

# ASIC Design Flow Manual Using Cadence Tool Suite



#### **Tools used for ASIC Flow:**

- 1. INCISIVE Used for Functional Simulation
- 2. **GENUS** Used for Synthesis and pre-Layout Timing Analysis
- 3. **INNOVUS** Used for Physical Design

# **Getting Started:**

- 1. Make sure the Licensing Server is switched ON and the client is connected to server."
- 2. Open the "counter" directory and make a right click to "Open in Terminal".
- 3. To open the tools to be used, type in the command "csh" (Press Enter) followed by "source /home/install/cshrc" <Or the path of tools whichever is applicable>.
- 4. A welcome string "Welcome to Cadence Tool Suite" appears indicating terminal ready to invoke Cadence Tools available for you.

## Module 1: Creating an RTL Code

In order to create an RTL Code, you can open a text editor and type in your Verilog code or VHDL Code.

- 1. In the terminal, type in "**gedit <filename>.v [OR] <filename>.vhdl**". The file extensions depends on the type of RTL Code you write as shown.
- 2. Similarly, using same command, Test Bench also could be written as shown below.



```
timescale lns/lps
module counter(clk,m,rst,count);
input clk,m,rst;
output reg [7:0] count;
always@(posedge clk or negedge rst)
begin
if(!rst)
count=0;
else if(m)
count=count+1;
else
count=count-1;
end
endmodule
```

#### RTL Code for a 16-bit Synchronous Up-Down Counter

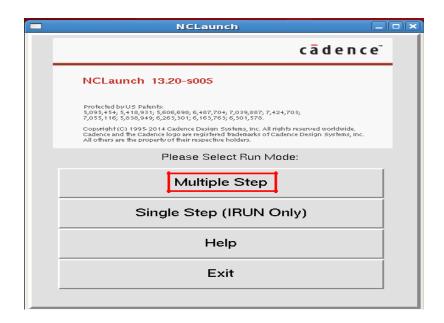
```
timescale Ins/lps
module counter test;
reg clk, rst,m;
wire [15:0] count;
initial
begin
clk=0;
rst=0;#25;
rst=1;
end
initial
begin
m=1;
#600 m=0;
rst=0;#25;
rst=1;
#500 m=0;
end
initial $sdf annotate ("delays.sdf", counter_test.counter1, ,"sdf.log");
initial $sdf_annotate ("counter.sdf", counter_test.counter1, ,"sdf.log");
counter counter1(clk,m,rst, count);
always #5 clk=-clk;
initial $monitor("Time=%t rst=%b clk=%b count=%b", $time,rst,clk,count);
initial
#1400 $finish;
endmodule
```

#### **Test Bench for the Up-Down Counter**



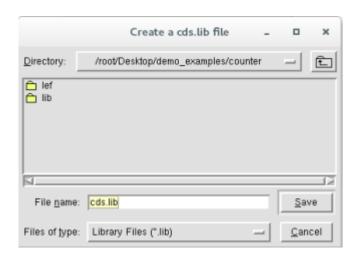
#### Module 2: Functional Simulation

- 1. To perform Functional Simulation, "Incisive" tool is to be used.
- 2. In your terminal, type the command "nclaunch -new" to open the tool.



3. Select "Multiple Step". And then select "Create cds.lib"

**Note:** The '-new' switch is used only for the first time the design is being run. For the next time on wards, the command to be used could be 'nclaunch' only.



