

AEM10941 Evaluation Board User Guide

Description

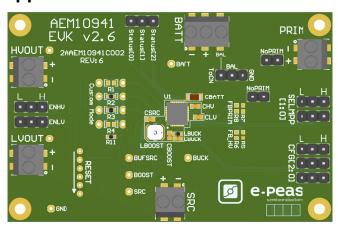
The AEM10941 evaluation board is a printed circuit board (PCB) featuring all the needed components to operate the AEM10941 integrated circuit (IC). Please refer to the datasheet for all the useful details about the AEM10941 (Document DS_AEM10941).

The AEM10941 evaluation board allows users to test the e-peas IC and analyze its performances in a laboratory-like setting.

It allows easy connections to the energy harvester, the storage element, the low-voltage and the high-voltage loads. It also provides all the configuration access to set the device in any one of the modes described in the datasheet. The control and status signals are available on standard pin headers, allowing users to configure for any usage scenario and evaluate the relevant performance.

The AEM10941 evaluation board is a plug and play, intuitive and efficient tool for making the appropriate decisions (component selection, operating modes...) for the design of a highly efficient subsystem powered by solar energy harvesting in your target application.

Appearance



Features

Two-way screw terminals

- Source of energy (PV cell).
- Low-voltage load.
- High-voltage load.
- Primary energy storage element.

Three-way screw terminals

- Energy storage element (Battery or (super)capacitor).

3-pin headers

- Maximum power point tracker (MPPT) configuration.
- Low drop-out regulators (LDOs) enabling.
- Energy storage elements and LDOs configuration.
- Dual-cell supercapacitor configuration.

2-pin headers

- Primary battery configuration.

1-pin headers

- Access to status pins.

Provision for resistors

- Custom mode configuration.
- Primary battery configuration.

Evaluation Kit Information

Part Number	Dimensions
2AAEM10941C002 REV:6	76 mm x 49 mm

Device Information

Part Number	Dimensions
10AEM10941C0010	5 mm x 5 mm



1. Connections Diagram

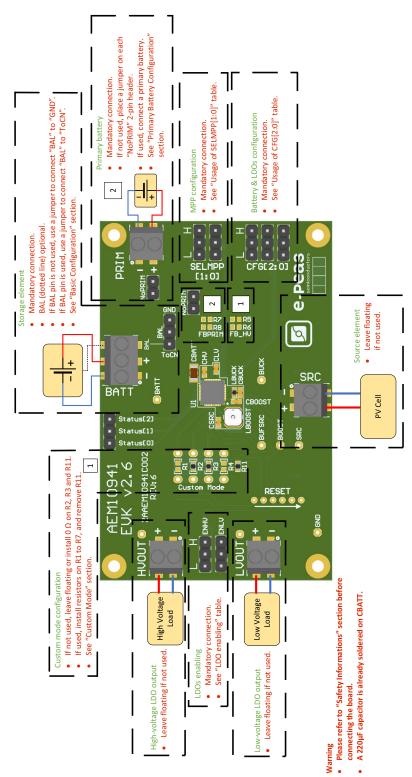


Figure 1: Connection diagram

Note: if R1, R2, R3, R4 and R11 are not mounted (and thus, SET_OVDIS, SET_OVCH and SET_CHRDY are floating), make sure that no power source is connected to SRC or to PRIM when CFG[2:0] is LLL (custom mode) or floating. This would lead to damaging the AEM10941. Having SET_OVDIS, SET_OVCH and SET_CHRDY tied to BUCK by installing 0 Ω on R2, R3 and R11 prevents this behavior.



