Renesas RA Family

Guidelines for Using the S Cache on the System Bus

Introduction

Caches can effectively improve instruction or data access speed for microcontroller and microprocessor systems with a mismatch between CPU and slower SRAM. Even though there are no internal caches in the Arm® Cortex®-M23 and Cortex-M33 processors, for some Renesas RA Family Cortex-M33 MCUs, there are system-level caches for both instruction cache and data cache present, which help to improve instruction and data fetch speed.

The cache enabling and configuration for the instruction cache are handled by the Renesas Flexible Software Package (FSP). The cache enabling, disabling, and flushing functionality for the data cache are demonstrated in this application project with reference software projects provided. In addition, this application project provides guidelines and example code for keeping the data cache coherent. Use this application project as a reference resource for S Cache operations.

The data cache is named S Cache in the Renesas RA Family Cortex-M33 MCU Hardware User's Manual. The S Cache is on the MCU's system bus. The instruction cache is named C Cache and is on the code bus. This application note is focused on the data cache usage of the RA MCUs. For consistency, this application note uses **S Cache** throughout the rest of the application note. At the time of the release of this application project, the RA Family MCU groups that support the S Cache are RA6M5, RA6M4, RA6E1, RA6T2, and RA4M3. The user can review the MCU Hardware User's Manual "Buses" section and look for the Cache section to understand whether any new MCUs include S Cache and its general specifications.

For other RA6 Series MCUs that do not have a S Cache are provided with SRAMHS. Access to the SRAMHS is always in a no-wait state. Use the SRAMHS on these MCUs when improved SRAM access is needed.

The example project provided is based on EK-RA6M5. You can easily port the example project to other MCUs that support S Cache. The performance improvement of using S Cache on an MCU varies based on the MCU memory access speed, memory size, and the nature of the SRAM access pattern of the application code. The user needs to analyze all these aspects when evaluating the S Cache.

Required Resources

Development tools and software

- The e^2 studio ISDE v2024-07
- Renesas Flexible Software Package (FSP) v5.5.0
- SEGGER J-link® USB driver

The above three software components, the FSP, J-Link USB drivers, and e^2 studio, are bundled in a downloadable platform installer available on the FSP webpage at renesas.com/ra/fsp.

Hardware

- EK-RA6M5 Evaluation Kit for RA6M5 MCU Group (http://www.renesas.com/ra/ek-ra6m5)
- Workstation running Windows® 10
- One USB device cable (type-A male to micro-B male)

Prerequisites and Intended Audience

This application note assumes you have some experience with the Renesas e^2 studio IDE development. You must be familiar with importing, building, and debugging a Renesas RA Family MCU project based on FSP packages. In addition, users are required to read the entire Hardware User's Manual Caches section prior to proceeding to the rest of this application note: The intended audience is product developers who wish to use the S Cache feature to improve the system's performance.

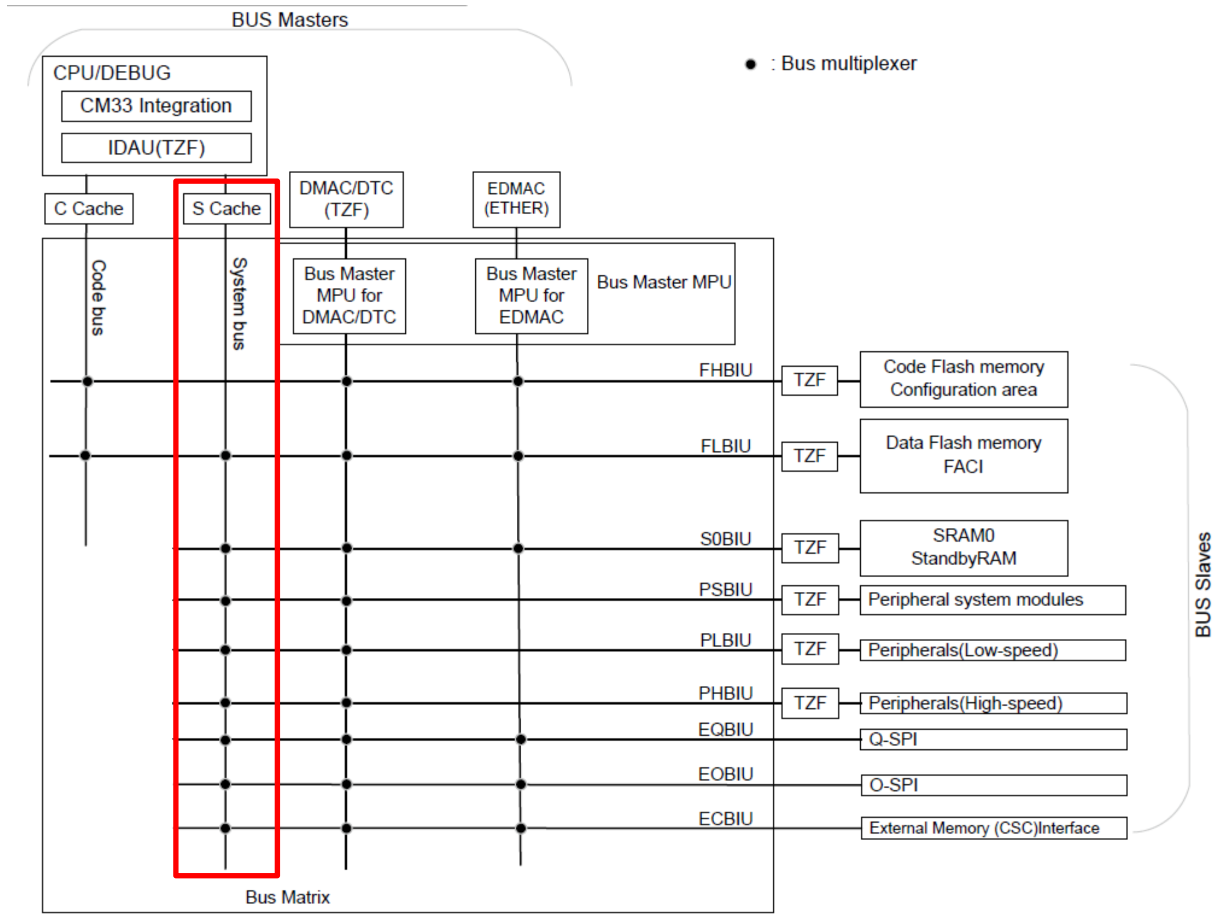
Contents

1. Overview of the S Cache on the System Bus

A cache is a smaller, faster memory located closer to a processor core than the main memory. It stores copies of the data from frequently used main memory locations. Some RA Family Arm® Cortex®-M33 MCUs implement both C Cache on the Code Bus and S Cache on the System Bus to reduce the average cost (time or energy) to access data from the main memory.

1.1 S Cache Architecture

Read the **Buses** > **Overview** section in the Renesas RA Family Cortex-M33 MCU Hardware User's Manual to see whether the MCU supports S Cache and understand the S Cache architecture. The bus system architecture for RA Family Cortex-M33 MCUs that have S Cache is shown in the following graphic.



Note: TZF is TrustZone Filter. C cache is instruction cache. S cache is data cache.
For FLBIU, the code bus accesses the data flash memory and configuration areas (code region) through FLBIU. The system bus accesses FACI and SCDS (peripheral region) through FLBIU.

Figure 1. Bus Architecture for RA6M4 and RA6M5

The bus architecture for RA6E1, RA6T2, and RA4M3 is similar to that of RA6M4 and RA6M5 regarding the S Cache operation; however, these devices do not have external memory interfaces like QSPI and OSPI.

Table 1 is the bus master specification for the RA6M4 and RA6M5 MCUs with S Cache. For arbitration between masters, the analysis in this application note is based on the following priority sequence:

EDMAC > **DMAC/DTC** > **CPU**

Table 1. Bus Specification for RA6M4 and RA6M5 MCUs with S Cache Support

Bus Master Name	Bus Interface Maximum Frequency	Synchronization	Specifications
Code bus	200 MHz	ICLK	Connected to the CPU Instruction Cache (C Cache) for instructions and operands
System bus	200 MHz	ICLK	Connected to the CPU Data Cache (S Cache) for data access operations
DMAC/DTC	200 MHz	ICLK	Connected to the DMAC/DTC
EMAC (Ether)	100 MHz	PCLKA	Connected to the EDMAC

Note that other MCUs with S Cache support may have different ICLK and DMAC clock configurations. In addition, some MCUs with S Cache support may not include Ethernet support; the user is required to reference the specific MCU Hardware User's Manual to understand the specific configurations.

