# arm

## Arm SystemReady IR

# Deploying Yocto on SystemReady IR compliant hardware

#### Non-Confidential

Issue 01

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#### Release information

#### Document history

Issue	Date	Confidentiality	Change
01	11 October 2021	Non-Confidential	First version

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(LES-PRE-20349)

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The information in this document is Final, that is for a developed product.

Web Address www.arm.com

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# **1** Overview

SystemReady IR is a compliance certification program based on a set of hardware and firmware standards that enable interoperability with generic off-the-shelf operating systems and hypervisors. These standards include the Base System Architecture (BSA) and Base Boot Requirements (BBR) specifications, and market-specific supplements.

The Yocto Project (YP) is an industry standard development tool to build Linux-based software stacks for embedded devices. YP provides the flexibility to create custom solutions, however most YP builds require custom engineering to run on a specific hardware platform. As a result, it is difficult to support many targets with a single configuration. On SystemReady IR platforms, YP builds rely on consistent boot behavior, a firmware provided system description, and mainline Linux support to eliminate perplatform enablement. SystemReady IR reduces the effort for maintenance and can support many platforms with a single image.

In this guide, learn how SystemReady IR compliant platforms make it easier to build, deploy, and maintain YP solutions. This guide focuses on the SystemReady IR band of the SystemReady program. This band addresses the needs of the embedded Linux ecosystem and is relevant for YP developers. All examples in this guide use SystemReady IR compliant platforms.

This guide teaches you about the following:

- The SystemReady IR boot flow
- A reference deployment example on an Arm-based NXP board
- Information about where to find the necessary components to get YP up and running on a SystemReady IR compliant platform

You can support SystemReady SR and ES certified platforms with the same YP configuration, but this configuration is not described in this guide.

# 2 What is SystemReady IR?

Cloud native software development is crucial to enable large scale IoT deployments. Working to cloud native principles, you can build systems in which the cloud and edge work together, with the benefits of each type of compute.

To help the growth of a cloud native edge ecosystem and support the continued growth and innovation in IoT, Arm launched the Project Cassini initiative. Project Cassini is an open, collaborative, standards-based initiative formed by three pillars: standardization, security, and ecosystem. SystemReady IR makes up the standardization pillar of Project Cassini and will be the focus of this guide. For more information about Project Cassini, see **Project Cassini**.

IoT devices are generally Linux-based and are used in industries ranging from complex smart cameras to small industrial controllers. To enable these use cases, a flexible SoC ecosystem is necessary to implement unique feature sets to meet specific requirements. This flexibility can lead to fragmentation, where systems lack a set of standards for common features and interfaces. As a result, fragmentation affects developers and the broader IoT ecosystem.

IoT software typically needs to be developed for specific hardware targets. Each platform has different dependencies and requires a unique software stack. Debugging and ongoing maintenance can become costly, however SystemReady IR addresses fragmentation in IoT.

SystemReady is a compliance certification program with separate bands targeting different parts of the Arm ecosystem. For all bands, SystemReady compliant platforms use a standard firmware interface that simplifies the boot process and removes the need for platform-specific boot support. SystemReady IR provides standards for Linux and other operating systems that use the devicetree specification. These standards enable you to easily deploy a standard software stack across all SystemReady compliant platforms. Effort spent creating platform-specific software stacks can be redirected to more important tasks, such as building differentiating features.

SystemReady IR certified platforms use a minimum set of hardware and firmware features and must be compliant with the following requirements:

- Arm Base System Architecture (BSA) for 64-bit
- Embedded Base Boot Requirements (EBBR)
- EBBR recipe of the Arm Base Boot Requirements
- Devicetree Specification

Platforms are tested for compliance using the Architectural Compliance Suite (ACS) tool for the relevant SystemReady band. For more information about the certification process for SystemReady IR, see the SystemReady IR - IoT integration, test, and certification.

## 2.1 Arm Base System Architecture

The Arm Base System Architecture (BSA) offers a standard hardware architecture for SoC designers. This architecture allows you to optimize the SoC for specific use cases and retain the minimum feature set to enable software combability. The cost savings from removing additional hardware features for specific SoCs is offset by the complication of developing software across different hardware. Meeting minimum hardware specifications as defined by BSA simplifies this optimization process.