1.1. Signals Description

		If used	If not used	
NAME	FUNCTION	CONNECTION		
Power signals				
SRC	Connection to the harvested energy source.	Connect the source element.	Leave floating.	
BATT	Connection to the energy storage element.	Connect the storage element in addition to CBATT 1 (min 150 μ F).	Do not remove CBATT.	
BAL	Connection to mid-point of a dual-cell supercapacitor.	Connect mid-point of supercapacitor and a jumper from "BAL" to "ToCN".	Use a jumper to connect "BAL" to "GND".	
PRIM	Connection to the primary battery.	Connect primary battery and remove the "NoPRIM" jumpers.	Connect a jumper to each "NoPRIM" 2-pin.	
LVOUT	Output of the low-voltage LDO regulator.	Connect a load.	Leave floating.	
HVOUT	Output of the high-voltage LDO regulator.	Connect a load.	Leave floating.	
Debug signals				
VBOOST	Output of the boost converter.			
VBUCK	Output of the buck converter.			
BUFSRC	Connection to an external capacitor buffering the boost converter input.			
Configuration signals				
CFG[2:0]	Configuration of the threshold voltages for the energy storage element.	Connect jumpers (see Table 2).	Cannot be left floating (see Table 2).	
SELMPP[1:0]	Configuration of the MPP ratio.	Connect jumpers (see Table 4).	Cannot be left floating (see Table 4).	
FB_PRIM_D FB_PRIM_U	Configuration of the primary battery.	Use resistors R7-R8 (see Section 2.3.2).	Connect a jumper to each "NoPRIM" 2-pin.	
FB_HV	Configuration of the high-voltage LDO in the custom mode.	Use resistor R5-R6 (see Section 2.3.1).	Leave floating.	
Control signals				
ENHV	Enabling pin for the high-voltage LDO.	Connect jumper (see Table 3).	Cannot be left floating.	
ENLV	Enabling pin for the low-voltage LDO.	Connect jumper (see Table 3).	Cannot be left floating.	
Status signals				
STATUS[2]	Logic output. Asserted when the AEM performs a MPP evaluation.			
STATUS[1]	Logic output. Asserted if the battery voltage falls under Vovdis or if the AEM is taking energy from the primary battery.			
STATUS[0]	Logic output. Asserted when the LDOs can be enabled.			

Table 1: Pin description

1. CBATT capacity on the EvK may vary depending on suppliers availability, with a minimum value of 150 μ F (see CBATT value on Figure 15).



2. General Considerations

2.1. Safety Information

Always perform the following steps in the correct order:

- 1. Reset the board see "How to reset the AEM10941 evaluation board" on Figure 2.
- 2. Completely configure the PCB (jumpers/resistors):
 - MPP configuration (SELMPP[1:0]) see Table 4.
 - Battery and LDOs configuration (CFG[2:0] and, if needed, R1 to R6) see Table 2.
 - Primary battery configuration ("NoPRIM" or R7-R8) see Section 2.3.2.
 - LDOs enabling (ENHV and ENLV) see Table 3.
 - Balancing circuit connection (BAL) see Section 2.3.3.
- 3. Connect the storage elements on BATT and optionally the primary battery on PRIM.
- 4. Connect the high and/or low voltage loads on HVOUT/LVOUT (optional).
- 5. Connect the PV cell on SRC.

To avoid damage to the board, users are urged to follow this procedure.

How to reset the AEM10941 evaluation board:

To reset the board, disconnect the source, the storage element and the optional primary battery and connect the reset pads to GND (from top to bottom, as indicated on the EVK silkscreen) in order to discharge the internal nodes of the system.

