



Application Form

European Entrepreneurial Region (EER 2013)

1. Contact Data

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1.1. Fact Sheet



Map of Austria and the Federal Province of Styria

1.1.1. General Information

- Date of application: **9. November, 2011**
- EER year : **2013**
- Applicant: **Government of Styria**
- Political endorsement: **The application is supported by Dr Christian Buchmann, Minister of Economy, Europe and Culture. Member of the Committee of the Regions (CoR).**
- Contact person: **Dr Gerd Gratzner, Department 14 – Economic Affairs and Innovation**
- Austria encompasses nine federal provinces and features a so-called “centralised federalism”. The responsibilities for legislation and execution are divided between the federal government and the federal provinces. Numerous legislative powers as well as certain business-related areas which pertain to the principles of the Small Business Act (SBA) are- for constitutional reasons- established at the federal level (e.g. matters of trade and industry, the credit and banking industry, insolvency law, etc.), but also specifically find their implementation at the federal province level.

1.1.2. Regional Data

- NUTS 2: **code AT22**
- Population: **1,210,614**
- Area: **16,401.04 km²**
- GDP/inhabitant: **29,400 € (2008)**
- Name of the region: **FEDERAL PROVINCE OF STYRIA**

1.1.3. Awards in the Field of Entrepreneurship

Fast Forward Award!

The Fast Forward Award is the **Province of Styria business award** and the most successful innovation award in the comparison of Austrian federal provinces. The Fast Forward Award is presented once a year by the Province of Styria’s Department of Economic Affairs. Based on a scientific preliminary evaluation of all submissions implemented according to stringent and objective evaluation criteria, 18 enterprises and research institutions were nominated for the Fast Forward Award and the Public Forward Award by a 22-member expert jury in 2011. The 6 best projects were also awarded again this year on 14 September 2011.

The Green Panther

Together with renowned partners from the sphere of economics, media and sponsors, the **Province of Styria, the Styrian Economic Chamber** and the **CREATIVE INDUSTRIES STYRIA (CIS)** network annually present the *GREEN PANTHER* – the Styrian advertising award – in several submission categories.

The most women-friendly and family-friendly enterprises of Styria and the Female Founder of the Year!

The compatibility of career and family will determine the economic potential of Styrian enterprises even stronger in the future. How enterprises succeed in providing their employees working conditions which are not only economically practical, but also pursue socio-political necessities will be a decisive competitive advantage in the future. The *Gründerinnenzentrum Steiermark* (Styrian Women’s Business Centre) and an expert jury annually ascertain and award the most women-friendly and family-friendly enterprises of Styria and also the *FEMALE FOUNDER OF THE YEAR!* The Province of Styria, the City of Graz, the Styrian Economic Chamber – Woman in Economy – and the *Gründerinnenzentrum Steiermark* are responsible for awarding the *FEMALE FOUNDER OF THE YEAR.*

TRIGOS Award Styria!

The TRIGOS is an award for **corporate social responsibility (CSR)**. Since 2004, Styrian enterprises with responsibility are also annually given curtain calls and honoured for their commitment in the four categories “Workplace”, “Society”, “Market” and “Ecology”. In addition to the project, the holistic CSR commitment of the enterprise is also evaluated, whereby the TRIGOS contributes towards the appraisal of corporate social responsibility in Styria. The TRIGOS is presented in Styria in cooperation with the **BKS Bank** (the **Styrian Economic Chamber**, the **Federation of Austrian Industries in Styria (IV Styria)**, the **Austrian Environmental Umbrella Organisation (UWD)** and the **Austrian daily newspaper “DIE PRESSE”** are also among the organisations supporting TRIGOS).

FIT IM JOB!

The **Styrian Economic Chamber**, the **Province of Styria**, the **Austrian insurance company MERKUR VERSICHERUNGS AG**, the **Styrian Regional Health Insurance Fund**, the **Styrian Medical Association** and the **Austrian Workers’ Compensation Board (AUVA)** confer the *FIT IM JOB* health award annually. Those enterprises which have provided their employees with the best health promotion (*workplace health promotion*) are awarded in several categories. In process, it does not depend on the capital employed, but on the quality of implemented measures.

2. Presentation of Political Vision

2.1. THE VISION – the new economic strategy “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation”!

Styria shall become a model region in which it is possible by means of an arranged and target-oriented economic policy to transform regional know-how into value added, and thereby also to improve the transition from research and knowledge into production.

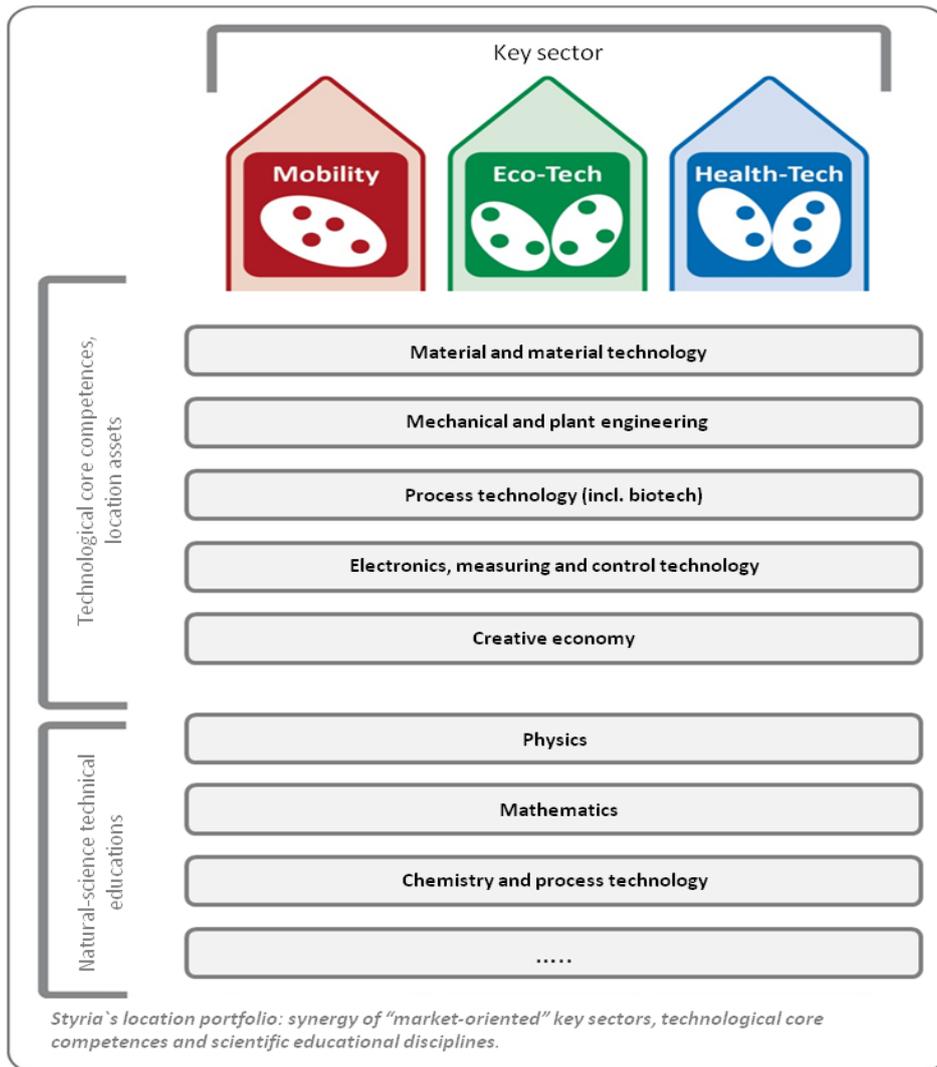
The *new economic strategy of the Province of Styria, “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation”*, was enacted by the Styrian provincial government on **14 April 2011**. The formal approval for the Province’s new economic strategy through the *Landtag Steiermark*, which represents the legislative body in Styria (regional parliament), also followed on 17 May 2011. The strategy was worked out under active involvement of economic and social partners and is therefore subject to a broad regional sponsorship.

