

### Standardizing CDC and RDC abstract models

Accellera CDC Working Group

#### **Authors**

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# Hierarchical CDC and RDC closure with standard abstract models

#### Accellera CDC Working Group

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**SIEMENS** 



SYNOPSYS









# Making the impossible possible: CDC and RDC closure with abstracts from different tools

#### Accellera CDC Working Group

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SYNOPSYS







#### Presenter Introduction

- Anupam Bakshi
  - leads Agnisys for register automation & iSpec.ai for automating assertion generation





### Agenda (DVCON Japan)

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## CDC-RDC Basic Knowledge:

- Synchronous vs. asynchronous clocks
- Problems related to Clock Domain Crossing (CDC)
- CDC Synchronization
- Problems related to Reset Domain Crossing (RDC)
- RDC Synchronization



### 1. Synchronous vs. Asynchronous

- Synchronous clocks
  - Same source
  - Have an easily-established timing relationship
  - Static Timing Analysis works
- Asynchronous clocks
  - From different sources
  - Timing relationship unknown or difficult to establish
  - Static Timing Analysis doesn't work
- Multi-clock designs, NOT clockless





### 2. Coin Toss Analogy

- Think of a setup/hold violation result as the toss of a coin
  - Heads or Tails, but also very rarely it might just stay on its edge (metastability) before falling one way or the other
- Fixing metastability and fixing data coherency are independent
- For one bit, fixing metastability is enough
  - · Coherency doesn't matter, since either heads or tails is fine
- For multiple bits, must fix metastability AND data coherency
  - Requires all heads or all tails from multiple coins
  - A losing bet!



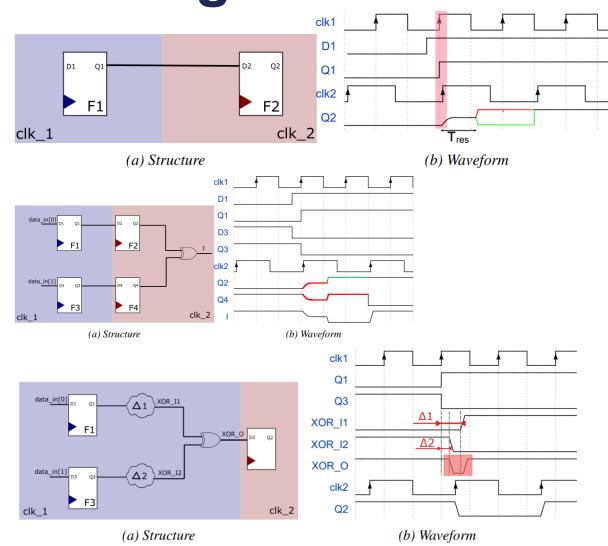


### 3. Why do CDCs need fixing?

- Metastability
  - Timing violations on registers resulting in an indeterminate state lasting more than one clock cycle

The coin on its edge

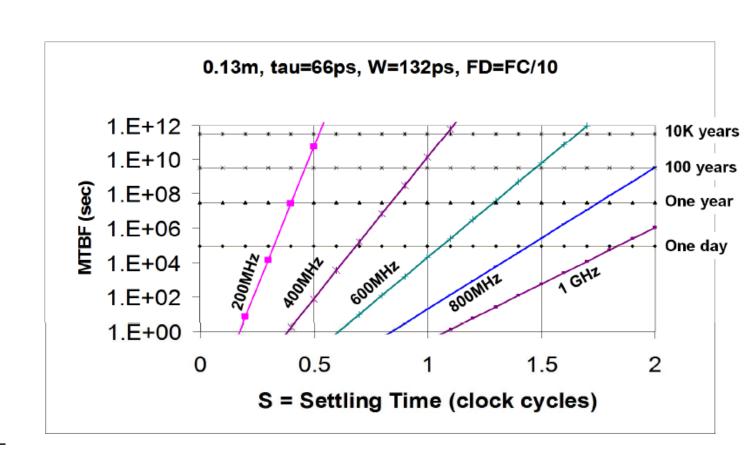
- Loss of Data Coherency
  - The indeterminate state settles to a random value
- Glitches
  - Multiple synchronized paths reconverge to cause unexpected momentary transitions





#### 4. MTBF Mean Time Between Failures

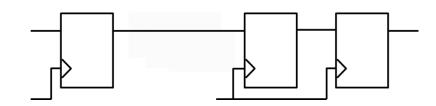
- given metastability at t=0, probability of metastability at t>0 ->  $e^{-t/\tau}$
- failure: still metastable at next clock edge
  - failure = p(enter m.s) x p(still m.s after  $T_S$ ) =  $T_W/T_C$  x  $e^{-T_S/\tau}$
  - rate(failure)
    - = rate(enter m.s) x p(still m.s after T<sub>s</sub>)
    - =  $T_W \times f_C \times f_D \times e^{-T_S/\tau}$
- MTBF = 1 / rate(failure)  $MTBF = \frac{e^{T_s/\tau}}{T_W f_C f_D}$





### 4. Synchronization

4.1 Multi-flop synchronizers



- Synchronizing one bit with two DFFs changes odds of metastability on the 2<sup>nd</sup> flop from ~1/p to ~1/p<sup>2</sup>
  - The probability of a metastability event in a 2-flop metastability resolver

$$MTBF(t_r) = \frac{e^{\frac{t_r}{\tau}}}{T_0 * F_c * F_d} * \frac{e^{\frac{T_r}{\tau}}}{T_0 * F_c}$$

