

# HIGH-POWER RF CONDITIONING AND 700 keV BEAM COMMISSIONING OF THE REVISED RFQ FOR THE FRANKFURT NEUTRON SOURCE

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## Abstract

We report the successful high power RF conditioning of the revised 175 MHz FRANZ RFQ up to 80 kW CW, as well as successful beam commissioning up to 700 keV in pulsed operation. After a revision of the RFQ electrodes, the RFQ accelerates protons from 60 keV to 700 keV. The Frankfurt Neutron Source FRANZ will be a compact accelerator driven neutron source utilizing the  ${}^7\text{Li}(p,n){}^7\text{Be}$  reaction with a 2 MeV proton beam.

## INTRODUCTION

The Frankfurt Neutron Source (FRANZ) is a compact accelerator driven facility originally initiated in the early 2000s [1–6]. It is designed to provide a 2 MeV proton beam for neutron production via the  ${}^7\text{Li}(p,n){}^7\text{Be}$  reaction [7]. The produced neutrons with a thermal spectrum around 30 keV can be used for a number of experiments in the fields of applied physics and experimental astrophysics [8].

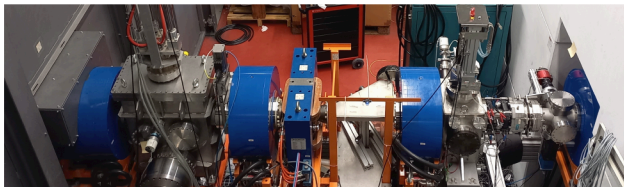


Figure 1: Photograph of the current FRANZ LEBT beamline (Aug. 2022).

Significant progress on the driver linac was made recently. The commissioning of the new CHORDIS ion source [9, 10] in late 2020 was a first milestone. Since the CHORDIS ion source only provides a 35 keV proton beam, an electrostatic post-accelerator was developed and commissioned at IAP to reach the desired beam energy of 60 keV [11]. After stable operation was confirmed, the Low Energy Beam Transport line (LEBT), see Fig. 1, was commissioned and the beam was transported up to the point of injection into the RFQ-Accelerator. The 60 keV beam is now in routine operation at the FRANZ. This presents an important milestone for the initial beam commissioning of the FRANZ facility. Meanwhile, emittance measurements to further improve an efficient injection into the RFQ haven been performed.

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## RFQ RETROFIT

A change of the RFQ injection energy to 60 keV, necessitated a redesign of the RFQ electrodes. The new beam dynamics design is based on the so-called SEGLER method and the resulting electrode geometries were developed in 2022 [12, 13]. Production of the new electrodes was ordered in summer 2022. The RFQ retrofit and low level rf tuning was finished in summer of 2023. Following that, rf conditioning and finally beam commissioning were performed.

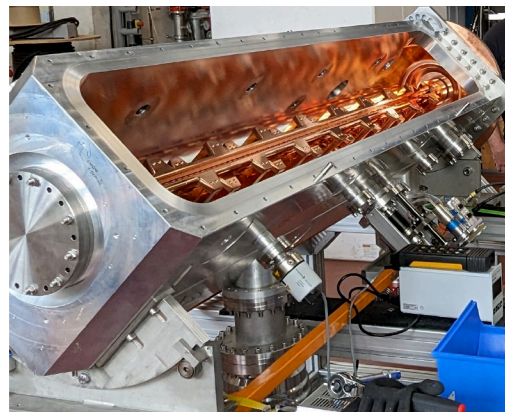


Figure 2: FRANZ RFQ after installation of the new electrodes and successful delivery to IAP Frankfurt with the lid open for final RF tuning.

