Electronic Design

Use an LDO and PLD for Power-Supply Enable and Disable Functions

Discover how a low-dropout linear regulator and a programmable logic device can replace microcontrollers for enable/disable functions, reducing power consumption to just microamperes.

any systems require enabling and disabling through control lines or when applying the input power. While a small microcontroller (MCU) can implement the enable/ disable function, you still need to write, maintain, and flash code for it. Many designs using a system-on-chip (SoC) have an MCU within that chip; adding another is redundant. Moreover, the MCU in the SoC isn't low power enough to both remain always on and provide the enable controller function.

This article discusses a low-cost, low-power enable controller hardware solution that consumes only microamperes of current using a low-dropout linear regulator (LDO) plus a programmable logic device (PLD). The PLD comes preprogrammed with the logic you need to implement the decision-making function of the enable controller. *Figure 1* shows the proposed solution; its power supplies are typical for an automotive system powering an SoC.

Enable Controller Solution

This solution employs the <u>TPS7B85-Q1</u> off-battery LDO¹ and the <u>TPLD801-Q1 PLD</u>² (*Fig. 2*). Features in the TPS7B85-Q1 are specifically useful in this application:

• The basic LDO function provides a fixed 3.3- or 5-V output voltage (V_{OUT}) from a battery voltage (V_{BAT}) of up to 40 V. This V_{OUT} provides power to the TPLD801-Q1.

• A power-good (PG) output with pin-programmable delay. When applying $\rm V_{BAT},$ the LDO powers up. When the LDO $\rm V_{OUT}$ reaches regulation, PG goes high after a delay programmed by a capacitor on the DELAY pin. The TPLD801-Q1 uses the rising PG signal to detect and latch an initial application of $\rm V_{BAT}$ (FIRST_EN) to enable the system.

• An uncommitted SENSE comparator provides a logic high or low sense output (the SO pin) if its sense input pin (the SI pin) is above or below the 1.21-V internal voltage reference (V_{REF}), respectively. The SI pin has a maximum voltage of 40 V irrespective of whether the LDO V_{IN} is powered



or not. For blocking negative voltages, you can use diode D2. The comparator tests whether the ENABLE_IN signal's amplitude is above a certain voltage threshold. If it is, then the signal is allowed to pass to the TPLD801-Q1's enable input. This voltage threshold is adjustable through R4 and R5.

• A precision enable (EN) pin. The precision enable feature (as opposed to logic level enable) isn't documented in





2. This is the schematic for the enable controller.

the TPS7B85-Q1 datasheet, but the EN pin goes to a comparator with a 1.32-V V_{REF} threshold (rising) and hysteresis of 100 mV. It allows for the use of a resistor divider (R2, R3) from V_{BAT} to EN to ground to set a precise V_{BAT} startup voltage. Using the precision enable ensures that the LDO's output doesn't ramp with rising V_{BAT} (which has an unknown ramp rate), but waits until V_{BAT} is above the set startup voltage before turning on the LDO. In this case, V_{OUT} rises in approximately 240 µs, regardless of the V_{BAT} ramp rate. With the resistor values shown, the V_{BAT} startup voltage of the LDO is approximately 6.5 V, but it's adjustable through R2 and R3. The ramp rate of V_{OUT} is important because the TPLD801-Q1 has a maximum (slowest) allowable V_{CC} ramp rate of 0.25 V/ms.

Bleed resistor R1 discharges the output capacitor of the LDO (C1) during power down. The TPS7B85-Q1 has 30-k Ω internal pullup resistors on its PG and SO pins. The length of the PG delay is a matter of choice. The CDELAY = 4.7 nF gives a delay of approximately 4 ms (*Fig. 2*).

Some Design Notes on the TPLD801-Q1

The TPLD801-Q1 is an automotive-qualified PLD, integrating logic blocks such as flip-flops, counters, delays, logic gates, and a 25-kHz or 2-MHz oscillator, as well as dividers and a pipeline delay. TI's InterConnect Studio design tool can graphically design and simulate the logic design.

You can also use the <u>TPLD801 evaluation module</u> and <u>TPLD programmer kit</u> to permanently program the logic design into one-time programmable memory, or temporarily program the design into volatile registers.

At the heart of the TPLD801-Q1 logic design is a D-type flip-flop configured as a latch (ENABLE LATCH), so that the rising clock edge latches a logic-high output. Only the reset input can reset the latch. The latch output goes into two separate delay lines, each set to approximately 15 ms. When the latch output goes high, the EN_VBAT_PWR signal immediately goes high and enables the front-end power supply.

To allow time for the front end to power up first, the EN_ LV_PWR signal goes high approximately 15 ms later and enables the power supplies powering the SoC and the rest of the system.

It's possible to clock the ENABLE LATCH with a rising edge in two ways:

1. At the first enable event, which generates a rising edge on the PG output of the LDO.

2. With an ENABLE signal that's been passed to the PLD from the TPS7B85-Q1's SO output, and what the PLD has measured is longer than a pre-programmed duration. Alternatively, you could use an inverted ENABLE/ signal if you need a different application; but if unused, it's tied high.

