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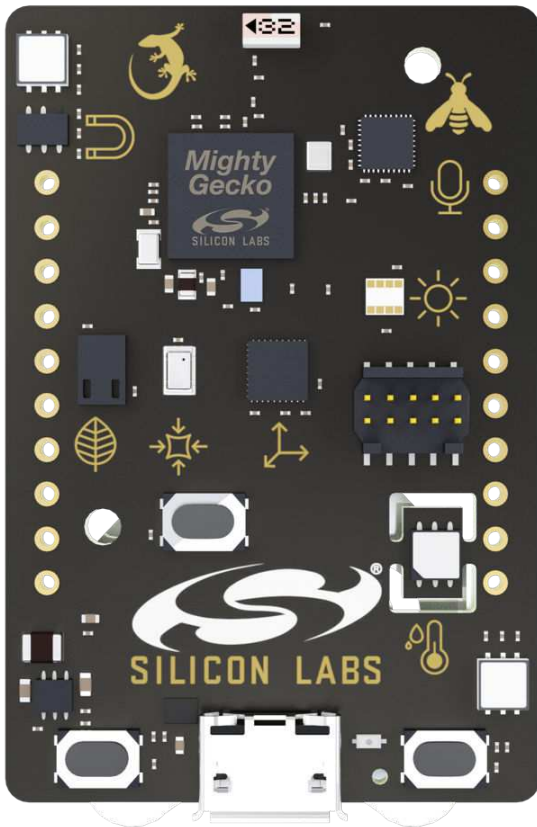
UG250: Thunderboard Sense User's Guide

The Thunderboard™ Sense is the ultimate multi-sensor, multi-protocol cloud inspiration kit.

The board is a small and cost effective, feature rich, prototype and development platform based on the EFR32™ Mighty Gecko Wireless System-on-Chip. The Thunderboard Sense is an ideal platform for developing energy-friendly connected IoT devices. This is a true multi-protocol capable kit, supporting proprietary stacks and standard protocols such as Zigbee, Thread and Bluetooth® low energy.

The Thunderboard Sense ships with a ready to use Bluetooth demo that works with a cloud connected smartphone app, showcasing easy collection of environmental and motion sensor data.

A built in SEGGER J-Link debugger ensures easy customization and development.



KEY POINTS

- EFR32 Mighty Gecko Wireless SoC
- Fine grained power-control for ultra low power operation
- 2.4 GHz ceramic chip antenna
- Six sensors and four high brightness controllable RGB LEDs
- User LEDs/pushbuttons
- 8-Mbit Flash for OTA programming
- SEGGER J-Link on-board debugger
- Virtual COM Port
- Mini Simplicity connector for AEM and packet trace using external Silicon Labs debugger
- 20-pin 2.54 mm breakout pads
- Power sources include USB, coin cell and external batteries

ON-BOARD SENSORS

- Relative humidity and temperature sensor
- UV index and ambient light sensor
- Indoor air quality gas sensor
- 6-axis inertial sensor
- Barometric pressure sensor
- MEMS microphone

SOFTWARE SUPPORT

- Simplicity Studio™
- Energy Profiler
- Network Analyzer

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1 Kit Contents	5
1.2 Hardware Content	5
1.3 Kit Hardware Layout.	5
2. Specifications	6
2.1 Absolute Maximum Ratings	6
2.2 Recommended Operating Conditions	6
2.3 Current Consumption	7
3. Hardware	9
3.1 Block Diagram.	9
3.2 Power Supply	10
3.3 EFR32 Reset	11
3.4 Peripheral Power Domains	11
3.5 Sensors	11
3.5.1 Si7021 Relative Humidity and Temperature Sensor	12
3.5.2 Si1133 UV Index and Ambient Light Sensor	13
3.5.3 BMP280 Barometric Pressure Sensor	14
3.5.4 CCS811 Indoor Air Quality Gas Sensor	15
3.5.5 ICM-20648 6-Axis Inertial Sensor	16
3.5.6 SPV1840 MEMS Microphone	17
3.6 LEDs	18
3.6.1 RGB LEDs	18
3.6.2 Low power red/green LED.	19
3.7 Push Buttons	19
3.8 Memory	19
3.9 On-board Debugger	20
3.10 Connectors	20
3.10.1 Breakout Pads	21
3.10.2 Mini Simplicity Connector	22
3.10.3 USB Micro-B Connector	22
3.10.4 Battery Connector	22
4. Debugging	23
4.1 On-board Debugger	23
4.2 Virtual COM Port	24
4.3 Mini Simplicity Connector	24
5. Power and Interrupt Controller.	25
5.1 Communication	25
5.2 Register Map	26

5.3	Interrupt Controller	.28
5.3.1	Clearing Interrupts	.28
5.3.2	Periodic Event Signalling	.29
6.	Radio	30
6.1	RF Section	.30
6.1.1	Description of the RF Matching	.30
6.1.2	RF Section Power Supply	.30
6.1.3	RF Matching Bill of Materials	.30
6.1.4	Antenna	.31
6.1.5	Antenna Matching Bill of Materials	.31
6.2	EMC Regulations for 2.4 GHz	.32
6.2.1	ETSI EN 300-328 Emission Limits for the 2400-2483.5 MHz Band	.32
6.2.2	FCC15.247 Emission Limits for the 2400-2483.5 MHz Band	.32
6.2.3	Applied Emission Limits	.32
6.3	Radiated Power Measurements	.33
6.3.1	Maximum Radiated Power Measurement	.33
6.3.2	Antenna Pattern Measurement	.34
6.4	EMC Compliance Recommendations	.36
6.4.1	Recommendations for 2.4 GHz ETSI EN 300-328 Compliance	.36
6.4.2	Recommendations for 2.4 GHz FCC 15.247 Compliance	.36
7.	Schematics, Assembly Drawings and BOM	37
8.	Kit Revision History and Errata	38
8.1	Revision History	.38
8.2	Errata	.38
9.	Board Revision History and Errata	39
9.1	Revision History	.39
9.2	Errata	.39
10.	Document Revision History	40

1. Introduction

The Thunderboard Sense (OPN: SLTB001A) has been designed to inspire customers to make battery operated IoT devices with the Silicon Labs EFR32 Mighty Gecko Wireless System-on-Chip. The highlights of the board include six different environmental sensors and four high brightness RGB LEDs accessible to the EFR32 wireless MCU. The sensors and LEDs have been grouped into power domains that can be turned on and off by the application code as needed. By default, the board starts up in the lowest power operating mode, with all sensors disabled.

Programming the Thunderboard Sense is easily done using a USB Micro-B cable and the on-board J-Link debugger. A USB virtual COM port provides a serial connection to the target application. Included on the board is an 8 Mbit serial flash that can be used for Over-The-Air (OTA) firmware upgrade, or as a general purpose non-volatile memory. The Thunderboard Sense is supported in Simplicity Studio™, and a Board Support Package (BSP) is provided to give application developers a flying start.

Energy profiling and advanced wireless network analysis and debugging tools are available through the provided Mini Simplicity Connector using an external Silicon Labs debugger. See [AN958](#) for more information about debugging and programming interfaces that can be used with Silicon Labs' starter kits.

Connecting external hardware to the Thunderboard Sense can be done using the 20 breakout pads which present peripherals from the EFR32 Mighty Gecko such as I²C, SPI, UART and GPIOs. The breakout pads follow the same pinout as the expansion headers (EXP) on other Silicon Labs Starter Kits.

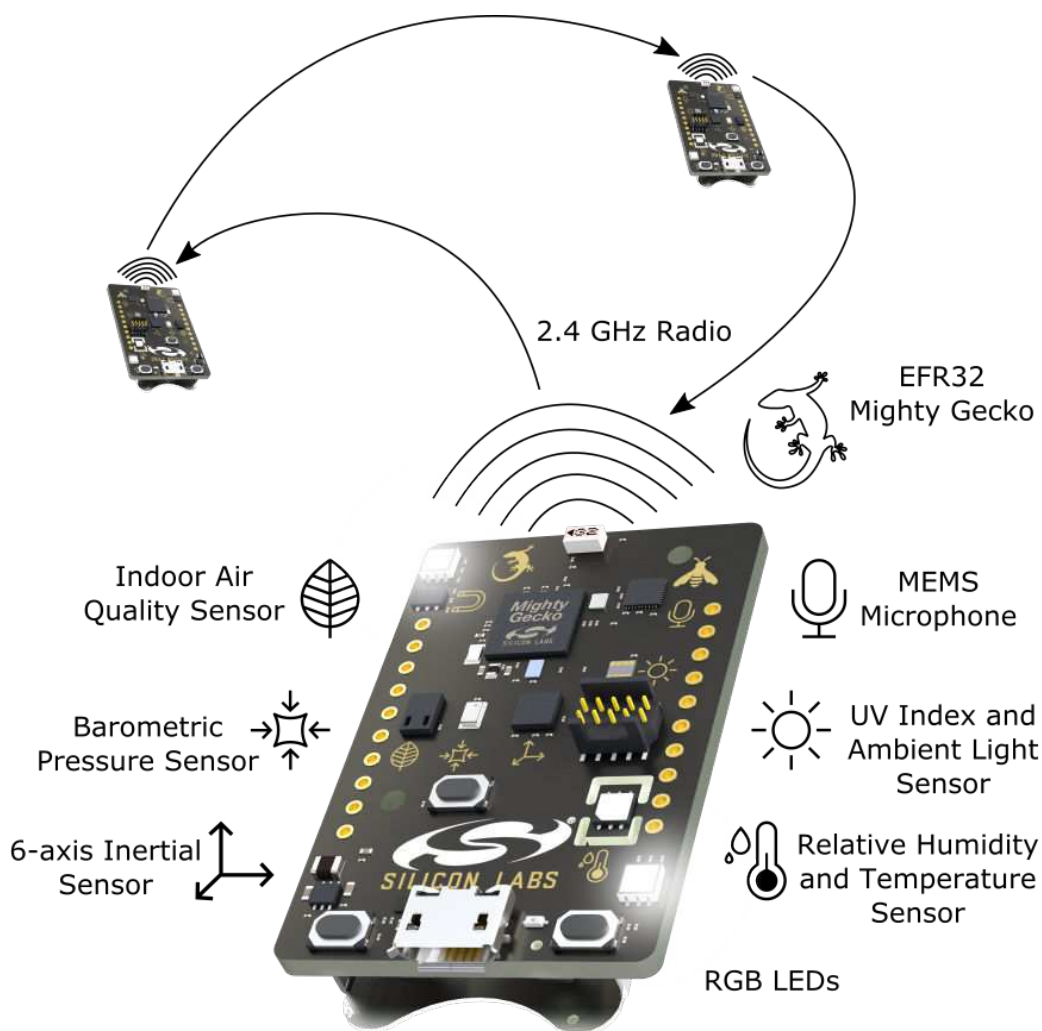


Figure 1.1. Thunderboard Sense

1.1 Kit Contents

The following items are included in the box:

