SMAesH: technical documentation

Masked Hardware AES-128 Encryption with HPC2

SIMPLE-Crypto

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1 Overview

This document describes SIMPLE-Crypto's Masked AES in Hardware (SMAesH), implemented in the aes_enc128_32bits_hpc2 hardware IP.

2 History

1.0.1 (2023-06-15) Fix latency in Section 5.4 (documentation change only).

1.0.0 (2023-05-01) Initial release.

3 Features

The AES-128 HPC2 module is a masked hardware implementation of the AES-128 encryption algorithm as specified in [NIS01].

- The core implements the AES-128 encrypt function.
- The implementation is protected against side-channel attacks using the HPC2 masking scheme [CGLS21].
- The amount of shares $d \ge 2$ can be chosen at synthesis time.
- The randomness required for the masking scheme is internally generated using an embedded PRNG.
- The core is controlled through three simple valid-ready stream interfaces (input data/key, output data and PRNG seed.
- The core has an encryption latency of 105 clock cycles and a throughput of one 128-bit block of data per 105 clock cycles.
- There is no latency penalty for key change.
- The state of the core is automatically cleared when encryption finishes.

4 Core User Guide

A top-level view of the core is shown in Figure 7 and a detailed list of the ports is given in Table 1. The interface is composed of three independent interfaces: the input composed of the plaintext and the key (in red), the ciphertext output (in blue) and the PRNG seed (in green). The key (in_shares_key), plaintext (in_shares_plaintext) and ciphertext (out_shares_ciphertext) are all 128-bit masked values. The internal PRNG seed (in_seed) is 80-bit wide.

In this section we next detail the operation of the Synchronous Valid-Ready Stream (SVRS) protocol for the data interfaces, the operation of the aes_enc128_32bits_hpc2 core, and the masked data encoding.

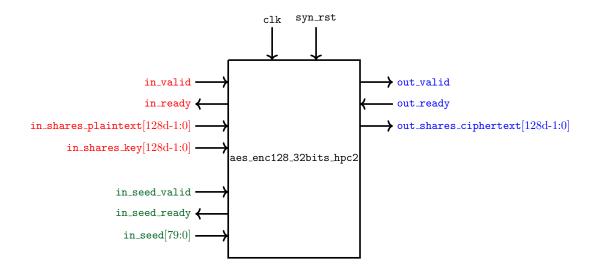


Figure 1: Top level view of module aes_enc128_32bits_hpc2.

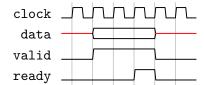


Figure 2: SVRS transaction (don't care (X) signals are represented with a flat red solid line).

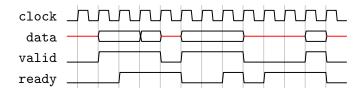


Figure 3: Multiple SVRS transactions.

		Mod	lule Generics								
Parameter	Value Type			Description							
d PRNG_MAX_UNROLL		integer integer		Amount of shares Maximum unrolling for the embedded PRNG.							
Module Ports											
Ports Name	Type	Direction	Width [bits]	Description							
clk	clock	input	1	Clock (all the logic is synchronized on the positive edge).							
$\mathtt{syn}\mathtt{_rst}$	control	input	1	Active high synchronous reset. Keep asserted for at least one cycle.							
		SVRS	Input interfac	ce							
in_shares_plaintext	data	input	128d	Shared plaintext (SVRS data signal).							
in_shares_key	data	input	128d	Shared key (SVRS data signal).							
in_valid	control	input	1	SVRS valid signal.							
${\tt in_ready}$	control	output	1	SVRS ready signal.							
SVRS Seed interface											
in_seed	data	input	80	Fresh randomness used as a seed by the embedded PRNG (SVRS data signal).							
${\tt in_seed_valid}$	control	input	1	SVRS valid signal.							
${\tt in_seed_ready}$	control	output	1	SVRS ready signal.							
		SVRS	Output interfa	ace							
out_shares_ciphertext	data	output	128d	Shared ciphertext (SVRS data signal).							
$\operatorname{\mathtt{out_valid}}$	control	output	1	SVRS valid signal.							
$\mathtt{out_ready}$	control	input	1	SVRS valid signal.							

Table 1: aes_enc128_32bits_hpc2 port description.

4.1 SVRS protocol

The Synchronous Valid-Ready Stream (SVRS) protocol operates between a sender and a receiver. The bus is composed of the two control signals valid and ready, as well as any number of data wires. The valid and data signals are outputs (resp. inputs) of the sender (resp. receiver), while the ready signal is an input (resp. output) of the sender (resp. receiver).

