

DESCRIPTION

Fe-Pt-BASED FERROMAGNETIC MATERIAL SPUTTERING TARGET

5

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates to a ferromagnetic material sputtering target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer, and to an Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target showing low particle generation.

10

BACKGROUND ART

15 [0002] In the field of magnetic recording represented by hard disk drives, ferromagnetic metal materials, i.e., Co, Fe, or Ni-based materials are used as materials of magnetic thin films that perform recording. For example, in recording layers of hard disks employing a longitudinal magnetic recording system, Co-Cr or Co-Cr-Pt ferromagnetic alloys of which main component is Co are used.

20

[0003] In recording layers of hard disks employing a perpendicular magnetic recording system that has been recently applied to practical use, composite materials composed of a Co-Cr-Pt ferromagnetic alloy, of which main component is Co, and a nonmagnetic inorganic grain are widely used. In many cases, the magnetic thin film of a magnetic recording medium such as a hard disk is produced by sputtering a ferromagnetic material sputtering target consisting primarily of the above-mentioned material because of its high productivity.

25

[0004] Meanwhile, a recording density of a magnetic recording medium is rapidly increasing every year, and the current surface density of 100 Gbits/in² may reach 1 Tbits/in² in the future.

30

If a recording density reaches 1 Tbits/in², the size of a recording bit is smaller than 10 nm. In that case, it is expected that superparamagnetism due to thermal fluctuation will pose a problem. It is also expected that magnetic recording media currently used, for example, a material in which

35

magnetocrystalline anisotropy is enhanced by adding Pt to a Co-Cr based alloy, or a material in which magnetic coupling between magnetic grains is weakened by further adding B thereto, will not be sufficient.

This is because a grain with a size of 10 nm or less stably showing a ferromagnetic behavior is required to have higher magnetocrystalline anisotropy.

[0005] In view of the discussion above, an FePt phase having a $L1_0$ structure gathers much attention as a material for an ultrahigh-density recording medium. An FePt phase having a $L1_0$ structure is also a potential material suitably applicable to a recording medium because it has an excellent corrosion resistance and oxidation resistance.

[0006] In order to use an FePt phase as a material for an ultrahigh-density recording medium, a technology is required to be developed where ordered FePt nanograins are dispersed in a similar orientation and in a magnetically isolated manner as high densely as possible.

From this point of view, a granular magnetic recording medium has been proposed. This granular medium, which has a structure where magnetic fine grains are deposited in a nonmagnetic matrix such as an oxide, needs to further have a structure where the magnetic grains are magnetically insulated mutually through the intervention of a nonmagnetic substance. For the granular magnetic recording medium and known Documents related to it, see Documents such as Patent Document 1, Patent Document 2, Patent Document 3 and Patent Document 4.

[0007] Moreover, the magnetic recording layer is composed of a magnetic phase such as an Fe-Pt alloy, and a non-magnetic phase to isolate the magnetic phase, and a metal oxide is effective as one of the materials for the non-magnetic phase. Many of these magnetic recording layers are formed by the sputtering deposition method. When trying to sputter a ferromagnetic material sputtering target containing a metal oxide using a magnetron sputtering apparatus, a problem may arise in general such an inadvertent release of the metal oxide during sputtering and abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target, resulting in particle generation (dust adhered on a substrate).

In order to solve this problem, the adherence between a metal oxide and a matrix alloy is required to be enhanced, and in addition, a sputtering

target is required to be more densified.

[0008] Patent Document 1: Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 2000-306228

Patent Document 2: Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 2000-311329

Patent Document 3: Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 2008-59733

5 Patent Document 4: Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 2008-169464

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[Technical Problem]

10 [0009] An object of the present invention is to provide a ferromagnetic material sputtering target, which enables to form a magnetic recording layer composed of a magnetic phase such as an Fe-Pt alloy, and a non-magnetic phase to isolate the magnetic phase, and in which a metal oxide is used as one of the materials for the non-magnetic phase. Provided is a
15 ferromagnetic material sputtering target wherein an inadvertent release of the metal oxide during sputtering and particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target are suppressed, the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy is enhanced, and its density is increased.

