

R&D activities on sCO₂ in Europe

sCO₂ cycles for Nuclear Power Production

Seventh episode – 30 September 2024

This webinar is in cooperation with 9 European R&D projects

COMPAS_sCO₂

SCARABEUS 




CO₂OLHEAT


sCO₂-4-NPP

CARBOSOLA

 DESOLINATION

SOLAR
sCO₂OL

sCO₂-Efekt

Webinar content & speakers

- **Nuclear landscape, a brief introduction**
(Moderator Albannie Cagnac – EDF)
- **Use of carbon dioxide in nuclear energy**
(Otakar Frýbort – Research Centre Řež)
- **sCO₂ for molten salt reactors**
(Paul Levisse – NAAREA)
- **Fusion Energy and the role of sCO₂**
(Jack Acres – UK Atomic Energy Authority)



What is the first word that comes to your mind when thinking about Nuclear Power Generation?



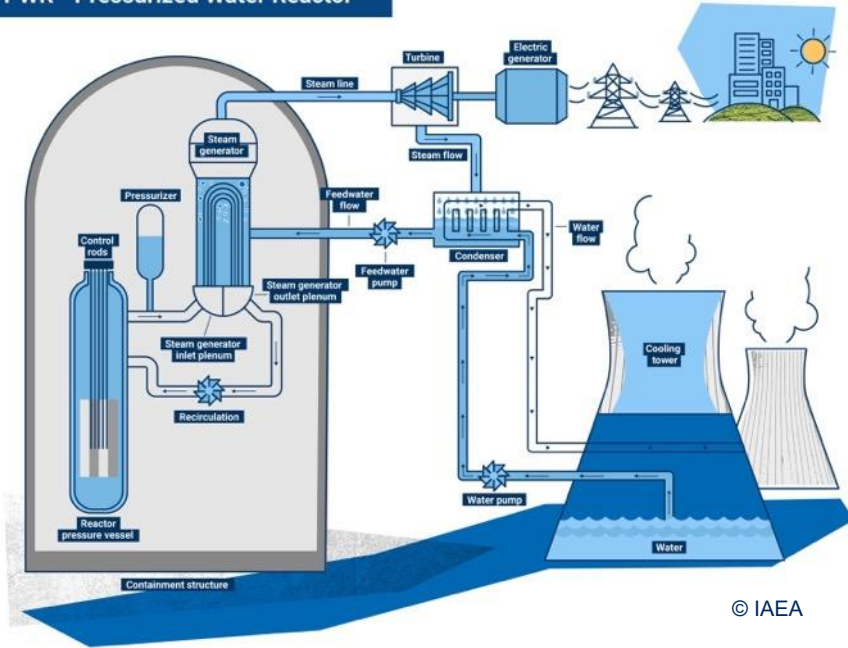


Nuclear landscape, a brief introduction

Albannie Cagnac, EDF

Nuclear Energy ?

PWR - Pressurized Water Reactor



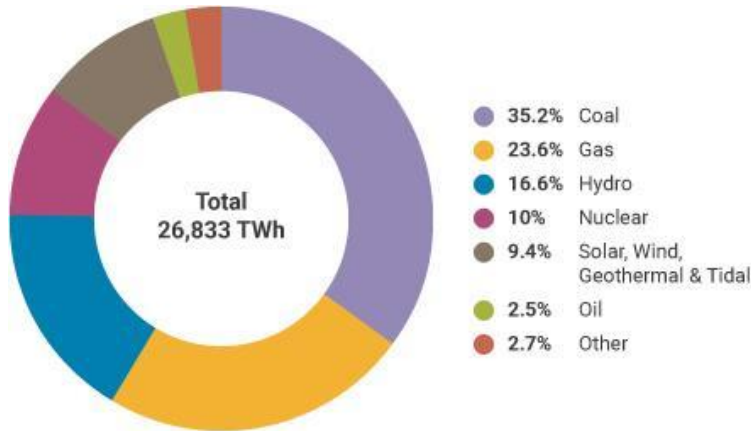
Nuclear plants vs Coal & Gas plants

Nuclear power plants use nuclear fission (and one day nuclear fusion) to produce electricity while thermal power plants use the heat from burning coal or gas to produce electricity.

Both need turbine, condenser, cooling system, heat exchangers.

Nuclear Energy in the world

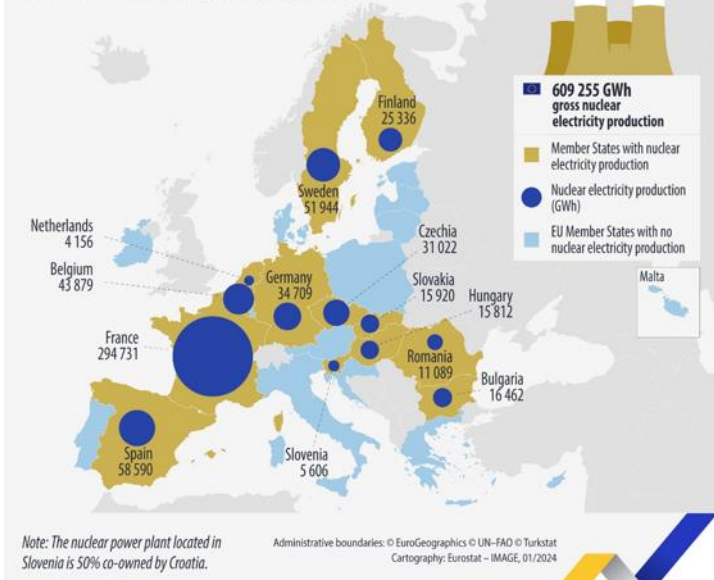
Worldwide Production



Source: IEA

Nuclear energy in the EU, 2022

(gross nuclear electricity production, GWh)

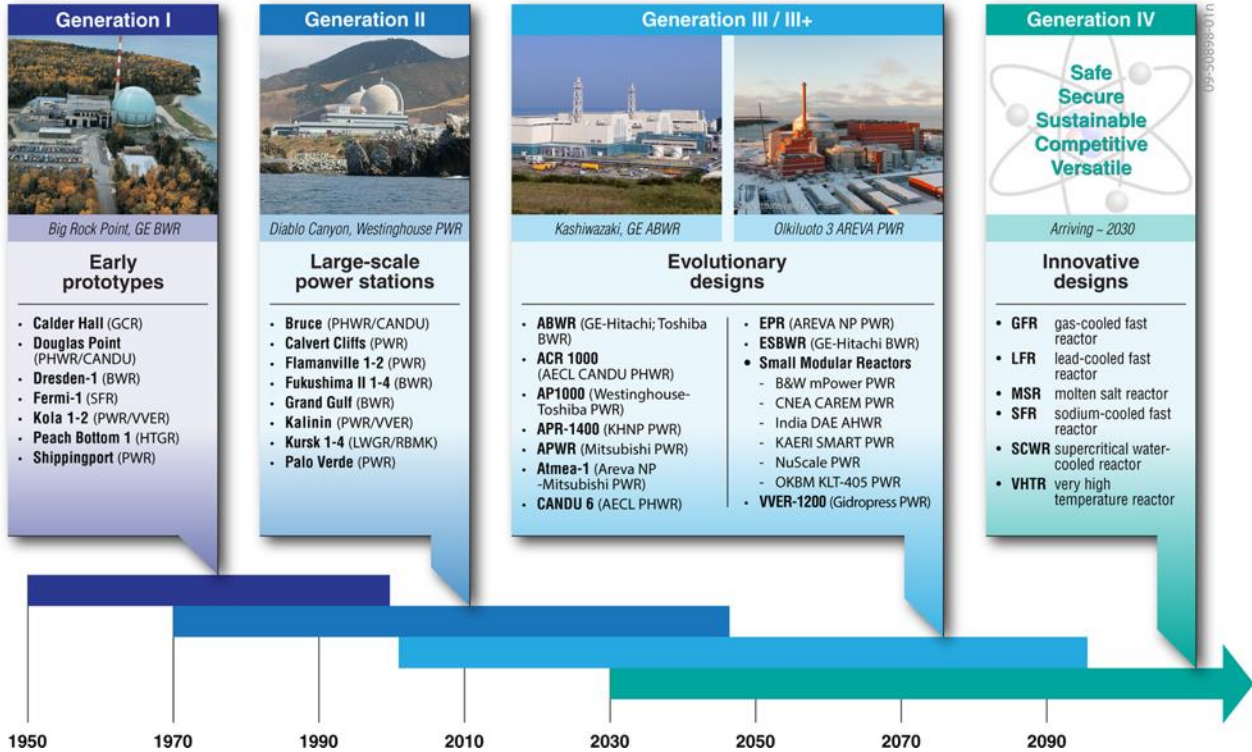


eurostat 

Around 22% of the total electricity produced in the EU

Nuclear Technology?

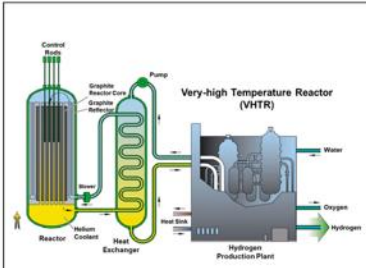
Technology evolving with scientific and engineering advances.



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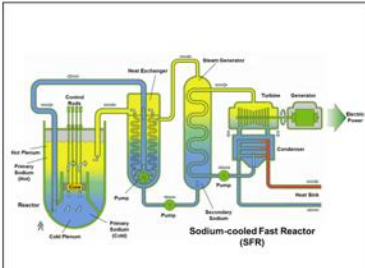
Next generation : Generation IV concepts

First researches for CO_2 use in nuclear : 1960's / 1970's



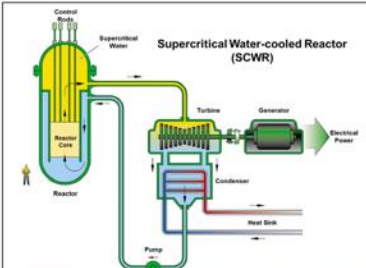
Very-high Temperature Reactor (VHTR)

Neutron spectrum: Thermal neutron
Coolant: Helium
Outlet temperature: 900 to 1,000°C
Fuel cycle: Open
Output power: 250 to 300 MWe



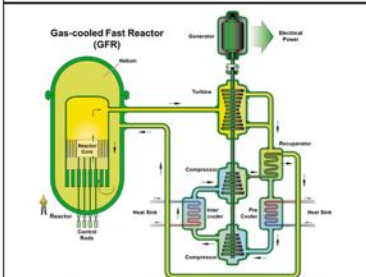
Sodium-cooled Fast Reactor (SFR)

Neutron spectrum: High-speed neutron
Coolant: Sodium
Outlet temperature: 500 to 550°C
Fuel cycle: Closed
Output power: 50 to 1,500 MWe



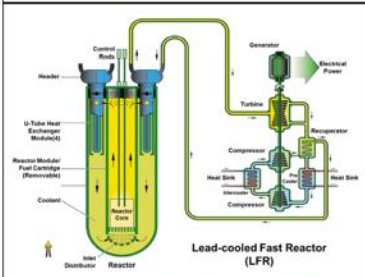
Supercritical Water-cooled Reactor (SCWR)

Neutron spectrum: Thermal neutron or High-speed neutron
Coolant: Water
Outlet temperature: 510 to 625°C
Fuel cycle: Open or Closed
Output power: 300 to 1,500 MWe



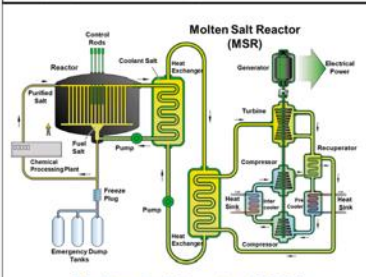
Gas-cooled Fast Reactor (GFR)

Neutron spectrum: High-speed neutron
Coolant: Helium
Outlet temperature: 850°C
Fuel cycle: Closed
Output power: 1,200 MWe



Lead-cooled Fast Reactor (LFR)

