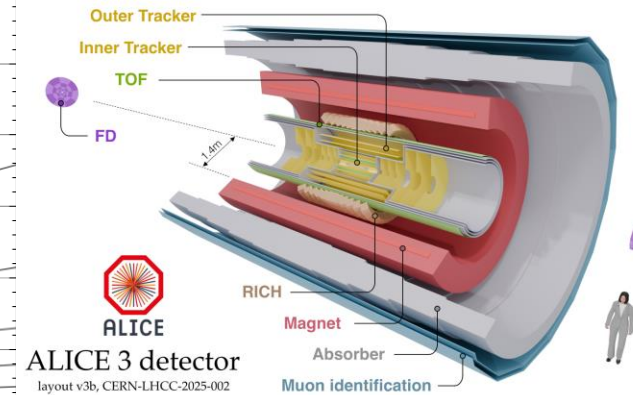
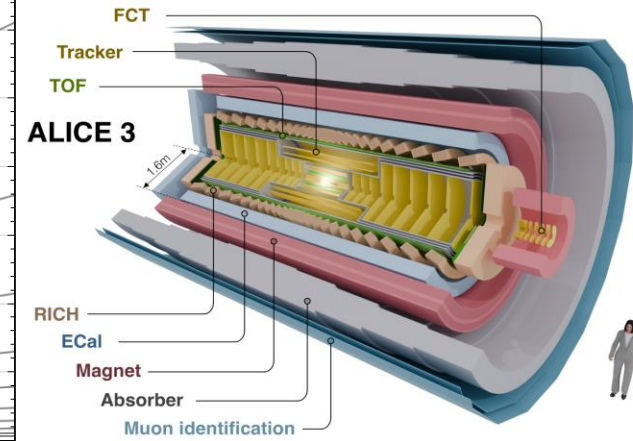
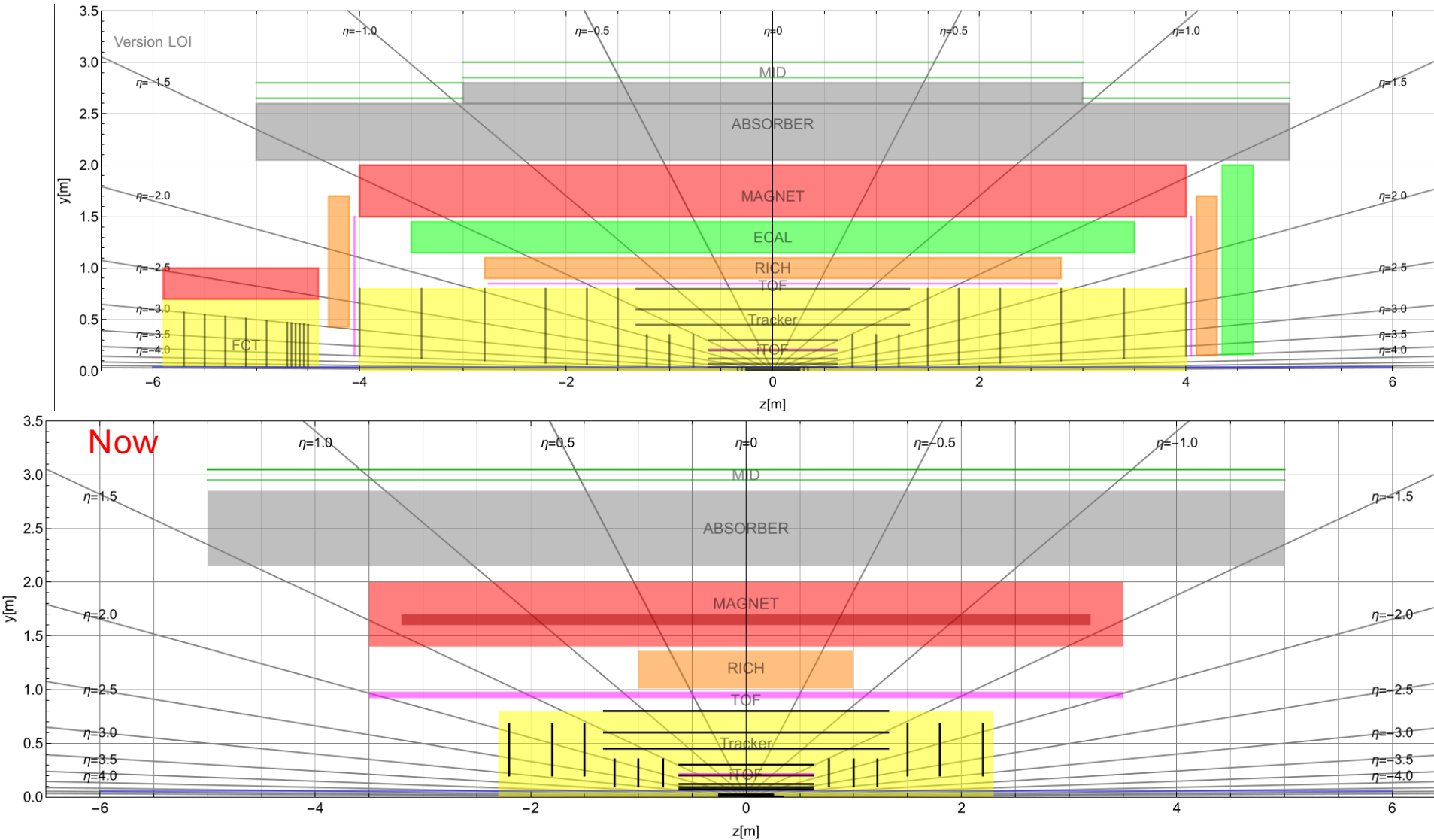


# **Technological Challenges and Electronics Development for the ALICE 3 RICH Detector**

Jaime Octavio Guerra-Pulido

On behalf of the ALICE3 RICH working group

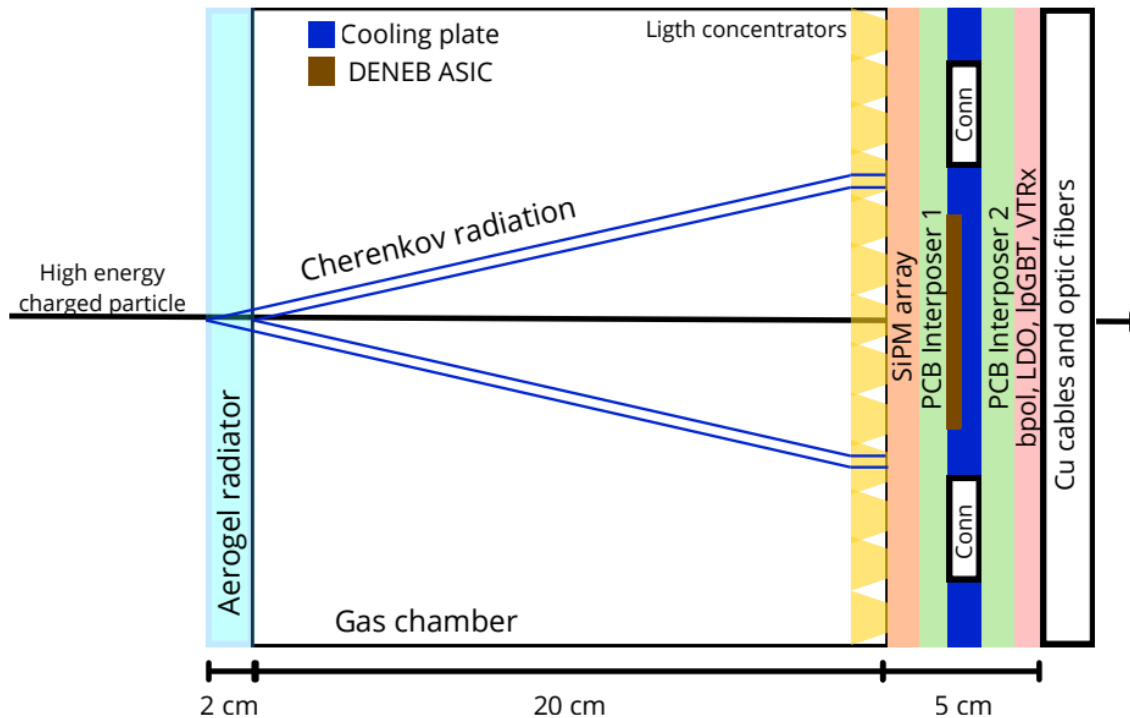
# Detectors of the ALICE 3 upgrade



ALICE 3 layout has evolved since its first version. Now, all detectors have reduced its size. However, many technological challenges remains.

# ALICE 3 RICH detector: operation principle

- A Ring-Imaging Cherenkov detector is used to identify charged particles. The ALICE 3 RICH aim is to extend the identification capabilities beyond the ToF .
- Cherenkov radiation is emitted when a charged particle travels through a medium at a speed greater than the speed of light in that medium.
- The opening angle of the Cherenkov light cone depends on the particle velocity and the refractive index of the radiator.