The *new economic strategy “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation”* thereby provides the medium and long-term setting for active economic development and furthermore forms the basis from which the measures and development programmes of the Department of Economic Affairs are derived. The purpose of the new economic strategy is to set the right course for the future of Styria for the global change processes as well as the opportunities and threats certified in the SWOT analysis.

Growth through Innovation is therefore the focal point of objectives. **The milestones of the new economic strategy “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation” are the bundling of active location development along the three guiding themes...**

- **Mobility**
- **Eco-Tech and**
- **Health-Tech**

...as well as the orientation of future promotional instruments towards an active and comprehensive location development.



Technological core competencies and corresponding locational advantage are available for the positioning of these **three guiding themes**. For example, these are all engineering disciplines which are taught at the universities in Graz and Leoben, but are all also areas of the creative economy which perform a cross-sectional function in relation to the innovative capability of enterprises. The **Styrian competence centres (Competence Centres for Excellent Technologies, COMET)** are also integrated in these three future fields.

Styria has the potential to be able to assert itself as a comparatively small, but increasingly more mature, flexible and innovative player in global competition. The Styria 2020 economic strategy will contribute its share for this purpose.

2.2. Styrian Starting Situation and SWOT Analysis

2.2.1. Starting Situation

Styria is an industrially characterised federal province, and the percentage of industrial-commercial production in the total regional value added is very high by international comparison. But in spatial-structural terms Styria is characterised by very different regions. In addition to the continuously growing central region comprising Graz and surrounding areas, it is primarily certain parts of Upper Styria which feature a strong industrial R&D base.

The central region and the Upper Styrian economic area assume the role as the **driving force of technology and innovation**. These also have appropriate R&D structures, a very good training and enterprise base, and are locations of universities and polytechnic degree courses as well as several Styrian competence centres. Starting from a raw-material-oriented industry and proceeding towards a modern technology and innovation region with the help of special regional potentials and a closing of ranks among all location stakeholders, the path was able to be taken successfully in the 1990s. The growth of the Styrian economy in the years before the economic and financial crisis in 2008/2009 was higher than that in the EU-15 countries. The export ratio was able to be increased to **58 % of gross regional product**.

2.2.2. SWOT Analysis

Strengths: With a current R&D ratio of **4.4 % of gross regional product in 2009**, Styria still ranks supreme among all Austrian federal provinces and also assumes an absolute top spot in the European comparison. The industrial base and the engineering tradition linked with the industry and the university research institutions prove to be a foundation and special strength of Styria. The weaknesses of the industrial structure have been reduced and transformed into a strength through the renewal of the industrial base in the past two decades. The high number of research and training institutions as well as the variety of scientific disciplines is a locational advantage for Styria with a scarcity value in Europe: **55 % of Austria's technical university research scientists work in Styria**. This percentage is even higher in the realm of special *technological core competencies*. Styria accounts for 73 % of Austrian R&D personnel at universities in the field of mechanical engineering and automotive engineering, 75 % of metallurgy and materials sciences and 58 % in technical chemistry or in other interdisciplinary technical sciences.

Weaknesses: Styria **currently reaches only about 85 % of the Austrian average** in terms of gross regional product per inhabitant. Despite strong innovation peaks, there are *simultaneous innovation deficits in the breadth of small and medium-sized enterprises which have not pursued enough systematic innovation processes* up to now. Moreover, a need for improvement and catching up exists in the interconnection of science & research as well as the Styrian small and medium-sized enterprise structure. The service sector in the urban area is particularly characterised by a *below-average density* of business-related services. In addition, the regional political challenges in Styria play a pivotal role (re-concentration of core areas, unfavourable demographic developments, suburbanisation and compartmentalised municipal structures).

Threats: The renewal of Styria's economic structure took place *through extensive technological investments of enterprises, which led to distinct increases in productivity*. At the same time, the macroeconomic growth is strongly attributed to the *expansion of rather traditional industries and not international growth industries*. Despite the dynamic development of recent years, the *threat of structural problems* and thereby the threat of the weakening of growth exists. Furthermore, competitive disadvantages in the cost sector increase **the threat of transferring production**.

Opportunities: Opportunities for Styria particularly lie in the *good positioning of core industrial fields* and the *existing R&D base*. This enables the preparation of a new phase of structural change and the transition to a *knowledge-based growth path*. Styria benefits from its geostrategic location and the international connection as the southeast hub due to the expansion of European core areas in the direction of Eastern and Southern Europe as well as through the *Baltic-Adriatic corridor as a central transport axis*.

Highly qualified personnel and cooperative research institutions as well as Styria's core competencies in engineering disciplines provide the prerequisites for this. Multi-functionality and smallness will increase the necessary flexibility and adaptability in the future.

3. Styrian Action Plan

3.1. The Small Business Act (SBA), the Business Policy on the European Level and the EUROPE 2020 Strategy in Relation to the New Economic Strategy "Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation"

Austria also pledged to implement the **Small Business Act (SBA)** with the adoption of the reasoning for competitive ability of the **SBA** by the European Council on **1 December 2008**. Numerous measures for **implementation of the SBA** have already been taken or are currently being **taken on the federal level**. An **initial accompanying programme** for the years 2009 and 2010 was agreed upon between the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ) and the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFJ) with the goal of promoting essential elements such as "*Prevention of Entrepreneurial Failure, Knowledge Management for SMEs*" and "*Successful Implementation of European Regulations on the Individual Operational Level*" in terms of *best practices* by means of informational and advisory measures.

A second SBA accompanying programme for 2011/2012 is currently being developed. The European Union relies on a new integrative growth strategy with the priorities of an intelligent, integrative and sustainable growth.