20 [Solution to Problem]

[0010] After intensive studies to achieve the above object, the present inventors find that by selecting Fe as a main component of a matrix alloy and a metal oxide having good wettability, a high-density sputtering target having the enhanced adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy can be produced. A sputtering target produced in this way can
25 significantly reduce particle generation. In other words, we find that a target with low particle generation can be obtained by using a metal oxide having good wettability.

[0011] Based on these findings, the present invention provides:

- 30 1) an Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target comprising a metal and a metal oxide, wherein the metal has a composition in which Pt is contained in an amount of 5 mol% or more and 60 mol% or less and the remainder is Fe;
- 35 2) the Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to 1) above, wherein a value of wettability for a molten metal of the metal oxide is

25 (J/molK) or less;

3) the Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to 1) or 2) above, wherein a content ratio of the metal oxide is 15 to 70 vol%; and

4) the Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to any one of 1) to 3) above, wherein the metal oxide having a grain size between 0.1 and 50 μm is dispersed in a matrix of the metal.

[0012] The present invention also provides:

5) the Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to any one of 1) to 4) above, wherein the metal oxide refers to one of more oxides selected from Zr, Mg, Ti, Al, B, Ta, Nb, Zn, Si, Cr, Mn, and Ga;

6) the Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to any one of 1) to 5) above, wherein the relative density is 97% or more; and

7) the Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to any one of 1) to 6) above, wherein one or more elements selected from B, C, Ru, Ag, Au, and Cu are contained as an addition element in an amount of 5 mol% or more and 20 mol% or less.

[Advantageous Effects of Invention]

[0013] The present invention relates to a ferromagnetic material sputtering target, which enables to form a magnetic recording layer composed of a magnetic phase such as an Fe-Pt alloy, and a non-magnetic phase to isolate the magnetic phase, and in which a metal oxide is used as one of the materials for the non-magnetic phase. The present invention can effectively provide a ferromagnetic material sputtering target wherein an inadvertent release of the metal oxide during sputtering and particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target are suppressed, the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy is enhanced, and its density is increased.

It can be advantageously used for deposition of a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

[0014] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention comprises: a metal having a composition in which Pt is

contained in an amount of 5 mol% or more and 60 mol% or less and the remainder is Fe; and a metal oxide. This is a basis of the present invention.

[0015] As shown in the following Examples, we find that addition of one or more oxides selected from Zr, Mg, Ti, Al, B, Ta, Nb, Zn, Si, Cr, Mn, and Ga as a metal oxide can increase the density of the Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target, and can significantly suppress particle generation. We also find that the addition of these oxides commonly improves the wettability for a molten metal of the metal oxide.

5 [0016] Wettability of a matrix alloy and a non-magnetic material can be predicted and evaluated by simulations using Calculated Wettability Index (hereafter, referred to as "CWI").

In particular, a CWI for a molten metal of a metal oxide having a value of 25 (J/molK) or less (Note that the unit "K" represents Kelvin as used throughout herein) is effective to produce a high-density ferromagnetic material sputtering target having good wettability and enhanced adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy. A sputtering target produced in this manner can effectively suppress particle generation.

15 [0017] The wettability described above can be calculated from the change in the free energy and the enthalpy of Fe and each metal oxide at any chemical equilibrium.

Calculation procedures are as follows: at first, the change in the free energy (ΔG_0) is calculated for a reaction in which oxygen is exchanged between an arbitrary oxide (solid phase) and Fe (liquid phase); secondly, the change in the enthalpy (ΔH_{mix}) for merging 1 mol of Fe into a metal component of the arbitrary oxide is calculated; and finally, a value calculated by $(\Delta G_0 + \Delta H_{\text{mix}})/RT$ was assigned to CWI, wherein R is the gas constant, and T is a temperature of the reaction field. A value of CWI is generally known to correlate with a contact angle between the arbitrary oxide and the metal component.

25 [0018] For the Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention, It is particularly effective that the content ratio of the metal oxide is 15 to 70 vol% and a metal oxide with a grain size of 0.1 to 50 μm is dispersed in a matrix of the metal. Thereby, a high-density sputtering target can be produced, and the obtained sputtering target can effectively

30

35

suppress particle generation.

