ModusToolbox™ Sensor Designer tool user guide

ModusToolbox™ CAPSENSE™ and Multi-Sense Pack
Sensor Designer tool version 1.50.0

About this document

A newer revision of this document may be available on the web here.

Scope and purpose

The Sensor Designer tool is a standalone software tool included with the ModusToolbox™ software. The tool is used to create and configure Liquid Level, Button, and Radial Slider sensor designs.

Intended audience

This document helps application developers understand how to use the Sensor Designer tool as part of a ModusToolbox™ application.

Document conventions

Convention	Explanation
Bold	Emphasizes heading levels, column headings, menus and sub-menus
Italics	Denotes file names and paths.
`Monospace`	Denotes APIs, functions, interrupt handlers, events, data types, error handlers, file/folder names, directories, command line inputs, code snippets
File > New	Indicates that a cascading sub-menu opens when you select a menu item

Abbreviations and definitions

The following define the abbreviations and terms used in this document:

- Application – One or more projects related to each other.
- CAD – computer-aided design
- CAPSENSE™ sigma-delta – self-capacitance sensing method
- CAPSENSE – capacitive sensing
- CSD – self-capacitance sensing method
- Configurator – A GUI-based tool used to configure a resource.
- DXF – drawing exchange format
- ISX – inductive sensing method
- PCB – printed circuit board
- PSOC™ – programmable system-on-chip

Reference documents

Refer to the following documents for more information as needed:

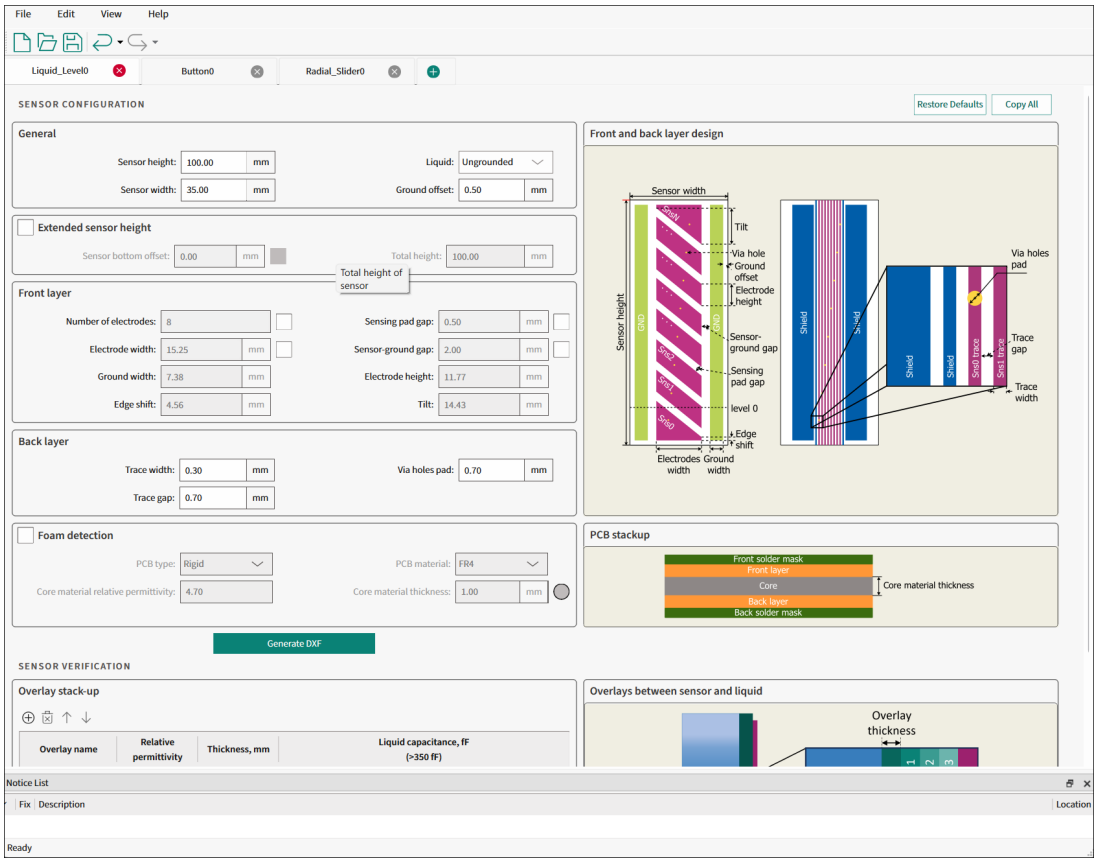
- ModusToolbox™ tools package user guide
- CAPSENSE™ Configurator user guide
- CAPSENSE™ Tuner user guide
- Eclipse IDE for ModusToolbox™ user guide
- VS Code for ModusToolbox™ user guide

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1 Overview

The Sensor Designer tool generates sensor drawings in the **.dxf* file format to be imported into PCB layouts. The tool interface contains the parameters description and illustrative images of the sensor drawings. You can add multiple Liquid Level tab, Button tab, and Radial Slider tab tabs to generate data for the sensor. The tool is supported on Windows, Linux, and macOS.



