An aerial photograph of numerous small white sailboats scattered across a vast expanse of clear, turquoise blue water. The boats are viewed from above, and their shadows are cast onto the water's surface. The overall scene is serene and suggests a large-scale maritime activity or a fleet of vessels.

A TT Case  
Entrepreneurship Story :  
"Water Drones: A journey  
from HEP to a Sailing  
Technology exploitable in  
other fields"

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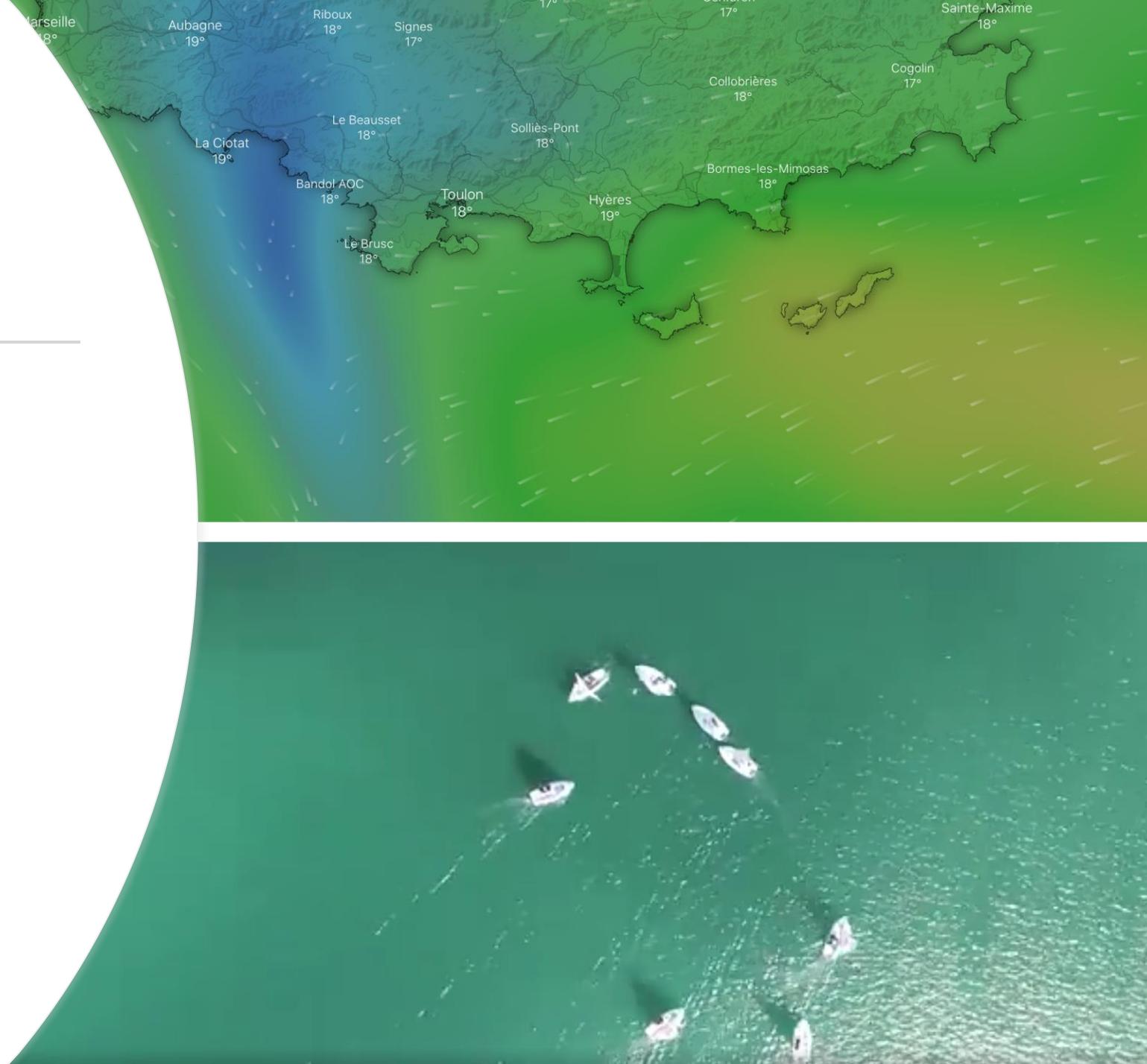
by Valentina Venturi

# A passion for sailing

There is a lot involved in sailing:

- aerodynamics
- balance
- strategy and tactics
- meteorology
- material science
- team-work
- material science

