

## Supporting Information

### Identifying Electrocatalytic Sites of Nanoporous Copper-Ruthenium Alloy for Hydrogen Evolution Reaction in Alkaline Electrolytes

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## Experimental Section

**Preparation of alloys of np-Cu<sub>100-x</sub>Ru<sub>x</sub>:** The Ru-Cu-Mn ribbons were got by arc melting pure Ru, pure Cu and pure Mn under an argon atmosphere. The Ru: Cu: Mn atomic ratios were designed to fabricate precursor Ru<sub>3</sub>Cu<sub>22</sub>Mn<sub>75</sub>. The ribbons were prepared by rapidly re-melt the alloy ingots the cold surface of a spinning copper roller with the width of 2 mm and the thickness of 40 μm. The Ru: Cu: Mn atomic ratios were determined by EDS and ICP (**Figure S2 and Table S1**). The np-Cu<sub>100-x</sub>Ru<sub>x</sub> (x =12, 47, 65) alloys with tunable Ru/Cu ratios were prepared by chemical dealloying the precursor for different time in 1 M (NH<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> solution heating at 40°C.

**Preparation of np-Cu:** The preparation of the Cu-Mn ribbons is the same as the above process, but the precursor was Cu<sub>25</sub>Mn<sub>75</sub>. Then, Cu<sub>25</sub>Mn<sub>75</sub> ribbons were dealloyed in 1 M (NH<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> solution at 40°C for 48 hours. After dealloying, the np-Cu was obtained.

**Characterization:** XRD patterns of the samples were taken by using a Bruker D8 Advance X-ray diffraction (Cu K $\alpha$ ,  $\lambda$ =1.5418 Å). Microscopic morphology was performed with a Zeiss Sigma HD SEM at 10 kV. HAADF-STEM images were taken by a JEOL JEM-2100F operated at 200 kV. The chemical state of samples were tested using X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (Thermo Scientific Escalab 250Xi with a Al K $\alpha$  monochromatic). The content of Ru and Cu were obtained with the Agilent 730 (ICP-OES: inductively coupled plasma-optical emission spectrometer). The nitrogen adsorption isotherms were collected at 77 K (Micromeritics ASAP 2020) and the specific surface area was obtained by BET (Brunauer-Emmet-Teller) means. The *ex-situ* X-ray absorption spectroscopy (the Ru-K, and Cu K-edge XAS spectra of np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub> and the Cu K-edge XAS spectra of np-Cu) was performed on Beamline BL01C1 at National Synchrotron Radiation Research Center (NSRRC, Taiwan). The data were operated in the fluorescence mode at room temperature (25°C). The *in-situ* XAFS data were obtained with the same condition to get atomic environment and valence state changes during the catalytic process. For the *in-situ* measurements (**Figure S20**), the diluted catalysts were evenly coated on the carbon cloth (0.4 mm in thickness), which was used as a working electrode. A graphite rod and a saturated calomel were used as counter electrode and reference electrode in 1.0 M KOH, respectively. A well-designed

polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) cell were used for the electrochemical process. The window of the PTFE cell was installed at about 45° towards incident beam and detector. The different potentials of OCV, -0.1 V, -0.2 V and -0.3 V versus RHE were applied to the working electrode during the test.

**Electrochemical measurements:** The electrochemical tests were carried out on an electrochemical workstation (Ivium CompactStat. h) with a three-electrode cell using a rotating disc electrode (RDE) at room temperature. A graphite rod and a Ag/AgCl electrode were used as the counter and reference electrode, respectively. All potentials refer to that of the reversible hydrogen electrode (RHE) after transformation ( $E_{\text{RHE}} = E_{\text{Ag/AgCl}} + 0.0591 \text{ pH} + 0.197 \text{ V}$ ). The working electrodes for HER were made by applying catalyst ink onto the glassy carbon electrode (GCE) with an area of 0.196 cm<sup>2</sup>. The catalyst inks were prepared by dispersing 2 mg powder in a solution containing 0.5 mL of ethanol and 15 μL of 5wt% Nafion solution by sonication for 1 hour. Then 15 μL ink was dropped on the GCE for drying in the air, and the loading mass of catalyst is 0.306 mg cm<sup>-2</sup>. The polarization curves of HER were carried out in Ar-saturated 1.0 M PBS and 1.0 M KOH solution with a scan rate of 2 mV s<sup>-1</sup> with the working electrode rotating at 1600 rpm to remove the bubbles on the electrode. All potentials were corrected with iR to the reversible hydrogen electrode (RHE), and EIS measurements were carried out from 0.01 to 10<sup>6</sup> Hz under operating voltage.

**Faradaic efficiency measurements:** Faradaic efficiency of np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub> was measured with the cell as shown in **Figure S14** at applied potentials (-0.01, -0.05, -0.10, -0.15, -0.20 V vs RHE). The gas chromatography (GC-2014C, Shimadzu) has a thermal conductivity detector for H<sub>2</sub> quantification. Ultra pure argon (Ar, 99.999%) was used as the carrier gas. Nafion 117 membrane space out a customized two cells, and each compartment of the cell was filled with 35 mL 1.0 M KOH solution.

**Calculation of the mass activity and price activity:** For comparison the mass activities of Pt/C, Ru/C, np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>, the activity values were normalized to mass loadings. For np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>, the contributions of np-Cu have been deducted. The current density at -50 mV vs. RHE was applied to assess the mass activity. The details are as follows:<sup>[1]</sup>

$$j_{mass}^{np-Cu_{53}Ru_{47}} = \frac{j_{area}^{np-Cu_{53}Ru_{47}} - j_{area}^{np-Cu}}{mass_{Ru}} (mA cm^{-2}) = \frac{34.530 - 0.003 (mA cm^{-2})}{0.306 * 56.53\% (mg cm^{-2})}$$

$$= 199.599 mA mg^{-1}$$

$$j_{mass}^{Pt/C} = \frac{j_{area}^{Pt/C}}{mass_{Pt}} = \frac{24.812 (mA cm^{-2})}{0.306 (mg cm^{-2})} = 81.085 mA mg^{-1}$$

$$j_{mass}^{Ru/C} = \frac{j_{area}^{Ru/C}}{mass_{Ru}} = \frac{3.277 (mA cm^{-2})}{0.306 (mg cm^{-2})} = 10.709 mA mg^{-1}$$

For comparison the price activities of Pt/C, Ru/C, and np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>, through the above results, we obtained the mass activity of the prepared catalysts. Then, mass activity divided by their price (**Table S2**), respectively. The value obtained is the price activity.

$$j_{price}^{np-Cu_{53}Ru_{47}} = \frac{mass\ activity_{np-Cu_{53}Ru_{47}}}{price_{Ru}} = \frac{199.599 (mA mg^{-1})}{195 / 28.3495 (dollar g^{-1})} = 29.018 A\ dollar^{-1}$$

$$j_{price}^{Pt/C} = \frac{mass\ activity_{Pt/C}}{price_{Pt}} = \frac{81.085 (mA mg^{-1})}{974 / 28.3495 (dollar g^{-1})} = 2.36 A\ dollar^{-1}$$

$$j_{price}^{Ru/C} = \frac{mass\ activity_{Ru/C}}{price_{Pt}} = \frac{10.709 (mA mg^{-1})}{195 / 28.3495 (dollar g^{-1})} = 1.557 A\ dollar^{-1}$$

**Calculation of the active site density and TOF:** In order to compute per-site turnover frequency (TOF) of catalysts, we learned from the reported method.<sup>[2, 3]</sup> The per-site TOF values can be computed according to the following equation:

$$TOF = \frac{Total\ number\ of\ hydrogen\ turnover / geometric\ area\ (cm^{-2})}{Number\ of\ active\ sites / geometric\ area\ (cm^{-2})}$$

The number of total hydrogen turnovers are calculated from the current density according to:

Number of hydrogens

$$= \left( j \frac{mA}{cm^2} \right) \left( \frac{1 C s^{-1}}{1000 mA} \right) \left( \frac{1 mol e^{-1}}{96485.3 C} \right) \left( \frac{1 mol H_2}{2 mol e^{-}} \right) \left( \frac{6.022 \times 10^{23} molecules H_2}{1 mol H_2} \right)$$

$$= 3.12 \times 10^{15} H_2 s^{-1} cm^{-2} \text{ per } mA cm^{-2}$$

The active sites per real surface area are calculated from the following formula:<sup>[4]</sup>

$$Number\ of\ active\ sites = \left( \frac{No.\ of\ atoms / unit\ cell}{Volume / unit\ cell} \right)^{2/3}$$

$$\text{Number of active sites(Cu)} = \left( \frac{4 \text{ atoms/unit cell}}{41.237713 \text{ \AA}^3/\text{unit cell}} \right)^{\frac{2}{3}} = 2.111 \times 10^{15} \text{ atoms cm}_{real}^{-2}$$

$$\text{Number of active sites(Ru)} = \left( \frac{4 \text{ atoms/unit cell}}{41.237713 \text{ \AA}^3/\text{unit cell}} \right)^{\frac{2}{3}} = 2.111 \times 10^{15} \text{ atoms cm}_{real}^{-2}$$

Note that according to the XRD results (**Figure 1b**), np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub> forms a solid solution alloy, and Ru is embedded in the crystal lattice of Cu. Therefore, the number of active sites of Ru is calculated according to the unit cell of Cu.