2 Launch the Sensor Designer tool

There are several ways to launch the Sensor Designer tool, and those ways depend on the application, and how you use the various tools.

2.1 VS Code and Eclipse IDE

VS Code and Eclipse have tools to launch the Sensor Designer tool from within an open application. Refer to the applicable user guide for more details:

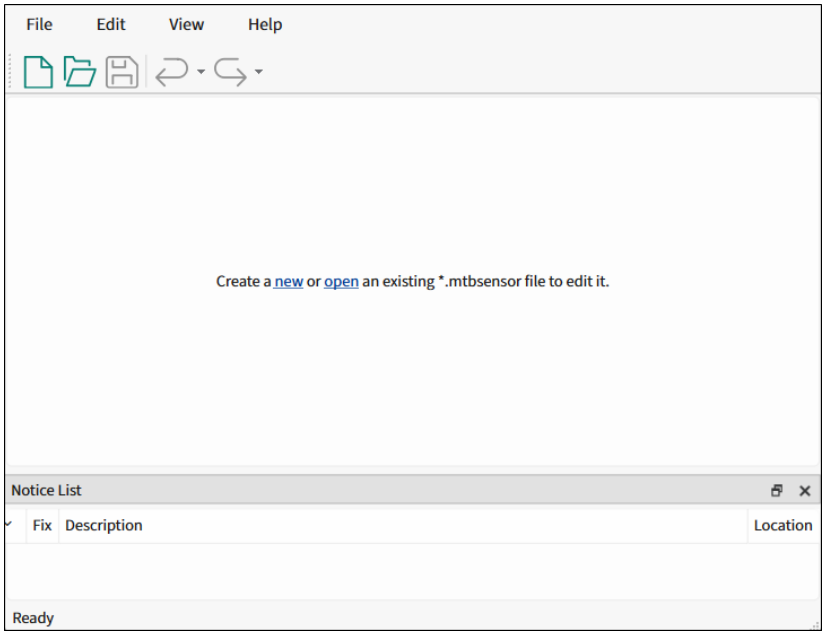
- VS Code for ModusToolbox™ user guide
- Eclipse IDE for ModusToolbox™ user guide

2.2 Executable

You can launch the Sensor Designer tool GUI by running its executable as appropriate for your operating system. By default, it is installed here:

<install_dir>/ModusToolbox/packs/ModusToolbox-Multi-Sense-Pack/tools/sensor-designer-tool

When opened this way, the Sensor Designer tool GUI opens blank without any information.



3 Quick start

This section provides a simple workflow for how to use the Sensor Designer tool.

1. Launch the Sensor Designer tool.
2. Create a new or open an existing sensor configuration to edit it.
3. Edit the configuration.
4. Generate a design-respective sensor drawing.
5. Save the configuration.
6. Click the **Generate DXF** button to generate a **.dxf* file to the specified directory. Then, import the file to the CAD software.

4 GUI description

Menus

- **File**
  - **New** – Creates a new file with new configuration.
  - **Open...** – Opens a specified **.mtbsensor* configuration file. The current configuration file, if any, will be closed. If there are unsaved changes, a dialog opens asking to save or not.
  - **Close** – Closes the current configuration file.
  - **Save** – Saves the current configuration file.
  - **Save As...** – Saves the existing file under a different name.
  - **Open in System Explorer** – This opens your computer's file explorer tool to the folder that contains the **.mtbsensor* configuration file.
  - **Recent files** – Shows recent files that you can open directly.
  - **Exit** – Closes the tool. You will be prompted to save any pending changes.
- **Edit**
  - **Undo** – Undoes the last action or sequence of actions.
  - **Redo** – Redoes the last undone action or sequence of undone actions.
- **View**
  - **Notice List** – Hides or shows the Notice List pane. The pane displays by default.
  - **Toolbar** – Hides or shows the Toolbar.
  - **Reset View** – Resets the view to the default.
- **Help**
  - **View Help** – Opens this document.
  - **About Sensor Designer tool** – Opens the About box for version information, with links to open https://www.infineon.com and the current session log files of the application.

Toolbar

The toolbar contains common commands from the **File** and **Edit** menus. Use the check box under the **View** menu to show or hide the toolbar.



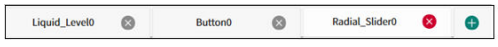
4.1 Sensor tabs

There are three tabs on the Sensor Designer tool interface:

- Liquid Level tab
- Button tab
- Radial Slider tab

The sensor tabs represent the relevant sensor configuration. A tab contains a set of parameters to configure the settings of a sensor drawing pattern and generate it to the **.dxf* file.

The tab name is provided as the default name for the generated **.dxf* file.



