**I. Summary**

Small-size satellites are seriously in research not only for studying but also supporting the commercial purposes. Because of their tiny dimensions, it is convenient for the unique tasks such as: relaying signal, local area observing, environmental index measuring… which would down the price of both manufacturing and launching process. Therefore, small-size satellites are more and more be interested in.

Relating to jobs of satellites mentioned above, they need the system called Satellite Ground Station (SGS) for receiving control signals and communicating. Usually, the host (who has satellite launched) will own or renting one or some system for operating. However, orbit time of one satellite does not allow it to link to the SGS all the time. This is because most of small-size satellites work in LEO (Low earth orbit) and usually flight over the SGS twice per day. In the early orbit phase, all small-sized satellites are close for several days, even one month. All satellites developers are eager to assess the status of satellites as early as possible. The bigger orbit radius, the longer satellite can contact to its SGS. The problem is how to receive all the satellite signals simultaneously.

In the demand of getting signal as comprehensive as possible, people need to distribute SGS around the earth. This is nearly impossible because of boundary of nations and cost for building, operating and maintaining. The group of sharing private SGS seems to be a good solution. Individual owning SGS (so called Host) could join a network of sharing SGS. The requirements (bandwidth, rating, durability…) should be established when they join the network. People who wants to get signal from satellites (so called User) could match their requirements to suitable available SGS. To satisfying most various types of satellites in many frequencies, the SGS may have a mechanism to switch or turning between different frequencies which will easily be done using Software-Defined Radio (SDR).

Relating to SDR and its functionalities, generally understand that instead of using many hardware components in radio system design (mixers, filters, amplifiers…), the job is simplified by combined all of them in FPGA structure which allows hardware to be reconstructed by tuning parameters in computers. The benefits of SDR varies in areas form civilian to military, from class to industry. In satellite communication, the more sensitive ground station implies a higher quality of transmission between satellite and the earth. These day, SDR exponentially simplifies SGS design and increase the sensitivity based on it’s characteristic of low cost, portability and flexibility on solution.

VGU communication lab are equipped the USRP (Universal Software Radio Peripherals) which DSP engine and open-source SDR hardware designed by Matt Ettus. There is a tool call GNURadio providing an GUI mean to tune parameters of the SDR. The USRP are easily used to couple radio spectrum into digital world, and GNURadio can be used to manipulate the spectrum in digital domain. Being armed with transmitting and receiving capabilities, the possibilities of SDR to radio operator are endless.

**II. The project includes steps below:**

1. Doing comprehensive literature research on space engineering, spacecraft dynamic and satellite communicating.

2. Constructing azimuth and elevation rotational structure. Design and building the mechanical structure of universal-mounting rotary antennas. Figuring out the optimal solution for electrical system and design. Programing a software with graphic user interface helping people to control structure manually and automatically.

3. Observing satellites broadcasting signal using SDR with suitable antenna. The system should adapt with many frequencies.

