
DIGITAL ELECTRONICS - LABORATORY 2

INTRODUCTION TO VHDL PROGRAMMING

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Introduction

The goal of this lab is to familiarize you with the software Quartus required to implement your VHDL project on the CPLD.

⚠ Installation (to be done at home before the lab) ⚠

Quartus is a software produced by Intel. To install it, follow the next steps :

1. Create a free account on [intel.com](https://www.intel.com).
2. Download the 18.1 Lite version of Quartus, ModelSim Starter and MAX V device support ([Windows](#) [Linux](#), under individual files), don't download more recent versions of Quartus as troubles have been reported with the CPLD that you will use.
3. Launch the Quartus setup file and check ModelSim Starter as well as MAX II/V device boxes on the Select Components window at the beginning of the installation.
4. Follow further steps.
5. At the end of the installation, **DO NOT** install the recommended drivers from the installation of Quartus, by unchecking the corresponding box.
6. Before launching Quartus, connect the CPLD to your computer using the USB Blaster.
7. From the device manager ("gestionnaire de peripheriques") of your operating system, right click on Altera USB-Blaster. Then, click on update drivers and select the driver folder available on myUliege (you might need to unzip the archive *drivers.zip*).

Electronic board

Figure 1 shows the schematic of the electronic board used for the project. As you can see, the CPLD is soldered on the board. Some pins of the CPLD are directly accessible via the pins on the board with a $220\ \Omega$ resistor, some are directly connected to LEDs and 2 are connected with the clock signals generated by 2 555-timers.

1 Development of a simple electrocardiogram

Specification

Let's imagine that an analogue amplification circuit connects to electrodes on a patient, and the output is a voltage between 0 V to 3.3 V. Moreover, the output voltages are such that

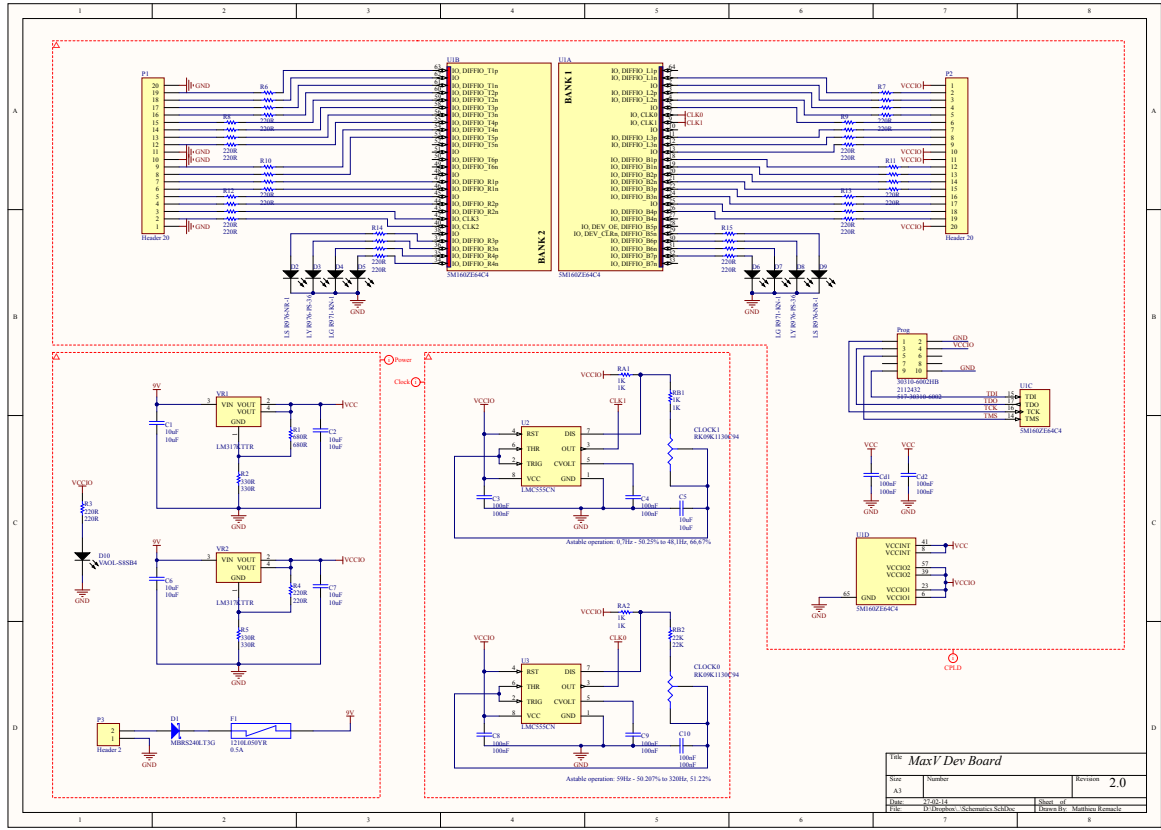


FIGURE 1 – Electronic board

the output can be considered as a 0 most of the time and as a 1 during a heartbeat.

The aim of this example is to design a system that switches on an indicator light when the patient's heart rate exceeds a certain value, set here at 150 bpm (beats per minute), and another light when this rate falls below 40 bpm.

Architecture

One possible solution is to use a fast clock (faster than a heartbeat), and count the number of clock strokes between each beat. The lower the number of strokes, the faster the speed of the beats, and vice versa. So you will need an internal signal to count the number of clock strokes between beats.

The first difficulty is to design the frequency of the clock. Indeed, a high frequency will make it possible to be more precise in the heart rate measurement, but on the other hand, the maximum number of counts is increased, and therefore the number of registers required to store the internal signal will be higher.

A frequency of 60 Hz seems to be a good compromise. Indeed, at 150 bpm, it will take 24 clock strokes, while at 40 bpm, it will take 90 clock strokes. Thus, only 7 bits are required to

retain the number of clock strokes.

In addition to the bits used for counting, two other bits should be used to retain the output values of the LEDs between 2 heartbeats.

A possible implementation is an architecture with a single simple process, carrying out the following actions :

- Count the clock strikes between two heart beat.
- Update the indicator light according the heart frequency during each beat, i.e. when the input is at 1.

On the board with the CPLD, we are going to use a clock signal from a 555 timer to simulate a heartbeat.

Code

Here is an example of a code performing the requested operations.

```
library ieee ;
use ieee.std_logic_1164.all ;

entity cardio is
  port
  ( -- Input ports
    clk      : in  std_logic ;
    heart    : in  std_logic ;
    -- Output ports
    led_fast : buffer std_logic ;
    led_slow : buffer std_logic ) ;
end entity cardio ;

architecture cardio_arch of cardio is
  signal cnt      : integer range 0 to 127 := 0 ;
  signal heart_old : std_logic := '0' ;
begin
  main : process( clk )
  begin
    if( rising_edge( clk ) ) then
      if( heart_old = '1' and heart = '0' ) then
        if( cnt > 90 ) then -- too slow
          led_fast <= '0' ;
          led_slow <= '1' ;
        elsif( cnt < 24 ) then -- too fast
          led_slow <= '0' ;
          led_fast <= '1' ;
        else
          led_slow <= '0' ; -- good range
          led_fast <= '0' ;
        end if ;
        cnt <= 0 ; -- reset counter
      else
        if( cnt /= 127 ) then
          cnt <= cnt + 1 ;
        end if ;
        heart_old <= heart ;
      end if ;
    end if ;
  end process main ;
end architecture cardio_arch ;
```

FIGURE 2 – Cardio implementation

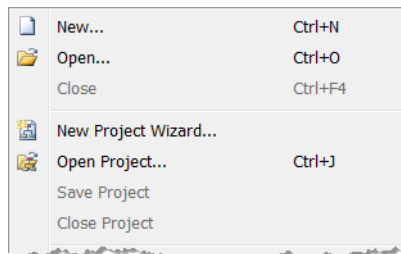
The **heart_old** signal is used to retain the previous value of **heart**. It can therefore detect the end of a heartbeat, i.e. when the **heart** signal changes from 1 (previous rising edge) to 0 (present rising edge). When this condition is detected, the LEDs are lit according to the counter value beat and the counter is then reset.