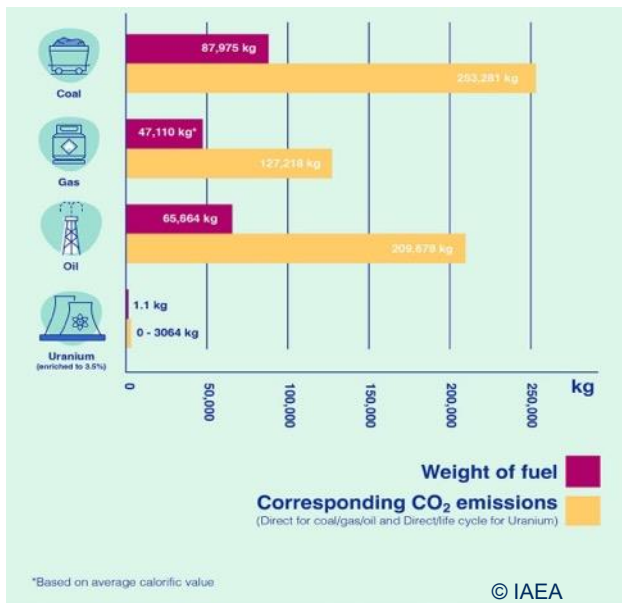
Neutron spectrum: High-speed neutron
Coolant: Lead
Outlet temperature: 80 to 570°C
Fuel cycle: Closed
Output power: 20 to 1,200 MWe



Molten Salt Reactor (MSR)

Neutron spectrum: Thermal neutron or High-speed neutron
Coolant: Fluoride salt or Chloride salt
Outlet temperature: 700 to 800°C
Fuel cycle: Open or Closed
Output power: 1,000 MWe

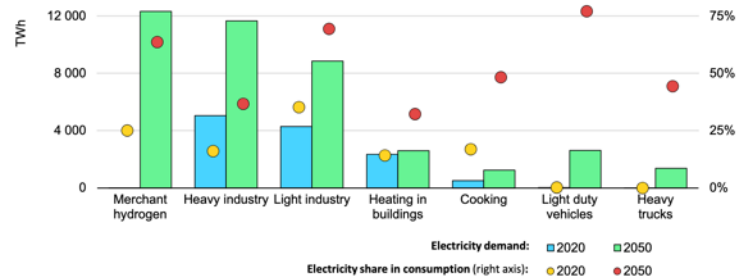
Reviving interest in nuclear potential for global transition



Low emission energy

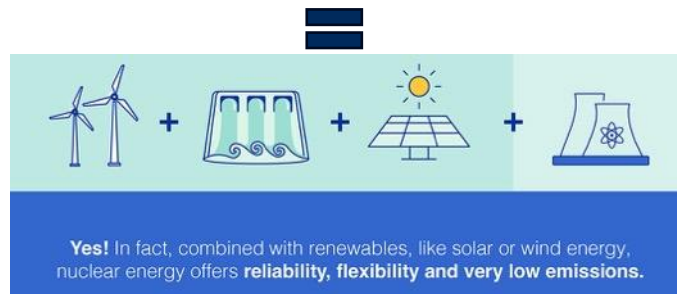
Increasing demand

Global electricity demand and share of electricity in total energy consumption in selected applications in the Net Zero Emissions by 2050 Scenario



IEA. All rights reserved.

Source: IEA (2021), [Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector](#).



Yes! In fact, combined with renewables, like solar or wind energy, nuclear energy offers **reliability, flexibility and very low emissions.**

Reviving interest in nuclear's potential

New non electric applications



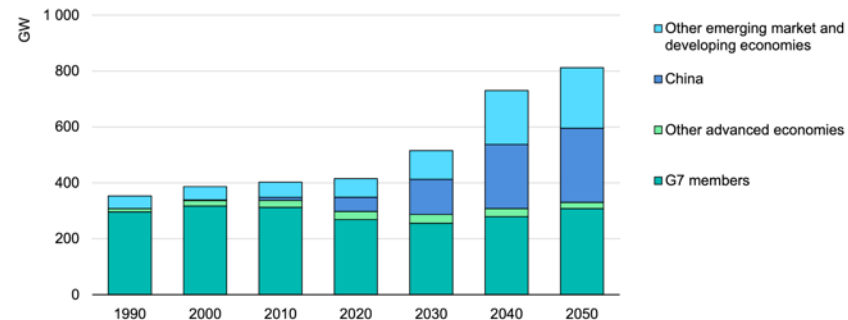
District heating



Desalination

Increased power capacity to reach net zero targets

Nuclear power capacity by country/region in the Net Zero Emissions by 2050 Scenario



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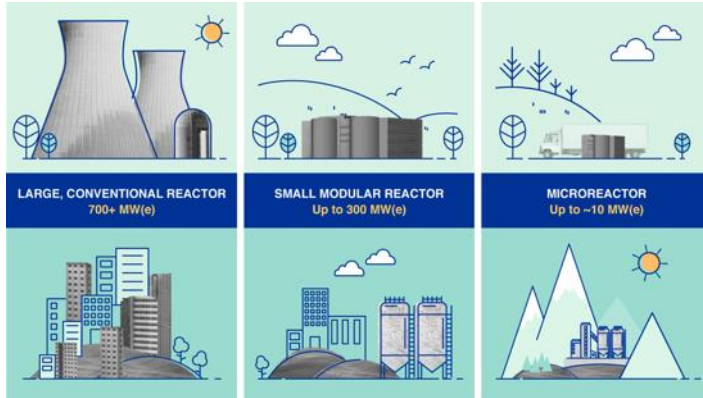
Note: Power capacity refers to gross capacity, before accounting for onsite electricity consumption.

Sources: IEA (2021), [Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector](#); IEA (2021), [Achieving Net Zero Electricity Sectors in G7 Members](#).

**NEW R&D PROGRAMS or CONSTRUCTIONS
(USA, FR, UK, PO, CZ, CA, PRC, INDIA...)**

New Challenges for competitiveness

New designs : SMRs



- **Small** – fraction of the size of a conventional NPP
- **Modular** – factory-assembled and transported as a unit to a location for installation.
- **Reactors** – to generate heat to produce energy.

Challenges

Technological innovations (efficiency, safety)

Cost-competitiveness

Policy and regulatory

Safety and waste management

The advantages of sCO₂ cycles, already discussed in previous episodes, make them a good choice for these new reactors.

Thank you for your attention



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Use of carbon dioxide in nuclear energy

Otakar Frýbort
Research Centre Řež

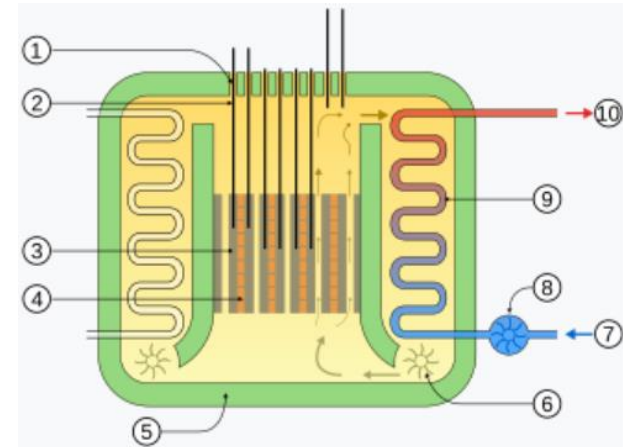
Summary

- Use of CO₂ in existing nuclear power plants
- General comparison of Rankin and EB cycle
- Nuclear reactor concepts under development using the sCO₂ power cycle
- Issues for implementation of sCO₂ cycles in nuclear energy
- Demonstration of sCO₂ cycles
- Conclusions

Use of CO₂ in existing nuclear power plants

Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor

- Design and developed in UK
- The prototype was commissioned at Windscale in 1962
- Commercial use since 1976
- Core moderated by graphite
- CO₂ in gaseous phase used as a cooling media
- Power production through Rankine steam cycle



- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Charge tubes | 6. Gas circulator |
| 2. Control rods | 7. Water |
| 3. Graphite moderator | 8. Water circulator |
| 4. Fuel assemblies | 9. Heat exchanger |
| 5. Concrete pressure vessel and radiation shielding | 10. Steam |

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advanced_Gas-cooled_Reactor

Use of CO₂ in existing nuclear power plants

A1 – Jaslovske Bohunice

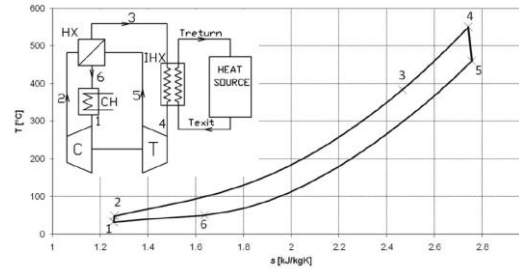
- Design developed in Czechoslovakia
- The pilot plant became operational at Jaslovske Bohunice in 1972
- Core moderated by heavy water
- CO₂ in gaseous phase used as a cooling media
- Power production through Rankine steam cycle
- 100g of silica gel permanently stopped the reactor in 1977



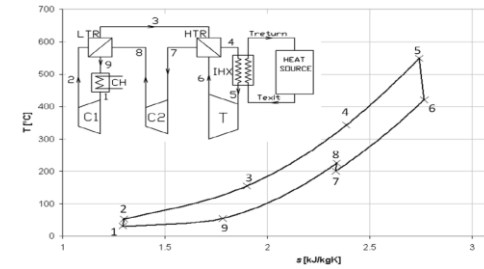
The cross section of A1 nuclear powerplant

sCO₂ conversion cycle architecture

- Selection of the most suitable cycle layout depends on:
 - inlet temperature
 - required temperature drop
 - pressure level/ratio
 - thermal power

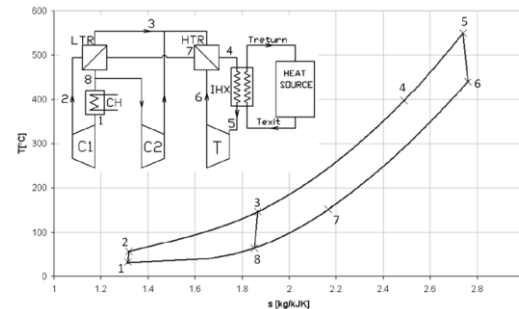


Simple Brayton Cycle Temperature - Entropy Diagram

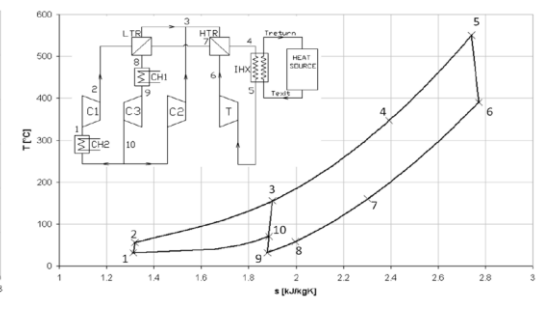


Precompression Cycle Temperature - Entropy Diagram

- The selected cycle architecture affects mainly:
 - cycle efficiency
 - total power of the cycle
 - investment demand



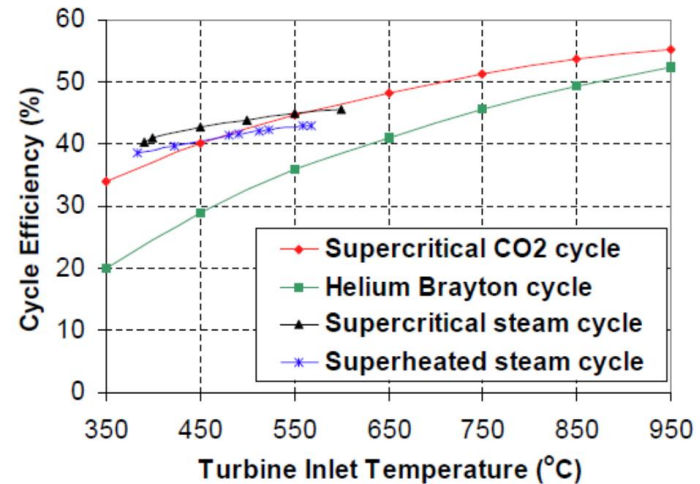
Recompression Cycle Temperature - Entropy Diagram