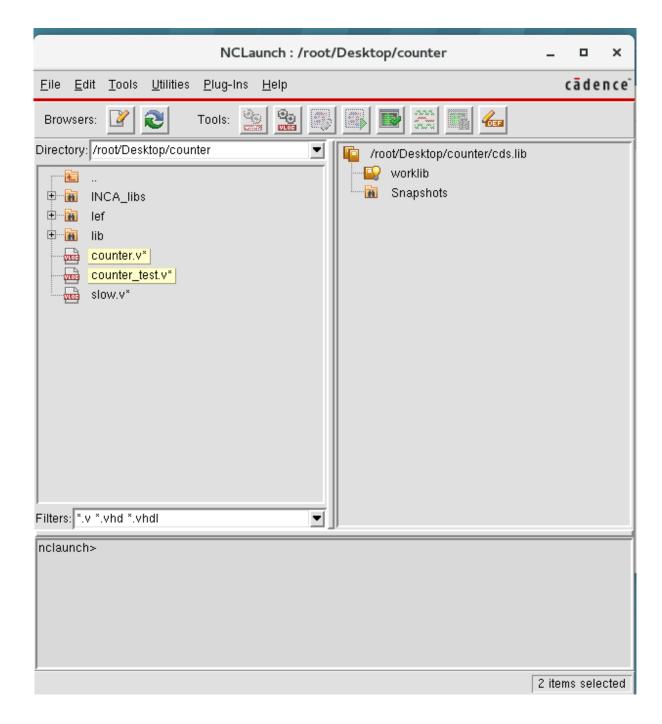


**4.** Save the cds.lib file. It is a tool file that holds the design location information for easy access by the tool.

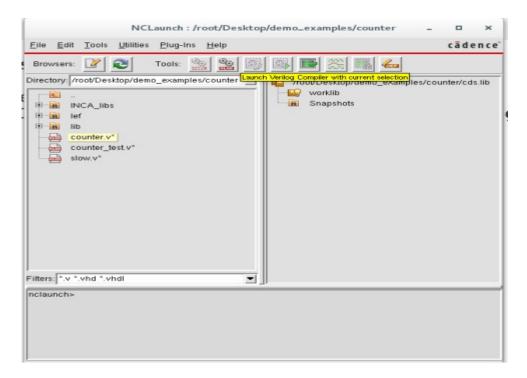


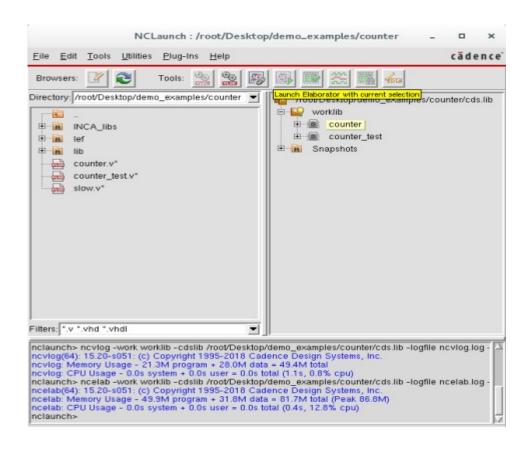
- **5.** Based on the Libraries available and the type of RTL Code written, one of the three shown above is to be selected. Cadence tool suite provides default gpdk libraries. Here, counter RTL is of Verilog Format and hence third option is selected.
- **6.** A new pop-up "nclaunch" opens which will contain all the .v and .vhdl files as per the cds.lib file created.
- 7. Functional Simulation using Cadence runs in 3 stages:
  - → Compilation of Verilog/VHDL Code and/or Test Bench
  - → Elaboration of the Code & Test Bench Compiled
  - → Simulating the Test Bench or Top Module[in absence of Test Bench]
- 8. A set of tools are shown in the nclaunch window which refer to **VHDL Compiler**, **Verilog Compiler**, **Elaborator**, **Simulator** corresponding from Left To Right.
- 9. Select the .v or .vhdl files to be compiled and launch Compiler. On successful completion of compilation, on the Right hand Side, the modules appear under "Worklib".
- 10. Select the Module under Worklib and "Launch Elaborator". On successful completion of Elaboration, "Snapshots" are generated.
- 11. Select the Test Bench under snapshots and "Launch Simulator".
- 12. The above steps are depicted under following snapshosts.



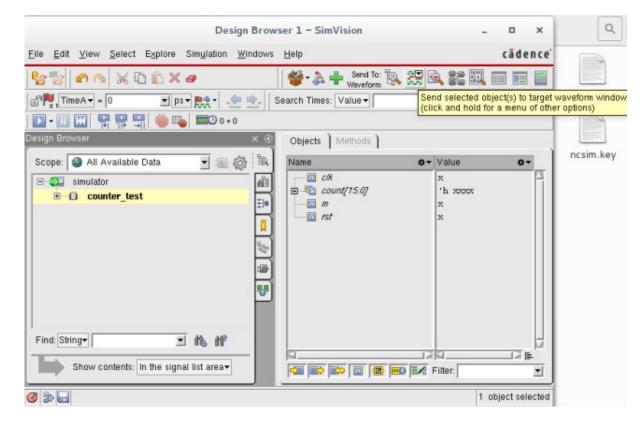










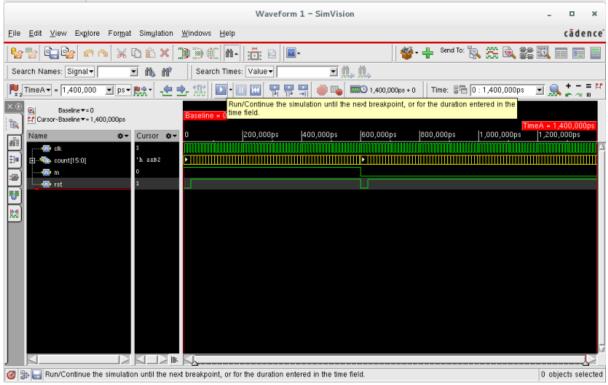


The Design Browser pops-up and The Test Bench Module name can be seen on the left and the Pin list on the right when selected. For Simulation, The number of Pins / Ports to be simulated can be selected.

Make a right click on the selected and Select "Send to Waveform Window".

In the waveform window, we can see different ports in the design. Now click on the Run simulation key to start the simulation. Use the 'pause' key to interrupt or stop the simulation. Use different options like zoom in, zoom out etc to analyze the plot.





**Module 3: Synthesis** 

## **Inputs for Synthesis:**

- 1. RTL Code (.v or .vhdl)
- 2. Chip Level SDC (System Design Constraints)
- 3. Liberty Files (.lib)

# **Expected Outputs of Synthesis:**

- 1. Gate Level Netlist
- 2. Block Level Netlist
- 3. Timing, Area, Power reports

**Synthesis** is a 3-stage process which converts Virtual RTL Logic into Physical Gates in order to give a Physical Shape to the design through Physical Design.



# Synthesis runs in following stages:

- → Translation RTL Codes are compiled
- → Elaboration / Mapping Pieces of Logic are replaced with corresponding Gates from Libraries with same Functionality
- ightarrow Optimization Tool tries to reduce cell count without affecting the functionality

To run the synthesis, the following script can be used.

```
set_db lib_search_path ./lib/90
set_db library slow.lib
set_db hdl_search_path /
read_hdl counter.v
elaborate
read_sdc constraints_top.sdc
synthesize -to_mapped -effort medium
write_sdf -timescale ns -nonegchecks -recrem split -edges check_edge > delays.sdf
write_hdl > counter_netlist.v
write_sdc > counter_sdc.sdc
gui_show
report timing > counter_timing.rep
report power > counter_power.rep
report area > counter_cell.rep
report messages > counter_message.rep
```

#### Chip Level SDC is as follows:

```
create_clock -name clk -period 2 -waveform {0 1} [get_ports "clk"]
set_clock_transition -rise 0.1 [get_clocks "clk"]
set_clock_transition -fall 0.1 [get_clocks "clk"]
set_clock_uncertainty 0.01 [get_ports "clk"]
set_input_delay -max 1.0 [get_ports "rst"] -clock [get_clocks "clk"]
set_output_delay -max 1.0 [get_ports "count"] -clock [get_clocks "clk"]
```

