

Introduction

With the Altera® Nios® embedded processor, system designers can accelerate time-critical software algorithms by adding custom instructions to the Nios instruction set. System designers can use custom instructions to implement complex processing tasks in single-cycle (combinatorial) and multi-cycle (sequential) operations. Additionally, user-added custom instruction logic can access memory and/or logic outside of the Nios system.

Using custom instructions, system designers can reduce a complex sequence of standard instructions to a single instruction implemented in hardware. System designers can use this feature for a variety of applications, e.g., to optimize software inner loops for digital signal processing (DSP), packet header processing, and computation-intensive applications. The Nios CPU configuration wizard, which is accessed from the SOPC Builder, provides a graphical user interface that system designers can use to add up to five custom instructions to the Nios processor.

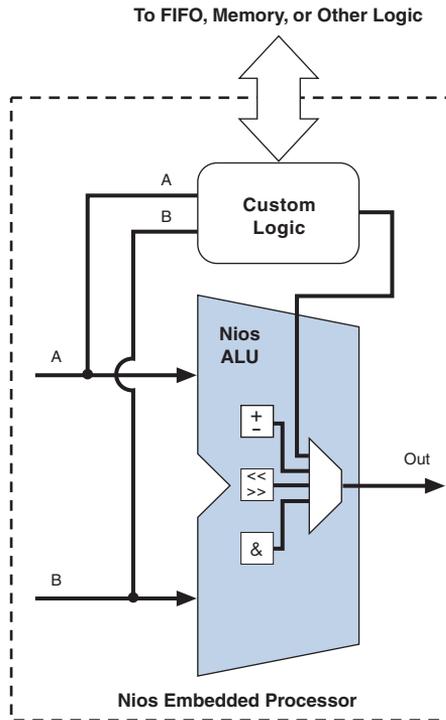
This application note describes the Nios custom instruction feature, provides a design example, and describes how to implement custom instructions.

Understanding Custom Instructions

With custom instructions, system designers can add custom-defined functionality to the Nios processor's arithmetic logic unit (ALU) and instruction set (see [Figure 1 on page 2](#)). Custom instructions consist of two essential elements:

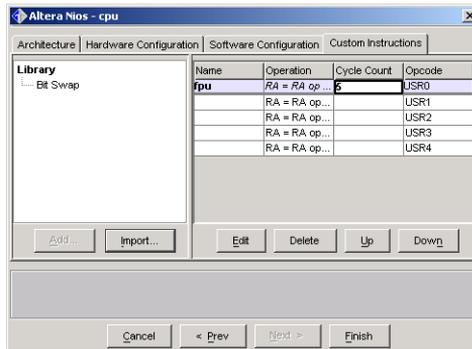
- *Custom logic block*—Hardware that performs the operation. The Nios processor can include up to five user-defined custom logic blocks. The blocks become part of the Nios microprocessor's ALU.
- *Software macro*—Allows the system designer to access the custom logic through software code.

Figure 1. Adding Custom Logic to the Nios ALU



The custom logic block performs a user-defined operation (represented as op in the custom instruction table of the Nios configuration wizard) on the contents of two registers (Ra and Rb) and stores the result in Ra , for example, $Ra \leftarrow Ra \ op \ Rb$. You can design a custom instruction logic block to perform any function, as long as the logic block has the appropriate interface as described in this document. See [“Hardware Interface” on page 3](#) for more details. See [“Software Interface” on page 7](#) for information on accessing your custom instruction logic block from software.

The Nios configuration wizard integrates the custom logic blocks with the Nios processor’s ALU when building the Nios embedded processor (see [Figure 2](#)). The Nios configuration wizard also creates software macros in C/C++ and Assembly, providing software access to these custom logic blocks. You must provide the name of the macro. If the custom instruction is combinatorial, the number of clock cycles needed to perform the instruction is fixed at 1. If the custom instruction is sequential, you must provide the number of clock cycles.

