

Time Distribution System Proposal for the Hyper-Kamiokande Experiment's Far Detector and IWCD

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Introduction

A crucial information to reconstruct the Cherenkov ring(s) associated with an event in the Hyper-Kamiokande experiment is the arrival time of the light emitted in water on the detector's PMTs. To achieve this goal a reference time must be established and distributed to all the PMT front-end (FE) modules readout electronics.

The time synchronisation precision is directly related to the event's reconstruction accuracy; therefore, great care must be devoted to this task to control all sources of errors and inaccuracies. The

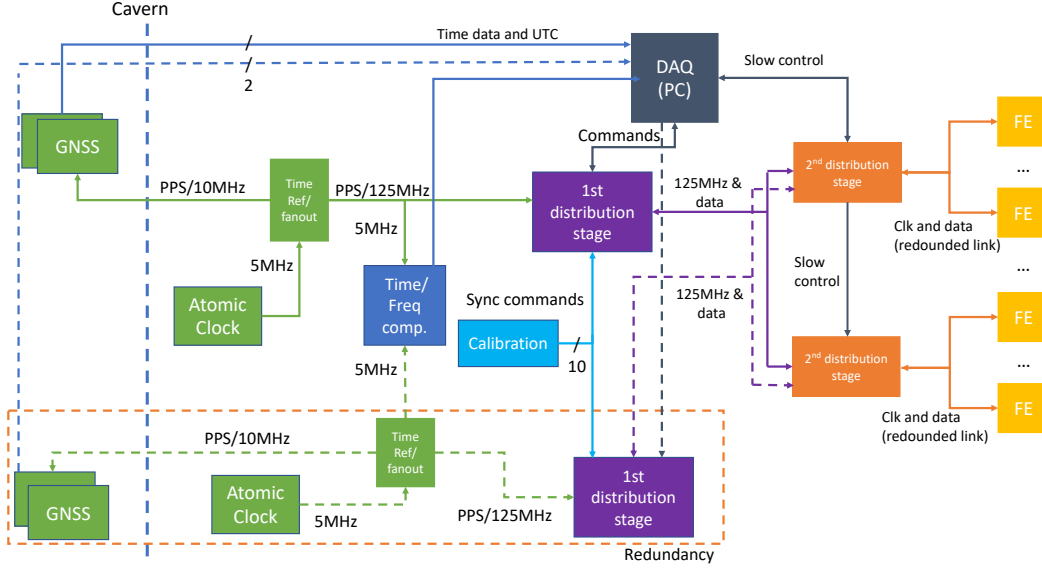


Figure 1: The proposed time distribution block scheme.

Hyper-Kamiokande experiment requires a time distribution jitter smaller than 100 ps RMS and the clock skew between front-end boards to be constant over any power-on and reset.

The time tag of each particle interaction needs to be in a format that allows its correlation with data collected by other experiments worldwide; for this reason the generated local time base has to be associated with the Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) with an accuracy better than 100 ns. This absolute time tagging will also be used to identify the events generated in the detector by the particles sent from the J-PARC accelerator. Along with the time synchronisation some “critical information” like slow control data have to be transmitted by this subsystem hence a 100 Mbps or greater bandwidth bidirectional data channel must be provided.

The full block scheme of the proposed system is depicted in Fig. 1 and it can be subdivided into 3 main parts, as shown in the conceptual diagram reported in Figure 2 which highlights also its sub-constituents and their envisioned positions.

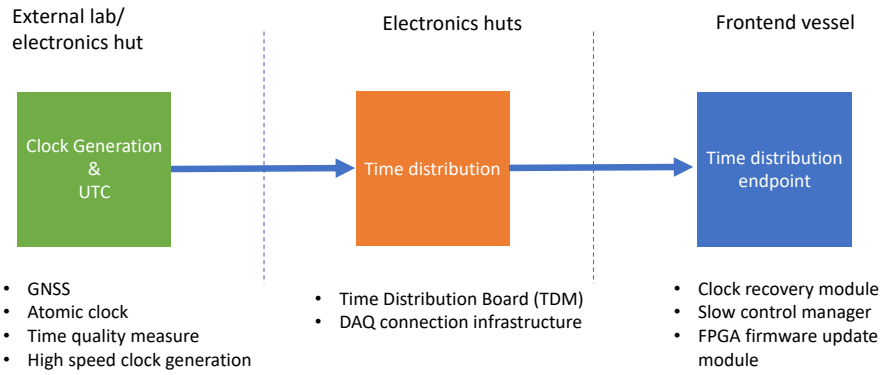


Figure 2: The block scheme that describes the 3 main time distribution sub-systems.

To guarantee the most stable and precise reference, the local time base originates in an atomic clock working in free running mode. It generates a 5 MHz frequency that is sent to a time reference fan-out board. Here the 125 MHz reference clock is generated and sent to the distribution network along with a PPS (Pulse Per Second) “counted” using the 5 MHz time base. The 125 MHz frequency is distributed over different branches by means of time distribution modules and delivered to all the

leaves represented by the FE modules using the so-called Time Distribution Endpoints or TDE. A 10 MHz clock is also generated and sent to a GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) along with the PPS. Here the time distance between the local PPS and UTC is measured and sent to a computer infrastructure via Ethernet protocol where it is used to convert the events local time tag to UTC.

This document describes the R&D program carried out by LPNHE, INFN, and IRFU to select the most suited technologies to meet the experiment's requirements summarising all the efforts made over the last 2 years, and presents the envisioned solution for the Hyper-Kamiokande far detector and IWCD.

The document starts presenting the experimental requirements and then describes the proposed design in 3 main sections, following the block scheme reported in Figure 2. The document ends with a chapter that describes the cost and human resources estimated to produce the design along with a detailed schedule.

1 Experiment's Requirements

The full list of experiment's requirements relative to the time distribution system is reported below:

1. A high-speed reference clock must be distributed to all the FEs with a jitter of 100 ps RMS (measured on 10.000 cycles). The clock stability must be, at minimum, of 10^{-11} @ 1 s and 10^{-12} @ 100 s. At the present time, the selected frequency is 125 MHz as it is suited for the QTC's and discrete TDC digitizer solutions, but it could be changed to a different frequency in case the selected digitizers would need it.
2. The distributed clock absolute time difference between any two FEs must be kept within 10 ns. This means that the different cable lengths, due to the different FE positions in the detector, must be compensated by the time distribution system. The requirement is then met if any two FEs receive the synchronous data stream within 10 ns (according to the measured cable delay) and each of them has a jitter smaller than 100 ps on the distributed reference clock (see requirement 1). An online phase difference measurement can be performed only if it doesn't require any extra hardware. An online phase compensation is not required.
3. The time distribution system must provide a synchronous and phase deterministic communication link to each FE with a bandwidth equal or greater than 100 Mbps. The link from the FEs to the time distribution and DAQ doesn't need to be phase deterministic.
4. All the FE's TDCs must receive a synchronous reset every N periods of the 125 MHz distributed reference clock. For the discrete and QTC solution N is 2048, that corresponds to a reset frequency of 61.03 kHz. For the HKROC solution N is 15360, that corresponds to a reset frequency of 8.13 kHz. As for the first requirement, also this aspect will be re-evaluated once the digitizer selection will be made.
5. A coarse counter is needed to extend the TDC's range. This coarse counter must be common to all the FEs and generated from a single point. This counter must be 32-bit long incremented at steps of $N \cdot 8$ ns (see requirement 4). The implications of the counter wrapping are dealt outside the time distribution system. Each FE will count the TDC resets and will check the received global coarse counter against that.
6. Two kinds of synchronous commands must be issued from various far detector's subsystems to all the FEs via the time distribution system. The first is a so-called acquisition veto. The time distribution system must provide an interface to receive this command from up to 10 different sources and send it embedded in the sync packet in the trigger field (see requirement n.7). The described transport method implies that the time difference between its reception at time distribution system and its broadcast to FEs can be as high as 10's of microseconds since it could be issued in the next available sync packet (see requirement 4). The second kind of synchronous command is an emergency stop issued by one entity. Its interface and maximum skew are still to be decided.
7. The TDC reset, the global coarse counter and the trigger register must be sent periodically in the same order forming a so-called synchronization packet described in Figure 3.

8. The 1 Pulse Per Second (PPS) and a time code must be provided to the multi PMT (mPMT) along with the synchronous packet. The PPS will be dispatched in a time deterministic manner to all the FEs as soon as it is generated.
9. The local time base used to generate the distributed reference clock must be accorded to UTC within 100 ns at least. An accord is also required to the JPARC time base.
10. The GNSS system (composed from 2 GNSS receivers, at least) must be monitored using a local clock to detect any possible time jump.

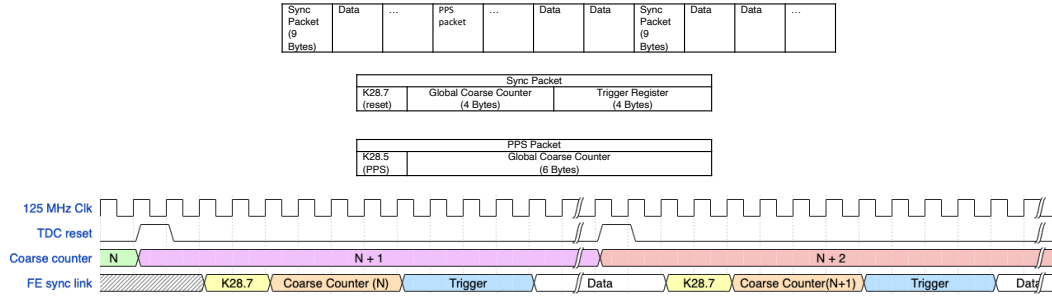


Figure 3: The sync and PPS packets.

2 Clock Generation and UTC

2.1 General Concept

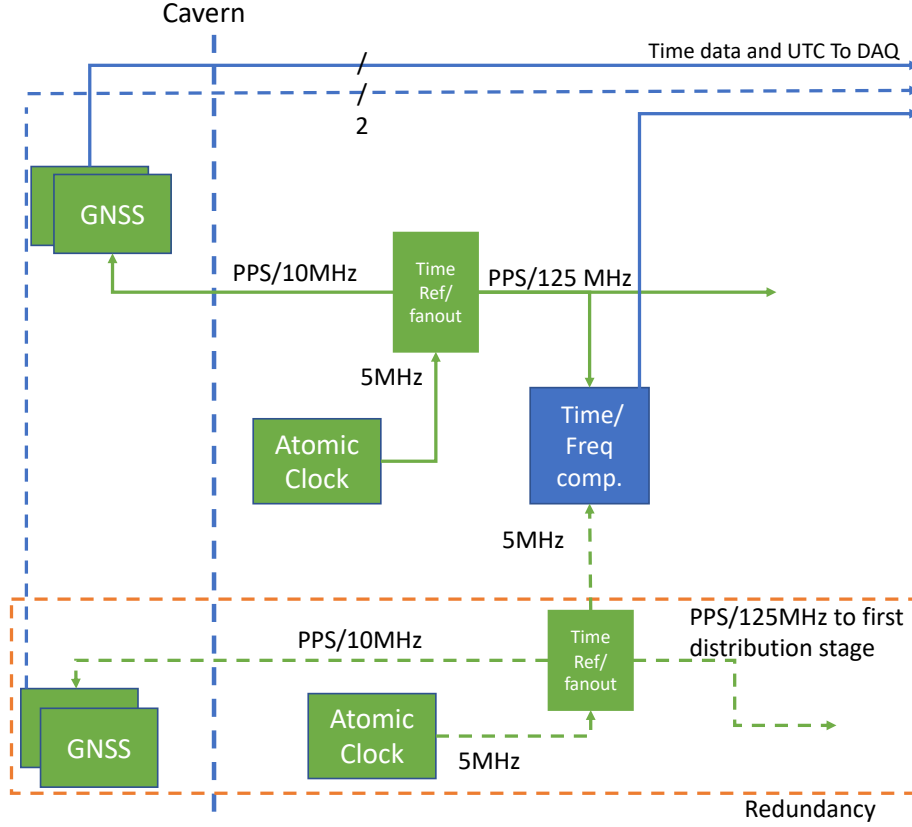


Figure 4: Detailed scheme of the clock generation section. The green boxes represent the clock and time generation instruments, the dashed orange box contains the hot spare clock generation chain while the blue box represents the subsystem used to monitor the time distance between the main and spare system.