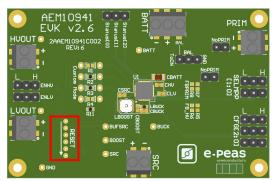


Figure 2: Board reset



2.2. Basic Configurations

Configuration pins		Storage element threshold voltages		LDOs output voltages		Typical use		
CFG[2]	CFG[1]	CFG[0]	V _{OVCH}	V_{CHRDY}	V _{OVDIS}	V _{HV}	V_{LV}	
Н	Н	Н	4.12 V	3.67 V	3.60 V	3.3 V	1.8 V	Li-ion battery
Н	Н	L	4.12 V	4.04 V	3.60 V	3.3 V	1.8 V	Solid state battery
Н	L	Н	4.12 V	3.67 V	3.01 V	2.5 V	1.8 V	Li-ion/NiMH battery
Н	L	L	2.70 V	2.30 V	2.20 V	1.8 V	1.2 V	Single-cell (super)
								capacitor
L	Н	Н	4.50 V	3.67 V	2.80 V	2.5 V	1.8 V	Dual-cell supercapacitor
L	Н	L	4.50 V	3.92 V	3.60 V	3.3 V	1.8 V	Dual-cell supercapacitor
L	L	Н	3.63 V	3.10 V	2.80 V	2.5 V	1.8 V	LiFePO4 battery
L	L	L	Custom mode - see Section 2.3.1. 1.8			1.8 V		

Table 2: Usage of CFG[2:0]

ENLV	ENHV	LV output	HV output
Н	Н	Enabled	Enabled
Н	L	Enabled	Disabled
L	Н	Disabled	Enabled
L	L	Disabled	Disabled

Table 3: LDOs enabling

SELMPP[1]	SELMPP[0]	Vmpp/Voc
L	L	70%
L	Н	75%
Н	L	85%
Н	Н	90%

Table 4: Usage of SELMPP[1:0]



2.3. Advanced Configurations

A complete description of the system constraints and configurations is available in the AEM10941 datasheet "System configuration" Section.

A reminder on how to calculate the configuration resistors value is provided below. Calculation can be made with the help of the spreadsheet found on e-peas website.

2.3.1. Custom Mode

In addition to the pre-defined storage element protection levels, the custom mode allows users to define their own levels via resistors R1 to R4 and to tune the output of the high voltage LDO HVOUT via resistors R5-R6.

Here is how to determine the values of R1-R4 to set the desired storage element protection levels:

$$-R_T = R1 + R2 + R3 + R4$$

-
$$1M\Omega \le R_T \le 100M\Omega$$

$$- R1 = R_{T} \cdot \frac{1V}{V_{OVCH}}$$

- R2 =
$$R_T \cdot \left(\frac{1V}{V_{CHRDY}} - \frac{1V}{V_{OVCH}} \right)$$

- R3 =
$$R_T \cdot \left(\frac{1V}{V_{OVDIS}} - \frac{1V}{V_{CHRDY}}\right)$$

$$- R4 = R_{T} \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1V}{V_{OVDIS}}\right)$$

Here is how to determine the values of R5-R6 to set the desired HVOUT voltages:

$$- R_V = R5 + R6$$

-
$$1M\Omega \le R_V \le 40M\Omega$$

- R5 =
$$R_V \cdot \frac{1V}{V_{UV}}$$

$$- R6 = R_{V} \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1V}{V_{HV}}\right)$$

Make sure the protection levels satisfy the following conditions:

-
$$V_{CHRDY} + 0.05V \le V_{OVCH} \le 4.5V$$

-
$$V_{OVDIS} + 0.05V \le V_{CHRDY} \le V_{OVCH} - 0.05V$$

-
$$V_{HV} \le V_{OVDIS} - 0.3V$$

If custom mode used:

- Remove R2, R3 and R11 zero ohm resistors.
- Set resistors R1 to R6 to configure the custom mode.

If custom mode unused:

- Leave the resistor footprints of R1, R4, R5 and R6 empty.
- Place 0 ohm resistors on R2, R3 and R11.
- Do not set CFG[2:0] to LLL.

2.3.2. Primary Battery Configuration

If a primary storage is used, it is mandatory to determine V_{PRIM.MIN}, the voltage at which the primary battery is considered fully depleted. To do so, use resistors R7 - R8.

