



Next Generation Nuclear Energy: Advanced Reactors and Integrated Energy Systems

April 2022

Changing the World's Energy Future

Shannon M Bragg-Sitton



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Next Generation Nuclear Energy: Advanced Reactors and Integrated Energy Systems

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INL/MIS-22-66708

Presentation Overview

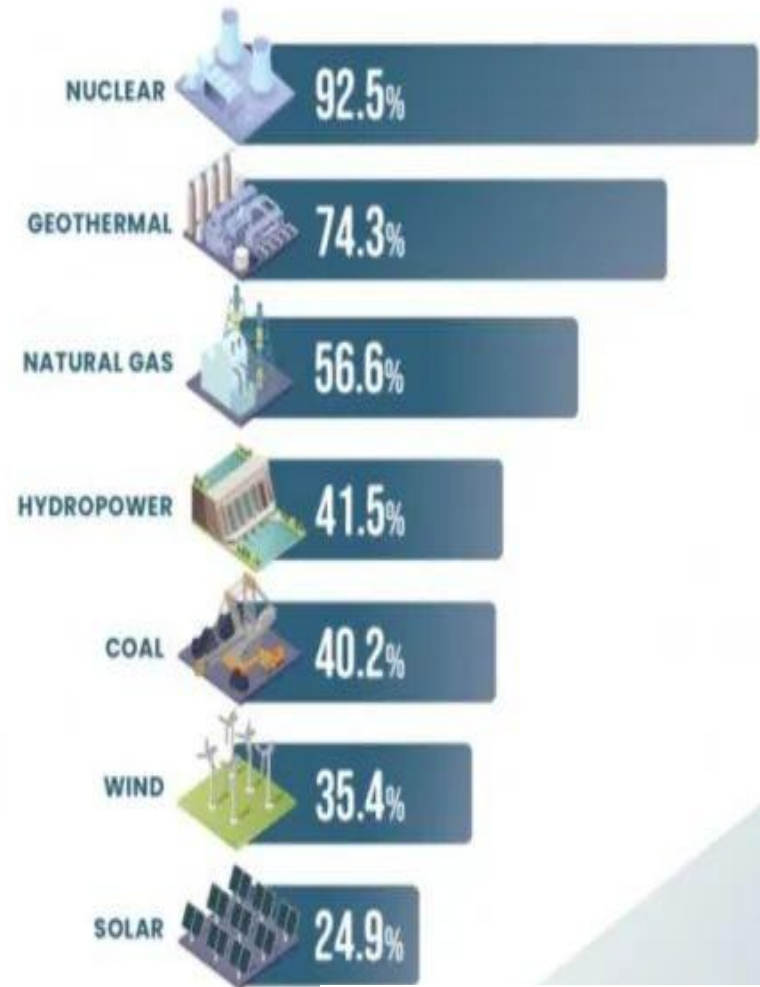
- Current state of nuclear energy as a part of a clean energy mix
 - Status of current fleet plants
 - New paradigms for operational flexibility
- Nuclear plant scale
 - Micro
 - Small
 - Large
- Advanced reactor concepts
 - Gas cooled (helium)
 - Fast spectrum, liquid metal cooled
 - Molten salt
- Novel deployment opportunities: Beyond the grid
- Demonstration and deployment timelines

The current role of nuclear energy in the U.S.



Capacity Factor by Energy Source in 2020

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

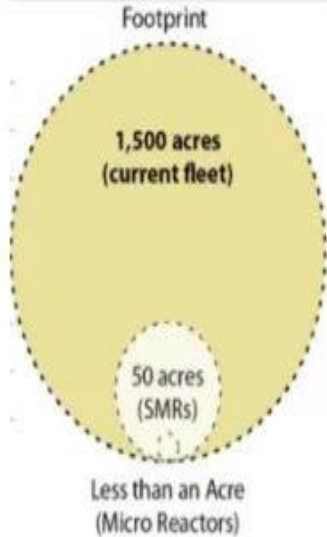


energy.gov/nuclear

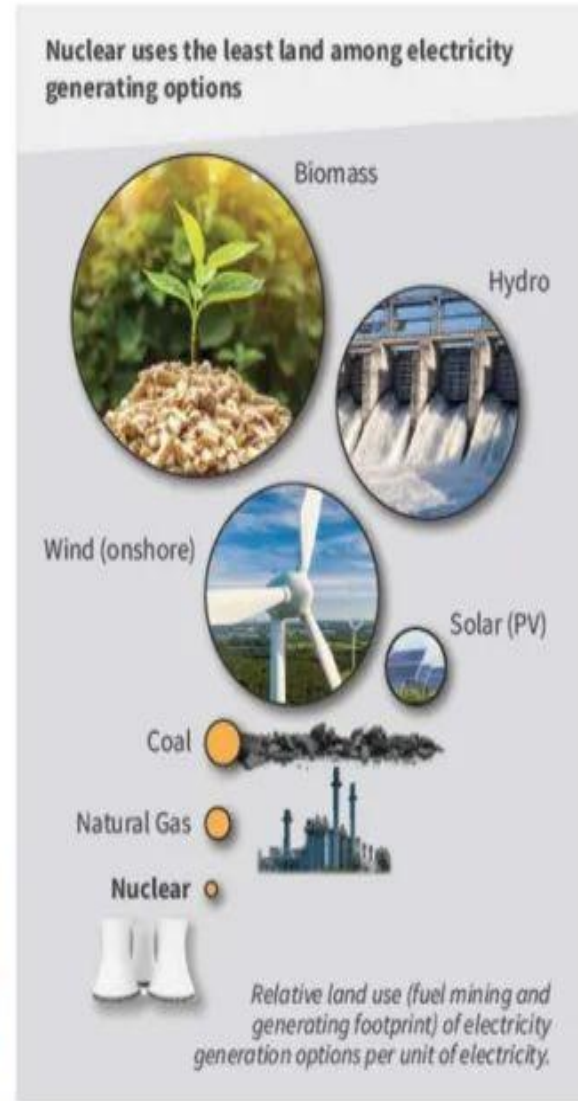
Nuclear energy and deployment flexibility



Artist renditions courtesy of GAIN and Third Way, inspired by the *Nuclear Energy Reimagined* concept led by INL. Learn more about these and other energy park concepts at thirdway.org/blog/nuclear-reimagined



Microreactors and small modular reactors can be deployed to provide reliable energy where it is needed with a small footprint that allows for siting very near to the intended use.



Source: <https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/energy-and-the-environment/nuclear-energy-and-sustainable-development.aspx>

Advanced reactor design concepts

Key Benefits

- Enhanced inherent/passive safety
- Deployment flexibility
- Versatile applications
- Long fuel cycles
- Reduced waste
- Advanced manufacturing and factory manufacturing to reduce costs

60+ private sector projects under development

SIZES

SMALL

1 MW to 20 MW

Micro-reactors

Can fit on a flatbed truck. Mobile. Deployable.

MEDIUM

20 MW to 300 MW

Small Modular Reactors

Factory-built. Can be scaled up by adding more units.

LARGE

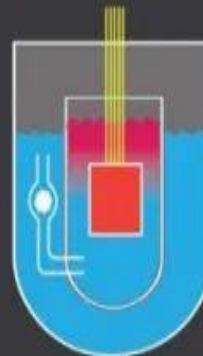
300 MW to 1,000 + MW

Full-size Reactors

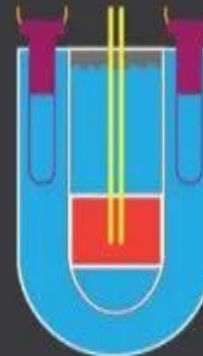
Can provide reliable, emissions-free baseload power

Advanced Reactors Supported by the U.S. Department of Energy

TYPES



MOLTEN SALT REACTORS – Use molten fluoride or chloride salts as a coolant. Online fuel processing. Can re-use and consume spent fuel from other reactors.



LIQUID METAL FAST REACTORS - Use liquid metal (sodium or lead) as a coolant. Operate at higher temperatures and lower pressures. Can re-use and consume spent fuel from other reactors.



GAS-COOLED REACTORS – Use flowing gas as a coolant. Operate at high temperatures to efficiently produce heat for electric and non-electric power.

Small modular reactors

- Less site preparation
- More deployment options
- Flexible operation
- New business opportunities

THE DESIGN FACTOR

1

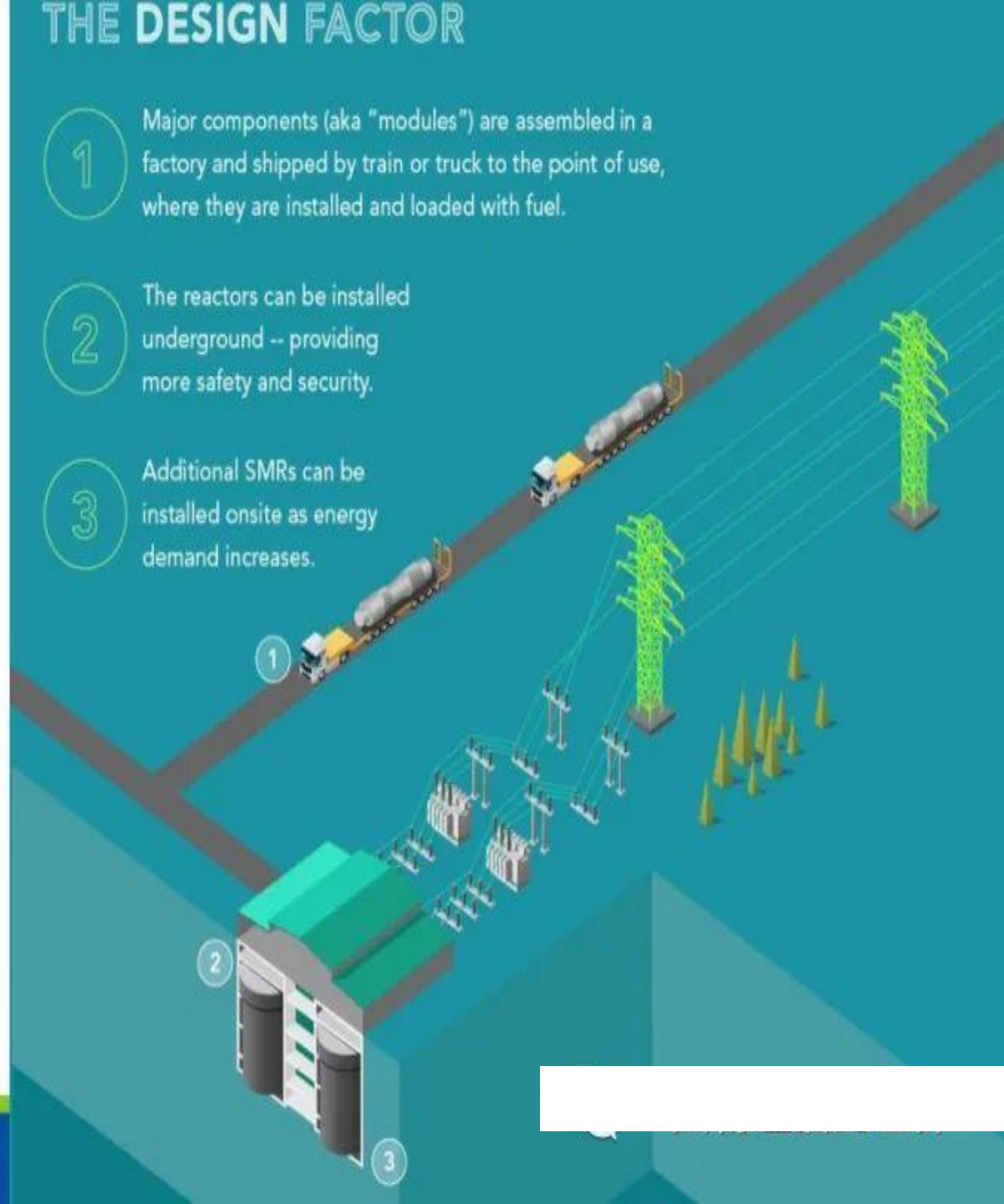
Major components (aka "modules") are assembled in a factory and shipped by train or truck to the point of use, where they are installed and loaded with fuel.

