

The nEXO Search for $0\nu\beta\beta$

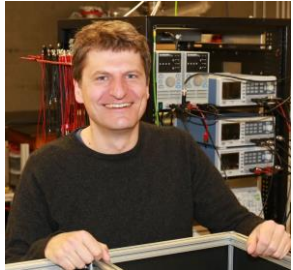
Thomas Brunner (thomas.brunner@mcgill.ca)

nEXO Canada Spokesperson

For the nEXO Collaboration

$0\nu\beta\beta$ International Summit at SNOLAB, April 27, 2023

nEXO Delegation at this Summit



Dr. Thomas Brunner
McGill University
Canada
CFI co-lead



Dr. Beatrice Franke
TRIUMF
Canada
CFI co-lead



Dr. Giorgio Gratta
Stanford University
USA
Spokesperson



Dr. Mike Heffner
Lawrence Livermore
National Laboratory
USA
Project Director



Dr. Julien Masbou
SUBATECH
France
LXe detector expert



Dr. Yifang Wang
Director, Institute of High
Energy Physics of the Chinese
Academy of Sciences (IHEP)
China (unexpectedly unable
to travel)

Please approach us with any questions you may have concerning our experiment.

Charge Readout Electronics (SLAC)

Subsystem Scientist:
L. Yang (UCSD)
Subsystem Manager:
A. Dragone (SLAC)

Photon Readout Electronics (BNL)

Subsystem Scientist:
M. Chiu (BNL)
Subsystem Manager:
L. DeMino (BNL)

TPC (PNNL)

Subsystem Scientist:
J. Orrell (PNNL)
Subsystem Manager:
A. Gorham (PNNL)

Photon Detector (BNL)

Subsystem Scientist:
D. Moore (Yale)
Subsystem Manager:
M. Worcester (BNL)

Computing, Control and Software (LLNL)

Subsystem Scientist:
S. Sangiorgio (LLNL)
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Radioactive Background Control (SLAC)

Subsystem Scientist:
A. Piepke (UA)
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TPC Support Systems (LLNL)

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Subsystem Scientist:
G. Gratta (Stanford)
System Manager:
TBD

Facility (SNOLAB)

Subsystem Scientist:
E. Caden
Subsystem Manager:
D. Hawkins

Outer Detector (SNOLAB)

Subsystem Scientist:
T. Brunner
Subsystem Manager:
D. Hawkins

nEXO Subsystems and Canadian Contributions

WBS with Canadian Contributions

WBS with Canadian Leadership

Charge Readout Electronics (SLAC)

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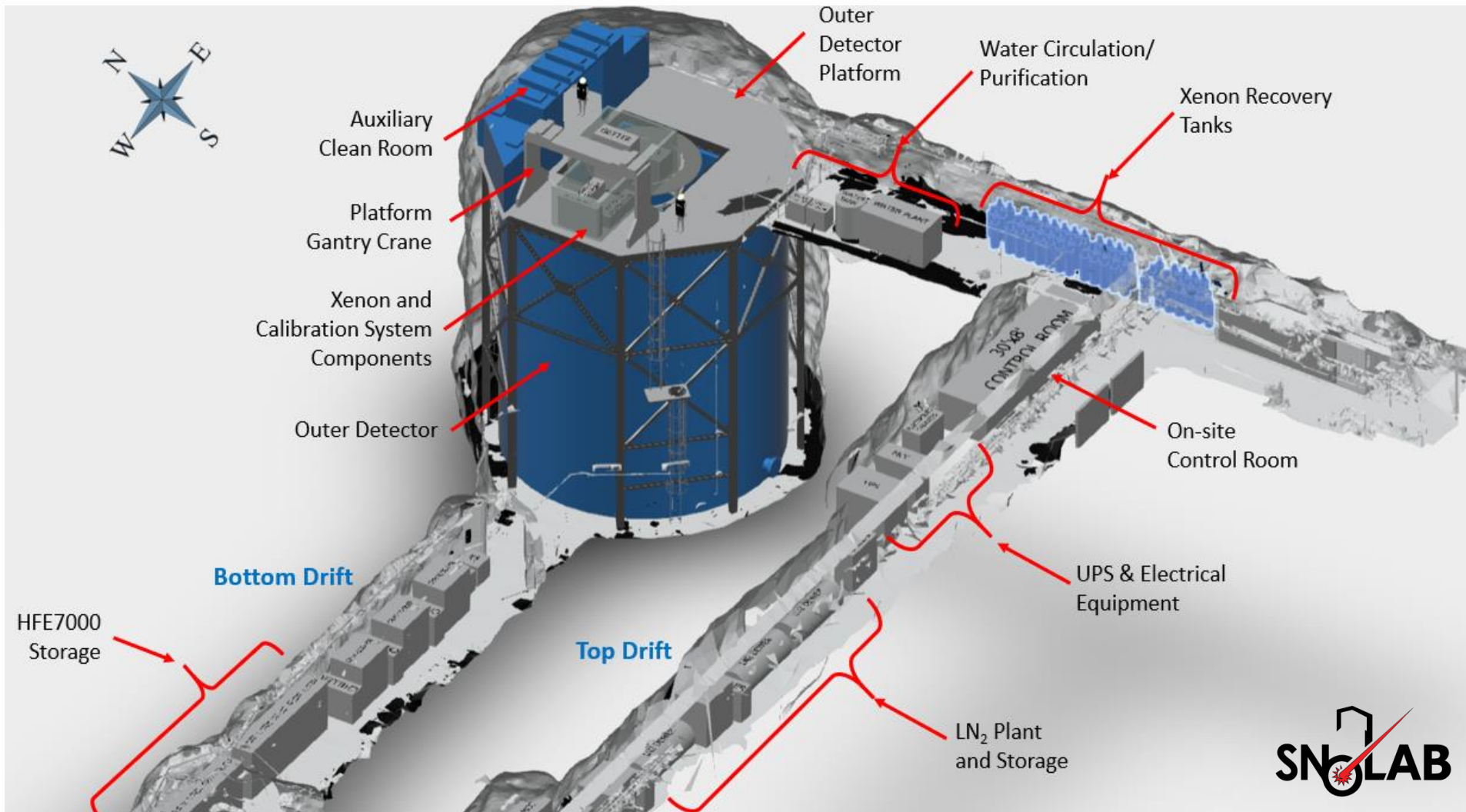
Outer Detector (SNOLAB)

Subsystem Scientist:
T. Brunner
Subsystem Manager:
D. Hawkins

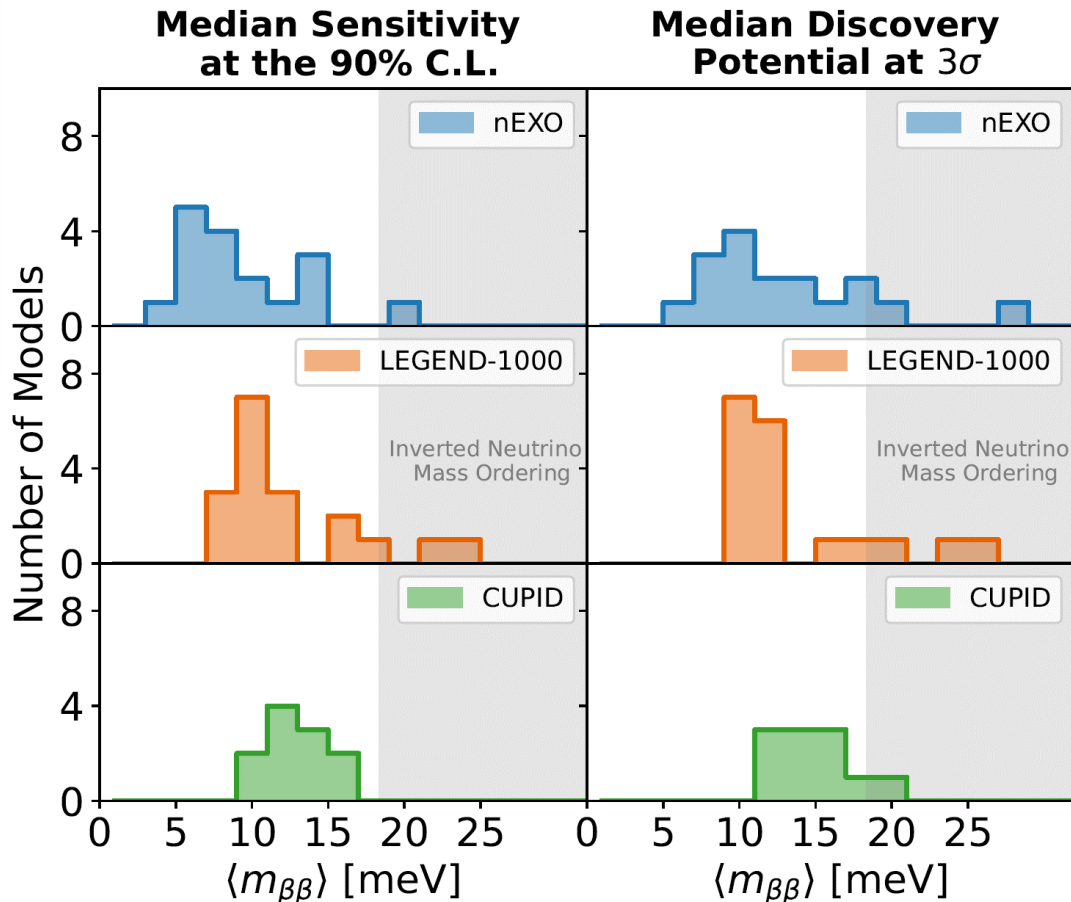
- **Two subsystems are Canada-led.**
- Canadian groups are contributing to 5 other subsystems.
- **Significant engineering and project management support from SNOLAB**

Very substantial engineering done by SNOLAB

Note that the Outer Detector Tank is on a critical path (infrastructure requested in CFI IF 2023), because it is also used as a clean room for constructing the cryostat and assembly of the inner detector components.



Comparison with other experiments



Effective Majorana mass $\langle m_{\beta\beta} \rangle$ is an effective, albeit imperfect, metric to compare physics reach between isotopes and experiments.

