

Full MOX Core Design for KNGR

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Abstract

Nuclear design of KNGR(Korean Next Generation Reactor) is performed to evaluate the feasibility of full MOX(Mixed Oxide, $\text{PuO}_2\text{-UO}_2$) fuel loading in KNGR core. The reactor core is designed to produce 3983 MW_{th} fission power, 3-batch, 18-month cycle length and Low Leakage Loading Pattern scheme with minimal change in NSSS designs optimized for UO_2 fuel. A hybrid CEA configuration, 50% enriched boron in chemical shim, 5% enriched UO_2 fuel in burnable poison rod have been adopted to guarantee the required shutdown margin and satisfy MSLB accident requirement.

1. Introduction

Basically, KNGR utilizes the slightly enriched uranium in uranium dioxide (UO_2) pellets. An important design feature of KNGR is that the core can accommodate, if necessary in the future, the full core loading of MOX fuel. For this purpose, a nuclear design for the initial and equilibrium cycle have been performed to investigate the feasibility of full core MOX loading and the results are described in this paper.

It is assumed that MOX fuel is composed of tail uranium and reactor-grade plutonium from reprocessed spent UO_2 fuel with the 10-year of cooling period. The reactor core is designed to generate 3983 MW_{th} at hot full power condition and provide burnup of 17500 MWD/T in the first cycle and 17800 MWD/T in the equilibrium cycle corresponding to 18 month cycle length. It is assumed that all parameters except for the fuel type are the same as UO_2 fuel.

The nuclear design for full MOX operation in KNGR was performed on the assumption that the full MOX operation starts without any transition core. The full MOX core design is based on the following design principles.

- At hot full power, sufficient thermal margin should exist for operational flexibility.
- The moderator temperature coefficient(MTC) should be negative under all operational conditions.

- With the most reactive control rod stuck out of core, the remaining control rods shall be able to shut down the reactor with sufficient margin.
- The effects of all accident situation in all Cycle will be acceptable.
- The full core loading of MOX fuel should be possible with minimal change in system designs optimized for UO₂ fuel.
- Burnable poison rod should not use mixture fuel with MOX fuel and poison absorber.
- The geometry of MOX fuel assembly is the same as UO₂ fuel.

The nuclear design and analysis is based on the multi-dimensional diffusion theory calculations for the entire core and the Westinghouse licensed PHOENIX-P/ANC code package is used in this study. PHOENIX-P is an assembly-calculation code, which generates the homogenized few group constants for fuel assemblies based on two-dimensional, multi-group transport theory. The few-group constants for ANC are calculated as a function of burnup, fuel type, and temperature. ANC is a two-group diffusion theory code that solves the multi-dimensional diffusion equations as a function of cycle burnup for all types of core geometries required to model the reactor core. Fuel shuffling, geometry generation (unfolding), and cross-section interpolation are handled internally by the code. A variable search procedure gives the capability of searching on any parameter such as critical boron, buckling, control rod position, and/or power. The generation of nonuniform inlet temperature distribution is also available.

II. Design Features of KNGR Full MOX Core

Core Performance Specifications

The reactor core is composed of 241 fuel assemblies with active fuel length of 381 cm. The core performance specifications of KNGR full MOX core are the same as those of UO₂ core (See Table 1).

Table 1 Core Performance Specifications

Total Heat Output, MWth	3983
Reactor Coolant Temperature, deg F	
Hot Zero Power	555
Design Inlet, Hot Full Power	555
Design Core Average, Hot Full Power	585.5
Nominal System Pressure, psi	2250
Peaking Factor Limit at HFP	
Nuclear 3-D Peaking Factor (Fq) Base on LOCA Limit of 13.9 KW/ft	2.58
Average Linear Heat Rate, KW/ft	5.6
Volumetric Power Density, KW/liter of core	99.47

Burnable Poison Rod

Generally, burnable poison plays a role in control the excess reactivity at beginning of cycle(BOC), suppression of pin peak power in assembly, reduction of critical boron concentration(CBC) at BOC. One of the characteristics for MOX fuel loaded core is that depletion is slower than UO_2 fuel loaded core and lower CBC at BOC. So, the MOX loading core has lower burnable poison dependency than UO_2 core. However, the full MOX core of KNGR utilizes burnable poison absorber to satisfy 18 month cycle length and achieve low leakage loading patterns. The full MOX core utilizes integral type poison rod, $Gd_2O_3+UO_2$, same as UO_2 fuel loading core. Enrichment of gadolinia is limited to the amount of 10 weight percent and slightly enriched uranium is mixed within poison rod.

