

NDA Monthly Update

March 2016

Summary

- Major milestone at historic Sellafield fuel pond
- Mentoring scheme opens for small businesses
- Update on NDA Strategy and Business Plan
- New Sellafield Chair announced
- 2016 Supply Chain Event date confirmed
- NDA's Insight magazine published
- Website moves home
- Funding support for innovators
- Last fuel leaves Oldbury
- Wylfa closes after almost 45 years
- Waste overview published
- Silo equipment delivered to Sellafield

Diary Dates

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| • Dounreay suppliers event | 8 March |
| • National Apprenticeship Week | 14-18 March |
| • Sellafield share transfer | 1 April |
| • Publication of NDA Strategy and Business Plan | April |
| • NDA Archive Open Day, Wick | April |

Major milestone at historic fuel pond

The “most significant stride ever” was achieved in the Sellafield clean-up mission when the entire bulk stocks of historic nuclear fuel were removed from one of the site’s oldest ponds. The milestone came after decommissioning teams lifted the final skip of ‘metal fuel’ from the Pile Fuel Storage Pond via a remote-controlled process. Retrieval of the pond’s ‘canned fuel’ inventory was successfully completed in October 2015. The work means radioactivity levels at the 68-year-old spent fuel pond have now been cut by 70 per cent, vastly reducing the risk it poses to people and environment. The achievement is the most visible sign yet of progress in the NDA’s programme to clean-up the legacy of Britain’s early nuclear industry, which is set to continue for at least another 100 years. The fuel has been transferred to a modern on-site storage building.

[Weblink: Sellafield pond achievement](#)

Mentoring scheme welcomes applications

A mentoring scheme for smaller businesses has re-opened to applications. The voluntary scheme operates for two years, pairing Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) with larger organisations to share skills, experience and contacts with the aim of helping SMEs navigate through the maze of nuclear decommissioning opportunities. All UK-based SMEs are eligible to apply to become a mentee, regardless of industrial background, but must aspire to work in nuclear decommissioning or have an existing involvement. The deadline for applications is 15 April.

[Weblink: SME mentoring scheme](#)

Strategy and business plan update

Consultations on the NDA’s draft strategy and draft business plan 2016 to 2019 closed on 15 February. The feedback is being analysed and the final version of both documents, together with the public feedback, will be available in early April. Both documents take the government’s Spending Review into account. The strategy, published every five years, looks at the long-term mission while the Business Plan, published annually, takes a more focused look at the next three years.

[Weblink: consultations](#)

New chair for Sellafield Ltd board

The NDA has announced that Tony Fountain will become the new chair for Sellafield Ltd, taking up the role on 1 April 2016 as part of new management arrangements which will see Sellafield Ltd become a wholly owned NDA subsidiary. He will replace current chair Tony Price. Tony Fountain brings valuable knowledge of the nuclear industry having been Chief Executive of the NDA from 2009 to 2011.

[Weblink: NDA announces new chair for Sellafield Ltd](#)

Date confirmed for 2016 Supply Chain Event

The date of the next annual networking event for NDA suppliers has now been confirmed as **Thursday, 3rd November**. For 2016, the NDA Estate Supply Chain Event again returns to EventCity in Manchester, providing opportunities for businesses of all sizes to exhibit in the main hall and to meet leading figures in nuclear decommissioning. The one-day event is free of charge for visitors and exhibitors (optional extras are subject to a small fee). Launched in 2011, its aim is to continue improving the visibility of opportunities for suppliers, particularly those in the Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) community. Further details will be published shortly.

Insight magazine published

The Spring edition of the NDA's news magazine Insight has been published and is available on the website.

[Weblink: Insight published](#)

New home for NDA website

The NDA's website content has now been moved to the central government website and the old website has been switched off. Web users should be automatically redirected to the new content. Meanwhile, the new website also includes a recently launched NDA blog post, with contributions from guest authors on a range of topics.

[Weblink: NDA website](#) and [NDA blog home page](#)

How the UK is providing support

As the fifth anniversary of the Japanese tsunami is marked this month, the NDA's Head of International Relations, John Mathieson, looks at international support for clean-up work at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant and the contribution made by UK businesses.

