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**EU R&D provides long-term focus for chip industry**

David Manners  
Wednesday 17 November 2010 12:24

European R&D funding programmes like CATRENE and ENIAC provide a long-term approach to the microelectronics industry, it was said at the roundtable discussion during the European Nanoelectronics Forum 2010 in Madrid this week.

"Europe is able to handle very complex projects with very complex partnerships," said Reinhard Ploss of Infineon, "there's not a need for money so much as a need for environment. For instance in the US you get a free lane for hybrid cars. In Europe we could encourage e-cars in cities."

Ploss pointed out that R&D projects can take ten years while companies have to make money quarter on quarter. Large companies can't say they'll make no money for some years but will get a big pay-back later. Ploss thought small and medium sized companies were quicker at getting products to market, and therefore co-operation between large and small companies was the best way forward.

Asked if Europe, having created the mobile industry, was now losing it to US firms like Qualcomm and Broadcom, while ST-Ericsson is losing money, Alain Dutheil, former CEO of ST-Ericsson and COO of ST, replied: "The way we see it as a shareholder is that we are making an investment. We are not able to sustain the R&D resources needed which is why we have co-operations. But we are patient because the programmes in place are going to pay back."

Asked why the EU was receiving less R&D proposals for funding than it had money to spend on such projects, Andreas Wild replied: "It is difficult to marry two funding principles – one involving integrated governmental funding, and the other being top-down EU-led funding arrangements where define projects with which we have companies willing to engage and governments willing to fund. We haven't got a funding mechanism which marries the requirement to the process."

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