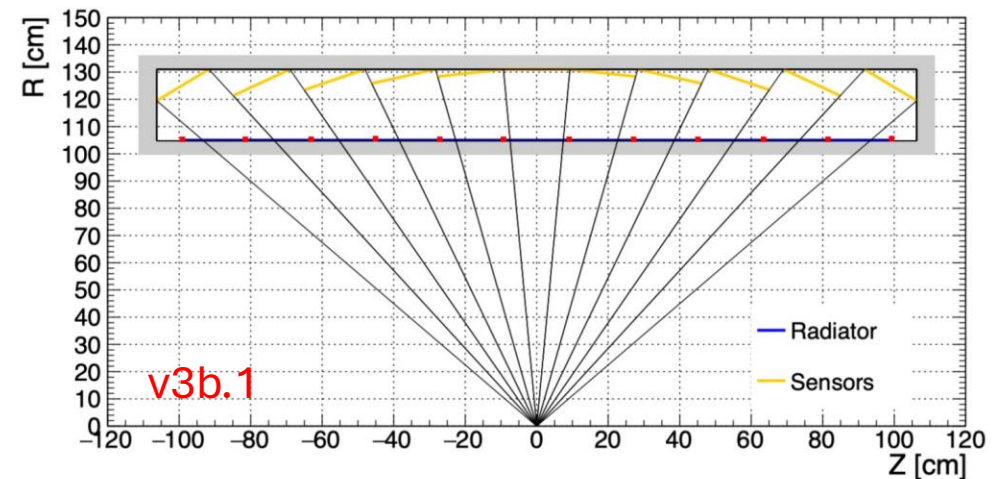
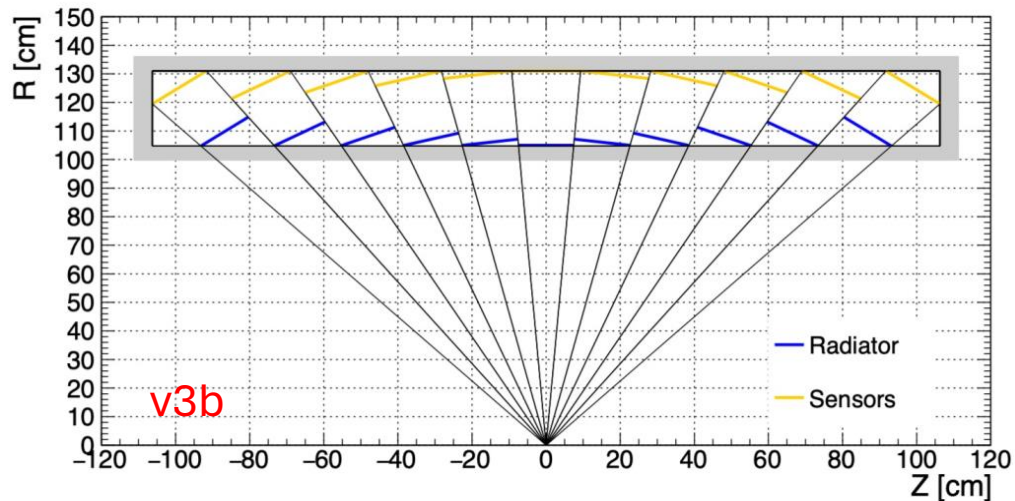
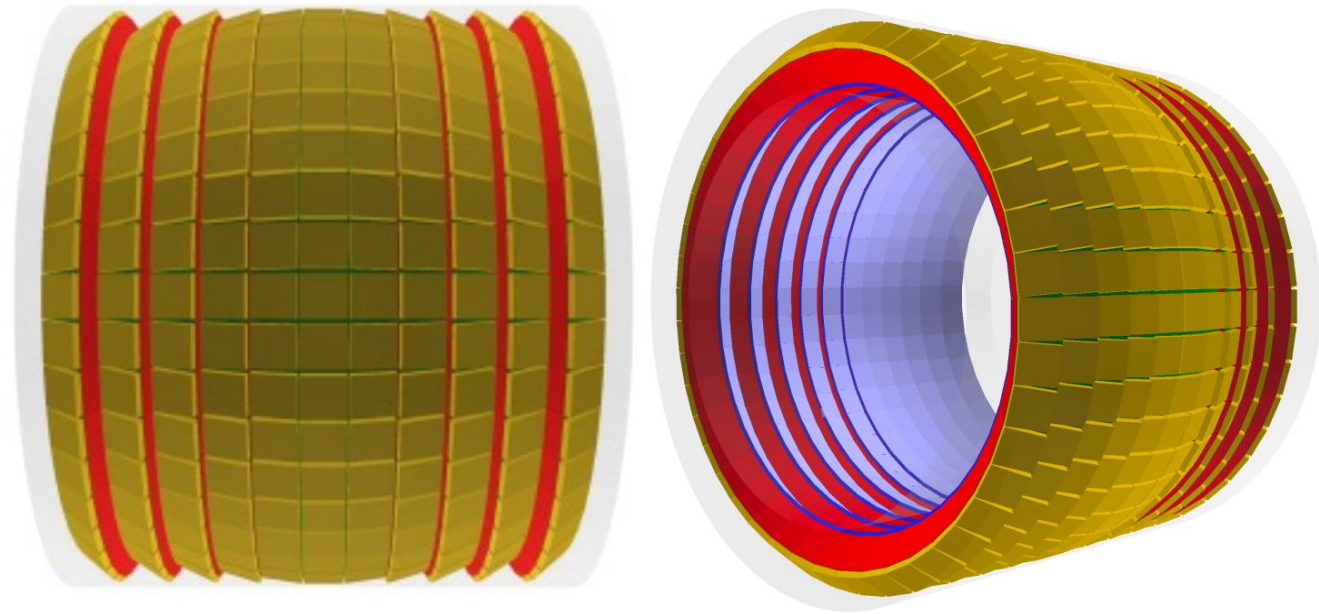
Schematic representation of the ALICE 3 RICH detector



\*for illustrative purposes only

# Geometry of the ALICE 3 RICH detector

- 11 cylinders with 44 modules each.
- 1 module:  $17 \times 18 \text{ cm}^2$ , 6237 SiPMs, 6-8 DENEb, 10 bpol, 18 LDOs, 6-8 lpGBT + VTRx.
- Total active area: Without and with light concentrators:  $10.40 \text{ m}^2$  and  $2.60 \text{ m}^2$ .
- Light purple shows the aerogel tiles, yellow shows the back of electronics, and red the mechanical structure.
- Design is changing rapidly because of economical, mechanical, cooling, and pieces constraints.

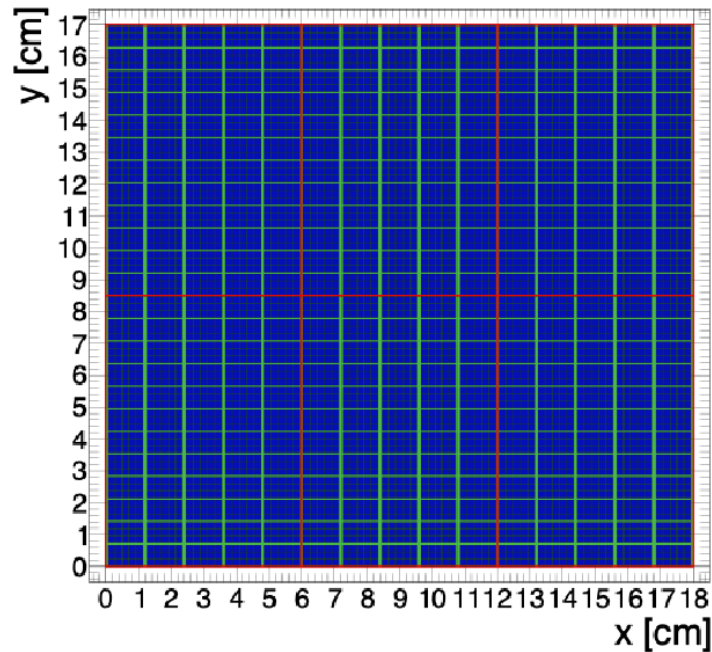


Credit: N. Nicassio

# Technological challenges of the ALICE3 RICH: high granularity and low DRC

- **Granularity is so high** that it should have around **6,237 channels (SiPMs) per module** ( $17\text{ cm} \times 18\text{ cm} = 306\text{ cm}^2$ ) inside an area of six modules make the PCBs hard to route in order to preserve the signal integrity throughout all the system in both digital and analog domains.
- SiPMs with 2.2 mm and 1.3 mm have been considered. Blue color means SiPM area and green means free space between SiPMs. Many SiPMs arrays are being considered.
- Passive components have to be placed in the SiPM to make annealing reducing the free space on the PCB.