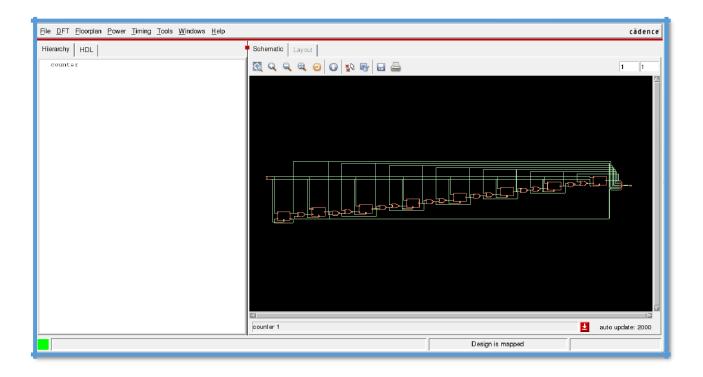
Close out all INCISIVE windows and in the same terminal type in the following command to run Synthesis.

#### genus -f rc\_script.tcl

The tcl [Tool Command Language] script runs executing each command one after the other.



A window of Genus GUI pops - up with the top hier cell on the left top. Make a right click and select Schematic Viewer → In Main.



The Gate level Circuit that implements the RTL Logic can be seen and analysed.

As from the script, Block Level SDC, Gate Level Netlist, Timing, Power and Area reports are generated which are readable.

The Timing report gives the path with Worst timing.

The area report gives Cell count and Total area occupied by them.

The total power consumed by those cells are given in Power report.



# Module 4: Physical Design

## **Mandatory Inputs for PD:**

- 1. Gate Level Netlist [Output of Synthesis]
- 2. Block Level SDC [Output of Synthesis]
- 3. Liberty Files (.lib)
- 4. LEF Files (Layer Exchange Format)

## **Expected Outputs from PD:**

1. GDS II File (Graphical Data Stream for Information Interchange - Feed In for Fabrication Unit).

Close out all windows relating to Genus and in the terminal, type the command

**innovus** (Press Enter)

For Innovus tool, a GUI opens and also the terminal enters into innovus command prompt where in the tool commands can be entered.

Physical Design involves 5 stages as following:

After Importing Design,

- → Floor Planning
- → Power Planning
- → Placement
- → CTS (Clock Tree Synthesis)
- $\rightarrow$  Routing



# Module 4.1: Importing Design

To Import Design, all the Mandatory Inputs are to be loaded and this can be done using script files named with .globals and .view/.tcl

```
# Generated by:
                  Cadence Encounter 13.23-s047_1
                  Linux x86_64(Host ID cadence)
# OS:
# Generated on:
                  Tue May 24 02:16:38 2016
# Design:
# Command:
                  save_global Default.globals
# Version 1.1
set ::TimeLib::tsgMarkCellLatchConstructFlag 1
set conf gxconf file {NULL}
set conf qxlib file {NULL}
set defHierChar {/}
set init_design_settop 0
set init_gnd_net {VSS}
set init_lef_file {lef/gsclib090_translated.lef lef/gsclib090_translated_ref.lef}
set init_mmmc_file {Default.view}
set init pwr net {VDD}
set init verilog {counter netlist.v}
set lsg0CPGainMult 1.000000
set pegDefaultResScaleFactor 1.000000
set pegDetailResScaleFactor 1.000000
```

Globals File to import design using Mandatory Inputs

The Globals file reads in the LEF's and Gate Level Netlist and .view file implicitly.

```
# Version:1.0 MMMC View Definition File
# Do Not Remove Above Line
create_library_set -name MAX_timing -timing {/root/Desktop/counter/lib/90/slow.lib}
create_library_set -name MIn_timing -timing {/root/Desktop/counter/lib/90/fast.lib}
create_constraint_mode -name Constraints -sdc_files {counter_sdc.sdc}
create_delay_corner -name Max_delay -library_set {MAX_timing}
create_delay_corner -name Min_delay -library_set {MIn_timing}
create_analysis_view -name Worst -constraint_mode {Constraints} -delay_corner {Max_delay}
create_analysis_view -name best -constraint_mode {Constraints} -delay_corner {Min_delay}
set_analysis_view -setup {Worst} -hold {best}
```

The .view file reads Liberty Files and Block Level SDC to create various PVT Corners for analysis.

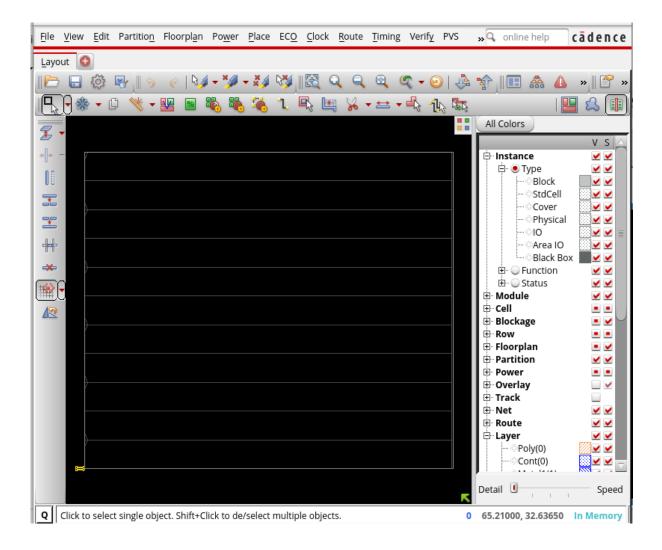


In the terminal command prompt, type the commands as shown. The design is imported and "Core Area" is calculated by tool and shown on GUI.

```
File Edit View Search Terminal Help
Options:
Date:
                Tue May 14 12:13:39 2019
               KrishnaCadence (x86 64 w/Linux 3.10.0-862.el7.x86 64) (2cores*4c
Host:
pus*Intel(R) Core(TM) i5-2520M CPU @ 2.50GHz 3072KB)
               Red Hat Enterprise Linux Server release 7.5 (Maipo)
License:
12:13:39 (cdslmd) OUT: "Innovus Impl System" root@KrishnaCadence
                        Innovus Implementation System
                                                                checkout succeed
                8 CPU jobs allowed with the current license(s). Use setMultiCpuU
sage to set your required CPU count.
Create and set the environment variable TMPDIR to /tmp/innovus temp 6984 Krishna
Cadence root ohoasS.
Change the soft stacksize limit to 0.2%RAM (31 mbytes). Set global soft stack si
ze limit to change the value.
**INFO: MMMC transition support version v31-84
[INFO] Loading PVS 16.12-s208 fill procedures
innovus 1> source Default.globals
1.000000
innovus 2> init_design
```

