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33^d ITER Council Meeting: ITER Project making progress, preparing updated baseline

ST PAUL-LEZ-DURANCE, France (17 November 2023) – The ITER Council convened to review the performance of the ITER Project and work leading to the update of the project baseline. The Council received presentations on the progress of construction, manufacturing, assembly, and licensing and safety demonstration. Council Members re-emphasized the strong value of the ITER mission and resolved to work together to find solutions to facilitate ITER's success. The Council also congratulated the European-Japanese Broader Approach collaboration on having achieved First Plasma at JT-60SA on 23 October 2023.

At its thirty-third Meeting on 16-17 November 2023, ITER Director-General Pietro Barabaschi reported on the progress of the ITER Project, reflecting the efforts of the ITER Organization and Domestic Agencies to position the project for success and strengthen its central position in global efforts to deploy a cleaner, reliable and abundant energy source.

china Project progress: The Council noted the progress achieved on repairs to key components—the vacuum vessel (VV) bevel joints and thermal shield (TS) cooling pipes—as well as ongoing manufacturing, assembly, and installation. Manufacturing of the final poloidal field coil is in its final stages. The final toroidal field (TF) coil from Japan has been delivered, and the final TF coil from Europe is in shipment. The first two central solenoid modules have been stacked and are being aligned while the third central solenoid module has arrived at ITER. Installation of magnet feeders has begun in the tokamak pit. Multiple support systems have been commissioned or are in the commissioning process.

eu
india
japan
korea
usa Progress with ASN: The Council noted with appreciation that the Director-General's ongoing dialogue with the French nuclear safety authority, Autorité de Sûreté Nucléaire (ASN), has created a strategy to address ITER's first-of-a-kind regulatory needs. The Council urged the Director-General to continue this constructive dialogue.

Updating the project baseline: The ITER Organization and Domestic Agencies are advancing their collaboration toward the development of an optimized, reliable cost and schedule baseline. This update includes recovery from past delays incurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic and technical challenges of completing first-of-a-kind components (such as the VV sectors), and enhanced testing of components (e.g., TF coils) in order to offset future risks. A critical aspect is better assembly sequencing, in order to achieve the fastest path to the start of ITER nuclear operation. The Council took note of these ongoing efforts, and requested the Director-General to continue moving forward expeditiously with preparation of the updated project baseline proposal for validation by ITER Members in 2024.

ITER Member support: Council Members re-emphasized the strong value of the ITER mission and resolved to work together to find solutions to facilitate ITER's success. They also expressed their support for ITER's commitment to integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion principles into hiring actions, work culture, and the cultivation of the next generation of the fusion workforce. The Council noted the ongoing challenges facing the project and expressed appreciation that all ITER Members are continuing to meet their in-kind and in-cash commitments to support project success.



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 that serves as the scientific backbone behind the growth of a fusion industry. As the host, Europe contributes 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 United States), contribute equally for the remaining expenses. 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/>