Regattas involve all



# Experience in sailing

25 years as sailor

Some coaching

Teaching

Regatta judge trainings

Regattas organization

Yachting club president

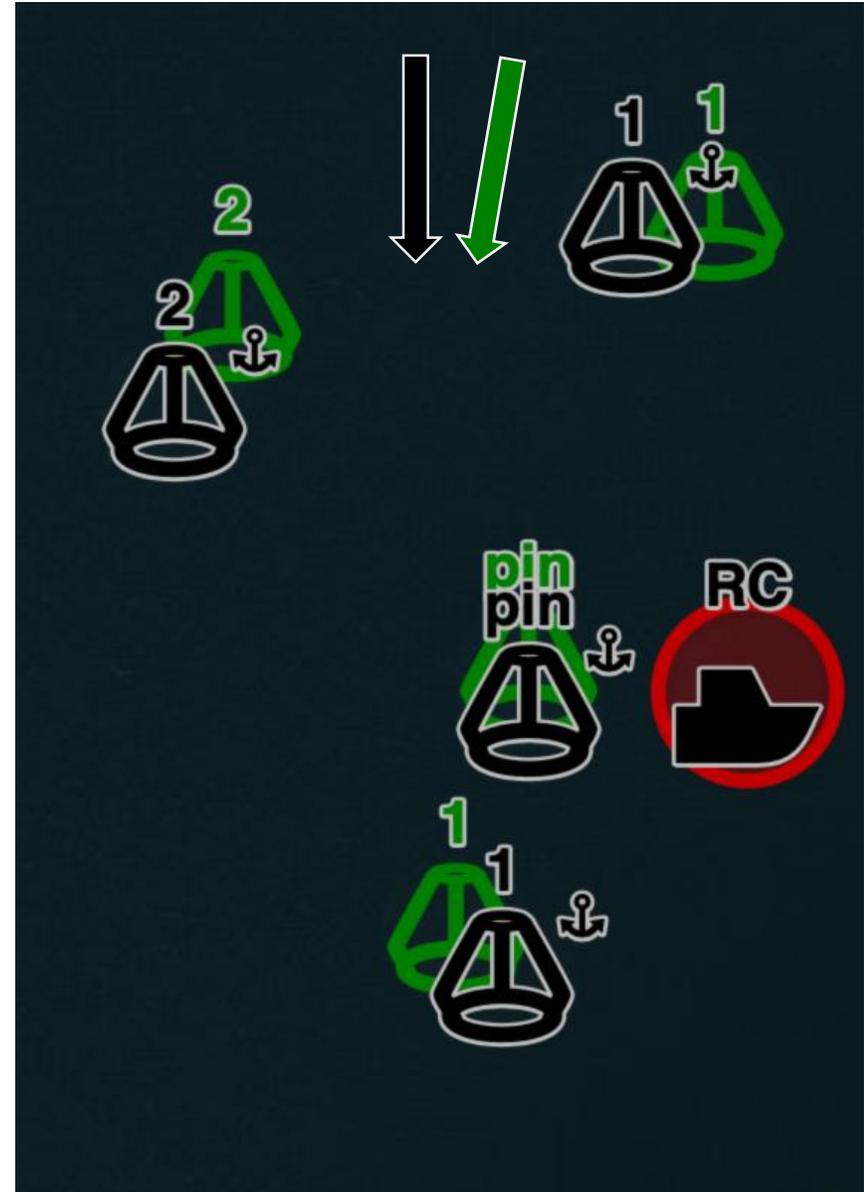


# How are regattas organized

In a regatta there are courses delimited by marks (buoys).

They form certain shapes with a specific orientation with respect to the wind.

The wind often changes direction so the course has to be re-oriented, and the marks moved.



