

PULP PLATFORM

Open Source Hardware, the way it should be!

A look inside an Application Processor: CVA6

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ETH zürich



<http://pulp-platform.org>



[@pulp_platform](https://twitter.com/pulp_platform)

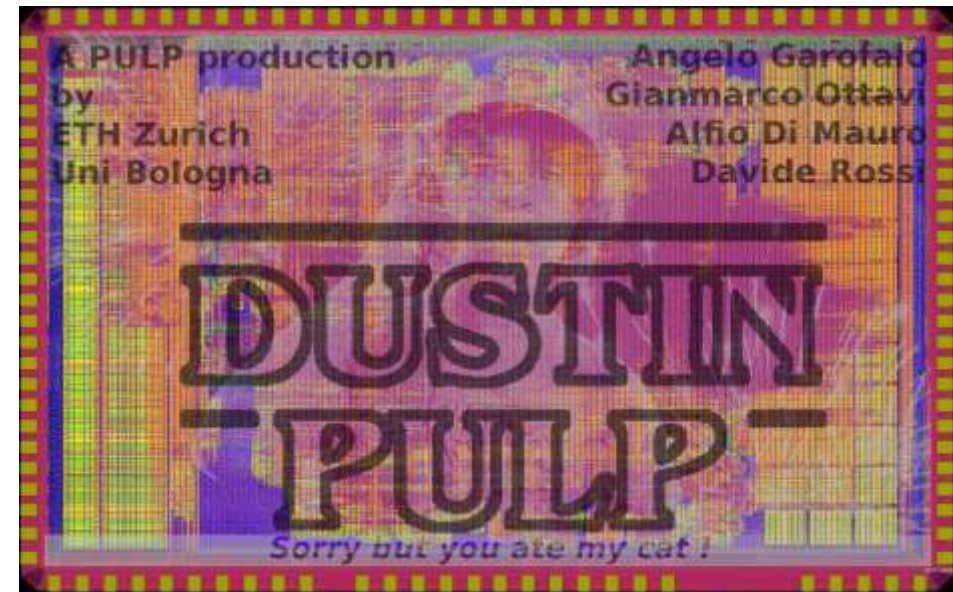


https://www.youtube.com/pulp_platform



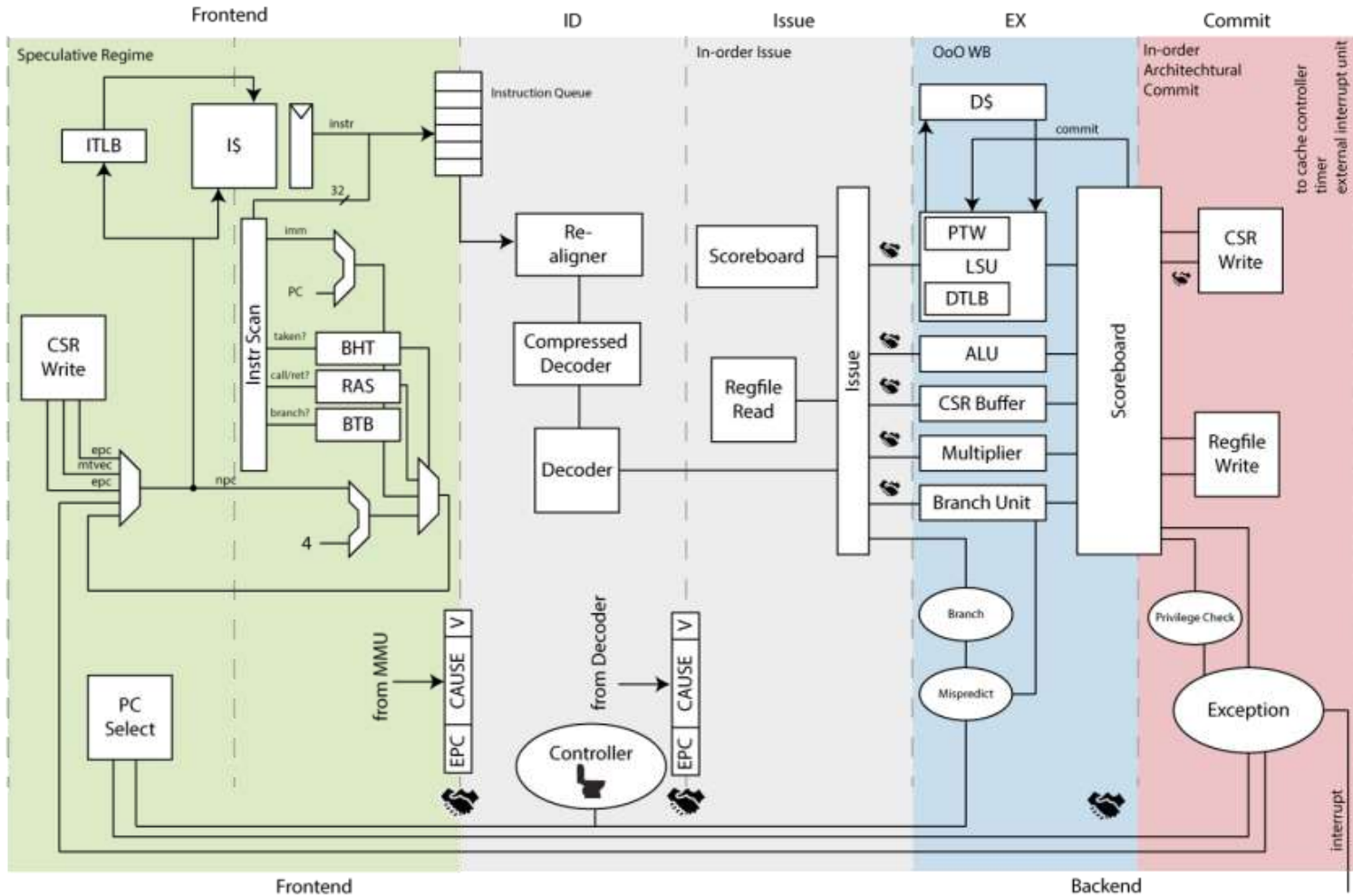
CVA6 is open-source

- You can find all the RTL of the Core at:
 - <https://github.com/openhwgroup/cva6>
- CVA6 is just one of the core born from the PULP Project
 - <https://pulp-platform.org/>
 - <https://github.com/pulp-platform>
- From RTL to Silicon





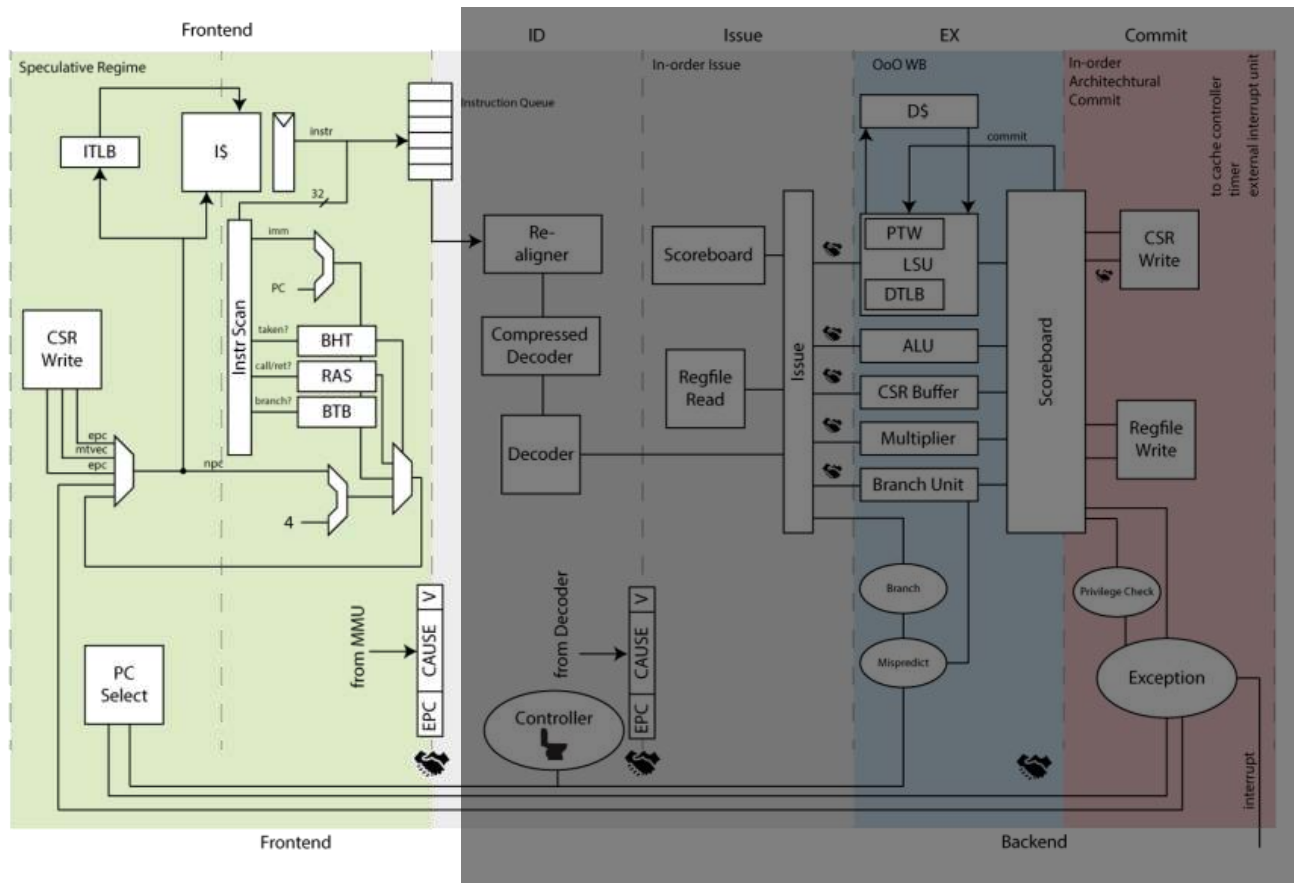
A look Into CVA6



- RISC-V ISA RV64IMAC(F)
- M,S,U Privilege level Spec.
 - Can run linux-like OS (Application class processor).
- In-Order Single Issue with 6 stages of Pipeline



A look Into CVA6: Frontend



PC Generation:

- Sequential Fetch
- Miss Prediction Recovery
- Exception
- Debug
- CSR

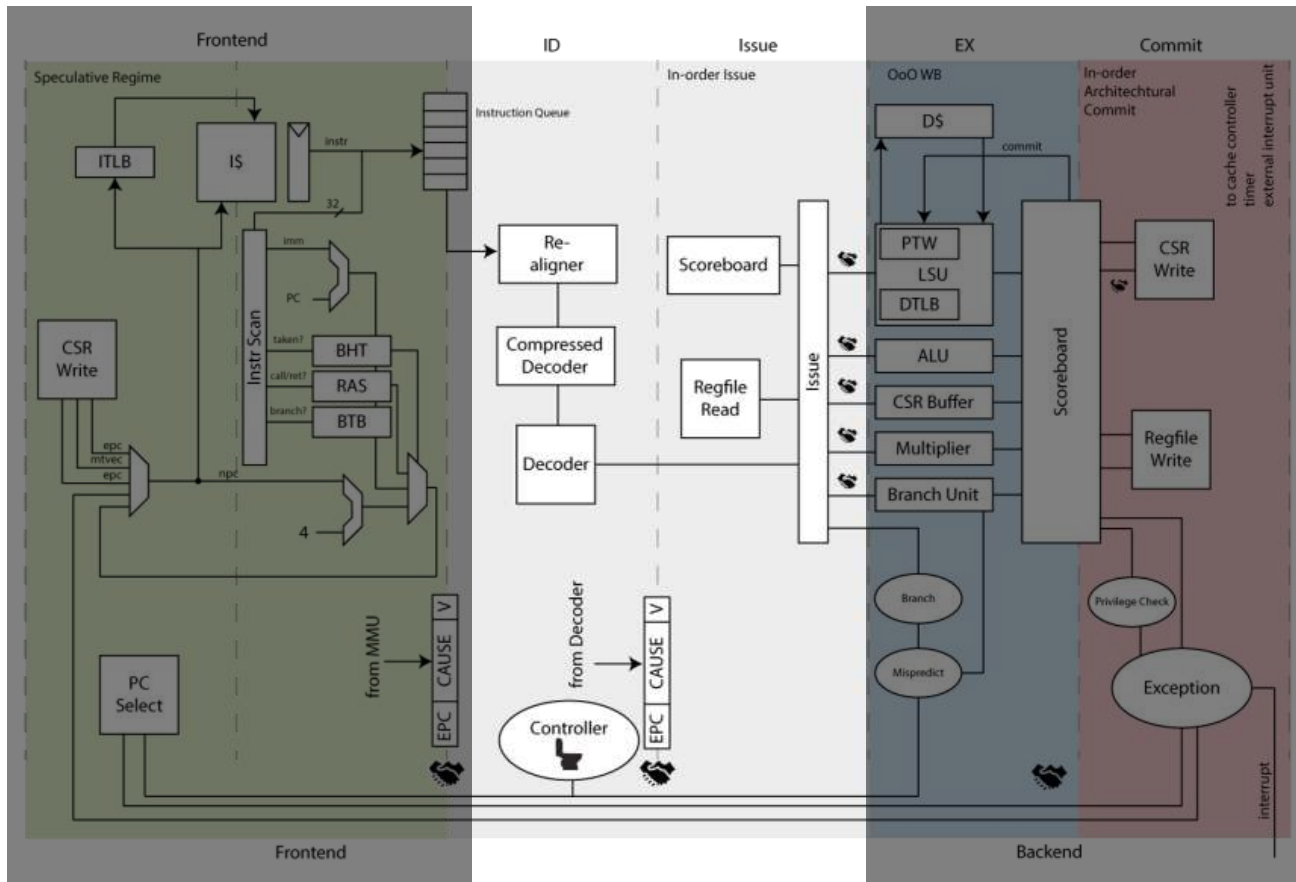
Instruction Fetch:

- Pre-Decoding for Branch Prediction
- Instruction Cache
 - Virtually Indexed and Physically Tagged
 - Pipelined to mitigate long propagation delays of memory macros

Frontend Decoupled with backend via Instruction queue



A look Into CVA6: Backend



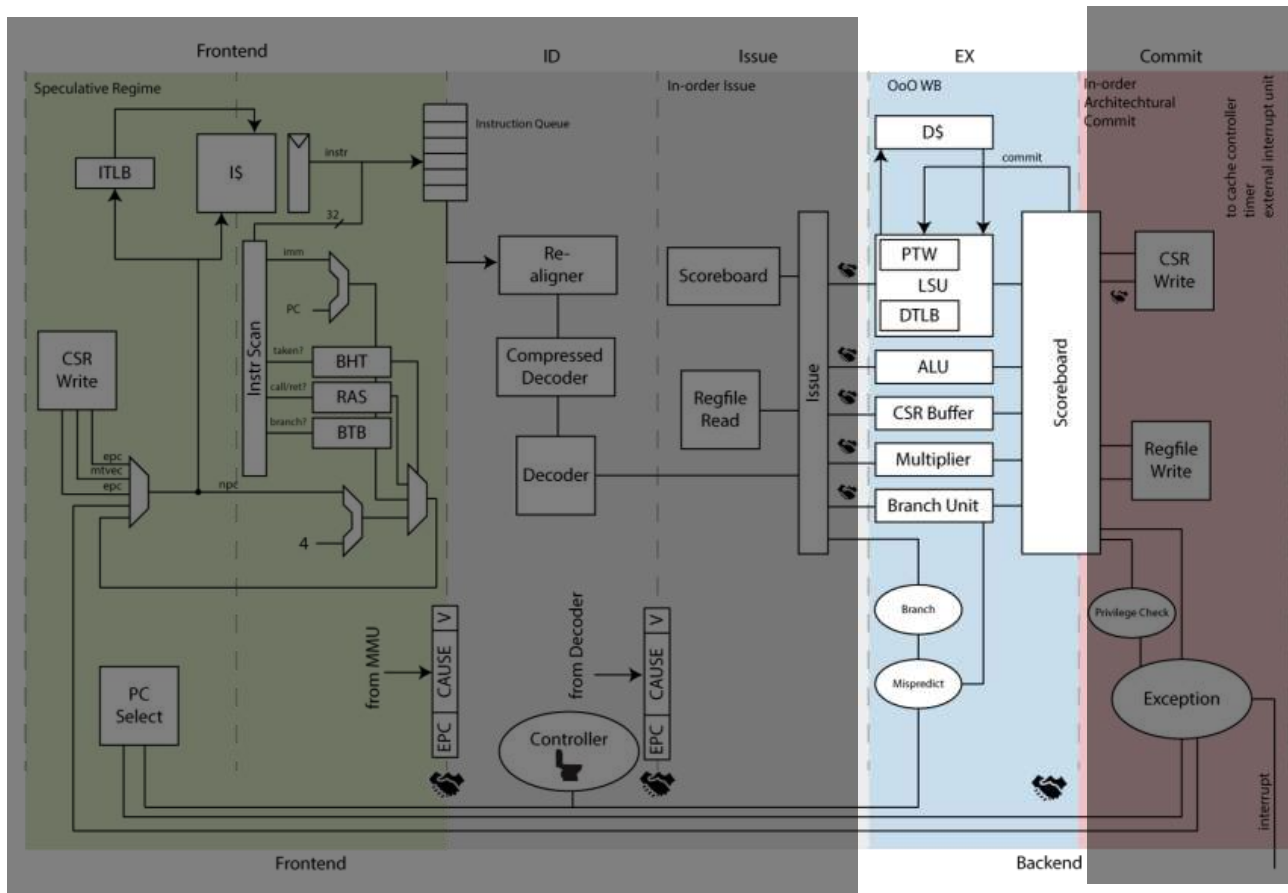
Decode Stage:

- Compressed decoder
- Decoder

Issue Stage:

- Renaming
 - Lightweight 1-bit renaming scheme
- Operand Read
 - Instruction Are issued if Operands are ready
- Scoreboarding
 - Mixed Scoreboard with Reorder Buffer
 - Issued instruction are tracked for data Hazards
 - Allow Out-Of-Order completion

A look Into CVA6: Backend

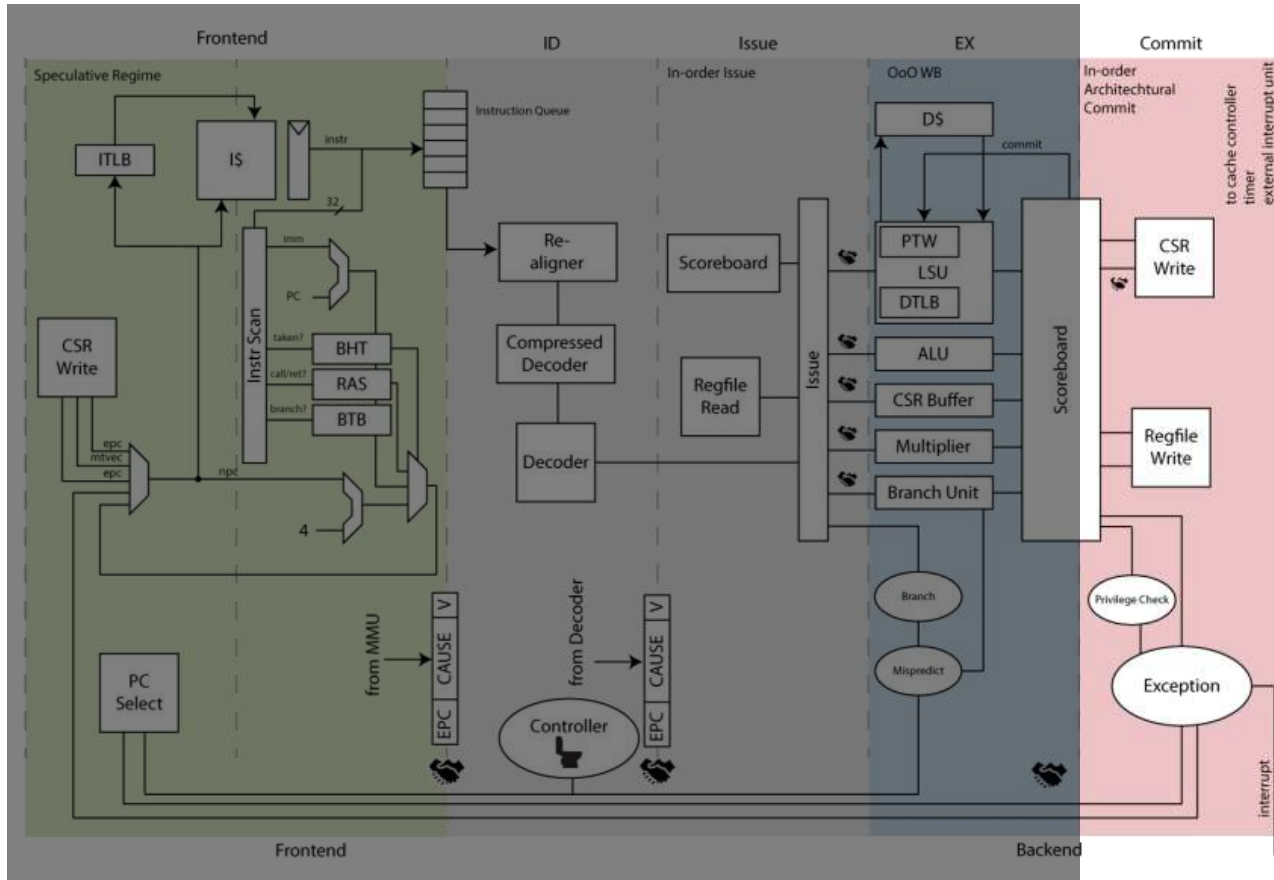


Ex Stage:

- ALU
- FPU
- Multiplier/Integer Div
 - 2 Stage/Iterative
- LSU with 3 Master Ports
 - Load
 - Store
 - PTW
- Data Cache 2 Stages Pipeline
- Branch Unit



A look Into CVA6: Backend

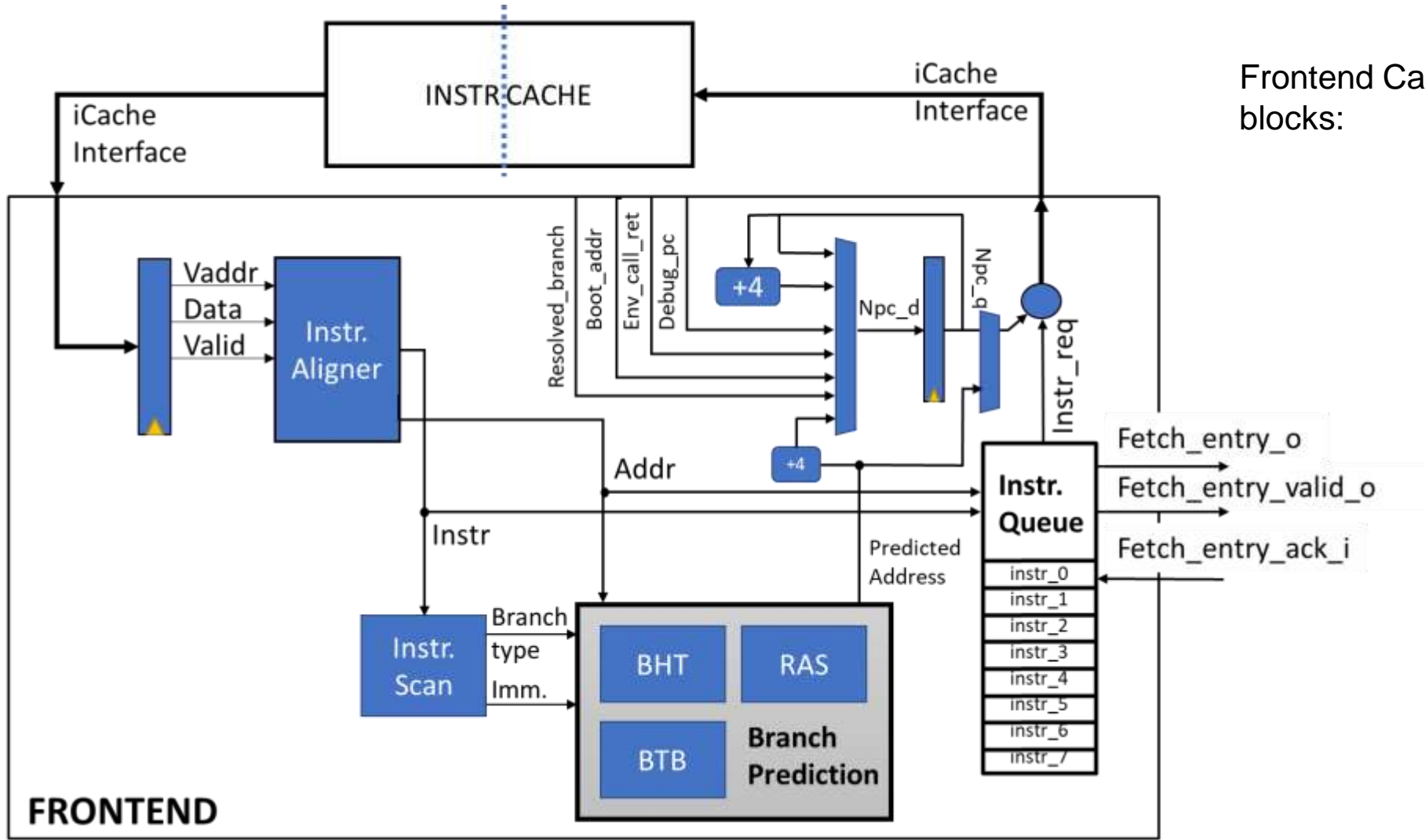


Commit Stage

- Commit Completed instruction In-Order
 - Register File
 - Main memory

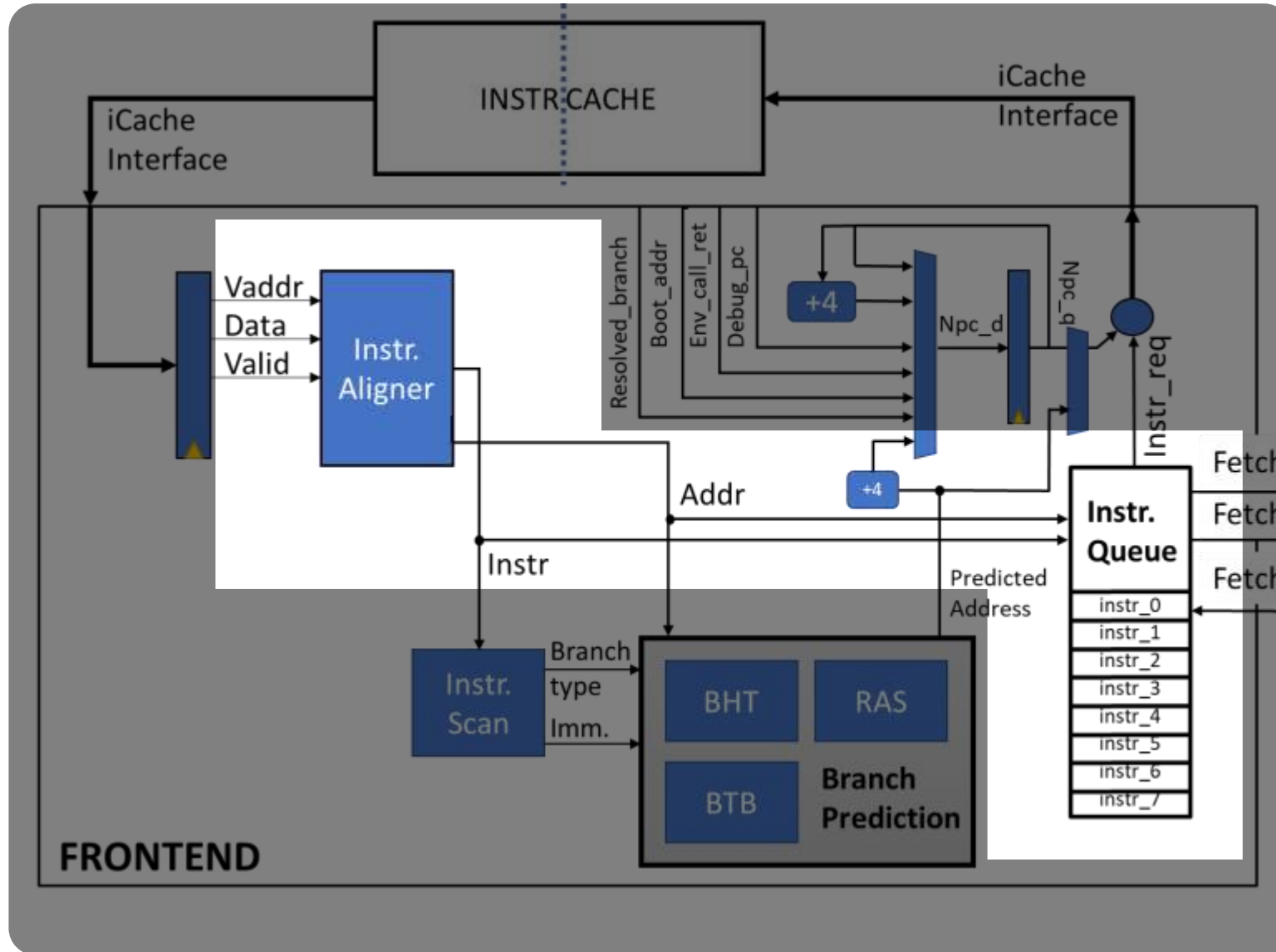
External Interface to main memory AXI4 Compliant

Deep Dive: Frontend



Frontend Can be divided in 3 main blocks:

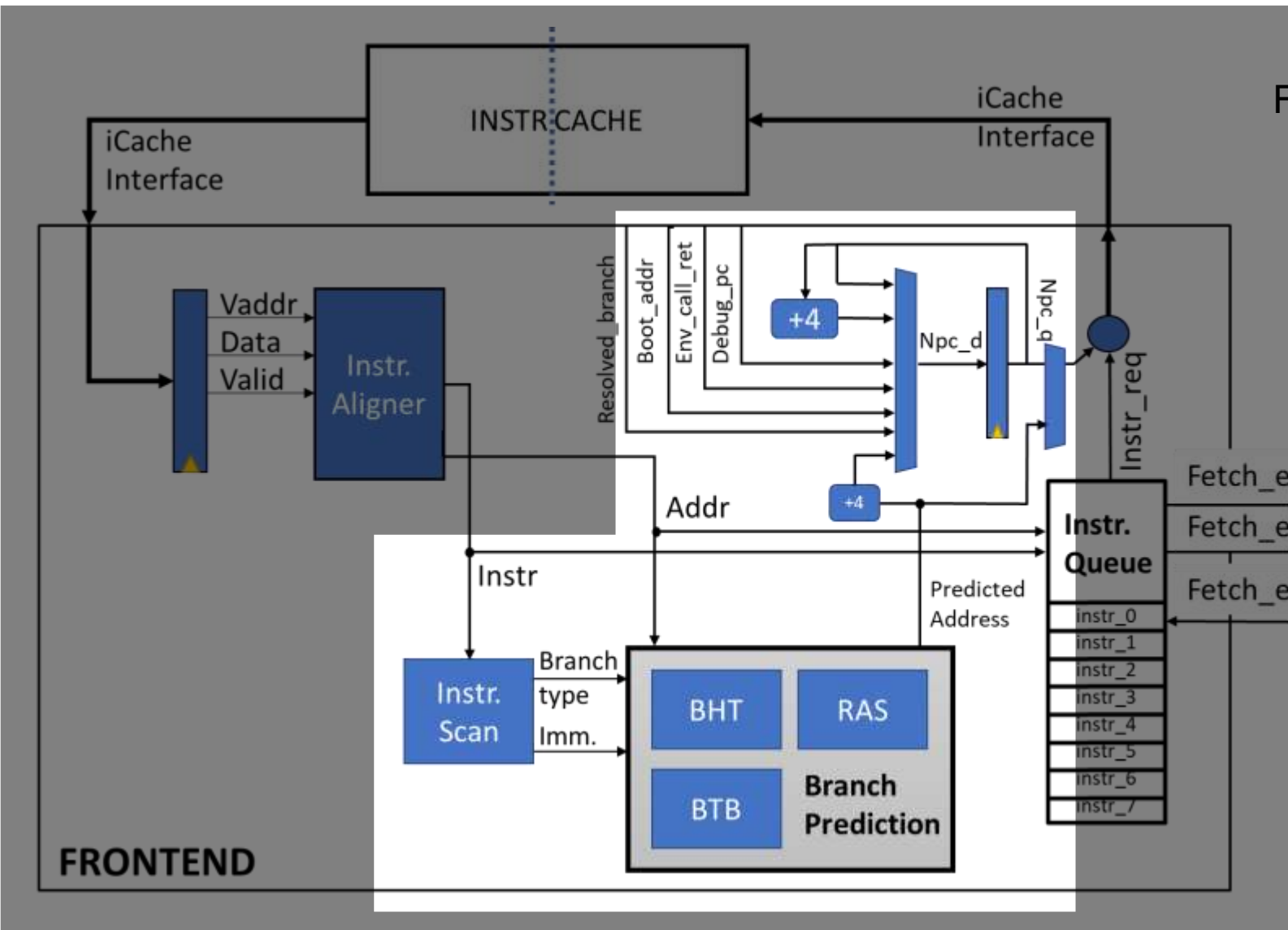
Deep Dive: Frontend



Frontend Can be divided in 3 main blocks:

- Current Instruction
 - Realign Sampled Instruction from Instruction cache
 - Store the current instructions into instr. queue;

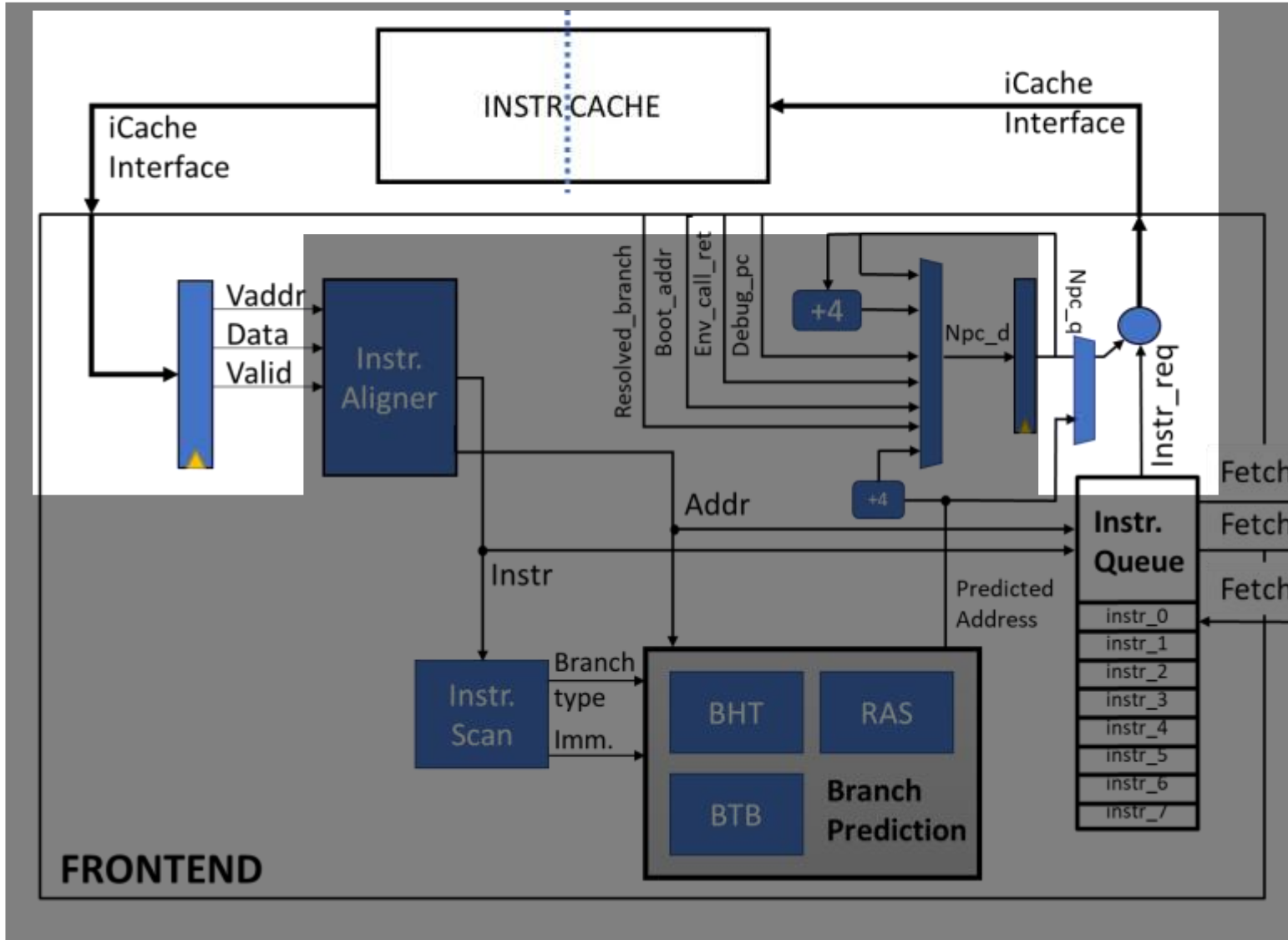
Deep Dive: Frontend



Frontend Can be divided in 3 main blocks:

- Current Instruction;
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 - Store the instruction into instr. queue;
- Next Program Counter Logic:
 - Compute next PC depending on:
 - Booting;
 - Exceptions;
 - Debugging;
 - Branch;
 - Recovery from bad Prediction;
 - Sequential Fetching.