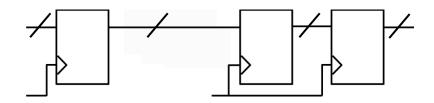
- For a typical .25um ASIC technology,  $T_0$ =9.6nS, $\tau$ =0.31nS, and for  $T_r$ =2.3nS, $F_c$ =100Mhz and  $F_d$ =1Mhz, the MTBF=20.1 days.
- When using a 2-flop synchronizer, the MTBF at the output of the 2nd flop will be 9.57\*10^10years.
- Add a 3<sup>rd</sup> DFF for ~1/p<sup>3</sup>
- One bit matches cycle *n* or cycle *n*+1 by coincidence





### 4. Synchronization

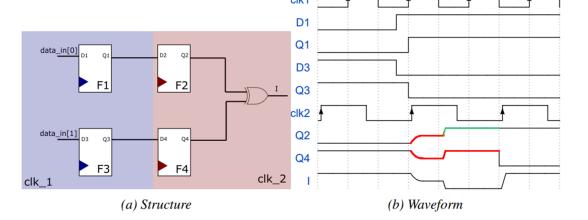
4.1 Multi-flop synchronizers



- With multiple bits, metastability is still addressed but data coherency is a problem!
  - If multiple bits change on the same cycle, the result of each bit is random

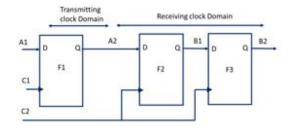
• This synchronization works only if the data is "gray" (only one bit

changes)

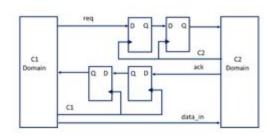


#### 4. Structural CDC

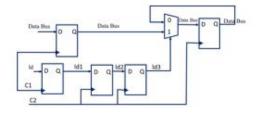
#### Commonly Used Synchronization Schemes



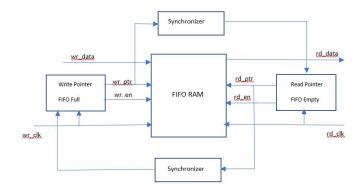
Double-FF synchronizer



Handshake synchronizer



MUX synchronizer



FIFO synchronizer







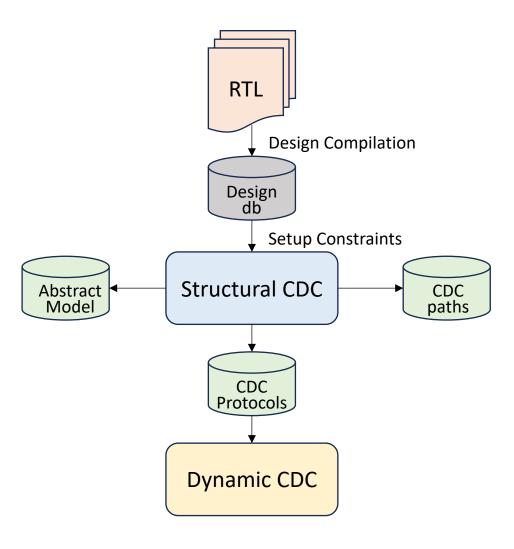
### CDC verification on RTL

- Setup generation
- CDC setup check
- CDC structural checks
- CDC assertions-based verification
- Hierarchical CDC structural verification



#### 1. CDC Verification flow

- Design Compilation
  - Parameters, defines
- Setup Constraints
  - Clock, reset, and IO signals
  - Configuration: stable, constant inputs
- Structural CDC Check
  - CDC schemes validation and debugging
- Abstract Model Generation
- Dynamic CDC Verification
  - CDC constraints and protocols







### 2. Setup Constraints

The set of constraints used to guide CDC verification

- Clocks
- Resets
- Configuration signals
- Black boxes
- Primary inputs/outputs

Don't rely blindly on timing constraints



Reuse timing constraints is risky

- Pseudo-static signals
- Exclusive signals
- Gray coded buses
- Custom synchronizers
- False path

Clock groups for timing analysis =/= Clock groups for CDC analysis
Signal paths waived for time analysis =/= Signal paths waived for CDC analysis





### 3. Dynamic CDC Verification

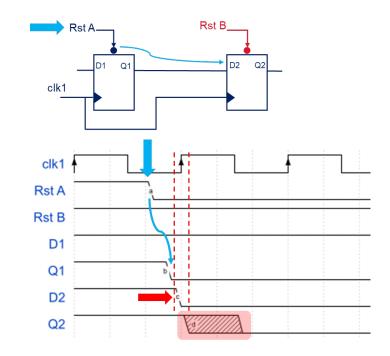
- Dynamic verification is to ensure
  - structural CDC check is done with the proper constraints and assumptions
  - the identified CDC paths follow the protools defined by the CDC schemes
- CDC constraint properties
  - Assertions are generated based on the setup constraints
  - Ideally, should be done concurrently with structural CDC check
  - Violations can potentially invalidate the complete structural CDC
- CDC protocol properties
  - Assertions are generated based on the CDC paths
  - Violations can potentially invalidate the CDC paths