Figure 2. Custom Instructions Tab in the Nios Configuration Wizard

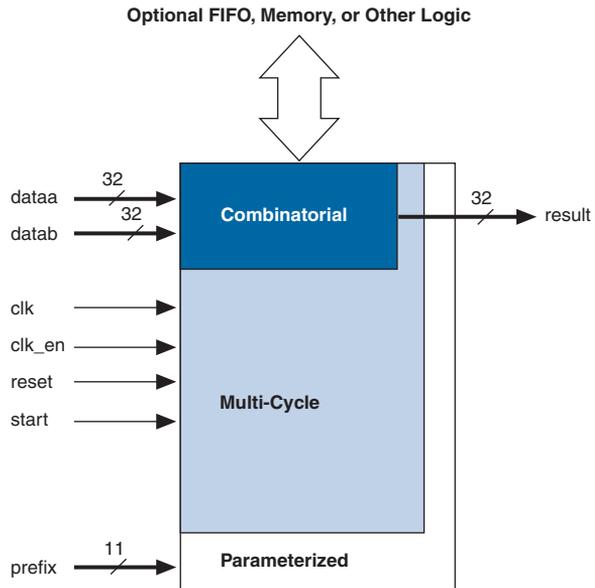
Hardware Interface

You can create custom logic blocks using the following formats:

- Verilog HDL
- VHDL
- EDIF netlist file
- Quartus II Block Design File (.bdf)
- Verilog Quartus Mapping File (.vqm)

Because the block connects directly to the ALU, it must provide an interface with predefined ports and names (see [Figure 3](#)). The Nios configuration wizard scans the custom logic blocks, searches for the required ports, and connects these ports to the ALU.

Figure 3. Custom Logic Block Interface (32-Bit Nios Processor)



You can implement custom logic blocks using one or a combination of these four options:

- Combinatorial logic
- Multi-cycle logic
- Parameterization
- User-defined ports

Combinatorial Logic Option

Using the combinatorial logic option, the custom logic block must complete the operation in a single clock cycle. Because the transaction takes one clock cycle to complete, the block only requires data ports, and does not require control signals (see [Table 1](#)).

 If the block only requires one input port, use the `dataa` port.

Table 1. Ports for Combinatorial Custom Logic

Port Name	Width (Bits)	Direction	Description
<code>dataa</code>	CPU width	Input	Operand
<code>datab</code>	CPU width	Input	Operand (optional)
<code>result</code>	CPU width	Output	Result

Multi-Cycle Logic Option

For multi-cycle or sequential logic, the custom logic block must provide the data ports shown in [Table 1](#) as well as control signal ports (see [Table 2](#)). These control signals provide status to the custom logic block and synchronize it with the Nios processor. When you add the custom instruction in the Nios configuration wizard, you must enter the number of clock cycles the block requires to perform the operation.

Table 2. Additional Ports for Sequential Custom Logic

Port Name	Width (Bits)	Direction	Description
<code>clk</code>	1	Input	CPU master input clock, which is fed by the Nios system clock.
<code>reset</code>	1	Input	CPU master asynchronous reset, which is fed by the Nios master reset. <code>reset</code> is only asserted when the Nios system is reset.
<code>clk_en</code>	1	Input	Clock qualifier. The custom logic block should use the <code>clk_en</code> signal as a conventional clock qualifier signal and should ignore all rising clock edges when <code>clk_en</code> is not asserted.
<code>start</code>	1	Input	Instructs the block to latch data and begin operation.

The CPU asserts `start` on the first clock cycle the operation executes when the ALU issues the custom instruction. At this time, `dataa` and `datab` hold valid values. The CPU waits for the required number of clock cycles specified in the Nios configuration wizard and then reads `result`.

Parameterization Option

You can use the optional 11-bit `prefix` port (see Table 3) to pass a parameter to the custom instruction. The `prefix` port uses the Nios PFX instruction to load the 11-bit `K` register before the custom instruction executes. The custom logic block receives the `K` register data upon execution of the custom instruction.

Table 3. Prefix Port

Port Name	Width (Bits)	Direction	Description
<code>prefix</code>	11	Input	Payload of the <code>K</code> register.

You can use the `prefix` port with either combinatorial or multi-cycle custom logic blocks. The interpretation of the `prefix` data is unspecified, so you can use it for a variety of purposes. In extreme cases, you can encode `prefix` to represent up to 2,048 different functions contained in a single custom instruction.

User-Defined Ports Option

Optional user-defined ports allow the custom instruction to interact with components outside of the Nios system. If the Nios configuration wizard does not recognize a port, it routes the port to the top level of the system module where external logic can access the signals.

Combining Options

Using a combination of multi-cycle ports, the `prefix` port, and user-defined ports, you can implement extremely versatile operations, including cases in which a custom instruction's operation is dependent upon previous instances of the instruction. Example applications include:

- A custom multiply accumulate (MAC) instruction. The result of each multiplication is added to a running total. You can use multiple clock cycles to pipeline the function, increasing system performance as needed. The `prefix` port resets the MAC to zero (a value of zero in software corresponds to a logic low in hardware).
- A custom packet processing instruction. The custom instruction receives up to 64 bits of data using `dataa` and `datab` in parallel. Based on a command specified using `prefix`, the packet processing logic could operate on the 64-bit packet (e.g., mask bits in the header) and quickly inject the packet back into the data stream by outputting the result via a user-defined port. A system can perform bit-compare, bit-modify, and output-to-datastream (i.e., write-to-FIFO) operations in one or two clock cycles.

