

EC200U&EG915U Series

MUX Application Note

LTE Standard Module Series

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About the Document

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-	2021-04-27	Joe TU	Creation of the document
1.0	2021-06-09	Joe TU	First official release
1.1	2021-08-20	Joe TU	Added an applicable module series EG915U.

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1 Introduction

The document defines Quectel MUX (multiplexer) protocol between UE and TE and provides examples of how to use the MUX function on EC200U and EG915U series modules.

2 Overview of MUX Protocol

MUX provides mechanisms for conveying data streams between TE and UE over a single physical port. Quectel MUX protocol creates four virtual channels on one physical port to transmit multiple streams of data simultaneously. It enables the physical port to act like four real physical channels for the application. Every virtual channel supports SMS and PPP dialing, etc.

All data from the application is packed into different frames, and the frames consist of the data and protocol fields which clearly indicate the channel number, length of the information, FCS, and so on. The frames are transmitted as one stream via the serial port. After arriving at the other peer, the data is unpacked as four streams by the MUX protocol stack and transmitted to the application. In addition to the information field, the control signals are also simulated.

Each channel between TE and UE is called a DLC (Data Link Connection) and is established separately and sequentially.

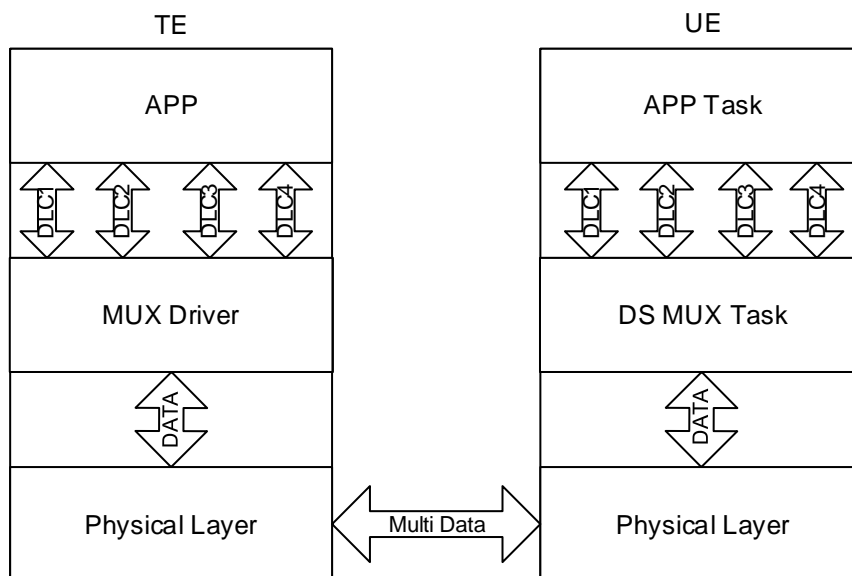


Figure 1: MUX Architecture

3 MUX AT Command

3.1. AT Command Introduction

3.1.1. Definitions

- **<CR>** Carriage return character.
- **<LF>** Line feed character.
- **<...>** Parameter name. Angle brackets do not appear on the command line.
- **[...]** Optional parameter of a command or an optional part of TA information response. Square brackets do not appear on the command line. When an optional parameter is not given in a command, the new value equals to its previous value or the default settings, unless otherwise specified.
- **Underline** Default setting of a parameter.

3.1.2. AT Command Syntax

All command lines must start with **AT** or **at** and end with **<CR>**. Information responses and result codes always start and end with a carriage return character and a line feed character: **<CR><LF><response><CR><LF>**. In tables presenting commands and responses throughout this document, only the commands and responses are presented, and **<CR>** and **<LF>** are deliberately omitted.

