

NIRAB Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Monday 4th July 2022, 10:00-16:00

BEIS Conference Centre, 1 Victoria Street; and virtual on MS Teams

Minutes

1. Chair Update

The Chair welcomed guests from Rolls Royce and UKRI, and an observer from EPSRC.

Minutes from the previous meeting on 23rd May 2022 accepted; All actions complete or for discussion at this meeting.

2. NIRO update

New NIRO new team members were introduced, and an update on activities on international engagement was provided.

3. Innovation in UK SMR Programme

Rolls Royce provided an overview of the UK SMR programme with a focus on innovation. The design process and considerations for design and delivery was also discussed. NIRAB welcomed the very interesting and thought-provoking presentation and discussion.

4. Update from BEIS

Great British Nuclear (GBN) is evolving, and the team are aiming to make recommendations for scope by September, which will go to the Prime Minister.

AMR RD&D: Phase A competition is scheduled to launch early July. BEIS have taken on the great feedback from moderation sessions received.

NIRAB suggest that Phase A, B and C should take learning from the UKSMR discussion from earlier in this meeting. Some learning around what you do in parallel, do certain things upfront, to drive acceleration of programme.

5. NIRAB Guidance on AMR RD&D programme for Regulators

This item is a follow up from the previous NIRAB plenary meeting in May 2022. NIRAB members are in broad agreement with the areas highlighted for advice. The paper presented



will be updated following discussion, and submitted to regulators to support the AMR RD&D programme.

6. Delivery Working Group

A presentation of the work on the review of new nuclear build regulatory and statutory processes and applicability to AMRs was provided. A key conclusion is that while processes can be optimised to work better for AMRs, it will not significantly reduce timescales for delivery. Most processes are rated Amber on a RAG scale, with Planning rated as red.

The paper identified a number of cross cutting areas that drive the pace of approvals which is in the vendors hands. Design maturity and operator capability are two driving factors for delivery timelines. These cross-cutting areas are presented in the report, which will be submitted to BEIS.

The NDWG has discussed skills needs for HTGRs and will return at a later date once more is known about the requirements of a demonstrator. Cabinet office are conducting review on skills. NIRAB will feed some thoughts on this.

7. Technology Working Group Update

The technology working group (NTWG) gave some observations on the nuclear innovation programme (NIP). The NIP had a range of projects, on different scales and budget. The NIP was set up prior to a decision to pursue HTGRs and had a different set of objectives to the current programme. It was noted that BEIS are also funding an external organisation to do a more detailed evaluation of the NIP. The NTWG has also discussed prioritisation criteria for the R&D programme going forward. Following discussion at the plenary the work on prioritisation criteria and R&D requirements for the AMR RD&D programme will continue.

8. Use Case Working Group

NIRAB briefly discussed the scale of the net zero challenge, this points to the need for many solutions needed. NIRAB support development of success criteria for a demonstrator. End user engagement also highlighted as important to understand user needs.

9. Work Programme Review

NIRAB intends to publish an annual report covering work done over the first year of NIRAB 3. This will be discussed at the next meeting and will include a forward look at the work programme.



10. AOB

- Monthly working group meetings to continue.
- Next NIRAB Plenary – Friday 23rd September.

