Backup Power Solution Using Supercap with TPS61030 for Data Concentrator Circuit

Circuit Description
This reference design delivers a backup power circuits using a supercap with the boost converter TPS61030. In the low-power system that requires a backup switchover circuit at system’s failure, a supercap together with TPS61030 could provide sufficient power to maintain data communication prior to the whole system’s complete shutdown.

Design Resources
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- TPS61030 Product Folder
- TL321A Product Folder
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![Backup Power Solution Using Supercap with TPS61030 for Data Concentrator Circuit](image)

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1 Introduction

Data concentrator is a critical device in automated metering infrastructure of smart grid. It securely aggregates the data from a number of meters and sends the data to the centralized utility servers via GPRS, GSM or other telecom networks. The data concentrator must operate for a period of time in case of the power supply failure or system brownout, which requires sufficient backup power for the equipment to the data storage or communication. So an additional energy storage device is applied in the data concentrator, either the battery or supercap. Battery has higher energy density while the supercap has better performance at output inrush current capability and lifetime which makes the supercap more competitive for the application in the data concentrator.

As the output voltage of one cell supercap is not higher than 2.7V, a boost converter is needed to raise the output voltage to power the GSM/GPRS module, the voltage of which is higher than 3.6V normally. Furthermore, the low input voltage boost converter can fully utilize the supercap’s energy.

This reference design illustrates a backup power solution for the data concentrator using the boost converter TPS61030 and a supercap. The design includes the schematic and layout design, components selection and performance waveforms.
2 Design Process

2.1 Block Diagram and Operating Principle

Figure 1 shows the block diagram of the reference design. It mainly consists of a supercap, a charger circuit for supercap, and a boost converter.

Normally, the $V_{sys}$ is powered by the grid and the voltage can be set to 5.3V, using device such as an adaptor. The output voltage $V_{out}$ is around 5V considering 0.3V forward voltage of the schottky diode. At the meantime, the boost converter TPS61030 stops switching and the $V_{sys}$ charges the supercap if its voltage $V_{sup}$ is lower than 2.65V.

If the grid browns out and $V_{sys}$ drops down to lower than 5V, TPS61030 starts switching and maintains $V_{out}$ at 5V utilizing the energy of supercap. The schottky diode prevents the current flow from $V_{out}$ to $V_{sys}$.

Figure 2 shows the theoretical operating waveforms of this reference design. The main load $I_{load}$ is a GPRS class 10 module, of which the average current is about 500mA. But the pulse current of $I_{load}$ reaches 2A and lasts 1.154ms. In order to deal with the pulse current, aluminum electrolytic capacitors are applied at output to support $V_{out}$ during 1.154ms period. Using this aluminum E-capacitor, the output current requirement for the adapter and boost converter is reduced to 500mA, which will also reduce the cost of the system.
### 2.2 Schematic and Component Design

Figure 3 illustrates the charging circuit for the supercap. The two 49.9ohm resistors control the charging current. The N-MOSFET and the TL431A limit the supercap voltage to 2.65V when the supercap is fully charged. The Schottky diode D2 prevents reverse current when Vsys is at low voltage.

When the voltage of supercap is lower than 2.65V, the voltage at TL431A PIN 2 is lower than 2.5V, so its PIN 1 voltage is almost equal to VSYS, and the SI1012 turns on. The charging current is defined by equation (1).

\[
I_{chg} = \frac{V_{SYS} - V_{D2} - V_{sup}}{R_{ch}}
\]

Where
- \(V_{sys}\): input voltage of charger;  
- \(V_{D2}\): Forward voltage of Schottky diode D2  
- \(R_{ch}\): resistor to set the charging current

When \(V_{sup}=0V\), the charging current will be

\[
I_{chg\_max} = \frac{5.3 - 0.3}{49.9/2} \approx 200mA
\]

When \(V_{sup}=2.6V\), the charging current is

\[
I_{chg\_max} = \frac{5.3 - 0.3 - 2.6}{49.9/2} \approx 96mA
\]

The maximum power dissipation on the charge current setting resistors happens at \(V_{sup}=0V\), as shown in following equation (2), around 1W. Considering 50% power margin, two 2512 package resistors in parallel are used. Each of them can supports maximum 1W at 70°C ambient temperature from datasheet.

\[
P_{chg\_max} = (V_{SYS} - V_{D2}) \cdot I_{chg\_max} \approx 1W
\]

When the supercap voltage reaches the setting point 2.65V, the N-MOSFET SI1012 is turned off, the supercap stop charging.

