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## **STRAT.AT REPORT 2012**

### **SECOND STRATEGIC REPORT FOR AUSTRIA ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EU COHESION POLICY 2007-2013**

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# Foreword

## OF THE ÖROK-OFFICE

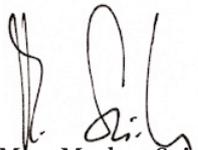
This Strategic Report 2012 on the progress of the implementation of EU Cohesion Policy in Austria was prepared at a time during which the current Structural Funds programming period 2007–2013 was not yet over, but the preparations for the programming period 2014–2020 were started at the same. In this transition phase between two programming periods, the Report meets the requirement of informing on the progress achieved under the “National Strategic Reference Framework” (NSRF) for Austria (“STRAT.AT 2007–2013”) and also contributes evidence-based results to the reflection process on future strategies.

This Report takes into account the provisions of the relevant EU regulation as well as the corresponding guidelines of the European Commission. Its content contains an analysis of socioeconomic developments as well as a presentation of the implementation of Austria’s Structural Funds programmes, pointing out the relevant measures that feature only national funding from federal bodies or the Länder. The aim was to obtain a more complete picture of the different scopes of action and their effects with respect to the EU programmes that intervene only in certain sections of the respective policy areas. In this context, the report also addresses the relevant focus areas of the “Programme for the Development of Rural Areas” (e. g. LEADER).

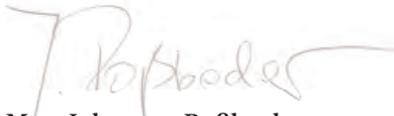
The Report also presents six good practice examples that illustrate the contribution of Cohesion Policy to the objectives of “Europe 2020 Strategy” both with respect to regional development as well as to the coordination of Regional and Cohesion Policy. It also summarizes the experiences with the programme implementation 2007–2013 up to now – based on the results of the Strategic Report 2009 – and discusses the consequences that may be derived for EU Cohesion Policy for the programming period as of 2014. These findings also flowed into the process for setting up Austria’s Partnership Agreement (“STRAT.AT 2020”) for the activities of the “European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds” for the period 2014–20. An analysis of the implementation based on the “EU 2020 Strategy” is supplemented by assessments of external experts in the sections presenting the conclusions, and thus the Report is also contributing to a critical discussion of EU Cohesion Policy in Austria.

The Strategic Report for Austria – “STRAT.AT Report 2012” – was written by the team of experts of the firm “convelop GmbH” within the framework of the ÖROK under the leadership of the Subcommittee on Regional Economy with the collaboration of the STRAT.AT Partnership as well as the relevant programming bodies. The Report was adopted on 14 November 2012 by the ÖROK Commission of Deputies and officially submitted to the European Commission on 17 December 2012 by the Austrian Federal Chancellery. Therefore, Austria has fully complied with the special reporting obligations for the years 2009 and 2012 regarding the implementation of the NSRF.

This publication aims primarily at an expert audience and apart from serving as documentation, it also strives to raise awareness for EU Cohesion Policy in Austria. Moreover, the experiences shared in this Report are a contribution to the future design of the ESI Funds from 2014 to 2020. The Report is also published in English to facilitate communication for experts at the European level to share and discuss their views.



Mag. Markus Seidl



Mag. Johannes Roßbacher

Managing directors

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# Summary

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy programmes in Austria

The **Second Strategic Report for Austria** pursuant to Article 29 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 on the implementation of the Austrian **National Strategic Reference Framework – STRAT.AT** is based on the first report of 2009 taking into account the Commission's Guidance Note.<sup>1</sup> These findings were investigated and expanded on starting out from the implementation data as of 31 December 2011.

The Austrian programmes were launched relatively quickly – albeit with the delays inherent to EU Cohesion Policy. They show a strong orientation on the relevant master **strategies of the EU** (Lisbon Strategy and as of 2010 “Europe 2020 Strategy”) and a generally good to very good implementation progress across all funding programmes – both with respect to financial implementation and attainment of the agreed objective indicators. Therefore, we expect an almost complete allocation of the funds.

- The **ERDF** programmes for the objectives “Regional Competitiveness” and “Convergence Phasing Out Burgenland” indicate an average funds allocation rate of 66%. The **results indicators** show a good performance with respect to the agreed target values. According to the ERDF monitoring data as of 31 December 2011
  - some **7,700 new jobs** are planned or have already been created (112% of the targets). Around one-tenth are R&D jobs;
  - the **investment volume** funded is around EUR 3.5 billion (92% of the targets);
  - the climate-related investments helped create 140 MW in additional generation capacities from **renewable energy** sources and this surpasses the agreed targets by more than 30%; the contribution to the reduction of greenhouse emissions of around 200,000 t is in line with plans.

Start-ups and **R&D projects at enterprises** lagged behind the targets. The cause is not a lack of projects, but primarily the transfer of project funding to exclusively nationally financed schemes. The programmes focus heavily on the **funding of individual enterprises** in the form of subsidies, and in this case, specifically on encouraging **investment activity** at enterprises. In international comparison, this is a special feature of the programmes. Overall, one should not forget that the volume of funds paid out – similar to that of Europe in general – is lower than in the previous programming period. Apart from the financial and economic crisis, this is due, above all, to the increasing hindrances in the processing due to the growing complexity of the multi-level governance structures as well as to the uncertainty regarding the interpretations of eligibility and unresolved audit issues.

- The national “**ESF programme for Employment**” and the programme “ESF Convergence Phasing Out Burgenland” focus on special labour market themes and target groups (preventive and active labour market policy; specifically, persons distant from the labour market, active aging) and support the approaches of the Territorial Employment Pacts. Up to now, under the ESF programme for “Employment”, EUR 412 million in public funding has been allocated, and an amount of EUR 343 million paid out. The funds have been used to provide consulting to 6,860 enterprises and 399 qualification pacts. Overall, qualification and employment measures supported almost 460,000 participants. The programmes reached the target groups of “women” and “older persons” exceptionally well. This also applies to the integration objectives. Practice shows that the integration of marginalised groups into the labour market is a challenging task – even more so considering the current job market.
- Under the **ETC programmes**, around 90% of ERDF funds earmarked for Austria with Austrian

1 Guidance note on indicative contents and structure for the national strategic reports 2012 (COCOF\_11-0040-01-EN)

participation had been contractually allocated by 31 December 2011. The cross-border programmes successfully integrated new concepts such as the “Lead Partner Principle” and in this manner substantially improved the **quality of co-operation**. Projects in the area of research, technology and **innovation** are becoming more important. Compared to previous Structural Funds programming periods, the importance of education and environmental themes, especially as regards risk prevention, energy and climate change, is growing. However, it has also been observed that

- very **divergent understandings of development** with partially incompatible procedures (e. g. competition versus proactive project development) exist and counteract each other;
  - there is a tendency towards fewer and larger projects. The requirements imposed are also reducing the number of potential project organisers. This is detracting from the ETC programmes’ effectiveness across a broader range;
  - the transfer of the **general rules** of the Structural Funds, especially those that give programming competence to only one member state are often inadequate for the ETC programmes.
- Austria gives special weighting to the second pillar of CAP and **rural development** within the Austrian Programme for Environmentally Compatible Agriculture (ÖPUL, *Österreichisches Programm für eine umweltgerechte Landwirtschaft*), and the disbursement of payments shows a heavy weighting on disadvantaged (mountain) rural areas. The EAFRD programme had paid out approximately 66% of the EU funds until the end of 2011. The degree of implementation of Priorities 3 & 4 (“Diversification of Rural Areas” and “LEADER”) is far below this level as regards the use of funds. An outcome of the “LEADER mainstreaming” is that there are still quite a significant number of funded projects with only limited innovative content although many of the projects implemented in the programme regions had a positive impact. The impact assessment conducted for the mid-term evaluation showed a year-on-year increase of gross added value from the programme of EUR 1,257 million; the employment effects are expected to reach a volume of almost 26,200 full time equivalents of which 5,866 are in agriculture. In the area of climate protection, the measures helped to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 1.9 million t by the mid-term evaluation.

## Synergies and complementarities with Europe 2020

The data on programme implementation shows the high share of funds earmarked for the programming period 2007–2013 in accordance with the **Lisbon guidelines** (approx. 90% of ERDF and ESF). As regards the **Europe 2020 Strategy** and the implementation of the National Reform Programme (NRP), there were contributions to all objectives. However, due to the small volume of the funds from the Structural Funds, the contributions to the targets can only be very limited.

## The framework and its effects on the programmes

Apart from the many **positive effects** of the Structural Funds such as the impulses for a regular planning cycle, monitoring oversight and a closer coordination of the federal level with the *Länder*, they are also creating more and more hindrances that in Austria’s view are producing insecurity. The experience with implementation during the programming period 2007–2013 revealed that in comparison to the previous period, the greater flexibility at the programming level (e. g. use of the funds) is being **counteracted** by the administrative rules at the operating level. In this context, it has to be stressed that is very clear that the regulatory density is home-grown in Austria. If all **regulations** at the EU and at the national level were to be **strictly adhered** to, the system would reach the limits of operability both with respect to processing and to the control mechanisms and auditing. The “**simplification**” measures introduced at the EU level are welcomed. The principles of accounting for indirect costs based on “flat rates” and standard unit costs for personnel costs apply. These constitute a significant simplification in the processing of funding for labour-intensive action plans, as in the case of innovation and R&D projects.

## Effects of the financial and economic crisis

Austria proved to be a “**resilient**” economic region with excellent **problem-solving capacities** during the financial and economic crisis. Nonetheless, the crisis has not been without repercussions on the implementation of the programmes due to the contraction of investment activity. The consequences for the programmes are (i) longer and smaller projects, (ii) delays in payments because of the prolongation of the projects and (iii) a shift in the focus of the projects from detail engineering to less riskier investments in companies. The budget cuts carried out because of the pressure to consolidate government finances are starting to have negative effects on the possibilities of raising funds for regional co-financing.

The **ESF programmes** have significantly widened funding to combat unemployment caused by the deteriorating conditions on the labour market triggered by the crisis and have set up training and employment schemes. At the same time, it became necessary to adjust the integration targets slightly downwards. Furthermore, adjustments were made to individual schemes such as the enlargement of eligible target groups to include short-time employees in the qualification programmes.

The interventions during the crisis were generally carried out in the form of national programme measures using the elements specified in the EU Communication “A European Economic Recovery Plan” and supplemented by the measures of the *Länder* (see Report 2009). As an immediate response to the recommendations of the Structural Funds programmes, the simplification approaches (such as accounting for indirect costs by “flat rates” and using standard unit costs for personnel expenses) were taken up and applied.

### Conclusions for the current programming period – relevance of the strategies

As STRAT.AT is largely compatible with the Europe 2020 Strategy and the current strategies and Operational Programmes continue to serve as a reference framework. On account of the objectives of the programmes and the relatively low financing volumes when compared to the convergence scheme regions, these programmes are not suitable as “economic steering elements”. The consequences of the crisis are ameliorated by national interventions. With respect to the remaining term of the **programming period 2007–2013**, the following challenges remain:

- The implementation of **system adaptations** to account for the more stringent requirements for the audit system introduced in the programming period 2007–13, but without hindering or slowing down the overall process;
- Furthermore, the situation that the management of the current programmes and the complex planning processes operate **parallel** at several levels (national, regional) has to be solved in the new programming period.

### Conclusions for the further design of the EU Structural Policy 2014

For the years 2014+, the following general aspects must be taken into account:

- **Good governance principles must be strictly observed by all sides.** Apart from the avoidance of an excessive density of regulations, this requires the timely and clear definition of the rules (harmoni-

sation as far as possible) and the avoidance of any ex post additions or new interpretations.

- **Improve the performance of the system** both at the implementing bodies as well as at the control and audit authorities. To implement the programmes, the bodies involved have to be supplied with sufficient resources (concentration).
- **Vertical coordination:** The new governance concept makes it necessary to deepen the relationship to the National Reform Programme. Vice versa, this calls for a greater inclusion of the *Länder* in the preparation and reporting of the NRP.
- **Harmonisation of the regulations** by the EC as well as in the national financial aid rules (e. g. within EU framework programmes).
- The principle of **proportionality** must be observed, that is, the relation of reporting and auditing expenses to the size of the programme.
- As regards content, it will be necessary to place a greater emphasis on research and the related **development of locations** well as more on “**CO<sub>2</sub> reduction**”.

The **regulation proposals** being discussed since October 2011 propose the merger of the five EU funds under the “Common Strategic Framework” (CSF) as well as a closer vertical coordination with Europe 2020, the National Reform Programme and EU co-financed programmes. This is supplemented by an orientation on outcomes (“performance turn”). In the view of experts, there are two options for positioning the Structural Funds:

- The function and main argument for the European programmes is the **harmonisation of spatial** interventions and coordinated action for local development. For Austria, the issue within this framework will be to overcome sector-specific biases and the strict separation of target groups in favour of a coordinated development perspective in line with the common central themes as well as a stronger orientation on local development in which horizontal (enterprise level) financial aid programmes play more of a supplementary role.
- If this development scenario is not pursued, the alternative is to focus the funds as “**financing instruments**”. The individual Operational Programmes have to be argued here before the backdrop of the policy fields and regional strategies.

In any case, what we need are **framework conditions** from the EU and the member states that permit and/or encourage higher risk tolerance and enable clear, enforceable strategies. Major progress must be achieved in the current negotiation process to define EU Cohesion Policy 2014+.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The establishment of multi-level governance processes in the programming period 2007–2013 for all programmes has the purpose of strengthening the strategic orientation of EU Cohesion Policy.

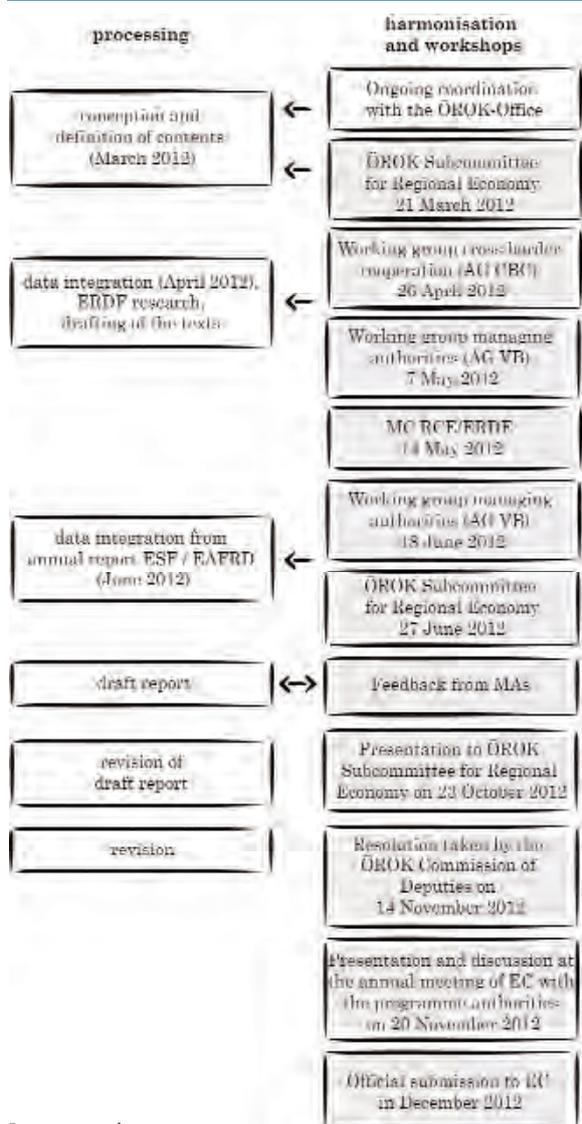
The Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) requires **reporting** by the member states on implementation progress achieved, the strategy selected and the contributions to the European objectives.<sup>2</sup>

This document is the **Second Strategic Report** for Austria on the implementation of the National Strategic Reference Framework – STRAT.AT. It is guided by the requirements of the European Commission and its starting point is the findings of the First Strategic Report 2009. These findings are investigated and expanded on the basis of the implementation data available as of 31 December 2011. To ensure a complete report, all of the Structural Funds Programmes have been covered and references to Austria’s Programme for the Development of Rural Areas taken into account.

## On the nature of the report

The preparation of this Strategic Report by the ÖROK Subcommittee on Regional Economy was done with the participation of the STRAT.AT partners as well as the relevant programming bodies. The writing of the report was awarded to an external team of experts of the firm convelop, which introduced an expert view that is particularly evident in the sections that discuss the conclusions and outlook. The Second STRAT.AT Report is not only a report on the progress achieved, but also a critical analysis of the implementation of EU Cohesion Policy in Austria.

Figure 1: Process flows



Source: convelop

<sup>2</sup> The reporting obligation results from Art. 29 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, with nos. 2 to 4 defining the basic contents of this report.

## 2 THE STRATEGY - STRAT.AT

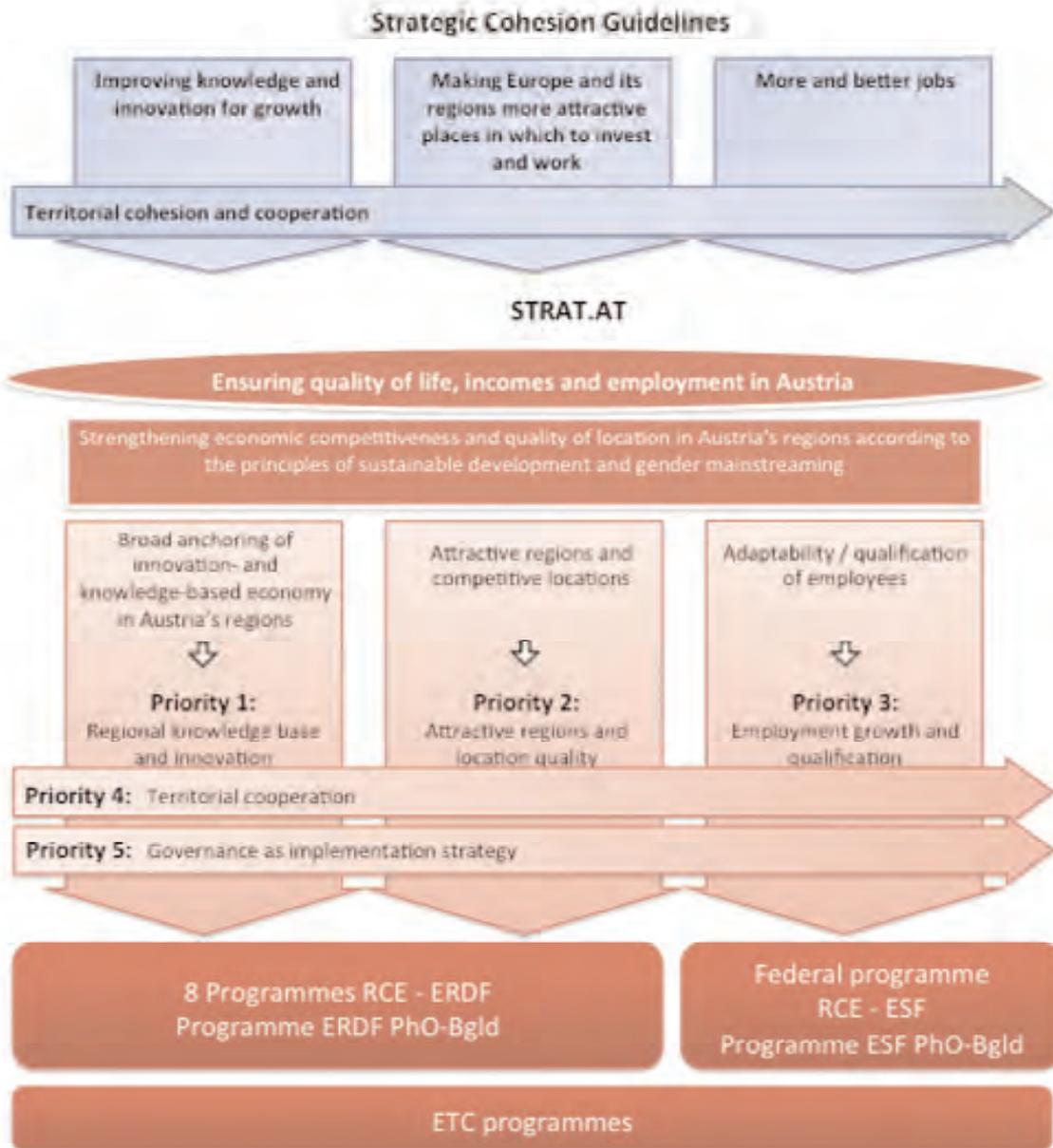
The “National Strategic Reference Framework“ – in Austria **STRAT.AT** – is based on the European strategies, especially on the **Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion** and forms the **National Reference Framework** for EU Cohesion Policy 2007–2013. **STRAT.AT** serves as the framework for the objectives “Regional Competitiveness and Employment” and “Convergence Phasing Out” (Burgenland) as well as a point of reference for the ESF Strategy. At the same time, it makes a reference to the objective “European Territorial Cooperation“ and includes an interface to Priority 3 of the Programme on the Development of Rural Regions 2007–2013 (Diversification of Rural Economies and Quality of Life in Rural Regions).

STRAT.AT is thus part of a reference framework for a total of **21 Operational Programmes**. The figure below shows the relationship between the Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion (SGC), the objectives and priorities of STRAT.AT, and the individual Structural Funds programmes.

“The **development strategy** of STRAT.AT has the purpose of supporting Austria to plan and develop its transition to a knowledge-based economy and society on a broad basis.” (ÖROK 2006). The STRAT.AT has three vertical and two horizontal priorities:

- Priority 1: **Regional knowledge base and innovation** with a focus on the broad anchoring of an innovative and knowledge-based economy in Austria's regions.
- Priority 2: **Attractive regions and quality of location**, with the focus on endogenous regional policy and location development that place a greater emphasis on balancing objectives.
- Priority 3: This priority concentrates on the objective of **increasing the adaptability** and the **qualification of employees**, and on **employment growth**.
- Priority 4 refers to **territorial cooperation** and therefore includes the ETC programmes (cross-border, transnational and EU-wide network programmes).
- Priority 5 refers to national and **regional governance** as well as gender mainstreaming as an implementation strategy.

Figure 2: Relationships of STRAT.AT objectives and priorities to the Structural Funds programmes and the Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion.



Source: Own illustration, convelop according to ÖROK 2006

## 3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRENDS

### 3.1 Financial and Economic Crisis: Austria in the European Context

The **financial and economic crisis** that broke out in 2008 and its long-term effects had a major impact on economic development during the reporting period. Austria proved to be a **resilient economic location** during the crisis with a high capacity for overcoming problems. The strong bias towards business-related and job-creating investments, and the qualification and employment measures of the Structural Funds programmes were all factors that helped ameliorate the situation for the economy and the labour market in a critical phase.

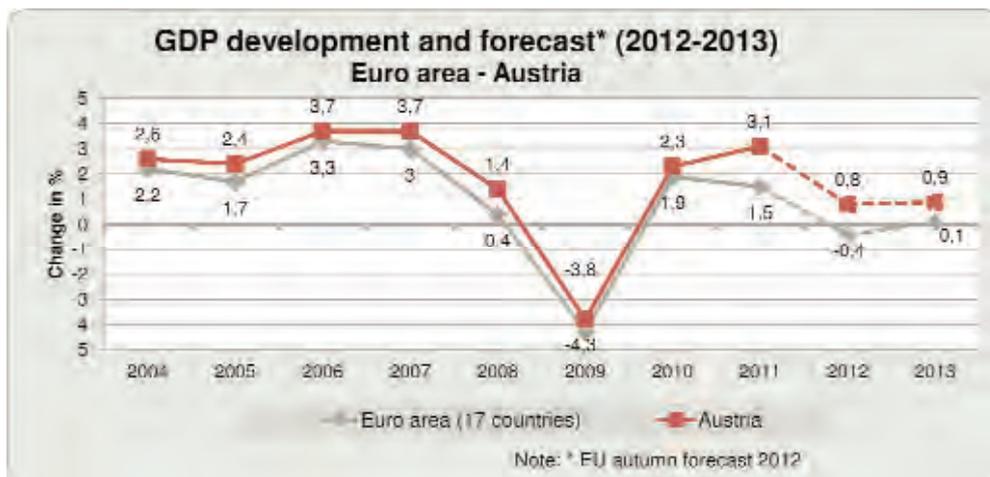
#### Resilient development of Austria and its regions

After a booming economy in the first years of the programme's implementation, the situation changed abruptly. In the summer of 2008, the financial crisis that originated in the US started to spread to the real economy. The year 2009 was marked by extremely re-

cessionary trends. Austria was unable to decouple from these dramatic developments.

However, up to now it has coped quite well with the crisis: the crash of 2009 was not as severe in Austria as throughout the entire EU and euro area with respect to the effects on GDP, employment and also rising unemployment.<sup>3/4</sup> The surprisingly quick recovery was stronger and faster in Austria than in the EU and euro area. In international comparison, Austria responded quickly and forcefully using traditional economic stimulus policy measures. At the same time, there were strong impulses from the emerging markets especially from the Asian region. Austria's exporting sector profited from the excellent competitive position it built up over the past years, especially in technology niches. The effects of the economic crash of 2009 had been largely offset by 2011. In 2011, GDP in Austria and also employment were higher than in 2008<sup>5</sup> in real terms, while 4.6 million jobs are still lacking throughout the EU versus the level of 2008. Nonetheless, unemployment is still higher than before the crisis – also in Austria (2008–2011: +34,449

Figure 3: Economic Development



Source: Eurostat

3 Cf. also OECD (2011): Economic Surveys. Austria.

4 GDP Euro area: -4.3%, (AT: -3.8%), Employment: -1.1% Euro area (AT: -0.8%), unemployment ratio EU-27: Increase of 7.1% 2008 to 9.0% 2009 (AT: 3.8% vs. 4.8%).

5 Index value GDP Austria 2008=109, 2011=110.6 (2005=100) (Source: Statistik Austria).

jobless). Rising base unemployment rates and increasing bottlenecks for highly qualified, technically skilled personnel are occurring simultaneously more frequently. Despite the fact that the unemployment rate in Austria is the lowest within the entire EU, the effort to overcome unemployment and underemployment will remain an enormous challenge, also in coming years.

**Return to old development patterns after wide economic fluctuations**

How strongly the crisis affected the economy depends on competitiveness as well as on a region's economic structure. The higher the share of industrial production, the wider the fluctuations during the recession of 2009 and the recovery of 2010/2011.

