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Europe signs major civil engineering contract for ITER

Fusion for Energy (F4E), the EU organisation managing Europe's contribution to ITER, has signed a major contract with the b.NEXT consortium (Assystem, Egis, Empresarios Agrupados) in the field of civil engineering for a value of roughly 80 million EUR. The contract, expected to run until 2030 with the possibility of an extension, foresees the provision of services in the form of consulting, design, nuclear safety, construction and project management. Building on their previous collaboration, and knowledge acquired through one of the largest Architect Engineer contracts ever signed, the two parties will continue to work together in order to complete the civil and mechanical works performed on the site of the fusion experiment.

Europe is responsible for the delivery of nearly all ITER buildings, facilities, infrastructure and power supplies. The expertise of b.NEXT will serve to conclude the roads, trenches, lighting and networks on the platform. The consortium will also assist F4E with the supervision of the works in the Tritium building to be ready for its nuclear phase. Furthermore, it will contribute to the design and construction of facilities that will house generators and fuel storage tanks.

Marc Lachaise, Director of Fusion for Energy (F4E), stated: "Europe's participation in ITER offers companies a unique opportunity to be involved in the biggest international fusion project, which will influence the energy mix of the future. They will be part of a large supply chain managed by F4E, which will strengthen their skills, boost their competitiveness, and provide them with first-hand experience in developing tomorrow's fusion devices. Building on our previous collaboration with b.NEXT partners, we rely on their expertise and renew our commitment to excellence and timely delivery."

Stéphane Aubarbier, Deputy CEO of Assystem, commented: "The ITER project is the most ambitious nuclear research programme in recent decades. The success of b.NEXT illustrates the strength of our consortium, which brings together complementary expertise in engineering, project management and digital technologies. Assystem continues to play a major role in the development of nuclear fusion, an essential technology for the world's energy future. Having worked with F4E since 2010, we are proud to continue this collaboration, capitalising on the quality of our production and the valuable experience acquired by our teams. We are convinced that fusion technologies are crucial to maximising sustainable, low-carbon electricity production worldwide, while offering promising career prospects for current and future generations."

François Martin, Chief Nuclear Officer at Egis: "We are proud to play a part in fusion technology and to provide a concrete response to the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. This, in collaboration with our partners through b.NEXT, consolidates Egis' European leadership in nuclear infrastructure and testifies our clients' confidence in us at this historic moment in the renaissance of the nuclear industry."

Gilles Schartle, Research Reactor and Fusion Director at Egis: “The nuclear industry is exploring how fusion energy can help us address climate change, enhance energy security, and improve the quality of life for billions of people around the globe. We can see rapid growth in fusion investment and the importance of building solid supply chains to deliver future reactors. Therefore, it was important for Egis to collaborate with F4E in ITER via the b.NEXT consortium, in order to reach this objective...”

Javier Perea, Managing Director and CEO of Empresarios Agrupados, highlighted: “The ITER project is very relevant to designing the future energy mix and a transition free of CO2. It is a complex international experiment aiming to demonstrate the technical feasibility of fusion on an industrial scale in the next decade. The project will pave the way for a sustainable, inexhaustible energy source with the capacity to provide the base load for completely decarbonized electrical systems with a minimum environmental impact. This contract builds on the great teamwork of b.NEXT partners and F4E since 2010, bringing together the best capabilities in advanced engineering for nuclear projects of the highest complexity.”

Background

Fusion for Energy (F4E) is the European Union’s organisation for Europe’s contribution to ITER. One of the main tasks of F4E is to work together with European industry, SMEs and research organisations to develop and provide a wide range of high technology components together with engineering, maintenance and support services for the ITER project.

F4E supports fusion R&D initiatives through the Broader Approach Agreement signed with Japan and prepares for the construction of demonstration fusion reactors (DEMO).

F4E was created by a decision of the Council of the European Union as an independent legal entity and was established in April 2007 for a period of 35 years.

Its offices are in Barcelona, Spain.

<https://www.fusionforenergy.europa.eu/>

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