In case of utilizing natural uranium in poison rod, power distribution control is more difficult than that of the core with slightly enriched uranium. Adopting slightly enriched(5%) uranium in poison rod results in ease of peak power control.

Control Rod

When a PWR core is fully loaded with MOX fuel, the control rod worth is significantly reduced, usually by about 30%, due to the spectrum hardening effect. Consequently, it is difficult to maintain the shutdown margin required for full MOX core without any change in core design characteristics.

Currently, there are 101 CEA (Control Element Assembly) locations including 8 spare locations in KNGR as shown in Figure 1. In this study, the same control rod configurations of Figure 1 and Table 2 are adopted.

In UO_2 core, the full strength CEAs use natural boron (19.8% B-10) in the form of B₄C. A preliminary evaluation of the CEA worth for natural boron shows that the shutdown margin is slightly less than 6500 pcm (6500 pcm is the shutdown margin requirement for UO_2 core), implying that the shutdown margin requirement cannot be satisfied with natural boron B₄C. To guarantee sufficient shutdown margin in the full MOX core design, B₄C CEA with 90% enriched B-10 is adopted in this work.

Table 2. CEA Configurations for KNGR full MOX core
(B₄C with 90% Enriched B-10)

CEA	No. of CEAs	Absorber
P2	8	Inconel
P1	9	Inconel
R5	4	B ₄ C
R4	8	B ₄ C
R3	12	B ₄ C
R2	8	B ₄ C
R1	8	B ₄ C
SB	20	B ₄ C
SA	16	B ₄ C

P = PSCEA, R = Regulating Bank, S=Shutdown Bank

Chemical Shim

The natural soluble boron is used as chemical shim in KNGR UO₂ core to suppress the initial excess reactivity and to compensate for the fuel depletion effect. In the case of full core loading of MOX fuel, the soluble boron worth is substantially reduced to about one-third of that of UO₂ core because of the neutron spectrum hardening in full MOX core. Consequently, the required CBC is far higher than that of UO₂ core, and this very high boron concentration can give rise to several problems such as design changes in boron control systems and/or fuel corrosion enhancement, etc.

There are several options to resolve the problems such as the HMR (High Moderating Reactor) concepts and enriched B-10 soluble boron. In HMR approach, the neutron spectrum is made less harder by increasing the moderator to fuel ratio. However, fuel rod and/or fuel assembly design changes are inevitable in this case. On the other hand, the enriched B-10 option can be implemented with minor changes in NSSS design. Recently, EPRI [EPRI TR-19992, March 1998] has shown that the adoption of enriched B-10 results in the improvement of plant operability and fuel cycle cost with payback time of about 6 years, although the initial cost for enriched B-10 is fairly high.

In the current design, we adopted 50% enriched B-10 to keep the maximum critical boron concentration for full MOX core similar to that of UO₂ core and also to exploit potential advantages of the enriched B-10 soluble boron.

III. Fuel Rod and Fuel Assembly

Fuel Assemblies

Geometry and dimensions of MOX fuel assemblies are assumed to be the same as those of UO₂ fuel assemblies. Each fuel assembly is comprised of 16x16 array of 236 MOX fuel rods and 5 guide tubes. MOX fuel is the mixture of plutonium and tail uranium dioxides, where plutonium is the reactor-grade one from reprocessed LWR fuel (PuO₂-UO₂). Composition of plutonium isotopes utilized in the present design is given in Table 3., which corresponds to typical PWR spent fuel of 46 GWD/T and 10-yr cooling.

In the first cycle of KNGR full MOX core, 7 types of fuel assemblies are introduced for 17500 MWD/T cycle burnup corresponding to 18-month cycle length. In each assembly, a simple plutonium content zoning was performed for assembly power distribution control as depicted in Figure 2. In addition, 6 w/o gadolinia burnable absorber (Gd₂O₃) was used to reduce the critical boron concentration and also to flatten the assembly power distribution.

