

RoboSim5G - Developer Documentation

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Project: RoboSim5G - 5G Network Simulation for Robotics Research

Organization: phine.tech GmbH

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1. What is RoboSim5G?

RoboSim5G is an **open-source framework for simulating 5G network connectivity in robotic applications** within the Gazebo Ignition Fortress simulation environment. It bridges the gap between robotics simulation and realistic 5G network behavior by providing:

- **Gazebo plugins** that simulate 5G User Equipment (UE) and gNodeB (gNB) components
- **Integration with real 5G Core Network implementations** (OAI, free5GC, Open5GS)
- **Docker-based deployment** for reproducible, isolated network environments
- **ROS 2 Humble integration** for seamless robotics workflow

The framework enables developers to test and validate robotic applications under realistic 5G network conditions without requiring physical 5G hardware infrastructure.

Key Technical Features:

- C++17 Gazebo plugins with ROS 2 integration
 - Container-orchestrated 5G Core Network functions
 - Support for multiple 5G Core Network implementations
 - Dynamic network configuration through SDF world files
 - Real 5G protocol simulation (authentication, registration, PDU sessions)
-

2. Who is it for? / Who does it help and how?

Target Developers

RoboSim5G is designed for:

1. Robotics Researchers

- Testing autonomous systems under realistic wireless network conditions
- Evaluating network-dependent robot behaviors (teleoperation, cloud processing, fleet coordination)
- Publishing research on 5G-enabled robotics

2. 5G Network Engineers

- Validating network configurations before physical deployment
- Testing edge computing scenarios with robotic endpoints
- Developing network slicing strategies for robotic applications

3. Software Developers

- Building distributed robotic systems with 5G connectivity
- Integrating cloud-based AI/ML pipelines with robots
- Developing multi-robot coordination systems

4. Education and Training

- Teaching 5G networking concepts through practical robotics examples
- Demonstrating end-to-end 5G system integration

How it helps

For Roboticists:

- No deep 5G networking knowledge required

- Focus on robot behavior, not network infrastructure
- Test network failure scenarios safely

For Network Engineers:

- Validate configurations with mobile robotic endpoints
- Simulate realistic traffic patterns and mobility
- Rapid prototyping without hardware costs

