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Design and Verification of 32 bit RISC V Processor using Simulation and FPGA

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ABSTRACT: The recent fast growth of technology has simplified and improved our lives. This progress is mostly owing to the quick development of the silicon industry and the invention of different processors. With the silicon processor serving as the brain of any modern computer, we as humans are able to automate many monotonous tasks and are also able to do many other tasks which are usually very difficult for a human being. So, we thought why not design our own working processor. It used to be difficult to design a processor due to the vast quantities of money and resources necessary, as well as the fact that many corporations make their technology, innovations and research a trade secret. But due to the availability and development of free open-source design tools, open-source ISA like RISC-V and hardware description languages it is possible for undergraduate students to design their own processor just like developing an open-source software. The main objective of this project is to design a basic processor which will be able to execute about 31 different instructions out of the 47 instructions present in the base integer instructions set RV32I of RISC-V. We will be using an FPGA which is highly customizable for prototyping a chip and it's cheaper and very easy to deploy the processor on a FPGA than printing it on a die. The reason for this objective was that if in the near future, once our processor is developed properly, can be used for processing data for a small embedded system, and the hardware descriptions language can be extended easily for some particular applications. These applications can be anywhere from machine learning, vector acceleration to simple signal processing functions.

KEYWORDS - RISC, Pipelining, Verilog, Instruction Set

I. TECHNOLOGY

RISC-V

RISC -V also known as reduced instruction set architecture. It is an open-source Instruction set architecture (ISA). It was developed by the developers at University of California, Berkeley. It is known as reduced instruction set architecture because it has very few instructions to be micro coded in order to make a functional processor which helps in the development of architecture that perform complex tasks optimally. The number of instructions in RISC is comparatively low compared to 3684 in x86 and 232 in ARM where RISC has just 47 instructions. Open-source ISA not only reduces hardware costs but also allows for scalability by allowing the community to include custom instructions that simplify software. The central processing unit (CPU), or brain of the computational device, is a true technological marvel. It appears to be a fascinating magic that only elite experts understand, but we will unravel this magic by designing our own RISC-V. Our project aims to create a basic RISC-V-based processor that can execute a few instructions from the RV32I base integer instruction set. The project described above can then be developed and extended for any specific application, such as AI, signal processing, and so on.

TOOLS USED

GTKWave:

GTKWave is a VCD waveform viewer that is built with the GTK library. This viewer supports VCD, LXT, LXT2, VZT, and GHW files, as well as standard Verilog signal dump formats. It also allows them to visualize. GTKWave was created for Linux, but it can also be used on Windows. It is a free and open-source EDA tool. It aids in wave simulation.

ICARUS VERILOG

The process of designing hardware begins with an abstract description of the intended device. Design entry languages such as schematic drawings and hardware description languages are used by the designer to enter the design.

Quartus prime

Intel Quartus Prime is Intel's programmable logic device design software; prior to Intel's acquisition of Altera, the tool was known as Altera Quartus Prime. Altera Quartus II was released earlier. Quartus Prime supports HDL design analysis and synthesis, allowing developers to compile their designs, analyse timing, examine RTL diagrams, simulate a design's response to various stimuli, and configure the target device with the programmer. Quartus Prime includes VHDL and Verilog implementations for hardware description, visual editing of logic circuits, and vector waveform simulation.

II. METHODOLOGY

First and foremost, we had to understand the specification of the processor that we were going to make using the RISC-V manual. After noting down the target specification, we started to choose which instruction we will be micro coding from the base integer instruction set. We then chose the Verilog hardware description language to microcode each of our instruction. We first divided the RISC-V processor into five stages of computing. We took each individual instruction and assigned the amount of work that each stage will be handling for each of the chosen instruction.

As a test case we first started with the micro coding of the ADD instruction and divided it into its processing flow for each stage. Then we verified the functionality of the ADD instruction through simulation and once the simulation was functionally correct, we verified if the particular ADD instruction worked on the DE1-SOC FPGA. Some problems arose when we started to test our single ADD Instruction on FPGA. One of the first problems we faced was that we had to reduce the frequency of the clock present on the FPGA from 50MHZ to 1HZ in order to see the results for multiple add instruction one at a time.

To reduce the clock frequency from 50MHZ to 5MHZ we had to use a built in Phased Locked Loop intellectual property present in Quartus Prime. And to further reduce the clock frequency from 5MHZ to 1HZ we designed our own clock divider circuit using Verilog. The second issue was to see the visual output of the particular microcode RISC-V instruction and for that we used 32 LED's connected to the general-purpose input output pins of the FPGA.

Once we had a flow for micro coding the instructions and testing the instructions through both simulations (i.e. software) and using a FPGA (i.e. hardware), our work became a little easier. We had to take individual instructions from the base integer instruction set (RV32I) and then start using the above-described flow for the ADD instruction for every other instruction. We have micro coded 31 instructions. For the verification of individual instructions, we have used an open source online RISC-V assembler which takes the input in the form of assembly language and then dumps out the machine code of the individual instructions which then forced into the memory of our processor using the testbench.

In the project implementation code, we have used two clocks as the input. The reason for using two clocks is to avoid race condition from register to register between two stages. The two clocks are equally space between each other with a 25 % duty cycle.

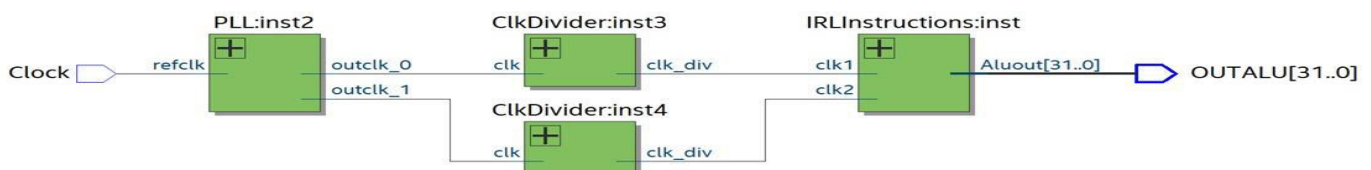


Figure 1- Clock Divider Block Diagram

We have used a 32-bit program counter for pointing to the next instruction. Note: The program memory starts to execute a new instruction at every memory address which is divisible by 4 i.e., 0x0, 0x4, 0x8, 0x12, 0x16, etc. The reason for doing so is due to the byte addressability of the JAL instruction. The 32 x 32 bits general purpose registers are initialised in our code. We have also initialised 32 x 512 bits program memory for storing the instructions. The ALU has been instantiated with registers a and b directly connected to the ALU's input and the function of the ALU is controlled by the opcode fed into the ALU. A simple initial block is used to initiate all the memory locations to zero and the initial block is also used to force the instructions and values into the memory locations at the start of the code. All the registers and wires are initialised before the start of the main program.

