



ADVICE FOR SMEs SEEKING TO COLLABORATE WITH LARGER ORGANISATIONS ACROSS THE FUSION SECTOR

Fusion energy is too complex for any one person, organisation, or even sector to achieve alone. Delivering fusion energy will require expertise from a wide range of people and industries.

For us to succeed in achieving our vision of a sustainably-powered world, we need to find ways to work together to achieve fusion faster.

To do this, The Fusion Cluster brought together businesses already working in fusion to co-create this advice for SMEs seeking to collaborate with larger organisations across the fusion sector.



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We share the goal of a sustainably-powered world. To achieve it, we need to work with organisations that might not share our language, resources, or operating conditions. When approaching a new partnership, it is important to take the time to develop an understanding of each other's contexts.



Collaboration is essential, because while it can feel like larger companies hold all the power, larger organisations regularly find themselves in need of SMEs' agility and specialist knowledge. Understanding how your company fits within the broader fusion supply chain will help your company flourish.



Working together is about so much more than contract delivery. Working with SMEs helps larger companies see challenges in new ways and experience new ways of working. SMEs' agility and unique viewpoints are an essential part of making fusion a reality. Building long-term working relationships could yield unexpected benefits in the future. When establishing a partnership, decide clear aims, outcomes, and outputs from your activities, agreeing what success looks like for all and how this will be measured.



Strong partnerships require honesty and transparency, and don't shy away from discussing the challenges of collaboration. Find ways to discuss resource needs for your partnership as early as possible. Be honest and transparent about your policies, processes and working practices and what you need in order to collaborate.



While SMEs have a reputation for being agile, larger companies are often working on longer-term projects. Addressing this difference in timescales and ways of working is essential if you want to identify areas for potential collaboration. What can you do now, to build connections which might help you in 2 - 3 years' time?



Fusion is an exciting sector which is developing fast, and your specialist knowledge might be exactly what is needed. Maybe you don't see yourself as part of the fusion landscape now, but building connections across the fusion sector could help to connect you to exciting future projects.



Business Development and building working relationships and networks takes time, and the results may not be immediate, but it is always time well spent. The more connections you make, and the more visible you are, the more likely it is that opportunities will come your way.



Networking is key, but it's not just about networking events and conferences. Finding ways to build connections across the sector through working groups, task forces, and committee membership is a fantastic way to grow your business and list of contacts.



Clear communication helps everyone. Partnerships thrive on honest, regular, and jargon free communication. Making fusion a reality will require people and organisations from a wide range of specialisms to work together, and to do that we all need to be communicating in a language everyone can understand.

