

Searching for neutrinoless double beta decays with



Raymond Tsang, University of Alabama

on behalf of

the **nEXO** collaboration

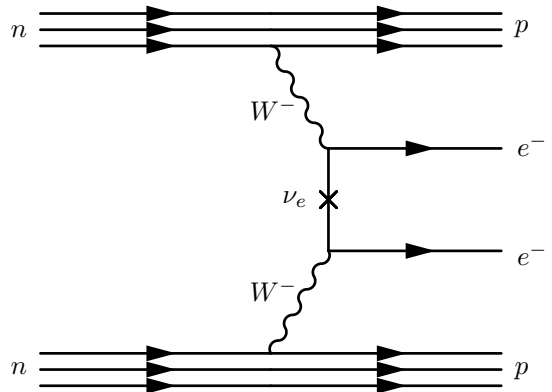
Oct 12, 2023

Next Generation Nucleon Decay and Neutrino Detectors 2023

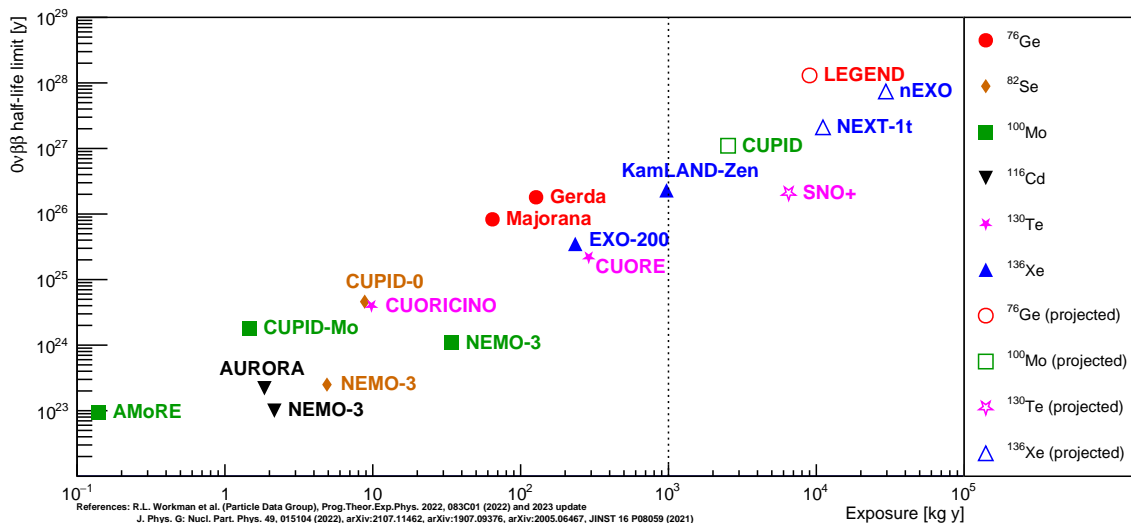
Procida, Italy

## Why search for $0\nu\beta\beta$ ?

- Enabled by non-zero neutrino mass
- Observation of  $0\nu\beta\beta$  always implies new physics \*
  - Lepton number violation
  - Majorana fermions: A new class of particles
  - Matter-antimatter asymmetry
- The search for  $0\nu\beta\beta$  goes beyond measuring the Majorana mass of neutrinos.



\*[J. Schechter and J.W.F. Valle, PRD 25 2951-2954 (1982)]

$0\nu\beta\beta$  landscape – Why tonne-scale?

Towards the next generation:

- Need a **ton** of  $\beta\beta$  emitter
- Extremely low background
- and various technical challenges

Extraordinary discovery requires extraordinary evidence

- Multiple experiments
- Different isotopes and detection technologies
- Different decay energies

# The 2023 Long Range Plan

- The 2023 Long Range Plan for Nuclear Science was made public last week on Oct 4, 2023.
- The writing was lead by the Nuclear Science Advisory Committee (NSAC), which advises the US DOE, supported by numerous White papers from the nuclear physics community.
- $0\nu\beta\beta$  experiments are mentioned in Recommendation 2:

## RECOMMENDATION 2

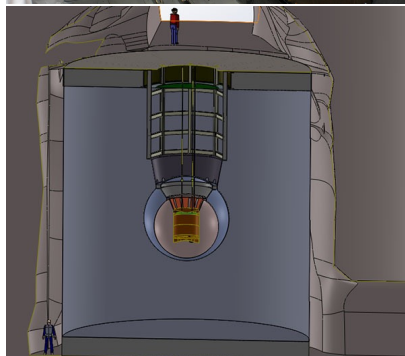
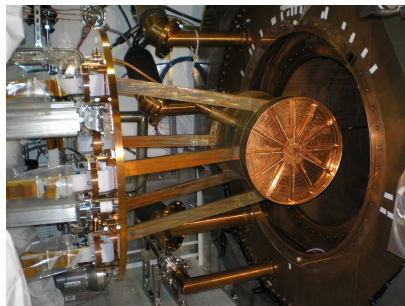
As the highest priority for new experiment construction, we recommend that the United States lead an international consortium that will undertake a neutrinoless double beta decay campaign, featuring the expeditious construction of ton-scale experiments, using different isotopes and complementary techniques.

- It shows the community's unwavering support for the building of  $0\nu\beta\beta$  experiments.



## Milestones of the EXO program

- 2001: The EXO program began.
- 2010: EXO-200 detector was built.
- 2011: EXO-200 began taking data.
- 2014: The nEXO collaboration was formed.
- May 2018: nEXO Pre-Conceptual Design Report (pCDR)
- Nov 2018: CD-0 (Mission need) for tonne-scale  $\beta\beta$  decay search
- Dec 2018: EXO-200 stopped taking data.
- Feb 2021: nEXO's first budget review by DoE
- Jul 2021: DoE portfolio review for project comparison
- Jan 2022: Project start
- Now: Continue R&D



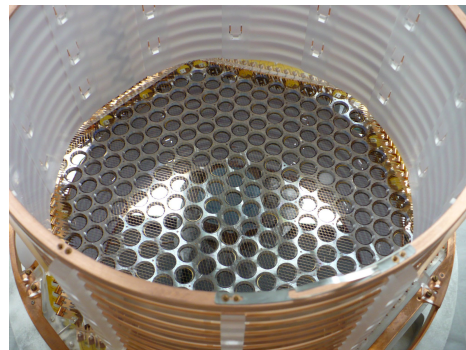
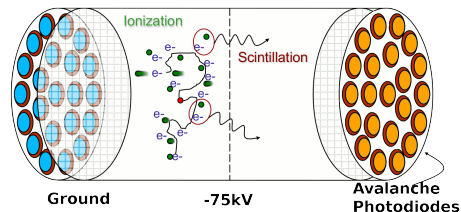
# EXO-200 – a successful experiment and demonstrator

