

# TI-PMLK

TI Power Management Lab Kit  
Cost-Effective Test Methods  
Using TI-PMLK LDO Boards





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*Many people have collaborated with me in the realization of the TI-PMLK project, in different times, at different levels, in different ways. My sincerest thanks go to the Texas Instruments University Program Team and to the University of Salerno Power Electronics Laboratory Team.*

*Nicola Femia*



# Preface

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas...  
(Happy, he who could capture the origins of things...)*

Publio Virgilio Marone, Mantova 70 B.C. – Brindisi 19 B.C.

**D**esign is an exciting and fascinating art. Power electronics, for its interdisciplinarily nature, is a challenging field where the knowledge of *why* makes all the difference in understanding *how* to achieve design goals. The *will of learning* and the *means for learning* are the two basic ingredients needed to develop the virtuous ability to understand the reality of problems, to select the appropriate techniques and methods to solve them, to make meaningful design decisions and to intelligently evaluate the solutions.

The main purpose of the TI-PMLK collection of Experiment Books is to stimulate the spirit of investigation in students and practicing engineers who are engaged in learning and understanding the design of power supplies. The experiments cover a basic anthology of topics and issues encountered in the design of low power dc-dc non-isolated power supplies, such as power supplies topologies and characteristics, modes of operation, efficiency, control, stability, accuracy, transient response, noise, power magnetics, and more. The experiments can be performed by using the power supply boards of the TI-PMLK suite, which includes low dropout linear regulators and buck, boost and buck-boost switching regulators. The Experiment books are not intended to provide an exhaustive overview of design issues or definitive design hints: rather, it is meant to guide the reader into a multifaceted active learning experience.

All the experiments are based on a logical sequence of steps. They start with the *Case Study* section, which provides the description of the specific property or feature relevant to the power supply board to be used in the experiment, and illustrates the goal and the type of measurement to be done. The *Theory Background* section provides a short summary of concepts, models and equations, supporting the interpretation and understanding of the incoming experimental observations. The *Measurement Setup* section provides the instructions for connecting the instruments needed for the experiments to the board under test. Warnings are provided to prevent main mistakes. The *Test* section provides instructions on how to execute the measurements, and guidelines on how to analyze and understand the results of the measurements. Each test includes an *Answer* section, where the user is required to answer questions and to provide a discussion about the behavior of the board under test, relevant to the specific performance under investigation, based on the observation of the measurements results and on the application of concepts and properties illustrated through the various sections of the experiment. The *Discussion* section provides comments to achieve a better understanding of conceptual and practical correlations among system characteristics and operating performance. The final *Experimental Plots* section illustrates and discusses the results of some sample measurements.

## Preface (cont.)

The experiments cover a variety of steady-state, transient and dynamic tests. The tests are mostly based on time domain measurements, while some tests focus on the investigation of dynamic properties that are described through frequency response functions, such as the power supply rejection ratio. This allows a user to conduct a complete experience on the characterization and understanding of power supply issues. Most of the experiments require basic laboratory equipment, including a power supply, some multi-meters, an oscilloscope and a load. Some tests require more sophisticated instrumentation, such as a dynamic source, a dynamic load, and a vector network analyzer, for best measurement.

The boards have been designed to allow the investigation of the influence of physical parameters and operating conditions of a power supply on its own performances. Various combinations of power and control components can be selected. Most of them yield operating conditions that fit good engineering standards. Other ones may lead to operating conditions typically undesired in industry applications, such as instability. Thus, the reader can achieve a sound understanding of such real phenomena.

Suggested combinations of power and control parts are provided for each experiment. The user is invited in some experiments to detect combinations that yield a certain operating condition or behavior. The user can select the setup of jumpers and connectors to generate a great variety of conditions. The book provides recommendations and warnings for safe board operation and for effective measurements. Before performing any experiment, the reader is strongly recommended to read carefully all the warnings and the introductory section of the book, where the specific description of the board is provided and information on settings and performance are given, including forbidden combinations and special operating conditions. The reader is also strongly invited to read the manufacturers' datasheets of all the parts mounted in the boards, especially the control chips, to improve the knowledge and the understanding of each device.

A good knowledge of the power supplies implemented on the boards, supported by the heuristic observations and the models and methods discussed in the book, help the user to distinguish what can be done from what cannot be done.

The level of detail and completeness of models discussed in the *Theory Background* section vary from experiment to experiment. Sometimes the models include certain specific properties, other times they are simplified or approximated. Achieving familiarity with models is a fundamental learning step: a good power supply designer has to be able to grade the importance of modeling certain properties, at device level as well as at system level, in order to assess if they really provide meaningful and influential information to meet the application requirements. Essential formulas and expressions for the basic analysis of the phenomenon under investigation are mostly introduced without step-by-step theoretical derivations, which are beyond the objectives of the book. The reader is encouraged to test him(her)self in filling this gap, through an in-depth study of models and methods for the analysis and design of power supplies discussed in the cited references.

The parameters of semiconductor and passive power components mounted on the boards are provided in the book to allow the application of analysis formulas and design equations. All parameters of power components are affected by uncertainty, due to tolerances, ageing and influence factors like temperature, current, voltage and frequency. The values collected in the books have been extracted from the manufacturers' datasheets in certain reference conditions. The power and control components and sub-circuits of integrated circuits controlling the power supplies, which determine modes of operation and performances, are subjected to the influence of temperature, voltage, current and frequency too. As a consequence, the predictions of formulas and equations provided in the book, based on the parameters of power and control devices, can show different levels of agreement with respect to the results of experimental measurements.

## Preface (cont.)

The user is strongly encouraged to read the references provided in the book, to analyze the characteristics and the behavior of integrated circuits and power components of the boards, and to verify if different values of the parameters of components can be used to achieve a better compliance between the results of formulas and the results of experimental measurements. The investigation of real device characteristics and of their influence on overall performance of a power supply is a fundamental component of designers' work.

The TI-PMLK series also provide students and practicing engineers the opportunity of having valuable experiences on power converters testing techniques. Typical tests on power management boards are generally sophisticated and difficult. Different types of experimental verifications are necessary, indeed, to assess the overall static and dynamic performance of a board providing voltage or current regulation. A regulator has to guarantee that its regulated output, voltage or current, fulfils certain static and dynamic requirements, which may change depending on the type of application. The main measurements of interest to the TI-PMLK Series Boards are summarized below.

- **Accuracy/Regulation.** The accuracy and the regulation features of a regulator are inherent to the precision of the regulated output with respect to the desired nominal value and to its variations with respect to line and load changes over their relevant operating ranges. Accuracy and regulation measurements in DC-DC converters are typically based on the average value of the regulated DC output and can be realized by means of a simple multimeter with 4 ½ digits resolution. In this type of measurements the board under test can be fed by a standard DC power supply and terminated on a load resistance. Measuring the accuracy and regulation at different load current levels requires variable load resistors or a DC electronic load.

- **Steady-State Noise.** This noise is generated by the regulator itself. Different type of measurements are required for LDO regulators and switching regulators. LDO regulators

noise is determined by transistors (shot and flicker noise) and resistors (thermal noise), and is characterized by a magnitude of about  $10\mu\text{V}_{\text{RMS}}-50\mu\text{V}_{\text{RMS}}$  in the frequency range 10Hz-100kHz. Switching regulators noise is determined by the commutations of transistors inherent to switch-mode operation (switching ripple), and is characterized by a magnitude of about  $10\text{mV}_{\text{RMS}}-100\text{mV}_{\text{RMS}}$  in the frequency range 100kHz-1MHz. The LDO regulators noise measurement requires a spectrum analyzer, which is a sophisticated and expensive instrument, whereas the switching regulators noise measurement can be realized by means of an oscilloscope. In this type of measurements the board under test can be fed by a standard DC power supply and terminated on a load resistance. Measuring the noise at different load current levels requires a variable resistor or a DC electronic load.

- **Load/Line Transients.** The load/line transient tests are aimed at assessing the ability of a regulator to limit the perturbations of its regulated output, voltage or current, in presence of rapid and intense variations either of the load current or of the input voltage. The output overshoot and undershoot surges caused by the load and line variations can be observed by means of an oscilloscope. The main issue is the generation of fast varying load current and line voltage (step-wise changes, in theory), which requires a dynamic load and a dynamic source, respectively. These instruments are not frequently available in the university educational laboratories, and only few are able to provide the fast current/voltage required by load/line transient tests.

- **AC response.** The analysis of the AC response of a regulator is based on the injection of a sinusoidal perturbation into the circuit and on the measurement of the magnitude of the perturbation determined in the regulated output. The measurement of the Power Supply Rejection Ratio and of the Output Impedance, which are the most important AC performance metrics, is normally realized by means of a Vector Network Analyzer comprised of some special injection device needed to add the AC disturbance into the regulator power train.

## Preface (cont.)

The Cost-Effective Test Methods books accompanying the TI-PMLK Series boards propose a wide variety of tests and measurements, covering noise, accuracy/regulation, transient response and AC response topics, which can be realized with a basic instruments set-up including:

- a DC power supply
- a 4-channels digital oscilloscope
- an arbitrary waveform generator
- 4 digital multimeters

The jumpers and pins of TI-PMLK Series boards, which allow to change the boards hardware configuration and to investigate their static and dynamic performances, also permit to inject signals and disturbances into the circuit. This way, the TI-PMLK Series boards are allowed to operate as:

- variable load
- dynamic load
- dynamic source
- variable AC source
- disturbance injector

This offers the possibility to simplify the set-up and implementation of DC, transient and AC response tests and measurements, without a DC electronic load, without a DC power supply with dynamic capabilities and without a Network Vector Analyzer.



The Cost-Effective Test Methods books illustrate and discuss several test and measurement configurations based on the interconnection of TI-PMLK Series boards, showing how the TI-PMLKs allow to setup laboratory tests where they are at the same time the subject of technical investigations on power management and the tools to easily realize them. Students, instructors and practicing engineers are encouraged to push their own imagination to the search of further possible unconventional uses of the TI-PMLK Series Boards, thus discovering that they allow them to go far beyond power management educational purposes.

The ultimate intention of this book is to accompany the reader through an active experience, made of observations, application of physics and mathematics, reality investigation and system level reasoning. That is engineering insight. The Author hopes the reader may fully enjoy this book and the pleasure of being a design engineer, a creative and autonomous thinker, able to acquire and re-elaborate the knowledge to win ever new design challenges.

Know why, know how!

Nicola Femia



Nicola Femia is Professor at the University of Salerno, Italy, where he teaches Power Electronics and Energetic Intelligence, in the Electronic Engineering and Computer Engineering Master Degree Programs. He leads the Power Electronics and Renewable Sources Laboratory. Over the past 25 years, he has promoted and directed worldwide university and industry research activities and education programs on power electronics, photovoltaic systems, and power design. He has been Visiting Professor at the Electrical Engineering Department of the Stanford University, Stanford, CA, where he taught Power Electronics Control and Energy Aware Design.

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## Instrumentation needed for experiments

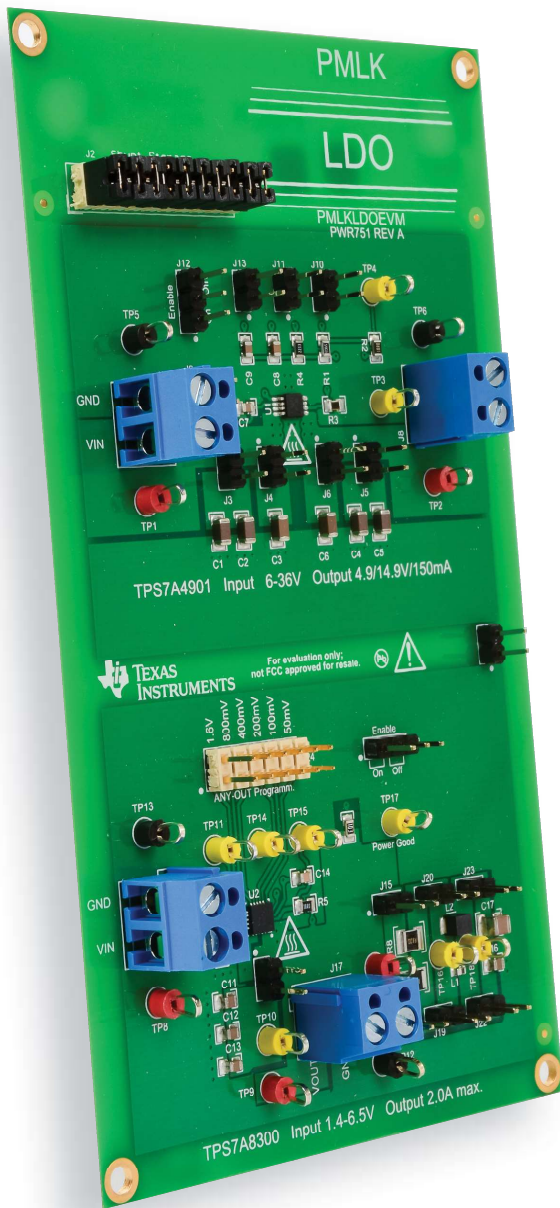
The instrumentation recommended for the execution of the Experiments of this Book is comprised of:

- *DC power supply 0-35V/4A with dual isolated output*
- *4 digital multimeters with 4½ digit resolution*
- *250MHz 4-channels Digital Oscilloscope + 2 current probes 20A/50MHz*
- *10MHz 2-channels Waveform Generator*
- *1750Ω/0.3A, 200Ω/1.5A, 50Ω/1.5A, 5Ω/3A Sliding Rheostat, or*
- *series of 33Ω, 40Ω, 50Ω, 68Ω, 100Ω, 120Ω, 150Ω, 200Ω, 300Ω, 600Ω Power Resistors with 50W power rating*

The instrumentation used in the lab tests corresponding to the Experimental Plot samples shown in the book is comprised of:

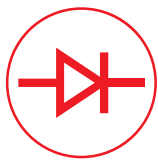
- *TTI EX354RT Dual Isolated Output Power Supply 0-35V/4A*
- *LeCroy WaveRunner 44Xi 400MHz 4-channels Digital Oscilloscope, with 2 Tektronix TCP 305 50A current probe + Tektronix TCP A300 amplifier*
- *Agilent 33500B 10MHz 2-channels Waveform Generator*
- *4 Hewlett-Packard 34401A multimeters*
- *RVFM 1750Ω/0.3A Sliding Rheostat*
- *RVFM 200Ω/1.5A Sliding Rheostat*
- *RVFM 50Ω/1.5A Sliding Rheostat*
- *RVFM 5Ω/3A Sliding Rheostat*
- *ARCOL aluminium housed resistors*





# TI-PMLK-LDO

The TI-PMLK-LDO is an experimental power supply board based on two integrated linear voltage regulators, the ultra-low dropout TPS7A8300 and the ultra-low noise TPS7A4901



# TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 Schematic

The TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 section of the board accepts input voltages in between 6V and 36V, while regulating output voltage at 5V or 15V with a maximum load current 150mA.

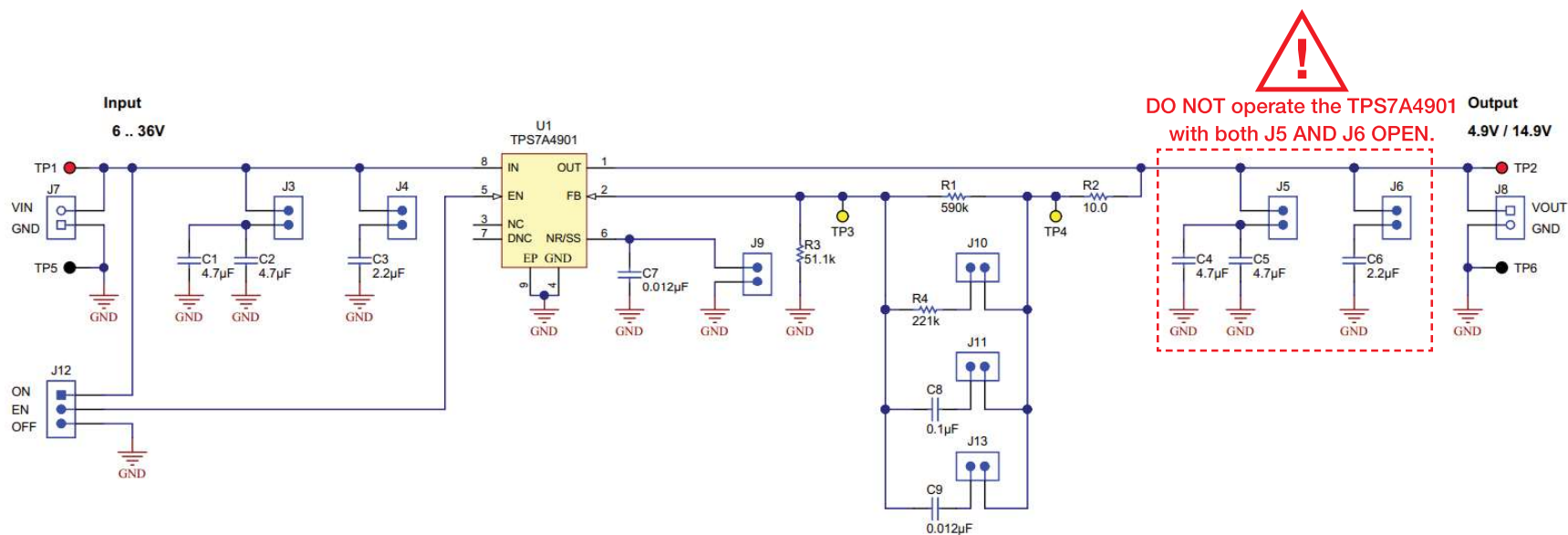


Figure 1. Circuit schematic of TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 LDO regulator



# TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 Bill of Materials

Designator	Description	Manufacturer	Part Number
C1, C2, C4, C5	ceramic capacitor, 4.7 $\mu$ F, 50V, +/-10%, X7R, 1206	Taiyo Yuden	UMK316AB7475KL-T
C3, C6	ceramic capacitor, 2.2 $\mu$ F, 50V, +/-10%, X7R, 1206	MuRata	GRM31CR71H225KA88L
C7, C9	ceramic capacitor, 0.012 $\mu$ F, 50V, +/- 10%, X7R, 0805	AVX	08055C123KAT2A
C8	ceramic capacitor, 0.1 $\mu$ F, 50V, +/- 10%, X7R, 0805	Kemet	C0805C104K5RACTU
R1	resistor, 590k $\Omega$ , 1%, 0.125W, 0805	Panasonic	ERJ-6ENF5903V
R2	resistor, 10.0 $\Omega$ , 0.1%, 0.125W, 0805	Yageo America	RT0805BRD0710RL
R3	resistor, 51.1k $\Omega$ , 0.1%, 0.125W, 0805	Susumu Co Ltd	RG2012P-5112-B-T5
R4	resistor, 221k $\Omega$ , 1%, 0.125W, 0805	Vishay-Dale	CRCW0805221KFKEA
U1	Single Output High PSRR LDO, 150mA, Adjustable 1.2 to 33V Output, 3 to 36V Input, with Ultra-Low Noise, 8-pin MSOP (DGN)	Texas Instruments	TPS7A4901DGNR

(use the part numbers of components to retrieve, through the manufacturers websites listed in the references, details about parameters and data that are used in the formulae provided for calculations in each experiment)



# TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 Board

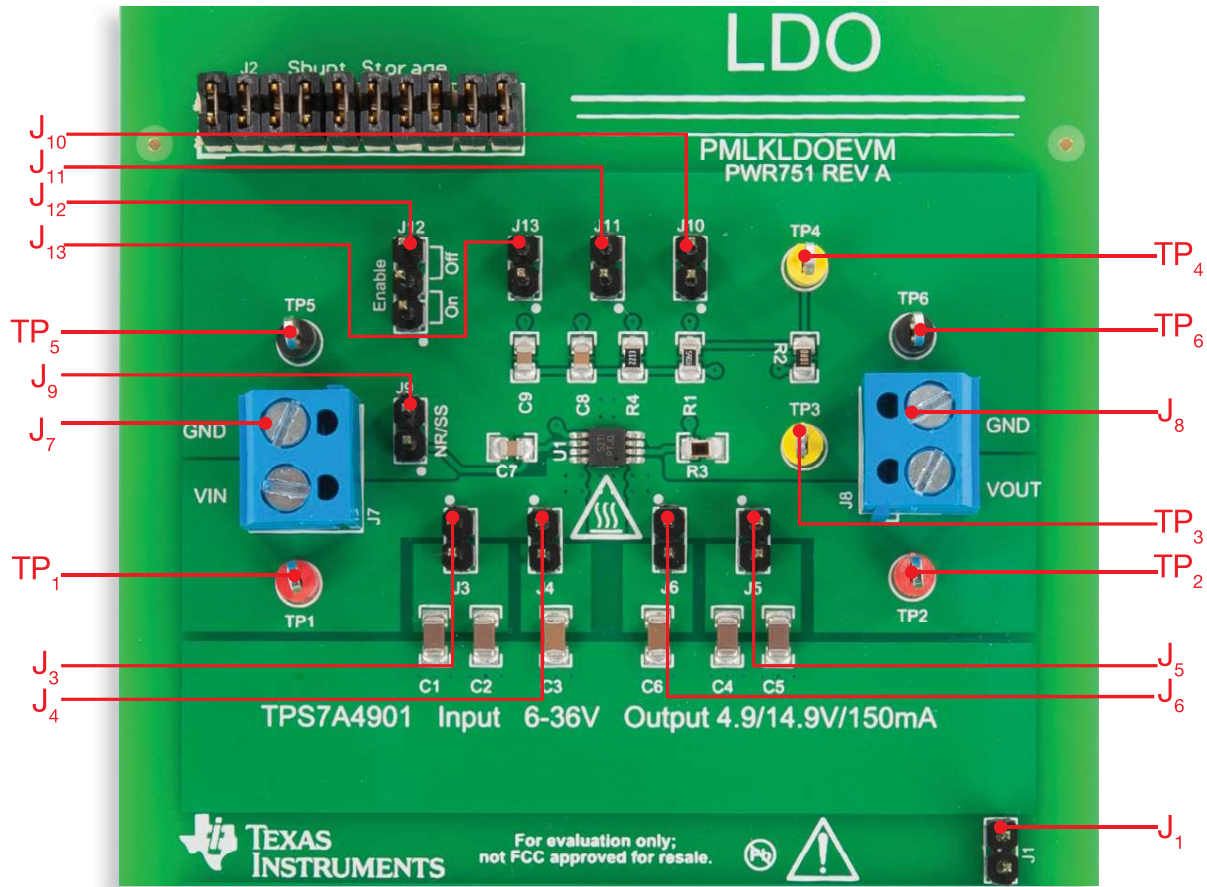


Figure 2. Plain view of TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 LDO regulator board



# TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 Connectors, Jumpers and Test Pins

## Descriptors and functions for Connectors, Jumpers and Test Pins

### Connectors

**J<sub>7</sub>** - input voltage screw drive connector

**J<sub>8</sub>** - output voltage screw drive connector

### Jumpers

**J<sub>1</sub>** - connects grounds of TPS7A4901 and TPS7A8300 board sections

**J<sub>3</sub>** - connects C<sub>1</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>2</sub> (4.7μF) input capacitors

**J<sub>4</sub>** - connects C<sub>3</sub> (2.2μF) input capacitor

**J<sub>5</sub>** - connects C<sub>4</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>5</sub> (4.7μF) output capacitors

**J<sub>6</sub>** - connects C<sub>6</sub> (2.2μF) output capacitor

**J<sub>9</sub>** - connects Noise Reduction/Soft Start pin directly to ground and shorts across C<sub>7</sub> (12nF) noise reduction capacitor

**J<sub>10</sub>** - connects R<sub>4</sub> (221kΩ) resistor for 5V output voltage operation

**J<sub>11</sub>** - connects C<sub>8</sub> (100nF) phase lead capacitor

**J<sub>12</sub>** - enables LDO operation when top pin and center pin are shorted (ON), while it disables the LDO operation when center pin and bottom pin are shorted (OFF)

**J<sub>13</sub>** - connects C<sub>9</sub> (12nF) phase lead capacitor

### Test pins

**TP<sub>1</sub>** - positive pole of input voltage

**TP<sub>5</sub>** - ground pole of input voltage

**TP<sub>2</sub>** - positive pole of output voltage

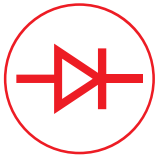
**TP<sub>6</sub>** - ground pole of output voltage

**TP<sub>3</sub>** - feedback voltage

**TP<sub>4</sub>** - pin for loop gain measurements, can be used together with **TP<sub>3</sub>** to inject the ac stimulus into the 10Ω resistor R<sub>2</sub>

## Voltage and Current Measurements

- use **TP<sub>1</sub>** and **TP<sub>5</sub>** to measure the input voltage
- use **TP<sub>2</sub>** and **TP<sub>6</sub>** to measure the output voltage
- use **TP<sub>3</sub>** and **TP<sub>6</sub>** to measure the feedback voltage
- hang a current probe to one of the external power wires connected to **J<sub>7</sub>** to measure the input current
- hang a current probe to one of the external power wires connected to **J<sub>8</sub>** to measure the load current



# TI-PMLK TPS7A8300 Schematic

The TI-PMLK TPS7A8300 section of the board accepts input voltages in between 1.4V and 6.5V. The output voltage can be set between 0.8V and 3.95V with onboard jumpers on J<sub>24</sub>, with a maximum load current of 2A.

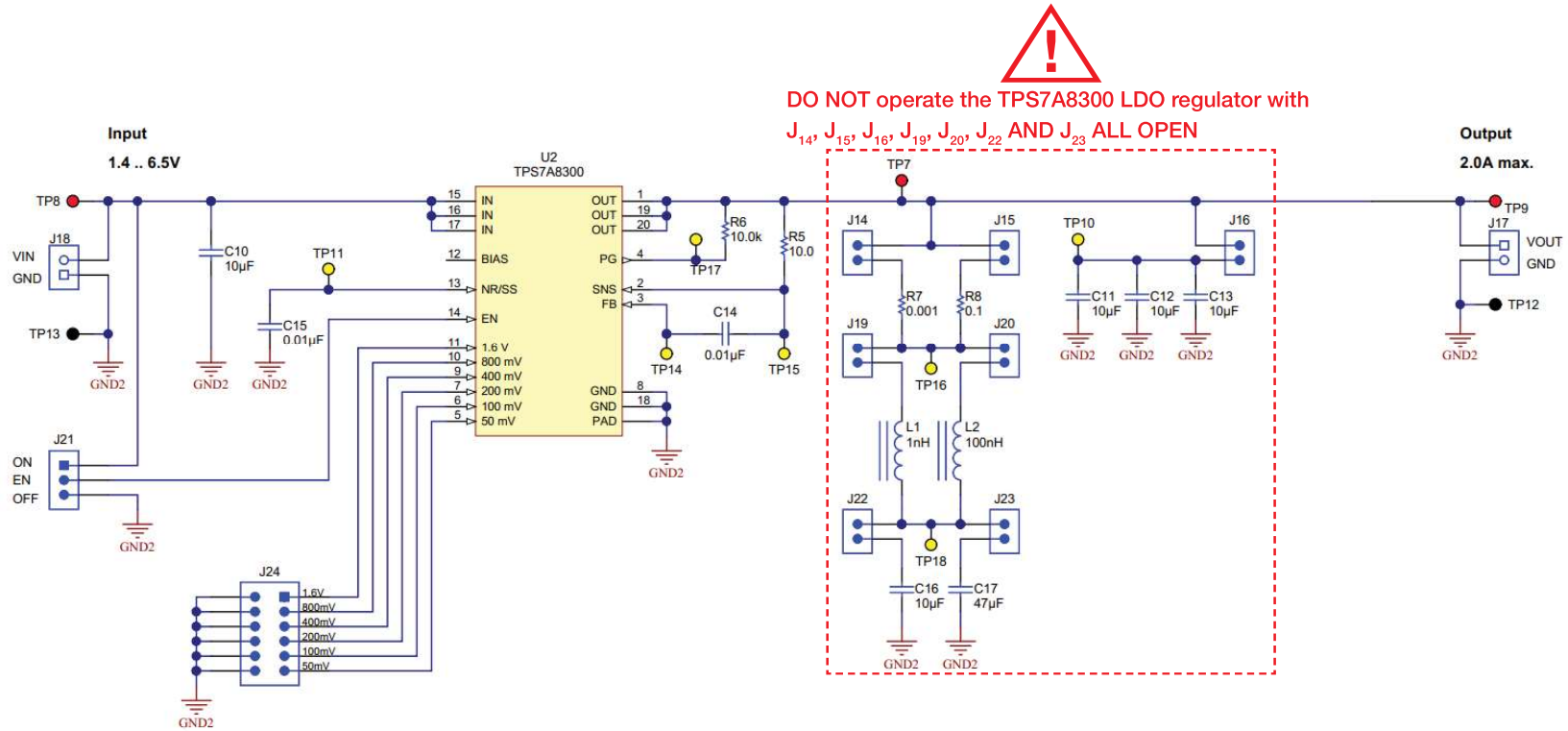


Figure 3. Circuit schematic of TI-PMLK TPS7A8300 LDO regulator



# TI-PMLK TPS7A8300 Bill of Materials

Designator	Description	Manufacturer	Part Number
C10, C11, C12, C13, C16	ceramic capacitor, 10 $\mu$ F, 16V, +/-10%, X5R, 0805	MuRata	GRM21BR61C106KE15L
C14, C15	ceramic capacitor, 0.01 $\mu$ F, 50V, +/-10%, X7R, 0805	MuRata	GRM216R71H103KA01D
C17	ceramic capacitor, 47 $\mu$ F, 16 V, +/- 20%, X5R, 1210	MuRata	GRM32ER61C476ME15L
L1	Inductor, Multilayer, Ceramic, 1nH, 0.3A, 0.015 $\Omega$ , SMD	Taiyo Yuden	HK16081N0S-T
L2	Inductor, Wirewound, Ferrite, 100nH, 2.85A, 0.02 $\Omega$ , SMD	TDK	NLCV32T-R10M-PFR
R5	resistor, 10.0 $\Omega$ , 1%, 0.125W, 0805	Yageo America	RC0805FR-0710RL
R6	resistor, 10.0k $\Omega$ , 0.1%, 0.125W, 0805	Yageo America	RT0805BRD0710KL
R7	resistor, 0.001 $\Omega$ , 1%, 1W, 1210	Rohm	PMR25HZPFV1L00
R8	resistor, 0.1 $\Omega$ , 1%, 0.5W, 1210	Rohm	MCR25JZHFLR100
U2	2-A, Low Noise, RF, LDO Voltage Regulator, 20-pin Plastic Quad Flatpack	Texas Instruments	TPS7A8300RGR

(use the part numbers of components to retrieve, through the manufacturers websites listed in the references, details about parameters and data that are used in the formulae provided for calculations in each experiment)



# TI-PMLK TPS7A8300 Board

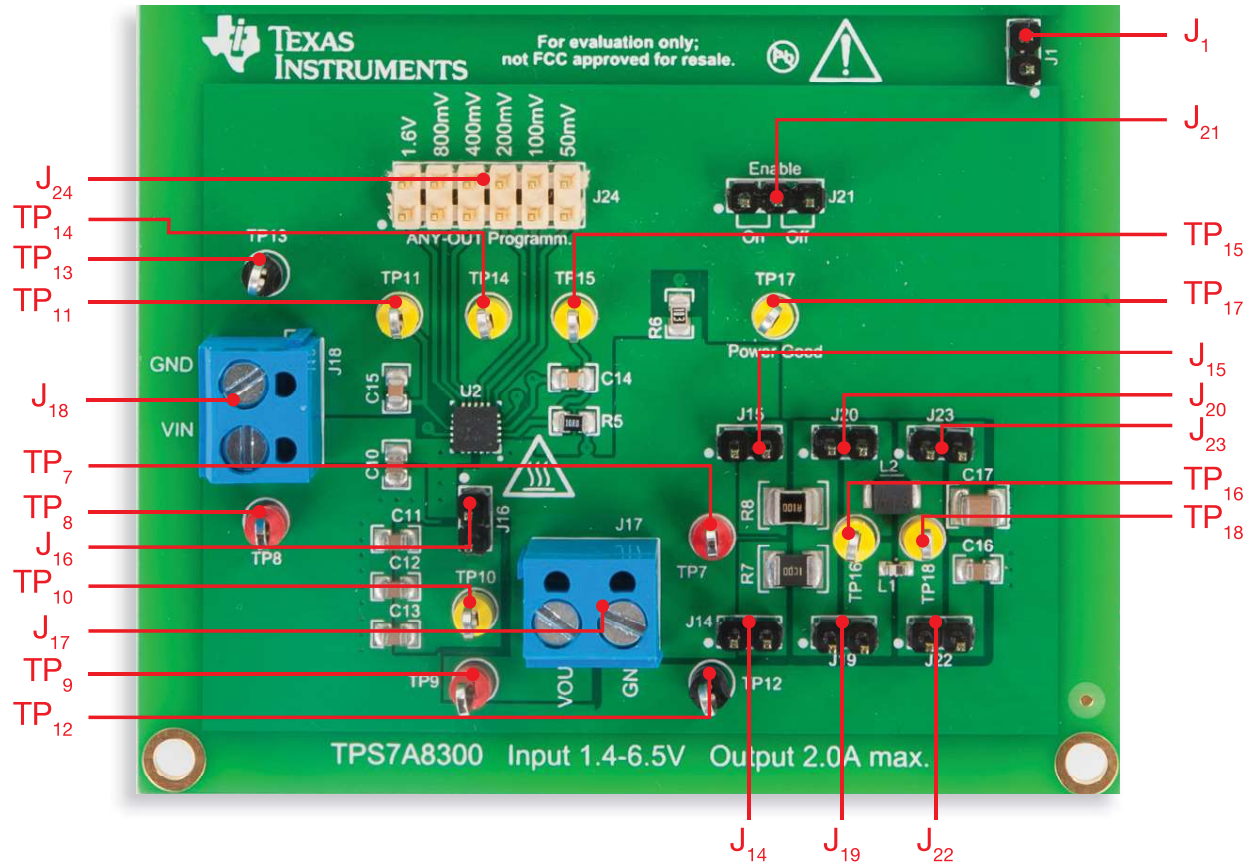
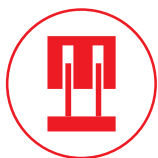


Figure 4. Plain view of TI-PMLK TPS7A8300 LDO regulator board



# TI-PMLK TPS7A8300 Connectors, Jumpers and Test Pins

## Descriptors and functions for Connectors, Jumpers and Test Pins

### Connectors

- J<sub>18</sub>** - input voltage screwdrive connector
- J<sub>17</sub>** - output voltage screwdrive connector

### Jumpers

- J<sub>14</sub>** - connects the resistor R<sub>7</sub> (1mΩ) [emulated ESR]
- J<sub>15</sub>** - connects the resistor R<sub>8</sub> (100mΩ) [emulated ESR]
- J<sub>16</sub>** - connects the C<sub>11</sub>-C<sub>13</sub> (3x10μF) output capacitors
- J<sub>19</sub>** - connects the inductor L<sub>1</sub> (1nH,15mΩ) [emulated ESL]
- J<sub>20</sub>** - connects the inductor L<sub>2</sub> (100nH,20mΩ) [emulated ESL]
- J<sub>21</sub>** - enables LDO operation when ON pin and EN pin are shorted, while it disables the LDO operation when EN pin and OFF pin are shorted
- J<sub>22</sub>** - connects the output capacitor C<sub>16</sub> (10μF)
- J<sub>23</sub>** - connects the output capacitor C<sub>17</sub> (47μF)
- J<sub>24</sub>** - connects the internal resistors of TPS7A8300 to adjust the output voltage
- J<sub>1</sub>** - connects grounds of the TPS7A4901 and the TPS7A8300 board sections

### Test pins

- TP<sub>8</sub>** - positive pole of input voltage
- TP<sub>9</sub>** - positive pole of output voltage
- TP<sub>10</sub>** - voltage on C<sub>11</sub>-C<sub>13</sub> (3x10μF) output capacitors
- TP<sub>11</sub>** - noise rejection capacitor voltage
- TP<sub>12</sub>** - ground pole of output voltage
- TP<sub>13</sub>** - ground pole of input voltage
- TP<sub>14</sub>** - feedback voltage
- TP<sub>15</sub>** - connection pin for loop gain measurements, can be used together with TP<sub>7</sub> to inject the AC stimulus into the 10Ω resistor R<sub>5</sub>
- TP<sub>16</sub>** - can be used together with TP<sub>7</sub> to sense the voltage across the resistors R<sub>7</sub> (1mΩ) and R<sub>8</sub> (100mΩ) [emulated ESR]
- TP<sub>17</sub>** - Power Good pin voltage
- TP<sub>18</sub>** - can be used together with TP<sub>16</sub> to sense the voltage across inductors L<sub>1</sub> (1nH,15mΩ) and L<sub>2</sub> (100nH,20mΩ) [emulated ESL], or to sense the voltage across capacitors C<sub>16</sub> (10μF) and C<sub>17</sub> (47μF)

## Voltage and Current Measurements

- use TP<sub>8</sub> and TP<sub>13</sub> to measure the input voltage
- use TP<sub>9</sub> and TP<sub>12</sub> to measure the output voltage
- use TP<sub>14</sub> to measure the feedback voltage
- hang a current probe to one of the external power wires connected to J<sub>18</sub> to measure the input current
- hang a current probe to one of the external power wires connected to J<sub>17</sub> to measure the load current



# Notes, Warnings and Recommendations

## NOTES

- The jumper  $J_9$  of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator can be used to connect an external capacitor in parallel to the  $C_7$  (12nF) NR/SS capacitor. Increasing the NR/SS capacitance determines a longer Soft Start time at the start-up, modifies the Power Supply Rejection Ratio (PSRR) and reduces the output voltage noise.
- The jumper  $J_{10}$  of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator can be used to connect an external resistor in series to the  $R_4$  (221k $\Omega$ ) voltage divider resistor. Increasing the resistance in series to  $R_4$  allows to increase the output voltage. The value of the resistance  $R_x$  to put in series to  $R_4$  to get a value  $V_x$  of the output voltage  $V_{out}$  is given by the following formula:

$$R_x = \frac{R_1 R_3 (V_x - V_{ref})}{(R_1 + R_3) V_{ref} - R_3 V_x} - R_4$$

- The capacitor  $C_{16}$  (10 $\mu$ F) mounted in the TPS7A8300 board can be connected directly to the output of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator by shorting the upside pin of the jumper  $J_{14}$  with the downside pin of the jumper  $J_{22}$ .
- The capacitor  $C_{17}$  (47 $\mu$ F) mounted in the TPS7A8300 board can be connected directly to the output of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator by shorting the upside pin of the jumper  $J_{15}$  with the downside pin of the jumper  $J_{23}$ .

## WARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### GENERAL

- 1) **DO NOT** exceed input and output voltage and current ratings
- 2) If the board is terminated at the output into an electronic load in constant current mode, the sequence to follow is:
  - a) at the turn on: turn on the power supply, then turn on the electronic load
  - b) at the turn off: turn off the electronic load, then turn off the power supply
- 3) Whatever change in the setup of jumpers has to be done, the board has to be shut down first, according to the recommendations given at point 2)

### TPS7A4901 LDO REGULATOR

- 1) **DO NOT** operate the regulator with both  $J_5$  **AND**  $J_6$  **OPEN**
- 2) For an effective load transient response measurement, the use of an electronic load with high slew-rate (>1A/ $\mu$ s) dynamic current sink mode operation is recommended
- 3) For an effective line transient response measurement, a power supply with high slew-rate (>1V/ $\mu$ s) dynamic voltage mode operation is suggested
- 4) In the test of PSRR, if a power summing amplifier is used to inject into the input the ac stimulus, be sure that the total dc+ac input voltage never exceeds the maximum voltage rating of the board and that it does not become negative

### TPS7A8300 LDO REGULATOR

- 1) If  $J_{16}$  is **OPEN**, one of the two capacitors  $C_{16}$  or  $C_{17}$  has to be connected to the output, through  $J_{22}$  or  $J_{23}$ , to one of the two resistors  $R_7$  and  $R_8$ , through  $J_{14}$  and  $J_{15}$ , and to one of the inductors  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ , through  $J_{19}$  and  $J_{20}$
- 2) For an effective load transient response measurement, the use of an electronic load with high slew-rate (>1A/ $\mu$ s) dynamic current sink mode operation is recommended

# Experiment 1

The goal of this experiment is to analyze how the output voltage regulation capabilities of an LDO regulator depend on the line and load conditions. The TPS7A4901 LDO regulator is used for this experiment.



## Case Study

The goal of this experiment is to analyze how the dropout voltage and the output voltage accuracy of an LDO regulator depend on the line and load conditions.

Figure 1 shows the simplified schematic of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator. Two elements characterize the **regulation capability** of the LDO regulator: the **regulation region** and the **regulation accuracy**. The regulation region is identified by the input voltage range  $[V_{INmin}, V_{INmax}]$  and the output current range  $[I_{OUTmin}, I_{OUTmax}]$  wherein the LDO is able to regulate the output voltage. The output current range spans from  $\sim 0A$  to a maximum current  $I_{OUTmax}$ , which is determined by the maximum temperature rating of the LDO, the power dissipation capabilities of its package and the maximum input voltage of the LDO ( $I_{OUTmax} = 150mA$  for TPS7A4901). The output voltage range spans from the dropout voltage  $V_{DO} = V_{INmin}$ , that depends on the pass device characteristics, to a maximum  $V_{INmax}$ , that depends on chip technology ( $V_{INmax} = 36V$  for TPS7A4901). The regulation accuracy of the LDO regulator is the percent tolerance  $(V_{out} - V_{outnom})/V_{outnom} \times 100$  of the output voltage  $V_{out}$  with respect to the nominal value  $V_{outnom}$ . The regulation accuracy depends on the **load regulation** and **line regulation**, which is expressed as the output voltage tolerance versus the load current  $I_{OUT}$  and versus the input voltage  $V_{IN}$ , over the relevant regulation ranges  $[I_{OUTmin}, I_{OUTmax}]$  and  $[V_{INmin}, V_{INmax}]$ .

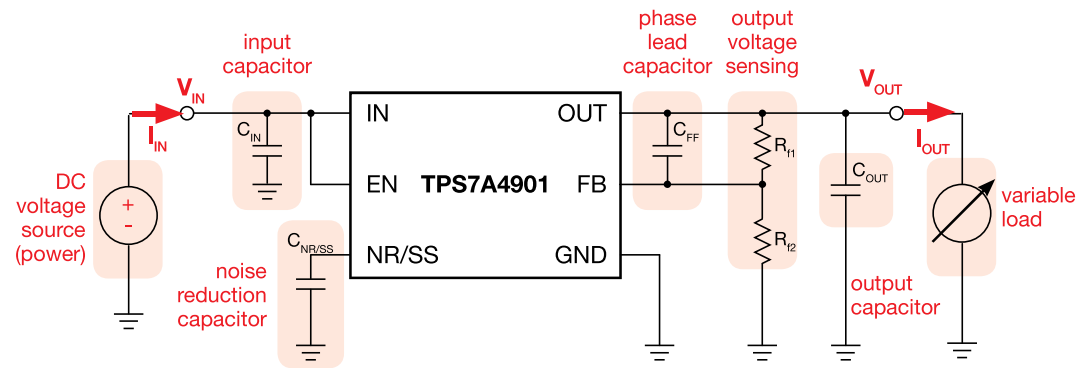


Figure 1. Simplified schematic of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator

**Test#1.** We measure the input voltage and the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator while varying the load current. The goal is to determine the dropout voltage of the LDO regulator. To detect the value of the dropout voltage we decrease the input voltage, starting from a value that is sufficiently bigger than the output voltage, and observe the output voltage to see when it begins decreasing with respect to its nominal value. While the input voltage decreases, the operating point of the LDO regulator moves from the *regulation region* to the *dropout region*.

