

# Experience of HTTR Licensing for Japan's New Nuclear Regulation

**Mr. Etsuo Ishitsuka, JAEA, Japan**  
**22 April 2021**

## Meet the Presenter

**Dr. Etsuo Ishitsuka** is the general manager of the HTTR Reactor Engineering Section at the Department of HTTR project in JAEA, Japan Atomic Energy Agency. He earned his Doctorate of Engineering from the University of Tokyo in 1999. He started his research career at the Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute in 1986 as a research engineer for the Japan Materials Testing Reactor (JMTR) project. He worked in a wide field of neutron irradiation technology development, such as production of medical radioisotopes, fusion blanket materials, plasma facing components and plasma diagnostics components, etc. He was promoted to Senior research engineer in 1994 and managed the experiments of a fusion blanket functional test in JMTR and the ITER project as the deputy general manager. After managing an international cooperation and training of foreign young researchers, he joined HTTR project in 2015 as the general manager. His current works are the technology developments related to core management and operation. His team was in charge of the seismic evaluation of facilities and beyond design basis accidents in this licensing.



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# Innovation by HTGR

Items	HTGR	LWR
Electric output (thermal output)	SMR (Small Modular Reactor) ~300MW (~600MW)	Large scale NPP ~1000MW (~3,000MW)
Outlet temperature	700 °C ~ 950 °C	~300 °C
Application	Heat application (hydrogen production, high-temperature steam, desalination, district heating), power generation	Power generation

## Safety (S)

✓ Excellent safety feature ( no melting core)

## Stable power supply (E)

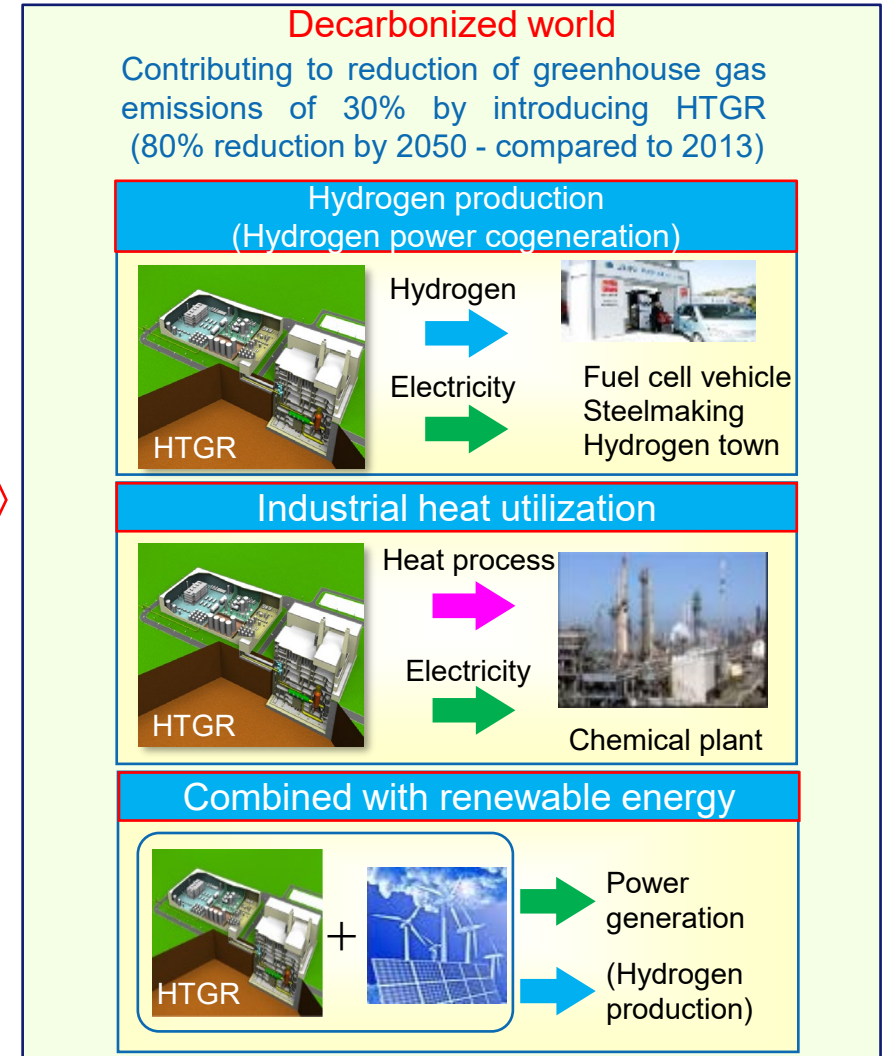
✓ Stable supply of hydrogen energy from nuclear power

## Economic efficiency (E)

- ✓ Heat utilization rate: ~80%
- ✓ Electricity generation efficiency: ~50%
- ✓ High burnup (120GWd/t)

## Environmental friendliness (E)

- ✓ ~1/4 spent fuel generated from LWRs
- ✓ Contribute to reduce carbon dioxide emission

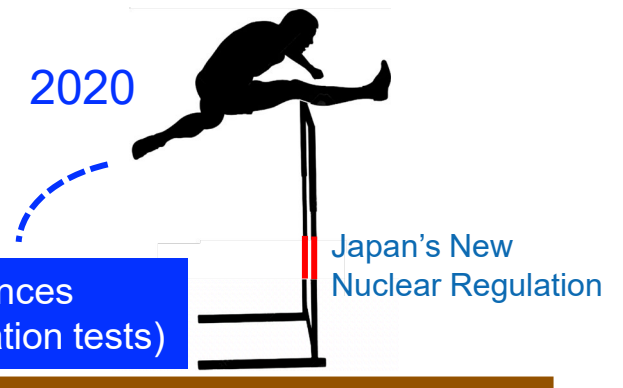
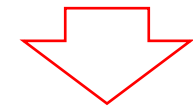


# Contents



- 1) Outline of HTTR
- 2) Outline of Japan's New Nuclear Regulation
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- 4) Conclusion

References of HTTR :  
 -Excellent Feature of Japanese HTGR Technologies, JAEA-Technology 2018-004  
 -High Temperature Gas-cooled Reactors, Volume 5 of the JSME Series in Thermal and Nuclear Power Generation 2021



# Outline of HTTR



# Location of HTTR



Oarai Research and Development Institute

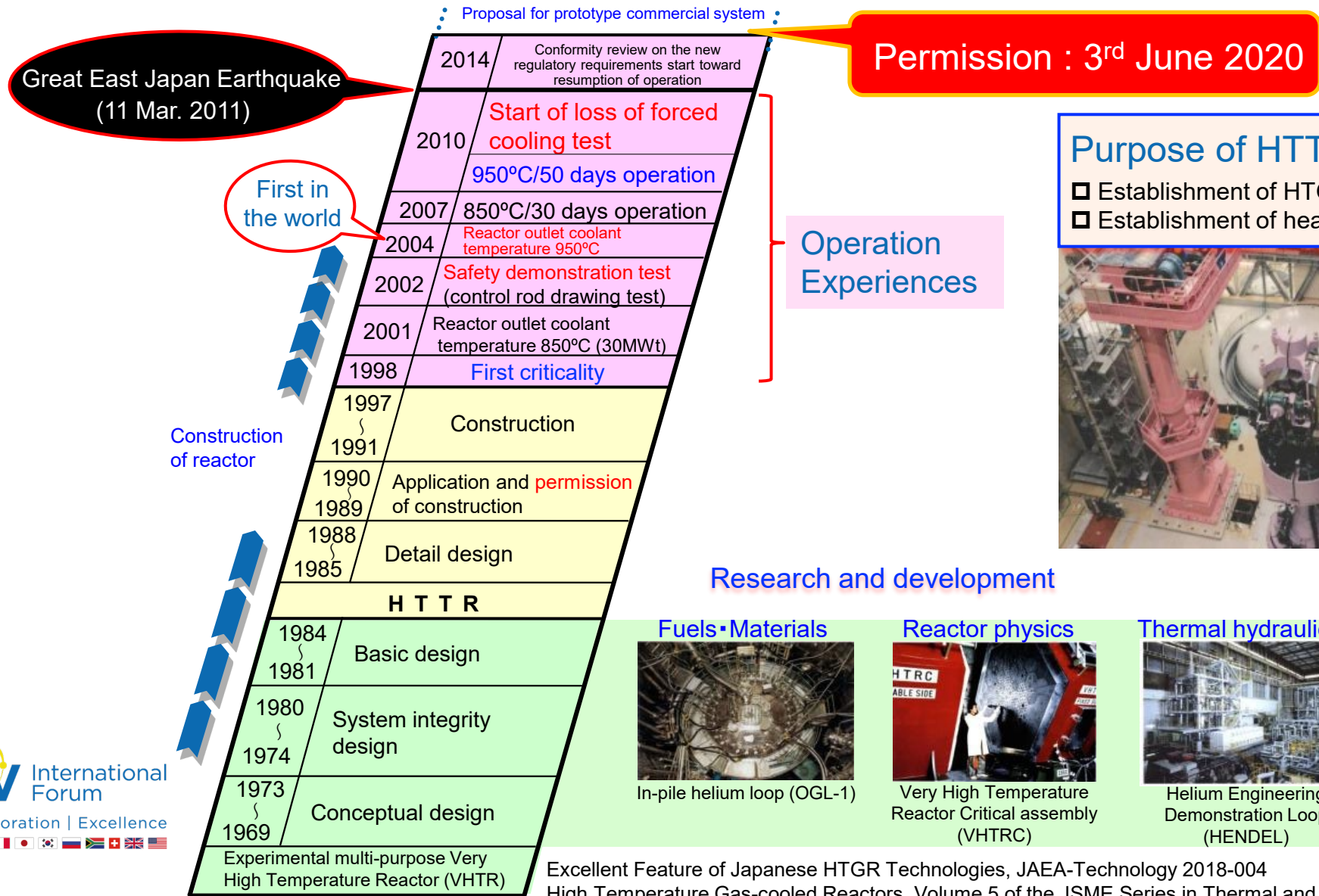
# Major Specifications of HTTR

Thermal power	30 MW
Average power density	2.5 MW/m <sup>3</sup>
Outlet coolant temperature	850 °C / 950 °C
Inlet coolant temperature	395 °C
Primary coolant pressure	4 MPa (He)
Direction of coolant flow (core)	Downward
Moderator / Reflector	Graphite
Core height	2.9 m
Core diameter	2.3 m
Fuel	Low enriched UO <sub>2</sub>
- Uranium enrichment	3 ~ 10% (Ave. 6%)
- Fuel element type	Prismatic block
Pressure vessel	2.25Cr-1Mo steel
	H13 m × ID6 m, t122-160 mm
Containment vessel	Steel containment
	H30 m × ID18.5 m, t30-38 mm





# Outline of HTTR History





# Overview of the HTTR Project

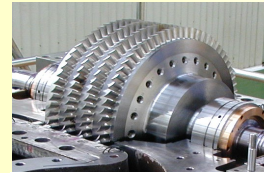
## (1) Reactor technology



- 30 MW<sub>th</sub> and 950°C prismatic core advanced test reactor (Operation start in 1998)

- Safety evaluation by NRA for restart
- Accumulation of validation data
- Advanced fuel development

## (2) Gas turbine and H<sub>2</sub> technology



He compressor

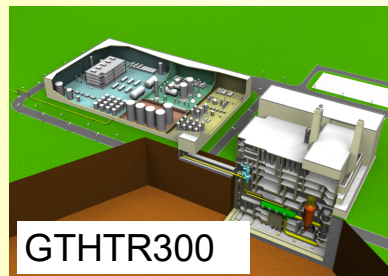
- R&D of gas turbine technologies such as high-efficiency helium compressor, shaft seal, and maintenance technology



hydrogen facility

- In October 2016, 31 hours of hydrogen production with the rate of 0.02 m<sup>3</sup>/h was successfully achieved.

