

EC™ Interface Specification

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EC™ Interface Specification

1 Introduction

This document describes the EC™ interface designed for microprocessor cores. All MIPS cores implementing the EC interface comply to this specification. Implementation-specific details can be found in the documentation accompanying the core.

Use the EC interface to attach memory controllers, memory-mapped I/Os, etc. A bus controller must be included in cases where multiple slaves connect to the EC interface. [Figure 1](#page-4-2) shows an example of the EC interface placement within a system.

Figure 1 Example of the EC Interface in a System

1.1 Features

The EC interface has the following features:

- 32 or 64-bit data buses
- 36-bit addressing
- Separate read and write data buses
- All signals are unidirectional—no bidirectional or 3-state buses
- Fully registered, synchronous interface to the master
- Separate read and write bus error indications
- Separate address and data phases allow pipelining on the interface
- No limit on the number of outstanding transactions
- Number of outstanding transactions can be limited by the slave
- Support for variable burst length
- Sequential or sub-block ordering burst address sequences
- Indication of first and last address phase of a burst
- Request for emptying external write buffers and indication of external write buffers being empty
- Byte enable indication

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- Indication of instruction read (fetch)
- Address and data phases can complete the same cycle they are initiated (zero wait states)
- No limit on the number of wait states in address and data phases
- Independent read and write data phases. A read transaction can overtake a write transaction and vice versa.
- Only one master and one slave

1.2 Basic Operation

All inputs to the master are sampled at the rising edge of the Clock signal. Further the outputs from the master change with respect to a rising edge of the Clock signal.

The EC interface does not include a signal to indicate reset. Therefore to reset the EC interface, reset the master and the slave simultaneously. Whenever the EC interface is reset, all transactions are aborted and the bus returns to the idle state. EB_ARdy, EB_AValid, EB_WDRdy, EB_RdVal, EB_Burst, EB_BFirst, EB_BLast, EB_RBErr, and EB_WBErr must be driven inactive during reset.

Each transaction on the EC interface has an *address phase* and a *data phase*, which can have a number of wait states.

A wait state in the address phase is named an *address wait state* and is defined as a clock cycle where EB_AValid is asserted and EB_ARdy was sampled deasserted in the beginning of the cycle.

An address phase begins in the clock cycle where the master asserts EB_AValid. An address phase ends on the positive clock edge following an asserted sample of EB_ARdy. For maximum speed (no address wait states), EB_ARdy has to be sampled asserted on the positive clock edge preceding the beginning of the address phase. During an address phase, all signals driven by the master are unchanged and stable (except from the write data bus, EB_WData).

Due to the separate read and write data buses, two types of data phases exist: the read data phase and the write data phase.

A wait state in a data phase is named a *data wait state*. It is defined as a clock cycle where the corresponding address phase has been started (and possibly ended) and:

- For a write data phase, EB_WDRdy is sampled deasserted at the beginning of the cycle
- For a read data phase, EB_RdVal is sampled deasserted at the end of the cycle

A read data phase begins in the clock cycle where the master starts the corresponding read address phase. However, if there are outstanding read data phases when the read address phase begins, the corresponding read data phase does not start until all of the preceding read data phases have ended. The read data phase ends at the positive clock edge where EB_RdVal is sampled asserted. It can not end earlier than when the corresponding address phase ends.

A write data phase begins in the clock cycle where the master starts the corresponding write address phase. However, if there are outstanding write data phases when the write address phase begins, the corresponding write data phase does not start until all of the preceding write data phases have ended. The write data phase ends at the positive clock edge following the positive clock edge where EB_WDRdy is sampled asserted. For maximum speed (no data wait states), EB_WDRdy must be asserted on the positive clock edge preceding the beginning of the corresponding address phase. It cannot end earlier than the corresponding address phase ends.

From these definitions, for a given transaction the number of data wait states must be greater than or equal to the number of address wait states.

2 Signal List

[Table 2](#page-6-1) lists all of the EC interface signals in alphabetical order. [Table 1](#page-6-2) defines the signal directions.

