



## KalmanFilter-based alignment in ACTS

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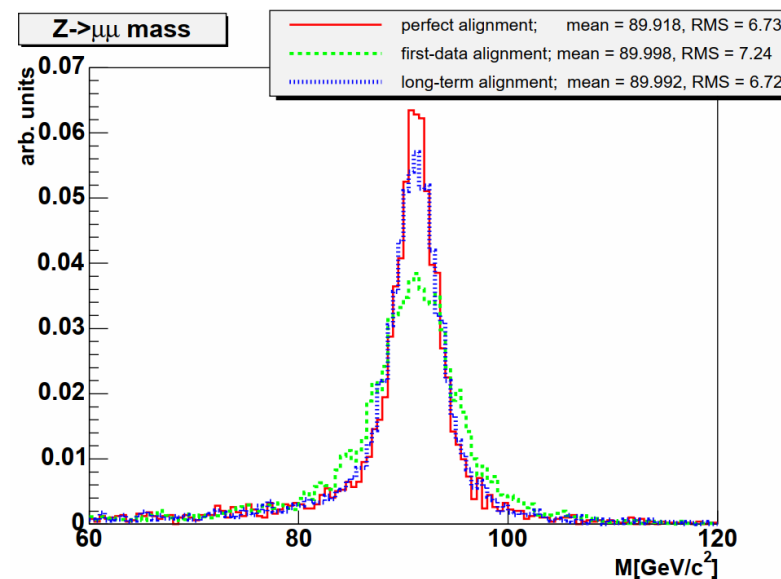
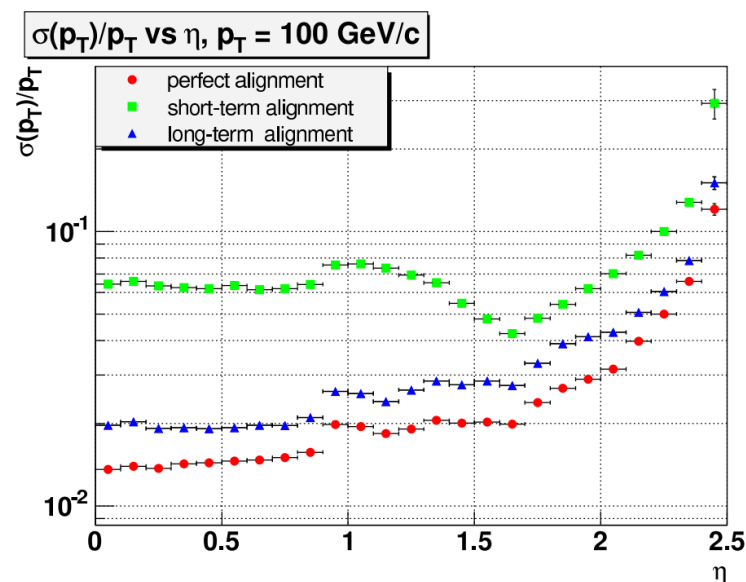
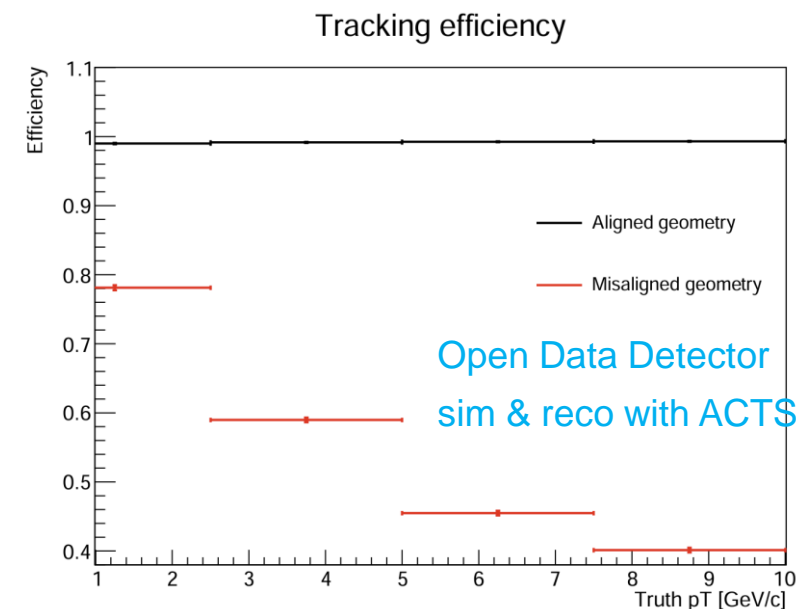
FTCF2025, Huangshan, Nov 25, 2025

# Why alignment matters?

See more in [Pawel Bruckman's slides](#)

- Limited detector placement precision upon installation
- Misalignment is the dominant source of measurement resolution degradation

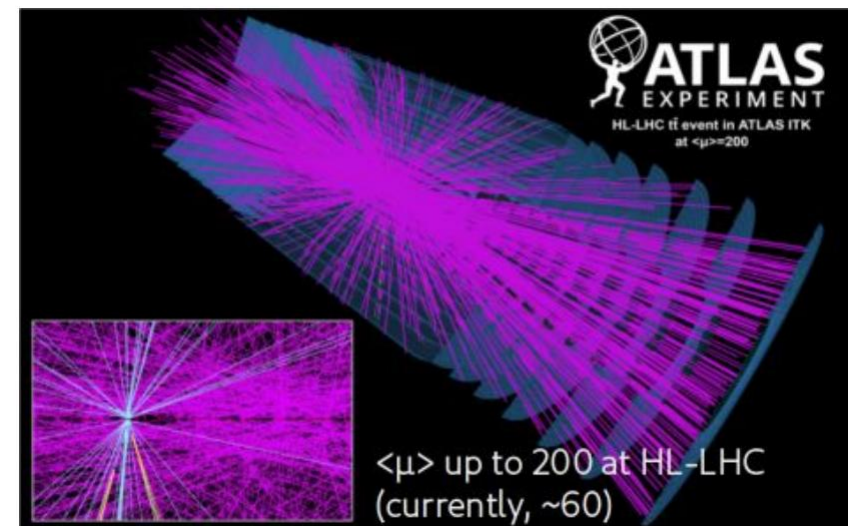
➡ Degradation of tracking precision and efficiency, and eventually **physics precision!**



From [G. Steinbrück](#)

# Why Kalman Filter based alignment?

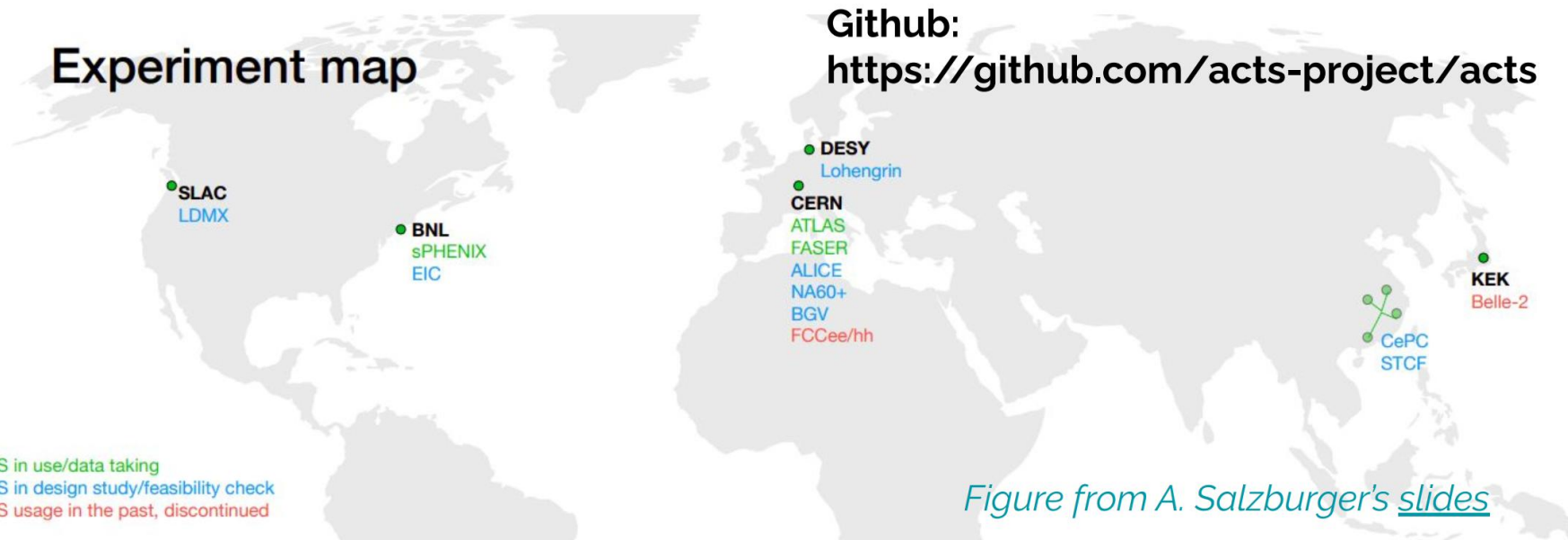
- HL-LHC: recorded data (7-10x), pile-up  $\langle\mu\rangle = 200$ 
  - Highly-performant tracking software
- Track-based detector alignment primarily relies on global  $\chi^2$  fitting methods:
  - High computational complexity
  - Difficulty in handling material effects and non-Gaussian noise
- Kalman Filter is widely used for track fitting in the high energy physics
  - Transition to a Kalman-Filter based alignment algorithm
  - Expected to enhance robustness and efficiency in detector alignment



