



**S M Technologies**

Designing The Wireless World

**Case Study of  
Design of High Performance  
Low Noise Amplifiers MMICs**

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## SM Technologies Pvt Ltd

SM Technologies Pvt. Ltd. is an Indian company and the sister concern of RFIC Solutions Inc., headquartered in USA. As a fabless RF design house, SM Technologies focuses on advanced wireless solutions, with its design and development activities carried out in India. The company specializes in highly integrated System-on-Chip (SoC) and System-in-Package (SiP) solutions, custom ICs, and IP cores using state-of-the-art GaAs, InGaP/GaAs, InP, CMOS, and SiGe semiconductor processes, utilizing MESFET, pHEMT, and HBT technologies. Its expertise includes the design and development of Low Noise Amplifiers (LNAs), Power Amplifiers (PAs), RF Switches, complete transceivers, millimeter-wave chips, and RF modules for a wide range of wireless applications, including WLAN, WiMAX, PCS, and cellular systems

### The Client:

The client was a South Korea based organization that designs innovative solutions, and is dedicated to RF technology and products for wireless industry. They provide next generation products and are manufacturer of innovative RF components including gain blocks, local drivers, IF ICs, power amplifiers, discrete devices, and RF integrated circuits (RFICs).

### Design Challenges:

The client wanted to move towards leadership position in the market by focusing on business and revenue growth through Low Noise, high linearity RFIC amplifier designs. The client was looking for a low noise amplifier design with low noise and good linearity. They wanted high performance design solutions on their cellular, PCS and WCDMA band LNA design. Quick and cost efficient solution was highest priority. Client also wanted a single chip solution which can be tuned for performance in terms of NF, Gain, OIP3 in the above-mentioned bands, which means a high performing broadband LNA chip.

SM Technologies was chosen to design all 4 LNAs on GaAs process with highly stable performance for low noise and linearity over temperature, process and supply voltage variations within 6 months which included the IC fabrication and testing time. The designs were covering 40MHz to 4GHz frequency band.

## Our Solution:

The client chose SM Technologies because of our innovative design service model whereby we utilize some of our existing Design IPs and project execution process. We presented a project plan which was efficient in time & engineering resources. SM Technologies has innovative and cost-effective pricing model that addressed the defined design requirements of our client. The low cost design service was possible through RFIC solutions India design center, where a team of dedicated engineers is providing high quality SM Technologies solutions to our customers.

SM Technologies completed 4 LNA designs within the specified time and met all the specification over process, temperature & supply voltage variations, in the ready for tape out design. SM Technologies used proven design techniques to provide stable performance over temperature and supply voltage variations. The designs required only coupling and bypass capacitors as off- chip components reducing the cost of board assembly.

SM Technologies provided full support to the team of engineers working at client side during GDSII tape out of the designs. Our specialized RFIC layout design team provided high performance layouts with ability to tune the circuit with minimum mask changes or through a concept called “mask sharing”. Client was able to send all designs for fabrication on scheduled time. SM Technologies also helped client in testing of designs with test plans, component data, and assembly diagrams as a part of our overall design service flow.

Team of engineers from our design center constantly communicated with the client for any specification changes till the GDSII tape out. Our interactive approach immensely satisfied our customer as they were able to include any design changes to their satisfaction. We made sure that the design changes were tracked and done extremely efficiently because of the use of innovative and robust design approaches and project management strategies.

The designs were assembled and tested after fabrication and all designs showed compliance with the simulated specifications with OIP3 as high as 38dBm and noise figure as low as 0.65dB. The broadband LNA showed deviations from desired specifications by 3-5dB and required some tuning to achieve close to desired performance over the 40MHz to 4GHz band.

## Benefits for client:

SM Technologies was able to provide within the design window, a cost efficient service to our client which helped them introduce new high performance LNA Chips in market within 7 months from the start of project. The client achieved:

- 0.5 to 1dB of better Noise Figure performance over the other competition.
- High linearity performance over the other competition.
- Cost reduction of 40% due to RFIC solutions cost -effective design service.
- Efficient & focused usage of client's own engineering resources.
- Product launch within scheduled time.