In the initial crisis phase of 2009, it was above all the regions with a high share of export manufacturing that were affected, while regions (mostly structurally weak) with a strong focus on domestic markets and service-based agglomerations fared better. In tourism, mainly the leading regions were confronted with strongly rising unemployment due to the drop in foreign guests. On the other hand, the structurally weak tourism regions succeeded in compensating the decline in overnight stays of foreign guests partly by domestic overnight stays.<sup>6</sup>

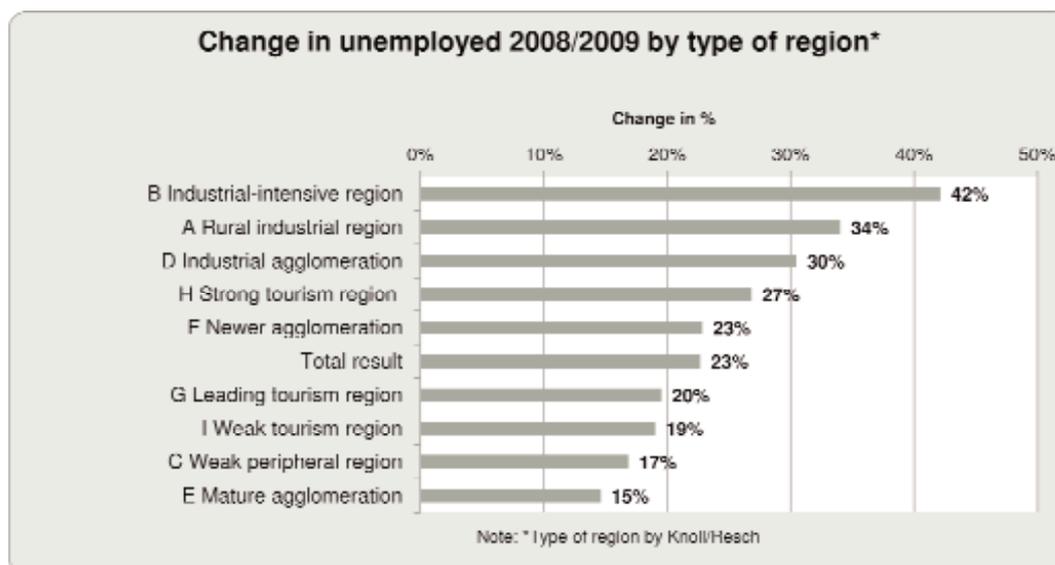
During the **recovery phase**, Austria's regions proved to be highly **resilient**. They are now returning to their **long-term development patterns**. Although industrial regions are still confronted with higher unemployment rates (+ 13%), the steepest rises are in the urban agglomerations – with unemployment being 20% and higher. This is explained by the attraction of urban areas for the pool of available labour and its constant enlargement. Therefore, with a view to the objective of social cohesion, urban labour markets will have to be given more attention.

**Changed framework conditions for Austria as an economic region**

Even though the probability of a major setback may be assessed as minor, **growth** has been **flattening** since the end of 2011 again, and in the euro area, a recessionary trend started in the second quarter of 2012. Before this backdrop, the economy in Austria will probably develop relatively well nonetheless at an estimated growth rate of 0.8%.<sup>7</sup> The medium-term outlook has dimmed though due to the sustained euro crisis, the government consolidation policies and the overall sluggishness of the global economy. Therefore, the **framework conditions** are changing sustainably:

→ The **growth rates** in the EU and Austria will drop far below the levels of before the crisis in the coming years.

Figure 4: The impact of the crisis in the regions



Source: AMS, calculations envelop

6 Cf. WIFO (2010): Monthly Report 5/2010, p. 461 ff.  
 7 EU Autumn Forecast 2012.

Table 1: The headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy

Headline targets	EU	Austria
Employment in %	75%	77–78%
R&D in % of GDP	3%	3.76%
Reduction of CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	-20% (vs. 1990)	-16%
Renewable energy	20%	34%
Energy efficiency – Reduction of energy consumption in mill. t crude units (CDU)	Increase in EE by 20% i. e., 368 mill. t. CDU	7.16 mill. t. CDU
School dropout rate	10%	9,5%
University graduates in %	40%	38%
Reduction of the share of persons living in poverty and social exclusion	20,000,000	235,000

Source: National Reform Programme 2011

The table below lists the special challenges (basis: NRP 2011 Summary with a view to the relevance for EU Cohesion Policy):

Table 2: Headline targets and challenges in the NRP

Headline targets	Challenges
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on strengthening labour market participation of older workers, of women and young people, of persons with migration backgrounds and low-skilled workers</li> </ul>
<b>Research and development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the innovation capacity of enterprises</li> <li>• Promoting research</li> <li>• Advancement of the information society</li> </ul>
<b>Climate protection and energy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of renewable energy sources and higher energy and resource efficiency</li> <li>• Reduction of greenhouse emissions</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase participation in education especially to achieve a higher number of graduates in natural sciences and technical studies</li> <li>• Improve education levels and lower the rate of school dropouts</li> <li>• Attractiveness, quality and permeability in occupational education</li> </ul>
<b>Reduce poverty and social exclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on measures to fight long-term unemployment and improve labour market participation for persons of employable age at risk of poverty</li> <li>• Make family and job compatible and improve the employment participation of women</li> </ul>
<b>Competitiveness and entrepreneurial environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start-up dynamic</li> <li>• Further internationalisation</li> </ul>

Source: NRP 2011; Shortened to relevance for EU Cohesion Policy by convelop

→ (Anti-cyclical) state **stimulus measures to spur demand** will be less effective in the future. At present, fiscal policy may be expected to have a tendency to create impulses that check growth.<sup>8</sup>

→ The **higher unemployment rates** pose a challenge to social integration especially in the case of persons with low skills, youths and persons with migration backgrounds. At the same time, demand for highly qualified personnel will continue to rise.

At the enterprise level, **competitive and innovative pressure** will continue to intensify, among other things, due to the rapid progress of the emerging markets and the competition from the Asian region.

High **insecurity** leads to **shorter decision-horizons** and reduced planning certainty. Therefore, in the current phase, capacities will reach their limits and little will be spent on expansive projects.

<sup>8</sup> IMK (2012) Fiskalpakt belastet Euroraum. Gemeinsame Diagnose des Makro-Konsortiums. IMK (Düsseldorf)1, OFCE (Paris) and WIFO (Vienna).

### 3.2 Objectives and Challenges – Europe 2020/NRP<sup>9</sup>

In the light of this outlook and the Europe 2020 Strategy with its focus on **growth**, WIFO has identified the “**growth bottlenecks**” that are currently squeezing growth and employment.<sup>10</sup> “Easing” the barriers to growth such as the small number of enterprises that engage in R&D or the lower-than-average share in tertiary education will therefore be of enormous significance for improving Austria’s competitiveness in the coming years. This analysis was integrated into the agreement on the national **objectives** for the **Europe 2020** strategy. Apart from the six core objectives, special challenges were identified.

The objectives and challenges formulated here to match the national goals cannot be viewed separately from the **regional development potentials** and trends. The following section deals with the most important regional implications related to the core objectives and challenges:

- **Migration and aging:** Austria has a growing and at the same time aging population. Estimates state an increase to 9.048 million persons by 2030. However, **growth** is not equally distributed across the **regions**. Generally, it is expected that the agglomeration regions of Austria will continue to post above average rates of increase, while rural areas will develop divergently. This leads to disparities in social, environmental and economic policy needs in the regions.
- Crucial for **knowledge-based production** are accessibility, security and **attractive locations** as well as research, technology and innovation infrastructure embedded in a national and European context. From a regional policy standpoint, the increasing **pressure** for more **innovation** in conjunction with the societal trend of increasing urbanisation is resulting in a deeper functional specialisation of the regions. Agglomerations are gaining importance as economic drivers and business locations.
- The combination of a scarcity of workers and a rising base unemployment rate are creating a need to align the **qualifications needed** with the long-term development prospects of a region in an attempt to avoid mismatches as much as possible. High quality education and further education structures should be a priority of any policy to promote the appeal of a region as an economic centre.
- **Resource and energy scarcity & climate change:** From a regional perspective, there are different potentials regarding the use of renewable energy sources and higher efficiency. The effects of climate change will vary depending on location and focus of a region’s economy. Therefore, regionally adapted strategies will be needed.

### 3.3 Strategic Guidelines and Concepts

New **basic strategy materials** have been prepared since the First Strategic Report in response to the Europe 2020 Strategy and the financial and economic crisis, but also within the scope of the periodic updates. The most important basic planning materials are listed below:

- As regards the spatial perspective, the **Austrian Spatial Development Concept 2011** (ÖREK 2011) was prepared that formulates a common strategy for the spatial development of Austria until 2021. In this context, the following areas have been defined: “regional and international competitiveness”, “social diversity and solidarity” and “climate change, adaptation and resource efficiency”. ÖREK addresses these developments and specifies a further refining of the steering mechanisms, among other things, with a view to the regional efficacy of R&D and to expanding regional education management.
- A **research, technology and innovation strategy** was developed at the federal level. This strategy defines the goal for Austria of becoming one of the most innovative countries of the EU by 2020 and of mobilising research, technology and innovation to master the social and economic challenges (e. g. climate change, resource scarcity, demographic change). The research, technology and innovation strategy mentions measures that relate to the education system and to the strengthening of research structures (basic and applied research) with a view to excellence, thematic priorities, support for entrepreneurial innovation capacity, and an improved efficiency of political steering (governance).
- The **Länder** revised and published their regional **development strategies** taking into account the Europe 2020 Strategy and the concepts of the federal government. In line with the notion of multi-level governance, the overarching strategies are “translated” into regional-specific requirements and embedded in the regional circumstances. The new generation of economic and innovation mission statements all stress the interrelatedness of

9 See National Reform Programmes 2011 and 2012; cf. ÖROK (2009): STRATAT Report 2009, ÖROK (2011): Österreichisches Raumentwicklungskonzept. ÖREK 2011.

10 Cf. Ederer/Janger (2010): Growth Bottlenecks – Engpässe für Wachstum und Beschäftigung in Österreich im Rahmen der Strategie “Europa 2020“.

intelligent and sustainable growth. They also exhibit a tendency to focus on fewer themes and address the concept of “smart specialisation”<sup>11</sup>. The Structural Funds programmes play an important role at the level of the *Länder* for the implementation of these strategic concepts and the promotion of regional innovation.

The analyses prepared to serve as basis for the strategies indicate that the closer Austria comes to the “technology frontier”, the more new challenges arise with respect to the capacities of the research and university systems, higher qualification levels and the greater the significance of equity capital funding.

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11 Smart specialisation is understood to mean a strategic approach to economic development through the targeted support of R&D and innovation schemes in order to attain competitive advantages in regional niches (see e. g. <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>).

## 4 IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES OF EU COHESION POLICY 2007-2013 IN AUSTRIA

### 4.1 Financial Implementation 2007-2011 – Overview

In Austria, 21 programmes are being implemented within the framework of EU Cohesion Policy for which a total of around EUR 1.5 billion from the Structural Funds and the EAFRD funds have been earmarked. When analysing EU Cohesion Policy in Austria, one should not forget that the Structural Funds programmes are integral elements of Austria's regional, technology, economic, environmental and labour market policy. The contribution of EU Cohesion Policy to their implementation varies by policy area. EU Cohesion Policy and national policy are very closely interconnected due in particular to the implementation of the Structural Funds in Austria through established national and regional agencies and financial assistance instruments.

#### Financial implementation 2007-2011 – Breakdown by use of funds

Until 31 December 2011, some EUR 1.1 billion of SF funds (ERDF/ESF) and more than EUR 900 million in

national public funds had been earmarked for projects. The allocation of funds varies from 66% (average of the programmes for Regional Competitiveness) to 87% in the national programme for “employment”. Additionally, under EAFRD more than two-thirds of the funds committed have been used amounting to more than EUR 2.6 billion. The commitments are a stable “leading indicator” in Austria for programme implementation. According to the evaluations of the European Commission, Austria has the smallest gap between commitments and payments in all of Europe.<sup>12</sup>

#### Financial implementation 2007-2011 – Breakdown by payments<sup>13</sup>

As regards payments, it has to be stressed that the level of 69% achieved for the ESF is not only excellent for Austria, but also in European comparison. An excellent level of programme implementation was also ascertained for EAFRD.

In ERDF, the payments (incl. payments on account) are on average 40%. The convergence programme Phasing

Table 3: Overview - Implementation of the Structural Funds programmes (as of 31 Dec. 2011)

Commitments	EU funds		National public funds	
	Absolute (in 1,000 €)	Use of funds	Absolute (in 1,000 €)	Use of funds
OP Employment ESF	411,837	87%	469,772	88%
OPs Convergence				
Phasing Out (ERDF, ESF)	123,179	70%	43,948	74%
OPs Regional Competitiveness				
ERDF	365,339	66%	414,297	75%
OPs ETC (ERDF)	228,040	89%	n. a.	n. a.
<b>Payments</b>				
OP Development of rural areas EAFRD	2,610,148	66%	2,615,941	68%
...of which axes 3 & 4	211,857	44%	213,074	45%

Note: ERDF: commitments as of 31 Dec. 2011 (ATMOS monitoring reporting status as of 20 Feb. 2012), ESF: commitments as of 31 Dec. 2011 (OP employment: estimates; Data as of 31 Oct. 2011 projected to 31 Dec. 2011), EAFRD: payments as of 31 Dec. 2011 without Technical Assistance. Source of data: ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP fund; ESF monitoring; Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management; Regionalmanagement Burgenland

<sup>12</sup> See J. Walsh/A Abdulwahab, 2011 Annual Reports EU Overview reporting.

<sup>13</sup> The table in Appendix B.2 is an overview of the payments received from the European Commission for the Austrian operational programmes of the objectives Convergence Phasing Out and Regional Competitiveness and Employment.

Out Burgenland is slightly above the average at 43%. The Regional Competitiveness programmes vary from 33% to 46%. The level of payments is lower than in the period of comparison of the previous programming period, but has already reached a share at which it may be assumed that the funds will be fully used up. Differences between payments versus commitments result from the practice increasingly being observed of settling balances in single payments at the close of a project. The reason is the excessive administrative work involved in the processing of final settlements. Furthermore, because of the economic crisis, the project organisers are prolonging

the terms of the projects. There is also growing uncertainty regarding the interpretation of eligibility and audit issues.

### 4.2 Implementation with a reference to STRAT.AT

In order to assess the amount and structure of the contributions of Austrian programmes to the EU objectives and priorities according to the Strategic Cohesion Guidelines, thematic codes were allocated to each of the STRAT.AT strategy fields.<sup>14</sup>

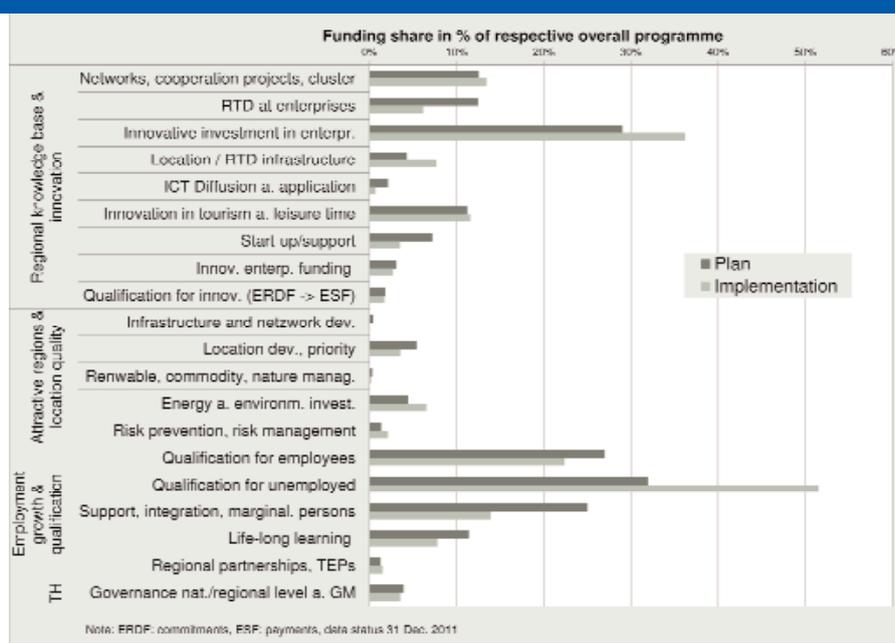
Table 4: Planning and implementation of ERDF and ESF funds and their contributions to STRAT.AT\* - Overview

Strategic Cohesion Guidelines (SCG)	STRAT.AT Priority/ Objectives	Planning	Performance	in % of target values
SCG 1: Improving knowledge and innovation for growth	Regional knowledge base & innovation**	569,742,066	372,194,129	65%
SCG 2: Making Europe and its regions more attractive places in which to invest and work	Attractive regions and location quality	81,139,883	55,110,553	68%
SCG 3: More and better jobs	Employment growth and qualification	506,598,400	258,256,982***	51%
	Governance as implementation strategy	46,998,237	25,272,003	54%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,204,478,586</b>	<b>710,833,667</b>	<b>59%</b>

Note: \* The table includes the Regional Competitiveness and Employment programmes ERDF and ESF as well as the Convergence Phasing Out Programmes ERDF and ESF; \*\* The objective "qualification for innovation" included in Priority 1 contains a connection to the Guidelines "More and better jobs" of the SCG; \*\*\* Only funds paid out by the EU to implementing bodies.

Source: ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP fund; Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management/ESF monitoring; allocations and calculations convelop

Figure 5: Implementation of STRAT.AT



Source: ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP fund; ESF monitoring, calculations convelop, data status 31 Dec. 2011

14 For details on the methods, see ÖROK (2009): STRAT.AT Report 2009. First Strategic Report of Austria on the Implementation of EU Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.

Table 5: Planning and implementation of ERDF and ESF funding and their contributions to STRAT.AT<sup>1</sup>

Strategy field (SF) of STRAT.AT	Implementation, total			ERDF		ESF	
	In millions Euro		In %	Shares in % <sup>2</sup>		Shares in % <sup>3</sup>	
	Plan	Performance	(Plan/Perf)	Plan	Perf	Plan	Perf
Networks, cooperation, clusters	85,362,138	59,796,982	70%	13%	13%		
R&TD at enterprises	84,801,783	27,368,390	32%	12%	6%		
Innovative investments in enterprises	197,309,506	161,218,020	82%	29%	36%		
Location/R&TD infrastructure	29,090,602	34,131,130	117%	4%	8%		
ICT diffusion & application	14,335,637	3,072,015	21%	2%	1%		
Innovation in tourism	76,418,777	51,504,189	67%	11%	12%		
Start-ups	49,132,062	15,525,743	32%	7%	3%		
Innovative financing of firms (financial engineering instruments)	20,953,350	11,994,412	57%	3%	3%		
Qualification for innovation	12,338,211	7,583,246	61%	2%	2%		
<b>STRAT.AT Priority 1: Regional knowledge base &amp; innovation</b>	<b>569,742,066</b>	<b>372,194,129</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>84%</b>		
Infrastructure and grid development	3,000,000	-	0%	0%	0%		
Location development, priorities Renewable commodities, nature management	2,175,000	821,386	38%	0%	0%		
Investments in energy & environment	30,193,422	29,095,103	96%	4%	7%		
Risk prevention, risk management	9,074,950	9,426,594	104%	1%	2%		
<b>STRAT.AT Priority 2: Attractive regions &amp; location quality</b>	<b>81,139,883</b>	<b>55,110,553</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>		
Qualification for the employed	141,440,275	59,510,187	42%			27%	22%
Qualification for the unemployed	167,599,900	137,003,037	82%			32%	52%
Measures for persons marginalised from the labour market	131,031,725	37,017,134	28%			25%	14%
Life-long learning	59,868,000	20,704,647	35%			11%	8%
Regional pacts, TEPS	6,658,500	4,021,978	60%			1%	2%
<b>STRAT.AT Priority 3: Employment, growth &amp; qualification</b>	<b>506,598,400</b>	<b>258,256,982</b>	<b>51%</b>			<b>97%</b>	<b>97%</b>
Governance & Gender Mainstreaming	46,998,237	25,272,003	54%	4%	4%	3%	3%
<b>STRAT.AT Priority 5: Governance as implementation strategy</b>	<b>46,998,237</b>	<b>25,272,003</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,204,478,586</b>	<b>710,833,667</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup> STRAT.AT Priority 4: Territorial Cooperation is addressed via the programmes ETC, and is not presented here

<sup>2</sup> ERDF total=100%

<sup>3</sup> ESF total=100%

Source: ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP fund; ESF monitoring; own allocations and calculations by convelop

The implementation of the Structural Funds programmes shows that according to the relevant programme planning, the funds have been allocated by more than 50% to Priority 1 “regional knowledge base and innovation” and 36% to Priority 3 “employment growth and qualification”.<sup>15</sup>

A relatively small share (8%) is used for Priority 2 “attractive regions and location quality” and for Priority 4 “governance” (4%).

The implementation of the **strategy and actions fields** is largely balanced and according to plan. The specific strengths, problem areas, and programme changes in this context will be discussed later on. The drivers behind the implementation are still the “innovation investments” by the ERDF and the qualification of the unemployed in the case of the ESF. Compared to the first phase of the programme implementation until 2009, the range of measures used has become much broader. The concentration on the aforementioned “drivers” has decreased.

<sup>15</sup> It should also be taken into account that the data for Priorities 1 and 2 refer mainly to ERDF and thus to commitments and Priority 2 mostly to the ESF and in this case to payments.

## 5 OBJECTIVE- AND PROGRAMME-SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION AND FINDINGS

### 5.1 ERDF programmes “Regional Competitiveness” and “Convergence Phasing Out”

#### Contents of the programmes

Despite the different starting situations in the regional economies of the *Länder*, the new ERDF programmes have a **homogenous strategy**. They are based mainly on the first two priorities of STRATAT with Priority 1 “regional knowledge base and innovation” clearly dominating. Priority 2: “development of attractive regions and competitive locations” is used as a supplement and as a balancing element.

The strategies are based largely on a set of **three thematic strands**: (i) to strengthen regional strong points and (further) develop regional areas of strength, (ii) enlarge the entire regional innovation base and (iii) initiatives for endogenous development. In accordance with the relevant circumstances, there are also complementary measures in every Operational Programme that target specific regional challenges.

#### Programmes and their implementation performance

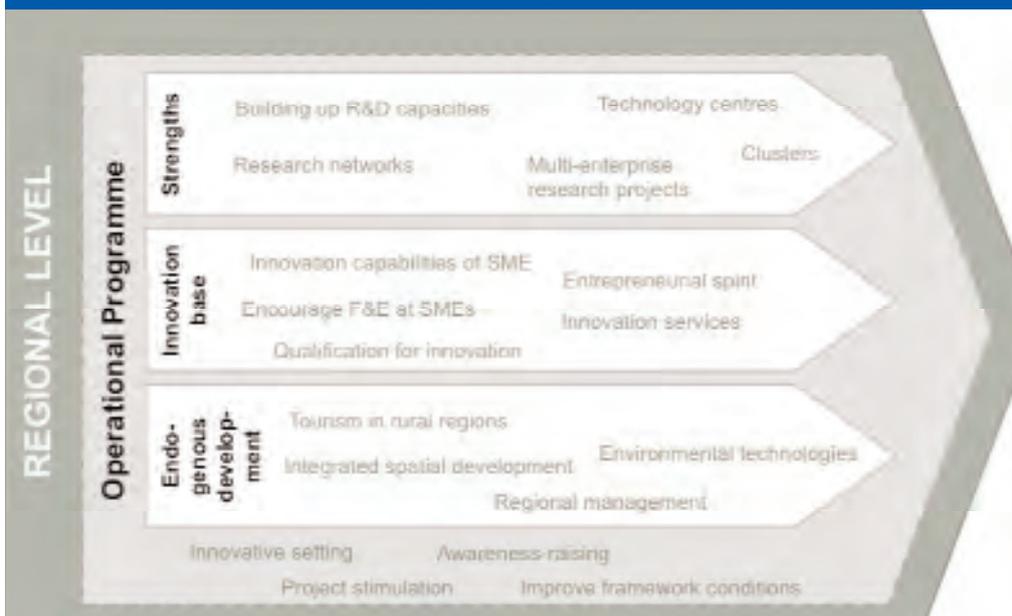
The **use of funds** of the programmes averaged **two thirds** as of 31 December 2011. The ratio fluctuates in the range of 44% to 81%. However, only less than one third (29% of ERDF funds) of the funds have been paid out to project organisers up to now. The implementation to date (commitment status until 31 Dec. 2011) at *Länder* level is shown in the table 6.

#### Adjustments to the programmes within the current strategies

Within the course of implementation, there have been **adjustments** to the Operational Programmes in five *Länder*<sup>17</sup>. The indicative planned ERDF funds have been re-allocated.

Essentially, the adjustments **shifted** personnel-intensive R&D projects to **spending on plant and equipment**. Within the “soft measures”, there was a shift from innovation services to technology transfer and

Figure 6: Focus of the ERDF regional programmes



Source: Own presentation, convelop 2007

Table 6: Distribution of ERDF funds by Land, plan and performance for the period 2007-2013

	Plan in €	ERDF funds Commitments in €	Use of funds in %
Burgenland	125,026,964	81,293,936	65%
Carinthia	67,388,430	29,951,950	44%
Lower Austria	145,646,798	89,204,632	61%
Upper Austria	95,543,517	77,107,851	81%
Salzburg	13,813,480	9,486,172	69%
Styria	155,061,854	106,401,187	69%
Tyrol	34,772,988	23,121,252	67%
Vorarlberg	17,660,129	12,915,994	73%
Vienna	25,151,861	17,150,090	68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>680,066,022</b>	<b>446,633,064</b>	<b>66%</b>

Source: ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP fund; status of the data: 31 Dec. 2011

Table 7: Adjustments to the indicative allocation of funds

Code	Description	Re-allocations in €
08	Other investments in firms	20,413,677
03	Technology transfer and improvement of cooperation networks between SMEs	10,470,000
55–60	Tourism, cultural heritage	2,594,707
33–54	Energy, climate, risk management	1,500,000
06	Assistance to SMEs for the promotion of environmentally-friendly products and production processes	608,250
02	R&TD infrastructures, competence centres	200,000
09	Other measures to stimulate research, innovation, entrepreneurship in SMEs	-749,621
16–32	Transport and mobility	-2,400,000
07	Investment in firms directly linked to research and innovation	-2,866,739
01	Research, technology and development activities in research centres	-6,603,483
05	Advanced support services for firms & groups of firms	-7,028,493
04	Assistance to research, technology and development, esp. in SMEs	-15,801,356

Source: Applications for programme changes

cooperation projects (e. g. clusters). The reasons for the shift are to be found in the economic situation and the framework conditions for eligibility as well as in the processing of financial aid especially in the case of measures that involve high personnel costs.