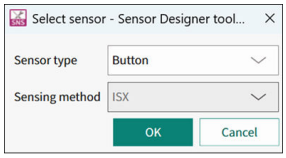
Commands

- **Restore Defaults** – Restores parameters values on the current tab to their default values.
- **Copy All** – Click this button to copy the list of input and output parameters to the system clipboard as plain text.

4 GUI description

Select sensor

To create new tab configuration, click **New** on the **File** menu. It will display the "Select sensor" dialog.



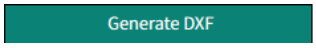
- **Sensor type** – **Liquid Level**, **Button**, **Radial Slider**.
- **Sensing method** – **CSD** for **Liquid Level** and **Radial Slider**, **ISX** for **Button**.

Move actions

- To add a tab for a new level, click the green (+) button to display the "Select sensor" dialog.
- To remove a tab, click the red (-) button.
- To rename the sensor, double-click its name.
- To change the tabs order, left-click a tab name and drag it to the preferred position.

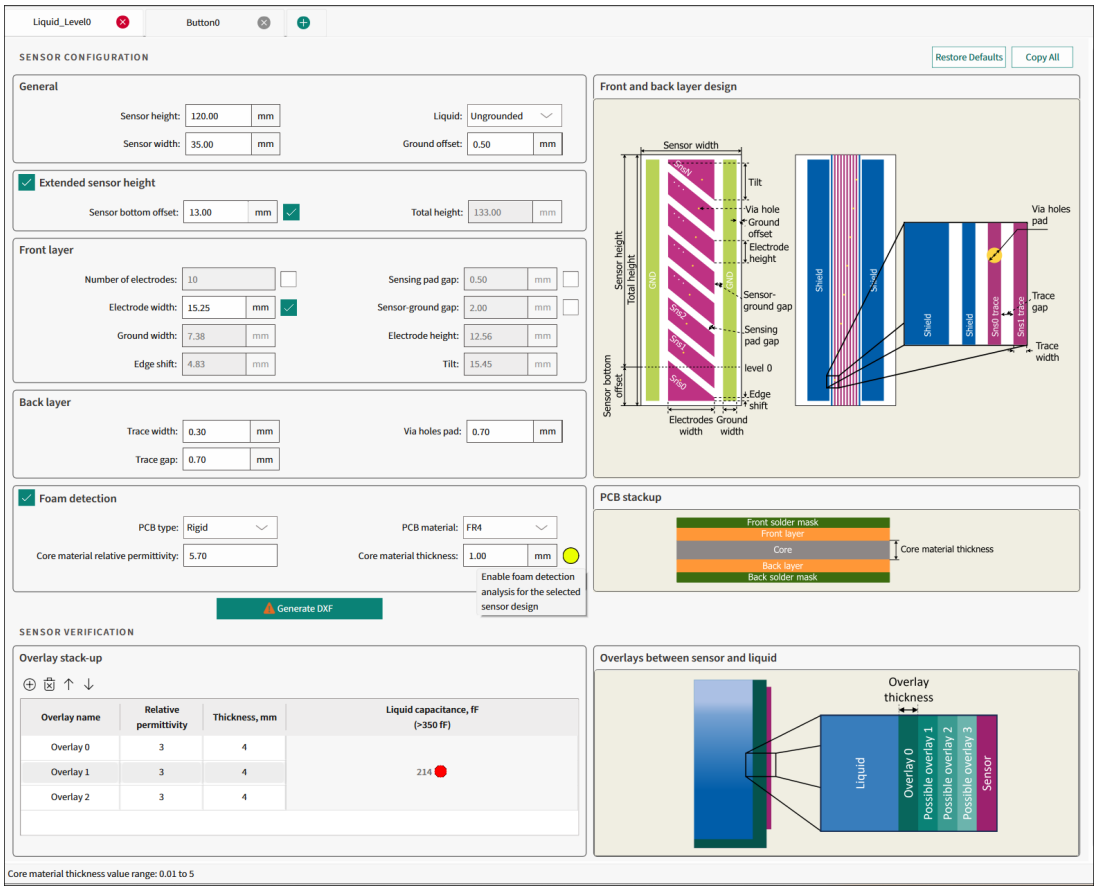
Generate DXF

Click this button to generate a *.dxf file of the calculated sensor to a specified file location.



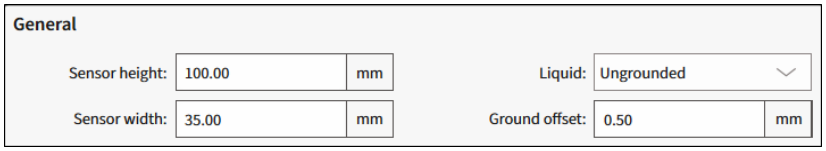
5 Liquid Level tab

The **Liquid Level** tab is used to design a liquid level sensor for the preferred application requirements and generate a **.dxf* file.