Because the custom instruction logic is integrated with the Nios CPU, the design of the custom instruction directly affects the f_{MAX} performance of the entire Nios CPU. You can pipeline the custom instruction logic so that it does not become a performance bottleneck in a Nios system.

Software Interface

After you integrate a custom logic block into the Nios processor's ALU, you can access the custom logic through software. The Nios architecture includes five user-definable opcodes (see [Table 4](#)) with which you can access the custom logic block. You call these opcodes in software—written in C/C++ or Assembly—using macros.

Table 4. User Opcode, Type & Format

Opcode	Type	Format
USR0	RR	Ra <- Ra op Rb
USR1	Rw	Ra <- Ra op %r0
USR2	Rw	Ra <- Ra op %r0
USR3	Rw	Ra <- Ra op %r0
USR4	Rw	Ra <- Ra op %r0

As described earlier, the custom instruction takes the contents of two general-purpose registers (Ra and Rb) and performs an operation as defined by the custom logic block. The result of this operation is then stored in a general-purpose register (Ra).

The USR0 opcode is of type RR, which can use any of the general-purpose registers for Ra and Rb. USR1 through USR4 are type Rw opcodes, where Ra can be any of the general-purpose registers. However, Rb must be the %r0 register.



For more information on opcodes and their usage, refer to the *Nios 16-Bit Programmer's Reference Manual* and the *Nios 32-Bit Programmer's Reference Manual*.

When writing C/C++ code, the register usage is transparent, because the compiler automatically chooses the registers. However, in Assembly, you must indicate which registers are used for a particular operation.

The Nios configuration wizard automatically builds the macro after you add the custom instruction. The wizard supports macro naming for ease of use and readability of your software code.

Using Custom Instructions in C/C++

When using custom instructions in C/C++, you access the custom instruction with a function call. Your Nios system header file (**excalibur.h**), which the SOPC Builder generates, includes the C/C++ macro definition. There are two different C/C++ macros, one for use with `prefix`:

```
nm_<name>_pfx(prefix, dataa, datab)
```

and one for use without `prefix`:

```
nm_<name>(dataa, datab)
```

If your custom instruction uses the `prefix` port, the only valid input to `prefix` is an immediate value of 11 bits or less. If the C/C++ macro does not pass a value for `prefix`, the custom logic's `prefix` port is loaded with zero. [Figure 4](#) shows an example using a custom instruction (`my_cust_inst`) with and without a `prefix`.

Figure 4. C Code Using a Custom Instruction

```
int main(void)
{
    unsigned short a = 4660;
    unsigned short b = 17185;
    unsigned int return_value = 0;
    unsigned int return_value_1 = 0;

    printf ("\n\nWill call the My_Cust_Inst function ...\n");

    return_value = nm_my_cust_inst(a, b);    //If a prefix is not given, the
                                           //value is 0x000

    return_value_1 = nm_my_cust_inst_pfx(1, a, b);

    printf("After the call, return_value = \n", return_value);
    printf("After the call, return_value_1 = %d \n", return_value_1);

    return (0);
}
```

Using Custom Instructions in Assembly

When using custom instruction in Assembly, you can use either the Assembly macro or the opcode to call the custom instruction. To use the macro, include the Nios header file (**excalibur.h**), which the SOPC Builder generates. If you use `prefix`, the PFX instruction must precede the custom instruction macro, otherwise zero is loaded into the `prefix` port. **Figure 5** shows an example using a custom instruction (`my_cust_inst`) with the PFX instruction. When using an `Rw` opcode, the opcode automatically loads the `%r0` register for the `datap` port.

Figure 5. Assembly Code Using A Custom Instruction

```
LD %r1, [%L6]           ; Load word at [%L6] into %r1
LD %r0, [%L2]           ; Load word at [%L2] into %r0
PFX 1                   ; Only needed if using prefix
nm_my_cust_inst %r1     ; Macro calling a Rw opcode, r1 <- r1 "OP" r0
ST [%L4], %r1           ; %L4 is the pointer, %r1 is stored
```

Design Example

The following example, which is an excerpt of a reference design provided with the Nios embedded processor, shows the benefits of using custom instructions versus a software-only implementation. The design uses a simple four-function floating-point unit (FPU) created in hardware as a custom instruction. The FPU implements the signed multiply, multiply with negate, absolute value, and negate floating-point operations. The `prefix` port specifies the different operations of the FPU.