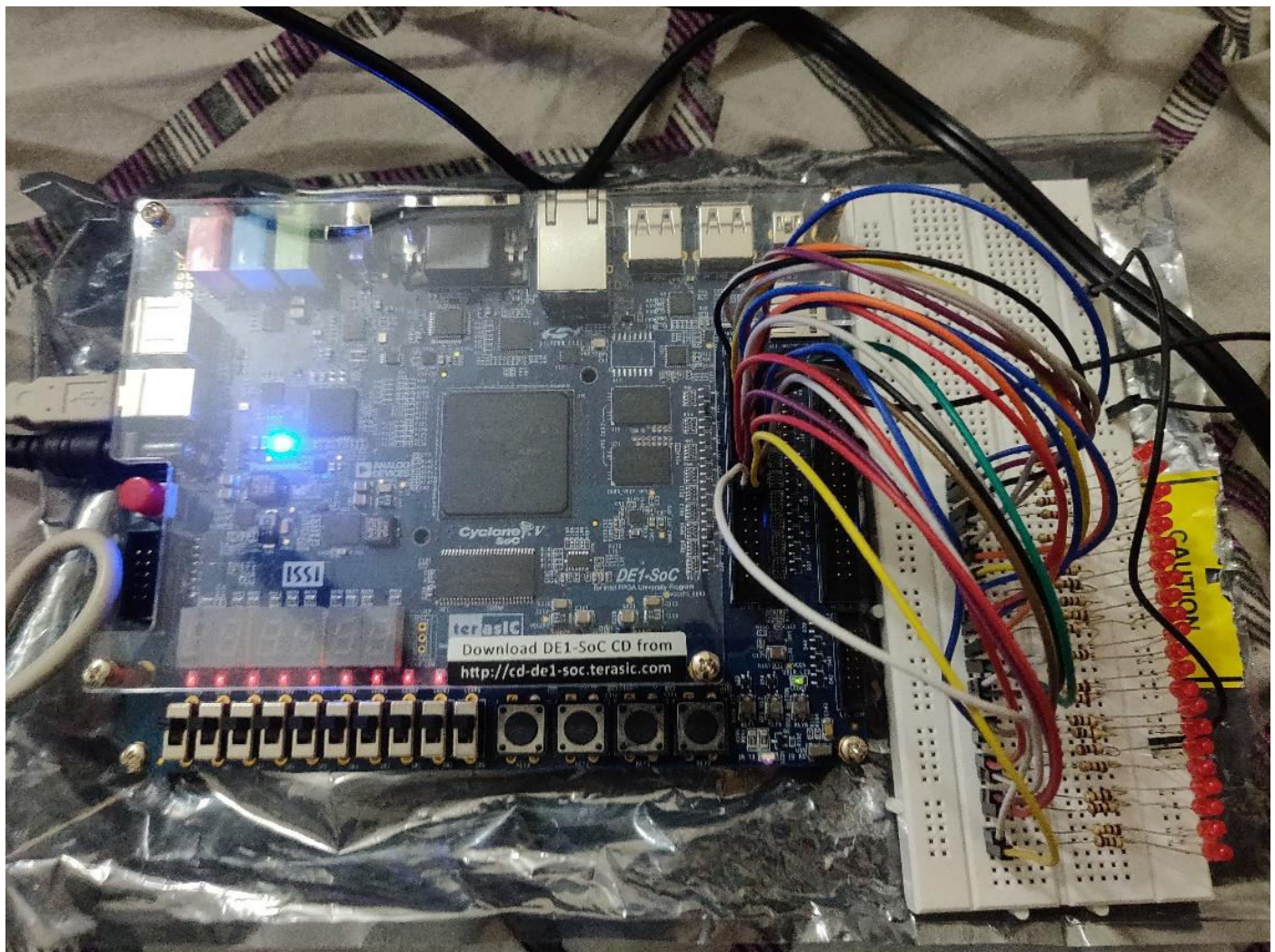


Figure 2- FPGA Testing

INSTRUCTION SET

It is a set of commands that is given to a CPU in machine language. Addressing modes, instructions, native data types, registers, memory architecture, interrupt and exception handling, and external I/O are all part of the instruction set. We've implemented 31 instruction set which are as follows.

R-Type	I-Type	Load-Type	Store-Type	U-Type	UJ-Type
SLT	ADDI	LB	SB	LUI	JAL
SLTU	SLTI	LH	SH	AUIPC	JALR
AND	SLTIU	LBU	SW		
OR	ANDI	LHU			
XOR	ORI				
SLL	XORI				
SRL	SLLI				
SUB	SRLI				
SRA	SRAI				
ADD					

PIPELINING

A pipeline in a pipelined processor has two ends, the input end and the output end. There are multiple stages/segments between these ends, with the output of one stage connected to the input of the next, and each stage performing a specific operation. The intermediate output between two stages is stored in interface registers. These interface registers are also referred to as latches or buffers. A common clock controls all stages of the pipeline as well as the interface registers.

Pipelining as 5 stages which help in queuing of multiple instructions in a single clock.