The bus operates synchronously with an event source shared by the sender and the receiver (here, the positive edges of the clock). At each event, a transaction occurs if both valid and ready are asserted (i.e. set to logical 1). The transmitted data of the transaction is the value of the data signals at the event.

Once valid is asserted, it cannot be de-asserted (i.e., sticky signal), nor can the value of data be changed until a transaction occurs. To prevent deadlocks, a sender must not wait until the assertion of ready before asserting valid. To prevent combinational logic loops, the valid signal may not combinationally depend on the ready signal.

Examples of protocol use are given in Figures 2 and 3.

4.2 Core Usage

Encryption An encryption is started by executing a transaction on the in interface. The encryption is executed using the shared key and plaintext provided in the transaction, then the out interface becomes valid, with the shared ciphertext as data.

The core can only perform one execution at a time and will not start a new encryption before the ciphertext of the current encryption has been consumed from the out interface. Figure 4 illustrates the interface signal for two consecutive encryptions.

Security: The out_shares_ciphertext is gated to not expose any confidential value when out_valid is not asserted.

Initialization: After reset, the core will not start an encryption before it is reseeded. Latency and throughput: The AES implementation has a latency of 105 clock cycles. To achieve the maximum throughput of one encrypted block per 105 cycles, there must be no back-pressure (i.e., out_ready must be high at the clock cycle where cipher_valid becomes asserted) and the input must be valid (valid_in asserted) at least one cycle before cipher_valid is asserted.

(Re-)seeding The seed interface is used to reseed the internal PRNG (this PRNG generates the internal masking randomness, see Section 5.5 for details). A reseed is executed by means of a transaction on the seed interface, as shown in Figure 5. During this transaction, the provided seed data must be uniform randomness (i.e. all the bits must be fresh, uniform and independent). After a reseed transaction, the reseeding procedure lasts for a few cycles (the duration depends on the core configuration, it is typically less than a dozen cycles).

Interactions with encryption.

• After a reset, the core does not start any encryption before being reseeded once.

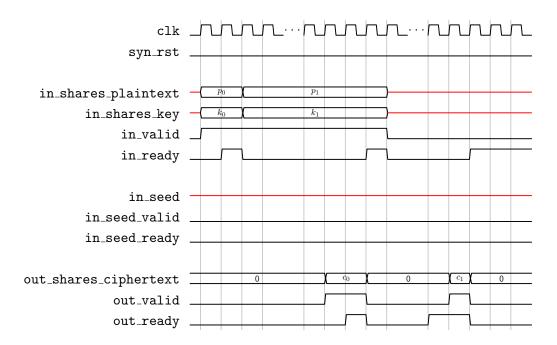


Figure 4: Exemplary interface view for two executions.

- The core will not accept a reseed transaction while it is encrypting.
- The core will not start an encryption while it is reseeding.
- Starting a new encryption takes precedence over starting a reseed, hence if reseeding if needed, no new valid input should be asserted before a reseed transaction happens.

4.3 Sharing encoding

The busses in_shares_plaintext, in_shares_key and out_shares_ciphertext contain respectively the shared representation of the plaintext, the key and the ciphertext.

A sharing (or shared representation) of a bit b is a tuple of d shares $\left(b^0, b^1, \ldots, b^{d-1}\right)$ such that $\bigoplus_{m,0 \leq m < d} b^m = b$. The sharing of a n-bit bus $\mathtt{data}\left[n-1:0\right]$ where $\mathtt{data}\left[i\right] = b_i$ is $\mathtt{shares_data}\left[nd-1:0\right]$ where $\mathtt{shares_data}\left[ni+j\right] = b_i^j$ and $\left(b_i^0, \ldots, b_i^{d-1}\right)$ is a sharing of b_i . This representation is illustrated in Figure 6.

The key and the plaintext must be fed as uniform sharings (i.e. the sharing is selected uniformly at random among possible sharings that represent the correct value). The output ciphertext sharing is guaranteed to be uniform.

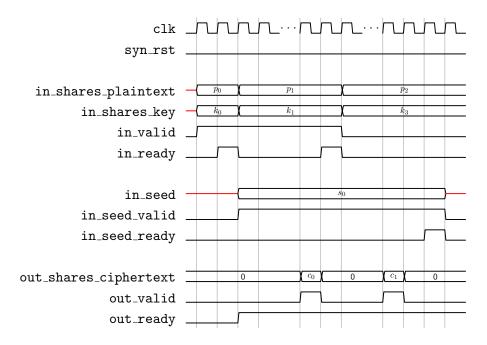


Figure 5: Exemplary reseeding procedure.

5 Core Architecture

The top-level architecture of aes_enc128_32bits_hpc2 is depicted in Figure 7: its main components are the encryption unit MSKaes_32bits_core and the PRNG. Some additional logic is used to handle the encrypt/reseed interlocking, as well as units to shuffle the shares of the masked busses.

