

Fusion project ITER presented to European Industry

Over six hundred representatives from European industry and fusion research institutes gathered in Barcelona on 13/14 December, for a two-day workshop named "ITER – Opportunities for European Industry". The goal of the workshop is to inform European companies about the international ITER Fusion Energy Project, and to discuss opportunities for their involvement in its construction. The workshop follows an initiative of the Committee for Fusion Industry of the European Commission, and is hosted by the Spanish fusion laboratory CIEMAT.

During the ITER-project, the European industrial companies that will construct the European part of the ITER-device will use high-tech know-how developed in fusion research institutions around Europe. It is expected that a lot of technological innovation will result from the exploitation of this knowledge, which opens many opportunities for high-tech companies to participate fruitfully to the project. Fusion research institutions themselves will benefit from industrial methodologies and knowledge. The workshop, which includes a fusion industry exhibition, offers a practical possibility for industrial parties to meet fusion experts from ITER and the European Fusion Development Agreement (EFDA), and --to get involved in the construction of the project. An Industry Suppliers Database, to which interested companies are encouraged to register, was officially presented at this occasion.

ITER will be a major experimental facility to demonstrate the scientific and technical feasibility of fusion power. The realisation of ITER will be a major step towards the creation of prototype reactors for power plants which are safe, sustainable, environmentally responsible and economically viable. The construction costs of ITER are estimated at 4.7 billion Euro over 10 years, a large part of which will be awarded in the form of contracts to industrial companies and fusion research institutions. Another 5 billion Euros are foreseen for the 20-year exploitation period. Europe will contribute 45% of the costs, while the other six parties to this joint international venture (Japan, China, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, India, and the USA), will contribute the rest.

During a meeting held in Korea on the 6th of December, the ITER-Parties reached agreement on the main elements of the International Agreement for ITER, including the sharing of the in-kind contributions to the project between the different Parties. This should enable the signature process to be completed during 2006 and ITER construction to begin soon thereafter. During the same meeting, India joined the project as a full partner, which means that now over half the global population is represented in the ITER project.

Europe has achieved a position of pre-eminence in fusion through its extensive fusion research programme, which is strongly integrated on the European level. In June this year the ITER-Parties decided that ITER should be located on the site proposed by the EU at Cadarache in the south of France. Around half of the hardware in the construction programme will be supplied by Europe through a European Domestic Agency, which will be, amongst other things, responsible for the supply of the European contribution to ITER and for the co-ordination of related R&D. The European Domestic Agency will be located in Barcelona.

Source: European Fusion Development Agreement (EFDA)

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