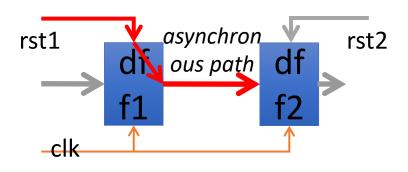




### 4. Reset Analysis

- DFF models also have recovery time
  - Time between asynchronous Set/Reset release and clock when data and output are different
  - Static analysis is sufficient to determine synchronization point
- Asynchronous reset domains causes meta-stability
  - Contain registers whose resets are asserted asynchronously
  - Originate in one asynchronous reset domain
  - Sampled by register(s) in a different reset domain



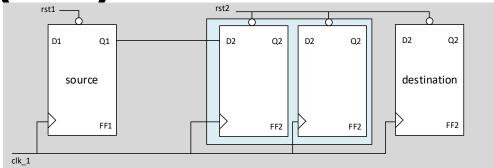


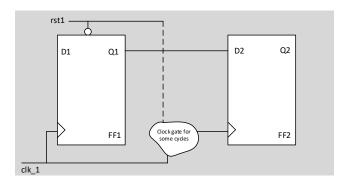


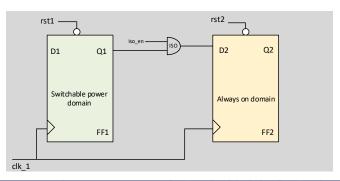


### 5. Resolving RDC issues (1/2)

- Adding synchronizer in the destination domain
- Reset ordering of different resets in the design
- Reset-less paths: Clock gate the downstream flops for some cycles when rst1 asserts to avoid glitch capture
- Multipower domain designs : reset ordering, isolation en asserted





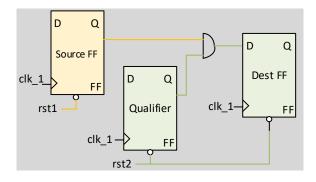




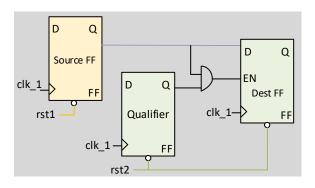


### 5. Resolving RDC issues (2/2)

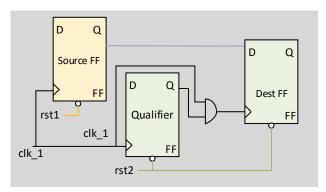
- Using Qualifiers
  - Data Qualifier
  - Enable Qualifier
  - Clock Qualifier



Data Qualifier



**Enable Qualifier** 



**Clock Qualifier** 

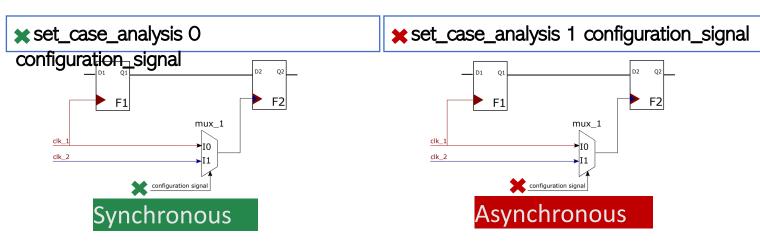




#### Structural CDC/RDC - Limitations

#### 1- Constraints based static checks

- Affect the results of the structural checks
- Are taken blindly for the structural verification
  - e.g., a CDC can be bypassed if the crossing signal is pseudo-static



#### 2- Rules based static checks

- Not possible to have rules for all architectures
- False positives / negatives
- Cannot verify correctness of design



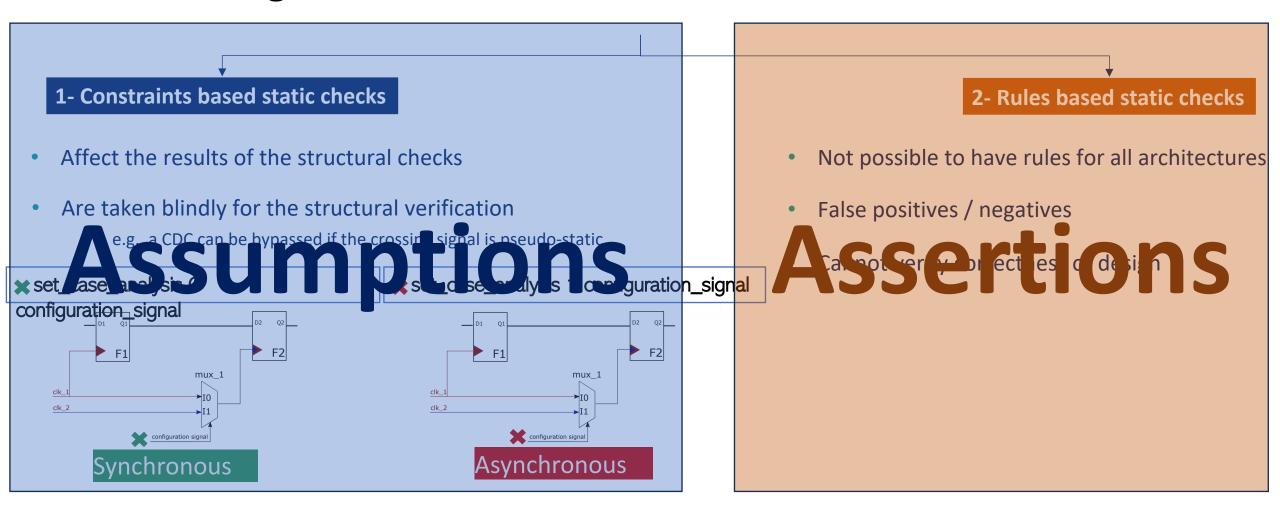




### CDC Assertion based Verification

- Constraint based static checks
- Rule based static checks









#### 1- Constraints based static checks

- Constraints to be double checked with the functional verification
- Configuration signals

```
define_constant –value [0/1] –signal [signal name]
```

```
always@*
begin
assert_cdc_constant_prop : assert (select === value)
```

```
F1

P1 Q1

P2 Q2

F2

F2

Clk_1

clk_2

select

configuration signal
```



