For more information on the Chemical Industry of the Future, contact the OIT Clearinghouse at (800) 862-2086 or visit www.oit.doe.gov/chemicals.

Please send any comments, questions, or suggestions to webmaster.oit@ee.doe.gov.
Industry articulates R&D priorities

The U.S. chemical industry and OIT are working together to actively implement the Industries of the Future strategy. Participants in the Chemical Industry Vision 2020 Partnership—representatives from over 300 chemical companies and associations—are steering the direction for future research. Industry-led involvement ensures that R&D activities yield the greatest benefits for the industry while improving energy efficiency and environmental quality. Through the Partnership, the chemical industry has created a powerful force for attracting and guiding private and public investments in new technology development.

Collaborative efforts stimulate R&D for a sustainable future

Why work together?

By participating in Industries of the Future partnerships, the chemical industry is working together to pursue innovative technology development that ensures future competitiveness and sustainable growth. Industrial partners benefit from:

- Clearly defined R&D goals and pathways to their successful attainment
- A powerful common voice to guide government investments
- Expanded resources to accelerate R&D
- Multidisciplinary approaches to industry needs
- Cleaner, more energy-efficient technologies and processes, including use of alternative feedstocks
- Increased plant productivity and profitability now and in the future

Energy is essential to the chemical industry both as a source of heat and power for plant operations and as a raw material for production. While the U.S. chemical industry has significantly reduced energy consumption in the past several decades, it still consumes 5.3 quads per year, or close to 25 percent of all manufacturing energy use.

In 1996, chemical industry leaders articulated a long-term vision for the industry, its markets, and its technology in the groundbreaking document Technology Vision 2020—The U.S. Chemical Industry. To achieve the vision, the industry joined the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Industrial Technologies (OIT) in the innovative Industries of the Future partnership.

Energy Use in the Chemical Industry

- Organic Chemicals 49%
- Other 8%
- Inorganic Chemicals 13%
- Agricultural Chemicals 13%
- Plastics 17%

Total Energy Use = 5.3 quads

Over half of the energy consumed by the chemical industry is used for heat and power; the remaining energy is used as feedstock.

Benefits to local communities and the nation:

- Cleaner air
- Decreased greenhouse gas emissions
- Enhanced quality of food, health, housing, and transportation
- Improved energy security
- Increased exports

Projected Energy Cost Savings through Industries of the Future Partnerships

The Chemical Industry of the Future portfolio is helping companies cut energy consumption now and in the future.

Source: Based on an energy and economic analysis of the current Chemical Industry of the Future portfolio.
Based on industry-defined priorities and recommendations, OIT awards cost-shared support to projects that will improve the industry’s energy efficiency and global competitiveness. Collaborative teams from industry, universities, suppliers, national laboratories, and other organizations share the costs and the risks of R&D. To date, OIT has provided over $36 million in funding to cost-shared projects.

Collaborative projects have allowed the industry to pursue a wide range of high-priority technology announcements. The current portfolio consists of 38 different collaborative projects.

Collaborative projects yield success

OIT and chemical industry partnerships are giving companies a competitive edge. To date, the Industries of the Future initiative has launched dozens of partnerships with companies to develop valuable new technology.

Commercialized projects are already providing the chemical industry with solutions to environmental and energy challenges.

Advanced Intermetallic Alloys for Ethylene Reactors

Coating the inside of ethylene furnace tubes with intermetallic alloy materials promises to reduce tube maintenance, a leading cause of inefficiency in ethylene production. Research is focusing on using these coatings to prevent two major problems with conventional tubes: carburization, which limits tube life, and coke formation, which requires costly plant shutdowns for steam decoking of the tubes. Fabrication methods and welding techniques are also being developed.

Partners

• Sandvik Steel Company
• Nooter Fabricators, Inc.
• Duraloy Technologies, Inc.
• Inco Alloys International, Inc.
• Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Benefits

• Extends tube service life
• Improves reaction conditions
• Reduces furnace downtime
• Lowers energy use

Visit www.oit.doe.gov/chemicals to learn more about the projects in OIT’s Chemical Industry of the Future portfolio.
Enabling Technologies
OIT works with industry, national laboratories, academia, and others to research, develop, and commercialize enabling technologies that can benefit the chemical industry. The Industrial Materials program funds projects that fill the need for materials that are light, strong, corrosion-resistant, and capable of withstanding high-temperature environments. Efforts in Combustion target clean, cost-effective technologies that will increase productivity, improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions, and enhance fuel flexibility. Research in Sensors and Controls addresses such challenges as improving sensor reach and accuracy in harsh environments and providing integrated, on-line measurement systems for operator-independent control of plant processes.

BestPractices
Through the BestPractices program, OIT helps chemical companies apply existing technologies to save money, cut emissions, and reduce waste. OIT alerts companies to opportunities for funding, tools, expertise, and potentially applicable technologies in OIT’s extensive portfolio of crosscutting products and services.

BestPractices plant-wide assessments help chemical manufacturers develop a comprehensive strategy to increase efficiency, reduce emissions, and boost productivity. Up to $100,000 in matching funds is awarded for each assessment through a competitive solicitation process. Akzo Nobel, one of the world’s largest chemical companies, is currently participating in a plant-wide energy efficiency assessment program to reduce energy consumption by 20 percent. The assessment team is using pinch technology to monitor water systems, and other software is providing data on motors, compressed air, steam, and pump systems. Small to mid-sized manufacturers can take advantage of the Industrial Assessment Centers program, which provides no-charge assessments through a network of engineering universities.

Financial Assistance
OIT offers two Financial Assistance programs to boost technology development and application. The Inventions and Innovation program awards grants of up to $200,000 to inventors of energy-efficient technologies. Grants are used to establish technical performance, conduct early development activities, and initiate commercialization activities. The second program, NICE3 (National Competitiveness through Energy, Environment, and Economics), provides cost-shared grants of up to $500,000 to industry-state partnerships for demonstrations of clean and energy-efficient technologies. Through NICE3, DuPont-Merk Pharmaceutical Co., the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and Telesonic Ultrasonics have developed ultrasonic technology to clean tank surfaces without harmful solvents. The technology allows DuPont-Merk to reduce cleaning times, conserve petroleum feedstocks, eliminate VOC emissions, reduce energy use by 225 million Btu, and save $350,000 per year.

State-Level Industries of the Future
State-Level Industries of the Future programs bring the energy, environmental, and economic benefits of industrial partnerships to the local level. The Chemical Industry of the Future is assisting states such as Alabama, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Texas, and West Virginia to implement State-Level Industries of the Future activities.