The Horizontal Lines on the GUI across the Core Area are alternative VDD and VSS tracks and Standard Cell Placement Rows.





# Module 4.2: Floorplan

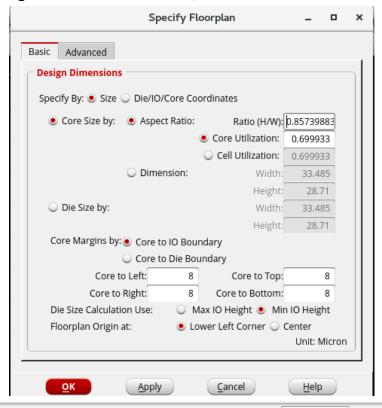
## **Steps under Floorplan:**

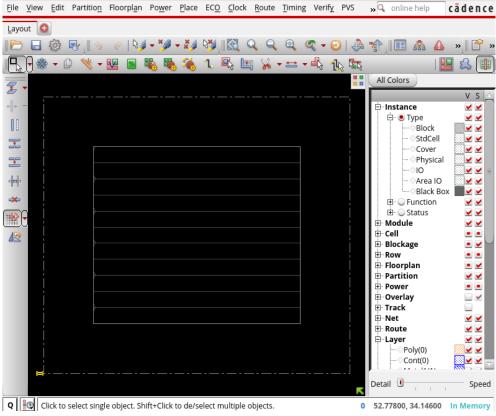
- 1. Aspect Ratio [Ratio of Vertical Height to Horizontal Width of Core]
- 2. Core Utilisation [The total Core Area % to be used for Floor Planning]
- 3. Channel Spacing between Core Boundary to IO Boundary

Select **Floorplan** → **Specify Floorplan** to modify/add concerned values to the above Factors.



On adding/modifying the concerned values, the core area is also modified.







The Yellow patch on the Left Bottom are the group of "Unassigned pins" which are to be placed along the IO Boundary along with the Standard Cells [Gates].

# Module 4.3: Power Planning

### **Steps under Power Planning:**

- 1. Connect Global Net Connects
- 2. Adding Power Rings
- 3. Adding Power Strings
- 4. Special Route

During the stage of Importing Design, under the Globals file, Two command lines state the names of Power and Ground Nets.

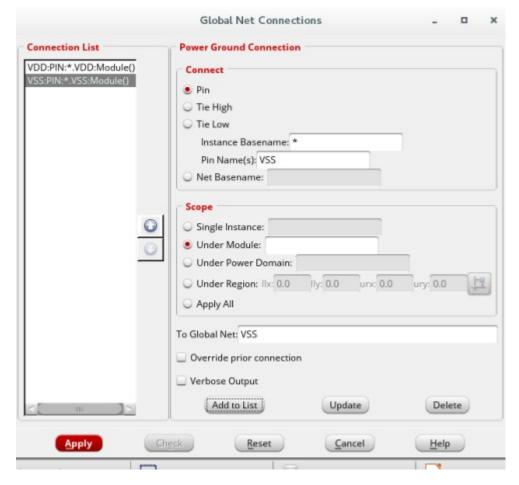
However, in order to Current flow through these Power nets, they are to converge at a point, preferably a common net connected to a Pin.

Under **Connect Global Net Connects**, we create two pins, one for VDD and one for VSS connecting them to corresponding Global Nets as mentioned in Globals file.

Select **Power** → **Connect Global Nets..** to create "Pin" and "Connect to Global Net" as shown and use "Add to list".

Click on "Apply" to direct the tool in enforcing the Pins and Net connects to Design and then Close the window.





In order to Tap in Power from a distant Power supply, Wider Nets and Parallel connections improve efficiency. Moreover, the cells that would be placed inside the core area are expected to have shorter Nets for lower resistance.

Hence Power Rings [Around Core Boundary] and Power Stripes [Across Core Boundary] are added which satisfies the above conditions.

Select **Power → Power Planning → Add Rings** to add Power rings 'around Core Boundary'.

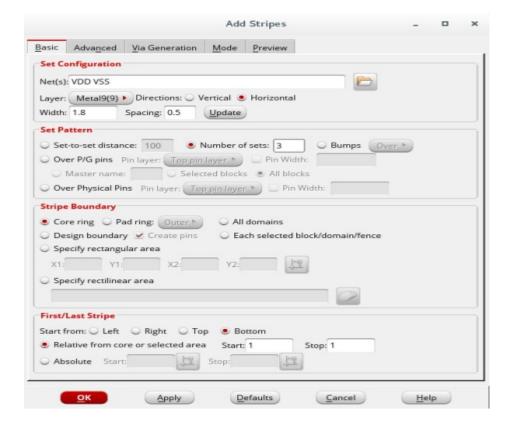




- → Select the Nets from Browse option OR Directly type in the Global Net Names separated by a space being Case and Spelling Senstive.
- → Select the Highest Metals marked 'H' [Horizontal] for Top and Bottom and Metals marked 'V' [Vertical] for Right and Bottom. This is because Highest metals have Highest Widths and thus Lowest Resistance.
- → Click on Update after the selection and "Set Offset: Center in Channel" in order to get the Minimum Width and Minimum Spacing of the corresponding Metals and then Click "OK".



