

# The Year 2014 – The Real Starting Year of the ILC?

RIKA TAKAHASHI



KEK's Director General, Atsuto Suzuki talks about his plan with new Planning Office. Credit: Nobuko Kobayashi

Close to the end of 2013, we had encouraging news for the ILC. On 24 December, the Japanese cabinet released the government budget decision for fiscal year 2014 – which includes an official budget for the International Linear Collider. The amount of the budget is 50 million yen, or about half a million US dollars, which might not seem a lot at first glance. However, this budget is a highly significant symbol towards the realization of the ILC, since this

budget represents a qualitative change in the status of the ILC in the Japanese government. It means that the ILC is now recognized as a formal project.

This budget will be used by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to investigate and analyze the requirements and issues for the realization of the ILC. The funds will also be used to collect objective data which will serve as the basis for future governmental decisions.

Along with this development at the government level, the Japanese research community is also taking a next step. On 6 February, KEK announced the creation of an office responsible for the ILC project, the ILC Planning Office. The office will be headed by Atsuto Suzuki, Director General of KEK.

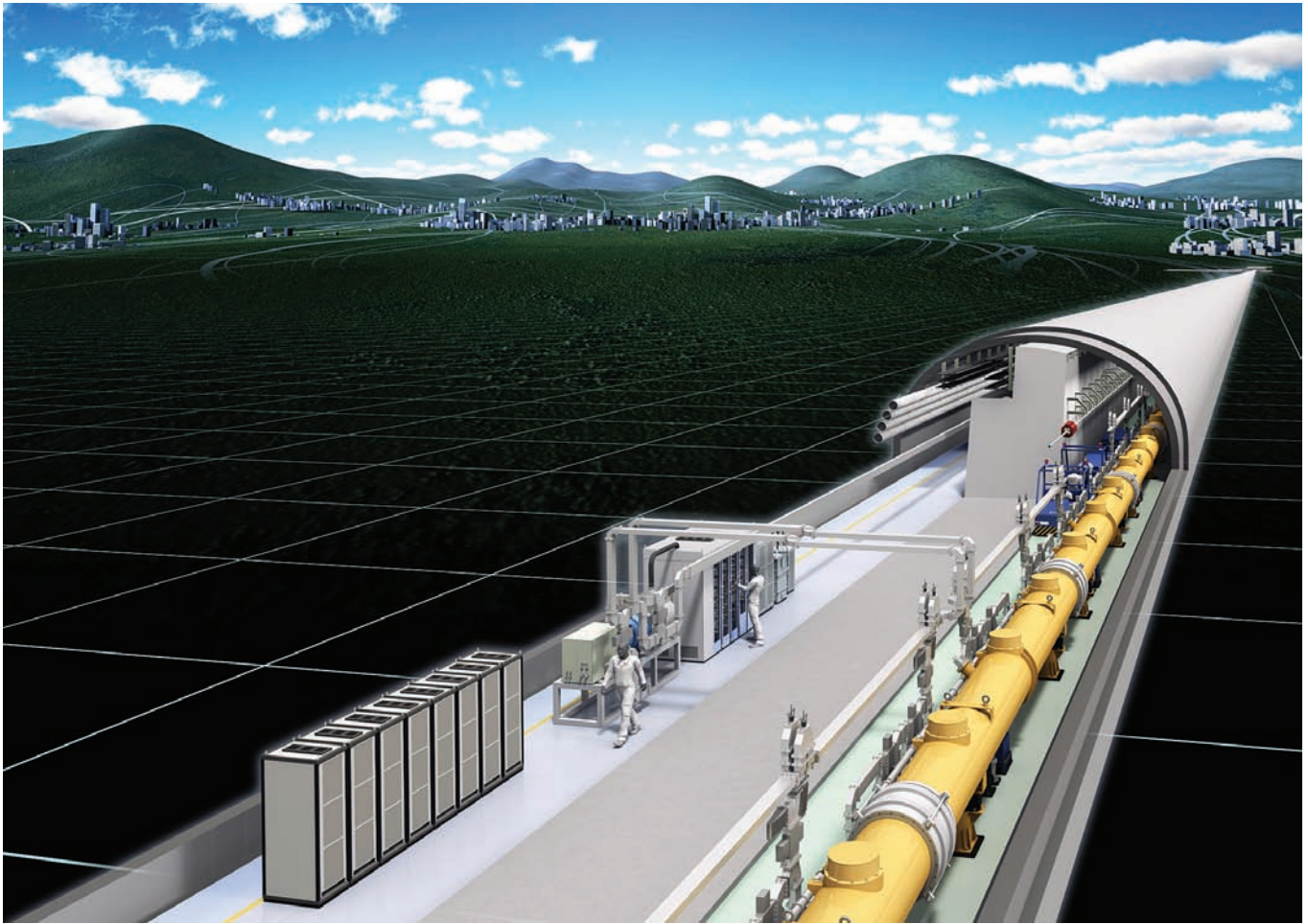
KEK has been playing a leading role in the research

and development efforts for the ILC. “With the national budget officially allocated, the ILC project now needs the driving force to bring forward the project. The new office, the Planning Office for the International Linear Collider, will coordinate and integrate efforts related to planning, scheduling, and managing research activities. It will also take care of internal and external cooperation and coordination as well as handling any discussions related to the organization of a future international laboratory, or the way to manage it, and the on going research activities,” said Suzuki.

The new office is just a section in the KEK organization, and this is merely a starting point. “I am planning to expand this office into a pan-Japan organization with participation by all the researchers and engineers in Japan. Ultimately, the new office will become the international ILC pre-laboratory,” he said.

Suzuki aims to deepen the industry-academia collaboration, which is currently carried out through cooperation with the Advanced Accelerator Association Promoting Science and Technology (AAA). AAA, was established in June 2008 with a total of about 100 companies, universities and laboratories. AAA has discussed issues on R&D, intellectual property rights and other related areas concerning the ILC as a model project. “We will have a new facility in KEK furthering the industrialization of the superconducting cavities. The new office is also in charge of the industry-academia collaboration,” said Suzuki.

In addition, the expert panel established under MEXT started their discussions on the issues pointed out by the Science Council of Japan last summer, such as: scrutinizing the cost evaluation or calculating the number of



ILC Rendering Image. Credit: © Rey. Hori

scientists and engineers needed to build the accelerator and facility, or how to distribute the cost internationally.

“With all these developments, I think we can say that the year 2014 will be a real starting year for the ILC as a project,” says Suzuki. They will work on the detailed accelerator design, and issues related to managing the international laboratory if it is built in Japan.

Suzuki says, “We will present our best appeals to relevant counterparts such as OECD to endorse the ILC project as an international project under the aegis of an appropriate international organization like OECD or UNESCO, to solidify the foundation for the government to start the international negotiations as soon as possible.”

February has traditionally been a memorial month for

the ILC project. The release ceremony of the Reference Design Report took place in February 2007, and the new organization for the realization of the project, the Linear Collider Collaboration, was also established in February of 2013. This new office in KEK may well become another memorial event for “ILC February.”

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