Design and Rationale of the Draft Proposed RISC-V Composable Custom Extensions Spec

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SPEC: https://github.com/grayresearch/CX/

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Introduction (§1)

RISC-V custom extensions' reuse problem (§1)

- Standard extensions layer and compose. But take years to ratify
- Custom extensions: rapid in-house domain optimized solutions
- ... with incompatible opcodes, discovery, computation, state, error handling, tools, versioning, hardware signaling
 - RoCC, CV-X-IF, PCPI, SCAIE-V, MCUX, ACE, CODA
- Solution silos → fragmentation



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A mix & match composable custom extensions ecosystem $(\S 1.1)$

- Agility of custom extensions + composability of standard extensions
- Adopt some SW and HW interop standards so extensions coexist

- Then *anyone* can define, develop, and/or use:
 - A new extension, its software libraries, its hardware implementations
 - A processor that uses any of these, a system composed of these
 - Tools for same

Keeping RISC-V simple, open, agile

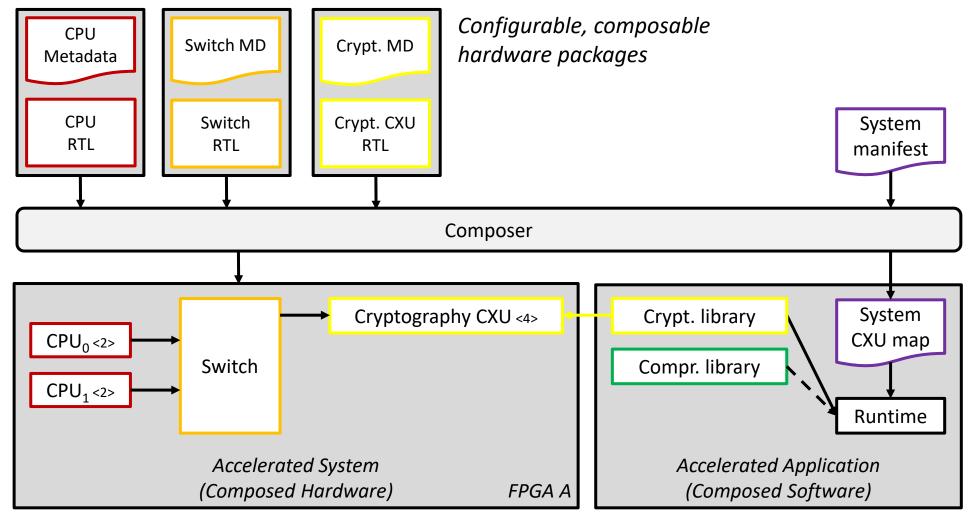
 Less pressure to add domainspecific standard extensions



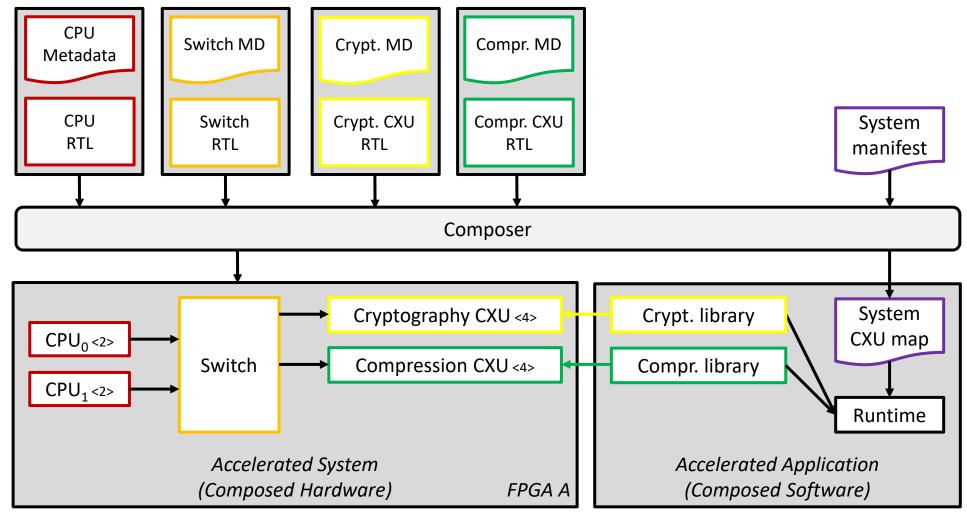
Key elements

- Composable extension (CX): a composable custom extension's interface contract
- Composable extension unit (CXU): a hardware core that implements a CX
- Composable extension library (CX lib): software that selects a CX, issues its custom instructions