The Europe 2020 strategy and the objectives of the SBA are of importance for Styria in numerous matters:

- The involvement in and implementation of the two Europe 2020 flagship initiatives **Innovation Union** and **Digital Agenda** as well as the programme "**Horizon 2020 – the new Framework Programme for Research and Development 2014 plus**" are also the focus of economic considerations for the Federal Province of Styria.
- The future new framework conditions on the European level and the new European structure of the "**S³ Platform – Smart Specialisation Strategy for Further Development of European Regions**" as well as the better linkage of regional policy with innovation and research policy are of pivotal importance for the coming **EU Structural Funds period 2014-2020 in Styria**. The augmented exploitation of research and innovation potential in Styria is based on a strong partnership between politics and public authorities, economy and stakeholders from research and science.
- Styria aspires, **even stronger than before**, to participate in the diverse programmes of the European Union for R&D and innovation, for human resources or also for regional development.

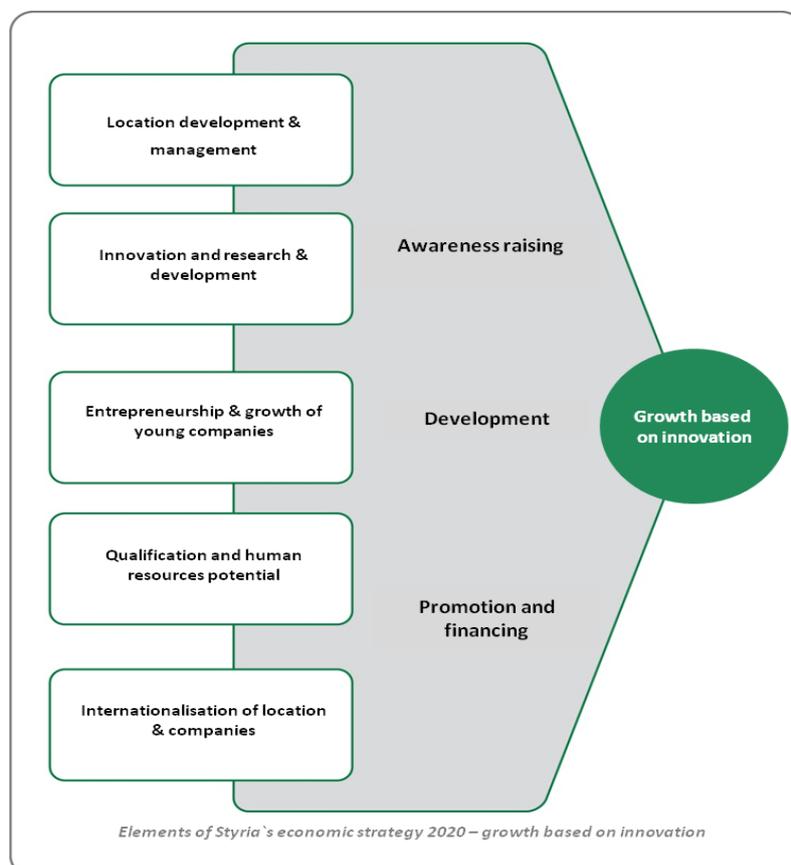
- That is why the **development of strategic alliances, the exchange with other European regions** and the **maintenance of partnerships on the European level** also represent future key activities which could be deepened in a possible EER year 2013 in Styria.

The **new economic strategy “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation”** supports the central objectives of Europe 2020 and also takes into consideration the principles of the **Small Business Act (SBA)** through the development and implementation of this strategy in numerous cases. It will also constitute the basis for the new conceptualisation of the programme for the EU Structural Funds period 2014-2020.

A **clear concentration and focussing** on the potentials, the relative strengths and thereby on the region’s three guiding themes (Mobility, Eco-Tech and Health-Tech) in order to render peak performances and to be able to prevail in the worldwide competition also ensues with the **new economic strategy “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation”**. As a result, this **“intelligent” specialisation** is in full accord with the development of the **Smart Specialisation Strategies (S³)** on the European level.

The **three guiding themes** will be successively implemented within the framework of the following **five core strategies** (see graphic):

1. *Active location development and professional location management*
2. *Innovation and promotion of research & development*
3. *Promotion of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial spirit as well as concentration on the growth of young innovative enterprises and knowledge-based production*
4. *Qualification and human potential*
5. *Internationalisation of enterprises and location as well as improvement of market access for Styrian SMEs*



3.2. The intersections and points of contact of the new economic strategy “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation” with the principles of the Small Business Act (SBA) are subsequently presented: ´

- The planning and implementation of activities and economic measures for **promotion and further development of a business-friendly environment (fostering entrepreneurship & entrepreneurial spirit)** constitutes a focal point of the **new economic strategy “Styria 2020”**. Service features for motivation, mobilisation and development of young enterprises and formations with knowledge-intensive services and products will be **specifically developed and professionalised**. Styria shall be characterised in the **promotion of innovative enterprises** by the framework conditions which position it internationally as a flagship region. An enhanced integration of clusters, networks, headquarters consulting, competence centres and impulse centres in the development of the economic and science location Styria additionally ensues.
- In addition, Styrian enterprises (especially SMEs) will be more strongly supported in the future in order to **benefit from the European Single Market and from the growth of markets**. The **new economic strategy “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation”** supports Styrian enterprises so that they can benefit from the possibilities of the “third countries market” by planning and implementing an internationalisation and export offensive for Styria. The **Internationalisation Centre Styria (ICS)** established in 2005 assumes a pivotal role here. The number of Styrian SMEs which are active in export markets shall be increased through implementation of professional mobilisation and consulting. At the same time, Styria accelerates the intensification of cooperation with advisory institutions such as with the Styrian Economic Chamber in order to abide by the principle *“one counterpart for one client”*. The location development and location management department has been established in the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG) so that Styria can further expand its positions as an innovation and knowledge location. With this setting of priorities in the sphere of **headquarters consulting (HQ consulting)** the **Styrian economic policy** pursues the goal of bringing innovation and corporate headquarters to Styria, but also to service existing headquarters and to regularly enquire about their requirements. In particular, the setting-up of the headquarters of international enterprises with management decision capability as well as competence centres – i.e. technology or R&D centres of international concerns – is the ultimate objective.
- **The enterprises shall be able to transform environmental problems into business opportunities**. The **Styrian guiding theme Eco-Tech** also integrates renewable resources such as wood. This is particularly important for Styria, which is rich in forests. Moreover, enterprises will be actively supported and accompanied, particularly in the sphere of **clean mobility and green technology**, in order to be able to develop **new business opportunities and models** here.
- The present-day budgetary consolidation is also a central theme for the Federal Province of Styria. The **future promotional and financing offers for Styrian enterprises** will be **increasingly oriented towards the growth phases of enterprises and corresponding future investments**. Access to financing shall be facilitated within the framework of the economic strategy “Styria 2020”. The related access to adequate financing possibilities shall ensue through strengthening and acceleration of appropriate **risk and private equity instruments**. The development and intensified implementation of **investment, liability and guarantee instruments that spare cash value** represents an essential objective. The number of projects with financing and equity instruments **shall be increased as a result**.