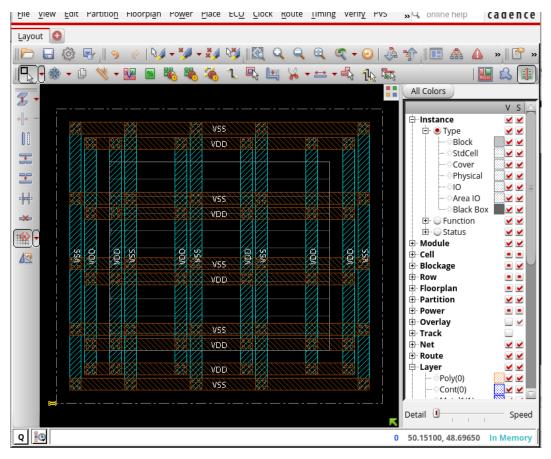
 $\rightarrow$  Similarly, Power Stripes are added using similar content to that of Power Rings.



Factors to be considered under Power Stripes:

- $\rightarrow$  Nets
- → Metal and It's Direction
- → Width and Spacing [Updated]
- → Set to Set Distance = (Minimum Width of Metal + Min. Spacing) x 2





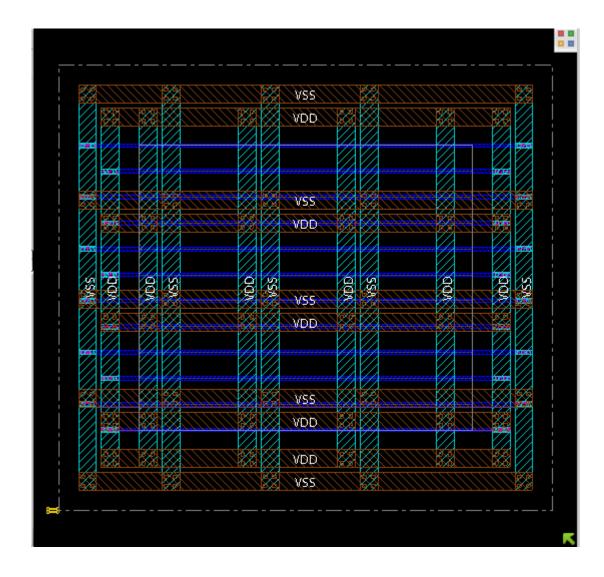
On adding Power Stripes, The Power mesh setup is complete as shown. However, There are no Vias that could connect Metal 9 or Metal 8 directly with Metal 1 [VDD or VSS of Standard Cells are generally made up of Metal 1].

The connection between the Highest and Lowest Metals is done through Stacking of Vias done using "Special Route".

To perform Special Route, Select Route  $\rightarrow$  Special Route  $\rightarrow$  Add Nets  $\rightarrow$  OK.

After the Special Route is complete, all the Standard Cell Rows turn to the Color coded for Metal 1 as shown below.



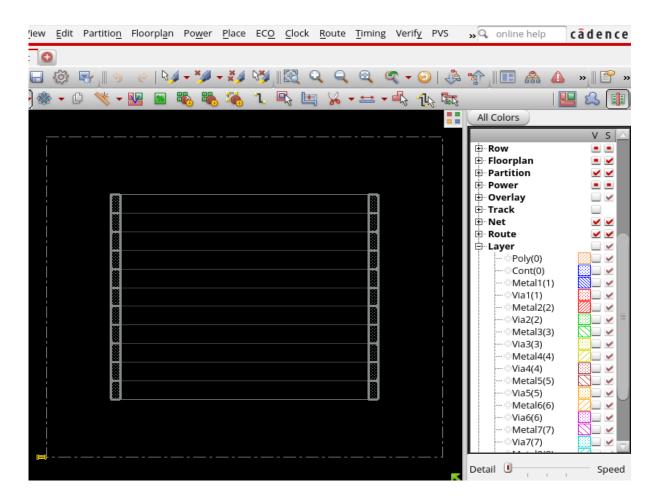


The complete Power Planning process makes sure Every Standard Cell receives enough power to operate smoothly.



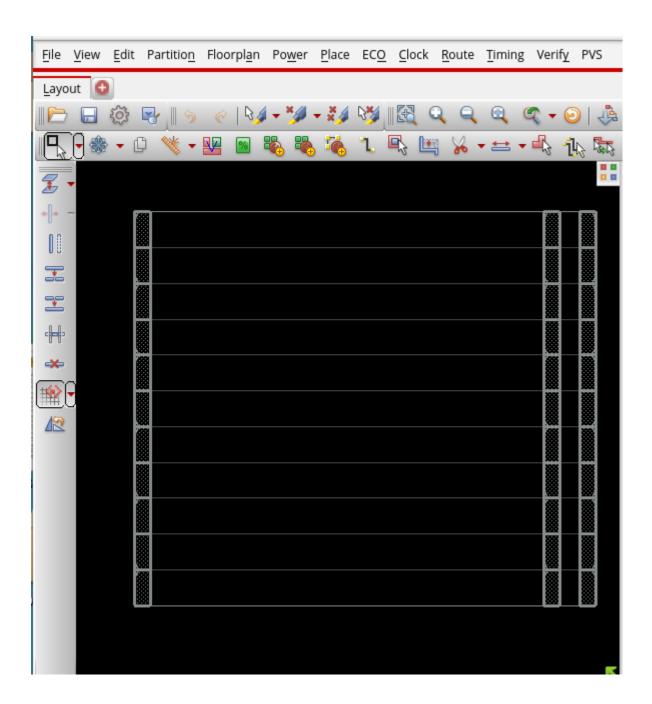
#### Module 4.4.1: Pre - Placement

- → After Power Planning, a few Physical Cells are added namely, **End Caps and Well Taps**.
- → **End Caps**: They are Physical Cells which are added to the Left and Right Core Boundaries acting as blockages to avoid Standard Cells from moving out of boundary.
- → **Well Taps**: They act like Shunt Resistance to avoid Latch Up effects.
  - To add End Caps, Select Place → Physical Cell → Add End Caps and "Select" the FILL's from the available list. Higher Fills have Higher Widths. As shown Below, The End Caps are added below your Power Mesh.





