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OV/1-2: The Status of the ITER Project

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Over the last 2 years, ITER has made the transition from building up the infrastructure (ITER Organisation (IO) staff, Domestic Agencies (DAs)) and completing the design to become a real project. A new management structure was introduced in 2010 and several new communication channels were established with the DAs. To date 69 Procurement Arrangements have been signed with the DAs, representing 75% of the total value to be procured in kind. Thus, a large percentage of the work is now performed in the DAs and in the industry of the ITER members. The work performed by the IO is changing during this transition to oversight of the work performed in the DAs and industry. A Strategic Management Plan (SMP) is used to status the project performance and to flag issues and delays. With the SMP and the matching Detailed Work Schedule, ITER is now in the position to develop recovery plans and to tackle delays at an early stage.
Construction is progressing rapidly in Cadarache and factories in Members have begun manufacturing the components: Over 4 years, 300 tons of advanced Nb3Sn for the TF coils have been produced; manufacturing facilities for conductors and magnets have been set up; and full-scale TF radial plate, case and sub-scale winding mock-ups have been manufactured, together with relevant mock-ups of the vacuum vessel, divertor and blanket. The base mat and seismic pads on which the tokamak building will rest are under construction; the electrical yard is close to be finished and the ITER HQ building too. A decision has been taken to start operation with an all W divertor. The main technical reason is to learn to deal with the issues of melt layers and potential flaking in the non-nuclear phase of the operation. Elimination of the CFC/W divertor results in a considerable cost saving which is used to pay for deferred items.
ITER is presently well into the construction phase and is facing the problems to be expected in such phases. However, it has a more complex organization and procurement scheme than other large science projects and so the solution of problems tends to be more complicated. The achievements over the last 2 years have shown that an international cooperation such as ITER can work successfully and that it is able to deal with the usual problems which arise in large and technically ambitious construction projects.

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