- The **promotion of human capital, further qualification and all forms of innovation** shall be supported on the SME level and represent key factors of the Styrian economic policy. Within the framework of the new economic strategy, Styrian enterprises will be actively supported in the sphere of workforce potential as well as in issues of increasing *diversity* within the workforce (*age structure, migration background etc.*). The acceleration of coordination and synchronisation in the **knowledge triangle Economy – Research – Education** is also the focal point of location-related developmental themes, whereby the Province of Styria's Department of Economic Affairs accelerates the establishment and implementation of the **"location dialogue"** together with economic and social partners.
- The **enlargement of the innovation base** and thereby the increase in the number of Styrian SMEs which will be integrated in innovation processes is an essential strategic objective for the development of the economic location Styria.
- The concept of smart regulation is appropriately taken into account with the **new 2010 Austrian Insolvency Law for Enterprises**. Enterprises which have become insolvent now have the possibility to handle the reorganisation within the framework of a procedure with so-called "self-administration". Moreover, a **de-stigmatisation of the term insolvency** is achieved through the **linguistic equation** of all reorganisations under the concept of **reorganisation proceedings**.

The **coherence between the economic strategy "Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation" and the Europe 2020 strategy as well as the general principles of the Small Business Act (SBA)** is **completely given** with the examples cited above.

3.3. Entrepreneurship

3.3.1. Support and Promotion of Enterprise Formations and Business Start-ups in Styria

The promotion and support of entrepreneurship as well as enterprise formations and business start-ups is a high priority in Styria. As the responsible Economic Affairs Department of the Province of Styria, Department 14 supports entrepreneurial thinking and action, and in cooperation with the operationally active Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG) and the Styrian Economic Chamber encourages looking at self-employment as a career option through a variety of campaigns and measures.

All relevant institutions and organisations in the Styrian start-up sector collaborate to this effect in the **GRÜNDERLAND STEIERMARK network** (www.gruenderland.st). More than 20 partners from the Styrian regions aim to bundle all activities in the start-up sector and to be a contact point and source of information for enterprise founders.

Based on the principles of the **Small Business Act (SBA)** and promoting the facilitation of start-ups, essential facilitations for enterprise founders have also been created in the sphere of **social security** and **tax law** in recent years. Enterprise founders are optimally supported with the **NEUFÖG (Austrian Business Start-up Promotion Act)** and the introduction of **business registration ONLINE** as a **"one-stop shop"** provided by the **Styrian Economic Chamber**.

As an operative implementation organisation of the Department of Economic Affairs, the **Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG)** (www.sfg.at) operates the project **"Start!Up-Club"** and in doing so is supported by the Styrian Economic Chamber, the *Landesschulrat für Steiermark* (Styrian

Provincial School Board) and the *Steiermärkischen Bank und Sparkassen AG* (Styrian Savings Bank). In the sphere of **raising awareness for students and young people**, the **“Start!Up-Club”** is the platform for young Styrians who are contemplating self-employment and entrepreneurship as a career option. The offer ranges from the formation of virtual enterprises within the framework of lessons to events in the start-up sector. Moreover, the **“Start!Up-School”** features a province-wide project regarding implementation and constant further development that pursues the objective of developing early awareness for self-employment as a career option. In addition, there are special **advanced training and qualification programmes for teachers** at the polytechnic institutes in Styria.

Focus on Styrian micro-enterprises and one-person enterprises (EPU)!

Roughly two-thirds of all Styrian enterprises are so-called **“one-person enterprises” (EPU)**. This increasingly significant economic factor is supported with various measures in Styria. For instance, in **2011** the province-wide major event **“My Way”** on the topic of enterprise formation was implemented and additionally expanded by the emphasis for **“one-person enterprises”**. In addition, Styrian one-person enterprises will be supported on their path to a possible employer enterprise within the framework of the **“Erfolgs!Duo”** (“Successful Duo”) programme. In order to underscore the importance of this target group even more, a separate **staff unit** has been set up as an **EPU advisory body** in the **Styrian Economic Chamber**, which in addition to the establishment of a uniform concept of entrepreneur primarily strives towards the networking of one-person enterprises with employer enterprises and the introduction of EPU to the standards of established enterprises.

Newly established, innovative enterprises which are distinguished with **high market and growth contents** render a substantial contribution towards strengthening the Styrian economy and creation of new jobs. The central objective of Styrian Business Promotion Agency is the increase in the rate of self-employment and strengthening the sustainability of start-ups. Successful and sustainable start-ups will be ensured through a process-oriented, integrated **support programme for high potentials** of the Styrian founder and young entrepreneur scene, the **Community for Professional Performance**. The objective is the creation and development of a sustainable **community of Styrian high-tech start-ups**, which after their start-up are available as **mentors for the next innovative generation** and thereby **enable a sustainable cycle of innovation**.

With the **existing, comprehensive regional Styrian impulse centres, the start-up centre, the Gründerinnenzentrum Steiermark** (Styrian Women’s Business Centre, which has endeavoured to accompany women in all phases of their start-up and their entrepreneurial career, and to be available as a reliable partner for all matters of *women entrepreneurship*) and the **Business Incubator Centre, GRÜNDERLAND STEIERMARK** has institutions or infrastructures, which provides women founders and young women entrepreneurs with advisory and coaching services, extensive know-how transfer, subsidised offices and modern infrastructure.

The promotion of young, knowledge-based enterprises with growth potentials is the focal point of the core strategy featuring entrepreneurship and growth of young enterprises within the framework of the new economic strategy “Styria 2020”. But in the next few years the Department of Economic Affairs will also pursue the initiatives already started in the sphere of entrepreneurial succession.

Special target groups relevant to start-ups will be broadly supported in Styria in order to be able to successfully take the path towards self-employment. The **Styrian Women Founder’s Centre for Handicapped People** (www.chance.at) successfully accompanies people with **physical impairments** on the future path towards self-employment, and the **Styrian Public Employment Service (AMS)** supports unemployed individuals within the scope of a special start-up programme. In addition to advisory services, special access to financing is offered for **unemployed enterprise founders** (www.dermikrokredit.at).

Research associates, students and graduates of Styrian universities will be extensively supported at **Science Park Styria** (www.sciencepark.at). These support services encompass individual coaching and mentoring programmes, assistance in the search for investors as well as customised promotional advice and granting interest-free start-up loans.

The **Styrian Economic Society (STVG)** (www.stvg.at) operates extensively in Styria and cooperates in the *educational sector* with *enterprises, ministries on the federal level and public corporations* in order to contribute appropriately towards strengthening the **educational location Styria in Europe**. Regional and national projects as well as numerous projects on the **European level** – such as YENTELS (www.yentels.com), Your Future – Your Profit (www.ecent.org), COMENIUS (www.scholl-wow.net) and ENTRExplorer Leonardo da Vinci Transfer, (www.entreexplorer.com) – successfully contribute towards raising awareness in the sphere of **entrepreneurship** and **entrepreneurial spirit**.

Women Entrepreneurship!

A surplus in the start-up rate of women amounting to 55% of total start-ups could also be observed for the first time in Styria in 2010. The **Styrian Women's Business Centre in Graz** has endeavoured to accompany women in all phases of their start-up and their entrepreneurial career and to be available as a competent and reliable partner for all matters of “women entrepreneurship” (www.gruenderinnenzentrum-stmk.at). The project **INNOREG – Innovation in der Region** – provides strategy, innovation and financing reviews, and will be **realigned** starting in **2011**. **Women and young entrepreneurs** will be increasingly highlighted in the course of action planning as future target groups.