- 1x Thunderboard Sense board (BRD4160A)

1.2 Hardware Content

The following key hardware elements are included on the Thunderboard Sense:

- EFR32 Mighty Gecko Wireless SoC with a 2.4 GHz ceramic antenna for wireless transmission
- Power and interrupt controller for fine grained power-control based on a Silicon Labs EFM8 Sleepy Bee microcontroller
- Silicon Labs Si7021 Relative Humidity and Temperature Sensor
- Silicon Labs Si1133 UV Index and Ambient Light Sensor
- Bosch Sensortec BMP280 Barometric Pressure Sensor
- Cambridge CMOS Sensors CCS811 Indoor Air Quality Gas Sensor
- InvenSense ICM-20648 6-Axis Inertial Sensor
- Knowles SPV1840 MEMS Microphone
- Four high brightness RGB LEDs, one bi-color LED and two push buttons
- Macronix Ultra Low Power 8-Mbit SPI Flash (MX25R8035F)
- On-board SEGGER J-Link debugger for easy programming and debugging, and with a virtual COM port through the USB Micro-B connector
- Mini Simplicity connector for access to energy profiling and advanced wireless network debugging
- Breakout pads for connection to external hardware
- Reset button and automatic switchover between USB and battery power
- CR2032 coin cell connector and external battery connector

1.3 Kit Hardware Layout

The layout of the Thunderboard Sense is shown below.

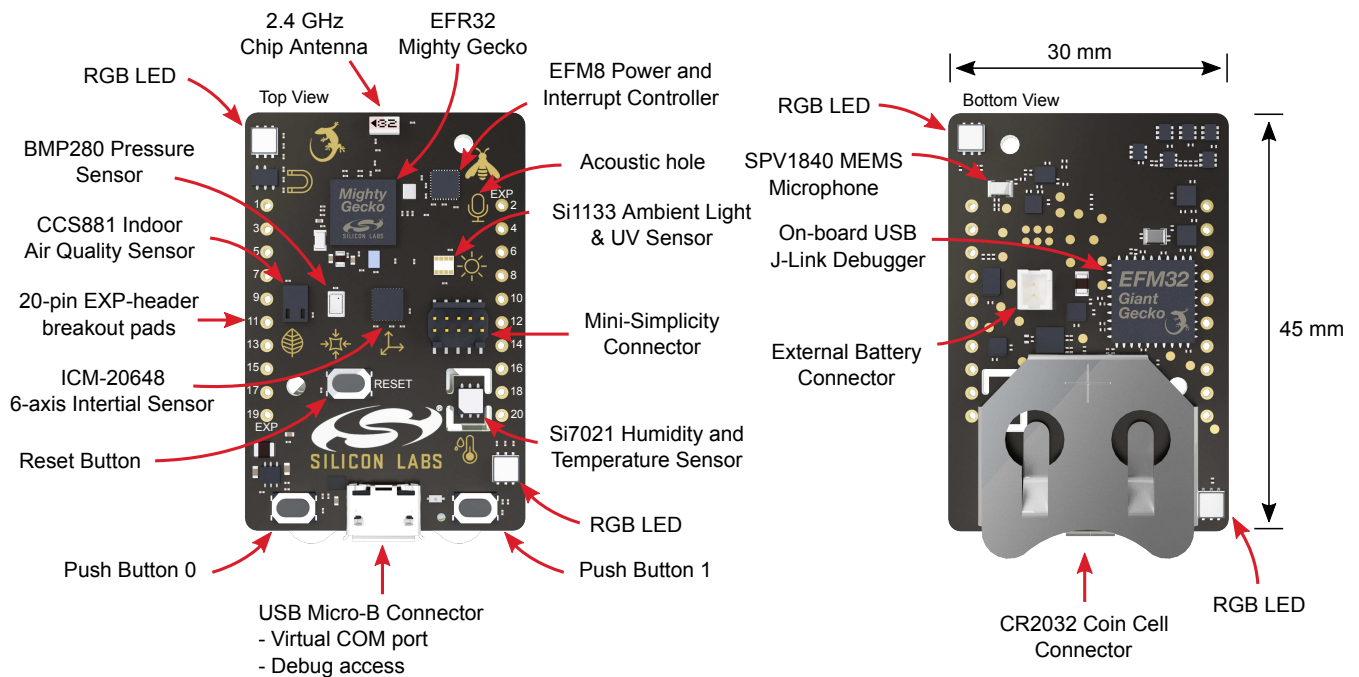


Figure 1.2. Thunderboard Sense Hardware Layout

2. Specifications

2.1 Absolute Maximum Ratings

Parameter	Symbol	Min	Typ	Max	Unit
USB Input Voltage	$V_{\text{USB-MAX}}$	0		+5.5	V
Supply Voltage VMCU	V_{VDDMAX}	0		+3.8	V
LDO output current	$I_{\text{VREG-LOAD}}$			300	mA
Voltage on any I/O pin	V_{DIGPIN}	-0.3		VMCU+0.3	V
Current per I/O pin (sink)	I_{IOMAX}			50	mA
Current per I/O pin (source)	I_{IOMAX}			50	mA
Current for all I/O pins (sink)	I_{IOALLMAX}			200	mA
Current for all I/O pins (source)	I_{IOALLMAX}			200	mA
Storage Temperature	T_{stg}	-40		+85	°C
ESD Susceptibility HBM (Human Body Model)	V_{ESD}			2	kV

2.2 Recommended Operating Conditions

Parameter	Symbol	Min	Typ	Max	Unit
Supply Input Voltage	V_{USB}	+4.5	+5.0	+5.5	V
Supply Input Voltage	V_{VBAT}	+2.0		+3.8	V
Supply Input Voltage (VMCU supplied externally)	V_{VMCU}	+2.0		+3.8	V
LDO Output Voltage	V_{REG}	+3.0	+3.3	+3.6	V
Operating Temperature	T_{OP}	0		70	°C

2.3 Current Consumption

The operating current of the board greatly depends on the application. The number of enabled sensors, how often they are sampled and how often the radio is transmitting or receiving are examples of factors that influence the operating current. The table below attempts to give some indication of how different features of the board contribute to the overall power consumption.

Table 2.1. Current Consumption, all values at 25°C and VMCU = 3.3 V

Parameter	Symbol	Condition	Min	Typ	Max	Unit
EFR32 Current Consumption ¹	I _{EFR32}	EFR32 in EM0 Active mode		3.4		mA
		Radio in receive mode		8.7		mA
		Radio transmitter active @ 8 dBm		23.3		mA
		EFR32 in EM4S, all power domains disabled ²		0.25		µA
Environmental Sensor Group Current Consumption	I _{ENV}	Turned off and isolated (leakage) ³		0.3	15	nA
		Enabled, all sensors in standby ⁴		0.29	1.2	µA
UV/ALS Current Consumption ⁵	I _{Si1133}	Standby		0.125		µA
		ADC Conversion in Progress		0.525		µA
		Responding to commands and calculating results		4.25		mA
RH/Temp Sensor Current Consumption ⁶	I _{Si7021}	Standby, -40 to +85°C		0.06	0.62	µA
		RH conversion in progress		150	180	µA
		Temperature conversion in progress		90	120	µA
		Peak I _{DD} during I ² C operations		3.5	4.0	mA
Barometric Pressure Sensor Current Consumption ⁷	I _{BMP280}	Sleep current		0.1	0.3	µA
		1 Hz forced mode, pressure & temperature, lowest power		2.8	4.2	µA
		Peak current during pressure measurement		0.72	1.12	mA
		Current at temperature measurement		0.33		mA
Microphone Current Consumption	I _{MIC}	Turned off			50	nA
		Enabled, not sampling ⁸		0.20	0.37	mA
		Sampling @ 1 kHz with EFR32 in EM2 ²		0.28		mA
		Sampling @ 16 kHz with EFR32 in EM2 ²		1.44		mA
CCS811 Current Consumption ⁹	I _{CCS811}	Turned off and isolated (leakage) ³		0.3	15	nA
		Enabled, sleep mode		3		µA
		During measurement		20		mA
		Average for a measurement every 60 seconds		0.67		mA

Parameter	Symbol	Condition	Min	Typ	Max	Unit
IMU Current Consumption ¹⁰	I _{IMU}	Turned off and isolated (leakage) ³		0.5	25	nA
		Full-chip sleep mode		8		μA
		Gyroscope Only, 102.3 Hz update rate		1.23		mA
		Accelerometer only, 102.3 Hz update rate		68.9		μA
		Gyroscope + Accelerometer, 102.3 Hz update rate		1.27		mA
RGB LED Current Consumption	I _{RGB}	Turned off		0.1	0.3	μA
		Power Enabled, all LEDs off		65		μA
		Additional current for each enabled LED		10		μA
		Current per LED, all colors 100% duty cycle		29.9		mA
Power and Interrupt Controller ²	I _{PIC}	Idle		80		nA
		Awake, responding to I ² C commands		0.54		mA
On-board Debugger Current Consumption	I _{DBG}	USB cable inserted, current sourced from USB 5V		29		mA
		USB cable removed, current sourced from VMCU rail.		20		nA

- 1 From EFR32 Mighty Gecko SoC datasheet
- 2 Measured with advanced energy monitor (AEM) using a Wireless Starter Kit (WSTK)
- 3 From TS3A4751 datasheet
- 4 Combination of UV/ALS, RH/Temp and BMP sensors' sleep currents
- 5 From Si1133 datasheet
- 6 From Si7021-A20 datasheet
- 7 From BMP280 datasheet
- 8 Based on microphone, OP-AMP and LDO datasheets
- 9 From CCS811 datasheet
- 10 From ICM-20648 datasheet

3. Hardware

The core of the Thunderboard Sense is the EFR32 Mighty Gecko Wireless System-on-Chip. The board also contains a multitude of sensors, including various environmental sensors and a motion sensor, all connected to the EFR32. The user interface components include push buttons, a bi-colour LED and four high brightness RGB LEDs.