# **ACTS recap**

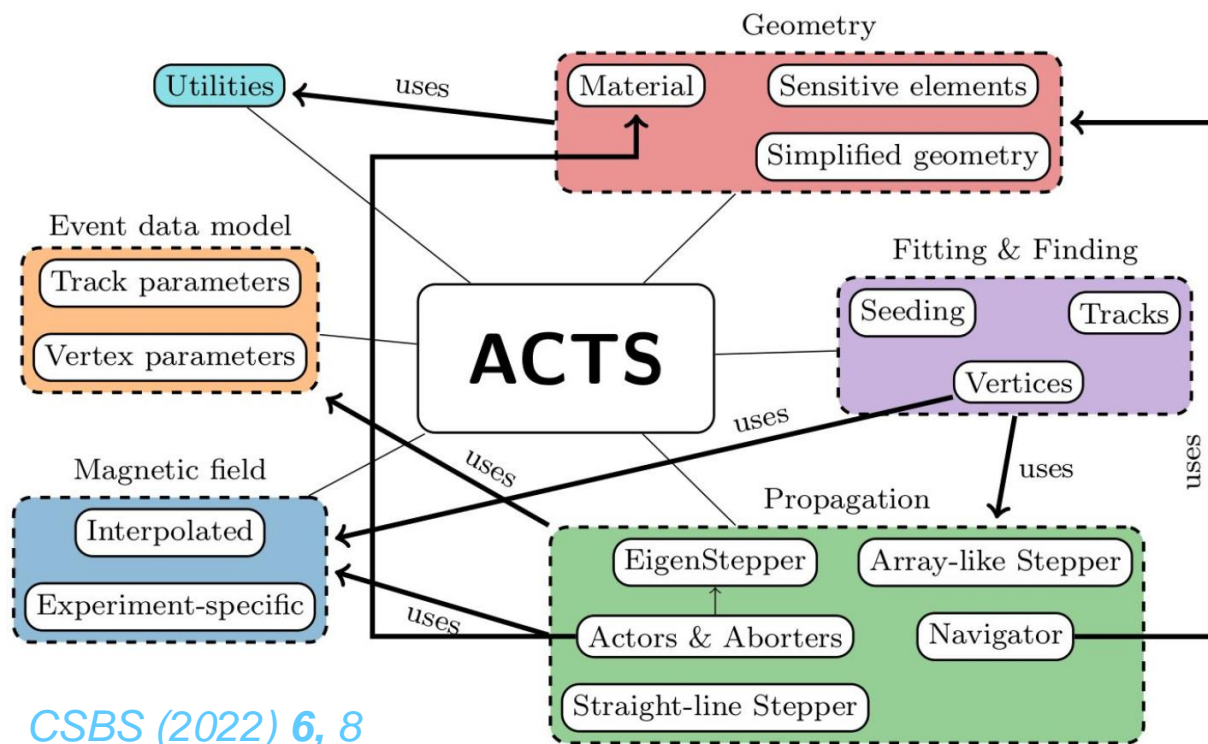
# ACTS project

- A modern **open-source detector-independent** tracking toolkit for current&future HEP experiments based on LHC (and beyond) tracking experience
  - Data production by **ATLAS, FASER, sPHENIX**
  - Detector R&D by **CEPC, STCF, EIC, ePIC, LDMX...** *(see talk of Hao Li)*
- A R&D platform for ML-based tracking, heterogeneous computing and 4D tracking



# ACTS design and functionalities

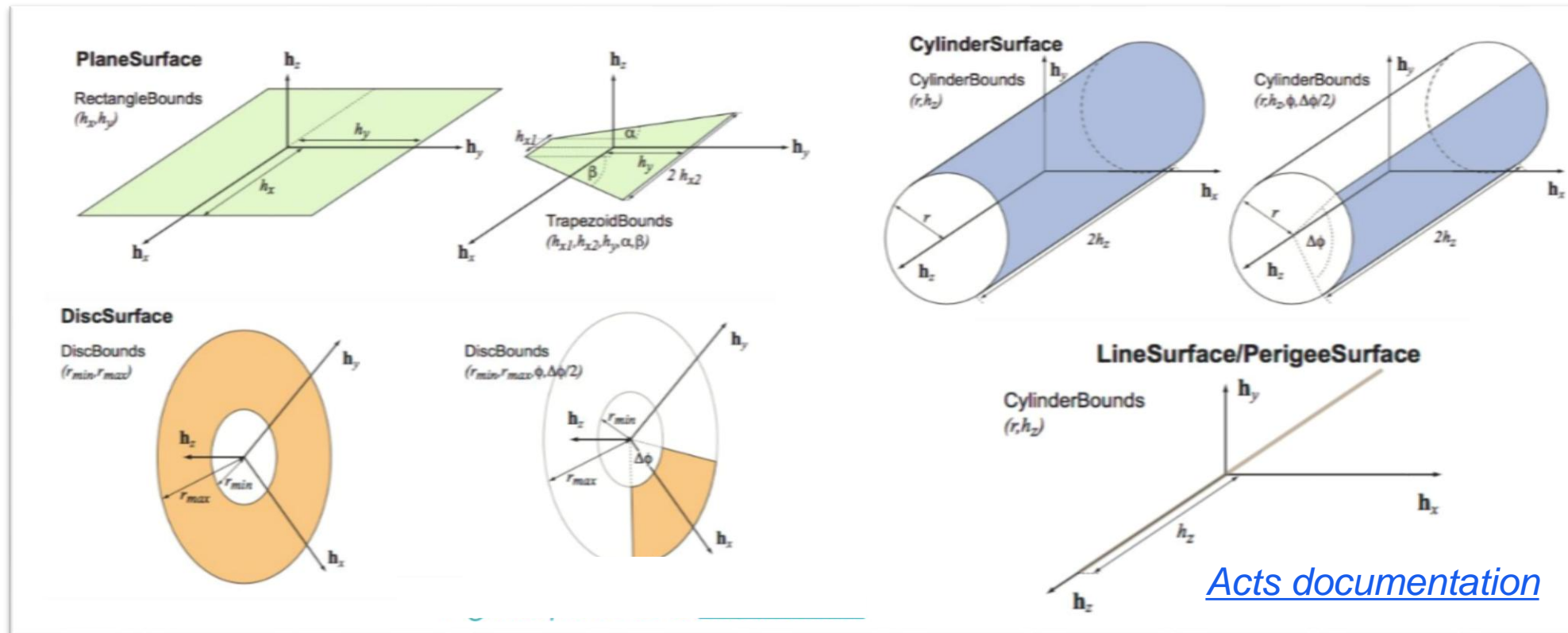
- Fully C++20 compliant, template design, strict thread-safety, contextual condition data ...
  - More in [A. Salzburger's slides](#)



- **Track fitting**
  - (Extended) Kalman Filter (KF), Gaussian Sum Filter, Non-linear KF
  - Global chisq fitter
- **Track finding**
  - Seeding, Combinatorial Kalman Filter (CKF), Graph Neural Networks, Hough Transform
- **Vertex finding&fitting**
  - Primary vertex: AMVF, IVF
- **KF-based Alignment** (prototype developed in 2022 and being slowly validated and optimized)

# ACTS tracking geometry

- Tracking geometry is simplified from detailed full simulation geometry for fast navigation, but with material effects well taken into account
- Different concrete surfaces types for various tracking detectors
  - A surface has shape, bounds, **rotation+translation**, local coordinates and unique identifier...



