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## **The Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform:**

### **Extending lifetime of existing plants in the shorter term – Towards sustainability in the long term**

***Members of the Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform (SNE-TP) are proposing a programme of R&D to support lifetime extension of current light-water reactors by up to 20 years. The platform's Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) also covers the development of a new generation of nuclear reactors in Europe which will burn fuel much more efficiently and produce less radioactive waste. The SRA is presented today at the first general assembly of the technology platform in Brussels.***

The bottom line is guaranteeing safety, but with this proviso a typical operating lifetime of the most common type of nuclear power reactor in the world could be extended to at least 60 years. This extension would be achieved via new methods for prevention and mitigation of plant ageing and the optimisation of operating methodologies and practices.

The new generation of nuclear technology, so-called generation-IV reactors, will burn fuel much more efficiently and produce less radioactive waste, while maintaining high levels of safety and increasing resistance to proliferation of nuclear weapons. They could be commercially operational around 2040, if not earlier in the case of certain designs. The SRA proposal is now publicly available and comments are invited from all stakeholders.

SNE-TP was launched last year with the political endorsement of the European Commission. European technology platforms bring together industry, research organisations, academia and other stakeholders willing to contribute to the realisation of a common vision for research, development and innovation in key areas of science and technology. In the field of nuclear energy systems and safety, SNE-TP today has 60 members from 19 countries representing all the key players in this field in Europe. It gathers stakeholders from industry (technology suppliers, utilities and other users), research organisations including technical safety organisations, universities and even NGOs. During its first year of operation, it has concentrated on drafting its SRA and the corresponding deployment strategy.

The European Commission recognises that nuclear energy, which currently provides 31% of the EU's electricity, is an important contributor to the development of the low-carbon economy. The Commission's Strategic Energy Plan (SET Plan) calls for specific actions to maintain competitiveness of nuclear fission technologies and urges the creation of a number of key European industrial initiatives (EII), including one in 'sustainable nuclear fission'. SNE-TP's SRA presented today outlines the contents of this EII, covering generation-IV fast-neutron reactors and allied infrastructure.

During the Sixth Euratom Framework Programme (2002-2006), the European Commission spent about €50 million on research in areas such as nuclear safety, plant-life management, advanced reactor technology, and education and training. Projects in all these fields will continue to be financed throughout the current Seventh Euratom Framework Programme (2007-2011).

**More information about the general assembly, SNE-TP's vision report and the SRA for public consultation can be found on the platform's website:**

[www.snetp.eu](http://www.snetp.eu).

**Information on the Euratom programme can be found on:**

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/euratom-fission/home\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/euratom-fission/home_en.html)

and

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/energy/fi/article\\_1121\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/research/energy/fi/article_1121_en.htm).

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