In the second instance, and for the purpose of rejecting spurious noise signals, the PLD measures if the incoming ENABLE signal is long enough by passing it through a delay line that's clocked with the PLD's internal 25-kHz, divided-by-four oscillator. The 25-kHz oscillator is very low power, consuming 8.2 μ A.

The delay line count of 94 gives an approximate 15-ms total delay, although you can set this time to a different duration as required by the application. If the incoming ENABLE signal is still present during and after this delay, the output of the delay line goes high, which presents a rising edge to the ENABLE LATCH's clock and latches a logic high. If the incoming ENABLE signal wasn't present for the entire time, then the delay counter resets and the rising edge to the latch



doesn't occur.

When the electronic control unit needs to power down, the SoC's MCU issues a rising edge through a general-purpose input/output. This D ISABLE s ignal c onnects t o the open-drain transistor shown in *Figure 1* and pulls down the DISABLE/ pin of the PLD to reset the ENABLE LATCH. After the ENABLE LATCH resets, the EN_LV_PWR output goes low immediately; approximately 15 ms later, the EN_ VBAT_PWR output goes low.

This 15-ms delay enables the low-voltage power rails to sequence down in the correct order required by the SoC before the front-end power supply becomes disabled. The delay times between EN_VBAT_PWR and EN_LV_PWR rising or falling are configurable by changing the count of the delay lines.

Selecting the PLD inputs to be Schmitt-trigger inputs provides leeway in how fast the logic signals driving into them need to transition. The two enable output signals are configured as push-pull. (If using open drain instead, then this configuration gives a glitch on power-up, as the open drain outputs are pulled momentarily high by the pullup resistors before the one-time programmable memory, OTP, of the TPLD801-Q1 has loaded and configured the outputs to be open drain. Even with push-pull, the outputs are high



4. An 18-V ENABLE_IN signal is applied to the enable controller, which certainly has an amplitude that lets the TPS7B85-Q1 comparator pass it to the PLD. TPS7B85-Q1 SI pin voltage for a 18-V ENABLE_IN signal is shown in red and the ENABLE LATCH internal PLD voltage in blue.

impedance before the OTP memory loads; thus, you may need external pull-down resistors.) *Figure 3* shows the overall PLD design.

Bench Test Results for the PLD/LDO Combo

Figure 4 shows an 18V ENABLE_IN signal applied to the enable controller, which certainly has an amplitude that makes it possible for the TPS7B85-Q1 comparator to pass

it to the PLD. The signal also has a sufficient duration for detection being validated by the PLD. The ENABLE LATCH latches high in response to this ENABLE_IN signal and stays high even if the ENABLE_IN is toggled.

It's possible to successfully repeat this test for a low-amplitude, 3.4-V signal at the other extreme. Or you can repeat the tests for short duration, low-amplitude ENABLE_IN signals, or both, which are insufficient in duration or amplitude



5. This diagram reveals the behavior of the circuit when first applying the input power to the LDO. The TPS7B85-Q1 PG pin voltage is shown in red on first power-up and the ENABLE LATCH voltage is in blue.



6. These are the actual outputs of the PLD, including an approximate 15-ms delay during the power-up sequence. The EN_VBAT_PWR output is shown in red and EN_LV_PWR's output in blue from the PLD.



7. This highlights the sleep behavior, showing the EN_LV_PWR (blue) going low followed by the EN_VBAT_PWR signal (red).

to trigger the ENABLE LATCH to be high.

Figure 5 illustrates the behavior of the circuit when first applying the input power to the LDO. The PG pin goes high when the LDO regulates, and after a delay (set by CDELAY), the first power-on event is detected by the PLD and the EN-ABLE LATCH latches high. (This test used the default 1- μ F CDELAY capacitor of the evaluation board, which gives a much longer delay.)

The actual outputs of the PLD are shown in *Figure 6*, including an approximate 15-ms delay during the power-up sequence.

Figure 7 shows the PLD outputs during a DISABLE event, depicting the 15-ms delay.

Why the PLD/LDO Combo is Better than a Microcontroller

This low-cost and low-power, hardware-based solution for handling power-supply enable and disable functions removes the need for an external MCU and can be further customized. You also have the option of ordering a custom PLD with the logic design pre-programmed on it.

A pre-programmed PLD avoids the time and cost of writing and maintaining firmware for an MCU. Moreover, it avoids having to program an MCU in your production environment. These time-saving features of having the preprogrammed PLD and the fact that the TPLD801-Q1 and TPS7B85-Q1 hardware solution is low cost saves overall system expense.

The TPLD801-Q1 is available in a small package measuring 1.6×2.1 mm and the TPS7B85-Q1 comes in a 3-

 \times 3-mm package, which saves space in the overall printed circuit board layout. This is helpful to printed-circuit-board designers who often face the task of having to fit more functionality into the same board area.

Acknowledgement: The author wishes to thank Thijs Tooth for his assistance in the bench testing of this circuit idea.

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References

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2. "<u>TPLD801-Q1 Automotive Programmable Logic</u> <u>Device with 6-GPIO</u>." Texas Instruments datasheet, literature No. SCPS301, September 2024.