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35th ITER Council Meeting: Support for the overall approach for the proposed updated Baseline; strong project execution in 2024

ST PAUL-LEZ-DURANCE, France (21 November 2024) – The ITER Council convened to review the performance of the ITER Project. The Council received presentations on the progress of construction, manufacturing, assembly, and licensing.

Strong project execution in 2024: At the Council's thirty-fifth meeting on 20-21 November 2024, ITER Director-General Pietro Barabaschi reported on the progress of the ITER Project. Throughout 2024, the Project has performed according to the schedule of the proposed new baseline, with an execution rate that surpasses all previous years.

Discussion on the Proposed Baseline 2024: The Council discussed the proposed new baseline, presented by the ITER Organization (IO) at IC-34 in June, prioritizing the start of substantial research operation as rapidly as possible. Based on the analyses carried out so far by the ITER Members, the Council endorsed the overall approach proposed for Baseline 2024. The Council requested the IO, in cooperation with the Domestic Agencies, to continue their efforts to reduce the risks of the project and optimize costs, through the determination of project phases and gates, with appropriate milestones.

Component repairs: The Council welcomed the on-schedule repairs to thermal shields and the recent arrival of the first European vacuum vessel sector and the fourth and final Korean vacuum vessel sector, as well as the completed repairs to sectors. These successes reflect the collaborative incorporation of lessons learned with the efforts of the expert panel on issues of the vacuum vessel sector and thermal shield non-conformities, and give increased confidence in the project's capacity to deliver the remaining sectors in accordance with the proposed updated baseline schedule.

Additional progress: The Council noted additional areas of substantial project progress following completion of all toroidal field coils, which was celebrated on 1 July, including: sector module subassembly; divertor component manufacturing; achievement of helium liquefaction in the cryogenics plant; completion of the Radio Frequency Building and preparation to install the first gyrotrons for electron cyclotron heating; completion of the design for the magnet cold testing facility; completion of design of the disruption mitigation system; and constructive interaction with the French safety regulator regarding the staged licensing approach.

Engagement with Private Sector Fusion Companies: The Council welcomed the channels established for sharing knowledge with private sector entities, including the formalization of technical visits, discussions with ITER experts, open sourcing of some ITER science software, and a Private Sector Fusion Engagement (PSFE) help desk to oversee the sharing of ITER documents, with appropriate constraints for protecting intellectual property. These actions follow the inaugural ITER workshop in May, after which a series of follow-up surveys and discussions had been incorporated into the PSFE project to strengthen interaction between ITER and the private sector.



ITER Member support: The Council approved the 2025 ITER budget, which conforms to the proposed updated baseline. Council Members re-emphasized the strong value of the ITER mission and resolved to work together to facilitate ITER's success. The Council noted the challenges and successes of this first-of-a-kind 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/>