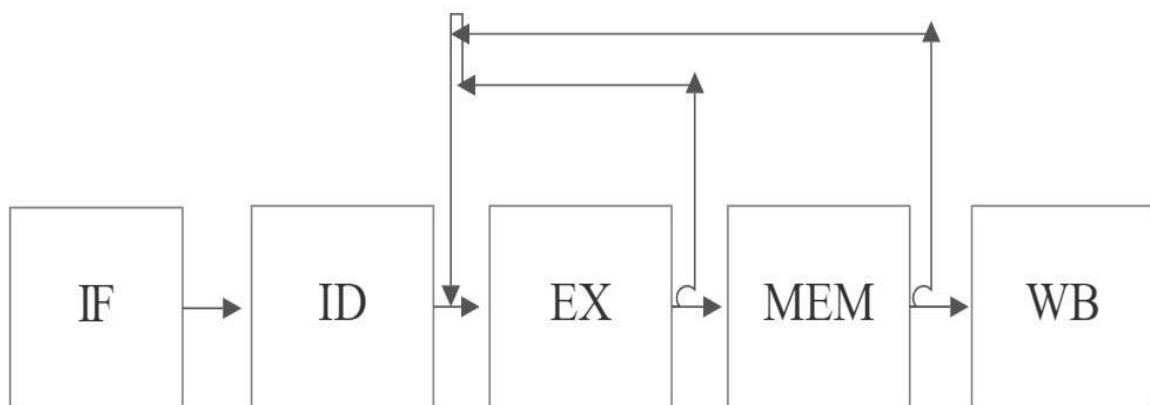
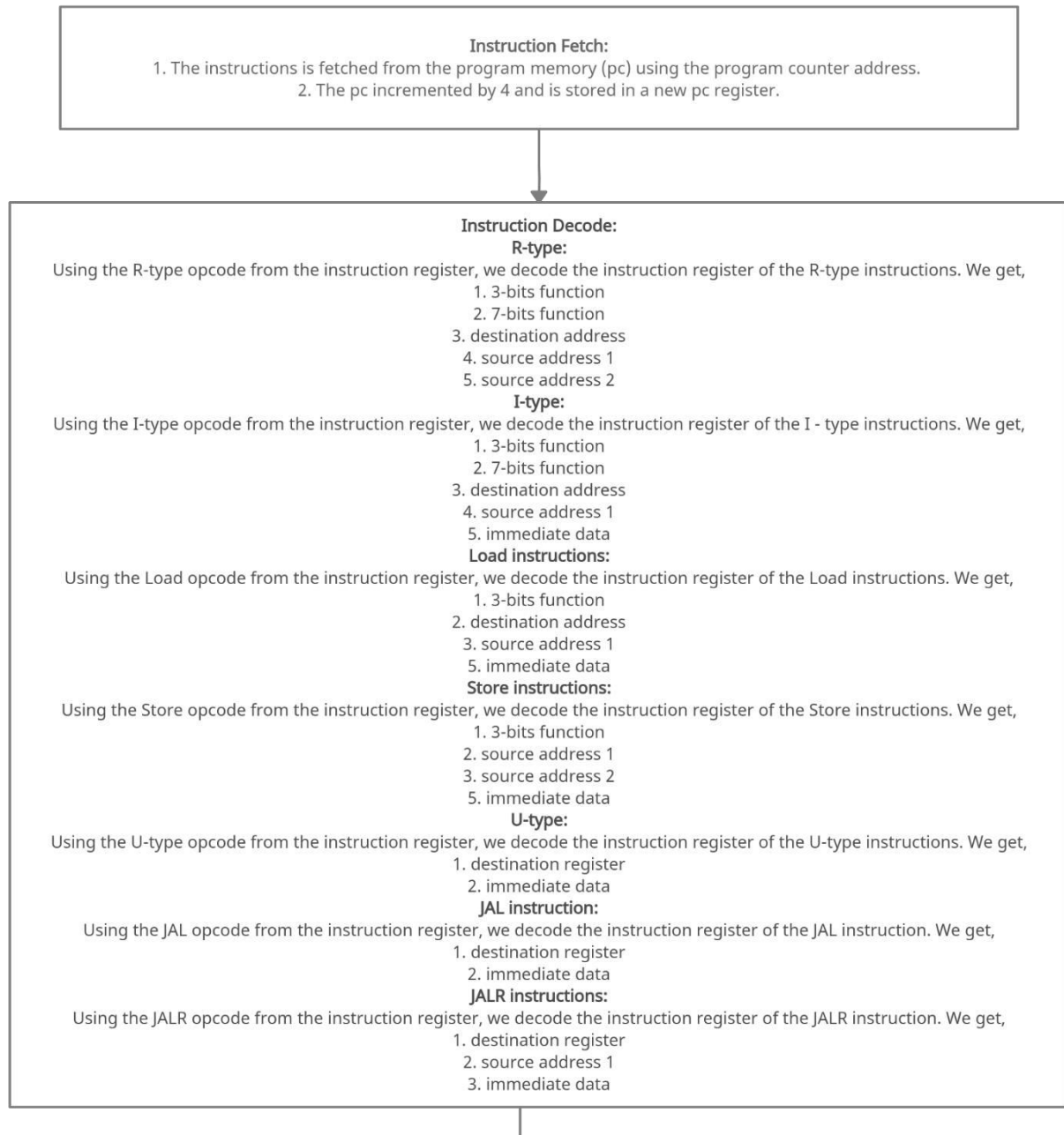


Figure 3- Pipelining Flow

III. IMPLEMENTATION

We've pipelined these instructions to ensure improved performance and higher operating frequencies and to reduce the complexity of designing the processor. The flow of pipelining for each type of instruction is shown below.



