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27th ITER Council: Moving forward with assembly phase

ST PAUL-LEZ-DURANCE, France (19 November 2020) – The ITER Council has convened to review the performance of the ITER Project toward First Plasma. The Council evaluated the progress of manufacturing, construction, and assembly, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on project progress.

At its Twenty-Seventh Meeting on 18-19 November 2020, the ITER Council convened once again via remote videoconference, in view of the ongoing pandemic. The Council assessed the latest progress reports and performance metrics, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on project progress. The project has largely managed to continue its robust performance, both with respect to Members' delivery of First-of-a-Kind components and worksite installation and assembly activities. Some impacts on the schedule towards achieving First Plasma in 2025 have been identified, but still remain to be assessed after consideration of mitigation measures.

china

eu

india

japan

korea

russia

usa

Continuity plan under COVID-19 conditions: The Council commended the ITER Organization (IO) and Domestic Agencies (DAs) on their resourcefulness and resolute implementation of the continuity plan under COVID-19 conditions. Prioritization of critical activities and launch of the “New Normal” at the ITER Organization has ensured productivity while rigorously adhering to hygienic measures, thereby largely preserving the integrity of ITER's closely integrated project schedule while minimizing risk and impact to the health and safety of project staff and collaborators.

Physical progress: The Council noted, with appreciation, the major project achievements ongoing since its last meeting, including the continued arrival of First-of-a-Kind components and the formal start of assembly phase.

- Four toroidal field coils have now arrived from Japan and Europe.
- Poloidal field coil 6 (PF6), procured by Europe in collaboration with China, is undergoing cold testing at the ITER site. PF5, manufactured onsite, is nearly complete.
- The first vacuum vessel sector, fabricated in Korea with port stubs supplied by Russia, arrived at ITER in August, enabling the start of preparation work on the first sector sub-assembly.
- The cryostat lower cylinder supplied by India has been installed, and is now being welded to the cryostat base.
- The qualification of the upending tools for the assembling of thermal shielding, toroidal field coils and vacuum vessel sectors.
- Significant onsite progress has occurred on the installation of the pulsed power electrical network, magnet power conversion system, cryogenics plant, cooling water systems, and cryolines and busbars in the Tokamak Complex.

The Council decided to maintain the Baseline 2016 schedule. The Council will further review the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, and other potential sources of delay, taking into account mitigation measures, at its next meeting in June 2021.



ITER Member support: The Council welcomed the remarkable statements of support expressed by all Members, at the ministerial and/or Head-of-State level, during the start-of-assembly celebration on 28 July 2020. The Council noted ongoing efforts made by the Members to meet their in-kind and in-cash commitments to enable the successful implementation of the construction strategy on schedule, despite the impacts of the pandemic.

Council Members reaffirmed their strong belief in the value of the ITER mission and vision to develop fusion science and technology, and resolved to work together to find timely solutions to facilitate ITER's success. The Council congratulated the One-ITER Team on the commitment to effective collaboration that has put the project on the path to success. The Council will continue to monitor project performance closely, and to provide the support needed to maintain this pace of achievement.

BACKGROUND TO THE PRESS RELEASE

ITER—designed to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion power—will be the world's largest experimental fusion facility. Fusion is the process that powers the Sun and the stars: when light atomic nuclei fuse together to form heavier ones, a large amount of energy is released. Fusion research is aimed at developing a safe, abundant and environmentally responsible energy source.

ITER is also a first-of-a-kind global collaboration. Europe is contributing almost half of the costs of its construction, while the other six Members to this joint international venture (China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the USA), are contributing equally to the rest. The ITER Project is under construction in Saint-Paul-lez-Durance, in the south of France.

For more information on the ITER Project, visit: <http://www.iter.org/>