Partial-cooling Cycle Temperature - Entropy Diagram

General comparison of Rankin and EB cycle

- Subcritical steam cycles 42%
- Supercritical steam cycles less than 50%
- sCO₂ above 50% on high temperatures
- Other advantage of the sCO₂ cycle in comparison with SCW – mainly in dimensions and corrosion issues



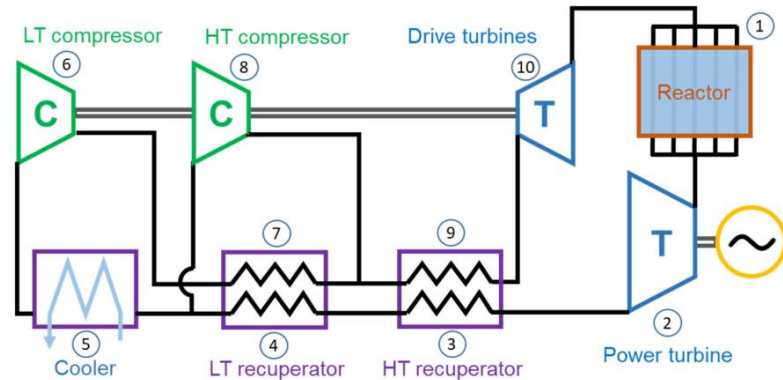
Cycle efficiency comparison of advanced power cycles

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Cycle-efficiency-comparison-of-advanced-power-cycle-4_fig1_299509259

Nuclear reactor concepts under development using the sCO₂ power cycle

HWGTR

- Design by Terra Power, US
- Gas cooled fast reactor concept – compact reactor core design
- Thermal power of 500 MW
- Direct Brayton cycle
- Main sCO₂ parameters
 - T_{max} – 550 °C
 - P_{max} – 22.5 MPa
- Gross/Overall efficiency 41/36%



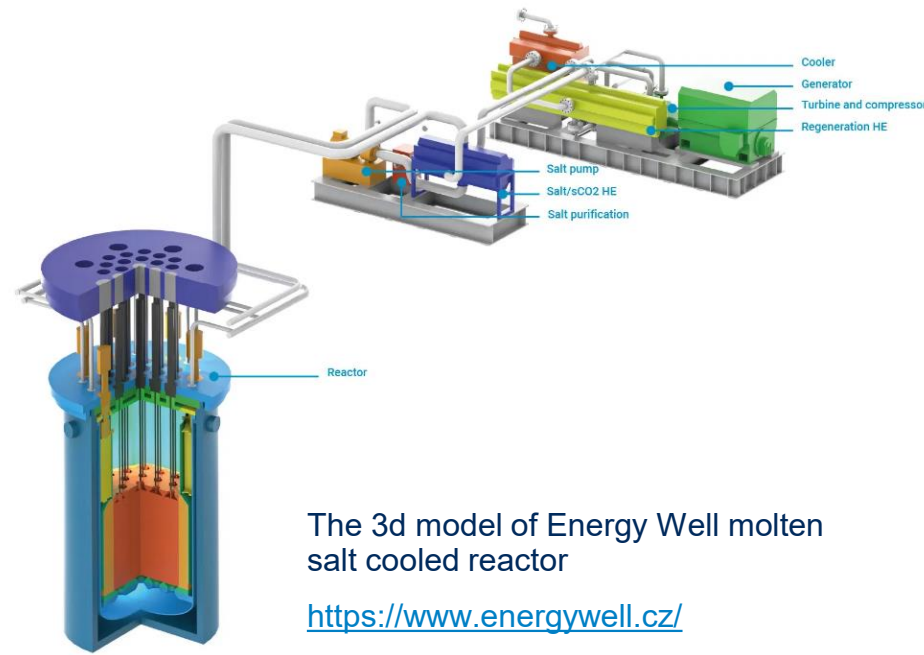
HWGTR power cycle schematic

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1738573321005702>

Nuclear reactor concepts under development using the sCO₂ power cycle

Energy Well

- Design by CVR, Czech Republic
- Primary and secondary cycle - FLiBe salt
- sCO₂ power cycle is used for power generation
- Thermal power of 20 MW
- Main sCO₂ parameters
 - T_{max} – 600 °C
 - P_{max} – 25 Mpa
 - Efficiency – 40%



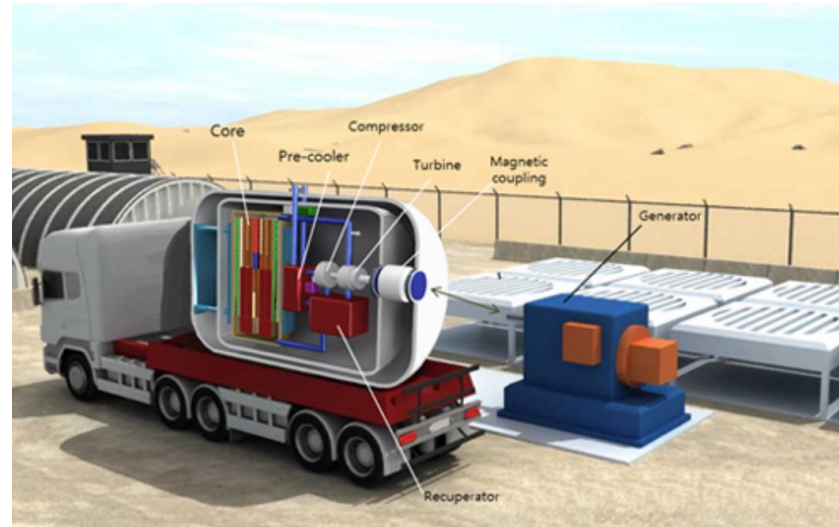
The 3d model of Energy Well molten salt cooled reactor

<https://www.energywell.cz/>

Nuclear reactor concepts under development using the sCO₂ power cycle

KAIST MMR - Supercritical CO₂-cooled micro modular reactor

- Design by Kaist, South Korea
- Direct sCO₂ cycle
- Thermal power of 36 MW
- 20 years of operation without refueling
- Main sCO₂ parameters
 - T_{max} – 650 °C
 - P_{max} – 20 Mpa
 - Efficiency – 33%



Visualization of KAIST MMR

<https://breakthroughs.kaist.ac.kr/sub02/view/id/278>

Issues for implementation of sCO₂ cycles in nuclear energy

- Operation pressure of sCO₂ much higher than primary loop pressure
- Licencing
 - The technology is not fully verified
 - The long-term reliability hasn't been demonstrated
 - It is mainly planned to be in connection with other non-validated technologies
 - Missing component reliability data

Demonstration of sCO₂ cycles

- Loops
 - SNL loop
 - Viena
 - sCO₂ loop at CVR
 - ...
- Demonstration cycles
 - Step
 - Sofia
 - Solarscool H2020 project
 - Desolation H2020 project
 - ...
- Possible applications for demonstration of the operability of the sCO₂ cycle
 - Waste heat recovery
 - Thermal energy storage
 - CSP applications
 - ...

Conclusions

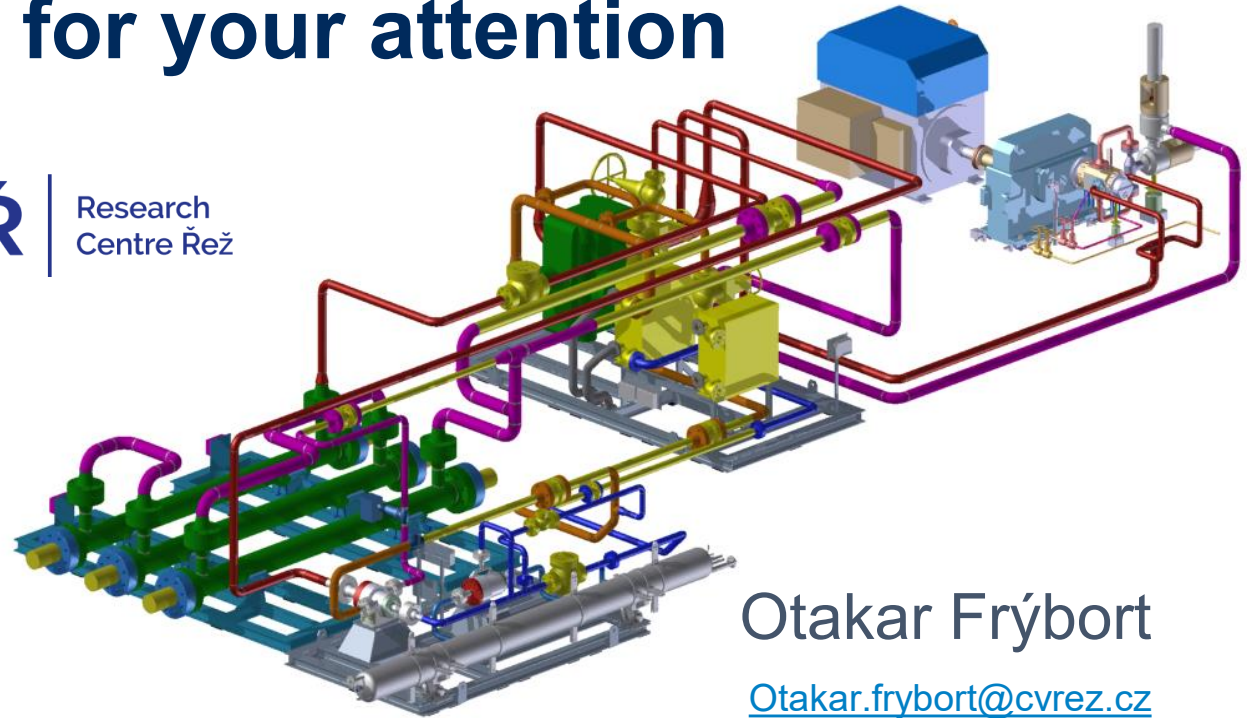
- Utilization of sCO₂ Brayton cycle is the way how to improve GIV NPP efficiency
- Use of sCO₂ cycle in PVRs or BWRs is not beneficial
- Before it's application, the cycle needs to be fully verified in the labs and further in industrial application

Thank you for your attention



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sCO₂ for molten salt reactors

Paul LEVISSE
NAAREA

NAAREA a French company

providing an energy access service on an industrial scale.



Recycling of nuclear spent
fuel



80 MW_{th} / 40 MW_e



Nuclear reactor
Fourth generation
molten salts
and fast spectrum



Stable & competitive
price

Nuclear
abundant
affordable
resourcefull
energy, for
all

NAAREA a French company

providing an energy access service on an industrial scale.



80 MW_{th} / 40 MW_e



Approximately
100,000 Western
households



90 % of the industrial
plants



2700 buses or heavy
goods vehicles



The largest ships in the
world fully loaded



110,000,000 m³ of desalinated water
consumption of 2 million inhabitants



5,700 tonnes/year
of carbon-free hydrogen.