2 Creation and simulation of a project

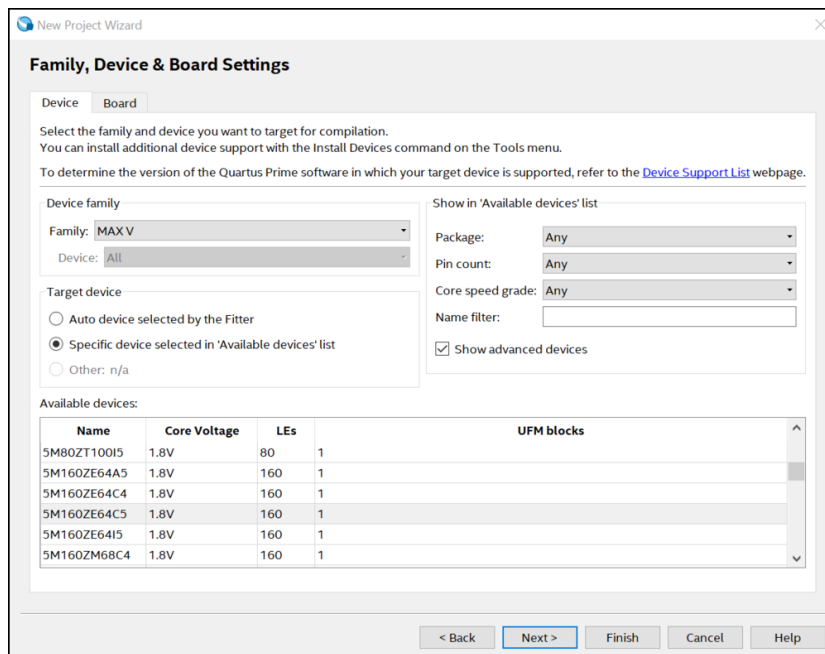
Quartus

This software works with the notion of Projects. A project includes all the source codes, programming files, constraint files, etc., necessary for the programming of a component. You will therefore have a single project for your laboratory. The creation of a project is relatively simple :

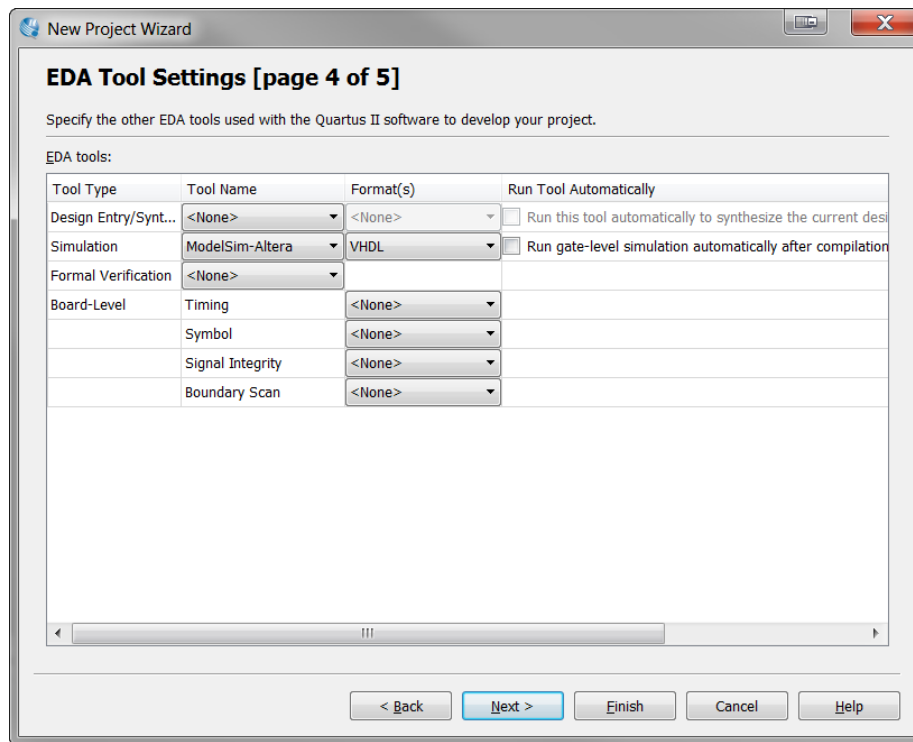
1. Click on **File** → **New Project Wizard**.



2. A new window opens. Now, you can configure the characteristics of your project. First, specify the location and the name (put cardio here) of your project. Then, you can skip the step of adding a file (we will create one later). Then, you have to specify which component is going to be used. Select the component reference **5M160ZE64C5**.

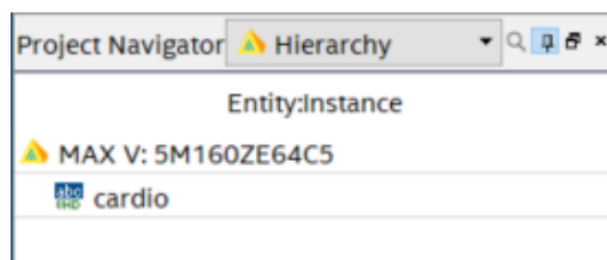


3. Finally, in the simulation section, choose **ModelSim Altera** and **VHDL**.



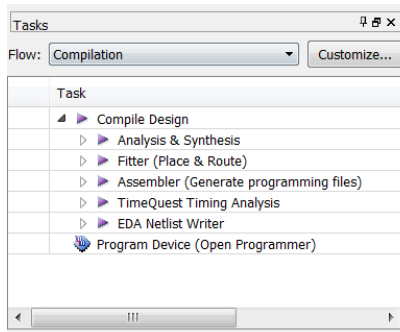
The project is created and you have now access to the main window of Quartus.

Project Navigator : This window provides a summary of the project hierarchy. In this laboratory, the hierarchy will remain simple since we will only have one file. In this window, it is also possible to review all the files of the project.

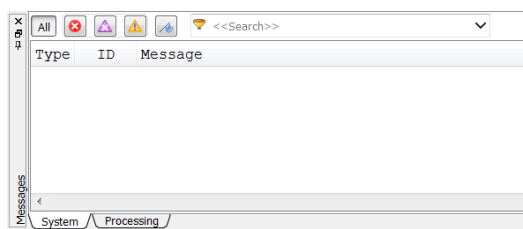


Tasks : This window provides all the information about the tasks to be performed to have an operating project. Each task (for example : the synthesis) can be performed independently by double-clicking on it. If a task requires another task to be done, it will be performed as well.

Moreover, it is possible via this window to access the compilation reports, showing what happened during the execution of a task. To do so, simply click on the small arrow to expand the task, and then click on one of the proposed reports.