**Test#2.** We measure the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator while varying the load current and the line voltage. The goal is to verify the regulation capabilities of the LDO regulator when it is in the regulation region, and to observe if and how the output voltage depends on the load current and line voltage. To verify the regulation capabilities we make two type of measurements. First, we set the input voltage of the LDO regulator at a value higher than the dropout voltage investigated in the previous test, we observe the output voltage while varying the load current, and determine the *load regulation*. Then, we set the load current at a given value and observe the output voltage while varying the input voltage, and determine the *line regulation*.



# Theory Background

The fundamentals of LDO regulators are provided in this section (see [1][4][11][12] for a general discussion of LDO regulators operation and characteristics, and [2] for more details on TPS7A4901 operation and features).

Figure 2 shows the architecture of a low-dropout (LDO) regulator using a PNP bipolar transistor as pass device connected between the input and the output. The output voltage is sensed through the voltage divider  $R_{f1}$ - $R_{f2}$ , that generates the feedback voltage  $V_{FB}$ . The Error Amplifier adjusts the pass device base current until the emitter-collector voltage  $V_{EC}$  equals the difference between the input voltage  $V_{in}$  and the desired regulated output voltage given by the formula (1):

$$(1) \quad V_{OUT} = V_{ref} (1 + R_{f1} / R_{f2})$$

where  $V_{ref}$  is the internal reference voltage. The base current  $I_B$  is injected into ground, and depends on the line and load conditions. The PNP transistor must work in the active region in order to achieve the output voltage  $V_{OUT}$  given by (1).

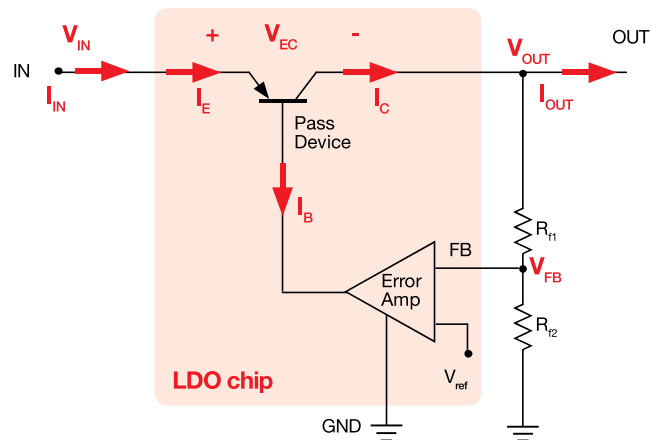


Figure 2

Figure 3 shows the output characteristic of a PNP bipolar transistor. The PNP transistor works in the active region, thus ensuring a regulated output voltage, provided that the input voltage  $V_{IN}$  is greater than  $V_{INmin} = V_{OUT} + V_{EC,sat}(I_{OUT})$ , where  $V_{EC,sat}(I_{OUT})$  is the saturation emitter-collector voltage at the current  $I_{OUT}$  required by the load. The voltage  $V_{INmin}$  is called **dropout voltage**.

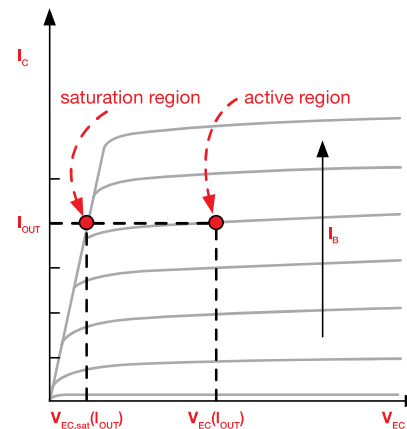


Figure 3

Figure 4 shows the effect of output voltage de-rating caused by the decrease of input voltage below  $V_{INmin}$ . When  $V_{IN}$  is lower than the **dropout voltage**  $V_{INmin}$ , the PNP transistor works in the saturation region of Figure 3, and is not able to deliver the current  $I_{OUT}$  required by the load. Therefore, the output voltage  $V_{OUT}$  is derated with respect to the desired nominal value  $V_{OUTnom}$ . This corresponds to the **dropout region** in Figure 4.

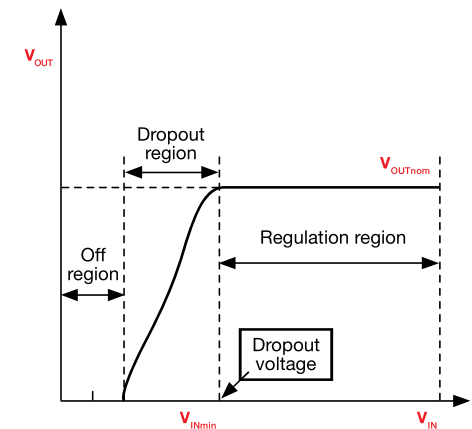


Figure 4

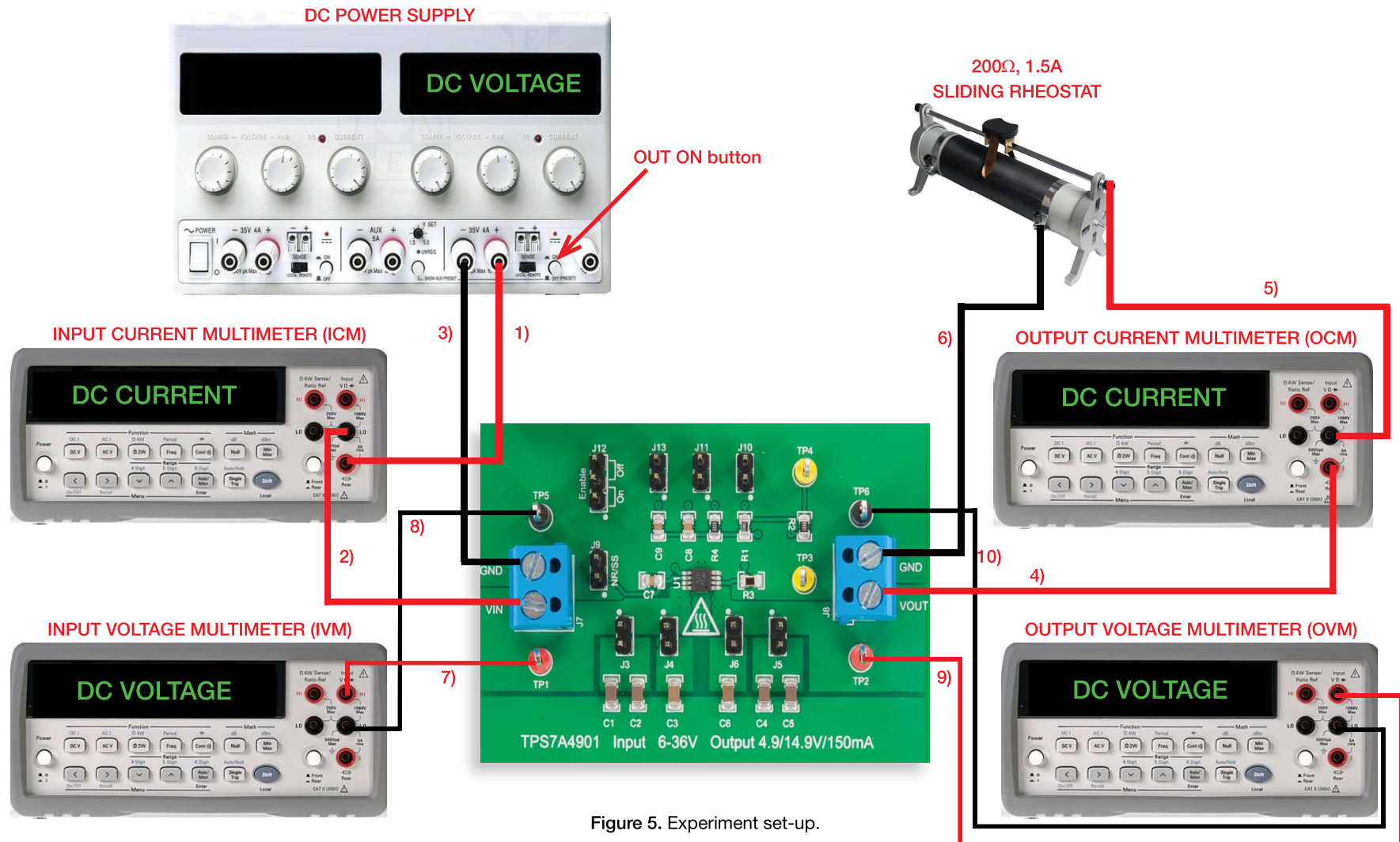
## Good to Know

- 1 In theory, it is possible to find a ratio of resistances  $R_{f1}/R_{f2} = V_{OUTnom}/V_{ref} - 1$ , that corresponds to the desired value of the nominal output voltage  $V_{OUTnom}$ . In practice, the values of commercial resistances are standardized, so that in most cases the nominal ratio  $R_{f1}/R_{f2}$  cannot be exactly achieved with the two resistors voltage divider made of  $R_{f1}$  and  $R_{f2}$ , so that the regulated  $V_{OUT}$  does not equal  $V_{OUTnom}$ .
- 2 Commercial resistors are available with different tolerances. Resistors with 0.1% tolerance ensure higher regulation accuracy, but they are more expensive than 1% tolerance resistors, which cause instead a degradation of the accuracy.
- 3 The reference voltage  $V_{ref}$  of the LDO is set inside the IC and can have a tolerance of 1% to 2%, which influences the value of the regulated output voltage  $V_{OUT}$ .



# Experiment set-up: configuration

The instruments needed for this experiment are: a DC POWER SUPPLY, four MULTIMETERS and a  $200\Omega$ , 1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT. Figure 5 shows the instruments connections. Follow the instructions provided in next page to set-up the **connections**.





## Experiment set-up: instructions

With all the instruments turned off, make the following **connections**:

- 1) connect the POSITIVE (RED) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the POSITIVE (RED) CURRENT INPUT of the INPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (ICM)  
[**WARNING**: the positive current input of the multimeter is distinguished from the positive voltage input]
- 2) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) CURRENT INPUT of the INPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (ICM) to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator
- 3) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator
- 4) connect the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator to the POSITIVE (RED) CURRENT INPUT of the OUTPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (OCM)  
[**WARNING**: the positive current input of the multimeter is distinguished from the positive voltage input]
- 5) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) CURRENT INPUT of the OUTPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (OCM) to the first input connector of the 200 $\Omega$ ,1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT
- 6) connect the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator to the second input connector of the 200 $\Omega$ ,1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT
- 7) connect the POSITIVE (RED) VOLTAGE INPUT of the INPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (IVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_1$  which is the VIN of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator
- 8) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) VOLTAGE INPUT of the INPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (IVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_5$  which is GND of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator
- 9) connect the POSITIVE (RED) VOLTAGE INPUT of the OUTPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (OVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is VOUT of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator
- 10) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) VOLTAGE INPUT of the OUTPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (OVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_6$  which is the GND of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator



# Test#1: preparation and procedure

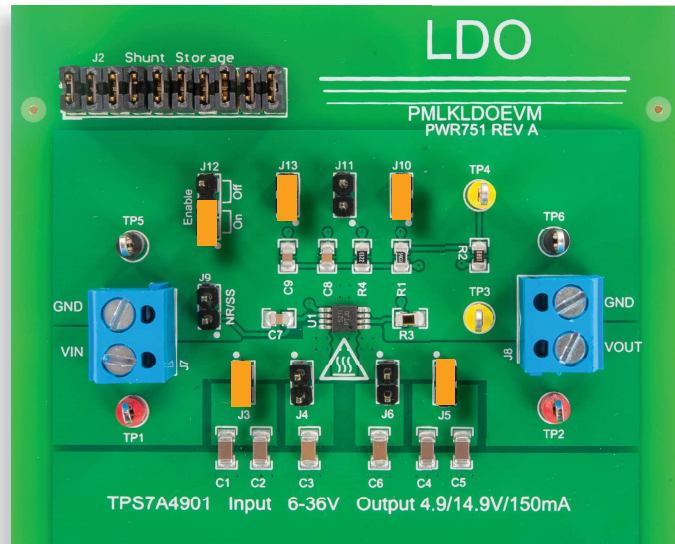


Figure 6. TPS7A4901 LDO board: jumpers set-up for Test#1

### Jumpers set-up, Figure 6:

- **J<sub>12</sub> shorted** in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- **J<sub>10</sub> shorted** → nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 5V$
- **J<sub>13</sub> shorted** → C<sub>9</sub> (12nF) phase lead capacitor connected
- **J<sub>5</sub> shorted** → C<sub>4</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>5</sub> (4.7μF) output caps connected
- **J<sub>3</sub> shorted** → C<sub>1</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>2</sub> (4.7μF) input caps connected
- **J<sub>4</sub> open** → C<sub>3</sub> (2.2μF) input cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>6</sub> open** → C<sub>6</sub> (2.2μF) output cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>11</sub> open** → C<sub>8</sub> (100nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>9</sub> open** → C<sub>7</sub> (12nF) noise reduction cap. disconnected

### Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the MULTIMETERS
- 2) set the ICM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 1A$
- 3) set the OCM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 5V$
- 4) set the IVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\geq 5V$
- 5) set the OVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\geq 5V$
- 6) turn ON the POWER SUPPLY (ensure that the “OUT ON” button is OFF)
- 7) set the DC VOLTAGE of the POWER SUPPLY at the initial value of 6V
- 8) set the POWER SUPPLY CURRENT LIMIT at 200mA
- 9) set the position of the 200Ω, 1.5A RHEOSTAT sliding contact corresponding to the maximum resistance (200Ω)
- 10) turn ON the POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button. In these conditions you should read about 6V in the IVM display, about 5V in the OVM display, about 25mA in the OCM display and slightly more than 25mA in the ICM display (if you read values much different than the one listed above, turn OFF the “OUT ON” button of the DC POWER SUPPLY and verify the previous steps)
- 11) reduce slowly the DC POWER SUPPLY voltage by means of the “fine adjust” knob, watch the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator on the OVM display, stop when you see the voltage to decrease by more than 0.1%, and record the input voltage and the output voltage values in Table 1
- 12) reset the DC POWER SUPPLY voltage at 6V and repeat step 11) for the values of the load current listed in Table 1 (\*) by adjusting the position of the 200Ω, 1.5A RHEOSTAT sliding contact
- 13) turn OFF the DC POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button
- 14) open jumper **J<sub>10</sub>** to set 15V nominal output voltage  $V_{out}$ , repeat the steps 9) to 12) by setting the initial value of VOLTAGE of the POWER SUPPLY at 16V (the values 6V and 5V are now 16V and 15V), and fill Table 1
- 15) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the “OUT ON” button of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments

(\*) You may adopt for this test any sequence of increasing values of the load current from 0A to 150mA allowed by the resolution of the sliding contact of the specific rheostat you adopt for the experiment. It is not required that the load current equals exactly the values listed in Table 1.



# Test#1: measure and calculate

For each position of jumper  $J_{10}$  (open/shorted), execute the following steps.

- 1) Calculate the nominal output voltage  $^{(a)}V_{\text{outnom}}$  based on the formula (1) provided in the *Theory Background* section, using the  $R_{f1}$  and  $R_{f2}$  values provided in the parameters box below, and report the value in Table 1 [**NOTE:** neglect the tolerances of the sensing resistors].
- 2) For the value of the load current of 25mA, measure the output voltage  $^{(b)}V_{\text{out},1V}$  at  $V_{\text{IN}}=V_{\text{outnom}}+1V$ , and report the value in Table 1.
- 3) For each value of the load current of Table 1, measure the value of the input voltage  $^{(1)}V_{\text{inmin}}$  at which you observe an output voltage value  $^{(2)}V_{\text{out},0.1\%}$  deviating of more than 0.1% from the value measured at  $V_{\text{IN}}=V_{\text{outnom}}+1V$  [e.g. 5mV at 5V], calculate the drop voltage  $^{(3)}V_{\text{drop}} = V_{\text{inmin}} - V_{\text{out},0.1\%}$ , and report the values  $V_{\text{inmin}}$ ,  $V_{\text{out},0.1\%}$  and  $V_{\text{drop}}$  in Table 1.
- 4) Answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in [1][2][4].

**Table 1.** Dropout voltage of TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 LDO regulator vs load current at  $V_{\text{OUT}} = 5V$  and  $V_{\text{OUT}} = 15V$

	$I_{\text{OUT}}$ [mA]	25	50	75	100	125	150
<b><math>J_{10}</math> shorted (<math>V_{\text{outnom}} \approx 5V</math>)</b> $^{(a)}V_{\text{outnom}} = V_{\text{ref}}(1+R_{f1}@J_{10st}/R_{f2}) = \dots\dots V$ $^{(b)}V_{\text{out},1V}@{V_{\text{IN}}=V_{\text{outnom}}+1V, I_{\text{OUT}}=25\text{mA}} = \dots\dots V$	(1) $V_{\text{INmin}}$ [V]	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
	(2) $V_{\text{OUT},0.1\%}$ [mV]	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
	(3) $V_{\text{drop}} = V_{\text{INmin}} - ^{(2)}V_{\text{OUT},0.1\%}$ [mV]	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)
<b><math>J_{10}</math> open (<math>V_{\text{outnom}} \approx 15V</math>)</b> $^{(a)}V_{\text{outnom}} = V_{\text{ref}}(1+R_{f1}@J_{10op}/R_{f2}) = \dots\dots V$ $^{(b)}V_{\text{out},1V}@{V_{\text{IN}}=V_{\text{outnom}}+1V, I_{\text{OUT}}=25\text{mA}} = \dots\dots V$	(1) $V_{\text{INmin}}$ [V]	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
	(2) $V_{\text{OUT},0.1\%}$ [mV]	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
	(3) $V_{\text{drop}} = V_{\text{INmin}} - ^{(2)}V_{\text{OUT},0.1\%}$ [mV]	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)

### Sensing resistors:

#### $J_{10}$ open ( $V_{\text{OUT}} = 15V$ ):

$$R_{f1} = R_1 = 590k\Omega, \pm 1.0\% \text{ tolerance}$$

$$R_{f2} = R_3 = 51.1k\Omega, \pm 0.1\% \text{ tolerance}$$

#### $J_{10}$ shorted ( $V_{\text{OUT}} = 5V$ ):

$$R_{f1} = R_1(590k\Omega, \pm 1.0\% \text{ tolerance}) \text{ in parallel to } R_4(221k\Omega, 1.0\% \text{ tolerance})$$

$$= 160.8k\Omega, \pm 0.5\% \text{ tolerance}$$

$$R_{f2} = R_3 = 51.1k\Omega, \pm 0.1\% \text{ tolerance}$$

### TPS7A4901 reference voltage:

$$V_{\text{ref}} = 1.194V \pm 1.5\% \text{ tolerance}$$

## Answer:

1 Does the dropout voltage increase or decrease with increasing load current?  increases  decreases  other: \_\_\_\_\_

2 How does the dropout voltage change at different  $V_{\text{out}}$ ?  higher at 15V  higher at 5V  other: \_\_\_\_\_



## Test#2: preparation and procedure

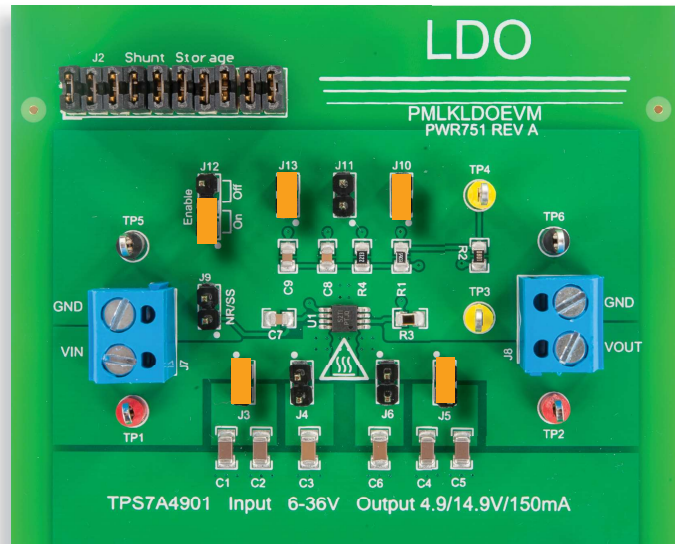


Figure 7. TPS7A4901 LDO board: jumpers set-up for Test#2

### Jumpers set-up, Figure 7:

- **J<sub>12</sub> shorted** in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- **J<sub>10</sub> shorted** → nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 5V$
- **J<sub>13</sub> shorted** → C<sub>9</sub> (12nF) phase lead capacitor connected
- **J<sub>5</sub> shorted** → C<sub>4</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>5</sub> (4.7μF) output caps connected
- **J<sub>3</sub> shorted** → C<sub>1</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>2</sub> (4.7μF) input caps connected
- **J<sub>4</sub> open** → C<sub>3</sub> (2.2μF) input cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>6</sub> open** → C<sub>6</sub> (2.2μF) output cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>11</sub> open** → C<sub>8</sub> (100nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>9</sub> open** → C<sub>7</sub> (12nF) noise reduction cap. disconnected

### Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the MULTIMETERS
- 2) set the ICM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 1A$
- 3) set the OCM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 1A$
- 4) set the IVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\geq 10V$
- 5) set the OVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\geq 20V$
- 6) turn on the POWER SUPPLY (ensure that the OUT ON button is OFF)
- 7) set the DC VOLTAGE of the POWER SUPPLY at 6V
- 8) set the POWER SUPPLY CURRENT LIMIT at 200mA
- 9) set the position of the 200Ω, 1.5A RHEOSTAT sliding contact corresponding to the maximum resistance (200Ω)
- 10) turn ON the POWER SUPPLY "OUT ON" button. In these conditions you should read about 6V in the IVM display, about 5V in the OVM display, about 25mA in the OCM display and slightly more than 25mA in the ICM display (if you read values much different than the ones listed above, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY and verify the previous steps)
- 11) read the output voltage on the OVM display, record the value in Table 2 and repeat this step for all the values of the load current listed in Table 2<sup>(\*)</sup> by adjusting the position of the 200Ω, 1.5A RHEOSTAT sliding contact and adjusting the POWER SUPPLY knob until you read 6V on the IVM display for each value of the load current
- 12) move the 200Ω, 1.5A RHEOSTAT sliding contact until you read the value of 50mA<sup>(\*\*)</sup> in the OCM display, read the output voltage on the OVM display, record the value in Table 3 and repeat this step for all the values of the input voltage listed in Table 3, by changing the POWER SUPPLY DC voltage set point (you do not need to turn OFF the POWER SUPPLY "OUT ON" button). Adjust the POWER SUPPLY knob until you read the desired input voltage on the IVM display for each value of the load current
- 13) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments

(\*) You may adopt for this test any sequence of increasing values of the load current from 0A to 150mA allowed by the resolution of the sliding contact of the specific rheostat you adopt for the experiment. It is not required that the load current equals exactly the values listed in Table 2.

(\*\*) You may adopt the value of the load current closest to 50mA you are able to set with the resolution of the sliding contact of the specific rheostat you adopt for the experiment.



## Test#2: measure and calculate

- 1) Calculate the nominal output voltage  $V_{out}$  based on the formula (1) provided in the *Theory Background* section, using the  $R_{11}$  and  $R_{12}$  values provided in the parameters box below.
- 2) With input voltage fixed at  $V_{in} = 6V$ , measure the value of the output voltage  $V_{out}$  for each value of the load current  $I_{out}$  and report the value in Table 2.
- 3) Calculate the percent LOAD REGULATION, by means of the formula  $(V_{out} - V_{outnom})/V_{outnom} \times 100$ , for each value of the load current  $I_{out}$  and report the value in Table 2.
- 4) With load current fixed at  $I_{out} = 50mA$ , measure the value of the output voltage  $V_{out}$  for each value of the input voltage  $V_{in}$  and report the value in Table 3.
- 5) Calculate the percent LINE REGULATION, by means of the formula  $(V_{out} - V_{outnom})/V_{outnom} \times 100$ , for each value of the input voltage  $V_{in}$  and report the value in Table 3.
- 6) Answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in [1][2][4].

**Table 2.** Load regulation of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator at  $V_{out} = 5V$

$V_{IN} = 6V$	$I_{OUT} [mA]$					
	25	50	75	100	125	150
$V_{OUT} [V]$						
load regulation [%]						

**Table 3.** Line regulation of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator at  $V_{out} = 5V$

$I_{OUT} = 50mA$	$V_{IN} [V]$					
	6	9	12	15	18	21
$V_{OUT} [V]$						
line regulation [%]						

### Sensing resistors:

#### $J_{10}$ open ( $V_{OUT} = 15V$ ):

$R_{11} = R_1 = 590k\Omega, \pm 1.0\%$  tolerance

$R_{12} = R_3 = 51.1k\Omega, \pm 0.1\%$  tolerance

#### $J_{10}$ shorted ( $V_{OUT} = 5V$ ):

$R_{11} = R_1(590k\Omega, \pm 1.0\%$  tolerance) in parallel to  $R_4(221k\Omega, 1.0\%$  tolerance)

$= 160.8k\Omega, \pm 0.5\%$  tolerance

$R_{12} = R_3 = 51.1k\Omega, \pm 0.1\%$  tolerance

### TPS7A4901 reference voltage:

$V_{ref} = 1.194V \pm 1.5\%$  tolerance

## Answer:

1 Does the output voltage increase with the load current?  yes  no  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_

2 Does the output voltage increase with the line voltage?  yes  no  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_



## Discussion

In Test#1 we are interested in investigating correlations between the value of the *dropout voltage* and the values of the load current and of the input voltage.

The LDO dropout voltage increases as the output current increases, as shown in the plot of Figure 8. This is determined by the increase of the emitter-to-collector voltage of the bipolar PNP pass device operating in saturation, as the current passing through the device increases. An LDO regulator characterized by a lower dropout voltage is able to work with a smaller difference between the input voltage and the output voltage (see *Experiment 5* for dropout voltage discussion relevant to N-channel MOSFET LDO regulators). This has two main positive consequences: the regulation region is expanded and the maximum efficiency of the LDO regulator increases (see *Experiment 2* for efficiency analysis of LDO regulators).

In Test#2 we are interested in investigating correlations between the value of the output voltage and the values of the load current and of the input voltage.

The plots of line and load regulation of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator are shown in Figures 10 and 11. The line and load regulation are a measure of the steady-state tolerance of the LDO regulator. A smaller value of line regulation or load regulation means that the regulated output voltage is less sensitive to the input voltage or to the load current, respectively. In other words, the LDO regulator is able to neutralize the effects of input voltage and load current variations. Such ability is the result of various influence factors, such as the type and characteristics of the pass device, the type and characteristics of the operational amplifier used to realize the feedback error amplifier, the characteristics of the voltage reference generator, the characteristics of voltage divider resistors. For a given pass device, a high open-loop gain operational amplifier is the primary requisite to achieve good line/load regulation. The line regulation and load regulation contribute to the definition of the LDO regulator accuracy, which includes the cumulative effects of line/load regulation, reference voltage, op-amp, voltage divider resistors, and temperature (see [2] for more details on thermal characteristics of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator and [12] for more details on the calculation of the LDO regulator accuracy).



## Experimental plots

The plots collected in the Figures 8 to 11 show the typical characteristics of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (see [2] for further details).

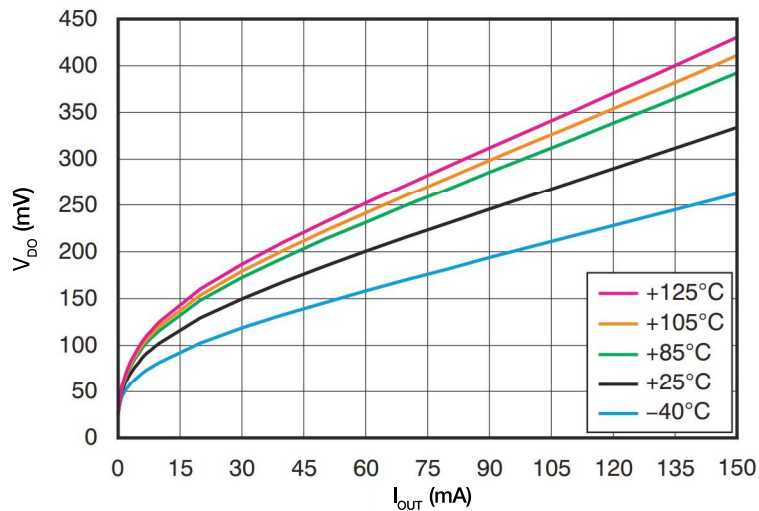


Figure 8. Dropout voltage of TPS7A4901 vs load current

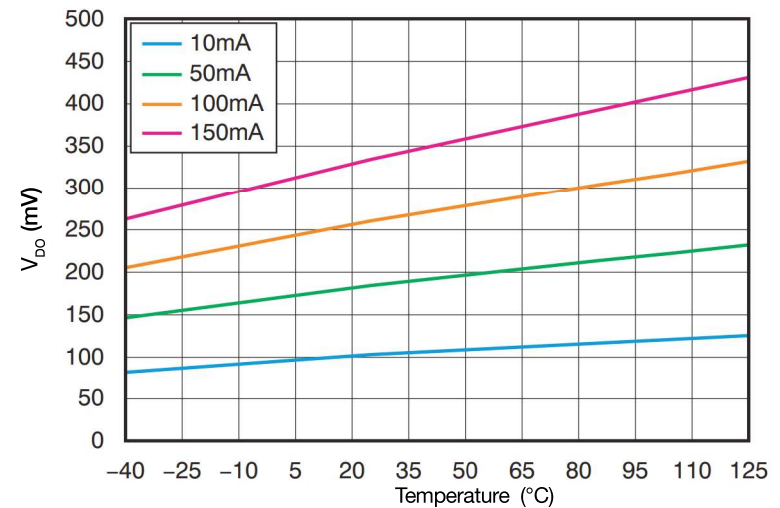


Figure 9. Dropout voltage of TPS7A4901 vs temperature

The dropout voltage also depends on the LDO chip junction temperature  $T_j$ . The plots of Figures 8 and 9 show how the dropout voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator changes with the junction temperature. The junction temperature,  $T_j = T_a + R_{\theta ja} P_d$ , depends on three main factors: the LDO chip power dissipation  $P_d$  determined by the current/voltage operating conditions, the ambient temperature  $T_a$  and the junction-to-ambient thermal resistance  $R_{\theta ja}$  of the LDO regulator package (it is about  $R_{\theta ja} = 55^\circ\text{C}/\text{W}$  for TPS7A4901). Therefore, the measured dropout voltage changes with the ambient temperature (see [2] for more details on thermal characteristics of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator and [Experiment 2](#) for further insight in thermal analysis of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator).



## Experimental plots

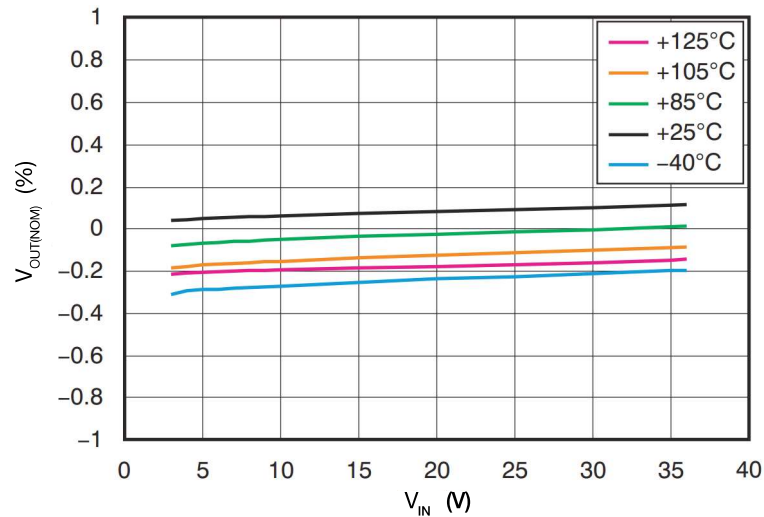


Figure 10. Line regulation of TPS7A4901, with temperature dependency

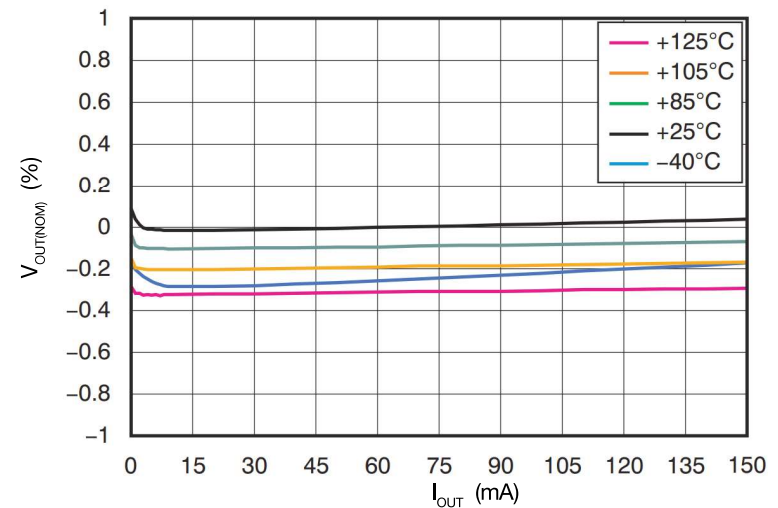


Figure 11. Load regulation of TPS7A4901, with temperature dependency

The plots of Figures 10 and 11 show the line regulation and load regulation of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator, and their dependency on the LDO chip junction temperature. It can be observed that the both the line regulation and the load regulation are worse at very low temperature (below 0°C) and at very high temperature (above 100°C). The first situation is of interest in aerospace applications, where the ambient temperature is extremely low and the semiconductor devices inside the LDO regulator chip operate at a junction temperature below 0°C despite of their power dissipation. The second situation is of interest in automotive applications, if the LDO regulator is part of electronics located inside the engine compartment where the ambient temperature can be up to 80°C and more, or when the LDO regulator operates with a big difference between the input voltage  $V_{IN}$  and the output voltage  $V_{OUT}$ , which causes a high power dissipation inside the LDO regulator (see [2] for more details on thermal characteristics of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator and [Experiment 2](#) for further insight in efficiency analysis of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator). It is interesting to note that in all the aforementioned situations, the line and load regulation become both negative. This means that the output voltage is always lower than the required nominal value. If a high accuracy is required by the specifications given for the application, it is possible to improve the line and load regulation by selecting a couple of resistors of the feedback voltage divider with appropriate values of resistances  $R_{f1}$  and  $R_{f2}$ , which allow to partially compensate the output voltage derating caused by the extreme temperature conditions. In other words, according to the formula (1) provided in the [Theory Background](#) section, the voltage divider can be designed so that the nominal output voltage is slightly higher than the nominal value, thus neutralizing the derating caused by the extreme temperature conditions. In order to make this solution really feasible, resistors with 0.01% to 0.1% tolerance are required, which may have some impact on the cost of the LDO solution.

# Experiment 2

The goal of this experiment is to analyze how the efficiency of an LDO regulator depends on the line and load conditions. The TPS7A4901 LDO regulator is used for this experiment.



## Case Study

The goal of this experiment is to analyze the correlations between the efficiency of the LDO regulator and the values of the load current and of the input voltage.

The subject of investigation in this experiment is the efficiency of LDO regulators. Figure 1 shows the simplified schematic of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator. The main contributors that affect the efficiency of LDO regulators are: the pass device, the LDO architecture and the operating conditions. The pass device of LDO regulators is characterized by power dissipation which increases when the difference between input voltage and output voltage increases. The LDO architecture influences the efficiency as it determines the ground current  $I_{\text{gnd}}$ , also called quiescent current, which is the difference between the LDO regulator input and output currents. The ground current  $I_{\text{gnd}}$  consists of several components, determined by the band-gap reference, the sensing resistors, the error amplifier, and the pass device drive current. The ground current and the voltage drop across the pass device are determined by the load current and input voltage operating conditions. LDO regulators efficiency calculation is discussed in detail in the *Theory Background* section.

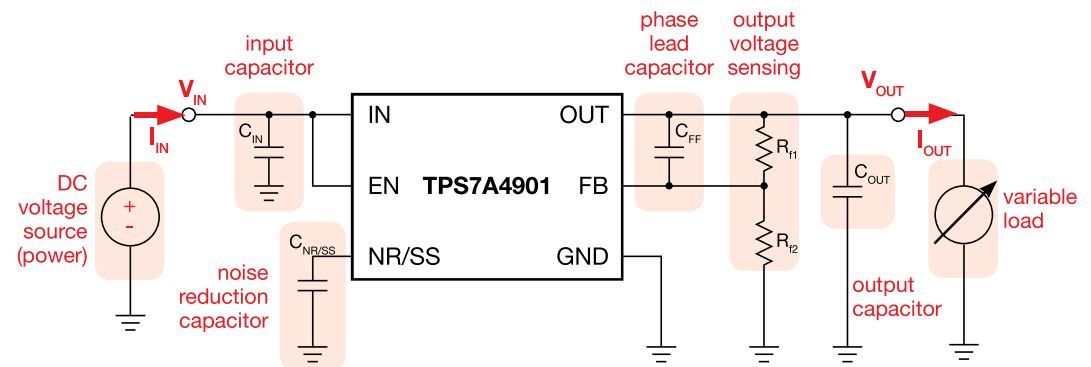


Figure 1. Simplified schematic of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator

**Test#1.** We measure the input voltage  $V_{\text{IN}}$ , the input current  $I_{\text{IN}}$ , output voltage  $V_{\text{OUT}}$  and output current  $I_{\text{OUT}}$  of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator while varying the load current. The goal is to evaluate the percent efficiency of the LDO regulator, and to observe if and how it depends on the load current. The test is repeated at different values of the input voltage to detect its influence on the efficiency.

**Test#2.** We measure the input voltage  $V_{\text{IN}}$ , the input current  $I_{\text{IN}}$ , the output voltage  $V_{\text{OUT}}$  and output current  $I_{\text{OUT}}$  of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator while varying the input voltage. The goal is to evaluate the percent efficiency of the LDO regulator, to observe if and how it depends on the input voltage and to compare the measured efficiency with the results of efficiency calculation realized by means of formulae provided in the *Theory Background* section, including a basic thermal analysis. The test is repeated at different values of the output current.



# Theory Background

The fundamentals of LDO loss analysis are provided in this section (see [1][4][12] for a general discussion of LDO regulators operation and characteristics, and [2] for more details on TPS7A4901 operation and features).

Figure 2 shows an LDO regulator using a PNP bipolar transistor pass device. The pass device voltage  $V_{EC}$  equals the difference between the input voltage  $V_{IN}$  and the output voltage  $V_{OUT}$ . The total LDO regulator power dissipation is given by the formula (1):

$$(1) P_d = P_{IN} - P_{OUT} = V_{IN} I_{IN} - V_{OUT} I_{OUT}$$

The dissipation is determined by the LDO chip and by the voltage divider resistors  $R_{F1}$  and  $R_{F2}$ . The LDO regulator input current fulfills the equation (2):

$$(2) I_{IN} = I_{OUT} + I_{GND} + I_{VD}$$

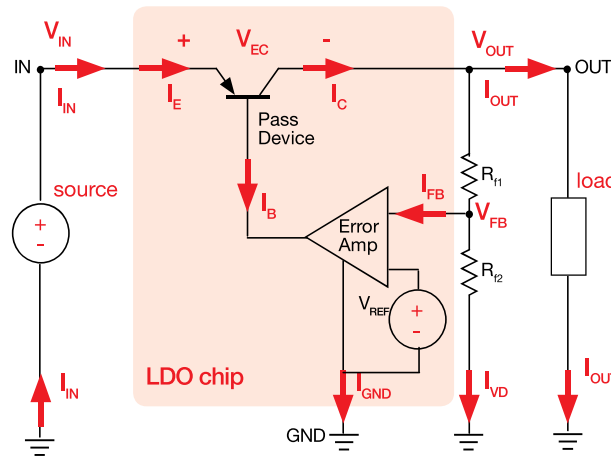


Figure 2

Based on formula (1), given the output voltage  $V_{OUT}$  and the output current  $I_{OUT}$ , the LDO regulator power dissipation increases if the input voltage increases. The PNP pass device is the main contributor to the power dissipation. Figure 3 shows the output characteristic of a PNP bipolar transistor. The output voltage regulation is ensured provided that the input voltage is higher than the dropout voltage (see [Experiment 1](#)). In this case, the PNP transistor operates in the active region and its voltage  $V_{EC}(I_{OUT}) = V_{IN} - V_{OUT}$  is higher than the saturation voltage  $V_{EC,sat}(I_{OUT})$ .

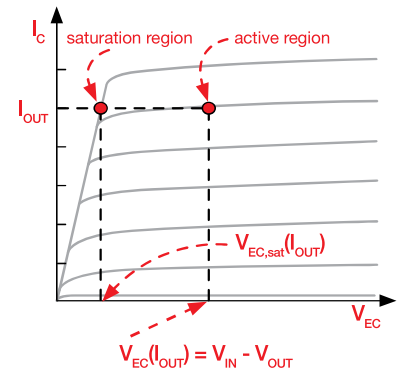


Figure 3

The LDO regulator efficiency  $\eta$  is given by the formula (3):

$$(3) \eta = P_{OUT} / P_{IN} = V_{OUT} I_{OUT} / [V_{IN} (I_{OUT} + I_{GND} + I_{VD})] \times 100$$

where  $I_{VD} = V_{ref}/R_{F2}$  and the  $I_{GND}$  depends on LDO input voltage  $V_{IN}$ , load current  $I_{OUT}$  and junction temperature  $T_j$ , as shown in Figure 4. The LDO junction temperature  $T_j$  depends in turn on the LDO chip power losses  $P_{LDO}$  according to formula (4):

$$(4) T_j = T_a + R_{\theta JA} P_{LDO}$$

where  $R_{\theta JA}$  is the LDO chip thermal resistance,  $T_a$  is the ambient temperature and:

$$(5) P_{LDO} = V_{IN} I_{IN} - V_{OUT} I_{OUT} - (R_{F1} + R_{F2}) I_{VD}^2$$

The LDO ground current  $I_{GND}$  depends on the base current needed to bias the pass device, on the error amplifier op-amp, on the voltage reference and on the junction temperature. Figure 4 shows the ground current vs output current and input voltage for the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator.

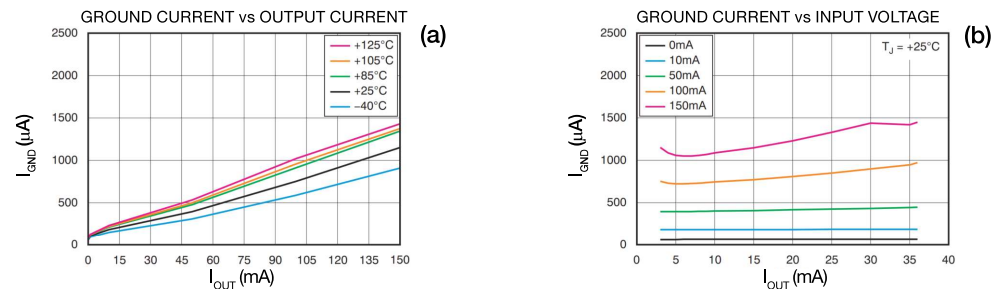


Figure 4

## Good to Know

The LDO regulator sinks a quiescent current  $I_Q$  from the line, even when it is not delivering current to the load (see [1][2][12] for details).



# Experiment set-up: configuration

The instruments needed for this experiment are: a DC POWER SUPPLY, four MULTIMETERS and a 200 $\Omega$ ,1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT. Figure 5 shows the instruments connections. Follow the instructions provided in next page to set-up the **connections**.