The base clock represents the foundation of the cadence delivered to all the detector electronics elements; therefore it must be very stable and precise to guarantee, at each end-point, a signal that still meets all the requirements in spite of the deterioration due to the distribution process. To achieve this goal many elements must work together as shown in the block scheme of Figure 4.

This section describes all these elements.

2.2 Atomic Clock

The cadence generator technology that guarantees the best performance is the atomic clock, but, currently, on the market there is a vast range of instruments with different noise levels, stability characteristics and prices. The two candidate technologies proposed for Hyper-Kamiokande are the Passive Hydrogen Maser (PHM) (microwave amplification by stimulated emission of radiation) and the Rubidium (Rb) standard. The models under consideration are the rubidium clock FS725 from Stanford Research (SRS) [1] and the T4Science pHMaser 1008 [2]. Both output a PPS, a 5 MHz and a 10 MHz and, the selected rubidium clock, has also a PPS input used as a reference for its internal PLL. In other words, the clock's output frequencies can be periodically calibrated using the PPS input. This option could be used to mitigate the instrument's drift measured at 10^{-11} over 1000 s. The proposed PHM doesn't have this feature.

The main characteristics of the two devices are summarised in Table 1¹.

Technology	pHMaser 1008	SRS SF725
Frequency stability	$\sim 5 \times 10^{-13}$ @ 1 s	$\sim 2 \times 10^{-11}$ @ 1 s
Equivalent jitter	0.5 ps	2 ps
Frequency drift	$\sim 5 \times 10^{-15}$ @ 1 day	$\sim 1.6 \times 10^{-12}$ @ 1 day

Table 1: Passive Hydrogen Maser pHMaser 1008 and Rubidium atomic clock SRS SF725 characteristics.

Atomic clocks performance As evident from the Table 1, the Passive Hydrogen Maser shows much better performance that goes up to 2 orders of magnitude with respect to the Rubidium, both at short and long timescales. This values have been verified in an extensive test campaign conducted in collaboration with the colleagues of the SYRTE laboratory, part of the Observatoire de Paris [3], one of the institutes that concur to the UTC definition. A more visual comparison involving Allan Standard Deviation (ASD) [4] can be found in Figure 5. The time at which the curves reach the

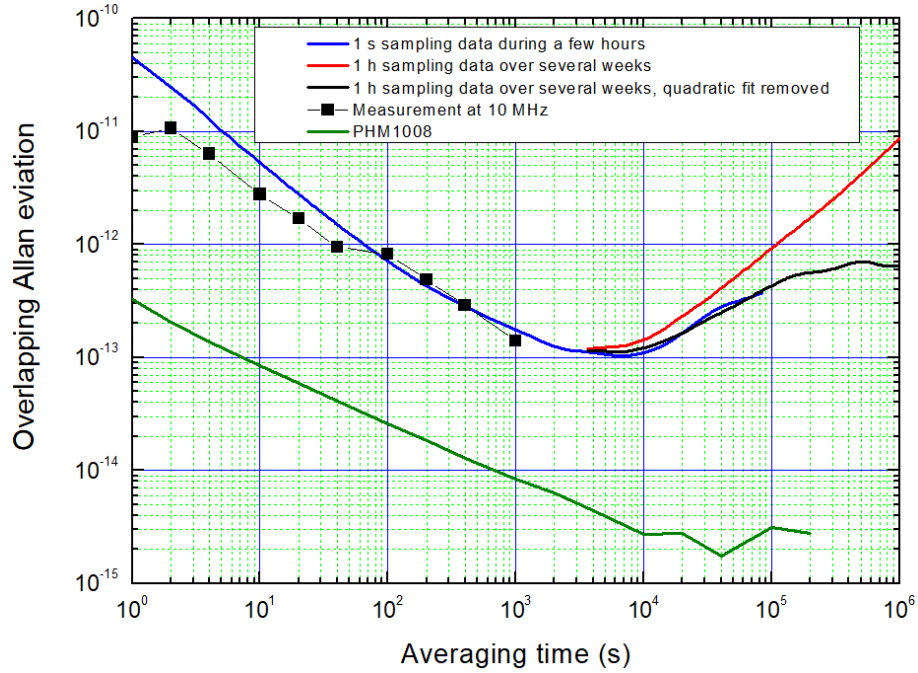


Figure 5: Allan Standard Deviation of the rubidium atomic clock calculated using different sampling times compared with the Passive Hydrogen Maser (green curve).

minimum indicates the time at which long-term frequency drifts become dominant over the short-time fluctuations. The difference in performance of 2 orders of magnitudes between the PHM and Rb technologies are evident also in this plot where the green line is constantly and consistently below the others.

Time base system configuration Considering the far detector’s need to synchronize all the front-ends in a very tight manner, we plan to use the atomic clocks in the so-called “free-running” mode, so without steering the output using a PPS input. The 5 MHz from the atomic clock is sent to the entity that synthesizes it and generates the FE reference clock. The same entity also counts the number of cycles to reach one second and generates a local PPS. It then becomes the time distribution reference

¹The Passive Hydrogen Maser also provides a 100 MHz clock output.

point. It serves also as fan-out providing a very stable 10 MHz frequency and the PPS to the GNSS receivers to phase align their outputs overriding the instruments internal oscillators. As described in the next chapter, this logical entity will be integrated in the first distribution stage board for practical reasons. The Septentrio GNSS receivers measure the time distance between the PPS input and UTC. This information is then sent to the DAQ via Ethernet links and is used to convert the local time tag to UTC. We prefer this scheme to the one where the atomic clock is steered by the GNSS PPS for, at least, 3 reasons:

- The free-running scheme gives the control of the atomic clock drift while, in the other mode, the atomic clock's internal PLL follows the GNSS and won't be as precise as a post-processing correction. Moreover, according to the manual [1], the steering procedure is mainly intended for the instrument calibration.
- working in free-running mode allows also to avoid corrections on the atomic clock output frequencies that could bring possible errors due to GNSS malfunction or satellites data misconfiguration. This specific case has been already observed in Super-Kamiokande.
- The free-running clock configuration facilitates the use of multiple GNSS receivers giving the possibility to select the UTC time reference to use (see below).

It is also worth mentioning that any atomic clock drift, no matter its value, will affect all the detector's FEs equally then it will be invisible on the relative time tagging.

The conversion values to transform the local time tag into UTC will be calculated periodically by the GNSS receivers and sent to the data acquisition system via Ethernet in a CGGTTS (Common Generic GNSS Time Transfer Standard) file [5]. The validity period of each conversion factor depends on the atomic clock performance and in particular on its drift, evaluated comparing its Allan standard deviation to the one of the GNSS receivers system. We have already performed this measure, thanks to our SYRTE colleagues, on the purchased SF725 rubidium clock and the corresponding plot is reported in Figure 6.

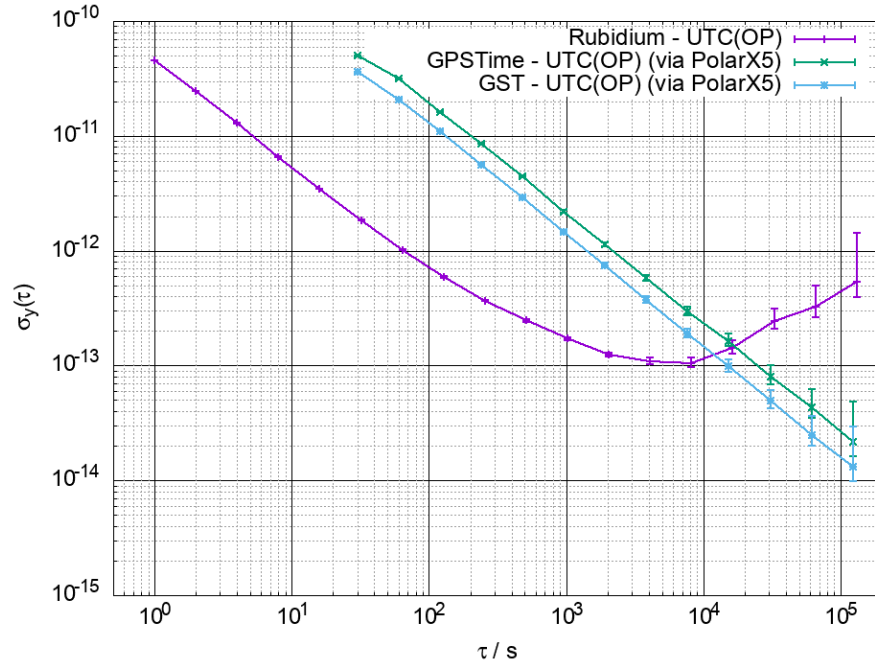


Figure 6: Allan standard deviation comparison between the SRS FS725 rubidium atomic clock and the GPS and GST (Galileo Standard Time) to the UTC definition of the Observatoire de Paris (UTC(OP)).

As visible from the purple curve, it starts showing an evident drift at about 10^4 seconds after the GNSS alignment and this is the time when a new conversion value would be needed. According to this plot, we are planning to measure the local PPS to UTC time distance integrated over an hour, store its result in a CCGTTS file and send it to the DAQ. Here a specific algorithm would execute the conversion and store the value in a database for future checks.

A similar analysis will be done when the already ordered PHM atomic clock will arrive at our laboratory but, according to the data-sheet and previous experiences, we are expecting to see a drift at a day scale. If this result will be confirmed, it would mean that the local PPS to UTC conversion factor could be updated only once per day.

2.3 Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS)

As already mentioned, the GNSS will be used to correlate the local time base with the universal coordinated time by means of the information included in its data stream. To guarantee an accuracy at the level of 100 ns or better, many parameters must be taken under control and corrected, if needed. Some of them are related to the satellites, like e.g. the position of each transmitter at any given time. This implies that each satellite's orbit must be known with a precision that sometimes goes beyond the one included in the data stream. Some other elements are relative to the receiver and concern the electromagnetic signal that reaches the antenna, the interference and the reflection to which it is subjected. To improve the first kind of uncertainty, correction algorithms will be implemented on the received data by means of a computer infrastructure that elaborates information coming from the UTC consortium. This consortium is composed from many laboratories spread around the world working together on the UTC definition. As part of their duty, they publish a weekly report that includes parameters needed to reconstruct the universal time at the “state of the art” precision. The uncertainty related to the local equipment can be mitigated performing an accurate calibration of the receiver, the associated antenna and the connection cable against a cadence generated by a so-called group 1 laboratory (like SYRTE located at ‘Observatoire de Paris’ (OP) in Paris) part of the UTC consortium, and able to guarantee a resolution below 5 ns.

After an extensive R&D study, the Septentrio PolARx5 multi-frequency multi-constellation timing/reference receiver associated with a multi-frequency B3E6 choke ring antenna have been selected [6, 7]. A calibration procedure has been conducted on the first purchased set presented in Figure 7.



Figure 7: The Septentrio PolARx5 GNSS receiver and the associated antenna.

and the results are reported in the tables below:

Institute	Equipment status	Measure MJD	Receiver type	BIPM code	RINEX name
OP	Traveling	NC-NC	Septentrio PolaRx5TR	LPN1	LPN1
OP	Group 1 reference	59508 – 59514	Septentrio PolaRx5TR	OP73	OP73

Table 2: GNSS calibration equipment description.

Receiver	Reference	Measure’s MJD	REFDLY	CABDLY	P1 DLY	TDEV	P2 DLY	TDEV
OP73	Ref	59508 – 59514	85.2	129.6	29.500	NC	26.30	NC
LPN1 1	OP73	59508 – 59514	88.3	127.1	25.832	0.024	22.871	0.022

Table 3: GPS calibration table. All values are in ns.

Receiver	Reference	Measure’s MJD	REFDLY	CABDLY	E1 DLY	TDEV	E5a DLY	TDEV
OP73	Ref	59508 – 59514	85.2	129.6	31.700	NC	31.300	NC
LPN1 1	OP73	59508 – 59514	88.3	127.1	28.242	0.040	25.431	0.034

Table 4: Galileo calibration table. All values are in ns.

The presented calibration will be done on all the used receivers before the deployment and the measured delay values will be stored in their configuration system. The values will be checked every 5 years using a portable device called “travelling station”. This mobile station will be compared against all the HK’s GNSS receivers and with the one at the UTC consortium lab to align all the systems without moving them.