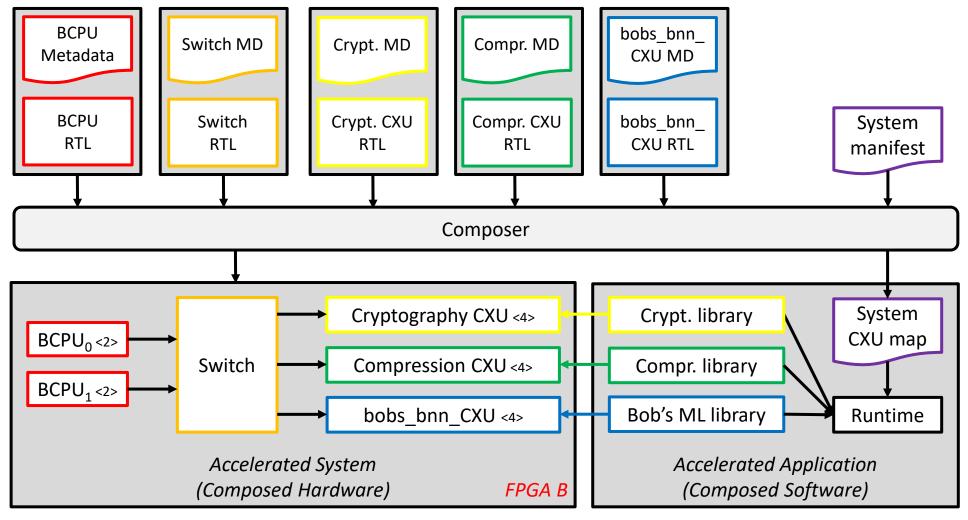
Example: Alice's SoC (§1.2)



Alice's SoC v2



Bob's SoC



Objectives ⇒ design rationale

- Easy, robust, routine, boring composition
 - Across orgs, decades, platforms, tools
- Decentralized
- Diversity
- Open, nonproprietary, free, limitless
- Simple, frugal, fast
- Stable binaries, stable RTL
- Secure (privileged access control)
- Promote uniformity ...

Promote uniformity

- Uniform naming (IDs), discovery, versioning
- Uniform, unlimited, conflict-free instruction encodings
- Uniform stateful extensions & uniform (no code) context save/restore
- Uniform error signaling
- Uniform access control
- Uniform logic interfaces
- Uniform metadata

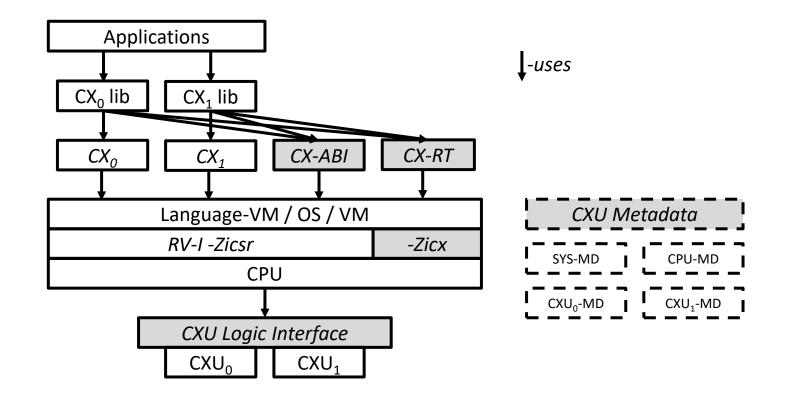
One good enough way to do things vs. many incompatible ways

New interop standards

- ISA: HW-SW: composable extension multiplexing: -Zicx
 - A standard ABI for composition of CXs and CX libraries
 - Software first selects hart's current CX & CX-state
 - Each CX enjoys full custom instruction encoding space
- Non-ISA: HW-HW: CXU Logic Interface (CXU-LI)
 - A signaling standard for composition of { CPUs + CXUs } complexes
- Better together

Standard interfaces and formats (§1.4)

- CX Runtime: library services (discovery, state management, ...)
- -Zicx: "composable extensions" extension, new CSRs for CX multiplexing
- CXU Logic Interface & metadata



Scope: what *kinds* of custom extensions? (§1.3)

- Invariant under composition ⇒ *isolated ones*
- V1: custom function instructions: int registers & an isolated state context
 - None of: float regs, vector regs, memory, CSRs, PC, exceptions

• *Cf.* RoCC, CV-X-IF, PCPI, SCAIE-V, MCUX, ACE, CODAL, ...

⇒ another presentation

Stateful composable extensions (§1.3.1)

- Custom function instructions may R/W current state context data, including private RAM and registers
- Each CX/CXU configured with n isolated state contexts

• IStateContext (§1.4.4) standard CF instructions for uniform access to state

```
interface IStateContext {
// CF_ID         custom function
      [1023] int cf_read_status ();
      [1022] void cf_write_status(int status);
      [1021] int cf_read_state (int index);
      [1020] void cf_write_state (int index, int state);
};
```

CX (V1) scenarios: more than meets the eye

- Stateless
 - Bitmanip: X[rd] = f(cf, X[rs1], X[rs2]/imm) all of Zba Zbb Zbc Zbs

Stateful

- CSRs: X[rd] = f(cf_write_state, X[rs1], X[rs2]) CX csrrw
- Reduce: (X[rd],A) = f(cf, A, X[rs1], X[rs2]) dot product, multiprec math
- Vector: V[rd] = f(cf, V[rd], V[rs1], V[rs2]) vector-regfile state $\{X,V\}[rd] = f(cf, V[rs1], X[rs2])$ put/get elements
- 4r1i: $(i,a,b) = (\{cf_0, custom\}, X[rs1_0], X[rs2_0]) 2$ instruction sequence $X[rd] = f(cf_1, X[rs1_1], X[rs2_1], i, a, b)$
- Channels: X[rd] = putget(chan[cf.chan], cf.{put,put2,wait}, X[rs1], X[rs2])
- f(RAM): put-data*; operate(data)*; get-data* crypto, ML, ...
- Async: $FSM = f(cf_0, ...);; X[rd_1] = f(cf_1, FSM, X[rd_0], ...)$
- CPU support for CX V1 enables so much for so little

