

## Minutes

### NIRAB Tenth meeting

22nd March 2016, 13:00-16:00

The Royal Academy of Engineering, London

#### Attendees:

##### MEMBERS

Dame Sue Ion	Chair		
Tim Abram	University of Manchester	John Lillington	AMEC Foster Wheeler
Marie Carlick (on behalf of Andrew Carlick)	DBD Ltd	John Molyneux (on behalf of Paul Stein)	Rolls-Royce
Richard Clegg	Lloyd's Register	Neil Thomson	EDF Energy
Steve Cowley	CCFE	Mike Tynan	NAMRC
Paul Harding	URENCO	Laurence Williams	CORWM
Neil Hyatt	Sheffield University	Peter Wylie	Sellafield Ltd
Malcolm Joyce	Lancaster University	Chris Moore (on behalf NNL of Andrew Sherry)	
Bill Lee	Imperial College		

##### OBSERVERS

Derek Allen	Innovate UK	Melanie Brownridge	NDA
Neil Bateman	EPSRC	Robin Grimes	FCO

##### OFFICIALS

Rob Arnold	DECC	Jack Kelly	DECC
Leo Dando Ladenis	DECC	Craig Lucas	DECC
Si Dilks	DECC	Katrina McLeay	DECC
Paul Drabwell	BIS	Rupert Wilmouth	GO-Science

##### SECRETARIAT

Andrew Brown	NIRO	Andrew Howarth	NIRO
Gordon Bryan	NIRO	Simon White	NIRO

#### Apologies:

##### MEMBERS

Andrew Carlick	DBD Ltd
Mick Gornall	Springfields Ltd
Paul Stein	Rolls-Royce
Andrew Sherry	NNL

##### OBSERVERS

Sir Mark Walport	GO-Science
Tim Dafforn	BIS
David Senior	ONR
John Loughhead	DECC

## Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

The Chair opened the tenth meeting of NIRAB by welcoming members and observers. The draft minutes from the last meeting (NIRAB-100-1) were accepted.

## Agenda Item 2 – Actions from previous NIRAB meetings

The actions from the last meeting were reviewed using the NIRAB action tracker (NIRAB-24-9).

*Action 6.1 Update the reactors and fuel roadmap to take on board NIRAB member comments* – The paper has been updated and published on the [NIRAB website](#) as the UK Nuclear Innovation and Research Programme Recommendations. [Action complete].

*Action 7.1 DECC to identify any outputs from the SMR TEA that flag up the need for any research on public acceptance.* The TEA is due to be completed at the end of March 2016 at which point DECC will discuss the outputs with NIRAB. [Action open].

*Action 8.3 Research Councils and Innovate UK to ensure Sir Henry Royce Institute (SHRI) includes NIRAB priorities when developing its scope.* The nuclear lead for the SHRI has used the NIRAB's recommendations in developing their business case. [Action complete].

*Action 9.1 NIRO to gather the views of NIRAB members on a post-NIRAB advisory structure.* To be covered under agenda item 8. [Action complete].

## Agenda Item 3 – Government Update

The Chancellor, at the budget, announced that the Government was now inviting expressions of interest for the first phase of the SMR competition. Government is inviting expressions of interest from developers, utilities, potential investors and other parties who will have an opportunity to engage in a structured dialogue with Government. The timeline for the first phase of the competition is as follows:

Timeline	Date
Publication of opportunity to engage in Phase One dialogue.	17 March 2016
Deadline for questions	1 April 2016
DECC responses to questions published	13 April 2016
Deadline for receipt of responses (i.e. all the items specified in paragraph 2.9)	6 May 2016
DECC provides confirmation or rejection of eligibility	23 May 2016
Phase One dialogue begins	Late May 2016
Expected close of Phase One	Autumn 2016

DECC officials are currently working with Ministers to agree the priorities for nuclear R&D to be funded in 2016/17. These are likely to include topics that are regarded as a priority for all funding scenarios. Once the internal governance process is complete further information will be provided to NIRAB. The NIRO team is supporting officials in prioritising NIRAB's recommendations using the principles agreed by NIRAB.