Core The module MSKaes_32bits_core implements a masked version of the AES encryption algorithm by serially processing 32-bits parts of the state. It runs a single AES execution at a time and the ciphertext produced (sh_ciphertext) has to be fetched before a new execution can start. The shared plaintext (sh_plaintext) and the shared key (sh_key) are fetched at the beginning of a new execution by performing a simple transaction at the input interface (with valid_in and in_ready). Similarly, the shared ciphertext (sh_ciphertext) is output from the core with a dedicated interface (with cipher_valid and out_ready). The signal busy is asserted when an execution is ongoing inside the core.

PRNG The module prng_top is generating the randomness required by the masking scheme. It is the producer on the randomness bus, while MSKaes_32bits_core is the receiver.

When not reseeding, it takes only a single cycle to generate the fresh randomness, therefore at the next cycle after a randomness transaction, new randomness is already available (i.e., rnd carries fresh randomness, and out_valid is asserted). During an

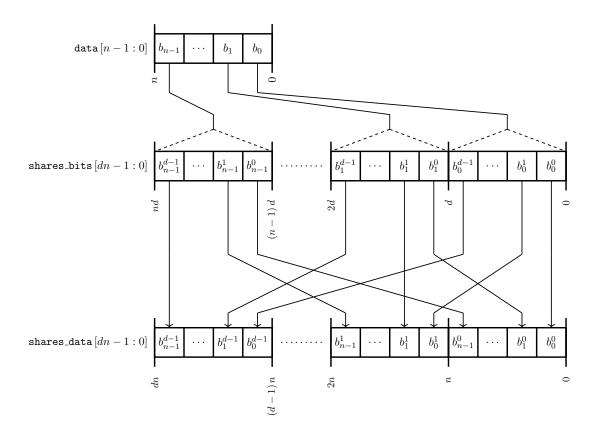


Figure 6: Encoding of a shared n-bit wide data with d shares.

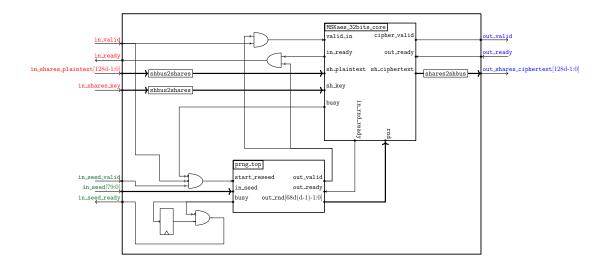


Figure 7: Global architecture of the module aes_enc128_32bits_hpc2.

encryption, MSKaes_32bits_core needs randomness at all clock cycles, hence it keeps out_ready asserted, and thanks to the high-throughput capability of the PRNG, a transaction happens on the randomness bus at every clock cycles (out_valid stays asserted).

This high throughput capability is actually relied upon by MSKaes_32bits_core: it needs randomness for security at every cycle during the encryption and cannot stall once encryption is started. The signal out_valid is de-asserted only when the PRNG has not been seeded after a reset, or while it is reseeding. To ensure that fresh randomness is always available when encrypting, the interlocking logic prevents the MSKaes_32bits_core from starting an encryption if out_valid is de-asserted, while it prevents prng_top from starting a reseed when an encryption is ongoing. If no encryption is ongoing and in_seed_valid is asserted, then a reseed is initiated and a transaction on the seed bus occurs at the next cycle (this is to avoid a combinational dependency in_seed_valid \rightarrow in_seed_valid, and is achieved by detecting a rising edge on the PRNG busy signal).

Share shuffling The modules shares2shbus and shbus2shares are simple wire shufflings that "transpose" the encoding of the shared data. More precisely, the encoding of a sharing inside MSKaes_32bits_core is shares_data_inner $[ni+j] = b_j^i$ unlike the more intuitive external representation shares_data $[ni+j] = b_i^j$ described in Section 4.3. This internal representation is more convenient for the implementation, as it makes it easier to describe the extraction of masked bits from a masked bus using Verilog operators.

