



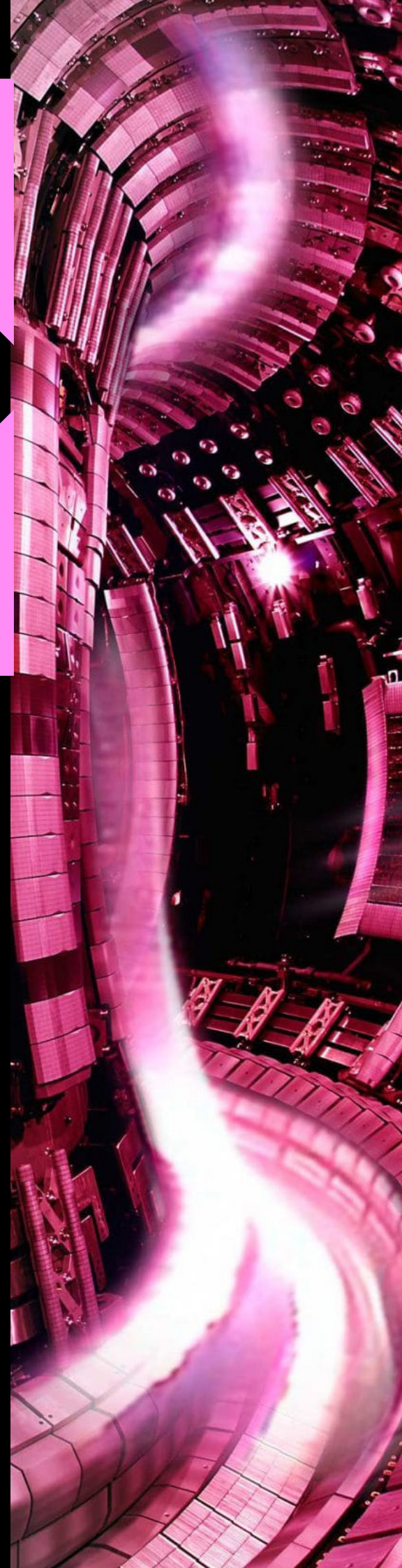
**THE
FUSION
CLUSTER**

ADVICE FOR LARGER COMPANIES SEEKING TO COLLABORATE WITH SMEs


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 larger organisations seeking to collaborate with SMEs across and beyond 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, take the time to develop your understanding of each other's contexts. Some SMEs might have hundreds of employees, some might have tens. So, a "one-size-fits all" approach to partnership working won't succeed when collaborating with SMEs.




Collaboration is about so much more than contract fulfilment. Working with SMEs connects you to specialist knowledge and skills that can spark new ideas. Identifying ways to build capacity within the SMEs you collaborate with helps to ensure long-lasting, productive working partnerships. 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. Be honest and transparent about your policies and processes and what you need from a partner organisation in order to collaborate. Consider how the practicalities of collaborating with you might affect who can and can't work with you. How can you co-create terms and conditions so that they work well for everyone involved?




While you may be working on large-scale projects which have a multi-year timeframe, SMEs are often working on 6 - 12-month timescales. Addressing this difference in timescales and ways of working is essential if you want to identify areas for potential collaboration. Are there more immediate benefits you could offer the SMEs you collaborate with?



Working with established contacts has its advantages, but the fusion sector is developing so rapidly, there could be SMEs out there you haven't met yet who would be perfect project partners, some of whom may not even be currently working in fusion. Making opportunities for collaboration as visible as possible to the broadest possible audience will help you to find the best possible project partners.



The earlier you engage with potential partners, the stronger the collaboration will be. The more time SMEs have to understand what you are looking for and when, the more likely it is they will be able to provide what you are looking for.



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.