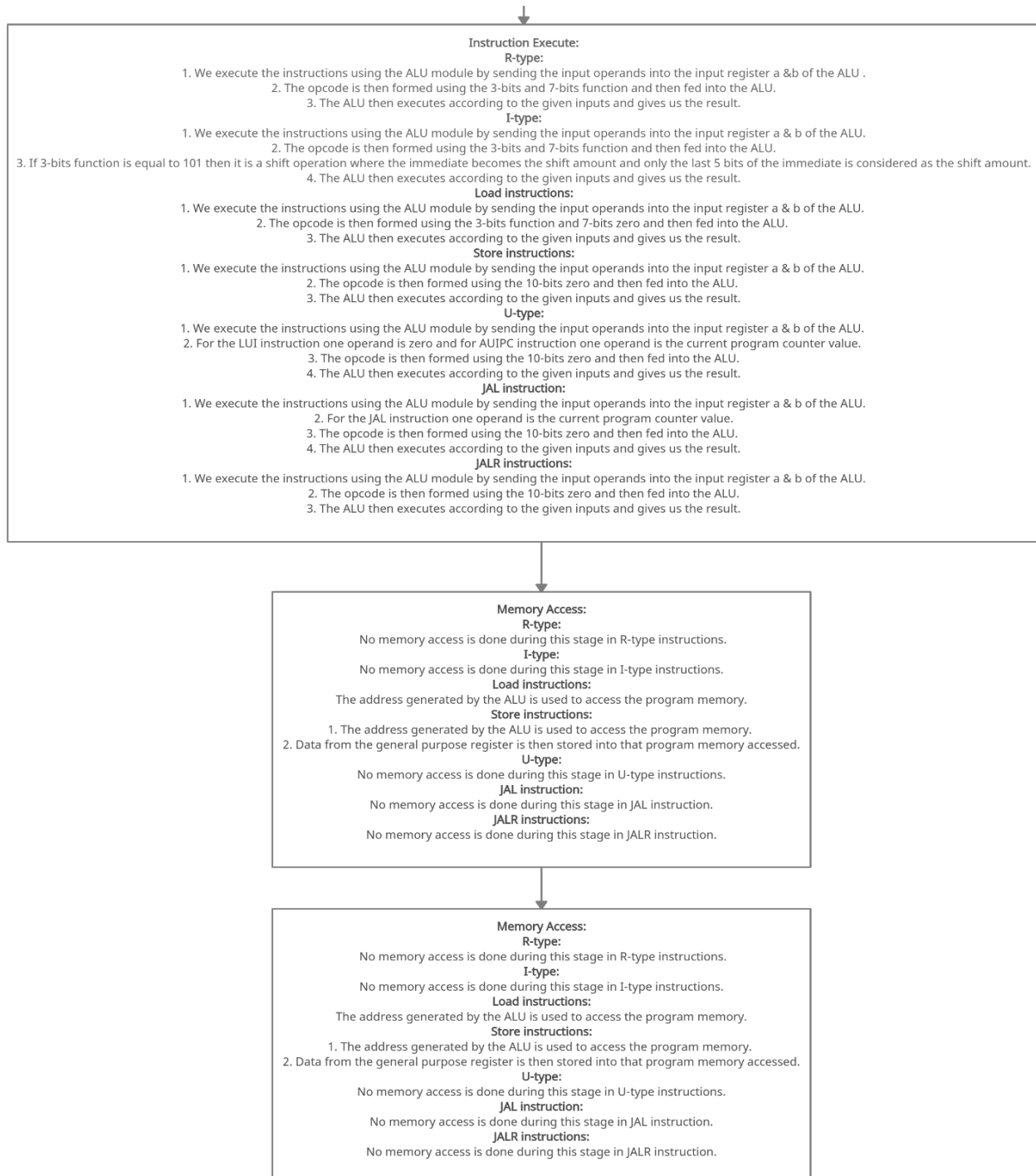


Figure 4- Instruction Set Flow

IV. RESULTS AND SIMULATIONS

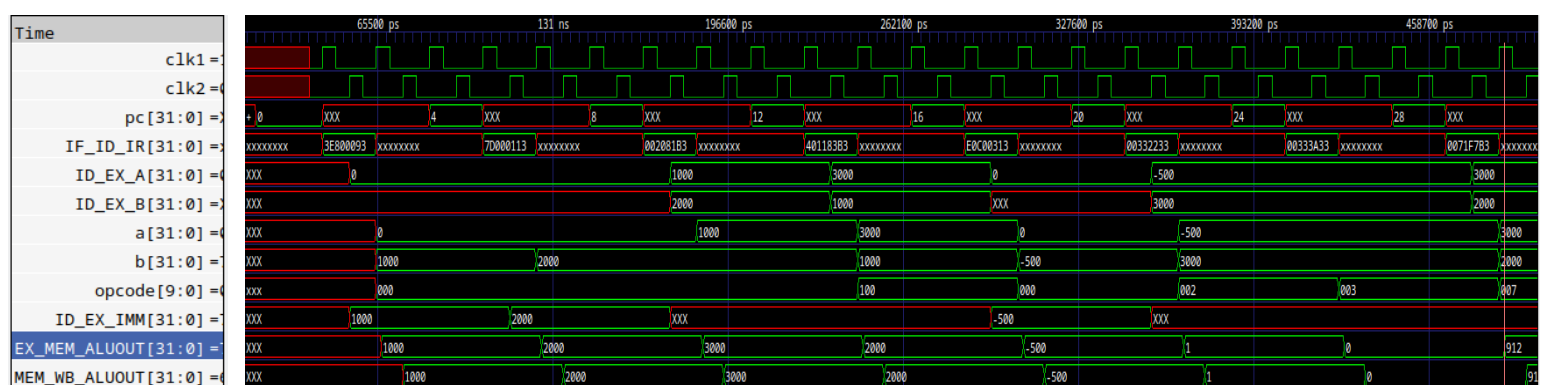
Each and every instruction was verified and tested with multiple test cases which involved multiple register level state changes which showed accurate functioning of the instruction which we had micro coded before it became a part of a larger system.

Using an online RISC-V assembler we convert the assembly language test code we write as the stimulus for our processor into machine code which is understandable by our processor. Using the testbench we force machine code into the program memory of the RISC-V processor. This is done using the first initial block present in the testbench. We also initiate our program counter to zero using another initial block. We also configure our two clocks to run at the correct intervals of time so that we can avoid any timing violations in our processor. The last initial block is used to dump out the. VCD file used for viewing the simulations in GTKWave. It dumps out all the variables i.e. all the registers, wires and nets used in our design.