Mentoring for Migrants!

The increasing importance and the potential of the high propensity towards start-ups by individuals with a migration background must be utilised for the Styrian economy. Immigrants are particularly interesting for internationally proactive enterprises and can provide a valuable contribution towards corporate development with their resources. This thinking is appropriately taken into account on the basis of a **programme specially developed by the Styrian Economic Chamber, “Mentoring for Migrants”**. The objectives of the programme are primarily assistance with integration in the Austrian employment market, developing the potential of a qualified workforce with specific skills and above all the **support of start-ups** through qualified individuals with a migration background. In addition, a specially established **“migration advisory body”** that particularly embraces **entrepreneurs with a migration background** will be established in the **Styrian Economic Chamber**.

Entrepreneurial Succession in Styria!

More than 4,000 enterprises will be pending succession by **2013**, whereby the assured and competent continuation of these enterprises signifies the safeguarding of up to 38,000 jobs. The **Province of Styria's Department of Economic Affairs**, together with the **Styrian Economic Chamber** as well as other project partners, is developing a special package of measures for Styrian SMEs. The **entrepreneurial acquisition and succession programme “FOLLOW ME”** is an initiative for raising awareness of the topic entrepreneurial succession and provides adequate support possibilities in order to substantially increase the rate of entrepreneurial acquisitions through **active succession management**.

Numerous educational institutions with their qualification offers are available for the entire realm of **entrepreneurship education** and **entrepreneurial skill development** in Styria. The Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG), together with partner organisations such as the Styrian Economic Chamber of the Styrian impulse centres within the framework of **GRÜNDERLAND STEIERMARK**, offer an

extensive package of measures such as coaching, workshops and individual advice in order to increase and disseminate the know-how from founders and those interested in start-ups. In addition, the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG) also provides specific financial support through the **promotion of qualification measures** for founders and entrepreneurs in the **“Start!klar”** (“All Set!”) and **“Weiter!bilden”** (“Study Further!”) programmes.

3.3.2. Support and Promotion on the SME Level in Styria – Erlebniswelt Wirtschaft!

The initiative **“Erlebniswelt Wirtschaft** (*Adventure-World Economy*) – **made in Styria**” was initiated by Provincial Minister of Economic Affairs Dr Christian Buchmann in order to also give the people in Styria a better understanding of the **innovative strength of Styrian enterprises**. The Styrian economy can be better experienced, whereas the economic performance of domestic enterprises becomes more transparent and tangible. Partner organisations such as the **Federation of Austrian Industries in Styria (IV Styria)** and the **Styrian Economic Chamber** support this project. This consequently transforms the most varying enterprises into **“transparent factories”**. Twelve enterprises were already on board at the start. Innovative firms representing the most varying sectors from the entire federal province open their doors to a broad public. The interest of young people for the enterprises can be aroused at a very early stage due to the opening, particularly with respect to schools as well as educational and training institutions. As a result, enterprises can position themselves as **attractive training enterprises** which enable young people to complete an apprenticeship. But “Adventure World Economy” also offers the involved enterprises numerous advantages: the enterprises are integrated in a long-term partnership and thereby have the opportunity to present their enterprise to the public in a demonstrative manner and to make the economy concretely comprehensible. This has a positive effect on the **image**, strengthens **credibility** and is **part of a comprehensive responsibility towards the society (corporate social responsibility)**. A special **“seal of quality”** has been developed for the project. Every enterprise has the right to employ this seal of quality outwardly at their own discretion in their communications. Styrian enterprises will be actively supported in the implementation of this initiative by the Styrian creative cluster **Creative Industries Styria (CIS)**.

3.3.3. Support in the Promotion of the Single Market and SME Internationalisation Efforts

It is very important for Styria to internationalise the location on a large scale. In the coming years, objectives in relation to the Single Market and internationalisation efforts of the Styrian economic policy will be increasingly pursued with the **core strategy** of the new economic strategy **“Styria 2020 – Internationalisation of Enterprises and Location”**:

1. **Increasing the number of Styrian SMEs** which are active in export markets through motivation, professional mobilisation and consulting.
2. **Intensification of cooperation with advisory institutions** such as the Economic Chamber in order to abide by the principle “one counterpart for one client”.
3. **Internationalisation and export offensive for the location Styria**

Styria’s export ratio was quite remarkable in the boom phase, whereby the export base could also be accordingly enlarged in recent years. However, this export base is still concentrated too strongly on a few central sectors (automotive, metal) and on nearby exports (Germany, Italy). **That is why the enlargement of Styria’s export base has to be rapidly accelerated**. The markets of Eastern and Southeast Europe are to be further refined, whereas the enterprises also have to be prepared to **go increasingly into distant growth markets**.

The **Internationalisation Centre Styria (ICS)** was established in 2005 by the Province of Styria, the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG), the Styrian Economic Chamber and the Federation of Austrian Industries in Styria (IV Styria). The **Internationalisation Centre Styria** is conceived as a “**one-stop shop**” for Styrian enterprises and is furthermore responsible for the **location marketing measures and economic missions** for the Province of Styria’s Department of Economic Affairs. It is ultimately available to all Styrian enterprises in all matters pertaining to export. The mission is to establish Styrian enterprises worldwide and to facilitate their market entry into new target markets.

Existing Styrian SMEs as well as export newcomers and employees are supported with the **ICS programmes** such as “Project Development for Neighbouring Markets”, “ICS Range of Services”, “International Project Evaluation”, “Intercultural Coaching” as well as the **ICS Competence Workshop**. The **ICS Focus Programmes** are primarily oriented towards the growth markets Turkey, China and Russia (St. Petersburg).

The **Internationalisation Centre Styria (ICS)** is also active in the execution of EU programmes within the framework of the **European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)** by assuming the role of informational, advisory and project development agency in **economically relevant areas**, and as a project partner which supports the development, approval and implementation of projects. The Department of Economic Affairs itself is involved in the Monitoring Committee of the **ETC programme “Austria-Slovenia 2007-2013”** in order to be able to accelerate and support bilateral, innovative and sustainable economic projects in terms of the economic strategy “Styria 2020”.

Since **2008** the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG) and **ICS** have served as host organisations of the **Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)** within the scope of the **Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)**. As a result, services can be offered for high-tech enterprises which pursue the goal of expanding their business activities beyond the Austrian borders. The direct access to over **600 partner organisations** in all European countries and beyond provided by this network is a central starting point for the Europe-wide networking of the Styrian economy, especially for SMEs which would not have had the opportunity to be active all over Europe without these support services due to their structure and limited resources.

A new Styrian internationalisation offensive is planned in 2011. Among other things, the ten-point programme shall include a strengthening of financing and service features, the creation of a credit financing pool for exporters, the development of export guarantees/liability in the style of the activity of the *Österreichische Kontrollbank* (Austrian Control Bank; OeKB), the improvement of foreign language competence in Styria, the reduction of administrative effort and bureaucracy with regard to the import and export of goods as well as a resumption of the “**Future Region Alpe-Adria-Pannonia**” project.