Table 1 Signal Direction Key

Table 2 EC Interface Signals

Table 2 EC Interface Signals (Continued)

Table 2 EC Interface Signals (Continued)

a. Optional. Only used in 64-bit implementations.

3 Timing Diagrams

The following sections provide examples of typical EC interface timing.

3.1 Single Read Transactions

[Figure 2](#page-10-0) shows the basic timing relationships between signals during a simple (fastest) read transaction. When the master is ready to begin a bus transaction (cycle 3), the address is driven on EB_A, the associated control information is driven on EB_Instr, EB_Burst, EB_BFirst, EB_BLast, EB_BLen, EB_Write, and EB_BE, and EB_AValid is asserted. On the same rising clock edge that these signals are driven out (end of cycle 2), the EB_ARdy signal state is sampled. If EB_ARdy is sampled deasserted, the master maintains the transaction values on the previously mentioned signals. The master continues driving valid and stable values on these interface signals until the rising clock edge following the one that the EB_ARdy signal is sampled asserted.

Starting in the same cycle as the read transaction is initiated, the master samples EB_RdVal, EB_RData, and EB_RBErr. These signals are sampled on each rising clock edge until the EB_RdVal signal is sampled asserted. The data values sampled with this asserted EB_RdVal are considered valid. However, if EB_RBErr was sampled asserted in same cycle, the transaction is considered failed.

Note that the data phase cannot end earlier than the corresponding address phase. EB_ARdy must be sampled asserted at least one clock cycle before the corresponding EB_RdVal is sampled asserted.

Figure 2 Fastest Single Read Transaction Timing

[Figure 3](#page-12-0) shows an example of a read transaction with three wait states in the data phase (indicated by the deassertion of EB_RdVal for three clock cycles). EB_RdVal is sampled deasserted on the rising edges at the beginning of cycles 4, 5, and 6 and then is asserted on cycle 7.

Figure 3 Single Read Transaction Timing (3 Data Wait States)

3.2 Single Write Transactions

[Figure 4](#page-14-0) shows a zero wait state (fastest) write transaction. Like the read transaction when a write request is issued (cycle 3), the address and control information for the transaction are driven on EB_A, EB_Instr, EB_Burst, EB_BFirst, EB_BLast, EB_BLen, EB_Write, and EB_BE. These signals remain unchanged until the rising clock edge after the EB_ARdy signal is sampled asserted.

The write data is driven on the write data bus, EB_WData, in same cycle as the address is driven on EB_A. The write data is held on the bus until the rising clock edge after EB_WDRdy is sampled asserted.

EB_WBErr is sampled on the first rising clock edge after the rising clock edge that EB_WDRdy is sampled asserted. If EB_WBErr is asserted at this time, the bus transaction is considered failed.

Note that the data phase cannot end earlier than the corresponding address phase. EB_WDRdy must be sampled asserted on the same clock edge or later than the clock edge where the corresponding EB_ARdy is sampled asserted.

Figure 4 Fastest Single Write Transaction Timing

[Figure 5](#page-16-0) shows an example of a write transaction with four data wait states, indicated by the deassertion of the EB_WDRdy signal. EB_WDRdy is deasserted for four clock cycles and then asserted. Note that the address phase is prolonged by one clock cycle because EB_ARdy is deasserted for one clock cycle (sampled deasserted at the end of cycle 2).

Figure 5 Single Write Transaction Timing (1 Address Wait State and 4 Data Wait States)

3.3 Back-to-back Read Transactions

[Figure 6](#page-18-0) shows an example of two consecutive read transactions, which shows the ability to pipeline read addresses independent of data wait states. The pipeline depth is implementation specific. Through manipulation of the EB_ARdy signal, the slave can limit the depth of the address pipelining.

Figure 6 Back-to-back Read Transaction Timing

3.4 Back-to-back Write Transactions

[Figure 7](#page-19-1) shows an example of two consecutive write transactions. Similar to the read transactions, pipelining of write addresses can occur regardless of data wait states.

