

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and National Decommissioning Centre launch research partnership



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The unique strategic partnership, supporting research with a potential value of up to £900,000, will see the NDA work with researchers from the University of Aberdeen in areas of mutual interest to both the nuclear and oil and gas sectors.

The areas of research will include decarbonisation of decommissioning activities, economic impacts, cost benchmarking and remote operations in hazardous environments.

This agreement builds on three years of discussions involving the NDA, the NDC, Net Zero Technology Centre, regulators including the North Sea Transition Authority, and industry bodies, which sought to identify mutually beneficial opportunities through the insights and lessons learned from each sector.

The partnership will draw on current research taking place at the NDC and the University of Aberdeen to deliver a programme of research that will provide benefit to both the nuclear and offshore energy sectors.

It will include links to a project backed by the Scottish Government's Energy Transition Fund in which the NDC is working with the offshore energy sector to reduce emissions from decommissioning operations by introducing alternative processes, new technologies and assessing opportunities for wider collaboration.

The partnership also aims to harness the capabilities of the NDC's £1.6 million simulation suite, to enable operational

scenarios related to nuclear decommissioning activity to be trialled in a safe, virtual environment.

This will allow users to reduce the risks in operations such as the removal or moving of infrastructure, or deployment of new technologies to understand which are best suited to a task.

Welcoming the agreement, Karl Sanderson, Head of Cross-Industry Learning at NDA, said:

“The civil nuclear industry has engaged with other industry sectors on many areas of common interest in recent years, sharing lessons learned on over 15 topics, involving more than 150 organisations.

“This new relationship with the NDC will build on prior collaboration to enable joint projects and research to be conducted, that aim to under-pin the UK as an emerging centre of global excellence in decommissioning.”

A cross-industry workshop between NDA and NDC to build on learning between the nuclear decommissioning and oil and gas sectors.

Professor Richard Neilson, director of the NDC at the University of Aberdeen, said:

“We are delighted to be working in partnership with the NDA to explore areas where our expertise can provide value in both nuclear and offshore energy decommissioning contexts, including remote operations, decarbonisation, cost benchmarking, and potentially underwater laser cutting.

“We look forward to working closely with colleagues at the NDA as we seek solutions that help to meet the many challenges of nuclear decommissioning, while delivering cross-sector benefits.”

Roger Esson, Head of Industry and Partner Networks, at the Net Zero Technology Centre, added:

“At Net Zero Technology Centre we know the value of partnership and collaboration, our strategic partnership with

the University of Aberdeen to fund the NDC, continues to provide opportunities to share knowledge to address the challenges that our industry is facing as we seek to realise our net zero ambitions.

“This latest agreement brings together two research partners to address their challenges and to establish where common ground and mutual interests could benefit all parties – it is this kind of cross-sector learning that will accelerate the energy transition.”

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