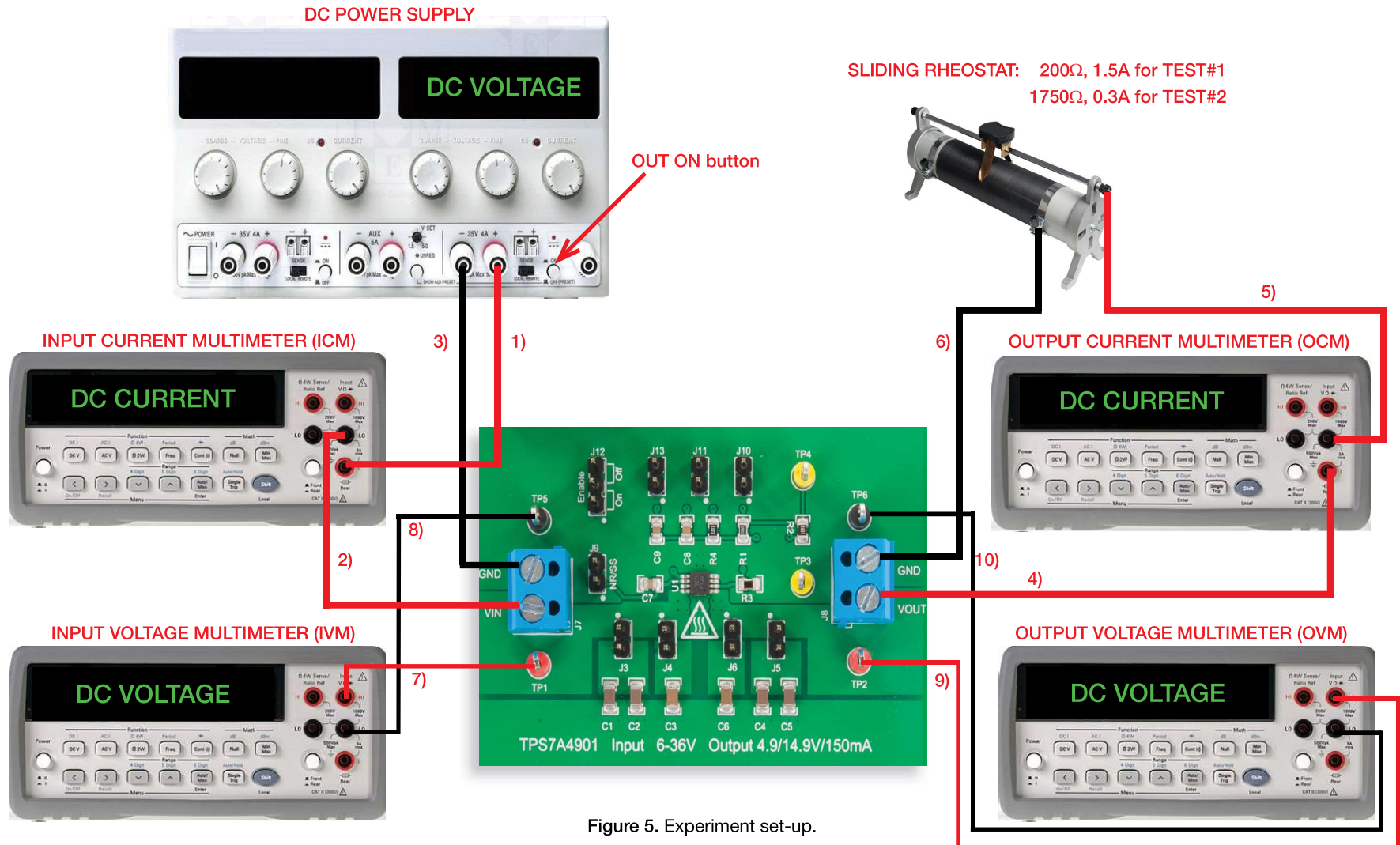


Figure 5. Experiment set-up.



## Experiment set-up: instructions

With all the instruments turned off, make the following **connections**:

- 1) connect the POSITIVE (RED) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the POSITIVE (RED) CURRENT INPUT of the INPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (ICM)  
[**WARNING**: the positive current input of the multimeter is distinguished from the positive voltage input]
- 2) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) CURRENT INPUT of the INPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (ICM) to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator
- 3) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator
- 4) connect the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator to the POSITIVE (RED) CURRENT INPUT of the OUTPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (OCM)  
[**WARNING**: the positive current input of the multimeter is distinguished from the positive voltage input]
- 5) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) CURRENT INPUT of the OUTPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (OCM) to the first input connector of the 200 $\Omega$ ,1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT for **Test#1** or to the first input connector of the 1750 $\Omega$ ,0.3A SLIDING RHEOSTAT for **Test#2**
- 6) connect the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator to the second input connector of the 200 $\Omega$ ,1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT for **Test#1** or to the second input connector of the 1750 $\Omega$ ,0.3A SLIDING RHEOSTAT for **Test#2**
- 7) connect the POSITIVE (RED) VOLTAGE INPUT of the INPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (IVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_1$  which is the VIN of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator
- 8) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) VOLTAGE INPUT of the INPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (IVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_5$  which is GND of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator
- 9) connect the POSITIVE (RED) VOLTAGE INPUT of the OUTPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (OVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is VOUT of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator
- 10) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) VOLTAGE INPUT of the OUTPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (OVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_6$  which is the GND of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator



## Test#1: preparation and procedure

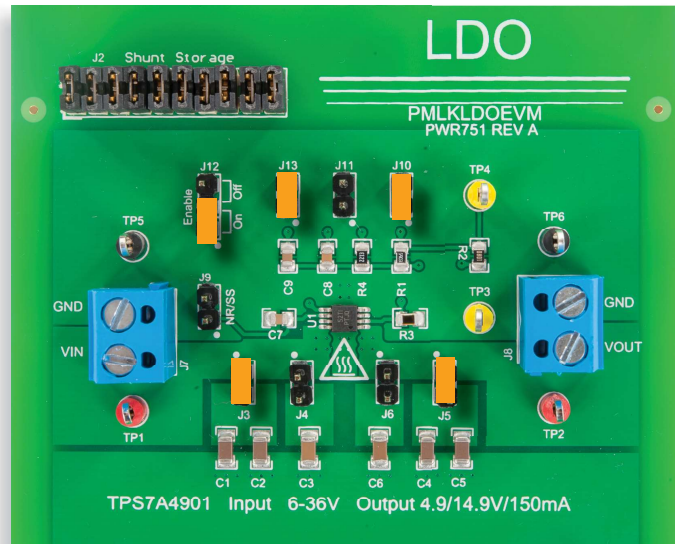


Figure 6. TPS7A4901 LDO board: jumpers set-up for Test#1

### Jumper set-up, Figure 6:

- **J<sub>12</sub>** shorted in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- **J<sub>10</sub>** shorted → nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 5V$
- **J<sub>13</sub>** shorted → C<sub>9</sub> (12nF) phase lead capacitor connected
- **J<sub>5</sub>** shorted → C<sub>4</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>5</sub> (4.7μF) output caps connected
- **J<sub>3</sub>** shorted → C<sub>1</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>2</sub> (4.7μF) input caps connected
- **J<sub>4</sub>** open → C<sub>3</sub> (2.2μF) input cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>6</sub>** open → C<sub>6</sub> (2.2μF) output cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>11</sub>** open → C<sub>8</sub> (100nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>9</sub>** open → C<sub>7</sub> (12nF) noise reduction cap. disconnected

### Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the MULTIMETERS
- 2) set the ICM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 1A$
- 3) set the OCM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 1A$
- 4) set the IVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\geq 5V$
- 5) set the OVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\geq 5V$
- 6) turn on the POWER SUPPLY (be sure that the "OUT ON" button is OFF)
- 7) set the VOLTAGE of the POWER SUPPLY at 8V
- 8) set the POWER SUPPLY CURRENT LIMIT at 200mA
- 9) set the position of the 200Ω, 1.5A RHEOSTAT sliding contact corresponding to the maximum resistance (200Ω)
- 10) turn ON the POWER SUPPLY "OUT ON" button. In these conditions you should read about 8V in the IVM display, 5V in the OVM display, about 25mA in the OCM display and slightly more than 25mA in the ICM display (if you read values much different than the one listed above, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY and verify the previous steps)
- 11) read the output voltage and input current of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator on the OVM display and ICM display respectively, record the output voltage and the input current values in Table 1, and repeat this step for all the values of the load current listed in Table 1 (\*) by adjusting the position of the 200Ω, 1.5A RHEOSTAT sliding contact (adjust the POWER SUPPLY knob until you read 8V on the IVM display for each value of the load current)
- 12) change the POWER SUPPLY DC voltage set point to 10V (you do not need to turn OFF the POWER SUPPLY "OUT ON" button), and repeat the step 11)
- 13) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments

(\*) You may adopt for this test any sequence of increasing values of the load current from 0A to 150mA allowed by the resolution of the sliding contact of the specific rheostat you adopt for the experiment. It is not required that the load current equals exactly the values listed in Table 1.



## Test#1: measure and calculate

- For each value of the nominal input voltage and of the nominal load current indicated in Table 1, measure the input voltage  $V_{IN}$ , the input current  $I_{IN}$ , the output voltage  $V_{OUT}$ , the output current  $I_{OUT}$ , and collect the results in Table 1. **[NOTE:** the input voltage and the output current that you read on the IVM and OCM MULTIMETERS might not be exactly equal to the nominal input voltage and the nominal output current indicated in Table 1 due to resolution of the DC POWER SUPPLY and of the SLIDING RHEOSTAT; in each measurement adjust the DC POWER SUPPLY and the SLIDING RHEOSTAT set points so as the values you read in the IVM and OCM MULTIMETERS are as close as possible to the input voltage and the output current indicated in Table 1].
- Calculate the percent efficiency by means of the formula  $\eta = V_{OUT} I_{OUT} / (V_{IN} I_{IN}) \times 100$  and report the result in Table 1.
- Analyze the measurement results, answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in [1][2][4].

**Table 1.** Efficiency of TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 LDO regulator vs load current, at output voltage  $V_{OUT} = 5V$

(1) $V_{IN}$ [V]	(2) $I_{IN}$ [mA]	$I_{OUT}$ [mA]											
		25		50		75		100		125		150	
(3) $V_{OUT}$ [V]	(4) $I_{OUT}$ [mA]												
(5) $\eta$ [%]													
$V_{IN} = 8V$	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	
	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	
	(5)		(5)		(5)		(5)		(5)		(5)		
$V_{IN} = 10V$	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	
	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	
	(5)		(5)		(5)		(5)		(5)		(5)		

### Sensing resistors:

#### $J_{10}$ open ( $V_{OUT} = 15V$ ):

$R_{r1} = R_1 = 590k\Omega$ ,  $\pm 1.0\%$  tolerance

$R_{r2} = R_3 = 51.1k\Omega$ ,  $\pm 0.1\%$  tolerance

#### $J_{10}$ shorted ( $V_{OUT} = 5V$ ):

$R_{r1} = R_1$  (590k $\Omega$ ,  $\pm 1.0\%$  tolerance) in parallel to  $R_4$  (221k $\Omega$ , 1.0% tolerance)  
 $= 160.8k\Omega$ ,  $\pm 0.5\%$  tolerance

$R_{r2} = R_3 = 51.1k\Omega$ ,  $\pm 0.1\%$  tolerance

### TPS7A4901 reference voltage:

$V_{ref} = 1.194V \pm 1.5\%$  tolerance

## Answer:

1 Does the line current equal the load current?  yes  no  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_

2 Which operating parameter has the greatest influence on the efficiency?  the line voltage  the load current  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_



## Test#2: preparation and procedure

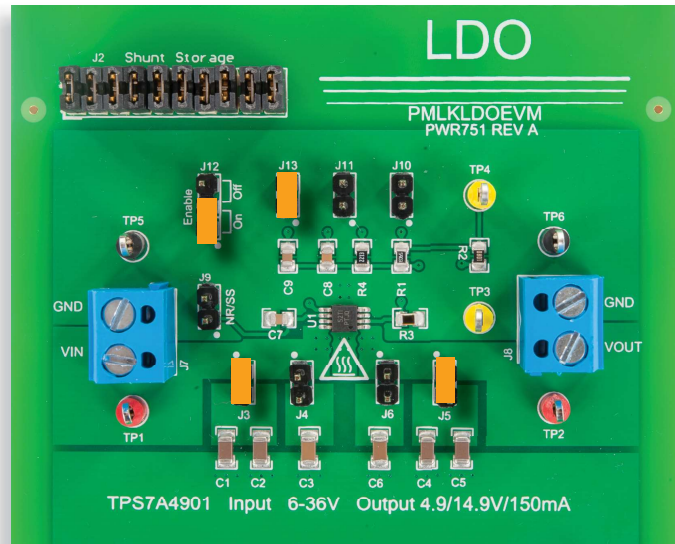


Figure 7. TPS7A4901 LDO board: jumpers set-up for Test#2

### Jumpers set-up, Figure 7:

- **J<sub>12</sub>** shorted in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- **J<sub>10</sub>** open → nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 15V$
- **J<sub>13</sub>** shorted → C<sub>9</sub> (12nF) phase lead capacitor connected
- **J<sub>5</sub>** shorted → C<sub>4</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>5</sub> (4.7μF) output caps connected
- **J<sub>3</sub>** shorted → C<sub>1</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>2</sub> (4.7μF) input caps connected
- **J<sub>4</sub>** open → C<sub>3</sub> (2.2μF) input cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>6</sub>** open → C<sub>6</sub> (2.2μF) output cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>11</sub>** open → C<sub>8</sub> (100nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>9</sub>** open → C<sub>7</sub> (12nF) noise reduction cap. disconnected

### Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the MULTIMETERS
- 2) set the ICM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 1A$
- 3) set the OCM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 1A$
- 4) set the IVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\geq 15V$
- 5) set the OVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\geq 30V$
- 6) turn on the POWER SUPPLY (be sure that the "OUT ON" button is OFF)
- 7) set the VOLTAGE of the POWER SUPPLY at the initial value of 16V
- 8) set the POWER SUPPLY CURRENT LIMIT at 200mA
- 9) set the position of the 1750Ω, 0.3A RHEOSTAT sliding contact corresponding to the maximum resistance (1750Ω)
- 10) turn on the DC POWER SUPPLY "OUT ON" button. In these conditions you should read about 16V in the IVM display, about 15V in the OVM display, about 8.5mA in the OCM display and slightly more than 8.5mA in the ICM display (if you read values much different than the one listed above, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY and verify the previous steps). Adjust the sliding contact of the 1750Ω,0.3A RHEOSTAT until you read about 10mA<sup>(\*)</sup> in the OCM display
- 11) read the output voltage and the input current of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator on the OVM display and ICM display respectively, use the values for the calculations required in Table 2, and repeat this step for all the values of the input voltage listed in Table 2 (adjust the POWER SUPPLY knob until you read the desired input voltage value on the IVM display)
- 12) adjust the sliding contact of the 1750Ω, 0.3A RHEOSTAT until you read about 50mA<sup>(\*\*)</sup> in the OCM display and repeat the step 11)
- 13) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments

<sup>(\*)</sup> You may adopt the value of the load current closest to 10mA you are able to set with the resolution of the sliding contact of the specific rheostat you adopt for the experiment.

<sup>(\*\*)</sup> You may adopt the value of the load current closest to 50mA you are able to set with the resolution of the sliding contact of the specific rheostat you adopt for the experiment.



## Test#2: measure and calculate

- For each value of the input voltage and of the load current indicated in Table 2, measure the input current  $I_{IN}$  and the output voltage  $V_{OUT}$ , calculate the experimental percent efficiency by means of the formula  $\eta_{exp} [\%] = V_{OUT} I_{OUT} / (V_{IN} I_{IN}) \times 100$  and report the result in Table 2.
- Calculate the theoretical percent efficiency by means of the formula (3) provided in the *Theory Background* section and report the result in Table 2 [NOTE: use the plots of Figure 4(b) to determine the ground current  $I_{GND}$  of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator].
- Calculate the LDO power losses  $P_{LDO}$  by means of the formula (5) provided in the *Theory Background* section, calculate the LDO chip junction temperature  $T_j$  by means of the formula (4) provided in the *Theory Background* section and report the result in Table 2 [NOTE: assume that the ambient temperature  $T_a$  is 25°C, or use a value of the ambient temperature measured nearby the LDO chip, if available].
- Use the plots of Figure 4(a) to update the value of the ground current  $I_{GND}$ , based on the calculated junction temperature  $T_j$ , and to refine the value of the theoretical efficiency  $\eta_{theo} [\%]$  calculated at point 2).
- Answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in [1][2][4].

**Table 2.** Experimental vs theoretical efficiency of TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 LDO regulator vs input voltage, at output voltage  $V_{OUT} = 15V$

(1) exp $\eta_{exp} [\%]$	(2) theo $\eta_{theo} [\%]$	$V_{IN}$											
		16V		18V		20V		22V		24V		26V	
(3) loss $P_d [mW]$	(4) temp $T_j [^{\circ}C]$	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
$I_{OUT} = 10mA$		(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
		(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)
$I_{OUT} = 50mA$		(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
		(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(4)

### Sensing resistors:

#### $J_{10}$ open ( $V_{OUT} = 15V$ ):

$$R_{f1} = R_1 = 590k\Omega, \pm 1.0\% \text{ tolerance}$$

$$R_{f2} = R_3 = 51.1k\Omega, \pm 0.1\% \text{ tolerance}$$

#### $J_{10}$ shorted ( $V_{OUT} = 5V$ ):

$$R_{f1} = R_1 (590k\Omega, \pm 1.0\% \text{ tolerance}) \text{ in parallel to } R_4 (221k\Omega, 1.0\% \text{ tolerance})$$

$$= 160.8k\Omega, \pm 0.5\% \text{ tolerance}$$

$$R_{f2} = R_3 = 51.1k\Omega, \pm 0.1\% \text{ tolerance}$$

### TPS7A4901 reference voltage:

$$V_{ref} = 1.194V \pm 1.5\% \text{ tolerance}$$

## Answer:

- 1 Which is the factors causing the main degradation of the LDO efficiency?  the  $V_{IN}/V_{OUT}$  ratio  the ground current  $I_{GND}$   the feedback current  $I_{FB}$

other : \_\_\_\_\_

- 2 Which are the input voltage and output current conditions allowing to achieve the maximum efficiency? \_\_\_\_\_



## Discussion

In Test#1 we are interested in investigating correlations between the efficiency of the LDO regulator and the values of the load current.

Both the input voltage  $V_{IN}$  and the load current  $I_{OUT}$  have an impact on the LDO regulator efficiency. However, you may observe from experimental measurements that the input voltage  $V_{IN}$  has a much higher influence on the efficiency than the output current  $I_{OUT}$ . In fact, given the LDO regulator output voltage  $V_{OUT}$  and load current  $I_{OUT}$ , an increase of the input voltage  $V_{IN}$  directly translates into an increase of the pass device voltage  $V_{EC}$ , thus having a strong impact on the difference between the input power  $P_{IN}$  and the output power  $P_{OUT}$  of the LDO regulator, as highlighted in the formula (1) provided in the *Theory Background* section. Instead, given the LDO regulator output voltage  $V_{OUT}$  and input voltage  $V_{IN}$ , an increase of the load current  $I_{OUT}$  directly translates into an increase of the input current  $I_{IN}$  too, thus making the effect on the power losses limited to the increase of the LDO chip ground current  $I_{GND}$ , as highlighted in the formula (2) provided in the *Theory Background* section. (see *Experiment 5* for ground current discussion relevant to N-channel MOSFET LDO regulators).

In Test#2 we are interested in investigating correlations between the efficiency of the LDO regulator and the values of the input voltage, taking into account the thermal properties of the LDO regulator.

The results of measurements should highlight that the main factor of influence on the efficiency is the ratio between the input voltage  $V_{IN}$  and the output voltage  $V_{OUT}$ , whereas the LDO chip ground current  $I_{GND}$  has minor influence, for the same reasons relevant to Test#1 discussed above. It should be noted that the ground current  $I_{GND}$  increases with the LDO chip junction temperature  $T_j$ , which in turn is higher when the input voltage  $V_{IN}$  is higher, due to the higher LDO losses  $P_{LDO}$ . Therefore, the increase of the input voltage  $V_{IN}$  boosts the ground current  $I_{GND}$ , thus having a two fold influence on the degradation of the efficiency (see [2] for more details on thermal characteristics of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator).



## Experimental plots

The plots collected in the Figures 8 to 11 show the typical characteristics of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (see [2] for further details).

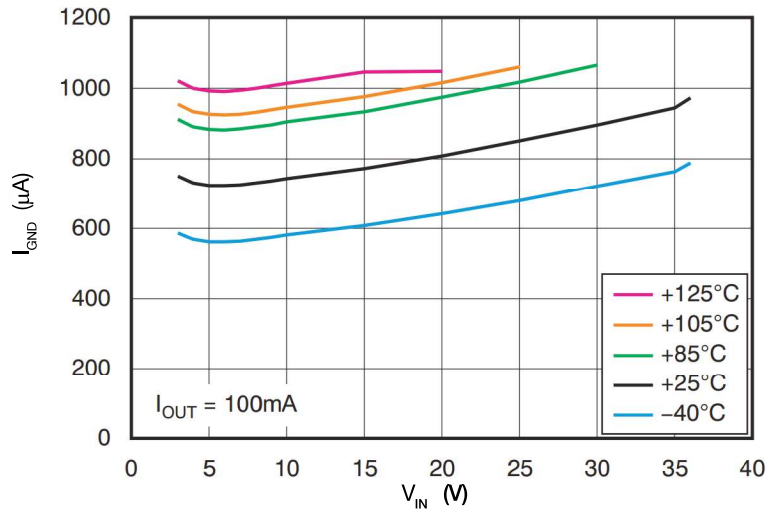


Figure 8. Ground current of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator vs input voltage at 100mA

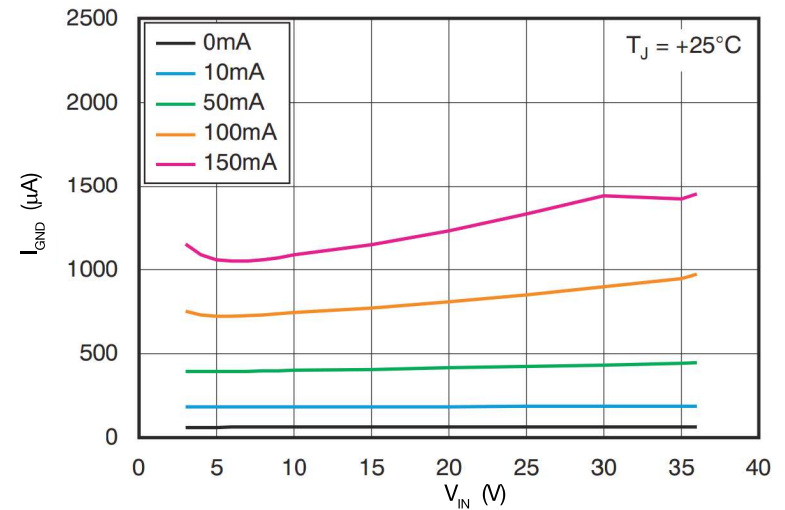


Figure 9. Ground current of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator vs input voltage at 25°C

The plots of Figures 8 and 9 provide a synoptic view of how the LDO chip ground current  $I_{\text{GND}}$  depends on input voltage  $V_{\text{IN}}$ , load current  $I_{\text{OUT}}$ , and junction temperature  $T_{\text{J}}$ . The voltage divider current  $I_{\text{VD}}$  has a very little influence on the efficiency, provided that its value is very small, as in the case of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator. The voltage divider current  $I_{\text{VD}}$  depends on the LDO chip voltage reference  $V_{\text{ref}}$  and on the resistance  $R_{\text{f2}}$  of the output voltage divider, as shown in the [Theory Background](#) section.



## Experimental plots

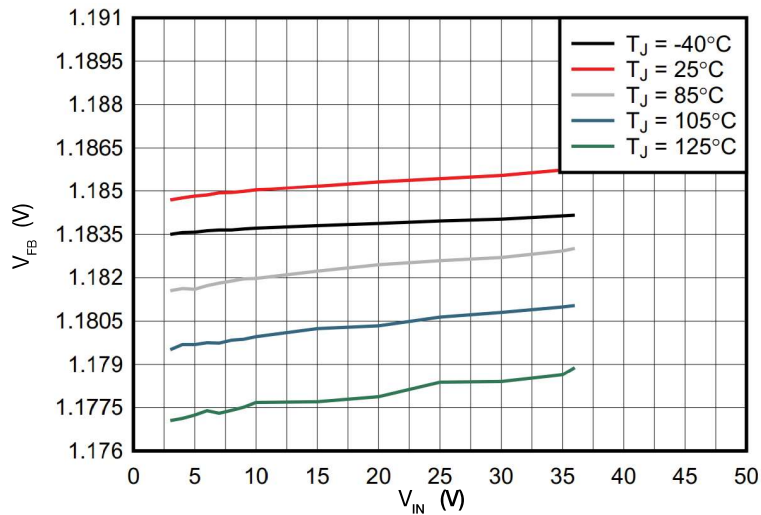


Figure 10. Feedback pin voltage of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator vs input voltage

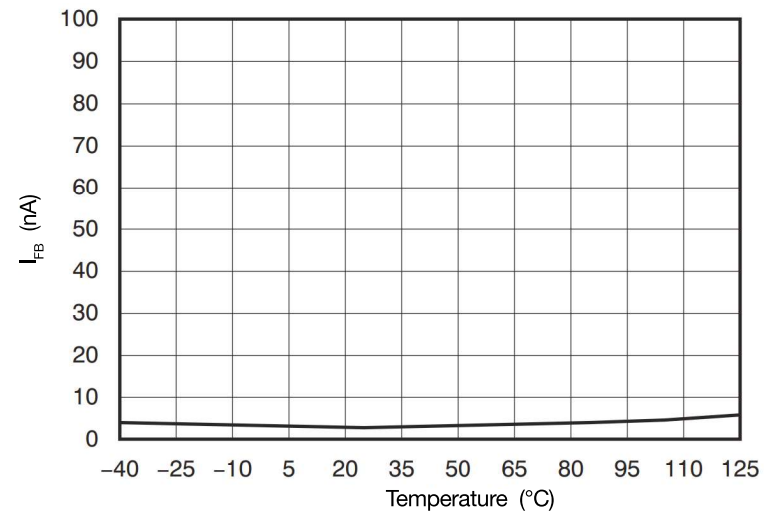


Figure 11. Feedback pin current of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator vs temperature

Figure 10 shows that the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator reference voltage has a little dependency with respect to the temperature, typical of a band gap voltage reference, and very little dependency with respect to the input voltage  $V_{IN}$ . As shown in the *Theory Background* section, the voltage divider current  $I_{VD}$  is set by the ratio  $V_{ref}/R_{i2}$ . The value of resistance  $R_{i2}$  cannot be too small as it can degrade the LDO efficiency (see *formula (3)*). At the same time, the value of resistance  $R_{i2}$  cannot be too high so as to make the voltage divider current  $I_{VD}$  comparable to the feedback current  $I_{FB}$  of the LDO feedback error amplifier: in this case, the resistors  $R_{i1}$  and  $R_{i2}$  would no longer work as a voltage divider and lead to degradation of the output voltage accuracy. Figure 11 shows the plot of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator feedback current. In order to ensure that the resistors  $R_{i1}$  and  $R_{i2}$  operate like a voltage divider, the current  $I_{VD}$  has to be two to three orders of magnitude greater than the feedback current. For example, assuming  $I_{FB}=5\text{nA}$  and a factor  $I_{VD}/I_{FB}=500$ , we have  $I_{VD}=25\text{mA}$  and  $R_{i2}=V_{ref}/I_{VD}=48\text{k}\Omega$ .

# Experiment 3

The goal of this experiment is to analyze the LDO regulator stability and to investigate the effect of the output capacitor on load-transient and line-transient response. The TPS7A4901 LDO regulator is used for this experiment.



## Case Study

The goal of this experiment is to analyze the LDO regulator output voltage waveform in presence of load-transients, and to verify the stability.

The subject of investigation in this experiment is the stability for the LDO regulator. The condition shown in Figure 1 will be considered, where the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator is fed by a dynamic voltage source and terminated into a dynamic load. The LDO regulator must guarantee a good output voltage regulation in permanent steady-state conditions (see *Experiments 1* and *Experiments 2*) and in the presence of line voltage and load current perturbations, which are frequent in many real world applications. Supply voltage perturbations are commonly seen in power management of automotive applications, whereas load perturbations are observed in systems using power amplifiers and logic devices. Perturbations involving fast variations of large magnitude are classified as line-transients and load-transients, whereas perturbations that are permanent, with moderate magnitude, and perhaps with some dominant harmonic spectrum, are classified as line-noise and load-noise.

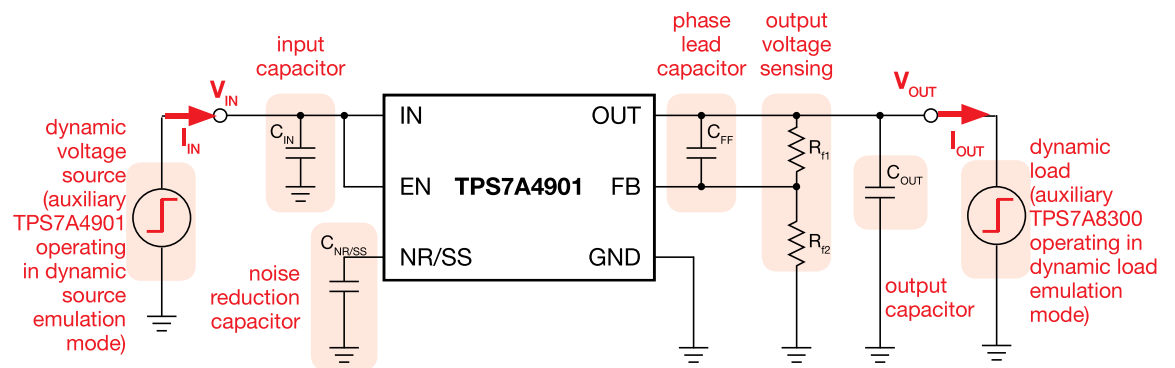


Figure 1. Simplified schematic of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator

**Test#1.** We set-up the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator with a constant voltage source and record the output voltage waveform with a square-wave load current generated by an auxiliary TPS7A8300 regulator operating in dynamic load emulation mode. The expectation is that, after each load change, the output voltage has some small and short transient surge and then it returns close to the nominal value. The magnitude of the output voltage transient surges will be measured. The influence of the phase lead capacitance  $C_{FF}$  on the magnitude of output voltage transient surges will be observed and discussed.

**Test#2.** We set-up the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator with a fixed load and with a square-wave input voltage generated by an auxiliary TPS7A4901 regulator operating in dynamic source emulation mode. The expectation is that, like in the load-transient case, after each input voltage change the output voltage has some transient surge and then it returns close to the nominal value. The magnitude of the output voltage transient surges will be measured. The influence of the output capacitance  $C_{OUT}$  on the magnitude of output voltage transient surges will be observed and discussed.



# Theory Background

The fundamentals of LDO regulators feedback compensation are provided in this section (see [1][4][12] for a general discussion of LDO regulators operation and characteristics, and [2] for more details on TPS7A4901 operation and features).

Figure 1 shows an LDO regulator with PNP bipolar transistor pass device.

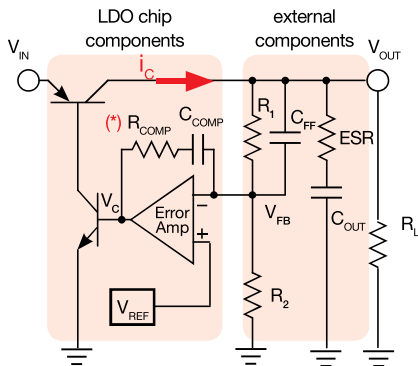


Figure 1

(\*) The resistor  $R_{COMP}$  is typically used in LDOs designed to work with ceramic output capacitors.

The LDO regulates the output voltage by means of a feedback error amplifier, which compares the feedback voltage  $V_{FB}$  to a fixed reference voltage  $V_{REF}$  and changes the PNP pass transistor current as required by the load. Resistors  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  provide the voltage feedback to the error amplifier and set the reference-to-output gain  $G_{VREF} = (1 + R_1/R_2)$  which provides the output voltage  $V_{OUT} = G_{VREF} V_{REF}$ .

[NOTE: the LDO works ideally as a voltage-controlled voltage-source].

When the LDO voltage regulator of Figure 1 is stable it regulates the output voltage at the desired nominal value despite of input voltage and load current variations. The stability depends on the characteristics of the voltage feedback loop, highlighted in red in the block diagram of Figure 2. In particular, the stability is determined by the properties of the Voltage-Loop Gain (VLG)  $T = G_{VC} G_{EA}$ , where  $G_{VC}$  is the LDO control-to-output gain and  $G_{EA}$  is the error-amplifier gain.

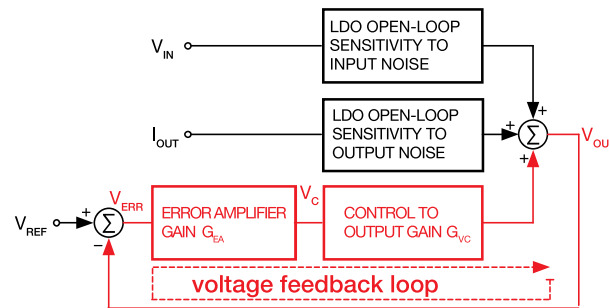


Figure 2

Figure 3 shows a VLG Bode plot. For robust stability, the phase margin  $f_m$  has to be about  $50^\circ$  at the cross-over frequency  $\omega_c$ , which is the frequency where the magnitude equals 0dB, and the phase shift  $\phi_s$  (the shift between the minimum of the phase and  $-180^\circ$ ) has to be at least  $20^\circ$  in the frequency range below the cross-over frequency  $\omega_c$ , where the magnitude is greater than 0dB.

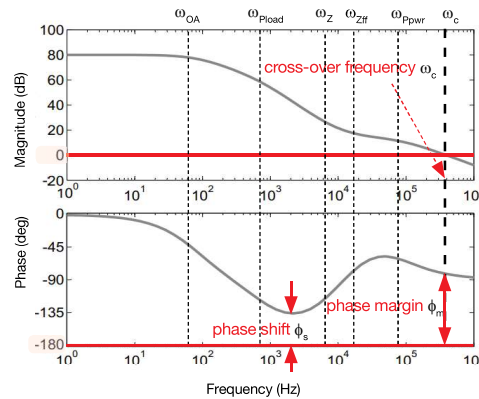


Figure 3

The  $G_{VC}$  and  $G_{EA}$  gains depend on LDO chip internal components (pass device, gate driver, op-amp, error amplifier feedback  $R_{COMP}$ - $C_{COMP}$ ), on external R-C components ( $R_{F1}$ ,  $R_{F2}$ ,  $C_{FF}$ ,  $C_{OUT}$ , ESR) and on load current  $I_{OUT}$ . The resulting loop gain is given by equation (1):

$$(1) \quad T = T_0 \frac{\left[1 + \frac{s}{\omega_z}\right] \left[1 + \frac{s}{\omega_{zff}}\right]}{\left[1 + \frac{s}{\omega_{pload}}\right] \left[1 + \frac{s}{\omega_{ppwr}}\right] \left[1 + \frac{s}{\omega_{OA}}\right]}$$

$$\omega_{pload} = \frac{I_{OUT}}{C_{OUT} V_{OUT}} \quad \omega_z = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{C_{OUT} ESR} & \text{(no } R_{COMP}) \\ \frac{1}{C_{COMP} R_{COMP}} & \text{(no ESR)} \end{cases}$$

The phase lead of  $\omega_z$  zero improves the stability, provided that its frequency is neither too low nor too high. LDOs designed to work with ceramic output capacitors, having very low ESR, may include the resistance  $R_{COMP}$ , which combines with the capacitance  $C_{COMP}$  to generate the zero  $\omega_z$ . In principle, the capacitor  $C_{COMP}$  should introduce a pole in the origin. However, the finite DC gain of the op-amp limits the dc loop gain  $T_0$ , which is also influenced by the base-collector current gains of pass and gate drive devices, and introduces the pole  $\omega_{OA}$ . The external capacitance  $C_{ff}$  introduces the zero  $\omega_{zff}$  which can be used to adjust the crossover frequency and phase margin. The high frequency pole  $\omega_{ppwr}$  depends on the capacitance of pass PNP device. The  $\omega_{pload}$  pole depends on the load. While  $\omega_{pload}$ ,  $\omega_{zff}$  and  $\omega_z$  (when determined by ESR) can be fixed by the LDO chip user,  $\omega_{OA}$  and  $\omega_{ppwr}$  depend on LDO chip design and they are not disclosed in the datasheets.



# Test#1: Experiment set-up configuration

The instruments needed for this experiment are: a DC POWER SUPPLY, a TI-PMLK TPS7A8300 LDO Board working as DYNAMIC LOAD, a WAVEFORM GENERATOR, and an OSCILLOSCOPE. Figure 5 shows the instruments configuration. Follow the instructions provided in next page to set-up the **connections**.

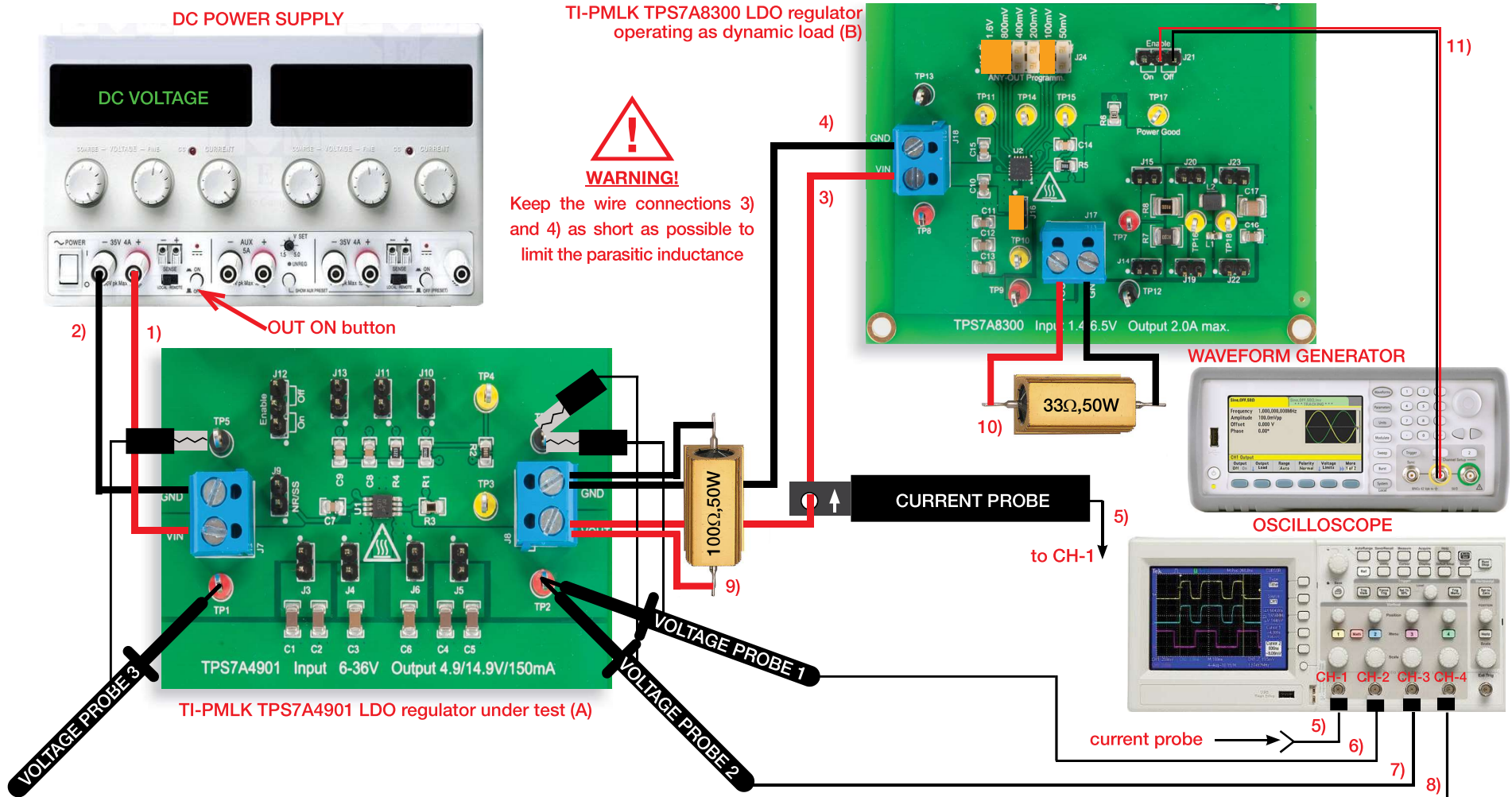


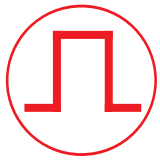
Figure 5. Test#1: experiment set-up.



## Test#1: Experiment set-up instructions

With all the instruments turned off, make the following **connections**:

- 1) connect the POSITIVE (RED) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test (A)
- 2) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test (A)
- 3) connect the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B)
- 4) connect the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B)
- 5) connect a current probe<sup>(\*)</sup> to channel 1 of the oscilloscope and hang it on the cable connecting the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test (A) to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B), ensuring that the arrow printed on the probe clamps corresponds to the current that enters the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator  
*[<sup>(\*)</sup> If a current probe is not available in your laboratory, you can connect a sensing resistor in series to the wire linking the two boards and use a current sensing amplifier, such as INA139-Q1 (see [13]) to generate a signal that you can measure with a standard voltage probe (to learn more on current sensing amplifiers see [14])]*
- 6) connect a voltage probe to channel 2 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test (A). This probe will be used to measure the DC+AC components of the output voltage  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 7) connect a voltage probe to channel 3 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test (A). This probe will be used to measure the AC component of the output voltage  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 8) connect a voltage probe to channel 4 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_1$  which is the input voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test (A)  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 9) connect a 100 $\Omega$ ,50W power resistor between the OUTPUT (VOUT) and the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test (A)
- 10) connect a 33 $\Omega$ ,50W power resistor between the OUTPUT (VOUT) and the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B)
- 11) connect the output of the waveform generator to the “EN” and “OFF” pins of jumper  $J_{21}$  of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B)



## Dynamic load emulation: principle of operation

Figure 6 shows a simplified block diagram of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator with the “EN” pin of jumper  $J_{21}$  shorted to the “ON” pin<sup>(1)</sup>. Connecting the “ON” pin to a voltage higher than  $1V$ <sup>(2)</sup> enables the operation of the regulator. Shorting the pins of the jumpers rack  $J_{24}$  corresponding to the labels 100mV, 800mV and 1.6V sets an output voltage nominal value  $V_{out}=3.3V$ <sup>(3)</sup>. In these conditions, the error amplifier ensures the regulation of the output voltage  $V_{out}$  at the 3.3V nominal value by adjusting the gate-source voltage  $V_{gs}$  of the N-channel MOSFET pass device until the feedback voltage  $V_{FB}$  equals the reference voltage  $V_{ref}$ . Therefore, the gate-source voltage  $V_{gs}$  of the N-channel MOSFET pass device is constant, the output current is regulated at the level required by the load resistance  $R_{load}$ . The input current of the regulator is also constant and its value is  $I_{in} \approx I_{out} = 100mA$ , with  $R_{load} = 33\Omega$ .

<sup>(1)</sup> see pages 22 and 23 for details about the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator board.

<sup>(2)</sup> see [3] for details about the enable voltage threshold of TPS7A8300 LDO regulator.

<sup>(3)</sup> see [Experiment 5](#) and [Experiment 6](#) to learn more about LDO regulators and TPS7A8300.

