



Short Communications

European Fuel Cell Research, Development and Demonstrations: Future Programmes and Aims

Eric Ponthieu *

European Commission, DG XII F / 2, JOULE Programme, rue de la Loi 200, MO75 6 / 4, 1049 Brussels, Belgium

Received 24 July 1997

Abstract

In 1994, the European Commission decided to establish a 'fuel cell research, development and demonstration strategy' for Europe. A broad consultation process was launched at European level involving the concerned stakeholders and a document entitled 'A ten year fuel cell research, development and demonstration strategy for Europe' was finally published in 1995. The strategy will therefore be implemented during the so-called Fourth (1994–1998), Fifth (1998–2002) and Sixth (2002–2006) Framework Programmes of the European Commission. © 1998 Elsevier Science S.A.

Keywords: Fuel Cell; Application

The purpose of the strategy document is mainly to improve the efficiency of dispersed activities carried out at the level of industrial, national and European programmes, in particular by defining common technological goals to be reached at the 2005 horizon.

Early 1996, when the European Commission initiated the definition process of its Fifth Framework Programme, it was decided to explore the need for updating the content of the strategy document by seeking the views of all actors concerned. An invitation to contribute was addressed to all past and current contractors of FC-related BRITE-EURAM, JOULE and THERMIE projects, to Energy European Associations and Federations, as well as to readers of the EC newsletter 'Cordis-Focus'. Over 30 organizations sent in written submissions to the Commission. An analysis of these indicated an obvious necessity to adapt some elements of the strategy document and accordingly, a meeting was held in Brussels with all the contributors.

That meeting demonstrated a broad consensus on:

(1) the continued validity of the strategy document for addressing European needs;

(2) the necessity to integrate some changes/new elements in the updated version:

–re-balancing the effort on the simplification of FC systems in favour of compact stand-alone reformers and internal reforming systems (in contrast with the FC/H₂ networks);

–the inclusion of combined GT-FC systems for electricity generation;

–the inclusion of IT-SOFC for transport applications;

–the revision of cost targets for fuel cell equipped electric vehicles;

–the inclusion of micro-CHP applications in buildings;

–the enlargement of the scope of fuels which have a potential to be reformed on-board for transport applications;

–the establishment of a common demonstration site in Europe.

The Commission has proceeded with the adaptation of the content of the strategy according to these elements and has made an updating of the state-of-the-art section. This new draft version of the strategy has been sent to all Member States contact persons for fuel cell-related activities. A meeting should take place soon with these contact persons to define the final version of the updated document.

It is hoped that the updated document will serve as a reference in defining the content of the future FP5 programme related to fuel cells.

* Fax: +32-2-295-06-56, ext. 400; G = Eric; S = Ponthieu; O = DGXII F/2; OU1 = BXL; P = CEC; A = RTT; C = BE; Internet:eric.ponthieu@dg12.cec.be.