Deep Dive: Frontend



Frontend Can be divided in 3 main blocks:

- Current Instruction;
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 - Store the instruction into instr. queue;

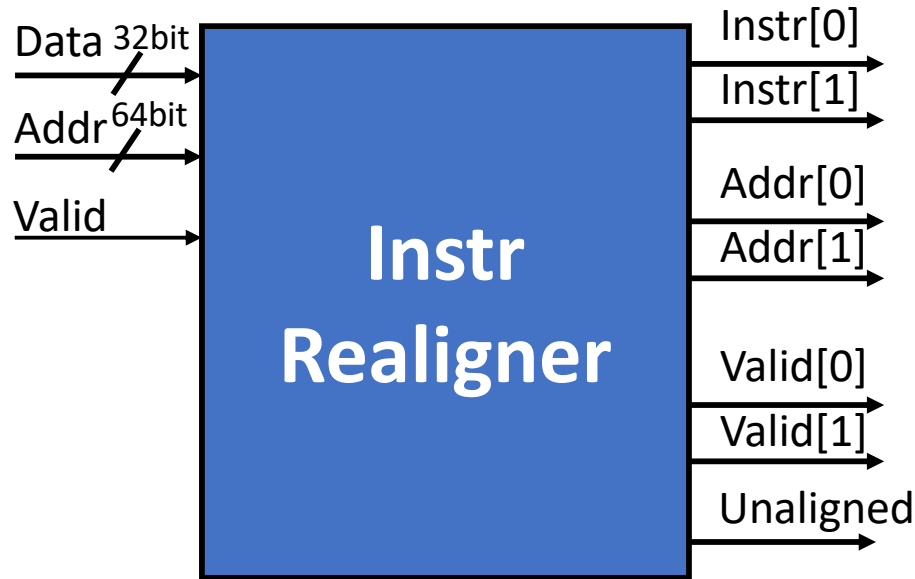
- Next Program Counter Logic:
 - Compute next PC depending on:
 - External Inputs;
 - Branches on current instr;
 - Recovery from bad Prediction;
 - Exception;
 - Debugging;
 - Booting;

- Cache interface:
 - Request Side;
 - Response Side;

Why do we need an instruction realigner?

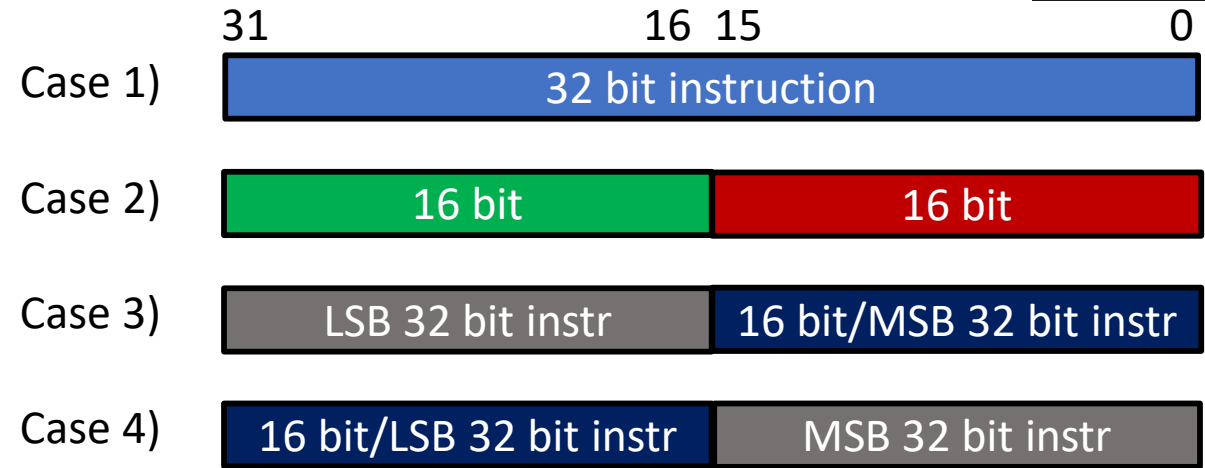
CVA6 supports Compressed Instructions and data interface from ICACHE is 32 bits.

- Compressed Instructions ~70% of total instruction.
- On 32bit fetch width equals to ~1.5 instr per fetch.



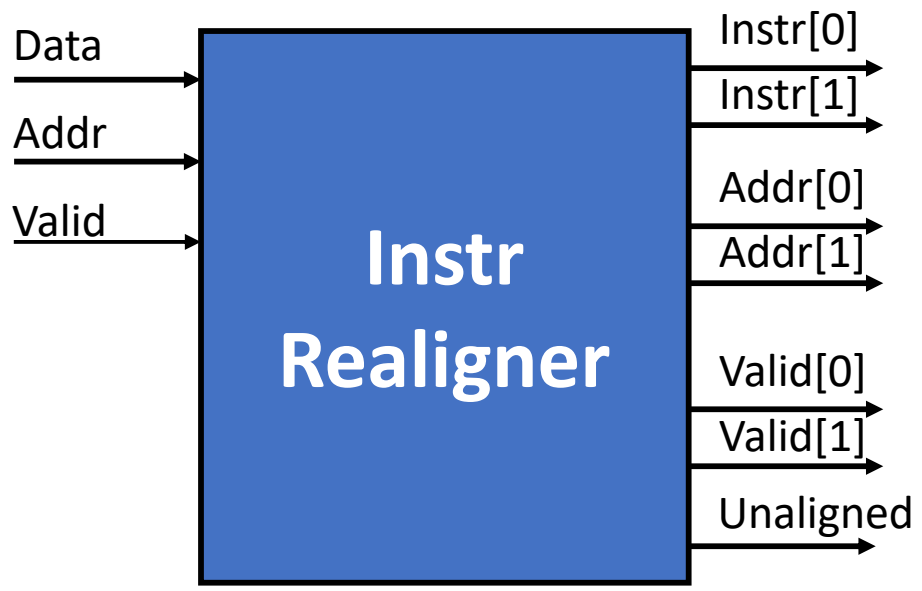
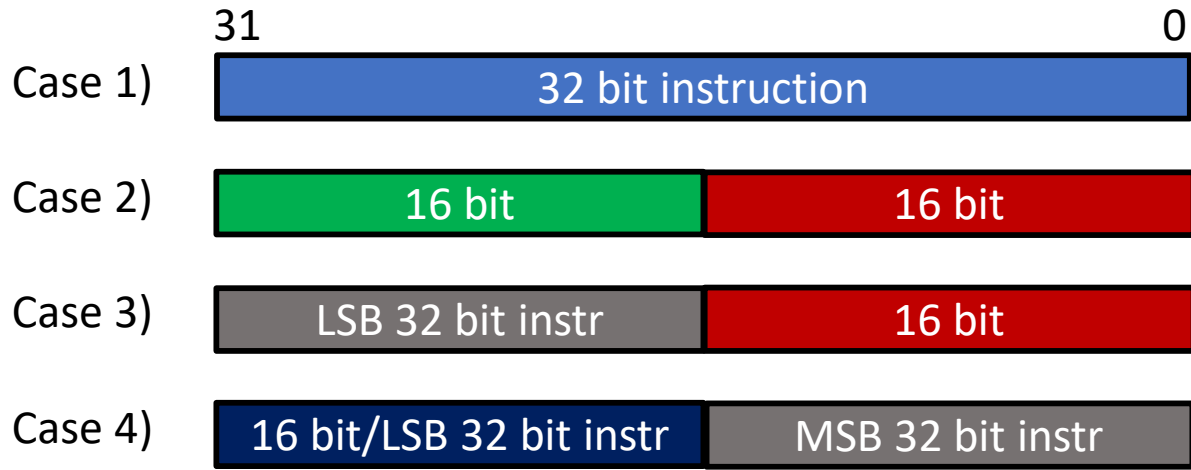
Non Compressed instruction have the first 2 bits = 1 → Check bits [1:0] and [17:16]

- Data will contain on of the following cases:

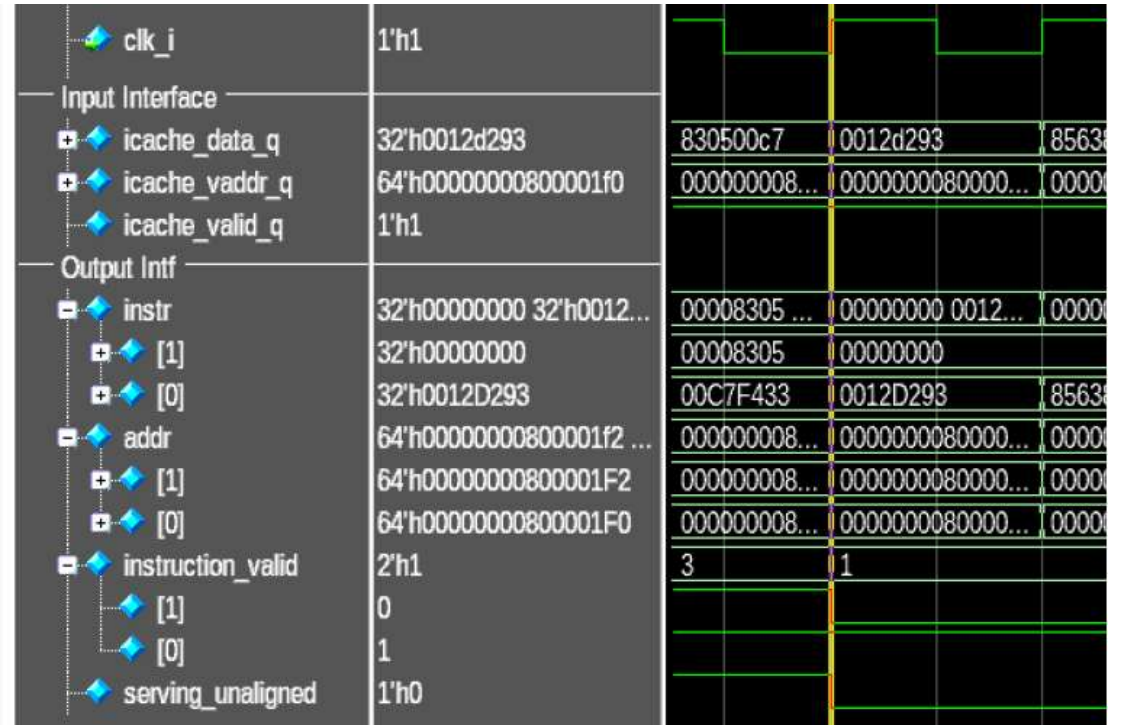


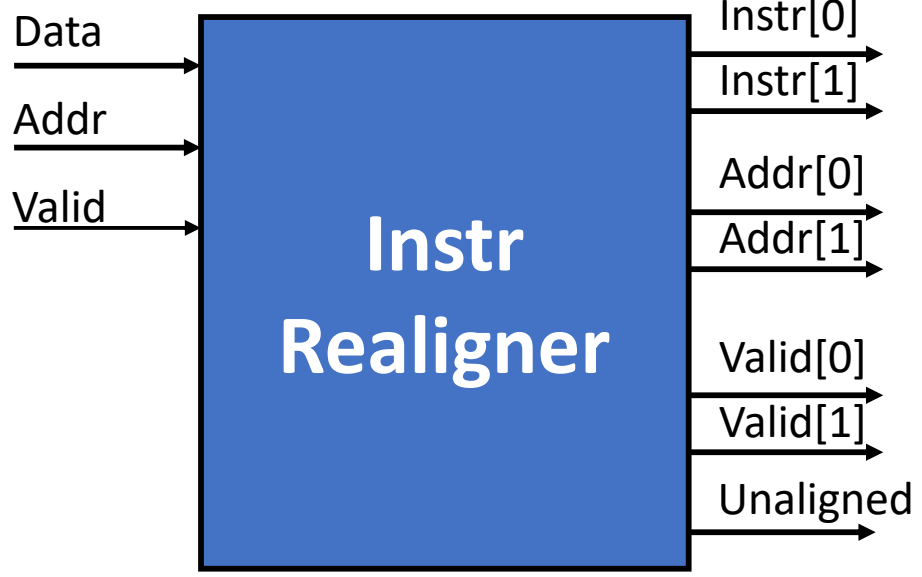
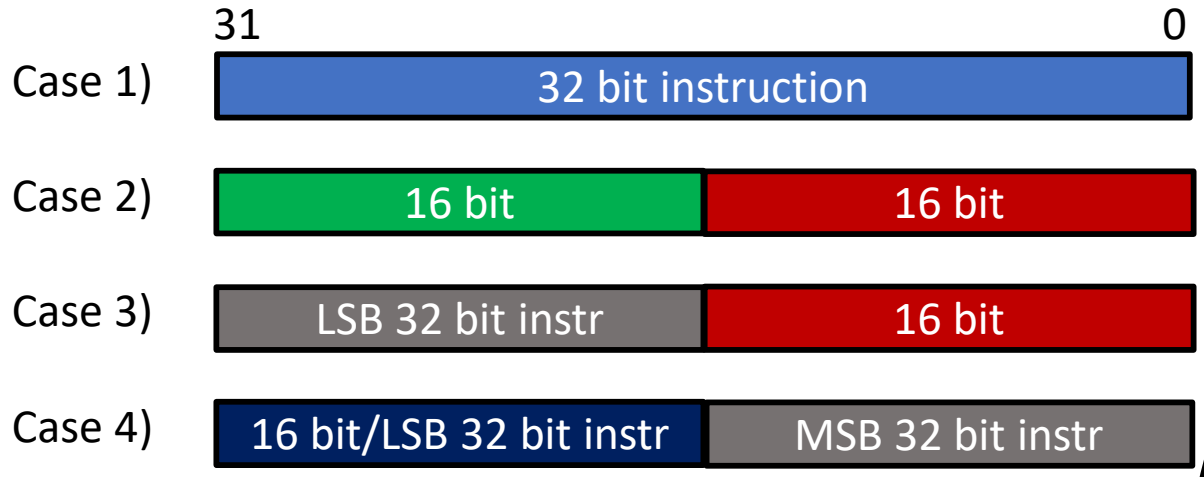
No Alignment Necessary

- Addr corresponds to the fetch address of the presented data.
- Valid tells if the data that is presented at the interface is usable.

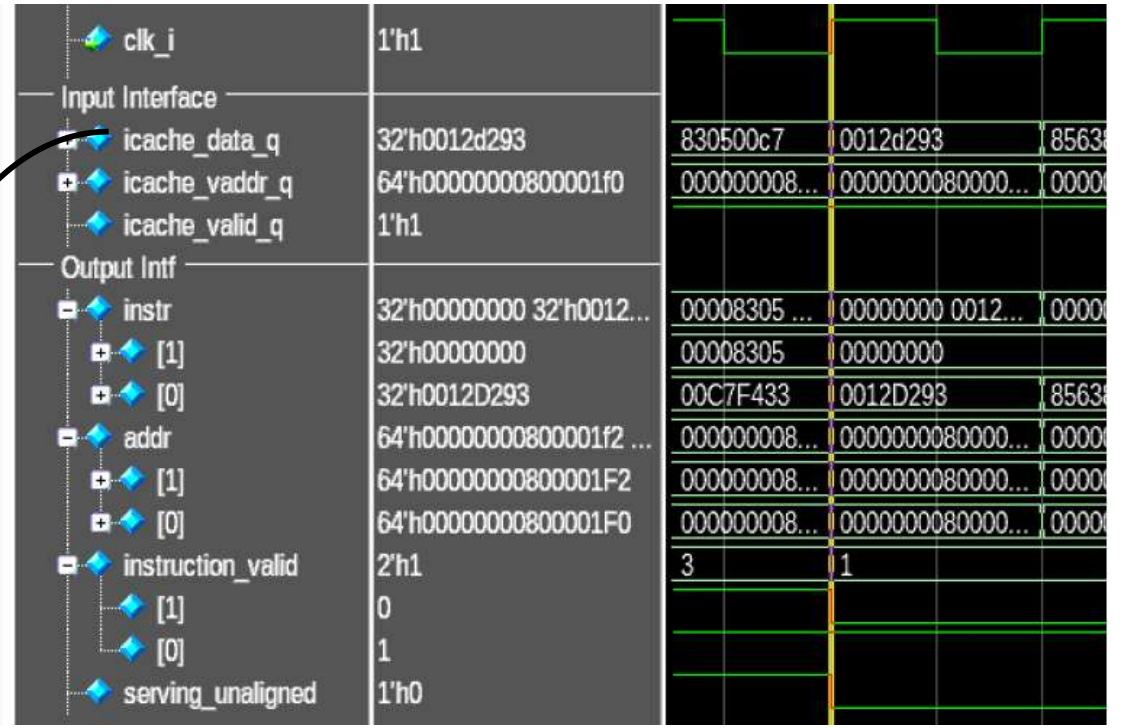


Case 1)

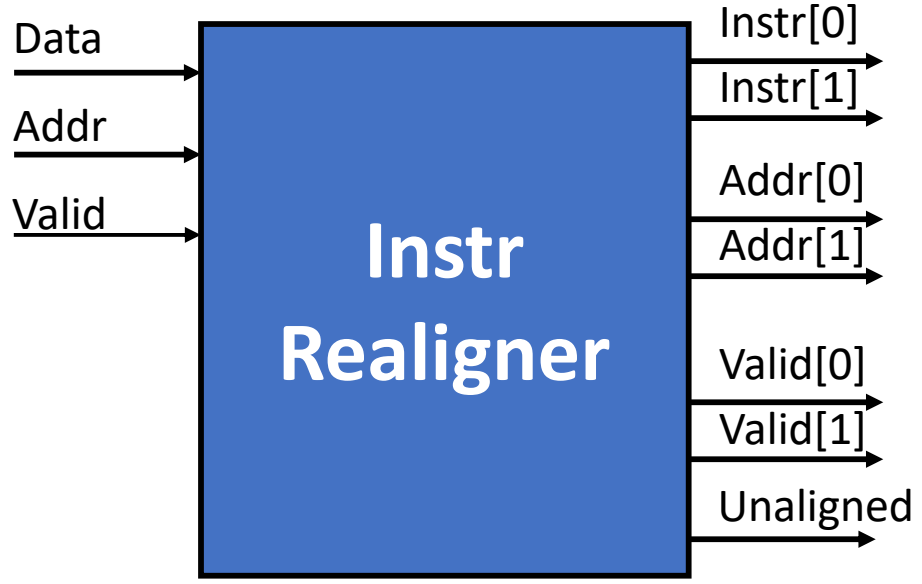
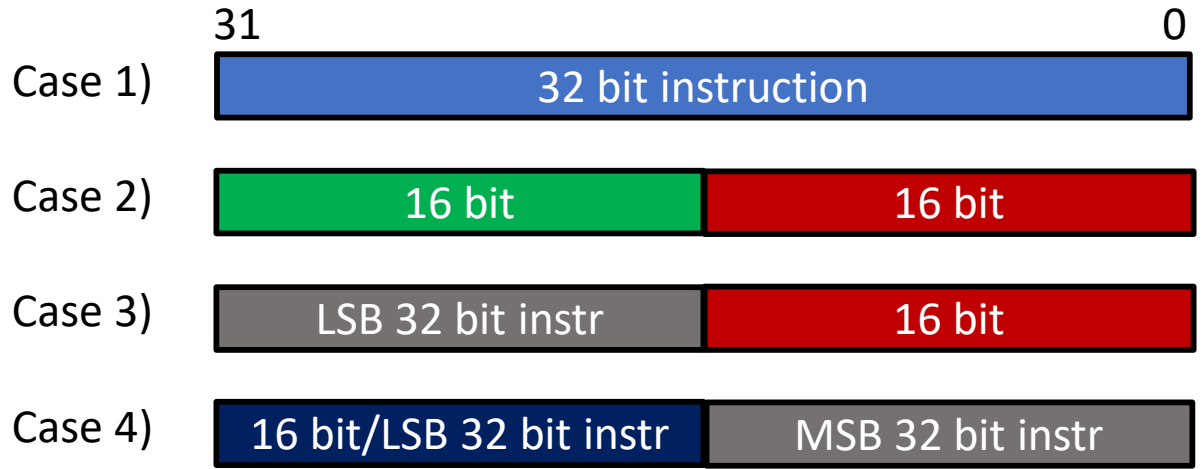




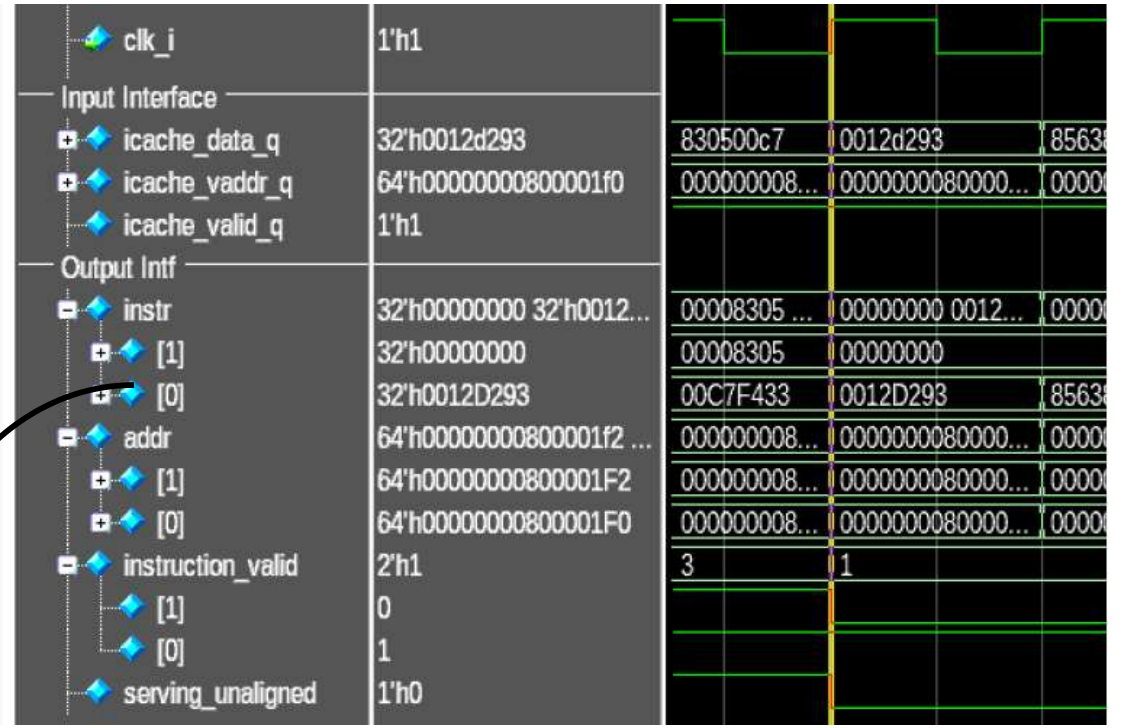
Case 1)



0x0012 d293 → Data[1:0] = 11
Non Compressed Instructions

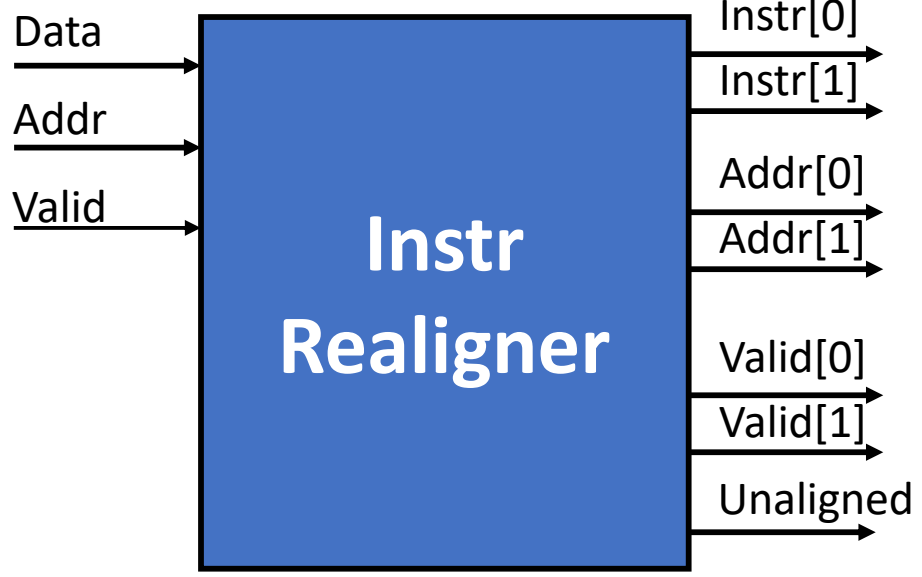
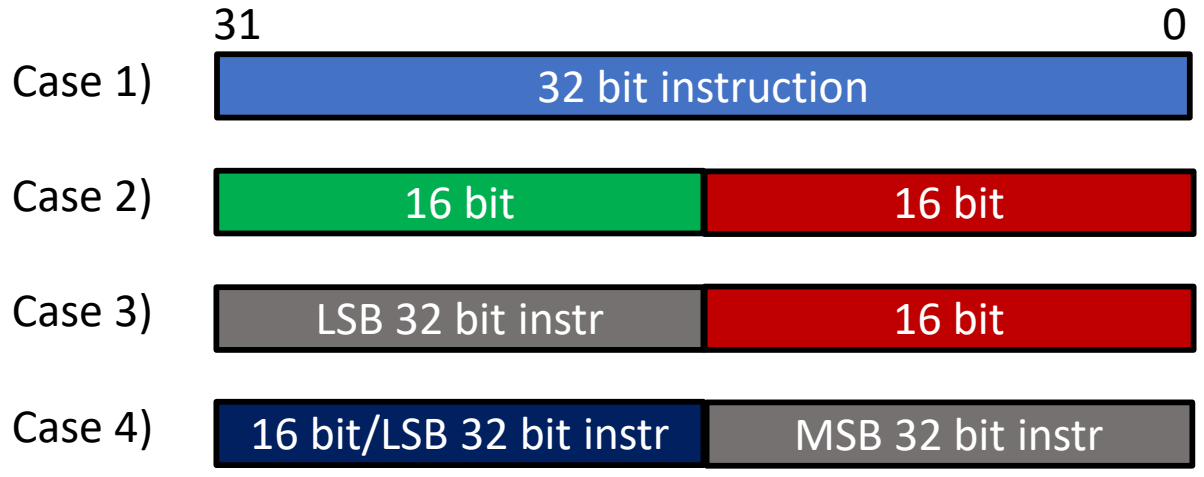


Case 1)

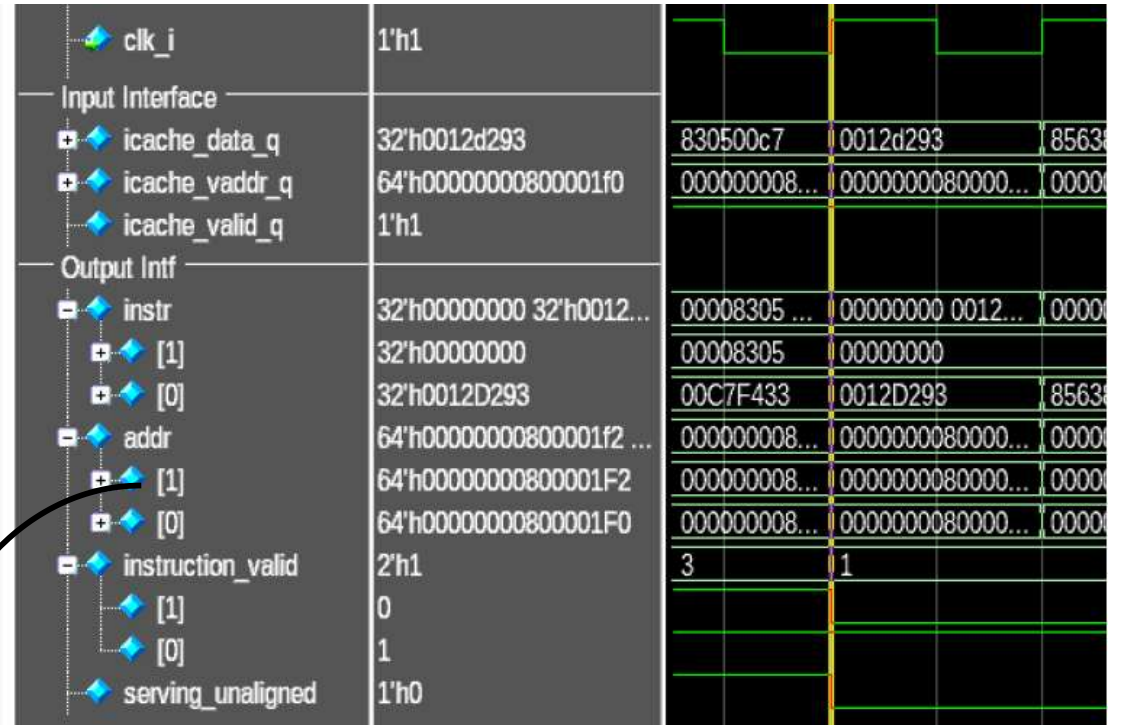


0x0012 d293 → Data[1:0] = Data[17:16] = 11
Non Compressed Instructions

All data is put into Instr[0]