These resistors are calculated as follows:

$$- R_p = R7 + R8$$

-
$$100 k\Omega \le R_p \le 500 k\Omega$$

$$- R8 = R_{p} - R7$$

$$\begin{array}{lll} \text{-} & \text{R8} &=& \text{R}_{p} - \text{R7} \\ \text{-} & \text{R7} &=& \frac{\text{V}_{PRIM_MIN}}{4} \cdot \text{R}_{p} \cdot \frac{1}{2.2 \text{V}} \end{array}$$

If unused, use a jumper to short each "NoPRIM" 2-pin headers.

2.3.3. Balancing Circuit Configuration

When using a dual-cell supercapacitor (that does not already include a balancing circuit), enable the balancing circuit configuration to ensure equal voltage on both cells. To do so:

- Connect the node between the two supercapacitor cells to BAL (on BATT connector).
- Use a jumper to connect "BAL" to "ToCN".

If unused, use a jumper to connect "BAL" to "GND".



3. Functional Tests

Warning regarding measurements

Any item connected to the PCB (load, probe, storage device, etc.) involves a leakage current. This can negatively impact the measurements. Whenever possible, disconnect unused items to limit this effect.

This section presents a few simple tests that allow the user to understand the functional behavior of the AEM10941. To avoid damaging the board, follow the procedure found in Section 2.1 "Safety Information". If a test has to be restarted make sure to properly reset the system to obtain reproducible results.

Those functional tests were made using the following setup:

- Configurations:
 - SELMPP[1:0] = LL
 - CFG[2:0] = HLL
 - ENHV = H
 - ENLV = H.

- Storage element: capacitor (4.7 mF + CBATT).
- $10 \text{ k}\Omega$ between HVOUT and GND.
- LVOUT left floating.
- SRC: current source (1 mA or 100 μ A) with voltage compliance (4 V).

Feel free to adapt the setup to match your system as long as the input and cold-start constraints are respected (see the AEM10941 datasheet "Introduction" Section).



3.1. Start-up

The following example allows users to observe the behavior of the AEM10941 in wake-up mode.

Setup

- Place the probes on the nodes to be observed.
- Referring to Figure 1, follow steps 1 to 5 explained in Section 2.1 "Safety Information".

- BATT: voltage rises as the power provided by the source is transferred to the storage element (see Figure 3).
- SRC: regulated at V_{MPP}, which is a voltage equal to the open-circuit voltage (V_{OC}) multiplied by the MPP ratio defined in Table 4. During the MPP evaluation, the AEM10941 stops pulling current from SRC and thus, V_{SRC} rises to V_{OC} (see Figure 4). Note that V_{SRC} must be higher than 380 mV to allow the AEM10941 to coldstart.
- HVOUT/LVOUT: regulated when voltage on BATT first rises above V_{CHRDY} (see Figure 3).
- STATUS[0]: asserted when the LDOs are ready to be enabled (refer to the AEM10941 datasheet "Normal Mode" section) (see Figure 3).
- STATUS[2]: asserted each time the AEM10941 performs a MPP evaluation (See Figure 4).

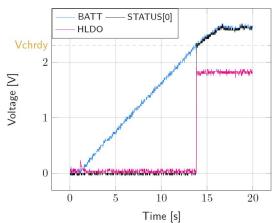


Figure 3: STATUS[0] and HVOUT evolution with BATT

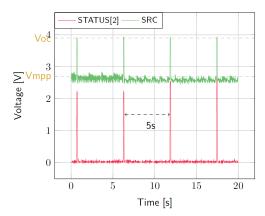


Figure 4: SRC and STATUS[2] while energy is extracted from SRC (BATT under V_{OVCH})



3.2. Shutdown

This test allows users to observe the behavior of the AEM10941 when the system is running out of energy.

Setup

- Place the probes on the nodes to be observed.
- Referring to Figure 1, follow steps 1 to 5 explained in Section 2.1 "Safety Information". Configure the board in the desired state and start the system (see Section 3.1). Do not use a primary battery.
- Let the system reach a steady state (i.e. voltage on BATT between V_{CHRDY} and V_{OVCH}, and STATUS[0] asserted).
- Remove the PV cell and let the system discharge through quiescent current and any load(s) connected to HVOUT/LVOUT.