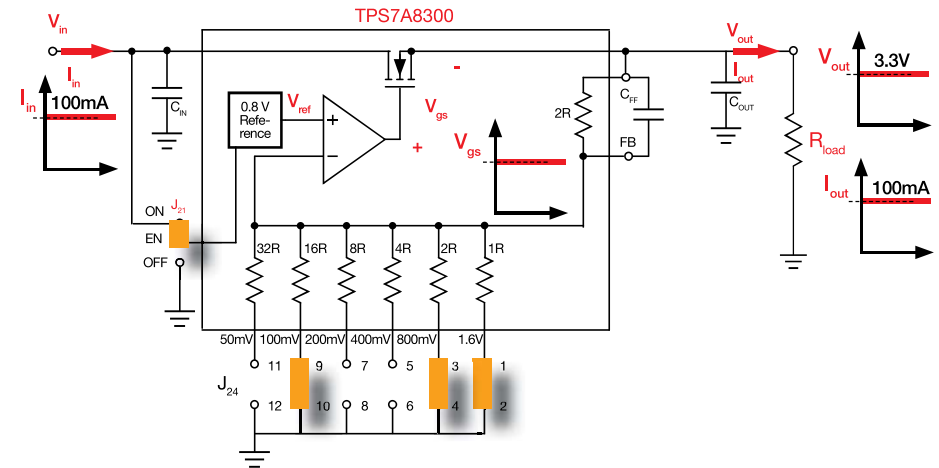


Figure 6. TPS7A8300 board operating in normal mode

Figure 7 shows a TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating in dynamic load emulation mode, with the “EN” and “OFF” pins of jumper  $J_{21}$  connected to the output of a WAVEFORM GENERATOR providing a square-wave output signal  $V_{inj}$ . When the square-wave voltage signal is at high logic level, the output voltage  $V_{out}$  is regulated at 3.3V and the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator sinks about 100mA at the input, whereas when the square-wave voltage signal  $V_{inj}$  is low the output voltage of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator drops to zero and then the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator sinks about 0mA at the input. This results into a 100mA square-wave current in the input of the TPS7A8300 regulator.

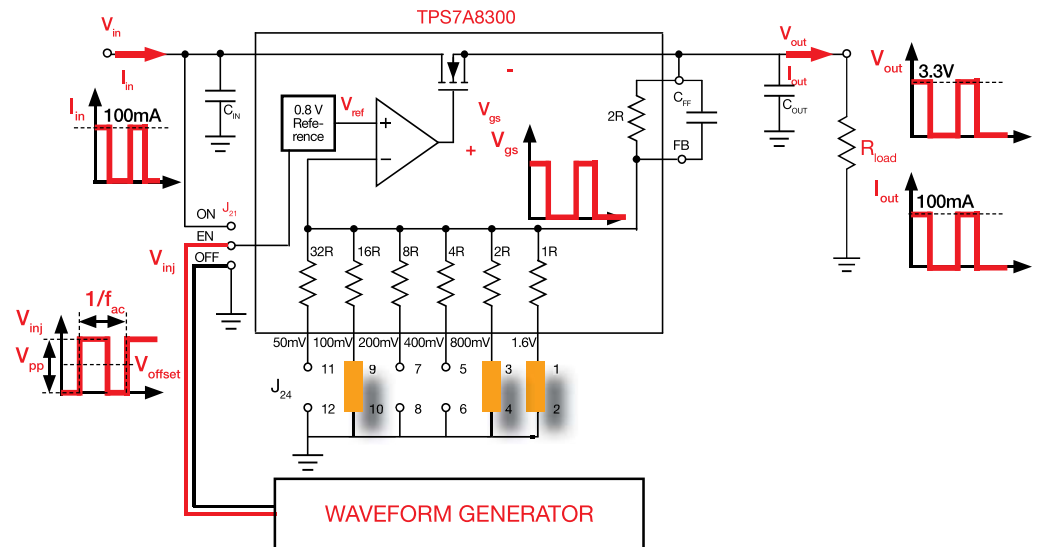
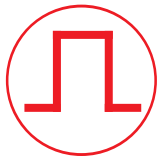


Figure 7. TPS7A8300 board operating in dynamic load emulation mode



## Dynamic load emulation: TPS7A8300 regulator set-up

Figure 8 shows the schematic of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator (B) with the connection of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR to the “EN” and “OFF” pins of jumper J<sub>21</sub>, needed to obtain the operation of the regulator as dynamic load emulator. The WAVEFORM GENERATOR injects into the enable pin a square-wave voltage with  $V_{pp}$  amplitude and  $V_{offset}$  offset.

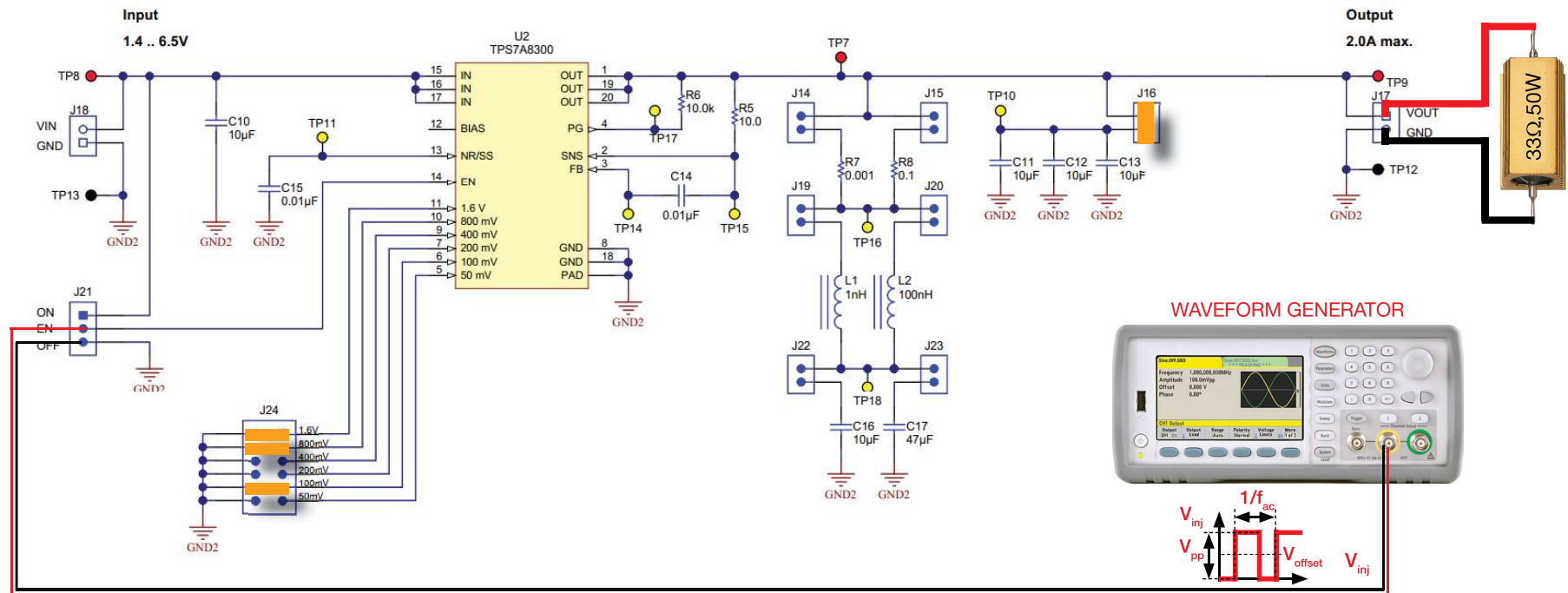


Figure 8. TPS54160 board operating as dynamic load

In this Test the following values of frequency  $f_{ac}$  and AC component  $V_{pp}$  are adopted to test the load transient response of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test.

$f_{ac}$	$V_{pp}$	$V_{offset}$
5Hz	2V	1V

With this set-up, the output voltage of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating in dynamic load emulation mode switches in square-wave mode between 3.3V and 0 and similarly the input current switches between 100mA and 0.

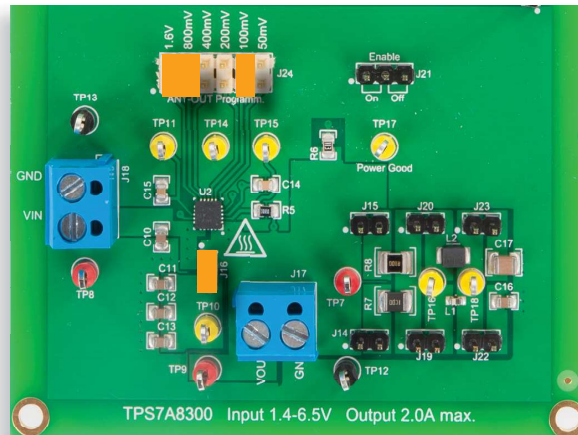
**[WARNING:** the values  $V_{offset}$  and  $V_{pp}$  must ensure that the square-wave signal does not exceed the absolute minimum and maximum ratings of the EN voltage, -0.3V and 7V respectively].



# Test#1: preparation and procedure



(a) TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test



(b) TPS7A8300 LDO regulator working as dynamic load

Figure 9. Jumpers set-up for Test#1

## TPS7A4901 regulator under test jumpers set-up, Figure 9(a):

- $J_{12}$  shorted in ON position  $\rightarrow$  LDO operation enabled
- $J_{10}$  shorted  $\rightarrow$  TPS7A4901 nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 5V$
- $J_5$  shorted  $\rightarrow C_4$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_5$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) output cap. connected
- $J_{13}$  shorted  $\rightarrow C_9$  (12nF) phase lead cap. connected
- $J_3$  shorted  $\rightarrow C_1$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_2$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) input cap. connected
- $J_4$  open  $\rightarrow C_3$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) input capacitor disconnected
- $J_6$  open  $\rightarrow C_6$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) output capacitor disconnected
- $J_{11}$  open  $\rightarrow C_8$  (100nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- $J_9$  open  $\rightarrow C_7$  (12nF) noise reduction cap. disconnected

## TPS7A8300 regulator operating in dynamic load emulation mode jumpers set-up, Figure 9(b):

- $J_{21}$  EN and OFF pins  $\rightarrow$  connected to the waveform generator
- $J_{24}$  pins with labels 100mV, 800mV and 1.6V shorted  $\rightarrow$  sets the output voltage  $V_{out}$  of TPS7A8300 at 3.3V
- $J_{16}$  shorted  $\rightarrow C_{11}$ - $C_{13}$  (3x10 $\mu$ F) output caps. connected
- $J_{14}$ ,  $J_{15}$ ,  $J_{19}$ ,  $J_{20}$ ,  $J_{22}$ ,  $J_{23}$  open  $\rightarrow R_7$  (1m $\Omega$ ) and  $R_8$  (100m $\Omega$ ) output resistors,  $L_1$  (1nH) and  $L_2$  (100nH) output inductors,  $C_{16}$  (10 $\mu$ F) and  $C_{17}$  (47 $\mu$ F) output capacitors disconnected

## Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the OSCILLOSCOPE, set CH-1 in DC 50 $\Omega$  coupling mode, select CH-1 as trigger source, execute the "de-gauss" of the current probe to remove possible dc bias in the current probe, set CH-2 in DC 1M $\Omega$  coupling mode, CH-3 in AC 1M $\Omega$  coupling mode and CH-4 in DC 1M $\Omega$  coupling mode
- 2) turn on the POWER SUPPLY (ensure that the "OUT ON" button is OFF: the power supply OUTPUT must be disabled), set the DC VOLTAGE at 6V, and set the CURRENT LIMIT at 200mA
- 3) turn on the WAVEFORM GENERATOR (ensure that the "OUT ON" button is OFF), and set , high impedance output, square wave mode, 5Hz frequency, 50% duty-cycle, 2V<sub>pp</sub> amplitude, 1V offset
- 4) turn ON the POWER SUPPLY "OUT ON" button. In these

conditions you should see on the oscilloscope the traces of CH-1 (load current) and CH-3 (AC component of output voltage) as flat horizontal lines at 0 level, the trace of CH-2 (DC+AC components of the output voltage) as a flat line at 5V level, and the trace of CH-4 (input voltage) as a flat line at 6V level. Use the oscilloscope cursors (or measurement functions) to verify the values of the average input and output voltages. If you read value much different than the expected ones, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY and verify the previous steps

- 5) turn ON the WAVEFORM GENERATOR "OUT ON" button. In these conditions you should see CH-1 trace as a quasi-square-wave, CH-2 trace as a flat line with 5V average value, CH-3 trace as a flat line with 0V average value and small magnitude spikes of short duration in correspondence of load current transients, and CH-4 trace as a flat line at 6V level (see the experimental figures samples at the end of the experiment). Expand the vertical scale and adjust the off-set of the four channels and the time-scale to make the waveforms best fitting the scope width and height. Adjust the trigger level at 50% of the CH-1 trace vertical swing
- 6) record in Table 1 the output voltage average value before and after each load transient and the output voltage transient surge magnitude for the input voltage values listed in Table 1 (you do not need to turn OFF the POWER SUPPLY "OUT ON" button while adjusting the voltage)
- 7) turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR and the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then short jumper  $J_{11}$  to connect  $C_9$  (100nF) phase lead capacitor in parallel to  $C_9$  (12nF) phase lead capacitor, repeat the steps 4) to 6), and report the results in Table 2
- 8) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR and the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments



## Test#1: measure and calculate

- 1) Measure the DC output voltage  $V_{OUTinitial}$  before the load transient, the DC output voltage  $V_{OUTfinal}$  the LDO regulator provides at the end of the load transient, the magnitude of the output voltage surge  $\Delta V_{OUT}$  during the the load transient response, and collect the measurements in Tables 1 and 2.
- 2) Answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in [1][2][12].

**Table 1.** Load transient performance of TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 LDO regulator at  $V_{OUT} = 5V$ , with  $C_9$  (12nF) phase lead capacitor connected

(1) $V_{OUTinitial}$ [V]	(2) $V_{OUTfinal}$ [V]	(3) $\Delta V_{OUT}$ surge [mV]	$V_{IN} = 6V$			$V_{IN} = 12V$			$V_{IN} = 18V$		
			(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
$I_{OUT} : 50mA \rightarrow 150mA$			(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
$I_{OUT} : 150mA \rightarrow 50mA$			(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)

**Table 2.** Load transient performance of TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 LDO regulator at  $V_{OUT} = 5V$ , with  $C_8$  (100nF) and  $C_9$  (12nF) phase lead capacitors connected in parallel

(1) $V_{OUTinitial}$ [V]	(2) $V_{OUTfinal}$ [V]	(3) $\Delta V_{OUT}$ surge [mV]	$V_{IN} = 6V$			$V_{IN} = 12V$			$V_{IN} = 18V$		
			(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
$I_{OUT} : 50mA \rightarrow 150mA$			(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
$I_{OUT} : 150mA \rightarrow 50mA$			(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)

### Output capacitors:

$J_5$  shorted and  $J_6$  open:

$C_{out} = C_4$  and  $C_5$  in parallel = 9.4 $\mu$ F  
ESR ~ 35m $\Omega$ @10kHz, ~2m $\Omega$ @1MHz

### Phase lead capacitors:

$J_{11}$  open and  $J_{13}$  shorted:

$C_{FF} = C_9 = 12nF$

$J_5$  open and  $J_6$  shorted:

$C_{out} = C_6 = 2.2\mu$ F  
ESR ~ 50m $\Omega$ @10kHz, ~4m $\Omega$ @1MHz

$J_{11}$  shorted and  $J_{13}$  open:

$C_{FF} = C_8 = 100nF$

$J_5$  shorted and  $J_6$  shorted:

$C_{out} = C_4, C_5$  and  $C_6$  in parallel = 11.6 $\mu$ F  
ESR ~ 20m $\Omega$ @10kHz, 1.5m $\Omega$ @1MHz

$J_{11}$  shorted and  $J_{13}$  shorted:

$C_{FF} = C_8$  and  $C_9$  in parallel = 112nF

### TPS7A4901:

$\omega_{OA} \sim 0.12$ -0.15Mrad/s

$\omega_z \sim 1.2$ -1.5Mrad/s [ $\omega_z = 1/(R_{comp}C_{comp})$ ]

$\omega_{Ppwr} \sim 12$ -15Mrad/s

## Answer:

- 1 Does the output voltage exhibit oscillations during load transients?  yes  no  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Does the final output voltage  $V_{OUTfinal}$  value equal the initial one  $V_{OUTinitial}$ ?  yes  no  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Describe the correlation of the surge magnitude  $\Delta V_{OUT}$  with the input voltage, the polarity of the load step and the phase lead capacitor setup: \_\_\_\_\_



## Test#2: Experiment set-up configuration

The instruments needed for this experiment are: a DC POWER SUPPLY, a WAVEFORM GENERATOR, an OSCILLOSCOPE and a TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating as DYNAMIC SOURCE, Figure 10 shows the instruments configuration. Follow the instructions provided in next page to set-up the connections.

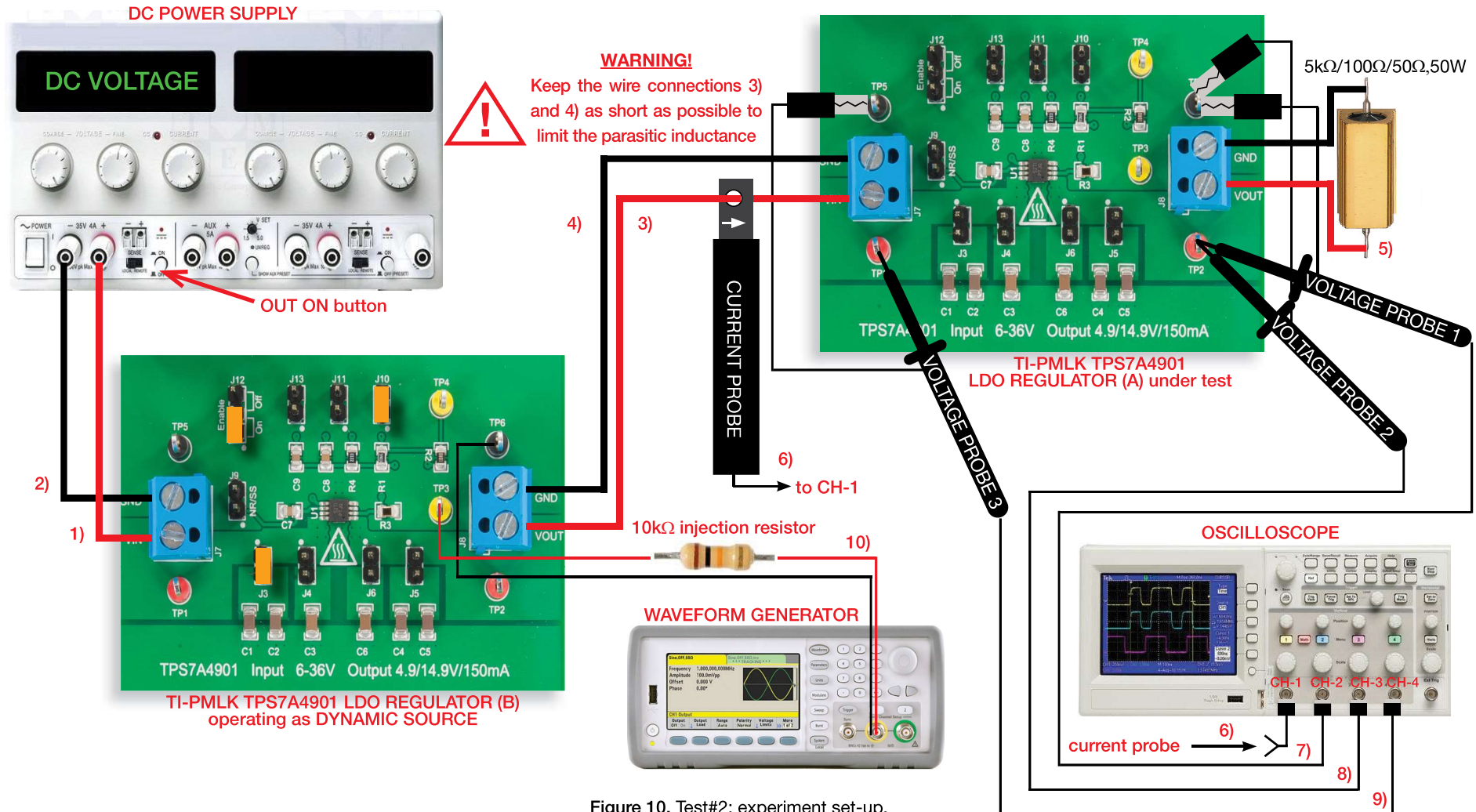


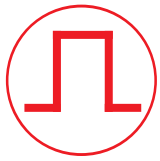
Figure 10. Test#2: experiment set-up.



## Test#2: experiment set-up instructions

With all the instruments turned off, make the following **connections**:

- 1) connect the POSITIVE (RED) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as dynamic source
- 2) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as dynamic source
- 3) connect the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as dynamic source to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test
- 4) connect the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as dynamic source to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test
- 5) connect a  $5k\Omega, 50W$  <sup>(\*)</sup> power resistor between the OUTPUT (VOUT) and the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test. [<sup>(\*)</sup> *50W power resistors are suggested to keep the surface temperature low. If 50W power resistors are not available in your laboratory, you can use resistors with lower power rating, provided that it is higher than the power to be dissipated  $P_{load} = V_{out}^2/R_{load}$ . If the power rating of the load resistor is too close to  $P_{out}$ , a heat sink is required to keep the surface temperature within safety limits*]
- 6) connect a current probe <sup>(\*\*)</sup> to channel 1 of the oscilloscope and hang it on the cable connecting the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as dynamic source to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test, ensuring that the arrow printed on the probe clamps corresponds to the current that enters the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test.  
<sup>(\*\*)</sup> *If a current probe is not available in your laboratory, you can connect a sensing resistor in series to the wire linking the two boards and use a current sensing amplifier, such as INA139-Q1 [13] to generate a signal that you can measure with a standard voltage probe (to learn more on current sensing amplifiers see [14])*
- 7) connect a voltage probe to channel 2 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test. This probe will be used to measure the DC+AC components of the output voltage  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 8) connect a voltage probe to channel 3 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test. This probe will be used to measure the AC component of the output voltage  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 9) connect a voltage probe to channel 4 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_1$  which is the input voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 10) connect the output of the waveform generator to the TEST PIN  $TP_3$ , which is the FEEDBACK (FB) voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as dynamic source, through a  $10k\Omega/1/4W$  injection resistor



## Dynamic source emulation: principle of operation

Figure 11 shows a TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in normal mode, with the TEST PIN  $TP_3$ , which is the FEEDBACK (FB) PIN voltage of the regulator, floating <sup>(1)</sup>. In these conditions, the error amplifier ensures the regulation of the output voltage  $V_{out}$  at the 5V nominal value with an input voltage  $V_{in} = 12V$  by adjusting the base current  $I_b$  of the PNP bipolar pass device until the feedback voltage  $V_{FB}$  equals the reference voltage  $V_{ref}$ . Therefore, the base current  $I_b$  of the PNP bipolar pass is constant and the output current is regulated at the level required by the load resistance  $R_{load}$ .

<sup>(1)</sup> see pages 18 and 19 for details about the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator board.

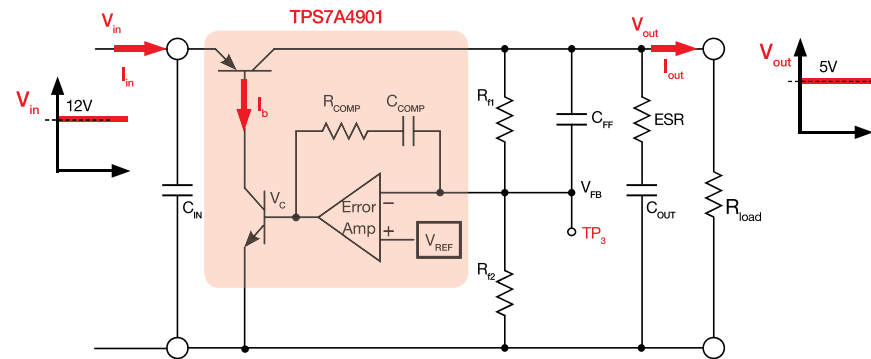


Figure 11. TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in normal mode

Figure 12 shows a TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in dynamic source emulation mode, with the TEST PIN  $TP_3$  connected to the output of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR through a 10k $\Omega$  injection resistor. The voltage signal  $V_{inj}$  generated by the WAVEFORM GENERATOR injects a disturbance in the FEEDBACK (FB) PIN voltage of the regulator, which causes a change in the output voltage. In particular, the DC bias component  $V_{offset}$  of the voltage signal  $V_{inj}$  causes a drift in the average output voltage of the regulator, whereas the AC square-wave component of peak-to-peak amplitude  $V_{pp}$  and frequency  $f_{ac}$  generates an AC square-wave component in the output voltage at the same frequency  $f_{ac}$ . Therefore, the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in dynamic source emulation mode is comprised of a DC component  $V_{dc}$  and an AC component  $V_{ac}$  which can be adjusted by means of the dc and ac components  $V_{offset}$  and  $V_{pp}$  of the signal  $V_{inj}$ . The TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in dynamic source emulation mode works without its own output capacitor connected, to speed-up the output voltage slew-rate while it switches from the low to the high voltage value and viceversa. The input capacitor of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test makes up for the missing output capacitance of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in dynamic source emulation mode. The TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test (A) behaves like a current source, as shown in Figure 12, as an LDO regulator feeding a fixed load sinks from its input a fixed current.

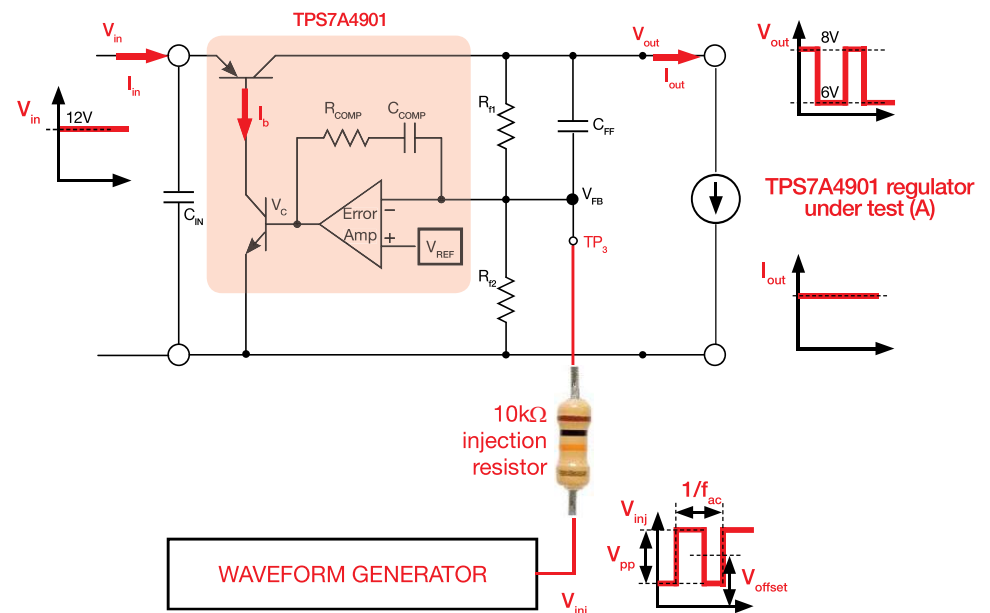


Figure 12. TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in dynamic source emulation mode



## Dynamic source emulation: TPS7A4901 regulator set-up

Figure 13 shows the schematic of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) with the connection of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR to the FEEDBACK (FB) TEST PIN  $TP_3$  needed to obtain the operation of the regulator as dynamic source emulator. The WAVEFORM GENERATOR injects into the FEEDBACK (FB) TEST PIN  $TP_3$  a square-wave voltage with  $V_{pp}$  amplitude and  $V_{offset}$  offset, through a  $10k\Omega/1/4W$  injection resistor.

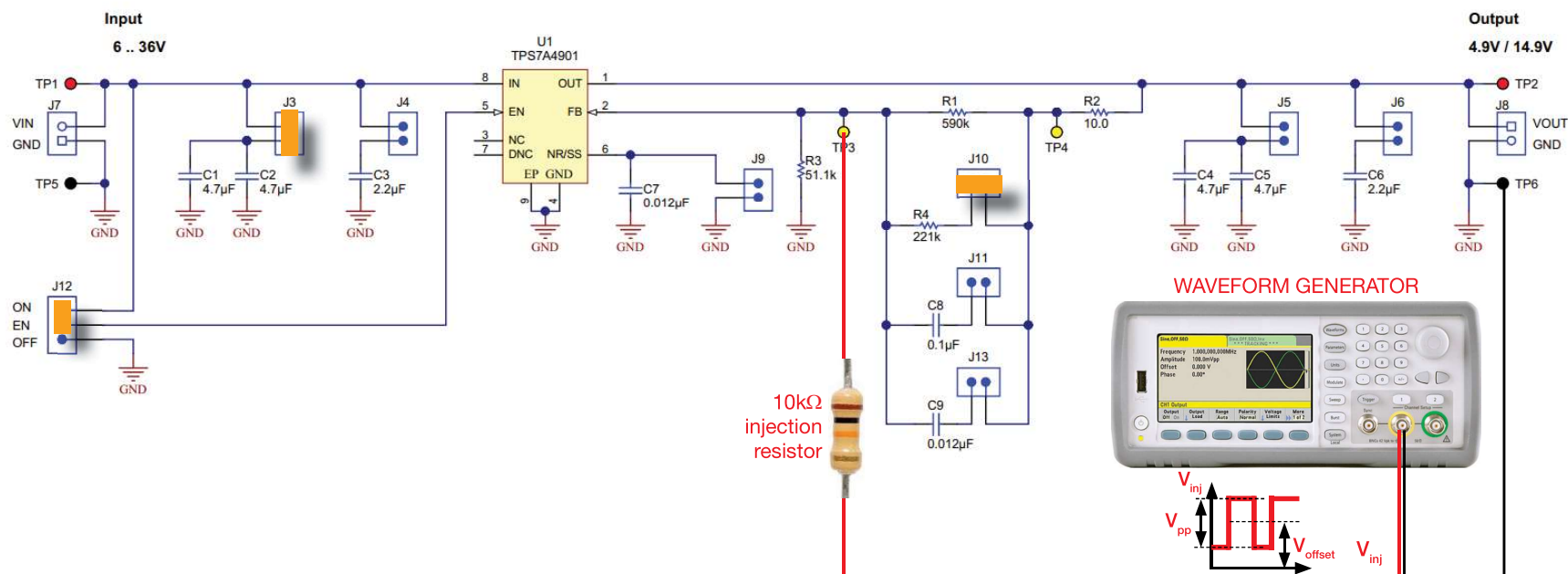


Figure 13. TPS7A4901 LDO REGULATOR operating as dynamic source

In this Test the following values of frequency  $f_{ac}$  and magnitudes  $V_{pp}$  and  $V_{offset}$  are adopted:

$f_{ac}$	$V_{pp}$	$V_{offset}$
5Hz	530mV	800mV

With this set-up the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in dynamic source emulation mode switches between **6V** and **8V**, with an input voltage  $V_{in} = 12V$ . [NOTE: the values  $V_{offset}$  and  $V_{pp}$  may require some fine adjustment for the output voltage switches exactly between 6V and 8V].



## Test#2: preparation and procedure



(a) TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test



(b) TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating as dynamic source

Figure 14. Jumpers set-up for Test#2

### TPS7A4901 regulator under test jumpers set-up, Figure 14(a):

- $J_{12}$  shorted in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- $J_{10}$  shorted → TPS7A4901 nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 5V$
- $J_5$  shorted →  $C_4$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_5$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) output caps connected
- $J_{13}$  shorted →  $C_9$  (12nF) phase lead cap. connected
- $J_3$  shorted →  $C_1$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_2$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) input caps connected
- $J_4$  open →  $C_3$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) input capacitor disconnected
- $J_6$  open →  $C_6$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) output capacitor disconnected
- $J_{11}$  open →  $C_8$  (100nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- $J_9$  open →  $C_7$  (12nF) noise reduction cap. disconnected

### TPS7A4901 regulator operating in dynamic source emulation mode jumpers set-up, Figure 14(b):

- $J_{12}$  shorted in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- $J_{10}$  shorted → TPS7A4901 nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 5V$
- $J_3$  shorted →  $C_1$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_2$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) input caps connected
- $J_{13}$  open →  $C_9$  (12nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- $J_5$  open →  $C_4$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_5$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) output caps disconnected
- $J_4$  open →  $C_3$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) input capacitor disconnected
- $J_6$  open →  $C_6$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) output capacitor disconnected
- $J_{11}$  open →  $C_8$  (100nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- $J_9$  open →  $C_7$  (12nF) noise reduction cap. disconnected

### Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the OSCILLOSCOPE, set CH-1 in DC 50 $\Omega$  coupling mode, CH-2 in DC 1M $\Omega$  coupling mode, CH-3 in AC 1M $\Omega$  coupling mode, CH-4 in DC 1M $\Omega$  coupling mode, and select CH-4 as trigger source
- 2) turn on the dual POWER SUPPLY (ensure that the “OUT ON” buttons are OFF), set the output at 2.5V and the CURRENT LIMIT at 200mA
- 3) turn on the WAVEFORM GENERATOR (ensure that the “OUT ON” button is OFF), and set high impedance output, square wave mode, 5Hz frequency, 50% duty-cycle, 530mVpp amplitude, 800mV offset
- 4) turn ON the “OUT ON” button of the POWER SUPPLY and of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR. In these conditions you should see on the OSCILLOSCOPE the trace of CH-2 (full output voltage of the TPS7A4901 regulator under test) as a flat line at 5V level, the trace of CH-3 (AC component of output voltage of the TPS7A4901 regulator under test) as a flat line with 0V average value and small magnitude spikes of short duration in correspondence to line voltage transients and the trace of CH-4 (input voltage of the TPS7A4901 regulator under test) as a square-wave. Expand the vertical scale and adjust the off-set of the oscilloscope channels and the time-scale to ensure the waveforms fit the scope. Adjust the trigger level at 50% of the CH-4 trace vertical swing
- 5) measure the output voltage average value before and after each line transients and the output voltage transient peak surge magnitude and report the results in Table 3
- 6) turn OFF the WAVEFORM GENERATOR “OUT ON” button and the DC POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button, then connect a 100 $\Omega$ ,50W power resistor to the OUTPUT  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test and repeat steps 4) and 5)
- 7) turn OFF the WAVEFORM GENERATOR “OUT ON” button and the DC POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button, then connect a 50 $\Omega$ ,50W power resistor to the OUTPUT  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test and repeat steps 4) and 5)
- 8) turn OFF the WAVEFORM GENERATOR “OUT ON” button and the DC POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button, then short jumper  $J_6$  to connect  $C_6$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) output capacitor, open jumper  $J_5$  to disconnect  $C_4$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_5$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) output capacitors and repeat the steps 4) to 7), recording the results in Table 4
- 9) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the “OUT ON” button of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments



## Test#2: measure and calculate

- 1) Measure the DC output voltage  $V_{OUTinitial}$  before the line transient, the DC output voltage  $V_{OUTfinal}$  the LDO regulator provides at the end of the line transient, the magnitude of the output voltage surge  $\Delta V_{OUT}$  during the the line transient response, and collect the measurements in Tables 3 and 4.
- 2) Answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in [1][2][4].

**Table 3.** Line transient performance of TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 LDO regulator at  $V_{OUT} = 5V$ , with  $C_4$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_5$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) output capacitors connected

(1)	$V_{OUTinitial}$ [V]	(2)	$V_{OUTfinal}$ [V]	(3)	$\Delta V_{OUT}$ surge [mV]	$I_{OUT} = 1mA$ (5k $\Omega$ , 50W load resistor)			$I_{OUT} = 50mA$ (100 $\Omega$ , 50W load resistor)			$I_{OUT} = 100mA$ (50 $\Omega$ , 50W load resistor)		
						(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
	$V_{IN} : 6V \rightarrow 8V$					(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
	$I_{OUT} : 8V \rightarrow 6V$					(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)

**Table 4.** Line transient performance of TI-PMLK TPS7A4901 LDO regulator at  $V_{OUT} = 5V$ , with  $C_6$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) output capacitor connected

(1)	$V_{OUTinitial}$ [V]	(2)	$V_{OUTfinal}$ [V]	(3)	$\Delta V_{OUT}$ surge [mV]	$I_{OUT} = 1mA$ (5k $\Omega$ , 50W load resistor)			$I_{OUT} = 50mA$ (100 $\Omega$ , 50W load resistor)			$I_{OUT} = 100mA$ (50 $\Omega$ , 50W load resistor)		
						(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
	$V_{IN} : 6V \rightarrow 8V$					(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
	$I_{OUT} : 8V \rightarrow 6V$					(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)

### Output capacitors:

$J_5$  shorted and  $J_6$  open:

$C_{out} = C_4$  and  $C_5$  in parallel = 9.4 $\mu$ F

ESR ~ 35m $\Omega$ @10kHz, ~2m $\Omega$ @1MHz

### Phase lead capacitors:

$J_{11}$  open and  $J_{13}$  shorted:

$C_{FF} = C_9 = 12nF$

$J_5$  open and  $J_6$  shorted:

$C_{out} = C_6 = 2.2\mu$ F

ESR ~ 50m $\Omega$ @10kHz, ~4m $\Omega$ @1MHz

$J_5$  shorted and  $J_6$  shorted:

$C_{out} = C_4, C_5$  and  $C_6$  in parallel = 11.6 $\mu$ F

ESR ~ 20m $\Omega$ @10kHz, 1.5m $\Omega$ @1MHz

$J_{11}$  shorted and  $J_{13}$  shorted:

$C_{FF} = C_8$  and  $C_9$  in parallel = 112nF

### TPS7A4901:

$\omega_{OA} \sim 0.12$ -0.15Mrad/s

$\omega_z \sim 1.2$ -1.5Mrad/s [ $\omega_z = 1/(R_{comp} C_{comp})$ ]

$\omega_{Ppwr} \sim 12$ -15Mrad/s

## Answer:

1 Does the output voltage exhibit oscillations during line transients?  yes  no  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_

2 Does the final output voltage  $V_{OUTfinal}$  value equal the initial one  $V_{OUTinitial}$ ?  yes  no  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_

3 Describe the correlation of the surge magnitude  $\Delta V_{OUT}$  with the load current, the polarity of the line step and the output capacitor setup: \_\_\_\_\_



## Discussion

In Test#1 we are interested in investigating correlations among the load transient response of the LDO regulator, the values of the input voltage, the polarity of load step and the value of the phase lead capacitance.

The stability of LDO regulators is discussed in [1][4][12], where it is highlighted that the capacitance and ESR of the output capacitor must be bounded within a given range to achieve stability. The internal compensation setup of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator is designed to guarantee the stability with a capacitance higher than  $2.2\mu\text{F}$  and an ESR lower than  $200\text{m}\Omega$  [2]. The external phase lead capacitance  $C_{FF}$  may help in improving the transient and ac performance of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator [2]. Stability is ensured in the operating conditions of Test#1. The correlations among the load transient performance and the test conditions depend on the voltage loop gain cross-over frequency. The load current and the output capacitance and ESR are major contributors to the value of the cross-over frequency. The cross-over frequency of the LDO regulator voltage loop gain can be adjusted by means of the placement of the poles and zeros of the feedback compensation error amplifier shown in Figure 1. Given the output capacitance and ESR, if the poles and zeros of the error amplifier are placed so as to set a high cross-over frequency, the loop gain will have a higher magnitude over a wider frequency range, as the loop gain magnitude is greater than  $0\text{dB}$  in the range of frequency  $[0, \omega_c]\text{rad/s}$  (see [7] for details about the design of the error amplifier). This involves that the effects of load perturbances are more strongly magnified by the error amplifier, by changing more intensely its output voltage, which drives the base current of the PNP pass device, thus determining a faster adaptation of the pass device current to the load demand. Therefore, a higher crossover frequency ensures a faster response of the LDO regulator to load transients. This makes the magnitude of the output voltage transient surges smaller. In fact, the LDO regulator reacts faster to the load perturbation and this shortens the duration of the time interval wherein the output capacitor has to sustain the unbalance between the pass device current and the load current. Therefore, a little correlation is expected between the load transient response of the LDO regulator and the input voltage  $V_{IN}$ , as the input voltage mainly influences the PNP pass device bias point and losses (see *Experiment 2*). A major correlation is expected, instead, with the phase lead capacitance, as it influences the frequency of the zero  $\omega_{ZFF} = 1/(C_{FF}R_{FF})$  of the voltage feedback loop gain. In fact, a decrease of  $\omega_{ZFF}$  frequency involves a higher voltage feedback loop gain cross-over frequency and then a faster response, with consequent decrease of the load transient output voltage surge magnitude, as shown in Figures 15 and 16. Based on the formula provided in the *Theory Background* section, a higher current increases the frequency of the pole  $\omega_{Pload} = I_{OUT}/(C_{OUT}V_{OUT})$ , thus determining an increase of the cross-over frequency  $\omega_c$  and a smaller output voltage surge magnitude. Thus, the load transient might be characterized by a smaller surge when the load current steps down compared to a load current step up, as shown in Figure 15. In principle, given the DC gain  $T_o$ , the poles  $\{\omega_{Pload}, \omega_{Ppw}, \omega_{OA}\}$  and the zeros  $\{\omega_{Z}, \omega_{ZFF}\}$  of the voltage loop gain formula (1) provided in the *Theory Background* section, the cross-over frequency  $\omega_c$  could be calculated by solving the equation  $|T(\omega_c)|=1$ . However, an explicit solution of this equation is not available. If the aforementioned loop gain parameters are available, the cross-over frequency can be determined by means of transfer functions Bode Plots MATLAB® capabilities [6], looking at the magnitude  $0\text{dB}$  crossing point. If the parameters are not available, the loop gain can be measured by means of a network vector analyzer using the  $10\Omega$  injection resistor  $R_2$  [8].

In Test#2 we are interested in investigating correlations between the line transient response of the LDO regulator and the values of the load current and of the output capacitance.

The correlation of line transient response with the load current is the same discussed above for the load transient. The line transient response is influenced by the output capacitance, as it influences the  $\omega_{Pload} = I_{OUT}/(C_{OUT}V_{OUT})$  pole frequency of the voltage feedback loop gain. A higher output capacitance involves a decrease of  $\omega_{Pload}$  frequency, and then a lower loop gain cross-over frequency, which causes an increase of the output voltage line transient surges magnitude. Instead, line voltage step-up and line voltage step-down should not determine different output voltage surge magnitudes, as the input voltage mainly influences the PNP pass device bias point and losses (see *Experiment 2*). It should be noted that the LDO regulator has a very good line-transient response, so that line transient voltage surges are not visible and measurable if a dynamic source with low voltage slew rate ( $<1\text{V}/\mu\text{s}$ ) is used, as shown in Figures 17 and 18. In most applications of practical interest, sharp step-wise line transients do not occur, as the slew rate of the output voltage of voltage sources is limited by their output capacitance. So, it is possible that in this test you observe no change in the line transient response after you change the output capacitance setup. However, the sensitivity of the output voltage to high frequency line disturbances is one of the most important LDO regulator issues, as LDOs are often used as post-regulators for switching power supplies, to reduce the effects of high switching frequency noise. The LDO regulator line noise rejection capabilities and the relevant impact of the output capacitance are discussed in *Experiment 4* (see *TI-PMLK BUCK, BOOST and BUCK-BOOST to gain insight the switching power supplies issues*).



## Experimental plots

The plots collected in the Figures 15 to 18 show some examples of load and line transient response of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (see [2] for further details).