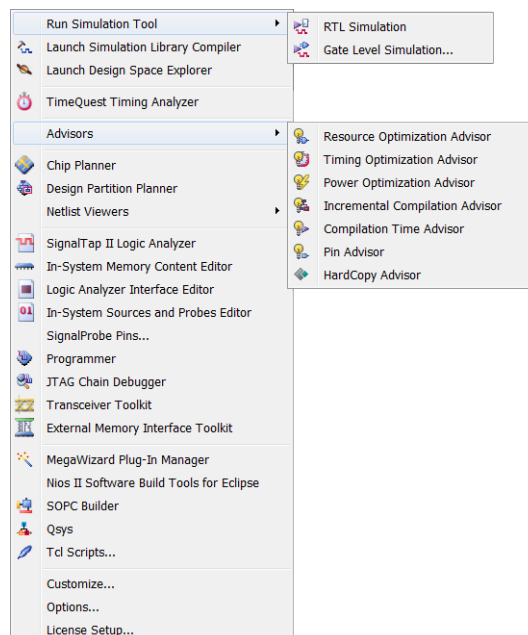
Messages : Generated messages (e.g. compilation errors, etc...) will be displayed here.



Tools : Important tools, such as the launch of a compilation, a timing analysis, or the pin planner can be found in this bar.

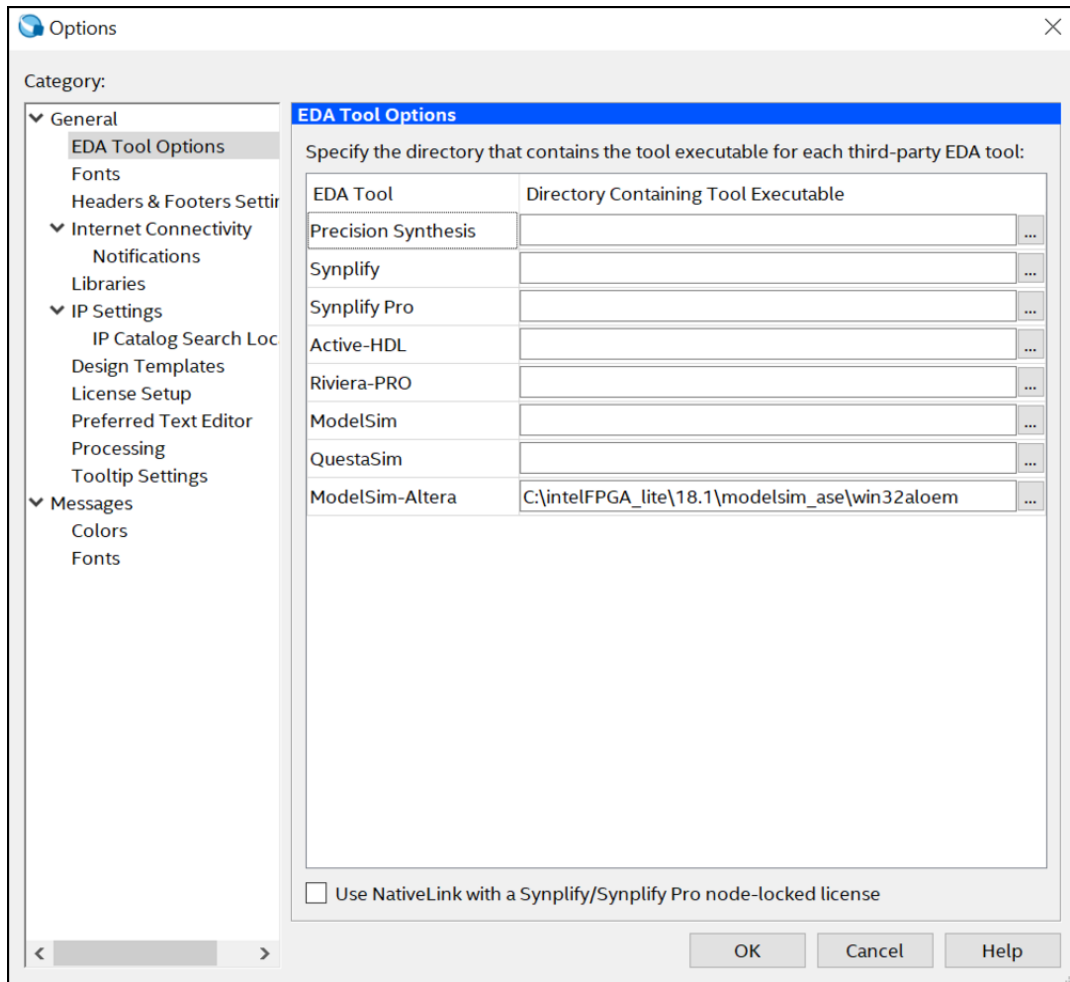


In the top bar, further tools are available under Tools.



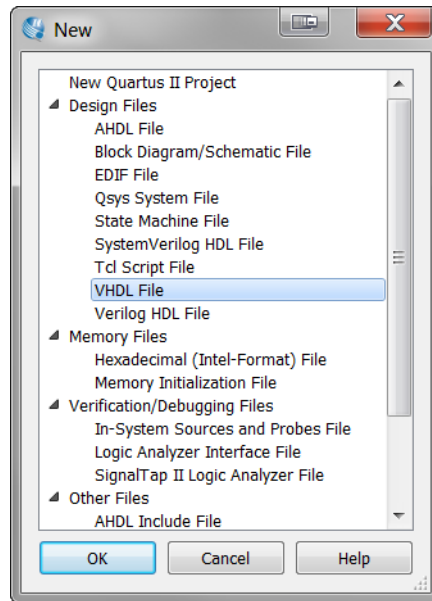
Configuration of ModelSim


To complete the configuration of ModelSim in Quartus, it is necessary to specify the path to win32aloem (in the installation folder of ModelSim, often the same as Quartus) by clicking on Tools → Options → EDA Tool Options.



VHDL File

Now, let's implement our electrocardiogram. Click on File → New and in the window that appears, select VHDL file.



An empty file opens in the workspace, all you have to do is to copy the example code displayed in the Figure 2 (in *cardio.txt* available on myUliege). Once it's done, you can check that what you have written is correct with the button . If the compilation is successful, a message will be displayed in the message window and a (empty) compilation report in the workspace.

As your file is syntactically correct, it is now time to launch the analysis and the simulation steps.

ModelSim

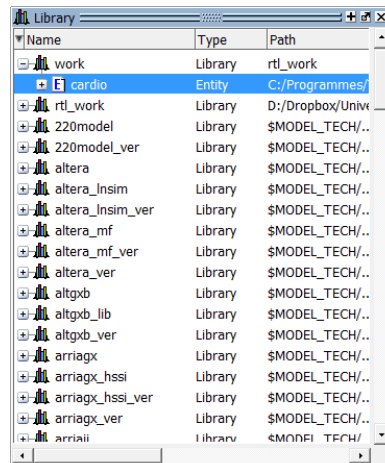
In order to check the system implementation, it can be simulated. Click on Tools → Run Simulation Tool → RTL Simulation, which will launch the ModelSim program with all the parameters already loaded. As for Quartus, the workspace is divided into different areas. The most important are the following :

Libraries : All necessary libraries are listed in this window. In particular, your program can be found in **work**. Double-click on the name of your program to start the simulation.