This kind of charging circuit benefits the cost-effective, but results in low efficiency and long charging time. One of the other solutions is a buck converter like TPS62750, which has a current setting pin to configure the charging current and its efficiency is around 90% at the output current ranging from 100mA to 600mA.

The boost converter circuit is shown at Figure 4. When the Vsys powers on, the schottky diode D1 conducts. The output voltage \(V_{out}\) will be the \(V_{sys}\) minus the D1 forward voltage, which is about 0.3V when \(I_{load} = 500mA\). The \(V_{sys}\) can be set to 5.3V to make sure that the \(V_{out}\) keeps at 5V in high load.
In order to stop the TPS61030 from switching at the \( V_{\text{sys}} \) power on condition, the boost converter TPS61030 must adjust its regulation voltage to a point lower than the \( V_{\text{out}} \). This function is implemented by TPS61030 LBI pin and LBO pin (pin 6 and pin 7). When \( V_{\text{sys}} = 5.3 \text{V} \), the voltage of LBI is defined by the divider resistors in Figure 4.

\[
V_{\text{LBI}} = \frac{R_f}{R_f + R_s} \times V_{\text{sys}} = \frac{100}{100 + 909} \times 5.3 \approx 525 \text{mV}
\]

As the \( V_{\text{LBI}} \) is higher than 510mV, the LBO pin will be high impedance, and the TPS61030 regulation voltage \( V_{\text{out}_{\text{re}}} \) is defined by equation (3), where \( R_6 \) and \( R_{10} \) are the feedback divide resistors, and the \( V_{\text{ref}} \) is the reference voltage for FB pin.

\[
V_{\text{out}_{\text{re}}} = \frac{R_6 + R_{10}}{R_{10}} \times V_{\text{ref}} = \frac{1000 + 124}{124} \times 0.5 \approx 4.5 \text{V}
\]

As the real \( V_{\text{out}} = 5 \text{V} \), \( V_{\text{out}_{\text{re}}} \) can be set to 4.5V, which is lower than real \( V_{\text{out}} \) even considering the voltage drop caused by load transient. The \( V_{\text{out}_{\text{re}}} \) at this condition should be not too low; otherwise the high power dissipation may occur at the feedback resistor. At the same time, the power save mode of TPS61030 must be enable (SYNC PIN connect to GND) to stop the TPS61030 from switching. The boost converter only consumes quiescent current, 20µA typically.

When the \( V_{\text{sys}} \) powers off, and becomes lower than 5V, the \( V_{\text{LBI}} \) will be lower than 510mV. An internal MOSFET shorts the LBO pin to GND, thus \( V_{\text{out}_{\text{re}}} \) will be

\[
V_{\text{out}_{\text{re}}} = \frac{R_6 + R_{10}}{R_{10}} \times V_{\text{ref}} = \frac{1000 + 124/1000}{124/1000} \times 0.5 \approx 5.0 \text{V}
\]

The TPS61030 starts operating and maintains the \( V_{\text{out}} = V_{\text{out}_{\text{re}}} = 5 \text{V} \). As \( V_{\text{out}} > V_{\text{sys}} \), the Schottky diode D1 prevents reverse current flowing from \( V_{\text{out}} \) to \( V_{\text{sys}} \).