[0019] Moreover, the metal oxide described above is preferably one or more oxides selected from Zr, Mg, Ti, Al, B, Ta, Nb, Zn, Si, Cr, Mn, and Ga. They can improve wettability, all of them are effective for a high-density sputtering target, and the produced sputtering target can effectively suppress particle generation. In addition, a relative density of 97% or more can be achieved for the Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target.

[0020] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention may also contain one or more elements selected from B, C, Ru, Ag, Au, and Cu as an additive element in an amount of 0.5 mol% or more and 20 mol% or less. Addition of these elements can increase a perpendicular coercive force of a film deposited using the ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention, and can decrease an ordering temperature of Fe-Pt.

[0021] A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention can be produced by the powder metallurgy method. For production, powder of each metal element (powders of Fe and Pt) and powder of an additive metal element (powders of B, C, Ru, Ag, Au, Cu), if desired, are prepared. A maximum grain size of these powders is desirably 20 μm or less.

Instead of using powder of each metal element, an atomized alloy powder of these metals, for example, an alloy powder comprising a base metal powder and an additive metal element to be added as appropriate may also be used. In this case, grains having a mean grain size of 10 μm to 200 μm are desirably used.

[0022] Then the powders are weighed to achieve a desired composition, which is then mixed and ground using a known technique such as a ball mill. When adding a metal oxide powder, it may be mixed with a metal powder at this stage.

On the other hand, a metal powder of 0.5 μm or larger is more preferred because a problem such as promoted oxidation may arise when the powder is too small.

Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, powder having a maximum grain size of 5 μm or less is desirably used. On the other hand, a metal oxide powder of 0.1 μm or larger is more preferred because it is easily agglomerated when the powder is too small.

[0023] The powder mixture obtained in this way is molded and sintered by hot press. In addition to hot press, the plasma discharge sintering method and the hot isostatic sintering method may be used. For a holding temperature during sintering, the lowest temperature in a temperature range where a target is well compacted is preferably used. The temperature range is often 800 to 1300°C, depending on a composition of the target.

[0024] Next, this mixed powder is filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature of 1100°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. This is further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe, and then subject to sputtering. Then the number of particles is counted.

[0025] Accordingly, a high-density Fe-Pt-oxide target in which the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy is enhanced can be produced. Even if a volume ratio of the oxide is increased, the density of the target can be maintained to be high, and particle generation during sputtering can be decreased. Moreover, as necessary, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material can be preliminarily predicted by simulations, which then can be confirmed by experiments to show that an oxide having a CWI of 25 (J/molK) or less is effective. The smaller is this value, the better is the wettability.

The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention produced in this way is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer.

[Examples]

[0026] The present invention will be described by Examples and Comparative Examples below. Note that the Examples are merely illustrative and the present invention shall in no way be limited thereby. That is, the present invention is limited only by the claims, and shall encompass various modifications other than those included in the Examples of the present invention.

[0027] (Example 1)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was

produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, zirconium oxide (ZrO_2) having a maximum grain size of 1 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the ZrO_2 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.60 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 97.4% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. Note that the number of particles was evaluated after increasing the absolute number of particles by increasing a film thickness by about 200 times thicker (to a thickness of 1000 nm) than the normal thickness because the difference in the number of particles was not clearly seen at a thickness normally used for a product (a thickness of the recording layer is 5 to 10 nm). Hereafter, a similarly treatment was performed.

As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 12. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (ZrO_2) was 22.5%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (ZrO_2) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The result showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 23.7 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter).

This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target.

Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0031] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0032] [Table 1]

	Oxide Species	Additive Element	Relative Density (%)	Number of Particles	Wettability CWI	Oxide (vol%)	Fe weight (Top kg/ Bottom mol%)	Pt weight (Top kg/ Bottom mol%)	Oxide weight (Top kg/ Bottom mol%)	Additive element weight (Top kg/ Bottom mol%)
Example 1	ZrO ₂		97.4	12	23.7	22.5%	0.6kg 42.2%	2.4kg 48.3%	0.6kg 9.6%	
Example 2	MgO		97.6	8	18	30.4%	0.6kg 35.2%	2.4kg 40.3%	0.3kg 24.4%	
Example 3	TiO ₂		98.4	7	16.5	27.2%	0.6kg 40.1%	2.4kg 45.9%	0.3kg 14.0%	
Example 4	Al ₂ O ₃		97.9	9	15.2	29.0%	0.6kg 41.3%	2.4kg 47.3%	0.3kg 11.3%	
Example 5	B ₂ O ₃		97.8	10	15	46.4%	0.6kg 39.3%	2.4kg 45.0%	0.3kg 15.8%	
Example 6	Ta ₂ O ₅		98.5	7	14.3	15.4%	0.6kg 45.3%	2.4kg 51.9%	0.3kg 2.9%	
Example 7	Nb ₂ O ₅		98.2	8	11.8	26.3%	0.6kg 44.4%	2.4kg 50.9%	0.3kg 4.7%	
Example 8	ZnO		98.5	8	9.6	22.2%	0.6kg 40.2%	2.4kg 46.0%	0.3kg 13.8%	
Example 9	SiO ₂		98.8	7	7.3	42.0%	0.6kg 38.3%	2.4kg 43.9%	0.3kg 17.8%	
Example 10	Cr ₂ O ₃		99.3	6	6.2	23.4%	0.6kg 42.9%	2.4kg 49.2%	0.3kg 7.9%	
Example 11	MnO		99.2	6	6.1	24.9%	0.6kg 44.1%	2.4kg 50.5%	0.3kg 5.4%	
Example 12	Ga ₂ O ₃		99.5	7	1.8	19.8%	0.6kg 43.6%	2.4kg 49.9%	0.3kg 6.5%	
Comparative Example 1	CaO		95.3	64	32.5	32.1%	0.6kg 37.8%	2.4kg 43.3%	0.3kg 18.8%	
Comparative Example 2	Y ₂ O ₃		96.9	53	27.6	24.1%	0.6kg 44.1%	2.4kg 50.5%	0.3kg 5.5%	
Comparative Example 3	CoO		99.9	—	-2	19.8%	0.6kg 39.7%	2.4kg 45.5%	0.3kg 14.8%	
Comparative Example 4	In ₂ O ₃		99.8	—	-2.3	18.1%	0.6kg 44.5%	2.4kg 51.0%	0.3kg 4.5%	
Comparative Example 5	GeO ₂		99.9	—	-2.9	20.4%	0.6kg 41.5%	2.4kg 47.5%	0.3kg 11.1%	
Example 13	SiO ₂		98.4	19	7.3	62.8%	0.6kg 31.0%	2.4kg 35.5%	0.7kg 33.6%	
Example 14	SiO ₂		99.2	6	7.3	22.5%	0.6kg 42.9%	2.4kg 49.1%	0.12kg 8.0%	
Example 15	TiO ₂		98.2	16	16.5	55.5%	0.6kg 30.2%	2.4kg 34.6%	1kg 35.2%	
Example 16	Cr ₂ O ₃		98.9	8	6.2	50.5%	0.6kg 36.3%	2.4kg 41.5%	1kg 22.2%	
Example 17	SiO ₂	Au	97.8	7	7.3	49.7%	0.6kg 30.3%	2.4kg 34.7%	0.5kg 23.5%	0.4kg 11.5%
Example 18	SiO ₂	Ag	97.1	10	7.3	54.5%	0.6kg 34.0%	2.4kg 39.0%	0.5kg 26.4%	0.01kg 0.6%
Example 19	SiO ₂	Cu	98.3	7	7.3	51.9%	0.6kg 31.1%	2.4kg 35.6%	0.5kg 24.1%	0.1kg 9.1%
Example 20	SiO ₂	Cu	98.8	6	7.3	38.4%	0.6kg 32.8%	2.1kg 32.8%	0.3kg 15.2%	0.2kg 19.2%
Example 21	SiO ₂	Ru	97.9	6	7.3	52.6%	0.6kg 32.2%	2.4kg 36.9%	0.5kg 25.0%	0.1kg 5.9%
Example 22	SiO ₂	C	97.0	18	7.3	45.5%	0.6kg 38.1%	2.1kg 38.2%	0.3kg 17.7%	0.01kg 5.9%
Example 23	SiO ₂	B	97.9	11	7.3	42.7%	0.6kg 37.9%	2.1kg 38.0%	0.3kg 17.6%	0.01kg 6.5%
Example 24	TiO ₂		99.1	6	16.5	37.3%	1.2kg 88.5%	0.3kg 6.3%	0.1kg 5.2%	
Example 25	TiO ₂		98.9	7	16.5	42.7%	0.35kg 30.8%	2.38kg 60.0%	0.15kg 9.2%	