Simulation of R Type Instructions

Assembly Code Used for Testing and Simulations:

```
addi x1 , x0 , 1000 /* x1 = 1000 0x3E8
addi x2 , x0 , 2000 /* x2 = 2000 0x7D0
add x3 , x1 , x2 /* x3 = 3000 0xBB8
sub x7 , x3 , x1 /* x7 = 2000 0x7D0
addi x6 , x0 , -500 /* x6 = -500 -0x1F4
slt x4 , x6 , x3 /* x4 = 1 0x1
sltu x20 , x6 , x3 /* x20 = 0 0x0
and x15 , x3 , x7 /* x15 = 912 0x390
or x14 , x3 , x7 /* x14 = 4088 0xFF8
xor x16 , x3 , x7 /* x16 = 3176 0xC68
addi x5 , x0 , 12 /* x5 = 12 0xC
sll x21 , x4 , x5 /* x21 = 4096 0x1000
addi x5 , x0 , 6 /* x5 = 6 0x6
srl x20 , x21 , x5 /* x20 = 64 0x40
addi x5 , x0 , 7 /* x5 = 16 0x10
sra x22 , x6 , x5 /* x22 = -4 0xFFFC
```



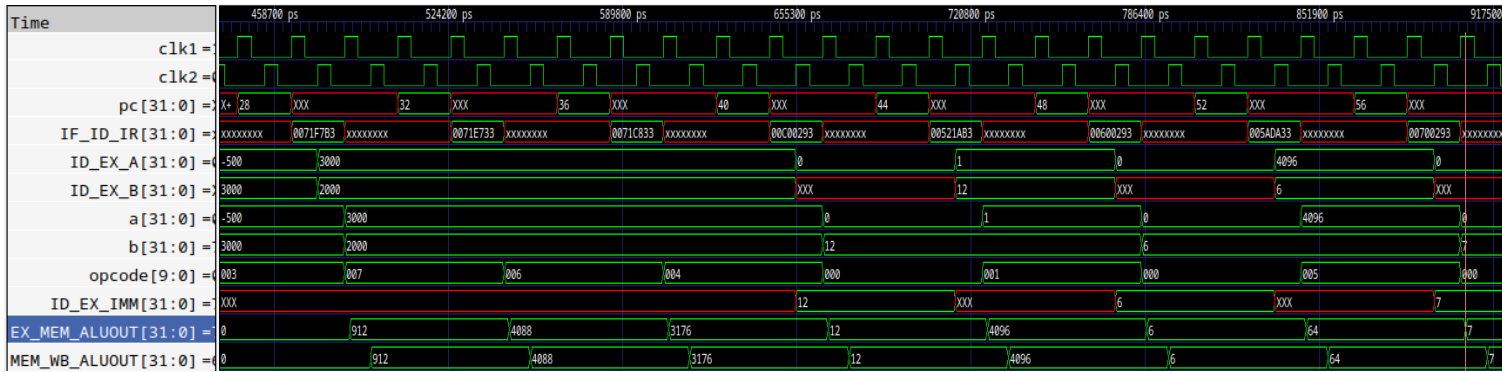


Figure 4.2 R-Type Result

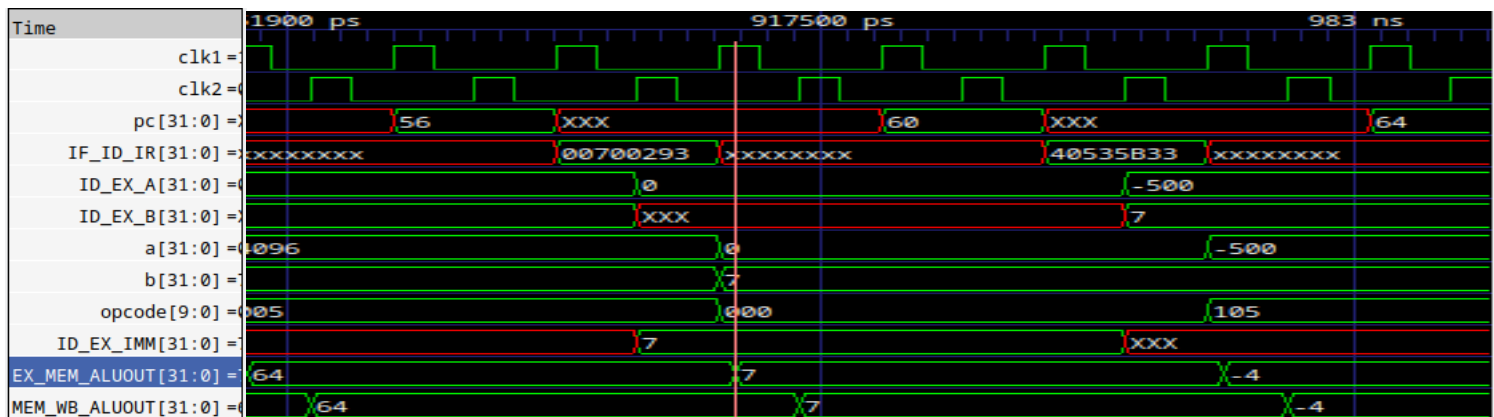


Figure 4.3 R-Type Result

Note:
Zoom in for clarity

Simulation of I Type Instructions

Assembly Code Used for Testing and Simulations:

```
addi x1 , x0 , 1000 /* x1 = 1000 0x3E8
addi x2 , x0 , 2000 /* x2 = 2000 0x7D0
add x3 , x1 , x2 /* x3 = 3000 0xBB8
addi x6 , x0 , -500 /* x6 = -500 -0x1F4
slti x4 , x6 , 50 /* x4 = 1 0x1
sltiu x20 , x6 , 300 /* x20 = 0 0x0
andi x15 , x3 , 2029 /* x15 = 936 0x3a8
ori x14 , x3 , 965 /* x14 = 3069 0xBFD
xori x16 , x3 , 1442 /* x16 = 3610 0xE1A
slli x21 , x4 , 12 /* x21 = 4096 0x1000
srli x20 , x21 , 6 /* x20 = 64 0x40
```

```
srai x22 , x6 , 7 /* x22 = -4 0xFFFC
```

