

**Evaluating the safety and regulatory aspects of the
combined nuclear/chemical complex for Hydrogen
production**

By

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Title: Evaluation of the safety and regulatory aspects of the combined nuclear/chemical complex for hydrogen production

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Abstract:

Recently there has been an exceptional resurgence of interest in the nuclear power industry and the cogeneration of hydrogen from nuclear process heat and electricity, with climate change and energy security the main drivers for the implementation of these technologies. Nuclear-assisted hydrogen production technologies include electrochemical, thermochemical and hybrid-thermochemical options that respectively require electricity, high-temperature process heat and both electricity and high-temperature process heat from the nuclear reactor. Although the current commercial fleet of nuclear reactors are able to supply in the requirements of the electrochemical technologies, high-temperature nuclear reactors (HTR) are required for the thermochemical and hybrid-thermochemical options. The unique safety characteristics of Gen-IV HTGR technologies, such as the PBMR, favour their use in future energy-generation scenarios, especially with regard to process heat applications. Hydrogen production as process heat application is uniquely capable of alleviating concerns regarding energy security and sustainable development while supplying in the energy requirements of a growing population and economy. Hydrogen is relatively environmentally benign as fuel constituent or secondary energy carrier in the so-called hydrogen economy and is able to complement or even substitute fossil fuels in future energy markets, especially in the transport and industrial sectors. Regardless of the benefits of nuclear-assisted hydrogen production technologies, barriers ranging from technological and economical feasibility to safety and regulatory concerns exist that require to be addressed if these technologies are to be successful. In this regard, the purpose of the study is to investigate all safety and regulatory aspects associated with a combined nuclear/chemical complex such that they may be evaluated according to their attendant risk and probability to impede implementation of the technology. Of fundamental importance is the connection and co-location of the two critical facilities, especially considering the hazardous chemical inventories present at the chemical facility, the consequences of a nuclear accident and the use of the final product (hydrogen) by consumers.

Titel: Evaluering van die veiligheids- and regulatoriese aspekte verbonde aan 'n gekombineerde kern-chemiese kompleks wat verantwoordelik is vir die produksie van waterstof

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Uittreksel:

Onlangse hernieude belangstelling in kernenergie en die meegaande produksie van waterstof met behulp van die proseshitte en elektrisiteit gelewer deur die kernreaktor, is meerendeels weens bekommernisse rakende klimaatsveranderinge en energiesekuriteit. Kernbehulpde waterstofproduksietegnologieë sluit elektrochemiese, termochemiese en hibried-termochemiese opsies in wat onderskeidelik elektrisiteit, hoë-temperatuur proseshitte en beide elektrisiteit en hoë-temperatuur proseshitte van die kernreaktor verlang. Alhoewel die huidige kommersiële float kernreaktore aan die vereistes van die elektrochemiese opsies voldoen, word hoë-temperatuur kernreaktore benodig vir die termochemiese en hibried-termochemiese opsies. Die unieke veiligheidseienskappe van die Generasie IV hoë-temperatuur gasverkoelde kernreakortegnologieë, soos die PBMR, begunstig hul gebruik in toekomstige energie-opwekking scenarios veral ten opsigte van prosesहितtoepassings. Waterstofproduksie as prosesहितtoepassing is uniek om bekommernisse rakende energiesekuriteit en volhoubare ontwikkelinge te verminder terwyl dit kan voorsien in die energie behoeftes van 'n groeiende populasie en ekonomie. Waterstof is relatief omgewingsvriendelik as brandstofkomponent of as sekondêre energiedraer in die sogenaamde waterstofekonomie. Dit kan komplimentêr tot aardbrandstowwe gebruik word of selfs vervanging daarvan bewerkstellig in toekomstige energiemarkte, veral in die vervoer- en industriële sektore. Ongeag die voordele van kernbehulpde waterstofproduksietegnologieë, is daar verskeie struikelblokke wat uit die weg geruim moet word alvorens die tegnologieë suksesvol toegepas kan word. Dit sluit aspekte rakende tegnologiese- en ekonomiese haalbaarheid tot veiligheids- en regulatoriese kwessies in. Vervolgens is die doel van die studie om alle veiligheids- en regulatoriese aspekte wat verband hou met die gekombineerde kern/chemiese kompleks te bestudeer volgens hul bydraende veiligheidsrisiko en die moontlikheid om implimentering van die tegnologie te belemmer. Die koppeling en ko-plasing van die twee kritiese fasiliteite is van kardinale belang veral in ag genome die inventaris van gevaarlike stowwe by die chemiese aanleg, gevolge van 'n kernogeluk en die gebruik van die finale produk (waterstof) deur verbruikers.

