

UK Government to fund research into mini-nuclear plants

Mini-nuclear power plants could help to solve Britain's looming power crunch and cost a lot less than large nuclear plants



Almost half of Britain's electricity capacity is expected to close by 2030, as older, large nuclear plants come an end *PA Wire/PA Images*

The UK Government will provide up to £56m of funding for research and development in mini-nuclear plants, it said on Thursday.

The funding will be available over the next three years and will be used to assess the potential of designs of advanced and small modular reactors (SMRs) and accelerating their development, the government said in a statement.

SMRs use existing or new nuclear technology scaled down to a fraction of the size of larger plants and would be able to produce around a tenth of the electricity created by large-scale projects, such as EDF Energy's Hinkley Point C.



British Gas' energy plans are no silver bullet (but this is)

The mini-nuclear power plants could help to solve Britain's looming power crunch and cost a lot less than large nuclear plants, companies developing the technology say.

Such plants are still under construction but developers say they could be ready for deployment by the mid-2020s. Critics say there is no guarantee developers will be able to cut costs enough to make the plants viable.

Almost half of Britain's [electricity](#) capacity is expected to close by 2030, as older, large nuclear plants come to the end of their operational lives and coal plants shut as part of the country's efforts to meet its climate goals. "Nuclear is a vital part of our energy mix, providing low carbon power now and into the future so today's package of new measures will help to boost innovation and provide greater clarity on our future plans," energy minister Richard Harrington said.

The Government also pledged a further £86m for nuclear fusion research at the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy in Oxfordshire.

It also set out the process for assessing potentially suitable sites for new nuclear plants with more than 1 gigawatt of capacity after 2025.