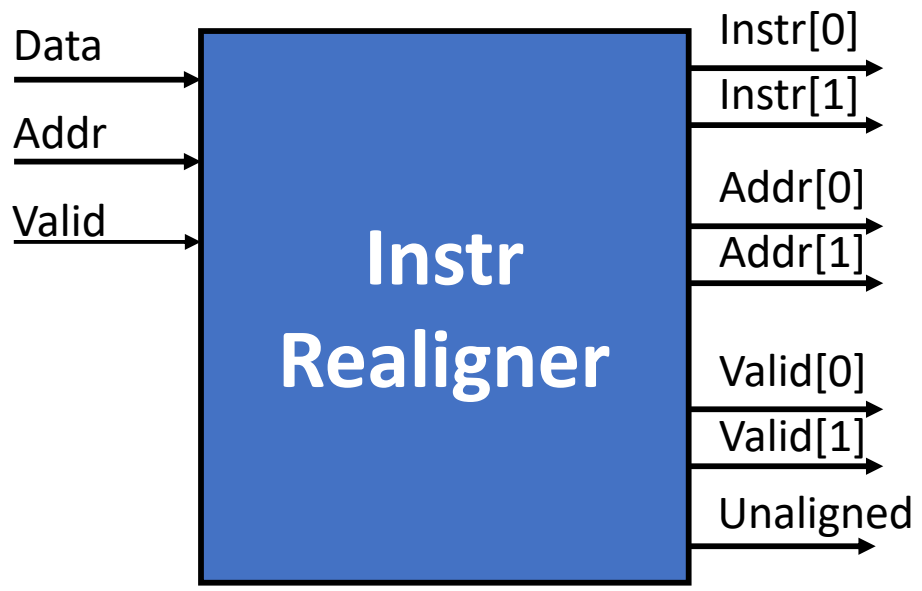
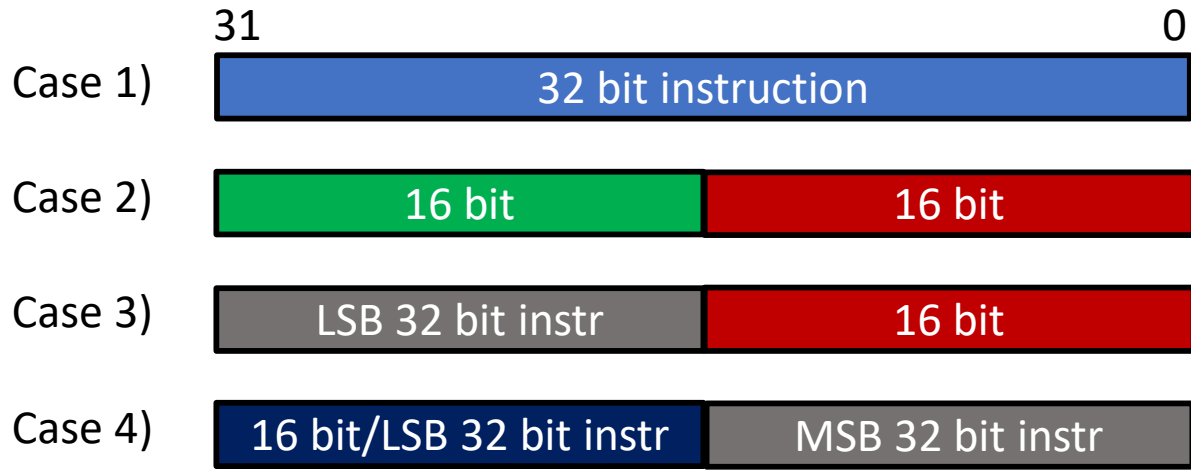
Case 1)



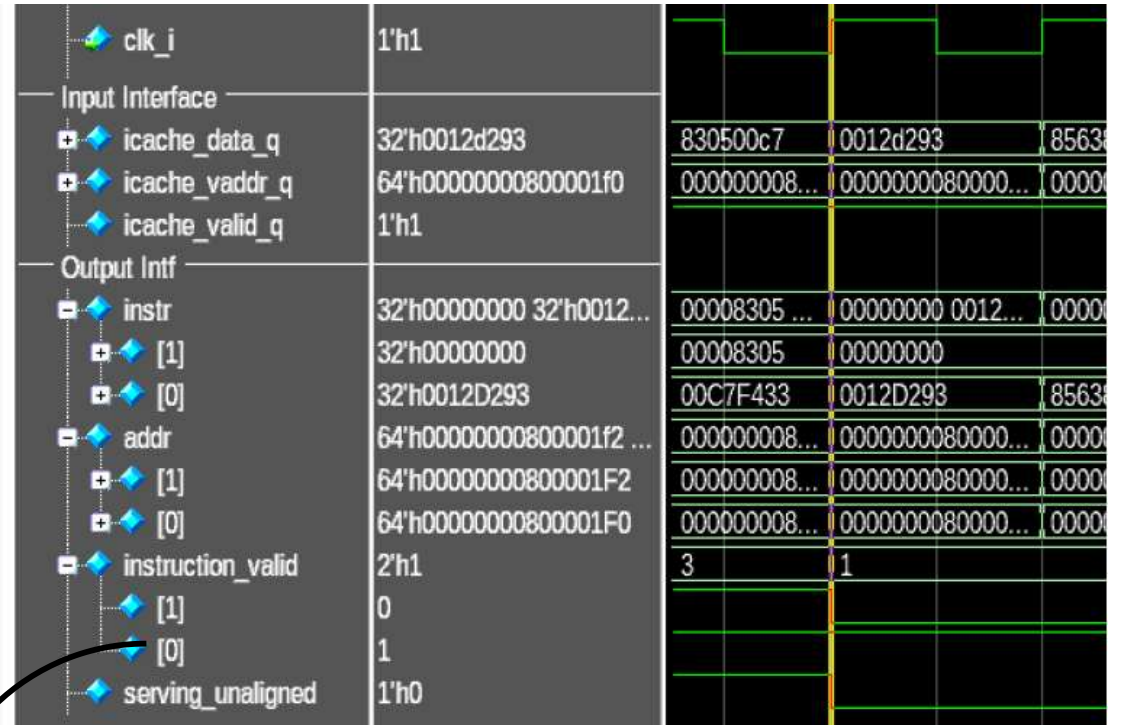
0x0012 d293 → Data[1:0] = Data[17:16] = 11
Non Compressed Instructions

All data is put into Instr[0]

We have both Addr[0] and [1] with valid addresses



Case 1)



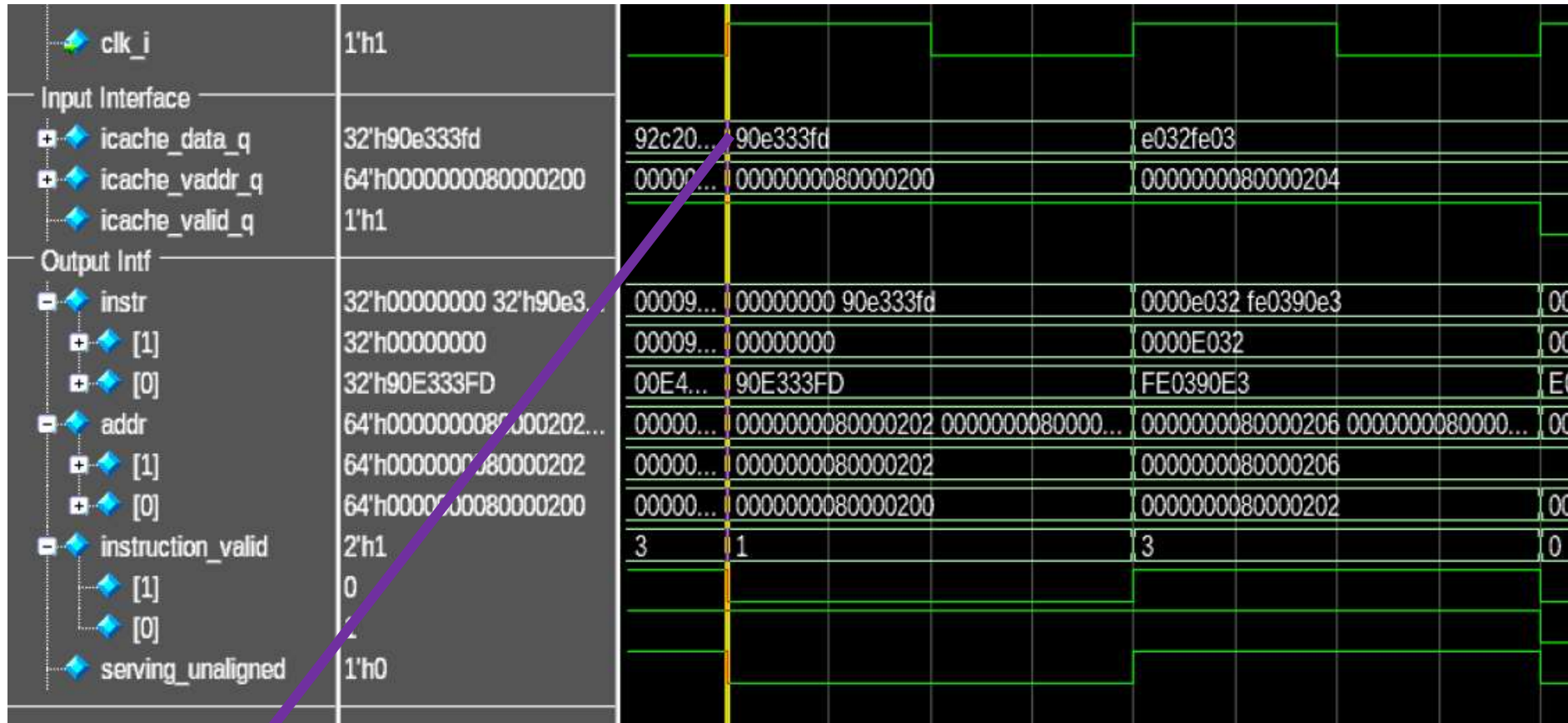
0x0012 d293 → Data[1:0] = Data[17:16] = 11
Non Compressed Instructions

All data is put into Instr[0]

We have both Addr[0] and [1] with valid addresses

But only valid[0] = 1 → Subsequent block in the Frontend will consider only instr[0]

Case 3)

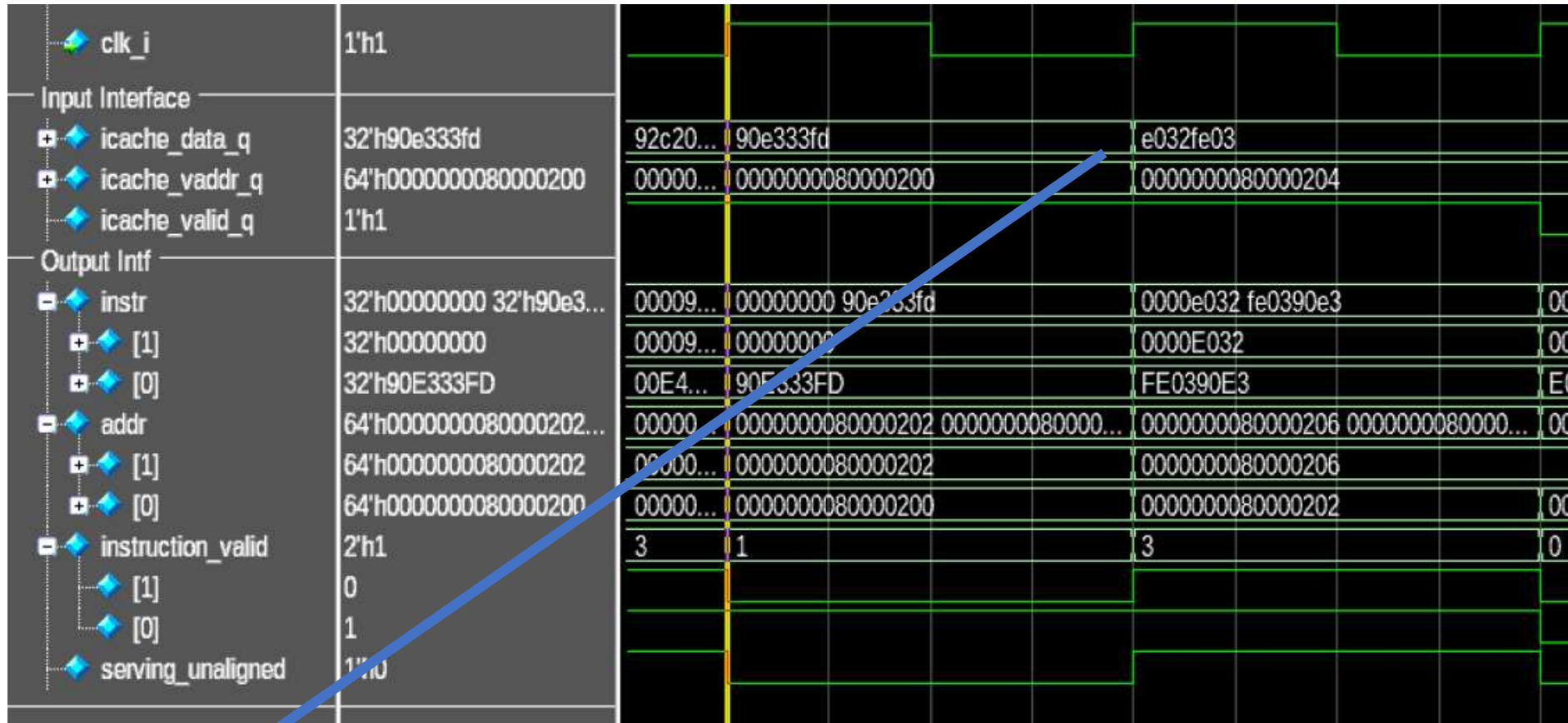


0x90E3 33FD → 0xD = 1101 (Compressed)
0x3 = 0011 (Not Compressed)



Store the Upper 16 bits into an inside register and serve the Non-Compressed instruction the next Cycle

Case 3)



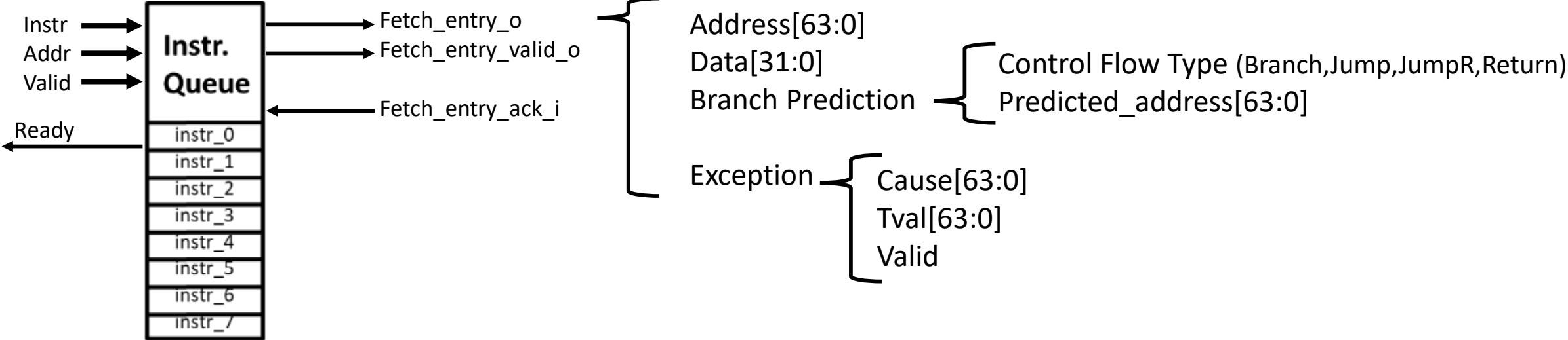
0xE032 FE03 → Upper 16bits Compressed!



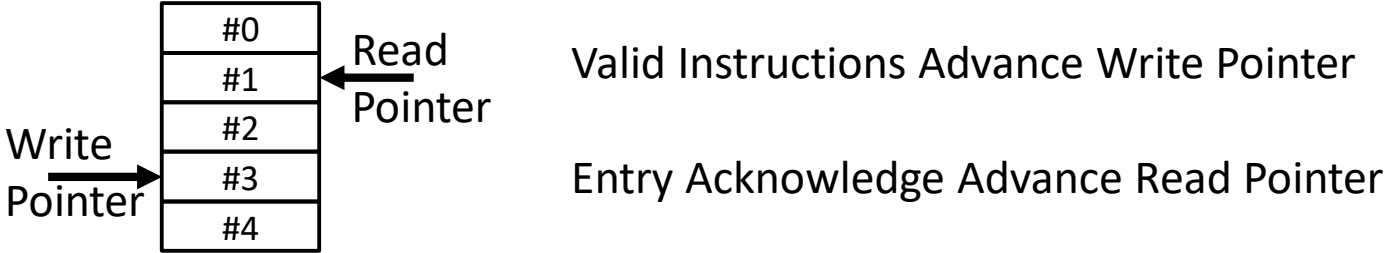
We can serve a compressed and the 32bit unaligned instruction in the same Cycle

Pushing into Instruction Queue

- Valid Instructions can be Pushed into the instruction Queue

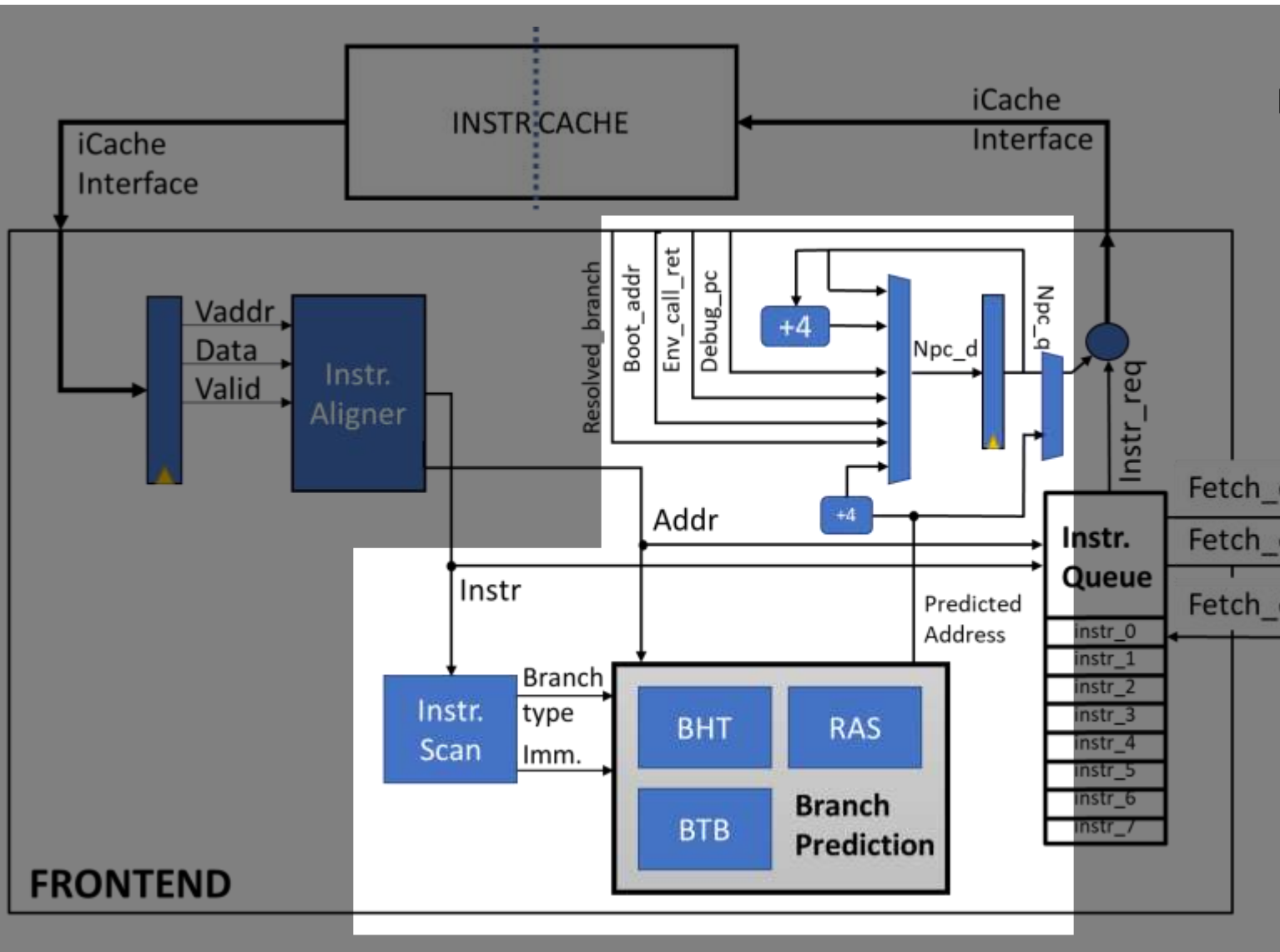


- Form of circular Buffer: pointer for write and read.



- If the Queue becomes full → ready = 0 stops request to cache

Next Program Counter Logic



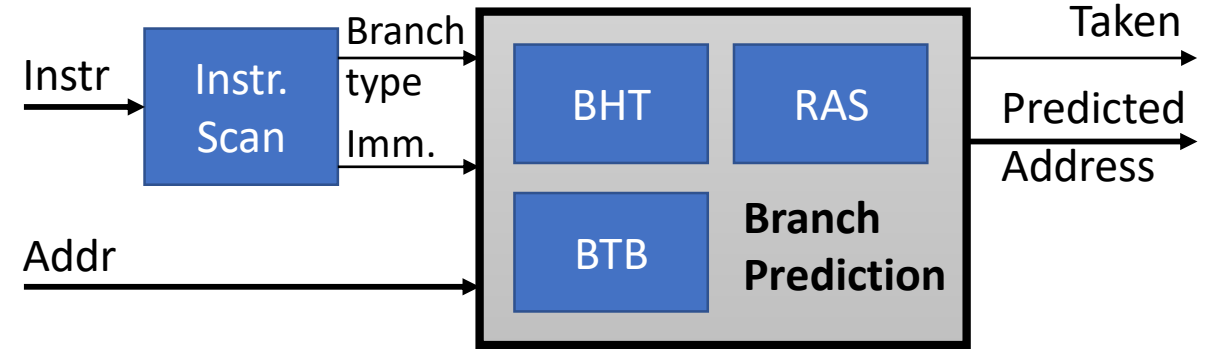
Frontend is divided in 3 main blocks:

- Current Instruction;
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 - Exceptions;
 - Debugging;
 - Branch;
 - Recovery from bad Prediction;
 - Sequential Fetching.

Branch Prediction

CVA6 implements Dynamic Branch Prediction:

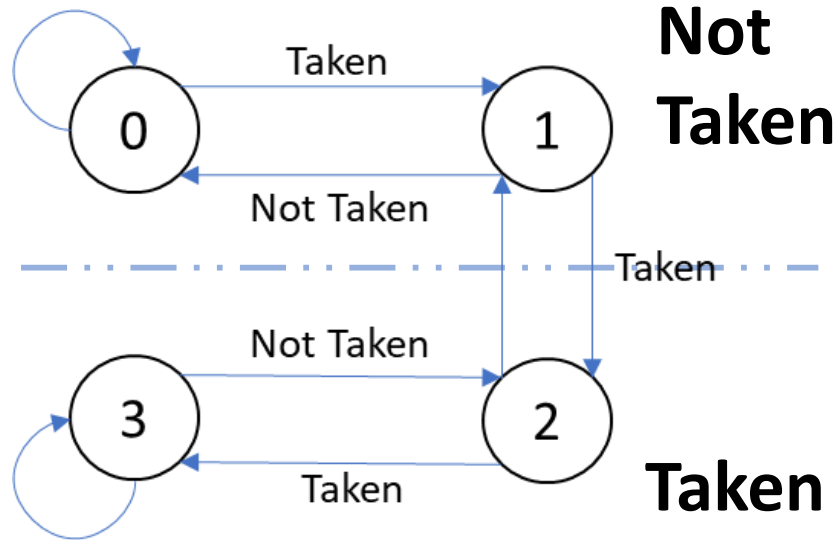
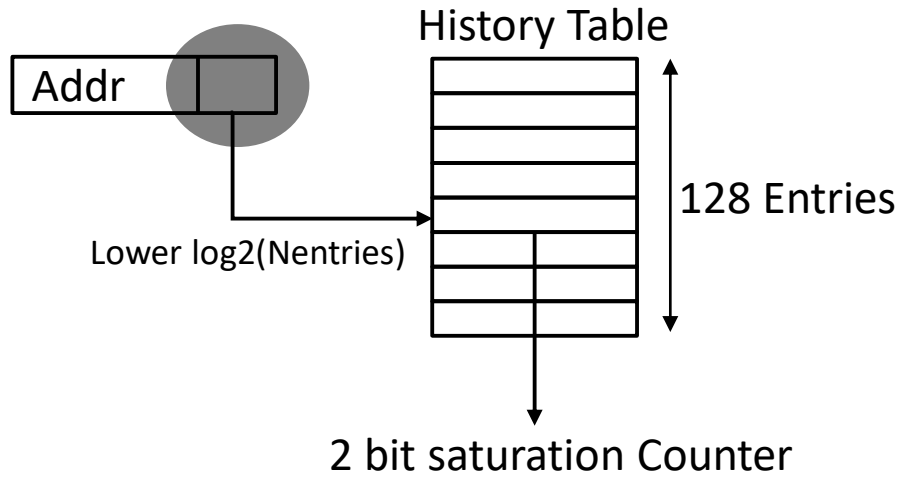
- Branch History Table (BHT): Used for predicting Branches (BEQ, BNE, etc).
- Branch Target Buffer (BTB): Used for predicting JALR.
- Return Address Stack (RAS): Used for predicting returns from function calls.



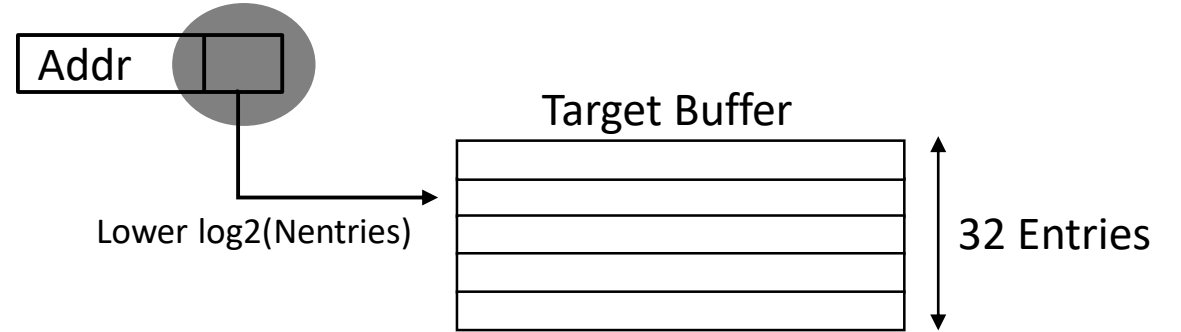
Instruction Scan Pre-decodes the instructions to control branch prediction:

- Extract Type of branch → Select Predictor.
- Extract Immediate → Calculation of predicted Address.

BHT: Bimodal



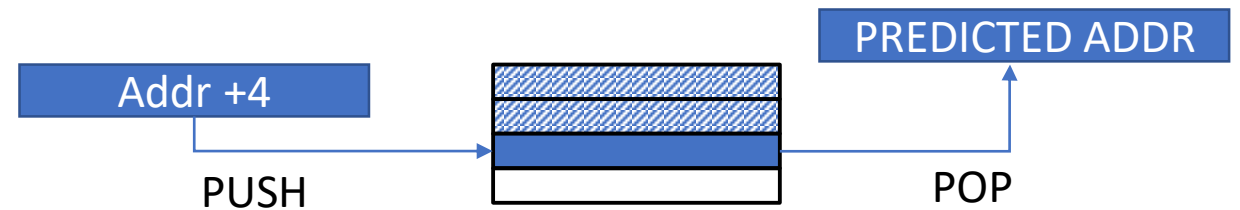
BTB



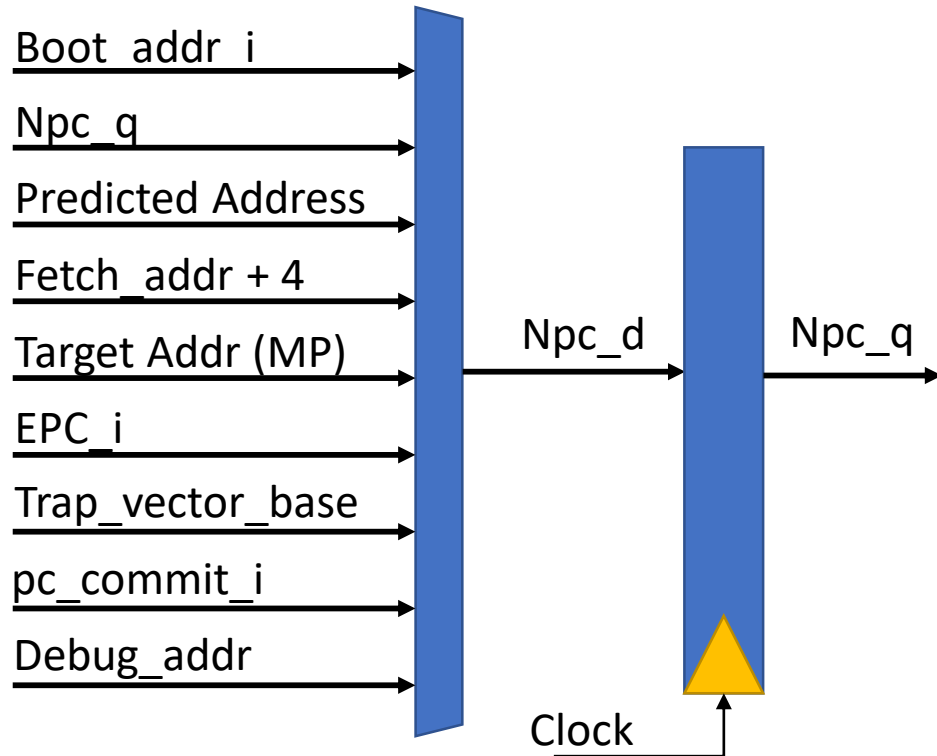
Each Buffer contains the last Address Known of the predicted JALR (that isn't a return).