1.2 S Cache Specifications

Read the **Buses** > **Caches** > **Overview** section in the Renesas RA Family Arm® Cortex®-M33 MCU Hardware User's Manual to understand the S Cache specifications. The following table has a summary of the key features of RA6M4 and RA6M5. Other MCUs with S Cache may have different capacities, number of entries, and so forth. The user is required to reference the specific MCU Hardware User's Manual to understand the specific configurations.

Table 2. S Cache Specifications for RA6M4 and RA6M5

Parameter	S Cache
Capacity	2 KB
Way	2-way set associative
Line size	32/64 bytes (defaults to 32 bytes)
Number of Entries	32/16 entry/way (defaults to 32 entries per way)
Write way	Write-through, non-write allocate
Replace way	2 way: LRU (Least recently used)
S Cache support area	0x20000000-0xDFFFFFFF except Standby SRAM area (0x2800_0000 to 0x2FFF_FFFF). Note: Peripheral area 0x4000_0000 to 0x5FFF_FFFF and QSPI I/O register area 0x6400_0000 to 0x67FF_FFFF must not have the cacheable attribution in the Arm® MPU.

Use caution when updating the Memory Protection Unit (MPU) configurations to avoid accidentally making these sections cacheable. Note that based on the Cortex-M33 default memory map, the RA6 Standby SRAM region is also cacheable. Renesas RA6 MCUs with S Cache-control have chosen a different configuration in this area and made this section as non-cacheable. This is controlled by hardware; the user does not need to set the Standby SRAM area as non-cacheable.

In addition, the Quad Serial Peripheral Interface (QSPI) registers of the RA6 MCUs with S Cache are located in the Normal memory region based on the Cortex-M33 default memory map, as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 . The user needs to use the Arm Memory Protection Unit (MPU) to set this area as Non-cacheable. Also, if the Cortex-M33 default memory map is used, the peripheral area memory type is Device nGnRE, and the cache attribute is not available for this area. As such, no action is needed to set this area as non-cacheable. An example code is provided in section 2.4.2 Figure 5 to set the QSPI register area as Non-cacheable.

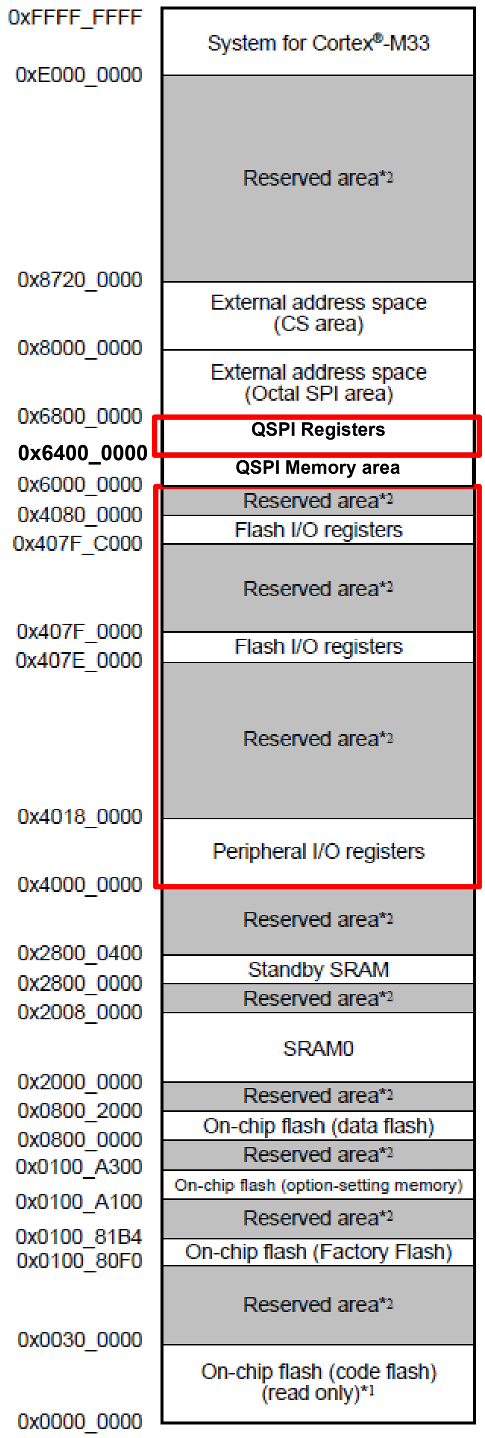
2.2.5 Behavior of memory accesses

Summary of the behavior of accesses to each region in the memory map.

Table 2-16 Memory access behavior

Address range	Memory region	Memory type	Shareability	XN	Description
0x00000000-0x1FFFFFFF	Code	Normal	Non-shareable	-	Executable region for program code. You can also put data here.
0x20000000-0x3FFFFFFF	SRAM	Normal	Non-shareable	-	Executable region for data. You can also put code here.
0x40000000-0x5FFFFFFF	Peripheral	Device, nGnRE	Shareable	XN	On-chip device memory.
0x60000000-0x9FFFFFFF	RAM	Normal	Non-shareable	-	Executable region for data.
0xA0000000-0xDFFFFFFF	External device	Device, nGnRE	Shareable	XN	External device memory.
0xE0000000-0xE003FFFF	Private Peripheral Bus	Device, nGnRnE	Shareable	XN	This region includes the SCS, NVIC, MPU, SAU, BPU, ITM, and DWT registers.
0xE0040000-0xE0043FFF	Device	Device, nGnRnE	Shareable	XN	This region is for debug components. Contact your implementer for more information.
0xE0044000-0xE00FFFFF	Private Peripheral Bus	Device, nGnRnE	Shareable	XN	This region includes the ROM tables.
0xE0100000-0xFFFFFFFF	Vendor_SYS	Device, nGnRE	Shareable	XN	Vendor specific.

Figure 2. Arm® Cortex®-33 Default Memory Map



Note 1. See Table 4.1. The capacity of the flash differs depending on the product.
Note 2. Do not access reserved areas.

Figure 3. Memory Areas that Need to be Non-Cacheable

1.3 Defining the Memory Attribute using the Memory Protection Unit

The RA6 and RA4 MCU groups, which have the S Cache support, also include the optional Arm Memory Protection Unit (MPU). The MPU is a programmable peripheral that can define memory access permissions, such as privileged access only, and memory attributes, such as Cacheability, for different memory regions.

When S Cache is enabled, whether a memory region is cacheable depends on the MPU configuration. The MPU is programmable, and the configuration of the MPU regions is managed by several memory-mapped MPU registers. The MPU can be used to protect memory regions by defining access permissions.

Although the Arm® Cortex®-M23 and Cortex-M33 processors do not have an internal level 1 cache, the cache attributes produced by the MPU settings are exported to the processor's top level. The RA Family MCU S Cache can utilize this feature to vary the cacheable setting for the SRAM regions. For example, for any algorithms where the variables need to be updated and flushed very frequently by multiple bus masters, using the MPU to configure these areas as non-cacheable may benefit the system.

When enabled, the MPU can override Cortex-M33's default memory access behavior. The attributes and permissions of all regions, except those targeting the NVIC and debug components, can be modified using an implemented MPU.

The user can set up the MPU to define additional memory regions as non-cacheable. Section 2.4.2 explains the use case of using the Arm MPU to achieve S Cache coherency.

The example project demonstrates how setting the SRAM region that is used by the DMA and CPU as non-cacheable can avoid the cache coherency issue. Users can reference section 3 for the details.

1.4 S Cache Operation

Read the **Buses** > **Caches** > **Operation** section in the Hardware User's Manual to understand the access flow from CPU to S cache. Once the S cache is enabled, access to the cacheable area follows the access flow as shown in Figure 4.

The S cache function works when it is enabled, and cacheable access is performed from the CPU. When an SRAM access to the cacheable area is initiated, the cache first checks the address of the CPU access request and compares the address with the entries in the cache tag. Then, based on this, the CPU determines whether the CPU access is a hit or a miss.