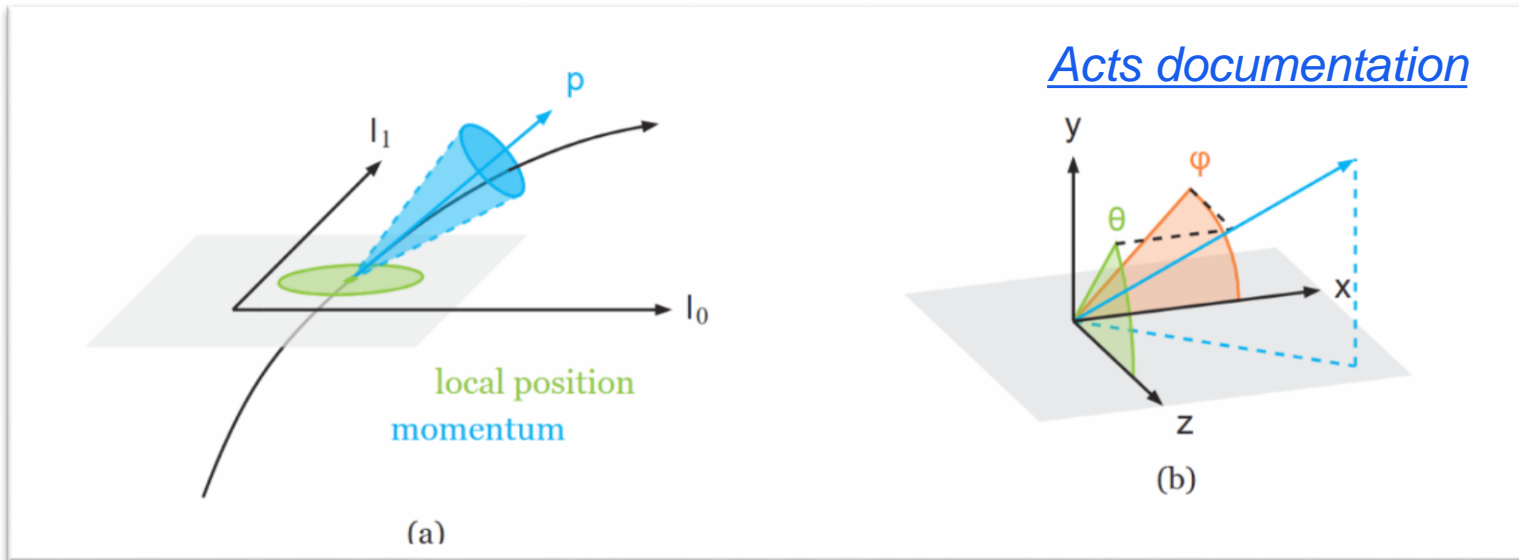


# ACTS track parameterization

- 6-dimensional bound/local track parameters (integration of **particle flight time** in track propagation)

$$\vec{x} = (l_0, l_1, \phi, \theta, q/p, t)^T$$

- Measurement (1, 2, or 3 dimension) is a subset of the 6 parameters:  $\vec{m} = H \cdot \vec{x}$



e.g.  $H = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$



# **Alignment in ACTS**

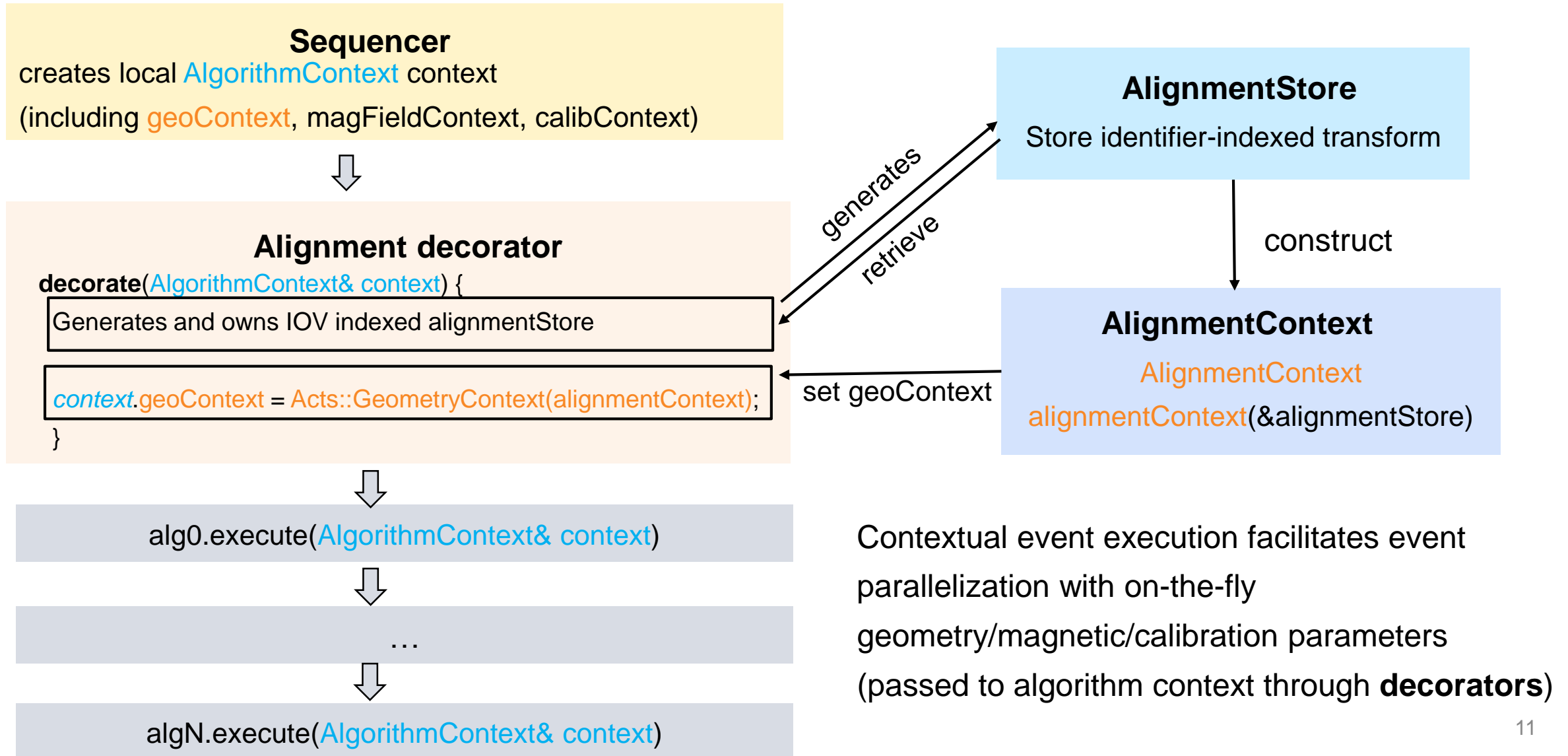
# Alignment parameters

- Detector element placement description:
  - Translation ( 3 parameters) + Rotation (3x3 rotation matrix)
- Alignment parameters (6 parameters for now):
  - 3 parameters for **translation** along original local axes ( $\vec{x}_L, \vec{y}_L, \vec{z}_L$ )
  - 3 parameters for **rotation** about original local axes ( $\vec{x}_L, \vec{y}_L, \vec{z}_L$ ) using Euler angles
    - Suppose rotation in the order: 1) around  $\vec{x}_L$  about  $\alpha \rightarrow$  2) around  $\vec{y}_L$  about  $\beta \rightarrow$  3) around  $\vec{z}_L$  about  $\gamma$  , then the new local axes become

$$(\vec{x}_L''', \vec{y}_L''', \vec{z}_L''') = (\vec{x}_L, \vec{y}_L, \vec{z}_L) \begin{pmatrix} \cos\beta\cos\gamma & \sin\alpha\sin\beta\cos\gamma - \cos\alpha\sin\gamma & \cos\alpha\sin\beta\cos\gamma + \sin\alpha\sin\gamma \\ \cos\beta\sin\gamma & \sin\alpha\sin\beta\sin\gamma + \cos\alpha\cos\gamma & \cos\alpha\sin\beta\sin\gamma - \sin\alpha\cos\gamma \\ -\sin\beta & \sin\alpha\cos\beta & \cos\alpha\cos\beta \end{pmatrix}$$