[0033] (Example 2)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, magnesium oxide (MgO) having a maximum grain size of 0.5 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the MgO powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.30 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 97.6% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 8.

In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (MgO) was 30.4%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (MgO) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

In the same way as in Example 1, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 18.0 (J/molK). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target.

Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release

of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target.

[0037] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0038] (Example 3)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, titanium oxide (TiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 3 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the TiO_2 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.30 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0039] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 98.4% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0040] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 7. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (TiO_2) was 27.2%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (TiO_2) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during

sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

[0041] In the same way as in Example 1, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 16.5 (J/molK). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target.

[0042] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0043] (Example 4)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, aluminum oxide (Al_2O_3) having a maximum grain size of 1 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the Al_2O_3 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.30 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0044] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 97.9% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped

target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0045] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 9. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (Al_2O_3) was 29.0%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (Al_2O_3) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

[0046] In the same way as in Example 1, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 15.2 (J/molK). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target.

[0047] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0048] (Example 5)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, boron oxide (B_2O_3) having a maximum grain size of 3 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the B_2O_3 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.30 kg, respectively, and mixed and

ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0049] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 97.8% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

5 [0050] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 10. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (B_2O_3) was 46.4%.

15 [0051] Note that, since the oxide (B_2O_3) in this case has a melting point of about 500°C, B_2O_3 may melt out when the mixed powder containing B_2O_3 is subject to hot pressing, and this may make density growth difficult. Therefore, when adding B_2O_3 , a volume ratio of about 40% is preferred. In this way, the following results were obtained: the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

[0052] In the same way as in Example 1, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 15.0 (J/molK). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target.

25 [0053] Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target.

30 [0053] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a

35

granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

5 [0054] (Example 6)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal
10 oxide powder, tantalum oxide (Ta_2O_5) having a maximum grain size of 0.7 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the Ta_2O_5 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.30 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be
15 added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0055] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact.
20 Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 98.5% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0056] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of
25 particles was 7. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (Ta_2O_5) was 15.4%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (Ta_2O_5) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during
30 sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

[0057] In the same way as in Example 1, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 14.3 (J/molK). This
35 wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and

the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target.

Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target.

[0058] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0059] (Example 7)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, niobium oxide (Nb_2O_5) having a maximum grain size of 0.9 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the Nb_2O_5 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.30 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0060] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 98.2% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0061] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 8. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (B_2O_5) was

26.3%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (Nb_2O_5) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

[0062] In the same way as in Example 1, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 11.8 (J/molK). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target.

Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target.

[0063] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0064] (Example 8)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, zinc oxide (ZnO) having a maximum grain size of 3 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the ZnO powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.30 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0065] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably

selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 98.5% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0066] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 8. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (ZnO) was 22.2%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (ZnO) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

[0067] In the same way as in Example 1, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 9.6 (J/molK). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target.

Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target.

[0068] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0069] (Example 9)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having

a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, silicon oxide (SiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 2 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the SiO_2 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.30 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 98.8% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 7. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (SiO_2) was 42.0%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (SiO_2) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

In the same way as in Example 1, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 7.3 (J/molK). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, has a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target.

Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppresses particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target.

The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a

magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0074] (Example 10)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, chromium oxide (Cr_2O_3) having a maximum grain size of 3 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the Cr_2O_3 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.30 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0075] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 99.3% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0076] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 6. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (Cr_2O_3) was 23.4%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (Cr_2O_3) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

[0077] In the same way as in Example 1, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 6.2 (J/molK). This

wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target.

Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target.

