Press Release

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32nd ITER Council Meeting: ITER Project focuses on updated baseline preparation

ST PAUL-LEZ-DURANCE, France (22 June 2023) – The ITER Council has convened to review the performance of the ITER Project and efforts to update the project baseline. The Council received comprehensive presentations on the progress of construction, manufacturing, assembly, and system commissioning. Council Members reaffirmed their strong belief in the value of the ITER mission and resolved to work together to find timely solutions to facilitate ITER's success.

At its thirty-second Meeting on 21-22 June 2023, ITER Director-General Pietro Barabaschi reported on the progress of the ITER Project, reflecting the efforts of the ITER Organization (IO) and Domestic Agencies (DAs) to position the project for success, and to instill a robust culture of quality and safety. The Council noted that component manufacturing and delivery, and system installation and commissioning have continued at a steady pace.

china
eu
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Updating the project baseline: Much of the discussion focused on the joint efforts of the IO, DAs and selected external experts to propose an optimized, reliable cost and schedule baseline for Council consideration. These efforts include:

- Recovering from past delays incurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic and technical challenges in completing First-of-a-Kind components;
- Finalizing strategies and supplier contracts for repairs to key components;
- Close and effective engagement with the French regulator, Autorité de sûreté nucléaire (ASN), regarding their questions related to the machine assembly "hold point," and ensuring mutual alignment on the way forward;
- Setting clear, scientifically and technically meaningful milestones along the way to full nuclear operation that effectively and transparently communicate the progress of the ITER Project;
- Considering strategies to offset future risks, including in particular the use of ITER's completed cryogenics plant, following commissioning, for additional testing of toroidal field coils prior to installation;
- Proposing a change to the plasma-facing "first-wall" material from beryllium to tungsten; and
- Planning for an "Augmented First Plasma," to enhance the scope and scientific value of ITER's first experimental campaign.

Collectively, these efforts retain ITER's added value to the fusion community, while providing critical information to the burgeoning commercial fusion sector, as well as important safety regulatory insights and lessons learned. As envisioned, these efforts will facilitate ITER's capacity to provide the required safety demonstration to the regulator, and will compress the previously envisioned staged approach to reach ITER's scientific goals as rapidly as possible. The Council took note of these efforts, and requested the Director-General to continue moving forward expeditiously with preparation of the updated project baseline proposal for review and approval in 2024.

New leadership team members: In keeping with the Director-General's recommendation, the Council appointed Sergio Orlandi as ITER Construction Project Leader, and Alain Bécoulet as ITER Chief Scientist. The Council also took note of the Director-General's efforts, supported by the DAs, to achieve more agile project management.

ITER Member support: Council Members reaffirmed their strong belief in the value of the ITER mission and resolved to work together to find timely solutions to facilitate ITER's success. At the request of the Director-General, the Council agreed to examine the feasibility of certain adjustments to project governance, in particular to strengthen the project's capability to control the quality of its supply chain. The Council noted the ongoing challenges facing the project and appreciated that all ITER Members continue 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. Europe is contributing 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), are contributing equally to the rest. 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/