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JAPAN DETERMINED TO HOST NUCLEAR PROJECT, READY TO DISCUSS COMPENSATION

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TOKYO, Nov 11 (AFP) - Japan is determined to host a multibillion-dollar experimental nuclear reactor amid an intense contest with France and is ready to discuss ways to appease the losing side, an official said Thursday.

Two days of negotiations in Vienna between six nations failed to secure an agreement on whether France or Japan would host the revolutionary International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project.

"We will discuss what we can do to become the host," Takahiro Hayashi, deputy director of Japan's Office of Fusion Energy, told AFP.

"What we have proposed is that the host and non-host should share responsibilities," Hayashi said. "That includes other projects."

Sources at the commission in Brussels said Tokyo might agree to a tradeoff scenario in which it lets ITER go to France if Japan gets to be host country for a new international scientific computing centre.

Satoru Ohtake, the director of nuclear fusion at Japan's science and technology ministry, who attended the talks Monday and Tuesday, was to return to Japan on Thursday, Hayashi said.

The French minister for science, Francois d'Aubert, is in turn due in Japan next week.

The United States and South Korea back building ITER at Rokkasho-mura in Japan, while China and Russia back the European Union's site of Cadarache in southern France.

ITER is a test bed for what is being billed as a clean, safe, inexhaustible energy source of the future. The project, emulating the sun's nuclear fusion, is not expected to generate electricity before 2050.

The ITER budget is projected to be 10 billion euros (13 billion dollars) over the next 30 years, including 4.7 billion euros to build the reactor. The EU plans to finance 40 percent of the total.

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