3.3.4. Promotion of innovation in Styria through Establishment and Support of Innovation Pools

Innovation is the future basis for growth and the increase of competitive ability. Styrian enterprises will be actively supported in their planned innovative processes through co-operations and network activities with the **core strategy “Promotion of Innovation and R&D”** of the **new economic strategy “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation”**.

The **Styrian competence centres (Competence Centres for Excellent Technologies)** are a decisive driving force of the Styrian **innovation system**. Styria holds the top position in Austria with **19 out of 45** competence centres. **Three of the five** largest competence centres (K2) in Austria are located in Styria:

- **Mobility - SVT Sustainable Vehicle Technologies** (www.vif.tugraz.at)
- **Materials – MPPE Integrated Research in Materials, Processing and Product Engineering** (www.mcl.at)
- **ACIB – Austrian Centre of Industrial Biotechnology** (www.acib.at)

In the period from 2006-2016 Styria will have invested about 100 million euros in the concept of competence centres, which shall initiate an additional total investment volume of 200 million euros. As a result, **industry** and **science** can work together on the **technologies of the future** as well as in the **innovative projects of the future** in these creative innovation pools. With more than 800 employees in Styria at present, the **competence centres** are an additional vital employment motor and guarantor for high-quality jobs (700 employees are scientists). In addition to the competence centres, there are also a series of so-called “**K-projects**”, which are established in various strength fields starting from wooden structure research and including applied medical research as well as bioengineering.

The active know-how transfer as well as the brisk sociocultural exchange between international and domestic employees is indispensable for the research location Styria. The strengthening and interconnection of **international research and cooperation possibilities** as well as the acceleration of **career promotion for young scientists** in Styria is also an essential objective of the economic strategy “Styria 2020”. The **internationalisation of curricula** and the image enhancement of the location Styria, and especially the **training and research environment**, are associated with coordinated **educational and qualification measures**.

A **province-wide initiative** has been initiated in **Styria** with the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG) **project “Take Tech”**, which enables Styrian enterprises to introduce students and young people to the multifaceted fields of activity and career possibilities in the technical or scientific career fields in an enterprise. The “**Company IQ**” **project** has been additionally developed by SFG in order to also successfully expedite **innovation in small enterprises**. Numerous Styrian small or medium-sized enterprises implement innovative, outstanding interventions within the framework of this project so that long-term successes can also be recorded in the national market.

In order to prepare the employees in Styrian enterprises (especially in SMEs) – in a manner *focussed specifically on target groups* – for the challenges of the future, global change processes and thereby for the **higher qualification requirements**, the possibility of **cross-financing within the framework of EU Structural Funds** was also utilised within the framework of the **EU programme “Regional Competitiveness Styria 2007-2013”**. Sensitisation, qualification and innovation processes as well as acquisition of know-how for knowledge management and innovation and the implementation of training courses for top skilled personnel in Styrian enterprises are the focal point of activities here.

The Styrian **INNOLAB programme** functions as an informational and service hub for **inventors** and **innovative entrepreneurs in the Styrian economy** at **Campus 02 University of Applied Sciences**, and also supports innovative Styrian projects with difficult innovation processes. Support services can be utilised, starting with evaluation of ideas and leading from planning up to realisation. As an invention and innovation support programme, INNOLAB is supplemented in the form of a new concept in the field of innovation marketing that particularly involves SME-suitable methods for optimised customer integration in the innovation process.

Innovation in the promotion of Styrian skilled personnel with the Triality programme: This programme is co-financed with the help of EU funds from the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** and is a training programme especially developed for apprentices which trains young people to become top-qualified skilled personnel and future managers. As a supplement to apprenticeship and vocational school it enables ambitious young people to have an individual, inter-company technical training in the strategic strength fields of the Styrian economy.

The Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG) has developed a **virtual “one-stop shop” for regional and international transfer of knowledge and technology between researchers and enterprises** that is open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week with the **website www.technologie.at**. Furthermore, Styrian **“AplusB centres”** support enterprise start-ups from the sphere of universities, polytechnics and non-academic research institutions. In addition to more long-term management consulting and the stimulation of start-ups, financial support and corresponding technical consulting represent those measures which contribute towards optimisation of starting conditions for young entrepreneurs from this environment.

The **SCIENCE FIT** campaign in Styria makes it **easier for enterprises to utilise scientific institutions to solve operational problems** and therefore opens up access to students and graduates of Styrian universities. The **SCIENCE FIT – active transfer of knowledge – project** financed by European Union funds from the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**, the Province of Styria and the City of Graz offers especially Styrian SMEs the possibility to utilise know-how from Styrian research institutions. The Graz University of technology (TUG) with the Institute of General Management and Organisation (UFO), the research company JOANNEUM RESEARCH (JR) with the JOANNEUM CREATIVE LAB, the Montanuniversität Leoben (MUL- university for mining, metallurgy, and materials) and the University of Graz (KFU) with its research management and research service active approach Styrian enterprises, pose open questions on site and show potential forms of cooperation with the help of specific topics.

3.4. Cross-cutting Themes/EU Dimension

Starting in the spring of 2012, a specially installed project group consisting of representatives from the department of Economic Affairs, the Styrian Economic Chamber and the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG) and which will be coordinated by the Province’s Department of Economic Affairs shall be established for a potential EER 2013 in Styria. The activities and network plan for EER 2013 as well as the corresponding communications concept will be jointly prepared so that the implementation activities of the EER year can commence starting in January 2013.

A potential award ceremony and distinction of Styria with the EER 2013 label would provide an important contribution towards further development of the partnership-based acceleration of the theme **entrepreneurship & entrepreneurial spirit** as well as **raising awareness and integration of the principles of the Small Business Act (SBA)** in connection with the “Styria 2020” economic strategy, the “Europe 2020” strategy as well as the seven European flagship initiatives.

The inclusion of the greatest possible number of Styrian stakeholders and the cooperation with other European partner regions within the framework of a potential EER Year Styria 2013 would substantially support the concentrated alignment of planned activities, the application of the pursued objectives and the implementation of the **new economic strategy “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation”**. As a result, the implementation activities in the EER Year Styria 2013 would also generate a lasting effect.

The **European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations** proclaimed in 2012 plays a pivotal role particularly in the Federal Province of Styria with its above-average problem situations as well as the regional and international migratory balances. The EER Year Styria 2013 could contribute towards the theme of **self-responsibility, citizenship** and **self-employment** through focussing more strongly on awareness-raising measures within the framework of the following **European Year of Citizens in 2013**.

3.4.1. Styria and European Programmes

Styria also interconnects the **SBA-relevant** topics with the European Structural Funds Programmes, and particularly here with the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** within the framework of the operational programme **“Regional Competitiveness Styria 2007-2013”**. The Styrian programme pursues the development of new growth fields, the acceleration of regional strengths and the dissemination of the innovative base of Styrian SMEs and the strengthening of the region’s innovative strength.