3 types of fuel assemblies and 9 w/o gadolinia burnable absorber are used in Equilibrium cycle core.

Table 3. Composition of Plutonium Isotopes

Isotope	Am-241	Pu-238	Pu-239	Pu-240	Pu-241	Pu-242
Fraction (w/o)	1.08	1.83	57.93	22.50	11.06	5.60

Table 4. MOX Fuel Assemblies Data for Initial and Equilibrium Cycle

Assembly Type	No. of Assemblies	Plutonium Content (w/o Pu-tot)	No. of Fuel Rod per Assembly	No. of Poison Rods per Assembly	Poison Enrichment (w/o Gd ₂ O ₃)
A0	81	3.2/2.2/1.2	164/20/52	No Shim	---
B0	44	4.2/3.2/2.2	164/20/52	No Shim	---
B1	28	4.2/3.2/2.2	108/64/52	12	6
B2	8	4.2/3.2/2.2	108/68/44	16	6
C0	28	5.2/4.2/3.2	164/20/52	No Shim	---
C1	28	5.2/4.2/3.2	108/64/52	12	6
C2	24	5.2/4.2/3.2	108/68/44	16	6
J0	36	8.2/7.7/7.2	164/20/52	No Shim	---
J1	16	8.2/7.7/7.2	108/64/52	12	9
J2	40	8.2/7.7/7.2	108/68/44	16	9

IV. Loading Patterns for KNGR Initial and Eq. Cycle

The loading pattern for each cycle is determined on the basis of 3-batch fuel management scheme and is given Figure 3. Basically, Low Leakage Loading Pattern (LLLP) is maintained by locating the lower plutonium content assembly in the core peripheral

V. Nuclear Design parameters

Depletion Characteristics

The first and equilibrium cycle of KNGR full MOX core has been depleted at HFP condition by ANC using a 3-dimensional model of the core. In table 5, CBC and several nuclear peaking factors are given for various burnup points. Note that 0 burnup in table 5 corresponds to no xenon condition. Figure 4 and 5 show that CBC as a function of burnup and axial power distributions for each cycle are given in Figure 6 and Figure 7. Figure 8 through 10 show radial power distribution, respectively.

CEA bank Worth and Shutdown Margin

In essential, reactor core must be safely shutdown with sufficient margin. The rod worth of each cycle are evaluated to maintain shutdown margin for full MOX core. Rod worth is calculated at EOC (End of Cycle) HZP (hot Zero Power) condition due to the minimum value in all conditions. It is conservatively assumed that CEA (Control Element Assembly) bite position worth is 275 pcm (percent milli), which is the same value of UO₂ core. Uncertainty in N-1 worth calculation is conservatively assumed 6.5%, that is larger than 2~3 % of UO₂ core. As mentioned before, all FSCEAs are comprise of B₄C, and Bank 4 and 5 is composed of natural

boron to minimize the rod worth in rod ejection accident while other rods use 90% enriched boron. Therefore, P1, P2 bank is not PSCEAs. Bank rod worth at HZP and HFP is summarized in table 6. Required shutdown margin is determined by safety analysis. Under accident condition such as MSLB(Main Steam Line Break Accident), core should be safely shutdown without return to power. Required Shutdown Margin is about 7.5% $\Delta \rho$ and scram worth at HFP is 11% $\Delta \rho$. The boron capacity of RWST(Refueling Water Storage Tank) must be 6000 ppm. In table 7, shutdown margin of KNGR core in Equilibrium cycle at HZP has 7.7 $\Delta \rho$ which satisfies required shutdown margin.

Temperature Coefficients

In table 8, moderator temperature coefficient(MTC) and fuel temperature coefficient(FTC) at BOC, MOC, EOC show remarkable reduction than those of UO₂ core.

Boron Worth and Xenon Worth

Table 9 and 10 show that boron worth and Xe worth at each conditions.

Kinetic Parameters

Kinetic parameters relate to delayed neutron are summarized in table 11 and 12.