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"It would be possible to describe everything scientifically, but it would make no sense; it would be without meaning, as if you described a Beethoven symphony as a variation of wave pressure."

– Albert Einstein –

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	ENERGY SECURITY	3
1.2	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	4
1.3	NUCLEAR ENERGY AS PRIMARY ENERGY SOURCE	6
1.4	HYDROGEN AS ENERGY CARRIER	10
1.5	THE HYDROGEN ECONOMY	12
1.5.1	CURRENT AND NEAR-TERM MARKETS	12
1.5.2	MID- AND LONG-TERM MARKETS	14
1.6	HYDROGEN PRODUCTION	17
1.6.1	FIGURE-OF-MERIT ASSESSMENT	18
1.7	THE SOUTH AFRICAN ENERGY SITUATION	22
1.7.1	THE SOUTH AFRICAN ENERGY POLICY	23
1.7.2	THE SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR ENERGY POLICY	24
1.7.3	THE SOUTH AFRICAN LIQUID-FUELS POLICY	26
1.8	IMPORTANCE OF SAFETY	26
1.9	IMPORTANCE OF REGULATIONS	27
1.10	PURPOSE OF STUDY	27
1.11	ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED	27
1.12	ASSUMPTIONS	28
1.13	OVERVIEW OF REPORT	29
2	NUCLEAR REACTOR- AND HYDROGEN PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES	31
2.1	INTRODUCTION	31
2.2	HTGRs	31
2.2.1	GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HTGRs	34
2.2.2	SAFETY CHARACTERISTICS OF HTGRs	34
2.2.3	PRINCIPLES OF INHERENTLY SAFE NUCLEAR REACTORS	36
2.2.3.1	NUCLEAR STABILITY	37
2.2.3.2	THERMAL STABILITY	39
2.2.3.3	CHEMICAL STABILITY	40
2.2.3.4	MECHANICAL STABILITY	41
2.2.4	LEADING CANDIDATE GEN-IV HTGRs	43
2.2.4.1	HTTR-30 (JAPAN)	44
2.2.4.2	PBMR (SOUTH AFRICA)	46
2.2.4.3	HTR-10 (CHINA)	47
2.2.4.4	GT-MHR (USA/GUS)	49
2.3	NUCLEAR-HYDROGEN PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES	51
2.3.1	ELECTROLYSIS PROCESSES	51
2.3.1.1	LOW-TEMPERATURE WATER ELECTROLYSIS (LTWE)	51
2.3.1.2	HIGH-TEMPERATURE STEAM ELECTROLYSIS (HTSE)	52
2.3.2	THERMOCHEMICAL CYCLES	53
2.3.2.1	NUCLEAR STEAM METHANE REFORMING	54
2.3.2.2	IODINE-SUPHUR CYCLE (I-S)	55
2.3.2.3	PARTIAL OXIDATION (POX) OF METHANE	57
2.3.3	HYBRID THERMOCHEMICAL CYCLES	58
2.3.3.1	HYBRID-SULPHUR CYCLE	59
2.3.3.2	PLASMA-ARC REFORMING OF METHANE WITH CO ₂	60
2.4	CONCLUDING REMARKS	61
3	HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES	62
3.1	INTRODUCTION	62
3.2	HYDROGEN (H ₂)	62
3.2.1	PHYSICAL PROPERTIES	62
3.2.2	CHEMICAL PROPERTIES	65
3.3	METHANE (CH ₄)	75