To achieve the best performances and use multiple devices together, each GNSS receiver will be provided with a 10 MHz and a PPS input cadences generated from the atomic clock. The 10 MHz frequency will be used to override the internal receiver’s oscillator, as it has a more stable and precise clock for the internal logic. The PPS input will be used once at start-up to synchronise multiple receivers outputs in order to use them together and switch from one to the other in case of malfunctions. The receiver and antenna position are also crucial for the UTC accuracy because a good data reception would allow to reduce the data post-processing and to reach greater precision. The number of “seen” satellites has a great impact in terms of UTC definition reliability and precision. While it is true that even one satellite can give a precise UTC reference (once the antenna position is known with enough precision) in this configuration the system would completely depend on that specific satellite and changing it would bring jumps in the UTC reference. Moreover, correcting the received data would be more difficult and less precise. The minimum number of satellites that we are envisioning to see is 5 at any given time. They could belong to different constellations like the American GPS (Global Positioning System), the European Galileo and the Japanese QZSS (Quasi-Zenith Satellite System) and we would provide algorithms to combine them. The basic idea is to have a time reference from each constellation and, from them, get the UTC reference calculating the time distance between them.

GNSS-atomic clock interconnection topology To minimise the local time base uncertainty, the atomic clocks will be placed close to the far detector’s electronics in a cavern where the satellites signal doesn’t arrive. The GNSS equipment will be placed at the cavern’s entrance, several kilometers away in a position that maximises its reception quality, then the two elements must exchange data over a

very long optical fiber without losing their synchronicity. The CERN White Rabbit technology will be used to build this link.

White Rabbit (WR) is the name of a collaborative project including CERN, GSI Helmholtz Centre for Heavy Ion Research and other partners from universities and industry to develop a fully deterministic Ethernet-based network for general purpose data transfer and sub-nanosecond accuracy time transfer. Its initial use was as a timing distribution network for control and data acquisition of the accelerator sites at CERN as well as in GSI's Facility for Antiproton and Ion Research (FAIR) project. The hardware designs and the source code are publicly available [8].

This protocol is based on the clock and data recovery so one optical fiber can be used to distribute the master clock and for a bi-directional communication link.

White Rabbit uses Synchronous Ethernet (SyncE) to achieve sub nanosecond synchronisation and IEEE 1588 Precision Time Protocol (PTP) to communicate time. The phase difference between the master and the slave is measured using a specific module based on phase frequency detectors [9]. A two-way exchange of the Precision Time Protocol synchronisation messages allows precise adjustment of clock phase and offset. The link delay is known precisely via accurate hardware timestamps and the calculation of delay asymmetry. The measurements results are computed to align the master and the slave clocks and remove skew due to the cabling and thermal effects.

The White Rabbit can be considered as a sort of an off-the-shelf solution since the hardware can be bought from companies that produce and sell WR compliant electronics devices.

This solution is very convenient because, over a single fiber it is possible to transport the signals needed to the GNSS receivers (PPS and 10 MHz clock) and use the data link to transport the time information received from the satellites. The planned topology consists in a White Rabbit switch configured as Grand Master placed close to the atomic clock inside the cavern that receives the PPS and 10 MHz clock from the fan-out reference board. It embeds the two frequencies into the data stream and sends them over a mono-mode fiber laid down in the entrance tunnel up to the building where the GNSS receivers are located. There, a second White Rabbit switch configured as a slave, outputs a PPS and 10 MHz clock replica phase aligned to the Grand Master. An Ethernet cable connected from the WR switch to the DAQ network will transport the data needed to convert the local time tags to UTC. This last part is possible due to the White Rabbit protocol compatibility with the standard Ethernet.

The events generated by the particles packets sent by the J-PARC accelerator must be identified and separated from the noise and astrophysical events. A specific acquisition's window must be opened for each event however a direct "trigger" signal can't be sent due to the distance between the accelerator and the far detector. The most effective solution to this problem is the so-called "common view" technique where the two sites are both equipped with a GNSS receiver locked on the same satellites.

A data collection campaign will be performed, with a portable GNSS receiver, at the far detector site well ahead of the system deployment. This test will be useful to establish the best final antenna position and to check the number of common satellites available. The data collected will determine also the entity of the post-processing needed to achieve the experiment's requirements. The portable equipment, composed from the same elements installed at far detector site, will then be used as a "travelling station" to check the calibration parameter of the resident receivers during the regular data acquisition period.

An alternative solution to synchronise the time between the accelerator and the far detector sites consists in adopting the common view method separately between each station and the the Japanese UTC consortium lab: NICT. This alternative is considered as a backup solution because could bring a slightly higher error.

To achieve the best performance and enhance reliability, an array of 4 GNSS receivers, with each couple connected to one antenna, will be installed at the Hyper-Kamiokande far detector site and constantly monitored to guarantee that at least 1 set will be operational at any time.

White Rabbit experimental tests A test campaign has been carried out to validate the White Rabbit as a viable solution to bring the base cadences from the atomic clock to the GNSS receivers. The concept has been tested using a couple of custom boards realised by the INFN branch of Rome 1 and presented in Figure 8. The connection scheme consists of two boards, equipped with Xilinx Spartan VI FPGA, connected with an optical fiber (the blue cable) and the transmitted and received clocks are extracted by means of black coaxial cables. The data bandwidth has been measured compliant to

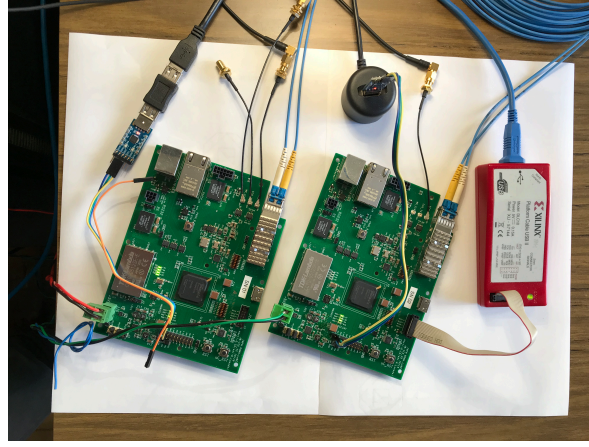


Figure 8: The White Rabbit test bench composed by two custom boards developed in the INFN test bench of Rome 1.

the Gigabit Ethernet standard, moreover, connecting one board to a computer, it has been verified that the data packets are correctly exchanged while the time information is dropped.

The clock characterisation has been carried out in two steps. First, the PPS provided by the two WR nodes has been verified to be stable over different resets and its total jitter on the RX side has been measured at 17.9 ps. Then the jitter on reconstructed clock has been measured in the frequency domain and is reported in the plot of Figure 9. The phase noise analysis starting from 10 Hz shows a

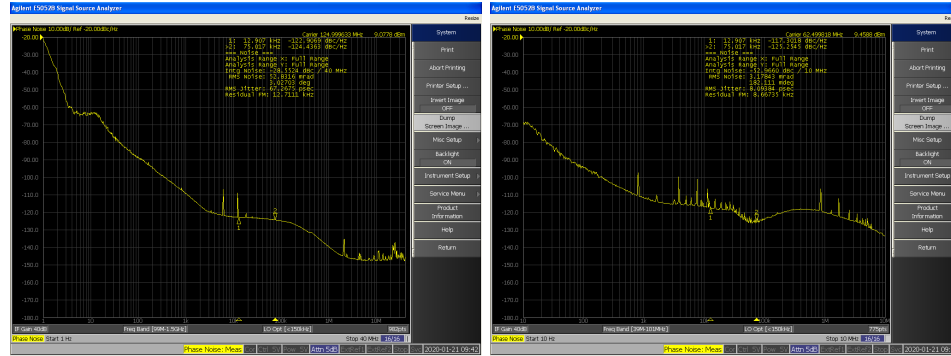


Figure 9: Frequency domain jitter measurements performed on the reconstructed clock using the White Rabbit scheme. On the left the phase noise analysis including frequencies as low as 1 Hz. On the right the same measurement starting at 10 Hz.

jitter as low as 8 ps RMS while at frequencies below that threshold there is a great quantity of noise. If the same measurement is performed starting from 1 Hz the total jitter rises to 67 ps and there are some hints that this additional noise is generated by the local oscillator on the transmission side.

2.4 Reliability, Redundancy and Risk Mitigation

To avoid single point of failure the entire chain of atomic clock, GNSS receivers, time distribution reference point and the first distribution stage (described below) will be duplicated in a hot spare configuration. This means that the second chain will be always active and its time base will be constantly compared with the main one. This constant time comparison is assured using the Keysight 53230A universal time/frequency counter [10] which measures the time distance between two signals with a resolution of 20 ps and sends it over Ethernet to the data acquisition system. This scheme provides a constant check of the HK time reference accuracy and an alternative, ready-to-use reference in case of malfunction of the main one. Tracking the time distance between the main and spare time

references will give enough information to merge the data tagged with the two different time bases. To further enhance the system reliability, a third atomic clock will be acquired and used as a cold spare. It will be safely stored at the far detector site, according to the vendor recommendations, operated and checked regularly and thus ready to be used in case the main or the hot-cold one needs a long period of maintenance. The system maintenance will be addressed with a scheduled plan of interventions designed to change the parts before they arrive at the end of life. The plan will be realized using the information coming from the instruments producers and envisions to change the “physical package” of the atomic clocks or the entire instrument within ten years from the start of operation. We are also considering to replace the GNSS receivers approximately on the same time scale or before the end of producer’s support. The switch to new devices will be staged to avoid any possible perturbation to the HK time base.

A risk mitigation strategy has been developed on the most crucial part of the time base generation scheme i.e. the atomic clock. As extensively discussed above, two technologies have been evaluated and, while the passive hydrogen maser clock shows much better performance than the rubidium, the second is still capable of delivering a cadence that meets all the experiment’s requirements. This consideration, associated to a more affordable cost, makes it a preferable choice for the baseline solution. However, the two instruments will be still tested and compared to get long term performance data and reevaluated in the future. The Hyper-Kamiokande’s clock generation scheme has been designed in such a way that the PHM clock could be used instead of the rubidium on the experiment without requiring any major system rework, if this need will be identified.

2.5 Instruments Physical Characteristics

The clock generation chain instruments physical and electrical characteristics are summarised in Table 5. The inventory as of March 2022 is also reported.

Instrument	Dimension (WHL or DH) in mm & weight	Power	Operating Conditions (temperature °C and humidity)	Position	Quantity Needed	Available
Rubidium Clock SRS FS725	220x90x330 4 kg	120W@220V	+10/+40 5%/95% (non condensing) RH	Electronic Huts and storage	3	1
Septentrio PolaRx5 GNSS receiver	140x37x225 0.94 kg	5W@220V	-40/+65 5%/95% (non condensing) RH	Radon Hut	4	1
Septentrio B3E6 antenna	376x350 5 kg	NA	-55/+85	Radon Hut Roof	2	1
Keysight time compare	212x88x272 4 kg	90W@220V	0/+55	Electronics Hut	2	1
White Rabbit switch	446x44x222 3 kg	80W@220V	-10/+50 5%/95% (non condensing) RH	Electronic Huts and storage	3	1

Table 5: Clock Generation and UTC instruments physical characteristics

3 First Distribution Stage

3.1 Function and principles

The main function of the First Distribution Stage (FDS) is to distribute with minimal skew and jitter a reference clock at the desired selected frequency to the Second Distribution Stage (SDS) which then fans out the reference clock to all front-ends, underwater. The variations of clock skew at any end-point must be less than 100 ps during operation and after system restart. The master reference clock is provided to the FDS by an atomic clock at 5 MHz. It is scaled up in frequency to the desired value, 125 MHz in the current plan, by an appropriate clock synthesizer. In addition to the reference clock, the FDS must generate the required synchronization information for the front-ends: a periodic TDC reset signal with an associated coarse timestamp counter, and a 1PPS signal accompanied by a date code. The latency of synchronous signal distribution is required to be accurate to one period of the reference clock (i.e. 8 ns at 125 MHz). The FDS also has to provide a 10 MHz reference clock and a 1PPS signal for use on the GNSS receiver side. The FDS requires a certain number of user inputs for the fanout of external synchronous and asynchronous signals: a veto signal for the data acquisition, an emergency stop for high voltage sources, and possibly other ancillary signals. If this does not add too much complexity, the FDS may monitor the slow variations of delay of all, or a subset, of its transmission links, but it is not required to compensate for these variations. The FDS is housed in an electronic hut, outside of the water tank. Although reliability is a concern, this equipment remains accessible for replacement in case of failure.