### Thematic strands

The Austrian ERDF programmes exhibit a strong thematic **concentration**. The share of interventions that are directly supportive of the Lisbon strategy reaches an implementation rate of 88% (so-called Lisbon earmarkings). Austria therefore ranks in a leading position within the EU.

**Research, technology and development projects**<sup>18</sup> account for more than one fourth of financial assistance volumes with nearly EUR 120 million in ERDF funds. Therefore, these projects support headline target 2 “Research and Development” in the National Reform Programme. New **types of project organisers** (e. g. universities, joint projects, development societies like clusters) have been increasingly included in the programmes that support the formation of regional innovation cores. However, diverging levels of implementation have been observed between multi-enterprise projects and single enterprise R&D projects. While funding for the area of multi-enterprise projects has been exhausted fully or to a large

18 EU-Codes 01–04.

Table 8: EU intervention areas (summary), plan - performance - use of funds

Code	Description	Share in programme		Allocations <sup>1</sup> In % of target values
		Planning in %	Performance in %	
01-09	R&D, innovation	77%	81%	69%
1	Research, technology and development (R&TD) activities in research centres	6%	7%	79%
2	Research, technology and development (R&TD) infrastructure, centres of competence	4%	8%	127%
3	Technology transfer and improvement of cooperation networks	7%	6%	57%
4	Assistance to R&TD, particularly in SMEs	10%	6%	40%
5	Advanced support services for firms and groups of firms	6%	5%	55%
6	Assistance to SMEs for the promotion of environmentally-friendly products & production processes	5%	2%	34%
7	Investment in firms – R&I	18%	16%	59%
8	Other investment in firms	18%	28%	98%
9	Other measures to stimulate research and innovation and entrepreneurship in SMEs	3%	3%	55%
10-15	Information society	3%	1%	20%
16-32	Transport	1%	0%	16%
33-54	Energy, environmental protection and risk prevention	6%	9%	94%
55-60	Tourism, culture	4%	2%	43%
61	Urban and rural regeneration	3%	3%	59%
62-79	Employment, human potential, social infrastructure	2%	0%	0%
80-81	Partnerships, networking, policy improvement	2%	2%	53%
82-84	Compensation for additional costs due to peripheral location	0%	0%	-
85-86	Technical Assistance, monitoring, evaluation	2%	2%	72%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>65%</b>
	“Lisbon Priorities”	86%	88%	

<sup>1</sup> commitments refer to the planned use of funds in %

Source: ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP fund; status of the data: 31 Dec. 2011, calculation convelop

Table 9: Funding by group of actors

Actors	Public funding		Share in enterprise funding
	In €	In %	In %
SME	352,584,095	40%	54%
Large companies	302,040,432	34%	46%
Government-linked organisations	217,492,476	24%	-
Other private organisations, associations etc.	18,738,857	2%	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>890,855,860</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP fund; status of the data: 31 Dec. 2011, calculation convelop

extent (e. g. research, technology and development infrastructures; research, technology and development projects at research centres), the single enterprise R&D-projects are far below the average. This is not due to a “lack” of research projects at enterprises. Rather, the high administrative requirements within

the scope of the ERDF accounting procedures result in the enterprise-based R&D projects being funded solely by national funds.

Environmental projects (**energy/climate/risk prevention** – see also headline target 3 in the National

Reform Programme) have been supported up to now with EUR 38 million from ERDF funds. Biomass projects are just as relevant in this context as projects in connection with energy efficiency and risk prevention. In total, the projects have helped to increase generation capacities of renewable energy sources by 140,000 MW. Greenhouse emissions were reduced by 200,000 t.

Overall, **spending on plant and equipment** remains the “driver behind implementation”. Investment activity with a reference to research, technology and innovation (Code 07) and other investment activity (Code 08) cover some 44% of the programme’s funds (planned: 36%). Nearly one fourth of funding goes to tourism-related activities within the scope of entrepreneurial investments (Code 08). If one adds the environmental investments, the share of investment-related funding is much higher than 50%. The **programme adjustments** helped to enlarge this area. Because of the crisis and the decline of risky projects, a shift is now being seen from investments in **research, technology and innovation** (Code 07) to other investments in **companies** (Code 08).

In total, more than 70% of the programme funds are made available **directly to companies**. The **share of SMEs** in enterprise funding is almost 55%. Thus, **large companies** play a key role in the use of the funds at present. Government-linked organisations receive up to one fourth of funding.

### Selection of core indicators: Output and result

The table shows the **core indicators** that apply to all ERDF programmes in Austria (for a complete overview of the core indicators, see Appendix B1: ERDF Core Indicators). The files refer to project commitments, while the core indicators in Appendix B1 refer to projects completed and settled. The projects

commitments are presented because they are more current and there is a close relationship between commitments and payments in Austria. Therefore, the commitments represent a stable, more complete and current measure of programme implementation. It is revealed that

- the **result indicators** agreed with the European Commission (EC) are above expectations;
- according to the monitoring, some **7,700 new jobs** are planned or have already been created, around one-tenth are R&D jobs;
- the objectives for the additional generation capacities of **renewable energy** were surpassed (133%) and the contribution to reducing greenhouse emissions is according to plan;
- the **investment volume** funded of EUR 3.5 billion has already reached 92% of the planning targets); Almost one fourth of investments in enterprises are made in the tourism sector in which the level of investment activity remained high even during the crisis.

Further **programme-specific core indicators** show

- that 19 risk prevention projects were completed (60% of target value).
- 74 projects – 41 were planned – were implemented within the framework of special urban development schemes.

As regards the output indicators, the total number of **project commitments** is already much higher than the target figures. However, the figures for the **R&D projects and start-ups** deviate clearly downwards. This is not due to lacking projects but rather to the more frequent instances of projects being funded from national sources.

Within the course of programme implementation, the **target values** have been adjusted especially because of the shift seen in staff-intensive R&D meas-

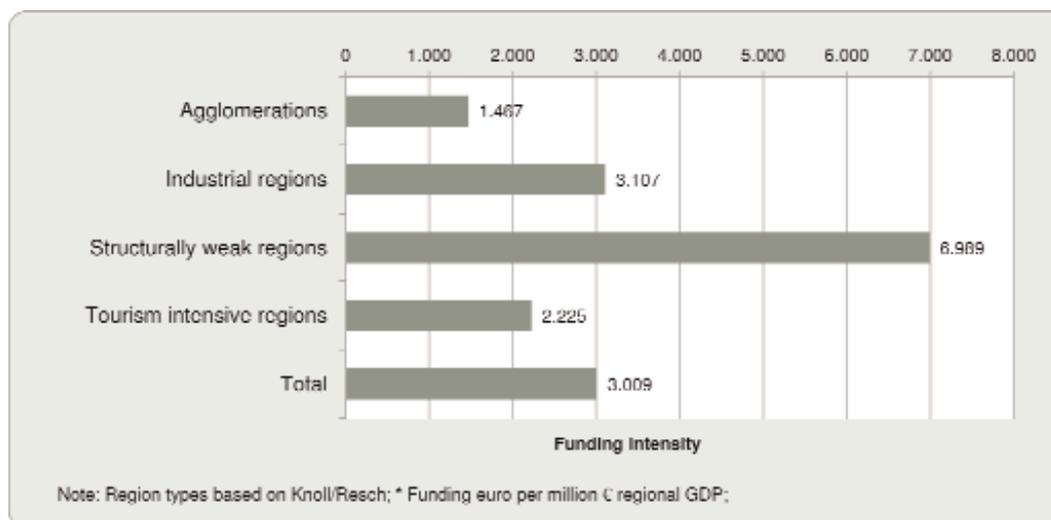
Table 10: Planning and implementation of the agreed sets of indicators as part of the EU core indicators - in relation to project commitments

Category	Indicator	Planning	Perf 31 Dec. 2011	In %
<b>Output</b>	Total no. of projects	4,300	7,339	171%
	... thereof cooperation projects (incl. R&D)	501	456	91%
	... thereof start-ups	342	73	21%
	... thereof R&D projects	798	269	34%
<b>Results</b>	Planned no. of jobs to be created (FTE)	6,876	7,719	112%
	... thereof planned no. of new R&D jobs to be created	862	764	89%
	Investment volume funded (in € million)	3,750	3,468	92%
	Additional generation capacity of renewable energy (MW)	105	140	133%
	Reduction of greenhouse emissions in t	296,900	200,269	67%

“Performance 31 Dec. 2011” refers to commitments and completed projects. The core indicators presented in the Appendix refer to the relevant Commission requirements only for completed projects.

Source: Planning data, individual OPs, ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP funds; Data status: 31 Dec. 2011, calculation convelop

Figure 7: Regions by funding intensity\*



Source: ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP fund; status of the data: 31 Dec. 2011, calculations convelop

Table 11: Public funding\* by type of region\*\*

Region type	Public funding in €	Share in %
Agglomerations	237,167,950	28%
Industrial regions	79,308,454	10%
Structurally-weak regions	462,886,343	56%
Tourism-intensive regions	47,632,310	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>826,995,056</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* only projects that can be regionally allocated (= 93% of the approx. EUR 891 million in national and ERDF funds)

\*\* classification based on Knoll/Resch, adapted by convelop

Source: ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP fund; commitments status: 31 Dec. 2011, calculation convelop

ures to the segment of purely nationally funded projects. This concerns several larger programmes (Upper Austria, Styria, Tyrol). The adjustment involved a reduction in the number of projects from 1,344 R&D projects planned to 798 projects (-40%) and a cut of the expected additional R&D jobs by 13%. The allocation of funds to Code 4 was reduced accordingly. In the case of further changes, these are mostly technical corrections (e. g. in the case of cooperation projects, a reduction of greenhouse emissions in t) due to the changed method of recording and the overestimated target values in the planning phase. The consequences of the financial and economic crisis tend to be reflected in shifts in the thematic codes rather than in the target values.

### Funding by region

If one looks at the **region type** instead of the Land as the regional level, it is revealed that<sup>19</sup> around EUR 462 million or 56% of the funds go to structurally weak regions. In urban agglomerations, the share remains below one third of the allocated funds. Industrial regions and predominantly tourism regions account for a total of 10% and 6%, respectively, of the commitments. If one weights the funding by the gross regional product, the pattern of funding partially changes. Structurally weak regions report the by far highest levels also with respect to **funding intensity**. These are followed after a larger gap by industrialised regions and regions with intensive tourism. Agglomera-

19 Around EUR 827 million can be regionally allocated, i. e., 93% of the funding volume.

tions have the lowest level of funding intensity by contrast. The regions **focus interventions** on different areas:

- In the **central areas**, the multi-enterprise R&D projects (including the setting up of research centres, research infrastructure, and technology centres) as well as the technology transfer projects are of high significance.
- R&D projects are very important in **industrial regions** as well as investment projects at enterprises (share: 34%) and measures in the area of energy efficiency (share: 10%), especially in an industrial setting.
- In **structurally weak regions**, investment projects at enterprises predominate with a share of 70%.
- Also in **tourism intensive regions**, entrepreneurial investment schemes play a significant role (share 27%). Parallel to this, subsidised projects concentrate in the areas of renewable energy - biomass (21%) and risk prevention (31%).

### Interim conclusions on the implementation of the ERDF programmes

The ERDF programmes for the objectives “**Regional Competitiveness**” and “**Convergence Phasing Out Burgenland**” address the new paradigm of regional structural policy and aim to achieve a balance between funding for larger areas with innovation cores and the strengthening of structurally weak regions to achieve economic balance. These have the following special features:

- The ERDF programmes have one of the strongest **Lisbon links** in Europe (88% of funds committed are earmarked).
- The programmes are highly **concentrated** by theme in international comparison. 80% of implementation focuses on the improvement of the “business environment”<sup>20</sup>.
- The content is dominated by innovation (“I”) in the area of research, technological development and innovation - research, technology and innovation, and in this case, **investments** at enterprises (Codes 06–08).
- They are strongly focused on **funding for individual enterprises** (approx. 70% of funds for single enterprises) which results in a relatively high share of private funding.

The programmes involve themes relating to locally focused **regional policy objectives** as well as **innovation policy** with concepts for wider areas. New approaches such as schemes to strengthen regional innovation centres (e. g. through R&D, infrastructure)

have been integrated into the programmes. They are an enormous support for regional innovation policy. The **intensity of the financial assistance** provided is the highest in the **structurally weak regions**. In the central areas, especially multi-enterprise research projects receive support. **New types of project organisers** (e. g. universities, associations formed for specific projects, development organisations and clusters) encounter a system that has become more complex and highly demanding. The large number of bodies in Austria involved in implementation also adds to the complexity.

## 5.2 ESF Programmes “Employment” and “Convergence Phasing Out”

The national ESF programme “**Employment**” and the ESF programme “**Convergence Phasing Out Burgenland**” address **Priority 3** of STRAT.AT. The ESF profile of the national programme “Employment” and of the ESF programme “Phasing Out Burgenland” were refined in the current period in accordance with the experience gained from previous programming periods. The focus of the programmes is on active and preventive labour market policy, and with respect to the target groups, they concentrate on older persons and groups of persons distant from the labour market and supports the approach of life-long learning and adult further education. The integration of the regions in the ESF is done using the regional structures of the Austrian Employment Office and of the federal body for social affairs through the secretariats of the *Länder* and the Territorial Employment Pacts.

Furthermore, several RCE/ERDF programmes (Vienna, Carinthia, Styria) had plans to fund ESF measures from the ERDF to a limited extent (cross-financing) in their programme planning. This option has been executed only by Styria up to now.

Based on the number of **commitments**, the programme “Employment Austria” has an **implementation ratio of 87%** (EUR 411.8 mill. in public funding). The corresponding figure for the ESF programme “Convergence Phasing Out” Burgenland is 80%. The national programme reported some 552,000 participants by 2011 of which 305,000 are women. The share of the population from socially weaker groups (e. g., migrants, persons with disabilities) is 39%. Almost 80,000 persons with disabilities have received support under the programme up to now.

A consequence of the financial and economic crisis is that funds from Priority 1 for **preventive labour mar-**

20 APLICA/ISMERI (2011): Expert evaluation network delivering policy analysis on the performance of Cohesion Policy 2007–2013, Synthesis of national reports.

Figure 8: Priority areas of the Operational Programme “Employment” of the ESF Austria 2007–13



Source: Own presentation, convelop 2007 according to Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2009

ket policy have been shifted to the programme for the **labour market integration** of unemployed persons of Priority 2 both in the national programme for employment as well as in the ESF programme Convergence Phasing Out. The employment targets following the integration measures had to be revised from 50% to 40% for Priority 2. The **thematic priorities** for the implementation of the employment programme can be summarised as follows. The data refer in this case to **payments** (cf. Table Payments and Table Indicators):

The preventive bias of **Priority 1 – adaptability of employees and employers** has a growing focus on “productive aging” in accordance with the demographic trends seen in qualification counselling (including qualification pacts). Counselling was provided at more than 6,800 companies and almost 400 qualification pacts and more than 184,000 persons received support, with the share of older persons reached being over 40%. The ratio of employed persons after 12 months was 90% and thus clearly surpassed the targets.

The programme of **Priority 2 – combatting unemployment** was enlarged financially because of the economic crisis and accounts for 35% of earmarked programming funds. Based on ESF payments, the share is 44%. Within the scope of the qualifying training courses and employment projects (socio-economic enterprises and non-profit employment proj-

ects), almost 78,500 persons were subsidised (target 2013: 76,000) from 2007 to 2011. What needs to be highlighted here are the “production schools” used for labour market integration of youths. However, expectations with respect to integration targets – also with a view to the economic crisis – had to be revised from 50% to 40%. In the implementation, an employment ratio of 38.5% was achieved one month after the programmes were completed.

**Priority 3a** focuses on the **occupational integration of persons with disabilities**. Financial support has been provided to almost 80,000 persons with disabilities under the programme up to now. The objective is to obtain and secure a workplace in the open labour market. The range of actions comprises, among other things, clearing measures at the transition point from school to work, vocational training, work assistance and job coaching. The targeted share of 50% women in persons supported has not been achieved yet; in 2011 it was 41%.

Apart from the separate measures for the **integration of persons distant from the labour market (Priority 3b)**, these are also closely related to **Priority 5 Territorial Employment Pacts (TEP)**. After the creation of the TEP network during the programming period 2000 to 2006, the networks were intensified in the current period. According to the evaluation<sup>21</sup>, in the past few years the aim of creating regional networks has been largely achieved as well as the setting up of re-

21 ÖIR/BBJ/Institut für Gesellschafts- und Sozialpolitik (2012): Ongoing Evaluation of the Interventions of the European Social Funds in Austria 2007–2013. Priority 5 Territorial Employment Pacts 2010–2011.

gional-specific strategies relating to the labour market, employment and structural policy objectives. The focus in this programming period is to implement innovative projects coordinated by the TEPs and positioned along the lines of the **thematic interfaces**. The themes are the integration of persons distant from the job market into the labour market and welfare programmes (2007), improvement of integration of persons with migrant backgrounds (2009), and integration of persons distant from the labour market into the means-tested minimum welfare benefits scheme (2010).

In **Priority 4 life-long learning**, the goal is to improve access to education opportunities for disadvantaged persons as well as training measures, adult further education (e. g. education counselling) and in the area of science (e. g. stipends for graduates). These measures support the NRP goals in the headline target “education”. The targets of the output indicators have been partially attained (e. g. persons in educational and further training courses at schools) or the trend is in line with the implementation ratio (e. g. participation in information, counselling, guidance).

The degree of implementation in the **ESF Phasing Out Burgenland** shows a high degree of concentration on labour market measures. In Burgenland, reallocations of ESF funds were carried out at the end of 2011. Reallocations were made from employee and enterprise-focused Priority 1 and Technical Assistance (Priority 4) programmes to Priority 2, integration in the labour market and social integration (EUR +1.5 million).

## Interim Conclusions

Overall, the **ESF programmes in Austria** exhibit a high ratio of implementation. These are funded mainly through large, more “mainstream-oriented” measures. The **data** on the participants shows a good ratio of implementation in the target groups (women, older persons) especially in the area of preventive labour market policy. This also applies to the result indicators (employment and labour market integration after the end of the measures). In the case of the integration of unemployed persons into the labour market, the “integration targets” had to be revised downwards due to the deteriorating labour market conditions. Labour market integration in the case of persons distant from the job market is especially difficult in the current labour market situation. Mobilisation of small and medium-sized enterprises for special target groups (e. g. older persons within the scope of “productive aging”) remains a constant challenge. In this case, awareness of the consequences of demographic change is not sufficiently widespread. The traditional decentralised and regional approach of integrating the *Länder* into the ESF implementation process deepens with the growing significance of the TEPs and permits a closer orientation on regional needs and the respective institutional setting. The generally increasing requirements of ESF implementation present a growing challenge to the system and cost-benefit considerations. In particular, the decentralised approach creates major problems for the bodies involved with respect to the manageability of the ESF.

Table 12: Planning and implementation status - ESF funds

Priorities	Planning*	Payments	Use of funds
Adaptability of employees and employers	100,534,000	56,912,789	57%
Combatting unemployment	166,534,000	152,277,557	91%
Persons marginalised from the labour market	127,112,000	89,599,703	70%
Life-long learning	56,118,000	31,885,394	57%
Territorial Employment Pacts (TEP)	6,246,000	4,486,052	72%
Technical Assistance	15,728,560	8,301,197	53%
<b>National employment programme</b>	<b>472,272,560</b>	<b>343,462,692</b>	<b>73%</b>
Adaptability of employees and employers	6,816,663	3,222,986	41%
Integration in the labour market and social integration	39,236,615	22,010,751	58%
Support structures, access to knowledge and knowledge transfer, labour market partnerships	4,425,000	1,500,994	34%
Technical Assistance	1,661,722	131,060	6%
<b>Phasing Out Burgenland</b>	<b>52,140,000</b>	<b>26,865,791</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>524,412,560</b>	<b>370,328,483</b>	<b>71%</b>

Source: ESF implementation reports 2011, calculations convelop, \* including reallocations

Table 13: Output and result indicators (selection)

<b>P 1 Employees and enterprises</b>		<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Output indicators</b>							
Qualification counselling, number of enterprises counselled	Result	144	633	1,971	1,805	1,693	6,246
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	6,300
Flexibility consulting, no. of enterprises	Result	0	97	182	197	142	618
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	800
Qualification pacts	Result	18	60	155	153	101	399
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	230
Persons supported (QfB)	Result	21.186	32.554	46,471	41,511	43,143	184,865
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	210,000
Share of women	Result	71.90%	62.60%	60.10%	62.50%	58.30%	62,00%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	50,00%
Share of older persons (QfB)	Result	42,60%	38,90%	38,80%	43,30%	45,70%	41,90%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	40,00%
<b>Results indicators</b>							
Employment 12 months after participation	Result	0.00%	92.30%	91.70%	92.30%	92.90%	90,80%
	Target	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
<b>P 2 Combatting unemployment</b>							
<b>Output indicators</b>		<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
Persons supported	Result	13,942	12,161	14,811	24,664	12,876	78,454
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	76,000
Share of women in the total of persons supported (persons)	Result	51.80%	55.90%	51.40%	51.70%	48.00%	50.80%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	50.00%
Share of target group Older persons (persons)	Result	42.90%	43.10%	42.10%	33.80%	28.70%	37.60%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	40,00%
<b>Result indicators</b>							
Employment 3 months after the measure	Result	36.50%	34.50%	28.90%	33.90%	34.50%	38,50%
	Target	50%	50%	50%	40%	40%	40%
<b>P 3a Occupational integration of persons with disabilities</b>							
<b>Output indicators</b>		<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
Supported cases	Result	7,114	14,272	18,067	23,143	16,760	79,356
	Target	17,900	17,900	17,900	17,900	17,900	89,500
Share of target group women	Result	41.27%	37.68%	37.99%	39.62%	40.82%	-
	Target	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	-
<b>Result indicators</b>							
Status 6 months after a measures	Result	42.25%	46.79%	45.70%	45.60%	45.87%	-
	Target	52.00%	52.00%	52.00%	52.00%	52.00%	-
<b>P 3b Integration of persons distant from the labour market</b>							
<b>Output indicators</b>		<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
Supported projects (1st call)	Result	11	39	39	0	0	-
Supported projects (2nd call)	Result	0	0	17	59	59	-
Supported projects (3rd call)	Result	0	0	0	1	7	-
<b>P 4 Life-long learning</b>							
<b>Output indicators</b>		<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
Person in educational and further training measures (schools)	Result	0	5,833	19,775	27,047	31,250	83,905
	Objective	-	-	-	-	-	40,000
Person in educational and further training measures (adults)	Result	1,520	5,349	9,047	8,624	7,524	32,064
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	36,000

Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, ESF Monitoring

Table 14: Planning and implementation status – ESF funds by code (cumulated spending until year-end 2011)\*

Code	Planning ESF		Payments		Use of funds/ target
	Absolute	In %	Absolute	In %	
<b>High degree of implementation</b>					
72	Design, introduction and implementation of reforms in education and training systems				
	187,500	0%	187,500	0%	100%
66	Implementing active and preventive measures on the labour market				
	165,237,400	32%	135,327,933	51%	82%
69	Improve access of women to employment				
	2,362,500	0%	1,675,104	1%	71%
<b>Medium degree of implementation</b>					
80	Promoting partnerships, pacts and initiatives				
	6,658,500	1%	4,021,978	2%	60%
85	Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection				
	12,249,907	2%	6,136,146	2%	50%
62	Training and services for employees				
	141,440,275	27%	59,510,187	22%	42%
<b>Low degree of implementation</b>					
73	Measures to increase participation in education and training throughout the life-cycle				
	59,268,000	11%	20,517,147	8%	35%
71	Pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people				
	131,031,725	25%	37,017,134	14%	28%
86	Evaluation and studies; information and communication				
	5,564,253	1%	1,506,639	1%	27%
74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation				
	412,500	0%	0	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>524,412,560</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>265,899,767</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>51%</b>

\* Only payments of the EU to implementing bodies

Source: Ministry of Labour Social Affairs and Consumer Protection/ESF monitoring, own calculations convelop

### 5.3 European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)

The ETC programmes are a key instrument for strengthening territorial cohesion. Austria takes part in seven cross-border, three transnational (Central Europe, Southeast Europe, Alpine Space) and four EU-wide networking programmes (INTERREG IV C, ESPON II, INTERACT II, URBACT II). In total, around EUR 1 billion ERDF funds were earmarked for the ETC programmes with Austrian participation during the period 2007 to 2013. The amount allocated by ERDF for Austria comprises around EUR 257<sup>22</sup> million with the largest share going to the cross-border programmes of Austrian regions with the new member states.

#### Programme implementation 2007 to 2011 – Overview

A complete overview of Austria's involvement in the European Territorial Cooperation is given in table 15:

In the implementation of the ETC programmes 2007–2011, Austria relied on the positive experiences and on the high level of continuity of the actors. The changes in the period 2007–2013, especially the application of the rules of the Lead Partner Principle in the cross-border programmes has been largely successful and has improved the quality of cooperation. By 31 December 2011, EUR 228 million in ERDF funds had been used for cross-border and transnational projects with Austrian involvement.

Within the scope of the transnational programmes, there are 202 project commitments, 148 with the involvement of Austria and 288 with Austrian partners. The interregional programmes promote cooperation between the regions throughout the entire EU territory and have the purpose of promoting the sharing of experiences and the transfer of knowhow, and also address special thematic areas such as the European Spatial Planning and urban themes. 58 Austrian project partners were involved in 49 projects (of 281).

22 The EU-wide network programmes are not considered here, because there is no indicative funding allocation to countries in the planning phase and for this reason, Austria's share cannot be determined.