5.1 Sensor configuration

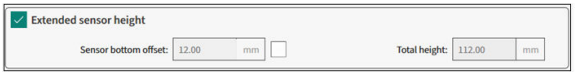
General



- **Sensor height** – The height (mm) of the sensor measurable stack-up. The range – 30.00-422.5, default – 100.00.
- **Sensor width** – The width (mm) of the entire sensor stack-up. The range – 20.00-60.00, default – 35.00.
- **Liquid** – Select whether the liquid is Ungrounded or Grounded. Default – Ungrounded.
- **Ground offset** – The spacing gap (mm) between the outer ground traces and the edge of the sensor area. The range – 0.5-15, default – 0.50.

Extended sensor height

The extended sensor height improves the accuracy near the bottom of calculated levels.



5 Liquid Level tab

- **Sensor bottom offset** – The height of the measurement offset. The range – 0-99.99, default – 12.00.
- **Total height** – Read-only. The total height of the sensor.

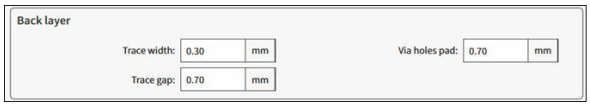
Front layer

Select the relevant check box to use the parameter as an input parameter.



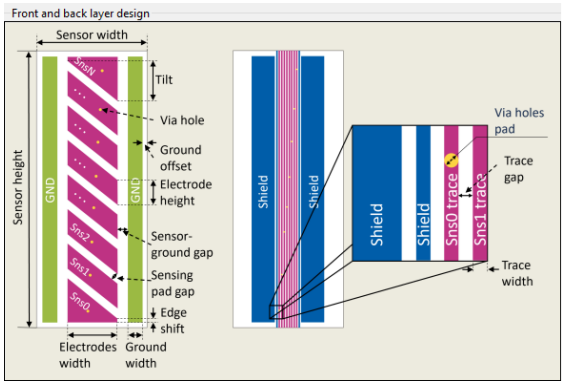
- **Number of electrodes** – The total number of electrodes. The range – 3-32.
- **Electrode width** – The horizontal width (mm) of each electrode. The range – 1-59.99.
- **Ground width** – Read-only. The width (mm) of the ground traces.
- **Edge shift** – Read-only. The edge shift (mm) area on the top and bottom electrodes. This value can be negative.
- **Sensing pad gap** – The space (mm) between the electrodes. The range – 0.1-10.
- **Sensor-ground gap** – The horizontal space (mm) between the electrodes and neighboring ground traces. The range – 0.1-10.
- **Electrode height** – Read-only. The height (mm) of an electrode when measured at a single point on the horizontal axis.
- **Tilt** – Read-only. The distance (mm) between the highest and lowest points of the tilted edge of an electrode.

Back layer



- **Trace width** – The width (mm) of the trace, which connects some segment of the Liquid Level sensor with the connector. The range – 0.1-10, default – 0.30.
- **Trace gap** – The distance (mm) between adjacent trace widths. The range – 0.1-10, default – 0.70.
- **Via holes pad** – The diameter (mm) of through-hole pads for each sensor between the front and back layer. The range – 0.1-10, default – 0.70.

Illustration of front and back layer design parameters



Foam detection

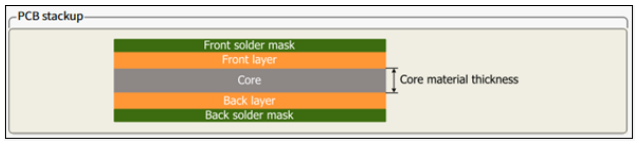
Enables the foam detection analysis for the selected sensor design.

5 Liquid Level tab

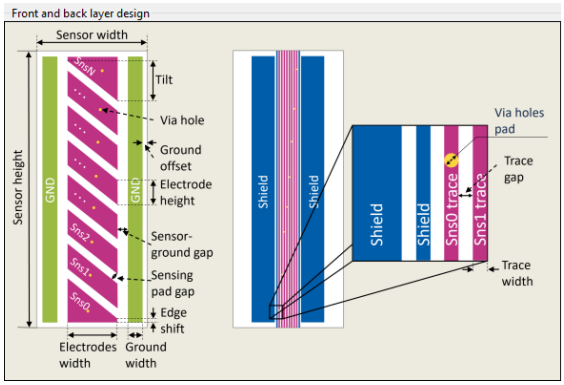


- **PCB type** – The PCB technology used for the sensor: Rigid, Flex, Other.
- **Core material relative permittivity** – The relative permittivity of the PCB core material. The range – 2-10, default – 4.70.
- **PCB material** – The PCB base material used for the sensor. Available: FR4, FR5, Getek, Rogers4350, Teflon, Polyimide, Polyester, Polyethylene Naphthalate, Liquid Crystal Polymer, Arylon.
- **Core material thickness** – The thickness (mm) of the PCB core material between the conductive layers. The range – 0.01-5, default – 1.00.

