

The need for a unified European hydropower voice

The new EU project ETIP Hydropower (September 2022 – August 2025) will closely link the EERA Joint Programme Hydropower to the new European Technology and Innovation Platform (ETIP) for hydropower. It succeeds the HYDROPOWER EUROPE project (2018–2022) which created a forum for more than 600 stakeholders representing all sectors.

A European Technology and Innovation Platform is a community whose primary purpose is to define Research & Innovation priorities for its sector. The secondary purpose is to overcome barriers to the deployment of R&I outcomes: e.g., industrial strategy, market opportunities, exploitation of research results, international cooperation, education, environmental and social impacts. A variety of ETIPs exist and they have the task to work together to contribute to the Net Zero Economy and help solve the energy crisis. The ETIP HYDROPOWER is managed by a consortium of six international organizations with the support of two communication agencies (see Photo of the Secretariat team and Acknowledgement).

Helping to unify the voices of hydropower in Europe

There is a need for unified industry representation to be recognized at a European level. The HYDROPOWER EUROPE Forum provided a first opportunity to gather 650 stakeholders representing all the sectors of the value chain. Under ETIP HYDROPOWER, the hydropower forum will continue to grow and offers an ideal opportunity to help unify the voices of hydropower in Europe.

Facilitating Research Supporting Hydropower in Europe

Facilitating R&I actions and funding is of immediate interest and value to many hydropower industry organisations, helping them to overcome barriers in hydropower deployment. Hence a unified R&I focussed organization, where the hydropower industry could get rapid answers to urgent R&I questions through collaborative funding efforts, will be implemented by ETIP HYDROPOWER. It is not intended to duplicate existing funded research programmes, but rather, to facilitate European industry collaboration on priority issues not yet being funded,

or not yet prioritised or funded enough. Hence this new unified R&I organization should complement and extend existing R&I actions. For instance, more innovation is needed for preserving biodiversity and improving river ecosystems by taking advantage of synergies within multi-purpose projects.

Implementing Strategic Actions Supporting Hydropower in Europe

There were 3160 NGOs amongst 11,800 organizations advocating their interest to European Union (EU) decision-makers and officials in 2019 generating 24,894 jobs and a budget larger than 3 billion €/year. New hydropower deployment in Europe is often discussed as being very controversial. However, hydropower is the vital pillar of flexibility and storage within the new electricity system in the Net Zero Economy. ETIP HYDROPOWER will help in raising awareness and dispelling myths about hydropower in Europe. Hence, in the energy crisis, the task is to demonstrate how hydropower is contributing to the overarching priorities of European citizens: RePowerEU, Climate change adaptation, Green Deal, Circularity. Hydropower and the other renewable resources recently gained legal support from the European Parliament for accelerated permitting.

Personal commitment of all stakeholders in 2023

During a webinar on 25th January 2023, the vision of ETIP HYDROPOWER, its objectives, the suggested project structure and its foreseen work program will be presented and discussed. This webinar is an introduction to a wider consultation process with the purpose of collecting stakeholders opinions on the services that the ETIP can provide to them and for proposals on working groups that the ETIP should implement. Any stakeholder can become a member of ETIP HYDROPOWER which entails being registered online, sharing the ETIP HYDROPOWER vision and mission

and bringing a positive contribution to the ETIP. All members will be invited to participate to the first online General Assembly planned during the newly created 'HYDROPOWER DAY' which will be held in Brussels during the period 25-27th April, 2023. The members can then elect their representatives for the Governing Board of the ETIP HYDROPOWER. Any member can suggest the creation of a new working group with drafted terms of reference on any particular topic and submit it to the Governing Board. Members will be invited to join a WG when such a group is created.

In conclusion

ETIP HYDROPOWER will help to ensure that hydropower can play the vital role of a catalyst and enabler in the transition to a clean and safe energy system in Europe by being a reliable supplier in order to overcome the actual energy crisis as well as the achievement of climate neutrality by mid-century.

Acknowledgement

The HYDROPOWER EUROPE Forum and the ETIP HYDROPOWER are supported by a project, funded by the European Commission under Horizon Europe call HORIZON-CLS-2021-D3-02-15. Project partners are: International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD), European Association for Storage of Energy (EASE), European Renewable Energies Federation (EREF), Association of European Renewable Energy Research Centres (EUREC), International Hydro-power Association (IHA), Samui France SARL (SAMUI), VGBE energy (vgbe) and ZABALA Brussels SPRL (ZABALA).



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