5.1 Masked AES Core Architecture

The module MSKaes_32bits_core is almost identical to the 32-bit masked AES implementation presented in [MCS22]. As shown in Figure 8, the module is organized

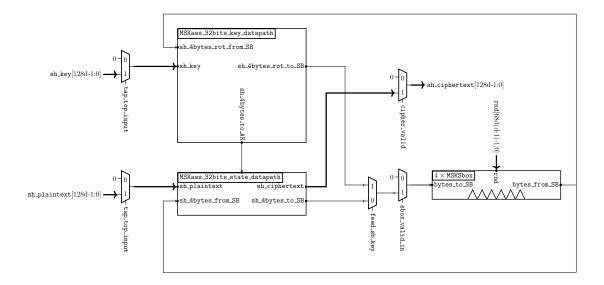


Figure 8: Datapath architecture of the module MSKaes_32bits_core. Wires not in bold are 32d bits wide (apart from muxes control signals).

around two datapath blocks performing the operations dedicated to the round computation (denoted MSKaes_32bits_state_datapath) and the key scheduling (denoted MSKaes_32bits_key_datapath). The module MSKSbox is shared between the two datapath blocks and implements the SubBytes layer for 4 masked bytes. In particular, it is composed of 4 parallel instances of masked S-boxes that follow an optimized architecture based on the S-box representation presented in [BP12]. A single S-box is organized as a pipeline of 6 stages with 34 HPC2 AND gadgets each requiring d(d-2)/2 bits of randomness per execution. The bus rnd is used to provide the fresh randomness to the 4 S-boxes instances (randomness is not used anywhere else in MSKaes_32bits_core).

5.2 Architecture of the MSKaes_32bits_state_datapath module

Figure 9 shows the detailed architecture of the module MSKaes_32bits_state_datapath. It is organized as a shift register where each register unit holds a masked state byte (the numbers on the figure indicate the byte index in the unmasked state). The module operates on 32-bit parts of the state and is also implementing the logic that computes the AddRoundKey, ShiftRows and MixColumns layers. In particular, these are implemented in purely combinational logic. Addition gadgets (i.e., XORs) are used to perform the key addition with key bytes coming from the round key (denoted sh_4bytes_from_key). The module MC_unit computes the result of the MixColumns operation for a masked column (i.e., 4 masked bytes). The ShiftRows layer is free, being implemented as a specific routing at the input of the SubBytes layer. In particular, the ordering of the bytes routed to the S-boxes (denoted sh_4bytes_to_SB) is selected such that the rotations over the rows are applied. Dedicated MUXes (controlled by route_MC) are used in order to bypass

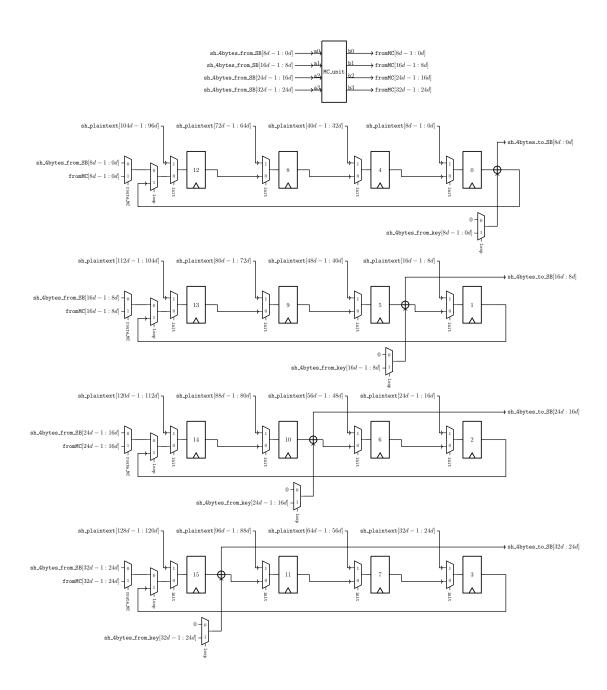


Figure 9: Global architecture of the MSKaes_32bits_state_datapathmodule. The value held by the DFF at index i is depicted by the signal $sh_reg_out[i]$ in the HDL.

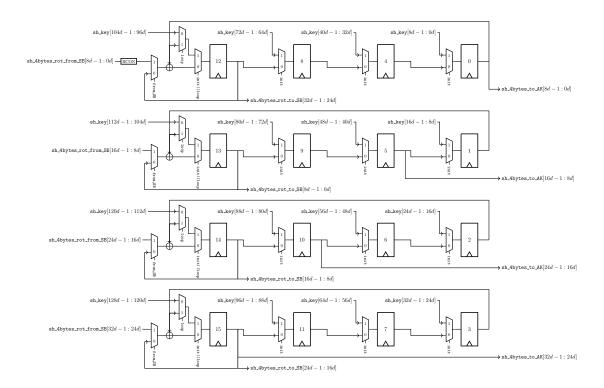


Figure 10: Global architecture of the module MSKaes_32bits_key_datapath. The value held by the DFF at index i is depicted by the signal sh_m_key[i] in the HDL.

the MixColumns logic block when executing the last round. Other MUXes (controlled by loop) are used during the last key addition in order to bypass the ShiftRows, SubBytes and MixColumns layers. When a new execution starts, the masked plaintext bytes are loaded in the register through the MUXes controlled by init. Then, the AddRoundKey and ShiftRows layers are executed by propagating the data across the pipeline to the S-boxes. The MixColumns operation is performed when the result of the SubBytes layer is coming back to the core by asserting the signal route_MC.

