

# Fast Design Optimization of Microwave Structures Using Co-Simulation-Based Tuning Space Mapping

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**Abstract** — Tuning space mapping (TSM) expedites efficient design optimization of microwave circuits by replacing sections in the electromagnetic (EM) model with corresponding sections of designable equivalent elements. A key assumption of TSM is that these designable elements can replace their respective EM model sections without introducing significant distortion in the structure's response. This can be achieved through the co-calibrated ports technique introduced in Sonnet *em*. Here, we generalize the TSM algorithm. A tuning model is constructed by simulating the EM model sections separately and connecting them with the tuning components through a co-simulation process. This allows us to implement the TSM algorithm with any EM simulator. The response misalignment between the original structure and the tuning model is reduced using classical space mapping. The proposed algorithm is illustrated through the design of two microstrip filters simulated in FEKO.

**Index Terms** — Computer-aided design (CAD), co-simulation, electromagnetic simulation, engineering design optimization, tuning space mapping.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Surrogate-based optimization methodology [1, 2], particularly space mapping (SM) [3-8], facilitates the efficient simulation-based design of CPU intensive structures. A recent development in

microwave space mapping technology is tuning space mapping (TSM) [9, 10], which combines SM with the tuning concept widely used in microwave engineering [11, 12].

TSM requires a so-called tuning model, which is constructed by introducing circuit-theory based components (e.g., capacitors, coupled-line models) into the structure under consideration (fine model). Some parameters of these components are selected as tunable. The corresponding tuning model is updated and optimized with respect to the tuning parameters. In the calibration process, optimal values of the tuning parameters are transformed into an appropriate modification of the design variables, which are then assigned to the fine model. Because the tuning model is based on an "image" of the fine model, its generalization capability is usually better than one of the standard SM surrogate models [3]. It results in a smaller number of fine model evaluations required to find a satisfactory design (typically 1 to 3 iterations [9]).

Key to TSM is that the designable components of the tuning model represent their respective EM model sections without introducing significant distortion of the structure's response. This can be achieved using the co-calibrated ports technique introduced in Sonnet *em* [13].

In this paper, we generalize the TSM algorithm by constructing the tuning model through separate simulation of the relevant EM model sections and combining them with circuit-theory-based tuning components through a co-simulation process [14, 15]. The unavoidable

response misalignment between the original structure and the tuning model is reduced using classical space mapping.

Our approach allows us to implement the TSM algorithm using any EM simulator. Here, we exploit FEKO [16].

The robustness of our technique is demonstrated by the optimization of two microstrip filters. Good designs are obtained after just a few EM simulations of the respective structures. Here, a comprehensive numerical comparison with other optimization techniques is provided, including gradient-based and derivative-free algorithms as well as space mapping [6].

## II. CO-SIMULATION-BASED TUNING SPACE MAPPING

In this section, we formulate the optimization problem (Section II.A), describe the tuning space mapping algorithm (Section II.B), and explain the construction of the proposed co-simulation-based tuning model (Section II.C).

### A. Design optimization problem

The design optimization problem is formulated as

$$\mathbf{x}_f^* \in \arg \min_{\mathbf{x}} U(\mathbf{R}_f(\mathbf{x})), \quad (1)$$

where  $\mathbf{R}_f \in R^m$  denotes the response vector of a fine model of a device of interest;  $\mathbf{x} \in R^n$  is a vector of design variables, and  $U$  is a scalar merit function, e.g., a minimax function with upper and lower specifications. Vector  $\mathbf{x}_f^*$  is the optimal design to be determined.

### B. Tuning space mapping algorithm

We adopt the TSM algorithm with embedded surrogates (ETSM) [10]. ETSM involves the tuning model  $\mathbf{R}_t$  where certain designable sub-sections of the structure of interest are replaced by suitable surrogates [10], preferably distributed elements with physical dimensions corresponding to those of the fine model. After a space-mapping-based alignment procedure, the tuning model is matched to the fine model. Because critical fine-model couplings are preserved (or represented through  $S$ -parameters) in the tuning model,  $\mathbf{R}_t$  is expected to be a good surrogate of the fine model. Using the design parameters of the embedded surrogates, we subsequently optimize the tuning model to satisfy the given design specifications. The resulting

design parameters become our next fine model iterate. A conceptual illustration of the embedded surrogates is shown in Fig. 1.