2

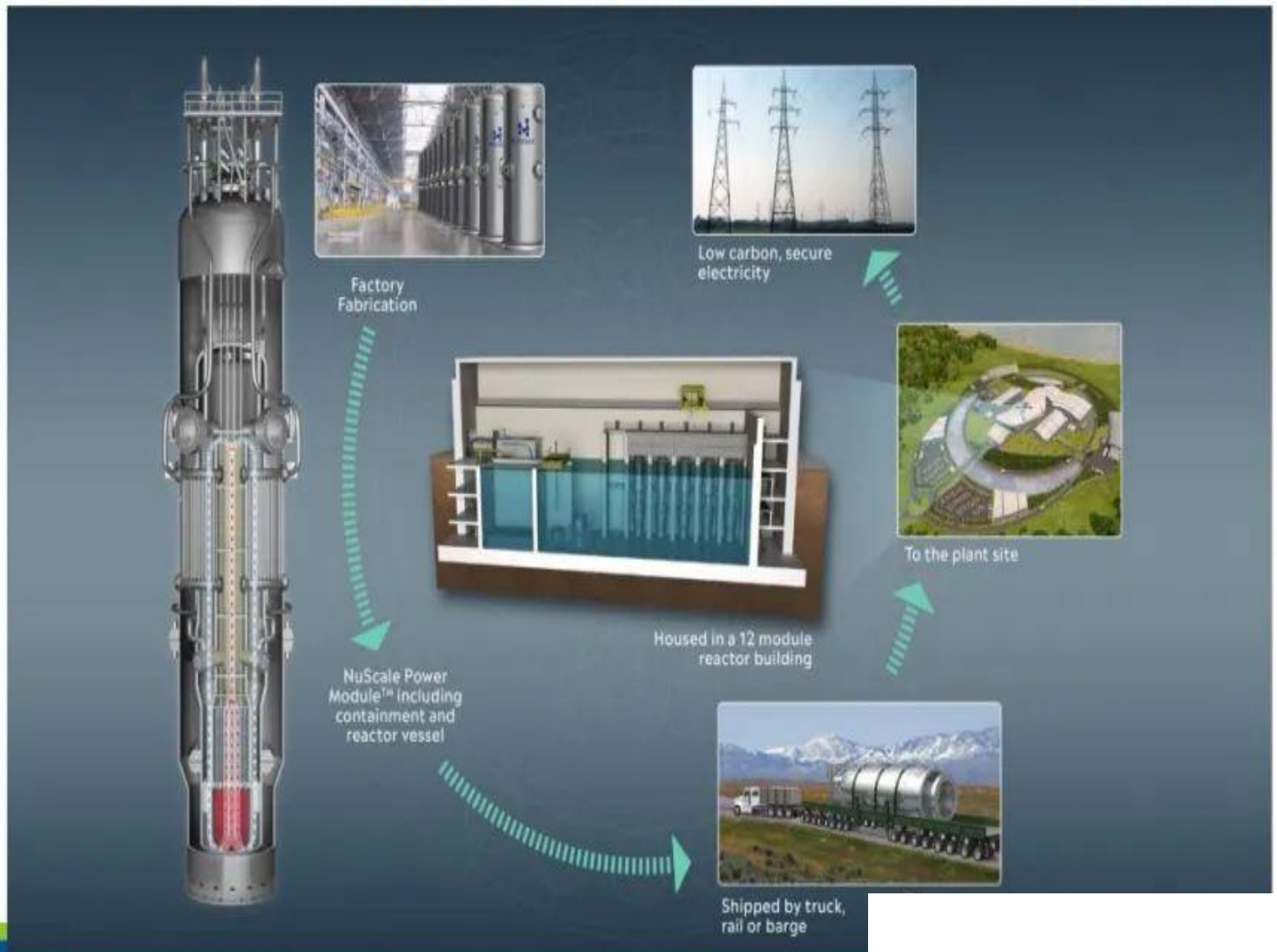
The reactors can be installed underground -- providing more safety and security.

3

Additional SMRs can be installed onsite as energy demand increases.



NuScale Power: A new approach to construction and operation



What are Microreactors?

- Small size and power level: <1 MW – 20 MW
- Factory build, easily transportable to and from site
- Minimum site preparation
- Flexible operation; self-regulating
- Designs enable remote and/or semi-autonomous operation
- High-degree of passive safety
- Operational lifetime: 5 – 20 yrs
- Technologies evolving from advances in materials, space reactor technologies, advanced nuclear fuels, and modeling & simulation
- Well suited for remote areas and applications:
 - Remote communities
 - Isolated microgrids
 - Mining sites
 - DOD applications
- Broadly distributed, reliable, energy sources



Advanced reactors: Summary of the U.S. landscape

- Dozens of U.S. companies are working on advanced nuclear projects for a wide array of capabilities to meet the energy needs of the future
 - Light water-cooled advanced small modular reactors
 - Advanced sodium-, gas-, lead-, molten salt-cooled reactors
 - Significant levels of private sector investment
- Motivation for advanced reactor development
 - Potential for improved safety and operational capability
 - Various options for future commercial, limited-grid and remote applications
 - Potential for improved nuclear resource utilization and reduced nuclear waste
 - Flexible operation to support the national grid of the future containing many energy-source options

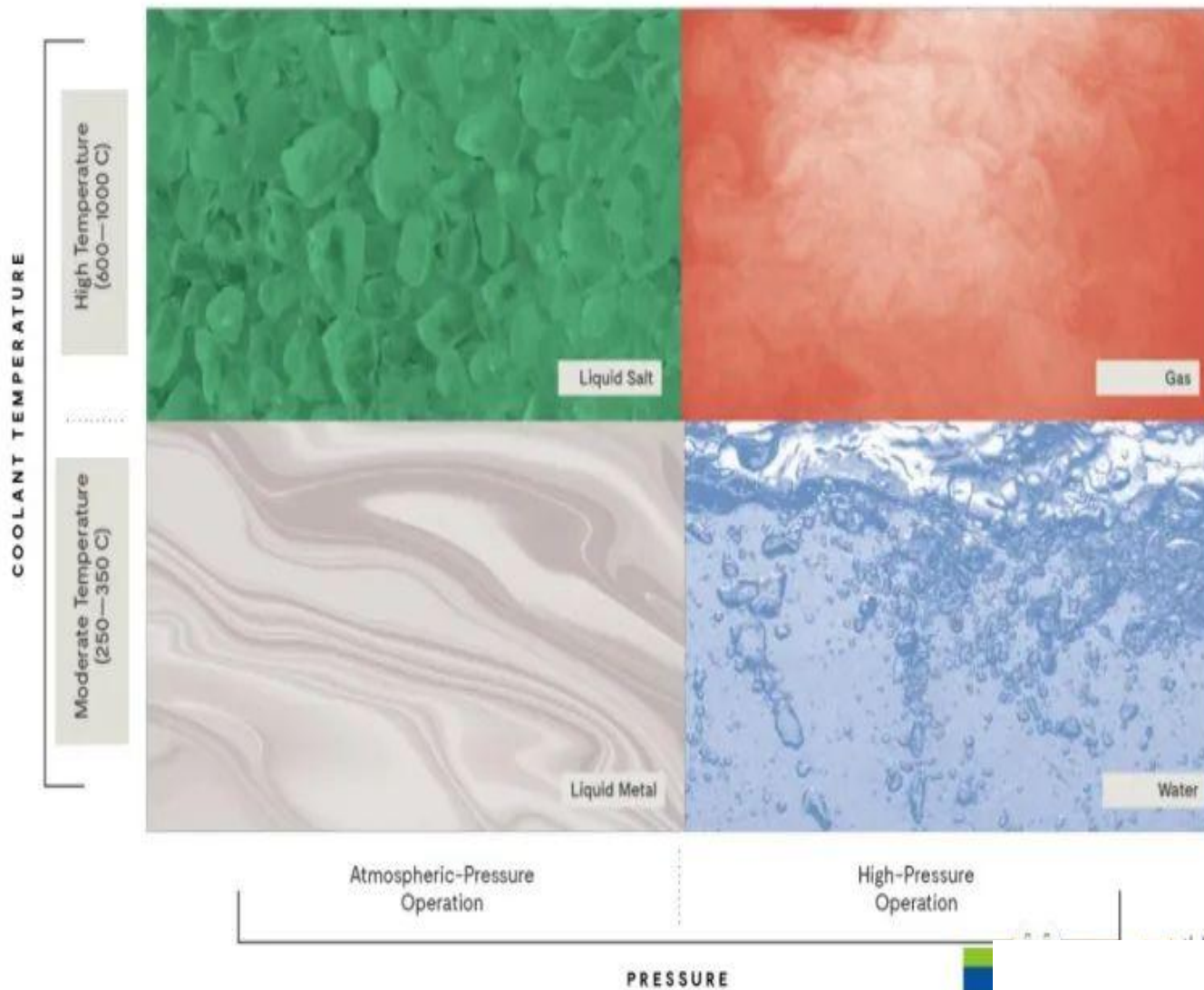
Reference: T. Beville, Overview of Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program, NRC Advanced Reactor Stakeholder Public Meeting, January 21, 2021.

Advanced safety approaches

- “Passive/inherent safety”
 - High thermal mass: no added coolant required
 - Natural circulation: no pumping power required
 - Fail-safe valves: no backup power required
 - “Walk-away-safe”: plant shuts down on its own in emergency scenarios, driven by laws of physics
- Limit impacts to site boundary through novel fuel designs
 - TRISO fuel – contains fission products around each fuel element
 - Keep fuel cool without power supply using passive safety approaches
 - Molten salt fuel – contains fission products in liquid or removes and stores continuously; online refueling



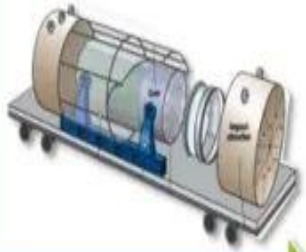
Reactor coolant choices



Vision for advanced reactor demonstrations and deployment – opportunities ahead of us

Demonstrate First Microreactors in Early 2020s

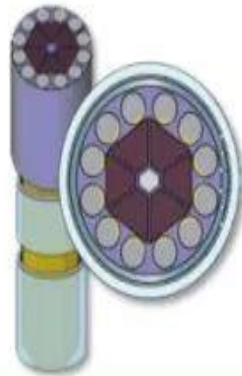
- Resolve key advanced reactor issues
- Open new markets for nuclear energy
- Provide a “win” to build positive momentum
- Civilian and federal apps.