The basic principle of operation of the FDS is to perform the distribution of clock and synchronization messages from their respective sources using a pair of commercial fanout chips driving the transmitter side of an array of optical transceivers, and accomplish the final expansion to the required number of end-points using passive optical splitters. The baseline scheme relies on separate physical media for clock and data: a first set of optical fibers distributes the pure clock, and a second set is used to broadcast serially encoded synchronization messages. Alternatively, other schemes based on a common media may be supported: clock embedded in serial data (using a CDR technique at the receiver end), and serial data carried over a modulated clock [11]. The FDS uses entirely commercial components, including an off-the-shelf System-on-Module (SoM) based on an FPGA with embedded processor cores.

3.2 Proposed hardware architecture

The block diagram of the proposed hardware architecture for the FDS is depicted in Fig. 10. The central part is a commercial SoM. The currently selected family of products is the TE-80x from Trenz [12] equipped with a System-on-Chip (SoC), Xilinx ZynqUltraScale+ (ZU2 to ZU4). This device features two multi-core ARM processors, a large array of programmable logic resources, over 250 user defined I/O pins, and 4 high-speed GTR serial transceivers. The SoC handles all the logic functions of the FDS with the assistance of external hardware. Reference clock frequency multiplication is accomplished by a dedicated PLL. The selected part is the AD9545 from Analog Devices [13]. This state-of-the-art clock synchronizer and jitter cleaner provides leading edge performance and features several characteristics that are not always found on competitor parts, e.g. zero-delay mode, sophisticated temperature compensation based on a digital filter, and more. The 5 MHz reference clock from the atomic clock is fed to one of the inputs of the AD9545. Outputs generate the 125 MHz reference clock to be distributed, a 10 MHz reference clock for the GNSS receiver and two jitter filtered copies of the 5 MHz input clock.

The broadcast of the reference clock and messages to the SSCD takes places in two steps: a first expansion of signals, by a factor 8, is accomplished in the electrical domain by a pair of commercial PECL fanout chips, e.g. Texas Instruments CDCLVP1208. After the electrical to optical conversion performed by two groups of up to eight Small Form factor Pluggable (SFP) optical transceivers, the second, and final, step of clock and serial data signals expansion is done in the optical domain by passive optical splitters. The fanout ratio of the selected optical splitters is 1:24, although 1:16 or 1:32 devices may also be considered. In total, the FDS provides a combined electrical and optical clock and synchronization data expansion factor of up to 1:256 in its largest configuration of eight TX SFPs for clock, eight TX SFPs for serial data, and two groups of eight 1:32 optical splitters. Transceivers in the 1310 nm wavelength window and 80 km reach seem adequate devices on the FDS side, while more cost-effective 20 km reach counterparts shall be sufficient on the SDS side. According to the

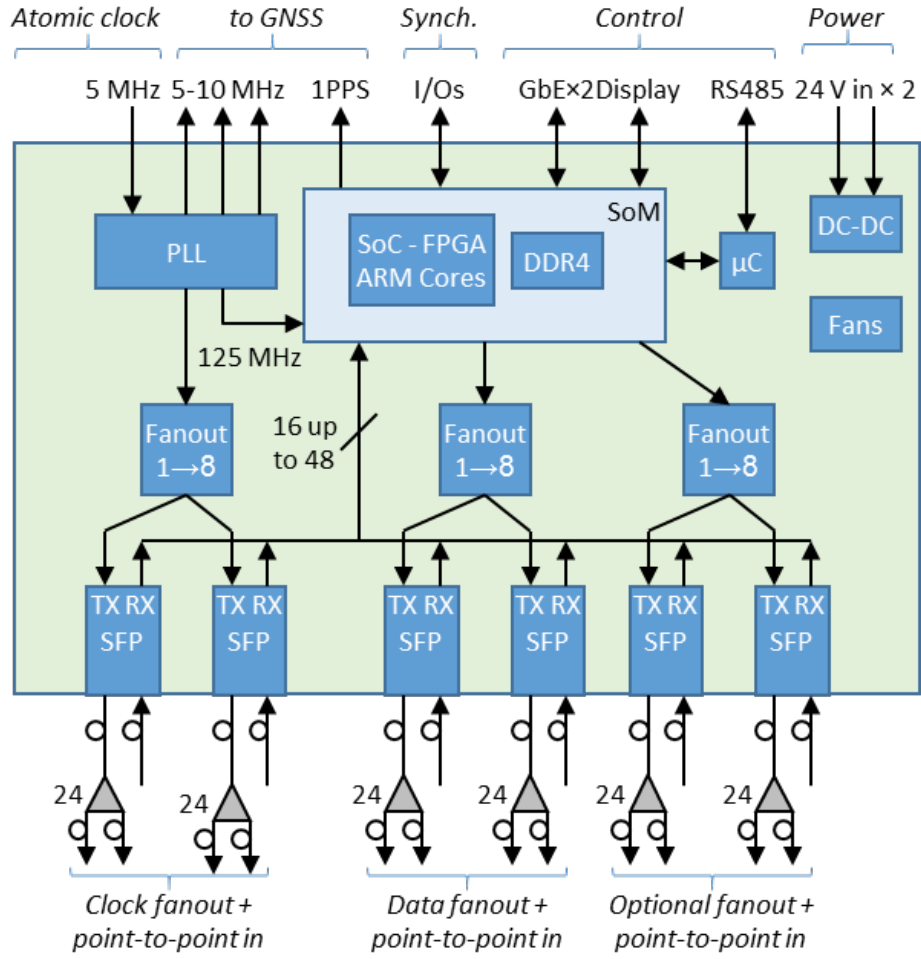


Figure 10: Block diagram of the first stage clock distributor.

datasheet of a typical 80 km reach transceiver, the minimum output optical power of the device is 0 dBm. The quoted attenuation of a 1:32 passive optical splitter is 17.2 dB. The minimum receiver sensitivity of a common 20 km reach SFP transceiver is -23 dBm. The safety margin on the optical budget is therefore around 5.8 dB. This is expected to remain sufficient after taking into account the loss in fiber couplers (0.1 dB per junction) and the attenuation over the length of the fibers themselves which will be very small given the short distance to cover (few tens of meters). Long reach transceivers and passive optical splitters are only usable with single mode optical fibers. Using single mode optical fibers between the FDS and SDS is not an issue because all the connections between these sub-systems are outside of the water and inexpensive fiber couplers can be used. Determinism in terms of latency for the clock distribution path relies essentially on:

- The delay alignment performance of the synthesizer PLL between its different outputs,
- the stability of the input to output delay of a single 1:8 fanout chip and that of SFP transceivers,
- the stability of propagation time through passive optical splitters and all the fiber cabling involved.

By adopting the simplest possible structure and placing the minimum number of elements in the clock distribution chain, it is expected to reach the best achievable stability in terms of latency and the minimum amount of added jitter. The path for synchronous message distribution adopts the same architecture, although it is less critical than the clock path in terms of acceptable skew and jitter. The serial data to be distributed originates from the FPGA logic of the SoC. The serializer primitive

of an ordinary differential output pin pair is planned to be used. The maximum supported rate is expected to be 500 Mbps (i.e. 250 Mbps of user data before encoding), which is well within the 1250 Mbps capability of the I/O pins of the target device. The FDS is an asymmetric unit that provides clock and data broadcast capability from one source to a large number of end-points, but it has only a limited number of point-to-point communication links in the opposite direction: 16 in a minimal implementation, and up to 48 pushing the design to the limits of the number of I/O pins available on the selected SoM. No information is expected to flow from the SDS to the FDS and only a subset of the units that make the SDS have a return path to the FDS (at least one among the units served by the same passive optical splitter in the forward direction). The return path may be used to loop back the received clocks, or possibly transmit serial data from a subset of SDS units to the FDS. The planned rate is 500 Mbps or some sub-multiple of it. On the FDS, each return link uses the RX side of an SFP transceiver and connects to a pair of regular FPGA input pins. For monitoring the stability of the corresponding part of the clock distribution system, the FDS may measure the phase shift between its local reference clock and the clocks that are looped back by the fraction of SDS units that have a return link to the FDS. One of the possible methods for the precise measurement of the phase offset between a reference clock and a synchronous delayed copy is the Digital Dual Mixer Time Difference (DDMDT) technique [14]. This proven method is notably used by White Rabbit.

The FDS logic generates a local 1PPS signal by counting the fixed appropriate number of clock cycles of the generated reference clock (i.e. 125,000,000 for a 125 MHz reference clock). This 1PPS signal is sent to all front-end (accompanied by a time code), and it is also sent to the GNSS receiver along with a 10 MHz clock, synchronous to the reference clock provided by the atomic clock. This information is used on the GNSS side to measure, and periodically record, the delay between the generated 1PPS and the 1PPS synchronous to the UTC obtained from the GNSS receiver. A 5 MHz output is provided to compare the reference clock of the main atomic clock to that of the spare atomic clock. An additional 5 MHz output is available for delay calibration or some other purpose.

The FDS has about 10 TTL level user I/O's for receiving external synchronous signals, one, and possibly two, Gigabit Ethernet ports for control and configuration, a local microcontroller with a RS485 interface for remote supervision, redundant power supply inputs (24 V), two fans, and optionally a small TFT screen and navigation buttons. The FDS is expected to fit in a single 1U 19" rack mountable enclosure. For increased flexibility, part of the functions (e.g. clock multiplication) are housed on a mezzanine card while core components are placed on a motherboard that also receives the SoM. An external, commercial, redundant, power supply unit is used to power the FDS. For system redundancy, the complete FDS is duplicated. If the main FDS fails, the secondary unit takes over. Switching between the two units is however not glitch free and system reconfiguration is expected to take up to few tens of seconds.

3.3 Embedded firmware and software

All the time critical tasks and programmable hardware related functions of the FDS are coded in FPGA logic. Embedded software running on the ARM processor cores of the SoC is used to control system operation and exchange housekeeping data with an external PC and the DAQ over standard Gigabit Ethernet. A small piece of embedded software also runs on the local microcontroller to control fan speed, perform local monitoring and communicate with the control PC over RS485.

4 Prototyping

4.1 First Distributor Stage demonstrator

The RDHK clock distributor demonstrator is a unit designed to evaluate several principles and technical options for clock distribution. It is composed of three main elements: a custom made motherboard, a commercial SoM, and a custom made mezzanine card called "CLK_MEZZ". All these elements, two fans, a small display and a navigation panel fit in a standard 1U 19" enclosure. A 3D image of the RDHK is shown in Fig. 11. The RDHK motherboard houses the required DC/DC converters and voltage regulators to derive all the power voltages used on-board from a 24 V input. For redundancy, a second 24 V input is provided. The motherboard has connectors to plug the SoC module and mezzanine card, a dual SFP cage connected to GTR transceiver pins of the SoC to provide two Gigabit Ethernet

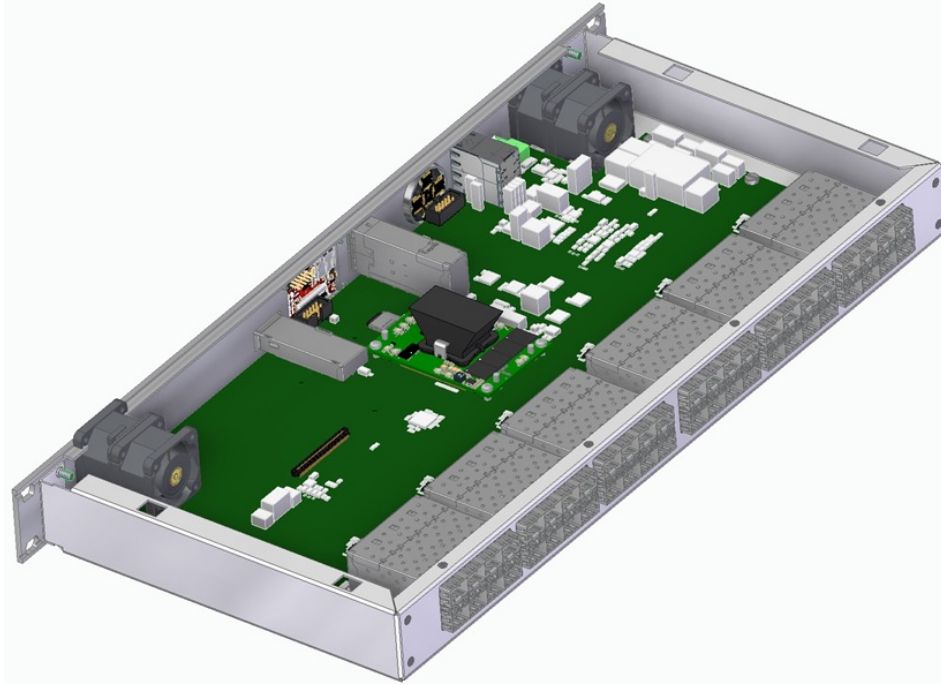


Figure 11: The RDHK in its enclosure.

ports, a QSFP cage for connectivity up to 40 Gbps (using an appropriate SoM), a RS232-USB interface for console I/O, an 8-bit microcontroller and RS-485 port (RJ45 connector) for remote monitoring, a local 125 MHz oscillator, and various ancillary circuits. The RDHK motherboard provides 6 groups of 8 SFP cages for communicating with downstream devices, i.e. up to 48-ports in total. The CLK_MEZZ mezzanine card comprises the required PLL to generate the 125 MHz clock from the 5 MHz clock provided by the atomic clock. It provides also two SFP cages for additional optical I/O capability, and an RJ45 connector for cascading two RDHK units in a master-slave configuration. The RDHK is compatible with SoM model TE803 from Trenz in its different options of equipped SoC and SDRAM.