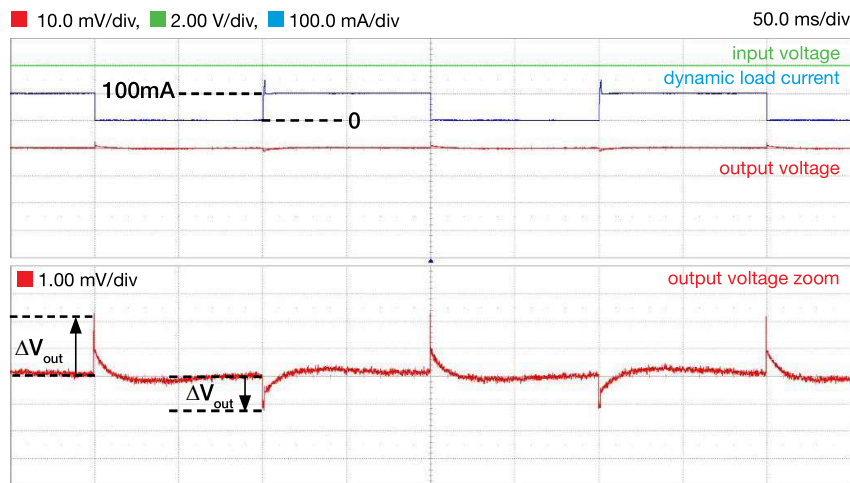


Figure 15. TPS7A4901 LDO load transient for:  $V_{out}=5V$ ,  $V_{in}=6V$ ,  $C_{out}=9.4\mu F$ ,  $C_{FF}=100nF$  and  $I_{OUT}$  swinging between 50mA and 150mA

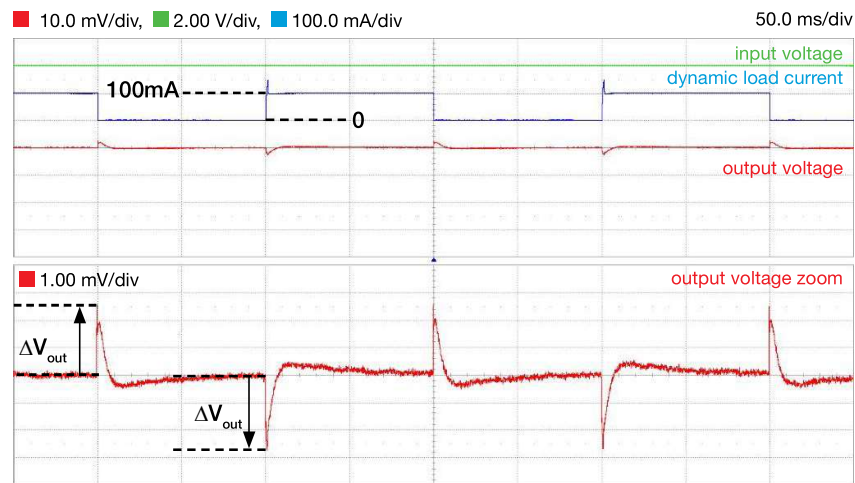


Figure 16. TPS7A4901 LDO load transient for:  $V_{out}=5V$ ,  $V_{in}=6V$ ,  $C_{out}=11.6\mu F$ ,  $C_{FF}=12nF$  and  $I_{OUT}$  swinging between 50mA and 150mA

The plots of Figures 15 and 16 highlight the influence of the phase lead capacitance on the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator load transient response. The output voltage surge magnitude is smaller when the phase lead capacitance is higher, as the frequency of the zero  $\omega_{zFF}$  is lower, thus increasing the cross-over frequency. The overshoot and undershoot surge magnitudes are referred to the zero level of the AC component of the output voltage. The load transient responses of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator shown in Figures 15 and 16 have been realized by means of a 5Hz square-wave dynamic load current in order to easily visualize the step-up and the step-down load transients in the same oscilloscope screenshot. Therefore, each load step occurs before the transient response to the previous load step has completely vanished. A square-wave dynamic load current with a frequency lower than 5Hz allows the observation of the complete transient response.

**[NOTE: the screenshots shown in Figures 15 and 16 have been generated by a LeCroy WaveRunner 44Xi 400MHz 4-channels Digital Oscilloscope, with 500kS/s sampling rate and 3bits filter settings. The waveforms you get in your test may look different due to the oscilloscope model and acquisition settings and to some experiment set-up elements, like the cables length]**



## Experimental plots

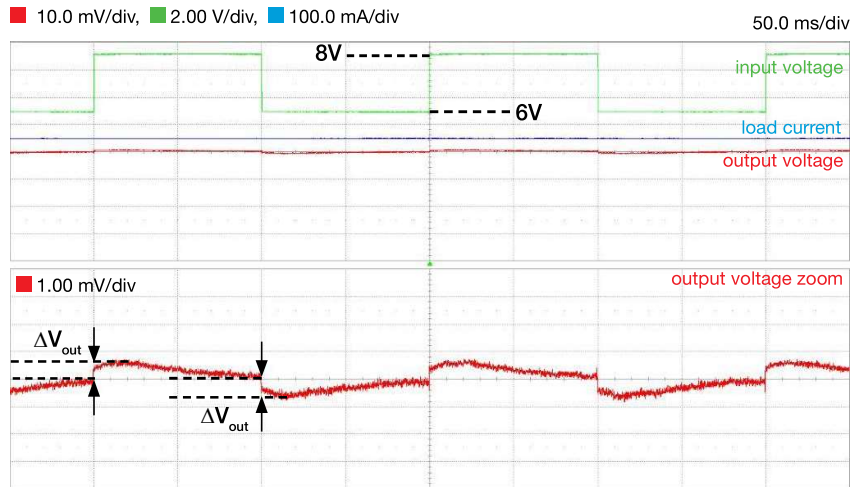


Figure 17. TPS7A4901 LDO line transient for  $V_{out}=5V$ ,  $I_{OUT}=50mA$ ,  $C_{FF}=100nF$  and  $V_{IN}$  switching between 6V and 8V

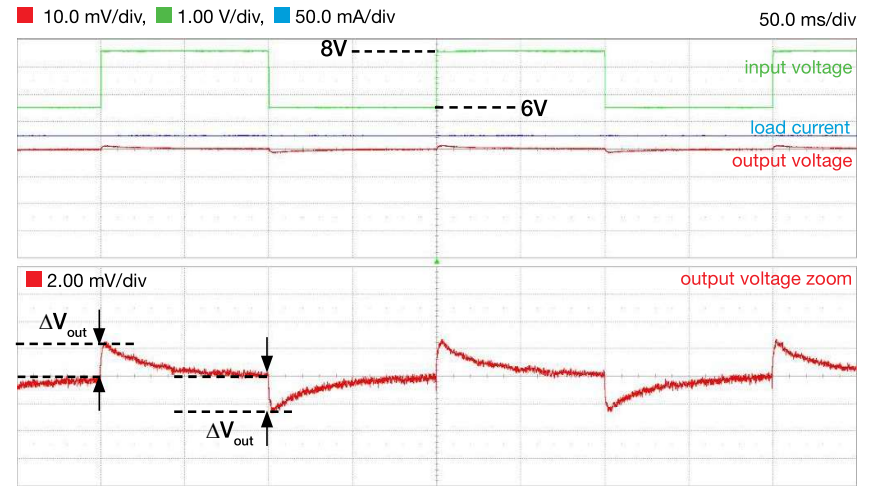


Figure 18. TPS7A4901 LDO line transient for  $V_{out}=5V$ ,  $I_{OUT}=50mA$ ,  $C_{FF}=12nF$  and  $V_{IN}$  switching between 6V and 8V

The plots of Figures 17 and 18 show the line transient response of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator. The output voltage surge magnitude is smaller when the phase lead capacitance is higher, as the frequency of the zero  $\omega_{ZFF}$  is lower, thus increasing the cross-over frequency. The overshoot and undershoot surge magnitudes are referred to the zero level of the AC component of the output voltage. The line transient responses of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator shown in Figures 17 and 18 have been realized by means of a 5Hz square-wave dynamic line voltage in order to easily visualize the step-up and the step-down line transients in the same oscilloscope screenshot. Therefore, each load step occurs before the transient response to the previous load step has completely vanished. A square-wave dynamic line voltage with a frequency lower than 5Hz allows the observation of the complete transient response.

[NOTE: the screenshots shown in Figures 17 and 18 have been generated by a LeCroy WaveRunner 44Xi 400MHz 4-channels Digital Oscilloscope, with 500kS/s sampling rate and 3bits filter settings. The waveforms you get in your test may look different due to the oscilloscope model and acquisition settings and to some experiment set-up elements, like the cables length]

# Experiment 4

The goal of this experiment is to analyze the LDO regulator Power Supply Rejection Ratio (PSRR), that provides a measure of the input noise rejection capabilities of the LDO regulator. The influence of output capacitor and voltage loop phase lead capacitor on the PSRR is investigated. The TPS7A4901 LDO regulator is used for this experiment.



## Case Study

The goal of this experiment is to analyze the LDO regulator output voltage waveform when an AC noise is injected into the input voltage.

The subject of investigation in this experiment is the line voltage noise rejection capability of the LDO regulator. The LDO regulator is able to guarantee a good output voltage regulation under steady-state (see *Experiment 1 and Experiment 2*) as in presence of line voltage and load current perturbations (see *Experiment 3*). In many applications there are perturbations that are characterized by a moderate magnitude and some dominant harmonic spectrum. This is the case of switching and resonant power supplies, whose DC output voltage exhibits an inherent ripple with a fundamental frequency that can range from 10kHz to about 10MHz. LDO regulators are ideal as post-regulators to filter out high frequency ripple noise in powering analog-to-digital converters and other noise-sensitive devices in audio, measurement and RF applications, where high accuracy is needed.

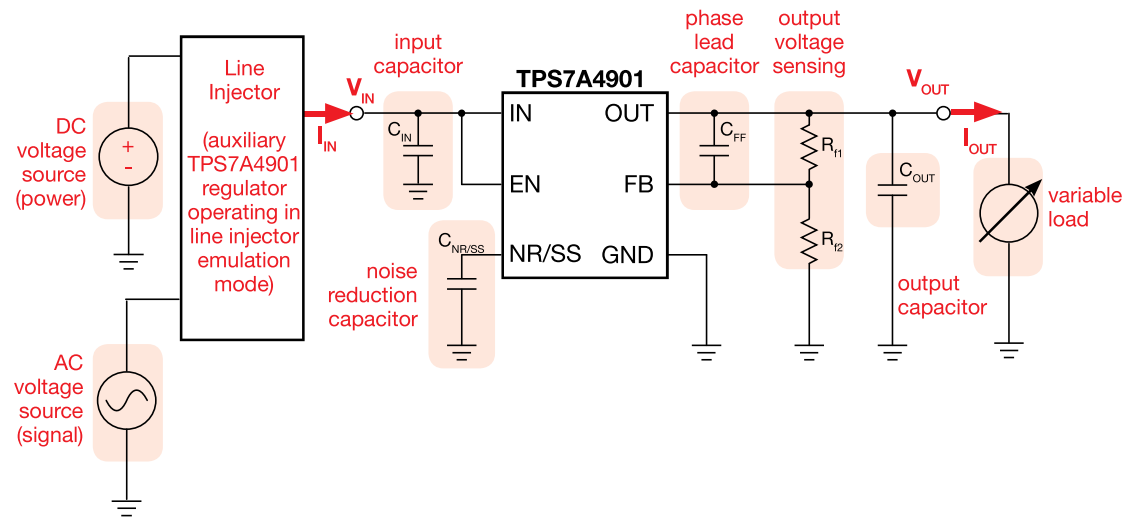


Figure 1. Simplified schematic of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator

**Test#1.** We set up the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator with an input voltage consisting of an AC component added to a DC voltage and terminate it into a fixed DC load, generated by an auxiliary TPS7A4901 regulator operating in line injector emulation mode, as shown in Figure 1. The input voltage AC component is added by means of a Line Injector, which is a device able to apply an AC noise on the DC voltage generated by the DC voltage source. An auxiliary TPS7A4901 LDO regulator is used to realize the Line Injector. The LDO regulator is terminated into an adjustable load, which is realized by means of a sliding rheostat. We record the PSRR over a wide frequency range. The influence of the DC voltage and of the output capacitance  $C_{OUT}$  on the PSRR magnitude will be observed and discussed.

**Test#2.** We set up the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator with an input voltage consisting of an AC component added to a fixed DC bias voltage and terminate it into an adjustable DC load. Then we record the PSRR over a wide frequency range, varying the load current and the value of the phase lead capacitance  $C_{FF}$ . The influence of the load current and of the phase lead capacitance  $C_{FF}$  on the PSRR magnitude will be observed and discussed.



# Theory Background

The fundamentals of LDO regulators Power Supply Rejection Ratio are provided in this section (see [1][4][11][12] for a general discussion of LDO regulators operation and characteristics, [5] for a discussion on PSRR measurement, and [2] for more details on TPS7A4901 operation and features).

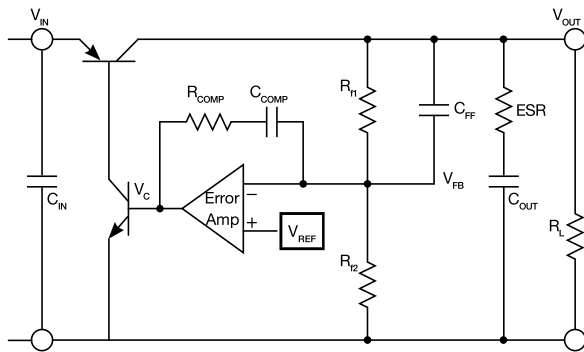


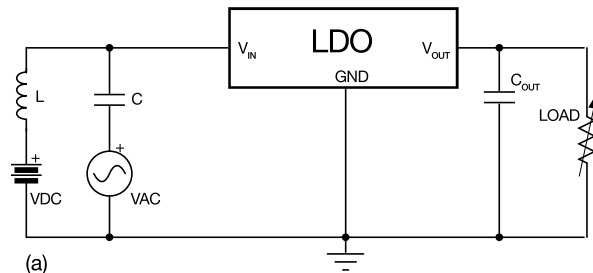
Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the feedback of an LDO regulator with PNP bipolar transistor pass device. The input noise rejection of an LDO regulator is determined by the output capacitor ( $C_{OUT}$ , ESR) the feedback loop setup ( $R_{COMP}$ ,  $C_{COMP}$ ,  $R_{T1}$ ,  $C_{FF}$ ) and by the input capacitor  $C_{IN}$ . A high loop-gain cross-over frequency and a big input capacitance  $C_{IN}$  improve the noise rejection. However, a too high cross-over may compromise the stability and a too big  $C_{IN}$  may cause unwanted resonance with parasitic inductance of input traces and wires. **The PSRR has to be measured with the input capacitor  $C_{IN}$  disconnected to assess the inherent LDO input noise rejection capability.**

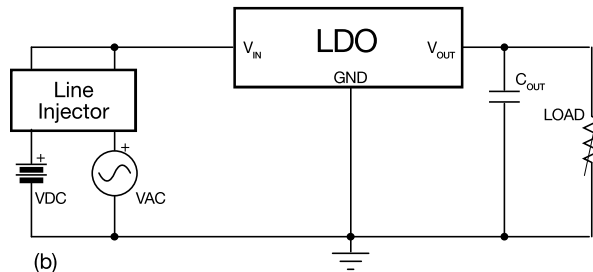
The efficacy of the LDO regulator in rejecting the input noise is measured through the Power Supply Rejection Ratio (PSRR), which is defined as:

$$(1) \quad PSRR_{dB} = 20 \log \left[ \frac{\Delta V_{IN, pk-pk}}{\Delta V_{OUT, pk-pk}} \right]$$

Figure 2(a) shows a simple setup to add AC noise to the bias DC input voltage of an LDO regulator. It allows the use of an oscilloscope to probe  $V_{IN}$  and  $V_{OUT}$  and works within a frequency range that is conditioned by the values of L and C. Though very simple, the PSRR measurement based on L-C elements is affected by bandwidth limits and poor accuracy at low and high frequencies. The use of an input summing power amplifier, or *line injector*, shown in Figure 2(b) provides more reliable measurements over a wider frequency range.



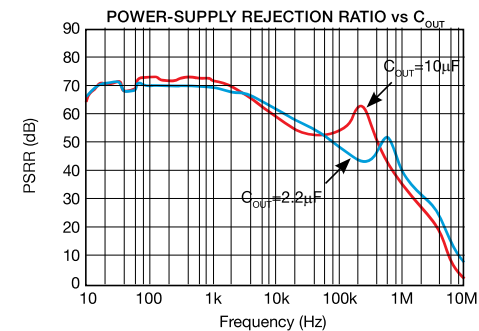
(a)



(b)

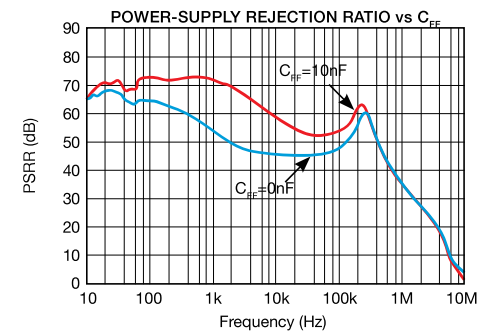
Figure 2

Figure 3 shows the PSRR Bode plots for two different values of output capacitance  $C_{OUT}$  and phase-lead capacitance  $C_{FF}$ . Increasing the output capacitance  $C_{OUT}$  causes a reduction of the cross-over frequency, due to the lower value of the load pole frequency ( $\omega_{Pload} = 1/(C_{OUT}V_{out})$ ), and may worsen the PSRR at middle and very high frequencies, whereas the PSRR beyond the cross-over frequency is improved. Increasing the phase lead capacitance  $C_{FF}$  determines an increase of the cross-over frequency, due to the lower value of the phase lead zero frequency ( $\omega_{Pload} = 1/(C_{FF}R_{T1})$ ), and then a better PSRR at low frequencies, whereas high frequency PSRR is not improved.



a)

$V_{OUT} = 5V$   
 $V_{IN} = 6.2V$   
 $I_{OUT} = 150mA$   
 $C_{NR/SS} = 10nF$   
 $C_{FF} = 10nF$



b)

$V_{OUT} = 5V$   
 $V_{IN} = 6.2V$   
 $I_{OUT} = 150mA$   
 $C_{NR/SS} = 10nF$   
 $C_{OUT} = 10\mu F$

Figure 3



# Test#1: experiment set-up configuration

The instruments needed for this experiment are: a DC POWER SUPPLY, an OSCILLOSCOPE, a WAVEFORM GENERATOR, two MULTIMETERS and a 200 $\Omega$ /1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT. Figure 5 shows the instruments connections. Follow the instructions provided in next page to set-up the **connections**.

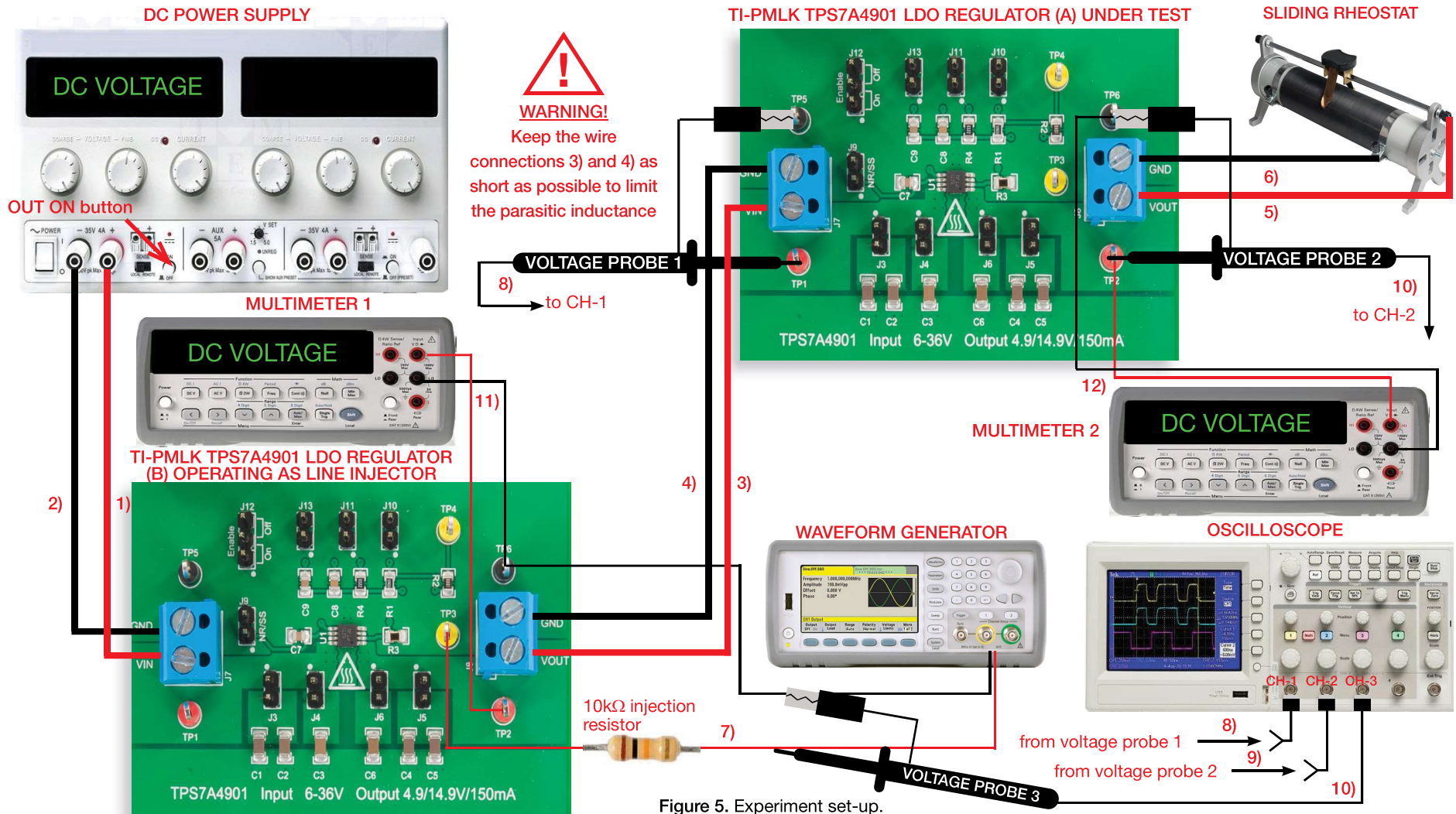


Figure 5. Experiment set-up.



## Test#1: experiment set-up configuration

With all the instruments turned off, make the following **connections**:

- 1) connect the POSITIVE (RED) output of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector
- 2) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector
- 3) connect the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test
- 4) connect the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test
- 5) connect the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test to the first input connector of the 200 $\Omega$ ,1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT
- 6) connect the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test to the second input connector of the 200 $\Omega$ ,1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT
- 7) connect the output of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR to the TEST PIN  $TP_3$  which is the FEEDBACK (FB) voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector, through a 10k $\Omega$ , $\frac{1}{4}$ W injection resistor.
- 8) connect a voltage probe to channel 1 of the OSCILLOSCOPE and hang it to TEST PIN  $TP_1$  which is the input voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test  
[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 9) connect a voltage probe to channel 2 of the OSCILLOSCOPE and hang it to TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test  
[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 10) connect a voltage probe to channel 3 of the OSCILLOSCOPE and hang it to the output of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR  
[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 11) connect the MULTIMETER 1 to TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector
- 12) connect the MULTIMETER 2 to TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test

[NOTES: A) The input capacitor on the LDO regulator, working as a low pass filter, influences the PSRR. Therefore, the PSRR measurements changes depending on whether they are performed with or without the input capacitor connected. In this experiment the input capacitor is disconnected. B) A fixed 200 $\Omega$ ,50W power resistor can be used instead of the sliding rheostat].



## Line injector emulation: principle of operation set-up

Figure 6 shows a simplified schematic of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in normal mode, with the TEST PIN  $TP_3$ , which is the FEEDBACK (FB) PIN voltage of the regulator, floating <sup>(1)</sup>. In these conditions, the error amplifier ensures the regulation of the output voltage  $V_{out}$  at the 5V nominal value by adjusting the base current  $I_b$  of the PNP bipolar pass device until the feedback voltage  $V_{FB}$  equals the reference voltage  $V_{REF}$ . Therefore, the base current  $I_b$  of the PNP bipolar pass is constant and the output current is regulated at the level required by the load resistance  $R_{load}$ .

<sup>(1)</sup> see pages 18 and 19 for details about the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator board.

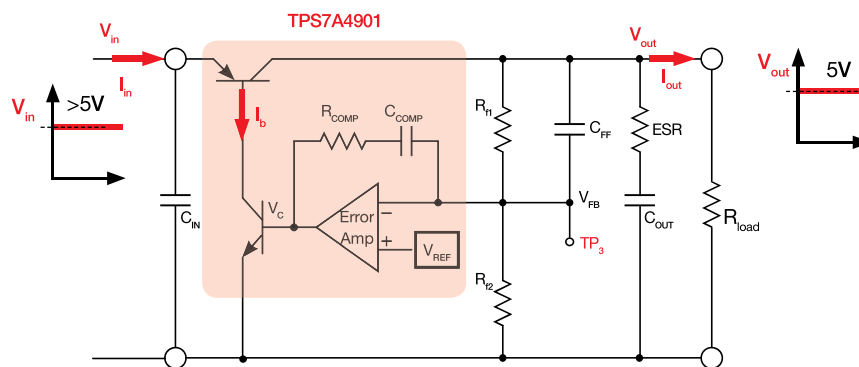


Figure 6. TPS7A4901 board operating in normal mode

Figure 7 shows a TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in line injector emulation mode, with the TEST PIN  $TP_3$  connected to the output of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR through a 10k $\Omega$  injection resistor. The voltage signal  $V_{inj}$  generated by the WAVEFORM GENERATOR injects a disturbance in the FEEDBACK (FB) PIN voltage of the regulator which causes a change in the output voltage. In particular, the DC bias component  $V_{offset}$  of the voltage signal  $V_{inj}$  causes a drift in the average output voltage of the regulator, whereas the AC sinusoidal component of peak-to-peak amplitude  $V_{pp}$  and frequency  $f_{ac}$  determines an oscillation of the output voltage at the same frequency  $f_{ac}$ . Therefore, the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in line injector emulation mode is comprised of a DC component  $V_{dc}$  and an AC component  $V_{ac}$  which can be adjusted by means of the dc and ac components  $V_{offset}$  and  $V_{pp}$  of the signal  $V_{inj}$ . The TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test (A) behaves like a current source, as shown in Figure 7. In fact, an LDO regulator feeding a fixed load sinks from its input a fixed current.

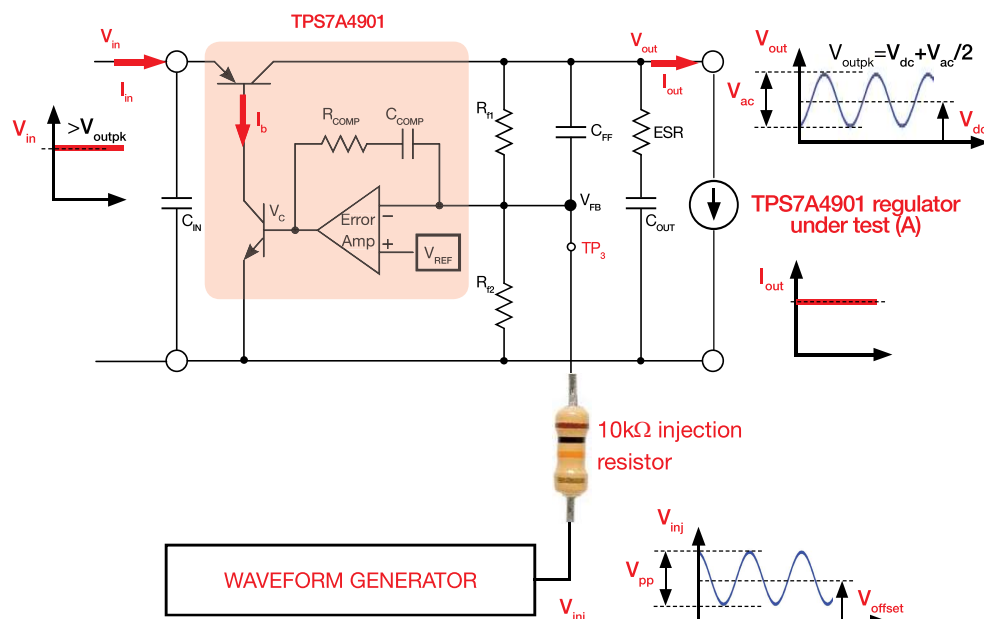
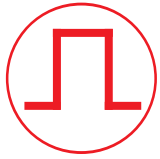


Figure 7. TPS7A4901 board operating in dynamic source emulation mode



## Line injector emulation: TPS7A4901 regulator set-up

Figure 8 shows the schematic of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) with the connection of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR to the FEEDBACK (FB) TEST PIN  $TP_3$  needed to obtain the operation of the regulator as line injector. The WAVEFORM GENERATOR injects into the FEEDBACK (FB) TEST PIN  $TP_3$  a sinusoid voltage with  $V_{pp}$  amplitude and  $V_{offset}$  offset.

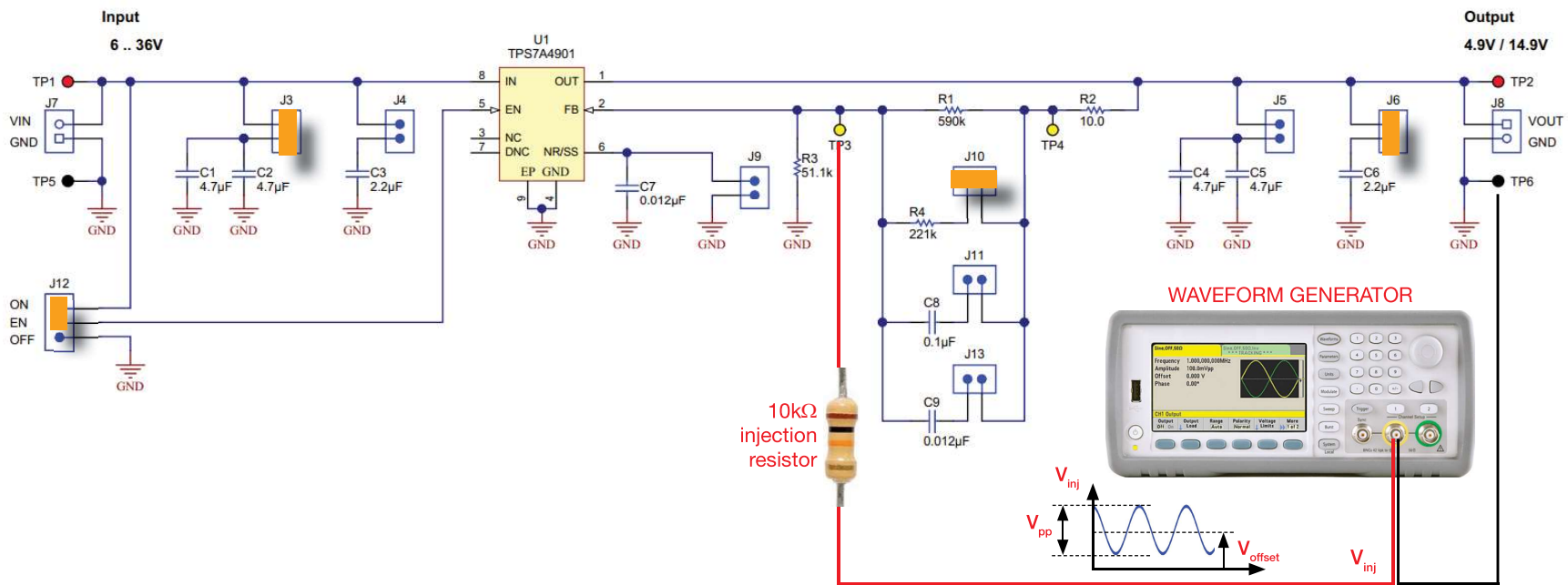


Figure 8. TPS7A4901 board operating as dynamic source

In this experiment the following values of frequency  $f_{ac}$  and AC component  $V_{pp}$  are adopted to measure the PSRR of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test:

$f_{ac}$	100Hz	1kHz	10kHz	100kHz	1MHz
$V_{pp}$	0.5V	1.0V	2.0V	4.0V	8.0V

For each frequency value  $f_{ac}$ , the DC component  $V_{offset}$  has to be adjusted to achieve the values **8V**, **12V** and **16V** of the DC component  $V_{dc}$  of the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in line injector emulation mode, required in this experiment. The

input voltage  $V_{in}$  also needs to be adapted to the peak output voltage  $V_{dc} + V_{pp}/2$  in order to guarantee the operation of the TPS7A4901 regulator with limited power loss. The following reference values are valid at 10kHz:

$V_{in}$	14V	18V	22V
$V_{dc}$	8V	12V	16V
$V_{offset}$	2.0V	1.2V	0.6V

$V_{offset}$  has to be set at a lower value for  $f_{ac} < 10\text{kHz}$  and at a higher value for  $f_{ac} > 10\text{kHz}$ .



# Test#1: preparation and procedure



(a) TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test



(b) TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating as line injector

Figure 9. Jumpers set-up for Test#1

## TPS7A4901 regulator under test jumpers set-up, Figure 9(a):

- **J<sub>12</sub> shorted** in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- **J<sub>10</sub> shorted** → nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 5V$
- **J<sub>5</sub> shorted** → C<sub>4</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>5</sub> (4.7μF) output caps connected
- **J<sub>6</sub> shorted** → C<sub>6</sub> (2.2μF) output cap. connected
- **J<sub>11</sub> shorted** → C<sub>8</sub> (100nF) phase lead cap. connected
- **J<sub>13</sub> open** → C<sub>9</sub> (12nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>3</sub> open** → C<sub>1</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>2</sub> (4.7μF) input caps disconnected
- **J<sub>4</sub> open** → C<sub>3</sub> (2.2μF) input cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>9</sub> open** → C<sub>7</sub> (12nF) noise reduction cap. disconnected

## TPS7A4901 regulator working as line injector jumpers set-up, Figure 9(b):

- **J<sub>12</sub> shorted** in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- **J<sub>10</sub> shorted** → nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 5V$
- **J<sub>3</sub> shorted** → C<sub>1</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>2</sub> (4.7μF) input caps connected
- **J<sub>6</sub> shorted** → C<sub>6</sub> (2.2μF) output cap. connected
- **J<sub>4</sub> open** → C<sub>3</sub> (2.2μF) input cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>5</sub> open** → C<sub>4</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>5</sub> (4.7μF) output caps disconnected
- **J<sub>9</sub> open** → C<sub>7</sub> (12nF) noise reduction cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>11</sub> open** → C<sub>8</sub> (100nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>13</sub> open** → C<sub>9</sub> (12nF) phase lead cap. disconnected

## Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the OSCILLOSCOPE, set CH-1, CH-2 and CH-3 in AC 1MΩ coupling mode and select CH-3 as trigger source
- 2) turn on the two MULTIMETERS and set DC voltage mode
- 3) set the position of the 200Ω/1.5A RHEOSTAT sliding contact corresponding to the maximum resistance (200Ω)
- 4) turn on the DC POWER SUPPLY (ensure that the “OUT ON” button is OFF), set the DC VOLTAGE at 14V and the CURRENT LIMIT at 50mA
- 5) turn on the WAVEFORM GENERATOR (ensure that the “OUT ON” button is OFF), set high impedance output, sine wave mode, frequency  $f_{ac} = 100\text{Hz}$ , amplitude  $V_{pp} = 0.5V$ , voltage offset  $V_{offset} = 2V$
- 6) turn ON the DC POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button and the WAVEFORM GENERATOR “OUT ON” button
- 7) adjust the  $V_{offset}$  voltage value of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR until you read 8V in the display of the MULTIMETER 1
- 8) in these conditions you should read 4.9V in the display of the MULTIMETER 2 and see sinusoidal waveforms on the CH-1, CH-2 and CH-3 of the OSCILLOSCOPE. (if the value in the display of MULTIMETER 1 is not 4.9V or the waveforms in the OSCILLOSCOPE are not sinusoids, turn OFF the “OUT ON” buttons of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR and of the DC POWER SUPPLY and verify the previous steps)
- 9) set the horizontal scale of the OSCILLOSCOPE so that you see 10 periods of the CH-3 sinusoidal waveform per division
- 10) use the OSCILLOSCOPE “FFT” math function applied to CH-1 and to CH-2 and measure the “dBV” values of the two traces at the AC frequency  $f_{ac}$  and calculate the PSRR [dB]
- 11) repeat steps 7) to 10) for all the values of the frequency  $f_{ac}$  and of the DC input voltage of the TPS7A4901 regulator under test listed in Table 1 [NOTES: a) the  $V_{offset}$  voltage value to adjust at step 7) becomes 12V and then 16V; b) for each value of the  $V_{offset}$  voltage, set the DC POWER SUPPLY voltage at the  $V_{in}$  value provided in the *Line injector emulation: TPS7A4901 regulator set-up* section; c) for each value of the frequency  $f_{ac}$ , set the  $V_{pp}$  amplitude of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR sine wave signal at the value provided in the *Line injector emulation: TPS7A4901 regulator set-up* section]
- 12) turn OFF the “OUT ON” button of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR and of the DC POWER SUPPLY, open jumper **J<sub>5</sub>** to disconnect C<sub>4</sub> (4.7μF) and C<sub>5</sub> (4.7μF) output capacitors and repeat the steps from 6) to 11)
- 13) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the “OUT ON” button of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR and of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments



# Test#1: measure and calculate

- 1) Measure the PSRR [dB] = CH1\_FFT [dBV] - CH2\_FFT [dBV] at the frequencies listed in the Table 1, with the two different output capacitor setups.
- 2) Answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in [2][9][12].

**Table 1.** PSRR of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator with  $V_{OUT} = 5V$ ,  $I_{out} = 25mA$ ,  $C_{FF} = 12nF$  and different output capacitors setup

(1) PSRR [dB] with $C_{OUT}=2 \times 4.7\mu F + 2.2\mu F$	AC signal frequency				
	100Hz	1kHz	10kHz	100kHz	1MHz
(2) PSRR [dB] with $C_{OUT}=2.2\mu F$					
$V_{IN,DC} = 8V$	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
$V_{IN,DC} = 12V$	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
$V_{IN,DC} = 16V$	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)

### Output capacitors:

#### $J_5$ shorted and $J_6$ open:

$C_{out} = C_4$  and  $C_5$  in parallel = 9.4 $\mu$ F  
ESR ~ 35m $\Omega$ @10kHz, ~2m $\Omega$ @1MHz

#### Phase lead capacitors:

#### $J_{11}$ open and $J_{13}$ shorted:

$C_{FF} = C_9 = 12nF$

(Visit the websites of capacitors manufacturers for more details about ESR vs frequency curves)

#### $J_5$ open and $J_6$ shorted:

$C_{out} = C_6 = 2.2\mu F$   
ESR ~ 50m $\Omega$ @10kHz, ~4m $\Omega$ @1MHz

#### $J_{11}$ shorted and $J_{13}$ open:

$C_{FF} = C_8 = 100nF$

#### $J_5$ shorted and $J_6$ shorted:

$C_{out} = C_4, C_5$  and  $C_6$  in parallel = 11.6 $\mu$ F  
ESR ~ 20m $\Omega$ @10kHz, ~1.5m $\Omega$ @1MHz

#### $J_{11}$ shorted and $J_{13}$ shorted:

$C_{FF} = C_8$  and  $C_9$  in parallel = 112nF

## Answer:

- 1 How does the PSRR Magnitude depend on the output capacitance?  insensitive  increases with higher capacitance  decreases with higher capacitance

other: \_\_\_\_\_

- 2 Is the DC input voltage  $V_{IN,DC}$  influential on PSRR Magnitude?  yes  no  other: \_\_\_\_\_



## Test#2: experiment set-up configuration

The instruments needed for this experiment are: a DC POWER SUPPLY, an OSCILLOSCOPE, a WAVEFORM GENERATOR, two MULTIMETERS and a 200 $\Omega$ /1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT. Figure 10 shows the instruments connections. Follow the instructions provided in next page to set-up the **connections**.

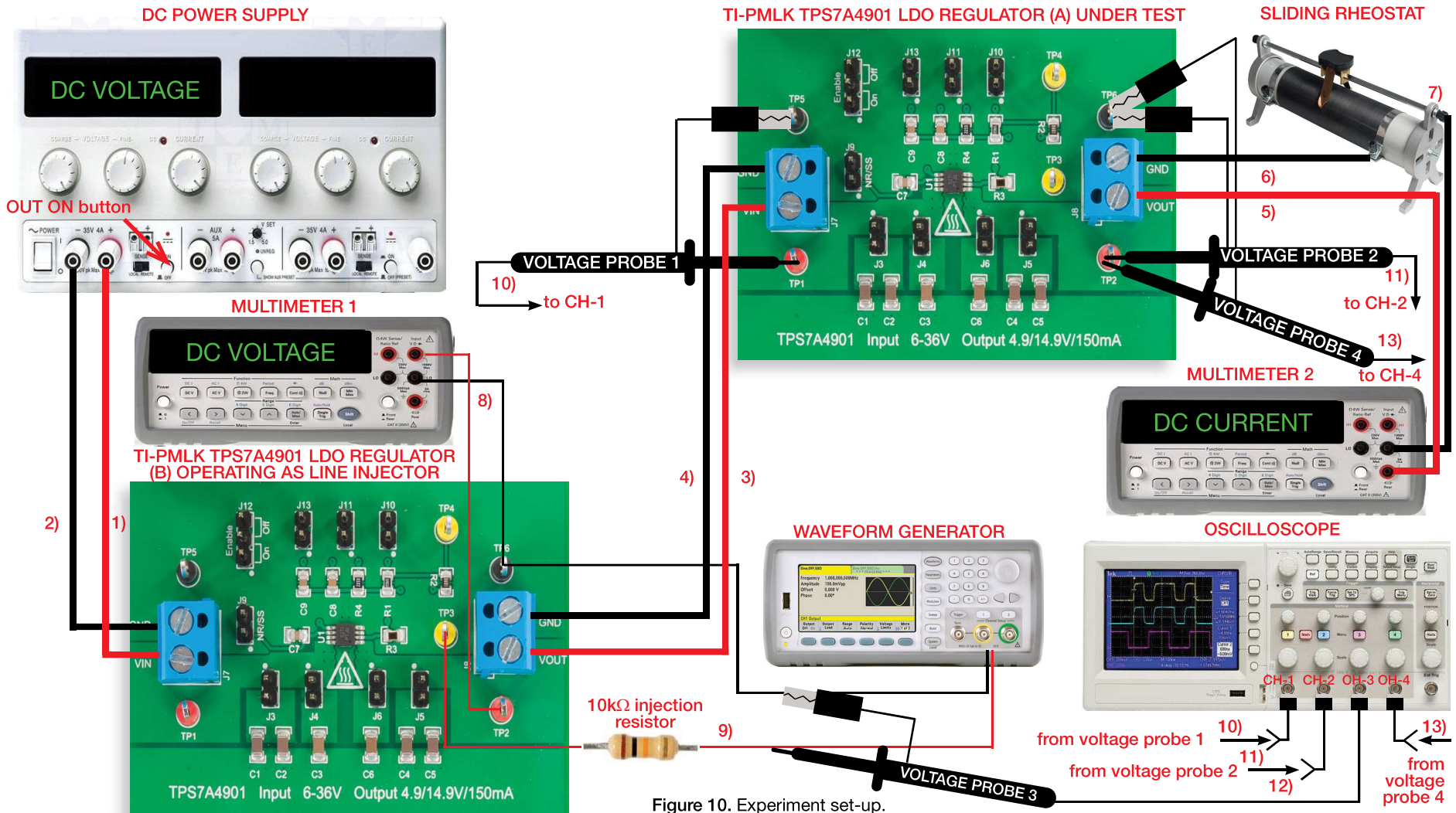


Figure 10. Experiment set-up.