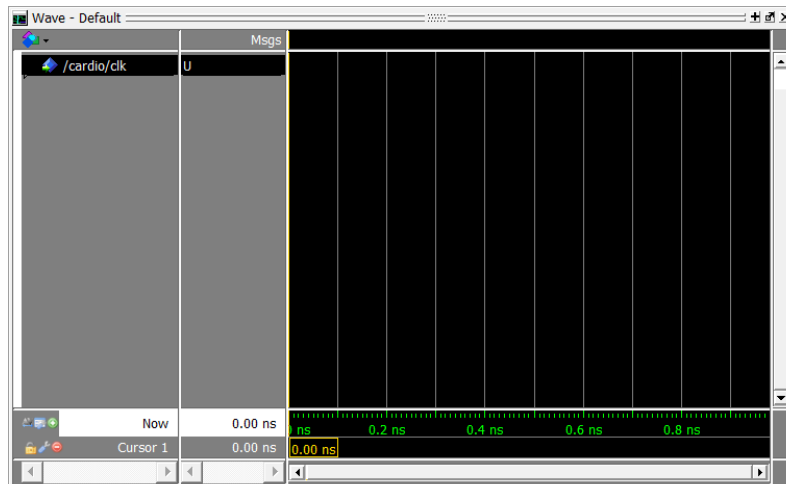
Objects : All available signals will appear in this window. You can drag and drop them into the Wave window with the mouse to display their evolution during the simulation.

Wave : All requested simulation results will be accessible in this window. Here, the **clk** object has been moved (If the window does not appear, do View → Wave).

Console : It is possible to control the software using a console, i.e. with commands in the console. I do not recommend this method.



Name	Value	Kind	Mode
clk	U	Signal	In
heart	U	Signal	In
led_fast	U	Signal	Out
led_slow	U	Signal	Out
cnt	0	Signal	Internal
bpm_calculated	0	Signal	Internal



When you double-clicked on your program in the Libraries window, you started a simulation. In fact, your simulation was initialized but nothing happened yet. Indeed, you have to first give the software stimuli, i.e. determine the system inputs. With ModelSim, there are 2 main ways of doing it.

- Launch the simulation without any information and specify the stimuli directly in the simulation.
- Start the simulation with a test bench file, which contains all the stimuli specifications.

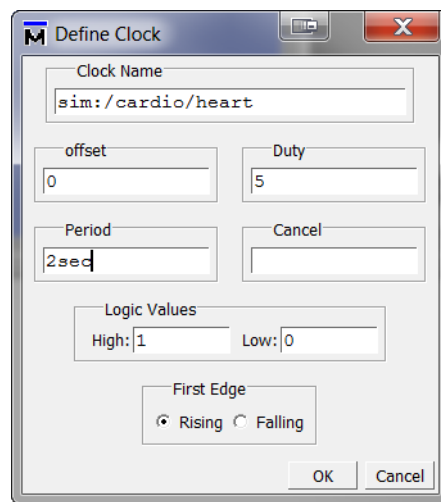
1st option


Start by first moving all the objects in the Wave window, which will allow you to view the signals. Note that inputs, outputs, but also internal signals are available, which is very useful for debugging your code.

Then, right click on the **clk** item. Then, in the menu that appears, choose Clock.



In the Period field, enter "16ms". Repeat the operation with the heart signal, but this time with a period of "2sec", and a duty cycle of 5, which will simulate a heartbeat.



Finally, run the simulation for 10 seconds. In order to so so, write 10 sec in the appropriate field and click on the button .



2nd option : Test bench

Now, we will see the second possibility of simulation : the use of a test bench file. It's a VHDL code that includes the entity that is being tested, and runs different test processes. The unit under test is called Unit Under Test (UUT), or Device Under Test (DUT). The code test is shown in Figure 3.

```
library ieee;
use ieee.std_logic_1164.all;
use ieee.std_logic_unsigned.all;

entity test_cardio is
end;

architecture test_cardio_arc of test_cardio is
    signal heart      : std_logic;
    signal clk        : std_logic;
    signal led_slow   : std_logic;
    signal led_fast   : std_logic;
    constant clk_cycle : integer := 1000;
    constant beat_cycle : integer := 20;

    -- description of cardio
    component cardio
    port (
        heart      : in std_logic;
        clk        : in std_logic;
        led_fast   : out std_logic;
        led_slow   : out std_logic);

    end component;

    -- beginning of the architecture port map
begin

    DUT : cardio
    port map (
        heart      => heart,
        led_slow   => led_slow,
        led_fast   => led_fast,
        clk        => clk);

    -- Processes declaration
    clk_stimulus : process
    begin
        for i in 1 to clk_cycle loop
            clk <= '0';
            wait for 8 ms;
            clk <= '1';
            wait for 8 ms;
        end loop;
        wait;
    end process clk_stimulus;

end architecture test_cardio_arc;
```

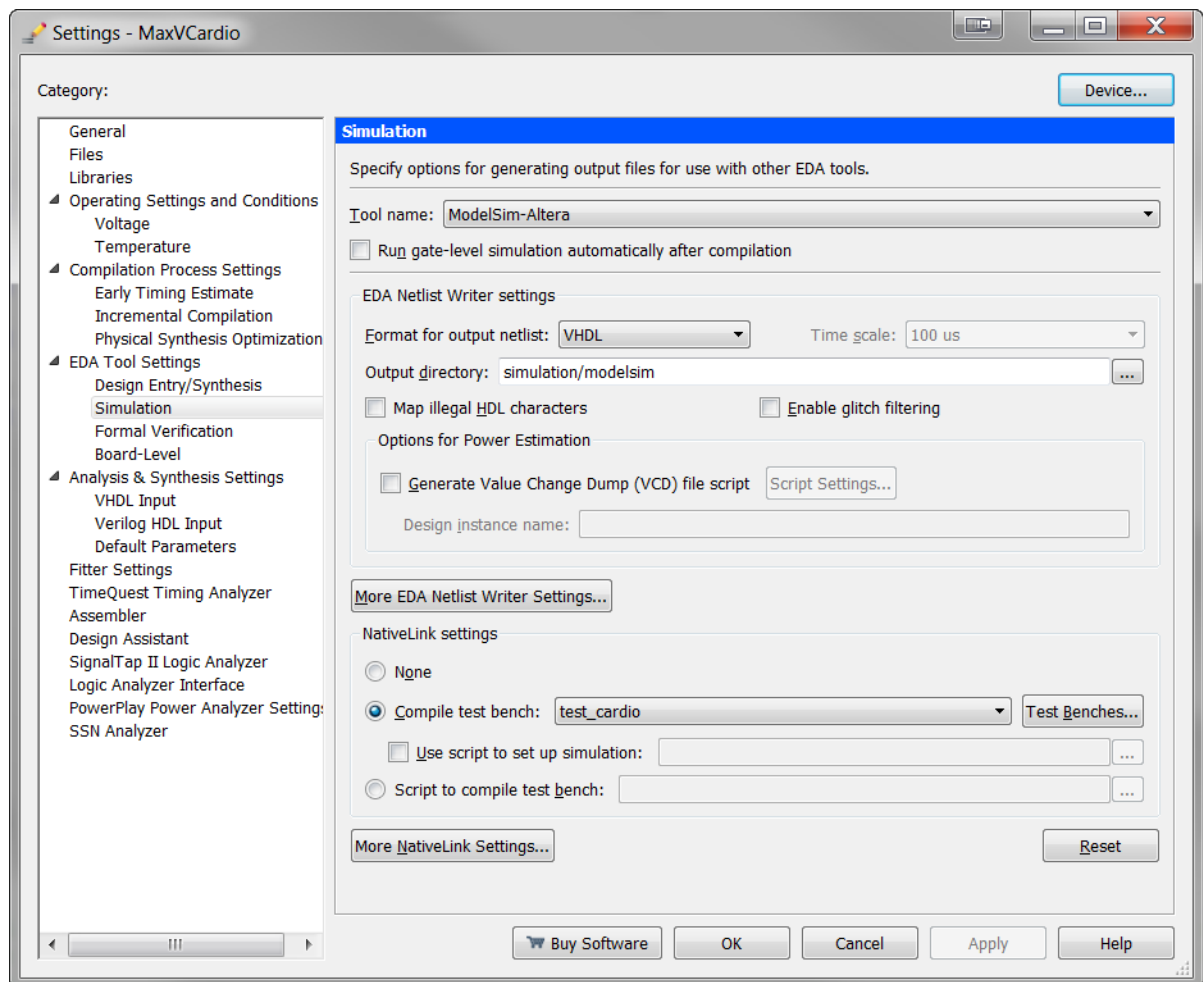
FIGURE 3 – Test bench implementation

The code structure is as follows :