## RF TUNING

After the installation of the new RFQ electrodes at the company Neue Technologien GmbH (NTG) in Gelnhausen (see Fig. 2), the final RF tuning was performed on site in collaboration with IAP. A total of 18 tuning plates had to be installed and adjusted to tune the final frequency of 175 MHz of the RFQ while maintaining a flat voltage distribution over the whole length of the RFQ. For the measurements, the frequency shift introduced by a small dielectric plastic cylinder placed on top of the electrodes is recorded at a position above each tuning plate to deduce the flatness. This process took about two days with numerous iterations, until the results were satisfactory. The final field flatness was within  $\pm 3\%$  which is a typical acceptable value for a four rod RFQ (see Fig. 3 (left)).

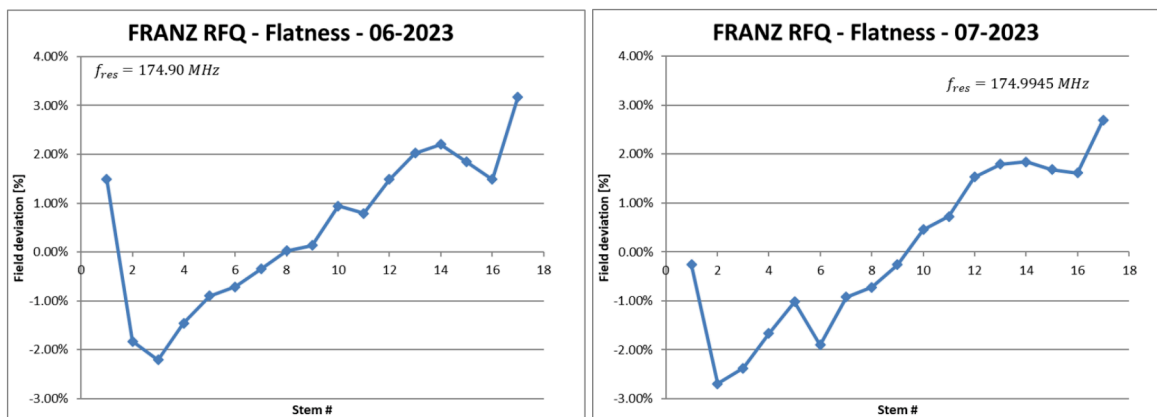


Figure 3: RFQ Flatness measurements (left): without tuner at company NTG. (right): After installation of dynamic tuner at IAP.

After delivery of the RFQ to Frankfurt, the final tuning steps were performed after mounting the dynamic tuner to the cavity. With the tuner installed and the last tuning plate adjusted, the final flatness stayed almost identical to the previous setup without tuner (see Fig. 3 (right)).

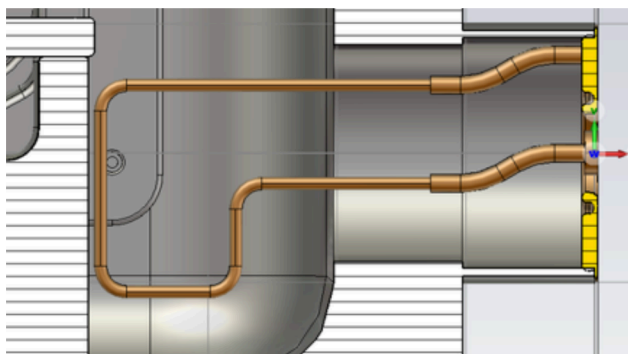


Figure 4: View of the CST model used to determine the loop size and position

For RF coupling at high power CW operation in the order of 150 kW in the future, a well known coupler using the GSI design was chosen [14]. Consequently, the coupling loop had to be redesigned to match the new coupler. CST simulations were performed to determine the ideal coupling loop shape and position (see Fig. 4). The final loop distance from the RFQ stems is the most critical parameter for loop matching. In simulation, a loop distance of 2 mm to the stem would provide a strong overcoupling up to  $\beta \approx 5$ . By rotation of the loop, the coupling factor can be reduced (theoretically to 0). Final dimensioning of the loop was done by low level rf measurements to ensure the necessary coupling range between  $\beta = 1$  to  $\beta \approx 1.5$  for beam operation with the CHORDIS ion source. Once the final loop geometry was fixed, the loop was brazed to the coupler. Since the first coupler failed vacuum tests after brazing and the fault was localized not at the braze connections, a second coupler was successfully prepared. For RF conditioning and first low current beam tests, the coupler was mounted at an angle to

achieve critical coupling  $\beta = 1$ . From low level RF Q-factor measurements, it was expected to require 68 kW of power for the design electrode voltage of 60 kV. Therefore, the goal for conditioning of the RFQ was set to reach at least 80 kW.