RAS

On Function Calls: PUSH → Save Return Address on the stack
On Function Return: POP → Use the popped Address as Predicted Address



Next Program Counter

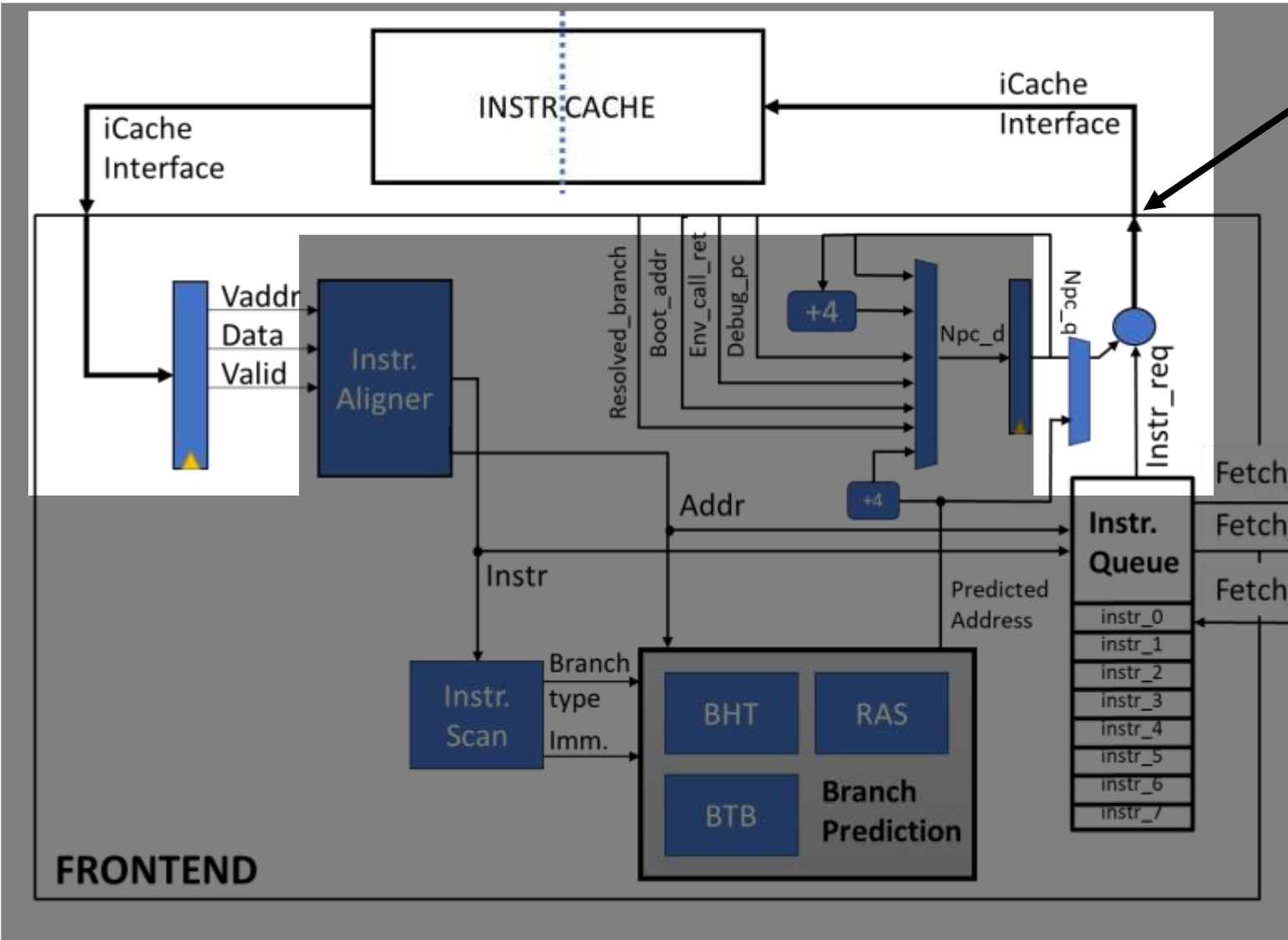


- NPC_Q → Next Program Counter at t0
- NPC_D → Next Program Counter at t1
- NPC_Q is used to decide the address of the next instruction to fetch.

SystemVerilog Code Snippet

```
always_comb begin : npc_select
    automatic logic [riscv::VLEN-1:0] fetch_address;
    // check whether we come out of reset
    // this is a workaround, some tools have issues
    // having boot_addr_i in the asynchronous
    // reset assignment to npc_q, even though
    // boot_addr_i will be assigned a constant
    // on the top-level.
    if (npc_rst_load_q) begin
        npc_d = boot_addr_i;
        fetch_address = boot_addr_i;
    end else begin
        fetch_address = npc_q;
        // keep stable by default
        npc_d = npc_q;
    end
end
// 8. Branch Prediction
if (bp_valid) begin
    fetch_address = predict_address;
    npc_d = predict_address;
end
// 1. Default assignment
if (if_ready) npc_d = {fetch_address[riscv::VLEN-1:2], 2'b0} + 'h4;
// 2. Replay instruction fetch
if (replay) npc_d = replay_addr;
// 3. Control flow change request
if (is_mispredict) npc_d = resolved_branch_i.target_address;
// 4. Return from environment call
if (eret_i) npc_d = epc_i;
// 5. Exception/Interrupt
if (ex_valid_i) npc_d = trap_vector_base_i;
// 6. Pipeline Flush because of CSR side effects
// On a pipeline flush start fetching from the next address
// of the instruction in the commit stage
// we came here from a flush request of a CSR instruction or AMO,
// as CSR or AMO instructions do not exist in a compressed form
// we can unconditionally do PC + 4 here
// TODO(zarubaf) This adder can at least be merged with the one in the csr_regfile stage
if (set_pc_commit_i) npc_d = pc_commit_i + {{riscv::VLEN-3{1'b0}}, 3'b100};
// 7. Debug
// enter debug on a hard-coded base-address
if (set_debug_pc_i) npc_d = ArianeCfg.DmBaseAddress[riscv::VLEN-1:0] + dm::HaltAddress[riscv::VLEN-1:0];
icache_dreq_o.vaddr = fetch_address;
end
```


Cache Interfaces



NPC_Q will Be used for the Fetch Address of the next Instruction

Caches Interfaces Frontend – ICACHE

- Icache_dreq_o

Req: Signal Request to ICACHE.

Kill_S1: Kills Request on 1° stage.

Kill_S2: Kills Request on 2° Stage.

Vaddr: Address of Request.

- Icache_dreq_i

Ready: Cache Ready to accept requests.

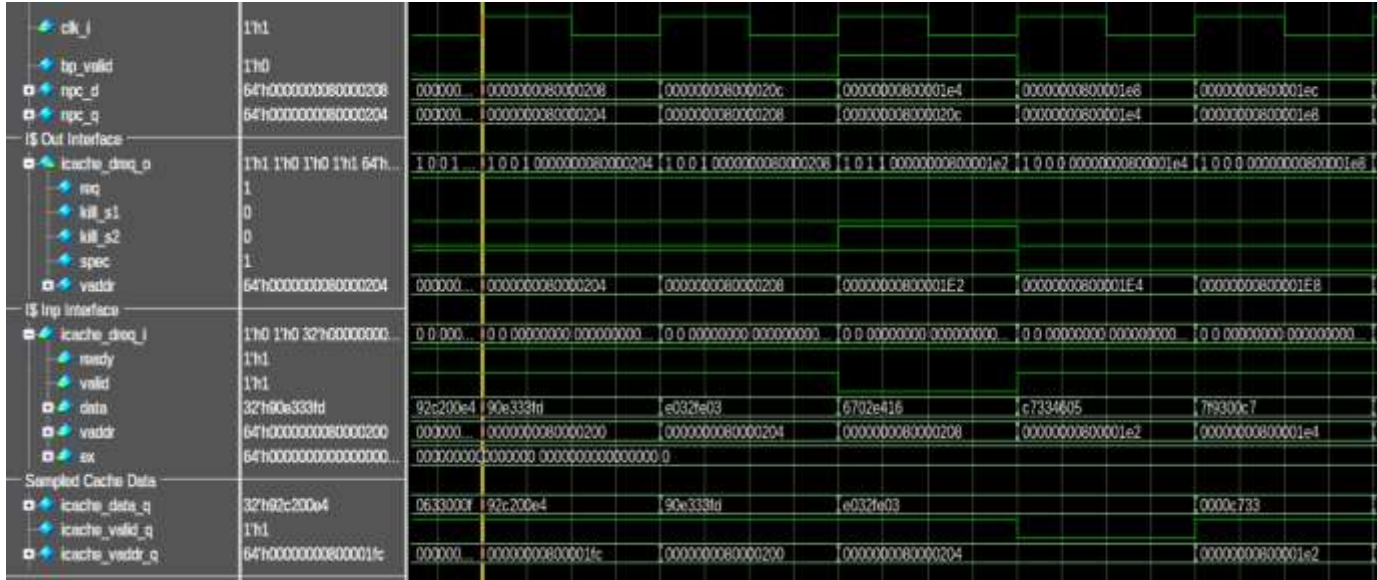
Valid: Data in the interface is Valid.

Data: Data read from ICACHE.

Vaddr: Address of the Data.

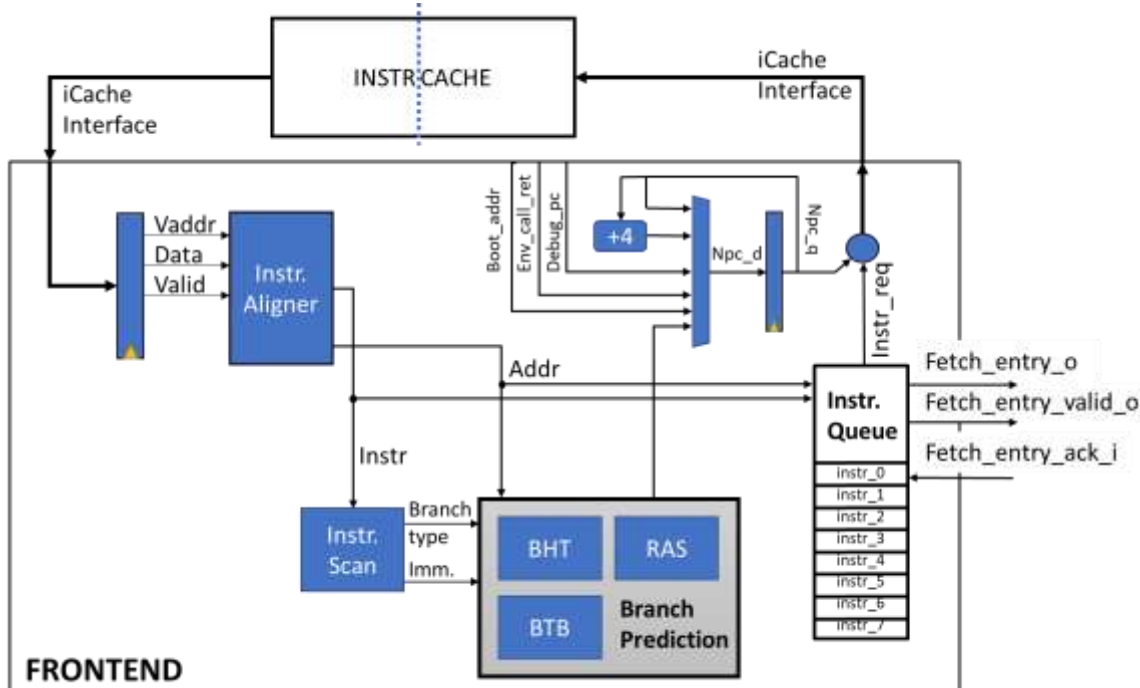
Ex: Exceptions from the request.

Cache Requests Examples

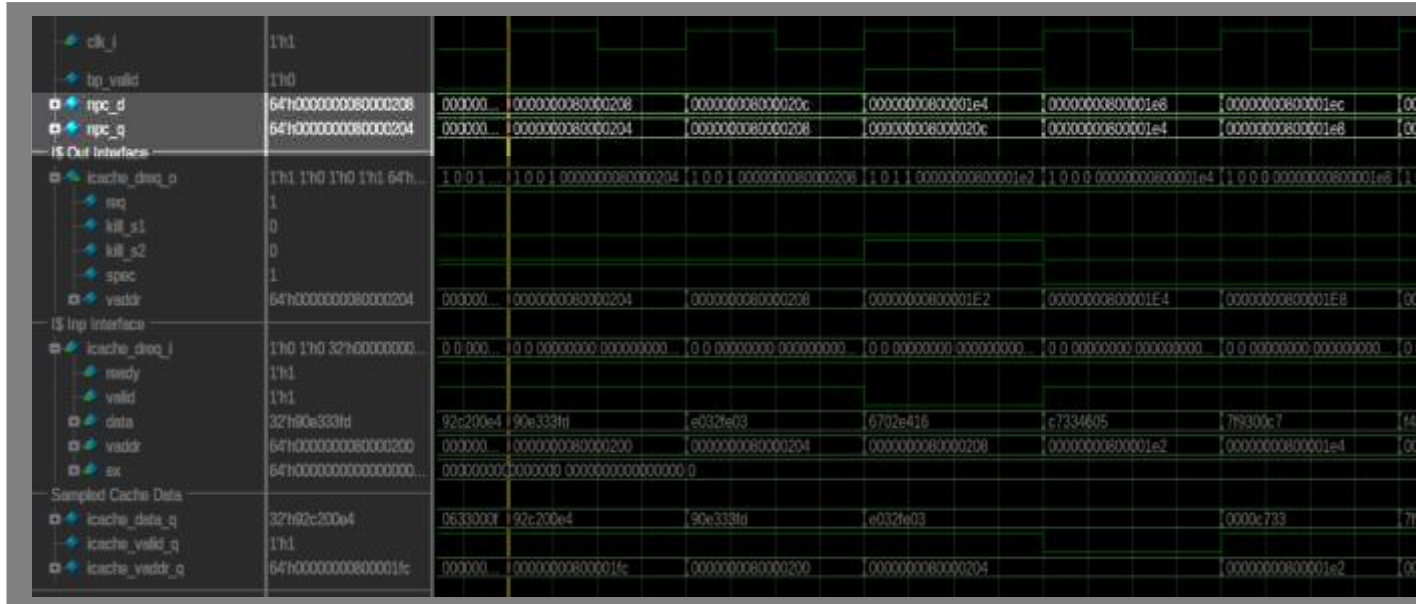


Signal Involved:

- NPC_Q & NPC_D;
- ICACHE_DREQ_O: Request Interface
- ICACHE_DREQ_I: Response Interface
- Sampled Data from ICACHE:
 - Icache_data_q
 - Icache_valid_q
 - Icache_vaddr_q

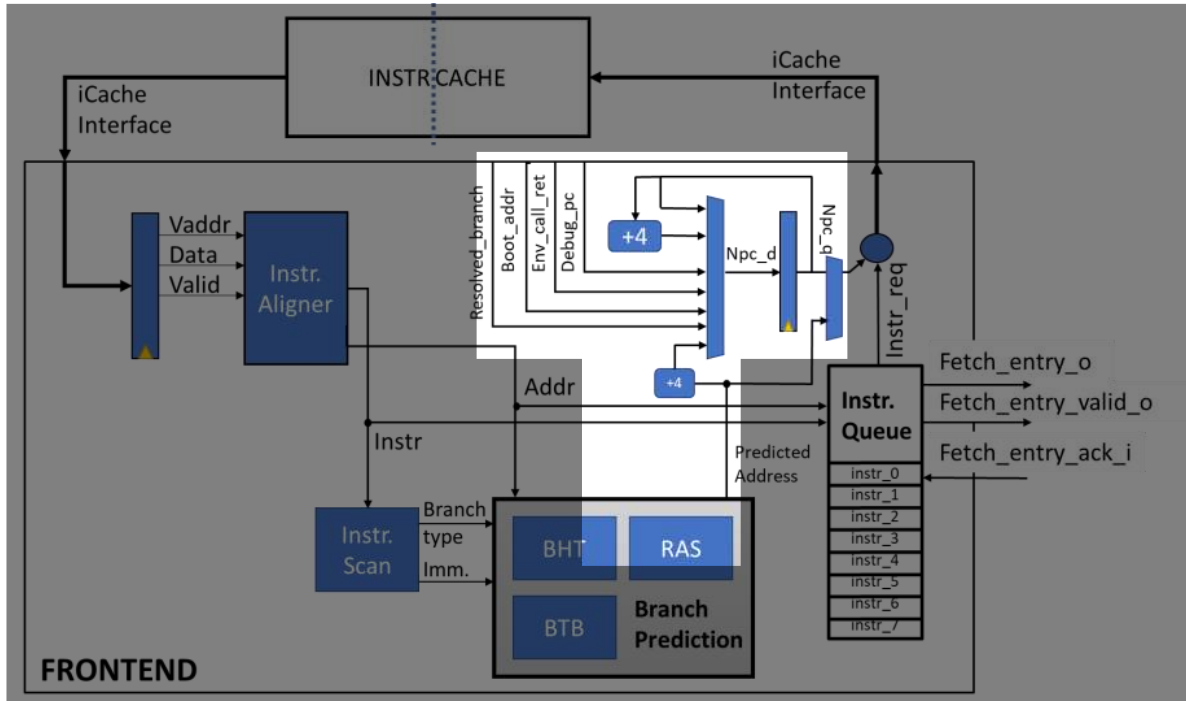


Cache Requests Examples

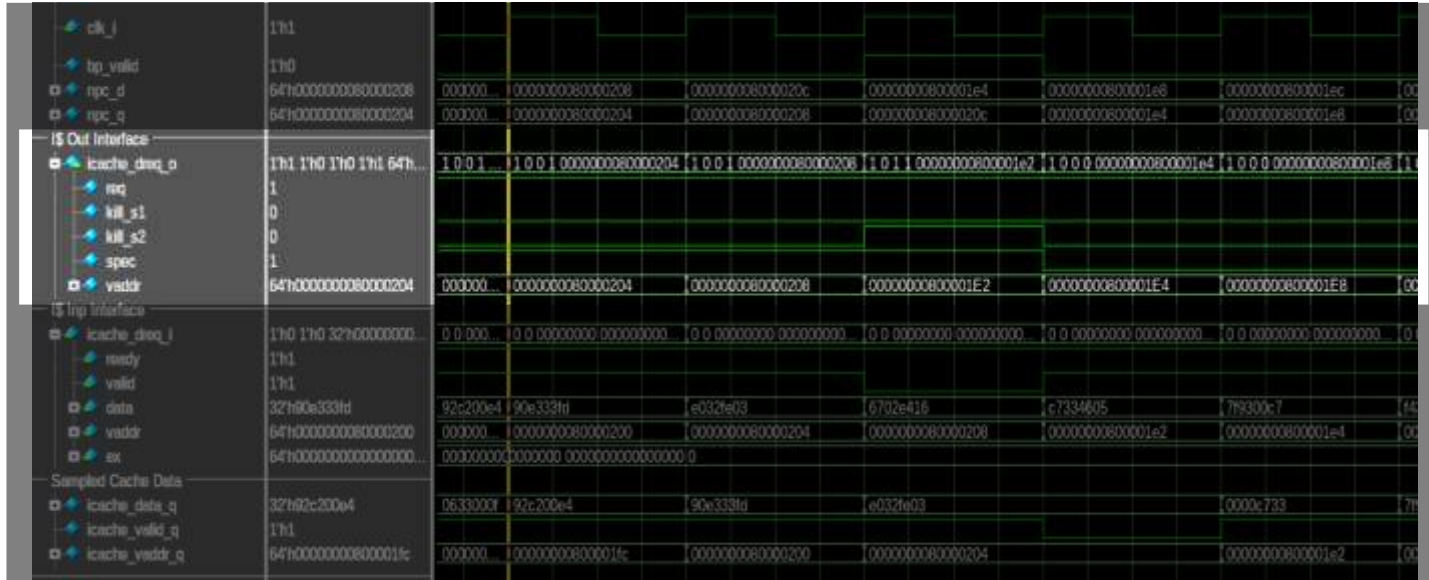


Signal Involved:

- NPC_Q & NPC_D;
- ICACHE_DREQ_O: Request Interface
- ICACHE_DREQ_I: Response Interface
- Sampled Data from ICACHE:
 - lcache_data_q
 - lcache_valid_q
 - lcache_vaddr_q

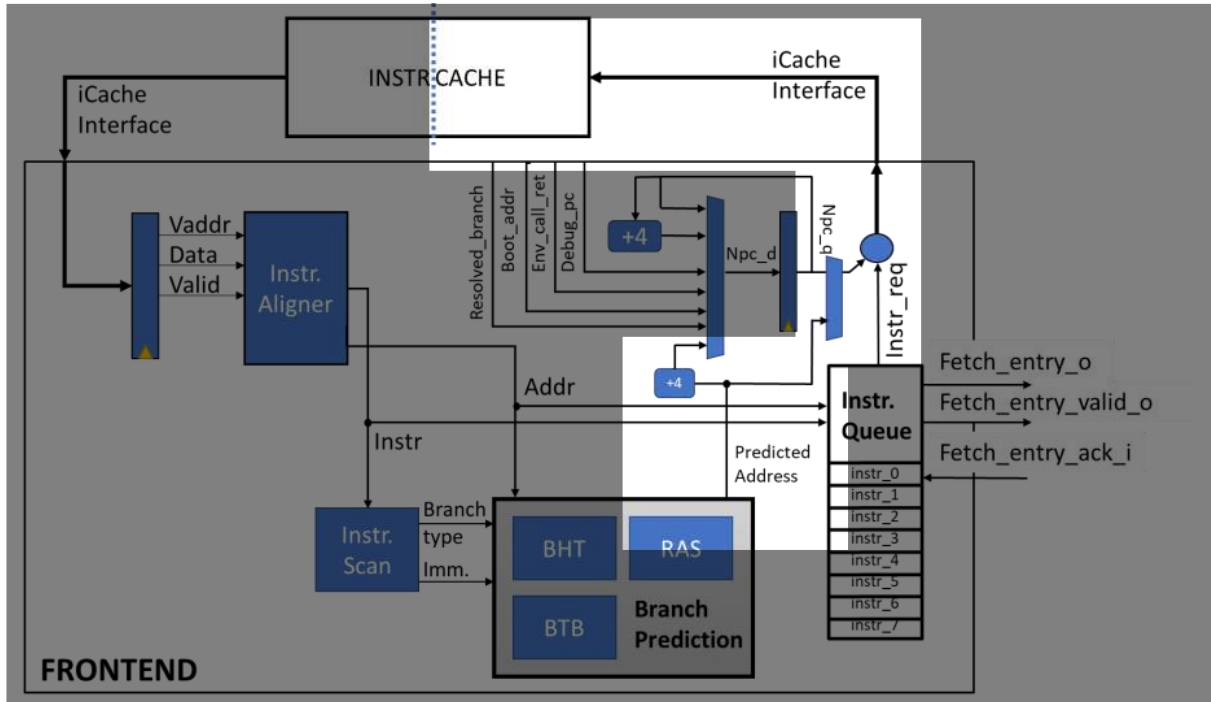


Cache Requests Examples

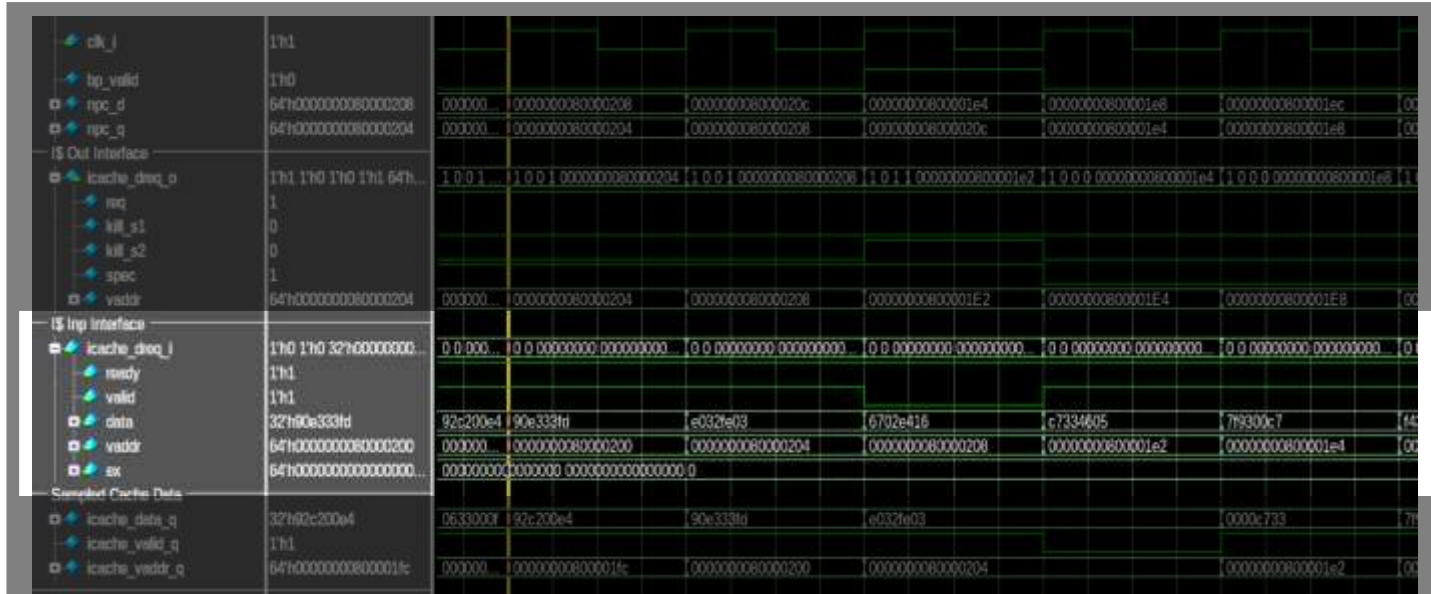


Signal Involved:

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- ICACHE_DREQ_I: Response Interface
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 - Icache_valid_q
 - Icache_vaddr_q

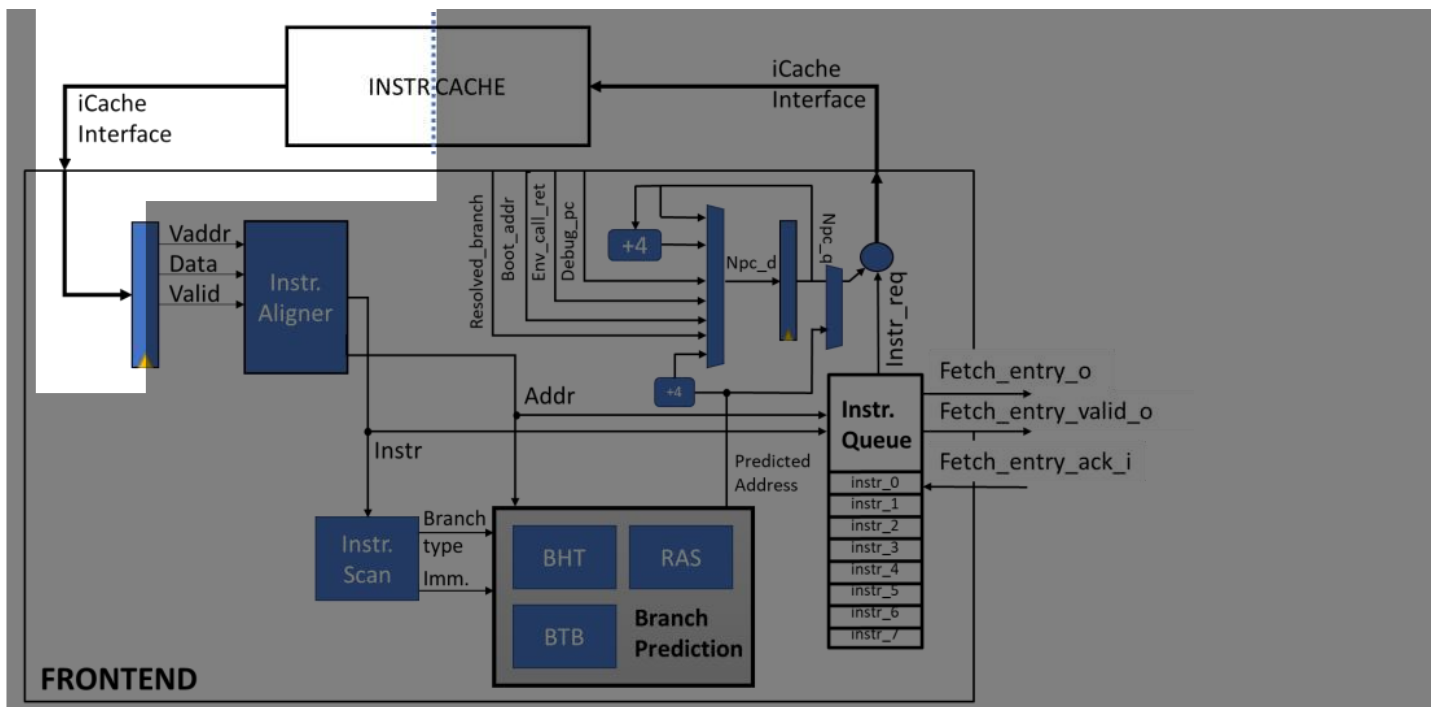


Cache Requests Examples

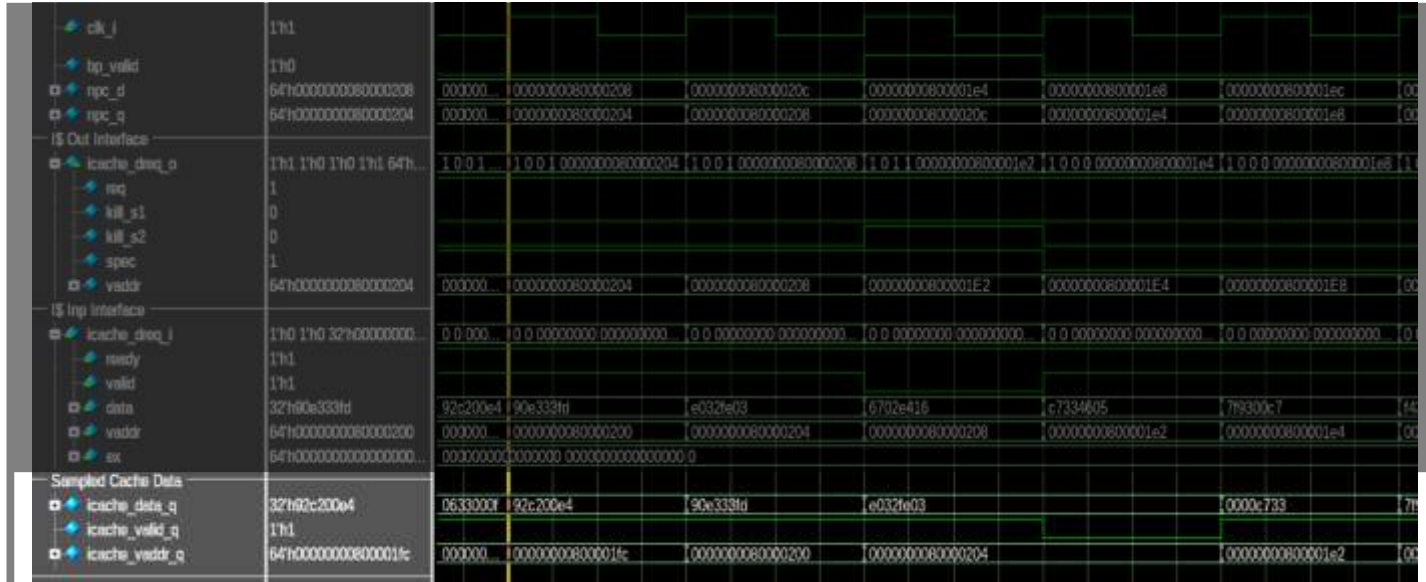


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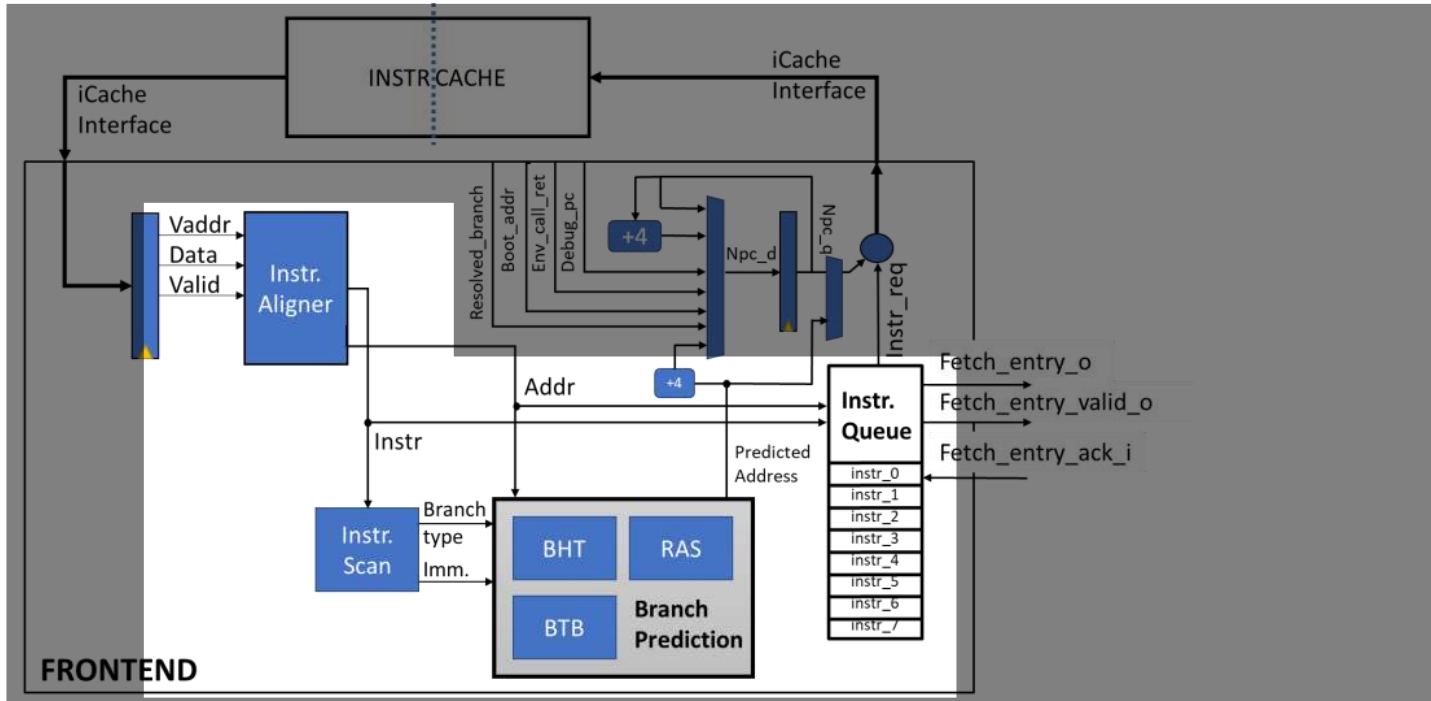


