

# Efficient exploitation of energy efficiency research

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Carrying out research is all well and good, but what happens to the knowledge once the project has finished? Many research projects consider in advance how to use research findings, either to get a product onto the market or to define how to share the new knowledge.

The European project Bricker, which is developing configurable retrofitting solutions for energy efficiency in large public buildings, is no exception. Here, we discuss the project's exploitation challenges with Meike Reimann from [Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum](#), Germany.

## **So what is "exploitation," and how does it work?**

In these types of projects, we really try to make the whole consortium aware of exploitation possibilities and routes. We also advise on [intellectual property rights](#) management. For example, if two partners share a result that is exploitable in terms of a patent, how should they handle that? The importance of the issue can't be overstated and it can lead to problems if not addressed early enough.

## **How do you achieve consensus among project partners and make sure it's fair?**

The end of a research project may put a revenue-generating product on the market. So it's important to work out who shares what beforehand, based on the work or ideas you put into the project.

We find out what the background is, what people bring to the project, what the results are and how they evolve within the project. When the

project ends, some partners may well be able to sell a product, and others may become suppliers in that product's value chain. All this should be set out and agreed upon during the project.

There are many people involved in such projects: scientists from university who just think about science, big companies, small businesses, and they all have substantially different views on things. We therefore discuss what each partner wishes to take home from the project when completed.

Some scientists might want to publish in order to boost their reputation through the project; others might want a product to commercialise. It's therefore necessary to talk up front about these issues and not leave it [until] too late.

Bricker is a specific case, because there are several individual products, such as the solar collectors, that can be marketed by the partners who created them. Moreover, what's really good about Bricker is that it can also be marketed as a package, a configurable system for retrofitting buildings or for adapting them to take on active solutions.

## **Are there any specific challenges in exploiting energy projects like Bricker?**

For [energy projects](#), including retrofitting, regulations play a big role. Many regulations are governed by the EU, but each country also has its own regulatory environment. Moreover, if you do green retrofitting, you are often highly dependent on national incentives and politics. If governments change, it can be challenging.

## **There are three demo buildings in Bricker. Does that make exploitation easier?**

It helps to reach the market in each of the three countries. The demo buildings are already there, and people will have trust in that. Demonstration really persuades people that it's a good product, and we see that in many projects.

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