

Dear readers,

I am pleased to introduce myself as your new contact person for the HC-H2 newsletter. We are also starting the year with a small change: from 2026 onwards, the newsletter will be published quarterly. Today's issue marks the start of the 2026 newsletter year.

Even at the start of the year, it is clear to see just how much momentum there is in the Rhenish mining area and around the topic of hydrogen. From research developments to positive news from the start-up landscape and new participation formats for the region – the structural change in our Rhenish mining area is a highly dynamic and diverse process.

There is much more to discover in the months ahead. We have a wide range of projects, events and developments coming up, and we will continue to keep you informed on a regular basis here. If you have a project, idea or topic that you would like to see featured in an upcoming issue, please feel free to get in touch at any time. I look forward to the exchange and to many inspiring insights from the network.

Enjoy reading!  
 Yours sincerely,  
 Anna Ludwig  
 HC-H2 Network

## Good News

### Four More Years for the Startup Village Jülich



© Startup Village

Good news for the start-up ecosystem in the Rhenish mining area: the Startup Village Jülich has received a new funding approval from the Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control. This secures funding for another four years.

The extension of funding creates scope for new programmes, more in-depth support for founding teams, and additional offers for sustainable and future-oriented business ideas. The sense of excitement within the Startup Village team was therefore considerable when the approval came through. The shared moment of celebration symbolises the strong momentum with which the project is now moving forward.

Alongside its community of start-ups, partners and resident companies, Startup Village Jülich will continue its activities, thereby strengthening the region's position as a start-up location in the long term.

### Further Funding for IN4climate.RR

The project "IN4climate.RR" supports industrial companies in the Rhenish mining area in their transition towards climate neutrality. This joint initiative by NRW.Energy4Climate and the Wuppertal Institute began in 2022 and has now been granted additional funding by the federal and state governments until the end of 2029.

As it enters its second funding phase, the project will expand its thematic scope. Alongside existing focus areas, process heat will play a more prominent role. Furthermore, support will increasingly focus on implementing concrete measures.

The project targets manufacturing companies in the Rhenish mining area and includes activities such as technical support, networking opportunities, and assistance with initiating transformation projects.

[Read more](#)

## HC-H2 Close Up



### The New Home of Hydrogen Research in Jülich



© Forschungszentrum Jülich/Jansen

The Institute for a sustainable Hydrogen Economy (IHE) at Forschungszentrum Jülich has reached an important milestone: the internationally renowned architectural firm HENN has been selected to design its new research building at Brainergy Park Jülich. Scheduled for completion by the end of 2031, the facility will receive around 90 million Euros in funding from the State of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Bringing together office and laboratory workspaces at a single location, the new building is intended to support collaboration, knowledge exchange and sustainable development.

[Read more](#)

## Focus on the Rhenish Mining Area



### The Citizens' Council for the Rhenish Mining Area Launches in 2026



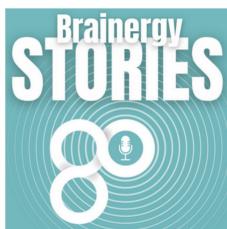
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The structural transformation of the Rhenish mining area has a direct impact on many people. By establishing the Citizens' Council, the State Government is introducing a new format for public participation, actively involving citizens in this process. In summer 2026, 100 participants from across the region, selected by lottery and in accordance with socio-demographic criteria, will come together to develop a shared vision for the future of their region.

The Citizens' Council will formulate concrete recommendations for action addressed to the Government of North Rhine-Westphalia. These deliberations are grounded in the objectives and milestones set out in the framework plan for the Rhenish region. The entire process will be accompanied by the Zukunftsagentur Rheinisches Revier, which ensures professional planning, facilitation and the effective integration of the results. The recommendations will be presented to the public and formally submitted to the State Government.

[Read more](#)

### Podcast: "Brainery Stories"



© Brainery Stories

More than ten years of Brainergy Park Jülich – and many stories worth telling.

In this podcast "Brainery Stories", Morena Blajic and Markus Bambynek discuss the developments, ideas and people behind the energy transition business park. Through personal conversations, they share insights into the site's origins, current projects and future visions.

[Read more](#)

## HC-H2 Documentary Series



### Colours of Hydrogen: Orange is the Other Green



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What role do colours play in the world of hydrogen, and what can they reveal about its origin, production methods and climate impact? In this edition of the HC-H2 documentation series, we explore a seemingly straightforward topic that reveals many nuances on closer inspection.

The case of orange hydrogen clearly demonstrates how alternative approaches can play a significant role in achieving green climate goals. The full article explores what role orange hydrogen can assume and why it is more than just a transitional solution.

[Read more](#)

## Upcoming Events



### H2 Forum Berlin

03. March – 04. March 2026, Berlin

### Zukunftstag Jülich

08. May 2026, Jülich

### World Hydrogen Summit & Exhibition

19. May – 21. May 2026, Rotterdam

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