All four functions are compared with their respective software implementation. A timer measures the clock cycles required for each operation. Sample code for the multiplication is provided in **Figure 6**. For the complete hardware and software design used in this example, refer to the reference design in the `<Nios installation directory>\tutorials\CI_Tutorial\Cust_Inst_Example1` directory.

Figure 6. Multiplication with Custom Instructions

```
/* ***** */
/* Multiplication */
/* ***** */

a=-32.57;
b=300.84;

dwStartTick=GetTickCount(); /* record start time*/

res_a=a*b;

lTicksUsed=GetTickCount(); /* record end time */

printf("\nFor Nios software implementation:");
printf("\nValue of a is: %f", a);
printf("\nValue of b is: %f", b);
printf("\nValue of a*b is: %f", res_a);

CheckTimeStamp (dwStartTick, lTicksUsed);

our_dwStartTick=GetTickCount(); /* record start time*/

res_a = nm_fpu_pfx(2, a, b)

our_lTicksUsed=GetTickCount(); /* record end time */

printf("\nFor the floating point module: ");
printf("\nValue of a is: %f", a);
printf("\nValue of b is: %f", b);
printf("\nValue of a*b is: %f", res_a);

CheckTimeStamp (our_dwStartTick, our_lTicksUsed);
```

Table 5 compares the performance of the custom instruction versus a software-only implementation. The custom instruction increases the performance by as much as two orders of magnitude over the software-only implementations.

Table 5. Custom Instruction vs. Software-Only Performance Comparison (1)

Floating-Point Operation	CPU Clock Cycles		Speed Increase
	Software Library	Custom Instruction (FPU)	
Multiplication $a \times b$	2,874	19	151.26
Multiply and Negate $-(a \times b)$	3,147	19	165.63
Absolute $ a $	1,769	18	98.28
Negate $-(a)$	284	19	14.95

Note:

(1) These performance calculations are compiler-dependant. They were taken using the Cygnus compiler included in Version 2.1 of the Nios embedded processor.

Additionally, custom instructions reduce the software code needed to perform the operations:

- Custom instruction—200 bytes
- Software-only—4 KBytes

In this example, a standard math library performs the software implementation for floating-point math. However, there are many custom applications for which a predefined library is not available. In these cases, you must create the functionality in C/C++ or Assembly, further increasing the complexity of the software code.

By using custom instructions, you only need to call the software macro to interface with hardware that completes the task, reducing both the complexity and size of the software code.

Implementing Custom Instructions

This section describes the process of implementing a custom instruction and includes the following steps:

- “Create a Custom Logic Block” on page 12
- “Instantiate the Custom Instruction” on page 14
- “Create Software Code Using Macros” on page 18

Create a Custom Logic Block

To begin, create a logic block that performs the functionality you want. You control the design and operation of the custom logic block, however, you must follow these guidelines:

- File Format
- Port Naming
- Port Operation
- Multi-Cycle Signal Timing

File Format

When creating your logic block, you must use one of the following file formats:

- Verilog HDL
- VHDL
- EDIF netlist file
- Quartus II **.bdf**
- **.vqm**



If you black box design file(s), make sure to include the design file(s) in your Quartus II project.

Port Naming

When designing the logic block, you must include all of the required ports for the type of operation the block will perform (i.e., combinatorial or multi-cycle). [Table 6](#) shows the required ports for each type of operation.



You **must** use these predefined port names so that the ports connect to the proper interface.

Table 6. Custom Instruction Ports

Port	Width (Bits)	Direction	Combinatorial	Multi-Cycle
dataa	CPU width	Input	Required	Required
datab	CPU width	Input	Optional	Optional
result	CPU width	Output	Required	Required
clk	1	Input	–	Required
reset	1	Input	–	Required
clk_en	1	Input	–	Required
start	1	Input	–	Required
prefix	11	Input	Optional	Optional

The ports your block requires depend on whether you implement combinatorial or multi-cycle logic. Use combinatorial logic if the required operation can execute in a single CPU clock cycle. If the logic block cannot meet system frequency requirements for a single clock cycle or if is intrinsically a multi-cycle operation, you can pipeline the block. In these cases, you must use multi-cycle logic.