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

Phase space factor
Axial coupling, $g_A = 1.27$
NME

	$m_{\beta\beta}$ [meV], (median* NME)	
	90% excl. sens.	3σ discov. potential
nEXO	8.2	11.1
LEGEND	10.4	11.5
CUPID	12.9	15.0

* $T_{1/2}$ values used [$\times 10^{28}$ yr]:

nEXO: 1.35 (90% sens.), 0.74 (3σ discov.) [1]

LEGEND: 1.6 (90% sens.), 1.3 (3σ discov.) [2]

CUPID: 0.15 (90% sens.), 0.11 (3σ discov.) [3]

[1] nEXO collaboration, J. Phys. G: Nucl. Part. Phys. 49 015104 (2022), arXiv:2106.16243

[2] LEGEND pCDR, arXiv: 2107.11462

[3] CUPID pCDR, arXiv:1907.09376

nEXO Construction Budget

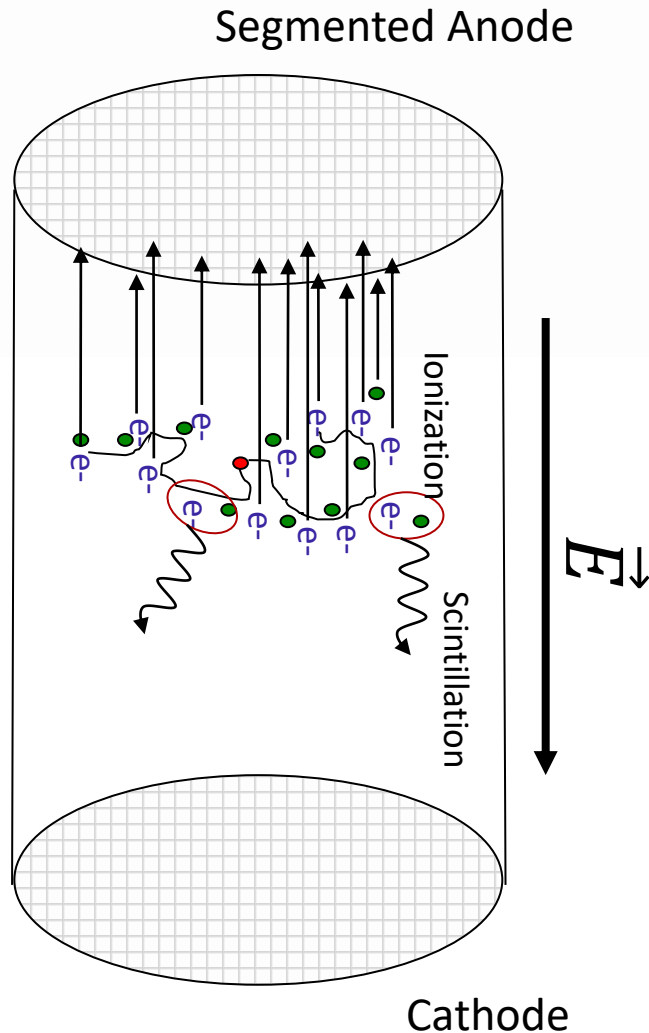


- Bottom-up project budget with more than 13,000 entries.
- Assumption that nEXO is located at SNOLAB Cryopit.
- Assume CD-1 in US DOE FY24 (early CY2024).
- Assume data taking start in 2031.
- Total cost estimate for nEXO of order US\$441M (without contingency).

Source	Amount
US DOE Project	US\$311M (US\$431M with contingency)
Canada	US\$58M-US\$77M (MSI + IF + NSERC)
US grants and base funding	US\$49M
China	US\$4M
Additional opportunities being evaluated	
Europe	Under discussion
China	Possible contribution of enriched xenon

Liquid-Xe Time Projection Chamber (TPC)

- Xe is used both as the source and detection medium.
- LXe is continuously recirculated and purified.
- LXe TPCs are well understood. As a fully homogeneous detector, it precisely measures backgrounds in situ.
 - No internal materials (other than Xe), making nEXO uniquely robust against unknown backgrounds
- Multiparameter measurement from scintillation light and ionization signal:
 1. Energy from combined scintillation/ionization
 2. Topology, e.g., single-site or multi-site event
 3. Position distribution from 3D event reconstruction
 4. Particle identification from scintillation/ionization ratio

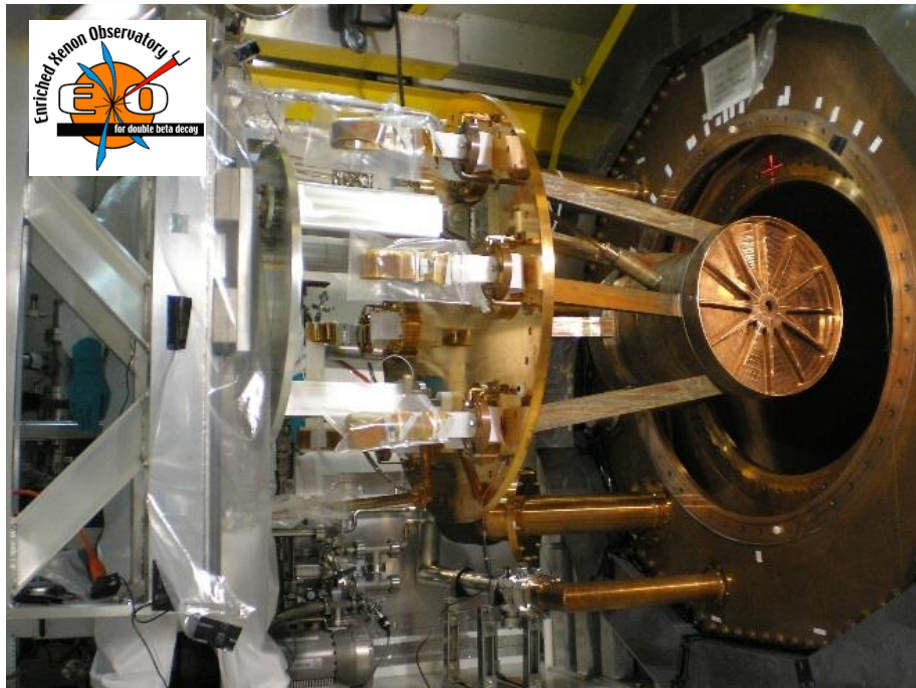


Searching for $0\nu\beta\beta$ in ^{136}Xe – a phased approach



EXO-200 at WIPP (Decommissioned in Dec. 2018):

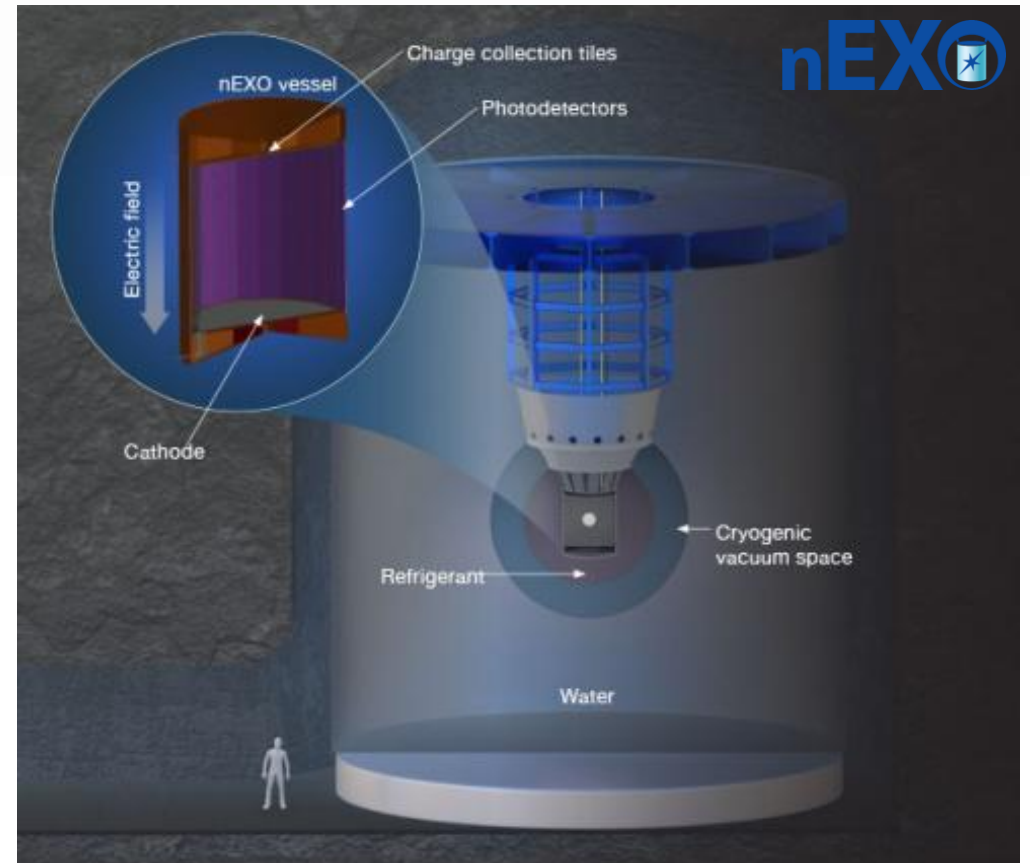
- EXO-200 first 100-kg class $\beta\beta$ experiment
- 175 kg liquid-Xe TPC with $\sim 80\%$ Xe-136
- Discovered $2\nu\beta\beta$ in Xe-136
- **Demonstrated excellent background identification through multiplicity and location of event in TPC**
→ this is essential for nEXO design



<https://www-project.slac.stanford.edu/exo/>

nEXO:

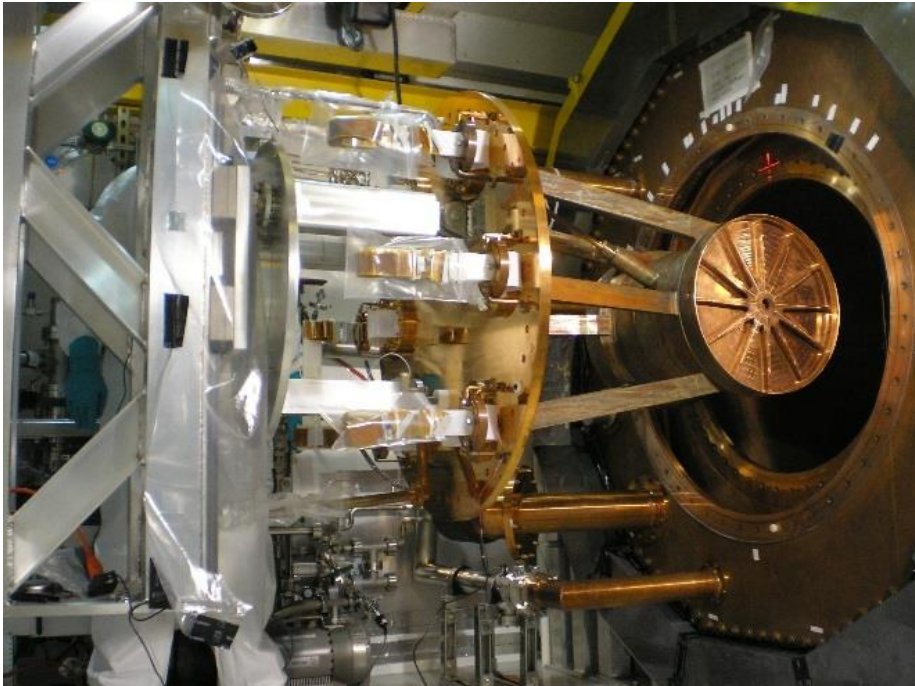
- 5-tonne liquid Xe TPC
- Enriched in Xe-136 at $\sim 90\%$
- SNOLAB cryopit preferred location by collaboration



<https://nexo.llnl.gov/>

EXO-200 $0\nu\beta\beta$ results

- First 100 kg-class experiment to take data.
- Excellent background, very well predicted by the massive material characterization program (and the simulation) → [This is essential for nEXO design.](#)
- More papers on non- $\beta\beta$ decay physics.



