

Collaborative Research as an effective tool to speed up industrial transitions – ENGIE Laborelec’s return on experience

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Abstract

Many industries that face the severe challenges of the Energy Transition, risk to experience a lack of common visions, a weak ecosystem of partners and of R&D&I (Research & Development & Innovation) technical means, and a limited financial resource to venture risky paths towards their future businesses. In the mean time we observe a strong convergence between three drivers towards an effective collaborative research strategy:

- More & more industries implement their R&D&I activities through intensive interactions with their external R&D&I ecosystem
- More & more public funding schemes require R&D&I projects to be business oriented high TRL pilot or demonstration actions
- More & more public funding schemes require R&D&I projects to be collaborative to be funded

Consequently, a sort of ‘Place to Be’ emerges in such growing convergence, wherein business oriented collaborative R&D&I is heavily stimulated by public funding frameworks.

Since 2013, ENGIE Laborelec has intensified its R&D&I activities in that collaborative “Place to Be” by selected public European and Regional funding schemes. On about 10 years’ time, ENGIE Laborelec submitted 249 collaborative research projects to funding authorities, of which 78 projects were granted. Our cumulated in-kind contribution in all these projects costs ~39M€ to ENGIE Laborelec. About ~ 50% of it has been covered by the contracted grants. The portfolio of 78 projects all together represents a total cumulated R&D value for the concerned research partners of more than 730M€ .

In this presentation we will illustrate how ENGIE Laborelec insights by true collaboration with partners has led to very effective qualitative and quantitative leveraging effects. Three key learnings will be shared that have significantly accelerated our own R&D&I journey in the challenging Energy Transition:

- Collaborative Research supported by public funding induced powerful, collective and structured inspiration on a series of emerging technologies, R&D roadmaps and fundamental trends that drive the Energy Transition worldwide
- It unlocks and boosts precious interactions with peers, and gives access to a broad landscape of stakeholders and technical R&D&I infrastructures
- It drastically reduces your risks and provides quantitative leveraging effect on financing your R&D&I activities

Several drawbacks will also be illustrated, amongst others how to deal with possible administrative & financial requirements, with Intellectual Property aspects and how to accept some failures when they arise.

All in all, ENGIE Laborelec will share its genuine conviction that this R&D&I strategy is an essential success factor in any transition undertaking.