

NAHV: Widening engagement and increased commitments for newly awarded initiatives

Trieste, 28th May 2025

Partners of the North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley (NAHV) have gathered in Trieste at their second Annual Consortium Meeting to review the implementation of industrial testbeds and horizontal actions. The two-day meeting is hosted by the Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia.

On the first day, **Jerneja Sedlar**, the NAHV Coordinator, **Stephen Taylor**, Strategic Coordinator of the NAHV Joint Working Group and other representatives of the NAHV Consortium reported on their progress at the NAHV Annual Briefing and engaged with the members of the NAHV Stakeholder Advisory Forum.

NAHV is the first transnational initiative of its kind funded by the Clean Hydrogen Partnership through the Horizon Europe Programme. The second Annual Meeting of the NAHV Consortium hosts close to 100 delegates representing 37 project partners from three countries: Croatia, Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region of Italy, and Slovenia, who have gathered at the Urban Center in Trieste at their Annual Meeting. The Meeting was introduced by the NAHV Annual Briefing and a public opening, which hosted the NAHV's stakeholders, members of the NAHV Stakeholder Advisory Forum, and representatives of the related initiatives co-funded by the EU, jointly shaping the Hydrogen Ecosystem of the Northern Adriatic.

The Annual Briefing was held at Finance Central Directorate building of the Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia. The Region FVG is one of the institutional partners of the initiative together with the Croatian Ministry for Economy and Sustainable Development (MINGO) and the Slovenian Ministry for Environment and Energy. **Fabio Scoccimarro**, Regional Councillor, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Autonomous Region of Italy opened the agenda as a host of the Briefing, followed by **Korana Mesić**, Head of the Energy Administration Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia and **Hinko Šolinc**, General Director, Ministry of Environment and Energy of the Republic of Slovenia. The three institutional representatives underlined a sustained support and active involvement of the three territories to the first transnational hydrogen valley in the EU.

Industrial testbeds progressing towards a renewable hydrogen uptake

Jerneja Sedlar, NAHV Coordinator, Head of the Development and Investment Department of HSE described the progress made particularly at the level of industrial testbeds. Altogether, **17 industrial "testbed" projects** are being developed in different locations in all three partner countries, supported by a number of cross-cutting actions. In the final year of the NAHV Horizon Europe funded project, 2029, key industry players from all three countries aim to produce up to 5,000 tonnes of renewable hydrogen per year from renewable energy sources, destined for energy storage, distribution and use. It is expected that some 20% of the produced renewable hydrogen will be exchanged between the participating countries, thus creating a primary regional market for hydrogen. The implementation of this ambitious initiative aims to facilitate the uptake of hydrogen-related solutions and enable the actors of the emerging hydrogen ecosystem of the North Adriatic in autonomous production, transmission, storage and use of renewable hydrogen as well as driving further uptake in the future. The Consortium prepared a complete overview of 17 industrial pilot projects in the 2nd edition of the **NAHV Testbeds Catalogue available from the NAHV web site (www.nahv.eu).**



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Education related activities address training of future professionals and experts in the field of hydrogen technologies

A number of education-related activities are being addressed to promote the training of future professionals and experts in the field of hydrogen technologies with the aim to ensure interdisciplinary education covering science, technology, engineering and mathematics as well as financial, and societal aspects of hydrogen technologies. These activities are coordinated by the **University of Rijeka** with the participation of the **Universities of Ljubljana** and **Trieste**, and partners **GITONE**, **ECUBES**, and **META Circularity**.

The Consortium initiated the preparation of **vocational training programmes** with support from the FVG Regional Administration and the Slovenian and Croatian ministries, and other partners. It aims for funding through the European Social Fund. The **development of micro-credentials** for reskilling and upskilling industry professionals is going to be launched in the school year 2025-26 in collaboration among the involved universities.

SAF in a full swing and newly funded initiatives awarded

Alberto Soraci of Area Science Park, who is the Coordinator of the Stakeholder Advisory Forum (SAF), briefly presented the purpose and the functioning of this body, which aims to involve external partners in the initiative for consultation, implementation support and to seize potential additional opportunities arising through the project life.

“Preparatory activities led by **Area Science Park** for the launch of the NAHV AISBL, a non-profit association to be founded in under the Belgian law, are now advanced and drawing to a conclusion” reported **Stephen Taylor**, Strategic Coordinator of the **NAHV Joint Working Group**, a governance body of the NAHV initiative.