VI. Summary and Conclusion

The full MOX core design for KNGR core is performed minimal change in NSSS system designs optimized for UO₂ fuel. The reactor core is designed to produce 3983 MW_{th} fission power, 3-batch, 18-month cycle length and LLLP scheme. The main characteristics of Full MOX core is as follows :

- 50 % enriched boron in chemical shim is used to maintain CBC at BOC comparable to those of UO₂ core
- All PSCEA utilizes B4C instead of Inconel, extended CEA concept are adopted to maintain the required shutdown margin under all conditions.
- Gadolinia in burnable poison rod is mixed with 5% enriched UO₂ in order to maintain the cycle length and flatten power distribution.
- The 3 types burnable poison and a simple plutonium zoning is performed to flatten the power distribution in an assembly with 0.5% enrichment separation.

The most important feature of the full core MOX design in this study is the adoption of enriched boron in both of chemical shim and CEAs. The main objective of use of enriched boron is to minimize NSSS design change by making the reactivity control capacity remains as similar as the UO₂ core. In view of nuclear design, safety analysis and economic consideration, the adoption of enriched boron can be a viable approach to full core MOX loading.

VI. References

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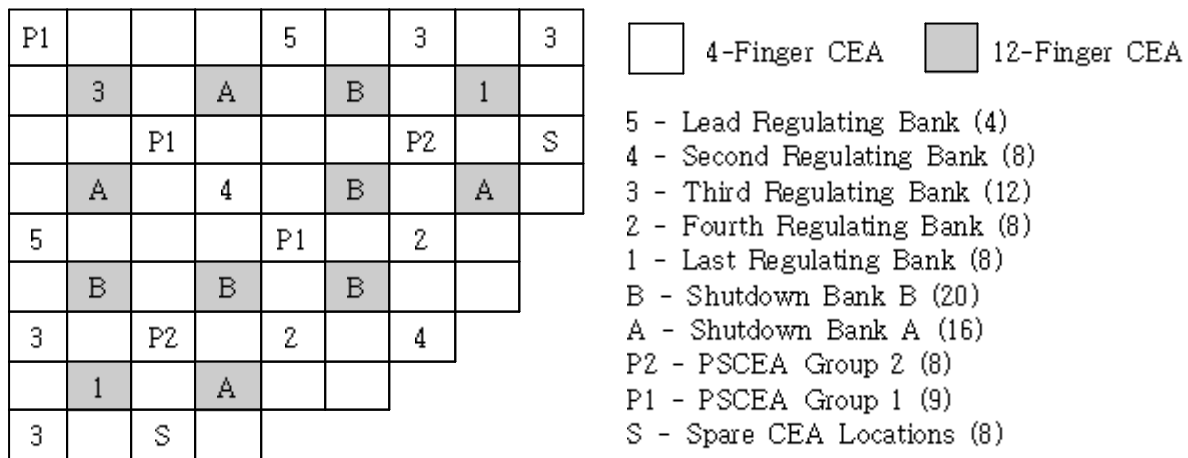


