

GNEP Siting Process NE

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For Immediate Release

August 3, 2006

DOE Continues Path Forward on Global Nuclear Energy Partnership Department Announces \$20 Million for GNEP Siting Studies and Seeks Further Coordination with Industry

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced \$20 million to conduct detailed siting studies for public or commercial entities interested in hosting DOE's Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) facilities. Entities could qualify to receive up to \$5 million per site. DOE also announced that it is seeking expressions of interest to obtain input from U.S. and international nuclear industry on the feasibility of accelerating development and deployment of advanced recycling technologies by proceeding with commercial scale demonstration facilities, specifically a Consolidated Fuel Treatment Facility and an Advanced Burner Reactor.

“The siting studies and expressions of interest enable public and commercial entities to provide useful input to the Department's decision-making process for siting and building GNEP facilities in the U.S.,” DOE Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy Dennis Spurgeon said. “These are important steps forward for the GNEP initiative.”

GNEP, launched earlier this year as part of the President's Advanced Energy Initiative, aims to expand the use of nuclear energy to address the growing demand for energy. GNEP proposes private-public-international partnerships to develop advanced technologies to recycle used nuclear fuel, reduce wastes, and avoid misuse of nuclear materials.

Based on international and private sector response to GNEP, the Energy Department believes there are advanced technologies available to recycle used nuclear fuel that may be ready for deployment in conjunction with those currently under development by DOE. In light of this information, DOE is investigating the feasibility of accelerating development and deployment of advanced recycling technologies by proceeding with commercial demonstrations of the technologies.

The Department is considering a two-track approach to demonstrate technologies under GNEP. The first track involves deployment of commercial scale facilities for which advanced technologies are available now or in the near future. The second track would focus on further research and development on transmutation fuels (containing plutonium and minor actinides) technologies.

Under the first track, DOE is currently considering two commercial scale facilities: a Consolidated Fuel Treatment Center, capable of separating used fuel into its usable and waste components; and an Advanced Burner Reactor which would convert transuranics into shorter-lived radioisotopes while producing electricity.

Under the second track, an Advanced Fuel Cycle Facility announced earlier this year to support development of technologies to separate and fabricate the transmutation fuels for the Advanced Burner Reactor would be designed and directed through DOE's national laboratories and therefore, is not part of the siting studies or the industry-requested expressions of interest.

Congress allocated \$20 million in FY 2006 to DOE for siting studies of integrated recycling facilities, with a maximum of \$5 million available per site. To be eligible for funding for siting studies, the proposed site must meet minimum criteria related to size, hydrology, electricity capacity, population density, zoning, water availability, road access, and seismic stability.

Preference for award of funds for the siting studies may be given to sites where the applicant has demonstrated community and state support for the use of the site for GNEP facilities. Preference may also be given if the proposed site has the potential for supporting both facilities.

Applications for financial assistance grants must be received by September 7, 2006. DOE anticipates announcing applications it will fund by the end of October 2006. Winning applicants will have 90 days to complete the site studies and submit required information to DOE.

Information generated from the detailed siting studies may be used in an environmental impact statement (EIS) that will evaluate the potential environmental impacts from each proposed GNEP facility. At the conclusion of the EIS, DOE will make decisions about whether to move forward with the facilities, and if so, where to locate them. Both the Consolidated Fuel Treatment Center and the Advanced Burner Reactor could be located together.

Industry-submitted expressions of interest on the recycling technologies are due to the Energy Department by September 8, 2006. The Department believes that industry's input is valuable in considering the configuration of GNEP's closed fuel cycle. Information gained from the expressions of interest will be used to create Requests for Proposals for the proposed Consolidated Fuel Treatment Facility and the Advanced Burner Reactor.

A briefing to describe DOE's baseline plan and answer expression of interest-related questions will be held August 14, 2006, from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. DOE requests that interested parties who wish to attend the briefing send an email to GNEP_EOI_RSVP@nuclear.energy.gov.

The Financial Assistance Funding Opportunity Announcement for the siting studies and the Expressions of Interest may be found at: <http://gnep.gov/>. The specific location for the briefing on the request for expressions of interest also will be announced on the GNEP website, <http://gnep.gov/>. The Financial Assistance Funding Opportunity Announcement is also available at <http://www.grants.gov/>. The request for expressions of interest issued today will be published in the Federal Register on August 7, 2006.

Additional information on DOE's nuclear energy programs may be found at: <http://www.nuclear.gov/>.

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