2025

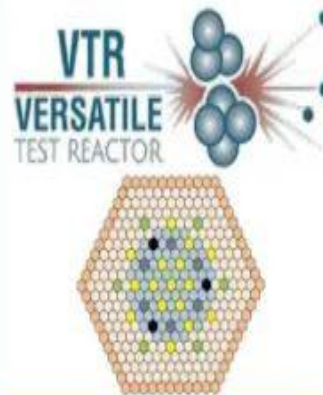
Microreactors Deployed

- Support deployment for remote site power and process heat customers
- RD&D to enable broader deployment



Versatile Test Reactor (VTR) Operating

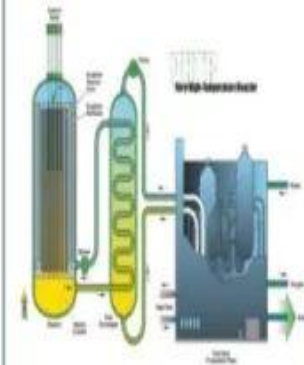
- Establish fast-spectrum testing and fuel development capability
- Support non-LWR advanced reactor demonstrations



2028

Advanced Reactor Demonstrations

- DOE-NE Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program
- Demonstrate two advanced reactors



2029

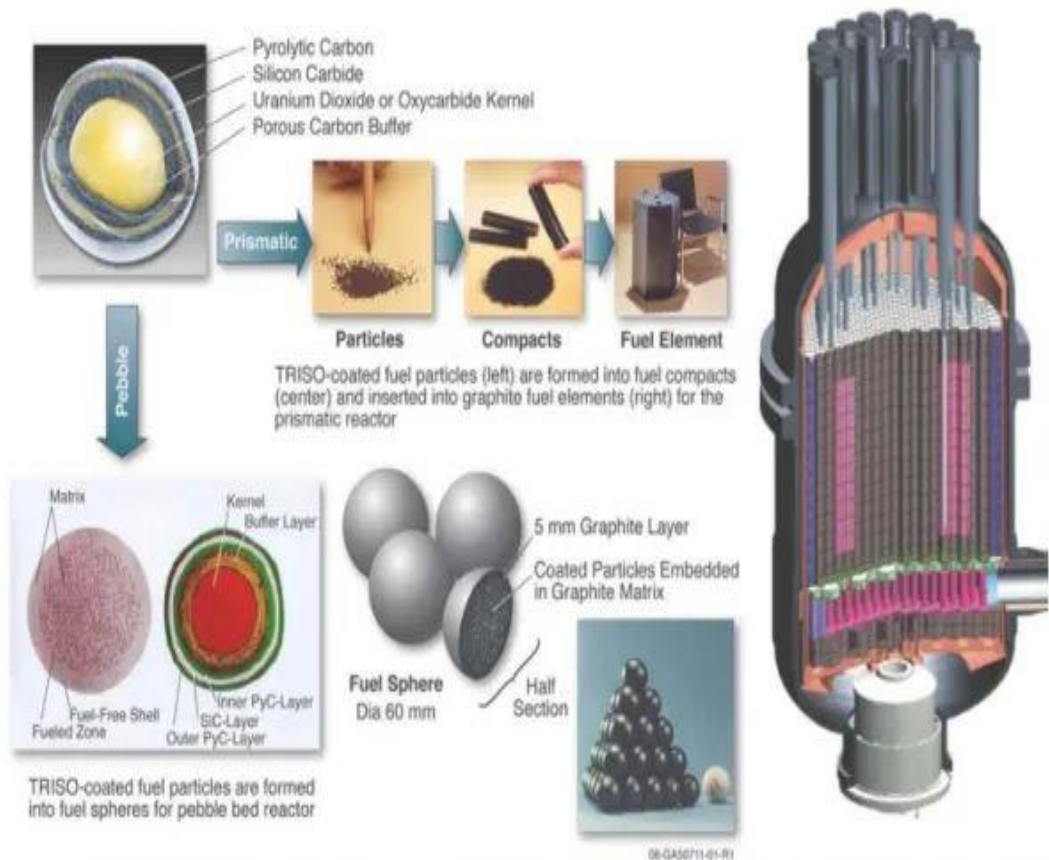
SMR Operating

- Enable deployment through siting and technical support
- 2029 - First NuScale module (UAMPS) to commence commercial operation



High temperature gas reactor: General characteristics

- Moderator: Graphite
 - Solid at high temperatures
 - High moderating ratio, heat capacity, thermal inertia
- Coolant: Helium
 - Inert (chemical & neutron) and single phase
- Fuel: Tri-structural Isotropic (TRISO)
 - Structural coatings act as safety layers
 - Transport of fission products out of fuel very limited up to 1,800°C during loss of cooling transient



Information courtesy G. Strydom, HTGR National Technical Director

Example: X-energy—Xe-100

- 200 MWth (80 MWe) per unit
- Modular, scalable to a 4-pack for 320 MWe
- Helium coolant: 750°C, 7 MPa
- Steam secondary: 565°C, 16.5 MPa
- Fuel: 220,000 Graphite Pebbles with TRISO Particles
- High temperature tolerant graphite core structure
- ASME compliant reactor vessel, core barrel & steam generator
- Designed for a 60-year operational life
- Flexible application – electricity and/or process heat
- Base load or load following
- Online refueling (95% plant availability)
- Safety perimeter: 400 yards

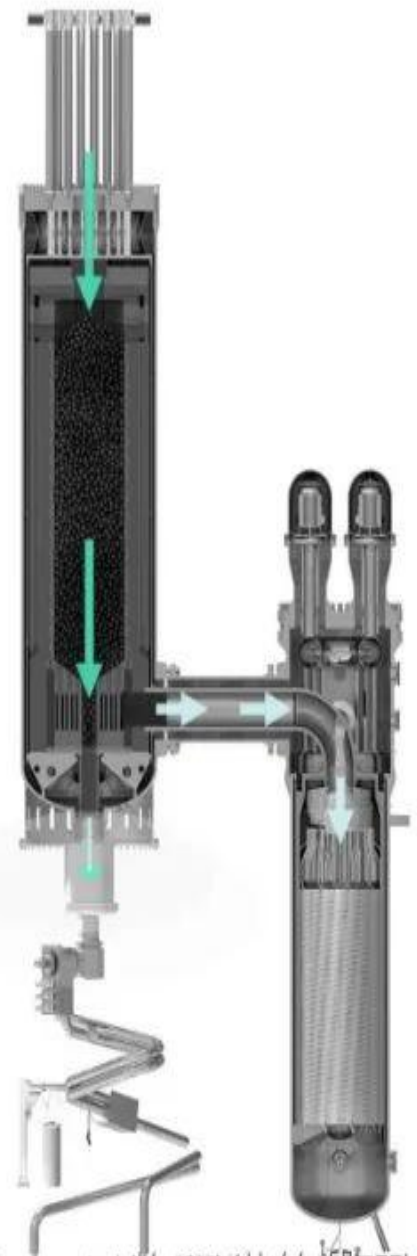
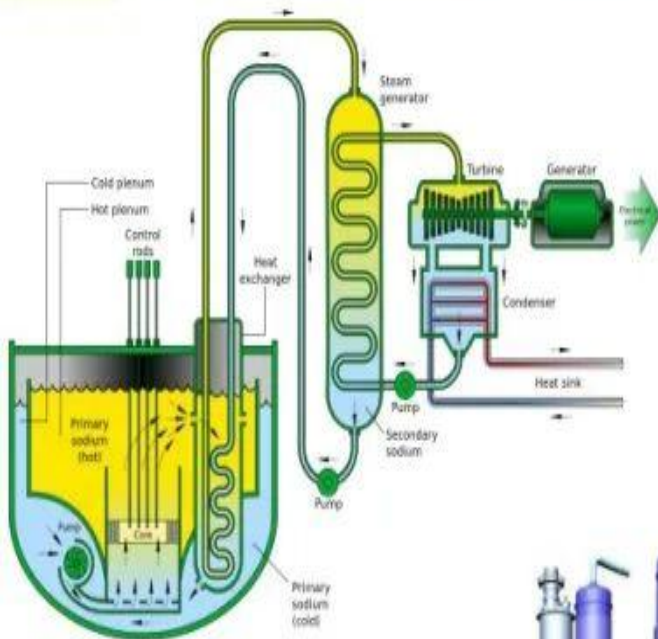
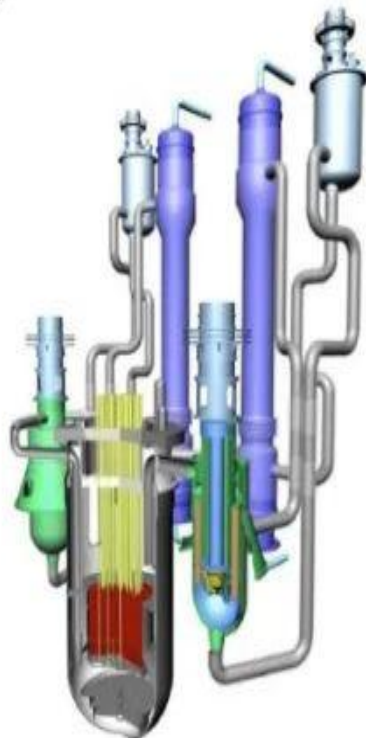


Image source:
[X-energy.com/reactors/xen-100](https://www.x-energy.com/reactors/xen-100)

Liquid Metal Fast Reactor



*Gen-IV International
Forum, Sodium Fast
Reactor concept
Top: Pool-type
Right: Loop-type*



- Liquid metals as a primary coolant, allow higher power density
- Leading coolants considered in the U.S. include sodium, lead
 - Sodium: Chemically reactive w/water, air; SS compatible
 - Lead: Non-reactive w/water, air; corrosive
 - Coolant temperature $\sim 550^{\circ}\text{C}$
 - Operate near atmospheric pressure
- Typically intended for a closed fuel cycle
 - Metal fuel, although oxides also possible
- Fast neutron spectrum (no moderator)
- Power conversion: Rankine/steam cycle or sCO_2 Brayton
- Allows for natural circulation and passive safety
- Many designs use electromagnetic or mechanical pumps
- Significant global experience; U.S. experience includes EBR-II (pool-type), Fermi-I (loop), and FFTF (loop)