The aim of the NAHV AISBL is to ensure long-term sustainability of the initiative’s results and their impacts beyond the life of the NAHV Horizon Europe project. This structure, which is open to the NAHV partners as well as other interested stakeholders, can also integrate other initiatives. After the **North Adriatic Clean Hydrogen Investment Platform (NACHIP)**, launched in autumn 2024, two more such initiatives have been awarded EU funding, **H2Ready** and **NASCHA**. All these projects received the support by the NAHV joint Working Group in the application stage and foresee an integration with the NAHV SPV at the end of their life.

H2Ready is a bilateral Interreg initiative Italy-Slovenia which was awarded €700 thousand in funding addressing the key challenge of energy transition by involving municipalities in the development and implementation of hydrogen solutions. The project aims to enhance municipal involvement in the energy transition, leveraging their key potential as intermediaries between energy needs, infrastructure development, and social innovation. A H2READY consortium of 6 partners led by GOLEA, a regional development agency seated in Nova Gorica, this initiative integrates the public sector as a key player in ensuring critical mass demand for hydrogen.

The **North Adriatic Smart Communities Hydrogen Accelerator (NASCHA)** led by **Area Science Park** aims to accelerate transnational innovation in the North Adriatic Hydrogen Ecosystem by validating and demonstrating renewable hydrogen technologies in Croatia, Slovenia, and Friuli-Venezia Giulia through pilot solutions, advancing bankability and investor readiness through three Smart Communities of Practice, two cross-cutting pilots on hydrogen storage and retail distribution, scalable across the communities. NASCHA builds on the North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley (NAHV) and NACHIP initiatives, targeting value chains of transportation and mobility, urban areas and sustainable irrigation. Similarly to NACHIP, NASCHA has received €7.9 million in funding from the Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument under the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF), managed by European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA).

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You are welcome to visit the NAHV home page for more info: www.nahv.eu.

NAHV: A flagship initiative for the implementation of the EU Hydrogen Strategy creating a transnational hydrogen ecosystem

The NAHV was awarded a grant of €25 million by Clean Hydrogen Partnership and started in September 2023 and has a duration of 72 months. The project received the Seal of Excellence, which is awarded under Horizon Europe to projects that have been highly rated. Among 37 organisations that make part of the Consortium, there are: companies, universities, institutes and other public entities from the three participating countries. The partnership is led by HSE, Slovenia's largest electricity producer and trader and the largest producer of electricity from renewable sources. As the first transnational hydrogen Valley in the EU, the NAHV represents one of its flagship initiatives in the context of the EU Hydrogen Strategy realisation, which is an important component contributing to reach the decarbonisation of the EU industry and reduce the CO₂ emissions to reach the targets of the EU Green Deal.

Industrial testbed projects aiming for decarbonisation and renewable hydrogen uptake

The project design covers the **entire value chain of renewable hydrogen use**, from production, through storage and distribution, to its end use in various sectors, notably industry and land and maritime transport, creating leverage to accelerate the transition to renewables on **three target pillars**: hard-to-abate industries, and the energy and transport sectors.

The key aim of the initiative is to create a market for green hydrogen on both the demand and supply sides, making it a competitive energy source for the future. Key industry players from all three countries will develop pilot projects to produce up to **5,000 tonnes of renewable hydrogen** per year from renewable energy sources, destined for energy storage, distribution and use. It is expected that some 20% of the produced renewable hydrogen will be exchanged between the participating countries, thus creating a primary regional market for hydrogen. By introducing advanced hydrogen technologies and developing skills and infrastructure, the partnership also pursues other key objectives of the European Green Deal. In particular, the NAHV testbed projects address the decarbonisation of important industrial sectors such as steel, cement and glass production, and provide sustainable land and maritime transport solutions linked to reducing the carbon footprint.

It is expected that the implementation of the planned mature stage innovation activities will unleash further investments in renewable hydrogen-related technologies destined to increase the capacity of hydrogen production, storage, transmission and use. An estimated sum of around **€800 million of funding is projected as one of the expected impacts of the NAHV**, during the course of the project implementation and afterwards, deriving from private and public sources in the form of follow-on investments in the successfully implemented pilots in 17 testbed locations across the three participating countries, as well as through new initiatives which will contribute to the evolution of a social and economic ecosystem based on renewable hydrogen. The foreseen development creates the need for **new competencies and skills**, which makes the universities and research institutions which are partners in the initiative important protagonists in designing and disseminating new educational programmes, as the NAHV is destined to become a vehicle for **job creation**.



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