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INTERVIEW

## MobyFly won the Expo 2025/Jetro Osaka award!

Interview with Ms Sue Putallaz, cofounder, CEO, and winner of the Hack Osaka global innovation award

[MobyFly](#) is a company co-founded by Ms. Sue Putallaz, Mr. Anders Bringdal, and Mr. Ricardo Bencatel. Thanks to the founder's extensive background, the Valais-based company has developed a revolutionary zero-emission hydrofoil boat. The company just won the "Expo 2025/Jetro Osaka Award" at the Annual Global Innovation Conference [Hack Osaka](#) in Japan.

JETRO Geneva supported MobyFly to attend this event. It is now a great pleasure for us to interview Ms. Putallaz, Co-Founder and CEO of the company.

### *Could you introduce your company?*

MobyFly designs and delivers fast, zero-emission hydrofoil boats that are quiet and efficient. Our goal is to decarbonize waterborne transportation. It is not only about ecology. The hydrofoil boat must also be operational for commercial applications. We have a scalable design that can go from 10 to 30 meters and can be adapted to other marine sectors like Leisure or Shipping. Our boats are capable of transporting from 12 to 300 passengers very fast (more than 70km/h), with a great range (400km for the largest hydrogen



The three hydrofoils with a capacity from 12 to 300 passengers.

model), in a comfortable and efficient way (requiring up to 70% less energy than current diesel ferries).

### *What is a hydrofoil and why is it different from other boats?*

The best energy is the one we don't use. So it's all about energy management, because our goal is to be zero emission. The hydrofoil ship has been around since the 1960s, but it has evolved significantly. Our foils work in much the same way as an airplane wing: with enough speed (around 37 km/h) the foils create lift, raising the boat above the surface of the water. This significantly reduces drag and allows the boat to travel at high speed without creating waves while reducing energy consumption by 70% at high speed compared to a traditional diesel boat.

In short, thanks to our hydrofoil technology, passengers enjoy a comfortable, smooth and fast trip, without smell or noise (because of the diesel engine).

### *Why are you using both hydrogen and electric batteries?*

It depends on the use and the country. In both cases, we have a zero-emission boat powered by electricity. Both technologies are good, but one may be better suited to the operator's needs or the availability of the chosen power source.

Recharging the battery takes just over 30 minutes in fast charge for up to 120 km range. On the other hand, depending on the operating schedule, it might be better to opt for hydrogen because it offers a range of 400 km without recharging.

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## MobyFly won the Expo 2025/Jetro Osaka award!

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*How have you heard of Hack Osaka and why have you taken part to it?*

Well, it was Nathalie from your office who contacted me. She asked us if we had heard about this competition, which was not the case. We met with her and Fumi Jokura and it all started. Internally, we discussed whether it was worth doing or not. A startup works with limited resources and time. Japan is a priority market for us because there is a long history of hydrofoil experience and many local companies that can be potential buyers and technology partners. So we decided to participate in the competition.

It was a great collaboration with Nathalie and Fumi, but also a good experience for us, regardless of winning the award. We were asked so many questions that we thought were obvious and that we had never thought to communicate about. The process was really helpful. Thanks to everyone, including the JETRO team in Osaka who did a great job.

*Have you an example?*

Yes: for example, the fact that the boat will be certified. This has always been obvious to us, but we did not mention it always on our presentations. The questions led us to communicate more about our competitive advantages. Our team has a long experience with hydrofoils at the highest level of nautical competition (America's Cup). In addition, our flight control system has been improved over the last ten

years. The software is an essential part of our product. The boat could be even operated autonomously, although legislation requires the presence of a human pilot on board. Participating in the competition has made us realize that we can slightly modify the way we communicate to highlight our top edge technology.

*You won an award there, what does it mean for you?*

This means that our boat will carry passengers at the Osaka World Expo 2025 and beyond.

We are extremely happy. It's a great feeling, especially because it's Japan. Many of our team members have strong connections to Japan. For the company, it is also great because we already have a fruitful cooperation with a Japanese company. This award is a recognition of the quality of our product. It will strengthen our existing relationships.

*What about the production of your boat?*

As mentioned, we have been testing and improving our software and design for the past ten years. We

have designed very advanced hydrofoils and we are working hard to produce the first one.

As far as the production sites are concerned, we also want to have an ecological process. The boat will be produced locally. The boat for the European market is produced in Portugal. For the Japanese market, we would like to have a local production site in Japan.

Production is a very sensitive issue. Sometimes a difference of some degrees might have an impact on the weight of the boat, and weight is energy. The most important aspect is that the production partner can strictly follow our specification and quality requirements.

In the long run, our goal is to produce more than 500 boats per year. All sizes combined.

*When and where will we be able to try your hydrofoils?*

This summer, in the heart of Europe. Stay tuned: communication will follow on our LinkedIn page!

Visitors to the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games will also be able to try our hydrofoils, as well as visitors to the Osaka 2025 World Expo!