## (3) Innovative HTGR design



GTHTR300

- GTHTR300 for electricity generation and desalination
- GTHTR300C for cogeneration and nuclear-renewable hybrid system.

- Clean Burn HTGR for surplus plutonium burning
- Development of safety standards

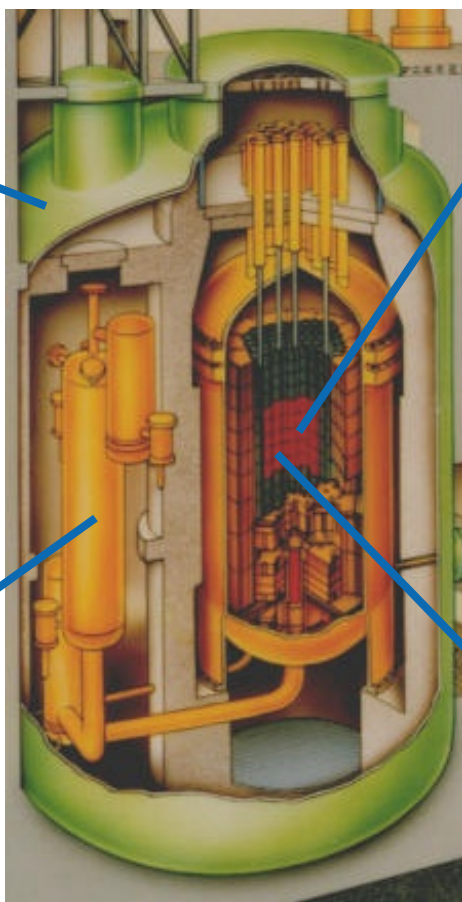
## (4) HTTR-GT/H<sub>2</sub> test



- The connection of a helium gas turbine power generation system and hydrogen production with the HTTR.

- Basic design of the HTTR-GT/H<sub>2</sub> test is completed.


# Japanese Technologies as a Front Runner



■ Experiences of HTTR design, construction, operation  
(MHI, Toshiba/IHI, Hitachi, Fuji Electric, KHI, etc.)

A lot of technical data of HTTR was accumulated.  
Optimum design of commercial HTGR can be conducted by only Japanese technology.

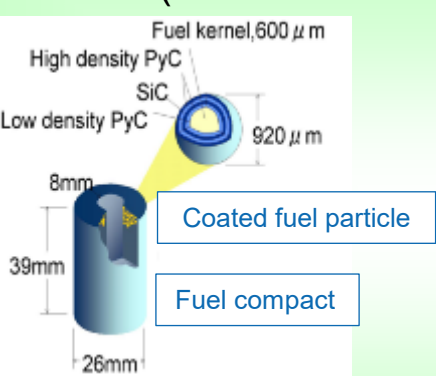
■ High temperature resistant metal  
(Mitsubishi material)



Intermediate heat exchanger (IHX)

Hastelloy XR is applicable at 950°C as the nuclear structural material .  
IHX can deliver hot helium gas at 950°C to outside the reactor pressure vessel.

■ Fuel (Nuclear Fuel Industry)



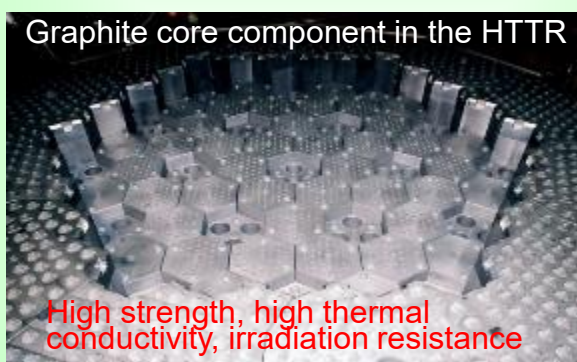
Fuel kernel, 600 μm  
High density PyC  
SiC  
Low density PyC  
920 μm  
8mm  
39mm  
26mm  
Coated fuel particle  
Fuel compact

Ceramics coating layer retains fission products inside the coated fuel particle at extreme low leak level.

Ceramics coating is stable for long-term.  
(3 times higher burnup than LWR)

■ Graphite, IG-110 (Toyo tanso)

World highest quality graphite (isotropic, high density)