Adding custom logic blocks to the Nios ALU can affect the system frequency. Even if the custom logic block meets the system frequency requirements as standalone block, when you place it in the Nios system, changes in place and route may affect the performance.

Port Operation

You should design your logic block so that the ports operate as described below:

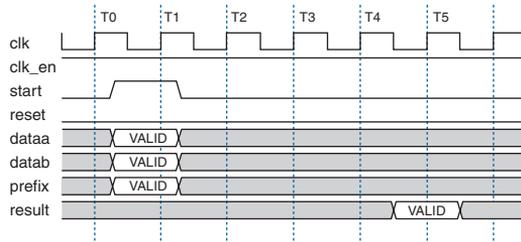
- For combinatorial logic, the CPU presents the data from the `dataa` and `datab` ports for execution on the rising edge of the CPU clock. The CPU reads the `result` port on the following rising edge of the CPU clock.
- For multi-cycle logic, the CPU asserts the `start` port on the first clock cycle of execution when the custom instruction issues through the ALU. At this time, `dataa` and `datab` have valid values. For all subsequent clock cycles, `dataa` and `datab` have undefined values. The CPU waits for the required number of clock cycles specified in the Nios configuration wizard for the custom instruction, and then reads the `result` port. See [Figure 7](#).
- The Nios system clock feeds the block's `clk` port, and the Nios master reset feeds the `reset` port. `reset` is asserted only when the whole Nios system is reset, e.g., during a watchdog timer time out. The logic block should use the `clk_en` signal as a conventional clock-qualifier signal and should ignore all clock rising edges during which `clk_en` is deasserted.
- You can use the optional `prefix` port with either combinatorial or multi-cycle logic; the interpretation of the 11-bit `prefix` data is not specified. The `prefix` port has a valid value on the first clock cycle of the execution when the custom instruction issues through the ALU. For all subsequent clock cycles, `prefix` has an undefined value.

- You can add other ports to your logic block, which allows your custom logic block to access logic that is external to the Nios CPU. Any ports that are not recognized by the Nios configuration wizard are routed to the top level of the Nios system module. These ports are labeled `export`.

Multi-Cycle Signal Timing

Before instantiating your logic block, you must determine the number of CPU clock cycles your block requires. Combinatorial logic requires one clock cycle. For multi-cycle logic, you can simulate the logic block to verify the required number of clock cycles. For example, **Figure 7** shows a logic block that uses five clock cycles. The CPU executes the custom instruction on the T0 clock edge, asserting the `start` bit and providing valid data for the next clock edge (T1). Five clock cycles later, the custom instruction provides a valid result. If you were instantiating the logic block in this example, you would specify five clock cycles in the Nios wizard.

Figure 7. Multi-Cycle Timing Example (5 CPU Clock Cycles)



Instantiate the Custom Instruction

You use the SOPC Builder in the Quartus II software to create a Nios embedded processor (CPU), configure system peripherals, and connect these elements to make a Nios system module. When you add a Nios CPU to the SOPC Builder, the Nios configuration wizard displays.

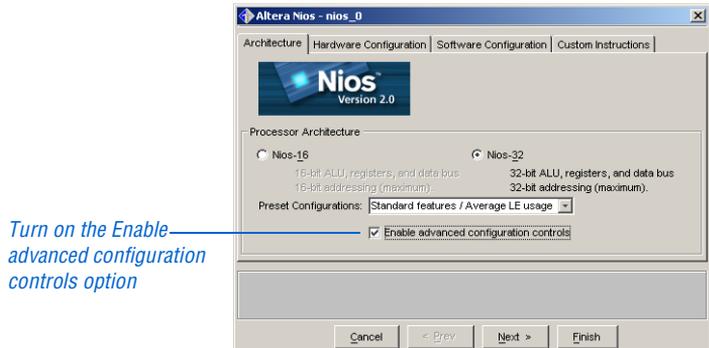


For detailed instructions on creating a Nios design, including using the SOPC Builder and adding a Nios CPU, refer to the *Nios Tutorial*.

Perform the following steps to add a custom instruction to the CPU.

