

IEA Hydrogen: technology diplomacy in practice

M.R. de Valladares¹, S. Oberholzer²

¹IEA Hydrogen, Executive Office, Bethesda, USA

²Swiss Federal Office of Energy, Hydrogen & Fuel Cells, Bern, Switzerland



The International Energy Agency Hydrogen Implementing Agreement – now known as IEA Hydrogen -- is an IEA technology collaboration programme (www.ieahia.org). IEA Hydrogen is the world's largest and longest lived cooperation in hydrogen R,D&D, presently numbering 27 members with diverse legal and regulatory frameworks, cultures, missions and markets. Membership includes 21 countries (our most recent member is China), the regional European Union (27 countries) and a United Nations organization, as well as four non-government members. An energy major (Shell), a combined gas-electric utility (Southern Company), a leading public-private partnership (NOW) and a hydrogen safety association (HySafe) comprise the non-government members. With global membership covering five continents and engagement with countries on all seven continents, how does IEA Hydrogen manage its innovation-oriented planning and operations?

The essence of science is discovery. Hence, scientists lean toward collaboration that enhances the discovery process in the service of their research. This feature of “scientific culture” generally tends to reduce barriers to cooperation and community development. From this basis, sensitivity to Members’ cultural constructs underpins all IEA Hydrogen efforts to plan and execute our portfolio of tasks and activities. From the perspective of our shared vision and mission, IEA Hydrogen’s strategic approach to planning and execution combines “process” with efforts to harmonize and optimize diverse regional, country and company circumstances, interests, priorities and policies.

This presentation provides an overview of our current activities with a focus on our approach to strategic planning and implementation. Current activities include seven ongoing tasks and three concluding tasks organized in three themes: our core business of R,D&D; Analysis; and Awareness, Understanding and Acceptance (AUA). While most activities are organized in tasks, the AUA theme encompasses outreach and information dissemination activities. This presentation is, finally, a case study about IEA Hydrogen as an exercise in technology diplomacy.