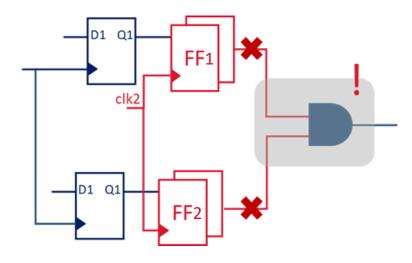


1- Constraints based static checks

- Constraints to be double checked with the functional verification
- Mutually exclusive

define\_exclusive -signals [set of signals names]

```
property mutex (data, clk);
@(posedge clk)
$onehotO(data ^ $past(data));
endproperty
```





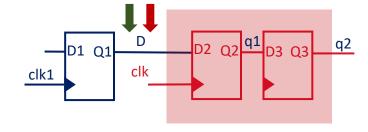


2- Rules based static checks

- Fundamentally target to verify design intent
- CDC paths are **not covered by STA**:

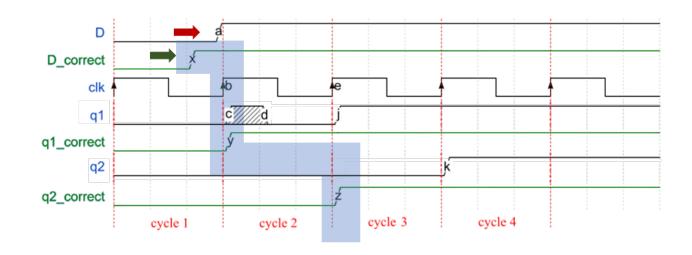
CDC-RDC basic knowledge

Make sure source data is stable while crossing.



```
property cdc_data_stable (D, NUM_CYCLES);
   @(posedge clock)
   ##1 $changed(D) |-> $stable(D)[*(NUM_CYCLES-
1)];
 endproperty
```

NUM CYCLES is based on synchronization latency







#### 2- Rules based static checks

- Fundamentally target to verify design intent
- CDC paths are not covered by STA:
  - Make sure source data is stable for several cycles.
  - Enabler: Make sure source data is stable wrt to its enabler.

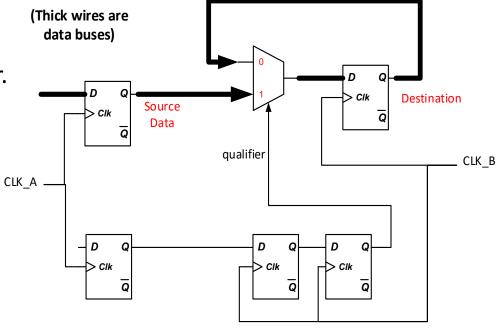
Source data must be static when CDC Control is enabling.

Source data can toggle when CDC Control is disabling.

CDC Control must be a known value

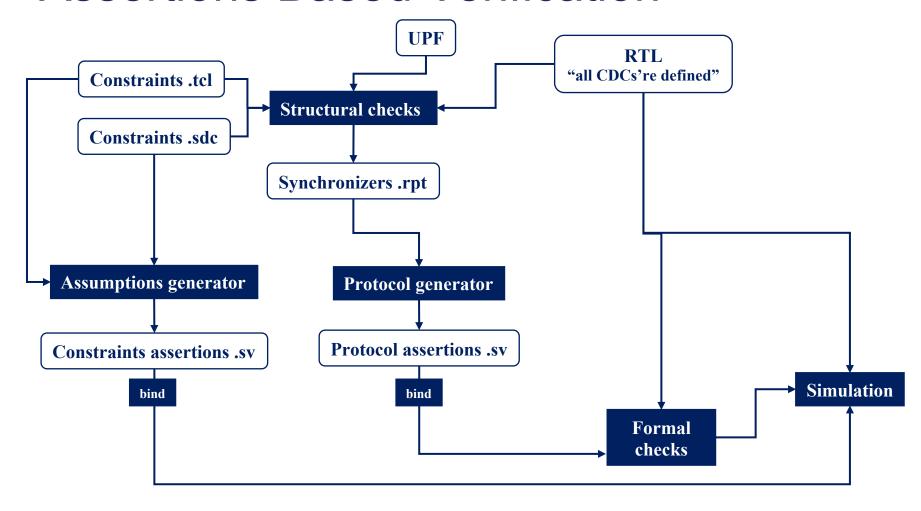
property qual\_data\_stable (SRC\_DATA,QUAL,SETUP\_ROOM);
 ##1 \$changed(SRC\_DATA) |-> (QUAL === 1'b0)[\*SETUP\_ROOM];
endproperty