Cache Requests Examples

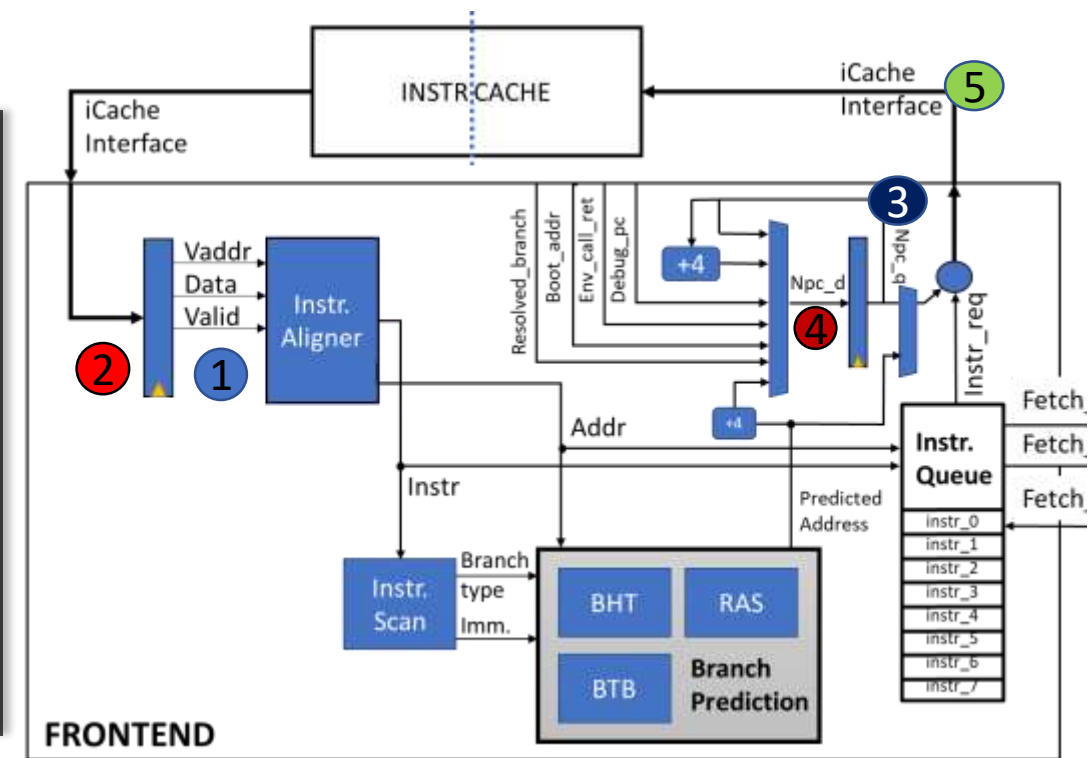
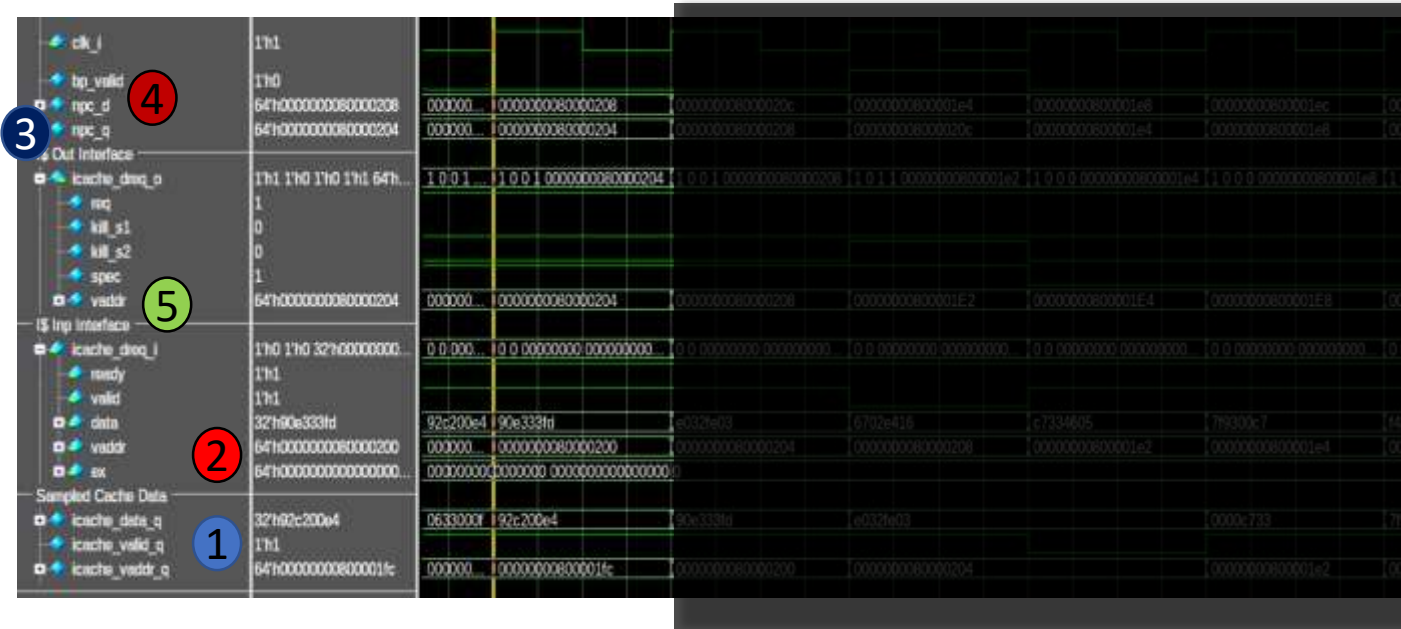


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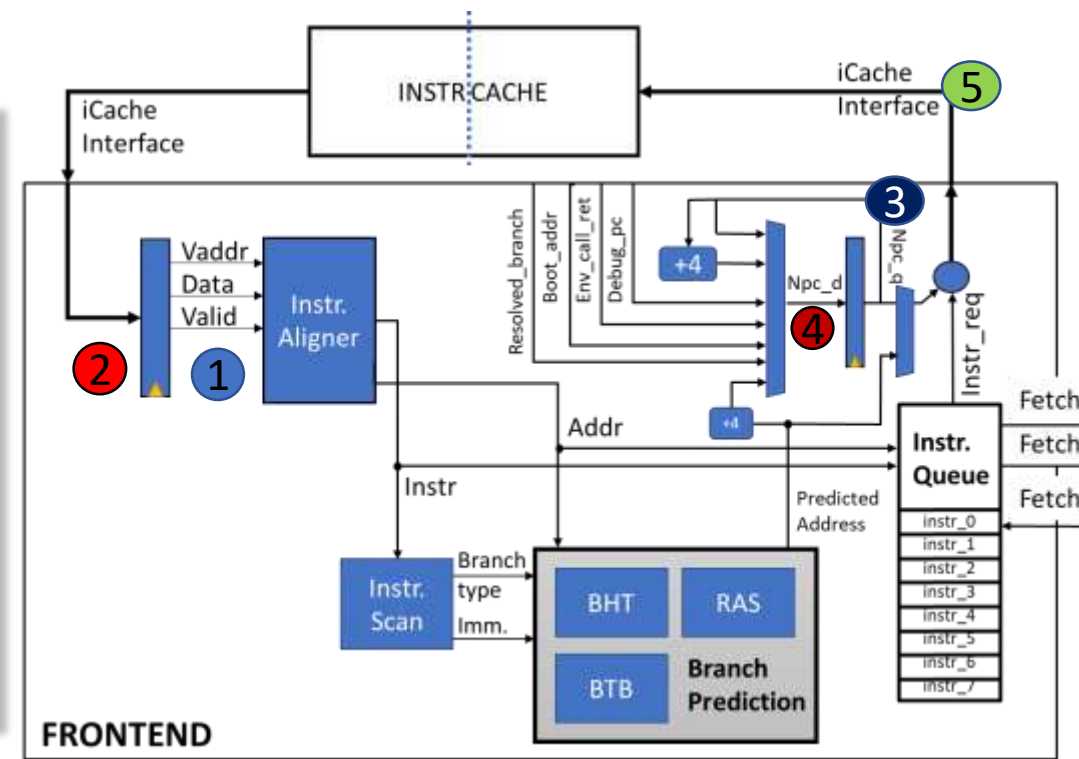
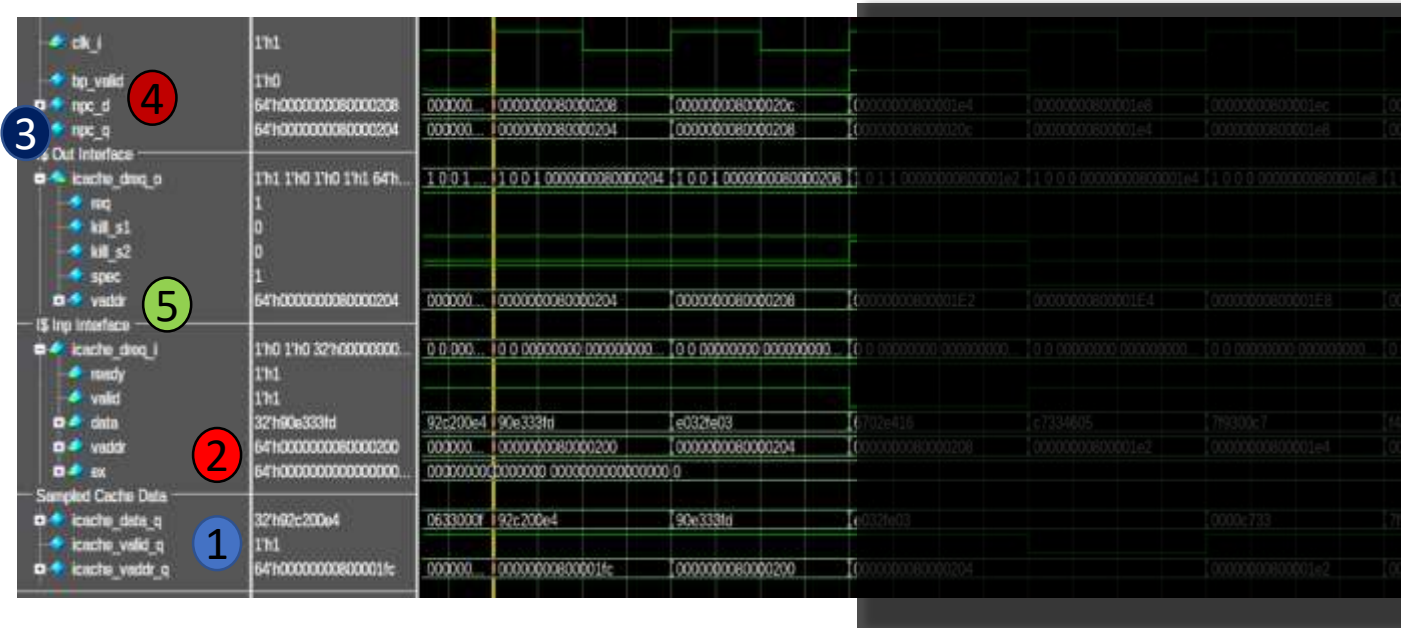


Cache Requests Examples



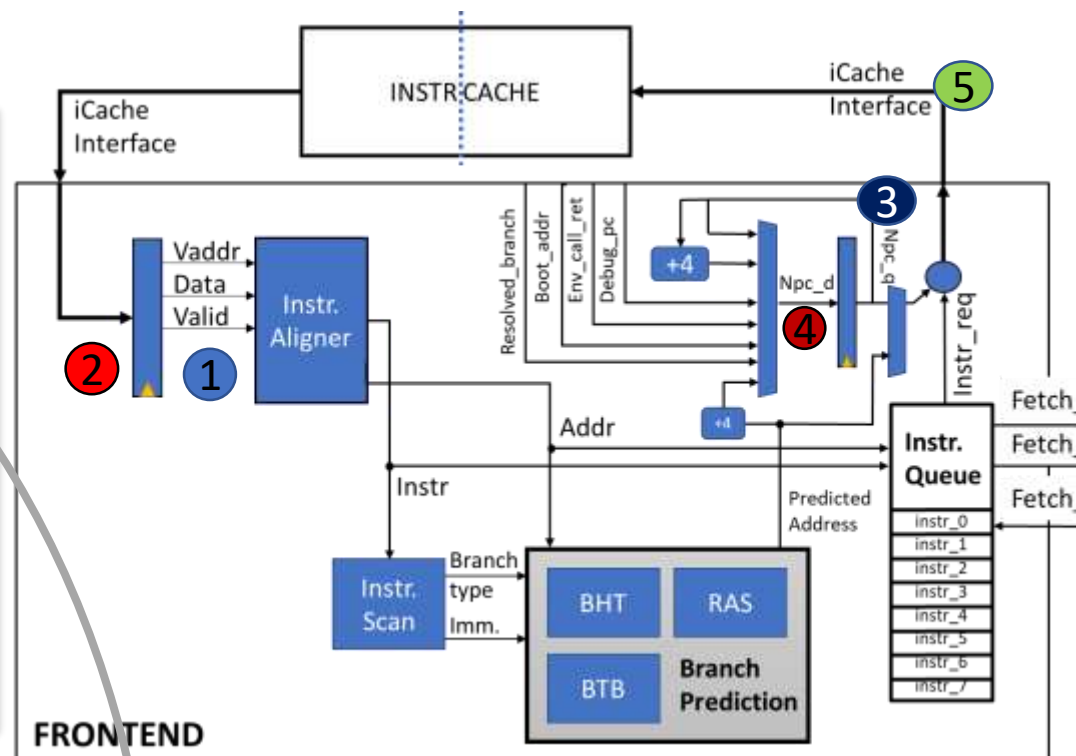
	SIGNAL	T0	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	ICACHE_VADDR_Q	0x01FC	0x0200	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2
2	DREQ_I.VADDR	0x0200	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2	0x01E4
3	NPC_Q	0x0204	0x0208	0x020C	0x01E4	0x01E8
4	NPC_D	0x0208	0x020C	0x01E4	0x01E8	0x01EC
5	DREQ_O.VADDR	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2	0x01E4	0x01E8

Cache Requests Examples



	SIGNAL	T0	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	ICACHE_VADDR_Q	0x01FC	0x0200	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2
2	DREQ_I.VADDR	0x0200	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2	0x01E4
3	NPC_Q	0x0204	0x0208	0x020C	0x01E4	0x01E8
4	NPC_D	0x0208	0x020C	0x01E4	0x01E8	0x01EC
5	DREQ_O.VADDR	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2	0x01E4	0x01E8

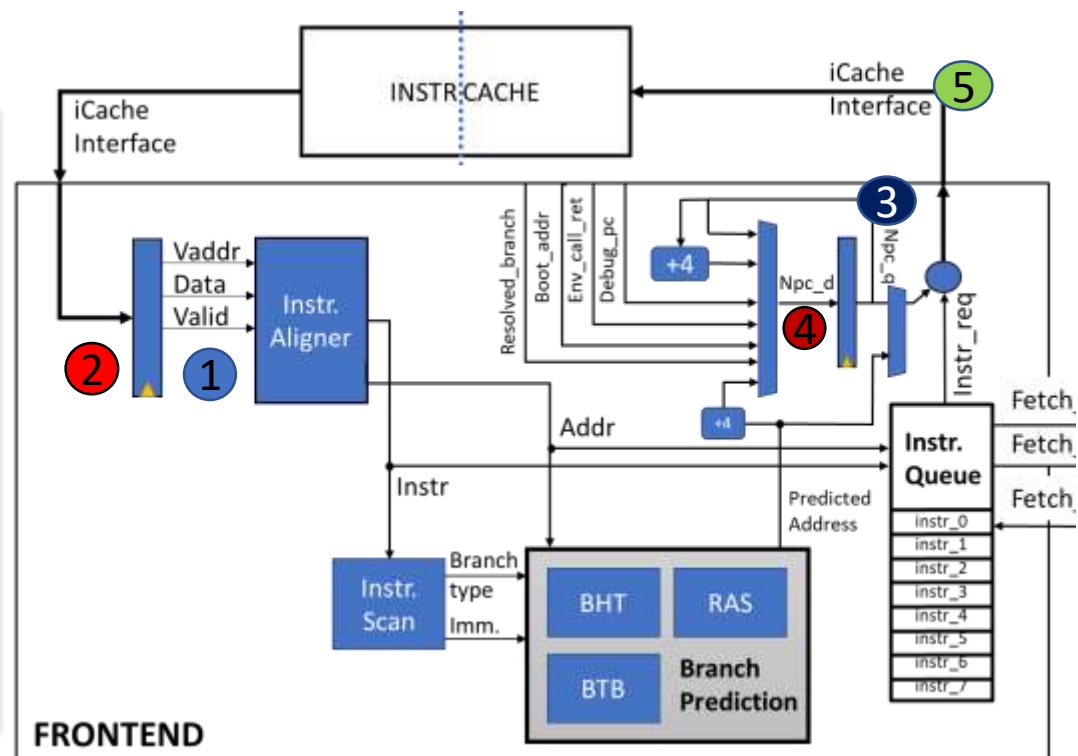
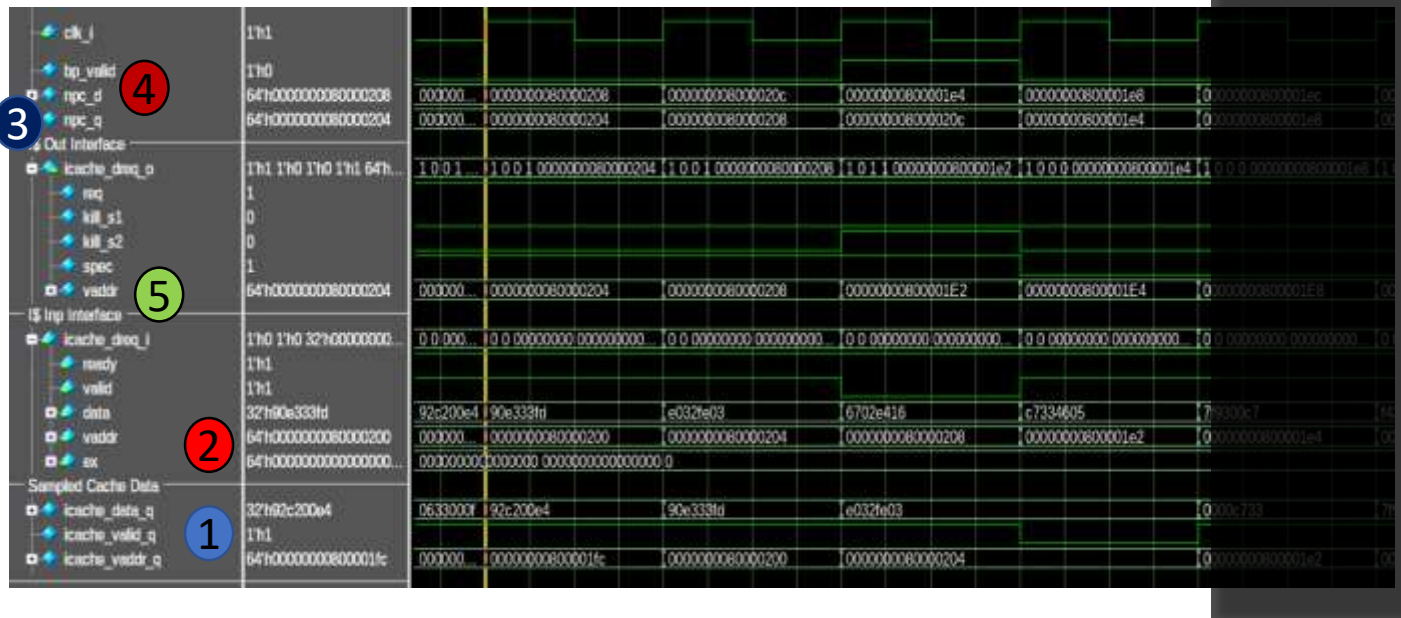
Cache Requests Examples



	SIGNAL	T0	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	ICACHE_VADDR_Q	0x01FC	0x0200	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2
2	DREQ_I.VADDR	0x0200	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2	0x01E4
3	NPC_Q	0x0204	0x0208	0x020C	0x01E4	0x01E8
4	NPC_D	0x0208	0x020C	0x01E4	0x01E8	0x01EC
5	DREQ_O.VADDR	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2	0x01E4	0x01E8

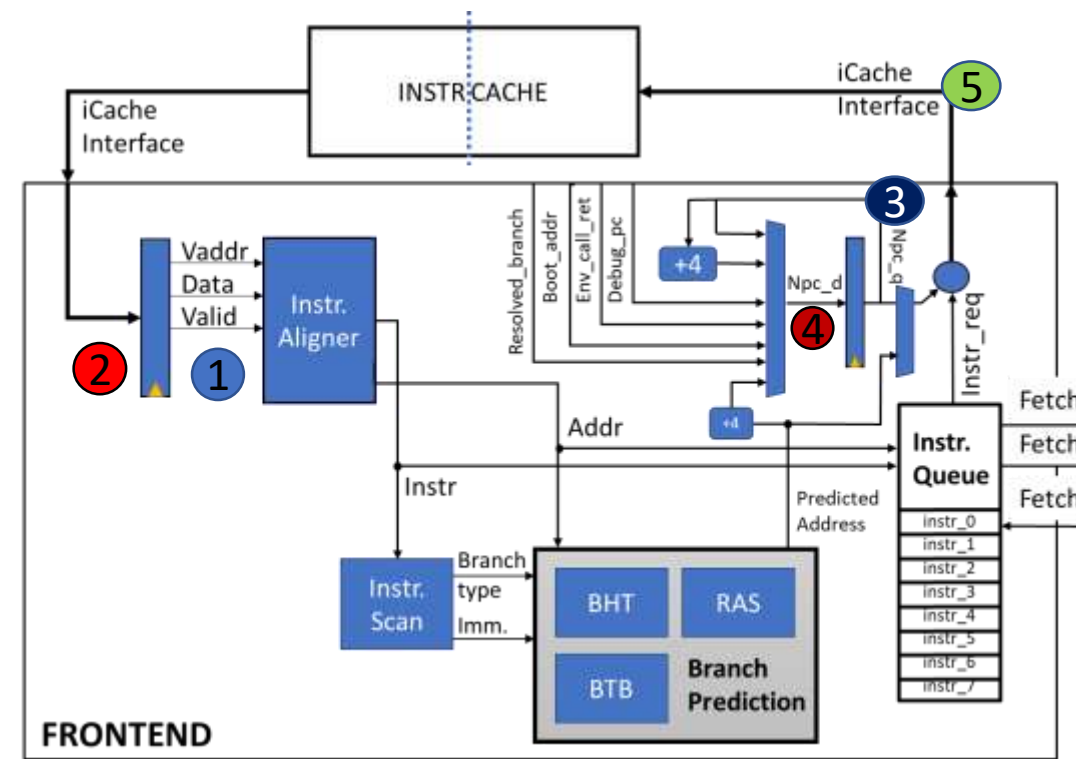
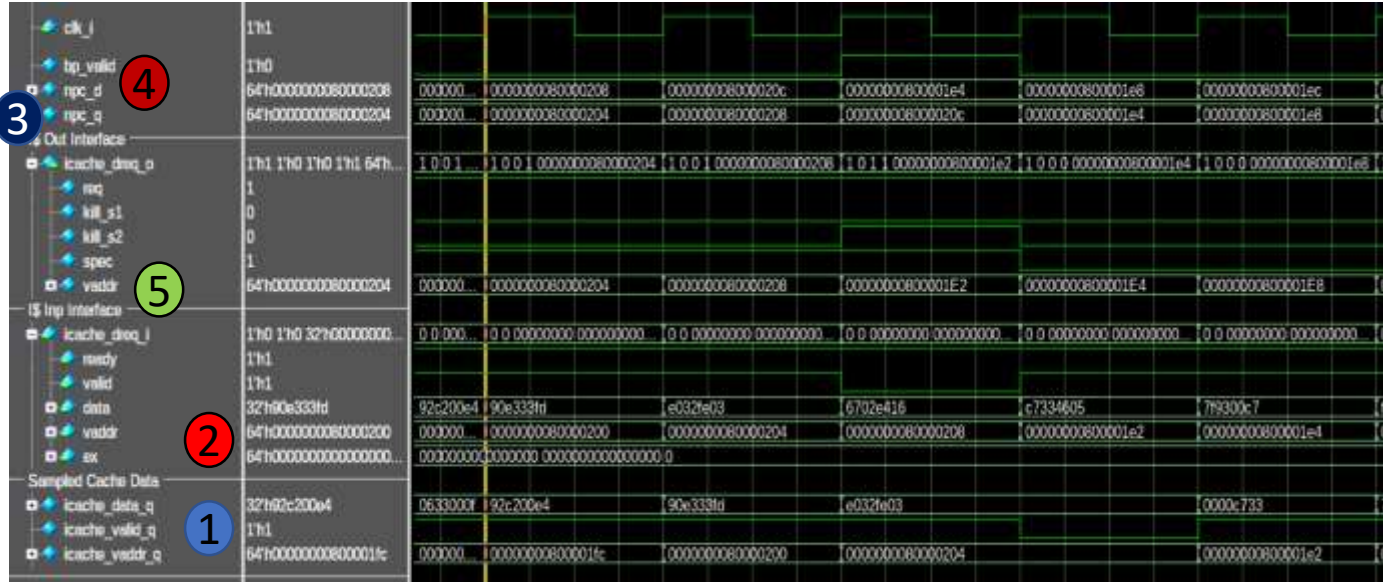
Annotations: A grey box labeled "Invalidated" is positioned above the T1 column. Arrows indicate dependencies between rows: T0 to T1, T1 to T2, T2 to T3, and T3 to T4. A curved arrow from the "Kill Request in S2" in the memory dump points to the T1 row.

Cache Requests Examples



	SIGNAL	T0	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	ICACHE_VADDR_Q	0x01FC	0x0200	0x0204	Invalid	0x01E2
2	DREQ_I.VADDR	0x0200	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2	0x01E4
3	NPC_Q	0x0204	0x0208	0x020C	0x01E4	0x01E8
4	NPC_D	0x0208	0x020C	0x01E4	0x01E8	0x01EC
5	DREQ_O.VADDR	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2	0x01E4	0x01E8

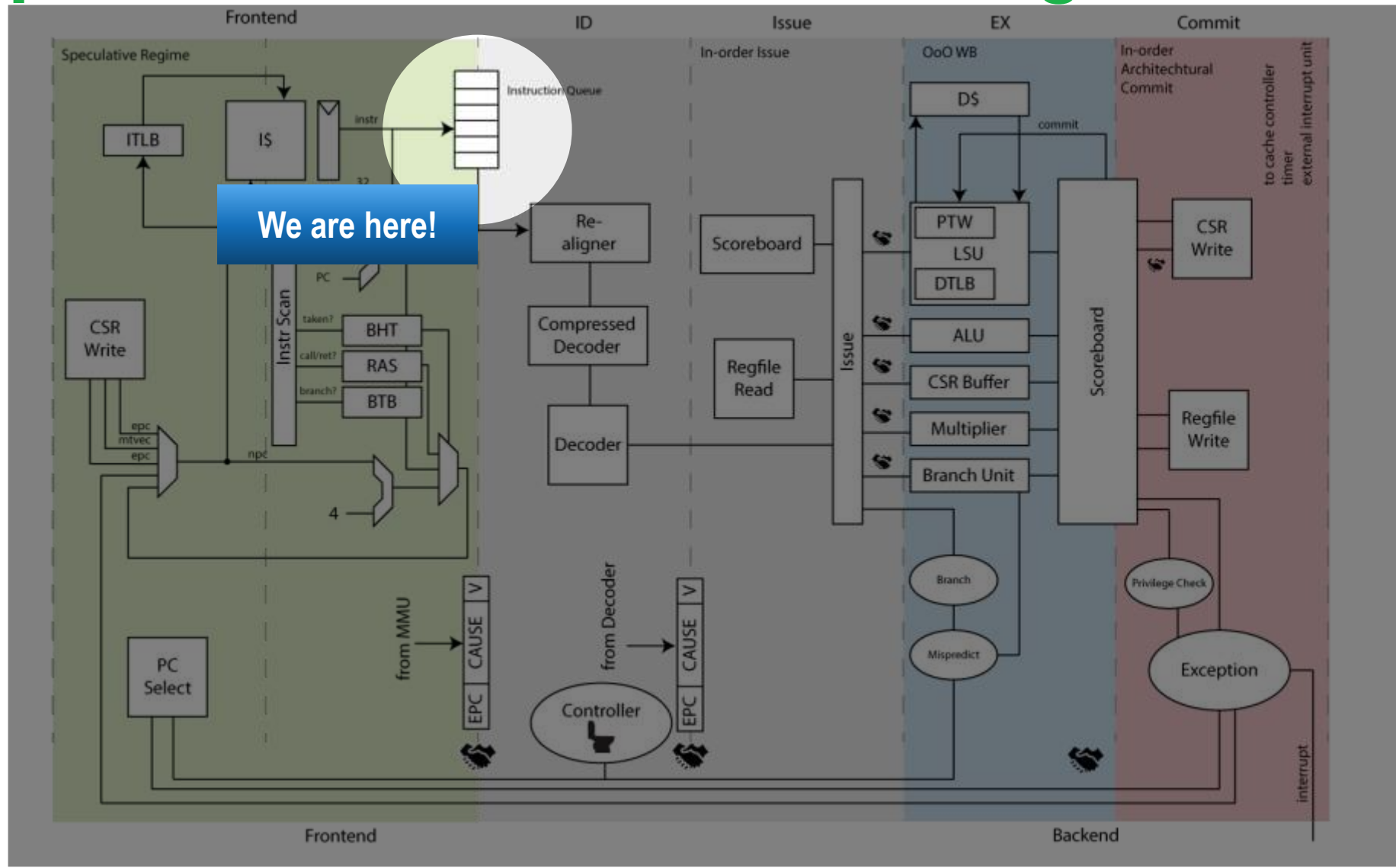
Cache Requests Examples



	SIGNAL	T0	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	ICACHE_VADDR_Q	0x01FC	0x0200	0x0204	Invalid 0x0208	0x01E2
2	DREQ_I.VADDR	0x0200	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2	0x01E4
3	NPC_Q	0x0204	0x0208	0x020C	0x01E4	0x01E8
4	NPC_D	0x0208	0x020C	0x01E4	0x01E8	0x01EC
5	DREQ_O.VADDR	0x0204	0x0208	0x01E2	0x01E4	0x01E8