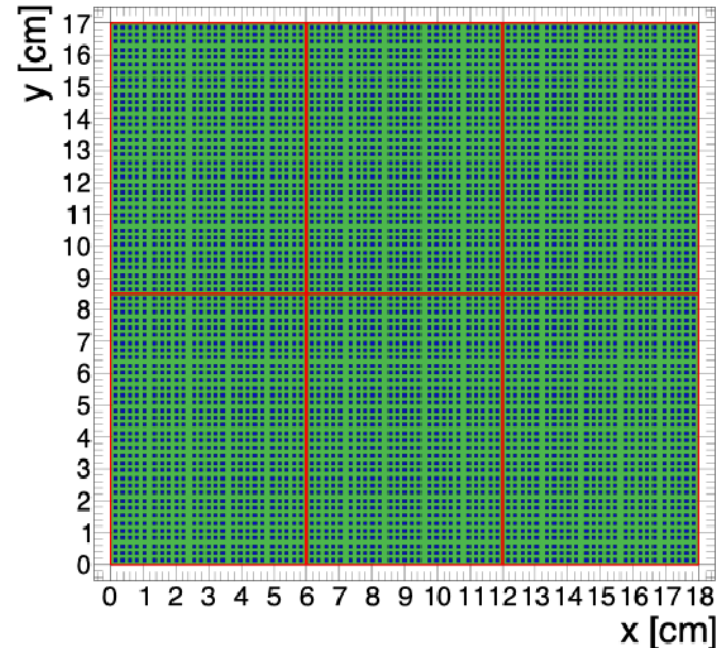
2.2 mm pitch  
Without light concentrators



**Pros:** no light concentrators

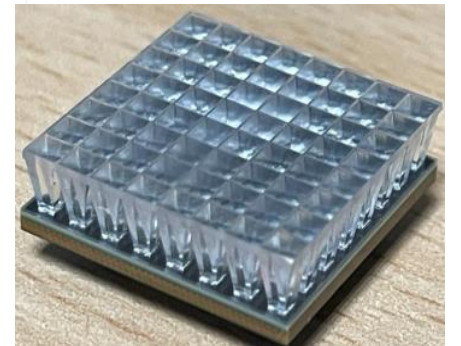
**Cons:** less free space,  
Larger active area means higher DRC.

1.3 mm pitch  
With light concentrators



**Pros:** More free space, lower DRC

**Cons:** Light concentrators,  
Harder to assembly



# Technological challenges of the ALICE3 RICH: DENEb ASIC

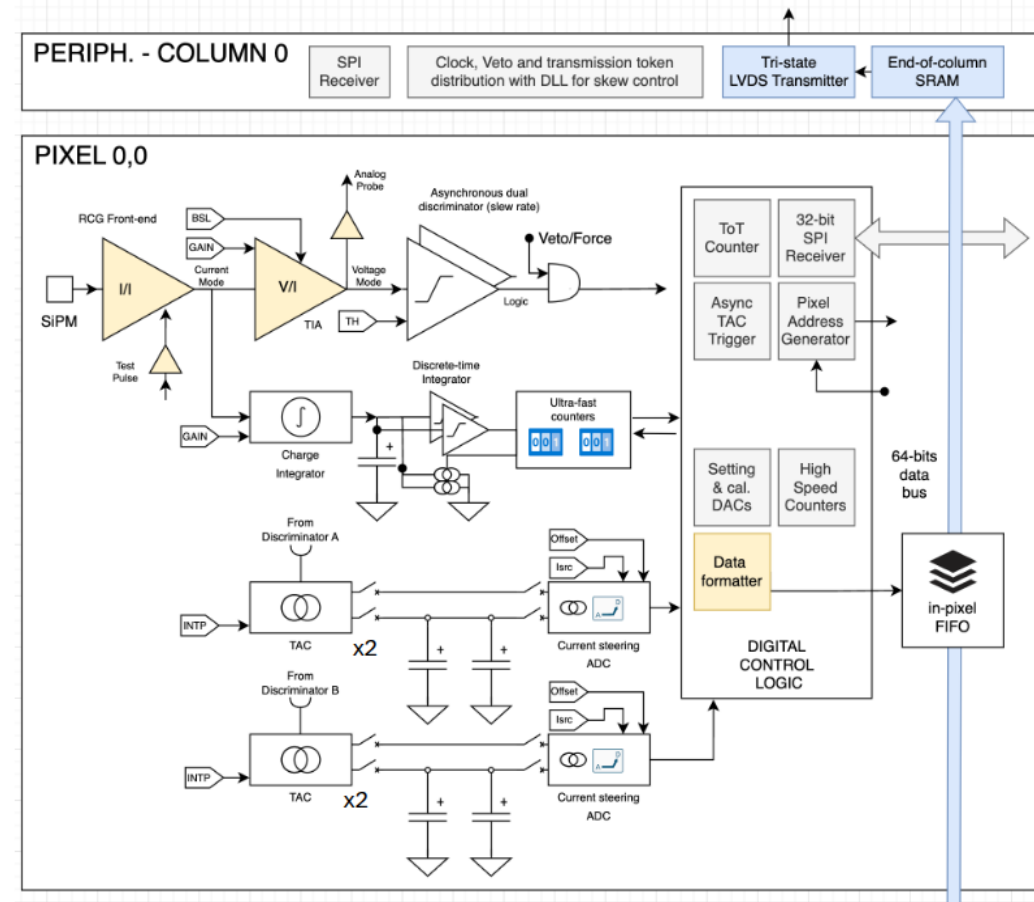
- So many channels need a very high-density ASIC to read them all. DENEb chip is being designed by an international collaboration led by the INFN in Torino (Prof. Angelo Rivetti).
- This chip was originally developed to be used in DUNE experiment.
- Its predecessor is called ALCOR and it has been tested but it is designed only for 64 channels.
- Current commercial ASICs do not provide the required channel density. Although Weeroc chips are widely used and their performance has been proven, they support only up to 64 readout channels per chip which is not dense enough for the ALICE 3 RICH.



Features	Value
Technology	110 nm CMOS
Operating temperature	77–300 K
Channels	1024 (32 × 32 pixels, 500 μm pitch)
Silicon area	~ 18 × 23.5 mm <sup>2</sup>
Measurements/channel	Time-of-arrival, Time-over-threshold, Slew-Rate, Charge (Photon-Counting)
Single-photon time resolution (SPTR)	< 100 ps
Dynamic range (charge)	> 100 photoelectrons
Photon-counting resolution	~ 3–4 codes/PE (1 PE resolved between 1 and 5 PE)
Maximum event rate on a pixel	~ 3.8 MHz
In-pixel event word	1 × 64-bit (timing) or 2 × 64-bit words (timing, charge)
End-of-column memory	2048 (64-bit) or 1024 (2 × 64-bit) words/column
Output links	32 SLVS/LVDS differential transceivers
Link speed	320 Mbps SDR or 640 Mbps DDR
Aggregate bandwidth	up to ~ 20 Gbps (DDR, Time-Division-Multiplexing)
Average power / channel	~ 5–15 mW/channel (mode and temperature dependent)
Special features	Power gating, dark-count suppression window

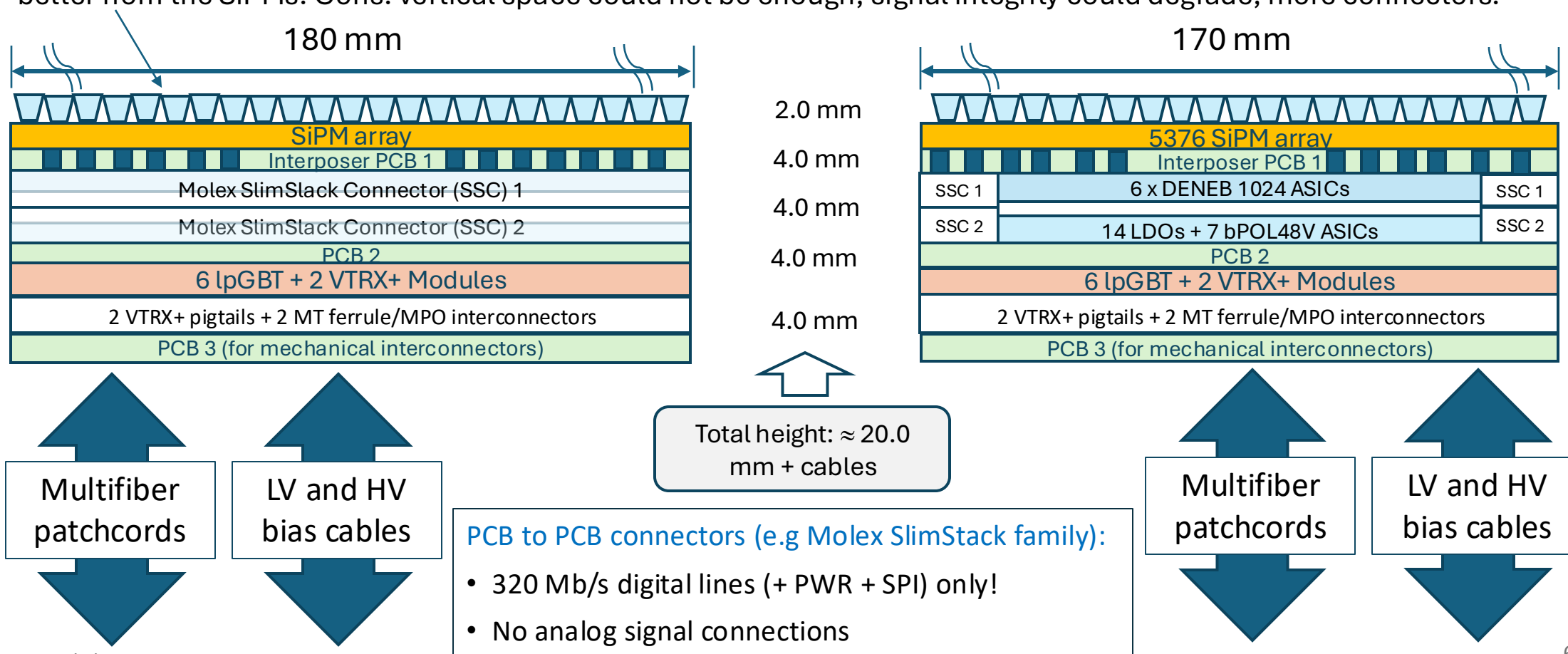
**DENEb: a 1024-channel cryogenic mixed-signal ASIC for SiPM matrix readout targeting sub-100 ps timing and wide dynamic range** S. Durando, et al. 2026, JINST, 21, C05025