Table 1: Types of AT Commands

Command Type	Syntax	Description
Test Command	AT+<cmd>=?	Test the existence of corresponding Write Command and to return information about the type, value, or range of its parameter.
Read Command	AT+<cmd>?	Check the current parameter value of a corresponding Write Command.
Write Command	AT+<cmd>=<p1>[,<p2>[,<p3>[...]]]	Set user-definable parameter value.
Execution Command	AT+<cmd>	Return a specific information parameter or perform a specific action.

3.2. Declaration of AT Command Examples

The AT command examples in this document are provided to help you familiarize with AT commands and learn how to use them. The examples, however, should not be taken as Quectel’s recommendation or suggestions about how you should design a program flow or what status you should set the module into. Sometimes multiple examples may be provided for one AT command. However, this does not mean that there exists a correlation among these examples and that they should be executed in a given sequence.

3.3. AT+CMUX Multiplexing Mode

This command enables/disables the multiplexing protocol control channel and sets parameters for the control channel.

AT+CMUX Multiplexing Mode	
Test Command AT+CMUX=?	Response +CMUX: (list of supported <transparency>s),(list of supported <subset>s),(range of supported <port_speed>s),(range of supported <N1>s),(range of supported <T1>s),(range of supported <N2>s),(range of supported <T2>s),(range of supported <T3>s),(range of supported <k>s) OK
Read Command AT+CMUX?	Response +CMUX: <transparency>[,<subset>[,<port_speed>[,<N1>[,<T1>[,<N2>[,<T2>[,<T3>[,<k>]]]]]]]] OK
Write Command AT+CMUX=<transparency>[,<subset>[,<port_speed>[,<N1>[,<T1>[,<N2>[,<T2>[,<T3>[,<k>]]]]]]]]	Response OK Or ERROR If there is an error related to ME functionality: +CME ERROR: <err>
Maximum Response Time	300 ms
Characteristics	The command takes effect immediately. The configuration is not saved.

Parameter

<transparency>	Integer type. Multiplexer transparency mechanism. 0 Basic option
<subset>	Integer type. Defines the way in which the multiplexer control channel is set up. A virtual channel may subsequently be set up differently but in the absence of any negotiation for the settings of a virtual channel, and it shall be set up according to the control channel <subset> setting. 0 UIH frame used only
<port_speed>*	Integer type. Transmission rate of the physical port (not supported currently). 1 9600 bit/s 2 19200 bit/s 3 38400 bit/s 4 57600 bit/s 5 115200 bit/s 6 230400 bit/s 7 460800 bit/s 8 912600 bit/s
<N1>	Integer type. Maximum frame size. Range: 1–2048; Default value: 31.
<T1>	Integer type. Acknowledgement timer, that is, the time UE waits for an acknowledgement before resorting to another action (e.g. transmitting a frame). Range: 1–255; Default value: 10. Unit: ten milliseconds.
<N2>	Integer type. Maximum number of re-transmissions. Range: 0 – 100; Default value: 3.
<T2>	Integer type. Response timer for the multiplexer control channel. Range: 2–255; Default value: 30; Unit: ten milliseconds. <T2> must be longer than <T1> .
<T3>	Integer type. Wake up response timer. Range: 1–255; Default value: 10; Unit: second.
<k>	Integer type. Window size. Defines the maximum number of I frames that can be parsed by a DLC. Range: 1–7. Default value: 2. (Not supported currently)

Example

```

AT+CMUX=?
+CMUX: (0),(0),(1-8),(1-2048),(1-255),(0-100),(2-255),(1-255),(1-7)

OK
AT+CMUX?
+CMUX: 0,0,5,31,10,3,30,10,2

OK
AT+CMUX=0

OK
    
```

4 MUX Protocol

This chapter explains the technical details of the MUX protocol.

4.1. Frame Structure

All information transmitted between the TE and UE is conveyed in frames.

Table 2: MUX Frame Structure

Flag	Address	Control	Length	Information	FCS	Flag
1 octet	1 octet	1 octet	1–2 octet	Uncertain length	1 octet	1 octet

4.1.1. Flag Sequence Field

Each frame begins and ends with a flag sequence octet (0xF9).