NAAREA's Approach



1

A nuclear technology

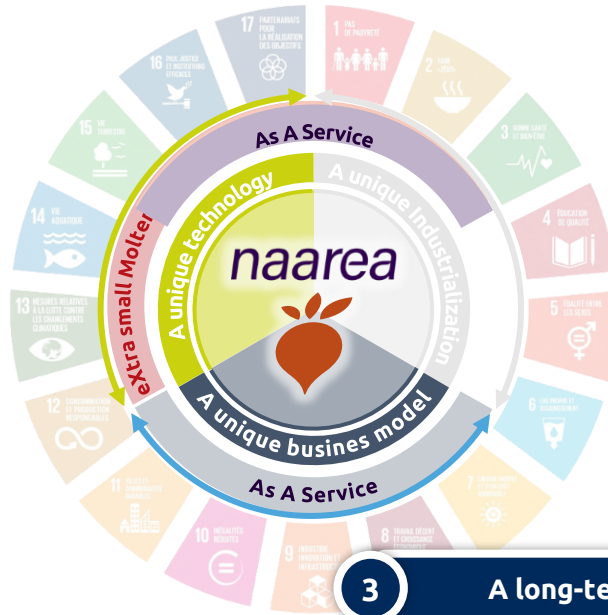
- Molten salt reactor → passive safety
- Fast spectrum → uses Nuclear spent fuel
- eXtra-small → reactor in a 40ft container
- 80 MWth / 40 MWe
- Water free / Pressure Free

*Sustainable, distributed,
dispatchable, safe energy*

newcleo
Futurable Energy



THORIZON



2

A serial industrial approach

- Centralized In-factory build → Reliability
- Standard module → flexible deployment and easy maintenance
- limited Civil work → Fast Installation and decommissioning

*Reliable, competitive,
simplified deployment*

3

A long-term Service business model

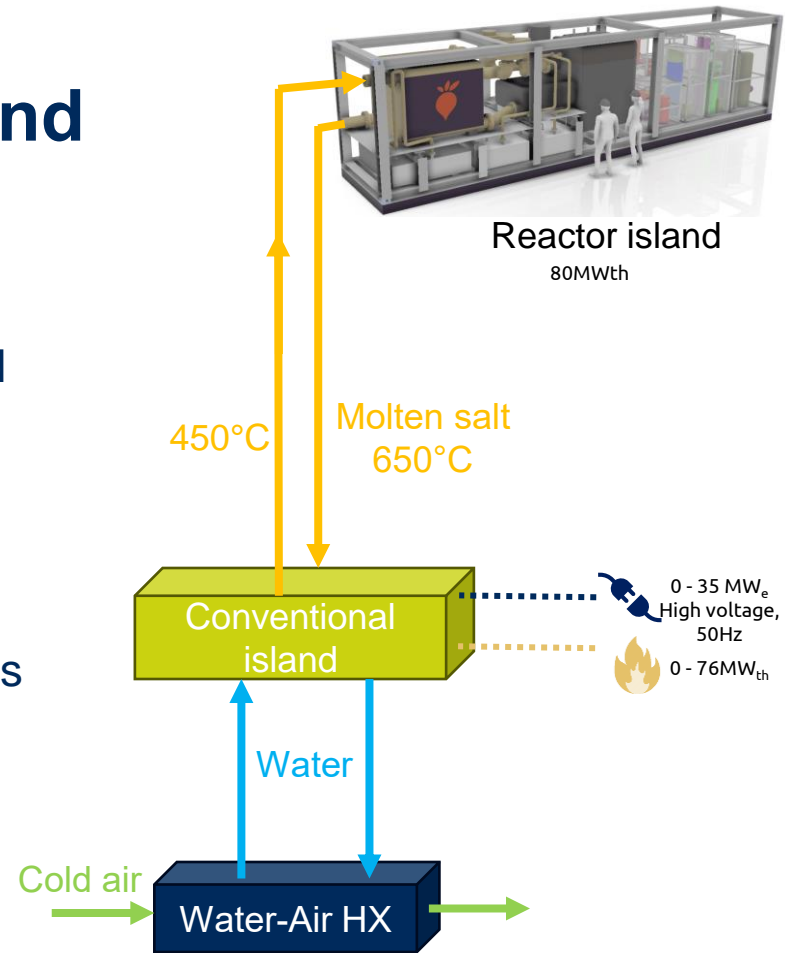
- Access to Carbon free resilient energy
- Long-term contract → No trading impact

NAAREA has the responsibility of the full cycle

Why sCO₂ ?

NAAREA's conventional island

- Reactor island interface :
 - 80MWth molten chloride salt (650°C)
 - Molten salt coming out of the reactor island is non-radioactive and non-contaminated
- Power conversion island :
 - Recompression Brayton sCO₂ cycle
 - Directly coupled to the grid
 - Electricity and/or heat
 - Load variations to follow client requirements
 - No nuclear safety requirements on conventional island
- Cycle cooling :
 - Air cooled w/ intermediate water loop

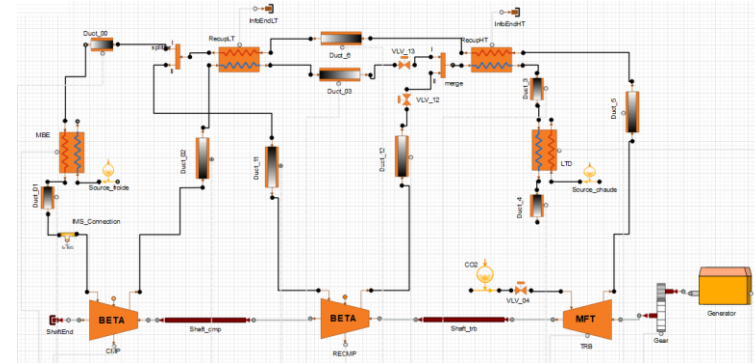


Why sCO₂ with Molten Salt SMRs

	Characteristic of molten salt SMR	Synergy with sCO ₂ cycle
Temperature	High temperature fluid with operating range between 400°C and 700°C	sCO ₂ displays significant efficiency benefit vs steam >550°C (SCW costly in <200MWth range) Good matching between molten salt temperatures and CO ₂ temperatures across main heater
Compacity	Molten plutonium salts enable for very compact reactors → Container implantation for reactor island	sCO ₂ enables compact turbomachinery and conventional island → Reduce overall footprint of plant for installation on industrial sites
Reactivity	Fast neutron molten salt reactors can react rapidly to load changes (no Xe poisoning, limited thermal inertia)	sCO ₂ transient response seen as faster than steam (lower inertias)
Installation	80MWth reactors are to be installed as close as possible to end users (industries, ...), sometimes in remote areas	Absence of water use for cooling or make-up water reduces installation constraints and increases resiliency

sCO₂ development for NAAREA (1/2)

- R&D :
 - Salt-sCO₂ interaction (calculations, tests)
 - Potential specific sCO₂ – material corrosion tests
- sCO₂ steady and transient model :
 - Definition of design parameters vs techno-economic optima :
 - Turbine inlet temperature vs material costs
 - Compressor inlet temperature vs dry cooling surface vs hot day performance
 - Recuperator pinch vs cost
 - Strategies for main transient and accidental conditions :
 - Reactor shutdown (avoid salt freeze)
 - Turbine trip / load rejection : no power extraction from reactor
 - Coupled reactor + turbine control
 - Client load following (heat & electricity)

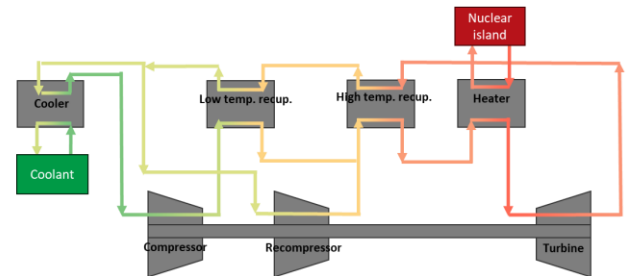
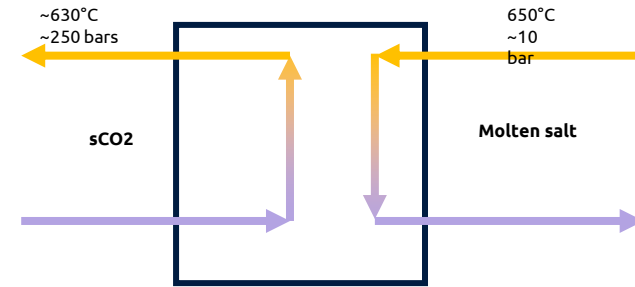


sCO₂ development for NAAREA (2/2)

- Overall integration :
 - NAAREA positioned as EPC & operator
 - Turbomachinery, heat exchangers and other equipment designed and manufactured by dedicated suppliers
- Main challenges :
 - Demonstration of techno-economic competitiveness : difficulty in projecting equipment CAPEX & OPEX for series production
 - No off-the-shelf solutions available for turbomachinery and heat exchangers : specific FEED studies & supply chain development

Focus on MSR specific challenge : salt-sCO₂ heat exchanger

- At the crossroad of multiple challenges :
 - Corrosion resistance :
 - Molten salts corrode most alloys (highly dependent on salt purity)
 - Chloride salts are especially aggressive
 - sCO₂ has specific high temperature corrosion mechanisms (carburisation, ...)
 - High pressure and high temperatures
 - Compacity and costs
 - Manufacturability
 - Salt side must be drainable



Thank you for your attention



ETN PRESENTATION FUSION ENERGY AND THE ROLE OF SCO_2

FOR PUBLIC USE

UKAEA - STEP - Power & Cooling

Jack Acres

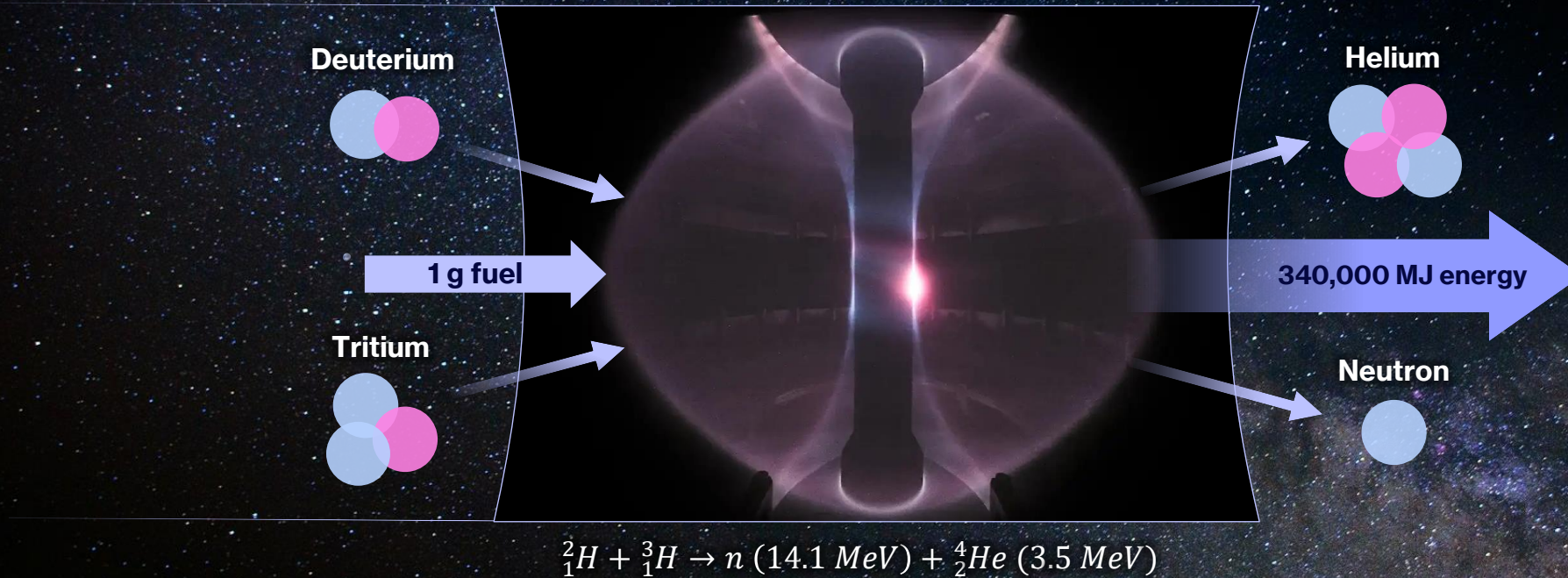
OFFICIAL - PUBLIC





WHAT IS FUSION

Fusion is the process that powers the sun and stars by fusing hydrogen nuclei at the core...