2012: *Phys.Rev.Lett.* 109 (2012) 032505

2014: *Nature* 510 (2014) 229-234

2018: *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 120, 072701 (2018)

2019: *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 123 (2019) 161802

Final result

Phase I+II: 234.1 kg yr of ^{136}Xe exposure


Limit: $T_{1/2}^{0\nu\beta\beta} > 3.5 \times 10^{25}$ yr (90% CL)

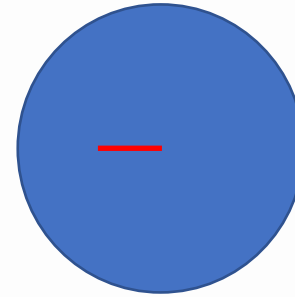
$\langle m_{\beta\beta} \rangle < (93 - 286)$ meV

Sensitivity: 5.0×10^{25} yr

The power of a monolithic detector

LXe mass (kg)	Diameter or length (cm)
5000	130
150	40
5	13

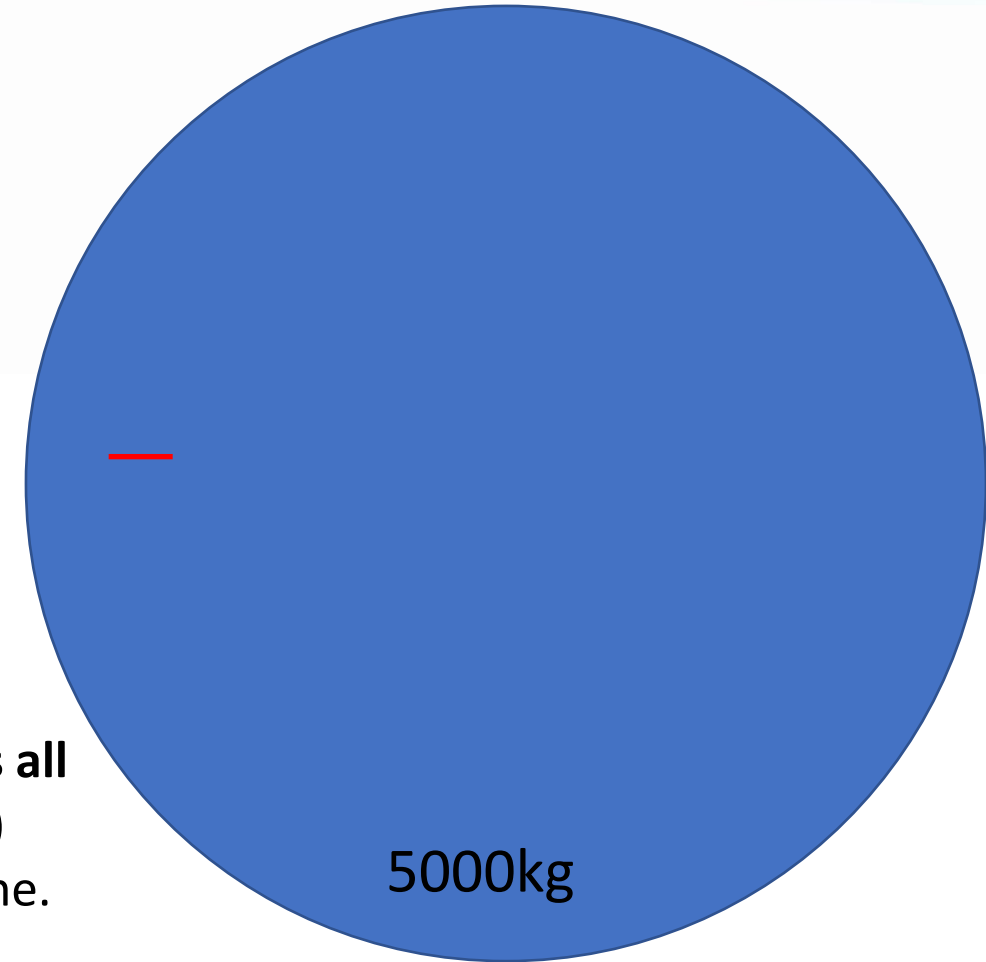
2.5 MeV γ -ray
attenuation length in LXe
8.5cm = 



150kg



5kg

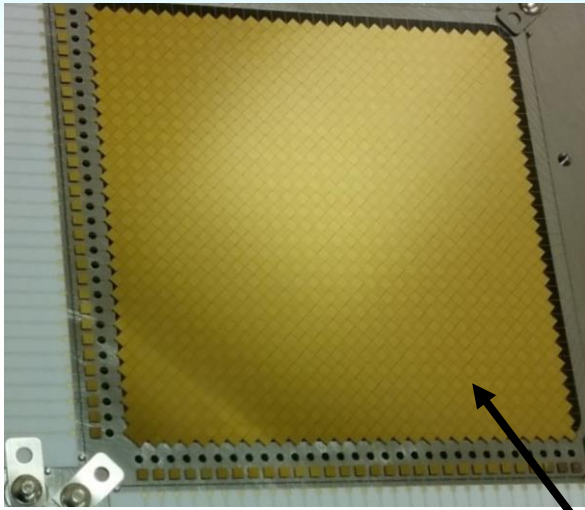


5000kg

- **Monolithic/Homogeneous is key because extraneous material is all external** (Gamma backgrounds typically originate from the walls)
→ photons Compton scatter on their way into the detector volume.

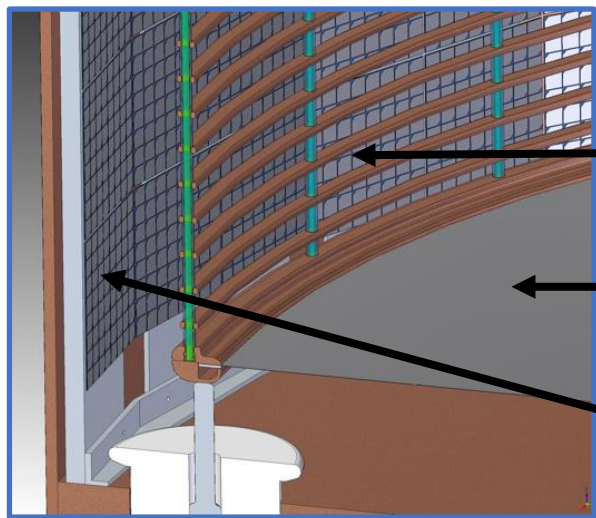
Among the projects selected and funded by DOE for tonne-scale, nEXO is the only Monolithic/Homogeneous detector

The nEXO detector



Picture: 10 x 10 cm² tile prototype
JINST 13, P01006 (2018)
Tile simulation: JINST 14 P09020 (2019)

- 5 t liquid xenon TPC similar to EXO-200 (~30x the volume).
- SiPM for 175nm scintillation light detection, ~4.5m² SiPM array in LXe.
- Tiles for charge read out in LXe.
- Cold electronics inside TPC in liquid Xe.
- 3D event reconstruction.
- Combine charge and light readout. Goal $\rightarrow \sigma/E$ of <1% at Q-value.
- 1.5 ktonnes water-Cherenkov detector for muon tagging and shielding.

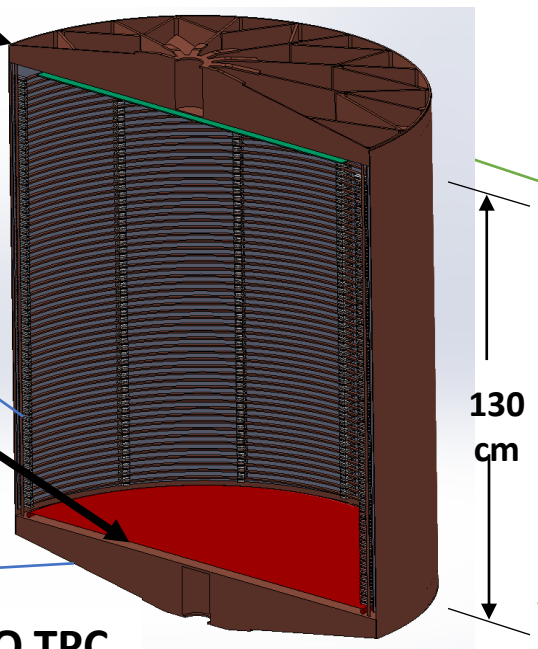


charge readout pads (anode)

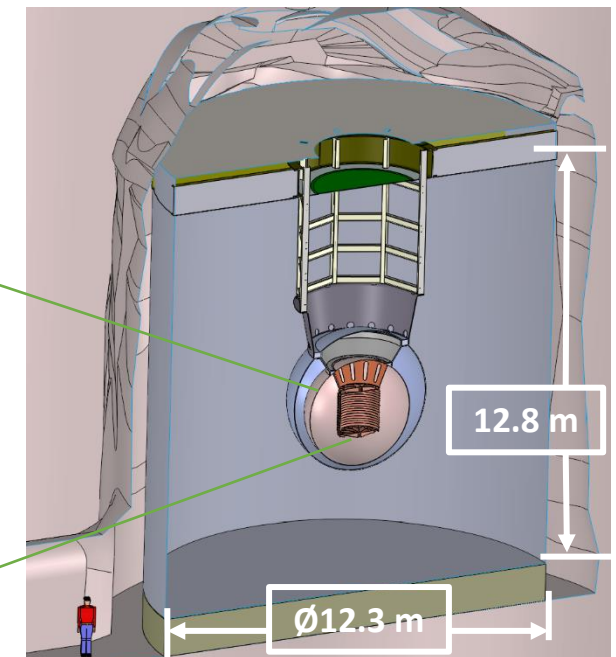
Field shaping rings

Cathode

SiPM 'staves' covering the barrel



nEXO TPC



nEXO at the SNOLAB Cryopit

Anode Charge Readout

- Charge collection on tiled anode plane
- Full simulation of charge collection in nEXO used to optimize design
 - Crossed strips with no shielding grid
 - Channel pitch: 6mm
 - Tile size: 10 cm x 10 cm

Z. Li et al. (nEXO Collab) "Simulation of charge readout with segmented tiles in nEXO," JINST 14 P09020 (2019)

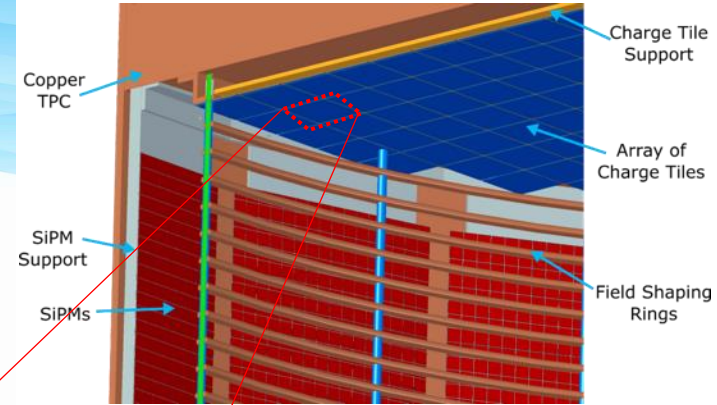
- Prototype tiles have been measured in LXe to validate simulation