4. Evaluating the performance and accuracy. Comparing with given projects if possible.

5. Finalizing and writing report.

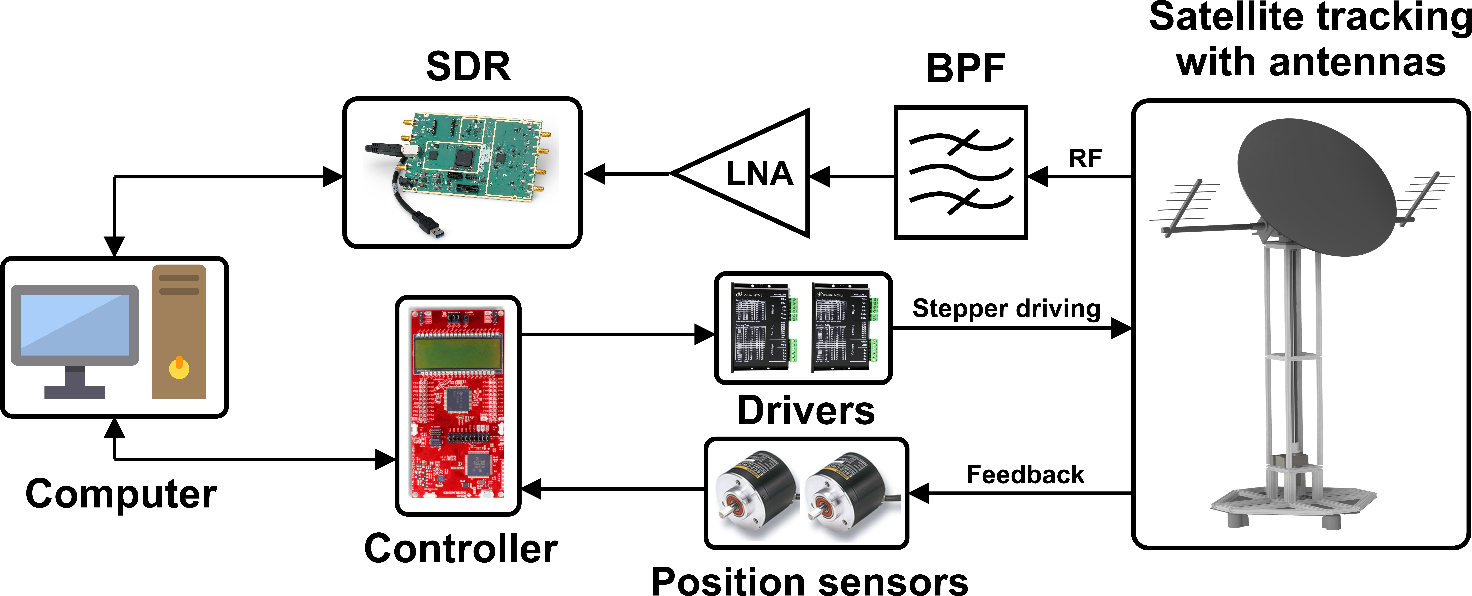


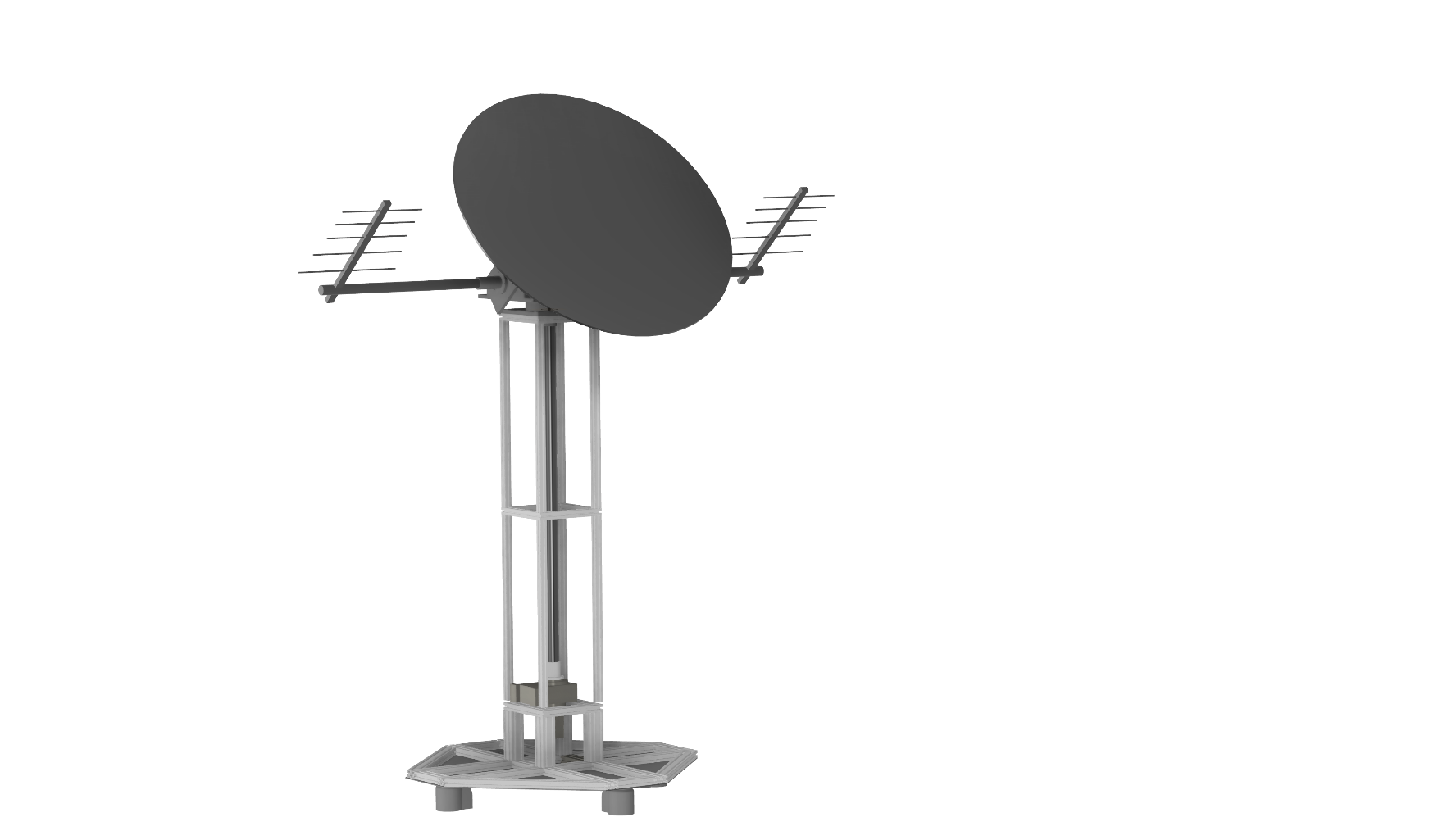
Figure: Flow of RF signal and tuning mechanism