[0078] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0079] (Example 11)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, manganese oxide (MnO) having a maximum grain size of 3 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the MnO powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.30 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0080] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 99.2% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0081] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of

particles was 6. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (MnO) was 24.9%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (MnO) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

[0082] In the same way as in Example 1, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 6.1 (J/molK). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, has a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target.

[0083] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0084] (Example 12)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, gallium oxide (Ga_2O_3) having a maximum grain size of 0.9 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the Ga_2O_3 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.30 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0085] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably

selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 99.5% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0086] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 7. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (Ga_2O_3) was 19.8%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (Ga_2O_3) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples shown below.

[0087] In the same way as in Example 1, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 1.8 (J/molK). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target.

Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target.

[0088] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0089] (Comparative Example 1)

A target was produced under the same conditions as in Example 2 except that CaO was added as the oxide. In this case, CaO used was preliminarily predicted for the wettability of the matrix alloy and the

non-magnetic material by simulations. This predicted measure of wettability CWI was 32.5 (J/mol·K), showing CaO has poor wettability.

The relative density of the sintered target was 95.3%. It was a low-density Fe-Pt-oxide (CaO) target having poor adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy.

[0090] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 64. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (CaO) was 32.1%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (CaO) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target remained to be low, and the number of particles generated during sputtering exceeded 20, which is more than the results in any Examples shown above.

[0091] This decreased wettability appears to reduce the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the decreased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to increase an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, increase particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. Therefore, the Fe-Pt-oxide (CaO) target doped with an oxide showing poor wettability (CaO) was found to be unfavorable.

[0092] (Comparative Example 2)

A target was produced under the same conditions as in Example 2 except that Y_2O_3 was added as the oxide. In this case, Y_2O_3 used was preliminarily predicted for the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material by simulations. This predicted measure of wettability CWI was 27.6 (J/mol·K), showing Y_2O_3 has poor wettability.

The relative density of the sintered target was 96.9%. It was a low-density Fe-Pt-oxide (Y_2O_3) target having poor adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy.

[0093] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 53. In this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (Y_2O_3) was 24.1%. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume

ratio of the oxide (Y_2O_3) was increased up to 70%, the density of the target remained to be low, and the number of particles generated during sputtering exceeded 20, which is more than the results in any Examples shown above.

[0094] This decreased wettability appears to reduce the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the decreased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to increase an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, increase particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. Therefore, the Fe-Pt-oxide (Y_2O_3) target doped with an oxide showing poor wettability (Y_2O_3) was found to be unfavorable.

[0095] (Comparative Example 3)

A target was tried to be produced under the same conditions as in Example 2 except that CoO was added as the oxide. In this case, CoO used was preliminarily predicted for the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material by simulations. This predicted measure of wettability CWI was $-2.0 \text{ (J/mol}\cdot\text{K)}$.

The relative density of the sintered target was 99.9%. However, CoO was pyrolyzed at high temperature and could not exist in the sintered compact in the form of an oxide. Therefore a sintered target having an intended composition of the present invention could not be obtained. Note that in this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (CoO) was 19.8%.

[0096] (Comparative Example 4)

A target was tried to be produced under the same conditions as in Example 1 except that In_2O_3 was added as the oxide. In this case, In_2O_3 used was preliminarily predicted for the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material by simulations. This predicted measure of wettability CWI was $-2.3 \text{ (J/mol}\cdot\text{K)}$.

The relative density of the sintered target was 99.8%. However, In_2O_3 was pyrolyzed at high temperature and could not exist in the sintered compact in the form of an oxide. Therefore a sintered target having an intended composition of the present invention could not be obtained. Note that in this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (In_2O_3) was 18.1%.

[0097] (Comparative Example 5)

A target was tried to be produced under the same conditions as in

Example 1 except that GeO_2 was added as the oxide. In this case, GeO_2 used was preliminarily predicted for the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material by simulations. This predicted measure of wettability CWI was -2.9 (J/molK).

5 The relative density of the sintered target was 99.9%. However, GeO_2 was pyrolyzed at high temperature and could not exist in the sintered compact in the form of an oxide. Therefore a sintered target having an intended composition of the present invention could not be obtained. Note that in this case, the volume ratio of the oxide (GeO_2) was 20.4%.