3.5 Read Transaction Followed by a Write Transaction

[Figure 8](#page-20-1) shows the relationship between a read transaction and a subsequent write transaction. A write transaction following a read transaction behaves as described for the single write transaction. Completion of these transactions out of order is allowed.

[Figure 9](#page-21-0) shows an example of a read transaction followed by a write transaction where the write transaction is completed prior to the read transaction (out of order).

Figure 9 Read Transaction Followed by a Write Transaction with Reordering

3.6 Write Transaction Followed by a Read Transaction

[Figure 10](#page-22-1) shows an example of a write transaction followed by a read. As in the case of a write following a read, a read transaction following a write transaction is not affected by the behavior of the write transaction. Completion of these transactions out of order is allowed.

[Figure 11](#page-24-0) shows an example of a write transaction followed by a read transaction where the read transaction is completed prior to the write transaction (out of order).

Figure 11 Write Transaction Followed by a Read Transaction with Reordering

3.7 Burst Transactions

A burst transaction initiates the transfer of multiple related transfers. Read bursts are used to read data to be placed in the instruction or data cache. Write bursts are used to empty the contents of the write buffers.

Note that initiated bursts are always completed. The burst transaction cannot be aborted before reaching the burst beat count (indicated by EB_BLen) except in the case where the EC interface is reset.

EB_Burst is asserted during the entire burst address sequence. EB_BFirst is driven asserted during the first address phase of the burst and is deasserted with each of the remaining address phases. EB_BLast is driven asserted during the last address phase and is deasserted with all prior address phases. Apart from EB_Burst, EB_BFirst and EB_BLast behavior, and the deterministic address sequence, the multiple transfers of a burst transaction behave like that of back-to-back single transactions, which simplifies interfacing to systems that do not support burst transactions. Note that it is possible in the presence of data wait states, for all of the burst address phases to complete before the first data phase of the burst (or even of a preceding transaction) has completed. If this behavior is undesirable, EB_ARdy can be used to control the pace at which the addresses are transferred.

Note that EB_AValid cannot be deasserted between address phases within a burst and that all bits in EB_BE must be asserted in all address phases within a burst.

[Figure 12](#page-26-0) shows an example of a read burst transaction. EB_BLen indicates the length of the burst (see [Section 2, "Signal](#page-6-0)") [List" on page 7](#page-6-0) for further information on EB_BLen). The data requested is always an aligned block according to the EB_BLen signal. The order of the words within the block varies depending on which word in the block is being requested and the value of EB_SBlock (see [Table 3](#page-27-0) through [Table 6](#page-28-0) for further information on the refill scheme).

Figure 12 Burst Read Transaction Timing

[Table 3](#page-27-0) through [Table 6](#page-28-0) show the possible sequences for the least significant address bits during a burst.

| Req Word (DWord ^a) Address | $EB_A[3:2] (EB_A[4:3]^a)$ Sequence | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Table 3 Burst Order for Sequential Ordering (4 Beat Bursts)

a. Optional. Only used in 64-bit implementations.

Table 4 Burst Order for Sub-block Ordering (4 Beat Bursts)

a. Optional. Only used in 64-bit implementations.

a. Optional. Only used in 64-bit implementations.

| Req Word (DWord ^a) Address | $EB_A[4:2] (EB_A[5:3]^a)$ Sequence | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| $\overline{0}$ | θ | 1 | $\overline{2}$ | 3 | $\overline{4}$ | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| $\mathbf{1}$ | $\mathbf{1}$ | $\overline{0}$ | 3 | $\overline{2}$ | 5 | $\overline{4}$ | 7 | 6 |
| $\overline{2}$ | $\overline{2}$ | 3 | $\overline{0}$ | 1 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | $\overline{0}$ | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | θ | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5 | 5 | $\overline{4}$ | 7 | 6 | 1 | θ | 3 | $\overline{2}$ |
| 6 | 6 | 7 | $\overline{4}$ | 5 | 2 | 3 | $\overline{0}$ | 1 |
| 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | $\overline{0}$ |

Table 6 Burst Order for Sub-block Ordering (8 Beat Bursts)

a. Optional. Only used in 64-bit implementations.