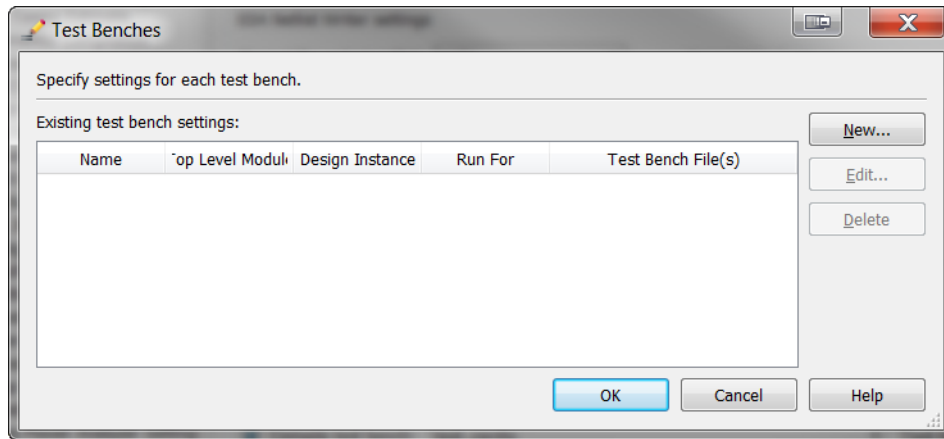
- Declaration of an empty entity for the simulation.
- Declaration of the internal signals that correspond to the inputs/outputs of the DUT.
- Connection of the DUT within our architecture.
- Specification of DUT inputs.

The test bench can be seen as a block box with no inputs/outputs in which the DUT is tested.

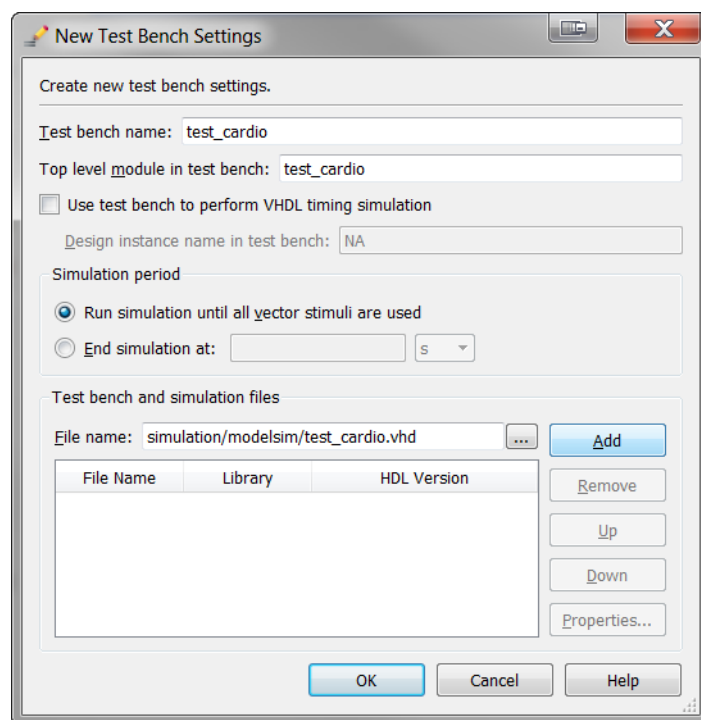
Let's add the test bench file to our project. Create a new VHDL file, copy the code (in *test_cardio.txt* available on myUliege) and save the file. Then, in Quartus, click on Assignments → Settings. In the window that opens, choose the Simulation part under EDA Tools Settings.




Then, in the NativeLink settings section, check Compile test bench, and click on the Test Benches button.

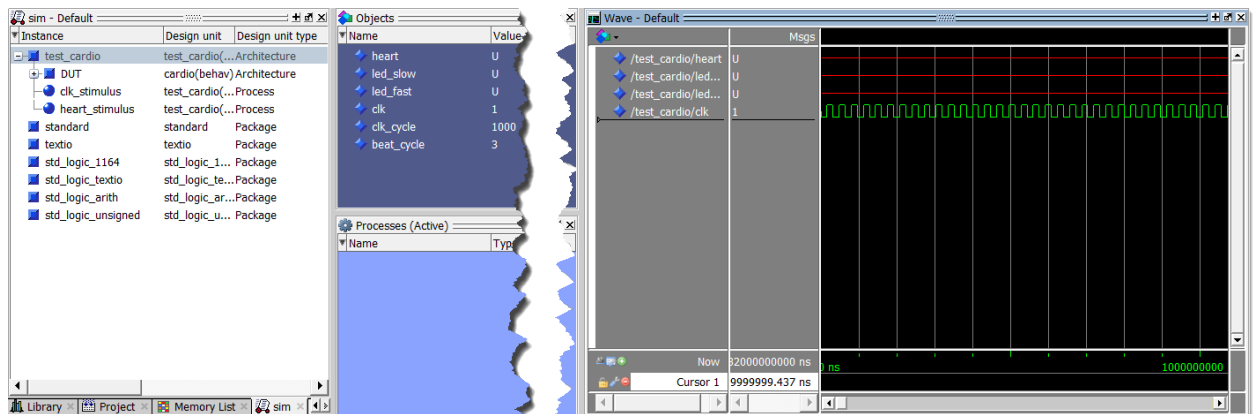


In the window that opens, press New.



Indicate a name for the test bench, following the example in the screenshot. choose the duration of the simulation, and finally, using the button , select your test file. Don't forget to click on Add.

Then return to the main Quartus window. Then click on Tools → Run Simulation Tool → RTL Simulation. The simulation starts. After adjusting the zoom in the Wave window with the O and I keys of your keyboard, you should get the window represented in the figure below.

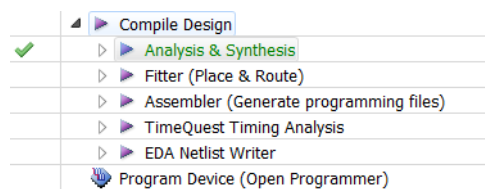


As shown in the screenshot, your simulation starts automatically, with the information contained in the Test bench file. However, the test bench does not contain any information about the heart signal. The heart signal appears in red.

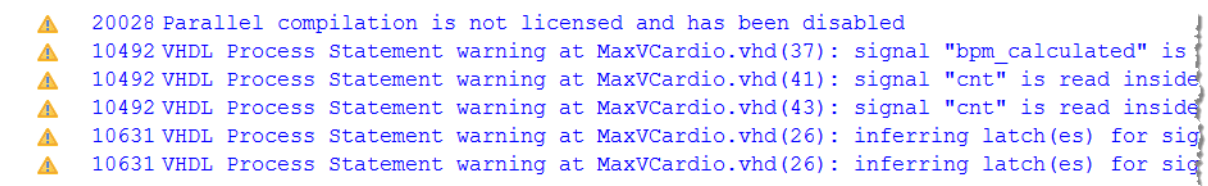
Your task is to modify the Test bench file to implement your test scenario. Check that the system behaves as desired.