Table 15: Distribution of ERDF funds by ETC programme, plan and performance for the period 2007–2013

Programme	EU Funds OP Total Plan	EU Funds OP Total Perf	EU Funds AT Plan	EU Funds AT Perf	Commitments AT
<b>Cross-border</b>	<b>454,781,195</b>	<b>365,846,669</b>	<b>223,966,029</b>	<b>173,832,652</b>	<b>78%</b>
Austria - Czech Republic (AT-CZ) <sup>1</sup>	107,435,393	80,763,618	38,310,000	30,788,077	80%
Slovakia - Austria (SK-AT) <sup>1</sup>	59,906,356	44,121,539	39,910,000	26,872,370	67%
Austria - Hungary (AT-HU) <sup>1</sup>	82,280,309	68,898,035	47,760,000	37,403,239	78%
Bavaria - Austria (BAY-AT) <sup>1</sup>	54,101,822	37,807,716	30,300,000	19,377,352	64%
Italy - Austria (IT-AT) <sup>2</sup>	60,074,668	46,650,988	22,390,000	18,365,764	82%
Slovenia - Austria (SI-AT)	67,111,477	66,614,330	35,590,000	31,893,243	90%
Alpenrhein-Bodensee- Hochrhein (ABH) <sup>3</sup>	23,871,170	20,990,444	9,706,029	9,132,606	94%
<b>Transnational</b>	<b>517,465,331</b>	<b>390,865,505</b>	<b>32,688,669</b>	<b>54,207,432</b>	<b>166%</b>
Central Europe	231,250,410*	205,521,709*	14,088,669	25,896,617	184%
Alpine Space	91,924,773*	67,877,556*	8,800,000	13,451,671	153%
Southeast Europe	235,628,106*	117,466,240*	9,800,000	14,859,145	152%
<b>All OPs ETC</b>	<b>972,246,526</b>	<b>756,712,174</b>	<b>256,654,698</b>	<b>228,040,084</b>	<b>89%</b>

1 Status 5 finalised funding agreement incl. Technical Assistance (TA)

2 contractually-committed funds, without TA, 3 Status 4 commitments incl. TA

Source: Managing authorities of the programmes, ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP-fonds; Data status: 31 December 2011, Federal Chancellery IV/4

Table 16: Implementation of transnational and network programmes

Programmes	Project commitments to date	Projects in which Austria participates	Austrian project partners
Alpine Space	35	34	83
Central Europe	101	74	137
Southeast Europe	66	40	68
INTERREG IV C	204	35	43
URBACT II	44	7	8
ESPO II	33	7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>346</b>

Source: ÖROK-NCP (Status December 2011)

### Cross-border ETC programmes<sup>23</sup>

The spatial situation and the share of regions that directly border a national boundary highlight the significance of Territorial Cooperation – especially cross-border cooperation (CBC) – for Austria. The current period 2007–2013 enhanced the importance and brought additional funding as well as a number of major changes (Lead Partner Principle, frequency, scope and amount of the expenses for administration and control) that now pose considerable challenges to the project organisers and the programming bodies.

By 31 December 2011, more than three quarters of the funds allocated to ERDF had been contractually allocated. The project commitments by the monitoring

committees were even higher. Therefore, programme implementation has achieved excellent progress.

Cross-border ETC programmes cover a **wide thematic range**. Programme implementation 2007–2011 shows diversification across more than 40 different thematic EU codes. Compared to the INTERREG I+II+III periods up to now, the contents of the themes are shifting (see “15 Years INTERREG/ETC”). Projects in the area of research, technology and **innovation** are becoming increasingly important (Austria-Czech Republic). Compared to previous Structural Funds programming periods, the significance of education and the themes of **environment** is growing, especially in relation to risk prevention, energy and climate change.

23 The presentation is based largely on the results of the reflexion process “15 Years INTERREG/ETC in Austria”. ÖROK (2011a): 15 Years INTERREG/ETC in Austria: Review and Outlook, ÖROK publication series no. 183. According to the EC rules, the following concrete data refer to the four cross-border programmes (BAY-AT, SK-AT, AT-HU, AT-CZ), whose Managing Authorities are seated in Austria.

Figure 9: Bilateral ETC programmes with Austrian involvement 2007-2013

**Austrian cooperation with:**


NUTS III Regions

Source: ÖROK Atlas BLATT 15.06.02/2007

Table 17: Thematic fields by code for the cross-border programmes with Managing Authorities in Austria (BAY-AT, SK-AT, AT-HU, AT-CZ)

Themes:	ERDF total	ERDF AT	AT share in ERDF total
Research, technology, development, innovation and promotion of entrepreneurship	26,647,430	15,242,173	57%
Tourism	29,434,970	13,851,543	47%
Environmental protection and risk prevention	33,348,804	13,698,138	41%
Mobility	37,738,756	13,611,693	36%
Reforms in the areas of employment and social inclusion	19,634,322	8,173,100	42%
Improvement of access to employment and sustainability	9,761,297	6,420,104	66%
Investments in social infrastructure	9,150,116	5,739,603	63%
Culture	13,567,395	5,739,431	42%
Energy	9,060,753	5,185,482	57%
Improvement of human potential	7,985,704	4,868,375	61%
Building institutional capacities	8,765,878	4,531,395	52%
Information society	4,862,721	3,439,934	71%
Increase in adaptability of employees, enterprises	2,135,593	1,471,357	69%
Urban and rural regeneration	1,123,308	656,377	58%
Improvement of social inclusion of disadvantaged persons	509,778	289,807	57%
n. a.	1,792,696	816,873	46%
<b>Total result (without techn. assistance)</b>	<b>215,519,521</b>	<b>103,735,385</b>	<b>48%</b>

Note: Table includes the four cross-border programmes with MAs in Austria. These are: BAY-AT, SK-AT, AT-HU, AT-CZ.

Differences in the data in Table 15 result from the Technical Assistance, which is not included in Table 17

Source: ATMOS monitoring at aws/ERP fund; calculation convelop

A comparison in this context of the distribution of funding between the overall programmes and the Austrian projects shows that Austrian regions give a much stronger **weighting** to themes such as research, technology and innovation, information technologies and human resources than the partner regions.

The **ETC programmes** show excellent progress despite the new and time-consuming administrative requirements. New rules such as the Lead Partner Principle were introduced in the cross-border programmes that have significantly strengthened **cooperation quality**. The core indicators (see Appendix B4 ETC – selection of core indicators) reveal that nearly 60% of projects feature the four cooperation criteria (joint project preparation, joint project implementation, joint staff, joint financing)<sup>24</sup> with cooperation intensity being stronger at the former internal borders of the EU. A further 68 projects with jointly used infrastructure were implemented. In 64 projects, cooperation took place in the area of public services, and in 56 projects in the area of joint environmental protection; 63 projects support clusters, networks and cooperation platforms and 48 projects deal with education and qualification.

The reflexion process “15 Years INTERREG/ETC” shows the positive effects of “good practice examples” with respect to relevance, learning and sustainability. The **experience** gained to date with the implementation of the **ETC programmes 2007–2013** reveals the following:

- The **transposition of the general rules of the Priorities** whose rationale is based on the competence of only one member state has been proven inadequate. Apart from the EU rules, one has to also take national rules into account, and these are not always uniform thereby creating an extremely complex set of rules and regulations.
- The persistence of highly divergent **understandings of development** (administrative culture) with in some cases incompatible procedures (competition versus proactive project development) causes them to collide with each other within the programmes.
- The Lead Partner Principle means more preparation work and improved cooperation quality, but at the same time, also greater challenges especially as regards documentation, financing and liability issues.
- A tendency of fewer and larger projects has emerged. Due to the requirements, the number of potential project organisations is shrinking. There is a risk of “closed shops”, which means that projects can only be managed with the help of exclu-

sive specialized services. Unfortunately, this is detracting from the wide effectiveness of ETC programmes.

In the **reflexion process “15 Years INTERREG/ETC in Austria”**, a stronger strategic orientation of the programmes and an improved link to other EU programmes, funds and national programmes were defined as important, likewise the necessity to simplify the handling procedures.

#### Reflexion process: 15 years INTERREG/ETC

As regards quality, the leading projects surveyed were shown to have largely achieved their goals and to have improved the quality of cooperation. Most goals were achieved especially as regards cross-border and transnational effects, and sustainable effects. However, as the samples were mainly good practice projects, these findings cannot be viewed as representative for the attainment of the objectives of all INTERREG (III) projects.

As regards sustainability, the projects funded revealed that achieving continuity was the main feature. Important factors for sustainable effects include, among other things, the involvement of relevant multipliers, the visibility of the projects and their results, and the firm establishment of cooperation among institutional partners.

Concerning added value, the immaterial effects are basically the essence of INTERREG/ETC. In terms of expertise, added value consists mainly of the knowledge and experience shared through the projects carried out. Important benefits with respect to institutions include the cooperation achieved and networks formed, the creation of (programme) structures and the stabilisation of institutional cooperation.

However, the benefits achieved are counteracted by the “adverse value” of rising (formal) requirements causing the attractiveness and broad scope of the effects of the ETC programmes to suffer. These are at risk of becoming minority programmes whose added value is restricted to a (very) small circle and show a tendency of promoting the same actors and similar projects.

The INTERREG/ETC programmes may be attested as highly relevant. The achievement was not only to give due attention to the specific context in the-

continued on the following page

24 See Appendix Core Indicators ETC.

matic fields that were funded, but also to develop the appropriate approaches. Therefore, many relevant contributions to regional development were made possible through the projects funded.

The following recommendations for action were developed in the “reflexion process”:

- Define strategic areas of focus and strengthen the profile of the ETC programmes: The implementation of the programmes should have a greater strategic orientation, with a balance being achieved between thematic concentration (in the respective regional context) and considerations of EU priorities and the overarching strategies.
- Furthermore, it is a matter of a more conscious defining, connecting and linking of ETC programmes: This applies, on the one hand, to references to the diverse ETC themes, and on the other, to references to other EU programmes and funds, and national programmes.
- Framework conditions and processes should be simplified, with as much as possible being “Europeanised” by having the EU Commission prepare uniform guidelines and instruments for all ETC programmes (for each thematic focus).
- The results of ETC-funded projects should be disseminated more reliably especially to the relevant but uninvolved actors. Furthermore, the suitable actors should be addressed and motivated to take part in ETC projects. Politics and the general public should be informed of the ETC.
- The Austrian findings were also placed in a general larger European framework based on the findings of two recent analyses. It was revealed that many of the problem areas and challenges are not specific to Austria, and this is particularly true for cooperation with the “new member states”.

### Macro-regional strategies: The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

Macro-regional strategies must be viewed in the light of their external, integration and development policy background. They form a new foundation for transnational cooperation areas. Fourteen Danube countries took part in the EUSDR, four of which are potential and current accession candidates, and two are third countries. Even the initiation of the strategy

created a **higher awareness** of the area as a common region and increased the willingness to work together more closely towards a common economic, cultural, tourism and ecological interest. The same as in the case of the drafting of the strategy, Austria is committed to playing an **active and constructive role** here as well.

- Three of the eleven priority areas were coordinated by Austrian institutions and the competent Austrian institutions all actively work in the other areas in the steering groups.
- In Austria, the Federal Chancellery in agreement with the Ministry for European and International Affairs has set up a coordination platform with representatives of the ministries, *Länder* and social partners for the ongoing support of the implementation of the EU strategy.

The first year of implementation<sup>25</sup> was a success from an Austrian perspective for the improvement of **cooperation** between the different public entities and sectors. Moreover, it was possible to identify the junction points of the new activities of the strategy and current Austrian and EU policies. The positioning of Austria as a player in Southeast Europe is also identified as an added value by the actors. Cooperation took place primarily within the scope of projects and contributed to the transparency of the relevant projects and to knowledge clustering. In many areas, there are significant potentials – as in similar initiatives in the starting phase – in the definition of its structural framework but also with respect to coherence within the strategy and also in connection with existing initiatives. Action is also required in refining the rationale behind the interventions of the overall initiative and in the individual priority areas.

In the first year of implementation, formal and informal networks became established in Austria and the programme started well. The challenges to success are in the establishment of functioning (work) processes, in heightening internal coherence and in improving interaction with existing activities and strategies. The integration of EUSDR in future EU programmes is viewed as crucial for the potential success of the strategy.

### 5.4 European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

The EAFRD programme is being implemented under a new framework in the current period. The agricultural reforms of 2003 and 2005 firmly established the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with

25 Cf. Metis (2012): Österreich und die EU-Strategie für den Donauraum. Erfahrungen und Perspektiven im ersten Umsetzungsjahr.

the creation of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and completely separated it from the schemes of the Structural Funds.

As a supplement to the competition-oriented ERDF programmes, the **Development Programme for Rural Areas** plays an important role in the stabilisation and development of rural areas. The Austrian Programme for the Development of Rural Areas 2007–2013 aims to achieve multi-functional, sustainable and competitive agriculture and forestry in flourishing rural regions. The aim is to accomplish the following **thematic objectives**:

- Improving the competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sector,
- Sustainable use of natural resources and preservation of cultural landscapes, and
- Preservation and development of attractive, thriving rural regions.

EAFRD targets primarily the **focus group** of agricultural enterprises and their environs, but also addresses – partly in Priority Axis 3 and in Priority Axis 4 LEADER – integrated development projects for rural areas (for example, start-ups and funding for micro enterprises, tourism programmes, commercial projects such as in the areas of wood and culture including architecture, social matters and integration). The focus is on wood processing and direct marketing programmes, the development of agro-tourism and the promotion of power plants that use renewable energy sources. Further **areas of focus** are the investment measures for the protection and improvement of cultural landscapes and rural heritage especially with respect to measures relating village renewal and the further development of rural infrastructure.

Until the end of 2011, the volume of projects funded with EAFRD funds was EUR 2.6 billion. Therefore, two thirds of the programme funds have been used. The two priorities “Improving the competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sectors” and “improving the environment and countryside” cover 92% of funding volume and have an allocation ratio of around 70%. The status of implementation of Priorities 3 and 4 are far below this level at 40%.

### Results of programme implementation

Almost 6,000 enterprises have introduced new products or processes due to the funding. The subsidised farming areas contribute to the various sustainability

objectives by applying the corresponding agricultural management techniques. Among other things, funding was provided to protect bio-diversity for an area covering 2.9 million ha, to safeguard soil quality 3.4 million ha, and to avoid marginalisation 4.1 million ha. According to the monitoring results, the programmes created 1,570 jobs. Impulses for employment came from renewable energy generation (absolute figure: 496), agricultural tourism (absolute figure: 325), and tourism (absolute figure: 232). The qualification programmes report over 41,000 successfully completed qualification courses.<sup>26</sup>

The **effects of the programme** were estimated in the mid-term valuation.<sup>27</sup> According to the estimates, gross added value created by the programme rose by EUR 1,257 million. Spending alone on preparatory work helps to generate added value, especially in the sectors outside of agriculture and forestry. The employment effects estimated are almost 26,200 FTE of which 5,866 are expected to be created in agriculture. As a consequence of the provision of “public goods” by environmental services (e. g. in the form of compensation payments, environmental programmes for agriculture) and the related reduction in the production of goods at market prices, the labour productivity of agriculture is reduced. In the area of climate protection, the measures taken helped to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 1.9 million t by the end of 2009. As regards the improvement of water quality and the change to the gross nutrient balance (nitrogen), a decline of 8% until 2013 has been calculated.

### Priority Quality of life in rural regions and diversification of the rural economy

This Priority was upgraded in the current programme. For the first time, funding was made available to projects that support small businesses and the trades, and basic services projects. As of the end of 2011, EUR 108.3 million from the EAFRD funds had been paid out.

- Measures for the “diversification of rural economies” comprised among other things diversification, start-ups and tourism until the end of 2011, for example, some 500 owners of micro enterprises were supported with starting their businesses and 137 tourism projects were implemented.
- In the area “improvement of the quality of life in rural areas” 847 projects have been funded to date to “secure a supply of basic services”. These include local food shops and trail infrastructure projects.

26 The data used refer to: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (2012): Austrian Programme for the Development of Rural Areas 2007–2013. Yearly Interim Report 2011.

27 Cf. Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (2010): Evaluation Report 2010. Mid-term Evaluation of the Austrian Programme for the Development of Rural Areas, p. 52 ff.

Table 18: Plan and performance status – EAFRD funds

Priorities and programmes	Planning	Implementation	
	In EUR 1,000	In EUR 1,000	In %
1 Improving the competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sectors	495,477	368,553	74%
2 Improving the environment and the landscape	2,970,142	2,029,738	68%
3 Quality of life in rural regions and diversification of rural economies	249,263	108,305	43%
31 Measures to diversify the rural economy	39,305	22,519	57%
32 Measures to improve the quality of life in rural areas	188,062	74,246	39%
33 Training and information measures for economic actors operating in the fields covered by axis 3	19,420	10,153	52%
34 Skills-acquisition and animation measures	2,475	1,387	56%
4 Implementation the LEADER concept	236,394	103,552	44%
<b>Total EAFRD</b>	<b>3,951,275</b>	<b>2,610,148</b>	<b>66%</b>

Source: Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management; Spending reported until year-end 2011; own calculations convelop.

At the same time, 270 village renewal programmes were completed and almost 2,500 projects for the “preservation and improvement of rural heritage”.<sup>28</sup>

- The area of qualification was generally upgraded in the current programme. Programmes to “improve the expert qualification of the economic actors” focus on the qualification in connection with agro-tourism services and forestry activities. Up to now, more than 32,500 actors have been reached.
- Furthermore, regional development processes for “learning regions” and “Local Agenda 21” programmes were started. A total of 32,590 persons received funding for occupational training and information events with more than 7,650 training days. The “learning regions” approach tested a new method for regional development with a focus on learning.

#### Priority 4: LEADER

LEADER enables the broad implementation of innovative approaches and the traditionally widespread method in Austria of endogenous, autonomous regional development: It is considered an important instrument for strengthening regional governance.

As of the end of 2011, 86 LEADER regions had been recognized in Austria. They cover 88% (73,700 km<sup>2</sup>) of the territory of Austria. More than half of the popula-

tion lives in LEADER regions. The challenge in the current period is the “mainstreaming” of the LEADER concept. In total, in Priorities 1 to 3 more than 5,060 projects (without cooperation partners) were implemented, with Priority 3 being the most important for LEADER. The fact that the degree of implementation as regards funding is almost 45% lower than that of Priorities 1 and 2 is explained by types of LEADER projects.

They feature more complex structures and require longer preparatory and commitment phases. However, in some *Länder*, the funding allocation rates are already high in LEADER.

The mainstreaming of the LEADER programme has also led to far-reaching changes.<sup>29</sup> With the integration of LEADER into the programme LE 07–13, the subsequent activities following the former Community initiatives have created a conflict between administration and innovation. As a consequence, a rather significant number of projects at individual enterprises with only a low degree of innovation are being funded under LEADER.

This is especially true for the *Länder* that view LEADER mainly as means of strengthening Priorities 1 to 3 and less as an instrument for promoting innovation to achieve integrated rural development.

28 Funding for nature protection, national parks, cultural landscapes, landscaping and development, forestry, raising awareness for environmental protection and the potential of the Alpine region.

29 Cf. Dax, T./Oedl-Wieser, Th./Strahl, W. (2011): Mid-term evaluation of LEADER measures. Austrian Programme for the Development of Rural Areas 2007–2013, p. 63 ff.

## 5.5 Contributions to Europe 2020 and Implementation of the National Reform Programme

This section investigates the relationship of the contributions of the EU Cohesion Policy Programmes to these objectives. In this context, it should be taken into account that Cohesion Policy programmes are only (small) cross-sections of the respective policy fields.

The data on programme implementation shows a high share of funding earmarked for the programming period 2007–2013 in accordance with the Lisbon guidelines, and therefore, an orientation on the European strategies.

The programmes of the Structural Funds will be analysed here with respect to the objectives defined in the National Reform Programme and in Europe 2020.

The **headline targets 1 “jobs created”, 4 “education”** and especially **5 “reduction of poverty and social exclusion”** of the NRP are addressed mainly by the **ESF programmes “Employment”** and “Convergence Phasing Out Burgenland” that target the groups addressed in these objectives, i. e., older people, youths, persons with migrant backgrounds and women.

In the headline target education, for example, migrants and school dropouts are supported in obtaining qualifications and competencies with the aim of integration into the labour market as well as support for adult education programmes within the life-long learning concept.

In **headline target 4**, the programmes co-finance programmes, among others, to combat long-term unemployment and improve employment participation of persons of employable age at risk of poverty and exclusion.

The contribution of the programmes to **headline target 2 “research and development”** is the **encouragement of enterprises** to invest in R&D and to build and strengthen a **region’s strong points**:

- Specific measures relating to **technology location development** (combination of technology and research infrastructure, research projects) supports in several programmes the formation of regional strengths in the meaning of smart specialisation (e. g. in Styria, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Carinthia).
- The enterprise-level programmes aim to **encourage enterprises** to invest in R&D and to broaden the regional knowledge base. To this end, instru-

ments are used in the programmes such as innovation assistants, e.g. in the programmes in place in Lower Austria, Salzburg, Carinthia and Tyrol. The **innovation capacity** of enterprises is supported by funding detail engineering and the introduction of new products and processes. Funding for research projects at individual enterprises is a key element although serious problems arise with respect to the administration of the programmes.

- In the case of the **cross-border ETC programmes**, cooperation projects in research and education are being given more attention. The cooperation ventures of the framework programmes are increasingly being supplemented by the creation of regional cooperation, knowledge and research areas.
- Some programmes concentrate on competence development in the area of **information technology** (e. g. Lakeside Labs in Carinthia, clusters in Vienna). Furthermore, the enlargement of the broadband grid and closing the broadband gap are part of the EAFRD funding programmes in Priority 3.

**Headline target 3 “climate protection and energy”**: At present, around 10% of ERDF programming funds are being applied in headline target 3 for the expansion of **renewable energy** and **energy efficiency**. Thus, the funds are used to support the national subsidy programmes.

Furthermore, EAFRD has a focus on the promotion of renewable energy from biomass. Practically every Austrian *Land* and/or programme defines environmental technologies as a priority, for example, in clusters or relating to wood. The ESF comprises qualification schemes for “green jobs”. For the cross-border programmes, the themes of environment, energy, and more frequently also climate protection are important fields of action (ca. 20% of ERDF and ETC funds).

**Headline target 6: “competitiveness and entrepreneurial environment”** The ERDF programmes include support for innovative start-ups. In some *Länder*, the ERDF funds are used to enlarge the range of services of incubators at universities and scientific institutions. In two programmes (Burgenland, Upper Austria), new financing instruments are used to promote start-ups and growth. Generally, the indicators have problems in attaining the objective “promotion of start-ups” due to the shift to the area of projects without EU co-financing.

Overall, it is a fact that due to the small volume of funding from the Structural Funds, the contributions are restricted and the measures taken have only limited impact because of the relatively low level of funding.

## 5.6 Evaluation and Monitoring Processes<sup>30</sup>

In Austria, evaluation practices in the policy fields have developed quite divergently. Great store was always set by qualitative evaluation approaches with a learning dimension. In this context, Austria always takes an active part in discussions at the European level. The following evaluation and monitoring processes are summarised here. The findings are discussed in the sections on each specific fund.

### Implementation monitoring within the framework of the STRAT.ATplus process

The planning process of STRAT.AT was transferred for 2008 to 2011 to the **strategic monitoring process of STRAT.ATplus**. The purpose of STRAT.ATplus is to promote the sharing of experiences, reflexion processes and the generation of practical impulses. This has created a framework in Austria that supports processes – apart from administrative and technical funding issues – for all actors involved in regional policy by encouraging dialogue in the information, reflexion and learning processes.

Priority themes of the STRAT.ATplus process:

- 2008: “EU Cohesion Policy in Austria 1995–2007” – Analyses and reflexion processes on the experiences gained from implementation (see ÖROK 2009 – EU Cohesion Policy in Austria 1995–2007 – Taking Stock)
- 2009: “Trends and Challenges – Future Challenges and Impacts on Regional Policy”
- 2010: “Future Perspectives” – Discussion of themes such as employment growth and qualification in the Europe 2020 Strategy
- 2011: “The Regional Dimension of Innovation with a View to 2014+” and “Reflexion on Austria’s Involvement in INTERREG/ETC” (see ÖROK 2011 – 15 years INTERREG/ETC in Austria: Review and Outlook).

The two processes dedicated to the experiences and findings of EU Cohesion Policy to date (see STRAT.AT focus themes 2008) as well as the participation of Austria in INTERREG/ETC (see focus themes 2011) enable a new form of reflexion on policy-making and implementation on the long-term horizon. The processes have brought us deeper insights into the possibilities and limitations of implementation of EU

Cohesion Policy in Austria. The quantitative analysis of the WIFO pilot study on “regional convergence” arrived at encouraging findings and shows that progress has been achieved in employment and on the labour market in the programming regions. The regions that received funding in the first and second Structural Funds periods developed significantly better than the regions without funding. Furthermore, the growth disparities in employment trends have developed positively since Austria’s accession to the EU. An analysis of the experience gained in Austria also resulted in the widely shared assessment that the financial aid measures under the regional policy programmes have to be limited to a “good Austrian mainstream” level under given national and EU framework conditions. Qualitative considerations have led to the conclusion that institutional deficits are covered at the regional level. The possibilities of a more targeted focus in multilevel governance have improved, and this increases the chances for the regions to catch up with national and international developments and programmes. The application of the rules supports the optimisation and professionalization of the administrative system in the relevant policy fields (improved coordination, simplification of complexity of funding schemes) and creates impulses for structured and systematic learning (evaluation, monitoring).<sup>31</sup> For a summary presentation of the conclusions drawn on Austria’s participation in INTERREG /ETC, see the chapter on European Territorial Cooperation (ETC).

### ERDF: Programme and impact evaluations 2007 to 2013

A specific evaluation of the ERDF-funded measures across all programmes by the federal government (ÖROK 2011 – impact evaluation – a practical test) showed that the ERDF programmes clearly contributed to the attainment of climate targets. Interim valuations and reflexions were conducted for the programmes on Regional Competitiveness in four *Länder* (Vienna, Vorarlberg, Styria, Lower Austria). Unlike the previous programming periods, there were no systematic programme evaluations. This time, a preference was given to specific thematic evaluations. Therefore, an evaluation within the framework of the Convergence Phasing Out programme in the area of innovation resulted in adaptations to the programme and to the drafting of the innovation campaign Burgenland 2020.