4.1.2. Address Field

The address field consists of one single octet, including the Data Link Connection Identifier (DLCI), the C/R bit and the address field extension bit as shown in the following table.

Table 3: Address Field

Bit 1	Bit 2	Bit 3	Bit 4	Bit 5	Bit 6	Bit 7	Bit 8
EA	C/R				DLCI		

4.1.2.1. DLCI

The DLCI identifies the virtual channel between TE and UE. The ports are assigned as follows.

Table 4: Applicable Modules

DLCI	Virtual Channel
0	Reserved to control the channels
1	Virtual channel 1
2	Virtual channel 2
3	Virtual channel 3
4	Virtual channel 4

4.1.2.2. C/R

The C/R (command/response) bit identifies the frame as either a command or a response. TE sends a command to the UE with the C/R bit set to 1, and the UE responses with the C/R bit set to 1. The UE sends a command with the C/R bit set to 0, and the TE responses with the C/R bit set to 0.

Table 5: C/R Bit Usage

Command/Response	Direction	C/R Value
Command	TE → UE	1
	UE → TE	0
Response	UE → TE	1
	TE → UE	0

The frames sent by the TE have the C/R bit set to 1 and those sent by UE have the C/R bit set to 0.

4.1.2.3. EA

EA bit extends the range of the address field. When the EA bit is set to 1 in an octet, it signifies that this octet is equals to the length field. When the EA bit is set to 0, it signifies that another octet of the address field follows.

NOTE

EA is supported being only set to 1 currently.

4.1.3. Control Field

The content of the control field defines the type of frame. See **Chapter 4.2** for details of the frame types.

Table 6: Coding of Control Field

Frame Type	HEX (P/F=0)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Notes
SABM (Set Asynchronous Balanced Mode)	0x2F	1	1	1	1	P/F	1	0	0	
UA (Unnumbered Acknowledgement)	0x63	1	1	0	0	P/F	1	1	0	
DM (Disconnected Mode)	0x0F	1	1	1	1	P/F	0	0	0	
DISC (Disconnect)	0x43	1	1	0	0	P/F	0	1	0	
UIH (Unnumbered Information with Header check)	0xEF	1	1	1	1	P/F	1	1	1	
UI (Unnumbered Information)	0x03	1	1	0	0	P/F	0	0	0	Optional

As Bit 5 of Control field, P/F is the Poll/Final bit. The poll/final (P/F) bit shall serve a function in both command frames and response frames. In command frames, the P/F bit refers to the P bit. The poll (P) bit set to 1 shall be used by one station to solicit (poll) a response or sequence of responses from the other station. In response frames, it is referred to as the F bit. The final (F) bit set to 1 shall be used by a station to indicate the response frame transmitted as the result of a soliciting (poll) command.

For UIH frame, P/F should set to 0.

4.1.4. Length Field

Table 7: The Structure of Length Field

Bit 1	Bit 2	Bit 3	Bit 4	Bit 5	Bit 6	Bit 7	Bit 8
EA	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	L7

The L1 to L7 bits indicate the length of the following data field. The default maximum length is 31 bytes. The range of the length field may be extended by use of the EA bit. When the EA bit is set to 1 in an octet, it signifies that this octet is equals to the length field. When the EA bit is set to 0, it signifies that another octet of the address field follows.

Bit 1	Bit 2	Bit 3	Bit 4	Bit 5	Bit 6	Bit 7	Bit 8
0	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	L7

Bit 1	Bit 2	Bit 3	Bit 4	Bit 5	Bit 6	Bit 7	Bit 8
L8	L9	L10	L11	L12	L13	L14	L15

NOTE

Even if the data after this byte is empty, the length field should be reserved.

4.1.5. Information Field

The information field is valid only when the control field is in UIH frames.

