

£3 million nuclear robotics contract is first tranche in LongOps UK-Japan deal

The UK Atomic Energy Authority (“UKAEA”) has awarded Veolia Nuclear Solutions (UK) and Wälischmiller Engineering GmbH separate contracts totalling £3 million to supply robotic manipulator arms to its RACE research facility.

The £3M contract stems from the £12M UK-Japanese robotics deal for fusion energy and nuclear decommissioning research, called “LongOps”, announced in January this year.

LongOps will support the delivery of faster and safer decommissioning at the Tokyo Electric Power Company’s (“TEPCO”) Fukushima Dai-ichi site in Japan and at Sellafield in the UK.

Veolia Nuclear Solutions (UK) and Wälischmiller Engineering GmbH will each provide a twin-arm haptic manipulator – a form of kinaesthetic communications technology, complete with electrical and control systems, to deliver key aspects of the LongOps project. The manipulators will also be used by UKAEA to train operators that are based at both Sellafield and Fukushima.

In addition, developments from LongOps will be applied to the upgrading, maintenance and dismantling of fusion devices, such as the Joint European Torus (“JET”).

The four-year LongOps collaboration is led by UKAEA’s Remote Applications in Challenging Environments (“RACE”) robotics test facility at Culham Science Centre near Oxford.

LongOps is funded equally by UK Research and Innovation (“UKRI”), the UK’s Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (“NDA”) and TEPCO.

Notes to Editors:

About LongOps

In January 2021, the UK and Japan announced the LongOps research and technology deployment collaboration to help automate nuclear decommissioning and aspects of fusion energy production.

The decommissioning of legacy nuclear facilities and fusion facilities are complex large-scale projects that are time-intensive to accomplish safely. Robotics and digital twin technologies will play an essential part in carrying them out efficiently with no risk to human health.

The world-leading LongOps alliance will see new robotics and automation techniques applied to both fusion research and to decommissioning nuclear facilities in Japan and the UK.

[More information on LongOps.](#)

About Veolia Nuclear Solutions (UK)

Veolia Nuclear Solutions is a leading world-class player in nuclear facility clean-up and treatment of radioactive waste. It provides the most comprehensive range of technologies, expertise and services to develop the activity of facility restoration, decommissioning and treatment of radioactive waste.

About Wälischmiller Engineering GmbH

Wälischmiller Engineering is a global manufacturer of manipulators, remote handling systems, and robots for high-radiation and other hazardous environments. The company is involved in complex projects all over the world. For over sixty years Wälischmiller has produced world-class innovative equipment for the market areas of nuclear technology and industry.