



Department for  
Energy Security  
& Net Zero



## **UK-France Women in Nuclear: Mentoring Programme**

### **What is it?**

The UK-France Women in Nuclear partnership is a mentoring programme which brings together early- to mid-career women in the British and French nuclear sectors. This will be the fourth year of the programme. The initiative pairs laureates with a senior mentor, who can be either male or female, from the other country. We aim to organise two site visits throughout the programme, one taking place in the UK and one in France, along with other events to help laureates grow their international network. We expect the UK site visit to take place at some point in early summer, and the France site visit towards the end of 2024, with dates and locations to be confirmed later. Previous site visits included a visit to Hinkley Point C and the GANIL facility in Caen.

### **Who should apply?**

We are looking for women with 3–8 years of experience in the nuclear sector (this can include time spent studying). We encourage a range of applicants, from apprentices to project managers to engineers – what we're most interested in is your passion for the nuclear sector, an interest in France/the UK and an idea of what you'd like to get out of a mentoring relationship with a senior person in the opposite country's nuclear sector. We would be looking to have 32 laureates this year (16 from France and 16 from the UK).

This is an excellent opportunity for women in the nuclear sector who are looking to expand their international network and to learn from some of the most senior men and women in the British and French nuclear industries.

### **Application process and timelines**

Applications will open in 2024 on January 19. This will be an online form which will ask you about your experience, what you think you can gain from the programme and your interest in France/the UK. We will also request a copy of your CV. Applications will close on March 1st so that we can begin the sifting process. We will confirm successful applications by mid-March. We will host a virtual opening event to formally start the programme in late March-early April.

### **Are there any costs associated with the programme?**

The programme and its events are free; however, employers will be expected to cover the laureates' and mentors' travel and accommodation costs for the site visits and networking events.

### **Experience of a previous laureate:**

*The UK-France Women in Nuclear mentoring scheme has thoroughly exceeded my expectations. The programme has provided numerous opportunities to network with influential nuclear professionals from both France and the UK, which is invaluable considering our historic partnership. The visits and tours of nuclear sites in both nations provided significant insight into operational practices as well as future strategy from different perspectives. Most importantly, the programme has helped me to establish a once-in-a-lifetime mentoring relationship with my mentor Julia, who has been an endless source of support, advice and encouragement. Through Julia and the*

*mentoring scheme, my professional and personal development has been accelerated beyond what I thought was possible. I have to thank the team for making this programme so successful, and I would highly recommend it to anyone else who is considering applying in the future.*

**Nicole, 2022-23 Programme Laureate**

*It was a privilege for me, both personally and professionally, to be selected as a laureate on the 2023 UK-France WiN mentorship scheme. There have been many unsettling events and disruptions in 2023 that would have had more significant impact on the programme, but the team behind the scenes persisted and maintained their dedication to ensure participants were able to get the most out of it. I did not know what to expect initially, however it has proven to be such an enriching journey throughout. I met many aspiring individuals, especially my mentor, who offered countless advice, support and guidance that helped me in shaping my personal and professional development at a key stage in my career. I never dreamt that I could be part of such an amazing community, and I will not hesitate to recommend it to anyone else who is considering applying.*

**Zoe, 2023-2024 Programme Laureate**

**Award:**

For its 30th anniversary, WiN France decided to create a special prize to reward programs which promote diversity with an international dimension. We are pleased to say that the 2023 iteration of the program had the honor of being presented this prize by Ms. Agnès Pannier-Runacher, former French Minister of Energy Transition, during the World Nuclear Exhibition on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.



## **Mentoring – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the difference between mentoring, coaching and counselling?**

Mentoring assumes that the person who is your mentor has already achieved or has some prior knowledge of what you are setting out to achieve. In such a role, mentors are more experienced in the area the mentees want support with and they can share opinions, information and advice because of their experience in that area.

In coaching, the coach is not typically experienced in the area the client wants to improve on. The coachee is viewed as the 'expert' in their life and the coach's role is to support what is working and make it even better. The coach's questions and feedback help to open up new perspectives and self-awareness that help stretch the coachee to reach that next level of performance.