## Features:

- Liquid xenon (LXe) time projection chamber (TPC)
- 200 kg of Xe enriched to 80% in  $^{136}\text{Xe}$
- 2 drift volumes separated by a central cathode
- Ionization: Charge collection wires
- Scintillation: Avalanche Photodiodes
- Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, New Mexico, USA.
- Overburden: 1623 m.w.e.
- Operational from 2011 to 2018

## EXO-200's major achievements:

- First observation of  $2\nu\beta\beta$  of  $^{136}\text{Xe}$   
[PRL 107, 212501 (2011)]
- Most precise measurement of  $^{136}\text{Xe}$   $2\nu\beta\beta$  half-life to-date:  
 $\tau_{1/2}^{2\nu} = (2.165 \pm 0.016 \pm 0.059) \times 10^{21}$  y  
[PRC 89, 015502 (2014)]
- Limit on  $^{136}\text{Xe}$   $0\nu\beta\beta$  half-life:  $\tau_{1/2}^{0\nu} > 3.5 \times 10^{25}$  y (90% C.L.)  
[PRL 123 161802 (2019)]



Next step: scale up!

# nEXO

160+ collaborators  
 34 institutions  
 9 countries  
 1 goal: Find  $0\nu\beta\beta$



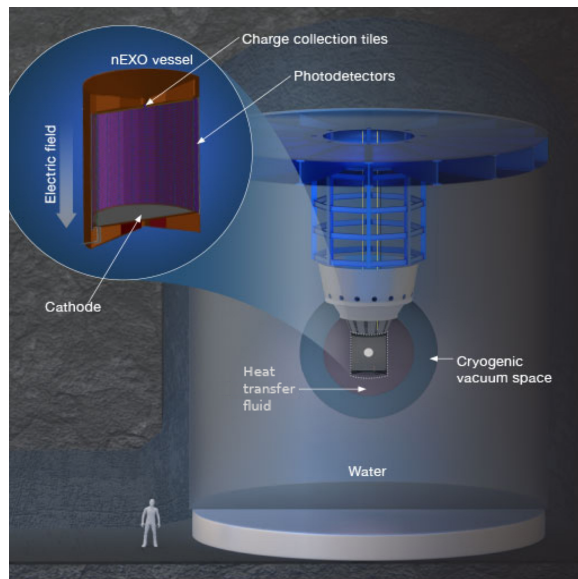
# nEXO experiment and design

## Features:

- Single phase single volume LXe TPC
- 5 tonnes of LXe enriched to 90% in  $^{136}\text{Xe}$
- Ionization: Charge collection tiles
- Scintillation: Silicon Photomultipliers (SiPM)
- Location: SNOLAB with 6010 m.w.e. overburden

## Improvements over EXO-200:

	EXO-200:	nEXO:	Improvements:
<b>Vessel and cryostat</b>	Thin-walled commercial Cu w/HFE	Thin-walled electroformed Cu w/HFE	Lower background
<b>High voltage</b>	Max voltage: 25 kV (end-of-run)	Operating voltage: 50 kV	Full scale parts tested in LXe prior to installation to minimize risk
<b>Cables</b>	Cu clad polyimide (analog)	Cu clad polyimide (digital)	Same cable/feedthrough technology, R&D identified 10x lower bkg substrate and demonstrated digital signal transmission
<b>e<sup>-</sup> lifetime</b>	3-5 ms	5 ms (req.), 10 ms (goal)	Minimal plastics (no PTFE reflector), lower surface to volume ratio, detailed materials screening program
<b>Charge collection</b>	Crossed wires	Gridless modular tiles	R&D performed to demonstrate charge collection with tiles in LXe, detailed simulation developed
<b>Light collection</b>	APDs + PTFE reflector	SiPMs around TPC barrel	SiPMs avoid readout noise, R&D demonstrated prototypes from two vendors
<b>Energy resolution</b>	1.2%	1.2% (req.), 0.8% (goal)	Improved resolution due to SiPMs (negligible readout noise in light channels)
<b>Electronics</b>	Conventional room temp.	In LXe ASIC-based design	Minimize readout noise for light and charge channels, nEXO prototypes demonstrated in R&D and follow from LAr TPC lineage
<b>Background control</b>	Measurement of all materials	Measurement of all materials	RBC program follows successful strategy demonstrated in EXO-200
<b>Larger size</b>	>2 atten. length at center	>7 atten. length at center	Exponential attenuation of external gammas and more fully contained Comptons

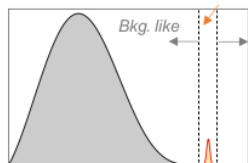




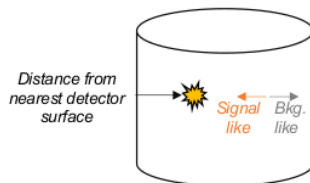
# Multi-observable analysis

nEXO can robustly identify a signal event by measuring multiple observables.

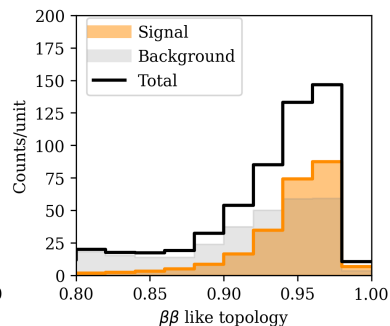
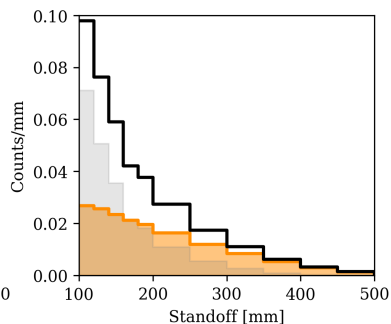
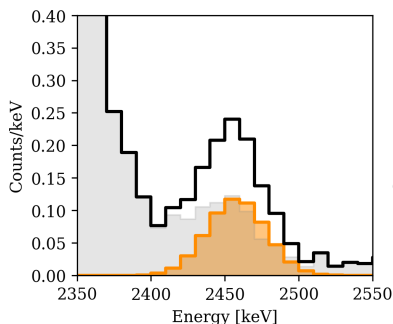
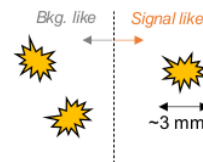
**Energy:** *Signal like*