*Caveat: a rotation can be expressed in 24 equivalent sequence of Euler angles*

# Geometry Context



# Ideas of track-based alignment

- Tracks share the same detector geometry (a.k.a. **global track parameters**  $\vec{\alpha}$ ) while they have their own track parameters (a.k.a. **local track parameters**  $\vec{x}_i$ )
- The global track parameters can be estimated by minimizing the  $\chi^2$  sum of a set of chosen good quality tracks:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_i \chi_i^2 = \sum_i [\vec{m}_i - \vec{h}_i(\vec{x}_i(\vec{\alpha}), \vec{\alpha})]^T V^{-1} [\vec{m}_i - \vec{h}_i(\vec{x}_i(\vec{\alpha}), \vec{\alpha})]$$

- This involves solving the non-linear equation iteratively, i.e.  $\vec{\alpha}$  is updated iteratively to approach its optimal value:

$$\frac{d^2 \chi^2}{d^2 \vec{\alpha}} \Big|_{\vec{\alpha}_0} \Delta \vec{\alpha} = - \frac{d \chi^2}{d \vec{\alpha}} \Big|_{\vec{\alpha}_0}$$

The Kalman Filter fitter is used to fit each track in each iteration

# Alignment ingredients

$r = m - h(x, \alpha)$  The track residual

$V$  The measurement covariance

$H = \left. \frac{\partial h(x)}{\partial x} \right|_{x_0}$  The projection matrix from (bound) track parameters to measurement

$C$  The covariance of track parameters at different measurements:  
Straightforward with global chi2 fitter. Can be provided by Kalman Filter as well

$A_{k\ell} \equiv \frac{\partial r_k}{\partial \alpha_\ell}$  The derivative of residual w.r.t. alignment parameters

The first and second derivatives for a single track and then summed over tracks

$$\frac{d\chi^2}{d\alpha} = 2A^T V^{-1} (V - HCH^T) V^{-1} r,$$

$$\frac{d^2\chi^2}{d\alpha^2} = 2A^T V^{-1} (V - HCH^T) V^{-1} A.$$

$$\left. \frac{d^2\chi^2}{d\alpha^2} \right|_{\alpha_0} \Delta\alpha = - \left. \frac{d\chi^2}{d\alpha} \right|_{\alpha_0}$$

Solved with Eigen LU decomposition (claimed stable and well tested with large matrices)

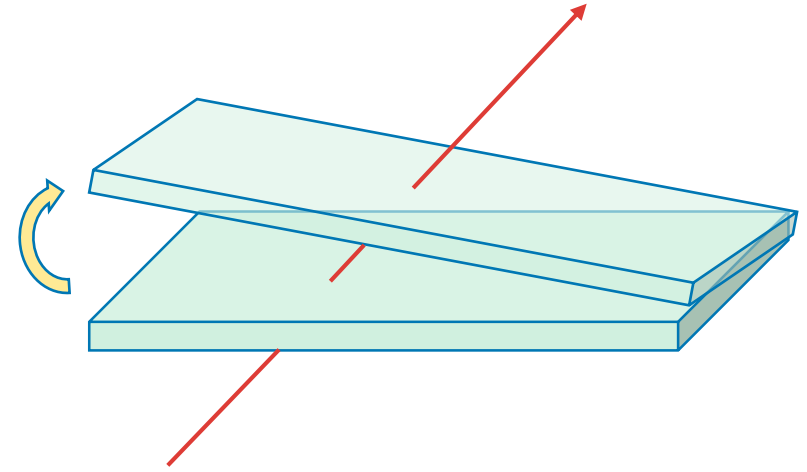
# Residual derivative

- Suppose the rotation  $(\alpha, \beta, \gamma)$  around the original local axes is small, then

$$\frac{\partial \vec{x}_L'''}{\partial(\alpha, \beta, \gamma)} = (\vec{x}_L \quad \vec{y}_L \quad \vec{z}_L) \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} = R \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\frac{\partial \vec{y}_L'''}{\partial(\alpha, \beta, \gamma)} = (\vec{x}_L \quad \vec{y}_L \quad \vec{z}_L) \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} = R \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\frac{\partial \vec{z}_L'''}{\partial(\alpha, \beta, \gamma)} = (\vec{x}_L \quad \vec{y}_L \quad \vec{z}_L) \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} = R \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$



Residual  $\vec{r} = (r_x, r_y)$  :

$$r_x = (\vec{x}_{track} - \vec{o}_{module}) \cdot \vec{x}_L - x_{hit}$$

$$r_y = (\vec{x}_{track} - \vec{o}_{module}) \cdot \vec{y}_L - y_{hit}$$

- $\vec{x}_{track}$  is the intersection of track with detector module
  - Changed with  $\vec{o}_{module}$  and  $\vec{x}_L, \vec{y}_L, \vec{z}_L$
- $\vec{o}_{module}$  is the center of the detector module
- $x_{hit}$  and  $y_{hit}$  are hit local position on module

# An alignment prototype

- It takes a set of tracks and sort out the sets of detector elements which can be and requested to be aligned => the initial value of  $\vec{\alpha}$
- Perform the fit for each track using  $\vec{\alpha}$ , and estimate the  $\chi^2$  derivatives w.r.t.  $\vec{\alpha}$
- Solve the equation to obtain  $\Delta\vec{\alpha}$
- Update  $\vec{\alpha}$  to become  $\vec{\alpha}'$  using provided alignment parameter updater
- Stop iteration of the above three steps when provided converging criteria is met

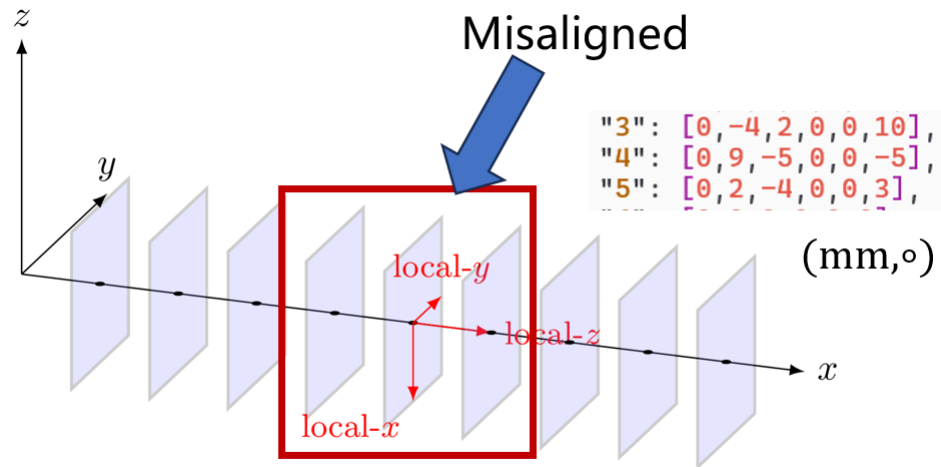
```
template <typename trajectory_container_t,  
          typename start_parameters_container_t, typename fit_options_t>  
Acts::Result<AlignmentResult> align(  
    const trajectory_container_t& trajectoryCollection,  
    const start_parameters_container_t& startParametersCollection,  
    const AlignmentOptions<fit_options_t>& alignOptions) const;
```