[Weblink: Helping businesses access the Japanese market](#)

£500,000 for innovative smaller businesses

The NDA is contributing £500,000 to a £1.5 million initiative to encourage smaller businesses to find new ways of solving some of the energy industry's technical challenges. The contribution takes Innovate UK's Energy Game Changer fund, announced last year, to £2 million. The funding support aims to attract innovative Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) into all energy sectors, including oil, gas and nuclear. The NDA is particularly interested in technologies that could be applied to decommissioning challenges. Allocation of funding will take place through a competitive process that opens on 28 March.

[Weblink: Game Changer initiative](#)

Last fuel leaves Oldbury

The last flask of fuel has been dispatched from Oldbury for reprocessing at Sellafield, completing a defuelling programme that began when the power station closed in 2012. Transfer of the last fuel also removes 99 per cent of the radioactive hazard from the site and enables Oldbury to move into its decommissioning phase. The aim is to reach the passive Care and Maintenance by 2027.

[Weblink: Oldbury dispatches last flask](#)

UK's last Magnox plant closes

Wylfa, the last Magnox power station in the UK, finally closed after generating electricity for almost 45 years. Closure was originally scheduled for 2010, however, its life was extended for a further five years thanks to an innovative method of transferring partly used fuel from one reactor to the other. The manufacture of Magnox fuel ceased in 2008. Wylfa was the last and largest in a fleet of 11 UK plants based on the ground-breaking Magnox design that gave the nation's scientists a global lead in the race to develop nuclear energy for homes and businesses. The combined additional revenue from Wylfa's extra lease of life, as well as from Oldbury's four-year extension, amounted to approximately £1 billion which has been used for decommissioning and clean-up.

[Weblink: Wylfa closure](#)

Waste overview published

The NDA has published an updated overview of Higher Activity Waste (HAW), containing details about where waste arises and how it is being dealt with. The information summarises volumes and forms of HAW in stock and estimated to arise in future from NDA estate activities. Data has been sourced from the 2013 UK Radioactive Waste Inventory and from NDA SLCs. The report also includes a summary of total HAW volumes across the UK (from all radioactive waste producers) and an overview of long-term management policy for HAW. The document is aimed at all organisations and individuals with an interest in HAW. It is also being used to inform the development of the NDA's strategy for managing HAW, which is due to be finalised in 2016.

[Weblink: Waste overview](#)

Bulk delivery of silo equipment

One of Sellafield's most hazardous buildings is closer to being cleaned up after delivery of a massive piece of decommissioning kit. The 50-tonne 'transfer tunnel', which will be hoisted into place at the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo, is the main component of the first Silo Emptying Plant (SEP), one of three 360-tonne machines which will scoop out the building's highly radioactive contents.

[Weblink: Special delivery for Sellafield](#)

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- NDA's Insight magazine published
- Website now at new gov.uk home
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Diary Dates

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| • Annual conference of DISTINCTIVE PhD projects | 19 April |
| • NDA Archive Open Day, Wick | July 2016 |
| • More 4 TV programme featuring Drigg rail station | May |
| • Nuclear cyber security conference, Warrington | 23-25 May |
| • IAEA conference on decommissioning, Madrid | 23-27 May |

Sellafield becomes NDA subsidiary

A new era in the history of Sellafield is under way after the SLC became a subsidiary of the NDA on 1 April. Direct ownership by the NDA will help Sellafield Ltd to accelerate progress and improve efficiency. The Parent Body Organisation model, where Sellafield Ltd was owned by private sector consortium Nuclear Management Partners (NMP) from 2008 until last month, has now been replaced by a simpler structure that is more suited to the complexities of the NDA's largest, most hazardous site. NDA Chief Executive John Clarke said: "The new arrangements will accommodate the challenges at the site more easily and allow for longer-term planning. The private sector will still be heavily involved in delivering work at Sellafield but no longer as an owner."

[Weblink: New era for Sellafield](#)

NDA publishes latest long-term Strategy

The NDA has now published two of the key documents that outline its forward plans for the years ahead. The Strategy, effective from 2016 onwards, is updated every five years and focuses on a long-term overview based on a series of themes; the Business Plan for 2016-2019, takes a more detailed look at site activities in the shorter term. Both documents take account of the funding settlement allocated to the NDA in the government's Spending Review last autumn. A period of public consultation took place during January and February, enabling the NDA to take account of feedback before the documents were finalised.

