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Both agreements were signed in Buenos Aires on 29 January by utility Nucleoeléctrica Argentina SA and China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) in the presence of Argentine federal planning minister Julio de Vido, Chinese ambassador Yin Hengmin and CNNC president Mao Xiaoming.

Under the first agreement, NASA and CNNC will cooperate on issues related to reactor pressure tubes, including engineering, fabrication, operation and maintenance. It will also cover the manufacture and storage of nuclear fuel, licensing, life extension and technological advances. This agreement is aimed at both operating and future nuclear power plant projects.

The second agreement calls for the transfer of Chinese technology to Argentina. Under the accord, Argentina could act as a technology platform, supplying third countries with nuclear technology incorporating Chinese goods and services.

In addition, the CNNC delegation presented technical and financial aspects of its CAP-1000 reactor, which is one of several designs being considered for Argentina's fourth nuclear power reactor.

The signing of the two agreements follows a July 2012 nuclear cooperation accord between

Argentina and China involving studies for a fourth nuclear power plant, financed by China, and in transfer of fuel fabrication and other technology.

### **Nuclear growth**

Argentina has two operating power reactors, one at Atucha and the other at Embalse. A second unit at Atucha is nearing completion. Work began on this in 1981 but was suspended due to lack of funds in the 1990s before resuming in 2006. All three units are pressurized heavy-water reactors (PHWRs). Embalse is a 600 MWe Candu-6, while the Atucha units are a Siemens design unique to Argentina.

Government plans call for the construction of a fourth unit and a feasibility study has already been conducted. In July 2007, Nucleoeléctrica signed an agreement with Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd (AECL) to establish contract and project terms for construction of a 740 MWe gross Enhanced Candu 6 reactor, as well as completing Atucha 2. A further 740 MWe Enhanced Candu 6 unit was proposed. However, the government has also been talking with reactor vendors from France, Russia, Japan, South Korea, China and the USA, suggesting that the choice of reactor design may not be certain. A final decision on Atucha 3 is pending completion of Atucha 2.

In September 2007, AECL signed a memorandum of understanding with Nucleoeléctrica and CNNC to conduct a joint study for cooperation in the design, manufacture, construction and operation of Candu nuclear power reactors on future projects in Argentina, Canada and China. In addition, CNNC and Nucleoeléctrica agreed to strengthen cooperation in sharing and exchanging their Candu 6 reactor operational and maintenance experience.

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