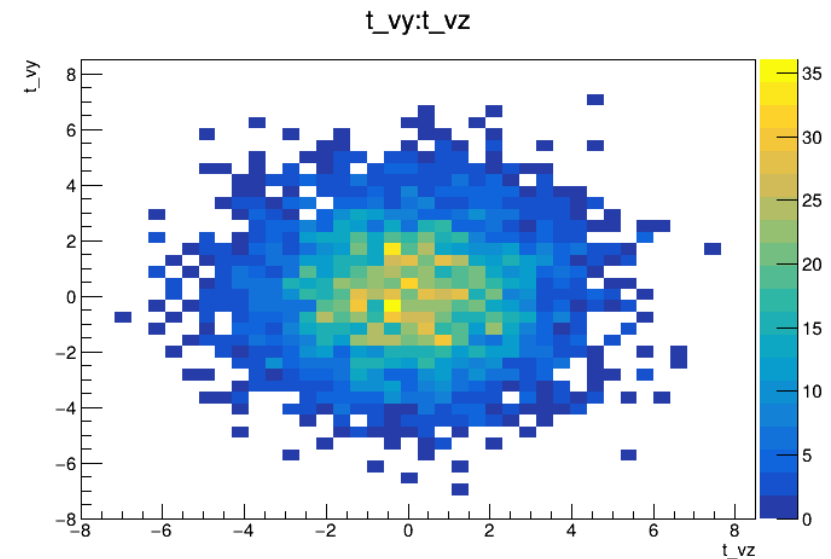
# **ACTS Alignment example**

# Sanity check with a telescope-like detector

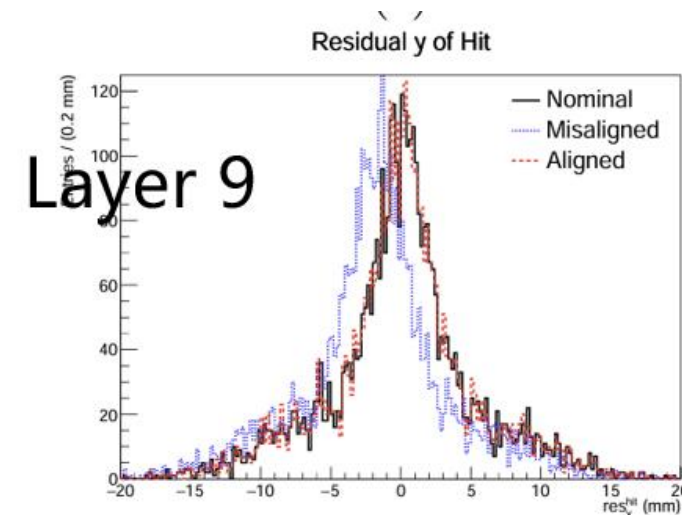
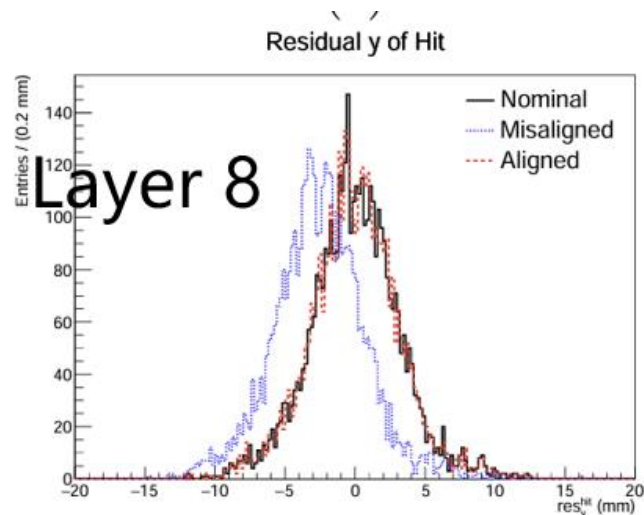
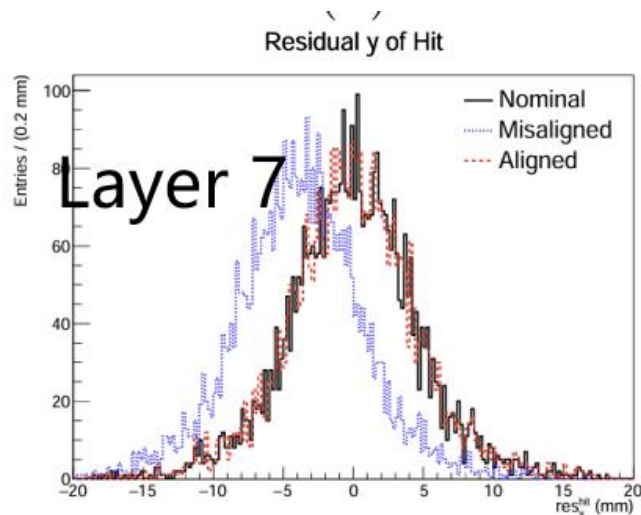
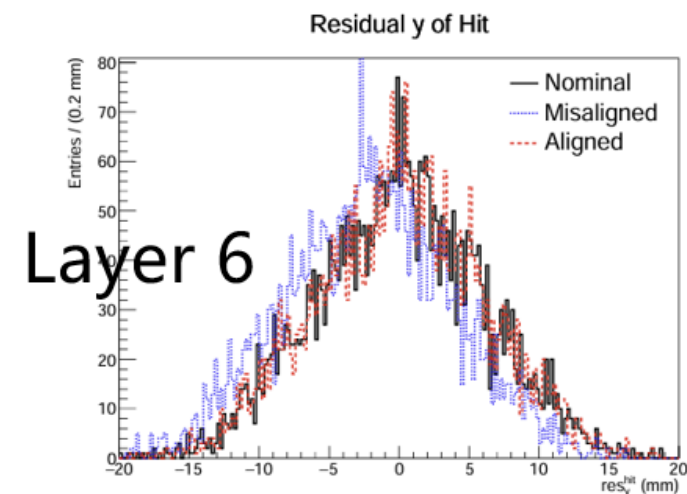
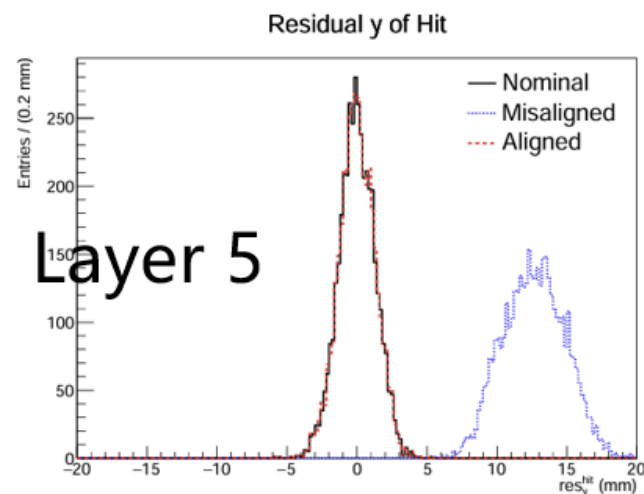
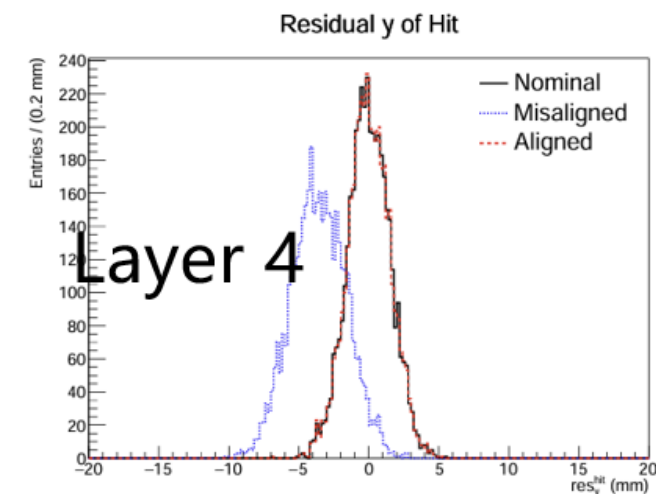
- Particle Gun:
  - 10k muon per event,  $p = 10$  GeV, direction of momentum along global x-axis
  - Vertex: x, t=0, y and z~2D Gaussian with  $\sigma_y = \sigma_z = 2$  mm
- Alignment degree of freedom: Translation-in-x/y+Rotation-around-z
- Only align the misaligned layers