3.3.1	PHYSICAL PROPERTIES.....	75
3.3.2	CHEMICAL PROPERTIES.....	76
3.4	NATURAL GAS.....	79
3.5	CARBON MONOXIDE (CO).....	80
3.6	CARBON DIOXIDE (CO ₂).....	81
3.7	SULPHURIC ACID (H ₂ SO ₄).....	84
3.8	SULPHUR DIOXIDE (SO ₂).....	85
3.9	SULPHUR TRIOXIDE (SO ₃).....	85
3.10	IODINE (I ₂).....	86
3.11	HYDROGEN IODIDE (HI) AND HYDRIODIC ACID.....	87
3.12	OXYGEN (O ₂).....	88
3.13	HELIUM (He).....	89
3.14	CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	89
4	ACCIDENT PHENOMENA.....	90
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	90
4.2	EVOLUTION OF A FLAMMABLE GAS CLOUD.....	90
4.2.1	JET RELEASES.....	91
4.2.2	DIFFUSION.....	94
4.2.3	DISPERSION OF GAS CLOUDS.....	95
4.2.4	REAL GAS CLOUDS.....	98
4.3	IGNITION.....	101
4.4	COMBUSTION.....	102
4.4.1	LAMINAR PREMIXED FLAME.....	103
4.4.2	LAMINAR NON-PREMIXED FLAME.....	104
4.4.3	TURBULENT PREMIXED FLAME.....	105
4.4.4	TURBULENT NON-PREMIXED FLAME.....	106
4.4.5	GENERAL TYPES OF COMBUSTION.....	107
4.4.5.1	FLASH FIRES & FIREBALLS.....	107
4.4.5.2	UNCONFINED VAPOUR CLOUD EXPLOSION.....	108
4.4.5.3	DEFLAGRATION.....	108
4.4.5.4	DETONATION.....	109
4.4.5.5	DEFLAGRATION-TO-DETONATION TRANSITION.....	112
4.5	BLAST WAVES.....	115
4.6	HEAT RADIATION.....	118
4.7	HYDROGEN EMBRITTLEMENT.....	119
4.7.1	PHENOMENA.....	121
4.7.2	CATEGORIES.....	122
4.7.3	MECHANISMS.....	123
4.8	CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	124
5	THE COMBINED NUCLEAR/CHEMICAL COMPLEX.....	125
5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	125
5.2	OVERVIEW OF NUCLEAR-HYDROGEN R&D PROJECTS.....	126
5.2.1	SOUTH AFRICA.....	127
5.2.2	FRANCE.....	128
5.2.3	JAPAN.....	129
5.2.4	KOREA.....	130
5.2.5	USA.....	131
5.2.6	DISCUSSION.....	132
5.3	COMPATIBILITY OF THE PLANTS.....	132
5.3.1	POWER, HEAT AND TEMPERATURE.....	133
5.3.2	PRESSURE.....	134
5.3.3	ISOLATION.....	134
5.3.4	TRITIUM CONTAMINATION.....	135
5.3.5	DISCUSSION.....	135
5.4	INTERFACIAL EQUIPMENT.....	136

5.4.1	<i>THE INTERMEDIATE HEAT EXCHANGER</i>	136
5.4.1.1	GERMANY	137
5.4.1.2	JAPAN	139
5.4.1.3	USA (H ₂ -MHR)	140
5.4.1.4	FRANCE	141
5.4.2	<i>NUCLEAR STEAM REFORMER</i>	142
5.4.3	<i>HOT GAS DUCT</i>	143
5.4.4	<i>HIGH-TEMPERATURE ISOLATION VALVE</i>	144
5.4.5	<i>DISCUSSION</i>	145
5.5	SAFETY ASPECTS OF THE COMBINED COMPLEX	146
5.5.1	<i>HAZARD IDENTIFICATION</i>	146
5.5.2	<i>TRITIUM AND HYDROGEN TRANSPORT</i>	150
5.5.3	<i>THERMAL TURBULENCES</i>	153
5.5.4	<i>RELEASE OF FLAMMABLE SUBSTANCES INTO THE NUCLEAR REACTOR BUILDING</i>	154
5.5.5	<i>PHYSICAL SEPARATION REQUIREMENTS</i>	155
5.5.5.1	PSA REGARDING SEPARATION DISTANCES	160
5.5.6	<i>PSA STUDY ON THE HTTR/SMR COMPLEX</i>	167
5.5.7	<i>PLANT PHENOMENA IDENTIFICATION & RANKING TABLES</i>	168
5.5.7.1	CHEMICAL RELEASES	171
5.5.7.2	PROCESS THERMAL EVENTS	175
5.5.7.3	HEAT TRANSFER SYSTEM FAILURE	177
5.5.7.4	VHTR UPSETS	181
5.5.7.5	CONCLUSIONS	183
5.5.8	<i>MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS</i>	184
5.6	REMARKS REGARDING THE LAYOUT OF THE COMBINED COMPLEX	185
5.7	CONCLUDING REMARKS	188
6	REGULATORY ASPECTS	189
6.1	INTRODUCTION	189
6.2	NATIONAL REGULATIONS	191
6.2.1	<i>HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES ACT</i>	191
6.2.2	<i>NUCLEAR ENERGY ACT</i>	195
6.2.3	<i>NATIONAL NUCLEAR REGULATOR ACT</i>	201
6.2.4	<i>NNR REQUIREMENT- AND LICENSING DOCUMENTS</i>	209
6.2.5	<i>SECONDARY ACTS AND REGULATIONS</i>	210
6.3	INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS	211
6.4	CONCLUDING REMARKS	211
7	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	213
7.1	INTRODUCTION	213
7.2	SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION	213
7.3	CONCLUSIONS	222
7.4	RECOMMENDATIONS	225
	REFERENCES	226
	APPENDIX A: NFPA 704	232
	APPENDIX B: NATIONAL RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND CLASSIFICATION SCHEME	233