SETUP\_ROOM = Synchronization Latency + Implementation Headroom





#### **ABV - Assertions Based Verification**







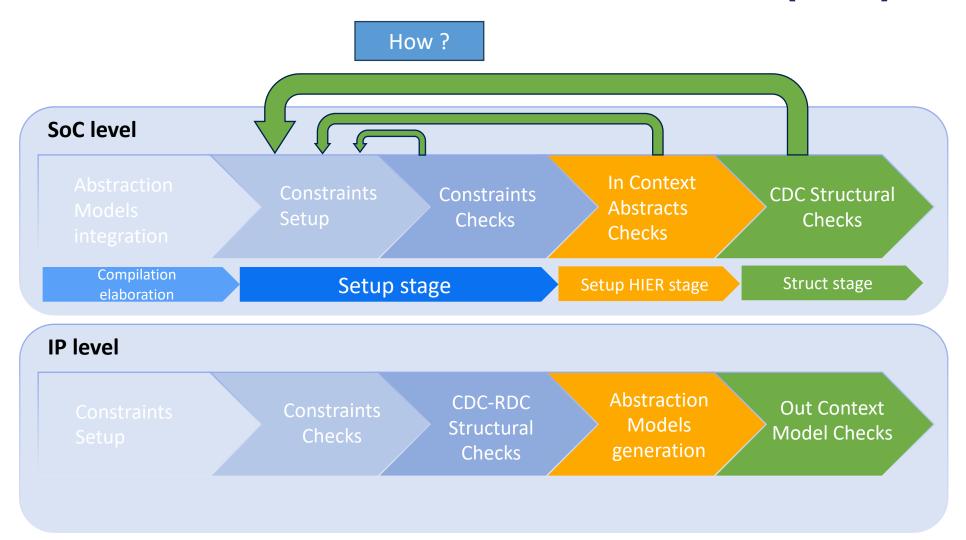


## CDC-RDC Hierarchical Flow

- Why?
- How?
- CDC Models from different tools



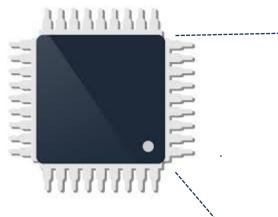
### CDC-RDC Hierarchical Flow (1/2)



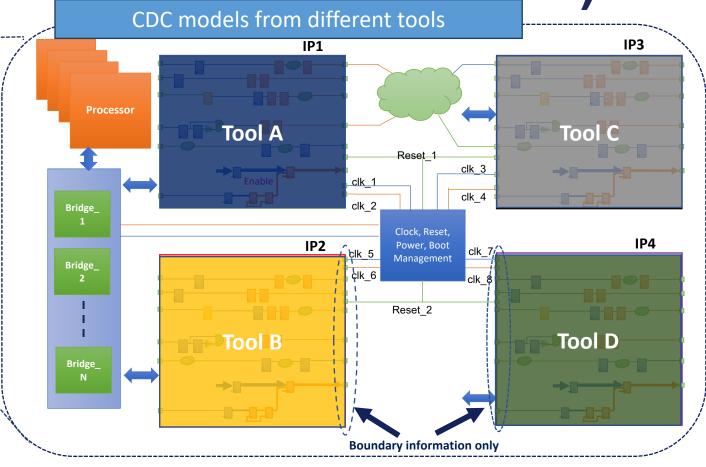




### CDC-RDC Hierarchical Flow (2/2)



- CDC models are currently lacking standardization.
- CDC models from different tools are not compatible.









### Accellera CDC Working Group

- Presentation
- The five sub working groups
- Call for contribution



### What was the problem?

As we move from monolithic designs ... to IP/SOC with IPs sourced from a small/select providers ... to sourcing IPs globally (to create differentiated products) ...

We must maintain quality as we drive faster time-to-market

In areas where we have standards (SystemVerilog, OVM/UVM, LP/UPF), the integration is able to meet the above (quality, speed)

But in areas where we don't have standards (in this case, CDC), most options trade-off either quality, or time-to-market, or both :-(

Creating a standard for inter-operable collateral addresses this gap





#### **Accellera CDC WG initiative**





Pre-WG launched Sep '22 to evaluate need. WG launched Jan '23

124 members from 24 companies (as of Feb 19 '24)

5 active sub-groups: Output-Collateral, Format, Assertions, Testing, Training

| Ver  | Focus                                 | Timeline  |
|------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| v0.1 | CDC                                   | Oct 2023  |
| v0.3 | RDC & Format                          | July 2024 |
| v0.5 | Assertions, Complexities & Extensions | Dec 2024  |
| v1.0 | Final LRM release                     | Mar 2025  |

| Agnisys  | Aldec   | AMD          | AMS         | Analog Devices | ARM       | Arteris           | Blue Pearl Software |
|----------|---------|--------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Cadence  | Huawei  | Infineon     | Intel       | Marvel         | Microsoft | NVIDIA            | NXP                 |
| Qualcomm | Renesas | Robert Bosch | Siemens EDA | ST Micro       | Synopsys  | Texas Instruments | Verilab             |





### Accellera CDC WG Scope

Tool-agnostic interoperable collateral

Supporting hierarchical CDC/RDC/Glitch structural analysis

Human readable, and machine parseable

LP/UPF compliant

Multimode/param/instance comppliant Covering majority of common interface protocols (e.g. AMBA, UCle, etc.)