5.3 Architecture of the MSKaes_32bits_key_datapath module

The module MSKaes_32bits_key_datapath is shown in Figure 10. It is organized as a shift register where each register unit holds a masked byte of the key (the numbers on the Figure indicate the byte index in the unmasked key). The module is split in 4 independent parts, each taking care of the key scheduling operation on a single row. The sharing of the 128-bit key is routed from the input with the control signal init.

Concretely, the key scheduling starts by sending the last column of the key (i.e., byte indexes 12, 13, 14 and 15) to the S-boxes. The RotWord operation is performed by the routing that sends the key bytes to the S-boxes. Once computed, the result of the SubBytes layer is routed back to the core through the MUX controlled by the signal

```
%%% First key addition
for 0 \leq i < 16 do
       \mathtt{S}_{i}^{0}=\mathtt{P}_{i}\oplus\mathtt{K}_{i} ;
done
\%\%\% Perform the rounds
for 0 \le r \le 9 do
       % Operation for a single round
       SR^r = ShiftRows(S^r);
       SB^r = SubBytes(SR^r);
       \mathtt{MC}^r = \mathtt{MixColumns}(\mathtt{SB}^r);
       \mathtt{AK}^r = \mathtt{AddRoundKey}(\mathtt{MC}^r,\mathtt{RK}^r);
       \mathtt{S}^{r+1}=\mathtt{AK}^{r} ;
done
%%% Last round
SR^9 = ShiftRows(S^9);
SB^9 = SubBytes(SR^9);
AK^9 = AddRoundKey(SB^9);
C = AK^9;
```

Figure 11: Pseudo-code of the AES encryption.

from SB. At the same time, the round constant is applied and the first column (i.e., byte indexes 0,1,2 and 3) of the new key is computed by adding its value to the column coming back from the S-boxes. The remaining three columns (i.e., byte indexes [4,5,6,7], [8,9,10,11] and [12,13,14,15] are then updated sequentially by XORing each bytes with the value of the last byte updated in the same row. The signal loop is used to make the key shares loop across the key pipeline. This is required to keep the key material after the AddRoundKey operations while the SubBytes results of the key scheduling is still under computation.

5.4 Internal operation

Let us first introduce notations for the intermediate states in the AES algorithm with pseudo-code in Figure 11 and Figure 12. Each variable denotes a state or subkey byte at a given step of the algorithm. In particular, the plaintext (resp. key, ciphertext) byte at index $0 \le i < 16$ is denoted P_i (resp. K_i , C_i), and the value S_i^r (resp. RK_i^r) denotes the byte at index i of the state (resp. round key) starting the r-th round. When no index is given, the full 128-bit state is considered instead.

Using these notations, Figures 13, 14 and 15 describe the evolution of the AES states stored in the architecture over the computation of one round. Next, Figures 16, 17 and 18 depict the control signals that drive the datapath for the first round, middle rounds, and last round. In particular, for the first round (Figure 16), the data is fetched by the module when the signal valid_in is asserted if the core is not busy, there is no ciphertext stored in the core and randomness is available. At the next clock cycle, the internal FSM counters cnt_round and cnt_fsm are reset and the execution

```
\%\% Key evolution for each round key
for 0 \le r < 10 do
        % Fetch value on which operate
        \quad \text{if} \ r == 0 \ \text{then} \quad
                 t^r = K;
                 t^r = \mathtt{R}\mathtt{K}^{r-1};
         end
        \mbox{\ensuremath{\mbox{\%}}} 
 Perform the last column rotation
        [\mathbf{R}_0^r,\mathbf{R}_1^r,\mathbf{R}_2^r,\mathbf{R}_3^r]=[t_{13}^r,t_{14}^r,t_{15}^r,t_{12}^r] ;
        \% Perform SubWord on the rotated column
        [\mathtt{RSB}_0^r,\mathtt{RSB}_1^r,\mathtt{RSB}_2^r,\mathtt{RSB}_3^r] = [\mathtt{SubWord}(\mathtt{R}_0^r),\mathtt{SubWord}(\mathtt{R}_1^r),\mathtt{SubWord}(\mathtt{R}_2^r),\mathtt{SubWord}(\mathtt{R}_3^r)]
        \% Compute the first column of the next round key
        \mathtt{RK}_0^r = \mathtt{RSB}_0^r \oplus t_0^r \oplus \mathtt{RCON}^r;
        \mathtt{RK}_1^r = \mathtt{RSB}_1^r \oplus t_1^r ;
        \mathtt{RK}_2^r = \mathtt{RSB}_2^r \oplus t_2^r ;
        \mathtt{RK}_3^r = \mathtt{RSB}_3^r \oplus t_3^r ;
        \% Generate the three remaining columns
        \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i < 4 \ \text{do}
                 for 0 \leq j < 4~\mathrm{do}
                         \mathtt{RK}^r_{4i+j} = \mathtt{RK}^r_{4(i-1)+j} \oplus t^r_{4i+j} ;
                 done
         done
done
```

Figure 12: Pseudo-code for the AES key evolution.