The BSA specifies a 64-bit hardware system based on the Arm architecture, with baseline requirements covering processing elements, memory subsystems, interrupts, Memory Management Units (MMU), PCIe, peripherals, and other power and security features. The BSA describes the minimum set of features required for an OS to boot and run. Further requirements can be added on top of these baseline requirements for specific market segments, for example, the BSA server supplement. The baseline BSA specification is sufficient for IoT.

On AArch64 platforms for SystemReady IR compliance, you must run the BSA tests included in the ACS test tool and report the results. However, the results are informational and the platform is not required to pass all BSA tests for certification. BSA does not specify 32-bit hardware requirements and there are no BSA test cases for AArch32 platforms.

## 2.2 Embedded Base Boot Requirements

The Embedded Base Boot Requirements (EBBR) addresses fragmentation in embedded boot sequences. Embedded platforms traditionally implement a bespoke boot sequence and as a result, require platform-specific modifications to the OS. The EBBR specifies boot features that ensure OSs can boot without modifications. As embedded deployments become larger and more diverse, standardized boot behavior becomes more important.

The EBBR specification defines features at the interface between the firmware and an OS or hypervisor. EBBR-compliant platforms present a consistent firmware interface to the OS, allowing compliant OSes to boot unmodified and to employ advanced features including Secure Boot and firmware updates. The EBBR uses the Unified Extensible Firmware Interface (UEFI) specification to define the boot and runtime services expected by an OS or hypervisor.

The Arm Base Boot Requirements (BBR) covers all SystemReady bands. This specification includes an EBBR recipe that specifies how BBR compliance is met when implementing the EBBR requirements.

## 2.3 Devicetree specification

The devicetree specification defines a data structure which describes the hardware components of a particular system. The bootloader loads both the kernel image and the Devicetree Blob (DTB). The OS's kernel then reads the devicetree information, allowing it to use and manage the hardware components. Devicetrees move the hardware description out of the kernel binary, helping to reduce the number of kernel forks needed to support specific hardware.

Traditionally in embedded Linux systems the devicetree has been included as part of the OS image, and the OS needs to include a devicetree for every supported platform. The difference with SystemReady IR is that firmware is required to provide a default devicetree that is suitable for booting the Linux kernel so that the OS is not required to provide its own copy. This makes it possible to deploy a single image on a much wider range of hardware.

The default devicetree requirement is a requirement on the firmware, not on the OS. The OS is not required to use the default devicetree and can install a replacement at boot time if needed.

# **3 UEFI overview**

The UEFI standard defines the Application Binary Interface (ABI) exposed by the firmware that an OS uses. UEFI chooses which binary to load and execute, defines a set of abstract interfaces for accessing the console, network, storage, and other devices, and details how control is handed over from firmware to an OS. The most well-known open source implementation of UEFI compliant firmware is the Tianocore **EDK2 reference implementation**. U-Boot also implements a subset of the UEFI ABI. Most IR compliant platforms use the U-Boot implementation.

UEFI firmware works by being able to find, load, and execute UEFI applications. This firmware provides basic access to devices until the OS is ready to take control of the platform and use its own device drivers. UEFI applications are executable code in PE/COFF format. The firmware doesn't need to know what the application does. When a UEFI application is run, it can either run to completion and return control back to firmware, or transfer control to an OS which assumes control of the hardware. The first type of application contains standalone utilities, boot menus, or other tools. The second type of UEFI application is referred to as an OS loader. A UEFI application can also load and execute another UEFI application. For example, a boot menu application like GRUB can load and execute an OS loader such as the UEFI stub embedded in a Linux kernel image.