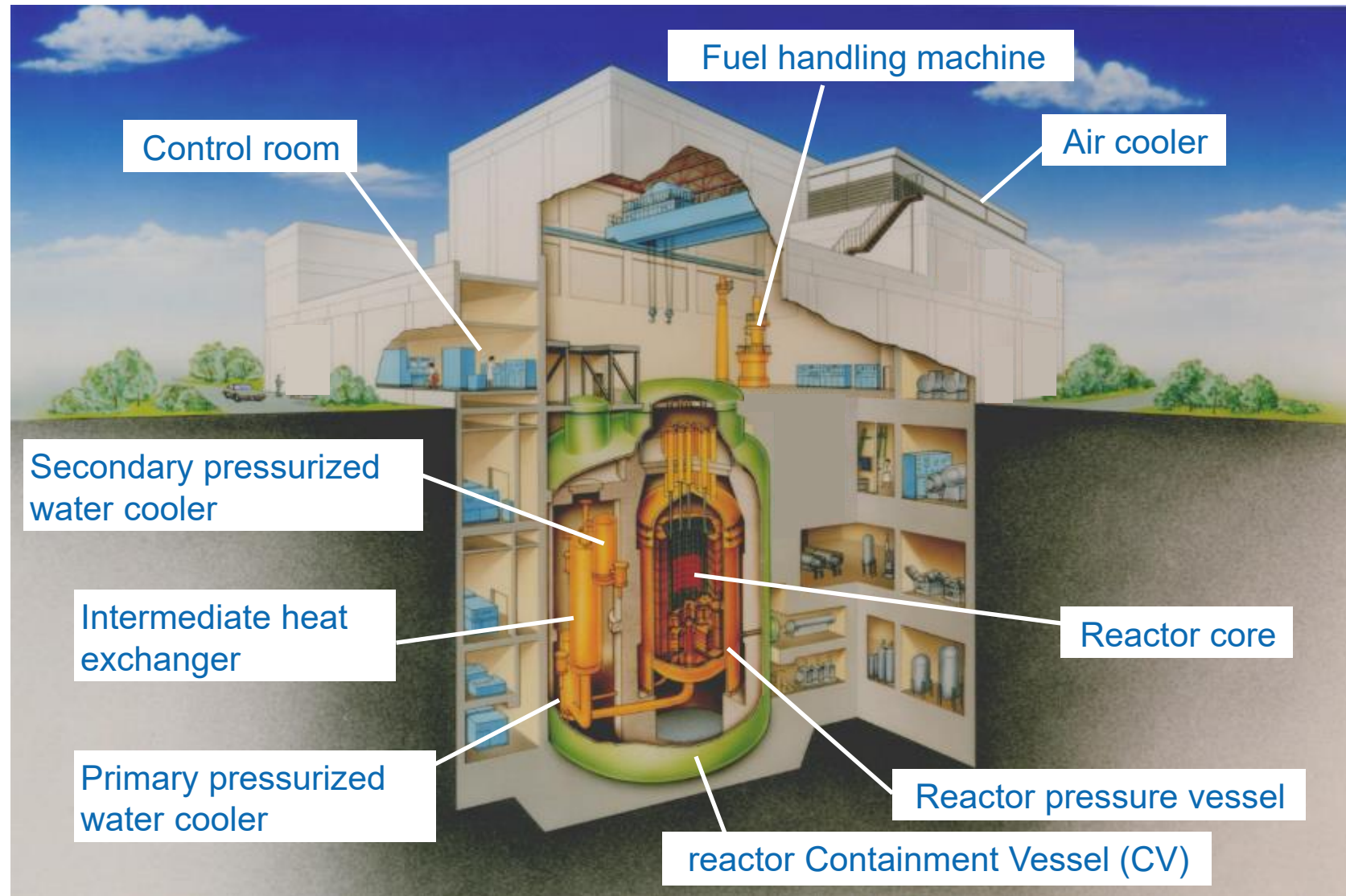


Graphite core component in the HTTR

High strength, high thermal conductivity, irradiation resistance

Constructed by domestic technology

# Reactor Building of HTTR



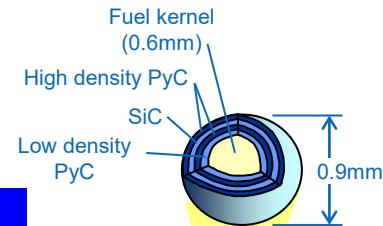


# Core components of HTTR

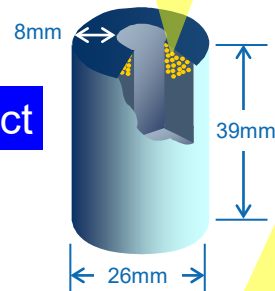
Ceramic fuel coating

Retain radioactive material at 1600°C

Coated fuel particle



Fuel compact



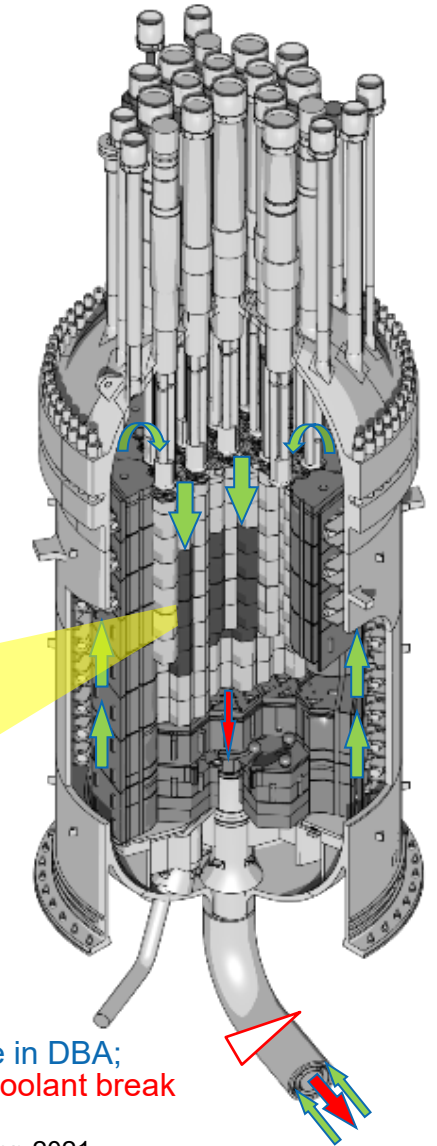
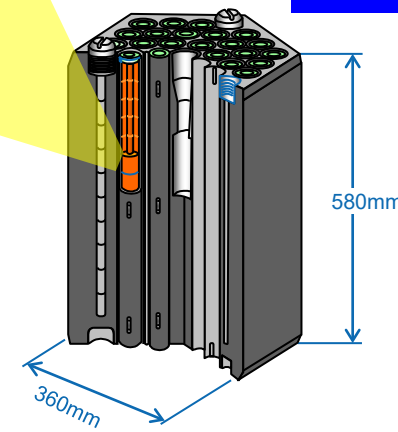
Helium coolant

Stable at high temperature (No temperature limit)

Graphite core structure

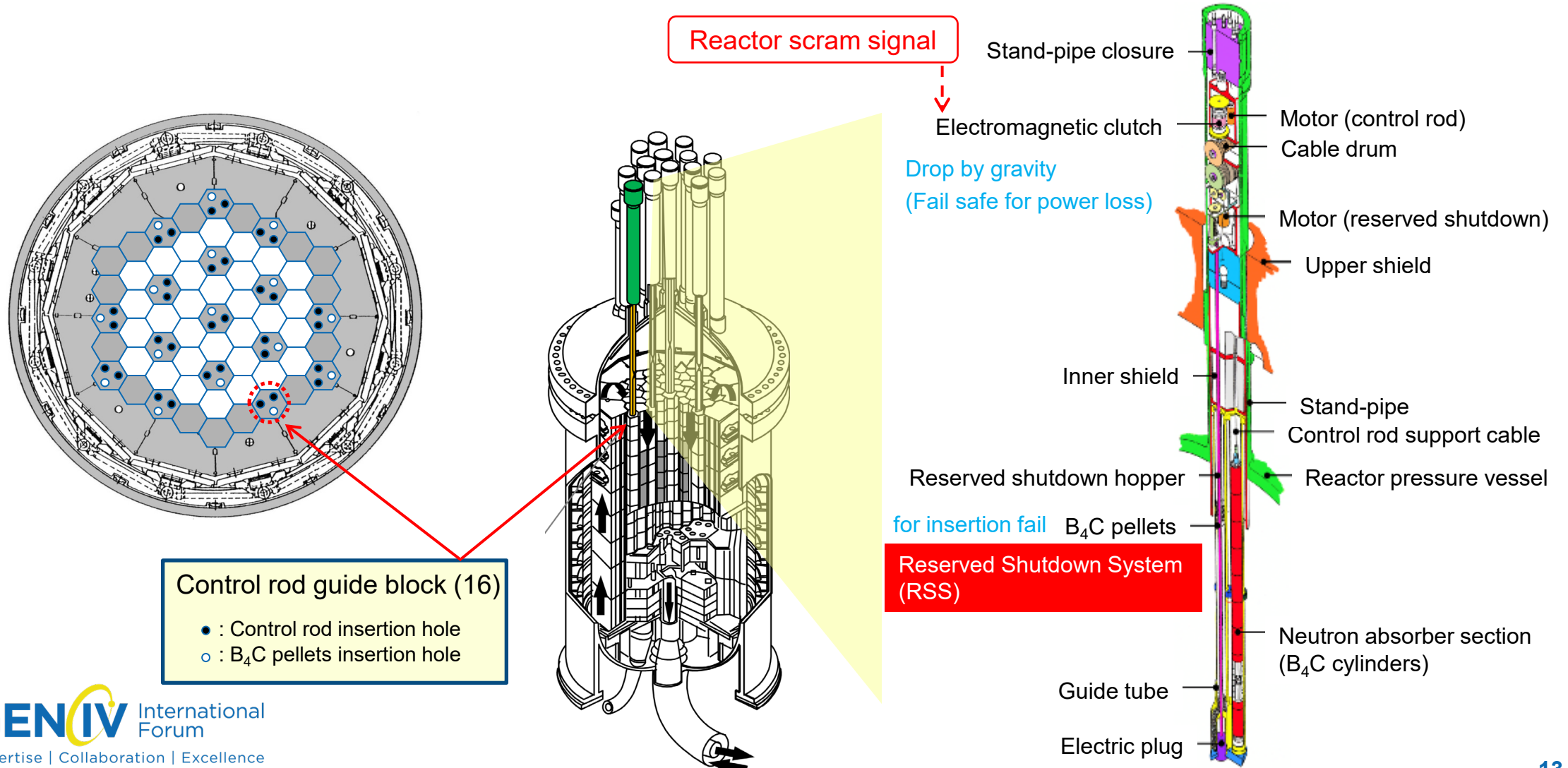
Temperature limit: 2500°C

Fuel assembly





# HTTR safety features: Reactor shutdown



**Control rod guide block (16)**

- : Control rod insertion hole
- : B<sub>4</sub>C pellets insertion hole

# HTTR safety features: Reactor cooling

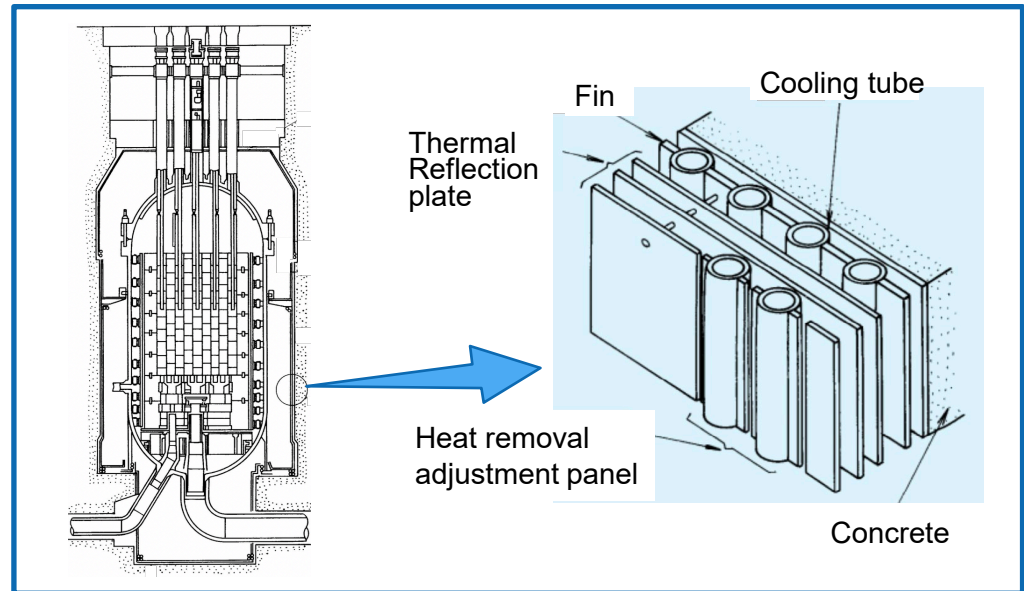
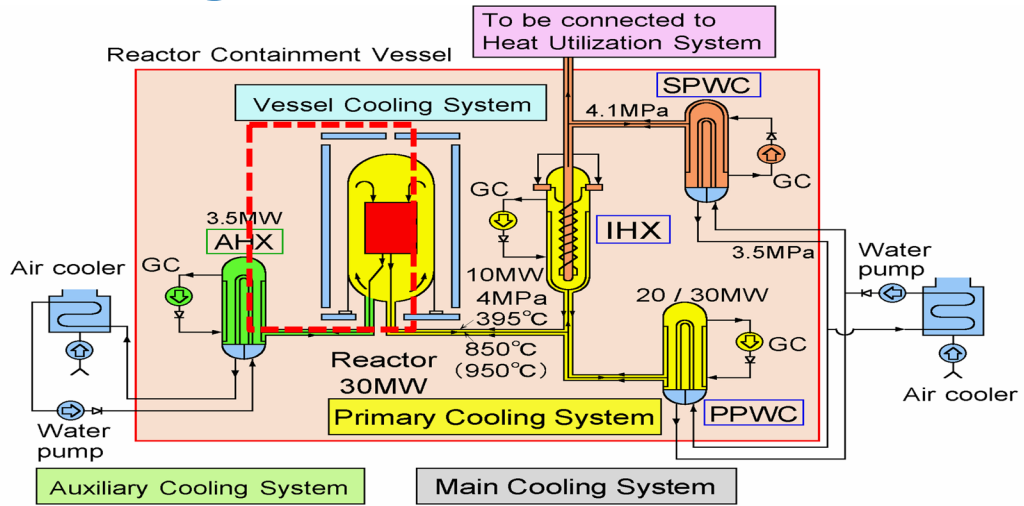
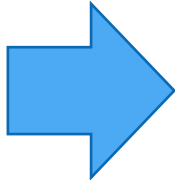
< Normal operation >  
**Main Cooling System**