In the downstream direction, from the RDHK to external devices, each group of 8 SFP transmitters is driven by a common serial source via an 1:8 fanout chip (CDCLVP1208, Texas Instruments). The serial source can be a pair of output pins from the FPGA of the SoM or an output pair of a sextuple D flip-flop (MC10EP451, ON Semiconductor) which is external to the SoM. The inputs of the sextuple D flip-flop originates from the SoM, while the clock is derived directly by the PLL placed on the mezzanine card. In this way, the serial streams to be distributed can be retimed locally with a discrete flip-flop that is not influenced by the variations of delay through the FPGA. When the serial stream to be fanout is taken directly from FPGA output pairs, any potential variations of delay through the FPGA are also propagated. The serial stream transmitted over each group of 8 SFPs can be serial data or a clock (e.g. the constant binary data word “1100” serialized at 500 Mbps is equivalent to a 125 MHz clock). Each group of 8 SFP transmitters is selectable to send either serial data or a serialized clock. In the upstream direction, from external devices to the RDHK, each of the 48 SFP receivers is connected to a distinct pair of FPGA I/O’s of the SoM, providing up to 48 point-to-point link in this direction. It should be noted that the desired number of ports is reached by using regular FPGA I/O pins for transmission and reception, instead of embedded FPGA high-speed serial transceivers which are much less numerous than ordinary I/O’s. Transmission can use Xilinx UltraScale+ component OSERDESE3 or the native TX_BITSLICE primitive. Both can perform serialization from 4-bit or 8-bit parallel words at a serial rate up to 1.25 Gbps, although it is intended to run no faster than 500 Mbps. For the distant partner, this rate is compatible for reception with regular FPGA input pins or the receiver part of various Xilinx FPGA high-speed transceivers (e.g. GTP, GTH). Reception on the RDHK side can use Xilinx ISERDESE3 components or native RX_BITSLICE primitives. These can implement a 4-bit or 8-bit deserializer, up to gigabit per second serial rate. However these, blocks do

not incorporate CDR circuitry. Consequently, deserialization uses the local reference clock. Correct data reception necessarily requires that the remote partner uses the clock it has recovered from the RDHK to clock the serializer driving the return path link to the RDHK, i.e. the communication link must be fully synchronous in both directions to the same common clock source.

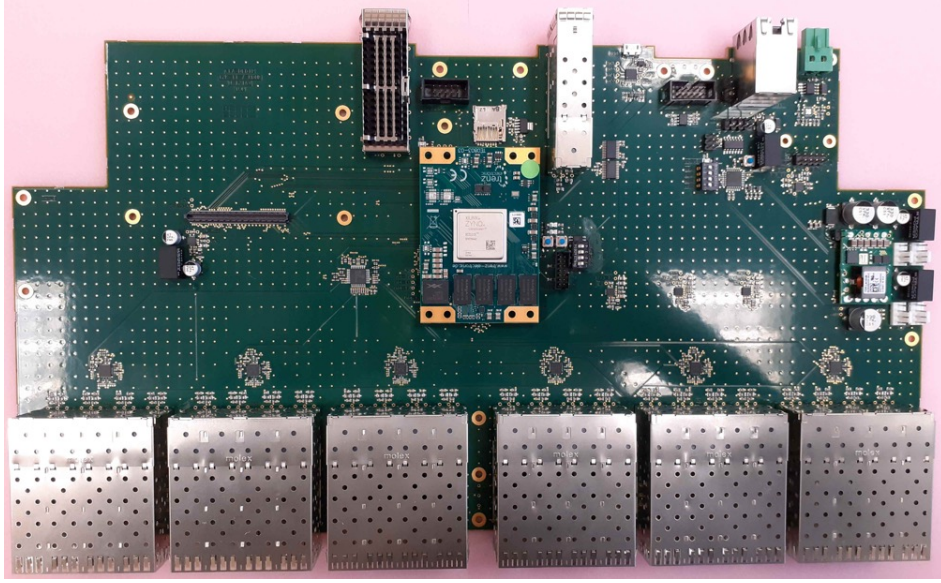


Figure 12: Picture of the RDHK motherboard and the installed SoM.

A picture of the RDHK board is shown in Fig. 12. The board has been delivered at the end of March 2022 and is still under debugging at the time of writing this document. Its companion card, the CLK_MEZZ, has been designed, laid out and will be fabricated soon. Although no result can be presented at this time on the RDHK prototyping effort, the development and debugging of this unit will continue over the coming weeks and the experience gained is expected to help significantly the design of the FDS for Hyper Kamiokande which is planned to re-use the main concepts and tested components.

5 Second Distribution Stage

5.1 Introduction

The second distribution stage receives the reference clock, the TDC reset, the global coarse counter, the PPS and the synchronous commands from the first stage and pass them to the front-ends. To accomplish this task it establishes a bi-directional, synchronous and phase deterministic link to each node over an optical fiber pair used also to exchange critical slow control information between the data acquisition system and the front-ends. The link characteristics enumerated above represent the most critical aspect of the second distribution layer and an extensive R&D campaign has been carried out in the last two years to select the most suited technology for the Hyper-Kamiokande experiment.

5.2 Clock and Data Recovery

Many solutions have been evaluated and the selected one is based on the Clock and Data Recovery (CDR) scheme: the process of extracting time information (clock) and data from a single serial stream. The CDR is implemented by means of a specific serializer-deserializer (ser-des) couple to be used on both sides of the link. The simplicity, reliability and the convenience of this technique has fueled its use in many different fields so that all the modern FPGAs have CDR compliant ser-des already embedded in the silicon. This represents a further advantage for the experiment because it allows sending slow control data and distribute the system clock using one single fiber. It doesn't require any dedicated chip-set beside the FPGA already used to perform all the digital operations needed for the data collection and communication with the DAQ. Reducing the components on the electronics boards has advantages on many critical aspects of the HK's design like the in-water electronics footprint, its power dissipation and the number of links and connectors between the design entities.

A time distribution scheme based on the CDR requires that one entity, called master, receives the precise clock, the master clock, along with data and distributes it to the different nodes, called slaves. This implies that the master establishes a CDR compliant serial link to each slave where the data and clock is merged and serialised. Each receiver separates back data and clock from the serial stream using a deserialiser. In order to guarantee the performance required by the experiment, extreme care must be devoted to the ser-des configuration to achieve low jitter and a fixed phase relation between the transmitter's and receiver's clock. This last aspect is particularly critical since, in the standard configuration, the FPGA's ser-des locks on a random phase after each reboot or reset. Details of the CDR concepts are reported in the block scheme of figure 13

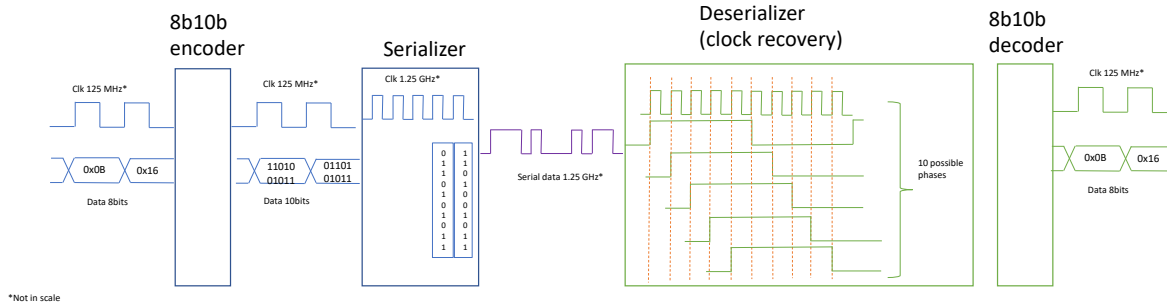


Figure 13: A schematic view of the clock and data recovery concept)

A minimum number of data transitions per second needs to happen on the line to properly extract time information, therefore, data must be encoded in a specific way that guarantees the clock reconstruction on the receiving side. One of the most common encoding techniques is the so-called "8b/10b". The phase deterministic locking mechanism selected for Hyper-Kamiokande is described on the Xilinx FPGA documentation relative to the ser-des [15, 16] in the receivers section when the PMA manual alignment mode is discussed. This technique has been widely used in many physics experiments since more than a decade and it is recognised as practical and reliable hence there are many references in literature, the first published in 2011 [17].

The proposed locking system idea is quite simple: during the link locking phase, the master sends a conventional word to the slave, usually a so-called 8b10b comma, over the serial line. The slave receives the serial data stream, parallelises it and looks for this conventional word. If it is not found, the firmware performs a so-called "slide" which consists in shifting the parallel word alignment by 1 serial stream unit interval. This procedure goes on until the conventional word has been recognised. Since the clock is extracted from the data stream, the shift mechanism just described produces also a phase shift of the reference clock and, when the data alignment is reached, the reference clock replica on the slave has the same phase as the master's.

The proposed fixed phase clock and data recovery scheme is considered simpler and more robust than a "direct" scheme in which the clock and data are sent on two separate fibers in network scheme such as the one between second distribution stage and the front-ends. This aspect becomes critical in the conditions like the Hyper-Kamiokande's where the fibers' length between the clock distribution and the FEs varies depending on the boards positions and the in-water equipment has tight constraints in term of power dissipation, heat dissipation and reliability with no maintenance foreseen for very long periods of time.

The CDR scheme is considered more robust because it requires one optical transceiver to transfer data and clock while the direct solution needs two. This difference brings an obvious reliability advantage since these optical components are considered fragile in terms of lifetime. Moreover, having less components simplifies the board design, reduces the power consumption and the heat dissipation especially in a tight environment as the Hyper-Kamiokande in-water vessel where the FE electronics is hosted.

The CDR scheme is also considered simpler especially when the connection's fibers are of different lengths. In such a scenario, the master electronics would receive from each slave a data stream that is not aligned with his reference clock. This misalignment needs to be carefully compensated on a channel to channel base at risk of misinterpreting the received data or causing catastrophic failures due to gate meta-stability.

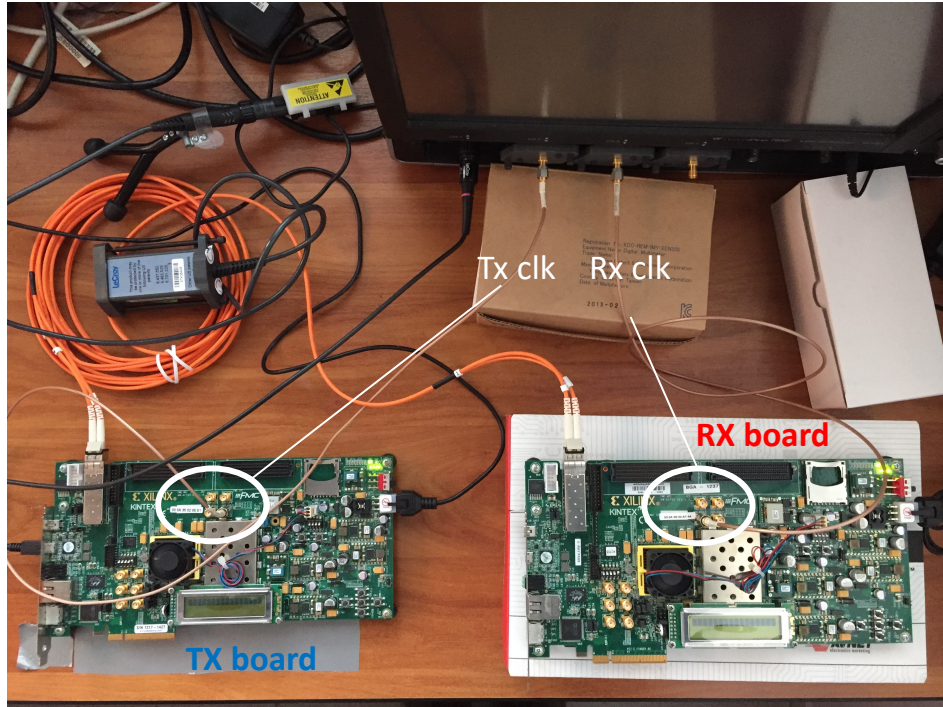


Figure 14: The custom solution test-bench based on the KC705 evaluation boards. On the left the first board configured as transmitter (TX) and on the right the second configured as receiver (RX). In the photo, the orange optical fiber and the 2 cables that bring the transmitted and reconstructed clock to an oscilloscope are visible.

