

SNETP Annual Report

September 2007 – December 2008

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1.1 Introduction

This first Annual Report of the Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform (SNETP) covers the 15 month period from the official launch of the Platform in September 2007 until the end of 2008. The Report is a required deliverable of the SNETP Office project of the 7th Euratom Framework Programme.

During this period SNETP underwent rapid evolution witnessing:

- the establishment of a management structure,
- full functioning of the three key working groups,
- the launch of the website,
- a steady growth in Platform membership,
- the publication of two Newsletters in 2008, and
- the staging of a first General Assembly.

An achievement of special importance was the preparation of its Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) which defines in detail the scope of the sustainable nuclear fission work programme.

Tribute should be paid to the hard work of the volunteers constituting the Governing Board, Executive Committee and Secretariat, as well as the members of the Working Groups. The active support and participation of the European Commission is also gratefully acknowledged.

1.2 Early days

In 2005 a 1-year Specific Support Action "ENFTP" was launched under FP6 with the title "Towards a European Nuclear Fission Technology Platform?", the question mark indicating that the outcome was by no means certain. This Specific Support Action (SSA) comprised 17 partners forming a 'think tank' to explore all the potential ways of achieving a more efficient and broader integration of R&D in nuclear fission energy.

On 1st October 2006, the SSA evolved into a 2-year Coordination Action "SNF-TP" with 24 partners. Its objective was to prepare the launch of a Technology Platform and deliver a Vision Report. However, following the publication in January 2007 of the Commission's "An Energy Policy for Europe", endorsed in March 2007 by the European Council, and the announcement in November 2007 of a European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan), it became clearer in EU political circles that nuclear fission had an important long-term role to play in delivering security of energy supply, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and maintaining competitiveness. It was therefore decided to broaden the number of stakeholders involved and to bring forward the official launch of SNETP.

1.3 SNETP Launch Event

The Platform was launched officially on 21 September 2007, in the presence of the Commissioner for Research, Janez Potocnik, and the Commissioner for Energy, Andris Piebalgs. The ceremony was held in the European Commission's Charlemagne Building and was attended by approximately 300 people.

On this occasion the SNETP Vision Report, formally endorsed by a core of 34 stakeholder organisations, was distributed to all participants.

As well as keynote speeches from the two Commissioners, 20 other speeches were held by stakeholders representing the European Parliament, DG RTD, DG TREN, government ministries, IAEA, nuclear industry, users of nuclear power, research associations and technical safety organisations (TSOs). The presentations were structured into three panel sessions:

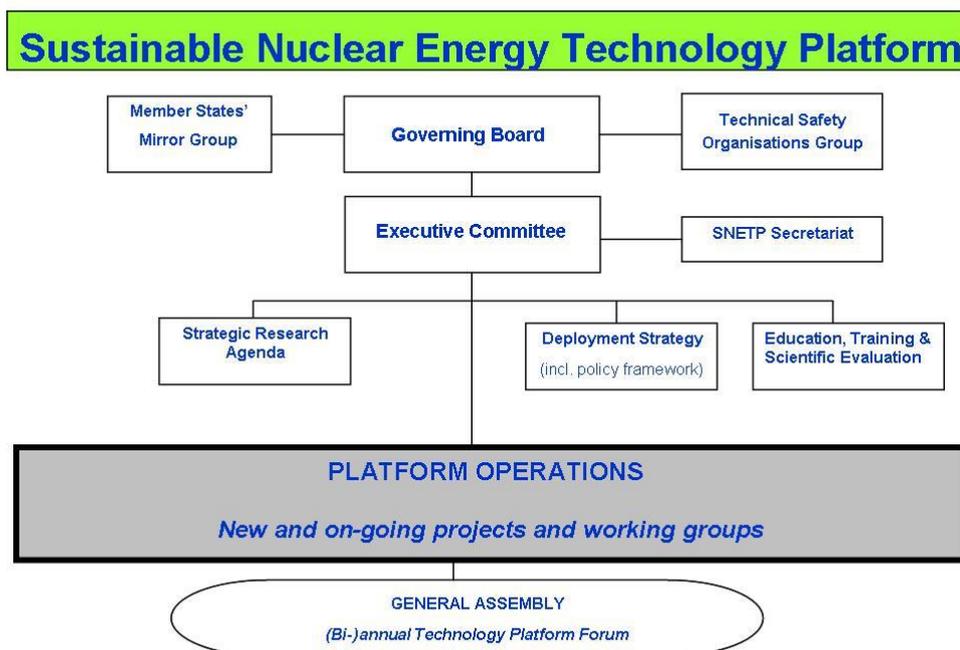
- the role of nuclear research to tackle the EU energy challenges;
- views from the main users of nuclear energy; and,
- 'SNETP - from Vision Document to Strategic Research Agenda and Deployment Strategy (DS)'.