**Standoff:**

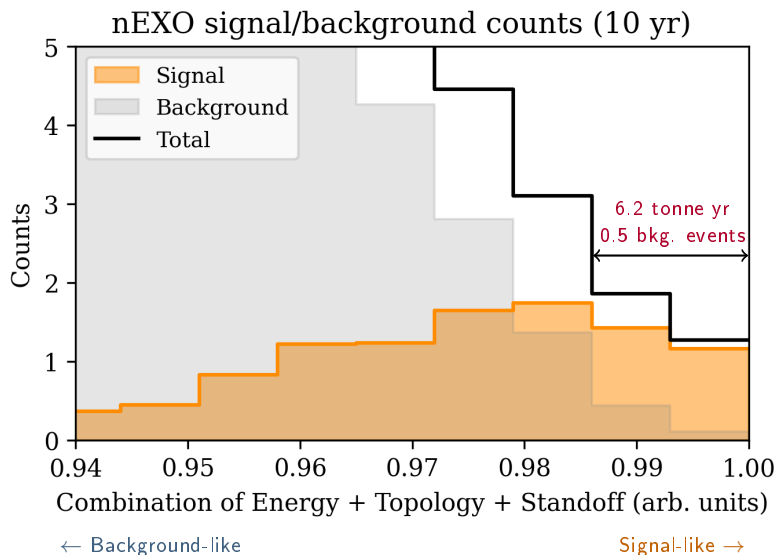


**Topology:**



Assumed signal:  $\tau_{1/2} = 7.4 \times 10^{27}$  year.  
(Potential  $3\text{-}\sigma$  discovery by nEXO.)

# Multi-observable analysis



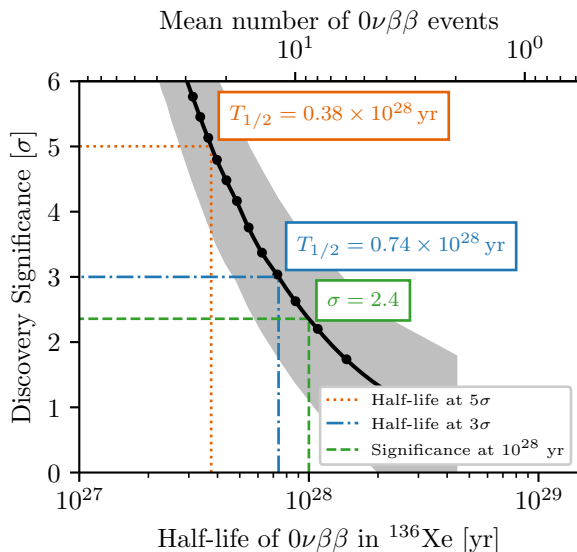
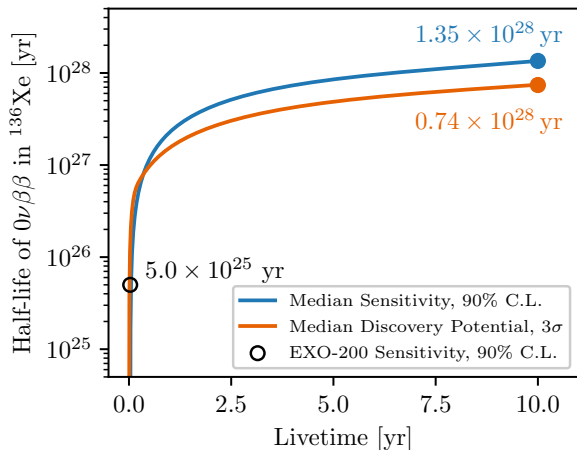
Combining three quantities:

- 3D voxels are ranked by signal-to-background ratio.
- Then, arranged into a single dimension by proper ordering.
- “Background-free” in the combined parameter

Not a 1D peak search!

Assumed signal:  $\tau_{1/2} = 7.4 \times 10^{27}$  year.  
(Potential 3- $\sigma$  discovery by nEXO.)

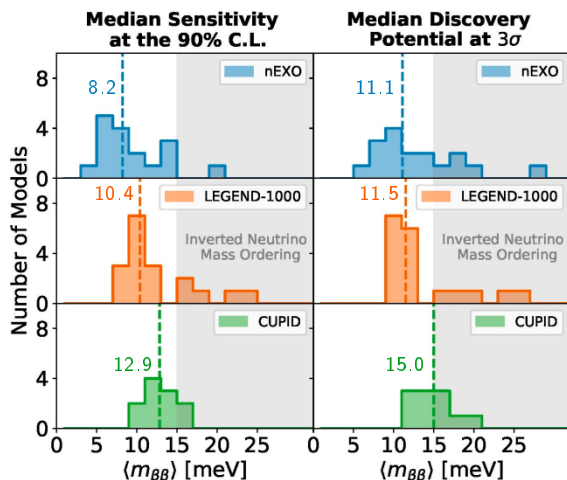
## Sensitivity projection



[J. Phys. G: Nucl. Part. Phys. 49 015104 (2022)]

- KamLAND-Zen limit:  $\tau_{1/2} > 2.3 \times 10^{26}$  years at 90% C.L. [PRL 130 051801 (2023)]
- Still a lot of room for discovery!

# Comparison with other experiments



- Included all published NMEs that have not been superseded by later publications
- Difference among experiments is small compared to difference among NMEs.

NMEs used:

Method	Year	Citation
IBM	2015	<a href="#">PRC 91 034304 (2015)</a>
NSM	2008	<a href="#">PRL 100 052503 (2008)</a>
IBM	2020	<a href="#">PRD 102 095016 (2020)</a>
QRPA	2014	<a href="#">PRC 89 064308 (2014)</a>
NSM	2016	<a href="#">PRC 93 024308 (2016)</a>
QRPA	2015	<a href="#">PRC 91 024613 (2015)</a>
QRPA	2018	<a href="#">PRC 98 024608 (2018)</a>
NSM	2018	<a href="#">JPS Conf. Proc. 23 012036 (2018)</a>
QRPA	2013	<a href="#">J. High Energ. Phys. 2013 25 (2013)</a>
QRPA	2013	<a href="#">PRC 87 064302 (2013)</a>
QRPA	2013	<a href="#">PRC 87 045501 (2013)</a>
QRPA	2018	<a href="#">PRC 97 034315 (2018)</a>
QRPA	2010	<a href="#">Nucl.Phys.A 847 (2010) 207</a>
EDF	2013	<a href="#">PRL 111 142501 (2013)</a>
EDF	2015	<a href="#">PRC 91 024316 (2015)</a>
QRPA	2018	<a href="#">PRC 97 045503 (2018)</a>
EDF	2017	<a href="#">PRC 96 054310 (2017)</a>
QRPA	2015	<a href="#">PRC 91 024613 (2015)</a>
EDF	2010	<a href="#">Prog.Part.Nucl.Phys. 66 (2011) 436</a>

Half-lives used [ $\times 10^{28}$  years]:

	90% sens.	$3\sigma$ disc.	Ref.
nEXO	1.35	0.74	<a href="#">[JP G: NPP. 49 015104 (2022)]</a>
LEGEND	1.6	1.3	<a href="#">[arXiv:2107.11462]</a>
CUPID	0.15	0.11	<a href="#">[arXiv:1907.09376]</a>

## nEXO's unique strengths

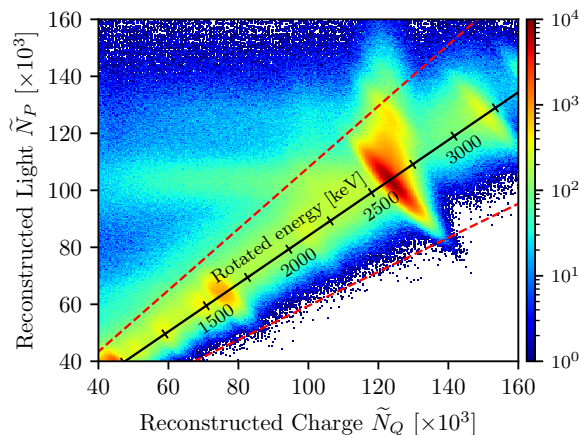
## 1. Homogeneous

## 2. Scalable

## 3. Confirmation possible

A monolithic homogeneous detector is well-suited for a  $0\nu\beta\beta$  search.

- Gamma background identification and rejection with advanced topological reconstruction
- Sufficiently good energy resolution to suppress  $2\nu\beta\beta$  background to a negligible level
- Internal radon background removal by alpha tagging
- Measures backgrounds precisely in situ enabling a multi-dimensional analysis
- Uninstrumented center creates a “background-free” region.



# nEXO's unique strengths

## 1. Homogeneous

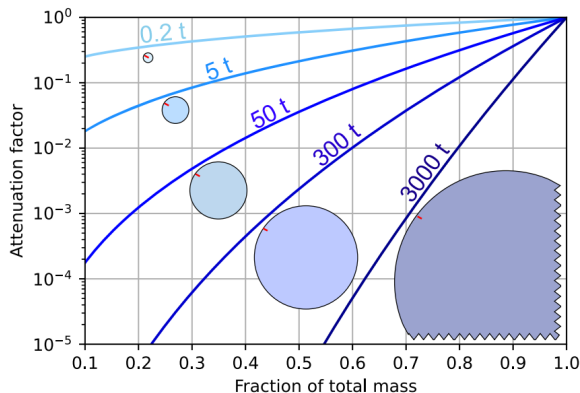
## 2. Scalable

## 3. Confirmation possible

There is a feasible path forward to scale up to beyond 100t in case of a non-discovery.

[A. Avasthi et al., *Phys. Rev. D* 104, 112007 (2021)]

- The advantages of a homogeneous detector improve with size
- Sufficient enrichment capacity exists. Xenon enrichment is well understood and cost effective.
- Recirculating Xenon reduces risk, as the purification system can be upgraded if unexpected backgrounds are discovered and/or if new technology becomes available. (Note that xenon has no long-lived, unstable isotopes.)



## nEXO's unique strengths

### 1. Homogeneous

### 2. Scalable

### 3. Confirmation possible

Ability to perform a follow-up experiment with the same hardware in case of a discovery.

- Perform a follow-up experiment with non-enriched or depleted xenon if the half-life is sufficiently short:
  - A genuine signal would not be observed with depleted xenon.
  - Enhance confidence that an observation of  $0\nu\beta\beta$  has been made.
- Re-deploy the same enriched Xe in another experiment for independent confirmation.
  - The xenon can be retrieved and used in another experiment.
- Barium tagging is a possible upgrade to unambiguously identify  $\beta\beta$  decays.

# nEXO R&D status

- Pre-Conceptual Design Report in 2018
- First sensitivity projection in 2018
- Updated sensitivity projection in 2022
- Status of R&D beyond pre-CDR, including
  - Background control
  - SiPMs
  - Charge collection
  - Calibration
  - and more

## nEXO Pre-Conceptual Design Report



### Abstract

The projected performance and detector configuration of nEXO are described in this pre-Conceptual Design Report (pCDR). nEXO is a tonne-scale neutrinoless double beta ( $0\nu\beta\beta$ ) decay search in  $^{136}\text{Xe}$ , based on the ultra-low background liquid xenon technology validated by EXO-200. With  $\approx 5000$  kg of xenon enriched to 90% in the isotope  $^{136}\text{Xe}$ , nEXO has a projected half-life sensitivity of approximately  $10^{27}$  years. This represents an improvement in sensitivity of about two orders of magnitude with respect to current results. Based on the experience gained from EXO-200 and the effectiveness of xenon purification techniques, we expect the background to be dominated by external sources of radiation. The sensitivity increase is, therefore, entirely derived from the increase of active mass in a monolithic and homogeneous detector, along with some technical advances perfected in the course of a dedicated R&D program. Hence the risk which is inherent to the construction of a large, ultra-low background detector is reduced, as the intrinsic radioactive contamination requirements are generally not beyond those demonstrated with the present generation  $0\nu\beta\beta$  decay experiments. Indeed, most of the required materials have been already assayed or reasonable estimates of their properties are at hand. The details described herein represent the base design of the detector configuration as of early 2018. Where potential design improvements are possible, alternatives are discussed.

This design for nEXO presents a compelling path towards a next generation search for  $0\nu\beta\beta$ , with a substantial possibility to discover physics beyond the Standard Model.

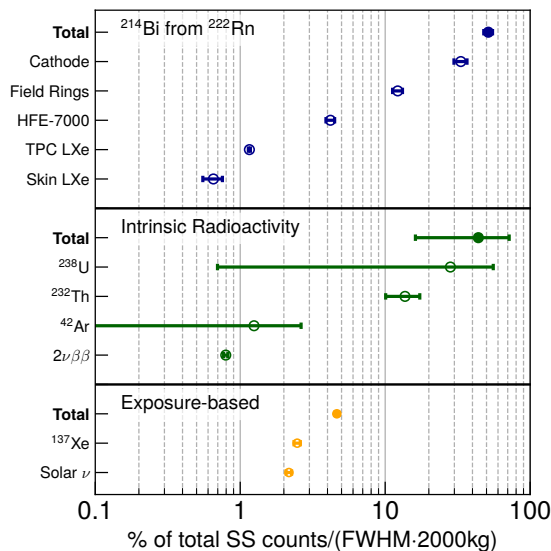
Minor revisions, Aug 12, 2018

[arXiv:1805.11142]