If the access is a read, the system behavior varies according to the following rules:

- For a read hit, the cache reads required data from the cache data and returns it to the CPU. In a cache read hit, there is a 0 bus wait cycle.
- For a read miss, the cache reads one cache line data from memory and stores it in the cache data. The cache then returns the required data. In cache read miss, the number of bus cycles used is the same as when the cache is disabled.

If the access is a write, the system behavior varies according to the following rules:

- For a write hit, the cache processes a write cycle to cache data and a write cycle to memory.
- For a write miss, the cache processes a write cycle to memory. There is no impact on cache data.

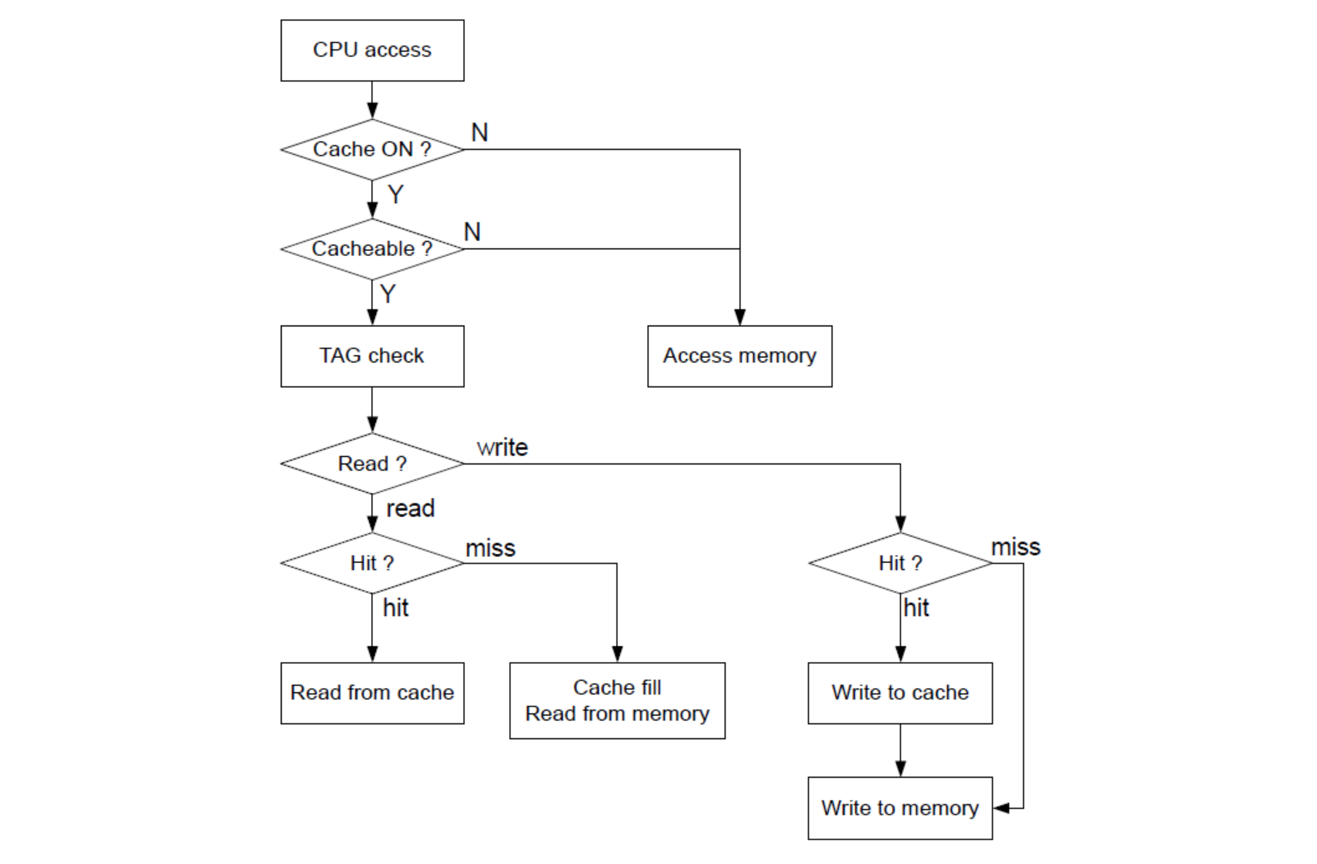


Figure 4. Access flow from CPU to S cache

2. Using S Cache in An Application

Consider using the S cache for improved MCU performance based on the analysis in this section. Guidelines on when to use S cache in an application, usage notes for using S cache, and how to keep S cache coherent are addressed in this section.

2.1 Using S Cache to Improve MCU Performance

The description in this section uses RA6M4, RA6M5, and RA4M3 as examples. Users can adapt the same analysis to other MCUs wherever it applies.

RA6M5 and RA6M4 have a maximum system clock of 200 MHz. Access to SRAM is a slower process than the CPU speed. The analysis of using S cache on RA MCU assumes the Error Correction Code on the SRAM is disabled (which is the default setting from the MCU and FSP point of view). Under this condition, the read access to S cache is 1 cycle with cache hit, and access to SRAM is 4 cycles (with 1 wait state) when the system bus is operating at over 100 MHz. This application project demonstrates the improvement of MCU performance when the CPU operates at 200 MHz. When operating at 100 MHz or less, read access to S cache is 1 cycle with cache hit, and access to SRAM is 3 cycles (with 0 wait state).

For RA4M3, the maximum system clock is 100 MHz. Accessing SRAM is always 0 wait states. Read access to S cache is 1 cycle with cache hit, and read access to SRAM is 3 cycles (with 0 wait state). For this reason, enable S cache if improved system performance is desired.

For RA MCUs with S cache support, consider enabling S cache to boost system performance when the data processed by the CPU exhibits a significant spatial locality, like in the case of a working buffer that does not need to be updated frequently.

Note that when S cache is enabled, and the above condition is met, the more frequently the data in S cache is used without needing an update, the larger the benefit of using S cache.

For a cache miss, the bus access cycle is the same as when the cache is disabled for all MCUs that support the S cache. And there is no performance improvement from cache write operations. For data not frequently used, filling the cache is an initial operation that will not be repeated or is repeated with very low frequency.

2.2 Configuring the S Cache Registers on RA6M5

The following table summarizes the S cache registers, their functionality, and the application functions used in this application project to configure these registers. Refer to the included example projects to look at the detailed definitions for these functions.

Table 3. S Cache Register Configuration Demonstrated in the Application Project

Registers	Functionality	API created in application code
SCACTL: S Cache Control Register	Enable and disable S cache	`void enable_s_cache(void);`
		`void disable_s_cache(void);`
SCAFCT: S Cache Flush Control Register	Flush or do not flush the S cache	`void flush_s_cache(void);`
SCALCF: S Cache Line Configuration Register	Configuration register that configures the S cache line size to 32 or 64 (default is 32)	`void select_s_cache_line_size(bool line_size_32);`

For other S Cache-related registers, the application project uses the default setting after the MCU reset. Table 4 is a summary of these registers and the default settings used in the application project.

Table 4. Registers Configured at Default MCU Reset State

Registers	Functionality	Default Settings used in the Application Project
CSAR: Cache Security Attribution Register	This register defines the security attributes of registers for Cache-Control, Line Configuration, and Cache Error.	This register is write-protected by the PRCR register. The default setting is used in the application project. Both secure and non-secure projects can use these attributes.
CAPOAD: Cache Parity Error Operation After Detection Register	This register defines the action the MCU will take when a Cache Parity Error is detected. The options are Non-Maskable Interrupt or Reset.	The default setting is Non-Maskable Interrupt. This setting is used in the application project. Demonstrations on the handling of the NMI interrupt are out of the scope of this application project.

Some tips to maximize the MCU bus performance are discussed. Finally, guidelines on how to design the software to benefit from the S Cache update scheme are provided.

2.3 Improving the CPU Performance

As explained in section 2.1, enabling S cache can improve system performance for some applications. The analysis in section 2.1 focuses on saving time from the bus cycle access point of view. Aside from bus access, instruction cycles are also a factor that influences the system's performance. Therefore, the perceived system performance improvement will not be proportional to the bus cycle savings.

The analysis of the system performance improvement based on the example project provided in this application project is provided in later sections.

2.3.1 Allocating Memory Access to Maximize the MCU Bus Performance

Several guidelines for memory allocations should be considered when designing the software for the purpose of improved performance, for example, when S Cache is enabled on RA MCUs.