- BATT: voltage decreases as the system consumes the power accumulated in the storage element. The voltage remains stable after crossing V_{OVDIS} (see Figure 5).
- STATUS[0]: de-asserted when the LDOs are no longer available as the storage element is running out of energy. This happens 600 ms after STATUS[1] assertion (see Figure 5).
- STATUS[1]: asserted for 600ms when the storage element voltage (BATT) falls below V_{OVDIS} (see Figure 5).

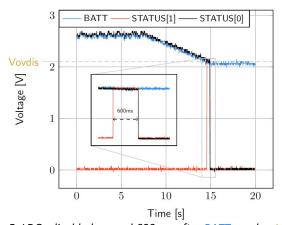


Figure 5: LDOs disabled around 600 ms after BATT reaches V_{OVDIS}



3.3. Switching to Primary Battery

This example allows users to observe switching from the main storage element to the primary battery when the system is running out of energy.

Setup

- Place the probes on the nodes to be observed.
- Referring to Figure 1, follow steps 1 to 5 explained in Section 2.1 "Safety Information". Configure the board in the desired state and start the system (see Section 3.1). Connect a primary battery (example: 3.1 V coin cell with protection level at 2.4 V, R7 = $68 \text{ k}\Omega$ and R8 = $180 \text{ k}\Omega$).
- Let the system reach a steady state (i.e. voltage on BATT between V_{CHRDY} and V_{OVDIS}, and STATUS[0] asserted).
- Remove the PV cell and let the system discharge through quiescent current and any load(s) connected to HVOUT/LVOUT.

- BATT: voltage decreases as the system consumes the power accumulated in the storage element. The voltage reaches V_{OVDIS} and then rises again to V_{CHRDY} as it is recharged from the primary battery (see Figure 6).
- STATUS[0]: never de-asserted as the LDOs are still functional (see Figure 6).
- HVOUT: stable and not affected by switching on the primary battery (see Figure 6).

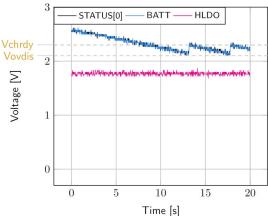


Figure 6: Switching from SRC to the primary battery



3.4. Cold Start

The following test allows the user to observe the minimum voltage required to coldstart the AEM10941. To prevent leakage current induced by the probe, the user should avoid probing any unnecessary node. Make sure to properly reset the board to observe the cold-start behavior.

Setup

- Place the probes on the nodes to be observed.
- Referring Figure 1, follow steps 1 and 2 explained in Section 2.1. Configure the board in the desired state.
 Do not plug any storage element in addition to CBATT.
- SRC: connect your source element (PV cell).

- SRC: equal to the cold-start voltage during the cold-start phase. Regulated at the selected MPPT percentage of V_{OC} when cold start is over (see Figure 7). Be careful that the cold-start phase time will shorten with the input power. Limit it to ease the observation.
- BATT: starts to charge when the cold-start phase is over (see Figure 7).

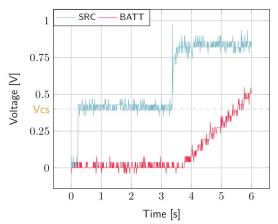


Figure 7: AEM10941 behavior during cold start



3.5. Dual-cell Supercapacitor Balancing Circuit

The following test allows the user to observe the balancing circuit behavior that balances the voltage on both side of the BAL pin.

Setup

- Following steps 1 and 2 explained in Section 2.1 and referring to Figure 1, configure the board in the desired state. Plug the jumper linking "BAL" to "ToCN".
- BATT: plug a capacitor C1 between the positive (+) pin and BAL pin, and a capacitor C2 between BAL pin and the negative (-) pin.
 - C1 & C2 > 1 mF.