4.1.6. FCS Field

FCS checks the address, control, length and information field with CRC. The UIH frame is special that only checks address, control and length fields, which indicates that the information field is not checked. or the check algorithm, see B1–B3 of *3GPP TS 27.010 V13.0.0* for detailed information.

4.2. Frame Types

4.2.1. SABM

SABM is a command frame and is used to establish DLC between TE and UE. TE initiates the command and UE responds with UA frames.

4.2.2. UA

The UA frame is a response to SABM or DISC frame, as illustrated in the following figure.

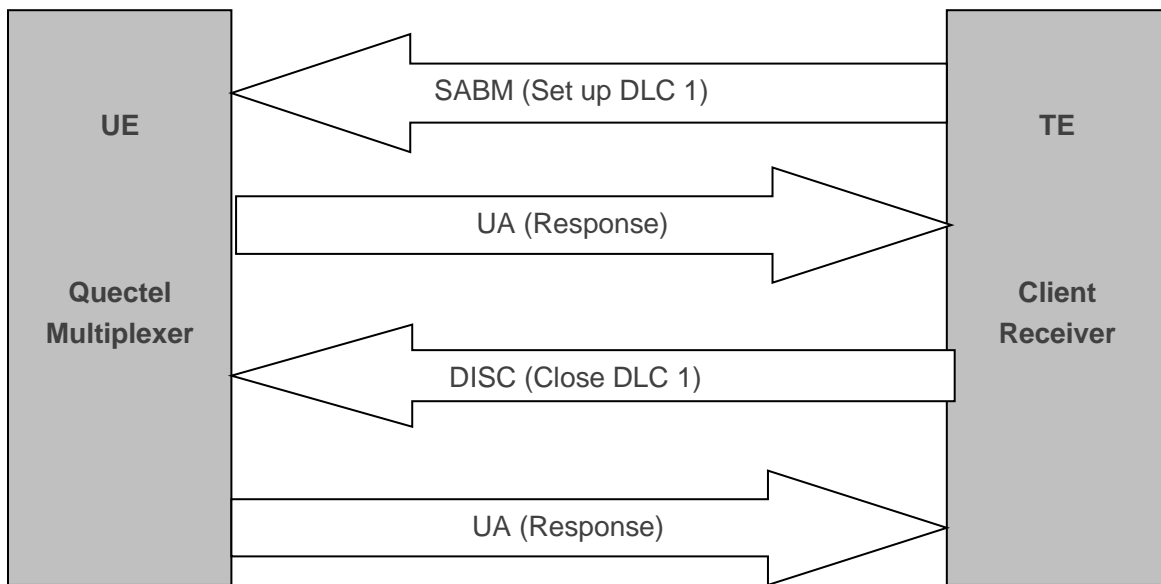


Figure 2: UA Frame (Response)

4.2.3. DM

The DM response frame reports a status where the station is logically disconnected from the data link. When in disconnected mode, no commands will be accepted until the disconnected mode is terminated by the receipt of a SABM command. If a DISC command is received while in disconnected mode, a DM response will be sent.

4.2.4. DISC

DISC is a command frame and is used to close the specific DLC. When the DLC1 0 is closed by the DISC command, all the established DLC channels are closed and the normal AT command mode is restored. The receiving station uses the UA frame to respond as a confirmation of the DISC command.

4.2.5. UIH

The UIH frame is used to transmit data or UIH MUX command control message and is identified with address field. If the address field is set to DLCI 0, it indicates that this frame is used to transmit UIH control messages; otherwise, it indicates that this frame transmits data. The UIH frame does not check the information field.

4.3. UIH MUX Control Message

The UIH MUX control message is transmitted through the DLCI 0 channel. The messages should exist in pairs, that is, a command message and a response message. The command and response are determined according to the C/R bit of the following type fields. Message format is as follows.