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1: HDI per capita electricity consumption (UNDP, 2005 as given in IAEA, 2006)	1
Figure 1-2: 1973 and 2005 Fuel Shares of Total Final Consumption (IAE, 2007)	2
Figure 1-3: 1973 and 2005 Fuel Shares of Electricity Generation (IAE, 2007)	2
Figure 1-4: Probabilistic global population projections to 2100 (IAEA, 2006)	5
Figure 1-5: Projected global primary energy use through 2100 (IAEA, 2006)	6
Figure 1-6: Nuclear electricity generation and capacity additions since 1966 (IAEA, 2006)	7
Figure 1-7: Ranges of levelized costs for electricity generating technologies (IAEA, 2006)	8
Figure 1-8: CO ₂ emission rates for electricity generating alternatives (IAEA, 2006)	9
Figure 1-9: Summary of external costs of each energy option (IAEA, 2006)	10
Figure 1-10: Current energy scenario (Marban & Valdez-Solis, 2007)	11
Figure 1-11: Peak-electricity nuclear system (Forsberg, 2005)	16
Figure 1-12: World hydrogen production routes in 2005 (Ewan & Allen, 2005)	17
Figure 1-13: The primary energy sources considered and their routes to hydrogen	18
Figure 1-14: Figure-of-merit 1 (Ewan & Allen, 2005)	19
Figure 1-15: Figure-of-merit 3 (Ewan & Allen, 2005)	19
Figure 1-16: Figure-of-merit 4 (Ewan & Allen, 2005)	20
Figure 1-17: Overall figure-of-merit (Ewan & Allen, 2005)	20
Figure 1-18: South African primary energy supply in 2002 (Digest of South African	22
Figure 2-1: TRISO-coated fuel particle (PBMR, 2008)	33
Figure 2-2: Barriers to the release of fission products in HTGR (Kugeler, 2005)	36
Figure 2-3: Principles of inherently safe nuclear reactors (Kugeler, 2005)	37
Figure 2-4: Negative temperature coefficient of reactivity (Kugeler, 2005)	38
Figure 2-5: Nuclear Doppler Effect (Lamarsh & Baratta, 2001)	39
Figure 2-6: Self-acting decay heat removal in HTGR (Kugeler, 2005)	40
Figure 2-7: Concept of limiting the ingress of foreign media into the primary circuit of	41
Figure 2-8: External events considered for licensing of HTGR (Kugeler, 2005)	42
Figure 2-9: HTTR-30 core (Kugeler, 2005)	44
Figure 2-10: HTTR-30 fuel elements (Kugeler, 2005)	45
Figure 2-11: Arrangement of primary system of the PBMR (PBMR, 2008)	46
Figure 2-12: Vertical schematic section through PBMR (Van Antwerpen, 2007)	47
Figure 2-13: Flow sheet of the HTR-10 coupled with a steam generator (Kugeler, 2005)	48
Figure 2-14: Vertical section of the HTR-10 with steam generator (Kugeler, 2005)	48
Figure 2-15: GT-MHR reactor building (Hayner <i>et al.</i> , 2006)	49
Figure 2-16: GT-MHR reactor system cutaway (Hayner <i>et al.</i> , 2006)	50
Figure 2-17: Schematic representation of an electrolytic cell (Verfondern, 2007)	52
Figure 2-18: HTSE coupled with a HTGR (Verfondern, 2007)	53
Figure 2-19: Flowsheet of nuclear SMR (Kugeler, 2005)	55
Figure 2-20: Iodine-Sulphur Cycle combined with the HTTR (Verfondern, 2007)	57
Figure 2-21: Proposed POX system combined with a HTGR and HyS process	58
Figure 2-22: HyS cycle or Westinghouse Sulphur process	60
Figure 2-23: Hybrid plasma-arc reforming of methane with CO ₂ (Basson, 2008)	61
Figure 3-1: Flammability region of hydrogen-air-oxygen mixtures at NTP (NASA, 2005)	65
Figure 3-2: Effects of N ₂ , He, CO ₂ , and H ₂ O Diluents on flammability limits of hydrogen	66
Figure 3-3: Effects of halocarbon inhibitors on flammability limits of hydrogen-oxygen	67
Figure 3-4: Variation in distance from a hydrogen fire for a thermal radiation exposure	69
Figure 3-5: Minimum dimensions of gaseous hydrogen-air mixtures for detonation at	70
Figure 3-6: Detonation cell size of hydrogen, methane, ethylene and acetylene in air at	71
Figure 3-7: Minimum initiation energies for direct detonation of hydrogen-air mixtures	72
Figure 3-8: Pressure signals from different hydrogen combustion modes (Lelyakin,	73
Figure 3-9: Flammability diagram for methane-oxygen-nitrogen mixtures at	77
Figure 4-1: Distance vs. aperture diameter for various concentrations (Houf & Shefer,	94
Figure 4-2: Comparison of the mass flow rate following a sonic release of hydrogen	96
Figure 4-3: Hydrogen concentrations at 3 and 5 seconds after leak according to	97
Figure 4-4: Hydrogen concentration distribution in 5 seconds after release with a wind	98