- Variables often accessed together should be close to one another in memory. This increases the likelihood that the other variable will already be in the cache after the processor has accessed the first variable, thus avoiding cache misses.
- When accessing data linearly, use vectors or arrays. Linked lists, hash maps, dictionaries, and so forth are great data structures for many things, but they are not cache-friendly. Iterating through such a data structure involves many cache misses. If performance is important, stick to arrays. In addition, use arrays of values instead of arrays of pointers. Accessing the variable using a pointer invariably involves a cache miss. So, for fast array access, dispense with the pointers and go with values.

2.3.2 Designing for Data Structure Grouping and Alignment

When looking at how a program accesses memory, design decisions can be made that will take the most advantage of the cache. If a data set that a program is working on is smaller than the cache line size of the processor, it is important to make sure that the data is read into one cache line. This is done by grouping the data together in a structure and aligning that structure so it stays in a cache line.

For example, suppose a function uses local variables i and j as subscripts in a 2-dimensional array; they might be declared as follows:

```
int i, j;
```

These variables are commonly used together, but they can fall into different cache lines, which could be detrimental to performance. If the variables are used in a part of the program that is performance-critical, we could instead declare them as follows:

```
struct { int i, j; } sub;
```

This relies on the compiler's default alignment for structures. This default alignment is typically enough to ensure that the structure is aligned in the cache so that both indexes are in the same cache line.
`i` and `j` must now be referred to as `sub.i` and `sub.j`.

The alignment of the structure can be specified if the compiler supports this feature. Here is an example using the attribute feature of GCC to align a structure on an 8-byte boundary:

```
struct { int i, j; } sub __attribute__ ((aligned (8)));
```

2.3.3 Understanding the S Cache Update Strategy

The RA MCUs use the Least Recently Used (LRU) policy as the cache replacement method. With the Cache Write-through, no-write allocate policy, the cache is filled upon read miss, as shown in Figure 4.

To benefit from the LRU policy, design the system with the following points in mind to avoid cache replace events whenever possible:

- Use the data while still in the cache. Consider that data usage, and if possible, load data from the memory to the cache just once, use them or make some modifications to them, and then return them to the operating memory. If we need to store the same data from SRAM to cache, we are not using the cache optimally.
- Reduce the number of times data that is already saved to the cache is written to memory if these variables are updated. For example, in a sorting algorithm, we can reduce the instances of writing the original array by employing some intermediate variables.

2.4 Keeping S Cache Coherent

Cache coherency needs to be considered when the cacheable region is accessed by both the CPU and other bus masters (such as DTC and DMAC). For shared memory between MCU and other bus masters (DTC and DMAC), the S cache needs to be flushed prior to CPU access, or the shared memory area can be set as Non-cacheable using the MPU. Otherwise, it might use stale data from the S cache since other bus masters might have updated the SRAM.

2.4.1 Flushing the S Cache

Flushing the S Cache can be achieved in one of two ways:

- Flush S Cache in the application code
  Software developers know which regions are common for CPU and other masters, and they know when the CPU or another master writes to the command regions; the software developer can decide on what regions are cacheable by setting up the MPU.

  The S-Cache is a write-through cache; when the CPU writes to an address, and that address is already in the cache, a cache HIT occurs for the write. The data is written to the cache, then the cache will subsequently write the data out to the main system memory, so the cache and main system memory will be coherent after the main system memory is written. This means that for a CPU write to memory, the only cache coherency issue occurs briefly while the Cache writes to main memory. For the cacheable regions, the recommendation is for the software developer to flush the S cache prior to the CPU's read access to the common region. This method is demonstrated in this application project.

- Flush the S cache at the end of the bus master transfer
  This method may incur more overhead when frequent transfers are needed. This method is demonstrated in this application project.

Keep in mind that flushing the S Cache invalidates the entire S Cache, not just the shared regions. Flushing the S Cache should be done as infrequently as possible to maintain the best system performance.

2.4.2 Using the Arm® Memory Protection Unit

Users can reference the below link to understand the fundamentals of the Arm v8-M MPU:

Memory Protection Unit (MPU) Version 1.0 (arm.com). For a more detailed description of the Arm v8-M MPU, users can reference the Armv8-M Architecture Reference Manual.

Here are some of the key points that are covered in the above links that are related to the usage of S Cache. Users should keep these in mind when using the MPU for S Cache control.

- The memory model and address space.
- The MPU programmers' model: Renesas supports 8 MPU regions when TrustZone® is not enabled and 8 MPU regions for each secure and non-secure region when TrustZone is enabled. 32 bytes are the smallest size, and 32 bytes are aligned, addressed, and configurable by a series of memory-mapped registers.
- The difference between Armv7-M and Armv8-M.1 MPU
- The memory types and attributes: Normal memory is cacheable by default when the MPU is enabled. Note that Renesas MCU architecture defined the Standby SRAM region as Non-cacheable by hardware when S Cache is enabled. MPU can selectively set some Normal memory regions as Non-cacheable. Device memory is always non-cacheable.
- Memory Barrier Instructions:
  - A Data Memory Barrier (DMB) operation is recommended to force any outstanding writes to memory before enabling the MPU.
  - A DSB is used after enabling the MPU to ensure that the subsequent ISB instruction is executed only after the write to the MPU Control register is completed. The ISB instruction is used after the DSB to ensure the processor pipeline is flushed and subsequent instructions are re-fetched with new MPU configuration settings.
- MPU register overview
- Configuring an MPU region (reference Configuring an MPU Region).

Setting up a memory region as Non-cacheable is very easy with the CMSIS API, which follows the recommendations mentioned above (CMSIS support for MPU). An example of using CMSIS API to set up a memory area used by both the CPU and DMA master as Non-cacheable to resolve the S Cache coherency issue is demonstrated in this application project. Table 5 is a brief description of the CMSIS MPU APIs; all of these APIs are inline functions included in mpu_armv8.h, which are automatically included when establishing a project template using the RA Smart Configurator. These CMSIS-APIs are already including the necessary memory barrier instruction calls.

Table 5. CMSIS MPU API

CMSIS MPU Configuration API	Functionality	Comments
ARM_MPU_Disable	Disable the MPU	This API should be called every time the MPU configuration is to be updated. This is to provide portability of the MPU configuration code. This API is demonstrated in the example project.
ARM_MPU_SetRegion	Configure the MPU region number, MPU Base Address Register, and MPU Limit Address Register	This function is used to configure the location of one MPU region. This API is demonstrated in the example project.
ARM_MPU_SetMemAttr	Set up the MPU region attribute	This function is used to configure the attribute of one MPU region. This API is demonstrated in the example project.
ARM_MPU_Enable	Enable the MPU with the default memory map as background and define whether to enable MPU during hard fault NMI.	This API is demonstrated in the example project.
ARM_MPU_Load	Configure a number of MPU regions using a table.	An example of using this API is included in the example code in Figure 5. to set the QSPI register region as Non-cacheable. This region is not set as Non-cacheable from the default memory map and must be included in any projects that utilize the QSPI.

As explained in section 1.2, the QSPI register area should be non-cacheable; when using the QSPI, the user should set the IO register region as non-cacheable. Optionally, the user can set the memory area as non-cacheable as well.

```
#define MPU_REGION_0         0U
#define MPU_REGION_1         1U
#define REGION_0_ATTR_IDX    0U
#define REGION_1_ATTR_IDX    1U
#define READ_WRITE           0U
#define READ_ONLY            1U
#define PRIVILEGED_ONLY      0U
#define ANY_PRVILEGE         1U
#define EXECUTION_PERMITTED 0U
#define NO_EXECUTION         1U
const ARM_MPU_Region_t mpuTable[1][2] = {
{
    //  BASE      SH       RO    NP    XN      LIMIT    ATTR
    { .RBAR = ARM_MPU_RBAR(0x60000000UL, ARM_MPU_SH_NON, 1UL, 1UL, 0UL), .RLAR =
ARM_MPU_RLAR(0x63FFFFFFUL, 1UL) },
    { .RBAR = ARM_MPU_RBAR(0x64000000UL, ARM_MPU_SH_NON, 0UL, 1UL, 1UL), .RLAR =
ARM_MPU_RLAR(0x67FFFFFFUL, 2UL) }
```

```
}
};
/* Disable MPU */
ARM_MPU_Disable();
ARM_MPU_Load(0, mpuTable[0], 2);
ARM_MPU_SetMemAttr(REGION_0_ATTR_IDX, ARM_MPU_ATTR(ARM_MPU_ATTR_MEMORY_(0, 0, 1, 0),
ARM_MPU_ATTR_MEMORY_(0, 0, 1, 0))); //ARM_MPU_ATTR_MEMORY_(NT, WB, RA, WA)
ARM_MPU_SetMemAttr(REGION_1_ATTR_IDX, ARM_MPU_ATTR(ARM_MPU_ATTR_DEVICE_nGnRnE,
ARM_MPU_ATTR_DEVICE_nGnRnE));
/* Enable MPU, enable default memory map as background, MPU enabled during fault and NMI
handlers */
   ARM_MPU_Enable(MPU_CTRL_PRIVDEFENA_Msk | MPU_CTRL_HFNMIENA_Msk);
```