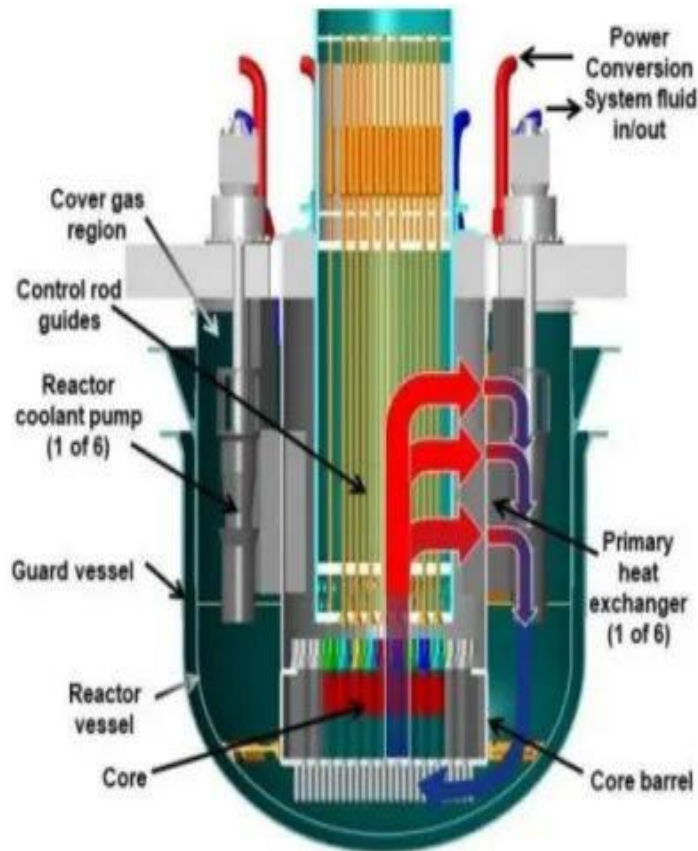
Example: TerraPower/GE Hitachi—Natrium

- Sodium-cooled fast reactor
- 345 MWe, plus molten salt storage for up to 500 MWe for 5.5 hrs
 - Na-salt heat exchanger to isolate thermal storage from nuclear island
- Metal fuel
- ~500°C operating temperature
- Targeted power costs of \$50-55MWh for first demonstrations and \$40/MWh or less with storage system
- Ramp rate target of 8-15% per minute
- 80% reduction in nuclear concrete relative to large-scale LWRs

Reference: Natriumpower.com



Example: Westinghouse Lead Fast Reactor

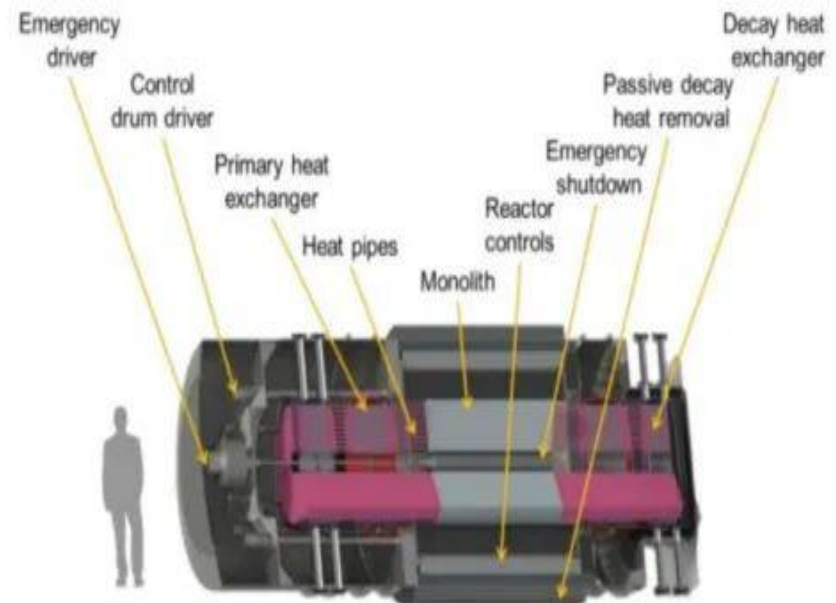


- 450 MWe, lead-cooled
- Passively safe, compact, scalable
- Flexible output, support for non-electric applications
- Could incorporate thermal energy storage
- sCO₂ Brayton cycle
- Potential use of Westinghouse EnCore Fuel (advanced technology/accident-tolerant fuel)
 - Chromium-coated fuel cladding (phase 1)
 - SiC cladding (phase 2)

Image source: Westinghouse LFR Fact Sheet, available at <https://www.westinghousenuclear.com/new-plants/lead-cooled-fast-reactor>

Example: Westinghouse eVinci™ MicroReactor

- Transportable energy generator
 - Fully factory built, fueled and assembled
 - Delivers combined heat and power – 1 MWe to 5 MWe
 - 40-year design life with 3+ year refueling interval
 - Target less than 30 days onsite installation
 - Autonomous operation
 - Power demand load following capability
 - High reliability and minimal moving parts
 - Near zero Emergency Planning Zone with small site footprint
 - Green field decommissioning and remediation
 - Solid core
 - Heat removal via sodium heat pipes
- Heat pipes:
 - No reactor coolant pumps
 - Inherently adjust heat load
 - Higher temperature operation



Molten Salt Reactors

General characteristics

- Molten salts have high heat capacity
- Allow for low pressure operation
- Large margin to boiling
- High operating temperature: $\sim 700^{\circ}\text{C}$

Molten salt *cooled*

- Fluoride or chloride salt coolant
- Solid fuel, typically TRISO
- Low-pressure
- Steam cycle

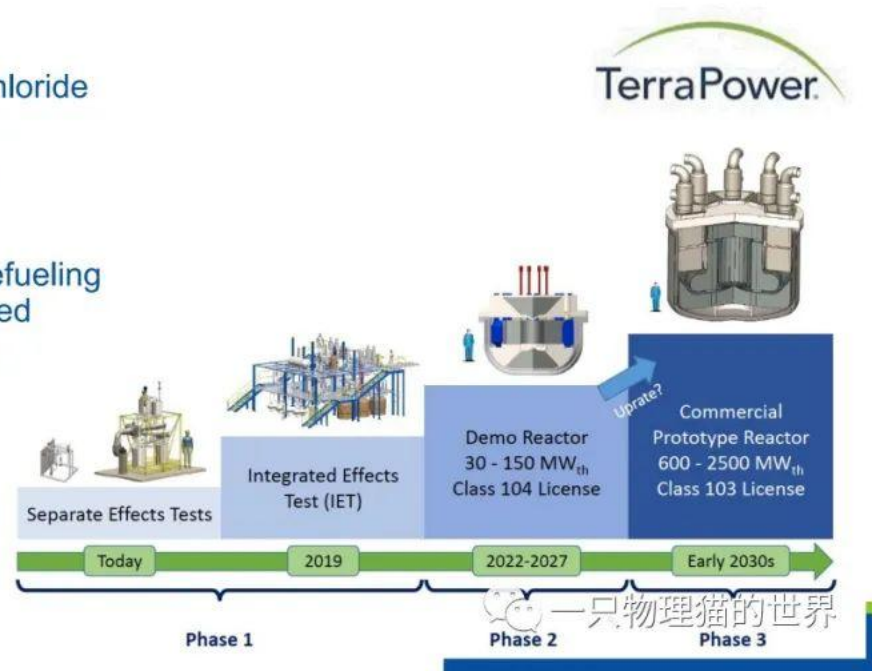
Molten salt *fueled*

- Nuclear fuel dissolved in a liquid salt, circulated through system
 - U or Th fuel cycle
 - Fluoride or chloride salt
- Heat produced directly in the heat transfer fluid
- Chemical separation of fission products on-line
- Possibility for on-line reprocessing

Example: TerraPower Molten Chloride Fast Reactor

- Fuel dissolved in a molten chloride salt coolant
- High operating temperature
- Stable, inherently safe
- Net breed and burn, batch refueling with DU or NatU make-up feed
- Passive decay heat removal

Image source:
K. Kramer, 2018 ETEC Nuclear
Suppliers Workshop,
DOI: [10.13140/RG.2.2.18467.09768](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.18467.09768)



Example: Kairos Power FHR (solid fuel)

- Low-pressure fluoride salt coolant
- TRISO fuel
- Steam cycle
- 140 MWe, 45% net efficiency
- Reactor outlet 650°C
- Nitrate “solar” intermediate salt
- 585°C main/reheat temperature
- Online refueling
- Single or multi-module deployment
- Passive cooling upon loss of power

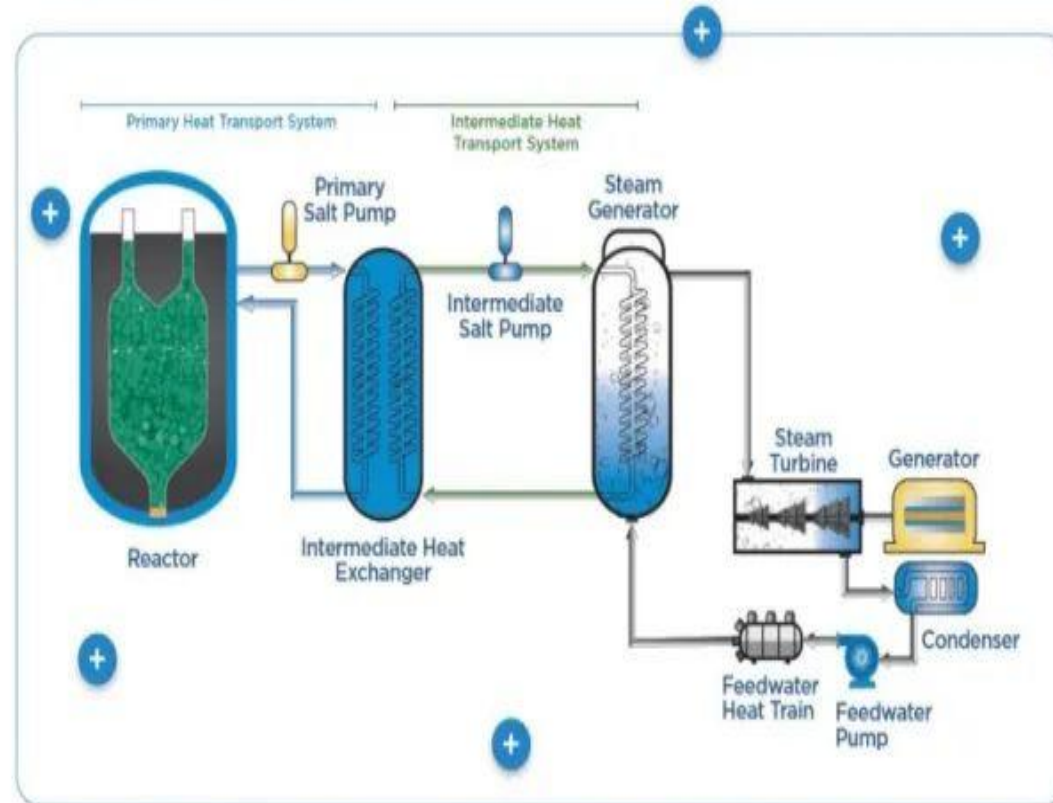


Image reference: Kairos Power, <https://kairospower.com/technology/>

US DOE Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program

- Established in fiscal year (FY) 2020 budget language (\$230 million (M))
- Focuses DOE and non-federal resources on **actual construction** of demonstration reactors
- Establishes ambitious timeframe for demonstration reactors – five to seven years from award, including design, licensing, construction and start of operations
- Program also addresses technical risks for less mature designs
- Desired outcomes:
 - Support diversity of advanced designs that offer significant improvements to current generation of operational reactors
 - Enable a market environment for commercial products that are safe and affordable to both construct and operate in the near-and mid-term
 - Stimulate commercial enterprises, including supply chains
- Overall FY21 budget for ARDP activities \$250 M