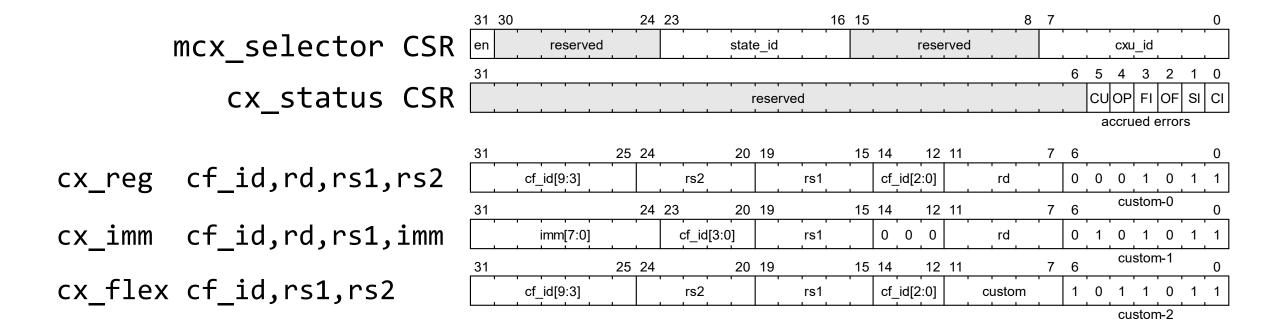
Scope: V2 ideas, directions

- Compose V1 with PULP stream semantic registers
- Access memory: CXU⇒CPU; precisely ordered; disjoint/isolated regions
- Enable custom instructions beyond custom-[012] opcodes
- Register pairs e.g. (X[rd],X[rd+1])
- Speculative issue / cancelation of stateful custom instructions

Composable extension multiplexing

Collision-free custom instructions

- mcx_selector ::= hart's current (CX/CXU, state)
- CX lib: csrw mcx_selector; then custom-[012];* issues requests to the CXU
- CXU performs each request, updating its state; write dest reg & cx_status



Multiplexing in detail

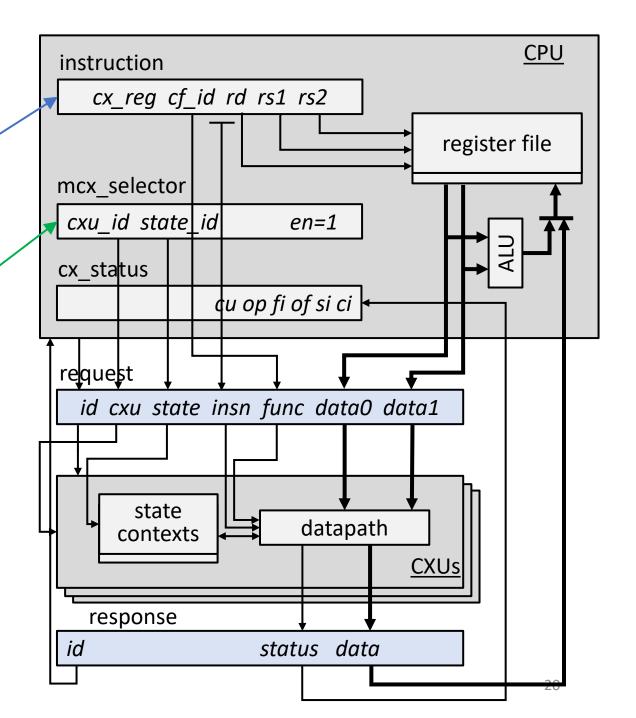
The SW ⇔ HW interface

```
csrw mcx_selector,x1
cx_reg 101,x4,x2,x3
cx_reg 102,x7,x5,x6
```

•••

csrw mcx_selector,x10
cx_reg 11,x14,x12,x13
cx_reg 12,x17,x15,x16

•••



CX Runtime and CX ABI (§1.4.5)

- CX libraries use CX Runtime services
 - Discovery: map CX_ID (GUID) ⇒ CXU_ID, if present
 - State: alloc/free, save/reload a state context
 - Change CX selectors
 - Access control
 - Runtime services, in software, keeps hardware frugal
- CX ABI
 - -V **setvl** analogy: **csrrw mcx_selector** prefixes groups of custom instructions

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- mcx_selector: callee save, restore on stack unwinds
- Basic: scoped by C++ RAII object constructor/destructor
- Better: compiler inserts and optimizes mcx_selector writes

Example CX programming model

C++ RAII object to scope the custom instructions

• Try to select the IBitmanip CX, issue its custom instructions, deselect it

Better: retain selector values

Versioning story (§1.6)

- Over decades, change happens (AVX, Direct3D12)
- A CX is a named, immutable interface contract
- Any change is a new CX, so you mint a new CX_ID
- A CXU may implement >1 CX, e.g., old and new CX contracts

Negotiation: CX lib asks CX Runtime for CX₂ else CX₁ else fails

Inspired by Microsoft Component Object Model (§1.9)

- Framework for composition of 100s of diverse software components
- Proven at scale for three decades across Windows, Office, DirectX
- In common with CX proposal
 - Immutable interface contracts, self-named by GUIDs ✓
 - Components implement 1+ interfaces ✓
 - Separately authored, separately versioned, substitutable ✓
 - Dynamic discovery affords best-interface negotiation ✓