## Test#2: experiment set-up instructions

With all the instruments turned off, make the following **connections**:

- 1) connect the POSITIVE (RED) output of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector
- 2) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector
- 3) connect the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test
- 4) connect the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_7$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test
- 5) connect the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test to the current measurement port POSITIVE (RED) INPUT of the MULTIMETER2
- 6) connect the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_8$  screw terminal of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test to the second input connector of the 200 $\Omega$ ,1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT
- 7) connect the current measurement port NEGATIVE (BLACK) INPUT of the MULTIMETER 2 to the first input connector of the 200 $\Omega$ ,1.5A SLIDING RHEOSTAT
- 8) connect the voltage measurement port of MULTIMETER 1 to TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector
- 9) connect the output of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR to the TEST PIN  $TP_3$  which is the FEEDBACK (FB) voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (B) operating as line injector, through a 10k $\Omega$ , $\frac{1}{4}$ W injection resistor.
- 10) connect a voltage probe to channel 1 of the OSCILLOSCOPE and hang it to TEST PIN  $TP_1$  which is the input voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test  
[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 11) connect a voltage probe to channel 2 of the OSCILLOSCOPE and hang it to TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test  
[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 12) connect a voltage probe to channel 3 of the OSCILLOSCOPE and hang it to the output of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR  
[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 13) connect a voltage probe to channel 4 of the OSCILLOSCOPE and hang it to TEST PIN  $TP_2$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator (A) under test  
[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]



## Test#2: preparation and procedure



(a) TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test



(b) TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating as line injector

Figure 11. Jumpers set-up for Test#2

### TPS7A4901 regulator under test jumpers set-up, Figure 11(a):

- **J<sub>12</sub>** shorted in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- **J<sub>10</sub>** shorted → nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 5V$
- **J<sub>5</sub>** shorted →  $C_4$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_5$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) output caps connected
- **J<sub>6</sub>** shorted →  $C_6$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) output cap. connected
- **J<sub>11</sub>** open →  $C_8$  (100nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>13</sub>** open →  $C_9$  (12nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>3</sub>** open →  $C_1$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_2$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) input caps disconnected
- **J<sub>4</sub>** open →  $C_3$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) input cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>9</sub>** open →  $C_7$  (12nF) noise reduction cap. disconnected

### TPS7A4901 regulator working as line injector jumpers set-up, Figure 11(b):

- **J<sub>12</sub>** shorted in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- **J<sub>10</sub>** shorted → nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 5V$
- **J<sub>3</sub>** shorted →  $C_1$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_2$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) input caps connected
- **J<sub>6</sub>** shorted →  $C_6$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) output cap. connected
- **J<sub>4</sub>** open →  $C_3$  (2.2 $\mu$ F) input cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>5</sub>** open →  $C_4$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) and  $C_5$  (4.7 $\mu$ F) output caps disconnected
- **J<sub>9</sub>** open →  $C_7$  (12nF) noise reduction cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>11</sub>** open →  $C_8$  (100nF) phase lead cap. disconnected
- **J<sub>13</sub>** open →  $C_9$  (12nF) phase lead cap. disconnected

### Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the OSCILLOSCOPE, set CH-1, CH-2 and CH-3 in AC 1M $\Omega$  coupling mode, CH-4 in DC 1M $\Omega$  coupling mode and select CH-3 as trigger source
- 2) turn on the two MULTIMETERS and set DC voltage mode
- 3) set the position of the 200 $\Omega$ /1.5A RHEOSTAT sliding contact corresponding to the maximum resistance (200 $\Omega$ )
- 4) turn on the DC POWER SUPPLY (ensure that the “OUT ON” button is OFF), set the DC VOLTAGE at 18V and the CURRENT LIMIT at 50mA
- 5) turn on the WAVEFORM GENERATOR (ensure that the “OUT ON” button is OFF), set high impedance output, sine wave

mode, frequency  $f_{ac} = 100\text{Hz}$ , amplitude  $V_{pp} = 0.5V$ , voltage offset  $V_{offset} = 1.2V$

- 6) turn ON the POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button and the WAVEFORM GENERATOR “OUT ON” button
  - 7) adjust the  $V_{offset}$  voltage value of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR until you read 12V in the display of the MULTIMETER 1 and the sliding contact of the RHEOSTAT until you read 25mA<sup>(\*)</sup> in the display of the MULTIMETER 2
  - 8) in these conditions you should see sinusoidal waveforms on CH-1, CH-2 and CH-3 of the OSCILLOSCOPE and a sinusoidal waveform with 4.9V dc bias on CH-4. (if the waveforms in the OSCILLOSCOPE are not as described above, turn OFF the “OUT ON” button of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR and of the DC POWER SUPPLY and verify the previous steps)
  - 9) set the horizontal scale of the OSCILLOSCOPE so that you see 10 periods of the CH-3 sinusoidal waveform per division
  - 10) use the OSCILLOSCOPE “FFT” math function applied to CH-1 and to CH-2 and measure the “dBV” values of the two traces at the AC frequency  $f_{ac}$  and calculate the PSRR [dB].
  - 11) repeat steps 7) to 10) for all the values of the frequency  $f_{ac}$  and of the load current<sup>(\*)</sup> listed in Table 1 [NOTES: a) adjust the load current through the sliding contact of the RHEOSTAT while reading the value on the display of MULTIMETER 2; b) for each value of the frequency  $f_{ac}$ , set the  $V_{pp}$  amplitude of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR sine wave signal at the value provide in the *Line injector emulation: TPS7A4901 regulator set-up* section]
  - 12) turn OFF the “OUT ON” button of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR and of the DC POWER SUPPLY, shorten the jumper **J<sub>11</sub>** to connect  $C_8$  (100nF) phase lead capacitor and repeat the steps from 6) to 11)
  - 13) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the “OUT ON” button of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR and of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments
- <sup>(\*)</sup> You may adopt the nearest value of the load current you are able to set with the resolution of the sliding contact of the specific rheostat you adopt for the experiment.



## Test#2: measure and calculate

- 1) Measure the PSRR [dB] = CH1\_FFT [dBV] - CH2\_FFT [dBV] at the frequencies listed in the Table 2, with the two different phase lead capacitor setups.
- 2) Answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in [2][9][12].

**Table 2.** PSRR of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator with  $V_{OUT} = 5V$ ,  $V_{IN,DC} = 12V$ ,  $C_{OUT} = 2 \times 4.7\mu F + 2.2\mu F$  and different phase lead capacitors setup

(1) PSRR [dB] with $C_{FF}$ disconnected	AC signal frequency				
(2) PSRR [dB] with $C_{FF} = 100nF$ connected	100Hz	1kHz	10kHz	100kHz	1MHz
$I_{OUT} = 25mA$	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
$I_{OUT} = 75mA$	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
$I_{OUT} = 125mA$	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)

### Output capacitors:

#### $J_5$ shorted and $J_6$ open:

$C_{out} = C_4$  and  $C_5$  in parallel =  $9.4\mu F$   
ESR ~  $35m\Omega@10kHz$ ,  $\sim 2m\Omega@1MHz$

#### Phase lead capacitors:

#### $J_{11}$ open and $J_{13}$ shorted:

$C_{FF} = C_9 = 12nF$

(Visit the websites of capacitors manufacturers for more details about ESR vs frequency curves)

#### $J_5$ open and $J_6$ shorted:

$C_{out} = C_6 = 2.2\mu F$   
ESR ~  $50m\Omega@10kHz$ ,  $\sim 4m\Omega@1MHz$

#### $J_{11}$ shorted and $J_{13}$ open:

$C_{FF} = C_8 = 100nF$

#### $J_5$ shorted and $J_6$ shorted:

$C_{out} = C_4$ ,  $C_5$  and  $C_6$  in parallel =  $11.6\mu F$   
ESR ~  $20m\Omega@10kHz$ ,  $\sim 1.5m\Omega@1MHz$

#### $J_{11}$ shorted and $J_{13}$ shorted:

$C_{FF} = C_8$  and  $C_9$  in parallel =  $112nF$

## Answer:

- 1) Describe the observed correlations among the  $C_{FF}$  capacitance, the load current  $I_{OUT}$  and the PSRR values over the frequency range of measurement:

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## Discussion

In Test#1 we are interested in investigating correlations between the PSRR of the LDO regulator and the values of the DC input voltage and of the output capacitance.

The PSRR is a measure of the capability of a power supply to ensure the immunity of the output voltage against *permanent disturbances* (ripple noise) in the input voltage, whereas the magnitude of the output voltage surges exhibited during the line transient response, investigated in *Experiment 3*, is a measure of the capability of a power supply to achieve the immunity of the output voltage against *occasional transient disturbances* (spike noise) in the input voltage. The former is based on frequency-domain analysis, the latter is based on time domain analysis. The frequency-domain response and the time-domain response of a dynamic system, like an LDO voltage regulator, are correlated to each other. The factors impacting the LDO regulator time-domain response also do impact its frequency-domain response. In *Experiment 3* it has been highlighted that a higher output capacitance reduces the cross-over frequency of the voltage feedback loop gain, and this is expected to slow down the line transient response, with consequent increase of output voltage surges magnitude. It has been also emphasized that if the cross-over frequency is very high, like for the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator, the line transient output voltage surges may not be visible unless a dynamic source with very high voltage slew rate ( $>1V/\mu s$ ) is used. A high slew-rate line voltage disturbance is a form of high frequency noise (the frequency spectrum of a sharp edge step-up waveform has more harmonics than a smooth edge step-up waveform). Thus, if we want to measure the ability of a voltage regulator to immunize its output voltage against fast line transients, we can analyze its PSRR, rather than through a more difficult line transient test. Figures 12 and 13 show the *closed-loop* PSRR plots of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator, as they can be obtained by means of a Network Vector Analyzer. Four regions are highlighted in the plots. In the DC-to-middle frequency region (a) the *closed-loop* PSRR looks almost flat and its magnitude is determined by the open loop DC gain of the error amplifier. In the middle-to-high frequency region (b) the *closed-loop* PSRR is influenced by the poles and zeros of the feedback loop gain and of the *open-loop* PSRR, which is the PSRR without feedback control. The output capacitor plays a double role in the region (b):

- 1) it influences the loop gain cross-over frequency and the high-frequency boundary of the middle-to-high frequency region, which corresponds to the cross-over frequency (it is also called “system bandwidth” as it bounds the frequency region where the closed-loop feedback control is able to attenuate the effects of disturbances);
- 2) it influences the *open-loop* PSRR and the magnitude of the *closed-loop* PSRR nearby the high frequency boundary of the middle-to-high frequency region.

In particular, an output capacitance increase has a beneficial effect on the *open-loop* PSRR at high frequency, where the output capacitor has a lower impedance, whereas it causes a decrease of the closed-loop pole frequency  $\omega_{pload} = I_{OUT}/(C_{OUT}V_{OUT})$ , with a consequent reduction of the system bandwidth (see Figures 12 and 13). In the regions (c) and (d) beyond the cross-over frequency the feedback control is inactive and the *closed-loop* PSRR equals the open-loop PSRR. The PSRR rise in the region (c) is determined by the progressive decrease of the output capacitor impedance, whereas the PSRR fall in the region (d) is caused by the capacitances of the pass device and other parasitic. The input voltage has a minor influence on the PSRR as it mainly determines the bias point of the PNP pass device.

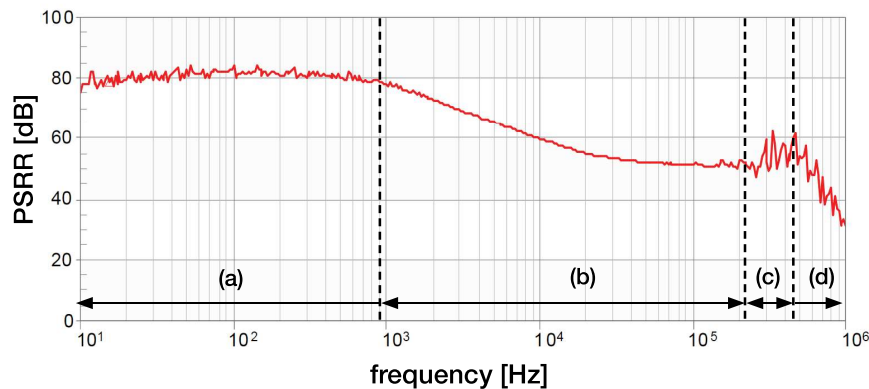
In Test#2 we are interested in investigating correlations between the PSRR of the LDO regulator and the values of the load current and of the phase lead capacitance.

A correlation is expected with the load current, as it influences the  $\omega_{pload}$  pole of the voltage loop gain. A higher current involves a higher pole frequency and then a higher cross-over frequency, then a higher PSRR magnitude and an expansion of the system bandwidth. The phase lead capacitance has a direct impact on the feedback loop gain too, as it determines the frequency  $\omega_{zFF} = 1/(C_{FF}R_{H1})$  of the phase lead zero. An increase of the phase lead capacitance involves a lower frequency  $\omega_{zFF}$  of the phase lead zero, thus determining a higher loop-gain and a higher PSRR magnitude in the middle-to-high frequency region.

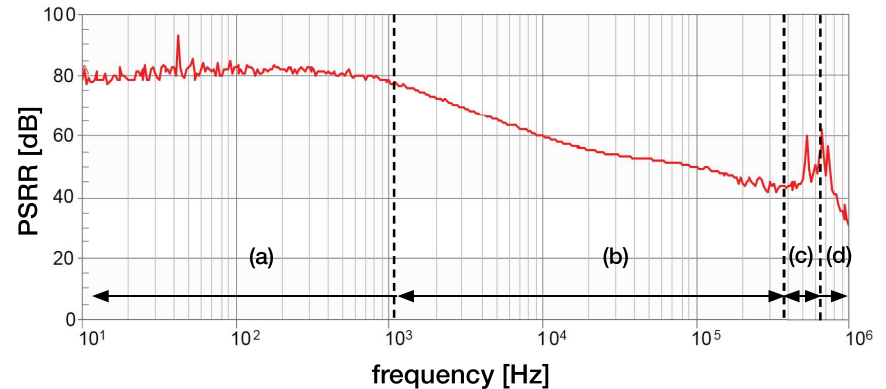


## Experimental plots

The plots collected in this section are samples of experimental measurements performed on the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator. Figures 12 to 15 show the PSRR magnitude of the LDO regulator with different line, load and phase lead capacitor setup (*those measurements have been realized by means of a Network Vector Analyzer to provide a global view of the PSRR: see [4] for further details about this type of measurement*). Figures 16 to 19 show the oscilloscope screenshots obtained by means of the procedure described in the previous sections.



**Figure 12.** TPS7A4901 LDO PSRR for:  
 $V_{out}=5V$ ,  $V_{in}=6.5V$ ,  $I_{out}=100mA$ , no  $C_{in}$ ,  $C_{out}=2 \times 4.7\mu F$ ,  $C_{FF}=100nF$



**Figure 13.** TPS7A4901 LDO PSRR for:  
 $V_{out}=5V$ ,  $V_{in}=6.5V$ ,  $I_{out}=100mA$ , no  $C_{in}$ ,  $C_{out}=2.2\mu F$ ,  $C_{FF}=100nF$

The plots of Figures 12 and 13 highlight the expected influence of the output capacitance on the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator closed-loop PSRR. In Figure 12 you can observe a lower crossover-frequency (upper boundary of region (b)) and a higher magnitude of the PSRR as in the high frequency range of region (b) as in the region (c), compared to the PSRR plot of Figure 13. These are the effects of the higher capacitance. **[NOTE:** The plots of Figures 12 to 15 have been realized by means of a network vector analyzer and of a power summing amplifier which adds the ac stimulus generated by the network vector analyzer to the constant voltage generated by the DC power supply, as shown in Figure 1. These plots are provided as reference for sampled measurements described in the previous in the Test#1 and Test#2 procedures. The PSRR plots look crisp in the low frequency and in the high frequency ranges due to the effects of the measurement system configuration and setup. The ac stimulus frequency sweeps from a lower boundary  $f_{min}$  to a higher boundary  $f_{max}$ , through a given number  $N_{sam}$  of sample frequencies. The magnitude of the ac stimulus can be set at different levels for each sample frequency over the  $[f_{min}, f_{max}]$  range. For each sample frequency, the network vector analyzer injects the sinusoidal ac stimulus into the line and measures the magnitude of the corresponding sinusoidal disturbance on the output voltage. The sweep time  $T_{swp}$  is the time the network vector analyzer takes to execute the PSRR measurement over the entire frequency range  $[f_{min}, f_{max}]$ . Changing the  $[f_{min}, f_{max}]$ ,  $N_{sam}$ ,  $T_{swp}$  and ac stimulus magnitude setup determines different levels of accuracy and smoothness in the PSRR plot. The bandwidth of the power summing amplifier may also influence the high frequency region of the PSRR plot. Finally, output noise-floor level has to be assessed to discern PSRR from the inherent noise of the LDO regulator in the measurement environment. The reader is invited to further investigate LDO regulators PSRR measurements issues in the relevant technical literature [2][9][12]].



## Experimental plots

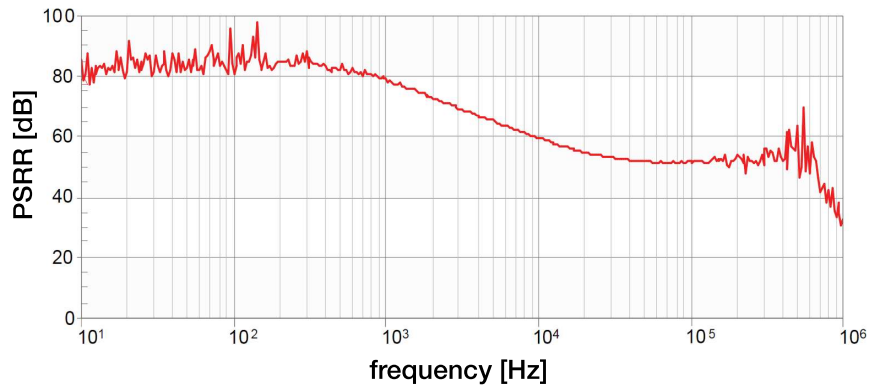


Figure 14. TPS7A4901 LDO PSRR for:  
 $V_{out}=5V$ ,  $V_{in}=12V$ ,  $I_{out}=20mA$ , no  $C_{in}$ ,  $C_{out}=2 \times 4.7\mu F$ ,  $C_{FF}=100nF$

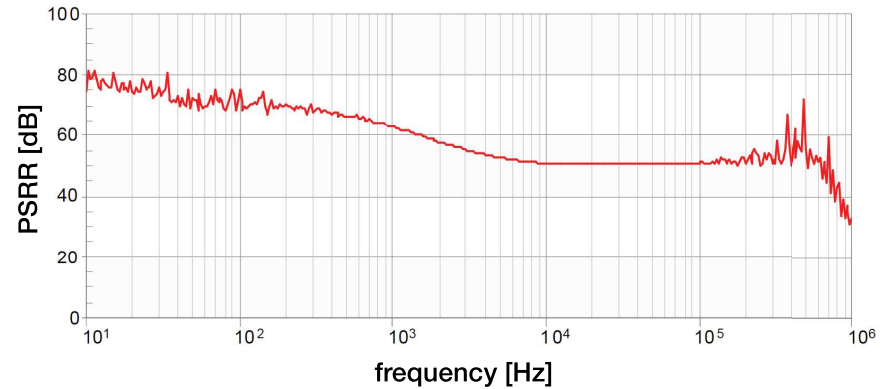
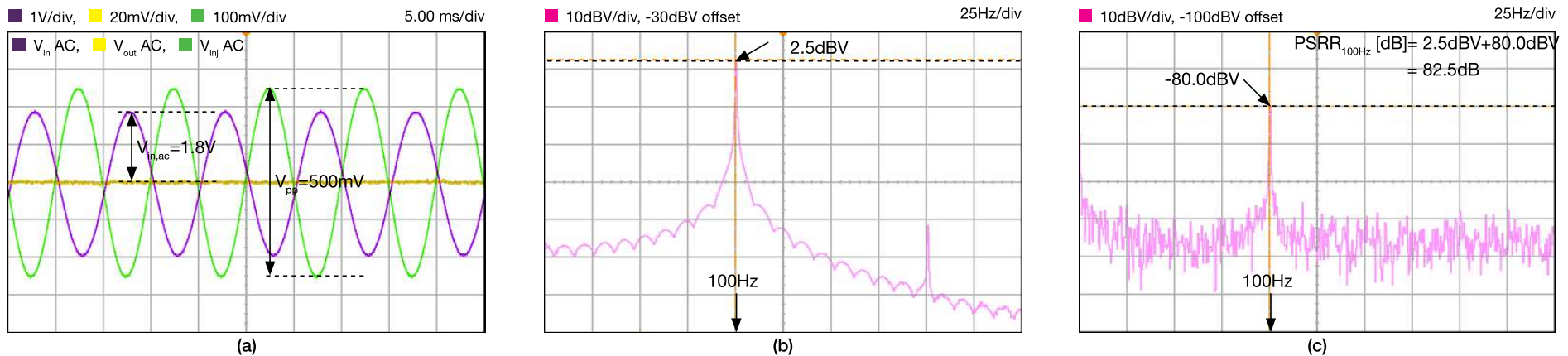


Figure 15. TPS7A4901 LDO PSRR for:  
 $V_{out}=5V$ ,  $V_{in}=12V$ ,  $I_{out}=20mA$ , no  $C_{in}$ ,  $C_{out}=2 \times 4.7\mu F$ , no  $C_{FF}$

The plots of Figures 14 and 15 highlight the expected influence of the phase lead capacitance on the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator closed-loop PSRR. In Figure 14 you can observe a higher PSRR, compared to the plot of Figure 15, in the middle-to-high frequency region, where the zero introduced by the phase lead capacitance has a strong effect on the increase of the crossover frequency, thus improving the PSRR.



## Experimental plots



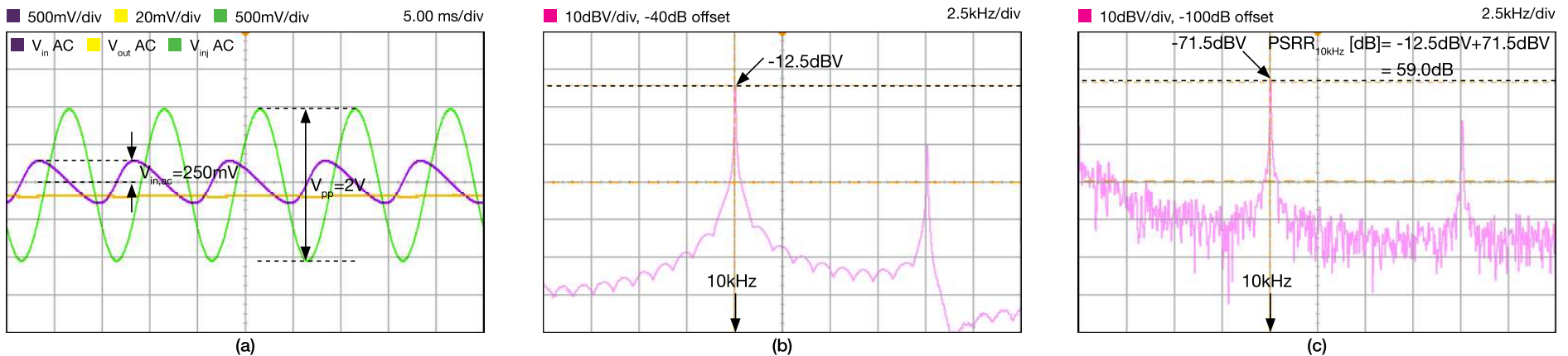
**Figure 16.** FFT-based PSRR measurement of TPS7A4901 regulator under test for  $f_{ac}=100\text{Hz}$ ,  $V_{inj, pp}=500\text{mV}$ ,  $V_{inj, offset}=800\text{mV}$ ,  $V_{in, dc}=12\text{V}$ ,  $V_{in, ac}=4\text{V}$ ,  $V_{out}=4.9\text{V}$ ,  $I_{out}=50\text{mA}$ , no  $C_{in}$ ,  $C_{out}=2 \times 4.7\mu\text{F}$ ,  $C_{FF}=100\text{nF}$ : (a) time domain waveforms; (b)  $V_{in, ac}$  FFT magnitude plot; (c)  $V_{out, ac}$  FFT magnitude plot.

The plots of Figure 16(a) show the AC sinusoidal components of the input voltage (violet trace) and output voltage (yellow trace) of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test, obtained by injecting the AC  $1V_{pk-pk}/100\text{Hz}$  sinusoidal signal (green trace) into the FEEDBACK (FB) pin of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in line injector emulation mode. The AC sinusoidal components of the output voltage of the LDO regulator under test has a very small amplitude in consequence of the high PSRR. The magnitude of this AC component can be easily measured by means of the “FFT” math function option available in the oscilloscopes. Figures 16(b) and 16(c) show the FFT magnitude spectrum of the AC sinusoidal components of the input voltage and output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test, respectively. The PSRR of the LDO regulator at 100Hz is given by the difference between the dBV values of the 100Hz spectrum components of the two signals at that frequency, which correspond to the peaks well visible in the plots.

**[NOTE:** in order to improve the readability of the FFT plots of Figures 16(b) and 16(c), a 16 sweeps averaging has been applied to the oscilloscope CH-1 and CH-2, which sense the AC components of the input and output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test].



## Experimental plots



**Figure 17.** FFT-based PSRR measurement of TPS7A4901 regulator under test for  $f_{ac}=10\text{kHz}$ ,  $V_{in,pp}=2\text{V}$ ,  $V_{inj,offset}=1.19\text{V}$ ,  $V_{in,dc}=12\text{V}$ ,  $V_{in,ac}=250\text{mV}$ ,  $V_{out}=4.9\text{V}$ ,  $I_{out}=50\text{mA}$ , no  $C_{in}$ ,  $C_{out}=2 \times 4.7\mu\text{F}$ ,  $C_{FF}=100\text{nF}$ : (a) time domain waveforms; (b)  $V_{in,ac}$  FFT magnitude plot; (c)  $V_{out,ac}$  FFT magnitude plot.

The plots of Figure 17(a) show the AC sinusoidal components of the input voltage (violet trace) and output voltage (yellow trace) of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test, obtained by injecting the AC  $2V_{pk-pk}/10\text{kHz}$  sinusoidal signal (green trace) into the FEEDBACK (FB) pin of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in line injector emulation mode. Figures 17(b) and 17(c) show the FFT magnitude spectrum of the AC sinusoidal components of the input voltage and output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test, respectively. The PSRR of the LDO regulator at  $100\text{Hz}$  is given by the difference between the dBV values of the  $10\text{kHz}$  spectrum components of the two signals at that frequency, which correspond to the peaks well visible in the plots. The magnitude  $V_{pp}$  of the AC sinusoidal component of the signal injected into the FEEDBACK (FB) pin of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator operating in line injector emulation mode has to be increased to measure the PSRR at higher frequency. This is due to the inherent low-pass characteristics of the LDO regulator loop gain (see [Experiment 3](#)), which makes the LDO control loop less sensitive to higher frequency signals. The magnitude  $V_{pp}$  has to be upper limited in order to guarantee that the input voltage of the LDO regulator under test is always greater than the dropout voltage, namely  $V_{in,dc} - V_{in,ac} > V_{dropout}$  to ensure that the LDO regulator under test correctly operates in the regulation region (see [Experiment 1](#)).

**NOTE:** in order to improve the readability of the FFT plots of Figures 17(b) and 17(c), a 16 sweeps averaging has been applied to the oscilloscope CH-1 and CH-2, which sense the AC components of the input and output voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator under test.

# Experiment 5

The goal of this experiment is to analyze the dropout voltage and the ground current of an LDO regulator based on a N-channel MOSFET pass device. The TPS7A8300 LDO regulator is used for this experiment.



## Case Study

The goal of this experiment is to analyze how the dropout voltage and the output voltage accuracy of the N-channel LDO regulator depends on the line and load conditions.

The subject of investigation in this experiment is the measurement of the voltage drop across the N-channel MOSFET pass device when it works in the ohmic region. The pass device voltage drop influences the dropout voltage of the LDO regulator, namely the minimum input voltage allowing the output voltage to be regulated at the desired nominal value. In this experiment the dropout voltage  $V_{\text{dropout}}$  across the pass device is measured in a different way compared to *Experiment 1*. In particular, as shown in Figure 1, the feedback pin voltage is forced at a value imposed by an external DC signal generator. If we set such value slightly lower than the 0.8V reference voltage, we emulate the effect of having an output voltage lower than the nominal one, thus causing the internal error amplifier to force the pass device to work into the ohmic region, thus allowing the measurement of the dropout voltage associated to the N-channel MOSFET.

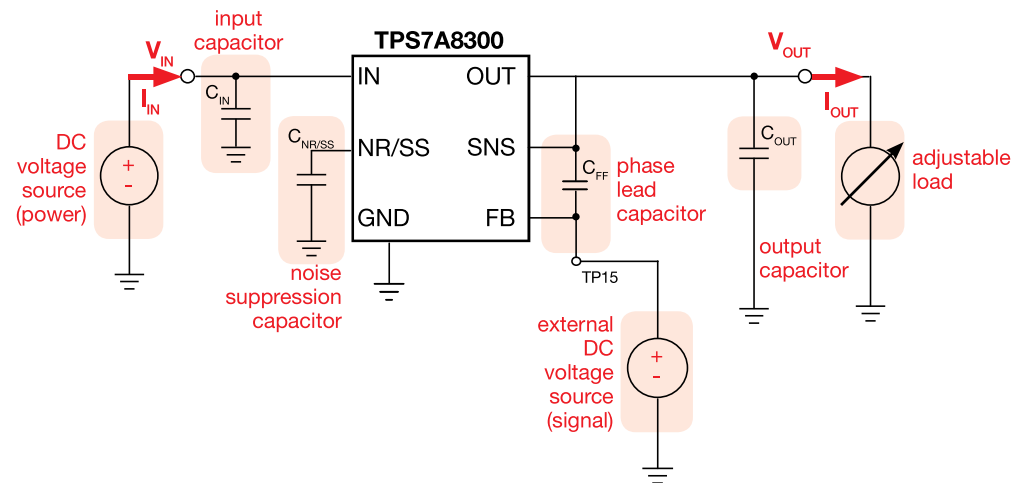


Figure 1. Simplified schematic of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator

**Test#1.** We measure the input voltage and the output voltage of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator at different input voltage and load current, in two different conditions of floating feedback pin and forced feedback pin. The goal is to detect the voltage drop of the N-channel MOSFET pass device of the LDO regulator, to calculate its channel resistance and to observe how it depends on the operating conditions.

**Test#2.** We measure the ground current of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator at different input voltage and load current to observe how it depends on the operating conditions.



# Theory Background

The fundamentals of N-MOSFET LDO regulators are provided in this section (see [1][4][11][12] for a general discussion of LDO regulators operation, and [3] for more details on TPS7A8300 operation and features, whereas refer to *Experiment 1* for dropout voltage discussion regarding a PNP pass device LDO regulator).

Figure 2 shows the internal architecture of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator, using an N-channel MOSFET pass device.

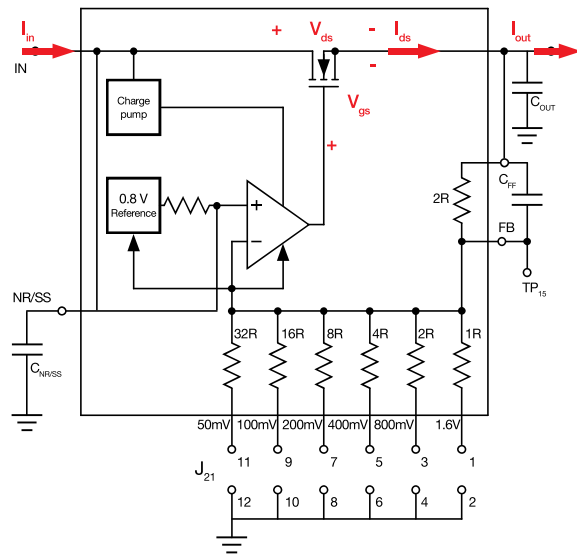


Figure 2

The output voltage can be set from 0.8V to 3.95V with steps of 50mV, by selecting the proper combination of internal resistances 1R to 32R to connect to ground through the jumpers rack J<sub>24</sub>. In normal operation, the feedback pin FB is floating and the feedback control of Figure 2 senses the output voltage and adjusts the MOSFET gate-source voltage  $V_{gs}$  until the drain-source voltage  $V_{ds}$  equals the difference between the input voltage and the desired output voltage  $V_{out}$ , and the MOSFET drain-source current  $I_{ds}$  equals the load current  $I_{out}$ , according to equations (1)(2):

$$(1) \quad V_{ds} = V_{drop} = V_{in} - V_{out} = V_{in} - R_{out} I_{out} = V_{in} - R_{out} I_{ds}$$

$$(2) \quad I_{ds} = (V_{in} - V_{ds}) / R_{out}$$

The output voltage is regulated if the MOSFET operates in the saturation region, where  $V_{ds} > V_{gs} - V_{th}$ , as in Figure 3.

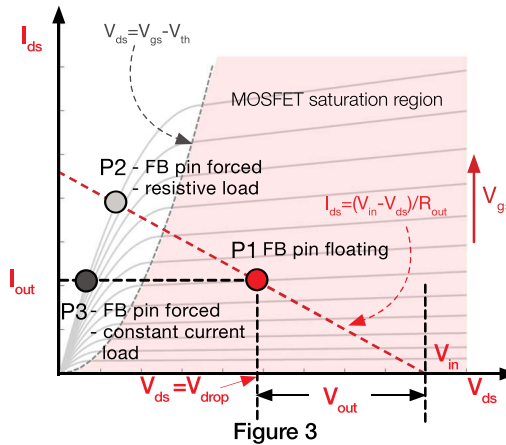


Figure 3

In the saturation region, the MOSFET drain-source current  $I_{ds}$  is given by equation (3):

$$(3) \quad I_{ds} = \beta/2 (V_{gs} - V_{th})^2 [1 + \lambda (V_{ds} - (V_{gs} - V_{th}))]$$

where  $V_{th}$  is the gate-source threshold voltage,  $\lambda$  is the channel-length modulation factor, and the factor  $\beta$  depends on charge carriers mobility, channel width and length, and gate oxide capacitance per unit area. The grey curves of Figure 3 are the plots of equation (3)  $I_{ds}$  vs the drain-source voltage, for increasing values of the gate-source voltage, whereas the red dashed curve is the plot of equation (2). If the MOSFET operates in the saturation region, the feedback control has margin to adjust the gate-source voltage  $V_{gs}$  and find the value such that  $I_{ds}$  and  $V_{ds}$  fulfill both equations (2) and (3), even though  $V_{in}$  and  $I_{out}$  vary, thus ensuring that the output voltage  $V_{out}$  equals the desired value, and the drain-to-source current  $I_{ds}$  equals the desired load current  $I_{out}$ .

The output voltage can be regulated if the MOSFET operates in the ohmic region too, where  $V_{ds} < V_{gs} - V_{th}$ , as in Figure 4.

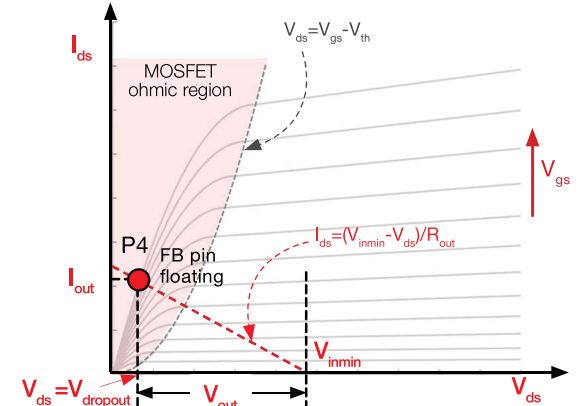


Figure 4

In the ohmic region, the MOSFET drain-source current  $I_{ds}$  is given by equation (4):

$$(4) \quad I_{ds} = \beta (V_{gs} - V_{th} - V_{ds}/2) V_{ds}$$

The regulation in the ohmic region is achieved only if the input voltage is higher than the minimum value  $V_{inmin}$  for which there is a feasible value of gate-source voltage  $V_{gs}$  fulfilling both equations (2) and (3). In the ohmic region the drain-source voltage  $V_{ds}$  is very low and it is much smaller than  $V_{gs} - V_{th}$ , so that the drain-source current can be simplified as shown in equation (5):

$$(5) \quad I_{ds} \approx V_{ds} / R_{ds,on}$$

where  $R_{ds,on} = 1/[\beta (V_{gs} - V_{th})]$  is the MOSFET channel resistance. The channel resistance  $R_{ds,on}$  provides a measure of the dropout voltage  $V_{dropout} = V_{inmin} - V_{out}$ .



# Experiment set-up: configuration

The instruments needed for this experiment are: a DC POWER SUPPLY, four MULTIMETERS, a SIGNAL GENERATOR and a  $5\Omega/3A$  SLIDING RHEOSTAT. Figure 5 shows the instruments connections. Follow the instructions provided in next page to set-up the **connections**.

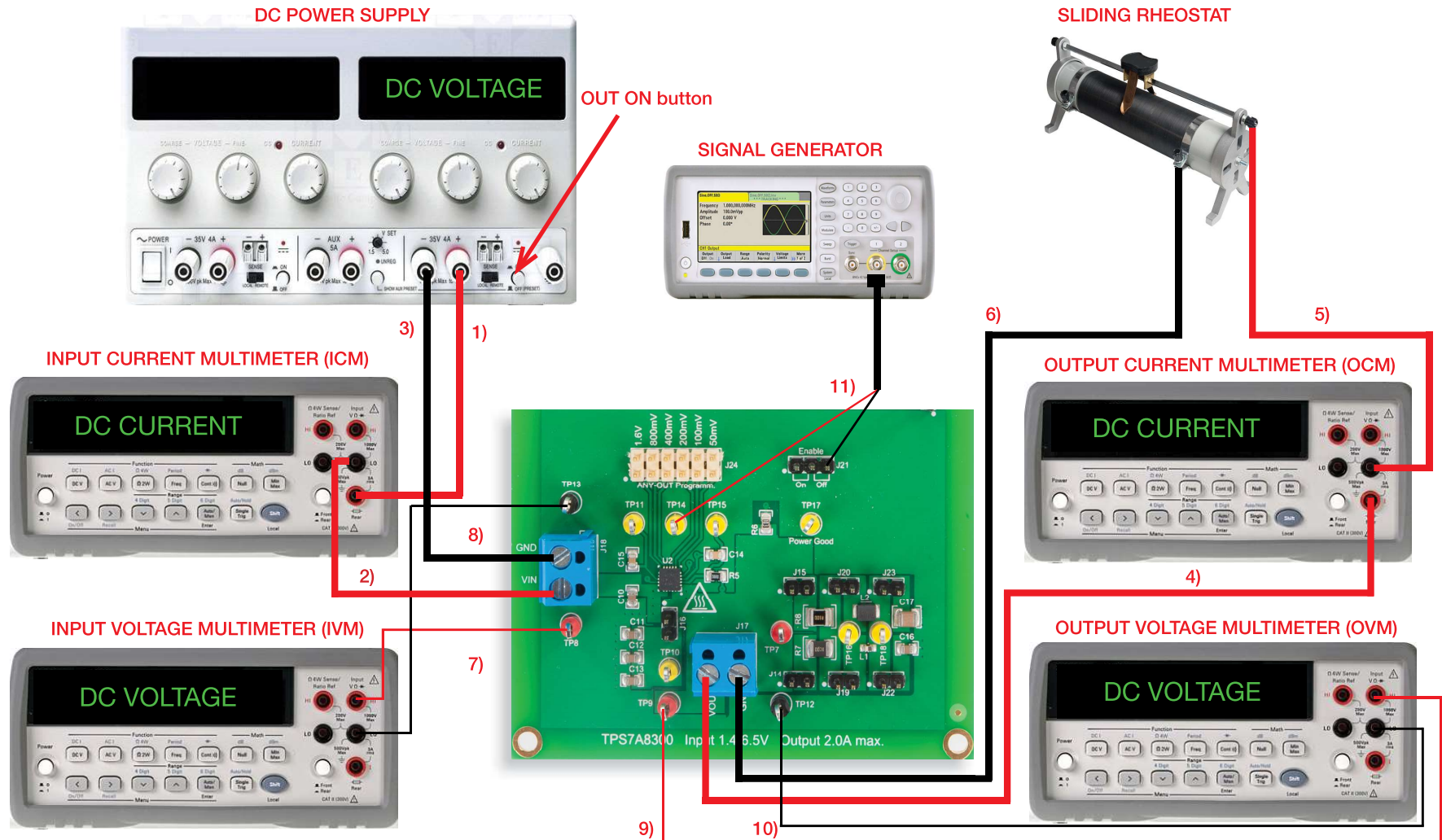


Figure 5. Experiment set-up.



## Experiment set-up: instructions

With all the instruments turned off, make the following **connections**:

- 1) connect the POSITIVE (RED) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the POSITIVE (RED) CURRENT INPUT of the INPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (ICM)  
[**WARNING**: the positive current input of the MULTIMETERS is distinguished from the positive voltage input]
- 2) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) CURRENT INPUT of the INPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (ICM) to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator
- 3) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator
- 4) connect the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator to the POSITIVE (RED) CURRENT INPUT of the OUTPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (OCM)  
[**WARNING**: the positive current input of the MULTIMETERS is distinguished from the positive voltage input]
- 5) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) CURRENT INPUT of the OUTPUT CURRENT MULTIMETER (OCM) to the first input connector of the SLIDING RHEOSTAT
- 6) connect the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator to the second input connector of the SLIDING RHEOSTAT
- 7) connect the POSITIVE (RED) VOLTAGE INPUT of the INPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (IVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_8$ , which is the VIN of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator
- 8) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) VOLTAGE INPUT of the INPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (IVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_{13}$ , which is GND of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator
- 9) connect the POSITIVE (RED) VOLTAGE INPUT of the OUTPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (OVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_9$ , which is VOUT of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator
- 10) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) VOLTAGE INPUT of the OUTPUT VOLTAGE MULTIMETER (OVM) to the TEST PIN  $TP_{12}$ , which is the GND of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator
- 11) connect the POSITIVE terminal of the OUTPUT of the SIGNAL GENERATOR to TEST PIN  $TP_{14}$  of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator and the GROUND terminal of the OUTPUT of the SIGNAL GENERATOR to the ground of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator (use the  $J_{21}$  connected to ground, as shown in Figure 5)



# Test#1: preparation and procedure

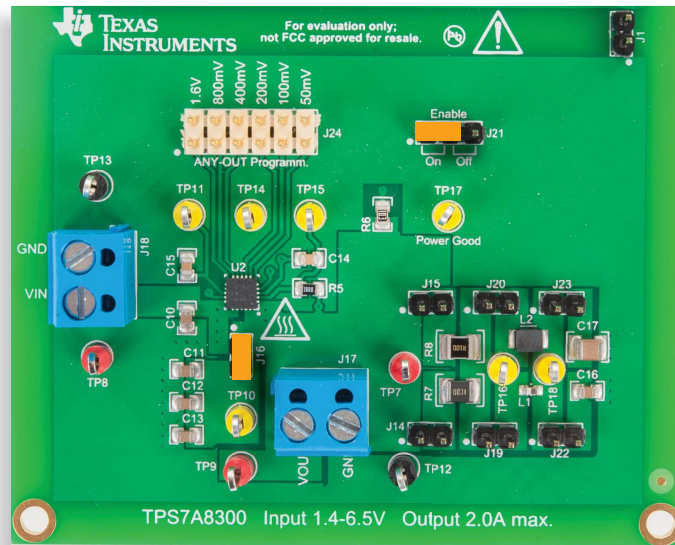


Figure 6. TPS7A8300 LDO board: jumpers set-up for Test#1

## TPS7A8300 regulator jumpers set-up, Figure 6:

- $J_{21}$  shorted in ON position  $\rightarrow$  LDO operation enabled
- $J_{24}$  open  $\rightarrow$  nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 0.8V$
- $J_{16}$  shorted  $\rightarrow C_{11}$ - $C_{13}$  ( $3 \times 10\mu F$ ) output caps connected
- $J_{14}$  AND  $J_{15}$  open  $\rightarrow R_7$  ( $1m\Omega$ ) and  $R_8$  ( $100m\Omega$ ) output resistors disconnected
- $J_{19}$  AND  $J_{20}$  open  $\rightarrow L_1$  ( $1nH$ ) and  $L_2$  ( $100nH$ ) output inductors disconnected
- $J_{22}$  AND  $J_{23}$  open  $\rightarrow C_{16}$  ( $10\mu F$ ) and  $C_{17}$  ( $47\mu F$ ) output caps disconnected

## Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the MULTIMETERS
- 2) set the ICM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 1A$
- 3) set the OCM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 1A$
- 4) set the IVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\leq 10V$
- 5) set the OVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\leq 1V$
- 6) turn on the POWER SUPPLY, keep the "OUT ON" button OFF (POWER SUPPLY output disabled), set the voltage at 1.4V and the current limit at 1A
- 7) set the position of the  $5\Omega/3A$  RHEOSTAT sliding contact corresponding to the maximum resistance ( $5\Omega$ )
- 8) turn ON the SIGNAL GENERATOR, keep the "OUT ON" button OFF (OUTPUT disabled), set the DC MODE, set the output coupling at  $1M\Omega$ , and set the voltage at 775mV
- 9) turn ON the POWER SUPPLY "OUT ON" button and move the sliding contact of the RHEOSTAT until you read 50mA in the OCM display. In these conditions you should also read about 1.4V in the IVM display, about 0.8V in the OVM display, and slightly more than 50mA in the ICM display (if you read values much different than the one listed above, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY and verify the previous steps)
- 10) measure the input and output voltages for the load current values<sup>(\*)</sup> listed in Table 1, by adjusting the position of the sliding contact of the RHEOSTAT while watching the load current in OCM display (you do not need to turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY while varying the load current)
- 11) reset the sliding contact of the RHEOSTAT to the position corresponding to 50mA<sup>(\*)</sup> load current, turn ON the SIGNAL GENERATOR "OUT ON" button and repeat step 10)
- 12) turn OFF the SIGNAL GENERATOR "OUT ON" button, reset the sliding contact of the RHEOSTAT to the position corresponding to 50mA<sup>(\*)</sup> load current, set the POWER SUPPLY voltage at 2.5V, and repeat steps 10) and 11)
- 13) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the SIGNAL GENERATOR "OUT ON" button, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments

<sup>(\*)</sup> You may adopt the nearest value of the load current you are able to set with the resolution of the sliding contact of the specific rheostat you adopt for the experiment.