< Abnormal condition >  
**Auxiliary Cooling System**

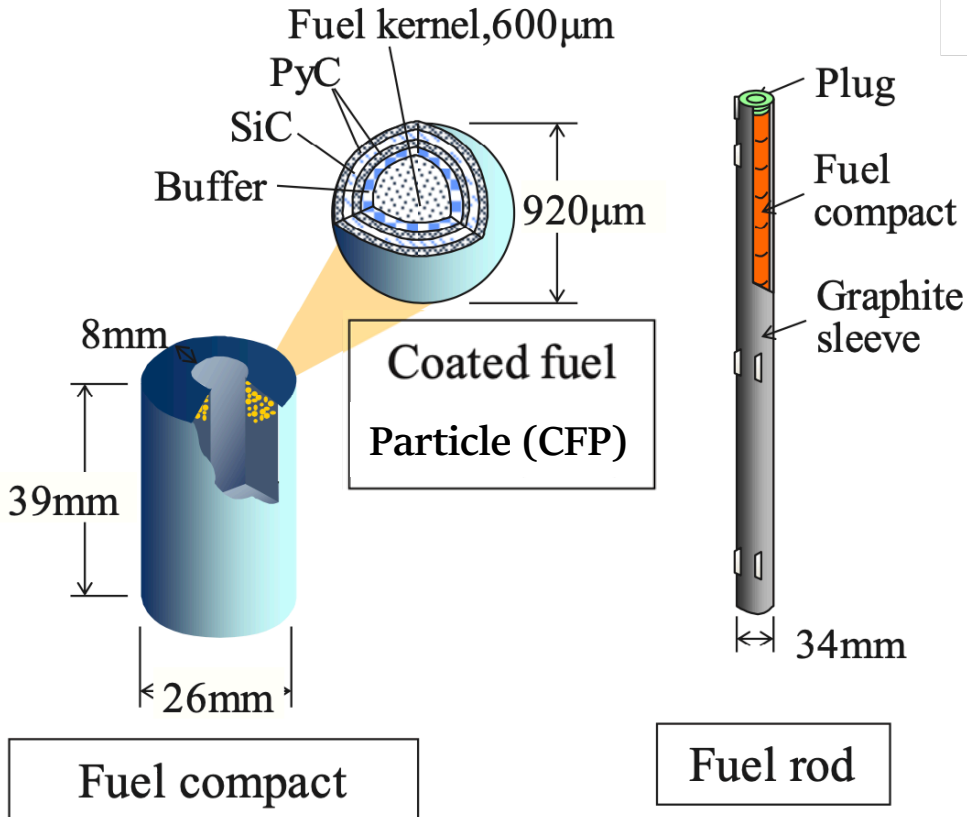
- Forced-circulation core cooling
- 1 system

< Abnormal condition >  
**Vessel Cooling System**

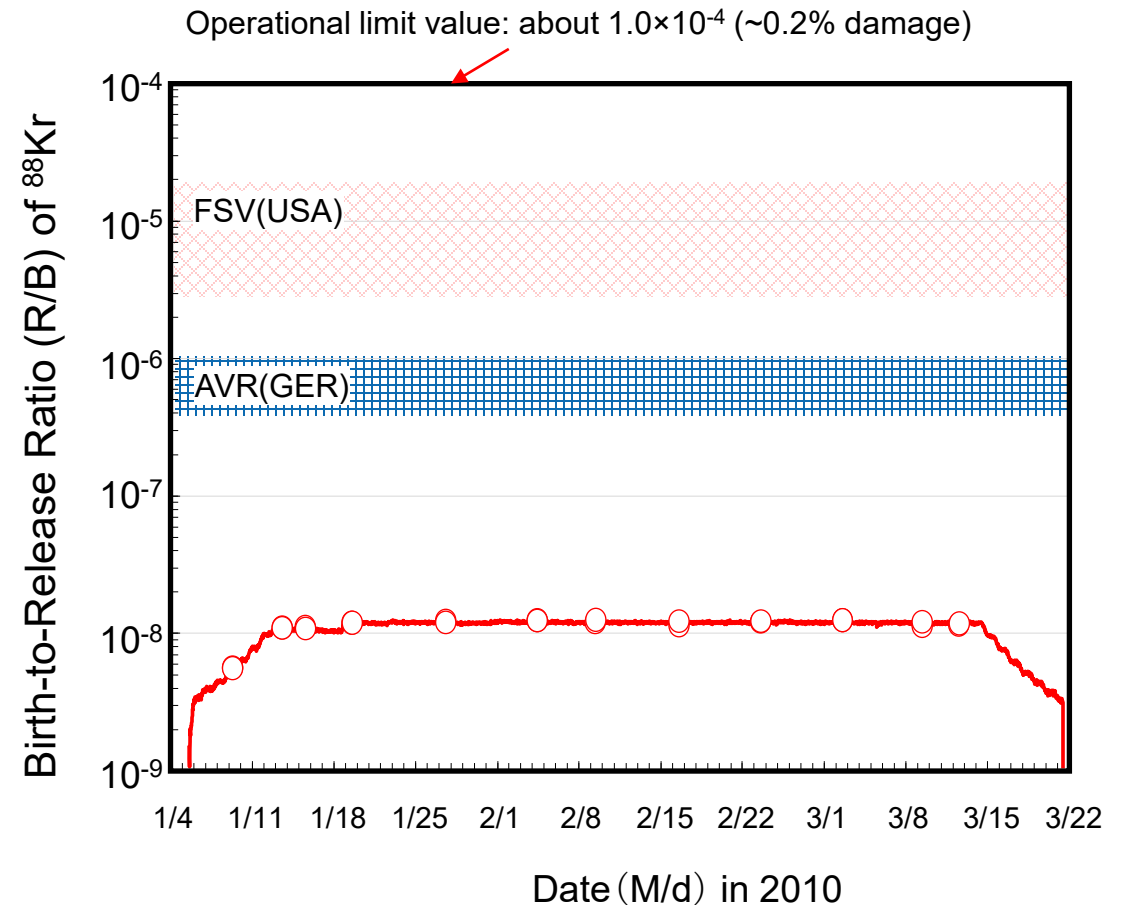
- From outside of pressure vessel
- Forced-circulation cooling water
- Final heatsink: atmosphere
- 2 systems
- **Constant operation**



# HTTR safety features: Fission product containment



Test results of 50 days continuous operation at  $950^\circ\text{C}$



# Inherent reactor safety design of HTTR

Ceramic (SiC) coated fuel particle

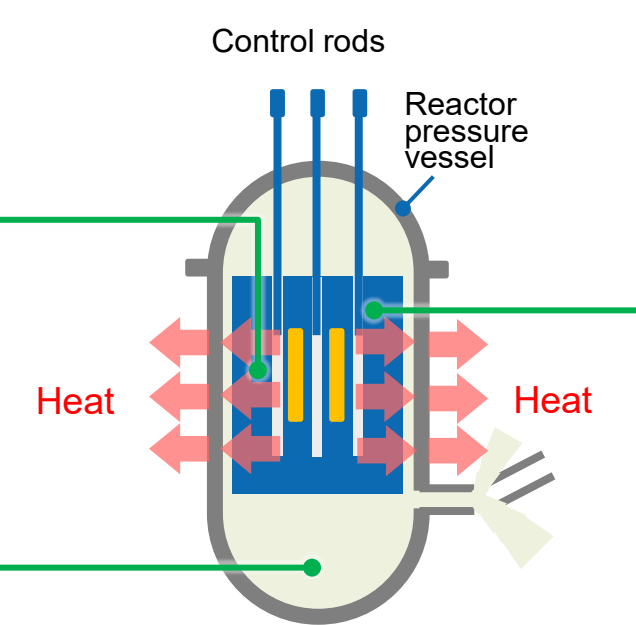
Proven integrity at 1600°C

Fuel kernel    TRISO ceramic coatings

Experimental result

Inert helium coolant

No explosions of H<sub>2</sub> and vapor due to chemical inertness and absence of phase change of He coolant



Reactor is safely shutdown and cooled by inherent design features without reliance on any equipment or operator action in the event of loss of coolant or station blackout

Old regulatory standards do not take into account the good points of inherent reactor safety design

Graphite core

Negative reactivity coefficient, high heat capacity and large thermal conductivity of graphite core provide for safe removal of core decay heat

Fuel pin

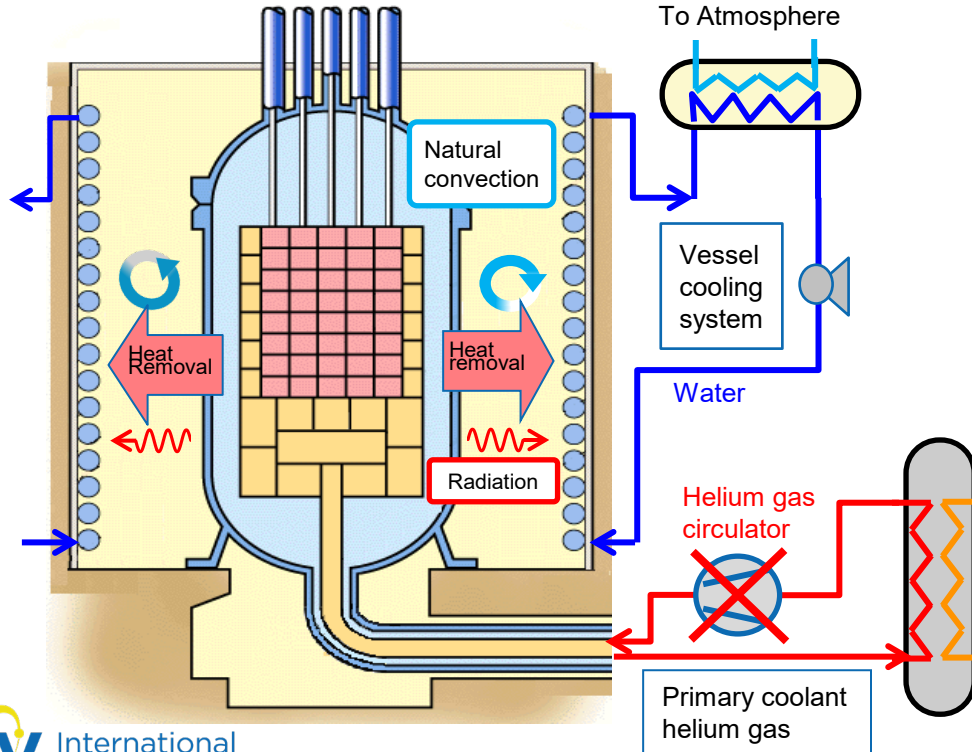
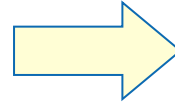
Fuel block