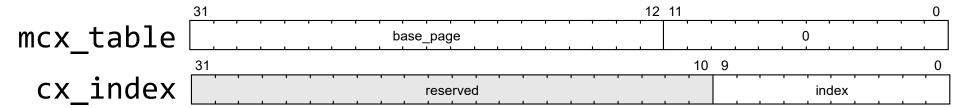
Composable Extensions / -Zicx (§2)

Four new CSRs (§2.2)

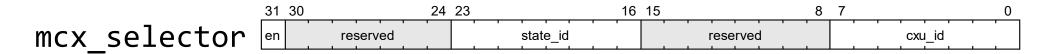
M-mode composable extension multiplexing



Access controlled custom extension multiplexing

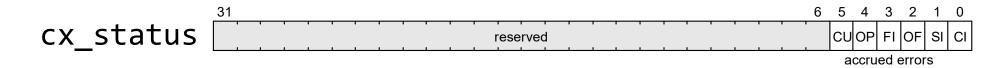


mcx_selector CSR



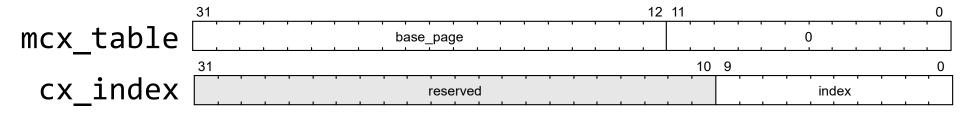
- .en=1 enables composable extension multiplexing
- .en=0 custom-0/1/2 does whatever it already does on this CPU
- .cxu_id selects current configured CXU
- .state_id selects current state context of that CXU
- Only accessible in machine mode

cx_status CSR



- Accrues CX/CXU error status flags (CXs don't raise exceptions, cf. fcsr)
- R/W in all priv modes
- Set when mcx_selector.en=1 and a custom-[012] instruction error
 - .CI: invalid cxu_id
 - .SI: invalid state_id
 - .OF: that state context is OFF
 - .FI: no such custom function
 - .OP: operation error, e.g., divide by zero
 - .CU: (stateful CX) custom error: errno etc. via IStateContext::cf_read_status/state

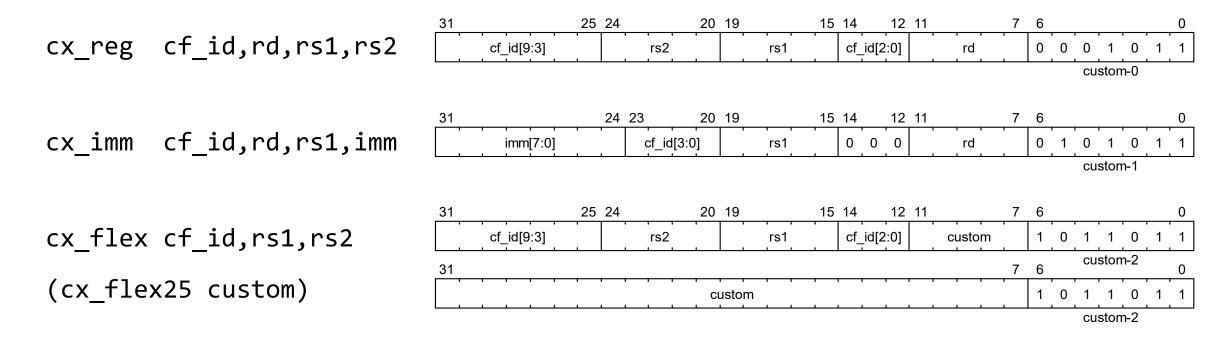
Access controlled CX multiplexing CSRs (§2.7)



- Grant/deny unpriv software access to CXs and CX state
 - + Deny inferring CX use in other harts deny certain side channel attacks
- Unpriv: change CX selector with one CSR write, no OS detour
 - Priv OS: at *mcx_table keep hart's 4 KB = 1024 CX selector table, unpriv inaccessible
 - Priv OS: provides opaque CX selector indices to unpriv user code
 - Unpriv: csrrw old_index=x1, cx_index, x2=new_index
 - CPU: mcx_selector = mcx_table[cx_index] "at next priv mode"
- Prefer cx_index writes to mcx_selector writes

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CX custom function instruction encodings (§2.3)



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- Ripe for discussion / redesign
- Future proofing? Anticipate V2+ needs

Implicit fences (§2.2.5), precise exceptions (§2.3)

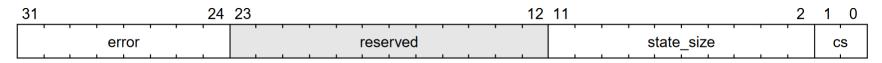
- Implicit fence between CX CSR access and any custom-[012] instructions
 - CX CSR access "happens-before" custom instructions*
 - custom instructions* "happens-before" CX CSR access
- E.g., csrr cx_status awaits responses of prior custom instructions