The iteration of the ETSM algorithm consists of two steps: alignment of the tuning model with the fine model and the optimization of the tuning model. First, based on fine model data at the current design  $\mathbf{x}^{(i)}$ , the current tuning model  $\mathbf{R}_t^{(i)}$  is built with appropriate surrogate elements replacing certain fine model sections. The tuning model response may not agree with the response of the original fine model at  $\mathbf{x}^{(i)}$ . We align these models through the parameter extraction process

$$\mathbf{p}^{(i)} = \arg \min_{\mathbf{p}} \|\mathbf{R}_f(\mathbf{x}^{(i)}) - \mathbf{R}_t^{(i)}(\mathbf{x}^{(i)}, \mathbf{p})\|, \quad (2)$$

where  $\mathbf{p}$  represents the parameters of the tuning model used in the alignment process. These might be any parameters traditionally used by input, implicit or frequency SM [3].

Next, we optimize  $\mathbf{R}_t^{(i)}$  to have it meet the original design specifications. We obtain optimal values of the design parameters  $\mathbf{x}^{(i+1)}$  as

$$\mathbf{x}^{(i+1)} = \arg \min_{\mathbf{x}} U(\mathbf{R}_t^{(i)}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}^{(i)})). \quad (3)$$

### C. Co-simulation-based tuning model

Typically, the tuning model is implemented using the co-calibrated port technology of Sonnet *em* [17], allowing us to cut into the structure being optimized and insert tuning components with minimal disturbance of its response [13]. To realize the ETSM algorithm with an arbitrary EM simulator (here, FEKO), we implement  $\mathbf{R}_t$  as a co-simulation model as explained in Fig. 2 [18]: essential couplings of the optimized structure are evaluated using EM simulation, whereas the designable parameters are modeled by distributed circuit elements (Fig. 2(b)). This allows us to optimize the tuning model with the circuit-theory speed. The tuning model itself is constructed in a circuit simulator (here, Agilent ADS [19]), Fig. 2(c).

### D. ETSM algorithm implementation

Figure 3 shows the flowchart of the proposed tuning space mapping algorithm exploiting a co-simulation-based tuning model. The tuning model is initialized before each iteration of the TSM algorithm in order to update the data components containing the  $S$ -parameters of the EM-simulated sections of the model. The alignment between the

tuning and fine models (cf. (2)), as well as the tuning model optimization (3), are computationally cheap because both are performed within a circuit simulator.

Typically, the algorithm is terminated when a satisfactory design is found. Because of the good generalization capability of the co-simulation-based tuning model, two to four iterations usually suffice to conclude the search process.

### III. EXAMPLES

In this section, the performance of the co-simulation-based TSM is verified using two examples of microstrip filters. What is more important, we also provide a comprehensive numerical comparison between this technique and several other approaches, including: (i) space mapping (SM) [6], (ii) a gradient-based optimizer (here, Matlab's *fminimax* [21]), and (iii) a derivative-free optimizer (here, a pattern search algorithm [22]).

Space mapping is a recognized surrogate-based optimization methodology that exploits a physically-based coarse model  $R_c$  to create a surrogate that is subsequently used in the iterative optimization process similar to (3). Here, the SM surrogate is created using input and frequency SM [6], so that the surrogate is of the form  $R_s(\mathbf{x}) = R_{c,f}(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{c})$ , where  $\mathbf{c}$  is a vector determined to minimize  $\|R_f(\mathbf{x}^{(i)}) - R_{c,f}(\mathbf{x}^{(i)} + \mathbf{c})\|$  ( $\mathbf{x}^{(i)}$  being the current design). Furthermore,  $R_{c,f}$  is a frequency-mapped coarse model, i.e., the coarse model evaluated at frequencies different from the original frequency sweep for the fine model, according to the mapping  $\omega \rightarrow f_1 + f_2\omega$ , with  $[f_1 \ f_2]^T$  also obtained to minimize the misalignment between the coarse and the fine model.

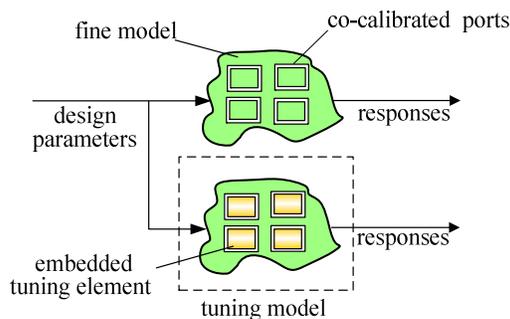


Fig. 1. Conceptual illustration of the tuning model with embedded surrogate elements [10].

