

FUSION

The logo for the Fusion Industry Association, featuring the word "FUSION" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a stylized orange and yellow circular graphic consisting of several concentric rings, resembling a sun or a fusion symbol.

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

September 7th, 2023

Fusion Industry Association
800 Maine Ave SW
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Washington, DC 20024

Statement of support for the UK Government's new fusion development and commercialisation programme

The Fusion Industry Association welcomes the U.K. Government's ambitious new £650m programme for fusion development and commercialisation as an alternative to Euratom association.

Fusion, when commercialized, will provide clean, safe, and sustainable energy that is affordable and always available. Fusion can help to solve the climate and energy security crises, and provide a 21st century industrial base of jobs, wealth, and leadership for those countries and regions that lead in its development.

Today, real breakthroughs prove that, with investment, fusion energy is within our grasp. Private fusion energy developers around the world - the members of the Fusion Industry Association (FIA) - are racing to develop commercial pilot plants. To fully realize the benefits of fusion, national governments must now build meaningful partnerships between public and private entities to transition from scientific research to solving the remaining challenges that will make fusion energy viable. It is time to move from basic scientific research to applied commercial energy programs.

The UK is already a leader on the commercialization of fusion, with plans for pilot plants, an established and clear regulatory regime, and a robust private sector. However, for more than two and a half years, critical research funding and progress for fusion has been held up because the British Government has not had clarity about UK access to EU fusion science programmes and ITER. To alleviate this problem, in November 2021 the British government announced their intention to develop a robust programme of funding and support to fusion research and development as an alternative to association with Euratom. This funding would enhance the UK's leadership in fusion with a focus on the growth of the commercial fusion industry. The Fusion Industry Association now congratulates the UK Government on seizing the opportunity presented by their ambitious proposals and welcomes the launch of their proposed alternatives package.

The UK has a strong history of leadership in the elements that will push fusion to deployment: regulation, supply chain, workforce, and planning. We encourage the government to maintain and enhance this position by implementing a programme that is focussed on the commercialisation of fusion — by building broad industry capability, attracting and incentivising inward investment, enhancing international collaboration, and by creating new high caliber jobs within the UK's fusion industry. The rest of the world is moving in this direction; last year, the US Administration announced a bold decadal vision for fusion, and in 2023, both Japan and Germany unveiled ambitious national fusion strategies. Amid this increasingly competitive landscape, the proposed package will ensure that the UK remains a leader and will be a catalyst for economic growth by accelerating the commercialisation of fusion energy.

Cooperation and collaboration remain a cornerstone of the fusion sector. The FIA, alongside our members in the UK and worldwide, will continue to engage and collaborate with ITER and European partners regardless of the outcome of the UK's status with respect to Euratom, as we have done for many years. Furthermore, we encourage the UK Government as part of their alternative programme to continue to fund scientific engagement with EUROfusion - a model proven successful in the intervening period since 2021. The UK should also now seek a new, direct, and mutually beneficial relationship with ITER that continues the long-standing tradition of cooperation underlying fusion development, including exploration of a role as an independent full partner.

The Government's proposed alternative programme will be ambitious, exciting, and commercially focussed, representing a unique opportunity and an effective use of public funds at a critical time in the effort to develop and deploy fusion energy. We therefore welcome today's announcement, and look forward to a rapid adoption of the UK Government programme of alternative interventions as soon as possible.

The FIA stands ready to support and consult further on this issue.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nick Walkden', is positioned above the typed name.

Dr Nick Walkden
UK Director
Fusion Industry Association