Figure 4-5: Deflagration pressure profile in a hemispherical and in a flat gas cloud	99
Figure 4-6: Detonation pressure profile in a hemispherical and in a flat gas cloud.....	100
Figure 4-7: Essential features of a laminar flame (Friedman & Burke as illustrated in	103
Figure 4-8: Laminar premixed flames with a flat flame and Bunsen flame illustrated on	103
Figure 4-9: Schematic illustration of counter-flow and co-flow laminar diffusion flames	104
Figure 4-10: Laminar jet diffusion flames (Smooke et al, 1989 as illustrated in Warnatz	104
Figure 4-11: Schematic illustration of a “V-shaped” turbulent premixed flame stabilized	105
Figure 4-12: Borghi diagram (Borghi, 1984 as illustrated in Warnatz <i>et al.</i> , 2006).....	106
Figure 4-13: Schematic illustration of a turbulent diffusion jet flame	106
Figure 4-14: Turbulent non-premixed methane-air jet flame (Nau <i>et al.</i> , 1996 as.....	107
Figure 4-15: Overpressure and flow velocity distribution for a spherical deflagration	109
Figure 4-16: Rankine-Hugenoit curve (Warnatz <i>et al.</i> , 2006)	110
Figure 4-17: Obstacle experiment with 30% hydrogen mixture (Groethe <i>et al.</i> , 2007).....	111
Figure 4-18: High-speed video frames from the detonation test (Groethe <i>et al.</i> , 2007).....	111
Figure 4-19: Critical initiation energy for selected fuel-air mixtures (Verfondern &	112
Figure 4-20: Schlieren pictures of a) a laminar deflagration, b) a turbulent deflagration,.....	114
Figure 4-21: Velocity-distance diagram of FZK tube experiments with various H ₂ /air	115
Figure 4-22: Characteristic shape of pressure-time function for a detonation shock	116
Figure 4-23: TNO for blast overpressure according to the Multi-Energy method.....	117
Figure 4-24: Ductile and brittle behaviour of metals (Verfondern, 1999 as illustrated in	120
Figure 5-1: Concepts of PBMR process heat plants (Greyvenstein <i>et al.</i> , 2008).....	127
Figure 5-2: Principle of the AREVA-NP combined cycle cogeneration HTGR (Copsey,	128
Figure 5-3: Potential arrangement of a dedicated 600 MW _t VHTR for H ₂ production at a	128
Figure 5-4: HTTR/SMR plant (Verfondern, 2007).....	129
Figure 5-5: GTHTTR300C plant (Yang, 2005 as illustrated in Verfondern, 2007).....	129
Figure 5-6: Korean NHDD plant (Lee, 2005 as illustrated in Verfondern, 2007).....	130
Figure 5-7: Korea design (Shin, 2005 as illustrated in Verfondern, 2007).....	130
Figure 5-8: Concept of the US H ₂ -MHR combined with the I-S cycle (Verfondern, 2007)	131
Figure 5-9: H ₂ -MHR combined with both I-S cycle and HTE (Verfondern, 2007)	131
Figure 5-10: Temperature of delivered heat for some reactors (Forsberg <i>et al.</i> , 2004)	133
Figure 5-11: Primary circuit of a modular HTGR with IHX a) Principle flow diagram, b) T-	136
Figure 5-12: Arrangement of (a) a reactor based on the HTR-Modul-type and (b) Helical-.....	138
Figure 5-13: Two IHX components tested in KVK: (left) Helical tube bundle and (right)	138
Figure 5-14: Schematic and photograph of the He-He IHX in.....	139
Figure 5-15: Printed Circuit Heat Exchanger, PCHE (HEATRIC as illustrated in.....	140
Figure 5-16: Two variants of plate fin IHX Brayton Energy design (left) and Nordon	141
Figure 5-17: IHX vessel with integrated plate IHX modules (Breuil, 2006 as illustrated in.....	141
Figure 5-18: Technical concept of a helium-heated steam reformer for the HTTR/SMR	142
Figure 5-19: New concept helium-heated steam reformer for the HTTR/SMR (Verfondern	142
Figure 5-20: Hot gas duct of a 200 MW _t modular HTR (Kugeler, 2005)	143
Figure 5-21: Details of insulation systems for hot gas ducts: a) hot gas duct of EVO-.....	144
Figure 5-22: High Temperature Isolation Valve (Verfondern & Nishihara, 2004a).....	144
Figure 5-23: Tritium (“HT”) and hydrogen balance in HTGR H ₂ production system	151
Figure 5-24: Ingress of flammable gases into the reactor containment	154
Figure 5-25: Quantity Distance relationships according to US and German regulations	156
Figure 5-26: Decision criteria for risk-informed applications at the NRC (from RG 1.174.....	159
Figure 5-27: Master logic diagram for potential disruption scenarios (Smith <i>et al.</i> , 2005).....	160
Figure 5-28: Core damage risk as a function of increasing the separation distance.....	164
Figure 5-29: Material diagram (FZ) as illustrated in Verfondern, 2007).....	184
Figure 5-30: Comparison of present and previous work of hydrogen permeation in.....	185