The active site density of Cu is estimated by using the method suggested by: [5]

$$np - Cu_{53}Ru_{47} : 2.111 \times 10^{15} \text{ atoms cm}_{real}^{-2} \times (BET_2) \times (mass) = 1.015 \times 10^{17} \text{ Cu - sites cm}^{-2}$$

Finally, the current density from the LSV polarization curve can be transformed into TOF values based on: [1]

$$TOF_{np-Cu_{53}Ru_{47}} = \frac{3.12 \times 10^{15} \text{ H}_2 \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ per mA cm}^{-2}}{1.015 \times 10^{17} \text{ Ru - sites cm}^{-2} + 1.015 \times 10^{17} \text{ Cu - sites cm}^{-2}} \times j = 0.015 j$$

Therefore, the TOF values of np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub> catalyst was calculated to be:

$$\text{TOF (-0.1 V vs. RHE)} = 1.139 \text{ H}_2 \text{ s}^{-1}$$

### Calculation of the electrochemically active surface areas (ECSA):

The real surface area for HER is calculated from the electrochemical active surface area (ECSA), which can be converted from the specific capacitance<sup>[4]</sup>. The specific capacitance for a flat surface is generally found to be in the range of 20-60  $\mu\text{F cm}^2_{geo}$ .

$$A_{ECSA} = \frac{\text{specific capacitance}}{60 \mu\text{F cm}^2_{geo} \text{ per cm}^2_{ECSA}}$$

From **Figure S12** we can calculate ECSA for np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub> and np-Cu:

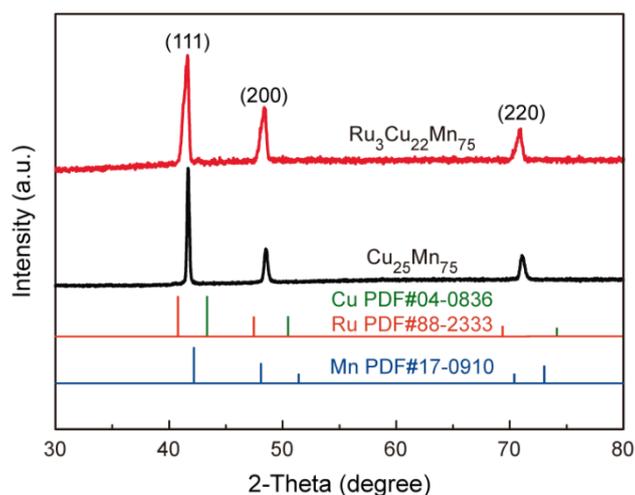
$$A_{ECSA}(np - Cu_{53}Ru_{47}) = \frac{59 \text{ mF cm}^{-2}}{60 \mu\text{F cm}^2_{geo} \text{ per cm}^2_{ECSA}} = 983.3 \text{ cm}^2_{ECSA}$$

$$A_{ECSA}(np - Cu) = \frac{8.5 \text{ mF cm}^{-2}}{60 \mu\text{F cm}^2_{geo} \text{ per cm}^2_{ECSA}} = 141.7 \text{ cm}^2_{ECSA}$$

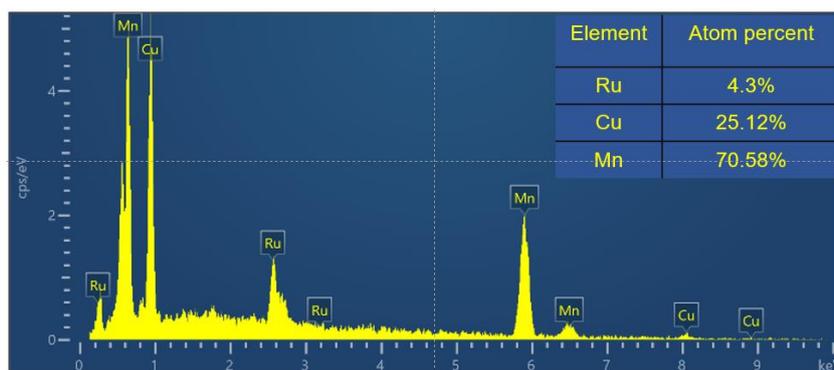
**Theoretical calculations:** All the density functional theory (DFT) calculations were used by Vienna Ab-initio Simulation Package (VASP).<sup>[6, 7]</sup> The spin-polarized projector augmented wave (PAW) projectors

and the Perdew-Burke-Ernzerhof (PBE) functional of generalized gradient approximation (GGA) was applied to depict the electronic structures of catalysts.<sup>[8,9]</sup> The DFT-D3 empirical correction method was used to accurately describe the van der Waals interactions. The energy cut off for the plane-wave expansion was established to 400 eV. The energy convergence was established to  $10^{-5}$  eV, and the residual force on each atom was smaller than 0.01 eV/Å for structural relaxations. For Cu<sub>50</sub>Ru<sub>50</sub> model, we replaced Cu atoms with Ru atoms in the (4 × 4 × 3) supercell. For the slab models of pure Cu and Ru, we chose (001) surface with different termination and 3 × 3 repeated unit cell and three atom layers.