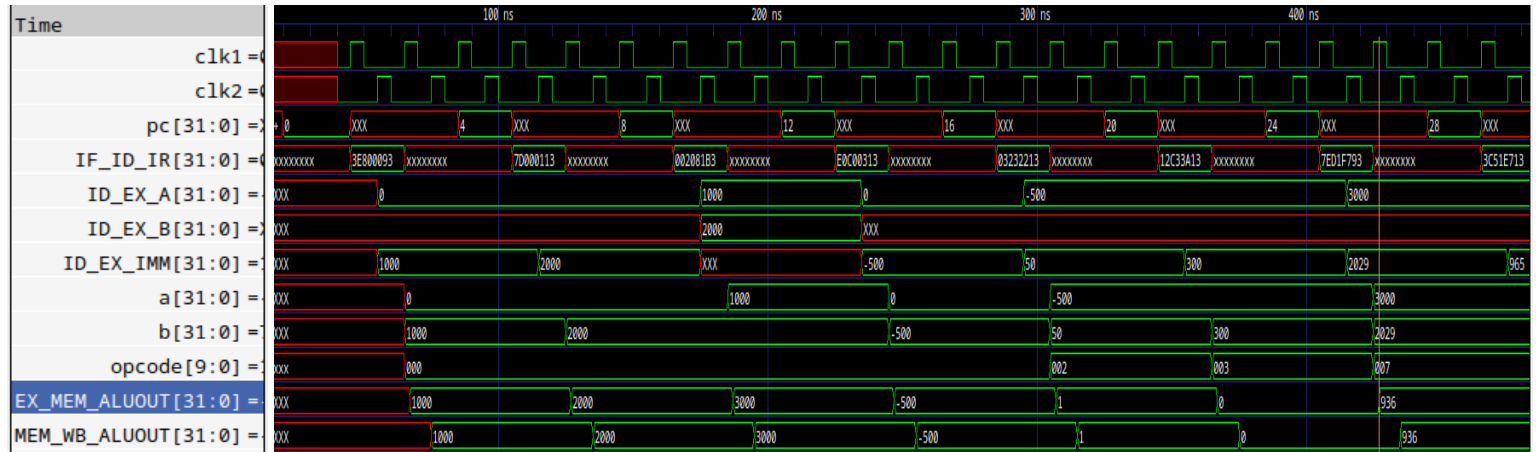


Figure 5.1 – I-Type Result

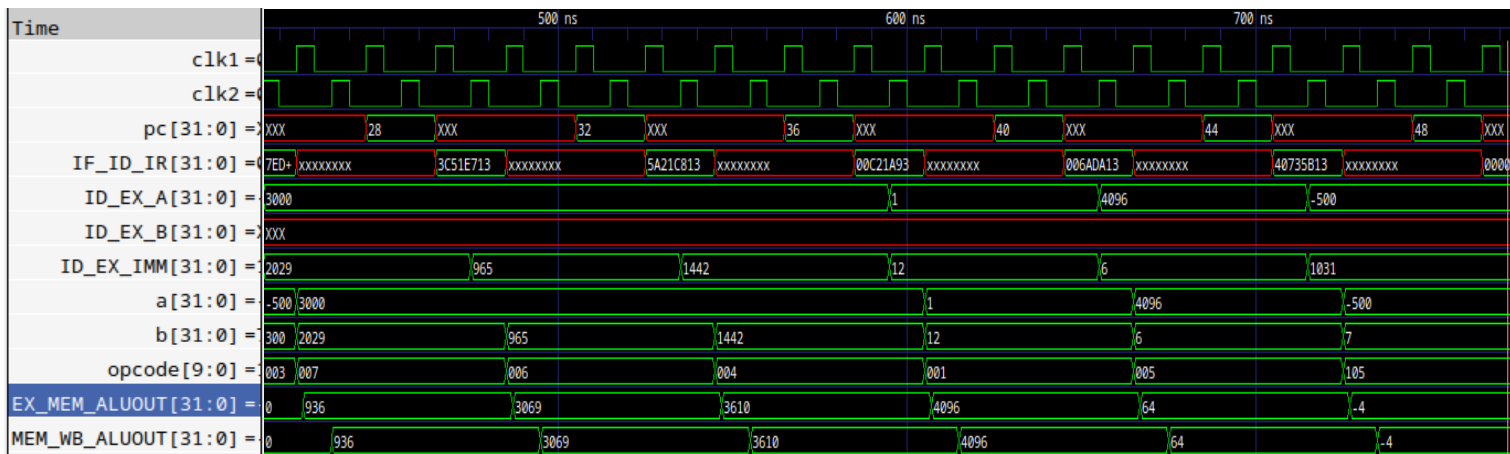


Figure 5.2 – I-Type Result

Simulation of Load, Store and U Type Instructions

Assembly Code Used for Testing and Simulations:

```
addi x3 , x0 , 19 /* x1 = 19
lui x5 , 0x34aff /* regbank[5] = 34AFF000
addi x5 , x5 , 0xa3 /* regbank[5] = 34AFF0A3
sb x5 , 3(x3) /* rom[22] = 000000A3
lui x10 , 0x8765F /* regbank[10] = 8765F000
sh x10 , 6(x3) /* rom[25] = 0000F000
auipc x24 , 0xffc32 /* regbank[24] = FFC32018
sw x24 , 16(x3) /* rom[35] = FFC32018
lb x20 , 16(x3) /* regbank[20] = 18
lbu x21 , 16(x3) /* regbank[21] = 18
lh x18 , 6(x3) /* regbank[18] = FFFFFFF000
lhu x19 , 6(x3) /* regbank[19] = 0000F000
lw x30 , 16(x3) /* regbank[30] = FFC32018
```