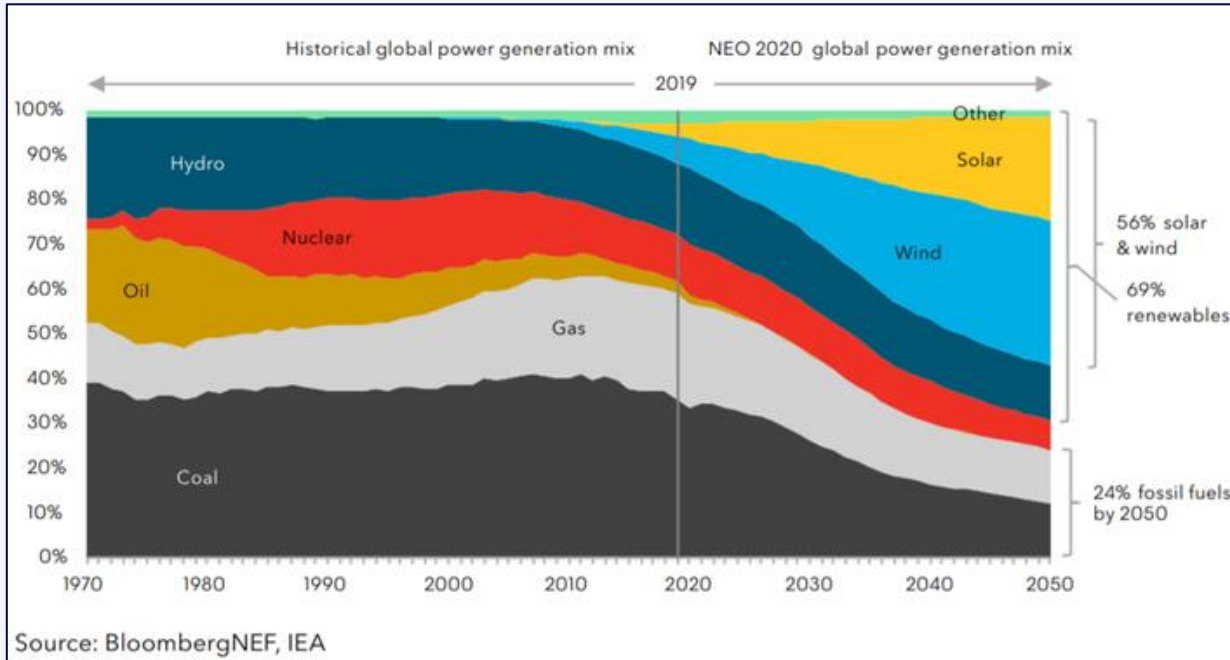


... unlike its fission counterpart, fusion relies on fusing two lighter atomic particles. The mass deficit of the subatomic particles releases energy ($e=mc^2$)



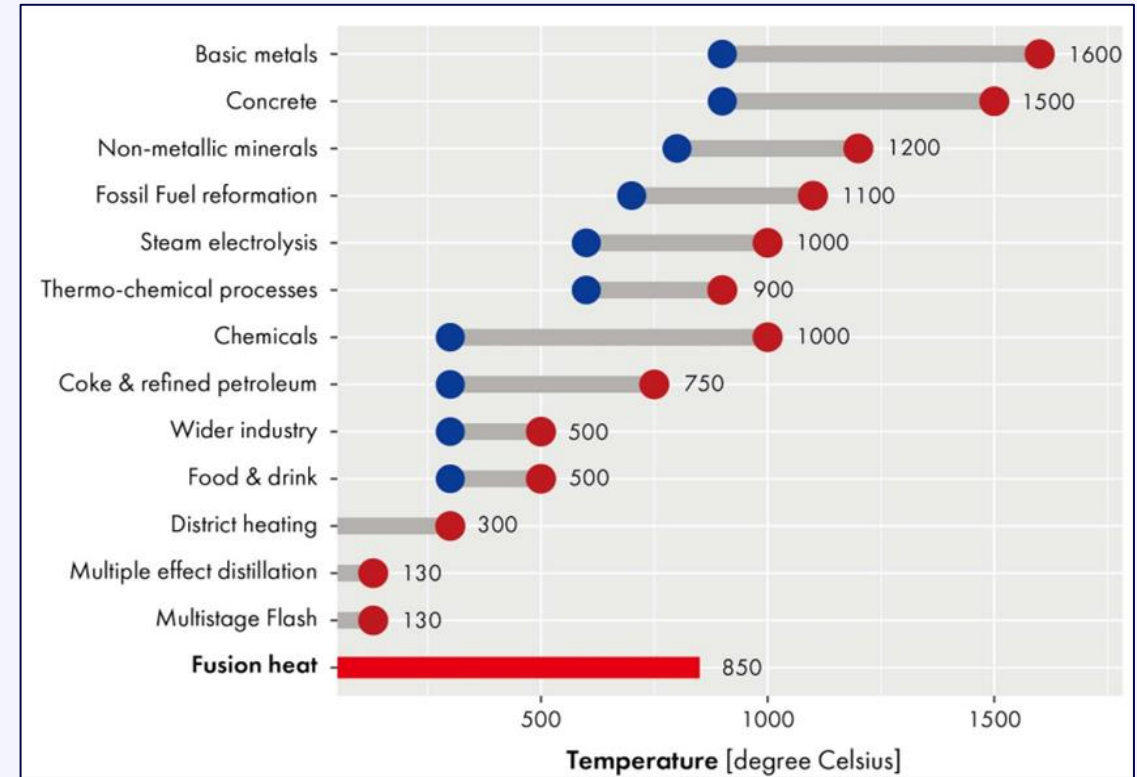
WHY FUSION? FUSION POWER IN A GLOBAL DEMAND FOR CLEAN ENERGY

GLOBAL ELECTRICITY MIX



New Energy Outlook Projects Massive Energy Sector Shift Through 2050 - forbes.com - Robert Rapier
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rpapier/2020/10/31/new-energy-outlook-projects-massive-energy-sector-shift-through-2050/>

TEMPERATURE DISTRIBUTION OF HEAT DRIVEN INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES



The commercialisation of fusion for the energy market: a review of socio-economic studies
 Thomas Griffiths, Richard Pearson, Michael Bluck and Shutaro Takeda

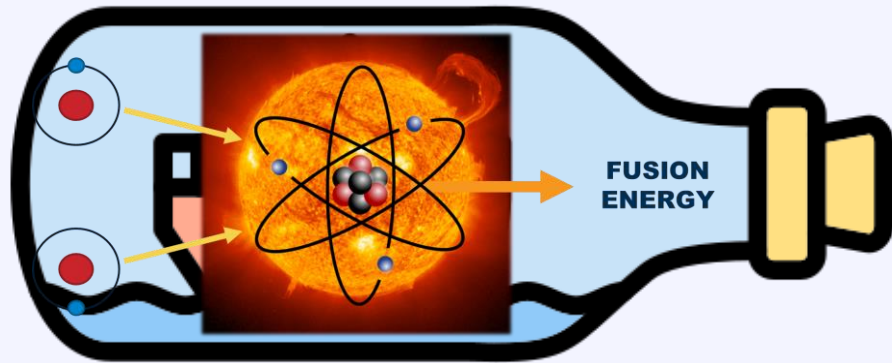
A GLOBAL DEMAND FOR RELIABLE, DISPATCHABLE, AND SAFE CLEAN ENERGY – ALLOWING US TO REACH NET ZERO

HOW TO DO FUSION: FUSION ON EARTH

Fusion in the sun occurs at immense pressures and temperatures. At these conditions, the hydrogen is in a “plasma” state (ionised and stripped of its electron).

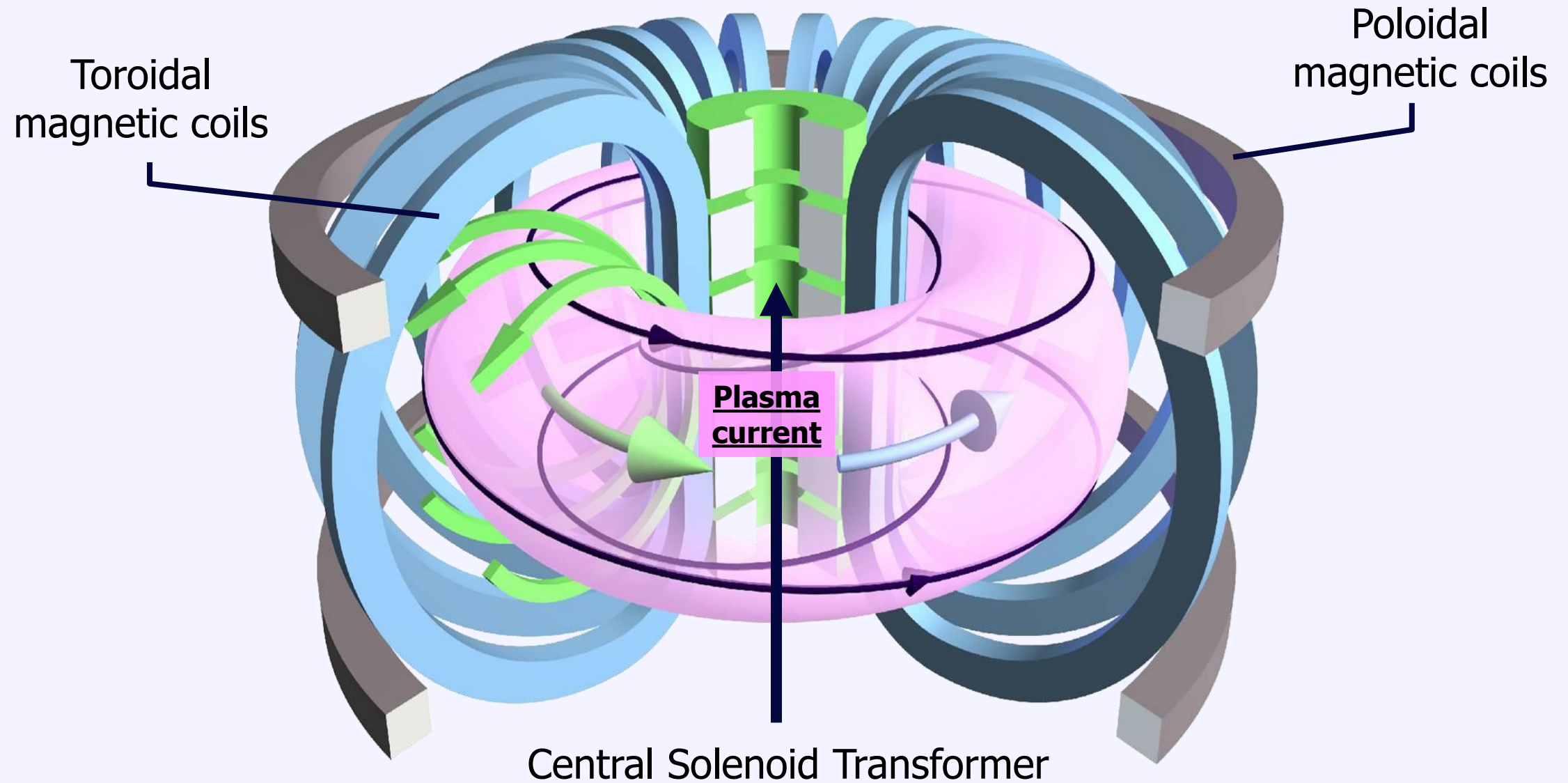
Recreating fusion on earth requires:

- High vacuum to remove impurities and cooling effect
- Very high temperatures, 10x higher than the centre of the sun, due to lower achievable plasma pressures (100-150 Million °C)
- Deuterium and tritium. Deuterium is widely available naturally. Tritium will need to be bred locally to sustain the high energy value of the D-T reaction