M. Jewell et al. (nEXO Collab) "Characterization of an ionization readout tile for nEXO," JINST 13 P01006 (2018)

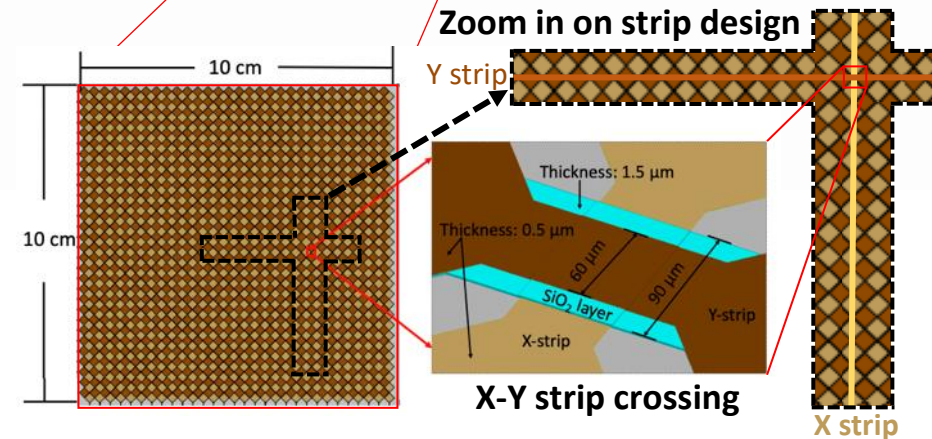
April 27, 2023

0νββ International Summit - nEXO

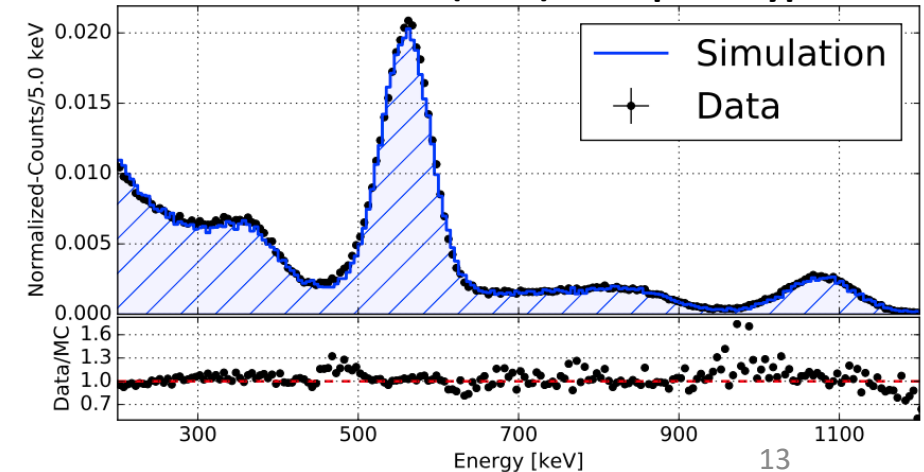
Zoom in on upper corner of TPC:



Zoom in on strip design

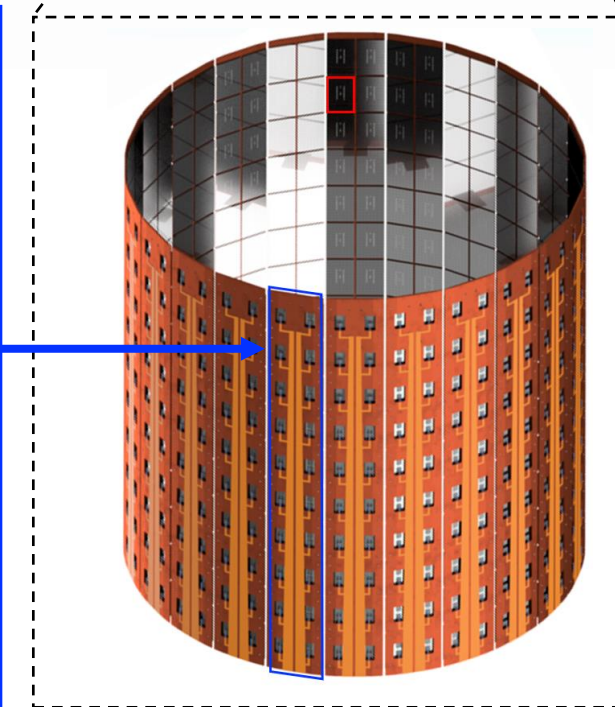
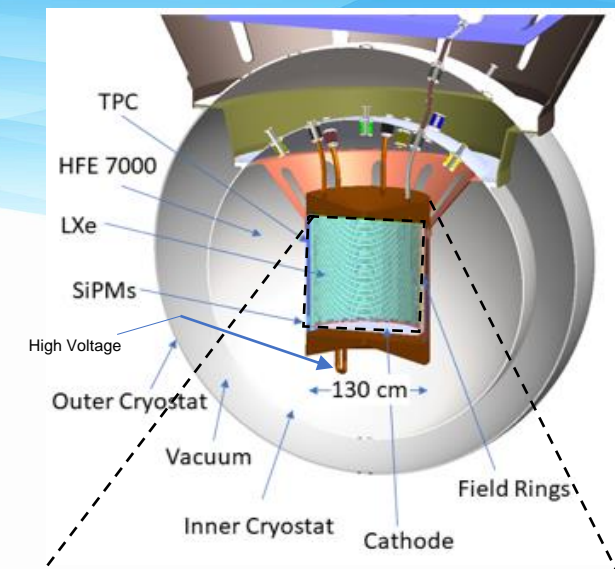


Source calibration (²⁰⁷Bi) with prototype tile:



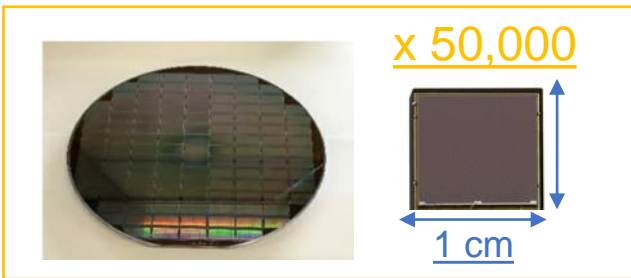
SiPMs for photon detection

- Advantages of SiPMs for photon detection
 - Low intrinsic radioactive backgrounds.
 - Improved energy resolution (SiPMs high gain).
 - Lower bias required for SiPMs (~ 50 V versus ~ 1.5 kV).
 - Devices from 2 vendors meeting requirements, demonstrated through R&D.



Photon detector (PD)

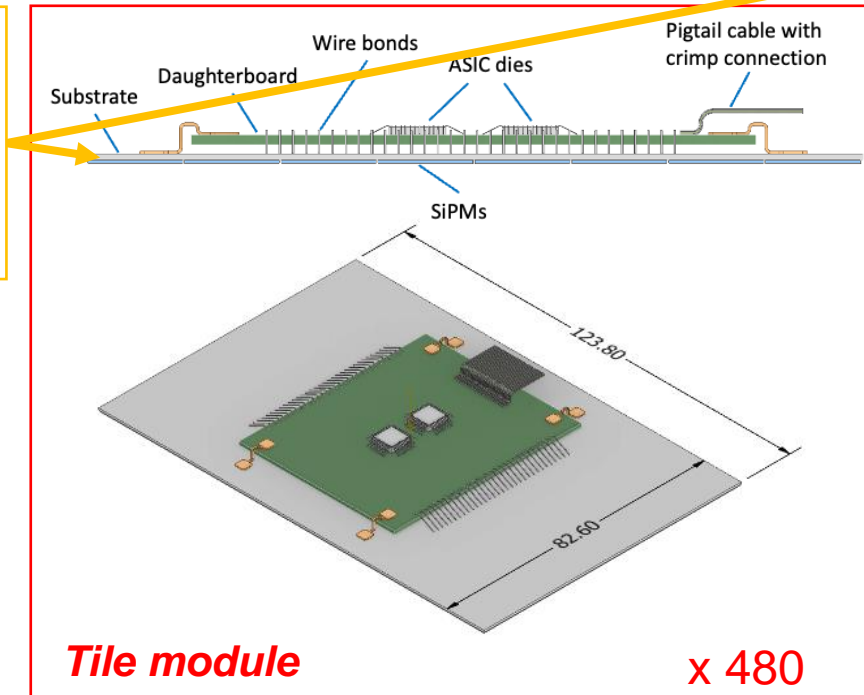
SiPM Devices



A. Jamil et al. (nEXO collab.) "VUV-sensitive Silicon Photomultipliers for Xenon Scintillation Light Detection in nEXO," *IEEE Trans. Nucl. Sci.* 65, 11 (2018)

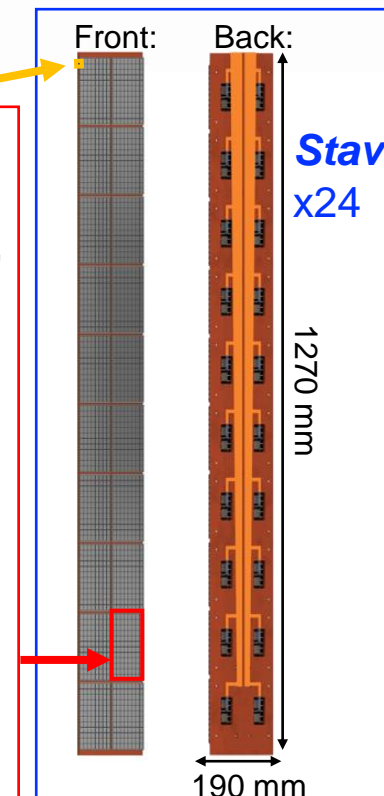
G. Gallina et al. (nEXO collab.) "Characterization of the Hamamatsu VUV4 MPPCs for nEXO," *NIM A* 940, 371 (2019)

G. Gallina et al. (nEXO), "Performance of novel VUV-sensitive Silicon Photo-Multipliers for nEXO," *Eur. Phys. J. C* 82, 1125 (2022)



Tile module

x 480



Stave
x24

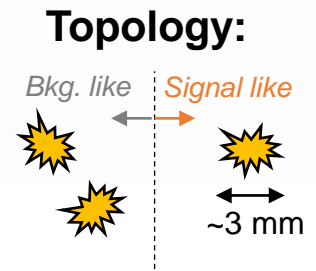
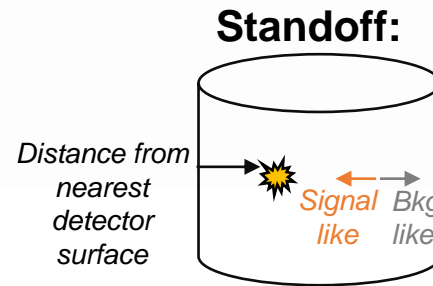
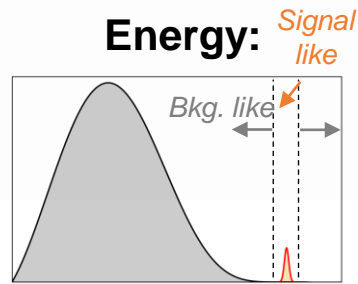
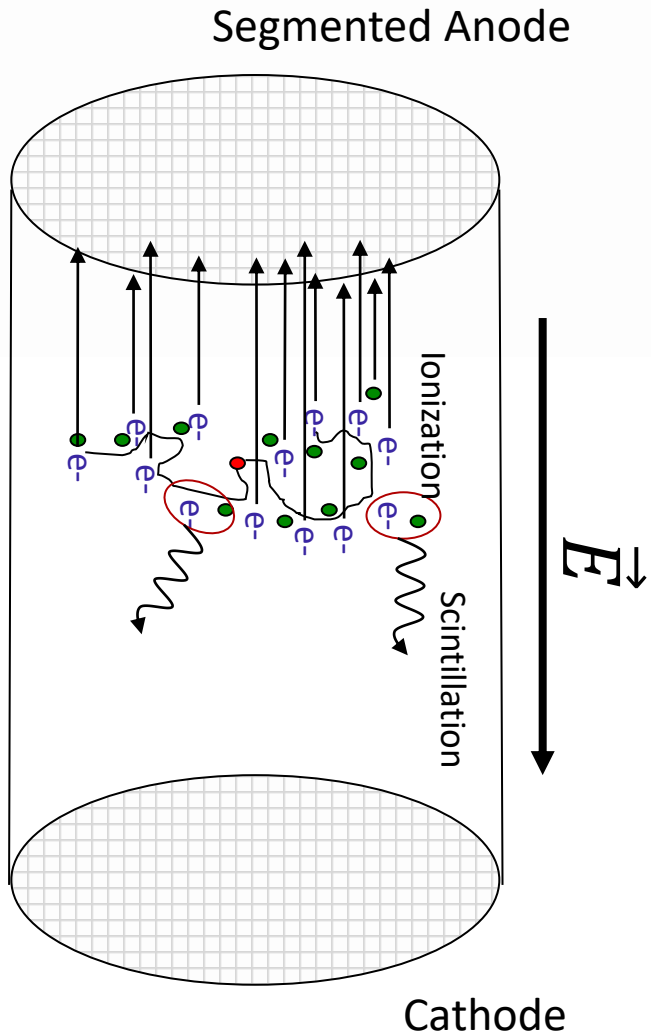
1270 mm