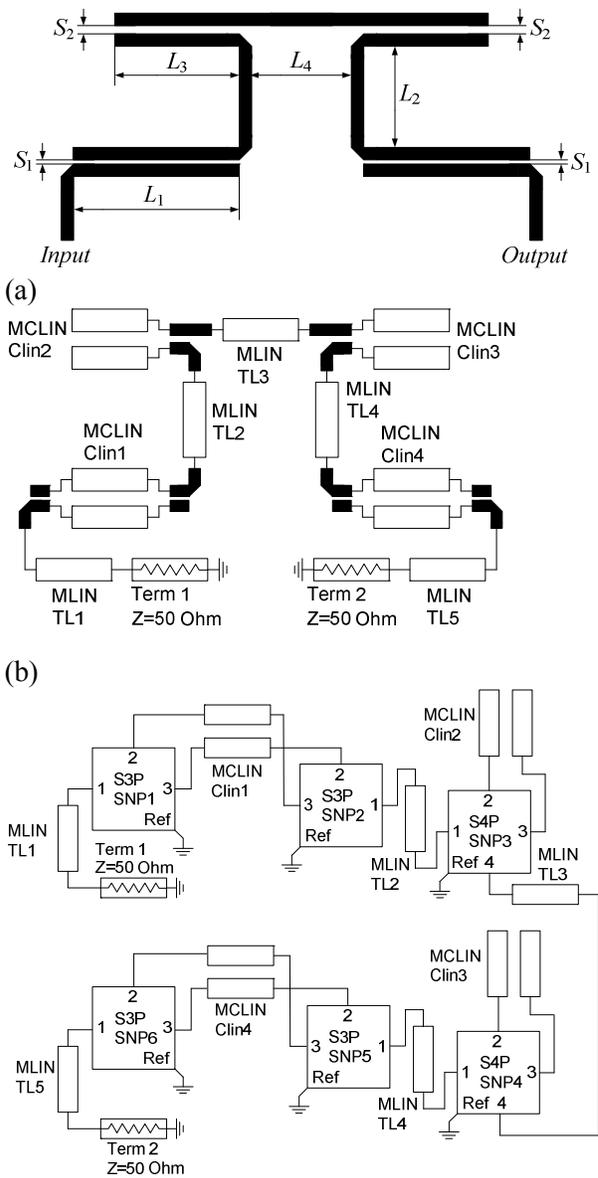


Fig. 2. Co-simulation-based tuning model [18]: (a) a coupled-line bandpass microstrip filter structure [20], (b) its co-simulation tuning model with black sections simulated using an EM solver (here, FEKO) connecting designable tuning components, (c) ADS implementation of the tuning model  $R_t$ ; S-parameters of the EM-simulated sections are stored in S3P and S4P data components SNP1 to SNP6. Note that all the designable parameters (microstrip lengths, widths and coupled-line gaps) are associated with the distributed circuit components, which allows fast optimization of the tuning model. On the other hand, simulating parts of the filter

using the EM solver allows us to maintain good accuracy and predictability of the tuning model.

