



PRESS RELEASE

Toronto, June 2012

Successful networking for the future energy supply:

The Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Network NRW

The aim of the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Network North Rhine-Westphalia, which was founded in 2000, is to establish hydrogen and fuel cell technology as a permanent component of the future energy supply, at the same time fully exploiting the technology's opportunities for the German State North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) as an economic location. With a view to the challenges presented by the energy turnabout and the objectives towards climate protection, energy efficiency and the expansion of renewable energies, hydrogen and fuel cell technology is seen as a key technology in all segments of the energy system.

More than 400 members from industry and science are already actively engaged in the Network and use the numerous services the Network offers. The Network is the largest of its kind in Europe.

The principal feature of the Network's activities is the initiation of co-operative projects. The focus of the project work shifted increasingly from research and development in the direction of testing and market preparation during the last years. The Network is at its members' disposal as a contact point for concretising project ideas and identifying suitable funding programmes, and as a two-way channel of communication with policymakers. Since 2000 the NRW state government and the European Union (European Regional Development Fund - ERDF) have provided around 110 million euros for about 100 hydrogen and fuel cell projects. The total investment volume is a good 185 million euros. The Network is coordinating the dedicated "NRW Hydrogen Hyway" program dealing with hydrogen production (from renewables and by-product), hydrogen refuelling stations, vehicle development and deployment, stationary applications, R&D and special market applications.

The Network's members are also closely involved in national (e.g. National Innovation Programme for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells, NIP) and European funding activities (e.g. Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking, FCH JU).

As a consequence of the expansion of renewable power generation following the energy turnabout, hydrogen will play an ever growing role as storage medium in the future energy supply. Surplus wind power can be converted by water electrolysis into hydrogen both centrally and, in particular, on a decentralised basis. Hydrogen can then be stored without difficulty using various technical methods. As required it can, for example, be turned back into elec-

tricity using fuel cells with a high degree of efficiency or used as a "domestic fuel" in fuel-cell-powered vehicles to provide emission-free mobility. Projects to develop the necessary components from the electrolyser to the single application (i.e. fuel cell vehicles) and to try out this comprehensive approach are a current focus of the Network's activity.

The Network also represents NRW within the Clean Energy Partnership (CEP), the lighthouse project of the Federal Government for mobility with hydrogen and fuel cells, and it has responsibility for managing the Project Coordination Body of the Electro Mobility Model Region Rhine Ruhr, one of eight "Electro Mobility Model Regions" funded by the Federal Ministry of Transport.

Beside this, another main topic is the market introduction of fuel cell based micro CHP systems. NRW is currently preparing a funding scheme to support this important technology, complementary to the national funding.

The Network has helped ensure that NRW is regarded – also internationally – as one of the leading fuel cell locations in Europe. Testimony to this, among other things, is its pioneering role in the European partnership Hydrogen and Fuel Cells and Electro Mobility in European Regions (HyER) and the fact that major hydrogen and fuel cell companies such as Ballard, Hydrogenics and Dynetek (Canada), Idatech (USA) and Ceramic Fuel Cells (Australia) have established bases here. Companies and institutes residing in NRW offer products and services covering the whole value added chain of fuel cell and hydrogen technology.

Companies and institutes from all over the world can apply for membership of the network. The membership is free of charge. The application can be made online via www.fuelcell-nrw.de

The Fuel Cell & Hydrogen Network NRW is exhibitor on the German Pavilion during the WHEC 2012 in Toronto.

Further information:

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