190 mm

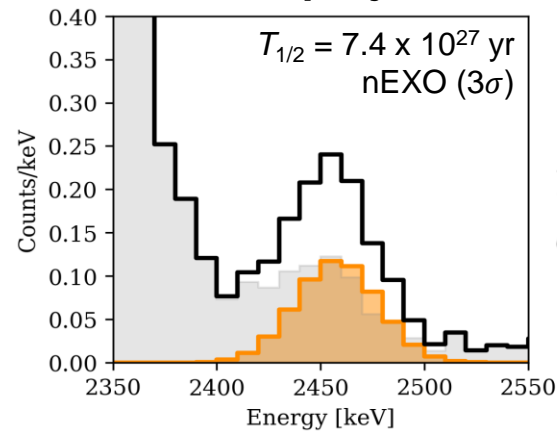
- The nEXO collaboration is pursuing a targeted, successful research program.
- **Most of the studies were led by graduate students and postdocs.**
- **An integrated online radioassay data storage and analytics tool for nEXO**, R.H.M. Tsang, et al., submitted to NIM A, arXiv:2304.06180 (2023)
- **Performance of novel VUV-sensitive Silicon Photo-Multipliers for nEXO**, G. Gallina, et al., Eur. Phys. J. C 82, 1125 (2022)
- **Development of a ^{127}Xe calibration source for nEXO**, B. G. Lenardo, et al., JINST, 17, 07, P07028 (2022)
- **nEXO: neutrinoless double beta decay search beyond 10^{28} year half-life sensitivity**, G. Adhikari et al., J. Phys. G: Nucl. Part. Phys. 49 015104 (2022)
- **Reflectivity of VUV-sensitive silicon photomultipliers in liquid Xenon**, M. Wagenpfeil, et al., JINST 16 P08002 (2021),
- **SNEWS 2.0: A Next-Generation SuperNova Early Warning System for Multi-messenger Astronomy**, SNEWS 2 collaboration, New J. Phys. 23 031201 (2021)
- **Event Reconstruction in a Liquid Xenon Time Projection Chamber with an Optically-Open Field Cage**, T. Stiegler, et al, NIMA 1000, 165239 (2021)
- **Reflectance of Silicon Photomultipliers at Vacuum Ultraviolet Wavelengths**, P. Lv, et al, IEEE Trans. Nucl. Sci. 67, 2501 (2020)
- **Reflectivity and PDE of VUV4 Hamamatsu SiPMs in liquid xenon**, P. Nakarim, et al., JINST 15, P01019 (2020)
- **Measurements of electron transport in liquid and gas Xenon using a laser-driven photocathode**, O. Njoya, et al., NIM A 972, 163965 (2020)
- **Characterization of the Hamamatsu VUV4 MPPCs for nEXO**, G. Gallina, et al., NIMA 940, 371 (2019)
- **Simulation of charge readout with segmented tiles in nEXO**, Z. Li, et al., JINST 14, P09020 (2019)
- **Imaging individual Ba atoms in solid xenon for barium tagging in nEXO**, C. Chambers, et al., Nature 569, 203 (2019)
- **Study of Silicon Photomultiplier Performance in External Electric Fields**, X.L. Sun, et al., JINST 13, T09006 (2018)
- **VUV-sensitive Silicon Photomultipliers for Xenon Scintillation Light Detection in nEXO**, IEEE Transactions on Nuclear Science 1 (2018)
- **nEXO Pre-Conceptual Design Report**, arXiv:1805.11142v2
- **Characterization of an Ionization Readout Tile for nEXO**, M. Jewell, et al., JINST 13, P01006 (2018)
- **Sensitivity and Discovery Potential of nEXO to Neutrinoless Double Beta Decay**, J.B. Albert, et al., Physical Review C 97, 065503 (2018)

nEXO Signal and Background

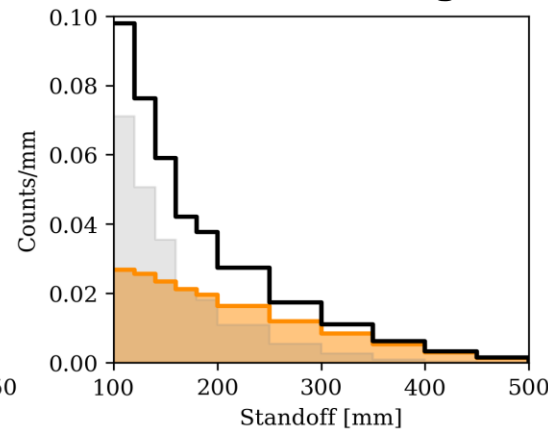
nEXO measures multiple parameters for each event to be able to robustly identify a $0\nu\beta\beta$ signal



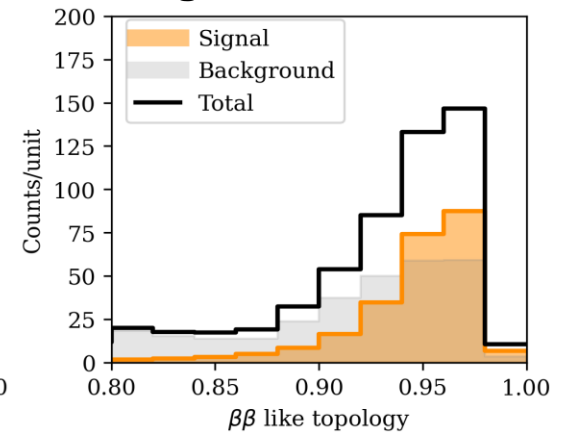
1D projections of simulated nEXO signal and backgrounds:



Energy from combined scintillation/ionization



Position distribution from 3D event reconstruction

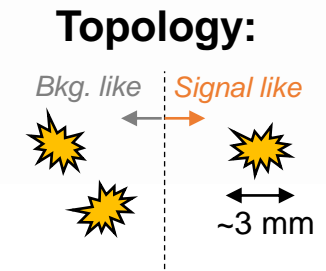
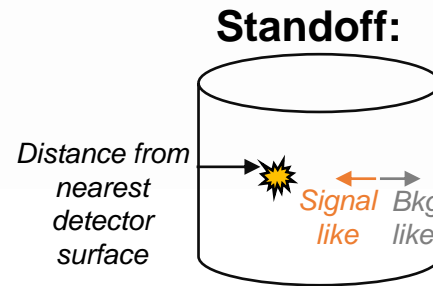
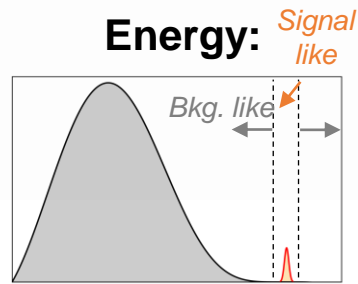
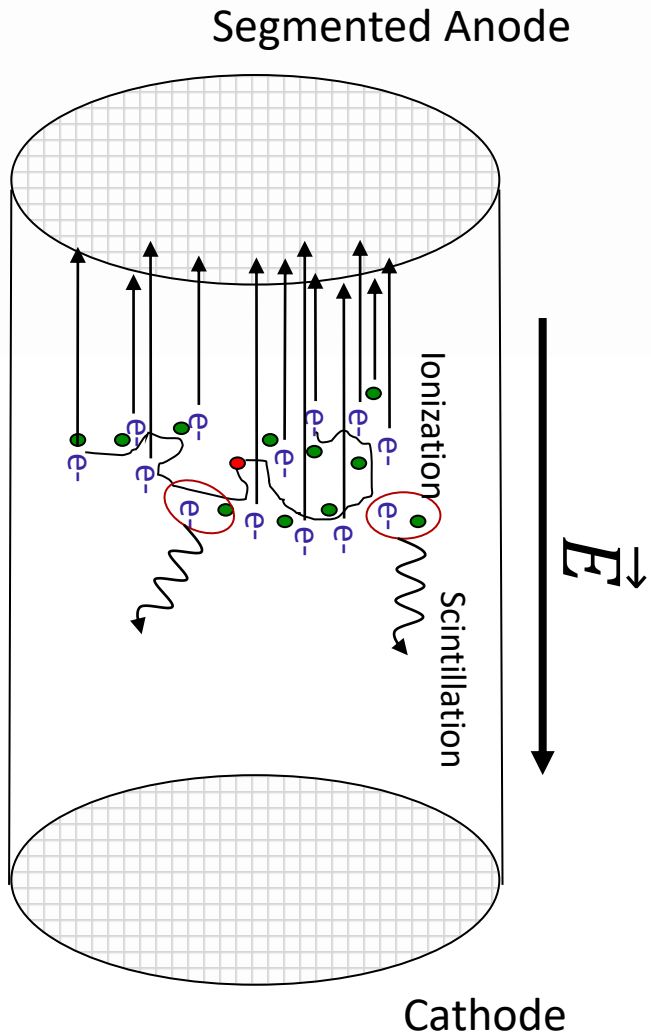


0 \leftarrow Background-like *Signal-like* \rightarrow 1
Topology, e.g., single-site or multi-site

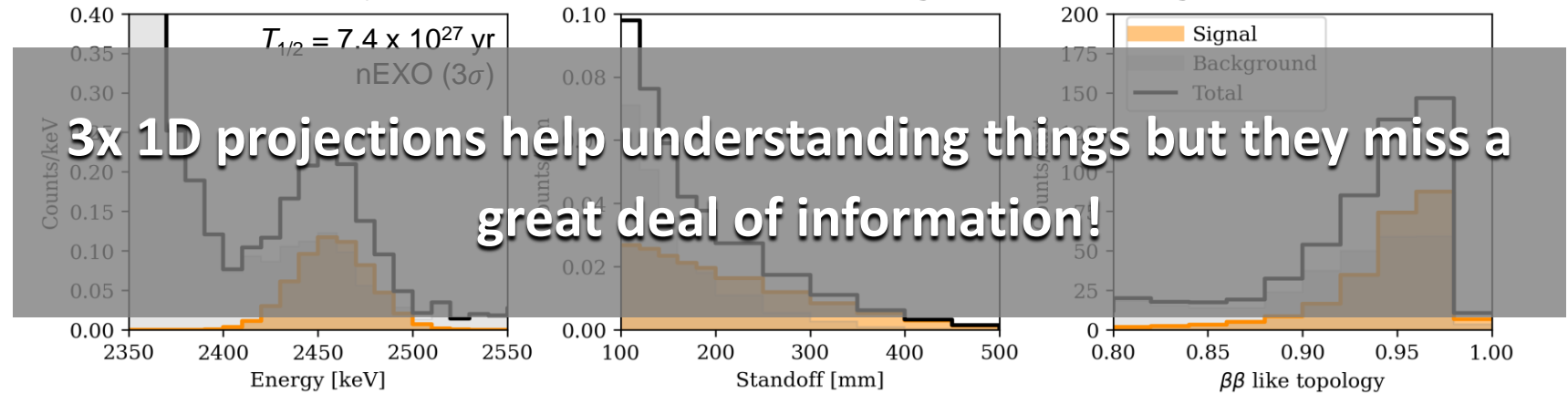
nEXO Signal and Background



nEXO measures multiple parameters for each event to be able to robustly identify a $0\nu\beta\beta$ signal



1D projections of simulated nEXO signal and backgrounds:



3x 1D projections help understanding things but they miss a great deal of information!