As an administrative body for the current ERDF programme **“Regional Competitiveness Styria 2007-2013”**, Department 14 – Economic Affairs and Innovation – is also involved in the **bilateral ETC programme “Austria-Slovenia 2007-2013”** via the Monitoring Committee, so that all bilateral and innovative economic projects can be coordinated and supported as a result. The **Internationalisation Centre Styria (ICS)** also supports with the development of the ETC programme by assuming the role of **informational, advisory and project development agency with economically relevant areas of the programme** and supports project partners in the development, approval and implementation of projects.

The **European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF)** is part of those EU measures which serve to directly combat the economic and financial crisis. The EGF has also been successfully reflected in Styrian economic and employment policy. The EGF enabled broad and far-reaching training and qualification measures within the scope of the **“Automobile Styria” foundation**. The **“Automobile Styria”** foundation was the first application for Austria approved by the EGF. The EGF assumed two thirds of the costs incurred in this connection. One third was financed by the concerned enterprises.

The good cooperation on the institutional and stakeholder level in Styria also led to a coordinated approach in relation to promoting the adaptation of workers to industrial change and the change of production systems under integration of the **European Social Fund (ESF)**. **Flexibility Consulting for Businesses (FBB)** is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and supports Styrian enterprises in the course of **operational restructurings** – especially during the financial and economic crisis – with the objective of stabilising and safeguarding employment through the utilisation of flexible interventions with capacity fluctuations through numerous measures.

In the beginning of **2009**, the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG) was authorised by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFJ) to **assume the role of contact point and regional point of contact for the entire Southeast Styrian region** in order to optimise participation from this region in the **7th EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7)**. To achieve this ambitious objective, the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG) concentrates on preparing the multifaceted **FP7** information specifically for target groups, offering customised consulting services, reducing the high degree of complexity and enhancing regional and international networking.

3.5. Regional Implementation and Development of a Styria-wide Network Policy

Within the framework of *new economic strategy “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation”*, the Province of Styria will also rely on successful public-private partnership models in the future when – in addition to the public sector – Styrian enterprises and regional research institutions from the most varying technology fields are to be integrated into supporting organisations .

“**Cluster Province Styria**” with its **six clusters** is a trailblazer and profitably utilises the advantages of this **Styrian network strategy**.

An internationally recognised pilot model has been successful with the **ACstyria automotive industry cluster** (www.acstyria.com) as an example for a functioning network policy. Other clusters have been initiated in areas of strength to include energy and environmental technology (**ECO World Styria**; www.eco.at), wood (“**Wood Cluster Styria**”; www.holzcluster-steiermark.at), human technology (“**Human.technology Styria**”; www.humantechnology.at), food technology (**TECHFORTASTE.NET**; www.techfortaste.net) and materials (**Materials Cluster Styria**; www.materialcluster.at). In addition, five **corporate networks** have already reached the preliminary stage to becoming a cluster.

Moreover, global economic developments necessitate an increasingly clearer profiling of individual regions. The positioning of a **city or a region as a brand** is also becoming more and more important. The Styrian provincial capital Graz and the urban area have been **positioned** in the past decades as a **modern cultural city in a region with high quality of life**. In 2003, Graz was successfully presented as the “Cultural Capital of Europe” with the promotion of cultural activities and institutions.

The **Styria-wide network Creative Industries Styria (CIS; www.cis.at)** can be regarded as a marketplace for **creative industries and entrepreneurs**. Clients and cooperation partners utilise the network to find and promote creative services. The **Province’s Department of Economic Affairs** laid the foundation for this through the establishment and operation of **Creative Industries Styria GmbH**, which was also entrusted with the implementation of the candidacy for “**Graz UNESCO City of Design**”. The theme **Creativity & Design** is high on the agenda for the City of Graz and the economic location Styria. The **distinction “Graz UNESCO City of Design” received in 2011** is important for the development of the region, so that efforts towards **international positioning and networking** will be even stronger in the future.

3.6. Sustainability and Ecological Modernisation of the Styrian Economy

The efficient and sustainable utilisation of natural resources is becoming more and more important. The “business-as-usual” principle no longer represents a feasible option for the future.

A **master plan** for the **Province of Styria** has been developed with the **climate protection plan**. The energy and climate package (particularly pertains to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the increased utilisation of renewable energies) shall contribute towards achieving the **Europe 2020 objectives** (flagship initiative for a resource efficient Europe).

The *new economic strategy “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation”* contributes decisively towards promotion of sustainability and the ecological modernisation of Styria. Innovations in environmental technology as well as measures for improvement of energy and resource efficiency will be promoted within the framework of the **guiding theme Eco-Tech** (energy and environmental technology). An orientation towards *clean production & clean technologies* will also be increasingly pursued in the other **guiding themes (Mobility and Health-Tech)**.

According to a ranking available from 2010 (CLEANTECH GROUP, US investor's network), the **world's best concentration of environmental technology enterprises is in Styria. More globally leading green technology enterprises than anywhere else in Europe can be reached within a driving time of one single hour by car.** About **200 Styrian enterprises** and **research institutions** are working today on cleaner and greener technologies of tomorrow. **ECO WORLD STYRIA** (www.eco.at) is the supporting organisation in this technology field for the Province of Styria's economic initiative in the realm of energy and environmental technology. Furthermore, ECO World Styria was one of 20 European pilot clusters which have been audited with the status "**World Class Cluster**" within the scope of the upcoming **European Cluster Certificate**. In addition to the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG), the Province of Styria and the City of Graz, successful enterprises are also involved in the cluster's organisational structure. These cluster enterprises are growing twice as fast per year (**22%**) as the world markets, and are technology and market leaders with regard to biomass plants, solar systems, hydroelectric plants and recycling systems.

In the **Styrian environmental cluster ECO WORLD STYRIA** these enterprises work together with research, administration and the ECO World Styria GmbH team on further expanding the technology leadership and continuously increasing the number of technology employees. In addition to innovation support, the **ECO WORLD STYRIA** range of services also encompasses essential strategic support in the form of "**ECO FUTURE RADAR – For Green Tech Business – 2012 to 2015**".

In the meantime, **Wood Cluster Styria** (established in **2001**) is also among the strongest networks in Europe in the Styrian strength field **FOREST-WOOD-PAPER** with over **150 Styrian cluster partners** along the **entire value added chain for the timber industry**. As an interface between industry, science and politics, it is a central concern to support **Styrian cluster partner enterprises** in their daily business routine and to implement product ideas together with them, conquer new markets, optimise marketing and distribution, adapt the internal organisation to the current circumstances and thereby also to create or to safeguard jobs, **particularly in the rural regions** of Styria.

3.7. Successful Implementation

The **core strategies** pursued within the framework of the **new economic strategy "Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation"** as well as their **degree of target achievement** will be constantly subjected to monitoring and evaluation.

