

## 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 third year that the programme has run. The initiative pairs our laureates with a senior mentor 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 form a network.

### **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 and an idea of what you'd like to get out of a mentoring relationship with a senior person in the French nuclear sector. We would be looking to have 20 laureates this year (10 from France and 10 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 women in the British and French nuclear industries.

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

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

If you have any questions about this programme, please do not hesitate to contact [luke.cuthbert@beis.gov.uk](mailto:luke.cuthbert@beis.gov.uk), [laura.kiston@developpement-durable.gouv.fr](mailto:laura.kiston@developpement-durable.gouv.fr) or [nicolas.godard@diplomatie.gouv.fr](mailto:nicolas.godard@diplomatie.gouv.fr).

### **Experience of previous laureates:**

*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.*

**Nicole**

*I joined the UK-France Women in Nuclear Mentoring last year (2022) as a laureate and was paired with Christian Jeanneau from Assystem. The programme was fantastic, from the virtual networking with the other laureates, working on presentations focused on "key challenges and opportunities over the next 30 years in decommissioning" and "will developing nations be able to afford Nuclear Energy", the in-person events in the UK and France, and the mentoring discussions I've had with Christian.*

*Through the programme I've met like-minded women (both mentors and laureates), who all have incredible stories and advice to share, and it's been a great opportunity to learn more about the nuclear industry in France. During our mentoring conversations, Christian has challenged my assumptions around my future career and offered support and guidance on a wide range of topics I'm facing in my current project management role; he's also taken the time to share useful articles and suggest new connections to support my professional network. I would thoroughly recommend the programme to anyone considering applying.*

### **Leanne**

*My experience of the UK-France Women in Nuclear programme has been a very rewarding one. The opportunity to meet with other laureates from both countries at similar stages in their career to me was hugely positive and has left me with a great network to take forward in future roles. It has also provided me with a great mentor, someone in a senior position in France which has meant I've been able to learn from them as well as sharing my own experiences of the UK's nuclear industry. We have been fortunate to undertake two visits as part of the scheme, one in the UK and one in France. Both were well organised, informative and enjoyable events. The combination of visits, networking and mentoring across two countries makes this a uniquely beneficial experience and one I would highly recommend.*

*Just to say thank you for all the effort and organisation that went into the scheme. I found it really enjoyable and beneficial and was able to use my experiences from it when I was applying for my new role as EA to the NDA CEO!*

### **Laura**

## **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

**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 Luke, Laura or Nicolas (emails above).

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.