25 x 25  $\mu\text{m}^2$  resolution



# Residual at telescope layer



# Validation with a realistic example detector

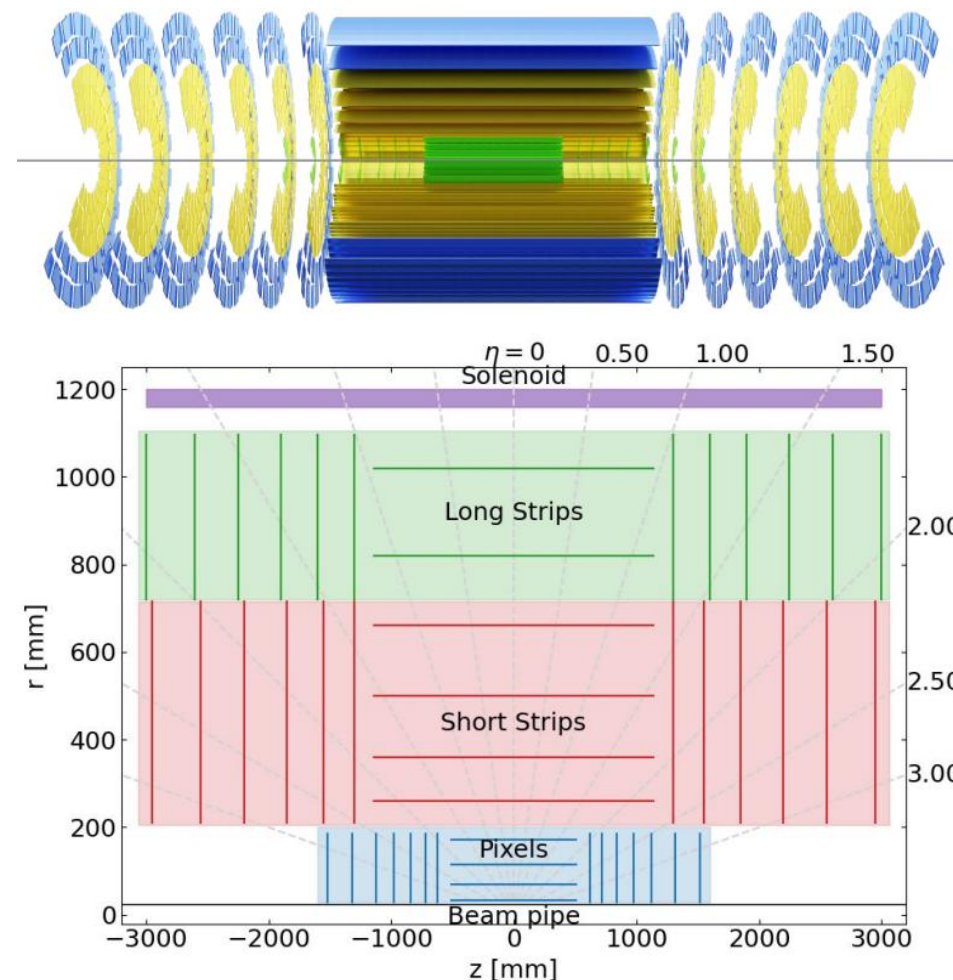
- Pixel
  - 2D Resolution:  $15\ \mu\text{m}$
  - 4 barrel layers + 7 endcap disks
- Short strips
  - 2D Resolution:  $43\ \mu\text{m}$  /  $1.2\ \text{mm}$
  - 4 barrel layers + 6 endcap disks
- Long strips
  - 1D, two sided with stereo angle (Resolution:  $72\ \mu\text{m}$ )
  - 2 barrel layers + 6 endcap disks

Misalignment decoration (testing two layers for now:

Pixel-4<sup>th</sup> layer and Short Strip-2<sup>nd</sup> layer):

→ Translation-in-x/y:  $\pm [0.25, 0.75]\ \text{mm}$

→ Rotation-about-z:  $\pm [0.01, 0.03]\ \text{rad}$



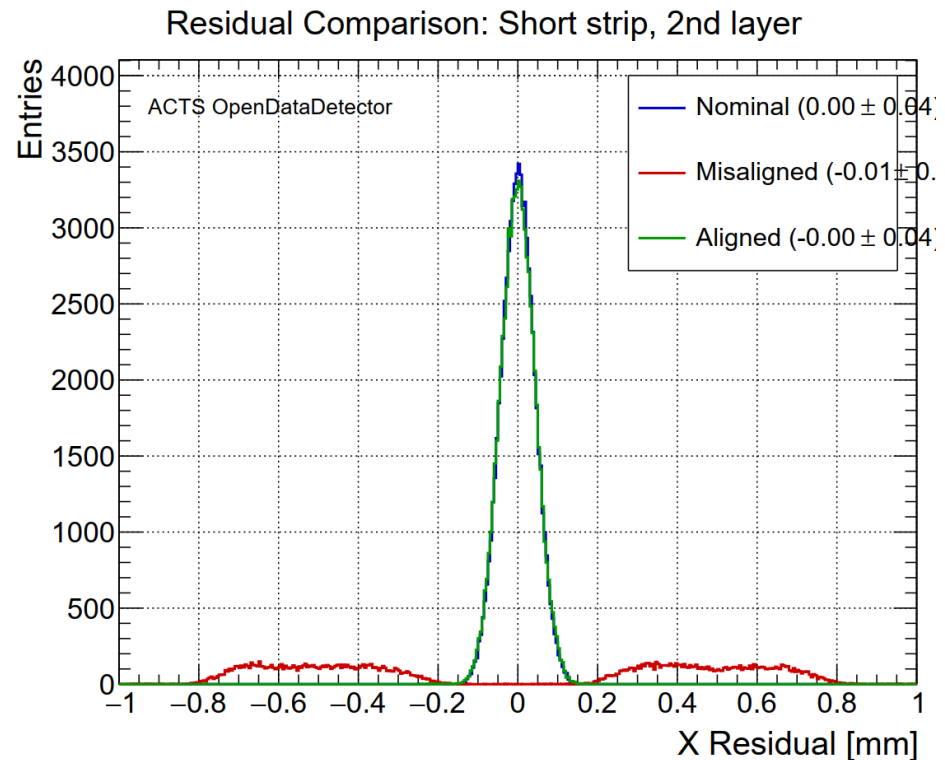
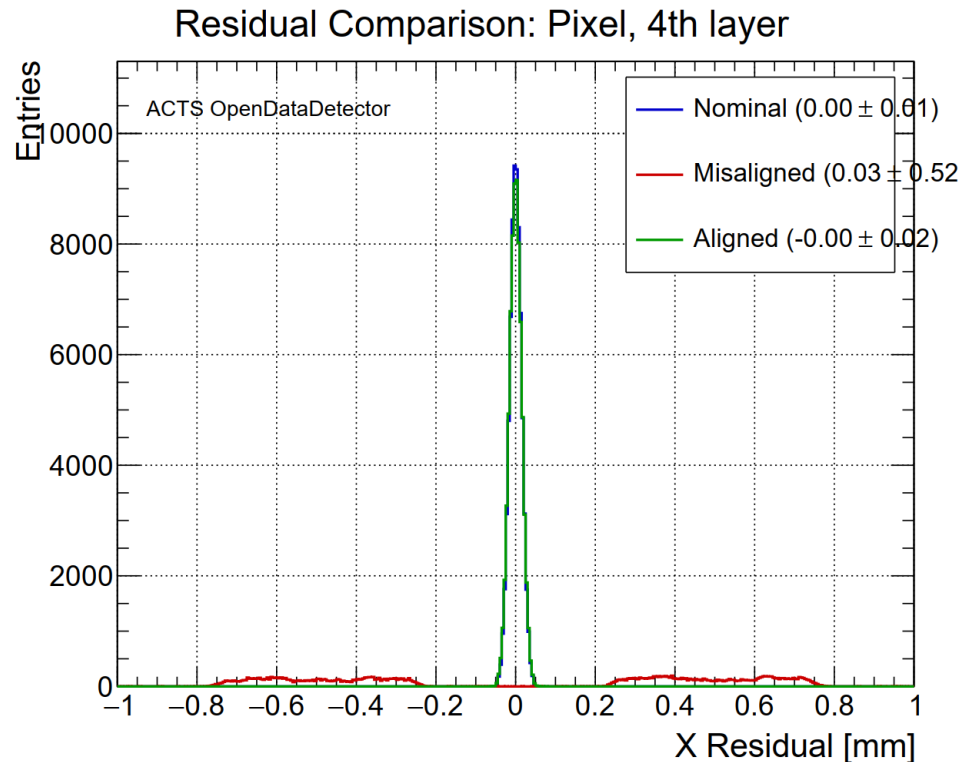
GitLab: <https://gitlab.cern.ch/acts/OpenDataDetector>