# Background

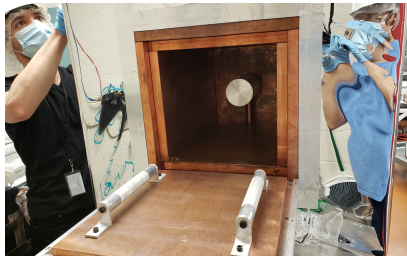
- Background sources
  - Gamma background from U/Th
  - Outgassed radon
  - Exposure to dust, radon, and cosmic rays
- Following EXO-200's successful strategy: Assay everything!
- Techniques used:
  - Gamma spectrometry
  - Neutron activation analysis (NAA)
  - Inductively coupled plasma Mass spectrometry (ICP-MS)
  - Electrostatic collection and liquid scintillator counting
  - $\alpha$ -counting
  - Accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS)



# Intrinsic U/Th radioactivity

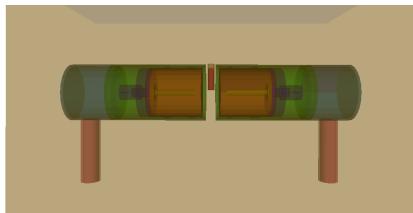
## Gamma spectrometry

- Re-installed HPGe detector at SURF in Mar 2023 which has been running since.



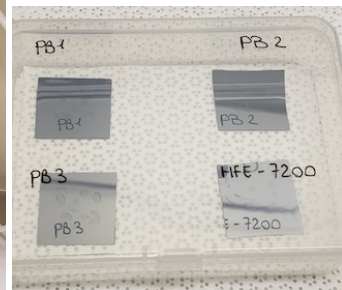
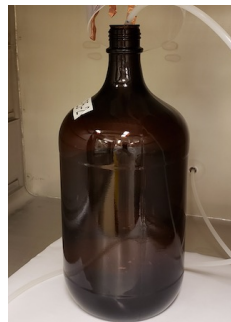
## NAA

- New capability being developed:  $\gamma$ - $\gamma$  coincidence NAA [RT et al., JINST 16 P10007 (2021)]
- Plan to activate a sapphire sample at MITR and to be counted at TUNL



## Measurement of U/Th/ $^{210}\text{Po}$ in HFE (Heat transfer fluid)

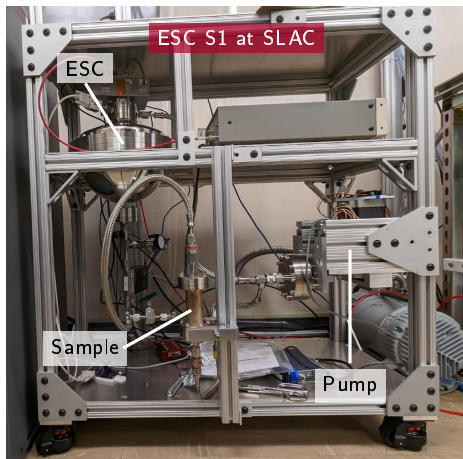
- $\alpha$  decays of  $^{210}\text{Po}$  in HFE may produce  $^{137}\text{Xe}$  via  $(\alpha, n)$
- Reduced volume by 10000 $\times$  via evaporation to enhance sensitivity
- Quantified  $^{210}\text{Po}$  by  $\alpha$  counting with  $^{209}\text{Po}$  tracer
- Measured  $^{210}\text{Po}$  at a few  $\mu\text{Bq/kg}$
- Placed limits on U/Th at a few fg/g by ICP-MS.



# Radon counting

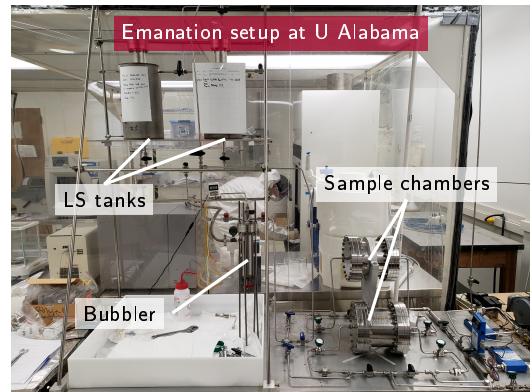
## Electrostatic collection (ESC)

- Measures with a PIN diode the energy of air-borne alpha particles from Rn progeny
- Currently, 3 ESCs, one of them being commissioned.
- Sensitivity: 30  $\mu\text{Bq}$  in 4 weeks
- Working to confirm EXO-200 radon measurement independently.



## Liquid scintillator counting

- Counts Bi-Po coincidence by viewing radon loaded liquid scintillator with a PMT
- Revived the setup that screened samples for LZ
- Sensitivity:  $\sim 200 \mu\text{Bq}$  in 4 weeks



# Exposure-based backgrounds and tracking

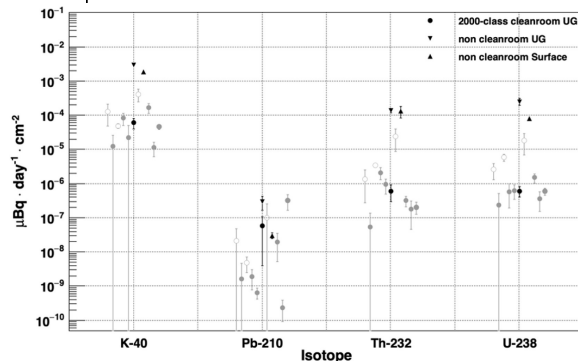
## Exposure-based background sources:

- Cosmogenic activation while above ground
  - Performed exhaustive search for potential background contributors among activation products
  - No major background sources identified
- Dust deposition on parts
  - Studied U/Th deposition at various locations in SNOLAB
    - [\[M.L. di Vacri et al., NIM A 994, 165051 \(2021\)\]](#)
    - [\[M.L. di Vacri et al., NIM A 1056, 168700 \(2023\)\]](#)
  - U/Th deposition rate:  $10^{-6}$  to  $10^{-7}$   $\mu\text{Bq d}^{-1} \text{cm}^{-2}$  in clean areas.
  - Dust composition dependent on local activity.
- Radon progeny deposition on parts
  - $^{137}\text{Xe}$  production by ( $\alpha$ , n)
  - Studied deposition lengths of radon progeny
    - [\[D. Chernyak et al., PRC 107, 065802 \(2023\)\]](#)
  - Deposition rates similar for all materials
  - Ventilation rate is an important factor

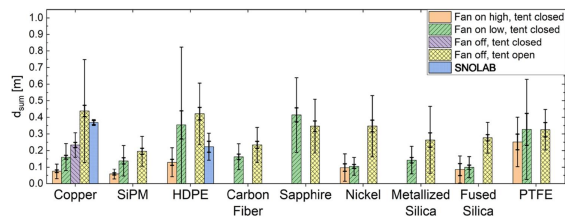
## Mitigation measures:

- Cleanrooms with radon-reduced air
- Handling and cleaning protocols
- Parts tracking database

## Dust deposition at SNOLAB:



## Radon daughter plateout:



# Radioassay data management

- Data management needs fulfilled by materials database  
[RT et al., NIM A, 1055, 168477 (2023)]
  - Database for storage and retrieval, including published EXO-200 radioassay data:  
[D.S. Leonard et al., NIM A 591, 490 (2008)]  
[D.S. Leonard et al., NIM A 871, 169 (2017)].
  - Tools for detector design
- Auto-generated spreadsheet for background and sensitivity calculations
  - Facilitates the interpretation of radioassay data
- Has been in use since 2014
  - Stored more than 300 radioassay records from nEXO, in addition to 343 radioassay records from EXO-200.
  - Further integration with other software tools used by the collaboration

## Allowed Radioactivity Calculator

Expected Background | Maximum Activity | Maximum Mass | Help

Description: Describe the material and component.