ARDP program elements

- **Advanced Reactor Demonstrations (Demos)**

- Cost-shared partnerships with industry (up to 50 percent (%) government, not less than 50% industry) to build two advanced demonstration reactors with significant improvements compared to current generation of operational reactors
- Demos to be constructed and operational in a 5-7 year window after award
- \$160 M appropriated for fiscal year (FY) 2020 (\$80 M per award)
- \$160 M appropriated for FY 2021 (\$80 M per award)

- **Risk Reduction (RR) for Future Demonstrations**

- Cost-shared research and development (R&D) activities with industry (up to 80% government, not less than 20% industry) to address technical risks in advanced reactor designs to support potential future advanced reactor demonstrations
- \$30 M appropriated for FY 2020 (up to 5 awards)
- \$40 M appropriated for FY 2021 (To be distributed among awards based on agreed-upon cost requirements)

ARDP program elements

- **Advanced Reactor Regulatory Development**

- National laboratory-led R&D to resolve technical challenges with licensing advanced reactors
- Supporting efforts with NRC and industry stakeholders to develop cross-cutting advanced reactor licensing frameworks Licensing Modernization Project (LMP)
- Technology-Inclusive Content of Application Project (TICAP)
- Focused R&D to address technology-specific regulatory challenges for NE advanced reactor campaigns
- \$15 M appropriated for FY 2020; \$15 M for FY 2021

- **Advanced Reactor Safeguards**

- Applies laboratory R&D to address near term challenges that advanced reactor vendors face in meeting domestic requirements for U.S. builds.
- Project focus areas: Materials Accountancy, Physical Protection, Gen-IV and IAEA Interface
- \$5 M appropriated for FY 2020; \$5 M for FY 2021

ARDP demonstrations

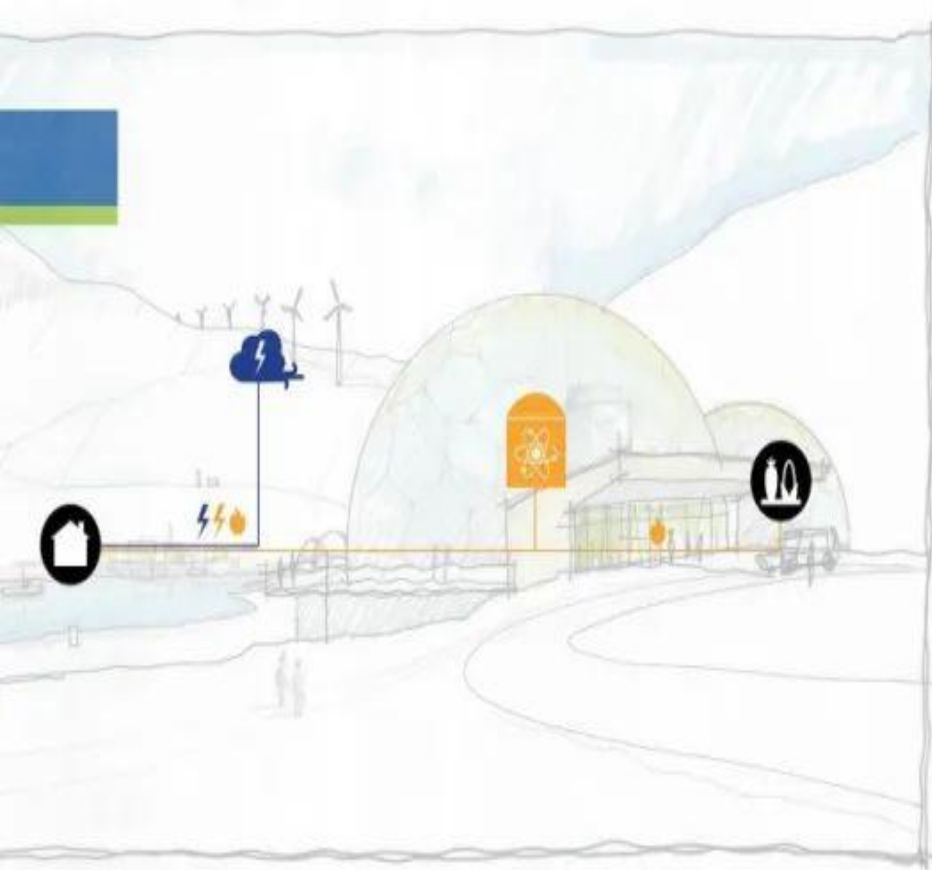
- **TerraPowerLLC – Sodium Reactor**

- Sodium-cooled fast reactor that leverages decades of development, including fuel
- High temperature reactor coupled with thermal energy storage for flexible electricity output
- New metal fuel fabrication facility
- <https://natriumpower.com/>

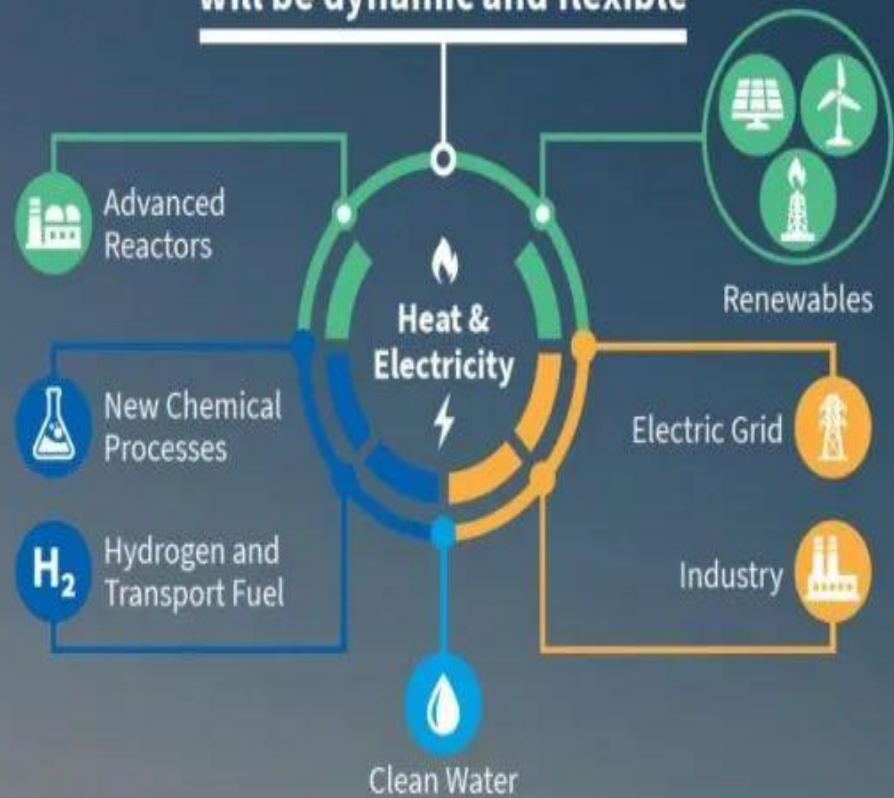
- **X-energy – Xe-100 reactor**

- High temperature gas-cooled reactor that leverages decades of development and robust fuel form
- Provides flexible electricity output and process heat for a wide range of industrial heat applications
- Commercial scale TRISO fuel fabrication facility
- <https://x-energy.com/>

- Site selection for demonstrations in process; both currently considering Energy Northwest sites in Washington state



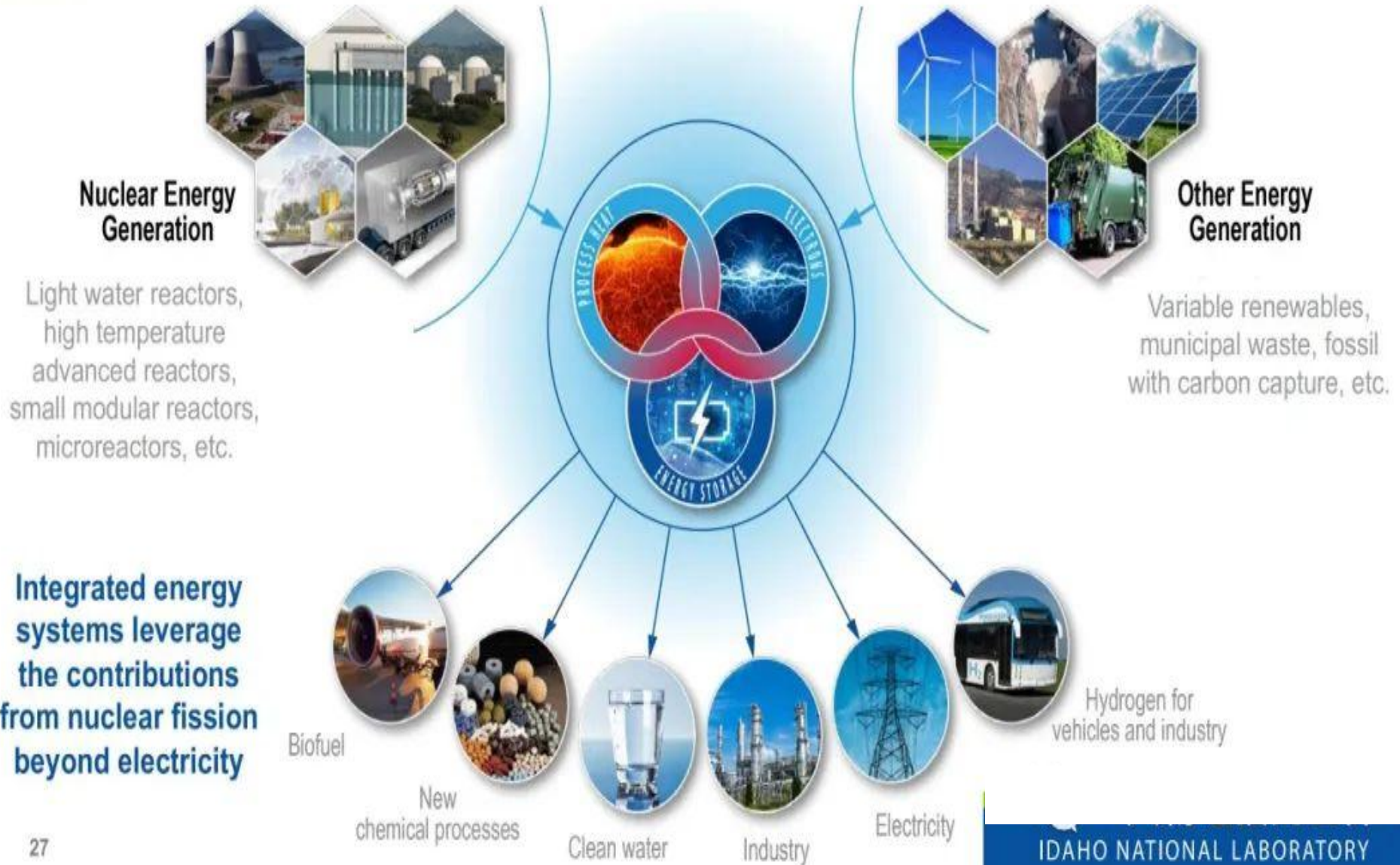
Integrated Nuclear Energy Systems will be dynamic and flexible



