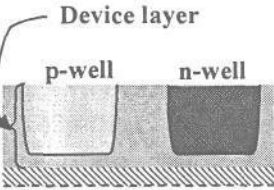
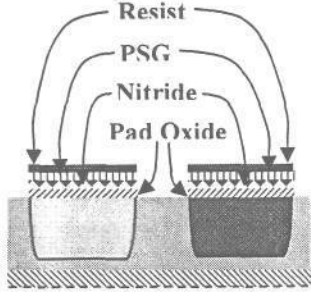
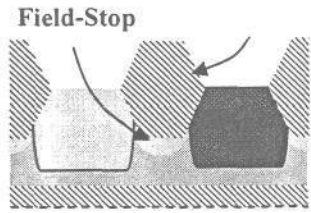
## Chapter 3: Material & Methodology

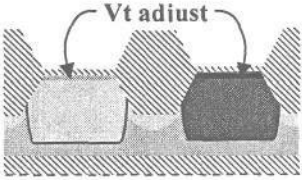
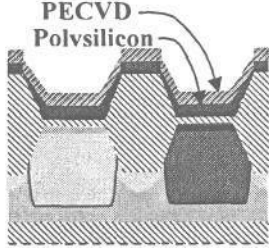
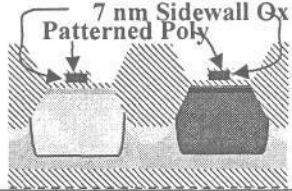

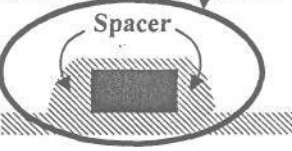
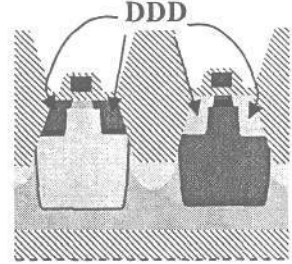
### 3.1 Device Fabrication

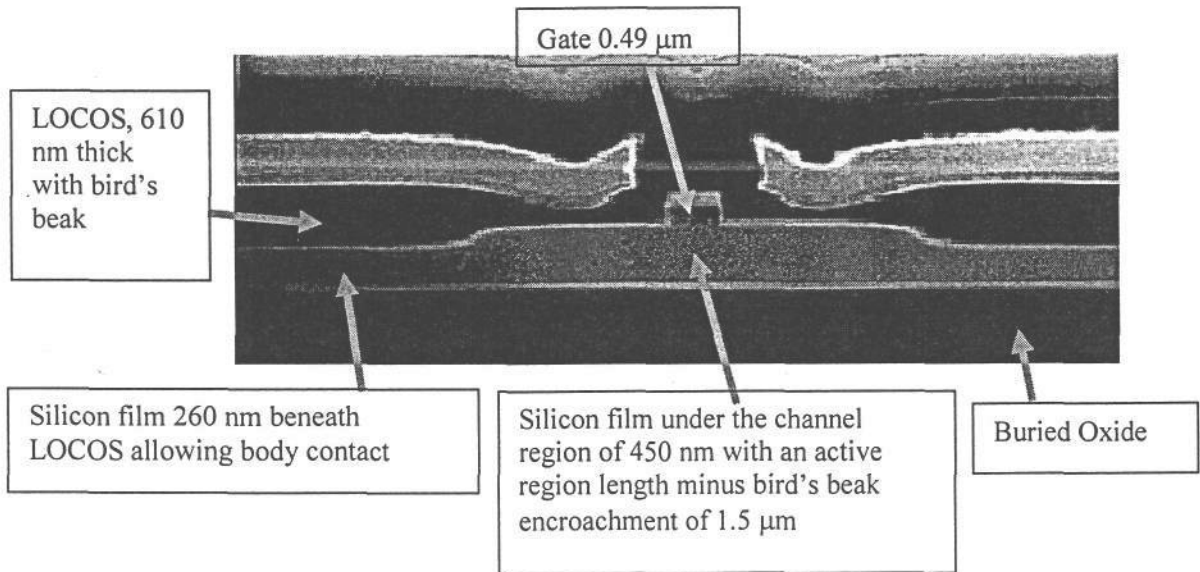
The sample devices used to measure the latch-up characteristics are CMOS structures on bulk silicon substrates as well as bonded silicon-on-insulator (SOI) substrates. The flow of fabrication in chronological order of 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  NMOS and PMOS on SOI substrate fabrication process based on the preparation of lot X126 runcard is shown in Table 3.1. The table groups the process steps into a list of main steps in chronological order, along with the targeted cross-sections and the relevant descriptions concluded from the preliminary investigations.