• Precise exceptions vs. speculative issue of stateful custom instructions

IStateContext

| Custom function | CF_ID | Assembly instruction | Encoding |
|-----------------|-------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| cf_read_status | 1023 | cx_read_status rd | cx_reg 1023,rd,x0,x0 |
| cf_write_status | 1022 | cx_write_status rs1 | cx_reg 1022,x0,rs1,x0 |
| cf_read_state | 1021 | cx_read_state rd,rs1 | cx_reg 1021,rd,rs1,x0 |
| cf_write_state | 1020 | <pre>cx_write_state rs1,rs2</pre> | cx_reg 1020,x0,rs1,rs2 |

- Each stateful extension must include these CF instructions
- cf_{read,write}_status accesses state context status word:



- .cs (like mstatus.XS): 0:off 1:initial 2:clean 3:dirty
- cf_{read,write}_state to save/restore raw state context data

Composable Extension Unit Logic Interface (CXU-LI) (§3)

CXU-LI objectives ⇒ design rationale

- Modular, platform neutral, composable extensions' implementations
- Compose CPUs+CXUs without changing CPU+CXU RTL
- Handle diverse CPUs (pipelines) and CXUs
- LUT frugal
- Promote uniform signaling, naming, configuration, validation, metadata

Zen of CXUs

- A CXU implements one (or more) composable extensions
- CPU custom-*+ ⇒ CXU requests ⇒ CXU ⇒ CXU responses ⇒ CPU
- Configurable width, latency, state, ... described in metadata
- CXU Logic Interface feature levels
 - 0: combinational; 1: fixed latency; 2: variable latency; 3: reordering
 - Each CXU and CPU speaks a specific CXU-LI level
- Composition: CPUs ⇔ switches & adapters ⇔ CXUs

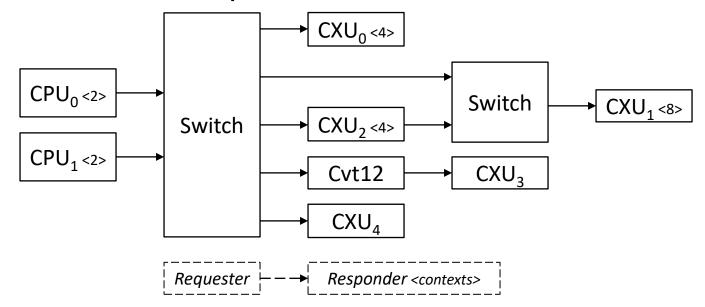
CXU-LI feature levels (§3.3)

- Keep simple use cases simple and frugal, make complex use cases possible
- Accommodate simple or complex CPUs, simple or complex extension

| Level | CFU type | Req valid, func, data, resp data, status | Clock, reset, clock enable, state ID, resp valid | Req ready, resp ready, raw insn | Reordering, req ID |
|-------|------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| O | combinational | Y | | | |
| 1 | fixed latency | Y | Y | | |
| 2 | variable latency | Y | Y | Y | |
| 3 | reordering | Y | Y | Y | Y |

CPUs × CXUs composition (§3.2)

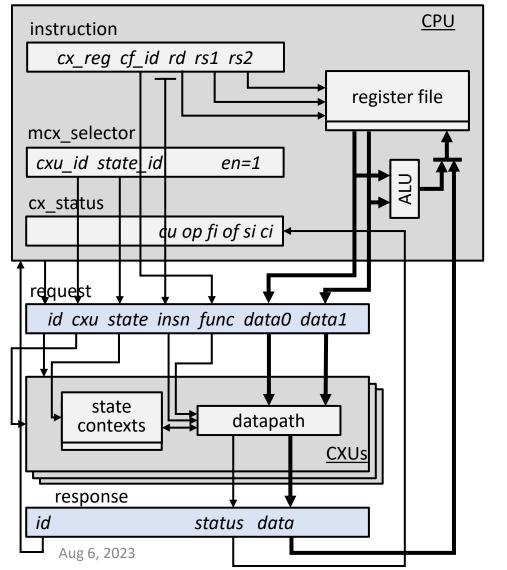
- CPUs ⇔ switches & adapters ⇔ CXUs
- Powered by CPU & CXU packages' metadata
- CPUs and CXUs can request CXUs; CXUs form a DAG



- CXUs composition = configuration constraint satisfaction, else infeasible
 - E.g.: CXU-L1 CPUs + CXUs: find a feasible system-wide CXU_LATENCY

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CXU-LI HW-SW interface, again



| CXU-LI signal | ← Source or → Destination |
|---------------|--|
| req_id | ← CPU |
| req_cxu | ← mcx_selector.cxu_id |
| req_state | ← mcx_selector.state_id |
| req_insn | ← insn |
| req_func | ←insn.cf_id |
| req_data0 | $\leftarrow R[insn.rs1]$ |
| req_data1 | $\leftarrow R[insn.rs2] \{custom-0/-2\} \text{ or } insn.imm \{custom-1\}$ |
| resp_id | → CPU |
| resp_status | → cx_status bits |
| resp_data | $\rightarrow R[insn.rd] \{custom-0/-1\}$ |
| | |