Mass (m): 5.5 kg

Material: R-002.11.1: Aurubis copper

Component: MC-371: Baseline2019 SiP1

U-238 activity (a<sub>U</sub>): 3.160e-3 mBq/kg

Th-232 activity (a<sub>Th</sub>): 5.250e-4 mBq/kg

U-238 efficiency (ε<sub>U</sub>): 5.528e-6 counts/ROI/2σdecay

Th-232 efficiency (ε<sub>Th</sub>): 2.047e-6 counts/ROI/2σdecay

Total background (B): 3.216e-3 counts/ROI/2σ

U-238 background (B<sub>U</sub>): 3.030e-3 counts/ROI/2σ

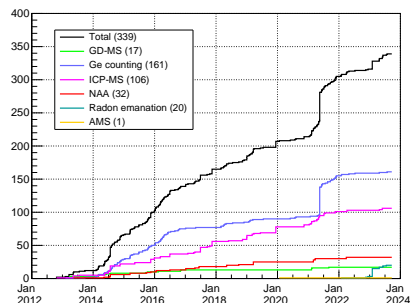
Th-232 background (B<sub>Th</sub>): 1.864e-4 counts/ROI/2σ

Category: Intermediate component (0.1-1)

Percentage of total budget: 0.633 %

Download data as CSV

Cumulative Number of Radioassay Measurements Performed (as of September 22, 2023)

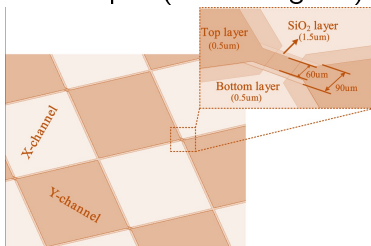


## Charge detection

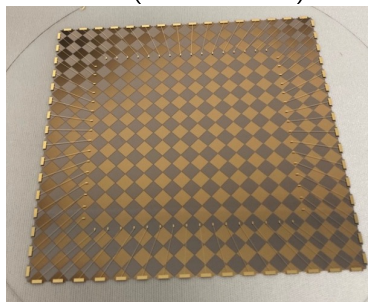
- Metal pads as anode to collect ionization electrons
- 120  $10 \times 10 \text{ cm}^2$  quartz tiles surface-coated with linked Au+Ti pads.
- Read out by custom cryo ASIC.
- Developed production of low-background flat cables with manufacturer. [[I. Arnquist et al. NIM A 959 163573 \(2020\)](#)]
- R&D focus: cold electronics, fabrication, and integration



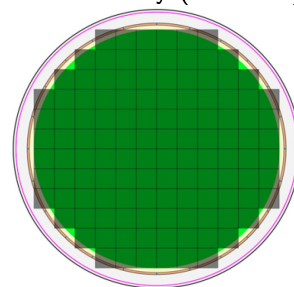
Au+Ti pad (6 mm diagonal)



Tile ( $10 \times 10 \text{ cm}^2$ )



Full assembly (120 tiles)



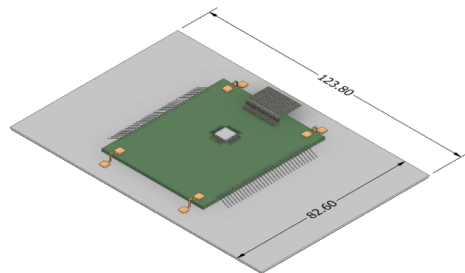
## Light detection

- Silicon photomultipliers (SiPM) to detect VUV (175 nm) scintillation light from Xe
- 1 cm<sup>2</sup> units are ganged into channels of 6 cm<sup>2</sup>, then arranged into 96 cm<sup>2</sup> tile modules.
- Modules are installed on the 24 staves inside the TPC barrel covering 4.6 m<sup>2</sup>.
- Devices from 2 vendors that meet nEXO requirements have been identified through numerous studies.

[G. Gallina et al., EPJC 82 1125 (2022)]

[G. Gallina et al., NIM A 940, 371 (2019)]

[A. Jamil et al., IEEE TNS 65, 11, 2823-2833 (2018)]

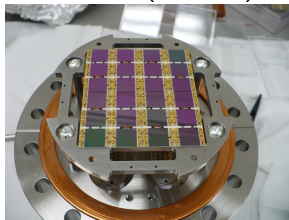


- R&D focus: Cold electronics, wire bonding and integration

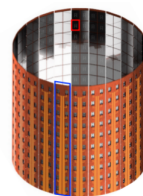
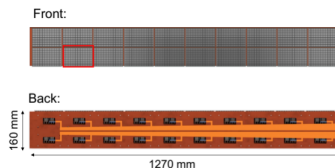
SiPM unit (1 × 1 cm<sup>2</sup>)



Module (96 cm<sup>2</sup>)



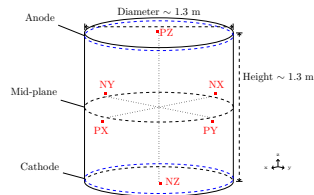
Stave (20 modules) / Full assembly (24 staves)



# Calibration

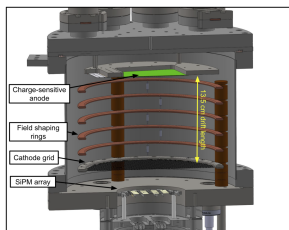
## External gamma sources

- Six sources around the TPC deployed in guide tubes for periodic monitoring
- Successfully used in EXO-200
- R&D: Hardware and simulation