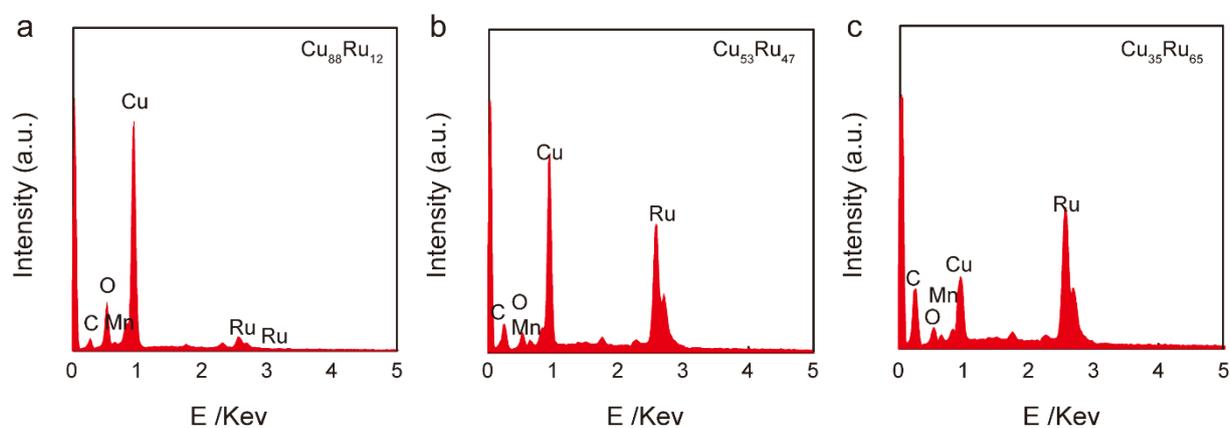
## Supporting Figures



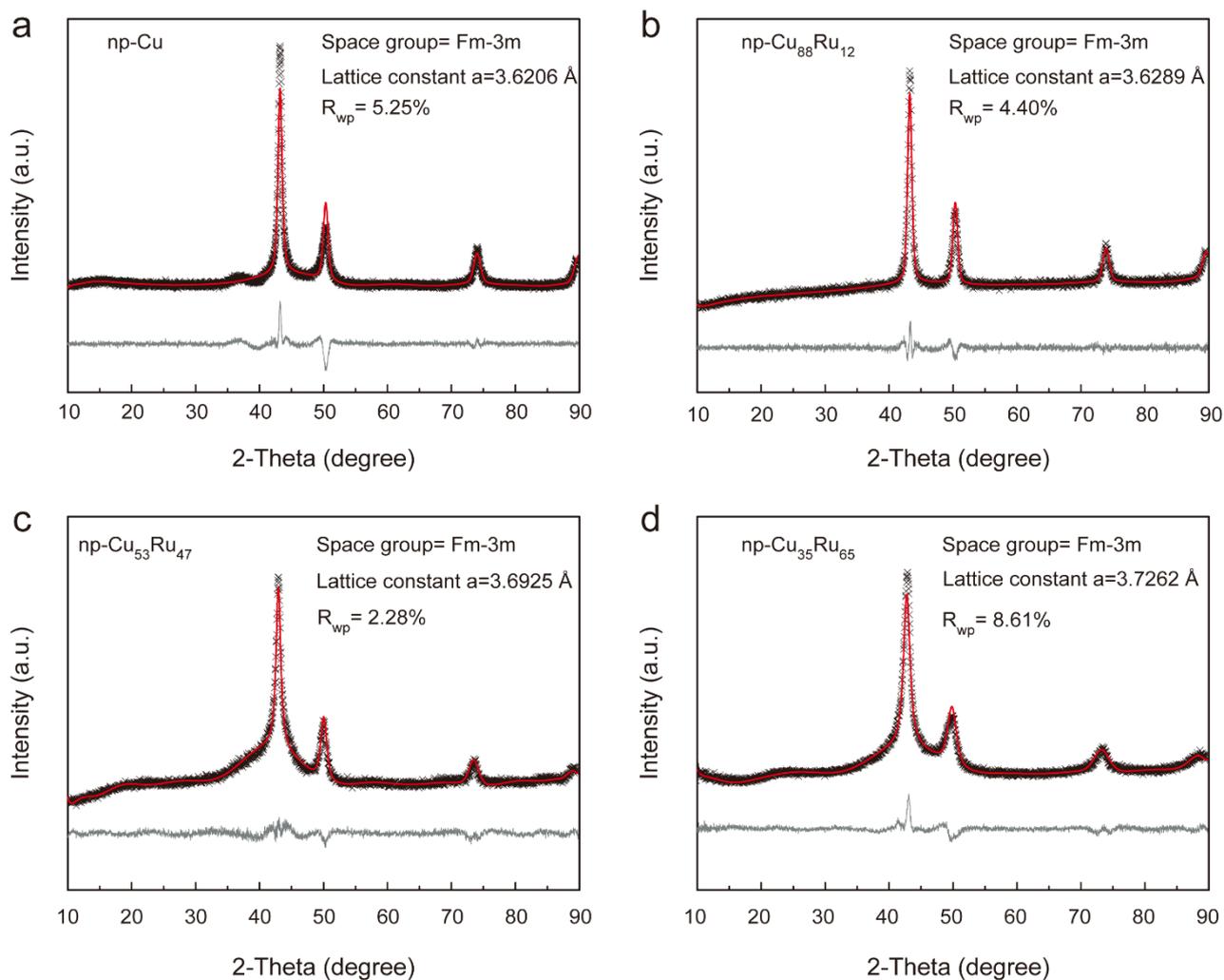
**Figure S1.** XRD pattern of  $\text{Ru}_3\text{Cu}_{22}\text{Mn}_{75}$  and  $\text{Cu}_{25}\text{Mn}_{75}$  precursors. There are three main peaks, which can be assigned to (1 1 1), (2 0 0) and (2 2 0) diffraction of a single-phase face-centered cubic (FCC) structure.



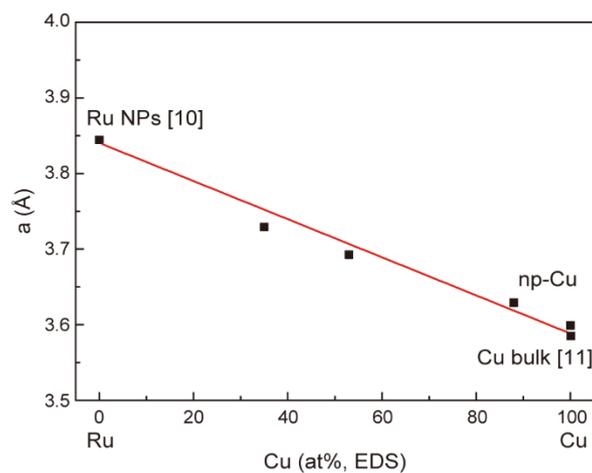
**Figure S2.** EDS spectra of the as-synthesized precursor ( $\text{Ru}_3\text{Cu}_{22}\text{Mn}_{75}$ ).



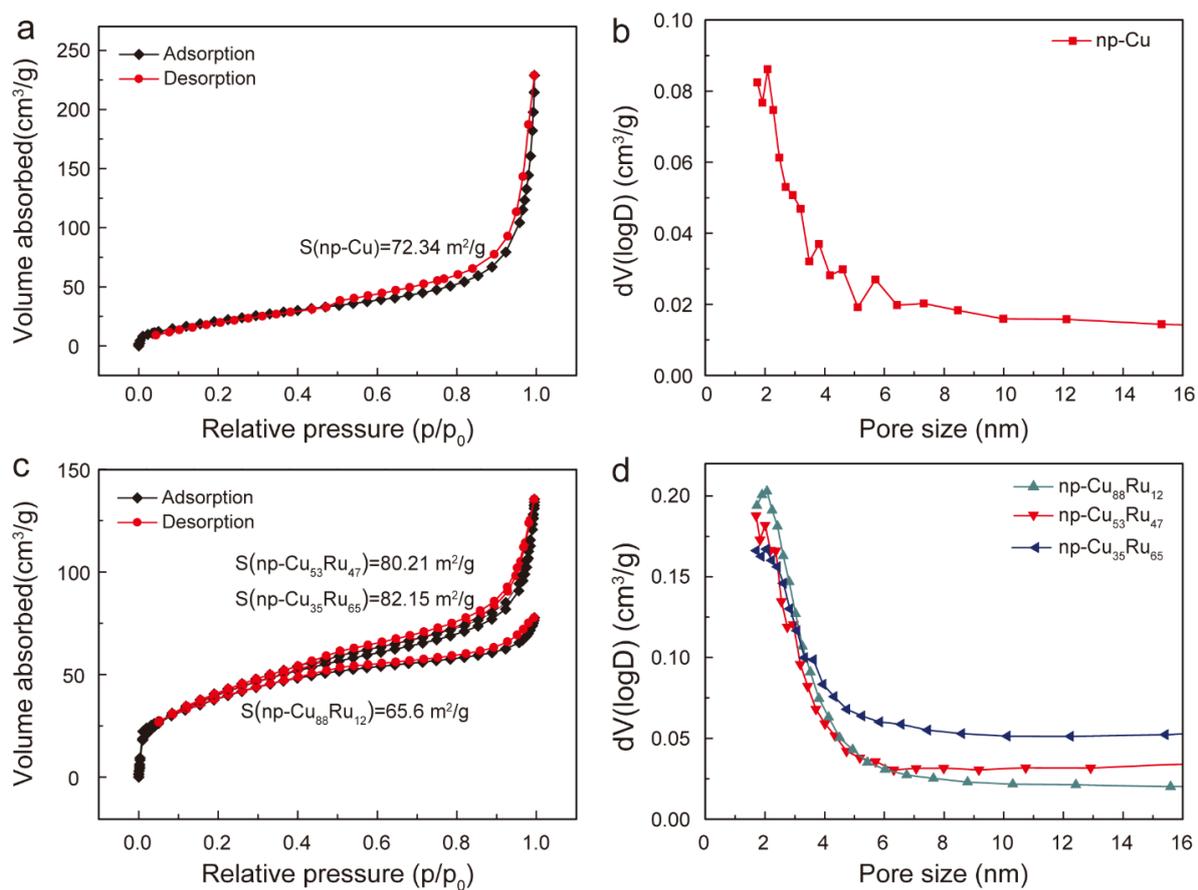
**Figure S3.** EDS patterns of the np- $\text{Cu}_{100-x}\text{Ru}_x$  ( $x = 12, 47, 65$ ) alloys: (a) np- $\text{Cu}_{88}\text{Ru}_{12}$ , (b) np- $\text{Cu}_{53}\text{Ru}_{47}$ , (c) np- $\text{Cu}_{35}\text{Ru}_{65}$ .



