



European Hydrogen Valleys Partnership

WG in the spotlight; Valleys & Islands

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With members from 17 different regions, from 6 different countries, Valleys & Islands is a big working group. The WG is coordinated by Anna & Anders (Gävleborg, Sweden) and Arianna (Umbria, Italy).

The Working Group

“The concept for the Hydrogen Valleys and Islands Group is to engage in cross-cutting studies and project development activities as pilots, to identify how to achieve in practice collaboration for FCH technologies across multiple sectors”.

The aim is to coordinate project development and attract funding for large scale projects, in multiple geographies, integrating supply chains, with on the ground implementation. The WG also aims to achieve socio-economic benefits of Hydrogen Valleys and Islands as well as alternative systems for islands or non-grid connected areas.

To achieve this, the WG sees three key actions:

1. Increase awareness and engagement - **HyVisit** - create an interregional knowledge chain to connect H2 valleys and share best practices;
2. Quantify and develop business models for value chains and the value introduced by Hydrogen in the integrated management of energy-mobility-industry: **HyEnergy Manager**;
3. Attract **portfolio** investments for multiple technologies in valleys or islands through brokering contact between project regions and funders, investors, decision makers and technologies: **HyInvest**;

The ideas presented above were developed before the third plenary session of the partnership in Paris on 4th February and pitched to the audience of HyVolution.

The Valleys & Islands is an overarching Working Group: it does not focus on a singular FCH technology, but seeks to integrate Hydrogen as an energy carrier within the energy system and society, centralised and decentralised. The key is sectoral integration, merging production, mobility, industry and storage.

They explain that “all members of the working group have been engaged and involved in developing these ideas via several online meetings between the members, from November to February”. They are planning the next WG meeting in April.

Next steps

After the successful pitch of the project ideas during HyVolution, the WG is preparing for the future. At the moment they are defining the business cases of the pilot joint projects. After this phase ends, in June, they are going to present their final business cases in June and July. After the presentation of the business cases the WG will start with the implementation of the pilot joint projects till December 2020, so that they are ready to prepare for the next MFF and 2021-2027 EU funding programmes.

Successes

This working group has had several successes following HyVolution, despite the Covid-19 impact. They explain that one of the member regions, Gävleborg, hosted a visit by Bart Biebuyck, Executive Director FCH JU. “He was

very supportive of the value chain approach in the WG and in the member regions, and also of the project pitches at HyVolution”, the coordinators explain. They also mention that he specifically mentioned HyVisit as an interesting idea to develop. Since this meeting with Bart Biebuyck, the WG has been having early discussions with the FCH JU on developing a H2020 application for this project in collaboration with the Valleys & Islands working group.

Challenges

Just like the first WG in the spotlight, this WG is a very successful WG. But, besides the many successes this WG has, obstacles do occur sometimes.

In these strange times, Covid-19 is obviously an obstacle for collaboration and development, the coordinators explain. An important remark from the coordinators is that the effective use of digital tools for this type of collaboration is a learning that we can all develop especially during the current crisis.

The coordinators also mention that the WG has a wide geographical spread, from Sweden to Spain to Greece. This can create challenges sometimes, such as active participation. But the coordinators do explain that these are the challenges of any interregional working group. They have experienced that time pressure helps to deliver concepts. For example, HyVolution was a positive way of focusing action, but it proved hard to deliver.

The coordinators also further elaborate on the topic of the WG. The area that they focus on (Valleys and Islands) is geographically based. This sometimes creates challenges when interregional participation is asked. This participation relies on the value chain and supply chain collaboration.

Dealing with challenges

But how are they dealing with these challenges? A lot of the obstacles that this WG has been facing do occur in every WG. For this WG digital meetings have been successful in developing the

working group, and time and resources allocated to the WG meant that they were able to deliver for HyVolution.

Future

What does the future hold for this WG? The coordinators explain that economic viability and investor appetite via public private partnership for Hydrogen Valleys will be critical for scaling the projects on the ground. But with the work they have been doing, we see a bright future ahead!