To verify the physical cross-section of the actual fabricated product, scanning electron microscopy (SEM) will be employed to wafer top view for critical dimension monitoring and to a selected wafer cleaved for the purpose. SEM is a type of electron microscope, which is similar to light microscopy, with the exception that electrons are used instead of photons. SEM allows much larger magnifications and better resolution since electron wavelengths are much smaller compared to photon wavelengths [i]. The picture of the n-channel MOSFET SOI device taken by Scanning Electron Microscopy is shown in Figure 3.1. The bulk silicon device is similar to the structure shown except for the presence of the buried oxide.

**Table 3.1: Fabrication method in chronological order of 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  NMOS and PMOS on SOI substrate fabrication process based on the preparation of lot X126 runcard [ii], [iii], [iv].**

<b>STEP 1: WAFER PREPARATION</b>	
a. Wafer coding – to label the wafers	
b. 720 nm sacrificial oxidation – to adjust silicon	
c. 2 <sup>nd</sup> marking	
<b>STEP 2: WELL FORMATION</b>	
a. Well oxidation	
b. N-well formation: Patterning; Phosphorus Implantation – to form well for PMOS	
c. P-well formation: Patterning; Boron Implantation – to form well for NMOS	
d. Anneal – to activate dopants and remove damage	
e. Drive-In – to achieve specified well depth	
<b>STEP 3: ACTIVE AREA FORMATION</b>	
a. Pad Oxidation – to releases stress on surface due to Nitride	
b. Nitride Deposition – to inhibit oxidation during LOCOS formation over the active area.	
c. PSG Deposition – as mask to field-stop implantation and to achieve adhesion with resist	
d. Patterning of Active Area	
<b>STEP 4: LOCOS FORMATION</b>	
a. Field-stop: Boron Ion Implantation – to ensure isolation and reduce series resistance below LOCOS	
b. LOCOS Oxidation: 700 nm – for isolation	
c. Sacrificial Oxidation: 30 nm – to remove nitride thin film	

<b>STEP 5: GATE FORMATION</b>	
a. Gate Oxidation: 11 nm - as gate oxide	
b. NMOS Vt adjust: Boron Ion Implantation – to adjusting Vt to desired 0.75 V. No mask. Lower dose ∴ no effect to PMOS.	
c. PMOS Vt adjust: Pattern; Boron Ion Implantation – to make it a buried-channel compensated device. Otherwise Vt too negative compared to NMOS.	
d. Anneal - to activate channel dopant atoms	
<b>STEP 6: GATE ELECTRODE FORMATION</b>	
a. Polysilicon deposition: 300 nm; Implant with Phosphorus; back side etching – to prepare the n+ polysilicon gate electrode	
b. PECVD deposition: 160 nm - as a mask during poly ECR etch. Provides better pattern transfer to poly rather than a thick mask.	
c. Gate Electrode Formation: Patterning; PECVD etch; Gate Electrode ECR etch – to form n+ poly gate electrode	
d. Sidewall Oxidation: 7 nm - to replace SiO <sub>2</sub> gate edges that might have been affected by polysilicon ECR etch	
<b>STEP 7: LDD &amp; SPACER FORMATION</b>	
a. N-LDD Formation: Patterning; Phosphorus Ion Implantation; Anneal - to improve reliability, reduce substrate current (esp. critical for NMOS) and improve breakdown voltage.	 
b. Spacer Oxide Formation: 16 nm Oxide Deposition; Etch; Anneal – to act as mask to NMOS & PMOS source/drain diffusion implants.	
<b>STEP 8: SOURCE/DRAIN FORMATION</b>	
a. NMOS n <sup>+</sup> diff region formation: Pattern; Arsenic Ion Implantation; Phosphorus Ion Implantation; Anneal - to form graded junctions (Phosphorus diffuses faster than Arsenic) and to reduce hot carrier effects.	
b. PMOS p <sup>+</sup> diff region formation: Pattern; Higher dose of Boron Ion Implantation at lesser tilt angle; Lower dose of Boron Ion Implantation at greater tilt angle - will form a p <sup>-</sup> ring around the p <sup>+</sup> regions to reduce hot carrier effects.	
<b>END OF DEVICE PROCESS – PROCEED TO METALLIZATION</b>	



**Figure 3.1: N-channel device structure from 0.5 micron technology used as samples for latch-up characterization**

SOI device fabrication is aimed to be compatible to the MIMOS 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  CMOS technology. The reason behind the choice of technology is to strike a balance between available technologies in MIMOS that have been sufficiently investigated and short channel devices to identify SOI characteristics alien to bulk and allow demonstration of SOI substrate to short-channel effects. The type of SOI device to be fabricated suitable with the bonded SOI substrate physical thickness is Partially-Depleted Enhancement-type Inversion-Mode 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  gate length SOI PMOS and NMOS.

SOI layout is kept fully compatible with the existing masks available to minimize increase in cost incurred. Decision was made on the MIMOS mask product label P018 since it provides sufficient test structures for first round device behaviour investigation