Counselling typically hinges on making a diagnosis of what is wrong and prescribing a method or series of steps that have been proven to work for other patients. Counsellors tend to focus on the past, trying to help the client uncover the root cause of why something is happening or why someone is feeling a certain way.

### **What is the time commitment?**

Each mentoring session could be anywhere between 30 minutes and 2 hours; the length of the session and the frequency of meeting should be discussed at the first session and will be dependent on the laureate's objectives and the availability of the mentor and laureate. The length of the mentoring relationship depends on the mentor and laureate and what they want to achieve.

You will also be asked to participate in a review of the scheme.

### **What happens in a mentoring session?**

The mentor and laureate will agree beforehand what the objectives for mentoring are and how frequently they will meet.

They work together to make progress on the laureate mentoring goals. It is useful to see it as a semi-structured conversation that will involve listening, questions, advice and suggestions, brainstorming solutions, considering options and actions.

At the start of the mentoring relationship, you will need to think about what the gap is that you would like mentoring to fill, for example, understanding of how something works, how to do something, who to speak to, how to improve or achieve something.

It's useful to set some goals as you begin to work together. This will give focus and ensure that the mentoring is valuable. These goals will be reviewed regularly to ensure a continued focus to the meetings.

### **What can I get out of being mentored?**

There are lots of benefits to being mentored, they include:

- Receiving impartial advice and encouragement.
- Benefiting from a supportive development relationship.
- Assistance with problem solving.
- Improved self-confidence, knowledge and skills.

### **What can I get out of being a mentor?**

There are also lots of benefits to being a mentor, including:

- An opportunity to reflect on and develop your own practice.
- It uses your experience, making it available to a new person.
- It enables you to practice communication and interpersonal skills.
- It provides personal satisfaction through supporting the development of others.

**Experience of a current mentor:**

*"I am delighted to be part of the WIN UK-FR mentoring adventure. It resonates in me with all the values of sharing, solidarity and openness to others. As a pair, we agreed on a fixed monthly appointment that we strive to honour despite the schedules respecting constraints and a standard framework of topics for reflection: successes, difficulties, opportunities and also career projection longer term. Throughout our discussions, I was able to testify and give advice if I was faced with situations similar to my mentee's current affairs. We discussed who worked well or the pitfalls to avoid. And above all, I listened attentively and asked questions to help my mentee think better and gain perspective on her subject. I am enriched just as much as my mentee by these discussions and associated reflections. It's a win-win approach whose benefits are well worth the time investment!"*

**Almas AMARA, current mentor**

**What happens if I change my mind?**

If at any stage in the process you are no longer able to participate in the programme, then please let us know by emailing Benji Hopkin ([benji.hopkin@energysecurity.gov.uk](mailto:benji.hopkin@energysecurity.gov.uk)), Julian Lawford ([Julian.Lawford@energysecurity.gov.uk](mailto:Julian.Lawford@energysecurity.gov.uk)), Marion Couturier ([marion.couturier@developpement-durable.gouv.fr](mailto:marion.couturier@developpement-durable.gouv.fr)), or Nicolas Godard ([nicolas.godard@diplomatie.gouv.fr](mailto:nicolas.godard@diplomatie.gouv.fr)).

Once initial matches are made, you will be asked to confirm that you are happy to proceed, this is in case there is a potential conflict of interest between the matched pair.

**What would a mentor offer that a professional/technical mentor would not?**

This will be a mentoring scheme to support personal development rather than professional or technical development.

**Where should we meet?**

Currently, the meeting should be organised virtually, especially considering the cross-Channel nature of the scheme.

**Should anyone take notes?**

That is for each mentor and laureate pair to decide for themselves. There is no obligation to keep notes of the sessions, however it is good practice and supports reflection and learning.

**What about confidentiality?**

Mentoring is based on trust and openness, and what you discuss with your mentor is confidential unless there is a perceived risk to you or to others. If you choose to share information of your mentoring experience with us for review or promotional purposes, then we will make sure both mentor and laureate are happy before we use it.