UMC Introduces Enhanced Prototyping Program for its Most Advanced Production Technologies

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Shuttle Express(TM) will dramatically decrease overall cost and turnaround times for 0.13um and 90nm designs

UMC, a world leading semiconductor foundry, today introduced its Shuttle Express enhanced prototyping program, an extension of the foundry's Silicon Shuttle(TM)* multi project test vehicle. Shuttle Express was created to help offset the inherent higher costs and longer turnaround times associated with silicon verification of system-on-chip (SOC) designs on advanced 0.13um and 90nm technology. This program offers UMC customers a new alternative for fast prototyping in addition to the normal Silicon Shuttle, enabling new 0.13um and 90nm designs that incorporate top 3 configurable metal layers to improve turnaround time by 60%~70% compared with conventional IC prototyping. UMC is the first foundry to offer this type of innovative service.

Ken Liou, director of the Design Support Division at UMC, said, "As part of UMC's overall foundry SOC solutions, UMC continues to introduce new programs that help today's SOC designers seamlessly bring their chips to production in the shortest time possible. We understand that cost and time-to-market issues are primary customer considerations when evaluating 90nm or 0.13um technologies for their new designs.

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* Silicon Shuttle is a program that enables customers the opportunity to verify their advanced designs and prototypes in silicon at a reduced cost. Via the Silicon Shuttle offering, the mask cost is split among multiple customers as they can purchases "seats" on the same mask.

Shuttle Express can significantly lower these barriers and therefore open doors to more customers that wish to realize the true advantages of state-of-the-art process technologies."

The Shuttle Express works with any 90nm or 0.13um customer product designed with configurable top 3 metal layers. While manufacturing the first silicon run, UMC also produces a number of base silicon wafers within the same wafer lot. After the first run, further logic and/or design changes can be performed utilizing just the top 3 configurable metal layers, avoiding the time and costs spent for the re-taping and mask tooling of the entire design. The processing time to achieve second cut silicon is therefore drastically reduced.

The first Shuttle Express will be provided in November 2004. Customers may contact their UMC sales representatives for inquiries and reservations.

The original press release can be found here.