Simon Webster of DG RTD summarised the next steps regarding the Platform's work programme and governance and finally CEA Director General Alain Bugat in his closing speech emphasised the importance of new funding mechanisms and highlighted the strategic role of the European Nuclear Energy Forum.

1.4 Organisation and Structure

The task of defining the management structure of the Platform and of drafting operating rules initially fell to an informal Secretariat led by Henri Paillère of CEA, assisted by nominees from E.ON, UJV Rez, FORATOM and DG RTD. There was to be a Governing Board, an Executive Committee, three main Working Groups covering respectively the SRA, DS and Education & Training, the Secretariat and, last but not least, the actual members of the Platform.

A draft "Organisation and Structure" document was subsequently presented to the 1st meeting of the SNETP Governing Board held in Brussels on 30 October 2007. At that meeting, Philippe Pradel of CEA was elected Chairman of the Platform for 2 years, together with Vice-Chairmen Bernd GÜthoff of E.ON Kernkraft and Frantisek Pazdera of UJV Rez. The Board was to have 10 members from industry, 10 from research organisations, 2 from the TSOs, as well as representatives from ENEN, FORATOM, ENS, DG RTD and DG TREN. After a number of iterations, the Organisation and Structure document was finally approved at the 2nd Governing Board meeting in May 2008.



The Structure of the Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform during 2007-2008

Membership of the Platform was growing fast during the first year. From 34 founding members in September 2007 the number of members had risen to 70 by the end of 2008, representing industry, research and academia, technical safety organisations, non-governmental organisations and national representatives.

From the outset, the establishment and governance of SNETP required the organisation of a substantial number of meetings and events. All the significant ones taking place in 2007 and 2008 are listed in Appendix 1.

In accordance with the principle of openness and as a part of its communication strategy, the Platform since the beginning paid attention to keeping its members and the general public informed about its objectives and activities. Specific actions taken in 2008 included maintaining the website (www.snetp.eu) and the publication of two newsletters in July and November 2008.

1.5 SRA, DS and ETKM Working Groups

Following the official launch, the first mammoth task of the Platform was to set about defining in detail the scope and content of European sustainable nuclear fission R&D up to 2050 and beyond.

Dr. Hamid Aït Abderrahim of SCK·CEN was appointed Chairman of the SRA Working Group entrusted to take on this challenge. Having identified and split the work into a number of 'chapters', 14 recognized experts were assigned to be topic leaders. The topics included:

- current and future light water reactors;
- advanced fuel cycles for waste minimisation and resource optimisation;
- Gen IV fast spectrum systems with closed fuel cycle;
- other applications of nuclear energy;
- cross-cutting topics such as structural materials, pre-normative research, modelling & simulation, and fuel;
- safety;
- new large infrastructures; and finally,
- education, training and knowledge management (ETKM).

In all, more than 150 individuals contributed to the compilation of the SRA. Having held its first meeting in January 2008, the SRA Working Group had completed a 1st draft by late summer. In October, a hand-picked editing group was closeted for 2 days in order to consolidate and condense the document down to a manageable 60 pages of text. An Executive Summary was added and subsequently published in time for the 1st SNETP General Assembly in November 2008. With the exception of appendices to be added later on molten salt reactors and thorium, the SRA document was almost ready to go out to public consultation by the end of 2008.

Early discussions on the Deployment Strategy document led to three conclusions:

- that the document should logically follow and be based on the SRA;
- that it should focus on when and how to deploy the facilities required to deliver the SRA work programme; and
- that the R&D programme should also be in tune with the wider needs of commercial nuclear power development.

On the latter point it was clearly the nuclear utilities that were best placed to judge the timing of future nuclear investments and who, following a meeting in January 2008, lost no time in issuing a joint 'utilities statement' spelling out their research priorities.

Against that background, the newly-created Deployment Strategy Working Group, with Olivier Marchand (EDF) and Patrick Morilhat (EDF) as Co-Chairmen, kicked off with a telephone meeting in May 2008 to discuss a preliminary draft DS document focusing on planning assumptions, policy issues, resources and implementation. At a second meeting in

August 2008, the Group added a number of key messages. In the absence of a definitive draft SRA, further work on the DS was put on hold until 2009.

A key aspect of resource provision for fission R&D was recognised in the Vision Report to be the supply of an adequate number of educated and trained researchers. The European Nuclear Education Network ENEN was making good progress in promoting mainly university level courses in nuclear disciplines but there was a lack of information on the demand side, meaning that the gap between supply and demand was unknown. The Platform therefore decided to set about obtaining this information and if necessary implementing a strategy to overcome any apparent shortage.

The Education & Training Working Group, later adding Knowledge Management to its title, was thus established in April 2008 with Phil Beeley of ENEN and Gérard Labadie of EDF as Co-Chairmen. Having defined its terms of reference, the ETKM Group optimistically aimed at quantifying the "gap" within one year in a final report. Five sub-groups were created to cover:

- human resource needs,
- co-ordination with other forums,
- output from training courses,
- facilities to support E&T, and
- international co-operation.