Simulation of loss of coolant



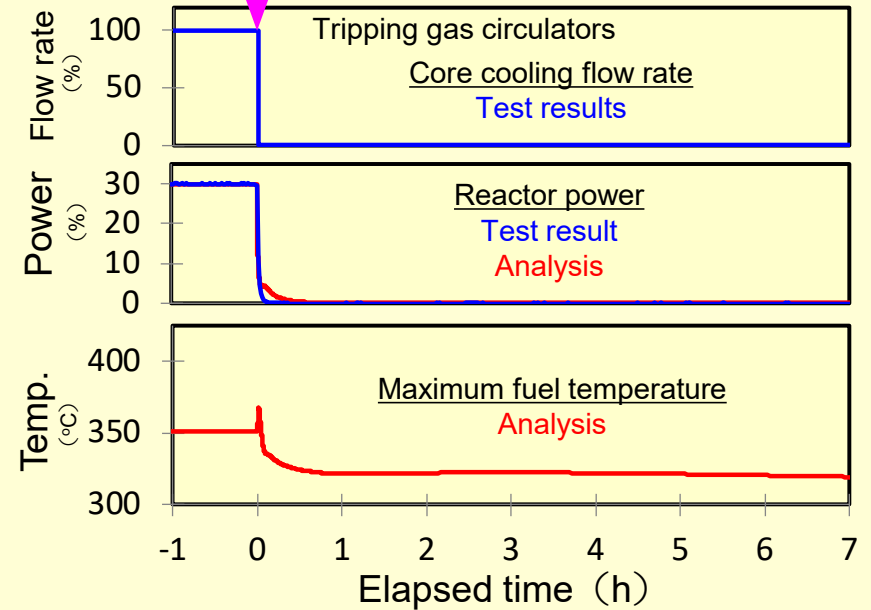
# Safety demonstration test

- 30% power (9MW) Loss of forced cooling test  
(All HGC tripped) . . . Finished (2010)
- 100% power Loss of forced cooling test  
(All HGC tripped) . . . Planned
- 30% power Loss of core cooling test  
(All HGC + VCS tripped) . . . Planned



## Test condition

- Initial power 30% (9MW)
- Reducing core flow rate to zero
- Keeping VCS operation
- No scram operation (No CR insertion)



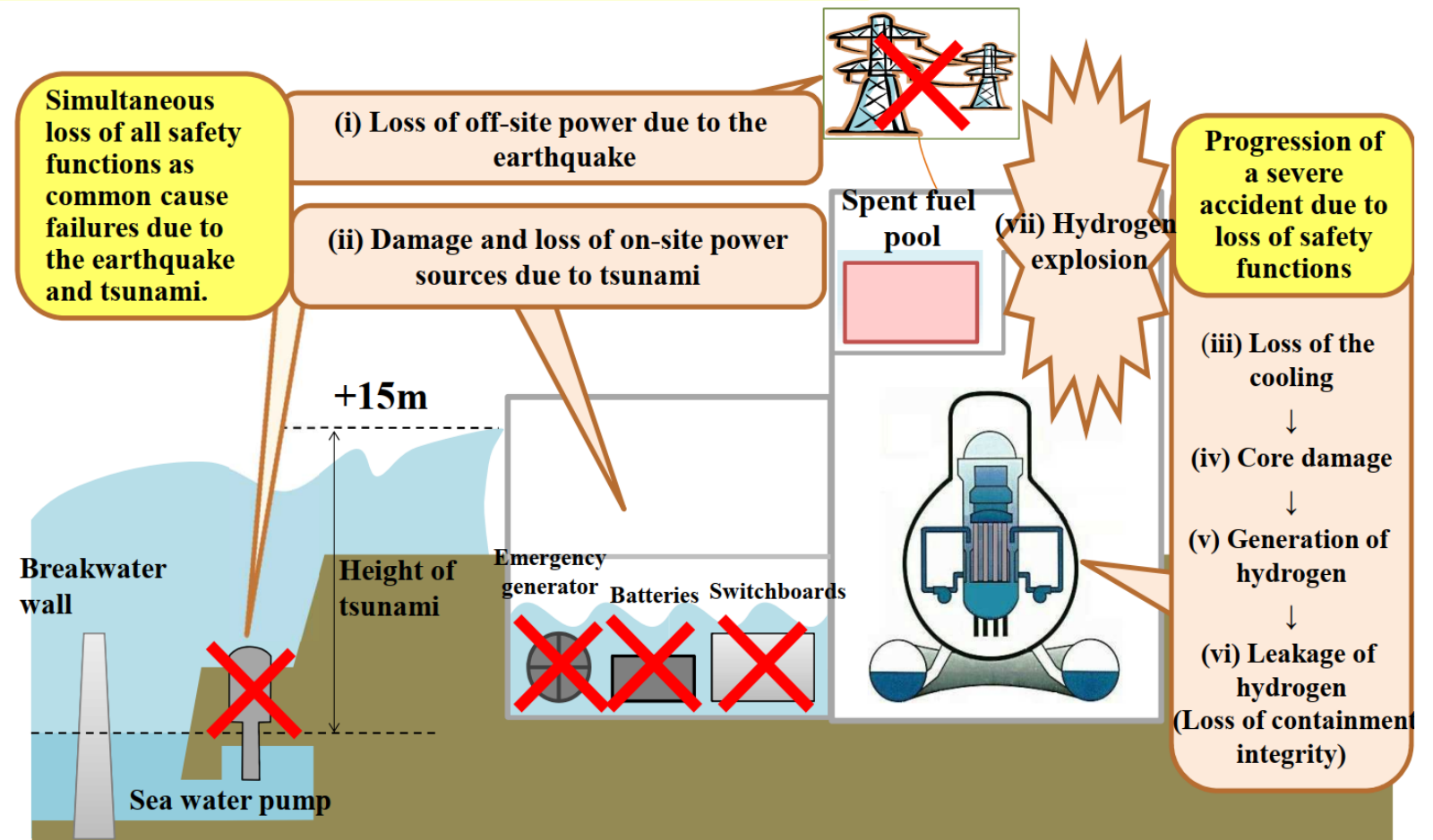
Reactor is naturally shut down as soon as the core cooling flow rate to zero. Reactor is kept stable long after the loss of core cooling

# Outline of Japan's New Nuclear Regulation

# Safety Regulation Problems before Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Accident

## Lessons learned from the Fukushima-Daiichi Nuclear Power station accident

- All safety functions were lost simultaneously due to the earthquake and tsunami.
- The initial impact spread and the crisis eventually developed into a severe accident.



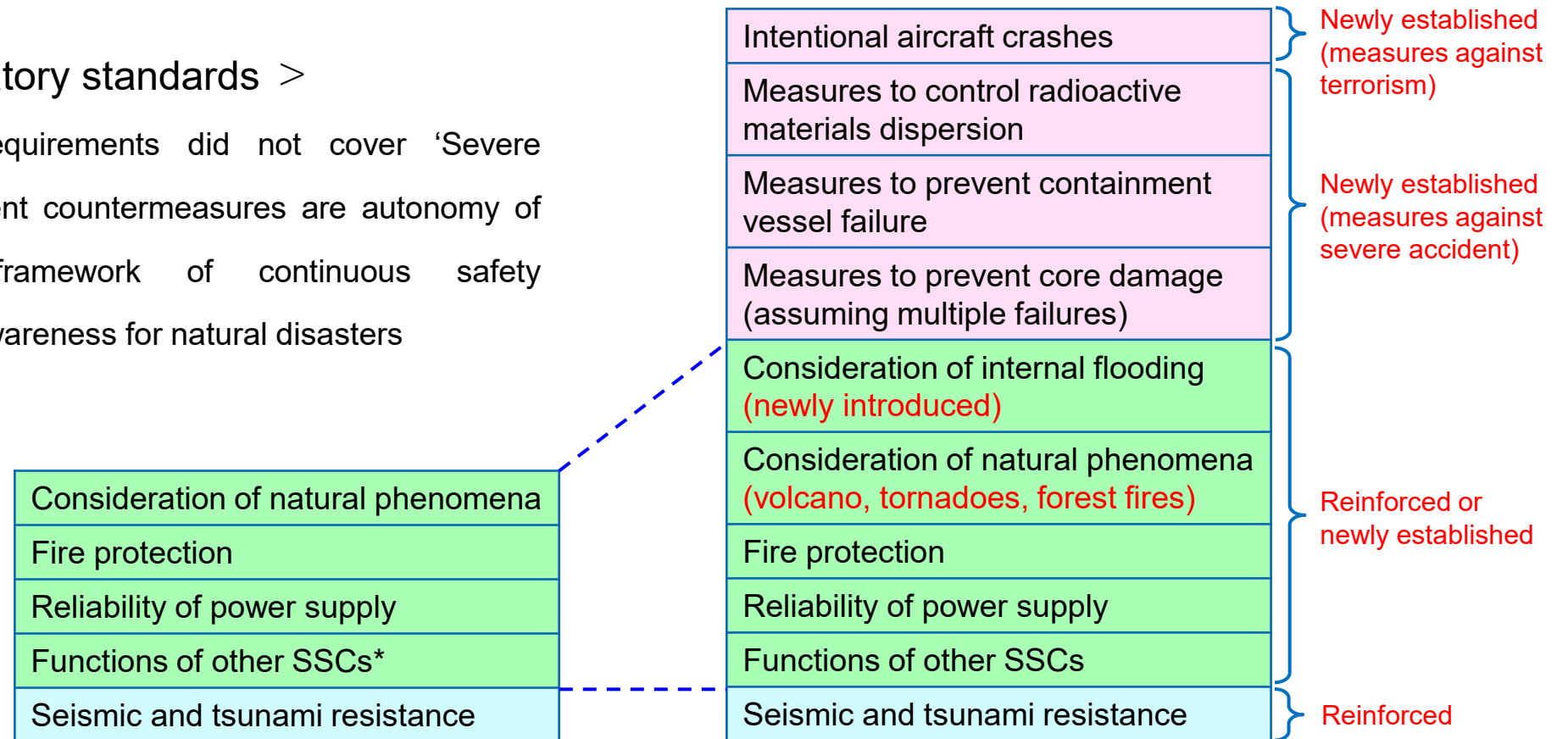
# Comparison between previous and new regulatory requirements for NPP

The New Regulatory Requirements tighten measures to prevent or deal with severe accidents and acts of terrorism

## < Old regulatory standards >

- ✓ Regulatory requirements did not cover 'Severe accidents'
- ✓ Severe accident countermeasures are autonomy of owner
- ✓ No legal framework of continuous safety improvements
- ✓ Lack of risk awareness for natural disasters
- ✓ ...