As in Figure 2, the main load is the GPRS class 10 module with an average output current around 500mA. The capacity of the supercap is defined by equation (4), obtained from energy conversation principle.

\[
\frac{C_{\text{sup}}}{2} \left( V_{\text{sup}_{\text{max}}}^2 - V_{\text{sup}_{\text{min}}}^2 \right) = \frac{V_{\text{out}} \cdot I_{\text{out}} \cdot T}{\eta} \tag{4}
\]

Where
\[V_{\text{sup}_{\text{max}}} : \text{maximum voltage of the supercap;}
\]
\[V_{\text{sup}_{\text{min}}} : \text{minimum voltage of the supercap, defined by the UVLO of the TPS61030;}
\]
\[\eta : \text{efficiency of the TPS61030; } T : \text{operating period after } V_{\text{sys}} \text{ power off;}
\]

Giving \( V_{\text{sup}_{\text{max}}} = 2.65 \text{V}, V_{\text{sup}_{\text{min}}} = 1.7 \text{V}, \eta = 75\%, T = 60\text{s}, \) the \( C_{\text{sup}} \) is

\[
C_{\text{sup}} = \frac{2 \times 5 \times 0.5}{0.75 \times (2.65 \times 2.65 - 1.75 \times 1.75)} \times 60 = 97 \text{Farad}
\]
A 100Farad/2.7V supercap is selected in the reference design.

The inductor peak current of TPS61030 is defined by the equation (5) from its datasheet, where $L$ is the input inductor, and $f_s$ is the switching frequency. The TPS61030 limits its inductor peak current at typical 4A, so the maximum output current is defined by equation (6).

$$I_{L\_peak} = \frac{V_{out} \cdot I_{out}}{V_{in} \cdot \eta} + \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{V_{out} - V_{in}}{L \cdot V_{out} \cdot f_s} \right)$$  \hspace{1cm} (5)

$$I_{out} = \frac{V_{in} \cdot \eta}{V_{out}} \left[ \frac{I_{L\_peak}}{2} \right] - \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{V_{out} - V_{in}}{L \cdot V_{out} \cdot f_s} \right)$$  \hspace{1cm} (6)

In the reference design, $L = 6.1\mu H$, and $f_s = 600kHz$ according to the TPS61030 datasheet. The maximum output current at $V_{in}=1.7V$ is the smallest, which is

$$I_{max\_1.7} = \frac{1.7 \times 0.75}{5} \times \left[ 4 - \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{5 - 1.7}{6.1\mu H \times 5 \times 600kHz} \right) \right] \approx 0.98A$$

This maximum output current at $V_{in} = 1.7V$ is higher than the average load current 500mA, but smaller than the peak current 2A. So an aluminum electrolytic capacitor is added at the output to support current gap during this 1.154ms period. The $V_{out}$ drop can be calculated by equation (7), where $C_{alu}$ and $ESR_{alu}$ are the capacitance and effective series resistor of the aluminum electrolytic capacitor respectively.

$$\Delta V_{alu} = \frac{I_{load\_peak} - I_{max\_1.7}}{C_{alu}} \times 1.154ms + \left( I_{Load\_peak} - I_{max\_1.7} \right) \times ESR_{alu}$$  \hspace{1cm} (7)

A 4700µF capacitor EEUFR0J472 is adopted in the reference design. Its ESR is 15mΩ at 20°C. According to the equation (7), the voltage drop of the $V_{out}$ is

$$\Delta V_{alu} = \frac{2A - 0.98A}{4700\mu F} \times 1.154ms + (2A - 0.98A) \times 15m\Omega \approx 265mV$$

So the minimum output voltage of $V_{out}$ is about 4.74V, which is high enough to support the GPRS module.

Although a large aluminum electrolytic capacitor is used, a small ceramic capacitor combined with a tantalum capacitor or a ceramic capacitor larger than 47µF is still needed to absorb the switching current of the inductor, because ESL (Effective Series Inductor) of an aluminum capacitor make it not suitable to smooth high frequency voltage ripple. The small ceramic capacitor combined with a tantalum capacitor is adopted at this reference design.

### 2.3 PCB Layout

The reference design is implemented using 7.8cm by 5cm and 2 layers PCB. Figure 5 shows the top layer and top silk screen. All the components are placed in top layer. The C3 is the 100F/2.7V supercap. The C7 and C8 are the output aluminum capacitors. The charger circuit is placed in upper left corner of the PCB, while boost converter with its external component is placed at the bottom right. Make sure the output ceramic capacitor is as close as possible to the TPS61030.
The Figure 6 shows the layout of bottom layer.