Questionnaires focusing on resource requirements in each discipline and also on large training facilities (e.g. research reactors) were drawn up and sent out. By the end of 2008 however, it was becoming clear that an overall picture of European requirements for trained personnel was going to be difficult to obtain, although there was partial data available for example in the UK and France; information on facilities however appeared to be more readily accessible.

In November 2008, the ETKM Group decided to split the final report into two parts: the first part would define the mission & work plan and be published in early 2009; the gap analysis and forward strategy part would follow later. The Group remains indebted to the ENEN organisation which continues to play a key part in its activities.

1.6 First General Assembly

SNETP held its first General Assembly on 26 November 2008 in the same European Commission building in Brussels that had staged the Launch 14 months earlier. Open to the public, the General Assembly attracted over 230 participants.

Euratom Research Director Octavi Quintana Trias gave the inaugural speech, which was then followed by three sessions.

The first session was dedicated to the development of R&D priorities and included presentations from the SRA, DS and ETKM Working Groups. The second session was devoted to the SET-Plan and implementation of the SRA and featured speeches by Edit Herczog MEP, SNETP Vice-Chairman Bernd GÜthoff and Yves Kaluzny of CEA. Mr. GÜthoff presented proposals for R&D in support of LWR operation and also suggested a new organisational structure for the Platform. Mr. Kaluzny spoke on behalf of a newly-created task force overseeing the preparation of the European Industrial Initiative on Gen IV fast neutron reactors with closed fuel cycles. The final session consisted of a panel discussion on the issue of funding for fission R&D. Speakers on the panel represented the European Parliament, European Investment Bank, European Commission, government ministries, utilities, research organisations and TSOs.

The closing speech was given by SNETP Chairman Philippe Pradel.

1.7 Launch of SNETP Office

The initial administrative work of the Platform having been carried out by the Secretariat acting on a voluntary basis, an application was submitted in April 2008 for EC funding under the 7th Euratom Framework Programme in order to place the secretariat function on a proper professional footing. The application cited Paris-based consultancy LGI as "SNETP Office" Co-ordinator assisted by CEA, E.ON, FORATOM and UJV Rez. The application was pronounced successful in October enabling the new Secretariat to commence operations from a dedicated office in Paris on 1 December 2008 and to hold a first kick-off meeting on 17 December.

The functions of SNETP Office include organising formal meetings and writing the minutes, operating the SNETP website and handling emails, arranging publication of reports, brochures, newsletters etc, commissioning and deploying an exhibition stand and other communications materials, and interfacing with the European Commission.

At the end of October 2008, SNETP was formally recognised as a 'European Technology Platform' (ETP). The Platform is listed as such on the CORDIS website. SNETP representatives are henceforward invited to participate in events organised by the Commission for ETP leaders.

Annex 1 – Calendar of key events

Date	Event	Location
2007		
21 September	Launch of SNETP; Vision Document distributed	Brussels
19 October	1 st meeting of Secretariat	Brussels
29 October	Pre-Executive Committee	Brussels
30 October	1 st Governing Board	Brussels
2008		
9 January	1 st meeting of SRA Working Group	Brussels
16 January	Informal meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs	Hannover
24 January	SNETP Utilities meeting	Brussels
5 February	Secretariat meeting	Brussels
6 February	1 st Executive Committee	Brussels
18 February	Informal meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs	Brussels
19 February	2 nd meeting of SRA Working Group	Brussels
21 April	Informal meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs	Paris
29 April	1 st meeting of ETKM Working Group	Paris
19 May	Kick-off meeting of Deployment Strategy Working Group	Telecon
26 May	3 rd meeting of SRA Working Group	Brussels
27 May	2 nd Executive Committee	Brussels
29 May	2 nd Governing Board	Prague
19 June	SNETP presented at MEP Forum for the Future of Nuclear Energy	Strasbourg
July	1 st SNETP Newsletter published	-
10 July	4 th meeting of SRA Working Group	Paris
11 July	2 nd meeting of ETKM Working Group	Paris
15 July	Secretariat meeting	Brussels
28 August	2 nd meeting of Deployment Strategy Working Group	Paris
2 September	Informal meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs	Brussels
22 September	Secretariat meeting	Brussels
23 September	5 th meeting of SRA Working Group	Brussels
10 October	3 rd Executive Committee	Paris
14 October	3 rd meeting of ETKM Working Group	Brussels
23/24 October	SRA editing group	Brussels
November	2 nd SNETP Newsletter published	-
5 November	4 th meeting of ETKM Working Group	Paris
25 November	3 rd Governing Board	Brussels
26 November	1 st General Assembly	Brussels
17 December	Kick-off meeting of 'SNETP Office'	Paris