

France: France Hydrogène and EIB sign agreement to accelerate support for hydrogen projects



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The agreement signed between France Hydrogène and the European Investment Bank (EIB) aims to provide support focused on advising and supporting project promoters in the hydrogen sector.

Thanks to this agreement, promoters in this sector will benefit from the technical and financial expertise of the EU climate bank, the leading international lender in the field of energy transition.

France Hydrogène (AFHYPAC), the French association for hydrogen and fuel cells, and the European Investment Bank (EIB) – the EU climate bank – today signed a collaboration agreement aimed at facilitating access to the EIB's financing solutions and expertise for hydrogen project promoters in France.

More specifically, this agreement comes under the EIB's InnovFin Advisory programme, which is supported by the European Commission. The resources made available by this programme are expected to help speed up the financing of hydrogen projects through the establishment of personalised advice and support in parallel with a thorough exploration of the funding possibilities.

The EIB and France Hydrogène share common objectives, in particular their strong commitment to climate issues. The EIB is the EU climate bank, and the financing of new technologies, such as innovative projects to combat climate change, is at the heart of its activity. Hydrogen technologies play a major role in accelerating the energy transition, but require scale-up and substantial investment. For this reason, it is necessary to support project promoters throughout the study and feasibility phase of their project as well as the funding research phase. The EIB will therefore work closely with France Hydrogène and its members on sharing knowledge and best practices to facilitate access to the most suitable financing for proposed hydrogen projects and thus identify those that could be eligible for EIB financing. This close cooperation will also make it possible to identify funding deficits in this emerging sector so that they can be addressed by the introduction of new financial instruments, among others.

*“This agreement with France Hydrogène marks a milestone in the development of hydrogen projects in France. Tackling the climate emergency represents a huge challenge and innovative solutions need to be developed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions”, said **EIB Vice-President Ambroise Fayolle**. “Thanks to our expertise as the EU climate bank, we hope that many project promoters will receive personalised advisory support and benefit from facilitated financing.”* He concluded: *“I also welcome the European Commission’s extensive support for this agreement. The development of the hydrogen market in France is expected to have a positive impact on climate and industrial development in France and the European Union. It is by pooling our strengths and skills that we will overcome the climate challenge.”*

*“To meet the targets of the 2030 Energy and Climate Act, public and private investment needs have been estimated at nearly €24 billion over the coming decade. Like the European Commission and other governments, the French government has announced a national strategy for the development of carbon-free hydrogen with financial support of €7.2 billion over 10 years. The partnership agreement signed today with the EIB gives a further positive signal for the deployment and scale-up of hydrogen technologies in France and Europe. The goal is for the players in our sector to hold all the cards and to receive support in deploying projects, supporting new innovations and finding industrial solutions in order to reduce costs and fast become more competitive in Europe and on the international market. France Hydrogène and the EIB intend to collaborate effectively to this end”, said **Philippe Boucly, Chairman of France Hydrogène**.*

This agreement is fully in line with the “National Strategy for the Development of Carbon-Free Hydrogen in France” announced on 8 September 2020: it prepares the ground for a new era for hydrogen as a future strategic industry in France and the European Union.

The agreement was signed today at a virtual event organised by France Hydrogène and the EIB, during which the Bank’s advisory and financing solutions were presented to the association’s members.

Background information

European Investment Bank

As the EU climate bank, the EIB decided to increase financing for projects supporting climate and environmental objectives, bringing them up to 50% of its activities by 2025. This means that the EIB Group will mobilise at least €1 trillion by 2030 to promote investments helping to meet these goals. In 2019, the EIB dedicated 47% of its financing in France – i.e. €3.28 billion – to combating climate change.

About the EIB's InnovFin Advisory services

The EIB's InnovFin Advisory service was set up with the support of the European Commission under the InnovFin and Horizon 2020 programme. InnovFin guides clients in structuring their projects in order to improve their access to finance. It helps them to capitalise on their strengths and to adjust certain aspects such as the economic model, governance, funding sources and structure with a view to facilitating their access to credit. In the long term, clients see their chances of success increase.

InnovFin Advisory also provides recommendations for improving investment conditions through cross-cutting activities. This may include assessing the relevance of new financing mechanisms and conducting studies on enhancing the effectiveness of financial instruments to improve conditions for access to finance in certain sectors.

France Hydrogène

With more than 210 members, France Hydrogène (AFHYPAC) brings together the operators of the French hydrogen sector across the entire value chain: major industrial groups developing large-scale projects, innovative SMEs and start-ups supported by laboratories and research centres of excellence, associations, competitiveness clusters and local authorities committed to the deployment of hydrogen solutions.

Its goal is to accelerate the development of hydrogen solutions to succeed in the energy transition, boost the economy and create value locally to improve the quality of life for all.