

UKERC has been invited by the French National Research Agency to play a key role in an exciting new drive to establish a number of Institutes of Excellence in the low-carbon energy field.

UKERC Director John Loughhead will join the evaluation jury for the scheme, which is being Chaired by Didier Houssin, CEO of the International Energy Agency. The initiative, which launches in December has 1 billion Euros of funding over ten years, and will establish new centres in solar energy, marine energy, energy efficiency in transport equipment and infrastructures, energy efficiency in buildings and cities, and ground source energy. The institutes will be able to use 25% of the funding on direct expenses, while 75% will be invested, with a view to its yielding sufficient interest over the ten-year period to fund the institutes.

The jury of international experts will evaluate each proposal, using assessment criteria including scientific and technological quality, industrial relevance, economic impact, quality of governance, and the extent of financial commitment from the private sector. Their conclusions and recommendations will then be endorsed by a Steering Committee of French Ministries, before submission to the General Commission for Investment, a body authorised by the French Prime Minister, for a final funding decision.

The initiative is supported by the new 'Investments for the Future' funding programme initiated by the French government in order to build capacity for research and innovation in France.

John Loughhead, UKERC Director, comments: 'Energy research has become an international venture with increasing collaborations between countries and this is now being reflected in national evaluation processes. I am delighted to be able to contribute to this work and hope the new Institutes will facilitate further interactions between the UK and France'.