🌍 HYMANTOVALLEY NEWS - SPECIAL RELAUNCH EDITION 🚀

April 2026 | Innovation, Resilience, and Energy Transition

The Project Relaunch and the Bolzano Meeting

We are thrilled to officially announce the relaunch of the HYMANTOVALLEY project today, April 15, 2026, during our fourth partner meeting hosted in Bolzano. This two-day event (April 14-15) at the NOI Techpark, hosted by our partner Wolftank, marks a decisive moment for our consortium. In addition to technical planning sessions and updates on new activities, the meeting's agenda featured an important study visit to SASA SpA, a cutting-edge local public transport company.

Overcoming Obstacles: The New Course of HYMANTOVALLEY The path to innovation is never without obstacles. Originally launched on **September 1, 2023**, with an expected duration of 36 months, the project faced technical, bureaucratic, and market barriers that caused a natural slowdown in finding companies, particularly SMEs, ready to practically apply these new technologies.

To relaunch the project, in agreement with the European Commission, the consortium revised its program by adding new activities and new partners. **Officially restarted on January 7, 2026**, with the entry into force of the new *Amendment*, Hymantovalley has transformed critical issues into opportunities: the project's duration has been **extended to 50 months** (with a new end date set for **October 31, 2027**) and we have welcomed **6 new industrial and strategic partners** (SEI, Nutri-Tech, Faber, Diamant, Fagioli, and TI-ES) who will bring pragmatic solutions, ranging from high-pressure transport to marine

decarbonizing filters and aquaponics. HYMANTOVALLEY is back, stronger and more concrete than ever.

HYMANTOVALLEY's consortium at the 4th partners meeting in Bozen

HMANTOVALLEY project website updated https://hymantovalley.agirenet.it/en/

Focus on Partners – The Strength of the Territory

This newsletter will showcase 2 of the 22 partners of the consortium, The Province of Mantova and AGIRE (Agency for the Intelligent Management of Energy Resources).

PROVINCE OF MANTOVA: The institutional engine of decarbonization
The Province of Mantova is the beating heart of the project. Located in the center of the Po Valley, it lies in one of the areas with the worst air quality in Europe. Its territory, characterized by a strong agricultural structure and a dense socio-industrial presence (ranging from the food sector to petrochemicals and heavy industry), is a unique strategic hub thanks to its trimodal logistics system, which connects water transport (with the inland port linked to the Adriatic Sea), rail, and road transport along the main European TEN-T corridors.

As an intermediate entity between the Municipalities and the Lombardy Region, the Province's key competencies include territorial planning and the management of local transport and viability. To contribute to the ambitious goal of climate neutrality (zero CO_2 emissions), the entity had to deal with the morphology of its territory: lacking wind and having very little hydroelectric power available, the only large-scale renewable sources that can be exploited are solar and biomass. For this strategic reason, the Province has decided to focus strongly on green hydrogen as a fundamental energy vector to reduce the emissions of local transport and industries.

The province of Mantua highlighted in red on a satellite map of Italy located on a crossroad between the European Transport Corridor Mediterranean and the European Transport Corridor Scandinavian-Mediterranean

A.G.I.R.E. Srl: The Agency for Intelligent Energy As the operational arm of the Province of Mantova, AGIRE (Agency for the Intelligent Management of Energy Resources) is an *in-house* company 100% owned by the public entity. Its *mission* is to guide the territory toward the reduction of climate-altering emissions, promote energy savings, and support the sustainable development of local authorities, citizens, and businesses.

Thanks to twenty years of experience in managing European projects, AGIRE plays an absolutely central role in HYMANTOVALLEY: it acts as executive coordinator, ensuring that technical and bureaucratic challenges are overcome, and leads on the front line all dissemination, communication, and hydrogen ecosystem creation activities in the territory.

*The staff of **AGIRE - Energy Agency of the Province of Mantua** - coordinator of the Hymantovalley project.*

Voices of the Key Players (Interviews):

In these newsletters, we will publish the full interviews with several of the project's many key figures. Here are the questions we have prepared for Alessandro Gatti, Executive at the Province of Mantua, and Nicola Galli, Director of A.G.I.R.E., on the occasion of this relaunch:

🎤 **Three questions for Alessandro Gatti** *(Director of the Planning, Navigation, Building, and Environment Department of the Province of Mantua and Project Manager of HYMANTOVALLEY)*

1) Dr. Gatti, the Province manages key transport hubs. How can Mantua's trimodal logistics infrastructure serve as a trailblazer in Europe for the genuine decarbonization of heavy-duty traffic?

- The trimodal logistics infrastructure of the **Port of Mantua–Valdaro**, now recognized as a **"Core" port** within the European **TEN-T networks**, certainly plays a vital role at the European level in the decarbonization of heavy-duty traffic. The Province's strategy is to transform it into one of the most modern integrated **freight villages**, equipped with alternative fuel technologies (hydrogen and electric) and capable of effectively managing the **road–rail–water modal shift**. Therefore, trimodality and green hydrogen are key elements for decarbonization. Indeed, the Province of Mantua aims for the Port to be not only a hub for managing cargo flows but also an innovative energy center, where sustainability is fully integrated into terminal operations, allowing heavy traffic to eliminate or drastically reduce emissions.