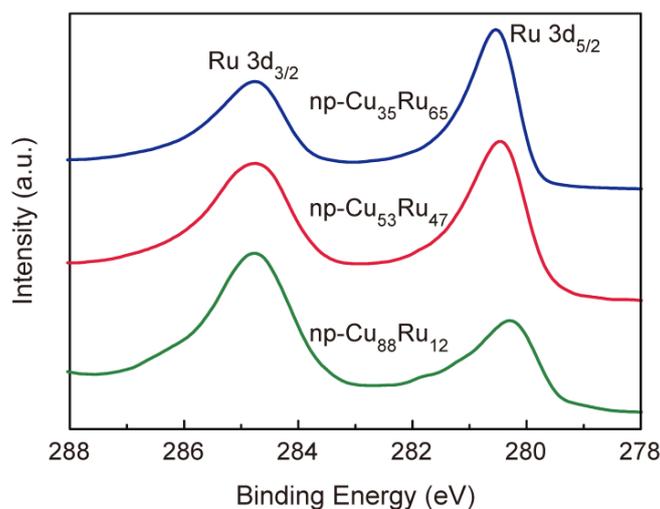
**Figure S4.** XRD patterns obtained on the observed catalysts (black) and the calculated curve (red). The below line shows the difference profile (gray). (a) np-Cu, (b) np-Cu<sub>88</sub>Ru<sub>12</sub>, (c) np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>, (d) np-Cu<sub>35</sub>Ru<sub>65</sub>. The lattice constant of np-Cu, np-Cu<sub>100-x</sub>Ru<sub>x</sub> ( $x = 12, 47, 65$ ) were estimated to be 3.621, 3.629, 3.692 and 3.726 Å, respectively. These results indicate the formation of the FCC np-Cu<sub>100-x</sub>Ru<sub>x</sub> ( $x = 12, 47, 65$ ) alloy.



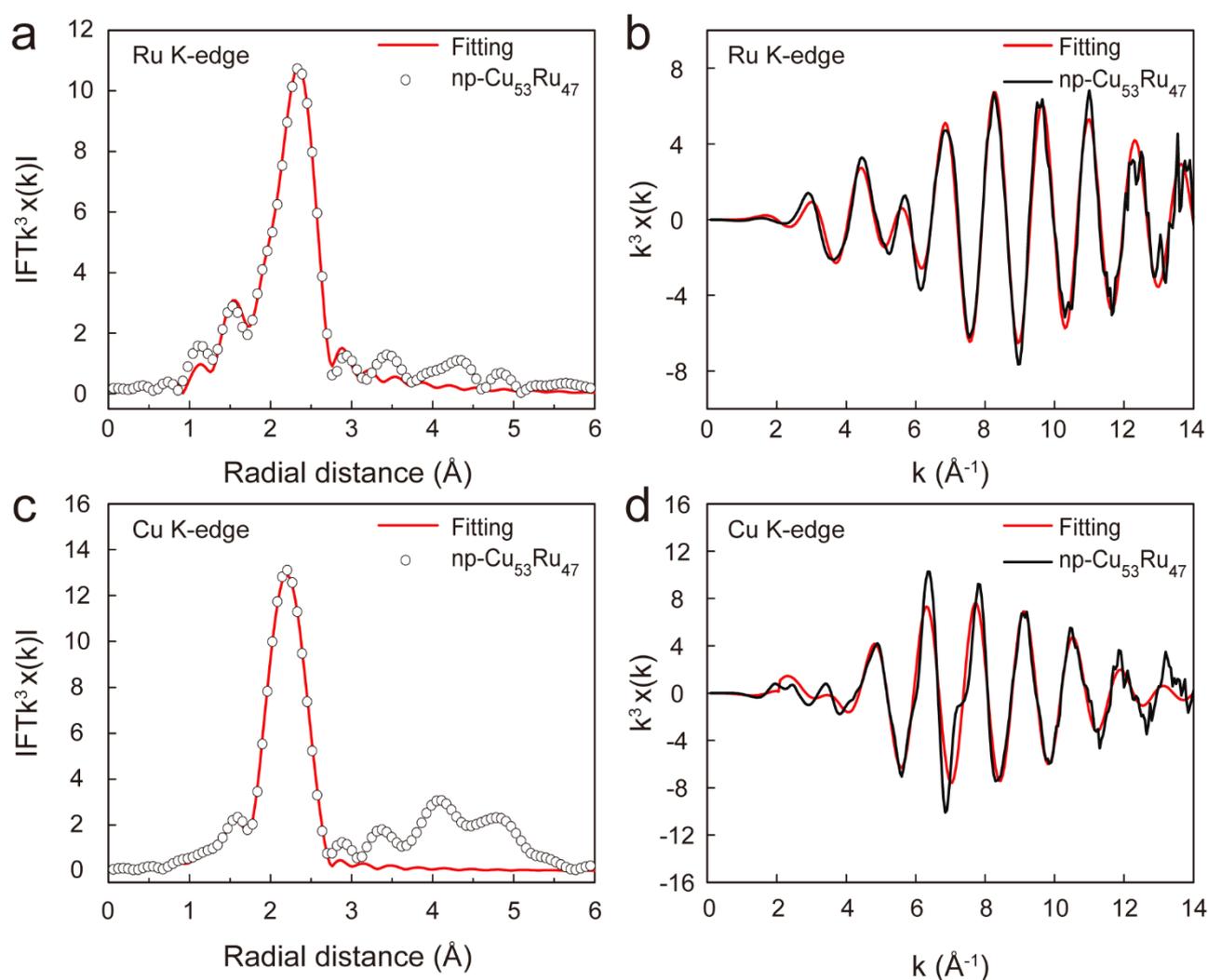
**Figure S5.** Correlation between the calculated lattice constants and the metal compositions of np-Cu<sub>100-x</sub>Ru<sub>x</sub> (x=12, 47, 65). (The metal content in the alloy was determined by EDS)



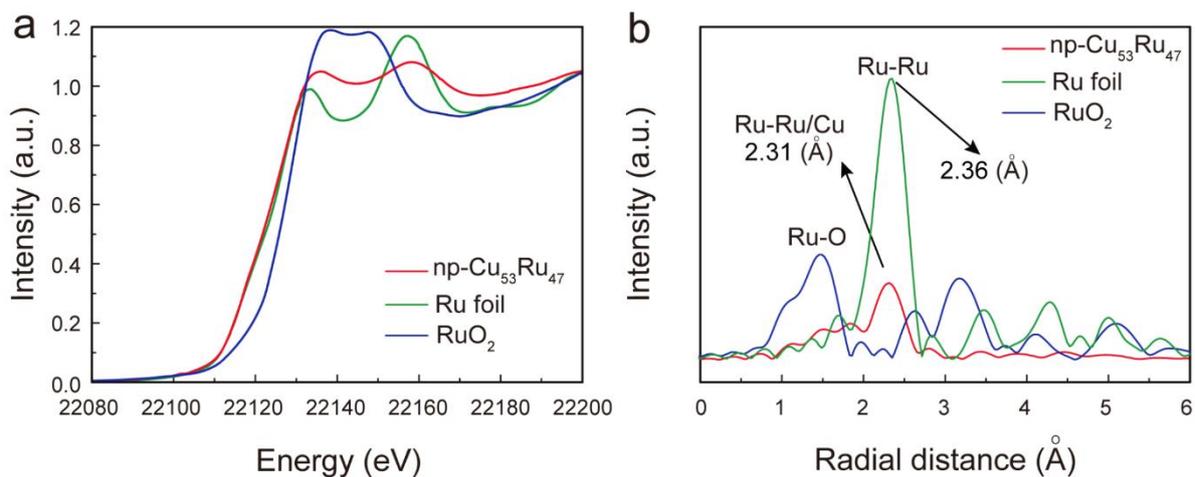
**Figure S6.** (a.c) Nitrogen adsorption/desorption curve of np-Cu and np-Cu<sub>100-x</sub>Ru<sub>x</sub> (x=12, 47,65). (b.d) Pore size distribution of np-Cu and np-Cu<sub>100-x</sub>Ru<sub>x</sub> (x=12, 47,65). The range of relative pressure is from 0 to 1.