4.3.1. UIH MUX Control Message Format

The format of UIH MUX control message format is as follows:

Table 8: UIH MUX Control Message Format

Flag	Address	Control	Length	Information	FCS	Flag
1 octet	1 octet	1 octet	1/2octet	Multiple octets	1 octet	1 octet

Table 9: UIH MUX Control Message Information Field

Type	Length	Value 1	Value 2	...	Value n
------	--------	---------	---------	-----	---------

Each box in this table above represents a field of minimum size per octet.

4.3.1.1. Type Field

The type field octet has the following format:

Table 10: Message Format – Type Field

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
EA	C/R	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6

The EA bit is an extension bit and is set to 1 in the last octet of the sequence. In other octets, EA is set to 0. In Quectel MUX protocol, only one octet is transmitted so EA is always set to 1.

The C/R bit indicates whether the message is a command or a response.

The T bits indicate the type coding. Each command has a unique pattern of bit sequence. This means that a single-octet type field can encode 63 different message types. Only single octet message types are defined in this document.

NOTE

When a UIH frame is on the DLCI 0, there are two C/R bits. The settings of the C/R in the address field is detailed in **Chapter 4.1.2**.

4.3.1.2. Length Field

The length field octet has the following structure:

Table 11: Message Format – Length Field

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
EA	L1	L2	L3	L4	L6	L6	L7

The EA bit is an extension bit. It is set to 1 in the last octet of the sequence. In other octets EA is set to 0.

The L bits define the length of the value octets that follows. L1 is the LSB.

4.3.1.3. Value Field

The contents of the value octets are defined for each message type in **Chapter 4.3.2**.

4.3.2. MUX Close Down (CLD)

The MUX close down command is used to reset the link to the normal AT command mode. The multiplexer closes down messages use the following type field octet:

Table 12: MUX Close-down Message – Type Field Format

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
EA	C/R	0	0	0	0	1	1

The length byte in CLD message frame is 0. It has no value octet.

4.3.3. Test Command (Test)

The test command is used to test the link between TE and UE. The format of the type field byte is as follows:

Table 13: Test Command – Type Field Format

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
EA	C/R	0	0	0	1	0	0

The length byte indicates the length of the subsequent value field. The content of the value range is arbitrary, and the other station should return the same content.

4.4. UIH Data Channel

User data is transmitted through DLCI 1~DLCI 4 channels, and the frame format is as follows:

Table 14: UIH Data Frame Structure

Flag	Address	Control	Length	Information	FCS	Flag
1 octet	1 octet	1 octet	1-2 octet	Multiple octets	1 octet	1 octet

The information field is used to transmit user data, and FCS only checks the address, control, and length fields.

4.5. Procedures

4.5.1. Lunch MUX

The activation of MUX needs to be triggered by sending **AT+CMUX** to the UE on a physical AT channel. If you need to switch the rate, the rate of the main serial channel needs to be modified through **AT+IPR** first. For detailed information about AT commands, see **document [1]**.

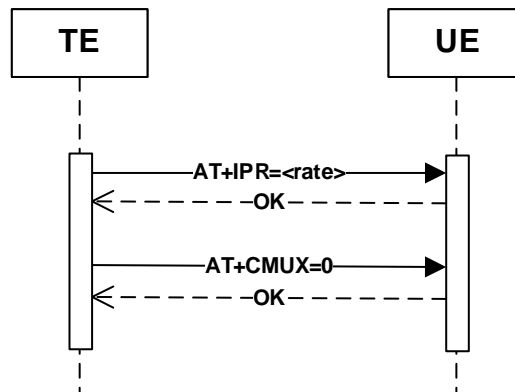


Figure 1: Enable MUX

4.5.2. Establish DLC

Currently the module supports one control channel (DLCI 0) and four effective DLC channels.

Use SABM to establish DLC channel. After entering MUX through executing the configuration command of **AT+CMUX**, the MUX control channel (DLCI 0) is first established by sending a SABM frame, and the UE will respond to the message through a UA message. SABM frames are also sent to establish other DLC channels.