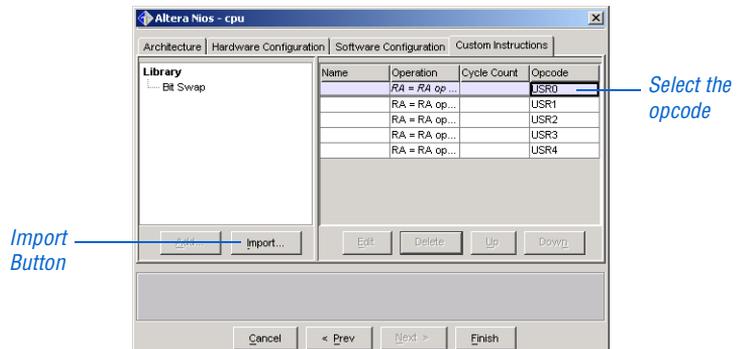
1. Turn on **Enable advanced configuration controls** in the **Architecture** tab. See [Figure 8](#).

Figure 8. Nios CPU Architecture Tab



2. Click the **Custom Instructions** tab.
3. Select the opcode (USR0 through USR4) that you want to use for the custom instruction.
4. Click **Import**. See [Figure 9](#). The **Interface to User Logic** displays.

Figure 9. Nios CPU Custom Instructions Tab



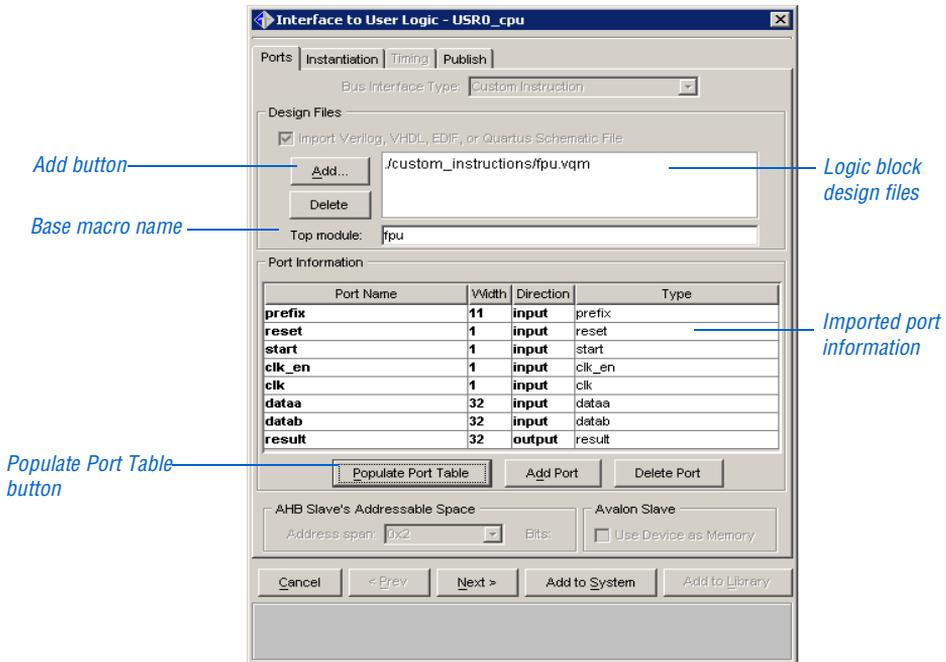
5. Click **Add** under **Design Files**. See [Figure 10](#).

6. Browse to the directory in which you saved the design file(s) for your logic block.
7. Select all of the logic block design files and click **Open**.
8. Enter the name of logic block's top-level module in the **Top module name** box. See [Figure 10](#).
9. Click **Populate Port Table**. The wizard scans the files and imports the port information. The ports are displayed under **Port Information**. See [Figure 10](#).



If the wizard does not scan the files correctly, you can manually enter the port names, widths, directions, and types.

Figure 10. Interface to User Logic



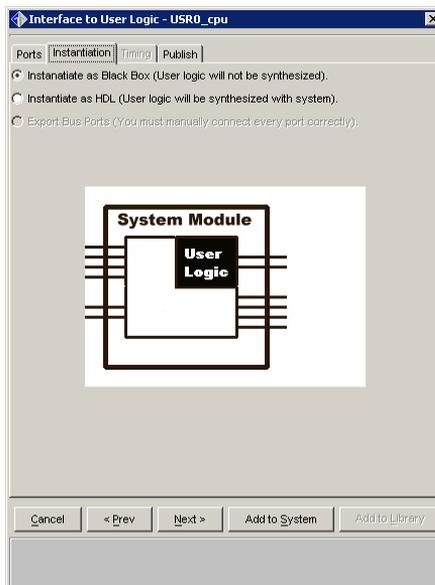
10. If your logic block has a different file format than your Nios system module, click the **Instantiation** tab. See [Figure 11 on page 17](#).

11. Select **Instantiate as Black Box**. See [Figure 11](#).



The **Instantiate as Black Box** option is turned on automatically if your design files are **.bdf**, EDIF Input Files (**.edf**), or **.vqm**.