10 [0098] (Example 13)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, silicon oxide (SiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 2 μm was used.

15 Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the SiO_2 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.70 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0099] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 98.4% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe. Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

25 [0100] In this way, a high-density Fe-Pt-oxide (SiO_2) target having good adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy was able to be produced. The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1.

30 As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 19. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (SiO_2)

35

was increased up to 62.8%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

[0101] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 7.3 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0102] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0103] (Example 14)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, silicon oxide (SiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 2 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the SiO_2 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 0.12 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0104] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding

time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 99.2% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

5 [0105] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

10 The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 6. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (SiO_2) was increased up to 22.5%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

15 [0106] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 7.3 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability
20 appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

25 [0107] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film
30 formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0108] (Example 15)

35 A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal

oxide powder, titanium oxide (TiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 3 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the TiO_2 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 1.00 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0109] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 98.2% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0110] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 16. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (TiO_2) was increased up to 55.5%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

[0111] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 16.5 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0112] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a

granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

5 [0113] (Example 16)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal
10 oxide powder, chromium oxide (Cr_2O_3) having a maximum grain size of 3 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the Cr_2O_3 powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, and 1.00 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be
15 added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0114] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact.
20 Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 98.9% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0115] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

25 The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 8. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (Cr_2O_3) was increased up to 50.5%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less,
30 which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

[0116] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 6.2 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter).
35 This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide

and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0117] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0118] (Example 17)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder, Pt powder and Au powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, silicon oxide (SiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 2 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, the SiO_2 powder, and the Au powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, 0.50 kg, and 0.40 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0119] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 97.8% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0120] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 7. In this case, the

following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (SiO_2) was increased up to 49.7%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

5 [0121] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 7.3 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target.

10 Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

15 [0122] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0123] (Example 18)

25 A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder, Pt powder and Ag powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, silicon oxide (SiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 2 μm was used.

30 Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, the SiO_2 powder, and the Ag powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, 0.50 kg, and 0.01 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0124] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably

35

selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 97.1% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0125] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 10. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (SiO_2) was increased up to 54.5%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

[0126] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 7.3 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0127] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0128] (Example 19)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder, Pt powder and Cu powder were prepared. For these powders,

powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, silicon oxide (SiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 2 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, the SiO_2 powder, and the Cu powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, 0.50 kg, and 0.10 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0129] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 98.3% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0130] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 7. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (SiO_2) was increased up to 51.9%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

[0131] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 7.3 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0132] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a

magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0133] (Example 20)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder, Pt powder and Cu powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, silicon oxide (SiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 2 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, the SiO_2 powder, and the Cu powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.10 kg, 0.30 kg, and 0.20 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0134] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 98.8% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0135] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 6. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (SiO_2) was increased up to 38.4%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

[0136] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 7.3 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter).

This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0137] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0138] (Example 21)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder, Pt powder and Ru powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, silicon oxide (SiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 2 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, the SiO_2 powder, and the Ru powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.40 kg, 0.50 kg, and 0.10 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0139] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 97.9% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0140] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table

1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 6. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (SiO_2) was increased up to 52.6%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

[0141] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 7.3 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target.

Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0142] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0143] (Example 22)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder, Pt powder and C powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, silicon oxide (SiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 2 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, the SiO_2 powder, and the C powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.10 kg, 0.30 kg, and 0.01 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0144] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed

in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 97.0% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0145] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 18. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (SiO_2) was increased up to 45.5%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

[0146] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 7.3 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0147] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0148] (Example 23)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe

powder, Pt powder and B powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, silicon oxide (SiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 2 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, the SiO_2 powder, and the B powder were weighed to 0.60 kg, 2.10 kg, 0.30 kg, and 0.01 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0149] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 97.9% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0150] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 11. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (SiO_2) was increased up to 42.7%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

[0151] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 7.3 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0152] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the

invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0153] (Example 24)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, titanium oxide (TiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 3 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the TiO_2 powder were weighed to 1.20 kg, 0.30 kg, and 0.10 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0154] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 99.1% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0155] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 6. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (TiO_2) was increased up to 37.3%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

[0156] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 16.5 (J/molK). The

smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0157] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

[0158] (Example 25)

A ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention was produced by the powder metallurgy method. For the production, Fe powder and Pt powder were prepared. For these powders, powder having a maximum grain size of 10 μm was used for each. Moreover, for a metal oxide powder, titanium oxide (TiO_2) having a maximum grain size of 3 μm was used.