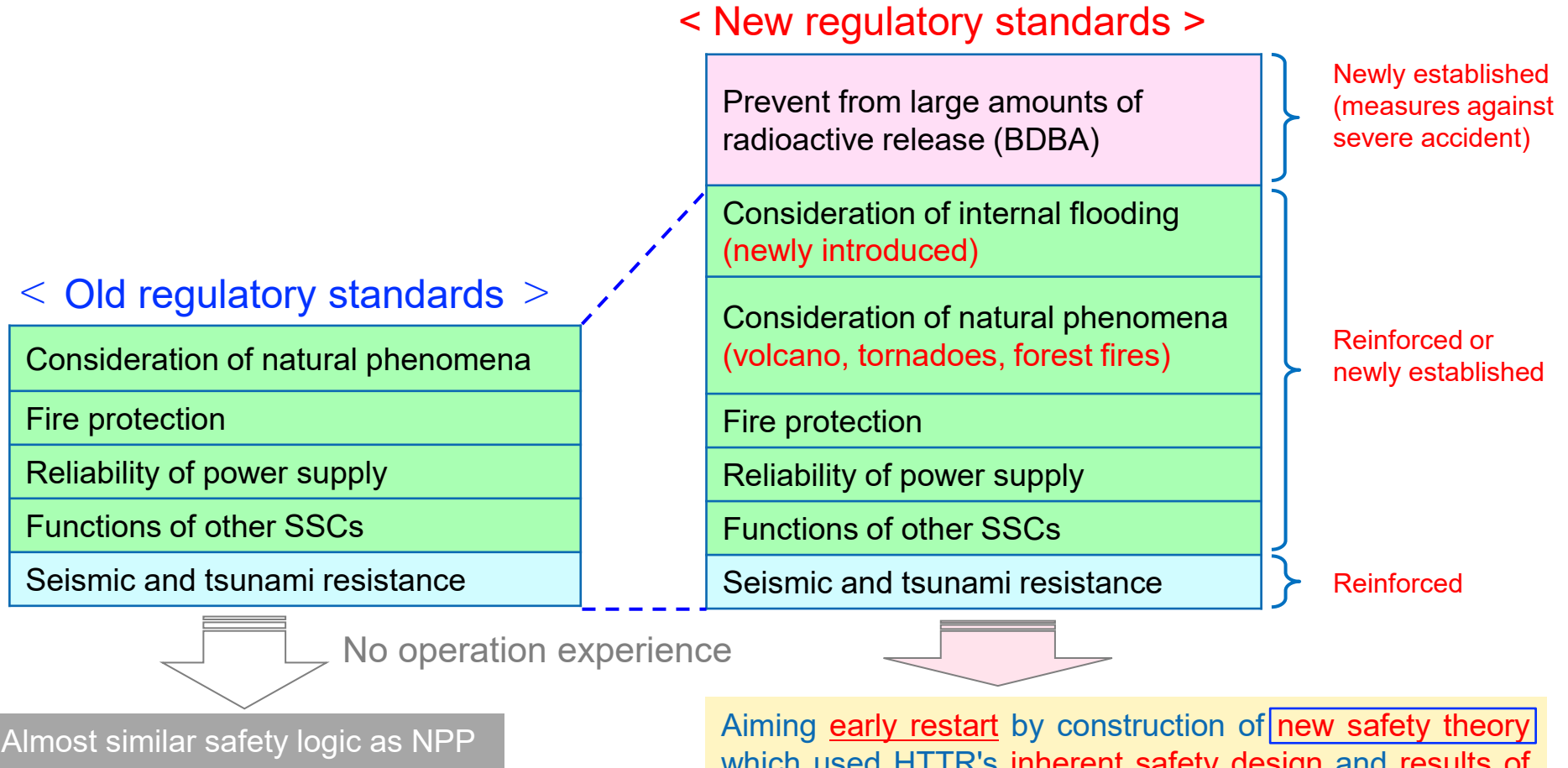
## < New regulatory standards >



\*:Structures, Systems, and Components



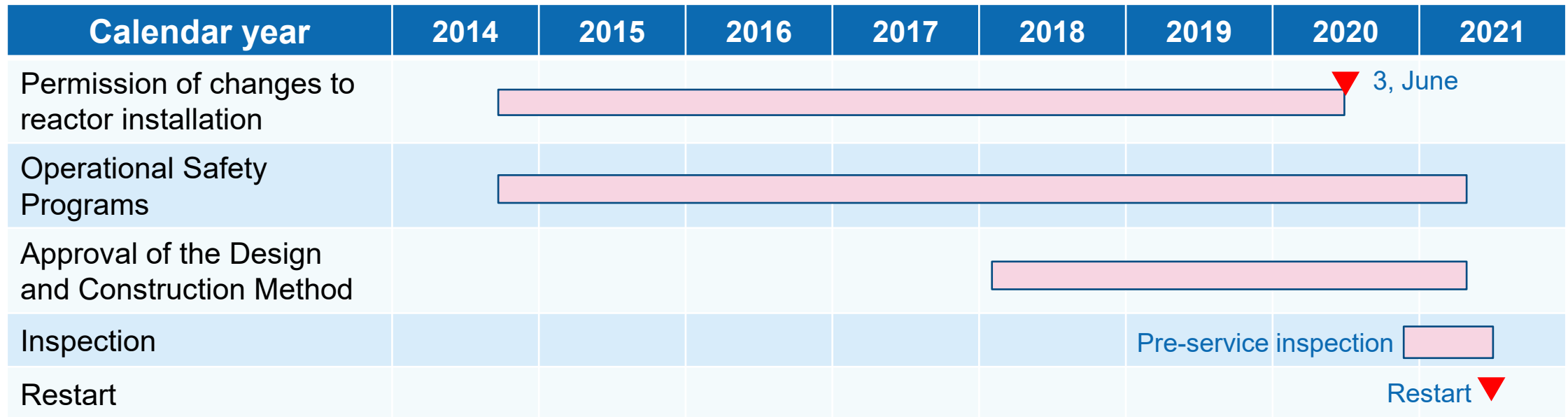
# New regulatory requirements for HTTR



# Conformation of Adaptability to New Regulatory Requirements for HTTR

# Towards the restart of HTTR

- ✓ Following the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station on March 11, 2011, revised regulatory requirements were issued by the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) in July 2013.
- ✓ **JAEA had submitted the application** including evaluation results satisfying the New Regulatory Requirements to the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) on **Nov. 26th, 2014**.
- ✓ Through many discussions with the NRA, **on June 3rd, 2020, JAEA obtained the permission** by the NRA for changes to Reactor Installation of the HTTR.
- ✓ It is targeted to restart HTTR in July 2021.



# NPP(BWR) and HTTR

	LWR (BWR)	HTTR
Thermal power	3,300 MW	30 MW (1/110, 0.9%)
Power density	50 MW/m <sup>3</sup>	2.5 MW/m <sup>3</sup> (1/20, 5%)
Coolant type	Light water	Helium
Coolant temperature	~285 °C	~395/850(950) °C (inlet / outlet)
Coolant pressure	~7 MPa	~4 MPa
Heatsink	Seawater	Atmosphere
Emergency core cooling system	Necessary	Unnecessary
Decay heat removal	Forced circulation pump	Natural heat transfer

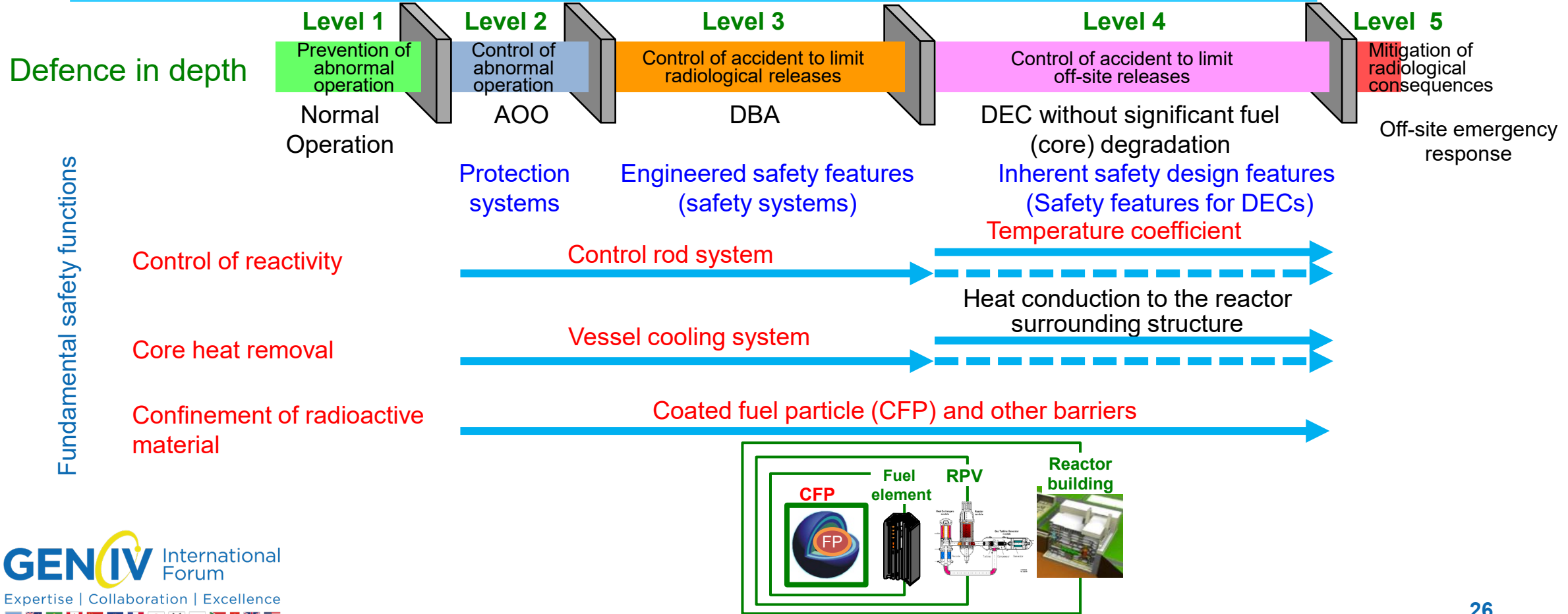


# Safety requirements

Safety requirements		Modular HTGRs	LWRs
Design extension condition (DEC)		<u>DEC without significant fuel degradation</u>	DEC without significant fuel degradation DEC with <b>core melting</b>
Reactor shutdown		At least two diverse and independent <b>means</b> ( <b>Inherent design features is regarded as one of means</b> )	At least two diverse and independent systems
Heat removal from core		<b>Passive cooling</b> from the outside surface of reactor vessel (Passive cooling)	In shutdown states: Residual heat removal ( <b>Forced cooling</b> ) In accident condition : Emergency core cooling ( <b>Forced cooling</b> )
Confinement of radioactive materials	Fuel integrity	In operational states and <b>in accident conditions</b>	In operational states (normal operation and AOO)
	Containment system	<b>Confinement</b> (i.e., vented low-pressure containment)	Containment Vessel
Additional specific considerations		<b>Mitigation of air and water ingress</b> into core during accidents	-