CX Spec

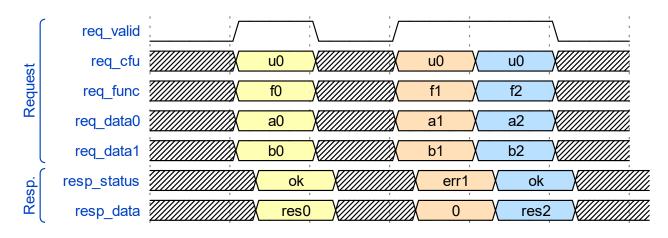
CXU-LI port signaling

| Level | Dir | Port | Width Parameter | Description |
|-------|-----|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1+ | in | clk | | clock |
| 1+ | in | rst | | reset |
| 1+ | in | clk_en | | clock enable |
| | in | req_valid | | request valid |
| 2+ | out | req_ready | | request ready |
| 3 | in | req_id | CXU_REQ_ID_W | request REQ_ID |
| | in | req_cxu | CXU_CXU_ID_W | request CXU_ID |
| 1+ | in | req_state | CXU_STATE_ID_W | request STATE_ID |
| | in | req_func | CXU_FUNC_ID_W | request CF_ID |
| 2+ | in | req_insn | CXU_INSN_W | request raw instruction |
| | in | req_data0 | CXU_DATA_W | request operand data O |
| | in | req_data1 | CXU_DATA_W | request operand data 1 |
| 1+ | out | resp_valid | | response valid |
| 2+ | in | resp_ready | | response ready |
| 3 | out | resp_id | CXU_REQ_ID_W | response ID |
| | out | resp_status | CXU_STATUS_W | response status |
| | out | resp_data | CXU_DATA_W | response data |

CXU-L0: combinational CXU (§3.5)

- Stateless composable extensions only
- Combinational function of the CXU request
- Send response after comb. delay

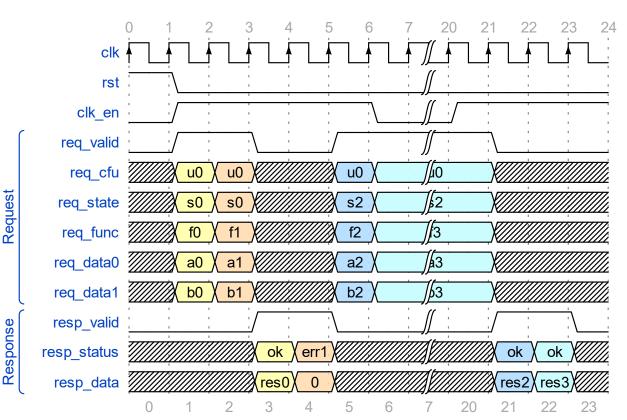
| Dir | Port | Width Parameter | Description |
|-----|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| in | req_valid | | request valid |
| in | req_cxu | CXU_CXU_ID_W | request CXU_ID: selects |
| in | req_func | CXU_FUNC_ID_W | request CF_ID |
| in | req_data0 | CXU_DATA_W | request operand data O |
| in | req_data1 | CXU_DATA_W | request operand data 1 |
| out | resp_status | CXU_STATUS_W | response status |
| out | resp_data | CXU_DATA_W | response data |



CXU-L1: fixed-latency (pipelined) CXU (§3.6)

- Compute function of request and state; send response after CXU_LATENCY cycles
- Initiation interval=1/cycle. No flow control
- Clock gating to save power: clk_en=0 suspends CXU interface and internals

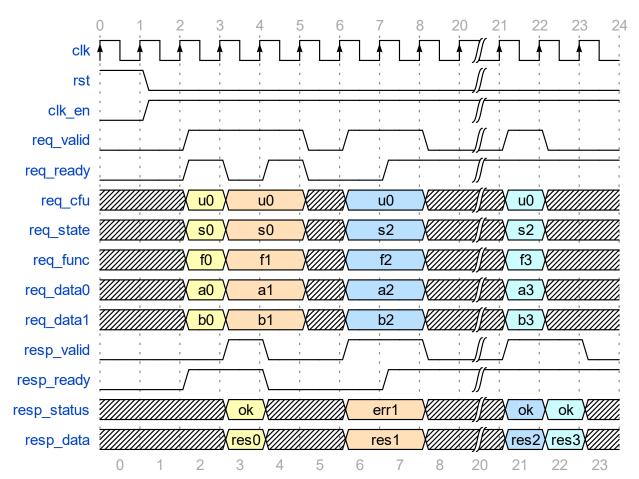
| Dir | Port | Width Parameter | Description |
|-----|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| in | clk | | clock |
| in | rst | | reset |
| in | clk_en | | clock enable |
| in | req_valid | | request valid |
| in | req_cxu | CXU_CXU_ID_W | request CXU_ID |
| in | req_state | CXU_STATE_ID_W | request STATE_ID |
| in | req_func | CXU_FUNC_ID_W | request CF_ID |
| in | req_data0 | CXU_DATA_W | request operand data 0 |
| in | req_data1 | CXU_DATA_W | request operand data 1 |
| out | resp_valid | | response valid |
| out | resp_status | CXU_STATUS_W | response status |
| out | resp_data | CXU_DATA_W | response data |



CXU-L2: variable-latency (stream) CXU (§3.7)

- Compute function of request and state; send response, in order, later
- Flow control: CXU can suspend requests; CPU can suspend responses