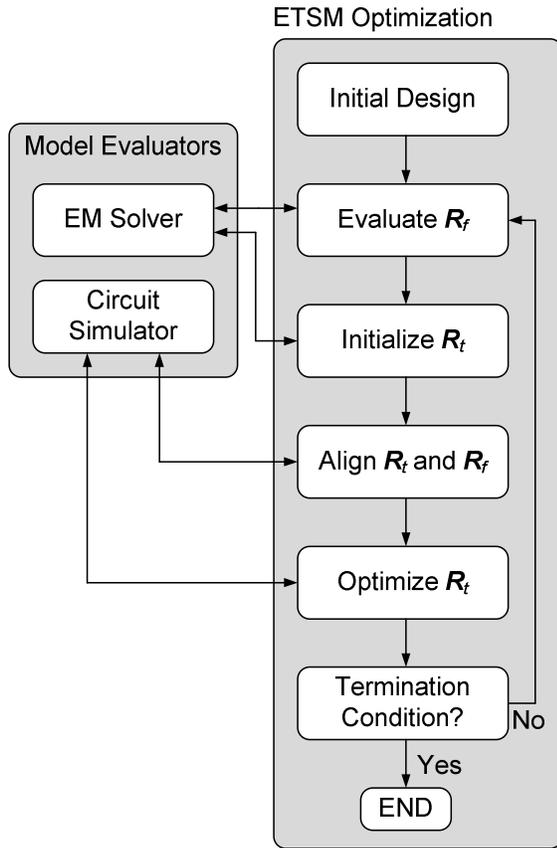


Fig. 3. A flow diagram of the proposed tuning space mapping algorithm exploiting a co-simulation-based tuning model. In each iteration, the tuning model is initialized by updating its data components (obtained by EM-simulation). Both the alignment procedure (2) and the tuning model optimization (3) are performed using a circuit simulator.

Matlab's *fminimax* is a gradient-based routine that uses a sequential quadratic programming (SQP) method [23] to solve the original minimax problem reformulated into an equivalent nonlinear programming problem [21].

The pattern search algorithm [22] is a derivative-free search routine that examines the neighborhood of the current design on a predefined grid and refines the grid in case this local search fails to improve the design. A few other mechanisms, such as a line search along promising directions, are also involved.

### A. Coupled-line microstrip bandpass filter [20]

Consider the coupled-line bandpass filter [20] shown in Fig. 2(a). The design parameters are  $\mathbf{x} = [L_1 L_2 L_3 L_4 S_1 S_2]^T$  mm. The fine model  $\mathbf{R}_f$  is simulated in FEKO [16]. The design specifications are  $|S_{21}| \geq -3$  dB for  $2.3 \text{ GHz} \leq \omega \leq 2.5 \text{ GHz}$ , and  $|S_{21}| \leq -20$  dB for  $1.5 \text{ GHz} \leq \omega \leq 2.2 \text{ GHz}$ , and  $2.6 \text{ GHz} \leq \omega \leq 3.3 \text{ GHz}$ . The initial design is  $\mathbf{x}^{(0)} = [29.0 \ 5.0 \ 8.0 \ 24.0 \ 0.1 \ 0.1]^T$  mm (specification error +31 dB).

A schematic of the co-simulation-based tuning model is shown in Fig. 2(b). Sub-sections marked black are simulated in FEKO. Due to symmetry, only two sub-sections need independent evaluation. The tuning model is handled by Agilent ADS [19] (Fig. 2(c)). The alignment procedure (2) uses the vector  $\mathbf{p}$  consisting of dielectric constants (initial value 3.0) as well as substrate heights (initial value 0.51 mm) of the distributed circuit components corresponding to the design variables  $L_1$  to  $L_4$ .

Figure 4 shows the fine model response at the initial design as well as the response of the tuning model at  $\mathbf{x}^{(0)}$  before and after alignment. Figure 5 shows the fine model response after the first iteration of the ETSM algorithm, which is already very good, satisfying the design specifications (specification error  $-1.3$  dB). Figure 6 shows the fine model response at the final design obtained in two iterations,  $\mathbf{x}^{(2)} = [25.38 \ 5.32 \ 8.50 \ 20.35 \ 0.085 \ 0.1]^T$  mm (specification error  $-1.5$  dB).

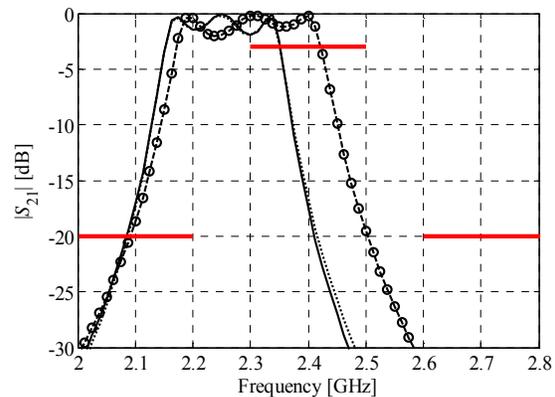


Fig. 4. Coupled-line bandpass filter: responses at the initial design  $\mathbf{x}^{(0)}$ : the fine model (solid line), the tuning model (dashed line with circles), and the aligned tuning model (dotted line).