S. Durando<sup>a,b,\*</sup>, S. Blua<sup>a,c</sup>, F. Cossio<sup>a</sup>, A. Di Salvo<sup>a</sup>, S. Garbolino<sup>a</sup>, V. Pagliarino<sup>a,c</sup>, S. Palestini<sup>a</sup> and A. Rivetti<sup>a</sup>



# Technological challenges of the ALICE3 RICH: PCB stacking

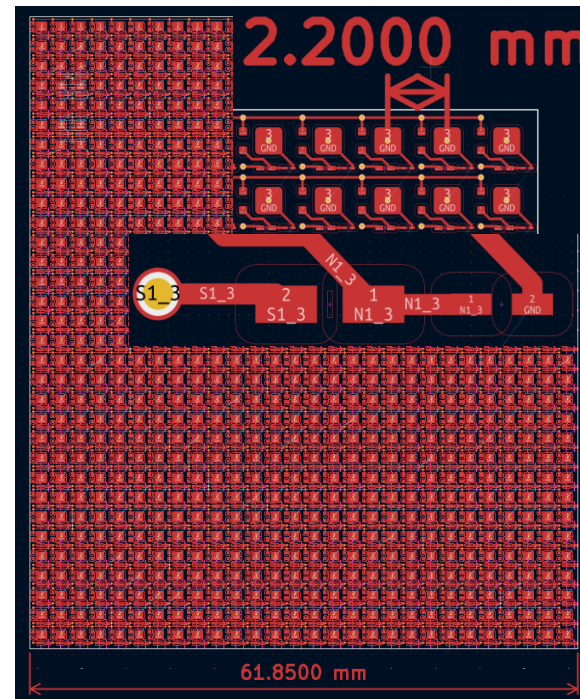
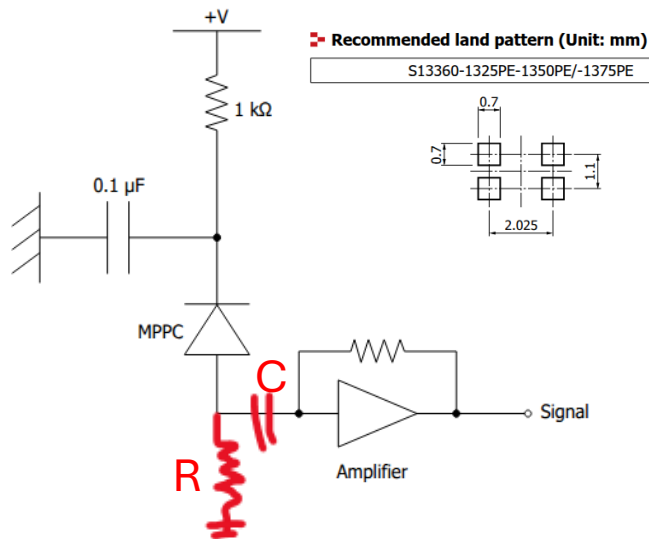
- The most conservative approach considers the use of 3 PCBs:
  - Interposer PCB1: The SiPM array ( $\geq 6237$  SiPMs) is mounted on one side and the other has the DENEb ASIC.
  - PCB2: It contains the power supplies (bPol48V and the LDOs) and communication modules (lpGBTs and VTRx).
  - PCB3 is used to protect and give mechanical support to the pigtails and ferrules.
- There is an option to divide interposer PCB1 in two PCBs: the first one contains the SiPMs array, and the second has the DENEb ASIC. Pros: routing would be easier, PCBs can be replaced independently, DENEb's heat can be isolated better from the SiPMs. Cons: vertical space could not be enough, signal integrity could degrade, more connectors.



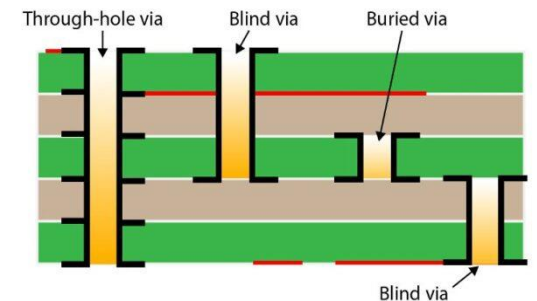
# Technological challenges of the ALICE3 RICH: Routing of PCBs

- SiPMs produce a current signal, and the DENEb ASIC includes a current-sensitive preamplifier at its input. Therefore, the SiPM anodes can be connected directly to the ASIC inputs. However, additional passive components have been included to allow for SiPM annealing.
- Passive components makes a hard routing even harder because the lack of space in the PCB due to a very high density.
- Density is so high that the recommended land pattern to place SiPMs was modified. Resistance is 0075 and capacitors 0203.

