France and Canada join forces for nuclear workforce capacity building

I2EN, GIFEN, CNA, and OCNI are joining forces to enhance workforce planning and human capacity building in the nuclear sector. This Franco-Canadian partnership aims to tackle the industry's key challenges by assessing current and future industrial skilled workforce needs and propose solutions for the country's nuclear new build ambitions.

Ottawa, ON - April 15th, 2025 - As the nuclear sector in France and Canada stands on the brink of expansion with new builds of large and small reactors, a strong focus is being placed on the need for a skilled workforce to meet this demand. The sector requires a wide range of professionals, including engineers, technicians, operators, scientists, entrepreneurs, regulators, and policymakers, all equipped with the necessary expertise to guide and manage the next generation of reactor fleets.

This is where the MATCH programme, developed by GIFEN, comes in. It serves as a strategic framework for forecasting industrial skill and resources requirements over 10 years and for guiding actions to meet these needs. Working with all stakeholders in the sector, the programme identifies actions to develop resources, operational excellence and economic sustainability.

"Given this context, I2EN, GIFEN, CNA, and OCNI have agreed to strengthen their bilateral cooperation in workforce planning and human capacity building within the nuclear industry" declares Jan van der Lee, CEO of I2EN. "Through these combined efforts, the 2024 Franco-Canadian Nuclear Workforce Development Partnership between I2EN and UNENE gains a broader scope to address the shared challenge of training and education programs for the right skills, at the right time."

"The French nuclear industry is open to the international scene and GIFEN is developing peer-to-peer relations to strengthen links between the French industry and its counterparts. We are therefore particularly enthusiastic about supporting the development of this Franco-Canadian partnership on skills to enhance the performance of our two sectors" says Olivier Bard, CEO of GIFEN.

"The Organization of Canadian Nuclear Industries is the voice of the Canadian nuclear supply chain, and we're pleased to be working with our partners in Canada and France to enhance workforce planning and human capacity building. Canada and France have ambitious nuclear programs that will require many more highly skilled workers, including some that we can train from other industries, leveraging OCNI's Ready4SMR programming," according to Brian Fehrenbach, OCNI's VP, Growth and Strategy.

"This strategic partnership marks an important step in addressing the workforce challenges our industry faces," says George Christidis, Interim President and CEO of the Canadian Nuclear Association. "As Canada advances its nuclear program, including refurbishments and potential new builds, workforce development remains one of our top priorities. By creating this forum for dialogue between I2EN, GIFEN, CNA, and OCNI, we can explore opportunities to share insights and lessons learned from our respective national experiences. This collaboration represents our shared commitment to ensuring the nuclear industry has the talent it needs to deliver on its clean energy promises."

With this strategic partnership in place, France and Canada team up to address future skilled workforce demands, thereby driving new nuclear projects both domestically and internationally with greater efficiency.

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The International Institute of Nuclear Energy (I2EN) represents and coordinates the French education and training offer for countries wishing to partner with France in the nuclear domain. It coordinates and mobilizes, as appropriate, the French academic, governmental, research and industrial stakeholders including 30 universities and high-level engineering schools, national research laboratories and industrial French companies to define and deliver education and training programs.

The French Nuclear Industry Association (GIFEN) represents and federates the French nuclear industry that employs over 200,000 professionals. It brings together over 600 member companies, including operators, large corporations and SMEs through the supply chain, as well as professional associations, covering all aspects of civil nuclear power production. It serves as the unified professional union for the sector, supporting workforce and industrial capacities development.

The Canadian Nuclear Association (CNA) is the national trade association representing Canada's nuclear industry, advocating for policies and regulations that support the sector's growth. It unites over 100 member organizations, including utilities, reactor designers, engineering firms, suppliers, academic institutions, and labor unions, covering the full nuclear supply chain from uranium mining to power generation.

The Organization of Canadian Nuclear Industries (OCNI) represents and advocates for Canada's nuclear supply chain, uniting over 250 member companies, including manufacturers, engineering firms, and service providers. These members employ more than 15,000 highly skilled professionals and support large reactor and small modular reactor (SMR) technologies domestically and internationally. OCNI launched its Ready4SMR programming in 2022 to support the development of a pan-Canadian supply chain and which can support the development of skilled labour and jobs for all of Canada's nuclear programs.

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