Examples of UEFI applications are as follows:

- GRUB, a boot system used by Linux distributions to display a menu of boot options
- Memtest86, an industry standard memory stress testing application
- UEFI shell
- Linux kernel. The Linux kernel itself is a UEFI application. The kernel contains a UEFI stub that calls ExitBootServices() and sets up the execution environment before jumping into the kernel.
- Tianocore EDK2 SCT, the standard UEFI Self Certification Test suite
- Doom

By design, UEFI is a simplified execution environment. Applications are single threaded using simple memory management. UEFI does not provide scheduling services. One UEFI application runs at a time. UEFI is designed to provide enough functionality for an OS to perform pre-boot actions, such as choosing a specific kernel version or loading additional files, before handing control to the OS. The defined ABIs, which are also called protocols, provide abstract access to network, storage, console, variable, and memory management services.

Also included in UEFI is the GUID Partition Table (GPT) format for partitioning block devices. GPT replaces the MBR (Master Boot Record) method of partitioning because GPT supports larger devices, can handle a greater number of partitions, and is robust against corruption.

## 3.1 UEFI boot process

This section explains how UEFI boot occurs when the device is powered on. The UEFI components and the OS are generic and independent of the system firmware. There are no platform-specific customizations. The information in this section applies to any SystemReady compliant platform.

When the platform is released from reset, the firmware performs an internal initialization before performing Boot Device Selection to locate and run a UEFI application. Boot Device Selection begins by using the BootOrder and BootXXXX variables to find a suitable UEFI application. Each of the BootXXXX variables contains the name of the boot option and a path to a UEFI executable in the form /Device/path/in device. Use the efibootmgr utility on Linux to see examples of BootXXXX entries, such as the following example code:

```
root@toybrick-debian:~# efibootmgr -v
BootCurrent: 0001
BootOrder: 0001
Boot0001* Debian VenHw(e61d73b9-a384-4acc-aeab-
82e828f3628b)/eMMC(0)/eMMC(1)/HD(3,GPT,5f6b0000-0000-403e-8000-
0d7d00000b89,0x6000,0x100800)/File(EFI\debian\shimaa64.efi)
```

```
root@toybrick-debian:~#
```

BootOrder is a list of numbers in the form 0001, 0004, 0002. BootOrder corresponds to the BootXXXX variables that tell firmware where to find a UEFI application. In the code example, the firmware attempts to load and execute the UEFI applications pointed to by Boot0001, Boot0004, and Boot0002, in that order. Firmware will attempt to execute each BootXXXX entry in BootOrder order. If an application cannot be found or if it exits and returns to firmware, firmware continues to the next BootOrder entry until the list is complete.

Typically, the BootXXXX entries point to a file stored in the EFI System Partition (ESP). The ESP is a FAT formatted partition that firmware uses for storing boot applications and other utilities. When an OS is installed, the OS copies boot applications into the ESP so that firmware can find and read these applications.

If BootOrder is not defined or none of the BootXXXX targets can be run, firmware falls back to the default boot targets. These targets is either the removable device path of

/EFI/BOOT/BOOT<ARCH>.EFI on any device with an ESP, or network boot. The order of the default boot targets is implementation defined and can usually be controlled by the user. Most EDK2 implementations provide a boot menu to the user. In U-Boot implementations, the default boot order is typically defined by the boot\_targets variable, as shown in the following code:

U-Boot 2021.07-dirty (Aug 06 2021 - 21:43:32 +0100)

SoC: Rockchip rk3399 Reset cause: RST Model: Rockchip RK3399 Toybrick ProD Board DRAM: 2 GiB Deploying Yocto on SystemReady IR compliant hardware

```
PMIC: RK8090 (on=0x40, off=0x00)
       mmc@fe320000: 1, sdhci@fe330000: 0
MMC:
Loading Environment from MMC... OK
      serial
In:
     serial
011 \pm :
     serial
Err:
Model: Rockchip RK3399 Toybrick ProD Board
Net:
Warning: ethernet@fe300000 (eth0) using random MAC address - ce:82:85:cf:61:0d
eth0: ethernet@fe300000
Hit any key to stop autoboot: 0
=> printenv boot targets
boot targets=mmc0 mmc1 usb0 pxe dhcp sf0
=>
```

## 3.2 Create a SystemReady IR bootable OS image

This section describes how an OS uses UEFI firmware to boot. Linux, BSD, and other operating systems contain support for the UEFI ABI. To build a bootable operating system image, the executable files must be in the right place.

