



- » [Newsletter](#)
- » [Weather](#)
- » [Community](#)

English home Forum Photo Gallery Features Newsletter Archive

About US Help Site Map

languages

- ▶ [China](#)
- ▶ [World](#)
- ▶ [Opinion](#)
- ▶ [Business](#)
- ▶ [Sci-Edu](#)
- ▶ [Culture/Life](#)
- ▶ [Sports](#)
- ▶ [Photos](#)

Services

- [Newsletter](#)
- [Online Community](#)
- [China Biz Info](#)
- [News Archive](#)
- [Feedback](#)
- [Voices of Readers](#)
- [Weather Forecast](#)

RSS Feeds

- [China XML](#)
- [Business XML](#)
- [World XML](#)
- [Sci-Edu XML](#)
- [Culture/Life XML](#)
- [Sports XML](#)
- [Photos XML](#)
- [Most Popular XML](#)
- [FM Briefings XML](#)

Search

Go

About China

- [China at a glance](#)
- [China in brief 2004](#)
- [Chinese history](#)
- [Constitution](#)
- [Laws & regulations](#)
- [CPC & state organs](#)
- [Ethnic minorities](#)
- [Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping](#)



Home >> [Sci-Edu](#)

UPDATED: 20:06, July 01, 2005

China invests more into thermonuclear reaction study



China's [Ministry of Science and Technology](#) announced Friday in [Beijing](#) to invest 50 million yuan (6 million US dollars) more to the country's ongoing research on thermonuclear experimental reactors.

The basic study on fusion reactions, which would be coordinated by Huo Yuping, professor at Zhengzhou University in central China, obtained the largest sum of funds of the National Basic Research Program in fiscal year 2005-2006.

Scientists with the [Chinese Academy of Sciences](#) (CAS) Institute of Plasma Physics have already developed an Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak, one prototype of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), which costs 10 billion euros and gathers researchers from the European Union, the [United States](#), [Japan](#), [Russia](#), the Republic of Korea and China.

The ITER is widely regarded as a testing step between today's plasma physics studies and tomorrow's electricity-producing fusion power plants.

The new Chinese investment into the thermonuclear research will speed up construction of such reactors, a senior official with the ministry said.

Using deuterium, which is everywhere in seawater, as fuel for reactions, a hydrogen plasma torus operating at over 100 million Celsius degrees will produce 500 megawatts of fusion power. The ITER, which means "the way" in Latin, is based on that idea.

The National Basic Research Program, which was written in March 1997 and coded as the 973 Program, is designed to finance the country's most strategic basic research frontiers.

The state has poured the largest sum of money, worth 1.46 billion yuan, into the 54 projects this fiscal year.

Cheng Jinpei, vice minister of Science and Technology, said after the announcement, "The 973 Program is aimed at combining scientists' pioneering spirit with the nation's strategic scientific research planning."

From 1998 to the end of 2004, the state sponsored a total of 188 projects within the 973 Program framework.

Source: *Xinhua*

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- [Most Popular](#)

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