**Detailed description:**

In the step one, we need to do research on previous relating problems to find the similarities for boosting the process. We will evaluate the demand of using SGS based on statistic information of satellites launched or going to be launch about: working frequencies, orbits, communicating and life time. The purpose of job is figuring out which suitable antenna and LNA we should use and economic benefit in the future. Moreover, we have to achieve the basic knowledge of spacecraft dynamic for and orbit studying for getting familiar with space positioning.

The work load in step two is very heavy. Firstly, we need to design a suitable structure which could be carry the universal-mount responsibility which means we want to mount as many kind of antenna as possible. The reason is about the SDR will work with many frequencies based on specific purpose, so the antennas must be suitable. The mechanical structure will allow the oriented antenna rotating in both azimuth and elevation axis. Secondly, the system requires appropriate motors and driving system as well as high precision electrical system. To manipulate this rotational system, we need to program a software running on computer to allow it working in both manual and automatic mode. The structure is expected to work outside with wind and rain resistance.

*We are currently working in this step and photos below are our results so far.*



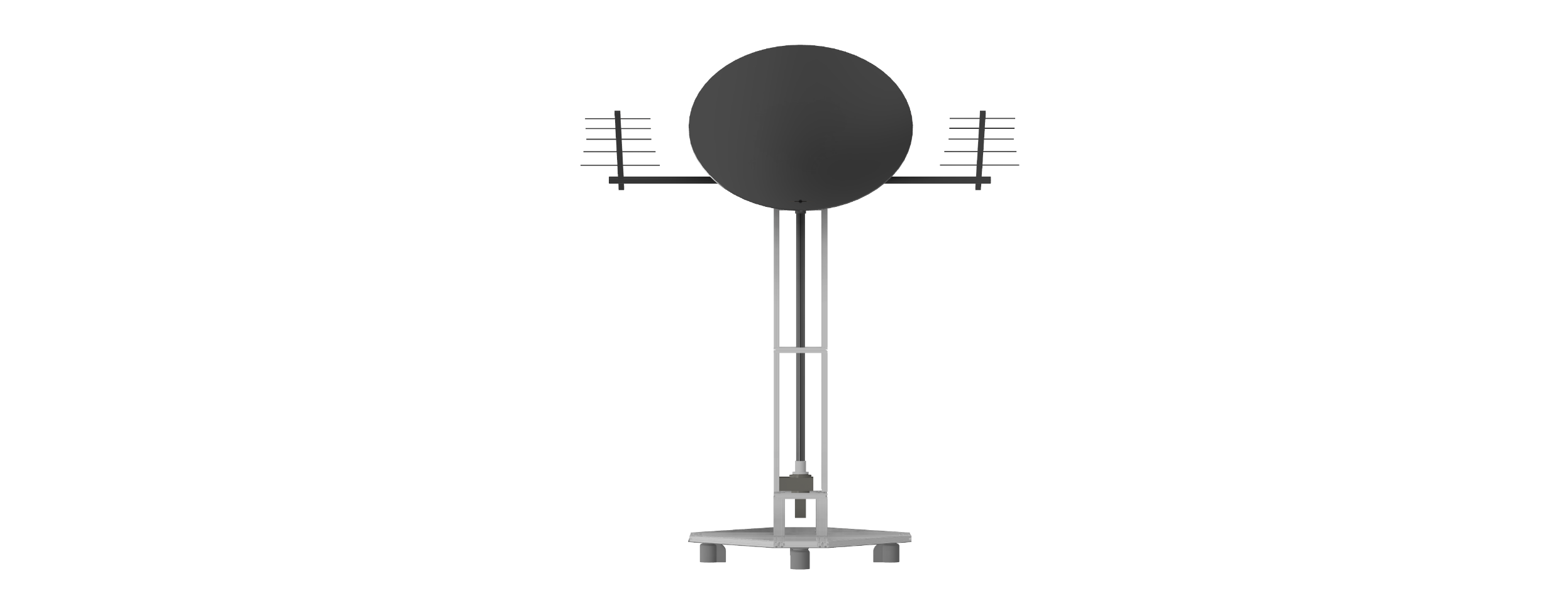
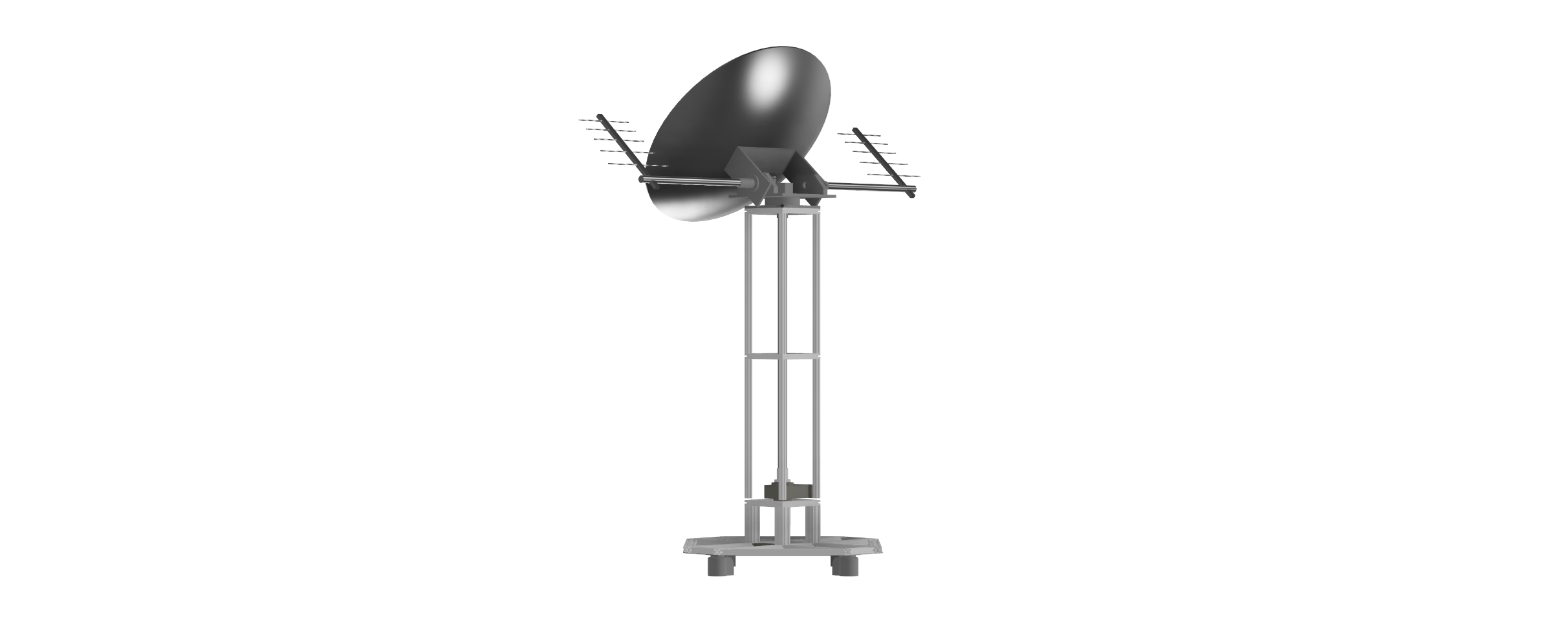