Figure 5. Setting the QSPI Register Region and Memory Region as Non-cacheable

Note that in order to use the MPU on the default memory map, the user needs to enable the MPU and enable the privileged mode. See below MPU_CTRL register attributes based on the (https://developer.arm.com/documentation/100235/0004/the-cortex-m33-peripherals/security-attribution-and-memory-protection/mpu-control-register). In our example project, the default memory map is used, so both ENABLE bit and PRIVDEFENA bit are enabled to configure the MPU regions.

Bits	Name	Function
[31:3]	-	Reserved, res0.
[2]	PRIVDEFENA	Enables privileged software access to the default memory map. When the MPU is enabled: 0 — Disables use of the default memory map. Any memory access to a location that is not covered by any enabled region causes a fault. 1 — Enables use of the default memory map as a background region for privileged software accesses. When enabled, the background region acts as if it has the lowest priority. Any region that is defined and enabled has priority over this default map. If the MPU ignores this bit.
[1]	HFNMIENA	Enables the operation of MPU during HardFault and NMI handlers. When the MPU is enabled: 0 — MPU is disabled during HardFault and NMI handlers, regardless of the value of the ENABLE bit. 1 — The MPU is enabled during HardFault and NMI handlers. When the MPU is disabled, if this bit is set to 1 the behavior is UNPREDICTABLE.
[0]	ENABLE	Enables the MPU: 0 — MPU is disabled. 1 — MPU is enabled.

Figure 6. MPU_CTRL Register

2.4.3 Choosing the Preferred Method

Which method to use in the user application to avoid the S Cache coherency issue is highly application-dependent. To reduce the S Cache flushing influence on CPU performance, when to flush the S Cache needs to be carefully considered. In addition, the user should design the application based on the recommendations from section 2.3 so the benefit of using the S Cache is maximized, which is also helpful in offsetting the overhead of the operations to avoid S Cache coherency issues.

If frequent S Cache flushing is inserted synchronously with the flow of the application, the performance of the system might be negatively influenced under certain conditions. For example, when using EDMAC with Ethernet applications, the transfer speed is very fast, and the shared region is used very frequently; in this case, setting the shared memory buffer as non-cacheable can be a better option than S Cache flushing to achieve S Cache coherency.

3. Example Project

3.1 Overview

This example project demonstrates how to enable and disable S Cache, how to handle S Cache coherency and how to use the cycle counter on the debug unit Data Watchpoint and Trace Unit (DWT) to evaluate the CPU performance improvement when S Cache is enabled.

System setup:

- A sine and cosine data set are stored in code flash.
- The data set is then transferred to the SRAM via a DMA channel.
- Next, the standard deviation of $sine^2$+$cosine^2$ are calculated by reading the sine cosine data from the buffer in the SRAM.
- The standard deviation should be 0 if there is cache coherency. When the S Cache is enabled, since both CPU and MPU access the shared area, the content in this area can lose coherency. The S Cache coherency issue is manifested by enlarged standard deviation. The example project demonstrated three methods to keep the cache coherent and hence recover the correct standard deviation.

The FSP modules used in this example project include r_dma, r_agt, and Arm® CMSIS DSP library. Their functionalities are explained briefly as follows:

- r_dmac: transfer data to DAC register to generate the sine and cosine wave.
- r_agt: time the DMA transfer of the DAC data
- Arm® CMSIS DSP module: calculate the standard deviation of ($sine^2$ + $cosine^2$)
- Arm CMSIS MPU API: set up the shared SRAM region as non-cacheable.

In addition, the cycle counter on the debug unit Data Watchpoint and Trace Unit (DWT) is used to track CPU cycles used in a fixed set of calculations when S Cache is disabled or enabled.

Analysis of S Cache Usage:

- The deviation of ($sine^2$ + $cosine^2$) will be larger if S Cache coherency is broken. See section 3.3 for this analysis.
- $sine^2$ + $cosine^2$ calculation should be faster when S Cache is enabled. See section 3.4 for this analysis.
- When the SRAM region, which is shared by CPU and DMA, is set as Non-cacheable, the $sine^2$ + $cosine^2$ calculation took a slightly longer time with S Cache enabled compared with flushing the S Cache.
- This application project provides routines to update the S Cache line size. However, it does not demonstrate the line size configuration to CPU performance. For set associative cache, line size primarily influences the cache miss time penalty. A larger line size means a larger penalty in time when a cache miss happens because it takes longer to bring the line into the cache.

  To show the set associative cache line size influence on the CPU performance, frequent S Cache misses need to be simulated. This is not demonstrated in this example project because there is no frequent S Cache miss designed in the performance analysis routine. On the other hand, for a cache of constant size, using a larger line size increases spatial locality, which can be helpful for some applications. Users should analyze the application at hand to select the line size that supports the best performance of the system. This is typically achieved through empirical investigation. Once the line size is determined for a system, it should not be randomly changed unless a new analysis is performed.

3.2 Import and Run the Example Project

Import project `using_s_cache_ra6m5` into an e² studio workspace. Click **Generate Project Content** and compile the example project. Next, connect the **J10 USB Debug** port on EK-RA6M5 to the development PC. Right-click on the project `using_s_cache_ra6m5` and select **Debug As > Renesas GDB Hardware Debugging**.