## Connection example



DENEb BGA  
Footprint

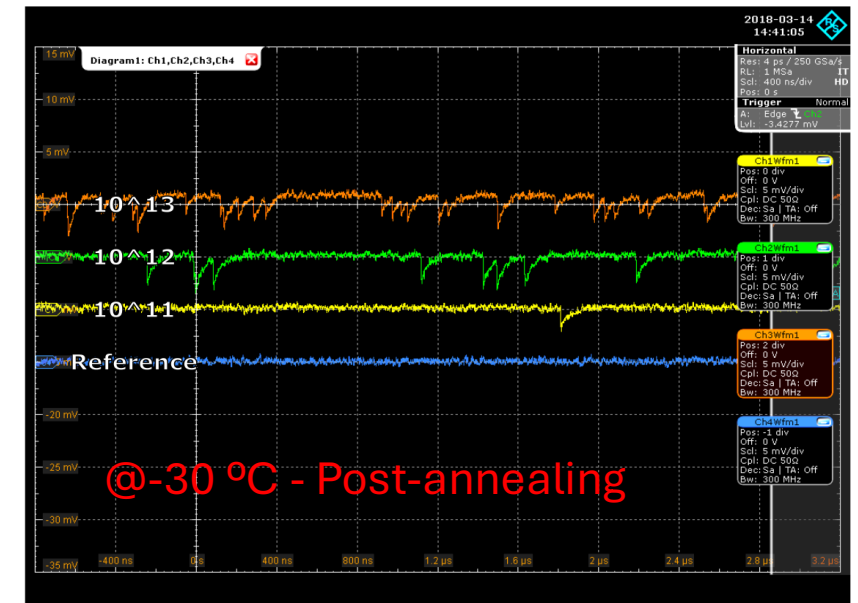
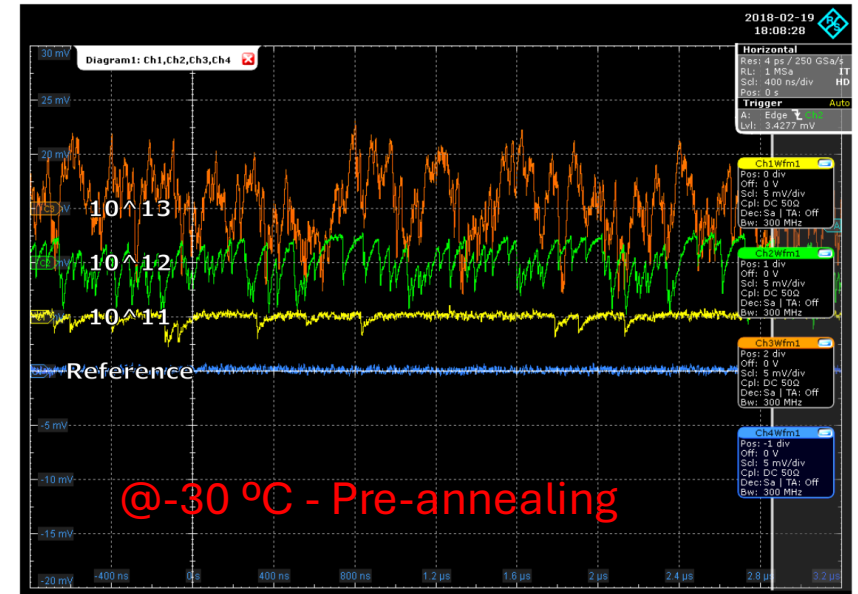
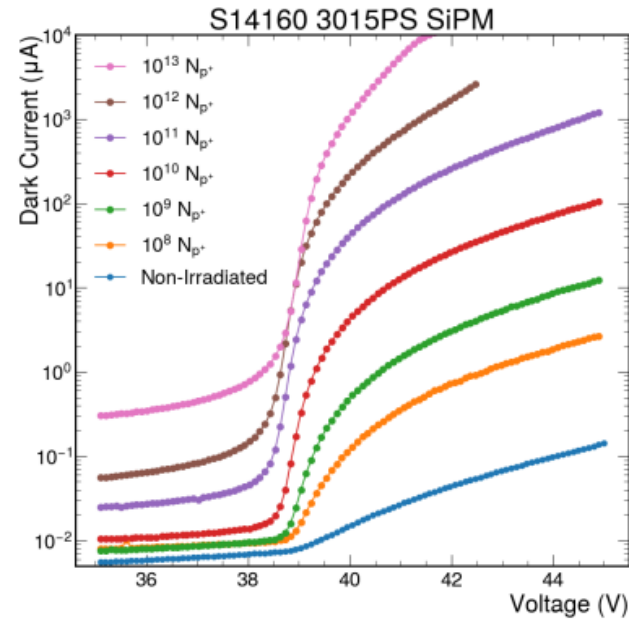
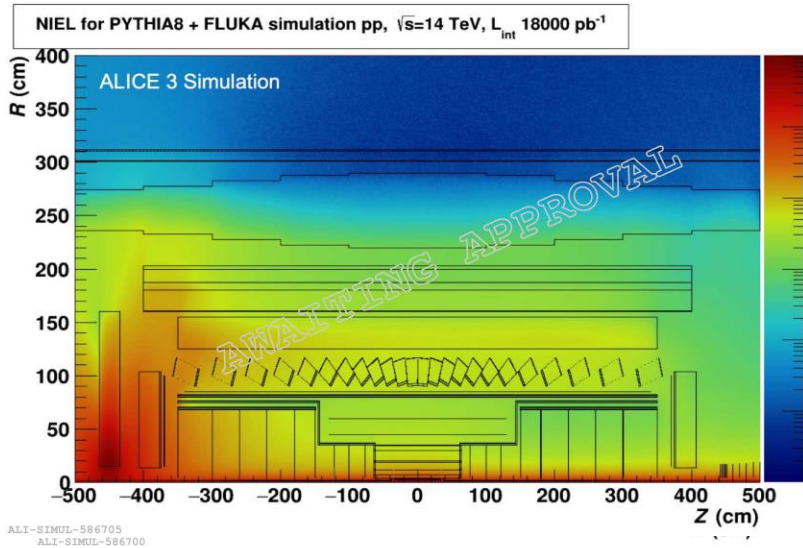


This task is fundamental.  
Bad PCB ---> Bad data.

This task is being done in Mexico.

# Technological challenges of the ALICE3 RICH: Radiation hardness

- The system is run in a **high radiation environment** making that the overall design must be radiation hard so not any element can be included in the design.
- Hadron radiation produces hard **damage in the crystal lattice of the SiPMs increasing the DRC**. Then, they have to be annealed to reduce DRC to acceptable levels again. Passive or active annealing has been considered.
- FPGAs or any other **sensitive element to radiation cannot be used** inside the RICH detector.

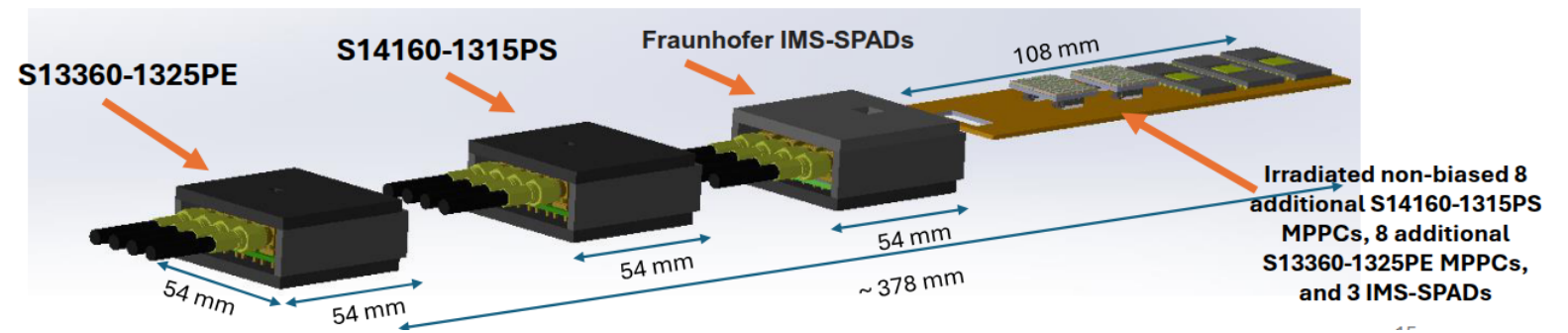
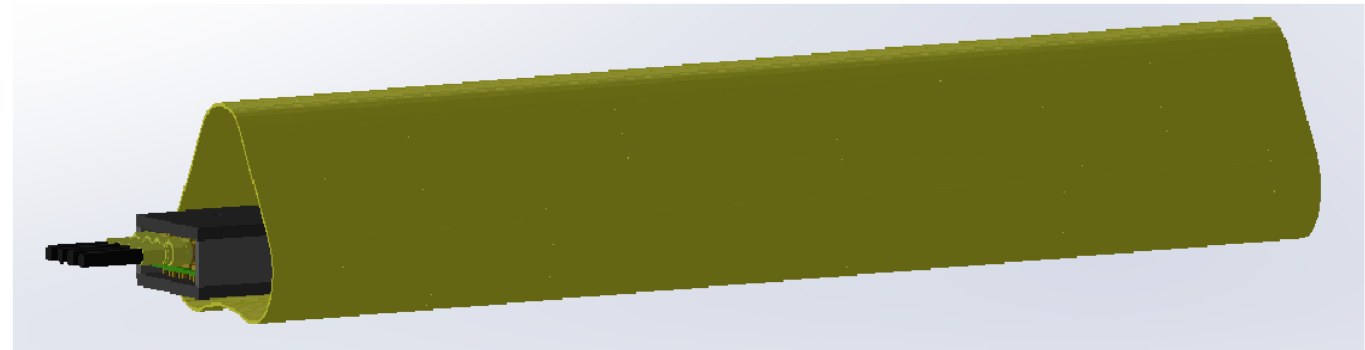
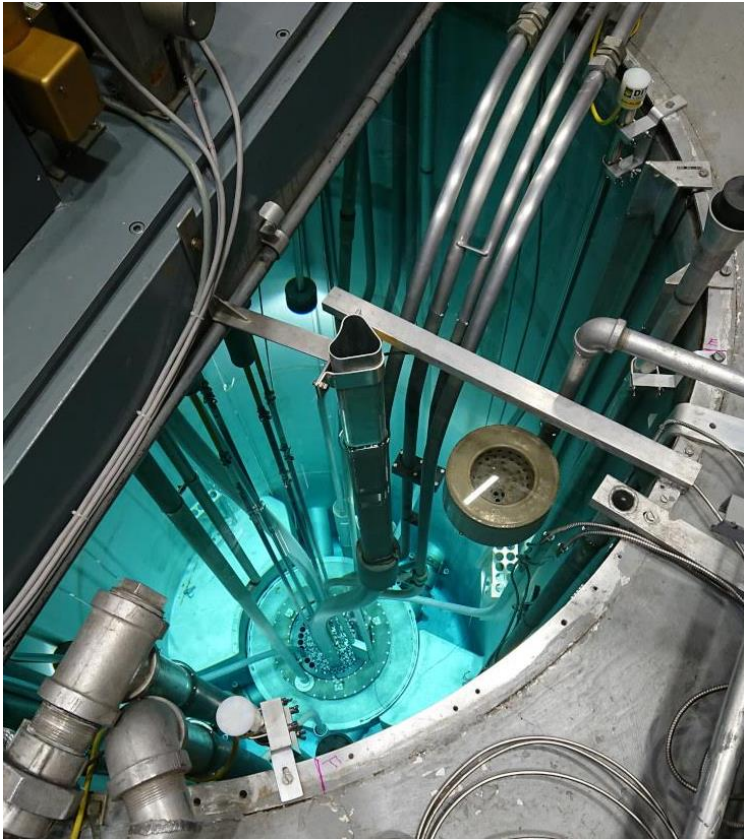


[1] Huang, J., Preins, S., Tsiao, R., Rodriguez, M., Schmookler, B., & Arratia, M. (2025). Measurement of SiPM Dark Currents and Annealing Recovery for Fluences Expected in ePIC Calorimeters at the Electron-Ion Collider. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2503.14622*.