For comparison, the filter was also optimized using Matlab's *fminimax* routine [21], a pattern

search algorithm [22], as well as a space mapping algorithm exploiting input, frequency and output SM [6] (the coarse model utilized by SM is shown in Fig. 7). The results are shown in Table 1.

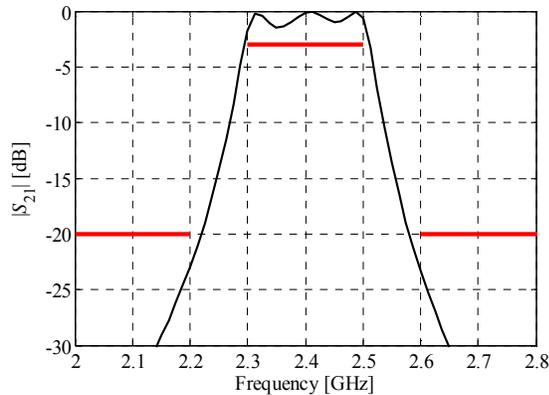


Fig. 5. Coupled-line bandpass filter: fine model response after one ETSM iteration.

It can be observed that both space mapping and gradient-based search fail to find a design satisfying the specifications. The design obtained using pattern search is slightly better than that obtained by the technique described here; however, the design cost is substantially higher.

### B. Wideband bandstop microstrip filter [23]

Consider the wideband bandstop microstrip filter [23] in Fig. 8(a). The design parameters are  $\mathbf{x} = [L_r W_r L_c W_c G_c]^T$ . The fine model  $\mathbf{R}_f$  is simulated in FEKO [16]. The design specifications are  $|S_{21}| \geq -3$  dB for  $1.0 \text{ GHz} \leq \omega \leq 2.0 \text{ GHz}$ ,  $|S_{21}| \leq -20$  dB for  $3.0 \text{ GHz} \leq \omega \leq 9.0 \text{ GHz}$ , and  $|S_{21}| \geq -3$  dB for  $10.0 \text{ GHz} \leq \omega \leq 11.0 \text{ GHz}$ . The initial design is  $\mathbf{x}^{(0)} = [7.0 \ 1.0 \ 9.0 \ 0.2 \ 0.1]^T$  mm (specification error +16 dB).

A schematic of the tuning model is shown in Fig. 8(b). The tuning model is implemented in Agilent ADS [19] (Fig. 8(c)).

The alignment procedure (2) uses the vector  $\mathbf{p}$  consisting of dielectric constants (initial value 3.38) as well as the substrate heights (initial value 0.508 mm) of the distributed circuit components corresponding to design variables  $L_r$  and  $L_c$ .

Figure 9 shows the fine model response at the initial design as well as the response of the tuning model at  $\mathbf{x}^{(0)}$  before and after alignment. Figures 10 and 11 show the fine model response after the first iteration of the ETSM algorithm, and at the final design obtained in four iterations,

$\mathbf{x}^{(4)} = [7.375 \ 1.265 \ 7.958 \ 0.051 \ 0.120]^T$  mm (specification error  $-2.1$  dB). The design obtained in one iteration of the ETSM algorithm is close to satisfying the design specifications, which demonstrates the robustness of our proposed approach.

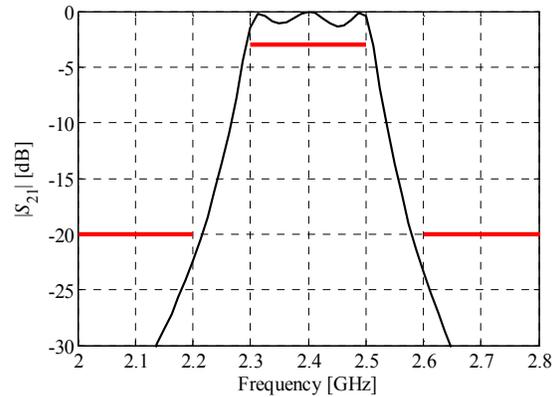


Fig. 6. Coupled-line bandpass filter: fine model response at the final design obtained in two ETSM iterations.

Table 1: Coupled-line bandstop filter: co-simulation-based tuning versus other optimization approaches: design quality and computational cost comparison

Algorithm	Best design found*	Design cost <sup>#</sup>
Co-simulation-based tuning	$-1.3$ dB	3
Space mapping	$+1.5$ dB	8
Matlab ( <i>fminimax</i> )	$+22$ dB	208
Pattern search	$-1.7$ dB	155

\* Specification error at the final (optimized design).