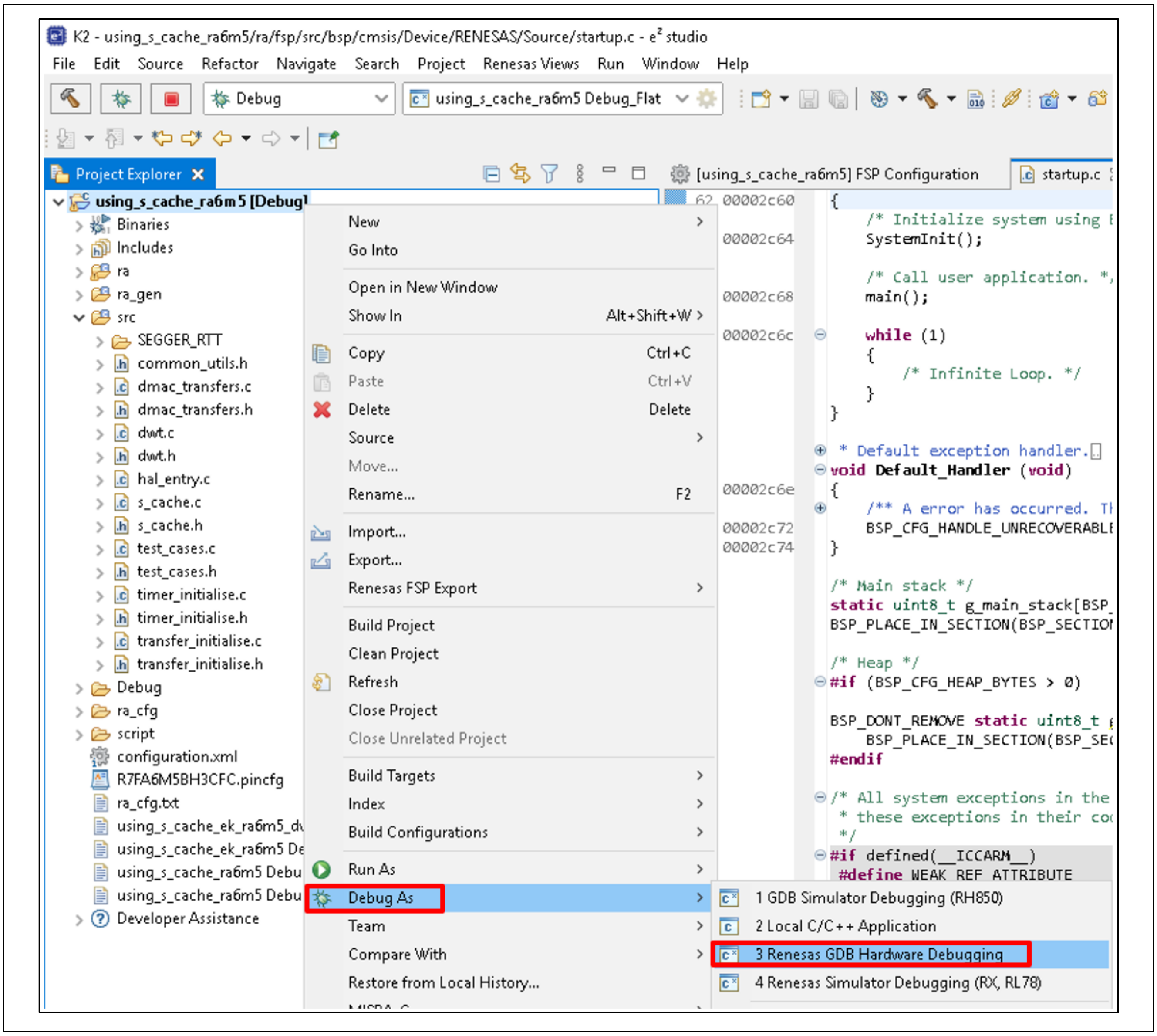


Figure 7. Using S Cache Example Project

Open the J-Link RTT Viewer 7.98b or later. First, click "**…**" and select **R7FA6M5BH** from **Renesas** as the Target Device. Next, set the connection to J-Link to **USB** and the **RTT Control Block** to **Search Range**. Set the search range to 0x20000000 0x8000 and then click **OK** to start RTT Viewer.

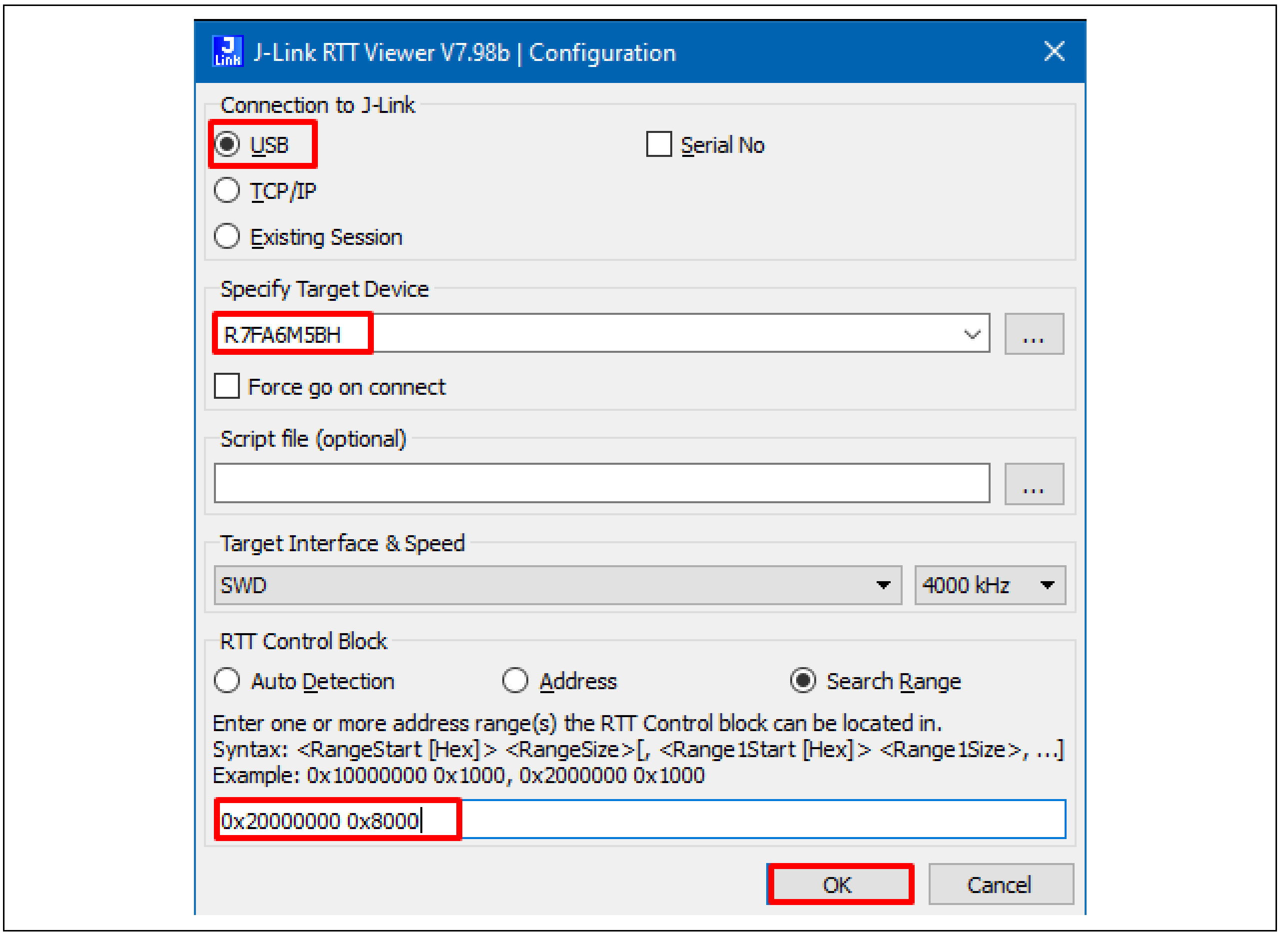


Figure 8. Connect to SEGGER RTT Viewer

The actions a user can take through the RTT user interface are S Cache configuration, whether to flush S Cache, where to Flush S Cache, and the S Cache line configuration.

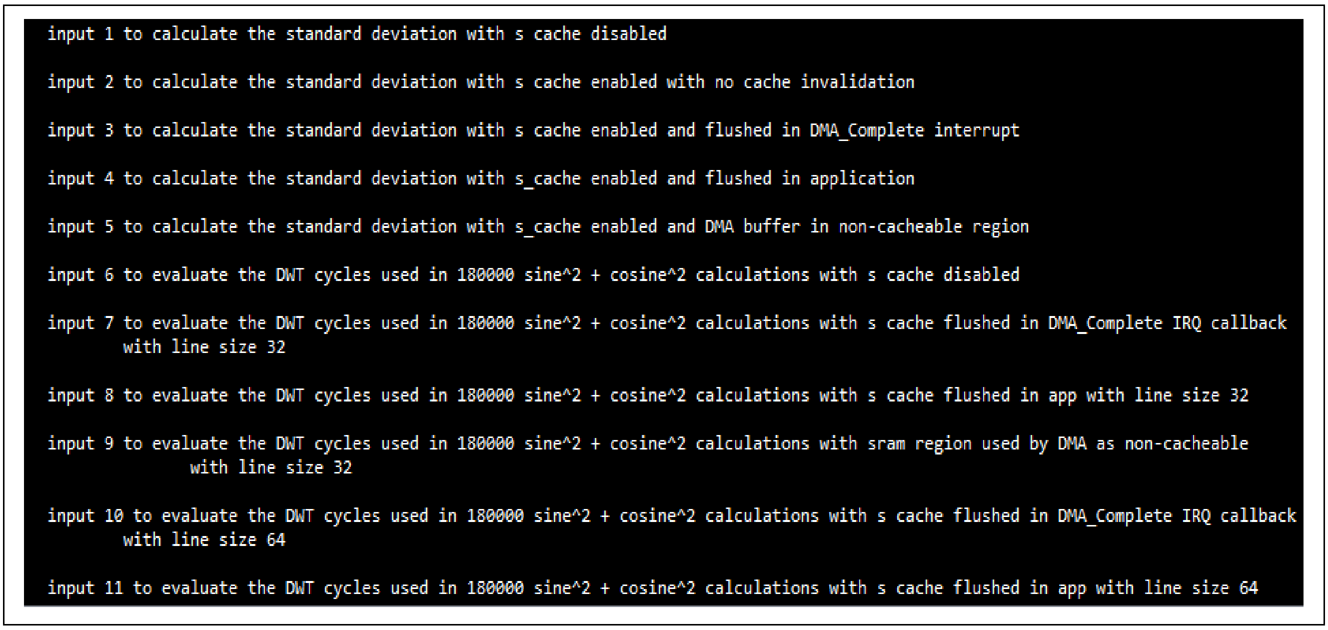


Figure 9. Actions Users Can Perform via RTT User Menu

3.3 Demonstration of How to Keep S Cache Coherent

When the S Cache is enabled and filled, the calculation uses the data from the S Cache, which can be different from the data transferred to the SRAM via the DMA transfer. This example project demonstrated that when S Cache is disabled, the standard deviation of (sine^2 + cosine^2) is 0, as expected.