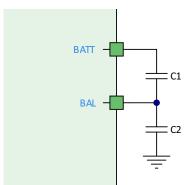


Figure 8: Capacitors connection for balancing

- For the balancing circuit to work, the voltage on BAL must be equal to or higher than 0.9 V.
- In order to make sure the balancing circuit is functional when exiting WAKE-UP MODE (see AEM10941 "Operating Modes" section in datasheet), C1 and C2 can be calculated following the formula:

$$- \frac{C_1}{C_1 + C_2} \cdot V_{CHRDY} \ge 0.9V$$

- SRC: connect your source element to power up the system.

Observations and Measurements

- BAL voltage equals half of BATT voltage.



4. Performance Tests

This section presents the tests to reproduce the performance graphs found in the AEM10941 datasheet and to understand the functionalities of the AEM10941. To be able to reproduce those tests, the following equipment is required:

- 1 voltage source.
- 2 source measure units (SMUs).
- 1 oscilloscope.

4.1. LDOs

The following example instructs users on how to measure the output voltage stability of the LDOs (Low-voltage and High-voltage LDO regulation Sections of the AEM10941 datasheet).

Setup

- Referring to Figure 1, follow steps 1 and 2 explained in the Section 2.1. Configure the board in the desired state and connect your storage element(s).
- BATT: connect SMU1. Configure it as a voltage source with a current compliance of 200 mA.
- SRC: either connect a power supply or a SMU:
 - Power supply configured for 1 V / 10 mA with a 100 Ω resistor in series (I_{SRC} = 2.5 mA with SELMPP[1:0] = LL (75%)).
 - SMU configured as 2.5 mA current source with 1.0 V voltage compliance.
- HVOUT / LVOUT: connect SMU2 to the LDO you want to measure. Configure it as a voltage source, with a lower voltage than the configured V_{HV}/V_{LV}, and with a current limit.

To avoid damaging the board, follow the procedure in Section 2.1 "Safety Information". If a test has to be restarted, make sure to properly reset the system to obtain reproducible results (see "How to reset the AEM10941 evaluation board" in Section 2.1).

Manipulations

- Impose a voltage between V_{OVCH} and 5 V on SMU1 prior to cold start.
- Connect the power supply or SMU on SRC to coldstart the AEM10941.
- Sweep voltage on SMU1 from V_{OVDIS} + 50 mV to 4.5 V.
- Repeat with different current limits on SMU2 (from 10 μ A to 80 mA for HVOUT and from 10 μ A to 20 mA for LVOUT).

Measurements

- HVOUT/LVOUT: measure the voltage (results shown on Figure 9 and Figure 10).



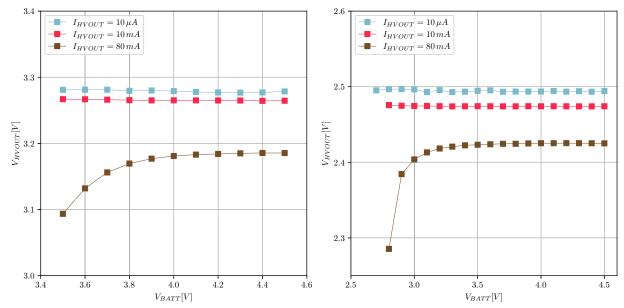


Figure 9: HVOUT at 3.3 V and 2.5 V

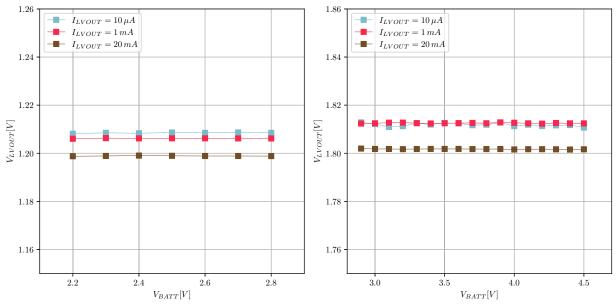


Figure 10: LVOUT at 1.2 V and 1.8 V



4.2. Boost Converter Efficiency

This test allows users to reproduce the efficiency graphs of the AEM10941 boost converter ("Boost Conversion Efficiency" Sections of the AEM10941 datasheet).