## Test#1: measure and calculate

- 1) Measure the output voltage in the operating conditions indicated in Table 1, calculate the difference between the input and the output voltage.
- 2) Calculate the equivalent MOSFET channel resistance  $R_{ds,on} = (V_{in} - V_{out}) / I_{ds}$  with Test Pin  $TP_{14}$  voltage forced to 0.775V.
- 3) Answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in relevant references.

**Table 1.** Output voltage and dropout voltage of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator at different load current and input voltage, with Test Pin  $TP_{14}$  voltage floating or forced at 0.775V

(1) $V_{out}$ [V]	(2) $V_{drop} = V_{in} - V_{out}$ [mV]	$I_{OUT}$ [mA]					
		50		250		500	
$V_{in} = 1.4V$	$TP_{14}$ floating	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
	$TP_{14} = 0.775V$	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
	(3) $R_{ds,on} @ TP_{14} = 0.775V$	(3)		(3)		(3)	
$V_{in} = 2.5V$	$TP_{14}$ floating	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
	$TP_{14} = 0.775V$	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
	(3) $R_{ds,on} @ TP_{14} = 0.775V$	(3)		(3)		(3)	

### Output capacitors, resistors, inductors:

$J_{16}$  connects the output capacitors  $C_{11} - C_{13}$  (3x10 $\mu$ F)

$J_{14}$  connects the output resistor  $R_7$  (1m $\Omega$ )  
 $J_{15}$  connects the output resistor  $R_8$  (100m $\Omega$ )

$J_{19}$  connects the output inductor  $L_1$  (1nH)  
 $J_{20}$  connects the output inductor  $L_2$  (100nH)

$J_{22}$  connects the output capacitor  $C_{16}$  (10 $\mu$ F)  
 $J_{23}$  connects the output capacitor  $C_{17}$  (47 $\mu$ F)

## Answer:

1) Is the drop voltage  $V_{drop}$  lower with  $TP_{15} = 0.775V$  than with  $TP_{14}$  voltage floating?  yes  no  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_

2) How do the input voltage and load current influence the drop voltage and the channel resistance with  $TP_{14}$  voltage forced at 0.775V? \_\_\_\_\_



## Test#2: preparation and procedure

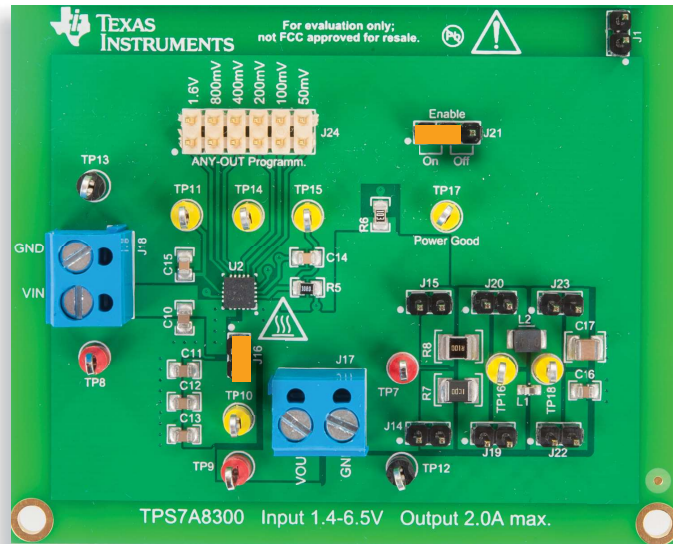


Figure 7. TPS7A8300 LDO board: jumpers set-up for Test#2

### TPS7A8300 regulator jumpers set-up, Figure 7:

- **J<sub>21</sub>** shorted in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- **J<sub>24</sub>** open → nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 0.8V$
- **J<sub>16</sub>** shorted →  $C_{11}$ ,  $C_{12}$ ,  $C_{13}$  (3x10 $\mu$ F) output caps connected
- **J<sub>14</sub>** AND **J<sub>15</sub>** open →  $R_7$  (1m $\Omega$ ) and  $R_8$  (100m $\Omega$ ) output resistors disconnected
- **J<sub>19</sub>** AND **J<sub>20</sub>** open →  $L_1$  (1nH) and  $L_2$  (100nH) output inductors disconnected
- **J<sub>22</sub>** AND **J<sub>23</sub>** open →  $C_{16}$  (10 $\mu$ F) and  $C_{17}$  (47 $\mu$ F) output caps disconnected

### Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the MULTIMETERS
- 2) set the ICM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 1A$
- 3) set the OCM in DC CURRENT MODE, with range  $\leq 1A$
- 4) set the IVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\leq 10V$
- 5) set the OVM in DC VOLTAGE MODE, with range  $\leq 1V$
- 6) turn on the POWER SUPPLY, keep the "OUT ON" button OFF (POWER SUPPLY output disabled), set the voltage at 1.4V and the current limit at 1A
- 7) set the position of the 5 $\Omega$ /3A RHEOSTAT sliding contact corresponding to the maximum resistance (5 $\Omega$ )
- 8) turn ON the POWER SUPPLY "OUT ON" button and move the sliding contact of the RHEOSTAT until you read 50mA<sup>(\*)</sup> in the OCM display. In these conditions you should also read about 1.4V in the IVM display, about 0.8V in the OVM display, and slightly more than 50mA in the ICM display (if you read values much different than the one listed above, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY and verify the previous steps)
- 10) measure the input and output currents for the line voltage and load current values<sup>(\*)</sup> listed in Table 2, by adjusting the position of the sliding contact of the RHEOSTAT while watching the load current in OCM display (you do not need to turn OFF the POWER SUPPLY "OUT ON" button while varying the load current and line voltage).
- 11) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the "OUT ON" button of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments

<sup>(\*)</sup> You may adopt the nearest value of the load current you are able to set with the resolution of the sliding contact of the specific rheostat you adopt for the experiment.



## Test#2: measure and calculate

- 1) Measure the input current  $I_{in}$  and output current  $I_{out}$ , and calculate the ground current  $I_{GND}$  in the operating conditions listed in the Table 2.
- 2) Answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in relevant references.

**Table 2.** Input and ground current of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator at different load current and input voltage

(1) $I_{in}$ [mA]	$V_{in}$ [V]					
(2) $I_{GND} = I_{in} - I_{out}$ [mA]	1.4	1.8	2.2	2.6	3.0	3.2
$I_{OUT} = 50\text{mA}$	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
$I_{OUT} = 250\text{mA}$	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
$I_{OUT} = 500\text{mA}$	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)

**Output capacitors, resistors, inductors:**

$J_{16}$  connects the output capacitors  $C_{11} - C_{13}$  ( $3 \times 10\mu\text{F}$ )

$J_{14}$  connects the output resistor  $R_7$  ( $1\text{m}\Omega$ )  
 $J_{15}$  connects the output resistor  $R_8$  ( $100\text{m}\Omega$ )

$J_{19}$  connects the output inductor  $L_1$  ( $1\text{nH}$ )  
 $J_{20}$  connects the output inductor  $L_2$  ( $100\text{nH}$ )

$J_{22}$  connects the output capacitor  $C_{16}$  ( $10\mu\text{F}$ )  
 $J_{23}$  connects the output capacitor  $C_{17}$  ( $47\mu\text{F}$ )

### Answer:

1 How does the  $I_{GND}$  current change when the input voltage increases?  increases  decreases  other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

2 How does the  $I_{GND}$  current change when the load current increases?  increases  decreases  other: \_\_\_\_\_

---



## Discussion

In Test#1 we are interested in investigating the dropout voltage of the LDO regulator, observing the operation of the N-channel MOSFET pass device in the ohmic region (dropout) and calculating the MOSFET channel resistance.

With the FB pin floating, the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator drives the operating point of the MOSFET pass device in the saturation region (e.g. point  $P_1$  of Figure 3) or in the ohmic region (e.g. point  $P_4$  of Figure 4) to regulate the output voltage. Regulation is achieved provided that the difference between the input voltage and the output voltage is greater than the MOSFET pass device dropout voltage. In *Experiment 1* we measure the value of the dropout voltage of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator by decreasing the input voltage until the output voltage regulation is lost. In this experiment, instead, we fix the input voltage and we force the FB pin voltage to a value lower than the reference voltage. This way, we emulate the effect of having an output voltage lower than the nominal value, and then we induce the feedback controller to increase the MOSFET gate-source voltage, up to the maximum value  $V_{gsmax}$  allowed by the internal MOSFET driver, trying to reduce the drain-source voltage to maintain the output voltage regulation. In *Experiment 1* we observed a decrease of the output voltage due to the decrease of the input voltage below the minimum value determined by the dropout voltage of the pass device, whereas in this experiment we observe an increase of the output voltage due to the decrease of the pass device voltage at its dropout value determined by the external voltage clamp imposed on the FB pin. The dropout voltage measured with this technique depends on the type of load. In fact, when the FB pin voltage is clamped, the MOSFET operating point may be forced to point  $P_2$  or to point  $P_3$  of Figure 3, depending on whether the load is a resistor or a constant current load (like the electronic load used for the test), respectively. The operating point  $P_2$  involves a higher value of the dropout voltage corresponding to a higher value of the load current. The MOSFET channel resistance measured in the two points  $P_2$  and  $P_3$  is almost the same, as they stay on the same  $I_{ds}$  vs  $V_{ds}$  curve corresponding to the maximum gate-source voltage  $V_{gsmax}$  of the MOSFET driver. The output voltage is not regulated when the pass device operates in point  $P_2$  or in point  $P_3$ : in both cases the output voltage  $V_{out}$  value is given by the input voltage minus the dropout voltage,  $V_{out} = V_{in} - V_{dropout}$ . Given the input voltage, if the load current increases, the operating points  $P_2$  and  $P_3$  move upward rightside, thus yielding a higher dropout voltage. Given the load current, if the input voltage increases, the operating point  $P_2$  moves upward rightside, thus providing a higher dropout voltage, whereas point  $P_3$  is in theory insensitive, thus providing the same dropout voltage. The channel resistance  $R_{ds,on} = 1 / [\beta (V_{gs} - V_{th})]$  we measure by forcing the MOSFET to operate on the  $I_{ds}$  vs  $V_{ds}$  curve corresponding to the maximum gate-source voltage  $V_{gsmax}$  of the MOSFET driver may increase at higher current. In fact, an increase of the current involves higher ohmic losses and then a higher junction temperature, with consequent decrease of the parameters  $\beta$  and  $V_{th}$  which decrease at higher temperature. The channel resistance is expected to increase at higher input voltage, which involves a higher dropout voltage.

In Test#2 we are interested in investigating the correlations among the ground current of the LDO regulator and the values of the load current and input voltage.

The ground current  $I_{gnd}$ , also called quiescent current, is the difference between the LDO regulator input and output currents, and consists of several components determined by the band-gap reference, the sensing resistors, the error amplifier, and the pass device drive current, which do not contribute to output power. A lower ground current improves the regulator efficiency, as shown in *Experiment 2*. The ground current is highly influenced by the type of series pass element and its junction temperature. In *Experiment 2* it is shown that the ground current  $I_{gnd}$  of TPS7A4901 LDO regulator is heavily dependent on the load current. This is caused by the inherent nature of the PNP bipolar transistor, which is a current-driven device, whose base current is merely proportional to the collector current and is permanently sunk to ground. The N-channel MOSFET pass device of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator is a voltage-driven device (it could also be classified as charge-driven device) and a higher load current involves a higher gate-source voltage  $V_{gs}$ . In steady state conditions the MOSFET gate current is almost zero. The slight increase of the ground current observed at higher load current is mainly caused by the error amplifier, which provides the higher gate-source voltage needed for the MOSFET to conduct a higher current, as you may observe in Figure 3. The ground current of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator is, instead, differently sensitive to the input voltage, as it can be realized looking at Figure 3. In particular, when the input voltage is not near the minimum value determined by the MOSFET dropout voltage, the sensitivity is higher as the MOSFET likely operates in the ohmic region, where the gate-source voltage  $V_{gs}$  needed to deliver a certain load current is strongly varying with the drain-source voltage  $V_{ds}$ . When the input voltage is high enough to determine the MOSFET operation in the saturation region, the ground current is almost insensitive to the input voltage, as in the saturation region the  $I_{ds}$  vs  $V_{ds}$  curve is almost flat.



## Experimental plots

The plots collected in these pages are samples of experimental measurements performed on the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator. They show the dropout voltage and the ground current of the LDO regulator for different input voltage, load current and junction temperature (see [3] for further details).

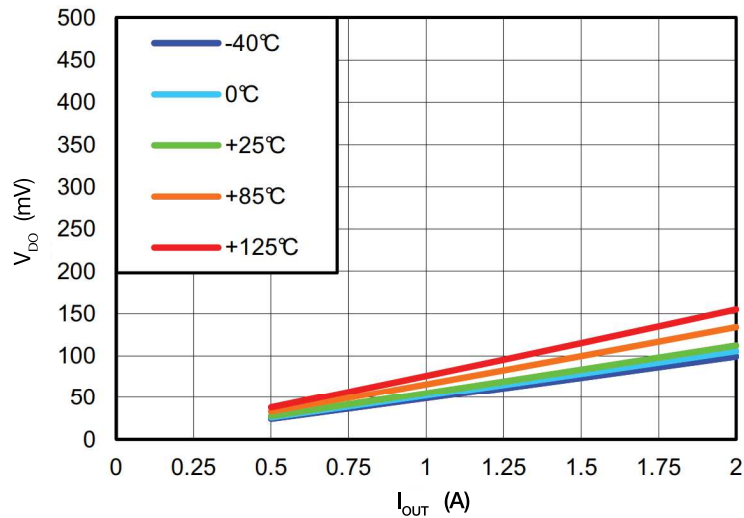


Figure 8. TPS7A8300 LDO regulator dropout voltage vs output current for:  $V_{out}=0.8V$  and  $V_{in}=1.4V$

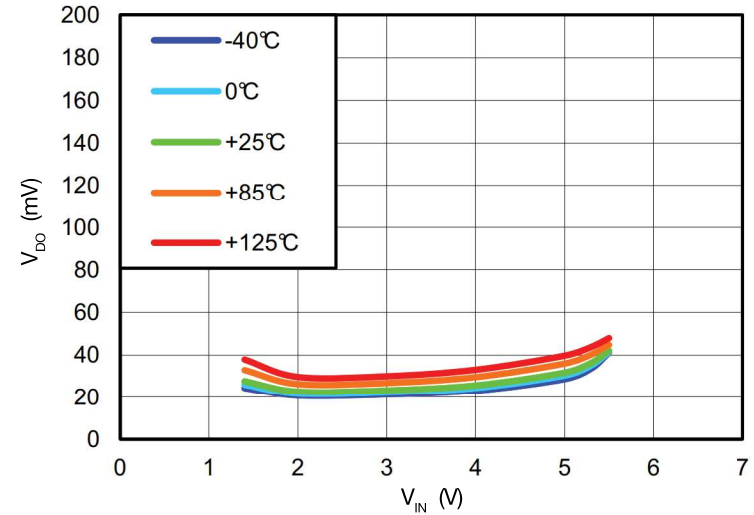


Figure 9. TPS7A8300 LDO regulator dropout voltage vs input voltage for:  $V_{out}=0.8V$  and  $I_{out}=0.5A$

The plots of Figures 8 and 9 highlight the influence of the load current and of the input voltage on the dropout voltage of the TPS7A8300 LDO discussed in the previous section.



## Experimental plots

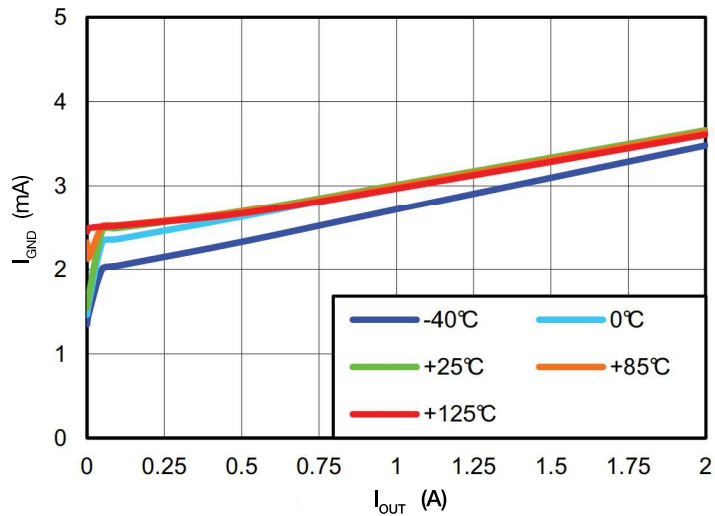


Figure 10. TPS7A8300 LDO regulator ground current vs output current for:  
 $V_{out}=0.8V$  and  $V_{in}=1.4V$

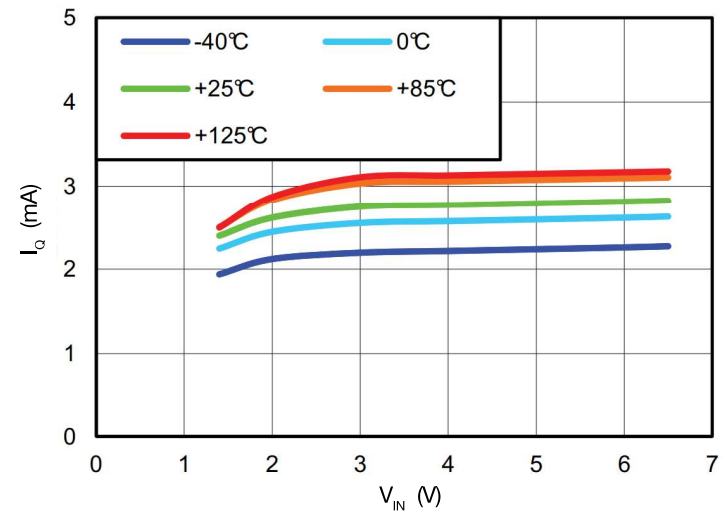


Figure 11. TPS7A8300 LDO regulator quiescent current vs input voltage for:  
 $V_{out}=0.8V$  and  $I_{out}=5mA$

The plots of Figures 10 and 11 highlight the influence of the load current and of the input voltage on the ground current of the TPS7A8300 LDO discussed in the previous section.

# Experiment 6

The goal of this experiment is to analyze how the characteristics of the output capacitor influence the load-transient waveform of an LDO regulator. The TPS7A8300 LDO regulator is used for this experiment.



## Case Study

The goal of this experiment is to analyze how the output voltage load transient surges of the LDO regulator depend on the output capacitor.

The subject of investigation in this experiment is the impact of the output capacitor characteristics on the waveform of the LDO regulator output voltage during load-transients. A simplified schematic of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator is shown in Figure 1. The combination of output capacitance  $C_{out}$ , resistance ESR and inductance ESL influences the load transient response of the regulator, as they influence the LDO regulator voltage loop gain, as discussed in *Experiment 3*. A good load transient response is characterized by small voltage surges, short settling time and absence of oscillations. The global output R-L-C combination is determined by the inherent R-L-C characteristics of the output capacitor in itself, and by the parasitic inductances and resistances of the Printed Circuit Board (PCB) layout traces. The group of components  $R_7$ ,  $R_8$ ,  $L_1$ ,  $L_2$ ,  $C_{16}$  and  $C_{17}$  mounted in the output section of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator board allows to emulate an equivalent output capacitor with different combinations of capacitance  $C_{out}$ , resistance ESR and inductance ESL.

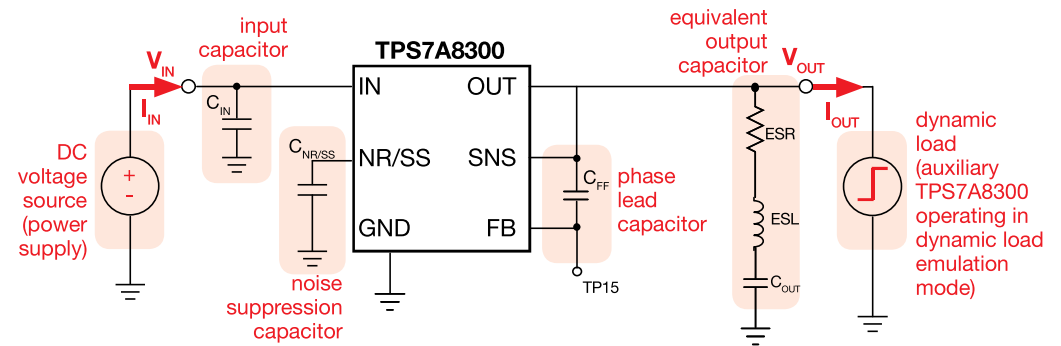


Figure 1. Simplified schematic of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator

**Test#1.** We connect the LDO regulator output to an auxiliary TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating in dynamic load emulation mode generating an AC 900mApp, 100Hz square wave current and we measure:

- the magnitude of output voltage surge overshoots and undershoots,  $\Delta V_{out,over}$  and  $\Delta V_{out,under}$ ;
- the time  $t_{pk,over}$  from the instant where the load step-down starts to the time where the output voltage shows overshoot;
- the time  $t_{pk,under}$  from the instant where the load step-up starts to the time where the output voltage shows undershoot;

**Test#2.** We use the additional components available on the output section of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator board to emulate different combinations of R-L-C characteristics and measure the output voltage surge peaks, to observe the effect of ESL, ESR and  $C_{out}$  in combination with different slew-rate level of the dynamic load current.



## Theory Background

The fundamentals of output capacitor impact on load transient response are provided in this section (see [1][4][11][12] for a general discussion of LDO regulators operation, [3] for more details on TPS7A8300 operation and features, and refer to [Experiment 3](#) for discussion of loop gain impact on load transient response of LDO regulators).

Figure 2 shows the model of a capacitor, including the capacitance  $C_{out}$ , the equivalent series resistance ESR, and inductance ESL.

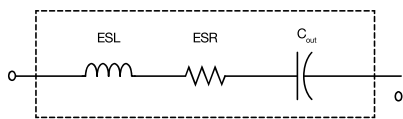


Figure 2

The values of ESL and ESR depend on the type of device. For a given capacitance  $C_{out}$ , the ESR and ESL of ceramic capacitors are very small whereas they are much bigger in electrolytic capacitors. Figure 3 shows an ideal qualitative plot of the LDO load transient response, including the effects of the parameters  $C_{out}$ , ESR, and ESL.

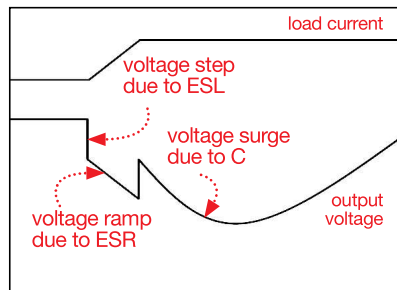


Figure 3

The effect of capacitance  $C_{out}$  is shown in Figure 4. An LDO cannot adjust the pass device current to instantly track fast load transients. The time the LDO takes to respond is determined by the setup of its feedback loop. During this time, the output capacitor supplies the current difference between the pass device and load. With an output capacitor having very low ESR and ESL, increasing the capacitance  $C_{out}$  increases the LDO response time and decreases the voltage surges magnitude, as a higher capacitance reduces the loop gain bandwidth but at the same time determines a smaller voltage variation as a consequence of the charge delivered to load.

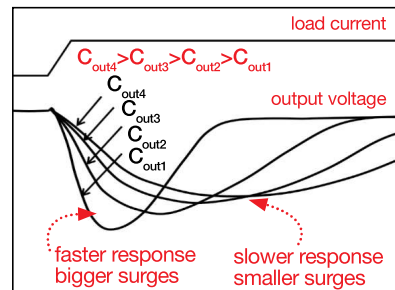


Figure 4

The effect of the ESL is shown in Figure 5. During the rising edge of the load current, the ESL determines a voltage spike of magnitude  $V_{ESL} = ESL \Delta I_{OUT} / \Delta t$ , increasing with the ESL value and with the load transient slew rate  $\Delta I_{OUT} / \Delta t$ . The parasitic inductances of PCB traces add up to the ESL. A larger  $V_{ESL}$  generates a stronger error amplifier response and then a faster LDO response, but a too high  $V_{ESL}$  yields undesired noise. A good layout design and the placement of the output capacitor as close as possible to the LDO out pin are necessary to keep the effects of the total ESL during load transients acceptable.

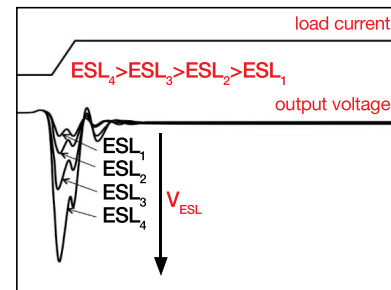


Figure 5

The effect of the ESR is shown in Figure 6. During the rising edge of the load current, the ESR determines a voltage ramp of magnitude  $V_{ESR} = ESR \Delta I_{OUT}$ , increasing with the load transient step magnitude  $\Delta I_{OUT}$  and with the ESR value. A larger  $V_{ESR}$  generates a stronger error amplifier response and then a faster LDO response, but a too high  $V_{ESR}$  yields undesired noise and a too big ESR may cause instability, as the ESR also contributes a zero in the loop gain. There is a trade-off based on ESR value, between stability and fast transient response.

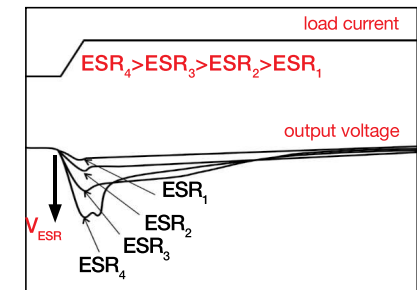


Figure 6



# Test#1: experiment set-up configuration

The instruments needed for this experiment are: a DC POWER SUPPLY, a WAVEFORM GENERATOR, an OSCILLOSCOPE and a TI-PMLK TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as DYNAMIC LOAD. Figure 7 shows the instruments configuration. Follow the instructions provided in next page to set-up the **connections**.

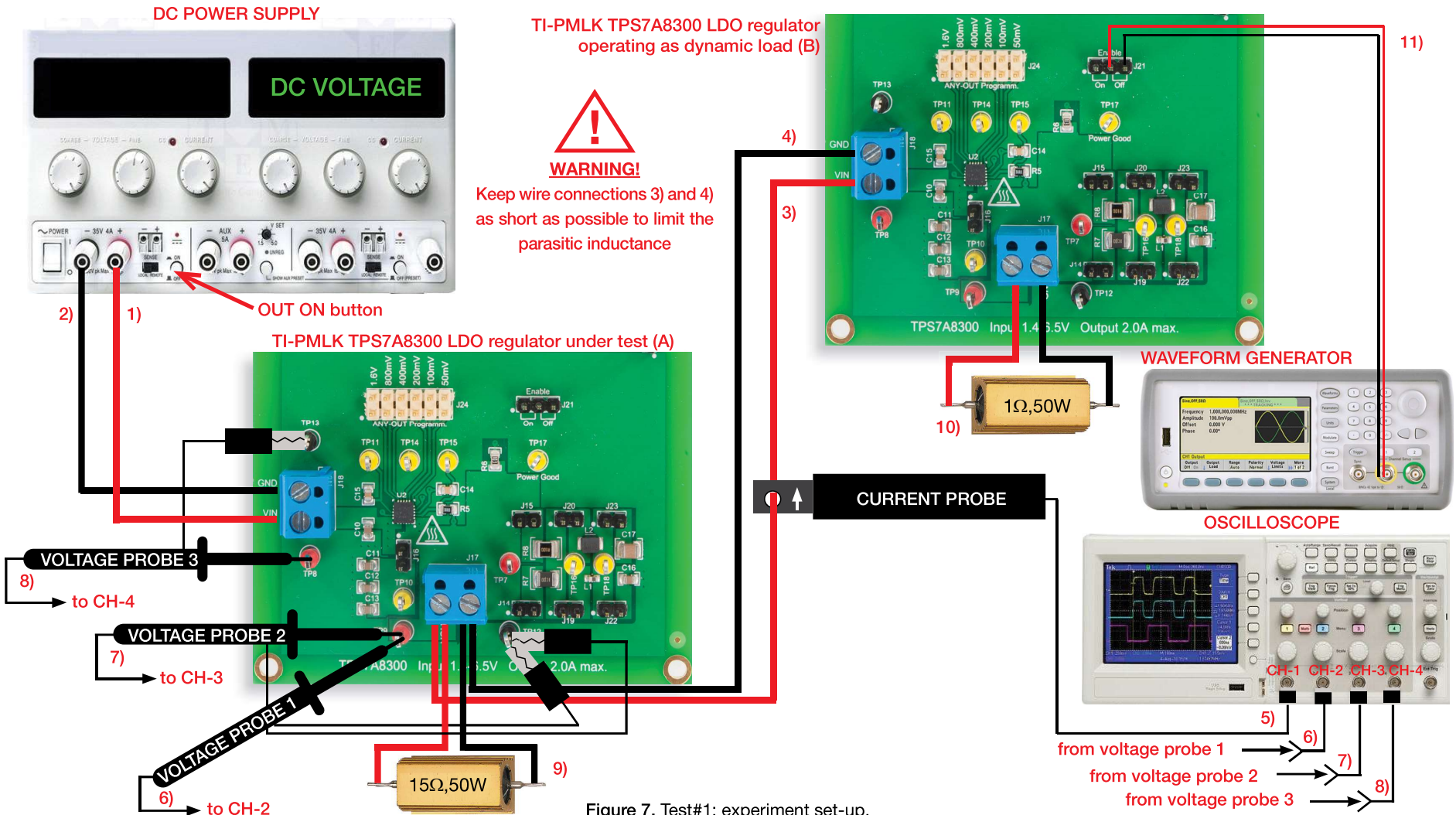


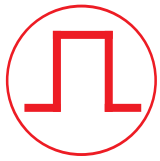
Figure 7. Test#1: experiment set-up.



## Test#1: experiment set-up instructions

With all the instruments turned off, make the following **connections**:

- 1) connect the POSITIVE (RED) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A)
- 2) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A)
- 3) connect the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A) to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B)
- 4) connect the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A) to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B)
- 5) connect a current probe<sup>(\*)</sup> to channel 1 of the oscilloscope and hang it on the cable connecting the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A) to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B), ensuring that the arrow printed on the probe clamps corresponds to the current that enters the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator.  
*[<sup>(\*)</sup> If a current probe is not available in your laboratory, you can connect a sensing resistor in series to the wire linking the two boards and use a current sensing amplifier, such as INA139-Q1 (see [13]) to generate a signal that you can measure with a standard voltage probe (to learn more on current sensing amplifiers see [14])]*
- 6) connect a voltage probe to channel 2 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_9$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A). This probe will be used to measure the DC+AC components of the output voltage  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 7) connect a voltage probe to channel 3 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_9$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A). This probe will be used to measure the AC component of the output voltage  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 8) connect a voltage probe to channel 4 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_8$  which is the input voltage of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A)  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 9) connect a 15 $\Omega$ ,50W power resistor between the OUTPUT (VOUT) and the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A)
- 10) connect a 1 $\Omega$ ,50W power resistor between the OUTPUT (VOUT) and the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B)
- 11) connect the output of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR to the couple of  $J_{21}$  pins labeled "off", with the positive output of the waveform generator hanged to the central pin



# TPS7A8300 regulator dynamic load emulation set-up

Figure 6 shows a TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating in normal mode, with the central pin of the jumper  $J_{21}$ , which is the ENABLE (EN) PIN voltage of the regulator, connected to the input voltage  $V_{in}$ <sup>(1)</sup>. Shorting the pins of the jumpers rack  $J_{24}$  corresponding to the labels 100mV, 800mV and 1.6V sets an output voltage  $V_{out}$  nominal value  $V_{out}=0.9V$ . In these conditions, the error amplifier ensures the regulation of the output voltage  $V_{out}$  at the 0.9V nominal value by adjusting the gate-source voltage  $V_{gs}$  of the N-channel MOSFET pass device until the feedback voltage  $V_{FB}$  equals the reference voltage  $V_{ref}$ . Therefore, the gate-source voltage  $V_{gs}$  of the N-channel MOSFET pass device is constant, the output current is regulated at the level required by the load resistance  $R_{load}$ . The input current of the regulator is also constant and its value is  $I_{in} = I_{out}$ .

<sup>(1)</sup> see pages 22 and 23 for details about the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator board.

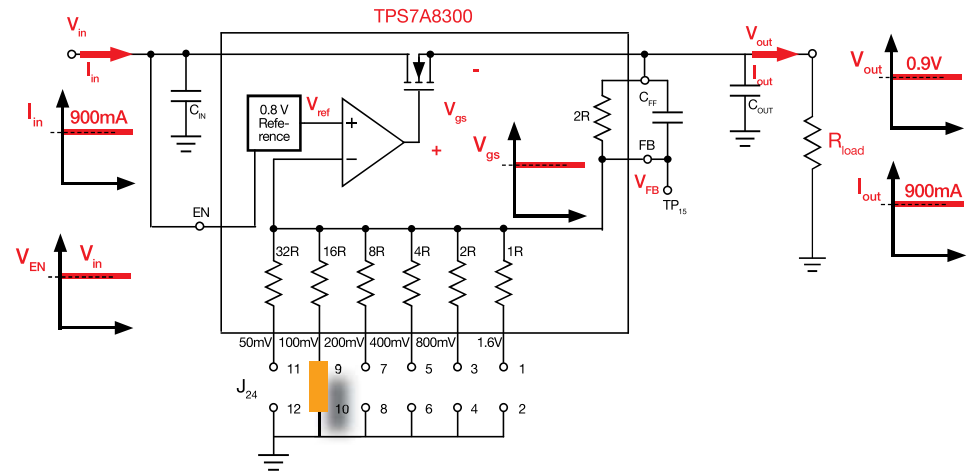


Figure 6. TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating in normal mode

Figure 7 shows a TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating in dynamic load emulation mode, with the central pin of the jumper  $J_{21}$ , which is the ENABLE (EN) PIN voltage of the regulator, connected to the output of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR. When the square-wave voltage signal  $V_{inj}$  generated by the WAVEFORM GENERATOR is high, the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator is enabled and regulates its output voltage  $V_{out}$  at the 0.9V nominal value, like in normal operation, whereas when the square-wave voltage signal  $V_{inj}$  is zero, the regulator is disabled. Therefore, the output voltage and output current of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator are both square-wave, and the final result is a square-wave current in the input of the TPS7A8300 regulator.

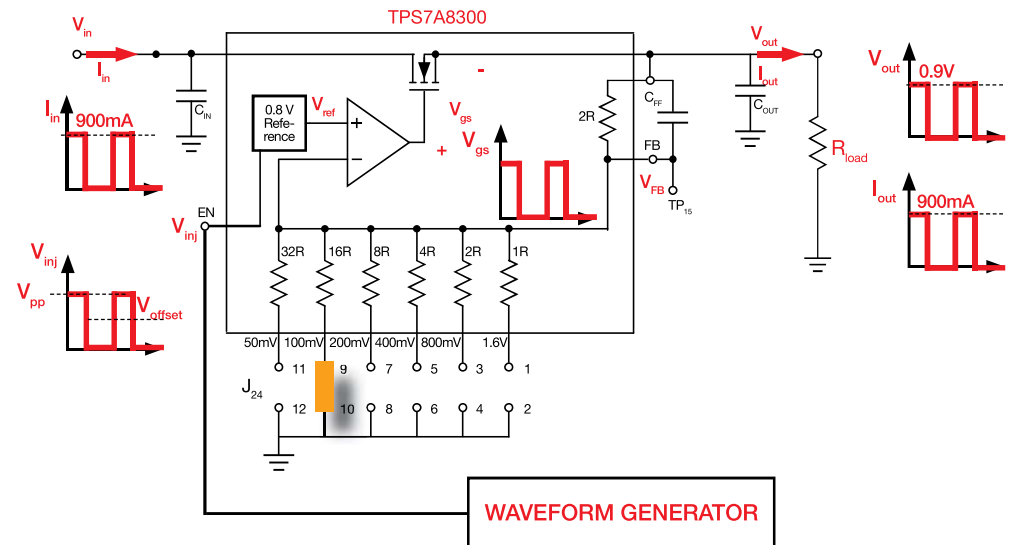
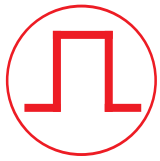


Figure 7. TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating in dynamic load emulation mode



# TPS7A8300 regulator dynamic load emulation set-up

Figure 8 shows the schematic of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator (B) with the connection of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR to the ENABLE jumper  $J_{21}$ , needed to obtain the operation of the regulator as dynamic load emulator. The WAVEFORM GENERATOR injects into the enable pin a square-wave voltage with  $V_{pp}$  amplitude and  $V_{offset}$  offset.

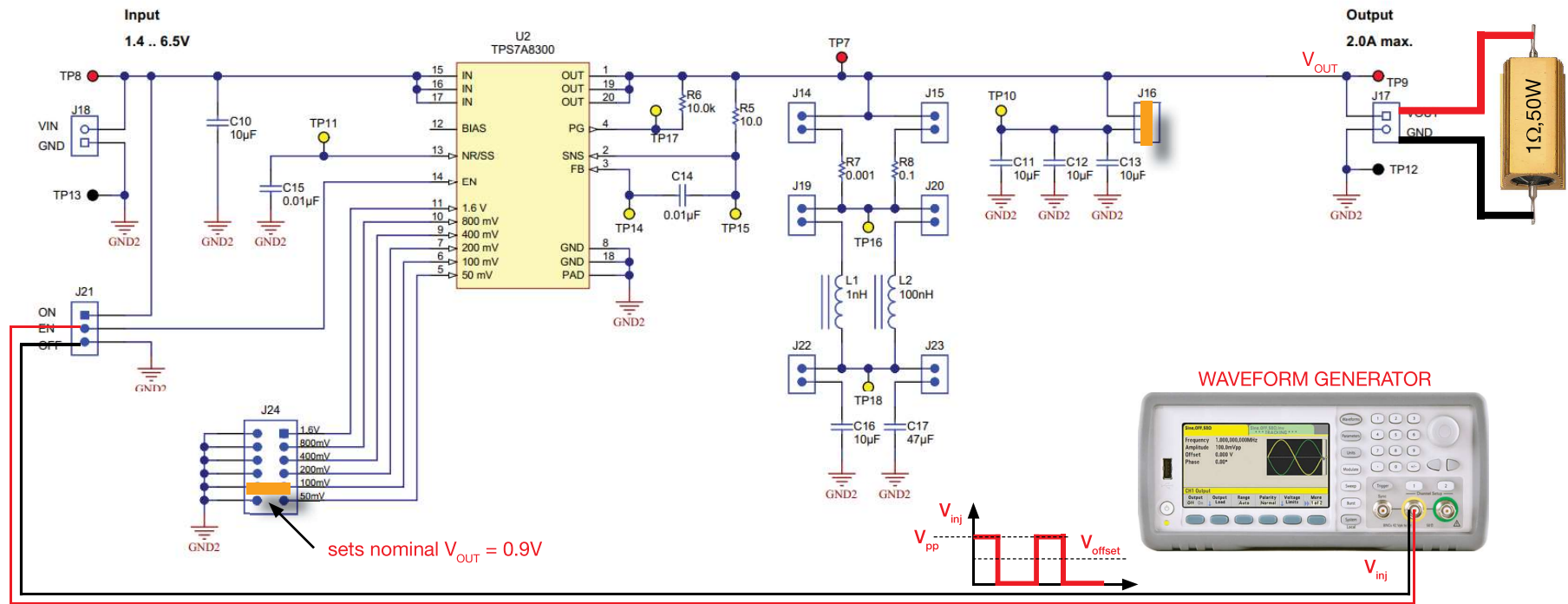


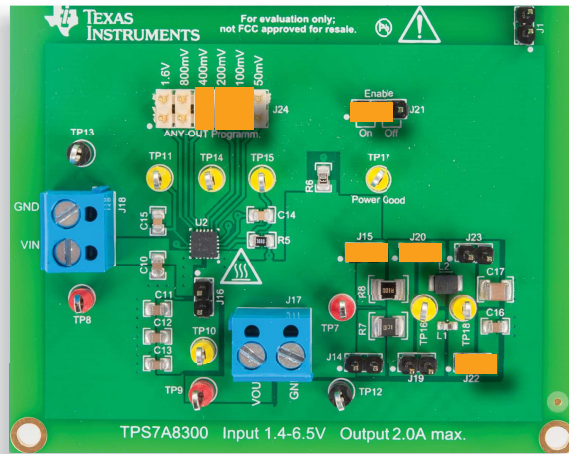
Figure 8. TPS7A8300 board operating as dynamic load

In this Test the values  $V_{pp} = 2.50V$  and  $V_{offset} = 1.25V$  are adopted to obtain an input square-wave current swinging between 0A and 900mA. In this mode of operation the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator is periodically started and stopped to achieve a square-wave input current. The current swings between zero and a value that is fixed by the load resistance  $R_{load}$  and by the setup of jumpers rack  $J_{21}$ .

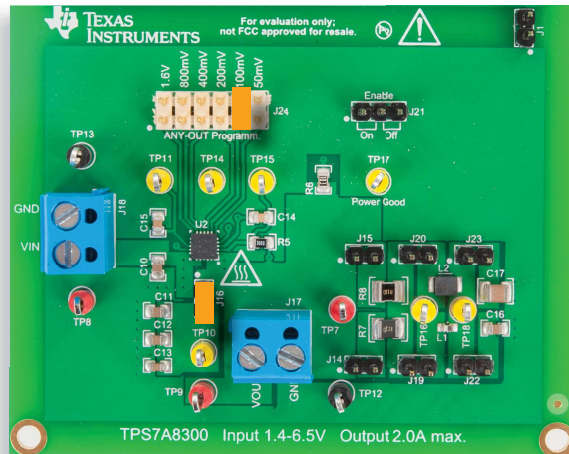
The rise and fall slew-rates of the input current are determined, respectively, by the soft-start capacitor  $C_{NR/SS}$  ( $C_{15}$  in the schematic of Figure 8) at the start, and by the time constant of the R-C circuit determined by the load and the capacitors  $C_{in}$  and  $C_{out}$  at the stop. In the Test#2 a different approach is shown, which can be adopted to achieve a square-wave input current.