## RFQ RF CONDITIONING

For LLRF control, in-house custom digital hardware was used. The control system for FRANZ called MNDACSv2<sup>1</sup> was used for RF conditioning of the FRANZ RFQ as well. For more details on the software and hardware see [15].

The RFQ was moved into the FRANZ radiation shielding bunker once all low level tuning steps were done. A total of 140 water connections, 61 water temperature sensors and 3 temperature sensors on the cavity frame and near the coupler were attached. The RFQ is connected to the experimental hall central cooling system.

For the first conditioning stage, a 500 W CW broadband amplifier was used. Once the power limit of this amplifier was reached, the cavity was connected to the Thomson tube amplifier on the Bunker roof, capable of up to 250 kW CW at 175 MHz. The same LLRF hardware was used for low power and high power rf conditioning [15]. Low power conditioning with the small broadband amplifier was done within about 5 days, reaching up to 400 W CW. Multipacting barriers were observed at powers of 3 W and 26 W. Otherwise, conditioning up to 400 W was uneventful. Therefore, the RFQ was soon connected to the RF power line of the main RF amplifier. From then on, high power conditioning required about nine days to reach a forward power of 80 kW. This conditioning period is shown in Fig. 5. Following initial conditioning, the RFQ was further conditioned to 90 kW at a lower duty cycle. While the general performance of the RFQ can be sustained even for longer periods of downtime if vacuum is preserved, each time any part of the beam line was vented, an initial reconditioning of the RFQ spanning usually 3-4 hours was needed.