The key aspects of the hardware will be explained in this chapter, while in-depth information on the EFR32 Mighty Gecko SoC can be found in the EFR32MG [datasheet](#) and [reference manual](#). For placement and layout of the hardware components the reader is referred to [1.3 Kit Hardware Layout](#).

3.1 Block Diagram

An overview of the Thunderboard Sense is illustrated in the figure below.

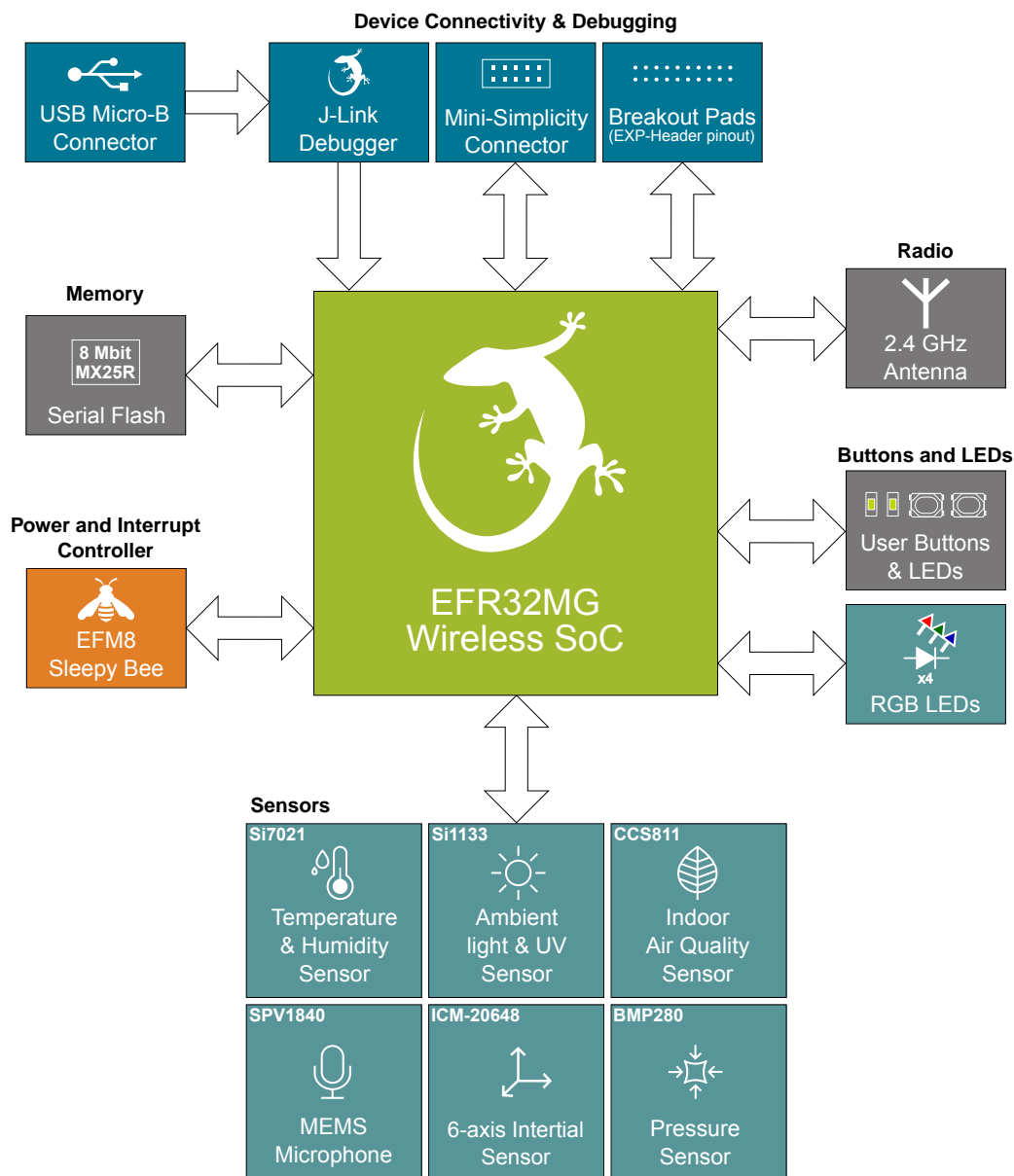


Figure 3.1. Kit Block Diagram

3.2 Power Supply

There are several ways to power the kit. The options include battery, on-board LDO from USB and the Mini Simplicity connector. [Figure 3.2 Thunderboard Sense Power Options on page 10](#) shows the power options available on the kit and illustrates the main system power architecture.

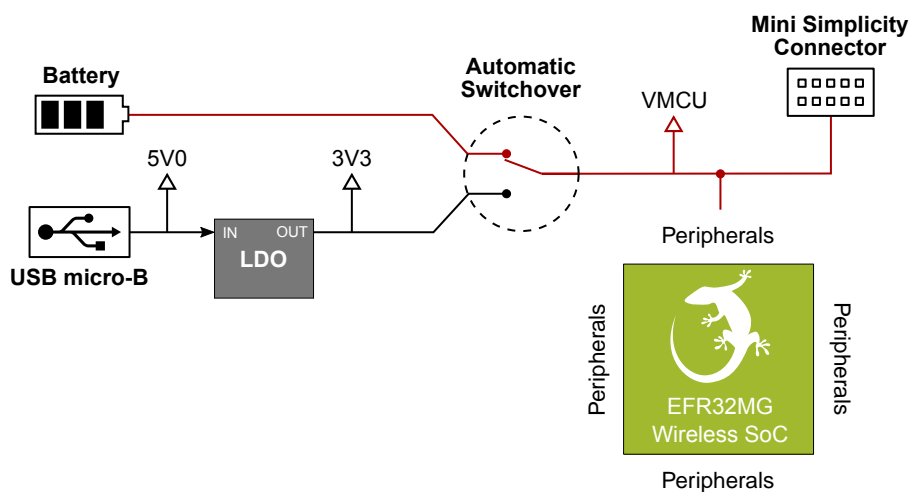


Figure 3.2. Thunderboard Sense Power Options

In normal operation, power can be applied using either a USB cable connected to a power source, or a battery connected to one of the battery connectors. The 5 volt power net on the USB bus is regulated down to 3.3 volt using a low-dropout regulator. An automatic switchover circuit switches the main system power from battery power to USB power when the USB cable is inserted, and prevents charging of the battery.

Batteries can be connected to the Thunderboard Sense using either the CR2032 coin cell connector or the external battery connector. A CR2032 coin cell is sufficient for low power operation that does not require high peak current. More demanding applications, such as enabling the RGB LEDs at high intensities, might need a higher capacity external battery or USB power.

Note: Do not connect batteries to both the CR2032 coin cell connector and the external battery connector at the same time.

A third option for powering the Thunderboard Sense exists through the Mini Simplicity connector. This option requires that no other power sources are present on the kit, as the power is injected directly to the VMCU power net. Powering the Thunderboard Sense through the Mini Simplicity connector with an external Silicon Labs debugger allows accurate current measurements using the Advanced Energy Monitoring (AEM) feature of the external debugger. For more information about using the Mini Simplicity connector, please refer to [4.3 Mini Simplicity Connector](#).

Note: When powering the board through the Mini Simplicity connector, the USB and battery power sources must be removed.

The power supply options are summarized in [Table 3.1 Thunderboard Sense Power Options on page 10](#). For placement of the USB and battery connectors the reader is referred to [1.3 Kit Hardware Layout](#).

Table 3.1. Thunderboard Sense Power Options

Supply mode	VIN	VMCU	3V3	5V0
USB power	4.5 - 5.5 V	On-board regulator	On-board regulator	USB VBUS
CR2032 battery	2.0 - 3.8 V	Battery voltage	Turned off and isolated	No voltage present
External battery	2.0 - 3.8 V	Battery voltage	Turned off and isolated	No voltage present
Mini Simplicity	2.0 - 3.8 V	Debugger dependent	Turned off and isolated	No voltage present

3.3 EFR32 Reset

The EFR32 Wireless SoC can be reset by a few different sources:

- A user pressing the RESET button.
- The on-board debugger pulling the #RESET pin low.
- An external debugger pulling the #RESET pin low.

In addition to the reset sources mentioned above, the debugger will also issue a reset to the EFR32 when starting up. This means that removing power to the debugger (unplugging the USB Micro-B cable) will not generate a reset, but plugging the cable back in will cause a reset as the debugger starts up.

3.4 Peripheral Power Domains

The sensors that make up most of the peripheral set of the Thunderboard Sense are grouped into power domains that are turned off when not in use. This allows for the lowest possible power consumption in every application. To help out with controlling the separate power domains, a Silicon Labs EFM8 Sleepy Bee microcontroller is used as an on-board Power and Interrupt Controller. By default, all sensors are disabled when the board powers up.

The EFM8 Sleepy Bee comes pre-programmed with a simple register interface accessible over the I²C bus, which is used to enable and disable power to the different sensors and the RGB LEDs on the board. It also contains a simple interrupt controller that aggregates interrupts from the sensors and notifies the host in case of interrupt events.

The EFM8 Sleepy Bee itself spends most of the time in sleep mode, and consumes very little power when doing so. In order for it to respond to I²C commands, the device must first be woken up. The INT/WAKE pin (PD10) functions as a dual role interrupt/wake-up pin. The EFR32 pulses this pin low to wake up the EFM8, and the EFM8 pulses the pin low to notify the host of interrupt events.

More details on communication between the EFR32 and the power controller, as well as register map and information related to the interrupt controller, can be found in [5. Power and Interrupt Controller](#).