For initial provisioning, a device will not have BootOrder or BootXXXX variables set, and the platform will boot from one of the default boot targets. The most common boot targets use the removable media boot path on a block device or boot over the network using DHCP/TFTP, iSCSI, or HTTPS. Currently, U-Boot implements TFTP boot and iPXE can be used for iSCSI boot. U-Boot does not have an implementation of HTTPS boot. In this guide, we boot from a block device like a USB drive.

For firmware to treat the block device as bootable, the firmware needs to be able to find an ESP partition containing a /efi/boot/boot<architecture>.efi file. For example, on AArch64 the boot file is /efi/boot/bootaa64.efi. For GPT formatted disks, the ESP must be FAT formatted and tagged with partition type 0xef00. ISO disk images do not need a separate ESP but must contain a /efi/boot/bootaa64.efi file.

To create a bootable image in GRUB, copy grub.efi to /efi/boot/bootaa64.efi and put the GRUB config file in the same directory. Other UEFI boot applications like systemd-boot are installed in a similar way. For more information, refer to the documentation for your boot application.

After an OS has been copied to local storage, it can replace the removable boot path with a BootXXXX variable. This variable allows the OS to specify the install path and a selection of UEFI boot targets. Linux distribution installers use the SetVariable() UEFI API to set BootXXXX after the boot loader is copied to the ESP.

# 4 Yocto Project overview

The Yocto Project helps developers build custom embedded Linux distributions. It is popular due to its modularity, which allows you to optimize speed, footprint, and memory utilization. The Yocto Project contains the following key elements:

- Tools for Linux development
- Poky, a reference embedded distribution
- OpenEmbedded build system

Poky is Yocto's stable reference OS, which demonstrates a basic level of functionality for embedded systems. Poky combines core components from the Yocto Project, is tested and supported, and receives frequent updates. Developers can use Poky as a foundation and adapt it to meet their requirements. Underpinning Yocto's modularity is the Layer Model, which allows for functionality to be logically organized into layers. Layers group related recipes and tell the build system what to make. Recipes are a form of metadata, which contain instructions on where to find the source code and information on dependencies and compilation options.

The OpenEmbedded layer index provides an easy way to find layers, such as Board Support Packages (BSP), GUIs, middleware, and the Poky layer. The Yocto Project Compatible Layer Index includes a curation of layers validated to work with Yocto. Combining pre-built layers with custom built layers, developers can build an entire distribution. The layer system creates a logical hierarchy which enables collaboration and reuse of code, whilst simplifying the overall view of the software.

An example hierarchy can include the following layers:

- Developer Specific Layer, a custom functionality for the specific product requirements
- Poky, a reference OS to act as a foundation
- Hardware Specific BSP provided by the silicon vender or ODM
- Yocto Specific Layer, which are recipes specific to Yocto builds
- OpenEmbedded-core, a small set of foundational recipes consistent across OpenEmbedded derived builds

The OpenEmbedded Build System uses the BitBake tool. BitBake parses recipes to compile a final image either through native or cross compilation. For more detailed information about Yocto, see the **Yocto documentation**.

## 4.1 SystemReady IR for Yocto

Yocto offers an easy way to build custom OS images. Embedded developers often support many platforms with different hardware and firmware, creating bespoke Yocto images for each configuration. SystemReady IR is designed to address this complexity. SystemReady IR compliant platforms expose a standardized set of interfaces to the OS so that Yocto builds and other off-the-shelf Linux distributions can boot without modifications. Embedded platforms can target

SystemReady IR, however Yocto builds can boot without modification across platforms compliant with SystemReady. For example, a Yocto build can be developed on a SystemReady SR compliant server then be seamlessly ported to production silicon that is SystemReady IR.

SystemReady IR provides an effective solution to the issue of fragmentation for embedded developers, offering a software experience that works while retaining the customizability that Yocto is known for. With this combination, you can support large, diverse deployments with substantially reduced effort.

