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Sommario/riassunto

Today, the silicon feedstock for photovoltaic cells comes from processes which were originally developed for the microelectronic industry. It covers almost 90% of the photovoltaic market, with mass production volume at least one order of magnitude larger than those devoted to microelectronics. However, it is hard to imagine that this kind of feedstock (extremely pure but heavily penalized by its high energy cost) could remain the only source of silicon for a photovoltaic market which is in continuous expansion, and which has a cumulative growth rate in excess of 30% in the last few years. Ev