[2] Calvi, M., Carniti, P., Gotti, C., Matteuzzi, C., & Pessina, G. (2019). Single photon detection with SiPMs irradiated up to 1014 cm<sup>-2</sup> 1-MeV-equivalent neutron fluence. *Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research Section A: Accelerators, Spectrometers, Detectors and Associated Equipment*, 922, 243-249.

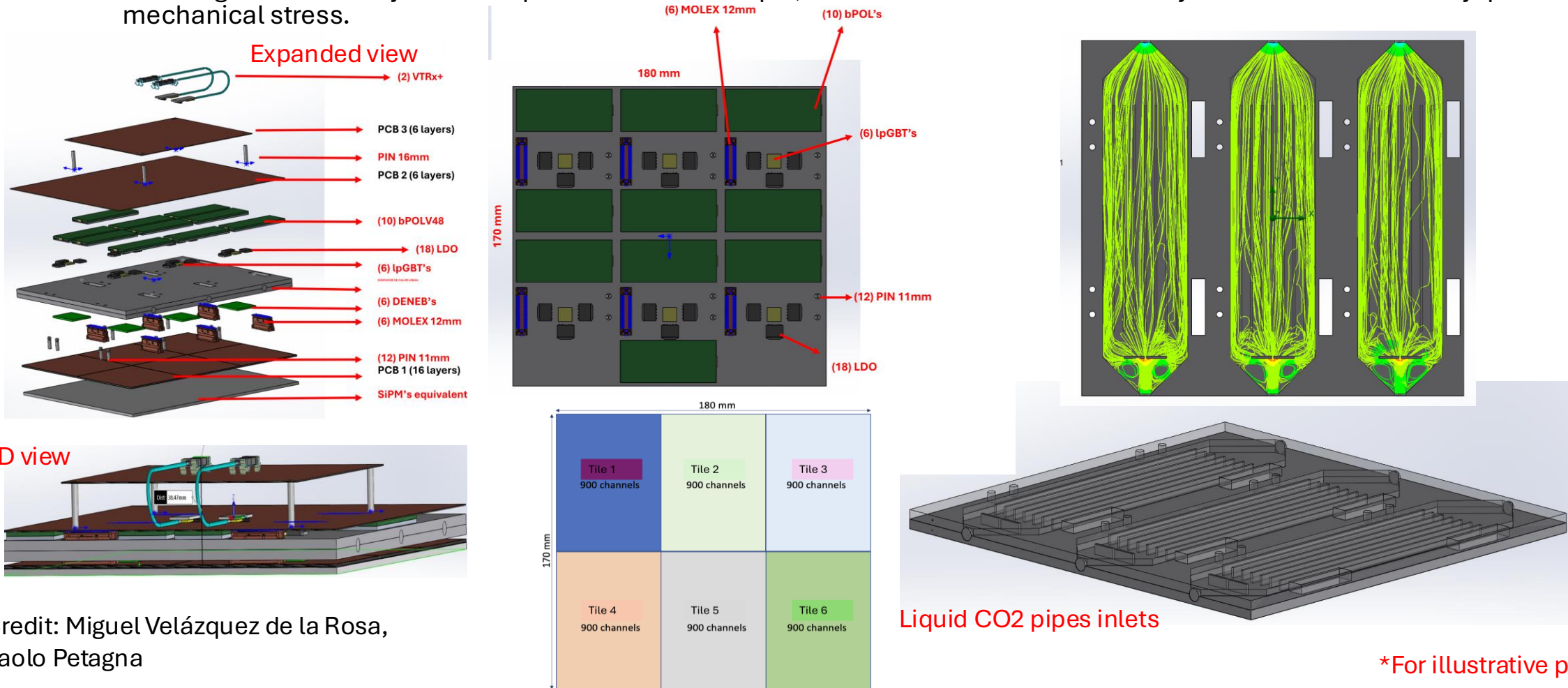
# Irradiation test of candidate SiPMs models

- To find SiPMs tolerance to hadron radiation, it is planned to make the irradiation of the possible SiPMs used in the RICH detector in the nuclear reactor of the Institute Josef Stefan in Ljubljana.
- Three types of SiPMs are going to be irradiated. Some SiPMs are going to be irradiated polarized and some others unpolarized. I vs. V curves of polarized SiPMs are going to be measured on site.
- It is expected that the dark current increases as a function of irradiation time. The main purpose of this study is to find the most resistant SiPM against neutron radiation.



# Technological challenges of the ALICE3 RICH: Cooling plate concept

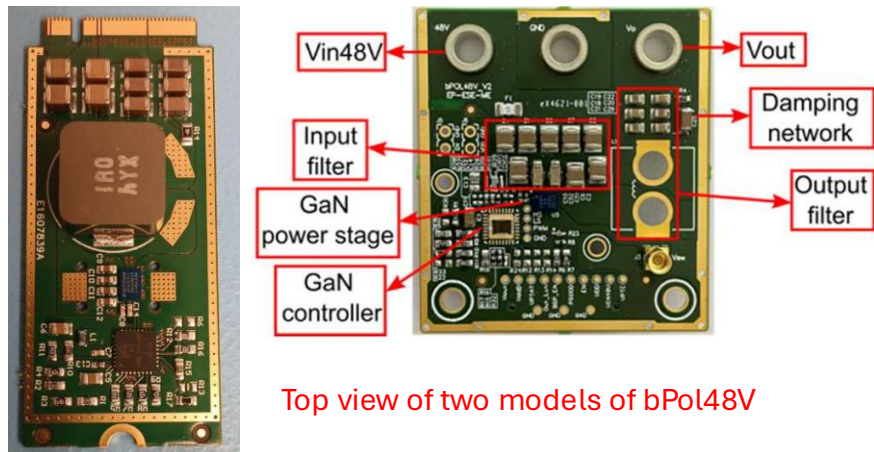
- DENEb dissipates 5 to 15 mW/channel, however, the number of channels is too high (900 operational channels). It is expected that DENEb could dissipate around 12 W of heat too close to the SIPM array.
- LDOs are inefficient (around 70 %) and they dissipate a considerable amount of heat. BPol48s, lpGBTs and VTRx produces heat that also should be extracted from the system.
- All the heat is produced in a small volume at the same time, and temperature gradient in the interposers could be high affecting mechanically the components. For example, BGA is known to be not very resistant to thermally produced mechanical stress.



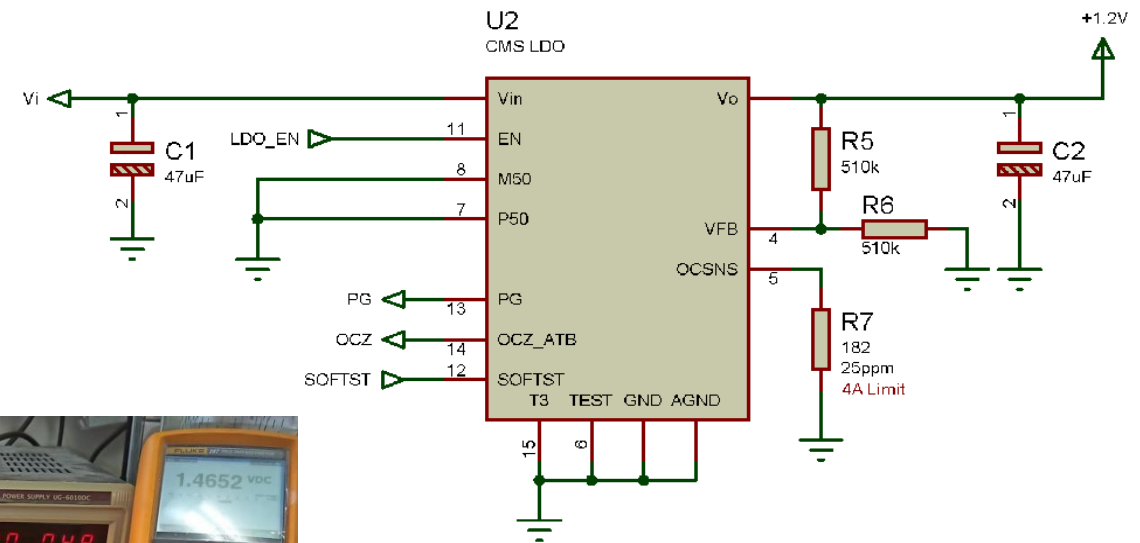
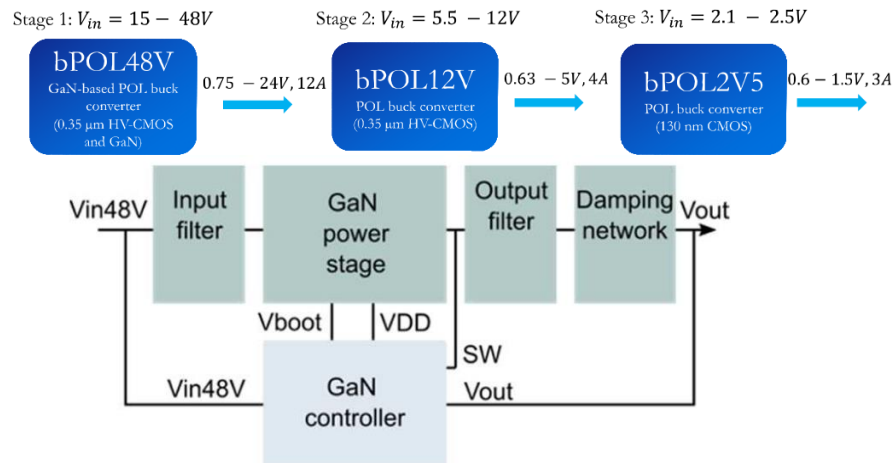
Credit: Miguel Velázquez de la Rosa,  
Paolo Petagna

