

Nuclear Industry Association Response to the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero's 'Financial Support for Nuclear Lifetime Extensions' Consultation

The Nuclear Industry Association welcomes the opportunity to respond to the DESNZ's 'Financial support for nuclear lifetime extensions' consultation.

The NIA is the trade association and representative body for the civil nuclear industry in the UK. We represent more than 320 companies operating across all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle, including the current and prospective operators of nuclear power stations, international designers, and vendors of nuclear power stations, and those engaged in decommissioning, waste management and nuclear liabilities management. Members also include nuclear equipment suppliers, engineering and construction firms, nuclear research organisations, and legal, financial and consultancy companies.

Executive summary

New nuclear and lifetime extensions of existing fleet are both vital for achieving Net Zero by 2050 with energy security and strong economic growth. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), nuclear has the lowest land use, lowest ecosystem impact and the lowest lifecycle carbon of all generating technologies at 5.1-6,4g CO₂/kWh.¹ Nuclear provides geographically concentrated, predictable baseload power, helping to minimise rising transmission and balancing costs for consumers.² The base of firm power provided by nuclear is critical for system stability, and for reducing the UK's reliance on gas to substitute for reduced renewable generation. According to the IEA, extending the operations of existing nuclear reactors is the cheapest option for additional low-carbon generation across all technologies.³ In France, the majority of the nuclear fleet is life-extended past 40 years of operation, which contributes to cheaper industrial and domestic electricity, lower emissions, and higher export earnings on electricity compared to the UK.^{4 5 6 7} We therefore strongly welcome the intent to make nuclear plant lifetime extensions eligible for CfDs, to further leverage the benefits of the existing fleet in the UK.

1. Do you have any comments on the proposed legislative amendment set out above, which would enable nuclear plant lifetime extensions to be eligible for CfDs?

¹ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2022) *Carbon Neutrality in the UNECE Region: Integrated Life-cycle Assessment of Electricity Sources*. Available at https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/LCA_3_FINAL%20March%202022.pdf

² NESO (2025) *2025 Annual Balancing Costs Report*. Available at: <https://www.neso.energy/document/362561/download>

³ IEA (2020) *Projected Costs of Generating Electricity 2020*. Available at: <https://www.iea.org/reports/projected-costs-of-generating-electricity-2020>

⁴ Nuclear Engineering International (2025) *EDF approved to extend reactor life*. Available at: <https://www.neimagazine.com/news/edf-approved-to-extend-reactor-life/?cf-view>

⁵ DESNZ (2025) *International energy price comparison statistics*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/international-energy-price-comparisons>

⁶ Electricity Maps (2025) *Electricity Maps: Interactive Map*. Available at: <https://app.electricitymaps.com/map/72h/hourly>

⁷ Energynews (2025) *France reaches a record €5 billion in electricity exports in 2024*. Available at: <https://energynews.pro/en/france-reaches-a-record-e5-billion-in-electricity-exports-in-2024/>

- a. We welcome the intent of the legislative amendment to enable nuclear plant lifetime extensions to be eligible for CfDs. However, we urge any amendment to be worded with care, to minimise the risk of unintentionally excluding certain stations from eligibility, and recognise the flexibility that exists within the UK regime.

- 2. Do you believe that the proposed amendment could have an impact on people with protected characteristics and what form would these impacts take? Please provide evidence to support your answer.**
 - a. We agree with the identified positive impacts of the proposed amendments — extending the lifetime of existing nuclear plants will reduce electricity system costs, maintain existing jobs, and potentially create new skilled, well-paying jobs to support refurbishments.

- 3. Do you have any further views on the proposed amendment’s interaction with the environmental principles?**
 - a. No further views. We agree that the policy supports efficient resource use and minimises environmental disruption.

Further Information

The NIA is happy to provide more context, or any clarifications desired on the content of our response and to ask our members where appropriate for additional information that may be useful.

Please contact Elisabeth Roden, Policy Analyst for the Nuclear Industry Association, at elisabeth.rodén@niauk.org to do this.