Constraints/Assumptions can be verified with SVAs

Can meet other needs (e.g. FPGA, Analog)







### Accellera CDC Working Group

Output Collateral Subgroup



Output-Collateral

Attributes for CDC/RDC block model

Address most industry standard interfaces

Identify limitations and extensions for the attributes





#### CDC-RDC basic knowledge

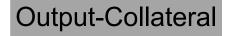
#### Summary of Changes To Attribute Table

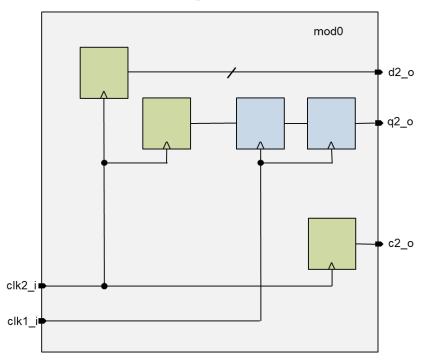
- Parameter
- Port Attribute Modelling
- Removal of keywords that are not EDA-Tool-Agnostic
- Removal of clock\_group and reset\_group
- Set\_cdc\_clock\_group
- Adding more examples to describe usage of reset, polarity, ignore,cdc\_static and constant
- Deferring usage of "gray\_code" and clock\_period to LRM 0.2

| Attribute           | Switch               | data_type 🔻      | values                                                                                     | Mandatory - |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| module              | name                 | string           | {module name}                                                                              | Yes         |
| parameter           | name                 | string           |                                                                                            | Yes         |
| parameter           | value                | range-list       | { values }                                                                                 | optional    |
| parameter           | type                 | string           | { int, string, boolean }                                                                   | optional    |
| parameter           | ignore               | string           | {ignore}                                                                                   | optional    |
| port                | name                 | string           | { name }                                                                                   | Yes         |
| port                | direction            | defined set      | { input, output, inout, internal }                                                         | Yes         |
| port                | type                 | defined set      | { data, clock, async reset, qualifier, supply, analog }                                    | Yes         |
| port                | logic                | defined set      | { combo, buffer, inverter, internal, glitch-free-combo, internal-sync }                    | optional    |
| port                | qualifier_from_clock | ; separated list | { clock-names }                                                                            | optional    |
| port                | associated_clocks    | ; separated list | { clock-names }                                                                            | optional    |
| port                | associated_resets    | ; separated list | { reset-names }                                                                            | optional    |
| port                | associated_inputs    | ; separated list | { ports }                                                                                  | optional    |
| port                | associated_outputs   | ; separated list | { ports }                                                                                  | optional    |
| port                | clock_group          | string           | {clock group}                                                                              | Yes         |
| port                | reset_group          | string           | {reset group}                                                                              | Yes         |
| port                | qualifiers           | ; separated list | { associated-ports }                                                                       | optional    |
| port                | polarity             | defined set      | { high, low, both }                                                                        | Yes         |
| port                | ignore               | string           | { blocked, hanging }                                                                       | optional    |
| port                | quasi_static         | ; separated list | { be any, <clocks is="" it="" quasi_static="" to="" which=""> }</clocks>                   | optional    |
| port                | set_case_analysis    | ; separated list | {binary, hex, and of any length}                                                           | optional    |
| port                | gray_coded           | boolean          | { true, false:default }                                                                    | optional    |
| port                | clock_period         | string           | {clock period}                                                                             | optional    |
| tool                | name                 | string           | {EDA name}                                                                                 | Yes         |
| tool                | version              | string           | {Tool Version}                                                                             | Yes         |
| design              | version              | string           | {Design Milestone}                                                                         | optional    |
| design              | date                 | string           | {Collateral Generation Date}                                                               | Yes         |
| design              | username             | string           | {user/tool who generate the collateral}                                                    | optional    |
| design              | description          | string           |                                                                                            | optional    |
| set_cdc_clock_group | async                | string           | <pre>-group {logical_ck1, logical_ck2}     -group {logical_ck1} -group {logical_ck2}</pre> | mandatory   |
| set_cdc_clock_group | sync                 | string           | <pre>-group {logical_ck1, logical_ck2}     -group {logical_ck1} -group {logical_ck2}</pre> | mandatory   |



#### Port Attribute Modelling - output interface example





port -name d2\_o -type data -direction output -associated\_from\_clock clk2\_i -cdc\_control q2\_o

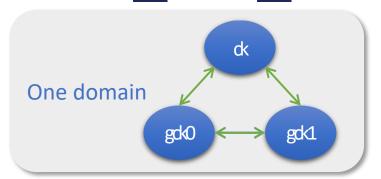
port -name q2\_o -type cdc\_control -direction output -cdc\_control\_from\_clock clk2\_i -associated\_from\_clock clk1\_i -associated\_output d2\_o

port -name c2\_o -type data -direction output - associated\_from\_clock clk2\_i

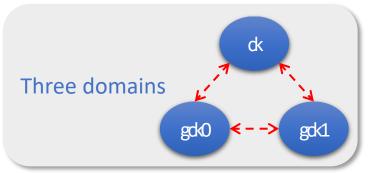




#### set cdc clock group

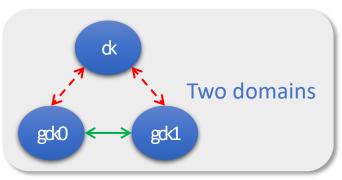


set\_cdc\_clock\_group -name 1dom {ck gck0 gck1}

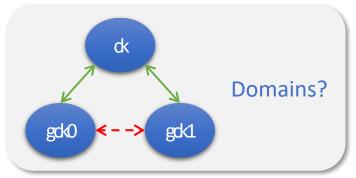


set\_cdc\_clock\_group -name 3domA {ck}
set\_cdc\_clock\_group -name 3domB {gck0}
set\_cdc\_clock\_group -name 3domC {gck1}