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1: Conversion factors for energy (IEA, 2007)	3
Table 2-1 Experimental gas-cooled reactors (Kugeler, 2005).....	32
Table 2-2: Mechanical characteristics of HTGR fuel pebbles (Kugeler, 2005)	42
Table 2-3: Leading candidate HTGR technologies (Kugeler, 2005)	43
Table 3-1: Physical and chemical parameters of hydrogen (BRHS, 2007)	74
Table 3-2: Safety related chemical and physical properties of CH ₄ , H ₂ and CO.....	76
Table 3-3: Composition of natural gas (NaturalGas, 2007)	79
Table 3-4: Characteristic properties of CO ₂ , CO, HI, CH ₄ , SO ₂ , SO ₃ and H ₂ SO ₄	82
Table 3-5: Characteristic properties of H ₂ , I ₂ , O ₂ and He.....	83
Table 4-1: Hydrogen cloud extents according to numerical solutions of the Ideal gas.....	96
Table 4-2: Asphyxiation hazards of hydrogen (NASA, 2005)	101
Table 4-3: Potential Ignition Sources (Ordin, 1983 as given in NASA, 2005)	102
Table 4-4: Physiological hazard of overpressures (NASA, 2005)	117
Table 4-5: Damage classification (Verfondern & Nishihara, 2005)	118
Table 4-6: Control building specifications regarding overpressure (TNO, 1992 as given.....	118
Table 4-7: Critical heat radiation for humans and goods (Böke, 1995 as given in.....	119
Table 4-8: Typical characteristics of hydrogen embrittlement types (NASA, 2005)	123
Table 5-1: H ₃ production and release for the 170 MW _t HTR-Modul (Verfondern, 2007).....	151
Table 5-2: Tritium permeation for steady-state operation of the HTTR (Verfondern &	152
Table 5-3: Separation distances according to various regulations	157
Table 5-4: Sensitivity Analyses related to separation distances (Smith <i>et al.</i> , 2005).....	162
Table 5-5: Summary of results from the sensitivity cases (Smith <i>et al.</i> , 2005).....	166
Table 5-6: PSA results conducted on the HTTR/SMR complex (Nelson <i>et al.</i> , 2007)	167
Table 5-7: Pre-conceptual design parameters for the NGNP (Forsberg <i>et al.</i> , 2007)	169
Table 5-8: Nuclear hydrogen production options (Forsberg <i>et al.</i> , 2007)	169
Table 5-9: Ranking criteria of importance of any phenomena (Forsberg <i>et al.</i> , 2007)	170
Table 5-10: Rating criteria of knowledge base (Forsberg <i>et al.</i> , 2007).....	170
Table 5-11: Summary of PHHP PIRT evaluation (Forsberg <i>et al.</i> , 2007).....	172
Table 5-12: Heat capacities of candidate molten salts (Williams, 2006).....	175
Table 5-13: Summary of the properties of candidate molten salts (Williams, 2006)	176
Table 6-1: Definitions pertaining to the Hazardous Substances Act (Act no. 15 of 1973).....	192
Table 6-2: Dose Limits (GG, 1993)	195
Table 6-3: Definitions pertaining to the Nuclear Energy Act (Act no. 46 of 1999).....	196
Table 6-4: Definitions pertaining to the National Nuclear Regulator Act (47/1999)	201
Table 6-5: Exempt radioactivity concentrations and exempt total radioactivity content.....	207
Table 6-6: Probabilistic risk limits (R. 388)	207