Analysis & Synthesis

During this step, the software will analyse your VHDL file and translate it into logical elements. To start the analysis, simply click on Analysis & Synthesis in the task window. If this operation is successful, you should see a small ✓, like this :



In addition, a compilation report window has opened in your workspace. If this is not the case, check your VHDL file again.



Once the file has been analysed, Some information on what has been achieved is now available. You can access the compilation report, if it is not already open, with a right click on Analysis & Synthesis then View Report.

cardio.vhd

Compilation Report - cardio

test_cardio.vhd

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Flow Summary

Flow Settings

Flow Non-Default Global Settings

Flow Elapsed Time

Flow OS Summary

Flow Log

Analysis & Synthesis

Flow Messages

Flow Suppressed Messages

Flow Summary

<<Filter>>

Flow Status

Successful - Wed Mar 10 12:43:22 2021

Quartus Prime Version

20.1.1 Build 720 11/11/2020 SJ Lite Edition

Revision Name

cardio

Top-level Entity Name

cardio

Family

MAX V

Device

5M160ZE64C5

Timing Models

Final

Total logic elements

15

Total pins

4

Total virtual pins

0

UFM blocks

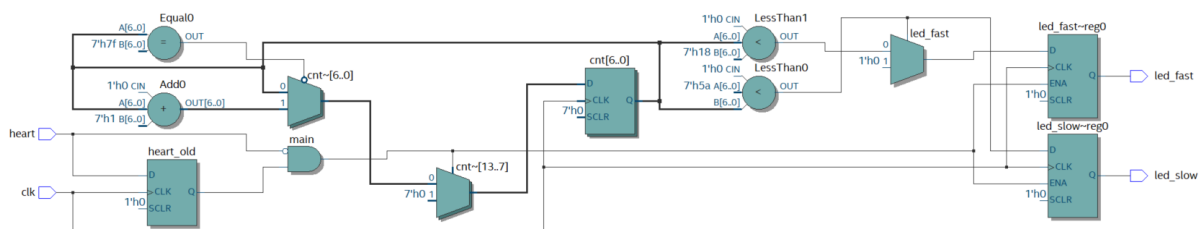
0 / 1 (0 %)

This window contains two important pieces of information :

- The number of logic elements used by your program.
- The number of I/O required.

These two pieces of information have to be compatible with the hardware you have ! Otherwise you will have to modify your code to use less resources. You can also, out of curiosity, go and see the other parts of the report, such as the Resource Usage Summary.

Furthermore, it is possible to see the physical implementation of the system. Click on Tools → Netlist Viewers → RTL Viewer.



Here you can see the translation of your code into a logic circuit with registers, multiplexers, etc... For example, the **heart_old** signal led to the addition of a register.

The last step now consists of assigning the signals of our system to inputs/outputs of the component. Only certain I/O of the CPLD are accessible on the development board. It will also be necessary to specify to the software what to do with the unused I/O and finally to indicate which voltage to use.

In this project, there are two types of signals : classical signals and clock signals. A signal is automatically considered as a clock signal by Quartus when you use the **rising_edge** function or other specific functions. You must be able to determine from the code you have written which signal is a clock signal but you can get confirmation in Quartus by going to the Fitter report and then navigating to Resource Section, Control Signal.

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Summary

Settings

Settings

Parallel Compilation

Source Files Read

Resource Usage Summary

Resource Utilization by Entity

Control Signals

	Name	Location	Fan-Out	Usage	Global	Global Resource Used	Global Line Name
1	clk	PIN_7	8	Clock	yes	Global Clock	GCLK0
2	cnt[6]~12	LC_X4_Y3_N7	6	Clock enable	no	--	--
3	counter~0	LC_X2_Y3_N4	16	Async. clear, Async. load, Latch enable	yes	Global Clock	GCLK3

Parallel

Pin-Out File

Resource Section

Resource Usage Summary

Input Pins

Output Pins

I/O Bank Usage

All Package Pins

Output Pin Default Load For Reported

Resource Utilization by Entity


Delay Chain Summary

Control Signals




Global & Other Fast Signals

Non-Global High Fan-Out Signals

The signals are described in the Usage field.

Now you must tell the software where each of your signals are located on the CPLD. To do this, click on the button  (Pin Planner), which opens the window shown in Figure 4.

You can move a signal (e.g. clk) to an input on the CPLD. However, please note the following :

- The clocks in your system must be on CPLD clock inputs, symbolised by .
- Some I/O are reserved (such as programming I/O's, represented by  or power supply I/O's (represented by .

Don't forget to refer to the schematic of the electronic board represented in Figure 1 to place your inputs and outputs in the right pins. The two 555 timers of the board are connected directly to the CLK0 and CLK1 inputs of the CPLD. Finally, you can also specify the output voltage of the pin, using the Standard I/O column. Check that everything is in 3.3-V LVTTL (default).

I recommend you to assign **clk** to the fastest clock of the board and **heart** to the slowest. Moreover, assign **led_slow** and **led_fast** to LEDs integrated on the board.

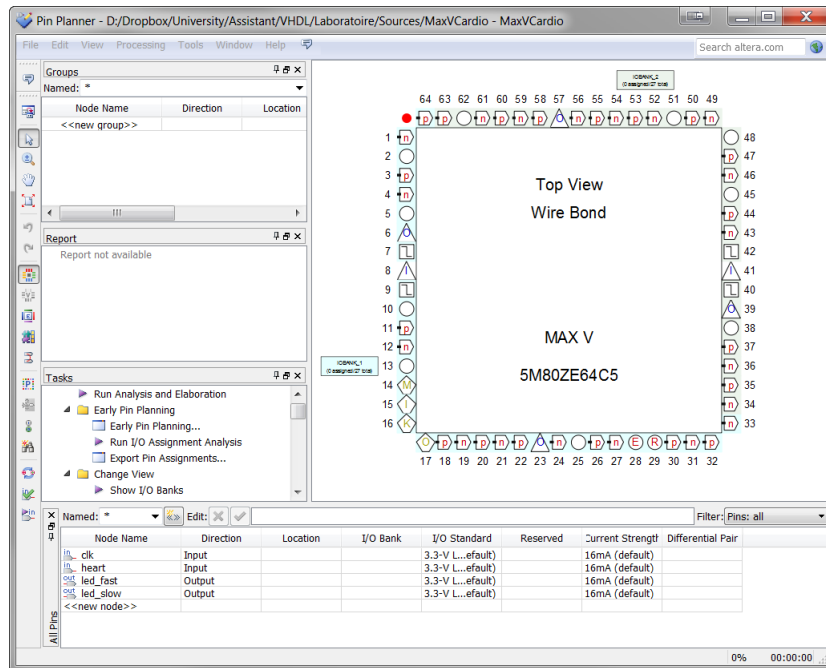
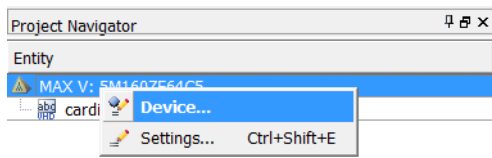
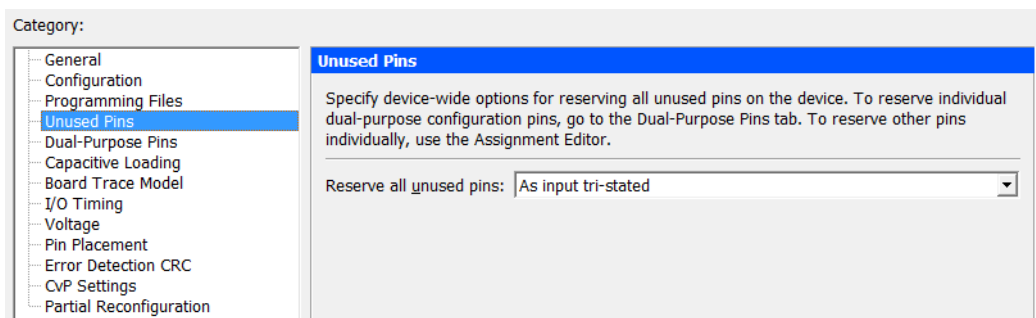


FIGURE 4 – Pin planner


The last thing to do is to tell the software what to do with the unused I/O. By default, the CPLD will impose a voltage of 0 V. However, this may cause problem as there is a risk of conflict with a voltage imposed by an external device (as the 555 timers). Therefore, it's better to change this default behaviour and set all unused pins to Input mode. To do so, right-click on the name of the CPLD in the Project Navigator, and click Device.