THIS IS ACHIEVED BY USING VARIOUS CONFINEMENT TECHNIQUES SUCH AS MAGNETIC AND/OR INERTIAL CONFINEMENT

HOW TO DO FUSION: THE TOKAMAK





WHO IS DOING FUSION: GLOBAL FUSION ROADMAP

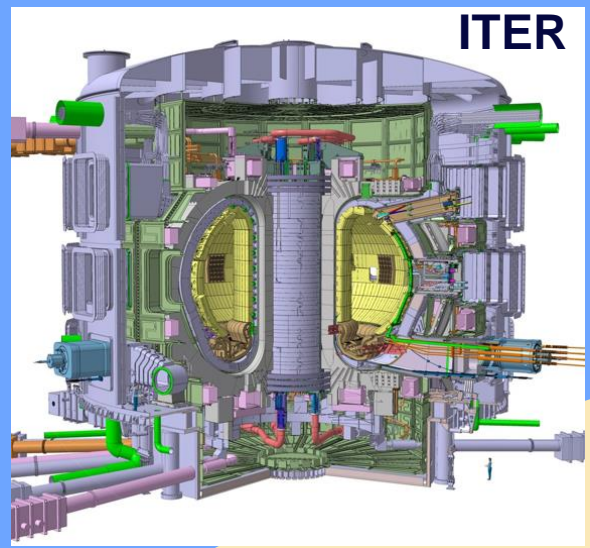
2020

2030

2040

2050

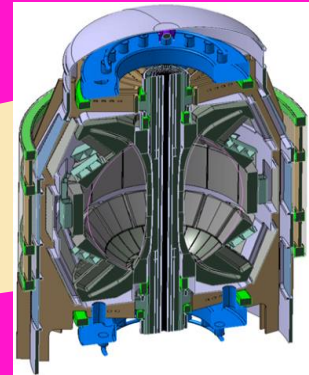
EXPERIMENTAL DEVICES



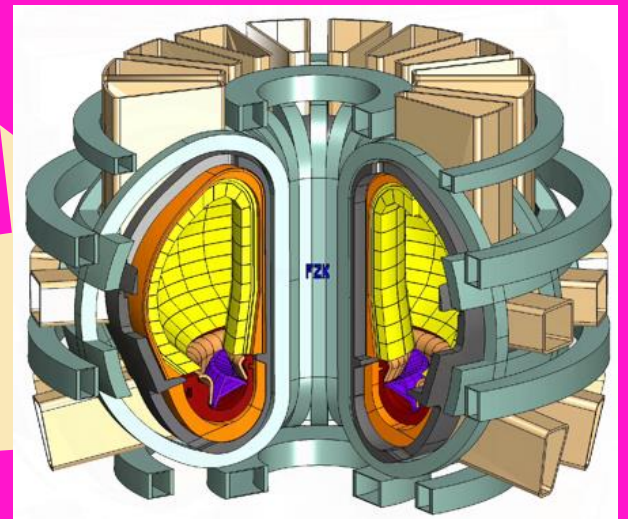
ITER

POWER PLANTS

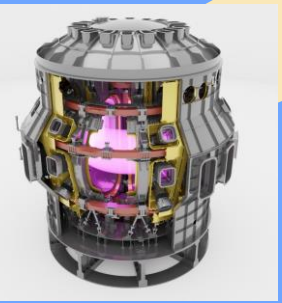
STEP



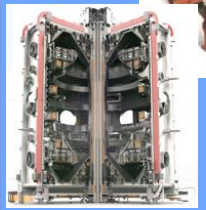
DEMO



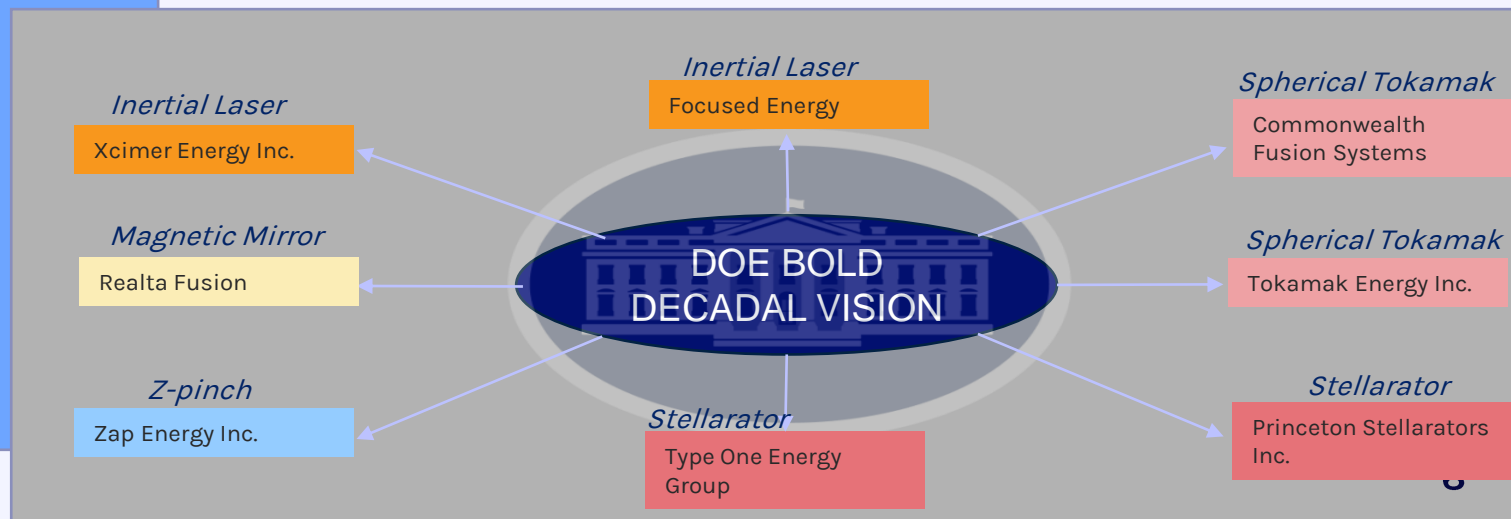
JET



JT-60SA & others supporting ITER...



MAST-U



WHAT IS STEP?



**DELIVER A UK PROTOTYPE FUSION ENERGY PLANT,
TARGETING 2040, AND A PATH TO
COMMERCIAL VIABILITY OF FUSION.**

STEP MISSION

WHAT IS STEP?

SPHERICAL TOKAMAK FOR ENERGY PRODUCTION

A pioneering, prototype fusion powerplant that will demonstrate:

- net energy,
- fuel self-sufficiency
- maintainability of fusion power plants
- a route to the commercial viability of fusion

STEP has progressed through five Concept Maturity Level reviews and three independent Fusion Technical Advisory Group reviews.

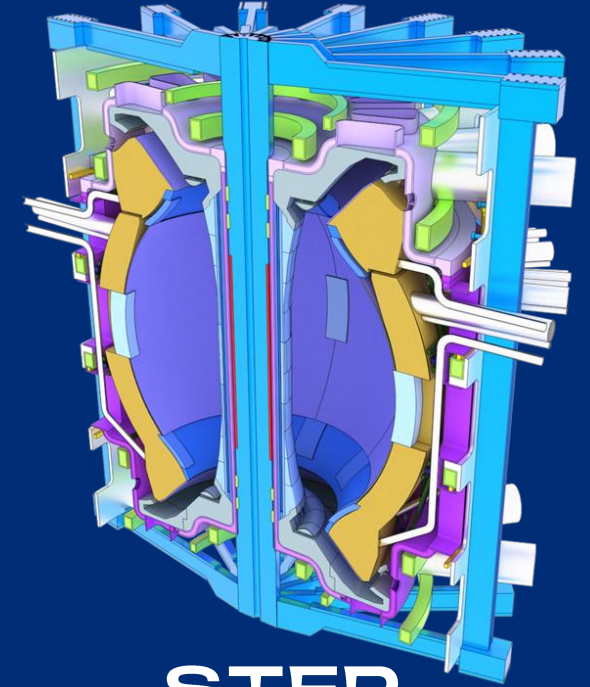
STEP will be delivered in 3 phases:

Phase 1 – develop concept design and select a site

Phase 2 – detailed engineering design and permissions and consents as well as pre-construction works by early 2030s

Phase 3 – manufacturing and construction – targeting operations around 2040.

SPHERICAL TOKAMAK BASIS



STEP

- Cored apple shape
- Novel exhaust options – Super-X Divertor
- Fewer, smaller magnets
- Smaller buildings
- Lower costs due to compact nature