Experimental tests A test campaign has been conducted to evaluate the proposed clock and data recovery concept. The experimental tests are based on evaluation boards and prototypes used as platforms to develop the firmware and the methods that will be used in the final release.

The study has started using a couple of Xilinx evaluation boards KC705 equipped with the Xilinx Kintex 7 FPGA [18]. A specific firmware has been written to establish a 1 Gigabit Ethernet communication link over an optical fiber with a special ser-des configuration that implements the fixed phase CDR method. The firmware has been installed on the boards set, one acting as transmitter (TX) and the other as receiver (RX). On each board, SMA connectors were used to output the transmitted and reconstructed clock signals so that their quality could be measured. The described setup is presented in Figure 14.

The first phase has been devoted to the data bandwidth compliance verification with the 1 Gbps Ethernet protocol; then, the attention has been focused on the jitter performances measurement for the embedded clock which represents the most important element at this stage of the R&D. An extensive measurement campaign has been carried out and the cadence characteristics have been evaluated in time and frequency domains. In the time domain the jitter has been measured by means of an oscilloscope (Lecroy Wavepro 760Zi 6 GHz 40Gps) and the results are reported in Figure 15.

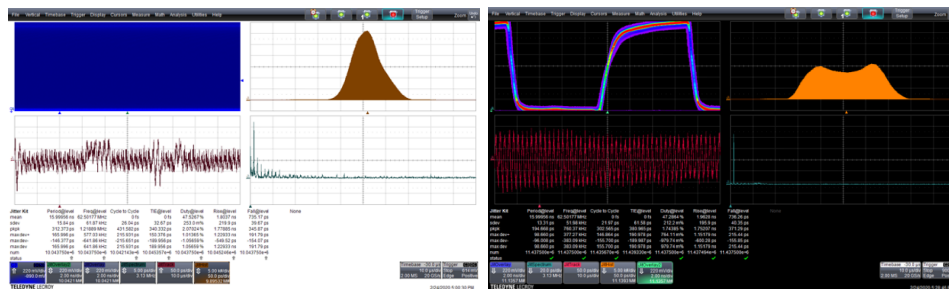


Figure 15: Time domain jitter measurements for the custom solution implemented on the KC705 evaluation boards set. On the left the transmitted clock is reported with a total jitter of 32 ps. On the right the received clock has 50 ps jitter and an evident deterministic component.

The jitter that affects the transmitted clock is equal to 32 ps which gives a measure of the cadence quality before the distribution. As can be seen from the Figure, the reported histogram doesn't have a perfect gaussian shape, sign of a deterministic component. This effect is even more evident on the receiver board where the reconstructed clock has a total jitter of 61 ps and the relative histogram has two clear peaks. Unfortunately, the measurement in the time domain doesn't provide any other detail about that.

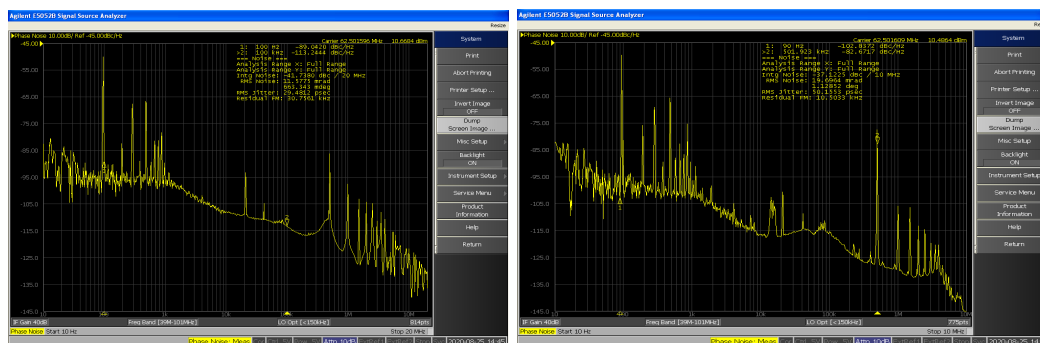


Figure 16: Frequency domain jitter measurements for the custom solution implemented on the KC705 evaluation boards set. On the left the transmitted clock is reported with a total jitter of 29.5 ps with evident components at 500 kHz. On the right the received clock is presented with a 50.1 ps jitter and the same evident deterministic component.

The same clock signals have been evaluated also in the frequency domain using a phase noise

analyser. The principle of this kind of measurement can be explained in a simplified way as follows. The clock under study is sent to an instrument capable to recognise its frequency and generate a cadence of equal characteristics but with very low jitter. The two clocks, the input one and the one generated internally, are combined using the heterodyne function (the same used in the demodulation operation) which result is the difference between the two. This waveform is then plotted and represents the frequency deconvolution of the clock jitter while the area under the curve is equal to the total jitter.

For this test, a Keysight E5052B has been used and the phase analysis plots of the transmitted and received clocks are reported in Figure 16. From the plots the total jitter values can be obtained: 29.5 ps for the TX and 50.1 ps for the RX, very similar to the measurement in the time domain. Moreover spikes (spurious frequencies) at 500 kHz are evident on both the transmitted and received clock which are the source of the deterministic jitter. The fact that the same “modulation” frequency is present on both sides of the link calls for an effect generated by the board hardware. Further verifications have identified the cause of this noise in the DC to DC power supply converters that feed the FPGA.

A second test-bench has been realised using a custom board as receiver (see Fig. 17) with a different power supply scheme and FPGA: a Xilinx Zynq 7000. For this new chip a compatible firmware has been designed so that the same 1 Gigabit Ethernet link has been established and a similar set of measurements has been carried out. The jitter on the received clock this time is lower (40.6 ps total)

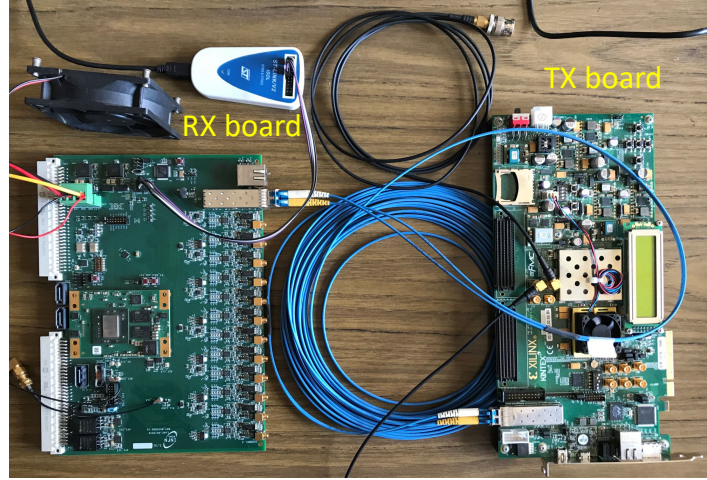


Figure 17: The custom solution test-bench modified using a custom board (on the left) as receiver and a KC705 as transmitter on the right. The connection scheme is the same as in the previous setup.

and the “modulation spikes” are less pronounced (Fig. 18 left). The custom board is equipped also with a so-called jitter cleaner component, a Phase-Locked Loop (PLL) SI5345 capable to filter the jitter and produce a cleaner clock. A measurement of the jitter has been performed also on the clock treated by this filter and the results are shown in the right plot of Figure 18. The excellent filtering capability of the PLL is evident since the measured jitter is now 2.4 ps and the modulation components are almost gone.

The phase stability has been also tested using an oscilloscope in infinite persistence mode triggered on the transmitted clock. The receiver board has then been reset multiple times and the RX clock has been reconstructed always with the same phase distance to the TX clock every time the link has been re-established.

The results of this extensive test campaign are very encouraging because all the Hyper-Kamiokande specifications are largely met and this clock distribution scheme is mature enough to be used in the experiment. The R&D described here shows different important aspects of the proposed solution. The method used and the selected components, including the jitter cleaner to be host on the FE side, are very effective and can mitigate eventual noise issues that will be discovered in the later integration stage. The group has enough skills on the time distribution to analyse, identify problems and solve them.

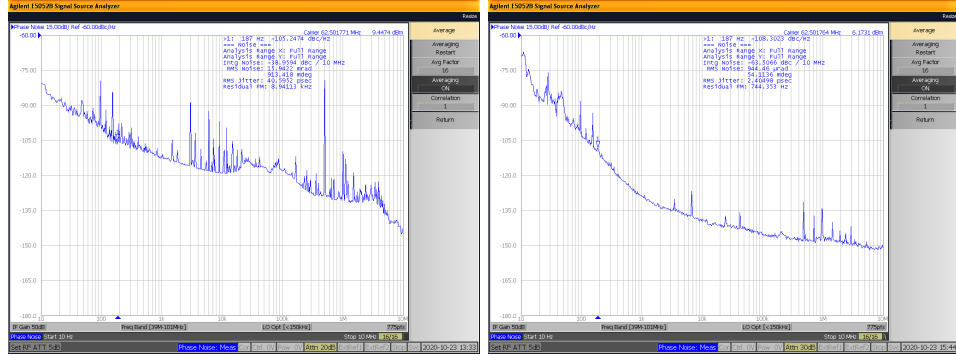


Figure 18: Frequency domain jitter measurements performed on the clock reconstructed by the custom board. On the left the clock before the jitter cleaner PLL and on the right as measured after the filter.

First Integration Test Once the clock distribution concept based on CDR has been evaluated, a new test campaign has been launched to measure its performances against the first prototypes of the digitisers under development for the experiment. Since that R&D is still ongoing a limited set of tests have been carried out but still sufficient to give indications of the possibility to integrate the different parts at the final stage. This effort is also a first attempt to realise the so-called “vertical slice test” which consists in realizing an electronics chain with all the components needed to acquire signals from a PMT. Starting the time distribution integration with the front-end at this early stage allows also to better identify the interfaces and prevent problems which could be hard to solve once the designs will be more mature.

The test has been conducted on the digitisers solution based on the QTC chips on which a prototype firmware, implemented on the same evaluation board presented before and without jitter cleaner, acted as time distribution master feeding a clock embedded with data to the QTC board. The firmware was written to provide the needed information to this specific FE implementation and analog data have been acquired based on the distributed clock. To better evaluate the performances, this data has been compared with others recorded while the front-end was receiving the clock directly from an external source on a dedicated fiber.

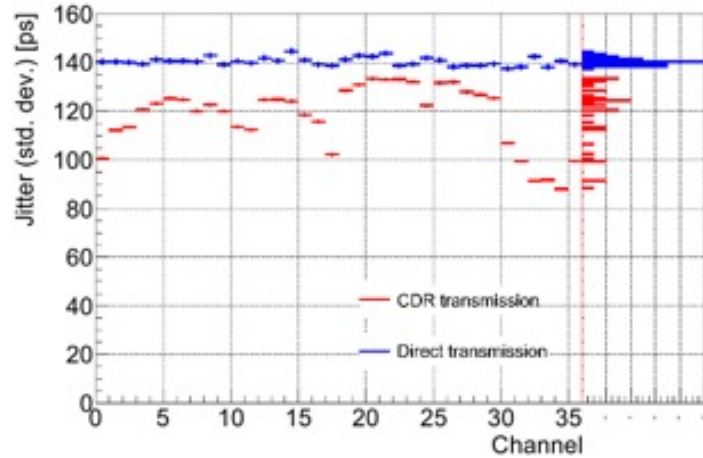


Figure 19: TDC resolution of a QTC receiving the clock from a clock and data recovery scheme (CDR, red dots) compared with the steup in which the clock is feed directly on a dedicated fiber (direct, blue dots) .