The different power connections are illustrated in the figure below.

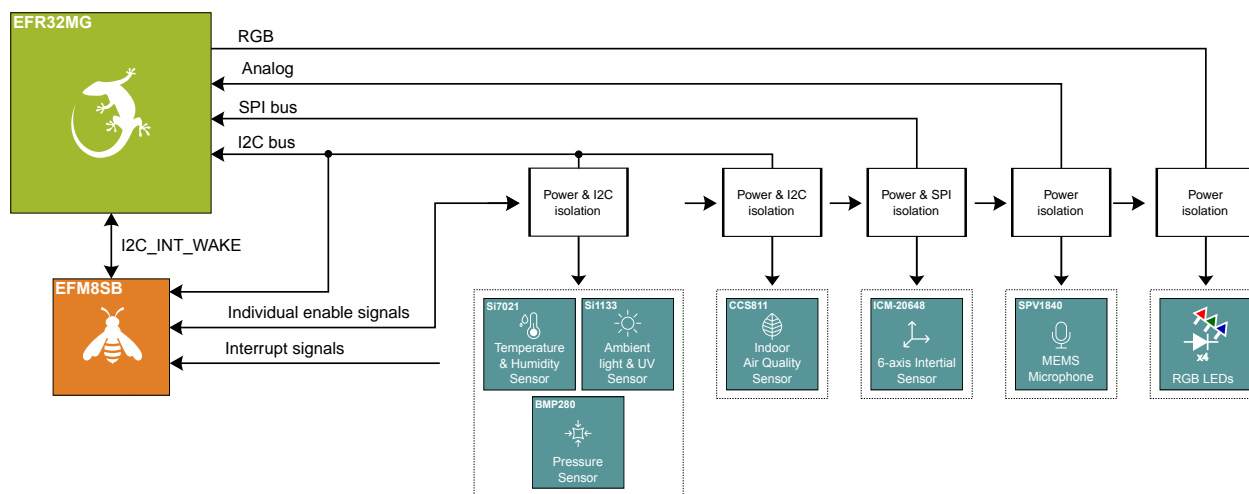


Figure 3.3. Power Domain Architecture

3.5 Sensors

The Thunderboard Sense contains six different sensors which can be accessed from the EFR32 over the I²C and SPI interfaces.

- Silicon Labs Si7021 Relative Humidity & Temperature Sensor
- Silicon Labs Si1133 UV Index & Ambient Light Sensor
- Bosch BMP280 Barometric Pressure Sensor
- Cambridge CMOS Sensors CCS811 Indoor Air Quality Gas Sensor
- InvenSense ICM-20648 6-axis Inertial Measurement Sensor
- Knowles SPV1840LR5H-B MEMS Microphone

3.5.1 Si7021 Relative Humidity and Temperature Sensor

The Si7021 I²C relative humidity and temperature sensor is a monolithic CMOS IC integrating humidity and temperature sensor elements, an analog-to-digital converter, signal processing, calibration data, and an I²C Interface. The patented use of industry-standard, low-K polymeric dielectrics for sensing humidity enables the construction of low-power, monolithic CMOS Sensor ICs with low drift and hysteresis, and excellent long term stability.

The Si7021 offers an accurate, low-power, factory-calibrated digital solution ideal for measuring humidity, dew-point, and temperature, in applications ranging from HVAC/R and asset tracking to industrial and consumer platforms.

On the Thunderboard Sense, the Si7021 is powered down and isolated by default. To use the sensor, 0x01 must be written to the ENV_SENSOR_CTRL register in the Power and Interrupt Controller, as described in [5. Power and Interrupt Controller](#). Doing so enables power to the Si7021 and connects the I²C lines used for the sensor to the main I²C bus. The Si7021 shares power and I²C bus isolation switch with the Si1133 and BMP280 sensor, and hence, all these sensors are powered and connected to the main I²C bus once 0x01 has been written to the ENV_SENSOR_CTRL register. The hardware connection is illustrated in [Figure 3.3 Power Domain Architecture](#) on page 11 and [Figure 3.4 Si7021 Relative Humidity and Temperature Sensor](#) on page 12

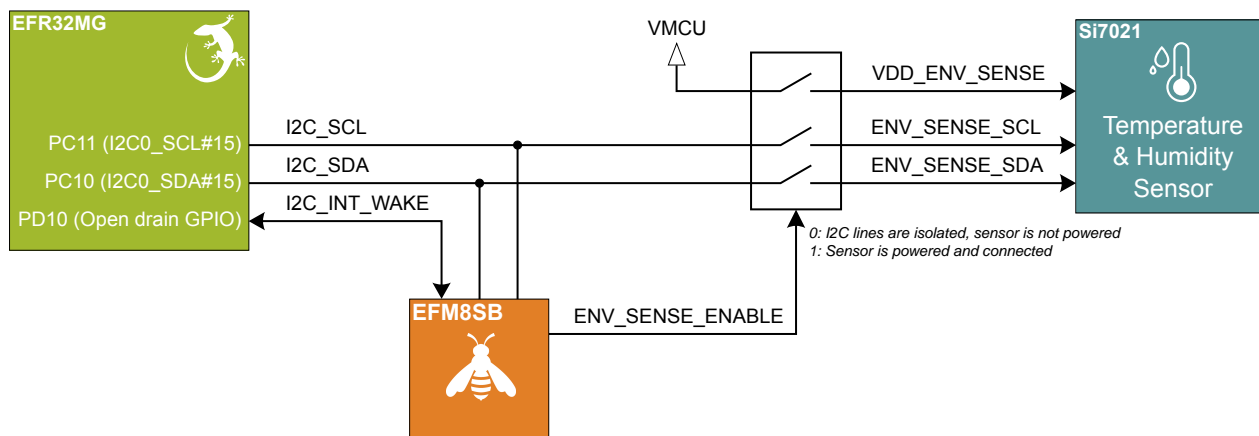


Figure 3.4. Si7021 Relative Humidity and Temperature Sensor

Note: Due to self-heating from the on-board LDO, temperature measurements are slightly off when running off USB power. More accurate temperature measurements are achieved when powering the board with a battery or through the Mini Simplicity connector.

3.5.2 Si1133 UV Index and Ambient Light Sensor

The Si1133 is a UV index and ambient light sensor with I²C digital interface and programmable event interrupt output. This sensor IC includes dual 23-bit analog-to-digital converters, integrated high-sensitivity array of UV, visible and infrared photodiodes, and digital signal processor.

On the Thunderboard Sense, the Si1133 is powered down and isolated by default. To use the sensor, 0x01 must be written to the ENV_SENSOR_CTRL register in the Power and Interrupt Controller, as described in [5. Power and Interrupt Controller](#). Doing so enables power to the Si1133 and connects the I²C lines used for the sensor to the main I²C bus. The Si1133 shares power and I²C bus isolation switch with the Si7021 and BMP280 sensor, and hence, all these sensors are powered and connected to the main I²C bus once 0x01 has been written to the ENV_SENSOR_CTRL register. The Si1133 has furthermore an interrupt pin that can generate an interrupt signal whenever a new sample is ready. There are several settings for handling the interrupt signal in the Power and Interrupt Controller as explained in [5.3 Interrupt Controller](#). The hardware connection is illustrated in [Figure 3.3 Power Domain Architecture](#) on page 11 and [Figure 3.5 Si1133 UV and Ambient Light Sensor](#) on page 13

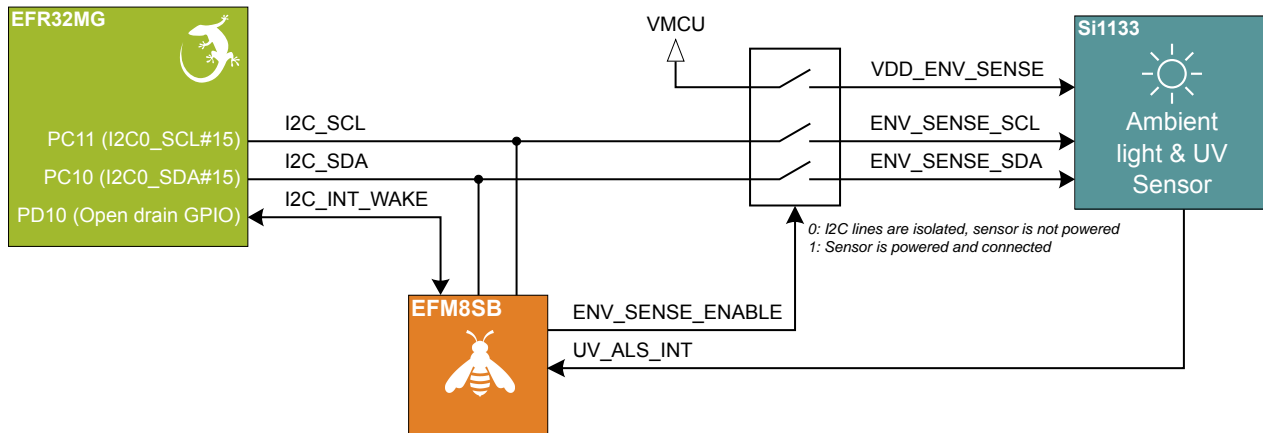


Figure 3.5. Si1133 UV and Ambient Light Sensor

3.5.3 BMP280 Barometric Pressure Sensor

The BMP280 is a combined absolute barometric pressure sensor and temperature sensor with a digital interface supporting both SPI and I²C. No external sensing elements are needed, and the device has an integrated ADC and ASIC with built-in configurable IIR filter to suppress noise. Selectable oversampling rates provides trade off between low power and high resolution, and an option to skip either temperature or pressure measurement is available in case one or the other is unnecessary.

On the Thunderboard Sense, the BMP280 is powered down and isolated by default. To use the sensor, 0x01 must be written to the ENV_SENSOR_CTRL register in the Power and Interrupt Controller, as described in 5. Power and Interrupt Controller. Doing so enables power to the BMP280 and connects the I²C lines used for the sensor to the main I²C bus. The BMP280 shares power and I²C bus isolation switch with the Si7021 and Si1133 sensor, and hence, all these sensors are powered and connected to the main I²C bus once 0x01 has been written to the ENV_SENSOR_CTRL register. The hardware connection is illustrated in Figure 3.3 Power Domain Architecture on page 11 and Figure 3.6 BMP280 Absolute Pressure Sensor on page 14.