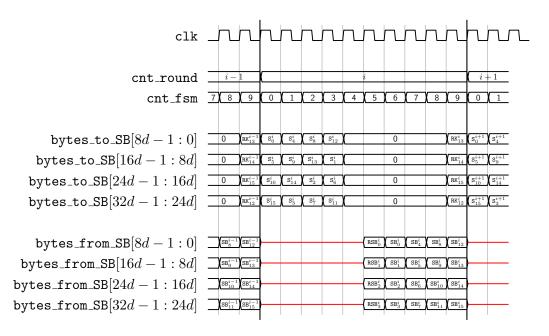


Figure 13: Data going into / coming from the S-boxes during a round.

begins. The round function and the key scheduling algorithm are executed in parallel by interleaving the S-boxes usage appropriately. In particular, the first cycle of the execution is used to start the key scheduling algorithm by asserting feed_sb_key and sbox_valid_in. During this cycle, both the module MSKaes_32bits_state_datapath and MSKaes_32bits_key_datapath are disabled.

Then, the core enters into a nominal regime that computes a round in 10 cycles, as depicted in Figure 17. A typical round starts with 4 clock cycles during which data is read from the state registers, XORed with the subkey and fed to the S-boxes, which performs the AddRoundKey, ShiftRows and SubBytes layers for the full state (one column per cycle). During these cycles, sbox_valid_in is asserted and data (state and subkey) loops over the shift registers. At the fifth cycle of a round (i.e., when cnt_fsm = 4), the module MSKaes_32bits_key_datapath is disabled in order to wait one cycle for the S-box results. At the same cycle, the S-boxes output the column of the new subkey value, which is processed by enabling the module MSKaes_32bits_key_datapath and asserting from_SB for one cycle. Next, during the last 4 cycles of a round, the S-boxes output the 4 columns of the state, on which the MixColumns layer is directly applied, and the result is stored in the state registers. At the same time, the subkey update is finalized, such that a new subkey is ready at the last cycle of a round (i.e., cnt_fsm = 9). During this last cycle, the next key schedule round is started, and a new state round starts at the following cycle.

Finally, the last round is very similar to the regime mode except that the module MC_unitis bypassed. In particular, the signal route_MC is de-asserted and the shift registers are configured to make the data loop. No new key scheduling round is started

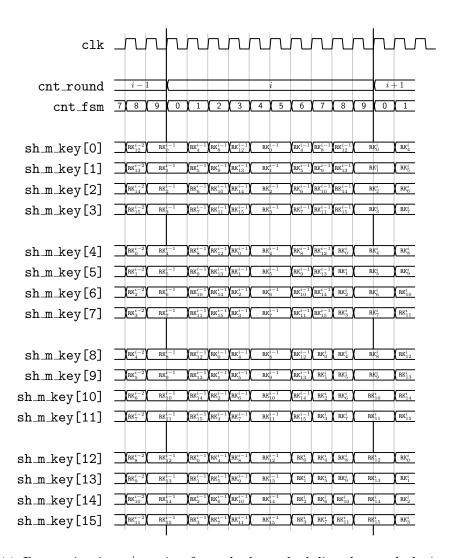


Figure 14: Data going into / coming from the key scheduling datapath during a round.

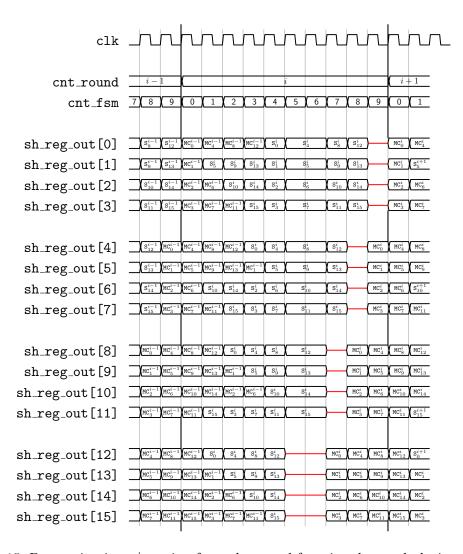


Figure 15: Data going into / coming from the round function datapath during a round.

