



## PARTNER CONNECTION

# Essi Projects and Red Hat: 10 Years of Collaboration

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Alberto Belle  
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## INTRODUCTION

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*Founded in 1996, Essi Projects is an IT consulting and training company specializing in infrastructure, middleware, and cloud solutions based on Enterprise Open Source. Through the company Edustance, it offers training for official certifications for Red Hat and Jboss portfolio solutions, with the objective of helping companies adopt and operate new developments in technology. Inspired by Essi Projects S.A., Essi Projects Ltd. was recently created in the U.K. to offer the same set of solutions.*

### **Q. Who is Essi Projects and what services does it offer?**

Essi Projects is an IT engineering company specializing in system integration, application development, and consulting projects. The company mainly conducts its business activities on the Iberian Peninsula.

Essi Projects started in 1996, focusing on Internet system infrastructure projects, including Java programming; at that time its portfolio of commercial solutions was limited, so it focused on ad hoc solutions. As the Internet's reach increased, Essi Projects expanded its services and the types of customers it worked with, thereby gradually developing into an IT engineering company. In 2004, the company decided to completely reorient its operations toward Open Source solutions and contacted numerous vendors, finally deciding on Red Hat.

This change brought about the need to retrain employees, who would have to adjust from working primarily with Solaris and open code to Enterprise Open Source software. The company made great efforts to promote Red Hat solutions and demonstrate the benefits of the technology compared with proprietary solutions.

In 2013 Essi Projects decided to include strategic and technological consulting services in its portfolio to help customers analyze complex issues and design technology solutions for their business challenges. The company therefore became a strategic partner and technological influencer for its customers, and this has enabled it to create its own branding, expanding its services and distinguishing itself beyond mere technology commercialization, as well as facilitating its growth.

In October 2014, Essi Projects created a new company in the U.K. which conducts the same business activities as Essi Projects in Spain.

### **Q. Why did Essi Projects select Red Hat as a partner? What was the "key"?**

When Essi Projects decided to use Enterprise Open Source, it contacted numerous vendors before ultimately deciding that Red Hat's approach was the most suitable for a number of reasons. First of all, Essi Projects' customers, including major accounts, public authorities, universities, and research centers, required "enterprise class" technology solutions. Red Hat was a perfect fit here as its technology solutions guarantee service quality and high levels of security and functional stability.

Another requirement was for Essi Projects to strengthen its relationships with its customers, so it was a priority to incorporate a long-term vision into its portfolio to guarantee technological continuity for the customers. Red Hat offers guarantees for continuity (solutions roadmap), technological reliability, and version compatibility – distinguishing it from other vendors.

It was important for Essi Projects that the solutions' Enterprise Open Source code did not have any legal attachments. The business orientation of Red Hat software offers a legal safety guarantee for the source code in terms of intellectual property through a software quality process.

Finally, Red Hat met Essi Projects' requirements to create a unified vision of the concepts of technology, solutions, and customer service – thereby establishing a relationship of mutual trust and support.

**Q. What services based on Red Hat-based solutions has Essi Projects developed?**

Essi Projects' portfolio of solutions and services is mainly based on Red Hat, demonstrating a natural evolution over the 10 years that the two companies have been working together. To enhance the quality and scope of these services, Essi Projects has obtained certifications for all the specializations in the current Red Hat channel model – infrastructure, middleware, and cloud. Essi Projects is the first Spanish partner to obtain these certifications.

Essi Projects has strengthened its position in the IT market in recent years by expanding its services, which has allowed it to offer consulting and technological services, with Red Hat one of the primary vendors.

Essi Projects is currently consolidating its growth in the EMEA region with projects such as the new company formed in the U.K., whose business is based on dealing with trustworthy vendors such as Red Hat.

**Q. How does Essi Projects leverage the Red Hat Partner Program?**

Essi Projects has the highest level of partnership in the Red Hat Partner Program, which gives it access to solutions before they are marketed, as well as technical content, commercial and business development information, and first-hand knowledge of the vendor's strategy. This all comes together by closely aligning Essi Projects and Red Hat.

Essi Projects has leveraged the partner program in three main ways: strategy, demand, and technological continuity.

In terms of strategy, Red Hat and its main partners establish joint goals at the beginning of each fiscal year, and include these in the business plan. This involves analyzing the progress made in previous years, identifying improvement and growth opportunities, and establishing new goals, and this enables a partner like Essi Projects to design its progress and growth goals so as to transfer them to its customers.

In terms of demand, marketing actions are coordinated to help meet growth and opportunity targets, reaching customers more effectively and offering partners a market presence backed by the vendor.

Regarding the roadmap, Essi Projects sees solutions before they are marketed, with access through pilot solutions or contributions made by the developer community.

Due to the companies' close collaborative relationship, Red Hat considers Essi Projects a highly valued partner, naming it "Best Infrastructure Partner of the Year" in 2008.

**Q. What has Essi Projects learned from its partnership with Red Hat?**

Essi Projects' learning experience throughout years of collaboration can be summarized as follows:

- Knowledge of a channel model that enables partner development within a stable ecosystem.
- Understanding the value of Enterprise Open Source solutions for customers, respecting Red Hat's philosophy when conducting projects and services.
- Launching a collaboration model with an Enterprise Open Source vendor.

**Q. How has Essi Projects benefited from the collaboration?**

The benefits can be described in terms of growth, stability, vendor support, and collaboration. The main benefit for Essi Projects is evident in the company's growth, as Red Hat has been an essential part of its technological portfolio. Red Hat has a defined long-term roadmap and efficient support, which has allowed Essi Projects to focus on launching and integrating solutions for its customers.

In commercial terms, Red Hat has facilitated Essi Projects' entry into the market with Enterprise Open Source solutions in two segments: major accounts, where it has expanded its presence, and the so-called "early adopters," where it has developed its business activities through its collaboration with Red Hat. Red Hat and Essi Projects have also collaborated at the technological level to create joint offerings that combine the technological strengths and experiences of both companies.

**Q. What are the key benefits of the collaboration for Red Hat?**

For Red Hat, collaborating with partners is necessary since, as a vendor, it understands the potential of combining their capacities and resources to better reach the market.

Red Hat believes the channel ecosystem is an essential component in growing its business, reaching farther than it would be able to on its own, forming close relationships with customers that are best managed by a partner, thanks to their technological neutrality. Also, the channel allows it to integrate solutions for customers and provide customer specialization while reducing complexity.

For Red Hat, collaborating with Essi Projects has served as a model for relationships with other Spanish partners in terms of managing knowledge and growth expectations, as well as assigning available resources.

**Q. What are Red Hat and Essi Projects' plans for future collaboration?**

Essi Projects' main goal is to continue growing and using Red Hat's solutions, both in Spain, its main market, and in the U.K., where it plans to become a leading player.

Red Hat has high expectations for its partner program and considers it essential to strengthen this ecosystem, relying on Essi Projects to achieve its goal.

The collaboration has been a success story for Essi Projects and Red Hat, and both companies hope to continue to work closely together in the future.

## About This Analyst

As research manager for IDC Spain, Alberto Bellé helps IT companies transform their business model, strategy, and commercial approach with the emergence of cloud, Big Data, social business, and mobility (the 3rd Platform). Bellé authors IDC research documents and is a regular speaker at events and conferences. After working at IDC for four years, Bellé became a technological advisor for the European Commission in 2010, before returning to IDC. He has also worked in London and Finland.

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Global Headquarters: 5 Speen Street Framingham, MA 01701 USA P.508.872.8200 F.508.935.4015  
[www.idc.com](http://www.idc.com)

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