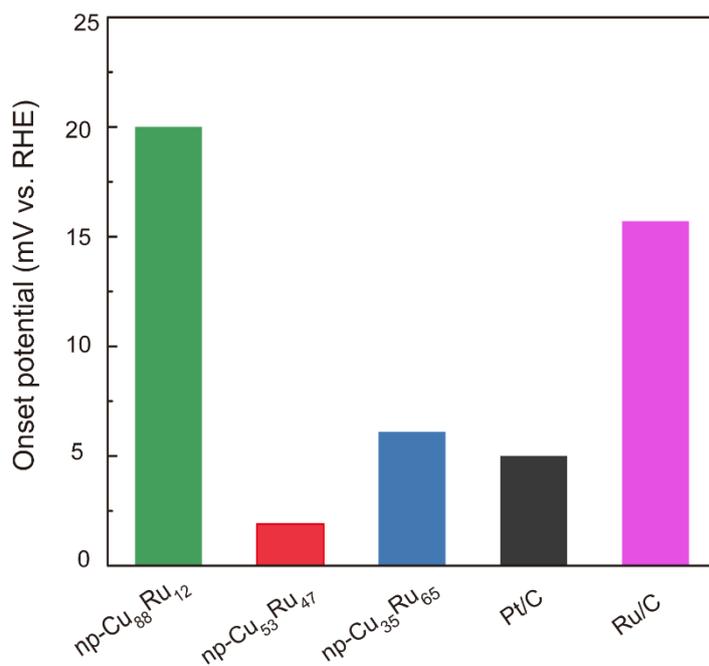
**Figure S7.** Ru 3d core-level XPS spectra recorded on np-Cu<sub>88</sub>Cu<sub>12</sub>, np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>, and np-Cu<sub>35</sub>Ru<sub>65</sub>.



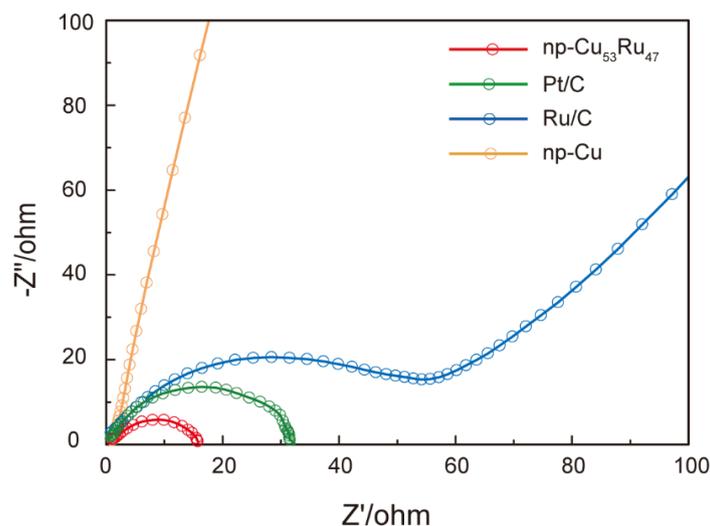
**Figure S8.** R space and inverse FT-EXAFS fitting of np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>. (a) (b) R space and inverse FT-EXAFS fitting result of Ru K-edge. (c)(d) R space and inverse FT-EXAFS fitting result of Cu K-edge.



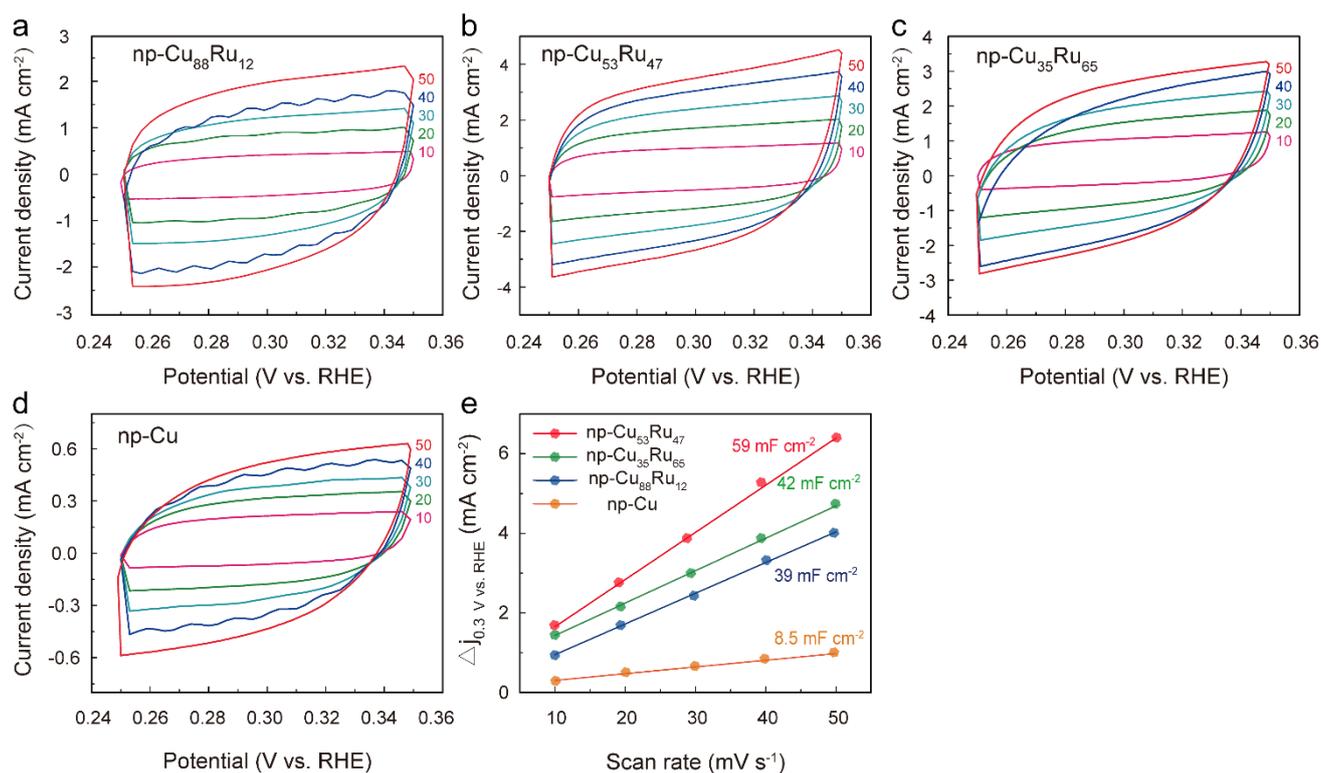
**Figure S9.** (a) The normalized XANES at the Ru K-edge of np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>, Ru foil, RuO<sub>2</sub>. (b) The FT k<sup>3</sup>-edge weighted c(k)-function of the EXAFS spectra for the Ru K-edge.



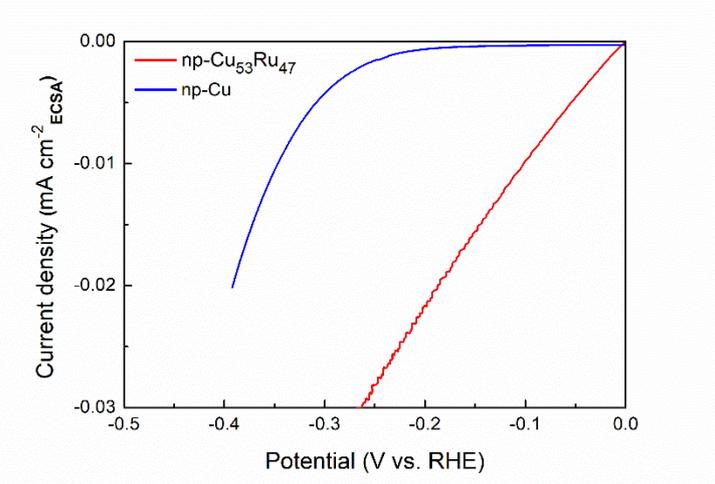
**Figure S10.** Onset potential at  $-1 \text{ mA cm}^{-2}$  of np-Cu<sub>88</sub>Ru<sub>12</sub>, np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>, np-Cu<sub>35</sub>Ru<sub>65</sub>, Pt/C and Ru/C in 1.0 M KOH.



**Figure S11.** Electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) of np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>, Pt/C, Ru/C and np-Cu catalysts in 1.0 M KOH. EIS measurement was performed at -0.15 V vs. RHE.



