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### 'Plug and Play' Chip Group Adds to Membership

By [Michael Singer](#)

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In a show of support for "plug and play," STMicroelectronics ([Quote](#), [Company Info](#)) Monday said it has joined Open Core Protocol International Partnership (OCP-IP) as a governing member.

Portland, Ore.-based OCP-IP is a non-profit industry association that wants to make a common standard for intellectual property core interfaces, or sockets, that facilitate "plug and play" system-on-chip (SoC) design. The group says to make sure complex microprocessors reach a wide audience, the industry needs a complete socket standard that everyone can use, no matter what their on-chip architecture is, or whose processor cores they're using.

The group says its OCP is not a rigid bus interface; rather it resides above the level of abstraction of a bus. The benefit of a standard socket for SoC design, say group members, is that intellectual property designers can make their cores independent of specific bus protocols, and hence of any particular design implementation. This allows for more reuse of OCP-compliant cores across multiple SoC designs.

"In the past Traditionally designers have an ongoing task to support each design's selected bus protocols by modifying a core's interface protocols, then the verification suite, then the test bench, then documenting and supporting that design-dependent version of the core. OCP eliminates the need to repeatedly modify the core itself, and preserves the verification and test benches by defining all the core's natural interface capabilities to be presented in an unchanging, universally understood manner," OCP-IP says in its literature.



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The Swiss-owned chipmaker now joins Nokia , Texas Instruments ([Quote](#), [Company Info](#)), United Microelectronics Corporation ([Quote](#), [Company Info](#)) and Sonics at the head of the table.

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"Standardization of a socket interface and its broad adoption in the semiconductor industry are key factors to enable development of reusable IP and IP integration in complex SoC products," said Aldo Cometti, director of development at ST and OCP-IP GSC member. "We count on this to further evolve our system level designs and to reduce complex SoC product design cycles and time-to-market. We look forward to working with OCP-IP members in contributing to the development of this IP socket standard."

STM said it is also joining as a participant in OCP-IP's Working groups, which recently announced the availability of the OCP 2.0 Specification Release Candidate.

The working group members are currently developing enhancements and support for OCP, and addressing the future needs of the membership in the use of the specification.

As a side benefit, OCP-IP says its members receive free training and support, free software tools, and free documentation, enabling members to focus on the challenges of SoC design.

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