Figure: General CAD model of satellite tracking mechanism

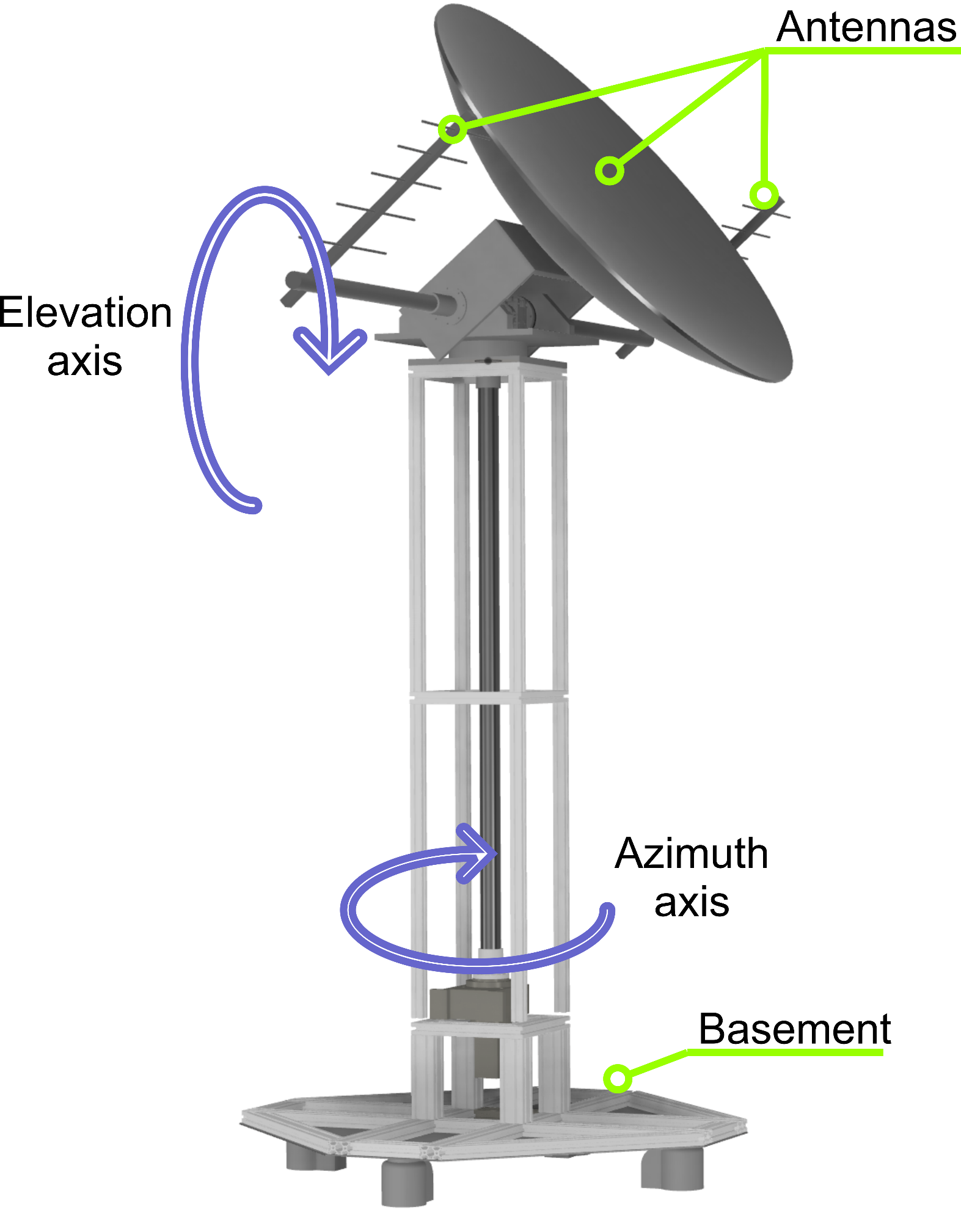


Figure: Working principle of rotary structure



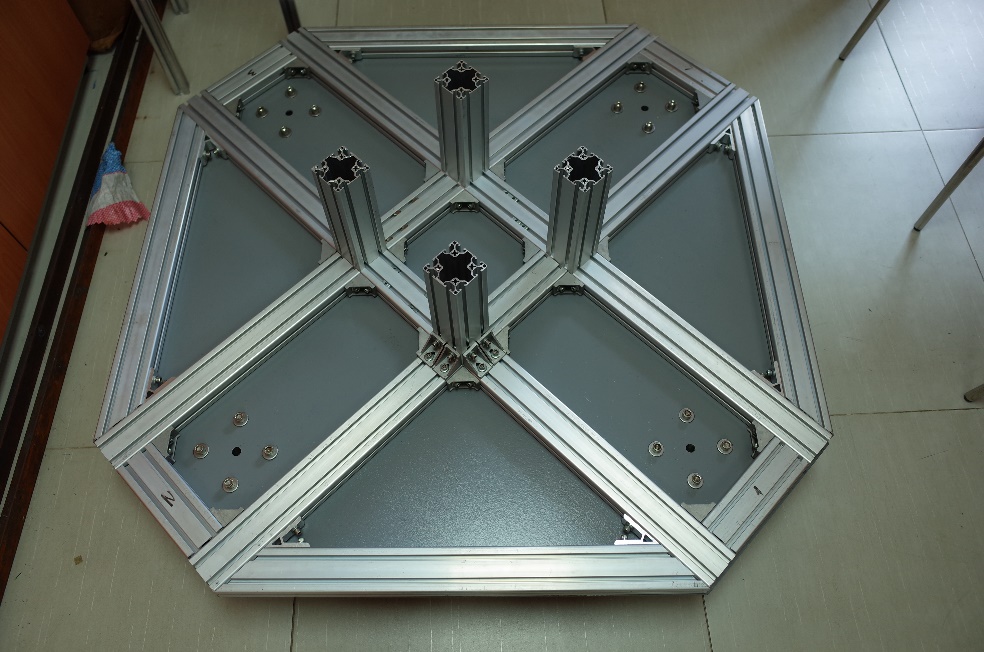


Figure: Structure body under constructing

In step three, we will work with SDR device which allows wide range frequency varying.

Using a GNURadio, it can be easily manipulated via block diagrams similar to Simulink. This stage will happen paralleling to the end of step two because while working with GNU radio, it will contribute some ideas for the software. The general idea of this is input the TLE (two-line elements which provide parameters about launched satellites) information of satellite and its working frequency, the rotary structure will point suitable antenna toward and keep tracking this satellite.

In the final step, we will summarize and write the report of the progress of this project. We will point out some important experience to develop later relating projects.

Expected outcomes:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Description | Criteria/Deliverable |
| Hardware | Two axes rotational system with universal mount for satellite tracking purpose and its controller working in both manual and automatic mode | . Mechanical frame  . Two axes with accuracy ±5 degrees and speed of 1 degree/second in minimum  . Have ability to be mounted:  + Parabolic antenna: 3m diameter, 20kg  + Two Yagi antennas: 0.5m x 0.5m x 2m, 5kg  . Wide range working frequency based on capacity of the used SDR (USRP B210: 70Mhz to 6Ghz) |
| Software | A program interfacing with SDR for frequency switching and signal processing | . Software to control the azimuth and elevation axis manually by tuning gauge in user interface.  . Software has availability to track the LEO satellite automatically.  . Software can interface with SDR, tuning frequencies.  . Software can receive the beacon signal and un-decoded downlink data. |
