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The case for Industry involvement in Light Sources

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Synchrotron light sources arguably the means of our age for the ultimate characterisation of materials: such facilities provide the ability to visualise the atomic, nano-, and macro-structure of a huge range of materials and living matter, often under processing or end-use conditions and in real time. This capability lends itself to an equally wide range of industrial R&D problems which, in particular, have been adopted by the healthcare industry. Light sources are also heavy demanders and developers of innovative advanced instrumentation technology such as detectors, precision mechanics and sample environments providing technology spill-over, transfer and co-development opportunities.

Moreover, in Europe and worldwide, funding agencies are requesting and demanding a stronger economic return from the significant public investments made in such research facilities and this is resulting in a gradual but firm pressure for stronger interactions with industry. In this context, new business models are springing to life, with more partnerships, more services, and nimble small start-ups bridging the gap between the research infrastructure and the commercially driven industry world.

This presentation will succinctly outline the strategies being deployed and the ongoing challenges of working with industry being seen at the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF), based in Grenoble France. The talk will look to both the current developments and future possibilities of business, as well as review examples of partnerships between academic and industry.

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