<sup>1</sup> Mesh Networked Data Acquisition and Control System

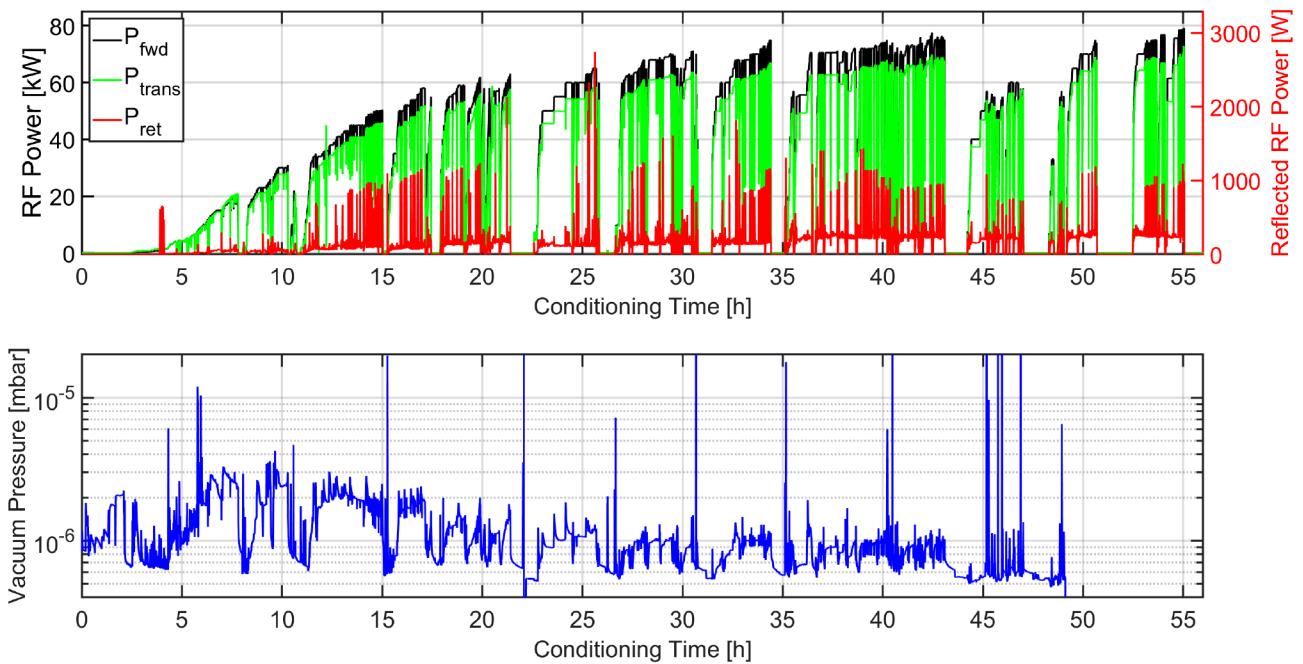


Figure 5: Conditioning power and vacuum pressure plot for the high power CW conditioning resulting in a final power of  $P_f = 80$  kW. The pressure gauge failed around hour 49.

## RFQ BEAM COMMISSIONING

After the successful RF conditioning of the RFQ at 100% duty cycle, the RFQ was operated at a duty cycle of up to 2% (1 ms, 10 Hz) to match the CHORDIS duty cycle of 0.5% to 1% (0.5 – 1 ms, 10 Hz). Using well known LEPT optical settings from previous beam dynamics and emittance measurement campaigns, first injection of a proton beam was immediately successful and on the first day up to 11 mA macropulse current protons were measured (see Fig. 6).

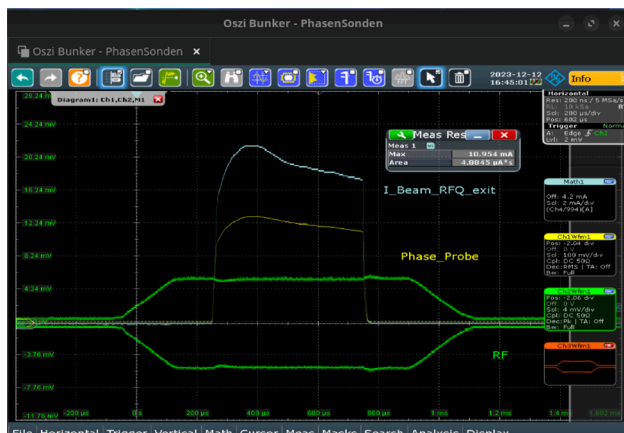


Figure 6: Oscilloscope screenshot of one of the first accelerated 700 keV proton pulses at the FRANZ RFQ. (blue) Faraday cup signal behind RFQ, (yellow) phase probe signal behind RFQ, (green) RF pulse.

After this successful first beam operation, energy measurements behind the RFQ were performed with phase probe signals. The resulting final RFQ energy varied between

699.9 keV and 701.54 keV for  $P_f = 58$  kW to  $P_f = 90$  kW respectively and is very close to the design value of 700 keV.

## Transmission Measurements

Transmission measurements were carried out utilizing an aperture just behind the first solenoid in the LEPT. This is necessary to remove the majority of  $H_2^+$  and  $H_3^+$  from the beam before the current in front of the RFQ is measured. The latest measurement with a matched beam (no losses at RFQ injection aperture cone [16]) show a proton current of 7.66 mA in front and 7.1 mA behind the RFQ. This results in a transmission of 92.7%.

## CONCLUSION

After successful CW high power conditioning up to 80 kW, the RFQ has been operated routinely for several weeks. Beam commissioning at the Frankfurt Neutron Source up to 700 keV was successfully performed and a transmission of 92.7% was measured for the RFQ. Further measurements will include emittance measurements of the RFQ beam with a slit grid emittance measurement device. After that, the RFQ and IH-DTL will be joined together and conditioned for 2 MeV beam commissioning.

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