Figure 19 reports the TDC measure resolution on the y axis versus the number of channels. The clock and data recovery scheme allows to perform a slightly more precise measure while the channel-to-channel dispersion could be explained by the spurious frequencies described in the previous paragraph.

Even though the results already meet the experiment’s requirements we are confident that the use of jitter cleaner on the final FE configuration will reduce the spread and further increase the resolution.

5.3 Time Distribution Module (TDM)

The number of slaves to be served, i.e. the front-ends, in the HK case, doesn’t allow the implementation of all the master’s functionalities on a single electronics board hence they have to be divided upon different cards, called Time Distribution Module (TDM), as depicted in the block scheme of Fig. 1.

Each TDM is also connected to the data acquisition system using a standard Ethernet link to exchange slow control information, like the upload firmware for the FE’s FPGAs or the acquisition related commands, and pass them to all the front-end modules connected to it. A non-deterministic channel from the in-water electronics to the TDM is also established and is used to send housekeeping information and slow control data to the DAQ.

Each time distribution module is designed to perform the following tasks:

- Receive the master clock and distribute it embedded into time related data with a jitter at the endpoint smaller than experiment’s requirement.
- Guarantee a constant channel to channel phase difference over each reset and power up compensating the differences introduced by different cable lengths.
- Guarantee a bidirectional data bandwidth of at least 100 Mbps (at net of the data encoding).
- Communicate to the data acquisition system to exchange slow control data.
- Implement a redundant optical fiber link to each FE to be activated by a software command.

Board Architecture Following the mentioned tasks and according to the experiment’s requirements, the TDM architecture has been designed around a Xilinx XCZU9EG Zynq ultrascale+ system on chip (SoC) FPGA [19] installed on a so-called “system-on-module” designed by Trenz[20]. A system on chip is a kind of FPGA on which a general-purpose processor is embedded on the silicon device along with the programmable part and specific connections are designed to exchange data between the two sides. The selected device hosts a quad-core Cortex-A53 and a dual-core Cortex-R5F Arm architecture associated to about 600.000 logic cells, 300 IO pins and up to 24 high-speed ser-des. As mentioned, this FPGA comes pre-assembled on a electronics board which hosts a number of features like the main power supply section, a double data rate (DDR) memory for the processor and so on. This choice makes the TDM design simpler since the most complex part, the FPGA and its ancillary sections, are brought to the board via this module avoiding the routing of a very complex and dense part. The link between the TDM and the system-on-module is performed using 4 high-speed connectors each of which has 160 pins that guarantees to exploit almost all the FPGA resources. The time distribution module can be then considered a sort of mother-board for the FPGA module on which all the specific features needed for Hyper-Kamiokande are implemented. As mentioned previously, the core features of this board are the high-speed serial links to the front-ends and the data acquisition system. To implement them, on the TDM, there are 4 groups of SFPs each capable of driving 8 fibers connected to 4 FPGA ser-des for a total of 32 SFPs and 16 ser-des. This connection scheme guarantees the clock and data distribution to 16 FEs having a link redundancy of 2, as explained in the following paragraph. Another group of 4 optical transceivers is devoted to the first to second distribution stage connection. Of this group, two fibers are used to receive the reference clock and two the synchronous data from the main and spare first distribution layer. The last main section is devoted to the DAQ communication where 2 1Gbps Ethernet links are implemented. The board design is completed by all the circuitry needed to power and control the optical transceivers and to monitor the system environmental and operation parameters.

The first prototype of the time distribution module has been designed in December 2021 and the fabrication is started in March 2022. A picture of the board layout is reported in figure 20.

Reliability To guarantee the same front-end’s operative level for more than 10 years reducing the maintenance at a minimum level, specific care must be devoted especially to the electro-optical transceivers used to connect the TDMs and the FEs, them being the most critical component in terms

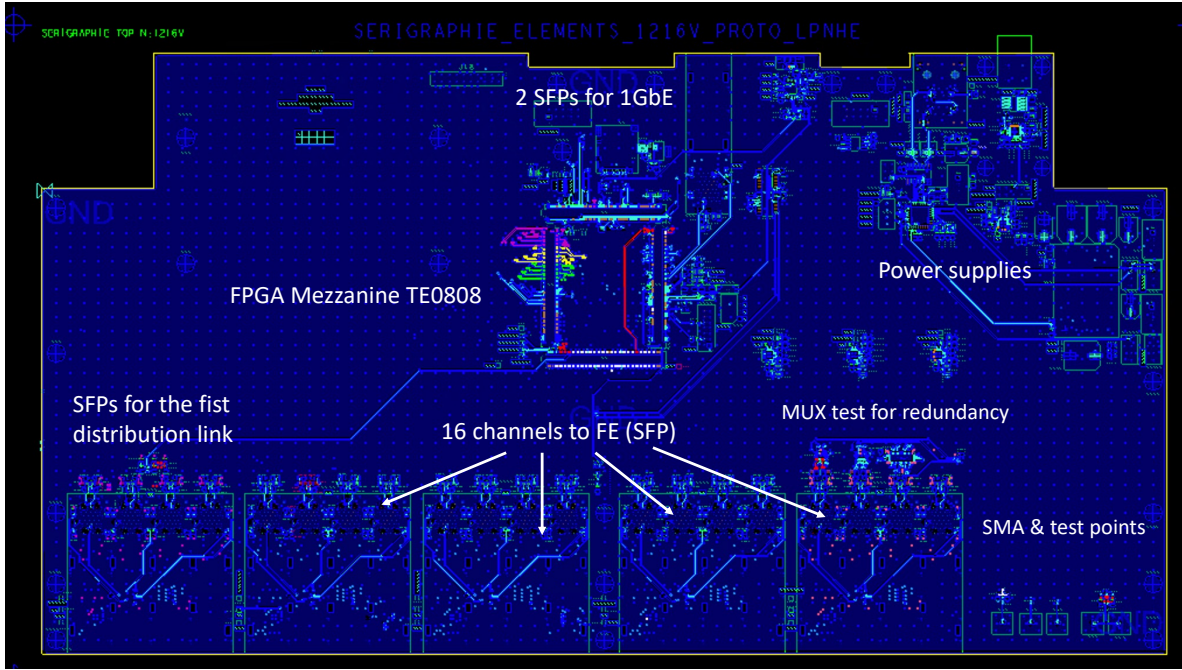


Figure 20: First time distribution module prototype board layout.

of lifetime. To mitigate any possible failure related to the loss of transmission, each second distribution layer board will be equipped with 2 separate fibers connection to each front-end driven by the same ser-des. Only one of them will be active at any given time. The switching mechanism will be supervised by software and will be activated by an explicit configuration command sent by the DAQ. This “manual” procedure is preferred to an automatic one that could detect the link status autonomously as an extra security level to avoid any possible mistake that could prevent the link lock. Technically, the switching mechanism is implemented using a 1 to 2 high-speed multiplexer designed specifically for high-speed data line. The activation of one output or the other is done via some control pins connected to the FPGA. On the prototype board 2 slightly different multiplexers have been used on different data channels with the goal of testing them and selecting the most suited for this specific application.

Another very important aspect to enhance the electro-optical transceiver reliability is the selection of the component itself. To find the device that meets all the experiment’s requirements, a market survey has been carried out and specific reliability characterization documents have been received from different producers. The study has brought to the selection of the Avago AFB5718APZ. This transceiver, compatible with the Small Form-Factor Pluggable (SFP) standard, is designed for data rate up to 1Gbps, it is capable to drive multimode fibers and is a great compromise in terms of mean time to failure (MTTF), power dissipation, performance and price. The failure in time (FIT, defined as $1/\text{MTTF}$) is about 47 at 35°C and about 59 at 45°C . As evident for these two values and in line with the standard behaviour of the electronics components, the operative temperature plays a crucial role in terms of reliability.

During the life time of the experiment the boards’ parameters will be constantly monitored to identify any early sign of malfunctions. Thanks to the modular design of this board, different levels of intervention can be planned to meet the required reliability goal. The first envisions changing the SFP modules when they stop working or when the critical parameters (e.g. optical budget, power consumption or temperature) are measured out of a safety range. This operation is expected to be performed without extra detector dead-time thanks to the redundant links and hot-plug SFP’s feature. The second level of intervention envisions the change of the FPGA’s mezzanine card which is the most critical and complex element of the board. If a problem will be identified on the TDM motherboard then it will be changed with another unit. The last two levels, obviously, require a data acquisition stop but it should be relatively easy and fast. To accomplish this plan a series of spare parts will be stocked at the far detector’s site and the stock will be constantly re-populated by the time distribution

group.

Power Consumption Estimation and Physical Dimensions The TDM is powered with a single 24 volts line and, on the board, the needed circuitry to produce all the required voltages is implemented. A first estimation based on previous experiences and tools available for the FPGA produces predicts a total power dissipation of about 5W for the FPGA part that would bring the total board consumption at 50W considering about 40 W for the optical transceivers and 5W for all the other components. A more precise assessment will be done once the prototype will be tested. All the board characteristics are summarised in the table below.

Board Dimension (WHL) in mm	Power	Operating Conditions (temperature °C and humidity)	Position	Quantity Needed
214x45x400 1 kg	50W@24V	+10/+40 5%/95% (non condensing) RH	Electronic Huts	67

Table 6: Time distribution module board expected power and physical characteristics

5.4 Time Distribution Data Format

The proposed communication protocol between the time distribution module and the endpoint in the frontend is defined considering the need of sending a periodic TDC reset and the associated global coarse counter in a so-called synchronization packet without adding any extra delay. Along with it, a PPS and the relative time information, the PPS packet, must be sent, following the same scheme, whenever they are received from the clock generation and UTC section via the first distribution stage. As highlighted in the requirements, the synchronization packet must contain a “special” 8 bits character followed by the 4 bytes long TDC reset and a trigger message of the same length for a total of 9 bytes. The PPS packet is composed from another “special” 8 bits character plus the six bytes long UTC time. A third “special” 8 bits character is sent when the two signals are coincident followed by the PPS and sync packets. The actual selected TDC reset frequency is not a multiple integer of the 1 PPS then care must be taken in the design of a protocol to avoid any overlap between the two pieces of information that could bring loss of data and synchronicity. The minimum distance between the two packets has been calculated at 512 ns for a TDC reset sent at a frequency of 61.03 kHz and 64 ns for a TDC reset at 8.13 kHz which should guarantee no overlaps. Moreover, different simulations have been performed to confirm the feasibility of this idea. Some results are reported below.

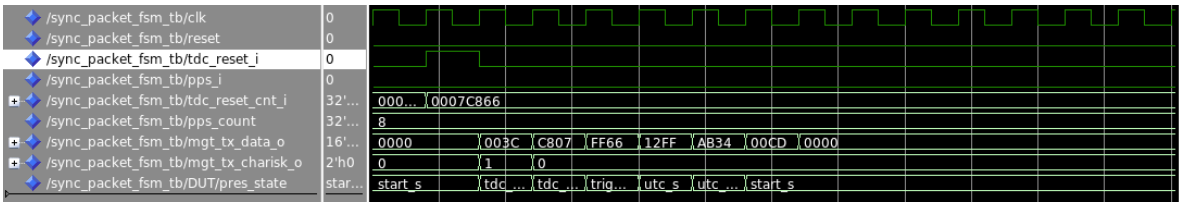


Figure 21: Simulation screenshot of a data stream associated to a TDC reset event.

Figure 21 shows the TDC reset packet as received from the time distribution endpoint while in figure 22 a PPS packet is represented. Figure 23 shows the minimum distance in time between the two packets and fig. 24 describes the case when the TDC reset signal and PPS overlap. All the reported plots are done simulating a firmware code compatible with the proposed ser-des hence it is ready to be implemented in the FPGA. This explains the reason of the 16 bit data bus (mgt_tx_data_o) and a clock at 62.5 MHz instead of 125 MHz system frequency that would be associated with an 8 bit bus. To mark the start of each packet three 8b10b K-characters have been selected: K28.1, K28.5 and K28.7. The line mgt_tx_charisk_o is active when these words are received.

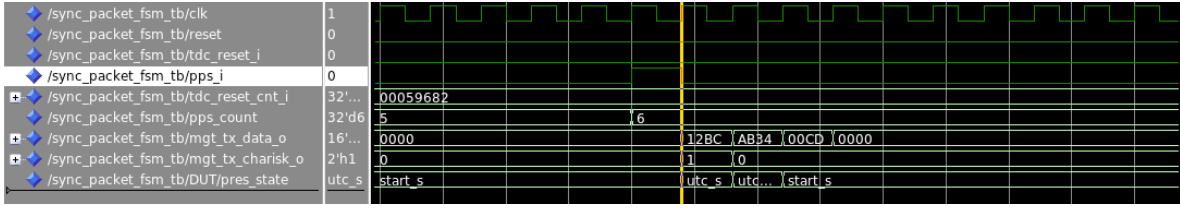


Figure 22: Simulation screenshot of a data stream associated to a PPS event.