# Technological challenges of the ALICE3 RICH: Power supplies

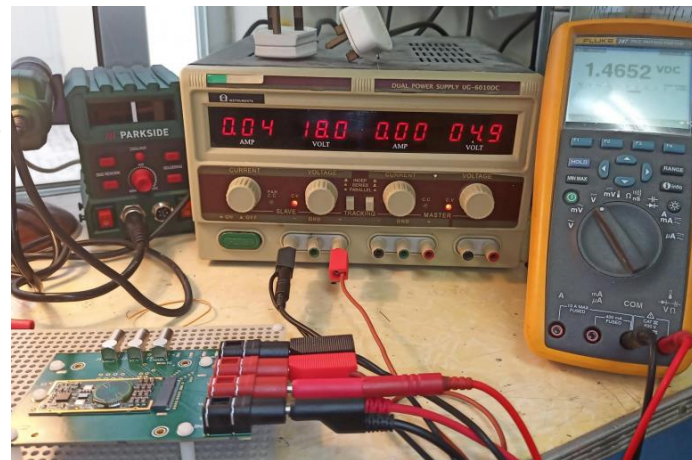
- Power supplies must be radiation hard because they will be placed inside the detector and they will be receiving a similar amount of radiation in comparison to SiPMs. bpol48V is a DC/DC converter in three stages designed for space applications and radiation environments. It can convert 15V-48V to 0.6V to 1.5V.
- Power supplies must be able to deliver high power and currents. DENEb works with 1.2 V, if it consumes 12W, then, 10 A must be delivered to the chip reaching the maximum current of the bpol48V. It can reach an efficiency of up to 97% switching at 1 MHz and using an inductor of 2.2  $\mu$ H.
- CMS LDO is a low drop-out linear voltage regulator used in CMS experiment.



Top view of two models of bPol48V

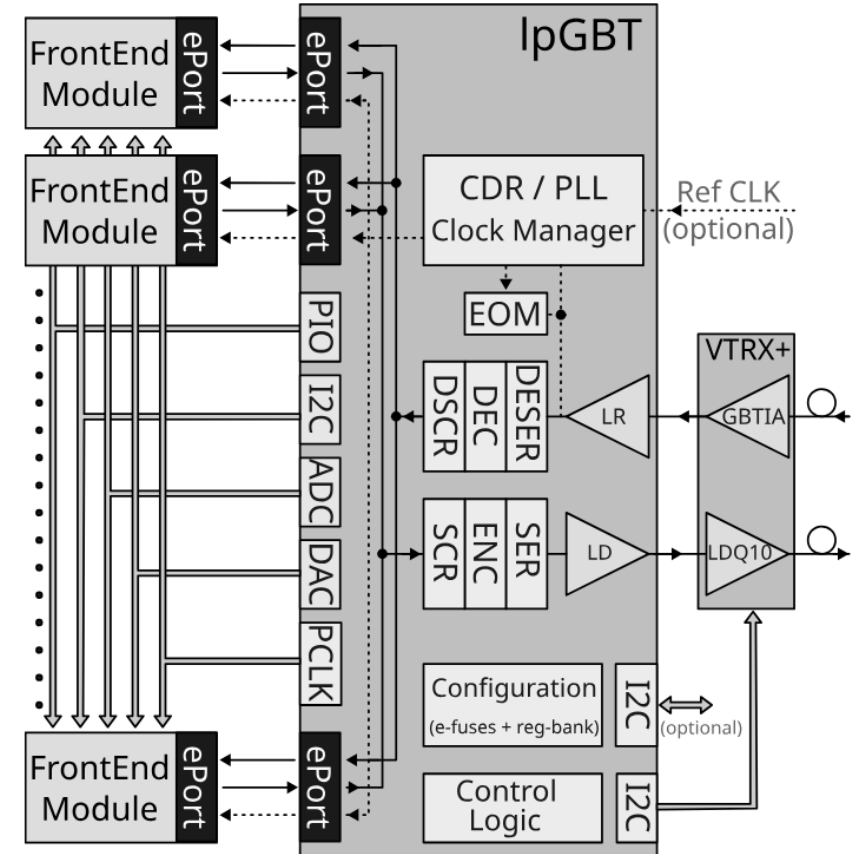
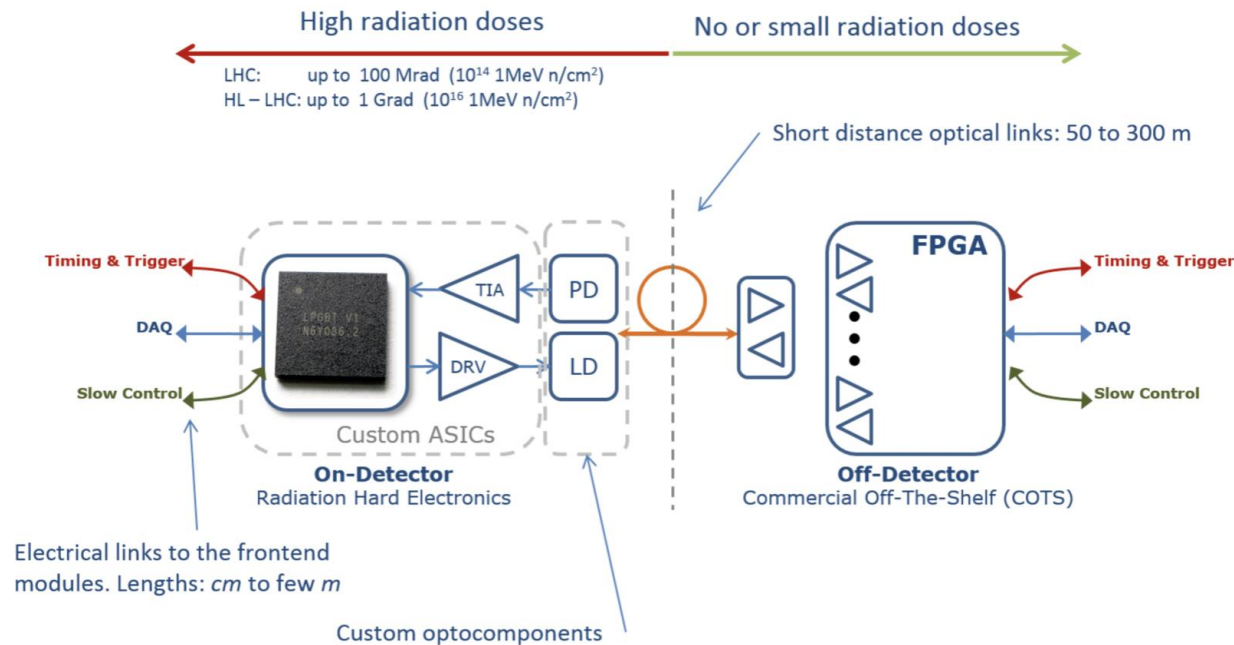