# 5 Example: deployment on an NXP board

Before you begin, you will need the following:

- An NXP i.MX 8M Mini EVK board
- A micro SD card that is 2GB or larger
- A computer running a Linux environment

## 5.1 Make the board SystemReady IR compatible

- 1. Ensure you have an NXP account.
- 2. Download and extract the i.MX 8M Mini EVK boot image (SystemReady-IR certified) from **Embedded Linux for i.MX Applications Processors**.
- 3. Download the uuu tool from the **mfgtools GitHub repository.** This tool is used to program the onboard eMMC.
- 4. On the NXP board, slide the power switch to the off position and set the boot mode switches to Download mode. The following table shows the switch settings:

	SW1	SW2	SW3	SW4	SW5	SW6	SW7	SW8	SW9	SW0
Top row	1	0	1	0	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х
Bottom row	Х	×	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	0
1=Switch Up, 0= Switch Down, X= Either										

#### Table 1: Boot mode switch settings

5. Connect the USB-C power cable to the power supply, the USB-C USB cable to the PC, and the USB Micro cable to the PC (serial). The following diagram shows how the cables should be connected:



Figure 1: Cable connection

6. Slide the power switch to the on position and flash the boot firmware as shown in the following code snippet:

\$ sudo uuu -b emmc imx-boot-imx8mmevk-sd.bin-flash\_evk

The SystemReady IR compatible version of U-Boot is installed to the onboard eMMC.

7. Slide the power switch to the off position and set the boot mode switches to eMMC mode, as shown in the following table:

	SW1	SW2	SW3	SW4	SW5	SW6	SW7	SW8	SW9	SW0
Top Row	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Bottom Row	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
1=Switch Up, 0= Switch Down										

#### Table 2: eMMC mode switch settings

The board is now ready to boot SystemReady IR compatible operating systems from an SD Card or USB.

## 5.2 Build a generic SystemReady IR Yocto image

Now that the board is SystemReady IR compatible, the next step is to build a base generic Yocto image that will boot on any SystemReady compatible platform.

- 1. Make sure all the Yocto build prerequisites are met, as described in Yocto Project Quick Build.
- 2. Set up Poky and the meta-arm layers using the following code:

```
$ git clone git://git.yoctoproject.org/poky
$ git clone git://git.yoctoproject.org/meta-arm
$ cd poky
$ source oe-init-build-env
$ bitbake-layers add-layer ../../meta-arm/meta-arm-toolchain
$ bitbake-layers add-layer ../../meta-arm/meta-arm
```

3. Change the MACHINE config value in the conf/local.conf config file to generic-arm64, as shown in the following snippet:

\$ sed -i 's/qemux86-64/generic-arm64/' conf/local.conf

Generic-arm 64 is a generic SystemReady IR aarch64 machine.

```
4. Change the init system from sysvinit to systemd, as shown in the following code:
    $ echo 'DISTRO_FEATURES += " systemd"
    VIRTUAL-RUNTIME_init_manager = "systemd"
    DISTRO_FEATURES_BACKFILL_CONSIDERED += "sysvinit"' >> conf/local.conf
```

This system can properly detect the console tty from the kernel.

- 5. Build the Yocto image using the following code:\$ bitbake core-image-base
- 6. Copy the image to a micro SD card using the following code: sudo dd if=tmp/deploy/images/generic-arm64/core-image-base-generic-arm64.wic of=/dev/sdX bs=4M

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7. Insert the microSD card into the development board and power it on. As shown in the following screen shot, the board shows U-boot, the systemd-boot menu, and a login shell for Yocto:



#### Figure 2: Boot display

The Yocto image is now installed on the NXP board.

# 6 The meta-arm layer

meta-arm is a layer with recipes specific for Arm platforms, and contains generic-arm64 and qemuarm64-sbsa QEMU machines.