Figure 1, CEA Configuration for KNGR full MOX Core

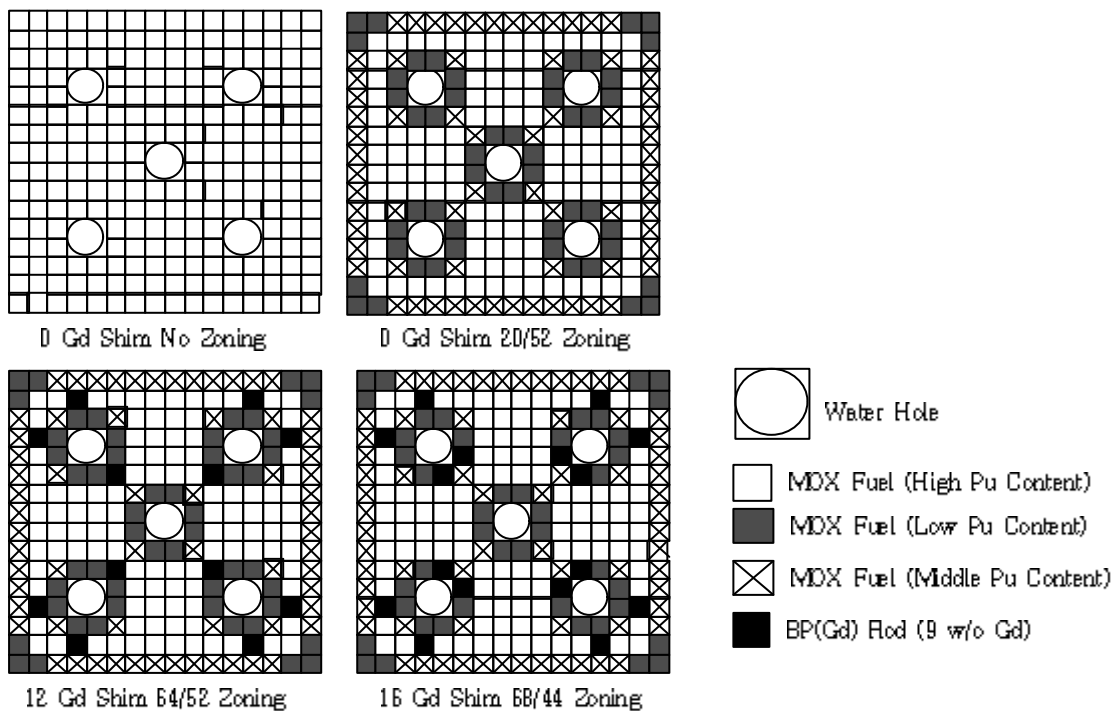


Figure 2, Fuel Assembly Configuration for KNGR Full MOX Core

A0	B2	A0	B1	A0	B2	A0	B1	B0
B2	A0	B2	A0	B1	A0	B2	B0	B0
A0	B2	A0	B1	A0	B2	A0	B1	B0
B1	A0	B1	A0	B2	A0	B1	B0	B0
A0	B1	A0	B2	A0	B1	B2	B0	
B2	A0	B2	A0	B1	A0	B0	B0	
A0	B2	A0	B1	B2	B0	B0		
B1	B0	B1	B0	B0	B0			
B0	B0	B0	B0					

H2	I1	I1	I1	I2	J1	I2	J1	J0
I1	I1	I0	I2	I0	H1	J2	I2	J0
I1	I0	I0	I2	I2	J2	H0	J1	I0
I1	I2	I2	H0	J2	H0	J2	J0	H1
I2	I0	I2	J2	H1	J2	H0	J0	
J1	H1	J2	H0	J2	I0	J0	H2	
I2	J2	H0	J2	H0	J0	I0		
J1	I2	J1	J0	J0	H0			
J0	J0	I0	H2					

J : Fresh Fuel D : No-Shirred
H : Twice-Burned Fuel 1 : 12-Shirred
I : Once-Burned Fuel 2 : 16-Shirred
G : Triple-Burned Fuel

Figure 3. Loading Patterns of Full MOX Core (Initial and Eq. Cycle)

Table 5. Depletion Characteristics of Full MOX Core(Initial and Eq. Cycle)

Burnup (MWD/T)	CBC (ppm)	ASI (x100)	Fr	Fz	Fq
0	1135	12.14	1.427	1.373	1.945
50	947	9.36	1.417	1.287	1.812
250	898	9.60	1.419	1.287	1.812
500	862	9.40	1.414	1.271	1.783
1000	804	8.76	1.413	1.250	1.755
1500	761	8.90	1.416	1.249	1.758
2000	728	9.01	1.416	1.248	1.754
2500	696	8.74	1.413	1.236	1.731
3000	664	8.20	1.410	1.221	1.704
3500	632	7.70	1.406	1.208	1.680
4000	600	7.39	1.404	1.199	1.664
5000	540	6.83	1.398	1.184	1.637
6000	485	6.61	1.393	1.176	1.620
7000	432	6.16	1.391	1.165	1.604
8000	382	6.28	1.387	1.165	1.600
9000	335	6.27	1.385	1.163	1.594
10000	291	6.44	1.382	1.163	1.595
11000	248	6.58	1.383	1.163	1.607
12000	208	6.46	1.388	1.160	1.609
13000	169	6.41	1.392	1.158	1.613
14000	131	6.32	1.396	1.155	1.618
15000	95	5.98	1.398	1.150	1.616
16000	58	5.53	1.398	1.144	1.608
17000	22	5.03	1.399	1.138	1.596
17500	4	4.72	1.399	1.133	1.587