The final reference design board is shown in Figure 7.
Figure 7: Reference Design Board

3 Bench Test Result

3.1 The Output Voltage after $V_{\text{SYS}}$ Failure

A power supply Agilent E3634A is used to power the $V_{\text{sys}}$. The power supply is turned on and off to simulate the blackout and recovery of the grid.

The output voltage $V_{\text{out}}$ before and after the grid failure at $I_{\text{out}}=100\,\text{mA}$ condition is showed in Figure 8, where CH1 is the supercap voltage $V_{\text{sup}}$, CH2 is the boost converter output voltage $V_{\text{out}}$, CH3 is the $V_{\text{sys}}$, and CH4 is the SW pin voltage of TPS61030 $V_{\text{sw}}$.

When the $V_{\text{sys}}$ voltage is at 5.3V, it supports the $V_{\text{out}}$ through a Schottky diode and also charges the supercap, so the TPS61030 doesn't switch; when grid fails, the $V_{\text{sys}}$ drops down. The boost converter starts switching to support $V_{\text{out}}$ using energy in the supercap. It is observed from the waveform that the $V_{\text{out}}$ keeps stable all the time.

Figure 8: $V_{\text{out}}$ at Grid Blackout
In Figure 9, the $V_{sys}$ voltage returns to 5.3V to power the $V_{out}$, and the TPS61030 stop switching again. The $V_{out}$ keeps stable in the transient period.

![Figure 9: $V_{out}$ at Grid Recovery](image)

### 3.2 Output Voltage at GPRS Module Operating

Figure 10 shows the output voltage waveform at GPRS module operation when the $V_{sys}$ voltage is normal. In the figure, $I_{load}$ is the GPRS module current simulated by the resistor load. The $V_{out}$ drops to 4.76V from 4.98V when $I_{load}$ = 2A, and returns back to 4.98V if $I_{load}$ comes to zero. The voltage under-shoot is mainly caused by the Schottky diode forward voltage at different current.

![Figure 10: $V_{out}$ at $V_{sys}$ Voltage Normal](image)

Figure 11 shows the $V_{out}$ waveform when the $V_{sys}$ fails and the GPRS module is still operating. The $V_{out}$ is powered by the supercap, which is 2.6V at this condition. The under-shoot is only about 180mV, and the $V_{out}$ keeps above 4.8V.
Figure 11: \( V_{\text{out}} \) Load Transient at \( V_{\text{sup}}=2.6\text{V} \)

The \( V_{\text{out}} \) switching frequency ripple at \( I_{\text{out}}=2\text{A}, V_{\text{sup}}=2.6\text{V} \) condition is showed as Figure 12, where the \( V_{\text{out}}(\text{AC}) \) is the output switching ripple. The peak-peak voltage ripple is about 136mV, which mainly be caused by the ESR of the tantalum capacitor and the aluminum capacitor.

Figure 12: \( V_{\text{out}} \) Switching Ripple at \( V_{\text{sup}}=2.6\text{V} \)

Figure 13 and Figure 14 show the \( V_{\text{out}} \) load transient performance and output switching ripple at \( V_{\text{sup}}=1.7\text{V} \) condition respectively. The \( V_{\text{out}} \) keeps between 4.98V and 4.72V and switching frequency ripple is about 140mV peak to peak.
3.3 Charging and Discharging the Supercap

The supercap charging curve from 0V to the targeted 2.65V is shown in Figure 15. It takes around 50 minutes to fully charge the supercap.

The supercap discharge curve when GPRS module operates is showing at Figure 16. The boost converter starts to power the load at \( V_{\text{sup}} = 2.64V \) and stop at \( V_{\text{sup}} = 1.65V \), which is the UVLO point of the TPS61030. The lasting time is 63s, which meets the design requirement but a little smaller than the expectation. One main reason is that some energy in the supercap can’t be utilized when discharged fast.
Figure 15: Supercap Charging Curve

Figure 16: Supercap Discharge Curve
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