[Weblink: Strategy and Business Plan](#)

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(SMEs) with larger organisations to share skills, experience and contacts with the aim of helping SMEs navigate through the maze of nuclear decommissioning opportunities. All UK-based SMEs are eligible to apply to become a mentee, regardless of industrial background, but must aspire to work in nuclear decommissioning or have an existing involvement. The scheme closes to applications on 15 April.

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Research projects on show

More than 40 nuclear research projects were on show at a recent event in Manchester, demonstrating the progress achieved in the years since funding totalling £50 million was awarded to them. Since 2012, the joint initiative by the NDA, Innovate UK, Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) has invested in a range of innovative projects aiming to encourage all sectors of the UK's nuclear supply chain. The Collaboration Nation event, which brought together research organisations with potential customers, featured a series of presentations, awards and networking.

[Weblink: Collaboration Nation](#)

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How the UK is providing support in Japan

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| • IAEA conference on decommissioning, Madrid | 23-27 May |
| • Scottish supply chain event, Dunblane | 22 June |
| • LLWR Annual Customer Forum, Workington | 29 June |
| • Publication of NDA Annual Report & Accounts | June/July |
| • NDA Archive Open Day, Wick | July 2016 |

National college for nuclear announced

Cumbria and Somerset are set to play a leading role in the government's £15 million investment to create a world-class nuclear training college for the UK. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) confirmed that the National College for Nuclear (NCfN) will be based on two sites at Lakes College, Lilyhall, and Bridgwater College. The college, set to open in September 2017, aims to train 7,000 people by 2020 and is one of five national colleges aimed at creating the 'workforce of tomorrow'. Sellafield Ltd and EDF will lead industry input into the nuclear college, working alongside the Universities of Cumbria and Bristol. Current forecasts predict demand for skilled staff at all levels in nuclear will increase by 40 per cent to 98,000 workers. The other national colleges will focus on advanced manufacturing, digital skills, wind energy, high-speed rail, creative and cultural industries and onshore oil and gas.

[Weblink: National College for Nuclear](#)

£12 million for research

R&D framework contracts worth up to £12 million were awarded to a series of consortia, as NDA seeks innovative solutions to technical challenges. Among the organisations involved are UK universities, global corporations and around 20 Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). The NDA's Direct Research Portfolio (DRP) forms a key part of the NDA's strategic research programme and focuses on direct funding for research that delivers innovation across multiple sites, develops technical expertise and informs NDA's strategy. The three new framework contracts were awarded to 10 consortia, involving more than 70 organisations and including three consortia led by SMEs. The contracts, last awarded in 2012, will cover the next four years.

Meanwhile, almost 50 research students and Post-Doctoral Research Assistants, who are working on a unique programme, gathered in Bristol to share their progress with representatives from industry, regulators and international organisations. The students were part of the four-year DISTINCTIVE programme (Decommissioning, Immobilisation and Storage Solutions for Nuclear Waste Inventories), launched in 2014. DISTINCTIVE is supported by 11 universities, led by Leeds, and funded jointly by the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council, NDA, the National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL), NDA and Sellafield Ltd.

[Weblink: Research contracts](#)

[Find out more about the DISTINCTIVE consortium](#)

Opening doors to Sellafield hazard removal

One of Sellafield's most hazardous buildings is a step closer to being cleaned up after a major engineering task was completed. The historic Pile Fuel Cladding Silo contains waste from the site's earliest days, when the site was focused on weapons-related

activities, and is one of the most challenging tasks in the NDA estate. Installation of a huge 40-tonne, 9-metre wide steel door frame on the side of the building marks a crucial step. This will allow doors to be hung, behind which holes will be cut so the waste can be removed by retrieval machines. Years of planning, testing and specialist engineering design preceded the milestone achievement.

[Weblink: Sellafield engineering feat](#)

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[Weblink: New era for Sellafield](#)

Performance overview published

The NDA has published the latest quarterly overview of performance across its sites, focusing on the priority programmes and major projects. Progress is measured against specific targets set out in the annual Business Plan.

[Weblink: Performance review](#)

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