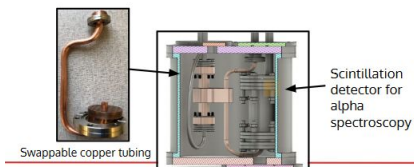
## $^{127}\text{Xe}$ calibration source

- Inject  $^{127}\text{Xe}$  ( $\tau_{1/2} = 36.3$  d) created by neutron activation of  $^{126}\text{Xe}$ .
- Gamma rays ranging from 145 to 618 keV.
- Proof of concept: [B.G. Lenardo, C.A. Hardy, RT, et al., JINST 17 P07028 (2022)]



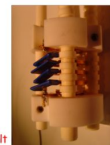
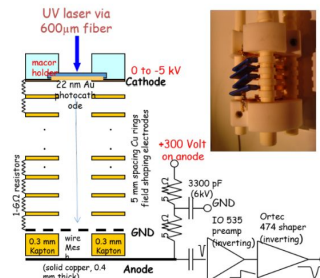
## $^{222}\text{Rn}$ injection

- Measure lightmap with alpha decays
- Demonstrated in EXO-200
- R&D: Rn transport study with  $^{220}\text{Rn}$



## Laser driven photocathodes

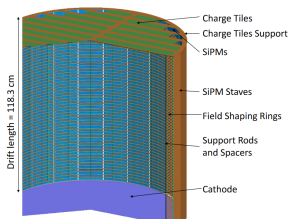
- Demonstrated measurements of electron drift parameters [O. Njaya et al., NIM A 972, 163965 (2020)]





# TPC vessel, HV, and Xenon

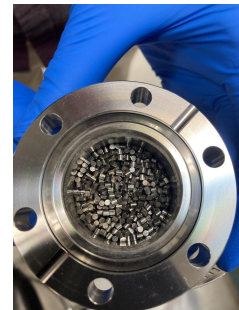
- TPC vessel made of electroformed Cu (EFCu)
- Field cage consisting of rings of EFCu separated by resistive spacers
- Held together by ultem (or sapphire) tensioning rods.
- R&D: Rn distillation column.



- Electric field: 400 V/cm.

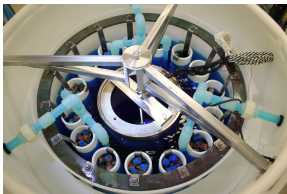
## Low Rn emanation getter

- Investigating alternative getter material with lower radon background.
- Promising results in purification tests.
- R&D focus: radium removal.



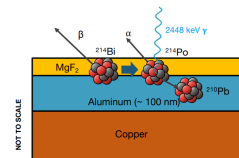
## Electroforming

- TPC cylinder to be electroformed intact
- Fluid dynamics modeling of electroforming bath
- Mixing uniformity improved



## Cathode R&D

- Electron-beam welded Cu cathode
- Investigating  $\text{MgF}_2$  coating for background rejection
- Decays of Rn plated out on cathode are a major background.
- Investigating tagging  $^{214}\text{Bi}$  decays with reflective coating on cathode

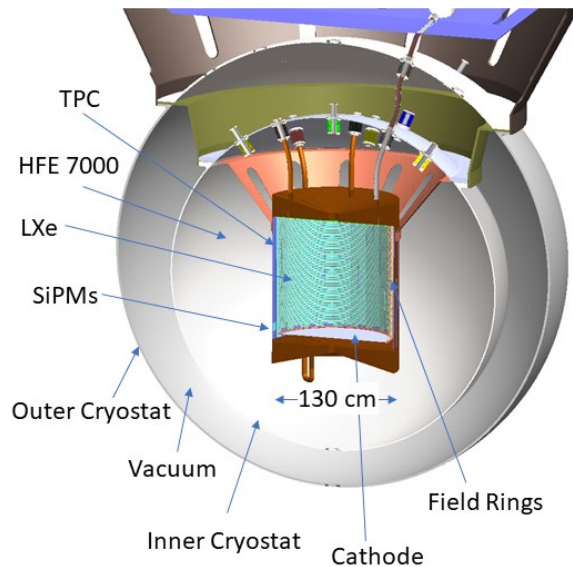


# Cryostat

- TPC submerged in 32 tonnes of HFE, a heat transfer fluid
- Contained in a cryostat consisting of nested spheres made of carbon fiber composite (CFC)
- Liner made of chemically vapor deposited Ni
- Much larger CFC vessels have previously been made.

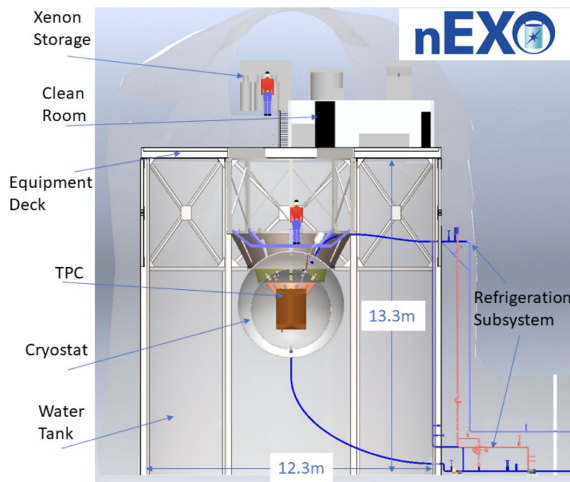
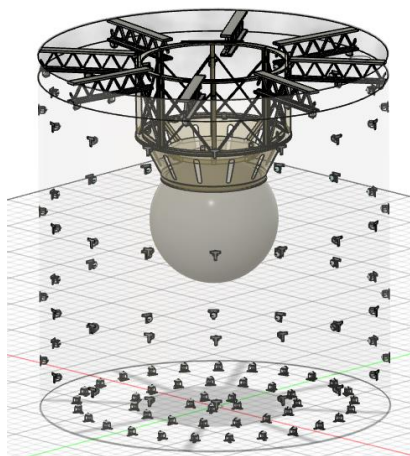


[https://www.spacex.com/media/making\\_life\\_multiplanetary\\_transcript\\_2017.pdf](https://www.spacex.com/media/making_life_multiplanetary_transcript_2017.pdf)



## Outer detector

- Shield against  $\gamma$ -rays coming from the wall of the cavern
- Moderate and stop neutrons coming also from the wall of the cavern
- Detect cosmic radiation with active water-Cherenkov muon veto



- 12.3 m in diameter and 12.8 m in height containing 1.5 kt of water
- 125 8-inch (203 mm) PMTs of 500 from Daya Bay.
- Laser/LED fibre optic system for calibration