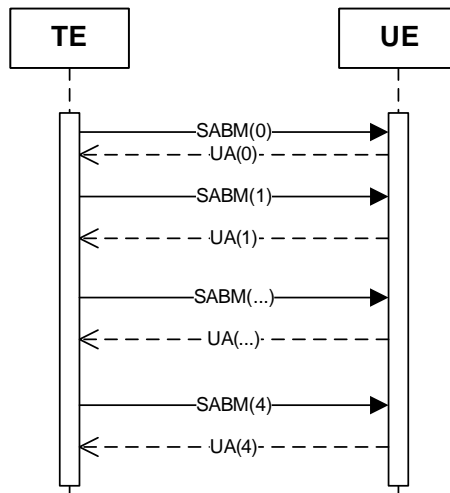


Figure 2: Establish DLC

4.5.3. Transmit Data

When the DLC connection is established, user data is transmitted through the UIH data channel.

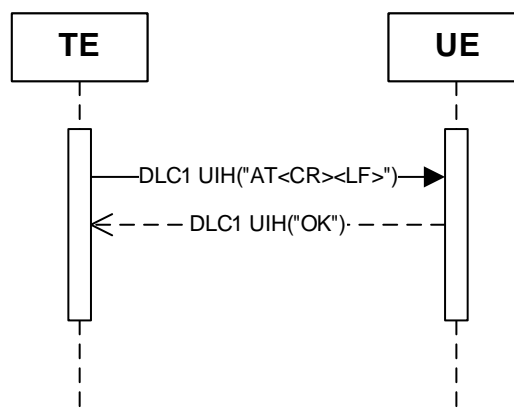


Figure 3: Transmit Data

4.5.4. Release DLC

The DLC channel is released through DISC command, and the UE responds to the command through the UA.

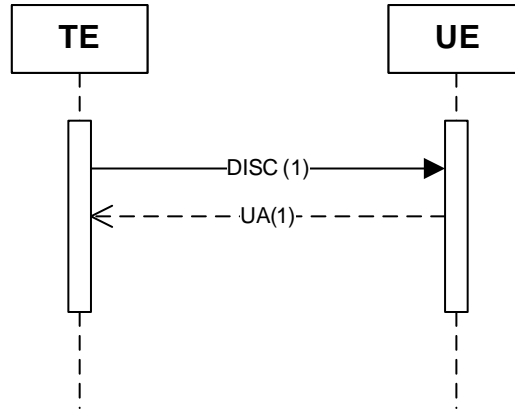


Figure 4: Release DLC

NOTE

Sending DISC command on DLCI 0 channel is equivalent to sending CLD command, see **Chapter 4.5.5** for details.

4.5.5. Disable MUX

Disable the MUX function through the CLD command and restore the serial port to the normal AT channel.

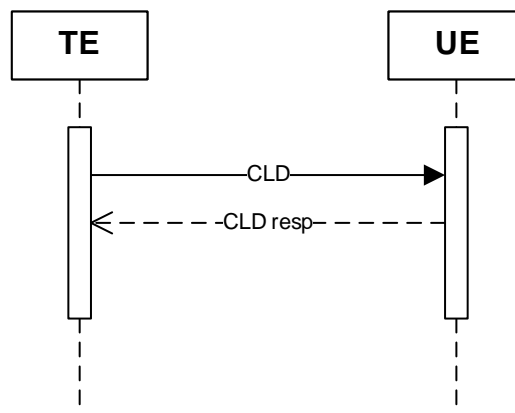


Figure 5: Disable MUX

5 Examples

5.1. Samples for Frame Structure

Sample 1: SABM frame to open DLCI 0

Flag	Address Field	Control Field	Length Field	FCS	Flag
F9	03	3F	01	1C	F9
Header	DLCI 0	SABM Frame	0, No Information Field		Tail