Setup

- Following steps 1 and 2 explained in the Section 2.1 and referring to Figure 1, configure the board in the desired state.
- VBOOST: connect SMU2 and configure it as voltage source with a current compliance of 200 mA.
- SRC: connect SMU1. Configure it as 1 mA current source with a voltage compliance of 1 V.
- STATUS[2]: connect to one of the SMU as a trigger, to detect falling edge.

Manipulations

- Impose a voltage between V_{OVCH} and 5 V on SMU2 and switch SMU1 on to coldstart the AEM. When done, impose a voltage on SMU2 between V_{OVDIS} + 50 mV and V_{OVCH}.
- Sweep voltage compliance on SMU1 from $\ensuremath{\text{V}_{\text{SRC,MIN}}}$ to 4.5 V.
- Repeat with different current levels on SMU1 (from 100 μ A to 100 mA) and with different voltage levels on SMU2 (from V_{OVDIS} + 50 mV to V_{OVCH}).

Measurements

- STATUS[2]: do not make any measurements while high (boost converter is not active during MPP calculation).
- SRC: measure the current and the voltage.
- VBOOST: measure the current and the voltage.
 Repeat the measurement a copious number of times to be sure to capture the current peaks. Figure 11 has been obtained by averaging over 100 measurements configured with a 100 ms integration time.
- Deduce input power P_{IN} , output power P_{OUT} and efficiency η as follows:

-
$$P_{IN} = V_{IN} \cdot I_{IN}$$

-
$$P_{OUT} = V_{OUT} \cdot I_{OUT}$$

$$- \eta = \frac{P_{OUT} - V_{O}}{P_{IN}}$$

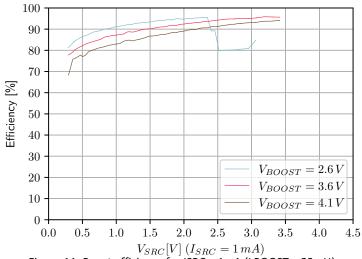


Figure 11: Boost efficiency for ISRC = 1mA (LBOOST = $22 \mu H$)



4.3. Custom Mode Configuration

This test allows users to measure the custom protection levels of the storage element set by resistors R1 to R6.

Setup

- Referring to Section 1, follow steps 1 and 2 explained in Section 2.1.
- To select custom mode:
 - Set CFG[2:0] = LLL.
 - Remove R2, R3 and R11.
 - Choose R1 to R6 to configure the battery protection levels and HVOUT output voltage.
- Place the probes on the nodes to be observed.
- SRC: connect your source element to power up the system.

Manipulations

- Remove the source element after the voltage on BATT has reached steady state (between V_{CHRDY} and V_{OVCH}).

Measurements

Measure the following nodes to ensure the correct behavior of the AEM10941 with respect to the custom configuration:

- STATUS[0]: asserted when the LDOs can be enabled (i.e. when BATT first rises above V_{CHRDY}).
- STATUS[1]: asserted when BATT falls below V_{OVDIS}.
- BATT: rise up and oscillate around V_{OVCH} as long as the source element has not been removed.
- HVOUT: equal to the value set by R5-R6.



5. PV Cell Characterization

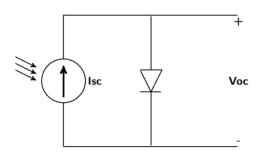


Figure 12: PV cell first order model

A photovoltaic cell can be modeled at first approximation by a light-controlled current source in parallel with a diode as illustrated in Figure 12. This allows to model the two main characteristics of a PV cell:

- Open-circuit voltage (Voc): corresponds to the forward voltage of the diode at no load.
- Short-circuit current (Isc): the current delivered by the current source (i.e. when shorting the + and terminals).