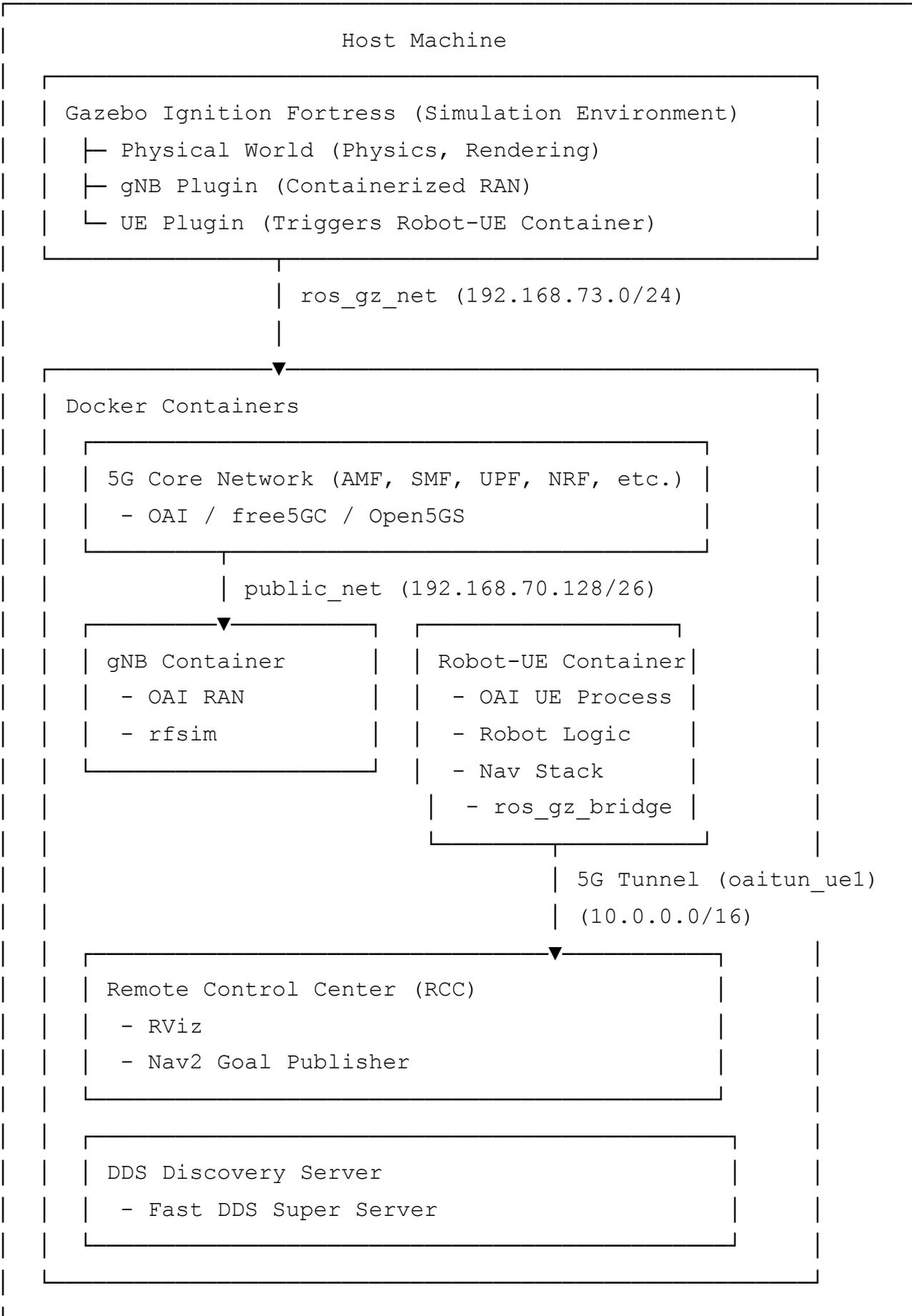
For Researchers:

- Reproducible experiments
 - Open-source, extensible platform
 - Integration with standard ROS 2 workflows
-

3. How does it work?

3.1 System Architecture Overview

RoboSim5G implements a **layered architecture** that separates simulation, robotics logic, and network functions:



Key Components:

1. Gazebo Simulation Layer

- Runs on host machine (demo mode) or container (containerized mode)
- Hosts gNB and UE plugins
- Simulates physical robot and environment

2. 5G Network Layer

- Core Network functions in containers
- gNB container (Radio Access Network)
- Authentication, session management, routing

3. Robot Application Layer

- Robot-UE container with dual function:
 - 5G modem simulation (OAI UE)
 - Robot control logic (Nav2, SLAM, etc.)

4. Remote Control Layer

- RCC container for teleoperation/monitoring
- Communicates via 5G tunnel

5. Service Discovery Layer

- DDS Discovery Server for ROS 2 node discovery
- Enables unicast communication over 5G