<sup>#</sup> Number of the fine model evaluations.

As before, the filter was also optimized using Matlab's *fminimax* routine [21], a pattern search algorithm [22], as well as a space mapping algorithm exploiting input, frequency and output SM [6]. Figure 12 shows the coarse model used by the SM algorithm. The results (Table 2), indicate that our technique outperforms the other methods. Although space mapping finds a design that is only slightly worse, the computational cost is twice as high. Direct optimization is far more expensive: only *fminimax* is able to find a design satisfying the specifications.

### C. Discussion

The results of our performance comparison between the co-simulation-based TSM and other

techniques are quite consistent for both our examples. It can be observed that the space mapping algorithm does not perform as well as TSM, which is an indication that the TSM tuning model has better generalization capability (because part of the tuning model comes from EM simulation). It is known [25] that SM can perform better for a carefully selected surrogate model, however, such selection requires user experience as well as some computational effort [25].

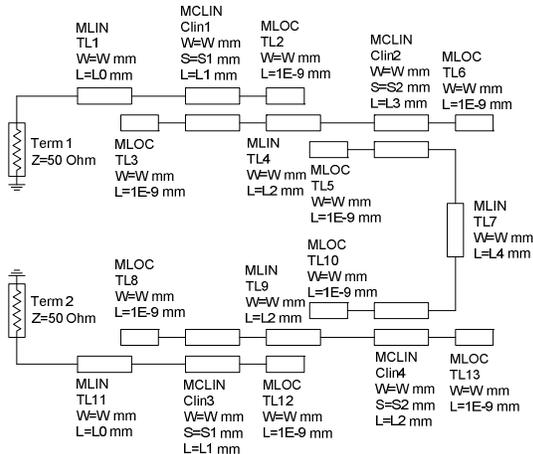


Fig. 7. Coupled-line bandpass filter: the coarse model utilized by the space mapping algorithm.

Both the gradient-based algorithm and pattern search are computationally far more expensive than TSM and are not as reliable. An issue that has to be taken into account while using an algorithm such as *fminimax* is the numerical noise that is always present in EM-simulation-based objective functions. In particular, a minimum step for finite differentiation has to be carefully selected (typically, a few orders of magnitude larger than the default value of  $10^{-8}$ ), otherwise, the algorithm may fail or even get stuck at the initial design. Similar issues have to be addressed for a pattern search algorithm, e.g., the results are typically sensitive to the size of the initial grid.

These remarks indicate that while all optimization methods require certain tuning and are sensitive to their control parameters, it seems that the co-simulation TSM approach is more reliable in this respect. This is reflected not only by the quality of the designs produced by TSM but also by the low computational cost of the optimization process.

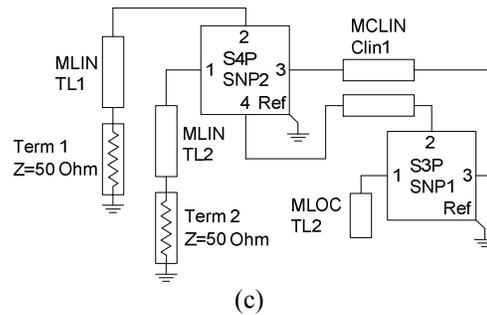
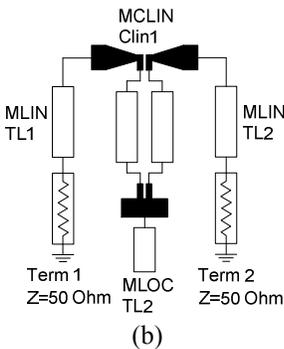
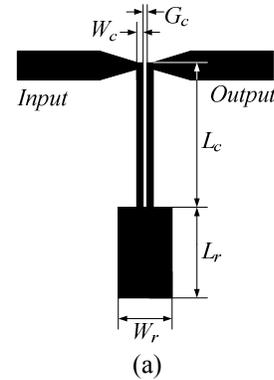


Fig. 8. Wideband bandstop filter: (a) geometry [23], (b) conceptual diagram of the co-simulation-based tuning model, (c) tuning model (Agilent ADS).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

We present an implementation of the ETSM algorithm that exploits a co-simulation-based tuning model of the microwave structure under consideration. In our proposed approach, critical fine-model couplings are simulated using an EM solver, whereas the designable parameters are modeled by distributed circuit elements. This facilitates good predictability by the tuning model, and, at the same time, design optimization with circuit-theory speed. More importantly, our ETSM algorithm can be implemented using any electromagnetic simulator. We demonstrate that our approach yields a satisfactory design for the

modest computational cost of just a few electromagnetic simulations.