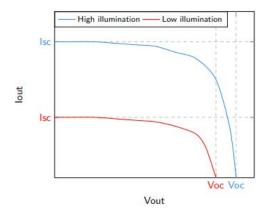


Figure 13: Typical I-V curve of a PV cell for high and low illumination levels

Typical current vs voltage graph of a PV cell for different illumination levels can be observed in Figure 13. Knowing that P = I * V, the associated power vs voltage curves can be drawn as shown in Figure 14. For a given technology, the maximum extracted power is achieved at a voltage corresponding to a given ratio of the open-circuit voltage (between 70% and 90%). This ratio is, in first approximation, independent of the illumination level. As it can be seen in Figure 14, Vmpp1/Voc1 \approx Vmpp2/Voc2.

As presented in Table 4, the MPP configuration of the AEM10941 allows to select the voltage ratio that optimizes the power extraction according to the characteristics of the PV cell.

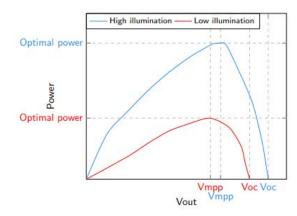


Figure 14: Typical power-V curve of a PV cell for high and low illumination levels

As can be seen in Figure 14, the power significantly decreases with the voltage beyond the optimum V_{MPP} . It is then recommended to configure the V_{MPP}/V_{OC} ratio to be slightly lower than the theoretical optimum and therefore avoid a significant drop of performance.



6. Schematic

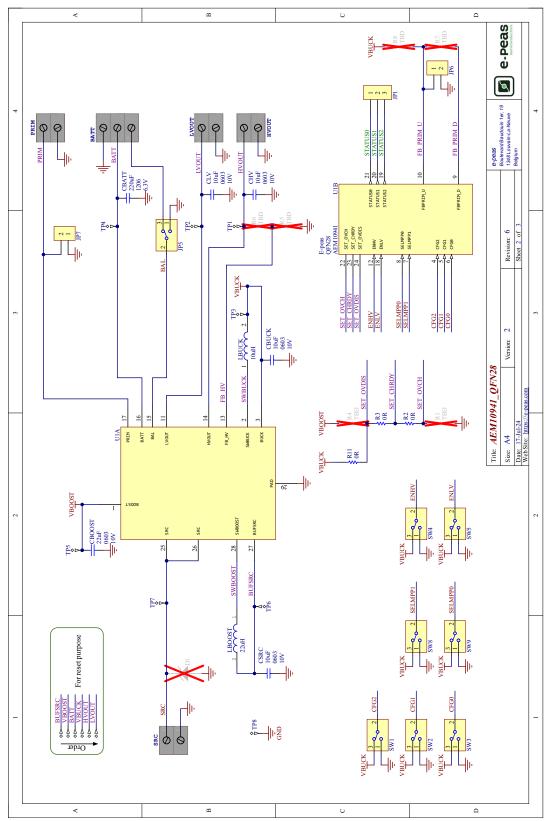


Figure 15: AEM10941 evaluation board schematic



7. Revision History

EVK Version	User Guide Revision	Date	Description		
Up to 2.3	1.0	July, 2018	Creation of the document.		
2.4	1.1	August, 2021	Connection diagram modification.		
2.5	1.0	September, 2023	Update to EVK v2.5.		
2.5	1.1	March, 2024	 Minor aesthetic improvements. Reset procedure: remove source as well as storage element and primary battery. 		
2.6	1.0	August, 2024	 Update to EVK v2.6. Update the functional tests and performance tests setups. Correction of C1 and C2 formula in "Dual-cell Supercapacitor Balancing Circuit" section. 		

Table 5: Revision history