3.2 Software Structure

RoboSim5G/

```
|— phine-plugins/                # Core Plugin Source Code
|   └─ src/phine_plugins/
|       └─ CMakeLists.txt        # Build configuration
|       └─ package.xml          # ROS 2 package manifest
|       └─ src/
|           └─ RS5G_plugins.hh    # Plugin class definitions
|           └─ gNB_plugin.cc      # gNB plugin implementation
|           └─ UE_plugin.cc       # UE plugin implementation
|           └─ aux_functions.cc   # Shared utility functions
|           └─ aux_functions.hh   # Utility function headers
```

```

|
├─ demo/                                # Host-based Simulation Demo
|   ├─ launch_robot_5G*.sh             # Launch scripts per CN type
|   ├─ kill_all*.sh                   # Cleanup scripts per CN type
|   ├─ build_images.sh                 # Image building automation
|   ├─ oai_setup/                      # OAI Core Network configs
|   ├─ free5gc_setup/                 # free5GC Core Network configs
|   ├─ open5gs_setup/                 # Open5GS Core Network configs
|   ├─ gazebo_launch/                 # Gazebo world and launch files
|   ├─ nav_stack/                      # Example robot application
|   └─ images/                          # Dockerfiles for containers
|       ├─ ue_amr/                     # Robot-UE image
|       ├─ rcc/                         # Remote Control Center image
|       └─ dds_discovery_server/       # DDS server image
|
├─ demo_containerized/                 # Fully Containerized Demo
|   └─ [similar structure to demo, Gazebo in container]
|
├─ model_folder/                       # Gazebo Models
|   └─ phine_gNB/                       # gNB visual model
|       ├─ model.config
|       └─ model.sdf
|
└─ doc/                                 # Documentation
    ├─ 5G_CORE_NETWORKS.md             # Core Network comparison guide
    └─ images/

```

3.3 Plugin System

gNB Plugin Architecture

Purpose: Simulates a 5G base station (gNodeB) by launching and configuring a containerized RAN implementation.

Load-Time Behavior:

1. Reads SDF parameters (`<cn_type>` , `<IP_GNB>` , `<IP_AMF>` , etc.)
2. Selects configuration method based on `cn_type` (OAI/free5GC/Open5GS)
3. Modifies Core Network-specific configuration files:
 - Docker Compose files (`docker-compose-gNB.yml`)
 - gNB configuration files (e.g., `gnb.sa.bandn78.fr1.106PRB.rfsim.conf`)
4. Launches gNB container with Docker Compose

5. Initializes ROS 2 node for pose publishing

Runtime Behavior:

- Publishes gNB pose to `/pose_of_<gNB_name>` topic
- Container runs OAI gNB in rfsim mode (software-defined radio simulation)

Key Code Structure:

```
class gNB_plugin : public gz::sim::System,
                  public gz::sim::ISystemConfigure,
                  public gz::sim::ISystemPostUpdate {
public:
    void Configure(...) override; // Load-time configuration
    void PostUpdate(...) override; // Runtime updates

private:
    void configureOAI(const char *project_path);
    void configureFree5gc(const char *project_path);
    void configureOpen5gs(const char *project_path);

    rclcpp::Node::SharedPtr node;
    rclcpp::Publisher<std_msgs::msg::String>::SharedPtr publisher;
    std::string model_name, linkName, netName, ip_gnb, ip_amf;
};
```

UE Plugin Architecture

Purpose: Simulates a 5G User Equipment (UE) integrated with robot logic by building and launching a containerized robot-UE system.

Load-Time Behavior:

1. Reads extensive SDF parameters (IMSI, keys, DNN, robot paths, etc.)
2. Selects Core Network-specific configuration
3. **Copies user's robot workspace** into container image directory
4. Modifies UE configuration files:
 - `docker-compose-ue.yml`
 - `conf/UE<robot_ID>.conf`
5. **Builds Docker image** containing:
 - OAI UE software
 - User's robot application
 - `ros_gz_bridge`

- DDS profile for 5G tunnel interface
- 6. Launches robot-UE container
- 7. Automatically starts ros_gz_bridge
- 8. Optionally starts robot launch file

Runtime Behavior:

- OAI UE process continuously runs, maintaining 5G connection
- Robot logic executes within same container
- All ROS 2 communication routed through 5G tunnel interface

Key Code Structure:

```
class UE_plugin : public gz::sim::System,
                 public gz::sim::ISystemConfigure {
public:
    void Configure(...) override;

private:
    void configureOAI(const char *project_path);
    void configureFree5gc(const char *project_path);
    void configureOpen5gs(const char *project_path);

    // Extensive parameter set for UE and robot configuration
    std::string robot_container_name, imsi, key, opc, dnn;
    std::string robot_project_path, robot_launch_file_name;
    std::string ros_discovery_server;
    // ... many more parameters
};
```