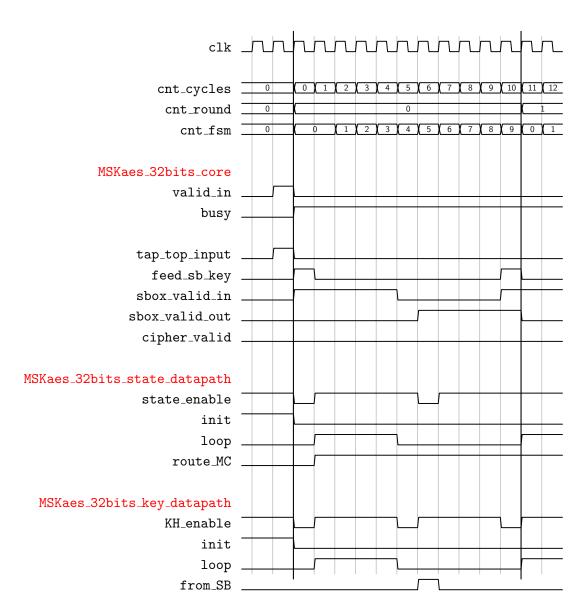


Figure 16: Data routing when a new execution starts.

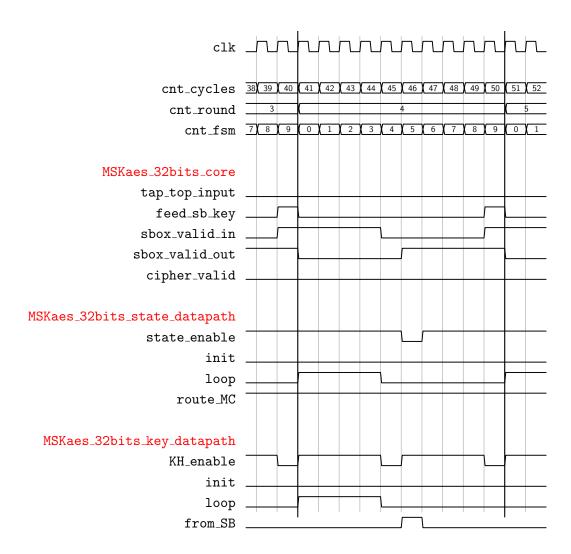


Figure 17: In regime data routing.

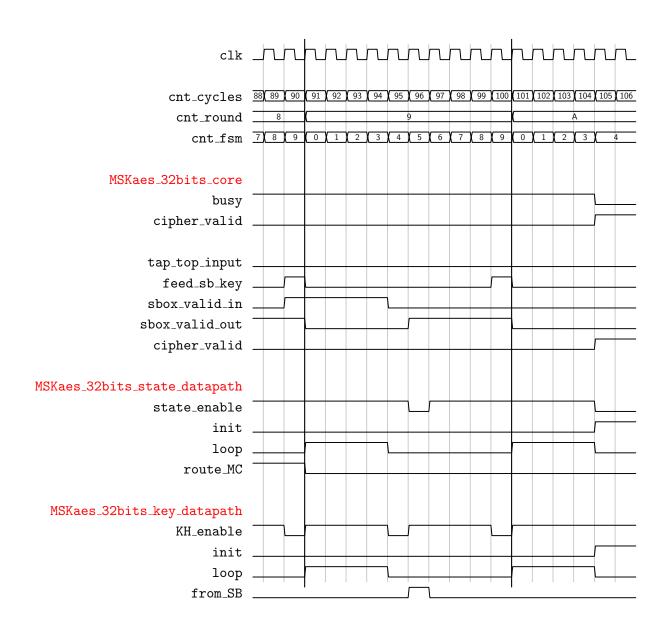


Figure 18: Data routing during last rounds.

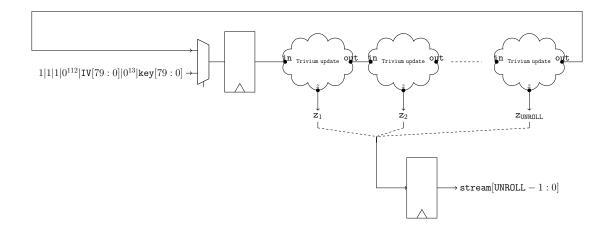


Figure 19: Datapath Architecture of a unrolled Trivium module

during this last cycle. At the end of the last round, once the ciphertext has been fetched from the output, a new encryption starts immediately (if valid_in is asserted), or the state register is cleared by asserting the control signal init. This ensures that the core is completely clear of any key- or plaintext-dependent data.