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

Abbreviation or Acronym	Description
AHTR	Advanced High-Temperature Reactor (US)
ACGIH	American Conference of Government Industrial Hygienists
ACS	Auxiliary Cooling System (HTTR-30)
AVR	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Versuchs-Reaktor (Germany)
BISO	Double (Binary) coated fuel particles
BLEVE	Boiling Liquid Evaporating Vapour Explosion
BMI	Bundesministerium des Innern (German Regulation)
BP	Boiling Point
BRHS	Biennial Report on Hydrogen Safety
BWR	Boiling-Water Reactor
CCS	Carbon Capture and Storage
CDF	Core Damage Frequency
CJ	Chapman-Jouguet
CNS	Central Nervous System
CTL	Coal-to-Liquid
DDT	Deflagration-to-Detonation Transition
DME	Department of Minerals and Energy (South Africa)
DOE	Department of Energy (US)
DOH	Department of Health (South Africa)
DRI	Direct Reduced Iron
EAF	Electric-Arc Furnace
EOS	Equation of State
EU	European Union
FCV	Fuel-cell Vehicles
FOM	Figure-of-Merit
FP	Fission Products
FZK	Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe – Research Centre Karlsruhe
GA	General Atomics
GAO	Government Accountability Office (US)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Gen-IV	Generation IV Nuclear Reactors
GG	Government Gazette (South Africa)
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GT-MHR	Gas-Turbine Modular Helium Reactor
H2-MHR	Modular Helium Reactor with Hydrogen cogeneration (US)
HAZOP	Hazard and Operability Study
HDI	Human Development Index
HT	High-Temperature
HTE	High-Temperature Electrolysis
HTGR	High-Temperature Gas-cooled Reactor
HTR	High-Temperature Reactor
HTR-Modul	Modular High Temperature Reactor (Germany)
HTSE	High-Temperature Steam Electrolysis
HTTR	High-Temperature Engineering Test Reactor (Japan)
HyS (also known as WSP)	Hybrid-Sulphur cycle
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Association
ICE	Internal Combustion Engine
IEA	International Energy Association
IHX	Intermediate Heat Exchanger
INSC	International Nuclear Societies Council
I-S (or I-S)	Iodine-Sulphur cycle