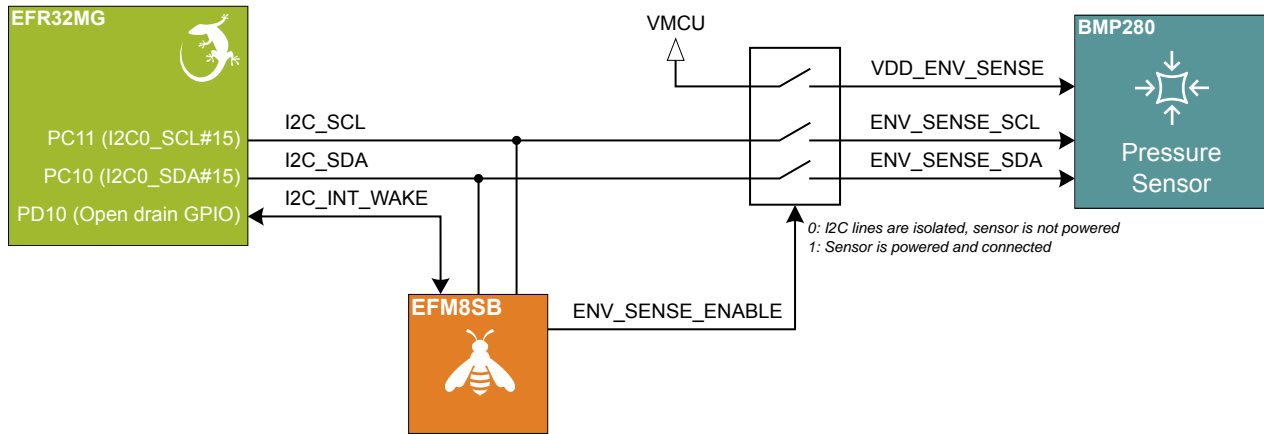


Figure 3.6. BMP280 Absolute Pressure Sensor

3.5.4 CCS811 Indoor Air Quality Gas Sensor

The CCS811 is a digital gas sensor solution for indoor air quality monitoring over the I²C interface. Gases that can be detected by the CCS811 includes ethanol and hazardous gases such as carbon monoxide and a wide range of volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

On the Thunderboard Sense, the CCS811 is powered down and isolated by default. To use the sensor, power must be enabled to the sensor, and it has to be woken up from sleep using the sensor's dedicated "wake" pin. Both are done by setting bits in the CCS_CTRL register in the Power and Interrupt Controller. See [5. Power and Interrupt Controller](#) for details.

The CCS811 has furthermore an interrupt pin that can generate an interrupt signal whenever a new sample is ready. There are several settings for handling the interrupt signal in the Power and Interrupt Controller as explained in [5.3 Interrupt Controller](#). The hardware connection is illustrated in [Figure 3.3 Power Domain Architecture](#) on page 11 and [Figure 3.7 CCS811 Indoor Air Quality and Gas Sensor](#) on page 15.

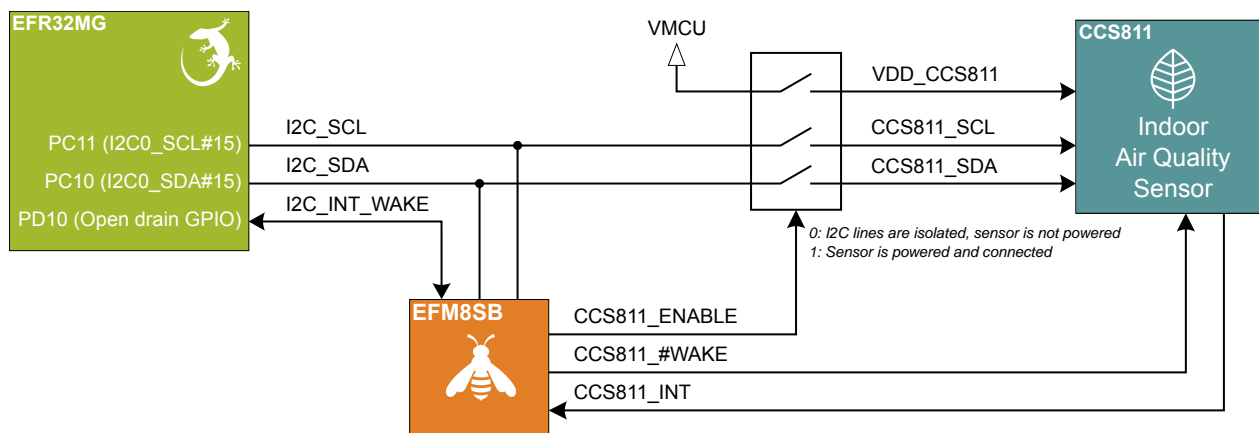


Figure 3.7. CCS811 Indoor Air Quality and Gas Sensor

3.5.5 ICM-20648 6-Axis Inertial Sensor

The ICM-20648 is a 6-axis inertial sensor consisting of a 3-axis gyroscope and a 3-axis accelerometer. Acceleration is detected independently along the X-, Y-, and Z- axes with 16-bit ADCs, in addition to the angular rates around the same axes. An integrated processor computes motion processing algorithms for ease of use and improved system power performance. The device supports both the SPI and I²C interface.

On the Thunderboard Sense, the inertial sensor is located in the center of the board. The coordinate system and rotation of the sensor follows the right-hand rule, and the spatial orientation of the board is shown in [Figure 3.8 Thunderboard Sense Spatial Orientation](#) on page 16.

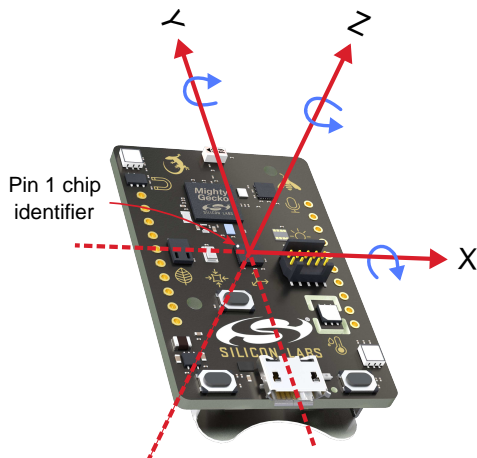


Figure 3.8. Thunderboard Sense Spatial Orientation

On the Thunderboard Sense, the ICM-20648 is powered down and isolated by default. To use the sensor, 0x01 must be written to the IMU_CTRL register in the Power and Interrupt Controller, as described in [5. Power and Interrupt Controller](#). Doing so enables power to the ICM-20648 and connects the SPI lines used for the sensor to the main SPI bus. The SPI interface is shared between the ICM-20648 and the SPI Flash, but uses separate chip select signals for the two devices. The ICM-20648 has an interrupt pin which, when enabled, generates an interrupt signal whenever a new sample is ready. There are several settings for handling the interrupt signal in the Power and Interrupt Controller as explained in [5.3 Interrupt Controller](#). The hardware connection is illustrated in [Figure 3.3 Power Domain Architecture](#) on page 11 and [Figure 3.9 ICM-20648 Six-axis Inertial Sensor](#) on page 16.

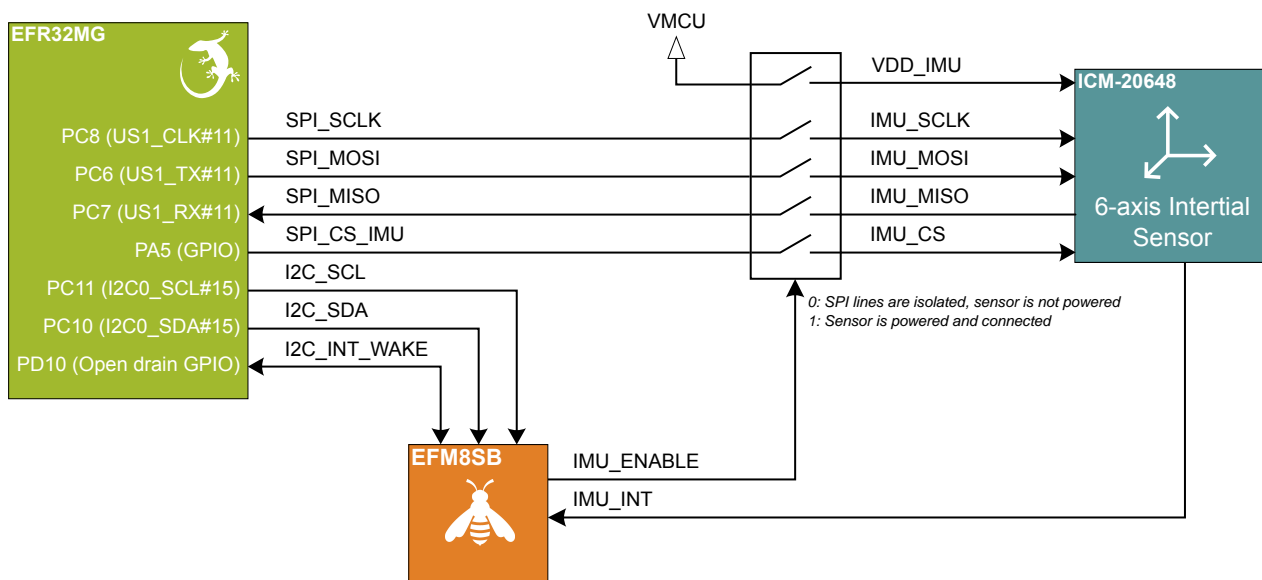


Figure 3.9. ICM-20648 Six-axis Inertial Sensor

3.5.6 SPV1840 MEMS Microphone

The SPV1840 is an omnidirectional MEMS microphone with high performance and low power consumption in a miniature 3.75 x 1.85 x 0.90 mm surface mount package. Included on the SPV1840 is an acoustic sensor, a low noise input buffer and an output amplifier. The microphone is suitable in applications requiring excellent audio performance and RF immunity.