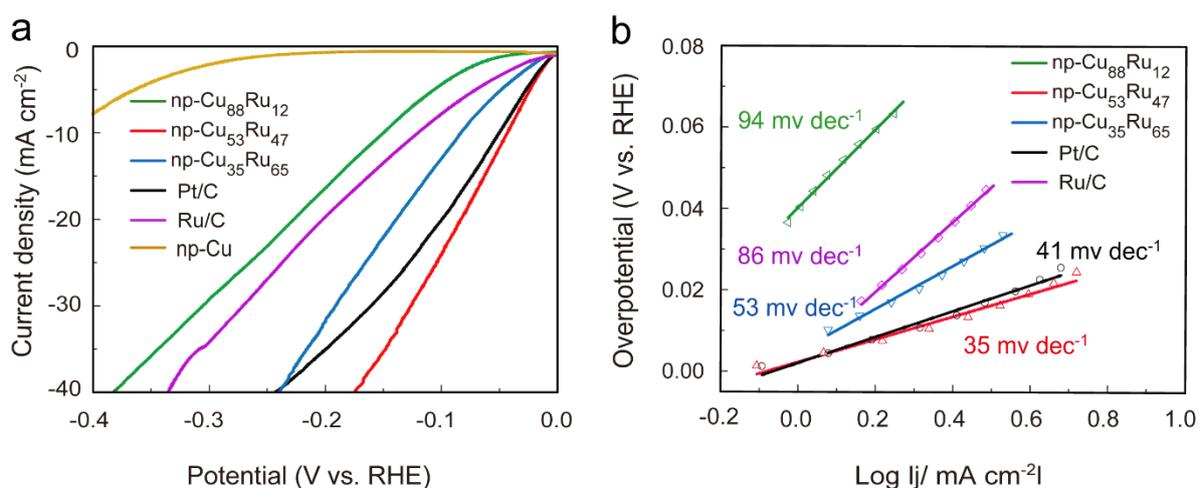
**Figure S12.** CVs of (a-d) np-Cu<sub>88</sub>Ru<sub>12</sub>, np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>, np-Cu<sub>35</sub>Ru<sub>65</sub>, and np-Cu. These CVs were performed at various scan rates (10, 20, 30, 40, and 50 mV s<sup>-1</sup>). (e) The plots of current densities against scan rates.  $\Delta j$  is the difference between anodic and cathodic current densities at a same potential (0.3 V vs. RHE).



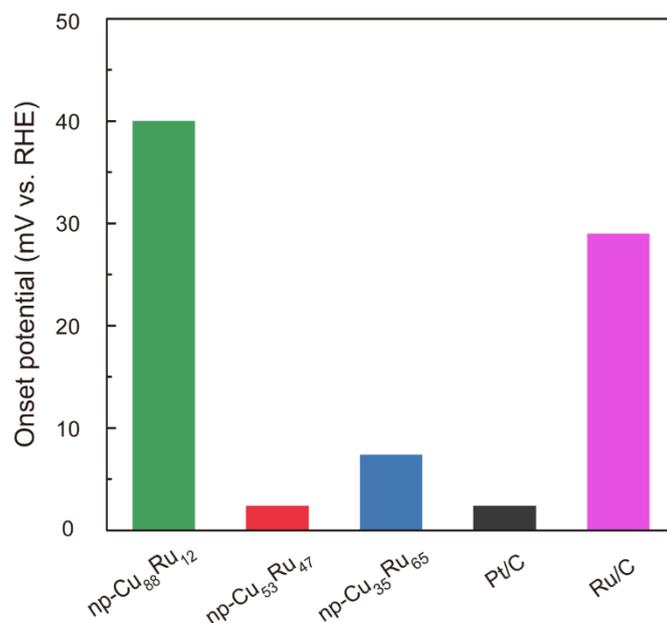
**Figure S13.** Polarization curves of different samples normalized by the ECSA.



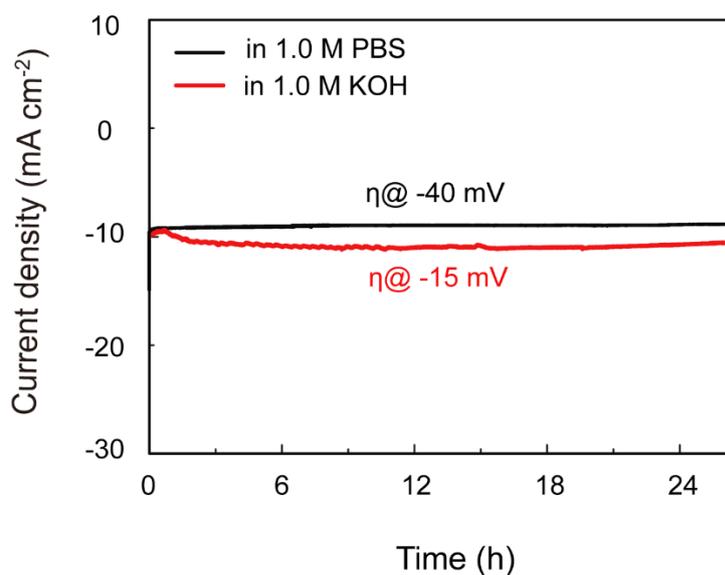
**Figure S14.** The electrochemical cell for Faradaic efficiency measurement.



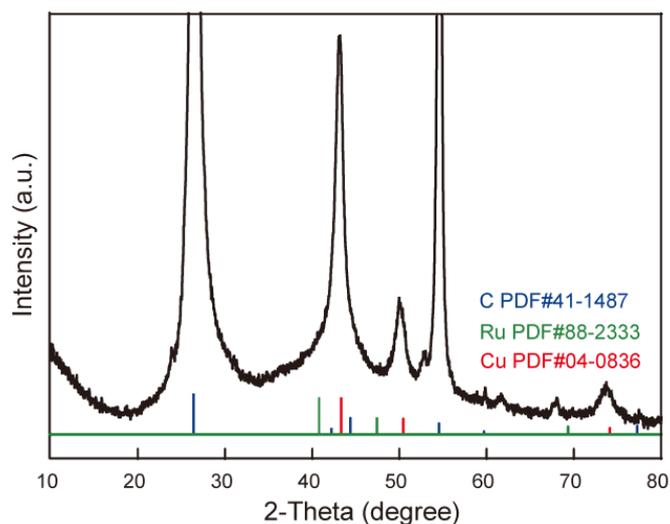
**Figure S15.** (a) Polarization curves and (b) Tafel plots of np-Cu<sub>88</sub>Ru<sub>12</sub>, np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>, and np-Cu<sub>35</sub>Ru<sub>65</sub> for HER with iR-compensation in 1.0 M PBS.



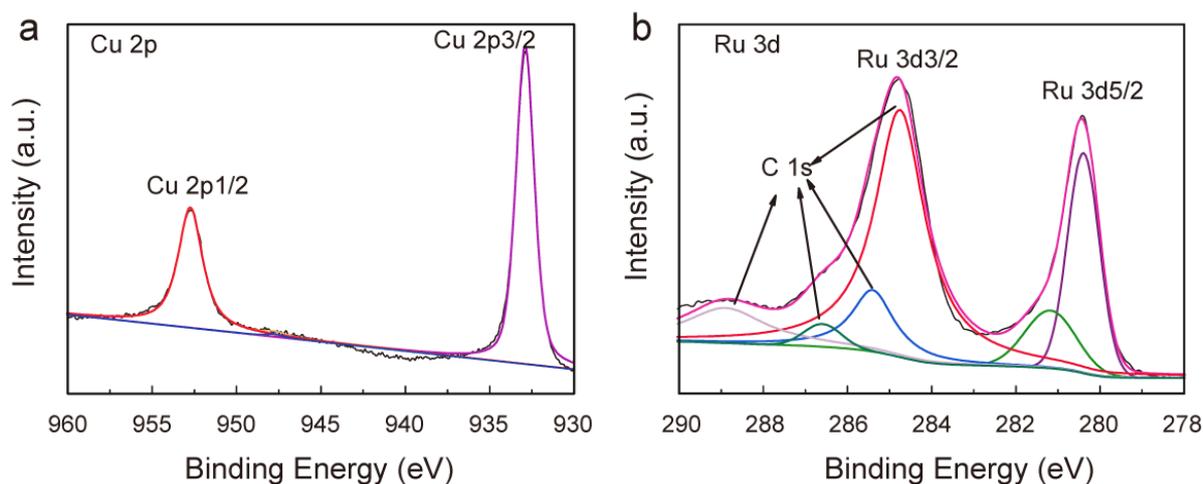
**Figure S16.** Onset potential at  $-1 \text{ mA cm}^{-2}$  of np-Cu<sub>88</sub>Ru<sub>12</sub>, np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>, np-Cu<sub>35</sub>Ru<sub>65</sub>, Pt/C and Ru/C in neutral solution.