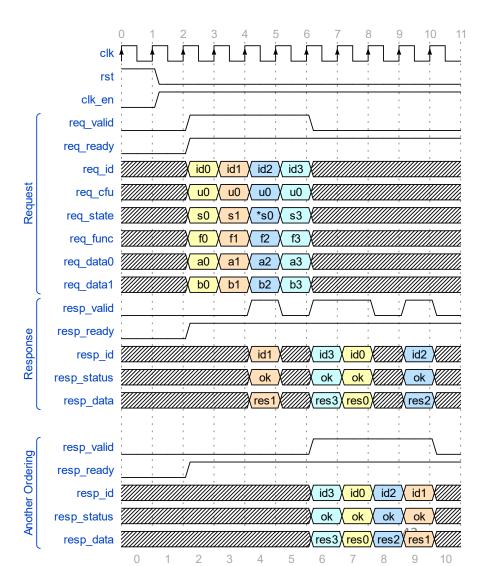
| Dir | Port | Width Parameter | Description | |
|-----|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------|
| in | clk | | clock | |
| in | rst | | reset | |
| in | clk_en | | clock enable | |
| in | req_valid | | request valid | sst |
| out | req_ready | | request ready | Request |
| in | req_cxu | CXU_CXU_ID_W | request CXU_ID | 8 |
| in | req_state | CXU_STATE_ID_W | request STATE_ID | |
| in | req_func | CXU_FUNC_ID_W | request CF_ID | |
| in | req_insn | CXU_INSN_W | request raw instruction | l |
| in | req_data0 | CXU_DATA_W | request operand data 0 | |
| in | req_data1 | CXU_DATA_W | request operand data 1 | JSe |
| out | resp_valid | | response valid | Response |
| in | resp_ready | | response ready | Re |
| out | resp_status | CXU_STATUS_W | response status | |
| out | resp_data | CXU_DATA_W | response data | |



CXU-L3: reordering CXU (§3.8)

Compute func of request and state;
 send response, possibly out of order

| Dir | Port | Width Parameter | Description |
|-----|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| in | clk | | clock |
| in | rst | | reset |
| in | clk_en | | clock enable |
| in | req_valid | | request valid |
| out | req_ready | | request ready |
| in | req_id | CXU_REQ_ID_W | request REQ_ID |
| in | req_cxu | CXU_CXU_ID_W | request CXU_ID |
| in | req_state | CXU_STATE_ID_W | request STATE_ID |
| in | req_func | CXU_FUNC_ID_W | request CF_ID |
| in | req_insn | CXU_INSN_W | request raw instruction |
| in | req_data0 | CXU_DATA_W | request operand data 0 |
| in | req_data1 | CXU_DATA_W | request operand data 1 |
| out | resp_valid | | response valid |
| in | resp_ready | | response ready |
| out | resp_id | CXU_REQ_ID_W | response ID |
| out | resp_status | CXU_STATUS_W | response status |
| out | resp_data | CXU_DATA_W | response data |



CXU-LI-compliant CPUs (§3.10)

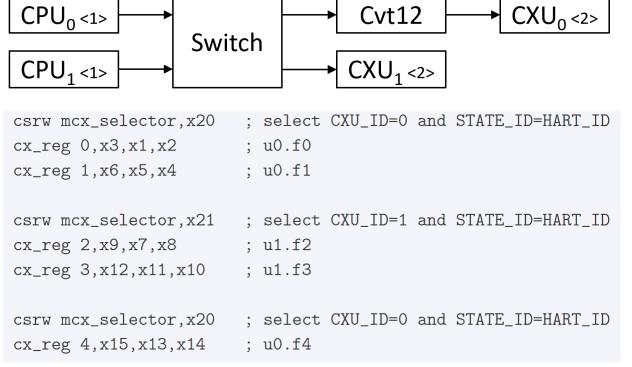
- -Zicx CX multiplexing: ⇒CXU requests, ←CXU reponses
- Composition: CXUs' levels ≤ CPUs' levels
- Austere single cycle CPU
 - -L0 combinational CXUs only
- Pipelined in-order CPU
 - -L1 for some fixed latency
 - -L2, suspend pipeline on req_ready=0, negate resp_ready when regfile WB busy
- OoO completion CPU
 - -L2 or -L3

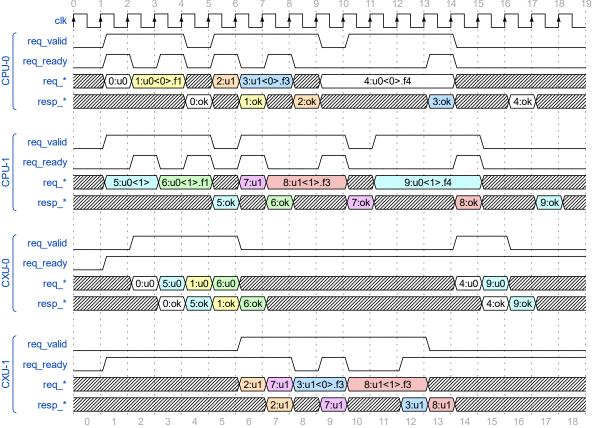
CXU Feature Level Adapters (§3.9)

- Translate higher level requests/responses for lower level CXUs
- Configurable
- Cvt01: combinational -L0 ⇒ pipelined -L1
 - With CXU_LATENCY-configurable response { valid, status, data } shift register
- Cvt02: combinational -L0 ⇒ streaming -L2
 - With response register + valid-ready logic + suspend reqs while resps suspended
- Cvt12: pipelined -L1 ⇒ streaming -L2
 - With pending responses queue + suspend reqs while queue full & resps suspended
- See repo 'zoo'

CXU Switch (§3.11)