The SPV1840 is placed on the bottom side of the Thunderboard Sense with an acoustic ventilation hole going through to the top side. This hole lets sound waves travel unimpeded from the top side of the board to the acoustic port of the MEMS microphone located on the back side of the component. The top side of the board should therefore be oriented against the sound source for best possible performance. Following the microphone is a signal processing stage containing an amplifier with 32.1 dB gain (-40.2 V/V) and an active first order low pass filter with a cut-off frequency of 10 kHz.

On the Thunderboard Sense, the SPV1840 is powered down by default. To use the sensor, 0x01 must be written to the MIC_CTRL register in the Power and Interrupt Controller, as described in [5. Power and Interrupt Controller](#). This turns on the low-dropout regulator powering both the microphone and the signal processing stage. The analog microphone signal is transmitted to the ADC of the EFR32.

The hardware connection is illustrated in [Figure 3.3 Power Domain Architecture on page 11](#) and [Figure 3.10 SPV1840 MEMS Microphone on page 17](#)

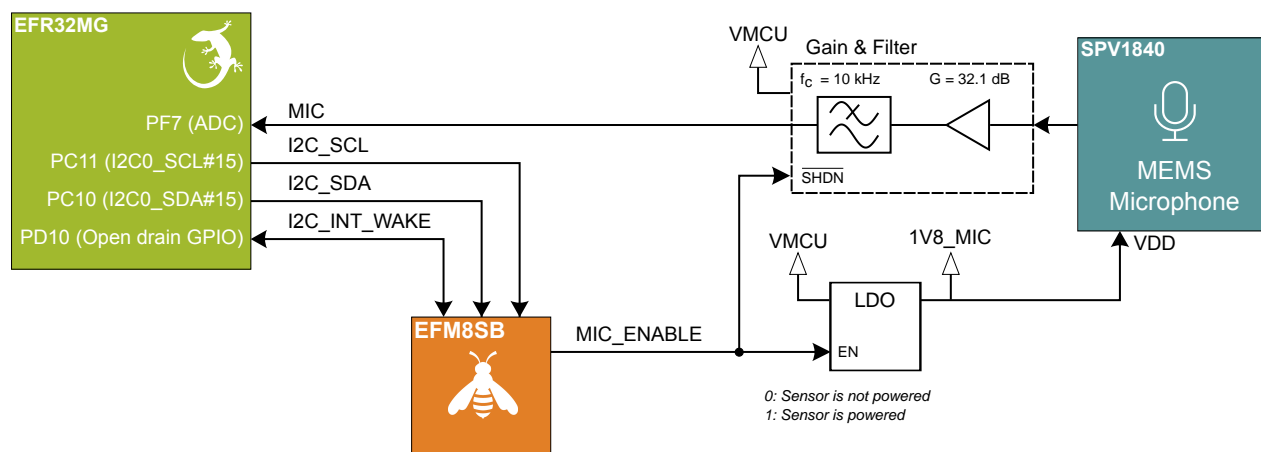


Figure 3.10. SPV1840 MEMS Microphone

3.6 LEDs

The board contains one low power bi-color LED (red/green), and four high brightness RGB LEDs. The low power LED and the RGB LEDs share the same I/O pins, but the RGB LEDs can be individually enabled/disabled through the Power and Interrupt Controller. [Figure 3.11 LEDs on page 18](#) shows how the different LEDs are connected to the EFR32, and how power to the RGB LEDs is controlled.

The following sections contain more detailed information.

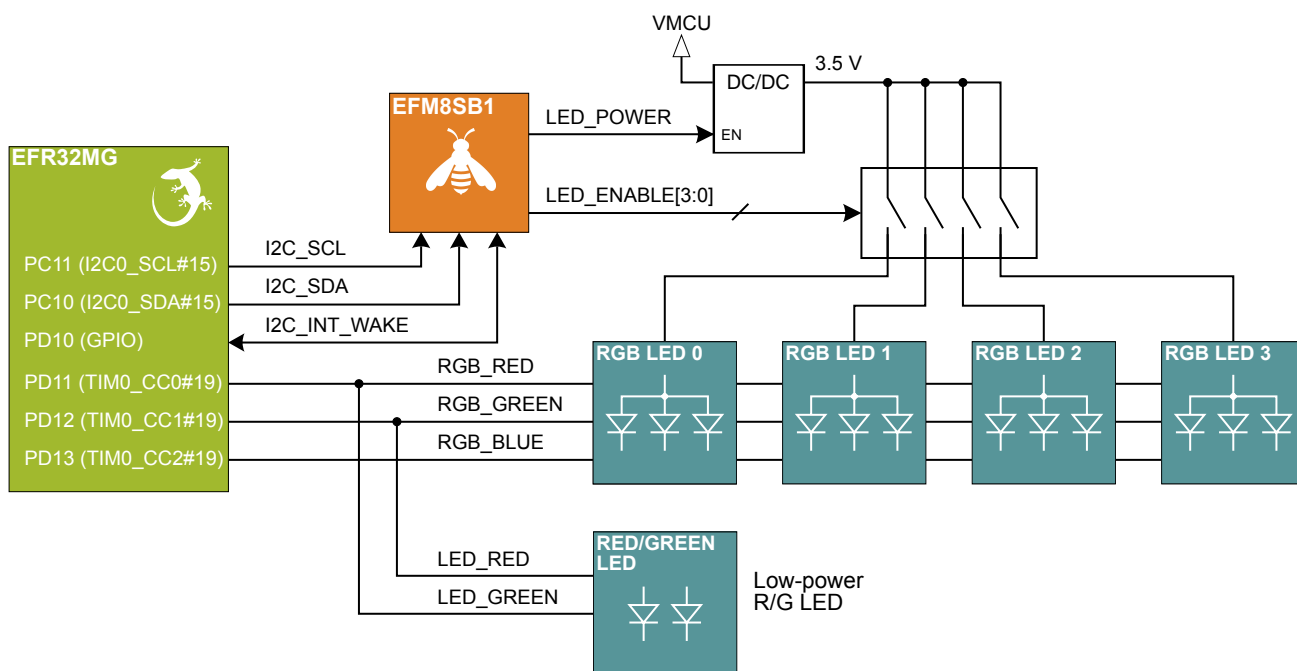


Figure 3.11. LEDs

3.6.1 RGB LEDs

The RGB LEDs are driven from a 3.5 V rail that is generated by a boost regulator. This ensures that the color representation remains constant even if the battery voltage drops below the LED forward voltage (V_f).

The boost regulator and each LED is individually enabled by writing to the LED_CTRL register in the power domain and interrupt controller. The cathodes of the same color of each LED are tied together, so that all enabled RGB LEDs will show the same color. The RGB LED hardware includes fast low-side drivers, so that any color can be created using the TIMER peripheral in the EFR32 in pulse width modulation (PWM) mode.

Because of the high current consumption, the RGB LEDs are not suitable for use in a coin cell application. Even with a low duty cycle PWM, the pulsed current can easily exceed 100 mA when all LEDs are enabled. Because of the boost regulator, the actual current drain increases slightly as the battery voltage decreases.

Table 3.2. RGB LED Typical Power Consumption at 3.3V VMCU

Color	1x LED	2x LEDs	3x LEDs	4x LEDs
Red, 100% duty cycle	13.4 mA	26.8 mA	40.2 mA	53.6 mA
Green, 100% duty cycle	8.0 mA	16.0 mA	24.0 mA	32.0 mA
Blue, 100% duty cycle	8.5 mA	17.0 mA	25.5 mA	34.0 mA
All, 100% duty cycle (white)	29.9 mA	59.8 mA	89.7 mA	119.6 mA

Turning off the boost regulator and the individual RGB LEDs reduces the quiescent current to about 100 nA typically. Turning on the boost regulator increases the quiescent current to about 65 μ A, even with no LEDs enabled. Due to the high side drivers, each enabled LED adds an additional 10 μ A of quiescent current even if the red, green and blue signals are all off.

3.6.2 Low power red/green LED

The board contains a small bi-color LED that is directly connected to PD11 and PD12 through current limiting resistors. Since these are directly connected, they cannot be disabled, and will always light up when these lines are driven high.

The current consumption of this LED is fairly low compared to the RGB LEDs, so the use of this LED is suitable for coin cell applications. The red LED consumes about 0.8 mA @ 3.3 V, and the green LED about 0.7 mA @ 3.3 V.

Note: The pin that drives the green line of the RGB LEDs is connected to the red low-power LED, and the red line of the RGB LEDs is connected to the green low-power LED.

3.7 Push Buttons

The kit has two user push buttons. Push button 0 is located at the bottom left corner of the board, while push button 1 is located at the bottom right corner of the board. The push buttons are connected to pin PD14 and PD15 respectively. Both push buttons are active low and de-bounced by an RC filter with a time constant of 1 ms.

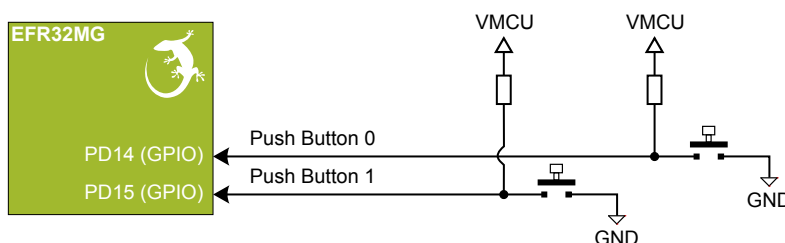


Figure 3.12. Push Buttons

3.8 Memory

The Thunderboard Sense is equipped with an 8-Mbit Macronix SPI Flash that is connected directly to the EFR32 Mighty Gecko. [Figure 3.13 Serial Flash on page 19](#) shows how the serial flash is connected to the EFR32. The SPI bus used for the flash is shared with the ICM-20648 six-axis inertial sensor.