Figure 11. Instantiation as Black Box



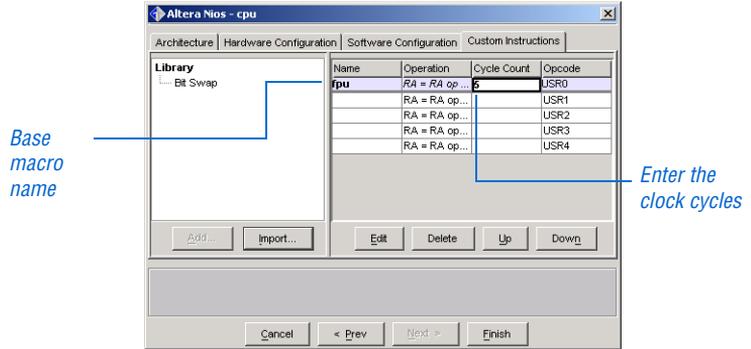
12. Click **Add to System**. You are returned to the Nios configuration wizard **Custom Instruction** tab.
13. Enter the base name that you would like to use to call your custom instruction in C/C++ or Assembly in the macro **Name** box. The wizard inputs the first four letters of the top-level module by default. The actual macro name will be **nm_<base name>**. See [Figure 12](#).



The wizard makes all macro names lower case.

14. Enter the number of clock cycles required to perform the operation in the **Cycle Count** box. See [Figure 12](#).

Figure 12. Macro Name & Clock Cycles



15. Repeat steps 3 through 14 for any additional custom instructions.
16. Click **Finish** when you are finished adding custom instructions.
17. Generate your Nios system module.

Create Software Code Using Macros

When you generate your Nios system module, the SOPC Builder creates software macros that you can use in your software code. The macros have the prefix `nm_`, which stands for Nios macro. The following sections describe how to use these macros in your C/C++ or Assembly code.

Using Macros in C/C++

For C/C++, you use the macros as a function call. Before using the macro, you must include the file `excalibur.h`, which is created by the SOPC Builder, in your code. Figure 13 shows an example macro the SOPC Builder created for a custom instruction.

Figure 13. C/C++ Example Macro

```
#define nm_fpu(_x, _y) ({\
    int __x = (_x), __y = (_y);\
    asm volatile("usr0 %0,%2 ; does fpu" \
        : "=r" (__x) \
        : "0" (__x), "r" (__y));\
    __x;\
})
```

When the SOPC Builder creates the macro, it assigns the inputs and outputs to type `int` (integer). If the inputs and outputs are not integers, you can manually edit the macro in the `excalibur.h` file to change `int` to another type (e.g., `float`). Alternatively, you can use type casting, which you would perform on the macro inputs and outputs. Figure 14 shows an example in which a macro takes in a signal of type `float` and changes it to type `int` (and vice versa) without changing any of the data bits.

Figure 14. Changing Signal Types

```
#define take_float_as_int32(x) (*(int *)&(x))
#define take_int32_as_float(i) (*(float *)&(i))
```

When including a macro in your code, use the following format:

```
result = nm_<name>(dataa, datab);
```

If you only want to use one input port, leave out the `datab` input:

```
result = nm_<name>(dataa);
```

If you are using the `prefix` port, the SOPC Builder creates a second macro with the suffix `_pfx`. The only valid input for `prefix` is an immediate value, which is a literal constant from 0 to 2,047 (11-bits). You must enter this value directly into the macro; it cannot be defined previously. Figure 15 provides an example macro with a prefix.

Figure 15. C/C++ Example Macro with Prefix

```
#define nm_fpu_pfx(_p, _x, _y) ({\
    int __x = (_x), __y = (_y);\
    asm volatile("pfx " #_p "\n\tusr0 %0,%2 ; does fpu" \
: "=r" (__x) \
: "0" (__x), "r" (__y));\
    __x;\
})
```

When including a macro with a prefix in your code, use the following format:

```
result = nm_<name>_pfx(prefix, dataa, datab);
```

or

```
result = nm_<name>_pfx(prefix, dataa);
```

If your custom instruction has a prefix port but you do not want to use it, you should use the format for the non-prefix macro. In this case, an 11-bit zero is provided to the prefix port of the custom instruction operation. This scenario is useful for situations in which your default prefix is zero because you do not have to load the prefix register before your custom instruction executes.