Sample 2: SABM frame to open DLCI 1

Flag	Address Field	Control Field	Length Field	FCS	Flag
F9	03	3F	01	1C	F9
Header	DLCI 1	SABM Frame	0, No Information Field	Check	Tail

Sample 3: UIH frame to transmit the AT command string "ATI<CR>"

Flag	Address Field	Control Field	Length Field	Information Field	FCS	Flag
F9	05	EF	09	41 54 49 0D	58	F9
Header	DLCI 1	UIH Frame	4	AT command string "ATI<CR>"		Tail

5.2. Establish Channels

Step 1: Launch MUX

No.	Step	Data Direction	Hex	Comment
1	TE launches UE MUX function via AT command	TE → UE	41 54 2B 43 4D 55 58 3D 30 0D 0D 0A	AT+CMUX=0<CR><LF>
	UE sends a response	TE ← UE	4F 4B 0D 0A	OK<CR><LF>

Step 2: Establish DLCI 0

No.	Step	Data Direction	Hex	Comment
1	TE requests to establish control channel DLCI 0 by sending SABM frame	TE → UE	F9 03 3F 01 1C F9	SABM Frame
	UE replies with the UA response	TE ← UE	F9 03 73 01 D7 F9	UA Frame

Step 3: Establish DLCI 1–4

No.	Step	Data Direction	Hex	Comment
1	TE requests to establish DLCI 1 by sending SABM frame	TE → UE	F9 07 3F 01 DE F9	SABM Frame
	UE replies with the DM response	TE ← UE	F9 07 73 01 15 F9	UA Frame
2	TE requests to establish DLCI 2 by sending SABM frame	TE → UE	F9 0B 3F 01 59 F9	SABM Frame
	UE replies with the UA response	TE ← UE	F9 0B 73 01 92 F9	UA Frame
3	Frame transmission on DLCI 3 and DLCI 4 are the same as above (DLCI 1 and DLCI 2).			

5.3. Frame Transmission

After the control channel and data channels are established, TE and UE can transmit data to each other through UIH frames.

Frame Transmission:

No.	Step	Direction	Hex	Comment
	TE sends the AT command string "AT<CR>" on DLCI 1	TE → UE	F9 07 EF 09 41 54 49 0D 39 F9	UIH Frame
1	UE replies with a response on DLCI 1	TE ← UE	F9 05 EF 09 41 54 49 0D 58 F9 F9 05 EF 3F 0D 0A 51 75 65 63 74 65 6C 0D 0A 45 43 32 30 30 55 0D 0A 52 65 76 69 73 69 6F 6E 3A 20 45 43 98 F9 F9 05 EF 39 32 30 30 55 43 4E 41 41 52 30 32 41 30 31 4D 30 38 5F 42 45 54 41 30 33 32 32 0D 0A 7C F9 F9 05 EF 0D 0D 0A 4F 4B 0D 0A 5F F9	UIH Frame
	TE sends the AT command string "AT<CR>" on DLCI 2	TE → UE	F9 0B EF 07 41 54 0D 54 F9	UIH Frame
2	UE replies with a response on DLCI 2	TE ← UE	F9 09 EF 07 41 54 0D 35 F9 F9 09 EF 0D 0D 0A 4F 4B 0D 0A D8 F9	UIH Frame
3	Frame transmission on DLCI 3 and DLCI 4 are the same as above (DLCI 1 and DLCI 2).			

5.4. Synchronization and Loss of Synchronization

The data in the DLC channel needs to comply with the protocol format of MUX. When the data in the channel does not comply with the protocol format, the channel may lose synchronization. At this time, no response will be got by sending any data to the channel. When the channel loses synchronization, data will gradually accumulate in the channel. When the data volume reaches a certain amount, the channel will clear the blocked data to clean the channel, and then UE and TE can communicate normally.