Energy from combined scintillation/ionization

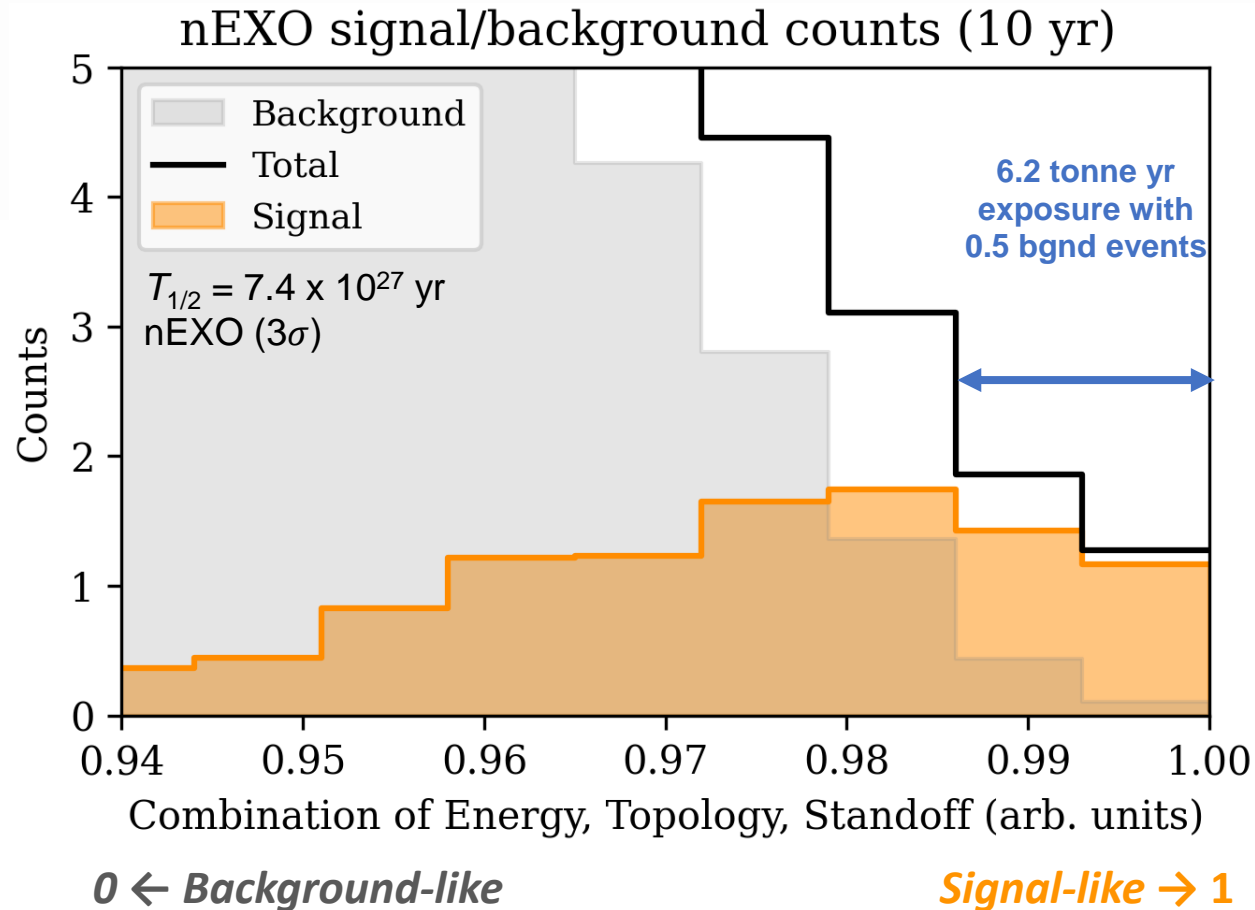
Position distribution from 3D event reconstruction

Topology, e.g., single-site or multi-site

0 ← Background-like Signal-like → 1

nEXO Signal and Background

- Likelihood fit allows optimal weighting between signal and background combining energy, topology, and standoff over full 3D parameter space
- For clarity, we arrange the 3D bins into 1D, ordered by signal-to-background ratio.



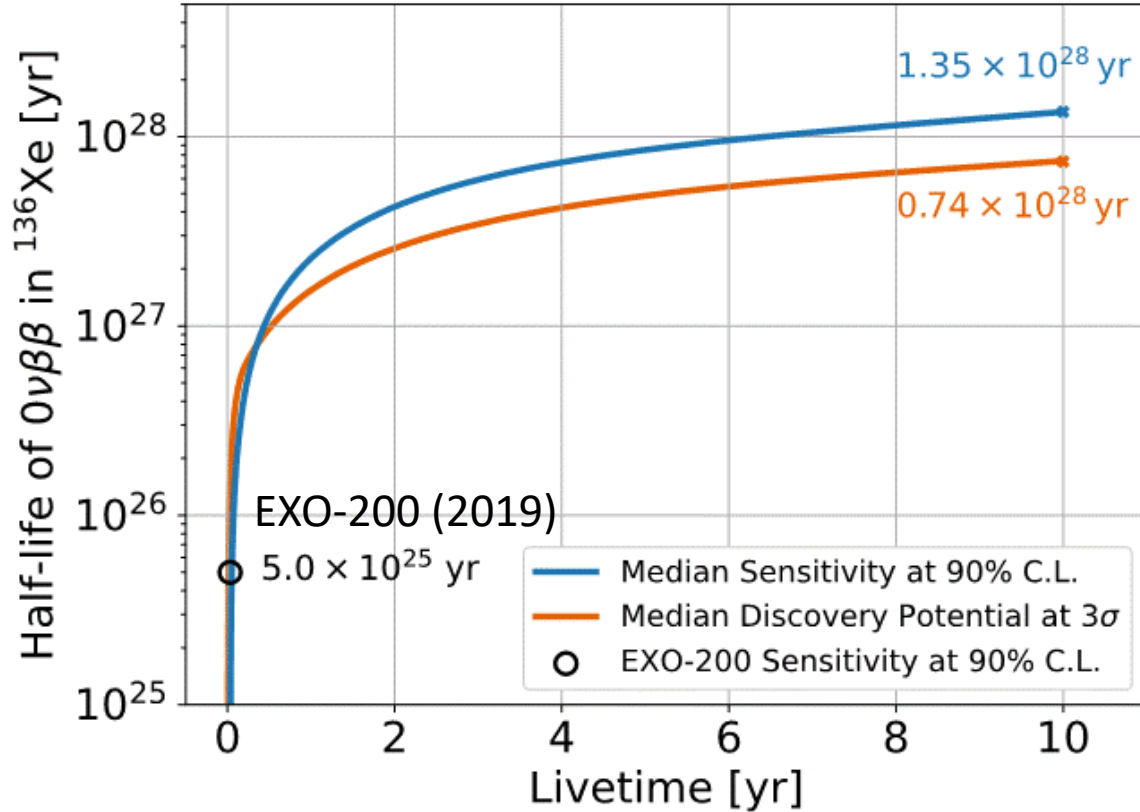
→ nEXO is a “background-free” experiment

Combine energy, topology, and standoff (preserving correlations)

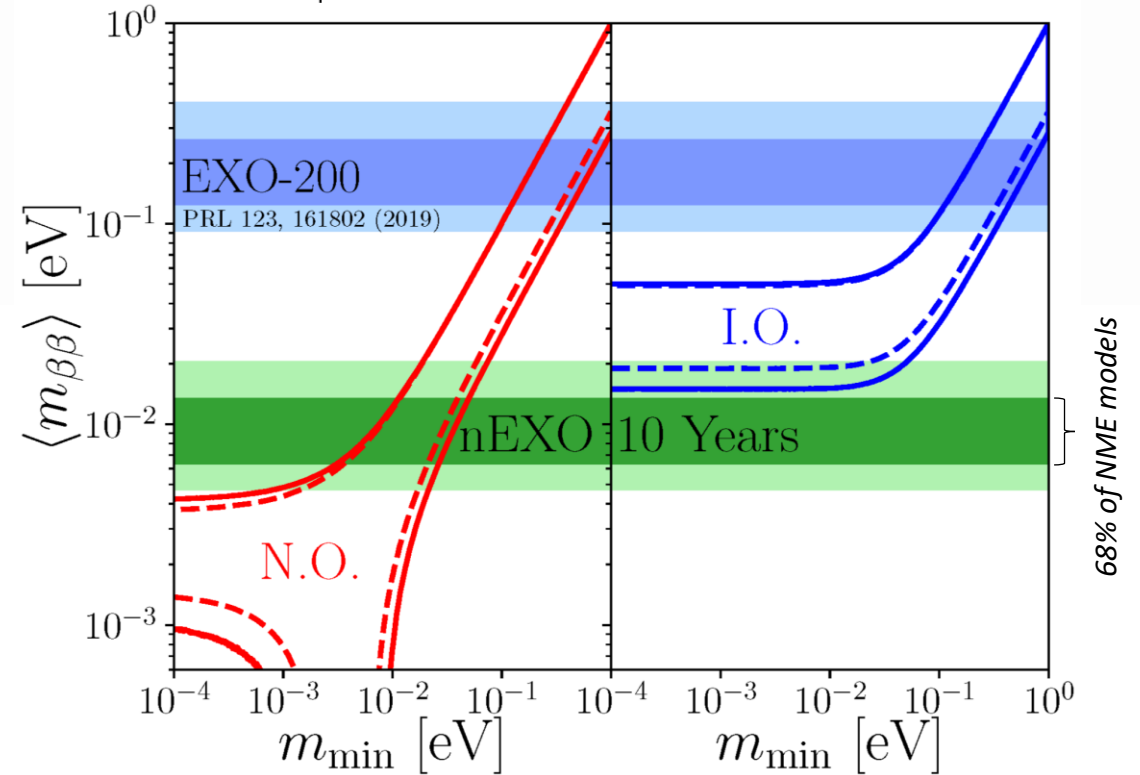
nEXO Projected Sensitivity



J. Phys. G: Nucl. Part. Phys. 49, 015104 (2022), arXiv:2106.16243



Allowed parameter space and nEXO exclusion sensitivity (90% CL):