Power dissipation of 0.8W at 3 A with 1.2V output voltage



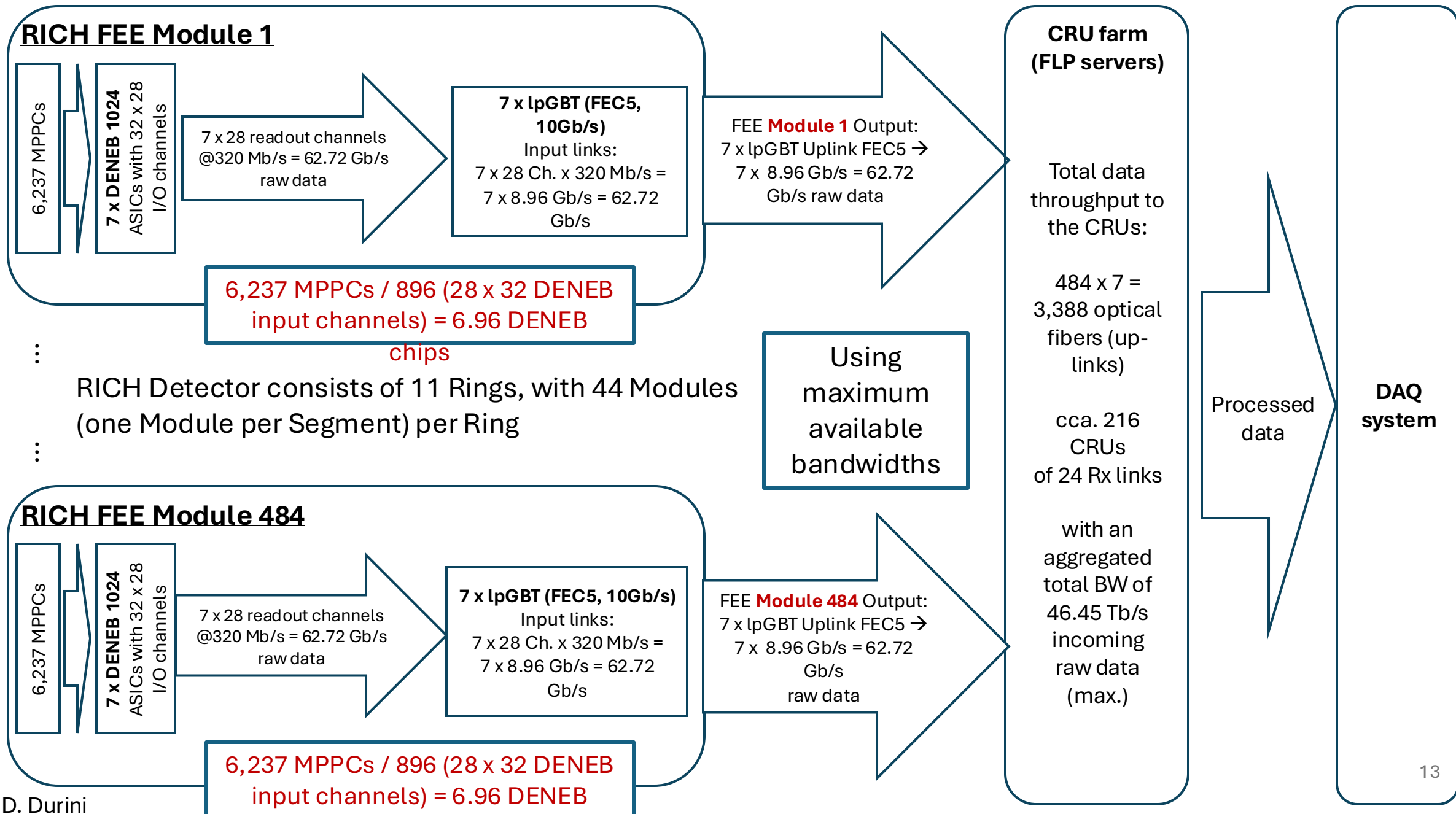
# Technological challenges of the ALICE3 RICH: Data transmission

- "The lpGBT is a multifunctional device, enabling data transmission between the off-detector and the on-detector systems".
- "Data can be transmitted from the detector at 5.12 and 10.24 Gb/s and to the detector at 2.56 Gb/s".
- "It implements data rate-configurable electrical links to communicate with the front-end ASICs and low-speed serial and parallel buses for experiment control".
- "A set of analog functions for monitoring and control of the physics detectors is also included".
- This technology is mature and it is produced now in industrial quantities.
- It has been tested in radiation environments proving to be reliable under this condition.
- DENEb send data through a 320 Mbits/s LVDS buses.



The total amount of data for the whole RICH detector is about 4.96 Tbits/s.

# Technological challenges of the ALICE3 RICH: Bandwidth considerations



Credit: D. Durini

# Conclusions

- A RICH detector is being developed for the ALICE 3 upgrade to extend charged hadrons and electrons identification capabilities beyond the momentum range covered by the Time-of-Flight (ToF) detector.
- The detector comprises approximately **3.0 million readout channels**. This large channel count requires the development of a **high-density ASIC capable of reading up to 1024 channels per chip**, at the expense of a relatively high-power consumption ( $\sim 12$  W per chip). The front-end electronics must provide **single-photon sensitivity to enable accurate Cherenkov ring reconstruction** and particle identification.
- **Radiation damage results in increased Dark Count Rate (DCR) and reduced Signal-to-Noise Ratio.** In order to decrease the DCR, **the goal is to operate the sensors at about  $-40$  °C** by flushing cooler fluid in the microchannels embedded in the interposer. A further reduction of the DCR may be achieved by employing **light concentrators**, which would allow the SiPM size to be reduced from  $2.2 \times 2.2$  mm<sup>2</sup> to  $1.3 \times 1.3$  mm<sup>2</sup> with a **reduction in the DCR by a factor of 3 to 4**.
- Radiation damage degrades the silicon lattice of SiPMs over time. Consequently, **a SiPM annealing procedure with thermal cycles is under development to reduce radiation-induced damage** with the aim to extend sensors lifetime.
- The **PCB design must ensure signal integrity in both the analog and digital domains**. Additional passive components should be included when active annealing functionality is required.
- The **detector is expected to generate up to 30.6 Tbit/s** of data when operating at full bandwidth. Data transmission will employ FEC5 or FEC12 error-correction protocols to ensure reliable communication and data integrity.

## Members of the group

Giacomo Volpe

Antonello Di Mauro

Eugenio Napi

Mario Nicola Mazziota

Nicola Nicassio

Tivadar Kiss

Daniele De Gruttola

Torsten Alt

Alberto Calavi

S. Sammut

D. De Venuto

S. Shankar Dasgupta

Guy Paic

Joseph Zammit

Christian Pauly

Daniel Durini Romero

Miguel Velazquez

Jaime Octavio Guerra  
Pulido

Carlos Osorio

Pierre Farrugia

Robert Helmut Munzer

Bart Verlaat

Domenico Di Bari

L. Congedo

G. De Robertis

M. Gilberti

F. Licciulli

A. Liguori

L. Lorusso

G. Panzarini

Roberta Pillera

and others.

My apologies if somebody is missing

## Participations and contributions of the Mexican teams

### WP8 Integration, **Coordinators: J. Guerra (UNAM), G. Paic (UNAM)**

- Service integration: gas, cooling, power supply system, detector safety system

**UNAM**



Daniele  
De  
Gruttola



Daniel  
Durini

**WP3: SiPM module**

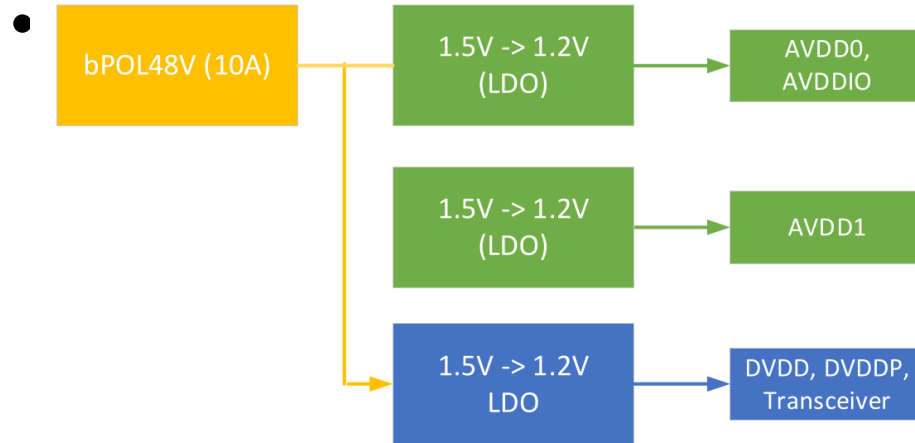
Prof. Durini (INAOE) is co-responsible of WP3, which is in charge of SiPM module.

Thank you for your attention!!

Questions?



# backup



	Current/Pixel	Total Current	Total Power
<b>Analog Domain</b>			
AVDD0	0.005	4.48	5.376
AVDD1	0.005	4.48	5.376
<b>Digital Domain</b>			
DVDD	0.005	4.48	5.376
DVDDP	0.005	0.16	0.192
Transceiver	0.002	1.79	2.150
<b>Total</b>		13.6	16.32