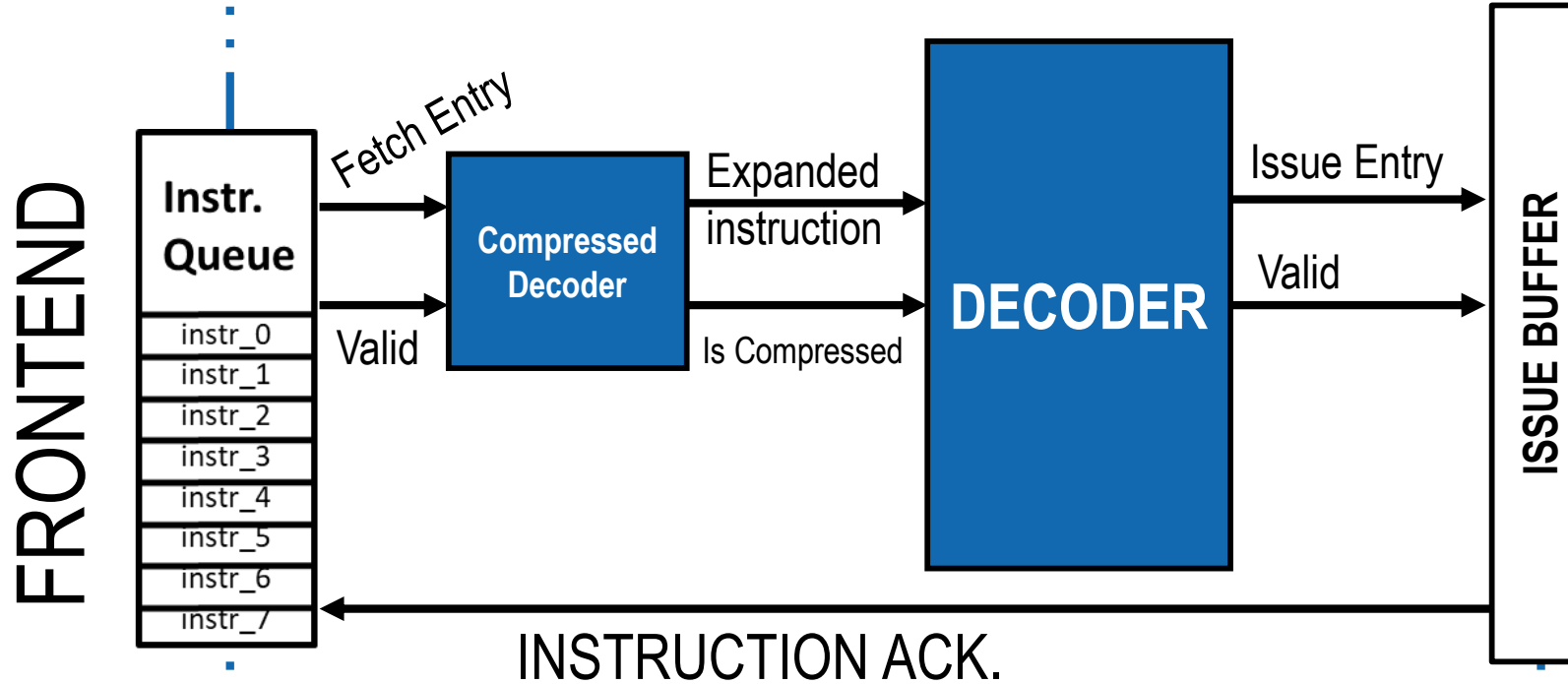
Deep Dive: Decode and Issue-Stage



Decode Stage

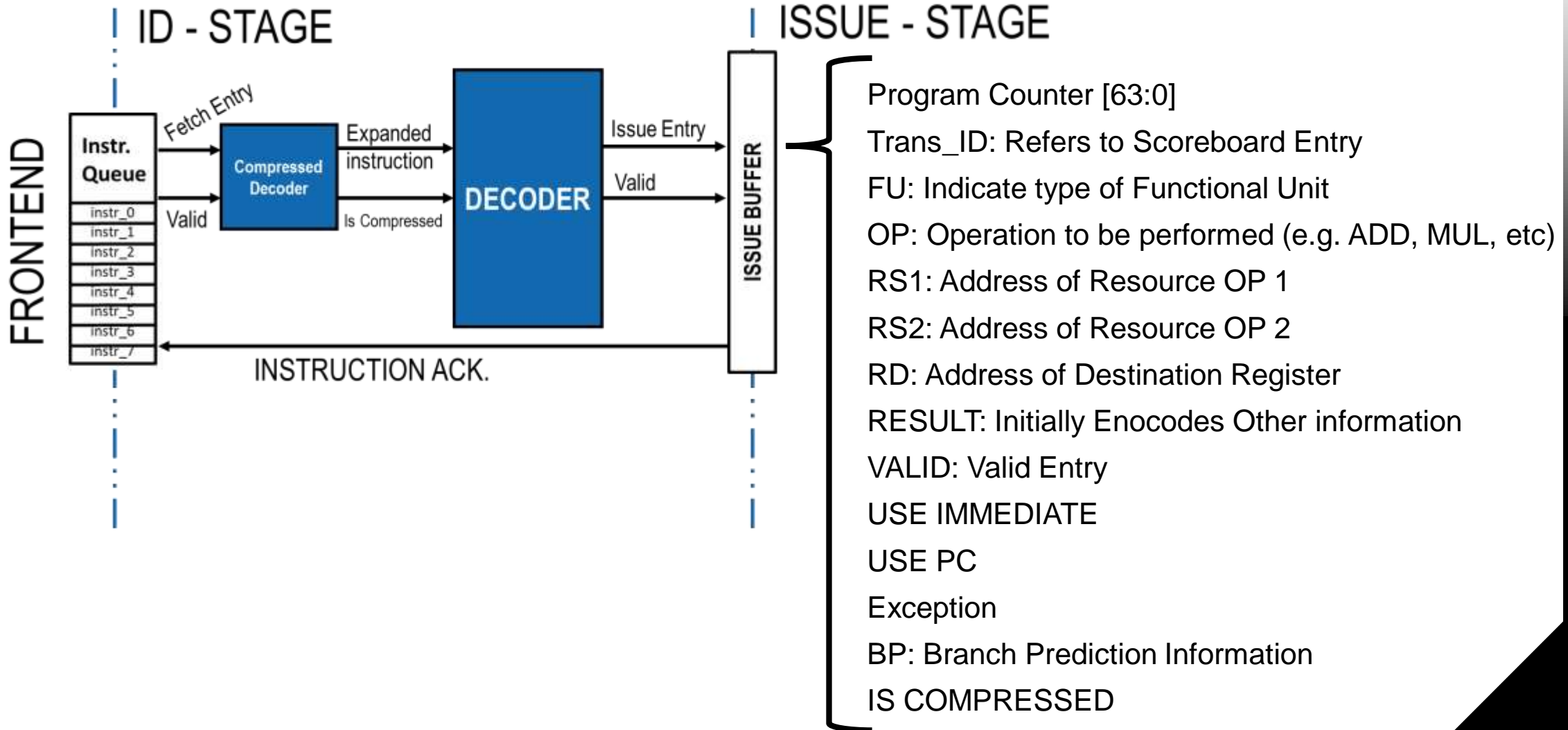
ID - STAGE

ISSUE - STAGE

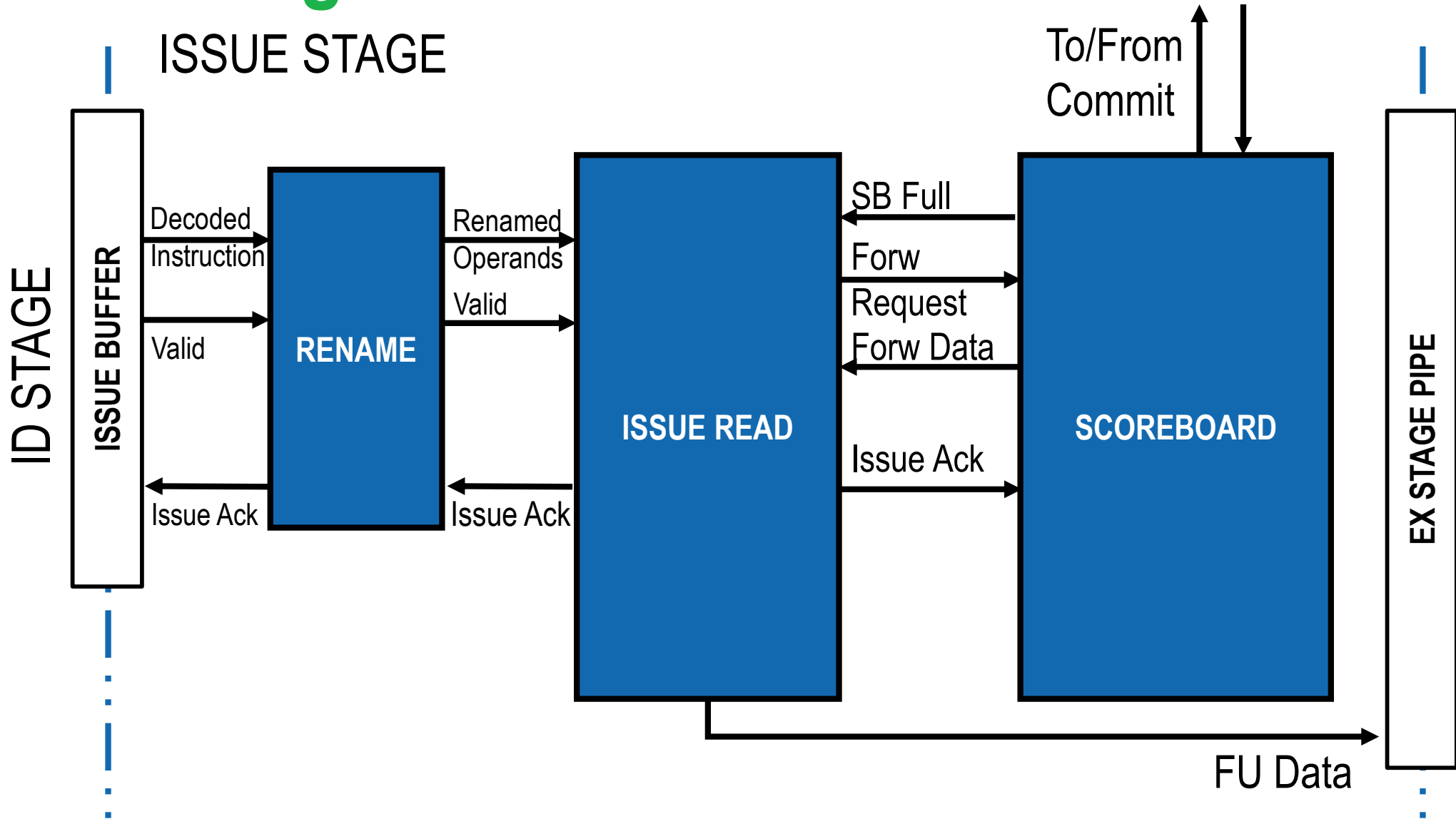


- Read Valid Entries From Instruction Queue
- Expand Compressed instruction into non-compress
- Write Decoded Information into the Issue Buffer

Decode Stage: Issue Interface

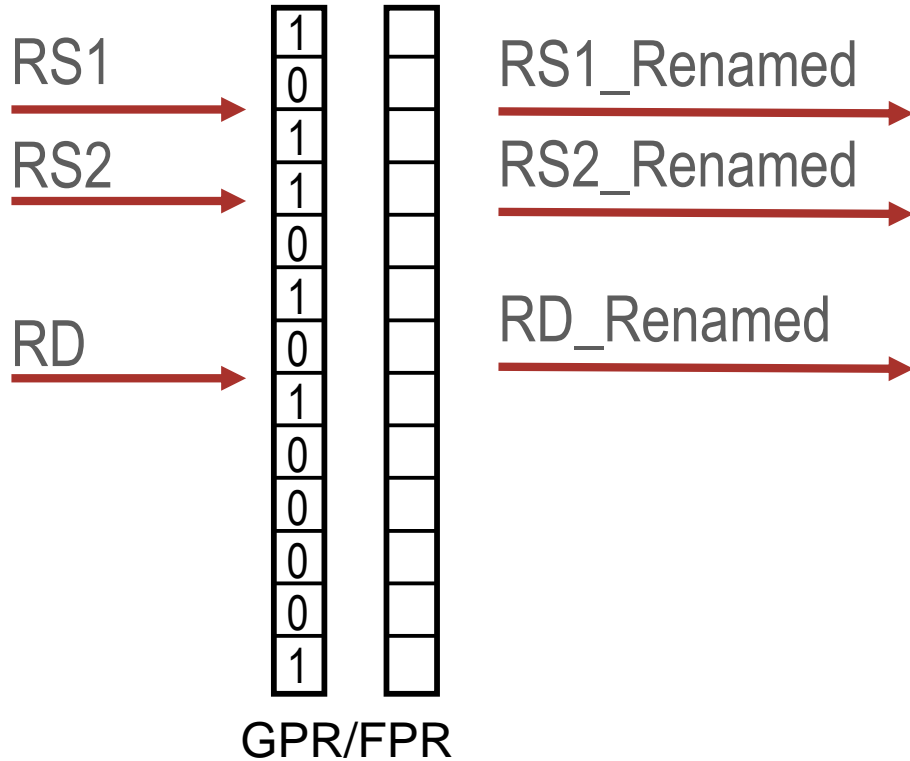


Issue Stage



RENAMING

Renaming Table



Avoids WAW Hazard by renaming Register

- Rare on In-order Single-Issue configuration but some Application benefits significantly

Example:

- Check renaming table
- Feed renamed operands to scoreboard

RS1	RS2	RNT[17]	RNT[10]	RS1 REN.	RS2 REN.
17	10	0	1	17	42

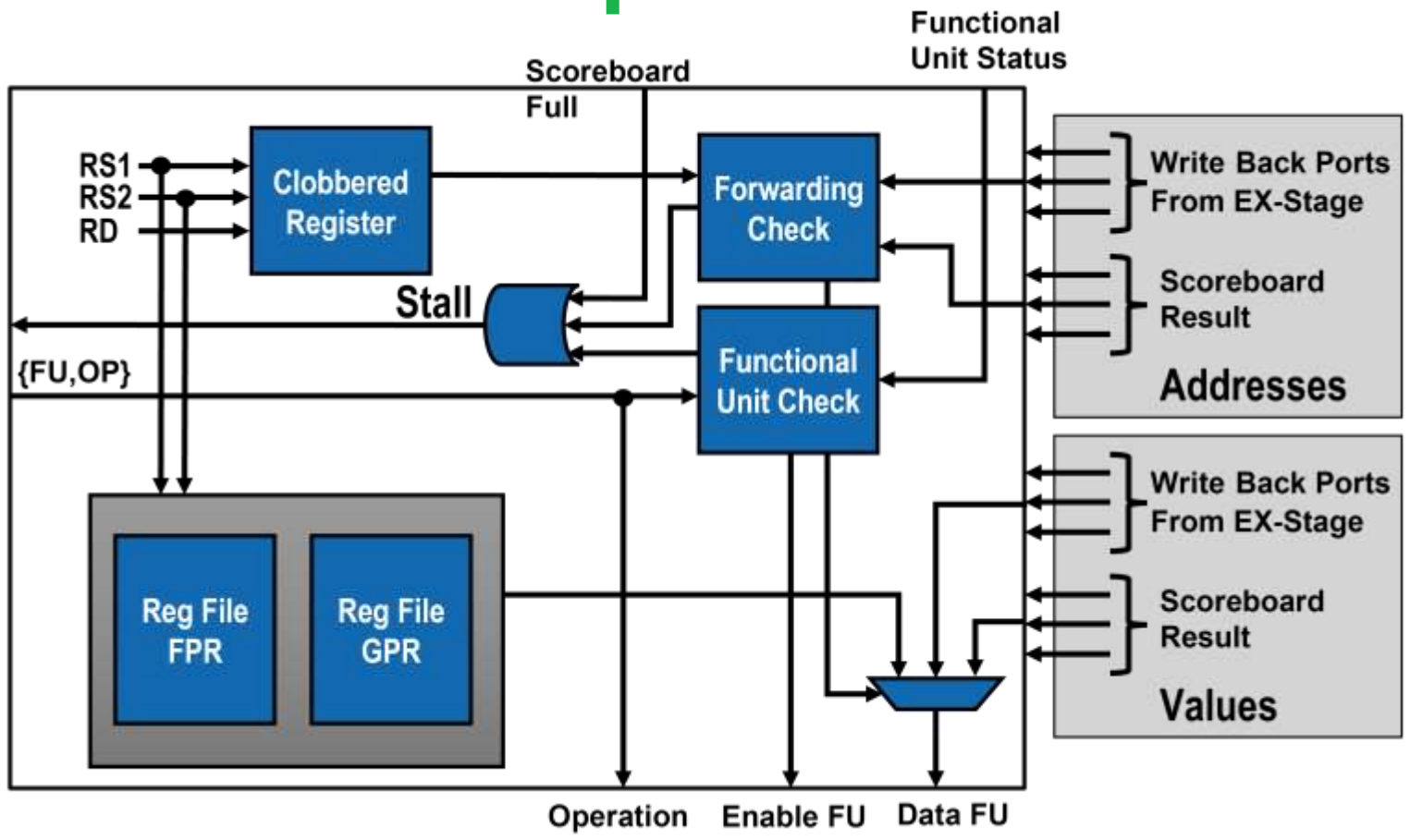
Update Renaming table:

- The renaming Table is updated only by the RD
- Tick/Untick Corresponding RD bit

RD	RNT[15]	RD REN.	RNT_N[15]
15	0	15	1



Issue Read Operands

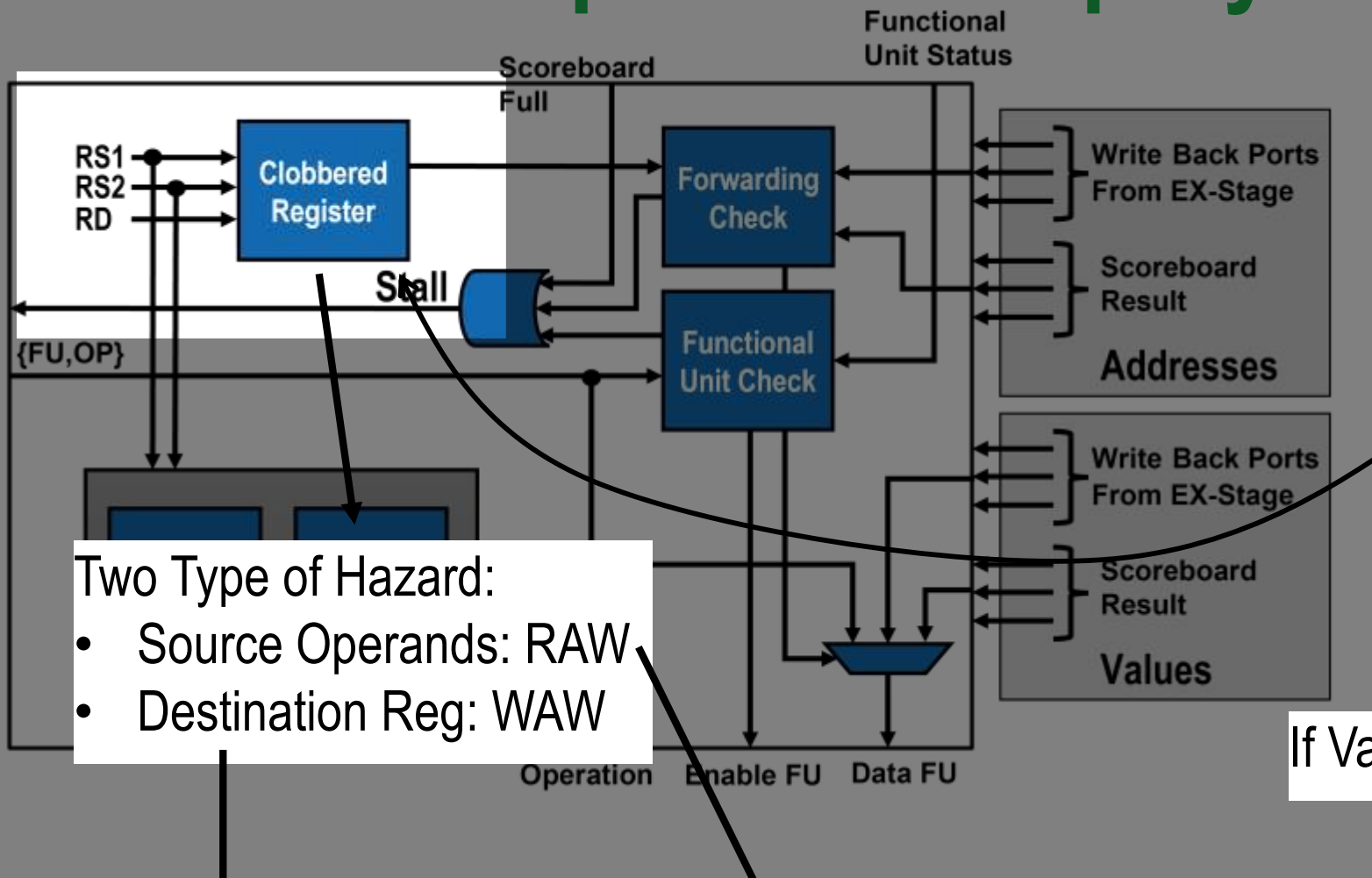


Main Tasks:

- Check for Data Hazard
- Check if Functional Units are Ready
- Forwarding Operands
- Interfacing to the Ex-Stage



Issue Read Operands: Step-By-Step



Two Type of Hazard:

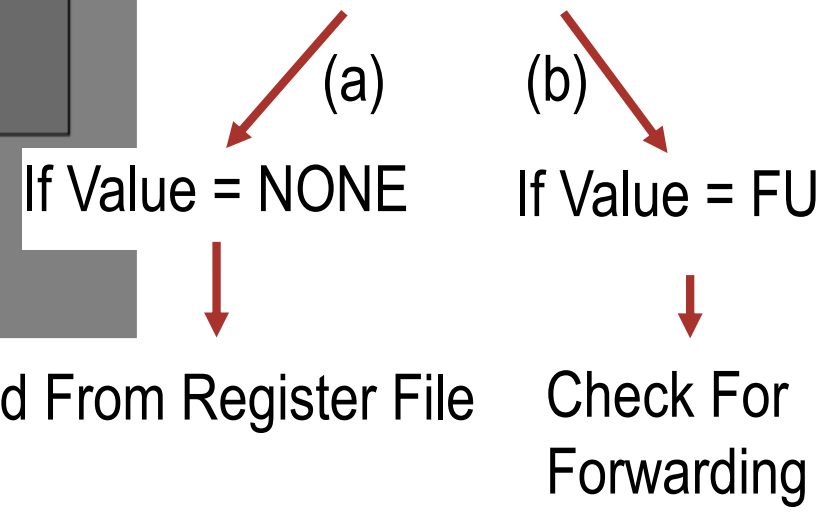
- Source Operands: RAW
- Destination Reg: WAW

Mitigated With Renaming

Mitigated With Forwarding

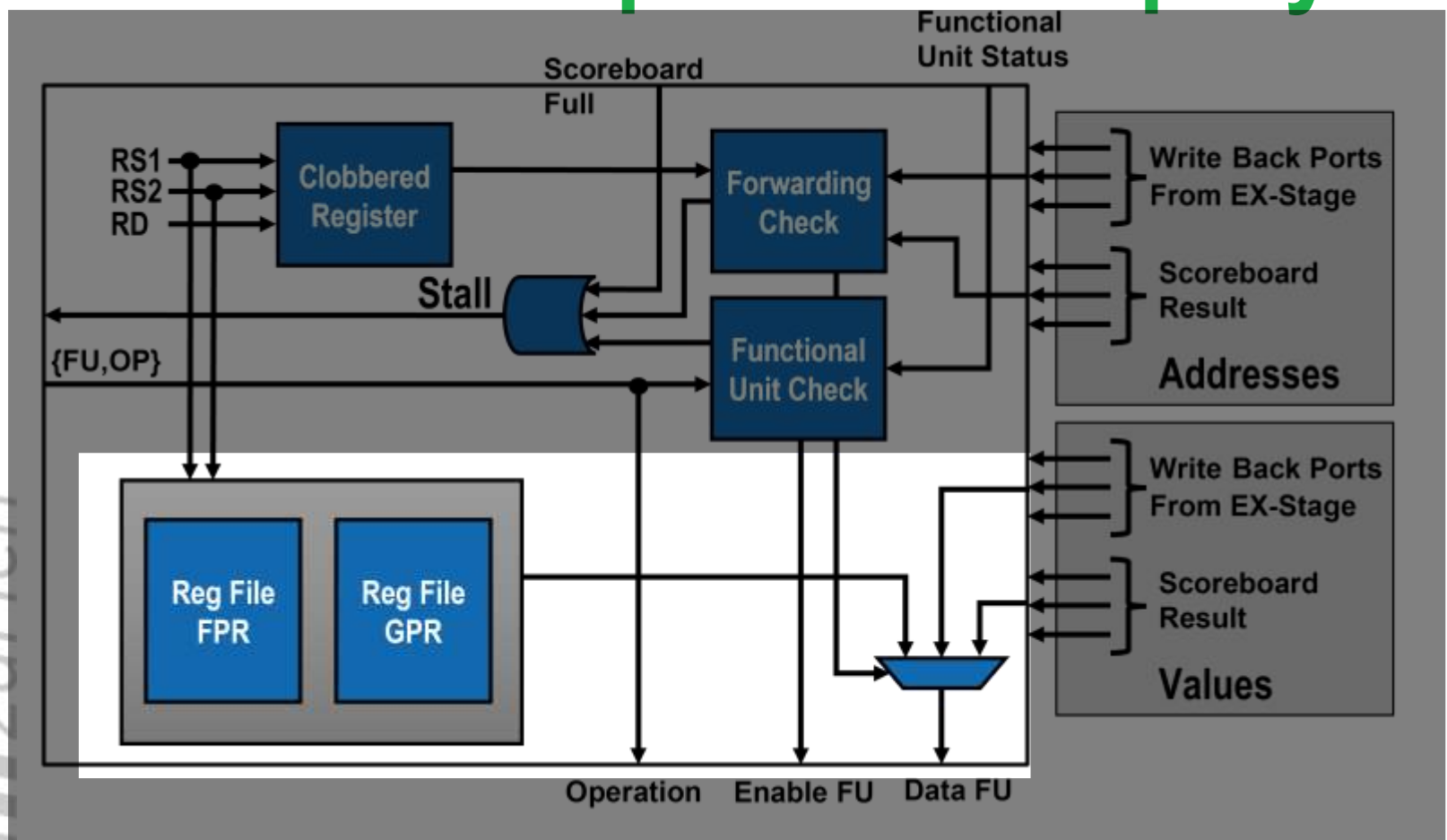
1. Check any inflight instruction is writing to source/destination operands.

Clobbered Register contains 64 entries (one per each register and renamed)





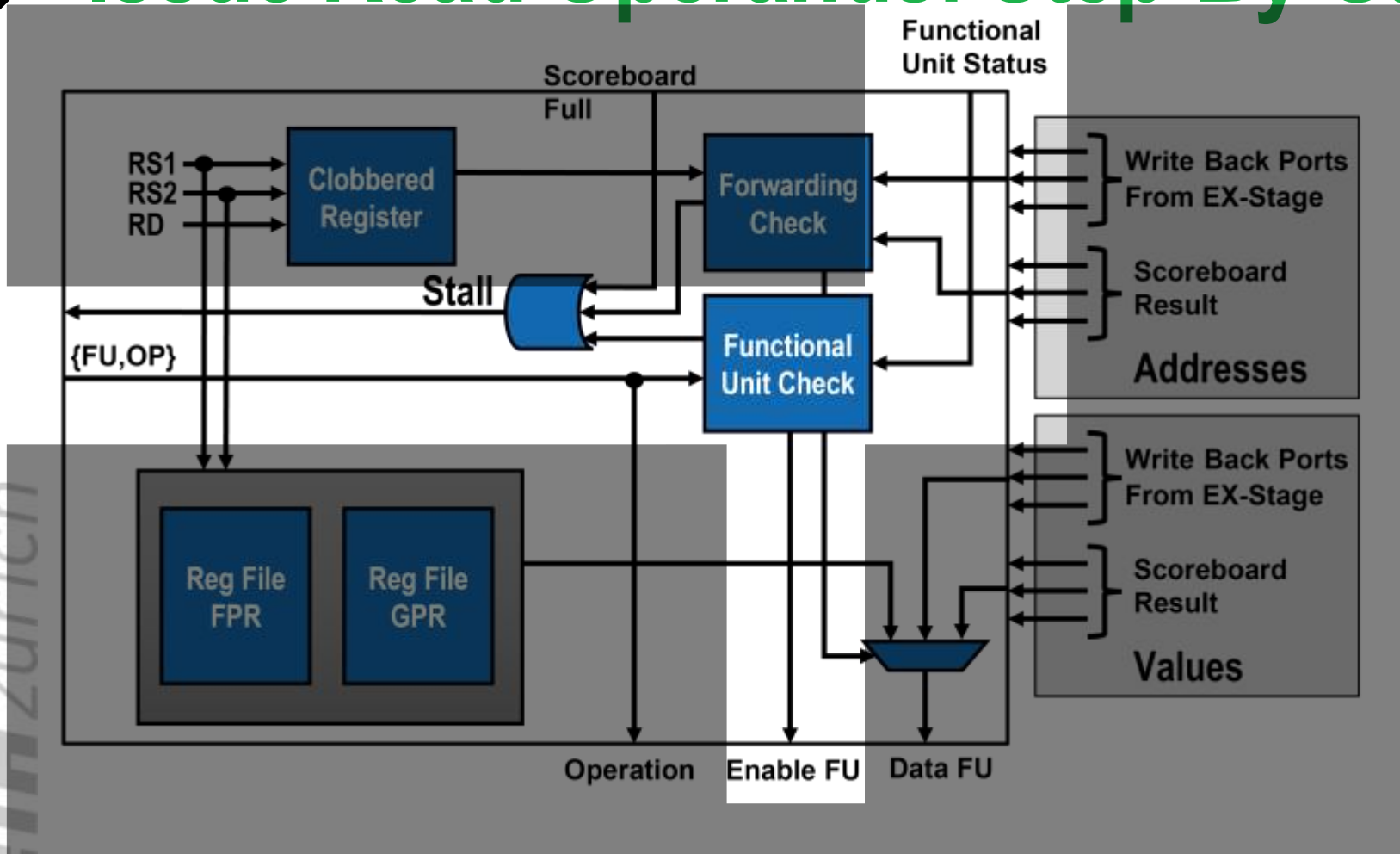
Issue Read Operands: Step-By-Step



1. Check any inflight instruction is writing to source/destination operands.
2. (a) Read Values From Register File

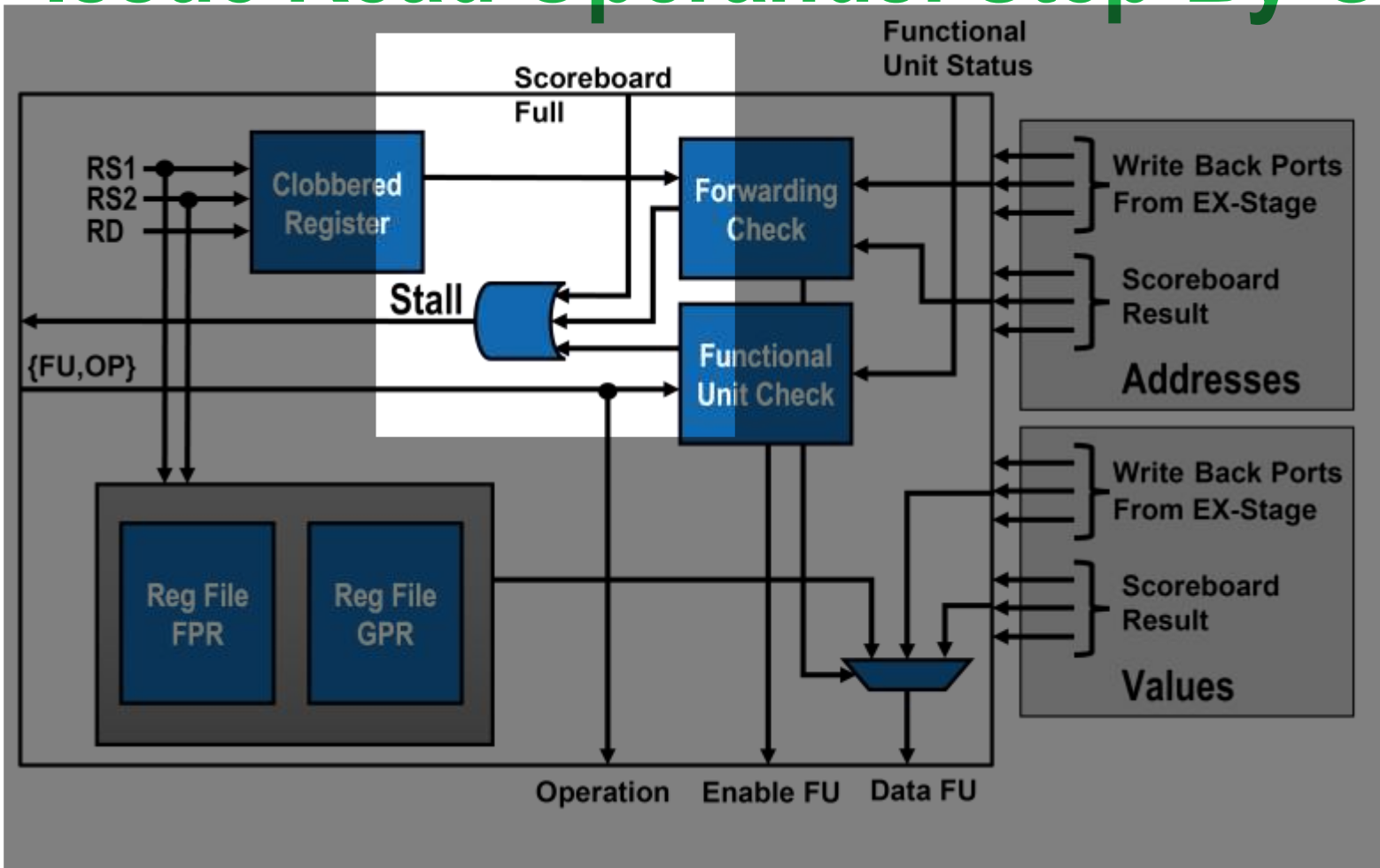


Issue Read Operands: Step-By-Step



1. Check any inflight instruction is writing to source/destination operands.
2. (a) Read Values From Register File
3. Check If FU is Ready
 - Stall If not