Burnup (MWD/T)	CBC (ppm)	ASI (x100)	Fr	Fz	Fq
0	1159	4.66	1.495	1.227	1.849
50	995	4.64	1.485	1.179	1.772
250	942	4.72	1.484	1.179	1.760
500	919	4.72	1.482	1.174	1.751
1000	875	4.59	1.478	1.161	1.730
1500	838	4.78	1.477	1.162	1.730
2000	805	5.00	1.476	1.157	1.725
2500	773	4.91	1.475	1.153	1.716
3000	741	5.05	1.472	1.150	1.707
3500	709	5.07	1.469	1.147	1.700
4000	679	4.94	1.468	1.141	1.691
5000	620	5.02	1.463	1.138	1.681
6000	563	5.09	1.459	1.135	1.671
7000	508	5.13	1.453	1.134	1.663
8000	455	5.21	1.448	1.133	1.656
9000	404	4.71	1.444	1.125	1.638
10000	354	4.84	1.440	1.126	1.632
11000	305	5.38	1.435	1.133	1.638
12000	258	5.37	1.431	1.133	1.631
13000	213	5.58	1.430	1.135	1.632
14000	168	5.63	1.429	1.135	1.631
15000	124	5.92	1.427	1.138	1.630
16000	82	5.72	1.426	1.136	1.623
17000	41	5.64	1.423	1.134	1.617
17800	9	5.65	1.421	1.133	1.613

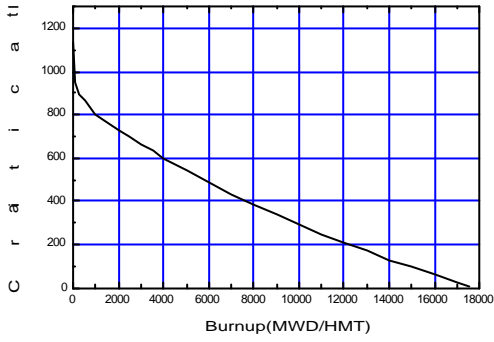


Figure 4, CBC Curve of Full MOX Core(Cycle 1)

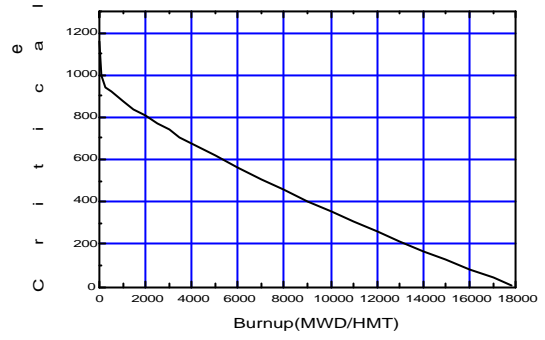


Figure 5, CBC Curve of Full MOX Core(Eq. Cycle)

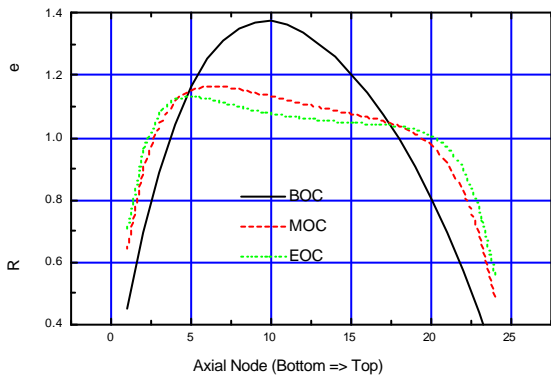


Figure 6, Axial Power Distribution(Cycle 1)

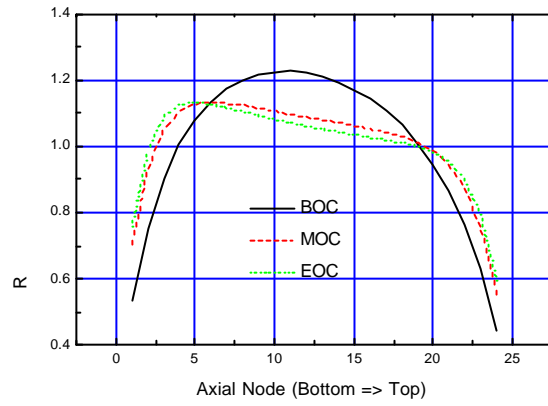


Figure 6, Axial Power Distribution(Eq. Cycle)

