

HyLights – Tasks and Goals

The European Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Platform has identified the importance of joining all the research and demonstration projects in a coordinated, coherent, stable and flexible framework to accelerate the commercialisation of hydrogen and fuel cells, mainly in transport in Europe. Two strategically important projects have been launched by the European Commission in preparation of this important phase of the transition to hydrogen as fuel and long-term renewable energy carrier.

One of them, HyLights, monitors concluded/ongoing demonstration projects and assists the planning of the next demonstration project phase, putting a clear focus on hydrogen in transport. HyLights is a coordination action that comprises 5 tasks to

- develop an assessment framework for concluded/ongoing demonstration projects,
- analyse individual projects and establish a project database,
- carry out a gaps analysis and prepare a requirement profile for the next stage projects,
- assess and identify necessary financial and legal steps in preparation of the new projects, and
- develop a European partnership or interest group named Hydrogen for Transport.

A gaps analysis will identify preparation arrangements for large demonstration projects to develop hydrogen as a transport fuel. This analysis will compare best practices with stakeholder expectations, regional potential and planned demonstration projects.

A prerequisite for an efficient process is to link with the groups involved in the analysis and/or preparation of the coming demonstration projects. On one hand, cooperation is ongoing with relevant expert groups from the U.S. and Japan, to harmonise the assessment framework and the planning process. On the other hand stakeholders from industry, governments and the public are invited to participate in the planning process via the initiative Hydrogen for Transport devised by the HyLights partners.

The total partnership has 21 participants initially, 4 institutes carrying out the assessment and planning work and 17 major industry partners (auto, oil, power and equipment) willing to collaborate, confirming their commitment and bringing practical knowledge. The extended partnership, including e.g. governments, is larger, joining the project via an associate status, and is meant to provide European visibility to hydrogen for transport, as well as to ensure openness and transparency in preparing optimal future large demonstration activities.

All this effort has to be seen in an energy context where oil prices have reached unexpected high levels, where security of supply is a growing concern, and where the first consequences of climate change are being suffered. By 2007 the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme (2007-2013), to be accompanied by the proposed Joint Technology Initiative on Hydrogen and Fuel Cells, will kick off the next step of large scale demonstration projects on hydrogen for transport.