# Safety design approach

- ✓ No significant fuel (core) degradation
- ✓ Fission product is confined by the combination of coated fuel particle and other barriers
- ✓ Passive engineered safety features and Inherent safety design features



# Safety importance classification

## HTTR safety characteristic

With **lower power density than LWRs** ( $\sim 2.5\text{MW/m}^3$  vs  $>50\text{MW/m}^3$ ) and large heat capacity of graphite core, the **HTTR can maintain in a stable state** when the cooling function is lost completely, and further **even the shutdown function and cooling function are lost simultaneously**.



## Safety importance classification

Reviewed with reference to “The guide\* ”.

## Classification of importance in seismic design

Reviewed with reference to “The rule of seismic importance classification of research reactor”.

Safety importance

PS1,2: Prevention System  
MS1,2: Mitigation System

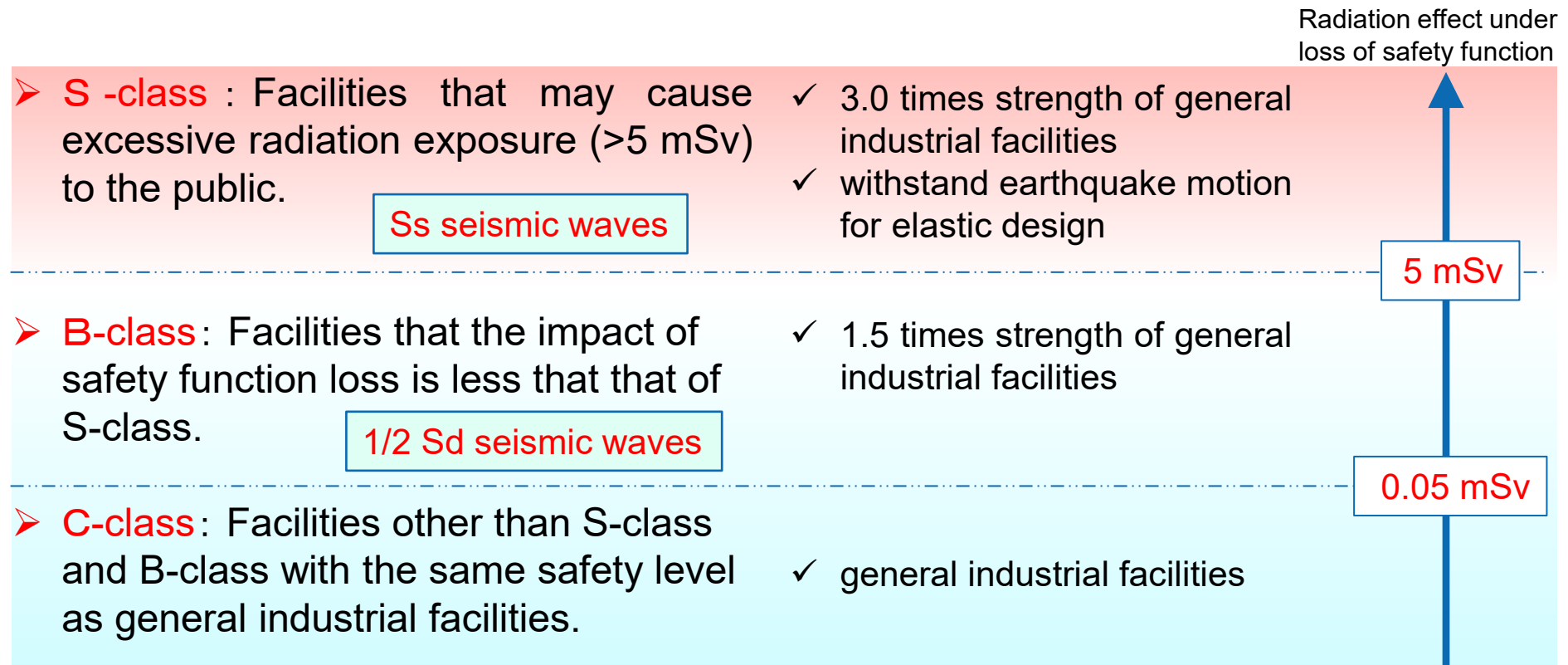
Seismic importance : (S, B, C)



Unique classification of the HTTR different from the NPP was proposed to the NRA by explaining the inherent safety design and results of safety demonstration test.

# Classification of importance in seismic design

In order to prevent the loss of safety functions and impact of radioactive materials on the public by earthquake, each facility must be designed sufficiently withstand the seismic force according to its importance.





# HTTR safety review results by Nuclear Regulation Authority (1/2)

Major discussion item		Regulatory review condition	Regulatory review results	Additional countermeasures
Earthquake	Design seismic ground motion	Raised from 350 gal to <b>973</b> gal	No large-scale reinforcement due to the degradation of the SSCs.	<b>Not required</b>
	Re-evaluation of seismic design classification	<p><b>Some of structures, systems and components (SSCs) were downgraded taken into account the results of safety demonstration tests.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Core heat removal: S class to B class</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Reactor internal structure: S class to B class.</b></li> </ul>		
Tsunami evaluation		Assumption of tsunami height for evaluation : <b>17.8</b> m from sea level	Tsunami does not reach the site because siting location is <b>36.5</b> m high from the sea level.	Not required
Evaluation of integrity of SSCs against natural phenomena such as tornado, volcano, etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Design basis tornado wind speed: <b>100</b> m/s</li> <li>● Thickness of descent pyroclastic material by volcano: <b>50</b> cm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All SSCs needed to be protected are installed inside the reactor building</li> <li>● Fire proof belt necessary around reactor building.</li> </ul>	<b>Fire proof belt</b> was required.

# HTTR safety review results by Nuclear Regulation Authority (2/2)

Major discussion item	Regulatory review condition	Regulatory review results	Additional countermeasures
Fire	Burnable materials in and around the reactor building was additionally evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Amount of burnable materials in the reactor building is limited.</li> <li>● Cables necessary to be protected against fire</li> </ul>	<b>Cable protection</b> against fire was required.
Reliability of power supply	Emergency power supply failure was evaluated.	Decay heat is removable from the core without electricity.	Only portable power generator for monitoring during accident is required.
Beyond design basis accident (BDBA)	Postulated BDBAs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DBA + failure of reactor scram</li> <li>➤ DBA + failure of heat removal from the core</li> <li>➤ DBA + failure of containment vessel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No core melt occurs in all BDBAs.</li> </ul>	

(DBA : Design Basis Accident)

HTTR will restart without significant additional reinforcements due to its inherent safety features.

# Conclusion

- The **new safety theory** which used HTTR's inherent safety design and results of safety demonstration test has been **approved** by Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) .
- As a result, JAEA obtained **permission** by NRA toward the restart of the HTTR in conformity to the New Regulatory Requirements on **3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020**.
- HTTR is expected to be **restarted without any additional reinforcement** due to its own high-level inherent safety features.
- Following the restart of HTTR, number of activities are planned:
  - ✓ **Safety demonstration test in OECD/NEA LOFC project.**
  - ✓ Technology demonstration test of heat utilization system.
  - ✓ International cooperation and human-resource development utilizing the HTTR.



Application documents

# “Pitch your Gen IV Research” Competition

*View and Vote for your Favorites*

- Watch outstanding videos on nuclear reactors by junior researchers from around the world (4 minutes each)
- “LIKE” your favorites
- Vote through April 30, 2021

Watch on YouTube



[tinyurl.com/wwauk74](https://tinyurl.com/wwauk74)

Watch on Bilibili



[tinyurl.com/hdrrvfek](https://tinyurl.com/hdrrvfek)



# Special Webinar Event

## 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration with the participation of current and former GIF Chairs



Wednesday, April 28, 2021 8:30 am EDT (UTC-4)

Register at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4928218237397954063>

*“Progress and  
Future Prospects  
toward Deploying  
GEN IV Reactors as  
Advanced Nuclear  
Energy Systems”*