# A problem worth solving

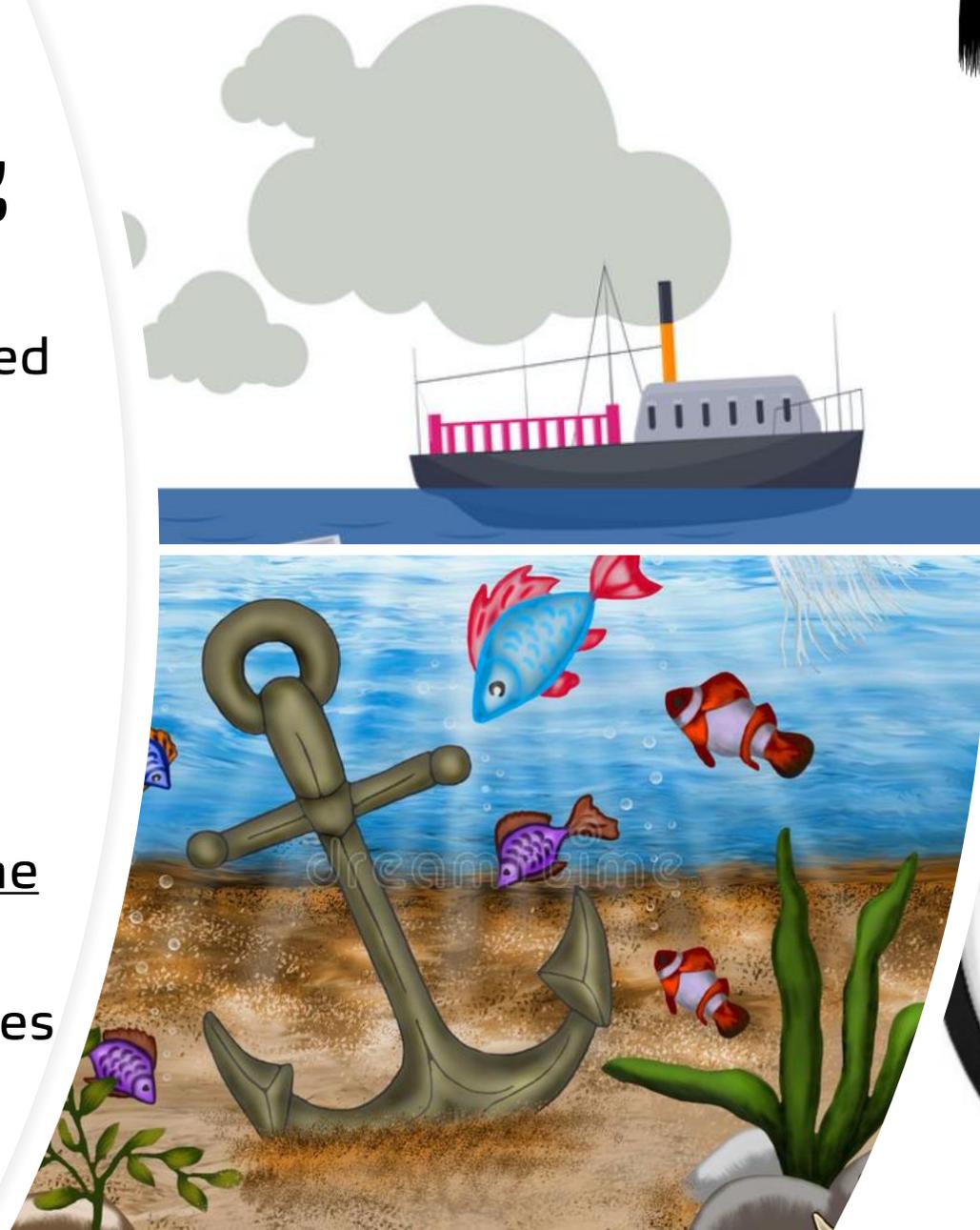
Motorboats are needed

Volunteers are overloaded

The seabed is ruined

Sailors wait a long time

The club has sometimes a high organizational cost



# Solution

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We needed something that simply didn't need any anchoring.

Constraints:

- Some connection for remote control
- Lightweight
- Easy to use

First prototype 2018: too heavy



# The first official startup

In 2020 I met someone who was trying to sell something similar to what I had in mind.

The product was interesting, I bought 1 and tried to give it the shape of a buoy.

We incorporated a company in September 2020 after a whole summer of work with a third person.



# The first official startup

In 2020 first early customers

In 2021 we had 40+ marks sold

Despite the success there were different visions for the future.





# A hard choice

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The product needed a new-design to solve some issues since long.

In September 2021 I left without knowing what to do.

