

## **New perspectives on supporting energy innovation from SMARTSPEND's closing Access to Risk Finance Conference**

**This 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the conference gathered speakers to discuss the latest developments in energy innovation funding and it presented the findings of the SMARTSPEND project.**

**18 November 2020** – The [Access to Risk Finance and SMARTSPEND Closing Conference](#) took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2021, from 9:30am to 1pm. The event had the dual purpose of discussing novelties in clean energy finance following the previous two editions, while also serving as closing event for the 3-year Horizon 2020 project [SMARTSPEND](#).

The first session focused on “Funding instruments for energy innovation”, where experts from public institutions and the energy sector discussed the latest developments in clean energy funding in Europe, with a focus on EU instruments as well as national programmes. The panel agreed that in addition to new public funding, it is essential to mobilise private funding and entrepreneurship to boost innovation.

The second session presented the deliverables from the SMARTSPEND project, including

- reflections on how European Technology and Innovation Platforms (ETIPs) can support the SET Plan now and in the future;
- the synergies between the research strategies of the SET Plan's Implementation Working Groups and other energy R&I actors;
- how industry delegations were organised over the last 3 years to take messages to national policy-makers;
- the highlights of the last 2 Access to Risk Finance Conferences.

The third session dealt with the novel subject of carbon contracts for difference in the EU Emission Trading System to de-risk innovative projects that are close to market integration. This tool can hedge the risk of carbon price fluctuations, providing stable conditions for projects that seek to mainstream decarbonisation in heavy industry sectors such as steel, cement and fertilisers. Panellists debated whether strike prices should be set differently for different industrial sectors and on whether it is appropriate for money to flow from the project owner to the supplier of the contract if the carbon price exceeds the strike price.

The conference closed with an interview of H el ene Chraye, Deputy Director of the Clean Planet Unit from DG Research and Innovation at the European Commission by Greg Arrowsmith, Secretary General of EUREC. They have discussed developments in EU research and innovation policy and the way ahead in the coming years, with particular interest from the Commission in boosting knowledge sharing between projects.

The full agenda of the event can be accessed [here](#). The presentations, recordings and minutes of the event can be found within a week of the event on the conference [website](#). For more information please contact Mr Nicolas de la Vega at [delavega@eurec.be](mailto:delavega@eurec.be).



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**The SMARTSPEND project in bullet points:**

- 3-year-project (2018-2021) developed by 11 expert partners from all over Europe
- Goal: more efficient and effective use of the national and European funding for Research, Development & Innovation in the energy sector
- Objectives:
  - to foster efficiency in allocation of public & private funding
  - to better inform stakeholders through the preparation and dissemination of six reports; and dissemination based on engagement with policy makers
- SMARTSPEND's leaflet and logo are available here: <http://smartspend.eu/communication-material/>

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**SMARTSPEND partners and sectors:**

SMARTSPEND's partners were chosen because of their links to companies and research centres in particular clean energy fields. This will allow the results of the project to be disseminated widely, including: analysis of industry funding needs; a map of funding instruments for energy innovation; recommendations for alternative models of sectoral organisation at EU level, and recommendations on supporting innovation in energy technology:

- [EUREC](#) - The Association of European Renewable Energy Research Centres: scientific coordinator
- [CIRCE Foundation](#) - Centre of Research for Energy Resources and Consumption): process industry
- [EASE](#) - European Association for Storage of Energy: energy storage
- [ECTP](#) – European Construction Technology Platform: energy-efficient buildings and construction
- [EGEC](#) - European Geothermal Energy Council: geothermal energy
- [EMIRI](#) - Energy Materials Industrial Research Initiative: advanced materials for clean energy and clean mobility technologies
- [ESTELA](#) - European Solar Thermal Electricity Association: Concentrated Solar Power
- [Ocean Energy Europe](#): Ocean Energy
- [The German Agency for Renewable Resources](#) (FNR) – bioenergy
- [WIP Renewable Energies](#): photovoltaics
- [ZABALA Innovation Consulting](#): smart energy networks



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