Table 6. Bank Rod Worth at EOC (Cycle 1 and Eq. Cycle, pcm)

Bank	HFP 4 ppm, Eq. Xe	H2P 329 ppm, No Xe	HFP 9 ppm, Eq. Xe	H2P 459 ppm, No Xe
R5	327	270	238	231
R4	360	301	302	288
R3	872	772	854	829
R2	1019	948	832	723
R1	1205	1292	1035	933
P2	795	608	641	467
P1	1315	1210	1112	1042
SB	5146	4955	4589	4265
SA	8161	7977	7649	7078
Total	19220	18333	17252	15855
Stuck Rod	5477	6135	5182	4578
N-1 Worth	13743	12198	12070	11277

Table 7. Reactivity Requirement and Shutdown Margin at EOC (Cycle 1 and Eq. Cycle, pcm)

	HFP	H2P	HFP	H2P
N-1 Scram Worth	13743	12198	12070	11277
Uncertainty (6.5%)	894	793	784	733
CEA Bite Position	275	275	275	275
Power Defect	0	2591	0	2542
Shutdown Margin	12574	8539	11011	7727

Table 8. MTC and FTC vs. Cycle Burnup at HFP, ARO, Eq. Xe

MTC	BOC (0 MWD/MTU)	MDC (8000 MWD/MTU)	EOC (17800 MWD/MTU)
Cycle 1 (pcm/F)	-12.98	-25.13	-37.55
Eq. Cycle (pcm/F)	-18.57	-27.13	-37.36
FTC	BOC (0 MWD/MTU)	MDC (8000 MWD/MTU)	EOC (17800 MWD/MTU)
Cycle 1 (pcm/F)	-1.679	-1.648	-1.611
Eq. Cycle (pcm/F)	-1.460	-1.456	-1.447

Table 9. Boron Worth at HFP Condition

	BOC (0 MWD/MTU)	EOC (17800 MWD/MTU)
Cycle 1 ($\Delta\rho$ /ppm)	-9.992	-14.261
Eq. Cycle ($\Delta\rho$ /ppm)	-6.662	-8.458

Table 10. MOX 노심 제논가 (전출력)

	BOC (0 MWD/MTU)	MDC (8000 MWD/MTU)	EOC (17800 MWD/MTU)
Cycle 1 (pcm)	1704	2023	2304
Eq. Cycle (pcm)	1060	1366	1573

Table 11. Kinetic Parameters (Cycle 1)

Burnup (MWD/HMT)	Group	λ	β_{eff}
BOC (0)	1	0,0129	0,000088
	2	0,0306	0,000862
	3	0,1315	0,000732
	4	0,3447	0,001452
	5	1,4404	0,000646
	6	3,7089	0,000161
	Total		0,003941
MOC (8,000)	1	0,0129	0,000088
	2	0,0306	0,000877
	3	0,1313	0,000743
	4	0,3450	0,001485
	5	1,4475	0,000664
	6	3,7109	0,000161
	Total		0,004018
EOC (17,500)	1	0,0129	0,000087
	2	0,0305	0,000894
	3	0,1310	0,000756
	4	0,3454	0,001523
	5	1,4547	0,000684
	6	3,7136	0,000162
	Total		0,004106

Table 12. Kinetic Parameters (Eq. Cycle)

Burnup (MWD/HMT)	Group	λ	β_{eff}
BOC (0)	1	0,0129	0,000083
	2	0,0306	0,000861
	3	0,1314	0,000724
	4	0,3457	0,001448
	5	1,4526	0,000650
	6	3,7023	0,000155
	Total		0,003920
MOC (8,000)	1	0,0129	0,000083
	2	0,0306	0,000868
	3	0,1312	0,000730
	4	0,3459	0,001463
	5	1,4558	0,000658
	6	3,7027	0,000155
	Total		0,003957
EOC (17,800)	1	0,0129	0,000083
	2	0,0305	0,000876
	3	0,1311	0,000736
	4	0,3460	0,001479
	5	1,4586	0,000666
	6	3,7038	0,000155
	Total		0,003994