As a consequence of the full integration of the ERDF programmes “Regional Competitiveness” and “Con-

30 For an overview of relevant evaluations – see Appendix: Overview of Evaluations.

31 ÖROK (2009b): EU Cohesion Policy in Austria 1995–1997 – Taking Stock, ÖROK Publications series no. 180, Vienna 2009.

vergence Phasing Out” into the national and regional financial aid landscape, the evaluations are conducted primarily by national bodies that also include ERDF projects (see Appendix C: Overview of Evaluations). Explicit, ERDF-specific, thematic evaluations are therefore conducted less frequently.

The more comprehensive **programme evaluations** conducted on “Regional Competitiveness” also reflect the assessments reached in the Strategic Report and therefore present a consistent picture. The implementation of the programmes largely followed the programme objectives, and therefore, showed a strong Lisbon orientation. The already high Lisbon

earmarking targets were even partially surpassed. An implementation trend is emerging of investments at the enterprise level.

Despite the marked changes in the economic policy framework in the course of the economic crisis, the evaluations confirm the strategic orientation of the programmes 2007–2013. This is explained by the fact that regional location policy is best implemented today – also after the crisis – primarily through regional innovation programmes. Therefore, the mid-term evaluations generally ascertain the adequateness of the high orientation on innovation of the programmes, also in the phase after the crisis.

#### **Box: Multi-programme Impact Evaluation – Practice Test**

Project impact evaluation – A practice test based on the example of the ERDF-funded environmental measures of the federal government in Austria for the period 2007–2013 constitute a pilot project aimed at creating a practical evaluation approach for the complex issues of impact assessments. It follows the method of process-oriented impact monitoring (PIM) in which impact models are defined and the focus of observations is on the change process intended to lead to the desired effects. Based on the logical effects model developed, an overall plausible contribution of ERDF environmental schemes to the STRAT.AT objectives is revealed. The focus of the measures, and thus a significant contribution of the ERDF schemes is to be found in the strategic priorities of Austria’s and international climate policy, namely energy efficiency and renewable energy services. The contribution of the measures to the STRAT.AT objectives of greater innovation in environmental and energy technologies is relatively low though. In this context, the ERDF programmes are viewed as instruments for promoting innovation only under certain conditions. Apart from the major effects on the environment, the funding schemes contribute to a greater competitiveness of the regions through a regionalisation of added value chains. The share of domestic production is high, the decentralisation of energy generation promotes demand for regional/local suppliers and service providers with respect to investment and operation. Apart from this, imported commodities are substituted by regional energy sources.

#### **Box: Programme Convergence Phasing Out Burgenland**

The Convergence Phasing Out programme is based on measures to support competitive structures especially by establishing an innovation and knowledge-based economy. The evaluation of the innovation-based measures of this priority revealed some initial implementation progress. The evaluation led to a series of adaptation proposals for existing measures, which aimed, in particular, to linking with existing clusters, the building of intermediary structures to support cooperation, and the adaptation of the funding schemes. The second thrust of the recommendations included new proposals for measures to strengthen innovation climate and supplementary financial aid for innovation. Therefore, the evaluation resulted in an action plan, the innovation campaign Burgenland 2020.

#### **Ongoing evaluation in the ESF programme “employment”**

Under the ESF, ongoing evaluation is conducted based, above all, on the impact assessment of the individual measures (see ESF Programme). Apart from an evaluation of the Territorial Employment Pacts (see also the good practice example) an assessment of the status quo of Austrian production schools<sup>32</sup> arrive at an overall positive assessment, as in this case, a comprehensive integration approach is offered for socially disadvantaged youths.

32 Cf. Bergmann, N./Schelepa, S. (2011): Status Report on Austria’s Production Schools.

**Box: Production schools**

In line with the international trend, a number of production schools were also opened in Austria in the past few years. The number was increased to 16 production schools by the end of 2010; these schools aim to give disadvantaged and marginalised youths a real chance of occupational and social integration. By learning in a production environment, the intention is to encourage curiosity to learn “more”. Production schools are different from other labour market policy instruments insofar as the explicit aim is to not only integrate participants into the labour market, but also prompt motivation to join training and further education programmes or return to school. The programmes are assessed as a great success. The aim is also to achieve a general stabilisation of the participating youths. A status report prepared at the end of 2011 gives a generally positive assessment. The programme reached the target group to a high degree. One proposal is to ensure a sufficient period of attendance to assure the intended stabilisation function and likewise a diversification of the offerings of the workshops. Offering a wider range of creative activities and experiences is considered an important step towards motivating the youths and reinforcing their contentment with life and work.

**In summary:**

- Based on the positive experience up to now, an **on-going evaluation** was also conducted in the national ESF programme “Employment” in the period 2007–2013, which had concentrated on programme-specific evaluations and in this manner contributed to programme optimisation and learning processes through the effectiveness of the programmes.
- In ERDF, evaluation practice will be **programme-specific**. The evaluations reveal a good start of the programmes and a good level of target attainment of the objective indicators. However, they stress that the increasingly stricter administrative rules with heightened documentation requirements and controls are a growing hindrance.
- The evaluations will be generally conducted at the programme level. However, little is known of the interaction (or lacking interaction) of the different EU programmes and their links to the national measures in the **regions**. This can also be argued for the stronger territorial orientation in evaluation practice of Cohesion Policy.<sup>33</sup>
- The Europe-wide reflexions with a long-term policy implementation focus conducted within the scope of the **STRAT.ATplus process** may be designated as good practices, as they deal with the possibilities, limitations and improvements to the Structural Funds and are discussed in a participative discussion process.

**Ongoing evaluation within the programme “development of rural areas”**

The EAFRD programme has a sophisticated and extensive evaluation system used for the assessment of each of the programmes that are bundled in a **synthesis of the interim reports**. To this end, analyses and improvement proposals are drafted for each of the programmes as well as a synthesis of the interim evaluations (see Section “Development Programme for Rural Areas”).

33 See Gruber, M./Gerhardter, G. (2011), “4D-Evaluierung – Ein Impuls für das Evaluierungsverständnis in der Regionalpolitik”, developed and commissioned by the Federal Chancellery IV/4 and Metis/WIFO (2012) Expert Report on the Partnership Agreement STRAT.AT 2020.

## 6 SYNOPSIS AND CONCLUSIONS ON ...

### 6.1 ... programme implementation to date

In summary, it may be ascertained that the implementation phase up to now has achieved good progress with respect to the commitments and payments, and results achieved. The contribution to the European objectives as regards orientation and financial weighting is high, with a Lisbon earmarking of 90 %.

- In the area of the programmes “**Regional Competitiveness**” and the ERDF “**Convergence Phasing Out**” programme, the **result indicators** point to a good performance versus the agreed targets especially in the areas of **employment, private investments** and the **energy and climate-related indicators**. Serious **difficulties in the implementation of R&D projects** at enterprises and **start-ups** have been observed. This is not a problem of lacking projects, but is rather explained by the administrative framework conditions and the fact that alternative national funding sources are available. Implementation concentrates more on investments in innovation at the single enterprise level and less on highly innovative R&D projects. A pattern that was reinforced even further – as in the two preceding programming periods of the Structural Funds in Austria – by the adjustments made up to now to the indicative funds allocation. After the **swift start** of the programmes, the implementation trend flattened due, above all, to the growing insecurity over the interpretation of eligibility and audit issues in addition to the financial and economic crisis. The programmes strike a balance between the **regional policy objectives** and an **innovation policy** with a wider scope. The focus on research and development concentrates in the central and industrial regions. “Innovative investments” dominate in the structurally weak regions. The latter regions have the highest funding intensity.
- The **nation-wide ESF programme “employment”** and the programme **ESF Convergence Phasing Out Burgenland** refined their profiles again in the current period based on the experience gained in past periods and now focus on **labour market target groups and themes** and successfully support the internationally recognized Territorial Employment Pacts. Related to this, is also the stronger involvement of the *Länder*, and therefore, the decentralisation of active labour market policy. Progress in programme implementation is good and the

participant data shows that the target groups have been reached to a high degree especially in the area of preventive labour market policy and integration achievements. Overall, as regards the implementation ratio, it is not only high in Austria but also takes a leading position internationally.

- The **ETC programmes** cover a wide range of activities, with the themes of education, research and environment growing in significance. In Austria, research and innovation as well as human resources are being more strongly weighted than in the overall programmes. New and major administrative challenges such as the common programme implementation and the Lead Partner Principle were successfully implemented in the programmes. This considerably improved the quality of cooperation. At the same time, there are growing restrictions in relation to potential project organisers and this is adversely affecting the broad-based effect of the ETC programmes.
- **EAFRD** in Austria features, above all, a strong orientation on rural development policy – especially via revenue sharing and funding of environmental schemes that are allocated a much higher weighting than spending on market structuring measures. The programme is achieving good progress supported, above all, by the large-scale funding measures. Priority 3 with its focus on the diversification of rural regions is progressing at a good pace in the measures targeting agricultural target groups, while Priority 4 with its focus on the integrated approach of the LEADER concept is experiencing delays in payments. This is true although in some *Länder* the rate of allocation is already high. The implementation of LEADER is experiencing a great deal of tension between administration and innovation. It has lost a lot of innovation momentum – especially when used as an implementation concept for Priorities 1 to 3.

As regards content, **programme implementation** is still dominated by projects with large-scale funding schemes. ERDF deals mainly with investments in innovation in enterprises, while the labour market policy of the ESF concerns labour market integration measures of the Austrian Employment Office, and in EAFRD the content is support for environmental and territorial funding schemes”. However, concentration on the aforementioned “drivers” has decreased.

## 6.2 ... synergies and complementarities

The data on programme implementation shows a high share of funding earmarked for the programming period 2007–2013 in accordance with the **Lisbon guidelines**, and therefore, an orientation on the European strategies. The section on the contributions to the Europe 2020 Strategy and the implementation of the National Reform Programme (NRP) shows that

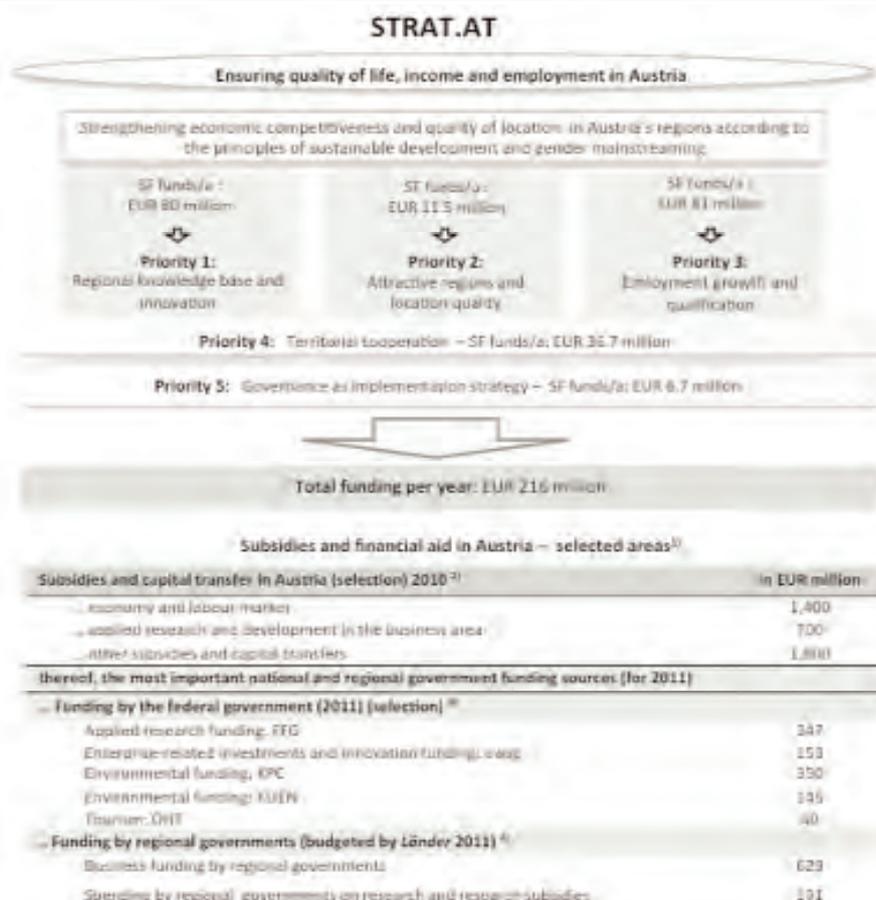
- the ESF programmes “Employment” and “Convergence Phasing Out Burgenland” target the core objectives of “employment”, “education” and especially “reduction of poverty and social exclusion” addresses the defined **target groups**.
- the ERDF programmes are positioned in the headline target 2 “research and development” and their contributions are based on a strategy aimed to encourage enterprises to invest in R&D and innovation, and thereby broaden the innovation basis,

thereby strengthening the **technology location development** in the meaning of smart specialisation.

- in the **cross-border ETC programmes**, the cooperation projects in research and education are being given more attention.
- some programmes are developing special competencies in the area of **information technology**, and the gaps in the broadband grid within the scope of the EAFRD programme are being closed.
- some 10% of ERDF programming funds are being applied for the expansion of **renewable energy and energy efficiency** (without taking into account the relevant research projects), and ESF qualification and EAFRD measures are also applied.

However, it should be mentioned that due to the **low volume of funds from the Structural Funds**, the contribution to the overarching objectives was only limited.

Figure 10: Annual allocation of the STRAT.AT through priority programmes in relation to selected funding areas in Austria



Data based on different sources: 1) The figures include Structural Funds means

2) for “subsidies/capital transfers in Austria” see: metis/WIFO (2012): STRAT.AT 2020. Expert paper, July 2012, p. 25

3) for the “financial aid funds of the federal government”, see the annual reports of the funds;

4) for the “financial aid of the Länder”, see the budgets 2011 of the Länder, “Financial aid for the business sector of the Länder” contains the budget sections 75 – Energy Sector, 77 – Tourism, 78 Trade/Commerce; “Financial aid for research and research aid” corresponds to section 28 of the budgets of the Länder.

Note: The data in the figure cannot present a full and transparent picture of the national subsidy schemes, which results already from the combination of the different sources. But it does offer an orientation on the fundamental dimensions.

Source: own conception and presentation, convelop.

## Complementarity with the National Measures

Precisely in Austria – where the implementation of the Structural Funds programmes is handled by established agencies and institutions and mostly with co-financing from existing national guidelines – there is a close **interconnectedness** between EU Cohesion Policy and national policy fields. In this case, a corresponding complementarity to the national and regional measures is assumed.

One should not lose sight though of the fact that the programmes of EU Cohesion Policy only cover sections of the policy fields. The current Structural Funds are **very important** at the *Länder* level for the regional economy and for innovation policy. In *Länder* with larger programmes up to half of the relevant budgets of regional agency are funded from the ERDF Structural Funds programme.

At the federal level, the Structural Funds account for around 5% of the total budget of the individual agencies and up to 10% of the relevant co-financed areas. An exception in this case is ERP funding and its co-financed programmes in which Cohesion funds play a great role. With the national co-financing, the funds allocated in the programmes double again.

EAFRD comprises – apart from the market structuring functions of pillar 1 of CAP – practically the full agricultural financial aid of Austria and involves the *Länder* in the implementation. This stresses the need for a discussion of the specific role of the future ESI Funds.

### 6.3 ... repercussions of the financial and economic crisis

The financial and economic crisis did not fail to have repercussions on the implementation of the programmes. It caused – apart from **depressing production and employment** – a steep decline in the willingness to invest in innovation at enterprises as of the autumn 2008. This concerns less re-investing by enterprises but rather more to larger, riskier investments that are ultimately the focus of the EU programmes. While in 2011 and 2012, in the segment of small investment projects the long-year average investment level was reached again, there is still restraint on the part of the larger projects of relevance for EU funding. The consequences for programme planning are

→ prolonged projects, smaller project sizes and a **lower risk tolerance of enterprises**.

→ **delays** in payments due to the prolongation of the duration of the projects.

→ a greater **shift** in the projects towards the thematic Code 08 “other investments in companies”.

As the economy slowed again as of 2012 and with the renewed recessive tendencies, which Austria's economy will not succeed in avoiding any longer, will present a major challenge in the future.

In this difficult economic situation, enterprises will concentrate on their core activities. Before this back-drop, it is more difficult to motivate them to invest in schemes to promote the economic framework across enterprises or for projects that target specific groups, e. g. older workers or women.

The ESF **programmes** have significantly increased funding to combat unemployment caused by the worsening labour market conditions triggered by the crisis by setting up training and employment schemes. At the same time, the integration goals had to be adjusted slightly downwards. Furthermore, the adjustments were made to individual measures such as the enlargement of eligible target groups by including short-term employees in the qualification measures.

The crisis interventions were done using mostly **national programmes** (see First Strategic Report 2009). The federal government has responded to the financial and economic crisis by setting up wide-ranging packages of measures. This includes measures to stimulate consumption, create investment incentives for private individuals and enterprises (e. g. higher liabilities assumed and guarantees, subsidies for growth projects or thermal insulation) or by strengthening labour market policy interventions (e.g. sabbaticals, short-time work, increase in funding for qualification and labour market integration). These measures were designed in accordance with the strategic guidelines<sup>34</sup> of the EU Communication “A European Economic Recovery Plan” and supplemented by the measures of the *Länder*.

The Structural Funds programmes have retained their objectives – long-term adjustments to the structures in the regions. The relatively small financial volumes in comparison to the Convergence regions and the specific administrative framework conditions, which cause a low degree of flexibility in processing, also means that they are not suitable as crisis intervention instruments”. Rather it is important that structural policy remains consistent over the long term. The consolidation pressure on public budgets is

34 COM(2008) 800 final, Communication from the Commission to the European Council, A European Economic Recovery Plan, Brussels, 26 Nov. 2008.

tightening the room for manoeuvring for public interventions. This pressure is starting to restrict national funding, especially in the form of subsidies. The Structural Funds means are having a stabilising effect in this situation especially at the *Länder* level.

#### 6.4 ... the framework conditions and effects on the programmes

The rules of the Structural Funds are increasingly being perceived as restrictive to implementation. While there is substantial progress in increasing flexibility at the **programme level**, the administrative rules are **counteracting** this effect although it must be mentioned that it is generally recognised that a large share of the regulatory density is created internally within Austria. Overall, documentation and audit expenses have increased in terms of both volume and depth of the audits.

In the area of EU co-financing, over the years and programming periods, rules and regulations have been built up at the EU and national level that are creating enormous insecurity among the actors. If the regulations are strictly adhered to at the EU and at the national level, the system reaches the limits of its operability both with respect to the processing and audit routines.

What is especially disrupting is the high insecurity prevailing over the financial aid and audit rules that is aggravated due to lacking binding or very long periods of communication with the EC and the audit authorities. The consequences in the ERDF may even include the temporary standstill of funding activities and result in risk-averse project selection. In the ESF as well, the bodies involved are faced with enormous challenges with respect to programme administration, and with their increasing involvement, the *Länder* level.

The status of payments in the ERDF shows that with a lower funding volume and an enlarged territory to cover it is behind the period of comparison from period 2000–2006. This trend can also be observed throughout Europe.

The measures initiated at the EU level for the “**simplification**” are welcomed. The principles of accounting for indirect costs on the basis of “flat rates” and the flat rates for personnel costs (standard scales of unit costs) are applied. These constitute a significant simplification of the funding of labour-intensive projects as in the case of the innovation and R&D projects. However, there are still great insecurities regarding the audit methods, and the yet to be conducted revisions by the audit authority will yield results only with a time lag.

Further measures of the “**EU Recovery Plan**” in the area of financing (advances) are not applied in Austria or are funded from national programmes. This also applies to the options regarding energy efficiency or new financing forms that are applied within the scope of the “crisis bailout schemes” but with national funding (see Appendix “Reaction to the European Recovery Plan”).

#### 6.5 ... the further relevance of the STRAT.AT strategies

After the end of the Lisbon strategy and under the impression of the economic crisis of the years 2008/09, the new growth and employment strategy **Europa 2020**<sup>35</sup> was prepared and approved by the European Council in June 2010. In key areas, it is a continuation of the predecessor strategy. The Priorities of the STRAT.AT largely follow the “intelligent”, “sustainable” and “inclusive” pillars of growth of the Europe 2020 strategy. Therefore, the STRAT.AT and the existing strategies of the Operational Programme until the end of the period 2007–2013 serve as a reference framework. Thus, no strategic changes are planned for the remaining time. The consequences of the financial and economic crisis must be solved through national measures and regulations. Due to the objectives of the programmes and the relatively low financing volumes in comparison with the convergence regions, these are not suitable as “economic interventions”.

With respect to the remaining **term of the programming period 2007–2013**, the following **challenges** remain:

- The implementation of the necessary **system adaptations** in line with the tighter requirements for the audit system that have emerged in the course of the programming period 2007–13, without hindering or slowing down the overall process.
- The processing of the **backlog** of projects due to the clarification processes. The project pipeline must be opened accordingly and the backlog processed to accelerate the allocations and payments.
- Furthermore, the fact that the **management** of the current programmes and the complex planning processes run **parallel** at several levels (national, regional) must also be solved for the new programming period. This is bringing the competent bodies to the limits of their capacities and resources.
- The combination of these administrative requirements, the limited personnel capacities and the cooling economic development pose a great **challenge** to compliance with the n+2 rule always met up to now.

35 European Commission (2010): EUROPA 2020. A Strategy for Intelligent, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS FOR FUTURE EU COHESION POLICY 2014+

The drafts available since October 2011 for the regulations include new **coordination elements**. The five funds (ERDF, ESE, EAFRD, EMFF, CF = ESI funds) are bundled into the “Common Strategic Framework”. The innovations in the drafts mainly concern strengthening governance. This includes, above all, apart from the policy coordination, a stronger orientation on “results”. What is planned is a closer **coordination** both horizontally between the funds as well as vertically in the Europe 2020 Strategy through the National Reform Programme to the EU co-financed programmes.

The conception and implementation of the programmes of EU Cohesion Policy in Austria in the past has been marked by a strong “**segmentation**” that cannot be eased by the “strategic umbrella” of STRAT.AT. This is augmented in Austria by a very clear segmentation of the programmes by target group and sectoral policy, and by the division of competencies between the national and regional level:

- The EFRE programmes of “Regional Competitiveness” and the “Convergence Phasing Out” address mainly **individual enterprises for funding** with a focus on innovative investments and supplementary economic location development policy with a technology orientation. In general, it supports existing programmes in place in Austria, some throughout the entire territory.
- The ESF programme “Employment” generally concentrates on **labour market policy for specific groups** and provides funding at the interfaces to the labour market, employment and social policy. There is no direct link to innovation funding within ERDF.
- The EAFRD Rural Development Programme concentrates largely on the target group of **agricultural and forestry enterprises**.
- The ETC CBC programmes have a **broader base**, put a greater focus on the territorial dimension, but still form a generally separate community.

The programmes therefore remain within the sectoral policies, their own intervention logic and own “communities”. These differences are defined at the EU level and are augmented in Austria by the clearly “specified” target groups. Ultimately, the challenge for the new programming period 2014–2020 with the planned closer coordination of the “ESI Fund” lies in

this segmentation into different target groups with only very little complementarity. The rules proposed are generally designed in such a manner that does not permit the simple continuation of the status quo.

A few of the key elements and scenarios are presented below:

The future design of the **architecture of the funds and the implementation** depends, first of all, on the intended objectives. A key legitimisation and function of the **European** programmes is primarily the harmonisation of spatial interventions and coordinated local development. Coordination in Austria is done traditionally at the regional/local level and is a task for the many structures such as the Territorial Employment Pacts, Regional Managements and the LEADER groups. The regional structures are supported partially by EU funds but still require an overarching **strategic framework** at the national level. Only in this manner, can they act as intermediaries between top-down strategies and bottom-up impulses.

For a fund to achieve this functionality, a major change is needed compared to previous practices: Above all, what is needed are adaptations and **harmonisation** on the part of the European Commission and of the rules and their interpretation at the national level. Up to now, scantily coordinated eligibility criteria have been a hindrance especially for larger interrelated projects and have caused massive problems for the project organisers and the abovementioned intermediaries that are forced to set up many very different accounting systems.

At the national level, the funds should concentrate on an actual added value for Europe that may be found when the sector-specific stances are overcome in favour of a harmonised development perspective. **The contents and themes** addressed here are manifold:

- **Knowledge-based location development** by linking R&D, transfer and infrastructure with thematic qualifications (e. g. doctorate courses); research centres, incubator functions of universities (spin-off funding and qualification)
- Orientation on **innovation funding** and the related qualifications. In EAFRD, the regulation proposals state a much stronger “innovation orientation”.

- **ICT measures:** R&D, funding for applications, qualification, broadband in rural areas.
- Enterprise **qualification programmes** (relevant for all funds).
- **Renewable energy – energy and resource efficiency** – is of relevance for research, investments and qualification. Smart city initiatives or climate and energy model regions may serve as integrating measures as well as cluster initiatives.
- **Thematic areas of focus** such as in food technology can be addressed by all funds also in combination with cluster initiatives and linked to the European innovation partnership in agriculture.
- Regional **qualification management**.
- New model solutions for **basic services** (e. g. linking of IT solutions, mobile services with employment projects).

These approaches all aim to support **location development**. Horizontal (enterprise) funding schemes have more of a complementary function. Nonetheless, precautions need to be taken for the event of a major economic contraction and adequate action plans prepared to support the manufacturing sector. Overall, the approach has less of a focus on a sharp demarcation of the target groups between the programmes, but rather thematically complementary sets of initiatives and project families should be set up that are embedded in an overall strategic system. What is called for is an opening up of the strictly defined target group demarcations on all sides.

Generally, the latest instruments are guided by the goals of integrated territorial development and community-led local development or the JOINT Action Plans. It still needs to be investigated in detail if this framework offers sufficient guidance. The implementation capacity depends closely on a programme's structures selected for the implementation.

In the current **configuration**, this can only be partially achieved: The funds are often driven by a sectoral bias and hardly feature functions for policy innovation. The rules are too complex and divergent for this purpose, and the programmes are manifold and cannot attain the required critical mass. The most attractive instruments cannot be applied presently in the EU programmes. To achieve this it would be necessary to reorganize programme implementation in ERDF and to require a commitment on the part of the funds to central common **thematic fields**. In this context, the bundling of nine *Länder*-specific programmes to form a national programme needs to be discussed. There are many arguments for moving the programmes to a national level, but in this case giving the *Länder* steering options for influencing the content and strategy and including regional components. Sufficient attention must be given to the issue of how

the interaction among the actors is to be organised in order for a programme with a national impact and strong regional components to be able to resolve the tension that arises from the advantages and disadvantages of national and regional programmes. This would increase the chances of including new innovation-based actions in the programmes and of reviving the approach of thinking in terms of a comprehensive national policy. This requires sufficient consulting and support capacities though and the possibilities of proactive project and location development.