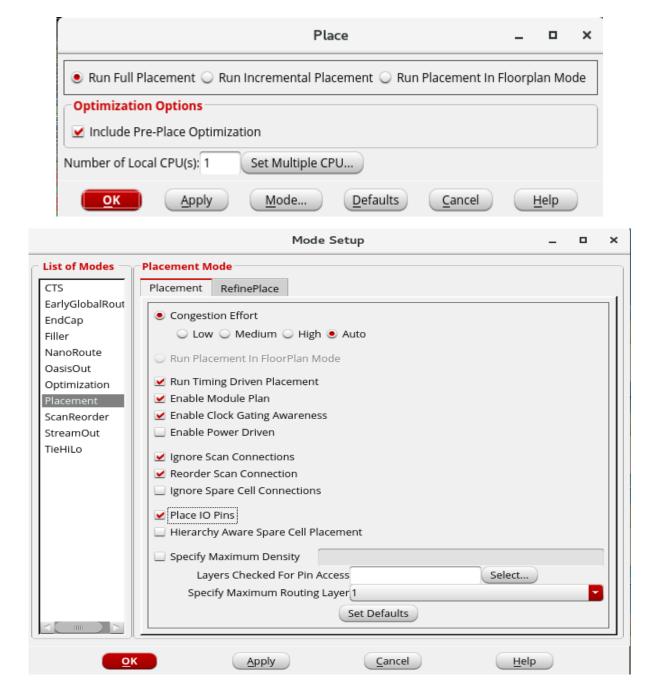
2. To add Well Taps, Select Place → Physical Cell → Add Well Tap → Select → FillX [X → Strength of Fill = 1,2,4 etc] → Distance Interval [Could be given in range of 30-45u] → OK





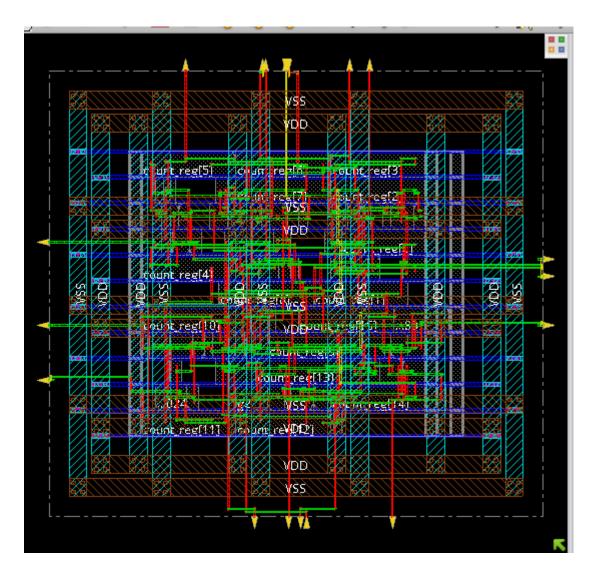
#### Module 4.5: Placement

- 1. The Placement stage deals with Placing of Standard Cells as well as Pins.
- 2. Select Place → Place Standard Cell → Run Full Placement → Mode → Enable 'Place I/O Pins' → OK → OK .



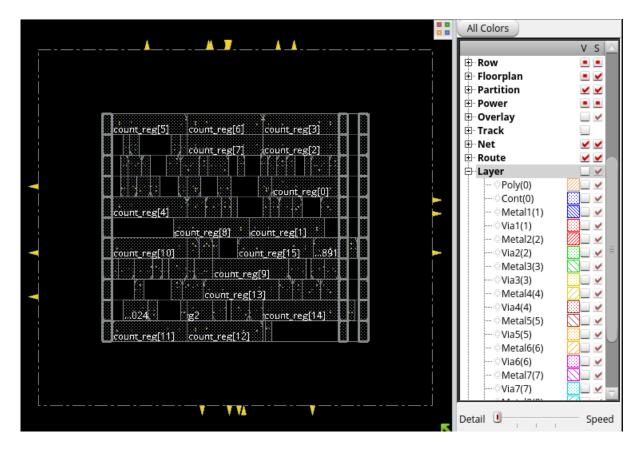


All the Standard Cells and Pins are placed as per the communication between them, i.e., Two communicating Cells are placed as close as possible so that shorter Net lengths can be used for connections as Shorter Net Lengths enable Better Timing Results.



**Placed Design** 





**Standard Cells Placed** 

You can toggle the Layer Visibility from the list on the Right.

# **Report Generation and Optimization:**

## → Timing Report :

To generate Timing Report, Timing → Report Timing → Design Stage - PreCTS → Analysis Type - Setup → OK

The Timing report Summary can be seen on the Terminal.



