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StarChip[®] achieves first-time-right ESD performance in SIM/Smartcard IC with Sofics TakeCharge[®] Technology

Technology ports smoothly to new foundry, meets high-end ESD specifications

MEYREUIL, FRANCE / GISTEL, BELGIUM (December 16th, 2011) – StarChip[®] (www.starchip-ic.com) of Meyreuil, France today announced that it has chosen TakeCharge[®] electrostatic discharge (ESD) technology from Sofics (www.sofics.com) of Gistel, Belgium, to protect its newest ICs, which include high voltage on-chip interfaces and must withstand exposure above 4kV Human Body Model (HBM) discharges in their target markets. Sofics technology was selected as the fastest and most cost-efficient way to implement ESD protection beyond the standard 2kV level.

StarChip develops flash-based, 32-bit ICs for Smartcards, subscriber identity modules (SIMs), and machine-to-machine (M2M) controllers. Sofics is the world leader in on-chip design solutions that enable maximum functional performance with robust ESD protection at the lowest cost.

“When we started development of our newest ICs for SIMs and smartcards we selected Sofics to develop robust, full-chip ESD protection to meet reliability requirements far beyond typical standards, in a foundry process that was new to both of us,” said Christian Dupuy, COO of StarChip.

“Sofics provided a solution that worked perfectly the first time. There was no need for re-spins, no significant increase in silicon real estate, and no ESD masks or other process extras. This minimized our development time and wafer costs.”

The market for SIM, Smartcard, and M2M controllers is on the verge of explosive growth, bigger than that of mobile phone communications. An IC designer in this market has to swiftly develop IC variants for specific end-user requirements without compromising performance and reliability.

“We were able to meet StarChip’s requirements and timeline because the TakeCharge portfolio is highly portable across foundries and easily adapts to provide higher protection and meet specialty ESD requirements,” said Koen Verhaege, Sofics CEO. “We significantly reduced our customer’s cost of development and design, and enabled faster time-to-market.

“After the first successful implementation, StarChip decided to include the same ESD cells in their next IC project. We appreciate their confidence in our technology, and in the re-use value and cost efficiency of our solutions.”

Information on TakeCharge is available on the Sofics website.

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About Sofics

Sofics (www.sofics.com) focuses on product development, licensing, engineering tools and design services for on-chip device- and system-level protection and reliability. Sofics is an independent IP provider, previously known as Sarnoff Europe.

About StarChip[®]

StarChip[®] (www.starchip-ic.com) is a dynamic semiconductor company that enables customers to directly benefit from its unique, optimized value chain system. We design and qualify products for mass production, then license our solutions for purchase directly by our customers through qualified foundries and test houses.