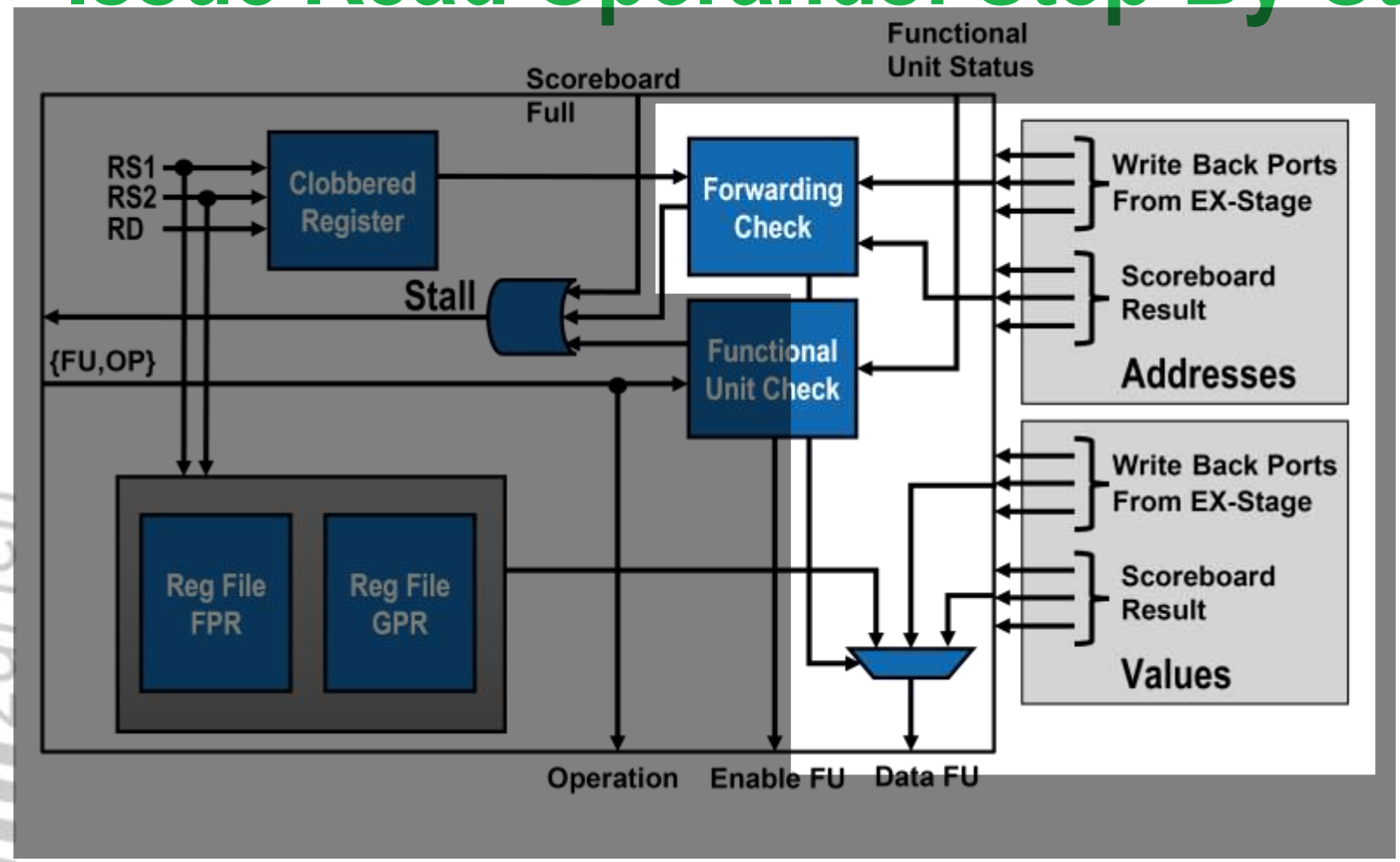
Issue Read Operands: Step-By-Step



1. Check any inflight instruction is writing to source/destination operands.
2. (a) Read Values From Register File
3. Check If FU is Ready
 - Stall If not
4. Check if Scoreboard is full
 - Stall if it is
5. ISSUE



Issue Read Operands: Step-By-Step

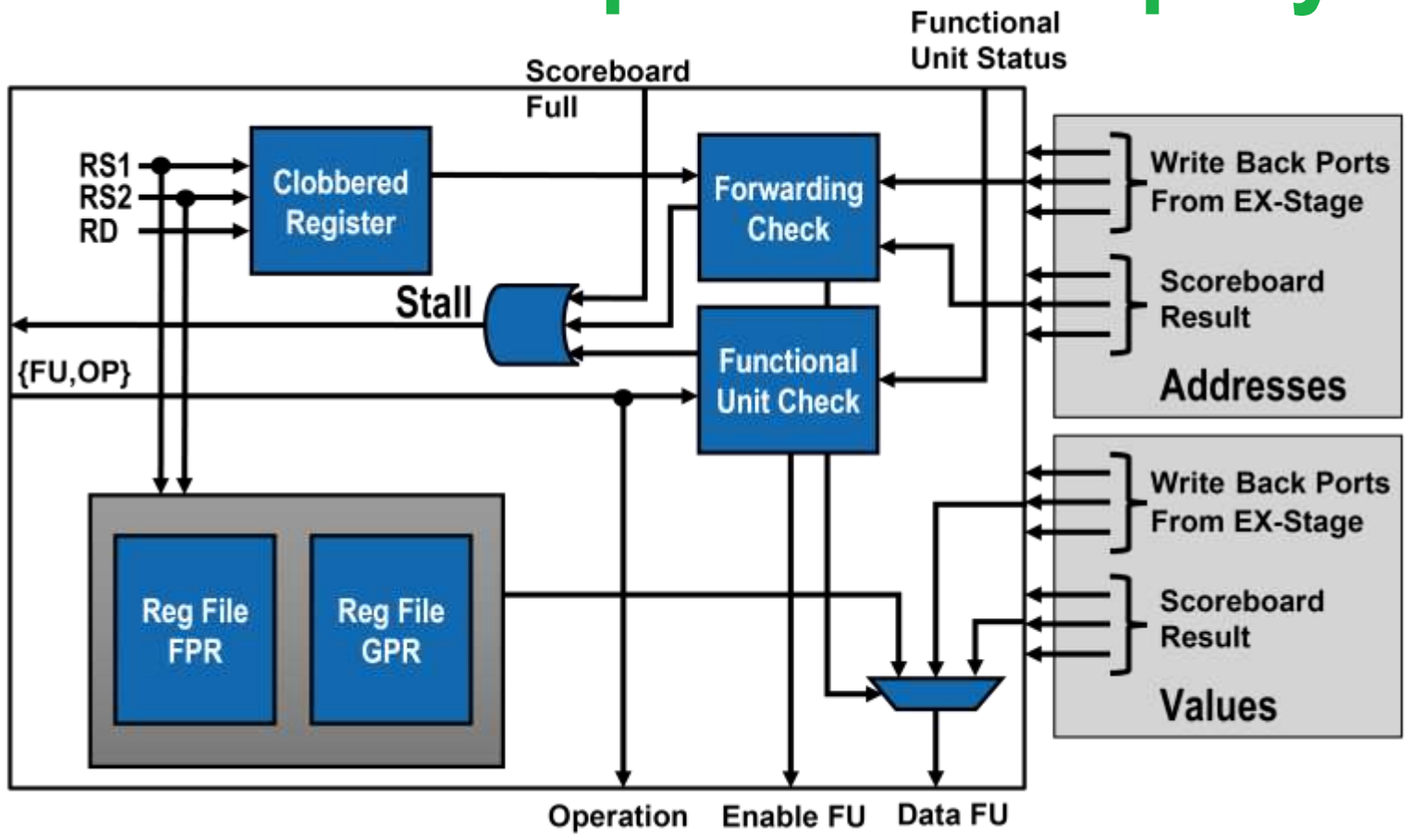


1. Check any inflight instruction is writing to source/destination operands.
2. (b) Check if Forwardable
 - Write Back Ports of Functional Units
 - Scoreboard Entries





Issue Read Operands: Step-By-Step

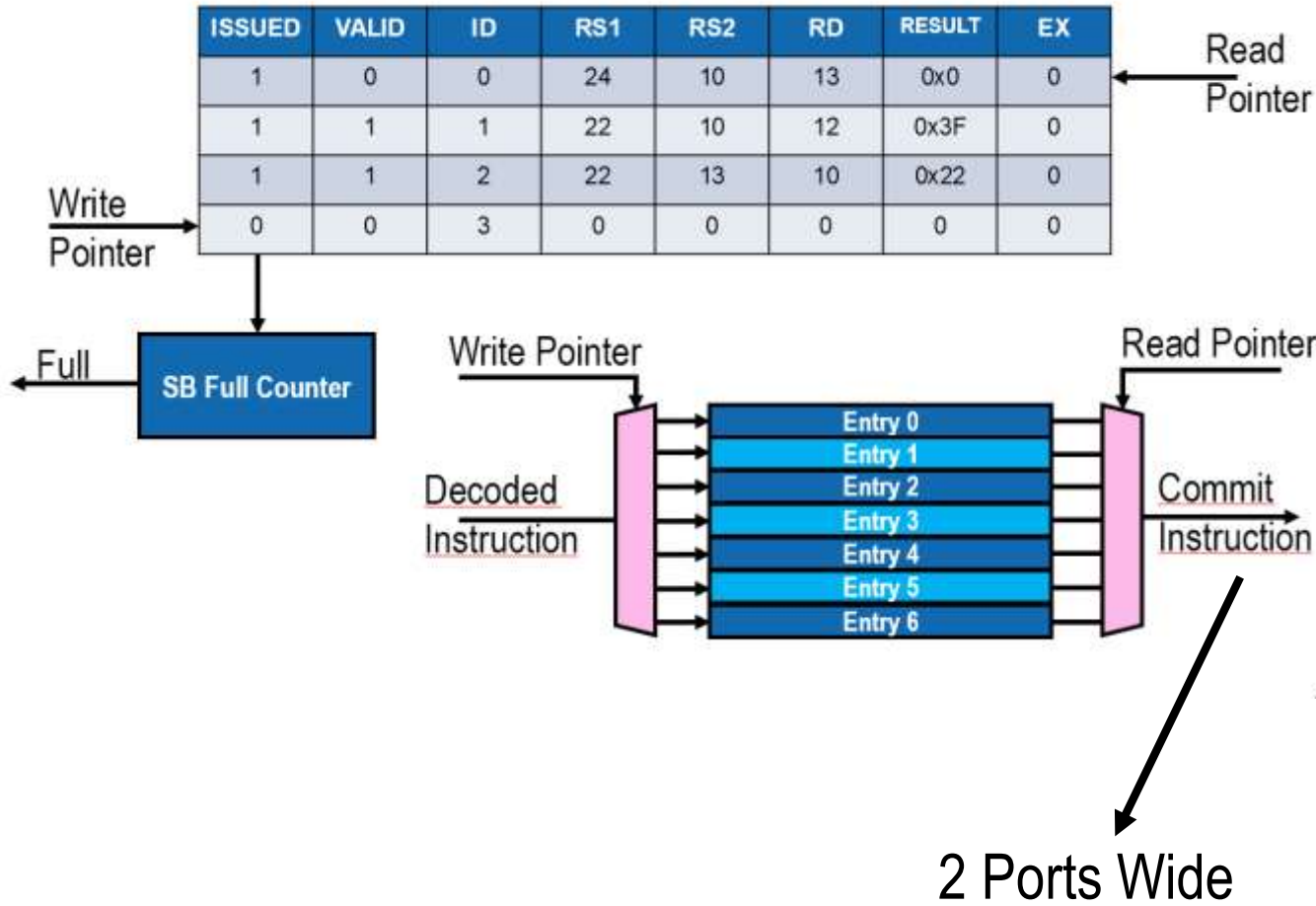


1. Check any inflight instruction is writing to source/destination operands.
2. (b) Check if Forwardable
 - Write Back Ports of Functional Units
 - Scoreboard Entries
3. Check If FU is Ready
 - Stall If not
4. Check if Scoreboard is full
 - Stall if it is
5. ISSUE





ScoreBoard



Track Each Issued and not Committed Instruction

Used for hiding load latency

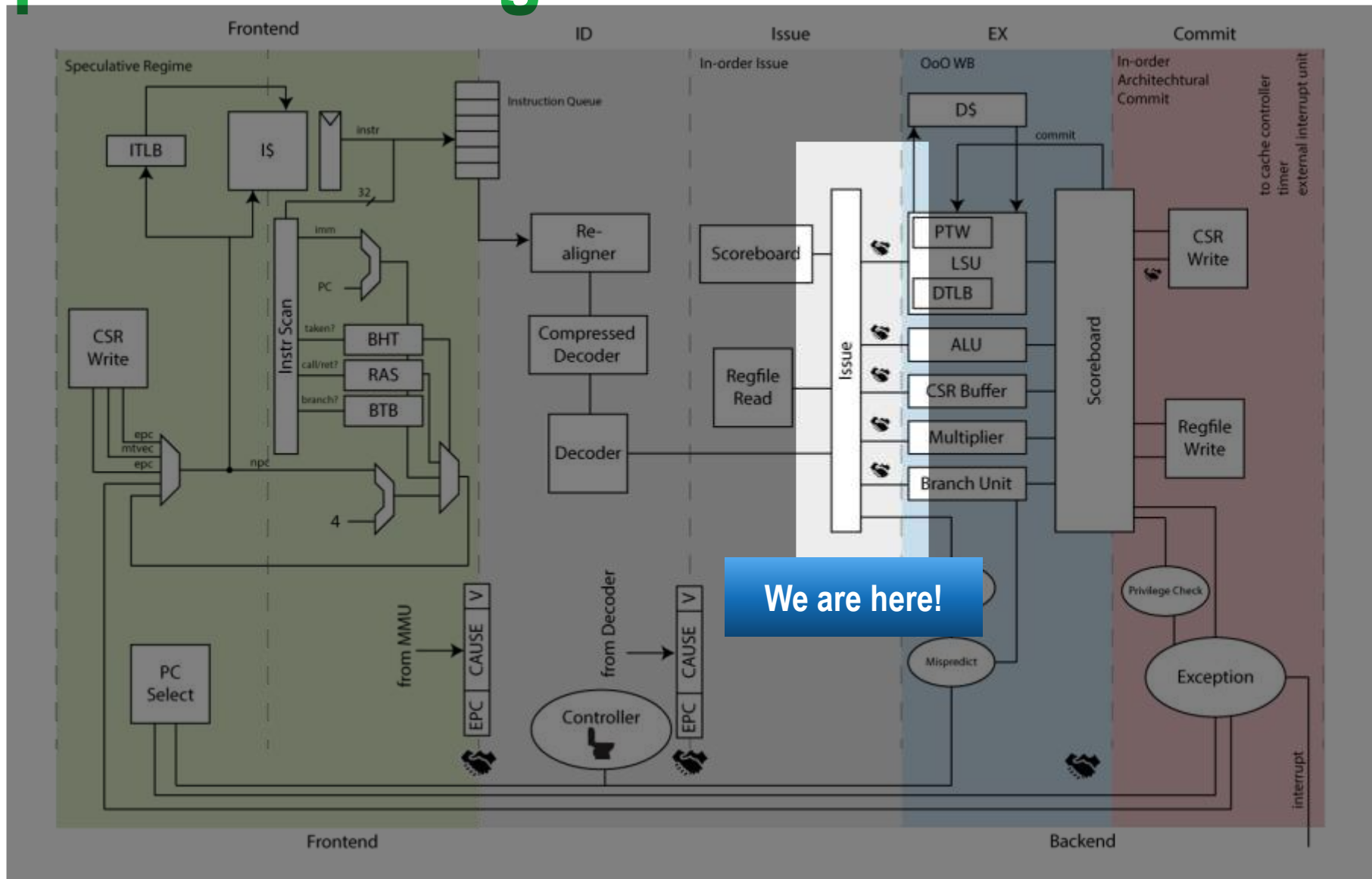
Write pointer Advance on issued Instructions

Read pointer Advance on Valid Instructions

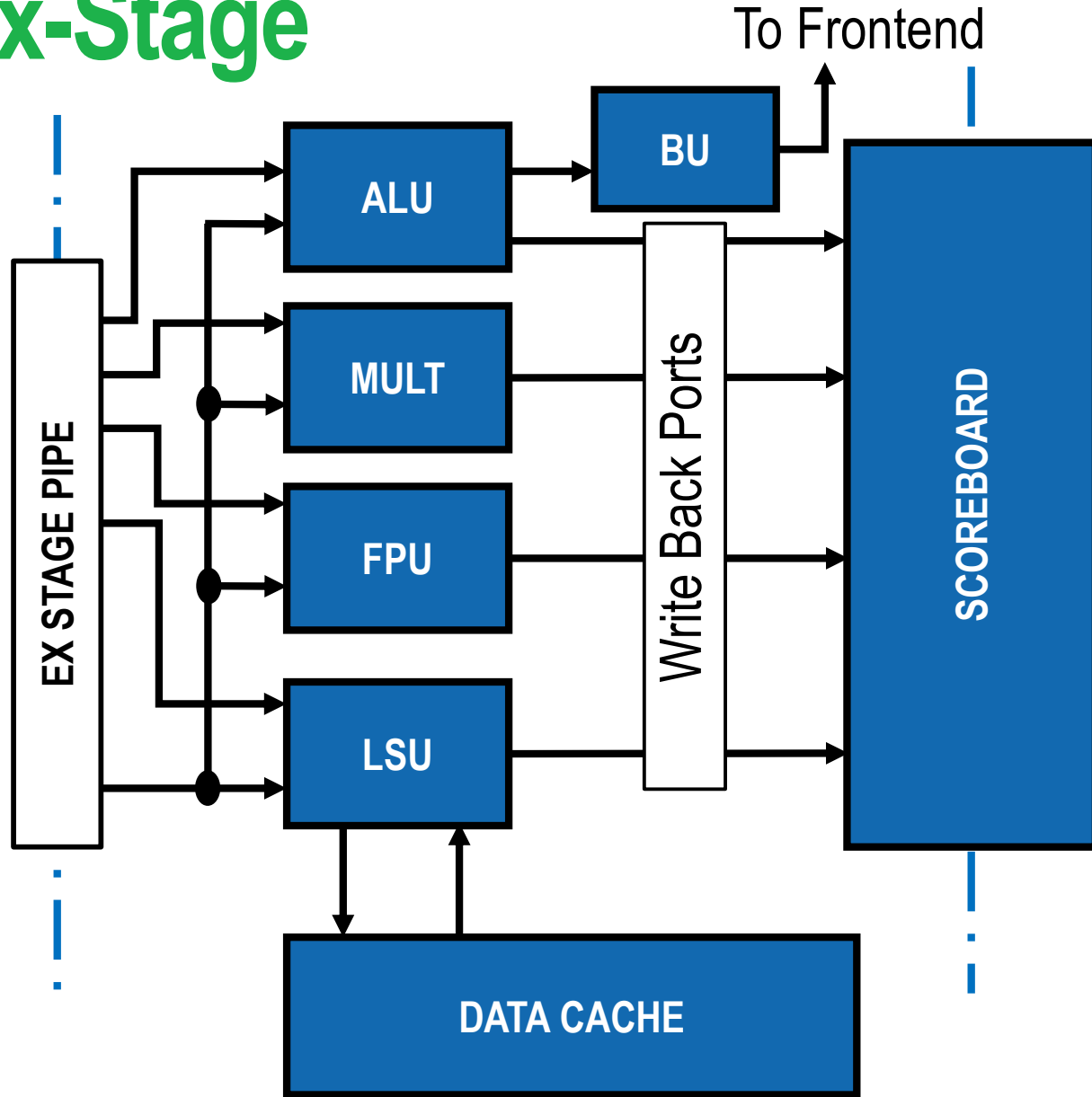
Issued Instructions are counted to check if SB is Full



Deep Dive: Ex Stage



Ex-Stage



Functional Unit Are selected Via enable from issue stage

Write Back Ports are Connected to the Scoreboard

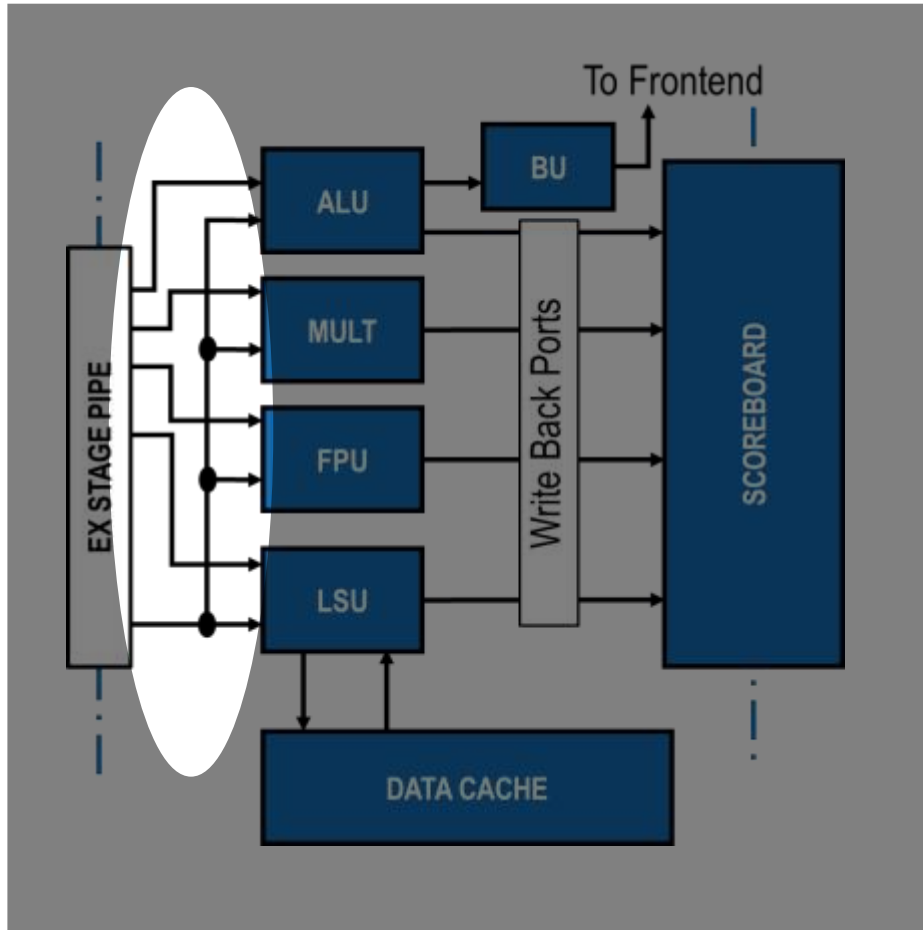
Branch Unit resolution is Connected to Frontend

Multiplier and FPU are internally Pipelined

Data Cache has 2 pipeline Stages, support hit under miss



Ex Stage Interface



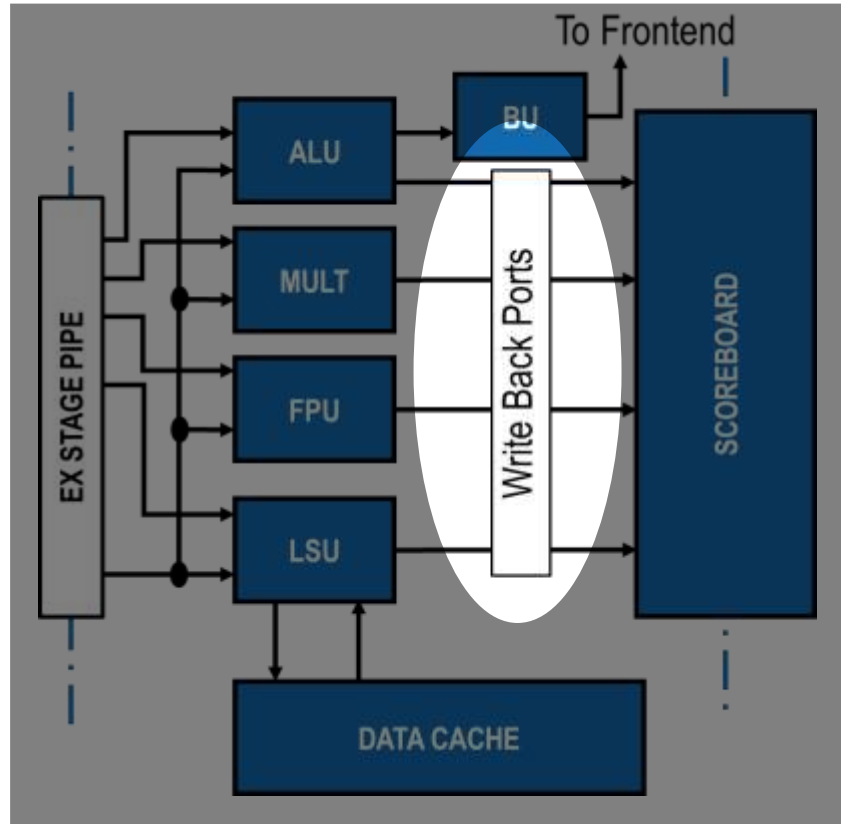
Enable →
FU Data →

Operator: Type Of Operation
Operand_a[63:0]: Value of OP_A
Operand_b[63:0]: Value of OP_B
Immediate[63:0]: Value of Immediate/OP_C
Trans_ID: ID in the Scoreboard

- The FU Data is shared Among Functional Units
- Enable Decide which FU to Activate



Ex Stage Interface



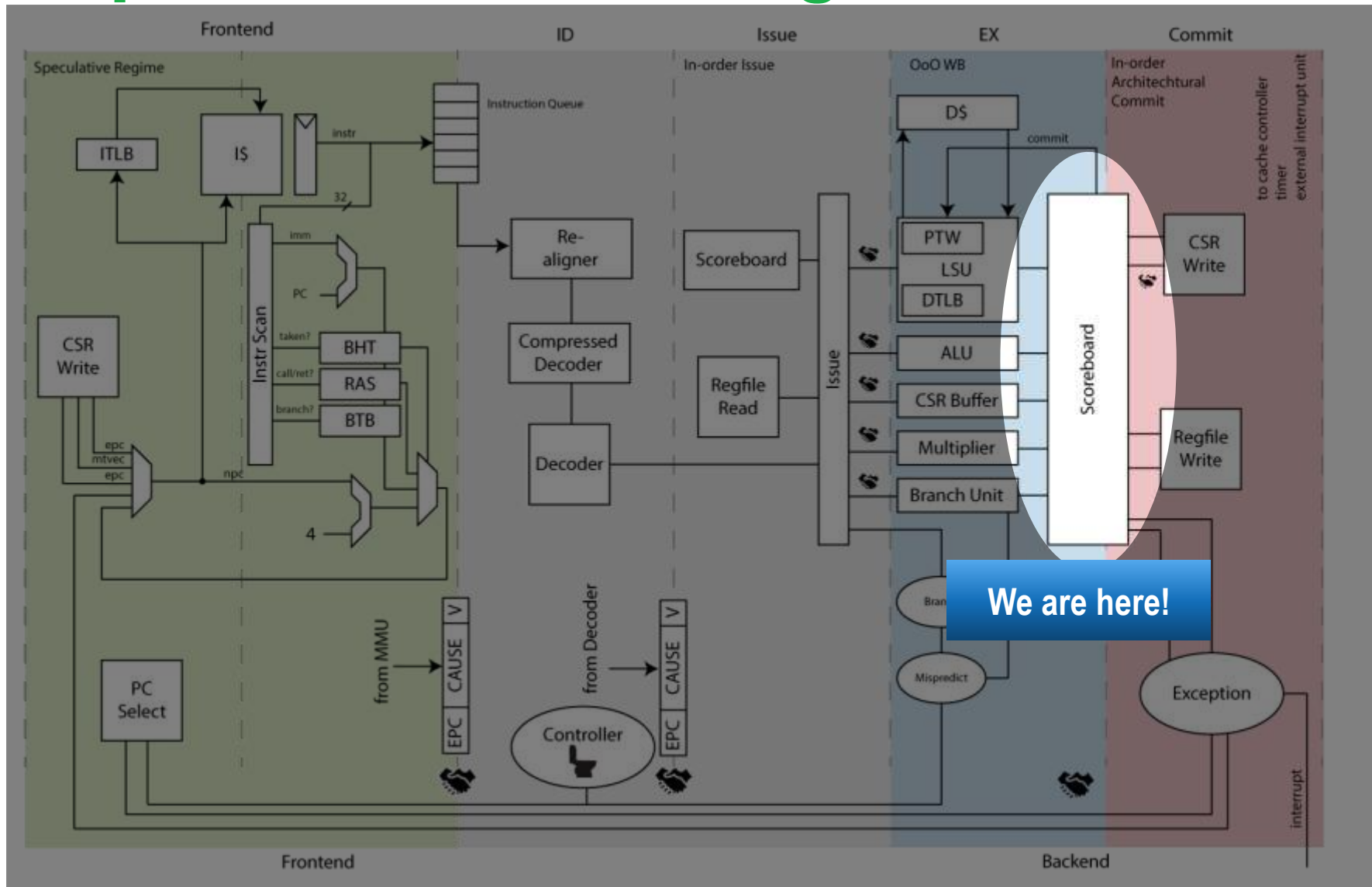
Enable →
FU Data →

Operator: Type Of Operation
Operand_a[63:0]: Value of OP_A
Operand_b[63:0]: Value of OP_B
Immediate[63:0]: Value of Immediate/OP_C
Trans_ID: ID in the Scoreboard

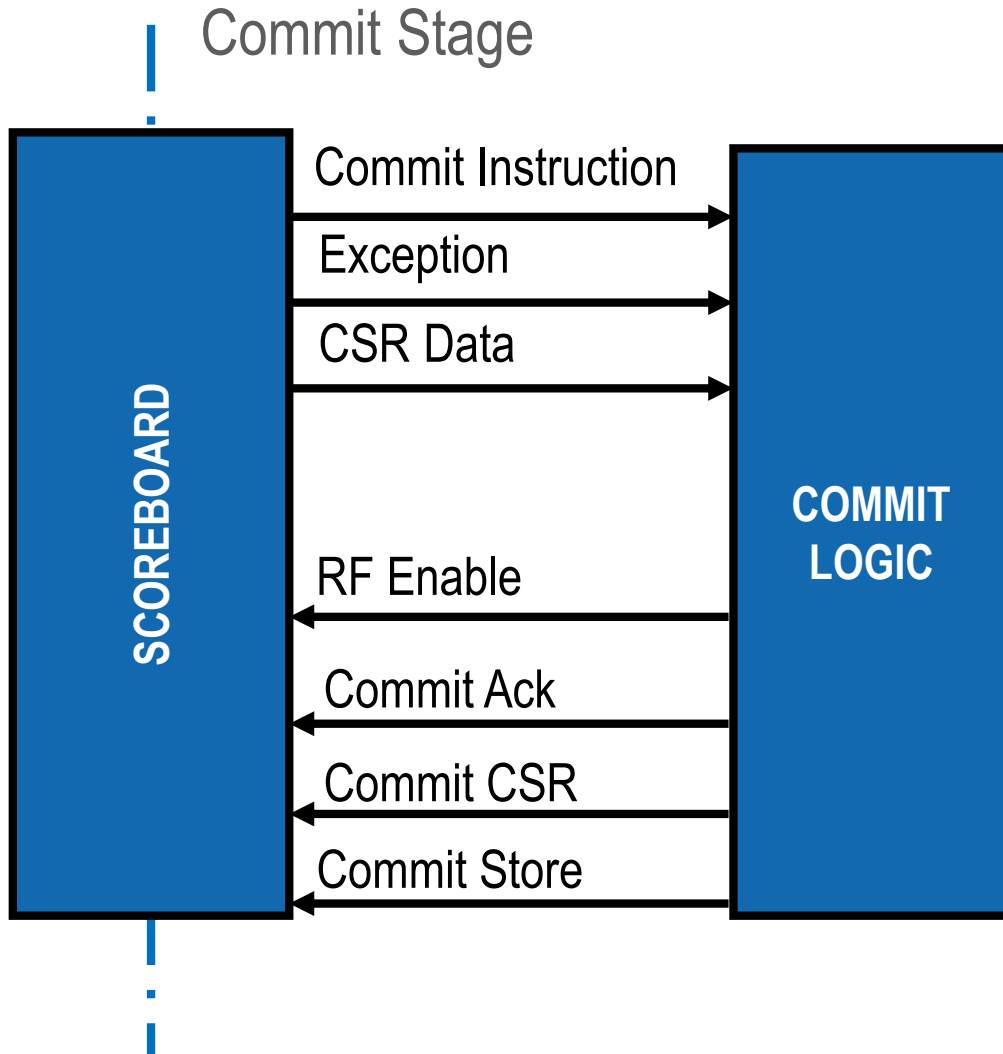
→ Valid
→ Trans_ID
→ Result[63:0]