Using Macros in Assembly

In Assembly, you can call your custom instruction using a macro or an opcode. To use the macro, you must include the **excalibur.s** file, which is created by the SOPC Builder, in your code.

You assign the opcode (USR0 through USR4) when you instantiate the custom instruction (refer to [“Instantiate the Custom Instruction” on page 14](#)). The macro calls the associated USR opcode and it is used in the same manner as the opcode.

For USR0, which is of type RR, you can input any of the 32 general-purpose registers for %Ra and %Rb. The resulting value is stored in the first register, %Ra. The format to use is:

```
nm_<name> %Ra %Rb
```

For `USR1` through `USR4`, which are of type `Rw`, you can input any of the 32 general-purpose registers for `%Ra`. `%Rb` must be `%r0` explicitly, and must be loaded before the opcode executes. The resulting value is stored in the general-purpose register `%Ra`. See [Figure 16](#).

Figure 16. Assembly Example Macro

```
MOV %r0, %Rb
nm_<name> %Ra
```

If your custom instruction uses the `prefix` port, you must use the `PFX` instruction to enter data into this port. In the code, the `PFX` instruction must be located before the Assembly macro or the opcode because the `PFX` instruction only affects the next instruction. If you do not use the `PFX` instruction, an 11-bit zero is entered into your custom logic's `prefix` port. See [Figure 17](#).

Figure 17. Assembly Example Macro with Prefix

```
MOV %r0, %Rb
PFX IMM11
nm_<name> %Ra
```

When you are finished writing your software code, compile it using the `nios-build` utility as you would with any other Nios program.

[Figures 18](#) and [19](#) provide VHDL and Verilog HDL template files that you can reference when writing custom instructions in these languages. You can download these template files from the Altera web site at <http://www.altera.com/nios>.

Custom Instruction Templates

Figure 18. VHDL Template

```

LIBRARY __library_name;
USE __library_name.__package_name.ALL;

ENTITY __entity_name IS

    PORT(

        signal clk : IN STD_LOGIC;      -- CPU's master-input clk <required for multi-cycle>
        signal reset : IN STD_LOGIC; -- CPU's master asynchronous reset <required for multi-cycle>
        signal clk_en: IN STD_LOGIC; -- Clock-qualifier <required for multi-cycle>
        signal start: IN STD_LOGIC;  -- True when this instr. issues <required for multi-cycle>
        signal dataa: IN STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (31 DOWNTO 0);    -- operand A <always required>
        signal datab: IN STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (31 DOWNTO 0);    -- operand B <optional>
        signal prefix: IN STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (10 DOWNTO 0);    -- prefix <optional>
        signal result : OUT STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (31 DOWNTO 0) -- result <always required>

    );

END __entity_name;

ARCHITECTURE a OF __entity_name IS

    signal clk: IN STD_LOGIC;
        signal reset : IN STD_LOGIC;
        signal clk_en: IN STD_LOGIC;
        signal start: IN STD_LOGIC;
        signal dataa: IN STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (31 DOWNTO 0);
        signal datab: IN STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (31 DOWNTO 0);
        signal prefix: IN STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (10 DOWNTO 0);
    signal result : OUT STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (31 DOWNTO 0);

BEGIN
    -- Process Statement

    -- Concurrent Procedure Call

    -- Concurrent Signal Assignment

    -- Conditional Signal Assignment

    -- Selected Signal Assignment

    -- Component Instantiation Statement

    -- Generate Statement
END a;
```

Figure 19. Verilog HDL Template

```

module __module_name(
    clk,                // CPU's master-input clk <required for multi-cycle>
    reset,              // CPU's master asynchronous reset <required for multi-cycle>
    clk_en,             // Clock-qualifier <required for multi-cycle>
    start,              // True when this instr. issues <required for multi-cycle>
    dataa,              // operand A <always required>
    datab,             // operand B <optional>
    prefix,             // prefix <optional>
    result              // result <always required>
);

input                clk;
input                reset;
input                clk_en;
input                start;
input                dataa;
input                datab;
input                prefix;

output [31:0]result;

    // Port Declaration

    // Wire Declaration

    // Integer Declaration

    // Concurrent Assignment

    // Always Construct

endmodule

```

Conclusion

Custom instructions are a powerful tool that allow you to customize the Nios embedded processor for a particular application. This customization can increase the performance of Nios systems dramatically, while reducing the size and complexity of the software.

Documentation Feedback

Altera values your feedback. If you would like to provide feedback on this document—e.g., clarification requests, inaccuracies, or inconsistencies—send e-mail to nios_docs@altera.com.



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