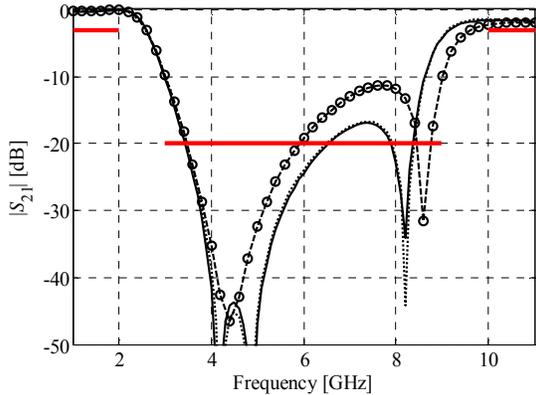


Fig. 9. Wideband bandstop filter: responses at the initial design  $x^{(0)}$ : the fine model (solid line), the tuning model (dashed line with circles), and the aligned tuning model (dotted line).

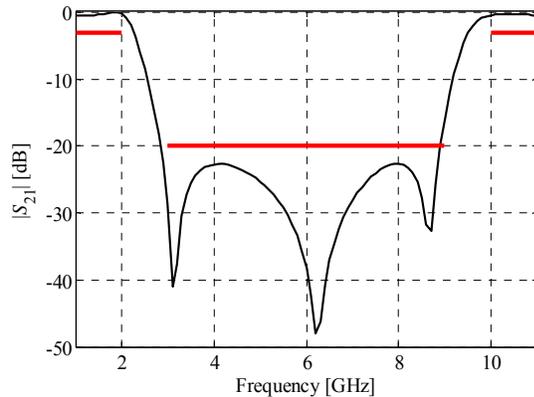


Fig. 10. Wideband bandstop filter: fine model response after one ETSM iteration. The design specifications are satisfied except for a small frequency shift in the stop band.

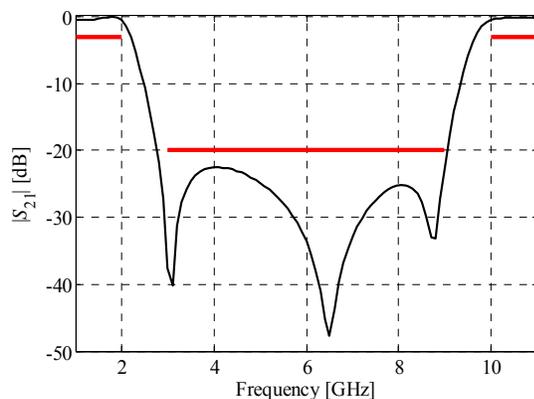


Fig. 11. Wideband bandstop filter: fine model response at the final design obtained in four ETSM iterations.

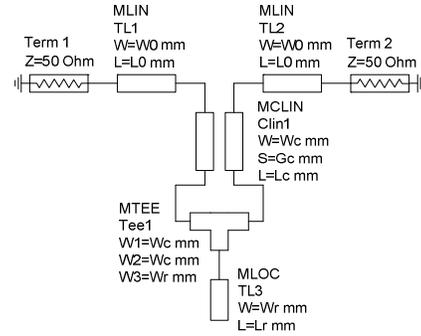


Fig. 12. Wideband bandstop filter: the coarse model used by the space mapping algorithm.

Table 2: Wideband bandstop filter: co-simulation-based tuning versus other optimization approaches: design quality and computational cost comparison

Algorithm	Best design found*	Design cost <sup>#</sup>
Co-simulation-based tuning	-2.1 dB	5
Space mapping	-1.5 dB	10
Matlab ( <i>fminimax</i> )	-0.6 dB	151
Pattern search	+0.2 dB	203

\* Specification error at the final (optimized design).

<sup>#</sup> Number of the fine model evaluations.

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