5.5 Randomness Generation

The module prng_top is a PRNG generating NRNDBITS = $4 \cdot 34 \cdot \text{MUL_HPC2_RND} = 4 \cdot 34 \cdot [d(d-1)/2]$ pseudo-random bits per clock cycle. It is based on one or multiple instances of the Trivium stream cipher [CP08] from which the key stream is used as the PRNG output. As shown in Figure 19, a Trivium instance is implemented using a 288-bit state register and UNROLL cascaded combinational layers that each implement one state update step and produce one keystream bit. Moreover, the state register is either taken from a reseed value (to initiate a reseed), or from the output of the final update step (during normal operation). At the output, the keystream is stored in a register to avoid the propagation of glitches that could reduce the security of the masked circuit.

The use of multiple Trivium instances allows us to adjust the area-latency trade-off: with more Trivium instances, UNROLL can be reduced, leading to a lower combinational logic depth. The top-level PRNG_MAX_UNROLL parameter is used for this purpose: the number of instances is NTRIVIUMS = [NRNDBITS/PRNG_MAX_UNROLL], and UNROLL = [NRNDBITS/NTRIVIUMS], which ensures that UNROLL < PRNG_MAX_UNROLL.

The reseeding follows the initialization of Trivium. Concretely, the state is first set to $1^3|0^{112}|IV|0^{13}|KEY$, where the KEY is set to the 80-bit externally provided seed (it is the same for all Trivium instances), while the IV is a constant, which is distinct for each Trivium instance. Then, the update function is applied at least $4 \cdot 288$ times, i.e., the PRNG is executed while feeding back its state for $4 \cdot 288/UNROLL$ cycles. During the reseed, the signal busy is asserted and out_valid is not. Once finished, the signal out_valid is asserted. After a reset, the core requires will not output valid data (i.e.,

Part	Shares (d)	Slices	LUTs	Regs	SRLs	Latency	Freq.	TP
						[cycle]	$[\mathrm{MHz}]$	$[\mathrm{Mbit/s}]$
xc7a100tftg256-2	2	1495	4664	3502	0	105	68.6	83.6
(opt. $disabled^1$)	3	3069	9960	7157	0	105	66.2	80.7
	4	4829	16527	12189	0	105	66.5	81.0
xc7a100tftg256-2	2	910	2950	3145	144	105	159	193
	3	1868	6071	6620	216	105	137.9	168.1
	4	3244	10759	11474	288	105	128.76	156.96

Table 2: Artix-7 FPGA synthesis results (out_of_context, post-implementation, PRNG_MAX_UNROLL = 128).

out_valid will stay de-asserted) until the completion of a reseed.

6 Core Performances

Following the architecture described section 5.2, the latency is 105 cycles per execution. Table 2 contains performance metrics for two implementations on a Xilinx Series 7 FPGA: one with the optimisations disabled at every steps of the toolflow and one with the optimisation enabled.

7 Core Verification

Functionality In order to ensure the proper functionality of the AES core, the Known-Answer Tests of the NIST "Advanced Encryption Standard Algorithm Validation List" is verified with the provided testbench¹.

In particular, all the testvectors related to the encryption algorithm from the files ECBGFSbox128.rsp, ECBKeySbox128.rsp, ECBVarKey128.rsp and ECBVarTxt128.rsp are tested at the RTL level. The testbench follows a randomized regression testing strategy to assess the functionality of the module. In particular, the execution related to each testvector cases is started sequentially by performing a transaction at the input interface. To simulate the behavior that may happen due to the integration of the core in a more complex system, a random amount of clock cycles is waited before initializing a transaction (i.e., before asserting the in_valid signal). Similarly, in order to simulate (hard) back-pressure conditions that may occur in practice, the output interface is simulated with random assertion of the out_ready signal. Besides, in parallel to the behavioral known-answer tests, the reseeding procedure is tested by issuing reseed requests at regular interval. This is achieved by waiting a random amount of clock cycles before

¹ Optimizations might impact the side-channel security of the implementation, see section 7.

¹https://csrc.nist.gov/projects/cryptographic-algorithm-validation-program/block-ciphers

asserting the signal in_seed_valid and waiting until a transaction at the seed interface occurs

Additionally, a practical implementation on an Artix7 FPGA (xc7a100tftg256-2) has been tested with random known-test vectors (i.e., random key, plaintext and seed).

Side-channel security This core has been formally verified for security in the glitch+transition robust probing model using the fullVeriftool [CGLS21, CS21]². The scripts for this verification are provided along with the implementation. The implementation has also been empirically evaluated on an FPGA (with synthesis optimizations disabled), the evaluation report is available at https://simple-crypto.org/outputs. Note that this evaluation is device-specific, and should be performed on every instantiation of this device.

8 Copyright

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²https://github.com/cassiersg/fullverif

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