Introduction

The Intel® Network Builders ecosystem is made up of network functions virtualization (NFV) solution providers focused on helping communications service providers (CommSPs) in the network transformation journey. Ecosystem members are helping CommSPs evolve from costly, inflexible, fixed-function hardware to a fully virtualized set of network functions residing in scalable, flexible, and cost-effective servers based on Intel® Xeon® processors.

The launch of the new Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors gives Intel Network Builders members access to processors with increased scalability and enhanced performance for NFVI applications. This new processor family is based on an entirely new processor architecture—Intel® Mesh Architecture—that scales to deliver workload-optimized performance in NFV applications. The Intel Xeon Scalable processors integrate a number of performance accelerators. The most important of these for NFV applications is Intel® QuickAssist Technology (Intel® QAT), which accelerates encryption/decryption and data compression operations needed for network security.

Intel® Select Solutions are workload-optimized solution configurations that utilize the Intel Xeon Scalable processors to meet the needs of today’s complex compute, storage, and networking workloads. The Intel® Select Solution for NFVI reference designs provide a roadmap to building optimized, next-generation NFVI servers powered by the Intel Xeon Scalable processors.

To help Intel Network Builders members develop solutions for these new servers, Intel has launched the Intel® Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI to enable Intel Network Builders members to accelerate the development of NFV solutions by leveraging the capabilities of these new processors.

Intel® Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI

The Intel Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI benefits Intel Network Builders members by providing these developers faster access to optimized and stable platform configurations to speed development of optimized NFV solutions (see Figure 1). In addition, CommSPs can utilize these platforms to conduct testing and modeling of solutions that will define next-generation services.
The Intel Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI provides a base configuration that can be used for a broad range of workloads, including:

- **Consumer Services:** VoLTE, Wi-Fi calling, RCS, WebRTC, vIMS, vTAS, vSBC
- **Business Services:** Network on demand, virtual managed services, SD-WAN, SD-Transport, SD-VPN, DC-DC, vE-CPE, vPE, vCE, vFW, vRouter, vWAN, vSBC
- **Wholesale Services:** IoT, MVNO services, vEPC
- **Internal Functions:** PCRF, DPI, SDN, OCS, OFCS, HSS, DNS, NAT, DHCP, Radius, FW, LB, Orchestration

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The Intel Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI was configured by analyzing the functional requirements of a wide range of NFVI use cases to arrive at a validated and workload-optimized configuration for VNFs and other NFVI applications.

The Intel Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI is built around the following architectural and deterministic performance features of the Intel Xeon Gold processor-based server board:

- **Balanced non-uniform memory access (NUMA) connectivity:** I/O is evenly distributed across both CPU sockets. Workloads running on both sockets can benefit from direct access to network, storage (Non-Volatile Memory Express,* or NVMe* drives), and Intel QAT acceleration.

- **High throughput versatile network interface cards (NICs):** two Intel® Ethernet Network Adapter XXV710-DA2 (dual 25 GbE) NICs per socket, four NICs in total, which gives aggregated theoretical throughput of up to 200 Gbps per server.

- **Data-center grade storage using Intel® 3D NAND SSDs** that deliver a blend of high performance, storage density, manageability, and reliability at an affordable price. High sequential throughput, high random IOPS, and low/reliable latency characteristics of Intel® SSD Data Center Family for NVMe* help accelerate applications across a wide range of NFVI workloads.

- **Intel QuickAssist Technology** acceleration built into the Intel® C628 chipset to improve performance and efficiency by offloading compute-intensive encryption and compression operations from server CPUs, including:
  - Bulk cryptography: symmetric encryption and authentication, and cipher operations
  - Public key cryptography: asymmetric encryption, digital signatures, and key exchange
  - Compression: lossless data compression for data in flight and at rest

Table 1 shows the hardware configuration of the Intel Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>PART</th>
<th>PRODUCT CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Processor</td>
<td>Intel® Xeon® Gold 6152 processors, 22 Cores, 2.1 GHz, 30.25 LLC (MB), 140 W (TDP)</td>
<td>S-Spec SR3B4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board + Chassis</td>
<td>Intel® Server Board S2600WFQ</td>
<td>R2208WFQZ5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intel® Server Chassis R2208WF – 2U, 8 x 2.5&quot; drives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Supply</td>
<td>Redundant 1300 W CRPS - AC, Titanium, Intel</td>
<td>AXX1300TCRPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>RDIMM 16 GB – DDR4 288-pin, 2666 MHz, Micron*</td>
<td>J26609-002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage drives - Boot</td>
<td>Intel® SSD Data Center S3520 Series - 150 GB, SATA 3.0</td>
<td>SSDSC2BB150G701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage drives - Capacity</td>
<td>Intel® SSD Data Center P3520 Series - 1.2 TB, PCIe 3.0 x 4 Interface</td>
<td>SSDPE2MX012T701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVMe Switch</td>
<td>4 Port Switch, Intel</td>
<td>AXXP3SWX08040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCIe Cables</td>
<td>OCuLink Cables for up to 4 NVMe drives, Intel</td>
<td>AXXCBL800CVCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectivity - NICs</td>
<td>Dual 25 GbE Intel® Ethernet Network Adapters XXV710-DA2</td>
<td>XXV710-DA2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Onboard Dual 10 G Copper &amp; 1 GbE Management Port</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of Band Network - NICs</td>
<td>Intel® Ethernet Network Connection OCP I357-T4</td>
<td>I357T4OCG1P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cables - Networking</td>
<td>Intel® Ethernet SFP28 Twinaxial Cable</td>
<td>XXVDACBL1M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Software Stack**

The software stack for the Intel Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI is optimized for NFV applications running on the Intel Xeon Gold processor. The solution stack (see Figure 4) comes with various optimization tools and sample demo applications that showcase the optimal performance levels of the underlying Intel platform ingredients.
Benefits

The Intel Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI comes with the following benefits for the Intel Network Builders members. The platform provides:

- an NFV infrastructure in a box with a time to market advantage
- a tuned and optimized hardware/firmware/software foundation that is aligned to CommSPs’ requirements
  - one-stop shop for customers to get the latest reference firmware ingredients
  - extensible, which accommodates a growing list of NFV test cases
- NUMA-aware(NUMA-balanced network, data, and crypto for simplified orchestration and provisioning, and deterministic performance
- a common debug platform between Intel and customer for effective debugging and root cause determination in the event of a platform issue
- continuous improvement to the NFVI building blocks, supporting the on-boarded NFV solutions, through Intel's validation capabilities throughout the lifecycle of product

Conclusion

The Intel Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI was developed to align with communications service providers’ requirements. It provides a development platform for NFV solution providers to assist the CommSPs and enterprises in the network transformation journey. More details are available from the Intel Network Builders account management team or the Intel Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI website at https://networkbuilders.intel.com/network-technologies/intelselectfasttrackkit.

About Intel Network Builders

Intel Network Builders is an ecosystem of independent software vendors (ISVs), operating system vendors (OSVs), original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), telecom equipment manufacturers (TEMs), system integrators (SIs), enterprises, and service providers coming together to accelerate the adoption of network functions virtualization (NFV)-based and software-defined networking (SDN)-based solutions in telecom networks and in public, private, and hybrid clouds. The Intel Network Builders program connects service providers and enterprises with the infrastructure, software, and technology vendors that are driving new solutions to the market. Learn more at http://networkbuilders.intel.com.

Figure 4. Block diagram of Intel Select Fast Track Kit for NFVI platform including hardware and software. Intel Network Builders members can add OpenStack and Open vSwitch to this configuration if needed for their applications.