

Pietro Barabaschi, Director-General ITER Organization

Born in 1965 in Milan, Italy, Pietro Barabaschi, an electro-mechanical engineer by training, has dedicated virtually his entire career to fusion research. He began his tenure as Director-General of the ITER Organization in October 2022.

In the late 1980s, shortly after graduating from the University of Genoa, Pietro joined the Joint European Torus (JET)—a European project based in Culham, UK—to work on what was at the time the largest fusion machine ever designed.



As he worked on different aspects of JET, acquiring a comprehensive experience of the complexities of building a large tokamak, another project, even more ambitious, was taking shape within the international fusion community. Launched in the mid-1980s by the USA and the USSR, soon joined by Europe and Japan, the ITER Project proposed the construction of a tokamak whose size and technical specifications would demonstrate the industrial feasibility of fusion energy.

china

eu

india

japan

korea

russia

usa

Pietro joined the ITER team in 1993 when the project was implementing early Engineering Design Activities from three Joint Work Sites: one in Munich-Garching, Germany, one in San Diego, California, and one in Naka, Japan. Working in San Diego and Naka, Pietro was appointed Deputy to the ITER Project Leader and Head of Engineering and Design Integration Unit in the year 2000.

In 2006, he moved from ITER to Fusion for Energy (F4E)—the European Joint Undertaking responsible for the delivery of European components to ITER and to the “Broader Approach,” a collaboration on advanced fusion research between Europe and Japan. Appointed Head of the Fusion Development Department, he led the European contributions to the JT-60SA project (a complete upgrade of the JT-60U tokamak) from 2007 to 2021. He also served as the F4E Acting Executive Director in 2014-2015, and again in 2022 until he took over as ITER Director-General.

In his different positions within the world of fusion research, Pietro has accumulated deep experience in the scientific, technological, industrial, human and financial dimensions of international collaborations.

He was the recipient of the US Fusion Power Associates “Excellence in Nuclear Engineering Award” in 1997, and was recognized for “outstanding technical contributions to the field of nuclear technology” at the International Symposium on Fusion Nuclear Technology in Japan in 2005.