- Configurably compose 1+ initiators with 1+ targets
- Transfer *eligible* inputs to *available* outputs
 - Route responses back to request initiators
 - Ensure each initiator receives in-order responses





CXU-L2/L3 ⇔ AXI4 Streams (§3.12)

| Dir | CXU-LI Port | Width | AXI-S Port |
|-----|-------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| in | clk | | aclk |
| in | rst | | aresetn (inverted) |
| in | clk_en | | - |
| in | req_valid | | reqs_tvalid |
| out | req_ready | | reqs_tready |
| in | req_id | CXU_REQ_ID_W | reqs_tid or reqs_tdest |
| in | req_cxu | CXU_CXU_ID_W | reqs_tuser or reqs_tdest |
| in | req_state | CXU_STATE_ID_W | reqs_tuser |
| in | req_func | CXU_FUNC_ID_W | reqs_tuser |
| in | req_insn | CXU_INSN_W | reqs_tuser |
| in | req_data0 | CXU_DATA_W | reqs_tdata |
| in | req_data1 | CXU_DATA_W | reqs_tdata |
| in | - | | reqs_tlast optional |
| in | - | * | reqs_tstrb optional |
| in | - | * | reqs_tkeep optional |
| out | resp_valid | | resps_tvalid |
| in | resp_ready | | resps_tready |
| out | resp_id | CXU_REQ_ID_W | resps_tid or resps_tdest |
| out | resp_status | CXU_STATUS_W | resps_tuser |
| out | resp_data | CXU_DATA_W | resps_tdata |
| out | - | | resps_tlast optional |
| out | - | * | resps_tstrb optional |
| out | - | * | resps_tkeep optional |

Metadata (§4)

Easier system composition with metadata

Preliminary – awaits revision

- Each CPU & CXU has metadata: properties, features, CXU-LI parameters
- Composer: Σ MDs + manifest ⇒ composed system RTL, CXU Map

Schema: Example CXU MD:

```
cxu_name: string
cxu_li:
    feature_level: scalar
    state_id_max: scalar | list | 'range'
    req_id_w: scalar | list | 'range'
    cxu_id_w: scalar | list | 'range'
    state_id_w: scalar | list | 'range'
    insn_w: scalar | list | 'range'
    func_id_w: scalar | list | 'range'
    data_w: scalar | list
    latency: scalar | list | 'range'
    reset_latency: scalar | list | 'range'
    xyz_range: [min,max]
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```

```
cxu_name: bobs_bnn_cxu
cxu_li:
   feature_level: 1
   state id max: 1
                          # only supports 1 state context
   req_id_w:
                          # any req_id is fine
                          # no req_cxu
   cxu_id_w: 0
   state_id_w: 0
                          # no req_state_id
   insn w: 0
                          # no req_insn
   func_id_w: range
                          # need >= 5-bit CF IDs
   func_id_w_range: [5,10] # so [5,6,7,8,9,10] are OK
                          # XLEN=64-bit only
   data_w: 64
   latency: [2,3,4]
                          # configurable w/ 2-4 cycles of latency
   reset_latency: 1
                          # requires at least 1 cycle of reset latency
other:
   adder_tree: [0,1]
                          # non-standard config parameter
   element_w: [4,8,16,32] # non-standard config parameter
```

CX Runtime (§TBD)

CX Runtime API

Preliminary – awaits revision

```
typedef int128 t cx id t;
                                       // global: CX ID, a 128b GUID
typedef int32_t cxu_id_t;
                                       // system: CXU index
typedef int32 t state id t;
                                      // system: state index
typedef int32 t cx sel t;
                                      // hart: CX selector (value or index)
interface cx_runtime {
 // CX discovery
 static cxu_id_t get_cxu(cx_id_t); // map CX to its CXU here, if any
  // state context management
  static state id t alloc state(cxu id t);
  static void free state(cxu id t, state id t);
  // CX+state selectors
  static cx_sel_t alloc_sel_cxu(cxu_id_t);
  static cx sel t alloc sel cxu state(cxu id t, state id t);
  static void free sel(cx sel t);
  // CX multiplexing
  static cx_sel_t set_cur_sel(cx_sel_t); // return prev selector
```

Status, next steps

Status

Draft

- Spec: first 45 pages
- CXU Zoo, CXU adapters
 - -L0: popcount, bnn
 - -L1: mulacc, dotprod, cvt01
 - -L2: cvt02, cvt12, mux, switch

V1 TODOs

- Discuss in RVI sig-soft-cpu, consensus
- RVI ISA and non-ISA Task Groups
- Overhaul metadata
- Design & build CX Runtime, Composer
- Explore V2, so V1 doesn't preclude it
- -Zicx + CXU-LI CPU cores
- CX libraries for CXU Zoo
- Import CFU Playground CFUs into CXU Zoo
- Demo: 1 CPU + 2 CXUs + libraries
- Plug Fest: CPUs × CXUs × libraries
- Verification?

Call to Action

We propose two new RISC-V International Task Groups:

CX-ISA TG: -Zicx ISA/CSRs to enable composable extensions

CXU-LI TG: (non-ISA) logic interface for CX hardware

We submit:

Draft Proposed RISC-V Composable Custom Extensions Specification https://github.com/grayresearch/CX

Questions? Suggestions? Criticism?
Discuss as github repo issues, or in RVI sig-soft-cpu group