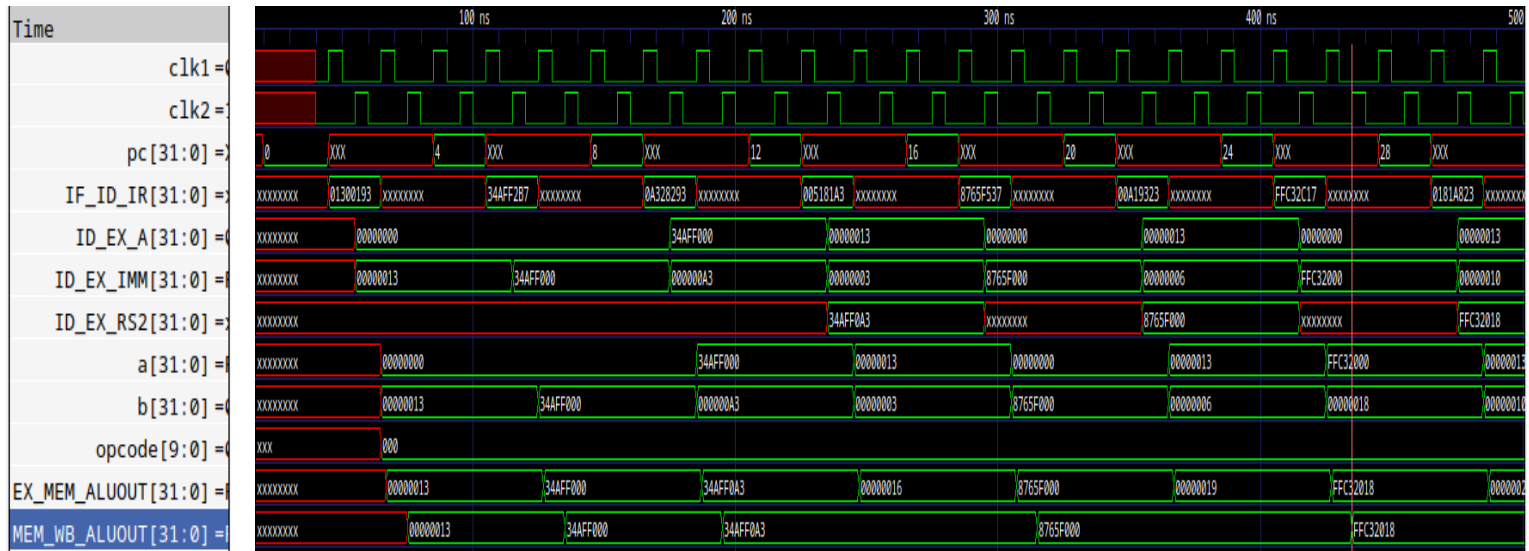


Figure 6.1- Load Store -Type Result

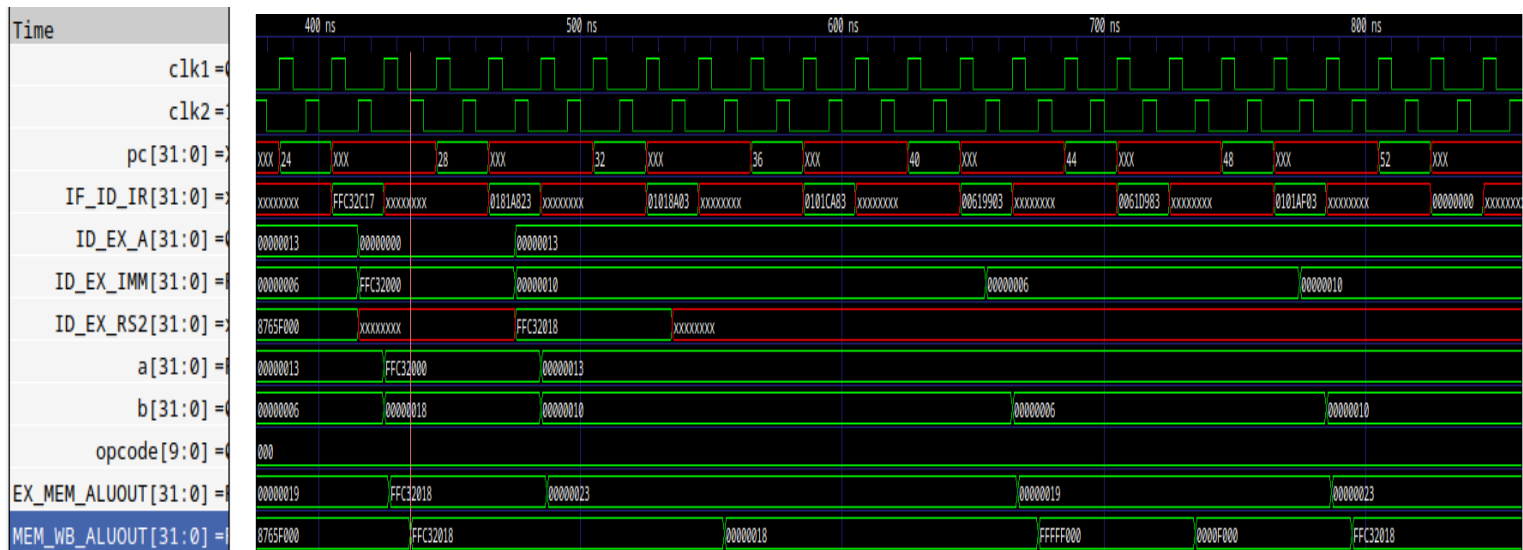


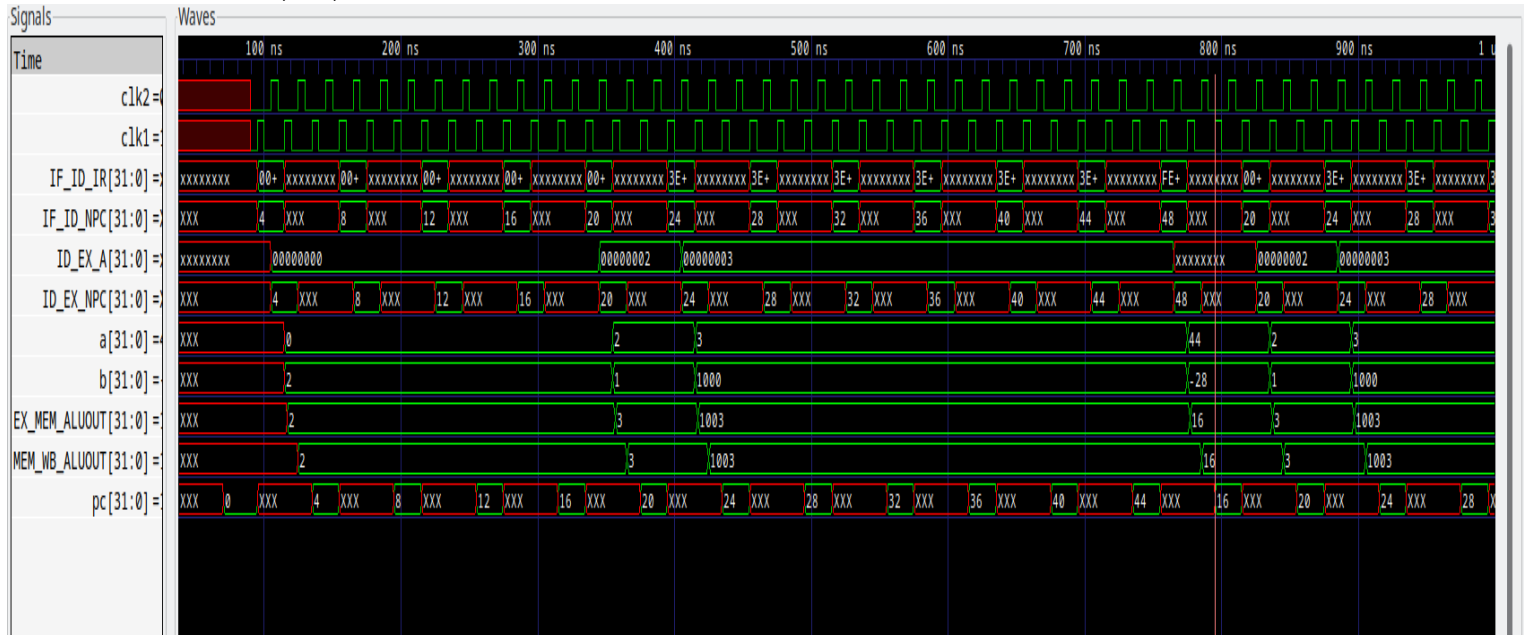
Figure 6.2- Load Store -Type Result

Simulation of JAL and JALR Instructions

Assembly Code Used for Testing and Simulations of JAL Instruction:

```
addi x4,x3,2
addi x4,x3,2
addi x4,x3,2
addi x4,x3,2
loop: addi x5,x4,1
addi x7,x5,1000
```

```
addi x7,x5,1000
addi x7,x5,1000