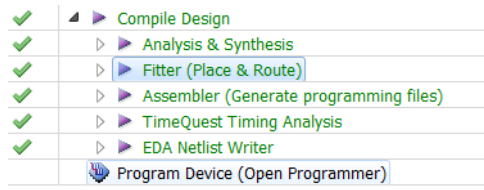



In the window that appears, click Device and Pin Options. A new window appears : go to the Unused Pin section. Finally, in the section Reserve all unused pins, choose As input tri-stated.

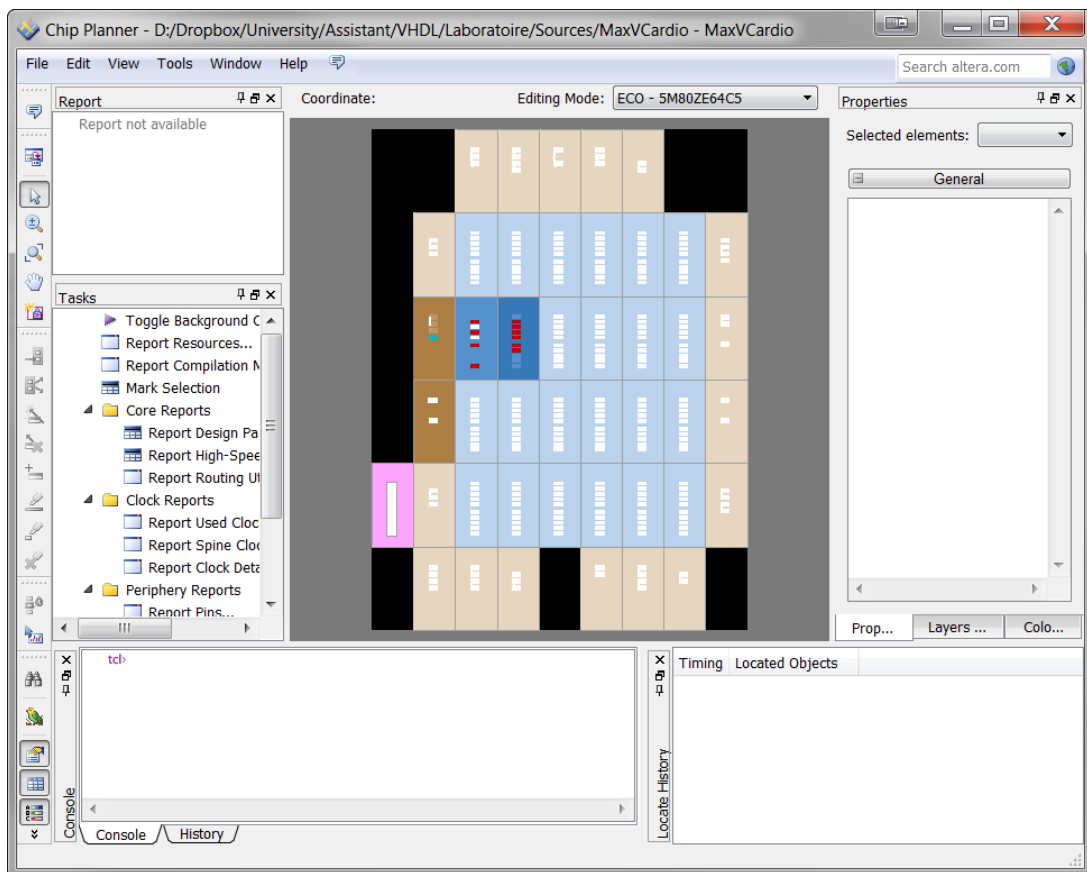


Place & Route

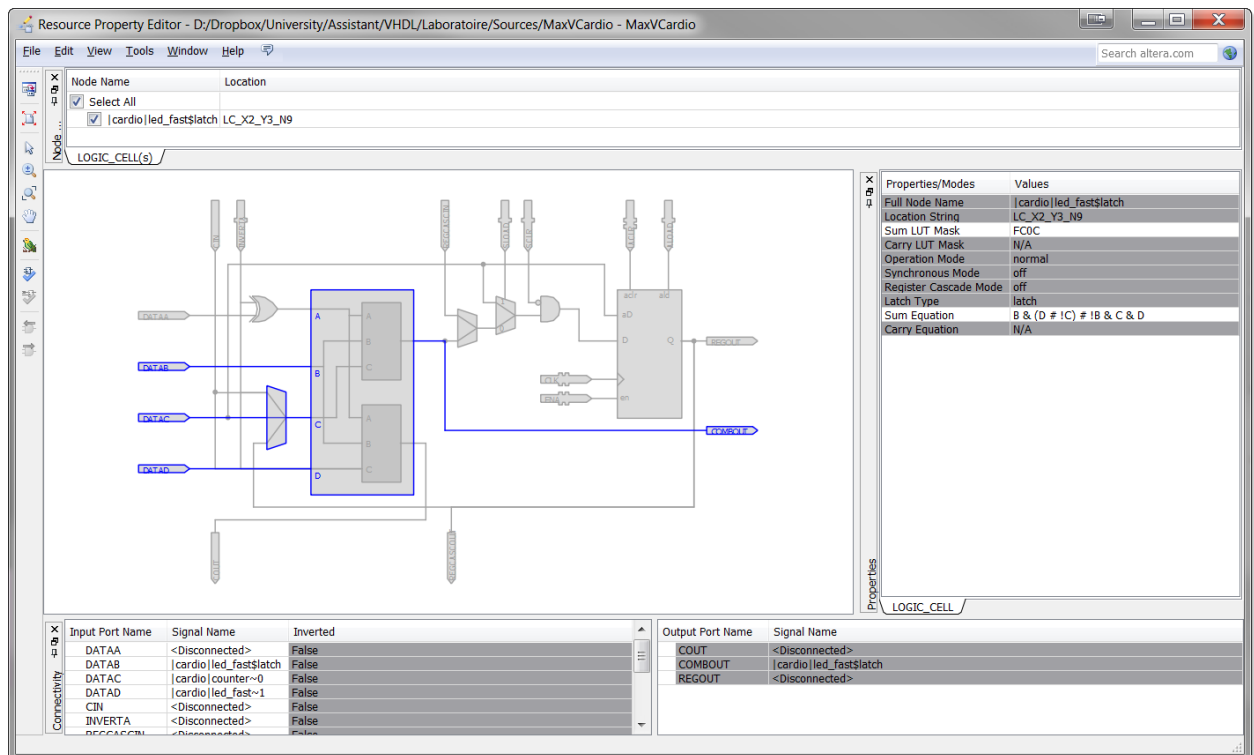
At this stage, your project has been coded, simulated and analysed. All that remains to do is to synthesise it, i.e. to build the logic circuit that can be implemented on the CPLD. Click on the button  to launch the complete compilation.