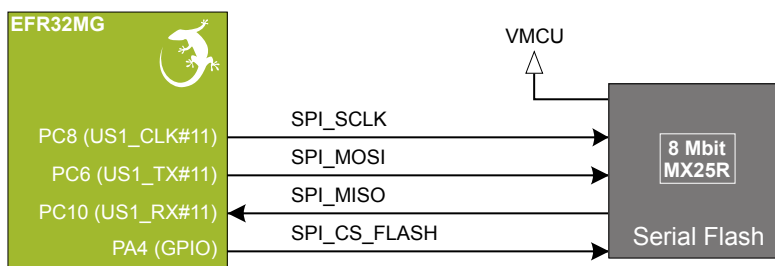


Figure 3.13. Serial Flash

The MX25R series are ultra low power serial flash devices, so there is no need for a separate enable switch to keep current consumption down. However, it is important that the flash is always put in deep power down mode when not used. This is done by issuing a command over the SPI interface. In deep power down, the MX25R typically adds approximately 100 nA to the current consumption.

3.9 On-board Debugger

The Thunderboard Sense contains a microcontroller separate from the EFR32 Mighty Gecko that provides the user with a on-board J-Link debugger through the USB micro-B port. This microcontroller is referred to as the "On-board Debugger", and is not programmable by the user.

In addition to providing code download and debug features, the on-board debugger also presents a virtual COM port for general purpose application serial data transfer.

Figure 3.14 On-Board Debugger Connections on page 20 shows the connections between the target EFR32 device and the on-board debugger. The figure also shows the presence of the Mini Simplicity Connector, and how this is connected to the same I/O pins. Please refer to chapter 4. Debugging for more details on debugging.

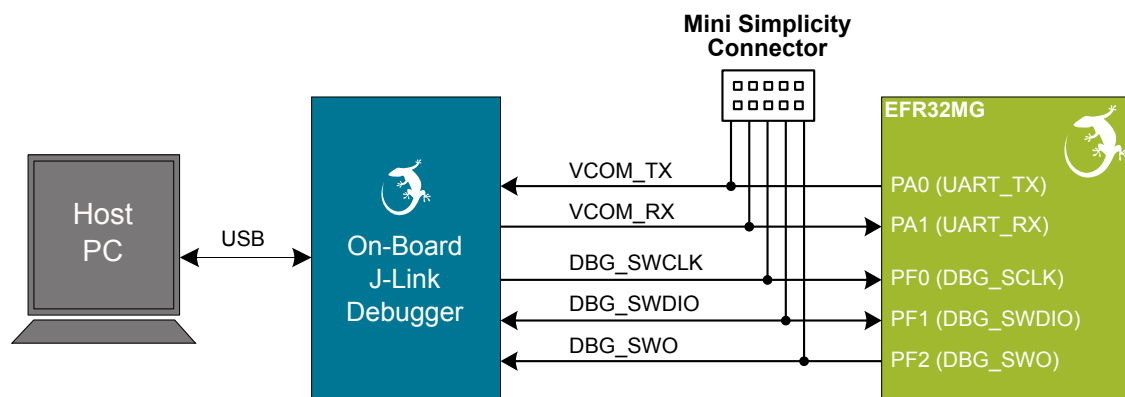


Figure 3.14. On-Board Debugger Connections

3.10 Connectors

Featured on the Thunderboard Sense is a Mini Simplicity connector, a USB Micro-B connector and 20 breakout pads that follow the expansion header pinout. The connectors are placed on the top side of the board, and their placement and pinout can be seen in Figure 3.15 Thunderboard Sense Connectors on page 20. For additional information on the connectors see the following sub chapters.

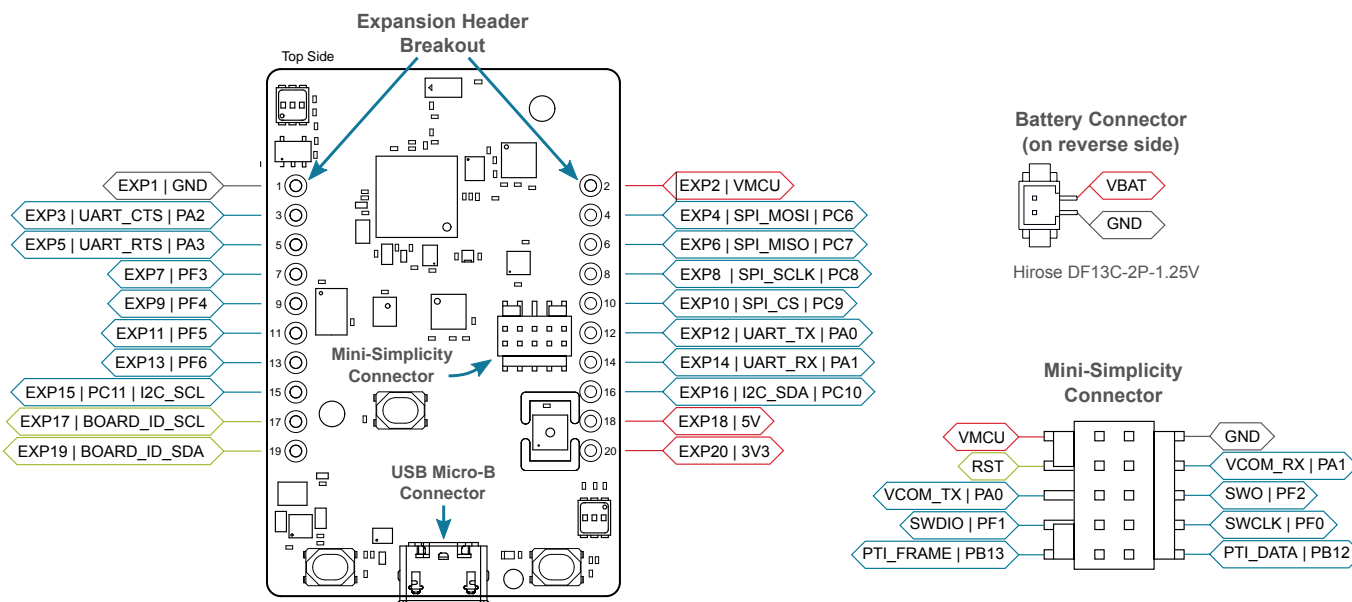


Figure 3.15. Thunderboard Sense Connectors

3.10.1 Breakout Pads

20 breakout pads, which follow the expansion header pinout, are provided and allow connection of peripherals or add-on boards. Ten of the pads are located along the left side of the board while the remaining ten are located on the right side of the board. The breakout pads contain a number of I/O pins that can be used with most of the EFR32 Mighty Gecko's features. Additionally, the VMCU (main board power rail), 3.3V (LDO regulator output) and 5V power rails are also exported.

The breakout pads are pinned out similar to the expansion header found on other Silicon Labs Starter Kits, which ensures that commonly used peripherals such as SPI, UART and I²C buses are available on fixed locations. The rest of the pins are used for general purpose IO. This allows the definition of expansion boards that can plug into a number of different Silicon Labs starter kits.

The pin-routing on the EFR32 is very flexible, so most peripherals can be routed to any pin. However, some pins are shared between the breakout pads and other functions on the Thunderboard Sense. [Table 3.3 Expansion Header Pinout on page 21](#) includes an overview of the expansion header and functionality that is shared with the kit.

Table 3.3. Expansion Header Pinout

Pin	Connection	EXP Header Function	Shared Feature	Peripheral Mapping
Right Side Breakout Pins				
2	VMCU	EFR32 voltage domain, included in AEM measurements.		
4	PC6	SPI_MOSI	IMU/SPI Flash	USART1_TX #11
6	PC7	SPI_MISO	IMU/SPI Flash	USART1_RX #11
8	PC8	SPI_SCLK	IMU/SPI Flash	USART1_CLK #11
10	PC9	SPI_CS		USART1_CS #11
12	PA0	UART_TX	Virtual COM Port	USART0_TX #0
14	PA1	UART_RX	Virtual COM Port	USART0_RX #0
16	PC10	I2C_SDA	Sensors/Power & Int. Controller	I2C0_SDA #15
18	5V	Board USB voltage		
20	3V3	Board controller supply		
Left Side Breakout Pins				
1	GND	Ground		
3	PA2	GPIO		
5	PA3	GPIO		
7	PF3	GPIO		
9	PF4	GPIO		
11	PF5	GPIO		
13	PF6	GPIO		
15	PC11	I2C_SCL	Sensors/Power & Int. Controller	I2C0_SCL #15
17	BOARD_ID_SCL	Connected to Board Controller for identification of add-on boards.		
19	BOARD_ID_SDA	Connected to Board Controller for identification of add-on boards.		

3.10.2 Mini Simplicity Connector

The Mini Simplicity connector featured on the Thunderboard Sense allows the use of an external debugger such as a Silicon Labs Wireless Starter Kit (WSTK) with the board. In addition to providing serial wire debug (SWD) and virtual COM port functionality, the WSTK can also support advanced energy profiling and wireless network analysis and debugging tools. The pinout is described in [3.10.2 Mini Simplicity Connector](#).

Table 3.4. Mini Simplicity Connector Pin Descriptions

Pin number	Connection	Function	Description
1	VMCU	VAEM	Target voltage on the debugged application. Supplied and monitored by the AEM when power selection switch is in the "AEM" position.
2	GND	GND	
3	EFR32 reset pin	DBG_RST	Reset
4	PA1	VCOM_RX	Virtual COM Rx
5	PA0	VCOM_TX	Virtual COM Tx
6	PF2	DBG_SWO	Serial Wire Output
7	PF1	DBG_SWDIO	Serial Wire Data
8	PF0	DBG_SWCLK	Serial Wire Clock
9	PB13	PTI_FRAME	Packet Trace Frame Signal
10	PB12	PTI_DATA	Packet Trace Data Signal

3.10.3 USB Micro-B Connector

The USB port can be used for uploading code, debugging and as Virtual COM port, as described in [4. Debugging](#).

3.10.4 Battery Connector

A small battery connector can be found on the secondary side of the board, above the CR2032 coin cell holder. This is a 1.25 mm pitch miniature crimping connector from Hirose (P/N: DF13C-2P-1.25V).

The positive supply input pin on this connector (VBAT) is directly connected to the coin cell holder +terminal, so only one battery should be used at a time to prevent current flow between batteries. The Thunderboard Sense contains a small transistor switch circuit that protects the board from reverse polarity on VBAT. When the USB cable is inserted, the transistor is turned off to prevent the on-board LDO from charging the battery connected either to the battery connector or to the coin cell holder.