2) How do you assess the impact of the project's recent expansion and the addition of new operational partners in accelerating the achievement of local carbon neutrality?

- I view it very positively and as a significant value-add. It was possible to modify and update the project while remaining faithful to its core characteristics—specifically, the opportunity to study and experiment with hydrogen across all aspects of trimodality, which is a unique feature of the Port of Mantua–Valdaro. Furthermore, the inclusion of new partners has allowed us to broaden the project with new experiments, such as **aquaponic greenhouses**, hydrogen-powered

pedal-assist bicycles, and further analyses related to city district heating.

3) In your coordinating role, how are you facilitating dialogue and synergy among very diverse players, such as established corporations, innovative startups, and university research centers?

- At the Province of Mantua, we enjoy challenges, and the role of coordinating partners who are highly diverse in type, size, and nationality is certainly one of them. Our goal is to build an **“open” innovation ecosystem** where, in addition to ensuring the success of the HYMANTOVALLEY project, we can catalyze many other public and private entities and projects related to the world of hydrogen. The great challenge is thus to act as true **“facilitators”** of this ecosystem, creating a synergy among the actors involved so that the final result is greater than the sum of its parts.

Alessandro Gatti *(Director of the Planning, Navigation, Building, and Environment Department of the Province of Mantua and Project Manager of HYMANTOVALLEY)*

🎤 **Three questions for Nicola Galli** *(Technical Director and Coordinator Contact of AGIRE for the HYMANTOVALLEY project)*

1) Mr. Galli, considering our local geography—which prevents us from exploiting wind or large-scale hydroelectric power—what is the strategic role of hydrogen in the territorial and energy planning of the Province of Mantua?

- Our Province is carving out an increasingly important role in the logistics and transport sector. Its geographic location in the heart of the Po Valley—at the intersection of two primary European corridors (North/South and East/West)—along with the presence of the Inland Port (Valdaro), the closest to Central Europe with direct links to Venice and the Mediterranean, makes it possible to move passengers and goods via three modes: road, rail, and water (plus air transport, given the proximity of Villafranca and Montichiari airports). Renewable hydrogen is one of the few available solutions for decarbonizing heavy-duty transport, where electric power requires batteries that are too bulky, heavy, and costly, with excessive charging times, and where diesel remains by far the most widely used fuel. Furthermore, renewable hydrogen—produced using free, inexhaustible, locally available resources, primarily sun and biomass in our case—is a tool to overcome dependence on foreign supplies. This dependence is a major cause of economic and political weakness for European States, as is evident in this period of conflicts, which consistently feature energy as a common theme. From this perspective, this is a decisive moment to unlock all investments and provide maximum support for the development of European green hydrogen supply chains.

2) AGIRE has a dozen European projects under its belt. What were the most complex technical and management challenges you faced during the revision of the Hymantovalley project, and how did you overcome them to achieve this relaunch?

- We sought to turn technical and economic constraints into opportunities: we maintained our original objectives while reducing investment in less mature sectors or areas where costs had escalated excessively. Simultaneously, we focused on local businesses that were already developing innovative hydrogen ideas but needed immediate

resources to bring them to fruition. I am thinking of **Nutritech's** pilot project using hydrogen within a sustainable, zero-impact aquaponic greenhouse for fish and vegetable production (including their logistics), as well as locally produced hydrogen bicycles, the application of hydrogen to district heating, and its use in the maritime sector.

3) The consortium was able to adapt in an extremely pragmatic way to the slowdown in the hydrogen market. Which of the new technologies included in the project (e.g., naval filters, aquaponics) are you most excited about?

- We overcame the difficulties by making the partner consortium broader and more cohesive. All the applications are interesting, but I believe the development of the sustainable greenhouse is particularly strategic for our province. It involves developing a new zero-emission product for the agrifood sector, which is vital for our region's growth—a growth that must not only be economic and employment-driven but also environmentally sustainable.

Nicola Galli *(Technical Director and Coordinator Contact of AGIRE for the HYMANTOVALLEY project)*

Hydrogen News

EU Green Light: €6 Billion for Renewable Hydrogen in Italy

The European Commission has approved a **€6 billion** Italian state aid scheme to boost renewable hydrogen production. Available until December 31, 2029, the measure aims to increase Italy's production capacity by approximately 200,000 tonnes per year. By utilizing "two-way contracts for difference," the plan is designed to lower the costs of green hydrogen, supporting the decarbonization of hard-to-abate industrial sectors and advancing the country's energy transition in line with the EU Green Deal objectives.
The **contracts for difference (CfDs)** indeed guarantee producers a fixed "strike price": if market prices fall, the state pays the difference, but if they rise, the producer returns the surplus. This mechanism eliminates price volatility, providing investors with the financial certainty required to fund large-scale, innovative green energy projects.

Read the full press release: European Commission Press Corner

Co-funded by the European Union

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