Auxiliary Functions

Located in `aux_functions.cc/hh`, these provide shared utilities:

- File modification (replacing specific strings in config files)
- Docker command execution
- Configuration validation
- Debug logging

3.4 Network Architecture

Docker Networks

1. public_net (phine-net)

- **Subnet:** 192.168.70.128/26 (configurable)
- **Purpose:** Control plane communication
- **Connected containers:**
 - All 5G Core Network functions (AMF, SMF, UPF, NRF, UDR, etc.)
 - gNB container
 - Robot-UE container
 - RCC container
 - DDS Discovery Server

2. ros_gz_net

- **Subnet:** 192.168.73.0/24 (fixed)
- **Purpose:** Direct Gazebo ↔ Robot-UE communication (mimics physical connection)
- **Static IP assignment:**
 - Host Gazebo: 192.168.73.129
 - Robot-UE container: 192.168.73.150 (MUST NOT CHANGE)
- **Used for:** ros_gz_bridge topic transport

3. 5G Tunnel (oaitun_ue1)

- **Subnet:** Configured in Core Network (e.g., 10.0.0.0/16)
- **Purpose:** Simulated 5G user plane data
- **Created by:** OAI UE process upon successful registration
- **Used for:** ROS 2 communication between Robot-UE and RCC

4. n3_net (free5GC only)

- **Purpose:** gNB ↔ UPF GTP-U tunnel (N3 interface)
- **Note:** OAI and Open5GS use public_net for N3

Routing Configuration

Host Machine:

```
# Route 5G subnet via UPF for RCC communication
sudo ip route add <5G_subnet> via <UPF_IP> dev <public_net_interface>
```

```
# Example for OAI:
```

```
sudo ip route add 10.0.0.0/16 via 192.168.70.134 dev br-<bridge_id>
```

RCC Container:

- Must have route to 5G subnet via UPF or ext-dn

- Configured in docker-compose-ue.yml

DDS Discovery Server:

- Must be reachable from both public_net and 5G tunnel
- Requires routing through UPF

3.5 Containerization Strategy

Two Deployment Modes

Demo Mode (demo/):

- Gazebo runs natively on host
- Better GUI performance
- Direct GPU access
- Requires local Gazebo Fortress installation

Containerized Mode (demo_containerized/):

- Gazebo runs in container
- Fully reproducible environment
- Easier dependency management
- Requires X11 forwarding for GUI

Container Roles

1. Core Network Containers

- Based on official OAI/free5GC/Open5GS images
- Configured via mounted volumes
- Stateful (database persistence)

2. gNB Container

- Based on OAI RAN image
- Runs in rfsim mode (software radio simulation)
- Configured by gNB plugin at runtime

3. Robot-UE Container

- **Built dynamically** by UE plugin
- Multi-stage Dockerfile:
 - Base: OAI UE image
 - Adds: ROS 2 Humble, user's robot workspace

- Entry point script starts:
 1. OAI UE process (background)
 2. ros_gz_bridge
 3. Robot launch file

4. RCC Container

- ROS 2 Humble + RViz + Nav2
- DDS client configuration for Discovery Server
- Pre-configured route to 5G subnet

5. DDS Discovery Server Container

- Fast DDS super server
- Persistent ID for network-wide discovery
- Listens on port 11811

Image Building Process

The `build_images.sh` script:

1. Builds base images (dds_discovery_server, rcc)
 2. Builds Gazebo simulation image (containerized mode only)
 3. UE image is built dynamically by UE plugin
 4. Core Network images pulled from registries
-

4. Getting Started as a Developer

Prerequisites

Required Software:

- Ubuntu 22.04
- ROS 2 Humble
- Gazebo Ignition Fortress 2.6.9
- Docker 27.5.1+
- Docker Compose v2.33.1+
- Git

Optional:

- C++17 compiler (GCC 11+)
- clang-format 17 (for code formatting)