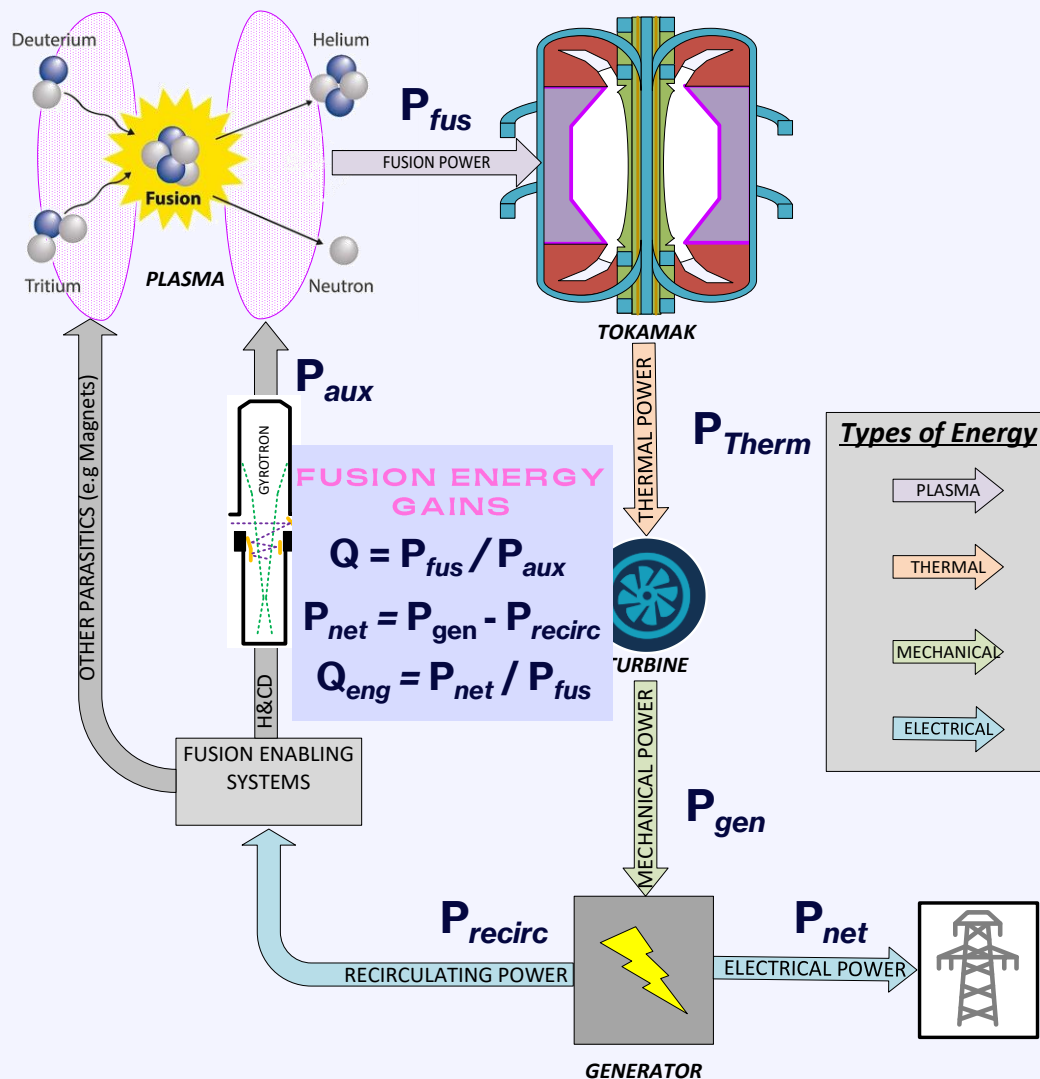
STEP 

THE STEP POWERPLANT



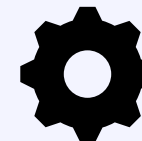
MAGNETICALLY CONFINED FUSION

A UNIQUE POWER SOURCE



4 KEY CHALLENGES UNIQUE TO FUSION POWER GENERATION:

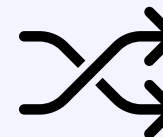
Challenge 1: Need for efficiency



Challenge 2: Need for heat integration



Challenge 3: Need for flexibility

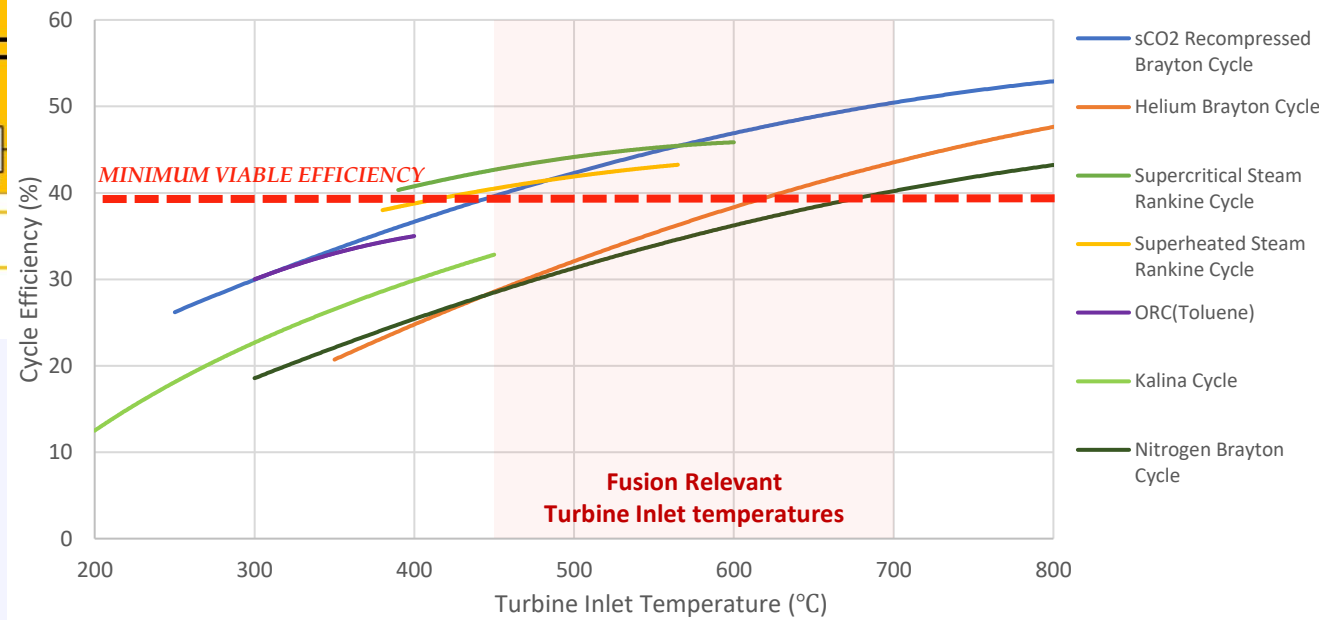
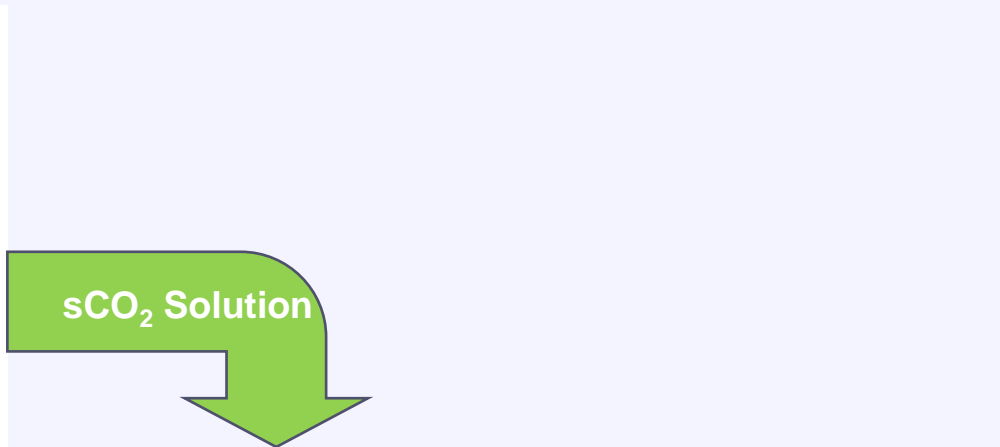
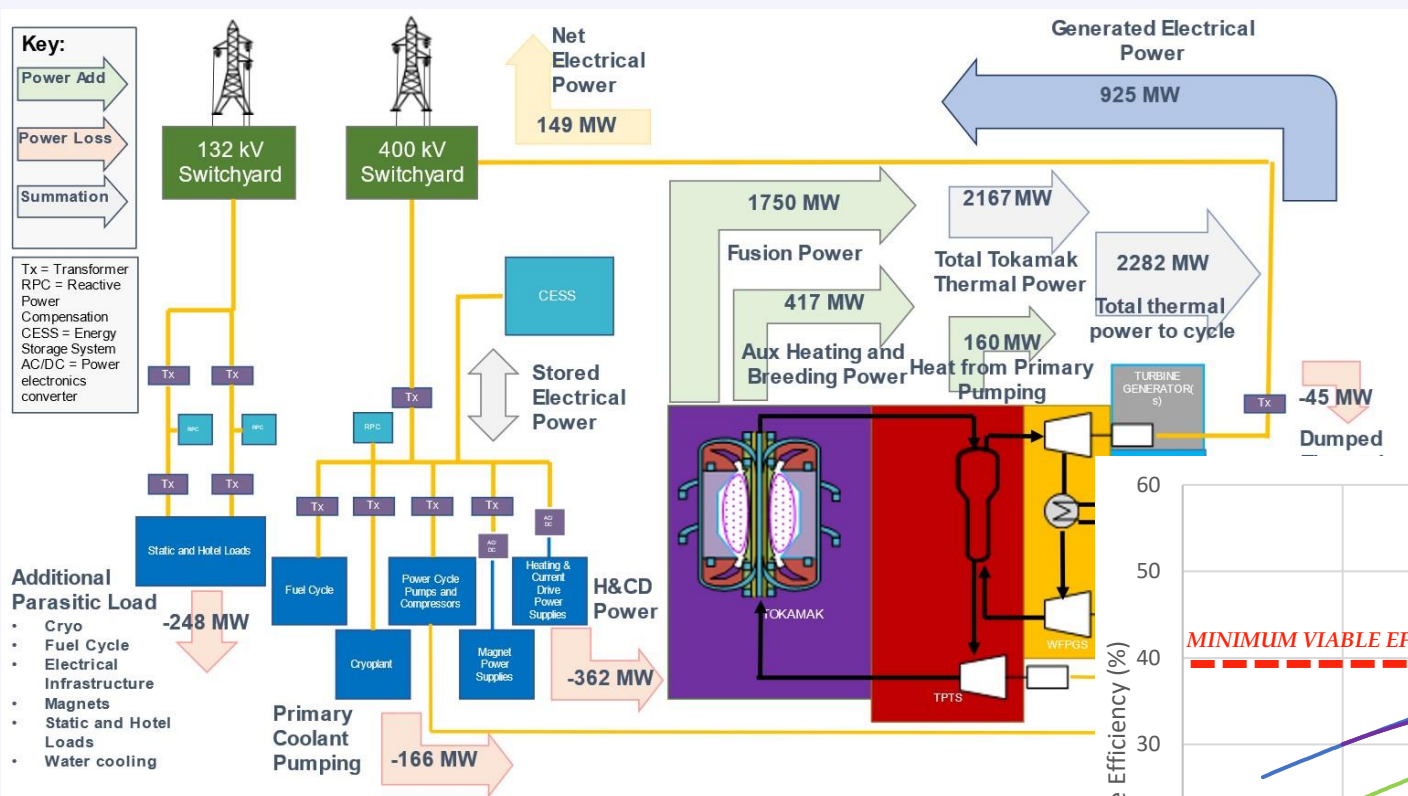


Challenge 4: Needs for viability





NEED FOR EFFICIENCY: DRIVEN BY THE POWER BALANCE

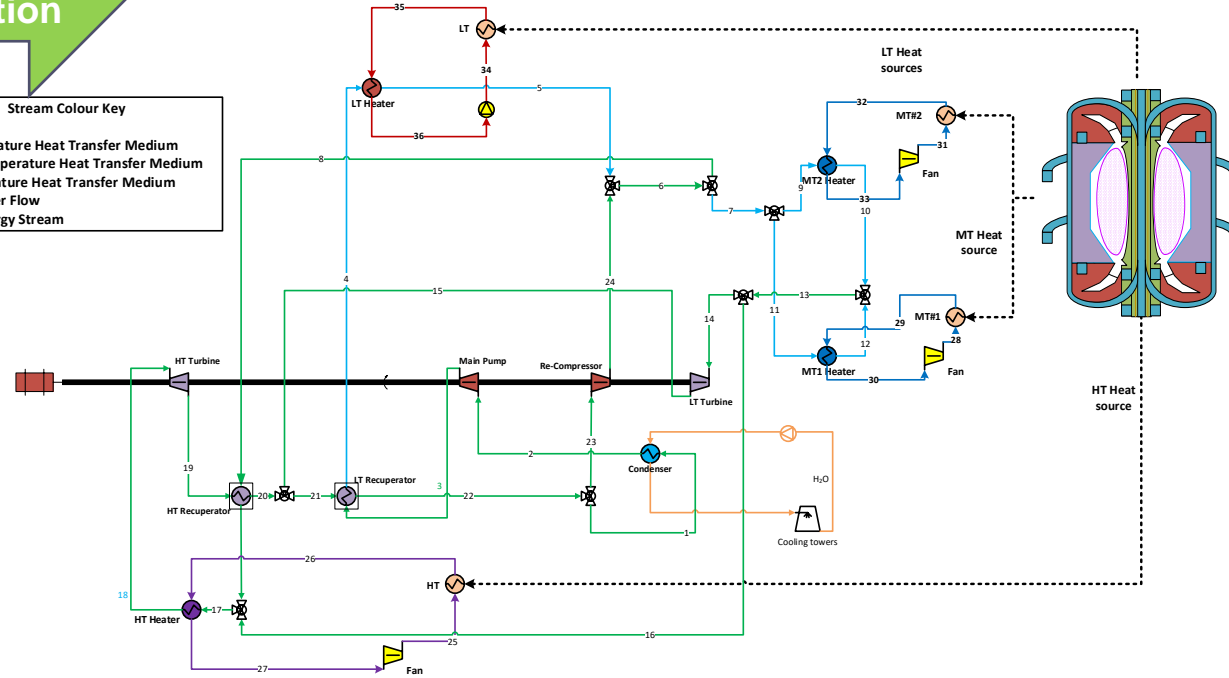
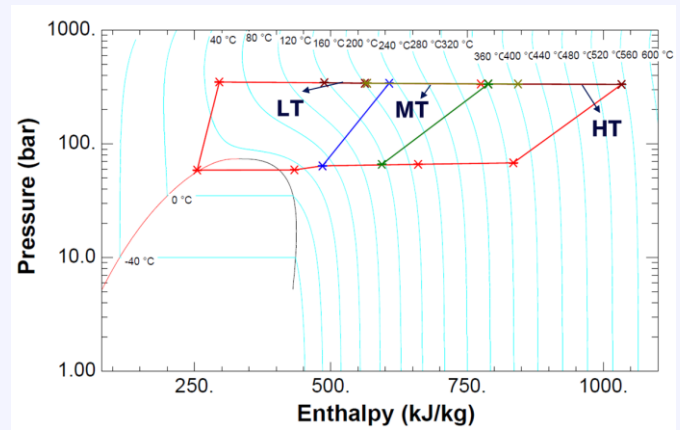
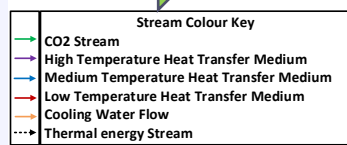
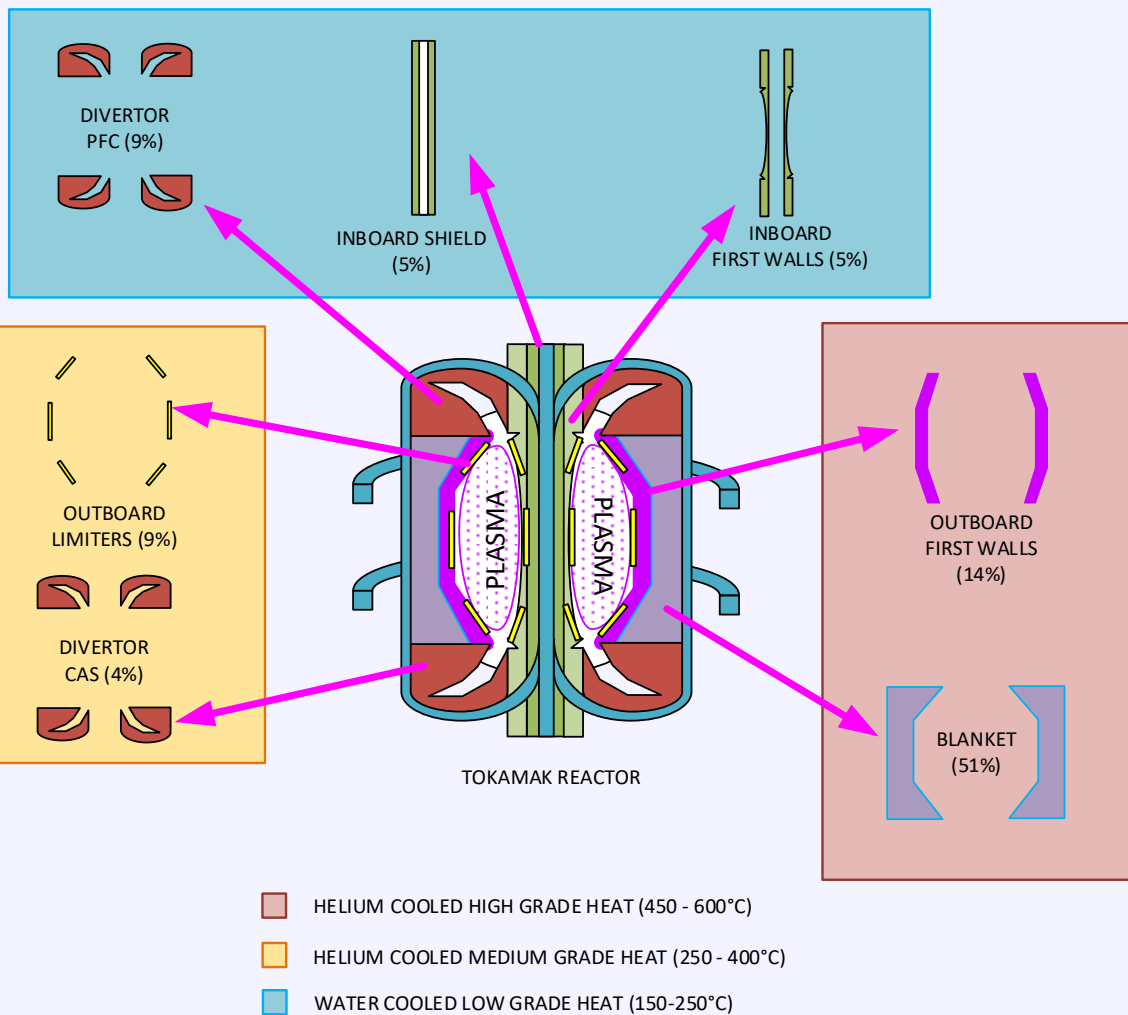