Ms Putallaz and Mr Bringdal remotely receiving the award.

## Switzerland lifts most measures; some must be kept in mind

Switzerland has lifted most existing sanitary measures on February 17. This makes companies and people's life easier although some must be kept in mind.

### Travel restrictions

While most measures are lifted for inbound travelers, some exceptions remain. As member of the Schengen space, Switzerland follows the common decisions regarding inbound travelers in the common space.

All vaccinated travelers from Japan

can enter Switzerland without restriction, but unvaccinated ones are not. Exceptions exist for family or business purposes but tourism is not authorized for non-vaccinated visitors from Japan.

The [Travelcheck website](#) from the Federal Office of Public Health is helpful to identify if you can or cannot enter Switzerland.

The [State Secretariat of Migration](#) publish the list of countries from which non-vaccinated people cannot enter the Schengen space.

### Masks, telework, capacity restrictions

Except the obligation to wear a mask in public transports and some measures related to large events, most measures are lifted.

The Federal Council remind however that some flexibility and tolerance is required. Some people may feel more comfortable keeping the mask a bit longer. Plus, freedom of business allows shops or restaurants to maintain some measures if willing.

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TREND

## Foreign business people and students authorized to enter Japan

In reaction to the spread of Omicron variant, Japan restricted the access to the country to non-resident foreign nationals. The measure entered into force on November 5th and ends on February 28th.

The government has decided to relax the strict entry ban from March 1st. Indeed, it will be possible for foreign visitors to enter Japan for business purpose. This applies as well to foreign students joining a Japanese university.

A quarantine is still necessary for people coming from Switzerland. The country is indeed on the list of 37 countries considered to be Omicron

hot spots. However, the quarantine will be less strict. Here the four case scenarios:

When coming from one of the 37 countries listed (including Switzerland) the quarantine is as follow:

- With booster shot, three days at home or venue of your choice plus a PCR test on the third day (7 days quarantine without PCR).
- Without a booster shot, three days in a designated facility and a negative PCR on the third day.

If you are not from a listed country (like the USA), the quarantine is more relaxed.

- Without booster, a three day quarantine at home or venue of your choice and PCR test on third day (or seven days without PCR).
- With a booster, no quarantine is necessary.

To be noticed:

All non-resident foreign visitors must apply for a visa. The application is fulfilled by the sponsoring organization, company or university the foreign visitor will attend.

It is now authorized to use public transport during the 24 hours after your arrival in Japan to reach your quarantine destination.

Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

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## Hack Osaka: Hack Award 2022 Winners

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INNOVATION

The Hack Osaka team did an amazing job in organizing a global start-ups event amid the sanitary measures and travel restrictions.

In addition to MobyFly who won the Expo 2025 Osaka / JETRO Prize, three other companies working on future mobility have won an award:

**HeyCharge GmbH (Germany)** won the Gold Award.

HeyCharge has built technology that unlocks high scalability of charging infrastructure in indoor environments and makes charging affordable and available for everyone.

There is no need for an on-site internet connection. Instead, all devices will communicate directly over Bluetooth with the App or SDK and provide maximum availability of the system.

**H3 Dynamics (Singapore)** won the O-BIC Prize.

H3 Dynamics develops an advanced air mobility and achieves decarbonization with a three steps approach: digitization, leading to solutions around autonomous operations, enhancing flight autonomy with hydrogen propulsion. Their infrastructure visual inspection AI analytics will enable to save

80% time, reduce cost 50%, bring 0 risks for workers, and develop accuracy +20%.

**Sharper Shape Inc. (USA)** won the KGAP+ Award.

Sharper Shape provides an AI-driven, end-to-end, integrated technology suite that is used to create best-in-class data and context-rich digital twins for utility infrastructure.

They focus on assisting utilities in addressing their primary risk factors and facilitating the transition to a risk-based proactive asset management system.

Source: [Hack Osaka](#)

## Swiss Open Innovation Webinar: Strong interest for Swiss startups

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EVENT

Over 100 participants attended the Swiss Open Innovation Webinar – Innovation and digital health in Western Switzerland on February 16.

The event was co-organized by the Greater Geneva Bern Area (GGBa), the Service of the Economy of Canton Neuchatel, and JETRO Geneva.

This event was meant to connect Swiss startups active in digital health with interested Japanese

companies. With more than 100 participants, mostly from Japanese companies, the event was a great success.

Both sides economic promotion organization were represented respectively by Mr. Takegami, Director General of JETRO Geneva and Mr. Bohn, Executive Director of GGBa. The three startups Netsensing Technology, Icosamed and MyElix highlighted the regional

knowhow of western Switzerland in healthtech. Mr. Krauss from CSEM and Mr. Thurner from the Start-Up Program Microcity introduced their structure and how they support startups to the Japanese audience.

The Q&A sessions was a very good opportunity for companies of both countries to exchange.

*JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.*

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online: <http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

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