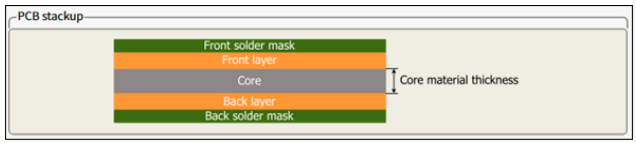
Illustration of PCB stackup



5.1.1 Illustration of front and back layer design parameters

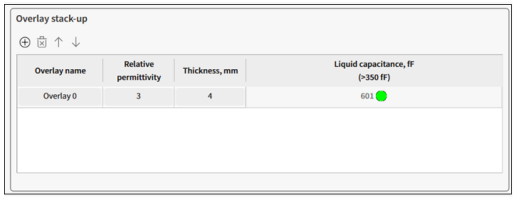


5.1.1.1 Illustration of PCB stackup



5.2 Sensor verification

Overlay stack-up



5 Liquid Level tab

Toolbar

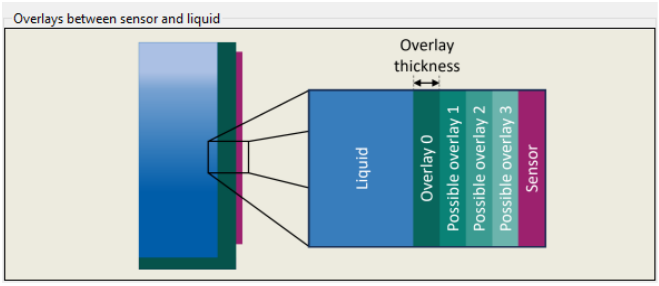
- To add an overlay, click the "plus" icon.
- To remove an overlay, click the "cross" icon.
- To move an overlay up/down, use the arrows.

Verification parameters table

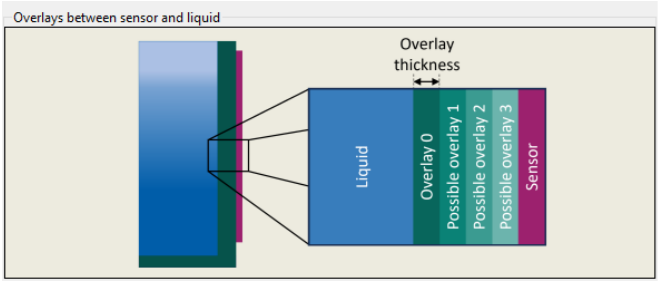
- **Overlay name** – The name of an overlay stack-up.
- **Relative permittivity** – Relative permittivity of the overlayer/stack-up material.
- **Thickness, mm** – The thickness of an overlay stack-up.
- **Liquid capacitance, fF (>350fF)** – The guarding value of calculated sensor capacitance depending on the sensor design and amount of added liquid. In short, the sensor capacitance caused by added liquid. This parameter must exceed 350fF. The sign in the executive button and a message in the Notice List will be displayed to the indicated inefficient design.