#### Output-Collateral



set\_cdc\_clock\_group -name 2domA {ck}
set\_cdc\_clock\_group -name 2domB {gck0 gck1}



set\_cdc\_clock\_group -name trickyA {ck gck0}
set\_cdc\_clock\_group -name trickyB {ck gck1}







## Accellera CDC Working Group

Format Subgroup



**Format** 

#### Goal

- 1. Determine exact format for domain specific language that can be used to capture required attributes/data from input/output/verification collaterals.
- 2. Ensure quality in terms of compliance to spec.

#### Methodology

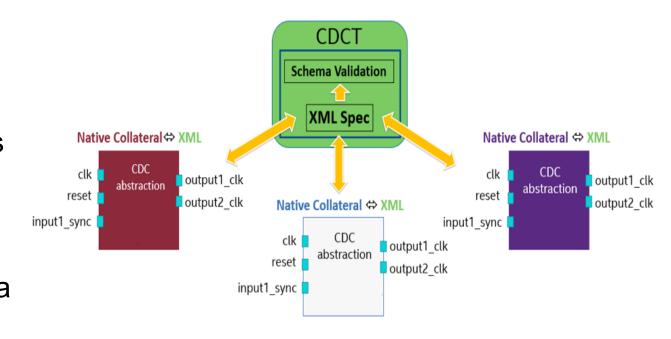
- 1. List different options like IP-XACT, TCL, Excel, JSON, etc.
- 2. Experiment with populating the formats to ascertain the ability to meet the requirements.
- 3. Determine pros and cons for each option of format.
- 4. Recommend a final format post CDC Workgroup approval





Format

- A limited feasibility study for CDC
  - conducted on a subsystem with multiple IPs connected by AMBA interfaces
  - across three different vendor tools
  - With limited support from the vendors
- Results:
  - 99.5% of what was identifiable in a flat run was also identifiable if the native abstraction collateral was replaced with an XML representation and translated across the vendor tools.







**Format** 

- Describing IP
  - static or semi-static
  - IP-XACT is industry standard for IP definition and packaging
  - Use models of IP and Product companies
- Integration of IP
  - Dynamic environment requires programmability for CDC definition
  - Tcl is preferred and widely used in industry
  - Use models for Product and EDA companies





**Format** 

- IP-XACT vs Tcl
  - IP-XACT is perfect for static representation
  - Useful for IP Delivery and SoC Integration
  - Infrastructure required for converting existing proprietary formats to IP-XACT
  - Tcl handles dynamic and conditional CDC scenarios better
  - EDA companies currently supports proprietary formats that are Tcl like
  - Human readability issue

 CDC Workgroup voted to use combination of both Tcl and IP-XACT





Format

- EDA companies to provide transformers for Tcl to/from IP-XACT
  - Also provide translators to and from its native format from and to the standard format
- Standard is tool agnostic
- IP providers have option to choose tools
  - to verify and produce collateral
  - to generate the standard format for SoCs that use a different tool
- The format is released as part of LRM ver 0.3 in July
  - Tcl API commands capturing and handling clock domains and attributes
  - IP-XACT schema for CDC as Accellera vendor extensions to the IP-XACT standard







## Accellera CDC Working Group

Assertion Subgroup



Assertion

#### Goal

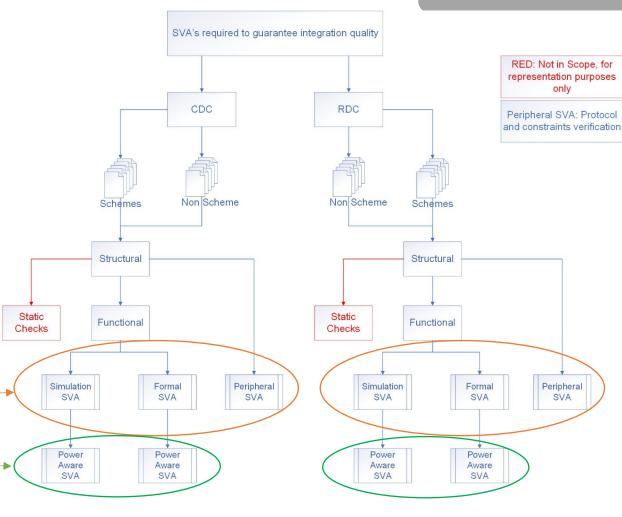
- 1. Produce Language Reference Manual (LRM) addendum for Assertions.
- 2. Enable all EDA vendors in developing tools that meet specification for generating System Verilog Assertions (SVA) along with collateral.
- 3. Enable Intellectual Property (IP) companies to generate SVA along with collateral using various vendors/tools.
- 4. Enable System On Chip (SOC) companies to consume generated SVA from any vendor/tool into their tool of choice.