- ROS 2 development tools(`ros-humble-desktop-full`)

Cloning the Repository

```
git clone https://github.com/phinetech/RoboSim5G.git
cd RoboSim5G
```

Environment Setup

```
# Set project path
export PROJECT_PATH=$(pwd)

# Add plugin path
export IGN_GAZEBO_SYSTEM_PLUGIN_PATH=$PROJECT_PATH/phine-plugins/build/ph

# Add model path
export IGN_GAZEBO_RESOURCE_PATH=$PROJECT_PATH/model_folder:$IGN_GAZEBO_RE

# Set ROS 2 domain ID (avoid conflicts)
export ROS_DOMAIN_ID=42

# Set Gazebo partition (avoid conflicts)
export IGN_PARTITION=robosim5g

# Set Gazebo transport interface (for demo mode)
export IGN_TRANSPORT_INTERFACE=192.168.73.129
```

Add these to `~/.bashrc` for persistence.

Building the Plugins

```
cd phine-plugins
colcon build
source install/setup.bash
```

Expected output: Plugins in `build/phine_plugins/` :

- `libgNB_plugin.so`
- `libUE_plugin.so`

Building Container Images

```
cd $PROJECT_PATH/demo # or demo_containerized
./build_images.sh
```

This builds all required Docker images.

Running the Demo

Choose a Core Network:

```
# For OAI:
source launch_robot_5G.sh

# For free5GC:
source launch_robot_5G_free5gc.sh

# For Open5GS:
source launch_robot_5G_open5gs.sh
```

Expected Behavior:

1. Core Network containers start (~10 seconds)
2. gNB container starts and registers with AMF
3. Gazebo opens with world loaded
4. Robot-UE container builds (first run: ~5 minutes) and starts
5. UE registers with Core Network
6. RViz opens with navigation interface

Verifying the Setup

Check Core Network:

```
cd demo/oai_setup # or free5gc_setup
docker compose ps # All services should be "running" or "healthy"
```

Check gNB Registration:

```
docker logs oai-amf | grep -A 5 "gNBs' Information"
# Should show gNB listed as "Connected"
```

Check UE Registration:

```
docker logs oai-amf | grep -A 10 "UEs' Information"  
# Should show UE with IMSI and "5GMM-REGISTERED"
```

Check 5G Tunnel:

```
docker exec -it ue_turtlebot ip addr show oaitun_uel  
# Should show 5G tunnel interface with IP from configured subnet
```

5. Development Guidelines

Code Style

Follow the project's coding guidelines in [CODING_GUIDELINES.md](#) :

- **Indentation:** Tabs (not spaces)
- **Naming:**
 - Variables: `snake_case`
 - Functions: `camelCase()`
 - Classes: `CamelCase`
 - Constants: `ALL_CAPS`
- **Style:** ROS 2 C++ Style Guide (Google C++ as fallback)

Formatting Code

```
# Format a single file  
clang-format -i path/to/file.cpp  
  
# Format all plugin sources  
cd phine-plugins/src/phine_plugins/src  
clang-format -i *.cc *.hh
```

Use clang-format 17 for consistency.

Version Control Workflow

Branching Strategy:

- `main` : Stable releases (protected)
- `dev` : Development branch (protected)
- `feature/<name>` : New features
- `bugfix/<name>` : Bug fixes

Commit Message Format:

`<type>: <short summary>`

`[optional body: detailed explanation]`

`Closes #<issue_number>`

Types: `feat`, `fix`, `docs`, `refactor`, `test`, `chore`

Example:

`feat: add Open5GS support to UE plugin`

`Implements configureOpen5gs() method with proper IMSI format and DNN configuration for Open5GS core network.`

`Closes #45`

Merge Request Process

1. Create feature branch from `dev`
2. Make changes, commit with clear messages
3. Format code with clang-format
4. Build and test locally
5. Push branch to remote
6. Create Merge Request targeting `dev`
7. Assign reviewer
8. Address review comments
9. Merge after approval