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Recipe	Description
Android Common Kernel	Downstream of kernel.org kernels, including selected patches that have not been merged into the mainline or Long Term Supported (LTS) kernel
Arm FVP – Architecture Envelope Model	Support for Fixed Virtual Platform (FVP) Architecture Envelope Models (AEM)
Arm FVP – Library Ecosystem Reference Design	Support for Arm FVP library, which includes all CPU FVPs
DS-5 Streamline Gator daemon	Daemon for gathering data for Arm Streamline Performance Analyser (part of Arm Development Studio)
Hafnium	A reference Secure Partition Manager (SPM) for systems that implement the Armv8.4-A Secure-EL2 extension, enabling multiple, isolated Secure Partitions (SPs) to run at Secure-EL1
OpenCSD	API for decoding trace streams from Arm CoreSight trace hardware
OP-TEE	Trusted Execution Environment (TEE) designed as companion to a non-secure Linux kernel running on Cortex-A cores using TrustZone
SCP Firmware	System Control Processor (SCP) and Manageability Control Processor (MCP) firmware reference implementation
Tianocore EDK2	Open-source implementation of UEFI
Trusted Firmware-A	Reference implementation of secure world software for Cortex-A
Trusted Firmware for Cortex-M	Reference implementation of secure world software for Cortex-M

#### Table 3: meta-arm layer recipes

# 7 Glossary

Abbreviations and terms used in this document are defined in the following table:

Term	Abbreviation	Definition
AArch32/64	-	32/64-bit version of the Arm architecture.
Application Binary Interface	ABI	Describes the low-level interface between two binaries, one of which is often an OS.
Advanced Configuration and Power Interface	ACPI	An open standard that OSs can use to discover and configure hardware components.
Architecture Compliance Suite	ACS	Test suite from Arm to evaluate platforms against EBBR and BSA specifications.
Base Boot Requirements	BBR	Set of requirements for boot and runtime services that system software can rely on. BBR is a superset of EBBR.
Base Standard Architecture	BSA	Specification for a hardware system architecture based on AArch64. See <b>Arm Base System Architecture</b> .
Basic Input/Output System	BIOS	Firmware that performs hardware initialization during system boot, largely superseded by UEFI.
Board Support Package	BSP	Software containing hardware specific drivers.
Cloud native	-	Method of building and running applications in a way that leverages cloud computing.
Devicetree	-	A data structure which describes the hardware components of a particular system. See <b>Devicetree specification</b> .
Devicetree blob	DTB	A format that is a flat binary encoding of Devicetree data.
Embedded Base Boot Requirements	EBBR	Subset of the BBR targeted at embedded devices. See <b>Embedded</b> <b>Base Boot Requirements</b> .
Globally Unique Identifiers	GUID	128-bit reference numbers that are unlikely to repeat and are considered unique.
GUID Partition Table	GPT	A standard layout for partition tables for storage devices using GUIDs.
GNU GR and Unified Bootloader	GRUB	Bootloader package from the GNU Project which displays a boot menu.
OpenEmbedded	-	Build automation and cross-compile environment used to create Linux distributions for embedded environments.
Poky	-	Reference embedded OS for the Yocto project. See <b>Yocto Project overview</b> .
Project Cassini	-	Standards-based initiative from Arm, with a focus on standardization, security, and ecosystem.
UEFI Secure Boot	-	Protocol to secure the boot process by verifying loaded UEFI driver or OS boot loader signatures against known keys.
System Management BIOS	SMBIOS	Specification that defines data structures that can be used to read information produced by the BIOS.

Term	Abbreviation	Definition
SystemReady	-	Compliance certification program from Arm based on a set of hardware and firmware standards. See What is SystemReady IR?
Tianocore EDK2	-	Open-source UEFI implementation.
U-boot	-	Open-source primary bootloader (first and second stage) often used in embedded devices.
Unified Extensible Firmware Interface	UEFI	A standard that defines an ABI that is exposed by the firmware for an OS to use. See <b>UEFI overview</b> .
Yocto layer	-	A collection of related recipes organized as a modular block. See <b>Yocto Project overview</b> .

# 8 Related information

The following are resources related to material in this guide:

- Arm Base System Architecture (BSA) specification
- Embedded Base Boot Requirements (EBBR) specification
- EBBR recipe of the Arm Base Boot Requirements (BBR)
- SystemReady IR
- SystemReady IR ACS GitHub repository
- SystemReady IR IoT integration, test, and certification
- Yocto Project Documentation

# 9 Next steps

In this guide, you learned about SystemReady, the Yocto Project, and how the two work together. As a next step, you can follow the example in **Example: deployment on an NXP board** to deploy a Yocto build on SystemReady compliant hardware.