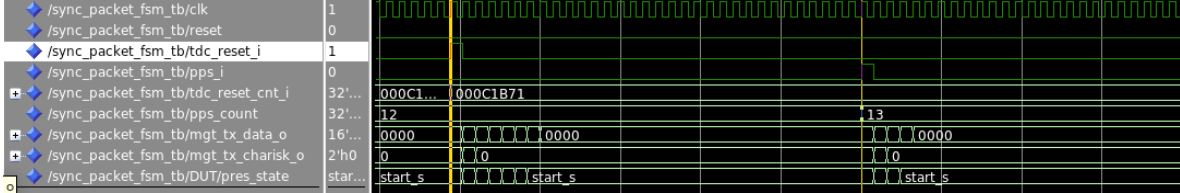


Figure 23: Simulation screenshot of the minimum distance between the TDC reset and PPS.

The actual data line will then be periodically occupied by these packets otherwise it will be available to send other information to the frontend. To avoid any possible interference a bus arbitration system will be implemented on the TDM FPGA to give priority to the periodic packets over the non-synchronous data.

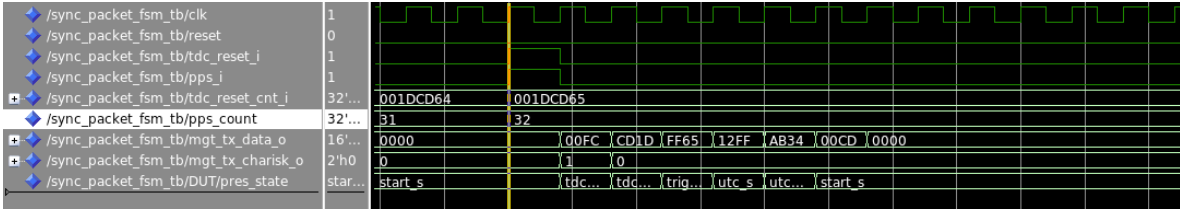


Figure 24: Simulation screenshot of a data stream associated to a PPS event and TDC reset in phase.

6 Time Distribution Endpoint

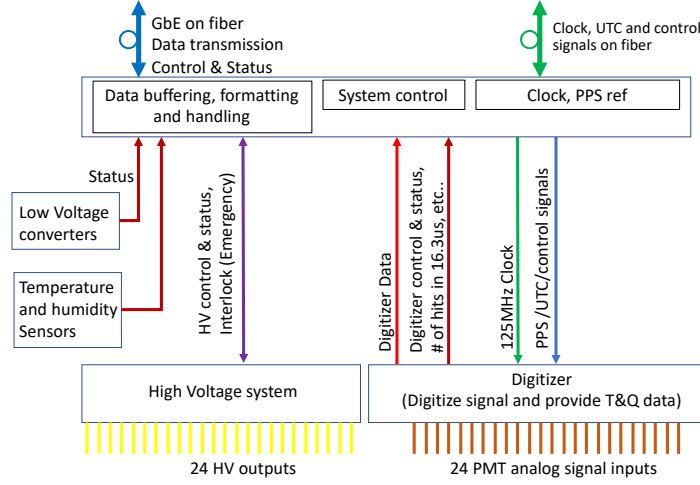


Figure 25: A front end electronics scheme with all the functional blocks reported. The shown grouping doesn't necessarily reflect the final hardware arrangement.

The Time Distribution Endpoint (TDE) is the entity integrated in the front-end electronics that receives the data stream from the Time Distribution Module, reconstructs the embedded clock and cleans it by means of a PLL. A FE general block scheme that reports all the logic elements is depicted in Figure 25. From the hardware point of view the TDE needs an optical transceiver to establish the connection over the optical fiber, an FPGA with the corresponding ser-des to extract the clock, and a PLL to clean the jitter used also as a fan-out to distribute the reference cadence to different entities. The described functionalities and components can be either implemented on a standalone board or installed along with other components on a shared platform. The main difference between these two approaches is that, in the first configuration extra connectors are needed to propagate the clock cadence in the front-end and more power is dissipated to have extra logic. An integrated scheme seems then more advantageous because this would allow to share the FPGA reducing the total power consumption and the heat dissipation, to enhance the reliability reducing the number of connectors and to simplify the entire system reducing the number of wires needed to exchange the relevant signals between the different FE boards. The proposed scheme envisions to integrate the time distribution endpoint on the data concentration board then it would consist of two optical transceivers (to serve the link redundancy explained before), the PLL and a firmware IP to handle the time data stream and extract the clock from data. All these elements will be provided as part of the time distribution package.

Since the established channel will be also used to exchange slow control data between the front end and the DAQ, the firmware IP will have an interface to share this information. This proposed piece of firmware has been already tested as presented in the previous chapter.

7 Estimation of Cost, Human Resources and Project Schedule

7.1 Cost Estimation

As described above, during the ongoing R&D phase, most of the instruments' samples to be used in the final Hyper-Kamiokande time distribution system have already been purchased and the prototypes for the custom boards have been designed providing a fairly accurate idea of the proposed system total cost. However, the global conjuncture and the ongoing electronics components' procurement crisis, could produce a relevant cost increase so the reader should evaluate the presented numbers in light of these two relevant considerations.

This estimation follows the same scheme used for the rest of the document subdividing the total cost in 3 parts related to the different sections of the proposed architecture. The price will be shared between the three proponent institutes in parts that will be decided at a later stage.

Time base generation and UTC The cost of the time base generation and UTC section is largely dominated by the prices of the needed instruments i.e. the atomic clock and the 2 GNSS receivers connected to 1 antenna. Considering a price of about 5.000 euros per atomic clock, 13.000 euros per GNSS receiver and 4.000 euros for the antenna, the total cost of each chain would sum up to 22.000 euros. To enhance the system's reliability, 2 full chains will be deployed and a frequency/time comparator, quoted at 5.000 euros, will be needed to correlate them. The needed White Rabbit network to link the instruments costs about 10.000 euros, the UPS (uninterruptible power supply) system is quoted at 2.000 euros and a small computer system to monitor the different instruments about 2.000 euros. Summing up all the items, the total cost for the time base generation and UTC part would be of about 94.000 euros.

Clock distribution network The clock distribution network cost heavily depends on the number of nodes to be served which varies upon the different architectures presently studied. Another important element is the number of multiPMTs that will be installed on the far detector. At this time the final numbers are not definitively set then, for sake of clarity, this cost estimation is done considering the best guess of 1.000 FEs. Knowing that each second distribution layer board serves 16 FEs, then the total number of boards would be 63 plus 4 spares. Assuming a cost per unit of 4.000 euros the total amount would be about 268.000 euros. Two first distribution layer elements will be enough to complete the network and two others will be built bringing this part cost to about 20.000 euros. The system is completed with the needed power supplies for about 15.000 euros. The time distribution components in each FE would cost about 60 euros then a total of 60.000 euros needs to be budgeted.

The final cost estimate, including 20% contingency, is reported in the summary table 7. It amounts to about 550 kEuros.

Annual maintenance cost After the installation and commissioning phase, the group will provide the time distribution system maintenance budget following the strategy highlighted in the previous chapters. A total estimated cost of 10.000 euros per year is envisioned.

7.2 Estimated human resources

To realise the entire project, including fabrication, testing, commissioning and maintenance, the estimated total needed human resources is 6 full time equivalent persons per year starting from second half of 2022 to the end of commissioning. The required resources will come from the three collaborating laboratories and will cover competencies on digital design, PCB design, cabling, board rework, software and data analysis.

The LPNHE laboratory, part of IN2P3 and CNRS, is involved in many experiments in the area of high-energy particle physics and astrophysics. Its engineering group has very strong expertise in detectors and electronics design that include high-speed digital links, time distribution, low noise analog frontends and board design. The people involved in this proposal have already designed similar systems for other large-scale experiments, like e.g. the LSST telescope and KM3NeT. The LPNHE group has also established a strong collaboration with SYRTE, the French laboratory part of the UTC consortium. In 2021 the LPNHE group has been funded by ANR, a French public national agency, for developing the time distribution for HK.

Item	Cost per unit (euros)	needed units	total (euros)
Time base generation and UTC			
atomic clock	5.000	3	15.000
GNSS receivers	13.000	4	52.000
GNSS antennas	4.000	2	8.000
freq/time comparator	5.000	1	5.000
White Rabbit network	10.000	1	10.000
UPS	2.000	1	2.000
computer infrastructure	2.000	1	2.000
Subtotal: Time base generation and UTC: 94.000			
Time distribution network			
first distribution boards	5.000	4	20.000
second distribution boards	4.000	67	268.000
power supplies	15.000	1	15.000
time distribution endpoint	60	1.000	60.000
Subtotal: Time distribution network: 363.000			
Total including 20% contingency: 549.000			
Yearly maintenance cost: 10.000			

Table 7: Time distribution cost estimation considering the HK configuration with 1.000 FEs.

INFN Roma is involved in many experiments in the area of high-energy physics and astrophysics and its engineering lab and electronic workshop have a very strong expertise in detector and electronics design, including data acquisition, low noise analog frontends, high speed sampling, high speed digital links, time distribution, slow control, board design and production. People involved in this proposal have already designed similar systems for large-scale experiments, like KM3NeT, BELLE2, BDX, and various smaller R&D projects.

The engineers from LPNHE and INFN Roma have a long history of collaboration that started in the year 2000's. They have worked together on the time distribution systems on previous experiments implementing the same technologies as proposed here.

The IRFU/CEA institute is a laboratory which includes a dedicated engineering department for electronics and detector development (DEDIP). The institute has a strong expertise and very wide knowledge on related items with many previous contributions to similar systems. In particular, DEDIP has recently developed the time distribution system for the TPCs of the ND280 upgrade (the near detector of T2K which will be ported to HyperKamiokande).

The IRFU and LPNHE groups have a long history of collaboration on electronics developments, a recent example is the development of the electronics readout for the TPCs of the ND280 upgrade where the two laboratories were in charge of developing respectively the two cards (FrontEnd Cards and FrontEnd Mezzanine) with an interface between them.

7.3 Schedule

After the final design approval, the group is planning to work on the clock generation and UTC synchronisation part operating the entire chain continuously for long periods in order to monitor the performance. It will be compared to the UTC(OP) time reference to discover possible weak points in the design. The two distribution layers first prototypes, already designed, will be tested until January 2023 then a second round of prototypes will be fabricated and tested until September 2023. The production candidates boards will follow in the period between September 2023 to end of March 2024. The components procurement phase will take almost one year and the following production will start in November 2024 for about 6 months. The final product will be tested at the production site. The full schedule is presented in the chart of Fig. 26

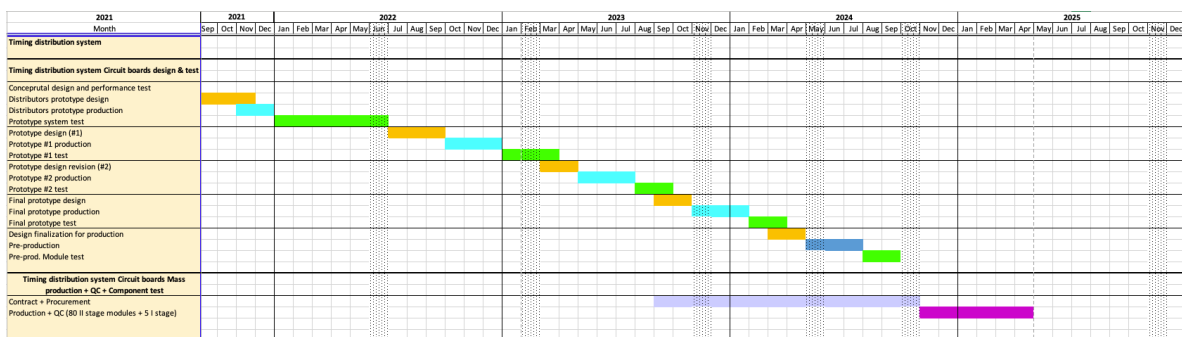


Figure 26: Proposed prototypes and production schedule for the time distribution boards.

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