INTEGRATED ENERGY SYSTEMS

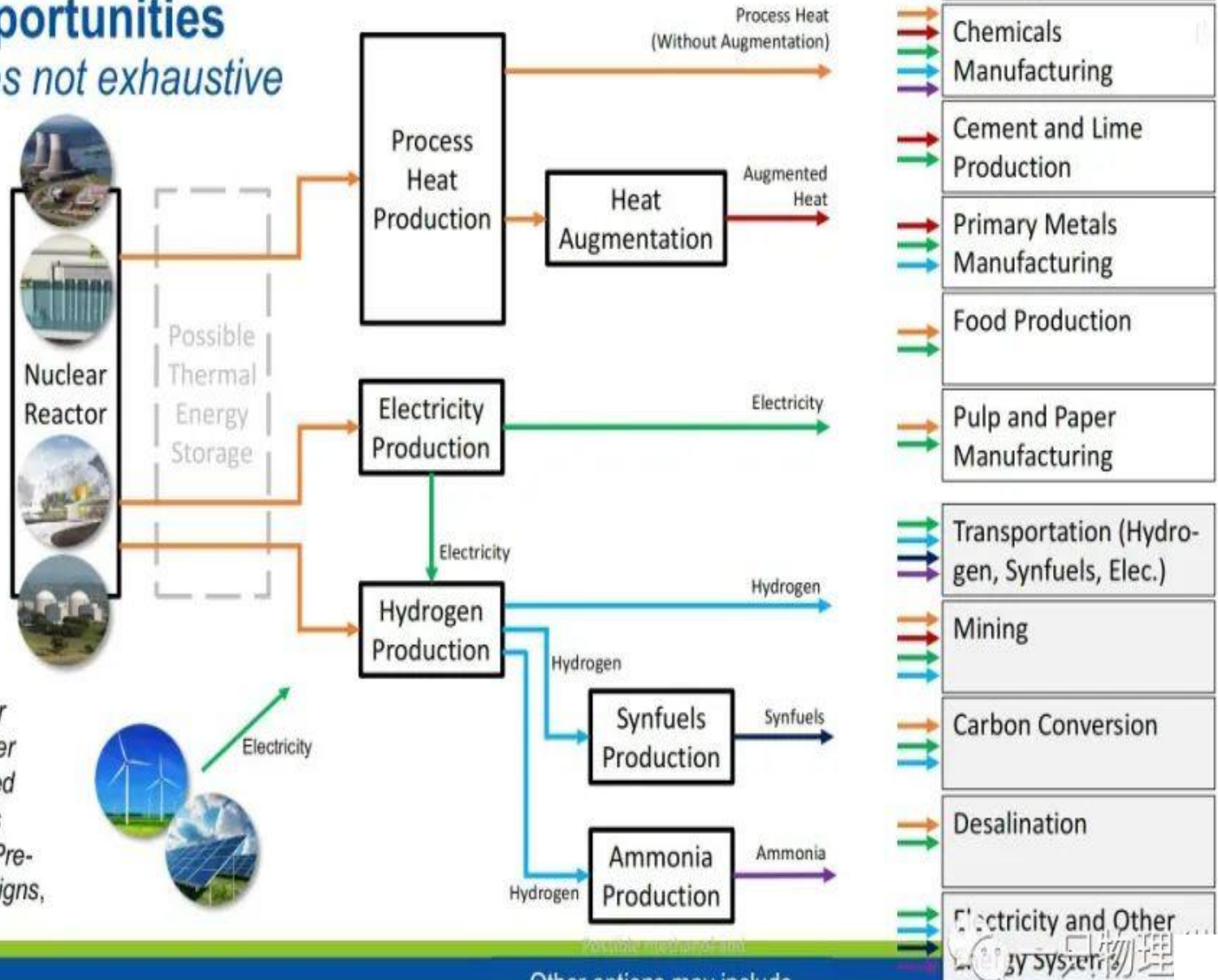
Maximizing the contribution of carbon-free energy generation for electricity, industry, and transportation – while supporting a resilient grid and converting valuable resources to higher value products

Future clean energy systems – transforming the energy paradigm



Potential nuclear-driven IES opportunities

Examples not exhaustive



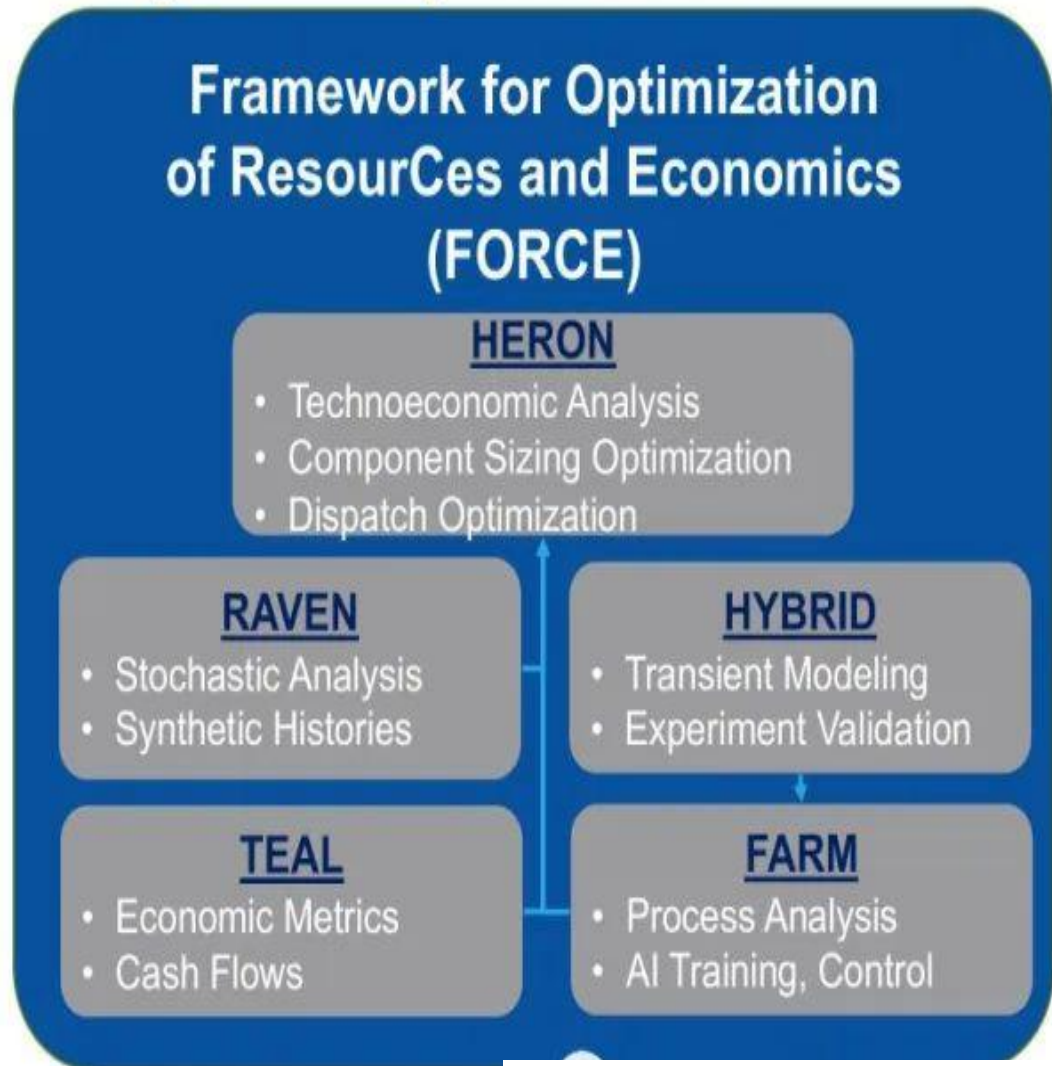
Source: INL, National Reactor Innovation Center (NRIC) Integrated Energy Systems Demonstration Pre-Conceptual Designs, April 2021

Other options may include methanol, synthetic methane

Integrated energy systems analysis and optimization

- **Technoeconomic assessment**
 - Portfolio Optimization
 - Dispatch Optimization
 - Process Model Simulation
 - Economic Analysis
 - Supervisory Control
 - Stochastic Analysis
 - Workflow Automation

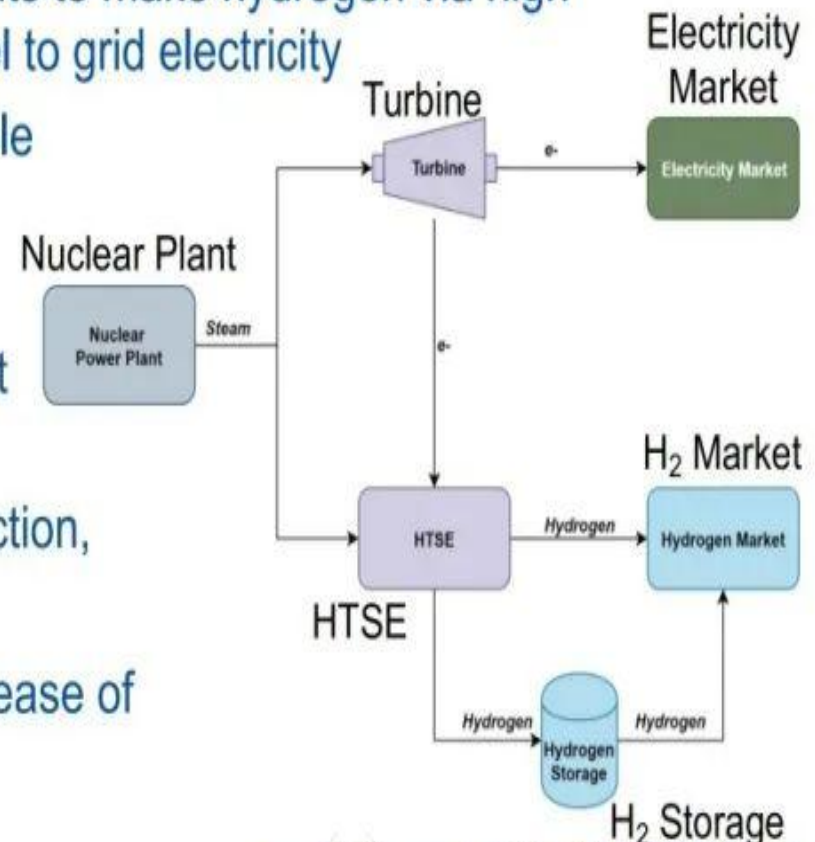
Framework for Optimization of Resources and Economics (FORCE)