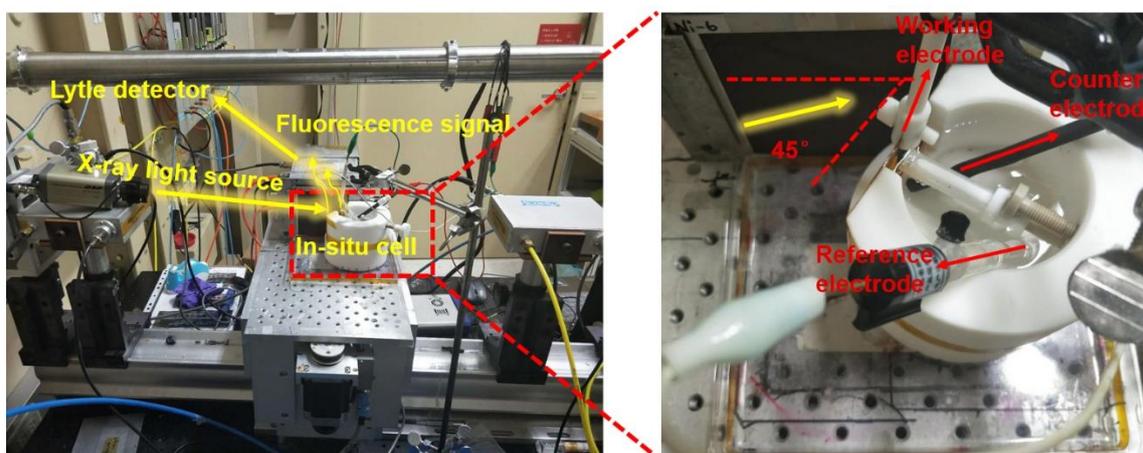
**Figure S17.** Time-dependent current density curves (I-t curve) under static overpotential for np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub> in alkaline (red) and neutral solution (black).



**Figure S18.** XRD pattern of np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub> after long-term chronoamperometric testing. The sharp C peaks in the XRD pattern is from the carbon paper as a support of the catalyst.

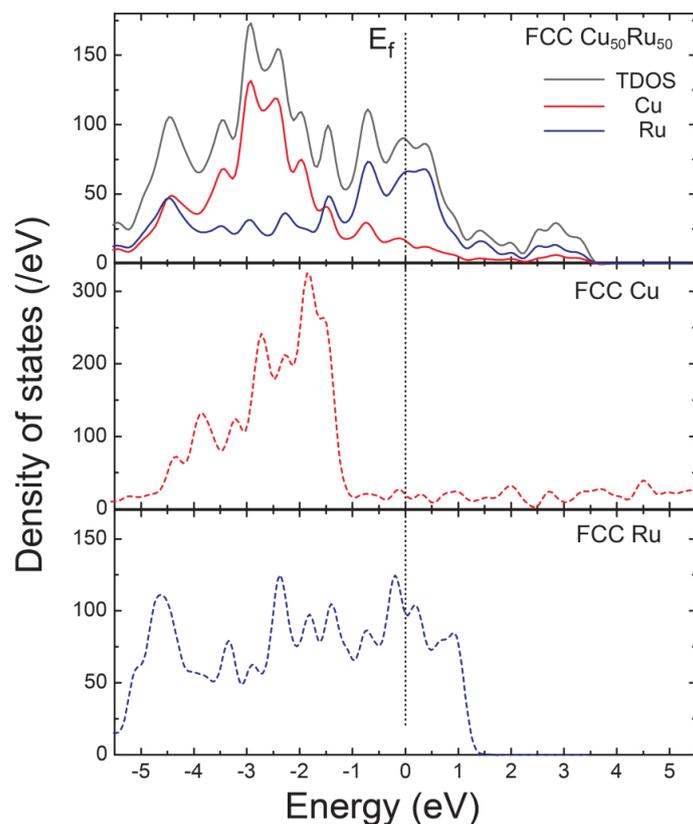


**Figure S19.** The Cu 2p (a) and Ru 3d (b) XPS spectra of the np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub> after long-term chronoamperometric testing.



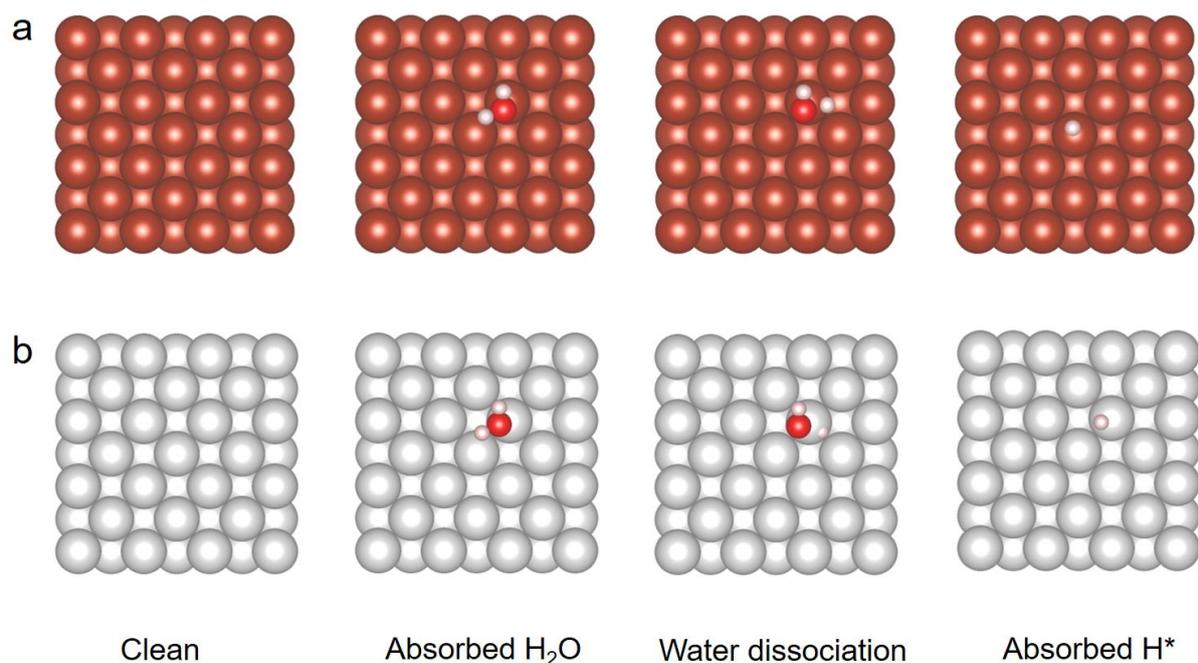
**Figure S20.** The detail of the *in-situ* XAS measurement.

For the in-situ XAS measurements, an electrochemical workstation and a custom-made poly tetra fluoroethylene cell equipped with a np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub> working electrode, a graphite rod and a saturated calomel were used as counter electrode and reference electrode in 1.0 M KOH, respectively. The window of the cell was mounted at an angle of roughly 45° with respect to both the incident beam and the detector. All spectra of the samples were measured in fluorescence mode.



**Figure S21.** Local density of states projected for three metal surfaces.

Compared with the pure FCC Cu and Ru, the unoccupied electrons density of Cu at fermi-level increases after the incorporation of Ru atoms into the Cu matrix, while the electrons density of Ru decreases, which could be attributed to the electron transfer from Ru to Cu in after the incorporation of Ru atoms into the Cu matrix. This suggests that the alloying could effectively optimize the d-electron domination of Cu and Ru atoms, thus leading to enhanced HER performance.



**Figure S22.** Atomic configurations of water dissociation step on the surface of pure Cu (a) and Ru (b). Color codes: deep orange, white represent of Cu and Ru. Red and light pink represent oxygen and hydrogen atoms in a single water molecule.

**Table S1.** ICP-OES analysis for Ru<sub>3</sub>Cu<sub>22</sub>Mn<sub>75</sub>, np-Cu and np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub>.

	Element	wt%	at%
Ru <sub>3</sub> Cu <sub>22</sub> Mn <sub>75</sub>	Cu	27.03	25.10
	Ru	7.11	4.15
	Mn	65.86	70.75
np-Cu	Cu	98.76	98.57
	Mn	1.24	1.43
np-Cu <sub>53</sub> Ru <sub>47</sub>	Cu	42.42	53.57
	Ru	56.53	44.89
	Mn	1.05	1.54

**Table S2.** Price of different noble metals<sup>[a]</sup>

Metal	Symbol	Unit of Measure	U.S.
Platinum	Pt	troy ounce	\$974.00
Ruthenium	Ru	troy ounce	\$195.00

[a] The prices for various noble metals are from the BASF corporation website on January 08, 2018.<sup>[4]</sup>  
(<https://apps.catalysts.basf.com/apps/eibprices/mp/>)

**Table S3:** Comparison of the surface parameters, mass activity and price activity for electrocatalysts investigated in 1.0 M KOH. Related to Figure 2.

