

News story: UKAEA launches National Fusion Technology Platform

More than 80 delegates from key stakeholders across the UK nuclear sector have heard details of multi-million-pound contracts from ITER that they can target with help from UKAEA after the Government's recent £86 million investment in UKAEA at Culham.

John Devine, head of exports and investment on the civil nuclear team at the Department for International Trade, kicked off the event at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, on Tuesday 16 January by saying he was confident in UKAEA's expertise, capability and record, before adding that the event represented an "opportunity for UK technologies and companies to get involved" and "take their expertise to the world."

Ian Chapman, UKAEA CEO, outlined how the two investments – H3AT and FTF – would help in making commercial fusion a reality.

The first centre of excellence – named Hydrogen-3 Advanced Technology (H3AT) – will research how to process and store tritium and helps with ITER's development.

Ian Chapman said:

The main purpose of H3AT is to looking forward to ITER. We want to partner with UK industry to make sure they win these contracts. This will allow the R&D to have other benefits as well as fusion, while these facilities will also help to train the next generation of people who will operate ITER.

Added to that was the Fusion Technology Facility (FTF) for developing thermal hydraulic tests for components under fusion conditions: for example in a vacuum, high heat flux, under a magnetic field. Partnering with UKAEA will support industry with a range of test and design capabilities, preparing them to bid for forthcoming major ITER contracts.

Ian Chapman commented:

We are extremely well placed – through using these processes in JET and the new facilities – to support the supply chain in its bidding for a wide range of projects.

Tom Greatrex, Chief Executive of the Nuclear Industry Association, added:

The level of Government investment seen with the £86 million

National Fusion Technology Platform demonstrates the expertise, confidence and ability of staff at Culham in being at the cutting edge of research. As well as being a world leader in fusion research, we have a similar industrial capability which we have the opportunity to seize. There is a very real sense that the UK can make its mark on the world in helping to develop sustainable nuclear power for the future.