Synchronization and Loss of Synchronization:

No.	Step	Data Direction	Hex	Comment
	TE sends the AT command string "AT<CR>" on DLCI 1	TE → UE	F9 07 EF 09 41 54 49 0D 39 F9	UIH Frame
1	UE replies with a response on DLCI 1	TE ← UE	F9 05 EF 09 41 54 49 0D 58 F9 F9 05 EF 3F 0D 0A 51 75 65 63 74 65 6C 0D 0A 45 43 32 30	UIH Frame

			30 55 0D 0A 52 65 76 69 73 69 6F 6E 3A 20 45 43 98 F9 F9 05 EF 39 32 30 30 55 43 4E 41 41 52 30 32 41 30 31 4D 30 38 5F 42 45 54 41 30 33 32 32 0D 0A 7C F9 F9 05 EF 0D 0D 0A 4F 4B 0D 0A 5F F9
	TE sends out-of-order data	TE → UE	12 F9 12 12 12 F9 F9
2	After that, the UE has no response, and all DLC channels are blocked	TE ← UE	
	TE continuously sends the AT command string "ATI<CR>" on DLCI 1		F9 07 EF 09 41 54 49 0D 39 F9
3	When the blocked data is cleared, UE and TE can communicate normally	TE → UE	F9 05 EF 09 41 54 49 0D 58 F9 F9 05 EF 3F 0D 0A 51 75 65 63 74 65 6C 0D 0A 45 43 32 30 30 55 0D 0A 52 65 76 69 73 69 6F 6E 3A 20 45 43 98 F9 F9 05 EF 39 32 30 30 55 43 4E 41 41 52 30 32 41 30 31 4D 30 38 5F 42 45 54 41 30 33 32 32 0D 0A 7C F9 F9 05 EF 0D 0D 0A 4F 4B 0D 0A 5F F9

5.5. Disable MUX

Disabling Procedures:

No.	Step	Data Direction	Hex	Comment
1	TE sends DISC frame to request for closing down DLCI 1	TE → UE	F9 07 53 01 3F F9	DISC frame
	UE replies with the UA frame to accept the request	TE ← UE	F9 07 73 01 15 F9	UA frame
2	TE sends DISC frame to request for closing down DLCI 2	TE → UE	F9 0B 53 01 B8 F9	DISC frame
	UE replies with the UA frame to accept the request	TE ← UE	F9 0B 73 01 92 F9	UA frame
3	TE sends DISC frame to request for closing down DLCI 3	TE → UE	F9 0F 53 01 7A F9	DISC frame

	UE replies with the UA frame to accept the request	TE ← UE	F9 0F 73 01 50 F9	UA frame
4	TE sends DISC frame to request for closing down DLCI 4	TE → UE	F9 13 53 01 77 F9	DISC frame
	UE replies with the UA frame to accept the request	TE ← UE	F9 13 73 01 5D F9	UA frame
5	TE sends CLD message frame to request for closing down multiplexer on DLCI 0	TE → UE	F9 03 EF 05 C3 01 F2 F9	UIH control message frame
	UE replies with the UA frame to accept the request	TE ← UE	F9 01 EF 05 C1 01 93 F9	UIH control message frame

6 Appendix References

Table 15: Related Documents

Document Name
[1] Quectel_EC200U&EG915U_Series_AT_Commands_Manual

Table 16: Terms and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
CLD	Multiplexer Close Down
C/R	Command/Response
CRC	Cyclic Redundancy Check
DCE	Data Communications Equipment
DISC	Disconnect
DLC	Data Link Connection
DLCI	Data Link Connection Identifier
DM	Disconnected Mode
EA	Extended Address
FCS	Frame Check Sequence
ME	Mobile Equipment
P/F	Poll/Final
PPP	Point-to-Point Protocol
SABM	Set Asynchronous Balanced Mode
SMS	Short Message Service

TA	Terminal Adapter
TE	Terminal Equipment
UA	Unnumbered Acknowledgement
UE	User Equipment
UI	Unnumbered Information
UIH	Unnumbered Information with Header Check