***Note**: When the value is below 350fF, you can still generate a *.dxf file but the sensor may have low performance.*

Illustration of overlays between sensor and liquid

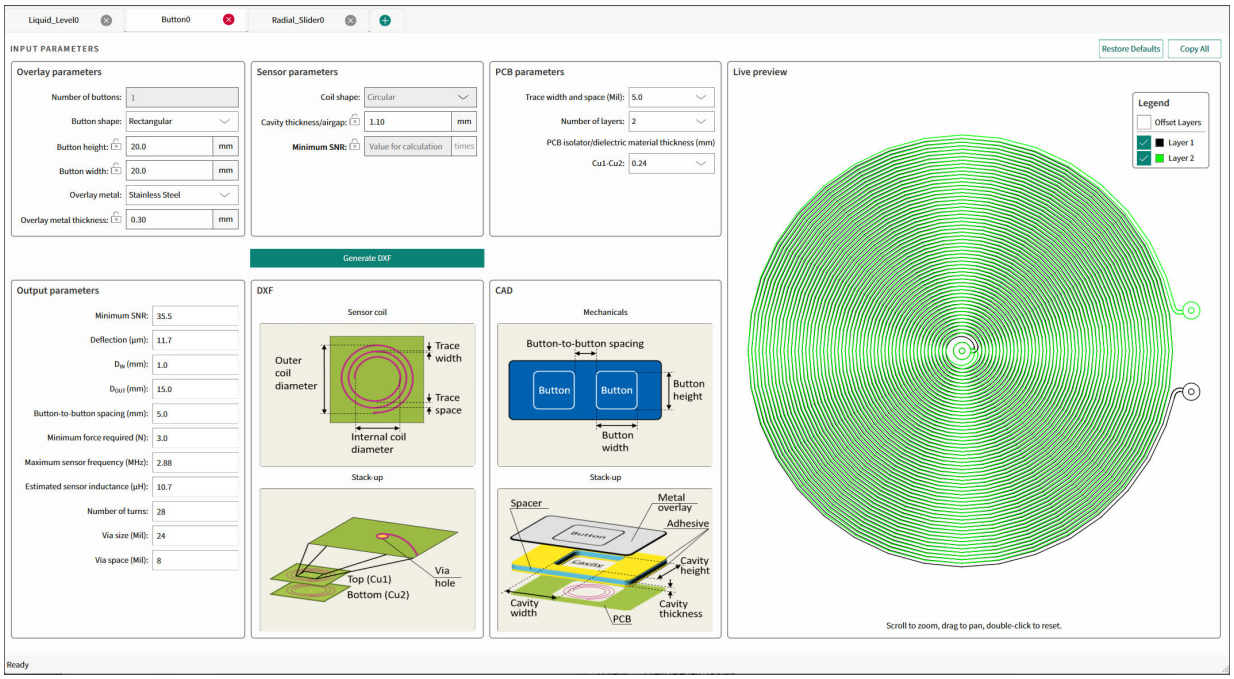


5.2.1 Illustration of overlays between sensor and liquid



6 Button tab

The **Button** tab is used to design an inductive sensing coil and its parameters for the preferred application requirements and generate a **.dxf* file.

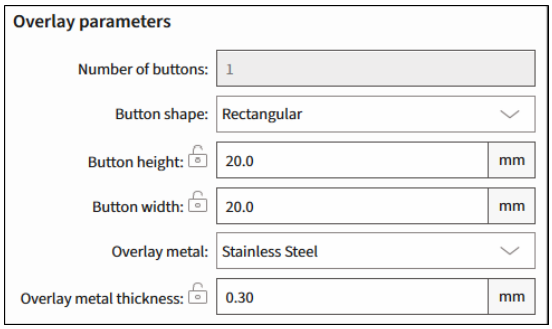


6.1 Input Parameters (Button)

The **Input parameters** include **Overlay**, **Sensor**, and **PCB** parameters.

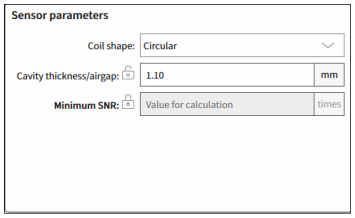
***Note**:* *The first output parameter will always be the same parameter, which is locked*  *(lock icon) in the **Input parameters** section. Lock the relevant parameter by double-clicking its unlocked icon*  *(unlock icon). Only one parameter can be locked at a time.*

Overlay parameters



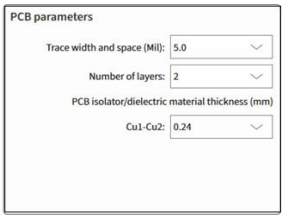
- **Number of buttons** – The number of buttons in the specified widget. Default – 1.
- **Button shape** – Circular.
- **Button diameter (mm)** – The range is 8-28, default – 20.
- **Overlay metal** [1)] – Stainless Steel, Aluminum. Default – Stainless Steel.
- **Overlay metal thickness (mm)** – The thickness of the specified overlay. The range is 0.2-0.5, default – 0.30.
  - Stainless Steel – The range is 0.2-0.5, default – 0.30.
  - Aluminum – The range is 0.25-0.5, default – 0.30.

Sensor parameters



- **Coil shape** – Circular.
- **Cavity thickness/airgap (mm)** – The gap between the overlay and the sensor coil. The range is 0.3-7. Default – 1.10.
- **Minimum SNR (times)** – The minimum SNR required for the sensor optimum performance. The range is 1-40.

PCB parameters



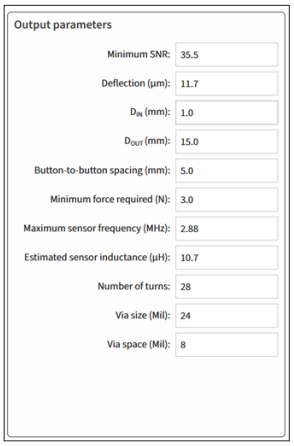
- **Trace width and space (Mil)** – The minimum sensor PCB trace width for generating output parameters. Select from: 3.5, 4.0, 5.0, or 7.0. Default – 5.
- **Number of layers** – The number of Cu layers. Select from: 1, 2 or 4. Default – 2.
- **PCB isolator/dielectric material thickness (mm)** – Enabled for more than 1 layer. The thickness of PCB Isolator or dielectric material used between Cu layers.
  - For 2 layers, Cu1-Cu2, select from: 0.24, 0.4, 1.0, 1.2. Default – 0.24.
  - For 4 layers, the spaces between the layers are fixed: 0.24 – 1.0 – 0.24.

***Note**: The **Generate DXF** button is disabled if the calculated value is beyond the allowed range and the first field of the **Output parameters** indicates that.*

6.2 Output parameters

The first output parameter will always be the same parameter, which is locked  in the Input parameters section. Lock the relevant parameter by double-clicking its unlock  icon .

[1] Titanium, Copper – not supported for this release.