JAEA	Japan Atomic Energy Agency
JAERI now JAEA	Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute
KLAK	Kleine Absorberkugeln
KVK	Komponenten-Versuchskreislauf (Components Test Circuit)
LFL	Lower Flammability Limit
LOCA	Loss of Coolant Accident
LTWE	Low-Temperature Water Electrolysis
LWR	Light-Water Reactor
MCS	Main Cooling System (HTTR-30)
MEDUL	Mehrfach & Durchlauf (Multi pass through put)
MESG	Maximum Experimental Safe Gap
MHR	Modular Helium Reactor
MMI	Methane-Methanol-Iodomethane thermochemical cycle
MP	Melting Point
Mtoe	Mega tonne oil equivalent
NASA	National Aeronautic and Space Administration (US)
Necsa	South African Nuclear Energy Corporation
NFPA	National Fire Protection Agency (US)
NGNP	Next-Generation Nuclear Plant (US)
NHI	Nuclear-Hydrogen Initiative
NHDD	Nuclear Hydrogen Development and Demonstration project (Korea)
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (US)
NNR	National Nuclear Regulator (South Africa)
NPP	Nuclear Power Plant
NRC	Nuclear Regulatory Committee (US)
NTP	Normal Temperature and Pressure
ORNL	Oak Ridge National Laboratories (US)
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration (US)
OTTO	Once-Through-Then-Out
PBMR	Pebble-Bed Modular Reactor (SA)
PCHE	Printed Circuit Heat Exchanger
PCU	Power Conversion Unit
PEM	Proton Exchange Membrane
PENS	Peak Electricity Nuclear System
PFHE	Plate Fin Heat Exchanger (France)
PHHP	Process Heat and Hydrogen Production
PHHP	Process Heat Hydrogen Production
PHPS	Primary Helium Purification System (HTTR)
PHX	Process Heat Exchanger
PIRT	Phenomena Identification and Ranking Table
PNP	Prototype Plant Nuclear Process Heat Project (Germany)
POX	Partial Oxidation of Methane
ppm	Parts per million
PRD	Pressure Relief Device
PSA	Probabilistic Safety Assessment
PWC	Pressurized Water Cooler (HTTR-30)
PWR	Pressurized-Water Reactor
PyC	Pyrolytic Carbon
QD	Quantity-Distance
R	Regulation (South Africa by notice in Gazette)
R&D	Research and Development
RBMK	Reaktor Bolchoi Mochtchnosti Kanalni (Russia)
RG	Regulatory Guide (US regulation)

RPV	Reactor Pressure Vessel
SAS	Small Absorber Spheres
SCRAM	Safety Control Rod Axe Man
SG	Steam Generator (HTTR)
SH	Super Heater (HTTR)
SHPS	Secondary Helium Purification System (HTTR)
S-I (or I-S)	Sulphur-Iodine cycle
SiC	Silicon Carbide
SMR	Steam Methane Reforming
SNL	Sandia National Laboratories (US)
SR	Steam Reformer (HTTR)
SRNL	Savannah River National Laboratories (US)
SSC	Systems, Structures and Components
STP	Standard Temperature and Pressure
Tetryl	N,2,4,6-Tetranitro-N-methylaniline
THTR	Thorium High Temperature Reactor (Germany)
TMI	Three Mile Island (US)
TNO	Organization for Applied Scientific Research and Development (Netherlands)
TNT	Trinitrotoluene
TRISO	Triple coated fuel particles
UFL	Upper Flammability Limit
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UVCE	Unconfined Vapour Cloud Explosion
VCS	Vessel Cooling System (HTTR-30)
VHTR	Very High-Temperature Reactor
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WGS	Water-gas-shift (reactor)
WSP (also known as HyS)	Westinghouse-Sulphur Process

TABLE OF NOMENCLATURE

Symbol	Description	Dimensions
A	Cross sectional area	m^2
c	Sonic velocity of gas	m/s
C	Molar concentration	mol/cm^3
C_p	Specific Heat Capacity (at constant pressure)	$J/g.K$ or $cal/g.K$
C_v	Fuel caloric value	kg/kJ
D	Distance from flame	m
d	Discharge diameter	mm
D_{if}	Diffusion coefficient	cm^2/s
E	Energy	W
F	Fraction of combustion heat radiated	$[-]$
f_t	Empirical turbulence factor	$[-]$
I	Intensity	$J/cm^2.s$
j	Flux	$kg/s.cm^2$
K	Constant	$[-]$
K_r	Allowable radiation level	$[-]$
K_a	Acidity Constant	$[-]$
L	TNT equivalent of explosive substance	kg
M	Molecular weight	kg/mol
m	Mass flow rate	kg/s
p	Pressure	Pa
P	Thermal Power	W
P^*	Reactivity	$\%$, cent, $\$$
R or r	Distance	m
T	Temperature	K or $^{\circ}C$
t	Time	s
u	Velocity	m/s
V	Volume	m^3
W	TNT equivalent of explosive substance	kg
W_b	Burning rate	kg/s
w	Water vapour % by weight	$\%$
x	Distance from nozzle	m

Symbol (Greek)	Description	Dimensions
α_T	Coefficient of reactivity (Temperature)	K^{-1}
α	α -particle (Radioactive decay)	$[-]$
β	β -particle (Radioactive decay)	$[-]$
γ	γ -particle (Radioactive decay)	$[-]$
ϵ	Emissivity	$[-]$
ρ	Density	kg/m^3
σ	Microscopic cross section	m^2
Γ	Resonance width	m