A reorientation of the agreed common themes requires, among other things, a certain degree of convergence of ERDF and ESF. For ESF, this means strengthening the process of regionalisation, but also requires openness for complementary themes. For ERDF, this ultimately means the consistent finalisation of the coordination process started to achieve harmonisation of across programmes. Structures of the national programme already exist in EAFRD with country-specific forms of implementation. In any case, a reorientation calls for "movement" as regards the themes of all funds and probably also means a change to the processing structures. The definition of common **thematic fields** should be done at the level of the partnership agreement.

Should the framework conditions lack these elements, there is the option of giving the funds a clear definition as a "**funding instrument**". The individual Operational Programmes have to be argued in this case before the backdrop of the policy fields and regional strategies within which the EU co-financed schemes are selected. The framework for this purpose is given at the regional level by the current or newly created regional innovation policy programmes. Thus, in this scenario challenges arise that are directly related to a comprehensive territorial perspective: the preparation of the programmes as well as the reporting and evaluations must be conducted bearing in mind a comprehensive view of current policy and development systems. A general territorial perspective would also form the central point of reference as well thereby requiring more transparency from the contributions of the diverse interventions (regional, national, EU). Even if the perspective were to keep its heavy focus on sectors, this would not make the undertaking less complex. Neither does this exclude the need to agree on the common themes in the partnership agreement.

### Further challenges

Irrespective of the course navigated, several fundamental issues need to be **clarified**:

**Good governance principles on all sides:** Above all, it will be crucial that the principles of good governance

are taken seriously and – apart from avoiding excessive regulation – that attention is paid to the timely and clear definition of every one of the rules (harmonised as far as possible) as well as to avoid introducing rules or re-interpreting rules ex post. This requires an exchange between the different Communities (e.g. research, regional policy, ETC).

**Better performance of the system:** It is necessary to improve the performance of the system both at the implementing bodies as well as at the control and audit authorities in order to achieve an adequate handling of the Structural Funds programmes. To implement the programmes, the bodies involved have to be supplied with sufficient and vital resources (cost-benefit).

**Vertical coordination:** The new governance concept makes it necessary to intensify the link with the National Reform Programme (NRP). This link to the NRP, which has been in place for ESF for some time already, is a new element for the ERDF programmes and EAFRD. Vice versa, this also calls for a greater involvement of the *Länder* in the preparation of the NRP and in reporting.

**Principle of proportionality:** From an Austrian perspective, it is especially important that the European Commission take the principle of proportionality se-

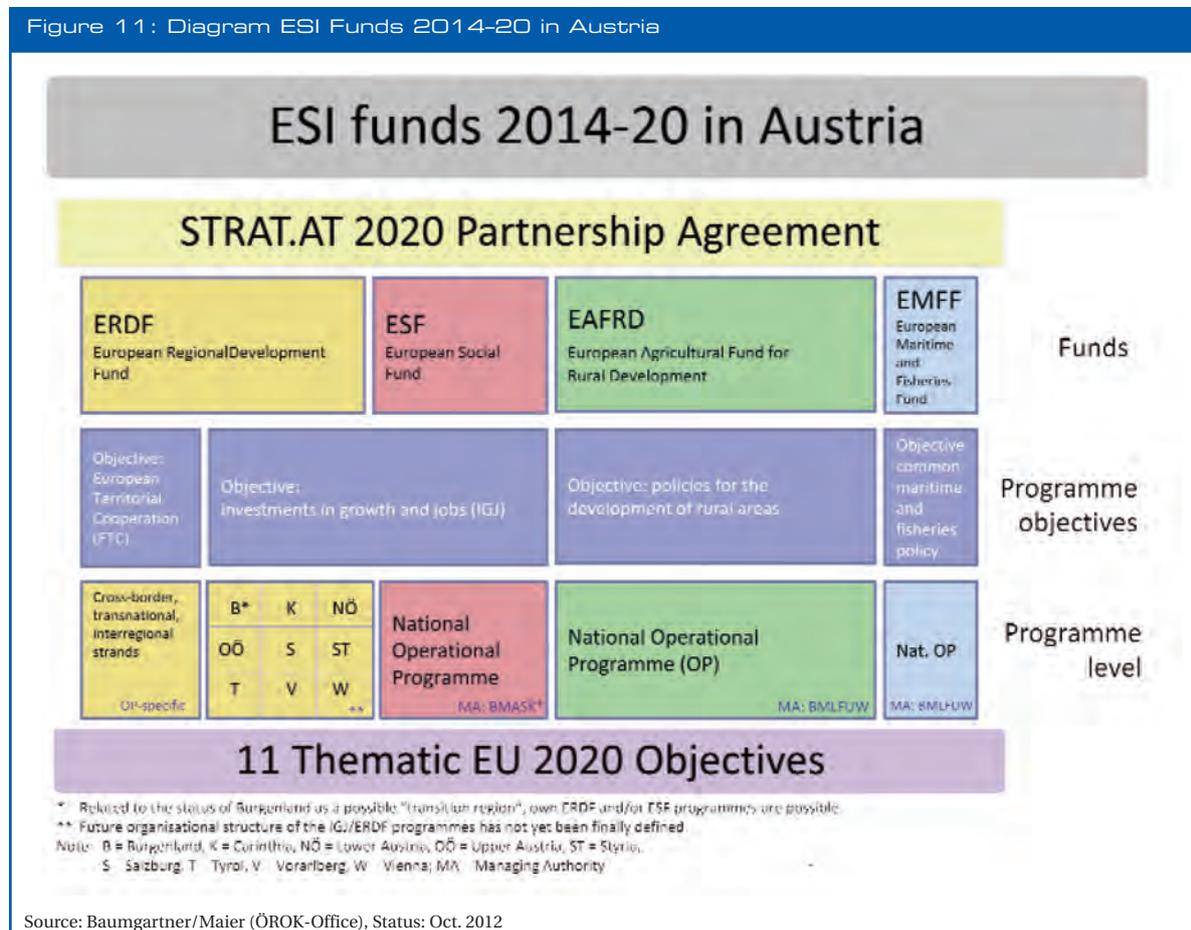
riously. Major infrastructure projects and programmes require different financing, reporting and control mechanisms, and moreover need to have a completely different understanding of what constitutes steering than the funding schemes for small businesses, consulting and soft measures or the programmes for research, technology and development. The principle of proportionality must also apply in the context of the “conditionalities”. These should be limited to the direct measures and should be reasonably commensurate with the type of programme and volume of the funds made available.

**From STRAT.ATplus to STRAT.AT 2020**

Experience has shown that the participatory process of preparing a programme requires the planning of sufficient time. Therefore, as of 2012 the STRAT.AT-plus process has been transferred to the so-called STRAT.AT 2020 process. The proposals of the European Commission on the content of Cohesion Policy 2014+ provide initial guidance even though the requirements have not been yet finally defined at the EU level (“moving target”).

Compared to 2007–2013, there will be a stronger strategic orientation in the future (Common Strategic Framework and Partnership Agreement), and linked

Figure 11: Diagram ESI Funds 2014-20 in Austria



Source: Baumgartner/Maier (ÖROK-Office), Status: Oct. 2012

to this, closer harmonisation with the EU funds involved will have to be striven for (ESI funds: ESF, ERDF, EAFRD, CF, EMFF). According to the proposals, there will be a concentration on a few priorities that are closely related to the Europe 2020 Strategy as well as a greater focus on results. Moreover, a close interaction with the objectives and programmes defined in the national reform programmes (NRP) is also proposed. The figure below shows the future architecture of the programmes with a reference to Austria:

The challenge for the programming process therefore remains “planning under uncertainty”, which seems to be inherent to the system. The preparation on a partnership basis with the involvement of all key stakeholders should not pose a major challenge for Austria. This is probably true for the **effective coordination** of the ESI funds and a sharper focus on the territorial perspective beyond the close confines of administrative boundaries.

## A GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

### A.1 Smart and territorial: Hohe Tauern Health (HTH)

The ERDF programme “Stärkung der regionalen Wettbewerbsfähigkeit Salzburg 2007–13” (Strengthening Regional Competitiveness Salzburg 2007–13; abbreviated: RCE/ERDF programme) is designed to support specific themes. By strengthening regional innovative environments with a focus on specific themes, better general conditions are to be created for innovation and development at enterprises.

A project of particular significance from a regional development perspective has been implemented at the interface of tourism and health. The Hohe Tauern Health (HTH) initiative seeks to make Oberpinzgau, an economically underdeveloped region, more attractive as a tourism destination. For this purpose, medical knowhow and academic research findings are applied in business and tourism. By staying in the Hohe Tauern National Park near the Krimml Water-

#### Healing effect of Krimml Waterfalls

The Krimml Waterfalls are the highest waterfalls in Europe and, with a waterfall drop of 380 m, are among the highest waterfalls in the world. In the area where the water hits the floor, they produce a finely dispersed highly concentrated aerosol that penetrates the airways and goes down deep into the lungs. The Paracelsus Medical Private University of Salzburg (PMU) was the first institution worldwide to study the clinical effects on persons suffering from allergic asthma using state-of-the-art research approaches based on molecular medicine. The aerosol levels measured are considered extraordinary due to the repeated rebounding of the water from the rocks. Similar levels were not found in measurements taken at two other waterfalls. “A clinical study showed that a daily one-hour stay at the waterfalls resulted in a long-term improvement in sufferers of bronchial asthma and allergies and that the persons were even able to discontinue their regular medication for extended periods of time,” said University Lecturer Dr. Hartl of PMU.

Figure 12: Hohe Tauern Health



Source: HTH

falls, guests suffering from allergies can enjoy holidays with a beneficial impact on their condition.

The initiative combines the region’s benign natural conditions with the positive findings obtained in long years of research (see box) and the fact that asthma and allergies – both chronic conditions – are making increasing demands on health care budgets. About one third of the population of Austria and Western Europe suffers from allergies, with a rising tendency. This is an example of how “innovative services” are created by a “traditional sector” working with science-based services. The project led to a wider approach within the framework of so-called “science-based” tourism and is guided by the idea of “smart specialisation”.

With funding from the RCE/ERDF programme, model projects were developed in collaboration with the Oberpinzgau Regionalverband (regional association)



Source: HTH

to develop health promotion programmes with a sound medical basis for the region. To this end, Paracelsus Medizinische Privatuniversität Salzburg (PMU) works closely with local hotels. At present, 11 hotels participate and also collaborate with local medical practitioners. The regional hospital at Mittersill also cooperates with HTH. A leading woodworking enterprise has also joined the HTH initiative and, partnering with a university institute, is working on the construction of buildings that meet the needs of allergy sufferers.

The tourist businesses have modified their facilities to suit persons with allergies and offer university-certified quality accommodations as well as other services and amenities. The portfolio of services that has been developed ranges from multi-week stays with university-certified effects to shorter sojourns combining the “waterfall” nature therapy with other healthcare programmes. Beside the tourists with health conditions, the “Hohe Tauern Health” project also targets guests with a high health awareness who appreciate allergy-friendly accommodations as well as a high-quality diet and wish to try out the waterfall experience themselves.

Erich Czerny, mayor of Krimml and HTH co-ordinator, strikes a positive balance despite the hard development work needed, as not only the university-certified health hotels but “the entire region including the National Park have been able to position themselves effectively and have succeeded in combining the resources of the natural environment with the health theme in a novel approach.” The initiative is already producing first effects in the region: The development of facilities and the thematic specialisation prompted businesses in the region to investment spending. This resulted, in particular, in the creation of added value through an improvement of accommodation quality. Since the launch of the initiative, the number of overnight stays has increased in the Krimml area. Increasingly, visitors are interested in using HTH services for longer periods.

RCE/ERDF funding helped to trigger a sustainable development in Oberpinzgau, which by now goes beyond the core health and tourism themes, and provides an impetus for innovation in other industries as well, among them the woodworking industry. Because of its success, the project was submitted for the RegioStars Award 2012, which aims at identifying “good practices” in European regional development. As one of the 107 projects submitted across Europe, “Hohe Tauern Health” made it into the final round, and was recognised as one of the European Union’s most innovative regional development projects.



Programme	Strengthening Regional Competitiveness Salzburg 2007–2013 (Stärkung der regionalen Wettbewerbsfähigkeit Salzburg 2007–2013)
Measures	Business-related knowledge transfer & service innovations as well as networks and innovative local development; Innovative and exemplary tourism development in the rural area
Funding	Allocated eligible project costs: EUR 11.6 million
Contacts	Government Office of the Land Salzburg, Department for Business, Research, Tourism; Technical Division for Regional Development and EU Regional Policy and Division for Business and Innovation Funding, Südtirolerplatz 11, A-5010 Salzburg, Austria <a href="http://www.salzburg.gv.at/regionale-wettbewerbsfaehigkeit">http://www.salzburg.gv.at/regionale-wettbewerbsfaehigkeit</a>

## A.2 Smart: PROFACTORSteyr

The structural policy objective was – and still is – to improve the competitive position of the Steyr-Kirchdorf region by providing infrastructure for research and development designed to support, in particular, SMEs operating in the region. In this context, “Profactor” is a key project. Profactor currently provides 87 high-tech jobs. It operates as a research-driven promoter of technology and knowhow transfer from the world of science to the business community and develops solutions for raising the efficiency across the entire value chain, from basic research to industrial production. Its key aim is to analyse the needs and requirements of the manufacturing industries (locally, regionally, and across the EU) and to develop forward-looking solutions that enable the businesses served to keep production competitive. The target group of Profactor comprises Austrian industrial enterprises, but first and foremost small and medium-sized enterprises, which, through Profactor, are able to swiftly and easily implement R&D projects. For international groups, the attractiveness of the location is enhanced through the establishment of R&D activities, but also by the availability of component suppliers boasting high technological standards.

In the current programming period, Profactor has thus far received EUR 3.9 million in ERDF funds.

Over the past years, Profactor has been evaluated several times, also as part of the update for the mid-term evaluation 2000–2006.<sup>36</sup> It may be assumed that there have been positive impacts on the regional economy and it has been shown that Profactor performs functions that are typical of extra-university research establishments. Specifically, the evaluation highlights the following functions that Profactor performs in the regional economy:

- **Interface:** By bringing together science and business, Profactor strengthens companies' competitiveness (in the region) sustainably. Through EU projects, Profactor provides an interface between the EU and individual enterprises, which enables them to take part in European research through EU research projects.
- **Know-how and transfer node:** Profactor's role as a know-how and transfer node is closely associated with its function as an interface. Profactor regularly organises meetings, symposia, discussion evenings etc. where academics and practitioners meet to discuss concrete problems.



Source: PROFACTOR

- **Networks:** One key role of Profactor is to bring together businesses, to develop and to foster networks. This is done by means of informal networks of contacts that develop in the course of projects. A special role in this regard is played by senior staff members who, as key persons, develop trust-based networks with important partners with whom they cooperate on an ongoing basis. These relationships built on mutual trust constitute a material resource for Profactor as well as an important basis for successful research activities. Beside these informal networks, Profactor also seeks to institutionalise networks formally. A typical example is the High Speed Cutting (HSC) Network. This is a network of companies involved in HSC, which was initiated by Profactor.
- **Applicant/initiator:** For Profactor, involvement in EU projects is an important source of income as well as an important way of participating in and contributing to European top research. As Profactor has already been involved in a large number of EU-funded research projects (currently in 13 EU projects, in total almost 100 projects) and has also initiated many such projects, it has extensive knowledge regarding the application for and execution of such projects. This knowledge directly benefits participating enterprises. Even when, later on, other enterprises act as project organisers, project proposals are predominantly drafted by Profactor.

Of the projects of the current programming period, three are highlighted below:

- **Adaptive production plants and production technologies:** The aim of this project is the development of methods, tools and software for the intelli-

36 Cf. Austrian Institute for Spatial Planning (ÖIR)/Regional Consulting International (RCI) (2005). Mid-Term Evaluation Update of Objective 2 Programme Upper Austria 2000–2006, p. 82 ff. The information in this section on the functions performed by profactor in the regional economy is based on this evaluation.



Source: PROFACOR

gent automation of new handling and assembly applications. The thematic focus is on autonomous grasping and manipulation, real-time 3D interpretation, cognitive man-robot interfaces and control systems.

- Intelligent machines and components: The aim of this project is the development of methods, tools and software for automated quality control in surface inspection and for the visual analysis of automated and semi-automated production processes.
- Smart structures: The key objectives of the project are the development of methods, tools and software for the active noise and vibration optimisation of industrial processes. The thematic focus is on the modelling, analysis and simulation of electro-mechanical structures, placement concepts, control concepts, piezoelectric structures and lightweight construction.



Programme	Strengthening Regional Competitiveness Oberösterreich 2007–2013
Measures	Action field 1.1.1.: Extra-university research and technology infrastructure
Financing	Allocated eligible project costs: EUR 16,343,000 Allocated ERDF funds: EUR 6.000.000
Contacts	Profactor GmbH Mag. Andrea Möslinger Im Stadtgut A2, A-4407 Steyr 07242/885/110; Andrea.moeslinger@profactor.at

### A.3 Sustainable and territorial: MOVE towards Energy Sustainability

The MOVE project is a cross-border project of Austria and Slovenia. The aim of the project is to make a contribution to the reduction of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions. This is to be achieved through a bundle of measures designed to a) use energy efficiently, b) promote the development and use of alternative energy sources, and c) improve energy sustainability, which will be ensured by meeting the first two targets. The portfolio of MOVE activities is broad, ranging from the development of cross-border energy plans to the issuance of energy performance certificates for (public) buildings and the development of further-education modules. In almost all areas of work, public relations activities are of key importance in order to raise general awareness for the efficient use of resources and renewable energy.

The project has lasted for about four years (2009–2013). Completion of the project is scheduled for autumn 2013. Of a total budget of EUR 3 million, EUR 2.5 million come from ERDF funds. The remaining EUR 500,000 are raised from public funds and from contributions made by project partners (as at summer 2012). On the Austrian side, project partners are the *Länder* of Styria and Carinthia as well as Holzcluster Steiermark and Technologieoffensive Burgenland (TOB).

In detail, the partners based in Slovenia and Austria cooperate in the following areas of activity:

- Regional energy model for the use of renewable energy: Under the project, guidelines (brochures) and tools have been created that facilitate the development of municipal and regional energy plans. For this purpose, analyses of existing potentials were conducted in the (SI-AT) border area that explored the availability of renewable energy sources and the potential for energy savings. In addition, a MOVE action plan was drawn up as process-oriented assistance for local authorities in the development and implementation of energy projects.
- Development of common content for use in further education on renewable energy and energy efficiency: A MOVE seminar on “Energy-efficient construction and rehabilitation” was developed and held for architects and designers. The seminar was organised in eight modules with a focus on energy performance certificates. With all themes, the emphasis was on actual practice, with priority given to training in new building construction and the rehabilitation of old buildings. In total, three four-day seminars were held (Bleiburg, Velenje and Martjanci).
- Energy efficiency in buildings: 280 public buildings were audited for energy efficiency as part of the project. Of these, the 35 most inefficient buildings were selected based on a comparison against

a benchmark. For these buildings, an “energy check” was performed as well as an analysis of the physical properties of the structures. Finally, eight buildings were selected for which thermal rehabilitation investment plans were developed under the project.

- Use of solar energy by means of photovoltaic (PV): In the border region of Slovenia and Austria, local authorities and industry collaborated in the search for suitable PV sites. Overall, 28 locations were identified and, after a detailed analysis, 28 business plans were drawn up for the operation of PV systems at these locations.
- Development of cross-border cooperation between businesses engaged in renewable energy and energy efficiency: A SWOT analysis of the border region with regard to renewable energy and energy efficiency provided insights into strategic action fields for businesses. In addition, cross-border sharing of information between businesses was promoted through field trips and international conferences.
- Demonstration centres: Project partner “Institut KSEENA” launched the demonstration centre with a test of two self-powered streetlights (ESUS) The aim is to use the demonstration centre to present the potential benefits of an integration of renewable energy (RE) into everyday life to a broader public. This is done by using technologies that are currently available in the market only on a limited scale but constitute an alternative option with promise for the future. ESUS use solar and wind energy and operate for three days even without any energy supply. The operating concept was approved after the end of the trial period in early 2012.

Preliminary work for implementing these activities was started as early as January 2009. The project completion is scheduled for November 2013.



Programme	Programme for cross-border cooperation SI-AT 2007–2013 (ETC)
Financing	Project budget EUR 2,997,855.90 (Styria's share: EUR 676,755.54, funding: 85%)
Contacts:	Project sponsor & Lead partner E-zavod Čučkovaulica 5, Ptuj 2250, Slovenia Director Ferčej Darko Tel.: 031 214 276; e-mail: darko@ezavod.info
Project term	36 months

#### A.4 Sustainable: Eco World Styria<sup>37</sup>

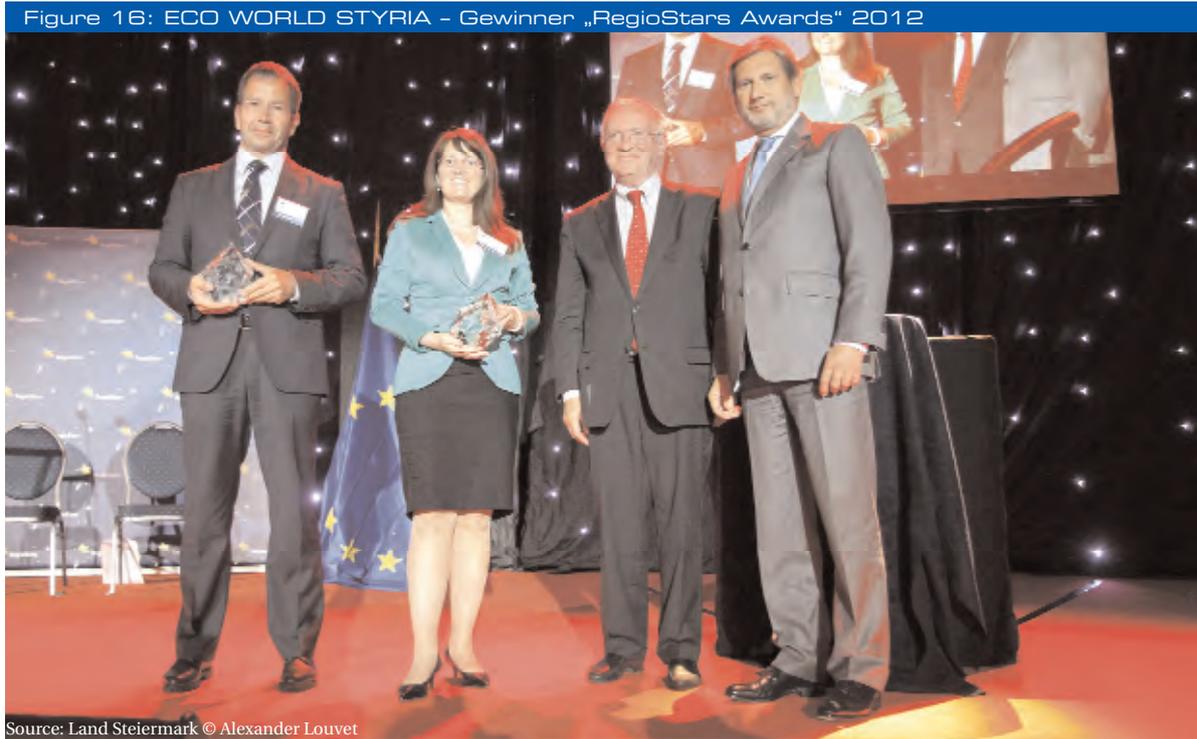
The Eco World Styria cluster funded under the “Regional Competitiveness Styria 2007–2013” programme is the *Land Styria's* key economic policy instrument in the area of energy and environmental technology and a key component of the new economic strategy Styria 2020. Working with strategic partners, Eco World Styria provides a support infrastructure that enables cluster clients to achieve sustainable growth in the areas of biomass, solar energy, waste and mass flows, water and wastewater. The cluster seeks to enhance the region's competitiveness internationally through innovation in green technologies and to stimulate economic growth.

The cluster has been boasting high growth rates since its foundation in 2005. About 180 businesses and research establishments are currently involved in the cluster. The environmental technology activities of the cluster's enterprises employ 16,600 people (as of 2011). Total revenues amount to EUR 3.2 billion. Over the past five years, revenues have doubled and some 5,000 jobs were newly created at Styrian companies. This performance is remarkable even by international comparison: Since the launch of the cluster, the sales revenues of green tech companies grew at an average annual rate of 18% in nominal terms (about 16% p. a. in real terms), i. e., at a much faster rate than global environmental technology markets, which expanded at an average rate of 10% per year. Cluster businesses are very active internationally, with an export ratio of 90%, and in R&D. Overall, the level of satisfaction among cluster companies is high. 95% of cluster businesses are convinced that in 2011 they outperformed (42%) their global peers on technology or achieved the same performance (53%).

The cluster's success has contributed to increasing the level of self-financing from almost zero at the start of the project to more than 40% of the aggregate budget (annual fees for companies, payment for services).

The cluster has already received several prestigious international awards in recognition of its dynamic performance.

- Eco World Styria was one of the 20 pilot clusters that were audited during the pilot phase of the European Cluster Excellence Initiative for eligibility for an award for excellent cluster management. In this audit, the cluster achieved 99% of the maximum score, based on which it was awarded “World Class Cluster” status.
- In early 2010, Eco World Styria was voted the world's best Green Tech Cluster by a network of US investors.



