

## S. Korea Budgets 28.6 Billion Won for Nuclear Fusion Project

SEOUL, Jan. 28 (Yonhap) -- South Korea said Friday it has budgeted 28.6 billion won (US\$27.8 million) this year for its newest nuclear fusion research facility as part of efforts toward a multi-billion-dollar experimental nuclear fusion project.

The Ministry of Science and Technology said the budget plan was endorsed on Thursday.

The nuclear fusion facility, the Korea Superconducting Tokamak Advanced Research (KSTAR), is being built in Daejeon, 164 kilometers south of Seoul, for a total of 309 billion won with the aim of completing the work by August 2008.

The research facility will be for a test bed for what is being billed as the clean, safe, inexhaustible energy source of the future, emulating the sun's nuclear fusion, according to Han Jeong-hoon, an official from the Korea National Fusion Program, which is in charge of the project.

"Building the KSTAR facility is essential for South Korea's participation in the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project," Han said.

South Korea, along with Japan, the European Union, China, Russia and the United States, are participating in the ITER project, which is aimed at building an experimental nuclear fusion reactor.

Japan and France are vying to host of the nuclear fusion reactor.

The choice between Japan and France has been delayed because of a failure to reach a consensus among the six countries.

South Korea, Japan and the U.S. back the Japanese site, while the European Union, Russia and China prefer the French site.

"South Korea is the only nation without such a nuclear fusion research facility among the six parties," Han said.

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