Testing

Manual Testing Checklist:

- Plugins build without errors
- Core Network containers start successfully
- gNB registers with AMF
- UE registers and obtains 5G tunnel IP
- Robot can navigate with Nav2 goals
- RViz shows robot position updates
- Switching gNB/UE off disrupts communication
- Switching back on restores communication

Automated Testing:

Currently, the project relies on manual testing. Future work should include:

- Unit tests for auxiliary functions
 - Integration tests for plugin configuration
 - CI/CD pipeline for build verification
-

6. Extending and Customizing

Adding a New Core Network

Steps:

1. Create setup directory: `demo/<new_cn>_setup/`
2. Add Docker Compose files for CN, gNB, UE
3. Add CN-specific configuration files
4. Implement configuration methods in plugins:

```
// In RS5G_plugins.hh
void configureNewCN(const char *project_path);

// In gNB_plugin.cc and UE_plugin.cc
void gNB_plugin::configureNewCN(const char *project_path) {
    // Modify CN-specific config files
    // Launch gNB container
}
```

5. Update SDF world files with new CN parameters
6. Create launch and kill scripts
7. Document in `doc/5G_CORE_NETWORKS.md`

Customizing Robot Application

Replace the demo robot with your own:

1. Prepare your robot workspace:

```
# Structure:
my_robot_ws/
├── src/
│   └── my_robot_pkg/
│       ├── launch/
│           ├── robot_logic.launch.py
│           └── ros_gz_bridge.launch.py
│       ├── config/
│       └── ...
└── install/ # After colcon build
```

2. Update UE plugin parameters in world file:

```
<robot_project_path>${PROJECT_PATH}/my_robot_ws</robot_project_path>
<robot_project_name>my_robot_ws</robot_project_name>
<robot_package_name>my_robot_pkg</robot_package_name>
<robot_launch_file_name>robot_logic.launch.py</robot_launch_file_name>
<ros_gz_bridge_name>ros_gz_bridge.launch.py</ros_gz_bridge_name>
```

3. Customize UE container Dockerfile:

- Edit `demo/images/ue_amr/Dockerfile`
- Add your dependencies:

```
# Install additional ROS packages
RUN apt-get update && apt-get install -y \
    ros-humble-my-dependency \
    && rm -rf /var/lib/apt/lists/*
```

4. Configure DDS profile for your interfaces:

- Edit `demo/images/ue_amr/dds.xml`
- Whitelist 5G tunnel interface
- Adjust message size limits if needed

Adding New Plugin Features

Example: Adding Signal Strength Simulation

1. Extend gNB plugin class:

```
// In RS5G_plugins.hh
class gNB_plugin : public gz::sim::System, ... {
private:
    double calculateSignalStrength(const gz::math::Pose3d &ue_pose,
                                   const gz::math::Pose3d &gnb_pose);
    rclcpp::Publisher<std_msgs::msg::Float64>::SharedPtr signal_pub_;
};
```

2. Implement in PostUpdate:

```
// In gNB_plugin.cc
void gNB_plugin::PostUpdate(const UpdateInfo &_info, const ECM &_ecm)
    // Get UE pose from entity
    auto ue_pose = getUEPose(_ecm);
    auto gnb_pose = getGNBPose(_ecm);

    // Calculate signal strength (simple distance model)
    double signal = calculateSignalStrength(ue_pose, gnb_pose);

    // Publish
    auto msg = std_msgs::msg::Float64();
    msg.data = signal;
    signal_pub_->publish(msg);
}
```

3. Add SDF parameter:

```
<plugin name="phine_plugins::gNB_plugin" filename="gNB_plugin">
  <!-- existing parameters -->
  <enable_signal_strength>true</enable_signal_strength>
  <signal_publish_rate>10.0</signal_publish_rate>
</plugin>
```

Modifying Network Parameters

Changing 5G Subnet:

1. Edit Core Network config:

```
# demo/oai_setup/conf/config.yaml
upf:
  interfaces:
    n3:
      ipv4_range: "10.0.0.0/16" # Change this
```

2. Update UE plugin SDF parameter:

```
<subnet_5G>10.0.0.0/16</subnet_5G>
```

3. Update DDS profile whitelist:

```
<!-- demo/images/ue_amr/dds.xml -->
<interfaceWhiteList>
  <address>10.0.0.1</address>
  <address>10.0.0.2</address>
  <!-- ... add all IPs in new range -->
</interfaceWhiteList>
```

4. Update routing on host:

```
sudo ip route add 10.0.0.0/16 via <UPF_IP> dev <interface>
```

7. API Reference

gNB Plugin API

SDF Parameters:

Parameter	Type	Description	Default
<code>cn_type</code>	string	Core Network type (<code>oai</code> , <code>free5gc</code> , <code>open5gs</code>)	Required

Parameter	Type	Description	Default
<code>link_name</code>	string	Link name for pose publishing	<code>phine_cell</code>
<code>net_name</code>	string	Docker network name	<code>phine-net</code>
<code>IP_GNB</code>	string	Static IP for gNB container	Required
<code>IP_AMF</code>	string	AMF IP address	Required
<code>debug</code>	bool	Enable debug logging	<code>false</code>
<code>mobile_country_code</code>	string	MCC for PLMN	<code>001</code>
<code>mobile_network_code</code>	string	MNC for PLMN	<code>01</code>

ROS 2 Topics Published:

- `/pose_of_<gNB_name>` (std_msgs/String): gNB pose as string

Container Lifecycle:

- Started by plugin during Configure()
- Stopped by user (kill scripts) or Gazebo shutdown

UE Plugin API

SDF Parameters:

Parameter	Type	Description	Default
<code>cn_type</code>	string	Core Network type	Required
<code>robot_container_name</code>	string	Name of robot-UE container	Required
<code>robot_id</code>	int	Robot ID (for multi-UE)	<code>1</code>
<code>ip_robotUE</code>	string	Static IP for container	Required
<code>net_name</code>	string	Docker network name	<code>phine-net</code>
<code>ip_gnb</code>	string	gNB IP address	Required
<code>debug</code>	bool	Enable debug logging	<code>false</code>
<code>subnet_5G</code>	string	5G subnet (CIDR notation)	Required
<code>imsi</code>	string	UE IMSI	Required
<code>key</code>	string	UE authentication key (128-bit hex)	Required

8. Additional Resources

Documentation Links

- **Main README:** [README.md](#)
- **Core Network Comparison:** [doc/5G_CORE_NETWORKS.md](#)
- **Contributing Guide:** [CONTRIBUTING.md](#)
- **Code of Conduct:** [CODE_OF_CONDUCT.md](#)
- **Coding Guidelines:** [CODING_GUIDELINES.md](#)

External Resources

5G Core Networks:

- [OAI GitLab](#)
- [free5GC Documentation](#)
- [Open5GS Documentation](#)

Gazebo:

- [Gazebo Fortress Documentation](#)
- [Gazebo Plugin Tutorial](#)

ROS 2:

- [ROS 2 Humble Documentation](#)
- [ros_gz Integration](#)
- [Fast DDS Discovery Server](#)

Docker:

- [Docker Documentation](#)
- [Docker Compose Specification](#)

Community Support

- **Slack Chat:** [Join RoboSim Workspace](#)
- **GitHub Issues:** [RoboSim5G Issues](#)
- **Email:** riccardo.belletti@phine.tech

Citing RoboSim5G

If you use RoboSim5G in your research, please cite:

```
@software{robosim5g2026,  
  title = {RoboSim5G: Open-Source 5G Network Simulation for Robotics},  
  author = {phine.tech GmbH},  
  year = {2026},  
  url = {https://github.com/phinetechnology/RoboSim5G}  
}
```

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For questions, contributions, or support, please refer to [CONTRIBUTING.md](#) or join our Slack community.