ACAT 2021: <https://indico.cern.ch/event/855454/contributions/4596738>

CHEP 2023: <https://indico.jlab.org/event/459/contributions/11546>

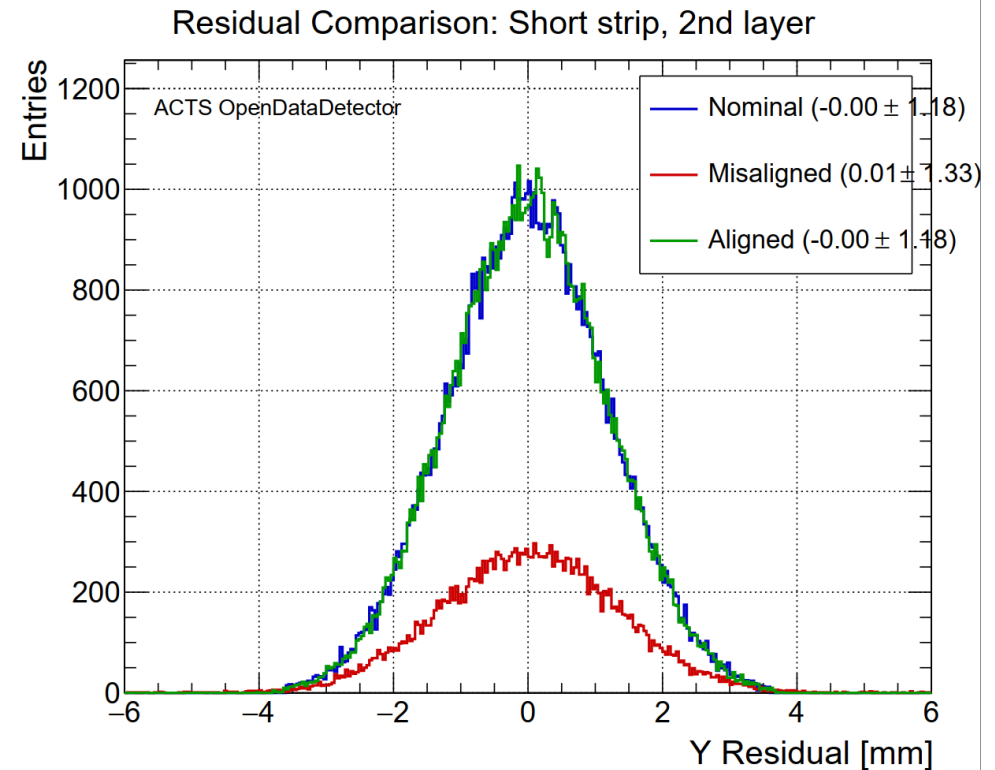
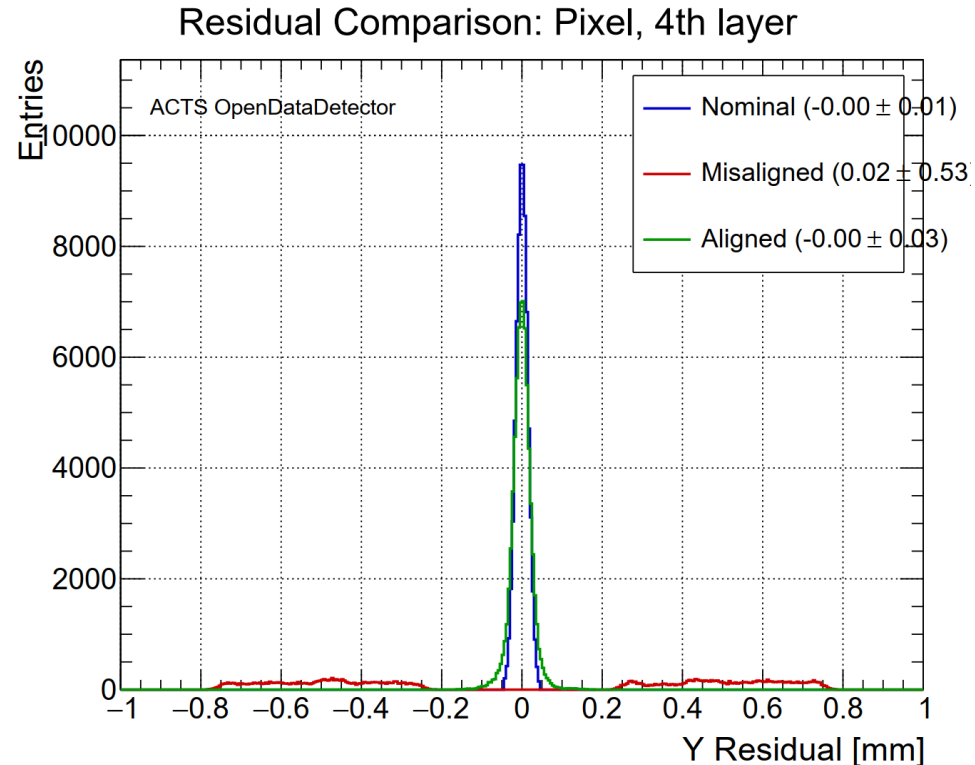
# Residual

- The residual in local x direction looks good (consistent with results without ideal detector geometry)