[Figure 13](#page-29-0) shows a burst write. Burst write transactions are used to empty write buffers. Write burst addresses always start at the lowest address of an address block according to the EB_BLen indication.

Note that like single transactions, burst read and write transactions can complete out of order. Burst reads can overtake burst writes and vice versa.

Figure 13 Burst Write Transaction Timing

4 External Write Buffers

Some systems might have external write buffers to increase bus efficiency and system performance. The EC interface has a simple two-signal protocol that allows the master to have some control over the external write buffers. When it asserts EB_WWBE, the master signals that it is waiting for EB_EWBE (External Write Buffers Empty) to be asserted. The master uses EB_EWBE to ensure that all pending writes have completed before it begins a new transaction.

If no external write buffers exist, tie EB_EWBE HIGH.

Note that EB_WWBE is not used to ensure coherency. If a write transaction is to the external write buffer, the master can generate a read request to the given address without asserting EB_WWBE (because the master has no knowledge of the external write buffers). Therefore any write buffers in the system must maintain coherency with reads.

A Endianess

The EC interface has no signal that indicates little- or big-endian operation. If the slave requires this information, for example, to generate the lower address bits that are not supplied with the EC interface, consult the documentation that comes with the core.

To help understand the use of endianess, [Table 7](#page-30-2) and [Table 8](#page-31-0) show some cases of how stores appear on the EC interface in little-endian and big-endian mode in a 32-bit and a 64-bit implementation of the EC interface.

Table 7 Endian Examples, 32-bit Implementation

Table 8 Endian Examples, 64-bit Implementation

| | Internal | Big-endian | | Little-endian | |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Adar[2:0] | | EB D[63:0] | EB BE [7:0] | EB $D[63:0]$ | EB BE [7:0] |
| sdr t0, $0x1(r0)$ | | 0xcdefXXXXXXXXXXX | 11000000 | 0x23456789abcdefXX | 11111110 |
| sdr t0, $0x2(r0)$ | \overline{c} | 0xabcdefXXXXXXXXXX | 11100000 | 0x456789abcdefXXX | 11111100 |
| sdr t0, $0x3(r0)$ | 3 | 0x89abcdefXXXXXXXX | 11110000 | 0x6789abcdefXXXXXX | 11111000 |
| sdr t0, $0x4(r0)$ | 4 | 0x6789abcdefXXXXXX | 11111000 | 0x89abcdefXXXXXXXX | 11110000 |
| sdr t0, $0x5(r0)$ | 5 | 0x456789abcdefXXX | 11111100 | 0xabcdefXXXXXXXXXX | 11100000 |
| sdr t0, $0x6(r0)$ | 6 | 0x23456789abcdefXX | 11111110 | 0xcdefXXXXXXXXXXX | 11000000 |
| sd t0, $0x0(r0)$ | Ω | 0x0123456789abcdef | 11111111 | 0x0123456789abcdef | 11111111 |

Table 8 Endian Examples, 64-bit Implementation (Continued)

B Lower Address Bit Generation

[Figure 14](#page-32-2) shows a Verilog example of how the lower address bits can be generated for use with a SysAD interface. Note that this case requires that only the default EB_BE patterns are used.

```
// Low address bit generation
   wire [1:0] my_a_1_0 = (BigEndian == 1'b1
? Protection of the Contract o<br>Protection of the Contract of
                                            // big endian
                                            (EB_BE[3] ? 2'd0 :
                                            EB_BE[2] ? 2'd1 :
                                             EB_BE[1] ? 2'd2 :
2'd3)the control of the control of the control of
                                            // little endian
                                            (EB_BE[0] ? 2'd0 :
                                            EB_BE[1] ? 2'd1 :
                                             EB_BE[2] ? 2'd2 :
2'd3)\mathcal{L}^{\text{max}}
```
Figure 14 Example of Generating Low Address Bit

C Revision History