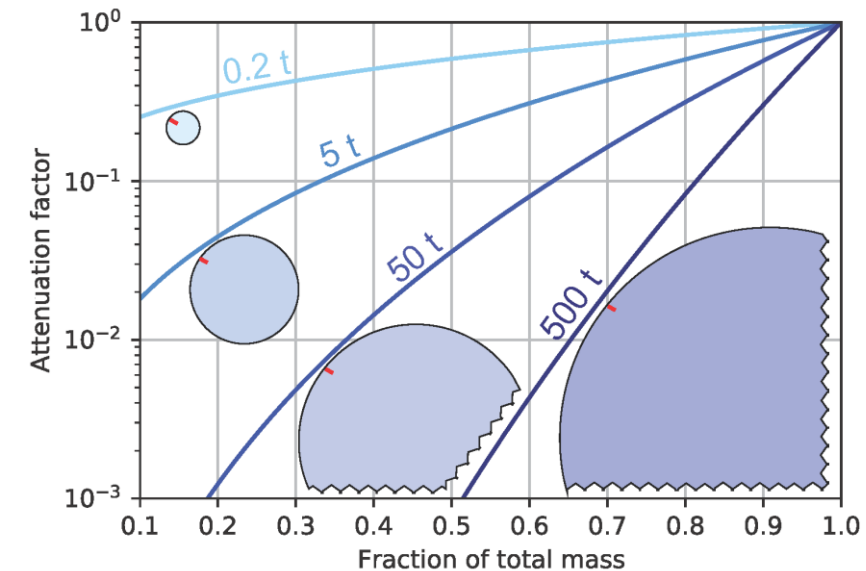


nEXO sensitivity reaches 10^{28} yr in 6.5 yr data taking

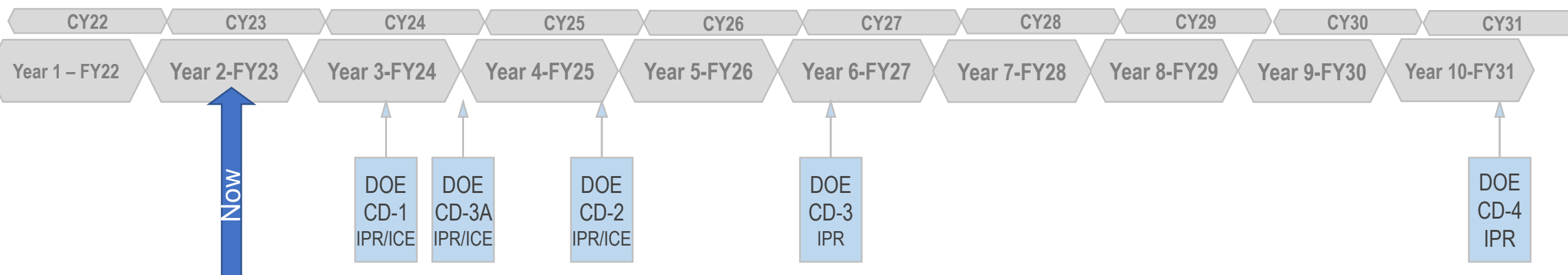
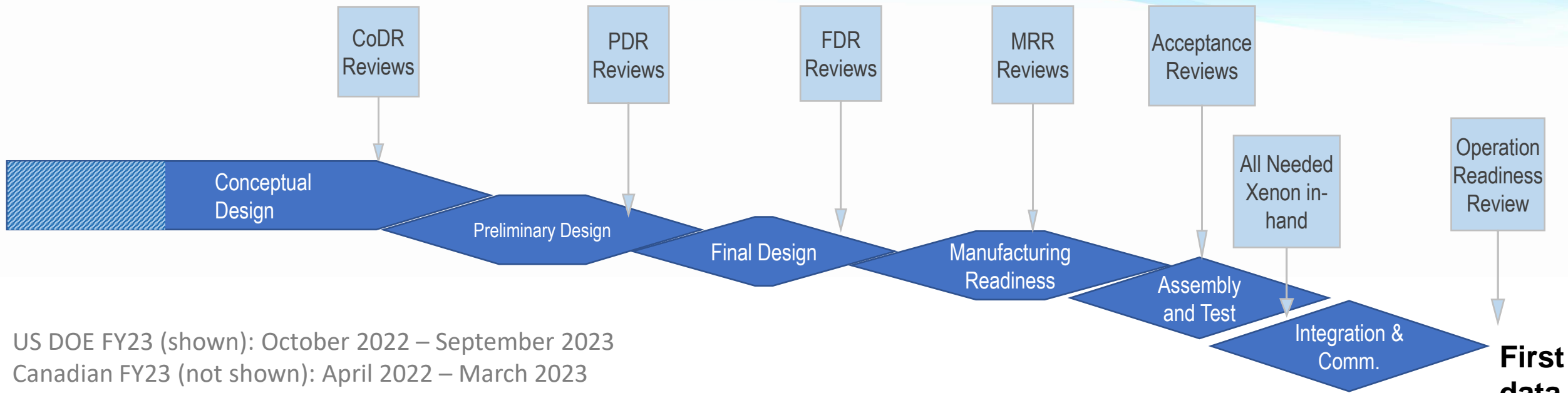
Projected sensitivity based on background levels measured in samples of all detector materials!

Other Unique Features of nEXO:

- LXe reduces risk, as the purification system can be upgraded if unexpected backgrounds are discovered.
- If nEXO discovers $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay:
 - nEXO can make a discovery by itself, by repeating the experiment with non-enriched (natural or depleted) xenon to confirm that a signal goes away.
 - The enriched xenon is NOT “frozen” in a particular detector. Should $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay be discovered by nEXO, the xenon could be re-used in a different experimental configuration to investigate the underlying physics.
→ This is particularly important at the tonne scale, given the cost of the material.
- If nEXO does not discover $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay: The advantages of the homogeneous detector keep improving with size. Should $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay not be discovered by nEXO, larger detectors using the same technology are possible (A. Avasthi et al, Phys. Rev. D 104, 112007 (2021))
→ The technology needs to be developed with an eye to the future.



nEXO high-level schedule



nEXO Project near term funding: DOE FY24 Estimates



WBS	Sub-system	Review Location	Date (CoDRs)
1.05	Time Projection Chamber support systems	1.05	7/24-7/28/2023
1.10	Outer Detector	SNOLAB	8/21-8/25/2023
1.11	Facilities	SNOLAB	8/21-8/25/2023
1.06.01	Charge Readout Electronics	SLAC	9/11-9/15/2023
1.06.02	Photon Readout Electronics	BNL	9/18-9/22/2023
1.04	Photon Detector	BNL	9/18-9/22/2023
1.08	Computing, Controls and Software	LLNL	11/13-11/17/2023
1.03	Time Projection Chamber	PNNL	12/11-12/15/2023
1.07	Radioactive Background Control	PNNL	Q1/Q2 FY24
1.09	Xenon	LLNL	Q1/Q2 FY24
1.02	System Integration and commissioning	SLAC	Q1/Q2 FY24
	CD-1 Director's Review	LLNL	February 2024
	CD-1 Independent Project Review	LLNL	Target: March 2024

CoDR: Project organized external design review

Estimate complete with
DOE FY23 funding in hand

Estimate \$3.8M of
DOE FY24 dollars

FY24 Funding (US DOE only)

- Technically Limited \$42M (\$57M with contingency).
- Of the FY24 dollars, \$3.8M is required to complete CD1 (CoDRs shown above + all CD1 deliverables shown on previous slide).
- **\$6.0M** in FY24 (constant funding+ inflation) required to avoid reversing ramp up.

nEXO Project Cost Profile



DOE FY	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	TOTAL
US DOE Project [US\$k]	500	5,000	42,000	47,800	59,100	57,000	50,800	26,700	11,400	10,700	311,000
CFI Innovation Fund [US\$k]		300	11,000	7,000	7,000	9,000	6,000	6,000	800	800	47,900

Notes:

- US DOE Project
 - 40% contingency is NOT included.
 - **Updated with inflation for 2-year shift from Portfolio Review** and suggested escalation model.
- Canada CFI Innovation Fund
 - CFI IF construction components listed only – R&D specific infrastructure excluded from table.
 - Assuming multiple CFI IF awards (2023, 2025, 2027, ...)
- Funding Status
 - \$5.5M of DOE funding in hand.
 - CFI IF 2020 in hand: CAN\$2M towards nEXO construction, CAN\$9.2M for nEXO R&D infrastructure.

Analysis of Alternatives (AoA)

In preparation for the next steps, DOE is proceeding with a formal Analysis of Alternatives.

This includes an analysis of the cost and performance at various sites.

For the cost, the analysis is done “differentially” from the case we analyzed with the most detail (Cryopit).

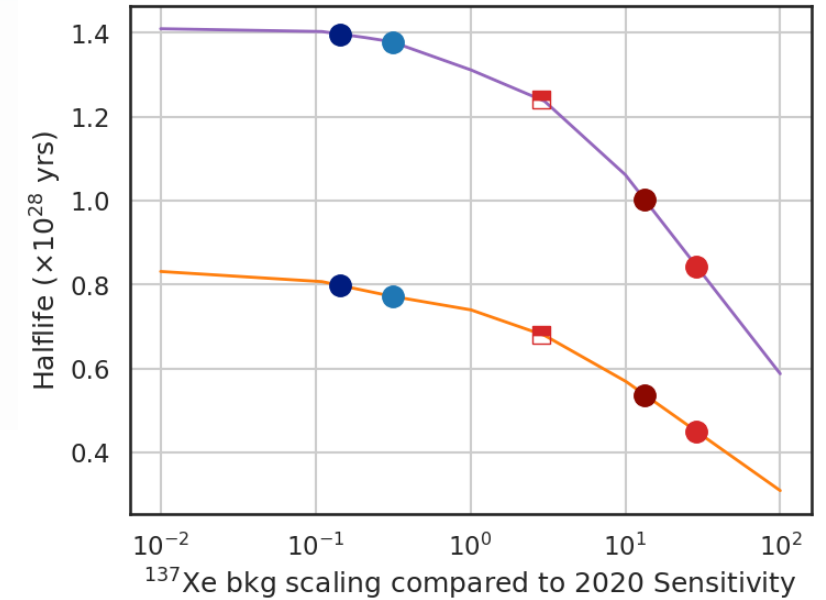
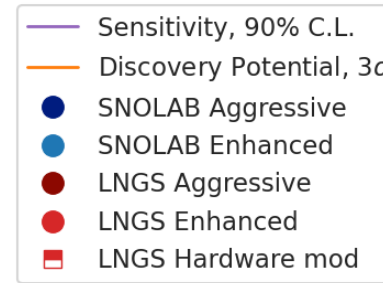
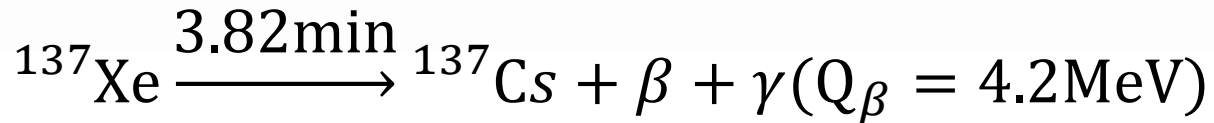
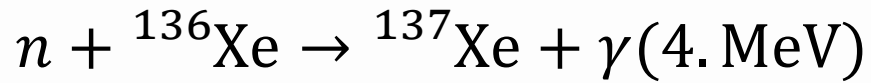
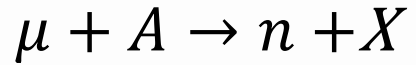
Site	Cost to DOE (M\$)	Total Cost (M\$)
SNOLAB primary	311	441
LNGS primary*	301**	462

* Account for some re-design work

** **Assumes contributions from Europe that are not as solid as CFI contributions from SNOLAB and Canada.** Does not take credit for a possible larger Italian contribution.