***Note**: Only one parameter can be locked at a time.*

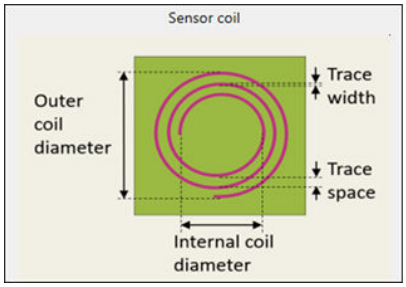
- **Button height and width, Button diameter, Minimum SNR (times), Overlay metal thickness, and Cavity thickness/airgap** – The calculated value of a specified parameter.
- **Deflection (µm)** – The overlay deflection for the minimum force applied to trigger the sensor to achieve the calculated or specified SNR.
- **D_{IN} (mm)** – The sensor-coil inner diameter/diagonal.
- **D_{OUT} (mm)** – The sensor-coil outer diameter/diagonal. Always – 75 % of the referred button size.
- **Button-to-button spacing (mm)** – The minimum spacing between buttons.
- **Minimum force required (N)** – The minimum sensor-activation force to achieve the calculated or specified SNR. Always – 3 N.
- **Maximum sensor frequency (MHz)** – The maximum sensor-drive frequency.
- **Estimated sensor inductance (µH)** – The estimated effective sensor coil inductance. The estimate is based on the number of coil turns, trace width, PCB layers, PCB layers spacing.
- **Number of turns** – The number of coil turns per each layer.
- **Via size (Mil)** – The diameter of the through-hole pad in the multi-layer PCB.
- **Via space (Mil)** – Spacing between through-hole pads and coil wire in the multi-layer PCB.

6.3 Illustration – DXF design

Displays the calculated structure of a designed sensor array.

Sensor coil

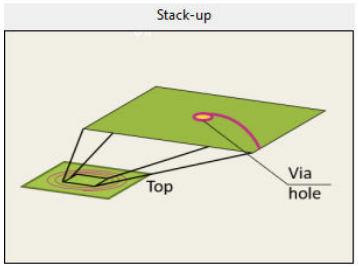
The illustrative image of a sensor coil.



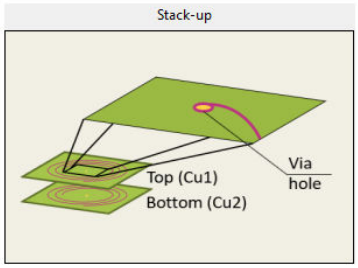
Stack-up

The illustrative image of a DXF Stack-up.

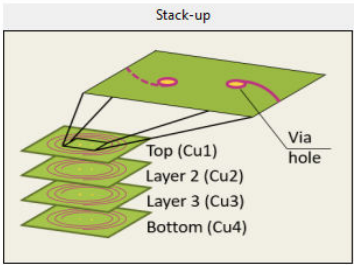
1 layer



2 layers



4 layers

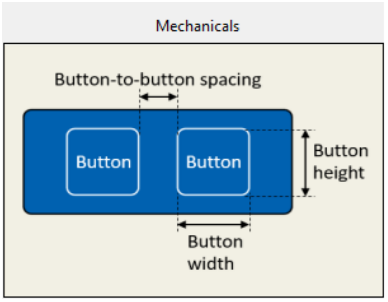


6.4 Illustration – CAD design

Displays the calculated mechanical structure of a designed button.

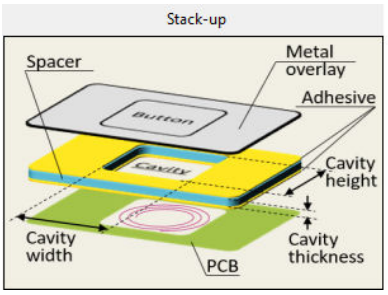
Mechanicals

The illustrative image of the buttons placement.



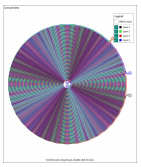
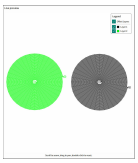
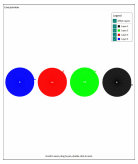
Stack-up

The illustrative image of the CAD stack-up.



6.5 Illustration – Live preview

Live preview illustrates the input parameters changing in dynamics.

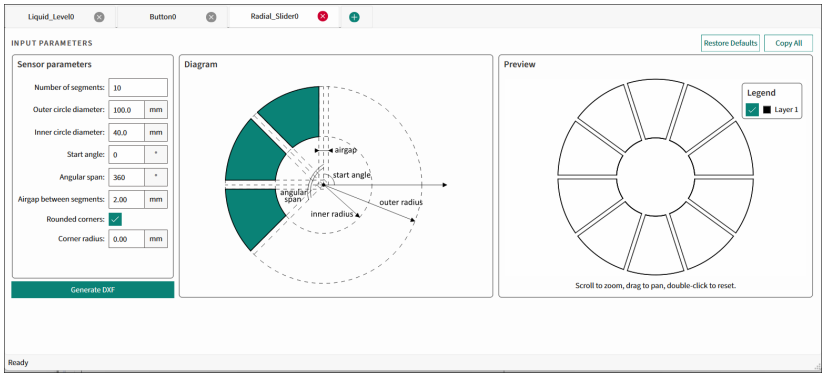
4 layers stacked	2 layers offset	4 layers offset
		

Set the **PCB parameters** as required for your project.