Assertion

- Sub-working groups presentation
- CDC architectures are studied for possible verification strategies.
- Guidance to produce re-useable SVA for both Formal and Dynamic Verification.
- Guidance extracted from collateral.
- Guidance must follow SVA LRM.
- Guidance must be tool/vendor independent.
- Current Work
- Future Work

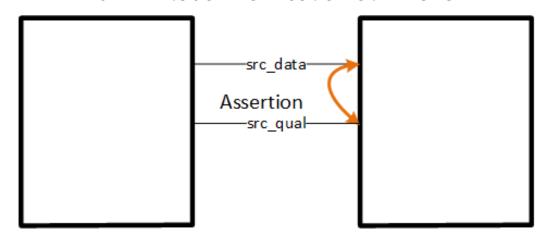


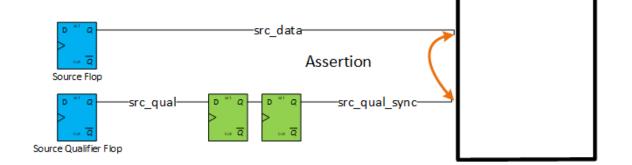


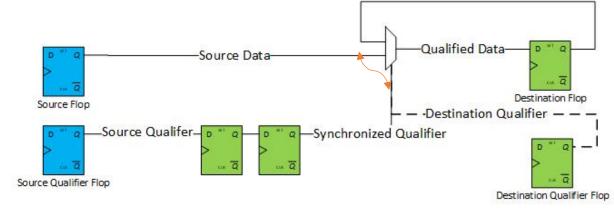


Assertion

- Sub-working groups presentation
- Possible Integration Scenarios under consideration:
  - Blackbox IP to Blackbox IP at SoC level.
  - SoC level glue logic to Blackbox IP.
  - Blackbox to SoC level glue logic.
  - Full Whitebox verification at IP level.













## Accellera CDC Working Group

Testing Subgroup



**Testing** 

Sub-working groups presentation

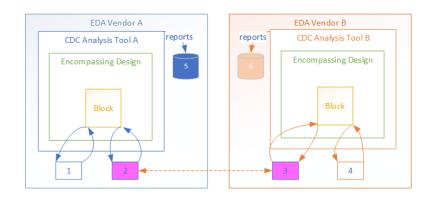
#### Goal

- 1. Evaluate the set of Accellera CDC attributes and protocols for completeness using multiple tools from multiple vendors.
- 2. Demonstrate the use of the complete set of attributes and protocols as defined and formatted by other sub-groups.
- 3. Provide RTL design examples within which the defined attributes and protocols can be further qualified and evaluated.





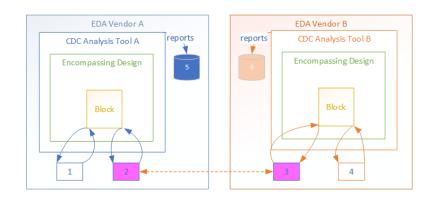
## Methodology (#1)



- Testing by Tool Vendor A
  - Step#1 -Perform static flat CDC using Vendor A tool, creating the native block model (1) and Accellera abstract model (2)
  - Step#2 Perform static hierarchical CDC using native block model (1) & using Accellera abstract model (2)
    - step#2.1 Compare results flat vs hierarchical with native block model
    - step#2.2 Compare results of hierarchical native vs Accellera abstract model(s)
  - Step#3 Accellera to facilitate exchange of Accellera abstract model (2) with another tool for the same IP
    - step#3.1 Perform static hierarchical CDC using Accellera abstract model by another tool vendor (3)
    - step#3.2 Compare results of Accellera abstract model (2) and another tool vendor's Accellera abstract model (3)



### Methodology (#1) [cont...]



- Step#4 Report fault model grading per step#2.2 and step#3.2. Fault grading information to be provided by Accllera CDC WG
- This process is of course symmetrical, and Vendor B performs tests to the above description for Vendor A





## Methodology (#2)

- Testing by Non-tool Vendors
  - Participants with access to more than one required CDC tool can perform cross tool testing
  - Design IP per list of required interface protocol can be either an inhouse design if available or borrowed for the testing purpose (Accellera to facilitate).
  - EDA vendors to provide their tool support to participants





## Accellera CDC Working Group

Training Subgroup



**Training** 

Sub-working groups presentation

#### Goal

- 1. Raising awareness of the importance of defining a standard CDC-RDC model
- 2. Provide generic documentation to let the CDC-RDC IP model user understand:
  - 1.1 CDC-RDC basic knowledge
  - 1.2 List of attributes & definition (related to IP CDC-RDC features/properties) as defined and agreed by the main CDC WG
- 3. Presentation of the hierarchical flow
  - 2.1 tool dependency issue
  - 2.2 necessity to create an inter operational CDC-RDC model
- 4. Inter operational CDC-RDC model integration manual





**Training** 

Sub-working groups presentation

- Accellera CDC WG work promotion through conferences
  - Past/current conferences
    - DVCON Europe 2023
    - DVCON US 2024





- Targeted conferences (To Be Confirmed)
  - DVCON Japan / India / China / Taiwan / Europe 2024
  - DAC 2024
  - DATE 2025
  - VLSI 2025





















## CDC LRM Draft 0.3 open for public review till Sept 9, 2024

Clock Domain Crossing Standard Draft 0.3

Public review open through Sept. 9,

2024-07-11

https://accellera.org/downloads/drafts-review



# Accellera CDC Working Group Call for Contribution



https://workspace.accellera.org/wg/CDC





Questions?