# Test#1: preparation and procedure



(a) TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test



(b) TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load

Figure 9. TPS7A8300 LDO board: jumpers set-up for Test#1

## TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test jumpers set-up, Figure 9(a):

- $J_{21}$  shorted in ON position  $\rightarrow$  LDO operation enabled
- $J_{24}$  pins with labels 100mV, 200mV and 400mV shorted  $\rightarrow$  sets output voltage  $V_{out} = 1.5\text{ V}$
- $J_{15}$  shorted  $\rightarrow R_8$  (100m $\Omega$ ) output resistor connected
- $J_{20}$  shorted  $\rightarrow L_2$  (100nH) output inductor connected
- $J_{22}$  shorted  $\rightarrow C_{16}$  (10 $\mu$ F) output capacitor connected
- $J_{16}$  open  $\rightarrow C_{11}$ - $C_{13}$  (3x10 $\mu$ F) output caps disconnected
- $J_{14}$  open  $\rightarrow R_7$  (1m $\Omega$ ) output resistor disconnected
- $J_{19}$  open  $\rightarrow L_1$  (1nH) output inductor disconnected
- $J_{23}$  open  $\rightarrow C_{17}$  (47 $\mu$ F) output capacitor disconnected

## TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load jumpers set-up, Figure 9(b):

- $J_{21}$  EN and OFF pins  $\rightarrow$  connected to the waveform generator
- $J_{24}$  pins with label 100mV shorted  $\rightarrow$  sets output voltage  $V_{out} = 0.9\text{ V}$
- $J_{16}$  shorted  $\rightarrow C_{11}$ - $C_{13}$  (3x10 $\mu$ F) output caps connected
- $J_{15}$  open  $\rightarrow R_8$  (100m $\Omega$ ) output resistor disconnected
- $J_{20}$  open  $\rightarrow L_2$  (100nH) output inductor disconnected
- $J_{22}$  open  $\rightarrow C_{16}$  (10 $\mu$ F) output capacitor disconnected
- $J_{14}$  open  $\rightarrow R_7$  (1m $\Omega$ ) output resistor disconnected
- $J_{19}$  open  $\rightarrow L_1$  (1nH) output inductor disconnected
- $J_{23}$  open  $\rightarrow C_{17}$  (47 $\mu$ F) output capacitor disconnected

## Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the OSCILLOSCOPE, set CH-1 in DC 50 $\Omega$  coupling mode, select CH-1 as trigger source, set CH-2 in DC 1M $\Omega$  coupling mode, set CH-3 in AC 1M $\Omega$  coupling mode, set CH-4 in DC 1M $\Omega$  coupling mode, and execute the “de-gauss” of the current probe to remove dc bias
- 2) turn on the POWER SUPPLY (ensure that the “OUT ON” button is OFF), set the voltage at 2.5V and the CURRENT LIMIT at 1.5A

- 3) turn on the WAVEFORM GENERATOR (ensure that the “OUT ON” button is OFF), and set high impedance output, square wave mode, 5Hz frequency, 50% duty-cycle, 2.5V  $V_{pp}$  amplitude and 1.25V  $V_{offset}$  amplitude
- 4) turn on the POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button. In these conditions you should see on the OSCILLOSCOPE the trace of CH-1 (load current) as a flat line at 100mA, the trace of CH-2 (full output voltage) as a flat line at 1.5V level, the trace of CH-3 (AC component of output voltage) as flat line at 0 level, and the trace of CH-4 (input voltage) as a flat line at 2.5V level (if you read values much different from these ones, turn OFF the “OUT ON” button of the DC POWER SUPPLY and verify the previous steps)
- 5) turn on the WAVEFORM GENERATOR “OUT ON” button. Set the oscilloscope trigger level at 50% of the CH-1 trace. In these conditions you should see CH-1 trace as a square-wave, CH-2 trace as a flat line with 1.5V average value, CH-3 trace as a flat line with 0V average value and small magnitude spikes of short duration in correspondence of load current transients, and CH-4 trace as a flat line at 2.5V level (see Figure 15). Adjust the OSCILLOSCOPE setup to make the waveforms best fitting the scope width and height
- 6) use the OSCILLOSCOPE measurement features to read on the CH-3 trace the magnitudes of output voltage surges  $\Delta V_{out,over}$  and  $\Delta V_{out,under}$  and to measure the times  $t_{pk,over}$  and  $t_{pk,under}$  where  $\Delta V_{out,over}$  and  $\Delta V_{out,under}$  occur (see Figure 15)
- 7) turn OFF the WAVEFORM GENERATOR “OUT ON” button and the POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button; setup the jumpers as indicated in section (b) of Table 1, turn ON the power supply “OUT ON” button and the WAVEFORM GENERATOR “OUT ON” button and repeat the step 6)
- 8) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the “OUT ON” buttons of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR and of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments



# Test#1: measure and calculate

- 1) Measure the magnitudes of output voltage surges  $\Delta V_{out,over}$  and  $\Delta V_{out,under}$ , the times  $t_{pk,over}$  and  $t_{pk,under}$  where  $\Delta V_{out,over}$  and  $\Delta V_{out,under}$  occur in the operating conditions indicated in Table 1.
- 2) Answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in relevant references.

**Table 1.** Output voltage surges, overshoot and undershoot times of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator during load transients, with different output capacitor, resistor and inductor setup for  $V_{in} = 2.5V$  and  $V_{out} = 1.5V$

(a)	J <sub>14</sub> op, J <sub>15</sub> sh J <sub>19</sub> op, J <sub>20</sub> sh J <sub>22</sub> sh, J <sub>23</sub> op	I <sub>OUT</sub> : 1A→100mA		I <sub>OUT</sub> : 100mA→1A	
		(1)	$\Delta V_{OUT,over}$ [mV]	(1)	(1)
(2)	$t_{pk,over}$ [ms]	(2)	(2)	$t_{pk,under}$ [ms]	(2)
(b)	J <sub>14</sub> sh, J <sub>15</sub> op J <sub>19</sub> sh, J <sub>20</sub> op J <sub>22</sub> op, J <sub>23</sub> sh	I <sub>OUT</sub> : 1A→100mA		I <sub>OUT</sub> : 100mA→1A	
		(1)	$\Delta V_{OUT,over}$ [mV]	(1)	(1)
(2)	$t_{pk,over}$ [ms]	(2)	(2)	$t_{pk,under}$ [ms]	(2)

### Output capacitors, resistors, inductors:

J<sub>16</sub> connects the output capacitors  
C<sub>11</sub>-C<sub>13</sub> (3x10μF)

J<sub>14</sub> connects the output resistor R<sub>7</sub> (1mΩ)  
J<sub>15</sub> connects the output resistor R<sub>8</sub> (100mΩ)

J<sub>19</sub> connects the output inductor L<sub>1</sub> (1nH)  
J<sub>20</sub> connects the output inductor L<sub>2</sub> (100nH)

J<sub>22</sub> connects the output capacitor C<sub>16</sub> (10μF)  
J<sub>23</sub> connects the output capacitor C<sub>17</sub> (47μF)

## Answer:

- 1 Are the surges magnitude bigger for case (a) or for case (b) ?  (a)  (b)  same  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Are the surges peak time shorter for case (a) or for case (b) ?  (a)  (b)  same  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Is the settling time shorter for case (a) or for case (b) ?  (a)  (b)  same  it depends on: \_\_\_\_\_



## Test#2: experiment set-up configuration

The instruments needed for this experiment are: a DC POWER SUPPLY, a WAVEFORM GENERATOR, an OSCILLOSCOPE and a TI-PMLK TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as DYNAMIC LOAD. Figure 10 shows the instruments configuration. Follow the instructions provided in next page to set-up the **connections**.

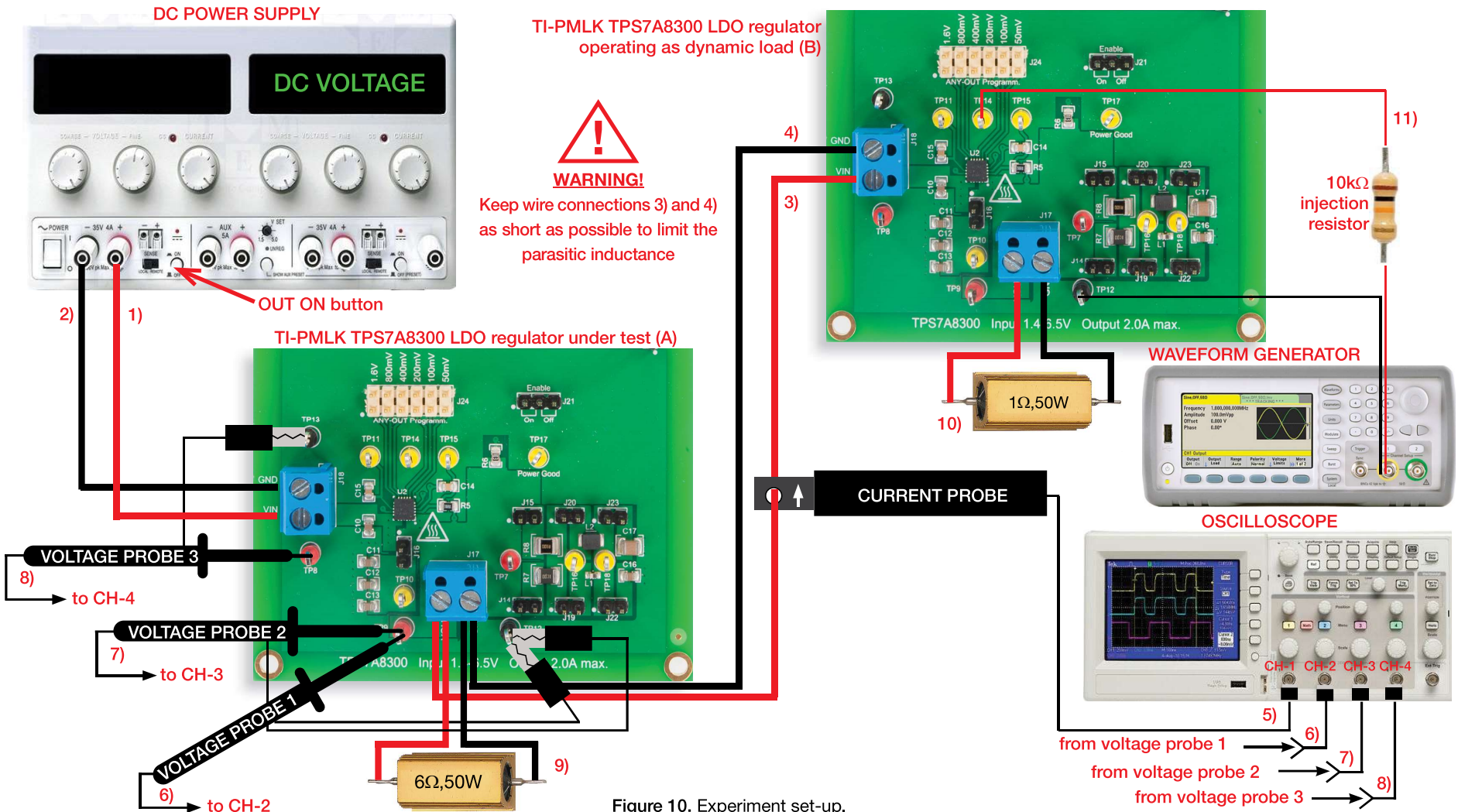


Figure 10. Experiment set-up.



## Test#2: experiment set-up instructions

With all the instruments turned off, make the following **connections**:

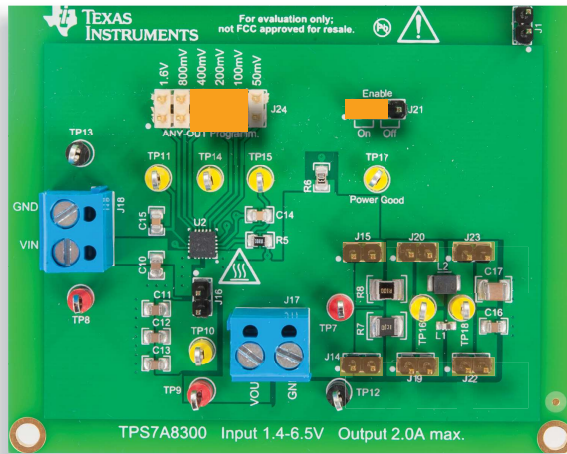
- 1) connect the POSITIVE (RED) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A)
- 2) connect the NEGATIVE (BLACK) OUTPUT of the DC POWER SUPPLY to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A)
- 3) connect the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A) to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B)
- 4) connect the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A) to the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B)
- 5) connect a current probe<sup>(\*)</sup> to channel 1 of the oscilloscope and hang it on the cable connecting the OUTPUT (VOUT) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A) to the INPUT (VIN) of the  $J_{18}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B), ensuring that the arrow printed on the probe clamps corresponds to the current that enters the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator  
*[<sup>(\*)</sup> If a current probe is not available in your laboratory, you can connect a sensing resistor in series to the wire linking the two boards and use a current sensing amplifier, such as INA139-Q1 (see [13]) to generate a signal that you can measure with a standard voltage probe (to learn more on current sensing amplifiers see [14])]*
- 6) connect a voltage probe to channel 2 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_9$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A). This probe will be used to measure the DC+AC components of the output voltage  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 7) connect a voltage probe to channel 3 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_9$  which is the output voltage of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A). This probe will be used to measure the AC component of the output voltage  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 8) connect a voltage probe to channel 4 of the oscilloscope, hang its positive tip to TEST PIN  $TP_8$  which is the input voltage of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A)  
**[WARNING: DO NOT INVERT** the positive and ground connections of the voltage probe]
- 9) connect a 6 $\Omega$ ,50W power resistor between the OUTPUT (VOUT) and the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test (A)
- 10) connect a 1 $\Omega$ ,50W power resistor between the OUTPUT (VOUT) and the GROUND (GND) of the  $J_{17}$  screw terminal of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B)
- 11) connect the output of the waveform generator to the FEEDBACK (FB) TEST PIN  $TP_{14}$  of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load (B) through a 10k $\Omega$ /¼W injection resistor



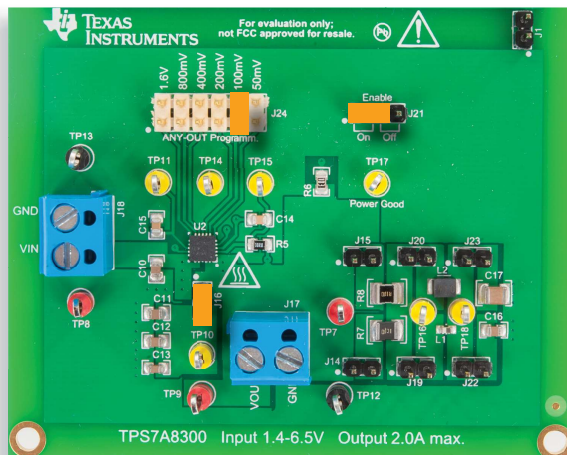




## Test#2: preparation and procedure



(a) TPS7A8300 LDO regulator under test



(b) TPS7A8300 LDO regulator operating as dynamic load

Figure 14. Jumpers set-up for Test#2

### TPS7A8300 regulator under test jumpers set-up, Figure 14(a):

- **J<sub>21</sub> shorted** in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- **J<sub>24</sub> shorted** (with labels 100mV, 200mV and 400mV) → sets the TPS7A8300 nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 1.5V$
- **J<sub>16</sub> open** → C<sub>11</sub>-C<sub>13</sub> (3x10μF) output caps disconnected
- **J<sub>14</sub> OR J<sub>15</sub> shorted<sup>(\*)</sup>, J<sub>19</sub> OR J<sub>20</sub> shorted<sup>(\*)</sup>, J<sub>22</sub> OR J<sub>23</sub> shorted<sup>(\*)</sup>** → R<sub>7</sub> (1mΩ) or R<sub>8</sub> (100mΩ) output resistors, L<sub>1</sub> (1nH) or L<sub>2</sub> (100nH) output inductors, C<sub>16</sub> (10μF) or C<sub>17</sub> (47μF) output capacitors disconnected

[<sup>(\*)</sup>WARNING: at least one of the two jumpers MUST be connected]

### TPS7A8300 regulator operating in dynamic load emulation mode jumpers set-up, Figure 14(b):

- **J<sub>21</sub> shorted** in ON position → LDO operation enabled
- **J<sub>24</sub> shorted** (with labels 100mV) → sets the TPS7A8300 nominal output voltage  $V_{out} = 0.9V$
- **J<sub>16</sub> shorted** → C<sub>11</sub>-C<sub>13</sub> (3x10μF) output caps connected
- **J<sub>14</sub>, J<sub>15</sub>, J<sub>19</sub>, J<sub>20</sub>, J<sub>22</sub>, J<sub>23</sub> open** → R<sub>7</sub> (1mΩ) and R<sub>8</sub> (100mΩ) output resistors, L<sub>1</sub> (1nH) and L<sub>2</sub> (100nH) output inductors, C<sub>16</sub> (10μF) and C<sub>17</sub> (47μF) output capacitors disconnected

### Test Procedure:

- 1) turn on the OSCILLOSCOPE, set CH-1 in DC 50Ω coupling mode, select CH-1 as trigger source, set CH-2 in DC 1MΩ coupling mode, set CH-3 in AC 1MΩ coupling mode, set CH-4 in DC 1MΩ coupling mode, and execute the “de-gauss” of the current probe to remove dc bias
- 2) turn on the POWER SUPPLY (ensure that the “OUT ON” button is OFF), set the voltage at 2.5V, and set the CURRENT LIMIT at 1.5A
- 3) turn on the WAVEFORM GENERATOR (ensure that the “OUT ON” button is OFF), and set high impedance output, square wave mode, 5Hz frequency, 50% duty-cycle, 1.53V  $V_{pp}$  amplitude and 1.39V  $V_{offset}$  amplitude

- 4) turn ON the POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button. In these conditions you should see on the OSCILLOSCOPE the traces of CH-1 (dynamic load current) as flat horizontal line at 0 level, the trace of CH-2 (full output voltage) as a flat line at 1.5V level, the trace of CH-3 (AC component of output voltage) as flat horizontal line at 0 level, and the trace of CH-4 (input voltage) as a flat line at 2.5V level (if you read value much different than the expected ones, turn OFF the “OUT ON” button of the DC POWER SUPPLY and verify the previous steps)
- 5) turn ON the WAVEFORM GENERATOR “OUT ON” button. In these conditions you should see CH-1 trace as a square-wave, CH-2 trace as a flat line with 1.5V average value, CH-3 trace as a flat line with 0V average value and small magnitude spikes of short duration in correspondence of dynamic load current transients, and CH-4 trace as a flat line at 2.5V level (see Figure 15). Adjust the OSCILLOSCOPE setup to make the waveforms best fitting the scope width and height. Set the trigger level at 50% of the CH-1 trace
- 6) select four different jumpers set-up for the equivalent output capacitor (see the **WARNINGS** in Test Preparation Section), read the magnitude of output voltage surges  $\Delta V_{out,over}$  and  $\Delta V_{out,under}$  and report the results in Table 2 [**WARNING:** turn OFF the WAVEFORM GENERATOR “OUT ON” button first, and then turn OFF the POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button before changing the jumpers set-up; then, turn ON the POWER SUPPLY “OUT ON” button and finally the WAVEFORM GENERATOR “OUT ON” button]
- 7) at the end of the measurements, turn OFF the “OUT ON” buttons of the WAVEFORM GENERATOR and of the DC POWER SUPPLY, then switch off all the instruments



## Test#2: measure and calculate

- 1) Measure the magnitudes of output voltage surges  $\Delta V_{out,over}$  and  $\Delta V_{out,under}$  with four different setup of the jumpers  $J_{14}$ ,  $J_{15}$ ,  $J_{19}$ ,  $J_{20}$ ,  $J_{22}$ ,  $J_{23}$  and report the results in Table 2 [NOTE: according to the **WARNING** provided in the *Test Preparation*, you have to ensure that there is a path from the output voltage node to the ground node through  $R_7$  or  $R_8$ ,  $L_1$  or  $L_2$ , and  $C_{16}$  or  $C_{17}$ ].
- 2) Answer the questions and try to motivate the results of your observation based on the information provided in the *Theory Background* section and in relevant references.

**Table 2.** Output voltage surges of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator during load transients, with different output capacitor, resistor and inductor setup, for  $V_{in} = 2.5V$  and  $V_{out} = 1.5V$

load current slew/rate	setup#1: _____	setup#2: _____	setup#3: _____	setup#4: _____
(1) $\Delta V_{out,over}$ [mV]	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
(2) $\Delta V_{out,under}$ [mV]	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
	ESR [m $\Omega$ ]	ESR [m $\Omega$ ]	ESR [m $\Omega$ ]	ESR [m $\Omega$ ]
	ESL [nH]	ESL [nH]	ESL [nH]	ESL [nH]
	$C_{out}$ [ $\mu$ F]	$C_{out}$ [ $\mu$ F]	$C_{out}$ [ $\mu$ F]	$C_{out}$ [ $\mu$ F]

### Output capacitors, resistors, inductors:

$J_{16}$  connects the output capacitors  
 $C_{11} - C_{13}$  (3x10 $\mu$ F)

$J_{14}$  connects the output resistor  $R_7$  (1m $\Omega$ )  
 $J_{15}$  connects the output resistor  $R_8$  (100m $\Omega$ )

$J_{19}$  connects the output inductor  $L_1$  (1nH)  
 $J_{20}$  connects the output inductor  $L_2$  (100nH)

$J_{22}$  connects the output capacitor  $C_{16}$  (10 $\mu$ F)  
 $J_{23}$  connects the output capacitor  $C_{17}$  (47 $\mu$ F)

## Answer:

- 1) What is the output setup determining the minimum magnitude of output voltage surge  $\Delta V_{out,over}$  and  $\Delta V_{out,under}$ ?  #1  #2  #3  #4

motivation: \_\_\_\_\_

- 2) What is the output setup determining the maximum magnitude of output voltage surge  $\Delta V_{out,over}$  and  $\Delta V_{out,under}$ ?  #1  #2  #3  #4

motivation: \_\_\_\_\_



## Discussion

In Test#1 we are interested in investigating correlations between the load transient response of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator and the characteristics of the equivalent output capacitor.

In *Experiment 3* it is highlighted that the load transient response of an LDO regulator is determined by the feedback loop gain and by the characteristics of the output capacitor. The TPS7A8300 LDO regulator has an internal compensation setup ensuring a cross-over frequency that can range from tens of kHz to MHz as load current rises from few mA up to 2A. If the dynamic load does not impose a very-high current slew-rate, then the load transient overshoot and undershoot observed in the output voltage are determined by the loop gain. Therefore, the influence of the output capacitor characteristics on the load transient in these conditions depends on the effect produced by the output capacitor itself on the loop gain. As discussed in *Experiment 3*, a higher output capacitance determines a lower frequency of the loop gain pole  $\omega_{\text{load}} = I_{\text{OUT}} / (C_{\text{OUT}} V_{\text{OUT}})$ , thus decreasing the cross-over frequency and determining higher magnitude and slower overshoots/undershoots. Moreover, a higher ESR reduces the frequency of the loop gain zero  $\omega_z = 1 / (C_{\text{OUT}} \text{ESR})$ , thus increasing the cross-over frequency and determining faster overshoots/undershoots characterized by smaller magnitude. A higher ESL increases the impedance of the output capacitor branch, thus having an effect on the load transients roughly equivalent to a decrease of the capacitance.

With the set-up (a) of Table 1, the total equivalent impedance seen by the LDO as output capacitor includes:

- a capacitance  $C_{16} = 10\mu\text{F}$ ;
- an inductance  $L_2 = 100\text{nH}$  [NOTE: the resistor  $R_8$  may have a parasitic inductance in the range from about 10nH to 50nH];
- an equivalent ESR composed of the ESR of the capacitor (from  $5\text{m}\Omega$  to  $20\text{m}\Omega$ ), the  $20\text{m}\Omega$  resistance or the inductor  $L_2$ , the  $100\text{m}\Omega$  resistance  $R_8$ .

With the set-up (b) of Table 1, the total equivalent impedance seen by the LDO as output capacitor includes:

- a capacitance  $C_{17} = 47\mu\text{F}$ ;
- an inductance  $L_1 = 1\text{nH}$  [NOTE: the resistor  $R_8$  may have a parasitic inductance in the range from about 10nH to 50nH];
- an equivalent ESR composed of the ESR of the capacitor (from  $5\text{m}\Omega$  to  $20\text{m}\Omega$ ), the  $15\text{m}\Omega$  resistance or the inductor  $L_1$ , the  $1\text{m}\Omega$  resistance  $R_7$ .

If the dynamic load current slew-rate is low (below  $0.01\text{A}/\mu\text{s}$ ) the load transient response might be difficult to observe due to the wide bandwidth feedback loop gain. If the dynamic load current slew-rate is high (above  $10\text{A}/\mu\text{s}$ ) the load transient response can be better observed. The output capacitor setup determines the magnitude and shape of the overshoot/undershoot output voltage transient, as shown in Figure 15 and 16. In real life applications, the R-L-C characteristics of the output impedance seen by the LDO regulators is influenced by the output capacitor, the impedance of the PCB layout traces and the impedance of the line connecting the regulator to the dynamic load. Any R-L-C element contributing to increase the output impedance causes an increase of the overshoot/undershoot surges magnitude.

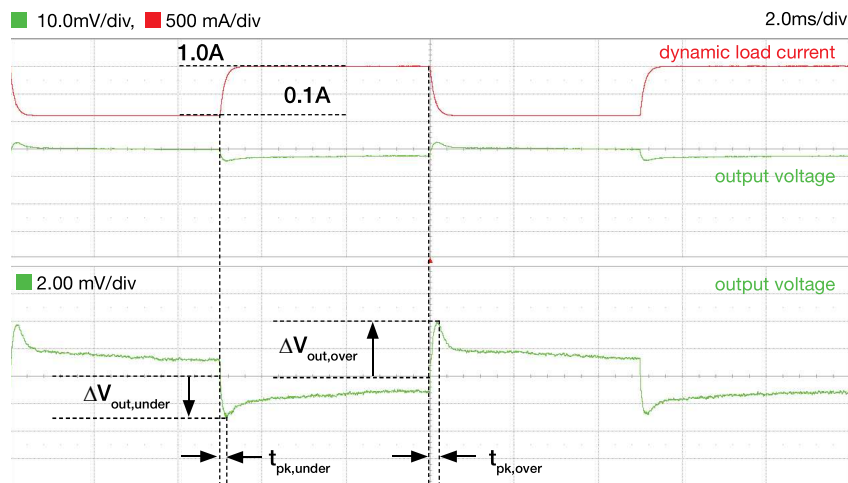
In Test#2 we are interested in investigating the correlations among the load transient response of the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator, the characteristics of the equivalent output capacitor, and the load current slew-rate.

The different combinations of jumpers that can be selected for the equivalent output capacitor set-up may yield, sometimes, visible changes in the LDO regulator transient response, whereas in other conditions almost no changes are observed. As discussed above, the LDO regulator load transient response is determined by the dynamic load current slew-rate and by the influence of the R-L-C characteristics of the output capacitor on the LDO regulator voltage loop gain. When the dynamic load current-slew rate is low, the LDO regulator may have the time to compensate the current increase with a fast change of the pass device gate voltage, provided that the cross-over frequency of the voltage loop gain is high. A small  $C_{\text{OUT}}$  and a high ESR improve the bandwidth of the voltage loop gain. With high crossover and low current slew-rate, the load transient surges are very small. When the dynamic load current slew-rate is high, the LDO regulator may not be able to make a fast change of the pass device operating point and then the load transient response is determined by the characteristics of the equivalent output capacitor, as discussed above. Therefore, a small  $C_{\text{OUT}}$ , a high ESR, and a high ESL increase the magnitude of the output voltage load transient surges with high dynamic load current slew-rate. Figures 17 and 18 highlight the effect of the output inductance when there is a sharp edge in the dynamic load current.

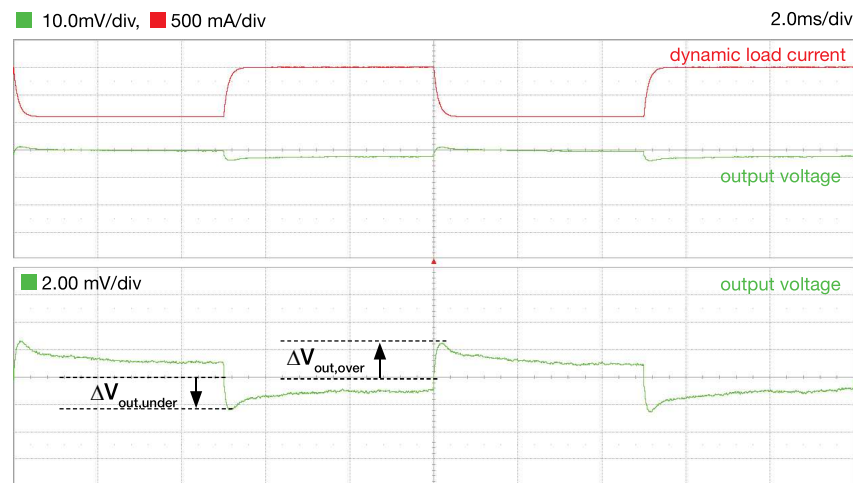


## Experimental plots

The plots collected in these pages are samples of experimental measurements performed on the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator. They show the load transient response of the LDO regulator for different set-up of the output capacitor configuration and of the dynamic load current (see [3] for further details on the TPS7A8300 LDO regulator dynamic response).



**Figure 15.** TPS7A8300 LDO regulator load transient response for:  $V_{in} = 1.8V$ ,  $V_{out} = 1.5V$ ,  $I_{out} = 0.1A \leftrightarrow 1.0A$ ,  $C_{out} = C_{16} = 10\mu F$ ,  $L_{out} = L_2 = 100nH$ ,  $ESR_{out} = R_8 = 100m\Omega$



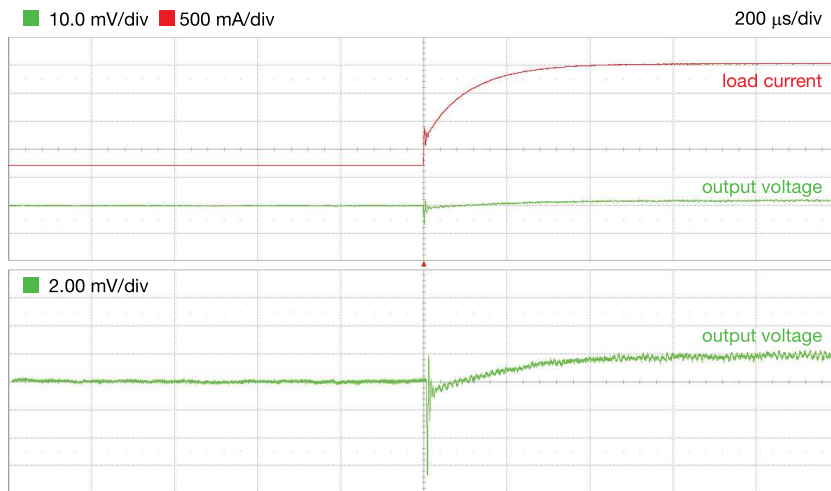
**Figure 16.** TPS7A8300 LDO regulator load transient response for:  $V_{in} = 1.8V$ ,  $V_{out} = 1.5V$ ,  $I_{out} = 0.1A \leftrightarrow 1.0A$ ,  $C_{out} = C_{17} = 47\mu F$ ,  $L_{out} = L_1 = 1nH$ ,  $ESR_{out} = R_7 = 1m\Omega$

The plots of Figures 15 and 16 highlight the influence of the output capacitance, equivalent resistance and equivalent inductance on the load transient response of the TPS7A8300 LDO discussed in the previous section. It can be noticed that the overshoot and undershoot surge magnitudes are referred to the zero level of the AC component of the output voltage. Indeed, the load transient response of the TPS7A4901 LDO regulator shown in Figures 15 and 16 have been realized by means of a square-wave voltage signal  $V_{inj}$  with a  $f_{ac} = 100Hz$  in order to easily visualize the step-up and the step-down load transients in the same oscilloscope screenshot. Therefore, each load step occurs before the transient response to the previous load step has completely vanished. The measurement of the settling times  $t_{set,over}$  and  $t_{set,under}$  requires a longer interval of time between the two load transients. A square-wave voltage signal  $V_{inj}$  with a  $f_{ac} \leq 5Hz$  allows the observation of the complete transient response.

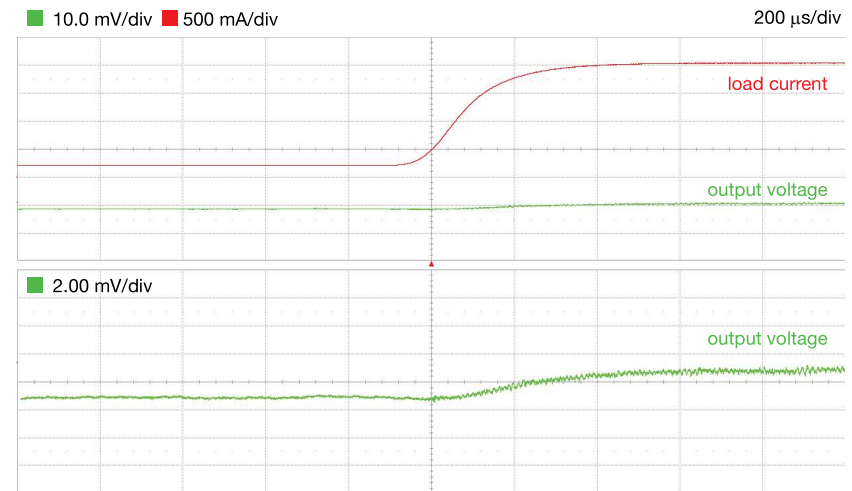
**[NOTE: the screenshots shown in Figures 15 and 16 have been generated by a LeCroy WaveRunner 44Xi 400MHz 4-channels Digital Oscilloscope, with 5MS/s sampling rate, 3bits filter and 20 sweeps averaging acquisition settings. The waveforms you get in your test may look different due to the oscilloscope model and acquisition settings and to some experiment set-up elements, like the cables length]**



## Experimental plots



**Figure 17.** TPS7A8300 LDO regulator load transient response for:  
 $V_{in} = 2.5V$ ,  $V_{out} = 1.5V$ ,  $I_{out} = 0A \rightarrow 0.9A$ ,  $C_{out} = C_{16} = 10\mu F$ ,  $L_{out} = L_1 = 1nH$ ,  $ESR_{out} = R_7 = 1m\Omega$



**Figure 18.** TPS7A8300 LDO regulator load transient response for:  
 $V_{in} = 1.8V$ ,  $V_{out} = 1.5V$ ,  $I_{out} = 0.1A \rightarrow 0.9A$ ,  $C_{out} = C_{16} = 10\mu F$ ,  $L_{out} = L_1 = 1nH$ ,  $ESR_{out} = R_7 = 1m\Omega$

The plots of Figures 17 and 18 highlight the combined influence of the output inductance on the load transient response of the TPS7A8300 LDO discussed in the previous section. You can observe that the output voltage in Figure 17 exhibits a negative spike corresponding to the sharp dynamic load current rise. This is the effect of the higher ESL, which dominates the load transient shape during the fast load current step-up, as highlighted in the *Theory Background* section. In Figure 18, instead, you can observe a different shape of the output voltage undershoot transient surge, which does not show the negative spike, as the dynamic load current step-up has a much smoother initial transition.

**[NOTE: the screenshots shown in Figures 17 and 18 have been generated by a LeCroy WaveRunner 44Xi 400MHz 4-channels Digital Oscilloscope, with 100MS/s sampling rate, 3bits filter and 10 sweeps averaging acquisition settings. The waveforms you get in your test may look different due to the oscilloscope model and acquisition settings and to some experiment set-up elements, like the cables length]**

# Appendix A

## References

- [1] Linear Regulators: Theory of Operation and Compensation, <http://www.ti.com/lit/an/snva020b/snva020b.pdf>
- [2] TPS7A4901 datasheet, <http://www.ti.com/lit/ds/symlink/tps7a4901.pdf>
- [3] TPS7A8300 datasheet <http://www.ti.com/lit/ds/symlink/tps7a8300.pdf>
- [4] LDO Regulator Stability Using Ceramic Output Capacitors, <http://www.ti.com/lit/an/snva167a/snva167a.pdf>
- [5] LDO PSRR Measurement Simplified, <http://www.ti.com/lit/an/slaa414/slaa414.pdf>
- [6] [www.mathworks.com](http://www.mathworks.com)
- [7] C.Basso, *Designing Control Loops for Linear and Switching Power Supplies: A Tutorial Guide*, Artech House
- [8] [www.omicron-lab.com](http://www.omicron-lab.com)
- [9] Techniques for accurate PSRR measurements, <http://www.ti.com/lit/an/slyt547/slyt547.pdf>
- [10] Simplifying Stability Checks, <http://www.ti.com/lit/an/sbva026e/sbva026e.pdf>
- [11] A Topical Index of TI LDO Application Notes, <http://www.ti.com/lit/an/sbva026e/sbva026e.pdf>
- [12] Technical Review of Low Dropout Voltage Regulator Operation and Performance, <http://www.ti.com/lit/an/slva072/slva072.pdf>
- [13] High-Side Measurement Current Shunt Monitor, <http://www.ti.com/lit/ds/symlink/ina139-q1.pdf>
- [14] Getting Started with Current Sense Amplifiers, <https://training.ti.com/getting-started-current-sense-amplifiers>

# Appendix B

## Manufacturers websites

ASJ,	<a href="http://www.asj.com.sg/">http://www.asj.com.sg/</a>
AVX,	<a href="http://www.avx.com/">http://www.avx.com/</a>
Bourns,	<a href="http://www.bourns.com">http://www.bourns.com</a>
Coilcraft,	<a href="http://www.coilcraft.com/">http://www.coilcraft.com/</a>
Diodes Incorporated,	<a href="http://www.diodes.com/">http://www.diodes.com/</a>
Kemet,	<a href="http://www.kemet.com/">http://www.kemet.com/</a>
Murata,	<a href="http://www.murata.com/">http://www.murata.com/</a>
Nippon Chemi-Con,	<a href="http://www.chemi-con.co.jp/">http://www.chemi-con.co.jp/</a>
ON Semiconductor,	<a href="http://www.onsemi.com/">http://www.onsemi.com/</a>
Panasonic,	<a href="http://industrial.panasonic.com/">http://industrial.panasonic.com/</a>
Philips Lumileds,	<a href="http://www.philipslumileds.com/">http://www.philipslumileds.com/</a>
Rohm Semiconductor,	<a href="http://www.rohm.com/">http://www.rohm.com/</a>
Samsung,	<a href="http://www.samsungsem.com/">http://www.samsungsem.com/</a>
Samwha,	<a href="http://www.samwha.com/">http://www.samwha.com/</a>
Taiyo Yuden,	<a href="http://www.t-yuden.com/">http://www.t-yuden.com/</a>
TDK,	<a href="http://product.tdk.com/">http://product.tdk.com/</a>
TE Connectivity,	<a href="http://www.te.com/">http://www.te.com/</a>
Texas Instruments,	<a href="http://www.ti.com/">http://www.ti.com/</a>
TT Electronics,	<a href="http://www.ttelectronics.com">http://www.ttelectronics.com</a>
Vishay,	<a href="http://www.vishay.com/">http://www.vishay.com/</a>
Yageo,	<a href="http://www.yageo.com/">http://www.yageo.com/</a>

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- *Reorient or relocate the receiving antenna.*
- *Increase the separation between the equipment and receiver.*
- *Connect the equipment into an outlet on a circuit different from that to which the receiver is connected.*
- *Consult the dealer or an experienced radio/TV technician for help.*

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Under Industry Canada regulations, this radio transmitter may only operate using an antenna of a type and maximum (or lesser) gain approved for the transmitter by Industry Canada. To reduce potential radio interference to other users, the antenna type and its gain should be so chosen that the equivalent isotropically radiated power (e.i.r.p.) is not more than that necessary for successful communication. This radio transmitter has been approved by Industry Canada to operate with the antenna types listed in the user guide with the maximum permissible gain and required antenna impedance for each antenna type indicated. Antenna types not included in this list, having a gain greater than the maximum gain indicated for that type, are strictly prohibited for use with this device.

#### **Concernant les EVMs avec antennes détachables**

Conformément à la réglementation d'Industrie Canada, le présent émetteur radio peut fonctionner avec une antenne d'un type et d'un gain maximal (ou inférieur) approuvé pour l'émetteur par Industrie Canada. Dans le but de réduire les risques de brouillage radioélectrique à l'intention des autres utilisateurs, il faut choisir le type d'antenne et son gain de sorte que la puissance isotrope rayonnée équivalente (p.i.r.e.) ne dépasse pas l'intensité nécessaire à l'établissement d'une communication satisfaisante. Le présent émetteur radio a été approuvé par Industrie Canada pour fonctionner avec les types d'antenne énumérés dans le manuel d'usage et ayant un gain admissible maximal et l'impédance requise pour chaque type d'antenne. Les types d'antenne non inclus dans cette liste, ou dont le gain est supérieur au gain maximal indiqué, sont strictement interdits pour l'exploitation de l'émetteur.

### **3.3 Japan**

3.3.1 Notice for EVMs delivered in Japan: Please see [http://www.tij.co.jp/lstds/ti\\_ja/general/eStore/notice\\_01.page](http://www.tij.co.jp/lstds/ti_ja/general/eStore/notice_01.page) 日本国内に輸入される評価用キット、ボードについては、次のところをご覧ください。 [http://www.tij.co.jp/lstds/ti\\_ja/general/eStore/notice\\_01.page](http://www.tij.co.jp/lstds/ti_ja/general/eStore/notice_01.page)

3.3.2 Notice for Users of EVMs Considered "Radio Frequency Products" in Japan: EVMs entering Japan may not be certified by TI as conforming to Technical Regulations of Radio Law of Japan. If User uses EVMs in Japan, not certified to Technical Regulations of Radio Law of Japan, User is required by Radio Law of

Japan to follow the instructions below with respect to EVMs:

1. Use EVMs in a shielded room or any other test facility as defined in the notification #173 issued by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications on March 28, 2006, based on Sub-section 1.1 of Article 6 of the Ministry's Rule for Enforcement of Radio Law of Japan,
2. Use EVMs only after User obtains the license of Test Radio Station as provided in Radio Law of Japan with respect to EVMs, or
3. Use of EVMs only after User obtains the Technical Regulations Conformity Certification as provided in Radio Law of Japan with respect to EVMs. Also, do not transfer EVMs, unless User gives the same notice above to the transferee. Please note that if User does not follow the instructions above, User will be subject to penalties of Radio Law of Japan.

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#### 4. *EVM Use Restrictions and Warnings:*

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- 4.2 User must read and apply the user guide and other available documentation provided by TI regarding the EVM prior to handling or using the EVM, including without limitation any warning or restriction notices. The notices contain important safety information related to, for example, temperatures and voltages.
- 4.3 Safety-Related Warnings and Restrictions:
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  - 4.3.2 EVMs are intended solely for use by technically qualified, professional electronics experts who are familiar with the dangers and application risks associated with handling electrical mechanical components, systems, and subsystems. User assumes all responsibility and liability for proper and safe handling and use of the EVM by User or its employees, affiliates, contractors or designees. User assumes all responsibility and liability to ensure that any interfaces (electronic and/or mechanical) between the EVM and any human body are designed with suitable isolation and means to safely limit accessible leakage currents to minimize the risk of electrical shock hazard. User assumes all responsibility and liability for any improper or unsafe handling or use of the EVM by User or its employees, affiliates, contractors or designees.
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# TI-PMLK

TI Power Management Lab Kit  
Cost-Effective Test Methods Using TI-PMLK LDO Boards



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