Legend

Generated DXF files have stacked layers. Check the **Offset layers** box to see the generated layers separately.

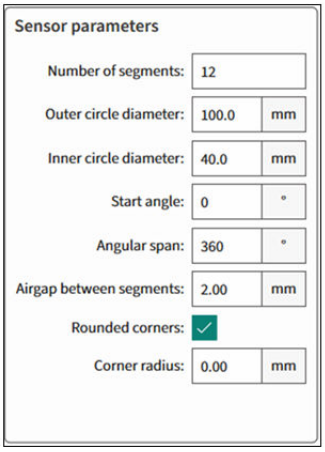
7 Radial Slider tab



The **Radial Slider** tab is used to design an array of capacitive sensors and their parameters for the preferred application requirements and generate a *.dxf file.

7.1 Input Parameters (Radial Slider)

Sensor parameters



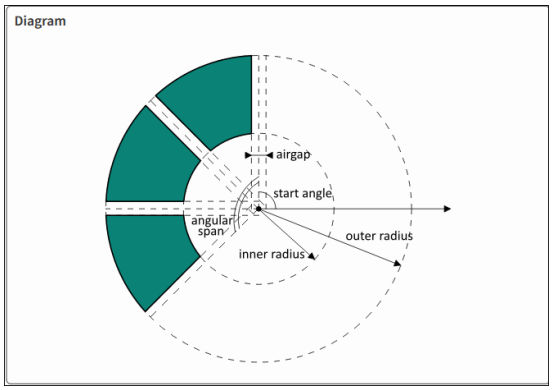
- **Number of segments** – The number of sensor subdivisions within the angular span. The range – 3-32; default – 8.
- **Outer circle diameter** – The diameter of the outer bounding circle with the sensor inside. The range – 10-300 mm; default – 100 mm.
- **Inner circle diameter** – The diameter of the inner circle with the sensor outside. The range is 1-299 mm; default – 40 mm.
- **Start angle** – The angle in positive polar coordinates where the first sensor starts. The range – 0-360°; default – 0°.
- **Angular span** – Contains all sensor segments. The range – 10-360°; default – 360°.
- **Airgap between segments** – The linear (consistent along the radius of bounding circles) distance between adjacent sensor edges. The range – 0.01-10 mm; default – 2 mm.
- **Rounded corners** – Rounded corners form smooth spline transitions with the bounding circle arcs, ensuring each junction occurs where the arc tangent matches the rounded-corner tangent.
- **Corner radius** – The radius of rounded corners. This parameter is only visible if **Rounded corners** is enabled. The range – 0-100 mm; default – 0.00 mm.

***Note**: The **Generate DXF** button is disabled when the geometry is not possible.*

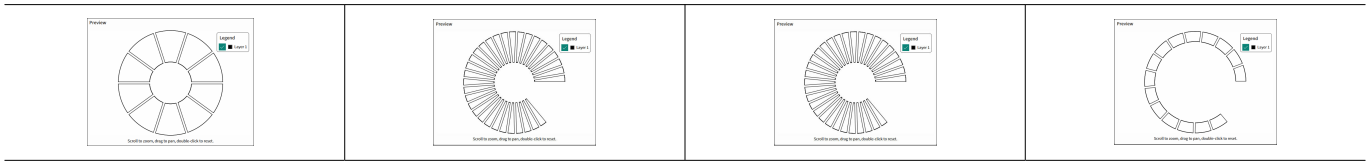
7.2 Illustration – Diagram and Preview

The illustration displays the images of the sensor performance.

Diagram is a graphic illustration of the Radial Slider sensor.



Preview illustrates the input parameters changing in dynamics depending on the selected parameters.



8 Version changes

Version	Change descriptions
1.0	New tool.
1.10	Improved ISX Button tab design and calculation Unified Liquid Level and ISX Button tabs behavior
1.20	Updated Liquid Level sensor dimensions.
	Updated GUI style.
1.21	Restricted Coil Shape to the Circular option for ISX Button sensors.
	Added core material estimation for the foam rejection feature.
1.30	Added the extended sensor height feature.
	Renamed "foam rejection" to "foam detection".
1.40	Added Radial Slider sensor type.
1.50	Added to Button tab (ISX sensing method): • a live preview of the Button coil geometry • traces (ease-of-use) used to connect coils to the rest of the board

Revision history

Revision	Date	Description
**	2025-02-12	New document.
*A	2025-03-04	Updated to version 1.10.
*B	2025-10-06	Updated to version 1.20.
*C	2026-04-14	Updated to version 1.21.
*D	2026-05-22	Updated to version 1.30.
*E	2026-08-28	Updated to version 1.40.
*F	2026-09-25	Updated to version 1.50.

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