P/N for mating products:

- Single row socket, 2 pos: Hirose DF13-2S-1.25C
- Crimping contact: Hirose DF13-2630SCFA

It is also possible to source pre-crimped cables from catalog distributors such as Digi-Key.

4. Debugging

The Thunderboard Sense contains an on-board fully functional SEGGER J-Link Debugger that interfaces to the target EFR32 using the Serial Wire Debug (SWD) interface. The debugger allows the user to download code and debug applications running in the target EFR32. Additionally, it also provides a virtual COM port (VCOM) to the host computer that is directly connected to the target device's serial port, for general purpose communication between the running application and the host computer.

An external Silicon Labs debugger can also be used with the board by connecting it to the Mini Simplicity connector. This allows advanced debugging features as described in [4.3 Mini Simplicity Connector](#). A Silicon Labs Wireless Starter Kit (WSTK) is a good example of a debugger that can be used with the Thunderboard Sense when connected through a debug adapter.

Figure 4.1 Thunderboard Sense Debugging Possibilities on page 23 show the possible debug options.

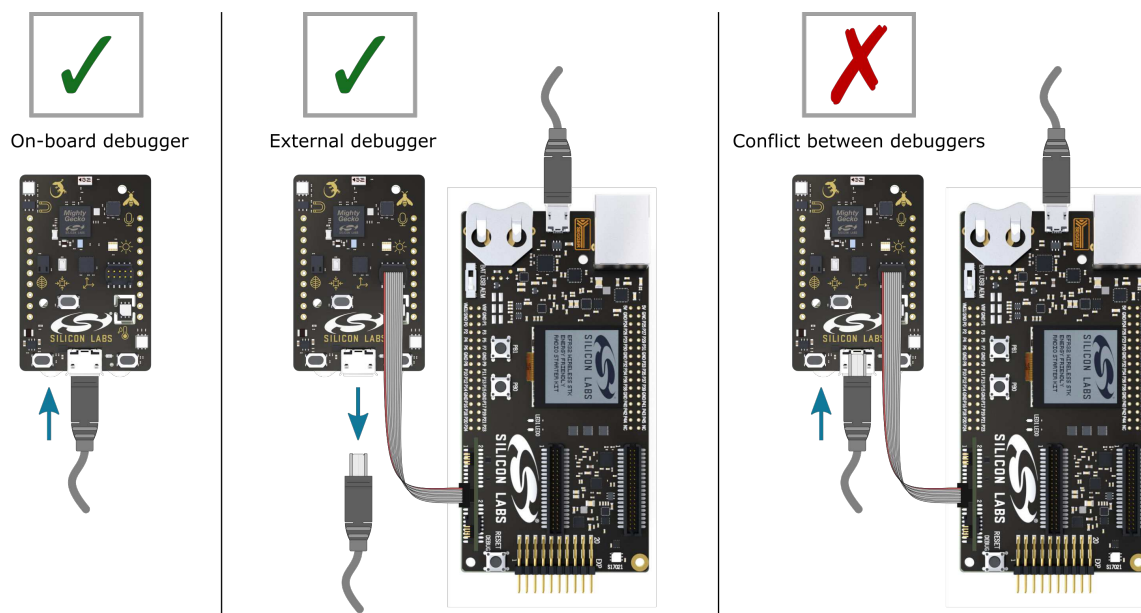


Figure 4.1. Thunderboard Sense Debugging Possibilities

4.1 On-board Debugger

The on-board debugger is a SEGGER J-Link debugger running on an EFM32 Giant Gecko. The debugger is directly connected to the SWD and VCOM pins of the target EFR32.

When the USB cable is inserted, the on-board debugger is automatically active, and takes control of the SWD and VCOM interfaces. This means that serial wire debug and communication will *not* work with an external WSTK connected through the Mini Simplicity Connector at the same time. The on-board LDO is also activated which then powers the board.

When the USB cable is removed, the on-board debugger goes into a very low power shutoff mode (EM4S), consuming around 20 nA typically. This means that an application running off batteries does not need to worry about the power consumption of the on-board debugger. Since the I/O voltage rail of the debugger remains powered in the battery operated mode, the pins connected to the SWD and VCOM interfaces maintain proper isolation and prevent leakage currents.

4.2 Virtual COM Port

The virtual COM port is a connection to a USART of the target EFR32, and allows serial data to be sent and received from the device. The on-board debugger presents this as a virtual COM port on the host computer that shows up when the USB cable is inserted. Alternatively, the VCOM port can also be used through the Mini Simplicity Connector with an external WSTK.

Data is transferred between the host computer and the debugger through the USB connection, which emulates a serial port using the USB Communication Device Class (CDC). From the debugger the data is passed on to the target device through a physical UART connection.

The serial format is 115200 bps, 8 bits, no parity and 1 stop bit. Flow control signals RTS and CTS are provided, but not supported by the current firmware implementation. The current firmware also does not support changing the baud rate.

Using the VCOM port through the Mini Simplicity Connector with an external WSTK works in a similar way, but requires that the on-board debugger is unplugged. The board controller on the WSTK then makes the data available over USB (CDC) or an IP socket.

Note: Changing the baud rate for the COM port on the PC side does not influence the UART baud rate between the debugger and the target device.

4.3 Mini Simplicity Connector

The Mini Simplicity connector is a 10-pin 1.27 mm pitch connector that gives access to advanced debugging features. Debugging with an external WSTK allows:

- Debugging of the target device through SWD
- Communication using the VCOM port
- Packet Trace Interface
- Advanced Energy Monitor

Please note that the Mini Simplicity Connector *cannot* be used at the same time as the on-board debugger is active (USB cable is plugged in). For information on how to correctly connect to the kit, see [Figure 4.1 Thunderboard Sense Debugging Possibilities on page 23](#). The recommended way to power the board when using the Mini Simplicity Connector is to use the AEM voltage supply of the WSTK. Power-cycling of the board, if necessary, can easily be done by flipping the power switch on the WSTK to "BAT" and back to "AEM".

It is also possible to have the Thunderboard Sense powered by a battery, and still use the the Mini Simplicity Connector for debugging and communication. In this case the power switch on the WSTK must be set to the "BAT" position, to prevent a power conflict. In this case level shifters on the WSTK itself takes care of interfacing to different voltage levels on the Thunderboard Sense.

5. Power and Interrupt Controller

This chapter contains reference information about how to interface with the Power and Interrupt Controller implemented in the EFM8 Sleepy Bee on the Thunderboard Sense.

The software examples available for the Thunderboard Sense provide a board support package (BSP) that handles enabling and interfacing to the different peripherals on the board. The BSP has supporting code to enable the different power domains, control the RGB LEDs and enable interrupts in the interrupt controller. It is recommended to use the provided BSP to get up and running as quick as possible with the kit.

5.1 Communication

Controlling the power domains and using the interrupt controller is done with commands over the I²C bus. The EFM8 firmware presents a register interface that can be read and written by the EFR32.

Before the Power and Interrupt Controller will respond to I²C commands, it must first be woken up. The EFM8 wakes up and enables its I²C peripheral on the falling edge of the int/wake pin (PD10). It remains awake as long as this line is low, and for about 1 ms after the line goes high again. If there is activity on the I²C bus lines while it is awake, the timeout is extended until 1 ms after the activity stops.

This means that the device can be woken up with just a short pulse on the int/wake pin. Please note that the minimum pulse width is about 4 μ s to ensure that the device properly wakes up. Several consecutive commands can be issued without re-asserting the wake-up pin as long as each transfer follows within 1 ms of the last.

Since the int/wake pin is used for both wake-up and interrupt signaling, it is recommended to configure the int/wake pin to an open drain (wired AND) configuration to ensure that both devices can change the pin state.

Writing to the registers is done by transmitting the 7-bit bus address 0x90 with the R/W bit cleared, followed by the register address and the data to be written. Reading a register first requires the address pointer to be set up using an I²C write, followed by a new start and the address with the R/W bit set. Reading can be done with a repeated start, or can be a simple one byte write followed by a read.

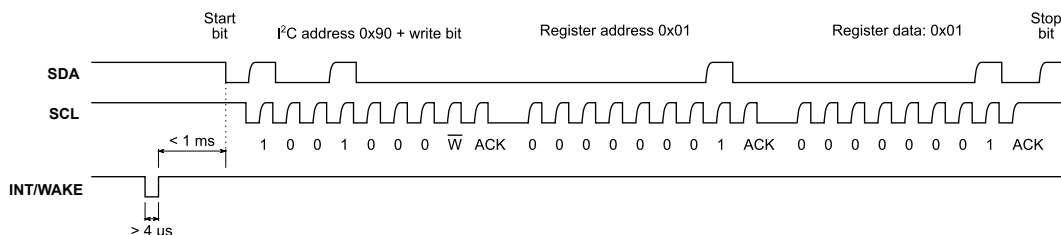


Figure 5.1. I²C Register Write Example

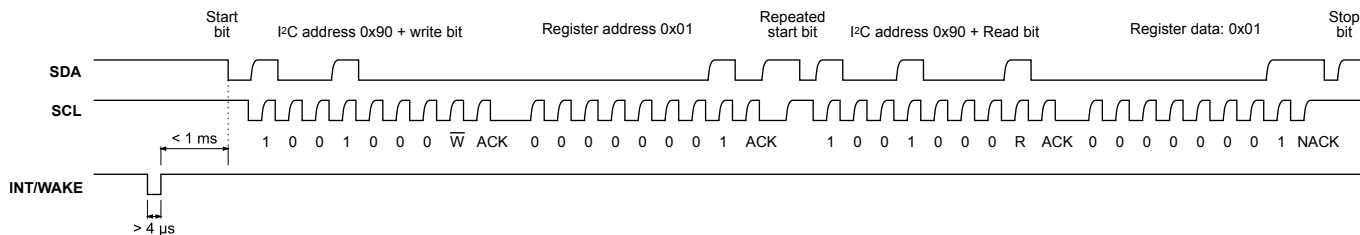


Figure 5.2. I²C Register Read Example