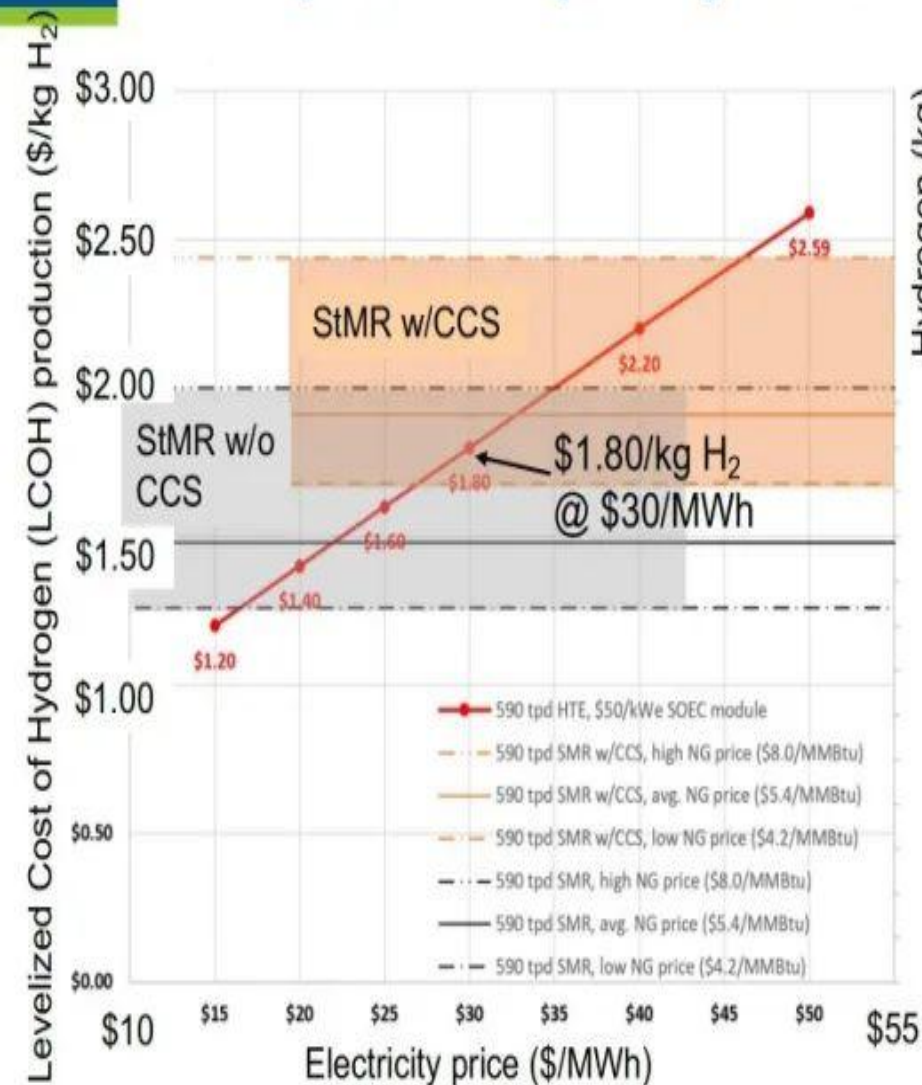
For more information and to access
opensource tools, see
https://ies.inl.gov/SitePages/System_Simulation.aspx.

Example: Disruptive potential of nuclear produced hydrogen

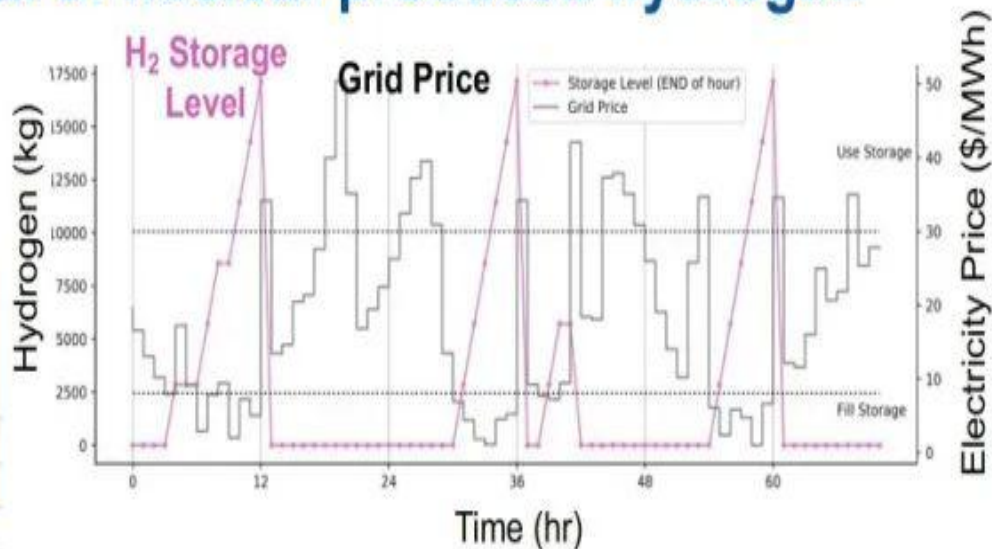
- Collaboration between INL, ANL, NREL, Constellation (Exelon), and Fuel Cell Energy
- Evaluated potential of using existing nuclear plants to make hydrogen via high temperature steam electrolysis (HTSE) in parallel to grid electricity
 - Low grid pricing → hydrogen is more profitable
 - High grid pricing → grid is more profitable
 - H₂ storage provides flexibility in plant operations, ensures that all demands are met
 - H₂ off-take satisfies demand across steel manufacturing, ammonia and fertilizer production, and fuel cells for transportation
- Analysis results suggest a possible revenue increase of **\$1.2 billion (\$2019)** over a 17-year span



Example: Disruptive potential of nuclear produced hydrogen



LWR-HTSE LCOH as a function of electricity price compared to the Steam Methane Reforming (StMR) plant (with and without carbon capture and sequestration [CCS]) LCOH with low, baseline, and high natural gas pricing.



- **Outcome:** Award from the DOE EERE Hydrogen & Fuel Cell Technologies Office with joint Nuclear Energy funding for follow-on work and demonstration at Exelon Nine-Mile Point plant.
- **Full report:** [Evaluation of Hydrogen Production Feasibility for a Light Water Reactor in the Midwest \(INL/EXT-19-55395\)](#)

Nuclear-H₂ demonstration projects

Four projects have been selected for demonstration of hydrogen production at U.S. nuclear power plants (NPP)

- H₂ production using direct electrical power offtake
- Develop monitoring and controls procedures for scaleup to large commercial-scale H₂ plants
- Evaluate power offtake dynamics on NPP power transmission stations to avoid NPP flexible operations
- Produce H₂ for captive use by NPPs and clean hydrogen markets

Projects

- Constellation: Nine-Mile Point NPP (~1 MWe LTE/PEM)
- Energy Harbor: Davis-Besse NPP (~1-2MWe LTE/PEM)
- Xcel Energy: Prairie Island NPP (~150 kWe HTSE)
- APS/Pinnacle West Hydrogen: Palo Verde Generating Station (~15-20 MWe LTE/PEM)
- FuelCell Energy: Demonstration at INL (250 kWe)

**Nine Mile Point NPP
LTE/PEM**



**Davis-Besse NPP
LTE-PEM**



**Thermal & Electrical
Integration at Prairie
Island NPP
HTSE/SOEC**



**Palo Verde Generating
Station, H₂ Production for
Combustion and
Synthetic Fuels**



**FuelCell Energy
at INL, SOEC**



Accelerating advanced reactor demonstration & deployment



National Reactor Innovation Center (NRIC) advanced reactor testing infrastructure

- Goal: Demonstrate two advanced reactors by 2025
- Strategy:
 - Repurpose two facilities at INL and establish two test beds to provide confinement for reactors to go critical for the first time
 - Build/establish testing infrastructure for fuels and components
- Capabilities:
 - NRIC DOME (Demonstration of Microreactor Experiments)
 - Advanced Microreactors up to 20 MWth
 - High-Assay Low-Enriched Uranium (HALEU) fuels < 20%
 - NRIC LOTUS (Laboratory for Operations and Testing in the US)
 - Up to 500 kWth experimental reactors
 - Safeguards category one fuels
 - Experimental Infrastructure
 - Molten Salt Thermophysical Examination Capability
 - Helium Component Test Facility



*Anticipate initial reactor testing in ~2024.
Flexible testbed to support testing of
multiple reactor concepts using the same
infrastructure ~annually.*

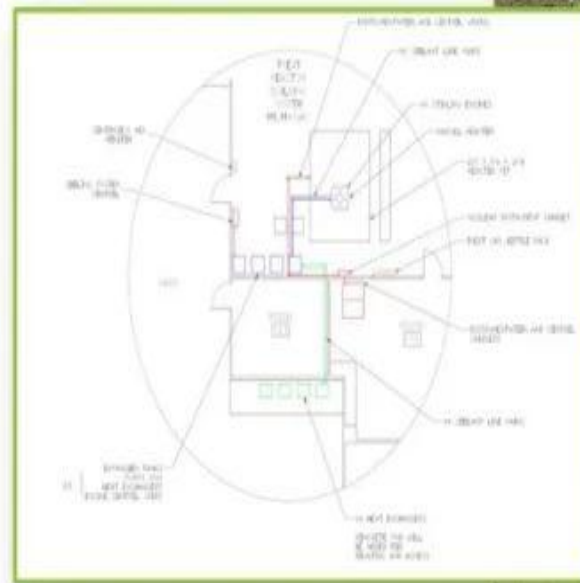
Microreactor integration with a microgrid

MARVEL

Microreactor Applications Research Validation and Evaluation (MARVEL) Objective:

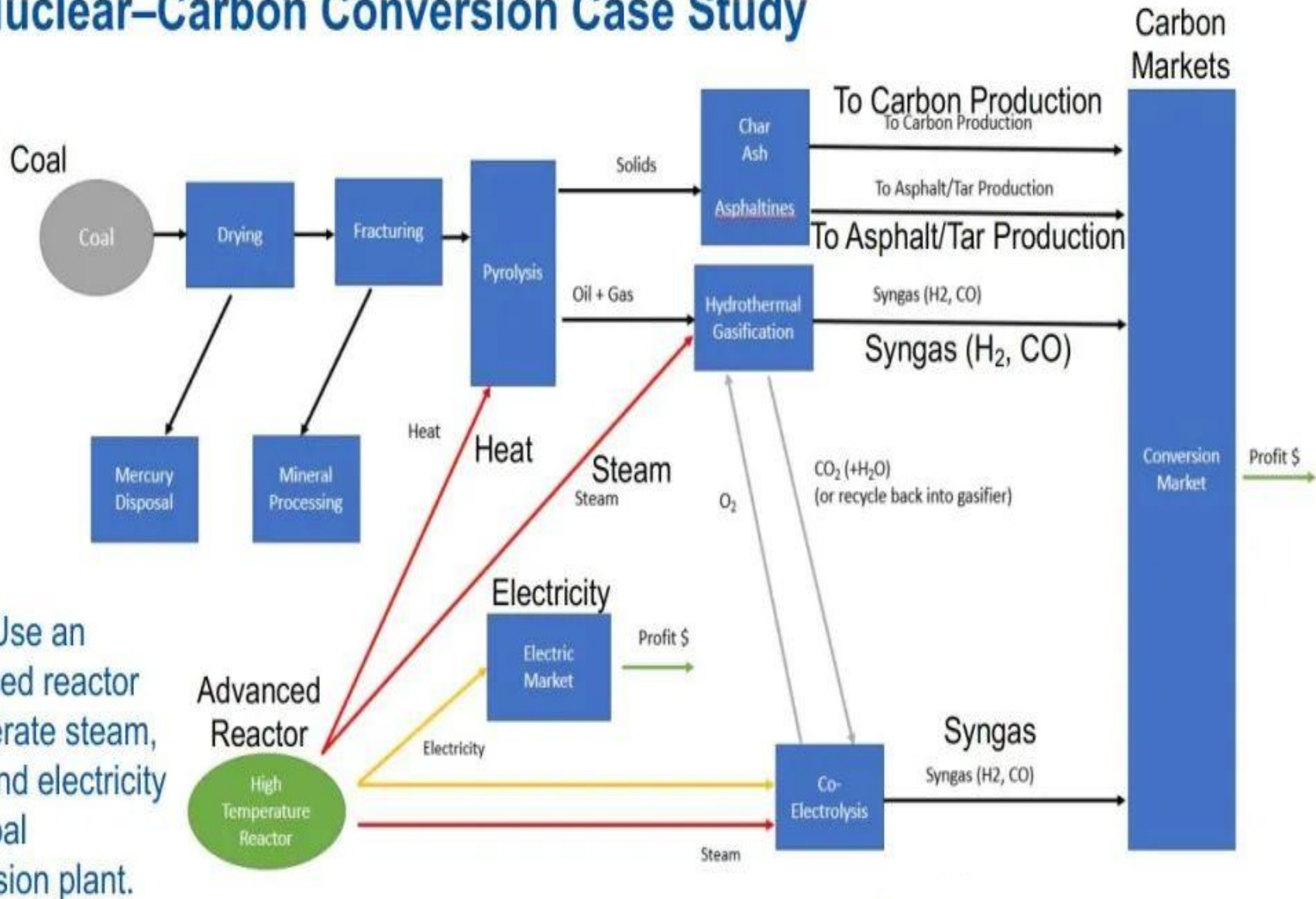
Operational reactor that produces combined heat and power (CHP) to a functional microgrid

Demonstrate nuclear microgrid operations and provide opportunity to demonstrate operation with coupled energy users, such as hydrogen production and desalination.



