SILESIAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
FACULTY OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Department of Power Electronics, Electrical Drives and Robotics

Master's thesis

To be determined

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CONTENTS

1 WHAT IS ENERGY HARVESTING?

Energy Harvesting is a process of using ambient energy by converting it into a usable form, i.e. electricity or heat. It is important to point out that energy harvesting has been around for quite a long time, since solar panels, wind turbines and water turbines are in constant use for a few decades, providing people with environmentally clean energy [1].

There are some important issues related to any energy source that could be potentially used for harvesting. First of all, it is crucial to evaluate intensity and availability of that source. Subsequently, one should find out a cost-effectiveness of the solution as well as the influence of the harvesting process on the primary energy source [1].

Vibration-based Energy Harvesting incorporates a number of different fields of study, i.e. material science, mechanics or electrical engineering, just to name a few. Last sentence implies that the analysis of a piezoelectric generator itself is not a straightforward process. The electromechanical response of this device relies thoroughly on the source of ambient energy [2].

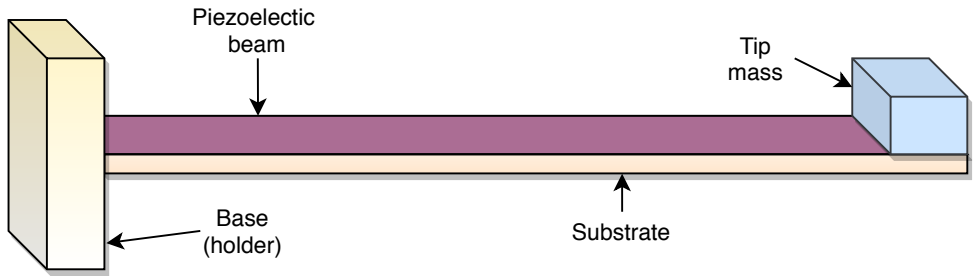

Table 1.1: Common data for some of Energy Harvesting Sources [1]

Type	Conditions	Power Density	Area or Volume	Energy/Day
Vibration	$1m/s^2$	$100\mu W/cm^3$	$1cm^2$	$8.64J$ (continuous vibration)
Solar	Outdoors	$7500\mu W/cm^2$	$1cm^2$	$324J$ (sunny half a day)
Solar	Indoors	$100\mu W/cm^2$	$1cm^2$	$4.32J$ (sunny half a day)
Thermal	$\Delta T = 5°C$	$60\mu W/cm^2$	$1cm^2$	$2.59J$ (heat available for half a day)

2 MEASUREMENT SETUP DESIGN

A proper measurement process is a crucial part of this project. Having said that, a custom data acquisition board is to be designed.

First of all, it is vital to highlight most important features required to achieve desired performance. There are four major aspects that have to be taken into account, namely, the ADC resolution as well as the input voltage range, the bandwidth and high input impedance of the analog front-end. Apart from that, one should take care of easy interfacing to personal computer, thus compact size and USB interface would be considered as huge assets.

The previous paragraph introduced briefly main functionalities of the target device. It is quite easy to notice that there would be a lot of trade-offs to consider through the design process. Compact size and the complex analog circuitry usually do not mix, especially when

planning to get a device of USB mass storage size. These facts are forcing the designer to look for a microcontroller that provides decent ADCs, also in terms of the sampling rate. Since the project is dealing with piezoelectric generators, there is always a risk of relatively high voltages at the input terminals, especially when harvesters are not connected to any load. To face this problem, the data acquisition board would be equipped with two different means of protection. The first one takes care of the input stage of the device. The second one is a classic galvanic isolation between the microcontroller (as well as the analog front end) and the personal computer. This way, there is no risk of damaging host devices utilizing the data acquisition system. The summary of the above-mentioned description is presented in the Figure 2.1.

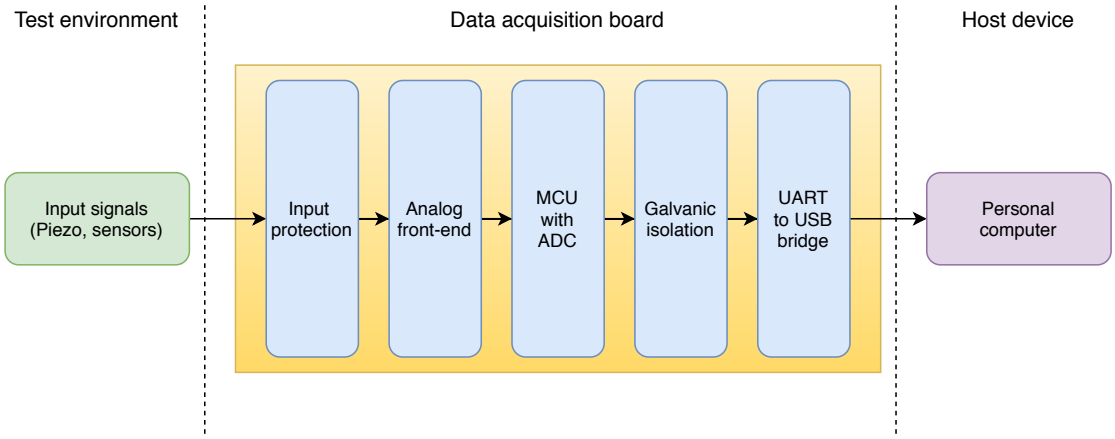

Figure 2.1: Measurement setup overview

2.1 Design requirements

REFERENCES

[1] N. W. Stephen Beeby, *Energy Harvesting for Autonomous Systems*. Artech House, 2010. ISBN: 978-1-59693-718-5.

[2] D. J. I. Alper Erturk, *Piezoelectric Energy Harvesting*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-470-68254-8.