- Comprehensive **socioeconomic information on various spatial levels**, partially starting with the district level, will be provided with the **Province of Styria's Economic Reporting and Information System (WIBIS; www.wibis-steiermark.at)**. In addition, the **WIBIS regional profiles** include data records compiled separately for each of the 17 Styrian districts, and the **WIBIS fact sheets** feature a concise informative description of the respective districts. The offer is supplemented by **economic situation sheets updated on a monthly basis** on the federal province level as well as by the **employment market forecast** published on a semi-annual basis.
- The **Styrian strength fields** represent thematic priorities of the Styrian economic policy which have been specified on the basis of past and present importance for the Styrian economy as well as its potentials. As a result, individual strength fields represent bundles of competencies and stakeholders which in their totality have an above-average importance for Styria, and – *at least in partial areas* – feature a critical mass. The **objective of strength field measurement** is to provide empirically measurable, structured fundamentals for the reflection on and discussion of Styrian strength fields. The measurement of Styrian strength fields will be implemented in cooperation with the **JOANNEUM RESEARCH Forschungsgesellschaft mbH (JR)**.

- Economic development in Styria will be continually monitored through appropriate **economic situation monitoring**. The regular dialogue and the exchange with partner organisations will contribute towards successful implementation and executive of the core strategies relevant for Styria.
- The **Styrian location dialogue initiated by the Province's Department of Economic Affairs** will be conducted on a quarterly basis. Strategically important topics relevant to the location and Styria will be handled on a broader stakeholder level. The Department of Economic Affairs, economic and social partners as well as case-related external experts will work on those task areas which shall orient the location Styria towards sustainable topics with high potential for value added, innovation and growth.
- In addition to the observation of the general economic development, monitoring and controlling, the Department of Economic Affairs will also perform the **evaluation of the execution of the economic strategy by means of an evidence-based policy information system**. As a consequence, economic control requirements can be identified, and action plans can be developed and implemented at an early stage.

4. Planning Measures and Activities for Communications Policy in the EER Year 2013 as well as Implementation of Future EER 2013 Activities

- Should Styria be distinguished with the EER 2013 label, an **active exchange** and the **cooperation** with already existing and additional new **"EER Regions 2011 plus"** is planned.
- **Several preliminary discussions** with the award-winning **EER 2011 Region, Federal State of Brandenburg** (Germany), and the **ZukunftsAgentur Brandenburg** (Brandenburg Economic Development Board) have already taken place, and the docking to the currently **active network of 6 EER regions** within the scope of **OPEN DAYS 2011**, "Consolidating European Entrepreneurial Regions (EER) Label - Towards Regional SBA Partnerships" underscore Styria's interest.
- **Department 14 – Economic Affairs and Innovation – of the Office of the Provincial Government of Styria** would function as a **central contact and coordination point** for the planning, organisation and implementation of a potential EER Year Styria 2013. So it could be assured that all communications activities in Styria will be **centrally coordinated and controlled**.
- The experiences and knowledge gained in EER Year 2013 could be communicated in detail to the Committee of the Regions in the form of an **interim and final report**. In addition, an **intensive and regular exchange** with the EER jury or the Committee of the Regions is planned as a matter of course. The responsible Styrian Provincial Minister of Economy, Europe and Culture is a **permanent member of the Committee of the Regions** and represents **Styrian interests** here.
- The existing and award-winning EER regions since 2011 as well as their **regional EER management structures** shall be **regularly informed** about the current activities in the Styrian entrepreneurial scene and thereby **actively involved**.
- An additional, corresponding effort will be made to broadly and profoundly sensitise the **Styrian cluster organisations**, the **Styrian competence centres** as well as **all other EER-relevant stakeholder levels in Styria** (Styrian Business Promotion Agency, Styrian Economic Chamber, IV Styria, leading enterprises and corporate networks, regional, start-up initiatives, economic and social partners, etc.) with regard to the EER Year Styria 2013.

- **Bilateral and multilateral informational and know-how transfer processes shall be developed, started and successfully implemented.** The results and knowledge as well as the subsequently resulting, economical, ecological and social **value added shall benefit all involved EER regions.**
- **A consistent communications concept** for an EER Year 2013 would be planned, developed and implemented by the Styrian Department of Economic Affairs in close cooperation with the two central, strategic and operationally proactive project partners, **Styrian Economic Chamber and Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG).** As a result, it could be achieved that a potential EER Year 2013 Styria will be communicated on a comprehensive regional basis as well as an inter-institutional basis.
- The communication of a potential EER Year 2013 in Styria shall also occur in close coordination with the **public relations for the program “Regional Competitiveness Styria 2007-2013”**, so that it is envisaged to select the EER theme as a focal point of communication in 2013.
- The **objectives and themes of the Committee of the Regions, the specific EER Year 2013 itself and the regional Europe 2020 strategy** would also be transported to the varying target groups (enterprises, citizens, schools & students, banks and credit institutes, special interest groups, economic and professional associations, etc.) with this approach. **At any rate, a penetration of the visibility on the European level is guaranteed as a result.**
- Numerous partner organisations plan and organise a series of target group-specific events every year, such as regional, national and international trade fair appearances, diverse competitions, symposiums, congresses, congresses etc. These events shall be increasingly utilised as a **platform and base of the communications policy** for a potential **EER Year Styria 2013.**
- The integration of the **Styrian Office as a permanent agency of the Province of Styria in Brussels** and consequently the Province of Styria’s European Department could take on an **active informational, communications and hub function** in the EER Year 2013. As a result, multipliers, interest groups and interested target groups would also be addressed and informed about the regional activities and measures.
- In the event of being awarded with the EER 2013 label by the Committee of the Regions, Styria would also like to consistently continue the successful path taken up to now in the EER Year 2013. However, a potential EER Year Styria 2013 should contribute through **enhanced cooperation** and the **intensification of contacts and networking activities with other EER regions on the European level** in order to...
 - a) ...exchange ideas on various key issues **stronger than previously,**
 - b) to **intensify** brainstorming in the various strength fields and technology areas,
 - c) to accordingly **learn from each other** and also
 - d) to **mutually benefit from each other.**
- An **EER Year Styria 2013** could **perform an additional impulse function** for the region and provide **powerful incentives** for the further development and the promotion of **key issues relevant to the future.** These thematic key issues could be worked out further in coordination and clarification with the other EER regions (e.g. themes for the regional cluster landscape, promotion of entrepreneurship in schools, advancement of ecological modernisation of the economy, safeguarding skilled personnel, promotion of innovation, etc.) and also serve to **prepare for the new EU Structural Funds period 2014-2020.**
- **Key issues can be discussed in depth, and future issues having an effect beyond the EER Year 2013 can be dealt with beneficially through special EER events in 2013 in Styria, through the**

active participation in events in other EER regions as well as particularly through the **synergetic utilisation of already existing or planned regional and international events in Styria.**

- In the event of being awarded with the EER label Styria 2013 and the approval of the EER jury, Styria would broadly and, *in compliance with specific quality criteria*, **provide this label to all relevant institutions and organisations.**

Graz, 9 November 2011

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gratzner', with a stylized, cursive script.

.....
Dr. Gerd Gratzner
Department 14 – Economic Affairs and Innovation