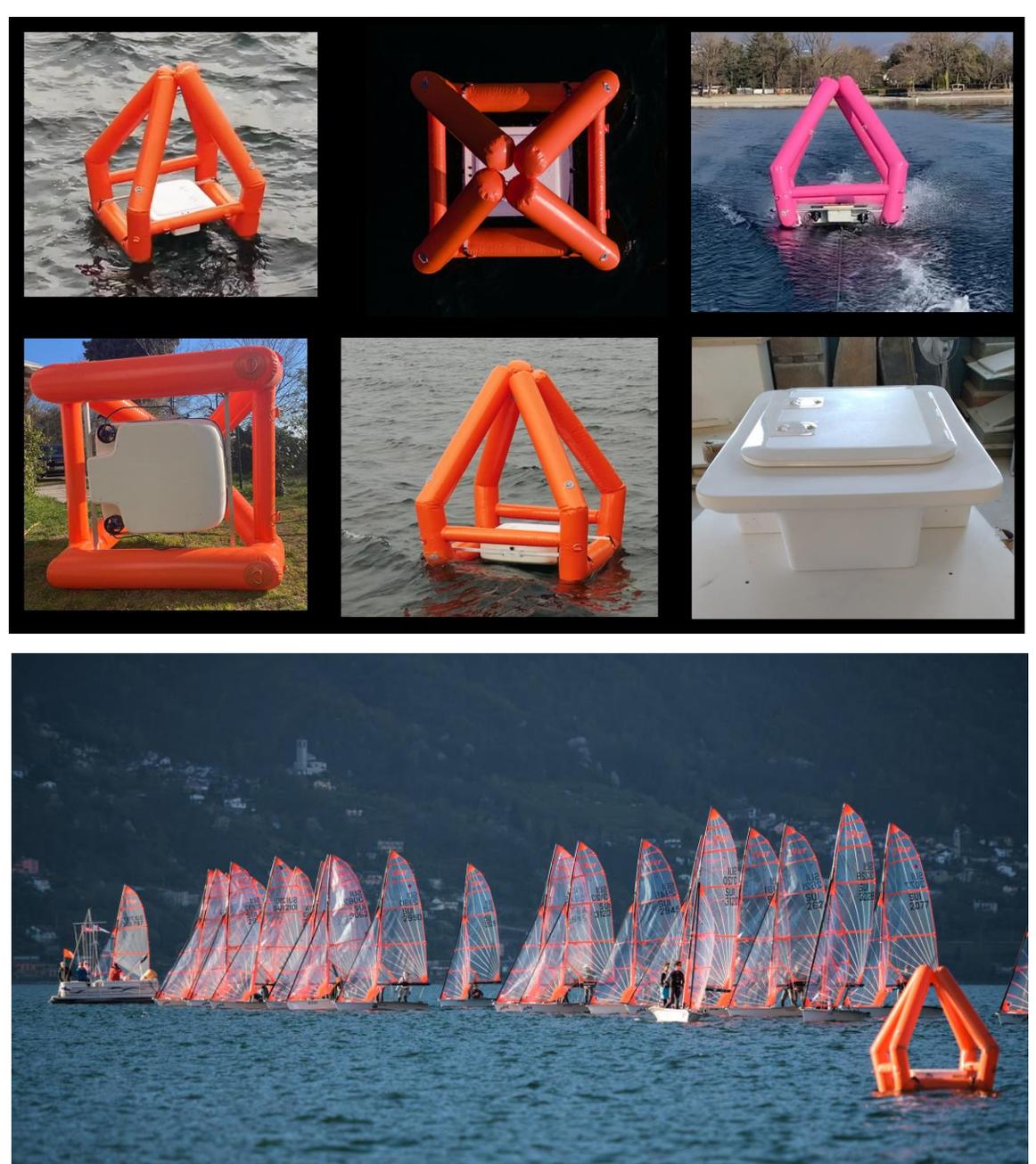
2 weeks later an angel investor approached me, saying he would have liked to participate to a new project for robotic marks

# November 2021- Today

The hardest time

There was no technology, no name, no team but only 1 idea in mind and a priceless experience

In 6 months we went from zero to the first items sold, with a more reliable design, a brand new control and many more functions in the web-app.



# At some point...

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...one can ask him/herself:  
can the technology be used for  
something else?

Do you have ideas for a different  
application for a water drone  
controlled via web-app?

Please write your thoughts in the chat





# How to select?

## Objectives:

- Niche or big market?
- Which ideas passionate me most?
- Where do I know more people?
- Feasibility?



# It feels like starting from zero

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Technology transfer looks very similar to the first stage of a startup





# How do you do Technology Transfer?

Please, if you are a KT or TT officer, can you share your way to go from an idea for a technology to its validation?



# How to understand if your idea has a future?

Talk to as many people as you can:

Talk about their life instead of your idea

Ask about specifics in the past instead of  
generics or opinions about the future

Talk less and listen more



# The mom test, good and bad questions

“Do you think it’s a good idea?”

“Would you buy a product which did X?”

“Would you pay Y for a product which did X?”



# The mom test, good and bad questions

“Why do you bother?”

“What else have you tried?”

“How are you dealing with it now?”



# Let's try

Breakout rooms 10 min:

one selected person in each room will try to understand if the idea given for Tech transfer is a good one by asking questions.

When we come back we'll want to hear your best questions!

Idea 1: Water drone for leisure on the water (sun bed ecc)

Idea 2: Water drone for safety

Idea 3: Water drone for catering



# Thank you for the attention!

“Did you like the presentation?”

.... Oups.....

“Which kind of Zoom conference do you normally attend?”

“Which is the last presentation you attended?”

“What did you like/dislike about it?”

.....

# Next HEPTrepreneurs

July 2022: we'll have a round Table of HEP Entrepreneurs