| Paper |  | Paper about Satellite ground station using SDR. |

In conclusion, in Vietnam, it is not only just a new project but also advanced. Being involve in this, we are going to take a big challenge because of the constraint of budget and time. However, the successful project will not only gain big opportunities for commercial benefits but also spark a light on space engineering research in VGU.

**III. Timeline (\*)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Step | From | To | Duration | Jobs | Detail | In charge |
| 1 | October 21st , 2018 | December 1st , 2018 | 1.5 months | Literature review and planning for the structure | Statistic the need of SGS | Vu |
| Satellite communicating | Vu |
| Dynamic of spacecraft | Khoa and Dung |
| Mechanism of structure | Dr Hien, Vu, Khoa and Dung |
| 2 | December 6th, 2018 | April 29th, 2019 | 5 months | Building rotary system | Detail design of mechanical structure | Dr Hien, Vu and Khoa |
| Construct the structure | Vu, Khoa and Dung |
| Design electrical system | Dr Hien and Vu |
| Software programing and graphic user interface | Vu |
| 3 | February 1st, 2019 | May 29th, 2019 | 4 months | SDR research | Interfacing with SDR to turning frequency and signal processing | Vu |
| Construct antenna feed line and switching | Dr Hien anh Vu |
| Combine the SDR part to software at step 2 | Vu |
| 4 | June 1st , 2019 | August 15th, 2019 | 2.5 months | Evaluate the model | Evaluate the accuracy of orienting | Dr Hien, Khoa and Dung |
| Perform the tracking ability on broadcast signal of satellite | Dr Hien and Vu |
| 5 | August 20th, 2019 | October 1st, 2019 | 1.5 months | Complete the report and papers | Writing report | Vu, Khoa and Dung |
| Paper for rotary part | Khoa and Dung |
| Paper for SDR part | Vu |

*\* Estimated timeline is set up based on our team current financial status expected receiving granting before March, 2019*