## Agenda Item 4 – Landscape Review

NIRAB's terms of reference contain a requirement to "To oversee a regular review of the nuclear research and innovation capability, portfolio and capacity in the UK". Therefore in 2016, NIRAB will oversee a survey of the civil nuclear R&D landscape similar to the one that was undertaken in 2012 and published by BIS in 2013. The landscape document provides Government with a view of the UK's nuclear R&D capability in its entirety and highlights areas where Government investment can be most

effective. This document and future versions will also be used to determine the effects of Government policies over time.

**Action 10.1: Bill Lee to lead on information gathering from academic institutions for the landscape survey.**

**Action 10.2: Derek Allen, Mike Tynan and Melanie Brownridge to work with NIRO to simplify the question set and develop questions to elicit information on alternative technologies and the research capability in SMEs.**

### Agenda Item 5 – National Nuclear Users Facility (NNUF) Update

A brief was given on the NNUF and progress to date. The funding is still subject to approval of a business case which is being prepared by EPSRC. The NNUF steering group has been working on the proposed equipment list in an attempt to align it with the future UK programme requirements and avoid duplication with other Government initiatives. Melanie Brownridge briefly described the work carried out by NDA on the management of materials and samples by the NDA Estate. Shortly after the meeting NDA published a [report](#) on the subject.

### Agenda Item 6 – China Joint Research and Innovation Centre (JRIC)

NNL has been charged with leading on behalf of the UK and a presentation was given on progress made in establishing the JRIC and the issues that remain to be resolved. Work on establishing technical priorities is being carried out in parallel with that required to establish an appropriate legal entity. It was discussed that establishing a bilateral research centre as opposed to a multilateral topic based research centre needs to take into account wider international relationships to avoid conflicts of interest. NIRAB's recommendations will be a key factor in determining the UK priorities for research to be commissioned through JRIC. A list of potential UK technical priorities proposed by members was endorsed.

### Agenda Item 7 – Sir Henry Royce Institute (SHRI)

The business case for the SHRI is being finalised by EPSRC. The location for the Manchester component of the SHRI has been agreed and a design for the building is being developed. There will be a significant amount of space for nuclear research equipment and is a significant investment in the UK's capability.

**Action 10.3: Neil Bateman to present at the next NIRAB describing how the totality of NNUF SHRI expenditure aligns with NIRAB's recommendations.**

### Agenda Item 8 – NIRAB Role

NIRAB members have been appointed to serve a three year term which comes to an end in December 2016. At the previous meeting members were asked to consider the structure of the advisory function required by Government post NIRAB. The members offered their views. A common theme in the views expressed was the need to evolve from primarily providing advice on the scope of research required to monitoring, reviewing and overseeing the effectiveness of implementation. Oversight of implementation might involve offering advice on the following areas:

- The quality of research
- The effectiveness of research interventions
- The overall balance, focus and direction of publicly funded nuclear R&D

- Any remaining gaps in research activity
- The co-ordination of research funded by a range of public bodies.

The research landscape will inevitably evolve and such oversight will be necessary to ensure that publicly funded nuclear R&D remains appropriately focused. It was further noted that provision of advice on nuclear research and innovation will form part of a wider strategic landscape which includes the Nuclear Industry Council.

### **Agenda Item 9 – NEA Education Skills and Technology Programme Discussion**

A paper was distributed to the board on a NEA proposal to encourage young researchers to address the challenges of the future. NEA officials are seeking feedback on the proposal. Board members were encouraged to make any comments to NIRO so they can be forwarded to the NEA.

**Action 10.4: Members that have any comments on the NEA Education Skills and Technology Programme to send them to NIRO by 15<sup>th</sup> April.**

### **Agenda Item 10 – NIRAB Chair/NIRO Additional Notable Activities**

A paper containing NIRAB Chair and NIRO stakeholder meetings was distributed to the board.

### **Agenda Item 11 – AOB**

Innovate UK has published a booklet which summarises completed projects funded by Innovate UK.

The Chair encouraged members to speak with passion, accuracy and clarity when speaking to the media about nuclear energy. The importance of nuclear new build projects to the UK was raised and everyone was encouraged to make them succeed for the UK.

### **Agenda Item 12 – Summary of Actions and Next Steps**

A summary of the actions arising from the meeting will be sent to members and observers with the draft minutes.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at the Royal Society, London.