Samples	$C_{dl}$ (mF cm <sup>-2</sup> )	$R_f^a$	Surface area <sup>b</sup> (mA cm <sup>-2</sup> )	Mass activity <sup>c</sup> (mA mg <sup>-1</sup> )	Price activity <sup>d</sup> (A dollar <sup>-1</sup> )
np-Cu <sub>53</sub> Ru <sub>47</sub>	59	983.33	3212.21	199.599	29.018
Pt/C	97	1616.66	5281.08	81.085	2.36

a: the  $R_f$  was calculated by dividing  $C_{dl}$  by 0.06 mF cm<sup>-2</sup>; b: the surface area was computed by multiplying the electrode geometrical area by  $R_f$  and then normalized by considering the loading mass of catalysts; c, d: the mass and price activity were got from the current density values of polarization curve at overpotential of 50 mV.<sup>[12]</sup>

**Table S4.** Comparison of the HER performance of catalysts in alkaline electrolyte.

Materials	Mass loading	Electrolyte	Overpotential at 10 mA/cm <sup>2</sup> (mV)	Tafel slope (mV/dec)	Ref.
np-Cu <sub>53</sub> Ru <sub>47</sub>	0.306 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	15	30	This work
Ru/C <sub>3</sub> N <sub>4</sub> /C nanoparticle	/	0.1 M KOH	79	/	[13]
Ru@C <sub>2</sub> N	0.285 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	17	38	[14]
RuP <sub>2</sub> @NPC (23.3wt%)	1.0 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	52	69	[15]
Ru/CN	/	1.0 M KOH	21	31	[16]
RuCo@NC	0.275 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	28	31	[17]
RuCoP	0.3 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	23	37	[18]
Ni@Ni <sub>2</sub> P-Ru HNRs	/	1.0 M KOH	41	31	[19]
Ru@GnP	0.25 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	22	28	[20]

Rh <sub>2</sub> P	0.153 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	30	50	[21]
Cu <sub>2-x</sub> S@Ru NPs	0.23 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	82	48	[22]
Pt-Co(OH) <sub>2</sub> /CC	6.9 (0.39 mg cm <sup>-2</sup> for Pt)	1.0 M KOH	84	/	[23]
Co/CoP	0.88 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	193	90.2	[24]
Ru <sub>0.33</sub> Se @ TNA	/	1.0 M KOH	57	50	[25]
Au-Ru-2 NWs	0.08 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	50	30.8	[26]
Ni <sub>3</sub> S <sub>2</sub> @nanoporous Cu	/	1.0 M KOH	60.8	67.5	[27]
Ru <sub>2</sub> Ni <sub>2</sub> SNs/C	0.1 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	40	23.4	[28]
CoRu@NCs-2	0.273 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	45	66	[29]
Ni-Mo	/	1.0 M KOH	35	45	[30]
Ni <sub>5</sub> Co <sub>3</sub> Mo-OH	/	1.0 M KOH	52	59	[31]
NiMoN	1.1 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 M KOH	109	95	[32]

**Table S5.** TOF values of np-Cu<sub>53</sub>Ru<sub>47</sub> and some well-known HER catalysts in literatures.

Catalysts	Electrolyte	TOF (H <sub>2</sub> s <sup>-1</sup> ) ( $\eta=0.1$ V)	References
np-Cu <sub>53</sub> Ru <sub>47</sub>	1.0 M KOH	1.139	This work
Sr <sub>2</sub> RuO <sub>4</sub>	1.0 M KOH	0.9	[4]
NiCo <sub>2</sub> P <sub>x</sub>	1.0 M KOH	0.056	[33]
Ni-MoS <sub>2</sub>	1.0 M KOH	0.08	[34]
Ru/NG	1.0 M KOH	0.35	[35]
PtRu/RFCs	0.5 M H <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub>	0.375	[36]
Ni-Mo alloy	2.0 M KOH	0.05	[37]
S-CoO NRs	1.0 M KOH	0.41	[38]
Ni <sub>5</sub> P <sub>4</sub>	0.5 M H <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub>	0.06	[39]
MoNi <sub>4</sub> /MoO <sub>2</sub> @Ni	1.0 M KOH	0.4 (50 mV)	[40]

**Table S6.** Comparison of the HER performance of catalysts in neutral electrolyte.

Materials	Mass loading	Electrolyte	Overpotential at 10 mAcm <sup>-2</sup> (mV)	Tafel slope (mV dec <sup>-1</sup> )	Ref.
np-Cu <sub>53</sub> Ru <sub>47</sub>	0.306 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 PBS	41	35	This work
RuP <sub>2</sub> @NPC	1.0 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 PBS	57	87	[15]
Rh <sub>2</sub> P Nanoparticles	0.153mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 PBS	38	46	[21]
Pt-Co(OH) <sub>2</sub> /CC	0.39 mg cm <sup>-2</sup> for Pt	1.0 PBS	32	70	[23]
Co/CoP	0.88 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 PBS	138	72.3	[24]
Ni <sub>3</sub> S <sub>2</sub> @nanoporous Cu	/	2.0 PBS	270	/	[27]
NiS <sub>2</sub> /MoS <sub>2</sub> HNW	0.2 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 PBS	284	83	[41]
Ni-C-N NSs	0.2 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 PBS	92.1	38	[42]
NiCo <sub>2</sub> P <sub>x</sub> /CF	5.9 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 PBS	63	63.3	[33]
Ni <sub>0.33</sub> Co <sub>0.67</sub> S <sub>2</sub> /Ti foil	0.3 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 PBS	72	67.8	[43]
Co <sub>9</sub> S <sub>8</sub> @C	0.3 mg cm <sup>-2</sup>	1.0 PBS	280	/	[44]

**Table S7.** The HER kinetic investigation in neutral and basic conditions. Gibbs free energies (G, eV) of adsorbed H<sub>2</sub>O, H, and OH on the catalysts; the energy barriers ( $\Delta G$ , eV) of H<sub>2</sub>O dissociation step (Volmer step) and combination of H\* into molecular hydrogen (Tafel step) on different catalyst models. Adsorption energy of H is referred to gas phase H<sub>2</sub>.

Catalysts	G(H) (eV)	G(OH) (eV)	G (H <sub>2</sub> O) (eV)	$\Delta G$ (H) (eV)	$\Delta G$ (H <sub>2</sub> O) (eV)	$\Delta G$ (OH+H) (eV)	$\Delta G$ (OH) (eV)
Cu (001)	-0.974	-1.383	+1.936	1.041	-2.345	0.792	1.118
Ru (001)	-0.450	-1.131	-0.942	0.568	0.986	0.832	0.907
Cu <sub>50</sub> Ru <sub>50</sub> (Cu sites)	-0.309	-1.102	+1.477	0.251	-1.416	0.928	1.069
Cu <sub>50</sub> Ru <sub>50</sub> (Ru sites)	-0.185	-0.761	+0.840	0.092	-0.551	0.704	0.833

**Table S8.** Structural parameters extracted from the Cu K-edge Ru K-edge EXAFS fitting. ( $S_0^2=0.90$ )

	Path	R(Å)	N	$\sigma^2(10^{-3}\text{Å}^2)$	E <sub>0</sub> (eV)	R factor
Ru	Ru-Cu	2.28	3.8	17.5	-17.639	0.006
	Ru-Ru	2.67	4.5	6.6	-5.694	
Cu	Cu-O	1.97	1.8	9.0	16.085	0.002
	Cu-Ru	2.63	3.2	6.3	0.607	
	Cu-Cu	2.43	4.1	10.5	-4.634	

$S_0^2$  is the amplitude reduction factor; CN is the coordination number; R is interatomic distance (the bond length between Cu, Ru central atoms and surrounding coordination atoms);  $\sigma^2$  is Debye-Waller factor (a measure of thermal and static disorder in absorber-scatter distances);  $\Delta E_0$  is edge-energy shift (the difference between the zero kinetic energy value of the sample and that of the theoretical model). R factor is used to value the goodness of the fitting. This value was fixed during EXAFS fitting, based on the known structure of Cu metal and Ru metal.

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