Then, the Fe powder, the Pt powder, and the TiO_2 powder were weighed to 0.35 kg, 2.38 kg, and 0.15 kg, respectively, and mixed and ground using the ball mill method. Thus, the metal oxide powder to be added was simultaneously mixed with the metal powders.

[0159] Next, this mixed powder was filled in a carbon mold, and hot pressed in vacuum atmosphere under the conditions of: a temperature suitably selected from the temperature range between 800 and 1300°C, a holding time of 2 hours, and a pressure of 30 MPa, to obtain a sintered compact. Sinterability was good, and a sintered compact having a relative density of 98.9% could be obtained. This was further processed to a disc-shaped target with a diameter of 180 mm and a thickness of 5 mm by a lathe.

[0160] Then sputtering was performed using this sputtering target, and the number of particles was counted.

The number of generated particles during sputtering is shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the number of particles was 7. In this case, the following results were obtained: even if the volume ratio of the oxide (TiO_2) was increased up to 42.7%, the density of the target was maintained to be high, and the number of particles generated during sputtering was 20 or less, which is less than the results in any Comparative Examples.

[0161] On the other hand, the wettability of the matrix alloy and the non-magnetic material was preliminary predicted by simulations. The results showed that a measure of wettability CWI was 16.5 (J/molK). The smaller is the value, the better is the wettability (the same hereinafter). This wettability appears to improve the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy, and in addition, have a significant impact on the increased density of the sputtering target. Moreover, this wettability appears to suppress an inadvertent release of a metal oxide during sputtering, and in addition to this, suppress particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently included in the target. The above results are shown in Table 1.

[0162] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the invention produced in this fashion is useful as a target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer. In particular, mutual selection of a matrix alloy and an oxide and their properties are important. This can effectively suppress particle generation which easily occurs upon film formation with a sputtering target containing an oxide.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

[0163] An object of the present invention is to provide a ferromagnetic material sputtering target, which enables to form a magnetic recording layer composed of a magnetic phase such as an Fe-Pt alloy, and a non-magnetic phase to isolate the magnetic phase, and in which a metal oxide is used as one of the materials for the non-magnetic phase. The ferromagnetic material sputtering target of the present invention: can effectively suppress an inadvertent release of the metal oxide during sputtering and particle generation due to abnormal electrical discharge starting at a void inherently

included in the target; can enhance the adherence between the metal oxide and the matrix alloy; and can increase its density. Therefore, it is useful as a ferromagnetic material sputtering target used for depositing a magnetic material thin film for a magnetic recording medium, in particular, a granular magnetic recording layer.

CLAIMS

[Claim 1] An Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target comprising a metal and a metal oxide, wherein the metal has a composition in which Pt is contained in an amount of 5 mol% or more and 60 mol% or less and the remainder is Fe.

[Claim 2] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to claim 1, wherein a value of wettability for a molten metal of the metal oxide is 25 (J/molK) or less.

[Claim 3] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to claim 1 or 2, wherein a content ratio of the metal oxide is 15 to 70 vol%.

[Claim 4] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the metal oxide having a grain size between 0.1 and 50 μm is dispersed in a matrix of the metal.

[Claim 5] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the metal oxide refers to one or more oxides selected from Zr, Mg, Ti, Al, B, Ta, Nb, Zn, Si, Cr, Mn, and Ga.

[Claim 6] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the relative density is 97% or more.

[Claim 7] The Fe-Pt-based ferromagnetic material sputtering target according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein one or more elements selected from B, C, Ru, Ag, Au, and Cu are contained as an additive element in an amount of 0.5 mol% or more and 20 mol% or less.