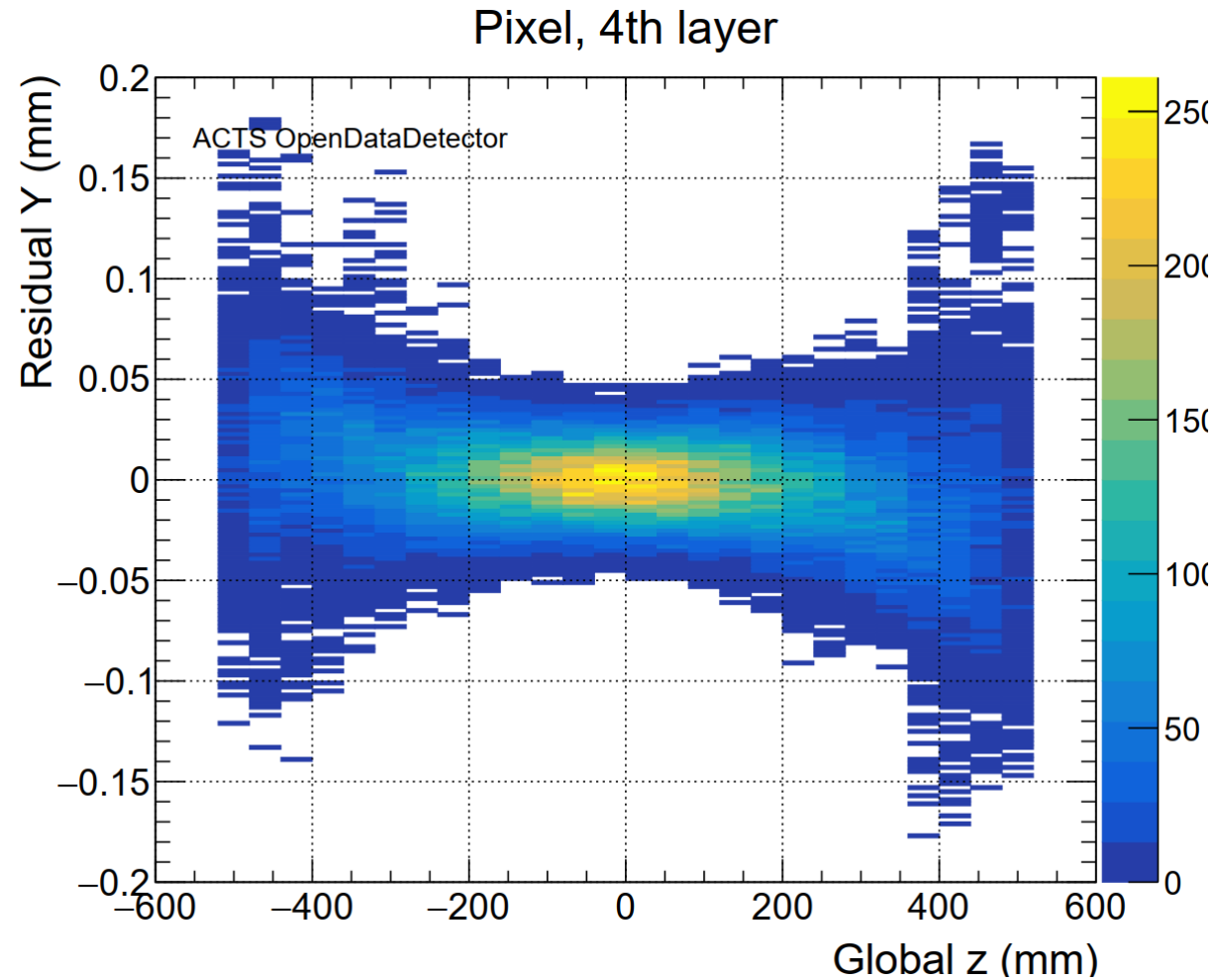
# Residual

- The residual in local y direction at Pixel is sub-optimal (under investigation)



# Residual

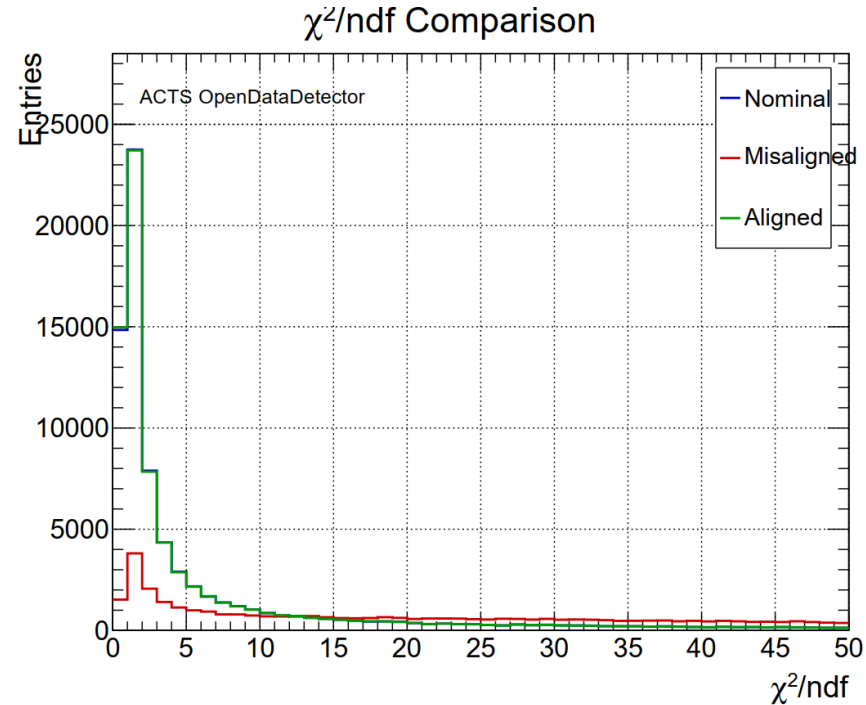
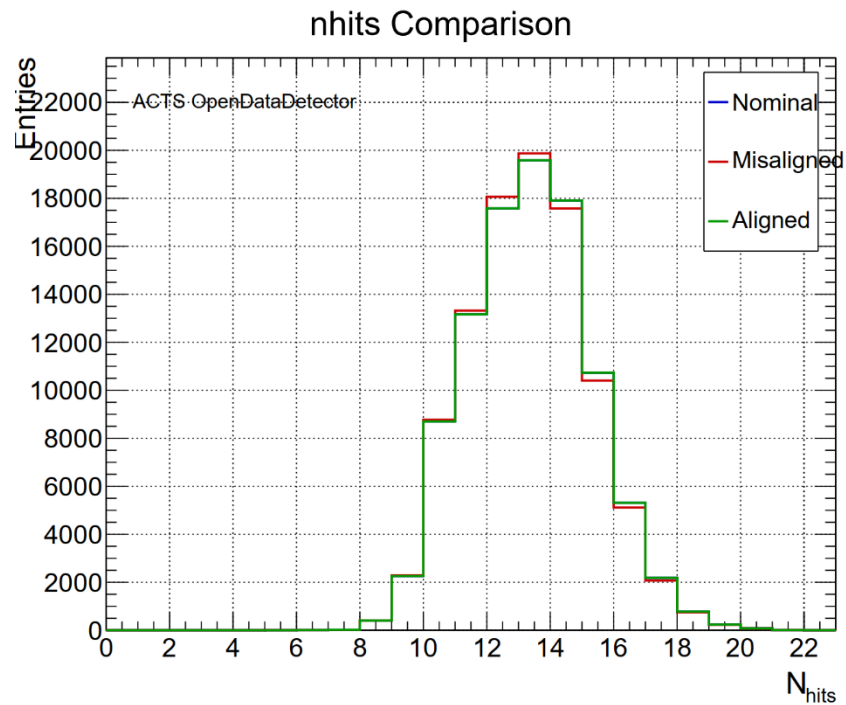
- The residual in local y direction at Pixel gets larger at larger global  $|z|$





# Track quality

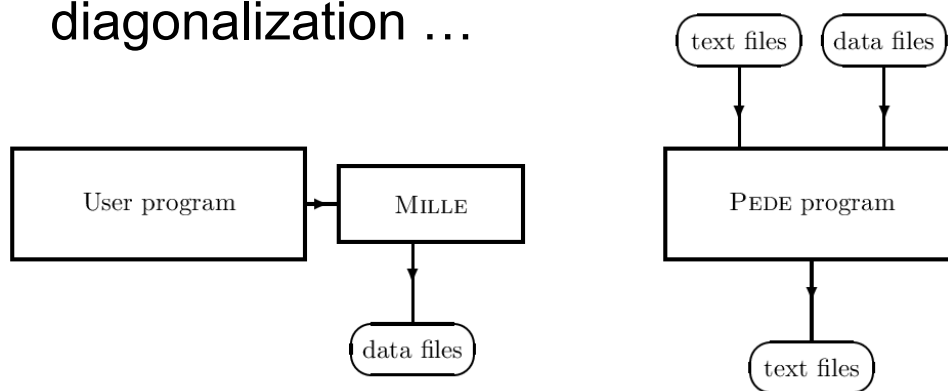
- Improved nHits and  $\chi^2/\text{ndf}$  for tracks with aligned geometry



# Minimization with MillePede ?

MillePede is a traditional alignment tool used and validated by BESIII, CMS ...

- MillePede = Mille + Pede
  - **Mille**: write **residual**, **derivatives of residual w.r.t. alignment parameters** and **track parameters** into binary file
  - **Pede**: solve equation with dimension  $n$  to get solution for delta of track parameters :
    - Solver: Inversion, Cholesky decomposition, diagonalization ...



Called for each dimension of a residual of each track

## ◆ mille()

```
void Mille::mille ( int      NLC,  
                   const float * derLc,  
                   int      NGL,  
                   const float * derGl,  
                   const int * label,  
                   float     rMeas,  
                   float     sigma  
                 )
```

Add measurement to buffer.

## Parameters

[in] **NLC** number of local derivatives  
[in] **derLc** local derivatives  
[in] **NGL** number of global derivatives  
[in] **derGl** global derivatives  
[in] **label** global labels  
[in] **rMeas** measurement (residuum)  
[in] **sigma** error

# Summary

- ACTS is a tracking software, but also provides ingredients for alignment
  - Validated with a toy telescope-like detector and a realistic Open Data Detector
  - Only surface/module-wise for now. Superstructure alignment is in progress
- Minimization needs to be handled externally by the users, e.g. Mille-Pede.
  - A toy minimization based on Eigen solver is in place more for proof of principle
- Join us if you are interested:
  - <https://mattermost.web.cern.ch/acts/channels/acts-alignment>