addi x7,x5,1000
addi x7,x5,1000
addi x7,x5,1000
```

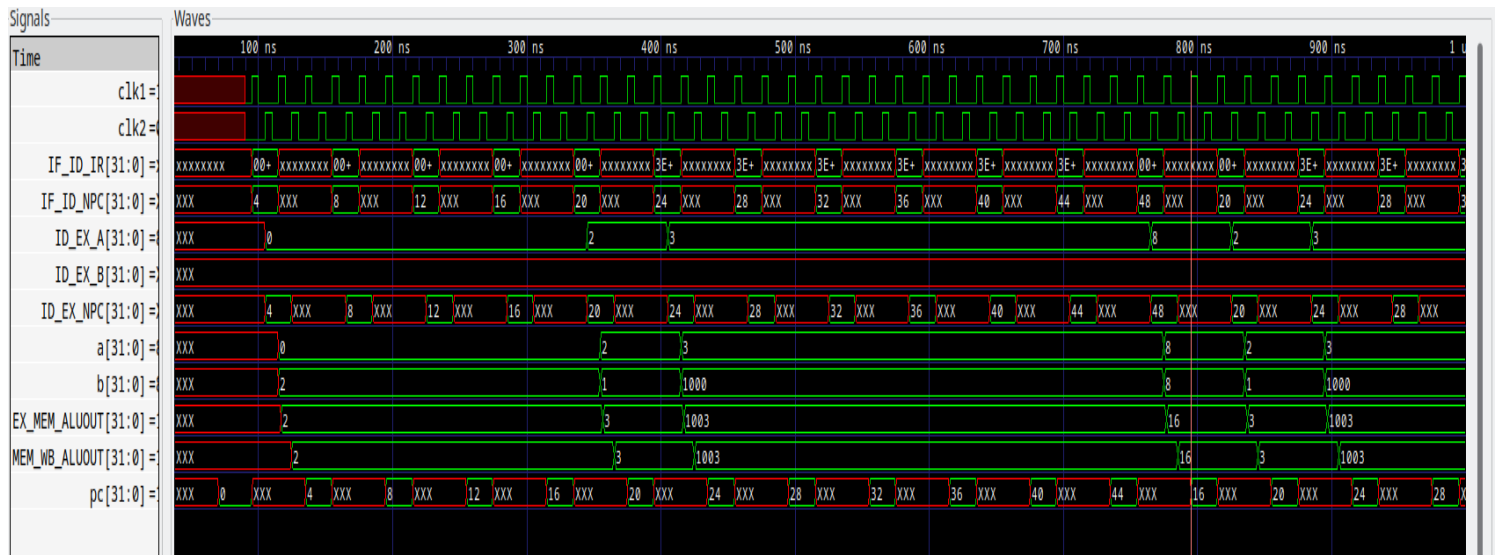


jal x1, loop

Figure 7.1 JAL & JALR Result

Assembly Code Used for Testing and Simulations of JALR Instruction:

```
addi x4,x3,2
addi x4,x3,2
addi x4,x3,2
addi x4,x3,2
addi x5,x4,1
addi x7,x5,1000
addi x7,x5,1000
addi x7,x5,1000
addi x7,x5,1000
addi x7,x5,1000
addi x7,x5,1000
jalr x20,x15,8
```



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