Staying positive: producing net power, Royal Society Phil. Trans. A Acres J., et al. DOI: 10.1098/rsta.2023.0404

Staying positive: producing net power, Royal Society Phil. Trans. A Acres J., et al. DOI: 10.1098/rsta.2023.0404



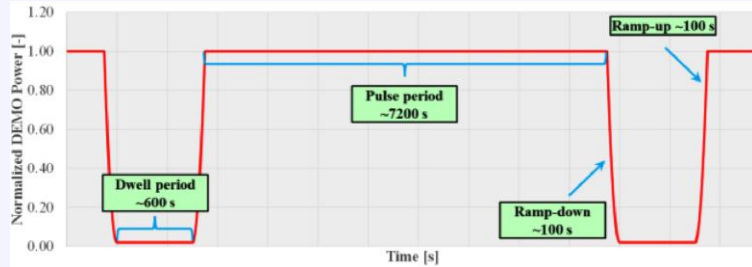
NEED FOR HEAT INTEGRATION DRIVEN BY THE TOKAMAK ARCHITECTURE



The Challenges of Developing a Fusion Power Plant: and How Chemical Engineers are Helping Make STEP a Reality, The Chemical Engineer, pp. 24-28, J. Acres

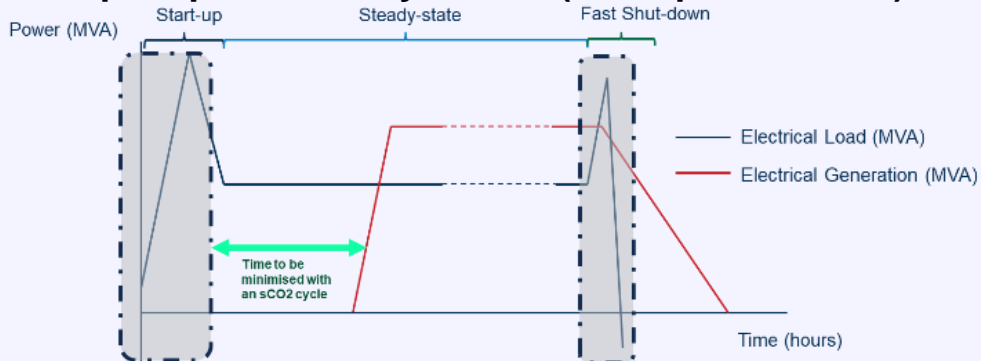
NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY DRIVEN BY THE TOKAMAK OPERATIONS

1. Inherently pulsed



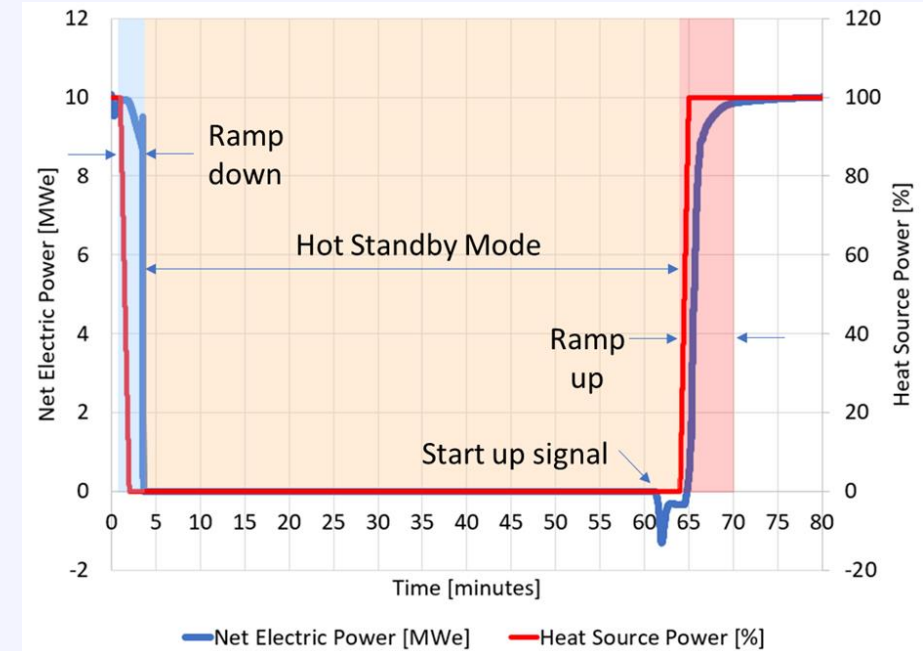
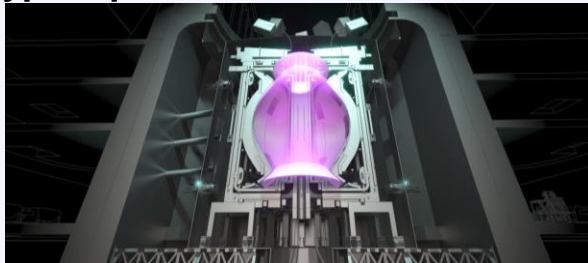
Maturation of critical technologies for the DEMO balance of plant systems, Fusion Engineering and Design, Volume 179, 2022; L. Barucca et al.

2. Rapid operational dynamics (startup/shut down)



sCO₂ in fusion, sCO₂ symposium 2024, J. Acres C. Clements
<https://sco2symposium.com/proceedings2024/chris-clements-jake-acres.pdf>

3. Prototypic operations



Rapid ramp rates of the sCO₂ power cycle could effectively support challenging operating scenarios

Evaluation on the rapidity of sCO₂ cycle power up and down events using the STEP dynamic simulation model, sCO₂ Symposium 2024
 M. McDowell, J. Acres <https://sco2symposium.com/proceedings2024/59-paper.pdf>



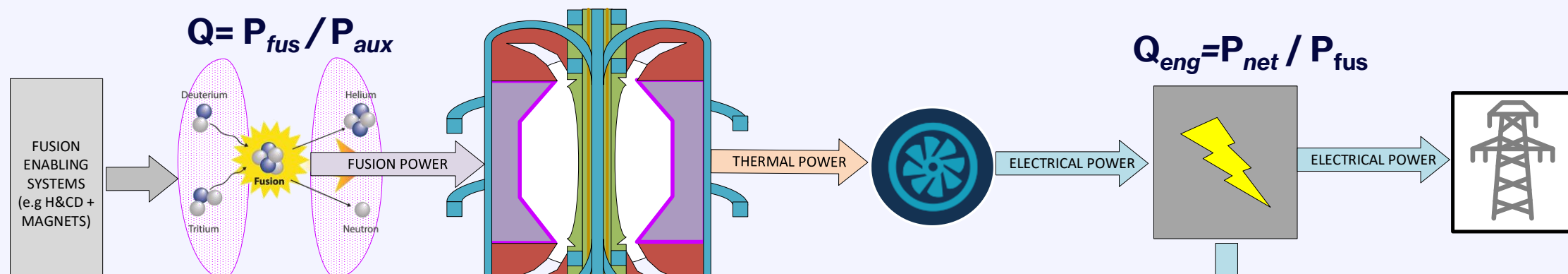
SCO2 UNIQUELY POISED TO ANSWER FUSION POWER GENERATION CHALLENGES?

Challenge 1: Need for efficiency

sCO₂ solution: High efficiency

Challenge 2: Need for heat integration

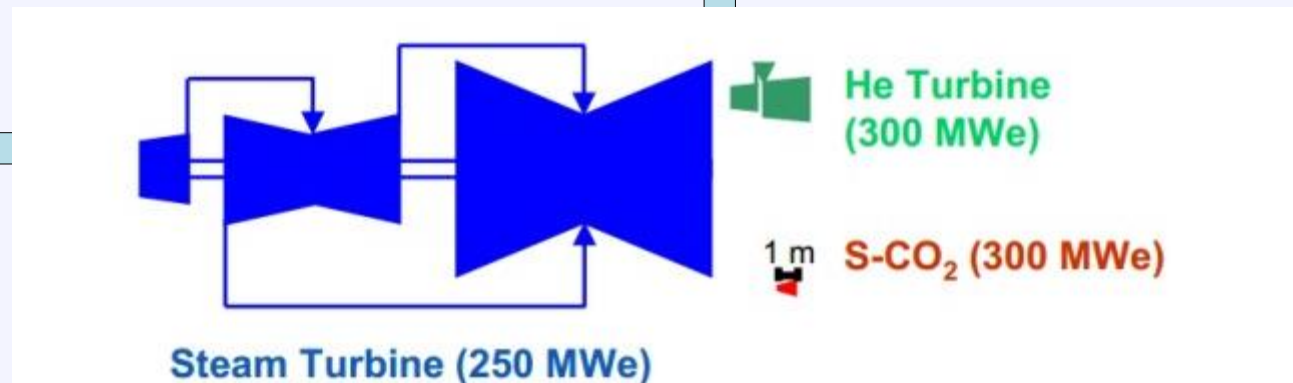
sCO₂ solution: Able to integrate heat



RECIRCULATING POWER

Challenge 3: Need for flexibility

sCO₂ solution: Highly responsive



Dostal, Vaclav, Michael J. Driscoll, Pavel Hejzlar. "A supercritical carbon dioxide cycle for next generation nuclear reactors." PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Nuclear Engineering; 2004.

STEP 

THANK YOU,
ANY QUESTIONS?

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Thank you and see you next time!

**Question / comments?
js@etn.global**