While the cost at LNGS and SNOLAB is comparable, due to cosmogenic activation of $^{136}\text{Xe} \rightarrow ^{137}\text{Xe}$ the physics reach is better at SNOLAB.

For the two more plausible cases: LNGS and SNOLAB



	Site	${}^{137}\text{Xe}$ Total Background Fraction [%]	Deadtime [days] (% of 10 yrs)	90% CL $0\nu\beta\beta$ Sensitivity [10^{28} y]	Discovery Potential, 3σ [10^{28} y]
Enhanced	SNOLAB	1.1%	1.6 (0.04%)	1.38	0.77
	LNGS	45%	148 (4%)	0.84	0.45
Aggressive	SNOLAB	0.7%	1.9 (0.05%)	1.39	0.80
	LNGS	28%	178 (5%)	0.99	0.53
Hardware Modification	SNOLAB	-	-	-	-
	LNGS	7.8%	15 (0.4%)	1.24	0.68

HIGH LEVEL ASSUMPTIONS

- **Enhanced** – Neutron capture tag eff = 80% (nominal γ threshold)
- **Aggressive** – Neutron capture tag eff = 93% (lower γ threshold)
details of dead-time reduction algorithm to be finalized
- **Hardware Modification** - Add neutron capture dopant to HFE volume

The international nEXO collaboration



Canadian contingent within nEXO

- 14 PIs members of nEXO
- ~45 undergraduate and graduate students and postdocs
- Canadian groups constitute ~25% of the collaboration, contribute to 5 subsystems, and lead 2 subsystems.
- Significant engineering and project management support from SNOLAB

List of collaborators available at <https://nexo.llnl.gov/>

~200 scientists, 34 institutions in 9 countries on 4 continents



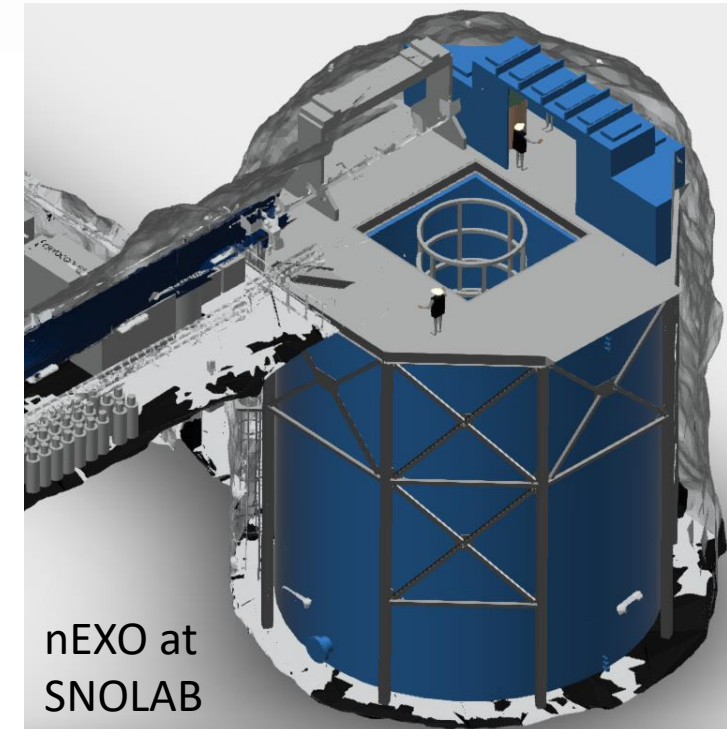
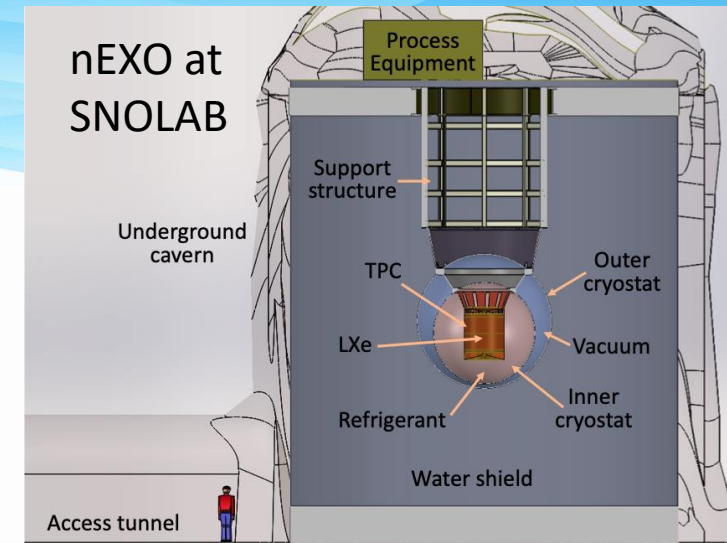
Collaboration Meeting December 2022



We are looking forward to welcome the collaboration in Montreal for the summer 2023 collaboration meeting!

Summary

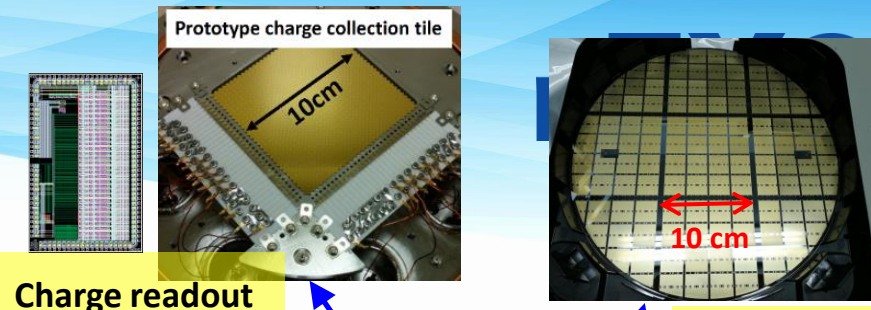
- **nEXO is a discovery focussed $0\nu\beta\beta$ experiment.**
- nEXO's multi parameter signal extraction enables a "background-free" $0\nu\beta\beta$ search that is particularly robust against unknown backgrounds.
- nEXO is being designed to reach a sensitivity beyond $\sim 10^{28}$ years and will probe the entire inverted ordering parameter space.
- **SNOLAB is the location preferred by nEXO.**
- **nEXO design at SNOLAB Cryopit is well advanced.**
- We hope to engage with international funding agencies to refine our funding strategy.



IHEP Beijing Status and Interests

Yifang Wang

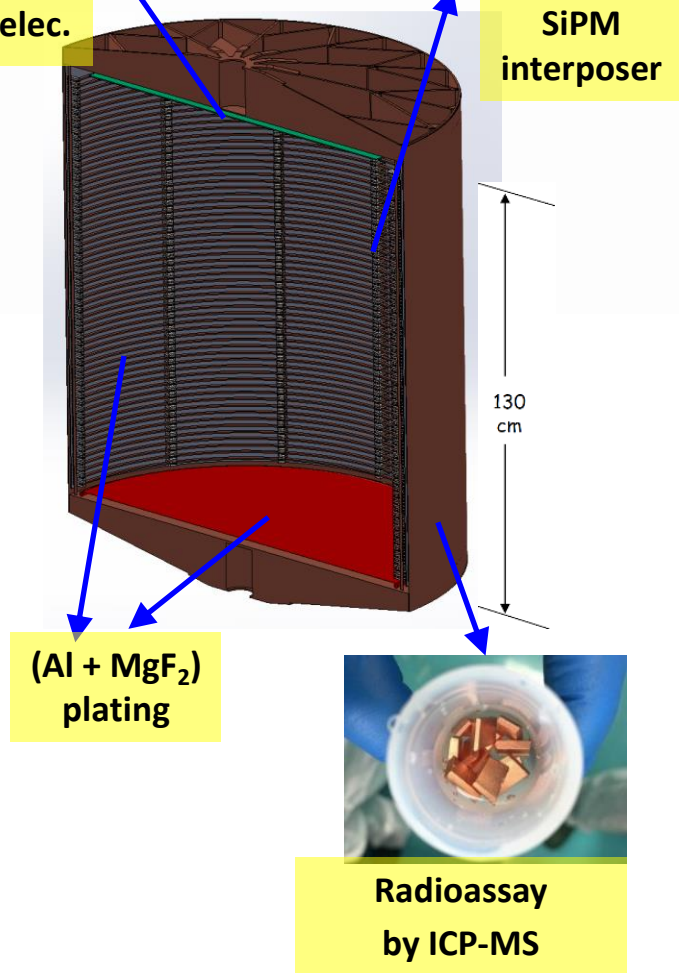
- Management Roles in EXO-200/nEXO
 - Physics coordinator: Liangjian Wen (2015-2016), Gaosong Li (2017-2022)
 - 1.04.02 L3 (Photon Detector - photon detector specification) : Guofu Cao
 - 1.03.04 L3 (TPC - Charge Detection & Anode) : Liangjian Wen



- Major activities in nEXO R&D:

Planned Hardware contribution from IHEP, not including manpower & overhead

L2 systems	WBS tasks	M&S Budget
TPC System	Anode charge tiles (full size ~1.3 m ²)	\$ 2.5 M
Photon Detector	Si-interposer (full size ~ 5 m ²) for SiPM readout	\$ 3.5 M
	(Al+MgF ₂) coating on cathode & shaping rings to reflect VUV photons	\$ 1 M
Electronics (charge readout)	Analog multiplexing ASIC (cold) + under-water FADC electronics based on JUNO experience	\$ 1 M
Radioactivity Control	Radio-assay via ICP-MS at IHEP	\$ 0.3 M
Veto system	~500 water-proof 8-in. PMTs (R5912) and readout electronics from Daya Bay	(in-kind, ~ \$ 1 M equivalent)



- Pursue a domestic solution for Xe-136 enrichment (up to about ~ 1 ton ^{enr}Xe)

IHEP Beijing Status and Interests



- We have been a main player of EXO-200 and will continue with nEXO, motivated by physics.
- We worked a lot on nEXO R&D and will contribute to electronics, detector, physics, etc.
- We have been working with the industry to explore the possibility to provide 1t enriched Xe. Technologically it is feasible but initial investment for equipment has not yet been started, due to uncertainties of nEXO (slow progress in DOE did not help in China).
- We plan to start exploring the funding possibilities for Xe enrichment and related equipment investment.