Dr. Gerd Gratzner (Land Steiermark), DI Sabine Seiler (ECO WORLD STYRIA), Luc Van den Brande (President RegioStars Jury), Dr. Johannes Hahn (Commissioner for Regional Policy)

→ In 2012, the European Commission presented the cluster with the RegioStars Award in the “intelligent growth” category. This award is the highest distinction for excellent regional projects. This was the first time since the creation of the award (2008) that it went to an Austrian project. The 272 European regions were invited to submit one project each from a pool of 50,000 to 100,000 projects per year that were co-financed from ERDF funds. Under the EU programme “Regional Competitiveness Styria 2007–2013”, the *Land* nominated the activities of Eco World Styria. In each of five categories, one winner was chosen. Among the reasons cited for the European award was the dynamic pace at which Eco World Styria has developed and been able to generate new momentum for green technologies in the region. The RegioStars Jury rated in particular the innovative achievements of ECO as outstanding: Identifying market trends and creating business opportunities through the “Eco Future Radar” helps businesses to define and adapt their strategies. The “Round Tables on Technology” and the “Cleantech Innovators Club” initiated by the cluster have led to innovative projects in industry and research, such as for new generators, building technologies, ash briquetting or landfill mining. In addition, clearly focussed cooperation with

global technology scouts and enterprises in growth markets has raised the export ratio further<sup>38</sup>.

The goals in the ongoing development of the cluster remain ambitious: By 2015, the cluster aims to attain the highest concentration of technology leaders within a one-hour journey time. At the same time, the number of people employed in environmental technology is targeted to rise by another 4,000 to 20,000 by 2015.

Programme	Regional Competitiveness Styria 2007–2013
Measure	Action field 2: Strengthening the actors in the innovation system including business-related infrastructure
Financing	Eligible total costs: EUR 888,000 ERDF share: 50%
Contacts	ECO WORLD STYRIA Umwelttechnik Cluster GmbH Reininghausstraße 13, A-8020 Graz, Austria www.eco.at



38 Cf. <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/607&format=HTML&aged=0&language=DE&guiLanguage=en>

## A.5 Inclusive: Territorial Employment Pacts in Austria

Originally started as an EU initiative in 1996, Territorial Employment Pacts (TEPs) were set up in all Austrian *Länder* in the 2000–2006 programming period. Most TEPs are organised at the *Länder* level. Regionalisation has been advanced further in the *Länder* of Styria, Upper Austria, and Vienna. The main actors are generally the regional offices of the AMS employment service, the *Länder* economic policy departments, and social partners. Due to the design of the instrument, the pacts vary widely from one to another in terms of organisation, network structure, and content.

As regards content, the TEPs, while differing in details, focus on action fields relating to labour market policies. Many address the traditional AMS target groups. By this, Austrian TEPs differ from other countries' employment pacts. Ireland and Finland, for example, are focusing increasingly on social policy themes whereas Italy promotes economic development strategies.

Financially, the pacts have been upgraded in the current Structural Funds period due to their having been included, as a separate priority, in the Operational Programme Employment Austria 2007–2013 (Priority 5) and as an activity of the ESF programme Convergence Phasing Out. In the current period, the ongoing existence and deepening of the networks is ensured by funding the operational structures of the TEP co-ordinating bodies in Priority 5.

In the second phase, however, the priority now is the development and testing of innovative measures aimed at improving the integration of persons distant from the labour market (including people with a migration background). Where such projects are funded under Priority 3b of the ESF programme Employment, project funds will be available to TEPs for the first time. The projects funded will be coordinated through the TEPs and will be embedded in the respective regional TEP strategies. Co-financing will be secured under the pacts.

In three calls conducted to date, around 100 model projects have been funded in the *Länder*. Thematically, the calls were positioned at specific interfaces. The projects funded were aimed at the integration of persons from marginalised groups at the labour market/welfare services interface (1st call – 2007), im-



Source: ZSI

proved integration of persons with a migration background (2nd call – 2009), and the integration of persons from marginalised groups at the interface to the means-tested minimum welfare benefits scheme (3rd call – 2010).

The measures offered range from pilot projects for the planned means-tested minimum benefits scheme to low-threshold employment options combined with stabilising support by social workers, to counselling and coaching, vocational guidance and activation courses and integration support.

For a better evaluation of how TEPs work and of the projects implemented under TEPs, two evaluations were conducted and completed in 2012. With regard to the pact structures now in place and the question of whether the pact structures are able to meet regional requirements, the evaluation findings have been positive, overall. While the outcome of each pact was different, "...overall [...] the work of the TEPs has to be rated as having been successful. Workable systems have been built and are maintained in all *Länder* and offer good conditions for successful cooperation. The instrument has proven helpful for developing, organising and initiating funding outside mainstream funding. Furthermore, the systems support adaptation to specific conditions in the *Länder*. Experience was positive especially in those *Länder* in which regionalisation systems have been created. Here, collaboration among actors is frequently extremely results-orientated as it addresses very concrete problems."<sup>39</sup>

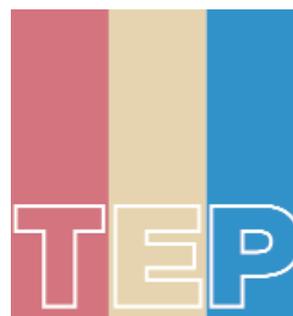
39 Cf. ÖIR/BBJ/Institut für Gesellschafts- und Sozialpolitik (2012): Begleitende Bewertung der Interventionen des Europäischen Sozialfonds Österreich 2007–2013. Evaluierung der Förderung in SP 3b Integration arbeitsmarktferner Personen, p. 123 f.; and: ÖIR/BBJ/Institut für Gesellschafts- und Sozialpolitik (2012a): ÖIR/BBJ/Institut für Gesellschafts- und Sozialpolitik (2007–2013): Begleitende Bewertung der Interventionen des Europäischen Sozialfonds Österreich 2010–2011.



Source: ZSI

According to the evaluation findings, Priority 3b measures coordinated through TEPs are moreover characterised by high additionality. Priority 3b ESF funds enable project organisers to address persons directly that marginalised. This is a target group that can otherwise hardly be reached by the AMS employment service or the *Land* under mainstream funding. The evaluation therefore concludes that most of the measures could not have been implemented without ESF funding<sup>40</sup>. The fact that the projects are implemented under TEPs is also rated as positive. “TEPs of course guarantee not only effective implementation of the ESF priority but, by bringing together all relevant labour market actors, also guarantee that the measures and projects tested will have a longer-term impact on funding for the Priority 3b target group. As a result, an overall labour market strategy has been developed in most *Länder*, which also includes the target group of persons distant from the labour market.” (p. 91).

Integration of the *Länders'* economic strategies into the respective pacts is regarded as a challenge. While some institutions increasingly integrate pact themes into their programmes and implementation measures, it may be assumed that in many cases there is still scope for action where the explicit inclusion of regional economic policy goals (especially in the integration of ERDF and ESF strategies) into TEP strategies is concerned.



Contact	Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Section VI / Dept 9 – ESF Co-ordinator of Territorial Employment Pacts in Austria at the CSI (Centre for Social Innovation), <a href="http://www.pakte.at">www.pakte.at</a>
Financing	Priority 5 nation-wide programme: Territorial Employment Pacts ESF: EUR 6,246,000 National: EUR 7,332,000 Priority 3b – integration of persons distant from the labour market – project funding ESF Convergence Phasing Out: Total spend EUR 935,000; ESF: EUR 675,000; national share EUR 225,000; private share: EUR 35,000

### A.6 Smart and territorial: LEADER Region Almenland Teichalm-Sommeralm

**Project: Designated the First Slow Region worldwide in cooperation with Slow Food International**

The key goal of the EAFRD Axis 4 LEADER in Styria is to support integrated bottom-up development processes (CLLD, LAG) through regional identity and brand-building processes with a focus on cooperation between regionally leading enterprises and local authorities (PPP models). By defining priorities, the aim is to start networks and regional innovation processes that are designed to become self-sustaining and thus contribute to the sustainable development of the quality of a region as a business location.

40 Cf. ÖIR/BBJ/Institut für Gesellschafts- und Sozialpolitik (2012a): Begleitende Bewertung der Interventionen des Europäischen Sozialfonds Österreich 2007–2013. SP 5 Territoriale Beschäftigungspakte 2010–2011, p. 89.

Figure 19: Natural Park Almenland



Source: Tourismusverband Almenland ©Bergmann Kreiner

The Almenland LEADER region has been a particular success in this context. In Styria, a project that is outstanding in terms of integrated regional development is ALMO Genussregion (gourmet region) along with “Almenland SLOW Region”, which was developed on its basis. It has already gained the status of a European benchmark project. Slow Region is the core and process-oriented outcome of more than 15 years of development, which started with Austria's accession in 1995, and in the LEADER period 2000–2006, resulted in the important collaboration of Almregion with the entrepreneur Karl Schirnhöfer. Under the region's LEADER plus programme (2000–2006), the region positioned itself nationally and internationally as ALMO Genussregion (gourmet region). Its signature project is the ALMO alpine ox marketed by the Styrian culinary specialist Karl Schirnhöfer (Schirnhöfer GmbH).

#### **Status at the beginning of the LEADER period 2007–2014**

The core elements of the agreement for the future are the “basic criteria” of a Slow Food region agreed with Slow Food International. The criteria define both the path and the quality of development, and are measured against targets in an ongoing evaluation process. In 2011, ÖAR Regionalberatung GmbH and ÖIR (Austrian Institute for Spatial Planning) conducted an interim evaluation<sup>41</sup> of LEADER programme implementation in Styria and rated the Almenland Slow Region a benchmark project. The outcome of the evaluation was, overall, good: The project is a very comprehensive, consistent and coherent development approach for the region that aims at achieving improvements in many areas. These include, among others, agriculture and farming (incl. product development), the local

41 ÖIR/ÖAR (2011): Halbzeitevaluierung der Förderschienen Integrierte nachhaltige Raumentwicklung, LEADER und Europäische Territoriale Zusammenarbeit (ETZ) bilateral in der Programmperiode 2007–2013, commissioned by the Government Office of the Land Steiermark.

With the support of Slow Food International and the further development of the principles and criteria for slow cities drawn up in Orvieto in 1999, Almenland seeks to develop into the first Slow Region worldwide and to this designation in 2014.

Based on a Slow Region agreement that is valid and binding on all local authorities, common quality parameters are laid down that define the “path” that will be open to all population groups in the region. The agreement includes environmentally-friendly cultivation methods as well as biodiversity in agricultural production and in the man-made environment as illustrated by the ALMO quality beef programme, research and innovation that give regard to local traditions, the preservation of the local gastronomy for a Europe of the Regions, the protection of regional culture including architecture, the 2020 regional energy model, but also fundamental innovative developments in the local economy (local retail trade, business start-ups etc.), and a tightly focused communication and information strategy to disseminate the Slow Food® philosophy and its principles.

Compliance with this agreement is audited by local bodies under the auspices of Slow Food. Designations that have been awarded may also be withdrawn again. The Slow Region is an exemplary case of integrated endogenous regional development that is based on the sharing of responsibilities across different sectors by local communities and enterprises.

retail trade, architecture, tourism, value creation, mobility and the supply of energy.

To date, 16 of the 25 (sub-)goals defined in the funding agreement have been achieved! In 2012, more than 100 jobs were created. Particularly positive is the large number of participating enterprises, as illustrated by the more than 30 “Almenland Wirtschaft brand programming agreements” that finalised to date. Contrary to the trend in the eastern part of Styria, overnight stays in the region are up by 9%. A number of leading hotels boast occupancy rates of 88% and more and thus rank among the top hotels in Austria. As a result of cooperation with the electricity utility Verbund, more than 80 regional hydro-power stations are in the design or construction stage, as well as the programme “1000 photovoltaic roof-tops” and the development of biomass by forest management associations. Efforts to meet the goal of energy self-sufficiency by 2020 are thus on schedule.

Almenland enterprises have also created product innovations that are recognised internationally. Stollenkäsemanufaktur Arzberg (manufacture of tunnel-matured cheese), which was founded with LEADER support only three years ago, has already won several international awards, including one world championship title. The underground tunnel in which cheeses mature and are exhibited attracts more than 10,000 visitors per year. This also benefits the Almenland dairy farmers (“hay region” has been defined as a goal) including Almenland alpine dairies.

The beef competence centre that is currently at the planning stage (in cooperation with the firm Schirrhofer) is expected to establish the region as “the” European beef region (in cooperation with leading regional restaurants) by 2015. Many of the sub-projects needed for this programme are already being implemented. Exemplary progress has also been made in building the regional organisation, which brings together all of the region's major stakeholders in one company named RegionalentwicklungsgesmbH ALMENLAND (a major part of which is being funded by the private sector). This GesmbH (limited liability company) is already engaged in preparatory work for the next programming period. The significance of the project for awareness-building and knowhow transfer (European excursion tourism) should be noted as well.



Programme	EAFRD axis 4 LEADER in Styria 2007–2013
Measures	Framework project for integrated rural development from 413.300.2.5
Financing	Allocated eligible project costs approx. EUR 10 million, incl. approx. EUR 4 million from various funds
Contacts	SVL Land Steiermark, Department 7 (Land and Local Community Development), A-8010 Graz; Austria Mag. Gerald Gigler e-mail: gerald.gigler@stmk.gv.at

## B APPENDIX - IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS - DATA

### B.1 Core Indicators ERDF

#### B.1.1 Core indicators ERDF: Convergence Phasing Out Burgenland

Table 19: Core indicators ERDF: Convergence Phasing Out Burgenland

Core indicators	Cumulative values					Target value 2007–2015
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
01 Jobs created	0	0	135	219	292	509
04 Number of RTD projects	0	0	4	6	7	47
05 Number of cooperation project enterprises-research institutions						
06 Research jobs created	0	0	6	10	10	47
08 Number of start-ups supported	0	0	6	6	8	20
10 Investment induced (million €)	0	0	59	91	171	432
12 Number of additional population covered by broadband access						
23 Number of renewable energy projects	0	0	0	1	5	25
24 Additional capacity of renewable energy production (MW)	0	0	0	0	9	9
30 Reduction greenhouse emissions (CO <sub>2</sub> and equivalents, kt)	0	0	0	4	4	95

#### B.1.2 Core indicators ERDF: Regional Competitiveness and Employment

Table 20: Core indicators ERDF: Regional Competitiveness and Employment

Core indicators	Cumulative values					Target value 2007–2015
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
01 Jobs created	59	197	780	1941	2851	6367
04 Number of RTD projects	0	11	54	100	157	751
05 Number of cooperation project enterprises-research institutions	0	4	47	148	391	206
06 Research jobs created	0	0	7	114	131	815
08 Number of start-ups supported	0	9	16	29	39	322
10 Investment induced (million €)	0	53	483	917	1484	3318
12 Number of additional population covered by broadband access	0	0	0	0	0	10000
23 Number of renewable energy projects						
24 Additional capacity of renewable energy production (MW)	0	0	13	70	78	96
30 Reduction greenhouse emissions (CO <sub>2</sub> and equivalents, kt)	0	0	33	75	98	201
31 Number of projects (Risk prevention)	0	0	3	7	9	32
32 Number of people benefiting from flood protection measures	0	0	0	0	0	300
33 Number of people benefiting from forest fire protection and other protection measures	0	0	12241	18289	18289	80000
34 Number of tourism projects	0	1	2	5	9	9
39 Number of projects ensuring sustainability and improving the attractiveness of towns and cities (Urban development)	0	0	15	27	32	41

### B.1.3 Core indicators ERDF: Regional Competitiveness and Employment and Convergence Phasing Out

Table 21: Core indicators ERDF: Regional Competitiveness and Employment and Convergence Phasing Out

Core indicators	Cumulative values					Target value 2007-2015
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
01 Jobs created	59	197	915	2160	3143	6876
04 Number of RTD projects	0	11	58	106	164	798
05 Number of cooperation project enterprises-research institutions	0	4	47	148	391	206
06 Research jobs created	0	0	13	124	141	862
08 Number of start-ups supported	0	9	22	35	47	342
10 Investment induced (million €)	0	53	542	1008	1655	3750
12 Number of additional population covered by broadband access	0	0	0	0	0	10000
23 Number of renewable energy projects	0	0	0	1	5	25
24 Additional capacity of renewable energy production (MW)	0	0	13	70	87	105
30 Reduction greenhouse emissions (CO <sub>2</sub> and equivalents, kt)	0	0	33	79	102	296
31 Number of projects (Risk prevention)	0	0	3	7	9	32
32 Number of people benefiting from flood protection measures	0	0	0	0	0	300
33 Number of people benefiting from forest fire protection and other protection measures	0	0	12241	18289	18289	80000
34 Number of tourism projects	0	1	2	5	9	9
39 Number of projects ensuring sustainability and improving the attractiveness of towns and cities (Urban development)	0	0	15	27	32	41

## B.2 Payments Objectives Convergence Phasing Out and Regional Competitiveness and Employment

According to 2.3.1 b) "Payment progress" of the Guidance Note of the EC "Indicative Contents and Structure for the National Strategic Reports (final version of 19 Jan. 2012/COCOF 11/0040/01-EN)

Source of data: as made available by EC to MS via COCOF Secr. on 26 Nov. 2012

Table 22: Payments Objectives Convergence Phasing Out and Regional Competitiveness and Employment

	1	2	3	4		
Country	CCI	OP	Source of funds	Total projected funding EU Structural Funds 2007-2013 (€) [Decided]	Payments received from EC (€) [Paid]	Column 3 as % of column 2 (rounded)
Austria	2007AT051PO001	OP Burgenland 2007-2013: Objective Convergence/Phasing out/ESF	ESF	52,140,000	36,007,702	69%
Austria	2007AT052PO001	Operational Programme Employment Austria 2007-2013	ESF	472,272,560	287,629,440	61%
Austria	2007AT161PO001	OP Burgenland 2007-2013: Objective Convergence/Phasing out/ERDF	ERDF	125,026,964	53,954,584	43%
Austria	2007AT162PO001	OP Lower Austria 2007-2013: Objective Regional Competitiveness & Employment/ERDF	ERDF	145,646,798	58,758,424	40%
Austria	2007AT162PO002	OP Upper Austria 2007-2013: Objective Regional Competitiveness & Employment/ERDF	ERDF	95,543,517	43,530,273	46%
Austria	2007AT162PO003	OP Vorarlberg 2007-2013: Objective Regional Competitiveness & Employment/ERDF	ERDF	17,660,129	8,695,209	49%
Austria	2007AT162PO004	OP Vienna 2007-2013: Objective Regional Competitiveness & Employment/ERDF	ERDF	25,151,861	10,312,369	41%
Austria	2007AT162PO005	OP Carinthia 2007-2013: Objective Regional Competitiveness & Employment/ERDF	ERDF	67,388,430	22,311,919	33%
Austria	2007AT162PO006	OP Salzburg 2007-2013: Objective Regional Competitiveness & Employment/ERDF	ERDF	13,813,480	5,516,262	40%
Austria	2007AT162PO007	OP Styria 2007-2013: Objective Regional Competitiveness & Employment/ERDF	ERDF	155,061,854	52,396,954	34%
Austria	2007AT162PO008	OP Tyrol 2007-2013: Objective Regional Competitiveness & Employment/ERDF	ERDF	34,772,988	14,418,500	42%

Note: The figures in the table refer exclusively to funding from the Structural Funds for the EU programmes named.

### B.3 Implementation ESF: “Employment” and “Convergence Phasing Out”

Table 23: Priority 1 Adaptability of Employees and Enterprises

Output indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Qualification counselling, number of enterprises advised	Result	144	633	1,971	1,805	1,693	6,246
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	6,300
Flexibility counselling, no of enterprises	Result	0	97	182	197	142	618
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	800
Qualification partnerships	Result	18	60	155	153	101	399
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	230
Persons funded	Result	21,186	32,554	46,471	41,511	43,143	184,865
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	210,000
Share of women in the total of persons receiving support (persons)	Result	71.90%	62.60%	60.10%	62.50%	58.30%	62.00%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	50.00%
Share of women in the total of persons receiving support (spending)	Result	70.90%	67.80%	65.20%	66.60%	62.00%	65.50%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	50.00%
Share in target group older persons (persons; qualification of enterprises)	Result	42.60%	38.90%	38.80%	43.30%	45.70%	41.90%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	40.00%
Share in target group older persons (spending)	Result	47.40%	44.20%	40.50%	43.00%	48.30%	44.30%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	40.00%
Innovative projects (number)	Result	0	0	1	0	2	3
	Target	5	5	5	5	5	-
Innovative projects (use of funds)	Result	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%	0.00%	0.10%	0.30%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	2.50%
<b>Results indicators</b>							
Benefits of the counselling for enterprises and FBB	Result	1	1.56	1.74	1.81	1.88	1.77
	Target	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Employment 12 months after participation	Result	0.00%	92.30%	91.70%	92.30%	92.90%	90.80%
	Target	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	-

Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection/ESF Monitoring

Table 24: Priority 2 Combatting Unemployment

Output indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Persons supported	Result	13,942	12,161	14,811	24,664	12,876	78,454
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	76,000
Share of women in the total of persons receiving support (persons)	Result	51.80%	55.90%	51.40%	51.70%	48.00%	50.80%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	50.00%
Share of women in the total of persons receiving support (spending)	Result	48.90%	51.30%	51.10%	50.40%	53.60%	50.80%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	50.00%
Share of the target group older persons (persons)	Result	42.90%	43.10%	42.10%	33.80%	28.70%	37.60%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	40.00%
Share of the target group older persons (spending)	Result	35.80%	38.30%	35.80%	41.60%	35.80%	37.70%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	40.00%
Innovative projects (number)	Result	0	1	2	3	2	4
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	5
Innovative projects (use of funds)	Result	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%	0.30%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	2.50%

**Results indicators**

Employment 3 months after the measure	Result	36.50%	34.50%	28.90%	33.90%	34.50%	38.50%
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Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection/ESF Monitoring

Table 25: Priority 3a Occupational Integration of Disabled Persons

Output indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Funded cases	Result	7,114	14,272	18,067	23,143	16,760	-
	Target	17,900	17,900	17,900	17,900	17,900	-
Share of target group women	Result	41.27%	37.68%	37.99%	39.62%	40.82%	-
	Target	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	-
Innovative projects (number)	Result	0	11	37	30	3	-
	Target	5	5	5	5	5	-
Innovative projects (use of funds)	Result	0%	1.02%	3.29%	2.92%	0.92%	8.15%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	2.50%

**Results indicators**

Situation 6 months after the measure	Result	42.25%	46.79%	45.70%	45.60%	45.87%	-
	Target	52.00%	52.00%	52.00%	52.00%	52.00%	-
Jobs obtained	Result	20.87%	15.75%	16.26%	18.77%	18.81%	-
	Target	15.00%	15.00%	15.00%	15.00%	15.00%	-
Jobs secured	Result	8.64%	5.52%	5.42%	7.56%	7.09%	-
	Target	16.00%	16.00%	16.00%	16.00%	16.00%	-
Integration into the labour market	Result	12.74%	25.52%	24.02%	22.18%	20.75%	-
	Target	21.00%	21.00%	21.00%	21.00%	21.00%	-

Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection/ESF Monitoring

Table 26: Priority 4 Life-long learning

<b>Output indicators</b>		<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
Persons in training and further education programmes (school)	Result	0	5,833	19,775	27,047	31,250	83,905
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	40,000
Persons in training and further education (adult education)	Result	1,520	5,349	9,047	8,624	7,524	32,064
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	36,000
Participation in information. counselling and orientation offers (school)	Result	0	0	772	2,649	1,766	5,187
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	10,000
Participation in information. counselling and orientation (adult education)	Result	8,317	36,870	46,187	45,688	45,749	182,811
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	250,000
Participation in information. counselling and orientation (education counsellors)	Result	0	88	102	136	52	378
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	500
Certification for persons working in adult education	Result	18	75	123	208	136	560
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	1,000
Funded cases – science	Result	0	2	185	240	263	690
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	1,500
Share of target group women (participation cases)	Result	55.00%	56.71%	56.30%	56.59%	56.54%	56.94%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	50.00%
Innovative projects (number)	Result	2	2	2	2	0	2
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	5
Innovative projects (use of funds)	Result	0.00%	0.35%	1.47%	1.19%	0.00%	3.01%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	2.50%

Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection/ESF Monitoring

## B.4 ETC – Core Indicators on Cross-border Programmes

Table 27: ETC core indicators

Core indicators	AT-CZ	BAY-AT	SK-AT	AT-HU
42 Number of projects that meet <b>2 of the four criteria</b>				
Joint project preparation, joint project implementation, joint staff, joint financing	27	2	0	53
43 Number of projects that meet <b>3 of the four criteria</b>				
Joint project preparation, joint project implementation, joint staff, joint financing	51	3	68	53
44 Number of projects that meet <b>4 of the four criteria</b>				
Joint project preparation, joint project implementation, joint staff, joint financing	57	98	0 <sup>42</sup>	43
46 Number of projects with jointly used infrastructure	21	30	5	12
47 Number of projects for the <b>development of cooperation in the area of public services</b>	1	46	11	6
49 Number of projects that support and improve the <b>joint protection and joint management of the environment</b>	8	21	12	15

Source: AIR – MAs AT-CZ, BAY-AT, SK-AT, AT-HU

Table 28: Supplementary ETC core indicators

	AT-CZ	BAY-AT	SK-AT	AT-HU
Number of projects supporting <b>fields of strengths, clusters</b> other networks, cooperation platforms	9	36	7	11
Number of projects in the field of <b>health and social integration</b>	8	22	4	3
Number of projects in the sector of <b>education and qualification</b>	18	21	3	6
Number of projects in field of <b>risk prevention</b>	9	20	5	5
No. of projects focusing on <b>renewable energy production</b>	4	11	2	4

