

NIRAB Meeting

Tuesday 8th October 2024, 11.00-12.00.

Virtually on MS Teams

Attendees

NIRAB Members: Francis Livens (Chair), Gordon Bryan, John Stairmand, Allyson Armet, Edoardo Patelli, Kirsty Armer, Maggie Brown, Gregg Butler, Kirsty Gogan, Malcom Joyce, Mike Lewis,

DESNZ: Ian Johnson

NIRO: Dan Mathers, Liv Thompson, Adeola Warner

Observers: Ian Streatfield, Jane Nicholson

Visitors: Joe Williams (UKRI)

Minutes

- Introduction and Welcome
- HTGR and Landscape Review Paper Update
 - The HTGR report is complete and has been discussed at several industry events.
 - Which plenaries/conferences/events the HTGR report should be presented at still in discussion.
 - Stakeholder workshops are likely to be pushed back to November/December/ January.
 - The content of the Civil Nuclear Landscape Survey has been finalised and all comments have been incorporated.
 - Both publications are with DESNZ awaiting review.
- Update from EPSRC
 - The EPSRC is waiting for the completion of the spending review.
 - EPSRC is pushing for higher recognition of the importance of PhD studentships.
 - The EPSRC has been involved in discussions with MoD, and other industries which need security clearance, on skills and the significant decrease of interest home students have exhibited in working at such organisations.
 - EPSRC has also been pushing for AI and quantum research.
- Update from Regulators
 - The GDA currently has 4 designs in scope.
 - The early regulatory engagement process has 5 applicants (Last Energy, Moltex Flex, Newcleo, X-Energy and TerraPower), details of the process have been published on the ONR site.
 - There has been a proposal for a new HTGR working group from China, Russia and Argentina – the UK is unlikely to join this collaboration.
 - ONR is due to support the government in their decision whether the UK is to be self-sufficient in nuclear medical radioisotopes next March.



- Update from NIRO
 - New team member introduction: Sonya Pemberton.
 - NIRO has participated in many international activities including: the UK-US Bilateral meeting (5th -9th August), the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency Roadmaps to Nuclear conference (19th-20th September) and is to attend the GIF revised framework treaty signing (14th -18th October).
 - NIRO collated NIRAB feedback in a report for government to review.
 - Gave a detailed overview of the R&D Landscape Survey, which provides a snapshot of the financial year 2022-2023 compared to the previous survey year, 2019-2020.
 - The US-UK collaboration campaign has made the front page of the US Department of Energy website.
- Update from DESNZ
 - Update on the work DESNZ has been doing with the Nuclear Industry Funders Group, with the support of NIRO. There have been discussions around the type of involvement DESNZ will have in NNUF 3.
 - The governmental spending review will be split into two parts, consisting of a 1-year spending review followed by a multiple year spending review.
 - AMR Phase B has been extended. Phase C is still dependent on the outcome of the spending review.
 - Czech Republic has placed an order for SMRs with Rolls Royce and will be purchasing stakes in RR SMR.
 - NAMRAC consultation with staff ends on the 8th October 2024. Government cannot comment on it until the results are out.
- Update from UKRI
 - UKRI is currently focusing on the spending review, as they are hoping to support heat and power.
 - UKRI have bid into core funding for supply chain development in SMR deployment, as well as into digital and AI space.
- Forward look at NIRAB
 - Discussion on the future of NIRAB.
 - Feedback from NIRAB is currently being discussed by DESNZ and NIRO.
 - It is anticipated that the December plenary will go ahead as a virtual Teams meeting.

