

Message from the Chair



The Geothermal Implementing Agreement (GIA) has vigorously launched into its third five-year term, building on past accomplishments, addressing key issues, and promoting the global deployment of geothermal as a sustainable renewable energy resource. Added impetus has come from the growing concern for climate changes arising from global warming due to carbon emissions, as documented by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). By increasing awareness of geothermal resources, and breaking down some of the barriers that had previously restricted investment by risk-averse players, we are beginning to see a pay-off in terms of a global renaissance in geothermal exploration and development drilling.

Membership of the IEA-GIA continues to grow, with France having joined in 2007 and considerable interest shown by industry and associations. There is an eagerness to collaborate, to share past experiences and to avoid mistakes from the past. The GIA core membership includes most of the geothermal pioneers, including Italy, New Zealand, Mexico, Iceland and the USA; plus the largest geothermal electric power producers, leading users of geothermal heat for direct applications, and companies, countries and institutions associated with advanced geothermal research programmes. The work of the GIA is well represented in its Web site, its publications and presentations by members at key conferences, and by its contributions to the material produced by the IEA Secretariat which helps publicize reliable statistics and general information on geothermal technology.

I would like to pay special tribute to our former Chair, David Nieva, who contributed significantly to the growth and reputation of the GIA during his four-year term. I concur with his concerns, expressed last year, that there is still a wide gulf in knowledge and understanding of geothermal resource development opportunities between those countries where geothermal is a mature industry and those that have yet to develop their indigenous geothermal resources. The continent of South America is a prime example of the latter. In these times of global financial turmoil, and energy supply uncertainty, we are challenged to work together even more closely to tackle the barriers that continue to suppress geothermal development, particularly in these countries. Cooperation and open sharing of knowledge will go a long way to overcome the public suspicion and miss-information that often accompany a competitive resource allocation. Improving the awareness of geothermal technology, its environmental benefits and its economic advantages, amongst decision-makers around the world (both at government policy and commercial investment levels) is high on my list of priorities.

In conclusion, I recommend to you this comprehensive annual report on the GIA activities for 2007. The Executive Summary provides a synopsis of the current world-wide status of geothermal energy development, its continuing acceleration and promising future. With concerted efforts to remove barriers, both real and perceived, the next few years should see geothermal taking an even more prominent position in global renewable energy portfolios.

Chris Bromley
Chair, IEA-GIA Executive Committee