	Timing Analysis	_ 0	
asic Advanced			
Use Existing Extract	tion and Timing Data		
Design Stage			
Pre-Place      Pre	-CTS O Post-CTS O Post-Route	Sign-Off	
Analysis Type			
● Setup   ○ Ho	old		
Include SI			
Reporting Options			
Number of Paths:	50		
	counter_preCTS		
Report file(s) Prefix:	counter_preC1S		

	root@Kr	ishnaCadenc	e:~/Desktop	/counter	_	0	
File Edit View Sea	rch Terminal He	lp					
Setup views includ Worst	ded:						
Setup mode	all	reg2reg	default	·-+ :			
TNS (r Violating Pat		-0.570	0.000 0 48				
DRVs -	 	Real		Total			
DRVS -	Nr nets(term	ns)   Wor	st Vio	Nr nets(terms)			
max_cap max_tran max_fanout max_length	0 (0) 0 (0) 0 (0) 0 (0)		0.000   0.000   0   0	0 (0)   0 (0)   0 (0)   0 (0)			



## → Area Report :

To generate Area Report, Switch to the Terminal and type the command,

report\_area to see the Cell Count and Area Occupied.

```
innovus 3> innovus 3> report_area
Depth Name  #Inst Area (um^2)
0 counter 84 672.8841
1
innovus 4>
```

# → Power report :

To generate Power Report, In the Terminal type the command

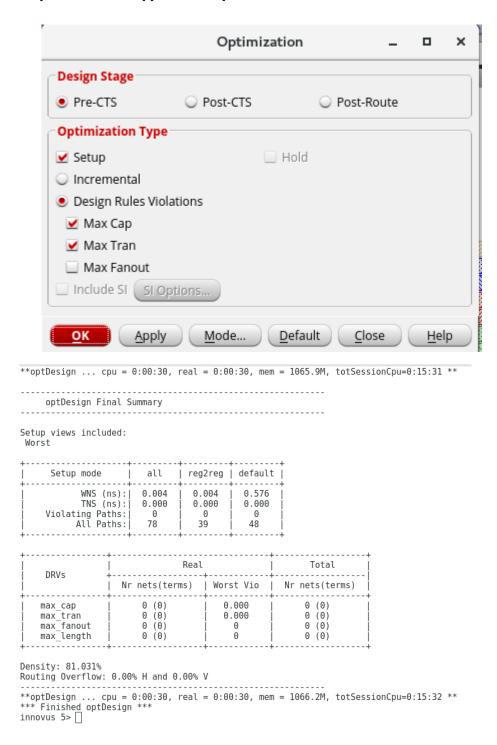
**report\_power** to see the Power Consumption numbers.

* * report_power *						
Total Power						
Total Internal Power: Total Switching Power: Total Leakage Power: Total Power:	·: 0	.19207683 .01693992 .00380342 .21282017	90.2531% 7.9597% 1.7872%			
Group		Internal Power	Switching Power	Leakage Power	Total Power	Percentage (%)
Sequential Macro IO Combinational Clock (Combinational) Clock (Sequential)		0.1793 0 0 0.01282 0	0	0 0	0 0	0
Total		0.1921	0.01694	0.003803	0.2128	100
Rail	Voltage	Internal Power	Switching Power	Leakage Power	Total Power	Percentage (%)
Default	0.9	0.1921	0.01694	0.003803	0.2128	100



# **Design Optimization:**

To optimize the Design, Select ECO → Optimize Design → Design Stage [PreCTS] → Optimization Type - Setup → OK





This step Optimizes your design in terms of Timing, Area and Power.

You can Generate Timing, Area, Power in similar way as above report Post – Optimization to compare the Reports.

# **Module 4.6: Clock Tree Synthesis**

The CTS Stage is meant to build a Clock Distribution Network such that every Register (Flip Flop) acquires Clock at the same time (Atleast Approximately) to keep them in proper communication.

A Script can be used to Build the Clock Tree as follows:

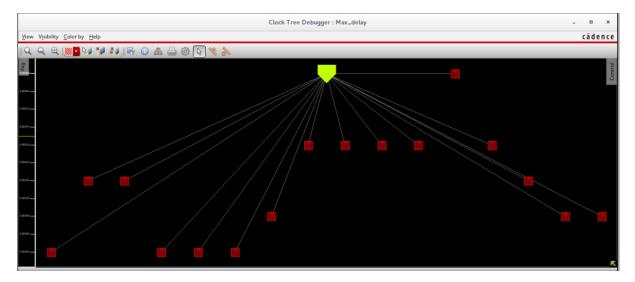
```
add_ndr -width {Metal1 0.12 Metal2 0.14 Metal3 0.14 Me
```

```
innovus 2> source ccopt.spec
Extracting original clock gating for clk...
  clock_tree clk contains 16 sinks and 0 clock gates.
  Extraction for clk complete.
Extracting original clock gating for clk done.
Checking clock tree convergence...
Checking clock tree convergence done.
```

Source the Script as shown in the above snapshot through the Terminal and then Select Clock  $\rightarrow$  CCOpt Clock Tree Debugger  $\rightarrow$  OK to build and view clock tree.







The Red Boxes are the Clock Pins of various Flip Flops in the Design while Yellow Pentagon on the top represents Clock Source.

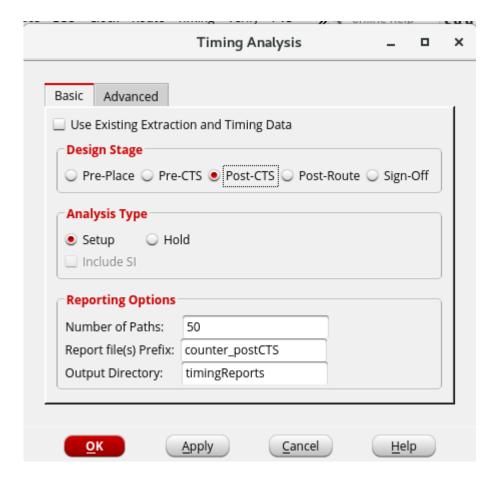
The Clock Tree is built with Clock Buffers and Clock Inverters added to boost up the Clock Signal.