- Results Are Redirected to the scoreboard

Deep Dive: Commit Stage



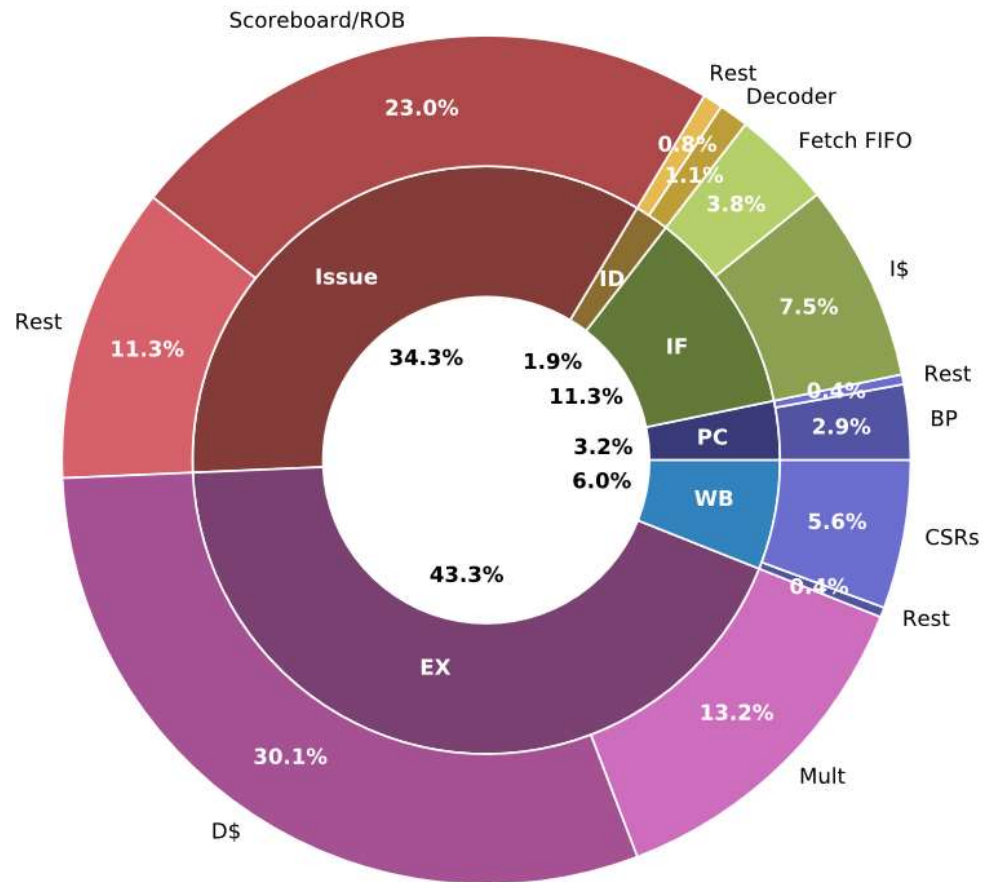
Commit Stage



- **Commit Stage Read the Scoreboard for Valid Instructions**
- **Committing an instruction has the following effect:**
 - Write result to register File
 - Write to CSR
 - Allow Store to write main Memory
- **Commit Stage retires Instruction in Order**



IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS: Area



- Area Results at 22nm FDSOI from GF
- Biggest Contribution are Cache Macros
- In general Sequential logic dominates Area



IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS: Energy

TABLE IV
ENERGY PER OPERATION CLASS [pJ], LEAKAGE [mW]

Instr. Class	PC	IF Stage		ID Stage		Issue	EX Stage					WB	CSR	CTS	Rest	Tot	
		I\$	Rest	Dec	Rest		L/S	VM	Mult	ALU	D\$						Rest
Mul	0.30	4.72	0.51	0.01	0.09	1.42	0.22	3.46	0.97	0.02	5.53	0.07	0.05	0.22	4.25	0.76	22.60
%	1.33	20.88	2.26	0.04	0.40	6.28	0.97	15.31	4.29	0.09	24.47	0.31	0.22	0.97	18.81	3.36	100.00
Div	0.25	3.19	0.35	0.00	0.02	1.11	0.22	3.43	0.68	0.00	5.54	0.05	0.02	0.20	4.07	0.81	19.94
%	1.25	16.00	1.76	0.00	0.10	5.57	1.10	17.20	3.41	0.00	27.78	0.25	0.10	1.00	20.41	4.06	100.00
LS w/ VM	0.32	4.63	0.54	0.01	0.09	1.38	0.30	3.50	0.09	0.03	9.18	0.18	0.06	0.22	4.06	0.62	25.21
%	1.27	18.37	2.14	0.04	0.36	5.47	1.19	13.88	0.36	0.12	36.41	0.71	0.24	0.87	16.10	2.46	100.00
LS w/o VM	0.30	4.39	0.51	0.00	0.07	1.36	0.30	3.48	0.07	0.02	9.12	0.17	0.06	0.22	4.04	0.64	24.75
%	1.21	17.74	2.06	0.00	0.28	5.49	1.21	14.06	0.28	0.08	36.85	0.69	0.24	0.89	16.32	2.59	100.00
ALU	0.30	4.36	0.50	0.05	0.13	1.69	0.24	3.47	0.11	0.03	5.53	0.08	0.08	0.24	4.05	0.72	21.58
%	1.39	20.20	2.32	0.23	0.60	7.83	1.11	16.08	0.51	0.14	25.63	0.37	0.37	1.11	18.77	3.34	100.00
IGEMM	0.61	10.17	1.59	0.19	0.65	5.88	0.61	3.84	4.41	0.71	13.75	1.00	0.31	1.12	4.68	2.28	51.80
%	1.18	19.63	3.07	0.37	1.25	11.35	1.18	7.41	8.51	1.37	26.54	1.93	0.60	2.16	9.03	4.40	100.00
Leakage	0.02	0.11	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.02	0.07	0.08	0.01	0.33	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.00	0.20	1.08

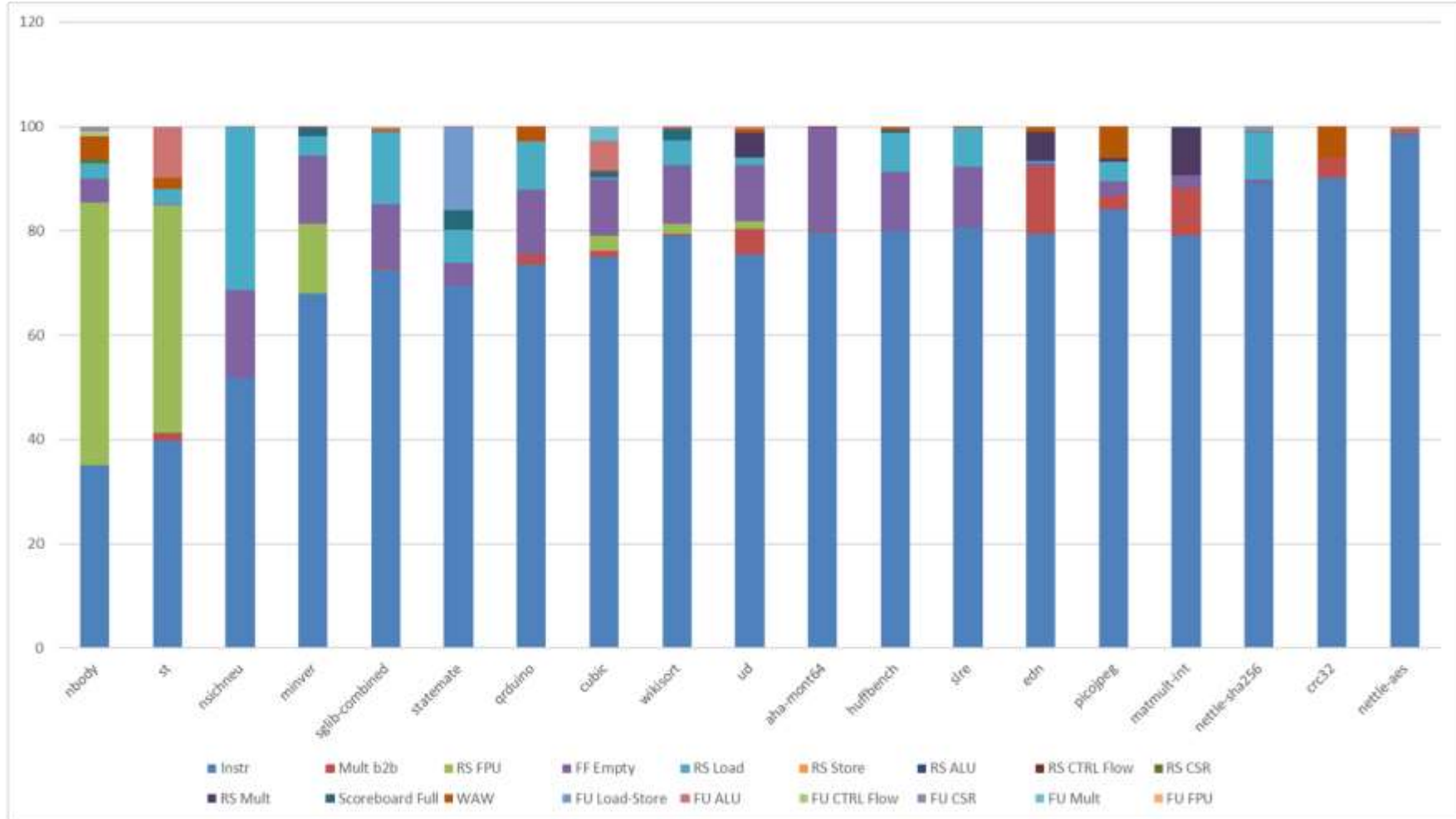


PERFORMANCE: Embench-iot Benchmark Suite

ETH zürich



Test Name	IPC
aha-mont64	0,751773
crc32	0,901578
cubic	0,730032
edn	0,837711
huffbench	0,736758
matmult-int	0,889643
minver	0,512024
nbody	0,327144
nettle-aes	0,986432
nettle-sha256	0,862099
nsichneu	0,429473
picojpeg	0,831389
primecount	0,57092
qduino	0,694356
sglib-combined	0,656466
slre	0,75285
st	0,396254
statemate	0,701807
ud	0,647145
wikisort	0,813702



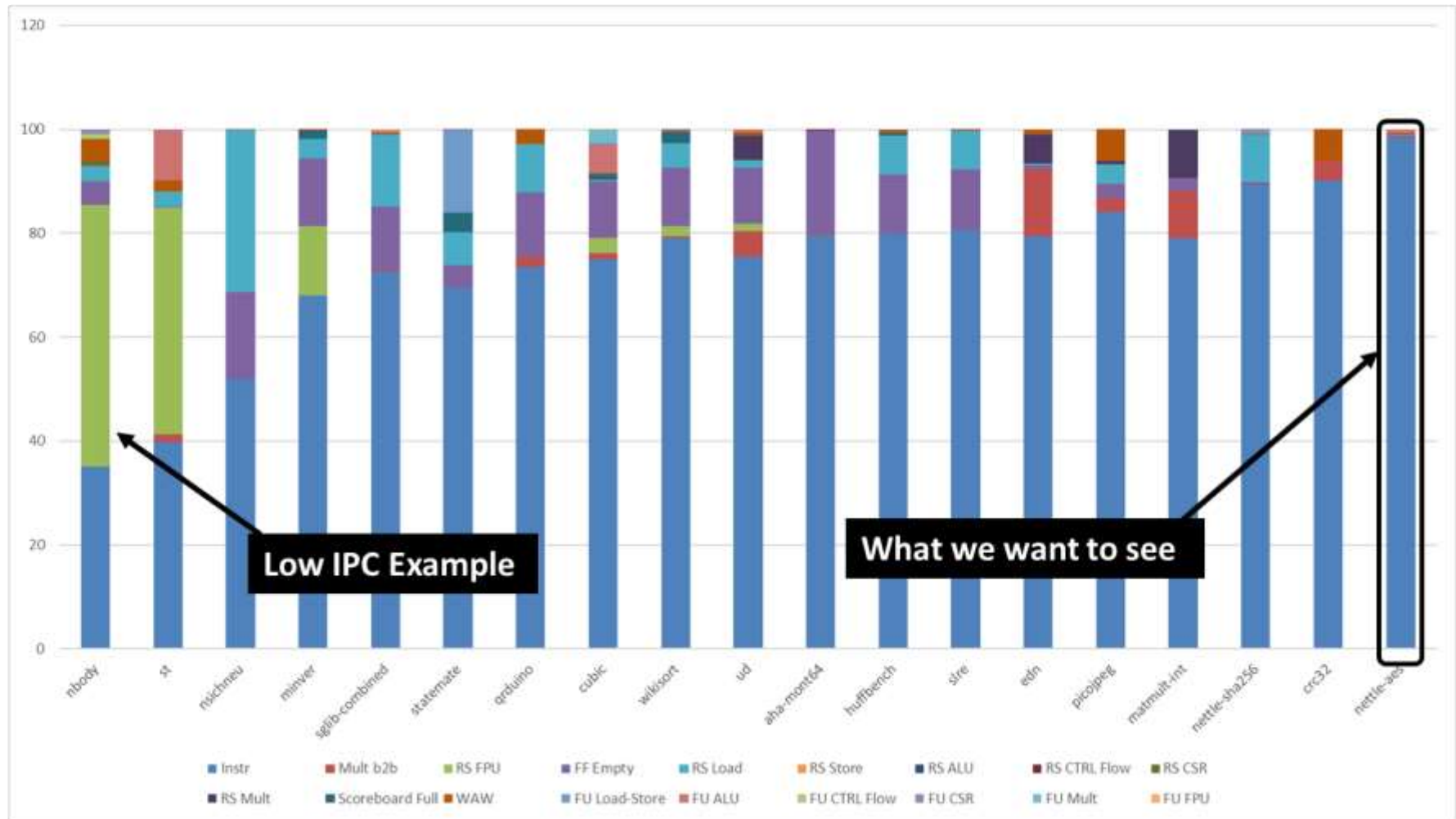


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Low IPC Example

What we want to see

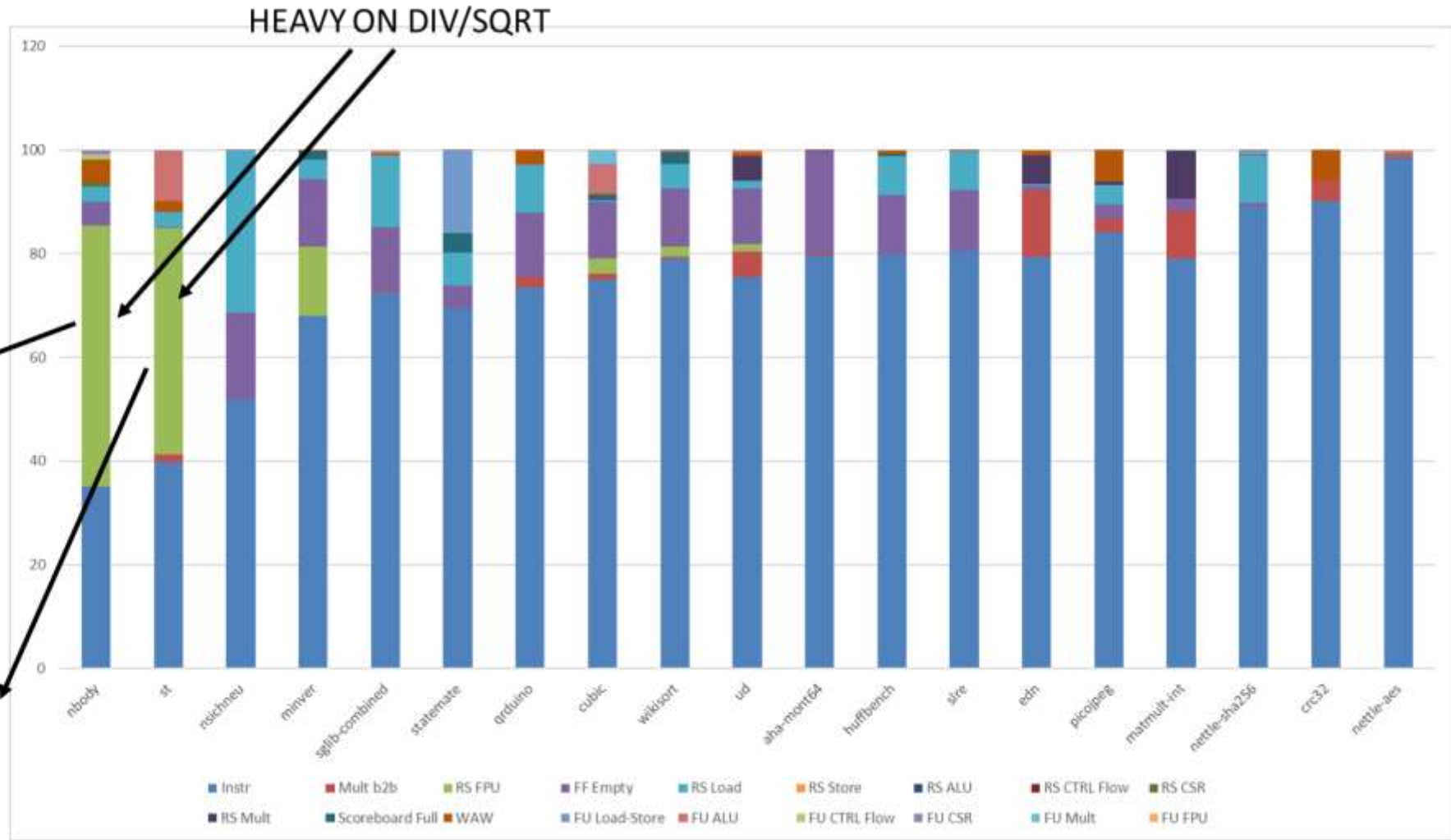


PERFORMANCE: Embench-iot Benchmark Suite

ETH zürich



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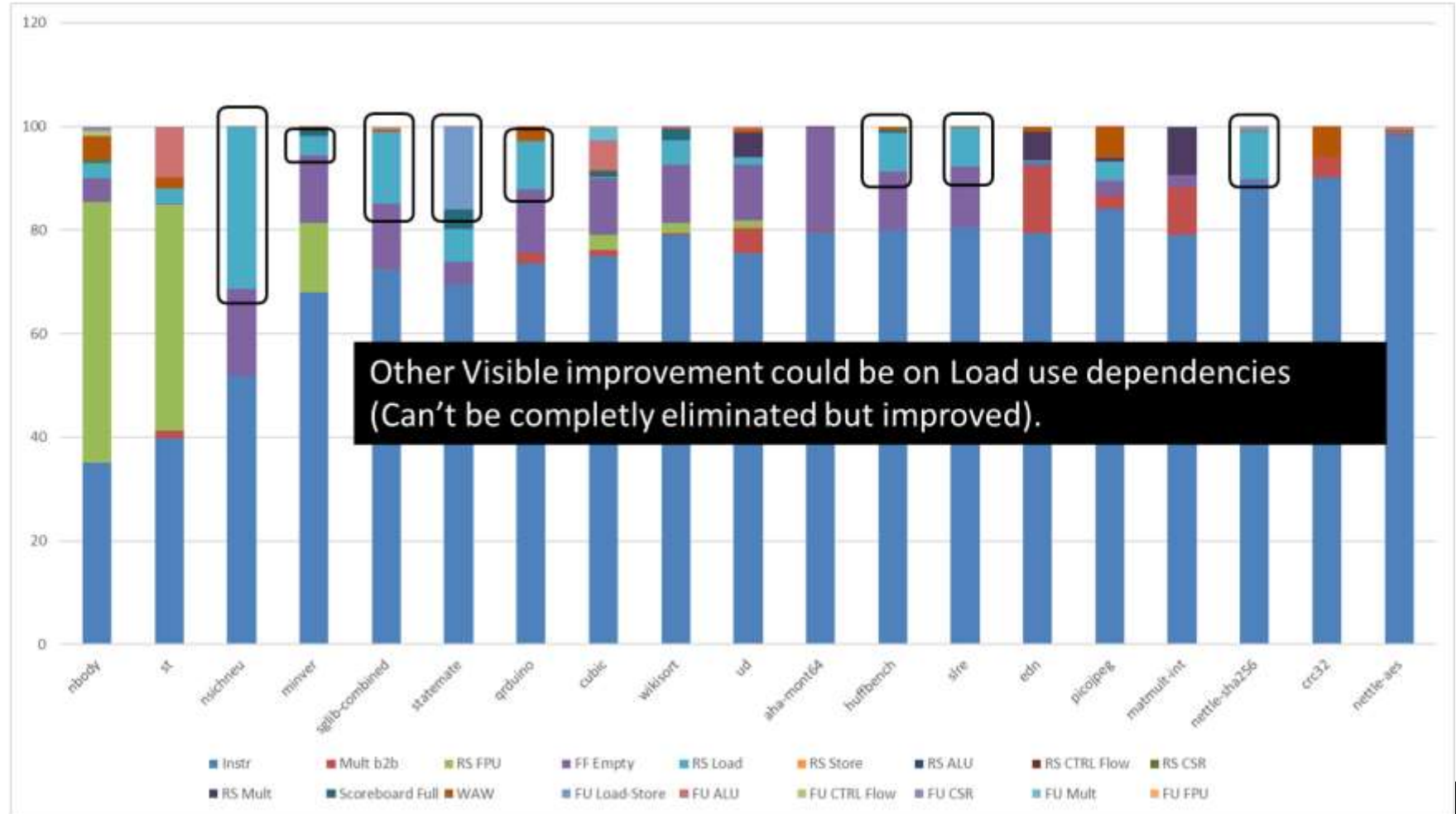


PERFORMANCE: Embench-iot Benchmark Suite

ETH zürich



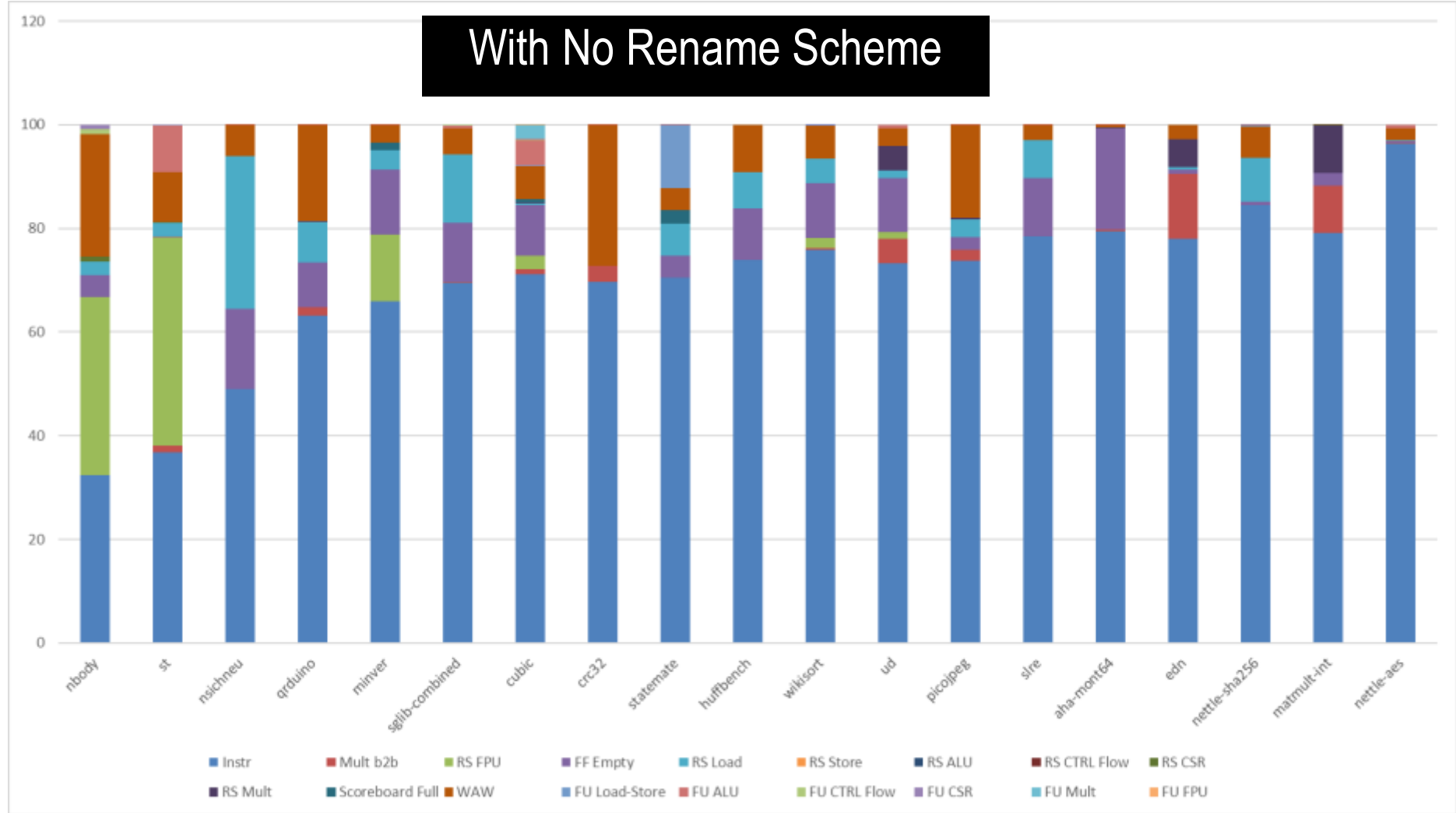
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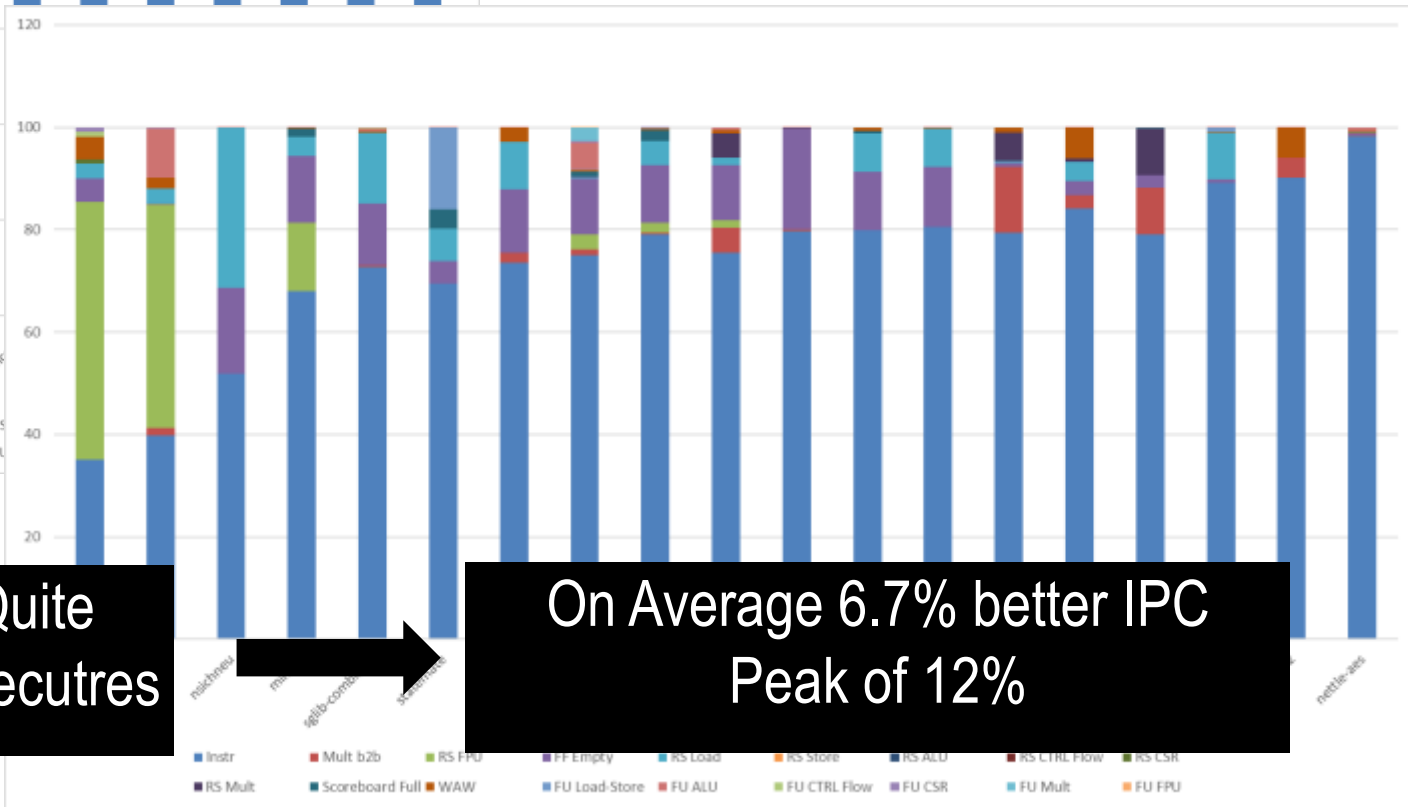
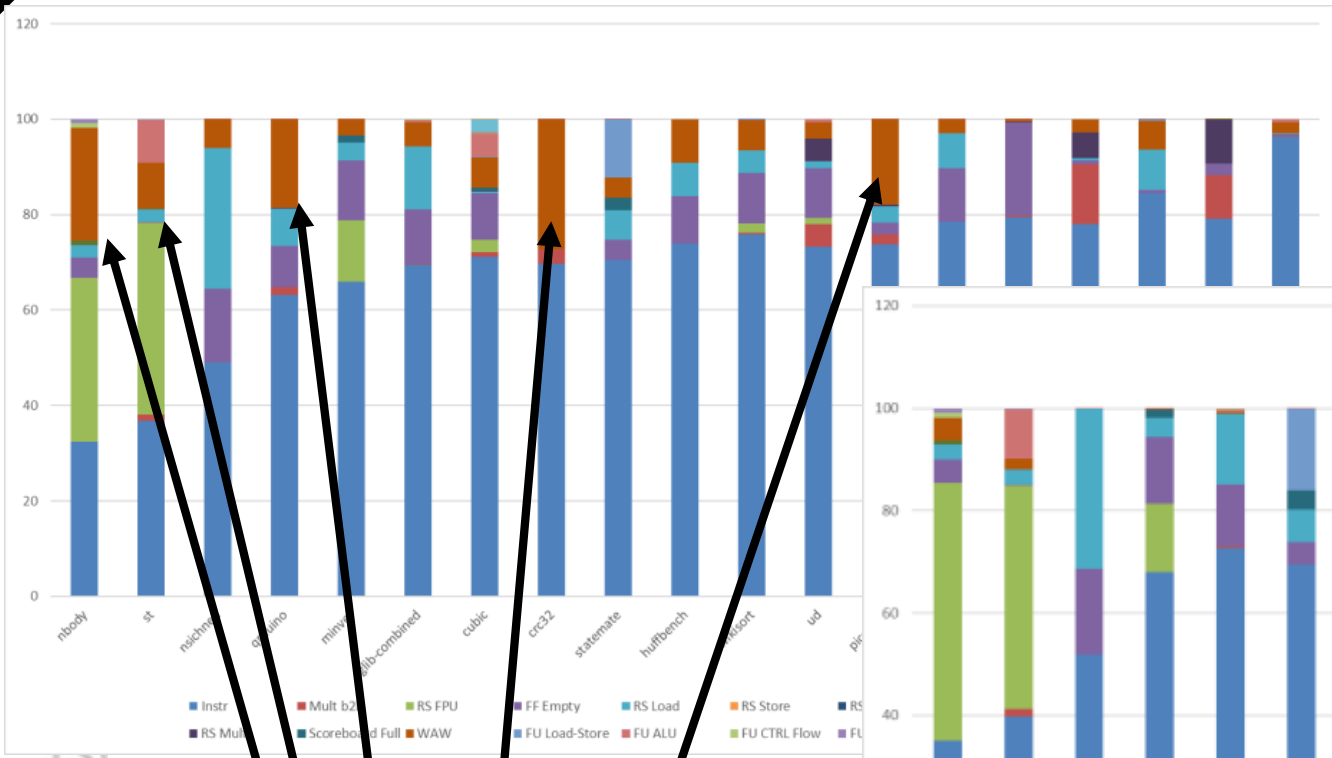
PERFORMANCE: Embench-iot Benchmark Suite

With No Rename Scheme





PERFORMANCE: Embench-iot Benchmark Suite



1 Bit Rename Scheme Quite effective on In-Order Architectures

On Average 6.7% better IPC Peak of 12%

ETH





CVA6 is open-source

- You can find all the RTL of the Core at:
 - <https://github.com/openhwgroup/cva6>
- CVA6 is just one of the core born from the PULP Project
 - <https://pulp-platform.org/>
 - <https://github.com/pulp-platform>
- From RTL to Silicon