Source: AIR – MAs AT-CZ, BAY-AT, SK-AT, AT-HU

42 Joint staff is precisely defined SK-AT: joint organisation or European Association for Territorial Cooperation.

Table 29: Thematic Codes for 4 ETC Programmes

EU- Code	Name Code	No. of projects	ERDF total	AT-ERDF
1	Research, technology and development activities in research centres	10	5,075,644	2,736,515
2	Research, technology and development infrastructure, centres of competence	3	3,142,687	2,659,378
3	Technology transfer and cooperation networks	11	5,042,745	2,695,319
5	Advanced support to R&TD	15	11,945,176	6,552,568
9	Other measures to stimulate research, innovation and entrepreneurship in SMEs	3	1,441,178	598,392
11	Information and communication technologies	8	3,452,947	2,611,427
13	Services and applications for citizens	3	1,101,843	701,758
14	Services and applications for SMEs	1	307,932	126,750
16	Railways	5	9,728,961	6,958,917
23	Rural and local roads	18	15,313,253	956,223
24	Bicycle paths	8	8,412,055	2,752,741
26	Multimodal transport	1	521,013	373,460
28	Intelligent transport systems	3	3,763,473	2,570,351
41	Renewable energy: biomass	2	1,274,498	746,753
43	Energy efficiency, co-generation, energy management	11	7,786,254	4,438,729
44	Household waste and industrial waste management	3	1,288,672	577,664
45	Water management and distribution	3	5,613,311	1,910,610
46	Waste water treatment	1	946,670	146,235
47	Air quality	1	2,622,021	280,654
48	Integrated prevention and control of environmental pollution	3	1,259,113	633,500
51	Promotion of bio-diversity and nature protection	11	6,790,468	3,206,737
53	Risk prevention	6	3,709,155	1,600,512
54	Other environmental and risk prevention measures	14	11,119,395	5,342,227
56	Protection and upgrading of the natural heritage	8	5,797,975	3,871,314
57	Improvement of tourism services	40	23,636,996	9,980,229
58	Protection and preservation of cultural heritage	12	3,763,017	1,904,035
59	Development of cultural infrastructure	6	5,031,322	1,899,615
60	Improvement of cultural services	9	4,773,056	1,935,781
61	Integrated projects to revive urban and rural areas	3	1,123,308	656,377
64	Development of specific services for employment, training and support in connection with restructuring of sectors and firms	6	2,135,593	1,471,357
65	Modernisation and strengthening of labour market institutions	5	2,273,054	1,613,031
66	Implementing active and preventive measures on the labour market	7	7,020,373	4,477,795
67	Measures encouraging active aging and prolonging working lives	1	467,870	329,277
71	Pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people; combatting discrimination	4	509,778	289,807
72	Design, introduction and implementation of reforms in education and training systems	4	3,378,427	2,129,314
73	Measures to increase participation in general and training throughout the life-cycle	5	1,880,022	998,764
74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation	5	2,727,255	1,740,297
75	Education infrastructure	1	53,090	19,540
76	Health infrastructure	8	4,280,742	2,376,466
79	Other social infrastructure	10	4,816,284	3,343,598
80	Support for the creation of partnerships, alliances and initiatives by networking the relevant actors	22	19,634,322	8,173,100

continued on the following page

Tab. 29: Thematische Codes für vier ETZ-Programme

EU-Code	Name Code	No. of projekts	ERDF total	AT-ERDF
81	Mechanisms to improve the drafting of policy concepts and programmes, monitoring and evaluation at the national, regional and local level, support for building capacities for the execution of policies and programmes	29	8,765,878	4,531,395
85	Preparation, implementation, monitoring and auditing	32	13,798,922	9,358,670
86	Evaluation and studies; information and communication	5	2,272,465	1,346,983
n. A.	n. A.	1	1,792,696	816,873
	<b>Result</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>231,590,908</b>	<b>114,441,039</b>

Source: ATMOS monitoring at awslerp-fonds, for the programmes: BAY-AT, AT-HU, SK-AT, AT-CZ

## B.5 Implementation Indicators EAFRD

Table 30: Implementation output indicators Priority 3 (as of year-end 2011)

Code	Measure	Output indicators	TOTAL	Targets 2007–2013	Execution ratio
311	Diversification towards non-agricultural activities	Number of firms supported (enterprises)	814	3000	27.1%
		Total investment volume (1,000 EUR)	66,496.550	80,000,000	83.1%
312	Start-ups and development of enterprises	Number of micro enterprises supported	469	500	93.8%
313	Support for tourism	Number of new tourism measures supported	137	250	54.8%
		Total investment volume (1,000 EUR)	27,637,037	36,000,000	76.8%
321	Basic services for the economy and population in rural areas	Number of funding schemes	847	2270	37.3%
		Total investment volume (1,000 EUR)	180,648.421	450,000,000	40.1%
322	Village renewal and development	Number of villages funded	270	300	90.0%
		Total investment volume (1,000 EUR)	6,549,759	12,000,000	54.6%
323	Preservation and improvement of rural heritage	Number of funding schemes	2,474	2,500	99.0%
		Total investment volume (1,000 EUR)	69,727,661	160,000,000	43.6%
331	Training and information programmes for economic actors in the areas of Axis 3	Number of supported economic actors	32,590	30.000	108.6%
		Number of days of training completed	7,655	11.000	69.6%
341	Competence development, raising awareness and implementation	Number of funding schemes	409	350	116.9%

Source: Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management

Table 32: Implementation output indicators, Priority 4 (as of year-end 2011)

Code	Measure	Output indicators	TOTAL	Targets 2007–2013	Execution ratio
411	Implementation of local	Number of local action groups (LAG)	86	100	86.0%
412		Total space of the area of LAG (km <sup>2</sup> )	73,742	73000	101.0%
413	development strategies	Total no. of inhabitants in the area of LAG	4,364,729	4500000	97.0%
		No. of projects funded of LAG	5,064	7500	67.5%
		Number of beneficiaries	4,345	NP	
421	Execution of cooperation projects	Number of cooperation projects funded	43	40	107.5%
		No. of cooperating of LAGs	163	120	135.8%
431	Leadership of local action groups (LAG), development of competence and raising awareness in the fields pursuant to Article 59	Number of funding schemes	313	250	125.2%

Source: Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management

## C EVALUATIONS: SELECTION

### Focus: Ongoing Evaluation

Scope		Evaluations used
ESF	Austria	AMS – Austria: Evaluation of qualification partnerships – productive aging, flexibilisation consulting
ESF	Austria	L&R (2011): Status of Austria's production schools
ESF	Austria	ÖIR/BBJ/Institut für Gesellschafts- und Sozialpolitik (2012): Ongoing evaluation of the interventions of the European Social Funding Austria 2007–2013.
ESF	Austria	ÖIR/BBJ/INSTITUT für Gesellschafts- und Sozialpolitik (2012a): Ongoing evaluation of the interventions of the European Social Funding Austria 2007–2013.
EAFRD	Austria	Bundesanstalt für Bergbauernfragen (2011): Mid-term evaluation of the LEADER measures. The Austrian Programme for the Development of Rural Areas 2007–2013.
EAFRD	Austria	Federal Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management (2010): Evaluation Report 2010. Mid-term evaluation of the Austrian programme for the development of rural areas.
EAFRD	Austria	Federal Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management (2010): Evaluation Partial Reports on the evaluation of the measures of Austrian programme for the development of rural areas.

Source: Own compilation, convelop

## Focus: ERDF-Reference - Selection - Compiled from the Evaluations of the Expert Network

Theme	Scope*	Policy field	Institution/Author, Title and date of completion
RTDI-activities in research centres	OÖ	Enterprise environment	ÖIR, RCi (2005): Evaluierung des Schlüsselprojektes profactor in Steyr (im Rahmen der Aktualisierung der Halbzeitbewertung des Ziel-2-Programms OÖ 2000–2006), commissioned by the government of Upper Austria
Support for R&TD infrastructure	NÖ	Enterprise environment	ÖIR, RCi (2007): Wirkungsanalyse Modellprojekte aus dem Ziel-2-Programm Niederösterreich 2000–2006 (Teil FTI Infrastruktur); commissioned by the government of Lower Austria
Support for R&TD infrastructure	NÖ	Enterprise environment	KMU Forschung Austria (2008): Interimsevaluierung des Technopolprogramms des Landes Niederösterreich; commissioned by the government of Lower Austria (Dept. WST3)
Support for R&TD infrastructure	Stmk	Enterprise environment	Convelop & ÖAR (2010): Wirkungsmonitoring „Regionale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit Steiermark 2007–2013“ (Teil FTE-Infrastruktur); commissioned by the government of Styria
Support for R&TD infrastructure	NÖ	Enterprise environment	Economica/Helmenstein et al (2010): Umwegrentabilität von Technopolen in Niederösterreich; commissioned by ecoplus
Technology transfer and cooperation networks	Ö	Enterprise environment	4C foresee – Management Consulting GmbH Wien AUSTRIA/Clement, W. et al (2009): Cluster in Österreich Bestandsaufnahme und Perspektiven; commissioned by bmwfi
Technology transfer and cooperation networks	W	Enterprise environment	KMU Forschung Austria (2007): Evaluierung des EU-Ziel-2-Projektes VITE (Vienna IT Enterprises); commissioned by Wiener Wirtschaftsförderungsfonds
Technology transfer and cooperation networks	W	Enterprise environment	IWI / Industriewissenschaftliches Institut (2010): Evaluierung des EU-Projektes Vienna IT Enterprises (VITE), verfasst von Herwig W. Schneider et al commissioned by Wirtschaftsagentur Wien
Research projects for SMEs	Ö	Enterprise environment	KMU Forschung Austria (2011). FFG Wirkungsmonitoring 2011 (der im Jahr 2007 abgeschlossenen Projekte), commissioned by FFG
Advanced support services for companies	NÖ	Enterprise environment	Amt der NÖ Landesregierung/WST3 (2008): Interne Evaluierung 8/2008 Förderlinie InnovationsassistentInnen
Advanced support services for companies	Bgld	Enterprise environment	Pöckhacker Innovation Consulting (2010): Evaluierung des Themenbereichs „Forschung und Innovation“ in der Prioritätenachse 1 des Phasing-Out-Programms Burgenland EFRE; commissioned by Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH
Advanced support services for companies	W	Enterprise environment	L&R Sozialforschung (2011): Evaluierung des Mingo Gründungscoachings verfasst von Andreas Riesenfelder und Susanne Schelepa commissioned by Wirtschaftsagentur Wien
Advanced support	Ö	Enterprise environment	INNO (2008): Zwischenevaluierung AplusB Gründerprogramm, Karlsruhe April 2008 (including INITS, Wien), commissioned by Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology
RTDI Investment projects in companies	Ö	Enterprise environment	Austrian Wirtschaftsservice GmbH/Knoll, N. (September 2007): Endbericht zum Pilotprojekt interner Evaluierungen von Förderungsprogrammen
RTDI Investment projects in companies	Ö	Enterprise environment	Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH/Knoll, N. (April 2011): Endbericht zur internen Evaluierung von Förderungen nach dem Arbeitsmarktförderungsgesetz (AMFG)
RTDI Investment projects in companies	Ö	Enterprise environment	IHS/Institute for advanced studies/Miess., M. et al (2011): Evaluierung der regionalen Beschäftigungs- u. Wachstums-offensive 2005/2006/Teil Zuschüsse gemäß Arbeitsmarktförderungsgesetz im Rahmen der unternehmenbezogenen Arbeitsmarktförderung, commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth

Theme	Scope*	Policy field	Institution/Author, Title and date of completion
RTDI Investment projects in companies	NÖ	Enterprise environment	convelop/IFIP (2008): Bewertung der Bedeutung von geförderten Unternehmen im Ziel-2-Programm Niederösterreich; commissioned by the government of Lower Austria
RTDI Investment projects in companies	Ö	Enterprise environment	convelop (2011): Wirkungsanalyse der AplusB Gründerzentren Steiermark, commissioned by der Steirischen Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft mbH
RTDI Investment projects in companies	Ö	Enterprise environment	convelop/Com-X, CEWES (2011): Evaluierung des Programmes FEMTech commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology
RTDI Investment	Ktn	Enterprise environment	convelop/Technopolis/ÖIR (2011): KWF-Evaluierung 2010; Bewertung des KWF-Förderungsportfolios; commissioned by Kärntner Wirtschaftsförderungsfonds
Investment projects in the tourism sector	Bgld	Enterprise environment	WIFO (2010): Eine quantitative Evaluierung der regionalökonomischen Auswirkungen der touristischen Leitprojekte im Burgenland, commissioned by Regionalmanagements Burgenland
Investment projects in the tourism sector	Bgld	Enterprise environment	Kreutzer, Fischer & Partner (2007): Evaluierung des volkswirtschaftlichen Nutzens von EU-Förderungen am Beispiel der Sonnentherme in Lutzmansburg; commissioned by Regional management Burgenland, government of Burgenland
New financial instruments	Ö	Enterprise environment	WIFO/Peneder, M. Schwarz, G. (2008), Venture Capital: Ergebnisse der Wirkungsanalyse für Österreich, in WIFO Monthly Bulletins 6/2008
Energy infrastructure	Ö	The Environment and energy	ÖAR, RIMAS (2011): Programmübergreifende Evaluierung der EFRE-kofinanzierten Umweltmaßnahmen der Kommunalkredit Public Consulting; commissioned by ÖROK
Energy infrastructure	Ö	The Environment and energy	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment, and Water Management (September 2011): Evaluierung der Umweltförderung des Bundes 2008–2010, revised volume
Integrated projects for urban regeneration	NÖ	Territorial development	convelop (2011): Pilotevaluierung 4D für NÖ Süd – Wiener Neustadt; commissioned by Federal Chancellery Dept IV/4
Integrated projects for urban regeneration	W	Territorial development	Metis (2012): Zwischenevaluierung des Programms RWB Wien 2007–2013, commissioned by MA 27 (part of urban integration development)
CBC programmes	Ö/PC**	Territorial development	Hummelbrunner, R. et al (June 2011): 15 Jahre INTERREG/ETC in Austria: Review and Outlook, commissioned by ÖROK
Themes across priority axes	Bgld	Convergence 07–13	convelop (Kooperationspartner von EPRC/LSE (2012 – ongoing) Evaluation of the Main Achievements of Cohesion Policy Programms over the longer Term, commissioned by the European Commission
Themes across priority axes	Stmk	Regional competitiveness programmes 07–13	ÖAR/convelop (2010): Wirkungsmonitoring „Regionale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit Steiermark 2007–2013“, commissioned by government office of Styria
Themes across priority axes	Stmk	Regional competitiveness programmes 07–13	Abteilung Wirtschaft & Innovation (2011): Interim evaluation of the Operational Programme “Regional Competitiveness Styria”
Themes across priority axes	NÖ	Regional competitiveness programmes 07–13	convelop (2011): Interne Reflexion des RWB Programmes Niederösterreich; commissioned by the government of Lower Austria
Themes across priority axes	Vlbg	Regional competitiveness programmes 07–14	Kairos (2011): Zwischenevaluierung des Operationellen Programmes Regionale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit Vorarlberg; commissioned by the government of Vorarlberg
Themes across priority axes	W	Regional competitiveness programmes 07–15	Metis (2012): Zwischenevaluierung des Programms RWB Wien 2007–2013, commissioned by MA 27

Theme	Scope*	Policy field	Institution/Author, Title and date of completion
Themes across priority axes	Ö	Regional Competitiveness, Employment, Rural Development	ZSI in Kooperation mit ÖAR Regionalberatung (2011): „SYN.AT“. „Koordination, Kooperation und Synergienutzung zwischen ESE, EFRE und ELER in Österreich“
Effects on regional structural change	Stmk	Objective 2 programmes 2000–2006	CSIL/Joanneum Research/Technopolis Group (2009): Case study Styria, Work Package 4 „Structural Change and Globalisation“, Prepared for the European Commission
Effects of cohesion policy in Austria	Ö	Objective 1 and 2 programmes 2000–2006	WIFO/Mayrhofer, Peter et.al. (2008): Quantitative Effekte der EU-Regionalförderung in Österreich. Teil der ÖROK-Publikation: EU-Kohäsionspolitik in Österreich 1995–2007 – Eine Bilanz, Materialienband, Vienna 2009

\* Ö = Austria, OÖ = Upper Austria, NÖ = Lower Austria, Stmk = Styria, W = Vienna, Bgdl = Burgenland, Ktn = Carinthia, Vlbg = Vorarlberg

\*\* PC = Partner countries

Source: A. Resch, Expert Evaluation Network der DG Regio, Country Report Austria 2012 (Draft)

## D RESPONSES TO THE "EUROPEAN RECOVERY PLAN" AND THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRISIS

The following section presents an assessment of the measures of the European Recovery Plan<sup>43</sup> in Austria. The questions are based on the Annex II of "Guidance Note on Indicative Contents and Structure for the National Strategic Reports 2012" of 19 January 2012, which was discussed within the scope of the COCOF (Coordination Committee for the Funds pursuant to Article 103 of the General Funds Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006) (COCOF-11-0040-01-EN). A brief overview is given first:

→ The additional amount of EUR 46 million from the European Recovery Plan were used in EAFRD; EUR 15 million of which were spent on the enlargement of broadband coverage in rural regions.

→ Measures in the area of financing (advances) are not applied in Austria or are funded from national programmes. This also applies for the options in the area of energy efficiency or new financing forms that are applied within the scope of the national "crisis programmes".

→ Accounting for indirect costs based on "flat rates" and using "standard unit costs" for personnel costs are applied. This constitutes a significant simplification of the handling of the funding of labour-intensive action plans, as in the case of the innovation and R&D projects.

### Financing:

1.	Explain the national policy on the use of advances under Cohesion Policy (2007–2009) to prefinance operations on the ground? To public authorities? To enterprises or other economic operators? Estimated volume?	No – Pre-funding from national funds
2.	Is expenditure incurred on major projects being declared while submissions to the Commission are pending?	No – Not relevant
3.	Are advances under state aid schemes to SMEs paid and declared to the Commission for reimbursement?	No – Pre-funding from national funds
4.	Is frontloading of planned investment over the Period 2007–2013 being implemented?	No – No plans to use this option
5.	Is the use of flexibility in the existing programmes to modulate the rate of the EU contribution to projects (up to 100 % of the eligible costs) being used?	No – No plans to use this option

### Simplification of categories of eligible expenditure:

#### Are your authorities using or planning to use

6.	Indirect costs declared on a flat-rate basis?	Yes. The option of applying the principle of accounting for "indirect costs" on a "flat rate" basis up to 20 % of direct project costs for ERDF projects involving personnel costs was introduced into the national eligibility rules. Direct personnel costs are used as basis for the determination of the mark-up for overhead costs. The basis for the introduction is an empirical analysis to determine the mark-up for overhead costs and the coordination of the method with the European Commission.
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43 EC (2008), A European Economic Recovery Plan, Communication from the Commission to the European Council, COM(2008) 800 final, Brussels, 26. 11. 2008

7.	Flat-rate costs calculated by application of standard scales of unit cost?	Yes. The principle of "standard scales of unit costs" was added to the national eligibility rules within the scope of a "personnel lump sum" and an amount to account for the so-called entrepreneur's salary.
8.	Lump sums to cover all or part of the costs of an operation?	No proposals were made with respect to the application of the principle of the "lump sums".
<b>If use has been made of these categories of expenditure, please provide:</b>		
-	Information on types of operations where the use of these categories of expenditure is made.	Priority: Cost-intensive personnel projects in the area of R&D, innovation and for consulting projects
-	Information on the (estimated) amount paid out by the beneficiaries and included in payment claims sent to the managing authority;	The options opened up to Austrian implementing bodies with the changes to the national eligibility rules were applied as of the autumn of 2010 especially in the case of project types mentioned. Verified data on the respective financial volumes were not available at the time of reporting (autumn 2012).

#### Enlarging or adjusting the priorities of OPs

9.	What measures under the four priority areas outlined in the Communication (people, business, infrastructure and energy; research and innovation) are being accelerated or adjusted? Are other adjustments necessary to the initially planned measures in order to meet new or different needs? What is the likely impact of these actions? Higher numbers of beneficiaries that anticipated? New needs identified?	The managing authorities proposed adjustments to the Operational Programmes Burgenland, Upper Austria, Styria and Vienna that were approved by the Monitoring Committees and finally approved by the European Commission. The adjustments may all be viewed as minor, because they contain supplements and adjustments to the individual activities without any changes to the programme strategies.
<b>In particular,</b>		
10.	Are OPs being amended to open the scope of actions to energy efficiency and renewable energies in housing? If yes, what amount has been (will be) allocated to these measures? What kinds of operations are concerned?	No – No changes to the programmes Energy efficiency is eligible for funding from the start in many programmes, an enlargement to "energies in housing" did not take place. For this, there are national funding programmes that were considerably enlarged also as a response to the crisis.
11.	Are JEREMIE-type access to finance instruments to benefit SMEs being accelerated or expanded? What is the expected total financial volume? And the EU co-financing?	No – JEREMIE is not applied in Austria. The national measures contain instruments for loans, investments (e.g. VC), and guarantees. In some <i>Länder</i> there are intentions – not related to the crisis – to allocate EU Cohesion Policy funds to regional equity investment funds.
12.	Have capacity building priorities to reinforce within public authorities their ability to plan, implement, monitor and control OPs been modified or reinforced?	Based on the well-functioning administrative structures in Austria and the integration of the processing of the EU Cohesion Policy funds by the general implementing bodies at the federal level and at the <i>Länder</i> level, no special reactions are planned within the scope of the Recovery Packages.

**Simplifying the implementation mechanisms**

<p>13. What national measures have been taken to accelerate the implementation of OPs? Clarifying procedures? Revised guidance or national legislation? Simplified procedures?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The measures concentrate mainly on the active and intensive communication in the regions and on potential project organisers (incl. SME road shows Burgenland) planned for the programme marketing.</li> <li>• In a few programmes, additional project calls were /are conducted and more funds are allocated to active project development.</li> <li>• As mentioned under 2.a, the national eligibility rules were adjusted to include the possibility of recognising lump sums.</li> <li>• In one project executed, "Governance Check" measures to simplify general processing were discussed and defined (e.g. an internal task force for defining more efficient procedures for changes to the management and control system)</li> </ul>
<p>14. Is it necessary to simplify provisions in the adopted programmes through formal modification to speed up deliver mechanisms?</p>	<p>No – Not in the programmes; further simplifications of the general system of EU Cohesion Policy funding are considered necessary though.</p>

**Use of possibilities under the Temporary state aid framework:**

Was Cohesion Policy funding used to finance.

<p>15. Schemes implementing the „Compatible limited amount of aid” up to Euro 500 000 following Commission state aid approval?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>16. State guarantees for loans at a reduced premium?</p>	<p>No – Not with the help of funding from the EU Cohesion Funds. Implementation of guarantees through national instruments and financing. As a reaction to the economic crisis, this instrument was enlarged significantly.</p>
<p>17. Loans interest subsidies, in particular for the production of green products (meeting environmental protection standards early or going beyond such standards)?</p>	<p>No – Not with the help of funding from the EU Cohesion Funds. Granting of loans and interest subsidies through national instruments and funding.</p>

**Public Procurement**

<p>Is the use of accelerated public procurement procedures, reducing the overall time limit of the procedure from 87 days to 30 days, being used under the OPs?</p>	<p>Not relevant</p>
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## G LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

<b>AMS</b>	Public Employment Service Austria (Arbeitsmarktservice)
<b>aws/ERP</b>	Austria Wirtschaftsservice/European Recovery Program
<b>CBC</b>	Cross-border cooperation
<b>CEEK-5</b>	Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary
<b>CF</b>	Cohesion Fund
<b>CPR</b>	Common Provisions Regulation, see Regulation (EC)1083/2006
<b>cross-financing</b>	Under certain conditions, the possibility exists of using ERDF and ESF funds to finance activities that belong to the intervention area of the respective other fund ("cross-financing"). However, this can only be done to a maximum level of 10% of community participation at the priority axis level. (Legal basis: Article 34 para. 2 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006).
<b>CSF</b>	Common Strategic Framework
<b>EAFRD</b>	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EIS</b>	European Innovation Scoreboard. Annually updated and EU-operated monitoring system for RTDI indicators for individual EU Member States, and selected states outside of Europe (e. g. US, Japan)
<b>EMFF</b>	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
<b>ERDF</b>	European Regional Development Fund
<b>ESF</b>	European Social Fund
<b>ESI funds</b>	European Structural and Investment funds (formerly known as CSF funds)
<b>ETC</b>	European Territorial Cooperation
<b>EU-15</b>	European Union: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France (incl. Monaco and Overseas Departments), Ireland, Italy (excl. San Marino, Vatican), Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, United Kingdom (excl. Guernsey, Jersey, Isle of Man), Austria
<b>EU-27</b>	EU-15 + MOEL-5 + Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania
<b>Euro-15 area</b>	Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France (including Monaco and Overseas Departments), Ireland, Italy (excl. San Marino, Vatican), Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Finland, Malta, Cyprus, Slovenia, Austria
<b>European Recovery Plan</b>	A European Economic Recovery Plan, Communication from the Commission to the European Council, COM (2008) 800 final, Brussels, 26 November 2008
<b>KLIEN</b>	Austrian Climate and Energy Fund (Klima- und Energiefonds)
<b>KPC</b>	Kommunalkredit Public Consulting
<b>LEADER</b>	Liaison entre Actions de l'Economie Rural; Initiative of the European Community for the Development of Rural Areas
<b>MA</b>	Managing Authority
<b>n+2 rule</b>	In general, this rule stipulates that funds provided within the scope of a programme must be spent before the end of the second year following the provision of the funds ("n" is the year funds are made available) (Legal basis: Article 93 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006).
<b>NRP</b>	National Reform Programme for Growth and Employment (as agreed with the European Council of June 2005 in Brussels)
<b>OeNB</b>	Oesterreichische Nationalbank
<b>ÖHT</b>	Austrian Hotel and Tourism Bank (Österreichische Hotel- und Tourismusbank)
<b>ÖROK</b>	Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz)
<b>PhO</b>	Phasing Out

<b>Principle of proportionality</b>	Principle of an appropriate relationship between the overall amount of proportionality expenses for an Operational Programme and the administrative and financial resources used for implementation purposes, in particular in the area of indicators, evaluation and management and control systems and mechanisms (Legal basis: Article 13 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006)
<b>RCE/ERDF</b>	Operational ERDF programmes for objective "Regional Competitiveness and Employment" (RCE) 2007–2013
<b>Regulation (EC) 1083/2006</b>	Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of the COUNCIL of 11 July 2006 No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999.
<b>RTI</b>	Research – Technology – Innovation
<b>STRAT.AT</b>	Austrian National Strategic Reference Framework 2007–2013
<b>TEP</b>	Territorial Employment Pact
<b>Thematic codes</b>	Mandatory classification of fund interventions into specified thematic areas, which are then summarised into groups, such as "RTD, Innovation and Entrepreneurship", "Energy", "Environment and Risks Prevention", "Human Resources" etc.). In addition, interventions are also classified by the form of finance, territory type and economic activity (Legal basis: Annex II Part A of Implementing Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 <sup>44</sup> )
<b>VC Fund</b>	Venture capital fund

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44 Regulation 1828/2006 of the Commission of 8 December 2006 laying down provisions for Implementing Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006 of the Council of 11 July 2006 with general provisions on the European Fund for Regional Development, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Funds, and Regulation (EC) No. 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Fund for Regional Development.

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