MARVEL Construction: Dec 2022
MARVEL Criticality: Dec 2023

Nuclear-Carbon Conversion Case Study

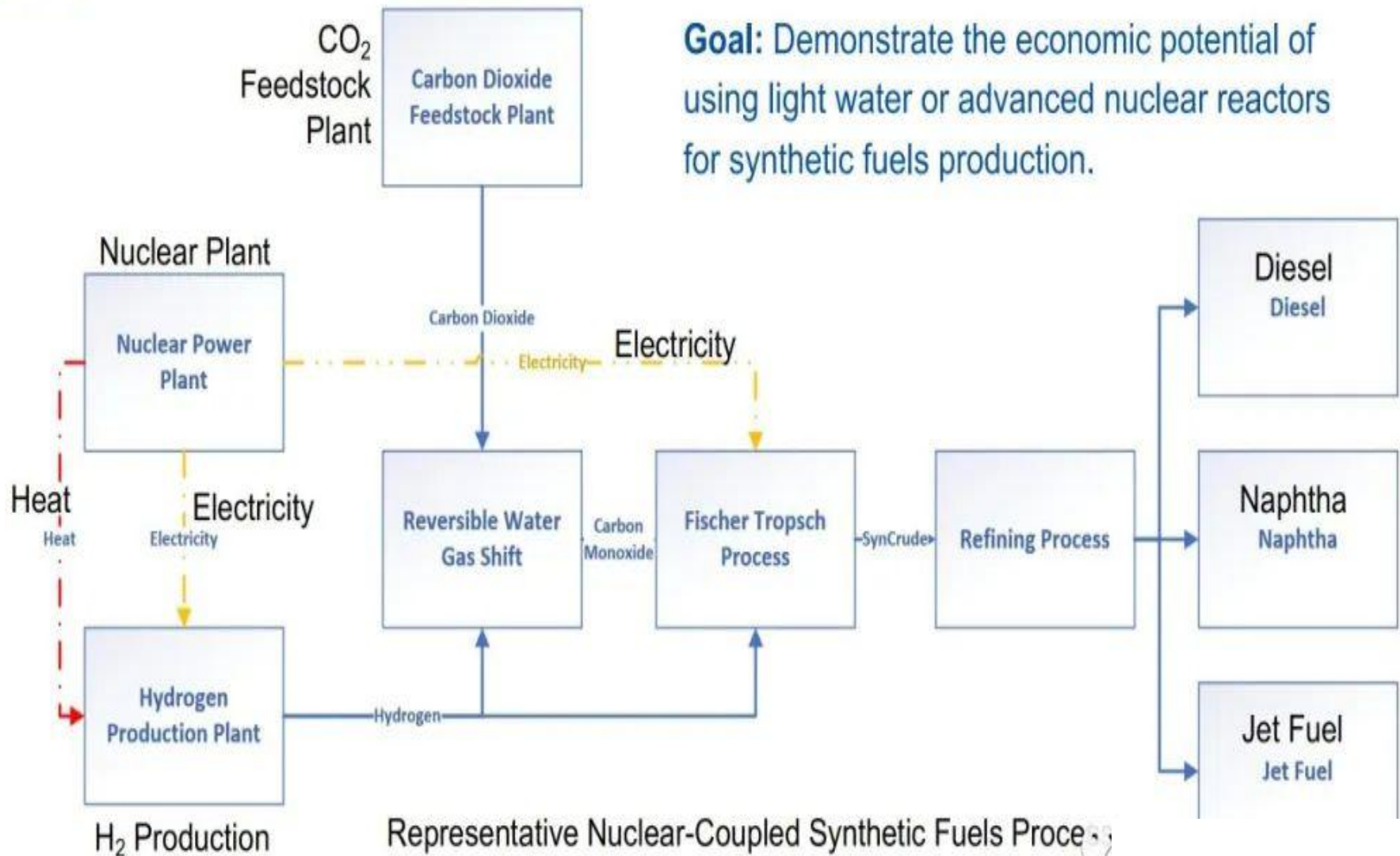


Goal: Use an advanced reactor to generate steam, heat, and electricity for a coal conversion plant.

Representative Coal Conversion Process

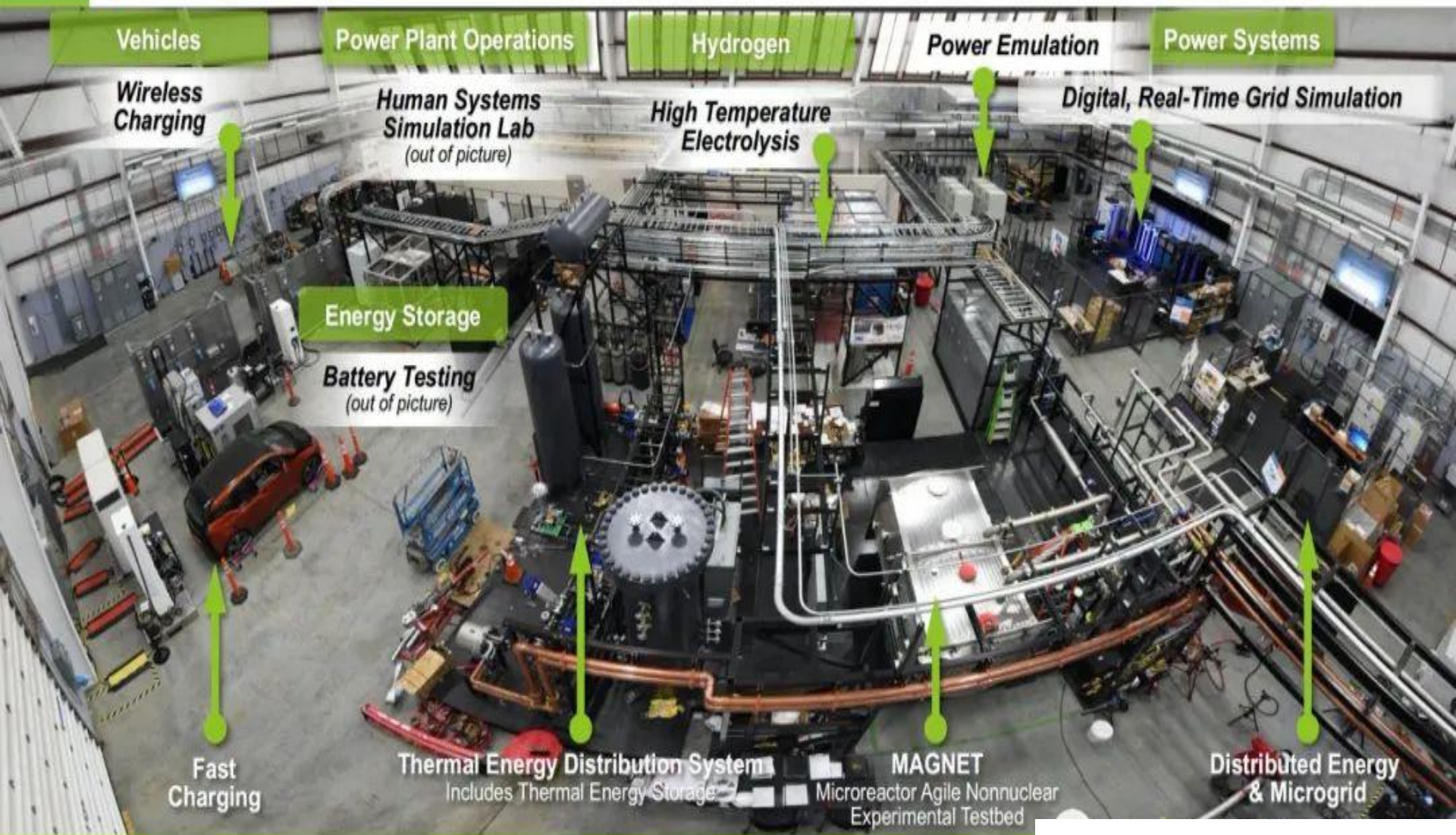
Nuclear Synthetic Fuels Production

Goal: Demonstrate the economic potential of using light water or advanced nuclear reactors for synthetic fuels production.



Representative Nuclear-Coupled Synthetic Fuels Process

Dynamic Energy Transport and Integration Laboratory (DETAIL)



Key References

- Integrated Energy Systems (IES): <https://ies.inl.gov>
- Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear (GAIN): <https://gain.inl.gov>
- National Reactor Innovation Center (NRIC): <https://nric.inl.gov>
- Gen-IV International Forum: Education and Training webinars, https://www.gen-4.org/gif/jcms/c_82831/webinars, 2016-2021
- Light Water Reactor Sustainability Program (LWRS), Flexible Plant Operations and Generation, <https://lwrs.inl.gov/SitePages/FlexiblePlantOperationGeneration.aspx>
- LWR-H2 Reports
 - Exelon study: INL/EXT-19-55395, *Evaluation of Hydrogen Production for a Light Water Reactor in the Midwest*, September 2019
 - Midwest study: INL/EXT-19-55090, *Evaluation of Non-electric Market Options for a Light-water Reactor in the Midwest*, August 2019
- LWR Steam Markets
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- Additional reports available at <https://ies.inl.gov/SitePages/Reports.aspx>
- IES Simulation Toolset: https://ies.inl.gov/SitePages/System_Simulation.aspx
- Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program:
 - Program: <https://www.energy.gov/ne/nuclear-reactor-technologies/advanced-reactor-demonstration-program>
 - Infographic: <https://www.energy.gov/ne/downloads/infographic-advanced-reactor-demonstration-program>
 - News release: <https://www.powermag.com/final-doe-advanced-reactor-demonstration-awards-announcement/>
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