When S Cache is enabled, the S Cache is corrupted after DMA transfers data to SRAM. When (sine^2 + cosine^2) is calculated, the corrupted S Cache is used and hence generates larger standard deviation.

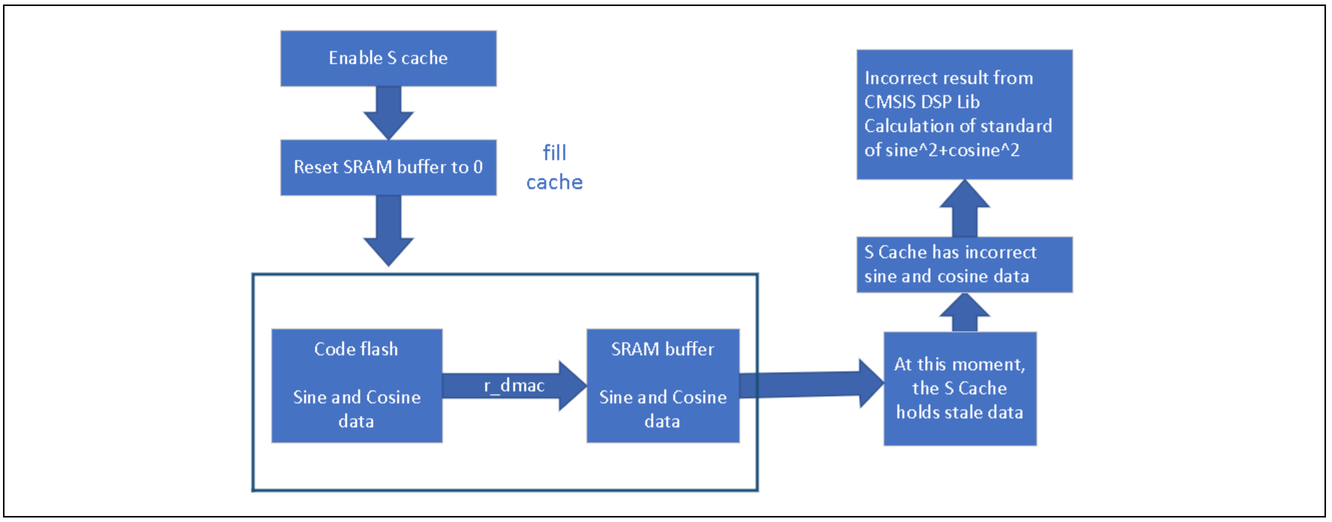


Figure 10. S Cache Coherency is Broken due to DMA Transfer to Common Area

When the S Cache is flushed in a DMA transfer, complete interrupt callback and in the user application prior to the calculation of (sine^2 + cosine^2), S Cache coherency is restored.

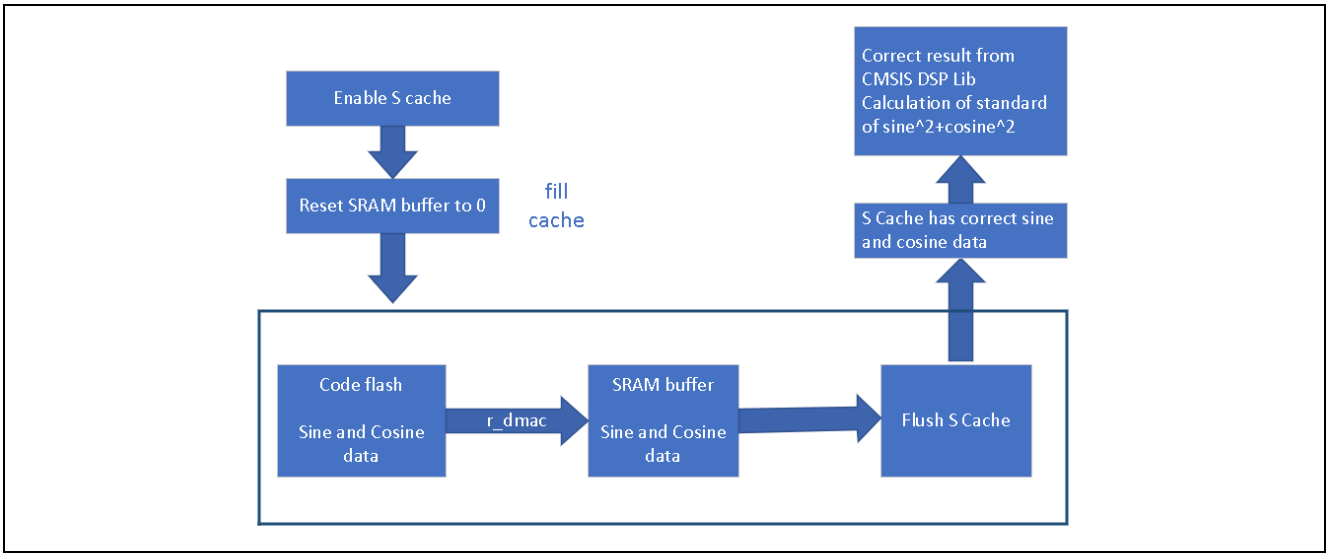


Figure 11. S Cache Coherency is Restored – Flush S Cache in Application Code

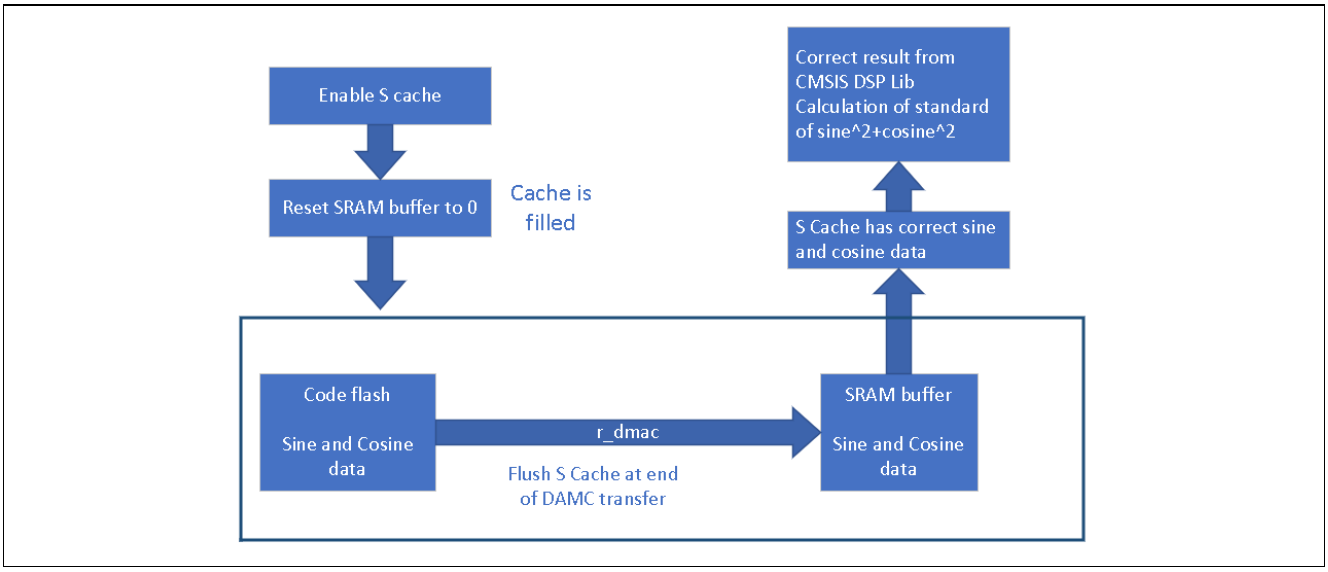


Figure 12. S Cache Coherency is Restored – Flush S Cache in DMA Transfer Complete Callback

Another method to achieve S Cache coherency is to set the SRAM Sine and Cosine data area as non-cacheable. Doing so will slightly reduce the performance of the system compared with flushing the S Cache based on the example project.