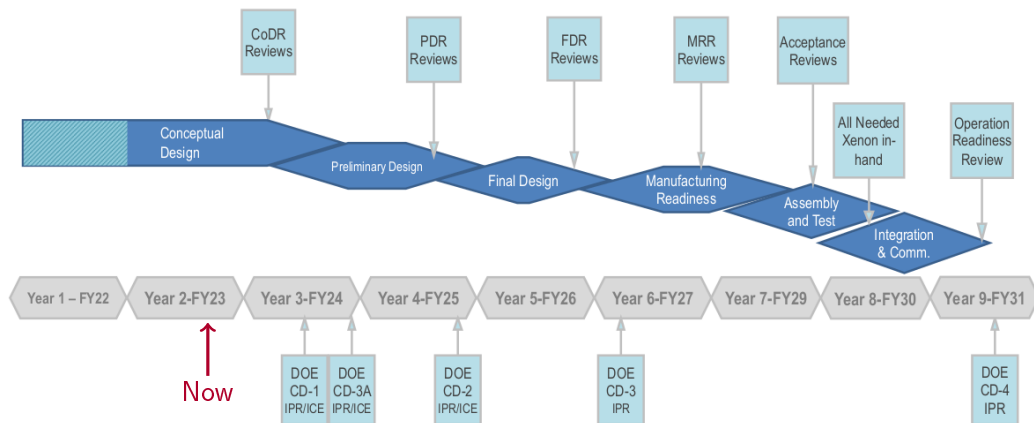
## Papers published

Paper title	Journal reference
An integrated online radioassay data storage and analytics tool for nEXO	NIM A 1055 168477 (2023)
Performance of novel VUV-sensitive Silicon Photo-Multipliers for nEXO	EPJC 82 1125 (2022)
Development of a $^{127}\text{Xe}$ calibration source for nEXO	JINST 17 P07028 (2022)
<a href="#">nEXO: Neutrinoless double beta decay search beyond <math>10^{28}</math> year half-life sensitivity</a>	<a href="#">JP G: NPP 49 015104 (2022)</a>
Event reconstruction in a liquid xenon Time Projection Chamber with an optically-open field cage	NIM A 1000 165239 (2021)
Reflectivity of VUV-sensitive Silicon Photomultipliers in Liquid Xenon	JINST 16 P08002 (2021)
Reflectivity and PDE of VUV4 Hamamatsu SiPMs in Liquid Xenon	JINST 15 P01019 (2020)
Characterization of the Hamamatsu VUV4 MPPCs for nEXO	NIM A 940 371-379 (2019)
Imaging individual barium atoms in solid xenon for barium tagging in nEXO	Nature 569 203–207 (2019)
Simulation of charge readout with segmented tiles in nEXO	JINST 14 P09020 (2019)
<a href="#">nEXO pre-conceptual design report</a>	<a href="#">arXiv:1805.11142</a>
VUV-sensitive Silicon Photomultipliers for Xenon Scintillation Light Detection in nEXO	IEEE TNS 65 11 2823-2833 (2018)
Characterization of an Ionization Readout Tile for nEXO	JINST 13 P01006 (2018)
<a href="#">Sensitivity and discovery potential of nEXO to neutrinoless double beta decay</a>	<a href="#">PRC 97 065503 (2018)</a>
Study of Silicon Photomultiplier Performance in External Electric Fields	JINST 13 T09006 (2018)
Characterization of Silicon Photomultipliers for nEXO	IEEE TNS 62 4 1825-1836 (2015)
Spectroscopy of Ba and $\text{Ba}^+$ deposits in solid xenon for barium tagging in nEXO	PRA 91 022505 (2015)

R&D has been progressing in earnest!

## Summary and notional timeline

- nEXO has a mature design. The collaboration is working to further refine it.
- With 10 years of livetime, nEXO is projected to achieve:
  - Sensitivity at 90% C.L.:  $\tau_{1/2} = 1.35 \times 10^{28}$  years or  $\langle m_{\beta\beta} \rangle = 8.2$  meV (median).
  - 3- $\sigma$  discovery potential:  $\tau_{1/2} = 7.4 \times 10^{27}$  years or  $\langle m_{\beta\beta} \rangle = 11.1$  meV (median).
- Next milestone: Conceptual Design Review (CoDR)



**Grazie per l'attenzione!**  
**Thank you for your attention!**

## Majorana mass

$$\left(T_{1/2}^{0\nu}\right)^{-1} = \frac{\langle m_{\beta\beta} \rangle^2}{m_e^2} G^{0\nu} g_A^4 |M^{0\nu}|^2$$

where

- $T_{1/2}^{0\nu}$  is the half-life of  $0\nu\beta\beta$ .
- $\langle m_{\beta\beta} \rangle$  is the Majorana mass.
- $G_{0\nu}$  is the phase space factor.<sup>†</sup>
- $g_A = 1.27$  is the axial coupling.
- $M^{0\nu}$  is the Nuclear Matrix Element (NME) which depends on the nuclear model used.

The NME is the largest source of theoretical uncertainty.

<sup>†</sup>J. Kotila and F. Iachello, Phys Rev C 85, 034316 (2012)

## Neutrino masses

	Expression	Method
Simple sum	$m_{sum} := \sum_{i=1}^3 m_i$	Cosmological limit
Incoherent sum	$\langle m_{\beta\beta} \rangle := \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^3 m_i^2  U_{ei} ^2}$	Direct measurement
Coherent sum	$\langle m_{\beta\beta} \rangle := \left  \sum_{i=1}^3 m_i U_{ei}^2 \right $	$0\nu\beta\beta$

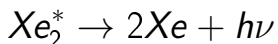
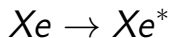


## Xe procurement

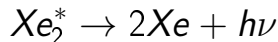
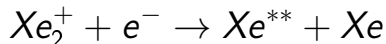
- Xenon enrichment is well known and cost effective
- EXO-200 had 200 kg of xenon enriched up to 80% with  $^{136}\text{Xe}$
- Since, KAMLAND-Zen used 745 kg of xenon enriched up to 90% with  $^{136}\text{Xe}$
- nEXO will need about 5 times what is already available
- nEXO has identified at least two western suppliers each with enough enrichment capacity for the entire production at competitive price

## Xenon scintillation mechanism

Excitation:



Ionization:



- Scintillation light: 175 nm (VUV).
- No self-quenching.
- Recombination depends on electric field.

## Radioassay instruments available

	Dedicated + Have access + Requested	Institutions	Th/U Sensitivity [ppt]
HPGe	4 + 9 + 1	UA, SURF, SNOLAB	300/150 AG, 2.3/1.2 UG
ICP-MS	1 + 2 + 1	PNNL, IHEP, CUP	1/1 routine, 0.008/0.01
GD-MS	0 + 1 + 0	NRC	10/10
NAA	3 + 0 + 1	UA	1/1 routine, 0.02/0.02
Rn	8 + 0 + 8	SNOLAB, SLAC	5 atoms $d^{-1}$
$\alpha$	2 + 0 + 1	UA, PNNL, SLAC	$^{210}\text{Po}$ : 30 mBq/m <sup>2</sup>