# **Report Generation and Design Optimization:**

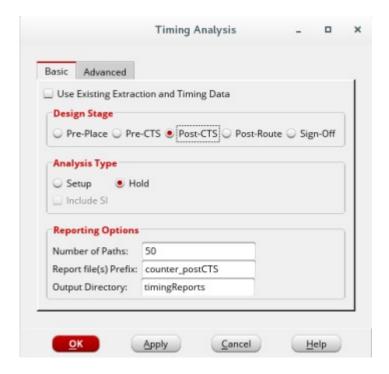
CTS Stage adds real clock into the Design and hence "Hold" Analysis also becomes prominent. Hence, **Optimizations can be done for both Setup & Hold, Timing Reports are to be Generated for Setup and Hold Individually.** 

# **Setup Timing Analysis:**





# **Hold Timing Analysis:**



For Area and Power Report Generation,

report\_area & report\_power commands can be used.

# **Design Optimizations:**

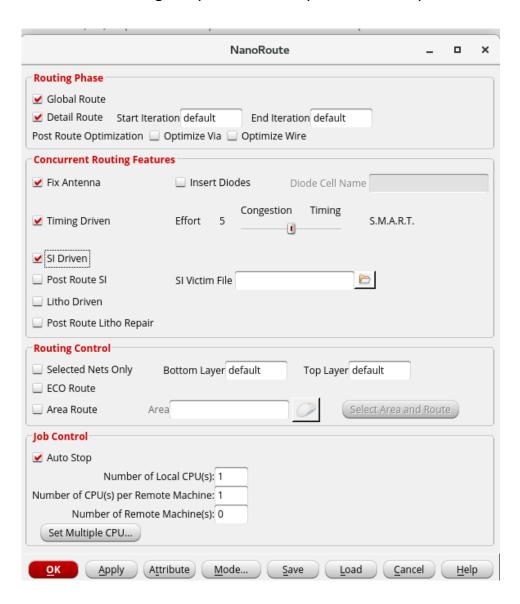




## Module 4.7: Routing

- $\rightarrow$  All the net connections shown in the GUI till CTS are only based on the Logical connectivity.
- → These connections are to be replaced with real Metals avoiding Opens, Shorts, Signal Integrity [Cross Talks], Antenna Violations etc.

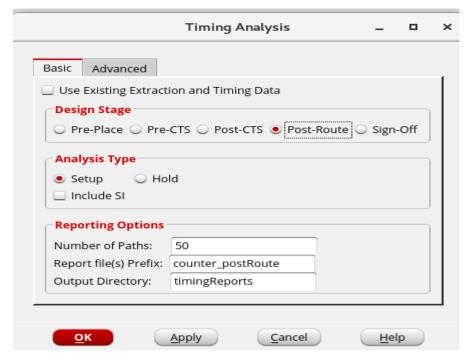
To run Routing, Select Route → Nano Route → Route and enable Timing Driven and SI Driven for Design Physical Efficiency and Reliability.



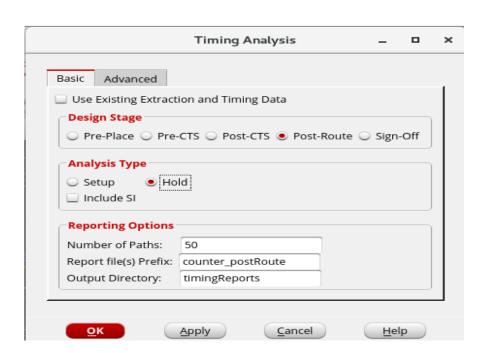


# **Report Generation and Design Optimization:**

# **Setup Report:**



# **Hold Report:**





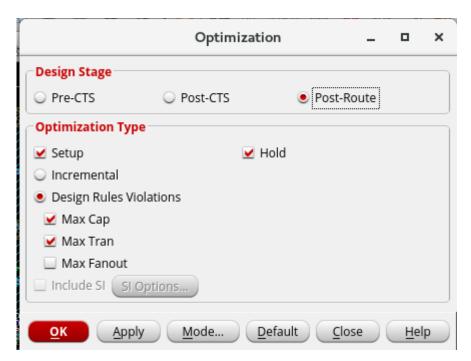
# **Area and Power Reports:**

Use the commands **report\_area** and **report\_power** for Area and Power Reports respectively.

# **Design Optimization:**

```
innovus 5>
innovus 5> setAnalysisMode -analysisType onChipVariation -cppr both
innovus 6> □
```

Enter the above shown command in the Terminal in order to run the Design Optimization first Post-Route.



The Report generation is same as shown prior to Design Optimization.

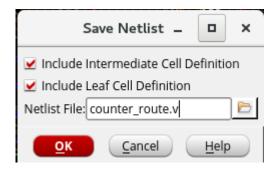


# **Saving Database:**

Saving Design => File → Save Design → Data Type : Innovus →
 Comparison of the Comparison of t



2. Saving Netlist  $\Rightarrow$  File  $\Rightarrow$  Save  $\Rightarrow$  Netlist  $\Rightarrow$  <NetlistName>.v  $\Rightarrow$  OK

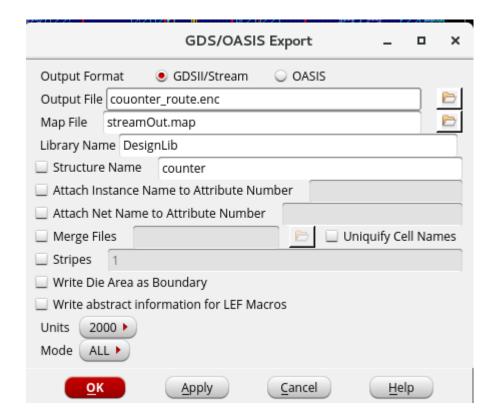


It is recommended to save Netlist and Design at every stage.

To restore a Design Data Base, type **source <DesignName>.enc** in the terminal.



# 3. Saving GDS => File $\rightarrow$ Save $\rightarrow$ GDS/OASIS $\rightarrow$ <FileName>.gds $\rightarrow$ OK



The GDS File is a Binary Format File which is not Readable and is fed to the Fabrication unit with data of various layers used depicted in terms of Geometrical Shapes.