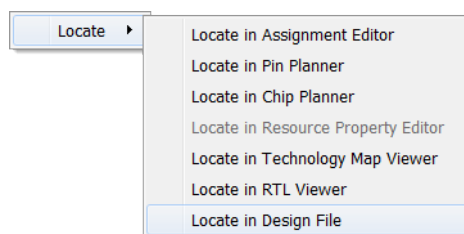
At the end of this stage, a number of reports are available. For example, it is possible to see how the code has been implemented on the component. To do so, click on  (Chip Planer), which opens the following window :



The darker blue a block is, the more it is used. Thus, in the program created here, only 2 logical units are used. You can go through the program to see exactly how your system has been implemented. you can see the logical equations, registers, etc. with a double click on a block to see details of the implementation.




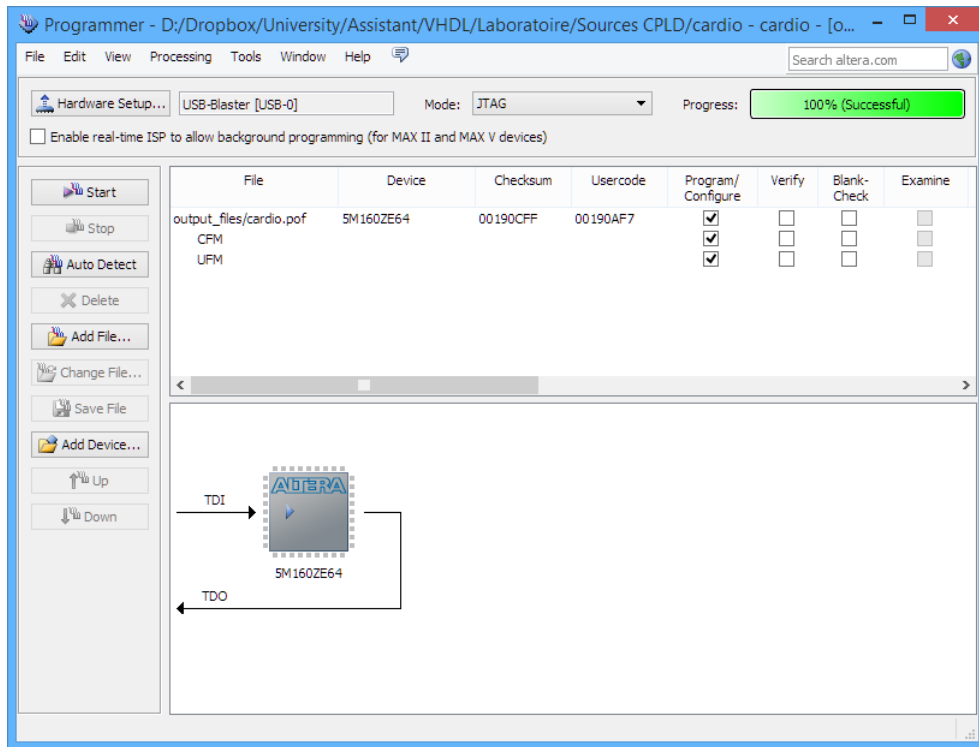
You can see where the item has been declared in the code by right-clicking and then Locate → Locate in Design File.




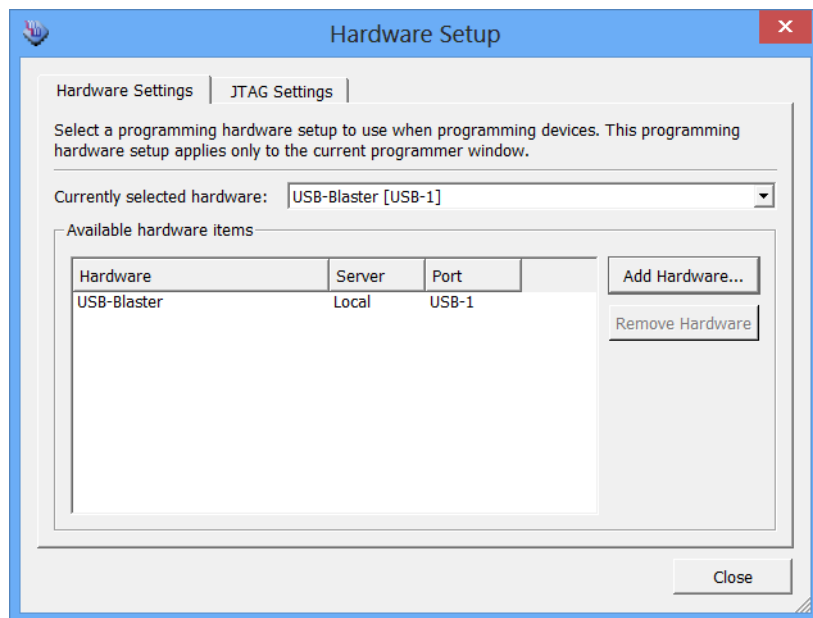
In future more complex projects, you will most likely have to do timing analysis, i.e. check the time it takes for the signal to go from the input to the output of the CPLD. Here, there is no need to do this analysis since the system is used at a very slow speed.

Programming of the CPLD

The last step is to program the component. Connect the programmer to your computer. Open the programmer by clicking on the button  (Programmer) in the Tools part of Quartus. A new window opens.



Click the button  **Hardware Setup...** to select and configure your programmer. A new window will open, choose USB-Blaster in Currently Selected Hardware.



Press Close to return to the programming window. Check the Program/Configure boxes. Finally, click on start. If everything went well, your component is programmed (don't forget to supply your board with the battery before clicking on start)!

Set the CLK0 potentiometer fully to the left (when you are facing the card, the notch should be directed to the left), and move the cursor of the other potentiometer to change the heart beat. Observe the changes.

In the laboratory, you would be able to measure the frequency range of the clocks thanks to an oscilloscope. The frequency of the **clk0** signal located in the pin 7 of the CPLD is between 50 Hz and 266 Hz. The frequency of the **clk1** signal located in the pin 9 of the CPLD is between 1.24 Hz and 90 Hz.

3 Exercise

For this exercise, I invite you to perform an improved version of the cardiogram. Indeed, instead of one LED indicating a too low heart rate and one LED indicating a too high heart rate, you will realize a system with 8 LEDs. The number of LEDs lit must be proportional to the heart rate. You can choose the intermediate heart rates, but the evolution of the LEDs lighting up must be proportional to the heart rate. In addition, the two danger thresholds (approx. 45bpm and 200bpm) should be indicated with red LEDs as shown in the Figure 5.

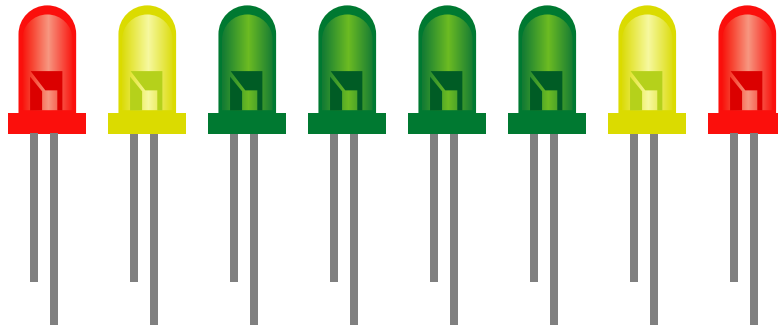


FIGURE 5 – LED configuration