Figure 13 is an example run of the S Cache coherency handling routines provided in this application project.

```
  < 1
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation in progress.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation transfer completed.
00>
00> Standard deviation when s cache is disabled is 0
00>
  < 2
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation in progress.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation transfer completed.
00>
00> Standard deviation when s cache is enabled but not flushed is 2364296
00>
  < 3
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation in progress.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation transfer completed.
00>
00> Standard deviation when s cache is enabled and flushed in dma transfer complete callback is 0
00>
  < 4
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation in progress.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation transfer completed.
00>
00> Standard deviation when s cache is enabled and flushed in app is 0
00>
  < 5
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation in progress.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation transfer completed.
00>
00> Standard deviation when s cache is enabled and DMA buffer destination is in the non-cacheable region is 0
00>
```

Figure 13. Demonstration of How to Keep S Cache Coherent

Table 6. Standard Deviation of $Sine^2$ + $Cosine^2$

S Cache Configuration	Standard Deviation
Disabled	0
Enabled, but S Cache not Flushed after DMA Transfer	Around 2364296
Enabled and S Cache Flushed in DMA Complete Transfer	0
Enabled and S Cache Flush in Application Code	0
Enabled and SRAM region used by DMA and CPU is non-cacheable	0

3.4 Demonstration of MCU Performance Improvement

In this example project, 1000 cycles of 180 ($sine^2$ + $cosine^2$) calculations are performed. The number of DWT cycles used for this calculation is captured and displayed on the RTT Viewer.

```
  < 6
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation in progress.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation transfer completed.
00>
00> DWT cycle used when s cache is disabled is 14520489
00>
  < 7
00>
00> Test setup is: S cache is enabled with line size set to 32 and S cache is flushed in DMA complete interrupt.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation in progress.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation transfer completed.
00>
00> DWT cycle used is 7938286
00>
  < 8
00>
00> Test setup is: S cache is enabled with line size set to 32 and S cache is flushed in application.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation in progress.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation transfer completed.
00>
00> DWT cycle used is 7938226
00>
  < 9
00>
00> Test setup is: S cache is enabled with line size set to 32 and SRAM region set as non-cacheable.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation in progress.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation transfer completed.
00>
00> DWT cycle used is 8562269
00>
  < 10
00>
00> Test setup is: S cache is enabled with line size set to 64 and S cache is flushed in DMA complete interrupt.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation in progress.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation transfer completed.
00>
00> DWT cycle used is 7938317
00>
  < 11
00>
00> Test setup is: S cache is enabled with line size set to 64 and S cache is flushed in application.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation in progress.
00>
00> DMAC dma_transfer_sine_cosine_operation transfer completed.
00>
00> DWT cycle used is 7938276
00>
```

Figure 14. Demonstration of CPU Performance Improvement when S Cache is Enabled

From the output presented in the above example, the CPU performance improvement is about 50%. This presented CPU performance increase depends on savings from bus access as well as instruction cycle access. When the SRAM area used by the DMA and CPU is set as non-cacheable, the performance improvement is slightly lower than flushing the S Cache, with a drop of about 7%.

As explained in the overview section 3.1, this example project does not demonstrate the line size influence on the CPU performance. The number of DWT cycle counter stays about the same for 32-byte or 64-byte line size configuration.

Also, notice that the CPU performance stays about the same when using the three different flushing methods, whether flushing at the end of the DMA transfer, in the application, or setting the shared region as non-cacheable.

4. References

RA6M5 Group User's Manual: Hardware: https://www.renesas.com/document/man/ra6m5-group-users-manual-hardware?language=en&r=1493931

5. Website and Support

Visit the following URLs to learn about the RA family of microcontrollers, download tools and documentation, and get support.

EK-RA6M5 Resources	renesas.com/ra/ek-ra6m5
RA Product Information	renesas.com/ra
Flexible Software Package (FSP)	renesas.com/ra/fsp
RA Product Support Forum	renesas.com/ra/forum
Renesas Support	renesas.com/support

Revision History

Rev.	Date	Description	
		Page	Summary
1.00	Jan.06.22	-	First release document
1.10	May.03.23	-	Add MPU example code and description
1.20	Jan.17.24	-	Update to FSPv5.0.0
1.30	Oct.29.24	-	Update to FSPv5.5.0

General Precautions in the Handling of Microprocessing Unit and Microcontroller Unit Products

The following usage notes are applicable to all Microprocessing unit and Microcontroller unit products from Renesas. For detailed usage notes on the products covered by this document, refer to the relevant sections of the document as well as any technical updates that have been issued for the products.

1. Precaution against Electrostatic Discharge (ESD)

   A strong electrical field, when exposed to a CMOS device, can cause destruction of the gate oxide and ultimately degrade the device operation. Steps must be taken to stop the generation of static electricity as much as possible, and quickly dissipate it when it occurs. Environmental control must be adequate. When it is dry, a humidifier should be used. This is recommended to avoid using insulators that can easily build up static electricity. Semiconductor devices must be stored and transported in an anti-static container, static shielding bag or conductive material. All test and measurement tools including work benches and floors must be grounded. The operator must also be grounded using a wrist strap. Semiconductor devices must not be touched with bare hands. Similar precautions must be taken for printed circuit boards with mounted semiconductor devices.
2. Processing at power-on

   The state of the product is undefined at the time when power is supplied. The states of internal circuits in the LSI are indeterminate and the states of register settings and pins are undefined at the time when power is supplied. In a finished product where the reset signal is applied to the external reset pin, the states of pins are not guaranteed from the time when power is supplied until the reset process is completed. In a similar way, the states of pins in a product that is reset by an on-chip power-on reset function are not guaranteed from the time when power is supplied until the power reaches the level at which resetting is specified.
3. Input of signal during power-off state

   Do not input signals or an I/O pull-up power supply while the device is powered off. The current injection that results from input of such a signal or I/O pull-up power supply may cause malfunction and the abnormal current that passes in the device at this time may cause degradation of internal elements. Follow the guideline for input signal during power-off state as described in your product documentation.
4. Handling of unused pins

   Handle unused pins in accordance with the directions given under handling of unused pins in the manual. The input pins of CMOS products are generally in the high-impedance state. In operation with an unused pin in the open-circuit state, extra electromagnetic noise is induced in the vicinity of the LSI, an associated shoot-through current flows internally, and malfunctions occur due to the false recognition of the pin state as an input signal become possible.
5. Clock signals

   After applying a reset, only release the reset line after the operating clock signal becomes stable. When switching the clock signal during program execution, wait until the target clock signal is stabilized. When the clock signal is generated with an external resonator or from an external oscillator during a reset, ensure that the reset line is only released after full stabilization of the clock signal. Additionally, when switching to a clock signal produced with an external resonator or by an external oscillator while program execution is in progress, wait until the target clock signal is stable.
6. Voltage application waveform at input pin

   Waveform distortion due to input noise or a reflected wave may cause malfunction. If the input of the CMOS device stays in the area between V_{IL} (Max.) and V_{IH} (Min.) due to noise, for example, the device may malfunction. Take care to prevent chattering noise from entering the device when the input level is fixed, and also in the transition period when the input level passes through the area between V_{IL} (Max.) and V_{IH} (Min.).
7. Prohibition of access to reserved addresses

   Access to reserved addresses is prohibited. The reserved addresses are provided for possible future expansion of functions. Do not access these addresses as the correct operation of the LSI is not guaranteed.
8. Differences between products

   Before changing from one product to another, for example to a product with a different part number, confirm that the change will not lead to problems. The characteristics of a microprocessing unit or microcontroller unit products in the same group but having a different part number might differ in terms of internal memory capacity, layout pattern, and other factors, which can affect the ranges of electrical characteristics, such as characteristic values, operating margins, immunity to noise, and amount of radiated noise. When changing to a product with a different part number, implement a system-evaluation test for the given product.

Corporate Headquarters

TOYOSU FORESIA, 3-2-24 Toyosu,
Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-0061, Japan
www.renesas.com

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