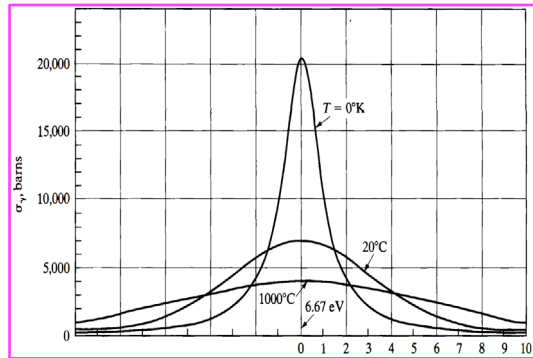
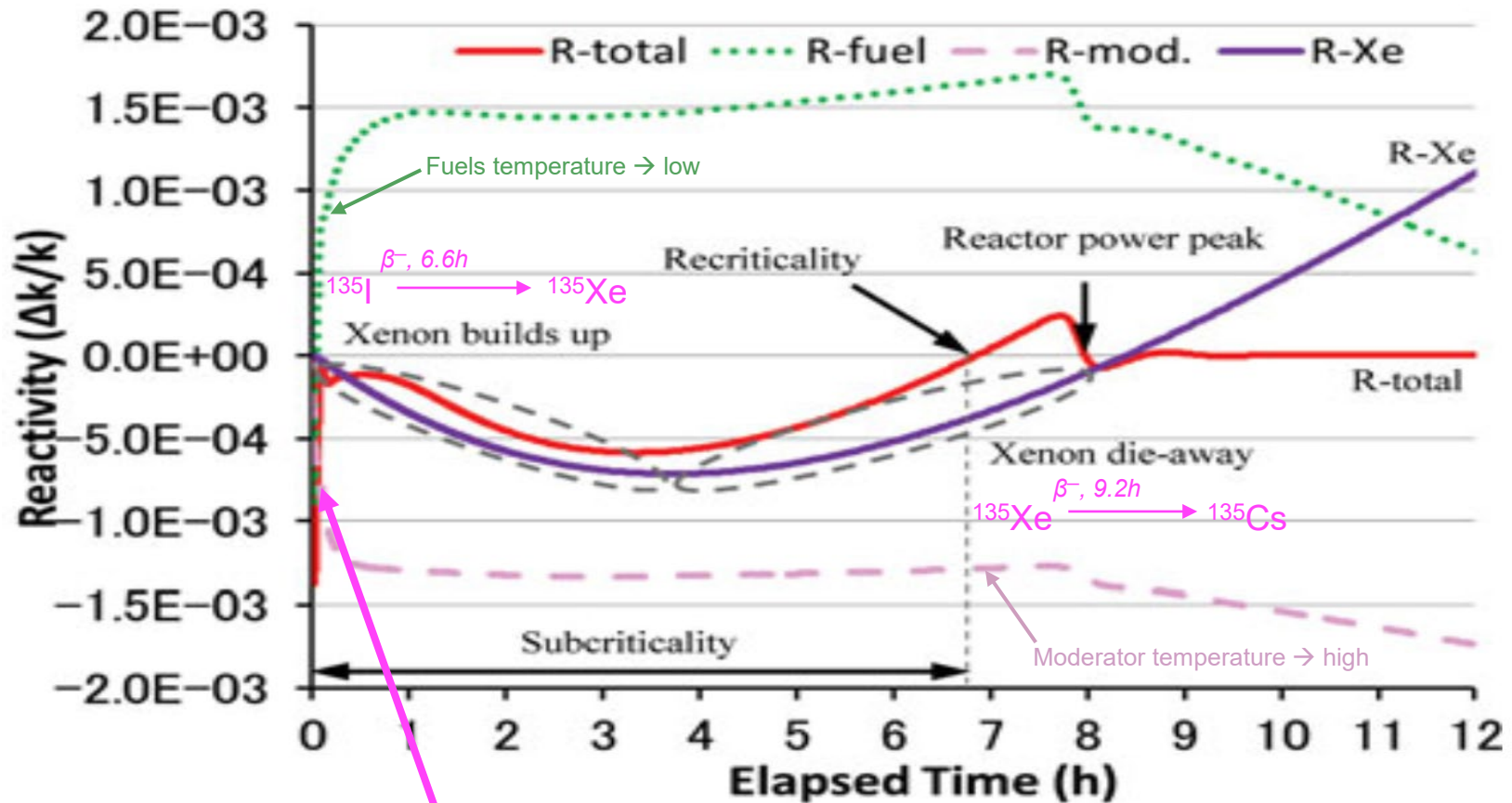
**GIF Webinar Series**  
2016–2021 EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING  
WORKING GROUP

# Upcoming Webinars

Date	Title	Presenter
28 April 2021	Progress and Future Prospects toward Deploying GEN IV Reactors as Advanced Nuclear Energy Systems	Panel Discussion by Current and Former GIF Chairs
25 May 2021	Advanced Manufacturing for Gen IV Reactors	Dr. Isabella van Rooyen, INL, USA
24 June 2021	In Service Inspection and Repair Developments for SFRs and Extension to Other Gen4 Systems	Mr. François Baque, CEA, France
27 July 2021	Evaluating Changing Paradigms Across the Nuclear Industry	Ms. Jessica Lovering, Carnegie Mellon University, USA

# Appendix

# Calculation results of LOFC test (1)

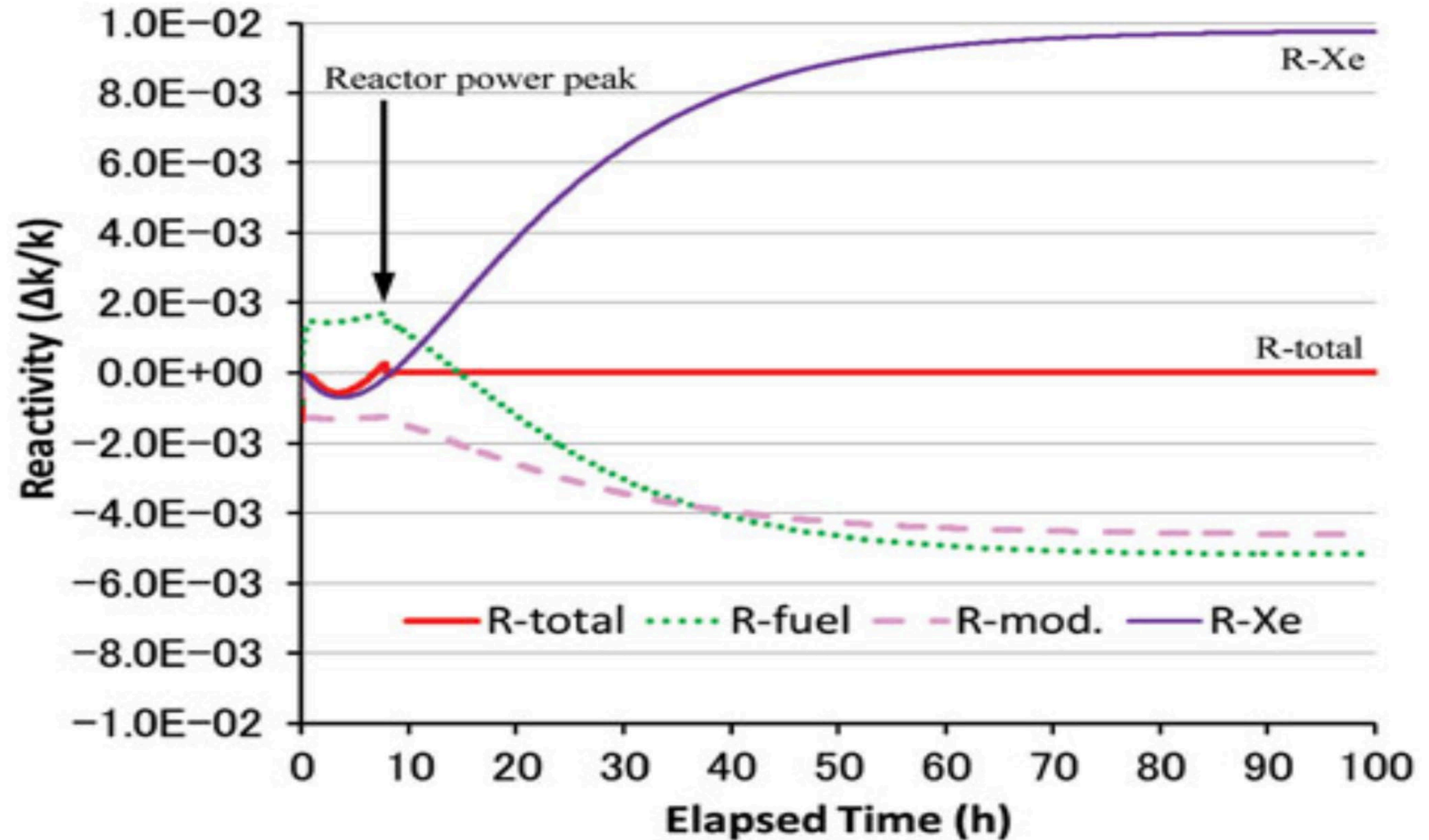


Capture cross-section of  $^{238}\text{U}$

Fuels temperature → high  
 Negative reactivity of the fuel caused by doppler broadening effect



# Calculation results of LOFC test (2)



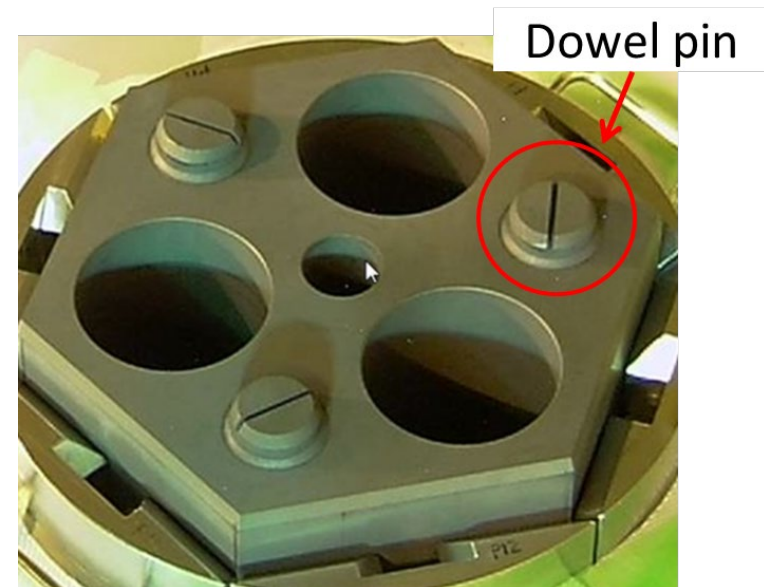
# Seismic measurement at 2011 earthquake

Location	Floor	Max of acceleration (m/s <sup>2</sup> )		
		North-South	West-East	Up-Down
Reactor building	2F	5.19	3.24	2.30
	1F	3.27	2.94	2.87
	B1F	2.58	2.21	1.84
	B3F	1.98	2.22	1.92
Inner concrete (CV)	B1F	3.60	2.71	2.58
	B3F	1.96	1.99	2.13

Red symbol: exceed design value

@ new regulation → 9.73 m/s<sup>2</sup>

Integrity of the blocks were visually confirmed



Control rod guide block