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Inverse-Oslo Method – a tool for expanding our understanding of the r-process

Following the first observation of a neutron star merger [1] it became clear that this was one of the sites of the r-process [2]. With an astronomical site for the r-process known it has become more important than ever to have accurate nuclear input [3], and in particular accurate neutron capture rates for unstable neutron rich nuclei. Unfortunately, the neutron capture rates of short-lived nuclei are currently impossible to measure directly. However, the capture rates could be constrained by Hauser- Feshbach (HF) calculations [4], which relies on the γ -ray strength function (\mathcal{S}_γ), nuclear level density (NLD) and the optical model potential to predict the capture cross section. Currently there are several models of the NLD and \mathcal{S}_γ which in turn produces capture rates that deviate as much as 10^5 in HF calculations [5]. Although the capture rates cannot be directly measured, the \mathcal{S}_γ and NLD can, even for very neutron rich nuclei with the beta-Oslo Method [6]. Recently, it has been shown that the Oslo Method can also be combined with inverse kinematics [7], expanding the Oslo Method to virtually any nucleus applicable, provided one can produce a reasonably intense beam.

The inverse-Oslo method has, for the first time, been applied on an experiment with a radioactive beam at HIE-ISOLDE at CERN. A 4.5 MeV/u ^{66}Ni beam hit a deuterated-polyethylene target at the C-REX particle array. γ -rays from the reaction were measured with the Miniball array and six large volume (3.5x8 inch) $\text{LaBr}_3\text{:Ce}$ detectors added to boost the γ -ray efficiency.

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